

CHARTIERS AVENUE APARTMENTS

MCKEES ROCKS, PA

June 16, 2026
McKees Rocks Planning Commission



ACTION-HOUSING

Who We Are

Mission

To empower people to build more secure and self-sufficient lives through the provision of decent, affordable housing, essential supportive services, asset building programs, and educational and employment opportunities.



Flats on Forward, Squirrel Hill



Sixth Ward Flats, Lawrenceville



Penn Mathilda Apartments, Garfield



Krause Commons, Squirrel Hill

TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS

The path to new apartments and retail



BOROUGH PROCESS

- ✓ Land Development Application
- ✓ Receive Review Comments
 - Respond to comments & update plans
 - Planning Commission Recommendation
 - Council Approval
 - Building Permit

DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

July 2026	Community Meeting hosted by MRCDC
Fall 2026	Borough Development Approvals
Early 2027	Financial Closing
February 2027	Start Construction
Fall 2028	Building Opens

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA(S)?

Chartiers Avenue Apartments will be...



1. Welcoming and Human-Centered

Create a **high-quality** residential building that supports everyday life through comfort, daylight, safety, and **universally accessible** design. Ensure all residents experience **dignity, independence, and true livability**.



2. A Home for Veterans

Respond to the unique needs and design considerations of **veterans**.

Provide spaces that **balance privacy and security** with opportunities for **connection**, supporting a strong and inclusive sense of community for all residents. Partnering with Operation Valor Arts and Veterans Leadership Program.



3. A Good Neighbor

Contribute positively to the block and the broader community through **respect for its context**.

Create a building that feels **rooted in McKees Rocks** and elevates the community design.

Add to **long-term residential stability** in the community.



4. A Healthy and Sustainable Environment

Design a **high-performance building** that promotes comfort, health, and efficiency through:

- **Energy-efficient HVAC** systems that provide consistent comfort and fresh air
- A well-insulated, airtight **building envelope**
- The use of **durable, healthy materials**
- **Abundant daylight** with appropriate shading
- **Biophilic design** elements that connect residents to nature.



5. Economically Viable

Works within the current budget constraints, with a focus on **long term durability and maintenance**.

WHO'S IT FOR?

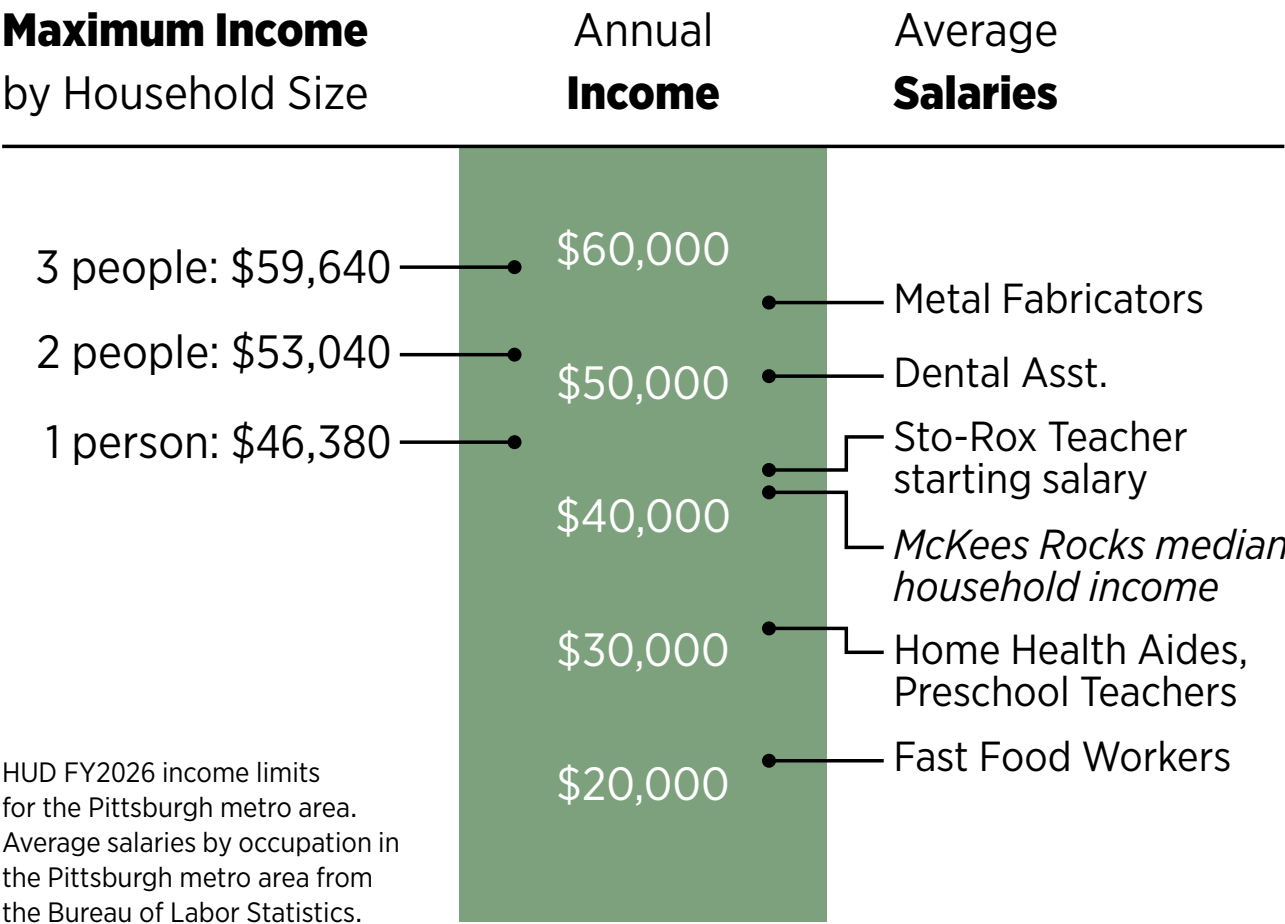
Providing a welcoming home for...

► **Veterans**

25% of the apartments (11) are designated for Veterans who meet the income requirements.

► **Residents whose earnings are not keeping pace with the cost of housing**

People making 60% the Pittsburgh Area Median Income or less are eligible to live here—which currently includes a majority of McKees Rocks households.



VALUING VETERANS

Design Considerations for Veteran Housing

*Source: Designing for calm: How building features impact veterans with PTSD
Texas A&M University, Alexandra H Salazar*

"**Open spaces** allowed veterans to **see their surroundings** and provided them with feelings of **security**. Sharp turns and blind corners caused stress due to the inability to see what was around the bend."

Open Floor Plans

Windows

"**Large windows** located closer to the ground made veterans feel safer in a space. They also preferred to have **multiple windows** in a space so they could see what was going on outside."

"**Larger hallways** that allowed for **increased maneuverability** and reduced the chance of touching other people were preferred by veterans."

Walkways/ Hallways

Entrances and Exits

"Veterans liked to **easily see the entrance and exit** to a room or building. This helped keep them from feeling trapped in a space."

"Veterans preferred spaces with **fewer pieces of furniture** and walls that were painted in **brighter, more vivid colors** instead of muted colors."

Interior Design

Green Space

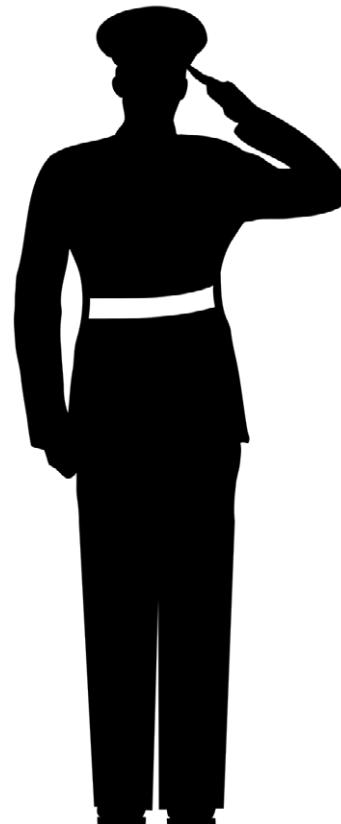
"**Open spaces with vegetation** made the veterans feel **calmer** and gave them more visibility."

"Veterans preferred **natural light**. Some said that poor light, including too much artificial lighting, could trigger stress."

Lighting

Air and Sound Quality

"Air and sound quality was important also, including **ventilation**, odor and noise levels. Many veterans said that certain odors could trigger fear or bad memories and that loud, unexpected noises were particularly startling for them. They felt that **soundproofing** was important in spaces they visited or lived in."



THE POINT OF TRANSITION

Four significant site forces overlap



Main Street Facades

The Site is at a point of transition along Chartiers Main Street District, where it change in both a slight bend in the street and change in elevations.

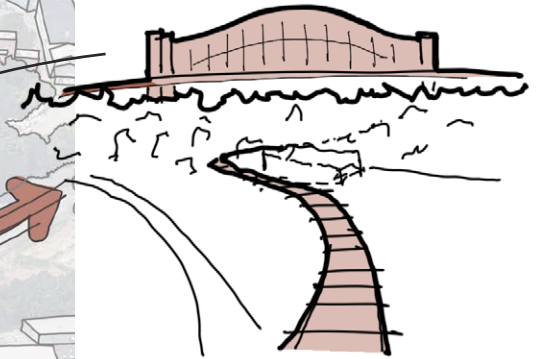
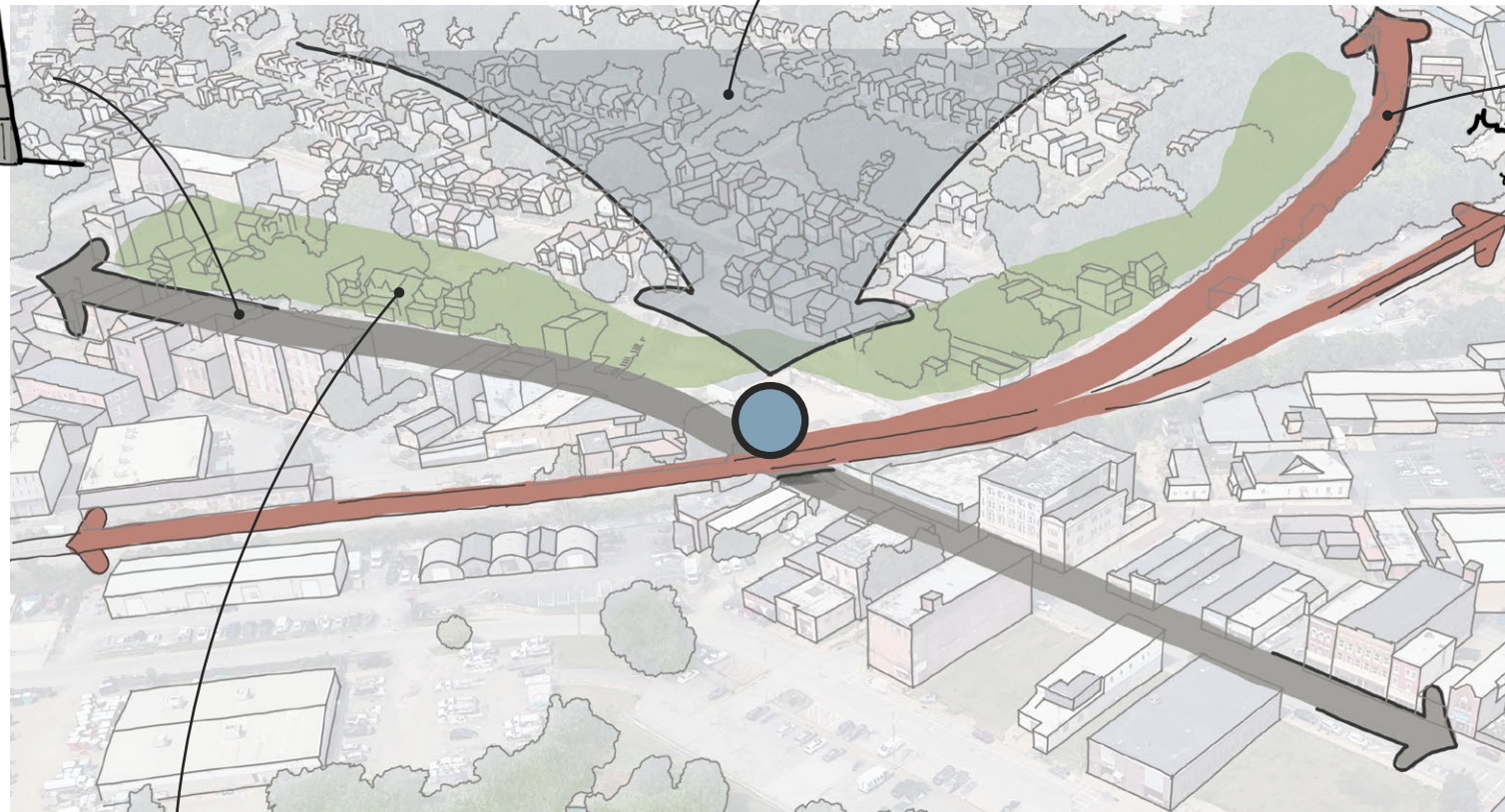
Main street facades are defined by brick facades, windows that repeat in patterns of three, and demarcated ground floors with high transparency



Houses on the Hill

Single family homes start immediately behind the site, and cover the upper plateau.

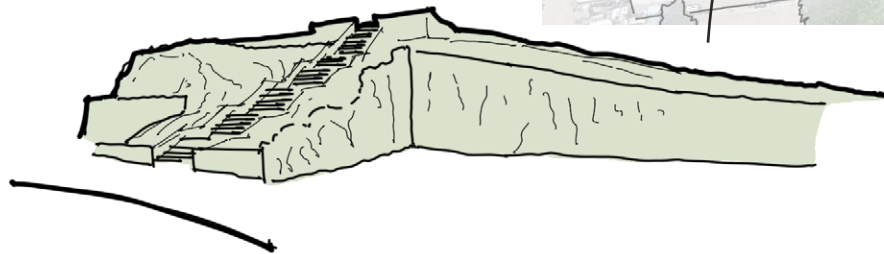
Details include traditional materials such as siding and limited brick. Windows are smaller in scale



Industrial Island Ave

Island Ave parallels the Railroad, and provides connections to the industrial heritage of the region, including the McKees rocks Bridge.

Characterized by strong horizontals, open space, and function-focused industrial buildings



Its called "The Rocks"

The area's rocky outcroppings transition across the site, with the bottom connecting to the flats, and the upper levels disconnected from the commercial corridor of Chartiers Ave.

Its a reminder that the site has very unique geography, and is at a point of a number of natural forces coming together

TURNING A CORNER

A new presence at Chartiers & Island Ave.

Large windows provide **generous daylight** for residents.

Roof deck with views to the bluffs and downtown McKees Rocks and Pittsburgh.

Building form is broken down into **smaller volumes** so it fits in better with its surroundings.

Main Street facade relates to downtown with rich brick color and patterns.

Retail space near the public steps.

Secure entrance pulled back from the corner for visibility.

Improved streetscape with street trees and other plantings.

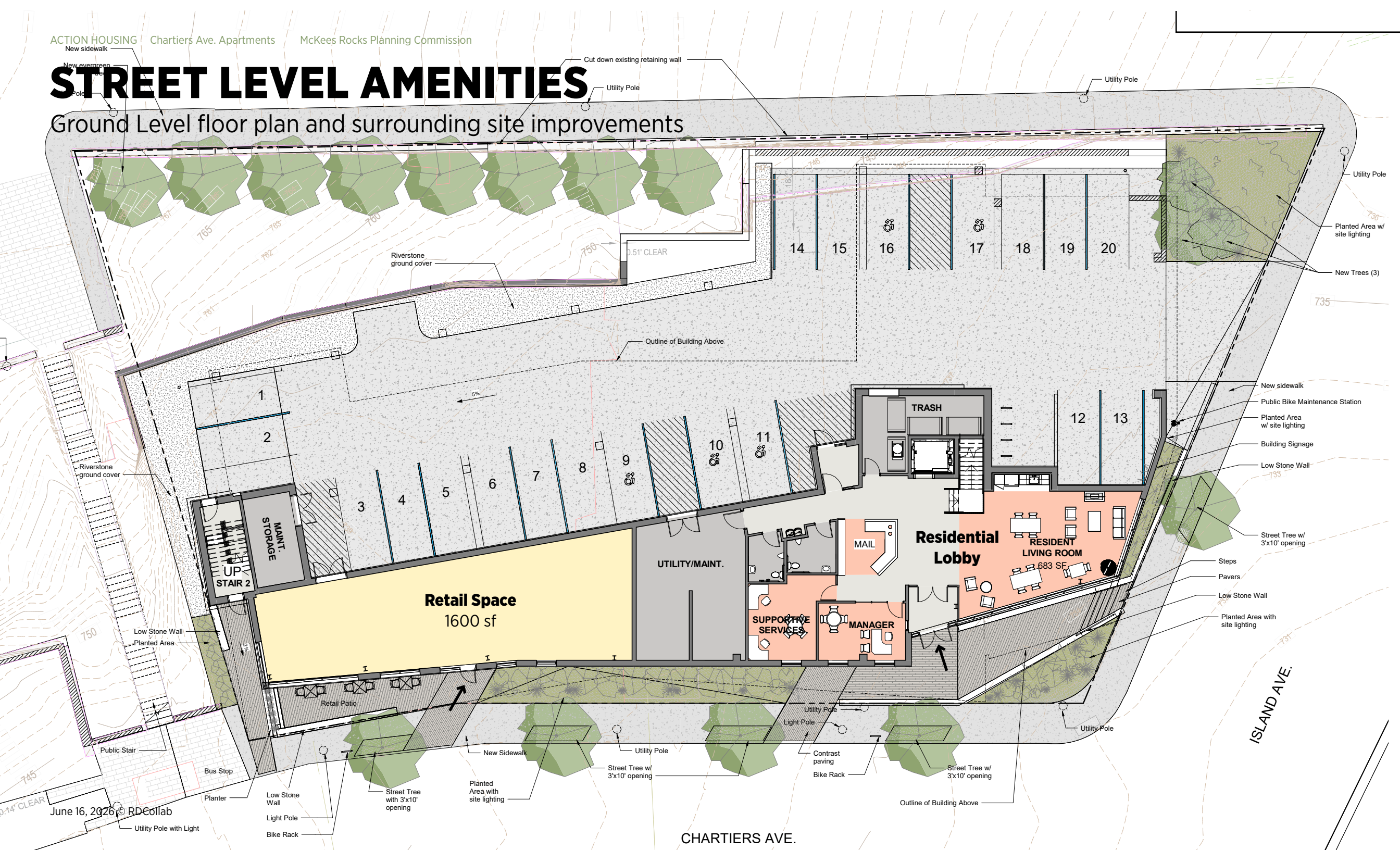
Parking garage entered from Island Ave.

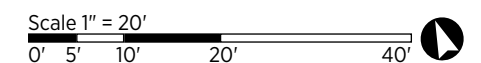
Chartiers Avenue

Island Avenue

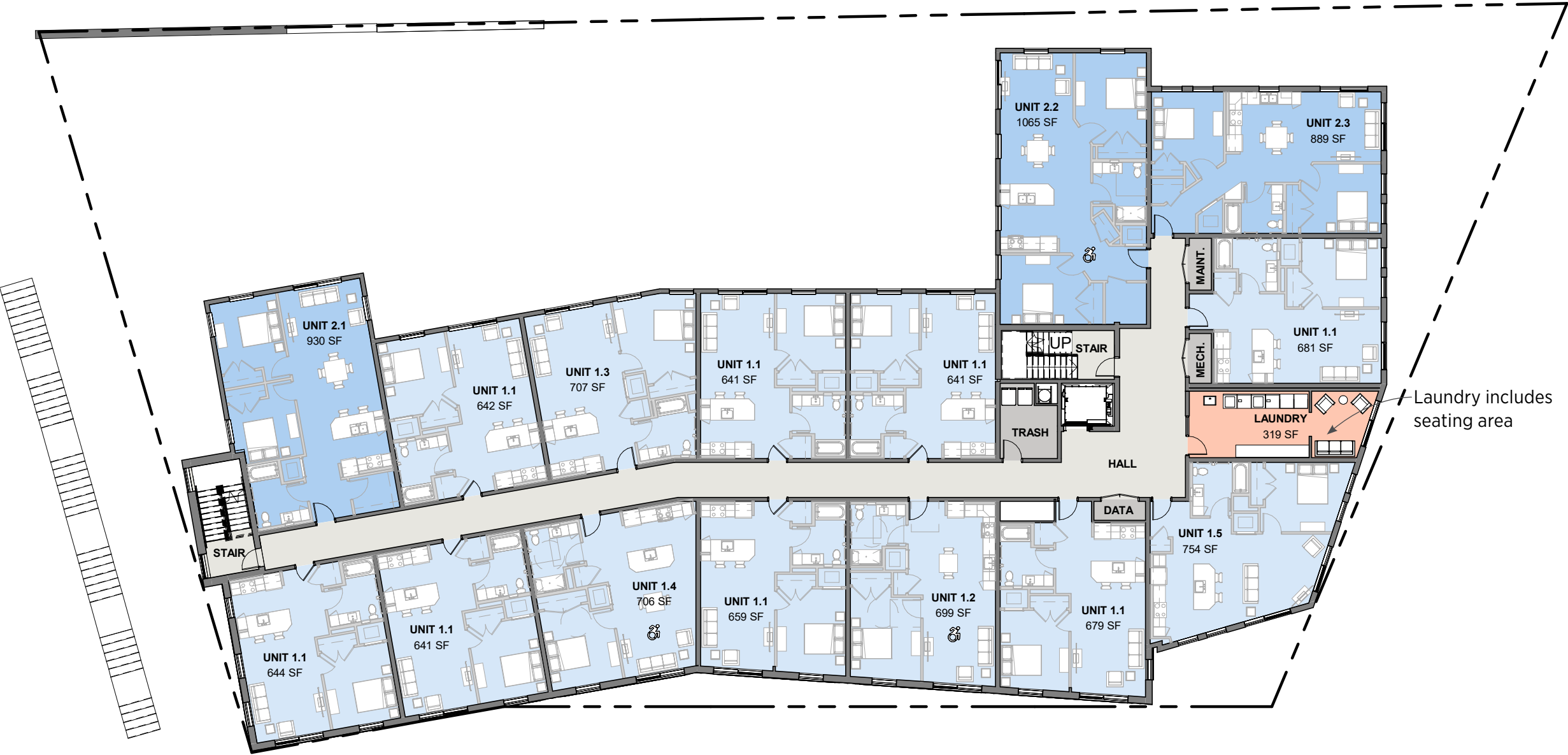
STREET LEVEL AMENITIES

Ground Level floor plan and surrounding site improvements





THIRD FLOOR



Laundry includes seating area

FOURTH FLOOR



Sky Lounge and Roof Deck provide light to the hallway

Roof Deck has incredible views, sun exposure, and is located near the elevator core

