



Agenda Item #:	12
Project Title:	1302 S Midvale Boulevard - New Mixed-Use Building in an existing Planned Multi-Use Site. (District 10)
Legistar File ID #:	81423
Members Present:	Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Wendy von Below, Marsha Rummel, Shane Bernau, Rafeeq Asad, Jessica Klehr, and Christian Harper
Prepared By:	Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of January 10, 2024, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new mixed-use building located at 1302 S Midvale Boulevard. Registered and speaking in support was Ian Luecht. Registered in support but not wishing to speak were Gary Stebnitz, Randy Manning, and Steve Shulfer. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Nick Badura. Registered neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak were Laura Scandurra, Maxwell Schweiner, and Matthew Kime. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak were Kim Sprecker, Diane Puccetti, LaVonne Bennett, Susan Reget, Paul Croake, and Jim Zellmer. Registered in opposition and available to answer questions were Carol Buelow, and Jackie Williams.

The proposal shows a seven story, mixed-use building with first floor commercial and a rooftop patio space. Vertically oriented masses and horizontal elements provide texture while using a relatively limited palette of materials, including masonry on the first floor retail, metal panel, wood look metal panel, and red elements as horizontal datum lines across the façade. In order to get street frontage the building is stepped down at the halfway mark of the first floor.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- The proposed building is 7 stories and exceeds the Zoning Code height. How is this possible?
 - In this district additional height could be allowed with a conditional use. It doesn't give us a maximum from there, just that additional stories could be approved. There are standards for buildings above maximum height that talk about context, resulting in an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability.
- Based on those two criteria, are you able to give us some of that context and justification for that excess height?
 - In terms of general zoning requirements for heights of buildings, we've been careful of adjacent to a residential zoned district, you have a two-story high 45 degree setback line to the top of your building, intended to encourage stepbacks. We've been very cognizant of that. In terms of the context of the neighborhood, as a more social animal, while frankly I agree with most of the statements the residents have made, one of the things we've been working in our office is developing that first floor and that access and connection to the neighborhood from an accessibility and general usage level. Integrating the bus shelter into the building itself, developing the street frontage.
- Appreciate the efforts you're giving to plan and activate that ground level but when you come back, I will be looking for more justification on the zoning criteria that Jessica mentioned for the 7 story height.
- You caught my attention when you said 7 stories was the sweet spot. What do you mean by that?
 - In researching building heights and building code, we are looking at a podium construction where we have a Type 1 construction from the 2nd story down and Type 3b construction going up. Looking at the allowable heights in areas, that was the maximum height we could achieve while still maintaining wood

construction, which led to maximizing density on the site while still maintaining an efficient construction system.

- I notice there's nothing larger than two-bedroom. Hoping there might be a conversation about larger units, this part of Madison has tons of families and schools nearby. Are you considering larger units at all?
 - At the present no, but we can have a discussion internally with our team. That's insightful for the neighborhood, there are a lot of families in the area.
- I'm also curious about the commercial space, would there be any communal spaces or is it all commercial for profit?
 - Generally at the moment it's a blank slate. We have had that conversation of perhaps how do we activate portions of it as community level uses rather than commercial but we haven't finished those discussions or landed anywhere.
- The address says Midvale, but the actual location means that you've got neighbors close by on Hammersley. I'm curious about your spill out space, filling your lot without any space for kids to mess around. I would like to ask you how you are connecting to your neighbors on Hammersley facing that side? Or maybe that's future development.
 - A big proponent of how we arranged the site was the two separate curb cuts coming in. With generally buildings being street oriented rather than the parking lots being street oriented, as well as safety on that intersection because right turns onto Midvale and the parking lot happening all at once cause congestion. We've had to route traffic through the site around the backside so we don't have any real space for children to spill out in the site plan.
- As you move ahead, I would caution about pedestrians trying to cross there and stopping and waiting for the bus. It's such a speedy intersection and yet it's residential at the same time. You're filling your site and setbacks might be more appropriate to the neighborhood. All that surrounds you has some sort of open base to them and are not right up to the sidewalk, that's a consideration as you move forward.
- This is a really busy major street close to a highway. The building should be pulled back more from the street. Especially if you're going to consider having more than two-bedroom units. Is the parking all surface?
 - No, 38 stalls are surface and 43 are underground.
- It seems to me that the lot is totally impervious so the conditional use standard about the aesthetic and the public interest of creating that, I question where's the greenspace? A place for kids to play? Is there a little bit of yard/green in back?
 - Those areas will be about 3-5' setback from the property lines, and then the lobes in the parking are going to be islands, either landscaped or grass, and the third area is directly south of where the bus stop is, and there is a little bit of greenspace in that location near the bus stop.
- In the north elevation rendering it shows you had a stepback but it seems to me it could be, to accommodate that transition, step that one portion down more as a way to have some relation to the two-story buildings nearby. Is that something you would consider?
 - I can definitely look into it.
- The public comment on this is 38 pages and you haven't even had your neighborhood meeting yet. One of the speakers tonight did a comprehensive review of the questions she hoped would be answered. When it gets to the conditional use items, to allow the height there has to be a public benefit. On E Washington we have bonus stories for things we created through ordinance, but this is through a conditional use. I don't mind 7 story buildings and eventually maybe this whole area gets changed but that's over a 20 year period. This is the pioneer and hopefully they can set the tempo for more intensive but more pedestrian scale approaches at the ground level.
- I second a lot of what you just said. I would suggest how a pioneer starts this is to follow the zoning code. Zoning and planning thought about what this site should be and settled on a five-story building. I also struggle to see how we would entertain something taller than that. I'm excited about the idea of the integrated bus stop amenity and being thoughtful about that. I hope the development team and design team move forward with that. I hope to learn more about that aspect of the project going forward.

- I agree with what everyone said. My additional concern is the viability of retail, especially in this area. To really make a retail viable you're going to need parking. By the parking table you have some but they have to get out and walk all the way around the building to get into the retail on the corner, or walk up some stairs to the back retail. Either way there's no parking on the street, it's a bus stop or a turn lane on Hammersley. The long-term viability of retail, I don't want to see blank commercial storefronts right up close to the sidewalk, this is a loss leader for all these units up above, I have real concerns about how close the building is to the corner given the pattern of development. When I see everything else in this area of town, it has at least some teaser parking in front, I know there is some parking in that back area but if you want to access the more desirable corner retail areas you're going to have to get out and walk all the way around the building. My brief exposure to the retail world makes me concerned for its viability there.
- I feel for the developers trying to make a project that works in a site that seems to have been poorly designed many years ago. I have a vague memory of going to that Dorn Hardware store many years ago and being extremely confused about how to get back there. I think I may have been coming down Midvale and missed that driveway and having to go all the way around and come back on Hammersley. It begs the question, should we be making big decisions about this "gateway" project with such a compromised plan and such an uncertain future for those businesses that the neighborhood, rightly so, is concerned about and the viability of it when apparently somebody referenced impending buy outs and possible demolitions of those buildings. Let's face it, those aging strip malls are often ripe for take overs for better or worse, there's something kind of crazy about trying to figure out how to deal with the inherent traffic flow patterns and the problems of having a housing development on this busy corner without having any idea whatsoever what's happening to the existing commercial developments just to the south. It's really tough and hard to even wrap your head around. Issues of the setback from the sidewalks and the intersection, which I think should be much bigger and the height, which I agree should not be 7 stories without dealing with the obviously underlying problems with the existing properties. It behooves the city to find something that gives more guidance for what is appropriate for this place otherwise you severely compromise those properties to the south. It makes everybody, us, the neighborhood, uncomfortable with the whole situation. Much more attention needs to be put on those issues. All in all this is a pretty handsome building but it has bigger issues than the surface aesthetics of it.
- The application is a Planned Multi-Use Site and the last thing it is "planned." This is an old 1950s grocery store in the back corner, and you have to cut through this developer's site. That's no reflection on this developer, it's the hand they've been dealt but a better comprehensive look at this whole area would be a better way to plan the next 20 years for this area.

Action

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.