



TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT
Long Reach Village Center
Urban Renewal Project

Planning Board Public Meeting of May 18, 2017
County Council Hearing to be scheduled

Request:

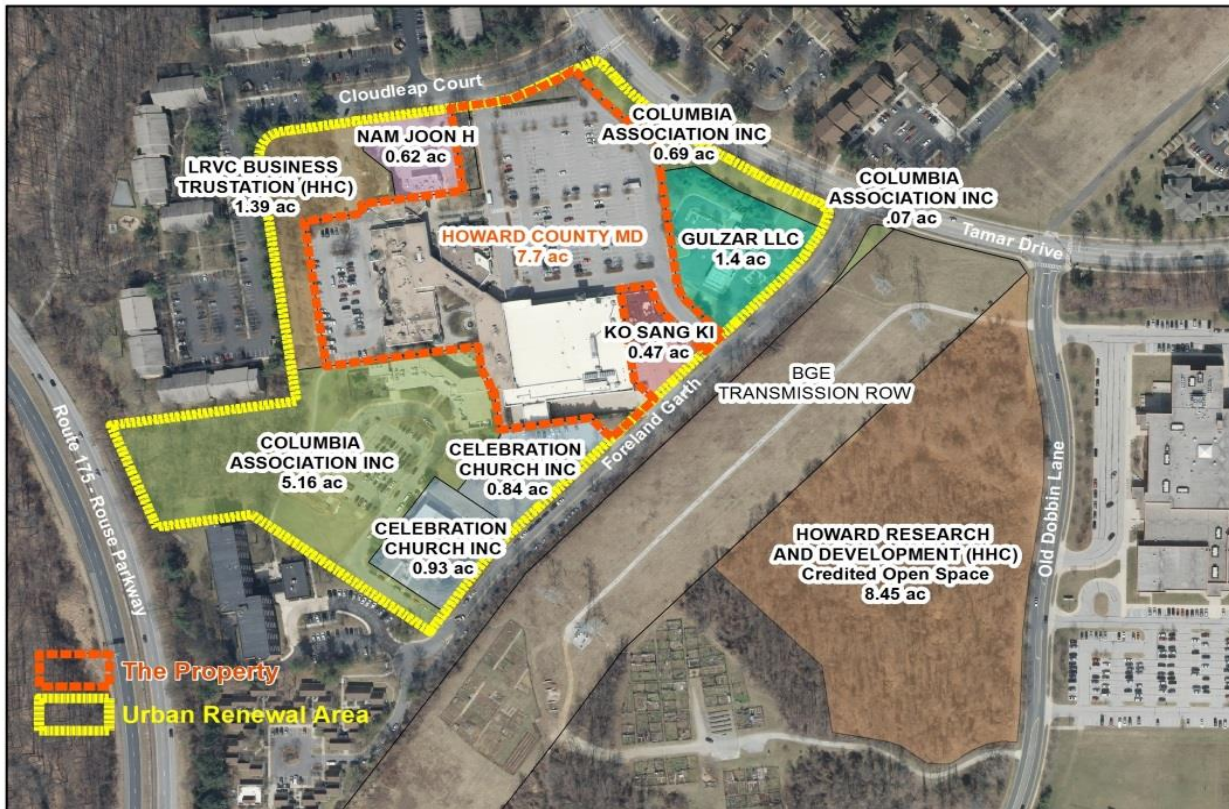
Recommend the County Council approve the preferred Urban Renewal Project to redevelop and revitalize the Long Reach Village Center (LRVC) urban renewal area.

Location:

The urban renewal area is bound to the north by Cloudleap Court and Tamar Drive; to the east by Foreland Garth; to the south by the Longwood Apartments; and to the west by the Timbers Apartments and Route 175. This area encompasses 19.1 acres and is located in the Second Election District of Howard County, Maryland. Howard County Government owns 7.71 acres within the urban renewal area (Parcel 6, Lots UN 1 and 2 on Tax Map 36, Grid No. 12).

DPZ Recommendation:

County Council approve the preferred Urban Renewal project to revitalize the LRVC urban renewal area described herein.



Map of Urban Renewal Area, including the property owned by Howard County

Background:

Council Bill 29-2009 – CB 29-2009 outlined a process for Village Center redevelopment and created the opportunity for Village Boards to create and file master plans.

Long Reach Village Center Community Plan (VCCP) - The Long Reach Village Board, aided by a panel of citizen volunteers, created a Village Center Master Plan that was approved by the Community and filed with the Department of Planning and Zoning in 2012.

Council Resolution 22-2014 – Facing decline of the shopping center, and given concerns about vacancies, poor maintenance, security and impact on neighboring property values, members of the community requested County intervention. On March 5, 2014, the County Council passed legislation finding that certain properties of the LRVC constituted a blighted area and found that the rehabilitation or redevelopment of these properties is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare of the residents of the County. The legislation defined the boundaries of the 19.1-acre urban renewal area, authorized acquisition of certain properties in the LRVC, and authorized preparation of plans for redevelopment.

County Acquisition – In October 2014 Howard County purchased a portion of the LRVC (excluding the former Safeway building). In February 2015 the County purchased the Safeway building resulting in county ownership of 7.71 acres in the LRVC urban renewal area.

Community Meetings – The County held five community meetings throughout 2015 to engage the public in reimagining the LRVC. Community participation exceeded expectations, with over 150 people attending the kickoff meeting in April 2015. That meeting – and each of the subsequent meetings in the series – featured both high attendance and thoughtful discussion.

Reimagine Long Reach Village Center Proposed Plan (Reimagine Plan) – Based on the input from the community meetings, the County developed a Reimagine Long Reach Village Center Plan (2016). The plan documents the County's objectives to revitalize the LRVC, potential land uses, and techniques the County may use to facilitate revitalization. One technique the plan contemplates is property disposal through a competitive developer solicitation process – a Request for Proposals (RFP).

Request for Proposals – Consistent with the Reimagine plan, the County issued an RFP in December 2016 with the help of a commercial real estate consulting firm, Chartwell Enterprises. The RFP was: marketed directly to more than 150 developers and other potentially interested parties; listed on CoStar, a commercial real estate marketing provider with broad reach; and posted on the County's website. The County and Chartwell held an industry day on January 10, 2017, and invited interested parties to the LRVC for a presentation regarding the property and its potential redevelopment.

RFP Evaluation Committee – The County formed a seven-member evaluation committee that include three community members (a Village Board member selected by the Long Reach Village Board, a Long Reach business owner selected by the County Administration, and a Village Board member and a Columbia Association representative selected by Councilman Calvin Ball). Four County representatives served on the committee, including one representative from County Administration, two representatives from the Department of Planning and Zoning, and one representative from the Department of Public Works. The committee unanimously recommended the development plan submitted by the Orchard Development Team (Attachment A) as its preferred plan for the redevelopment of the LRVC (see RFP Committee Recommendation Memorandum – Attachment C). Notably, each committee member rated the Orchard Development Team plan as the highest rated proposal by a substantial margin.

Proposed Development Plan:

Location - The site area for the redevelopment proposal is approximately 10.25 acres and consists of the County-owned 7.71-acre property, along with several adjacent parcels.



A	Retail Market Pavilion
	Medical Office
B	Retail
	Incubator Space
	Multi-Family
	Vertical Garden
C	Townhouses
D	Townhouses
E	Townhouses
	Senior Housing

Map of redevelopment area (also provided on page 11 of the enclosed proposal)

Land Uses and Development Program – As depicted on the concept plan above, the following uses are proposed:

- **Block A:** Approximately 17,500 SF of medical office over a market pavilion
- **Block B:** Mixed-use building to include 20,000 SF of retail; 20,000 SF of food incubator space; 132 market-rate multi-family housing units; 854 structured parking spaces; and a 19,500 SF vertical garden (adjacent to the south wall of the parking structure)
- **Blocks C & D:** 32 for-sale townhomes
- **Block E:** 120 senior multi-family housing units and 20 for-sale townhomes.

The proposed development program is predicated upon acquisition of the liquor store and deli parcels, which are privately owned and adjoin the County property. Acquisition of these parcels expands revitalization within the urban renewal area and achieves a more holistic redevelopment. As such, the development team has initiated conversations with these property owners and both have expressed preliminary interest in being part of the redeveloped center. The development team further indicated that it will work with other current tenants in the center who may wish to be part of the redevelopment to ensure a smooth transition for all interested parties.

According to the development team, the project does not rely on the integration of these parcels. If the deli parcel is not acquired, one block of townhouses (approximately 16 units) and the adjacent portion of the street between the townhomes and market/office building (Building A above) would not be built. If the liquor store parcel is not acquired, the entry plaza fronting Foreland Garth would not be built and a corner of the multi-use building (Building B above) would be adjusted slightly. In either scenario, the majority of the proposed uses can be achieved.

Community Spaces – The redevelopment proposal features a Village Green with a pavilion as its primary community gathering space. The Village Green is located prominently at the corner of Cloudleap Court and Tamar Drive. The development plan also offers a series of smaller, public spaces to include:

- A community dog park- located south of the vertical garden.
- A public plaza- situated at the southeast corner of Building B. This feature serves as an entry point from Foreland Garth.
- Neighborhood mews- a linear public green located between the senior housing and townhomes shown in Block E above. This axis extends from the existing Cultural Arts Center west to connect the residential and cultural uses.

In response to a request from the LRVC Evaluation Committee, the development team has indicated that basketball courts could be accommodated within the Green (likely near the eastern corner and the shared-use path along Tamar Drive) should the community desire such an amenity.

Demolition and Phasing – The development team has indicated the project could be built in phases. The first phase would include demolition of the existing surface parking lot and retail facing it, followed by constructing the new retail market pavilion, the Village Green, the multi-family building with ground floor retail, and the two western blocks of townhouses totaling 36 units (within blocks E and C in the map above).

Zoning – The proposed redevelopment site is zoned “NT” (New Town) and requires an amendment to the Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) to include residential uses. Accordingly, the Major Village Center Redevelopment process will be required to implement the proposed project. Attachment G outlines the steps for this process.

Evaluation and Conclusions:

Conformance with Reimagine Long Reach Village Center Proposed Plan Objectives –

The Reimagine Plan identifies objectives for the revitalization of the LRVC based on:

- Community input from the five public meetings
- The 2012 Long Reach Village Center Community Plan
- Columbia Association’s Guiding Principles
- Applicable *PlanHoward 2030* goals and policies

The development proposal addresses these objectives by describing how the redevelopment will create long-term economic sustainability, enhance connectivity between the LRVC and the rest of the village, provide attractive community gathering spaces, and incorporate innovative building and site design. Each of the Reimagine Plan objectives is evaluated below.

Economic Sustainability

Provide opportunities for existing businesses and attract new businesses to LRVC that supports the needs of the Long Reach Village and Columbia.

The development team envisions new retail uses that meet the daily needs of the neighborhood, such as carry-out or quick serve food, pharmacy, medical uses, health and fitness, daycare, convenience store, and other related services. To provide synergy with the existing art center, the development team proposes innovative and creative concepts including a food incubator and possible culinary institute.

According to the proposal, the food incubator serves a significant unmet need for local entrepreneurs in the food processing, agricultural, and technology industries. The incubator will offer commercial co-working kitchen space, a co-packing facility, training center for workforce development, and micro-storefronts. Both Howard Community College and Power52 intend to offer programs in the proposed training center, covering such areas as financial literacy, solar and energy efficiency, and agricultural technology.

The team also proposes a food hall within the market pavilion adjacent to the Village Green and a vertical garden adjoining the multi-family building. These components will give the LRVC a distinctive character and draw attention and interest from both the immediate community and beyond.

Improve the visibility of the LRVC from Tamar Drive, Cloudleap Court and Foreland Garth to support business viability.

The proposed site layout locates the retail uses closer to Tamar Drive, compared to existing conditions. The market pavilion building is proposed near the corner of Cloudleap Court and Foreland Garth, adjacent to the Village Green. The multi-family building, with ground floor retail, will be accessed from Foreland Garth and visible both from Foreland Garth and Tamar Drive.

Incorporate appropriate signage.

The development plan indicates that attractive and easily discernible wayfinding signage will be integral to the overall redevelopment.

Encourage the development of housing options to provide an on-site demand for goods and services.

The proposal describes how new residential development is a key component for the commercial success and long-term economic viability of the center. The proposed mix of housing types will add a significant customer base, within a short walking distance to merchants.

Connectivity

Create a network of pedestrian/bicycle pathways to formally connect the LRVC with neighboring properties and existing Columbia Association pathways. This network will consist of: new pedestrian connections with crosswalks, and existing or new internal streets in new alignments. Streets may be public or private.

The proposed site plan provides walkable streets, sidewalks, and interconnected blocks. The sidewalk network links buildings with public spaces, promotes a walkable and accessible community, and improves connectivity to adjacent parks, trails, schools, and neighborhoods. The development plan includes a shared-use path along Tamar Drive.

The smaller townhome blocks are located to reinforce existing pathway connections, create a stronger street network, and create a pedestrian framework that links to broader community amenities beyond the development site.

Maximize the impact of public transit facilities by locating them within the LRVC to support commercial operations and community uses.

The proposal describes a transit hub to include a sheltered transit stop for buses, Uber/Lyft, bike racks and a bike share station. The bike share station would be located adjacent to the Village's bus stop and near the Village Green and ground floor retail in the multi-family building.

Ensure that LRVC is visibly and physically accessible, convenient, and comfortable. New pathways should have lighting that is scaled appropriately for users and enhanced with landscaping.

The development plan includes a shared-use path alongside a densely-landscaped setback buffering the Village Green from the heavily-traveled Tamar Drive. Street trees, walkways and crosswalks are incorporated along all sides of the Village Green to promote pedestrian safety, walkability, and connections to the larger trail network.

Currently, access and visibility to Stonehouse and Columbia Art Center is lacking. The proposal provides a new internal street leading to the Stonehouse and Columbia Art Center building. This street will enhance the civic presence of the building with increased internal access and visibility.

Community Spaces

Ensure that expanded or enhanced public spaces are appropriately sited to function as an integral part of development to provide public interaction and gathering.

The central Village Green will be the primary community space located prominently at the corner of Cloudleap Court and Tamar Drive. It is situated to support retail users and provide opportunities to foster a sense of neighborhood identity and cohesiveness. The Village Green features a pavilion that functions as a gateway feature and performance venue.

The development plan also provides smaller public spaces, including a public plaza, community dog park, and neighborhood mews. The plaza is located to be an entry point and front door to the LRVC from Foreland Garth. It is designed to serve as a secondary hub for residential and village community life, promoting opportunities for gathering and social interaction. The dog park will offer opportunities for Long Reach residents to socialize and allow their dogs to play off-leash. The neighborhood mews is a linear green that will visually connect the proposed townhome area to the Art Center and Stonehouse.

Require that public spaces provide landscaping and offer benches or other types of outdoor seating.

Each of the proposed community spaces provide distinctive landscaping. The Village Green has bermed landscaped shoulders with native plantings, flowering trees, and integrated stormwater management. The plaza includes a grove of shade trees and stormwater management features. The dog park has a dense hedge to conceal a 4-foot high fence. The neighborhood mews features an informal landscape with native plantings, regularly spaced ornamental trees, and shrubs. The Village Green and plaza will also include flexible outdoor seating options.

Retail and enhance the existing institutional uses (such as Stonehouse and Columbia Art Center) and provide opportunities for new institutional uses (such as governmental, educational, and nonprofit uses) that complement the existing assets.

The proposal provides a new internal street leading to the Stonehouse and Columbia Art Center building to enhance the building's presence.

Innovative redevelopment features would complement the existing assets. The food and technology incubator/training center is described as a unique focal point for the new center. It would offer a commercial kitchen co-working space, co-packing facility, training center for workforce development, and micro-storefronts. The vertical farm is also noted as an attraction that would establish the reimagined LRVC as a compelling destination. The proposed vertical hydroponic farm is described in the proposal as a highly productive, environmentally-friendly source for local "365" fresh produce.

Building and Site Design

Incorporate high caliber, green building and site design strategies and systems.

The development team envisions a truly sustainable mixed-use redevelopment. The plan integrates net positive energy design, vertical farming, food incubation, and multigenerational residences. The development team anticipates achieving both "net-positive" energy and a LEED platinum rating. The design would produce more power than it uses, bring clean energy and greater reliability to on-site operations and external community stakeholders. Techniques to achieve net-positive energy design include: energy efficiency automated building control systems, geothermal heating and cooling, solar electric power, battery storage, and the conversion of organic food waste.

Incorporate massing and height standards to appropriately transition between neighboring properties.

The site layout incorporates a welcoming transition from Tamar Drive with a gateway entrance feature (pavilion) and a Village Green. Multi-story buildings are centrally located and townhomes provide a transition between these new multi-story buildings and garden apartments to the north and west of the site.

While the proposal offers benefits to the Stonehouse and Columbia Art Center building, in terms of enhanced visibility and access, the size and scale of the proposed multi-story buildings could create an overwhelming effect. To the extent possible, the long-term incorporation of the Stonehouse and Columbia Art Center uses within a new multi-story building could address this issue. The proposal provides an illustrative plan depicting a potential development framework for the southwestern portion of the Urban Renewal Area, should opportunities emerge for the long-term redevelopment of Stonehouse and Columbia Art Center.

Enhance the aesthetic quality of the LRVC by screening and appropriately siting parking, loading, and mechanical systems.

The multi-family building wraps an internal parking garage with residential and ground floor retail uses, and the south façade of the garage is screened by the vertical garden. The dog park is located to serve as a buffer to the parking garage entrance and loading/delivery area.

Conformance with *PlanHoward 2030*

The County's General Plan, *PlanHoward 2030*, supports the redevelopment of village centers as attractive focal points and as more vibrant and connected places that are served by multimodal forms of transit. *PlanHoward 2030* envisions that redeveloped village centers will also feature more sustainable and vibrant gathering places.

The proposed redevelopment will enhance the LRVC's function as the focal point for the surrounding village with attractive community gathering spaces and a mix of commercial, civic, and residential uses. It will improve pedestrian connectivity and provide multimodal transportation options. Redevelopment of the LRVC addresses the three principles of sustainability - community, environment, and economy – emphasized in *PlanHoward 2030*.

Overall Conclusion

The preferred redevelopment plan not only meets the goals and objectives of the *Reimagine Long Reach Village Center Plan* and *PlanHoward 2030*, it is also poised to be a model for innovative and sustainable redevelopment.

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Zoning recommends County Council approve the preferred Urban Renewal project to revitalize the LRVC urban renewal area as described and evaluated in this technical staff report.


Valdis Lazdins, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning

5/2/17
Date