

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Steph Monson, Urban Planner, Economic Development Department

Date: August 15, 2014

Subject: Consideration to adopt Riverside Drive Development Plan

Summary:

Consideration to advise City Council on the adoption of the Riverside Drive Development Plan

Background:

In 2013, The City of Asheville hired a team led by Heritage Directions, LLC, to identify redevelopment strategies for ten acres of underutilized City owned land in the heart of the City's RADTIP project area. The plan is complete and has been reviewed by staff and the Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission.

Review:

Plan Summary

The team has created a plan that:

- Recommends that the preferred renovation strategy for 14 Riverside Drive- an existing 1900 square foot building just to the north of 12 Bones restaurant- revolve around providing visitor amenities such as public restrooms and district information, and providing a place where one can always find some arts and culture programming happening
- Recommends an open space concept plan for several acres of city owned riverfront, just south and north of existing Jean Webb Park, that aligns with the RADTIP plans, leverages the arts and culture character of the district, and provides attractive improvements to stormwater management/water quality
- Presents four massing scenarios (with corresponding fiscal analyses sketches) for new mixed-use construction, centered around the historic smokestack and former Ice House site, that suggest the potential direction for a future redevelopment partnership
- Suggests improvements in circulation, arts and culture, preservation, and environmental stewardship that helps tie the redevelopment effort together.

Key Recommendations/Policy Considerations from the Plan

The consultants have identified the following as integral to the success of the plan:

- RADTIP implementation
- Careful development of riverfront open space amenities and greenway between 12 Bones and the Captain Bowen Bridge
- Creation of better connections between New Belgium Brewing and Riverside Drive open space
- Installation of River District Wayfinding and Orientation for visitors
- Design and construction of a parking garage that connects to Roberts Street from Riverside Drive
- Coordination and construction of a flood zone sensitive piece of infrastructure called the Pedestrian Transition Zone

- Development of better regulations for the area such as a Form Based Code with design guidelines
- Speedy renovation of 14 Riverside Drive as a community and visitor resource
- Maximizing the City's development potential on property designated for higher density mixed use buildings
- Encouraging partnerships with nearby landowner and stakeholders to leverage the City's land resource and create better development opportunities.

Community and Board Engagement

- The consultants had over sixty points of contact with the public, which ranged from individual stakeholder meetings to widely publicized public engagement efforts on site (at 14 Riverside Drive)
- A final public presentation occurred on March 18
- The AARRC has received multiple plan updates and received a presentation on key findings for the final draft in March 2014; the Planning and Design Review subcommittee of the Commission reviewed and edited the plan.
- The AARRC, at their August 14, 2014 meeting, voted unanimously in favor of the following motions:
 - 1) *"We advise City Council to adopt the Riverside Drive Development Plan as presented.*
 - 2) *We advise City Council to adopt the Riverside Drive Development Plan as an update to the City's adopted Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Master Plan, and adopt it as a plan that shall stand on its own, a plan not to be excluded from use if the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Master Plan becomes outdated.*

Staff Recommendations:

- 1) Staff recommends that PED advise staff on Council's consideration of the adoption of the plan
- 2) Staff proposes that, if Council adopts the plan, that staff return to PED with an implementation schedule for their review

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Link to Attachment

- 1) [Riverside Drive Development Plan](#)