

Herbaugh, Melinda

From: Wallis Bolz <wallisbolz@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 24, 2017 9:11 PM
To: Hogness, Magda; PRC
Subject: Project #3020338: comments for EDG3
Attachments: Wallis Bolz EDG3 comments project 3020338 January 25 2017 - Google Docs.pdf

January 25, 2017

Department of Construction and Inspections
Attn: Magda Hogness (magda.hogness@seattle.gov)
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124

Regarding: Project #3020338, 2925 E Madison St, Seattle, WA 98112
Comments for Early Design Guidance 3

Dear Ms. Hogness,

In January 2017, there are **four grocery stores in development** across the Central District: one in Madison Valley, two at 23rd and Union, one at 23rd and Jackson. The Madison Valley and Midtown Center projects are in the Early Design Guidance stage. Public comment for both projects centers on the size of the store and its relationship to the residential neighborhood; in each instance, **neighbors have said the proposed store is too big** for the site and too big for the neighborhood. At the January 4 Early Design Guidance meeting for Midtown Center, **the board agreed** and noted that the board generally does not favor large stores in urban contexts since they tend to be auto-oriented and contribute little if anything to foot traffic.

What is a large store? Approximately **30,000 square feet** of floor space. The retail space proposed for the grocery store in Madison Valley is 26,250 square feet, excluding the service area and parking garage. If the board is unwilling to move a store of equal size at Midtown Center out of Early Design Guidance, why move this project forward? The Madison Valley site constraints significantly exceed those of Midtown Center, notable among them the necessity to create "land" out of thin air in order to support the retail space. This "land" is the two-story, above ground, exposed parking garage.

Following EDG2 for this project, **the board agreed that the tree loss, the landscape buffer and the depth of the setback on Dewey Place are important** and should be addressed by the applicant. These issues cannot be addressed if retail space remains at 26,250 square feet. **The retailer's floor space and parking requirements** are driving the size of the building. These constraints **direct the applicant's response**, which is insufficient to mitigate the loss of trees, habitat and ecological function.

Yes, I acknowledge Velmeir Properties' effort to respond to board and public concern regarding **the big blank wall** of an exposed parking garage on Dewey Place. Five townhomes might be seen as an improvement if they weren't stuck like a mussel onto the backside of a six-story building rising up and out of the muck of the Dewey Basin. The applicant has set the parking garage back 26 feet from the property line, noting that it is the maximum setback possible to accommodate 70 stalls per level.

Regrettably, **the usefulness of this setback to ecological function is eliminated by the townhomes** tacked onto the building's backside.

That **big blank wall would not exist if retail space is sized appropriately** for its urban context. If the applicant pares and reconfigures retail space, the applicant will be able to make a meaningful and acceptable response to public concern regarding losses associated with the removal of the forested slope above Dewey. These losses include tree canopy, habitat, open space, urban forest, views and ecological function.

As it stands, **this building will do much harm to the neighborhood** and its development as a viable and attractive urban environment. The applicant does not acknowledge that **the City People's property**, with its small building footprint, large yard and significant grove of trees **provides an eco-service of annual significant dollar value whose functions include carbon sequestration, rainwater interception and habitat**. The preferred option eliminates all onsite eco-services, a development trend observable across our city. This incremental elimination of eco-services compromises clean air, threatens survival of local plant and animal communities and increases the cost of stormwater disposal.

Nor does the applicant acknowledge the forested slope as **a key feature of a popular neighborhood walking route as well as a component of an urban forest corridor and network of open spaces** that stretches from Interlaken to Seward Park. Within Madison Valley, this corridor includes the Washington Park Arboretum, a community garden (the Mad P), a natural area (the MerMad Woods), the forested slope above Dewey and the Harrison Ridge Greenbelt.

How to proceed? The applicant can: - **Reduce the building footprint, which can be achieved by reconfiguring and/or paring retail space**. This permits the applicant to exclude the slope (or its area) from development and maintain it as an open space buffer, in keeping with the natural topography of the site and in recognition of its ecological benefit and its role in an existing network of natural areas, open spaces, park property, habitat and view corridors. Applicant may consider use of a conservation easement to offset a loss in property value; - **Eliminate resident parking and reduce parking space available for commercial tenants**. Parking garages compromise urban mobility. Applicant can and should recognize emerging patterns of mobility, in support of Seattle Dept. of Transportation Director Scott Kubly's statement in January 2017: "The City of Seattle can't handle any more cars than we currently have." - **Recognize and support neighborhood amenities of high value**--the Dewey Basin walking route and the Mad P p-patch community garden, through its arrangement of uses on-site, including parking garage entries.

Thank you. With best regards, Wallis Bolz 2642 E Ward St, Seattle, WA 98112

These statements are supported by the following

Design Guidelines

for Project #3020338, 2925 E Madison St, Seattle, WA 98112

Context and Site

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems and features of the site and its surrounding as a starting point for project design.

C Topography

1 & 2 Land Form and Elevation Changes: Use the natural topography and/or other desirable landforms or features to inform the project design.

D Plants and Habitat

*1 & 2 On-site Features, Off Site Features: **Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements** such as: existing trees, native plant species or other vegetation into project design **and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats** whenever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not possible.*

*Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. **Promote continuous habitat**, where possible, and **increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat** where possible.*

Public Life 1 Connectivity

Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them

A Network of Open Spaces

*1 Enhancing Open Space: **Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces through the neighborhood.** Consider ways that design can enhance the features and activities of existing off-site open spaces. Open space may include sidewalks, streets and alleys, circulation routes and other open areas of all kinds.*

Design Concept 3 Open Space Concept

B Open Space Uses and Activities

*3 Connections to Open Spaces: **Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space** where appropriate. Look for opportunities to support uses and activities on adjacent properties and/or the sidewalk.*

C Design

*1 Reinforce Existing Open Space: Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, **reinforce existing character and patterns of** street tree planting, **buffers** or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept, where appropriate, that other projects can build upon in the future.*

*3 Support Natural Areas: Create an open space design that **retains and enhances on-site natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.** If the site contains no natural areas, consider an open space design that offers opportunities to create larger contiguous open spaces and corridors in the future with development of other public or private projects.*

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