

Below is a DRAFT letter of opposition to proposed McDonald's in front of the Hawthorne Branch Library. Comments on the project are due June 9, 2011, in advance of approval consideration by the Plan Commission on June 20, 2011.

June 3, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

At its meeting on June 2, 2011, the Madison Public Library Board reaffirmed its opposition to the proposed project to construct a McDonald's in the Madison East Shopping Center at the 2800 block of East Washington Avenue. The Library has a presence—the Hawthorne Branch—located in this shopping center, and has several concerns about the possible negative impacts upon library services and pedestrian safety that may result should a McDonald's be built on the site. (The Madison Public Library Board sent an initial letter of opposition to the Planning Department on July 19, 2010, following a brief presentation to the board by John Brigham of Lee & Associates about the proposed project on July 8, 2010. The Madison Public Library Board subsequently opposed the proposal in a letter dated March 9, 2011, and at meetings of the Urban Design Commission.)

The Madison Public Library Board concerns about the proposed project include:

- **Pedestrian safety and increased car traffic**
McDonald's traffic will increase the volume of cars entering and exiting the shopping center at the entrance closest to the library (across from Pawling Street). In a May 18th letter the Urban Design Commission, the Madison East Shopping Center Partners dismissed the Library's concern, citing a traffic analysis study. In a public meeting about the proposal on January 31, 2011, the traffic consultant who authored the study estimated that the proposed McDonald's would increase parking lot traffic during peak times by roughly 60 vehicles per hour. The Library therefore remains acutely concerned about increasing car traffic around a service heavily used by pedestrians, cyclists, and children. The Hawthorne Branch had more than 200,000 visits in 2010, an increase of 8.3% over the prior year. In addition to safety concerns, the Library is apprehensive about the potential impact increased traffic may have on the time it takes to return a book in the library's busy bookdrop—more than 528,000 items were checked in at the Hawthorne Branch in 2010.
- **Reduced visibility of the Hawthorne Branch**
The proposed site of the McDonald's would significantly reduce visibility of the library from East Washington Avenue. Several of the communities served by the Hawthorne Branch are highly transient, and it is critical that the library remain easily discoverable by residents. While the Landlord would support new lighted signage for the Library, this solution would require the Library to expend approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000. The most recent site plan includes a new monument sign for the shopping center that would include a small sign for the

Library, but it is unclear whether this alone would offset the reduced visibility of the branch.

- **Loss of parking**

The proposed site would eliminate dozens of parking spots close to the library. In addition, many of the spots that remain will be in use by McDonald's customers, forcing many library patrons to park considerably further away from the library than they do now. This inconvenience will be particularly acute for patrons with small children, those who borrow heavily from the library, and staff. (Staff members typically leave closer spots for patrons, and walk to their vehicles after closing time. While there is additional parking in the lot behind the mall, it is poorly lit and employees elect to not park there for safety reasons.)

Collectively, we believe these factors would significantly decrease use of the branch and, in turn, hinder the library's extremely positive impact upon the East side communities it serves. On February 23, 2011, Library management met with representatives from Lee & Associates in regards to the concerns detailed above. There was discussion of changes to the proposal that might mitigate impact to the library and its patrons, including new signage on the street, lighting of existing signage, dedicated parking, and lighting of the rear parking lot. While subsequent modifications to the project might marginally reduce some of the negative impacts described above, the Board continues to oppose the project.

Approval will, we believe, result in reduced usage of the library which in turn will mean less assistance with employment, fewer opportunities for youth and adults, reduced access to the internet, and adverse impacts upon literacy.

Sincerely,