

Tim Parks
City of Madison, Planning Division
Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room LL100
Madison, WI 53703

March 23, 2016

Subject: Proposed Kwik Trip and Summary of 3/16 Neighborhood Visioning Meeting

Dear Mr. Parks:

This letter is sent on behalf of a focus group that has been collaborating with other city staff and our alders to initiate more constructive dialogue on the vision of the Cottage Grove Road corridor, and more specifically, the future of the Rolling Meadows, Heritage Heights and Elvehjem neighborhoods. On March 16th, in part upon our focus group's recommendation, Alder Amanda Hall hosted a meeting that allowed Rolling Meadows and Heritage Heights residents to discuss the assets, gaps, opportunities and threats of and to the neighborhoods. Our hope is that this meeting is the first of many meetings that helps lay the groundwork for a corridor and/or neighborhood plan.

In our opinion, the themes evident from the city-facilitated discussion suggest that the proposed Kwik Trip *does not* align with the long-term interests of residents in our neighborhoods. We hope that you will consider this information in your staff report and that the members of the Urban Design Commission, Plan Commission, and any other committees/commissions will have access to this information as they evaluate the proposal for 4602 Cottage Grove Road.

Thank you for the consideration of this information.

Sincerely,



Kyle Magyera

(signed on behalf of Lara Kenny, Matt Ida, Lauren Cnare, Beth Godfrey, Wendy Ellis, Christopher Johl, and Andy Meeks)

cc: Alder Amanda Hall, Alder Denise Demarb, Katherine Cornwell

Summary: Resident Discussion on a Vision for the Rolling Meadows and Heritage Heights Neighborhoods

On March 16th, 2016, a group of approximately 50 residents gathered at Kennedy Elementary School to learn about current trends in and plans for the neighborhood (e.g., traffic volumes, comprehensive plan), and to identify and discuss assets, gaps, opportunities, and threats.

Assets:

1. Parks, sanctuary, and green space
2. Proximity to bike path
3. Proximity to grocery stores (Woodmans, Metro)
4. Access to bus line
5. Police and fire stations nearby
6. MSCR and YMCA
7. Farmers market
8. Convenience to Hwy 51 and Interstate
9. Mature trees
10. Quality of homes and large lot sizes
11. Community gardens
12. Percentage of home ownership
13. Active neighborhood association(s)
14. Good schools
15. Diverse age groups (demographics)

Themes: Residents appreciate and enjoy the attractiveness and “established” nature of our neighborhoods (e.g., mature trees, open space), and the proximity or access to certain amenities (e.g., bike path, MSCR, community gardens, farmers market, grocery stores).

Gaps:

1. Infrastructure (e.g., storm drains)
2. Lighting on streets
3. Traffic calming devices to reduce speeding
4. Restaurants
5. Local shops and businesses
6. Sports bar
7. Dog park
8. Shopping district appearance (better design)
9. Aging fire station
10. Better parking at schools
11. Coffee shops
12. Direct and improved transit options
13. No traffic flow/volume mitigation
14. Safe walking and biking conditions
15. Improved public safety
16. Complete Thompson Drive
17. More locally-sourced food
18. More facilities at parks
19. Limited walking opportunities
20. Improved bike path connectivity

Themes: Residents are most concerned about the lack of amenities and destination-oriented “local” business that are safely accessible by walking and biking. Safety is also a significant concern, more so because of increasing traffic volumes and patterns, as well as the absence of traffic calming devices. Poor walking and biking conditions were strongly emphasized throughout the discussion.

Opportunities:

1. Encouraging more mixed-use development
2. Encouraging higher-density development
3. Improving walkability and safe access to bike path

4. Development around us (e.g., Royster Corners and Grandview Commons)
5. Redevelopment at Rolling Meadows Shopping Center
6. Addressing poor walking/biking conditions (goal suggested by city: “complete streets”)
7. Implementing traffic calming devices
8. Establishing new and improve existing parks, green spaces, and community gardens
9. Improving transit routes and features at bus stops (e.g., shelter)

***Themes:** Residents believe that the current and upcoming development at Royster Corners and Grandview Commons could attract similar mixed-use, pedestrian-and-bike-friendly, or higher density development at or near the Rolling Meadows Shopping Center. There is also an opportunity to reduce or mitigate current traffic patterns, improve transit options and access, and enhance parkland.*

Threats:

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| 1. Coyotes | 9. Unsafe walking and biking conditions |
| 2. Rising property values | 10. Declining school revenues |
| 3. Crime (e.g., vandalism) | 11. Lack of walkability |
| 4. More traffic | 12. Proposed Kwik Trip |
| 5. Too many gas stations | 13. Corridor caters to automobiles |
| 6. No to few local businesses | 14. Vacant businesses |
| 7. Poor snow removal practices | 15. Disjointed corridor due to Hwy 51 |
| 8. Missing better redevelopment opportunities | 16. Airplane noise |

***Themes:** In addition to concerns about public safety, the discussion on threats focused on or continued to circle back to the proposed Kwik Trip - or too many gas stations - as being a threat to the livability of our neighborhoods. Residents want to see better redevelopment that incorporates local businesses, especially sit-down restaurants, coffee shops, and similar establishments, and that reduces the need to drive and improves opportunities to walk and bike to areas along Cottage Grove Road.*

Conclusion

Based on the visioning and comments from neighbors, we believe that the desired buildings, land uses, and amenities are consistent with what the City has identified in the Comprehensive Plan and Madison in Motion: Sustainable Transportation Master Plan. Additionally, the Kwik Trip proposal, as it stands now, will struggle to meet conditional use standards, especially with regard to the ability or probability of neighboring properties to undergo orderly development and improvement. Without a neighborhood or corridor plan in place, we are concerned that the current proposal will not spur the desired urban style improvement at what is a struggling strip mall, and that projects will continue to be proposed in a haphazard fashion with little regard to the desired buildings and amenities that are needed today and in the future. This is an especially crucial time for these neighborhoods - as they approach their 60th year of existence - when they could support and adopt modern design and amenities that help us thrive, or regress with the outdated, undesirable suburban development that exists now and which likely will remain if another gas station is approved.