

TO: CITY OF NORTHVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

As we enter the final phase of Preliminary Site Plan approval, Chair Tinberg suggested the Sustainability Team submit any remaining suggestions or concerns relative to the planned Downs infrastructure. Most of the following items have been raised and/or discussed during prior weeks, but this will help formalize the thoughts of the Sustainability Team.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

This has been a hot item in the Downs Site Plan development. Therefore, before stating our suggestions, let's review the "committed" items that already significantly contribute to reduced stormwater runoff:

- Daylighting of approximately 1100 feet of the Rouge River will completely eliminate the current 100-year storm floodplain and annually detain over 30 million of gallons (estimate) of stormwater that would otherwise continue to discharge contamination and sediment into the Rouge River .
- Significant reduction in open-space parking lots since the original Site Plan submission. Severely limiting open-space parking through measures such as extensive underground parking minimizes direct stormwater runoff.
- Narrowing of the roads (vs. the original plan) reduces stormwater loads due to less impervious surface.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS (SUSTAINABILITY TEAM):

- Use of More Permeable Surfaces:
 - Utilize permeable material (e.g., pavers) for the hardscape of Central Park. Robust paver surfaces exist that can withstand the use of heavy vehicles such as Food Trucks.
 - The stub road at the south end of the property (potentially connecting to Seven Mile), construct with permeable asphalt and/or pavers to avoid discharge into Johnson Creek.
 - Use of permeable pavers for the Pedestrian Promenade.
- Pocket Parks – Plant rain gardens in selected pocket park areas to further capture/contain stormwater.
- Utilize Deep-Rooted Grass – the Downs park areas offer a LOT of grass. Deep-rooted grass is ideal for erosion control, requires less watering, lower maintenance, excellent for heat and disease resistance. Also has been touted as good for heavy foot-traffic
- Detention Pond – It is noted that there is no direct vehicular access to the ponds. Overall design should be evaluated for future maintenance capabilities.

WALKABILITY

- A SECOND BRIDGE – Another pedestrian bridge to the south would significantly improve walkability and make it easier for new residents to patronize the retail/service areas located in the S. Main/7 Mile district. It would also act as convenient southern connector to River Street/Beal Town, Hines Park and to the potentially permanent Farmers’ Market location on Seven Mile.
- Pedestrian safety – As members of the Mobility Network Task Force, our team continues to advocate for high visibility crosswalks.

EV CHARGING STATIONS

- The planned Downs units should support (and promote) the growing use of EV’s, which will expand further once the new government subsidies are in place. Apartments and Condo residents (and any residence without a garage) will need a place to charge their EV units and selected parking areas should have plug-in stations.
- The DDA has an attractive vendor arrangement right now that supports the city’s additional EV stations. A similar agreement might work for the Downs.

TREE SIZE CONFIRMATION

- We applaud the use of trees throughout the Downs site. Before planting, the ideal tree size (diameter) should be determined to maximize survivability and long-term health (bigger may not always be better). A professional arborist could be brought in to help select and/or recommend the tree types and sizes to maximize their long-term growth and life.

FINAL THOUGHT

With the exception of the second bridge recommendation, the Sustainability Team does not view our input as decisions/commitments that must be made prior to Preliminary Site Plan Approval. Our expectation is that the developer and Planning Commission will continue to consider and act on the above input even AFTER the preliminary site plan process has been completed.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our desired Downs actions.