

Public Feedback Received at RFP #743 Interviews

Comment #1

Dahlmann Apartments Ltd (Ann Arbor Town Square) – This is definitely my first choice. A green spot in downtown is something that would serve everyone. It leaves the site available for future development if, in the future, that seems desirable. The City would be CRAZY not to accept Dahlmann's generosity. This is what most people would want, I am convinced, if polled.

Ann Arbor Committee for the Commons (AA Community Commons) – This is too unstructured a proposal, although public input into the Dahlmann plan would be a good idea.

Jarratt Architecture (the Fifth a2) – Of all the hotel proposals, this design is most compatible with the City's "feel". But I sincerely doubt a hotel of this size or any of the other sizes below is needed or wanted.

Acquest Realty Advisors (@Hotel and Retail Center) – So-so.

Valiant Partners LLC (AA Town Plaza Hotel & Conference Center) – Heaven help us! This is a hideous, ridiculous concept.

Misc – I'm sorry that we do not have an alternate proposal along these lines – for seniors, especially.

Comment #2

Jarratt Architecture (the Fifth a2) – Worst problem is complete lack of commitments from developers or financing. Nobody wants to commit now, but they could at least have done a market study. The "organic" condominiums concept is too vague. Not much detail on pedestrian concerns. No attention to relation to adjoining businesses.

Acquest Realty Advisors (@Hotel and Retail Center) – Council or committee should not accept or recommend project until after market study and economic impact study are done. This project seems to assume a public-financial conference center on the Y lot, and this requires public subsidy, which would not be popular. We were supposed to make money from the sale of our land. However this group has lots of actual experience with this type of project.

Comment #3

Dahlmann Apartments Ltd (Ann Arbor Town Square) – I like this proposal. It would provide a beautiful and needed public space for Ann Arbor. I think raising money to maintain it and volunteers to help do the same would be quite possible. And they are offering \$2.5 million, maybe more. Bronson Park in Kalamazoo is maintained in this way. Also, as the presenters pointed out, if it doesn't work, it can easily be changed in the future.

Jarratt Architecture (the Fifth a2) – Missed this one.

Acquest Realty Advisors (@Hotel and Retail Center) – Missed this one. Heard the design is conservative – I would greatly prefer something interesting designed by a talented architect.

Valiant Partners LLC (AA Town Plaza Hotel & Conference Center) – Impressive sounding, but the financing sounds vague and potentially very expensive to the City – an \$8 million bond issue for a start, so more debt for the City. I heard no real evidence that this will create the economic development they claim it will. I like that it's a LEED project and that there will be public space but how does the public get to the roof garden? If it's privately owned, it's not truly public. 150 feet tall – how about making it lower? Actually it may need work, but it's not bad.

Misc – If we build something, let's make it cool – ie, designed by an imaginative modern architect. We don't need any more brick!

Comment #4

Ann Arbor Committee for the Commons (AA Community Commons) – I am impressed with the sense of aesthetic balance and community possibilities in this proposal. I grew up in a City (Kalamazoo) that has a public park that beautifully balances with its downtown structures, civic areas and businesses. I believe this can work and that the experiment with a more inclusive public process involved would prove worth any investment of time, expertise, money and energy. It does already have considerable community support. Thank you for holding these sessions!

Comment #5

Ann Arbor Committee for the Commons (AA Community Commons) – Would provide a much needed focal point for downtown. Would generate pedestrian traffic, improve quality of life for City residents, stimulate activities that enhance the sense of community engagement and pride, stimulate further development in surrounding area (both commercial and residential) and, therefore, generate revenue for the City in an ongoing way vs the short-term potential one-time gain of selling public property coupled with the long-term financial risk shifted from private ? to the public of other development options. Finances and public desire are there/here for a Commons. The political elected officials is all that's needed.

Valiant Partners LLC (AA Town Plaza Hotel & Conference Center) – Developer will reap profit\$ and the City (taxpayers) will be responsible for the inevitable risk\$/debt. Why?!? Conference centers are ALWAYS financial disasters – check the data/evidence, I have. Large development like this are pedestrian dead zones. With changing technologies (video-conferencing) and tightening budgets (less business travel) –why build a loser project like this? In whose interest is it? Where's evidence of the need? Please share that evidence with the public.

Comment #6

Dahlmann Apartments Ltd (Ann Arbor Town Square) and Ann Arbor Committee for the Commons (AA Community Commons)– I would be interested in seeing the design of either to be a permanent community space. These 2 I believe are what A2 truly needs.

Acquest Realty Advisors (@Hotel and Retail Center) – Aren't hotels and retail failing already all over. We need economic recovery before the need for more is realized.

Valiant Partners LLC (AA Town Plaza Hotel & Conference Center) – Why does A2 need a conference center? What is the draw rather than Detroit or Grand Rapids for example which have more entertainment to offer? Would this be built without knowing the need? How would it

benefit ordinary residents? This City needs more reasons to go/be downtown - no more shopping, no public spaces – just business and restaurants now. In general, I am very concerned with even more debt accrued with building at this time – especially after the new City Hall expenses.

Comment #7

General Question re: goal of high density downtown

The real issue is not which project supports high density and which doesn't. The real issue is: How do you define "high density"?

Is the desired form of high density defined as:

- hotel or conference capacity, even if empty/unrealized/unrealistic?

or

- hotel/conference occupancy, then please share your relevant market studies with the public – we need the evidence, not just wishful thinking (and remember the impact of changing technologies – like video-conferencing - and the effects of severe economic downturn – like less business travel)

or

- is the desired form of downtown density the capacity to stimulate pedestrian traffic, civic engagement, community-based activities and attractions, and a sense of community ownership!

*Another consideration re density is:

There are many other downtown locations for building commercial and residential density but this is the only possible site for a central park like the Commons which would stimulate the 2nd sense (above) of social and cultural density, with likely multiplicative community benefits. And luckily we, the people, already own the property!