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Comments on the Truman - Olsen RFP process

The city in conjunction with SSM and Welton has wasted nearly two years so far with the current RFP process and may waste even more precious time in the future if they continue to pursue the Welton proposal. Welton is now asking for even more time to try to make their proposal for the Truman - Olsen parcel fit with the RFP requirements original set by the city.

I believe that the city should start over with a new RFP that would be sent out to all developers in the Madison area. The RFP should include the option to add other adjacent properties to the Truman Olsen parcel to create a much larger master plan foot print for the Truman Olson site that would include perhaps the vacant land and parking lot areas south of the Truman Olsen parcel that are currently owned by Thomas Bunbury. This would allow for a new north-south road into the center of the Wingra BUILD triangle and provide a way to connect the storm water and sanitary sewer systems in this area and drain them to Wingra Drive.

I don't understand the need for SSM to move so quickly with their master planning process separate from the Truman Olsen parcel process and want to start demolition of the Pick & Save store before plans for a new grocery store are even approved. The former Dean Fish Hatchery clinic had been slowing accumulating land for years and now has more than enough land to build a new clinic even without the purchase of the Pick & Save parcel. In the process Dean Clinic emptied a nursing home for the elderly and put a parking lot in its place. Dean Clinic also purchased 17 adjacent residential properties over the years. Dean/SSM evicted the tenants over a year ago, but now they say they aren't interested in building the new clinic in that area and want instead to purchase the Pick & Save parcel and build the new clinic there.

SSM should wait until a new RFP process plays out and a decision finalized on a future grocery store before being allowed to proceed with approval of their master plan and tear down the old Pick & Save. The current Dean/SSM clinic on Fish Hatchery Road is not obsolete and surely can handle their patients for at least another year or two. SSM will complain that time is critical but really it isn't. And they are saying that the 2018 floods caused too much damage to the building and they can't use the basement level like they used to. I don't believe it. Look at all the other commercial and institutional buildings that had flooding in the Madison area during that period. They cleaned up their mess and are back operating as normal. SSM already has many new clinics all over the city that that meet the needs of their patients. Why now to

they need to rush things when the end result is the loss of South Madison's only full service grocery store before a new one can be built.

The south side of Madison needs to have the continued presence of a full service grocery store on Park Street. Do not let the Pick & Save be torn down until plans for a new full service grocery store are approved by the city and a new store is built. Expand beyond the limits of the Truman Olsen parcel in consideration of any valid proposal that could meet the needs of South Madison residents looking for healthy and nutritious groceries at reasonable prices.

The city should also look into acquiring the Post Office parcel as a future redevelopment site to add even more land to a larger master plan for this area of Park Street. The Post Office has considered closing that location in the past. Find out what their future plans are. The existing Post Office building was originally built as an A&P grocery store. Could it be converted back into a grocery store again?

Consider the potential of the former Thorstadt property in all the discussions regarding the best location for a new full service grocery store in South Madison. The city blew it when they focused on the near east side for a Public Market. The best site in the city for a public market is the Thorstadt property. But it also could be a great site for a new grocery store.

The city should not allow SSM to proceed with their new clinic master plan and tear down the Pick & Save store before a new grocery store is built. It is simply wrong to instead propose to provide South Madison residents with free transportation for going elsewhere in the city to get their groceries. This concept is flawed, expensive to implement and will fail to provide residents of this area the groceries they need when they need them.

Years ago, I was a driver for a company that provided rides for poor and handicapped residents of the Madison area. I often drove people to and from grocery stores all over the city. These services are not cheap. Sure, the people who end up using these services don't have to pay the full cost of the rides that are provided but the city ends up paying more money for each ride to and from the grocery store that the true cost of the ride is way more than the cost of the groceries that were purchased during the round trip. Then too, the simple act of going to the grocery store ends up becoming a process that takes over a half a day with waiting to get picked up, driving to the store, collecting and paying for the groceries, waiting for a ride again and being driven back home. It is a slow and frustrating experience each and every time people have to go through it.

The city needs to master plan this entire area of Park Street in one master plan and stop letting developers develop just one parcel at a time with no regard for long term health and vitality of current and future residents of the area. This area of Madison is already experiencing a lot of redevelopment interest and we need a full service grocery store as a continued presence as the population of this area continues to grow.

Ron Shutvet