
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

March 30, 2010

Ald. Nik Kovac
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Ald. Milele A. Coggs
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Ald. Ashanti Hamilton
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Public Input Sought on Milwaukee River Greenway Overlay Zone

The public will soon have several opportunities to weigh in on proposed permanent zoning and design standards meant to improve public access, as well as to protect and preserve the natural areas along the Milwaukee River corridor between the former North Ave. dam and the city limits at Silver Spring Dr., according to Alderman Nik Kovac, the primary sponsor of the legislation that would create the standards.

Alderman Kovac said the proposed legislation -- co-sponsored by Alderman Ashanti Hamilton and Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs -- comes after years of community outreach and negotiations with property owners and the Department of City Development.

“The community and public input gathering that will take place is the next vital step in this process of putting into law the protections and standards that are critical in preserving this most beautiful and unique stretch of natural public space,” said Alderman Kovac.

“I strongly encourage anyone who has the inclination to find out more about what’s proposed and to take part in one or all of the public meetings scheduled on the legislation,” he said.

To review the draft ordinance, please go to Alderman Kovac’s web page – www.milwaukee.gov/district3.

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Proposed River Overlay Zone/ADD ONE

Alderwoman Coggs said ample public input, testimony, and inclusion on the overlay zone proposal is critical to making sure it's properly vetted. "Like the lakefront, the river is one of our city's greatest assets and an irreplaceable resource that we all enjoy," she said.

"So it is incumbent upon us to take some time to gather the opinions of a diverse array of neighbors and interested parties before the legislation comes to a vote on the Council floor," Alderwoman Coggs said.

Alderman Hamilton said the vast improvements and conservation efforts of the last 20 or 30 years have helped make the river an attraction, and the overlay zone can help continue that positive trend. "In the early 1970s, the polluted state of the river would actually repel people," he said. "But now it's been truly revived, and residents come to the river for recreation, relaxation, and for watching the abundance of fish and wildlife. This proposal is a big step in helping to ensure that our conservation efforts continue with this most precious natural resource."

Under the proposed overlay zone legislation:

- **No building could be constructed bigger than a duplex within the primary environmental corridor (PEC) in the entire overlay district, north from the North Ave. pedestrian bridge to the city limits in Estabrook and Lincoln Parks.**
- **North of North Ave., no building bigger than a duplex within a buffer zone 25 feet beyond the top of the bluff (TOB) line, and only limited building could take place between 25 and 50 feet of the TOB line.**
- **North of North Ave., 45-foot height restrictions would be in place up to 100 feet from TOB, and 60 foot restrictions up to 150 feet (except on commercial corridors, where the 60-foot restriction does not apply).**
- **Design guidelines that encourage green practices and careful treatment of the river side of buildings.**
- **No cutting down of native non-invasive trees without a permit anywhere within the PEC.**
- **Stricter storm water requirements for any new construction near the PEC.**

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Proposed River Overlay Zone/ADD TWO

The Common Council will take up the overlay zone legislation following the public comment and testimony period is ended. The public meetings scheduled so far include:

- **City Plan Commission – (overlay file) 1:30 p.m. on Monday, May 3 - PUBLIC HEARING (809 N. Broadway in the first floor boardroom).**
- **Public Works Committee (storm water and forestry files): 9 a.m. on Wednesday, May 12 (City Hall room 301-B).**
- **Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee (overlay file): 9 a.m. on Tuesday, May 18 (City Hall room 301-B).**
- **Common Council (projected -- final approval of all files): 9 a.m. Tuesday, May 25 (Common Council Chamber at City Hall).**

If approved by the Common Council, files are submitted to the Mayor for signature and are “official” one day after passage and publication by the City Clerk.

Alderman Kovac said credit for helping bring the legislation forward and refining it should go to the Milwaukee River Work Group, the Urban Ecology Center, the River Revitalization Foundation, Milwaukee Riverkeepers and the Rotary Club, which is investing \$400,000 in an arboretum within the overlay district.

“I would also like to recognize the business, residential, recreational, and environmental communities of Milwaukee for taking part in protecting and improving this important public asset,” he said. “It has truly been a privilege for me to be a part of this process, and I hope that we are all still proud of its results 100 years from now.”