

## **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED BETWEEN 8/24/16-9/9/16**

### **REGARDING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF MONUMENT SQ**

A complete copy of comments, photos and proposals submitted will be kept on file in the Planning Department. Please contact [Steven.Strichman@troyny.gov](mailto:Steven.Strichman@troyny.gov) for additional information.

Proposed a phased development - we can have anything we want, but not everything we want. Goals are to enhance Monument Sq as a public space. Direct extension of the public right-of-way to the river should be the fundamental design element. Suggested plan moving forward: Re-connect Front Street, Waterfront Plaza (river lobbies), Staircase to connect River St. to plaza and construct two new buildings that maintain the same heights as the surrounding buildings; Hendrick Hudson, Cannon building and Rice Building.

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I am forwarding my wishes for the Square, hoping that it will remain open space for all residents to enjoy as a public park with amphitheater for concerts, public ADA restrooms and facility for the Farmers Market during the summer months. There could be a barge restaurant to help with the tax base and a visitor's pavilion. I further propose a marina at the old Levonian site on River St. I believe the City of Troy needs recreational venues and green spaces to attract and retain new comers to the area.

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Concept plan submitted that suggested phased development. Phase I: Open air structure for farmer's market, private & public events, and general day to day public use (1-2 stories); vernacular brick masonry architecture. Cost effective, timeless & beautiful. Garden steps open to Monument Sq. with parking below.

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Phased development, design with consideration of a single building later, underground parking? Would like to see a design Riverfront Park using Frederick Olmsted's (Central Park) techniques; picturesque natural landscape, captivating and flowing. It was suggested to remove the parking lot and front street. Suggested moving away from the need to put a large building in the empty space and create a space that is more attractive to people to gather on a daily basis or for festivals. The additional park space will create a more sustainable and healthier city looking into the future.

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I would like to see a compelling design that provides a window from the river to the monument, and vice-versa. A striking building (visitors' center, restrooms, Farmer's market pavilion, etc.) and park/marina access to the Hudson would be fantastic. We shouldn't be afraid of something bold!

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Re-creating the Troy Fulton Market - a lost architectural gem once located on River Street and Fulton. Recreating lost architectural treasures has a strong appeal to the public imagination and will draw publicity, support and visitors to the development. The choice of style for the redevelopment in this

setting should strive for the maximum preservation of Monument Squares' historic character. Would like to see a complex of shopping and eateries, with indoor/outdoor public spaces, offers the local community and visitors a place to frequent and relax while experiencing the historic downtown and river. Below street level would be a flexible commercial space featuring a full wall of windows overlooking the Hudson.

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When first presented to the public around 2012, the Nigro submission called for access between the lower park level and the upper River Street level with a walkway between two new buildings on scale with the existing. The public embraced the ideas of access and flow between the two levels and seeing the river from the upper River Street level was happily embraced. I thought the idea of a building have "Two Fronts" also gets at the same perception. In addition to residential capacity, the commercial space needs to be such that continually draws then public, not just events. The reinforcing of commerce is sporadic and we need continual. Lastly, the design has to fit the strength of Troy which is compatible and certainly not clashing with the Historic identity of Troy.

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I hope that you consider the design competition approach. It can be of great benefit to the process and the City. Cities everywhere are all looking to attract the same residents and businesses. Properly run, a design competition would raise awareness about Troy and what we have to offer.

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I do believe that it would be a good location for a theatre like Proctors or the Palace in Albany. I work just down the street from the Madison here in Albany and I know a favorite for the local residents is the low cost Madison Theatre. Troy is the only city of the 3 major local one's Albany, Schenectady that doesn't have a theatre. It's a college town with lots of young people in the local area that are looking for a place to go besides going all the way to Albany or Schenectady. Use some of the space for a grocery store and additional retail space.

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Several talked about process, saying citizens should be involved all the way through (they were last time, by the way). Dean of Architecture Evan Douglass said, "...inject poetry into the built environment," a beautiful turn of phrase reminding us that much of Troy's desirability comes from having beautiful architecture, and that we need to complement it. He also made a grand point, that being surrounded by the past calls for honoring it, not slavishly imitating it. Many folks requested better recreation, gathering spaces, view of the river from Monument Square, and honoring the prime location in the heart of the downtown. Hear, hear!!

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Let's be modern. Let's be flexible. Let's reject the methods and power struggles of the past. There are projects throughout the world being designed with public participation, shunning the traditional authoritarian processes of the past. There is a park in Copenhagen designed this way and a myriad of other projects. Let the members of zoning, planning and historical review have a say, the exact same say as everyone else. There are now tools available to facilitate a process like this. The two major

features of a process like this is that it is inherently inclusive and transparent. It gives every person in Troy the ability to be involved. There is also no dark box all those ideas fall into with an RFP on the other side. It's flexible and adaptive in ways city hall will never be no matter who is in there.

I am asking you to release control. Don't make this once again a process mired in conflict and personal politics. Free the process! This process will make news. This process will make Troy modern, and known to actually listen to citizens. Developers who see how the RFP was created will feel less nervous about submitting something because the process is fundamentally different. It will be inherently transparent, because anyone can see any part of it at any time.

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This process will take longer. Why such a rush? If you have a process that truly embodies the thoughts and ideas of the residents, no future administration will be able to justify changing it.

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Once these tools are employed, you can use it for future endeavors in other areas of the city. You can focus the participants to smaller scale groups (like those that live in a certain district, or area) or open it up to the world.

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The design of this space should include a window to the river, western skies, light, and be designed as a plaza-style, multi-use space that would include trees and other landscaping elements and public restrooms. It should allow public access to the waterfront via steps and an exterior elevator for handicapped access. It should be a multi-use building that could include a visitor's center, possibly space for City Hall offices. I hope serious consideration will be given to the concept of a national design competition; utilizing the professional resources of the RPI school of Architecture to monitor such an undertaking. This could bring significant attention to Troy. I am not in favor of the tiered style building and 'Market Place' building. Construction methods, materials (and workers) of today do not lend themselves to recreating 19<sup>th</sup> Century architectural look-a-likes. Why should they...this is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Turn the page!

**Suggested Cities to look at:**

San Francisco, CA - Delores Park

Baltimore, MD - Torpedo Factory, pier

Boston, MA – Quincy Market

Washington D.C - Wharf, Capitol Riverfront

Little Rock, AR - River Market

Pittsburgh, PA.