



Regent Neighborhood

A S S O C I A T I O N

Date: December 10, 2010

To: Alder Bidar-Sielaff and members of the Urban Design and Plan Commissions

Subject: Comments on the Mullins Group's Proposed Development at the 2500 Block of University Avenue, Madison, WI

Background:

The Regent Neighborhood Association (RNA) Board, on behalf of the RNA, would like to provide to you with the following input on the proposed Mullins Group development at 2500 University Avenue. The Mullins project is a mixed-use development, which includes 130 residential rental units, 4 commercial/retail spaces and 152 spaces of indoor, on-site parking. We ask that you consider the following recommendations and conditions when making decisions about this project.

The RNA Board would like to thank the Mullins Group for the collaborative process that they engaged in to solicit input from the neighborhood and the city. The public engagement effort by the Mullins Group was viewed as a positive and constructive endeavor by almost all parties. It is an effort by a developer that we hope sets a positive example for other neighborhoods and other developers. We believe that it has resulted in a stronger project.

The RNA Board, in formulating its official response to this project, took into account feedback provided by the neighborhood as a result of a series of public engagement efforts. The Mullins Group sponsored four public listening/informational sessions from August to October 2010. This four-month effort concluded with an RNA- and Alder-sponsored final public feedback session on November 8, 2010 and an RNA Board meeting on November 17, 2010. As with any project of this magnitude, there were a wide variety of comments, both in support of and in opposition to the project. This letter therefore represents the input of the RNA Board; it is recognized that individual members of the Regent neighborhood may have different opinions on the project.

Further, the RNA Board considered the land use classifications associated with the project and adjacent areas, as laid out in the City Comprehensive Plan. In particular, the proposed, 130-unit residential rental housing project is in an area that has a land use classification of Community-Mixed Use (CMU). According to the City's Comprehensive Plan: "Net residential densities within a Community Mixed Use district generally should

not exceed 60 dwelling units per acre, but a neighborhood or special area plan may recommend small areas within the district for a higher maximum density if the development is compatible with the scale and character of the neighborhood."

Further, the project is adjacent to an area designated for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). This is described as: "Transit-Oriented Development is characterized by a compact, mixed-use development pattern that focuses the highest development densities and intensities in very close proximity to high capacity transit stops."

Recognizing all of this, the RNA Board has agreed to the following resolution, general comments about the project and specific conditions that should be placed on the project:

RNA Board Resolution:

This resolution represents the majority opinion of the RNA Board, but not the unanimous opinion of all Board members:

The Regent Neighborhood Association (RNA) Board believes that the Mullins Group has done a good job addressing neighborhood concerns about the proposed development on the 2500 block of University Avenue. There is strong support for the process of neighborhood involvement undertaken by the Mullins Group as well as for the project in general. There are lingering concerns that the height of the east and west towers as well as the total height and mass of the overall project may be too great for the area in which it is located. The RNA Board would appreciate the Urban Design Commission and Plan Commission taking into consideration the remaining neighborhood concerns about the height and mass of the project as part of their formal deliberations.

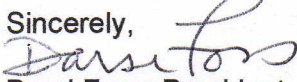
General Comments by the RNA Board:

1. **Materials and Colors:** The RNA Board has been presented with the building materials for the project and supports the choices.
2. **Parking:** The success of this building and particularly the commercial/retail space will depend on the success of the city, property owner and neighborhood working together through the University Avenue Corridor planning process. Additional on-street parking (e.g., 2500 to 2300 University Avenue) and off-street parking (e.g., DOT lot) is vital to the success of new and existing businesses. The RNA will need the city's support to achieve this through the efforts of its University Avenue Corridor planning process (in progress) and the resurfacing of historic University Avenue, which is planned for summer 2011.
3. **Traffic:** The RNA Board and neighborhood are concerned about bicycle and pedestrian safety, particularly on the Highland Avenue side of the development and at the Highland-University intersection. The city and developer need to work with the neighborhood, through the University Avenue Corridor Planning process to ensure that bikes, cars and pedestrians can safely co-exist in the area.
4. **Community Car:** We support the "green" components of the project, including the space for a community car. The Mullins Group has agreed to sponsor such a car to ensure that one is available to residents of the project and neighbors.

Conditions that should be placed on project by City:

1. **Retail/commercial tenants:** The RNA Board requests that if a business/tenant proposes to stay open later than midnight, that the RNA association and Board be made aware of this and be provided the opportunity to provide input.
2. **Demolition:** The developer/property owner should have as a goal the objective to recycle/reuse at least 50% of the materials associated with the demolition of the existing structures.
3. **Noise:** Significant concerns already exist among residents with respect to noise emanating from UW west campus buildings, Campus Drive and the UW Hospital helicopter. We appreciate that the building may attenuate the noise from Campus Drive. However, we expect that Mullins will implement the HVAC noise attenuation measures outlined in the sound study report from Audio Design Specialists. Noise measurements should be taken prior to and after construction to demonstrate that noise levels have not increased; those reductions should not be used to offset HVAC and other mechanical-related noise that the building may produce. Written documentation of achieving this condition should be provided to the RNA Board and members, through its listserv, no later than six months after the building is completed and open for occupancy.
4. **On-street Parking:** No residential parking permits should be allowed for this address. In addition, no person/business that is not a resident of or employee at the building should be able to lease or sub-lease a parking place. Neighboring streets may want to consider the use of residential parking permits only, in accordance with city guidelines.
5. **Rooftop Patio:** The RNA Board requests that the patio be closed by 9:00 pm each evening for use.
6. **Maintenance of Landscaping:** All landscaping and maintenance of the plantings, including those associated with the "flats" on the University Avenue side, are the responsibilities of the building's owner.
7. **Signage for the building:** The RNA Board requests that the property owner submit more detailed plans on signage and receive RNA Board approval before erecting signage. The neighborhood prefers low-key signage, especially non-lighted.
8. **Landscaping on street:** If the city finds that the Mullins' landscaping plan is insufficient in detail, the neighborhood requests the opportunity to review and provide comments on a more detailed plan from the owner/developer.

Thank you for your consideration of the recommendations, comments and conditions outlined in this letter.

Sincerely,

Darsi Foss, President
Regent Neighborhood Association