

From: Marijean <marijeanburdick@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 12, 2020 5:06 PM
To: Eric Lee <ELee@cityofdavis.org>
Subject: Submitting a comment on the draft Downtown Plan.

January 12, 2020

Meg Arnold, Chair
Downtown Plan Advisory Committee
City of Davis
23 Russell Boulevard
[Davis, CA 95618](#)

Dear Downtown Plan Advisory Committee Chair Arnold and members:

We support up to 3 stories on parcels at the periphery of downtown neighborhoods. Also-it is equally important to thoughtfully design any redevelopment and new buildings to fit in the character and setting, and to transition from downtown into the surrounding neighborhoods both in mass and scale. The Trackside property east of the railroad tracks is a specific example.

Historic Neighborhoods:

We are proud of the Old North, Old East, and University Rice Lane neighborhoods. There are so many lovely private family homes, cottages, California bungalows, duplexes, accessory cottages, beautiful gardens and yards, as-well-as small businesses. These vibrant neighborhoods are supported by homeowners, renters and business owners, who together have built a strong, healthy community. Our neighborhoods in turn are cornerstones to the vitality and health of Downtown Davis.

Here we live, and are the caretakers of our town's most significant historic homes and structures. The character and setting of our grand Davis neighborhoods along the perimeter of Downtown contributes immensely to our amazing and unique town. Passionately we believe in preserving Davis' attributes, as they are irreplaceable treasures! We also emphasize that city officials and developers have a duty to honor and protect the unique character of these magnificent settings, and the historical character of Davis. They should carefully review and approve new development and redevelopment projects to enhance the future of Davis without harming our town's finest qualities! Development should with certainty keep to two or three stories as it meets with the neighborhoods. Development should have appropriate architectural treatments.

Davis has an extraordinary old-town train depot. It can tell visitors the story of Davis. Highlighting early train, agricultural, and university themes in a future plan for downtown could work well for preservation and could have a positive and harmonious effect, compelling visitors and the community alike to enjoy this beautiful town with much to share.

Old East Davis neighborhood seems to be a continuous target. It appears that there's a long time plan by the city and developers to expand downtown and effectively push us out of our homes.

Our home is across the alley from the Core Transition East. When we purchased our home on I Street in 2001, the property behind our parcel at [901-919 3rd Street](#) was zoned as a single level commercial property. Although the structure of the building immediately behind our home has remained as a single level commercial property, the zoning of this parcel was changed to allow mixed use. When the Trakside property was purchased in 2015 it was zoned to allow a two story, (three if carefully designed) mixed use building. Clearly the investors bought the property in 2015 knowing this. Nevertheless they had the confidence to submit a plan to the city for a massive redevelopment.

To this day Old East Davis neighbors continue to participate in city planning processes. Neighbors have been open, and welcome a reasonable plan that preserves the irreplaceable attributes of Davis's old town charm, and the character and setting of the adjacent neighborhood homes.

It is absolutely incredible that massive four story buildings (best suited for the core downtown) would ever be considered directly next to single level homes adjacent to a neighborhood. This action shows blatant disregard for thoughtful transitions from downtown into surrounding neighborhoods.

DPAC Process:

In October 2019, the work of the Downtown Plan Advisory Committee was presented for public review and opened for the comment period. Yet what is being presented to the public is incomplete and misleading. Beautiful illustrations of thoughtful and reasonable structures are colorfully displayed. However, the pictures are starkly different than the written text. Three stories was discussed at length by DPAC to uphold intensity in the core with smaller buildings on the edge.

It is unbelievable that regardless of the process, the time and tax dollars spent and more than one unanimous vote in the DPAC process to carefully transition from downtown into the surrounding neighborhoods with a maximum of three stories, we are right back to defending against taller structures.

So where did the four story change come from?

After many months of conversation in this DPAC community forum, DPAC reconvened on February 21, 2019. City staff unexpectedly introduced an alternate plan. So different than the one that the citizen-based committee and Opticos collaborated on, that it cause palpable concern in the room.

From that meeting there was concern that "City staff wanted to take control of the process and direction." And, "Staff changes would create bigger buildings around the perimeter of the core and create a ring of tall buildings around the core."

Although we'd like to believe that the process works and can be trusted, the city's presentation of plan B showed just the opposite! The city's altered plan called for four story structures, and in effect created a wall in our neighborhood, again with no transition and no consideration for the community, or respect for collaborative effort and dedicated work between DPAC and the Opticos team. Frankly, the plan B announcement on February 21, 2019 seemed to have shocked many in the room, including the Opticos consultants Mitali Ganguly, and Dan Parolek. Response from Opticos staff mentioned, "that four story height reference in Neighborhood Medium zone was a mistake, and that they would get back to DPAC with clarification, and that there was no other mention of that issue by city staff one way or another."

Our homes, businesses, neighborhoods and commitment to the current health, vitality, and character of Davis were being offered up by the city. To that we say, make your investments, build respectfully, but don't take from others to get what you want!

Livability becomes a real issue because families, with young children and grandchildren, retirees, students, working professionals and seniors will be affected by the impacts of a solid wall of massive buildings:

Deprivation of

- sun-light
- privacy
- peace and quiet
- clean air
- traffic safety
- natural light
- historical setting

It destroys a sense of place and will force us out of our homes.

The preservation of community, character, and historical values is vitally important to us. OEDNA has been very clear with the city and remains determined to preserve and protect our neighborhood and community. Together and individually we have stressed that it is of the utmost importance to create a plan that will help the city and developers actively pursue a profitable future for downtown, while respecting neighborhoods, historical settings and the uniquely charming Davis.

Sincerely,

Marijean and Ray Burdick
[315 I Street](#)
[Davis, CA 95616-4214](#)

cc: Brett Lee, Mayor
Members of the City Council