

Appendix C:

Public Comments Summary



LANDMARK
SOCIETY

December 18, 2008

Doraine Carr Laudisi
Bureau of Buildings and Zoning
City Hall Room 125B
30 Church Street
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear Ms. Laudisi:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Midtown Redevelopment Project. As you know, The Landmark Society has actively participated in the planning process for this important project and has been pleased to share our expertise with the City and with its planning team. We commend the City and its consultants on the careful and thoughtful planning process of which the DGEIS is the result.

While we are impressed with the expansive vision laid out in the DGEIS, we are uncomfortable with one basic fact: this DGEIS describes a project that has two parts: *demolition* of a National Register-eligible resource, and *planning* for redevelopment of the site. The buildings shown in the concepts for redevelopment are just that – concepts. As far as we understand, apart from the PAETEC commitment, there is no commitment from any developer to actually build any of the structures envisioned for the site.

Our overarching concern, therefore, is not so much with the vision presented for the site, which has many commendable features in providing a cohesive urban design that can achieve many of the City's goals, but with the lack of a clear path from demolition to redevelopment. The DGEIS does not adequately describe how the City intends to seek, promote, and ensure the redevelopment of the site. Apart from the plan to issue a Request for Proposals for Midtown Tower, it is unclear from the DGEIS how the City intends to actively plan for and foster the redevelopment that would be necessary in order to lead to the results the City hopes to achieve. We are very concerned about what appears to be a strong possibility that this block could be cleared before firm plans for redevelopment are in place; if some or all of the hoped-for development does not materialize, we would be left with a vast empty space in one of downtown Rochester's most critical locations. The DGEIS does not address how this devastating outcome – which has been seen far too often in downtown Rochester where other notable historic buildings have been lost and replaced by surface parking lots – can be avoided or mitigated. We strongly urge the City to reconsider its position on phased demolition and, in addition, to forbid surface parking lots within the Midtown site.

We concur with the State Historic Preservation Office's conclusion that while the entire site is eligible for the National Register – a status normally reserved for buildings over 50 years old, but applicable here due to the property's exceptional significance – the atrium is the most significant component and most worthy of

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preservation. This determination of eligibility should be referred to more frequently in the document, so that readers are more fully informed of the nature of the resource in question.

We commend the City and its planners for starting the consultation process regarding historic resources early in the planning process and were glad to help facilitate and accelerate the NYSOPRHP review and determination of eligibility. We believe the conversations regarding historic issues and compliance with historic regulations have been productive. However, we believe that these discussions should not be relegated to an appendix but should be woven into the document more thoroughly. On the surface, it looks as if none of the 14.09 discussions have informed the development of any alternatives; the public should have the option to look at those alternatives in the primary document as well. We also note an inconsistency between the alternatives analyzed beginning on page 271 and the alternatives as described in Appendix G (the alternatives developed in the Section 14.09 consultation process). The 14.09 discussions did not result in an “all or nothing” (save everything or save nothing) scenario, but to an adaptive reuse scenario in which the tower and atrium could be retained and reused. Because this possibility is still under consideration, it would be helpful if the location of the atrium could be indicated, perhaps as a dotted line or shadow, in as many figures as possible, as this would more clearly illustrate how the atrium might fit into a reconfigured Midtown block, and/or where there may be an opportunity to deconstruct or interpret the atrium location.

Due to the exceptional significance of Midtown and of the atrium in particular, it would be our preference to see the atrium retained and adaptively reused as part of a re-envisioned Midtown site. Although the original function it served in linking the major downtown department stores is no longer viable, we believe the space can continue to contribute constructively to downtown’s future if it is successfully integrated into a creative reconstruction of the site. Too often in this community, we have seen opportunities for the reuse of unique and historic buildings slip away under similar circumstances, only to be regretted later.

We are pleased to see that the Midtown Tower, which is also part of the National Register-eligible property, may be retained, and the document should identify the Tower as a resource worth saving regardless of whether viable redevelopment options emerge. The first position the DGEIS should take would be to declare the Tower worth saving, rather than allowing the success or failure of positive responses to the RFP drive the process.

On p. 14, the reader is led to believe that the retention and adaptive reuse of the Tower is contingent upon development proposals and/or commitments. Should no viable responses emerge, we are not convinced that demolition should automatically be the next option considered. Other solutions, such as mothballing the building until a viable reuse emerges, may be more cost-effective and more environmentally sound in the long term, and would avoid the negative impacts of a vacant lot.

Although the City has moved ahead on an RFP process for the redevelopment of the Tower, we would like to see more details in the DGEIS regarding the RFP process and how decisions about retention and adaptive reuse will be made.

The possibility that the tower may remain should be introduced earlier in the document, for example, in the discussion of Aesthetic/Visual Resources on page 13. This section, like others in the document, does not address what the impacts would be if the Tower is reclad and kept standing, but instead describes the impact of the project if the site is totally cleared. The document should be consistent in its references to the tower’s viability to remain.

Page 90, Section 4.6.2, describes the Midtown site as a “bland urban environment characterized by no unifying style or period.” This is a very subjective assessment; the site could instead be described as a highly intact example of 1960s-era planning and urban design. We suggest that any such subjective language be removed from the document, as we have often seen in the past that what one generation finds aesthetically bland or displeasing comes into favor when reassessed by future generations.

One opportunity to minimize or mitigate the effect of demolition may be to salvage any remaining significant façade details from storefronts currently disguised by curtain walls. Some pre-demolition analysis could confirm whether such architectural details still remain on buildings that were re-clad in the 1960s. If any such details exist, perhaps they could be salvaged and re-used within the new construction on the site.

In identifying historic resources in the vicinity of the Midtown property, e.g., on pages 90-91, the DGEIS should not be limited to properties over 50 years old. Midtown itself is under 50 years old and yet has been determined National Register-eligible. Because this quadrant of downtown Rochester was the site of notable planning and design in the 1960s and 1970s – inspired in large part by the initial success of the Midtown project – there are other resources in the immediate vicinity of the Midtown site that may similarly be eligible for National Register status now or in the future; for example, the building at 1 East Avenue, Xerox Tower, and Manhattan Square Park.

While not strictly a preservation concern, we note that repeated references to the negative effects to the community resulting from the blighted Midtown Plaza do not acknowledge how the transient, disabled, workers and residents of downtown used the limited retail opportunities still available during the resource’s decline. These primarily marginalized populations will still need to access the types of retail that fill their needs. The language of this DGEIS does a disservice to this population and does not provide temporary mitigations to the challenge – how will this cross section of population be served with a totally cleared site? How can the city still provide services to this cohort in an aesthetically pleasing way that contributes to the overall site redevelopment, accepting them into the fabric of the community rather than shunting them aside?

Finally, if the ultimate decision is to demolish the atrium, we believe that loss can be mitigated only if it is replaced by an equally forward-thinking, high-quality design that functions as a true gathering place for the center city. It is too soon to tell if the open space now envisioned for the center of the Midtown block, the approximate site of the atrium, is an urban amenity of sufficient quality to mitigate the loss of the atrium, but if demolition is the ultimate result, we will strongly urge that this urban landscape not be an afterthought but a bold, innovative example of civic design.

Thank you again for including us in this process. We look forward to continuing to participate in these very important discussions.

Sincerely,



Joanne Arany
Executive Director

cc. Katie Comeau
Scott Forsyth
Craig Zicari

>>> Theresa Conroy 11/11/2008 4:35:10 pm >>>

Hi Dorraine - I think the City should

explore turning one long city block, on both sides, into a Little Italy type area. There is a 2-3 block area in Cleveland that they call Little Italy with shops and restaurants and street seating. It is really fun - we don't need it to be huge, but it would be a destination.

Then, maybe we could have a 1block Chinatown area. And then...

Terri

Theresa A. Conroy

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>>> Philip Fillion 11/12/2008 1:40:29 pm >>>

Dear Ms. Laudisi,

I am very excited about the revitalization of the Midtown area, although not without concern. However, I was wondering if there were not some way in which the Plaza could be preserved, especially since it was the first American shopping mall. It provided a great glimpse back into the '60s, and it would be a shame to see its style gone forever. I live about a mile away from Greece Ridge Mall, and GRM really cannot compare to Midtown in design, quality, or scale. It seems a terrible waste to demolish such a massive complex only to rebuild what is already there (a tower, and shops). Would it be possible for the businesses which plan to move to the new PAETEC site to move into the current Plaza instead?

Perhaps they could be given a tax break as an incentive.

Thank you very much for what you are doing to revitalize the city.

Philip Fillion

10th Grade

You are accepting suggestions for downtown development. Has there been any thought of opening a multifilm theatre? What a “draw” this could be! Parking!

Would it be possible to preserve or create another Midtown Tower Restaurant. That was such a classy and comfortable place for dining.

Thanks for your attention

Jeanette Gefell

11 Neville Terrace

Rochester, NY 14618

585-473-4767

JG/cb

December 19, 2008

Dorraine Laudisi, Sr. City Planner
City Hall, Room 125B
30 Church Street
Rochester, NY 14614

**RE: Comments on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
for Midtown Revitalization Project**

Dear Ms. Laudisi:

The Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC) would like to commend the partners, New York State, the City of Rochester and Paetec Corporation, for the open and inclusive process that has taken place thus far in the planning for this important revitalization project. We are sending written comments here that expand on those sent to you in correspondence dated August 1, 2008 in reference to information contained in the State Environmental Quality Review Draft Scoping Document for the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) for Proposed Action: Midtown Revitalization Project prepared by LaBella Associates for the City of Rochester July 2, 2008. We emphasize again in this correspondence that the RRCDC is pleased that the document we produced as the result of the 2007 Downtown Charrette, *Community-Based Vision Plan for Downtown Rochester, May 2008*, is referenced in the SEQR Draft Scoping Document in two sections, and strongly encourage that content and recommendations in that document be taken into consideration when assembling the ultimate plan for the redevelopment of the Midtown site. There are several key elements in the *Community-Based Vision Plan for Downtown* in the recommendations for the Midtown site that we felt were important to restate and highlight and we featured them in our review the Draft EIS, contained in our August 1 letter.

Examining the updated analysis and redevelopment alternatives outlined in the information posted on the midtownrochesterrising.com website, with particular attention to Appendices C and D, we wish to draw attention to the fact that the comments we have forwarded in writing and the issues that have been raised in discussions in review

meetings with the team responsible for preparing the EIS are not reflected in the current document.

The plan presented in the EIS does not seem to fully take advantage of the wealth of information contained in previously created (and in some cases City sponsored) master plans that have been developed over the past 10 years that directly address the reconfiguration of the Midtown Plaza site and surrounding areas. We strongly suggest that it would be prudent to have an alternate plan in case the Paetec project does not come to be or is further altered.

The manner in which the “big block” aspect of the current Midtown site is reconfigured will be critical. The proposed Paetec building has a weak presence/frontage on the corner of Main and Clinton. The long block that comprises the Paetec building’s footprint and “corporate plaza” would likely be detrimental to the functionality of the new streets and open spaces that will be provided by the breaking up of the Midtown Plaza complex into 6-9 separate sites. The proposed plans for division of the site into low, medium and high density configuration of blocks, buildings and green spaces, do not effectively feature integrative elements and, in their layout, seem to have little relationship to other blocks within the downtown. Each of the blocks within the site appears independent and the proposed site plan lacks hierarchal relationships and interconnectedness of the parts of the whole, making the blocks appear to function as independent islands rather than integrated urban fabric with meaningful connections and identity within their surroundings.

Reintroducing streets that accommodate vehicular and pedestrian circulation and penetrate and connect through and to surrounding areas of this important downtown site is an important aspect to pay attention to in this site redevelopment. Newly created streets in the site plan should be located so that they have key axial relationships to existing urban fabric with attention to view sheds, configured as to hierarchy and type, sized and designed to function in different ways depending on location and importance. There should be one key axial connection into the site from Main Street that is prominent and strong in design, a gateway encouraging pedestrian traffic and featuring special design features worthy of its location and function. This street might have a multiplicity of features and uses depending on season and time of day.

We have concerns about the size, location and design of proposed green space within the site, recognizing the need to create meaningful civic space. From a technical standpoint, placing green space anywhere over the existing parking garage has its limitations. (Note the problems at the current Civic Center Plaza and consider the difficulties of growing plants of any meaningful size above the parking spaces below.) Green space location and design should be intentional and not relegated to “left over” space. What surrounds successful beautiful green spaces is as important as what is inside them. Creating a large, out of scale, landscaped area on the corner of Broad Street and Clinton Avenue South does not effectively anchor or strengthen that important corner, nor does it give the community a needed civic space with the hierarchical integrity that it deserves or serve as a meaningful connection to its nearby neighbor, the Washington Square district. New and adaptively reused buildings should enhance the refurbished streets and with them create a viable connective tissue forming strong, vibrant public realm spaces. Civic and green spaces should be shaped by the urban fabric, consciously situated and scaled for the built environment in which they are located, taking full advantage of their surroundings.

In conclusion, the RRCDC favors a sustainable approach in the method of design and construction of the new site and its component buildings, streets and civic spaces that includes the sensitive reuse of the historically important Midtown Plaza buildings.

The RRCDC appreciates the opportunity to comment on this important and critical project for Rochester’s Downtown and look forward to an approach to the Midtown site that embodies high quality urban design and thoughtful construction practices. This is a project that will set the course for the region’s future.

Yours truly,

Joni Monroe, AIA
Executive Director

cc: Mayor Robert Duffy, Art Ientilucci

>>> Nancy Owens 11/10/2008 9:22:20 pm >>>

Ms. Laudisi - I used to work at Midtown at B. Forman back in the 1980's and really loved the feel of downtown's hustle and bustle in those days. But it is a new century and new plans are being made. I guess the big question is how do we get that old time feeling depicted in Olivia Newton John's song "downtown". Especially at holiday time. Well, it's the little things. Some of which we have now. An ice skating rink (big in winter). With free hot chocolate? Don't we wish! Cinema's with the smell of hot popcorn wafting through the air. These are memories of my Mother taking me to downtown Syracuse when I was a child. I am from central New York . Day Brothers, Edwards, department stores. But when retail moved out of the downtown centers it did the same thing to most every city. We need music, Yes!! Maybe piped from a popular store. Streets that are easy to navigate in the winter. Without the choking exhaust from the buses wafting everywhere. Good police presence to pick up the panhandlers, con men, and drunks. In summer, lots of flowered walkways, fountains. As far as retailers, seeing as the only store doing a brisk business downtown now is Family Dollar, what does that say? People here don't have the money to support high end retail. Maybe a few good outlets. Something the suburban malls don't have! Keep that in mind. Something the suburban malls don't have! I'm not sure what yet but there has to be some things we can think of. If only prices could come down a little to help the hurting public it would help tremendously. Maybe a twenty-five cent drop in parking fees. Anything that can be announced to the public where they think they are getting a deal will get their attention. Rochester is the only city in northern NY that has a Broadway Theatre League that I am aware of. I don't know about Buffalo or Syracuse. Everyone enjoys shows. The Philharmonic. There are already so many assets here that I really believe it is the fear of crime and parking that are the major turnoffs. I know we should put away the crazies somewhere. The Department of Mental Health thinks that they can all live among us as long as they stay on their meds. But do they? You see plenty of that kind of thing on our streets too. Well, just some thoughts. Good Luck with this new project.

Nancy L. Owens <<http://us.i1.yimg.com/us.yimg.com/i/mesg/tsmileys2/40.gif>>

>>> erin osullivan 11/30/2008 10:30:07 pm >>>

Dear Dorraine please read this at the forum

Our City of Rochester is wasting tax dollars.

The state budget shouldn't be wasting 50 million dollars on this city's idea of progress.

They are tearing down our city's history. Midtown Plaza was the first mall ever built and was built good. Instead of wasting money tearing down a perfectly sound building, why can't they use this place for the proposed Renaissance Square or a Casino? The PAETEC Company is a joke. This company is going bankrupt. Have you seen their stock? It has fallen to 93 cents!! This project is only going to create 120 jobs. Big deal!!! More "taxpayer" money wasted.

There is not enough parking in downtown Rochester. Most residents do not go downtown because of no free parking, like there is in the suburbs. If a casino was allowed or some entertainment in the plaza, it would bring more jobs. Why tear down a plaza that is in excellent condition? It will cost more to tear down and build a new building, that is not even close to being built as good as this historic landmark? There is no mall that even is close to our Midtown Plaza. Our city is wasting the state "Taxpayer" money on something that should not have even been thought of.

Ask people here. People have protested, but we have been silenced. This city wastes so much money only to fill pockets of political contributors. Our downtown was beautiful until the City of Rochester forced over 40 businesses in Midtown Plaza to move. It was alive and vibrant until they trashed and took the stores away.

We the citizens of Rochester think you are being given a snow job. Rochester doesn't have a good public transportation system. You need a car to go anywhere here.

Please save our Midtown Plaza.

AOL Search: Your one stop for directions, recipes and all other Holiday needs. Search Now
<<http://pr.atwola.com/promoclk/100000075x1212792382x1200798498/aol?redir=http://searchblog.aol.com/2008/11/04/happy-holidays-from-aol-search/?ncid=emlcntussear00000001>>.

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Department of Transportation

Monroe County, New York

Maggie Brooks
County Executive

Terrence J. Rice, P.E.
Director

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: CITY OF ROCHESTER
ATTN: DORRAINE LAUDISI, SR. CITY PLANNER
FAX #: 428-6137 PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET) 2
RE: MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT – GEIS
DATE: 12/19/08
FROM: BRENT H. PENWARDEN, III, P.E. – ASSOCIATE ENGINEER *BHP*
OF: TRAFFIC OPERATIONS & PERMITS
PHONE #: (585) 753-7733
FAX #: (585) 324-1368
EMAIL: BPENWARDEN@MONROECOUNTY.GOV

WE HAVE REVIEWED THE SUBJECT *GEIS* & TRAFFIC IMPACT REPORT, AND OFFER THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS, THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED BEFORE WE FINALIZE OUR REVIEW.

1. THE STUDY AREA SHOULD BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE BROAD & SOUTH, COURT & SOUTH, WOODBURY & S CLINTON, WOODBURY & SOUTH AVE & ANY OTHER INTERSECTION WHERE MORE THAN 100 VPH ARE ADDED.
2. THE DEMOLITION OF THE SKYWAYS WILL DISPLACE MANY PEDESTRIANS ONTO SURFACE STREETS, HOWEVER THERE SEEMS TO BE NO MENTION OF THE IMPACTS, AND DATA ON THE EXISTING USAGE WAS NOT PROVIDED. IS THE DEMOLITION & REMOVAL OF THE SKYWAYS NECESSARY? IS THERE A WAY TO RETAIN THEM OR REHAB THEM?
3. THE EXISTING SKYWAY CROSSOVERS ARE PLACED AT MIDBLOCK LOCATIONS. IF REMOVED, PEDESTRIANS WILL BE FORCED TO CROSS AT GRADE AND SHOULD NOT BE DOING SO MID-BLOCK. HOW WOULD THE SKYWAY SYSTEM TERMINATION REDIRECT THEM SO THAT THEY CROSS AT INTERSECTIONS? WILL THERE NEED TO BE ANY ADDITIONAL CROSSWALKS? HOW WILL THIS IMPACT THE OPERATION OF THE TRAFFIC SIGNALS?
4. THE ANALYSES MENTIONED ADDITIONAL PEDESTRIANS, BUT THE PEDESTRIAN VOLUMES DID NOT INCREASE AS THE PHASES ARE DEVELOPED, AND WERE NOT FURTHER INCREASED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE SKYWAY SYSTEM DEMOLITION. ALSO NOTE TODAY'S STANDARD FOR PEDESTRIAN WALKING SPEED IS 3.5 FT/SEC.
5. PG. 16 NOTES THAT NO INCREASED COSTS WOULD BE INCURRED BY MONROE COUNTY AS A RESULT OF THIS PROJECT. HOWEVER, MCDOT WILL NEED TO MAINTAIN ANY NEW SIGNALS, SIGNS, AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS. ALSO, MC PURE WATERS WILL NEED TO MAINTAIN THE COMBINED STORM/SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM.
6. UNDER TABLE 2.2 INVOLVED AGENCIES, MCDOT SHOULD BE LISTED AS THE TRAFFIC ENGINEERS FOR THE CITY AS WELL AS OWNER / OPERATOR OF TRAFFIC SIGNALS, SIGNS, AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS.

7. PG 44 IDENTIFIES THE "PREFERRED" MIDTOWN STREET GRID. WE BELIEVE THE AREA WOULD OPERATE BETTER IF "HISTORIC ELM ST." WERE TO BE EXTENDED STRAIGHT THRU TO BROAD ST., IN CONJUNCTION WITH ELIMINATING PLAZA DR. AND ATLAS ST., SOUTH OF NEW ELM ST. ALSO, IF BROAD ST. BECAME TWO WAY, THE PROPOSED SOUTHERN TERMINUS OF ATLAS ST. WOULD BE TOO CLOSE TO THE BROAD ST/CHESTNUT ST INTERSECTION.
8. HOW WELL WOULD THE TRAFFIC CIRCULATION PATTERNS AROUND THE SITE WORK IF THE EXISTING ONE WAY OPERATION ON CLINTON & BROAD WERE TO BE RETAINED?
9. WHAT TRAFFIC CONTROL IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR THE PROPOSED NEW INTERSECTION AT MAIN & CORTLAND?
10. CLINTON AVE. @ MAIN ST. — THE REPORT SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT NB RIGHT TURNS ARE ALLOWED FROM CLINTON AVE. ONTO MAIN ST. THIS TURN WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROHIBITED FOR PEDESTRIAN SAFETY. HOWEVER, WB RT TURNS FROM MAIN ST ONTO CLINTON WILL BE ALLOWED WHEN REN. SQUARE IS CONSTRUCTED.
11. THE REPORT STATES THAT, PER THE REN. SQUARE TIR, NO MODIFICATIONS ARE BEING RECOMMENDED AT CLINTON/MAIN. IN FACT, THE TIR IDENTIFIES THAT THE EXCLUSIVE BUS LANES ON MAIN ST. WILL BE CONVERTED INTO GENERAL TRAVEL LANES.
12. TABLE 5.4 — CLINTON @ MAIN — THE REPORT SHOWS THE EB APPROACH FAILING IN THE AM. HOWEVER, THE REN. SQUARE TIR ANALYSIS HAD THIS WORKING FINE WITH THE CHANGES MENTIONED ABOVE. THE ANALYSIS NEEDS TO BE MODIFIED TO MITIGATE FOR THE FAILING CONDITION AND TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE REN. SQUARE ANALYSIS.
13. COURT ST @ CLINTON AVE. — THE REPORT SHOWS THE EB APPROACH FAILING IN THE AM PEAK HOUR; LOS "F" IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE, AND ANY OVERFLOW WOULD BLOCK OTHER NEARBY INTERSECTIONS. MITIGATION OF THIS CONDITION IS REQUIRED.
14. COURT ST. WAS MODELED AS 1 WAY EAST OF CLINTON AVE. WHAT IF IT WERE MODELED AS 2 WAY HERE?
15. TABLE 5.5 — BROAD ST. & CHESTNUT ST. — FOR THE PM PEAK HOUR, MODEL THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NB LEFT TURN ARROW PHASE OPERATING IN THE PM PEAK IN ALL SCENARIOS TO REMOVE THE LOS "F" CONDITION FROM THE ANALYSIS.
16. MIDTOWN PARKING GARAGE ACCESS — WOULD THERE BE ANY CONFLICTS IF BROAD ST. OR COURT ST. BECOME 2 WAY? EB ON BROAD ST. IS A DIFFICULT TURN INTO THE UNDERGROUND PARKING.

WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO MEET WITH YOU AND THE DEVELOPER TO DISCUSS THIS PROJECT AND OUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, OR REQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT ME.

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL PAGES OR TRANSMISSION IS NOT LEGIBLE PLEASE CALL (585) 753-7733

CC: T. RICE
R. VENVERTLOH, LABELLA ASSOC.
D. GOEHRING, NYSDOT
FILE

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131 Saratoga Avenue
Rochester, NY 14608
(585)647-6492
11/12/08

Attn: Ms.Laudisi,

I have seen the outline of the New Midtown Project and have some questions that are still un-answered.

I am wondering "What" this project will bring to the Normal people that are living in the city?

We have lost every store that we had in the Midtown Plaza.

We have lost having a safe, indoor venue for making our purchases.

There is nothing downtown for Us any more.

Last time I was passing through on an RTS Bus I attempted to Find a rest room, and it took Me 20 minutes to find somewhere that would allow Me access.

This I think is totally unacceptable. And this New Project will be Years in the making. This Makes Me ashamed to call this City My Home. There is Nothing downtown at all any more.

I'm sorry But Family Dollar and Subway don't do anything for Me. I feel sorry for Visitors in our City. All they get is a view of all the abandoned buildings, and no where to go.

I hope we aren't waiting for Nothing with this project. I HOPE - there will be a reason to Go downtown soon.

Sincerely, Lisa & Alan Reinbolt

>>> BruceSchipper@aol.com 12/19/2008 4:18:47 pm >>>

Doraine Laudisi

The Bureau of Buildings and Zoning

City Hall Rm. 125B

Dear Ms. Laudisi,

To be brief:

The nation is broke.

The state is broke.

The city is broke.

In hard economic times, one does not spend or borrow money unnecessarily.

To do so is irresponsible.

Bruce Schipper

201 Elm Dr.

Rochester NY 14609

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(<http://www.aol.com/?optin=new-dp&icid=aolcom40vanity&ncid=emlcntaolcom00000025>)

TO: DORRAINE LAUDISI

NOV 11 2008

FROM: BOB WILKINSON

RE: MIDTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Doraine,

If the people who are planning this project plan on keeping Midtown Tower and use it for housing for 1 bedroom apartments that would be a plus! Regulate it so it is affordable for people, maybe even do something with the top of the Plaza Restaurant possibly reopen it but not a real fancy place. There is one concern that if Midtown Tower is converted to apartments Downtown would ~~and~~ need some kind of super market and drug store in the area to help out people who would be living downtown as well as working in the Downtown area. If the architect is smart design PACTECH building with maybe 4-5 businesses in the street level of it: BREUGGERS Bagels, Dunkin DONUTS, News Paper stand, ABBOTTS ICE CREAM & NY PIZZA Place, and Retrofit the elevators to go to only 1st floor of PACTECH unless you are an employee with a Pass. Just a couple of general ideas I had to throw out there.

Thank you
Bob WILKINSON
Bob Wilkinson

>>> mary anne 12/19/2008 4:40:35 pm >>>

PLEASE, this is not the time to commence the huge Midtown project.

Whether the public agrees or disagrees that the City of Rochester needs a new bus terminal or an expanded urban setting for MCCSURELY the Mayor, the County Manager, and highly informed business and university leaders are clear on the pure financial facts: Rochester and Monroe County are in deep financial trouble; the state is on the brink of bankruptcy; the nation is in recession, with another wave of bad news about commercial real estate defaults about to break!

Let sanity prevail! It's time to take a step back.

Editors note: contact info posted below.

Doraine Laudisi - Re: Midtown

Page 1

From: mary anne
To: Doraine Laudisi
Date: 12/22/2008 2:25 pm
Subject: Re: Midtown

Mary Anne Williams
1085 Everwild View
Webster, NY 14580
872-5232



www.rochesterdowntown.com

December 19, 2008

Ms. Dorraine Laudisi
Senior City Planner
City Hall, Rm. 125-B
30 Church Street
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear Dorraine:

To assure that the comments made as part of the Midtown Advisory Committee process have been formally recorded as responses to the DEIS for Midtown Plaza, I am including them as attachments to this letter. Two additional comments are provided:

1. **Mixed Use Program** – We strongly concur with the flexibility articulated in the DEIS (page 39) in guiding the targeted density and floor area ratios as future redevelopment opportunities present themselves. This would allow developers to make proposals to the City in response to changing market conditions for the remaining, non-PAETEC portions of the site.
2. **Open Space Treatment** – We have some concerns about the central open “piazza” space designated for Block 4 (pages 50-51). This space sits directly over the Midtown Garage footprint, which may create engineering limitations with the construction of a more traditional greenspace. It may prove to be similar to the Civic Center Plaza, also built over an existing underground garage, where the planting of trees has been infeasible. As a result, the wide expanse of asphalt has turned out to be an unpopular and forbidding public space, which has led to extremely low public usage. Fortunately, the need for flexibility on Block 2, the second potential greenspace on the site, has been recognized as important in the DEIS document.

Please contact me directly if we can provide any further information on the above comments or anything in the attached documents. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Heidi N. Zimmer-Meyer'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Heidi' being more prominent and the last name 'Zimmer-Meyer' following in a similar style.

Heidi N. Zimmer-Meyer
President

ROCHESTER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Attachment A: MIDTOWN SITE LAYOUT PROPOSALS

Final Offline Group Themes & Comments, September 12-22, 2008

HEIDI ZIMMER-MEYER: Regarding the site layout session, I was very surprised that by the end of the meeting everyone in the room appeared to be in agreement. Four basic responses to the proposals from EDAW floated to the top of the overall discussion:

1. **SW GREENSPACE** – The park on the SW corner of the block is ill-conceived. One park is enough on this block, and this site should contain a new structure with some massing to provide a more effective northeastern edge and connection to the Washington Square District.
2. **REMAINING NEW GREENSPACE** – This should be located in the center of the block, treated like a smaller European piazza, and handled in a very urban way (like Pioneer Square in Seattle). The four sides should be surrounded by streets and sidewalks featuring retail and active street front uses (mostly food, bars, coffee houses, etc.). One crowded vest pocket park works better than two large empty ones.
3. **NEW N/S AXIS STREET** – Needs to have a strong connection to Main Street, be designed as a wider route of circulation with a center median, and designed as flexible space allowing an easy transition to programmed events and alternative uses during off-peak time. On-street parking should be liberally built in along this street and throughout the site wherever possible. This should be deliberately designed as a grand connection to Main Street, with major visual terminus points in both north and south directions.
4. **CONNECTING TO ADJACENT STREETS & NEIGHBORHOODS** – The relationship between the uses, structures, and ultimate layout of blocks needs to be contextual, connecting to the East End, Main Street, Washington Square and Clinton Avenue. The Midtown Complex was designed to focus inward, effectively turning its back to the surrounding blocks, streets and buildings. Downtown has radically changed since 1961, and that model no longer works in the new downtown emerging in Rochester.

CRAIG JENSEN, via e-mail: I like the overall plan very much, with minor concerns and only two major concerns.

1. The green space shown on the corner of Broad and Clinton should be a building site. The lack of good public realm frontage and entrances at the south and west (Clinton Square, B&L, Xerox and the adjacent skyway escalator building) compromise the edges of this site. The city will be better served by a single public space as its living room. The one proposed on the east side of PAETEC is enough. Limit the height of the development on the site south of PAETEC to 5 stories if that view is a concern.
2. Is it both possible and practical to build the proposed streets, parks and independent buildings on top of the existing garage? Can the issues of foundations, services, infrastructure, landscaping, etc. be worked out without compromising the garage? Before PAETEC was announced, the Charrette solution limited the most intensive new development for parks and new buildings to sites to the north, outside the garage footprint.

JIM COSTANZA, via e-mail: The city should concentrate on city-wide traffic changes, and on-street parking to affect a dramatic sense of change that enhances the usability of retail and bolsters all of the markets simultaneously. If done coherently, this gets us to critical mass. I like these ideas:

- Use as much of the Midtown Tower shell as possible
- Create a European town square, where 3-4 story, residential and retail form a unique urban village
- Break the large parcels into very small parcels around the square to accommodate smaller, local developers who engage in residential construction
- The city sets design standards and common areas, but should let multiple, different, smaller-footprint buildings go up.

MARK TAYRIEN: From my perspective, the more prominent or important comments include:

1. **Open spaces (their number, location and scale)**
 - Need more people in one space not fewer people in more spaces
 - Open spaces north and east of towers problematic in this climate
 - Number, size and scale of open spaces – preference for piazza type spaces
 - Need for intimate spaces to surround open spaces
 - Concern over southwest corner open space, scale and activation
 - Southwest corner open space perceived as left over space
 - Southwest corner open space a potential location for building of limited height
 - Potential and/or need to develop fringe of central green area
2. **The scale of the connection to Main Street**
 - Larger or more open access to site from Main Street
 - More pronounced connection to Main Street and Liberty Pole
 - Importance of appropriate residential development to activate site
 - Importance of view corridors and termination – some work, others maybe not
 - Width of proposed streets – too narrow?
3. **Mid-rise v. high-rise residential development**
 - Importance of appropriate residential development to activate site
 - Economics of high rise residential in this market; need for more moderate-rise residential
 - More low-rise residential, less high-rise and less open space
4. **Streets with retail on only one side**
 - Lack of streets having retail on both sides
5. **Miscellaneous**
 - Concern regarding Chestnut off-site parcels tempered by fine grain building value
 - Servicing of four PAETEC building front-sides
 - Feasibility of developing proposed streets, parks and independent buildings over the garage (*submitted by email after the meeting*).

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| EDITORS NOTE: The comments listed below Mark Tayrien's name were not his comments, but a record of comments raised by various attendees at an advisory committee meeting |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

>>> lezleg@yahoo.com 11/30/2008 10:50:25 pm >>>
lezleg@yahoo.com has forwarded you this craigslist.org posting.
Please see below for more information.

Here's a letter to the Midtown project

Reply to: pers-933375635@craigslist.org
<<mailto:pers-933375635@craigslist.org>>
Date: 2008-11-25, 7:42AM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in regards to Midtown plaza, Why do we have to tare down the plaza why not make it a center for kids to go after school so they are not on the streets joining gangs or shooting each other or stealing or even selling drugs? I could see the plaza with a game room, a hockey court or basketball court, gymnastics, or cheer leading for the girls, after school help with homework, or training to get these kids motivated for graduation for a job. I am sure there are plenty retired adults who would love to help "underprivileged" children on volunteer. I just think it's a complete waste of tax payers dollars and just another excuse to "destroy" Rochester's history.

Or here is another suggestion, as we all know this was already a discussion among the developers. A casino would be a great way to "keep"

Midtown alive seen as how it's already dead down there. There are plenty of people without jobs in Rochester who would give their back teeth for ANY position they would be offered. We all know people love to gamble and that's a great way to get people off unemployment. Again that is my opinion. Or another suggestion, make it a skating rink/resturant for not just kids but adults to, again jobs would be offered, money would be made, and Midtown would stay where it is. There are endless possibilities that can be made, but not to sure if they have been considered. I am quite sure you are getting endless emails or phone calls or even handwritten letters. Take into consideration what is going to be done to Rochester. Buildings with boarded up windows or have been abandoned for many many years why not start there and get these businesses up and running again?

We need to think of the generations that are coming up now and give them something to do. They are bored and trying to keep themselves occupied.

But by selling drugs or joining gangs isn't an option in my book.

Concerned Rochestarian for 28 years!

- Location: Rochester
- it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

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>>> tedyunger@yahoo.com 11/30/2008 10:49:18 pm >>>
tedyunger@yahoo.com has forwarded you this craigslist.org posting.
Please see below for more information.

A proposed - rebirth of Midtown plaza

Reply to: pers-911541664@craigslist.org
<<mailto:pers-911541664@craigslist.org>>
Date: 2008-11-08, 11:51PM

I feel if a rebirth of Midtown plaza were to take place correctly, it could be a financial shot in the arm for Rochester. If for one they made part of it into a casino, that would draw money in, enough to convert the rest into a youth center & learning center. Also use it as a community center, by offering outreach programs to the less fortunate, who by bus could get there easily, Also a free job service – temporary help job bank would contribute to the development & growth of the city's youth. Another feature Midtown offered to downtown is a convent sheltered way to walk through downtown with a great food court, & some shopping. Which I feel has greatly contributed to the success of the downtown campuses. We already own Midtown, it's bought & paid for. It's a great central location every generation of Rochesterian knows by heart & transportation to & from it is already in place. With the economy as bad as it is I feel an investment into the Rochester landmark is worth it & managed like a business could pay the city back & more.

To borrow money for demolition & hope somebody still wants & can develop the site is a stupid & wasteful use of Rochester taxpayer's money. Especially if the site sit's vacant, which I honestly feel will happen. We should keep & reuse the site, keep it the center of downtown.

Also there has been a lot of development of downtown condos & apartments. It is only logical those residents will need a grocery store near by for convenience. A Price Right market would be nice in Midtown (maybe where Wegmans was long ago)

- Location: Downtown
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