

Staff Memorandum



Charting Our Future - Update on Engagement Efforts and Consideration of Revisions to 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.

Engagement Opportunities

The chart below lists the engagement opportunities to date along with an approximate number of participants. (Some participants forego signing in, and staff estimates participation when this occurs.)

Engagement Opportunities on the Draft Focus Area Maps & Principles	
Event	Number of Participants
Downtown Partnership Board Meeting	11
Latin American Festival (Handed out translated flyer of the upcoming public meeting)	35
Town of Chapel Hill/UNC/UNC Health Care Work Group Meeting	15
Chamber Governing Affairs Committee Meeting	15

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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Drop In Special Meetings for all Town Boards/Commissions (September 9, 16, & 23)	23
Drop In Studio at Carolina Coworking (11:30 AM -1:30 PM on September 10, 11, 17, 18, & 24)	42
Public Meeting (Spanish Interpretation available & utilized; A video ⁵ of the presentation and photos ⁶ are available.)	52
Focus Groups*	32
Drop in Studio at the Library (Sunday, September 22 from 3:30 – 5 PM)	12
Good Neighborhood Community Picnic (Discussed/Introduced Project to community members)	45
Transportation Management Conference (Sept. 25, 2019)	30
*Focus Groups included UNC, Partnership Agencies, Land Use Planning & Design Professionals, Developers & Real Estate Professionals, Local Business & Entrepreneurial Interests, Non-Profit Organizations	

In addition to the above, community members are able to access and comment on the Draft Focus Area Maps utilizing an [online mapping tool](#)⁷. This tool also allows viewers to compare the Land Use categories from the 2012 Land Use Plan with the proposed Character Types. To date, 406 community members have viewed this tool and 29 comments have been recorded. The Project website, [Charting Our Future](#),⁸ also includes a [FLUM informational video](#)⁹ that has been viewed 186 times.

Staff advertised the above input opportunities in a number of different ways:

1. Door hangers on Town buses
2. Digital flyer in PeachJar, which is the digital flyer system utilized by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools
3. Nextdoor, which is a private social network of neighborhoods in Chapel Hill
4. Town press releases and social media channels
5. Flyers at the Seymour Center
6. Public Housing Community newsletter
7. Electronic update from the Downtown Partnership

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idBYEjTNg-c&feature=youtu.be>

⁶ <https://chapelhill.photoshelter.com/galleries/C0000pty2EEoiZTA/G00000W6WzrXAOqc/Charting-Our-Future-Event-9-12-19>

⁷

<https://townofchapelhill.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=520711c2b8ea48fa8e6ea2e5a9454fe9>

⁸ <http://chartingourfuture.info/>

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljYaBs9W-BI&feature=youtu.be>



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8. E-mail to the following groups:
 - a. Affordable Housing Coalition
 - b. Non-profit organizations received Town funding
 - c. Participants in *Chapel Hill 2020*
 - d. Those requesting updates from the Charting Our Future website
 - e. Town Board/Commission members
 - f. Faith Community Contacts
 - g. Graduates of the People's Academy
 - h. Youth contacts from Housing & Community
 - i. Building Integrated Community (BIC) contacts

Staff continues to meet with the FLUM sub-committee of the Planning Commission to review and discuss the Draft Focus Area Maps and Principles. This sub-committee will report its recommendation to the full Planning Commission in October.

Community Feedback on the Draft Focus Area Maps and Principles

Below is a recap of the community comments received from all input opportunities to date. Additional Key Takeaways and verbatim comments from the Public Meeting, prepared by Kimley-Horn, are attached for your information.

1. Glenn Heights – Windsor Circle

The residents of Windsor Circle (Glenn Heights subdivision), which is located in the South Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Focus Area (S. MLK Focus Area), have petitioned the Council to remove their neighborhood from the South Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Focus Area.

The September 5, 2019 draft of the Focus Area Map and Principles designates the Glenn Heights subdivision as Townhouses, etc., which is defined as a medium-intensity residential opportunity that serves as a transitional use to single family homes and provides additional residential units within walking distance of future bus rapid transit stops and the Downtown area. In the S. MLK Focus Area, this character type includes townhomes, duplexes, and small lot single-family homes to increase range of housing prices within proximity to parks and open space.

According to Orange County Land Records, the lots that front on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard are not in the Glenn Heights Subdivision. The following analysis includes the lots fronting on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and for simplicity, the entire area is referred to by the moniker of Glenn Heights.

The Land Use Plan in *Chapel Hill 2020* included Glenn Heights in the S. MLK Focus Area, which resulted in its inclusion on the draft Focus Area Maps. When the Focus Area designation was overlaid on parcels on the Land Use Plan, parcels retained their underlying Land Use Category. In the case of Glenn Heights, that category is Low Residential, 1-4 units per acre.

More than likely, the neighborhood was included in S. MLK Focus Area because of:

- Its location adjacent to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd;



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- The age of the housing stock. Most of the homes were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, which could result in some existing homes being torn down and replaced; and,
- The large lot sizes, which are on average half an acre.

Removal from the Focus Area would mean that the neighborhood would retain its designation of Low Residential on the updated Future Land Use Map. As an alternative to removing the neighborhood from the S. MLK Focus Area, the Council could:

- a) Ask that a new Character Type be created that better reflects individual homes on individual lots and does not include multi-unit residential buildings. An example of such a new Character Type is below.

Small Lot Single Family: This Character Type provides another medium-intensity residential opportunity that serves to further diversify housing options within the Town by filling a gap between large lot single-family homes and multi-unit residential buildings. This Character Type includes homes on small individual lots as well as units clustered together as in a cottage court (Example images will be provided). This Character Type will allow for sensitive infill adjacent to transit.
 - b) Ask that the Townhouse etc Character Type be defined to also include low density single family.
2. The Character Types should be less prescriptive. Community members expressed that the Character Types are too narrowly drawn, and to insure the flexibility necessary to make the FLUM useful over the long term, the Character Type names and descriptions should be revisited.

This concern highlights the inherent tension between flexibility and certainty. More tightly defined Character Types seem to provide more certainty while less rigid Character Types give the flexibility necessary to better accommodate whatever land uses may arise in the next thirty years. Therefore, given the thirty year time horizon for this FLUM, it may make sense to revisit the Character Types.

Less prescriptive Character Types might comprise the following;

- Residential
 - Transit-supportive residential
 - Mixed Use
 - Commercial (broadly defined)
 - Institutional/Civic
 - Open space
3. Request to add additional parcels to the draft Focus Area Maps. One parcel adjacent to Meadowmont, and the other is adjacent to Southern Village. Please see the attached maps.



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4. In general, the community remains divided over the increased height shown on the draft Focus Area Maps. (For a summary of community feedback received prior to this engagement effort, please see the Project [website](#).)

For those opposed to the height, there is a concern that increased height will change the very nature of Chapel Hill, that recent developments do not adequately respect and enliven the public realm, and that increased development could further exacerbate flooding concerns.

For those in support of the height, they see the height as a way to accommodate growth within a compact area of Town thereby enhancing walkability, multimodal connections, and utilization of land already covered, for the most part, with impervious surfaces.

Major Changes Included in the Draft Focus Area Maps & Principles

As a result of Council's direction in June, the following changes were made:

- In the North 15-501 Focus Area, the vacant parcel behind 111 Erwin Road is now designated as Townhouses, etc; and,
- In the North MLK Focus Area, the Courtyards of Homestead is also designated as Townhouses, etc.

In addition, references to eight story buildings near BRT Stations in the North and South MLK Jr. Focus areas have been removed from the Focus Area Principles. The text now reads, "Leverage future transit service by increasing density and intensity within new developments near planned transit stations."

Next Steps:

Additional input opportunities will be scheduled during the Fall, and a complete summary of input received will be brought before Council before the end of the calendar year.

