

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



Agenda Date:	April 5, 2021
Action Required:	Resolution
Presenter:	Alex Ikefuna, NDS Director/Yolunda Harrell, CEO, New Hill Development Corporation/. Shelli Jost Brady, Project Manager/ Consultant
Staff Contacts:	Alex Ikefuna, NDS Director, Missy Creasy, NDS Assistant Director
Title:	Starr Hill Vision Plan – Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Background:

In July of 2017, a group of public servants, educators, artists, and entrepreneurs were convened by Kathy Galvin and then Vice Mayor Wes Bellamy to begin discussing the ever-changing economic landscape of Charlottesville, the on-going development thereof, and where the African American community fits into the picture. A series of solution-oriented meetings ensued and then persevered through one of Charlottesville's darkest moments in history. Out of great adversity comes triumph for those who endure and it became ever clearer that a new group, a new pathway, and a renewed ideal must emerge. With a reverence toward the history of African American prosperity in Vinegar Hill before its destruction and a recognition of the critical importance of African American wealth building, New Hill Development Corporation was established to build pathways of upward mobility in a city where wealth and prosperity abounds, yet is secluded in plain sight.

On February 1, 2019, the City executed a Donation Agreement with the New Hill Development Corporation, a Virginia not-for-profit corporation to develop a community vision and a small area plan for the Starr Hill Neighborhood which incorporates the former historical community of Vinegar Hill. The boundaries of the Starr Hill Neighborhood as provided in the agreement are Preston Avenue to the north, Ridge/McIntire Street to the east, the CSX railroad to the south and the Norfolk Southern railroad to the west. The total area is approximately 47.7 acres.

On November 4, 2019, Council received a proposed Starr Hill Community Vision Plan from the New Hill Development Corporation (hereinafter "Small Area Plan"). On November 18, 2019, the City Council passed a resolution to transmit the Starr Hill Plan to the Planning Commission for review and consideration as to whether to incorporate it into the Comprehensive Plan. After the Council's Resolution adoption, the Department of Neighborhood Development Services (NDS), on December 20, 2019, completed the review of the plan and determined that it would not move forward as a Small Area Plan based on the scoping of the work which could lead to future opportunities for additional planning steps. NDS worked with the New Hill Development Corporation to develop the most beneficial outcome for the City and New Hill. This consultation resulted in the parties' mutual agreement to pursue the adoption of a Starr Hill Vision Plan. The Starr Hill Vision Plan differs from the Small Area Plan because it is not as land use intensive as a

Small Area Plan. It will provide a set of principles to guide City decision making in the geographic area, but it will not provide the detailed maximization of zoning and land use planning contained in Small Area Plans.

As staff were working towards the Planning Commission discussion in March of 2020, the COVID-19 State of Emergency came into effect. On March 16, 2020, the City Council adopted a Resolution providing that the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing on the Starr Hill Vision Plan no later than August 31, 2020. However, document review continued between March and June 2020 and on August 11, 2020, the plan was presented to the Planning Commission for review. The plan was revised to reflect comments from the Planning Commission prior to consideration on March 9, 2021.

Discussion:

The Starr Hill Vision Plan is designed to guide the development of the Starr Hill community and investment of public funds. The Plan was endorsed by the Planning Commission with the direction to staff to prepare a Resolution for Adoption as an amendment to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Adoption of this plan does not mark the completion of the Starr Hill Plan process. Implementation, which may include additional studies and outreach, facilitating support for cultural concepts in/outside Jefferson School (including Public Square and amphitheater), consideration of short-term space options to locate potential small business incubation space, City Yard redevelopment, and seeking grants and funding for redevelopment initiatives and infrastructure improvement.

The Planning Commission held a virtual joint Public Hearing with City Council on March 9, 2021 on the approval of this plan. During the discussion, the Planning Commission gave a favorable impression of the Community Vision Plan, but did have concerns with the following:

1. Preservation of historic housing.
2. Parking issues.
3. Consideration of the area for Small Area Plan process in the future.
4. Preservation and protection of the neighborhood.
5. Consideration of the urgency of affordable housing.
6. Utilization of Historic Tax Credits as economic advantage for contributing historic properties on West Main and in the neighborhood.
7. The need for connection between Starr Hill and Downtown through the tunnel at City Yard, and other pedestrian options.
8. City Yard redevelopment

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan:

Approval of this Starr Hill Vision Plan aligns with the City Council Vision Statements of: A great Place to Live for All of Our Citizens, A Connected Community, A Green City, and Quality Housing Opportunities for All. The Plan also supports several goals and objectives of the City's Strategic Plan: Goal 1: An Inclusive Community of Self-sufficient Residents, Goal 3: A Beautiful and Sustainable Natural and Built Environment; and Goal 4: A Strong, Creative and Diversified Economy.

Community Engagement:

The vision, guiding principles and opportunity areas were developed through community engagement process – particularly from residents of Starr Hill Neighborhood, adjacent neighborhoods and from Charlottesville’s Black business community. The following are some key community engagement activities:

- April and May 2019: Front porch and merchant interviews
- May 9 – 10, 2019: Six focus groups
- May 23, 2019: Neighborhood meeting
- June 5, 2019: Black Entrepreneur meeting
- Mid-June through July 2019: Online weekly questions
- August 13, 2019: Focus groups

Planning Commission Work Sessions

- August 11, 2020

Joint Planning Commission/City Council Public Hearing

- March 9, 2021

Budgetary Impact:

There is no budgetary Impact.

Recommendation:

The Planning Commission took the following action:

The Planning Commission voted to approve the Starr Hill Vision Plan as an amendment to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The vote breaks down as follows:

Mr. Lahendro, Yes
Mr. Solla-Yates, Yes
Ms. Dowell, Yes
Mr. Mitchell, Yes
Mr. Stolzenberg, Yes
Ms. Russell, Yes
Mr. Heaton, Yes

The motion passed 7 – 0 to recommend to the City Council to amend the City’s 2013 Comprehensive Plan to include the Staff Hill Vision Plan dated June 26, 2020.

Alternatives:

The City Council has the following alternative actions:

1. by motion, vote to approve the attached resolution;
2. by motion, request changes to the attached resolution, and then approve it in accordance with the amended resolution;
3. by motion, defer action, or
4. by motion, deny the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Attachments:

1. Proposed City Council Resolution
2. Certified Planning Commission Resolution
3. Link to Planning Commission/Council Public Hearing Documents:
<https://civicclerk.blob.core.windows.net/stream/CHARLOTTESVILLEVA/f5748f86-70c7-4146-887f-1dbe3528ce09.pdf?sv=2015-12-11&sr=b&sig=MJgUftUygJzFmb8nulzAY4LKvHX07JsWGELWgyOw9bo%3D&st=2021-03-15T22%3A00%3A59Z&se=2022-03-15T22%3A05%3A59Z&sp=r>
4. Direct Link to the Project Website: <https://www.newhilldev.org/starr-hill>

RESOLUTION

TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT OF THE 2013 CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE TO INCLUDE THE STARR HILL VISION PLAN

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2021, after notice was given as required by law, the Charlottesville Planning Commission and Charlottesville City Council conducted a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Charlottesville, to include the contents of the proposed Starr Hill Vision Plan; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2021, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending approval by the City Council of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, and certifying a copy of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Council for its consideration; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that, upon consideration of the recommended Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the City Council hereby adopts the June 26, 2020 Starr Hill Vision Plan as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Neighborhood Development Services staff shall post on the City's website notice of Council's adoption of this Update, along with a copy of the approval Update.

**RESOLUTION
OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE STARR HILL VISION PLAN**

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2021 this Planning Commission and City Council jointly held a public hearing on the Starr Hill Vision Plan proposed as an amendment of the City's Comprehensive Plan, after notice given as required by law,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Planning Commission hereby recommends to the City Council that it should approve the Starr Hill Vision Plan dated June 26, 2020 as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan. A copy of the Starr Hill Vision Plan recommended by the Commission is attached to this Resolution and is hereby certified to the City Council for its consideration in accordance with City Code Section 34-27 (b).

Adopted by the Charlottesville Planning Commission, the 9th day of March 2021.

Attest: _____


Secretary, Charlottesville Planning Commission

Attachment: Starr Hill Vision Plan (**Link:** <https://www.newhilldev.org/starr-hill>)