



The District • Downtown Community Improvement District
11 South 10th Street • Columbia, MO 65201 • (573) 442-6816
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April 10, 2014

Mr. Mayor and City Council:

I'm writing in regards to the City Council's proposal to revise the zoning standards within C2 on an interim basis.

The CID Board has presented a number of recommendations to Council, many of which are consistent with what neighborhood groups, our customers, and Council members are asking for as well. The CID Board represents a diverse group of stakeholders ranging from those who rehab historic buildings to those focusing on new infill, from local business owners to residents. Their recommendations show a strong consensus of opinion from constituencies that are often at odds. That consensus certainly could not have happened without a dedication to a thoughtful public input process.

We all want to see a vital downtown that fosters a mix of uses, a diverse group of users, and an interesting sidewalk culture. We want a sympathetic mix of old and new buildings, a high-density area with fewer surface parking lots, and appropriate space for new businesses and new residents. Above all, we want to approach the inevitable growth of a very popular downtown in a manner that preserves what we all love so much about it.

We think that a community consensus on C2 zoning is possible provided everyone is at the table and has the opportunity to fully discuss how we want our central city to grow. As we all know, acting too quickly on a hot-button issue can create artificial divides between constituencies that often aren't that far apart on the issues to begin with.

As such, the Board of the Downtown Community Improvement District reaffirms our commitment to the city's consulting process and the deliberate community discussion that will arise from this process.

Specifically, the CID Board believes:

1) Interim changes to C2 zoning are inappropriate because they short-circuit the efforts of the city's consultants and the public discussion process. Both the CID Board and the general public have voiced concern about other city planning processes moving too quickly. Regardless of the subject, all options must be weighed and all parties have an opportunity to participate before a decision is made.

2) Ad hoc changes to zoning may have unintended consequences that negatively impact our urban fabric. This isn't simply a matter of marking time until everyone has an opportunity to weigh in. Quick decisions about zoning issues can lead to unintended consequences such as:

CID Board

Blake Danuser
Binghams

Adam Dushoff
Addison's

Tony Grove
Grove Construction

Christina Kelley
Makes Scents

Tom Mendenhall
The Lofts at 308 Ninth

Michael McClung
Déjà vu, Resident

Allan Moore
Moore & Shryock

John Ott
Paramount Building

Tom Schwarz
Landmark Bank

Deb Sheals
Historic Preservation Consulting

Ben Wade
Guitarfinder

Michael Wagner
Boone County National Bank

Marti Waigandt
808 Cherry

Skip Walther
Walther, Antel, Stamper & Fischer

Andrew Waters
Columbia Daily Tribune

- Increased parking requirements may encourage someone to tear down the building next to a development in order to build a parking garage. Or, it may increase the number of surface parking lots, interrupting an interesting and pedestrian-friendly stretch of sidewalk.
- The focus on simply providing more and more parking spaces ignores the need for a development to have an overall parking and transportation plan—one that could involve a mix of onsite parking, offsite parking, city garage permits, lot sharing, public/private parking facilities, bus passes for residents/employees, funding and placement of bike share stations, zip cars, etc. This approach would allow each entity to create a set of solutions designed to fit the needs of their tenants and would encourage creative solutions to the problem.
- These changes will create non-conforming uses, leading to problems with financing or insuring a project. For instance, someone seeking to replace a building in the historic core of Ninth, Tenth or Broadway should ideally do so in a way that is sensitive to the surrounding buildings (ie, built to the lot line). However, if they want to add residential to the upper floors, they would be required to provide onsite parking. A quick stroll down Ninth Street will show that the high density nature of this street is what makes it so vital. We certainly don't want to interrupt that streetscape to fulfill any new parking requirements.
- The long-term impact these changes would have on investment in our central city is unknown at this point. This isn't a question of whether we want to attract local rather than out-of-state developers, this is a question of whether or not the banks feel comfortable lending to *anyone* in the current atmosphere of uncertainty. If the rules can change this quickly, without important community discussion, any investment becomes a risk.

3) The goal should be a consistent standard for C2, not a permitting process where the rules are determined on case-by-case basis. A pre-determined set of rules brings certainty to the development process and guarantees a fair and transparent process. Any changes should be codified, easy to understand, and applied to all properties equitably. A case-by-case approach to decisions is not only inequitable, it is a poor use of Council's valuable and limited time. Council's role should be establishing overarching policies and we need to make sure there are the time and resources to do so.

Finally, the CID Board and our consultants, Winter and Company, just concluded the first step to developing a set of design guidelines for the downtown area. Mr. Winter and his team presented an initial set of goals, including:

- The development of aspirational standards for what development should look like.
- A wide range of suggestions for how for a developer can meet these standards.
- A focus, not simply on the number of floors, but on massing and scale.
- Options for activating ground floors with commercial uses, community space, or public art.
- A focus on durability and sustainability.
- Sensitivity to context, particularly in the historic areas.
- Options for shared, private parking structures that are better integrated into the urban landscape.
- Sample designs for everything from infill development to institutional buildings to residential.
- Ways to encourage and incentivize smart design.

Winter and Company have already been in discussions with Tim Teddy and Clarion Consulting and see their efforts as a complement to the city's review of the zoning process. Mr. Winter and his team will be conducting a workshop in May and we anticipate a full set of design guidelines by the fall.

Of course, the process of developing design guidelines is different than revising zoning categories but we believe the work of Winter and Company may allow us to address some of the current concerns on a more specific level.

Overall, we realize that revising C2 is a contentious issue but again, we believe that the various parties can eventually reach a community consensus on what downtown should look like now and in the future. Quick changes like this tend to divide people while a more thoughtful process will give everyone the time to consider the issues, have full and lively discussions, and negotiate agreements.

We urge you to forgo any ad hoc changes to C2 in favor of a community-wide discussion lead by the city's current consulting team. We also encourage you to look to the CID's current efforts to develop downtown design guidelines as another way to approach this issue.

Thank you for your consideration and please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carrie Gartner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Carrie Gartner
Executive Director
Downtown Community Improvement District