

Herbaugh, Melinda

From: Matt Towers <matt@centraldistrict.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 24, 2017 1:17 PM
To: PRC
Subject: PROJECT 3020338

I am writing in response to the MUP application for project #3020338.

I've been following the development of the City Peoples property proposal for quite some time now. It's given me a lot of insight into how the development process works in the city. It's not pretty. I'm disappointed that developers are given incredible and mostly unbridled power to transform our city. They and their supporters justify hasty and unchecked development by noting the incredible growth of our city and the lack of affordable housing.

Yes. We're growing fast, and the housing market is tight. And it's tightest for the people who do the most critical jobs for us: serve us food. Drive our buses. Teach our kids. However, nothing about the City Peoples proposed development addresses affordable housing. When those of us who are concerned about the development speak up, we get called NIMBYs. Worse yet, I've had two different people tell me personally that building more high-income housing is fine, because it will "trickle down" over the years and become affordable.

Really? Is this what we've become? Wait patiently for a few decades, and you might get some rich person's castoffs?

If the multiple negative effects the City Peoples development will have on our community didn't exist, the lack of affordable housing would be less of an affront. But this monstrosity will destroy one of the few healthy urban forests we have left in the city. The "traffic studies" facilitated by the developer are an obvious and complete farce that has put neighborhood activists in the position of paying for real data. And the worst part: installing a huge high-end grocery store with a boat-load of studio and one-bedroom apartments on top of it will exponentially increase the rate of gentrification in our traditionally culturally mixed neighborhood.

Simply put, the people who will be digging the ditches for this development, nailing the drywall, and making coffee for the crews on it will never be able to afford to live in its crappiest unit. And I thoroughly doubt they'll even be able to afford the prices at the grocery store. So I'm echoing Save Madison Valley's sentiments below.

Trees: The new Comprehensive Plan, Seattle 2035, states "Seattle's trees, vegetation, and soils make up a vitally important system that manages water runoff, cleans the air, mitigates greenhouse gas emissions and impacts, improves human health, and reduces the heat island effect. This natural system also provides wildlife habitats, supports livable neighborhoods, and is integral to the essential character of the Emerald City." One goal of the Comprehensive Plan 2035 is to seek to increase the amount of permeable surface by reducing hardscape surfaces; another goal is to promote the care and retention of trees and groups of trees that enhance Seattle's historical, cultural, recreational, environmental, and aesthetic character.

In contrast, this development will completely remove a healthy urban forest that presently contains a thriving and sustainable mix of tree, and which currently creates a contiguous and healthy ecosystem that provides habitat to many species. In its place will be a massive structure, built out to a degree that will not leave room for replacement of a similar canopy of trees of mixed sizes.

A grove of trees, exceptional and deserving of protection under Director's Rule 16-2008, has been identified on this hillside. The developer's logic that because the development will destroy the trees this puts them 'at risk' and because they are 'at risk' they can therefore be removed, is circular and makes a mockery of Seattle's claim to be a green city.

Traffic: The traffic study that the developer commissioned did not take an actual count of the current traffic. Instead they seriously overestimated the current traffic. This in turn makes the increase in traffic from the proposed supermarket appear significantly less than it will likely be. They also failed to provide a count of delivery traffic from a comparable supermarket. These are both numbers that can be obtained. This is a complicated site, with limited space for truck deliveries. The developer must provide a valid traffic study and then offer a safe, workable plan for the significant increase in traffic that this high-impact, destination supermarket will create.

An entrance on Dewey is seriously out of scale for Dewey. Dewey is a narrow street, often used as a walkway for the neighborhood. A residents' entrance would significantly disrupt the quiet residential neighborhood streets between Madison and Dewey, changing the character of the neighborhood, yet providing little reduction in volume on Madison. Please keep one access, on Madison.

Height: This building is too big as currently planned. It will stand 75 feet tall, directly across the narrow (18 foot wide) street of Dewey, facing one- and two-story homes. There is no transition between the commercial and residential zones, and the natural buffer currently provided by the trees is being removed. The proposed structure is 300-feet long. Looming from atop the hillside it will dominate the valley floor below. It is a solid mass that will cast a wide shadow on the neighborhood. The enormous mass is out of proportion for the area.

The project is being built on a critical slope. Rather than following the topography, or using the topography to inform the design, the project obliterates the slope. The proposed development is incongruent with Seattle Design Guidelines CS2-B.1, CS2-C.2, CS2-D.11, CS2.D.4, CS1-C, CS2-B, CS2-D.3, and CS2-D.4.

Water management. Our neighborhood has a history of flooding, including a loss of life in 2006. Even since that time, and following the addition of the retention pond, we still have periodic flooding and some homes in the area have problems with periodic flooding basements. An articulated plan explaining how storm water and wastewater will be managed has not been offered. Please don't permit this project until there is a clear plan for the removal of water that does not further burden our current combined sewer system.

Please seriously reconsider this project before issuing permits. Our neighborhood deserves better.

Respectfully submitted,

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