

To: Redevelopment Commission and other interested parties

Included in the Gateway Redevelopment Commission project was a market study that suggests how, and what type of businesses can be attracted to the downtown core of the city. There are books and articles about the flight of the creative class. In short, the message loud and clear is that if we want to keep our well-educated children and grandchildren as part of our community we must have not only the jobs, but also the quality of life and active community to keep them engaged. Being a city in close proximity to downtown Indianapolis and all the attractions it offers is one reason Franklin thrives. Franklin offers so many unique opportunities, but so do other donut communities, and building a thriving downtown community with dining, housing and cultural activities is a must. With the help of the Redevelopment Commission study and investment we can build on our long and successful history while increasing the connection to the college, parks and public schools.

Southwest Quadrant: As noted **the Redevelopment Commission market study calls for creating a more vibrant downtown:** Franklin like many small towns has some industrial type uses trapped in the retail / service area of the downtown. In the 1800's and early 1900's most, if not all, business was downtown. Over a period of time auto dealers, large retailers and industry moved to the industrial parks and high traffic retail corridors to build larger facilities. The southwest quadrant has about six to eight business located there, and they account of about 30 jobs. Most are in the floodway and suffered damage in the flood of 2008. The study suggests that those businesses should be relocated to the industrial and service areas. The area could then be redeveloped into a downtown park surrounded with new downtown retail, housing and public space that could add 200 plus residents and several businesses. The new investment in this area would add hundreds of thousands of dollars of tax base and the people living and working in the area would support the downtown businesses. The downtown park would give the community great festival and recreational opportunities that would further attract people downtown to support the community.

As you know the Johnson County Library Boards master plan calls for a new facility in Franklin and they are currently considering a location in the South West Quadrant, It is my hope that they will work with the Redevelopment Commission on the overall concept and design, while making their plans to go to referendum to seek approval of the voters for a new facility, our market study suggest that if approved it would make a great fit in the southwest quadrant and would be a great benefit to the redevelopment of the area. As a citizen I am still gathering information about the size, cost and effect on my property taxes. I do however believe that Public Library's will continue to be an important part of a community offering meeting and community space plus access to all types of data both in books and electronic format.

I believe it is my responsibility as Mayor to take the information learned from the studies, and put forward a vision for where we want the community to be 10 or 20 years from now. A few weeks ago you saw one concept plan presented in the paper and today I am here to share a second more artistic vision of what the Southwest Quadrant could mean for this community over the next several years.

My desire is to put the idea and concepts forward and then work to put the current land holdings in the control of the RDC to move forward with community discussion on the concepts and the area as a whole. I believe the RDC purchase of the Franklin Engineering property is evidence that you share a goal of redevelopment of the Southwest Quadrant.

Other quick items to reflect on are the true value of the assembled property of the Oren Wright Property and the Franklin Engineering property. We all know the RDC investment in the Franklin Engineering property will probably be in the \$100 k range when cleaned up. People have been quoting the value of the Oren Wright property at \$225 K or so. The reality is that the development value of a 1.8 acre site in a redevelopment area could be in the million plus range and with the combination of the Oren Wright and the Franklin Engineering property together the value goes even higher. That said, my hope would be that the city and RDC would always be willing to consider the value of what would occupy the property and how it will serve the community when agreeing to an actual price, if any for

the land. Cities often must assemble and clear property for big city changing projects to launch, as evidenced by the fabulous redevelopment of Downtown Indianapolis. Often City owned and assembled properties and cash are put into private and not for profit projects to advance the community.

My goal as Mayor is to work with the RDC in the coming weeks and months to start the conservation and planning for the area, and put the RDC into control of all downtown city owned vacant properties for redevelopment. While City Council's , Mayor's and Board of Works all have input and functions, the creation of the Redevelopment Commission was and is to work on the actual control and development of those public assets for the benefit of the community. Your board has access to the funds to hire professionals, assemble more of the Southwest Quadrant as property owners are willing to sell and fund some of the actual development and infrastructure necessary to move the project forward over a period of time. I want to be very clear with the private property owners around and in the South West Quadrant that I am not looking for anyone to be forced to sell. They can stay as long as they want and sell when they get what they want. Almost all of the land shown as potential park land is owned by parties that have personally told me that would be willing to look at offers now and in the future. Most of the new commercial buildings shown on the artist concept plans are long term concepts that would remove some private homes and business and it should be up to future developers to secure offers to assemble those properties. The only person in the area that has currently voiced strong opposition to working on the plan is Mr. Scott Graham and he has gone so far as to send very negative e-mails to private and public officials that have shown interest in the process. I have tried very hard to explain to Mr Graham that as I see it we are looking at the long range future of this community as outlined in the market study and he and other individual property owners can voice their opinions and hold onto their property as long as they wishes. However there are many other owners that do not share Mr. Graham's view and I believe there are many in the community that support the concept of long range planning and a future Franklin that adds to the vital needs of the downtown core.

Therefore I present the concept plans, Ask the RDC to continue working on the overall project and promise that within the coming weeks I will be back in front of the proper boards to work out the details of a plan to turn the properties over to your control, which may include some of the commitments of assistance as suggested by the City Council.

Sincerely

Mayor Fred L Paris