



234 Winder Street • Detroit, MI 48201 • www.BrushParkCDC.org • BrushParkCDC@Gmail.com

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Joel Smith
NEUMANN/SMITH ARCHITECTURE
JSmith@neumannsmith.com

Re: SoMA Parking Deck

The Brush Park Community Development Corporation (the "CDC") forwards this letter in response to the proposed SoMA Parking Deck development for the property located on Erskine (the "Project").

The updated Project plan for the proposed new construction of a 5 story stand-alone parking deck was presented before the CDC and the Brush Park community at a public meeting held on March 19, 2019. There were limited comments received by the Community, which were generally not supportive of aspects of the project.

After careful consideration, by a vote of 4 in favor and 5 objections, the Board voted to decline to support the Project. We understand that our decision is a departure from our prior support of the project, and Attachment A contains the opinions offered by the Board during the voting process for your consideration and provide explanation on the result of the Board's vote.

Should you have questions or concerns, please feel to reach out to us at hello@BrushParkCDC.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karissa Holmes", written in a cursive style.

Karissa Holmes, Secretary

Cc: City of Detroit Planning & Development
Historic District Commission

Attachment A: Poll Comments for “SoMA Parking Deck”

Below are the opinions submitted by CDC Board Members during the voting process for reference and consideration. Please note, the opinions have no bearing on the Board's final vote and are included for reference only.

Comment 1

While I support the development of the parking structure in general because I believe it is necessary to support the development of the West Elm hotel, I am not in support (and do not believe that the community supports) the current traffic plan/ingress/egress, and based upon the developers "traffic study" do not believe that they will seriously consider the valid concerns of our community if we provide support on this project. The traffic study is seriously deficient and they did not even attempt to address the first question: "Erskine traffic levels are already at capacity and increased traffic will cause significant delays and undue hardship for the surrounding area". The developer has provided no justification for why traffic cannot flow from Eliot, other than the fact that it does not seem to want to do so. The developer seems to be completely disregarding the very real concerns of residents and business owners who live with the impact of traffic in Brush Park on a daily basis. We have seen how a 30 car parking lot on Winder has created serious traffic impediments and safety concerns and the developer has not adequately addressed how they plan to mitigate those concerns. I would ask that the developer move ingress/egress to Eliot, which is a non-residential street. Lastly, although the CDC supported this deck in the past, we believed that the developer would develop residential above the deck and that is why we supported it. We do not generally support stand-alone parking decks as we do not want our neighborhood to become a parking lot/deck. It is very disappointing that the developer has decided to no longer move forward with the residential portion of this development and that it has no clear plans to develop the rest of the land it controls.

Comment 2

I wholeheartedly agree with and second each concern articulated by [Comment 1]

Comment 3

I support the overall project, however I object to using Erskine as the main entrance/exit. It makes more sense to use Eliot, especially since there are no residential properties on that block of Eliot. The residents of Brush Park do not want MORE event-related traffic/congestion.

Comment 4

While a very different version of this project was previously approved, my contention at the time was building a parking deck in the neighborhood, however I approved at the time because it was mixed use with residential, and more important to me it was closer to Woodward than the interior of the neighborhood. Subsequently, when another development wanted to build a parking deck within the interior of the neighborhood, our previous approval of SOMA was brought up as precedence by both the city and developer because of this I cannot support a stand-alone parking structure within Brush Park with no ancillary use such as the residential that was previously attached to the project. I support the Bonstelle development and understand a parking deck is needed to support it, but listening to the concerns of the community to this and other developments I cannot support the proposal as is.

Comment 5

I echo the thoughts of other Board members in that I strongly do not support a stand-alone parking structure in the neighborhood, and the intent of the original plan presented years ago has significantly changed. There is no reason why this building cannot be and should not be truly mixed use, where parking is an ancillary use rather than the primary use as it is in this case. Not only would it set a dangerous



precedent in the neighborhood, but specific to this parcel, it would not maximize or even come close to reaching the potential of this site. It would also negatively impact residents in this immediate area and diminish the urban fabric of this block. The structure should not be approved without residential, office, and/or a similarly active use as the primary use, with enough parking only to support those primary uses and the adjacent hotel. There are many other design solutions for this site that do not include 500+ public parking spaces; the CDC would be happy to discuss some of those with the developer if they are having design challenges and/or having trouble understanding the Brush Park community's goals. Furthermore, residents are generally not supportive of this project based on comments at the March CDC meeting. It is also general consensus among the community that standalone parking structures should not be allowed anywhere.

Comment 6

Until they can provide a solid feasible plan for handling traffic at that corner of Brush Park which feeds into a heavily used intersection at Woodward Avenue and Mack Avenue, I cannot support building a 5 story parking lot - and, especially since it's use would be seriously questioned in the absence of proximal commercial and residential activity.

