

July 15, 2016
To the City Commission.

I am writing to voice my support for a scaled back plan for E. 9th street. I was one of the 3 East Lawrence Representatives on the East 9th Project's Citizen Advisory Committee. I am also a partner in an LLC that owns property at 9th and Pennsylvania. I have lived in Lawrence for the past 40 years, and I have lived in my current residence on Pennsylvania Street for the past 12 years. I attended nearly all of the multiple meetings regarding the 9th street project since its inception and I believe I have a good working knowledge of this project.

At this point I support an alternative or compromise plan that would strip the project to the bare essentials that are necessities in all parts of the City. Those are good streets, good lighting, and good sidewalks. Doing these basics are what government is here to do, and will prove useful to whatever use comes along. On the CAC I was a major proponent of taking the steps necessary to put good planning principles in place to shape how a finished east 9th street would impact the neighborhood in 10 to 20 years. The CAC responded and adopted principles that recognized that this was strictly a street project, and was not intended to become an entertainment district. We agreed that the project would not oppose a downzoning project and we agreed that a Conservation Overlay District would be in the best interests of the existing neighborhood. We stopped short of incorporating those as a part of the actual plan. Proponents of the full design do not seem to recognize this, as much of their support focuses on the tourism and other economic benefits that a project of that scope would provide. A scaled down project better reflects the principles that were adopted by the CAC, and lessens the impact to the thriving neighborhood already in existence. I will continue to work on our downzoning project and will be working towards a COD at the appropriate time.

In actuality I support doing these basic sidewalk, lighting and street improvements all over the neighborhood and all over the city. I do not believe I am in the minority on that. Folks who live in the neighborhood (and elsewhere in the city) walk many places and do not limit their walks to 9th street. Improvements limited to 9th street do not help them as they walk home to their street in their neighborhood. Many adjacent streets to the project area (and within the City) do not have adequate sidewalks (if at all) nor do they have adequate lighting. I also accept that 9th street can be a good start to setting new standards for self-powered transport throughout the neighborhood and the city.

I encourage you as City Commissioners to implement a new plan for 9th street that meets the needs of all the neighbors in the area. Yes, there is a Warehouse Arts District, and yes, there is new housing and commercial development in that area, and yes, folks who live or visit there should also be able to access it via adequately maintained streets with adequate lighting and sidewalks. But, do these basic improvements because they are needed and they bring positive benefit to all residents and visitors to the neighborhood. Keep these improvements simple so that

they do not favor that newer development over the older established development in the area. We need a plan that will build consensus and not create winners and losers.

I look forward to working within this new process to ensure that it becomes a win for all the residents of the Neighborhood and the City. We can include in that process a manner to incorporate art that makes it unmistakably Lawrence. If we do that with sincerity and without ulterior motives we will create a 9th street that will be appreciated for the next 50 years - as 50 seems to be about the lifespan of the streetscapes that have existed along 9th since the founding of the City!
Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in,

Phil Collison
933 Pennsylvania