

## UDC, January 21, 2014, Union Corners, Gorman submission

I am John Steines, SASYNA Council member 2--3-2009 & 2011- present; Union Corners Planning 2004 - present; Speaking for myself. The SASY neighborhood has not had the privilege of reviewing this plan and no one can speak for them. Union Corners is embedded in community. It is not a stand alone site.

Those of us who have been meeting with the Gorman team are confused by the current situation. Our face to face meetings have been very cordial. We seem to have a trusting relationship. That suggests some other factor at play that is out of control. We believe a positive outcome can result through the enlightened engagement of those who care about the importance of careful planning and design. This submission is significantly retrograde in quality.

Context of this meeting is an information presentation of phase one, of Union Corners UW Clinic Building. We recognize the nature of informational meeting. However, we need to be sure the record reads as accurately as possible

1. Plans gain momentum if opposition is not heard
2. Communities have become blocked from effective action for failing to set the record early in process.
3. Commissioners do not have the long memory of neighborhood and we want commissioners to know we care deeply about effecting successful community at Union Corners.
4. The neighborhood wants to avoid bait and switch techniques which have resulted in previously submitted 'informational presentations' (at other times by different developers) gaining momentum.
5. The neighborhood would like to believe that this submission is a mistake in a rush to by Gorman to meet construction deadlines.
6. Gorman represented this plan submission as 'nothing new' to Alder, when in fact significant changes have been made, which include:
  - a. No parking structure;
  - b. Eliminated Union Corners Commons;
  - c. Lack of sensitivity to adjacent neighborhood scale and history.
  - d. Scale shown is reverse of historical and desired scale of decrease across site from East Washington Avenue (tallest) to shortest along neighborhood housing;
  - e. Elimination of neighborhood pedestrian friendly Woonerf design components;
  - f. Elimination of wading/reflecting pool;
  - g. Massive increase in surface parking.
  - h. Removal of major parking structure

- I. **Working With Neighborhood:** The proposed plan does not demonstrate working closely with the neighborhood. The neighborhood asked repeatedly to speak with Gorman and UW Clinic over lack of multi-use building with insufficient scale on East Washington/Milwaukee Street corner. What is presented here is a formula for disaster.
  - A. Primary tenant will not communicate with the rest of the neighborhood creates a broken neighborhood destined for failure
  - B. So much more is possible through cooperative action.

C. Lost is

1. ability to establish community,
2. unsafe street scape in an area that not so long ago was a 'no go' zone (needles, prostitution, gang violence).
3. And please note, two houses on Farwell Street have been disenfranchised:



From <http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/unioncorners/EWashRpt%208-00.pdf>

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*The Plan includes a strategy for the City of Madison to work consistently in the interest of the local community by providing cost-effective public realm improvements, compact land use, multi-modal transportation choices, and preservation of the local urban ecology.*

From UnionCorners RFP Staff Draft: *As mentioned above, there are several adopted City plans that cover Union Corners. Together these plans represent the community's desires for the future of the area.*

From UnionCorners RFP Staff Draft: *The City desires mixed-use projects that incorporate ground-level retail where feasible. Retail that serves neighborhood needs is especially desirable.*

From UnionCorners RFP Staff Draft: *The City's vision is to facilitate development that is sensitive to and takes advantage of both the commercial potential along East Washington Avenue and the adjacent residential neighborhoods.*

**II. Parking/Parking Structure:** Significant surface parking increase over previously submitted plan (July, 2012) is in conflict with City of Madison RFP, community interests and urban setting. Preliminary submitted plans showed a parking structure for the clinic and that is absent now. Where is our parking structure? The city invested millions into this space in improvements and sold the property for \$1 so there would be no TIFF. That does not negate the need and desire for structured parking in this urban infill setting.

*From UnionCorners RFP Staff Draft: The McGrath plan for the Sites included a series of buildings of a variety of densities and was expected to include 450 residential units and over 100,000 square feet of commercial space. The plan anticipated providing 938 parking spaces through a combination of surface, street, and structured parking. Developers are free to propose new plans for the site, but we the City hopes to achieve a comparable level of density. To achieve this density, the City anticipates the need for structured parking to be incorporated into or adjacent to buildings. The City may provide financial assistance, through TIF or other means, for the construction of structured parking on the Sites. The City will also consider financial assistance for shared parking structures between multiple redevelopment projects when such parking facilities are more financially feasible than single-use facilities for individual redevelopments projects.*

*From UnionCorners RFP Staff Draft: The City expects structured parking to meet the majority of parking needs.*

### **III. Signature, iconic building site & quality of design. Pre-eminent location at Milwaukee and East Washington.**

#### **Gateway where Capitol comes into view:**

- A. The location of East Washington Ave and Milwaukee Street has repeatedly been seen as the location of an iconic building, providing scale and function to meet the scale of the major gateway.
- B. What is proposed is a two story function disguised as three.
- C. No other business activity and no housing surmounting this structure is included.
- D. Neighborhood sought to meet with clinic regarding building use and scale in August, 2013 through Alder Marsha Rummel and UW Clinic refused to do so. UW Clinic declined to consider any additional height or building use.
- E. The neighborhood is thus deprived of any engagement with the primary client of the site.
- F. This is not how intelligent urban infill in existing neighborhood ought to be done.
- G. The neighborhood prefers not to implement a media campaign highlighting the failures of this plan and the lack of cooperation from a client that ought to understand community wellness as a component of health care.
- H. The original submission (July 2012) showed a Woonerf style mix, now replaced with Soviet era style block of boxes which are not sensitive to neighborhood scale.
- I. This plan reverses the increase of scale identified in previous plans and community

values - of neighborhood scale adjacent to housing and increase in size to East Washington maximum of 6 stories (height of East High School).

From <http://www.healthycommunitiesbydesign.org/> *Communities nationwide are recognizing the critical link between our built environments and public health.*

From <http://www.planning.org/research/publichealth/pdf/evaluationreport.pdf>

*Healthy Planning, Planning and Public Health*

*The birth of planning in the United States originated from a public health purpose. It was rooted in the need to reduce congestion, improve public health, and support social reform in housing and sanitation. Rapid urbanization of cities resulted in overcrowded housing, noxious industrial uses, human and animal waste, and outbreaks of infectious diseases.*

*The planning and public health professions were joined by a shared focus on urban reform and a common goal to prevent outbreaks of infectious disease through infrastructure improvements, a highly successful way to improve population health. To assist in addressing the issues that resulted from rapid urbanization, local governments created a series of policies related to sanitation, zoning, housing, and transportation. These policies have had lasting impacts on the ways in which we develop the built environment.*

From <http://www.planning.org/sustainingplaces/compplanstandards/pdf/compplansustainabilitystandards.pdf>

5.0 Processes

*Key features of plan-making that must be part of plan making and implementation include processes for involving the public and for carrying out plan objectives and proposals. These processes were addressed by the APA Sustaining Places Task Force, who stated them as follows (Godschalk and Anderson 2012)*

:

- *Authentic Participation—ensure that the planning process actively involves all segments of the community in analyzing issues, generating visions, developing plans, and monitoring outcomes.*
- *Accountable Implementation—ensure that responsibilities for carrying out the plan are clearly stated, along with metrics for evaluating progress in achieving desired outcomes.*

*Best practices in support of comprehensive planning processes include a variety of activities, procedures, and commitments, as listed in Table 2. While some of these will be evident in the resulting plan, it may be necessary to evaluate the use of others through knowledge about the specific local planning process and how it was carried out.*

From Union Corners RFP 2012, June 15: *Respondents to the RFP will need to engage these groups throughout the design, development, and entitlement processes.*

From <http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/unioncorners/UnionCornerPlans9-1-05.pdf>

*Buildings A and B (East Washington/Milwaukee Street corner) propose commercial at street level with 4-6 levels of residential condominiums above.*

From <http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/unioncorners/Meeting1.html#June%2028,%202004>

*Height and density: Some noticed a concern over height and density, while others thought there was less concern about this than expected. A comment coming from the large public meeting was that the buildings in this development should not exceed the height of East High School. That would limit the buildings to six stories or less. Todd seemed to think that was a reasonable limit. Noted that land across the railroad tracks is higher, so somewhat taller buildings on the development site would have little impact. Thought access to light by most adjoining neighborhoods would not be an issue. Pointed out that getting affordable units might require compromise on points like height and density. Greater density spreads the cost of land among more units, bringing down the development cost per unit.*

From UnionCorners RFP Staff Draft: Be compatible with and add vitality to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Create development consistent with requirements and guidelines in Urban Design District #5.

Create development generally consistent with:

Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Worthington Park Neighborhood Plan  East Washington Avenue – Old East Side Master Plan

City of Madison Comprehensive Plan

Other adopted City plans

from <http://www.thedailypage.com/daily/article.php?article=40743>

*Former Madison Ald. Satya Rhodes-Conway argued that a two-story structure would need to be expanded in the future. She also said that, as the "anchor building" at the site, the two-story structure would dictate the height of other buildings.*

*"When you look at little bit further down toward the Capitol, what we're able to build there, it's really disappointing to see a proposal with two stories here," she said. "I know that UW has what they want. I know that they are the main tenant and we need to pay a lot attention to them. But I would really encourage you to push them to think about different models."*

## IV. Co-housing

- 1, Neighborhood representatives discussed co-housing concept.
2. History of neighborhoods desire for this style of housing,.
3. Sponsored tours with Gorman Staff of ARBCO & Village co-housing sites and received encouragement in pursuing this style, but no evidence of co-housing as a model is mentioned on site detail.
4. Already, a large group of interested parties are meeting in a study group to learn group process, consensus training and co-housing history.

From [http://deurbanization.com/CURRENT\\_PROJECTS/Union\\_Corners/Entries/](http://deurbanization.com/CURRENT_PROJECTS/Union_Corners/Entries/)

[2010/11/11 UNION CORNERS COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT DRAFT 11.11.10.html](#) •Affordable Green Living which include: Senior housing options including independent and assisted living facilities. COOP, co-housing and single room occupancy housing.

**V. French Battery Building:** The neighborhood was promised when the French Battery Building was taken down and bricks stored on site, that the iconic building representing local history would be rebuilt. It is disappointing that city process and time has let that community priority crumble.

From <http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/unioncorners/UnionCornerPlans9-1-05.pdf>

*The reconstruction of the French Battery based on original construction drawings by a Chicago architectural firm in 1920 would face the new private street.*

*Both the French Battery and the companion loft building C will have street level commercial with 2-4residential condo minimum levels above.*

*Building G is proposed as commercial use on the street level and 3-4 levels of residential condominiums above. It should have distinctive architecture to frame the Town Square.*

From [UnionCorners RFP Staff Draft](#): *The McGrath plan preserved many of the bricks and the concrete company sign from the French Battery building that was previously located on the site. The concept plan shown above anticipated reconstructing this historic building and incorporating it into new development. Reconstructing the French Battery building as a link between the area's history and future is desirable.*

From <http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/unioncorners/UnionCornerPlans9-1-05.pdf> May 12, 2004 notes, Union Corners:

*Preservation. Focus of preserving buildings will be on French Battery Building. Original section of building will be kept...Saving large trees in front of French Battery Building.*

**VI. Stormwater runoff:** Close to 50% of the surface here appears to be dedicated to parking. Parking run off is the largest source of urban pollution. 50% of Union Corners drains to the north branch of Starkweather Creek north of East Washington Ave near Commercial Ave and 50% runs to the east branch of Starkweather Creek through he Dixon Greenway (unless those stormwater connections were re-routed with street reconstruction). That is sad, unnecessary and unenlightened:

From <http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/unioncorners/EWashRpt%208-00.pdf>  
Page 35: *Urban Ecology*

*11. Retain and preserve natural areas.*

*12. Respect the underlying ecology of potential redevelopment sites; design the placement of new uses accordingly.*

*13. Decrease the amount and size of impervious surfaces*