

City of Hopkins response to questions from 5/19/19 neighborhood meeting:

When did the lot become zoned for R4? Does the plan conflict with the 2030 Comp Plan?

The 2030 Comp Plan identified the zoning as R-4 but guided as low density residential. It has been zoned as R-4 since 1986 and perhaps longer.

The site is on the edge of the downtown district, surrounded by commercial uses on two sides and residential on two sides. At the time the 2030 Comp Plan was adopted, SW LRT was still uncertain. In areas with a mix of uses, often you can make the case for either land use. Now that SW LRT is under construction, the City is inclined to look at guidance of future land uses through the lens of transit oriented development when a site is within the ½ mile radius of a LRT station.

At this point, a project has not been proposed. However, the concept of an Artspace development is consistent with draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan, specifically the goals to:

- Grow the supply of housing in Hopkins, particularly in targeted areas. The site is within a 0.5 mile walkshed of the Downtown Hopkins LRT station. The comp plan supports developing housing as part of transit oriented development.
- Maintain an inventory of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households.

As the Artspace project is planned, it will be guided by the following goals:

- Reinforce Hopkins' unique identity and sense of community through high quality urban design.
- Encourage all public and private developments to be well designed, durable, human scaled and pedestrian oriented.

Who is paying for what?

It is too early to know how the financing will be structured. Every redevelopment project has its own variables. Artspace relies on many financial partners in order to put a project together. The City of Hopkins looks at each project independently and evaluates our role. It is too early in the development process to know the answer to this question.

Is the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority involved?

Not at this point. If through the site design process the need or desire for HCRRRA property is identified, we will have those conversations.

Value of an affordable artist live/work housing development

Artists that qualify for affordable rents – would they bring that much money into the City?

The goal of having an affordable place in our community for creative people to live and work, allowing them to focus on their artform, has everything to do with the value creative people bring to a community. Creative people often see things differently and therefore can help lead to unique solutions. Artists will support our existing creative businesses as well as add to the strength of the Hopkins Center for the Arts.

It has nothing to do with how much money they have or don't have. That being said, creative people need groceries, work other jobs, have children and give back to the community, just like everyone else. The development itself would bring money into the community by paying property taxes on a site that is currently tax exempt.

Artspace has studied the impact of their projects on communities and has tangible evidence to show that where their projects are located, the surrounding community thrive.

Site Selection:

What other properties were considered? Why wasn't Katherine Curren site considered? Or the Old Sinclair site? What was the process for eliminating other properties?

First, the City has to look at either property we own or properties where there is a willing seller. We do not have the ability to use eminent domain (condemnation) for economic development purposes under State law. Several sites were identified but are not available or not feasible.

For instance, Katherine Curren is owned by the Hopkins School District and they have not indicated an interest in selling this property. It is also too large, and likely too expensive, for a 40-unit building. The former Sinclair gas station site on Mainstreet is being held for redevelopment, to be combined with the Hopkins Park Plaza when the owners decide to sell. On its own, it is too small for an Artspace development.

In addition to site size and availability, other criteria that has been applied to the search includes: within ½ mile radius of LRT, close proximity to Mainstreet and the Hopkins Center for the Arts, zoning, and site conditions. City staff looked at all parking lots in our downtown system and concluded Lot 800 was the one that was most viable due to the location, lack of revenue and its low use.

If the City isn't actively trying to bring development to this property, why do they use underutilized as a factor?

While the City didn't come at this from a goal of development on this site, we do look for underutilization as a criteria for any redevelopment project. Maximizing a property's use and taxable value is important. Hopkins is a fully-developed city and has a need to continue to increase the taxable value in order to keep our property taxes reasonable. If a piece of property is not producing any money for the City, not meeting a critical need and is not part of a larger redevelopment plan, it is only fiscally-prudent to consider development that increases the tax base.

What is the future of Lot 800 if not used for an Artspace development? Has there been any thought to have developers look at the property for other proposals?

It is impossible to say what the future of this site holds. Disposing of City-owned property is a City Council decision. It may continue to be used as a City parking lot into the foreseeable future, or another development proposal could come along (solicited or unsolicited) that they support and they could choose to dispose of it.

The lot is not in an ideal location to make it a permitted lot. Many people are not willing to pay for parking in Hopkins, even in the central business district. It is also not centrally-located or visible from Mainstreet which makes it impractical for restaurant and bar parking.

Future demand for parking is not easy to predict. Demand may increase in the near term but may also decrease as ridesharing, LRT, increase in biking and driverless cars will influence demand for automobile parking, especially in the periphery of Downtown Hopkins. The impact of the development of the site on our overall public parking system will be evaluated through feasibility analysis. Capacity does exist within other municipal lots.

Has Artspace gone into other single family residential neighborhoods before?

Artspace has extensive experience working in similar communities such as Hopkins and with single family neighborhoods. The Pullman project in Chicago, Silver Spring, MD, Mesa, AZ are just recent examples. One closer to home is Jackson Flats in Minneapolis. This nearby project is an Artspace development in a lower-density residential neighborhood.

<https://www.artspace.org/jac-flats> The architecture is unique in every one of Artspace's developments so they will scale, size and design the project to be uniquely tailored for Hopkins and the surrounding site characteristics.

Site Design:

Garbage service, setbacks, green space, snow removal, main floor space, hours of operation, building height, parking and artist amenities would all be discussed as part of the site design process that the City would like the community to be involved with and help inform.

We have applied for a grant from the Metropolitan Council to include robust community engagement at the beginning of the concept and site design process to help shape this development in a way that provides community benefit. We hope you stay engaged.