

Urban Design Commission
City of Madison
126 S. Hamilton St
Madison, WI 53703

RE: The Avenue 1954 E. Washington Development Proposal - 52598

February 24, 2019

Dear Urban Design Commission:

In advance of the Urban Design Commission Meeting scheduled for February 27th, 2019, we, a collective of 21 nearby residents, would like to provide formal written comment for your consideration on The Avenue 1954 E. Washington Development Proposal.

Enclosed/attached with this letter is a document outlining a number of shared concerns with the most recent proposal which was presented to neighbors on January 9th, 2019. Throughout multiple iterations of this development, the neighbors and residents listed below have engaged in the process and expressed concerns, ideas, and recommendations during available forums with the developer, Madison Development Corp.

We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate and provide feedback in this process. We appreciate the efforts of the architects, Knothe and Bruce, to try to address design concerns. Unfortunately, we still have significant concerns. Some concerns are new, a result of the significant redesign of the latest iteration, yet some concerns have remained consistent throughout our engagement. Since this new proposal was moved forward by the developer despite our concerns, we present the attached for the independent consideration of the UDC.

We acknowledge that not every issue or recommendation listed may be in scope or actionable by the UDC; regardless, we prefer to provide this feedback at this time for formal public record. As subject matter experts of the neighborhood and site, it is our duty to provide our qualitative perspective to ensure the committee has the information required to ensure decisions are evidence based and support the long term success of the city and its hallmark neighborhoods.

Lastly, as neighbors, we seek transparency, communication, collaboration, and empathetic consideration. Going forward, if these principles are valued, we are optimistic we can come to a solution that is a win-win for the neighborhood and the developer.

Sincerely,

Chris Sell on behalf of a collective of 21 concerned neighbors (listed on Page 2)

Neighbor	Address	Email
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The Avenue Project - Stakeholder Concerns and Recommendations

ISSUE #1: Size and Height of the Proposed Building

Recommendation 1.1: *We recommend that the building be reduced by one story equating to a 3 story building with the 3rd story setback.*

Recommendation 1.2 *We have recently learned that the developer may have completed a shade study, and we would request additional time to review the results of that study and anticipate impacts to our properties and the neighborhood.*

Recommendation 1.3 *We recommend the developer address the significant, newly created privacy concerns resulting from the new proposal.*

ISSUE #2: Parking

Recommendation 2.1: *Parking be offered to tenants as part of their rent*

Recommendation 2.2: *Provide the neighbors the time to review a parking study*

Recommendation 2.3: *An accessibility analysis be completed and allow the neighbors and opportunity to review*

ISSUE #3: Traffic

Recommendation 3.1: *A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) and traffic counts on Mifflin St. from First to Fourth Street be shared with the neighbors and allowed time to review and comment. We ask the city to supplement this study with qualitative data such as focus groups or surveys with residents in this area. Engaging the stakeholders would create good faith with the neighborhood and may result in creative solutions.*

ISSUE #4: Pedestrian Safety

Recommendation 4.1: *We recommend a safety analysis be completed and shared with neighbors to review options to allow pedestrians to safely cross at Second St. and E. Washington Ave.*

Recommendation 4.2: *MDC and the neighbors partner to identify long term risk mitigation strategies. For example, the addition of a traffic light or pedestrian bridge would be large scale strategies that we realize would not be responsibility of the developer, so we, as neighbors, would welcome the opportunity to partner with MDC in lobbying the city to implement large scale safety measures.*

ISSUE #5 – Market Instability & Property Values

Recommendation 5.1: *A Housing and Rental Market impact study completed to provide the neighbors with information on the economic impact this development will have on the neighborhood and property/rental values. Other developers have engaged research firms like Pitney Bowes to provide market impact analyses. We feel it would ease anxieties of neighbors concerned about the impact to property values.*

ISSUE #6 – Stormwater management

Recommendation 6.1: *A stormwater management study be completed and validated by an independent party to re-assure neighbors that this development won't exaggerate current flooding issues.*

ISSUE #7 – Neighborhood Plan & Planning Process

Recommendation 7.1: *Provide an environmental analysis of the building and/or seek to obtain a LEED green building certification*

ISSUE #8 - Displacement and Relocation of Current Tenants

Recommendation 8.1: *We request that MDC provide a relocation and transition plan for the impacted tenants with details including but not limited to: the amount of notification, where they would be moved, and who will incur the moving expenses.*

Additional recommendations:

A landscaping plan which encompasses the entire property edge to edge with special focus on landscaping which contributes to the privacy of both property residents and the adjacent neighborhood. With the site being a historical site, there are many "heritage trees" that are invaluable to the neighborhood. We ask that the developer maintain these trees.

A privacy fence between the walkout patio units adjacent to the backyards of East Washington residents

The community room and adjoining outdoor space be moved to an area of the building not directly adjacent to the east Washington residents' private backyards. The current location of the community space will create noise and privacy concerns being adjacent to the east Washington neighbors' backyards.

Alternative Idea for Consideration by MDC and the city

If the city and common council believe the proposed project is in the best interest of the neighborhood, we offer a creative alternative solution. Since the residential units would be at the maximum allowed per zoning code, once the Options for Independence Site is demolished, we would ask the developer to consider expanding the current Grasskamp park to Second Street and sell/donate that greenspace to the city and made an official public city park. This would allow a compromise with the neighborhood while allowing the 120+ new tenants adequate green space to better support the added density. This would help the city meet its goal of increasing greenspace and parkland while allowing MDC to reduce maintenance resources needed for upkeep of the current private park.