



SPECIAL REPORT: More Businesses Are Moving Into Valley

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Commercial real estate development in Milwaukee's Menomonee River Valley continues to gather momentum, as one developer is proposing a \$60 million business park and a New Berlin company plans to move its corporate headquarters to the valley. Milwaukee-based Mallory Properties plans to redevelop a 24.8-acre site in the valley, creating a research and office park and a light industrial complex.

The City Plan Commission will review the proposed \$60 million project, called "City Lite," at its meeting on Monday, Jan. 22. Mallory's property is located about two miles west of downtown Milwaukee and is bounded by the Menomonee River on the south, 16th Street on the east, 25th Street on the west and a railroad line on the north.

The western half of the property, which will be the site of the research and office park, was originally developed in 1895 as a production plant for Milwaukee Gas Light Co. Some historic, red brick buildings still sit on the western half of the property, including a 17,400-square-foot, six-story, octagonal tower. The historic buildings total about 128,000 square feet of space. They will be retained and renovated for the new development.

The eastern half of the property, which will be site of the light industrial complex, is mostly vacant, with two small light industrial buildings totaling about 35,000 square feet of space. Mallory Properties acquired the western half of the property in 1985 from Schwerman Trucking and purchased the eastern half of the site in 2001 from LaFarge Corp.

The buildings on the property are currently occupied by a variety of tenants, including a skate board park, a truck terminal, a pallet manufacturer, a limousine service and a design studio. Some of the property also is being used as a staging area for the Marquette Interchange reconstruction project.

Mallory Properties wants the city to rezone the property from "heavy industrial" to "general planned development," which would allow office, retail and industrial uses.

According to documents filed with the city, Mallory's plan includes creating a significant amount of landscaping around the historic buildings, a campus-like setting with several trees, a large amount of green space and a riverwalk segment along the Menomonee River. For the eastern portion of the property, plans show a pair of 64,000-square-foot light industrial buildings.

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Frank Giuffre Sr., president of Mallory Properties, said the company has prospective tenant for a 33,000-square-foot historic building that is currently occupied by a skate park. He declined to name the tenant, but it would occupy the entire building for office and research space. The skate park would be moved to another building on the property.

The industrial building on the eastern portion of the property will be demolished to make way for newer buildings.

"The site has access, it has visibility from the expressway, it has parking, green space, the riverwalk ... It has all of the components to be appealing," Giuffre said. "It's got a suburban look and a downtown feel."

The redevelopment project is expected to occur in phases over the course of about five years.

Meanwhile, New Berlin-based Taylor Dynamometer Inc. plans to purchase a 3.5-acre site in the Menomonee Valley from the City of Milwaukee to build a new 50,000-square-foot corporate office and manufacturing facility.

The company hopes to begin construction in a few months and complete the project by the end of the year.

Taylor Dynamometer manufactures engine dynamometer and chassis dynamometer systems, dynamometer accessories, dynamometer controls, dynamometer software and dynamometer instrumentation.

The company needs more space and will move to Milwaukee from its 22,000-square-foot facility at 16211 W. Lincoln Ave., New Berlin, said vice president Jeff Brown.

Taylor Dynamometer's new site is located in a light industrial park that is being developed by the City of Milwaukee on the western end of the valley near Miller Park. The industrial park property was formerly the Milwaukee Road Shops rail yard.

Taylor Dynamometer has 30 to 40 employees who will be moved from New Berlin to Milwaukee, Brown said. The company plans to expand and add more jobs in the future and will benefit from being close to Milwaukee's workforce, he said.

"It's a great opportunity for the city and we were looking for a spot and it worked out." Brown said.

The land sale still must be approved by the Common Council. The city's Redevelopment Authority will review the plans at its meeting on Thursday, Jan. 18.

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