We, the members of P&D who unanimously voted against the proposal, would like to provide information that explains our vote to deny support for the proposal.

Project Overview
This is described by the developer as a 3-story project with 27,605 square feet, 24 dwelling units (8 efficiencies, 13 one-bedrooms, 3 two-bedroom) occupying 19,806 square feet, plus 802 square feet of commercial space, with 18 underground parking stalls and 28 bike stalls.

Historic requirements
817 Williamson is in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District. Landmarks Commission approval is required for (1) the demolition of the existing structure and (2) construction of the new structure. We did not specifically discuss at P&D whether to support demolition of the existing building – this building was built at some point after 1942 and is outside the period of historic significance (1850-1929). One factor the Landmarks Commission considers in determining whether to approve a demolition is whether the proposed structure is compatible with historic resources.

MGO 41.23(6) requires new construction on parcels zoned for mixed-use to be “visually compatible” with historic resources that are located within 200 feet of the parcel’s lot lines. Six qualities are assessed to determine whether new construction is visually compatible. The proposed project is not visually compatible with historic resources in any of the required qualities.

- The project is too large. The gross volume is far in excess of neighboring properties and would dominate the block face.
- The height along the sidewalk is far in excess of historic properties.
- The proportion of solids/voids in the street façade is not visually compatible in terms of the entry door (doors are focal points of the historic resources), the grouping of windows.
- The roof design is not compatible as all other historic resources (except one small corner property of the north side of Williamson) have peaked roofs.
- The rhythm of building masses/spaces is not visually compatible with historic resources. The building is about two times as wide (street frontage) as the larger historic resources. The 2 foot setback of the western 9 feet, and the 8 foot setback of the eastern 10 feet do not create a sense of space.

Conditional use approval
The Plan Commission will need to approve the demolition. Conditional use approval is required, according to the Legistar record, because the proposed project does not fit within the Traditional Shopping Street standards: (1) the project is over 25,000 square feet; and, (2) less than 75% of the ground-floor frontage facing Williamson is non-residential.

The Comprehensive Plan states: “Much of the infill over the last decade has occurred in the downtown and isthmus areas, and this will continue to some extent. Directing redevelopment and
infill to existing auto-oriented commercial centers and other areas as identified in the Growth Priority Areas Map, Generalized Future Land Use Map and sub-area plans will help accommodate needed growth while protecting the historic character of older neighborhoods.” Williamson Street is not a designated “growth priority area.”

The Comprehensive Plan provides that sub-area plans, such as BUILD II, “frequently offer more detailed height and design standards, and should be referred to in addition to [the Comprehensive Plan].”

The proposed building does not comply with BUILD II.
- “No building shall be wider than 60 feet.” The building is 80 feet wide.
- “Articulation and breaks in the facade of commercial and mixed-use buildings must be sufficient to maintain the rhythm of masses and spaces of existing commercial and mixed use buildings in the visually related area.” The building does not do so.
- “New buildings shall be no higher than 2-1/2 stories, except for the following: On the north side of the 800 and 900 block of Williamson Street, flat-roofed three story structures shall be permitted.” The building is, at a minimum, a 3-story flat-roofed structure on the south side of Williamson.

Other concerns
- The building is too close to the sidewalk for street tree(s).
- The architect could not identify where the 240 square foot “roof deck” would be located (identified in page 6 of the plans)
- The location of the garage exhaust is not set, but the likely place would be the green space on the western side, close to the sidewalk (and close to the neighboring residence).
- The roof will have, per the architect, up to 12 compressors on the roof (1/3 of mechanicals will be in the basement, the efficiencies will not have A/C). With residences up the hill on Jenifer, what noise issues would that create?

We hope this information will help you in determining your vote on this matter,

Linda Lehnertz
Mary Ann McBride
Leigh Mollenhoff
Jim Murphy
Steve Ohlson
Peter Wolff
Russ Wuennenberg