

**From:** Priscilla Arsove [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2013 2:36 PM  
**To:** 'tparks@cityofmadison.com'; 'mayor@cityofmadison.com'; 'district13@cityofmadison.com'  
**Cc:** 'councilmail@dmna.org'  
**Subject:** COMMENTS ON FRED ROUSE DEVELOPMENT ON KNICKERBOCKER AND MONROE

To Madison Plan Commission, Mayor Paul Soglin and Alder Sue Ellingson:

I am writing to strongly oppose the development of a multi-use apartment building at the site of the Town and Country gas station and bungalow at 665 Knickerbocker Street.

I am a 20+ year resident of Knickerbocker who has been active in neighborhood planning issues as a past president of the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association and as a member of the city-wide R2 Zoning Committee some years ago. Literally and figuratively, our neighborhood landscape has changed significantly over this time, never at a more rapid pace than over the past few years. In scarcely more one year this narrow neighborhood has absorbed nearly 100 new dwelling units (including the second phase of Wingra Shores).

There are inevitable tensions as the City's rational drive to create higher-density development intersects with its equally important interest in preserving the character, livability and values of traditional neighborhoods. This is a difficult intersection, to be sure, making it all the more incumbent on City planners to take utmost care to avoid a collision. I believe the proposed development on Knickerbocker Street would cause exactly this kind of collision, resulting in significant casualties to our neighborhood.

- It would raze a charming bungalow that's been an integral part of the street for nearly 100 years, not as a student rental or any other kind of transient housing.
- At 3 ½ stories and more than 28,000 SF the building does not respect the existing neighborhood character and context, goals that are widely cited in the Monroe Street Commercial Plan. The building is stunningly out of scale with the residential street onto which it intrudes -- a far deeper intrusion onto a residential street than any Monroe Street development thus far.
- The building includes a 21-car parking garage that would enter/exit through a double-width driveway on Knickerbocker, a one-block street that is home to more than 20 children. Many children would regularly cross that driveway.
- The building includes multiple large balconies that would reduce the visual and acoustic privacy of those living nearby.
- The corner of Knickerbocker and Monroe Street is already fraught with dangerous traffic, parking and pedestrian issues that would only be compounded by a

development of this scale. Nearby small businesses, which are an important part of the vitality and character of our neighborhood, depend on the availability of nearby street parking and rightfully fear this development will diminish their business.

It is, of course, a fact that bungalow at 665 Knickerbocker Street is zoned commercial, an artifact of the City's first zoning code in 1923 that was developed before most homes on the street existed and that has simply been carried forward in each major zoning code rewrite since. This does not mean that this zoning reflects good public policy today. It is also a fact that the proposed Rouse development exceeds the new zoning code standards, even *with* the adjoining house lot, so you, our policymakers, now have a choice. That choice must consider the uses, values and enjoyment of other property in the neighborhood, recommendations in adopted plans, the impact on surrounding properties, and the public interest in exceeding the height limits.

The above comments and attachments to this e-mail speak to a number of these considerations. With regard to public interest, what is most in the public interest is to ensure that development is accomplished in a way that does not adversely impact neighborhood properties and quality of life – in other words, to ensure that every development effectively navigates that difficult intersection with existing neighborhoods. Most notably in its destruction of a home, but in many other ways as well, the proposed Rouse development does diminish neighborhood properties and quality of life. It is not the right development to be sited deep within a neighborhood of one-block residential streets.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Arsove  
[REDACTED] Knickerbocker Street

Attachments:

- 1) Neighborhood context: existing and proposed Knickerbocker streetscape
- 2) "Commonwealth Development zone" in the Monroe Street Commercial Plan, which *excludes* the first-in TSS-zoned homes on Knickerbocker and Sprague
- 3) Parking and related quality of life impacts of the Parman Place development

**NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT**

*from this ...*



*to this ?*



FROM THE MONROE STREET COMMERCIAL PLAN. P. 17

**Block 17**

(S-M) This blue arrow suggests street and facade improvements along Monroe Street in this area. This includes coordinating streetscape, lighting, signage and facades.

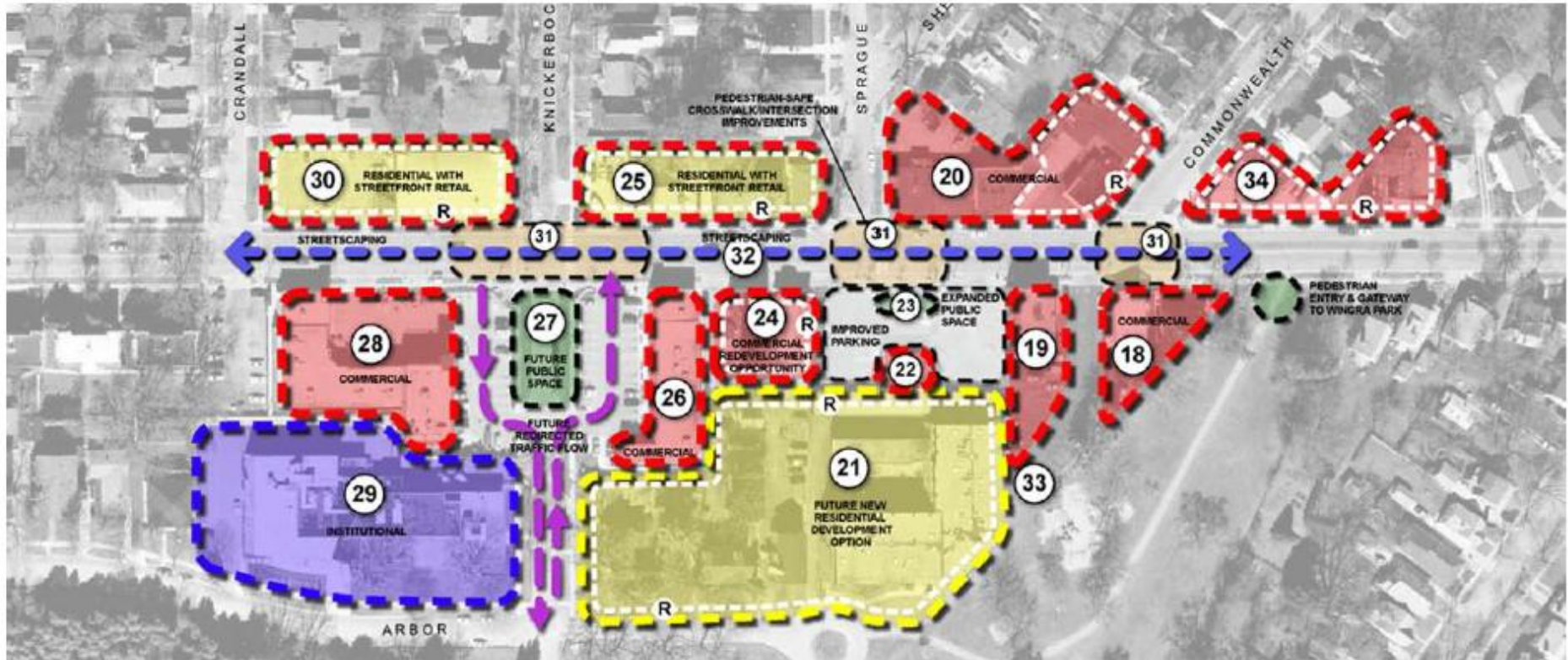


Figure K-9: Land Use, Development Strategies, and Target Projects for the Monroe-Commonwealth Node. Yellow depicts residential, red depicts commercial, and blue depicts institutional land uses. The dashed line surrounding the area depicts ground floor use and the fill depicts land use on upper floors. White dashed lines indicate potential redevelopment sites.

## NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS ( PARMAN PLACE EXAMPLE)

### FREE PARKING !

... on neighborhood streets . Sign posted at the entrance to Gates and Brovi Restaurant and Bar.



### QUALITY OF LIFE

Comments from Holly Gibbs, resident on Wyota Avenue behind Parman Place:

*My family and I live at 3602 Wyota Avenue, near Parman Place. We moved here 2 years ago and very specifically chose our home based on the quiet streets where we had hoped to raise our children. However, following the building of Parman Place the entire character of our neighborhood changed from a safe haven, to a crowded space that is stressful to return to whenever the restaurant is open. We went from a cozy, safe neighborhood with respectful drivers to one in the shadow of a large apartment complex. We used to walk with our young children several nights a week and chat with neighbors. It is no longer safe for us to walk in the streets near our home now because visitors to the restaurant drive aggressively, and at least occasionally are intoxicated. They park in our yards, or hurriedly park with their cars jutting out into the road. Gates and Brovi was pitched to our neighborhood as a restaurant, but is much more of a pub or bar than a restaurant.*

*We [...] wish you more success than we had in preventing this building that stripped our neighborhood of character and truly reduced our quality of life. We will now work to speed bumps or "slow down for children" signs in place before there is an accident.*