

Public Downtown Redevelopment Plan: The Blues Factory Proposal "FAQs"

• How was our Downtown Redevelopment Plan process conducted?

It was led forth by our Community Development Authority (city residents), endorsed by our Plan Commission (city residents), and approved by our Common Council (city residents). It included the investment in the services of an autonomous, outside company (Community Design Solutions) to guide our public through a transparent, engaging, deliberate process. It spanned 2014 and produced a vision for impactful downtown redevelopment and an executable plan of that vision. It involved numerous public engagement opportunities including planning meetings, visioning session, and public information meetings. Updates were shared at public meetings, via press releases, the city website, city Facebook page, city e-Newsletter, and the media. We are proud of the process we have led forward, the opportunity for engagement we've offered, and the outcome.

• Where can I find our Downtown Redevelopment Plan?

Our Downtown Redevelopment Plan is on our City website. You can find it at: http://cityofportwashington.com/pdf/planningDevelopment/11-06-14DowntownRedevelopmentSitesPlan.pdf

What is "wrong" with asphalt?

The short answer is "nothing." Except when you have an overabundance of it as our City does. It does not represent best land-use in the underutilized north slip parking lot. As a City, we can and must do better for the benefit of all residents and businesses.

Do we really have enough parking?

In short, yes. The study commissioned by our Business Improvement District, conducted over the course of a year and capturing data on weekdays and weekends, at night and during the day, arrived at that fact-based conclusion. We DO have a parking problem: far too much of it. We have invested in wayfinding signage to begin to better highlight where parking is located. It will not all be immediately in front of a specific storefront and it will not all be located immediately on the lake. But, more than ample parking exists, and our Main Street Design Committee is working now on a redesigned parking experience for our Marina District that will improve traffic flow and functionality, provide a safer and more connected pedestrian & biker experience, and ensure ample overall parking.

But what about access to and views of the lake?

Our City has a proud history of committing to and investing in public access to and views of the lakefront. In fact, our City has invested in two miles of public beach; another two miles of public beach via the Cedar Vineyard development; \$2 million in Coal Dock Park; Rotary Park; the harbor walk; the breakwater; Vet's Park and Upper Lake Park; & \$500,000 in our North Beach public access improvement – AND parking lot & pedestrian walkway improvements. About 34% of all our city's parkland is located along our lakefront. We have six (6) miles from north to south of unimpeded public access and lake views throughout our city's lakefront, many of which can be enjoyed from our 5,500 linear feet of parkland along the lakefront. For comparison, the north slip parking lot represents 180 linear feet (1%) of our lakefront – and a public walkway ensures public access and public views.

Will The Blues Factory development protect public access to and views of the lake?

Yes. In fact, it will improve the public access to and the public viewing experience of the lake from an expanded public walkway.

- I love The Blues Factory concept and look, but why can't it be located on the long-vacant former grocery store/former DQ/former Victor's site?
 - Our City does not own those three sites; they are privately owned. We cannot directly affect change on those three sites, but we can impact them indirectly through the redevelopment we as a city lead forward on the land we own. Additionally, the Downtown Redevelopment Planning process led forward over the course of 2014 envisioned vital, much-needed residential development for the former DQ and former Victor's sites. Such residential will help sustain our city businesses on a year-round basis, help us attract new businesses to our downtown, and inject energy into the heart of our community. The Blues Factory is not residential, and thus does not align with the vision for the former DQ and former Victor's sites. The Blues Factory aligns very well with our vision for the underutilized north slip parking lot. And, it successfully demonstrates the ability to answer to all 7 of the requirements set forth by our CDA in the Request for Proposal (RFP) process.
- I would love to see a grocery store/movie theater/regional retailer/fruit market in our downtown. Why can't the City make that happen?

Our City is not in the business of property ownership. Privately-owned buildings must be filled by the individuals who own them. Our Main Street Program, our Chamber of Commerce, and our City do make efforts to help property owners attract successful and sustainable tenants. Ultimately, however, negotiations are up to them to conduct. If you have an idea for a business downtown, we encourage you to speak directly with property owners. We, too, would love to see life and vibrancy and economic impact from these vacant privately-owned properties. We as City stand ready to do what we can to help; by including the four privately-owned properties in our public redevelopment vision, we are in effect creating outside interest in them and inviting private investment for them. And, in bringing more residential into our downtown we as City are making the four privately owned properties more attractive to prospective tenants and investors! That is a "win" for us all!

• How is The Blues Factory a unique destination experience?

The Blues Factory is multidimensional in scope and flexible in functional design. Beyond the restaurant portion, with indoor theater space and designated musical performance area it brings year-round entertainment and cultural opportunities to our lakefront, which we do not have much of during the winter months. Those year-round engaging lakefront experiences -- theater, musical performances, film festivals, weddings, conferences, and more -- would bring people to Port Washington year-round. We have nothing like it, and there is not much like it located along the lakefront to the south or north of us. We are, after all, the only lakefront community in Ozaukee County and the only lakefront downtown between Milwaukee and Sheboygan. For us, it could have real catalytic economic impact and open the door to year-round business sustainability (for our other city business partners) and the capturing of revenue streams we right now do not. And, we can do this while retaining – and building upon – our City's small-town feel; redevelopment and retention of core identity is not an "either-or" choice.

What does additional tourism mean for our City?

Bringing visitors to our City is extremely impactful on our local economy. And, if we desire to expand that tourism more on a year-round basis as we look to support and sustain our city business partners and attract new business in our downtown, we need economic spending on a year-round basis. Marketing studies show that in order to attract people to our City – any City – requires about 4-6 hours of activities. During the winter months, we are light on engaging indoor activities along our lakefront. While parkland is wonderful in the Summer months, it does not pull people to our lake in the winter months. The Blues Factory offers another way to sell our great City and one of the unique stories behind it. There is nothing like it in the cities surrounding us; it is a unique lakefront entertainment experience and it uniquely captures a part of our City's history. And, in that way, it is also something in which our residents can take great pride, and another opportunity for those residents to engage in year-round activity and dining.

What economic impact will The Blues Factory and our public Downtown Redevelopment Plan have on our City?

We believe it could have a very significant, positive impact. Our entire Downtown Redevelopment Plan envisioned a total economic impact of \$20-25 million; we hoped to realize about \$2 million of increment in redeveloping this underutilized parking. Now, with The Blues Factory representing an estimate \$5 million in increment, we are effectively \$3 million ahead of our total estimate for economic impact (of redevelopment of the five properties) – and that is with redevelopment of only one of the identified redevelopment priorities! The cumulative impact of our public Downtown Redevelopment Plan stands to have very real, lasting impact for all our city taxpayers – and of course, that does not include the economic impact of the additional people who will be living in our downtown and the additional people who will be visiting our downtown city businesses. This economic growth will be essential to fueling our continued ability to provide the quality of life our residents and businesses have come to value and demand.

• What if The Blues Factory fails?

No business is guaranteed to succeed. However, The Blues Factory Development Team spent the last year immersed in our community, connecting with and engaging stakeholders, creating their business plan, and investing in its development and execution. They have spared no expense; they are vested in and believe in its success. We believe they will succeed, and we are ready to help them succeed for the benefit of all. As we've demonstrated with Duluth Trading, our great City is worthy of this kind of investment and capable of supporting and sustaining it!

• Where can I view The Blues Factory concept?

You can find it on The Blues Factory website: http://thebluesfactory.com/

• How can I convey my opinion?

Contact your Aldermanic representative or Mayor Mlada via e-mail. Mayor Mlada can also be reached via cell phone. A listing of all Elected Officials can be found on our City website: http://cityofportwashington.com/