



Planning

## Old West Durham – Neighborhood Protection Overlay Workshop Summary January 31, 2017

### BACKGROUND

A Kick-Off Workshop for the Old West Durham Neighborhood Protection Overlay project was held at E.K. Powe Elementary School on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017 from 7:00 – 8:30pm. Roughly 65 community members attended. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Educate residents and property owners about the neighborhood’s current zoning regulations;
- Hear concerns residents and property owners may have about the built environment in Old West Durham and how current zoning regulations may not be addressing those concerns;
- Provide information about what a NPO is, how an NPO could be useful for Old West Durham, and the process and timeline for NPO development; and
- Solicit preliminary input about whether residents and property owners believe an NPO could be appropriate for Old West Durham and what issues it should address.

The workshop began with a presentation from the City-County Planning Department and the Old West Durham Neighborhood Association and was followed by a brief question and answer session. Participants then were invited to visit five interactive stations (with poster boards) and asked to record their comments/concerns on an accompanying worksheet. 42 community members submitted comments.

***The following is a summary of comments received that are representative of the whole. It is important to note that the comments are not the recommendations of the City-County Planning Department, but ideas and concerns shared by the Old West Durham community.***

### GENERAL CONCERNS (STATIONS 1 & 2)

Most participants were concerned with tear-downs and the size/scale of new residential development in the neighborhood. It is believed among participants that out-of-scale and out-of-context development can harm what is most cherished in the neighborhood: a quaint and friendly character, racial and income diversity, affordability, and greenery.

The overwhelming majority of participants did not have any concerns with the study area boundary.

### PERMITTED USES (STATION 3)

Station 3 presented information related to uses currently permitted within the RU-5 and RU-5(2) zoning districts. Because these two districts currently allow very limited residential uses, most participants were comfortable with the current regulations and just noted they would like the single and two family residential

character to continue. A few participants expressed concern about the current allowance of townhomes (in limited circumstances).

### TREES (STATION 3)

Station 3 also included information on trees and landscaping standards. The majority of participants expressed support for maintaining a robust tree canopy, but many also recognized that some existing trees may have reached their life cycle and may need replacement. Other commonly shared comments included the need to preserve front and back yards from overbuilding and concern about the pruning of trees by power companies.

### DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS (STATION 4)

Station 4 provided a summary of current dimensional standards in Old West Durham. This station received the highest volume of comments of any of the five stations, and 30 of the 42 participants who submitted worksheets (71%) expressly stated concerns with the current regulations. While there were a range of comments submitted, most focused on limiting size and bulk by reducing height limits, capping square footage as a percentage of lot size, preventing “camelback” homes, and reducing impervious surfaces (such as driveways).

It should also be noted that while participants supported more stringent dimensional regulations, many also sought to strike the appropriate balance between preservation of neighborhood character and the ability of property owners to expand their square footage in a contextual manner as needs change.

### NEXT STEPS (STATION 5)

Station 5 presented information on alternative policy solutions as well as next steps in the process. Most importantly, it gauged community support for moving forward with the NPO process. Participants were asked to envision a stop light and categorize their support for the process as either green (“I am comfortable moving forward”), yellow (“I am cautious about moving forward”), or red (“I don’t want to move forward”). Responses have been categorized in the accompanying table.

Color	# of Responses	%
<b>Green</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Red</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>

As depicted in the table, 93% of participants expressed some level of support (either “comfortable” or “cautious”) for moving forward, with only 7% stating a desire to halt the process.