

From: Save Madison Valley
To: [PRC](#)
Subject: Project 3020338
Date: Monday, May 22, 2017 5:01:15 PM

The following is a list of our concerns regarding the proposed development for 2925 E. Madison Street.

TREES/HILLSIDE

- One of the core values from the City's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan is environmental stewardship.
- This mixed-use project site is not within an urban center, hub urban village, residential urban village, or a manufacturing/industrial center and therefore the protection of trees and vegetation overrides the goals of growth and high density
- The proposed massive clearing and removal of trees and vegetation from the site is inconsistent with Design Guideline CS1-D.1 and D.2.
- This urban forest on this project site is the very type of green space that the City policy claims that it intends to protect.
- This proposal makes a mockery of the City of Seattle's policies on tree retention and protection of critical areas.
- The new Comprehensive Plan, Seattle 2035, states "Seattle's trees, vegetation, and soils still 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."
- A goal of the Comprehensive Plan 2035 is to seek to achieve an urban forest that contains a thriving and sustainable mix of tree species and ages, and that creates a contiguous and healthy ecosystem.
- A goal of the Comprehensive Plan 2035 is to seek to increase the amount of permeable surface by reducing hardscape surfaces where possible and maximizing the use of permeable paving elsewhere.
- A goal of the Comprehensive Plan 2035 is to seek to promote the care and retention of trees and groups of trees that enhance Seattle's historical, cultural, recreational, environmental, and aesthetic character.
- The living trees and understory of the site provide a number of important ecological services, both to wildlife and to the community and city.
- The trees covering the hillside are part of a contiguous greenbelt, part of a larger urban forest corridor, connected to the Mercer-Madison Woods, the Arboretum, and beyond.
- Tree on the site sequester some 12,600 pounds of CO2 annually and will sequester 170,000 pounds of carbon in total over their lifespan. The canopy intercepts some 40,000 gallons of water annually.
- Birds and other wildlife use the hillside.
- With this proposal, the developer proposes the complete removal of a healthy urban forest that contains a thriving and sustainable mix of tree species and ages, and that creates a contiguous and healthy ecosystem.
- The urban tree canopy and green space is contiguous with the Mercer Madison Wood, the Arboretum, and is part of a larger urban forest corridor that connects Lake Washington to Portage Bay and Union Bay. This project severs the urban forest corridor.

WATER

- This proposal will significantly decrease the amount of permeable surface on the site and will maximize the hardscape surfaces. This disturbs the natural management of storm water runoff.
- This proposal doesn't respect and respond to the very serious reality of severe problems with the combined sewer system and flooding in the area.
- The City of Seattle estimates that over 24 million gallons of untreated sewage are dumped into Lake Washington annually from overflow events. It is a very significant issue and this project will add to the problem.
- City People's currently has 25% impervious surface and 75% permeable surface; the development project proposes 100% impervious surface. When groundwater and water from the springs comes up against the impervious concrete of the building, it will be displaced onto the street or other properties nearby, thus adding to the neighborhood storm water runoff challenges.
- There is a tragic history of serious flooding in this area. Seattle resident Kate Fleming died in 2006 when a flash flood trapped her inside her basement (neighboring this site).
- At times of intense weather, neither the retention ponds (at 30th Ave East and East John St. and at Washington Park Playfield) nor the sewer system can adequately discharge the storm water. Instead, raw sewage is discharged into Lake Washington between Madison Park and Leschi, and flooding can occur. It is clear that even with the City putting in 3 million-gallon overflow tanks in recent years to divert the water, with more and more impervious surfaces upslope, there are still times when there is local flooding because the system cannot handle the water.
- We request that SDCI put significant time and care into critiquing the developer's claim that their currently proposed plan will adequately collect and discharge all water at the site.
- We request that SDCI require that the applicant reduce the overall height, bulk and scale of the proposed project in order to mitigate the runoff impacts from the site. Leaving a sizable portion of the existing tree canopy, or alternatively, replacing a comparable portion of the site with permeable surface (i.e., establishing a new and commensurate tree canopy) would reabsorb storm water and reduce the damming effect of water flow onto adjacent properties and Dewey Place East below.

HEIGHT AND BULK

- The developer has ignored the steep slope condition of the site by relying on the average grade taken from two dog ears on either side of the slope that are situated at the highest point of the plot of land.
- The method used to establish the height is intended to "permit the structure to respond to the topography of the lot." In this case it does precisely the opposite – this is not a better way to respond to the slope - it began with the presumption that the slope didn't exist.
- The building mass will looms over the Dewey residences in the single-family zone adjacent to the project site. The height, bulk, and scale of the proposal are completely out of sync with Design Guideline CS2-B.1, CS2-C.2, CS2-D.11 and CS2-D.4.
- The project site is immediately adjacent to a less intensive zone.

- The proposal fails to respond appropriately to the context and site per the Design Guidelines CS1-C and CS2-B.
- The building height and the removal of the tree buffer zone are inconsistent with the requirement for a transition between more and less intense zones in Design Guidelines CS2-D.3 and CS2-D.4.
- This building would be massively out of proportion to the surrounding area, especially on the eastern side where the project abuts SF 5000 residences.
- While the site itself is zoned NC2P-40 and NC2P-30, the project site is immediately adjacent to land that is zoned and developed as single family (SF5000).
- Residents who live in the one- and two-story homes adjacent to and on the blocks near this site, would live in the shadow of a six-story building towering above them.
- Where there are now tall trees that provide shade in summer and let in light in winter, there will be a 300-foot long, 70-foot high building mass.
- Under SEPA, the City can, and should, place an increased limitation on lot coverage, require a greater set back, and modify the height, bulk and scale of this project to address the significant adverse impacts that it will have. SMC 25.05.675.G makes it clear that DCI has regulatory power, and in fact, the responsibility, to modify the height, bulk and scale of this proposal beyond the limits set forth in the development regulations.

SLOPE

- The project does not respect the topography.
- The project does not use the site features to inform the design.
- This project eradicates the site topography and fabricates the “average grade” under the code’s height provisions in a manner that ignores the slope entirely and is inconsistent with Design Guideline CS1-C.2.
- The developer has ignored the steep slope condition of the site by relying on the average grade taken from two small points on either side of the slope that are situated at the highest point of the plot of land.

TRAFFIC

- A garage entrance on Dewey Street puts traffic on narrow neighborhood streets and through awkward intersections.
- Streets including Republican, and 32nd Ave., north of Lake Washington Blvd., are effectively single-lane streets and, along with one-way Arthur Pl., can’t carry the additional vehicles without creating conflicts, longer back-ups and frustration for area residents.
- Access exclusively from Madison is the best option.
- From a transportation perspective, a grocery store is a high intensity use. Were the same floor area given over to specialty shops, much less traffic would result, and less parking would be needed. Conversely, the apartments generate relatively little traffic, but create much of the building’s architectural bulk.

Sincerely,

Save Madison Valley 501(c)(3)