

Central West Focus Area

Summary of Comments Received following the April 18 Steering Committee Meeting

April 22, 2013

COMMENTS ON CONCEPTS ONLY

SARAH MCINTEE (SC Member)

Attached are comments in txt file regarding the land use maps.

I know that the land owners are anxious to know what they can do to develop their land, but it would be best if we worked on Estes Drive existing traffic issues before we started considering land uses. I agree with Jim Ward and Julie M. that we shouldn't be entertaining proposals for land use until we get a handle on Estes Drive traffic, school walking, bus, bike, ped, safety solutions. The capacity of the road situation does tell us what kind of development can be tolerated. Land uses of ANYKIND, including Carolina North, will increase the existing auto traffic demand related to cross town transmit insufficiency. We know we don't want to add travel lanes to Estes. We have to figure out to facilitate and augment what we have. How to get folks to stay home and walk more, use bus, etc.. This is not one of those situations where the demand on Estes will go away by doing nothing. Estes is certainly not going to become safer without a comprehensive transportation plan. Council would like input on how to fix these. We need to be creative. We probably need to do some arguing, too.

I believe I have asked for some kind of larger scale map that focuses on the schools includes right of way widths, that includes topographic lines and buildings.

Map 1 current intentions

The Chartwell proposal was the instigating project for the small area Central West effort. Neighbors do not like the idea of a student high rise, nor a hotel, on this corner. This proposal should not go through. There is also too much asphalt, it doesn't relate to the street. I am hoping for the full shade street trees over a slow speed bike and ped greenway with an ample buffer from street.

In my opinion, the neighbors are correct, but for some of the wrong reasons. Extreme building height is not the problem, putting in lots of permanent parking IS the problem. I also think it is a waste of a geographically valuable corner to put just residential, or vehicle storage for students. I question also the economic viability of a hotel so far from the town gateways, where hotels are used more. I would tolerate a hotel, but it is not a walking destination for the neighborhood like a large group of small restaurants might be.

This location is NOT a gateway. The real CH Gateways (intersections of 86 and 40, 54 and 40) should be where transit stations, storage facilities, warehouse stores and park & ride lots should be. Parking, storage and hotels do not belong inside of town unless they are right next to the university to serve university clients.

Student apartments should be located either next to campus, or at the gateways. Estes-MLK is NOT a gateway location. It is near the central part of town.

Whit's land is very appropriate for 2-3 story multi-family townhouses (a slightly more affordable Franklin Grove), med-high density teacher/workforce housing residential and limited mixed use, like offices and art/music studios for lessons.

The Davis' senior housing proposal is a fine use for this location. The concept plan is a bit sprawling and the development would have to have it's own transit system, like Carol Woods does.

The green space around the creek is a good idea, but I would like to see fewer eroded, compacting soil trail use and more boardwalks for access, where the ground is protected from compaction. Urban trails are not rural trails. Trails get high use in this area.

Map 2 Residential Focus

I like the devotion to retail on MLK, which probably could ingress onto Estes a bit, too, to make a genuine urban corner.

It is a mistake to have only residential anywhere on the state roads in Chapel Hill. A walkable community demands more mixed use at higher density. Creative and economic vitality depends on face time for pedestrians gathering places. We are near a university. We need meeting and learning spaces, restaurants, internet cafes, services like grooming salons, laundry, package delivery, etc. Destinations need to be no more than 1/4 mile away. All of our bus corridors also need to be mid-high density residential (2-4 stories spaced closely on the horizontal, for easy pedestrian access). The street level space on any building in the transit corridor is vital and valuable space for economic activity, for daytime and night time meeting activities.

Map 3 Office-Residential (see comment above on Map 2)

I like the green ingress near the power line cut at the end of the green space, but I would rather the "flex-space" or "town square" location be nearer the Somerset intersection.

I like the office or multifamily inside of the Chartwell property as a substitute for a student high rise. I always want a mixture of ages living together, whenever possible. I want communication between generations. We don't have enough of that because we keep segregating ages.

Map 4 Mixed Use (see comments on Map 2)

This is my preferred scenario. I generally prefer mixed use in high density interspersed with ample green space. I do not mind tall buildings. I don't want the parking lots. If there is parking, it should be mostly permeable. The YMCA or library (anyone) get bonus points from me if they put in a large pavilion with a dance floor surrounded by grass for concert goers. Amity church probably isn't going anywhere, but they may sell the front parcel and the back parcels. I think Amity's MLK parcel is also a possible village green space that the town could acquire. If the utility cut can be used for clipped grass recreation, that would be good. The town is short on soccer field space, I understand from Rainbow soccer folks. Soccer might be a use compatible with the power towers.

I also prefer multi-family to dedicated senior housing, though there is nothing that says you can't have senior units with care facilities nearby.

I think it is very important, for the sake of Estes Drive, to have destinations that duplicate the drawing destinations on the East side of Estes Drive. For example, we need a food store, restaurants, salons, laundry, etc. all on West Estes and MLK. WE have a lot of problem coping with the college students racing down Estes. Just yesterday, I pulled out into Estes from Caswell when an old car with young people pulled up behind me, they must have been going 45 mph, honking their horn at me, going 30 mph. It was students who hit my two children, on separate occasions, while they were riding their bikes. The older son had his helmet cracked and his bike trashed. IN both cases, the young drivers gave my sons bogus phone numbers and names. I have no affection for some of the students who use Estes Drive so irresponsibly. This road needs reduced limits, speed tables, lights, cameras, everything to get these kids to behave. Mark and I have been almost hit on several occasions crossing at Caswell--not always students, but some are.

Map 5 Greenspace

We need a street tree ordinance in CH. Shade trees need to be planted and cared for on Estes and MLK. The two most important things for pedestrians beyond having a sidewalk/crosswalks are street trees and reduced traffic speed on the road.

Continuation of the Bolin Creek trail system to behind Caswell would be good, but we have some resistant land owners.

Map 6 Bike and Ped

I like the idea of using the Caswell easement for a bike trail. Of course, all the roads need both a multi-use side path and protected bike lanes. Caswell Rd itself doesn't need a separate sidewalk system. It does need speed tables, but that is another issue.

There needs to be, at least, a protected bikeway that runs behind the schools as well as in front of the schools. In my opinion, we actually need Elliott Rd to extend behind the schools and go to MLK, but like Estes, this new through road would need traffic calming devices to assure a slow, safe speed for traffic.

Map 7 Motor Vehicular strategies

Anywhere rotaries are put in, the 4 legs need speed table crosswalks with button activated walk lights mid block, about 3-4 car lengths away from the circle. It is not safe to cross at a rotary itself.

Rotaries would be good at MLK and Estes, and at Somerset, where U-turns are likely.

I prefer the enhanced grid, with speed tables.

I prefer a new road across from Somerset, a new road mid block that would serve YMCA from the back.

Additional: I prefer a new road extension of Elliott Rd behind schools that goes to MLK. This road would have speed table crosswalks every 1/4 mile or less.

Additional: I prefer a new road, and extension of Surry from Caswell to meet the university's road at MLK. Again, this new road would have speed table crosswalks every 1/4 mile.

Additional: many neighborhood roads (like Kensington) need a narrowing.

Additional: the two travel lanes on Estes between Somerset and Library Drive must be narrow, 9-11 ft wide with sharrow markings. There should be a central turn lane with permeable block interspersed every 1/4 mile or less with a speed table crosswalk ped rest island. This third lane enables traffic to get around buses and parked utility vehicles. There should be walk cross lights at every intersection. There should be timed lights

Additional: the traffic around the schools need new infrastructure to calm and manage better parent pick-up traffic. School paths need enhancements, boardwalks over eroded banks. Safe Routes to School. Possibly rebuilding of schools, maybe reducing to one school, maybe setting elementary school further toward Coker Hills on other side of multi-purpose building and putting an extension of Clayton in front of Estes Hills, then behind Phillips.

JULIE MCCLINTOCK (SC Member)

Here are a couple of general comments on the concept maps presented last Thursday. I agree with the public commenters when they expressed a concern that we need to be sure these concept plans don't get ahead of the development of a strong list of guiding principles and objectives. The latter much be the focus of the April 25 meeting.

In general I like the concept of senior housing which appears in a number of the plans, but Ms Davis' land is very steep and there are many issues dealing with Bolin Creek and proper stormwater management. The footprint needs to be small with much reserved undisturbed land. Please note correct spelling of Bolin creek. All the development plans ignore the present traffic problems. Estes Drive is a parking lot NOW at rush hour and it won't be widened for decades if ever. There is reduced funding available for bus transit. Why would the Town want to create a big problem for commuters and school busses?

New development densities should relate to road capacity and depend on developing a new good internal system of roads. See comments on circulation maps below.

Scheme A Residential Focus

- (undergraduate) student housing is not a use that fits in for this Carolina North focused area; housing for graduate students and their families is the need, as is housing for staff supporting the senior housing proposed by Ms. Davis; these are uses that serve the needs of the Central West focus area
- community focus mixed use is too dense when placed close to school walk zones

Scheme B Office + Residential Focus

- ditto comment on (undergraduate) student housing
- earmark part of #1 for outdoor seating and natural space - perhaps an undulating buffer to neighbors
- retail on corners of busy intersection is completely problematic; there is no practical automobile access without increasing traffic problems
- civic community flex space concept good but in wrong place - needs to be nearer MLK
- dedicated open space is good to be near civic community flex space - but can not be placed under the high voltage power easement

Scheme C Mixed Use Focus

- what happened to Church?
- dedicated public open space is needed, but can not be located under the high voltage power easement
- mixed use on both sides of Estes near the MLK intersection will further worsen this bottleneck intersection

- mixed use should not be located E of Somerset next to the school; only moderate density multi-family can be located between Somerset and the schools

- it is unacceptable to take away the YMCA parking lot and not show a replacement location; the lot is already too small and the Y hopes to expand services which will require an expanded lot as well as space for parking all their activity buses

Open Space and Trails

- like parkway concept on Estes and green urban picture of MLK

Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

- trails/paths cannot be located along high voltage power easements

- we all emphasized off road bike facilities

- there are many more informal ped trails that could be created

- improved intersections need to be earmarked as safe ped crossings

Preliminary Vehicular Circulation Ideas

- Short-term Interventions: "enhanced intersection" means friendly to pedestrians, I hope

- Enhanced Grid: new roads intersecting with MLK and Estes near the MLK/Estes intersection are plain NOT OK nor will they be safe

- Improved Connections: stub out from Shadowwood not acceptable if it joins Estes as illustrated; better to just connect to Somerset as shown

- Enhanced Intersections: like roundabouts, but need additional internal roads to address development density -- if the total proposed density can be supported by Estes road capacity

MICHAEL PARKER (SC Member)

Some overall comments.

- * None of the alternatives seem to lay out a way of relating to Carolina North either physically or esthetically. Is it possible to consider MLK from Airport Dr. to Piney Mt. Rd. as another (albeit different) Franklin St.
- * Although the planning area ends at Shadow Wood, a longer term view of how MLK from there to Piney Mt. Could evolve in a manner consistent with the area to the south would be useful
- * The idea of public/community-focused spaces fronting onto Estes drive may be problematic. Perhaps a “town square” could be built backing up to the retail space on MLK, creating a more complete town square idea
- * The area south of Estes may be appropriate for more naturalistic outdoor recreation

Alternative A

- * The retail strip on MLK is appealing and could be integrated with community spaces to create a town square
- * Designating a large space as student housing may be problematic. Why not designate it as multi-family, which could include student housing (grad students, married students, undergrads)?

Alternative B

- * Probably achieves the best balance of uses/density of the three
- * There would appear to be insufficient retail space accommodated
- * There should be an explicit reduction in density/height as one approaches the existing single family neighborhoods
- * There appears to be too much reliance on Estes for community uses

Alternative C

- * The density may well be too high, particularly near the existing single family areas
- * There appears to be too much reliance on Estes for community uses
- * While the idea of using some the YMCA’s space for public outdoor uses is appealing, it seems to be “shorting” the Y in terms of its needs
- * Similarly, the church seems to be shorted on this alternative. However, working with the church to help meet its facility needs and improving its finances, while better utilizing its land should be explored in all alternatives

Circulation

- * There should probably be more real streets in the currently empty areas north of Estes
- * The idea of a road connecting to Airport Dr. seems very appealing and should be pursued
- * Is it realistic to think about burying the power lines to take better advantage of the easement for some form of either vehicular or other circulation?
- * As the mandate for the group is to look at transportation beyond the planning area, issues such as a northern entry into Carolina North and an Elliott Road entrance to the library warrant study

MICKEY JO SORRELL (SC Member)

First, I have to say that I do not support the short time line for comment on the concept maps. I had a busy weekend with family and am trying to get a few moments to review the maps this morning before leaving the house. They deserve more focused deliberation.

For that reason I am going to focus on the bike/ped map, which is the sub-group that I worked with.

Where are the off road bike/ped facilities we recommended? What do you mean by "new bike/ped facilities" along Estes and MLK? The recommendation needs to be more specific.

I like the idea of north-south greenways, but where did they come from? Can you be more specific about these connections?

I'd like to see more creative solutions to major intersections - especially Estes/MLK. Something serious needs to be proposed here. And soon.

Thank you. I look forward to having more time for comments in the future.

Just found my notes from Thursday night so I'll add in a few more comments:

Carolina North plans have always shown a "C" road that should be included on these maps.

Estes is recognized as a major east-west connector, but there is no bus service that is continuous across this connector. Why? Has this been studied? With what results?

Thanks

ERIC HYMAN (SC Member)

Here are my comments on the three conceptual plans submitted to the CWFA Steering Committee April 18, 2013.

I prefer a combination of elements presented in two of the conceptual models as follows:

1. Office and Residential Focus:

Likes:

- Public Open Space/town square
 - o Excellent community gathering area
- Civic community flex space
 - o Fits the future of work-from-home scenarios and reduced office space requirements—rent space as needed
- Multi-family or work-force housing in the three areas on both sides of North Estes Drive as shown
 - o Provides more affordable housing for working families and adds a younger dynamic that the CWFA needs
- YMCA expansion
 - o It is very important to provide incentives to keep the YMCA in the CWFA
- Senior Housing overlooking and intermixed with the natural greenway (resource conservation district buffer) area as shown. The white and orange striped area could be smaller footprint single housing in the style of patio homes and/or higher density condominiums with proper buffers to adjacent areas.

2. Mixed Use Focus

Likes:

- I very much prefer the mixed use concept that incorporates the highest density (village-type businesses with high-density housing on upper levels, with high quality design as a condition) on the corner property of MLK and North Estes Drive as shown. This would include the mixed use type street as presented in photograph 1. I believe North Estes Drive would be very appealing as a mixed use street with these design elements from the corner of MLK down to Philips. This design could also include new market side streets within the property that complement the village concept.
 - o I prefer the highest density plan for the corner property in order to provide ample local residents to support the local village style design that can be accessed by foot and bicycle for locals and by public transit for patrons living outside of the immediate area.
- The relocation of the church with full expansion of the YMCA outdoor recreation facilities as shown. I also like the mixed use/retail/office space expanding into the church location on the south side of North Estes Drive as shown. I think a local grocery/market somewhere in the mixed use areas is an excellent idea because it can be the focal point as a community gathering place in the CWFA with great outdoor green space.

3. General comments

- The residential focus conceptual plan would not provide the local shopping and gathering place or enough density to offer any other amenities to local residents, and it would not complement Carolina North. Workers/staff in Carolina North will need convenient lunch

places and after work meeting places. These can be provided in the mixed use conceptual plan.

- A viable, reliable (round-trip service into the evening hours) bus transit system would provide easy access to the CWFA mixed use village to increase customer traffic without increasing automobile traffic. Local residents could access on foot or bicycle.
- If it is determined that more student housing is actually needed, it would be more efficient and better for students if they were located closer to main campus. The corner properties of MLK and Estes Drive are some of the best properties for revenue generation in all of Chapel Hill. These are the properties that will be adjacent to Carolina North and will be the northern gateway to our town. Therefore, creating a mixed use community that can complement Carolina North, provide local residents with a meeting and gathering place, and offer a one-stop shop and entertainment area for residents and non-residents alike, is essential to creating the most desirable use of these essential properties.
- It is very important to provide affordable housing and as much work-force housing as needed in the CWFA to ensure that next generations can afford to live in Chapel Hill. Properties along MLK both to the north and the south of the areas identified in the conceptual plans are ideal because of convenient access to bus transit and the future BRT, and because they complement the developments already in place in these areas.
- I like the additional roadways that provide north and south access to MLK from two ends of Somerset Drive that will alleviate traffic on the intersection of MLK and Estes Drive
- I think it is an excellent idea to relocate either Estes Hills or Phillips to the Carolina North campus. This will allow expansion of each school, improve student safety, and it would reduce the daily period of intense traffic congestion along North Estes Drive as parents deliver and pickup students because of the elimination of one of the schools.

FIROZ MISTRY (SC Member)

Below are my comments on the maps presented at the last steering committee meeting.

Like others I feel we should finalize the principles before we get into too much detail about strategic plans.

Here are my comments on the plans presented (see maps on <http://centralwestcitizens.wordpress.com/steering-committee/concept-maps/>)

Map A (residential):

There is sufficient student housing along MLK, so any new housing along Estes should focus on the graduate student population likely to work at Carolina North. Building undergraduate housing here only increases traffic along MLK (car or bus).

Tree buffers along Estes should be shown along Estes in keeping with its current look.

So multi-family low-rise housing should be the goal along Estes. Photo 2 in Map C (mixed use) shows a good concept of how this housing could look like (but with a thicker tree buffer).

A day care well-integrated into the north side of Estes makes sense given that families are living there.

Retail (small grocery, restaurants, drug store) along MLK, north of Estes, makes sense since it could serve the multi-family housing and Carolina North. Photo 2 in Map B (Res+Office) has the right look for such a retail development. See Photo 1 in Map C for another implementation.

MLK , south of Estes, has the church and YMCA which both should be left alone.

Senior housing should be set back (with a thick tree buffer) from Estes. Photos 4 and 5 in Map B show a good implementation.

Map B (Residential + office)

Any offices should be only along MLK and not on Estes. Mixed use with retail at ground level and office/apartments at upper levels may be good use. Photo 2 shows a good implementation of this concept.

Senior housing should be set back (with a thick tree buffer) from Estes. Photos 4 and 5 in Map B show a good implementation.

Town square under easement is undesirable. Relocate to Somerset and Estes?

Map C (Mixed use):

Too much retail/office along Estes. This will overwhelm traffic along Estes.

Limit office/retail to MLK.

Multi-family on both sides of Estes will increase traffic on Estes. Better to put senior housing south of Estes.

Open Space and Trails

Parkway along Estes would be nice (but no retail or office on both sides of Estes, or traffic will be increased).

Pedestrian and Bike Trails

Okay.

Vehicular Circulation

New roads and intersections close to Estes-MLK intersection will make traffic flow slower due to the need for more traffic lights.

Round-about at MLK-Estes is attractive, but will it reduce traffic capacity and make rush hour worse than it is already today?

SONIA MORAN (Non-SC Member)

My name is Sonia Moran and I'm a new resident of Chapel Hill. I just relocated here from San Diego. I have been attending the meetings for a month already. I would like to share some of my thoughts in regards yesterday's meeting.

First of all, I would like to say that I appreciate going into these meetings because it reinforces my educational background. I have a Bach. of Architecture and as much as I love it, my inclination is also Urban Planning. So thank you for I am learning more by attending these meetings. I hope someday to be much involved other than just an observant.

My comments are as followed:

1) Mixed Use Focus:

- People are attracted to people. As we know when it comes to urban development, creating spaces where people can congregate and socialize, it is important to assign mini plazas or town squares in intersections where people transit the most. That would give the opportunity to introduce events such as public art exhibition, kiosks/vendors, etc. I appreciate seeing the conceptual diagram of the mixed use scheme.

- In regards the amount of office spaces suggested in the first level all along Estes Drive, I believe that it needs to be reduce maybe by a 50% of what you have in plan. It would be much pleasant to see more retail spaces for residents to enjoy. For instance, assuming that there is a student housing, students would like to come home and have a close destination for recreational activities; such as practicing yoga, martial arts, rock climbing, gym, book clubs, art stores, coffee shops - local venues.

Proximity to these destinations will eliminate students wasting time in commuting to go somewhere else for these activities. Spending time commuting stresses the student because of the time consuming. Therefore, it can cause them to feel discourage on keeping the balance life they wish to have between school and leisure time.

-Introducing the hybrid rental bike system (regular/motorized) (like in Washington D.C.) can be a good idea to eliminate traffic as long as stations are placed all over town.

- Water elements is important to have in these urban hubs because that can reduce stress and bring people to a better relaxation. Maybe introducing an "Alameda" walkway with rectangular pools of water on the sides; that can serve as buffers and also the perimeter small wall around the pool can serve as sitting benches. That would bring people in close contact to natural element. This pool can activate during the summer and shoot water to some assigned area where kids and dogs can refresh and play. (Something like the water feature at the entry of Balboa Park in San Diego) I think this alameda can transition from north to south crossing Estes Dr. into the green hiking trail.

- I agree with relocating the church somewhere else. I understand that the importance of developing towns and keeping their assets is important to the people, but times are changing, and people need to be educated and have an open mind to welcome improvements and modifications. Not saying that having a church is a bad thing, I just believe that it just doesn't belong there.

2) Office & Residential Focus:

My comment on this schematic diagram is that: the issue with traffic won't be eliminated as it is intended to be. Residents will still use their cars to go somewhere else for their needs.

3) Residential Focus

-By having all the retail spaces at MLK can be problematic because we can't assume that everybody is able to walk. Specially older adults from the senior housing. Seniors like to feel independent and don't like to feel like they need constant help. So that is why I appreciate the Mixed Use Scheme because it is central and the pedestrian circulation is equally distributed.

4) Vehicular Circulation:

Enhanced Grid : Addition of New Streets and Intersections:

- I think that the alternative street to ease the flow of traffic should be along the perimeter of the north, east, and south of the area rather than having cars intersecting the Town Square. The town square, instead, can become the Alameda for pedestrians and bicyclists only. Or if there was to be a street intersecting the town square, then maybe it should be considered to a One Way, assuming there is underground parking, that way cars come in and enter the underground parking lot, and then exist through the back of the block.

Thank you for your time and the hard work.

JANET SMITH (Non-SC Member)

I have reviewed the maps for Central West Focus Area and I have seen Julie McClintock's comments, which I agree with completely and support.

I would like to add that I do not see any mention of providing improved pedestrian and bicycle paths/sidewalks along Estes Drive between MLK and Franklin Street.

This need was identified by every single group at the Saturday Mall exercise.

While adding bike paths through the woods is certainly desirable, that does not take the place of improving walking and biking for those who wish to take the shortest route to their destination and do not want or need to take a scenic ride through the woods.

The residential character of this route lends itself to biking and walking alternatives to cars. I believe that car traffic on Estes today would be reduced if there were safer more pleasant walking and biking alternatives to the existing destinations - library, schools, Post Office, University Mall and Community Center. This will only increase with additional destinations at the MLK end of Estes.

DAN BRUCE (Non-SC Member)

Below are my comments on the maps presented at the last steering committee meeting.

First and foremost, I am distressed that this level of detail has been presented when the ink on the committee principles is barely dry. The objectives for the principles have yet to be discussed and there is already development strategies proposed? There has been relatively little discussion on the possible and impending negative impacts to the existing neighborhoods just adjacent to the area of subject. There are billions of dollars if property value in this area and quite frankly as a homeowner just down from the MLK Estes intersection I am very worried about the effects this push to develop such inappropriate high density will have on my property value as well as my neighbors.

With that said:

Map A:

~An undergraduate apartment complex just across the street from a post-graduate campus? Just doesn't make good sense from a transportation point of view to say the least.

~High density multi-family on both sides of Summerset will negatively impactn traffic on Estes Drive, especially near the two schools.

Map B

~Again..the high density development surrounding Summerset will negatively impact traffic on Estes Dr and the walking zones around schools

~Senior housing is certainly a workable concept should it be correctly engineered to not impact greatly on the RCD areas

~Not sure that public open space or town square would be allowed or a good idea under power easement.

Map C

~And the density increases.

~Transportation gridlock is created at Estes Dr.

~Now we're removing churches from the neighborhood.

~Again the dedicated public space is in the power easement.

~YMCA has plans to increase in size not downsize.

Open Space and Trails

~I like the parkway concept on Estes.

~With the amount of high density construction proposed around Estes and Summerset, Estes would be more like a parking lot rather than a parkway.

Pedestrian and Bike Trails

~Cannot locate trails under power easements

~Dangerous crossing for greenway trail at Estes.

Vehicular Circulation

Short Term Interventions

~Intersection enhancements; signal lights? Surely to create bottleneck on Estes

Enhanced Grid: Addition of New Streets

~So close to MLK intersection probably not approved by NCDOT

Improved Connection to Existing Communities

~Addition of intersection close to MLK intersection problematic most likely not approved by NCDOT

~Shadowwood and other developments dumping into Estes so near MLK will be a nightmare

Enhanced Intersections

~large 2-lane roundabout good idea at MLK Estes.

DEBBIE JEPSON (Non-SC Member)

Thank you for considering my comments on the principles and concepts for Central West.

1. The focus seems to have honed in on the corner of Estes and MLK away from considering the whole of the Central West area, is this intentional?
2. There is no indication of how the divergent views of the steering committee will be addressed to finalize the principles.
3. It appears that there is a rush to comply with the TofCH timeline, and as a consequence, discussion around the principles is being prematurely curtailed so that consultant's concepts can be considered. This seems inconsistent with the due process? I understood that you first needed to agree principles, then derive objectives from which concepts can be developed. (Who is Steering Who?).

As to concepts – prematurely drawn up – my comments are that densities of development should reflect the principles and that they should be sustainable in terms of market research into demand for the new commerce, or housing or whatever that is planned. I also comment that any green spaces should be generous with extra land around the minimum requirements set out by the NC regulations for this area. I welcome the concept of greenways linking areas to Bolin Creek, etc, creating an attractive walking area away from MLK. I think these should be built into developers plans.

I realized after I sent you my e-mail that I had not included intended comments on the concept plans. Particularly those relating to vehicular circulation ideas. The lower two maps presented indicate linking up the roads N of Estes to Huntingdon and Somerset. This will not increase traffic flow as there is not through road outflow from these roads (except onto Estes) and the single family residential area behind is a safe walk to school area actively in use that has already been the subject of considerable traffic calming interventions with the TofCH due to the steep nature and blind corners of the neighboring roads that are accessed by pedestrians.

I also note that the greenways marked are within power easements and that Duke currently prohibits their use for walking. I am presuming that your plans had made allowances for this by adding large margins alongside the existing easements to act as the new greenways. Likewise, any trails alongside creeks should be of a permeable nature –cinder ash – and attractively spaced to ensure they don't encroach the riparian buffer of 100 feet from banks (50 ft from either side).

SCOTT RADWAY(Non-SC Member)

Please see the attached PDF drawing of the "Chartwell" development application for the corner of MLK and Estes Drive. This image shows the design as proposed. The design used in the Central West materials provided by the town to your consultant is inaccurate and has been for over a year. The one shown in the CW materials was one of the two concept plans presented to the CDC and Council, not the design submitted for formal review in August 2012. Please have the materials shown on the town's web site and included in the CW materials revised to reflect the actual design.

The town's consultant has been told about this error. - Please forward this correct image to them so that they may accurately refer to the plans as submitted.

I do find it somewhat disconcerting that the information provided to them was not the most current and that it appears to have presented the hotel as only a hotel, rather than as a hotel on floors 2-5 with floor 1 of the building containing retail, restaurant, and other ground level commercial activity space as well as the hotel's public spaces. Likewise it is reasonable to have provided them with sufficient information about the corner of Estes and MLK to show that what the applicant and council heard during the concept review process was a desire for that corner to contain a "place" with public access, public art and substantial treed character. It seems that none of this public input gathered from concept plan meetings was communicated to the consultant.

Ultimately some entirely different design might evolve, but the current level of community input and the values presented by residents of the area as well as those living outside this area stated a strong preference for a "place" at the corner and building(s) facing MLK that were in scale with the UNC Carolina North Buildings.

••••• Prior to much additional work being done on schemes and concepts, it would be a good idea to get sufficient input from OWASA to determine how the properties in this area can have access to sanitary sewer. At the present time no sewer service is available and must be extended thru the lands owned by Lucy Carol Davis. This should be shown as a public infrastructure constraint to be remedied.