

## Apex 400 – Frequently Asked Questions

### Background

**Question:** Where is the Apex 400 project located?

**Answer:** The proposed project is located at the northwest corner of Main Street and Hillside Avenue and would encompass the former Giesche Shoe site and the Village owned parking lot at 418 - 424 N. Main Street, along with the portion of the lot that extends to Glenwood Avenue.

**Question:** What do the long range Village plans show as an appropriate use of this site?

**Answer:** The Main Street parking lot is one of the key opportunity sites identified in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Downtown Strategic Plan. Both plans recommend mixed-use commercial and residential development of the Main Street parking lot portion of the site. While neither of these plans incorporate the Giesche property into their recommendation, the property was not available when the abovementioned long-range plans were drafted.

The market study conducted as part of the 2009 Downtown Strategic Plan recommends that the Village add a minimum of 450 new dwelling units to the downtown to support the existing businesses and increase the vitality of the central business district. The 2013 Streetscape and Parking Study also recommends that the Village partner with a developer to construct a parking garage in the downtown through a public private partnership, rather than constructing a stand-alone garage, to maximize the Village's opportunities and reduce Village construction costs. The study identified the Main Street parking lot as one of three preferred sites to incorporate a parking structure as part of a private development on the south side of the tracks. The proposed project would meet these and a number of other goals outlined in the Village's various long-term plans.

**Question:** How long has this site been vacant?

**Answer:** The Giesche Shoe store closed in 2014, leading to a vacant site for the last five years. Since that time, four prospective developments have been proposed for the site. Other than the current proposal, none of the prior projects proceeded past the conceptual planning stage.

**Question:** What are the current commercial vacancy percentages in the downtown?

**Answer:** The total vacancy for downtown street level commercial space in 2018 was 14.92 percent. However, with proposed developments at both the McChesney and Giesche properties, the vacancy percentage in the downtown would be reduced to 4.51 percent.

**Question:** What type of public outreach was conducted surrounding this project?

**Answer:** In May 2018, the Glen Ellyn Plan Commission conducted a pre-application meeting.

This public meeting was open to residents and businesses to attend. Even though pre-application meetings are not required to be noticed to the public, property owners within 350 feet of the site were notified of the meeting. Notifications of the pre-application meeting were also included in the Village's e-newsletter, social media channels, website and downtown electronic sign. The Village also collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Alliance to share the notice with their members. The meeting offered an opportunity to provide feedback prior to formal submittals to the Village.

Information on the public hearing (originally scheduled for December 6, 2018 and rescheduled for Monday, January 7, 2019) was publicized in a number of avenues including the public notice printed in the Daily Herald newspaper, press releases to the media, as well as again through the Village's social media channels, e-newsletter, website and downtown electronic sign. The Village mailed notice to taxpayers of record within 350 feet of the property and placed a Public Hearing sign on the property. In addition, the Village worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Alliance to communicate all meetings and information to the business community.

Similar outreach methods were employed before the Village Board meeting to consider the Preliminary Planned Unit Development, the Plan Commission meeting to consider the Final Planned Unit Development, and the Village Board meeting to consider the Final Planned Unit Development.

## Residential & Commercial Components of Project

**Question:** What does the residential component of the project entail?

**Answer:** This is a transit oriented development which includes 107 luxury apartment units on the second through fifth floors. Transit oriented developments (TOD's) are common in many suburban downtowns due to proximity to train stations and convenient businesses. Units will include a mix of studio to two bedroom luxury apartment with expected rents ranging from \$1,770 to \$3,326 per month. The developer has the ability to convert one bedroom units to two bedroom units if demand is higher for larger units. The units are being constructed to allow conversion to condos units if desired in the future. The building will feature several common spaces including a rooftop pool, barbeque area, party room (with a shared kitchen), fitness and yoga room, conference rooms and a golf simulator.

**Question:** Is there a need for this type of housing in the Village?

**Answer:** The Village has a generous supply of single-family housing, affordable apartments and condominiums. The Village does not currently have an available supply of luxury apartments. These units will have high quality finishes and could be easily converted to condominiums in the future, if appropriate. This type of housing is attractive primarily to seniors and millennials and would add diversity to the Village's housing stock.

**Question:** Has the Village *rejected* previous development proposals for the site?

**Answer:** No. In 2002, Mid-America proposed a multi-story senior living development on the Main Street Parking Lot property only. Mid-America ultimately decided not to move forward with the project and withdrew their application. In 2014, Opus Development proposed a 5-story apartment building with first-floor commercial and structured parking, very similar to the Apex 400 project. Opus never formally submitted an application to request approval of the project. After 3 years, they decided they did not want to pursue the project further. These plans indicate that this property is best suited for a mixed-used development at a similar size and scope of what is being proposed by the developer. The market has shown that the development community believes that a multi-story structure is suited for the site based on location, demand and potential for financial success.

**Question:** What is the commercial component of this development?

**Answer:** The project will provide 8,844 square feet of first floor commercial space. The new commercial space included in this development will add commercial space meeting today’s commercial tenant expectations, in addition to meeting the current standards for building and fire safety codes. This new commercial space would potentially invite new uses to locate downtown.

## Parking

**Question:** Will the Village lose any parking as a result of this project?

**Answer:** Currently, the Main Street parking lot include a total of 122 spaces; 80 metered spaces available for public use and 42 parking spaces for permit parking only. The Apex 400 project will provide 137 public parking spaces on the first floor of the garage. While the project will result in the elimination of 22 on-street parking stalls (18 on Hillside and 4 on Main), 9 new parallel parking spaces are expected to be installed on Hillside as part of the CBD streetscape project. As seen in the chart below, the result will be a net gain of 2 public parking spaces.

Analysis of the Public Parking Inventory on Main Street and Hillside Avenue, April 2019 <sup>1</sup>	
Number of Public Parking Spaces	Reason for Change to the Parking Inventory
137	Public parking spaces included in Apex 400 development
-122	Existing public parking spaces in the Main/Glenwood Lots
-18	Parking spaces lost to two-way conversion of Hillside Avenue
-4	Parking spaces lost to the sidewalk bump-out on Main Street
9	Parallel parking spaces gained on Hillside Avenue due to street widening
2	Net gain of public parking spaces

<sup>1</sup> Assumes Construction of Site Plan Option A (without additional 3 feet of adjacent alley)

**Question:** How long will the parking structure at this location be under construction?

**Answer:** Once construction begins, the developer anticipates completing the structure within six months to be available for public use. In the meantime, the Village is working on a short-term parking plan to accommodate downtown parking needs.

**Question:** Is the Village selling the Main Street parking lot land to the developer?

**Answer:** While the developer will own the property during the construction of the parking garage and building, once complete, the Village will resume ownership in perpetuity of the first floor parking garage which will include the 137 public parking spaces.

**Question:** How will the public be able to access the first floor public parking?

**Answer:** There will be three access points for public parking, including entrances off of Main Street, Hillside Avenue and Glenwood Avenue. This increase over the two existing access/entry points to the Village surface parking lot will improve circulation and vehicle distribution to the surrounding road network. Residential access to the second floor of parking would only be accessible from Hillside Avenue.

**Question:** Why is the Village not requesting additional public parking to be provided?

**Answer:** In this particular location (C5A zoning district), the developer is not required to provide parking for the commercial or residential components of the project. However, the Village has requested that the developer exceed the Village's requirements by not only replacing the existing public parking, but also providing parking for the residents of the development. The proposed public and residential parking exceeds Village requirements and ensures that there is no net loss of public parking in the downtown as a result of the project. Adding more public parking would add more height and bulk to the project.

## Zoning, Environmental and Safety

**Question:** Has a traffic analysis been performed to identify the impact of increased traffic from the proposed development?

**Answer:** Yes, a traffic impact study was conducted with conservative estimates based in part on higher traffic counts on Main Street because of ongoing construction projects on Park Boulevard and Taylor Street this past summer. It is expected that the traffic generated by the development will be low, with approximately 38 vehicles entering the site and 31 vehicles leaving the site during the busiest traffic hour of the day. The Village's traffic consultant agrees with the findings of the traffic impact study submitted by the developer's consultant. The findings show that the existing roadway network is adequate to accommodate the additional traffic expected to be generated by the development. While delays would continue to be experienced when gates are down for train activity, vehicular traffic delays at intersections are projected to increase by only a few seconds following the completion of the development.

**Question:** Were the traffic studies conducted on atypical days when some schools had not yet begun?

**Answer:** While the initial traffic counts were performed over the summer prior to school starting, the Village required the traffic to be recounted after St. Petronille's children were back to school. The traffic study took into account the traffic generated by the school, including both motorists and pedestrians.

**Question:** How is the building height in comparison to others in the downtown?

**Answer:** Although there are several two to three story buildings adjacent to or across the street from the site at heights of 36 to 51 feet, a four story building is what the Zoning Code allows on the site. As part of the approval for the planned unit development, the developer is seeking a deviation from the height limitation to allow a five story building. The development was initially proposed to be 65 feet at its highest points (at the building corners due to an architectural cornice feature). However, the developer reduced the maximum height of the building to below 61 feet just prior to Village Board approval of the Preliminary PUD plans. The northeast corner of the building along Main Street will now be 54 feet above the pavement and the southeast corner of the building will be 47 feet above the pavement due to the 6-foot change in elevation across the site. There are several apartment developments on the periphery of the downtown core that are five to seven stories tall. The height of some taller nearby buildings are as follows: St. Petronille = 119 feet, Glen Ellyn Bible Church = 62 feet, Civic Center = 95 feet.

The Village is requiring that the Developer replace the existing parking on site to maintain public parking on the property as a convenience for downtown businesses and their customers. The entire ground level of the property will be reserved for public parking. The public parking component of the project, although essential, is also the main reason that a deviation is necessary since the ground level public parking will have a 14-foot clear height. If this important public parking level were eliminated, the height deviation would be reduced to 1 or 2 feet.

**Question:** Are the number of zoning requests for this project typical?

**Answer:** Most every special use and planned unit development petition involves requests for multiple types of deviations or variations. Since planned unit developments promote progressive development of land by encouraging more creative design for developments than is possible under the more conventional zoning regulations, relief from multiple sections of the code are common. The planned unit development provisions are intended to allow greater design flexibility than is normally permitted by the district regulations. Special uses are uses that, because of their unique character, cannot be properly classified in any particular district or districts without an evaluation of the specific use in the particular location. Therefore, special uses also regularly require relief from a number of zoning provisions. Granting relief from the

Village's codes is legal and often found with PUDs. It does not violate the Village's Zoning Code.

**Question:** Is the size of the building appropriate for the site?

**Answer:** Comparing the size of the former Giesche building to the proposed Apex 400 building is not an equitable comparison because the entire Apex 400 project site is more than 3 ½ times the size of the Giesche Shoe property. Buildings in the C5A zoning district are allowed to be constructed to the lot lines. The purpose of the C5A zoning district is to allow for high density development in a compact area for the purpose of increasing downtown residents and patrons.

**Question:** Does the building meet the Village's Appearance Guidelines?

**Answer:** The proposed building meets several criteria of the Village's Design Guidelines including, but not limited to the following:

- The building will be constructed of earth-toned brick and stone to match the color of nearby buildings.
- The middle portion of the building along Main Street will be setback several feet above the first floor to breakdown the overall scale of the building.
- The parapet walls will have a defined top which will frame the building.
- There is enhanced landscaping proposed along Hillside Avenue and Main Street utilizing recommended plant materials from the Design Guidelines.
- All proposed lighting is dark sky compliant.
- The storefronts will have cloth awnings that will relate to the building façade and to awnings on adjacent downtown buildings.
- Masonry will be used on all sides of the building, including the upper floors.
- Parking is proposed below the residential units and in the rear part of the building and will not be seen from Main Street or Hillside Avenue.
- All utilities will be undergrounded and all HVAC units will be screened from public view.

**Question:** Will sunlight be diminished on the street as a result of the development?

**Answer:** A computer generated sun study was conducted by the developer. The sun study shows what time of day Main Street will be in complete shadow with a 45 foot building (permitted height) versus a 65 foot building (proposed height). The proposed building as opposed to a permitted height building one-story shorter, would reduce sunlight on Main Street by 30-40 minutes in the evening, depending upon the season.

**Question:** Will the project result in the loss of commercial square footage in the downtown?

**Answer:** The Giesche store contained approximately 15,000 square feet of sales area on two floors and the Apex 400 building will provide approximately 8,840 square feet of first floor commercial space. However, the proposed commercial space will be constructed to meet the needs of current commercial clients with safety features, efficient layouts and amenities that are

sought after by today's business tenants. It is expected that the proposed businesses will generate an increase in sales tax revenue to the Village and provide contemporary retail space to meet the needs of new retail tenants.

## Financials

**Question:** How much is the Developer expecting to invest and what is the financial impact to the Village of Glen Ellyn?

**Answer:** The Developer is projected to spend \$41M on this project and is seeking \$1.36M total over five years in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) incentives in addition to the Main Street Parking lot, valued at \$1.845M. The reconstruction and expansion of the public parking lot at an estimated cost of \$3M is also a financial benefit to the public and will be Village owned once the improvements are complete. The Developer will also improve the streetscape on these blocks of the downtown in conformity with the new streetscape design to be completed soon.

The project is projected to generate \$7.3M of increment to the Village after incentives are paid out over the life of the TIF. The project would grow the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) and benefit all taxing districts once the TIF expires, generating approximately \$700K in property taxes by the end of the TIF. The Village's consultant has vetted the developers proforma and believes the estimated return on costs of approximately 6.5 percent is reasonable given that market return on cost benchmarks are near 7 percent.