

Covell Village
Planning Commissioner Questions
May 23, 2005

The Commissioners posed a number of important questions about Covell Village last week. Staff will be addressing these in detail. However, we have assembled some materials which we hope will help clarify important aspects of the project.

To start, we have a letter from Whit Manley, attorney on the issues of water supply, landfill and agricultural mitigation [tab 1]. Next is a letter from Chuck Cunningham of Cunningham Engineering on the issues of sewer capacity, water wells, storm water and traffic levels of service [tab 2].

What follows are our responses to some of the Commissioners' questions with some related attachments.

- **5 Minute fire response time** - A large portion of Davis is currently outside the recommended 5 minute response time. See the attached color map showing those areas [tab 3].
- **Outside Experts** - Short résumés for Andres Duany, Victor Dover and Paul Crawford are attached. Andres Duany's comments are in the attached email [tab 4]. Mr. Dover was contracted to review the plan by City staff. His suggestions resulted in better road connections, improved appearance for several major roads and the hamlet centers. In general, he commented that the "developers should be rewarded". At staff's request, Mr. Crawford was retained to draft zoning documents including the attached Preliminary Planned Development.
- **Differences between New Urbanist and City standard zoning** - A one page matrix of some key differences between Covell Village's New Urban zoning requirements and the City's pre-existing zoning code is attached. Also attached are Crawford's Draft Preliminary Planned Development ordinance, his memo describing that workproduct and the street sections for the project [tab 5].
- **Is Covell Village infill?** - Three definitions are: "The term "infill" in its simplest form refers to development on vacant land surrounded by developed land." - City of Fairfax, VA. "The use of vacant land and property within a built-up area for further construction or development, especially as part of a neighborhood preservation or limited growth program."- Yahoo online reference library. "The term infill refers to "filling in" vacant parcels of land in existing developed areas." - The Smart Growth Initiative for the City of Austin, TX.
- **Solar Energy** - Comments from Tobin Booth clarifying the engineering estimate of solar electric performance are attached. He estimates the proposed system would provide 30% of the electrical needs of a "standard" house. He also notes that since these homes will be more efficient than a "standard" house, the percentage would be higher [tab 6].

- **Housing Breakdown** - A color Housing Distribution chart showing the various types of housing is attached to help visualize the diversity and relative affordability of housing within Covell Village [tab 7].
- **Other areas in Flood Plains?** - A Citywide flood map is attached. It illustrates that a number of already built areas previously risked flooding. It confirms that this issue is normally resolved through proper engineering [tab 8].
- **Are SACOG growth requirements affected by the addition of Covell Village?** - Attached is a detailed essay with references explaining how the SACOG "fair share" allocation works. It clarifies that Covell Village would not trigger any increase whatsoever in Davis' SACOG allocation. On the contrary, the project would help Davis fulfill its future obligations, whatever they turn out to be [tab 9].
- **Is the Village Inn Important?** - Notes on the role of an inn in a New Urbanist Village are attached. Most prominent village-type New Urban projects have plans for a hotel or inn. These interact symbiotically with small shops, offices, senior care, hospice and the smaller dwelling types to add the vibrancy of people and activity at times when other uses may not. For the village to succeed, it must have all types of people at all times of day and night. The Inn plays an important role in that effort. In addition, its late removal poses challenges for the EIR process [tab 10].
- **What impact will bicycle commuters have on the system?** - While bikers and walkers may not have been accounted for in the traffic studies, a study by Mr. Z Smith for the City's Energy Task Force indicates about 33% of Covell Village residents who work in Davis will walk or bike to work (about 8% walk; about 25% bike). The essential graph from Mr. Smith's study is attached. ¹ [tab 11].
- **Should we accept Level of Service F intersections?** - No. There aren't any after the mitigations specified in the EIR are implemented. There is a significant difference between levels of service at intersections and road segments. The difference is described in the Draft EIR. The important excerpts are attached. They clarify that the critical engineering criteria is intersections, not segments [tab 12].
- **Agricultural Soils** - Two maps of soil quality are attached [tab 13].
- **Are homesites next to the road?** - In the Agreement, no more than 5 total home sites would be possible on all the parcels. None of the one to two acre sites would be included in the total mitigation easement lands. Two options are outlined, one is to place no more than one site per existing legal county parcel. The other option is to cluster all 5 sites together along the north edge of the Meyer parcel. They would front an access road for the organic farm which would be added on its north edge. The homes would buffer the organic farm from conventional farming to the north. Clustering would be the better environmental option, but will require the cooperation of the County.

¹ Covell Village averages about 2 miles from the UCD reference point used.

- **Pole Line and L Street** - There are plans for traffic calming as drivers enter Davis from the north. However, the specific configuration has not yet been engineered. A roundabout would be one possibility.
- **Hotel/Inn Phasing** - If the project begins in 2007, the infrastructure for the Village is slated for completion in the third phase of construction or about 2010. Thus, a hotel or inn is not likely to open until approximately 2011. By that time, approximately 500 homes should have been completed. Hospice and Co-housing infrastructure are slated for phase two. This could change if the Village is started earlier due to a strong demand. For instance, if Trader Joe's were to sign an agreement, their building would be constructed as soon as practical. In that event, a thriving Village center could encourage an earlier start for the Inn. As this scenario suggests, the commercial parts of the project must, by their nature, rely upon the marketplace to inform us when the risks are acceptable to begin.
- **Ag Mitigation Land in Drainage Pond** - Like huge causeway tracts, many delta islands and much of the Netherlands, a portion of the agricultural mitigation lands will be low lands which flood intermittently. This efficient use of land will also allow us to potentially improve the soil quality of this particular parcel when we backfill the area with good soils gathered elsewhere. An aerial map is attached along with the executive summary of an agricultural expert outlining the steps needed to accomplish this goal [tab 14].
- **Why rush to drill the well?** - The well will take about 33 months to complete (see attached schedule). To assure the water is available for the early homes, it is prudent to begin work soon after successful Measure J vote [tab 15].
- **Unitrans blessed the transit concept?** - Yes. Memorandum of Understanding has been signed. A copy is attached [tab 16].
- **Why not use a Landscape and Lighting District for maintenance?** - LLDs add to the monthly costs for residents of a project that is striving to maximize affordability. As noted in the Bee, "Property is now hot tax source" for cities (article attached)[tab 17]. This was confirmed in the fiscal study by the fact that no supplemental funding was needed for the project to cover the costs of maintenance. Therefore a LLD is neither needed nor desirable. After the payments committed to in the Development Agreement, the project adds an average net of \$1.4 million per year to the City (page 4 of Navazio staff report dated May 12).
- **Why this project?** - Covell Village is the right project because it:
 - Offers far more amenities than any outside developer could or would;
 - Includes a high proportion of lower cost housing;
 - Falls within the goal of a 1% growth rate;
 - Discourages development in the unincorporated parts of the county;

- Is an infill project which uses existing infrastructure and thus could generate \$18 million for improvements anywhere in Davis (page 6, Navazio staff report).
- **Why now?** - It is not now. The planning we are undertaking today is for dwellings which wouldn't be occupied until 2007 at the earliest, and which would extend to 2017.
- **Baseline Project Features** - A baseline list previously drafted at staff request by Covell Village is attached [tab 18].
- **Consuming the remaining WWTP capacity** - The plant was engineered to serve housing on the Covell Village parcel. This was because it was within the General Plan from 1987 to 2000. The EIR analysis simply confirms that the engineering was accurate.
- For handy reference, we have included copies of various useful plans [tab 19]