

Jeffrey Sanders
309 S. Oakland Ave.
Green Bay, WI 54303

12 Jan 14

Nic Sparacio, Planner
City of Green Bay Planning Department
100 North Jefferson Street, Room 608
Green Bay, WI 54301

Re: Public Hearing on Proposed Amendment to City of Green Bay Comprehensive Plan

Dear Mr. Sparacio and members of the Plan Commission,

Please accept this letter as written testimony in opposition to the amendment of the Comprehensive Plan allowing for the construction of a Walmart store along North Broadway Street in Green Bay. My opposition is based upon the potential risks such development poses to the character of the Broadway District, its long-term viability, and the economy of the greater downtown.

For more than two decades, city officials, business owners, On Broadway, and others have worked to revitalize what was once one of the more troubled sections of the city. Through sound planning and economic development activities, the District has become a vibrant commercial and residential urban center on the near west side. In many respects, it has become the heart of the community. Indeed, the positive changes taking place in the downtown proper and along the Fox River Trail owe their success to ground broken in the Broadway District.

The proposal by Walmart to build a 'supercenter' on the Larson property jeopardizes this success.

Bad planning decisions in the 1970s led to the development of the Port Plaza Mall...and to the destruction of one of the Midwest's better downtowns. At the time, planners and academics warned the city that the mall would ruin Green Bay's core and result in business lost to the suburbs. Elected officials moved ahead and the downtown withered. Only since the revitalization of the Broadway District has Green Bay begun to reverse the legacy of Port Plaza. I and others are concerned that this development, as proposed, would have a similar affect. It is not in our community's interest to make the same mistake twice.

Some of the key principles in creating and sustaining vibrant commercial and residential centers include promoting compact development, density, mixed-uses, walkability and, green space. Lincoln Park in Chicago, Nob Hill in Portland, and Downtown Asheville, North Carolina thrive for the same reasons that Broadway has succeeded in Green Bay, albeit on larger scales. They offer the types of commercial and residential uses sought by those who would prefer a more urban-oriented living and shopping environment. They also serve as effective incubators for small business. The Broadway District is an economic catalyzer for downtown Green Bay. In

concert with CityDeck, the Fox River Trail, and redevelopment along Washington Street, it is precisely the kind of commercial center sought after in the 21st century marketplace. Communities around the country are trying hard to recreate the dynamic environment that we now have on Broadway, and we cannot afford to lose it.

The Larson site provides an opportunity for creative, adaptive reuse that will anchor the District's northern border for generations. True, it has sat idle for too long. And On Broadway and the city have considerable financial interests resting on its eventual redevelopment. Sooner is clearly preferable to later, but the 'any port in a storm' mentality underlying many of Walmart's arguments for moving forward is not a rationale for sound planning. Its proposal risks jeopardizing good (or possibly great) development tomorrow for bad development today.

To be clear, my opposition is not to Walmart but to any big box retail chain proposing suburban-style development in a vibrant urban core. It is entirely outside the character of the District. The City of Green Bay Comprehensive Plan calls for the protection and enhancement of "special places." It singles out the Broadway District as a "model for other revitalization efforts" in the community. The plan also advises working to reinforce the identity of the District. Walmart's proposal, in its current form, would not reinforce but conflict with the nature and character of Broadway. Moreover, Walmart's stubborn adherence to the 'supercenter' concept, and its refusal to consider legitimate design alternatives that might actually compliment the District, runs contrary to what it and other similar retailers are doing in cities like Chicago, New York, and Washington DC.

My wife and I moved to the Seymour Park neighborhood in 2009. We did so in no small part due to its proximity to the Broadway District. During the past five years we have hosted friends from around the country. They all commented favorably on the District, its shops, and its atmosphere. Visitors to Green Bay find a downtown in the midst of a renaissance. Titletown Brewery, Hinterland, Chefusion, Kavarna... these are places unique in the metropolitan area. No one visits a downtown and leaves extolling the virtues of a discount retail outlet that looks just like a hundred others in a hundred other places.

For these reasons I respectfully request that the Plan Commission deny this application to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you.

Nicolas Sparacio

From: Janet Tolan [gbtchart2@aol.com]
Sent: Sunday, September 22, 2013 10:24 AM
To: Nicolas Sparacio
Subject: Walmart

Dear Council Member,

My name is Janet Tolan, and I've lived in Green Bay area nearly my entire life. I am excited to see the positive changes happening in our downtown. You have been making great strides in developing this area. However, I am concerned about the Walmart proposal. I urge you NOT to allow a Walmart in our Broadway or other downtown districts. Please take the time to view the documentary below on how Walmart has impacted the communities and people in the video. You can reach me at 920-884-0707, 240 N. Oneida St., Green Bay, WI 54303
<http://www.hulu.com/watch/407930>

November 8, 2013

Dear Rob Strong,

Please do all you can to keep Walmart out of Larsen Green. OBI leadership is making a hard sell for Walmart. I have lived in the Broadway District for 30 years. We do NOT need or want Walmart in our downtown! I just heard about the possible interest in Whole Foods coming to GB. That would be wonderful! The nearest Whole Foods is in Milwaukee and having one in GB would draw people from all over. It would be nice to have Whole Foods or Trader Joes before Appleton gets it. Please don't sell out our downtown by letting Walmart build on the Fox River! We need to keep our downtown going in a positive direction. The businesses on Broadway have worked very hard to get to where they are today; please don't let Walmart destroy them. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Crabb".

Peggy Crabb

122 South Maple Avenue

Green Bay, WI 54303

Rob Strong
Redevelopment Authority Staff
100 N. Jefferson St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

1003 S. Irwin Ave.
Green Bay, WI 54301
Dec. 5, 2013

Dear Mr. Strong,

Have you ever noticed the highway signs directing motorists to the "Historic District" of a nearby city? Where is Green Bay's historic downtown? Most of it disappeared when the mall was built and can never be restored. However, we still have the Broadway area of our downtown, which has become a delightful combination of interesting restaurants and eclectic locally owned businesses. This collection of unusual shops is just the kind of venue visitors to our city find interesting and enjoy spending time at.

Broadway has grown up gradually, carefully, and with much hard work and innovative thinking by talented and far-sighted members of our own community. It is a fine asset to our city, but also a somewhat fragile entity, and great care must be taken to assure its continuation as a special place that has not felt the effects of chain stores and big businesses. If that happens, what has been built on Broadway will disappear, and with it will come the total demise of our "historic downtown".

If you have been doing your homework, you already know that for every two jobs Walmart brings in, three will be lost. Do we really need a grocery store just a few blocks from one that already exists? Will it keep the New Leaf Market, another locally owned and supported budding business, from gaining a foothold?

Does Walmart really care about the downtown that has been nurtured on Broadway, or anywhere in our city? Yes, their money gets taken to our banks, but by the next day it is being transferred to Walmart headquarters far from Wisconsin.

Walmart is known for getting their way, and they will most likely keep coming back to you as many times as it takes to get what they want. The amount of acreage they intend to develop will overshadow everything else on Broadway and put at least some of the shops there out of business. Please do not let this happen.

Sincerely,



Kay Christman

From Larry Frye
String Instrument Workshop,
located in the Broadway District since 1982.

Jan 15, 2014

Many of my customers have asked my feelings about the Walmart proposal for Broadway. This is what I tell them.

Walmart is a business that is completely out of scale compared to the existing businesses in the district, both physically and financially. The sheer size of the development overshadows everything else around it, and financially, Walmart is used to getting its way, and is not afraid to use its resources to get its way, regardless of what is best for the district (see the Green Bay master plan).

Secondly, the stores of the Broadway district provide a number of unique products and services. Each of them is a wonderful source of product knowledge. I look at the expertise at each of the shops, and contrast that with the products, services, and expertise at Walmart, and it will be very apparent that Walmart will add very little to the quality of shopping in the Broadway district. I realize that Walmart will not directly compete with many of our businesses, but is it really necessary to dedicate such a large portion of this unique district to a business offering products and services that are already available throughout the city?

Third, the timing of this development appears to be a desperate move by OBI to rid itself of a property before certain financial deadlines. The acquisition of this property was barely within the scope of the mission statement of OBI, and the development proposed by Walmart goes completely against the positive direction in which that district has been going.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Frye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.