

Downtown Perspective on Joie de Vivre

Over the last decade, Downtown has changed significantly as a result of nearly \$130 million in public and private reinvestment. Downtown is, now a destination. It has become a center for a wide variety of governmental services, business and professional services, arts and cultural attractions, an eclectic mix of galleries, shops, restaurants and nightlife and a year-round agenda of special events and festivals.

Cultivating new residential infill, mixed use development is at the forefront of the

With a few exceptions, most of this prior investment, business expansion and development has been geared to the renovation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

Going forward, the next phase of Downtown's growth will also need to incorporate new infill construction geared to residential oriented, mixed use. A multi-faceted residential base built upon the principles of smart growth will be a pivotal component to infill development in and around the downtown.

An analysis of the potential for a variety of downtown residential uses and niche markets was undertaken several years ago by the nationally recognized firm of Zimmerman Volk Associates. It was generally noted that "a broad range of new construction as well as adaptive reuse of existing buildings will be required to support and sustain residential diversity in the Lafayette downtown study area." In addressing the market potential over time for an affordable residential component as one part of the larger mix, the analysis also noted that the study area could provide a combination of 93 new sf and mf affordable units per year or approximately 465 over a 5-year period.

The proposed residential, mixed use project, Joie de Vivre, dovetails with the study's findings, introducing new, affordably priced housing not currently available or underrepresented in the area. The project is in its predevelopment phase at this time. The overall plan seeks to develop approximately 118 rental units situated in an attractive setting with contemporary building design, energy efficient green features, landscape and other amenities. Located along Second Street frontage, from Pierce to the AOC campus, it would serve as a mixed use transition between the CBD and the adjacent neighborhood. Ground level retail services are planned along the major street frontage.

In concept, many positive features are evident, but as with all things new, there are also areas of concern regarding neighborhood impacts. As more detail planning and design continues, it will be very important that the team focuses on the project's fit and support to the adjacent neighborhood with respect to the overall density, scale and orientation of buildings, to historic,

architectural and urban design amenities, to the mix of uses as well as related parking, traffic flow/access and other infrastructure.

Some resident input has already been taken into account. We encourage a meaningful and continuing dialogue between the project team, the neighborhood, and Downtown during the process, which can only be beneficial, creating a high quality development that transitions well with the neighborhood and Downtown and is effectively managed once completed and placed in operation.