

February 23, 2011

Readers' Forum
The Courier-Journal
P. O. Box 740031
Louisville, KY 40201-7431

RE: MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION RESPONSE TO IRON QUARTER AGREEMENT

In light of the recent announcement concerning the agreement reached between Mayor Greg Fischer and Todd Blue as to the future for the Iron Quarter Buildings located between 105 and 119 West Main Street, the Main Street Association ("MSA") feels compelled to reaffirm its position on the importance of saving the facades of the buildings. **On May 11, 2010, the MSA approved a motion stating that, at a minimum, the facades of the buildings located along the 100 block of West Main Street be preserved with continuing development to follow.** The motion was made in an effort to abide by our mission statement which is to promote and advocate for the uniqueness of the neighborhood and the diverse historic, commercial, architectural, cultural, residential and educational assets of Main Street.

Our Association is made up of individuals, companies and organizations that are deeply passionate about the redevelopment and preservation of the buildings along Main Street and all of downtown Louisville. In order for the City to continue to grow and become an ever more vibrant community, its leaders, developers and citizens must work together to protect our treasured architectural and historic assets while, at the same time, supporting opportunities to redevelop properties in a financially responsible manner.

The Iron Quarter presents a real and significant opportunity to move this community forward and to take advantage of the extraordinary business development currently occurring near the KFC YUM! Center. Ensuring that the Iron Quarter is not turned into a parking lot should go without saying. Louisville's downtown maintains some of the most beautiful architecture in the United States, but year after year we see this architecture being turned into surface parking lots so as to avoid the hard work and effort that goes into bringing landmark properties back to life.

Developing a downtown is not like developing a suburban area - people want density and continuity in a downtown; turning the Iron Quarter into a surface parking lot stands in direct contrast to this notion. The Iron Quarter could serve as the foundation upon which the Arena district builds, but instead we are being threatened with yet another surface parking lot that will not conform to the Waterfront Development Corporation's Overlay District.

The MSA does not mean to underestimate the difficulty in trying to restore these buildings or their facades, but it does ask that the City's leadership try all that it can do for the benefit of the community as a whole. The youth of America want to live, work and play in densely populated communities and Louisville has so much to offer. It is disappointing to see yet another opportunity wasted. Unfortunately, the citizens in this community find themselves again scratching their heads at the decision made by its leadership.

The MSA has no crystal ball, but it does know a thing or two about the importance of the adaptive reuse of historic properties. We implore Todd Blue and Mayor Fischer to reconsider their agreement and try everything in their power to think for the community - either preserve these beautiful buildings, **or at the very least the facades**, or sell the buildings to someone who is interested in doing so for Louisville and its future!

Very sincerely,



Laurie Anne Roberts
MSA Board President