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Draft Development Strategy

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July 30, 2003

A Draft Development Strategy for the Midtown Park Blocks

The Midtown Park Blocks (from Salmon Street to Stark Street) should be reserved for public open space (over underground parking) to serve the retail core and the growing high-density mixed use development in the West End.

The City should proceed expeditiously with the acquisition of the Zell Block, and with the design and development of publicly-owned Blocks 1 and 5. Underground parking should be provided in all 3 of the blocks.

Further acquisition of the remaining 3 blocks for open space and parking should proceed at the time, and as needed, to support the development occurring in the surrounding retail cores and West End areas.

Ordinary maintenance and needed rehabilitation of current buildings in the Midtown Park Blocks should be encouraged. New development should not be permitted.

Discussion:

This strategy spells out a relatively certain future, but poses no specific plan and requires no certain date by which that future must be realized. As a result, it permits the acquisition of properties and creation of open space as circumstances and need and resources suggest. It allows for continuing occupancy of existing development. Under worst case scenarios concerning the need for open space in the West End, it would not press for the acquisition and demolition of all of the current buildings. Under more positive development scenarios, the parking and open space need for the entire West End area could be served by the Midtown Blocks.

It calls for the coordination of public investment in the Midtown Blocks and private investment in the retail core and the West End area surrounding the Midtown Blocks.

It encourages the maintenance and even rehabilitation of existing buildings, but prohibits new development—to maintain the quality of the area while assuring that future land acquisitions will not be so expensive as to thwart the long-run goal of achieving open space and parking in the blocks.

This is definitely a long-term strategy, but I think this approach will provide the middle ground that the Foundation and the City can stand together on. If we pose this long-term strategy along with the specific development project involving the Zell Block, the Schnitzer-Goodman Block and the City Parking Garage, we would have a damn good package.

I suggest we try to get some support from the Foundation on this general idea—and be ready to discuss specifics when Gil and Mazz get their act together. In fact, it wouldn't be a bad idea to get our act together and pose it to Gil before Gil and Mazz agree on something that is nothing like what would work for us. That means we have a week to work on it. ☺ Ernie.