

Resolution to Request City Council Utilize an RFQ/RFP Process For the Sale of the Development Rights Over the “Library Lot” Underground Parking Structure

WHEREAS, The City Council is contemplating selling the development rights over the underground parking structure located at Liberty Lane and Fifth Avenue, known as the “Library Lot,” by directing the city administrator to solicit responses to a Request For Proposal for Brokerage Services for the Sale;

WHEREAS, City Council directed the Planning Commission through a resolution on April 1, 2013 to review the D1 and D2 zoning;

WHEREAS, The role of the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission is to advise the City Council on development issues within the City of Ann Arbor;

WHEREAS, The redevelopment of city-owned parcels is the City’s only opportunity to require a development with greater emphasis on long-term, ongoing and growing economic benefit to the community;

WHEREAS, The Connecting William Street Framework Plan was created at the request of City Council on April 1, 2011 and 1) incorporated input from more than 2,000 participants from the public in its creation, 2) makes both overarching and site-specific recommendations for city-owned lots downtown, and 3) recommends a RFQ/RFP process for implementation;

WHEREAS, The Connecting William Street Framework Plan contains recommendations for the Library Lot that achieves the following: 1) create an identity and an iconic addition to the skyline in this portion of Midtown, 2) ensure that future development brings more people downtown and creates synergy with the Blake Transit Center and Downtown Library, 3) activate the plaza space and draw pedestrians down Fifth Avenue, and 4) develop the site at approximately 700% FAR with large floor plate office or lodging as most appropriate due to location and site size;

WHEREAS, The Connecting William Street Framework Plan calls for open space that is privately developed, owned, maintained, and programmed in coordination with building’s development to create an active interaction between inside uses and exterior spaces;

WHEREAS, The Midtown Character Area Intent in the zoning ordinance states: “At present, this district lacks a strong sense of identity and is a place where creation of a new context should occur. The intent for this district is higher density development with a strongly defined street edge and active open spaces”;

WHEREAS, The Downtown Design guidelines say that “Future development should find opportunities to establish an identity for Midtown, increasing its vitality and expanding its offerings. Primary pedestrian access to buildings along the civic corridor should be from the corridor street;

WHEREAS, The Parks Advisory Commission (PAC) Downtown Parks Subcommittee Report recommends the following for the Library Lot: 1) a development with street level businesses that spill out into an open space, 2) a public/private partnership in order to fund the open space, and 3) the use of placemaking principles;

WHEREAS, The City Planning Commission has specific recommendations for this site that include: 1) discouraging surface parking, 2) encouraging all vehicular access for service areas to be located in alleys where available, with no service areas being located on Fifth Avenue, and 3) encouraging an active uses (e.g., retail and restaurant) on the ground level;

WHEREAS, The Climate Action Plan, adopted by City Council in December 2012, recommends high-performance buildings, green roofs and solar ready buildings; and

WHEREAS, The City Planning Commission recognizes the sale of the “Library” Lot without an RFP may result in a development that 1) does not fulfill the overarching or site-level recommendations of the Connecting William Street Framework Plan, 2) does not meet the Intent statement for the Midtown Character Overlay Zoning District in the zoning ordinance, 3) ignores the recommendations of the Design Guidelines, and 4) ignores the recommendations of the Parks Advisory Commission (PAC) Downtown Parks Subcommittee Report;

RESOLVED, That the City Planning Commission recommends to City Council that if the development rights over the “Library Lot” underground parking structure are sold, an RFQ/RFP process be utilized that conditions the sale of the property in order to obtain a long-term, ongoing and growing economic benefit for the residents of the city;

RESOLVED, That the City Planning Commission recommends to City Council that if the development rights over the “Library Lot” underground parking structure are sold, an RFP contain the following conditions:

- A building that generates foot traffic, provides a human scale at the ground floor and creates visual appeal and contains active uses on all first floor street frontage and open space;
- A requirement for an entry plaza or open space appropriately scaled and located to be properly activated by adjacent building uses and to be maintained by the developer;
- A “mixed use” development with a density at around 700% FAR that takes advantage of the investment in footings and the mid-block location with active uses that have a high level of transparency fronting the plaza and at least 60% of Fifth Avenue and Library Lane frontages, while encouraging large floor plate office or lodging as a primary use, residential as a secondary use, and possibly incorporating a cultural venue.
- A requirement for the entry plaza or open space to incorporate generous landscaping;
- A requirement that discourages surface parking, limits vehicular access for service areas to be located in alleys where available and prohibits service areas from being located on Fifth Avenue
- To seek a design for this site that is meant to be visible on all four sides and that creates an iconic addition to the skyline;
- A requirement for high quality construction; and
- A request for a third party environmental certification (e.g., LEED Gold or Platinum)