

From: Wallis Bolz
To: [PRC; Hogness, Magda](#)
Subject: Project #3020338, 2925 E Madison St, Seattle, WA 98112
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2017 1:07:28 PM
Attachments: [Wallis Bolz MUP comments project 3020338 May 22 2017.pdf](#)

May 22, 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 MUP

Dear Ms. Hogness,

My name is Wallis Bolz, and I am a resident of the Arboretum neighborhood, a Green Seattle forest steward and a member of the Mad P-Patch community garden in Madison Valley. I write to comment on the proposed redevelopment of the City People's Nursery property at 2925 E Madison St.

I do not believe the applicant (Velmeir) has made an honest effort to address preservation of the 22 big trees on the City People's property or the retention and restoration of a functional landscape buffer on Dewey Place. I ask you to withhold the permits for this project until the applicant has figured out how to retain the trees or a buffer on Dewey Place.

The grove of trees faces Dewey Place and frames a public neighborhood view of Madison Valley and Madrona from East Madison Street. The grove is a key feature of a popular neighborhood walking route, which includes a community garden (the Mad P), a natural area (the MerMad Woods) and an Olmsted boulevard (Lake Washington). The grove is a significant component of a contiguous network of urban forest and habitat linking the greenbelts of North Capitol Hill--St. Mark's and Interlaken, to Madrona and the lake, by way of the Alder Creek Natural Area, the Washington Park Arboretum, the Mercer-Madison Woods and the Harrison Ridge Greenbelt.

Following EDG2 for this project, the Design Review board agreed with the community 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. Velmeir has not done so. The current plan is insufficient to mitigate the loss of trees, habitat, aesthetic value and ecological function. The applicant's proposal 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.

It is my sincere belief that in order to both create room for more residents and develop a healthy urban environment, we must be willing to accept less. This acceptance of less includes all of us: the present and future community, the property owner (LEAP), and Velmeir, the property developer. LEAP did not create the value of the property; their ability to realize several million dollars on the sale of this property rests on the work of our community. We participated in neighborhood planning. We built a community garden to eliminate an attractive nuisance. We kept fences and entrance fees out of the Arboretum, and we worked with the city to alleviate the chronic flooding of Madison Valley. We create open spaces, build new parks, renovate playgrounds and restore urban forest. We vote yes on levies and bond measures. We support the business district with our dollars. We participate in transit planning. We created this value for LEAP, and it is appropriate that they compensate our community for this effort. This is how partnership works.

LEAP and Velmeir have an opportunity to create a project appropriate for the site and of lasting value to the neighborhood. LEAP has an opportunity to exit our community with grace and acclaim.

How to proceed?

- **Work with the community.** The reluctance of both Velmeir and LEAP to participate in a meaningful and effective conversation with the neighbors is a regrettable waste of human capital, an inefficiency that has introduced unnecessary and expensive delay in the permitting process.
- **Reduce the building footprint.** This permits the applicant to exclude the slope (or its area) from development and maintain it as an open space buffer. In a meeting with members of the Mad P in April 2016, the applicant stated that the excavation for a building will collapse the slope facing Dewey Place. This does not mean that the area of the slope should be taken out of the urban forest; the City People's property, with its small building footprint, large yard and mature tree canopy provides an eco-service of annual significant dollar value whose functions include carbon sequestration, rainwater interception and habitat. Retention of an open space buffer is in keeping with the city's Comprehensive Plan, *Seattle 2035*, which 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."

It is possible to permit the applicant to remove trees and soil for the purpose of construction and require the applicant to provide a setback of 25-30 feet in order to recreate the function of the slope. The applicant and the city might consider a smaller footprint in favor of a taller building, use of a conservation easement to offset a loss in property value or the sale of the setback to the city.

- **Eliminate resident parking and reduce parking space available for commercial tenants.** Reduction of parking can contribute to a reduction in the bulk and scale of the building. 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.** These include the Dewey Basin walking route and the Mad P p-patch community garden. Do not permit placement of a garage entry on Dewey.

Thank you.

With best regards,

Wallis Bolz
2642 E Ward St, Seattle, WA 98112