

Bobbie Walthall

To: Leslie Soden
Subject: RE: Proposed Downtown Grocery Store & Apartment Complex

From: Sarah Norman <sarahenorm@gmail.com>

Date: August 8, 2017 at 7:46:49 PM CDT

To: tmarkus@lawrenceks.org, lzollner@lawrenceks.org, sday@lawrenceks.org, lsoden@lawrenceks.org,
sboley@lawrenceks.org, mamyx@lawrenceks.org, matthewjherbert@gmail.com, llarsen@lawrenceks.org

Subject: Proposed Downtown Grocery Store & Apartment Complex

To the Lawrence Historic Resources Commission, City Manager, City Commissioners, and City Planner:

I am writing in regards to the proposed downtown grocery store at 700 New Hampshire. While I am interested in and supportive of the idea of having a grocery store downtown, and while I am in support of East Lawrence no longer being considered a food desert, I have multiple concerns about the proposal. I fear that this project has become one that started as an effort for there to be a grocery store downtown, but has turned into a means to create yet another lofty downtown apartment complex.

My home is located at 712 Rhode Island, which faces the current Borders property. In reviewing the plans for the grocery store and apartment complex, it is my understanding that the proposed building would be situated in the northeast portion of the property, nearly directly along Rhode Island St. Building such a large building so close to the Rhode Island Street poses the following concerns to our currently quaint and quiet street:

- ☐ Noise- there would inevitably be a considerable amount of noise during the construction project. In addition, once the project is complete, there would be a lot of traffic from people coming and going to the grocery store, as well as to the apartments. What is now a peaceful area is threatened to become a loud, disruptive area. If cars are honking or alarms are going off, sleep and day to day life will be disturbed. In addition, if deliveries are being made to the grocery store in the wee hours of the morning, this will be disruptive. There are bedrooms located on the west side of my home and many of my neighbors' homes. These bedrooms are already exposed to a lot of the downtown bustle, but the noises associated with a grocery store and apartment complex would be jarring.
- ☐ Safety- In East Lawrence we appreciate character, but we also want our neighborhood to be safe. Frequently when I go by the Dillon's at 17th and Massachusetts I see homeless individuals sleeping or resting on the benches outside the store. While there aren't homes in such close proximity the Dillon's store, I feel that should individuals use the outside of the new store as a resting spot, it would draw safety concerns.
- ☐ Traffic- Naturally, a grocery store and an apartment complex will create a lot more traffic. I am concerned with how traffic will flow. The Dillon's on Massachusetts Street often has a congested parking lot that is difficult to navigate. It is my understanding that the proposal includes a traffic cut out that would allow the flow of traffic to come onto Rhode Island Street from the parking lot. This is absolutely unacceptable. We reside on a small street. I have two children and there are other children who live on the street. Adding such traffic to such a small street is in no way safe. In addition, by creating a cut out onto the street, our houses would constantly be exposed to glaring headlights, which is intrusive and disruptive.
- ☐ Parking- I am concerned as to if there will be adequate parking for the tenants of the apartment complex, as well as the employees and patrons of the grocery store. It is my understanding that the employees of the grocery store will be expected to park in a separate lot that has not yet been built. As it is now, there is limited downtown parking at times. With the addition of other multi-story apartment complexes with minimal parking on New Hampshire Street, street parking will become more difficult for homeowners on Rhode Island St. Employees from downtown businesses currently park on Rhode Island daily as it is, thus making it difficult for homeowners to find parking at times.
- ☐ Loss of Natural Light- The Hobbs Taylor Loft at the southwest corner of the block is a large building that blocks the sunlight from our street in the evening. By having a multi-story building erected in such close proximity to the

homes at the north end of the block, we will lose hours of natural sun each day. Coming from the Southwest, I love the sunshine and having it blocked from my home will create a different feel throughout the house. In addition, I have multiple neighbors who have taken great pride in nurturing gardens in front of their homes. These gardens will be threatened with a loss of natural light. It is unfortunate that Lawrence has not yet enacted the Right to Light law.

☐ Structural Damage- My home is over 100 years old. While I take good care of it, I am deeply concerned of how the close construction will affect the structure of my home not only during the construction process, but also how it could impact the viability of my home in years to come. This could potentially have a negative impact on property values for those houses on Rhode Island St.

☐ Odor- The grocery store and apartment complex will inevitably produce a lot of trash, and thus unpleasant odors. This is yet another example of a possible disruption to our happy living.

☐ Privacy- Currently our houses peer onto the Borders building and are protected by a row of shrubs. With a multi-story building, we will easily be giving apartment dwellers the ability to peer into our homes and yards. With the building to be located so close to Rhode Island St., my family and neighbors will lose privacy.

☐ Historical Preservation- The Donnelly Livery Stable wall was maintained with the Borders building. With the grocery store and apartment complex, what will become of this part of Lawrence history that dates back to the early 1900s?

☐ Viability- In today's increasingly technological society, the way commerce is being conducted is rapidly changing. Large retail stores are closing down and more individuals are using the Internet to purchase items. Placing a grocery store order online is becoming more popular. There has been a lot of talk about Drones being used for quick delivery of items. How will the rate of technological change affect the viability of a small, downtown grocery store? Will it become another vacant building, just like Borders, and if so, how will that impact downtown and the neighborhood?

While I highlight many concerns, I want to reiterate that I am not opposed to a downtown grocery store. However, I feel that the current proposal negatively impacts the neighborhood. I would like to see drastic alterations to the current proposal, including moving the building away from Rhode Island St. and to the north to mimic the other complexes that are being built along New Hampshire. I also am adamant about the elimination of a cutout for traffic onto Rhode Island St. and excluding a pool and eastward facing balconies from the apartments. I would like there to be consideration of permit parking along Rhode Island St. for homeowners, and an addition of a barrier between the grocery store and Rhode Island St. to reduce noise and unpleasant odors. I do hope that all involved in this project consider the long-standing viability of this project while maintaining the historical aspects of the area. Thank you for your time and your continued investment in Lawrence.

Sincerely,

Sarah Norman
712 Rhode Island St.
[\(785\)760-4432](tel:7857604432)
sarahrenorm@gmail.com

Kirk McClure
707 Tennessee Street
Lawrence, KS 66044
mcclure@ku.edu

August 14, 2017

City Commission, Lawrence, Kansas

Mayor Leslie Soden

lsoden@lawrenceks.org

Vice Mayor Stuart Boley

sboley@lawrenceks.org

Commissioner Mike Amyx

mamyx@lawrenceks.org

Commissioner Matthew Herbert

matthewjherbert@gmail.com

Commissioner Lisa Larsen

llarsen@lawrenceks.org

Re: **Subsidy to a Downtown Grocery Store**

Mayor, Vice Mayor and Commissioners:

The City is about to begin a process to determine whether or not it should participate in the development of a downtown grocery store. This process should include multiple detailed studies.

Market Analysis: The City's analysis should include market analysis. Market analysis answers the question: Does Lawrence have a shortage of grocery space either in stores or in square feet?

For too long, the City allowed developers to choose the locations of grocery stores. This approach led to clustering of stores in a few locations, rather than a healthy dispersal throughout the city. This mistake cannot be undone by subsidizing a grocery store, even if it is built in a desirable location, if the market already has enough stores.

The City should not embark in a project to develop a heavily subsidized grocery store unless it can demonstrate that there is a shortage of stores or a shortage of square feet of grocery space.

Feasibility Analysis: The City's analysis should examine project feasibility where subsidies are requested.

Too often, the City takes the approach that if the project is not feasible without subsidy, then it assumes that the full subsidy amount should be granted. Full feasibility analysis should examine whether other, less costly, alternatives will serve the City's needs adequately. The City should not give a presumption of validity to the developer's proposals. Often an alternative proposal, including doing nothing, will serve

the community's interests better. Searching for this better alternative needs to become a part of the feasibility analysis.

In the past, when the City used a consultant to answer the question: "But for" the subsidy, would this project be feasible? The City should not pose a simple yes-or-no question to the consultant. The consultant will answer this question narrowly and provide no further guidance. Feasibility analysis is much more complicated. The City needs guidance on whether a lower amount of subsidy would be sufficient, whether an alternative project on this site would better serve the City's needs and whether a different location would serve the needs of the City at a lower cost.

Benefit-Cost Analysis: The City's analysis should examine the benefits and costs of each significant development. For too long, the City assumed that each project, if properly zoned, is good for the community. This assumption is wrong. Many new projects serve only to pull demand away from other, usually older, neighborhoods and shopping districts creating depressed values and disinvestment. The City needs to better understand the implications of each new development upon existing properties. Often the benefits of the new development do not justify the costs to the older neighborhoods.

The City should undertake careful benefit-cost analysis to ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs of this project compared to comparable projects located elsewhere or to doing nothing. Retail space, such as a grocery store, does not produce jobs or tax revenues. All the groceries that would be purchased in the new store could be purchased in existing stores. Thus, the spending that produces the jobs and taxes is simply shifting from existing stores to the proposed store with little or no net benefits to the taxpayers.

The City needs to examine carefully the assumptions that are involved in proper calibration of the benefits and costs of the proposed project.

Recommendation: Perform the three analyses listed above in detail, charging the analysts to guide the City to the best negotiated outcome. Avoid asking simple yes-or-no questions and scrutinize the assumptions used to generate each answer.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk McClure", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Kirk McClure