

Submitted at DRB 2/14/17



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The Burlington Business Association, founded in 1978, is a non-profit, non-political membership organization with 200 business and non-profit members.

February 14, 2017

Development Review Board Members,

Our mission is to enhance and promote the economic vitality of Burlington, Vermont, and to assure that the City of Burlington continues as the cultural, social, political, educational and economic center of northwestern Vermont.

The Burlington Business Association (BBA) and its more than 230 local business members supports the Burlington Town Center Redevelopment, a project which is crucial to the future economic vitality of downtown Burlington.

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We encourage the Development Review Board to support this project and make every effort to move it forward. The project has benefited from a comprehensive public input process, which has resulted in a plan that benefits our downtown, our local businesses and the Burlington community.

The planned 274 units of housing will be an important step in addressing our housing supply crisis. In addition, with 20% of the units (total of 54) designated as perpetually affordable, the project will offer much-needed workforce housing. Time and time again, the BBA has heard from member businesses that struggle to attract new employees because of the high cost of living, one which rivals that of a major metropolitan area, not a small college town like ours.

Kelly Devine
Executive Director

It's time we address the fact that businesses are leaving for more modern, energy efficient office space in other parts of Chittenden County. This project creates "Class A" office space in the commercial center of Vermont.

Sarah O Donnell
Membership Services &
Events Manager

We understand that concerns have been raised about parking management during project construction. A recent agreement between the BBA and the city of Burlington requires the BBA to help support the parking needs of this project during construction. We will be working with DPW and private parking owners and operators to identify available parking spaces downtown and ensure parking needs are met during the construction phase. We know from our work on the Parking and Transportation Management Plan that parking spaces are available to meet this

Jack Commo
Administrative Coordinator



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need. On an average weekday, about 50% of our more than 8,000 downtown parking spaces sit vacant.

The proposed project replaces a failing suburban-style mall in the core of our city, with a vibrant mixed-use urban neighborhood, one that enhances our downtown. It will allow residents and community members the opportunity to live, work and play in the heart of this community.

For their part, Devonwood has consistently shown a commitment to working with community members, hearing out their concerns and making adjustments accordingly. There has been an honest effort to make this project one that the entire community can support.

The transformative nature of this project will project will shape our downtown for decades to come. We urge you to support it, because we believe that it represents much needed progress for Burlington. It will support our local downtown retail and hospitality industry, add office spaces for companies that want to be in Burlington and provide workforce housing for people who want to be part of this community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kelly Devine'.

Kelly Devine

Executive Director