

Stamford asks for public input on masterplan update

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STAMFORD -- Residents of individual neighborhoods will get their chance to weigh in on Stamford's land-use challenges and goals at a series of workshops the city's planning agency will use to help update the city's master plan.

The city's master plan is required to be updated every 10 years, and serves as a guide against which development projects are compared to determine whether a project is in balance with a particular area's other land uses or not.

"We feel this is important series of meetings for the public to be able to participate and give their opinions about what the plan should include," Planning Board Chairwoman Theresa Dell said.

The first workshop is at 7 p.m. this Thursday at the Long Ridge Fire Station to discuss planning issues facing the North Stamford area.

The city has hired Buckhurst, Fish and Jacquemart, or BFJ Planning, to lead the master plan revision process, and also retained Perkins Eastman, Stantec and Urbanomics as secondary consultants for the work.

City Land Use Bureau Chief Norman Cole and Associate City Planner David Killeen said the rapid amount of change in the city's landscape, especially in the downtown and South End, since the plan was last updated highlights the need for additional guidelines for certain areas.

For example, Cole said that part of the city along Bedford Street from Hoyt to Sixth streets is categorized as part of the downtown district where more intense development is allowed, though land use officials generally consider the area as inappropriate for large scale redevelopment.

Another example is the city's South End, including the 80-acre Harbor Point complex, where the master plan might include language specifying that limiting development in other longstanding and stable sections of the area such as Pacific Street north of Woodland Cemetery is desirable, Cole said.

"We could say that we don't want residential density to exceed a certain amount," Cole said. "We want anybody who reads it to understand why we protect it, the importance of architecture and other factors like the interspersed amount of subsidized housing."

Killeen said the revamp will also need to address transportation issues throughout different neighborhoods, including making better connections by jitney or mass transit between the downtown, train station and South End and improving pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly amenities in the city.

Also \$500,000 study to consider whether the streets and areas adjacent to the Glenbrook and Springdale railroad stations can accommodate greater residential or commercial development.

"I think transportation is clearly going to be a very important issue," Killeen said.

More information about the master plan process can be found at stamfordmasterplan.org.