

The Miffland District of Capitol Neighborhoods has established a steering committee of residents and property owners to consider the Up Urban Properties proposal at 400 West Washington Avenue. Over the course of the last several months, we have met on a weekly basis with the developer and city administrators in an effort to give constructive and knowledgeable input on this project.

From the beginning, one of our main concerns has been that this proposal would be the first on the north side of West Washington Avenue under the Downtown Plan as it relates to the West Washington corridor and our neighborhood. As such, we need certainty that the proposal meets the standards of the Plan, complies with the zoning code, and serves as a model for future proposals on West Washington. Consequently, we spent a great deal of time with the developer, looking at the detail and minutiae of the proposal.

The steering committee believes this project will set a very important precedent for future development in the rest of the neighborhood. Therefore, it is critical to correctly set parameters such as setbacks, height and massing within the context of the Downtown Plan. We are in agreement that a consistent setback should be established for the perimeter starting from the 200 block of West Washington Avenue all the way to the Park Street intersection, especially as we expect more development to come within the next 10 years. Some steering committee members believe a setback of at least 20 feet should be established, and there is consensus that setbacks should be consistent. The committee also believes that the City or UDC should establish parameters regarding the height of buildings on this corridor. The Downtown Plan defines structures of 4+2 stories. The two additional stories are intended to be used as a tool to effectuate exceptional design and accomplish the objectives of the Plan. Where additional stories are available, it is not intended that they be earned merely by complying with standards and criteria that would be required and expected in any case. Therefore, clarifying specificity needs to be added to the Downtown Plan for our neighborhood regarding height.

The neighborhood committee believes that the developer has made a good faith effort to work with our committee over the past four months, and the developer has made major improvements to the plans over the course of our meetings. At this point, the committee does not have a consensus of opinion in support or opposition to this project for the following reasons:

- The group generally agrees that the design is much improved over the initial submittal.
- Some believe the design is not exceptional and does not warrant two bonus stories. (See the attached letter for comments on various aspects of the proposal)
- Some members believe the two bonus stories would create an overpowering height and massing for this corner.
- Several members object to the portion of the Downtown Plan for structures of 4+2 stories in the neighborhood. Objection is based on the personal subjective opinion as to the definition of what “exceptional design” represents (Downtown Plan, Appendix C, Additional Building Height).
- Some neighbors believe the building should front West Washington Avenue rather than Broom Street.
- At the neighborhood meeting, concern was voiced over the lack of affordable units with the project, in particular for those who would be uprooted with the demolition of the houses.
- Some members are concerned that the project does not include sufficient vehicle and bicycle parking.

We respectfully submit our opinions and concerns with the expectation that city commissioners will take them into consideration in the review of this very important project.

Steering committee members: Dan Bohl, Rick Broughman, Dale & Jackie Bruckner, Dory Christensen, Reg Emshoff, Tim Kamps, Peggy LaMahieu, Pete Ostlind, Larry Warman.