



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board comment 05/04/2020

2 messages

Jeff Moore <jmoore1748@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 24, 2020 at 11:29 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I would like to go on record as being heartily in favor of the latest proposed city project. I am not native to this area but have lived and worked in Plattsburgh since the 80's and have watched the steady improvements here.

I remember in days gone by all of the rather raucous bars on City Hall Place—and recall the then bemoaned city efforts to curb the proliferation of “college” bars downtown. But no sooner did the those bars disappear than the likes of Irises and, later, the Pepper, etc. shot up—then Sawatdee, now the Bistro, and Sip and the Twisted Carrot and the Himalaya, and Aleka's—and there were the improvements of the buildings—and let's not forget the ensuing art projects around town.

I remember that folks got cranky about the city trying to curb the prevalence of one kind of downtown drinking, but it has proven a boon—still lots of bars or restaurants where one can buy alcoholic beverages but a wider variety of places and ages of patrons. The result: the city is more generally appealing and widely appreciated.

I hear each season the gripes about “lost parking” when many of the local restaurants create outdoor seating out of parking spaces—but can anyone deny the palpable energy that exists when each day the seats are full with delighted diners?

I remember when there was a new mayor in Burlington who took abuse for just the sort of issue before you—changing where cars could be parked. Mr. Sanders closed 4 blocks of Church Street—and created the shopping area that exists today. I was at several of the Burlington zoning board meetings during which many were arguing to retain the parking spaces in front of their stores—and I mean shouting. But does anyone today think that the conversion of those few blocks of Church Street was a dumb idea? That move created a center of commerce and theater and public assembly upon which more was built—thus the aquarium location, the mall, the parking garage, and the connection to the city parks and docks.

Change is hard—and change in and of itself is certainly not automatically good—but Plattsburgh has over the years quietly progressed, and has in my opinion become a more diverse and interesting and welcoming city as the result.

Making the river and lake part of the city center by redirecting the focus of downtown with new housing and shops and restaurants just seems to me to make sense.

Pat Hoffmann, [62 Clinton Street, Plattsburgh, NY 1290](#)

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>
To: mcMahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:33 AM

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MARKET ANALYSIS

SITE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The market analysis identifies trends that are currently impacting real estate development at the regional and local level and suggests a simple yet informed setting of existing and future investment opportunities for the Durkee Street site.

Relying in part on proprietary data (EMSI and ESRI Tapestry), at the core of the analysis was a thorough evaluation of socio economic data, residential, retail and office market data, as well as insight into other future city projects. In-person and telephone-based interviews were conducted with representatives of the Plattsburgh real estate market, commercial developers, economic development professionals, municipal officials, and licensed real estate professionals to inform the project consultants with "on-the-ground" data about the opportunities that likely exist, where demand lies, and how this project might seek to fill these voids in the market supply.

All of this data supports the notion of a "sharing economy" that prioritizes flexibility in design to accommodate multiple uses. This dynamic trend is popular in competitive real estate markets and could be employed in Plattsburgh. Examples include the following:

- Co-work space where users temporarily lease office space and share conference rooms and additional resources
- Shared kitchen(s) where multiple users can share equipment at different times for varying purposes
- Flexible market space that can serve various retail opportunities
- Short-term destination rental units for visitors - such as AirBnB

In conjunction with strategic site design, this analysis plays a large role in defining the size and form of proposed development allotments.



HIGH-END RESIDENTIAL

A growing demand for an urban experience is increasing the potential growth for modern, urban rental units and experiences offered in a downtown urban core. Downtown rental units are an attractive option to young professionals, empty nesters seeking to downsize, including seniors and retirees, and families of all income levels as the trend back to urban centers continues.

MARKET / POP-UP RETAIL

Competitive price points in the City of Plattsburgh compared to other larger cities in the northeast allow for young entrepreneurs to start up small businesses and shops using shared space, often under the umbrella of a Market Retail Co-Op. Under this model, successful businesses will evolve into their own space, furthering economic growth while allowing opportunities for new market trends.

PRELIMINARY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ELEVATION



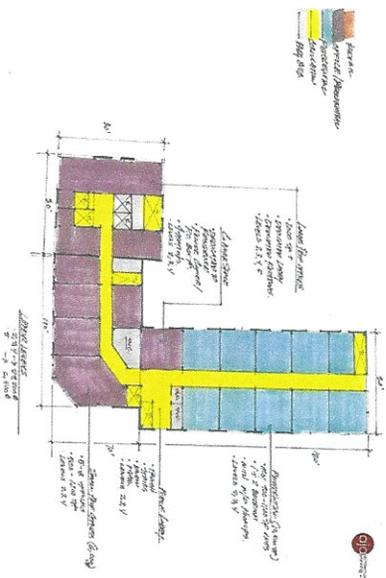
PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN W/ PARKING GARAGE ON SITE



PRELIMINARY FIRST FLOOR PLAN



PRELIMINARY UPPER FLOOR PLANS



SITE DESIGN

A RESIDENTIAL HUB & MARKET DISTRICT

Section A: A Summer's Pedestrian Promenade, Green Roof Terrace, & Riverside Esplanade



The site design is unified by a theme that includes a new residential hub & market district that speaks back to an era of post-industrial development. To achieve the activity and vitality of a lively downtown core, this district is envisioned to include the following site & building elements:

- ① 4-5 story Residential Hub with activated retail & office space throughout the first story. The overall architectural aesthetic should compliment the surrounding architecture
- ② Flexible Retail & Market Space for various uses including an indoor farmer's market, pop-up retail, and event space
- ③ 2 Story Mixed-use Development allows for attractive views from the nearby residential building while also providing rooftop dining overlooking the Saranac River
- ④ Activated Pedestrian Promenade with numerous amenities including: decorative pavements, planting, lighting, banners, & cafe seating
- ⑤ Active Great Lawn & Outdoor Market Space
- ⑥ Concert & Event Pavilion with a subtle lawn amphitheater
- ⑦ Riverside Access with natural stone seating stairs & fishing dock
- ⑧ Meandering riverside esplanade with selectively cleared views of the river

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & FUTURE INVESTMENT

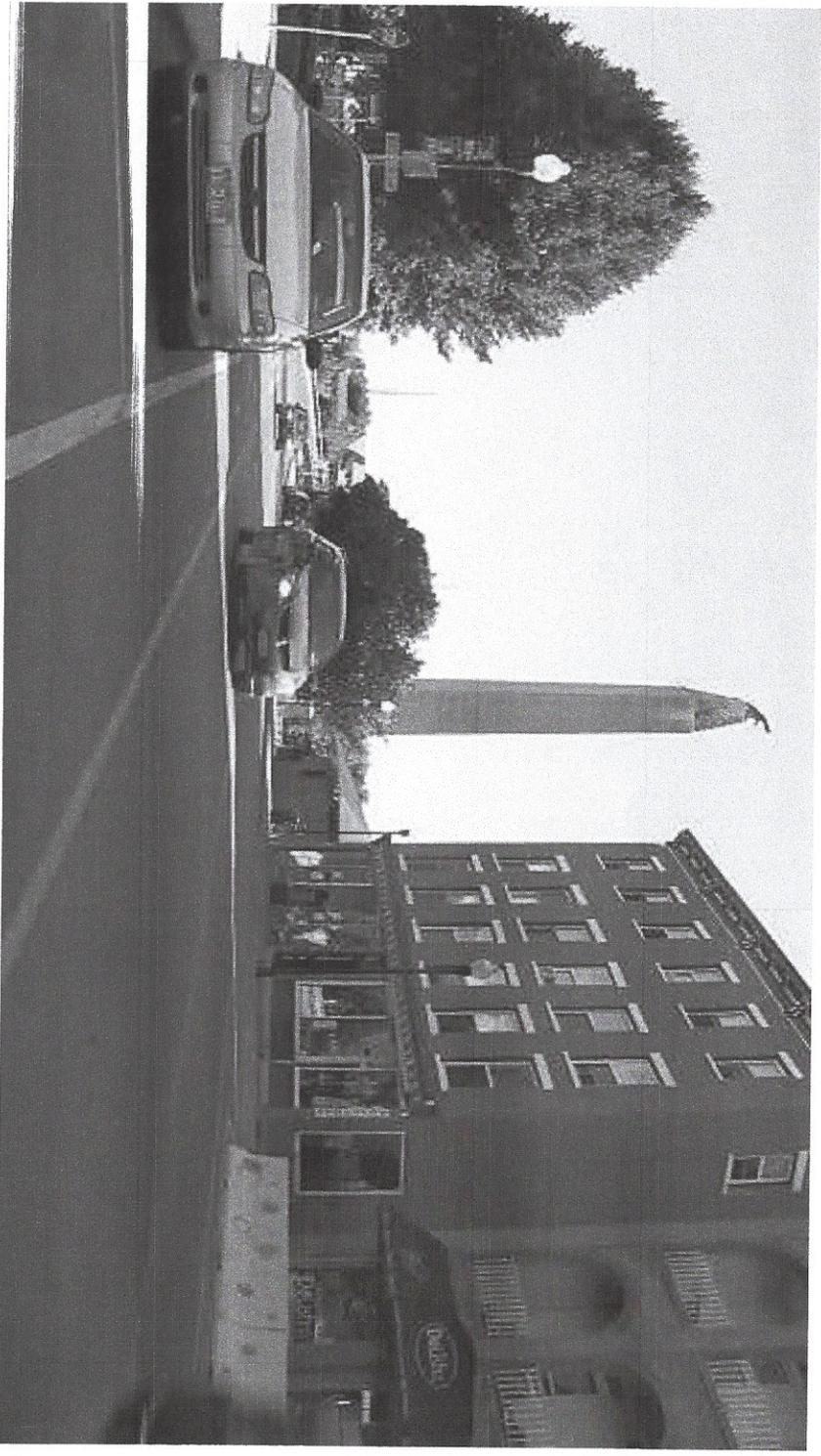
A financial feasibility analysis was completed to inform decision-making around the redevelopment of the site and to help the advisory committee understand how different uses and phasing may affect the expected profitability for a prospective developer. This analysis provides information regarding the funding gaps that may exist and what is required to attract private investment related to the current redevelopment scenario.

The financial development pro forma analysis uses key assumptions for lease rates, land acquisition costs, site construction costs, construction phasing, and market conditions.

The results of the pro forma analysis demonstrate that the project is feasible from a lending institution's perspective, but not necessarily from the developer's standpoint. The internal rate of return (IRR), which measures the developer's return on investment for implementing the project, may not be attractive enough to be considered feasible by the private sector. There are several options to bridge this funding gap, including public sector involvement in the form of grants, loan guarantees, incentives or other tax breaks. Pursuing public sector assistance by utilizing Downtown Revitalization Initiative funds could bridge the funding gap. When public support of \$1 million is included in the pro forma calculations, the IRR is boosted to a level that may be more attractive to the private sector.

A shared public/private investment may be just what is needed to reimagine Durkee Street, its historic connection to the Saranac river, and its future impact on the revitalization of downtown Plattsburgh.





Tearing down old walls

Editorial aired July 11, 2014 on WPTZ



Updated: 2:05 PM EDT Jul 11, 2014

Kyle Grimes

President and General Manager

There's a debate going on in the City of Plattsburgh that has people hot on both sides.

At issue: whether or not to close down a small stretch of road for a regularly scheduled community gathering.

Close the road or keep it open -- we don't much care about that.

What we are concerned about is the continued force against progressive ideas in the city.

Any mention of progress is met with an all too predictable outcry of parking problems or confusion over shifting traffic patterns.

The worst kind of parking problem a city can have is not having a parking problem.

Downtowns -- once written off as dead -- now have the unique opportunity to win businesses back. Key to winning that business back is foot traffic. Yes, foot traffic. People who actually will walk from store to store without having to park right in front of them.

There are some great ideas being floated in the city. The elected leaders would be best served spending their time figuring out how to make them work instead of putting up old walls.

I came upon this article and thought it was appropriate to the current situation. Six years have passed and at that time we couldn't get behind a very small idea. This time it's not the elected officials resistant to tearing down old walls,



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Of Appeals May 4, 2020

2 messages

Jeff Moore <jmoore1748@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 8:34 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I would like to state my strong support for the Durkee Street development by Prime LLC. The people opposed to this project consistently and falsely state that Prime is getting a "sweetheart deal". They are going to invest over 20 million dollars to construct this building and are going to pay more in property taxes or payments in lieu of taxes than is currently generated by that lot. On page 15 of "Durkee Street Reimagined Project Implementation" (attached), it stated that incentives must be offered to attract a developer for this project, because even though there is a market for higher-end apartments and retail/office space, the costs associated with investing in such a project would not yield an attractive-enough rate of return for a developer. It is unrealistic to think otherwise. If it were a "corporate giveaway" as PCC has stated, one would think there would have been more bidders. The people that are the leaders of the PCC want to keep repeating the same falsehoods in hopes of convincing people it is true. Like many of their claims, they are trying to scare people and promote doubt. They think more funding should go to existing building owners. The idea of using a large portion of the DRI funds to have owners of present buildings revamp their properties was an idea tried years ago and it did not revitalize the downtown as they had hoped.

This project, a mixed-use development on the Durkee Street Parking lot, is consistent with the concept that was submitted to the State "Durkee Street Reimagined, Market Analysis, and Site Design" (attached) pages 7,8, and 11. There is a vision of a multistory vertical building. Further, this building as envisioned was 5 stories tall. Imagine that! The details of the concept, whether 50,000 square feet of commercial space vs. 10,000, or 45 apartments vs. 114, does not change the character of the proposal vs. the proposed Prime project. The volume of residential or commercial space was not what anyone was promised. If there had been 5 bids on the project, they all could have been different from the concept. The proposal submitted by Prime is a very worthy project, which was vetted through the PAC committee, made up of various professionals and citizens including someone in opposition, and it was unanimously approved sending the project to the City Council for public review.

As far as adding a gathering space, we already have Monument Park (where there is a great view of the river) Trinity Park, Harborside all of which are underutilized. In addition to all the aforementioned, the space colloquially known as "Westelcom Park" right across the street from the Durkee Street Parking Lot, that is scheduled to be revamped, is similar in size as the gathering space the opposition continues to promote. While I don't claim to speak for anyone else in writing this letter, I am sure that some would agree with me that it would be excessive and redundant to have two gathering spaces right across the street from each other.

Presently there is little access to the river because of its layout: a steep bank made up of riprap leading to rapids. There's no way it could safely be made accessible. The trees can be trimmed but cannot be removed. The development of the Riverwalk will be a great improvement and look very nice, and create a scenic pedestrian walking opportunity that does not presently exist. I don't see how the downtown will look better by keeping the existing parking lot rather than a brand-new building. I can't imagine that I'm the only person who thinks spaces for people to live, work, and visit are more attractive than an at grade parking lot.

In my opinion, the proposed development is very attractive. "Durkee Street Revisited" paints a picture of a new building as a mix of the styles of the present buildings with new and modern architecture. I think this building accomplishes that very nicely. Prime Plattsburgh LLC has listened to and been very receptive to the concerns of the public and various boards, and have made many substantial changes in response to these concerns.

This is a great project for our downtown and for the surrounding area. To have this once in a generation opportunity slip through our fingers would be a travesty. We'll never get another opportunity like this. It would be good for the whole area. The DRI projects as a whole are going to transform our downtown in a positive way, attract other developers, (a project like this gets other developers attention) and gives hope and confidence to the small businesses downtown that may be unsure about reopening after the Pandemic passes as they will have more potential customers. The Farmer's Market decision to move to Harborside is a great idea. They will have more space, parking, and will have more flexibility in managing their market as they see fit. I wish them well.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with a quote from an article in the Press Republican from Mark Dame, former Clinton County Legislator: "Look at the issues and, whenever you make a decision, don't think of the people you're looking at that are sitting in the gallery who have... immediate vested interest in that decision. Think of...who aren't there, who haven't said anything and trusted you with making the right decisions."

Thank you for your time and service to your community.

Sue Moore

City of Plattsburgh

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City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Meeting Comments 4/27/20

2 messages

Kristine Lutters <klutters@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 8:27 PM

To: "cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com" <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Members:

There are risks and possibilities in everything we do, in every step we take, both collectively and individually. And there are certainly both risks and possibilities in the proposed project for the development of the Durkee St. parking lot. But I would suggest that at this point in this long process of grant application, community input, planning, revision, discussion, collaboration and conflict that the positive possibilities outweigh the risks. There are differences of opinion, there are perceived strengths and perceived weaknesses but this is a time to come together, work together and go forward together.

We have the opportunity to replace an unattractive parking lot with housing that will bring residents to downtown who will provide the energy to a downtown that has great potential. Downtown Plattsburgh needs additional residents to support businesses, counter student rowdiness and advocate for the good of the center city. They will join the coalition of Plattsburgh business owners and current residents to strengthen the city we all care for.

As we move forward with this project we should remember that we must work for the good of all city residents, businesses and enterprises. Let's not forget or neglect the needs of established downtown businesses or current residents. I trust that this can be accomplished.

Let's put aside disagreements and take the steps to support this project. Let's not reject the opportunity that is in front of us. We can't go back so let's go forward.

Kristine Lutters
Resident of Plattsburgh New York

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 9:01 AM

To: mcmahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

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City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning board meeting comment/May 5,2020

1 message

Mary Ward <mward@perucsd.org>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 2:56 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

am a long time resident of Plattsburgh, N.Y. I grew up here, and knew downtown in the fifties, and sixties. I have lived in other states but returned here in 1980, but am a frequent traveler in the United States and other continents as well. Plattsburgh is my hometown, but as I travel I am often thinking of the wonderful quality of life here. I do sometimes wish our city was a bit more vibrant and alive with opportunities.

I have watched the progress of the downtown development closely and participated in some of the first public feedback opportunities. I was especially interested in downtown offering young families places to bring their children to learn about our special location, our history and to relax and play. I was especially hoping for a small splash/ice skating park like I have seen in some other small cities. I myself lived in the city center and loved walking with my children to restaurants, the YMCA and the library. When I needed to downsize there was little available in the center city.

I also began to think about my grandparents, and about how walkable our city was and how we depended on downtown for supplies, recreation and our sense of community. One of my grandmothers needed to live an easy walk from downtown. She never drove and walked to do her banking, buy her groceries and to meet friends. She continued to walk downtown for almost all she needed from her apartment in the city center until she was ninety in 1990.

Although the new development doesn't include all I wanted in a project, I believe it does offer a way forward in the direction of positive change. We will get rid of an ugly parking lot, which encourages us to be healthier and to walk a bit more. Most importantly, it brings families and perhaps older people into the center of town to live in community. It brings the hope of more residents using the services that are offered downtown, and encouraging more spending in the city, rather than always running uptown to get what they need. I also may want the option to live in nice housing, in my city center, with all the services I need within a walkable distance, available to me in my future!

I also trust my city representatives. I think there are alot of us out here who have not spoken publicly, because we trust that the state officials who have chosen this project and the city that has worked for four years to obtain this grant, have

done their job, with the best interest of our city at heart. It is not perfect, but is an opportunity we should not waste. Due diligence has been done! Naysayers have been heard.

Please move forward now.

Mary Ward

[21 Kansas Ave](#)
[Plattsburgh, NY](#)
[12903](#)



City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Zoning Board Comment 5/4/2020

2 messages

Carl King <carl.king41@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 2:20 PM

To: cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com

I wish to express my support for the city government and for the Durkee Street redevelopment project. I feel it would be a major step forward to improve the downtown area and subsequently lead to higher tax revenues. The parking issues have been addressed adequately and I personally like the idea of more parking on Margaret Street making visits to restaurants there more convenient. The opposition arguments, in some cases, do not appear logical to me. Furthermore, their bias toward certain government officials seem too obvious.

I am a city resident at 20 Haley Drive.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl King

City Info <cityinfo@plattsburghcitygov.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:49 AM

To: mcMahonj@cityofplattsburgh-ny.gov

[Quoted text hidden]

15 Massachusetts St.
Plattsburgh, NY
April 26, 2020

Dear Chairman Nolland and Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

During my time on the Plattsburgh Common Council, I have supported the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) from grant application to the selection of a developer. I enthusiastically support the PRIME's proposed project and urge the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve it.

The project's need and character are supported by some 18 planning documents. Consider *A Plan for the Future, City of Plattsburgh, NY, May 1999 Comprehensive Plan*. It states: "This plan proposes intense development in the central business district portion of the city as a necessary element in revitalizing the City's downtown area." It further suggests the need to retain downtown as the primary social and business center of the City, and to actively support intensified development in the area to the greatest extent feasible. The plan identifies the benefit of allowing residential uses in the upper levels of structures to provide for intensive development and use of the area. It also suggests that the types and costs of upper level residences should be broadened. The plan recognizes the need to develop innovative parking controls to allow maximum use of limited available parking and to support intensified development.

With both the \$1million dollars that was made available for downtown property owners to expand and improve upper level residences in their buildings, as well as the \$3.5 million that will build infrastructure in preparation for the PRIME LLC development, we will finally fulfill the goal of downtown development as envisioned in the 1999 plan. This development will "broaden" "the types and costs of upper level residences." PRIME's residential units will be filled with a new demographic who will enjoy the central city location and patronize existing businesses. The question of how the development will affect parking has been investigated through a study and the work of the Parking Committee. As a result, "innovative parking controls" have been planned , and alternative spaces around the city are designed to compensate for those that are lost with the lot's development.

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)—revised in 2016 with assistance from Saratoga Associates—specifically identified the Durkee St. Lot as a prime location for a "mixed-use development, parking, and river access." PRIME's proposal fits well into what the LWRP imagines, as the project will offer a mix of 115 residential units, 10,000 feet of commercial space, and parking for residents and businesses. River access along the lot is another asset LWRP identifies, one that PRIME's proposal accommodates, as a riverwalk (where there is currently none), will border the project and connect with the

Saranac River Trail. The former Farmers Market is slated to be part public space, part commercial space, both amenities that fit nicely into LWRP's recommendations.

The Durkee Street Real Estate Market Analysis, 2016, describes the type of development that PRIME has proposed. It states that the lot presents "a unique opportunity for new construction, as most others in the downtown area would entail rehabilitation of existing buildings." The study adds, ". . . people (are) moving back into urban centers, which is changing the housing market landscape," a trend away from single-family homes. The analysis cites a market for empty nesters, young professionals and seniors who want to "live, work, and play" in a scenic, central location. Because project opponents frequently characterize the project as lacking adequate green space, it is important to note that the study did not advise constructing a park on this site because: one, it would generate no tax revenue; and two, "ample public space exists." However, with the PRIME development, the city will wind up with more green space and scenic views along the river than we have currently. Fortunately, because of a DRI Streetscape grant, WestelCom Park will be enhanced and PRIME's project will connect this park to a beautiful, new riverwalk. Clearly, PRIME's proposal reflects the type of development that professionals concluded would best fit the location.

The Downtown Revitalization Grant awarded to develop the Durkee St. Lot is the culmination and logical result of years' planning. The proposal comes before this board in part because of the grant's careful administration under supervision by the Department of State. This agency has posed neither objections to the process, nor questions about the developer's suitability. Along with White and Burke—the state mandated consultant the City hired to shepherd the RFP process and negotiations with the eventual developer—the City has, in good faith, gone forward with PRIME LLC. Each party has fulfilled its responsibilities to bring this project to fruition. Now it is up to the city boards to evaluate whether this project conforms to their respective specific standards. I have seen what PRIME and the City have submitted to your board: the GEIS, the various technical documents, answers to comments, and testimony; and I am satisfied with level of professionalism behind their preparation. As I see it, the matter before you is straightforward. Does this proposal meet your standards?

I am grateful to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the time and research it has devoted to evaluating PRIME's proposal, especially now as we endure a pandemic. During an

unprecedented time, you are considering a decision that holds enormous weight for our city's future. I encourage you to stick to the facts and matters pertaining to code when reviewing this project. Now is not the time to re-litigate the case for developing the Durkee Street Lot. This is just the kind of development sanctioned by the State of New York through its \$3.5 million grant for that purpose. As you evaluate the project according to your standards, I urge you to reject all arguments that attempt to muddy the waters. Plattsburgh's future depends upon growing, revitalizing and fulfilling our DRI grant. Failure to follow through would be a waste of many years' planning, and further, would kill Plattsburgh's eligibility for grants in the future.

Sincerely,

Rachelle Armstrong
Former Councilor
Ward 1, Plattsburgh Common Council
January, 2014—December 2019