

July 2, 2024

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

RE: Old Chapel Hill Rd Apartments Project Narrative

## **PROJECT NARRATIVE**

### **BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

- The proposed apartment community is located on three parcels that are within the Blue Hill District, and currently zoned OI-2 and R-5. The requested rezoning is for OI-3 to allow for a mixed-use development that includes multifamily apartments and a ground floor retail component. Trinsic proposes a five-story building with urban-style street frontages, tree-lined sidewalks, and landscaped semi-public spaces.
- The proposed development will complement nearby Blue Hill mixed-use and retail properties on South Elliott Road to create a tree-lined urban streetscape along South Elliott Road. It will further the long-term vision set forth in the Blue Hill District for a mixed-use, walkable area with transit access and quality public spaces.

### **NATURAL FEATURES OF THE SITE**

- The site has an irregular shape and topography which creates a design challenge for the building. Urban trees are planned for the S Elliott Road frontage, and a semi-public open space with furnishings and enhanced landscaping is planned along the road frontage. Other landscaping would be located throughout the site to provide shade and appropriate enclosures, screening and/or buffers.

### **ACCESS AND CIRCULATION**

- The site will be accessed by vehicle from the private drive to the north of the property, where vehicles can enter the parking deck on site. The property has existing road frontage on both S Elliott Rd and Couch Rd where pedestrians may access the site via sidewalks. A breezeway has been provided to provide pedestrian access through the site, eventually connecting S Elliott Rd to E Franklin St.
- The topography and natural features of the site prevent automobile connections between Couch Road and Elliott Road but ped-bike connections between the two roads will support the Town's mobility plan.

### **ARRANGEMENT AND ORIENTATION OF THE BUILDINGS**

- Buildings will be primarily oriented to create an urban edge along S Elliott Rd, the property's main frontage street. The design will create an urban edge along streetscape with pockets of open space to break up the façade. Parking deck access will be from the private drive north of the site, out of view from the street. The building extends to the west with an internal courtyard for private use. The western-most portion of the site will be provided as open space and an area for stormwater management.

### NATURAL VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING

- The LUMO requires mixed-use projects to provide 40% tree canopy on site, which becomes very limiting to create urban, higher density sides will maintaining such a high percentage as undeveloped. The project will aim to provide as much tree canopy as possible, however, 40% will not be achievable in this context. Street trees will be provided along the site frontage to create an appealing streetscape, and trees will be preserved in planted on the western portion of the site as well.

### IMPACT ON NEIGHBORING PROPERTIES

- No adverse impacts to adjacent properties are anticipated.
- The proposed plans will be consistent with general multifamily building form, height, and density of the surrounding area.

### EROSION, SEDIMENT AND STORMWATER CONTROL

- All storm water quality and detention requirements are to be met with a combination of aboveground and underground control measures. The project team will work with Town staff to assure minimal adverse impacts and full compliance with the latest standards.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPOSAL

- The developer is proposing that 5% of the market-rate apartments be rented at rates considered affordable to households at the 65% AMI level and an additional 5% of the market-rate apartments be rented at rates considered affordable to households at the 80% AMI level. The affordable units would be located throughout the project and indistinguishable from market-rate apartments. The developer looks forward to working with affordable housing advocates, Town staff, and town council to create the appropriate mix of units (efficiency, 1 BR, 2 BR, and 3 BR). The specifics will be documented as part of an Affordable Housing Plan.

### DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE PROPOSAL FOLLOWS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- **Complete Community Strategy** – where to direct growth
  - The proposed project addresses many aspects of the Complete Communities Framework to provide a well-rounded project that achieves Town goals. Specifically, this project addresses: housing diversity, live/work neighborhoods, local independent retailers, indoor and outdoor recreation, opportunity to add density & create critical mass, walkable, human scale, oriented to active transportation and transit, and identifiable & distinct.
- **Future Land Use Map** – appropriate uses and building height guidance
  - This property is located within the North 15-501 Corridor, Sub-Area B, which calls for Multifamily, shops, offices, commercial, and parks/gathering spaces as primary uses. Additionally, S Elliott Road is identified as an activated street frontage up to 6 stories. This project will achieve the vision for

- this area by providing a mixed-use building with multifamily and a retail component that provides an activated frontage along S Elliott Road.
- **Mapped transportation features** – Everywhere to Everywhere Greenways, Mobility and Connectivity Plan, Greenways Plan, and Connected Roads Plan
    - This project will provide pedestrian connectivity through the site with a sidewalk connects from S Elliott Road through the site. Additionally, sidewalks will be provided along the property frontage.
  - **Climate Action and Response Plan** – contributing to climate actions
    - This development is providing density and retail and in mixed-use neighborhood that is highly walkable, allowing for fewer vehicle trips when residents can walk to grocery, restaurants, retail, etc. Additionally, the building will be designed with energy efficiency in mind. Please see Climate Action Worksheet for further details.
  - **Applicable small-area plans**
    - While not zoned as a Blue Hill district, this site falls within the Blue Hill boundary which calls for walkable, higher density mixed-use areas which this project satisfies. We are proposing modifications to buffers, setbacks, and floor area ratio to achieve an activated street frontage envisioned for the Blue Hill area.