

From: [Mark A. Frankel](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#); [Firchow, Kevin](#)
Subject: SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CORE SPACES DEVELOPMENT
Date: Tuesday, August 31, 2021 10:24:44 AM

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Dear Urban Design Commission Members,

As an interested neighbor, I have been attending the Steering Committee meetings for the proposed Core Spaces development in the block bounded by Johnson, Gorham, State and Broom Streets. The Steering Committee involves both the Miffland Neighborhood Association and the Campus Area Neighborhood Association. I live 333 W. Mifflin St. in Miffland, and I am president of the Metropolitan Place Condominium Association.

During Steering Committee hearings, I have been impressed by the openness and sincerity of the Core Spaces team, with their plans for the project, and with their commitment to affordable student housing. This is a neighborhood of tall buildings, including the one I live in. The 10 stories proposed by Core Spaces are consistent with the surroundings. I believe that residential density is essential to the positive future health of State Street and the downtown. State Street will clearly benefit from this new investment. I also support the current design as one that I believe would make a positive contribution to our downtown living environment. Thanks for your consideration. .

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Urban Land Interests

August 30, 2021

Dear members of the Urban Design Commission,

I am writing to support the Core Spaces proposal for the redevelopment of much of Block 55 (bounded by Gorham, Johnson, State and Broom Streets). I am one of five partners who have owned the properties since the early 1980's.

Core has taken abundant time to meet with the adjacent neighborhoods, City staff and City commissions prior to submitting its formal proposal on July 14. Its plans respond to their suggestions and requests and have been strengthened by them.

At the suggestion of Bob Klebba, Core has held its building height along State Street to only three stories, rather than the four permitted by zoning.

Based on conversations with State Street retailers to the east, Core has given up land to nearly double the width of the shared alley. It has also set its buildings back to widen the sidewalks, making them more conducive to outdoor dining.

At the request of Madison Metro Transit, Core has removed vehicular entrance and exit points from Broom Street, so its project will not interfere with a bus stop.

The Landmarks Commission asked that three existing facades be incorporated in the new development, and Core's plans do that. From a pedestrian viewpoint, this preserves the familiar retail streetscape and its scale. The retail facades are articulated to encourage smaller stores. The store depths of 70 to 75 feet are ideal for smaller local entrepreneurs.

Core has provided for ample unassigned parking spaces within its ramp for food delivery vehicles, for resident move-ins and for service vehicles. Core's student-focused market does not use its cars very frequently. The development should have minimal impact on surrounding traffic.

Following suggestions from the UDC, Core has made big changes to its plans on the residential floors. The long building facades on Gorham and Johnson Streets are gone. Open space penetrates the building from both sides, so the facades on Gorham and Johnson are much narrower and lighter. In the revision, the enclosed interior courtyard has been almost entirely eliminated.

Above all, Core's project will create positive life for the neighborhood. It will bring 1,100 additional residents to the center of State Street. Its development will be an important generator for incremental taxes for the City to use to reimagine and reposition State Street. After COVID and the trashing of buildings last spring, State Street really needs this new investment.

Sincerely,

Tom Neujahr

From: [Jeffrey Wills](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Cc: [Verveer, Michael](#); [Tim Kamps](#)
Subject: Core Spaces proposal for block of Gorham-Johnson-Broom Streets (file ID #63798)
Date: Monday, May 10, 2021 5:14:40 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear members of the Urban Design Commission,

I write to you to express my opposition to a special waiver of the height limitation for the project proposed for the Core Spaces proposal.

Why are there height limitations in the city plan? Because the height of a building can affect the quality of life for all those around it (and inside it): blocking light, reducing airflow (or increasing wind tunnels), removing privacy, and creating more human density than the neighborhood can support. All these costs must be balanced against landowner's rights. And **this negotiation of competing interests was done in the multi-year process that resulted in the Downtown Plan with a height limit along Broom Street of 6-stories, and exceptionally 8-stories in parts.** That was substantially higher than the building stock in the area then, and higher than the local residents wanted. But when the expected development of the area is completed, we hope to have a substantial number of fairly tall, good-quality buildings. We have only seen part of it so far — the Domain and Lux abided by the plan — now we have to picture new 6-stories all up Broom St. and one must expect an eventual 8-story redevelopment of the low-rise part of the Capitol Center complex along Johnson Street.

We all want more density, for the sake of a thriving urban life and a healthy environment, but **the adopted Downtown plan already foresaw a high density.** Following the limits in the adopted Downtown plan, full 8-story development on the site in question would add at least 800 additional residents to that block. That is already 800 more pedestrians on the sidewalks, crossing the two busiest streets downtown (the cross-isthmus arteries of Johnson St. and Gorham St.) several times a day. And when a similar development across Broom St. is built, that will be another 300+. In short, the existing Plan will add a thousand additional pedestrians plus dogs on one block, on what are already crowded street corners, with some people crossing the street less carefully than others.

In terms of green-space amenities, the neighborhood is at its limits. The downtown and Miffland neighborhoods are famously the most park-deprived in the city. People's Park has the only bench to sit on, and there is no place to throw a ball to a dog, and no volleyball court for the thousands of existing residents. We need the city to buy land for a park on Broom Street before we add more people. In terms of light and wind, the high-rise canyons along Johnson and Gorham-Univ are

already having an impact. Unlike the wide boulevards of Washington and Wisconsin Streets, these two arteries are narrow and noisy — sound currently reverberates off the existing buildings for several blocks (does the city do noise pollution tests?). The city plan (and neighborhood commitment) has kept the Broom Street “gateway” to downtown wider and airier, but soon we will begin to feel the environmental effects there too. The Cap Center low-rises along Johnson was designed to give privacy to the interior courtyard but that will be impaired with even an 8-story building.

In my opinion, the only reason to revoke a part of the adopted plan is something extraordinary which would compensate those living and working in the neighborhood for the costs of a lower quality of life. For example, **we could consider extra height in return for public ground-level green space** (like Capitol Center). As citizens, we may want to provide low-income housing for certain categories of people, but that is a society-wide responsibility that should not be paid for by those living in just one neighborhood. If we want to help students, fine, but let the city or state discuss all the options to do that, and we can pay our taxes and adapt our strategy over time. Extra height is a fixed tax on all those in just one locality for the next 50+ years.

Details: the Core Spaces proposal is conveniently selective in its description of the adjacent buildings. It cites the tallest element of Capitol Center (rather than the 2-story units that take up most of the adjacent block) and it cites the tallest element of Domain (rather than the 6-stories adjacent). Both Capitol Center and the Domain (with patios and swimming pool) have extensive ground-floor open space that substantially reduce the total density and average ratio of occupied square feet to land. This proposed building looks massive because it is — a solid masonry block (except for the dark, airless hollow core that gives the project its name).

In short, we have an agreed-upon Downtown Plan which already has high density. If we bypass the plan, then we return to a world of PUDs and discussion of some special characteristics of every proposal. Inevitably you set a precedent for a 10-story height on the adjacent block across Broom St.

Yours very concerned,

Jeffrey Wills

212 Broom St.

Madison, WI