

Dela Cruz, Jeff

From: melissa stoker <melissastoker1@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 11, 2017 2:25 PM
To: PRC
Subject: Project 3020338

Dear Magda -

The following is a slightly more detailed write up of what I shared at the community meeting offered by SDCI on June 6.

Project 3020338; 2925 E. Madison St.

I would like to request that there not be an entrance put on Dewey Place. At 19 feet it has more the character of an alley than a regular-sized street. Beyond the potential impact to Dewey, this project is too big for the site. It can't accommodate a supermarket of this size, and I believe that is the bigger issue than the question of single versus split entrance.

I have a concern about the sheer volume of complex and detailed traffic information that is now available. There are over 300 pages from the applicant; around 25 pages from the traffic planner contracted by individuals in the community. I'm thinking about the burden of responsibility put on the Design Review Board, a group of volunteer architects (not engineers), wading through that quantity of technical information in order to make an informed decision. I suspect that in their shoes I might struggle a while, then move to the Conclusion, which recommends split access-- and then chose that: because, one, it's been recommended and two, it *feels* like it would help reduce the traffic on Madison. It seems logical.

The latest traffic report from the applicant has no new useful information. The biggest revelation is that the applicant has an internal problem with the exit from the site. Externally, they have stated that the project will add only 4 cars to the existing queues (or back-ups) and just seconds to the intersections in the area. No intersection will have a grade less than a C. And that is the same whether there is single or split access. EXCEPT – for the exit from the site. That is an F - a failing grade – again, whether there are one or two entrances. What this means is that this building would be so big and have so much parking that they need to exit the 82 residential units on Dewey. However, and this is significant, it still doesn't fix the problem on Madison. The exit remains an F. (In fact, I've been told by our traffic planner that there are some technical matters about the applicant's calculations that suggest the situation at the site exit may be even more busy and problematic than the current data show.) The Dewey access allows the developer to exit the residences, but does not fix the problem with the supermarket on Madison. We are potentially sacrificing the safety of the neighborhood streets in order to allow the developer to building an oversized building.

A few small examples from the study: initially they said the intersection of 32nd and Lake Washington Blvd was too far from the site to be involved, but then said it's awkward and that therefore people would not use that intersection and

would instead use 29th and Madison, and so they “assigned” the traffic there in their study. This is circular, assumptive, and skews the data. Furthermore, it seems possible that this intersection will experience a significant increase in traffic because leaving the store and making a left turn will be so difficult that some people will choose to turn right and make their way through the neighborhood rather than wait for a clear left turn. This pattern (waiting for a left, then choosing to go right) was documented by camera when our traffic planner studied traffic at the current site.

Both the initial and the updated report fail to characterize Dewey. They imply that it is a normal-sized street, that it will have two-way traffic, still with parking on one side, and cars driving 25 mph. This is not physically possible. Dewey is 19 feet wide and has a blind curve at the north end.

So, again, circling back around, the conclusion to the applicant’s traffic study recommends dual access. Instinctively that *feels* like a logical solution. However, digging into the details the situation looks very different: dual access solves the applicant’s internal problem of how to have an oversized supermarket and 82 residences on the same site, but does nothing to alleviate the problem on Madison and the surrounding streets.

I’m proposing that anyone who has the time available to look carefully through the reports will make a more informed decision, but it requires looking with a critical eye through a lot of technical details, being knowledgeable enough to question dubious data, and then piecing a picture together.

I don’t think it’s realistic to expect the Board or even potentially SDOT or SDCI to devote that much time to this one project, and therefore valuable data could go unused and a poor decision could be made, in spite of SDCI and the Board’s best intentions.

I’d like to pass on a suggestion. Would SDCI consider hosting something like a workshop or round table with Magda Hogness, John Shaw, representative(s) from SDOT who are experts on issues of operations and flow, along with the applicant’s traffic engineer and the traffic planner the community has hired. So instead of continuing the dueling reports, or risking a poor decision that could have serious consequences, there is a format for a give and take and an honest discussion of the data. An hour spent this way could enable SDOT and SDCI to be in a position to better advise the Board in an informed manner. Failing to make use of the copious data that’s been made available – by the applicant’s engineer as well as our traffic planner – risks being negligent, ruining a community, and endangering people’s lives.

Melissa Stoker

