

August 30, 2017

RE: **Applicant Responses to AFO Comments**  
Crossroads Project  
7200 & 7250 France Avenue South  
Edina, MN 55435

1. *The proposed setbacks of 40' on 72nd Street support the transition from the neighborhood, however the proposed building heights do not meet the Work Group's intention to have buildings that are closest to the neighborhood with building heights similar to the adjacent 1 and 2 story houses.*

**Response:**

We believe the economic feasibility of the project, especially the increased cost of stormwater management imposed on the 7200 France parcel due to historical accidents, requires greater scale of this phase. We have attempted to address the transition of this scale from the adjacent houses and believe our plan is appropriate. We are open to exploring other options including setbacks (which could provide attractive outdoor space for apartment residents) but suggest that these other options need to balance both views and privacy concerns expressed by the immediate neighbors.

2. *The distance from the neighborhood on the west side of the property is only 70' to the new development. The proposed building, 3 stores high, at approximately 250' long, is not in scale with the existing adjacent neighborhood houses. It is suggested at the proposed distance that the building height be no greater than 2 stories and the façade be designed to better fit with the scale of the adjacent houses. Three story elements could be used to gain occupiable space on this portion of the building but should meet a minimum setback of 20 feet from the west façade of the building. The four story portion above would need to be set back a minimum of 80' from the west façade. It is critical that this aspect of the proposed development be in scale with the neighborhood and is more sensitively treated as a transition between this single family context and the architecture of the broader development.*

**Response:**

Agree in concept to the concerns but believe there is at least a partial misunderstanding of the current plan. The current design breaks the 72<sup>nd</sup> elevation into 3 elements. The western-most element is the "short end" of the 3-story western sub-building mass. Then above and to the east of this is a massing that transitions the building to the higher floors. This then meets a break created by a dramatic 2-story breezeway. This breezeway creates views into the courtyard and also serves as the covered entry to the apartment component of the building and for bike storage for both apartment visitors and Wellness Center visitors. Finally, the western-most element of this 72<sup>nd</sup> elevation (to the east of the breezeway) is segmented between a 2-story "base" of the Wellness Center and the apartments above.

This segmentation is accentuated by a prominent setback that allows the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor apartments to have more prominent patios that use the Post-Tension slab.

I agree this nuance is not well captured by the drawings but this is the intent. We intend to refine all this further in the Design Development phase of architectural work.

3. *The 6-story portion of the north façade along 72nd Street dominates the scale of the street, which is intended to have a similar 'residential' character in scale. Based on the 1 story commercial base of the building along France, the angular geometry of the 5-story portion could be shifted south to expose a 1-story base to meet the residential scale along 72nd.*

**Response:**

See response above for #2, related to same elevation. Open to refinement of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street massing, façade treatment and materials.

4. *The 14-story portion of the proposal on Gallagher Drive and France Avenue seems appropriate in scale.*

**Response:**

Agree.

5. *The intersection at France Avenue and Gallagher is an important mid-"super block" connection for pedestrians and needs to be identified in this project as a public realm feature on par with the bike bridge. That being said, the proposed bike connection is, in our opinion, in conflict with the Work Group's efforts on focusing attention on the street-level public realm. With no guarantee that the bike bridge will be funded, a more development-ready solution would be to partner with the City and County to create a bike and pedestrian friendly intersection that would create identity for the project and the district. In addition to the Gallagher Drive/France Ave intersection, a pedestrian-friendly crosswalk should also be considered on 72nd and France as well.*

**Response:**

Partially agree. This is an important balance and subject for the next phase of Design Development. We feel it is important that the ground plain and the bridge plain (which we have every expectation will be built, but perhaps later subject to funding and approval timing) both be "public realm" features with a similar level of quality, accessibility and prominence.

An important symbolic / policy objective of the project is to demonstrate a new priority for pedestrians and bicyclists. We believe this can be achieved by emphasizing the ways those modes of transportation / users can enjoy the project and connections to area amenities in a way that is "more favorable" than the current car-centric environment. Some concepts for Design Development include:

- "Rounded" hardscape area on grade AND 2<sup>nd</sup> level that feature seating, including covered seating on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level;
- Public art that "spans" the 2 levels and engages pedestrians who arrive at the project from either level;

- Landscaping that “grows up” and “hangs down” to tie the two plains together visually and experientially;
- Blending of inside and outside architectural and landscaping features at the corner to “blur the line” between inside and outside;
- Innovative tenancy and space uses on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level to also blend the inside and outside, such as combined / fused bike shop, bike workshop and coffee shop on the south side of the bridge connection and the fitness area for the housing component on the north side of the bridge connection.

6. *Is this project intended to be realized in phases? The narrative alludes that in a couple places but the phasing strategy is not clear in the sketch plan submission.*

**Response:**

- The 7200 parcel segment is expected to be developed first, ideally starting in Spring 2018. When that secures a TCO, select tenants now in 7250 are expected to move into the Wellness Center of the 7200 parcel. Then the 7250 building will be vacated and ready for demolition and new construction.