

Public Testimony  
City of Kansas City, MO  
Re: 4438-4450 Washington

21 Sep 2024

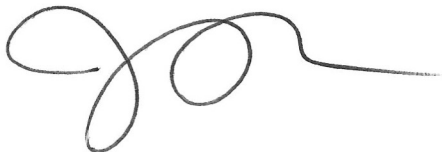
I'm a lifelong resident of Kansas City. Ask anyone: the Plaza is iconic. Westport is iconic. These areas are important not only for their shopping, but for their neighborhoods. Those neighborhoods have character: they're inviting, they're diverse, they're home. Home to thousands of people who help make Kansas City what it is.

I write this letter to express my opposition to the proposed development at 4438 Washington. Not only is this development uncharacteristic of the neighborhood – it is painfully out of step with the style, the culture, the soul of Westport. Moreover, this proposal represents a disregard for KCMO zoning and the current Midtown / Plaza Area Plan. The Area Plan, the results of a successful cooperation drawing together city officials, development experts, and concerned residents, binds new developments to adhere to the character of key central Kansas City neighborhoods. In addition, zoning restrictions are necessary for ensuring continuity within the neighborhood and across the city. We welcome “checks and balances” such as these to regulate new growth such that it does not spiral out of control.

The size of the proposed development dwarfs nearby historic and well-preserved single-family homes. Not only would this development dominate the neighborhood view, it would destroy the neighborhood character. We've already seen the effects of “out of touch” planning in this and other areas of the city. (The Penn Centre building on 46<sup>th</sup> Street and the “Westley” at 39<sup>th</sup> and Broadway provide recent examples). And inviting potentially hundreds of new residents to the area includes additional complexities, including increased traffic, parking problems, and noise, to name a few. The current residents (myself included) welcome none of these.

Historic character is what makes neighborhoods such as Westport so inviting to live, shop, work. Preserving this character means preserving the city code and Area Plan. Making an exception in the present case invites future challenges to this neighborhood and others – a slippery slope. If we are to preserve our neighborhoods, we must resist when new developments challenge their character. The proposed development at 4438 Washington is such a challenge. Permitting this project to proceed – against the current city plan and zoning – will not only alter the character of Westport, it represents the first step in dismantling our historic neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.