

502-518 West Washington Neighborhood Development Steering Committee Report **July 1, 2020**

The Miffland District of Capitol Neighborhoods has established a steering committee of residents and property owners to consider the Keller Real Estate Group proposal on the corner of West Washington Avenue and North Bassett Street. Over the course of the last several months, we have met five times with the development team and city staff to give constructive input on this project. These meetings included presentations to our regularly scheduled Miffland and Bassett District monthly meetings in early May; a large publicly noticed neighborhood meeting; and two development steering committee sessions (all five held via Zoom). Overall, the developer has made a good faith effort to work with our committee over the past two months, and has been largely receptive and responsive to feedback provided over the course of our meetings.

There is general consensus among this group that the proposed building meets the intent of the Mifflandia plan in terms of setbacks, stepbacks, and design, with the exception of the protrusion of West Washington-facing balconies into the stepback area. Several members have concerns around setting precedent for "air encroachment" on stepbacks; others believe the waiver process is appropriate in this case. Individuals have expressed concerns about the loss of more affordable housing units, the scale and mass of the proposed building, and the lack of an explicitly affordable housing component in the development. The architecture, materials, and amenities in the building design have all been well received. There is universal appreciation for the attention paid to maintaining and adding street trees.

There are conflicting opinions on the vehicular and service access points as proposed. Some group members believe the overall reduction in curb cuts on West Washington Avenue meets the intent of the Downtown Plan and Mifflandia Plan. The development team believes the garage access on West Washington Avenue is essential to functional operation of the building and provides a net benefit to the neighborhood by reducing traffic circulation through the neighborhood on Mifflin and Bassett Street; some members agree. Others argue that because the Mifflandia Plan calls for preserving and enhancing the broad terraces by reducing curb cuts, especially on corner lots, it therefore precludes vehicular access for this site on West Washington. Members have also expressed concerns on interactions between vehicles entering/exiting the building on West Washington and a future Bus Rapid Transit route, as well as left turns into and out of this driveway. Some concerns also have been raised about trash collection and move-in/out access along Bassett Street. All involved believe that clarification from city Traffic Engineering and other staff on these components of the site/operating plan and design will be beneficial and informative.

The steering committee appreciates this opportunity to provide feedback to the Urban Design Commission for consideration in their review of this proposal.

Steering committee members: Dory Christensen, Jonathan Cooper, Tim Kamps, Robert Lewin, Maddie Light, Ron Luskin, Peggy LaMahieu, Peter Ostlind, Larry Warman