

# Park East Redevelopment Project



Illustrative rendering of proposed plaza



## **Goal**

*To remove the Park East Freeway and replace it with a mixed-use district that reinstates the traditional street grid*

## **Objectives**

- Make this district a "one of a kind" destination.
- Enhance the success of the Water Street bars and restaurants with new entertainment venues.
- Design and construct a regional entertainment venue.
- Enhance the entertainment development with the Harley Museum and cafe.
- Promote residential and mixed use development.
- Incorporate the river as a visual features of this district.
- Extend RiverWalk in front of the new mixed use buildings.
- Provide green open space.
- Enhanced pedestrian connections across the River.
- Enhance transportation linkages with a multi-modal transfer facility incorporated into the Park Once system.

## **Benefits**

- Increases patrons for existing services.
- Generates new business opportunities.
- Complements existing entertainment and shopping uses.
- Enhances residential appeal.
- Enhances attraction of the convention center.
- Increases city tax revenues.
- Increases Downtown jobs.

## **Responsible Parties**

This complex development project will have two phases with different parties responsible for implementation in each phase. The first phase is the removal of the Park East Freeway from North Fourth Street to North Jefferson Street. This requires the completion of inter-governmental agreements on the removal, on changes to the surface streets to accommodate the existing traffic, and on the disposition of the land currently occupied by the freeway. The responsible parties for this phase are:

- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Milwaukee County
- City of Milwaukee

Following completion of the intergovernmental agreements, the redevelopment of the former freeway land can begin. This principally will be a private sector undertaking. The responsible parties for this phase are:

- The Milwaukee Redevelopment Corporation
- Private Developers

## **Rationale**

Removal of elevated section of the Park East Freeway, from 4th to Jefferson Streets, will reclaim approximately 11 developable blocks. The development within this area will augment the successful Water Street entertainment district. It will expand the potential for mixed-use riverfront development and RiverWalk attractions. It will provide an opportunity to create an extensive entertainment complex.

## **Recommendations**

The Plan calls for new development to meet certain standards for land use and design. These are:

1. The grid pattern of streets should be preserved and re-established where it has been





Aerial view of Park East freeway and surrounding blocks



Plan of existing conditions illustrating impact of elevated road



Location of potential redevelopment blocks and reconnected street grid



Illustrative rendering of redevelopment potential, above, illustrative site plan, below



interrupted.

2. Buildings should be mixed-use, with an emphasis on entertainment activity on Water Street (extending across Cherry Street to the Harley Museum at Schlitz Park) and residential use in the remainder of the area.

3. Buildings generally should be four to six stories in height.

4. Development on and near the river should include continuation of the RiverWalk and facilitate river access.

The redevelopment strategy focuses upon two activity generators: the Harley Museum and an entertainment complex on Water Street. The plan proposes further infill development to include residential buildings with ground-floor office or retail use, two parks, a hotel, a multi-modal parking structure and transit transfer building, a pedestrian bridge and streetscape improvements. Mixed-use river front buildings will center on a plaza that frames river views; ground level outdoor cafes will provide the choicest seats for viewing river activity or park activity. This will become one of the liveliest spots in Downtown.

The Downtown Plan calls for the existing street grid to be continued. The new streets on the East side will include the extension of Edison, North Market, East Ogden, and the connection of McKinley to East Knapp Street via a new lift bridge. On the West Side the extension of North Commerce and Vilet Street are recommended. Pedestrian connections could be enhanced with a new pedestrian bridge linking the activity generators on both sides of the River.

The Plan recommends the following building types. Most of the buildings will be from four to six stories. It is recommended that they have professional services or retail on the ground floor with residential units—apartments, flats, live/work—above. They have views of either the river or one of the new parks. Mixed-use riverfront buildings will have outdoor cafes and marinas. These buildings will provide on-site parking.

The Plan recommends that the mixed-use entertainment complex be an impressive, sig-



nature building with a six-story massing.

A mixed use parking deck and multi-modal transfer center are recommended to enhance regional accessibility to this new district. This will be an important location in the Park Once system. The Plan proposes that several lines of the transit system will intersect at this facility or in front of the entertainment complex. These transit connections will allow this district to be reached from anywhere in Downtown. The Plan also recommends that the suburban buses entering Downtown from the north transfer their riders here for transfer to the Downtown Transit Connector.

A recommendation for the east side park edge is a signature hotel. This is an important site because it is the visual termination of Water Street. The building should be of height and massing to complement the size of the proposed park. Additional retail frontage is recommended on Water Street.

Two new parks and a new plaza are proposed as contributions to Downtown's open space. The plaza would be an extension of the RiverWalk into the urban fabric. This allows direct access from the new entertainment complex to venues across the river. The plaza will become a very popular water taxi stop. Two urban parks are proposed, one on either side of the river as focal points of the mixed use buildings. They are necessary because many residences in the north section of the city can not access an open space within a five-minute walk.



Aerial view of Water Street park concept plan



Concept view from inside entertainment center

