

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: August 10, 2018

TO: Supervisor Theo Lipscomb, Chair, County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Aaron Hertzberg, Director, DAS Economic Development

SUBJECT: An information report on MacArthur Square: Volume II, A Strategic Redevelopment Plan for Civic Infrastructure and Economic Growth.

REQUEST

This report is for informational purposes, there is no request at this time.

REPORT

The County recently partnered with the City of Milwaukee to contract GRAEF to complete a planning study of MacArthur Square. The Report, MacArthur Square: Volume II, A Strategic Redevelopment Plan for Civic Infrastructure and Economic Growth was completed in July of 2018 and is included for your review. Volume I of the report was completed by GRAEF for the City of Milwaukee in 2009.

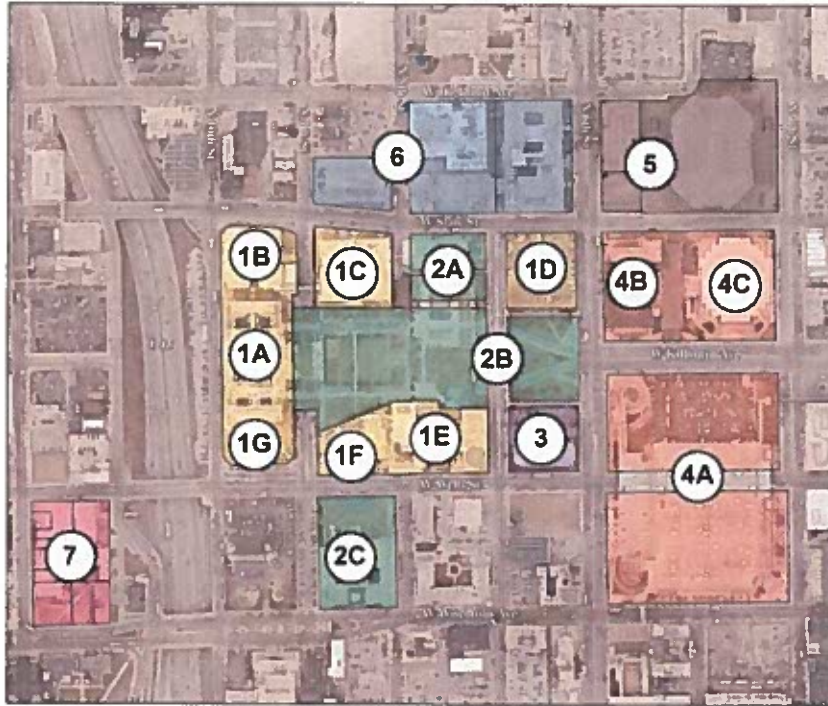
Background

Previous Legislation

File 14-107 – Adopted a resolution authorizing Milwaukee County’s role in relocating the General Douglas MacArthur statue located in MacArthur Square to Veterans Park on the lakefront.

Ownership and Land Use

The map below outlines the ownership and land-use of parcels on and surrounding MacArthur Square. The underground parking lot and green space above are owned by the City of Milwaukee. Many of the surrounding buildings including the Courthouse, Criminal Justice Facility, Safety Building, Public Museum and parking lot at 6th & State Streets are owned by Milwaukee County. It is understood that further planning and redevelopment efforts will require collaboration and should look to engage neighboring property owners, including but not limited to, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee Bucks, Wisconsin Center District, State of Wisconsin and Marquette University.



- Ownership and Land Use Key**
- 1: Milwaukee County
 - 1A: Milwaukee County Courthouse
 - 1B: Milwaukee County Criminal Justice Facility
 - 1C: Safety Building
 - 1D: Parking lot
 - 1E: Milwaukee Public Museum
 - 1F: Open space
 - 1G: Cias Plaza
 - 2: City of Milwaukee
 - 2A: Police Administration Building (PAB)
 - 2B: Open space / underground parking
 - 2C: Milwaukee Public Library
 - 3: State of Wisconsin Office Building
 - 4: Wisconsin Center
 - 4A: Wisconsin Convention Center
 - 4B: Milwaukee Theatre
 - 4C: UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena
 - 5: Bradley Center
 - 6: Milwaukee Area Technical College
 - 7: Marquette University

Source: DRAEF, MacArthur Square, Volume I, 2009.

Changes to MacArthur Square must involve the surrounding stakeholders.
 Source: DRAEF, MacArthur Square, Volume I, 2009

Current Context

Attention to MacArthur Square has recently been highlighted in the media with reports of tents set up as temporary housing for homeless individuals on the Square. Milwaukee County’s Department of Health and Human Services – Housing Division has deployed outreach workers to connect with these individuals and offer supportive services. Supervisors Alexander and Logsdon have also contacted the Department of Administrative Services to express concern for homeless individuals, quality of maintenance in the square, and the under-utilization of the public space.

From a planning perspective, MacArthur Square lacks visibility, clear public access, and programming. Many of the buildings no longer encourage or provide direct access to the Square. The Square has become forgotten and overlooked, while resources for maintenance and upkeep have shifted elsewhere. These qualities negate the Square’s benefits as a public space.

Many of the buildings surrounding MacArthur Square are also in flux. The County’s Safety Building is being studied for replacement, the Public Museum is in search of a new home, and the State of Wisconsin is looking to vacate its office building near the Square. The enclosed report looks to address the mentioned short comings and leverage building transitions to enhance the area’s potential for redevelopment.

The Vision

The report envisions three priority steps to successfully redevelop the area.

1. **Reconnect the streets:** Elevate and reconnect Kilbourn Ave. to the street grid on top of the Square. James Lovell, 8th, and 9th Streets would be reconnected within MacArthur Square to create vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.

2. **Add multi-purpose development:** Create and position parcels for new development. The vision involves no longer looking at some of the existing structures as long-term inflexible facilities. Over the next decade the parcels that these structures exist on can be redeveloped into flexible and efficient sites to modernize and grow the public district of downtown Milwaukee. New tax based development, new amenities, resources, and a revitalized public space would promote growth both in economic value and social value.
3. **Activate a human scale public place:** Build active public spaces along the edges of MacArthur Square conducive to year-round street activity. Some of the suggested changes can focus on traffic circulation for pedestrian activation. Updating the city's street grid to accommodate multiple modes of travel (street car, bicycles, bus lines, etc.) would make better public use of the space. Reshaping the Square would also result in better use of the space by adding multi-purpose areas to accommodate public activities, educational opportunities, and add to the future entertainment district.

The plan considered several concepts for redevelopment. Each concept intends to implement the stated vision while respecting existing assets and the historic vision for MacArthur Square. Concepts are preliminary in nature and require further community input, engineering analysis, and other considerations prior to advancing plans.



Development Pathways Plan - Alternatives 1
Source: CRABP, 2018



Development Assumption Plan: Alternative 2
Source: CRAER, 2018

Next Steps

The MacArthur Square: Volume II report is conceptual in nature. Individual parcel development may occur with guidance from the plan, but to address major infrastructure challenges and maximize public benefits, further study is needed. The City of Milwaukee is leading an effort to undertake this third phase of study to provide more detailed engineering, planning, and outreach and prepare stakeholders for implementation. The City will likely again ask the County to partner in this effort.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

MacArthur Square: Volume II report was paid for jointly by the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County. Milwaukee County's share, \$24,999 has been encumbered in the DAS – Economic Development Budget (115-1191-6149).

Staff from the Economic Development Division and Facilities Management Division – Planning and Development Section contributed an estimated 20 hours of staff time to the project.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes, there is no request at this time.

Submitted by:

Aaron Hertzberg
Economic Development Director

cc: Chris Abele, County Executive

Teig Whaley-Smith, Director, Department of Administrative Services
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