

Downtown Development Authorities (DDA) Economic Development Committee (EDC)
Comments in response to "The Downs" PUD Eligibility Application
October 2nd 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 constructed comments on The Downs PUD Eligibility Application. In reviewing the application, several consistent items come up from the discussion to include traffic, green / public space, Commercial / Retail Space, design of the residential products and density. We will provide points below for each of those items as well as overall feedback.

1. Traffic / Parking:

- a. Traffic and congestion is a concern of the teams and the community. The committee has some recommendations below that reduce the traffic impact of this development. 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 should be a roundabout. This does a few things: takes pressure off of Sheldon (South Center) south of Main Street at peak times, takes pressure off access / egress via Beal St through Beal Town neighborhood and creates a new North to South way to get into Downtown as well as access to the project neighborhood itself.
- b. 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 extended Beal Street and within walking distance of the Town Square.
- c. Parking: Parking requirements of the development should be a maximum of one car per bedroom. The developer needs to show the units by number of bedrooms, so that the area North of Beal Street can be properly evaluated.
- d. The grid road layout is consistent with the Master Plan but it does not reflect the grid pattern in the adjacent neighborhoods. For example Beal Town, the blocks are oriented with the long dimension North to South and narrower in the East to West dimension. The two super blocks North of Beal Street should be broken up into four smaller blocks that mimic Beal Town blocks. The two North to South streets suggested make this development much more walkable, like other neighborhoods in our community (Beal Town, Cabbage Town, West Orchard, Historic District). Tree-lined streets with parallel parking are more consistent with surrounding neighborhoods and far more safe than what is proposed now.

2. Green / Public Space:

- a. The River: A public / private partnership to "daylight" the river and create a linear park should be investigated. This could be in the form of a developer contribution to the City, which would allow the City to plan an award winning public park and apply for grants that are potentially available. Also, current site plans should reflect this as a possibility. Current design would have the river going through 6 residential parcels.
- b. If the pond is retention and always has water, it should have public access and no fence barrier. It should look like an attractive water feature, not a depression. Further the Master Plan shows a public linear park that fronts on 2 streets – River Street and a new street that bounds on the west side of the day-lighted river. The 13 homes on River Street, the 7 Single-Family lots to the west and the 13 town home lots to the west effectively mask the linear park from public view and access except at the Beal Bridge on the north end. The linear park as proposed by the Master Plan is much better than the developer's plan. The linear park should not be so hidden and the homes on River Street are not in keeping with the Master Plan.
- c. 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. We will want to ensure that the proper maintenance and upkeep is up to City Standards.
- d. Farmers Market: The Chamber is interested in fitting into what space is available, but this proposed space is far smaller than their smallest conceivable area size. This plan must assume that the Watermark surface lot is available for public use on Market Day, so that parking does not occur in the small space allotted to the market. This needs to be confirmed, and if this is true, is there enough parking for both apartment residents and the market patrons and vendor trucks? A better choice is to expand the market surface lot south of Beal Street to extend over the west side of the bridge. This allows public parking to be in proximity to the vendors (much safer than trying to get your purchases across Beal Street bridge). If the vendor trucks are allowed to park on the Watermark surface lot south side that might work. Another issue is the availability of 2 barns in South Lyon that formerly served the harness racing industry in Northville. They quartered horse and trained drivers and horse for local races, back in the day. These barns are immediately available but will be torn down soon. They can be moved. The developer is aware of these barns and has elected to pass on them. The City should consider that these barns could make for facilities with bathrooms that give more value to the linear park use by the public as well as serve vendors on Market Day.
- e. 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. Often berms are created in a project in order to save on the cost of hauling away excess soil that is created when the detention pond is built. The EDC suggests the elimination of these berms from the plan.

3. Commercial / Retail Space:

- a. Current design only includes 18,700 sq/ft of which we are concerned will only include private apartment amenities and sales office. A more viable option would be to extend a new North to South street South of Town Square with liner Commercial on both sides. This would allow something like restaurants on both sides that would activate this south side of town and connect to the existing Downtown via the North to South Pedestrian Link. This could be mixed-use with smaller micro residential apartments over. The nearby deck could expand to support the development on this new street North of Beal Street.
- 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 City of Northville can support at least 35,000 square feet of new retail space plus a boutique hotel. Additional office and support businesses are in addition to the retail square footage.

4. Design of the Residential Products:

- a. The committee has review 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.
- b. Various heights are listed within the development to include townhomes at three to three and a half stories. Three stories is enough for these products.
- c. The committee agrees with the CWA that the development should not include front facing garages in line with the front elevation of the homes. In fact this issue is currently being studied by the Planning Commission. The Master Plan specifically refers to alleyway access to rear garages as a preferred option to street curb-cuts and front-access garages. Earlier versions of the site plan show the alleyways and rear-access garages. The EDC feels that this is a better solution. Also note that the current proposal does not have any on-street parking, so guests have to park in the driveway. This is not sustainable. Rear garages off alleyways eliminates the need for street access driveways and allows for parallel parking on the streets.

5. Density:

- a. The committee agrees with the CWA's comments that it is higher than intended for the space. The idea to potentially eliminate the 13 single-family homes along River Street to increase the park area and improve the ability to Daylight the Rouge River and provide more space for the farmers market is a good one.
- b. The CWA suggest eliminating some of the townhome on either side of the pocket park on Hutton street. The committee would like the developer to investigate continuing Hutton Street over Johnson Creek and connect with Seven Mile at East Hines Drive. A tree-lined street with parallel parking would be very similar to our existing neighborhoods. This new North to South link to this development and the downtown is needed for numerous reasons.

- c. We agree with CWA's comments to reduce the number of townhomes on the Farmers Market property to provide usable green space. If we eliminated these units, we could have better access to the North end of the new park
6. **Consistent with the Master Plan** The developers state in their PUD eligibility that the proposed PUD is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan but do not enumerate any of the areas in which they feel their plan is consistent with these goals and objectives.
- a. The Master Plan calls for providing parking behind buildings. The creation of a parking lot at the corner of Griswold and Cady Streets is inconsistent with the Master Plan.
7. **Other:**
- a. Many of the amenities listed in HP's PUD eligibility application are not considered by the EDC to be public benefits, but rather are requirements of any applicant going through the development process: these include:
 - The elimination of out dating building structures, and "unsightly conditions".
 - Stormwater improvements.
 - Stormwater retention/detention ponds
 - Creation of 92 public parking spaces are a requirement of the purchase agreement with the City of Northville
 - Elimination of current race track

In addition to the feedback listed above, the committee is concerned with the timeline of the three 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 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.

Data Source	SEMICOG	CROSS STREET	TRAFFIC COUNT*	YEAR	crash	WHY THIS MATTERS
MAIN ROAD						
Sheldon						
1		2 way 5 to 6 mile	16,500	2004		Traffic does not drop significantly as it travels down Sheldon. Northville is becoming a pass through city. Impact on walkability. Impact on downtown merchants.
2		2 way to E Hines (7mile)	13,000	2004		
7 Mile						
3		2 way Rogers to Clement	7,500	2009		Counts are almost 10 year old. Considerable development on 7 mile corridor since 2009 and building continues
4		2 way Clement to Beck	7,500	2009		Hines/7mile split area. Dangerous area today. Cars often ignore the stop sign off Hines onto Hines/7 mile
5		2 way 100 ft. E of Hines	6,931	2015		
6		E Hines to Northville Rd	6,900	2009		Majority of traffic continues into Northville. Both the McDonald and Downs sites are building along this corridor. Impact will be significant. Quality of life issue. Cost of infrastructure and road maintenance? At what cost?
7		2 WAY NORTHVILLE TO HAGGERTY RD	16,350	2009		
8		EB 1.1 mile W of Haggerty	7,596	2010		
9		WB 1.1 mile W of Haggerty	8,331	2010		
Edward Hines North						
10		2 way Seven mile to Sheldon	10,040	2009		This is where both the Downs and Mc Donald property reside, will need access to 7mile.
11		Sheldon to Northville road (N)**	2,770	2011		
12		Rogers to Sheldon	7,180	2009		As developments west of Northville are built 7 mile/ Hines though downtown Northville will see increase in traffic. This is the path to 275/96
Main /Northville Rd.						
13		2 way between 7 mile N to S Junction	16,422	2015		Heavy traffic with both McDonald Ford and Downs property under development. 7 mile curve at the railroad tracks.
14		NB between 7 mile N and S Junction	7,411	2012		
15		SB between 7mile N and S Junction	7,321	2012		
16		2 way Beal and Dohney	10,481	2015		Beal street bridge area - gets you to Griswold - expect increase in neighborhood traffic - River street to handle overflow? Increase - traffic travels Gerald to avoid 7 mile back up into town
17		NB Between Beal and Doheny	5,216	2012		
18		SB between Beal and Doheny	4,184	2012		
19		2 way Johnson and Gardner	10,455	2015		
20		NB between Johnson and Gardner	5,583	2012		
21		SB between Johnson and Gardner	4,502	2012		

[illegible]

Missed Opportunities

Severed Pedestrian Connection to Downtown

Architectural character of the housing types is neither diverse, consistent or contextual; instead of intriguing and charming, the styles clash and are monotonous

**Griswold/ Cady
Street Intersection
Development
Opportunity
missed**

**Connect to
Beal Town**

Expanded Farmer's Market

Re-orient Linear Park
along River Street
frontage to make it
'public'
— and —
daylight the creek

Stormwater management is outdated & counterproductive

Hines Park
Gateway²
missed

**Missing Gateway
Opportunity –
anchor &
monumentality
needed**

Alternative planning suggestions for Northville



Potential Gateway Opportunities and suggested future growth along Northville arterials

Jeff Gaines
334 Yerkes Street



Building Use opportunities
Yellow – low density residential
Orange – mixed use residential
Red – mixed use commercial