

Summary Report
TLNA Steering Committee Meeting for
McGrath Property Group Proposal for the 1200 N Block of E. Washington

February 22, 2015

This document presents the findings of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association's (TLNA) Steering Committee on the *revised* proposal by McGrath Property Group for 1200-1212 E. Washington Avenue and 9-13 N. Few Street. This report addresses only the proposal version that removes the 4th floor from the previous proposal version and eliminates the Quonset hut.

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1. Purpose:

The report is provided to the TLNA Council as they prepare to consider the Council's position on the proposal. Prior to any Council Member forming a stance on the proposal the Committee encourages Council Members to carefully read this report and all materials on the TLNA Development Committee's website for the project which can be found at the link below:

<http://www.danenet.org/tlna/development.html>

2. Committee Membership:

The Committee has considered its members to be any neighbor who has come one of its meetings, hence does not have fixed membership. We prefer not to hinder input from the community and recognize that other commitments can prevent perfect attendance records, so agreed not to further limit membership.

These Tenney-Lapham neighbors have attended at least one of the Committee meetings:

Patrick Heck (TLNA Development Committee Chair), Patty Prime (TLNA President), Pat Kelly, Karla Handel, Nick Balazs, Rebecca Cuningham, Richard Linster, Jeff Reinke, Karen Banaszak, Kathy Nissley, Zach Simmons, Adam Shesch, John Feith, David Waugh, Ryan McCormick, Simon Puleo, Evan Wedell, Christine Knorr and Robert Lasseter.

Additionally, District 2 Alder Ledell Zellers has attended most meetings. Tim Parks, from the Planning Division of Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development has acted as an advisor and attended some meetings.

Note that many other neighbors have provided valuable input via email and other channels; their opinions are contained here, in meeting notes and/or separate links on the webpage.

The Committee formed as a result of the Dec. 9 neighborhood meeting called by Alder Zellers. At that meeting, the McGrath Property Group (MPG) presented their preliminary concept for the proposal and accepted neighborhood input. As is typical, attendees were given the opportunity to join the soon-to-form Steering Committee and other neighbors were invited via the TLNA listserv in all meeting announcements. Note that postcard invitations for the neighborhood meeting were sent by Alder Zellers to 1352 Tenney-Lapham (T-L) residences and businesses nearest to the proposal site.

For this particular committee, it is noteworthy that 14 of 19 members live within a block of the proposed development.

3. Committee Process:

Throughout the process the Committee aimed towards the issuance of this report rather than voting on a level of support for the proposal. Traditionally, TLNA Development Steering Committees have not chosen a committee position, but have instead issued summary findings such as these to the full TLNA Council.

The Committee has met three times –on Jan. 5, Jan. 15 and on Feb. 19. The first and third meetings included the development team from MPG while the second did not. Email communication supplemented the communication process.

Depending on the desires and actions of the TLNA Council, as well as the input of the City and MPG, the Committee is prepared to hold additional meetings and provide additional feedback to the developer. These meetings can serve several purposes, including, but not limited to, supplements to or clarification of this report, follow-up design issues, consideration of a modified proposal or consideration of any new information from the developer.

4. TLNA Council Process:

Prior to TLNA Council Members forming a stance on the proposal, the Steering Committee encourages a careful consideration of this report and also recommends that they contact the Committee with any questions. The Steering Committee can be contacted via its Chair, Patrick Heck (pwheck@gmail.com), and if a Council Member so desires, she can be included in issue-specific email dialogues with Committee Members.

5. Summary Findings:

The Steering Committee supports many of the ideas presented by MPG and their desire to improve this blighted site. We appreciate the developer's willingness to meet with the Steering Committee and individually with neighbors on multiple occasions to listen to our concerns. MPG also readily provided information, building renderings, shadowing studies and perspectives whenever the Committee made a request.

The Committee appreciates that most residents who live within a block of the site are long-term homeowners and renters who are invested in the neighborhood and Lapham School. The 1200 block is unique in the E. Washington corridor in that its north-facing half is made up entirely of single-family homes and a few small apartment buildings. Similarly, the north side of Curtis Court, also adjacent to the proposal site, is all small scale residential. These residents recognize and appreciate that their homes are next to potentially large commercial or residential developments, but they want development efforts to follow the T-L Neighborhood Plan and city policies that call for respecting the character and existing scale of the nearby neighborhoods.

The Committee recognizes that the proposal conforms to city zoning regulations and generally follows Urban Design District-8 standards, although several permitted conditional uses will be required. It also generally follows the T-L Neighborhood Plan with some exceptions as noted.

The proposed building height of 39' is at the maximum allowed in UDD-8. The addition of the building's parapet will add perhaps another foot, which the Committee does not find objectionable.

The new building consists of about 75,000 square feet. While recognizing that conditional use is often permitted for buildings of this size that meet the standards governing large retail developments in Sec 33.24(4)(f), the majority of the Committee objects to 75,000 square feet being larger than the requirements in the applicable Commercial Corridor – Transitional (CC-T) zoning. Sec. 28.067 (4)(a) states "Buildings shall not exceed twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet gross floor area for an individual establishment or forty thousand (40,000) square feet gross floor area for a multi-tenant building." Additionally, and most importantly, the T-L Neighborhood Plan says - "it is critical that new buildings respect the existing scale of the neighborhood." The nearby homes are mostly less than 2,000 square feet and less than 25' tall.

The majority of the Committee is not supportive of the proposed density, 70-80 units on the one-acre site, particularly given the lower densities of the nearby residential blocks. The proposed density exceeds the Land Use Recommendations in the T-L Neighborhood Plan for the 1200 block of E. Washington (Community Mixed-Used: average net density 41-60 units/acre.) The Committee recognizes that density is a fungible quantity, but the majority believes that the traffic increase and building mass that will accompany the proposed density will be a detriment to the neighborhood.

A majority of the Committee finds that the architecture of the proposal building is uninspired and too blocky, although most approve of the warehouse style, large windows and its referencing of industrial/warehouse buildings on Madison's isthmus. The red brick cladding that is on four exterior sides is looked upon favorably by Committee Members, but some prefer the addition of accented brick features, e.g., small amounts of lighter brick in geometric patterns or some small lighter brick sections. Some backyard neighbors feel the large windows will decrease their sense of privacy.

The Committee would prefer that there be a distinguishing or iconic feature that set the building apart from similarly styled, new apartment buildings. For example, the inclusion of the Quonset hut's arching front façade or a work of public or commissioned art would allow the design to contribute to the neighborhood rather than simply filling up that portion of the block.

The inset balconies on 3 sides are found to provide needed horizontal variation. Ideally, the building would also have some vertical variation along E. Washington, e.g., a 1- or 2-story section on the building's eastern third along E. Washington. That lower façade could have a deep step-back (15' for more) to the upper floor(s), providing visual interest. The retention of the Quonset hut in an earlier proposal version added that vertical variation and enhanced the block by providing variation of building styles, which was appreciated by the neighborhood and Steering Committee. The likelihood of future development occurring on the city-owned parcel just to the east of the MPG site is significant, so proactively providing a visual break is desirable.

The Steering Committee does not support the extension of the lower 2 floors to the northwest and northeast over the parking level on the back of the building. The privacy of the homes and backyards of the nearby neighbors is already compromised by the 3.5-story building and the Committee finds the extension to exacerbate those impacts.

All Committee Members approve of the grade-level entrance to the first floor commercial space and the apartment building. The large windows for the commercial space are also well regarded.

The Steering Committee supports MPG's expressed desire to have one or two small business tenants in the commercial space and that those tenants provide amenities/services to the nearby neighbors. If a retail entity should occupy the commercial space, the Committee prefers that its customer base include pedestrians and bikers, thereby minimizing traffic and parking impacts.

The Committee is encouraged by MPG's expressed desire to have 20 to 25% of the units be 2-, 3- or 4-bedroom units. The Committee would prefer as many large, family-friendly units as possible so that residents could send children to and support Lapham School. Additionally, residents will children could better integrate into the existing nearby residential neighborhood.

All Committee Members feel that the amount of green space on the building site is insufficient. The Committee believes the UDD-8 requirements for green space do not provide enough area for the residents, especially children, to recreate and enjoy the outdoors. Given that E. Washington Avenue is a major thoroughfare, a larger green space at the rear of the building would provide residents not only with a recreational area, but an outdoor space shielded from traffic noise. An enhanced green space in the rear of the building could also encourage the new residents to interact with the existing strong community of E. Mifflin, N. Few and Curtis Court neighbors.

The addition of solar panels on the rooftop for meeting the electrical needs of the building's common areas is much appreciated by the Committee, as is MPG's willingness to work with Focus on Energy. The Committee finds these features to increase the project's value to the neighborhood and encourages additional similar steps in these directions.

The additional street parking needs, traffic increases and changing traffic patterns expected from the new development are a large concern for the Steering Committee. The inability of exiting residents to access eastbound E. Washington and residents' inability to access N. Few from eastbound E. Washington are the biggest concerns. These drivers are likely to use the 1200 block of the E. Mifflin bike boulevard to access the light at Baldwin or, when accessing the light at Ingersol, to use Curtis Court or the 1100 block of the bike boulevard. The residents

of these residential blocks are already on edge due to speeding cars on the bike boulevard and commercial traffic. Drivers who choose the 1100 block of the E. Mifflin bike boulevard will also potentially endanger elementary school students at Lapham School.

The Committee appreciates MPG's willingness to consider options for addressing the traffic concerns, including, but not limited to, an agreement with the City for underwriting a future left turn lane onto N. Few from eastbound E. Washington. Assuming that the majority of building tenants work west of Few St., this turn lane would likely eliminate substantially more than 25% of the traffic increase on the surrounding residential streets and the bike boulevard.

The impingement of headlights onto the N. Few St. homes across from the parking level driveway is a large concern for the Committee. Traffic exiting the parking level will negatively impact the neighbors' quality of life and their property values. Ideally, the parking level exit should be located closer to E. Washington (or better yet on E. Washington) to alleviate this problem. The Committee appreciates that MPG has expressed a willingness to underwrite the installation of 4-season landscaping in these neighbors' yard, but additional options should be explored due to the small amount of land available for such plantings. MPG should engage those neighbors as soon as possible and the impacts must be addressed and minimized to the neighbors' satisfaction.

Further analyses of the proposal with respect to city code, ordinances and planning documents is provided in *Supplementary Findings* below. If a proposal for this site eventually is endorsed by the TLNA Council, we have also included a list of conditions that the Committee feels should be considered.

All Committee Members hope that MPG will continue the dialogue with the neighborhood and will continue to address the concerns of Tenney-Lapham neighborhood.

6. Supplementary Materials and Findings:

Further explanations and materials can be found at the TLNA Development Committee website.

-- Pertinent sections of city code, ordinances and planning documents related to height/size/density:

- Maximum Building Height is 3 stories, from *T-L Neighborhood Plan* and *UDD-8 Block 6b requirements*. In UDD-8 Sec. 33.24.15(e)(3), "height is based on an average story height of 9-12' (11-15' for the ground floor)." For a 3-story building, that would equate to a maximum height of 15' on the first floor plus 2 floors at 12' for a total of 39', which is the height of the proposed building.
- "It is critical that new buildings respect the existing scale of the neighborhood" from *Plan for redevelopment of the 1100 and 1200 blocks of East Washington Avenue* in the *T-L Neighborhood Plan*. Buildings in neighborhood are mostly less than 2,000 square feet and 25' tall whereas the proposed new building is about 75,000 square feet.
- "Buildings shall not exceed twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet gross floor area for an individual establishment or forty thousand (40,000) square feet gross floor area for a

multi-tenant building. Buildings exceeding this size may be allowed as conditional uses, meeting the standards governing large retail developments in Sec. 33.24(4)(f)," from *Madison CC-T Zoning, Sec. 28.067(4)(a)*. The proposal is for about 75,000 square feet.

- "maintain a rhythm of visual breaks and openings to ensure winter solar access and prevent the effect of a solid wall along the south edge of the neighborhood." from *Plan for redevelopment of the 1100 and 1200 blocks of East Washington Avenue in the T-L Neighborhood Plan*. The proposal has a continuous 130' wide and 39' tall wall that faces residential backyards. Shadow studies show that the building will block the morning sun in winter until past 10:00am for some E. Mifflin neighbors and early morning for some on N. Few and Curtis Court near the equinoxes and in the summer.
 - designated Community Mixed-Used: average net density 41-60 units/acre – *Land Use Recommendations in T-L Neighborhood Plan*. The proposal is for 70-80 units in one acre. We are concerned of the impact on the character of the surrounding neighborhood, traffic, and street parking that will be created by doubling the number of people living in the block.
- Pertinent sections of city code, ordinances and planning documents related to usage and character of surrounding neighborhood:
- "at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the ground-floor area shall be non-residential uses(s)", Sec. 28-151, Dwelling Units in Mixed-Use Buildings (f), from *Madison City Zoning CC-T*. The proposal and discussion indicates about 5-8% of the first floor would be commercial space, although conditional uses are permitted.
 - "for building with a street-facing width greater than forty (40) feet, at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the ground-floor frontage facing the primary street, including all frontage at a street corner, shall be non-residential", Sec. 28-151, Dwelling Units in Mixed-Use Buildings (e). The proposal and discussion indicates perhaps one-third to one-half of the E. Washington frontage would be commercial space, although conditional uses are permitted.
 - "Goal 2: Encourage the increase of owner-occupied housing and decrease the number of properties with absentee landlords and short-term rentals." From *T-L Neighborhood Plan*. The Committee encourages all developments to address this goal.
- Other points to be taken into consideration should a proposal move forward at this site:
- avoid damaging branches and roots of neighbors' trees during construction.
 - Neighbors should have input on all landscaping and fencing plans for the sections of the site that share property lines with E. Mifflin. It is recommended that landscaping include winter features so that some screening functions regardless of season.
 - assure proper drainage away from neighbors' backyards
 - since the location is 1 block from both Lapham Elementary School and Tenney Nursery, attracting young families (not just single professionals) should be a focus. A high percentage of multi-bedroom units would be ideal.

- The impingement of headlights onto the properties across N. Few from the parking level driveway must be minimized and addressed to the satisfaction of those neighbors.
- Street parking on N. Few, Curtis Court and E. Mifflin by residents or business patrons should be discouraged. Residents of the proposed apartments should not have access to residential parking permits should that program be established on nearby streets. In addition, the applicant shall inform all tenants of this facility of the restriction in their apartment leases.
- Traffic calming or diversion tactics should be used to keep all additional traffic generated by tenants or patrons of the project off of Curtis Court.
- Additional car traffic generated by the building should be discouraged from turning onto the E. Mifflin bike boulevard. The City should be encouraged to allow the entrance/exit on E. Washington rather than N. Few.
- The developer should install an electric car charging station and consider a car-sharing spot.
- Indoor and outdoor bicycle parking should meet or exceed City requirements.
- Gardening and green space for tenants should be maximized on the ground level and/or on rooftops, thereby decreasing runoff and increasing energy efficiency.
- Commercial entities that locate in the project should appeal to neighbors and enhance the neighborhood.
- If a restaurant, tavern, bar or similar establishment is included, it should close no later than 11:00pm with any outdoor spaces closing by 10:00pm.
- HVAC systems for the apartments and exhaust fans for the parking level should have minimal noise and should not impact the neighbors' quality of life nor their ability to enjoy their backyards.
- There should be either an onsite manager or the owner should provide a direct phone line and email address for neighbors to use if there is a problem with tenants or the building.
- Should dogs be allowed in the apartment building, tenants should be reminded that dog waste must be picked up and properly disposed of.