

September 13, 2021

**To:** Markiea Carter, Director, Department of Community & Economic Development

**From:** Katherine Keough-Jurs, AICP, Director, Department of City Planning & Engagement

**Subject:** Public Engagement Meeting Summary – Proposed Partial Vacation and Sale of Logan Street in Over-the-Rhine

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On Wednesday, September 08, 2021, the Department of City Planning & Engagement hosted a public engagement meeting on the proposed partial vacation and sale of Logan Street in Over-the-Rhine for the Findlay Market Garage development. Hamilton County is proposing a new development of a 515-space public parking garage located on the subject property (1810 Logan Street) which is currently a surface parking lot. This new development, Findlay Market Garage, will include 15,000 square feet of street-level retail space.

Mailed notice was sent to property owners within 400 feet of the subject property, as well as the Over-the-Rhine Community Council (OTRCC) and Over-the-Rhine Community Housing. Notice was additionally posted twice on the Department of City Planning & Engagement's Facebook and Twitter accounts. A website page was created with more information about the proposed project and included in notices. It may be accessed here: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/community-engagement-meetings1/past-community-engagement-meetings/findlay-market-garage-in-over-the-rhine/>

The meeting was held virtually on Zoom at 5:00 p.m. Seven community members were in attendance. The Department of City Planning & Engagement staff facilitated the meeting with John Reiser from the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) in attendance. Members from the Applicant Team included Mindy Barber with THP Engineering, David Kirk - DNK Architects, Kathleen Norris – Urban Fast Forward, Craig Honkomp – The Kleingers Group, along with multiple representatives from Skanska and Findlay Market. There was a total of 22 participants.

The PowerPoint Presentation that was presented during the Public Engagement Meeting is included as Attachment 1. Additional information, questions and support for the project are included in Attachment 2. Attachment 3 includes written public comment submitted by community members who attended the meeting.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: PowerPoint Presentation from Public Engagement Meeting
- Attachment 2: Additional Information from Public Engagement Meeting
- Attachment 3: Public Comment Submissions



# Partial Vacation and Sale of City Owned Property of Logan Street in Over-the-Rhine

Community Engagement Meeting | **September 8, 2021**

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## Welcome & Housekeeping

1. Welcome & Housekeeping
2. Brief Presentation
3. Question & Answer



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## Welcome & Housekeeping

- **Please remain muted.** City staff will unmute during question & answer.
- **Chat Bar**
  - Use the chat bar for tech-related issues or questions.
  - Do not use the chat bar to ask project-specific questions.

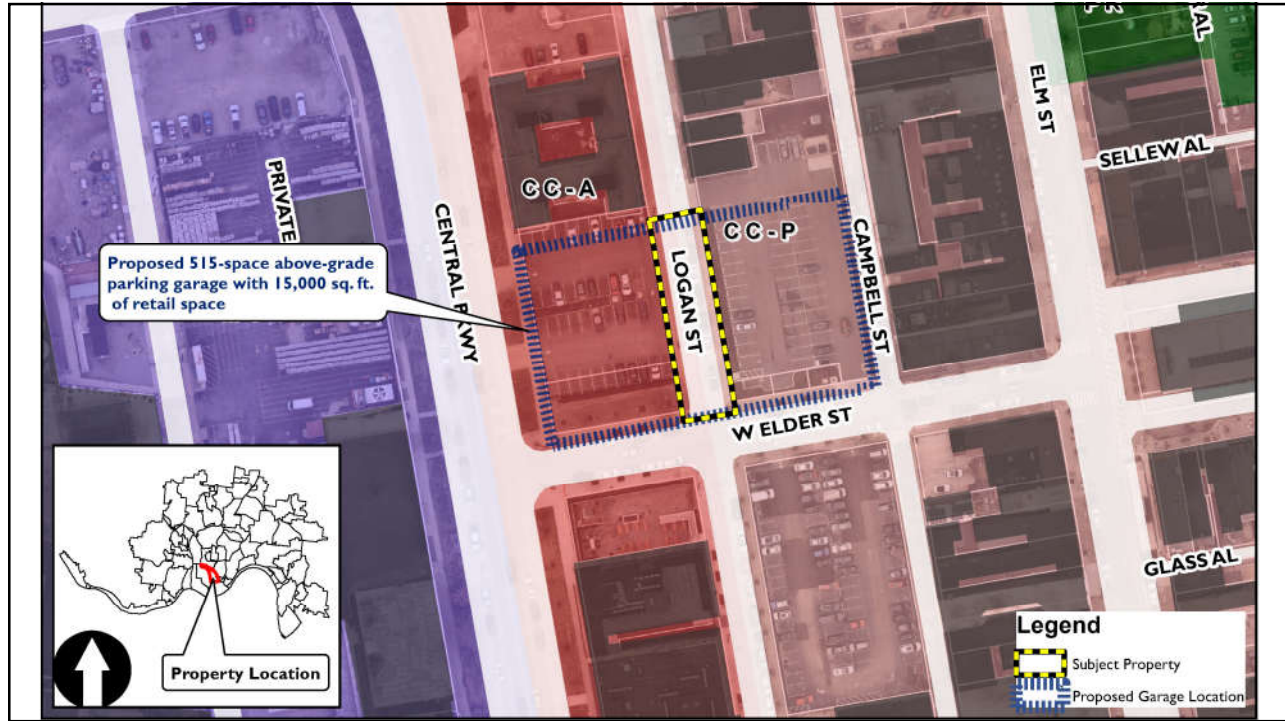
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## Purpose of this Engagement Session

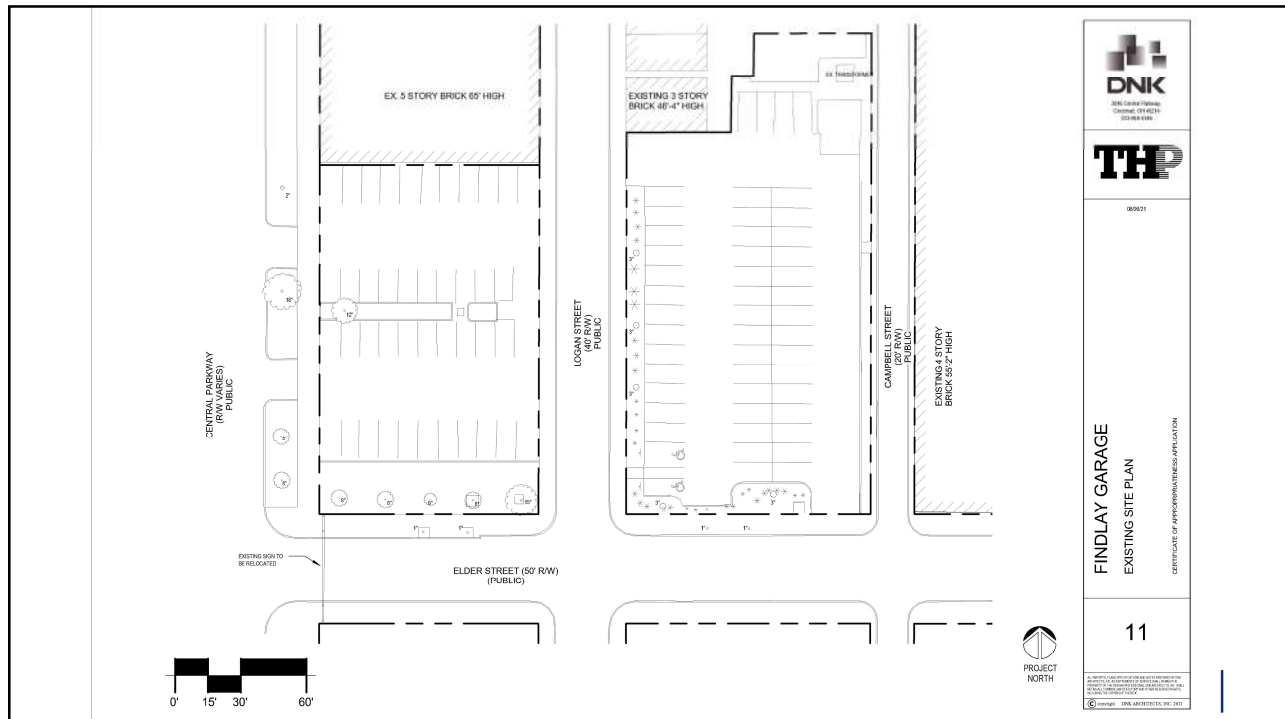
This is a public meeting to discuss the **proposed partial vacation & sale** and for staff to obtain community feedback on the project.

- City staff is here to facilitate the meeting and answer any process related questions.
- Members from the applicant team are here to answer any project related questions.
- **No decisions are being made at this meeting.**

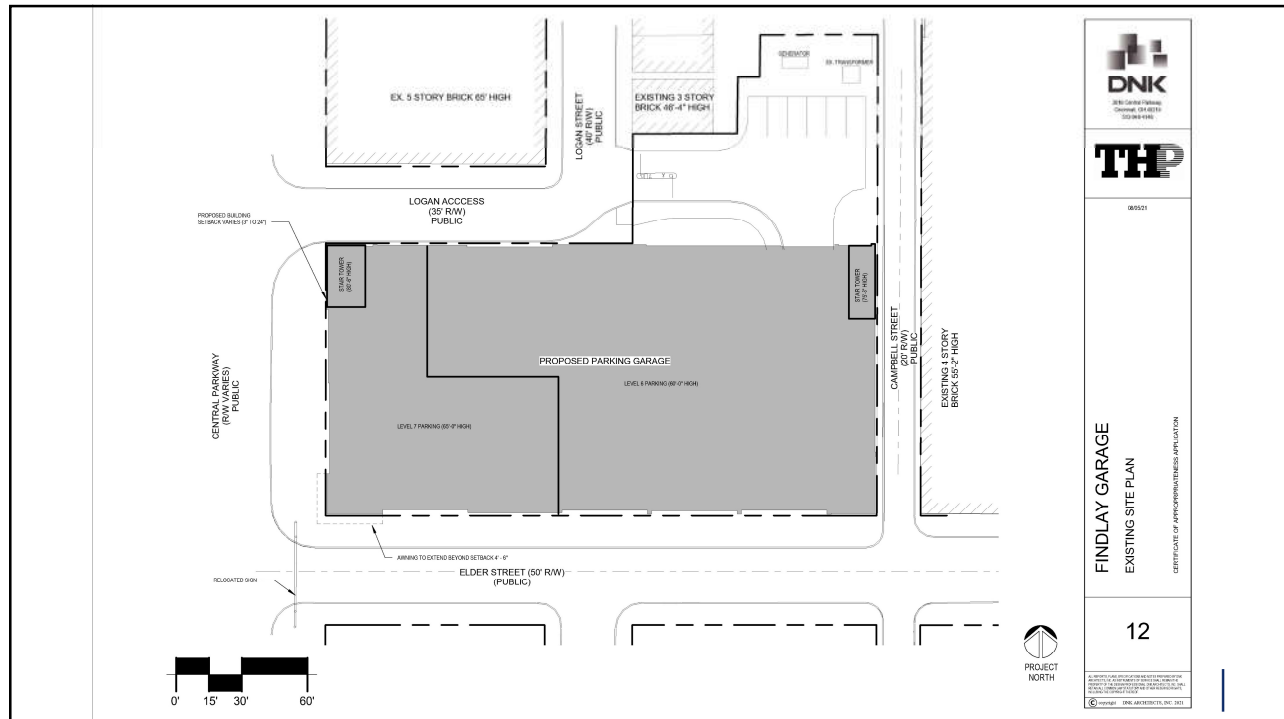
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## Background

- To date, Hamilton County has facilitated:
  - 18 meetings with 30 individual stakeholders** (including the Over-the-Rhine Community Council, OTR Chamber, OTR Foundation, Findlay Market, Talbert House, 3CDC, and neighbors).
  - 1 collective Stakeholder Update Meeting (in mid-July 2021 at Memorial Hall with 40 attendees).
- The following stakeholder input has been incorporated:
  - Street-level retail (~15,000 sf along Central Parkway and Elder Street).
  - Walkable (lively sidewalk, gateway to Findlay Market, trees, minimal vehicular/pedestrian interactions).
  - Attention to façade mass, scale & rhythm (façade height compared to adjacent existing buildings).
  - Avoid a Logan Street dead-end.
  - Create a public space.
  - Incorporate public art.

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## Request

- Sale of City-owned property for the right-of-way (ROW) at **\$56,350.00**
- Partial vacation of Logan Street

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## Q&A

- Everyone will be **unmuted one-at-a-time**. There will be time at the end for any questions/concerns that were not addressed.
- **Use “raise hand” function if you have a follow-up question following your initial question.**
- Do not use the chat bar for project-related questions (tech issues only).

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## Next Steps & Contact

- The proposed sale and vacation will need City Planning Commission and City Council approval.
- Website: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/community-engagement-meetings1/upcoming-community-engagement-meetings/findlay-market-garage-in-over-the-rhine/>
- Submit written public comment for inclusion of public engagement summary:

**Jesse Urbancsik, City Planner:**

[jesse.urbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:jesse.urbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov)

- by **9 a.m.** on **Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

## Partial Vacation and Sale of Logan Street - Additional Information

This document outlines information that was shared during the public engagement meeting on Wednesday, September 8, 2021. This document is intended as a summary and not as meeting minutes.

### **Background Info:**

Hamilton County will complete a new 519-space multi-level above-grade parking garage to the Over-The-Rhine neighborhood within half a block of Findlay Market in early 2023. To date, Hamilton County has facilitated 18 meetings with 30 individual stakeholders (including individuals from Over-the-Rhine Community Council, OTR Chamber, OTR Foundation, Findlay Market, Talbert House, 3CDC, and neighbors) and one collective Stakeholder Update Meeting (40 attendees) in mid-July 2021 at Memorial Hall. Hamilton County has incorporated the majority of stakeholder input into the garage design including: street-level retail (approximately 15,000 square feet along Central Avenue and Elder Street); incorporating sidewalk activity; creating a gateway; incorporating vegetation; avoiding vehicle/pedestrian interaction; avoiding a Logan Street dead-end; attention to façade mass, scale & rhythm; façade height relationship to adjacent existing buildings; creating public space; and incorporating public art.

### **Project Info:**

Hamilton County is proposing a new development of a 519-space public parking garage located on the subject property which is currently a surface parking lot. This new development, Findlay Market Garage, will include 15,000 square feet of street-level retail space. The future garage is going to be owned and developed by Hamilton County.

### **Questions:**

How many parking spaces will be in the garage?

*There will be 519 spaces.*

Were there other designs for the garage?

*There were approximately nine (9) overall proposals for the layout of the garage and development and cost estimates were done for all nine.*

How many shops will be on the ground floor of the garage?

*Around eight (8) to ten (10) shops.*

Would this proposal have any impact on current street parking and permits to park on the street?

*This would not impact the permits to park on the street.*

### **Other Comments:**

The vacation of Logan Street was criticized by residents with some calling it a missed design opportunity as it would be a detriment to the neighborhood to change the historic street grid. There were suggestions to create a pedestrian alley to allow community members to 'cut through' the garage and the design team stated that they tried to come up with something in that regard however it would not be viable.

There was support for a parking garage in the neighborhood, however not for the current design. Many residents stated that the garage could function on a smaller scale and that two mini garages could have been a better alternative. There was additional conversation regarding the façade of garage as it will cascade down from the roof.



Dear Jesse,

Thank you again for organizing and allowing me to participate in Wednesday night's Community Engagement meeting. I hope this letter will adequately summarize my comments.

I have been very clear from the beginning, when I started talking with Phil Beck and Commissioner Denise Driehaus about this project in April of this year, that I am not opposed to a large-scale parking garage on this site. What I am opposed to is the promise of significant numbers of parking to private businesses at the expense of a community asset and public property—namely the stretch of Logan Street that the county is requesting be sold to it and vacated by the City.

As I mentioned in the Zoom call, I have been a resident of the Findlay Market neighborhood of Over-the-Rhine since 2006, when I bought my three-family apartment building at 1826 Logan Street. I decided to make this physical move and investment because of Findlay Market. I am acutely aware of the parking situation in our neighborhood, since I have to deal with the frustrations it causes from time to time. However, I believe that the design presented by the County's consultants are based on priorities other than providing value to our neighborhood and solving its parking problems.

As the County has told us, the garage is designed to provide 200 parking spaces to Model Group, 165 spaces to FC Cincinnati, 50 spaces to Urban Sites, and 60 spaces to the public. That is *over half* of the garage constantly dedicated to providing amenities to private residential projects, and another 35% to the parking needs of FCC during its games—both private businesses. If the County were not providing this amount of parking to private businesses exclusively, the garage would not need to be as large as it is, therefore the necessary parking for the neighborhood could be accommodated on both sides of the street, and the City would neither need to vacate any ROW, nor sell any of the public's property.

However, as a person who has practiced architecture for over 16 years, assuming that the County should make these commitments to serve private interests, I do not see why this garage could not be built with the needed spaces to do so while spanning over Logan Street. The County's design team basically continued to say Wednesday, 'Trust us. We looked into it, and it cannot be done.' When pressed as to why it could not be done, "safety" and "budget" concerns were the answers. When I asked twice why capping a street makes it less safe than a walled alley (which the design team is proposing to connect the new dead end of Logan to Central Parkway), no one could provide any answers. David Kirk (the County's architect) referenced the fact that there is along this alley a light well for the Talbert House building that does not even reach the ground floor—which seems unlikely to provide any eyes on a sidewalk not visible to it below. A well-lit passage on Logan, with portions comprised of windows into the proposed retail spaces on the first floor of the structure, will be a more safe and effective way to accommodate the needs of the County. If done correctly, it could even be an exciting space to walk or drive through, like some that exist in Europe. Despite their claims of having tried so many design options, I have never seen one that proposed this solution. The other claim that this solution would cause the project to go over budget is irrelevant. It was not forced to provide for the aforementioned needs of private developers, which increased the size (and therefore the cost) of the garage its proposing to build. If the "right" thing to do for a community that is being affected by development is more expensive, a government should be the one entity that can be relied upon to spend extra money to do

so—it's duty should be to the citizens, not to the bottom line or to private business. This is especially true in a project of its own design and control.

Finally, I would like to address the fact that this project will cut off a section of the neighborhood—my section of the neighborhood—from the very asset that first brought me here to invest and live in it: Findlay Market. In general, we know from an Urban Planning lens, it is bad practice to cut off access from one portion of a neighborhood to another. In fact, our own neighborhood plan (The Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan) approved by the City in 2002, specifically acknowledges this, and emphasizes the importance of the smaller, North-South street grid used for local traffic and maintaining its “neighborhood scale”(p. 101). Further, it also states that the City's goals are to:

- “Facilitate both local and through travel” (p.109)
- Connect places by “Encourag[ing] **more** pedestrian friendly roadway and pathway networks”(p.109)
- Ensure that improvements in roads and **parking** should be done WITHOUT, “impacting the urban fabric or historic character of the neighborhood”(p.109), and as, “unobtrusively as possible.” (p.101)

I cannot think of anything more disconnected, historically inappropriate, and obtrusive as the *geographic* change the County and its consultants are proposing by cutting off an entire street. When I pressed the County's team about this issue, David Kirk responded that the project “...doesn't cut off access to the Market...” as it would connect pedestrians to the Market through Campbell Street. I found this response particularly disingenuous, given he had previously referred to Campbell Street as an “alley where we hear bad things are happening”, and the plan we saw Wednesday shows no pedestrian connection to Campbell Street, other than a service court consisting of surface parking, an existing electrical transformer, and a new generator.

In conclusion, I walked away from this meeting disappointed and a bit upset, due to my impression that our neighborhood has been told that the County cannot accommodate our concerns for inconsistent and disingenuous reasons. In reality, the County and its design team has chosen to prioritize the subsidy of private business ventures (whether they be sports entertainment, or real estate development) over the health of a historic, transitional neighborhood. In doing so, it has ignored the collective will of the neighborhood and the City (as laid out in its planning documents), and is now requesting that the City provide publicly owned land, at a reduced cost, to facilitate what is essentially a huge, missed design opportunity that will diminish the quality of life of its citizens, and devalue property around it. I would ask that the City seriously consider its obligations, the work of its citizens (not only in investing in this neighborhood, but in collaboratively planning for its future), and deny the County's request for the vacation and sale of this property. I am hopeful that in doing so, the City can facilitate a collaborative process whereby neighbors and the County can come together and realize the true potential of this project to the benefit of everyone.

Best regards,

**John Back** (513.509.8888)

## Urbancsik, Jesse

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**From:** Stefan Cornelis <SCornelis@gbbn.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 1:38 PM  
**To:** Urbancsik, Jesse; Chas Wiederhold  
**Subject:** RE: [External Email] 1810 Logan Street - Findlay Market Garage

Hi Jesse,

Thanks for sending the Powerpoint. I registered to attend but was unable to make it to the virtual meeting after all.

I'll let Chas respond on what he would like to see on his points.

Please add my comments as follows:

- 1) The actual layout of the parking and retail is unclear in the drawings presented. Where in plan will retail be located and how deep will the retail space be?
- 2) Has an underground parking level been considered to get closer to the building heights of the neighboring buildings? 60'-65' seem about 10' taller than the cornice height of the Globe building (excluding the tower) on the East. Because of it being a parking garage (aka only activated at street level by retail), I would like to see it NOT being the most prominent & highest building in the street.
- 3) Is there any more detail on the elevations and plans available and when will that be shared with the community? I urge the team to follow up with more public engagement that has more detail on how the buildings will look like and function.
- 4) Please include me on the list of who gets notified about any further public engagement with more detail.

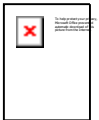
Thanks,  
Stefan



**Stefan Cornelis**  
Associate

O: 513.241.8700  
D: 513.419.8202

**gbbn.com**    



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**From:** Urbancsik, Jesse <jesse.urbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 12:36 PM  
**To:** Chas Wiederhold <CWiederhold@gbbn.com>  
**Cc:** Stefan Cornelis <SCornelis@gbbn.com>  
**Subject:** RE: [External Email] 1810 Logan Street - Findlay Market Garage

Hi Chas,

Thanks for your feedback, I appreciate you emailing it to me. Did you want me to add this as an attachment to the Community Engagement Meeting memo?

Please find the power point attached that was presented at the meeting. This was the only thing presented at the meeting.

This will be heard in front of City Planning Commission on Friday, Sept 17 at 9am and eventually City Council. I know that this will also go in front of the Historic Conservation Board for review as well.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

**Jesse Urbancsik | City Planner**

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**From:** Chas Wiederhold <[CWiederhold@gbbn.com](mailto:CWiederhold@gbbn.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 10:50 AM  
**To:** [jess.urbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:jess.urbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov)  
**Cc:** Stefan Cornelis <[SCornelis@gbbn.com](mailto:SCornelis@gbbn.com)>  
**Subject:** [External Email] 1810 Logan Street - Findlay Market Garage

External Email Communication

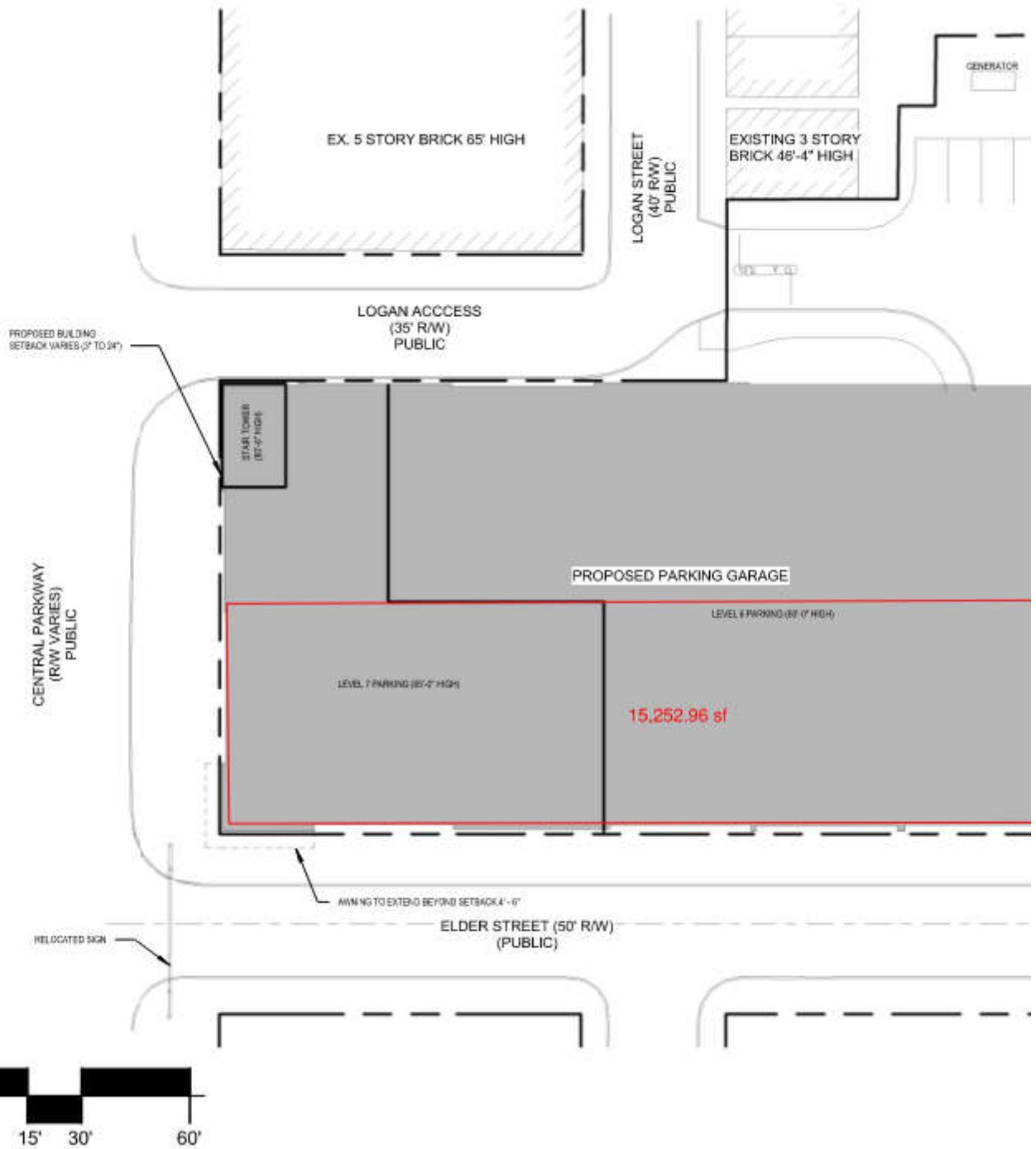
Hello,

I was unable to attend the public meeting concerning the garage at Findlay Market. I would love to have more information about what was presented, especially any plans, sections, elevations, or renderings provided. Could you please send any material to me that was shared at the meeting?

I wanted to share my concerns for the project based on what I have seen as both a citizen and an architect.

- 1) Garage Screening – Beauty is a human need and garage screens provide an opportunity to give this new building a sense of place and belonging within the historic district.
- 2) Location of Retail – Retail should be oriented east to west along Elder Street to take best advantage of daylight and create an activated pedestrian experience between Findlay Market and Central Parkway.
- 3) Future Engagement – Will there be future public engagement on this garage and if so, could I please be added to the notification list?

Thank you,  
Chas Wiederhold



**Chas Wiederhold**

O: 513.241.8700

M: 937.776.6221

[gbbn.com](http://gbbn.com)

