



Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan: Work Session #6



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SUMMARY

During the sixth work session, staff will revisit the Public Hearing Draft recommendations and testimony received for properties in the Connecticut-Randolph District and the Twinbrook District. The discussion will focus on testimony received for the Stonemill Square and Veirs Mill Village properties in the Connecticut-Randolph District. In addition, staff will present additional information on the Rock Creek Woods and Halpine View properties in the Twinbrook District in response to direction provided by the Planning Board during previous work sessions.

SCHEDULE

The Planning Board’s public hearing on the Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan was held on April 26, 2018 and the Board held three work sessions focused on the land use and zoning recommendations in the Public Hearing Draft on May 17, June 7 and July 12. The fourth and fifth work sessions, held on September 20 and October 4, focused on the transportation recommendations.

Additional work sessions are scheduled for November 29, December 13 and December 20 to discuss the transportation recommendations and review a redlined version of the Public Hearing Draft in preparation for the Planning Board Draft.

Key milestones in the Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan process include the following:

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| January 11, 2018 | Preliminary Recommendations presented to the Planning Board |
| March 8, 2018 | Working Draft presented to the Planning Board |
| March 22, 2018 | Public Hearing Draft available |
| April 26, 2018 | Planning Board Public Hearing |
| May 17, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #1 |
| June 7, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #2 |
| July 12, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #3 |
| September 20, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #4 |
| October 4, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #5 |
| November 15, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #6 |
| November 29, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #7 |
| December 13, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #8 |
| December 20, 2018 | Planning Board Work Session #9 (Tentative) |

WORK SESSION PURPOSE

During the sixth work session, staff will focus on the testimony received for the Stoney Mill Square and Veirs Mill Village properties as well as provide additional information on the Rock Creek Woods and Halpine View properties in response to direction provided by the Planning Board. The discussion will focus on specific requests from the commercial property owners regarding recommendations for short-term improvements, future street connections and open space, as discussed in greater detail below. In addition, staff will resume discussions with the Planning Board on design guidance for the Rock Creek View and Halpine View properties, also discussed below.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES IN THE CONNECTICUT-RANDOLPH DISTRICT

Commercial property owners have requested revisions to the plan to allow flexibility for interim reinvestment in the existing shopping centers and the future location of streets and open spaces. The property owners of Stoney Mill Square and the Veirs Mill Village Shopping Center submitted testimony in response to the Public Hearing Draft of the plan, in which they requested revisions to permit interim improvements to the properties without triggering compliance with the long-term master plan recommendations. In addition, the property owners of these commercial properties also requested flexibility in the location of streets and open spaces recommended with complete redevelopment.

Staff has discussed the requested revisions with the property owners and agreed to slight modifications to the language and illustrative images in the Public Hearing Draft, which will be shared with the Planning Board during the work session on November 15.

The Public Hearing Draft does not anticipate redevelopment of the existing shopping centers in the near term and does not suggest that the long-term master plan recommendations must be fulfilled with interim improvements. Further, interim improvements to the existing shopping centers are permitted and administered by Division 7.7 of the Zoning Ordinance.

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES IN THE TWINBROOK DISTRICT

Rock Creek Woods

During the July 12 work session, the Planning Board supported the property owner's request to rezone the Rock Creek Woods property through the Sectional Map Amendment process from R-20 to CRT-1.25, C-0.25, R-1.25, H-85 feet with guidelines. However, the Planning Board requested that the property owner work with staff to develop guidance on the preservation or replacement of two- and three-bedroom units with redevelopment of the site.

The Rock Creek Woods Apartments currently includes 269 units, of which 125 are two-bedroom units and 28 are three-bedroom units. The existing two- and three-bedroom units represent approximately 57 percent of the total existing units. As a comparison, since 2010, only 2 percent of units produced are three-bedroom units. Comparatively, between 1960 and 1969, more than 12 percent of the total units produced were three-bedroom units. Similarly, 54 percent of the units built in 1950 and 1959 were 2-bedroom units. Since 2010, 36 percent of the units produced were two-bedroom units, and over 60 percent (62 percent) of all the units created were studio or one-bedroom units.

The direct replacement of two- and three-bedroom units with redevelopment of the site is likely infeasible based on the market for multi-bedroom units over the last several years. While the zoning recommendations may result in approximately 500 units on the site, direct replacement of the existing two- and three-bedroom units is a challenge, as this would represent 30 percent of the total units.

Rather than identify a specific number or percentage of two- and three-bedroom units with redevelopment, staff recommends that the Planning Board consider including the following guidance for this property in the plan:

- Maximize residential development with a minimal amount of commercial density to fulfill the requirements of the Optional Method Development of the CRT zone with the following public benefits:
 - o Provide a minimum of 15 percent Moderately Priced Dwelling Units and a dwelling unit mix that includes two- and three-bedroom units for families as the highest priority public benefits.

Halpine View

During the July 12 work session, the Planning Board discussed the zoning recommendations for the Halpine View properties in the plan's Twinbrook District, including specific guidance on the provision of Moderately Priced Dwelling Units, market-rate affordable housing and a range of unit sizes. In addition to housing guidance, the Planning Board also discussed specific design guidance to ensure appropriate building transitions, open space and connectivity. In the context of the specific design guidance, the preservation of the existing community building on the site was discussed. Staff's recommended design guidance stated:

"Create an interconnected open space system that links Twinbrook Parkway and the stream valley park and provides visual and physical access through the property. Preserve and renovate the existing community building and integrate it into the community open space."

The applicant has indicated that the existing building requires significant upgrades to achieve a modern facility. Rather, the applicant has proposed that the Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan reference development of a new community building that is integrated into the community open space with the redevelopment of the site.

As the existing community building may be original to the site and have historic merit, staff requests that the Planning Board consider retaining the intent of the original design guidance but add flexibility to permit the construction of a new community building if the preservation and renovation proves infeasible. Staff recommends the following:

"Create an interconnected open space system that links Twinbrook Parkway and the stream valley park and provides visual and physical access through the property. Preserve and renovate the existing community building and integrate it into the community open space. If preservation and renovation of the existing community building proves infeasible, construct a new community building integrated into the open space."

CONCLUSION

During the sixth work session, staff will revisit the Public Hearing Draft recommendations and testimony received for properties in the Connecticut-Randolph District and the Twinbrook District and request final guidance from the Planning Board on the land use and zoning recommendations in the plan. Staff will return to the Planning Board on November 29 to conclude discussions on the transportation recommendations and anticipates providing a redlined version of the plan in advance of a December 13 work session.