

In December 2015, with no community knowledge, the Mayor shutdown the Urban Government Center. After more than 6 years what does the City have to show for this move?

1.

300 employees were displaced, and a majority are now in offices where City taxpayers pay the rent.

2.

Each of the 3 separate proposals centered on the City giving the property away for \$1. After 6 years and 2 failed efforts the City is left with the last place bidder. Unlike the other 2 the last one will be filling up the available acreage. No meaningful green space is suggested. What we will be living with is a hotel, an office complex, a separate apartment complex, and housing units. This change out will see a move from the 2015 time when 300 people came to the location to work Monday thru Friday, mostly day shifts- to what will be an influx of 1,000 persons, 7 days and nights a week at the updated property.

Is the City in a position to cover these major changes with top level core services? We say no, they aren't! Over the past 6 years the number of full time PH&S professionals are down by unheard of numbers- Police Department 11%, Fire 10% and EMS 15%. In theory area leaders can help define Community Benefits with the City and the Developer, but only if these ideas have no cost. So none of what I share here is eligible!

There was a different failed City effort we've lived with for 7 years. The findings from a study reported in 2015 had City blessing. It was to be a basis on resolving serious environmental issues tied to the CSX Railroad Corridor. But nothing ever happened. Funding deserves to be found! Why not with this?

Clearly City leaders best option will be their keeping the Barret Avenue property and work a redevelopment plan with the next Mayor. We are asking the Council to take us seriously. Show us over our way that you care about our environment and also about keeping our available open spaces, just that- OPEN.

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Steve Magre 8/11/22

At the July 21 meeting at Highland Community Ministries, Jon Baker of Wyatt, Tarrant, and Combs represented the Paristown Preservation Trust (PPT) and their plans for the site that once housed the Urban Government Center (UGC) and the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA).

Mr Baker used many words/expressions that made PPT's plan seem like one that is worthy of approval, but they seemed like words that were hard to believe.

- **Vehicular traffic directed onto Vine Street:** Mr Baker expressed sensitivity to traffic on Vine Street. All indications are that hotel guests and residents are going to use Vine Street regularly. There stands to be more than 600 vehicles being DIRECTED onto Vine Street every day, and of course, many of them will be coming and going multiple times. That will be a major change to an area that is already subject to traffic generated by regular events and special events at Vine Street and Brent Street.
- **Vehicular traffic on other surrounding streets:** Mr Baker did not express any sensitivity to traffic on other streets. The residents and visitors to the site will have to use other streets. St Anthony, Debarr, Breckinridge (east of Barret), Christy and others are ill-equipped to absorb additional traffic. As a resident under current circumstances, I know the challenges of traveling east away from Vine Street. The alley behind HCM, Highland Avenue, Kentucky St, the alley that is Vine Street between Kentucky and Oak are ill-equipped to funnel more traffic eastward. Highland Avenue between Vine and Barret is a joke as it is. It's narrow. It's frequently used for illegal dumping. Residents park heavy trucks in the easement. The next block of Highland is offset from that block. Turns left and right are both challenges. There are current issues without adding more vehicles into the mix.
- **Parking and the use of TARC by residents:** Mr Baker seems dismissive of parking concerns, and he spoke multiple times on the availability of TARC at a stop adjacent to the property. TARC usage must be on nearly an all-time low, and the demographics of the renters are not likely to match the demographics of TARC users. Residents of Louisville still rely heavily on automobiles, and people are not rapidly transitioning to the use of public transportation. Louisville is built around the use of automobiles. That's not changing soon. TARC should not be considered as something to alleviate parking concerns.
- **Parking at The Baxter as an example:** Another meeting attendee represented what was happening on the streets around The Baxter building. Residents were required to pay for parking spots on the property, but many have opted not to pay. They choose to park on the surrounding streets such as Rogers. They are not absorbing that well, and this area will not either.
- **Senior Housing as a separate project:** Hearing that the senior housing development was not part of the larger development effort came as quite a surprise. My thinking was that work was a requirement for approval. Related to that, it's not readily evident that the proposal will meet requirements for affordable housing.
- **What is sustainable development?:** Mr Baker referred to the development as sustainable. Without regard to construction materials, houses for resident owners seem like something that is sustainable - not apartment complexes and hotels. My house is 120 years old, and as a homeowner, I am a fixture in the neighborhood. I care about my property, and I care about the public areas around it. I am not here on a 12 month lease or on a night by night basis. Louisville has too many examples of apartment complexes that were shining gems with their opening, but over the years, they changed ownership many times and turn into undesirable parts of our community. This is true in every area of town - St Matthews, Middletown, Southwest Louisville, etc. It's not what this area needs. The proposed plan includes a hotel without regard for the occupancy rates of downtown hotels or existing hotels nearby (The Bellwether) or new boutique hotels (Barret and Breckinridge). I'm not sure that this area needs another hotel either.
- **Louisville's tree canopy:** Mr Baker spoke of PPT's concern for Louisville's tree canopy. This seems unfathomable. With all of the structures and pavement in the proposal, they can be doing nothing but reducing the tree canopy.
- **Future ownership:** PPT seems to have no plans for owning any of the development. Mr Baker spoke of the need to find an owner for the hotel and of spinning ownership for the apartments off to an unknown property management company. This sounds like a shaky development plan.
- **The work of PPT with the neighborhood advisory panel:** Mr Baker referred to PPT as collaborating with the advisory panel from the five affected neighborhoods. To my knowledge, there couldn't be anything farther from the truth. I'm aware of the advisory panel working on the Community Benefits Agreement, but the CBA seems like small potatoes given the input that PPT needs. I'm foreseeing no way that I will benefit from the proposed development. There is no plan for useful retail, and even if there was, there are examples (The Baxter) where retail space remains vacant months/years after the completion of the development. Commercial office space around Louisville remains readily available for tenants. Adding more on the UGC/LMHA property seems like adding to a pool that already can't be filled.

There are many things to dislike about the proposed plan, and few, if any, things to like about the proposal. Residents and our city's representatives should oppose the development of a hotel in general and not just the positioning of a hotel on the property. This area cannot stand the population density that is going to result from the proposed development. Please do your part to see that Louisville in general and Paristown and the Original Highlands and other surrounding areas get something out of the development of this property that is beneficial immediately and beneficial for years to come.