

Planning and Development Services
100 N. 5th Ave.
P.O. box 8647
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

To City Planners and Council Members;

I'm a second generation Ann Arborite. Many of my friends are also second generation citizens of Ann Arbor

I have yet to talk to anyone who approves of the plans for downtown Ann Arbor. Bringing in a consultant who has no idea of what Ann Arbor means to us just doesn't work.

High rises ruin the character of the town. The plan for the YMCA will cause more traffic, block out the sun and generate heat. Why not fix up the building that is there? Lots of towns save buildings. It would probably cost less than demolition.

The bus station could be out of town and still have the buses wait there on Fourth Ave.

Leave Ann Arbor a nice college town that we can be proud of.

Sincerely,

*Nancy Sturgis
1906 Longshore Dr.
Ann Arbor, 48105*

P.S. It's never too late to do the right thing.

Jayne Miller

DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2006

TO: MAYOR JOHN HIEFTJE AND MEMBERS OF THE ANN ARBOR CITY COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE ANN ARBOR PLANNING COMMISSION, AND MEMBERS OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

FROM: RAY DETTER, CHAIR, DOWNTOWN AREA CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

RE: CALTHORPE RECOMMENDATIONS — *Implementation*

On January 10 the Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council delivered a four-page memo to the Mayor and City Council, the Planning Commission, and the Downtown Development Authority stating the official response of our downtown resident group to the Calthorpe recommendations. That first memorandum was a very specific analysis and will be used to guide our actions relating to those recommendations.

This second memorandum expresses our concerns and advice regarding the importance of a very careful and selective implementation of the Calthorpe recommendations.

The Downtown Area CAC urges the city to adopt the Calthorpe Recommended Policy Framework for Downtown Ann Arbor as a general guide to future implementation of changes that will improve downtown. As a guide, it can be used to modify our master plans and zoning to support higher density downtown development that will encourage a pedestrian, retail and residential environment supportive of a broad spectrum of housing, work, and office opportunities.

We believe the Calthorpe report is essentially an outline for a future conversation on a selective implementation of the recommendations, many of which have been under discussion in our community for a long time but no action has been taken. As Joey Scanga of the Calthorpe group admitted at the Jan 17 joint meeting of Council, Planning, and the DDA, some of the information in the report is inaccurate (references to a non-existent Adaptive Reuse Ordinance) and sometimes uninformed (ways of changing historic districts and standards). Sometimes it is conflicted. While the Calthorpe recommendations express our community's commitment to protecting our historic districts, nearby residential neighborhoods, and locally owned businesses, it is clear that inappropriate zoning changes, excessive height and design bonuses, and encouragement of transfer of development rights may endanger those commitments.

In many cases, according to Mr. Scanga, the recommendations are only asking us to "take a look at a particular direction," a statement of possible policies. It is "a laundry list" that consolidates and focuses this community's thinking (sometimes conflicting) regarding the desired future of downtown. We don't have to adopt all the recommendations to proceed with implementation of those that have general community approval or are a part of already adopted master plans. Mr. Scanga suggested that we prioritize our "wish list",

decide what is most important, go after those recommendations first and fit in other items as we proceed. That seems wise advice. At least it's a good place to start.

The CAC urges the city to adopt the Calthorpe recommendations in principle and then act to implement specific selected recommendations.

If we want a desirable future for downtown, it must be based upon careful community planning. CAC members believe that the process of implementation of the Calthorpe recommendations is most important and requires caution. Implementation should follow a well-publicized schedule that is transparent—with public input, debate, and consensus building every step of the way as we move toward modifying already adopted city master plans. Our city's Downtown (1988) and Central Area Plans (1992), both products of months and years of broad community participation, may only need to be modified. Let's remember that the original plans for Kingsley Lane, as well as the plans for Liberty Lofts and Ashley Terrace, were approved because they conformed to the guidelines of the Downtown Plan. Unfortunately, our Downtown and Central Area Plans were never completely implemented with necessary zoning changes.

Re-zoning is the first big step in implementing the Calthorpe recommendations. But let's keep in mind that re-zoning is not simply about adding more bodies to downtown. Zoning should be carefully modified to encourage smart growth, better mixed use development, more retail, and more varied housing units. There is much to consider. We know our current Planning Department does not have the resources to do it alone. Mr. Scanga suggested that Planning, DDA and Council might hire someone to rewrite the zoning. He suggested "cherry picking" for ideas and patterns of zoning from different towns and areas to get the best examples.

As a city we are already doing many things to move toward implementation of some of the Calthorpe recommendations:

We are pleased that the Mayor already has asked local AIA architects to look into possibilities of a set of design guidelines for future development. It is not an easy task.

A Greenway Task Force has been meeting for months and will report in the fall.

For better or worse, the city has begun streamlining the development review process. The Alternative Transportation Study, the Huron, Division, and Fifth Avenue Studies, and a current DDA Parking Study will hopefully lead in the direction of a Comprehensive Parking and Transportation Plan for Downtown.

The DDA is taking action each time it acts on a project or program that comes before it: Development of the RFPs for the First and Washington and the Kline Lot reflect the direction of the Calthorpe recommendations.

A dialogue, somewhat sporadic, has opened up on the future of the Library Lot with a possible public open space, underground parking, and city hall and/or private housing/commercial development.

Across the street from the YMCA site is a perfect example of what we can do and are doing. The CAC recently supported three William Street Station resolutions that came before the DDA. We believed these resolutions supported community commitments, the existing DDA Plan, and they were reinforced by the Calthorpe recommendations.

The Resolution for a Parking Agreement with William Street Station not only gave support to a mixed-use building that will include a new transit center, ground floor retail, 100 units of low income housing and 90 units of mixed income rental housing, but commits the DDA to spending \$20 million on parking in the nearby area in the next five years. If future parking decisions are carefully related to the possibilities of use of the transit center, this is a step further toward developing a comprehensive parking and integrated transportation plan for the downtown as recommended in the Calthorpe Report.

The DDA approved the resolution.

The Resolution Providing a DDA Grant to William Street Station for Public Use Elements. Streetscape improvements on Fifth, William, and Fourth and publicly accessible open space in the mews portion are a part of this attractive project. The DDA has done this before at Ashley Mews, Kingsley Lane and Liberty Lofts. The TIF will pay for it.

The DDA approved the resolution.

The Resolution to Provide \$1,000,000 from the DDA Housing Fund as an equity loan to William Street Station to Support 45 units of Workforce 60% AMI housing for 15 years. The Downtown Area CAC and the community want a full range of housing options in the downtown. We strongly supported retaining the 100 units of very low income housing on the old Y site. We encourage affordable market rate options as well. One of the Calthorpe recommendations (p.34) was to aim to match income distribution in the downtown to that of Ann Arbor. The CAC happens to believe that affordable housing, defined to include market rate units at the 60-80% median level, should be a part of every residential development in the downtown. We believed that the DDA's approval of an equity investment at the William Street Station could make that happen.

The DDA did not approve this resolution.

We didn't absolutely need the Calthorpe recommendations to instruct us in the case of these actions currently being undertaken by the City and its DDA. They are actions that already have varying degrees of community support. But they are examples of the ways in which we can better accomplish community goals using the Calthorpe recommendations as a guide.

Now, let's get on with the important step of rezoning areas of our downtown.

We look forward to an extended public process of implementation that will allow us to participate in a discussion of all the important issues and concerns.

Downtown Development Report Comments

February 3-February 6

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Members of the Housing Policy Board

Re: Recommended Policy Framework for Downtown Ann Arbor, Jan 3 (Calthorpe Report)

We as members of the Housing Policy Board would like to express our support of the continuing City efforts to develop Ann Arbor in a responsible and community oriented fashion. The Calthorpe Report is another building block bringing a degree of objectivity to the process. The downside of coming into this community is that it is difficult for consultants to capture all the complexities of a city such as Ann Arbor.

Bob Gillett's letter dated February 5, 2006 regarding the Calthorpe Report outlines some of the areas of the report that could benefit from further study and detail. As citizen members of the Policy Board, we'd like to express our general agreement with the points made in Bob's letter. In particular we would like to voice our support for an inclusionary zoning ordinance and our concerns regarding the housing subsidy recommendations proposed in the report. Both the Office of Community Development and the Housing Policy Board are appropriate resources to tap in refining the reports findings regarding the housing needs of Ann Arbor.

We look forward to serving the Community and City Council in making recommendations regarding housing policy and appreciate the attention being paid to this critical aspect of maintaining and promoting Ann Arbor as a great place to live.

Housing Policy Board Members

Ashley Zwick

John Mouat

6 February 2006 --Ann Arbor City Council PH on the Calthorpe Report

The Calthorpe Report is not a plan. As a *report*, it really offers nothing to adopt or implement. The Calthorpe Report compiles planning tools, workshop summaries, and case studies that *may yet* serve a useful purpose. But we *still* have to figure out what we want the *future Ann Arbor* to be.

Informed citizens who have been frustrated by the process, find it easy to identify the shortcomings of the Calthorpe Report. Wrapping up six months of intensified discussion, the Calthorpe Report leaves old wounds open and defers even the questions whose answers *would* give direction to our future.

Ann Arbor has many organizations that serve the people and neighborhoods that make up our vibrant city. These community assets must be supported by *integrated* policies and programs that enhance *public and neighborhood access* to them.

Policy, based on shared vision, guides us to *sound decisions* that *make the most* of our resources. Shared vision should be distilled through public process that acknowledges and sustains the vitality of our community. Without vision we don't know where we are going. Without coherent policy, we suffer inertia and decline.

Downtown Ann Arbor is unique because it is shared among visitors and local citizens more than any other neighborhood. As a policy, *every* neighborhood should be connected with the next, and with the heart of our city. If we decide to create them, path systems and robust greenways can establish better connections and positive interactions.

One imminent decision, *for* an open and green gateway at First and William, can be a catalyst for aligning flood hazard mitigation policy with transportation planning, and for integrating park and open space planning with community development. This is one piece of the puzzle that fits *right now*.

There is no doubt that we can achieve an improved future environment if we *first* agree on what it should be and resolve policy conflicts. With or without the Calthorpe Report we can still realize a bright future for our city. When we aim for change that will benefit us *as a community*, we will *know* what to do next and it *will* be *easier* to do it.

Sincerely,
Alice Ralph, Architect, 3rd Ward Resident

Mayor and city council, friends, and fellow Ann Arborites,

I attended the first and third public workshops and saw portions of the second one, broadcast on CTN. I also attended the zoning presentation by Rick Hills at the library, and watched Robert Gibbs' presentations on CTN. I'm a current member of the city's Environmental Commission and a past member of the Energy Commission. My wife owns and operates a Main Street business. We eat, shop, socialize and find entertainment downtown regularly. I've read through the final Calthorpe report twice. My comments can be considered in this context.

My primary request is that the report be placed in a larger context of sustainability. As Energy Commission chair Robert Black noted at the first workshop during his group's summation, cities are organisms with inflows and outflows: food, water, and other energy sources/resources in; waste products out. The long-term viability of our community as a whole depends on the relationship of the downtown built environment and its inhabitants with the resources that sustain them and the 'downstream' impacts of their waste products.

With that in mind, I recommend that solid waste, storm water, and sanitary sewer requirements be re-evaluated in the context of increasing the downtown (and city) population. Likewise, with world petroleum and natural gas supplies soon to reach their ultimate peaks, we *must* prepare for the inevitability of reducing our energy demands, including shifting our energy sources to renewable ones and our food supply to more local sources. The downtown redevelopment process should integrate this awareness now.

Along those lines, I recommend that some form of green building requirement be incorporated into the development criteria or bonus system for new downtown structures.

Shifting focus, I'm quite concerned about the contentiousness of different aspects of this process and the approaches of some of the participants. I don't think we can afford to ignore what we can only assume to be legitimate concerns on the part of most individuals. It's when individuals claim to speak for a larger, undefined or unidentified group that the legitimacy of the concerns they raise come into question.

Having said that, I'll now attempt to speak on behalf of others in a sincere effort to shed light on what I think might be contributing to some of the contention: In the "Vision and Goals" section, the report identifies the "basic principles" on which it is based. I think that many Ann Arborites have bristled at the somewhat fatalistic "principle" that "growth ... [is] inevitable." (However, I do think most people believe and embrace change as inevitable.) I think we prefer to believe that the future of our community is within our influence and that broader "principles" should guide us in our decisions. I don't think we oppose growth downtown so much as we would be willing to accept it as a natural outcome of pursuing higher principles, such as social justice and sustainability. I encourage you to consider this perspective as this process continues.

Thinking similarly about other subtleties of this process, I've come up with several questions that I think are important to consider with regard to their psychological aspects.

- What is a "dynamic, economically viable, 24-hour downtown"? (as worded in the Downtown Residential Task Force enabling council resolution and referenced throughout this process, including tangentially in the Calthorpe report.)

This term probably refers to people residing in the downtown, rather than to people being out in the downtown area (and perhaps bordering neighborhoods) all night long. Can neighbors be assured that business hours will not be extended in the downtown beyond 2 am? Or will more all-night diners be opened? Could any current ones, like the Fleetwood, be exempted from any ordinance setting allowed hours of operation? Simply looking at

this as an example, I suspect that these sorts of concerns are behind some of the outward objections to "change" and "growth".

(As an aside, I again suggest that downtown be more broadly sustainable beyond economic viability.)

- What (other) fears, justifiable or not, underlie the concerns of current residents who are not supportive of different aspects of this process or the report?

While city council will no doubt make efforts to address the stated concerns, the underlying fears may be more complex and less clear, ultimately being unresolved in spite of those efforts. Obviously, city council has no control over the emotions of Ann Arbor residents, nor should it. However, I think that an effort to identify those fears, beyond the already stated dissatisfactions, would be a productive one. **A single public meeting, or even a short series of meetings, led by a facilitator from outside the community, trained in some relevant aspect of psychology, could go a long way toward (re)building a shared sense of community around this process.** Possible focal points include change in general, increased (human) density, and increased building heights. (Ben Stupka of the MEC offered a "small point of caution" with regard to increased density in his submitted comments, but was not specific as to the perceived negative impacts.)

- What real (rather than perceived) dangers and other negative impacts could result from changing the downtown along the lines of the report?

What are they and how will we minimize or address them on an ongoing basis? Will we need a plan for dealing with more litter on the sidewalks, for example? Will current downtown visitors still be able to walk in and get a table at their favorite restaurants or will the need for reservations and waiting list beepers only expand? Would a new downtown grocery put the People's Food Co-op out of business? Such questions would likely arise in the process of addressing the first two questions above. **The distinction is in taking the step of not only identifying them, but also in evaluating them and the potential for mitigating efforts.**

Talking around these issues without delving into them sufficiently would be a waste of valuable time and vital community energy.

Furthermore, I've read the comments submitted by others, from the city's website, and I have several pieces of feedback in response to them.

- As a supporter and promoter of sustainability, I especially appreciate the comments and submissions of the 208 Group, in particular the inclusion of the Hannover Principles.

- I also appreciate and agree with the input of the Living Economy Network and second their recommendations as well.

- I agree with Bob Johnson's comments on the importance of components of the downtown experience beyond retail shopping. **I recommend that the city make an effort to identify which of these sorts of venues and attractions are underutilized or threatened and also identify examples of other gaps in our civic, educational, cultural, and social environment that have benefited other communities and might likewise benefit ours.**

- And like (teenager) Joel Batterman, I believe that "the city should promote high-density, mixed-use developments throughout the city, not just in the downtown."

Aside from these thoughts and concerns, I support the path that we are on as a community, approve of the primary recommendations of the report, and look forward to continuing the discussion as we move forward.

Thank you for your consideration of my input and your commitment to our city!

Steven Bean

Dear City Council and Planning Commission Members:

Over the past few years my firm, The Greenway Collaborative, Inc. was hired by the City to develop a non-motorized transportation plan. In the draft non-motorized report and in previous appearances before you I have repeatedly stated the key to increasing non-motorized transportation in the city lies in the three D's of: Diversity, Density and Design. By that I mean diversity of land uses, increased population density and design of the physical environment.

The non-motorized transportation plan is primarily focused on the design of roadways within the confines of the public ROW. The Calthorpe Plan addresses the critical issues of diversity, density and design outside of the right-of-way. It is my opinion, that the recommendations in the Calthorpe plan are just as critical, if not more so, than the recommendations in the non-motorized report to increasing pedestrian and bicycle travel. I heartily endorse the recommendations of the Calthorpe report.

The recommendation to place a greater emphasis on getting people to live downtown is the most critical thing for the long-term success of our downtown. More people living downtown will create a market for additional retail and services strengthening the long-term viability of our downtown businesses. The framework for the recommendations,

with a focus on pedestrian scale first floors and context sensitive building design addresses the important qualitative side of the pedestrian experience. The flexibility built into the proposal that allows for fluctuations in market demand for different building uses strikes a good balance of free market and government regulation.

A key aspect of the recommendations is the open, simple and well defined approval process. We have counseled other communities that you can ask a lot of developers if there is a level playing field and a transparent and expedited process. I think it is not asking too much that we should define to those who wish to invest in our town a clear and concise vision of what we expect of them.

The challenge with this report lies in the working out details necessary to implement the general recommendations. I encourage you to direct staff to begin that process so that we don't all find ourselves five years from now in the same place we are today.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Norman D. Cox, ASLA
The Greenway Collaborative, Inc.
www.greenwaycollab.com

Greenway, Trail, Open Space, and Non-motorized Planning

Voicing my concerns about the Calthorpe recommendations for the future of downtown Ann Arbor.

This past year, I lost my job, sold my car, and felt like I had landed on Mars, with two children, ages 7 and 10 in tow. We live 4 houses from the west end of West Park, which enabled us to ride bikes to the coop, take the bus and walk to destinations. We rode our bikes across Huron Street, to our community garden at Zion Church, and picked food to eat from our garden.

Few people losing a job and being in precarious circumstances financially, would find themselves so well-placed as I was. Further, I lived in Davis, California for 8 years, riding a bike for transportation, and came to the University to get a planning degree...ending up writing a dissertation on bicycling. So riding a bike for transportation was not new to me. But biking with my children felt quite dangerous.

Overall, I think that if you wanted to do a multitude of small things to facilitate or support a truly sustainable lifestyle for people who choose to walk and bicycle (curb cuts, pedestrian crossings, more bike parking on Main St., maintaining and enhancing open space), you might end up making the community healthier at much less cost.

Afterall, I am a taxpayer now -- the ones you dream about coming into the community in the future might not exist. Ann Arbor is a community that has a financial lifeline to the federal and state governments, so the support for this community -- economically -- could change in the future. (In fact, that's what happened to me.)

Anything more than incremental change seems unwise to me at best. I saw Ann Arbor through a new pair of eyes this summer -- after living here for 20 years. And I won't forget it. We managed to stay here, but we are teetering on the edge of an existence now. How many people can afford the high taxes? And if they can, why would they choose to live in a skyscraper instead of in a house with a yard?

You can build a vision for the future, but you might want to wait to begin constructing it, except for modest changes built on conservative financial forecasts. Since many people in the community are opposed to elements of the plan, I think you should use the plan as a beginning point for continuing discussions, after Calthorpe and associates leave.

Thank you for listening.

Cathy Antonakos, PhD

I'd like to voice my support for the Calthorpe Report and the majority of recommendations presented within the Report. I think it is important that Council moves forward with the principles set forth in the report~ increasing residential density downtown, redoing our zoning code, increasing the transparency of the planning process, increasing mobility options downtown. I urge you to move forward with the Report and beginning to study which recommendations are sensible to implement in our community.

Sincerely,
Erica Briggs

A Few Thoughts on the Calthorpe Report
by Brian Buchalski
February 5, 2006

Although I find little in the Calthorpe Report that I disagree with, I feel that they missed a couple of observations that would have enriched it further.

First, I'd suggest that the Calthorpe Report more specifically address the relationship between the City of Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan. Although the Calthorpe Report mentions the University on several different occasions, I am surprised that, given its massive presence in Ann Arbor, an entire section wasn't devoted to this particularly important relationship. As it presently stands these two entities seem to exist with little consciousness of each other, at least in regards to

the planning of buildings. Whereas Ann Arbor carefully (and slowly) debates every addition to its built environment, the University has been erecting buildings at a very quick pace with seemingly without critique. Neither approach is necessarily better or worse than the other, however, I cannot help but believe that as the City and the University continue to operate independently of each other that this segregation will eventually result in some unpleasant consequences. In fact, I believe that some of these have already taken place:

- The ghetto-ization of housing near campus (especially to its south) by students who have little interest in maintaining their temporary homes and landlords who also have little motivation for exceptional maintenance due to the fierce competition for business in this realm. This past Fall term saw three fires in student rentals make the front page of the Michigan Daily.
- The entire University Medical Campus, which offers nothing more than an accretive junkspace as it grows like a cancerous tumor on alongside the Huron River on what could be some of the most picturesque landscape in town. The entire thing seems as though it could literally burst at its seems any day now. That anyone would seek care in this Frankenstein-like machine remains a mystery to me.
- North Campus and its pseudo-bucolic grounds which are nothing but sprawling, low density development located in within the city limits of Ann Arbor. Moreover, because of its considerable lack of amenities, North Campus induces many more students (including undergraduates) to unnecessarily rely on personal automobiles.

At any rate, I feel the both the City and the University would benefit greatly by developing together rather than separately. Aside from the historical value of the original forty acres at the core of the University, I see no reason why private development couldn't take place on University owned land and/or buildings and likewise I see no reason why University buildings need to restrict themselves to placement on University owned land. For example, why couldn't mixed-use developments of retailer/office/residential be located between the buildings on North Campus? Why couldn't some of the University's medical facilities move off of their campus and into mixed-use facilities downtown? Perhaps with retail at grade? Moreover, as the largest employer in Ann Arbor, both the University and the City share the considerable burden of dealing with the daily commuter traffic into the city and they should be strategically attacking this and other issues together. As such, I am disappointed that the Calthorpe Report made no suggestion that the City and University form some kind of liaison committee/taskforce charged with regularly strategizing their joint futures together. Similar efforts have been conducted before as, for example, in Cambridge where city leaders have been working with Harvard and MIT (amongst other universities) over the past fifteen years and are now beginning to see the results of an improved pattern of growth that is enhancing their community rather than tearing at its seams.

Secondly, I'd suggest including the LowerTown area of Ann Arbor as one of their overlay zones for downtown development. I would do this for a couple of reasons. One, as the oldest part of the city much of its development pattern (i.e., the street layouts) predates the use of the automobile and is conducive to the higher density developments that we see more of on the east coast of the United States or in European cities (most of which were also constructed before the era of the automobile). These street patterns with

their strange angles and unusually shaped blocks that were responsive to topography are also potentially very interesting from a pedestrian street-level experience and could serve as a very nice complement to the rest of the downtown with its rather severe use of the grid.

Admittedly, some may feel that LowerTown is too far from downtown to be included as an overlay zone but I'd like to point out that Calthorpe's inclusion of the South University zone is also somewhat remote from what we consider to be the downtown core. Moreover, including the LowerTown area as one of Calthorpe's overlay zones would also have a nice rebalancing effect on the perception of what is downtown Ann

Arbor. More specifically, it would bring both the Huron River and the east-west railroad (and Amtrak passenger) corridor back into the city center. The current situation compels one to think of both of these vital assets as residing just past the periphery of downtown Ann Arbor and this thinking has probably been to the benefit of neither them nor downtown. Shifting our thinking and returning both the river and the railroad station to downtown by way of including LowerTown as part of downtown Ann Arbor would bring a very attractive balance to the city both in regards to historical (temporal) and physical (spatial) understanding.

Brian Buchalski

To: Ann Arbor City Council:
COMMENTS on Calthorpe Report

p14

Creating a "balance of uses" assures endless controversy. The policy should be clear. This is the central business district. Although some residential use is ok, such use must be secondary to the needs of successful business. Residential amenity does not trump business convenience in this area. The urge to provide affordable housing must be carefully balanced against the need of downtown businesses for more customers with lots of money to spend. (Look in the windows of downtown stores and see what they sell and the prices.) The inclination to "preserve" everything old must not be allowed to interfere with business needs.

Evaluating the downtown infrastructure is a very good idea. Let's face it, downtown was laid out almost 200 years ago as a village of a few hundred people. It is not surprising that it is not exactly ideal for its present uses, let alone for the strains of substantial growth. For example, we cannot go on adding more parking spaces indefinitely without risking a collapse of the street system's ability to handle increased traffic. In many dense cities, most people don't have cars and many that do keep them outside the congested area. Perhaps we need storage lots at the edge of town with bus service to the center.

p17

Huron St. has become an efficient way to get through the downtown. But there is a down side. The identification of this highway as a pedestrian dead zone is important. It has always seemed to me that the amount of traffic along it makes it unappealing to pedestrians and difficult to cross so that it has become a barrier. This is a significant part of the issue as to how many cars downtown can stand. The report seems to blame the deadness to parking facilities. I don't think so. It seems to me that the motorists using Huron to get through the downtown area are the main culprit.

p19

The report underestimates the value and overstates the difficulties of PUD, which has been recognized by Michigan statutes as a legitimate part of zoning since 1978. It seems to be used all

over the state in most cases where large or complicated developments are proposed. It has proved itself as a highly successful way to get people to work together and avoid expensive and time-consuming litigation. Only one of the scores of published zoning decisions of Michigan's appellate courts since 1978 has involved a PUD. In addition, PUD is a great way to avoid the monotony of cookie cutter subdivisions, where every house is set back the same distance from its boundary lines, etc.

But PUD can be misused and it has been misused by Ann Arbor. It was devised as a way to modify zoning rules to better fit the circumstances of a particular proposal. But Ann Arbor has converted it into a tool for municipal extortion. The often applied requirement that the developer contribute money for construction of affordable housing is, perhaps, the best example. If there is a shortage of affordable housing, it is a problem of the entire community, if not of the nation as a whole, that cannot legitimately be assigned solely to the builders of unaffordable housing and/or their customers. If the city would desist from this unfair, immoral and probably illegal practice a lot of the costs and delays of PUD could be avoided.

It is suggested that somehow the downtown will benefit if the city reduces the presently allowed density in the outlying areas. It seems to me that such action is more likely to cause increased home building in the surrounding townships than to benefit downtown. It would make more sense to increase permitted densities throughout the entire city to put more families close to the downtown or the bus lines. Because downtown is only a small part of the city, it may well be that increasing density all over would be much more effective in curbing sprawl than focusing only on downtown. The effect would not be enormous because of the existing deed restrictions in most Ann Arbor subdivisions. For example, should the city permit two-family homes in R-1 districts, this action does not void recorded building restrictions that limit development to single-family homes.

p20

As a general proposition, the construction of a 1-story building downtown doesn't make much sense. The land is, or should be, way too expensive. That is why there are so few 1-story buildings downtown. When one is built, it is probably intended as a temporary building, so the land could be put to good use until a better opportunity comes along. These things don't happen too often, any harm is not long lasting, the variety is not so bad, and it is petty to be so picky.

Upper floor setbacks were tried by New York City in the 1920s. The result was a bunch of office buildings that looked like stairways part way to heaven. Nobody liked it so they dropped the requirement. Ada Louise Huxtable of The New York Times said: "Alas, good zoning doth not great architecture make."

p22

I am skeptical about the notion of requiring retail use of the first floor of multi-story buildings. I fear it will result in empty store fronts. People don't open stores to please planning commissioners but to make money. A lot of former downtown storefronts are now used for offices. I understand that AfterWords and Ehnis are shutting down. (Will we soon hear that Charlie Schlenderer has bought out Tiffany & Co. and is consolidating operations at the New York site?) An article in The Ann Arbor News, Jan. 25, 2002, suggests that there is a glut of office space available downtown. New buildings with empty store fronts, known in the real estate business as glass eyes, will not add to the allure of downtown.

p23

The design standards concept seems intended to permit the subjective judgment of amateur citizen planners to trump the views of design professionals. This can only lead to disputes. It seems to me that any such standards should be written into the ordinance, just like the standards now called setbacks and height limits, so that any professional can know in advance what the city requires. This concept is known in some places as The Rule of Law.

p24

I can't see any reason why downtown development proposals should receive fast track treatment over others. I can see why review of all development proposals should be much faster than it now is. I have been told that it now takes about 2 months to get a building permit for a single-family home. It used to take a few hours.

p25

I have never heard of a town where rain water is collected and stored on every building site, except in Bermuda where there is no other source of fresh water. This practice would probably waste a lot of valuable land. It may be OK in outlying business districts but it seems to me that the system of pipes now used to drain downtown should continue.

pp32-3

The discussion of housing demand in the downtown area isn't very precise, but it does make one wonder whether the possibilities for downtown really amount to a substantial part of the growth expected in the county. This should be clarified a bit so that the city council can make wise decisions on proposed expenditures on downtown infrastructure.

p42

The town square idea is a great one. The report doesn't identify a location, but there is one that sticks out like a sore thumb. The 5th Ave. parking lot.

p47

The possibility of commuter parking lots on the fringes, served by busses to the center, long used by the U of M, should have been mentioned here.

p50

The illustrative vision, Fig. 41, shows Huron St. redeveloped with only 1 lane of traffic in each direction. Who do they think they are kidding? "...a man with moonbeams in his hands has nothing there at all." (The Man of La Mancha)

p.52

In Figs. 46-7, does the label Fifth St. really mean 5th Ave.?

p.53

Ann Arbor has recent history with sidewalk improvements, notably along N. 4th Ave., S. Main St., and around the intersection of State & Liberty. The expensive result was pleasing to the eye but there is little, if any, evidence that there was any benefit to business or property values.

The town square idea for the Fifth Ave. parking lot is great. But Liberty Plaza is OK as is, at least for the present, and there must be some better project for what a redesign would cost.

Benches at the NW corner of the diag is another very good idea, and would probably be good for the hot dog industry at the corner of State and N. University.

p.54

It concerns me that there are so few gas stations, particularly those who can fix a flat and do other minor repairs, in a downtown that has so many cars.

p.55

Let's not implement AA Railroad service. Instead, let's talk the railroad into abandoning the track thru downtown. Fingerle Lumber could be served from the south.

The report is very pretty. Color is used lavishly in text, maps, and pictures, most of which are not needed to understand it. It is also a long-winded document that includes 9 pages of tales of conditions in other cities and lots of descriptions of Ann Arbor things that are common knowledge. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the author of this report didn't really want to encourage public review. It took me over 19 minutes to download it, and its 2 column format complicates the process of studying it.

February 3, 2006
Clan Crawford, Jr.

31 January 2006

Dear City Council members,

I am writing to express my concern about the Calthorpe plan and to urge you to neither accept nor adopt the plan as a guide for future downtown development in Ann Arbor. I am a 35-year resident of Ann Arbor, a homeowner in the first ward near to downtown for 20 of those years, and currently a citizen appointed to the Parks Advisory Commission and to the Environmental Commission. I speak only for myself but mention my 5-year service on these committees to indicate that I have worked on and am familiar with many issues facing the city including the Farmers Market Plan and the five-year update of the Parks and Recreation Open Space (PROS) Plan. The PROS Plan includes specific park and open space recommendations for the downtown district apparently overlooked by the Calthorpe plan.

First I need to clarify that I am not anti-growth and do support some residential growth downtown, in contrast to the portrayal by the Calthorpe supporters that all opponents of the Calthorpe plan are by definition "anti-growth.

In fact I looked at the potential renovation of the unused upper floors of downtown building long before it was fashionable. However, I feel that the Calthorpe plan is based on the highest possible estimate of expected new downtown residents, depending in large part of ex-U of M grads that want to return to their college town. It's ironic that the plan is proposing such changes to Ann Arbor as to make it unrecognizable to those wanting to return to their college memories. The choice of the highest estimate of downtown residential growth is a weakness of the report, unsubstantiated except as the judgment of one person.

The groups that support the Calthorpe plan suggest that it is a plan owned by the citizens of Ann Arbor, citing involvement in the public meetings and workshops. I disagree emphatically. I attended one of the workshops and several public meetings and found to my dismay that opinions that were counter to what appeared to be the already decided result were at best overlooked, at worst put down. The Calthorpe plan definitely supports the already expressed view of the DDA and seems to protect the interests of developers over citizens including heavy public subsidies for

downtown development. I strongly feel that tall buildings over 8 stories will destroy what is a unique, livable downtown. The developers insist that they can not make a profit at less than 9 stories but if Ann Arbor set an 8-story limit, the builders will come.

Secondly I am concerned about the lack of consideration for downtown parking for the new residents. The Calthorpe plan seems to follow the DDA lead in suggesting that the residents can just share parking spaces with shoppers and diners because they will use spaces at different times of the day. This overlooks evenings and weekends when downtown is very active. It also assumes that the new residents will pay for spots in the parking structures (to be built) instead of vie for free spots in nearby residential neighborhoods. City Council is concerned about that issue in relationship to U of M dormitories so shouldn't it be concerned about downtown as well? The general attitude about parking for downtown residents is that it won't be needed because downtown will be alternative transportation friendly but how does this jive with all the downtown residents leaving their parking spots each day and opening those spots for consumers?

The DDA suggests that the Calthorpe plan will support local businesses and independent small business owners. There is nothing concrete about this claim just words that suggest this is an important value. The most concrete part of the plan is the map showing the rezoning and "redevelopment" of Ann Arbor, but "redeveloped" as what and for whom? The maps call for a 3- to 12-story building on any lot that is occupied by less than a 3-story building. But much of the character of Ann Arbor lies in the 2-story buildings that line the major downtown thoroughfares, many of them with character that can't be replaced, and heaven forbid we leave any open space for the new residents. Like the DDA, the Calthorpe plan suggests that downtown residents will do just fine using the sidewalks as their open space – or driving I guess to other parks and open space. The Calthorpe plan suggests that a downtown greenway should be examined but the map shows all the land available for a greenway covered by buildings. Thus the most concrete part of the plan, the map, is counter to many of the plan recommendations. And adopting the Calthorpe plan will be the open door for "redevelopment" of downtown whether it [delete previous word] a [specific] project is desired by Council or not.

For these and many other reasons carefully articulated by others, I urge you to vote against accepting or adopting the Calthorpe plan.

Sincerely,
Catherine Riseng

On Thursday night, I was called to take a telephone survey (evidently commissioned by the DDA) on my opinions about Downtown. I spelled out my positions and feelings in great detail, but found that the survey was in parts so manipulatively worded that I couldn't give an answer, there was simply no way to express my concerns over the Calthorpe plan.

After the call finished, I began thinking about Hurricane Katrina,

which happened a mere 6 months ago. I remembered all the people who said they had ridden out storms before, but this time "it was different." One thing that was different was that there were no longer sufficient wetlands to ameliorate the brunt of the storm. The Gulf's commercial development and dredging of recent years had eliminated the natural buffer for weather extremes that the wetlands had historically provided.

Ann Arbor's flood plain is our buffer and insurance against extreme flooding, but the Calthorpe plan, written only a few months after Hurricane Katrina, regards it as a place to build. This is not "New Urbanism," but a very old and tired approach to exploiting the natural topography, rather than working with it. True new urbanists take their cues from the natural landscape and use it for an asset, rather than turn it into a liability.

It is unfortunate that Ann Arborites are in a position of "Calthorpe, take it or leave it." Calthorpe aren't the only urban planners out there, and they're certainly don't appear to be acting as true "New Urbanists."

Jill Peek

February 5, 2006

Mayor and Council:

I am writing to comment on the draft Calthorpe report ("Recommended Policy Framework for Downtown Ann Arbor" January 3, revised draft).

As background, I currently serve on the Downtown Development Authority Board ("DDA") and the City's Housing Policy Board ("HPB"). I also served as a member of the Downtown Residential Task Force ("DRTF").

I feel that there has been extensive DDA participation in the Calthorpe process and that there has been a great deal of community dialogue on the density and zoning aspects of the report. In contrast, I feel that there has been much less development of and discussion of the affordable housing aspects of the report—so my comments will focus on those recommendations in the report.

While these are my personal comments, these comments are certainly informed by policy discussions at the HPB.

At the outset, I acknowledge that the Calthorpe Report is one step in an ongoing community process for downtown planning. One of my general points is that the affordable housing concepts in the report are much less developed than some of the other concepts in the report. This observation is not so much a criticism of the report—rather it is a suggestion that, as this process moves forward, we need more focus on this issue and greater efforts to integrate the affordable housing recommendations of the Calthorpe process with the City’s ongoing policies and efforts in the area of affordable housing.

With this introduction, I offer the following comments:

1. I generally support the recommendations for greater downtown density.
2. I specifically and enthusiastically support the call for an inclusionary zoning ordinance. (This has been a recommendation of the HPB for several years.)
3. The Report does not seem fully informed about the City’s current affordable housing efforts or structures—for example, at p. 58, the Report assigns responsibility for affordable housing policy implementation to “the Housing Commission and Planning Department”. These are functions that have been the responsibility of the City’s Office of Community Development (“OCD”) and the HPB for many years. The Report never mentions the HPB or the OCD or the City’s Housing Trust Fund or the City’s HOME funds.

I’m assuming that the intent of the Report was to build on current City structures—not to reorganize the City. (This is an example of my general point—that these areas of the Report need more focused attention in the future.)

4. I was disappointed that the Report did not more fully address the downtown’s role as a governmental and human services center. This is important for two reasons. First, several of the larger downtown planning issues—e.g., the location and design of a new City Hall—effectively disappear from the report. Second, there are many critical human services that need to be located near these governmental services—and these are not addressed in the Report. Again, I see this as a need that should be addressed as this process moves forward.
5. In 2004 the City adopted the goal of ending homelessness in 10 years and endorsed the Blueprint to End Homelessness. This document included a number of critical housing and services goals. While these are community wide goals, they will have a significant impact on the downtown. There is no mention of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness or the role in downtown shelters, services, and housing to addressing the goals of that Plan. While the report recommends new housing subsidies for moderate and upper moderate residents (see #6), it does not suggest a strategy for addressing the housing needs of our poorest citizens or other special needs groups. Again, as we move forward, it is critical that we integrate the City’s existing affordable housing goals with the affordable housing recommendations in the Report.

6. I'm concerned that the recommendations about housing subsidy [p. 33] appear both ill-advised and infeasible. At p. 33, the report suggests moving housing subsidies to any unit priced at less than \$325,000 [purchase] or \$2,600/mo. [rent], and suggests subsidizing families "expected to earn less than \$89,000 annually". [The City's currently available housing subsidies are about \$1,000,000/yr.—that is enough to buy down the purchase price on 10 units from \$325,000 to \$225,000.]

This proposal is not consistent with current City policies, which, in recognition of the very great housing need and very limited public resources, require VLI targeting and permanent affordability.

To the extent that there is an economic plan contemplated in the Report, it is that buyouts from the inclusionary zoning ordinance will fund the proposed (vastly broader) subsidy programs. I question this assumption. I also question the policy wisdom of establishing governmental subsidy programs for persons at these higher income tiers—at least until all the basic human needs of the poor are met.

If the City is serious about pursuing this goal (i.e., subsidies to households earning well in excess of 100% AMI), I urge the City not to implement this program until the revenue stream from the new inclusionary zoning ordinance is in place and proven. Otherwise, the effect of the recommendation will be to shift scarce City resources from our poorest and most vulnerable citizens to the upper middle class.

7. This observation about housing—that the Reports assumes huge new City investments in achieving various downtown values without adequately evaluating the revenue streams that would support these programs—is true throughout the report. The reality is that municipal revenues in Michigan have been static for several years and that cities have been forced to cut staff and cut programs. I'm concerned that the Report assumes a level of City revenue growth that will not be realized.

In summary, I urge the City to move forward on the zoning changes (especially the inclusionary zoning ordinance) ASAP. I urge the City not to change its funding priorities for affordable housing—unless and until it has adopted an inclusionary zoning ordinance and has demonstrated that the revenue stream from the ordinance will support these expanded funding priorities. I urge the City, as it moves forward in this planning process, to make sure that its downtown planning efforts are cognizant of and build on past City affordable housing efforts and policies.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
Robert F. Gillett

I have just read the report and did not see any reference to accessibility for people with mobility impairments.

In order for the downtown to be truly "pedestrian friendly," people with limited mobility should be considered. And when considering accessibility, please remember that not everyone who has a mobility impairment has a wheelchair. There are those of us who use motorized scooters, and those who are able to walk short distances but with effort and while experiencing pain.

Speaking for myself, I would like to be able to take my scooter on the bus to visit the downtown area; but the busses do not accommodate the turning radius of the scooter very well. They are designed for wheel chairs. So, if I want to spend some time downtown, I need a parking place where I can load and unload my scooter.

Shops and restaurants should have a place to park one's scooter inside.

Should someone who walks with difficulty want to visit downtown, there should be strategically placed benches for resting.

In addition, I believe it will be EXTREMELY IMPORTANT to include the Allen Creek Greenway as part of the downtown plan. It will be a wonderful amenity to those living in the downtown and would create a beautiful and readily identifiable entrance to the downtown area. The increased residential density will demand a green space nearby for people to just sit and enjoy, a pathway to the Huron (handicapped accessible), and a place for the residents to walk their dogs.

Judith L. Marks, Ph.D.

To Whom it May Concern:

I am in agreement with the Calthorpe Report. Given the huge amount of public land within the city and the resulting high property taxes, finding ways to increase the taxable base is absolutely necessary if the city ever wants to seriously consider lowering taxes and making the city affordable to households of all income levels.

After graduating from U-M in 1990, it took me 10 years to be able to afford to move my family of five back into the city. While new development is needed, past building design mistakes should not be repeated. Some examples to add to the Calthorpe Report:

- Heading east on Liberty, Tally Hall's facade juts out to block a straight line view of the Burton Tower.

- Heading east on Miller, the "boxy" Ann-Ashley parking structure does not offer much of a "city gateway" for all the commuters and visitors coming downtown by way of the Maple/Miller interchange.

In addition, a mixture of downtown housing types as well as the development of a town center are also desperately needed. Good models can be found in the following communities:

- Cherry Creek in Denver CO - Older homes, blocks and half blocks adjacent to downtown with no historic preservation value, re-developed as two-three story townhouses and condos.
- Beaver Creek, CO - Public-private development of pedestrian retail village, including outdoor, public ice rink sitting atop an underground parking garage and opera house. A town center should encourage year round use, not just summer usage.

I hope this feedback helps, I want to thank everyone involved in this process and hope that much of the report is put into action.

Sincerely,
Larry Baird

Response to Calthorpe Report
Norman and Ilene Tyler
16 January 2006

Peter Calthorpe Associates has distributed the final report on their study of Ann Arbor's downtown. It reflects the current thinking of our community towards its downtown. However, we feel the report did not go far enough in its analysis and its proposals.

Many have referred to this document as the Calthorpe Plan. This nomenclature is inappropriate, for it did not present a plan for the downtown, but a series of policy statements, most of which had already been presented in other forums.

The overall purpose of this report has been difficult to assess, primarily for two reasons. First, the public input sessions (we attended all three) attracted a large number of interested citizens, but gave little direction to the people who were divided into working groups of 10-12, and controlled tightly the input expected (e.g., they did NOT say to explore density or how much do you want, but said these are your three options, choose one).

Second, the Report did a poor job of presenting a plan, or a vision, for the downtown. Calthorpe Associates is a well-respected firm, and plans they have created for other communities have represented new urban planning at its best. We did not receive that in the Ann Arbor report, perhaps because we did not ask for it. A notable plan would have included more than density build-out computer sketches and ill-conceived proposals for attracting more chain stores to the downtown and uninformed suggestions to consolidate existing historic districts. A useful "plan," in our opinion, should have included a number of critical planning constructs. For example, a boldly envisioned central open space (town square) of significant size has been part of our thinking and should have received major consideration. The library lot may be the appropriate location, but the approach should

not be to squeeze it into an existing parking lot, but be large enough and central enough to breathe as part of the entire city.

There are other areas that deserved more attention. Much of the Calthorpe Report dealt with the east-west orientation of the downtown retail zones. However, there is also an important north-south civic axis between the library and city hall that should form a primary downtown axis. The redesign of Fifth and Division and the crossing of Huron as important pedestrian corridors are critical to its success.

During the input sessions, much was made of the need for a large grocery store and hardware store to service future downtown residents. These are important, and will come from the private sector when economics dictate they should. However, the city also has a role in attracting new residents, especially in encouraging more owner-occupants in the Old Fourth Ward historic district, a residential district that has long been populated primarily by student renters. With construction of the new north quad dorms by the University of Michigan, some of the stress on the Old Fourth Ward to provide student housing may be relieved, possibly being available for more permanent residents. The Burns Park neighborhood has long been considered desirable because of its school and playground in a central location. The city should consider planning for a smaller elementary school and city park/playground as integral to such a healthy Old Fourth Ward downtown residential district.

The Calthorpe Report took a largely quantitative approach to downtown planning, with its density ratios and height mandates. A qualitative approach is just as important to ensure that it is not just the height or setback of a proposed building, but also its qualitative relationship to the street. We don't want new buildings that simply satisfied mandated numbers; we want buildings that reflect the visual character of downtown and contribute to it. To that end, the city should consider establishing a design review process that allows for excellence in design, rather than overly-regulated middle-of-the-road formulas.

To reduce growing conflicts between the development and preservation communities and to encourage the proper blending of old with new, we request that the city immediately restore the position of historic district coordinator. In addition, the Planning Commission and a restored City Planning Department must be brought fully into the process. Our own planners need to be given the time, resources and expertise to look at complex issues and provide continuing informed guidance to City Council and the DDA. Without this in-house component, the process likely will be disjointed, repetitive, with various groups sometimes working at cross-purposes. Our city planners should be asked to use their professional expertise and entrusted with their full range of responsibilities. Trust their judgment to move the process forward in a comprehensive, coordinated way.

In summary, the Calthorpe Report raised more questions than it answered. It was not a bad effort for an outsider with a limited amount of time, but the city must now use its own expertise to move this initiative forward. The above suggests some areas on which to focus; there are others that are equally important (transportation, greenways, etc.).

We appreciate that City Council, the DDA and the Planning Commission have made a commitment to looking at the future of the downtown. The Calthorpe report was a step in this process, but now the more important work is left to us, the local community, to better define our future downtown and how we want to get there.

All of us in Ann Arbor envision a vibrant downtown. One component of this vision that, in our minds, has not been fully addressed is the need to encourage a vibrant arts community.

Just as retail stores, banks and services are important in residents' lives, so too are venues to experience the cultural arts. Ann Arbor is lacking a common arts center; a civic center. It's surprising, as we're known in Michigan, and beyond, for our artistic excellence. With the cost of downtown business space being at a premium, many artists and arts organizations cannot feasibly afford individual space downtown.

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre would be very interested in discussing a civic arts center that would be home to visual artists and arts organizations for workspace, gallery and performance venue. We for one would love to be a part of this and be able to present our productions in a medium-sized downtown performance space. A civic center would have the potential to increase business for downtown restaurants and other merchants, address opportunities for those living downtown or near downtown without adding to a transportation problem, and strengthen the city's commitment to the arts. A civic center could be the cornerstone of a planned development site, in addition to or in place of other retail space.

Please consider your commitment to the arts, recognize that the arts are an integral part of creating a balanced community, and incorporate plans of an Ann Arbor Civic Center in to your downtown plans.

Suzi Peterson
Managing Director
Ann Arbor Civic Theatre
www.a2ct.org

Adoption of some of the zoning and parking recommendations in the Calthorpe Report is not in the City's best interest. These recommendations mean that developers would have the right to build large buildings without any City control over the details. In addition, because developers would no longer be required to provide parking, the high cost of parking would be transferred to the City.

I have designed a hypothetical building according to the maximum values allowed in the Calthorpe Report so that we can see what would happen in practice. This project would be built on the Brown Block, bounded by First, Huron, Ashley, and Washington. I will first discuss the building design, and then the parking requirements.

I am calling this building "Calthorpe Place".

Building Design

On page 54 of the Report, Calthorpe recommends: "Develop the Brown Lot at 1st and Huron Street as a gateway feature for the Downtown. The development proposal should include a mix of uses." The Brown Block is an almost-perfect square, 263.5 ft. x 264.0 ft. So the area within the lot lines is 69,564 sq. ft.

Calthorpe Place is in the Huron Corridor area (p. 53) and so the zoning overlay form requirements are from page 20, figure 20, second line:

Minimum Height (Stories) = 3
Maximum Height (Stories) = 10

Maximum Lot Coverage = 100%
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) = 660%
Upper Floor Setback - Front (Feet) = 10 - 20
Upper Floor Setback - Side (Feet) = 5 - 10

These upper floor setbacks apply to floor above the minimum height; i.e, above 3 stories (p. 20).

Figure 20, on p. 24, lists a variety of FAR bonuses for design features that meet a variety of community goals. Our hypothetical developer chooses only one:

Ground Floor Retail 100% FAR Bonus

Our developer isn't interested in any of the other community goals. S/he doesn't want to bother with affordable housing, open space/pedestrian amenities, tower design, transfer of development rights, or underground parking. S/he isn't including any parking at all. S/he wants to just walk into the Building Department with the plans, not negotiate about anything, and say "give me my building permit". And, under Calthorpe, the developer would have a right to the permit without any quibbling by the Planning Commission or Council.

Our developer chooses the following mix of uses:

First Floor: Ground Floor Retail
Second through Fourth Floors: Office
Fifth and Higher Floors: Market Rate Condos

The developer decides to allocate space to the various uses according to these calculations:

The first floor is built to the lot lines, as figure 20 allows. Some square footage will be used up with walls, a lobby, elevators, stairs, maintenance, building management, an atrium or other means to provide light to interior spaces, and other areas which cannot be rented out. Let us assume that 75% of the gross square footage can be rented to retailers. That is $69,564 \text{ sq. ft.} \times 0.75 = 52,173 \text{ sq. ft.}$ of rentable retail.

The second and third floors are built to the lot lines, giving us $69,564 \text{ sq. ft.} \times 2 = 139,128 \text{ sq. ft.}$ Let's keep the same 75% availability figure. This gives us $139,128 \times 0.75 = 104,346 \text{ sq. ft.}$ of rentable office space for these floors.

The fourth floor requires minimum setbacks of 10 feet on the front and rear, and 5 feet on each side. So the maximum dimension of the fourth floor is $(263.5 - 20) \times (264 - 10) = 61,849 \text{ sq. ft.}$ Available office space = $61,849 \text{ sq. ft.} \times 0.75 = 46,386 \text{ sq. ft.}$

Total available office space for rent = $104,346 \text{ sq. ft.} + 46,386 \text{ sq. ft.} = 150,732 \text{ sq. ft.}$

How much space do we have left for our market-rate condos? The maximum FAR is the basic 660%, to which we add 100% for our ground floor retail = 760% of the lot size. $7.6 \times 69,564 = 528,686.4 \text{ sq. ft.}$ of total floor space for Calthorpe Place.

We have already used up $69,564 \text{ sq. ft.}$ for each of the first three floors, plus $61,849 \text{ sq. ft.}$ for the fourth floor, or $(3 \times 69,564) + 61,849 \text{ sq. ft.} = 270,541 \text{ sq. ft.}$ Ergo, we have remaining for our market rate condos $528,686.4 \text{ sq. ft.} - 270,541 \text{ sq. ft.} = 258,145.4 \text{ sq. ft.}$

Assuming that we build to the maximum square footage for upper stories of $61,849 \text{ sq. ft.}$, these $258,145.4 \text{ sq. ft.}$ are the equivalent of $258,145.4/61,849 = 4.2$ stories. Since we have 6 stories left, our developer does not have to build to the lot line. Instead, s/he could make Calthorpe Place look like One North Main, with a stepped design on the upper stories.

Keeping the same 75% availability ratio, there will be $0.75 \times 258,145.4 \text{ sq. ft.} = 193,609 \text{ sq. ft.}$ for sale as condos.

Parking Requirements

Under the present rules, our developer would have to pay for parking for most of the building. However, Calthorpe recommends (p. 47): "Eliminate parking requirements on new projects in Downtown Ann Arbor". Most surface lots in Downtown are targeted for development. When a project replaces a surface lot, parking needs fall into two categories: replacement parking

(to make up for the parking lost by the project) and project parking (parking needed for the project to succeed).

Under Calthorpe, the costs of both replacement parking and project parking will be borne by the public. I will assume this means by the DDA's parking system. If the needed parking is not provided, then the Main Street merchants who depend on the Brown Block will be in serious trouble, and Calthorpe Place will fail for lack of tenants. If City Council is serious about the Calthorpe Report, implementation of its zoning and parking recommendations will be accompanied by a City commitment to provide the needed parking.

For Calthorpe Place, the DDA will have to build a structure (or structures) which will both replace the 198 spaces currently in the Brown Block lot, and provide the needed parking for the project.

How many spaces will project need? I will use space requirements set by section 5:167 of the City Code. These have been carefully set to minimize impervious surface; a couple of years ago City staff even did an on-site count of spaces for various uses.

Calthorpe Place has less than 300,000 sq. ft. of retail, so it will need one parking space per 310 sq. ft. of floor area. There is 52,173 sq. ft. of retail, so we need $52,173/310 = 168$ spaces for retail.

For offices we need 1 space per 333 sq. ft. of floor area. We have 150,732 sq. ft. of office, so we need $150,732/333 = 453$ spaces for the office.

For our condos, Calthorpe Place is a multiple-family dwelling located in a nonresidential zoning district, so we need 1 space per dwelling unit (condo). We have 193,609 sq. ft. of condos available. Their sizes will probably vary widely. Let us assume 2,000 sq. ft. as the average condo size. There will then be $193,609/2,000 = 96$ condos. They will require 96 spaces.

So the total project parking for Calthorpe Place is 168 (retail) + 453 (office) + 96 (condos) = 717 parking spaces.

The total amount of parking needed using the City Code figures is 198 (replacement) + 717 (project) = 915.

The DDA, AATA, and other agencies have put into place, or will be putting into place, a variety of programs to reduce the number of project parking spaces needed. Bearing those in mind, I am reducing the number of retail spaces and office spaces by 12% in each of these categories, and by 37% for the condos.

The final allocations for project parking and replacement parking are: 148 (retail) + 399 (office) + 61 (residential) + 198 (replacement) = 806 spaces.

This will probably have to be in an off-site parking structure (or structures) near the site, since the developer is not required to provide any parking, and s/he has chosen not to do so.

Although there are 198 spaces in the Brown Block surface lot, I expect the number of spaces per story in a structure of the same over-all footprint as the Brown Block will be about 150. So we will need the equivalent of a parking structure of $806/150 = 6$ stories.

Let us set an optimistically low cost for construction of these spaces. I will use \$35,000 per space, which is in the DDA's request for proposals for surface parking for First and Washington.

The cost of our new DDA parking structure(s) will be $806 \text{ spaces} \times \$35,000/\text{space} = \$28,210,000.00$.

Some will say that we dramatically reduce the needed parking downtown by encouraging changes in people's behavior so basic that many people will want to work, live, and visit downtown without cars.

However, believing that this will happen is an exercise in magical thinking. Pixies will not provide alternatives to the automobile.

Whatever our policy preferences might be, the brutal reality is that "In Michigan there can be nothing wrong with the car."

The Calthorpe Place example shows the peril of abandoning City control over large projects, and of shifting the cost of parking to the public.

The zoning and parking recommendations which make Calthorpe Place possible should not be adopted.

David Cahill

I understand the calls for increased density in Ann Arbor, as I am also suspicious of the ulterior, short-sighted financial motives of those making those calls. But to make proposals for buildings entirely out of scale with existing structures, let alone those that violate the natural demands of flood plains is just plain silly. Is Ann Arbor still a democracy, guided by the concerns of those who actually live here? What's the problem with listening to actual human voters who have requested MORE GREEN SPACE DOWNTOWN? Don't develop the Allen Creek area. This is Ann Arbor, not Southfield or Livonia. If you don't like human-scaled surroundings, MOVE!

J. Leach

I urge the planners to discuss expanding resources for arts and cultural activities and programs in the downtown plan.

John Woodford

There are a few things that I hope are being considered as the city's future is planned.

1. Tall buildings (over 6 stories) need serious set backs if the area around them is to remain pedestrian friendly. We already have two areas where tall buildings (one on Maynard and one on South University) create an unpleasant (and in the winter frigid) wind that discourages walking.
2. It is interesting and fun to shop in downtown Ann Arbor (which draws many visitors) because of the small, locally owned, unique stores. Rising rents, perceived parking problems and other factors have recently cost us many of these small boutique shops. We need to do everything possible to encourage the unusual, locally owned store—even subsidies if necessary. In mall after mall across the country and, regrettably, downtown after downtown, you see the same stores with the same merchandise. There is no incentive to shop at yet another Pottery Barn; and, therefore, no incentive to go downtown, or to live there.
3. Ann Arbor has a wonderful arts community that, if supported by the city, could be a tremendous draw to the downtown area.
4. This is a unique town; it needs a unique downtown that reflects its persona. The citizens of the city have a commitment to green space, public transportation and an inclusive, accepting lifestyle—this is what makes Ann Arbor special.

Anne Rubin

Hello,

I am writing to express my support for the downtown Greenway initiative as the city considers the Calthorpe report. This report gives little attention to downtown greenspace in spite of strong popular support for this idea. I urge the city to add the downtown Greenway to its priorities as it creates a plan for downtown development. I think this is a critical time for the city to consider the quality of life for all the city's residents who live in, work in, and visit our downtown. I would hate to see this great opportunity lost.

Thank you,

Pat Micks

All: Here is the public website that includes all the design and economic feasibility work of the best students on key downtown sites and the Allen Creek Corridor relating to the Calthorpe analysis. These were done during last two years.

Enjoy and share:

<http://bus-webdev.bus.umich.edu/MAP/re565map.htm>

Peter Allen
President