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Planning for the Future

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Concept Plan Submittal

Chapel Hill, NC

2.26.2019

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1. DEVELOPER'S PROGRAM

Introduction

This is a request for review of the 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Concept Plan submittal by the Chapel Hill Town Council, the Community Design Commission, and the Housing Advisory Board.

The proposed mixed-use development is located at the northeast corner of Estes Drive at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The 14.7 acre development proposes a mix of land uses: Retail, office and multi-family development.

The proposal embraces the adopted vision of the Town's Central West Small Area Plan which calls for "residential, commercial, retail, and/or institutional" at this important corner located across Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. from the planned UNC Carolina North campus. As anticipated, transit-friendly development is

proposed to welcome Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Community gathering spaces will be a key component of the new development as well as easily accessible bicycle and pedestrian amenities to connect the new community.

As part of the new development, the plans propose to reinvigorate this gateway intersection with new land uses, architecturally significant buildings that address the corner and future BRT station, functional community gathering spaces, BRT amenities, and new plantings. The new community will transition to lower density and intensity as the development steps away from the high frequency BRT corridor on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The goal is to make an intentional place, with walkable streets and lively storefronts that will encourage people to get out of their cars and enjoy the mix of uses on foot.

In accordance with the Central West Plan guidelines, the development proposes 269 multifamily dwelling units with approximately 38,500 sq.ft. of retail space, 40,000 sq.ft. of office space, and 3,000 sq.ft. of amenity area. The conceptual proposal conforms to the vision and scale the guidelines offer for this quadrant of the Central West area. We feel that it is a strong step in validating the hard work done by the CWP Steering Committee and Town Staff.

General Site Description

The property is approximately 14.7 acres. It is located on the east side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. at the Estes Drive intersection. The future Carolina North campus associated with UNC-Chapel Hill is to be located on the west side of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. at the site of the Horace Williams Airport. As a reminder, the UNC Carolina North campus is approved for research and educational uses with various supportive functions, as well as housing for students and faculty.

The adjoining property to the north, along Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., is the Shadowoods Apartments. Adjoining the Shadowoods Apartments, and at the northeast corner of this property, is the Coker Woods cluster single-family neighborhood. The Coker Woods development includes a 30 ft. wide, commonly owned open space at its perimeter.

Mr. Whit Rummel owns the undeveloped 7.5 acres adjoining to the east, across the power line. Amity Methodist Church is located to the south across Estes, along with the Estes Drive frontage of the YMCA.

Site Access and Circulation

The development proposes the creation of a new mixed use community that will connect to and integrate with the existing fabric of the area. This new community will also function as a bridge between the approved Carolina North campus and neighboring properties to the east. A general grid pattern of development is proposed, as called for with the Central West Small Area Plan.

Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. will be improved to be a vibrant street edge as a key connection to the high frequency transit corridor. The latest plans from the Consultant working on the BRT corridor design show a Station stop along the property frontage, which this proposal respects. Vehicular access from Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. is proposed as an inviting new tree-lined entry drive. In addition, in order to complete the new grid layout, two points of vehicular access are proposed on Estes Drive. Further embracing connectivity, a vehicular connection is proposed to the north for a future connection to Shadowoods Apartments and to Mr. Rummel's property to the east. Pedestrian and bicycle amenities are prevalent. Bike lanes, sidewalk connections, and a new multiuse trail on the tree-lined Estes Drive are proposed for easy pedestrian/cyclist movement throughout and around the site. We also intend to provide an internal bike/pedestrian way that generally follows the greenway along the northern edge of the property as show on the Central West Plan, but direct folks to the corner of Estes and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd where there will be provisions for a much safer crossing, rather than mid-block.

Building Orientation and Site Layout

The Central West Plan calls for a layout with diminished building height away from the BRT corridor on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. to the eastern edge of the property. The conceptual development proposal supports this transition with increased scale near the high frequency transit corridor, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

The proposal includes new office use as well as retail development on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. at 4 stories with multifamily use at the corner at 6 stories

over retail. The second tier of this grid network, as you step away from the BRT corridor, is at 5 stories and then building heights reduce to 3 and 4 stories as we travel to the eastern property line. Townhouses, at a similar scale to the Shadowoods Apartments, are proposed along two-thirds of the northern property line. An amenity building is also proposed near the pedestrian trail network around the storm water preserve on the eastern edge. For much of the eastern Estes Drive frontage, townhouse development addresses Estes Drive along the new multi-use trail.

Environment and Landscaping

Topographically, the property slopes gently to the south and southeast from the northwest corner at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. As such, the site is able to accommodate this requested grid layout. The upper segment of a drainage area is located in the southeastern corner of the property. This area is generally dry except for rain event. Storm water flows, for the most part, to the southeastern corner of the property. The project will comply with all storm water and sedimentation/erosion control requirements utilizing a variety of protection measures authorized by the Town. The Concept Plan indicates a pond in the eastern portion of the property, which will serve both as an amenity and runoff control.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives associated with this development proposal align well with the goals and objectives of the Town's adopted Central West Small Area Plan. Again we feel that proposal validates the good work done to date on that plan.

A formal development application will follow this Concept Plan review process. The future land uses and intensity called for as part of the Central West Small Area Plan require rezoning of the property. We anticipate requesting a conditional rezoning. The rezoning requested will likely be to an office/institutional category, which accommodates the broadest mix of uses.

Please see the accompanying compliance documents, as well as the Affordable Housing Proposal, for further descriptions.

2. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapel Hill's 2020 Comprehensive Plan (CH2020)

The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Concept Plan submittal is proposed in accordance with the CH2020 Comprehensive Plan and the Central West Small Area Plan, an element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

This statement of compliance is provided with regard to general concepts in CH2020 as well as the guiding principles of the Central West Small Area Plan.

Two key concepts within CH2020 Comprehensive Plan are Community Choices and Community Connections defined in the plan as:

Choices: The community would like more choices about where and how people can live and house their families and more choices about how they travel through town. The community also would like more choices about where to shop and how to meet daily needs. Community members also would like choices about where they can work and play in Chapel Hill.

Connections: The community also desires more connections and improved opportunities to meet others and to embrace the diversity of those who live, work, and play in the community. Community members want more connections in how they can get around and a real commitment to safe pedestrian and bicycle transportation. They want real connections between the decisions town leaders make and the ideals that the community has expressed in the Chapel Hill 2020 comprehensive plan. Chapel Hill wants a sense of connectedness from many perspectives.

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Compliance:

The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Concept Plan submittal will contribute to choices regarding where to live, work, and play in Chapel Hill. These choices will be achieved by offering new office and retail space as well as a variety of housing options all in close proximity to downtown, schools, and University services and amenities. This will provide additional choices about where to live and work as well as where to shop and meet general daily needs.

The development will provide important connections for those who live and work in the new community in the form of physical connections. These physical

connections include pedestrian and bicycle amenities and easy access to the high frequency public transit corridor on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Opportunities for social connections will be provided with expanded housing choices, new outdoor amenities, small scale retail and work places, and a variety of commercial and employment opportunities.

Chapel Hill's Central West Guiding Principles

Thirteen principles were developed by the community to help guide future development in the Central West Area. These principles were adopted by the Town Council in 2013 as an element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Concept Plan submittal demonstrates compliance with each of these principles:

Principle 1: Create a Strong Sense of Place

Principle 2: Ensure Community Compatibility

Principle 3: Create Social Connections

Principle 4: Improve Physical Connections

Principle 5: Minimize Vehicular Traffic Impacts

Principle 6: Enhance the Pedestrian/Bicycle Experience

Principle 7: Improve the Transit System

Principle 8: Encourage a Diverse Mix of Uses

Principle 9: A Diverse Population

Principle 10: Respect Existing Neighborhoods

Principle 11: Employ Environmentally Sound Practices

Principle 12: Feature, Repair, and Enhance Natural Resources

Principle 13: Consider Economic Impacts in Development Decisions

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Compliance:

The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. will be a vibrant addition to the area and will provide a strong sense of place within both the Central West area and the Town. This gateway mixed use development, at a major intersection, will begin to define the Central West area.

A new sense of place will be established at this corner with careful building placement, the creation of community gathering spaces, new plantings, and with a key connection to the Bus Rapid Transit corridor. New tree-lined drives will provide connections as envisioned in the Town's Small Area Plan for vehicles as well as ease of movement for pedestrians and bicyclists. Townhouses, facing Estes Drive, will line much of the eastern Estes Drive frontage as you step away from the intersection.

The Central West Plan promotes mixed-use at this location and encourages density and intensity that will further support the town's robust transit system plans. The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. development will offer an improved physical connection to this major north-south transit corridor. A variety of ways of moving both within and through-out the area are proposed for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles, improving connectivity overall.

For compatibility, the proposed development will provide a truly graceful transition between the surrounding residential and institutional uses and the new uses envisioned at the future UNC Carolina North campus.

Both physical and social connections are promoted with the new development. Opportunities for social interaction will be provided with expanded housing options, new outdoor amenities, gathering areas, open spaces and a variety of commercial and employment opportunities, including new "third places" within the mix of uses. The proposed office space will also provide an opportunity for entrepreneurial development within the community. Affordable and workforce housing is proposed to be a component of the development. A diverse population associated with a variety of land uses and floor plans is anticipated with this development to enhance these social connections. The contract purchaser's current intent is to construct the residential element of the project as rental housing. Please refer to the included affordable housing proposal for more information.

Vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connections are provided as envisioned by the Central West Plan. Vehicular access is provided from Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. as part of the grid layout as an east-west connection. This primary access point

will accommodate motorized and non-motorized vehicles as well as pedestrians/cyclists through the site with street trees and amenities. Sidewalks, informal trails, and a new Estes Drive multiuse trail will be a welcoming component of the new development, as will an east-west connection internal to the property connecting to Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Traffic impacts on the surrounding areas will be mitigated because of the link to the north-south Bus Rapid Transit corridor. The transit-oriented nature of the design coupled with ease of access to high frequency public transportation will help reduce traffic impacts. And, the internal capture associated with a mixed-use development will further help to reduce vehicular traffic impacts. This overall transportation approach promotes better air quality and sustainability as well as energy conservation. Vehicular parking can be minimized with this holistic approach, and bicycle parking maximized.

The proposal works with the natural environment and the topography of the site. Much of the parking will be tucked under the buildings and in structures to assist with minimizing the development's footprint, and the stormwater management will be located in a naturally occurring low portion of the site.

The applicant proposes to comply with the Town's policies and requirement for reduced energy consumption. In addition, locally commissioned art is anticipated to be incorporated at the community gathering spaces.

Storm water run-off from the development will be managed on-site with storm water retention and water quality treatment to be sized to meet all requirements. Storm water elements which are developed as bio-retention or permanent basins will become positive visual features. The proposed storm water facilities will constitute Best Management Practices to ensure that storm water runoff does not negatively impact neighboring properties. These practices will also do double duty as an aesthetic amenity for the residents

This new development will contribute to the strength and the economic prosperity of the Central West area and the larger community. The Town's tax base will be enhanced with sustainable land uses and intensities.

3. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH DESIGN GUIDELINES

Chapel Hill's Design Guidelines

All aspects of this project will be designed to comply with the Town's Design Guidelines. This includes access and circulation, storm water management, landscaping and tree canopy, parking and loading, street lighting, utilities, and solid waste management.

The purpose of the Town's Design Guidelines document "is to assure that new designs remain in continuity with the town's existing design 'successes,' and at the same time inspire exciting and creative additions to the community's blend of distinctive buildings from many eras" (p. 1).

The Chapel Hill Design Guidelines provide categories of town-wide criteria for design. The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Concept Plan submittal demonstrates compliance with each of the following design criteria as identified below:

Chapel Hill General Design Criteria

Design Criteria: Livability

Buildings and outdoor spaces should be designed to fit human scale, harmonize with design of streets, and accommodate pedestrian traffic.

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Compliance:

The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. project will provide human scale design that embraces the traditional grid street layout recommended by the Central West Plan. With the new development, density and intensity is focused on the Town's high intensity BRT at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and then gradually reduces as it transitions to the east. As such, the new buildings and outdoor amenity and community gathering spaces will harmonizes with the new tree lined drives pedestrian-oriented spaces and lively storefronts as well as with the surrounding area. As a transit-friendly, walkable and bike-able development, with sidewalks and trails throughout, the human scale will be emphasized.

Benches and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities will be provided to maximize enjoyment of the outdoor space. The design of the new main access drive from Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. with a pedestrian focus will slow vehicle speeds and cater to pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed design promotes pedestrian and bicycle activity and safety and encourages easy access to the convenient public transportation/BRT located on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

Design Criteria: Visual Impact

New public and private projects should be visually appealing, and compatible with other development in the surrounding area.

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Compliance:

The visual impact of this new development will be compatible with its location and with the height guidance of the Central West Small Area Plan. High quality architecture with appropriate transparency will define the character of the development. The proposal will provide new plantings and landscape buffering to the immediately adjacent land uses to the north and east, but in a more urbanistic form along the street frontages.

Because the Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. frontage for the proposed development is on the North-South high capacity transit route, and across the street from the University's Carolina North campus, the visual impact on this corridor will be compatible with this transit-oriented nature including a focus on the BRT transit stop as a major connection point. We understand that the Town has plans to undertake a BRT Corridor study, and we look forward to working with those resultant ideas.

Design Criteria: Vegetation

Landscape design concepts should preserve existing trees and incorporate native new trees and shrubbery. The landscape theme should be aesthetically compatible with that of the surrounding neighborhood.

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Compliance:

The landscape theme associated with this project will be evocative of the character of the surrounding Central West area. Because of the recent timbering of the property, special attention will be provided to the edges with adjoining properties and to incorporating native trees and shrubbery. The goal is to install plants that will over time lead to a new forested buffer. Compatible tree plantings are proposed along the new, main access drive envisioned by the Central West Plan and other internal drives. Compliance with the Town's tree canopy coverage requirements and parking lot landscaping requirements will ensure a compatible landscape theme for the development.

Design Criteria: Mobility

Land design concepts should provide a network of roads, bicycle paths and lanes, and sidewalks that give strong consideration to the safety of motorists, cyclists, joggers, and walkers.

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Compliance:

The new vehicular east-west drive through the project is an important element of the Central West Plan. It will be designed to slow vehicular movement. The layout is intended to enhance pedestrian movement and promote access by bicyclists, and conversely to encourage people to get out of their cars and explore the neighborhood on foot.

Multiple pedestrian and bicycle connections will encourage safe movement throughout the site. This will include pedestrian trails as well as the multi-use path on Estes Drive as called for in the Central West Plan. Connection to the public transportation network will be an important element. This transit oriented and transit supportive development will be a destination for employees and residents choosing alternative modes of transportation.

Design Criteria: Activity Centers

Structures and complexes should enhance community life by use of "destination points" such as arcades, lobbies, and ground-level retail stores, while at the same time providing for safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Compliance:

The development itself will be a “destination point” and will provide an important addition to the activity centers envisioned with the Central West Plan ensuring a mix of land uses in the area. Ground-level retail is proposed close to the North-South Bus Rapid Transit route and will encourage residents and neighbors to meet, both formally and informally. New pedestrian and bicycle connections will provide for safe movement both through and around the site.

Design Criteria: Views

Streets, buildings, and parking lots should enhance the urban environment by providing pleasant vistas and geographic orientations.

1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Compliance:

The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Concept Plan is designed to enhance the urban environment with views from both within the new buildings as well as from the surrounding areas. Setbacks, building facades, roof lines, community gathering spaces, and new plantings will be carefully designed for compatibility with the area. New street tree planting, common areas, parking lot landscaping, and the perimeter landscape buffer areas will promote views that are aesthetically pleasing and enhance the urban environment with pleasant vistas.

The 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. development will be a welcomed addition to the Central West area blending the intensity anticipated with the University’s Carolina North development and associated with a high intensity transit corridor with the existing surrounding area in accordance with the Central West Plan.