

Resolution on Proposed CVS Store

Resolution Unanimously Approved by University UNITED's Board on March 15, 2004:

It is hereby resolved that University UNITED appeals to the City Council the recent decision by the Planning Commission approving the plans submitted by Velmeir Companies on behalf of CVS for their pharmacy to be located at the corner of University Avenue and Snelling Avenue. It is further resolved that University UNITED is opposed to vacating the alley dividing the site, until such time as the Velmeir Companies submits a design that is accordance with the spirit of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the criteria of transit-oriented development, as endorsed by the community and the Snelling TOD framework approved by the St. Paul Planning Commission in October, 2003, and the City Council in March, 2004.

Background

In late 2003, Velmeir Companies submitted plans to the City of St. Paul for a one-story drive-through pharmacy at the northwest corner of Snelling and University. Because the building design did not meet TOD criteria, UNITED and a number of other community groups met with representatives of Velmeir Companies on a number of occasions to express their hopes for improvement. The Board of UNITED adopted a resolution in opposition to the original design on November 17, 2003

When it became clear that Velmeir was not willing to address some significant concerns, UNITED embarked on a community process to determine ways to promote a better design. A design charrette was held on December 30, 2003, yielding a number of possible alternative design approaches.

Velmeir has made some modifications to the original proposal, but we believe their efforts have fallen short. Specifically, their building still does not meet TOD criteria because:

- It is a single story, single-use structure at the busiest stop on the highest ridership transit route in the region
- It does not have an entranceway on University Avenue
- It does not have transparent windows on University Avenue, falling short of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) guidelines
- It has architectural massing of a 30 foot tall single story building, which is not pedestrian friendly.

The Building Department was prepared to approve the Velmeir plans with some conditions, but UNITED and a number of community partners and individuals requested a public hearing before the Planning Commission. At the hearing a considerable number of groups and individuals spoke in opposition to the Velmeir plans, but the Planning Commission approved the application. University UNITED is now requesting that the issue be appealed to the City Council.