



## Spradley Barr Mazda Redevelopment Neighborhood Meeting Notes (June 12, 2018)

### Overview

#### City Staff:

Clay Frickey, Project Planner  
Martina Wilkinson, Traffic Engineer  
Anna Simpkins, Planning Technician

#### Applicant:

Paul Mills, Russell + Mills Studios  
Shelly La Mastra, Russell + Mills Studios  
Todd Parker, Brinkman Development  
Eduardo Illanes, Oz Architecture

Neighborhood Meeting Date: June 12, 2018

### Proposed Project

- The purpose of the neighborhood meeting was for the developer to share the proposal with neighbors and gather comments before submitting a formal application with the city.
- The property is zoned General Commercial (CG). The proposed hotel, multi-family residential, and retail uses are all allowable uses within this zone district.
- The proposed 4 story hotel includes 100 rooms.
- The proposed 5-story multi-family residential portion includes 96 units in 2 buildings for 192 total units. The applicant anticipates most units will be studio and one bedroom.
- The applicant would be required to make right-of way (ROW) improvements along their frontage. Exact improvements will be determined once the applicant had submitted a formal proposal to the City.
- The Planning & Zoning Board would act as the decision-maker for this proposal. The hearing is public and the board will be provided all comments up to the hearing and received at the hearing. Anyone who received notice for the neighborhood meeting and or provided their address on the sign in sheet will receive notice of the future hearing date.

### Applicant Presentation

- The applicant is in the conceptual stage. A formal development proposal has not yet been submitted for City review.
- Applicant proposed a mixed-use development with a hotel, multi-family residential, and retail.

- Access to the site is proposed along Thunderbird Drive along the south, College Avenue on the east, McClelland Drive on the west and Drake Road on the north. Some locations would be limited to right-in, right-out only maneuvers for traffic safety.

## Questions/Comments and Answers

### Development Review Process & City Planning:

- **Who approved the Midtown Plan that this proposal is referencing?**

Clay Frickey explained that City Council adopted the Midtown Plan on October 1, 2013 with approximately a year and a half of public outreach prior to adoption. The plan, as well as data gathered through public participation, are available for download on the City's website at the following link:

<https://www.fcgov.com/mason/midtown.php>

- **Has the City offered the developer a tax break for this project?**

Clay Frickey explained that this property is within the City's Urban Renewal boundary. The developer is eligible for tax increment financing (TIF); this is a financing option utilizing tax exempt revenue bonds. The following links provide additional information on the Fort Collins Urban Renewal Authority and tax increment financing.

Fort Collins Urban Renewal Authority: <https://www.renewfortcollins.com/recent-projects>  
Tax Increment Financing: <https://www.larimer.org/assessor/tif>

- **Can you provide residents with an online pan for this development so we can see updates as timely as possible?**

Clay Frickey explained that the City informally reviewed the proposal at a pre-submittal meeting August 30, 2017. The original proposal is available on the City website: [https://www.fcgov.com/developmentreview/pdf/2017\\_0830\\_PreliminaryDesignReviewPacket.pdf?1503691962](https://www.fcgov.com/developmentreview/pdf/2017_0830_PreliminaryDesignReviewPacket.pdf?1503691962)

Please note that the applicant updated this proposal between the pre-submittal meeting and the neighborhood meeting. Formal submittal documents will be posted on the City website once they are received. Please contact the planner for aid in locating them.

- **What happens if they start the project and something falls through and they can't build it all?**

The applicant explained that infrastructure improvements would be part of first phase and would be built regardless and there is already interest in the proposed retail buildings.

Clay Frickey explained that the applicant can achieve a vested project by installing all public infrastructure improvements within 3 years of recording their final plans. If the applicant decides later to convert what is shown as retail to office after the project has been approved, that proposal will have to come back through the development review process.

### General Questions:

- **Will these buildings each have a different owner?**

The applicant explained that everything proposed would be owned by one development group.

- **Realistically, how long will it be before this project is approved, breaks ground, and is open for operation?**

Clay Frickey explained that most development proposals take 6-9 months for review and approval, and an additional couple of months for the permitting process. Most are about 12 months before they have approval to begin construction.

The applicant explained that they are targeting the typical timeline; looking to break ground in the second quarter of 2019. Development could be phased, building the hotel, retail, and one residential building in phase one and the second residential building as a phase two. Under a phased scenario, the first phase of construction would last approximately 13-months. If they decide to build the whole project at once, this would take approximately 18-months.

- **As this project is envisioned, are you requesting any code modifications?**

The applicant explained that they are not looking to request any modifications at this time, but they sometimes do come up as the project moves through the development review process.

- **What impact will this proposal have on existing utilities? Water, gas, electric, etc.**

Clay Frickey explained that the development team has to provide utilities that are adequate to service the development, it is possible they will have to improve existing infrastructure and or add new after coordinating with these City departments.

- **This new development will create so much light and it will impact our neighborhoods.**

Clay Frickey explained that the City does have lighting requirements for new developments. The City is also working toward becoming an International Dark-Sky Association compliant community. The existing light poles on the site would go away as they exceed the current lighting standards and car dealerships are some of the greatest light polluters. Specific lighting requirements for new construction can be found in Section 3.2.4 of the Land Use Code:

[https://library.municode.com/co/fort\\_collins/codes/land\\_use?nodeId=ART3GEDEST\\_DIV3.2SIP\\_LDEST\\_3.2.4SILI](https://library.municode.com/co/fort_collins/codes/land_use?nodeId=ART3GEDEST_DIV3.2SIP_LDEST_3.2.4SILI)

- **Who looks at how this proposal displaces businesses to the south like Arc and Dollar Tree? Property rents will rise and these will disappear.**

Clay Frickey explained that the City does look at those concerns and average rental rates around the City; however, any intervention is very limited at a macroeconomic level. There are currently no City programs in place to keep commercial rental rates low. There are more affordable housing tools and incentives available for residential projects.

### **Residential Buildings:**

- **How many dwelling units are planned?**

The applicant explained there are 96 units in each of the two residential buildings for a total of 192 dwelling units.

- **What is the bedroom mix for the units?**

The applicant explained that most of the units will be studio and one-bedroom based on market demands. There could be a few two and or three-bedroom units.

- **What are the setbacks for the 5-story residential buildings? Concerned about looming effects.**

The applicant explained that the Midtown Plan includes enhanced bicycle and pedestrian routes along College Ave and McClelland Dr. The proposal shows a 15-foot lawn along the street, a 15-foot pedestrian path, and a 10-foot building setback from the sidewalk, putting the buildings 40-feet back from the street.

- **Can you define affordable housing?**

Clay Frickey explained that affordable housing is defined in the City's Land Use Code; in this case *"a dwelling unit which is available for rent on terms that would be affordable to households earning eighty (80) percent or less of the median income of city residents, as adjusted for family size, and paying less than thirty (30) percent of their gross income for housing, including rent and utilities. The unit must be occupied by and affordable to such low-income household(s) for a period of not less than twenty (20) years."*

- **How many apartments in this development are "affordable"?**

The applicant explained that they are analyzing the feasibility of including affordable housing in part of the proposal, but there is currently no plan to do so.

Clay Frickey explained that the City desires more affordable housing options but that they cannot require a developer to include any.

- **Is the 5-story residential building design to help reduce train noise for our neighborhoods or to make more money?**

The applicant explained that a lot of elements come into play but that adding density in this location and along the MAX line are part of the Midtown Plan and the taller building is what makes the project financially feasible with current construction costs and loan rates.

- **What is the quality of the residential building? Is there any chance that this project could impact the train whistle?**

The applicant explained that they have to include specific provisions with BNSF.

Traffic Engineer Martina Wilkinson explained that Fort Collins did conduct a study for creating a "quiet zone" where the train whistle would not blow, it becomes a challenge further downtown where the tracks run down the middle of the street. There is renewed interest along southern corridors because the infrastructure is more separate; the City is not actively looking at this but could in the future. The City would be responsible for any expenses associated with introducing a quiet zone like additional gates.

- **A lot of apartments are going up around town, don't we have too many?**

Clay Frickey explained that the most recent residential vacancy rate for the city was below 5%, which is very low and additional units could improve overall affordability.

#### **Parking:**

- **How many parking spaces are provided for the residential?**

The applicant explained that they currently have one space per unit. City code requires 0.75 spaces for one bedroom or less, 1 space for a two-bedroom, and 1.25 spaces for a three-bedroom within the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) overlay district.

- **Is the parking underground?**

The applicant explained that the parking is not underground; the residential buildings have "tuck-under" parking internal to the site, so cars are parked under upper floors of the building.

- **Are you looking for additional parking reductions within the TOD?**

The applicant explained that they are not looking at any parking reductions, and that code requirements and practicality are not the same. All the uses will be tied together to address appropriate parking counts that will exceed TOD minimum requirements.

- **These people will go to the MAX parking lot across Drake when they don't have enough parking. What will the City do?**

Clay Frickey explained that TransFort is looking at improved east-west transit lines because that is a common complaint that MAX does not have enough adequate feeder lines. The City is hoping to build a parking structure on that north side of Drake and would likely come in conjunction with the K-Mart redevelopment. If the residents from this proposal were parking off site then the private property owners could have them towed.

#### **Traffic/Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements:**

- **Does the central drive shown on the proposed site plan cross Drake Rd at the north of the site?**

The applicant explained that the central drive does not cross Drake Rd for vehicles, bikes, or pedestrians. The access at this location will be limited to right-in, right-out maneuvers and bicycle and pedestrian crossings would still be to the west at Redwing/McClelland and to the east at College Ave.

- **Adding more cars to McClelland Dr seems like it would interfere with MAX operations. Has the City looked at this?**

Traffic Engineer Martina Wilkinson explained that the northern access drive proposed along McClelland would be limited to right-in, right-out only for that reason and the proximity to Drake Rd. The applicant is required to submit a traffic study for the proposal at this location and results would determine further operational and infrastructure improvements around the site.

- **This corner floods badly. What and who needs to do something?**

Traffic Engineer Martina Wilkinson explained that there is broader interest in redevelopment in this area than just this site so the City has coordinated internal meetings to determine what can be done collectively as more than one site redevelops. The City put together a potential wish list of improvements that could become capital projects with City-funding if they are for the public. Traffic is aware of the flooding and could add an improvement to that list.

Clay Frickey explained that the City stormwater engineers also review the proposal to ensure that the existing systems can handle what is proposed.

Northern Engineering is the civil engineer for the project and they explained that adding trees and grass to this site where there currently are none will be an immediate improvement for smaller storm events. The larger 5 and 10-year storm events are harder to predict but there will also be underground chambers to slow down storm runoff.

- **Can you talk about infrastructure improvements at the corner of College and Drake for pedestrians?**

Traffic Engineer Martina Wilkinson explained that traffic operations will look more closely at possible improvements once the applicant formally submits a development application with a traffic study. Possible improvements could include “pork chop” islands at pedestrian crossings, dedicated right-turn lanes, and additional traffic lanes. The City cannot require the developer to mitigate for existing deficiencies, only their impact.

The City is aware of intricate actions that occur at McClelland/Redwing and Drake and there is potential to limit some movements in the future. The City has no control over the train schedule or operations so nothing can be done to mitigate train delays. The City is looking at widening sidewalks on the east side of College to make it safer for pedestrians to reach MAX.

- **Would the developer budget for the right turn lanes? Wasn't this intersection just improved?**

Traffic Engineer Martina Wilkinson explained that that is one possibility that the developer could be required to construct. The intersection was last improved about 15 years ago.

- **Would pork chop islands go on all 4 corners at College and Drake?**

Traffic Engineer Martina Wilkinson explained that if the intersection ever became a capital project then the City would look at installing pork chop islands everywhere but this proposal would only be responsible for the southwest corner. Sometimes existing buildings are too close to the right of way, making installing pork chop islands complicated.

- **Could you do an underpass for the Mason Trail at Drake? Who has paid for other underpasses?**

Traffic Engineer Martina Wilkinson explained that CSU paid for the underpasses at Prospect and Shields/Elizabeth as part of the new stadium traffic mitigation. They looked at possibilities to help improve everyday operations as well which these locations accomplished. An underpass at this location would make the complicated McClelland/Redwing signal more efficient; the City's

capital projects engineering team has looked at various pedestrian grade separations around the city and this location was one. It could come one day but could be difficult to do depending on underground utilities and high cost. An overpass in this location would be difficult with the existing overhead power lines.

- **Is it possible to add a “no turn because of train” to the left turn lanes from College to Drake?**

Traffic Engineer Martina Wilkinson explained that they can watch this intersection from the traffic operations center and frequently see the left turn lanes go and end up blocking the intersection when a train is present. This type of signal is something they have looked at and it possible to connect with the railroad signal to trigger a red arrow automatically.

### **Hotel and Retail Buildings:**

- **How many rooms are proposed for the hotel?**

The applicant explained that 100 rooms are proposed.

- **Do the business and hotel have outdoor spaces?**

The applicant explained that all users will have access to the central garden drive and that businesses and the hotel will also have patios.

- **I don't understand why you are proposing a hotel here. Hotels in town are not on major intersections. Why here?**

The applicant explained that their feasibility studies look at highest and best use for a site. They are considering a Marriott product at this location, Marriott has looked at this corner before. There are no newer hotels in the area and the market is there for a new hotel along College.

- **We have so much empty retail between Harmony and Old Town? Why do we need more?**

Clay Frickey explained that recent numbers show commercial vacancy around 10% so still pretty low but that it is more concentrated in some areas.

### **Comments:**

- This is a beautiful proposal but does not belong on the Corner of College Ave and Drake Rd. The current car dealership on the site generates hardly any traffic and traffic is still terrible. More traffic lanes won't help. The train doesn't help. Too many people and vehicles shown here. Three stories is alright, 5 is unbelievable. I wish this was on a different corner.
- I am really excited that we are building up and not sprawling out. This neighborhood is already so dynamic that families only need one car. I want to show my support because I think this is what we need to not be a sprawling, endless suburb. I am excited for more trees on this site, they will promote community and meeting spaces.
- I do not believe that the remaining 123 parking spaces (after the apartments and hotel) are adequate for the store employees, store customers, or hotel employees. Where will they park?

In our neighborhood? Did the City not learn their lesson about parking after the “Summit” disaster?

- What agency do I contact in reference to restricting a 5 story apt., hotel being built in our community!
- No [sic] acceptable in size for this location enough new construction here!
- Want to stress we need to provide enough parking spots.
- Thanks for planning for green space and community building areas.
- Bad idea! There is no parking now. Too many accidents now.
- I think that this is the future; we live in a city that is not going to be the same as it was 10 years ago, we are moving in this direction. This does look nice, I think it's coming.
- Advice for the developer. I have no idea how many people will be employed building this. Consider that. A parking structure is sometimes built after and creates a huge problem in our neighborhoods, where will construction workers park, we will throw a fit if it is in our neighborhoods.
- I am kind of on the fence about development. Park of me thinks it is good for walkability and multi-purpose uses, I understand the annoyance at tall buildings. If we have them, which we will, get our transit system more bikable and walkable. I do these things, and MAX is really the only reliable bus. Start improving these things and people will give up their cars. We need to make these systems work so people can use them.
- I hope building finishes are high-quality and appropriate for the neighborhood.
- Comment for Brinkman: You are clearly one of the biggest developers in Northern Colorado, I hope you've heard this, this is a prime property for affordable housing due to proximity to stores, bus lines and bike paths. Start including more affordable housing units in your plans; this community and others in Northern Colorado need that. We are pricing people out permanently.
- I am pleased to see this. The current use is a blight on the corner. A lot of the success depends on detail, setbacks, and building texture. The corner is currently terrible. There is retail on one side, train tracks on the other; houses are isolated from this. This project has almost no impact from my view. Traffic is already not great but it will get worse regardless and this is a better use of the corner. I am a little concerned about 5 stories since this is already on a hill but the basic notion is a tremendous improvement.
- We are all looking at this the old-fashioned way adding too much parking. We need to make it easy for people not to have a car. Some day we will be forced into that. I'm not saying we don't need parking, I'm saying we need people not to have a car at all.
- Make one of the retail buildings you are proposing a parking garage.
- I support affordable housing at this location. There is a strong need and I can't imagine a better suited place. MAX, its central, close to groceries.