



November 6, 2019

Mayor Cory Mason
Racine City Council
City Development
Planning Commission
Preservation Racine

The Uptown BID was asked by City Development to comment on an application for a rezoning and conditional use permit for the former Hillside Lanes by the New Covenant Church.

The Uptown BID has identified at a minimum the following issues regarding this application:

- Over \$8,200 would be removed from the City's Tax Rolls.
- There are 720 existing tax-exempt properties on the current tax roll.
- Many of these tax-exempt properties are available and should be considered.
- With 200+ future residents moving to the immediate neighborhood there will be a need for an entertainment destination.
- Two developers have shown an interest in re-opening the Hillside Lanes with a 21st Century look, balancing its historic features with façade improvements.

We feel that the application from *New Covenant Church* for rezoning and conditional use permit does not fit the Uptown Strategic Plan, (the Plan) for the commercial corridor or for the revitalization of the commercial district - especially, given the limited number of retail spaces in this corridor compared to other districts.

The following is from the Plan:

Uptown Commercial District

The Uptown Commercial District is the historical retail, and entertainment destination for the Uptown neighborhood. This important corridor links the neighborhood to Downtown Racine and services both the neighborhood, surrounding small businesses, and major employers. Investment in this district to impact the Uptown neighborhood as a whole. (Page 29)

The work of New Covenant Church, however admirable, does not play a role in the Triple **Bottom Line Urban Business Zone** balancing the “Three P’s” – People, Planet, and **PROFIT** (Page 32). Furthermore, the Plan’s number 1 Uptown Project Area and Implementation Focus is on the Uptown Commercial District – Focus on retail, entertaining and living (Page 33). Therefore, the following was identified as the retail critical mass/cluster for Washington Ave., from 13th St. to Owen Avenue:

- Antique Shops
- Specialty Retailers
- Food Stores
- Bakery
- Coffee Shops
- Restaurants
- Home Furnishings
- Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Shops

City Development has an obligation to follow, the City Council approved, Uptown Strategic Plan when faced with a request such as this – now and in the future.

We are confident that working together we can resolve this and future development issues that may arise.

In all fairness to the existing and new Uptown business and property owners, it behooves us to partner together in moving this commercial corridor forward.

Together we can deliver a better Return on Investment to the City of Racine.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Uptown BID Board