



July 19, 2018

The Honorable Walter Burnett
27th Ward Alderman
4 N. Western Ave.
Chicago, IL 60612

Re: Zoning Change for 725 W. Washington

Dear Alderman Burnett,

On Monday, October 9, representatives of Related Midwest presented a proposal for a 680 ft (58-story) building located on the south side of Randolph east of Halsted along the expressway. Designed by Roger Ferris & Partners, the building would house an Equinox gym and hotel (165 keys), with 370 residential units above. A low-rise parking structure would be located along Washington.

The developer has purchased all of the buildings on the parcel between Randolph and Court Place (including the building on the northwest corner where Haymarket Pub is located), as well as the structure at 724 W. Washington. Under this proposal, these parcels would be upzoned, with each of the buildings transferring their floor area ratio to the tower. As proposed, the site would change from a mix of zoning (DX-5 and DX-7) and FAR (8.32, 7.0, 5.0) to DX-7 (11.5). This would require a \$4.86M contribution to the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund.

Representatives of Neighbors of West Loop were present at the January 31, 2018 community meeting for this development. Residents were pleased to see the vacant site become activated, both before construction (Related has established a pop-up retail village on the site during the summer of 2018) and as a result of the proposed project. The audience was also glad to see that half of the affordable housing will be included on-site (with the remaining affordable housing provided within the City's ARO Pilot Area). However the community expressed significant concern about traffic flow on the site, especially the proposal's reliance on the congested Halsted/Court Place intersection to provide egress to and from the site. Some members of the audience questioned whether or not there is sufficient demand for the amount of housing this project would provide, suggesting that an increase in hotel rooms and decrease in residential units would be beneficial.

The development team returned to our Development Committee on April 9, 2018 to present a revised traffic circulation concept. Under the plan, all traffic would enter the site from Halsted via Court Place. Vehicles would be able to exit the site westbound via Court Place, northbound to (one way westbound) Randolph, or southbound to (one way eastbound) Washington. Taxi and transportation network companies (e.g., Uber, Lyft) would drop off visitors using a bump-out along Randolph. This layout would



be more functional than the original concept, however we suggest that the egress point on Halsted not permit westbound-to-southbound left turns to avoid safety issues with left-turning vehicles from Court Place.

The development team provided their traffic study for the area, which we found to be detailed with reasonable assumptions. However, while we are appreciative that the study incorporated traffic demand from several nearby development projects, it omitted significant projects like 727 W. Madison and the H2O site. This underscores the need for a comprehensive traffic model of the neighborhood that includes all planned development projects.

As part of the April presentation to our committee and the community meeting for Related Midwest's proposed 900 W. Randolph project, the developer presented concepts to convert the service drives along the north and south side of Randolph east of Halsted into patio areas/sidewalked public space. Our committee would be supportive of this proposal for the south side of Halsted only based on 1) the isolated nature of this service drive and 2) that all properties along this section of the service drive (i.e., Haymarket Pub and the Related Midwest building) favor the conversion. Considering that the introduction of public space would benefit the proposed tower, we do not feel that any public funds (including the Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus funds) should be expended on this service drive conversion. As stated in previous position letters from our committee, we feel that any proposed changes to other service drives along Randolph should be evaluated through a community process.

Neighbors of West Loop supports this project. The proposed building would serve as a striking gateway to the western portion of Randolph Street. Though its scale would surpass other structures in the neighborhood, the project's location east of Halsted and along the expressway lessens our concerns about the building's size, which would be a concern if the building were located farther west. In particular, our committee appreciated the development team's efforts to address ground-level circulation issues for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians, to activate the site, and to retain affordable housing on-site.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Matthew Letourneau
Chairperson, Development Committee
NEIGHBORS OF WEST LOOP

cc: Mike Ellch, Related Midwest
Rich Klawiter, DLA Piper
David Reifman, Chicago Department of Planning and Development
Eleanor Gorski, Chicago Department of Planning and Development
Neighbors of West Loop Development Committee