

## SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Pentagon Centre, 1201 S. Hayes Street and 1200 S. Fern Street (SP #297)

SPRC Meeting #1

February 23, 2015

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Steve Sockwell, Chair; Steve Cole; Rosemary Ciotti; Brian Harner, Christopher Forinash

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### MEETING AGENDA

This was the first SPRC meeting for SP #297, Pentagon Centre. The SPRC Chair for this item, Steve Sockwell, gave a brief introduction explaining the process being utilized to evaluate both the PDSP and Phase 1 Site Plan amendment requests. Staff gave a presentation on the planning history in Pentagon City and for the site in particular as well as a summary of the prior 2008 approval. The applicant gave a presentation on the current request, highlighting the changes requested from the original approval as well as the changes made since the project was discussed at LRPC. Following the presentation, the SPRC discussed the following topics.

### SPRC DISCUSSION

#### Density and Heights

- Concern with regard to the size (bulk and width) of Building C. Long, large building wall against a low density area to the south. Adding a hotel wall doesn't help. It's a matter of scale, not height
  - Applicant wants to create an urban building edge on this street and suggested that seeing the architecture would help.
  - Stepbacks might help make this transition better. A suggestion was made to make the courtyards above street level face 15<sup>th</sup> Street as a way to break up this building more.
- LEED Silver is a requirement of the PDSP and should not receive bonus density.

#### Streetscape and Site Circulation

- What is the plan for 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the east? How does this project carry it through?
  - Proposal will maintain previous requirements that anticipated streetcar here
  - Loading area on 12<sup>th</sup> street for Building A will move to S. Grant Street in Phase II
- Be sure to note where S. Grant Street is on all drawings.
- S. Grant does not need to be a "Main Street" and could serve as a pedestrian/bicycle street. S. Hayes Street is fine now.

- Important streets are S. Hayes and 12<sup>th</sup> Street South. Not exciting frontage in Phase I for S. Hayes. Internal streets have loading so open spaces shouldn't be located opposite them.

### Mix of Uses

- Is there County policy or guidance about whether or not there should be retail on 15<sup>th</sup> Street? What does the draft Retail Action Plan call for on this street? One-sided retail on a wide street (15<sup>th</sup> Street South) is an issue.
  - Draft Retail Action Plan utilized existing planning documents (sector plans and approved PDSPs) to develop recommendations about where retail should go and what types are appropriate. Staff will check on this as well as any other relevant policy guidance.
- Have condominiums been considered for at least one of the residential buildings?
  - While it remains a possibility, it is unlikely given the current condo market
- What is the anticipated order of construction for buildings in Phase I?
  - Buildings D, A, and C in that order.
- Residential uses are going to be around for a while and the public realm is lacking now. Rethink the streetscape along S. Hayes Street.
  - There is not a lot of width to do much on that street in Phase I.
  - Parking garage has been reduced from its original size and will not stay forever.
- Consider the development in terms of the broader Pentagon City area. There is still probably a need for office development here that hasn't changed since the original approval. Investment objectives often skew what might be best for the community.
- Concern about the amount of retail and its ability to succeed here, particularly considering all the other retail that has been approved in the surrounding area.
  - Currently there is a large amount of big box retail here. In addition, there is demand for smaller players.
  - We don't know what retail is going to look like in the future.
    - Would like to see an alternative on this site with less retail proposed
- Are there metrics on population density and retail?
- What about health care providers? Consider here given the number of people proposed for the site.
- Recent trend in the corridors has been primarily residential development and it is a concern. The cumulative effect of all these projects is an issue and we need a more sophisticated means of assessment. The timing of new residents and new services, schools, open space raises questions about being able to keep up.
- Use mix at Pentagon City with regard to Metro usage is a concern.
- Land use balance is hard to adjudicate on a project by project basis. We need to consider if we are creating a vibrant community.

### Open Space

- Is there any other open space planned in Phase II? Concern about proposed above grade green space, as it often doesn't succeed.

- Upper level area in Building B
- Plaza on S. Grant adjacent to Building B
- Potential for space next to Building C
- Does green roof area count as open space?
  - No.
- What is green area between buildings A and B?
  - This area is an elevated open space area where a podium is shared. It is not a street level open space. It will likely be utilized by the public and the adjacent office tenants.
- It's ok for this site to be different than Met Park. Open space doesn't have to be internalized.
- Open space is not effectively addressed and the lawn area is not planned. Open space would work better in the core of the site.
- Elevated open space areas are not effective and should not be counted the same as grade level spaces.
- Concern about proposed project phasing for delivery of open space.
- Connectivity of the street in between the proposed open space areas could be cut off (14<sup>th</sup> Street South) or become a shared street.

### **Building and Site Design**

- Above grade parking should be invisible.
- Two-sided retail is not provided on S. Fern Street.
- Retail pavilion should be moved to S. Fern and Building E should be modified to have an edge on S. Fern as well.
- Flip upper levels of Building C to soften the edge on 15<sup>th</sup> Street South
- One-sided retail on 15<sup>th</sup> Street is not a good idea.
- Would suggest not putting office lobbies at building corners as those are the best places for retail.
- Utilize stepbacks on upper floors.
- Look at buildings in the in-between area on Wilson for an example of using stepbacks adjacent to a low density residential area. A less successful approach can be found at The Madison, in the former location of Buckingham Village 1. The stepback approach is likely better.

### **General Comments**

- First PDSP was poorly conceived and the design was problematic.
- Overall, the project is improving.
- Odd to build a 7-story parking garage on a temporary basis. Would prefer to see permanent underground parking here.

### **NEXT STEPS**

- Next SPRC meeting: **Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>**. This meeting will be preceded by a walking tour of the site and will be held at the Aurora Hills Community Center. The applicant

suggested that those interested in taking part in the walking tour meet inside the existing retail building in front of the Starbucks at 6pm.

- Staff and/or applicant to provide the following additional information:
  - Illustrate the impact of the proposed land use changes on the greater Pentagon City area, including the use mix that exists today (without PenPlace) in addition to the anticipated future build out.
  - Update building footprints for surrounding properties on context maps.
  - Provide a succinct comparison between the original proposal and the requested changes.
  - Ensure that future exhibits and illustrations of the site show the surrounding context.
  - Provide a contour drawing showing heights of the proposed buildings within the context of both existing and approved buildings nearby.