

June 9, 2023

Judy Johnson
Town of Chapel Hill Planning Department
405 Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

RE: Chapel Hill Life Sciences Center Statements of Justification and Compliance

STATEMENT OF JUSTIFICATION

The proposed zoning is in conformance with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. The property is currently zoned TC-2, and TC-3 zoning is requested to fulfill the themes and goals of the comprehensive plan elaborated on below. Falling within the Downtown Focus Area, Sub-Area A specifically calls for commercial and office and parks/gathering spaces, which the project will fulfill. Statements below further support the case for the requested TC-3 zoning district to permit a life science and retail development with outdoor public space.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Longfellow is proposing redevelopment of seven parcels located on Franklin St and Rosemary St for a new life science building in accordance with the CH2020 Comprehensive Plan. The new building will include office, lab, and retail space. The proposed plan addresses the following themes with their corresponding goals: A Place for Everyone, Community Prosperity and Engagement, Getting Around, Good Places, New Spaces, Nurturing our Community, and Town and Gown Collaboration. Similarly, it meets the intent of the Downtown Corridor Sub-Area A focus area of the Future Land Use Map.

THEME 1: A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

- Family-friendly, accessible exterior and interior places throughout the town for a variety of active uses
- A creative place to live, work, and play because of Chapel Hill’s arts and culture
- A welcoming and friendly community that provides all people with access to opportunities

This property is located within the Downtown corridor in Sub-Area A on the Future Land Use Map Update to Chapel Hill 2020, which calls for commercial, office, and parks and green/gathering spaces. This proposal fulfills each of these by providing a new office, lab and retail space to Downtown Chapel Hill, while also including a public courtyard component. This project places value on both the interior and exterior spaces for employees, Chapel Hill residents, and visitors to all enjoy.

THEME 2: COMMUNITY PROSPERITY AND ENGAGEMENT

- Balance and sustain finances by increasing revenues and decreasing expenses
- Foster success of local businesses

The proposed project will bring numerous jobs to Chapel Hill in a new energy efficient building that will add to the prosperity of the Chapel Hill community. While a majority of the project will be dedicated to office and lab space on the upper stories of the building, ground floor retail is proposed to further support other local businesses and create a well-connected community.

THEME 3: GETTING AROUND

- A well-conceived and planned, carefully thought-out, integrated, and balanced transportation system that recognizes the importance of automobiles, but encourages and facilitates the growth and use of other means of transportation such as bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation options

Located in downtown Chapel Hill, employees and visitors will have a variety of options when it comes to transportation to and from the site. Provided the size of building and number of people who will be traveling to and from for work, it will be necessary to include a parking garage on site. However, the project is along multiple bus routes in addition to being connected to bike lanes and sidewalks, providing options for public and active transportation. The project also proposes a midblock pedestrian and bicycle connection between Franklin Street and Rosemary Street.

THEME 4: GOOD PLACES, NEW SPACES

- A vibrant, diverse, pedestrian-friendly, and accessible downtown with opportunities for growing office, retail, residential, and cultural development and activity
- A development decision-making process that provides clarity and consistency with the goals of the Chapel Hill 2020 comprehensive plan
- A community that welcomes and supports change and creativity
- Open and accessible common spaces for community gathering, cultural uses, and community development

The proposed development contributes to the mix of land uses envisioned on the Future Land Use Map by providing new, vibrant office, lab, retail, and community spaces for downtown Chapel Hill. The site re-envision this downtown space to provide higher density nonresidential floor area while also creating a public courtyard for all to enjoy. The project also intends to feature a much-needed midblock pedestrian connection from Franklin Street to Rosemary Street to break up the existing block. A new, central courtyard will provide space for community gathering.

THEME 5: NURTURING OUR COMMUNITY

- Maintain and improve air quality and water quality, and manage stormwater to heal local waterways and conserve biological ecosystems within the town boundaries and the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction

Longfellow is actively seeking ways to reduce the carbon footprint for the proposed building and become an example of an environmentally forward-thinking project for Chapel Hill. The energy management plan provided with the submittal describes these efforts in greater detail.

THEME 6: TOWN AND GOWN COLLABORATION

- Take full advantage of ideas and resources to create a thriving economy and incorporate and utilize the intellectual capital that the University and Town create
- Improve and expand access to the arts, culture, and intellectual pursuits for both the University and the Town
- The University and Town will collaborate to improve downtown parking options that support business, cultural, and academic purposes

Life science is a growing field that has the potential to provide many jobs to existing residents, new residents, and graduates of UNC Chapel Hill. Being located on Franklin Street at the University's edge provides opportunity for relationships between the new businesses to come and UNC Chapel Hill. New, modern buildings with a focus on environmental stewardship will also attract talent to the area.

Sincerely,

MCADAMS



Jessie Hardesty
Planner III, Planning + Design