

CASE NUMBER PC-04-24
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN
1230 PARK AVE., FRANKLIN, IN

My name is Steve Yount. I live at 1543 Williamsburg Lane in Franklin. My son, David Yount, lives next door at 1553 Williamsburg Lane. I am presenting these comments on behalf of ourselves and our wives. It is my intention to attend the hearing on March 19 before the Plan Commission regarding the above matter. And, if time allows, I would like to provide comment. Not being familiar with the rules, procedures, and customs of the Plan Commission I don't know how much time the public will be allotted to speak; and, consequently, I don't know how much time I might have to address the Commission with our concerns. It is for this reason I am providing you with our thoughts about the Franklin College (FC) proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD_. I hope you will not only read what follows but will share this with Plan Commission members.

FRANKLIN COLLEGE DOES NOT NEED A PUD TO DEVELOP A TECH PARK AND ITS PROPOSED PUD VIOLATES AND RUNS COUNTER TO FRANKLIN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOOD, IS NOT THE MOST DESIREABLE USE FOR THE LAND, WILL NOT CONSERVE MY NEIGHBORHOOD'S PROPERTY VALUES, AND IS NOT A RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH STRATEGY.

The PUD shows Tech Park buildings and surrounding grounds for parking and such located near Umbarger Road on the far east side of the subject property and on the southern edge along Greensburg Road of the 250 acre parcel currently owned by FC (the Land). Approximately 43.8 acres are devoted to the Tech Park. The entire parcel of land constitutes almost 250 acres. The Tech Park, including surrounding land, would comprise just 17.5% of the total acreage.

I believe it is IC 36-7-4-603 which provides guidance on what must be considered when deciding whether or not to approve a PUD. There are five (5) considerations to which the Plan Commission and City Council must pay reasonable regard:

- “1. The Comprehensive Plan;
2. Current conditions and the character of current structures and uses in each district;
3. The most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted;
4. The conservation of property values throughout the jurisdiction; and
5. Responsible development and growth.”

Franklin's Comprehensive Plan (CP) says one of the benefits of planning includes “... making sure adjacent uses are compatible and protecting property values”. The CP also states a number of goals, including “adding more upper-income houses to the housing stock” and [the] “future should include making investments now to attract young, educated

professionals to live in Franklin”. The CP also points out the need to “protect and define Franklin’s urban/rural boundary for future growth needs”.

Under the section of the CP dealing with land use, the CP states:

“Due to the costs of expanding transportation and utility infrastructure, it is more cost effective for the City to redevelop its current inventory rather than build out new land.”

Also, the CP says rehabilitating and infilling development in the city’s traditional core neighborhoods is preferred before adding additional land for development. There are several different land use maps in the CP, including ones proposing both near-term and long-term land use concerning residential development. Both maps propose near and long-term land use to emphasize large lot suburban residential growth.

The FC proposed PUD (PUD) violates and ignores the guidance of the CP. The Land is presently zoned RS-1. My neighborhood, which abuts the Land to the north is also zoned RS-1. This is consistent with the goals of the CP – “making sure adjacent uses are compatible and protecting property values”. RS-1 is defined as medium to low density single family residential with contributing necessary infrastructure. Lots in RS-1 areas must have a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet. When the CP refers to large lot suburban residential development, I understand that to mean RS-1 zoned areas.

The PUD proposes an RT-2 and RT-3 zoned area for single family residences directly adjacent to and bounded by my neighborhood. RT-2 and RT-3 are high density, with smaller lot sizes (lot sizes for RS-1 are a minimum of 15,000 square feet), less square footage of living space, and consequently, lower property values than RS-1 housing. Traditionally understood, housing in areas zoned RT-2 and RT-3 is built by large regional or national production home builders and not local custom home builders. All homes in my neighborhood were built by local custom home builders. There are many fine custom home builders in Johnson County who, I strongly suspect, would build homes commensurate with the homes in my neighborhood, if given an opportunity. Based on its proposed PUD, it appears FC has no intention of considering such an option.

The remainder of the Land not designated for the Tech Park or which is being retained by FC is designated for attached residential, meaning multi-family apartments or condos, or mixed use, meaning, I suppose, a combination of apartments, condos, and retail. These proposed uses are significant deviations from the Land’s current RS-1 zoning.

Looking at the five (5) things to be consulted when considering a proposed PUD, the FC PUD clearly runs counter to and violates the CP. Changing the zoning from RS-1 to RT-2 and RT-3 and the zoning for apartments, condos, and retail space are a complete departure from the CP.

Secondly, the uses proposed in the PUD are not in keeping with the “current conditions and the character of current structures and uses” adjacent to the Land. The PUD would share a

very long boundary with an RS-1 neighborhood, which does not contain any apartments, condos, or retail businesses within its borders.

Thirdly, what the PUD proposes is not the most desirable use for the Land. The CP is clear that Franklin has enough high-density single-family housing and does not need more. In addition, Franklin has recently added an apartment complex near Needham Elementary School and attached rental housing near the I65 interchange with SR44. More of this kind of housing is not needed. A more desirable and logical use for the Land is for RS-1 neighborhoods with supporting infrastructure. If Franklin wants to attract more young, college educated professionals to live here RS-1 zoned neighborhoods better meets that goal than high-density lower cost detached residences and apartments.

Fourthly, the uses in the proposed PUD will devalue the properties in my neighborhood, which is zoned RS-1. Having RT-2 and RT-3 high density houses abutting the properties in my neighborhood and the apartments, condos, and retail space will not conserve the values of my home and those of my neighbors. The only logical and reasonable conclusion is that the uses proposed in the PUD will devalue my neighborhood.

Fifthly, the proposed PUD is clearly not a responsible way to develop and grow Franklin. The letter I received from FC's legal counsel says the PUD provides "an Innovation Park with research and office space, as well as supporting retail and residential uses." This is misleading. As noted above, only 17.5% of the total 250 acres is designated for the Tech Park. But, does FC have tech companies committed to come to Franklin for this project? Becoming a designated Tech Park is governed by the Indiana Code (see IC 35-7-32-1 through 29). Has FC gotten this designation? Will it be able to meet the requirements of the governing statutes to obtain the designation? Where is the money coming from to build the Tech Park buildings and related infrastructure? Does FC have the necessary funds?

All of this points to the fact FC does not need its proposed PUD to create a Tech Park. A more responsible development and growth strategy is for Franklin to re-zone that portion of the Land near Umbarger Road, where one part of the Tech Park is proposed to allow FC to see if it can attract tech companies. Let's see if that can happen. If FC is successful in attracting tech companies and there is a need for housing there are plenty of local builders in Johnson County to meet the specific needs of those executives, other officers, and employees who need places to live, even perhaps on portions of the Land by creating new subdivisions zoned as RS-1.

However, if Franklin approves the PUD it does not matter if FC ever attracts a tech company to come here. Once the PUD is approved FC can sell the roughly 87.2 acres devoted to RT-2 and RT-3 housing and apartments to whomever it wants. If FC is not able to attract tech companies the damage done by approving the PUD cannot be undone. The character of the Land and its adjacent neighborhood to the north, my neighborhood, will be forever changed for the worse. And, it will set a downward trajectory for the quality of any future development along Greensburg Road. For all of the above reasons, I, Steve Yount, and my son, David Yount, along with our wives, respectfully and strenuously object to FC's proposed PUD.