

Re: Review of a Rezoning Request  
NU & R-1to R-2  
2 Francis Ave. & 266 Vance Rd.

To: Matt Roskowske, Community  
Development Director  
Planning and Zoning Commission

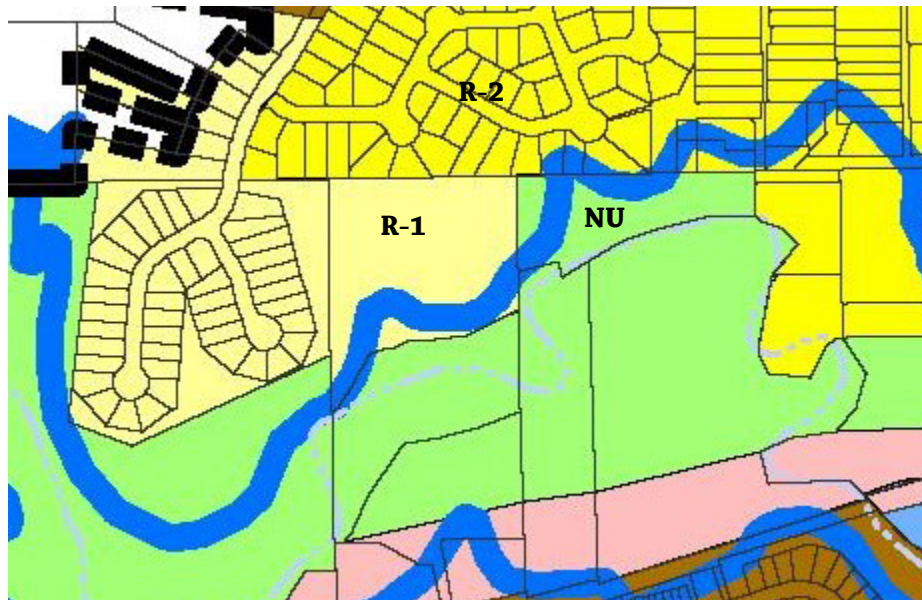
Date: June 2, 2023

From: John Brancaglione

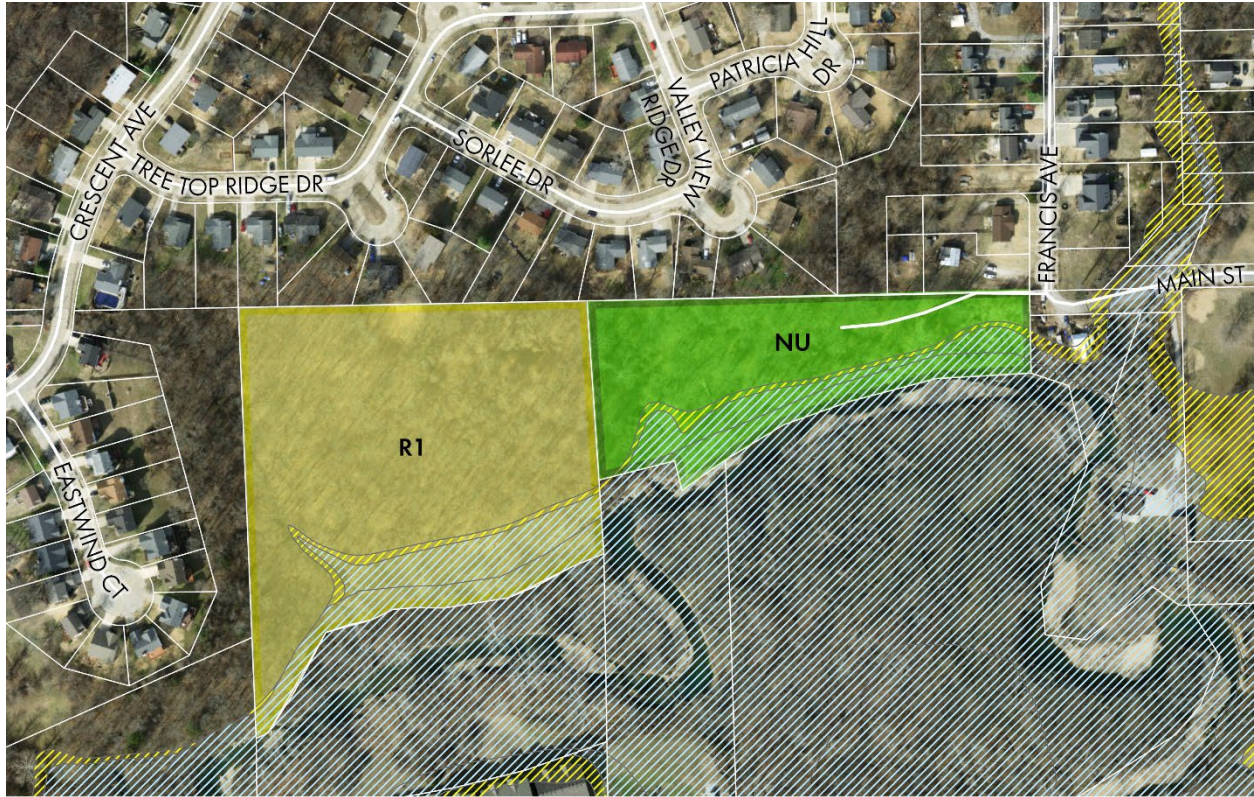
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## Background

The applicant Yahl Homes LLC is the owner of the subject parcels with the intention of constructing development of 24 townhomes attached in two-unit groupings as shown on the preliminary site plan provided later in this document. They are expected to be priced at approximately \$600,000 or greater. The subject parcels, while addressed on different streets, are adjacent to each other and located at the western end of Main Street. The westernmost parcel is zoned R-1 (266 Vance Road) and the easternmost parcel (2 Francis Avenue) is zoned NU. See the existing City zoning map for the area below.



Note that an existing single-family development zoned R-1 is located to the west and an existing single-family development zoned R-2 borders on the north. Also note that the floodplain zones (Zones 1 and 2 combined) indicate that most of the parcel zoned NU is within the flood plain. That is no longer the case. A map of the parcels using the St. Louis County GIS mapping data on the next page shows that the boundaries of the Zone 1 and 2 areas has shrunk considerably and now only impacts the southernmost strip of the 2 Francis Avenue Parcel. These flood zones are based on the latest Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) designations from about six months ago. The applicant is requesting a review for a rezoning to accommodate the proposed development and that will allow the filing of a preliminary development.



**Yahl Homes Rezoning  
Valley Park, MO**

**Flood Hazard Areas**  
 0.2% Annual Chance  
 1% Annual Chance

0 250 500 US Feet

**PGA PLANNERS LLC**



**Rezoning Review**

Article XII of the City Land Use Code outlines regulations for submission, review, and approval of a Zoning Amendment. Specific findings of fact required are listed in Section 405.930 to guide the analysis of a requested rezoning. The Zoning Amendment criteria is listed below (1-3) with our analysis of each criterion.

*1. How the proposed amendment would conform to the Comprehensive Plan.*

- » The subject property is in the “Vance Road Planning Area” of the City’s Comprehensive Plan update of 2008 and the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The plan for this area recognizes that the Area is largely built out and is primarily residential in character. However, it should be noted that the 2 Francis Avenue parcel was not within the City boundaries in 2008 or 2010 but was annexed sometime prior to the adoption of the revised zoning code in 2013. As noted previously, single-family residential development borders the Area on the north and west. Fish Pot Creek and its associated floodplain borders on the south.

- » The proposed townhome development would allow for development compatible with the surrounding character and would result in productive use of land that has been underutilized for many years.

PGAV believes that the proposed development will provide a residential community that represents a unit type that has market demand and often serves a professionally employed and often older market niche. In addition, the unit type and development density are an appropriate fit with the adjacent existing residential developments on the north and west. This also provide an added and contemporary selection to the Valley Park housing stock.

2. *Why the existing zone district classification of the property in question is inappropriate or improper.*

- » The 266 Vance Road property is currently zoned R-1 for traditional single-family residential development and the 2 Francis Avenue is zoned NU largely because of the floodplain designations in place when the 2013 zoning code was adopted. As noted previously much of this property is now out of the floodplain as a result of the new FIRM mapping.
- » The construction of attached townhome developments, such as the those proposed, has been a growing trend in recent years. The target demographic for single-family home ownership has shifted, and the traditional single-family subdivision, while still in significant demand, is not as desirable for certain demographic sectors. This trend had not yet emerged when the existing Comprehensive Plan was completed.
- » Rezoning of both parcels is required. Single-family attached housing as proposed (see attached site plan) is not permitted in the R-1 District per the City's zoning code. The NU district would not permit more than 1 single-family dwelling unit on the site.

3. *What major economic, physical, or social changes, if any, have occurred in the vicinity of the property in question that were not anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan and have substantially altered the basic character of the area, which make the proposed amendment to the Zoning District Map appropriate:*

- a. *List such changes.*
  - b. *Describe how said changes were not anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan.*
  - c. *Describe how said changes altered the basic character of the area.*
  - d. *Describe how said changes make the proposed amendment to the Zoning District Map appropriate.*
- » The assembly of the 2 parcels involved with the rezoning request for a single project along with the revised floodplain designation has allowed the appropriate use and zoning to be re-evaluated. The current townhome proposal is compatible with the adjacent residential uses and densities. It also offers a development and unit type of that has been in ever increasing demand in the St. Louis market and at a size and quality level that will be an asset to the area. As is the case with

any city, new residents provide support for the retail and service businesses already in Valley Park.

### **Other Considerations**

As shown on the preliminary site plan on the next page, the 2 Francis Avenue parcel serves largely to provide street access to Main Street. Four of the 24 units are at the western end of this property as it widens and adjoins the 266 Vance Road parcel that contains the remaining 20 units. This development will sit along the higher side of the properties but will be below the elevations of the residential developments to the north and west. The development area will be well above the 500-year flood elevation of Fish Pot Creek.

One issue that always causes some concern relates to the development's single access to another roadway. In this case the access road would be more than 1,100 feet long. This means that any traffic incident, or storm event that blocks the intersection at Main Street will not allow the residents and alternate exit. We also know that Main Street east of its connection with Francis Avenue can be inundated in a major flood event. However, history tells us that the flooding only last for a short time and that the northern section of Francis Avenue can act as an alternate way out.

The only connection to another road that can reasonably be made is to Crescent Avenue on the west though a common ground portion of that subdivision. Making this connection would present several issues and likely impediments. To create a permanent roadway would mean acquiring a strip of that common ground thereby making a condition of the development of that subdivision non-conforming. This would place a roadway between the two houses that abut that common ground area which connects to Crescent Avenue. We have seen other instances where "emergency" connections are made that use a pervious gravel connecting road that can be traversed by vehicles if needed but is otherwise gated. This would still mean that the developer would have to acquire an easement. In addition, topography and drainage in this area of the Vance Road parcel might present further issues.

The cost and complexity of providing this connection is an issue that may make the development economically infeasible and that assumes that the homeowners' association of the adjoining subdivision would be a willing participant. In summary, we believe that an alternate roadway connection is not feasible and that the lack of a secondary connection should not prevent the development from proceeding.

PGAV believes that the proposed development is appropriate for the properties involved and the rezoning of the two properties involved is appropriate and will be compatible with the adjoining subdivisions.

