

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Record of NYSOPRHP Section 14.09 Consultation**





LANDMARK  
SOCIETY

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July 31, 2008

Ms. Dorarine Laudisi  
Senior City Planner  
City Hall, Room 125B  
30 Church Street  
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear Ms. Laudisi:

The Landmark Society is pleased to submit the following comments on the draft scope for the Midtown Redevelopment Project.

- Under Reasons for Determination (the first cover page), "Impacts to Historic Resources," the 14.09 process requires consideration of alternatives that *avoid or minimize* adverse impacts, and then, if adverse impact cannot be avoided or minimized, mitigation is considered. We suggest that the consideration of alternatives in the EIS should also consider ways to *avoid and minimize*, not just mitigate, adverse impacts. It seems the language of this document puts the cart before the horse – it assumes total demolition and then mitigation rather than seeking alternatives to demolition. For example, originally the entire site was proposed for demolition, now retention of the tower and atrium is under consideration, yet in places such as this, the document still reads as if total demolition is assumed.
- Shifting to the Draft Scoping Document, p. 8, Section 4.5 -- What will define viewshed? We would like assurance that it will extend beyond the specific site and will provide long and short views for pedestrian/vehicular levels, as well as views from other structures in immediate surroundings.
- P. 10, Section 4.12 -- Considering the flux of the Renaissance Square project, how will the project team ensure that the redeveloped Midtown site can stand alone as a positive contribution to the urban core? How can they project traffic and parking related to any development, proposed or actual on the Renaissance Square site? Our point is that whatever Midtown becomes, it should function successfully as a stand alone, and, in the best case scenario, function harmoniously with any existing or proposed Main Street development.

LANDMARK SOCIETY OF WESTERN NEW YORK, INC.

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- We want to continue to reiterate that the SHPO determination of NR eligibility covers the entire site, not just the atrium. Every reference to historic resources (e.g. section 4.6, section 5.6) should reflect this.
- Sections 4.6 and 5.6 relate to identifying historic resources and the impacts on those resources; we point out that these would include State/National Register listed resources, S/NR eligible resources, and locally designated resources. Additionally, this area is rich with resources relating to the recent past, some of which may rise to NR eligibility due to the "exceptional significance" consideration. As the project team identifies historic resources, they should not assume that anything under 50 years old is not historic.
- In Section 5.16, Energy, or perhaps Section 10, Impacts on Use and Conservation of Energy Resources, there is an opportunity to raise embodied energy as an environmental impact that should be evaluated. We ask that the project team identify loss of embodied energy associated with demolition, and ways to minimize or mitigate this loss through recycling of materials and/or reuse of infrastructure and structural elements. We encourage consideration of options that include deconstruction and reuse, or the reuse of materials in place.
- In Section 12, Analysis of Alternatives, we observe the method of distinguishing the alternatives is based on analyzing different densities of redevelopment. We do not see a rationale in the document for this approach and question whether density is the best factor to single out, or whether other variables such as function, scale/massing, green space or circulation would be more instructive and useful ways to differentiate among the many possible alternatives that could be developed.
- Referencing the specific alternatives identified in the Draft Scope, "Alternative A," which analyzes the impact of the project *without* PAETEC, seems unrealistic since the project would not proceed without PAETEC (according to all accounts). It could make more sense to include, as one of the alternatives, a project with *only* PAETEC and no other development.
- Alternatives to be evaluated should specifically include options that retain the atrium and/or the tower. One alternative might be for PAETEC to incorporate the tower and/or atrium into its new building or buildings. Another alternative could consider the retention of the tower and/or atrium regardless of PAETEC commitment.
- Component Alternatives: Since the entire site is NR-eligible it would make sense to evaluate alternatives with respect to their impact on/possible reuse of elements other than the atrium and tower.

A fundamental question that pertains to the scope as a whole rather than to any single section is this: Why is there no overriding master plan for the urban core that would inform all these components and direct developers productively? This process seems to be asking the EIS itself to perform that planning function, when instead the project parameters should be defined first through creation of a master plan with public input, and then the SEQR process followed with respect to that plan. This would provide more clarity as to the nature of the project itself, rather than expecting the nature of the project to become clear through the process of preparing the EIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this scope. The Landmark Society stands ready to continue to help facilitate your review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne Arany", with a stylized, flowing script.

Joanne Arany  
Executive Director

Cc: Ed Olinger  
Jerry Ludwig  
Katie Comeau



## Statement on Midtown Plaza Atrium

July 29, 2008

To identify myself, I'm a professor of History at Hobart and William Smith Colleges who has written on a wide variety of topics, including modern American architecture. I'm here to contend that the atrium mall at Midtown represents a historical and architectural treasure that should be preserved for future generations if at all possible.

Let me be clear. I very much favor tearing down the Seneca, McCurdy and B. Forman buildings, and while I would like to see the Tower converted to housing, I do not believe it represents a central part of Rochester's history or holds architectural merit.

Nor do I care about the external facade of the atrium, which strikes me as both undistinguished and undesirable. What I'm concerned with is the interior, which served as the core of this community's life for several decades in the mid-twentieth century.

The Midtown atrium is important first of all because it is one of only two public buildings in Rochester designed by an architect with a genuine international reputation (the other is the Unitarian Church on Winton Road done by Louis Kahn). If anything, scholarly interest in Victor Gruen, the architect of Midtown, continues to grow a quarter century after his death, attesting to the stature he enjoyed within his profession.

Given the fact that our architectural inventory in Rochester is so limited for a city of our size and cultural aspirations,

can we really afford to lose a major work by an architect as well-regarded as Gruen?

But, some might say, Gruen may have been famous, but does that mean that the atrium is a high quality work? I would reply that it most definitely is.

Its aesthetic charm begins with its near-perfect proportions, especially in regard to the graceful stairs and balcony that give access to the second floor shops. The use of wood panelling and the highly inventive rafters that Gruen inserted at the top humanize the atrium and make it a pleasant and comfortable place to be, as do the two levels of clerestory windows which provide a remarkable amount of daylight for a building that is otherwise totally enclosed.

Everyone assumes that Rochesterians love Midtown because they associate it with Christmas. That may be true in part, but it is not the full story. Rather, I would suggest that the community came to love the atrium because it was a magical public space, exactly as Victor Gruen intended it to be.

Of course it doesn't look very magical at present, but if you examine it closely the atrium itself is in excellent condition from a structural standpoint. Cleaning, painting, and some upgraded light fixtures would work wonders.

What should it become? The obvious choice is to make it a neighborhood shopping center, providing essential goods and services for those residing within walking distance. That, in turn, might significantly increase the number of people interest-



ed in moving downtown.

A new exterior would be highly desirable, cutting in doors and windows to connect the stores inside to life on the streets outside. Above all, when the McCurdy Building comes down it will leave the Main Street side of the atrium wide open. That's the perfect opportunity to construct a glass wall across that entire facade, much like the one at Blue Cross Arena, again connecting the atrium to its urban surroundings and flooding it with light.

One final thought. Typically, when decisions of this sort are made about whether to save a building, financial considerations are uppermost. As a general rule that makes sense, but when one is dealing with an architectural gem that has become a basic part of the historic fabric of our city, one needs to take a long term rather than a short-term view.

A half century ago those in charge of our community decided to raze entire historical neighborhoods in order to make way for the Inner Loop. As we look back it is obvious they made a terrible mistake. What would be the capital value today of the buildings they wrecked in the name of Progress? Surely we would give hundreds of millions of dollars to reverse what happened.

If someone comes along with a proposal to erect a new architectural gem on the site where the atrium now stands, that might justify losing it. Short of that, I would urge the city to save and recycle this unique landmark building.

Daniel J. Singal



Senior Planner Laudisi,

Although I moved here in 2000 my initial visit to Midtown occurred this past fall. I have been back many times since and visited to say "goodbye" to the mall, in its present form, on July 25<sup>th</sup> of this year.

I attended the scoping meeting on Tuesday and concur with the sentiment of the SHPO letter as well as the seven people who spoke at the meeting. Regardless of their differing speaking styles, backgrounds and motivations the speakers all said the same thing: **KEEP THE ATRIUM AND TOWER!** The atrium is a wonderfully designed public space that does not derive its historical and architectural quality from the nostalgia of its visitors, as is commonly thought. Instead, the atrium is a masterwork of a major figure of 20<sup>th</sup> Century architecture and urban planning that, through its light and airy atmosphere and quality of design and materials, *created the conditions* for nostalgia to occur in people who visited our "town square." People don't usually come to love a badly designed building no matter how many stores it has or how long it has stood. I doubt anyone will lament the loss of our current train station as much as they still pine for its predecessor, Claude Bragdon's Central Station. The tower, while not as architecturally important as the atrium, is a sound structure that could easily be updated utility-wise once the asbestos remediation is complete. The curtain wall of the tower could be replaced to give it a completely different look without the costs associated with demolition, site preparation, design and construction of a new building. In these trying times of high energy and materials (steel) costs it makes sense to retain the tower for future needs. Paetec should consider using the tower as their planned secondary building and the atrium as a connecting structure/lobby of both buildings.

Midtown Plaza, as it stands today, does not perform *all* of the functions for which it was constructed. It *does* make sense to remove the majority of the plaza for redevelopment. Drawing new companies (and their workers) downtown is essential to its revitalization. Still, must we sacrifice the vital parts of the plaza with the rest of the complex?

In a city notorious for its parking issues, why destroy a fine city garage only to build a tower that will require *more parking* ?

According to the recently released study on the garage's condition conducted by Walker Parking Consultants the garage is in very good shape and would need about \$11-\$13,000,000 of work to provide another 20-30 years of use. The good condition of the garage is due to regular maintenance and a major renovation of the garage that was executed in the 1980's. Their estimate for complete replacement is \$60-\$80,000,000. That is over **SIX TIMES** the cost of major repairs and three to four times the cost of a complete replacement of floor slabs and other major support structure. The cost of replacement is prohibitive and repairing the exiting structure is the reasonable and responsible choice in this situation. Saving the atrium and tower sections of the complex would protect the majority of the garage from demolition/construction damage.

The skyway hub that is Midtown could be retained and updated at a much lower cost than total replacement of the connections to Chase Tower and Xerox Square.

With ESL's move to Chestnut St., and the construction of a garage to go with its new headquarters, it seems inevitable that the southern gateway to downtown will be a study in urban garage design, resulting in a functional, but uninteresting vista that will welcome visitors to our "renewed" center. To add another above ground garage for Paetec's employees would complete the composition of "hollowed out" concrete structures that exist and are being constructed in that area of downtown.

It is ironic that while some are quick to demolish a remnant of the super block urban planning of the mid-20th century (created and supported by private businesses to address an existing need) because it is obsolete and takes up a large parcel of taxable land, others desire to build another super block development at RenSquare (being created with public funds and of questionable necessity) that features the "finest" twenty-first century design and planning. Is trading one super block project for another *progress*? Should one, or both, projects fail to be completed we will be left with acres of *truly* vacant land at the crossroads of downtown. Two huge, unfinished developments will blight the area much more than the "obsolete" buildings that currently occupy these sites.

We must be mindful as we proceed with plans for Midtown that once something is gone it cannot be brought back. New is not always improved.

Thank You,

Dan Palmer

# Midtown: NYSOPRHP Consultation Meetings

Possible Participants \* = Participating via conference line

	Organization	Meeting #1 9/4/08	Meeting #2 10/02/08	Meeting #3 10/23/08
Joanne Arany	Executive Director; Landmark Society of Western New York	YES	YES	YES
Katie Comeau	Landmark Society of Western New York	YES	YES	YES
Ed Olinger	Landmark Society of Western New York	YES	NO	YES
Heidi Zimmer-Meyer	President; Rochester Downtown Development Corporation (RDDC)	YES	YES	YES
Joni Monroe	Executive Director; Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC)	YES	YES	YES
Meredith Keller	Interim Executive Director; Rochester Historical Society	YES	YES	NO
Meredith Andreucci	Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC)	YES	YES	YES
Paul Tronolone	Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC)	YES	YES	YES
Mike Fitzner	Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC)	NO	YES	YES
Art Ientilucci	City of Rochester; Zoning Bureau	NO	YES	YES
Doraine Laudisi	City of Rochester; Zoning Bureau	YES	YES	YES
Chuck Thomas	City of Rochester, Planning	NO	YES	YES
Dana Miller	Council Member; City of Rochester (spoke at Public Scoping Meeting)	NO	NO	NO
Daniel J. Singal	History Professor; Hobart & William Smith College (submitted comment)	NO	NO	NO
Dan Palmer	(Submitted a written comment at Public Scoping Meeting)	NO	YES	YES
Christopher Steion*	EDAW Inc.; Director of Urban Design	YES*	YES	YES
Mark Peckham*	NYSOPRHP; National Register Unit Coordinator	YES*	NO	NO
John Bonafide	NYSOPRHP; Historic Preservation Services Coordinator	NO	YES*	YES
Mark Tayrien	LaBella Associates	YES	YES	YES
Sergio Esteban	LaBella Associates	YES	YES	NO
Dan Kenyon	LaBella Associates	YES	YES	YES
Claudia Burcke	LaBella Associates	YES	YES	YES
John Anderson	Northern Capital representing PAETEC	NO	YES	YES
Pete Connoy	PAETEC	NO	NO	YES
Chic Bruno	PAETEC	NO	NO	YES



**Midtown Redevelopment Plan / SEQRA Assistance  
City of Rochester**

**NYSOPRHP Consultation Meeting #1**

September 4, 2008 – 9:00 AM – LaBella Associates, 300 State Street

**AGENDA**

1. Introductions
2. Meeting Procedures
3. 14.09 Consultation Process in Context of Generic EIS Process
4. Summary of Redevelopment & Urban Design Goals/Objectives of Midtown Project
5. Summary of Issues, Opportunities, & Constraints Related to Midtown Project
6. Facilitated Discussion –
  - *What are the key historic “character-defining” features and resources of the Midtown Site?*
7. Facilitated Discussion –
  - *In addition to meeting overall objectives of the Midtown Project, what key criteria should be included in the evaluation & review of Project alternatives?*
8. Other Issues –
  - *What other issues need to be considered with regard to historic resources?*

## Urban Design Goals/Objectives of Midtown Project

1. *Arrest further deterioration of the site and its negative influence on surrounding area.*
2. *Eliminate substandard conditions, deteriorated structures and other blighting influences.*
3. *Eliminate urban design characteristics contributing to blight within the project area.*
4. *Revitalize the urban core, reduce vacancy rates and preserve downtown property values.*
5. *Generate municipal tax base and additional jobs in the area (return on public investment).*
6. *Remediate asbestos to promote economic development through private development.*
7. *Identify an economically feasible plan for revitalization of Midtown properties.*
8. *Develop a public private partnership and attract private investment in this site.*
9. *Redevelop the site as a mixed-use urban space to accommodate PAETEC headquarters.*
10. *Provide additional economically attractive opportunities for development on the site.*
11. *Satisfy demand for parking on site.*
12. *Position district as premier development site for high quality office, residential and retail.*
13. *Develop a strong, economically viable and diverse neighborhood commercial area.*
14. *With respect to existing corridors, position site as a critical downtown development node.*
15. *Reconnect neighborhoods, enhance adjacent districts and improve walkability.*
16. *Enhance connections and linkages to other key districts including the East End.*
17. *Create meaningful open and green spaces that contribute to and enhance the public realm.*
18. *Break down the superblock established in 60's, improve access & reestablish a street grid.*
19. *Enhance and activate the street environment and the public realm.*
20. *Create an active/intimate street environment and foster active use of street front retail.*
21. *Implement proven placemaking methods: encourage activity, create a destination & "buzz".*
22. *Capitalize on catalytic potential of site to spur ongoing private investment and job creation.*



## Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

1. *Past & ongoing decline / Unique catalytic potential of site / Multiplicity of objectives.*
2. *Competition with suburban alternatives / demographic and energy influences.*
3. *PAETEC commitment & interest / PAETEC requirements & preferences.*
4. *Time / Schedule.*
5. *No economically feasible redevelopment potential in private sector.*
6. *Public commitment & funding / Budget & competition for public funds.*
7. *Absence of funding for a “public facility” and need for return on public investment.*
8. *Asbestos, outdated systems and cost to renovate.*
9. *High vacancy rate, absence of demand for mall space & potential revenue stream.*
10. *Outdated configuration of mall atrium.*
11. *Limited market for downtown retail development – street side development / zero sum game.*
12. *NSR eligibility & effects of redevelopment / Significance, public sentiment & identification.*
13. *Superblock, street grid and potential atrium conflict.*
14. *Structural & engineering aspects of demolishing some buildings and retaining others.*
15. *Closure issues following partial demolition.*
16. *Potential need to protect indoor elements in an outdoor setting.*
17. *Investment required to retain atrium / mall.*
18. *Phasing and potential delay in opportunities to incorporate architectural elements.*
19. *Back door along eastern boundary.*
20. *Connections to skyway system / position as a pedestrian node.*
21. *Need to preserve existing parking and meet additional needs on site.*
22. *Economic feasibility and timing of Tower adaptive reuse.*

## Suggested Considerations for Identifying Character Defining Elements

A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

*A highly intact early prototype of the enclosed shopping mall developed by nationally renowned architect/planner/theorist Victor Gruen. Midtown was the first downtown enclosed mall in the country.*

*Arguably Gruen's best expression of his ideal commercial mall as village/community center, combining retail, office, hotel, transportation and restaurant facilities in one coordinated complex using pre-existing urban fabric and new construction.*

*The intact courtyard/mall space is also an excellent example of period design, employing a subtle interplay of color and texture in the hard, i.e. tile and stone, surfaces, fountains,*

*The distinctive 'village clock' at the center with its animated vignettes of major world cultures, expressing the then-emerging image of the 'global village'.*

Midtown was a significant and influential example of Gruen's efforts to revitalize urban commercial cores. The goal was to enhance downtown retail, and specifically to attract middle-class suburbanites to shop downtown, by making downtown attractive, multifunctional and modern to compete with the amenities offered in the suburbs.

*Gruen's specific plan for Midtown was innovative in that it incorporated many different functions into a single complex: retail, parking, "public space," hotel, office, public transportation (bus terminal), restaurant, public auditorium, meeting rooms, "children's play and amusement area," private technical schools, bank, post office, art galleries.*

*As Gruen intended, Midtown has functioned as and has been perceived as a town square/public gathering place for Rochester. At the same time, it was private space, an early example of the privatization of "public" space seen in the evolution of shopping malls, theme parks, and other post-World War II environments.*

Rochester implemented Gruen's recommendations quite completely, possibly more completely than any other city for which Gruen did a revitalization plan. *That original design is quite intact, particularly in the atrium, which is virtually unaltered and includes works of art designed for the space as well as nearly all its original materials and finishes.*

Midtown Plaza opened to tremendous acclaim and national press; Rochester was hailed as having discovered the solution to downtown decay (even the World Book Encyclopedia cited Rochester for this achievement); planners from around the country came to see what Rochester had done; even the U.S. Congress held a hearing in Midtown.

The underground garage that was an integral part of the Midtown plan was particularly heralded as innovative and significant.

The construction of Midtown was *an innovative and very successful example of a public-private partnership* Midtown is associated with two prominent Rochester families, the Formans and McCurdys. Gilbert McCurdy and Maurice and Fred Forman, owners of two of Rochester's most prominent department stores, observed (and contributed to) the migration of retail business to the suburbs in the mid-1950s and decided to work together to "effect significant and long-lasting improvements in our downtown area." It was their vision for the revitalization of downtown that led them to contact Gruen and to work closely with the city to implement Gruen's plan

## **Suggested Considerations for Evaluative Criteria**

### **Premise:**

Demolition would have an adverse impact in that it would cause *destruction or alteration of all or part of the property*.

### **From various regulations:**

To the fullest extent practicable, it is the responsibility of every State agency, consistent with other provisions of law, to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to registered or eligible property.

- To the fullest extent possible, avoid or mitigate the adverse impacts.
- Fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives.
- Give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on such property.
- Make every effort to reconcile programs with the public policy of the State regarding historic preservation by finding a feasible and prudent means to avoid or mitigate any . .
- Other factors such as cost, program needs, safety, efficiency, code requirements or alternate sites may also be considered. However, none of these factors standing alone shall be determinative of whether a particular proposal is feasible or prudent.

### **From OPRHP:**

Whether there are feasible design alternatives - considering economic, engineering, and design factors - that avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on the facility, particularly the atrium portion.

The alternatives analysis could identify a project design that incorporates the existing historic resource, or portions thereof, into the overall redevelopment design for the Midtown Plaza site.

If no feasible options are identified, other possible mitigation measures, including appropriate recordation prior to any demolition work, would be considered.

## **Suggested Criteria for Evaluating Alternatives:**

With respect to alternatives that only mitigate, are feasible and prudent alternatives available that avoid effects?

With respect to all alternatives, do they avoid or mitigate, as the case may be, the destruction or alteration of all or part of the eligible property to the fullest extent practicable?

How effective is the alternative at accomplishing the State's historic preservation policies as expressed in article 14.00 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law:

- *Promote the use, reuse and conservation of such properties for the education, inspiration, welfare, recreation, prosperity and enrichment of the public;*
- *Promote and encourage the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such properties, including any improvements, landmarks, historic districts, objects and sites which have or represent elements of historical, archeological, architectural or cultural significance;*
- *Encourage and assist municipalities to undertake preservation programs and activities;*
- *Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past through cooperation with municipalities and local organizations;*
- *Preserve and enhance the state's attractions to tourists and visitors.*

Does the alternative conflict with, impede or compromise a project objective and, if so, is the conflict significant and is there some way to avoid or minimize it? For example,

- Economic impacts (including property values) and return on public investment
- Removal of blight and blighting influence
- Removal of impediments to redevelopment and connectivity presented by the superblock.
- Opportunities for economically feasible redevelopment and attraction of private investment
- Placemaking, revitalization and catalysis throughout the area, public realm
- Capitalizing on the unique opportunities presented by this key site and location

Is there an additional cost associated with the alternative and how might it be funded? (Operation and maintenance costs to be considered as well as capital costs)? Is it economically sustainable?

Does the alternative conflict with PAETEC requirements, preferences or participation?

Does the alternative have important schedule impacts that could compromise the project as a whole?

Are there engineering or physical constraints that would make the alternative imprudent or not feasible?

**CITY OF ROCHESTER  
MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN/ SEQRA ASSISTANCE  
MINUTES OF NYSOPRHP CONSULTATION MEETING #1**


Meeting Date: September 4, 2008

Meeting Place: LaBella Associates, PC – 300 State Street

Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m.

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***IN ATTENDANCE*** (and Distribution List):

	Name	Representing	Phone No.	E- 
X	Joanne Arany	Landmark Society		
X	Katie Comeau	Landmark Society		
X	Ed Olinger	Landmark Society		
X	Heidi Zimmer-Meyer	RDDC		
X	Joni Monroe	RRCDC		
X	Meredith Keller	Rochester Historical Society		
X	Meredith Andreucci	ESDC		
X	Paul Tronolone	ESDC		
	Mike Fitzner	ESDC		
	Art Ientilucci	City of Rochester		
X	Doraine Laudisi	City of Rochester		
	Dana Miller	Interested Party		
	Daniel J. Singal	Interested Party		
	Dan Palmer	Interested Party		
X	Christopher Steinon*	EDAW		
X	Matt Seybert*	EDAW		
X	Mark Peckham*	NYSOPRHP		
	John Bonafide	NYSOPRHP		
X	Mark Tayrien	LaBella Associates		
	Sergio Esteban	LaBella Associates		
X	Dan Kenyon	LaBella Associates		
X	Claudia Burcke	LaBella Associates		

\* = Participated via conference line

***PURPOSE:***

NYSOPRHP Section 14.09 Consultation Process in Context of Generic EIS Process

Item No.	Hand Outs for Meeting		
1.1	1. Urban Design Goals / Objectives of Midtown Project  2. Issues, Opportunities and Constraints  3. Suggested Considerations for Identifying Character Defining Elements  4. Suggested Considerations for Evaluative Criteria		

Meeting Summary			
1.2	<b>Opening Remarks:</b>  Attendees were introduced, including those on teleconference. Meeting procedures were briefly covered, and both M. Tayrien and P. Tronolone noted that the most important themes were consensus and collaboration.  The intent of the meeting was to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review redevelopment &amp; urban design goals/objectives of Midtown Project</li> <li>• Review issues, opportunities &amp; constraints related to Midtown Project</li> <li>• Identify key historic character-defining features/resources of the Midtown Block</li> <li>• Development/review of evaluation criteria for project alternatives related to historical resources/features</li> </ul>		
1.3	<b>Review and Discussion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P. Tronolone discussed the general NYSOPRHP section 14.09 consultation process in context of the DGEIS. He noted that this consultation would attempt to further shape the alternatives being considered in the DGEIS.</li> <li>• There was discussion in regards to the redevelopment &amp; urban design goals/objectives of the Midtown Project.</li> <li>• It was noted that the redevelopment should attempt to honor Rochester's 20th Century.</li> <li>• J. Monroe noted that an approach should be taken to incorporate green objectives, sustainable design and reuse for the project site. It was noted that all "green" goals can be integrated under sustainability, and could become part of the evaluative criteria.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding the cumulative perspectives of the project in relation to other downtown development projects.</li> <li>• There was discussion in regards to issues, opportunities &amp; constraints related to the Midtown Project.</li> <li>• J. Monroe noted her opinion that there is an opportunity for retail on the Midtown</li> </ul>		

	<p>site to co-exist with suburban retail alternatives. She further noted that the project could be a compelling reason to attract new retail to the area in the long term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M. Peckham affirmed that the intent of the Midtown Revitalization Project is to revitalize downtown, and in the long term, they should do better than a zero-sum gain (for example; retail moving into Midtown project area instead of Park Avenue or other locations).</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer noted that urban retail needs to be better defined in regards to the scale, uniqueness (niche market), layout, etc. She further noted that urban retail concepts are different than suburban.</li> <li>• J. Monroe inquired whether Midtown will be viewed as a “mall” or as “public green space”, and that view will be critical.</li> <li>• It was noted that there appears to be a trend towards a desire for a more urban lifestyle and that some areas have appeared to witness the “peak” of suburban development. In addition, the concept of a mixed use urban village was referenced as similar in comparison to a “lifestyle center”.</li> <li>• There was further discussion regarding the point that public commitment was a strength, however budget and competition for public funding was not, as there is a lot of competition for these limited funds.</li> <li>• E. Olinger noted that regardless of the use of the site, the abatement of asbestos still needs to be done and that the cost for abatement would be the same (whether a building was saved or demolished).</li> <li>• There was agreement that Midtown is currently considered a “failed site”, and that there are important implications to provide a revenue stream.</li> <li>• M. Peckham noted that the mall atrium may not have an outdated configuration for adaptive reuse.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding PAETEC as the key asset/driver at this point, and we must be responsive to their needs/desires. Also, the City and State are expecting an economic return on investment for the public funds.</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer noted that there is a strong, emotional attachment to Midtown, especially the atrium. She inquired about factors that create a public space that people want to be in. She noted that it is important to understand what those elements are and what the best resolution is to redevelop the sense of a community gathering space?</li> <li>• Concern was raised that the emotional attachment of the site may bring on the fear that we are “continuing to throw away importance and integrity”.</li> <li>• J. Arany noted the hallmark is the “uniqueness” of the plaza, and that is what used to draw people in. The atrium is the most unique element that remains, and it’s relevant to the needs of the community.</li> <li>• There was discussion in regards to as whether keeping the atrium was economically feasible. The issue is keeping something that is unique and being able to pay for it.</li> <li>• J. Monroe stated that we need to look at the long term and not do anything that will be regretted later. She inquired if there is an opportunity to phase demolition so that spaces are occupied and there isn’t a gaping hole on the site. She further inquired if there is allowance for not clearing the entire site?</li> <li>• There was further discussion regarding a balanced approach to developing the site with public and private spaces, such as including a public gathering place (“town square” environment), and that the full community should be addressed, and not just a specific demographic population.</li> <li>• J. Arany said that documentation needs to be established and relied upon to guide</li> </ul>		
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	<p>the process. P. Tronolone expressed that we are not “reinventing the wheel” and that the urban renewal plan will serve as a future development document and the GEIS will help build that plan. It was noted that existing documents such as the RRCDC’s Downtown Charette, the ULI study, as well as many other documents are also being used as references.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D. Laudisi explained to the group that SEQR will summarize learnings from all reports. Also, SEQR ends in findings statements, which leads to and shapes the urban renewal plan.</li> <li>• M. Peckham stated that the SHPO notification letter also identified other historical properties that may be impacted.</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer explained that the “super block” extends beyond Midtown, and other development sites will need to be integrated, and can not be done piece meal (Renaissance Square is a consideration in the midtown plans).</li> <li>• There was discussion in regards to the group focusing on historic resources and the need to identify character-defining elements and considerations for evaluative criteria and not get too involved in the planning process.</li> <li>• M. Peckham noted that the handout titled “Suggested Considerations for Identifying Character Defining Elements” was helpful, and the underlined sections captured those elements well.</li> <li>• M. Tayrien inquired if the atrium is considered the most important element of the site. SHPO responded yes and wants to know what can be done to perhaps retain the atrium. It is the most character defining element and needs to be focused on; the rest is historic.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding the skyways. E. Olinger noted that the Downtown Rochester skyway system was being developed and built when other cities were realizing they were a failure because it took away “street life”. Even though portions of the skyway would be severed, Midtown could still serve as a nodal center.</li> <li>• M. Keller inquired how much of first floor is the atrium? J. Monroe noted in her opinion, it does not go back to the retail space, just the floor plan with the public gathering space. There was a question regarding if the atrium should be considered to include the mezzanine and staircase? There was a “yes” response.</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer asked who is involved in ascertaining what the options are to keep spaces.</li> <li>• M. Tayrien responded that there is some flexibility. Everything constructed is steel frame construction. He noted that from an engineering standpoint it would be possible to demolish part of the site and brace the remaining structure (s). Structural constraints will not be the driver. Cost and programmatic issues will more than likely be the determining factor.</li> <li>• M. Peckham addressed the RRCDC Charette and that it explored this issue further. J. Monroe said that the Charette broke down the site, reusing the atrium, and found it was very flexible, however it did not take the deep retail spaces into account.</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer noted that if the atrium was kept as an indoor facility or an outdoor facility, there is a cost to maintenance and adding mechanical/electrical systems. Can income streams be created in order to keep it up and maintain it? There is flexibility to create spaces to make it more public.</li> <li>• J. Monroe noted that housing can be a new infusion of energy, and the site could become a destination place. Opportunities, such as an IMAX theater, would compliment and play off the atrium space. It needs new programmatic ideas.</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P. Tronolone inquired if you broke down the superblock with respect to the atrium, is the block eligible? M. Peckham noted that avoiding impact is not feasible. P. Tronolone made a point to the group that it would appear that we've moved beyond the feasibility of any true "avoidance" alternatives (i.e., looking at alternatives involving preservation of the block or substantial portions of the block, outside the atrium, for possible new uses) and moved into examination of impact minimization and mitigation approaches. M. Peckham and other group members concurred.</li> <li>• J. Arany noted that the Landmark Society wants to minimize, respect intent and play a part. Any proposal should encompass economic feasibility and give respect to the historical site. She added that whatever solution is adopted, including adaptive reuse, there will be a need for private sector funding.</li> <li>• M. Peckham agreed that the concepts should be flexible, meet new program requirements and do not ignore history.</li> <li>• J. Arany stated that she is unaware of what is intact and what's not. Demolition, in her opinion, should not happen unless there is a plan for construction.</li> <li>• M. Tayrien noted that PAETEC is reviewing one or two footprints, directly across from Chase, and that they seem to be in favor of that site at this time.</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer noted there is a nexus point on what matters most to PAETEC and what matters most to the community?</li> <li>• J. Arany inquired as to why it seems we are only embracing one population demographic. She further inquired what will make this enduring for the long term.</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer noted that most downtowns are usually populated by "artists and students" and that today there is a growing trend of baby boomers joining this. She further added that in regards to different needs and desires, we should be able to work with both the baby boomers and the millennial populations.</li> <li>• D. Laudisi noted that once an architect is on board with PAETEC, this process will feed into their architectural process. There was discussion regarding whether preservation is about the function of the atrium or the actual structure itself. J. Monroe stated that they were "integrally connected" and that the current configuration should be retained.</li> <li>• D. Laudisi inquired whether elements such as the rafters and stairwell were an integral part of the atrium. J. Monroe responded "yes". D. Laudisi - in place? J. Monroe - Yes. D. Laudisi - can they be moved? M. Peckham noted it is about materials, location and design.</li> <li>• P. Tronolone stated that it sounds like three alternatives were being proposed. 1) Attempt to preserve the atrium structure as an enclosed space for a new use. 2) Attempt to preserve the space that defined the atrium (as an outdoor facility or "town square"). 3) Attempt to preserve the programmatic purpose that the atrium served (i.e. "town square"), regardless of its location on the Midtown Block.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding reasonable costs, opportunities and challenges to save or minimize impacts on atrium.</li> <li>• E. Olinger inquired about the development program for the site. M. Tayrien noted that in the scoping document, the program was defined as a range. E. Olinger noted that this is a process, and the historic component needs to fit together.</li> <li>• M. Seybert said that the character defining elements will be reviewed. What can be fit in? What is achievable? What is an appropriate program?</li> <li>• M. Tayrien noted that the next meeting will be scheduled within a month.</li> </ul>	
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***NEXT MEETING:***

**Date: October 2, 2008**

**Time: 9:00am – 12:00 pm**

**Location: LaBella Associates, PC**

**300 State Street – Suite 201**

**Rochester, NY 14614**

The preceding minutes represent the author's understanding of the issues discussed and decisions reached. If there are any errors or omissions, questions, comments, or corrections regarding these notes, please respond using the contact information below within three days of issuance.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Kenyon  
Planner  
LaBella Associates P.C.  
(585) 295-6664

**Midtown Redevelopment Plan / SEQRA Assistance  
City of Rochester**

**NYSOPRHP Consultation Meeting #2**

October 2, 2008 – 9:00 AM – LaBella Associates, 300 State Street

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Recap of Comments and Summary of "Character-Defining" Features of Midtown Block Identified at Meeting No. 1
3. Brief Presentation of Midtown Redevelopment Project – Overall Program and Concept Site Plans
4. Presentation and Review of Alternative Concept Plans Developed in Response to Comments/Issues at Meeting No 1.
5. Review of Preliminary Comparative Evaluation Matrix
6. Discussion and Evaluation / Refinement of Alternative Concept Plans
7. Identification of Remaining Tasks / Efforts – Possible Transition to Urban Design Process

**CITY OF ROCHESTER  
MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN/ SEQRA ASSISTANCE  
MINUTES OF NYSOPRHP CONSULTATION MEETING #2**

Meeting Date: October 2, 2008

Meeting Place: LaBella Associates, PC – 300 State Street

Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m.

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***IN ATTENDANCE*** (and Distribution List):

	Name	Representing		
X	Joanne Arany	Landmark Society		
X	Katie Comeau	Landmark Society		
	Ed Olinger	Landmark Society		
X	Heidi Zimmer-Meyer	RDDC		
X	Joni Monroe	RRCDC		
X	Meredith Keller	Rochester Historical Society		
X	Meredith Andreucci	ESDC		
X	Paul Tronolone	ESDC		
X	Mike Fitzner	ESDC		
X	Art Ientilucci	City of Rochester		
X	Doraine Laudisi	City of Rochester		
	Dana Miller	Interested Party		
	Daniel J. Singal	Interested Party		
X	Dan Palmer	Interested Party		
X	Christopher Steinon	EDAW		
	Matt Seybert	EDAW		
	Mark Peckham	NYSOPRHP		
X	John Bonafide*	NYSOPRHP		
X	Mark Tayrien	LaBella Associates		
	Sergio Esteban	LaBella Associates		
X	Dan Kenyon	LaBella Associates		
X	Claudia Burcke	LaBella Associates		
X	John Anderson	PAETEC		
X	Chuck Thomas	City of Rochester		

\* = Participated via conference line

***PURPOSE:***

NYSOPRHP Section 14.09 Consultation Process in Context of GEIS Process

Item No.	Hand Outs for Meeting		
2.1	1. Preliminary Draft Comparative Evaluation Matrix  2. Rochester History, The Life and Times of Midtown Plaza (booklet distributed on behalf of the Rochester Historical Society)		

Meeting Summary			
2.2	<b>Opening Remarks:</b>  Attendees were introduced, including John Bonafide (NYSOPRHP) on teleconference and Christopher Steinon from EDAW, who briefly recapped Meeting #1's discussion regarding the "character-defining" features of the Midtown Block.  The intent of the meeting was to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review concept alternatives that meet overall project goals/objectives and to respond to features identified in Consultation Meeting #1.</li> <li>• Conduct preliminary evaluation of alternatives against criteria</li> <li>• Initiate discussion regarding necessary alternative/ evaluation refinements and elimination of unreasonable, imprudent alternatives.</li> </ul>		
2.3	<b>Review and Discussion:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C. Stienon presented on the Midtown Redevelopment Project including the overall program and concept site plans. He provided an overview of the history of Midtown and the historic perspective of the "open town square and retail area". He discussed the importance of analyzing the character defining elements and the key principles in putting together their concept site plans.</li> <li>• J. Arany noted that NYSOPRHP has determined that the entire site is eligible for listing as an historic place.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding the concept site plans and the levels of development. C. Stienon provided an overview of low, medium and high density scenarios, including programs for mixed use, office, retail, residential, hotel, and restaurant/food service. He further emphasized that the idea was to move from "introverted" spaces to "extroverted" spaces, and that the initial plan was to raze the entire site, except for the parking.</li> <li>• The three alternatives were reviewed beginning with the "Interpretive" alternative. This concept plan did not increase retail; it could include additional retail, however the market may not call for it. Retail was programmed along Main Street and along the edges of the atrium area, avoiding PAETEC. It also included above grade parking.</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer noted that retail is a huge issue, in particularly the depth of the spaces and access to parking.</li> <li>• The "Adaptive Re-Use" alternative was reviewed. C. Stienon noted that you have to find some use for this space. Either it becomes part of PAETEC with the idea it can be used for special events with the intent that they would own it and</li> </ul>		
2.3			

cont.	<p>maintain it. Or, it could be used as a winter garden during the day, café spaced, or retail program and become a “corporate atrium space”. The quandary is that there is not a retail program to match this use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “Preservation” alternative was also reviewed. It was noted that the Atrium would need to be enclosed and protected. There was discussion on whether or not you could demolish around it. From an engineering perspective, it could be done; you could demolish around it and it could stand on its own. There are columns that can hold it up, it could be braced and enclosed, however it would need new mechanical systems.</li> <li>• C. Stienon questioned how much can you keep and still maintain the character? A construction technique would have to be adapted that would add new elements, and it may have to compromise on some of the old elements.</li> <li>• M. Keller inquired what the existing atrium looks like from above. One response noted it looks like a “box”, and is not attractive. J. Arany noted that this is a good question, particularly for the buildings that look down over the space.</li> <li>• M. Fitzner questioned the retail program in the Preservation alternative (quoted at 160,000 sf), and questioned whether it was more retail than the market could bear. C. Stienon affirmed this and said that you would need to have open/empty space surrounding the area. There was discussion regarding whether the increase in individuals from PAETEC and other programs could help, however the Market Feasibility Study that was completed by Cushman &amp; Wakefield noted that the local market could handle 67,000 sf of retail space, assuming a 10-year horizon.</li> <li>• C. Stienon agreed that this is a concern, especially the visibility of the retail space around the atrium. M. Keller noted the proposed street grid and inquired what is pedestrian and what is vehicle. C. Stienon added that it could be either at this point.</li> <li>• M. Fitzner noted that there are eight garage exits for pedestrians that need to be maintained and incorporated into any program, and according to zoning regulations, pedestrian exits must be within 400 feet of each other. Any new reconstruction would have to apply new building codes.</li> <li>• J. Monroe expressed concern that these proposed grids appeared to be arbitrary blocks, and the preservation constraints should motivate the design.</li> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer questioned whether the Preservation Alternative was too internally focused and are we making the same mistake once again. C. Stienon agreed that this alternative would allow it to function the same way that it once did. The dimensions and set-up suggest that it was internally focused.</li> <li>• J. Anderson expressed the importance of the underground parking garage to PAETEC and to the site.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding urban grocery stores and what the downtown market could bear and how some investors prefer not to have multiple entrances/exits.</li> <li>• J. Anderson noted from his experience that 2<sup>nd</sup> floor retail does not work very well. He questioned why design a plan for 160,000 sf of retail in a layout that has failed, when the experts have said that only 67,000 sf of retail could be absorbed over a 10-year period of time. It was agreed that it is important to bring in people for guidance that know &amp; understand the retail business. C. Stienon noted that malls are now modeled with anchors and spines and not the “town square” design.</li> <li>• There was discussion related to development and maintenance of preserving the Atrium. D. Kenyon noted that to enclose the structure and install new mechanical and electrical systems would be approx. \$5M. Average energy costs and</li> </ul>	
2.3		

cont.	<p>maintenance costs for one year would be approximately \$325,000. J. Arany noted that costs could be absorbed by the buildings that surround it. A. Ientilucci questioned whether there was a program need for a large public space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H. Zimmer-Meyer inquired about what PAETEC would want out of the site. J. Anderson responded that PAETEC wants to help create a revitalized economy downtown. He has a concern with too much retail; the existing mall is functionally obsolete. What initially worked with Midtown was the retail, when retail died, people stopped coming. Preference is to see a design reflecting a healthy Midtown era, but feels that would not be accomplished successfully by retaining the existing atrium.</li> <li>• There was consensus that mimicking the existing configuration of Midtown with all the surrounding retail does not make sense.</li> <li>• J. Monroe raised a concern that sustainability was not mentioned in the evaluative criteria. C. Thomas noted that this is a City standard and is inherent in all plans.</li> <li>• It was noted that it is important to know that nothing has been finalized yet as far as specific site plans, and that there is still work to be done.</li> <li>• There was discussion on what should be preserved (bricks &amp; mortar, the concept, particular elements, facade materials, configuration, open space). H. Zimmer-Meyer questioned the true value of the atrium in current times. There are questions in regards to how should the atrium be used and be paid for. How can it be respectfully interpreted? Also, what is reasonable and feasible to do both financially and from an engineering standpoint?</li> <li>• J. Bonafide added that this is all part of the 14.09 Consultation process. The thought process has grown and is considering not only retention but partial retention or possible demolition. The steps are being put into place for evaluation and this has been a good approach with good open dialogue.</li> <li>• C. Thomas noted from a planning perspective, there has to be preservation and interpretation options. He also noted these options have to be outlined and considered and the importance of evaluating all factors, including costs.</li> <li>• J. Bonafide noted that SHPO strongly supports stakeholder participation and that successful projects involve the public. This is an important piece of the project, and the analysis of the alternatives, including economics is an important component. He further added that these sessions have been very productive. The City and State, as well as their consultants, have all been open to comments from the group.</li> <li>• There was agreement that the total Preservation option is not feasible because it contains too much retail.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding referencing both the Adaptive Re-Use and Historic Interpretation as the alternatives in the DGEIS.</li> <li>• D. Laudisi addressed the group's concern that the site plan drawings are "final". She noted that drawings reflecting street grids, buildings, etc. will change and that we are not prescribing a specific site plan at this time.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding clarification of the alternatives:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptive Re-use: keep structure, ceilings, walls, etc.</li> <li>• Historic Interpretation: take down existing structure, interpret alternatives in another way</li> </ul> </li> <li>• J. Arany inquired as to what the unique opportunities are for preserving the Atrium. Also, how do we embrace it to include all characteristics (economics, engineering, etc)? What is best for the community?</li> <li>• It was noted that in order to satisfy state requirements, we are going through the</li> </ul>	
2.3		

cont.	<p>SHPO process, and it's the intent of the SEQR process as well. The City is obligated to select an alternative(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C. Stienon noted that it becomes a set of criteria in the evaluation process. It will come down to economics and purpose. There was discussion on how this is a complicated process due to the emotional factor, and that the public needs to understand the intent of the project. It is a difficult balance between wants (preservation) vs. must haves (economics).</li> <li>• P. Tronolone added that the criteria are fed into the DGEIS, and the directions are carried forward into the final GEIS.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding whether the SEQR process will outline whether the atrium is demolished or retained. How do you close the loop? From the SHPO perspective, all possibilities have to be explored.</li> <li>• M. Tayrien clarified that the DGEIS will outline the different alternatives. The final GEIS will choose an alternative.</li> <li>• J. Bonafide added that the process is reasonable, and every alternative is not required to be detailed. A letter of resolution will be drafted, and an alternative analysis will go forward.</li> <li>• It was further explained that the 14.09 process and the SEQR review are separate and not conjoined, and the timing is parallel. However, it was noted that a letter of resolution is required before the demo contracts are released. The GEIS will outline a full environmental review; however the Letter of Resolution will only consist of a preservation review.</li> <li>• It was noted and discussed that the purpose of the project is to revitalize downtown, and to be a driving force for future growth and development. The street grid is an important component and vital for successful retail downtown.</li> <li>• A concern was raised that local brokers were not consulted on the retail perspective yet. It was noted that it is not necessary to become too specific at this time, unless the atrium is retained. Restaurants, cafes, food and entertainment can work. The retailers want parking, visibility and space. H. Zimmer-Meyer raised the issue that the Re-use alternative may complicate retail. It was agreed that someone will have to take over the atrium space in order to program and maintain it, because retail cannot support the atrium, and the City is not in a position to absorb the carrying costs of the atrium.</li> </ul>		
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***NEXT MEETING:***

**Date: October 23, 2008**

**Time: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Location: LaBella Associates, PC**

**300 State Street – Suite 201**

**Rochester, NY 14614**

The preceding minutes represent the author's understanding of the issues discussed and decisions reached. If there are any errors or omissions, questions, comments, or corrections regarding these notes, please respond using the contact information below within three days of issuance.

Respectfully submitted,



Claudia Burcke  
Planning Services  
LaBella Associates P.C.  
(585) 295-6675



**Midtown Redevelopment Plan / SEQRA Assistance  
City of Rochester**

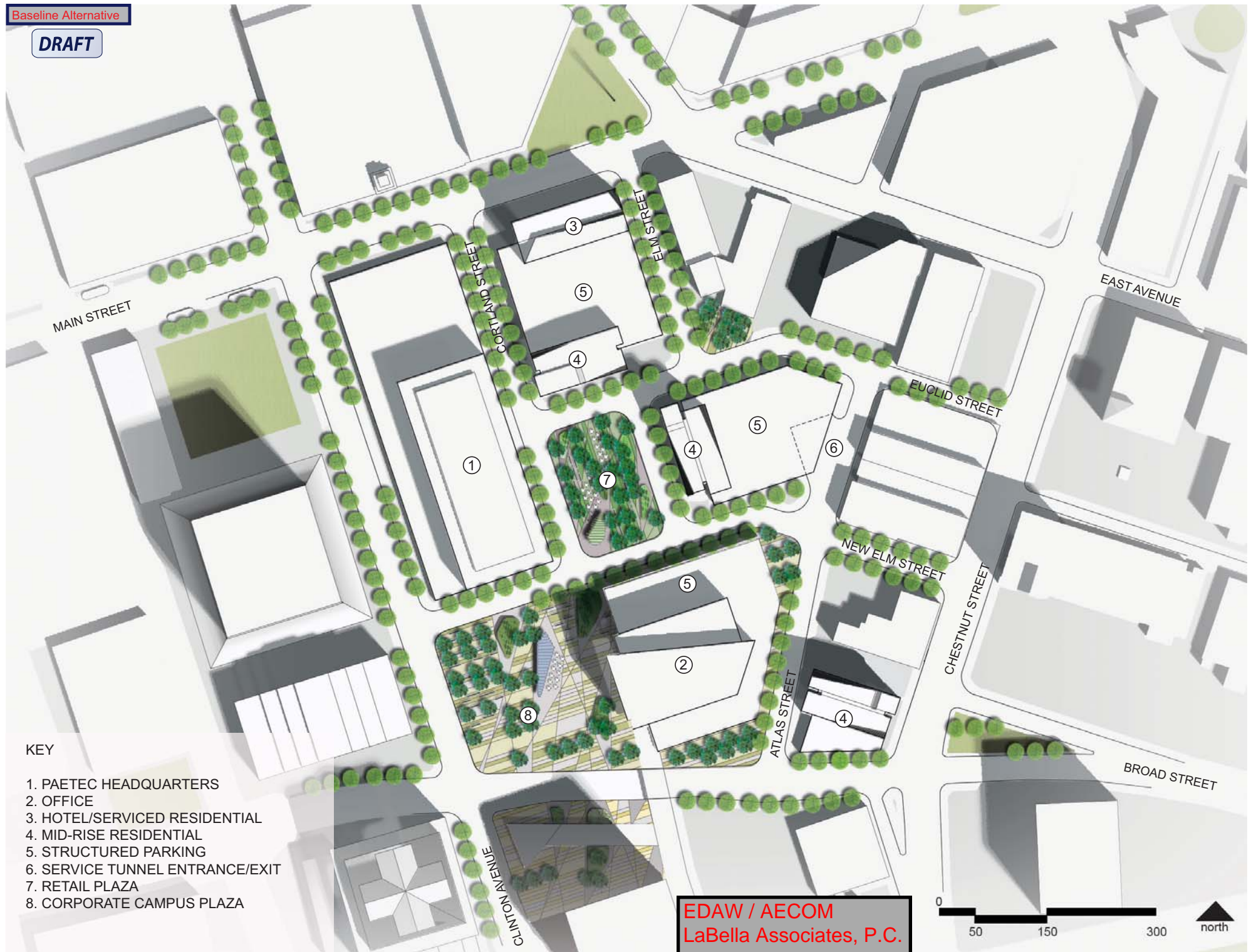
**NYSOPRHP Consultation Meeting #3**

October 23, 2008 – 1:00 p.m. – LaBella Associates, 300 State Street

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Summary and Recap of Current Status for Consultation Process
3. Review of Alternative Concept Plans
4. Evaluation of Remaining Preservation Alternatives
  - Review and Conclude Comparative Evaluation Matrix
5. Identification of Remaining Tasks / Efforts





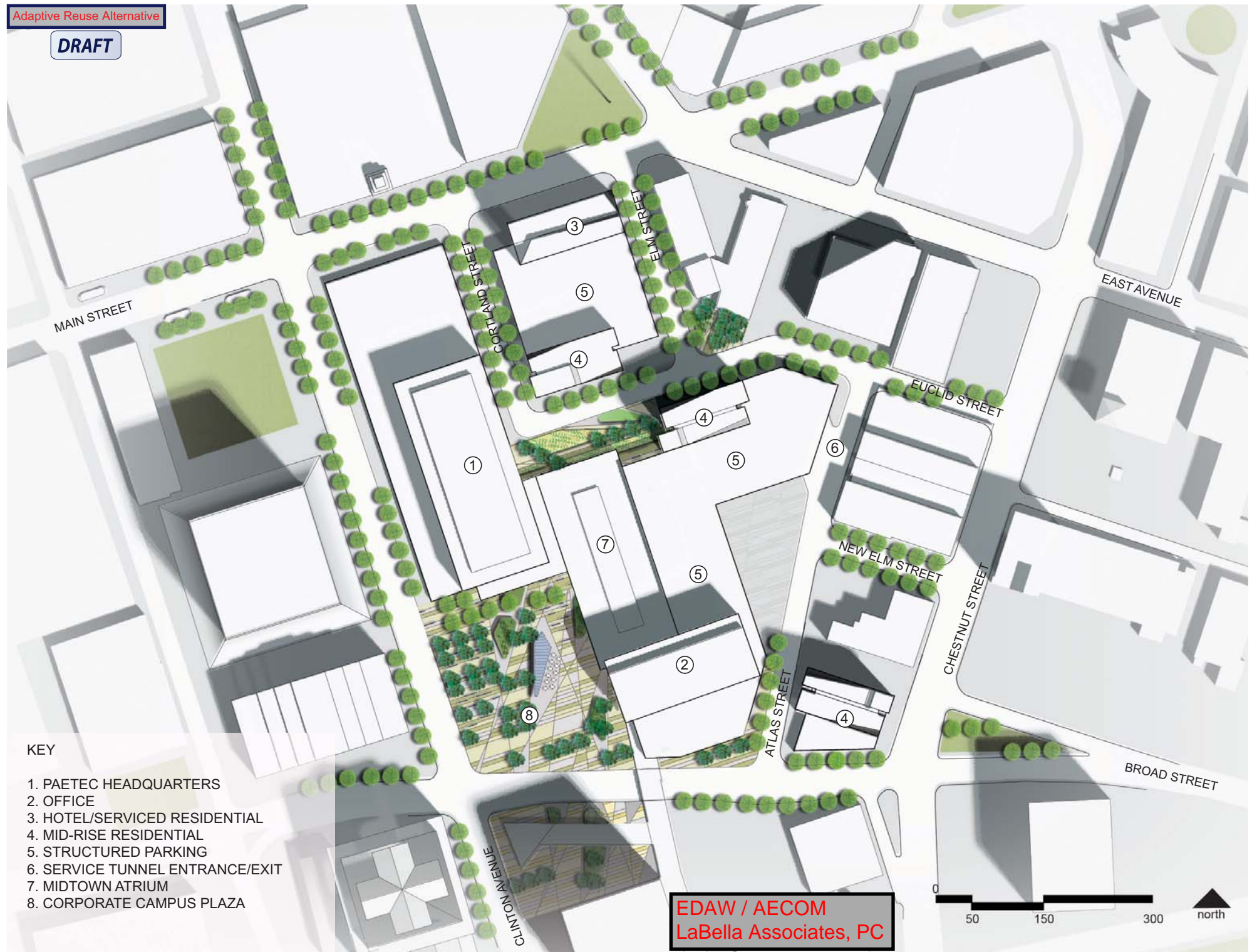
KEY

1. PAETEC HEADQUARTERS
2. OFFICE
3. HOTEL/SERVICED RESIDENTIAL
4. MID-RISE RESIDENTIAL
5. STRUCTURED PARKING
6. SERVICE TUNNEL ENTRANCE/EXIT
7. RETAIL PLAZA
8. CORPORATE CAMPUS PLAZA





DRAFT



KEY

1. PAETEC HEADQUARTERS
2. OFFICE
3. HOTEL/SERVICED RESIDENTIAL
4. MID-RISE RESIDENTIAL
5. STRUCTURED PARKING
6. SERVICE TUNNEL ENTRANCE/EXIT
7. MIDTOWN ATRIUM
8. CORPORATE CAMPUS PLAZA

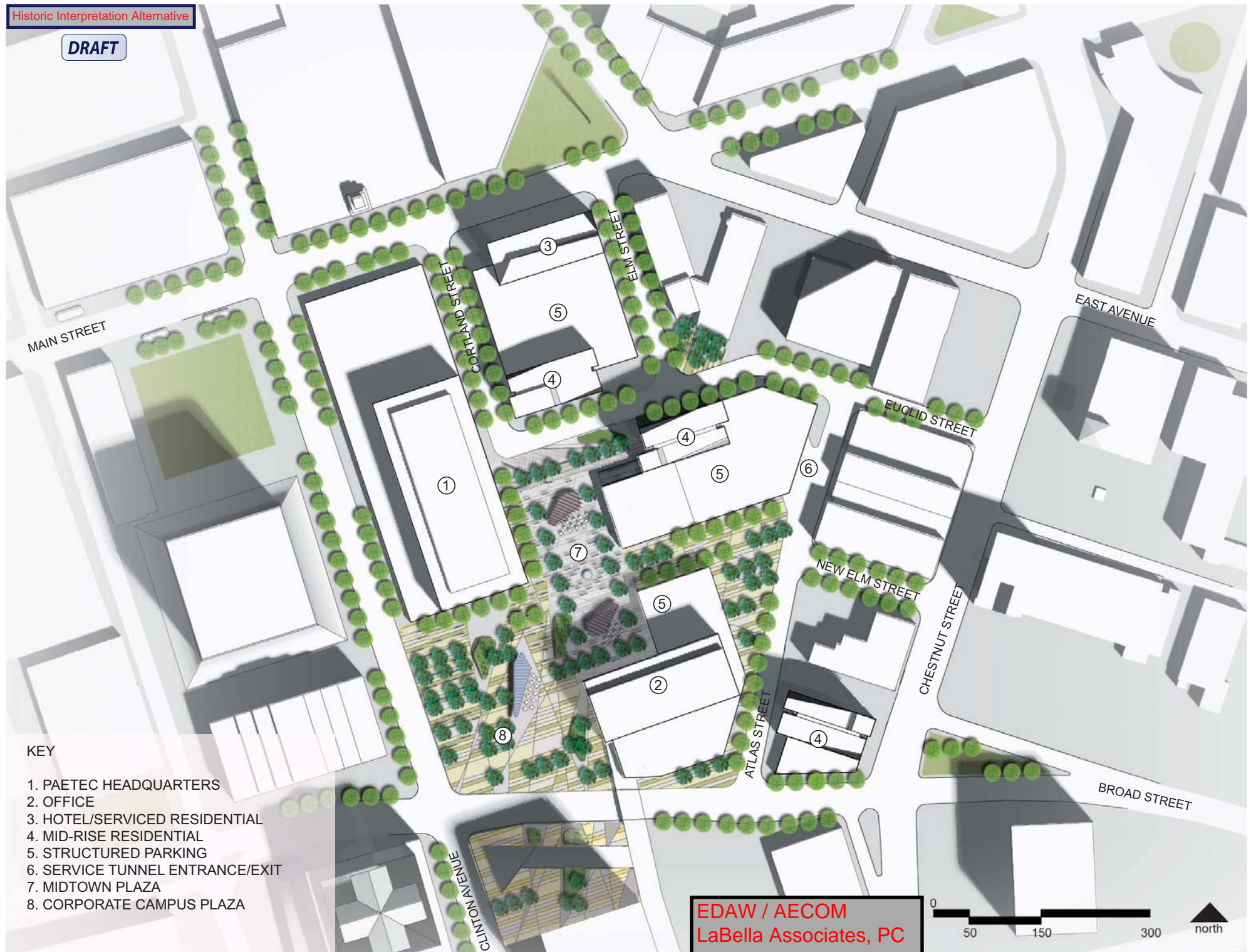
EDAW / AECOM  
LaBella Associates, PC







DRAFT



KEY

1. PAETEC HEADQUARTERS
2. OFFICE
3. HOTEL/SERVICED RESIDENTIAL
4. MID-RISE RESIDENTIAL
5. STRUCTURED PARKING
6. SERVICE TUNNEL ENTRANCE/EXIT
7. MIDTOWN PLAZA
8. CORPORATE CAMPUS PLAZA

EDAW / AECOM  
LaBella Associates, PC





# Midtown Redevelopment Plan / City of Rochester / NYSOPRHP Consultation Process

## Evaluation of Preservation Alternatives

90 Goal/Criteria	Notes	Baseline Alternative	Notes	Historic Interpretation	Notes	Adaptive Reuse	Notes
		In this evaluation, undertaking redevelopment scenario without consideration of preserving historic resources		Assumes the construction of the Baseline alternative with an interpretation of the demolished Midtown Mall / Atrium		Assumes the construction of the Baseline alternative plus the reuse of the Atrium structure for some other use	
<b>Is the Alternative Reasonable and Prudent?</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alternative is “constructible” – What architectural/engineering issues would be required to be addressed in order to realize the Alternative?</li> </ul>		-All structural systems will need to be coordinated with the structure of the garage & service tunnel below ground.		-All structural systems will need to be coordinated with the structure of the garage & service tunnel below ground.		-All structural systems will need to be coordinated with the structure of the garage & service tunnel below ground. -Atrium MEP systems will need to be upgraded to meet current standards. <b>- Additional structural reinforcing as necessary.</b> - Atrium enclosure will need improvements to achieve energy efficiency standards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there engineering or physical constraints on/around the site that would make the Alternative imprudent or not feasible?</li> </ul>		No		No		Protection of the original atrium structure during construction on adjacent parts of the site will be difficult.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any schedule and/or staging issues that would affect other key programmatic features of the Midtown Project?</li> </ul>		- The demolition of the site is more complicated if considered in phases. - Subsequent construction after PAETEC will need to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access to the Midtown Garage -		- The demolition of the site is more complicated if considered in phases. - Subsequent construction after PAETEC will need to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access to the Midtown Garage		- The demolition of the site is more complicated if considered in phases. - The Atrium space would need to be stabilized and protected prior to demolition of the rest of the site. - Subsequent construction after PAETEC will need to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access to the Midtown Garage -Atrium space would need to be protected and maintained throughout the entire project build-out <b>- A future functionary for the atrium would need to be identified early on.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would City, ESD, PAETEC, or other entities be required to take on and/or absorb any carrying, liability, and/or other costs/responsibilities</li> </ul>		N/A		-Capital and Maintenance budgets would need to be established by a combination of the City of		-Either PAETEC, the City, or a private consortium would be required to renovate, maintain, operate & insure the Atrium space.	

# Midtown Redevelopment Plan / City of Rochester / NYSOPRHP Consultation Process Evaluation of Preservation Alternatives

90 Goal/Criteria	Notes	Baseline Alternative	Notes	Historic Interpretation	Notes	Adaptive Reuse	Notes
		In this evaluation, undertaking redevelopment scenario without consideration of preserving historic resources		Assumes the construction of the Baseline alternative with an interpretation of the demolished Midtown Mall / Atrium		Assumes the construction of the Baseline alternative plus the reuse of the Atrium structure for some other use	
<i>associated with key preservation components of Alternative?</i>				Rochester or a BID to build/maintain the interpretive elements of the open space.		- <b>The City will need to maintain the space during the near term.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Estimated costs of construction necessary to realize key preservation components.</i></li> </ul>		None – - <b>The cost of the park must be taken into account and reflect the construction on a deck.</b>		Minimal – this includes the cost of interpretive elements only as the cost to build the public space will be part of the overall project budget - <b>The cost of the park must be taken into account and reflect the construction on a deck.</b>		Maximum – Estimated cost is \$4.9 million (2008 dollars; 32,500 sq. ft. x \$150/sq. ft.). Includes the cost to stabilize Atrium and construct a finished building to enclose the Atrium. <b>Includes HVAC equipment not the cost to stabilize this space during demolition and subsequent construction or the added cost to new construction on adjacent sites.</b> - This should be offset by the cost to construct the park and roads in the Base Scenario.	

# Midtown Redevelopment Plan / City of Rochester / NYSOPRHP Consultation Process

## Evaluation of Preservation Alternatives

90 Goal/Criteria	Notes	Baseline Alternative	Notes	Historic Interpretation	Notes	Adaptive Reuse	Notes
		In this evaluation, undertaking redevelopment scenario without consideration of preserving historic resources		Assumes the construction of the Baseline alternative with an interpretation of the demolished Midtown Mall / Atrium		Assumes the construction of the Baseline alternative plus the reuse of the Atrium structure for some other use	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assumed mechanisms/entities for funding construction of key preservation components. Are these funds readily available or are there reasonable mechanisms to obtain (e.g., net savings from avoidance of demolition costs used for rehab/reuse, incorporated into costs for PAETEC development costs, etc.).</li> </ul>		- No additional cost		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public cost or private business entity costs (BID) would be necessary as there are no City funds readily available.</li> <li>There are additional costs associated with the maintenance of the park that would need to be funded.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public cost or private business entity costs (BID) would be necessary as there are no City funds readily available.</li> <li>The costs that would otherwise have been spent to build an exterior public space can be transferred to the rehabilitation costs of the Atrium space.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimated costs of maintenance and operations necessary for key preservation components to ensure their preservation into near/long-term future.</li> </ul>		N/A		- Minimal - maintenance of interpretive elements above the standard maintenance costs of the public space.		Maximum- Estimated average annual operating cost is \$325,000 (2008 dollars; 32,500 sq. ft. x \$10/sq. ft.). Includes typical operating items for a building (such as maintenance, security, utilities, real estate taxes, grounds, legal, supplies & insurance). (from City of Rochester building conditions)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assumed mechanisms/entities for funding maintenance and operations of key preservation components. Are these entities/mechanisms already in place or would be reasonable to establish?</li> </ul>		N/A		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Rochester, BID, or some combination would be responsible for the maintenance of the open space. <del>This could also be funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF).</del></li> <li>There are no City funds available.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAETEC, the City, a BID or another private entity would be responsible for the maintenance of the Atrium.</li> <li>There are no City funds available.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alternative responds to economic and market setting(s) documented at the Midtown Block/region. Would approach to addressing key preservation components result in a setting/ components that would be reasonable from a real estate perspective? Is the Alternative</li> </ul>		N/A		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative is based on a program that is economically viable, reasonable and sustainable</li> <li>Requires maintenance involvement of City or BID</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An operator for the Midtown Mall Atrium space would need to be located. The overall development program surrounding the Atrium is economically viable, reasonable and sustainable, however the actual Atrium space was not included in the economic study as a particular program element, nor was the costs</li> </ul>	



# Midtown Redevelopment Plan / City of Rochester / NYSOPRHP Consultation Process

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<i>economically sustainable?</i>						to operate this space included in the pro-forma studies. -Requires financial involvement of PAETEC or BID for programming/maintenance of Atrium	
• Are there any other factors – including but not limited to safety, efficiency, code requirements, etc. – that would impede the reasonable realization or continuation of the Alt.?		NA		NA		The Atrium space would need to be treated and possibly updated as an independent structure with fire separation and dedicated smoke exhaust system apart from any adjacent (office) building.	
<b>Is the Alternative Consistent with Overall Midtown Redevelopment Project Objectives? (Qualitative)</b>							
• Extent that Alternative could result in positive economic impacts (including increase in property values) and return on public investment.		-Redevelopment option should result in a return on public investment		-Redevelopment option <b>should</b> potentially result in a return on public investment		-Redevelopment option could <b>potentially</b> result in a return on public investment.	
• Extent that Alternative could result in the removal of blight and blighting influences.		-The blighting influences identified relate to the apparent impenetrability of the site, the lack of visibility of retail spaces, and the back-of-house element facing the Eastern districts of downtown. This alternative removes all of the elements identified as blighting influences		-Alternative removes all of the elements identified as blighting influences - <b>The lack of streets through the site retains some of the characteristics of the existing super block .</b>		-Alternative removes some, but not all of the elements identified as blighting influences. The development block <b>may</b> appear to be largely impenetrable from certain points. - <b>Alternative retains some of the existing structure therefore to avoid blighting effects the atrium would need to be designed accordingly to avoid becoming an impediment through the site.</b>	
• Extent that Alternative removes impediments to redevelopment and connectivity presented by existing superblock characteristics.		-Alternative removes all of the site impediments		-Alternative removes all of the site impediments - <b>Vehicular movement through the site is limited.</b>		Connectivity through the site is still severely restricted. <b>Visibility through the site is blocked and</b> there is limited vehicular access across the site due to the presence of the Atrium. - Visibility through the site would require redesign of the atrium	

# Midtown Redevelopment Plan / City of Rochester / NYSOPRHP Consultation Process

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						structure.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alternative could provide opportunities for economically-feasible redevelopment and attraction of private investment.</li> </ul>		-Alternative provides significant sites for redevelopment and private investment		-Alternative provides significant sites for redevelopment and private investment		-Alternative provides significant sites for redevelopment; the development of these sites would be <b>informed and/or</b> constrained by the presence of the Atrium.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alternative contributes to “Placemaking” – revitalization and catalyst throughout the area (onsite and relationship to adjacent areas), public realm, etc.</li> </ul>		-Alternative provides significant opportunities for placemaking and revitalization both on and off site.		-Alternative provides significant opportunities for placemaking and revitalization both on and off site.		-Alternative provides significant opportunities for placemaking and revitalization both on and off site, <del>but limits cross site synergy.</del> - The atrium could potentially limit cross site access.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alt. capitalizes on the unique opportunities presented by this key site and location.</li> </ul>		-Alternative capitalizes on most of the unique opportunities in this location		-Alternative capitalizes on some of the unique opportunities in this location		- Alternative capitalizes on the unique opportunities in this location especially the unique atrium space and its connection to the City’s history.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the Alt. contribute to or conflict with PAETEC requirements, needs, and/or preferences and/or in any way enhance or impede their participation in the project?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does not conflict with PAETEC’s requirements.</li> <li>- Provides the best redevelopment setting in PAETEC’s view.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does not conflict with PAETEC’s requirements.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would require additional financial and programming support from PAETEC.</li> <li>- The PAETEC building would need to be designed to accommodate the atrium space.</li> <li>- PAETEC has not expressed an interest to adopt the atrium space into their development plans.</li> </ul>	
<b>Is the Alternative Consistent with historic preservation policies. (Qualitative)</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alternative promotes the use, reuse and conservation of character-defining features/characteristics of the Midtown Block for the education, inspiration, welfare, recreation, prosperity and enrichment of the public.</li> </ul>		<p>N/A</p> <p>The reopening of Cortland Street restores a historic element back to the site.</p>		-Alternative interprets these elements into a publically accessible open space		- The reuse of the space would entail a dramatic change to historic character of this space. The alternative seeks to protect the primary elements of the Atrium space only within a limited access space operated by PAETEC. The retail that currently defines the edges	

# Midtown Redevelopment Plan / City of Rochester / NYSOPRHP Consultation Process

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						of the space would be removed entirely, and replaced with completely different functions. The remainder of the mall would be demolished and in some cases only a glass storefront would remain. This will alter the character defining elements of this space as a completely enclosed mall atrium, however many character defining components of the original space would be preserved.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alt. promotes and encourages the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of character-defining features/characteristics of the Midtown Block, including any improvements, objects and sites which have or represent elements of historical, architectural, or cultural significance.</li> </ul>		-This alternative re- opens almost all of historic Cortland Street and a small part of historic Elm Street and maintains frontage along Main Street		-This alternate references key historic and architectural features of the site, re-opens part of the historic Cortland Street and a small part of historic Elm Street & maintains frontage along Main Street		-This alternate seeks to reuse significant historical and architectural elements of the Atrium space. The remainder of the site would be demolished and reconstructed. -This alternate re-opens part of historic Cortland Street and a small part of historic Elm Street and maintains frontage along Main Street	



# Midtown Redevelopment Plan / City of Rochester / NYSOPRHP Consultation Process

## Evaluation of Preservation Alternatives

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alt. fosters civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past, specifically related to the character-defining features/characteristics of the Midtown Block</li> </ul>		- View corridors are established to surrounding landmarks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- View corridors are established to surrounding landmarks</li> <li>-Alternative references key historic and architectural features of the site</li> </ul>		-Alternative seeks to reuse significant historical and architectural elements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that Alternative preserves and enhances the State's attractions to tourists and visitors.</li> </ul>		Does not preserve elements of the site that preserves and enhances the State's resources.		-Alternative references & possibly commemorates key historic and architectural features of the site		-Alternative seeks to reuse significant historical and architectural elements that were character defining features of this site.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent that the Alternative complies to State Article 14.00 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law</li> </ul>		Total demolition does not comply. However an interpretation of the atrium space within the park is possible.		Total demolition and therefore does not comply, but interpretation of the atrium is possible within its current location.		Substantial demolition and therefore does not comply, but retention of the atrium is a significant architectural mitigation strategy.	



# Empire State Development

Finger Lakes Regional Office

November 3, 2008

John Bonafide  
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP)  
Field Services Bureau  
PO Box 189  
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

**Re: Adverse Impact Determination  
Midtown Plaza  
Rochester, Monroe County, NY  
OPRHP Project No. 08PR01197**

Dear Mr. Bonafide:

As you are aware, the Empire State Development Corporation ("ESDC") is providing funding to the City of Rochester (the "City") to assist in the undertaking of the Midtown Redevelopment Project (the "Project") in downtown Rochester. The City has secured lead agency status for the purposes of review under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA") and is in the process of preparing a draft generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) for the Project.

In your letter to me on June 5, 2008, your office indicated that the entire Midtown Block, and in particular the former Midtown Plaza, is eligible for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places ("S/NRHP") because it was one of the first enclosed downtown shopping malls in the U.S.

In response to this letter and discussions at subsequent meetings, ESDC and the City, as part of the SEQRA GEIS process, solicited the participation of OPRHP and various other interested agencies, organizations, and individuals to participate in a review process with the intention to determine if there are reasonable and/or prudent alternatives that could avoid adverse impact to S/NRHP-eligible resources while still achieving the overall revitalization goals and objectives of the Midtown Project. Over the last two months, these agencies, organizations and individuals worked with the Project consultant team to formulate and evaluate a series of alternative redevelopment plans to attempt to achieve this balance.

**New York State Department of Economic Development**  
400 Andrews Street Suite 710 Rochester New York 14604  
Tel 585 325 1944 Fax 585 325 6505  
Web Site: [www.empire.state.ny.us](http://www.empire.state.ny.us)

However, as a result of this review process, we have not been able to identify a reasonable or prudent alternative that avoids any effects to the Midtown Plaza or Midtown Block. To date, the process has yielded alternatives that look to mitigate such impact through either partially retaining the enclosed shopping mall atrium portion of the Midtown Plaza or various levels of interpretation of the atrium's former location as an outdoor plaza element.

Given the above, ESDC has made a preliminary Determination of Adverse Impact associated with the Project. The City intends to report this determination and the evaluation of mitigation alternatives developed as part of the consultation process to date in their draft GEIS that will be issued on November 10, 2009, with the next forty days (40) for public review and comment. ESDC and the City intend to continue consultation, with a target of reaching a consensus on the terms of either a programmatic agreement or letter of resolution prior to the issuance of SEQRA findings for the Project.

Pursuant to our obligations under Section 14.09 of the State Historic Preservation Act, we would appreciate OPRHP's review and concurrence regarding ESDC's determination with regard to this Project.

Please contact Paul Tronolone at 716.284.2556 or me at 585.325.1944 ext. 222, if there is any additional information you require.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Merideth Andreucci", written in a cursive style.

Merideth Andreucci, Director  
Business Development Upstate

cc: Stephen Gawlik, ESDC  
Richard Dorado, ESDC  
Mike Fitzner, ESDC  
Paul Tronolone, ESDC  
Rachel Shatz, ESDC  
Ken Schoetz, ESDC  
Art Ientilucci, City of Rochester  
Doraine Laudisi, City of Rochester  
Thomas Richards, City of Rochester  
Mark Tayrien, LaBella Associates





## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

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David A. Paterson  
Governor

Carol Ash  
Commissioner

November 7, 2008

Merideth B. Andreucci  
Director, Business Development-Upstate  
Empire State Development Corporation  
400 Andrews St.  
Rochester, NY 14604

Re: ESDC  
Midtown Plaza  
Rochester, Monroe Co.  
08PR01197

Dear Ms. Andreucci:

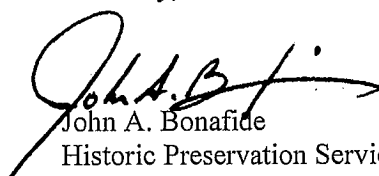
Thank you for providing your Agency's Impact finding statement regarding the proposed demolition and redevelopment of Midtown Plaza in Rochester, as required under Section 14.09 of the State Historic Preservation Act of 1980.

We have reviewed your findings statement and concur with your determination that the undertaking will have an Adverse Impact on the resource known as the Mid-Town Plaza. As previously defined by this office, the Mid Town plaza includes the commercial-retail development, the Victor Gruen atrium, and the commercial tower building. The removal of any one component or the entire complex constitutes an adverse impact to the historic resource.

Based on meetings held in Rochester where interested parties have been brought to the table to discuss options for the site, alternative proposals, and the needs of current and prospective developers/tenants, we believe that your agency is making significant efforts to explore prudent and feasible options. We would encourage you to bring this process to conclusion by selecting a preferred alternative and providing this office with the documentation that supports the option.

We look forward to continued consultation on this project. If I can be of any further assistance I can be reached at (518) 237-8643, ext.3263.

Sincerely,

  
John A. Bonafide  
Historic Preservation Services  
Coordinator

cc: Paul Tronolone, ESDC (via e-mail)