

Big Woods-EDA Assemblage
Consensus Document and Development Framework
August 2016 Work Session Discussion Document

Background: On April 12, 2016 the members of the City Council held a retreat to discuss issues pertaining to the development of the EDA-owned 6 parcel assemblage across from City Hall Avenue on the north side of Victory Boulevard. Retreat participants also included the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission and the Chairman of the Economic Development Authority as well as members of the senior staff. Discussion focused on expectations for the property with the goal of clearly identifying what the City would like to occur on the property rather than simply processing what may be allowed in the zoning district(s). This Retreat was an important first step toward developing specific vision which will guide development of this critically important gateway property.

Importance of the Assemblage: The participants discussed the relative importance of the assemblage as it relates to surrounding properties, character of the City and fiscal strength. The participants recognized that each of these three aspects were important, with importance to the character of the City deemed as the most important.

Guiding Principles for Development: Following a discussion of potentially desirable development concepts and a discussion of impacts/projects that would not be desirable associated with development of the assemblage a number of guiding principles/expectations emerged:

- The City should continue its efforts to develop the assemblage and to further refine a specific development vision which would allow the site to be marketed for specific rather than general uses.
- Development should be of gateway quality in terms of building design, building materials, uses and landscaping and should not be residential or industrial in nature.
- Development should not negatively impact traffic conditions on Victory Boulevard.
- Development should complement but not detract from or significantly compete with the existing business corridor.
- The assemblage should not be used for public buildings or facilities.
- The City would consider a potential private-public partnership on the property for certain types of projects such as recreational and/or cultural center.
- Development should enhance the quality of life and increase opportunities for citizens to shop locally.
- Development should not take the form of traditional strip mall development.
- The Assemblage should not be sold or developed piecemeal.

Possible Development Concepts: The following received majority or stronger consensus as development concepts that may be appropriate for the assemblage and therefore should be the subject of further study.

- Regional Sporting Goods Store
- Nautical Themed Retail
- Public-Private Recreation and/or Cultural Center Project
- Hi-Tech Manufacturing or Medical Facility
- Professional Office-Mixed Use

Next Steps:

The City Council establish a working Committee consisting of one member of the City Council, and Planning Commission, the members of the Economic Development Authority with participation from Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance and senior staff.

The Committee will be tasked to present its preliminary analysis to City Council within 90 days including its recommendations regarding which of the five development concepts are most desirable/feasible for detailed study. The Group will then be tasked with developing a detailed feasibility analysis and associated recommendations for presentation to Council within 120 days. It should be noted that the detailed feasibility analysis may require consulting services. Following this presentation the City Council will select the preferred development concept(s).

Supporting Actions:

Following selection of the preferred development concepts the EDA shall be tasked with actively marketing the property for the specific development concepts selected by the City Council. It should be noted that the designation of a preferred development concept(s) would not preclude consideration of other possible uses; however the EDA would not market or otherwise actively solicit private sector interest for projects that do not align with the Council's preferred development concepts(s).

The EDA shall utilize the Guiding Principles for Development listed above in evaluating any development proposal for the Assemblage.

Following the City Council's designation of the preferred development concept(s) the Planning Commission and staff shall review the Comprehensive Plan and related zoning requirements to identify and revise any section which may constitute an unreasonable barrier to development of the Council-selected preferred development concepts(s) and to incorporate the Guiding Principles for Development into the Comprehensive Plan and related zoning requirements relating to future development along the Victory Boulevard Corridor.