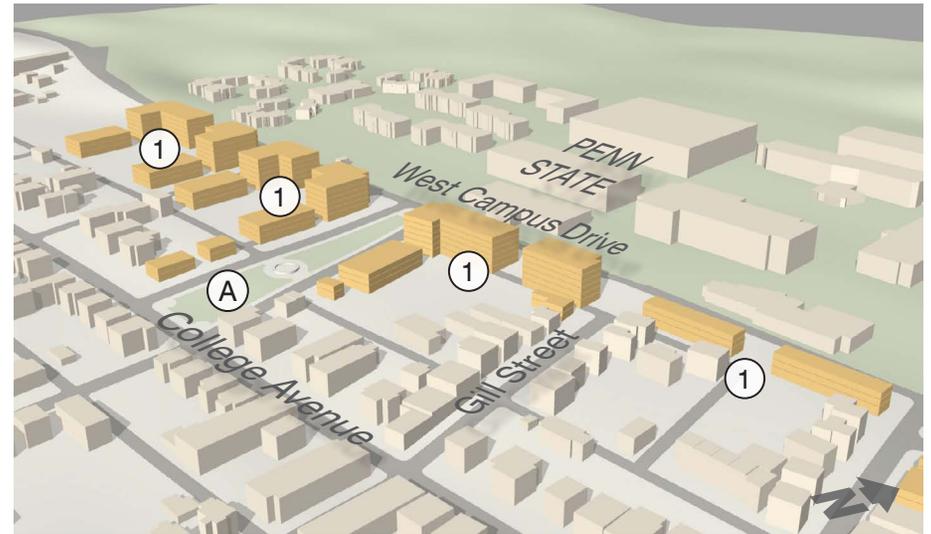


West End Urban Village - Three Story Development



West End Urban Village - Three to Six Story Development

# West End Urban Village

## 4-B: West End Revitalization Plan Implementation

*The Borough should advance the West End Revitalization Plan, establishing the West End's identity as an "Urban Village" and coordinate with Penn State University to stimulate preservation and revitalization of existing uses while encouraging investment and new infill development.*

**Implementation: Borough of State College, Downtown Improvement District., Downtown Businesses, Property Owners, Local Housing Organizations, Developers, Redevelopment Authority, Neighborhood Associations, Planning Commission**

The West End Revitalization Plan was thorough and has merit. In particular the following components of the plan should be strongly considered in this plan:

- The West End Revitalization Plan focused protection of neighborhood character and reinforcing the existing single-family nature of the area. Much of the plan is dedicated to this goal.
- However, the plan recognizes that new infill development, particularly along the north side of the district adjacent to Penn State's West Campus would be beneficial to the neighborhood, the borough, and the university as this boundary between the campus and Borough has long functioned as "back door" space for both entities.
- Penn State's master plan identifies building and open space development for the West Campus to create more of a cohesive campus environment. This presents the opportunity to redevelop the adjacent West End to reinforce a positive town/gown relationship.
- As mentioned before, providing newer, attractive housing options close to campus will help relieve the pressure to continue converting homes within the neighborhood to rental housing and this "boundary" area is ideally suited for graduate and married student housing, faculty, employees, and workforce housing.

- In addition to the housing outlined above, a limited mix of commercial uses are described in the Urban Village ordinance (cafes, neighborhood support retail, etc.).

The Borough developed a well-intentioned Urban Village District in the zoning ordinance to accommodate revitalization of the West End; however, the ordinance is too restrictive and not realistic as it relates to new infill development. The current caps of 3000-4500 GSF for any one building preclude the ability to develop significant infill development that is appropriate along the campus boundary. While the ordinance does allow building heights of up to 65' for a distance of 75' back from the northern district boundary, this limit does not reconcile with the building size limits (a 4500 SF building over 6 floors would result in a building footprint of 750 SF or 15' x 30'). Incentives tied to superior design should be developed that allow for larger building footprints and taller building heights that transition up from Clay Lane to the north.

Additionally, planned development will allow for consolidated and well-designed parking resources that can be located behind buildings, as well as for consolidated and well-designed open spaces.

The State College Borough Sustainable Neighborhood Report 2012 identifies advancing the West End Redevelopment Plan as one of Council's objectives for 2012-2013. It is important to note that with the development of Ferguson Township's Terraced Streetscape District, there is the potential that State College could lose important redevelopment opportunities if the West End Redevelopment Plan is not pursued.

Important components of the West End Revitalization Plan are illustrated in the West End Urban Village plan enlargement (previous page) and described below.

### Building Use

-  Commercial
-  Residential
-  Office
-  Hotel

### West Campus Drive Shared Use Path

Develop a shared-use path for bikes and pedestrians along West Campus Drive. At a minimum, West Campus Drive should be designated as a bike route as shown in the Bicycle Network (see *Exhibit 14: Proposed Bicycle Network*, page 82). However, a dedicated shared use path separate from the road on either the north or south side is desirable.

### West End Commons (A)

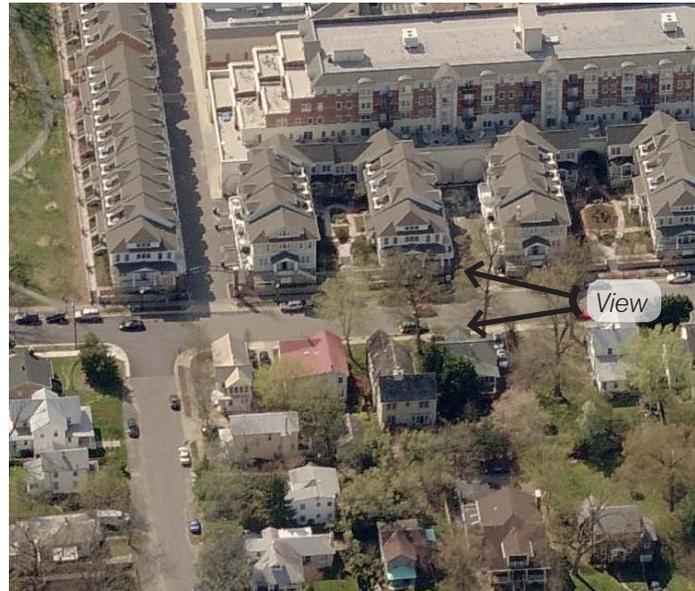
The original master plan for the West End revitalization identified several options for the creation of a commons, connecting West College Avenue with West Campus Drive and the Penn State campus. While one option is illustrated as part of this plan, it can be incorporated in many ways as illustrated in the West End Revitalization Plan. The concept has merit in creating a neighborhood focal point, particularly since downtown State College has limited public spaces.

### West End Redevelopment (1)

The master plan illustrates how new infill development can reinforce street edges, define the new West End Commons and strengthen the town gown relationship. The plan illus-

trated very much mirrors what was illustrated in the West End Revitalization Plan but is not possible under the current Urban Village ordinance because of the maximum building size limitations. Specifically, the following should be advanced for the West End:

- Use design incentives to allow larger building sizes and increased densities for the areas identified as redevelopment in the West End Revitalization Plan (primarily north of Clay street). Increased density, provided that it is well designed, is important for economic viability, the proximity to the West Campus and the proximity to and potential competition from Ferguson Township's Terraced Streetscape District. Design goals should focus on articulating larger buildings in a manner compatible with the existing smaller scale buildings to be preserved closer to College Avenue.
- Use design incentives to allow up to six story building heights along the northern property line (as currently allowed by zoning) and transition to four stories and then three stories for the remainder of the district as shown in the massing models.



*An example of well-designed density transitions from single family to mixed-use development in Arlington, VA.*

*Far left: The street view shows ends of townhouse groups designed to appear as single family detached housing to match the pre-existing development across the street.*

*Left: Aerial view showing the context of these townhouses and how they aid in transitioning to denser development.*

- Continue to encourage consolidation of parking into larger lots located behind buildings and allow for low scale structured parking (2-3 levels) provided it is located behind buildings (or below grade).
- Continue to limit the size of commercial establishments as currently identified in the Urban Village District zoning and allow for the same commercial uses as prescribed.
- Use redevelopment to the north to reinforce the existing street network and to define a central open space that links to College Avenue.
- Utilize streetscape improvements to reinforce the existing character of the tree-lined streets and link preservation areas, redevelopment areas and the West Campus and define a walkable neighborhood.

### Neighborhood Stabilization and Preservation

Implement recommendations of West End Revitalization Plan to stabilize and preserve existing structures with the goal of converting rental properties back into home ownership; improving the diversity and quality of rental opportunities to attract a broader range of residents; and supplementing the neighborhood with small scale commercial uses.

*Photographs of existing development within the West End.*

*Bottom right: Properties along the northern part of the West End represent important redevelopment opportunities within the West End.*

*Far right top: Additional small scale commercial uses such as those that currently exist should be encouraged for ground floors.*

*Far right middle: Many of the existing homes have been converted into apartments. West End Revitalization Plan goals to stabilize these structures and convert many back into home ownership remain important goals.*

*Far right bottom: View looking East along College Avenue shows the residential scale/ small-scale commercial character which should be preserved south of Clay Lane.*

