

From: [Nicholas Davies](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#)
Subject: No to University Row parking garage (91646)
Date: Saturday, February 28, 2026 11:38:53 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission,

Plan Commission previously reviewed the plans for 750 University Row in [legistar item 85055](#). Rather than considering the proposed changes a la carte, this project's compliance with the standards of conditional use needs to be holistically reevaluated.

This input on item 85055 is still just as relevant today:

UW Health wants to build both a drive-thru and a parking garage, both directly facing the street, with an extraordinarily large front setback, on a property that is less than a quarter mile from BRT route A, even though all of this violates the Transit Oriented Development ordinance.

Before Plan Commission, their rationales for this were:

1. At least the site won't be a surface lot

This was the same rationale presented by the owner of 402 Gammon Pl, who also wanted to build a street-facing drive-thru with a large setback and a parking moat, along the BRT route. The Zoning Board of Appeals denied this request, for good reason. I support putting the property to more use than a surface lot, but that doesn't give an applicant blanket permission to ignore city ordinance.

2. Their plans won't allow it

In other words, they started by drafting plans according to what they want to do, irrespective of TOD, and if they were to adjust their (noncompliant) plans to comply with TOD, the resulting plans wouldn't fulfill their dreams to the same extent. But why, in the first place, did they direct their contractors to draw up plans that don't comply with city ordinance? I could spend a lot of money, having people draft plans for me that ignore various laws in order to achieve my wildest dreams. And I might very much want to build the resulting plans for a 100 foot tower in my backyard (with a hot tub at the top). But I don't get to blame the city for that sunk cost, and it doesn't entitle me to an exception from the law.

This is not the city's first test of TOD, and won't be the last, but this is a major one, and I urge you to take it seriously, and to avoid granting exemptions for reasons like pity or favoritism. If there need to be adjustments made to the TOD ordinance, I encourage you to take that up with the city's legislative body.

Regarding the elimination of the solar rooftop, I don't buy that it's simply financially infeasible. That's a matter of priority. If they truly wanted the solar roof--if the solar roof was not just a bait-and-switch tactic to earn Plan Commission's initial approval--they could reduce the costs/scale of other elements of their planned development, such as the parking garage, to make it work. But they simply didn't, and that says everything about their priorities.

As outlined in this item's staff report, the plans violate the TOD ordinance in 3 ways:

- * The parking garage and drive-thru elements will be facing the street rather than behind the building.
- * The building setback will be greater than what's permitted within the TOD zone.
- * The building frontage will not be activated for pedestrian traffic.

This could be fixed simply by putting a portion of the building between the garage and the street. They declined to do that because their financial priorities are elsewhere--not in following the law.

When the applicant decided to violate the TOD ordinance, they used the same excuse--that complying with the TOD ordinance was simply out of their alleged budget. But clearly they have plenty of money in their budget for other elements.

So cutting the solar array from their plans is just another example of this developer shifting their financial priorities away from the public good, and expecting the city to just roll over. I hope you don't.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
3717 Richard St