



DMNA
DOWNTOWN
MINNEAPOLIS
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION

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September 18, 2018

Hilary Dvorak, Principal City Planner
City of Minneapolis CPED
250 South 4th Street, Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Garden Communities – 240 Park Avenue

Dear Hilary:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association regarding the Garden Communities project located at 240 Park Avenue South. Don Becker from Garden Communities and Chris Palkowitsch and others from BKV Group presented the project to the DMNA Land Use Committee on two occasions; August 6 and September 4.

At their first meeting with the DMNA LUC, Becker introduced Garden Communities and described other similar projects that they have developed across the country. Palkowitsch from BKV Group then reviewed the architectural and site plans for the project. The plan calls for a 17-story tower at the corner of Park and Washington Avenues. It includes 201 market-rate apartments with 5,000 square feet of retail on Washington Avenue. There will also be a six-level parking garage with five of those levels being above ground. The group explained that the apartments would wrap the parking podium.

After the group's first presentation to the DMNA LUC, there were a lot of questions and discussion. The committee expressed concern about the placement of the building on site; the height and scale of the building; the architectural style of the building when placed in context with historic properties in the Mill District; and the plan for the public realm space. There was also a lot of discussion regarding the height of the parking podium and the proposed number of parking spaces. The committee expressed concern about the overall lack of parking available in this part of downtown.

The developer came back to the DMNA LUC on September 4, with revised plans. The revised plan pulls the building further off of Park Avenue, which provides for a wider sidewalk more in-line with the neighborhood and increases light to adjacent buildings. Residents from adjacent properties still had concerns about the overall height of the building, but the committee is willing to support the CUP for additional stories if the developer looks for ways to enhance the pedestrian experience. The expectation is that the developer will follow guidelines established by the City's Pathways to Places project, as well as the vision established for Park and Portland Avenues. The committee challenged the developer to make other design changes to make the building more appealing to those who live close by and have to look at the parking podium. The committee suggested pushing more of the parking podium underground.

The DMNA LUC recommended providing a letter of support for the preliminary concept plan for Garden Communities project at 240 Park Avenue. The committee looks forward to reviewing more finalized plans at a future meeting.

The DMNA Board reviewed this project at their meeting on September 17. A resident from an adjacent building expressed concerns that the developer is seeking a variance to reduce the west interior side yard setback from 10 feet to 0 feet. After some discussion, the board concluded that it is opposed to this variance and would ask the Planning Commission to deny the request.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at christie@thedmna.org, or 320-583-4573.

Kind regards,

Christie Rock Hantge
DMNA Neighborhood Coordinator

CC: Don Becker, Garden Communities
Chris Palkowitsch, BKV Group
Council Member Steve Fletcher
Joe Tamburino, DMNA Board Chair
Kevin Frazell, DMNA Land Use Committee Chair