

Robin Proebsting

From: Aurora Bearse <aurora.bearse@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2020 12:41 PM
To: Nicole Gaudette
Subject: Re: 2750 77th Ave SE Property

I am neither an architect nor a planner, so I can't provide guidance on public space best practices. All I can say is our current development-created public spaces don't add any value.

A quick google search, though, shows that resources are available for designing useful plazas and public spaces. For example:

<https://www.pps.org/article/the-power-of-10>

<https://www.pps.org/article/you-asked-we-answered-6-examples-of-what-makes-a-great-public-space>

https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1251&context=masters_theses_2

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/pops/pops.page>

Again, personally I'd give up a plaza with a forlorn bench or dirty fountain in exchange for a larger building footprint with more affordable housing units, but that's just my personal preference.

Thanks for considering my comments.

On Thu, Feb 6, 2020 at 12:06 PM Nicole Gaudette <nicole.gaudette@mercergov.org> wrote:

Thank you so much for your thoughtful comments. These comments are great input for a possible future code update for the city's Town Center standards. I am interested if you have some thoughts about what a "best practice for the outdoor spaces would be. I would be happy to pass along the ideas to the applicant. 10% of the housing units must be affordable housing units. The affordable housing unit mix must be in ratio to the non-affordable units. This would result in a mix of affordable studios, 1 bedrooms, 2 bedrooms, and 3 bedrooms.

Nicole Gaudette

Senior Planner

City of Mercer Island – Community Planning & Development

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From: Aurora Bearse <aurora.bearse@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2020 11:36 AM

To: Nicole Gaudette <nicole.gaudette@mercergov.org>

Subject: [2750 77th Ave SE](#) Property

Please accept this as a comment on the proposed development.

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I am completely in favor of mixed use high-density development in the MI town center within walking distance to public transportation. We are desperately in need of a vibrant town center. I, therefore, support this proposed development.

I am adding a few issues that I'd like to see the city and developer take into account when finalizing the building plans. Some are specific to this plan, others are comments that should be taken into account for this and any future similar development:

- 1) "Public spaces" like plazas often become unused dead spaces. Just look at the current "public spaces" with little light, dirty or dead fountains, etc., that already populate our town center. Has the developer or the city looked into best practices for these spaces and ensured that this proposal makes the most of any public space?
- 2) There is a perception that we have no public parking downtown. As someone who regularly uses the downtown core, I don't think this is true, but the issue should be addressed. It might be worth adding some on-street parking pullouts around the building for people running errands. If this isn't done, access to public under-building or underground parking needs to be a) very well marked; b) very well lit (seen as safe); c) of an appropriate size (have you tried to fit in the spaces at Tabit Square, for example?) and d) allow for at least some walk-off spaces. There should also be electric car chargers available for public use.
- 3) I cannot tell from the plans, but has there been any discussion of adding some below-market/affordable housing apartments? I'd prioritize this public benefit wayyy above a public plaza.
- 4) Has the city considered amending its retail code to ensure that any new ground floor/street facing establishments will contribute to the vitality of the town center. In my opinion, doctor/therapist offices, banks, and other similar facilities that are only open 9-5 M-F make a town center feel like a dead space on evenings and weekends. They should not be in storefront properties. In contrast, retail stores, restaurants, gyms, coffee shops. etc., add to the town center's vibrancy.

Thanks for listening.

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