



Chapel Hill Northern Area Task Force Report

**Final Report 8/30/07
Prepared by the Northern Area Task Force**

**Adopted by the Chapel Hill
Town Council 1/14/2008**

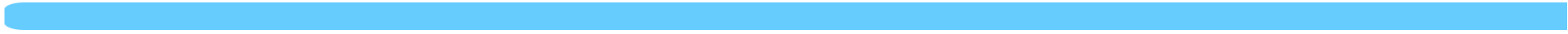


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INTRODUCTION

In March, 2007 the Town Council authorized the establishment of a citizens task force to act in an advisory capacity to the Town Council and study an area in the north of the Town roughly defined as north of Homestead Road, east of the railroad, south of I-40, and west of Carol Woods (referred to here after as the Northern Area).

The charge of the task force was to:

- Review background information on transit oriented development, identification of transit corridors and the Chapel Hill Long Range Transit Plan.
- Develop a vision statement for the area.
- Prepare recommendations for the Council's consideration on development regulations, design standards and appearance guidelines for the implementation of transit-oriented development along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Weaver Dairy Road and Eubanks Road.
- Develop recommendations on pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements throughout the study area.

Who was involved?

The project brought together citizens and property owners with representatives from the Town's Planning Board, Transportation Board, Community Design Commission and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board.

How were the recommendations developed?

The proposed recommendations are the result of a collaborative effort of the task force and town staff who met seven times between May and July 2007. The Task Force also participated in two design workshops with planning consultants. The Task Force acknowledges the contribution of the consultants and has incorporated some of their recommendations. This report proposes refinement of the Town's Comprehensive plan and development ordinances with respect to:

- Integrating new development into the fabric of the existing community,
- Creating a community that is pedestrian and transit friendly,
- Treating existing residents, neighborhoods and the natural environment respectfully,
- Creating an appropriate, economically and financially sustainable mixture of office, retail, and residential uses,
- Creating new development and design standards that will ensure transit oriented and pedestrian friendly land uses,

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What is the purpose of this report?

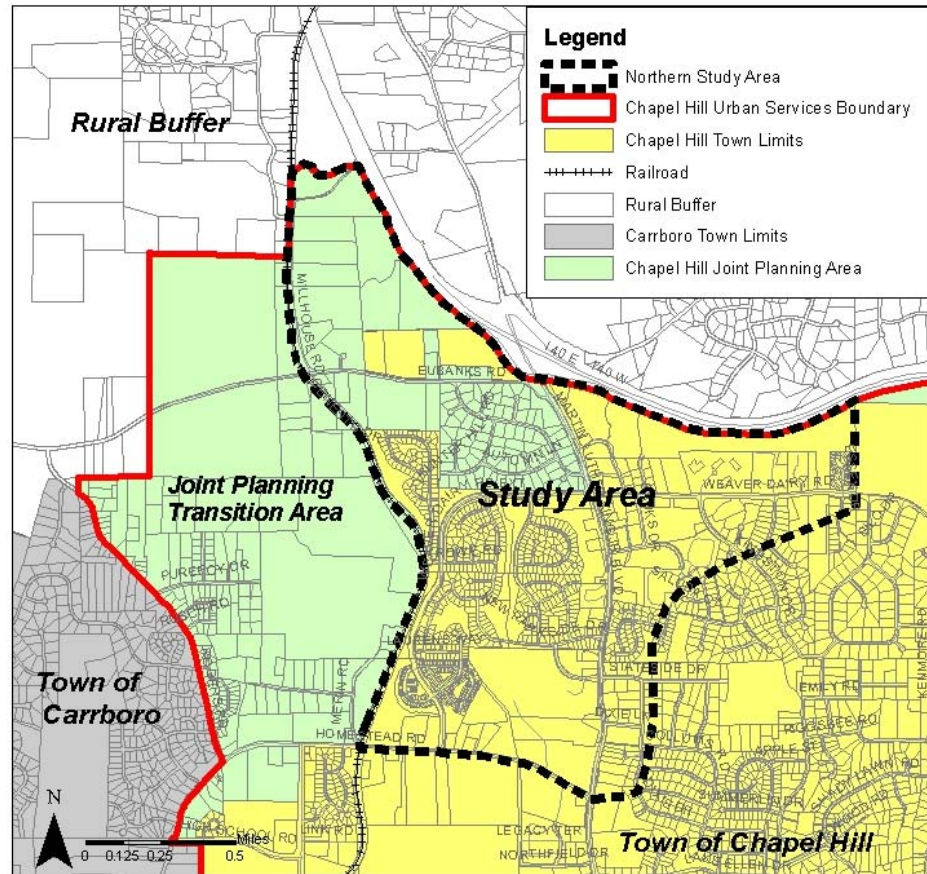
A substantial increase in the number of development applications presented an opportunity to responsibly plan for growth in the Northern Area. This combined with the recent relocation of the Town's Operation Center and the proposed development of Carolina North, a satellite campus for the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill on the Horace Williams property, have set the stage for the refinement of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and development ordinances.

In addition, the Town has developed projections for future growth based on the establishment of high capacity transit along major Town corridors, including Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

This report outlines the characteristics, opportunities and constraints of the Northern Area, establishes an overall vision and identifies issues that the Town and developers should address. It also makes specific recommendations and provides guidance on how to address the development and redevelopment of property in the area to best serve the citizens of Chapel Hill.

The Study Area:

Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (Historic Airport Road) is the northern gateway link connecting both downtown Chapel Hill and the main campus of the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill to the existing residential neighborhoods, community facilities and neighborhood retail services that serve these northern Chapel Hill neighborhoods. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. (NC 86) is also the primary northern entryway into Chapel Hill via its interchange with Interstate 40, the primary east to west interstate roadway in North Carolina. The intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. and Weaver Dairy Road is a significant visual and functional crossroads and the properties immediately surrounding the intersection are high profile locations for the development of higher intensity non-residential and residential uses.



THE VISION

THE NORTHERN AREA VISION:

During 2006 and 2007 when considering proposals for new development in the Northern Area, citizens and the Chapel Hill Town Council raised concerns about the orientation, form, uses, and density proposed and about how those proposals addressed the community goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. For the development opportunity areas, the areas identified for commercial and mixed uses in the Comprehensive Plan and for the principle transportation corridors in the study area, the Town especially wishes to encourage transit oriented development.

Specifically, the Town wishes developments to be well served by alternative modes of transportation, and to make the Northern area more accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Council identified a need to provide a more detailed vision for the future of undeveloped property and property which may be redeveloped in the Northern area of the Town. The Council wishes to provide guidance for transit oriented development and to put regulations and standards in place to implement that vision.

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

Successful Transit Oriented Development could achieve the following goals as stated in the Town of Chapel Hill's Comprehensive Plan:

- Promote orderly development and redevelopment to achieve appropriate and compatible use of land. (p65)
- Protect the physical and social fabric of Chapel Hill's neighborhoods (p11)
- Develop a balanced, multi-modal transportation system that will enhance mobility for all citizens, reduce automobile dependence, and preserve/enhance the character of Chapel Hill. (p92)
- Identify, protect, and preserve open spaces and critical natural areas and enhance the community's air quality and water resources. (p79)
- Increase the availability of well-designed, affordable, safe, and sanitary housing for all citizens of Chapel Hill. (p50)
- Increase employment opportunities for residents and satisfy local demand for commercial and retail services. (p44)

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT?

Density: Project density is related to the type of transit service anticipated to serve the development, for example typical bus service requires at least 8 units per an acre

Design: Guidelines must include site specific design and zoning within a framework of principles for walkability, building density, and integration of transit.

Diversity: Development includes a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, and office.



The following vision statement was developed by the Northern Area Task Force to address the Council's concerns

THE VISION STATEMENT:

Chapel Hill 's Northern Gateway will be a local vibrant hub humming with activity, its distinctiveness unmistakable.

The Northern Area will abound in public art, outdoor plazas, and green space, providing a warm welcome for both residents and visitors. It will encourage creative building design and land use plans that emphasize street-front

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aesthetics and the latest in green technology, and ample buffering of existing neighborhoods. It will value preserving areas of natural beauty, environmental sensitivity, and historic and architectural significance.

New development will be integrated with the existing neighborhoods in a seamless and mutually beneficial manner. From housing, to retail, to office, to community uses, the area will create a dynamic synergy and will define successful mixed use. Housing options will be many and varied and include a healthy number of affordable units that will maintain the area's

social and economic diversity. Ground-floor retail establishments will provide walkable destinations for area residents and extend the activity of the area long after the offices above them are closed for the day. A dense design model will preserve significant amounts of green space and trees and will be supported by the necessary infrastructure, avoiding crowding and congestion.

The vigor of the neighborhoods will be sustained by safe pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections via an abundance of walking trails, bicycle lanes, and transit station hubs. The major transportation corridors will be enhanced with myriad improvements for pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit, as well as automobiles. Walking, jogging, biking from home, to work, to shopping, to play, to civic engagements are part of the daily fabric of life.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives are intended to provide a framework for future development within the Northern Study Area. The goals, developed from key issues identified by the Northern Area Task Force, provide the basis for the development concepts and guidelines in the Northern Area.



Gateway Entrance

Goal 1: A landmark gateway that “announces” Chapel Hill at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., and Weaver Dairy Rd.

Objectives:

1. Require architecturally interesting buildings, public art, and design features fashioned as community gathering places
2. Design crosswalks as a signature feature
3. Create balanced architectural design that stresses continuity for both the east and west sides of the intersection
4. Install wayfinding signage or art that directs residents and visitors to key destinations
5. Design entry way signs so that it is a feature that incorporates Chapel Hill’s values
6. Consider longer term traffic control options such as pedestrian bridges and roundabouts



Neighborhood Protection

Goal 2: To protect the integrity of existing neighborhoods while accommodating transit-oriented development

Objectives:

1. Protect existing residential neighborhoods with adequate buffers that minimize the light, noise, and visual impacts of new development and that preserve property values
2. Limit the height or design of new buildings adjacent to existing residential development in order to provide a transition area and avoid shadow effects
3. Balance building density and scale with impact on existing neighborhoods
4. Maintain and or improve affordable housing options in the area
5. Ensure that the cumulative impact of development does not result in crowding and congestion in the area
6. Reduce vehicular impact on residential neighborhoods

Murals help create a sense of place in Chapel Hill.



Stepped buildings, such as the Franklin Hotel, limit height impacts on surrounding areas.



The Environment

Goal 3: Development that protects, restores, and enhances the environmental quality of the area

Objectives:

1. Identify and protect significant trees and tree stands in the area
2. Protect Booker Creek headwaters and RCD that lead to Lake Ellen, Eastwood Lake, and Eastgate S/C
3. Protect and provide adaptive reuse of historic, architecturally, or culturally significant buildings and features where possible
4. Recommend new developments to include accessible public open space
5. Encourage innovative on-site stormwater management, for example limit impervious surfaces, utilize vegetative roofs and harvest rainwater
6. Design development to mitigate noise impacts from I-40
7. Require innovative “green” development through energy efficient site planning, architecture, urban design, and maintenance respecting standards such as LEED, Healthybuild, and ASHRAE
8. Use development to restore degraded habitats
9. Bury existing and new electric power lines to allow for a full tree canopy
10. Develop lighting standards that respect both the natural and human environment



The protection of the significant strand of trees at Franklin Grove creates an attractive and unique community gathering space.



A vegetative roof and cistern on top of the Ram's Head parking garage reduces urban stormwater runoff



Land Uses and Intensity

Goal 4: Development that supports an active pedestrian environment and promotes transit use

Objectives:

1. Concentrate commercial development in nodes and at existing commercial centers
2. Establish minimum densities in order to ensure transit supportive development
3. Regulate building height: Appropriately scaled, multi-story, mixed-use buildings
4. Design buildings that are oriented and proximate to the transit corridors to maximize access to transit and transit use
5. Encourage niche pedestrian oriented commercial development such as hotels, clothing stores, book stores, cafés, bakeries, gyms, galleries, pre-schools, and a farmer's market
6. Discourage automobile oriented uses such as drive-in/drive-through services, gas stations, automobile services and repair, and car washes
7. Design the ground floor level of mixed-use buildings to be capable of occupation by both residential or non-residential use
8. Limit residential development close to I-40 to protect health and wellbeing of residents

A NOTE ON DENSITY

Transit oriented development requires higher density residential to support transit service

8-15 dwelling units/acre gross* density is the minimum needed to support bus transit service

This higher density can be achieved with a variety of building types and architecture without visually negative impacts of massiveness and monotony



Franklin Grove
Gross Density: 7 units/acre



Southern Village Town homes
Gross Density: 17-22 units/ acres



Market Street Apartments
Gross Density: 35 units/acre

**** Gross density includes the area necessary for streets, schools, facilities, open space, and parks. Net density refers to the design density of the principle area of a site devoted to primary buildings, support buildings (garages in apartment complexes), area devoted to parking, active recreation, and usually also includes the land area between the development and the primary street from which access is gained.***

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility

Goal 5: A highly connected bicycle and pedestrian system that provides safe, efficient, and attractive travel options

Objectives:

1. Complete the bicycle and sidewalk system along corridors (Weaver Dairy Rd., Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Homestead Rd. and Eubanks Rd.)
2. Avoid fragmentation caused by requiring separate developers to install sidewalks at different times
3. Provide pedestrian amenities along sidewalks, such as benches, lighting, and shade with landscaped streetscapes
4. Ensure safer crossing of major corridors through ground level street improvements
 - Install striped or colored crosswalks with maximum radius corners to ease pedestrian crossings
 - Install pedestrian activated signals with count down feature that provide enough time to safely cross at main corridors and transit stations
 - Provide pedestrian refuges with shade through median pockets along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
5. Connect existing development to new development with walking and bicycle trails
6. Stripe bicycle lanes per Town design manual cross section on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Weaver Dairy Road, Homestead Rd, and Eubanks Road
7. Create meandering sidewalks for aesthetic appeal in appropriate locations
8. Design varied and aesthetically interesting tree lawns, sidewalks and building setbacks that reflect the scale of the street:
 - Major Transit Corridor: Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
 - Secondary Streets: Eubanks, Weaver Dairy Rd., Weaver Dairy Road Extension and Homestead Rd.
 - Residential Street: these streets serve as feeder pedestrian and bicycle corridors



Shaded benches provide a place of rest for pedestrians



Median pockets and striped crosswalks can provide a safer refuge for pedestrians at mid block crossings along major corridors

The meandering path at Meadowmont provides a safe and aesthetic pedestrian/ bicycle corridor



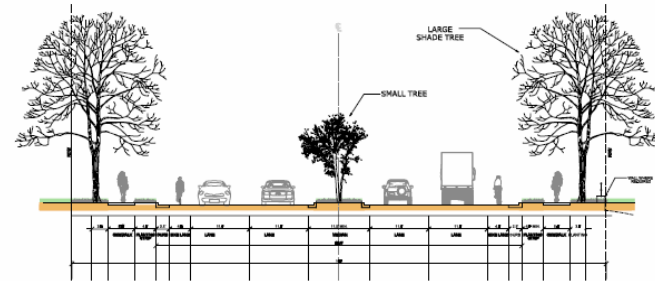
Transportation

Goal 6: A comprehensive transportation system that promotes bicycling, walking, and the use of transit

Objectives:

1. Promote a pedestrian oriented environment by controlling the amount, placement, and design of parking
 - Promote shared parking
 - Consider unbundling the provision of parking from residential units
 - Locate parking behind or under buildings
 - Encourage structured parking with pedestrian friendly facades or ground level retail
 - Allow parking reductions or incentives for developer investments in transit
2. Provide opportunities for transit oriented retail
3. Create aesthetically pleasing shaded streetscapes
4. Endorse and promote the NC 86/ Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Corridor Study recommendations
5. Provide safe, informative, and inviting bus stops
 - Develop shelters and signage of a scale and architectural quality that reflects the importance of major transit stops
 - Locate stops near designated pedestrian crossings with crosswalks and or signalized intersections, and when possible , away from busy corners
 - Incorporate shading, cover, and benches
 - Create attractive medians through tree plantings and lighting
 - Implement the minimal allowable width for car travel lanes by road type
 - Minimize the number of curb cuts and provide cross access between properties
 - Consider Town acquisition of NC 86 in order to fully implement recommended corridor improvements if the State does not accept the corridor study recommendations
6. Improve the road network to provide more connections and safer turning options (e.g. Perkins and Weaver Dairy Road, Westminster and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard).

The NC 86 MLK / MARTIN Luther King Jr. Boulevard Corridor Plan recommends streetscape improvements that incorporate median plantings, bicycle lanes, and narrower automobile lanes



IMPACTS OF TOWN ACQUISITION OF THE NC 86/ MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD. CORRIDOR

Pros:

- Town would have control to make desired road/ streetscape improvements
- The Town would receive approximately \$25,000 in Powell Bill funds from the state for maintenance of 5.5 miles (I-40 to North St.).

Cons:

- Town may lose eligibility for Federal and State transportation funding
- The Town would need to maintain the high capacity corridor which would likely cost more than the Powell Bill Funding



Design Guidelines

Goal 7: Guidelines that promote the design of safe, comfortable, active, and visually interesting buildings and streetscapes.

Objectives

1. Promote day and evening ground level pedestrian activity by including public space and attractive destinations
2. Design upper floor residential accommodation to overlook public space and create eyes on the street
3. Use lighting to create a safe and inviting environment for pedestrians
4. Articulate building forms to reflect the existing scale of residential and smaller commercial buildings. Provide varied roof lines to add architectural interest.
5. Continue pedestrian and bicycle paths into residential and commercial developments
6. Limit setbacks to draw buildings close to the street
7. Provide breaks in building frontages through green spaces and plazas
8. At small commercial sites with two or more businesses, include a public plaza facing the street, with outdoor seating where appropriate.
9. Landscape corners of major intersections to attract and buffer pedestrians from the street while providing pedestrian access to development
10. Create a master landscape plan to encourage harmonious design
11. Provide a landscaped streetscape along the corridors to create shade between roadways and buildings fronting the street. Building setbacks should be sufficient to allow for tree planting
12. Increase minimum tree circumference for trees required to be planted by developers from 2 1/2" to 4"
13. Provide parking and circulation on the interior away from the street
14. Locate site loading and service areas behind buildings and use landscaping and decorative fencing to screen views from adjacent streets and pedestrian ways.

Corner landscaping at the Station is inviting to pedestrians





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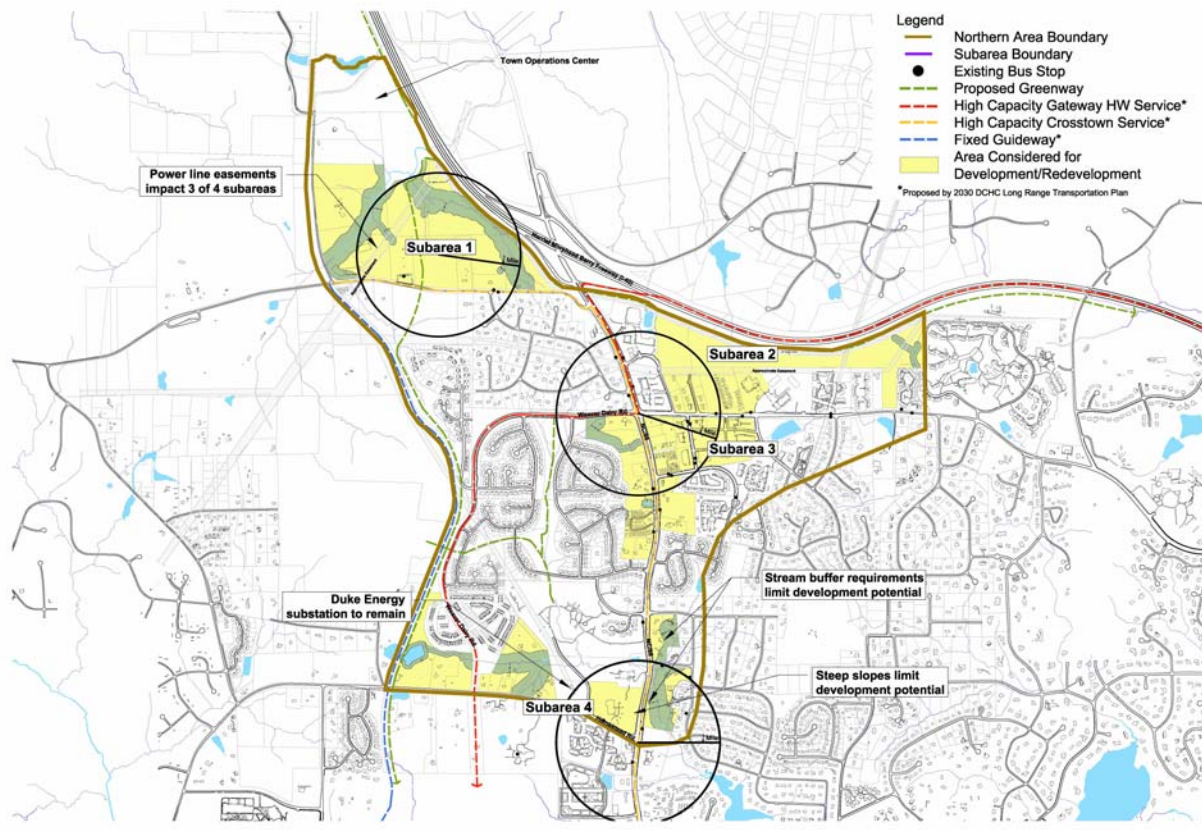
THE FOUR FOCUS AREAS



In addition to area-wide concepts, principles, goals, and objectives, the Task Force developed more specific concepts for four focus areas. These focus areas were chosen because of their access to major transit corridors, gateway presence, and development/redevelopment potential.

The following section details the assets and constraints of each focus area as well as recommendations for development.

An addendum to this report contains illustrative concept plans for the focus areas which were created by the consultants (A separate report, "Chapel Hill Northern Area Workshop: Transit Oriented Development Concept Plans" documents the evolution of these plans during two June, 2007 workshops). The plans used input from the Task Force to conceptualize how transit oriented development could take place in the Northern Study Area. The inclusion of this addendum does not constitute an endorsement by the Task Force. The Task Force has included them for illustrative purposes only.



Subareas 1 - 4 Major Constraints
Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



AREA SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

FOCUS AREA 1 (BETWEEN MILLHOUSE RD. AND EUBANKS)

ASSETS AND CONSTRAINTS :

Gross Area: 127 Acres

Developable Area: 90 Acres: discounts natural constraints only, other constraints will apply

Current Land Use Plan Designation: Mixed Use/ Office Emphasis

Current Zoning: MU-R-1 (Northern Parcels) and MU-OI-1 (Southern Parcels)

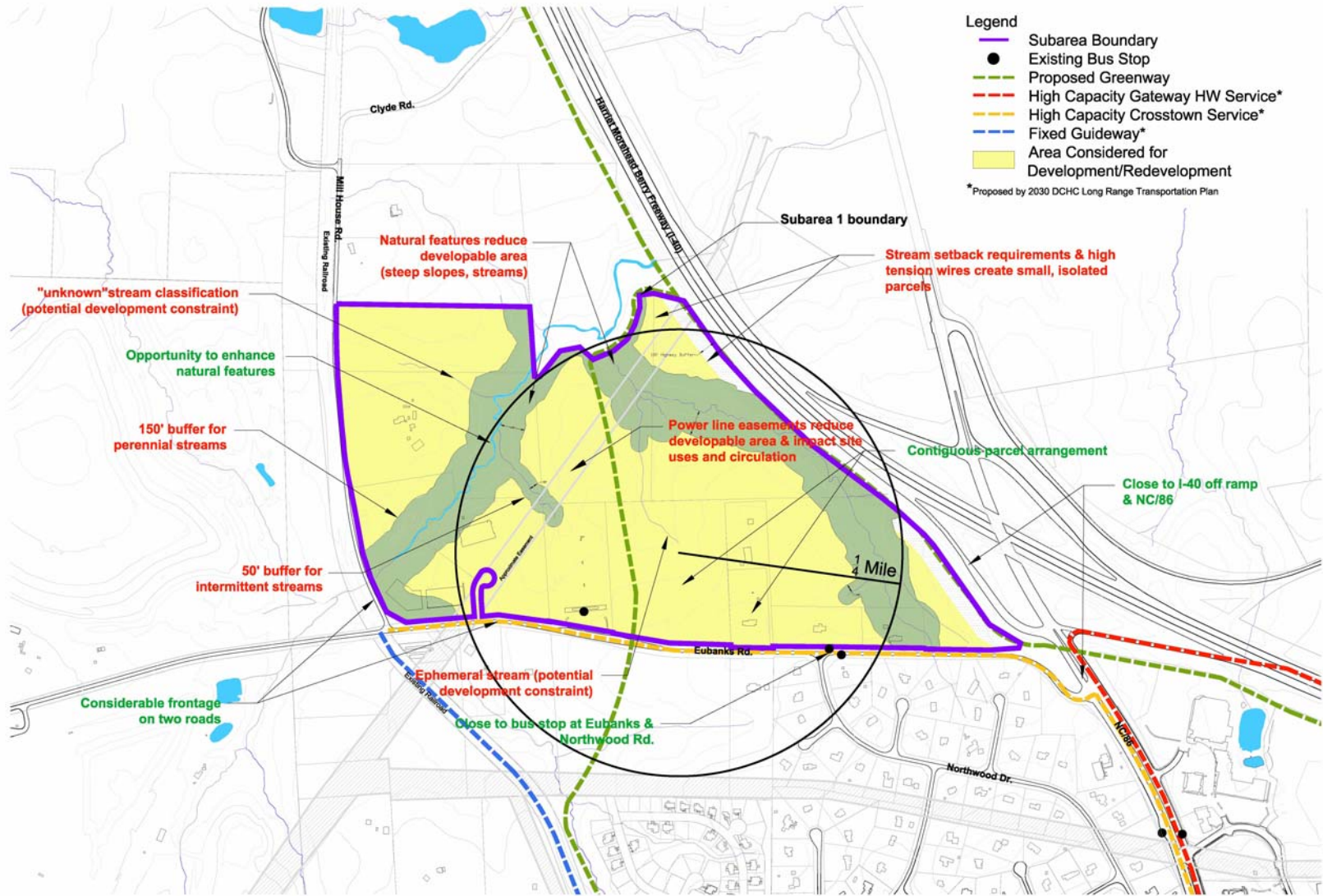
Description: Focus area 1 is unique in its size and gateway location. The area has relatively few land owners (12 parcels with an average size of 10 acres) and represents the largest development opportunity in the Northern Area. Most of the land in the area is undeveloped. At the corner of Millhouse and Eubanks there is an existing office and industrial center. The focus area also contains a 6-acre Town-owned park-and-ride lot that is used for both local and regional transit.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Proposed Development Concept:

Transit Oriented Village with high density residential and mixed use retail/office

- Served by transit stops and includes a transit center/public space oriented to Eubanks Rd that is served with parking garages and enveloped by housing retail/office
- Minimum gross density of 15 units/acre for residentially developed portions of the site
- Optimal site for a hospitality center including a hotel
- Opportunity for art or entrance feature in the southeast corner
- Integrate and expand the existing park-and-ride facility vertically with new development
- Protect the Northwood neighborhood from cut-through traffic



- Legend**
- Subarea Boundary
 - Existing Bus Stop
 - - - Proposed Greenway
 - - - High Capacity Gateway HW Service*
 - - - High Capacity Crosstown Service*
 - - - Fixed Guideway*
 - Area Considered for Development/Redevelopment
- *Proposed by 2030 DCHC Long Range Transportation Plan

Subarea 1 Assets & Constraints
Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



Focus Area 1 is constrained by existing streams, I-40 setback requirements, and high tension wires.

AREA SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

FOCUS AREA 2 (NORTH OF WEAVER DAIRY RD)

ASSETS AND CONSTRAINTS :

Area 2 Gross Area: 71 Acres

Developable Area: 68 Acres: discounts natural constraints only, other constraints will apply

Land Use Plan Designation: Mixed-Use & Medium Density Residential

Current Zoning: MU-OI-1 (Western Parcels) & R-3 (Eastern Parcel)

Description: In May 2007, the Town Council approved a 123-unit residential development on 13 acres adjoining the existing shopping center at the west of Focus Area 2. Area 2 includes the unusually shaped 43-acre University Station property, which consists of two triangular shaped parcels connected by a 275-foot-wide strip of land adjoining Interstate 40. The area also includes an existing 5-acre mobile home park, approximately 6 acres of the older phase of Vilcom Office Park, and a cluster of half-acre lots off Perkins Drive and Old University Station Road.

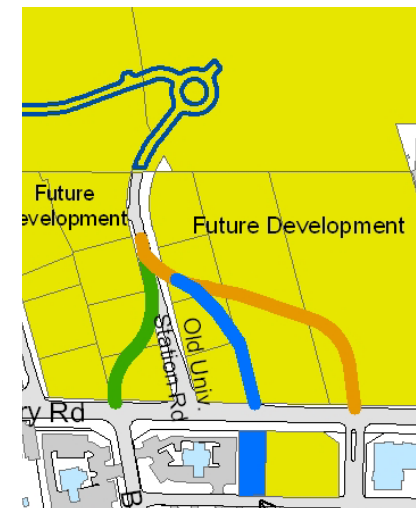
The northern part of the area is constrained by noise, power lines, and the highway right-of-way requirements. The existing configuration of the Chapel Hill North Shopping Center makes it quite difficult to incorporate into any redesign for the area. Most of the land in the area is relatively accessible with few natural constraints (streams and steep slopes).

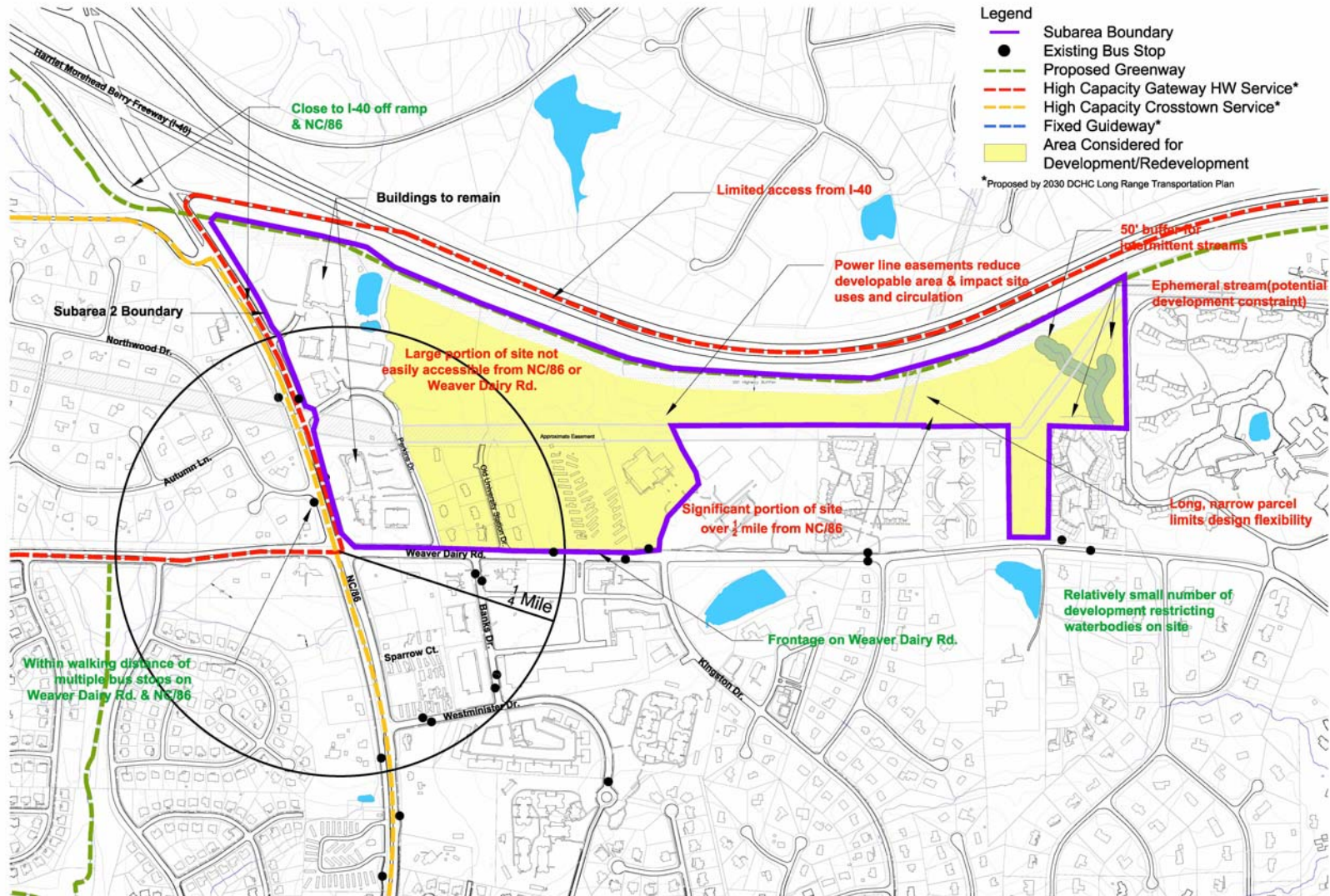
RECOMMENDATIONS:

Proposed Development Concept:

- Served by transit stops, Weaver Dairy Road will be a transit corridor and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard will serve as a high capacity transit corridor
- Mixed-use 8-15 dwelling units/acre on the northern side of Weaver Dairy Road west of and including the older part of the Vilcom office property
- University Station:
 - Western End - Mixed-use with transit oriented residential densities (8-15 DU/ac). In addition to the 100 foot buffer to I-40 which is required by Town ordinances, south of the buffer development should be designed to provide parking and non-residential uses between I-40 and any residential use.
 - Central - Residential development should not be permitted in the narrow strip of land adjacent to I-40. The strip should be used as green space and a buffer. A traffic calmed road connecting the eastern and western end of the property through the open space/buffer should be considered.
 - Eastern End - Residential use of a density consistent with adjoining residential developments and should not have residential development adjacent to I-40. If warranted a traffic light should be provided at the intersection of the eastern property access and Weaver Dairy Road.
- Old University Station Drive should be realigned to connect through to a possible new entrance to the Timberlyne Shopping Center with a signalized intersection and pedestrian improvements.
- Add a pedestrian activated crosswalk at Silo Drive in addition to the crossings are already included in the Weaver

The blue line represents the recommended realignment of the Old University Station Rd.





Subarea 2 Assets & Constraints
Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



AREA SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

FOCUS AREA 3 (SOUTH OF WEAVER DAIRY RD)

ASSETS AND CONSTRAINTS:

Area 3 Gross Area: 71 Acres

Developable Area: 59 Acres: discounts natural constraints only, other constraints will apply

Land Use Plan Designation: Mixed-Use, Medium & High Density Residential & Commercial, Development Opportunity Areas

Current Zoning: MU-OI-1, OI-1, CC, R2, R3 & R5

Description: On the eastern side of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., area 3 includes the existing Timberlyne Center. The center accommodates unique neighborhood commercial uses and has opportunities for redevelopment within its existing framework; currently there is excess parking capacity at the shopping center. On the western side, Area 3 includes the Altemueller property which contains historic buildings of a former farm, including a farm house and outbuildings. There are also stands of mature trees, the headwaters of Booker Creek, a mobile home park and Fire Station 4

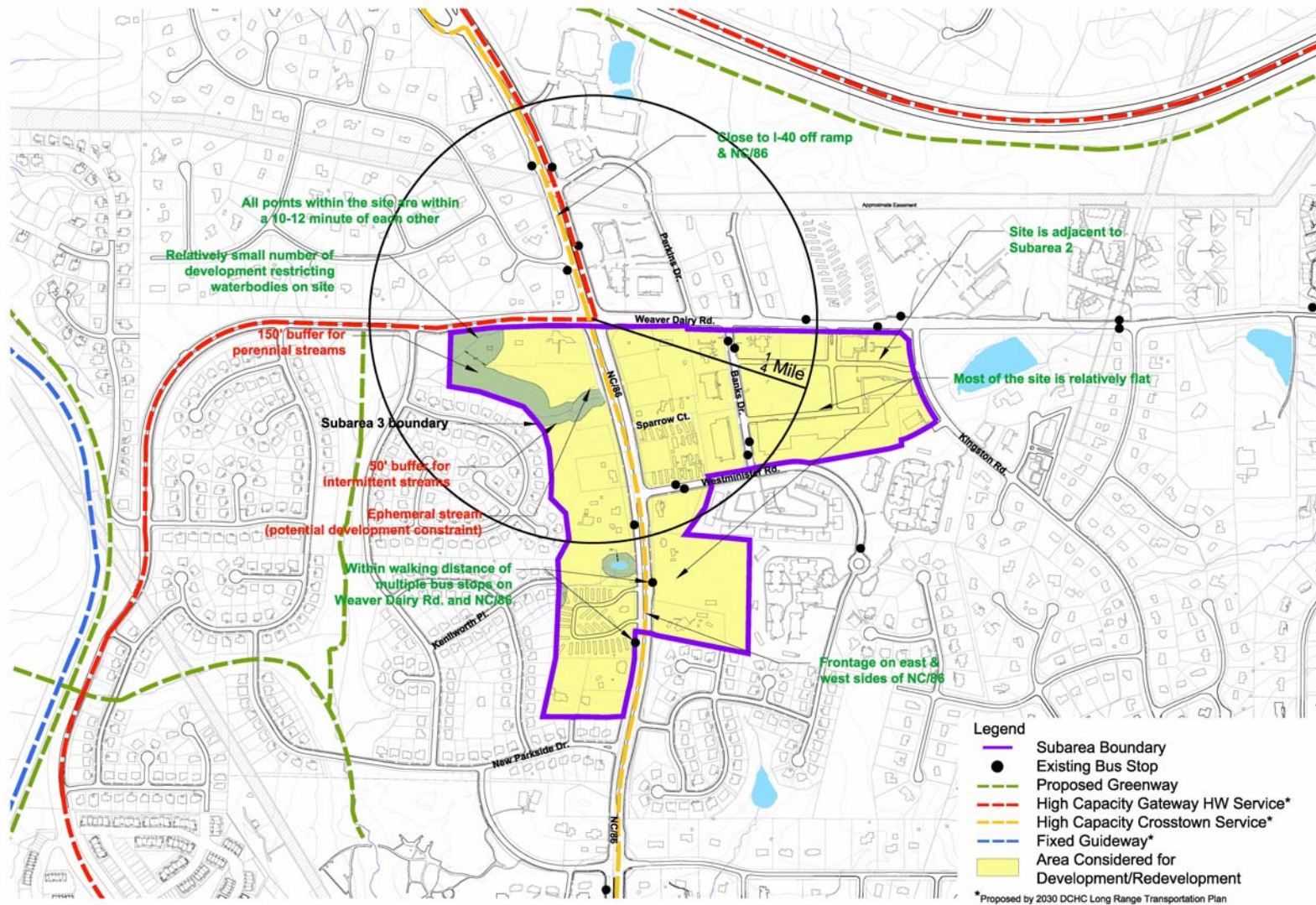
RECOMMENDATIONS:

Proposed Development Concept:

- Served by transit stops, Weaver Dairy Road will be a transit corridor and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard will serve as a high capacity transit corridor
- The corridors should have a landscaped and shaded streetscape
- The intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Weaver Dairy Rd. should have a highly visible gateway entrance that contains a retail component. The gateway should be connected to the Timberlyne Center by retail uses on the southern side of Weaver Dairy Rd.
- Timberlyne Center - The center should remain a major commercial node and should redevelop over time. A master redevelopment plan incorporating TOD principles and active public space should be prepared. Access to the center should be aligned to a realigned access at Old University Station Drive (see recommendations of area 2)
- East Side of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard - Mixed-Use, 15+DU/Acre minimum gross density for residential developments
- West Side of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard - Mixed-Use, 8-15DU/Acre minimum gross density for residential developments (density should be measured as an aggregate of all the property in this portion of the focus area)
- Altemueller property - Retain the building and tree group as an active focal space for the community. Adaptively reuse the farmhouse. Protect the natural and cultural heritage of the site. Because of the environmental constraints impacting the property, it will likely be developed at a lower density than the adjoining property on the east side of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
- Consider Town coordinated redevelopment of the Fire Station which incorporates the existing facility and TOD principles
- Extend greenway along Weaver Dairy Rd. Ext. to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.



The existing Altemueller farmhouse and surrounding mature oaks should be incorporated into the redevelopment plan of the property.



Subarea 3 Assets & Constraints
Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



AREA SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

FOCUS AREA 4 (HOMESTEAD RD)

ASSETS AND CONSTRAINTS:

Gross Area: 98 Acres

Developable Area: 40 Acres: discounts natural constraints only, other constraints will apply

Land Use Plan Designation: Mixed Use/ Office Emphasis

Current Zoning: R-1 (Along Homestead), R-2 (Eastern side of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd), OI-2 (Corner Parcel)

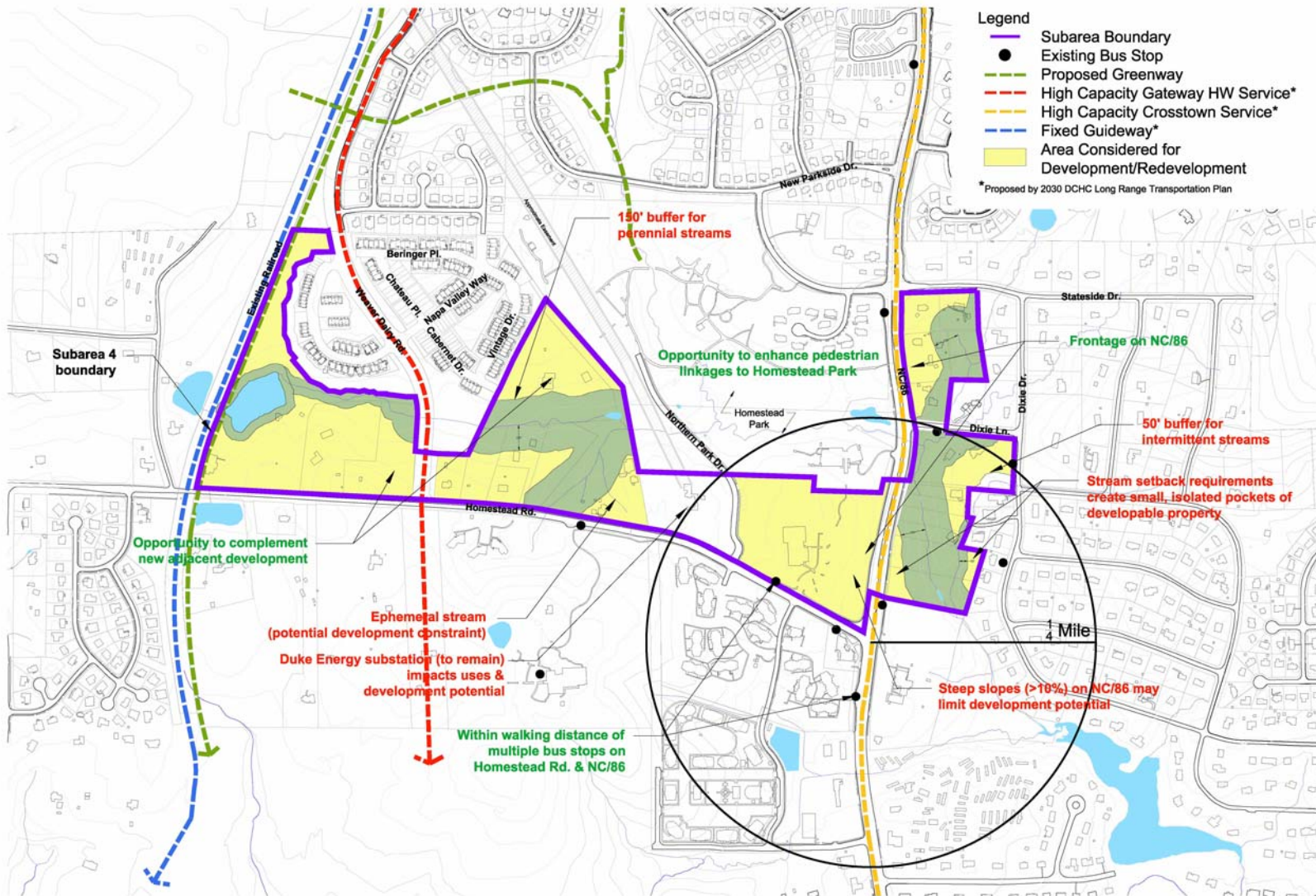
Description: Focus area 4 primarily runs parallel to Homestead Rd. Development in the area is heavily constrained by the resource conservation district. Most of the land in the area is developed as low density residential single family houses. Duke power has a substation property and a lot for sale on the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Homestead Rd. The senior center and Homestead Park are in close proximity to the study area. Transit wise, the area could be potentially served by three transit corridors: Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Homestead Rd, and the Railroad. Focus Area 4 is heavily contained by the RCD (Resource Conservation District). Most the land along the eastern side of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. has very limited development potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Proposed Development Concept:

Transit oriented development with a residential focus 15+ DU per an acre minimum gross density (residentially developed portions of the site) and supportive neighborhood retail

- Served by transit stops on Homestead Rd
- The intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Homestead Rd. should be identified as a hub and include a focal community space with supporting neighborhood retail
- Improved pedestrian corridor along Homestead Rd, from Town limits through Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. with uniformity in landscaping and a pedestrian/bicycle path separate from the roadway.
- Seek a pocket park east of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. on Resource Conservation District constrained property
- TOD concept should be expanded to the Town's property adjacent to Vineyard Square and the railroad tracks on the north side of Homestead Rd.
- Identify the farmhouse across from the senior center for potential adaptive reuse, for example, a small office



Subarea 4 Assets & Constraints
Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



IMPLEMENTATION

The overall and area-specific design concepts, together with the plan goals and objectives, have been offered as guidance for development in the Northern Area. Realizing these concepts and addressing these goals and objectives will require a cooperative effort between the Town, property owners, developers, and citizens.

The task force recommends the following implementation strategies:

- Development protocol that is coordinated and integrates infrastructure, physical improvements and Town services, including schools, with development
- Prepare and periodically update a coordinated transportation improvement plan to guide future development with specified timelines designed to address the transportation impacts of growth,
- Ensure that community infrastructure, including physical improvements and expanded Town services, will be in place at the same time as anticipated development
- Balance residential and commercial development from a fiscal point of view,
- Encourage revenue-neutral or revenue-positive development by balancing residential and commercial development,
- Continue to involve citizens in the process,
- Provide notifications to residents which includes detailed project and contact information,
- Confirm that Comprehensive Plan principles are upheld

Plan implementation will involve the following processes:

Comprehensive Plan

- We recommend the Council adopt these Northern Area Task Force recommendations as a component of the Town of Chapel Hill's Comprehensive Plan. This would provide more detailed guidance for this small area and can serve as a template for application to other areas of the Town.

Rezoning

- The Town has established a moratorium on certain types of development for the duration of the process to establish a vision and recommendation for how to shape the future development of Northern Area. This plan is the basis for the parallel preparation of standards and regulations to implement the plan vision. New regulations will likely provide incentives for a comprehensive approach to implementing the concepts of this plan. The Town Council will consider adopting new or amended zoning and regulations before the Moratorium ceases January 31, 2008

Development Requests

- Once adopted as a component of the Comprehensive Plan, the moratorium ceases and zoning regulations are in place, the guidelines and recommendations included in this plan should become the basis and justification for development requests for properties in the Northern Area. Development would be encouraged to be designed in a manner consistent with these guidelines.



Follow-up Actions:

In support of the formal processes outlined above, the task force identified the following matters as potential follow-up actions for the Town:

- Develop a transportation model for the Northern Area to analyze the cumulative impacts of development proposals on the transportation infrastructure
- Consider ways to pay for infrastructure, such as development impact fees
- Conduct a census of the mobile home parks in order to provide for increased affordable opportunities if those sites are redeveloped.
- Revise the Town's Traffic Impact Assessment to incorporate assessment of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trips
- Apply for funding from Clean Water Management Trust Fund
- Apply for State Affordable Housing Bond Money for replacement of mobile home parks
- Work with Chapel Hill Preservation Society
- Explore need for school sites in accordance with Schools Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (SAPFO)

Acknowledgement

The Northern Area Task Force thanks the Town Council of the Town of Chapel Hill for the opportunity to prepare this plan and acknowledges the assistance of Town staff and Crosby Schlessinger and Smallridge.

Chapel Hill Town Council

Kevin C. Foy, Mayor
Bill Strom, Mayor Pro Tem
Laurin Easthom
Sally Greene
Ed Harrison
Cam Hill
Mark Kleinschmidt
Bill Thorpe
Jim Ward

Chapel Hill Planning Department

JB Culpepper, Planning Director
David Bonk, Long Range and Transportation Coordinator
Gordon Sutherland, Principal Planner
Leigh Ann Cienek, Planner
Scott Simmons, Graphics Specialist
Liz Brisson, Transportation Planning Intern

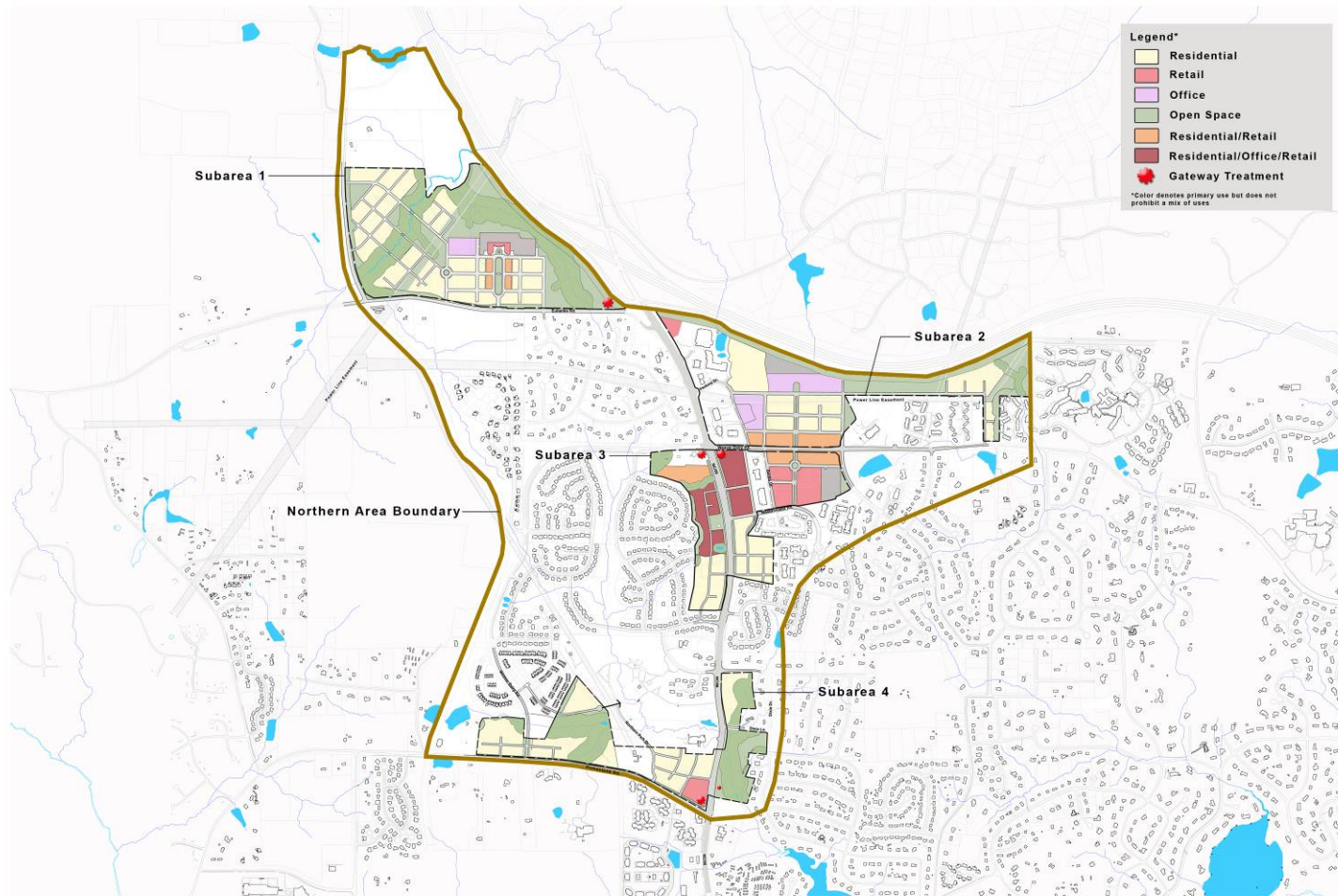
Crosby Schlessinger and Smallridge (CSS)

Carole Schlessinger, Skip Smallridge & Chris Raile

ADDENDUM A: ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPTUAL LAND USE PLANS



This section of the report contains the concept plans created by the consultants. The Task Force does not endorse these plans, but have included them for illustrative purposes only. The overall plan for the area is presented here, and the individual Focus Area plans on the following pages.



Subareas 1 - 4 Conceptual Land Use & Block Plan
Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



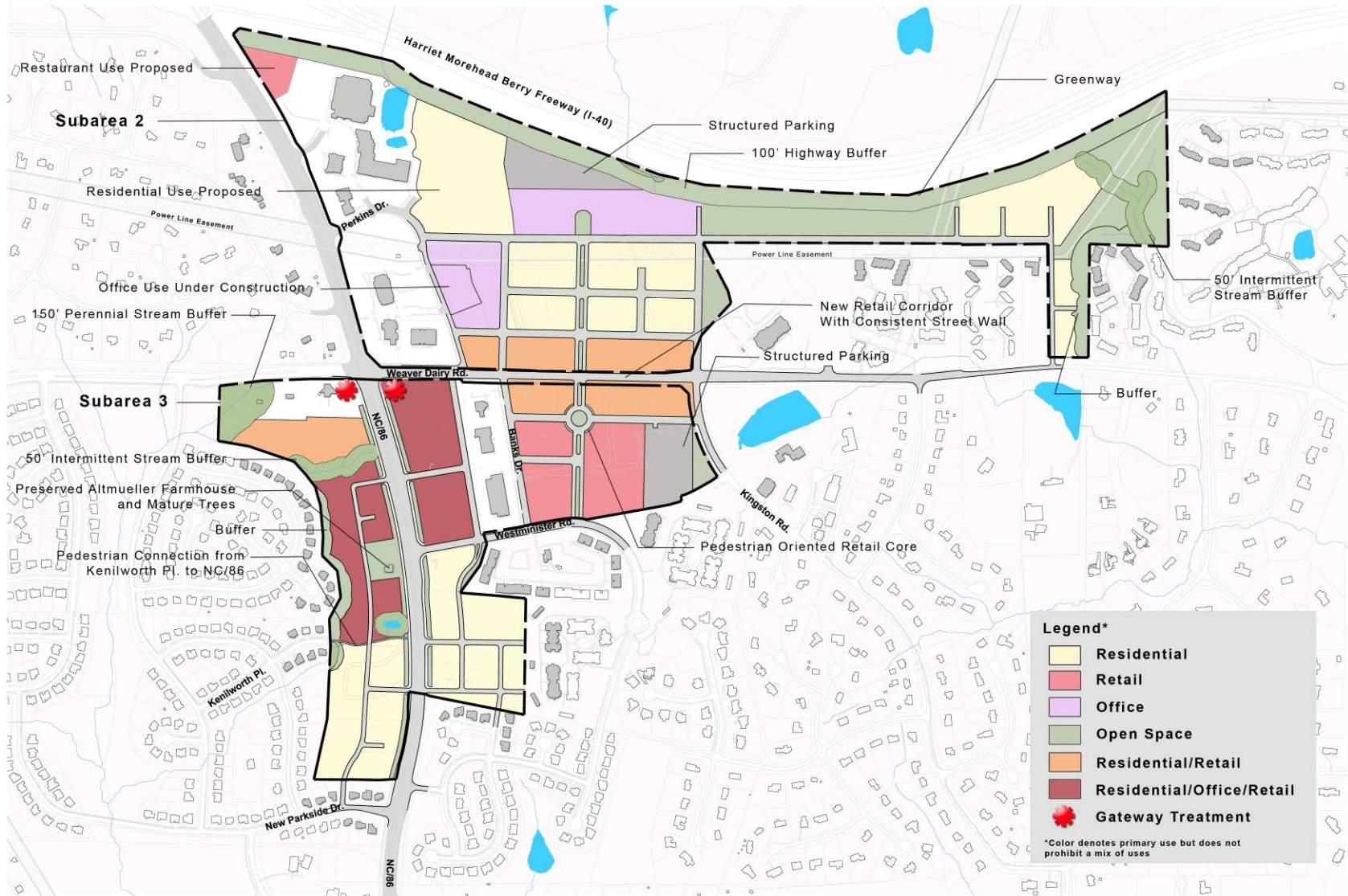
FOCUS AREA 1



Subarea 1 Conceptual Land Use & Block Plan
 Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



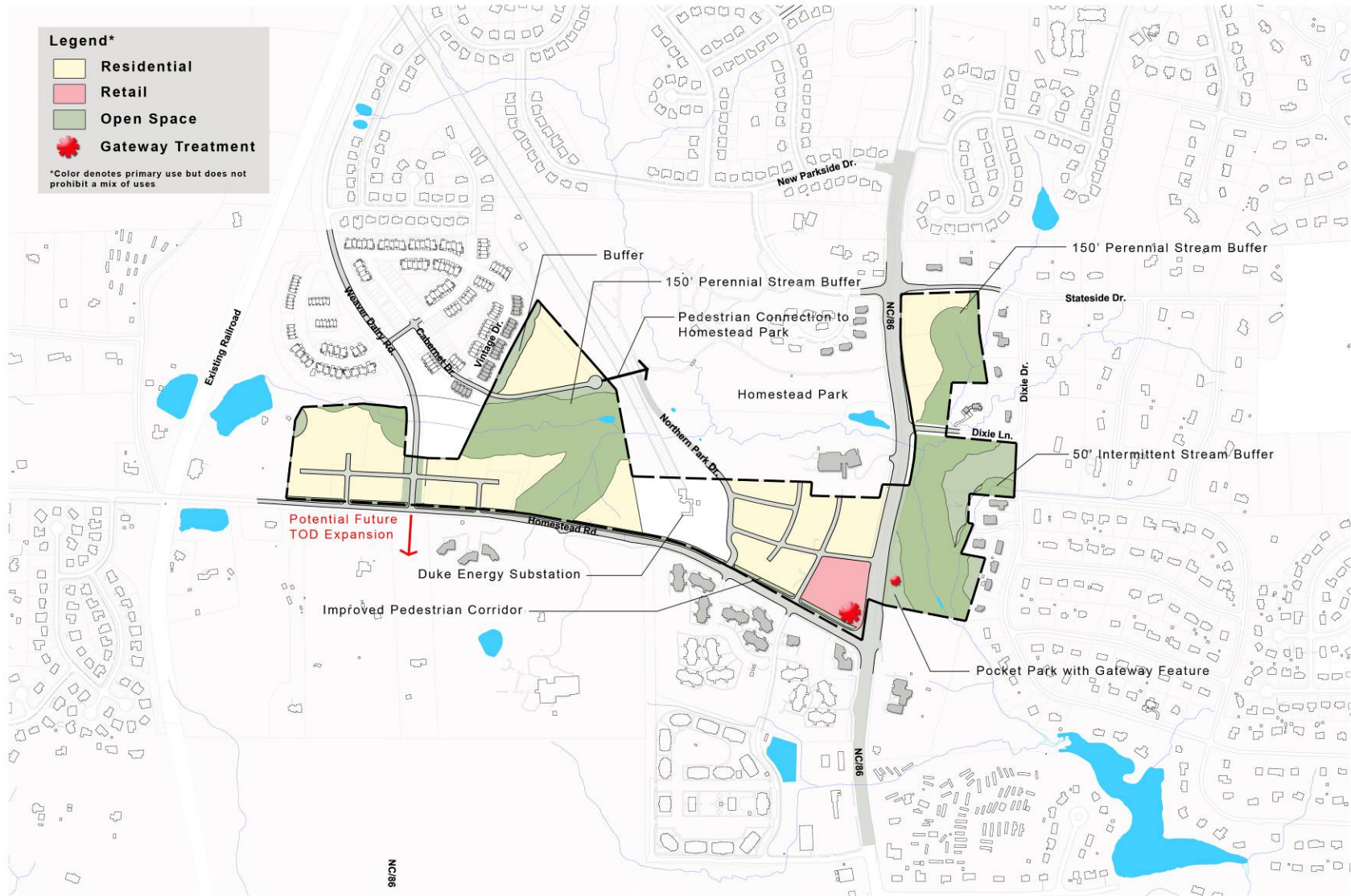
FOCUS AREAS 2 AND 3



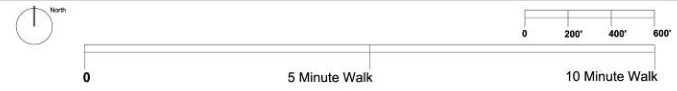
Subareas 2 & 3 Conceptual Land Use & Block Plan
Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



FOCUS AREA 4



Subarea 4 Conceptual Land Use & Block Plan
Chapel Hill T.O.D. Site Analysis



ADDENDUM B: PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM OPEN HOUSE



1. Guidelines as proposed by the task force are good-I hope they will be adopted and that the Weaver Dairy Road Project will be re-reviewed with some attention to preserving trees that currently are marked to be cleared.
2. My main concern is with a Rezoning Process. Will Rezoning be “in mass” or on a less organized process? As a homeowner, I would like to see the rights of homeowners protected in whatever process is used. Overall-good start but pros and cons should be highlighted and summarized.
3. Mixed use to encourage more “walkable” access to cafes, bookstores, etc. is good. Thanks for all your hard work
4. It would be nice if the kids in developments along Weaver Dairy Road Extension could walk to the schools on Seawell School Rd. I think I see this notion in the plans.
5. Need to consider projections for Carolina North as well!
Air and noise-tougher restrictions on residential development near I-40. Transit & Bike-Good! Neighborhoods-Make sure buffers to neighborhoods are not the bare minimum.
6. Make sure new developments do NOT have dead end streets. Need connectivity. Do not “improve” intersection, and create 2 turn lanes (tough on pedestrians.) Incorporate “island” on 4 lane roads. Have bike shoulders on Homestead. Require new developments to have sidewalks on both sides of the street!
7. We probably won’t be imposing design guidelines, therefore the Town needs to ensure there are adequate buffers-so those buffers could be several hundred feet and contain pedestrian pathways among trees. Thank you. Julie McClintock
8. Comments: Work with school board to identify more school sites. Establish specific height limitations or # of stories for each subarea. Show housing units in total # of units/acre rather than density per acre. Require minimum buffers that are quantified. Consider cap on # of units for each site.
9. thoughts: MLK & Weaver Dairy –crosswalks-? What about pedestrian bridges across these busy places? No buildings behind Coventry due to the boggy conditions when it rains. This is a very low area and increased runoff due to buildings/roads/parking would make this area much more wet during the rainy season.
10. Please make sure anyone contemplating changes at the back of Coventry @ Essex Drive, walks the property.
11. Referring to Subarea 2-Reference is made to an E-W road connecting the two buildable areas which would connect at each end to exit roads to Weaver Dairy Road. Based on the suggested use of 8-15 DU/acre on 68 buildable acres, this would mean construction of somewhere of 544-1050 units. Such development would require a road to handle school and transit buses along with garbage and trash trucks in addition to the auto traffic. I would urge that the roads should be built to city standards including curbs and storm sewers. This amount of housing imposes a large increase school load.-J. Houston 107 Essex Drive

12. Concerns: Focus Area 3 & 4 to Weaver Dairy Road Ext. Intersection with Homestead Rd to proposed Carolina North. As a resident of Northwoods V, Phase II my backyard overlooks WDR Ext, not just am/pm "rush hour." We have found that traffic is steady (esp. due to construction) throughout the day. Traffic has a huge impact in the quality of life of the residents in the area. We are specifically concerned about the # of vehicles (esp. considering C. North), air pollution/exhaust, noise pollution, speed and carelessness of drivers near these residential areas and school bus stops along the road. WDR Ext has become a cut-through for many from Homestead and areas nearby to I-40.

13. Add median to MLK Jr. Relocate CH Fire facilities (or at least training tower) to Town Op Ctr. and redev with higher (non-smoky) use. Embrace/create bike & ped connectivity towards MLK Jr. Blvd (especially in those neighborhoods e. of MLK Jr.) Support /advocate for additional bike loops to (activate traffic lights) at all intersections within study area, so bikes have full & safe use of road system.

Via Email:

I'll repeat my compliments about the Northern Area Task Force Report: Very well done and comprehensive. So my comments will be to echo a couple points made in that report.

(1) Gateway Entrance, Item 6: Longer term traffic control options.

My comment is that something is definitely needed other than "architecturally interesting buildings" to re-adjust the just-got-off-the-interstate I-40 traffic, as well as the commuting-from-Hillsborough traffic. In both cases, the drivers are not quite to their Chapel Hill downtown, main campus, or Carolina North destination ... and they've still got a nice wide 4-lane road in front of them. Slowing down to 35 mph is not the natural driving behavior in this situation.

(2) The Environment, Item 9: Bury power lines to allow for a full tree canopy.

MLK is currently a major heat-generating corridor with little to no shade over the roadway. Burying the power lines would be a positive step not only for aesthetics ... but also for reduction of the urban heat-island effect Chapel Hill is beginning to create.

(3) The Environment, Item 4: New Developments include public open space.

My comment is to contrast the comfortable, green open space buffer along the section of East Franklin Street between Dickinson's Garden Center and the Whole Foods Grocery shopping center entrance ... with the crowd-the-sidewalk developments on West Rosemary; e.g., the Warehouse, and the "awful" building on the corner of Rosemary and Mitchell Lane. Another example is the much-touted Franklin Hotel, which would give a completely different streetscape experience if set back several feet from the sidewalk.

Thanks for your hard work and efforts. Here's hoping that the recommendations are followed as a great example for the Town.

Alan N. Snavelly

ADDENDUM C: CORRESPONDENCE



The Preservation Society of Chapel Hill
610 E. Rosemary Street, Chapel Hill, N.C.
(919) 942-7818

August 27, 2007

Ram Development
516 West Peace Street
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill, and our membership, I would like you to consider preserving the historic Altemueller farmhouse currently located on your property on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. We are currently working with the Town of Chapel Hill and the State Historic Preservation Office to determine the age and relevance of this farmhouse. Preserving this historic home would be a wonderful contribution to Chapel Hill's history and landscape.

After looking at a preliminary site plan, I understand that preserving the Altemueller farmhouse might not be easy but integrating it would certainly be beneficial to your project. Adapting it for use as office space, retail store, or even a bank (an example of which is in Graham, N.C.), would create a distinctive, eye-catching landmark and a distinctive brand for your development. The preserved house would visually set your development apart from other non-descriptive areas on the road and would attract potential patrons interested in history or architecture. An older home in the midst of your proposed apartments would give tenants a sense of place, one that has authenticity and character and make it an attractive place to live in.

Besides being a great marketing opportunity, preserving the Altemueller farmhouse would be a thoughtful way to save the town's disappearing history. Recently the Preservation Society has been active educating the public on the rash of recent demolitions that are robbing Chapel Hill of its historic treasures. Rather than highlighting these cases we would much rather praise projects that exemplify the balance possible between promoting community growth and protecting the past.

The Preservation Society is more than eager to help save this home through whatever means possible. We can offer zero interest loans for the restoration of the house, identify architects trained in adaptive reuse planning, or we can simply craft a positive public relations campaign around a successful preservation project.

I hope you will seriously consider the real benefits in saving the Altemueller farmhouse. It could become a wonderfully distinctive business location that would be noticeable and it would certainly go a long way of endearing Ram development in the eyes of those Chapel Hillians that appreciate history.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this situation further and I hope to be working with in the near future.

Thank you,

Ernest Dollar
Executive Director
Preservation Society of Chapel Hill



The Preservation Society of Chapel Hill
610 E. Rosemary Street, Chapel Hill, N.C.
(919) 942-7818

August 27, 2007

To the Town of Chapel Hill,

On behalf of the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill and our membership I would like endorse the Northern Area Taskforce and their findings enclosed in their August 2007 draft specifically the preservation of the Altemueller farmhouse in Focus Area 3.

The Task Force has done a wonderful job highlighting the many assets of northern Chapel Hill and offered practical, common sense advice on its future growth. While reading the report it is important to keep in mind that it represents how the community wants itself to grow. A major theme that repeats itself is the need for complementary growth rather than destructive growth. At the heart of this community is the Altemueller farm, which has survived almost 130 years of development.

Most people pass this small farmhouse daily and think little of it but it is one of the first stitches in the social fabric of northern Chapel Hill and is historically important for the story it embodies. The Altemueller farmhouse is one of a minority of homes, which remain that tell us about Chapel Hill before its great expansion. The home gives us a window into the past and the lives of those helped the town grow. But rather than just being a tangible reminder of the past it could be the new cornerstone of the community's future.

Preserving and reusing the historic home would be a unique opportunity for a business to operate out of a distinctive location. A preserved farmhouse would peak interest in the community and attract tourists. It would make local residents feel as if their neighborhood is authentic and would instill a real sense of place. The Altemueller farmhouse could help develop a since of pride about the place they live.

The Altemueller farmhouse does not need to be destroyed. The Preservation Society of Chapel Hill has offered to work with RAM Development to adapt the house for modern uses. Older houses have been converted to galleries, banks, restaurants, and offices to name a few. Time has shown that historic buildings appreciate and become more valuable that modern construction because the are unique, have character, and seem real.

In closing, we hope that the Town of Chapel Hill will adopt the recommendations of the Northern Area Task Force when considering how to shape growth in northern Chapel Hill. The plan balances growth with preservation of natural and cultural resources. Without these greenspaces, historic homes, bikeways, and sidewalks this area would loose its distinctive feel and be indistinguishable from any other city in the United States. The Preservation Society strongly urges the Town to preserve what makes this area great.

Ernest Dollar
Executive Director
Preservation Society of Chapel Hill