

To: Columbia City Council
From: Downtown Leadership Council
Re: Infrastructure and Development

Council,

As the commission that exists to advise the City Council as to Downtown Columbia, the Downtown Leadership Council would like to reiterate our concerns regarding the most recent flurry of student apartment developments, specifically with infrastructure and parking.

We would ask Council to inquire with Public Works and Water & Light as to their formulas regarding increased capacities of specific infrastructures. The addition of the Shakespeare's Brookside, The Rise, ACC, and the Bengals apartments will most certainly put a major strain on our downtown sewer lines, at the very least. How is the determination made as to what each developer pays the city to cover the increases in capacities, if any? At what point does the City have to increase the size of pipes down the line? Certainly there are major increases needed. Is this a uniform, scientific analysis applied to each development? Is the cost the same for all projects, or are the later ones paying more?

The Land Use Principles and Policies identified in COMO Imagined include: "a policy of consistently assessing the sufficiency of services provided to a development before zoning, plat or plan approval...Sufficiency-of-services provisions ensure that new developments are paying for their impacts on infrastructure expansion and use. The sufficiency test should analyze the adequacy of infrastructure. This includes water, electric, sewer, and roadways, as well as public safety services including police, fire, and other first responders. Impact fees could be collected to offset public infrastructure and service costs."

It has been stated by Community Development staff, that The Rise development "might have to pay something" for their increase in capacities. What is the science behind this statement? Is it based on the number of toilets, for instance?

The time to have developers participate in these infrastructure projects is now. The DLC received testimony from representatives of developers in the past that they would like the city to have a specific formula to determine their costs so as to not have to negotiate every new project. The citizens of Columbia do not want to be left footing the bill for these student apartment projects' infrastructure costs, particularly when much needed infrastructure improvements to neighborhoods are delayed.

Just as our local developers have to pay for their infrastructure additions on the perimeters of our city, we feel strongly that the downtown apartment developers need to pay their fair share of the sewer and electric increases that they create. Of course, adequate and convenient parking downtown is already a huge problem for the restaurants and shops, and adding another 1,000 or more students—most with cars—will cause that problem to increase exponentially, as well.

Sincerely,

Brent Gardner
Vice-chair, DLC