




**CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW: CHAPEL HILL LIFE SCIENCES CENTER,  
306 W. FRANKLIN STREET (Project #CP-23-2)**

**STAFF REPORT**


TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
Britany Waddell, Director  
Judy Johnson, Assistant Director  
Corey Liles, Planning Manager

<p><b>PROPERTY ADDRESS</b></p> <p>306 W. Franklin Street; 311, 315, and 321 W. Rosemary Street</p>	<p><b>MEETING DATE</b></p> <p>March 22, 2023</p>	<p><b>APPLICANT</b></p> <p>Jessica Hardesty, McAdams, on behalf of Longfellow Real Estate Partners, LLC</p>
<p><b>STAFF RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p>That the Council adopt the attached resolution transmitting comments to the applicant regarding the proposed development.</p>		
<p><b>PROCESS</b></p> <p>Council hears from the applicant, receives comments from the Community Design Commission, hears public comments, and offers suggestions to the applicant.</p> <p>Because this review is a Concept Plan submittal, statements by individual Council members this evening do not represent an official position or commitment on the part of a Council member with respect to the position they may take when and if the Council considers a formal application.</p>	<p><b>PROJECT LOCATION</b></p> 	
<p><b>PROJECT OVERVIEW</b></p> <p>The approximately 1.8-acre site is located near various businesses and residences in downtown Chapel Hill. Zoning for the site is Town Center-2 (TC-2).</p> <p>The proposal includes demolition of the existing commercial buildings and construction of a 9-story building with approximately 320,000 sq. ft. of laboratory and office space. Other features of the proposal include retail space along W. Franklin Street, structured parking along W. Rosemary Street, and a midblock pedestrian connection.</p> <p>Following Concept Plan review, a Conditional Zoning review is typically required for the formal application.</p>	<p><b>ATTACHMENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-Range Plans Evaluation</li> <li>• Draft Staff Presentation</li> <li>• Resolution A, Transmitting Council Comments</li> <li>• Urban Designer Comments</li> <li>• Community Design Commission Comments</li> <li>• Applicant Materials</li> <li>• Applicant Draft Presentation</li> </ul>	



## Long Range Plans Evaluation

The following report provides an evaluation by Planning Staff of the Concept Plan site, based on long-range planning considerations.

<b>PROPERTY ADDRESS</b> 306 W. Franklin Street; 311, 315, and 321 W. Rosemary Street	<b>CURRENT ZONING DISTRICT</b> Town Center-2 (TC-2)
<b>EXISTING LAND USE</b> Retail/Commercial	<b>PROPOSED LAND USE</b> Research activities (life science), Office, Retail
<b>SURROUNDING PROPERTIES – EXISTING LAND USES</b> <b>North:</b> Multifamily Residential (Warehouse Apartments and 318-326 W. Rosemary St.) <b>South:</b> Retail, Restaurant, Hotel (Graduate Chapel Hill) <b>East:</b> Retail, Bank <b>West:</b> Retail, Civic (Chapel Hill & Orange County Welcome Center)	
<b>FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) FOCUS AREA</b> Downtown	<b>FLUM SUB-AREA</b> Primarily <b>B</b> , with portions of the proposed parking garage in <b>A</b>
<b>OTHER APPLICABLE ADOPTED PLANS</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mobility and Connectivity Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parks Comprehensive Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greenways Master Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Chapel Hill Bike Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Central West Small Area Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Arts Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stormwater Management Master Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Action and Response Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> West Rosemary Street Development Guide	
<b>SUMMARY OF PLAN CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING THE CONCEPT PLAN SITE</b> Map excerpts on the following pages demonstrate the Plan Considerations listed below. The location of the Concept Plan proposal is marked with the  symbol.  <b><u>Future Land Use Map (FLUM)</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FLUM states that “Preserving and enhancing the heart of Chapel Hill while attracting year-round residents and additional office and commercial uses are core components of this Focus Area”.</li> <li>• <i>Primary (predominate) Uses</i> for the Sub-areas include Multifamily/Shops/Offices, Commercial/Office, and Parks/Gathering Spaces.</li> <li>• <i>Secondary Uses</i> for the Sub-area (allowed, but not predominate) include Multifamily residential and Institutional/University/Civic.</li> <li>• Typical building heights guidance is up to 3-4 stories at the setback and up to 8 stories at the core.</li> <li>• The frontages along Franklin Street and Rosemary Street are designated as <i>Activated Street Frontages</i>. Development should, therefore, allow for “active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floors of buildings or in civic spaces.”</li> </ul>	

## **West Rosemary Street Development Guide**

The Guide includes a variety of considerations for both building and site design.

- Community Benefits
  - Ensure locally and minority-owned businesses are welcome and encouraged
  - Include affordable housing in all new developments
  - Ensure affordable homeownership within the community
  - Ensure the preservation of the Northside neighborhood/Potter's Field identity
- Development Framework
  - The Guide calls for an enhanced pedestrian connection on the project site between Franklin St. and Rosemary St.
  - Portions of the project site (excluding the main existing retail building) are identified as development opportunities.
- Public Realm – Elements of the project site that are within or impact the public realm should achieve the following:
  - Provide sufficient space for pedestrians
  - Include street tree plantings
  - Provide sufficient amenities
  - Add welcoming and safe lighting
  - Screen infrastructure
  - Hide or screen parking
  - Manage deliveries and loading areas
  - Reduce the size and number of curb cuts
- Building Design – Buildings on the project site should incorporate the following:
  - A horizontal datum line
  - Minor setbacks above the datum line
  - Entries off streets or public spaces
  - Entries spaced no more than 75 feet apart
  - Ground-floor retail with clear glass on at least 60% of the façade
  - Canopies to define ground-floor retail
  - Pedestrian-scale signage and amenities
  - Clear distinction between public and private spaces
  - Minimal use of tinted windows
  - Visual breaks in the façade
  - Accentuated visible corners
  - Parking to the rear/interior/below buildings
  - Screened building services

## **Mobility and Connectivity Plan**

- The Mobility and Connectivity Plan recommended construction of bike lanes along the property's Franklin Street frontage. These bike lanes were installed as part of the Franklin Street lane reallocation project.
- There are also existing bike lanes along Rosemary Street.
- The site is in or near several bicycle/pedestrian priority corridors:
  - Timberlyne
  - Cross Cities Connector
  - Eastern Connector

## **Parks Comprehensive Plan**

- The site is within the Neighborhood Park service area of the Hargraves Park.
- The site is not within the service area of any proposed parks.

### **Chapel Hill Bike Plan**

- Mapping of future bike facilities in the Bike Plan is superseded by the Mobility and Connectivity Plan. The Bike Plan provides some additional detail on facility design.

### **Stormwater Management Master Plan**

- The site is located in the Middle Bolin Creek Subwatershed (BL4). The applicant should **coordinate with Chapel Hill's Stormwater Management Division** to understand relevant stormwater considerations.

### **Climate Action and Response Plan**

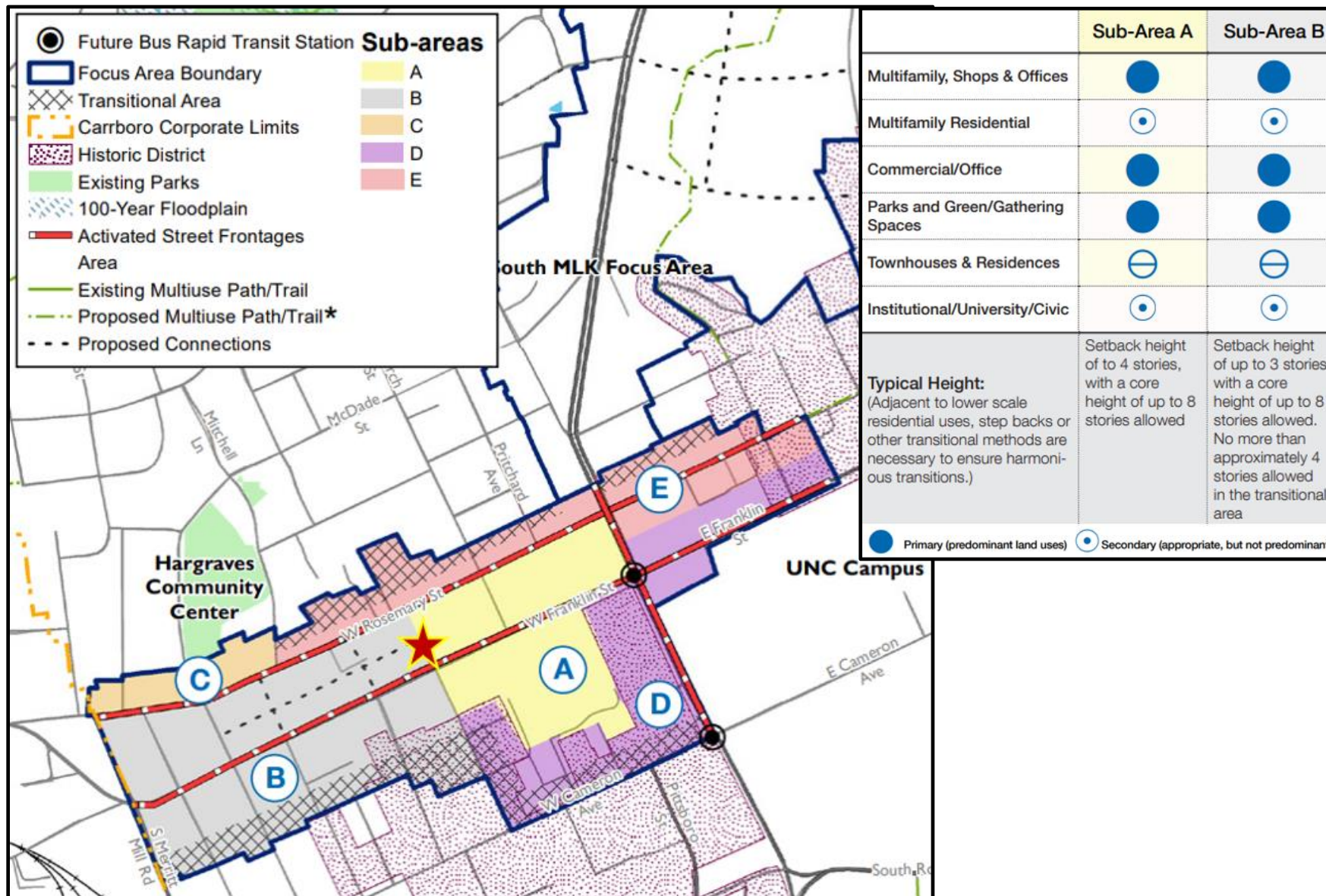
*(Note: no map excerpt provided, as the Plan is generally text-based)*

- Developing the site in accordance with the Future Land Use Map and Mobility Plan would contribute to the following Plan actions:
  - Create walkable, bikeable, transit-served neighborhoods
  - Increase bicycling, walking, and transit use
- Conditions for development could contribute to the other actions in the plan such as:
  - Increase transit ridership and implement Bus Rapid Transit
  - Net-zero emissions for new construction
  - Create a town-wide EV charging station network
  - Protect water quality, natural, and agricultural resources
  - Enhance green infrastructure

# CONCEPT PLAN REPORT

Chapel Hill Life Sciences Center

## Future Land Use Map (Excerpt)

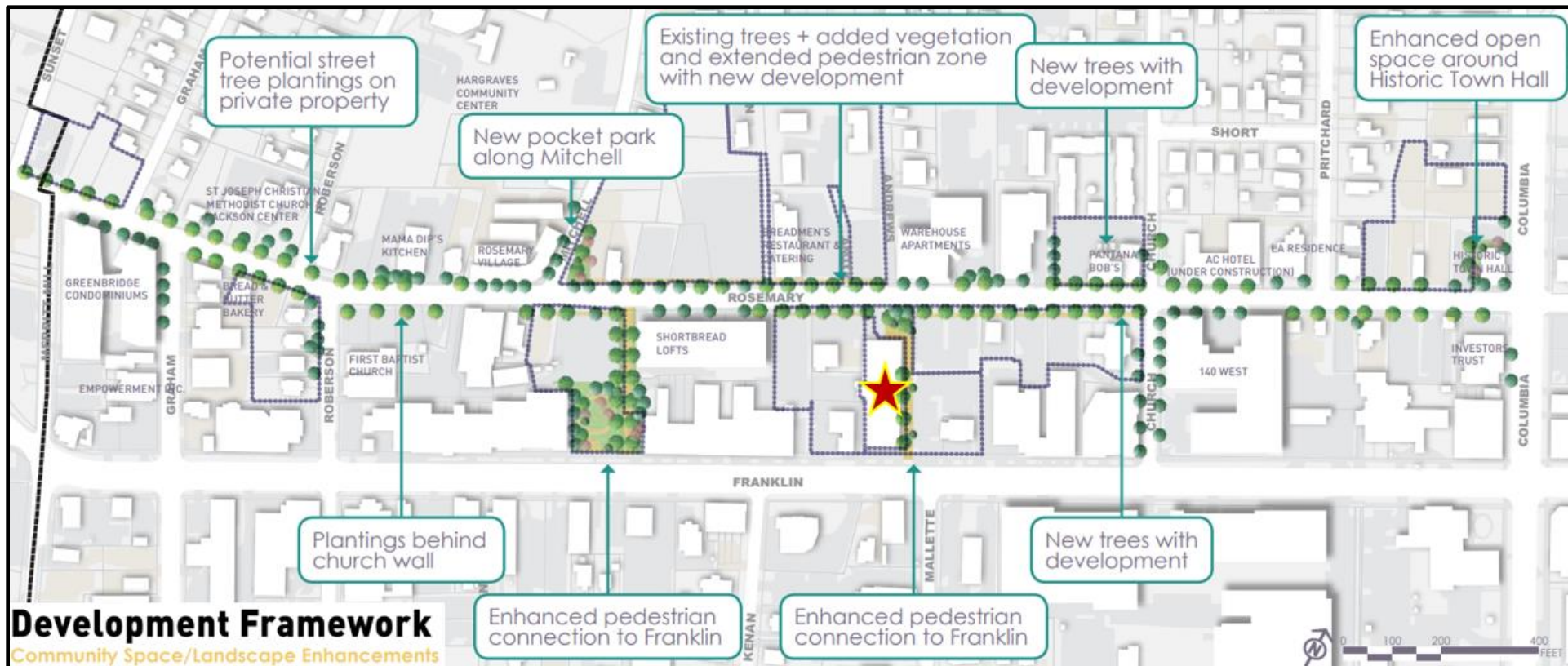




# CONCEPT PLAN REPORT

Chapel Hill Life Sciences Center

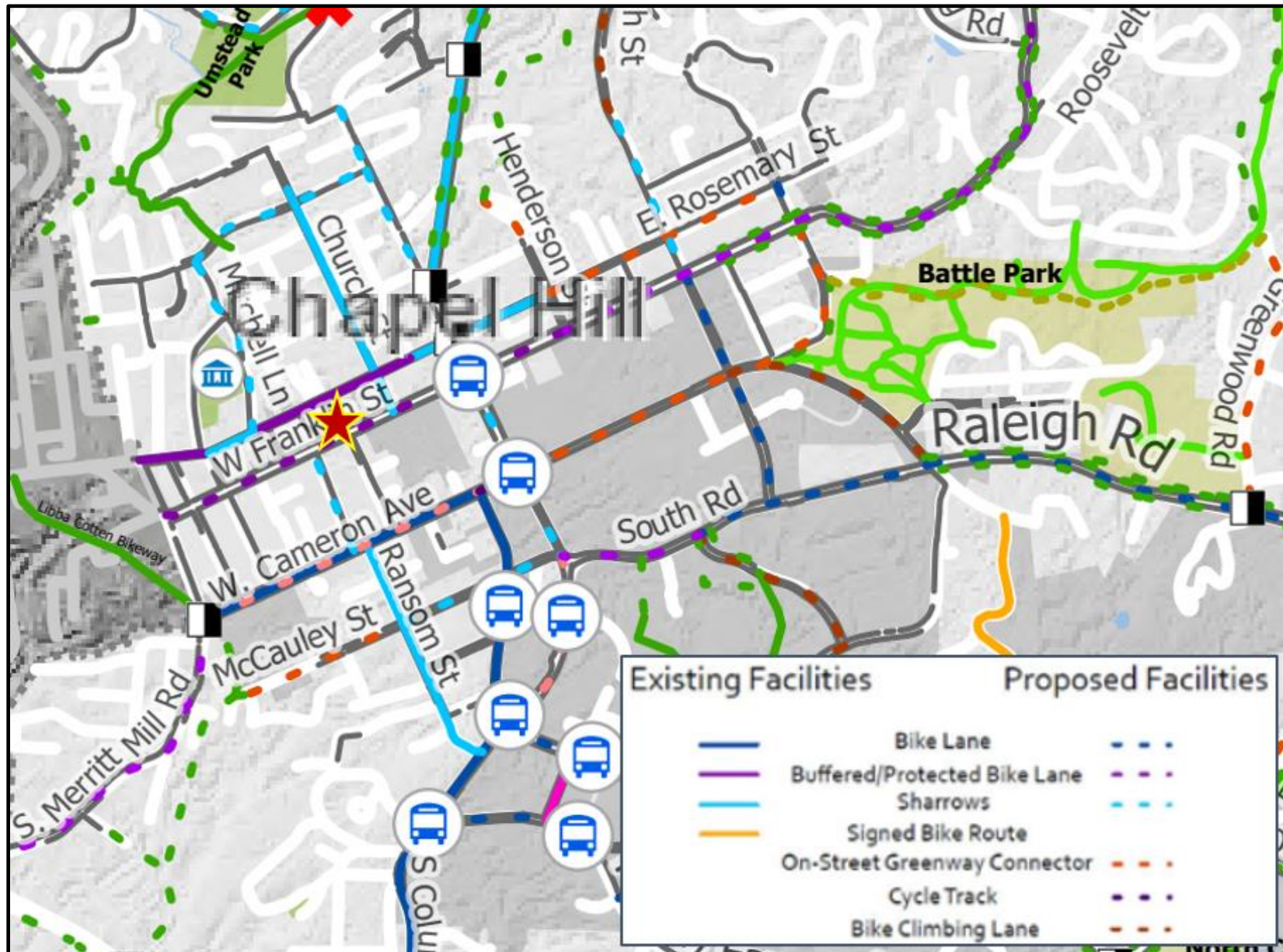
## West Rosemary Street Development Guide (Excerpt)



# CONCEPT PLAN REPORT

Chapel Hill Life Sciences Center

## Mobility and Connectivity Plan (Excerpt)

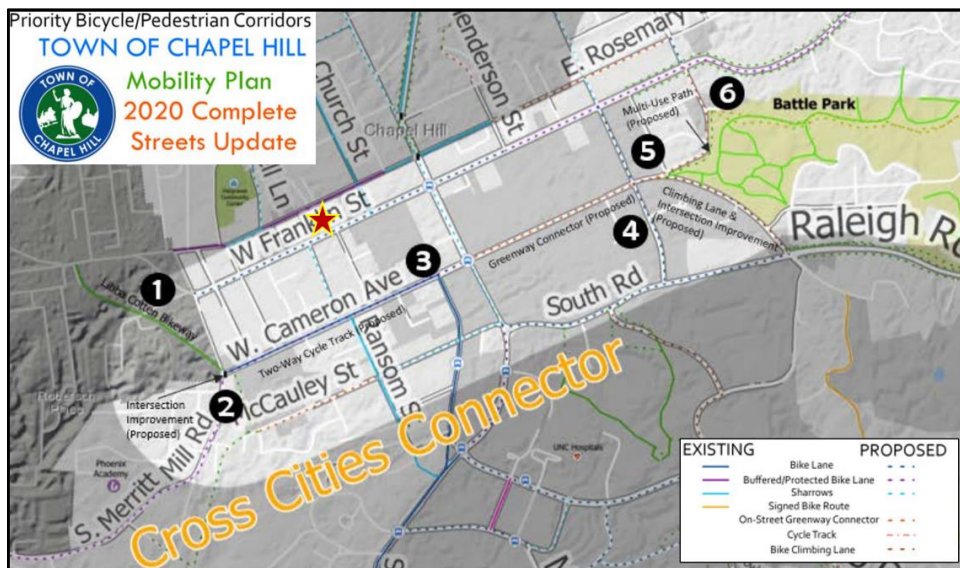
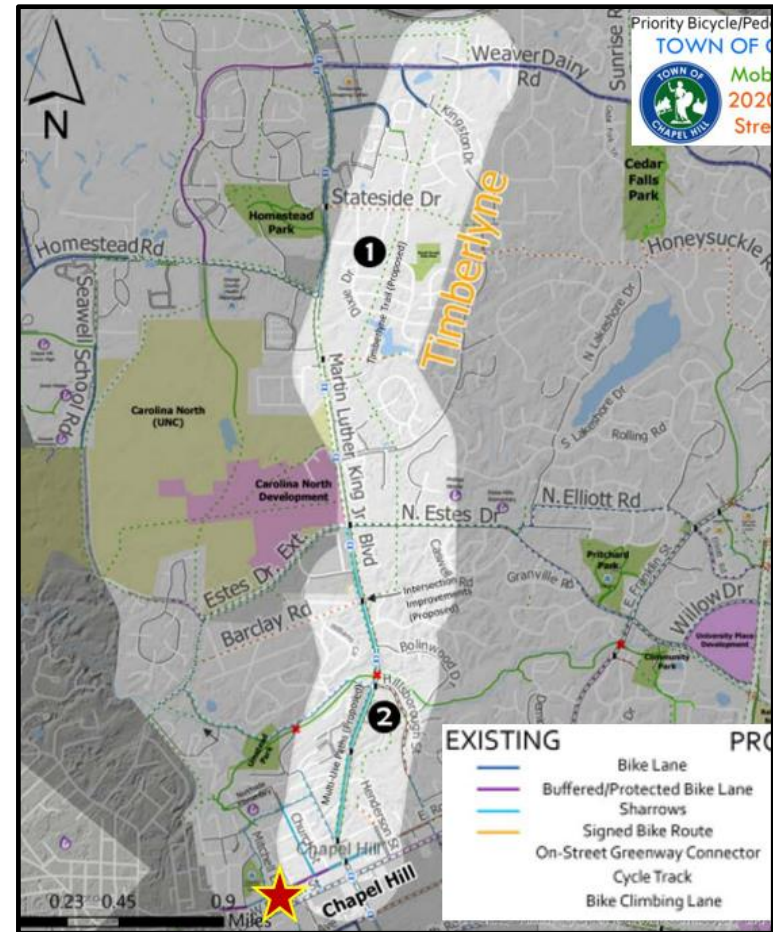
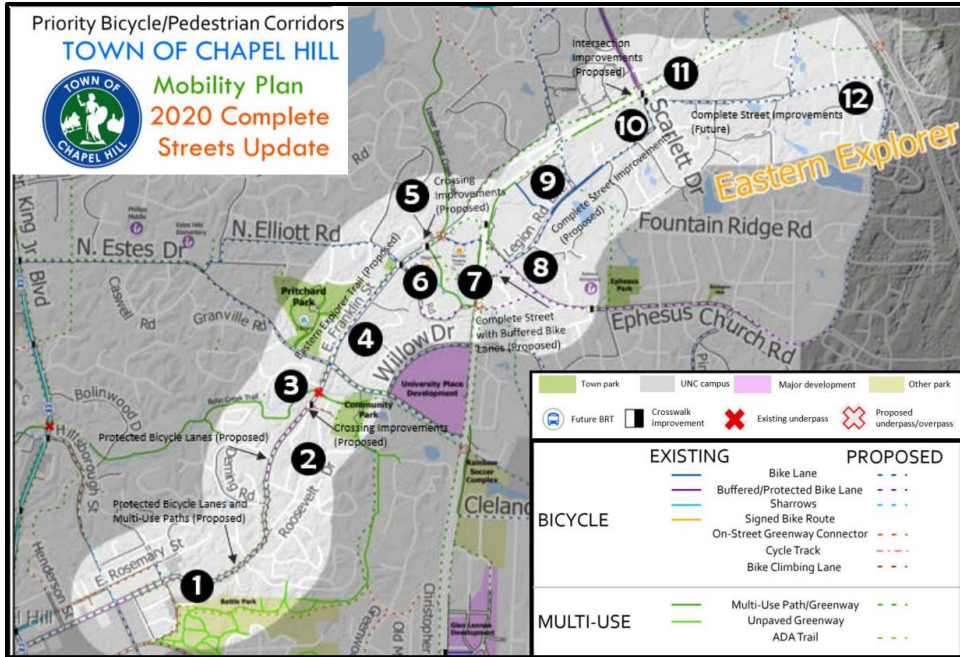




# CONCEPT PLAN REPORT

Chapel Hill Life Sciences Center

## Mobility and Connectivity Plan (Excerpts)

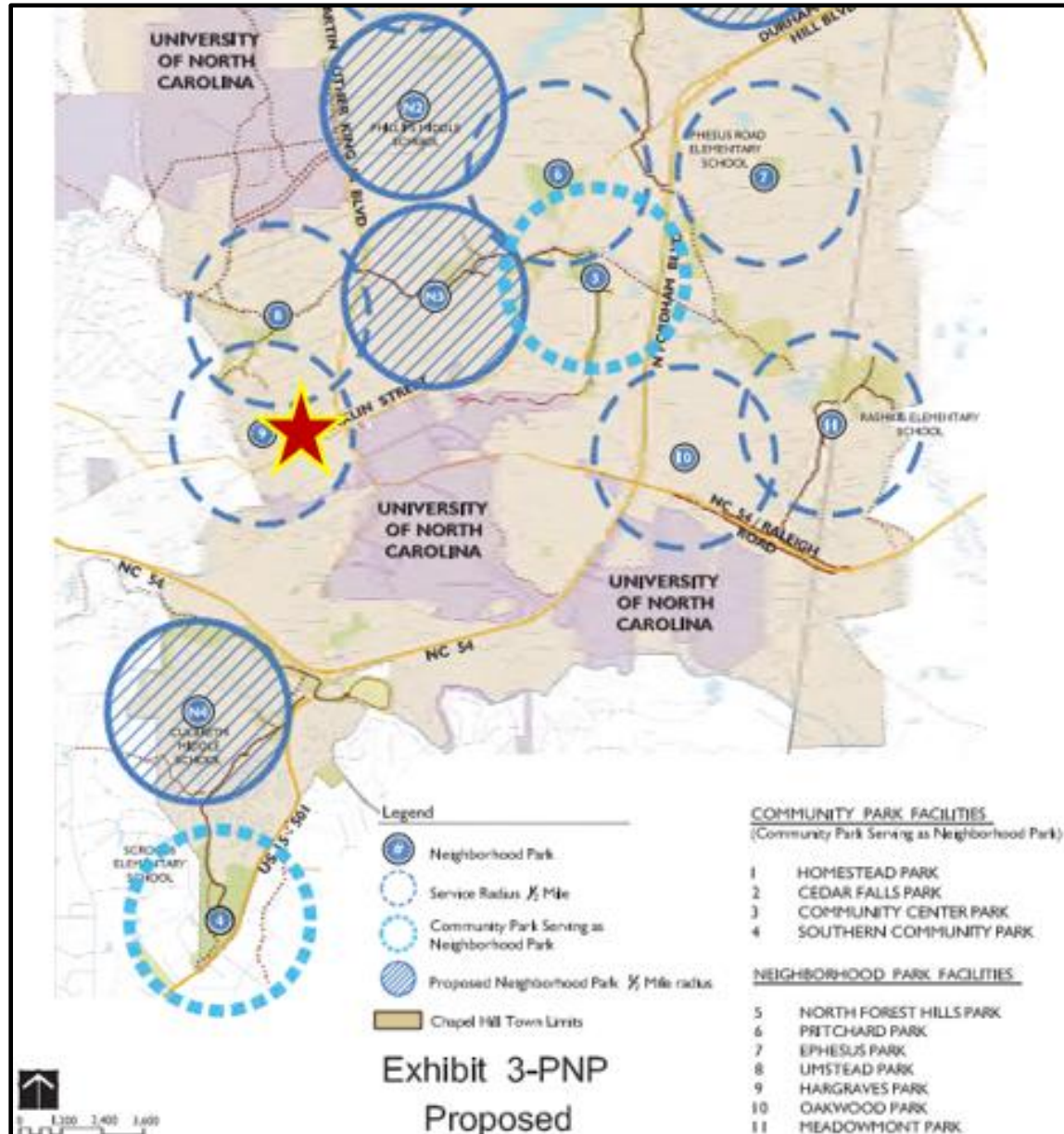




# CONCEPT PLAN REPORT

Chapel Hill Life Sciences Center

## Parks Comprehensive Plan (Excerpt)



# CONCEPT PLAN REPORT

Chapel Hill Life Sciences Center

## Stormwater Management Master Plan (Excerpt)

