

Sunday, January 12, 2020

To: Eric Lee, planner, and DPAC

Re: Comments on the draft Downtown Plan

Dear Eric and committee members: Please receive the following comments on the draft plan.

**1.) My history in this place.**

We were living on E Street in Old North Davis from 1982-1985, when our family of 4 outgrew our small duplex. We made the trek across the railroad tracks to Old East Davis in 1986. We set roots in a lovely Queen Anne Cottage built around 1900 where we raised our 2 children Daniel and Sarah Kate. Our home in Old East Davis is located just across the alley from the Core Transition East.

Our family quickly became immersed in the neighborhood environment; walking, biking, visiting with friends, and enjoying potlucks at different neighbors homes and yards. Living a block from downtown, we visited Central Park and the Farmer's Market regularly, shopped at the Davis Food Co-op, dined in the downtown restaurants and engaged in the local art, music and sport venues.

My husband Stephen and I have been able to create a thriving household and artist studio in this nurturing and supportive community. We are both artists and we have taught art classes in our studio and continue to draw, paint and sculpt our own art works in this creative environment.

Sounds great, however we faced many challenges in the neighborhood over the years.

**2.) What were the issues that we faced in the 80's and 90's?**

In the late 1980s the city council made plans to redevelop our neighborhood into a business district, complete with retail and restaurants. The plans were drawn out and ready to present at a city council meeting without the community being informed or consulted. The Old East Davis Neighborhood Association (OEDNA) was formed and responded with over 200 residents in attendance, we spoke out boldly against this threat to our homes and neighborhoods. The city council backed down on its proposal that night, and the Davis Enterprise featured a front page article.

In the early 1990s: No place to park! There was diagonal parking on I Street and students, shoppers and employees parked on the streets with no restrictions 24/7. A group of neighbors worked with the City of Davis to establish a parking district and parking permits for residents. The Davis Police Department then regulated the parking.

### **3.) What issues are we confronted with now?**

In June, 2015: Trakside Center proposed to develop a 6 story building on a parcel in the Core Transition East across the alley from single-story homes. We learned of the proposal for the first time by reading a front-page article in the Davis Enterprise. The neighborhood had not been consulted as the proposal was coming together.

### **4.) What are the vital components of a healthy community?**

**A sense of community:** the elements of spirit, character and pride, along with the processes of communication, inter-group relations, and networking are in place and in practice in our neighborhood. Our community is made up of different people with different interests, experiences, cultures and backgrounds. There are varied perspectives and ideas within the community that are shared and respected as we work together to solve issues that we are faced with. As families, neighbors and friends, we feel like we belong and that we are safe.

The members of our community hold a common vision for the future; we respect and celebrate our heritage, diversity, and resources. With all of these vital components established, there is an atmosphere filled with unity, harmony and friendship.

**Natural resources and historical assets** of our community contribute significantly to the quality of life for residents and play an integral part in defining community character. With our tree lined streets we enjoy walking and biking in our shaded urban forest, which provides beauty, clean air, and daily opportunities to relate to our neighbors. The historic homes and buildings enhance the neighborhood's personality and contribute to the everyday pleasures of community life. As a successful community we recognize the importance of these assets and continue to take appropriate measures to assure their continuance.

**Informed Citizen Participation** is crucial and the residents of OED actively participate by serving on local boards, attending public hearings, and being involved in civic organizations and community activities. Shared problem solving and planning for the future as a community have increased our local pride and commitment to each other.

***The Old East Davis Neighborhood is a healthy community. We have a sense of place.***

### **5.) What needs to be done to ensure that these vital components are recognized, supported and protected, now and in the future?**

**Efficient and Responsive Community Leadership:** Community leadership must be honest, fair and accountable. The city council should have the ability to bring the community together to

participate in open, neutral dialogue on important issues. Leaders should be representative of their community and be able to envision an economically secure, environmentally sound and socially viable future. Leaders should understand the challenges facing the community and be able to take advantage of opportunities within the community and in cooperation with neighboring communities. Leadership should empower community members to take an active role in resolving community issues.

**Effective Management of Growth and Development:** Prudent local zoning, districting and planning regulations must guide how land is divided, used, and developed. These tools allow the community to participate in the regulation of the development of residential areas, commercial districts, and the downtown. These are key considerations in managing growth while maintaining community character. Transition zones from one story homes to the downtown must provide a gradual increase to the center of downtown. Another important factor in the development of a healthy community is the diversity of the housing. This encompasses availability, affordability, and location, all of which affect the lives of community members, especially the elderly, disabled, and low-income families.

#### **6.) Feedback and comments about the draft Downtown Plan.**

The draft plan does not include benchmarks that measure whether or not the plan's historic preservation policies are being carried out by the City.

Transition zones between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods are acknowledged in the draft plan, but our recent experiences suggest that the features of transition zones-- a gradual step-up from single-story homes, and architecture that looks like it "belongs" in the neighborhood-- are not taken seriously, and in fact are dismissed, by the City.

The draft plan intends for the largest and tallest buildings to be in the center, with smaller, two-to-three-story buildings surrounding the downtown. However, the draft plan does not give a practical road-map for how this will be accomplished.

#### **7.) How will the Old East Davis Neighborhood be affected by the draft Downtown Plan?**

Our urban landscape has a profound effect on the *human spirit*, influencing our *well-being* and *health* as well as our physical and economic activity.

I respectfully request that the Downtown Plan acknowledge, support and include active measures to preserve and enhance the *character* and *spirit* of the neighborhoods that surround the downtown and exist today.

Sincerely, Mary Kaltenbach, 327 I Street, Davis CA 95616.