

COMMENTS FOR UDC MEETING

Thank you . My name is Karen Schwarz and I live at Weston Place, an adjacent property to the proposed project at 617 N. Segoe Rd.

Please understand that we are not objecting to redevelopment on this site. However, from the standpoint of COMPATABILITY with other structures on adjacent properties, and in terms of function, visual appeal and access, the proposed building is at an INTENSITY that FAR EXCEEDS what is considered to be “reasonable” according to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, especially in areas of function and access.

While Weston Place set a precedent for higher density land use, it is important to note that Weston Place has LESS THAN HALF THE DENSITY and MORE THAN TWICE THE PARKING per unit compared to the 617 project.

Building set-backs from the property line of 617 are minimal, as little as 4 feet at the SE corner of the building. At the NE corner, it is only 30 feet from the lot line when measured perpendicular to the lot line rather than the measurement that appears on the plan. The Sawyer Terrace building, which is 60 ft corner to corner from Weston Place, actually faces surface parking lots for 7 of its 8 stories. 617 has a full 11-story exposure to Weston Place, all at residential levels. This is a vastly different situation, and significantly diminishes quality of life due to limited natural light and extremely close proximity. The 5-story Overlook project on Frey St is across a full street width from Weston Place, or about 100 feet between building facades. Any proposed development on the DOT property would be across a full divided boulevard. 617 is barely 45 feet at its closest point, and averages only 70 ft from Weston Place. It should also be noted that the Sheboygan Ave apartments are adjacent to a large public open space (Rennebohm Park), the building facades are separated by much greater distances, and building set-backs from the street are significantly greater.

The impact of the 617 proposal includes parking issues. 617 has very little guest parking and LESS THAN 1 parking stall per bedroom, actually only 0.8 per bedroom. Virtually everyone, other than students living near campus, has a car. They may not use it for going back and forth to work or school, but they still use a car on a regular basis. Where will they park when the underground parking is full? Lack of adequate parking also has a negative impact on function and access for everyone in the immediate area.

The City staff report indicates that traffic volume in and out of 617 would be similar to the drive-up at the bank that was previously on this property. However, traffic for that particular bank was not so much drive as it was walk-up due to its proximity to the Sheboygan Ave. apartments. And it should be noted that the bank is no longer there for a reason – not enough business! Therefore, traffic volume in and out of 617 will be much higher than experienced by the former bank.

Weston Place has HALF the impact compared to the 617 proposal in terms of intensity of use and parking provisions to support the actual daily use of the building. So, the real question is this: Is another 12-story building appropriate TODAY in a SUB-urban setting? This is NOT downtown Chicago. It is not even near campus or downtown Madison. I realize that the Comprehensive Plan recommends not exceeding 60 dwelling units per acre, and that I live in a building that does exceed that by 50%. However, 198 dwelling units per acre is more than THREE TIMES that recommendation. A SMALLER PHYSICAL ENVELOPE in terms of height, density and physical separation would address most of our major concerns which are function, access, compatibility with the immediate surroundings, and most of all QUALITY OF LIFE.

In summary, this proposal is like putting 198 lb of corn in a 60 lb sack.

Thank you.
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