

Questions and Answers from the April 30, 2015 Long Reach Village Center Community Meeting

1. How long will the process take to establish a redevelopment area?
The redevelopment area has already been established with the passage of CR 22-2014. The redevelopment area is shown on the website at: <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/longreach>
2. When do you anticipate shovels going into ground?
Many factors will influence when the actual redevelopment takes place. The County anticipates that a Request For Proposals to solicit private sector interest in purchasing the property will be issued sometime in 2016. Depending on the scope of redevelopment and the planning and zoning approvals needed, development could take place in 2017 or 2018.
3. Is the County prepared to support a scope for development beyond the parcels currently owned?
The County will work with the owners of properties within the Urban Renewal Area. The County will not change or alter existing uses beyond its own without the express permission of the other property owners.
4. Can the parking be relocated so the "main" building would be seen from Tamar?
Enhanced visibility through alternative designs is certainly an issue that will be explored in the planning process.
5. What examples, both nationally and internationally can you give that are historically successful redevelopments over time?
There are a number of shopping centers that have been successfully renovated. Local projects include the redevelopment of the Chatham Mall. Another very successful redevelopment is the Annapolis Towne Center at Parole in Ann Arundel County. County staff is compiling a list of case studies and will be posting those on the project's website soon.
6. Is the future purpose of LRVC really open for determination? Much of the discussion seemed to assume no food/market presence.
There has been no definitive decision made regarding allowable uses. Most likely, the presence of a food market will be determined by the ultimate market viability.
7. Does the village design concept include the needs and number of residents who do not have cars? I see people walking and carrying bags that clearly don't have vehicles.
While not yet developed, conceptual plans will include considerations to make it pedestrian and cyclist friendly.
8. Won't an arts center be an elitist concept that will attract only a select few?
Any uses that are eventually developed as part of the redevelopment will have to take into consideration a wide range of users and households. The CA Arts Center and the Arts Council

both cater to households with a wide range of incomes and if a greater focus on the arts is the eventual plan, we would expect that to continue.

9. Isn't White Marsh being redone along the strip mall concept i.e. people walking from store to store.

The Avenues at White Marsh represents a good example of a "lifestyle" center, an alternative shopping center type to a traditional regional mall. These outdoor centers often focus on high end fashion and home goods and also include restaurants.

10. Who receives benefits (money-wise) from renting property in LRVC to a business?

All revenues from the Long Reach Village Center go to the County's General Fund.

11. How has County done this before? Successfully? What is the measure of success?

Howard County has not done this type of redevelopment before. The success of the redevelopment will be a repositioned Village Center that attracts both the residents of Long Reach and greater Columbia and Howard County.

12. Would County be OK if the development could not be sold?

The County would have to reassess its approach and strategy if that result occurs.

13. What resources can be made available for non-profit organizations?

At this point, there has not been any specific plans developed involving non-profit uses. When and if such plans are developed, then resources can be identified.

14. Will the County respect the meaning of Columbia?

The Village Centers are an integral part of the fabric of Columbia and the County intends to develop a plan that integrates the spirit of the Village Centers with today's economic realities.

15. What will you do about security at The Long Reach Village Center?

The County has worked closely and diligently with the Police Department to address security at the Village Center. Additionally, it has instituted physical improvements such as lighting, new security systems and landscaping to improve visibility. Finally, the County has hired Allied Barton, a private security company to patrol the center from 2 pm to 10 pm every day.

16. Who approves (acts on) the Urban Renewal Plan?

The County Council will approve the Urban Renewal Plan using its normal legislative process that would include obtaining public testimony.

17. Why can't there be better signage in Columbia in general? There is no way you would know a village center is here.

Signage in Columbia in many cases is controlled by private covenants. The County is reviewing the covenants that impact Long Reach Village Center and will develop a strategy to improve visibility from the street.

18. What are the goals of the consultants? How are their goals shaped? By profit? Resident satisfaction?

The goals of the consultants are to work with County Staff to have a productive community engagement process. They have no vested interest in any outcomes other than to assist in obtaining community input to inform the development of an Urban Renewal Plan by County Staff.

19. What role does the Howard Hughes Corporation have in this process? Howard Hughes Corporation is a land owner of a parcel within the Urban Renewal Area. They, like other landowners will be closely consulted with by County Staff. No decisions regarding their property will be made without their involvement and consent.

20. For a farmer's market, where could it be located? How much would it cost to bring that here? County Staff has explored that option and at this time the County already has the Columbia market covered with the Farmer's Market program. There may be opportunities in future years.

21. Could LRVC join a Co-op of farmers from the region and sell the surplus of fruits and vegetables grown throughout the season?
This option will be explored.

22. At what point will the type of anchor tenant be addressed?
The type of anchor tenant will likely be determined with the Urban Renewal Plan. Most likely, different types of anchor tenants will be allowed to provide private developers with the flexibility to develop innovative redevelopment proposals.

23. What anchor tenants have been considered thus far?
A variety of anchor tenants have been discussed and the attendees at the first meeting have suggested a number of options. Nothing has been definitely determined at this point.

24. Will this project follow a phased approach?
It is very possible the redevelopment will be phased; however, the County desires that redevelopment take place as quickly as feasible.

25. Are there any uses that Howard County has already decided they won't support or allow?
The types of allowable uses will be flushed out in the Plan, however, it is likely that uses that are clearly incompatible with the surrounding neighborhoods would not be allowed, like heavy manufacturing.

26. What is the ultimate drive? Profit to Howard County? Property value? Meet needs of village residents?

Facilitating a successful redevelopment of the Long Reach Village Center is the County's ultimate drive. This will be accomplished by meeting the needs of Long Reach residents because a successful redevelopment depends on it being economically viable. Economic viability will only occur if resident needs are being met.

27. How much does residents' input play in final decision?

The input of residents will inform and help shape the Urban Renewal Plan. This will serve as the guide for future redevelopment by the private sector. In any case, there will be significant opportunities for future community input as plans are reviewed through the planning and zoning process.

28. Have you considered not redeveloping the center? Possibly the center has shifted to Center Park Drive, Columbia Crossing or Dobbin Center?

Doing nothing is not an option for the County. The Village Center was specifically purchased to be stabilized and redeveloped.

29. Using the completed arts study, can the 250 seat theatre be placed in the LRVC and more classroom and studio space be placed downtown area?

These types of options will be considered as the County moves forward in the redevelopment planning process.

30. Is there a possibility of reconstruction of the entire Village Center?

No specific demolition plans have been developed, but a private sector developer could pursue a complete demolition of the existing site.

31. What are the considerations for construction among the Village Center tenants as they exist today?

The County has worked closely with current tenants to help improve their businesses. They have and will be kept informed of the redevelopment process and plans.

32. What are the plans for Regional Transit Authority (RTA) with Long Reach Village Center?

The County will work closely with the RTA to insure that transit is a key part of the redevelopment planning for Long Reach Village Center. The County understands that many residents rely on public transportation.

33. Why has a grocery store concept been excluded? Given the many households here, a true discount store would be appropriate in this particular setting.

As discussed at the April meeting, the market for a full-line grocery store is hyper-competitive and it is very unlikely that such a store would locate in a redeveloped center. Alternative formats are being explored, but the eventual decision will be driven by market conditions.

34. If housing was added as part of the solution, would it be market-rate?

Market rate housing certainly could be a part of future uses. A range of housing will be explored in the planning process to determine what might be the appropriate level and type for the Village Center.

35. Can the stigma of LRVC be changed/fixed?

It will take a community-wide effort to stop the decline of the Village Center. The County is confident that with community support, a creative approach can be developed to revitalize the Village Center and take advantage of the many positive aspects that the Village Center possesses.

36. Has there been any interest, other than the Church, renting the "Safeway" space?

The County has been contacted by some interested parties, however, we are required to prepare the Urban Renewal Plan before making any long term commitments.

37. Has any thought been given to engaging young people in the surrounding apartments in activities?

As part of our stabilization efforts, we are working with local groups and county agencies to engage young people and create interest in the redevelopment process.

38. Is it possible to acquire significant parcels to create a larger parcel to work with?

The County is reviewing potential options with other owners in the redevelopment area.

39. Are there no other paths going under Route 175 other than this location?

There is only one path going under Route 175 at this location and very unlikely that any others would be built.

40. Are the economic demographics of the neighborhood being considered?

The economic and demographic character of the neighborhood is being evaluated and will be included as part of the Urban Renewal Plan.

41. How will you entice businesses to come to Long Reach?

When the County completes and approves the Urban Renewal Plan for the Village Center, it will place the property on the market for sale with a request for proposal process. Offers will then be evaluated based on the economic attractiveness of the proposals.

42. Are you aware of updated redevelopment costs because of age of center?

The eventual costs of redevelopment will likely be borne by the private sector unless a portion of the Village Center is retained by the County. As there is currently no specific plans, there have not been any analysis of costs performed.

43. Will any improvements be made before center and plan are put up for sale?
Selective minor repairs and maintenance will likely be performed to maintain the appearance and operation of the Village Center, but is unlikely that any major improvements will be undertaken.
44. Will redevelopment include residential uses?
Residential uses could be a part of the eventual redevelopment program. Many redevelopments include a residential component to provide an onsite market for retail, office and other uses.
45. How much control will the County have when operating in conjunction with a development company?
The County will develop an appropriate level of control in the sales contract to insure that the guidelines developed in the Urban Renewal Plan are followed.
46. How much consideration will civic uses be given?
Civic uses like residential uses can be a very effective alternative anchor in the redevelopment of shopping centers.
47. Who makes the final decisions?
The County Council will approve the Urban Renewal Plan and the County Executive will approve the eventual sale of the Village Center.
48. How will we facilitate neighborhood cohesion?
The interaction with the neighborhood will be an important aspect of the Urban Renewal Plan. Both the connectivity with the neighborhood and scale of development will be addressed to make sure that the Village Center creates a strong sense of neighborhood cohesion.
49. How can planners reach out to all groups in Long Reach? Not everyone is able to attend evening meetings. i.e. students, seniors, families with young children.
The County has employed a range of methods to reach out to as many people as possible. Other groups have assisted in outreach as well. All of the Community Engagement sessions have been videotaped and are posted on the project's website. In addition, key stakeholders have been contacted and their input has been solicited.
50. Don't you think we need to address safety of walking paths as well as their upkeep if you want to use them in marketing?
The safety and upkeep of the paths is very important. Beginning in July of 2015, the Howard County Police Department will have a dedicated, year-round bike patrol that will closely monitor the paths.

51. There are 3 primary groups that may or may not have a need for the Village Center: elderly, middle age, and youth. Has a "needs analysis" been done targeted at each of these 3 groups? What is the population of each of these 3 groups?

The County has done a general analysis of the market and it is expected that when private developers submit proposals for specific development programs they will provide an economic analysis to justify their proposal.

52. Has an alternative to a retail focus been evaluated?

The County retained Webb Management Services to evaluate the need for arts facilities in the County and recommend particular uses for Long Reach Village Center and Downtown Columbia. Given the findings of the recent market study of the Long Reach Village Center prepared for the County/Columbia Association/Howard County Economic Development Authority, alternative anchors will be an important feature of any proposed redevelopment.

53. What is the affinity of Howard County residents - what do they like, use, value?

The County expects that any redevelopment proposal will provide a market analysis that will support the proposed approach and composition of the proposed uses.

54. How will the redevelopment educate, inspire, enlighten and challenge young adults and our youth to develop a greater appreciation for their community?

As part of the eventual Request for Proposals that the County solicits, it will include specific requirements to demonstrate how any proposal will incorporate the original values of the Village Center concept to create a stronger sense of community.

55. Is there a precedent of mixed-use retail/housing succeeding in a suburban environment?

There are many examples of successful mixed use retail and housing across the country. One great local example is Annapolis Towne Center at Parole. While it is larger in scale than the Long Reach Village Center, it has a number of successful retailers and restaurants on the first floor of residential and office buildings.

56. Will the eventual private developer be required to follow the development plan, or can they make changes?

The eventual developer of the project will be required to follow the guidelines in the Urban Renewal Plan and the existing Department of Planning and Zoning regulations and procedures. The Plan will have some level of flexibility to enable developers to respond to changing market circumstances.

57. It seems that the residents will not have input to change the plan until the plan is submitted to the Council. Why? We should have input in the drawings and proposal that results in the Plan. The County's community engagement meetings are designed to provide a forum for input for conceptual plans. Additionally, once a draft of the Urban Renewal Plan is developed, it will be likely that community meetings will take place to gather additional input.

58. How feasible would signs pointing to the Village Center indicating what is here at least at both Tamar intersections? This might alleviate poor visibility.

Current architectural covenants on the property control the ability to install signs. This is the case in many areas of the County. However, the County is evaluating the covenants to obtain a better understanding of the control of those covenants.

59. Has there been a comparison of Long Reach features (i.e. traffic flow, distance from major roads, lack of signage) with the other village centers?

The previously mentioned market study did this type of analysis. There is a link of the County's Long Reach website.

60. Will there be a way to submit questions or suggestions via the website (and get answers via e-mail)?

Yes, there's a section on the website to signup for email updates. Questions can also be submitted to the County via email.

61. How can you make a cohesive re-development with the Richburn Liquors and Deli Town parcels not being part of the plan or purchased and relocated?

While these properties are not part of County ownership, they are on the respective edges of the County's parcel and therefore can be designed around. It is possible that these properties can be interwoven with the development with good design.

62. Why is this plan going to make attractive to developer? They've had more than enough opportunity to come forward heretofore.

The Urban Renewal Plan will provide a developer with a much clearer concept and scope of redevelopment. The Urban Renewal Plan's guidelines will provide a developer with a level of certainty that does not exist today. This is very important for developers as the predictability of the planning and zoning process can have a big impact on costs.

63. How can the redevelopment occur when the immediately adjacent neighbors are lower income?

While there are some lower income households nearby, this should not be an impediment to redevelopment. Neighborhood diversity can be an attractive characteristic of many future uses. Those households can also be served by an improved Village Center as was one of the founding principles of Columbia.