



To: Council Committee on Economic Sustainability
From: Alisa Duffey Rogers, LUMO Project Manager
Subject: Proposed Changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM)
Date: September 29, 2020

Thank you for meeting with me in small groups on September 17, 2020 to discuss proposed changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Below is a list of suggested changes that result from those meetings:

1. **Time Horizon of the FLUM** - Change the time horizon of the FLUM to 2050, rather than 2049.

Staff Response: 2049 is 230 years after the state legislature granted the Charter for the Town in 1819. If Council would like to change the time horizon to 2050, this change is certainly doable.

2. **Parks and Green/Gathering Spaces Character Type** - Revise the definition for the Parks and Green/Gathering Spaces Character Type to include more intimate spaces, such as pocket parks.

Staff Response: Staff concurs with this suggestion and proposes the following changes as well as replacing one of the precedent images with a small gathering space:

This Character Type accounts for natural features **and gathering places** within the Focus Areas, ~~and~~ protects current open spaces while enhancing the connectivity of natural places, ~~and~~ ~~providing~~ **provides** open space in proximity to residential uses, **increases the tree canopy in Town, and provides places for community members to interact and connect.** In some Focus Areas, there are areas designated as parks and green space that have existing development. The intent is for those areas to transition back to natural areas over time. Green space also contributes to a more natural treatment of stormwater, when appropriate, within Focus Areas. [Note: Green/gathering spaces, integrated within other Character Types, is appropriate, **highly encouraged**, and anticipated.]

Character Type Principles:

- Helps preserve and enhance existing community amenities and provides options for new amenities
- Includes connectivity where possible to existing or planned linear green infrastructure, including bike and pedestrian paths and greenways
- Planned as part of an overall system of transportation, stormwater management, environmental restoration, and/or preservation of sensitive areas
- Accessible to neighborhoods of all income levels with accessibility provisions
- **Creates diminutive gathering places that are designed to provide places for unintentional connections. These spaces may be plazas or green spaces but should**



provide respite and/or activities appropriate to the neighborhood and the surrounding context.

3. **Description of Secondary in Character Type Matrices** – Revise the description of Secondary that appears above the Character Type and Height Matrices.

Staff Response: Staff concurs and would suggest the following:

Secondary (~~allowed~~ appropriate, but not predominant)

4. **Definition of Transitional Area** – Expand the definition to better describe possible methods of appropriate transitions.

Staff Response: Staff concurs and would suggest the following:

Transitional Area

This Focus Area strives for harmonious transitions between different types and intensities of land uses as well as built form in order to help mitigate undesirable impacts that a development might have on an adjacent site or use. The Transitional Area is intended to identify areas where lower-intensity **land** uses or development patterns may be appropriate between higher-intensity development and single-family neighborhoods. **Appropriate transitional techniques may include landscaping, changing land uses, and altering architectural and building forms.** For additional direction, see the Guiding Statements.

5. **Height Note on the Matrices** – Revise the Height Note on the Character Type and Height Matrices to reflect that appropriate heights are context sensitive.

Staff Response: Staff concurs and would suggest the following:

Note: Each story is approximately 12 feet tall, but height may vary based on many factors. **While suggested heights are noted above, determining the appropriate height for each site will require careful examination of the site and its surrounding context.**

6. **North Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Focus Area** - Add the following language to the Focus Area Principles. This Principle is currently included in the Focus Area Principles for South Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Focus Area.

Residential uses that are likely to attract students are appropriate in locations within proximity to transit and prioritize access to shopping and convenience to campus.

Staff Response: Staff concurs with this suggestion.

7. **South Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Focus Area** – In Sub-Area C, designate the Office Character Type Primary, rather than Secondary.

Staff Response: Staff concurs with this suggestion.



8. **North 15-501 Corridor** – In Sub Area C, designate the Multifamily Character Type Secondary, rather than Primary and decrease the Transitional Area Height from “Up to 4 stories” to “2-3 stories.”

Staff Response: Because of the number of existing multifamily complexes in the area, Staff would prefer to retain the Multifamily Character Type as Primary.

Regarding the Transitional Area Height, the existing designation “Up to 4 stories” provides flexibility for redevelopment in locations that are already served by infrastructure and contain impervious surfaces. The Transitional Area Heights can be fine tuned during the rewrite of the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) when more in-depth analysis can be undertaken.

9. **Downtown Focus Area** –

- a. Add a Focus Area Principle under the Land Use section that indicates a preference for year-round residents.

Staff Response: Staff concurs and would suggest the following:

To provide a substantial residential population to support downtown businesses throughout the year, housing for year-round residents is desirable in Downtown.

- b. Decrease the core heights in Sub-Area B to 6 stories from 8 stories.

Staff Response: There are many considerations for this suggestion. These considerations are discussed briefly below, but can be discussed more fully on October 2, 2020:

1. All of Sub-Area B is currently zoned TC-2, which permits core heights of 90 feet. 90 feet is approximately 7.5 stories.
2. The Guiding Statements should be used as a foundation when considering future development patterns. Particularly, the following Statements:
 - **Demonstrate the Town’s commitment to effectively respond to the threats associated with climate change as well as environmental stewardship and resiliency.** The Town should emphasize sustainable urban design principles that minimize impacts to Chapel Hill’s sensitive natural areas and respond to the threat of climate change by:
 - Creating compact walkable, mixed-use communities, in targeted locations, where activities are located closer to one another requiring less time and energy to access the daily needs of life including work, school, commerce, and recreation....
 - Densifying at strategic locations and mixing land uses. By building up, the Town can absorb development in a more compact manner, support a lively mix of activities, protect open spaces, integrate public spaces into developments, conserve landscaped areas, preserve tree canopy, and create nodes that make transit more viable. Permitting a mix of activities along streets, shortens trips,



reduces car dependency, enlivens the public realm, and makes possible the day and night usage of shared parking;

- **Cultivate a vibrant and inclusive community.** Requiring a mixture of land uses, residential; retail; office; civic, adjacent to each other or stacked vertically in certain strategic locations to invigorate certain streets;
- **Direct investment along key transportation corridors and promote construction of transit and multimodal transportation options in concert with the Town's regional transportation partners.** The Town should encourage density and intensity in a mixture of uses along key transportation corridors and at established activity nodes or centers with particular emphasis at future transit stations and areas with multi-modal and alternative forms of transportation including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The intent of this guiding statement is to concentrate the siting of higher-density housing, mid-rise office, and more intense mixed use development at targeted locations in order to achieve highly functional, walkable destinations that are not car dependent. This type of development supports a more sustainable, low-carbon lifestyle for residents.
- **Support and facilitate economic development, including the development of flexible and varied types of retail and office spaces; job creation; innovation; and entrepreneurship, through redevelopment and infill development, in order to expand and diversify the Town's tax base to enable the Town's fiscal resiliency.**
- **Provide appropriate transitions between land uses and buildings of different scales.**
- **Preserve and maintain Chapel Hill's appearance and create the quality of design and development the Town desires.**

3. What do these Guiding Statements tell us about the nature of future development in Downtown?

- These Statements would support retaining the core heights proposed for Downtown in the FLUM while also working to ensure that any future development/redevelopment preserves the essence of downtown Chapel Hill.
- With the LUMO Rewrite, standards, processes, and regulations can be crafted that help to marry the ideas of increased height while keeping the charm that is downtown. However, operationalizing that marriage will require careful interplay between the standards and regulations in the LUMO. Examples of such operationalization include:
 - Buildings that are four stories in height could be constructed by-right while obtaining the higher core heights requires a conditional zoning approval; and,
 - Design standards can be included that require facades to be broken up with different articulations and treatments to prevent long,



monotonous facades and to mimic individual storefronts.

Standards such as these help to create buildings that contribute to a sense of place by providing interesting street experiences. (The LUMO alone cannot create a sense of place. What happens in the right-of-way also contributes mightily.)

- Retaining the suggested heights for Downtown in the FLUM provides the flexibility to create predictability, functionality, and intentionality with the LUMO Rewrite.

4. **Staff Suggested Revisions:** Since the LUMO Rewrite will take time, staff would suggest adding the following Focus Area Principles to the Placemaking, Street Character, and Urban Form section for Downtown:

- **Promote Pedestrian Interaction** - The street level of a building should be designed to engage, charm, and attract pedestrians. Facades adjacent to the sidewalk should appear inviting, safe, and welcoming.
- **Design Facades at Many Scales** - Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and material choices and arrangements to indicate the activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote and support pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation. The building facade should create a “human scale” not only at the street/sidewalk level, but also as viewed from farther away.
- **Utilize Pedestrian-Friendly Materials at Street Level** - Use materials at street/sidewalk level that create a sense of permanence and bring life and warmth to Downtown.
- **Provide Facade Elements that Define the Place** - Provide unique elements on building facades, within/adjacent to public open spaces, and/or on the sidewalk to create a distinctive, attractive, and memorable sense of place associated with the building.

