



Project Proposal - HARVEST GATE

Asylum Avenue - Pratt Street - Main Street

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December 22, 2014

Project Summary

Project mission / outline

The mission of this project is to create a vital downtown center in Hartford CT that supports local business and draws people into downtown. The project consists of small retail, mixed residential, artist spaces, an art gallery, a boutique hotel, and commercial space that would ideally be occupied by small businesses along with a university or college such as UCONN or University of Hartford.

This proposal outlines in some detail why and how these specific components are necessary to create vitality in downtown Hartford.

Giving the city a core

This project will create a vibrant city center with a higher density of shops, services, and residence along with public open space. Visitors can be a part of the culture that Hartford offers while exploring our high quality pedestrian network to the riverfront, science center, front street, Bushnell Park, and other amenities all within a ten minute walk. The development will act as a nucleus and a binder that will glue the city together.

Create quality job opportunity

Job creation is a large part of this development. It gives members of the Hartford community a personal investment in the success of their downtown and a job in a place they are proud to be part of. The development will host small affordable business spaces for local entrepreneurs and/or individuals with marketable skills that would be able to take advantage of the small business startup grants available. The development will have a co-op which will create quality jobs both in the retail aspect and through the farming and transportation of crops. Peripheral jobs that are needed to staff and maintain the buildings and new businesses are created as well.

Healthy, sustainable, affordable living

The residential housing will range from efficient family living units to small units for the single active urban dweller and upscale loft style apartments. The units will utilize building techniques and technology to create a healthy place that is energy efficient and affordable.

Bring the cultures of Hartford and surrounding areas to the forefront

Hartford has a variety of vibrant cultures that are thriving in regional neighborhoods within the city. Representatives from these neighborhoods, as part of the community aspect of this development, will seek out individuals whom are presently operating businesses and offer these individuals an opportunity to bring their talents downtown. The plan is to have an umbrella business model that will assist these individuals to succeed in the new setting. Similar to the business model of a barber shop; where someone rents a chair and in the background is an overseeing set of policies. This allows personal expression and success of individuals while retaining a level of quality and consistency within the development. Bringing these cultures to the center will be something unique that will draw people to Hartford. This will also bring a variety of people into the center that otherwise feel ostracized in most urban redevelopments, which will also be a feature unique to this downtown.

Parking

The center of down town at this time is a series of parking lots. including, at its very core, one vast parking lot where this development is being proposed. Currently Hartford favors the vehicle rather than the pedestrian which is one of the reasons why, after the business day is done there is little pedestrian traffic in the city. Knowing parking will be needed, the plan incorporates new parking structures and additional spaces surrounding the development to handle an expected increase in traffic. One idea includes utilizing the open air parking at the corner of Main and Morgan and converting it to a multi story parking structure. This structure would sit across from the Stilt building at 20 Church St. and be visible from the highway, if done well, it would add architectural value to Hartford's sky line both in the city and from the highway while solving the parking issue.

Art

Art is something that every great city embraces, shared individual expression connects us to each other. The development itself is designed to act as a piece of art. The buildings will be built with character and craftsmanship; to have the feeling of human construction rather than manufactured spaces designed to produce profits with little concern for the human experience.

Space for outdoor events

The planned center court yard is based on the design of the Campo de' Fiori in Italy. The idea is to have a space that allows outdoor dining during most days, but also is large enough to host a variety of outdoor events. Some events that we have envisioned are farmers markets, basketball competitions, readings from authors and teachers, outdoor movie nights, winter lights and ice skating. Although some of these events are already taking place in the city; this design will provide an easily accessible space for future events to utilize which will assist in keeping citizens engaged in downtown. This space can be used in any way that brings the community together and draws people into the city.

Sustainable technology and the future of living

The development will be designed with the utmost concern for environmental impact. The living spaces will be clean and efficient. The theory of "living better with less" will be the underlining model for the design of the residential units. The buildings sustainability will be part of the culture of this space. Every aspect from materials to water management will be considered. The culture of sustainability will be felt throughout this development. The authenticity and implementation of this vision will determine the success of this project and therefore the success of the revitalization. For environmentally conscience individuals, municipalities, and states this development will be a beacon of the future of urban renewal.

Educate

Creating change that ripples through our city, our state, and so on is the big picture plan of this development. To create real and lasting change we must educate people. This will be accomplished first by putting a better product in front of people; highlighting better food and a better quality of living that is within reach. Paralleled in importance is providing the opportunity for a healthier, happier life style. This development will act as an example of a different way of thinking, a model of thinking that requires a more divergent approach to our problems as a society. .

"One thing we do know is that a well informed and better educated society has a better chance at making decisions that have a positive impact on their life and that makes a better place to live for everyone."

- OECD better life index international study, RSA statistic studies, UN studies

Vision

The vision is to create a necessity market rather than a luxury market. The development will showcase and highlight what makes Hartford different from surrounding areas and establish its place in the market. There will be an assortment of commercial/retail spaces varying in size. Many will be smaller spaces that will be affordable, utilizing the "makers space" idea of a shared kitchen for the smaller restaurants. This allows individuals to provide a specialty product or service without large overhead, reducing the risk of failure and diversifying the services and products offered. This developmental strategy is found in the original town centers; People went there because they could get multiple things they needed in one place from people they knew and trusted. Added to this is the ability to see other people they know, have chance encounters, and participate in activities, all which lead to more time spent in the city center leading to a stronger downtown.

Beyond the statistics I want to create a place within my city in which I would enjoy spending time, bring my friends to when they visit, and be proud when I say I live here.

Mission

To be part of the solution to solve social and economic inequalities. To create opportunities for many rather than a few without placing the burden of growth on the environment or society, and to highlight the healthy interdependence between people, business, and place. To generate income while still serving a greater purpose beyond profit.

Project square foot overview-

Parking - 6600 (on site only)
Retail / mixed use - 12,500
Residential - 18,000
Total - 37,100
