



Davis Garage sits at 300 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

File Photo

Proposed transportation hub could be economic answer for E. Winston

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

Community activist Marva Reid is circulating a petition urging city officials to follow through on plans to revamp a major section of East Winston.

Reid said she has collected more than a 100 signatures in recent weeks from community residents who want to see the city return the site of the current Davis Garage on the Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor to Union Station, the city's long defunct railroad station.

"The undersigned are in support of the City of Winston-Salem removing Davis Garage from the historic Union Station," reads the petition, which Reid has posted online as well. "We support the plan to return to rail service to Union Station as we believe this will attract investments and new developments to this important gateway into the City of Winston-Salem."

The city's former Union Station was constructed in 1926. The site is a registered historical landmark. For years, city officials had been in talks with the Davis family to buy the property in order to not only revitalize the train station but much of the area around it.

Davis Garage, founded by A.E. Davis, has called the former Union Station home for more than 35 years. Harvey Davis, one of A.E. Davis' four sons, has run the business since his father passed away.

The City and Davis family haggled over the price of property for years until the City used its eminent domain power to retrieve it last year.



Carol Davis



Marva Reid

"We were willing to make it happen, but it seems that that privilege and right has been taken from us," said Harvey Davis, whose family is now fighting the City in court over the matter.

City Council Member Dan Besse would not comment specifically about the battle for Davis Garage because of the pending litigation, but said the City has long envisioned turning the garage into a transportation hub.

Besse, a member of the Community Development and Public Works committees, said that if the City retains ownership of the property, renovations could begin in the coming months.

The revamped building would initially serve as a hub for PART (Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation) buses, relieving some of the congestion the downtown Clark Campbell Transportation Center is currently experiencing, Besse said. Down the road, Besse said the City hopes to make the station the eastern anchor for a streetcar system and add regional and long distance passenger rail service, which neighboring High Point and

Greensboro already offer.

As executive director of the Winston-Salem State University Simon Green Atkins Community Development Corp., Carol Davis has overseen a variety of brainstorming sessions and gatherings centered around the revitalization of the MLK Corridor, or the "Golden Mile" as it's sometimes called. She said she thinks restoring Union Station could be beneficial for the surrounding community.

"It goes hand-in-hand with some other transportation investments that are being made right there on the roadway, and it's always been a part of the vision that it would become more pedestrian friendly, that there'd be more services and amenities for people on campus and in the neighborhoods," she stated. "I think this would be a good first step."

In addition to the aesthetic benefits, Besse believes the transit station would be an important economic booster for the area, which is in dire need of an economic shot in the arm.

"It's a winner for the city and for East Winston as a community," he stated. "It

preserves and restores history and it draws additional development and economic opportunity to a part of the city that really could use it."

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