

Daniel B. Klatt
4 August, 2003

Franklin Land Use Plan Steering Committee
Comments on Draft Plan and Memorandum from Greg Dale of 7/30/03

I will be traveling with others to Napierville on August 7 to do some on-ground downtown research. I will not be able to attend our meeting. I do want to offer these comments in advance.

In general, my concern is to prevent this document from losing its focus – “The Character Areas are the broadest planning category for the community.” (Draft, p. 23) This was the studied choice of the committee, and the approach taken to get to this point. However, I have found some very specific “rules” have cropped up in the draft, to the point that this plan may become more restrictive and difficult to work with than our current zoning ordinance. I don’t believe this is truly what we intended, based on the Character Area process.

Overall, I find the text and descriptions of the following sections to be good – descriptive but not definitive. *Introduction; Guiding Principles; Regional Vision; Plan Structure; Design Concepts* (Draft, p, 3-42) That was the challenge. However, there are some contradictions. For example, “The Westhaven development in the West Harpeth Character Area is an example of TND design. The Central Franklin Area is a historic example of what the TND design is emulating.” (Draft, p. 33) I believe this is a true statement. However, the definition of TND as it evolves throughout the draft is different than what these two examples are in fact. Westhaven will had 500,000 leasable square feet of retail and office space, and downtown certainly has more than 200,000 square feet. “Regional Commercial Centers may occur in concentrations with gross leasable areas in excess of 300,000 square feet that serve a larger regional market only where designated in the plan in areas with access to I-65.” (Draft, p.37) Are Westhaven and Central Franklin TNDs or RCCs or both? I for one am not interested in allowing “large discount stores, warehouse clubs, large specialty retailers, manufacturers outlet stores and department stores” (Draft, p. 46, Regional Retail definition) in either of these locations. And neither of these locations have access to I-65. Another contradiction: why is Regional Retail set at 200,000 square feet, and Regional Commercial Centers set at 300,000 square feet?

In the description for Mixed-use Centers (Draft, p. 38) the term “professional offices” is used. I assume this is to distinguish this from “regional offices.” If that is the intent, then the Office category (Draft, p. 38) should be split into two separate categories: 1) Professional Office, “Any building or structure primarily used to conduct business where no sales of stock-in-trade, manufacturing, or warehousing occur. Offices may include doctor’s group practices, day care centers, telemarketing centers, sales offices, real estate offices, attorney offices, and office suites for individual businesses;” and 2) Regional Office, “Offices which accommodate major economic-bases corporate employers, with a broad regional influence, which may include corporate headquarters or regional offices

and structures with suites for a variety of professional or service offices.” This suggestion simply splits the current definition.

The Land Use Matrix (Draft, p. 47) sets very specific and definitive “rules” when, in reality, these “rules” have not been completely spelled out in the text and descriptions. I think the Matrix should be removed. The more specific the rules, the less creative the result.

Finally, the Draft Plan references **design** as a primary influence for all future development regardless of location. The Plan also references “master planning” in many places. I would recommend a general statement that provides a better overall description of what is meant by these terms, and include “architectural design” specifically. This is a significant element, and I personally believe that pattern books should be a requirement of all future development proposals.

The challenge for our committee is to formulate a living document that follows Character Area descriptions and provides a road map for not only planning staff and commissioners, but also for the creative development community. We need their ideas, and we want to encourage the creative and visionary process, not stifle it.

Memorandum of 7/30/03

Berry’s Chapel Area 3 suggestion

All four quadrants located at the intersection of Mack Hatcher and Franklin Road should be considered simultaneously in a comprehensive master plan that adequately considers preservation of the natural scenic beauty which currently exists and enhances this significant gateway into Central Franklin.

Goose Creek Area 3

Consultant comment; “The general TND definition (Draft, p.33-34) does not currently allow office uses.” Actually, the definition doesn’t mention whether office is appropriate or not, it only mentions “mixed-use.” This is confusing. Again, the Westhaven and Central Franklin examples certainly include office use. My questions are these: 1) Is available acreage a limiting criteria for when TND is appropriate, or just for when “other than residential” components become appropriate? 2) Is TND a *residential only* design function or a *mixed-use* design function? 3) Or is TND designation an opportunity for the design community to provide a multi-functioning “neighborhood” based on market conditions, sensitivity to surrounding areas, and conservation? We probably should consider a *master planned mixed-use center* designation for this area. Regardless, we need to be clear!