

Comments on 3535-3553 University Avenue and 733-737 N. Meadow Lane Rezoning Application

We are very close neighbors to this proposed project and have the following concerns.

1. Our primary concern is the traffic situation. Having the entrance to the parking lot on a small residential street just a short block from a major intersection is a recipe for a large increase in traffic on that small residential street and for a greatly increased probability of accidents. There is no way for a car to exit the facility and go south or west or north without driving on residential streets. One would have to turn left onto North Meadow and then turn right onto Heather Crest; or one would have to turn right, then right again onto University Avenue, then right again onto Blackhawk and then right onto Lucia Crest or continue on to Regent. Or one would do a U-turn at Blackhawk to get onto University Avenue going west, an intersection that has already been tagged as needing safety improvements.

Our residential streets in this little neighborhood already have a lot of vehicles trying to take shortcuts to get to Midvale or University. I cannot tell you how many cars drive down Bruce Court every day in search of University Avenue, only to use the cul-de-sac to turn around and, being irked that the street did not go to University Avenue, speed their way back up the hill looking for a way out of the neighborhood.

We want our little streets to be safe for all of us—little kids, elderly, dog walkers, speed walkers, strollers, and runners—and we believe that our city is a better and safer place when these small neighborhoods are protected and free from commuters looking for a quick way to get where they're going.

We have heard, but do not know, that there has not been a predictive model done on the traffic patterns and numbers from an additional 166 potential vehicles from this apartment. Yes, I believe that some residents will take the bus. But what if they work at Epic (which the developer said at one meeting was the type of resident they thought would live here) or a company to the west? What if they want to visit their mother who lives in New Glarus? They can't take the bus. Until a study is done and there is a recommendation on potential ways to ameliorate this increase in traffic and inherent confluence of traffic at University and Midvale, we do not support this application. (For example, one potential solution could be to make North Meadow a cul-de-sac and then figure out a way for drivers, after getting onto University Avenue, to do a safe U-turn to allow them to get to the intersection of University Avenue and Midvale.)

2. We also have a concern for the pool and party area on the rooftop and the potential noise issues, in particular at night. It appears that this area will be just about the same height, or perhaps a bit lower, than the second floor of our house. In the summer, we like to sleep with the windows open (helps to save on AC energy use). However, our windows face to the north and west and will be in line with noise from the rooftop. (It's bad enough that the lights from the hotel at Hilldale illuminate our second floor—tell the hotel to get rid of them.) We are very concerned about the noise and lights from this area. There are no bedrooms in our house that face to the south so moving to a different bedroom is not an option for us. (And while I understand that there are those who would call us NIMBYs, please understand that this will literally be in “our backyard.”)

The developers seem to be willing to work with neighbors so we encourage the city to deal with the traffic pattern and the party/pool area. In our opinion, the City of Madison not only needs to have more housing (although one wonders what the true carrying capacity is for the city), but it also needs to look at the smaller scale—the little cohesive neighborhoods that provide housing for families--and ensure that these small neighborhoods continue to be safe and secure and healthy places for current and future residents.

Signe Holtz and Ronald Halvorson

Bruce Court

P.S. We want to reiterate our support for absolutely no connection between Bruce Court and the development or between Bruce Court and University Avenue.

(I have lived in this house since 1988! I'd like to stay here. SH)