

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: September 3, 2008
TITLE: 2202-2224 South Park Street – Master Plan Update/Revision, Modifications to a Planned Commercial Site (The Villager Mall) in Urban Design District No. 7. 14 th Ald. Dist. (10903)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: September 3, 2008	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Lou Host-Jablonski, Ronald Luskin, Jay Ferm, Marsha Rummel, Todd Barnett, Bruce Woods, Richard Slayton, John Harrington and Richard Wagner.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of September 3, 2008, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of the Master Plan update/revision. The Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** modifications to a Planned Commercial Site for The Villager Mall; Phase I/Atrium improvements. Appearing on behalf of the project were Mark A. Olinger, representing the CDA; Ald. Tim Bruer, TC Lin and Larry Barton, representing Strang, Inc., and Janet Piraino, representing Mayor Dave Cieslewicz. Olinger and Barton provided a detailed overview of the master plan update/revisions that included the following:

- Contextual elements.
- Details on community feedback and input process underlying the required master plan revisions.
- Parking distribution of the site, primarily surface except for one proposed building off the southeasterly corner and potentially a building on the northeasterly corner.
- A review of pedestrian and traffic circulation elements including pedestrian/bike features, outdoor gathering spaces, plazas at entries to main buildings, as well as the proposed farmer's market adjacent to the plaza at the front of the Atrium building.
- A review of landscape improvements emphasized modifications to the proposed Urban League/library and future building to the southeast, including the elongating of the future retail building at the northeast corner of the site.

Following the presentation the Commission noted the following:

- Use 16-foot stalls with a 2-foot overhang to add more space along the Park Street corridor in order to create a promenade with the use of trees.
- Double the amount of trees along Park Street with elimination of a row parking along street to provide two rows of trees and enhanced streetscape and to provide a connection between buildings.
- Consider benches along the sidewalk at Park Street, the applicant noted that benches will be provided in the adjoining plaza but not on the street.

- Integrate proposed surface parking adjoining the Healthcare Building's westerly elevation with surface parking to the west by flipping it around to create more plaza/open space adjacent to the building's Park Street frontage.
- The desire for a "campus feel" needs a device to link all the pieces together. Spaces are independently nice but lack connectivity beyond the central drive aisle.
- Need to create a better presence/space along Park Street, need to create a better pedestrian space along the entire length frontage to provide connectivity to Park Street.
- Enhance front loaded space along the Urban League/library building's plaza.
- The northeast building should be two stories in height.

Following discussion on the master plan update/revisions, Barton and Lin provided an overview of the modifications to the Planned Commercial Site; Phase I/Atrium improvements. Following their presentation Ald. Bruer spoke in support, noting the underlying neighborhood process behind the modifications to the master plan, economic impacts, as well as ongoing budgeting process for the future Phase 2 improvements. Bruer noted parking issues and demand requires as much parking as possible to be provided, as well as the need to move the project forward with both the Phase I/Atrium improvements and Urban League/library projects. Bruer further noted issues with the removal of an existing billboard on the site currently in the process of negotiation with Adams Outdoor Advertising. Continued discussion by the Commission noted the following:

- Issue with the lack of emphasis on pedestrian connectivity from Park Street, access and the alignment of the Buick Street entry with north building and necessary landscape amenities along the Park Street corridor.
- Provide consideration for the elimination of the right-in and right-out drive aisle entry located south central on the site; in favor of enhancement for open space amenities, adjacent to the Buick Street driveway entry, combined with shifting of the Urban League/library building south up to ten-feet; additional on-site and streetscape improvements along the Park Street corridor and stronger pedestrian linkages between the Atrium, Urban League/library and future Healthcare Building.
- Like project, landscape features could be made stronger especially along Park Street with a double row of trees; trees 40-feet on center.
- Eliminate small ornamental trees along entry driveway; create obstacles for visibility of buildings.
- Need obstacles to slow up cut-thru traffic utilizing the main drive aisle.

ACTION:

On a motion by Wagner, seconded by Slayton, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of the Master Plan update/revisions. The motion was passed on a vote of (8-0-1) with Luskin abstaining. The motion noted that the plan has come far in terms of massing and the arrangement, but has a lot of issues in terms of landscaping plan and requires refinement based on comments and suggestions by the Commission. Upon final consideration, want to see alternatives on traffic flow and parking, including the sense of how Park Street looks as it relates to landscaping and other elements, and the following:

- The hierarchy of traffic flow through the site needs to be examined more as to how it functions.
- Initial approval is based on the understanding that the basic building placement, proposed demolition of existing buildings and the basic parking configuration is acceptable, but details of public plazas' entry points are still to be investigated.
- Trees along Park Street should be provided at 40-feet on center.
- Investigate moving southerly building west to obtain more greenspace, in combination with flipping of surface parking stalls and the use of small stall parking bays.

- Address connectivity from Buick Street to the face of the Atrium building.
- Consider moving/adjusting northerly drive aisle entry's alignment with the main drive aisle off of Ridgewood Street.
- Study hierarchy of vehicular access, consider doing away with Atrium drive aisle entry.
- Close southerly drive aisle off of Hughes Place and relocate northerly to provide an offset to the main drive aisle along the front of the Atrium plaza to discourage cut-thru traffic.
- Expand greenspace along Park Street, including in front of the Urban League/library building to create a better space.
- The northeast building shall be two stories in height.
- Still uncomfortable with relationship of Urban League/library building to the Buick Street entry, especially the blankness of the building's façade.

Relative to the Phase I/Atrium improvements, a motion for referral by Wagner, seconded by Rummel, noted the need for more details on the project. The motion passed on a vote of (8-0-1) with Luskin abstaining. The motion for referral noted the need to address the following:

- Like material and overall design but don't get a sense of the proposed "international flavor."
- Concern with curved elements on upper portions of the Atrium façade, not budgetary as well as resolve issues about what happens at the column.
- On signage, the atrium sign is not in keeping with the new architecture; not sympathetic to new architecture.
- Like where architecture is going generally, but need more details.
- Provide lighting and photometric plans upon final consideration.
- Provide an architectural tie or theme for both Phase 1 and future Phase 2 improvements such as the round element on the Harambee building or a new theme created with the updated façade improvements.
- References to clarifications contained in a memo by Mayor David J. Cieslewicz in support of the Amended Villager Master Plan were cited in providing substantiation for its approval by the Commission as a departure from standards typically required for a private commercial based retail project.
- Look at pedestrian access to adjacent apartments to the west.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 5, 5, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6 and 6.5.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 2202-2224 South Park Street

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
	4	7	-	-	4	5	4	5
	5	-	4.5	-	-	5	5	5
	5	6	5	-	-	5	5	5
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
	6	-	6	6.5	-	6	7	6.5
	6	5	-	-	-	5	6	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6

General Comments:

- Parking innovations needed: compact car, 2’ overhang (16’ stall length); Park Street streetscape is primary concern. Internal circulation needs refinement.
- Still needs more work on pedestrian and vehicle movement into and through the site.
- Nice improvement but needs a stronger front along Park Street as well as stronger pedestrian access off Park Street.
- Much improved. Address parking that faces Park Street and try to create green amenity for street and Villager site. Consider moving healthcare building back to strengthen rhythm of trees along street. Address and enhance pedestrian connections to outside of site.
- Need component/element that unifies buildings.
- Pedestrian and car circulation needs to be refined. Park Street edge needs more development to achieve strong and beautiful pedestrian way. One of the problems with South Park Street is the speed of the traffic. What is the City doing to slow down traffic on Park Street? If City chooses to not slow traffic on Park Street, we hurt the Villager project and all surrounding properties.
- Good to see some resolution finally. City, however, must realize that it must adhere to a quality standard for urban design.