

415 W. Washington
Pre-proposal Meeting – March 13, 2008
Questions and Answers

- Q. What's the latest on the project at First and Washington? How tall is it and what is the proposed use? It would be useful to know what new development is going on in the neighborhood near 415 W. Washington.
- A. Draft site plans of proposed projects are available for review in the lobby of City Hall. A list of proposed and approved downtown projects may be found on the project website at www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/systems_planning/Pages/415WWashingtonRFP.aspx.
- Q. The final FEMA flood maps are a ways off – where can we get the new floodway maps?
- A. We will post a link on the 415 West Washington website.
- Q. What kind of data is available from FEMA?
- A. Floodplain boundaries, floodway boundaries, flood elevations/depths. FEMA also provided City staff the Flood Insurance Study that includes cross-sections which allow the flood depth to be determined at any point.
- Q. What's the difference between the current and the new FEMA flood maps, and when will they be adopted?
- A. The floodway is slightly smaller on the new maps, and the building at 415 West Washington will be *out* of the floodway. Starting in April FEMA will hold a 90 day public review period. FEMA will take an unspecified length of time to address comments received from the public review. After FEMA finalizes the maps, the City will have six months to adopt the maps to be in compliance with FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.
- Q. Would residential use be allowed by FEMA?
- A. Michigan State law prohibits new residential uses in the floodway. The current FIRM maps show the building in the floodway (if any portion of a building is touching the floodway, the entire building is considered to be in the floodway). So, residential uses would not be allowed while the current flood insurance rate maps are in effect. When the new maps are adopted by the City, residential uses may be allowed because the building will no longer be in the floodway.
- Q. How do you deal with stormwater management for a site in the floodway?
- A. If the project goes through the site plan review process it would need to meet storm water detention requirements. This site is within the jurisdiction of the Washtenaw County Drain Commission, so they would perform the stormwater review. Due to site constraints, it seems most likely that underground detention would be necessary to meet the stormwater management requirements. Sometimes the County Drain office will allow less than full detention for redevelopment proposals, but always require water quality (first flush and bankfull) to be addressed.
- Q. Has there been water in the buildings recently?
- A. Yes. Recent site grading has helped.

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- Q. Are there any environmental concerns around the old dump area near the railroad tracks and Liberty Street?
- A. The only environmental investigation that the City is aware of on the site is for petroleum-type products. Remediation efforts by the City on the site were successful at the time of cleanup, but numbers were too high when re-tested six months later. That cycle was repeated with the same results.
- Q. Are there existing architectural drawings for the building?
- A. None that we know of.
- Q. Is topographic information available for the site as a pdf or in GIS?
- A. Two-foot contours are available via the city's GIS. Digital GIS data is available through the Washtenaw County website at:
<http://secure.ewashtenaw.org/ecommerce/mapstore/mapStoreHome.do>.
- Q. Does the bank need to be stabilized along the adjacent properties?
- A. It is recommended. Timber and steel beams are holding up the hill, and they are not secure.
- Q. Why is the smokestack room locked and entry forbidden?
- A. There is asbestos in the room. Most of the building has been abated, but not the smokestack room and a few other utility areas.
- Q. I am listing the adjacent carwash property on West Liberty. Could a developer close the curb cut on the carwash site and get an access easement from the City to use its curb cut?
- A. The answer would depend on the proposal that is submitted. In general, reducing curb cuts onto Liberty would be viewed as a positive change.
- Q. Has there been any discussion about the Stoll Furniture site?
- A. No.
- Q. Has there been any new movement on the proposal to make the railroad tracks into a passenger rail corridor?
- A. No. This site might be good for a future train station, but the City doesn't want to mothball the site until then. As part of the negotiations for the property, the City may request a right of first refusal on the property.
- Q. How would our designs work with a future passenger railroad station on the site?
- A. The railroad station is just an idea. There are no plans to build it at this time.

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- Q. Would my proposal be automatically disqualified if I don't meet all of the site objectives listed in the RFP?
- A. No. However, it might not rank as highly as other proposals that do meet all of the objectives. City Council is intentionally trying to be flexible in order to be open to a variety of public benefits.
- Q. If the City owns the greenway, would funding be available from the 1% fund for public art?
- A. The criteria for the fund have not been determined yet. If your project anticipates using 1% funds, be sure to include that information in your proposal.
- Q. The windows at 415 West Washington are boarded up; are the frames still intact?
- A. Yes, some of the panes were knocked out to accommodate the boarding, but the frames and much of the glass is intact.
- Q. Is brownfield funding available for the site?
- A. Brownfield tax increment financing may be an option if the site is not publicly owned.
- Q. Will the site require rezoning?
- A. Yes. The site is currently zoned PL Public Land. As part of the A2D2 process, the site will be rezoned to D2 Interface.
- Q. How are you involving the public on the RFP process?
- A. City Council will name an advisory committee which includes residents and other stakeholders to review the proposals. The selected proposal will also need to be approved by Council.
- Q. Is there more information about the history of the building and site available?
- A. Yes. Staff is preparing additional information which will be posted on the 415 West Washington RFP website.

Prepared by Jill Thacher
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