

# *Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation*

*P.O. Box 5245*

*Naperville, IL, 60567-5245*

[www.napervillehomeowners.org](http://www.napervillehomeowners.org)

**To:** Mayor Pradel and City Council Members

**From:** Dr. Bob Buckman, President Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation

**Subject:** 2030 Plan Supplemental Comments  
Proposed Revisions to Allowed Height in North Downtown Special Planning Area

**Date:** April 3, 2011

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This memorandum supplements the Confederation's previously provided public comments on the City's draft 2030 plan, and represents the views of the Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation's Board of Directors.

At the March 15, 2011 Council meeting, discussion about the allowable building heights in the proposed North Downtown Special Planning Area resulted in an amended height proposal for the area. While we concur with the proposal's reduction in height to 43' for properties located directly along Washington St., and appreciate the additional reductions in height throughout the remainder of the area, we remain concerned about both the number of elevation levels now proposed for the area and many of the building heights proposed within the area.

Documentation developed subsequent to the Council meeting resulted in 6 proposed height categories, up from 3 in the area north of Benton Avenue (omitting the western single family residential area west of Webster St.), for only a 3 block area.

We believe the height differentiations should be limited to the following:

1. 43' along Washington St. and in the existing R3 zoned area along Webster St. and the existing R2 and R3 zoned areas along Douglas Avenue. This is because of those properties' proximity to Washington Jr. High and the residential neighborhood on the west that is outside the bounds of the Downtown2030 plan;
2. 40' in the western half of the block bounded by Main St. and Webster St. This block is immediately adjacent to the residential neighborhood outside the bounds of the 2030 plan; and
3. 50' in the "core" of the proposed downtown special planning area, excluding the frontage along Washington St.

These height limitations are more consistent with existing zoning district height limits (43' for R3 and 40' for TU and conditional uses in R2), yet allow for increased building height in the "core" portion of the special planning area. In addition, the lower heights at the edges of the area adjacent to institutional and residential uses is in keeping with the plan's stated theme of protecting residential properties (page 9 of the plan) and in the school facility Spotlight, to not adversely impact pedestrian connections, routes

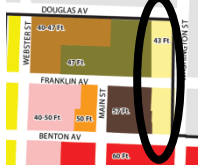
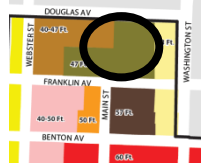
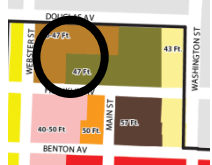
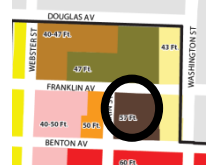
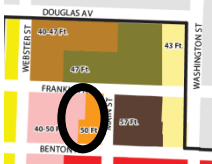
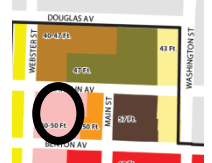
and environments (page 61 of the plan). As everyone knows, developers will typically ask for heights in excess of zoning allowances, and building mechanicals and decorative features can also add to height above the primary building structure. These can still be considered if there is an appropriate rationale and the impacts to the residential and institutional uses are mitigated. Furthermore, the proposal of 6 different height levels in the Council memorandum in a three block area is both confusing and needlessly complex. This will only serve to drive development to higher building heights across all of the blocks because of the multiple height allowances in a very small area.

Finally, there is an open acknowledgement that redevelopment of this area will result in increased traffic, which must be appropriately managed. This is demonstrated by comments made in Council and other meetings and by the reference within the plan itself to the potential for an additional traffic light along Washington St. Unwarranted increases in height will equate to even greater traffic volume as redevelopment occurs, and therefore we continue to be concerned that the failure to limit height and density will create unacceptable burdens on the existing transportation system. We believe our suggested building heights will strike the correct balance between encouraging redevelopment in the area and protecting the adjacent schools and neighborhood, while, limiting the increase in traffic.

Finally, we encourage Council to explicitly discuss and consider expected changes in traffic volumes resulting from the land uses allowed in the proposed North Downtown Special Planning Area. The City has existing traffic data available that would enable Council to have a specific discussion of this topic prior to approving the dramatic changes envisioned in the 2030 plan.

Please see the attached chart for detail on our height suggestions in the context of the areas' current zoning and the original and currently revised height proposals for the North Downtown Special Planning Area. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this iteration of the draft plan.

Attachment: North Downtown Special Planning Area Height Matrix

Block Description	Map Location	Current Zoning and Height Limits	Original Plan Height	Revised Plan Height	NAHC Recommendation
Fronting Washington		B5 Benton to Franklin <u>Secondary Commercial 2.5 FAR</u> TU Franklin to Douglas Transitional Use 40'	50' and 60'	43'	43'
Eastern portion of block bounded by Douglas and Franklin, except for along Washington		R2 Single Family and Low Density Multi-Family Residence 35' for single family and duplexes 40' for all other, limited to 3 stories	50'	47'	43' Douglas 50' interior "core"
Western portion of block bounded by Douglas and Franklin		R3 Med. Density Multi-Family Residence 43'	40' – 50'	40' – 47'	43'
Western portion of block bounded by Main and Washington		R2 along Franklin 35' for single family and duplexes <u>40' for all other, limited to 3 stories</u> TU along Benton 40'	60'	57'	50'
Eastern portion of block bounded by Main and Webster		R2 along Franklin 35' for single family and duplexes <u>40' for all other, limited to 3 stories</u> TU along Benton 40'	60'	50'	50'
Western portion of block bounded by Main and Webster		R2 along Franklin 35' for single family and duplexes <u>40' for all other, limited to 3 stories</u> TU along Benton 40'	40' – 50'	40' – 50'	40'