

RE: CDC Comments on Obey Creek Guidelines | March 21, 2015

Dear Mayor and Council:

The following are CDC commissioner comments assembled in anticipation of your March 25th meeting. We may have further discussion at our scheduled March 24th meeting. Thank you for the presentation to the advisory boards on the 11th, it was very helpful.

1) CDC REVIEW: Overall guidelines seem reasonable but no specific building design is yet proposed to conclude the material, aesthetic, and planning effectiveness. Recommend some level of CDC review for actual building design inclusive of reviewing actual building materials and elevations. If restricted similar to FBC, recommend all elevations within view of a public way (not simply fronting) so the full perspective may be reviewed in context.

2) SECTION 1 TERMINOLOGY: Consider guidelines as enforceable "standards" for an agreed minimum quality not just advisable "guidelines", (currently these terms are undefined and used inconsistently on the cover, table of contents, and referenced terms throughout document).

3) SECTION 1 INTENT: Noted the document dated March 20th in section 4 now omits the terms: "Required," "Unacceptable," "Recommend," leaving the section intro text to guide on intent which states: "...intended to provide general guidelines but are not of a regulatory nature." While the Design Guidelines are incorporated by reference in the Agreement, neither the Agreement nor the Guidelines themselves appear to state with any clarity the actual intended nature of them other than the above statement. Council should decide if they are to be enforceable standards, or non-mandatory guidelines intended to provide design and development guidance on how to comply with the Development Agreement. The later leaves open a level of objective/subjective review and enforcement to the Town Manager and/or CDC, or defined others.

- CDC recommends some level of enforceable standards. Applicants should be inspired by the guidelines, not inhibited. However, some areas such as dimensional details and percentages should be required as a minimum level of quality control. The current document in text parts does spell out well-intended "allowable," "not allowable," "minimums," etc., but again they are not clearly aligned with the overall document intent terminology, and thus may lead to later confusion among applicants and reviewers. Recommend both revising for consistency and adding a Definitions subsection to clearly define intent of terms used throughout without question.

4) SECTION 1 MISSION STATEMENT: Consider including transportation and connectivity goals.

5) SITE PLAN: Consider the anticipated Site Plan as an actual attachment to the Development Agreement.

6) BLOCK SIZE: Min. and Max. Block Sizes are not explicitly outlined. Victor Dover presented a compelling discussion recently for the Park & Ride lot on the importance of block size. He noted:

- City blocks in Charleston are 500 ft in length and generally considered slightly large for walkability.
- City blocks in Portland, Oregon, are 220 ft in length, which is generally considered a bit small.
- The Market Street block that is home to Weaver Street Market and Pazzo is about 300 ft in length.

7) SECTION 3, TYPE 6, STRUCTURED PARKING: Consider all side of structure parking within any view from a public way shall be lined by programmed building (not only portions fronting a public way). Intent is to completely conceal in perspective as well.

8) SECTION 3, ALL TYPES, MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT: Consider including required screening for all mechanical equipment for all building types (currently some types included, other types don't mentioned).

9) WOODLAND BIRDS: Given proximity to woodlands and the expanse of windows proposed, consider adding standards for the use of bird protection glass or the like (<http://www.ornilux.com/>)

and (<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/BirdFriendlyBuildingDesign.pdf>)

10) SECTION 5, STREET TREES: Landscape Standards _ US 15-501 Corridor: Change Minimum tree spacing to 40' on center in lieu of 60' and Minimum tree size to 3" caliper in lieu of 2". This frontage is the most important for the community and trees should be initially installed with an acceptable maturity and density.

11) SECTION 7, WETLAND CONSERVATION: Is the 100' buffer zone equal to or greater than the current requirements for Wilson Creek / RCD / Jordan Lake Rules? Ensure not in lieu of overlaid regulations.

12) SECTION 7, CONNECTIVITY: Section discusses bike / sidewalk / public improvements but does not provide map of how to achieve. Consider some level of detailed review for future map proposals to ensure larger Town connections.

13) SECTION 7, STEEP SLOPES: Current LUMO has specialized building standards for steep slope development. Consider referencing them in the commitment section.

14) SECTION 7, GREEN BUILDING: Happy to see this section developed. It should be noted the percentages currently outlined for energy, water, etc. are the required prerequisite levels for LEED certification (minimal attainable level equal to or slightly above current building code).

Recommend the following:

- Require all building meet certifiable standards for LEED in lieu of "strive" and require a 3rd party certifier to review the projects as such through energy modeling, commissioning, and/or other documentation if not actually certified by US Green Building Council's LEED program. Other program's such as Green Globes would also be acceptable and cost less.
- Energy Efficiency: Greatest impact is actual energy usage reductions. The ASHRAE 90.1-2007 standard baseline state is a current building code minimum, recommend considering the coming ASHRAE 90.1-2012 version as the baseline. Note that current Architecture 2030 guidelines (<http://www.architecture2030.org>) call for a 70% fossil fuel reduction in commercial building design. Recommend increasing the required energy reductions beyond 10% to at least 15% if ASHRAE 2007 version is to be used.
- Onsite energy production section: Consider encouraging or incentivizing more than 5% by way of Solar panels, Geothermal, etc., suggest 15%.
- Construction Waste Management: Consider 75% diversion from landfills in lieu of 50% (minimal cost impact to do so).
- Light-Pollution: Current LUMO has standards, consider referencing as a requirement. In addition recommend restricting the use of ANY exterior up-lighting in the development.

Thank you for your time and considerations.

Chapel Hill Community Design Commission

Condensed commissioner comments prepared by Chairman Jason Hart, AIA, LEED AP