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Common Council File No. 121132 Exhibit B

Corridor Plan for the Historic Mitchell Street Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District

History:

Mitchell Street has been a commercial corridor for over a century and like other commercial corridors in the metro area (and the United States) has evolved in tandem with the history of retail and the history of Milwaukee. Mitchell Street first became a vibrant retail street when it was established around 1870, and continued its evolution as a commercial corridor into the 1970's, when it was commonly known as the "Downtown of the South Side," ranked second in commercial importance only to downtown Milwaukee.

In its prime, Mitchell Street (1870's to 1970's) was a major shopping destination--similar to what regional shopping malls such as Mayfair and Bayshore are today--with a cluster of approximately 90 retail stores, the smaller supporting stores at street level "first floor" and the larger anchor stores at multi-level "stacked floors," including Schuster's, Sears & Roebuck, Kunzelmann-Esser and Goldmann's. Mitchell Street has always been a community-serving commercial corridor with many bridal stores, theatres (most notably the Modjeska), and other retail-related businesses, as well as churches, banks, funeral parlors, etc . This role as the commercial heart of the South Side is a role that Mitchell Street had when it was in its prime as a retail shopping district and rivaled downtown as the "Polish Grand Avenue" and in part, still has today.

In the 1980's, as a result of a market forces, Mitchell Street began to transition to being more of a "service street" than a "retail street" and mixed-use commercial corridor. This can be attributed to a few factors:

1. In the early 1980's, part of Mitchell Street was closed off to vehicular traffic as part of an effort to support commercial districts by creating pedestrian malls or closing off automobile traffic. However, "mallng" did not support the commercial district. It appeared to impede the ability of the district to thrive. In 1991, the pedestrian malls were removed. Mitchell Street was re-opened. However, many Mitchell Street retailers had already moved out, along with their very loyal customer base, due to the decline in retail and destination shopping.
2. During the economic downturn, many of the commercial corridors in the City of Milwaukee, including Mitchell Street, experienced retail and commercial tenant vacancies.
3. The current Local Business zoning district permits other non-commercial uses. The potential formation of a zoning overlay district will support Mitchell Street in a targeted way and be an important step to the progress being made to ensure the future of this historic commercial street.

In 1986, Mitchell Street, from 5th to 13th Streets, was designated the West Mitchell Street Historic District in accordance with the provisions of (currently) Section 320-21 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, and in 1996, was legally renamed West Historic Mitchell Street. This historic designation has supported the considerable efforts on the part of Business Improvement District No. 4 and its many partners to return Mitchell Street to its former status as both a thriving and historically significant commercial district.

Existing conditions and uniqueness of Mitchell Street:

Mitchell street currently is a mix of (1) occupied buildings with active retail storefronts; (2) a few partially occupied or vacant buildings, many in disrepair, many with storefronts that are blocked out or boarded up; and (3) buildings with storefronts that do not contribute to a retail street, e.g., non-retail services.

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In order for Mitchell Street to be competitive in a modern retail environment, it must be a "retail street" where street frontage is retail and commercial uses, storefronts are inviting, streetscape design is welcoming; and the street environment is pedestrian-oriented. While Mitchell Street remains a unique shopping street within the South Side market, in order to remain competitive, its retail cluster must be comparable or better than its competition (shopping centers and "big box" stores) and its offerings must be unique and/or superior. For example, a "Main Street" strategy is to offer a product or service that cannot be found in neighboring "big box" stores, similar to Mitchell Street's bridal shop that specializes in quinceanera dresses, its Lopez Bakery that specializes in authentic Mexican baked goods, international restaurants (Cuban, Caribbean, Middle Eastern), a soccer store that specializes in gear from Mexican and South American league teams.

The historic retail buildings that still dominate Mitchell Street still lend themselves to a broad range of retail: niche markets, many that appeal to the growing Spanish-speaking population on Milwaukee's South Side, specialty multi-ethnic markets, traditional markets such as home goods, transitional (growing) businesses and start-ups (new entrepreneurs). Historic Mitchell Street buildings have also adapted well to mixed use formats, typically retail at street level, and office, residential, or other commercial uses above. Commercial uses that do well above street level are those with a designated clientele such as a dentist or a tax preparer, that do not depend on pedestrian traffic or do not need a storefront to attract customers.

A traditional retail cluster for a commercial district such as Historic Mitchell Street might include one or more stores from the following categories: restaurants, diners, bakeries, coffee or tea houses, taverns, grocery, specialty/import stores, clothing, shoes, jewelry/watch repair, electronics/cameras, barbershops, florists, fitness centers, dance studios, art galleries, museums, antiques, resale stores, movie theaters, performance venues, liquor stores, record stores, hardware stores, dry cleaners, book stores, toy stores, and hotels (particularly those with ground floor retail such as a gift shop, coffee shop, bar or restaurant).

Why specific uses are to be restricted:

Why is it important to restrict specific uses in order to support Mitchell Street as a "retail street" and maintain a competitive retail cluster?

1. The first reason is economic and goes back to the original premise for the marketplace. Shoppers prefer to do multi-purpose shopping in a pedestrian-oriented zone whenever they can, and a competitive retail cluster (a critical mass of stores that altogether create a "draw" or an "anchor") on a traditional shopping street such as Mitchell Street, offers that. Shopping malls, "lifestyle centers," department stores and many "big box" stores also offer that. In fact, a "big box" store (e.g., Wal-Mart, Target) may present an internal retail cluster that is very similar to a traditional town square or to a retail street such as Mitchell Street.

The retail cluster can be enhanced by retail anchors or destination stores--a single store that is large enough or unique enough to be a draw in and of itself. Even then, shoppers would prefer to combine destination shopping (that one unique store) with the multi-purpose shopping provided by a retail cluster.

2. The second reason, already implied, for the retail cluster is convenience. The customer parks once and can in a pedestrian-friendly environment (definitions for this vary and evolve with individual marketplaces) accomplish a multitude of purchases within a customer-friendly or engaging, walkable marketplace. A traditional commercial corridor is always going to be a "park once" experience, where the customer can do multi-purpose shopping within a 5 to 10 block walking distance, similar to Historic Mitchell Street.

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3. The third reason is the quality of the customer's shopping experience as a competitive factor in retailing. After price point and selection of goods, shoppers are drawn to an area based on the retail experience. Whether it is a shopping mall, a shopping street, a town square or "lifestyle center," shoppers prefer a pedestrian-oriented zone with a broad variety of shopping choices in a customer-friendly environment.

The retail cluster is most effective in engaging shoppers when storefronts are continuous and not overly broken up (separated or spaced out) by parking lots, automobile-oriented uses with large curb cuts or paved areas, non-commercial or "non-contributing" uses that dilute and diminish the retail experience.

4. Can the retail cluster support other uses? Yes, it can--if the other uses are placed away from, that is above, below, or behind, the main retail corridor. In the case of Historic Mitchell Street, the main retail corridor is considered to be both sides of the street at the street (first floor) level. In order to maintain this desirable continuity of street level retail storefronts, offices, professional services, residential and other non-retail uses should be located:
 - Above the first floor (street) level in the upper stories of buildings or
 - Below the first floor (street) level in the basement level or
 - Behind a street level storefront (typically twenty feet in depth or greater), preferably with a separate entrance located to the side or to the rear of the building. If parking is placed to the rear of the building, the separate entrance for the non-retail uses can be conveniently located directly off the rear parking lot.
5. Can the retail cluster allow pre-existing or "grandfathered" uses that are non-retail. Yes. Historically, a community-serving commercial district such as Historic Mitchell Street, did have exceptions to retail storefront continuity for institutional uses (e.g., churches, schools, banks, etc.) and/or public uses (e.g., libraries, fire and police stations). Most of these institutional or public uses are pre-existing, that is, part of the original historic composition of uses that grew up to serve the surrounding community.

However, as the district continues to evolve (from this point going forward), the predominant pattern of use that should be encouraged is that of a strong traditional retail cluster (as noted above) located in the existing historic buildings--maintained and repurposed according to historic preservation guidelines--and, in particular, re-using the historic retail storefronts for the purpose for which they were originally designed.

6. Can the retail cluster include residential uses? Yes, but only if they are located above (upper stories above the street level) or away from the retail corridor (around the corner from the street level or on adjacent blocks). It is worth noting that a small entry area to a residential complex above street level will not detract from the retail cluster. Similarly, a tightly defined entrance to a parking garage for a mixed use building (residential/office/retail at street level) will not detract.

Supporting information from Milwaukee's Comprehensive Plan:

The next section is a series of key recommendations taken from the City of Milwaukee's Near South Side Plan (adopted May, 2009), as it pertains to the community's vision, goals and strategy for Mitchell Street:

Overall Assessment for Mitchell Street (p. 79 of the Plan):

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The Near South Side Market Analysis identified Mitchell Street from approximately Cesar Chavez Drive to Interstate 94/43 as a primary retail corridor that should be enhanced.

Mitchell Street has the potential to become a community-wide shopping district that provides goods and services for the Near South Side and the regional market area.

The Mitchell Street corridor has the benefit of larger footprint buildings and parcels with ample parking that could support larger anchor stores.

Retail businesses thrive by being adjacent to each other in a convenient, compact, pedestrian-oriented setting that allows shoppers to move easily from store to store. This principle can be seen on traditional retail corridors like Mitchell Street and in newer "town center" concept developments and suburban shopping malls.

The future viability of Mitchell Street depends on maintaining this high quality main street or downtown retail look and function. The following policies and strategies recommend how to fulfill this retail vision.

Policies and Strategies for Mitchell Street (taken from pp. 79-81 of the Plan):

1. Define a "pedestrian-oriented shopping zone" comprising the street level of buildings on properties with frontage on either side of Mitchell Street between 5th and 13th Streets, including either side of the Forest Home Avenue triangle.
2. Within this defined zone, maintain and promote an economically vibrant mix of retail stores and services at the street level, while discouraging uses that do not directly contribute to a high quality shopping experience.
3. Protect the heart of the pedestrian retail corridor by discouraging uses that don't contribute to a dedicated shopping zone.
4. Locate non-retail uses on parcels outside or above this pedestrian-oriented shopping zone. Social services, governmental agencies, and professional services should be located on floors above the street level or on surrounding streets.
5. Organizations that provide transportation services should locate where they can provide appropriate facilities for waiting and boarding passengers and vehicular movement, not in the pedestrian-oriented shopping zone.
6. Discourage new auto-oriented uses, drive through businesses, and gas stations in the pedestrian-oriented shopping zone.
7. Encourage businesses within the district to locate along Mitchell Street instead of along other non-primary commercial corridors.
8. To diversify the availability of goods and services in close proximity to Near South Side residents, attract national retailers that would complement and fit the urban format of the Mitchell Street corridor.
9. Increase residential densities within and adjacent to the corridor to provide a stable customer base for Mitchell Street businesses.

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10. All new developments along Mitchell Street should maintain the corridor's street frontage. Large blank walls with no windows facing the street should be avoided. The facade's of larger-scale buildings should be broken up with architectural detail and include ample windows.

Supporting information from Milwaukee's West Mitchell Street's Designation as an Historic District:

The following paragraphs address the social, architectural and historic significance of Mitchell Street buildings constructed between 1870-1940, and are excerpted from the City of Milwaukee's Historic Designation Study Report for the West Mitchell Street Historic District (revised September, 2012) :

Although Mitchell Street was laid out in 1857, little settlement occurred until the later 1870's when this farm studded portion of the South Side began to attract Polish settlers. As late as the mid-1880's, however, agricultural enterprises such as the Enos and Company Nursery and the Comstock Celery Farm could still be found in the neighborhood. Gradually commercial buildings began to appear in the vicinity of St. Stanislaus Church, which had stood in lonely grandeur at Mitchell and South 5th streets for years before it got its first neighbors. As Polish settlement increased, Mitchell Street developed into the commercial, cultural and religious center of the Polish community. Eventually, Mitchell Street became known as the 'Polish Grand Avenue' and ranked second in commercial importance only to downtown, a position it maintained until well after World War II. The substantial commercial structures erected there, including the enormous Kunzelmann-Esser, Schuster's, Sears Roebuck and Company and National Hardware Buildings, were a testament to the thriving retail trade. Only Milwaukee's central business district had as many large stores at Mitchell Street. Another indication of the street's importance were the many banks established there, as well as the two movie theaters, the Granada (razed) and the Modjeska.

After 1970 Mitchell Street slid into a precipitous decline that witnessed the closing of most of the large stores. Attempts were made to revive the street by building a landscaped pedestrian mall and a farmer's market in 1975, but the results were disappointing. The street has since been returned to a traffic thoroughfare and the farmer's market has been replaced with commercial buildings. Over the years, only two important structures on Mitchell Street have been razed, the Granada Theater, formerly at 1127 West Mitchell (razed 1973), and St. Jacobi Church, (razed 1975) formerly on the site where Mitchell Street intersects with West Forest Home Avenue.

The Mitchell Street Historic District is a nine-block commercial strip of late nineteenth and early twentieth century, brick or frame commercial structures. Although most of the structures are two stories tall, there are several one-story buildings and a number of buildings ranging from two to four stories in height. The Kunzelmann-Esser Building, at eight stories, is the tallest building on the street and one of the tallest on the South Side. There are approximately ninety buildings within the district. In addition to commercial structures, there are two large church complexes within the district.

The buildings were built between 1870 and 1940 with most dating from the period between 1890 and 1920. Many of the present structures were built to replace earlier buildings. They illustrate a wide range of architectural styles popular for commercial buildings in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. False-fronted wooden buildings, brick Queen Anne structures, early Twentieth Century Chicago Style commercial blocks, Classical Revival banks and Moderne storefronts can be found within the district.

Mitchell Street is architecturally significant for its fine assemblage of commercial structures and churches representing a wide range of architectural styles and periods. Styles range from boomtown gable-fronted storefronts to Queen Anne, Classical Revival, Mediterranean and Moderne. Researching permit records and looking at the rear of the buildings shows that Mitchell's Street's vitality led to successive periods of remodeling at many of the locations where new fronts and additional stories were added to accommodate

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growing businesses. The commercial district was relatively well confined to the frontage along Mitchell Street itself.