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Comments to the Madison Plan Commission on the Proposed Lake Point Drive Affordable Housing Project
Submitted by Erin O'Brien, 2221 Lake Point Drive
January 11, 2016

As already noted, this project is linked to the W. Broadway conditional use approval before you tonight.

I question the addition of the 12 units of 3-bedroom subsidized town homes because our neighborhood already has one of the highest concentrations of assisted housing in the city and 80% of the children in our neighborhood qualify for free or reduced cost lunch. Overall, we would like to see the City honor its commitment to improve transit and promote development of service-oriented retail before expanding our affordable housing stock. There is also ongoing blight, including an abandoned and padlocked 8-unit apartment building directly across the street from these proposed townhomes.

If you do look favorably on this proposal, please consider a significant modification to the scope and scale. As with the Broadway parcel, they are trying to do too much on too little land. To be consistent with neighborhood redevelopment priorities, the project would need to include a mix of subsidized and market rate housing. Because our neighborhood has very limited bus service, and we cannot safely absorb any more on-street parking, additional on-site parking for residents and guests should also be required.

I am most concerned about the demolition of our neighborhood center. You are being asked to approve this demolition based on a blank floor plan and a back-of-the-envelope calculation for what it will cost the developer to construct the ground floor facility. Here is the extent of the information provided by Movin' Out in their September 18, 2015

Supplemental Application and Updated Budget.

11. It appears that Movin Out/Mirus will completely finish the space for the center if it is part of the project. You project the construction cost will be \$1.6 - \$1.7 million. What is this cost based on and what does it include?
That estimate was based on a construction cost estimate we were provided several months ago which had less information about the nature of the finishes and the fact that construction costs have gone up over the summer. The \$110 per square foot identified above in response 10a. is the amount that should be used to calculate the hard costs for the center space. That cost will include 100% finished space but no furnishings, equipment or required soft costs. Below is a sample development budget with some line items that need to be considered. It is likely there are others to be added. We could try to provide assistance with this aspect of the project if you are interested in our help with that.

The proposed financing for this portion of the project is tenuous. Covering the developer's \$1.5 - \$1.7 million costs will require an amendment to our TIF District Project Plan. Given the controversy of the project and the fact that this district should have closed by now, this approval may not materialize.

As shown in the petition submitted earlier, we are terribly frustrated that the plans to demolish and relocate *our* neighborhood center were put together without the input of a single resident of the neighborhood. All negotiations, were between the City, the developers, and Center leadership. We have an unusual situation here in that our center is run by Vera Court Neighborhood Center, an organization based on Madison's north side. Our Director works part time (1-2 days/week) at our facility. There is not a single resident of the BLPW neighborhood on their Board of Directors and no local steering committee to help guide or oversee their activities.

We have been told by the BLPW Director that they expect operating costs to increase \$80 - \$100k/year in the proposed larger facility. To my knowledge there is also no budget or plan for how they will cover the increased costs to furnish, maintain, and operate this facility. If you approve this demolition and the financing doesn't come through, we will be left with no neighborhood center at all.

Given the opportunity to provide input on project alternatives and design, I believe you'd have a very different proposal in front of you. Few people would have chosen the W. Broadway parcel with a Fayette Street entrance as the priority because it will worsen the already significant traffic and pedestrian safety and parking concerns along Lake Point Drive and Fayette Avenue.

I do not believe this project promotes the safety and welfare of our neighborhood and ask you to vote no on the proposed demolition and rezoning.

Questions about this testimony can be directed to Erin O'Brien at 608-695-7511.