

Following nearby development.

Practical tips from Mary McCauley | Separate the proposal from the progress.

A sign, a rendering or a familiar address can start a lot of conversation. I look for the records that show what has actually happened and which questions are still open.

1. Make sure you have the right project

- ☐ Check the address, applicant, application number and review board. Separate filings can concern the same property but seek different approvals.
- ☐ Look at the source and its date. A concept plan, meeting agenda, approved minutes, signed decision and permit tell you different things.

2. Verify the milestone

- ☐ Distinguish what is proposed from what has been approved. Read the decision and conditions rather than relying on a headline.
- ☐ Ask what permits, funding or other steps remain. An approval or funding award does not by itself establish that construction has started.
- ☐ Look for a documented construction update. Treat an estimated completion or opening date as an estimate until there is newer evidence.

3. Connect the plans to your own decision

- ☐ Consider proposed building placement, access points, drainage, walking connections and construction activity in relation to the home you care about.
- ☐ Visit the travel routes at the times you would normally use them. Ask specific questions about the details that affect your daily life.
- ☐ A future amenity may be appealing, but make sure your decision works for the area as it exists today. Do not assume a project will raise or lower a particular home's value without market evidence.

Questions about a home you are considering? I can help you work through the next steps. Mary: (978) 496-6739.

Read more: [Mary's companion guide](#). General tips; confirm property-specific details and contract deadlines with the appropriate professionals. Updated September 19, 2026.