

Staff Memorandum



Charting Our Future - Update on Engagement Results for the Draft Focus Area Maps & Principles

Background:

- On [April 5, 2017](#)¹, the Town Council initiated a project to Rewrite the Town's Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO). The Town Council requested that the ordinance rewrite process begin with an effort to refine the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), called the Land Use Plan in *Chapel Hill 2020*, to affirm what is not expected to change and to provide an opportunity to have conversations about future planning that would inform the LUMO Rewrite process.
- Since the beginning of 2019, the Town Council has reviewed the various components of the refined Future Land Use Map. This review included the [Guiding Statements on March 13, 2019](#)² and the [Blueprint](#)³ or "rough draft" of the Focus Area Maps and Principles on May 1, 2019. The Council Committee on Economic Sustainability also reviewed drafts of this Blueprint on [April 5, 2019](#)⁴ and June 7, 2019.
- On [June 26, 2019](#)^{5a}, the Town Council authorized staff to engage with the community on the draft Future Land Use Map.

Findings from the Engagement Opportunities

Since the beginning of August, there have been nineteen in-person engagement opportunities as well as online engagement. Below is a synthesis of the input received to date.

Areas of Agreement

For the most part, the community agrees on the following themes. The numbers next to the statements represent the number of written comments received via e-mail and from in-person & online engagement opportunities. These numbers do not include verbal comments received during internal stakeholder meetings, which were taken into consideration when developing these themes. Further support for these areas of agreement resulted from the "dot" exercise at the public meeting in September. We asked attendees to place green dots next to Focus Area Principles that they supported and red dots next to those items they did not support. A PDF of that exercise, entitled "Dot Exercise," is included in your agenda materials.

¹ http://chapelhill.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=7&clip_id=3077&meta_id=156700

² <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3881199&GUID=00667D70-C56A-4704-BF59-DD4EB508470A&Options=&Search=>

³ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3931189&GUID=BF305E95-EA99-4343-B43C-32279777CBB5&Options=&Search=>

⁴ <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/businesses/council-economic-sustainability-committee>

^{5a} <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/15075/15?curm=6&cury=2019>



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- The importance of great streetscapes-- attractive, walkable streets that promote a livable community; (8)
- A mature tree canopy to shade sidewalks, to balance the scale of buildings, and to mitigate climate change; (4)
- The necessity of sensitive transitions between different land uses and buildings of differing heights and scales; (3)
- The promotion of civic spaces, parks, and opportunities for personal connections; (9)
- The creation of a sense of place in each Focus Area by incorporating streetscape, building design and landscaping in each Focus Area; (4)
- Equitable development that provides housing, employment, and opportunities for all members of the community; (3)
- Multi-modal connectivity to facilitate active transportation, reduce car trips, promote community vibrancy, and create walkable activity centers throughout town; (22)
- Environmental sustainability and resiliency best practices. (11)

Areas of Ongoing Discussions

Below is a summary of the general concerns raised by some community members:

1. Some community members have expressed a desire for the Town Council to agree on the desired population in 2049 prior to adopting a new Future Land Use Map. Some community members wish to ensure that the number of housing units being proposed will support that population. Others would prefer Council to endorse a slow growth philosophy toward population increases;
2. We received comments that the Town's infrastructure, specifically water; sewer; schools; and roads, are not adequate to support any additional development or redevelopment. Some community members have asked that capacity analysis be completed prior to adoption of a revised FLUM; and,
3. Given the amount of floodplain in already developed areas of Town, concerns were raised that development intensification in floodplains is unwise and could lead to increased flooding.

Below is a summary of some development related concerns:

1. Regarding the Northside Neighborhood, there is a split in the community regarding the ongoing applicability of the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) as it relates to development on the north side of West Rosemary. During the Focus Group discussions (please see the document labelled "Takeaways" in your agenda materials.), some participants felt that the NCD was too restrictive on the redevelopment potential along this portion of West Rosemary. Other community members feel that the core height shown adjacent to Northside is too tall and not respectful of the Northside



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Neighborhood.

2. Similarly, core heights in Downtown are a concern for some. These concerns range from:
 - a. An overall concern about more tall buildings Downtown;
 - b. Concern only in areas adjacent to historic areas and single-family homes; and,
 - c. Concern only along East Franklin.
3. When you look at the Focus Area Maps, it is apparent that, in some locations, the maximum heights are not the same on both sides of the street. That lack of symmetry is bothersome for some community members.
4. In general, there is a split within the community about increasing the height of buildings in Town. For some community members, the heights listed on the Focus Area Maps are not tall enough to accommodate growth over the next thirty years and to provide opportunities to move away from a car centric community. Other community members are not ready to see their town become more like a small city. Still others are accepting of remaking their town into a small city, which includes six-story buildings, as long as transitions to adjacent uses and buildings are done well. To see an example of this duality of vision for the Town's future, see the attachment labeled "Example of Comments and Dots."

Reconciling Differing Visions

If the Council wishes to reconcile these differing visions for the future and continue the uniqueness of Chapel Hill, then the community needs to be assured that "places" will be made within the Focus Areas, not individual buildings that do not relate to their surroundings or contribute to the public realm. The Guiding Statements and the Focus Area Principles discuss placemaking, but community focused placemaking is not currently embedded in the LUMO Rewrite process. Adding an interim step between the FLUM update and the LUMO rewrite that focuses on defining streetscapes, street character, and other urban design elements may help to harmonize these diverging views.

Next Steps:

Based on the discussions from this evening and the Work Session on November 18, staff will return in January 2020 with suggested revisions to the Focus Area Maps and Principles.

Regarding the remaining Future Land Use Map (FLUM) components, discussion and consideration of the following elements remain:

1. Precedent images of Character Types;
2. New University-Supportive Mixed Use (USMU) land use category;
3. Revised Map Book; and,
4. Revised Guiding Statements.

Decisions on these remaining items will be necessary prior to Council consideration of the complete FLUM.

