

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

The Berkeley, 2900 S. Glebe Road (SP #431)

SPRC Meeting #5

May 12, 2014

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Steve Sockwell, Chair; Jane Siegel, Erik Gutshall, Nancy Iacomini

MEETING AGENDA

This was the fifth meeting for SP #431, the Berkeley. The SPRC Chair for this item, Steve Sockwell, gave a brief introduction which was followed by a presentation by the applicant on changes made to the project since the last meeting. The applicant discussed the major transportation elements of the proposal as well as the community benefits associated with the project.

The applicant presented the following updates and changes to their proposal:

- Provision of rectangular rapid flashing beacons at the mid-block pedestrian crossing on S. Glebe Road
- Improvements to pedestrian crossings at the S. Mead Street intersection
- Redesign of mid-block entry driveway to eliminate octagon shaped drop-off area; two additional spaces that could be used for drop-offs were created in the internal drive between the two buildings
- New pedestrian path from the south side of Building 2 up to S. Mead Street
- Ground floor entrances and patios added along the stream side of the first floor units
- Revised color palette, elevations, and entrance details

Following the applicant's presentation, the SPRC discussed the following topics.

SPRC DISCUSSION

Transportation

- Is a LOS (Level of Service) D operation the best?
 - No, the levels of service range from A – F. LOS D is considered acceptable by the County for peak hour traffic. Arlington County will accept LOS E in some cases to allow for better pedestrian access (as opposed to road widening)
- Proposed flashing beacon is a good idea, S. Glebe Road is hard to cross
- Does the LOS take all kinds of traffic and circulation into account? (bikes, cars, people)
Will there be a need for turn lane at the center of the site (from the shopping center)?
 - Analysis does take bikes and pedestrians into account

- Signal timing at S. Mead can accommodate the projected increase in the number of residents
 - Proposed flashing beacon will warn drivers of the crosswalk
 - Driveway at S. Mead will have to be two-way to allow a left turn out
 - Signal warrant analysis showed majority of traffic is created by the shopping center itself, not this project
- Concern about potential for conflicts from vehicles exiting from the site with traffic leaving the shopping center
 - Signalized exit provides protected access, others exits have a stop sign
- S. Lang Street analysis was appreciated, but the applicant should go back and consider using S. Lang as the only access to the garage/loading area.
 - Using S. Lang appears to be technically feasible, but in order to put everything on that side, the play area would be eliminated and Building 2 would have no loading access
 - Please assess if you could relocate the play area to where garage/loading for Building 1 is now. How many feet of driveway could be removed if no loading is needed for building 2?
- Why can't parking entrance be in the West building?
 - This alternatives was previously studied. This is the highest point on site and would require moving the existing mechanical/heating system or full displacement of residents on site during construction.
- Is trip generation provided on the number of parking spaces or the number of units? How does the estimate compare to existing parking levels?
 - Based on the number of units, not the parking ratio. The current and estimated levels are very close.
- What about the CPTED analysis of fence options?
 - Hasn't been revisited yet
- Maybe it's time for a signal at the mid-block crossing, in light of the potential for commercial redevelopment across the street at some point in the future. Lining up mid-block vehicular access points is a good idea if it can support future signal improvements.
 - Staff has asked the applicant to show if the vehicular access point on S. Glebe can line up with shopping center curb cut to accommodate a potential mid-block signal. For an urban corridor, the spacing could accommodate another signal here.

Community Benefits

- What does "green roof technology" refer to?
 - Proposed courtyard patios are located over underground garages using green roofs because they are mounded over them; providing benefits that they can't do on the roofs of the buildings themselves but accomplishes stormwater management benefits

- What would be done if not for the “green roof technology” in this location? How did we treat 1401 Wilson public space and Met Park - are those spaces considered green roofs also?
 - Staff will check on how other projects were evaluated
- What is rent for ADUs now as compared to proposed?
 - Currently can't exceed 60% AMI
 - Proposal will be the same but may fluctuate if median AMI changes
 - Property has some units that are only 50% AMI and those will continue
- What happens to people living there now?
 - Relocation and project phasing has been designed to minimize displacement
- Is Berkeley mostly comprised of seniors?
 - No, they are not the predominate population
- What is current unit mix with regard to number of bedrooms and square footage allocated to affordable and market rate units? Would be helpful to compare to proposal.
 - AHC will find out; keep in mind that 1960's unit sizes will likely be larger, and less efficient, than current, modern standards
- How was the % of ADUs chosen?
 - Proposal is a minimum level that AHC would provide, their hope is to increase it if possible but financing is not set yet
- Good to maximize ADUs here, however affordable housing is most improved when it's consistent with our plans and the surrounding neighborhood.
- Any projections about how many children will live there given the unit mix?
 - AHC thinks it will increase but it's hard to determine
 - AHC knows they serve 40 kids now through their programming on-site, but that number is the max they can serve, not the entire population
- When does the Arlington Public Schools assessment occur? Before the PC vote?
 - Not sure, will find out but probably not before the proposal is approved
- Look at other AHC properties to help assist with reducing displacement of residents.
- What about coordination with Gunston Community Center on provision of social services and activities? This space has ample capacity.
 - Applicant will check with their programming staff on this, it may already be occurring
- FYI, a community garden is located across S. Lang St. that would be available for use by the residents.

Site Design & Characteristics

- Security design is still an issue, need to rethink fencing. New design has more eyes on the ground which will improve security.
- Please respond on suggestions made by CPTED officer. Take suggestions to insurance company to see if increased rates would be unsustainable.
- Explore raising height of trail to provide better visual access to the stream itself.

- Need to address connections to the stream, not just the trail. This should be an asset to the residents. Steps taken so far are small.
- Further discussion of S. Lang Street alternative is needed; what is total amount of driving feet along the stream if that option is fully explored?
- Fence is still a big unresolved issue. AHC has other buildings that are not fenced and other buildings located along the trail are not fenced. Can't support keeping it given the plan guidance. There is not total neighborhood consensus on this issue.

Other Comments

- Pleased to see responses to previous comments and progress made to date, hopefully more can be done before it goes to PC.
- Proposal currently doesn't fulfill the vision expressed in Four Mile Run Plan. Security concerns are valid but perhaps a gate on the stream side that could be opened up to the public in the future is an option.
- Issue of density is still outstanding; disagreement with base density including area of Four Mile Run in the calculation. Proposal is a 73% increase in site density.

NEXT STEPS

- Construction Phasing will be discussed at the next (final) SPRC meeting as well as a wrap up on all remaining issues.
- Next SPRC meeting date is TBD, likely late June.