



Serving Northeast Madison and Portland Neighborhoods

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# NE Neighborhood News

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By Lee Perlman

## Development news

### 82nd big box developers, opponents meet

Representatives of the Madison South and Roseway neighborhood associations met last month with their counterparts from SmartCentres of Canada. The development firm has been seeking to build 240,000 square feet of retail, including a 190,000-square-foot, big-box building, on a 26-acre former landfill on Northeast 82nd Avenue at Siskiyou Street, across from Madison High School. The neighborhood groups consider the project inappropriate and have mounted a major campaign against it. Earlier this year, SmartCentres submitted a formal application for their proposed use, then withdrew it in the face of what opponents claim were unfavorable signals from city bureaus.

According to Dawn Tryon of Madison South, SmartCentres representative David Sunitten said that the company was willing to collaborate with the neighborhoods on the design of the project. They did so on a project in Toronto, he said, with a result that proved satisfactory to everyone involved. Neighborhood representatives disputed Sunitten's accounts, based on information gained through web research.

Madison South's Frank Walsh told the SmartCentres group, "Should SmartCentres be involved with the land at 82nd and Siskiyou, we need to see a plan that is radically different from the original application. And if this is not something that is a possibility from SmartCentres' perspective, then we respectfully ask them to walk away from this development and pursue other, more appropriate locations."

The neighbors said they asked why SmartCentres had chosen Portland as their first U.S. development project. SmartCentres' representative Andrew Sinclair reportedly replied, "Why not?". Roseway chair Tyler Whitmire, taking a more positive tack, noted that SmartCentres did agree to hire local architects for the job and took this as a willingness on their part to "respect the culture" of the area.

Late note: In a phone call to the Star, SmartCentres spokesperson Flavio Volpe indicated that Walsh's criteria may in fact be on the table. "We're going to consider all options in the built environment, and uses other than retail," he said.