

From: [Jim Edson](#)
To: [Bunch, Eric](#); [Shields, Kathryn](#); [Barnes, Lee](#); [Bough, Andrea](#); [Ellington, Brandon](#); [Fowler, Dan](#); [Justis, Amy](#); [Loar, Teresa](#)
Cc: [MayorO: Public Testimony](#)
Subject: Fidelity Security Life Insurance Company Headquarters Building - 27th/Grand Ch 100 Plan Incentive Feedback (Ordinance 211016)
Date: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 1:16:06 AM

December 1, 2021

To: Councilpersons Mr. Eric Bunch and Ms. Katherine Shields; Neighborhood Planning and Development Committee

Copies: Mayor Quinton Lucas; City Clerk Marilyn Sanders

RE: Fidelity Security Life Insurance Company Headquarters Building

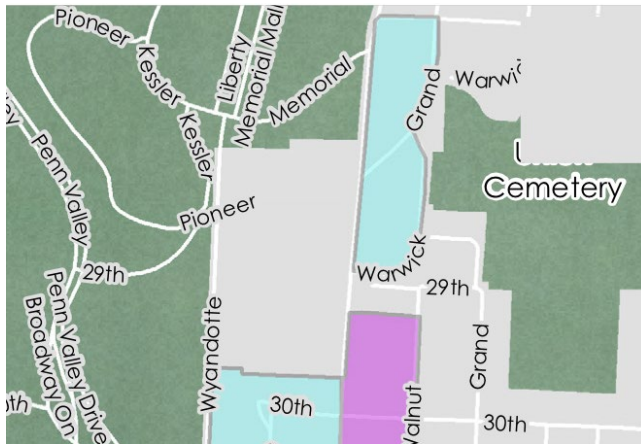
27th/Grand Ch 100 Plan Incentive Feedback

(Ordinance 211016)

My name is Jim Edson. My wife and I live at 204 East 30th Street. We have been homeowners in Union Hill for 20 yrs. I have served on the Union Hill Homes Association Board and the Union Hill Design Review Committee. Currently, I am a Board member on the Union Hill Special Business District and the Past President of Midtown KC Now. I recently retired from a 45-year career as an Architect and urban planner.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my concerns related to the proposed Fidelity Security Life (FSL) Headquarters building. Since the site at 27th and Main was cleared in the early 1970's, the Crown Center development has gradually progressed up to Union Hill with this property laying-in-wait. I have always felt that it important that this site be developed carefully as a "Gateway" building. Its southern corner splits the routes to Crown Center and the Crossroads/Downtown districts. It provides the opportunity for a people-friendly, active, urban edge to the Federal Reserve/Penn Valley Park green space across Main and Union Cemetery across Grand. Likewise, it connects walkers from Union Hill and the new residences to these routes and paths to Penn Valley Park. The new streetcar stop also brings the opportunity of an important public space and connecting hub of roads and walking paths to the development. These opportunities point to this site as one of the most desirable available in midtown Kansas City. I would also contend that the proposed project plan does not fulfill the promise of the site.

The potential of this site and those immediately to the south were recognized in the Main Corridor Overlay District (Ordinance 171037) when the site was designated as a Transit Node.



B. TRANSIT NODES

Transit nodes are centered around a rapid transit stop. Transit nodes encourage an appropriate mixture of density and uses around rapid transit stops to increase ridership and support transit investments. These nodes are characterized by compact development that facilitates access between rapid transit stops and nearby residential, commercial, civic, recreational, and institutional uses.

It is important that this project contribute to these goals of improving walkability and increased pedestrian access to this portion of Main Street to the benefit of the Streetcar project. The proposed Project could and should support the intent of the Main Corridor Overlay District in facilitating access to the surrounding amenities. It's important that the opportunity to create a great place with this Project is not lost.

Aside from my comments on the proposed development plan, it was a bit counter-intuitive to me to find out that 1) the project required public financial incentives for a building with minimal public accommodations; and 2) that the approval of the Chapter 100 Financial Incentive plan would precede and be separate from any approvals of the Project's Development Plan. It would seem that the City is agreeing on the price and scope of the project before the details of what the project consists of have been thoroughly reviewed and vetted.

I have attended two presentations of the project by FSL's Project Team. By their own description, the Project's design and plans are currently at a conceptual level. I would agree based on what was shared. It was reported that only with the approval of the Chapter 100 Financial Incentive request will the design progress through the normal design phases to construction documents. From my knowledge of the design process, a lot of details are yet to be worked through by the Project Team. Additionally, the City Planning and Development Department has yet to initiate its review process.

I believe this project warrants a coordinated approach to the reviews and approvals of the Chapter 100 Financial Incentive plan request with the Development Plan. This would require that the approval of the Chapter 100 Financial Incentive Plan be held until a review of the physical Development Plan is completed. I also believe this project warrants further review and input from the community stakeholders that will be impacted. The FSL Project Team has initiated communications related to the financial incentive request illustrated with conceptual plans. A deeper level of communications, including a stakeholder's workshop would be very much appreciated and, I believe, would improve the outcome.

Thank you for your attention.

Jim Edson
816.726.0927