

From: mcfleetwhite tds.net [mailto:mcfleetwhite@tds.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 11:01 PM
To: Schmidt, Chris; Martin, Al; Parks, Timothy
Subject: Potential Target at Hilldale

Dear Mr. Schmidt,

I am unable to attend the informational presentation that Target indicated they would be making at the November 4 Urban Design Commission meeting. But based on the neighborhood meeting a few weeks ago at which Target presented their proposed retail store at Hilldale, I wanted to express my thoughts about this plan and how it may impact our neighborhood.

My main concern is that if the big box Target goes ahead at Hilldale it needs to be done with sensitivity to the neighborhood. I'm not completely sure what that means, but a few ideas follow:

-Traffic is a major concern – Target's traffic impact was presented in trips per hour whereas the presented traffic map showed *daily* traffic numbers. Adding 700+ trips in an hour to a street with 40,000 cars per day does not look all that bad, but when car trips are multiplied by hours of operation it would start to add up. Maybe pre-Target traffic counts on all streets within a certain radius of Hilldale should be compared with post-Target counts. If traffic increases by say 10% on neighborhood streets, Target should pay for traffic calming or pedestrian measures on those streets.

-The traffic on surrounding city streets is one thing, but Hilldale internal traffic will be crazy, especially on the north side of Sentry. The internal mall traffic will need to be addressed.

-A 155,000 square foot store is huge! How big is Hilldale? 300,000 to 400,000 SF? This comparison would help give us a relative impact on such large store.

-It appeared in the presentation as if some of the parking would not be covered fully by the store above. Is there enough height between the parking level and the store to work in another level of parking so there is no parking with sky above? I would not want to be able to walk by and look down into a parking hole from Frey Street.

-The neighborhood needs a clear understanding of the 50' drop across the site that the store's representatives mentioned. They had roofs lower than the high spot on the site. Is a two-story Target with more than a single level of parking possible to better relate to the extreme slope across the site?

-Target needs a direct pedestrian connection with Hilldale and surrounding neighborhoods; the connection as shown at the meeting was tenuous at best. Pedestrians should be able to pass between Target's entrance and the mall by crossing only one street or drive. The proposed corner entrance might make sense for Target's "curb appeal," but it would require pedestrians to dodge cars across the mall drive from University Ave. as well as the entrance to Target's parking lot before arriving at the entrance to the store.

-An improved pedestrian crossing of University Avenue needs to be planned for now, not in the future when the frontage is built upon.

-The street life at the ground level should be considered as opposed to a wall of parking at the ground level. Ground floor retail and restaurant spaces could be included facing east and shielding the parking.

-They should push the sustainable envelope like skylights in the retail space, enough solar power to light the store and the parking level, planting a certain number of trees in the surrounding neighborhoods to offset the carbon emissions of the cars that will drive there, incentives for pedestrian shoppers, etc.

-They also said this was a brownfield development – a pile of dirt is brown but it is not a brownfield. This was a misleading statement. The site had three perfectly functional office buildings prior to demolition.

-Sunset Village needs assurances that commercial development will not encroach into the residential neighborhood as the property values and pressure for commercial redevelopment along University increases. Sunset Village does not have a neighborhood plan to formally resist expanding commercial development along University and Midvale. Maybe Target can provide us a grant to develop such a plan.

I trust that you will see that the best interests of the neighborhoods in your district are thoroughly considered as this project proceeds.

Thanks for your time,
Mari Fleet
401 N. Meadow Ln.