**Planning Principles Developed During Small Group Discussions**

Central West Focus Area

*From April 4, 2013 Steering Committee Meeting*

*Note: All Small Group Discussion notes are available on the Central West webpage under “Steering Committee Meeting Materials” under the April 4, 2013 meeting date.*

**Future Land Use Small Group Principles**

1. The future land uses in the area should respond to, and be compatible with, both existing local needs and those that will be emerging with the development of Carolina North.
2. Carolina North and adjacent development should be physically and socially complementary.
3. The Central West area should have a gradual transition that is in harmony with residential neighborhoods and with new mixed uses.

O: Residences that appeal to older adults and young professionals some of which are on a single level.

O: Have more offices and mixed-use along MLK

1. The Central West area should be a gateway to the Town.
2. The height and density along MLK is increased and gradually transitions to residential neighborhoods.

O: The heights are complementary with the tree canopy.

O: Keep the highest intensity of uses near MLK

1. Create an effective transportation strategy
2. Land uses should respect the natural character of the area and promote environmental goals.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety and Connectivity Small Group Principles**

1. Provide a safe, multi-use path along the north-side of Estes from Caswell westward to connect with Carrboro, Carolina North, and the Campus-to-Campus connector.

O: ADA Accessibility on all paths

O: Safe and connected access to all transit stops

1. Develop a bike/ped oriented wayfinding signage system.
2. Consider MLK/Estes intersection a gateway access point that accommodates safe bike/ped accessibility.

O: Construct a pedestrian-friendly grand circle at MLK/Estes

O: Incorporate a signature fountain as a focal point of the area – the “New Well”

O: ADA Accessibility on all paths

O: Safe and connected access to all transit stops

1. Assume that MLK incorporates complete streets principles that provide bike/ped facilities.

O: ADA Accessibility on all paths

O: Safe and connected access to all transit stops

1. Encourage expanding connectivity and permeability of bike/ped access within neighborhoods.

O: Develop a designated, signed bike/ped route from Caswell to the library.

O: ADA Accessibility on all paths

O: Safe and connected access to all transit stops

**Traffic and Transit Small Group Principlse**

**Overall Goal:** Central West should serve as a model for a transit-oriented, people friendly community that, over time, reduces VMT and promotes safety and alternate means of transportation.

**Planning Principles and Associated Objectives**

1. Improved connectivity should be created (N-S, E-W) both within and through the planning and impact areas, inclusive of Carolina North

O: Develop alternate routes through neighborhoods to reduce load on MLK and Estes

O: Develop Elliot Road as a complete street

O: Connect the “fire cut” to Wellington to divert traffic away from the front to f the two schools

O: Provide more complete (360°) access to Carolina North, e.g., from the North)

O: Ensure connections to the campus to campus bike route

O: Ensure connectivity between all modes of transportation (e.g., bike to bus)

1. Traffic flow through the area should be smoothed and improved, with each street reflecting its environment and use in terms of appearance/esthetics, width, speed, etc.

O: Ensure safe orderly flow around stopped buses, utility trucks, delivery vehicles, etc.

O: Use street trees and other similar landscaping means to address sound, microclimate, and appearance

O: Ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate lighting for all modes of transportation

1. In order to promote safety, accessibility, and use of alternate means of transportation, there should be separation, buffering, and protection for all modes of transportation on existing and newly-created streets (i.e., complete streets)

O: Encourage/develop a “walk-to-school” program

O: Use signage and other visual cues to indicate appropriate speed, behavior on various streets

O: There should be continuous (inclusive of street crossings) sidewalks/bike paths on both sides of MLK, Estes, and other major streets

1. The entire area should be genuinely transit-oriented, including bus (or other means of public transit) access to newly developed areas and improved access to existing ones. MLK should evolve as a major transit corridor (e.g., BRT); additional routes and service should be implemented to increase utilization and improve access to key social and commercial areas of the Town.

O: East-West bus service should be provided on Estes Drive

O: Connectivity between modes of transportation should be facilitated (e.g., bike racks at BRT stops).

O: Ensure adequate transit service/options for youth

O: Create useful destinations (e.g., retail community activities) that are accessible to and integrated with the transit system

O: Provide expanded hours of service to allow for round trip utilization of transit in the evenings, etc.

1. Minimize the visual impact of parked cars through the use of, for example, underground, under-building, and “hidden” parking

O: Reduce the number of required parking spaces

O: Encourage zip-car and other shared use/ownership solutions

**Community Character Small Group Principles**

**General**

1. The Central West Focus Area is made up of several different zones, which may require different planning solutions.

**Experiential Character**

1. The Central West Focus Area plan has an opportunity to create a “heart” for the area, providing destinations and public gathering areas for residents and others passing through the area.

O: This “heart” should build on some of the unique physical characteristics of Chapel Hill (University architecture, Franklin St., trees, etc.) and social characteristics (music, students, farmer’s market, local business, public art, college sports)

O: Streets and sidewalks are our public rooms and should be designed (massing, scale, permeability) with an eye to their character.

O: The “heart” should include public space (either indoor or outdoor).

O: This area should be primarily neighborhood oriented and draw local residents and workers.

O: Parking in this area should be limited

**Connections**

1. Recognize that MLK and Estes act as barriers to connectivity in the area.
2. Development opposite Carolina North needs to complement the new campus.
3. Maximize physical connections (roads, sidewalks, bikeways) and modify major roads so they facilitate cross-connections

**Physical Character**

1. The tree canopy is an important part of this area and that character should be maintained.

O: Plant trees as buffers along the streets

O: Keep street medians green and planted

O: Plan for maintaining the tree canopy, replacing older trees as they die out [we didn’t actually finish this one, but this is the direction I remember; correct me if I’ve got it wrong]

1. Heights along the streets should be moderate (pedestrian scale), lower near existing single family neighborhoods, and taller at the interior of a site.

O: The tallest buildings should not tower over or obscure the tree canopy

O: Use trees and open spaces to transition to single family neighborhoods

1. Building fronts along pedestrian ways should be articulated and be inviting to passersby.