Long Range Planning Committee  
Meeting Summary  
July 9, 2019  

**Topic: Housing Conservation District (HCD)**  

**Attendees:**  

**Planning Commission**  
Nancy Iacomini (Chair)  
Elizabeth Gearin  
James Schroll  
Elizabeth Morton  
Sara Steinberger  
Daniel Weir  
Kathleen McSweeney  
Jim Lantelme  

**Staff**  
Richard Tucker (Planning)  
Russell Danao-Schroeder (Housing)  
Jennifer Smith (Planning)  
Tim Murphy (Planning)  

**Public**  
Stuart Stein  
Jon Kinney  
Scott Pedowitz  
Tad Lunger  

A presentation was given by two staff, Richard Tucker and Russell Danao-Schroeder, representing the Planning and Housing Divisions of CPHD. Staff highlighted how the Housing Conservation District is tied into the larger Housing Arlington initiative. Staff also reviewed the major elements of the HCD Update Report, a document intended to provide the community with background information, staff’s preliminary recommendations regarding approaches to zoning changes and affordability requirements; policy tradeoff considerations; and graphics that illustrate how a variety of properties could redevelop in the future, based on staff’s preliminary recommendations.

Planning Commissioners had the following comments and questions:

- Has staff considered vouchers for tenants rather than rent restrictions?
- Incentives need to target renovation; some buildings are at the end of useful life
- Interested in redevelopment options that preserve MARKs (market-rate affordable units)
- Supportive of the preservation of units, but still worried about who ends up occupying them
- Are we planning to create guidelines for future development applications? (Staff - yes)
  - Guidelines are a good way to have some protection & buy-in – provides some certainty to know that there are guidelines that can be followed
  - Suggestion: A matrix of guidelines, by area to fit/meet character of the area
  - Would help streamline the review process in the end
  - Guidelines have to be flexible
  - Would the guidelines incorporate universal design?
  - Be careful about using the term stacked flats; other options possible
  - Resist framing with the phrase ‘character of the neighborhood” – some will reject this
  - Pattern book could be developed more quickly and can be used more as a marketing tool. May be better right away before guidelines are developed.
- Conceptual review:
  - Will there be a fee for this? (Staff – have not determined this yet)
• Staff – intended as a quick look at proposals; opportunity to understand; possibly improve prior to formal submission

• Heights:
  • Is the height limit the same for both garden sites and mid-rise sites? (Staff – no.)
  • Consider providing some flexibility for mid- to high-rise sites to think about where maximum height goes
  • Have we done modeling yet for tapering as it relates to the resulting density? (Staff – no.)
    ▪ Might be good to look at dimensions from lot lines – 100’: what area is left to be 6 stories/60’
    ▪ Property line vs shared property line – less concerned about height along street
    ▪ Compare 100’ vs 50’

• Site Typology and Development Options:
  • Could semi-detached or duplex lots have Accessory Dwellings? (Staff – yes.)
  • Favoring renovation and infill/adding buildings may help stem displacement
  • Help preserve tree canopy as well

• Trade-offs:
  • Parking – structured, not underground seems counter-intuitive
  • Has staff gotten feedback about the loss of open space, tree canopy, Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) sites?
  • Is there a way to highlight gradations of trade-offs with each redevelopment option?
  • Is there any possible mitigation?
    ▪ Offer more height to incentivize/compensate for tree retention?
  • Problem: only talking about cost consideration – schools, utilities, etc. We are not talking about increasing taxable utility of properties. Should compare costs and potential new revenues.
  • These are considerations that should have been included in the document
  • May need to consider a way to achieve/require tree replacement with removal of trees
  • Think of these as “challenges” not policy trade-offs
  • Parking: Analysis - some sites may be over/under parked, but affordable housing may not need as much
  • Some areas have high demand for on-street parking; other areas not
  • Traffic – look at Level of Service; maybe traffic goes up, but not bad
  • HRI is not a list of local historic district sites, just a list. Does not support staff’s recommendation of top 1/3 of Important HRI sites. Enhanced guidelines could inform potential options for Important sites
  • How much Federal money at play? What triggers Section 106 Review? HUD has design guidelines (Staff – Generally, Federal funding is used for other purposes)
  • Slide 22: Allow multifamily on single-family sites? (Staff – yes.)

Community Comments:
• What is the original purpose of HCD? Do we want to preserve units or incentivize redevelopment? When you preserve the units, you preserve the people in them. Hope we don’t displace current residents.
• This is Phase II of a continuous process. There was a pressing need to preserve housing. This is being done piecemeal. Incentives are needed to counter restrictions that had been put in place previously.