

“RIVERTOWN REVITALIZATION” DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the City’s vision for Downtown Antioch? Drawing from several revitalization studies over the years, most notably the Arcadis study and the current work in progress on the Downtown Specific Plan, the concept for “Rivertown” is a transit oriented walkable village, with the village center anchored by City Hall and Waldie Plaza. Immediately encompassing this center is ample commercial space for shops, restaurants and small businesses. Also existing in this area is the Amtrak Train Station and across the tracks is the favored future ferry station site. The key to enlivening this historic downtown core is to bring more residents as close to the core as possible to create a sense of place, similar to what exists in downtown Pleasanton and Livermore. Increasing residential density is essential to increasing train ridership, bringing in ferry service, and increasing evening and weekend customers to support current Rivertown businesses and attract new ones.

Would a new park and event center on the old Beede Lumber site bring more people downtown? The short answer is no. There is no event proposed by the park/event center proponents that cannot be hosted at Waldie Plaza and/or the Marina Boat Launch parking lot. Waldie Plaza is by far the better location for Downtown events. It already exists where it is for several reasons. It is at the center of the village, there is the City Hall parking lot and other parking proximate to Waldie Plaza that is generally available on evenings and weekends. It is just a short walk from both the east and west ends of Downtown to Waldie Plaza. Being the village center gathering place, Waldie Plaza is also well located for people to just stroll or enjoy a meal from a local restaurant or a brown bag lunch from home.

The other non-starter for the construction of another park/event center is that the City has no funding for the construction, the operations or the maintenance of another park/event center. Our current event and community centers are quite nice and are more than adequate for the City’s needs. However, they cannot support themselves financially. They drain money from the City’s general fund and there are higher priorities than another venue that costs the City money - priorities such as Police, Code Enforcement and essential maintenance of City infrastructure.

What is the plan for housing for Rivertown? There are a number of sites suitable for housing Downtown. However, the City owns just a few. The key City-owned catalyst site for new housing is the old Beede Lumber site. It is the largest and best housing site the City owns. The adjacent residential neighborhood is very nice and the river views will be attractive to buyers. Because the City owns this site, we can ensure that the product is well designed, high quality, for sale housing with restrictions to maximize home ownership occupancy. Without multiple sites, including the Beede site, developers with the wherewithal to implement an ambitious infill development and revitalization strategy cannot make the economics work. All City controlled housing sites will be high quality, market rate, for sale homes.

What kind of housing density are we looking at for the City owned sites? The market will support up to about 18 units per acre for the foreseeable future and that is the goal for the City owned sites. That translates to attached townhomes, but some detached units may be included depending on how the sites lay out. Further into the future, we believe that some industrial areas adjacent to the Marina will evolve to residential and could support higher density housing. However, the City does not own those sites.

What is going to happen to the Senior Center and Nick Rodriguez Center? Neither the Senior Center nor the Nick Rodriguez Center is part of the project under negotiations with the developer. Currently, and for the foreseeable future, the City has no funding to replace either of these facilities with newer and better facilities. The City is, therefore, planning to make incremental improvements to these facilities as we are able to find one-time funding sources for this purpose.

What is the current status of the project? After years of studies and false starts, the process of moving forward with a developer to kick off a long-awaited Downtown Revitalization effort started with the City Council's approval of a request for qualifications and proposals (RFQ/P) in June of 2014. The RFQ/P stressed the City's desire for high quality for-sale housing units. The Beede site is currently zoned for residential development of up to 10 units per acre under the City's 2003 General Plan. In June of 2015, the City Council directed staff to move forward with the completion of a Downtown Specific Plan and supporting environmental documents that will designate the old Beede Lumber site as mixed use, with residential density limited to not more than 18 units per acre.

Why did the City choose City Ventures as the developer for the City owned sites? After the RFQ/P process, City staff and consultants interviewed a number of interested developers, and reviewed their qualifications and experience. The City believes that City Ventures is the best suited developer to implement a Downtown development strategy that will successfully revitalize Rivertown. City Ventures, based in San Francisco and Newport Beach, focuses on the development of townhomes, high density condominiums, apartments, lofts, commercial mixed use, live-work, and single family detached homes in the San Francisco Bay Area and from Santa Barbara to San Diego. They are experienced in repositioning underutilized real estate into residential and mixed-use housing in urban infill areas and high demand suburban areas.

How and when will the project proceed? At this writing, the City Council has given direction to staff to negotiate exclusively with City Ventures for the development of City and Successor Agency owned sites in Downtown Antioch. These negotiations are in progress and it will take a few months to iron out all business terms, including the defining of what will constitute the project. Ultimately, the project will have to go through environmental review required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) before it can move forward. Any development agreement will include a scope of work, quality controls, economics, schedule, and phasing. Once entitlements are secured and the City Council approves an agreement with the developer, the developer can produce construction documents. All of this means that the earliest we will likely break ground on the first site is summer of 2017.