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# **Central West Focus Area Steering Committee**

## **Report to the Town Council**

October 21, 2013

# The Steering Committee's Task

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## Charge

- To develop a small area plan for the area east of the Estes/MLK intersection and plan transportation improvements for the broader Estes and MLK corridors

## Key Planning Issues

- Largest remaining tracts of undeveloped land in central Chapel Hill, including almost 30 acres north of Estes near MLK
- A congested road network at morning and evening peak times
- Unfriendly and potentially unsafe for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Melding existing neighborhoods with new development

## Drivers of Change

- Evolving Carolina North
- Possibility of MLK expanding to a BRT corridor
- Continuing development pressures

# Committee Organization and Decision-Making

- **17 member committee appointed by Council**
  - 8 residents of the surrounding area
  - 9 other representatives, including Advisory Board members, land and business owners
  
- **Committee determined its own decision-making process**
  - Consensus was the goal
  - 2/3 supermajority if no consensus
  
- **Consensus decisions (unanimous)**
  - Principles and objectives
  - Bike, pedestrian, and greenway plan
  - Stormwater recommendations
  - Improvements to Estes Road profile, including off-road trail
  
- **Supermajority decisions (2/3 majority or greater)**
  - Land uses
  - Heights and density
  - Draft plan document
  - Maximum Estes width of 5 lanes at the MLK intersection

# Extensive Outreach Yielded Significant Community Input

## Four Community Events

- March 2 Workshop: University Mall – 65 attendees
- April 25 Drop-in Event: Public Library – 75 attendees
- May 18 Workshop: Public Library – 80 attendees
- September 10 Community Meeting: Amity Church – 200 attendees



## Additional Avenues for Community Input

- Area walking tours, March 1 and August 25
- CW questionnaire, March 8, 300 responses
- Consultant meetings with landowners, March 27
- Planning concept display and survey at University Mall farmers market, May 18
- Public comment period at the beginning and end of steering committee meetings
- Outreach sessions to students and others
- Online survey with 475+ responses, September
- All materials posted on CW web page; CW blog on Design 2020 website

# Vision for Central West

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**The Central West Focus Area is a vibrant, diverse, and safe community that embraces Carolina North and the surrounding neighborhoods and provides a visible gateway to central and downtown Chapel Hill.**

**The development of the area enhances the quality of life for the Town of Chapel Hill and those who reside in the surrounding neighborhoods.**

**The Central West area responds to the needs of the Town, the neighborhoods, and the evolving Carolina North campus ...**

# CW Planning Principles Embody Six Key Themes

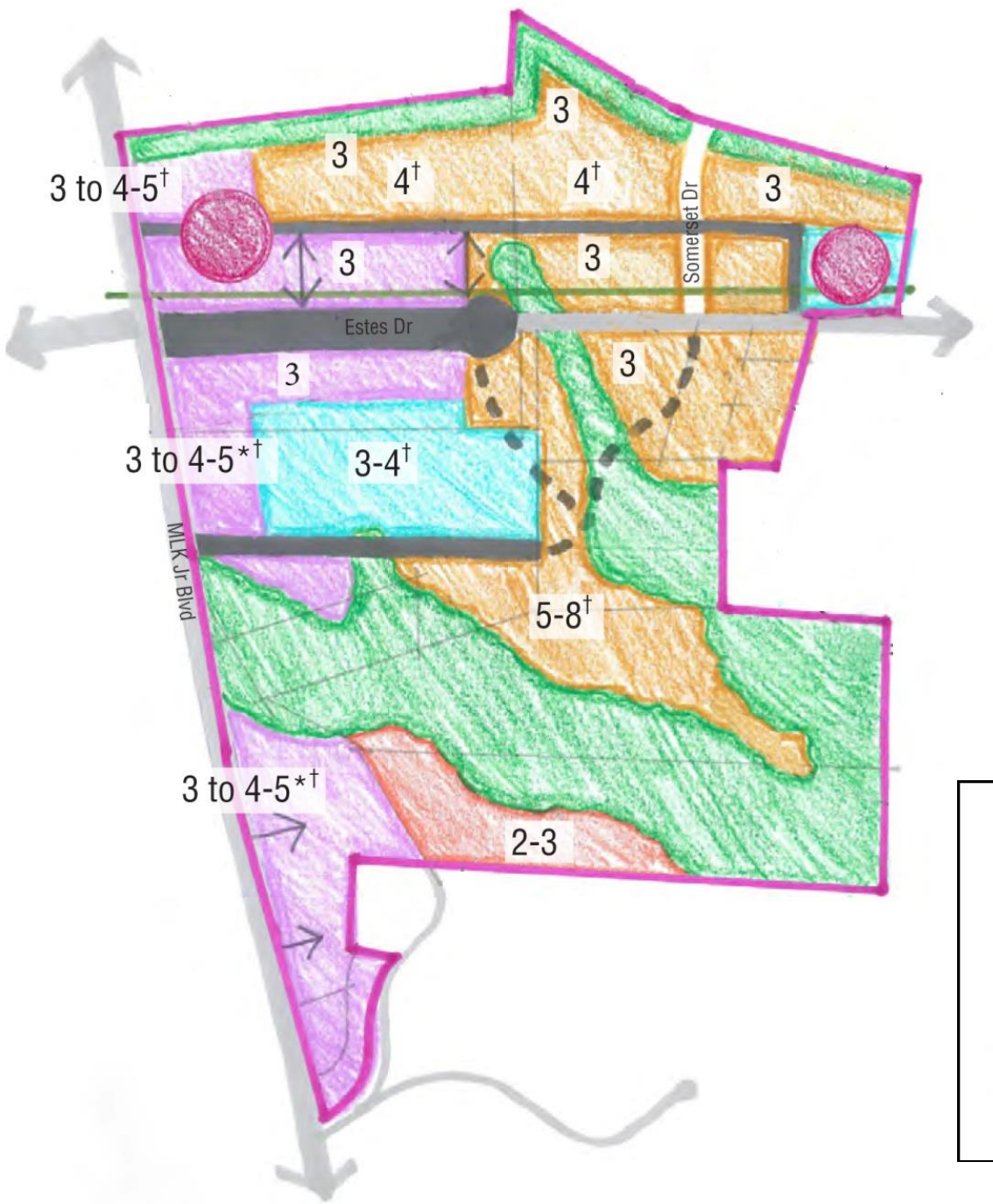
- **Respect existing neighborhoods;** scale down height near single-family areas, make sure adjacent uses are compatible and/or are sufficiently buffered
- **Improve pedestrian and bicycle** safety, circulation, and connectivity
- **Create walkable destinations,** including neighborhood public spaces -- “**town square**” -- and retail to help reduce car use, foster biking and walking, and improve social connections
- Recognize concerns about **traffic flow and safety on Estes;** plan to mitigate adverse impacts on traffic from new development
- **Foster diversity** of uses and users
- Maintain the **green, tree-filled character** of the area

# Planning Area Context





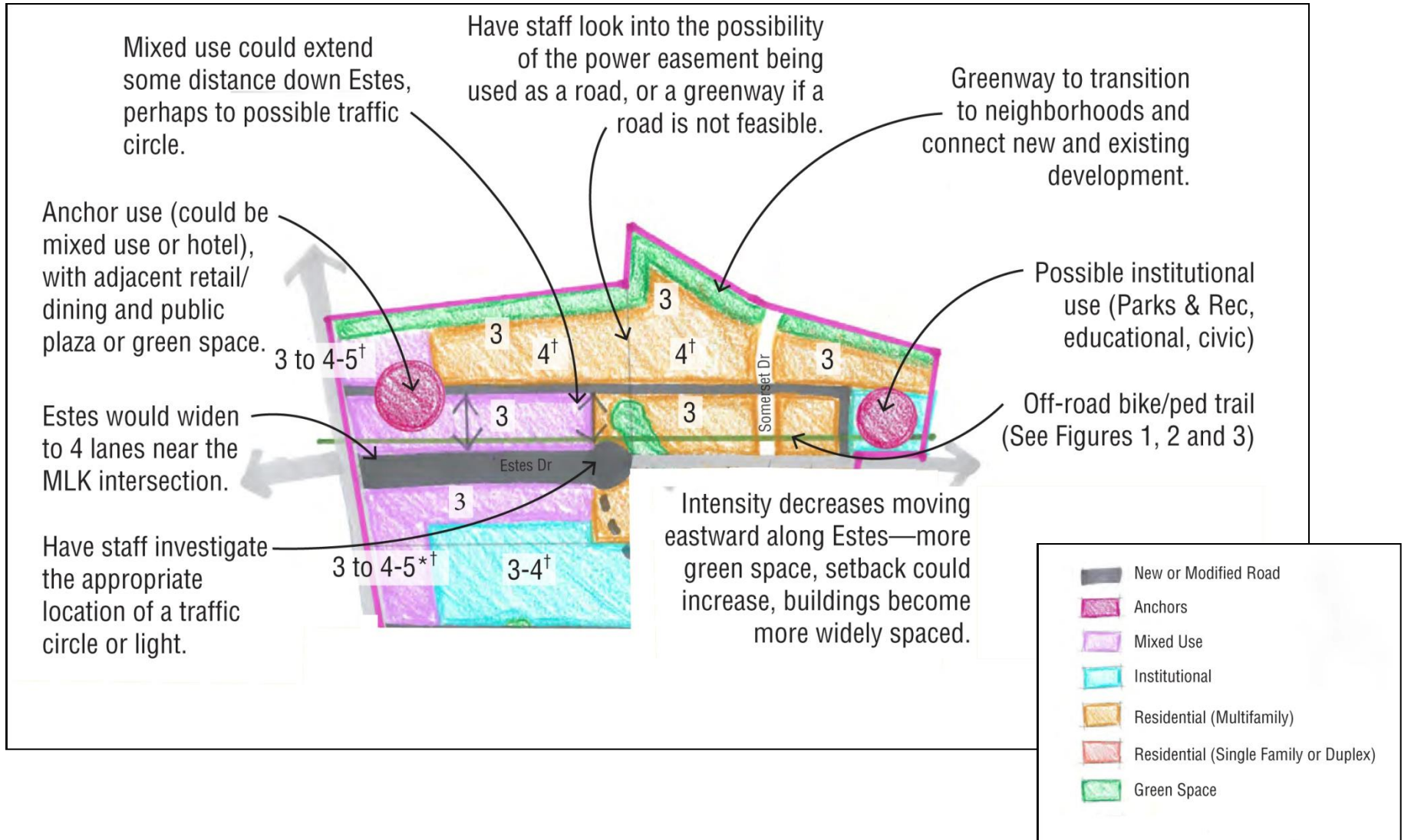
# Use and Heights



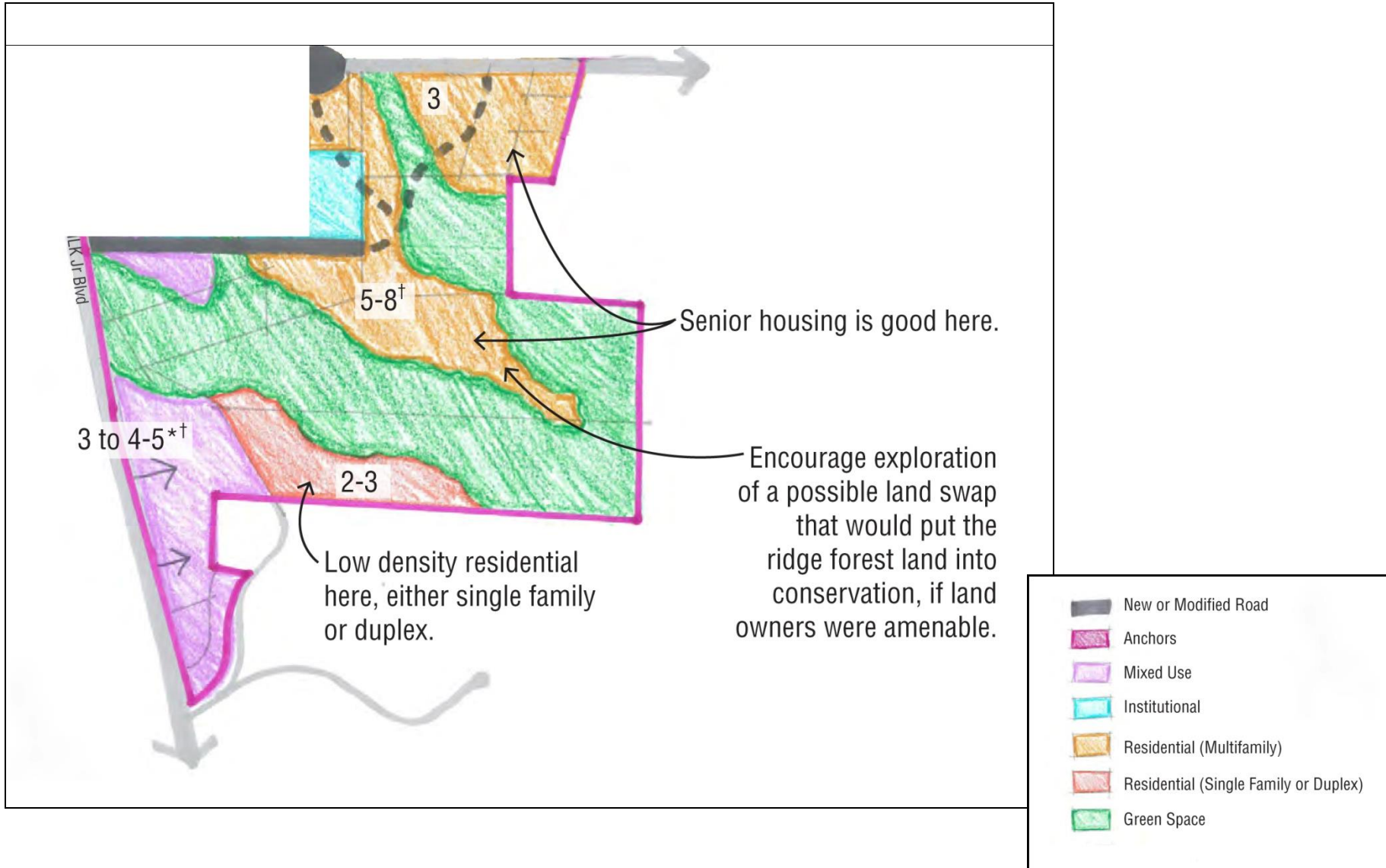
-  New or Modified Road
-  Anchors
-  Mixed Use
-  Institutional
-  Residential (Multifamily)
-  Residential (Single Family or Duplex)



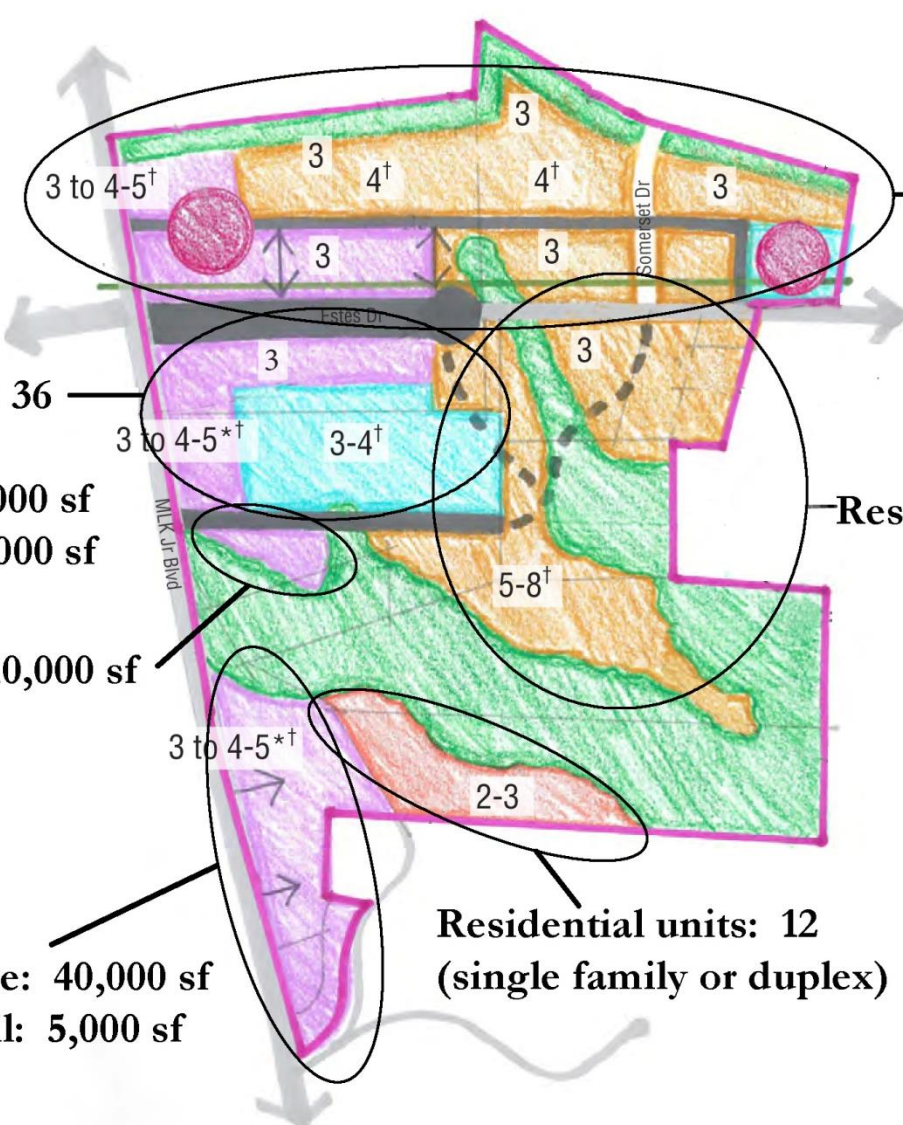
# Detail of Northern Part of Planning Area



# Detail of Southern Part of Planning Area



# Proposed Square Footage



Residential units: 325  
 Office: 40,000 sf  
 Retail: 20,000 sf  
 Commercial: 20,000 sf  
 Hotel: 65,000 sf  
 Institutional: 20,000 sf

Residential units: 36  
 Office: 10,000 sf  
 Commercial: 10,000 sf  
 Institutional: 30,000 sf

Residential units: 247

Office: 10,000 sf

Office: 40,000 sf  
 Retail: 5,000 sf

Residential units: 12  
 (single family or duplex)

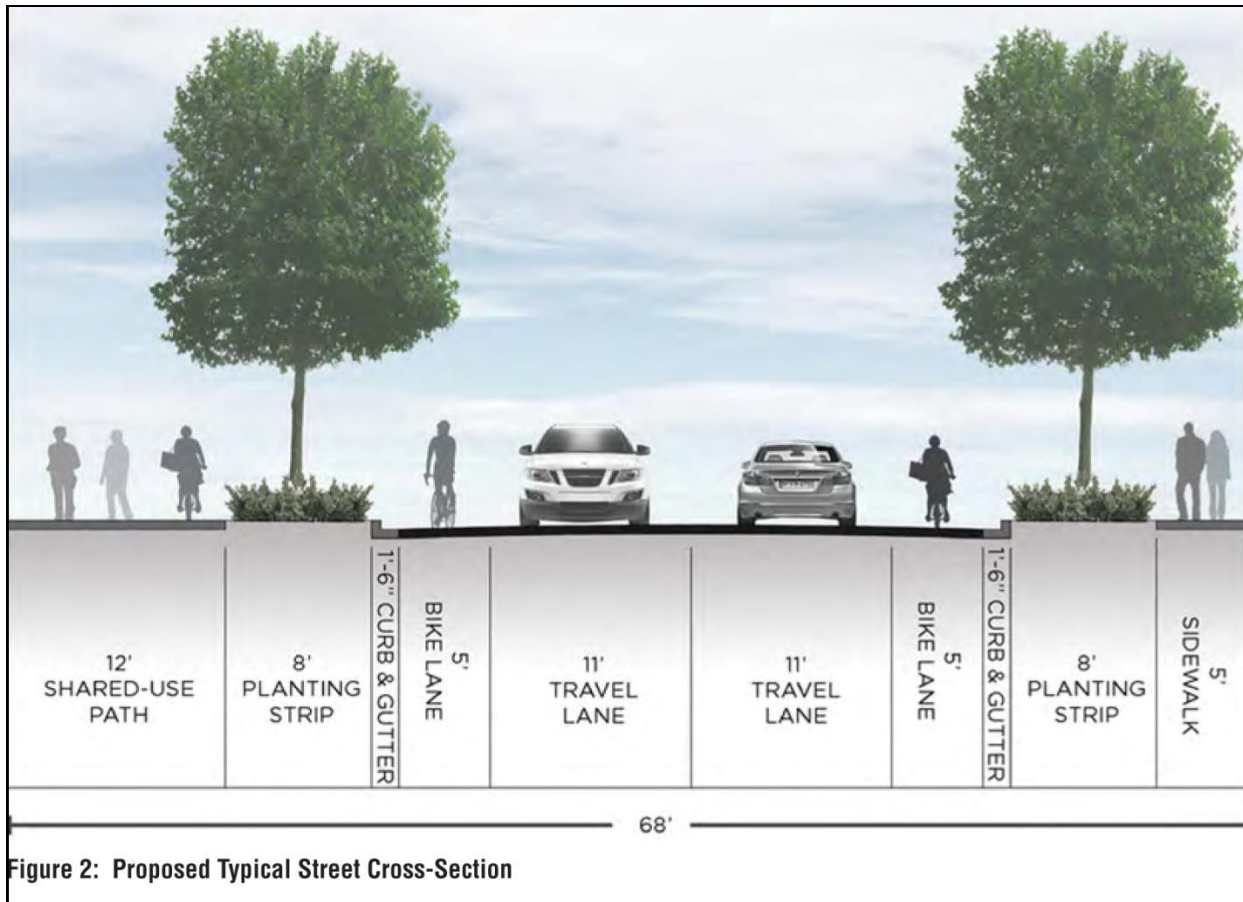
## Planning Area Totals

Use	Total
Residential	620 units
Office	100,000 sf
Retail	25,000 sf
Commercial	30,000 sf
Hotel	65,000 sf
Institutional	50,000 sf



# Proposed Estes Drive Improvements

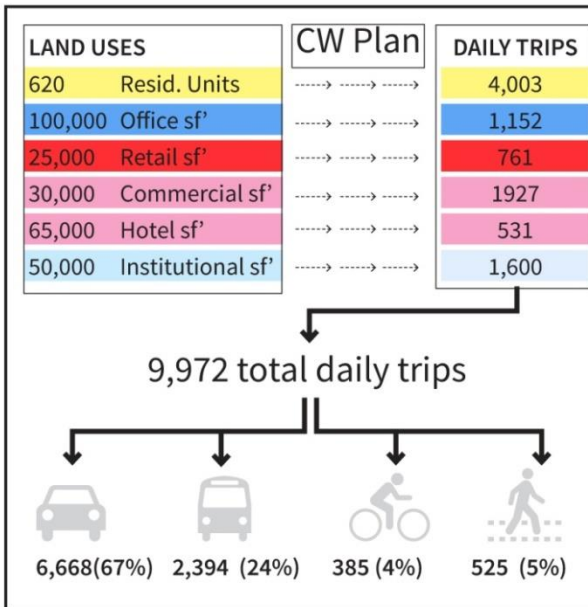
## Typical Section



# Analysis Shows Acceptable Levels of Traffic

## Central West Plan

Illustration	Mitigation Description	Existing	Final Alternative
	Existing Geometrics		✓
	NB Right-turn lane on MLK	★	✓
	SB right-turn lane on MLK	★	✓
	3rd NB through lane on MLK, requiring a 3rd receiving lane on MLK north of Estes	★	✓
	2nd SB left-turn lane on MLK, requiring a 2nd receiving lane on Estes east of MLK		✓
	2nd EB and WB through lanes on Estes, requiring 2nd receiving lanes on Estes both east and west of MLK		
	2nd WB left-turn lane on Estes		
	2nd EB left-turn lane on Estes		

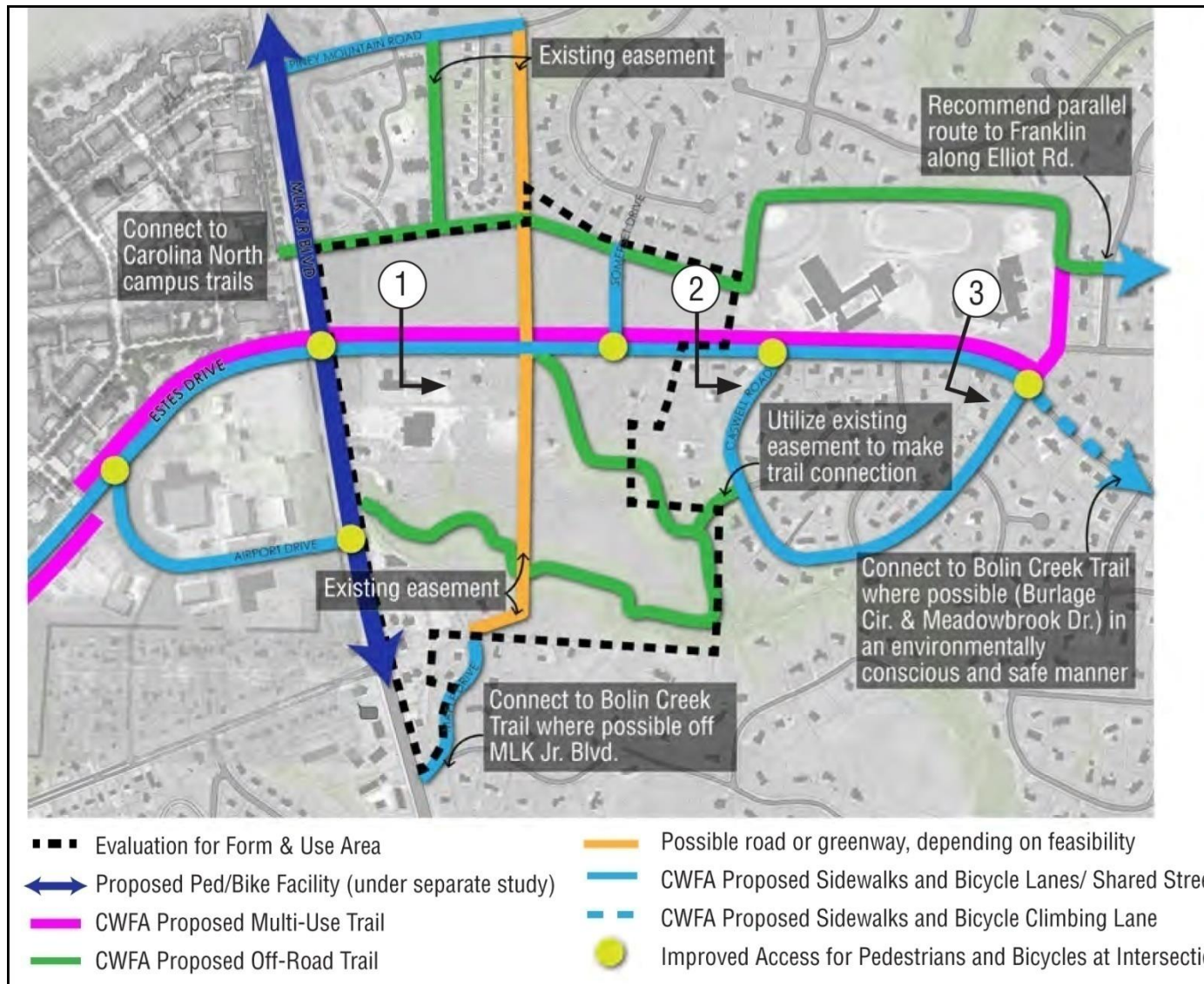


- ★ Mitigation Measure Identified in Carolina North TIA
- ★ Improvement required to mitigate background growth and CN traffic.

2012 EXISTING CONDITIONS				
Intersection	Traffic Movement	AM Peak		PM Peak
		D	E	F
Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd at Estes Drive	Overall Intersection	D	E	D
	Eastbound	L	E	F
		T	F	E
		R	D	D
	Westbound	L	F	D
		T	E	F
		R	E	E
	Northbound	L	B	C
		T	C	D
		R	--	--
	Southbound	L	C	E
		TR	D	C

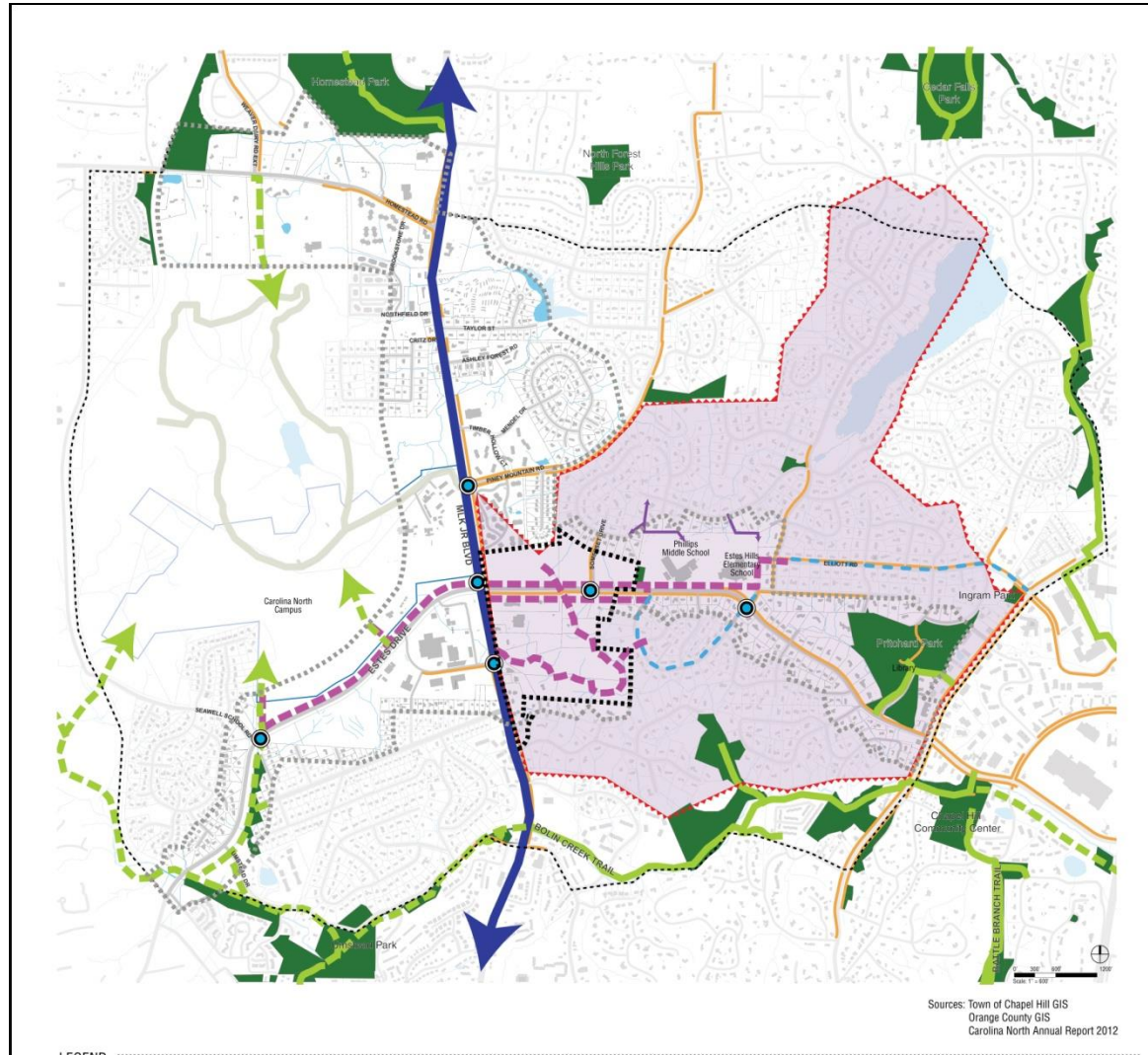
WITH mitigation				
Estes Drive & M.L.K. Jr.		Central West Plan		
		AM		PM
Control	Approach	LOS	Delay	Delay
Signalized	<b>Total</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>D</b> 49.9
	Eastbound	<b>E</b>	67.0	<b>E</b> 65.0
	Westbound	<b>E</b>	55.4	D 53.8
	Northbound	C	28.5	D 45.8
	Southbound			

# Bike and Pedestrian Improvements in Planning Area





# Connections to Bike/Greenway System



# Plan Benefits Town and Neighborhoods – and Responds to Community Concerns

- **Walkable and “bike-able” destinations for new and existing residents**
  - Community-oriented retail
  - Public gathering spaces
- **Responds to concerns about traffic**
  - Traffic no worse than current situation with reasonable mitigation measures
  - Improved safety
- **Major improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages**
  - Improves walkability and bikeability to schools
  - Estes becomes a “complete street”
  - New greenway and connections to existing greenway network
- **Respects existing neighborhoods**
  - Greenway buffer
  - Compatible transitions between new and existing development
- **Respects and protects the environment**
  - 40% of total area not developed
  - Storm water management master plan
  - Preservation of tree canopy and other natural features