

**Comments to the Urban Design Commission on the Proposed W. Broadway Development in Urban
Design District #1
Submitted by Erin O'Brien, [REDACTED] Lake Point Drive
December 9, 2015**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed development. I understand the charge of this committee is to review and comment on design elements and I will make every effort to limit my comments to the standards as outlined in Chapter 33.24 of the City of Madison General Ordinance.

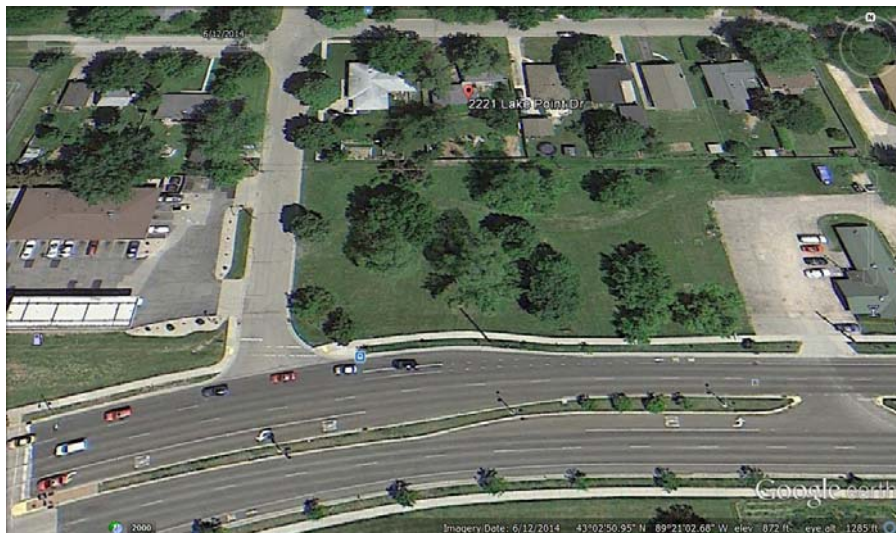
I appear before you today to request that the Urban Design Commission vote no on the initial approvals sought by the developers. As publicly funded projects on publicly owned properties, I believe this project and the Lake Point Drive proposal deserve a high level of scrutiny.

This proposal has elicited a mixed community response with strong support for a new neighborhood center, but concerns about its location on the ground floor of a housing project, and concerns about the density and design of the affordable housing component. The project poses land use conflicts that we understand will be dealt with more directly by the Plan Commission. That said, the staff report failed to note that the proposed housing is a questionable use, and possibly wholly inconsistent with, the goals and intent of our neighborhood redevelopment plans.

Many in the neighborhood would like to see the proposal more fleshed out before advancing for Plan Commission review.

I would like to comment on the following design elements for your consideration:

Access: The proposed driveway to the community center appears to bisect or be across from the PDQ driveways and will be very close to the intersection of Fayette and Broadway Avenue. There are already frequent near-accidents as cars make a soft turn from Broadway to cut into the 1st PDQ driveway. The addition of another driveway will add to these conflicts and needs careful consideration.



Parking: The potential for traffic conflicts will be exacerbated if the development leads to more on-street parking on Fayette Avenue. The amount of planned on-site parking appears inadequate. For example, our current neighborhood center has 16 parking spaces. This proposal triples the size of the facility and provides just 6 more dedicated parking spaces. And while the plans may comply with the minimum residential parking requirements, to ensure safe streets I'd recommend imposing a condition to exceed minimum standards. The code also says that surface parking lots with more than 7 spaces need to be subdivided with landscaping elements and this requirement is not yet met in the site plan.

The need for adequate on-site parking is also a major concern with the Lake Point Drive proposal before you today.

Alleyway: The staff report notes that the developer is considering vacating the unimproved alley way. I'm not sure what's involved in this or the implications for adjacent property owners. We respectfully request the opportunity to discuss options for that corridor directly with the developers and the city.

Height: There are no other three story buildings on the street. All adjacent commercial and residential buildings are one story. The 3-story design is not in harmony with the character of the street. It will also create an unpleasant view for the property owners to the north and will give the new residents a birds-eye view into their backyards.

Building materials: The code says that metal shall not be used as an exterior design material "except as an integral part of a design of exceptional merit." I don't know what this means but the schematic of the façade appears to violate this design principle.

Façade: The proposed façade is a monolith. It feels heavy and essentially creates a giant wall between Broadway and Lake Point. Perhaps the recommended articulation will address this, but breaking up the height and roof-line and providing for some cut-throughs in the façade would help the aesthetics immensely.

Screening: The design may or may not provide adequate screening of parking areas for the homeowners north of the site, or the proposed residents.

Landscaping: The plan is not clear on what existing vegetation will be maintained or replaced, but it appears that the plan is to remove, tall/mature hardwoods and replace them with 24' trees that will take years to mature. It's clear that the trees in the middle of the parcel could not be saved, but if it's possible to save some of the mature trees on the lot this would be a kind gesture towards those of us who have spent years enjoying their shade and the families of song birds and raptors that inhabit them each year.

Questions about this testimony can be directed to Erin O'Brien at 608- [REDACTED], [REDACTED]