

Downtown Development Authorities (DDA) Economic Development Committee (EDC)
Comments in response to “The Downs” PUD Eligibility Application
December 18, 2018

The EDC is designed to be a resource for the Planning Commission, City, Developers, Residents, etc. The purpose of the Economic Development Committee is to advise the City Council on matters related to promoting vital and inviting business areas and advancing economic development within the City. The Committee shall assess the current and ongoing business climate in the City and submit recommendations to the City Council intended to maintain a strong economic base in the City. In an effort to support each of those entities, the EDC has prepared comments on The Downs PUD Eligibility Application. The EDC was pleased to hear that the developer was working towards a development that meets the needs of the community such as daylighting the river, providing a Farmers’ Market location, etc.. In reviewing the PUD Eligibility Application, there were several issues that repeatedly received comments. Those issues include traffic, green / public space, Commercial / Retail Space, design of the residential products and density. Below are the EDC’s comments on each of the issues.

1. Traffic / Parking:

- a. The proposed project will have a significant impact on the whole Northville Community. With the new residential and commercial space, will come new cars and the EDC wants to ensure that they are properly accounted for and do not provide an increased burden on the parking and circulation system in Northville. If the congestion increases, motorist may bypass the downtown, finding another route to avoid the congestion. This would have a negative financial impact on the downtown.
- b. Traffic and congestion is still major concern and the EDC members did not feel it has been properly addressed in the new proposal.
- c. The project needs another North to South through-road to dissipate the traffic generated from the development. The best option is an extended Hutton Street down to the mouth of East Hines Drive, where there could be a roundabout.
- d. The EDC is pleased that the developer is providing additional parking.
- e. Parking: If two North to South streets are created (N-S Street south of Town Square and N-S Street between Hutton and Griswold) there will be more on-street parallel parking North of the extended Beal Street and within walking distance of the Town Square. More parking could provide more visitors to the downtown.

2. Green / Public Space:

- a. The EDC is pleased that the developer has chosen to daylight the river, as well as remove the Residential lots on the East side of the River to make it a more welcoming and usable park. Providing a daylighted river and linear park will create a recreational draw for the entire area and bring more visitors to town as well as providing a passive recreational space for residents of Northville.

- b. The bridge location is not ideal for public access. The optimal location of the bridge should be investigated as well as a second bridge connecting the neighborhood with the park, perhaps at the western end of Johnson Street. Daylighting the river will need to be included in the first phase to ensure completion.
- c. The EDC prefers that the project include retention ponds rather than dry detention ponds. It should look like an attractive water feature, not a depression.
- d. Proper maintenance of the area should be further vetted but concerns with the HOA being in charge of the upkeep of a publicly used space. The proper maintenance and upkeep of these public areas needs to be up to City Standards.
- e. The retention of the Farmers' Market in the downtown area is a substantial benefit to the community. The Market is a regional draw and many visitors stay in downtown after their visit to the market to shop, dine, or conduct business. The developer has recently met with the Northville Chamber of Commerce to discuss location and requirements for the Farmers' Market to stay downtown. The Chamber believes that the parking lot will work well for the Farmers Market if they can utilize the full lot. Also, the site north of the daylighted river would be a good location for public events that could entice visitors to the community.
- f. The creation of berms was listed as a public benefit. The EDC feels that the use of berms in this project is a suburban solution and not in keeping with urban residential development.

3. Commercial / Retail Space:

- a. Current design only includes 18,700 sq/ft of commercial space in the project. The EDC is concerned that the proposed commercial development will only include private apartment amenities and sales office. Cady Street becomes a transition area between the historic downtown and the single family and townhouses to the south. The Cady corridor, with proposed first floor commercial and upper floor apartments, is the area that connects the historic downtown with the proposed new residential development to the south. It is important from an economic development standpoint, to have a strong first floor use that activates the street front and draws residents from the south up and to the historic downtown.
- b. As part of the DDA's 2017 Strategic Plan for Downtown Northville, a retail marketing analysis was completed by LandUSA. The results of the marketing analysis show that the Northville trade area can support at least 35,000 square feet of new retail space plus a boutique hotel.

4. Design of the Residential Products:

- a. The EDC is pleased to hear the developer heard the concerns with the Residential developer and the designs included in the previous PUD Eligibility application. We are curious who the new developer would be and what the product would look like. The committee has reviewed the residential products

proposed within this application but will provide more feedback later in the development and approval process as this document is focusing on the PUD Eligibility application. That being said, we hope future designs are less suburban and generic options.

In addition to the feedback listed above, the committee is concerned with the timeline of the two phases of the project. Several amenities presented in this application are not part of the first phase of the project making those amenities at risk if the development is delayed or later phases are not completed. This needs to be addressed in this application to ensure that these are completed as part of the project.

The developer has indicated that they will be seeking public funding to assist with the public amenities included in the PUD Eligibility. It is the EDC's opinion that these areas of funding should be presented to the Planning Commission as part of this application. It is necessary to include which amenities are intended to be funded by the public and those amenities should not be included as criteria for PUD eligibility as they are not being provided by the developer, rather they would be funded by the public.

The intent of this feedback is to specifically address only items in reference to the PUD Application Eligibility currently being discussed. The Economic Development Committee has additional feedback on the overall project which will be shared at later phases of the project approval process.