



City of Ann Arbor Planning Services

Memorandum

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Derek Delacourt, Community Services Administrator
Brett Lenart, Planning Manager

RE: Pre-Entitlement Resolution – 415 W. Washington Street

DATE: June 26, 2020

On April 20, 2020, City Council considered the *Resolution to Direct the City Administrator, Ann Arbor Housing Commission, and Planning Commission to Create Proposed Application Materials, Review and Recommend Development Entitlements to the City Council for 415 W. Washington to Support the Development of Affordable Housing in the City*. The resolution would direct various staff and groups to initiate and submit the initial petitions for evaluation of a development concept at the site.

After discussion, the Resolution was postponed to July 6, 2020. As part of the postponement the City Council directed staff to conduct additional public engagement with a more focused geography of those living near the property and to further conversations with the Treeline Conservancy regarding the proposed plans.

From this direction, City staff has held numerous conversations with the Treeline Conservancy, which has ultimately culminated in the attached letter which recognizes the benefits of proceeding with the pre-entitlement process. Additionally, in full conformance with the City's Citizen Participation requirements prior to submittal of a project application, a webinar was held to present an overview of the engagement process held to date, and the basis for the recommended option.

While there are still concerns and objections by some regarding the presented option, both the localized and City-wide engagement shared similarly-ranging perspectives on the proposed option. Some of the more frequently raised issues/concerns/opportunities were to maximize affordable housing on the site, integrate the Treeline Trail, recommendations to avoid any construction in the floodplain, concerns/aspirations to ensure an appropriate development integrating into the adjacent historic district, preserving the Chimney Swift habitat and concerns about successfully balancing parking and circulation around the site.

Based on the additional engagement, staff affirms the recommendation that the preferred option is the likeliest model to enable achievement of the numerous shared goals of the site including environmental remediation, removal of blight, the realization of the adjacent segment of the Treeline Trail, and the best, albeit still modest, chance of realizing affordable housing at the site. [Note: A higher density proposal would increase the potential for affordable housing, but would also likely increase the chance that the project will face greater opposition and compromise success of other desired goals.] The amended resolution below reflects the additional engagement completed, and adds clarity to require Downtown Development Authority financial support of this work.

We look forward to addressing any questions as you consider this proposed direction.

Enclosures: Amended Resolution (for consideration of substitution/amendment of original resolution)
Treeline Conservancy Letter

CC: Tom Crawford, Interim City Administrator
Jennifer Hall, Executive Director, Ann Arbor Housing Commission
Susan Pollay, Executive Director, Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority
File

Resolution to Direct the City Administrator, Ann Arbor Housing Commission, and Planning Commission to Create Proposed Application Materials, Review and Recommend Development Entitlements to the City Council for 415 W. Washington to Support the Development of Affordable Housing in the City (Revised 6/25/20)

Whereas, City Council has directed staff to coordinate and analyze development options for 415 W. Washington with the goal of maximizing affordable housing;

Whereas, The City has actively developed concepts, analyzed them for feasibility, shared extensively with the public, and refined concepts consistent with the goals articulated through the community engagement process;

Whereas, this engagement has expanded from a City-wide perspective to include an additional localized session to provide further opportunity for comments, questions, and concerns;

Whereas, additional engagement has been conducted with the Treeline Conservancy resulting in a letter recognizing the value of the pre-entitlement process;

Whereas, This analysis has concluded with the recommendation that 415 W. Washington be pursued for redevelopment to include affordable housing or to support the development of affordable housing through contribution to the City's Affordable Housing Fund;

Whereas, To achieve the goals set forth in Resolution R-19-138 the City can take steps to entitle or approve development of certain attributes with the goal of expediting, or providing advancement of desired development concepts at the time a private development partner is solicited and/or selected;

Whereas, The Ann Arbor Housing Commission will lead the development of a proposed plan for the purpose of entitlement, including seeking financial support from the Downtown Development Authority for the work;

RESOLVED, That the following direction is conditioned upon the financial support of the Downtown Development Authority for the described work up to action by the City Council on a proposed zoning and/or plan to enable the preferred option;

RESOLVED, That the Ann Arbor Housing Commission is directed to develop plans and applications to the City for the redevelopment of 415 W. Washington that further the proposed concepts generated through the recent community engagement process;

RESOLVED, That the City Council hereby directs the City Administrator to authorize the Housing Commission to petition the City for the redevelopment of 415 W. Washington, and to provide appropriate staff support of this effort;

RESOLVED, That the City Council hereby directs the Planning Commission to provide feedback and recommend proposed zoning, plans, or other mechanisms to define and facilitate the realization of the redevelopment of 415 W. Washington;

RESOLVED, That these recommendations shall incorporate allocation of an appropriate portion of the site to future Treeline Trail use, the redevelopment of primarily residential use, with limited nonresidential use, and development standards that generally reflect that of the D2 Downtown Interface Zoning District; and

~~RESOLVED, That these recommendations be presented to the City Council by June 21, March 19, 2021; and~~

RESOLVED, That the Administrator, be authorized to take necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution including but not limited to providing written authorization for the Housing Commission to file applications regarding the development of 415 W. Washington.