

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**New Haven Development Commission Meeting**  
**Public Presentation on the Gateway Downtown Development Project**  
**Location: City Hall / 165 Church Street / New Haven, CT 06510**  
**January 13, 2009 / 6:00pm**

**Attendance**

The following Commissioners were in attendance: Jonathan Koppell, John Esposito, Shirley Ellis-West, Kevin Ewing, Marcus Paca, Alderwoman Bitsie Clark, Lawrence Morico, Kathleen Krolak. City staff was also in attendance including: Kelly Murphy, Tony Bialecki, Karyn Gilvarg, and Lisa Grossman, consultant to the City on the Downtown Gateway Project

**Call to Order**

Jonathan Koppell, Development Commission Chair, called the meeting to order welcomed members of the public to this public presentation.

**Route 34 Update**

The Chairman invited Susmitha Attota of the City Plan Department to provide a brief summary of information regarding the public workshops that were held for the Route 34 Project. Ms. Attota provided each Commissioner with a packet of information summarizing the comments heard from the public hearings that had been held on the Route 34 project. She offered to answer any questions or to talk further with anyone seeking more information.

**Gateway Downtown Development Project Update and Discussion**

The Chairman explained that the purpose of the presentation is to provide an update to the members of the public on the Gateway Downtown Development Project and to provide a forum to invite questions, ideas, and input from members of the public. The Chairman invited Tony Bialecki to present the City's progress on the different components of the Gateway Downtown Development Project. Tony Bialecki delivered the presentation (which is attached).

Following the presentation, the following comments were made to the Development Commission.

- A member of the public asked if the bike storage area that is being designed for the College on Crown Street would be available for use by the public. Mr. Bialecki explained that the building is striving for a LEED Gold standard, which has encouraged the College to include significant bike facilities. He noted that the College expects a high volume of bike traffic as part of their transportation demand management strategies and noted that it will be for use by the College, but also noted that the College is a public, state-run college.
- A member of the public expressed concern about the additional traffic that will be added to Crown Street given that that is the only point of entry that exist for the College's garage on the former Macy's site and also a current entry point for the Temple Street Garage. Mr. Bialecki noted that this concern had been brought up in several discussions with the College and ultimately has been approved by the State Traffic Commission. He noted that other measures will be put in place by the College to encourage other types of transportation – including bus traffic (e.g., with a UPass), bicycles, use of the trains, and carpooling. In addition, Mr. Bialecki noted that as part of this project, the State is paying for a complete upgrade of nine traffic signals in the area to help make traffic flow as efficient as possible.
- A member of the public asked if additional consideration had been given to converting Church Street to two-way traffic. Mr. Bialecki reported that this question was asked and studied, but at this point was not considered a feasible alternative. Mr. Bialecki further noted that a study had been done

separately from the Gateway Project that studied part of Church Street, College Street, Crown Street, Temple Street, and George Street. The study found that Church Street from George Street to Chapel Street was feasible for two-way conversion, and the other streets each had specific issues that make two-way conversions very challenging. Neither a timetable nor a budget has been established for the conversion of Church Street.

- A member of the public asked if there will be a way for commuters to know if certain downtown garages are full and which ones still have space. Mr. Bialecki noted that this question has been discussed, though no decision has yet been made on what type of communication might exist to help drivers know where vacant parking spaces exist.
- Given the level of interest in parking, traffic and transit issues, Kelly Murphy suggested that Michael Piscitelli, the Director of Transportation, Traffic and Parking being invited to a future Development Commission meeting to discuss these topics specifically.
- A member of the public asked what the status of development is for the State Street lots that went out to bid (Lot N and Lot O). Mr. Bialecki reported that the City continues to work with a developer on Lot N, but Lot O has no developer interest at this time. Mr. Bialecki noted that the developer (the lone respondent to an RFQ process) have been running into challenges because both lots – Lot N in particular – is so narrow, which has caused the Department of Transportation, Traffic, and Parking to look at different options for narrowing State Street, which would then create more developable lots.
- A member of the public asked if there would be plans to expand the sidewalks and outdoor public spaces around the College to allow for exterior social interaction. Mr. Bialecki noted that the City would certainly like to see active and vibrant sidewalks and streetscapes, but also has to recognize that the College has a natural consideration also for security and needs to create buildings that provide a safe learning environment for their students.
- A member of the public asked if there would be pedestrian phases when the new signals are installed. Mr. Bialecki confirmed that pedestrian phases are anticipated.
- A member of the public suggested that the City plan a citywide charette to develop conceptual ideas that would link all of the development projects together. Mr. Bialecki noted that the City is planning to conduct a charette on the new development that is proposed for the former Coliseum site. He noted that this type of charette has worked very well in the past and has provided concrete ideas that have then been incorporated into projects, such as the relocation of the front door on the 360 State Street Project (Shartenberg) toward State Street.
- A member of the public asked if the renderings shown of the College are accurate representations of what it will look like. Mr. Bialecki clarified that while the majority of the design work has been finished, some details remain to be confirmed and therefore are not completely accurately represented on the drawings (e.g., the drawings do not yet show street trees or street furniture).
- Alderwoman and Commissioner Bitsie Clark asked if the library is still in the same spot as is shown on the drawings – on the corner of North Frontage and Church Streets. Mr. Bialecki confirmed that that remains the location for and the look of the library.
- A member of the public asked if the pedestrian bridge will be solid on its western face. Mr. Bialecki clarified that the City has specifically requested and the State has agreed that the bridge have translucent or transparent qualities so that light is able to pass through. Alderwoman and Commissioner Bitsie Clark said that she hoped it is transparent so people can see the design of the garage through it. It was further noted that this is a location on the site where public art (through the % for Art Program) may be included.
- Commissioner Morico noted that in the economic downturn, the State could decide to cut certain portions of the project or choose different materials to cut costs, which would result in a much less attractive and lower-performing project for New Haven.
- A lively discussion took place regarding whether the public would have an opportunity to review the planned streetscape for Gateway Community College and to what extent the City and its residents may be able to influence the State to ensure an active and vibrant streetscape. Mr. Bialecki encouraged ideas to be suggested and explained that the City and the State still have yet to share ideas

regarding this phase of the design, so if the public has ideas, these ideas can be brought to the table. The group present strongly supported active streetscapes.

Jonathan Koppell also clarified that the renderings of the former Coliseum site also look more finished than they appear to be, and Tony Bialecki confirmed that they are just a first set of ideas that were submitted with the request for qualifications.

Hearing no further questions, the Chair of the Development Commission thanked members of the public for their interest and participation.

#### **Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes**

The members of the Development Commission approved the minutes of the November X, 2008 meeting. A motion was made to approve the minutes and was seconded. The vote was taken and the minutes were approved.

#### **Adjournment**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:55pm.