

From: Alex Lowe <alex@lowe.dev>
Sent: Tuesday, August 02, 2022 12:19 PM
To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>
Subject: Re: The George - Retail Space

Hi there,

Since my last email I've learned more about what's happening at The George and would like to officially retract my previous email. At this point I support allowing the requested changes by the developer, though I am still saddened by the lack of retail in which this will result.

I still believe the property owner is overcharging quite severely for this retail space and that this change will be detrimental to some of Ann Arbor's climate goals, but given the new information I have I don't believe the city preventing these changes is the correct response. I would however like to see the entire Packard corridor from Stadium Blvd to the edge of the city considered for TC1 zoning.

Thank you for your time,

Alex Lowe

On Tue, Mar 29, 2022, 20:34 Alex Lowe <alex@lowe.dev> wrote:
Hi there!

I was informed today that the owners of The George are attempting to get planning permission to turn their vacant retail space into 1-bedroom apartments. While I'm normally a big proponent of more residences, I feel this particular request deserves further study and a better effort from the property owner to show lack of demand before allowing this change.

From what I've been able to gather, the retail spaces [are going for \\$20-25/sf](#), which is very much [downtown Ann Arbor prices](#) and thus quite inappropriate for this space. In fact, if my reading is correct, commercial spaces nearby are going for half that price. I also understand that these retail spaces have never had a customer in over half a decade of existence, which leads me to question whether it was ever really part of the plan for this to be retail space or if the owners of the building were simply tragically overly optimistic about the rates they would be able to attain for the commercial space.

While not as in-demand as downtown spaces, retaining this as retail space (and ensuring it's appropriately priced as retail space) is critical to the city's goals. The space here should be considered a part of the centre of a 20-minute neighbourhood, and as such providing grocery access in this area should be considered essential. As of right now, much of the Bryant Pattengill East neighbourhood is essentially a food desert to those on foot, with this especially affecting those living west of Packard and south of Jewett.

It is my belief, therefore, that the property owners should be required to show that there is no demand for this retail space at much more reasonable prices before the city gives in and lets them remove that space altogether. It's in the city's best interests to make sure that retail space exists and is filled - for A2Zero reasons, for walkability reasons, to allow more people to live car-light or car-free lifestyles (which will in turn reduce traffic), and, of course, for financial reasons.

Best regards,

Alex Lowe
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