

January 18, 2012

Mr. Alan Martin  
City Plan Department  
Members of the Urban Design Commission  
Madison, WI

Re: Agenda Item 8, Amended PUD – GDP for Grandview Commons Town Center

I have written to you in the past regarding this subject but feel additional comments are necessary because of statements made by Ald. Cnare in her recent letter

The issue has indeed been before us for two years. For many of us it has been two long, agonizing years. During that time there have been numerous meetings but only minor changes to the plan – some negative, like moving the big box closer to single family homes. The development team has been unresponsive to the concerns of those who would be most affected by the proposed change.

The proposal for a big box is contrary to the design principles contained in the new urbanism concept. Embedding a big store in an established neighborhood will have many negative ramifications.

The design contained in the proposal is flawed. The grocery store will be isolated from the rest of the town center and located the furthest possible distance from the area with the highest population density. Very few people will be able to walk to this destination. Once you are in your car it doesn't matter whether you drive a few blocks or a few miles.

A Roundy's representative admitted that creating a walkable destination was secondary. Their primary goal was to serve a wide geographic area with all their grocery needs. In other words, it will be a regional shopping destination. This is further supported by the fact that the majority of the available land will be dedicated to parking.

I challenge the statement that there is equal support and opposition. While there is support for the proposal, it comes from people that do not live in close proximity to the store and from employees of Veridian and other development team members.

I also challenge the statement that without this proposal nothing will happen. There are many successful town centers without big box grocery stores.

The majority of people support the existing plan and the concept of a small, compact, pedestrian oriented town center. That has not happened primarily because of economic conditions and the fact that considerable residential development remains. Once completed, the population density will increase.

There are many design features, such as elevation, that have not been addressed. The impact of increased traffic on residential streets has also not been determined nor have alternatives been considered.

Big box stores are not the highest and best use for prime real estate. A thorough review of the economic impact the proposal will have on the City needs to be accomplished.

The existing neighborhood plan is sound. It was developed and approved after considerable work. The burden is not on us to defend it. The burden is on those who wish to change it, and they have not provided ample reasons to do so.

For the reasons stated and more, the proposal should not be approved.

Regards,

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