

Multifamily Residential Community Character Areas

Goals

- To promote development of high-quality multifamily residential housing with auxiliary buildings that will include artist studios for the residents.
- To promote renovation and/or redevelopment and to increase the variety of multifamily housing options, especially for artists and their families.
- To enhance safety through the implementation of development district standards that increase natural surveillance.
- To encourage multimodal transportation options.

Existing Conditions and Issues

The locations of the multifamily residential community character areas are scattered throughout the Arts District, mostly east of Queens Chapel Road, in areas currently zoned multifamily. Most of the multifamily housing was developed with brick construction in the late 1940s and has stood the test of time. There is relatively little land available for new multifamily development.

Many multifamily developments are nonconforming with the Zoning Ordinance design standards. This has limited the ability of owners to renovate and adapt existing structures to market tastes and inhibited reinvestment in the communities. Many apartments are surrounded by wide but poorly maintained lawns that lack functional green space. Current multifamily zoning regulations require 50-60 percent of the site for open space, not including parking. They also require substantial setbacks. The effect of these regulations makes redevelopment of obsolete multifamily housing financially impractical.

Recommendations

1. Rezone to implement the proposed development district standards for affordable and mixed-income buildings.
2. Permit uses that will support dense, mixed-income, multifamily residential units.
3. Encourage Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and green building standards.
4. Package multifamily housing with separate studios for artists.
5. Set aside a percentage of new residential units for affordable artist housing.
6. Reduce the required buffers, side yards, and setbacks.
7. Retain the current density for any future development of existing multifamily communities.

Traditional Residential Neighborhood Character Areas

Goal

To preserve the single-family residential neighborhood character as anchor of the Arts District, while supporting artists who produce and teach from their homes.



Front yards of residential homes should not be paved over, nor should wide driveway aprons be constructed.

Existing Conditions and Issues

The traditional residential neighborhood character area is the largest part of the Arts District. Each of the four Arts District municipalities has historic districts emphasizing the quality of historic and vernacular housing stock. These communities are known for their large stock of moderately priced housing, as most lots had been built out by the first half of the twentieth century with housing stock dating from the 1910s to the 1940s. Recently housing prices have approached market rates, after going through a long period of being undervalued. There are also higher-priced homes, mainly large historic structures, which are for the most part restored or under restoration.

The Arts District single-family residential communities are generally walkable, laid out on a grid, and have few cul-de-sacs or loops. Small lots, with 20-foot setbacks, single-apron driveways, and minimal lot widths are the norm and add to the appeal of these neighborhoods. Generally, density is four to ten units per acre. In addition to the built environment, many natural features such as wooded slopes run through these neighborhoods. These add to the appeal of these neighborhoods and their ability to stabilize and add long-term value to the Arts District as a whole.

Recommendations

1. Rezone to implement the proposed development district standards and guidelines.
2. Reinforce existing single-family detached residential neighborhoods as community-oriented, quiet, low-traffic, and child-safe.
3. Maintain the integrity of residential streetscape. Front yards should not be paved, nor should wide driveway aprons be constructed.
4. Support arts and handcraft home occupations.

Neighborhood Commercial Character Areas

Goals

1. To facilitate the development, redevelopment, and renovation of small businesses and institutions compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods, but discourage stores whose primary goods include beer, wine, cigarettes, and lottery tickets.
2. To encourage neighborhood and convenience services and retail establishments within easy walking distance of residences.
3. To offer opportunities for residential and artist studio spaces above ground-level retail.
4. To provide design, landscaping, and screening methods to mitigate the impact of neighborhood commercial uses on the traditional residential neighborhoods.