

West Broadway Rezoning, Public Comments

Sent: Friday, June 12, 2009 1:13 PM

Thomas,

The 2 floor requirement is good for aesthetic purposes and offers and sense of uniformity. Seeing 1 story structures that aren't set off by themselves like cub foods should not be allowed. All buildings along West Broadway from 94 to penn should be 2 stories minimum.

With that being said I am new to the concept of Infill development. I do not believe in the case of West Broadway Alive this is a good idea. It is way past time to start over on that street and updating the old doesn't make it new and I thought new is what that project was all about. Of course my concerns may come late as that is the direction of West Broadway Alive but I offer it anyway. Also, apts, condos above ground floor retail space is not a good idea ether unless the owner of the ground floor business choses to live upstairs. To many old buildings on West Broadway now are dilapitated because of transcient tenants. This is a repeat of the past mistakes.

Think of the Subdivision Sumnerfield just south of Old Highland, if the infill development idea took hold there the beautiful subdivision we see now would not exist. West Broadway has had such a bad reputation for decades it is hard for me to understand why a complete demolition and new construction of that area was never the main plan. Again think of Sumnerfield Subdivision, it used to be public housing projects as I understand it. The old buildings were torn down to replace them with new ones but they made a futher mistake, they allowed the same people who made the projects bad to move into the new condos, apts,etc. The same problem will resurface within the next 5 yrs.

West Broadway should be a pedestrian friendly project but not a loitering, drug selling, no place to go, hang out spot for the same bad element of people that live here now to infiltrate. I fear the project will be a total loss without safe guards to prevent a reoccurrence of the bad ole North Minneapolis days of which I am glad I missed. Gas stations should not be in the middle of West Broadway i,e, near Fremont, Penn, Lyndale, only at 94 or past the CVS towards the Robbinsdale border. SuperAmerica can be at the corner of I-94 on the other side of Sue's Store. Wendy's and Taco Bell need serious updating, move Broadway liquor closer to I-94, the health clinics, laundry, banks-add TCF, . Wells Fargo ATMs Sorry for the long ramble.

My vote to keep the 2 story minimum in place, no rental apts above ground floor retail

Sent: Friday, June 12, 2009 4:40 PM

Stick with the program: two story structures. It is too enticing to abandon any plan when financing looks promising, but in the long run, veering from a wise decision for quick gain is not in the best interest of the community.

Sent: Friday, June 12, 2009 7:46 PM

Hi Tom,

My first concern is parking. With new development... will there be enough... and what has to be 'removed' to make room for it? Could/would the city/developers take over private lots to be used as surface parking? Could a developer obtain a zoning variance to develop residential area for parking? Specifically with Cub Foods... 36 spaces for the only, and heavily-used grocery store in North? That seems very tight. Also, where will the parking be accessed for high-dense development on WB? Could our streets turn into '1-hour parking' zones?

My second concern is that the city is willing to deviate from a plan because a developer is showing interest in developing NOW. It would REALLY help to know who it is, what they want to do, etc, but overall, if their plan

doesn't fit what the city has been spending our money on... and what so many residents have spent time working on... then why compromise? It sounds like if they need a variance to the WB Alive plan, then NO WAY. It needs to be done right this time, and if this developer isn't willing to adapt or at least compromise to the WB Plan, then they can head somewhere else.

Personally, I feel more confident to see our existing, original, neglected structures renovated and reborn... vs slapping up a few new structures... which would look out of place against the existing 'shanty' buildings and out of style in 10-20 years again. I think this is a time of great opportunity on WB... for the right and WRONG people... so the city better be discriminating when they are approached by large-scale developers. This is OUR neighborhood... OUR WB... not an area for anyone to just come in and do as they please... as it appears has been done for decades.

Sorry if this comes off as accusatory or negative... far from it... but I would rather see slower, steadier, stable growth from people/developers who are dedicated to our community than a big boom-then-bust where the money promptly exits the community (can I mention the Mpls 'condo' explosion?). I think it's incredible that developers and entrepreneurs are seeing the real potential that exists here... we just need them to understand and adapt to the needs of the neighborhoods.

My humble opinion.

Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 9:53 AM

Tom,

Keep it two story minimum! Question what is Maximum? Your own points for the larger mass of building (architectural reasoning) along with added numbers of new folks ie consumers, eyes on the street etc. speaks for it's self.

We have waited to long for the vision that has occurred through the "Alive" process to sell out now. Single story new development along a corridor that still has some of its venerable 2, 3 and 4 story classics would be a slap in the face and would cut short the sociological goal of folks on the avenue to help business to survive and to take back the street.

I really like the idea of filling in these parking lots with compatible structures. It is a win, win for all to keep viable and needed buildings/businesses and enhance the avenue at the same time.

You mentioned Penn/Lowry Architecturally that development leaves a bit to be desired! I would use it as an example of what "not" to build on Broadway. Both facades are flat, no texture or character no bays or inset doorways. Also, the retail first floor shops are too low. That is the ceiling height on older vintage buildings was usually 10 to 12 feet. The new lower height retail in this development along with others I have seen makes them look squashed and does not set them apart from the office or lofts etc. above them. Not to mention; what's with the bank of gas meters on the Penn side of the development? Tacky to say the least.

Same goes for the St. Annes assisted living project. They forgot it backs (ie it really Fronts) on West Broadway as well. They at least didn't put the gas meters out there! Too late now for any significant architectural help. Maybe shade structures over the South facing windows would add some character. However, it sure could use some landscape assistance. Pergolas, arbors, trees, patios, seating, rain gardens, landscaping. Also, when we add landscaping to projects lets insist on proper maintenance and a way to water it.

Both projects are good additions to the North Side, but like Maxwell Smart architecturally they - "Missed it by that much"

I'd like to add a "thank you" Tom for your input, your concern and keeping us in the loop it is greatly appreciated!

Sent: Monday, June 15, 2009 11:14 PM

Once a building development is allowed you're stuck with it. If there are any doubts or hesitations about this kind of development I would say **STICK TO THE PLAN**. West Broadway Alive has been a community led vision. The thought of pushing non-conforming projects through just seems like development for development sake. Look at Kmart of Nicollet Ave S to see what that sort of approach will get you 20 years from now.

Of course there may be exceptions. If the development is **GOOD**, and is community focused for the **LONG TERM**, then it certainly should be considered. Let's just make absolutely sure that the neighborhood will benefit in the long term, not just the pocketbook of the developer.

Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009 9:10 AM

Tom,

I'm not sure what the council will do about two-story buildings, but if this measure passes it would give more density to the area (for good or for bad).

I don't like to see us leap into something that we may regret later.

Developers haven't always been upfront in my estimation. So we need to be sure they have our neighborhood as the highest motive and not just dollars for them.

My 2 cents

Sent: Monday, June 15, 2009 11:19 AM

Tom,

Please add me to the list of neighbors who would not change the two-story minimum for the convenience of developers. If there is a compelling reason to grant a variance, we can do so, but only then. You have done a wonderful job of shepherding a vision for West Broadway from conception to almost-completion. We would be remiss to sell it out now.

Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2009 5:25 PM

Tom - you outline the issue very well. It is certainly an important issue for the community to consider.

"Mandatory" two story zoning will certainly impede any new retail development in the 1-3 year horizon. Given the fragile condition of the existing retail businesses on West Broadway, that does not seem to me to be a good idea. Perhaps a stronger economy will give that commercial corridor a big lift, but there is certainly downside too. If the area cannot maintain a solid base of successful retailers, stores could close, vacancies could increase and social problems escalate. New retail development would help provide the energy and increased sales the area needs. My recommendation is not to abandon the goal of higher density development. I just think flexibility is the key. Permitting well-designed single level retail, especially if it is located right on the street would be a big improvement. If two plus stories was the goal (and perhaps a pre-condition for city financial assistance), while well-designed one story developments could also be permitted with appropriate oversight - that would be the way I would suggest proceeding.

Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2009 9:14 AM

I say "stick with the plan." It would be a slap in the face to all those citizens who participated in the planning process to have it ignored yet one more time because some "developer" came along who wanted to do something different. That is the exact same reasoning that got us the "Target" development (now CUB Foods), and the Hawthorne Crossing development – all of which were contrary to the plan which citizens spent hours participating in and which were opposed at public meetings by the same citizens. Those developments were forced down our throats by city officials and city bureaucrats who told us that they were the "experts" and knew what was "best" for us in north Minneapolis. We have plenty of examples of that kind of thinking now on Plymouth Avenue, West Broadway, and Lowry. PLEASE – let's do something different this time around. If Lake Street and Franklin Avenue can attract the kind of developer which produce the kind of Main Street development envisioned in the West Broadway Alive Plan, then I don't see why the same thing cannot happen on West Broadway.

I also agree with Greg Rosenow that the development at Penn and Lowry should not be held up as the standard for West Broadway. Compared to the developments on Lake Street and Franklin Avenue—that would be a very big disappointment.

Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2009 3:10 PM

I recommend the adoption of the two or more floors requirement.

Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2009 4:35 PM

I also recommend the adoption of the two or more floors requirement.

Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2009 4:59 PM

I agree with the others; please stay with the plan as original developed.

Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2009 5:00 PM

Tom,

I agree with folks as well. Let's stick with the WBA plan that people have already put so much time, energy and thought into. I think we're confident that development that really benefits this community and that is line with the WBA vision will come - no exceptions needed.

Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2009 9:09 PM

I too agree with adoption of the two or more floors requirement.

Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2009 10:52 PM

I also agree with adoption of the two or more floors requirement.