

What is this purpose of this FAQ?

The Downtown Grocery Committee has published these frequently asked questions both to dispel some of the current misinformation about the project as well as build community support for the downtown grocery store. We are responsible for this content, and the retailer has made changes to his satisfaction; as information changes or new questions come in, we will update this document and publish a new version on our Facebook page.

Who is the Downtown Grocery Committee?

We are friends and neighbors who are concerned about the lack of access to fresh, healthy, affordable food in our core neighborhoods. We first gathered in 2013 to address the issue of the food desert in Lawrence and have been meeting regularly ever since. Our weekly meetings at 9 am on Thursdays are open, and we hold a public meeting at the library on the last Thursday of each month (barring holidays). See the end of the FAQ for more information and to find out how you can get involved.

Join us on Facebook: We publish meeting information on our Facebook page well in advance of the meeting date. You may request to join the group to receive updates. Our Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DTGrocery/>

What is a food desert? How would a downtown grocery fix that problem?

A food desert is an area where the majority of people live more than one mile from a grocery store and at least 20% of the residents meet the federal poverty level standard. The downtown grocery store will not completely resolve the food desert in Lawrence, but it will make a significant impact toward defeating the food desert in quite a large swath of our core neighborhoods.

Will the store be a local or regional grocer? Will it be Checkers?

Currently, the strong interest to date is a regional grocer out of Kansas City – Price Chopper. The Queen family is committed to offer the Lawrence community a unique grocery and gourmet store.

Will the groceries be affordable?

Yes. One of our main goals has been to attract a retailer that offers goods and services that most people in the surrounding area can afford. This retailer has such a history.

Will the store double SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)?

That is undetermined as of this writing. The Downtown Grocery Committee supports this type of program, and the retailer has experience doing this in other communities. Price Chopper is signed on with this program for the next few years, starting in 2017.

Will the store offer specialty and gourmet foods?

Of course. This will be a full-line grocery store that will carry everything from store brands to name brands, including gourmet meats, cheeses, and specialty food made on-site.

Will the store sell local and/or regional produce, meat, and other products?

Yes. Queen's Price Chopper has their own regional produce purchasing program via a local wholesaler, C&C Produce. Local and regional farmers are welcome to participate; the farmers included must qualify for the program, be inspected, and have liability insurance.

Will the store have a selection of organically grown foods?

Yes. Expect a selection of fresh, frozen and packaged organic items.

Will the store offer “grab-n-go” (prepared and prepackaged) food?

Yes, as well as fresh food prepared on-site.

Will there be a bulk foods section?

Yes, but on a limited basis due to space available.

Will the store sell live bait for people who fish on the river?

Not at this time.

When will the store open?

We expect the store will open some time in 2018. As of this writing, representatives involved in the project say they hope for mid-2017 for the groundbreaking.

Will the store be open 24/7?

No. Current operational hours will be 6 a.m. - 10 p.m.; possibly midnight.

What size will the building be? What height will it be?

Current designs for the building have the grocery store at 40-45 thousand square feet, slightly larger than the Dillons on Massachusetts street. The overall height of the building with the residential project will be 40 feet – which is just ten feet higher than the current “Borders” building.

Where will the mechanicals (heating, cooling, electrics) for the building be located?

There are many options being discussed including rooftop or enclosed areas; concern for noise and light pollution in the neighborhood is being taken into consideration in the design. The developer has a history of using the quietest mechanicals available, and the design team has been discussing this issue.

Will the historic Donnelly Stables (and former auto garages) wall on the north side of the current building be saved?

Yes. The architectural plans include saving the north wall and integrating it into the design.

What does “mixed-use building” mean?

“Mixed use” means a mixture of commercial and residential uses. The commercial use will be a grocery store.

Will the store deliver groceries? Will there be a drive-up for grocery pickup?

The store will offer pickup for online ordering with an eye on possible future delivery services.

Will the store have a pharmacy? If so, will it have a drive-thru pickup?

As of this writing, a local pharmacy is being considered, and the architectural plans incorporate a drive-thru for the pharmacy.

How will vehicle traffic flow onto and off of the site?

There are a number of different types of vehicles that will visit the site, from semi trucks to bicycles.

The semi truck entrance will be on the northeast side, off of 7th street. Truck deliveries will happen overnight, so should not affect daytime traffic.

Light truck (bread, chips, soda) delivery is likely to be on the east side of the building throughout the day.

The pharmacy drive-thru will be on the south side of the building, in the surface parking lot.

Shoppers will use the parking garage, which will have its entrance on the southeast corner of the structure. Shoppers who park here will enter the store from within the underground structure.

The primary street and surface parking entrance for the store will be on New Hampshire street, and there will be bike racks available nearby.

There will be no vehicle access between the Hobbs Taylor parking lot and the grocery parking lot.

Will delivery trucks stack up on the street? Will there be a no-idling clause for delivery trucks?

We don't anticipate a cycle of deliveries that will exceed the capacity of the enclosed delivery bay, which means idling should not happen.

How will the project affect resident parking in East Lawrence?

The discussion between East Lawrence neighbors and developers is ongoing.

What will the impact be on adjacent downtown parking?

The developer is making every effort to accommodate the increase in parking on-site by building two levels of underground parking and keeping some surface parking available. There will be 200 approximately spaces underground; 100 for the store and 100 for the building's residents.

How much surface parking will remain? How much of it will be dedicated to grocery parking?

The number of stalls is still to be determined; however, all of the surface parking on the property will be dedicated to grocery parking.

Will the underground parking for the grocery store close when the store closes, or will the garage remain open for public parking when the store is not open?

The underground parking will be controlled. We don't know at this time if it will be open to public parking when the store is closed.

Will there be bus stops convenient to the grocery store? Will these stops have shelters?

The committee and residents plan to advocate strongly to the city and the transportation company regarding the location and relocation of stops and inclusion of shelters as the project develops.

Will there be shopping carts that can be taken to each bus stop – perhaps paid carts?

The shopping carts will have locking mechanisms on them, which means they won't be able to be taken off of the store grounds. Employees will be available to assist carrying groceries for people who need help getting to their car or a bus stop. The building design takes into consideration seating on the outside of the building for the bus lines and a grocery loading area inside the garage.

How will shoppers get carts to and from the underground parking?

Design plans include a cart escalator as well as a people escalator between the store and the parking structure.

How will the construction project impact downtown?

The impact will be similar to any of the other projects on New Hampshire street recently. The important part is to think about the end goal of this project – the downtown grocery store. The grocery store is a unique project that will benefit our community for the long term.

What will this project cost us as taxpayers?

Some of the funding for the grocery project will come out of federal funding designated for areas identified as food deserts. We are anticipating a request for public incentives for both the parking and living structures. We do not know at this time what will be asked for or how this will affect tax rates. The normal planning process involves several opportunities for public commentary and input.

How many jobs will the store create?

150-200 new jobs, both full and part-time.

Will the jobs at the store provide a living wage?

We expect so, but we don't have data at this time. Incentives from the city may require a living wage.

What overall benefit will the grocery store have for our downtown and our city?

This store will enhance the character of our downtown by broadening and diversifying its economic base. The store will bring over 2500 people a day to our downtown, many of whom will also seek other goods and services in the neighborhood. It will be an anchor store that supplies local employment, community connection, and convenient access to a variety of foods and other goods to help serve the varied needs of area residents, downtown restaurants, and out-of-town visitors. It will improve access to healthy, affordable food in the food desert, which will have a positive effect in our core neighborhoods.

How can I get involved?

We thank you for your interest and encourage you to become involved at whatever level is right for you. Here are some things you can do:

Spread the word: Talk with your family, friends, and neighbors after reading this FAQ and feel free to give them copies. We will update the FAQ regularly as more information comes to light and make updated versions available at our meetings and on our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DTGrocery/>

Attend a public meeting: Our meeting on the last Thursday of every month is open to the public, and is held at 9 a.m. We meet at the Lawrence Public Library, in one of the downstairs meeting rooms. If the last Thursday falls on a holiday (Thanksgiving, etc.) we will not meet.

Write a letter: We welcome letters of support from individuals and businesses in the community. For your convenience we do offer an endorsement form, available at any public meeting or in the Files section of our Facebook page. You may also consider writing a letter to your elected officials or local media regarding the project as well, now that you have this FAQ.

Join your neighbors: If you aren't already involved, most neighborhoods in the core of Lawrence have neighborhood associations or groups and regular meetings, at which the topic of a downtown grocery store is regularly discussed.

Shop at the store: When the store opens, take the time to walk, bike, bus, or drive to the store and enjoy the fruition of this long-term community endeavor.

Contact us via email at: dtgroc@gmail.com