

March 6, 2013



Mr. Cary Teague
Director of Community Development
City of Edina
4801 West 50th Street
Edina, MN 55424

Re: **7171 France Avenue Redevelopment**
PAI Project No.15226.11051

Dear Cary:

A family vacation will keep me from attending the Planning Commission meeting on the 13th. So, in advance of that session, I want to provide some additional input regarding the project, and the revisions that are being made in response to the meeting of the 27th.

We will also be submitting additional drawings and renderings, and hopefully this narrative and those exhibits will convey our approach clearly. Jim Vos of Cresa Partners, and others on the team, will be present on the evening of the 13th to present the changes in person, and to answer questions.

Reflecting on the meeting of the 27th, and reviewing the video archive (yes, all of it!), it was clear that there is a central disagreement about the organizational forces that should inform the site plan.

One idea is that the design team should "grab the Promenade and pull it on to and through the site", creating a new pedestrian armature around which buildings, roadways and parking are organized. The other view (ours) is that the *Promenade itself* is a strong pedestrian armature that informs the organization of sites adjacent to it, but, that to extend a pathway of that sort through our site, and to make it the primary organizing principle, would be to skew the true planning priorities.

The goals of this project are, very simply, to sell groceries and rent apartments, and to develop the site in a way that best supports those endeavors, within the context of the comp plan, zoning regulations and the PUD process. Significant factors that shape the site plan include:

- Keeping Byerly's in business during construction of a replacement store
- Providing safe and convenient access for people in cars. This is the primary way that retail customers and residents will travel to and from the site on any day, and throughout the year.
- Providing adequate visibility for retail
- Providing the quantity of rental housing units needed to support the investment structure
- Keeping building height at no more than six stories to control construction cost
- Maintaining appropriate separation of retail and housing
- Making roadway connections at mandated access points on Hazelton and France
- Making best use of proximity to the Promenade

Pedestrian connection to the Promenade is important and desirable, and the Promenade is an amenity that has informed the location of the housing. But it is not, and should not be the primary organizing force. Our site is *adjacent* to the Promenade, but it is not the Promenade.

POPE ARCHITECTS, INC.

1295 BANDANA BOULEVARD N, SUITE 200
ST. PAUL, MN 55108-2735
(651) 642-9200 | FAX (651) 642-1101

www.popearch.com



There is another force shaping the site plan, and that is the input provided to us by Planning Commission and City Council during the Sketch Plan Review process in the spring of 2012. During that process, we clearly heard the following priorities voiced:

- That the Byerly's store and the housing were too close together, and that retail activities would compromise the quality of the residential neighborhood next to the Promenade
- That the Byerly's store should be pulled up to France Avenue, away from the Promenade
- That a stronger pedestrian connection should be created with the Promenade and that a public outdoor gathering place should be established on our site
- That in order to achieve the above, building height and parking count were malleable
- That (subsequent to the sketch plan process) the primary vehicular connection to Hazelton must be at our easternmost property line

The plan that we have submitted clearly responds to all the forces in both of the bullet point lists above. It solves the puzzle of constructing in phases, negotiating grade changes, maintaining temporary site access for retail operations, separating construction traffic from retail traffic, creating a distinct residential neighborhood on the Promenade, separating housing and retail traffic flow, improving vehicular access to and through the site, creating a gathering place on France Avenue, providing adequate screened dockage, enhancing the Promenade and linking residential activity directly to it as has been the goal of the Planning Commission in other recent projects (i.e. Target). and providing reasonable separation between private amenities and public space.

The push and pull of the various forces is a huge planning challenge, and there are no perfect solutions. The plan we have submitted is product of compromise, but it is a very good plan, and we do not believe that a significantly better option exists.

Several sit-down sessions with city staff during the development of the plan also affirmed our approach. Staff has been extremely supportive, saying that this plan responds well to all the Sketch Plan input.

With these things in mind we have revised the plans to provide stronger and safer pedestrian connections, and to make other improvements as well. The following changes will be included in the presentation materials for the meeting on the 13th of March:

1. A primary pedestrian pathway, distinguished from other sidewalks, has been established in a broadened space, allowing a wider path and more interesting course of travel between the Promenade and Byerly's. Benches and public gathering spaces are provided along the way.
2. One vehicular crossing has been eliminated on the north side of Building B's retail lot.
3. The pathway connection at the Promenade has been strengthened, creating a feature with benches and signage that provides a gateway to our development, and clearer way finding.
4. A covered walkway, extending from the Byerly's entry through the parking lot to the south, will provide shelter for shoppers arriving in cars and by other means.
5. The water feature that has always been part of the planning, is now clearly illustrated, along with a pathway and footbridge connection for residents from Building A/B parking garage (where bikes are stored), directly to the Promenade.

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6. High translucent windows have been added to the west and east elevations of the Byerly's Store, bringing additional daylight into the Produce and Deli areas.
7. The dock screen wall design has been revised to include additional materials, and landscaping has been added.
8. We affirm the east elevation of Housing Building C, at street level, is incomplete. We have discussed using that location for public art or enhancing it in other ways, but we are not prepared to commit to any particular solution at this time. Since Building C construction is still out several years, we request approval of the site plan, with the development of Building C being conditioned upon final design review.

We believe these revisions strengthen the project as a whole, and in particular the connection of residents and pedestrians to the Promenade. We have attached a revised site plan, and will bring additional exhibits illustrating the changes proposed. If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please do not hesitate to contact Jim Vos of Cresa Partners, Greg Anderson of Anderson/KM Builders, or Matt Masica, my colleague at Pope Architects. Again, my apologies for not being able to attend.

Sincerely,

POPE ARCHITECTS, INC.



Paul Holmes
Principal

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Mr. Cary Teague
Director of Community Development
City of Edina
4801 West 50th Street
Edina, MN 55424

**Re: 7171 France Avenue Redevelopment
PAI Project No.15226.11051**

Dear Cary:

In our original Preliminary Development Application submittal, our project narrative outlined several sustainable concepts that the project team is very excited about. During the February 27th Planning Commission meeting, we heard the comment that our sustainable goals for the project should provide a way to measure these goals.

The current design of the site and buildings bring a high degree of sustainable attributes when measured by industry standard third party sustainable rating systems. The housing portion of the site in particular will be going through one such industry standard program, the Energy Design Assistance program facilitated by Xcel Energy. This program uses the same energy modeling standard as the USGBC's LEED program; ASHRAE 90.1 2007. Both LEED and EDA's programs benchmark the building's overall energy performance taking into account the building envelope and the mechanical and electrical systems that are provided within them. While this process will take considerable design development to get to the point of having measurable results to share, the housing team is committed to the EDA process.

It is our opinion that the EDA process would provide a measurable third party standard in which the project can be benchmarked in comparison to other projects. Beyond that, we want to emphasize the project's sustainability goals in addition to the EDA process.

Sustainable site items include:

- Added density. The site will help curtail urban sprawl and be well connected to the surrounding community therefore reducing the number of automobile trips and making use of a previously developed site and infrastructure.
- The site has been designed to accommodate different modes of transportation and features strong pedestrian connections, areas for bicycle storage, connection to mass transit, and accommodations for automobiles while reducing the amount of surface parking and accommodating electric vehicles by means of charging stations at the housing and grocery locations.
- Our current storm water management design calls for water to be retained on site via at-grade infiltration and underground storage which will help both the rate and quality of the water as it eventually leaves the site. We also continue to have discussions with the city about the potential of collecting rainwater from rooftops to be routed into the proposed city water feature near the promenade as well as other storm water strategies to exceed watershed requirements.

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1295 BANDANA BOULEVARD N, SUITE 200
ST. PAUL, MN 55108-2735
(651) 642-9200 | FAX (651) 642-1101

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Water efficiency items include:

- The selection of low flow plumbing fixtures.
- Drought tolerant landscaping on the site and sprinklers utilizing moisture sensors to avoid unnecessary operation.

Energy consumption and its effect on the atmosphere:

- We would point to the previously mentioned EDA process through Xcel Energy as an effective and measurable third party process that the housing portion of the site will undergo.
- When looking at materials and resources for the projects many of the materials will come from a 500 mile radius of the site; reducing the negative impact of the transportation of the building materials to the site as well as aiding local economies.
- A high recycled content for building materials selected for the project including the re-use of parts of the existing building and parking lot as base and aggregate for the new parking lots.
- An increased percentage of recycled material when waste is removed from site during construction thus reducing the impact on landfills.
- At the grocery store we will be using high efficiency refrigeration systems and incorporating an energy management system which controls HVAC, lighting, and optimizes operating efficiencies.

Improved indoor environmental quality:

- Use of low VOC adhesives, sealants, paints, and flooring.
- A mix of LED and fluorescent lighting, many of which will be tied to occupancy sensors throughout the project to reduce the overall energy demand for the project.
- Day-lighting strategies and consideration of views for the occupants by window placement and building orientation.

In conclusion, we are very excited about the sustainable ideals that are integrated into the design of the project. We want to emphasize that there will be measurable results specifically from the Energy Design Assistance program through Xcel Energy and on top of that there will be a wide array of sustainable features that will be seen, felt, and experienced on site from the charging stations in the parking areas to the day-lighting strategies for the grocery store. We feel that this project will be a tremendous asset to the City and look forward to working together with the City on a great project and amenity to the community at large.

Sincerely,

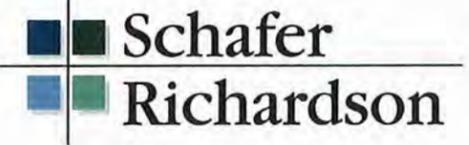
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Matt Masica
Senior Project Architect

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REVISED SITE PLAN



Preliminary Development Plan
Byerly's France Avenue Re-Development

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