

Chapel Hill Central West Focus Area

Key Findings from Homework Assignment: Summary of use, density, height and considerations responses For Steering Committee Meeting on July 1, 2013

AREA A:

Uses

- All responses suggest mixed-use (retail, office, and residential).
- Convenience retail noted by almost everyone.
- Five respondents suggested a public plaza and/or open gathering space.
- Four noted the need for structured parking over time.
- Three described the area as a village/new downtown.

Densities

- High (5 responses)
- Moderate to high (2 responses)
- Medium (1 response)
- Two respondents suggesting high density also recommended transitions to lower densities to the east to integrate with existing neighborhoods.
- Some respondents did not note “high/medium/low” but suggested:
 - Scaling commercial development to serve neighborhood needs, adding development and increasing density to serve Carolina North over time (transitioning from surface to structured parking as part of this)
 - Ensuring that density can be supported by through traffic studies
 - High quality with retail on ground floor and office/residential above

Height

- 1-3 stories (1 response)
- 2-3 stories (2 responses)
- 3 stories (1 response)
- 3-4 stories (4 responses)
- 4-6 stories (1 response)
- 5 stories (1 response)
- 6 stories (1 response)
- Many respondents noted transitioning to lower heights on Estes compared with those on MLK.
- Two of the 3-4 story respondents (above) specifically suggested 3-4 for MLK, increasing to 5-6 stories in the interior of the development.

Considerations

Walkability:

- This area should provide walkable retail for neighbors, multifamily housing, and eventually living and commercial space to serve CN residents.
- Roads across slopes, narrower roads, entrance/exits, set-back, form code for buildings, width of sidewalk, bike lane provisions, green way connections using utility right of ways, road crossing facilities.

Parking:

- On transit corridor, so resident parking should be limited. Will need to provide retail with enough parking to succeed, but walking traffic from CN may decrease this need.
- Hold to the fewest acceptable parking spaces and hide from street, green space and bike/ped areas. Emphasize transit access and alternative transportation methods.
- No parking lots, only parking ribbons alongside roads made with permeable block or parking structures,

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- Traffic circulation to mostly avoid Estes
- Need to provide road options to help keep new traffic off Estes
- See Easton and Owen PP on "Supporting Walkable Neighborhood Business Districts." Aim at serving those already there so they don't have to drive and not aim to attract more people to drive there. Traffic Study required.
- I like the two traffic circles, green way connector street and the right in right out connector to MLK. Bicycle connections to other greenway trails would be ideal.
- How much road/street is necessary (and supportable) given other uses/densities on land? How much density in whole area is required to make retail and parking viable and how much retail would that be?
- Connection to Shadowood, greenway connection

Parks and Green Streets:

- Like the Green Street idea from RH 6.11 plans
- Left 1/3: Tree lined plaza/park with benches, retail opens onto plaza; Right 2/3: Wide tree buffer along Estes
- Parkland or open green space location as well as bike/ped pathways. Protect waterways.
- Buffers to single family + open spaces for gathering

Land Uses:

- Some kind of small grocery would eventually be welcome

Coordination of Development Process:

- Could A, B&C be developed in concert and be addressed through the Development Agreement process?

AREA B:

Uses

- Eight respondents recommended residential. Of these:
 - Seven recommended multi-family housing (one specifically senior housing, two specifically workforce housing)
 - One recommended small single family housing
- Four respondents recommended mixed-use (residential and retail or community use; one noted office and retail)
- Three noted public green space/greenway

Densities

- Low to medium (2 responses)
- Medium/moderate (5 responses)
- Medium to high (2 responses)
- Some respondents noted:
 - Enough density to make public amenities feasible
 - Density that can be supported by traffic study
 - Create a desirable street frontage/feel on Somerset
 - Transition densities toward the established residential neighborhoods

Height

- 2 stories (1 response)
- 2-3 stories (3 responses)
- 3 stories (4 responses)
- 2-4 stories (1 response)
- 3-4 stories (2 responses)

Considerations

Walkability:

- Roads across slopes, narrower roads, entrance/exits, set-back, form code for buildings, width of sidewalk, bike lane provisions, green way connections using utility right of ways, road crossing facilities.

Parking:

- no parking lots, only nose in parking ribbons alongside roads made with permeable block or parking structures

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- Need to provide road options to help keep new traffic off Estes

- Traffic study and bike/ped connectivity with existing neighbors and Carolina North
- Protecting neighborhoods, access (traffic load and control), waterways, aesthetics.
- Keep through traffic one way only around the new neighborhoods, not through them per citizens map

Buffers/Setbacks:

- Setbacks on Estes should start to transition to those of existing residential
- Wide tree buffer along Estes
- Buffers from SF exist neighbors; relate to scale of Somerset/Estes

Parks and Green Streets:

- Like the Green Street idea from RH 6.11 plans

Land Uses:

- Retail, office space along North Estes with incorporated “Flex” space, and consider rent-a-spaces for companies to use to gather teams on a temporary basis—many companies have work-from-home and need temporary spaces to meet.
- How much road/street/green space can developer be expected to contribute given scale (B&C should be considered together in answering these questions)

AREA C:

Uses

- Single family detached (3 responses)
- Multi-family transitioning to single family toward existing neighborhoods (2 responses)
- Multi-family or single family attached (4 responses)
- Serve a new generation geared to denser living (1 response)
- Residential (unspecified) (1 response)
- Office (1 response)
- Other use notes:
 - One note to recommend workforce housing
 - Three notes about provision of green spaces and buffer areas

Densities

- Low (3 responses)
- Moderate/medium (6 responses)
- Several notations about being the final density transition to blend into existing neighborhoods.

Height

- 1-2 stories (1 response)
- 2 stories (3 responses)
- 2-3 stories (3 responses)
- 3 stories (2 responses)
- 3-4 stories (1 response)

Considerations

Walkability:

- Consider paths to adjacent school
- Greenway, connection to schools
- Roads across slopes, narrower roads, entrance/exits, set-back, form code for buildings, width of sidewalk, bike lane provisions, green way connections using utility right of ways, road crossing facilities.

Parking:

- No parking lots, only nose in parking ribbons alongside roads made with permeable block or parking structures.

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- Need to provide road options to help keep new traffic off Estes
- Access to both B and C through traffic light on Estes and existing Somerset entrance
- Protecting Estes from increased traffic load. Appropriate access controls (circles, RI/RO, etc.)

Buffers/Setbacks:

- Setbacks on Estes should mimic those of existing residential
- Wide tree buffer along Estes
- Buff Buffers from single family existing neighbors; relate to scale of Exist.

Parks and Green Streets:

- Like the Green Street idea from RH 6.11 plans

Land Uses:

- Could have fun designing houses that relate to the modernist aesthetic found in older neighborhoods to the north
- Maintain character and transition to schools and neighborhood
- See comment on other areas. How should this area best relate to existing neighborhoods and schools? What should nature of Somerset be?

AREA D:

Over half of the respondents noted that this is the church property and the SC should wait to decide what should happen on that site. Five respondents left this area blank. Others noted ideas, but stated that these depend on church decision making about whether they would stay in that location.

Uses

- All those who made recommendations for change (seven respondents), suggested mixed-use (residential, retail, office).
- Some suggested mixed-use at the corner, transitioning to multifamily toward the east along Estes.
- Two noted that it is possible to keep church on this property and have new development that is compatible.

Densities

- High (5 responses)
 - Highest densities at MLK, transitioning to moderate densities to the east along Estes Drive (2 responses)
 - Densities and heights should be similar to those in Area A at the northeast corner of the MLK/Estes intersection (2 respondents)
- Moderately high (2 response)
- Leave unchanged (2 responses)
- Others made no recommendation

Height

- 2-3 stories (1 response) 1
- 3-4 stories (4 responses)
- 5 stories (1 response)1
- 6 stories, transitioning to 3 toward Estes (1 response)
- Note: One of the 3-4 story respondents suggested 3 stories at the street and 4 internal to the development.

Considerations

Walkability:

- Bike/ped safety
- Roads across slopes, narrower roads, structures, entrance/exits, set-back, form code for buildings, width of sidewalks, bike lane provisions, green way connections using utility right of ways, road crossing facilities.

Parking:

- On transit corridor, so resident parking should be limited.
- Parking ribbons alongside roads made with permeable block or parking permeable parking lot (gravel or asphalt with drains directed to rain-water catch gardens)

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- Site access should be primarily from MLK
- Need to provide road options to help keep new traffic off Estes
- For both D&F, what kind of circulation improvements are required to make space usable, yet fit within site economics?
- Traffic circulation to mostly avoid Estes

Buffers/Setbacks:

- Buffers to single family

Parks and Green Streets:

- Open spaces for gathering

Land Uses:

- Status of church plans
- Need to figure out how to transition between mixed use and more residential character.
- What is the future of the church building?
- Any availability here does not mean full scale development. Until further notice I cannot imagine that we should spend any time or energy on this parcel.
- Can/should D&F be developed together in some way

AREA E:

Uses

- All respondents suggested residential.
- Seven respondents noted senior housing as an option.
- One respondent specifically called for single family.
- Three respondents specifically suggested multi-family.
- One respondent noted the need to transition to single family to the east in order to match adjacent existing development.
- Two respondents noted the need to match the use pattern on the north side of Estes (Areas B&C).
- Two respondents suggested workforce housing in part of the area.

Densities

- Low to medium (1 response)
- Medium (5 responses)
- Medium to high (2 responses)
- High (1 response)
- One respondent noted that densities should be based on traffic study of the entire area
- Two respondents noted that densities should reflect those in Areas B & C and adjacent properties.

Height

- 1-3 stories (1 response)
- 2 stories (2 responses)
- 2-3 stories (2 responses)
- 3 stories (1 response)
- 2-4 stories (1 response)
- 3-4 stories (2 responses)

Considerations

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- Need to provide road options to help keep new traffic off Estes
- Concerns about increasing traffic on Estes and/or requiring a compromise of RCD behind.
- Somerset Intersection design

Buffers/Setbacks:

- Setbacks on Estes should start to transition to those of existing residential to the east

- Observe stream buffer bisecting this property; respect the special nature of the interior portion that could be left alone if tall buildings allowed on edges
- Wide tree buffer along Estes
- Buffers from single family existing neighbors

Land Uses:

- Maintain character and transition to neighborhood
- Relate to scale of B/C
- I like the mix of higher density units and the cottage or patio style homes
- Senior housing versus apartments
- Can this be developed as a single area or will ownership preclude a unified approach?

AREA F:

Uses

- No new development information from five respondents for various reasons:
 - Two respondents wish to leave the site unchanged.
 - One respondent stated “no comment” because it is the YMCA.
 - Two provided no information/left blank.
- Two respondents suggested a continuation of civic/community use (including the YMCA).
- Four respondents suggested mixed-use (three noting that the YMCA could remain on the site with the addition of new uses too). Mixed-use could be retail, residential, institutional.

Densities

- Highest (1 response)
- Medium high (1 response)
- No adjacent single family, so density less of an issue (1 response)
- Future traffic impact should guide densities (2 responses)

Height

- 3 stories, possibly increase to 4-5 at the interior of the site (1 response)
- 3-5 stories (1 response)
- 4-5 stories (1 response)
- 6 stories at MLK, transitioning to 3 away from MLK (1 response)
- Sensitive to adjacencies (1 response)

Considerations

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- Try to get traffic to go to MLK, not Estes
- Traffic circulation to mostly avoid Estes

Buffers/Setbacks:

- Buffers to single family

Parks and Green Streets:

- Open space for gathering

Land Uses:

- What does the Y wish to do with this property – redevelop largely for its own uses or figure out a way for it to generate financial resources for the Y? If significant redevelopment is desired how does it link and relate to D&G?
- Patience with institutional planning.

AREA G:

Uses

- Multifamily (3 responses)
- Mixed use (7 responses)—mostly office and residential, some suggestions for retail closer to MLK.
- Environmentally sensitive area- make a park (1 response)

Densities

- High (3 responses)
- Medium (3 responses)
- Based on traffic impacts study
- No development- make a park (1 response)
- Consistent with adjacent properties

Height

- 2-3 stories, maybe higher if sensitive to adjacent uses (1 response)
- 3 stories (1 response)
- 2-4 stories (1 response)
- 3-4 stories (2 responses)
- 4 stories (1 response)
- 6 stories (1 response)
- 3-8 stories, stepped higher with setback away from MLK (1 response)
- Compatibility with adjacent areas, especially on MLK. Transitioning to higher densities toward Area H.

Considerations

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- Is a bridge across the RCD feasible so that a road can go through here?
- As much traffic as possible from this area should be sent to MLK, not Estes. Determine feasibility of bridge across RCD to access light at Airport Drive.
- Access.
- Convenient to transit.

Buffers/Setbacks/Environmental Concerns:

- Sensitive to the environmental issues.
- Limited foot print that respects RCD which takes up half of property.
- How much of this is truly buildable? Protecting steep slopes and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Protect town required stream buffers

Land Uses:

- This parcel seems appropriate for mixed use office and residential moderately high density 30-50 units per acre 5-8 story apartments as (unlike Chartwell site) there aren't any residents around to be bothered by height here and it is set down the hill a bit.
- Senior housing versus apartments.
- Does it relate more to F or to H?

AREA H:

Uses

- Residential- no specific type noted (2 responses)
- Multifamily (4 responses)—all of these respondents noted that the multifamily could potentially be senior housing
- Senior housing (3 responses)
- Park- No development due to environmental sensitivities (3 responses)

Densities

- Low (1 respondents)
- Low to medium (1 respondent)
- Medium (1 respondent)
- High (3 respondents)
- No development- make a park (3 responses)

Height

- 1 story (1 response)
- 2-3 stories (1 response)
- 3 stories (1 response)
- 3-5 stories (1 response)
- 6 stories (1 response)
- 6-8 stories (1 response)
- 6-10 stories (1 response)
- Four of the above respondents noted that clustered and taller buildings will allow for smaller footprints and more conservation area.

Considerations

Parking:

- Build structure parking or permeable block parking across slope with catch rain gardens or cistern collection for landscape use. Permeable block on all non- handicapped spaces. Parking should be limited and rented separately to encourage carpooling and going car-less.

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- As much traffic as possible from this area should be sent to MLK, not Estes. Determine feasibility of bridge across RCD to access light at Airport Drive.
- Circulation/roads. Which parts are environmentally sensitive and how to address?
- Access.
- How will greenways be built in this sensitive area?
- Traffic circulation to avoid Estes
- Convenient to transit.

Buffers/Setbacks/Environmental Concerns:

- RCD limits development here. Concerns about protection of ecologically valuable areas
- Protect RCD and steep slopes.
- Limited development potential for this land.
- Protect town required stream buffers.

Parks and Green Streets:

- This local area would be optimal for planting very large, long living specimen nut trees like American Beech and American chestnut to match the scale of the buildings.

Land Uses:

- Sensitivity to adjacent neighborhoods.
- This parcel seems appropriate for residential very high density set back quite a bit from road (senior housing seems okay). 30-50 units per acre (the buildable area is not very big) 6-10 story

apartments (up to tree line) as (unlike Chartwell site) there aren't any residents around to be bothered by height here.

- 1 story cottages are not a good idea since the construction footprint in this sensitive area would be too big. Senior housing in taller apartment buildings would be able to support a couple of independent vans to supplement EZ rider service. The elevators become more economical when several floors.
- Senior housing versus a park

AREA I:

Uses

- Commercial (1 response)
- Offices (4 responses)
- Mixed use (6 responses)
 - Most of the mixed use response emphasized office and noted that retail/food would be a nice addition if the economics support it.
 - One response noted apartments in the back of the site

Densities

- Moderate/medium (2 responses)
- Medium to high (3 responses)
- High (3 responses)

Height

- 2-3 stories (2 responses)
- 3-4 stories (1 response)
- 3-5 stories (2 responses)
- 3-6 stories, 1 in front and 6 in back (1 response)
- 4 stories max (1 response)
- 5-6 stories (1 response)

Considerations

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- Keep existing road structure.
- Can circulation be improved? Can it relate to or be connected with Carolina North?

Buffers/Setbacks:

- Maintain buffers

Street Design:

- What is our vision for the MLK streetscape? Will it be continuous or fragmented? Where are the green spaces? Are we happy with what is there now?
- Service road, boulevard median with large trees.
- Like north of Estes Dr, MLK in this section needs the boulevard median planted with large street trees, like beeches. Eventually, as development increases density, the treed median defining a new downtown-like area would extend from Homestead to just short of Mount Bolus.

Land Uses:

- As time passes and CN develops, this area should redevelop from its suburban office park feel
- Mt Bolus residents want same footprint
- Intensive mixed use, office, retail and residential, all these MLK buildings should be not more than 3 stories at 4'-16' from a 12' sidewalk, but stepped up to 4 stories about 40' from street, up to 10 stories >/= 200' from street.

AREA J:

Uses

- Single family (4 responses)
- Single family or townhouse/quads (3 responses)
- Townhouses or quads (1 response)
- Multifamily apartments (1 response)
- Office (1 response)
- Senior housing (1 response)
- Note on several of the responses to protect the environmental features, steep slopes, etc.

Density

- Low (3 responses)
- Low to medium (2 responses)
- Medium (2 responses)
- High (1 response)

Height

- 1-3 stories (1 response)
- 2 stories (3 responses)
- 2-3 stories (2 responses)
- 3 stories (1 response)
- 2-4 stories (1 response)
- 6-12 stories (1 response)

Considerations

Parking:

- Very limited parking, permeable, rented separately.

Traffic Management/Circulation:

- As much traffic as possible from this area should be sent to MLK, not Estes. Determine feasibility of bridge across RCD to access light at Airport Drive.

Buffers/Setbacks/Environmental Concerns:

- RCD protection important in this area
- Severe RCD constraints on eastern third
- Environmentally sensitive area
- Stream buffers
- Protecting the creek

Land Uses:

- Steep slopes will limit development. RCD isolates this area from the undeveloped land to the east; as a result, this property should relate toward properties along MLK, not to area H.
- Maintain and transition to neighborhood
- How much of land is actually buildable? If area could link well to H & G, consider for senior housing.
- Current prized homes in CH would indicate that high ticket single family homes would be valued here.
- Since parcel J interfaces with an existing single family neighborhood, but visually, it is on the other side of the local hill, building height should not exceed the hill top tree canopy. There seems to be room for only one building with a small footprint. It could easily be high density residential in back here, somewhat like parcel H. This parcel is on the other side of a creek/ravine to H, so they can see each other. This building should take a small footprint in this sensitive slope landscape, could be 5-10 stories with 6 apartments per floor, like parcel H. Sharing perhaps of a recreational trail system, maybe sharing with H construction of road and greenway bridges

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS (NOT SPECIFIC TO AN AREA):

- The revised Citizens Concept Plan is a good reference for some of my comments, but this is not meant to adopt that concept plan as proposed, with the idea that no more than what can be supported by a thorough Traffic Study should be allowed to develop.
- All information given in this table is predicated on the fundamental redesign of Estes Drive and MLK that promotes pedestrian and bicycle travel and safety. This assumes a change in Estes Drive from at least Seawell Drive to Franklin St and MLK within the impact area. Design changes to include at least, reduced auto speed with improved flow, continuous sidewalks on both sides of roadways.
- All development dependent upon ability of Estes to carry increased traffic; new independent traffic impact study for current traffic patterns and future projected patterns.
- Town/state willing to make investments to improve Estes from Greensboro St to Franklin St. If not, developers to pay for improvements.
- Development linked to development at Carolina North and not before, and also in coordination with Carolina North.
- Close the intersection Estes & MLK intersection and add roundabout north with entrance into properties.
- Allow for grid that accesses MLK rather than Estes.
- Retail and office north of Estes from MLK to Somerset. Office east of Somerset—less weekend traffic.