

Downtown Perspective on Joie de Vivre

Digest

Cultivating new infill, mixed use development inclusive of residential components, is in the forefront of Downtown Lafayette's agenda, as recent study findings indicate that is a pivotal component of the next phase of Downtown's redevelopment. The proposed project, Joie de Vivre, introduces a housing choice and affordability mix currently underrepresented in the area and meets the above objective.

In its preliminary, pre-development stage, Joie de Vivre seeks to develop affordably priced workforce housing, situated in an attractive setting with contemporary –designed 'green' buildings, landscape and other onsite/offsite amenities. It serves as a mixed use transition between the built-up commercial core of the downtown and the adjacent neighborhood, incorporating ground level retail services along the major street frontage.

As planning continues, it is very important that the project focuses on fitting in with and supporting the adjacent neighborhood beyond the development itself, addressing many aspects from density, scale and orientation of buildings, to historic, architectural and urban design amenities, as well as the mix of uses, related parking, traffic flow/access and other infrastructure.

Because it is in the concept stage, the project will be subject to changes and refinements as it moves forward with more detailed planning and design. We anticipate an ongoing line of communication between the design-development-sponsor team, the neighborhood and Downtown as the project proceeds into the next design-development level, working toward a high quality development, that transitions well with the neighborhood and downtown and is effectively managed once completed and placed in operation.

Larger Context:

Over the last decade, Downtown has changed significantly as a result of nearly \$130 million in public and private reinvestment. Today, Downtown is a destination and focal point 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. With a few exceptions, most of this investment, business expansion and development have been geared to the renovation and adaptive reuse of existing building stock.

Going forward, the next phase of the overall redevelopment 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 in this regard with the study’s findings in that it has the potential to introduce a housing choice and affordability mix not currently available or underrepresented in the area.

Project Perspective:

Joie de Vivre is in a preliminary, pre-development stage at this time. At the concept level, it seeks to develop affordably priced workforce housing, situated in an attractive setting with contemporary –designed ‘green’ buildings, landscape and other onsite/offsite amenities. Located along Second Street frontage, from Pierce to the AOC campus, it is intending to serve as a mixed use transition between the built-up commercial core of the downtown and the adjacent neighborhood, incorporating ground level retail services 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. It will be very important, that the project as a transitional one focuses on its fit and support to the adjacent neighborhood beyond the development itself. Some resident input has already been taken into account. As project planning continues, we anticipate that the team will continue to address many such aspects from 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.

The project is a work in progress and will be subject to change and refinement as it proceeds with more detailed planning and design. We anticipate an ongoing line of communication between the design-development-sponsor team, the neighborhood, and Downtown as the project proceeds from concept phase to the next design-development level toward a high quality development , that blends with the neighborhood and downtown and is well managed once completed and placed in operation.