

Chapel Hill Town Council – LUMO “Whys” and “Whats”

April 8, 2026

“Whys”: Single sentence explaining the reasons we are rewriting the LUMO.

Notes: There are many ways that our interests and priorities can be organized. Ultimately, we should aim for around 5.

Notes: The tracked changes in this document are based on Councilmember and staff input from the April 8, 2026, Council work session.

<p>Drawing from previous LUMO rewrite materials, our GOALS LIST might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. User Friendliness – Improve LUMO organization and the Town’s administrative processes2. Housing – Increase housing diversity, attainability, and supply3. Economic Development & Complete Community Land Use—Supporting a diverse and resilient local economy4. Transportation and Parking – Foster a multimodal, climate-aligned mobility system5. Environment and Sustainability – Build resilience and protect key environmental systems6. Recreation, Open Space, and the Public Realm – Ensure a healthy town and vibrant public realm	<p>Alternate Goals List:</p> <p>Overarching Interests: Complete Community, Sustainability, and Equity:</p> <p>Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. User Friendliness Why: Improve LUMO organization and the Town’s administrative processes2. Housing Diversity, Attainability & Supply Why: Increase housing diversity, attainability, and supply3. Economic Development Land Use Why: Support a diverse and resilient local economy4. Built Environment and Public Realm Why: Ensure the physical form of the Town supports livability, economic vitality, and equitable access to daily needs5. Environment and Resilience Why: Build resilience and protect key environmental systems
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“Whats” describe what we are trying to accomplish through this LUMO rewrite.

Notes: These are meant to be **high-level** and should **avoid getting into the specific ways each will be accomplished.**

Goal (Why)	Priorities (What)	Alternate Version Goals	Alternate Version Priorities (What)
<p>GOAL 1 — User Friendliness – Improve LUMO organization and the Town’s administrative processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the LUMO clear, intuitive, and easy to use for all audiences. • Improve predictability and reduce ambiguity in permitted uses. • Streamline the development application and review process while ensuring administrative pathways support Complete Community outcomes. • Ensure information is transparent, accessible, and easy to navigate. Balance efficiency with community benefits that cannot be achieved solely through administrative processes. • Streamline processes and reduce uncertainty to encourage locally driven infill and middle-housing development, especially by smaller and first-time builders. 	<p>GOAL 1 — User Friendliness Why: Improve LUMO organization and the Town’s administrative processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the LUMO clear, intuitive, and easy to use for all audiences. • Improve predictability and reduce ambiguity in permitted uses. • Streamline the development application and review process while ensuring administrative pathways support Complete Community outcomes. • Ensure information is transparent, accessible, and easy to navigate. • Balance efficiency with community benefits that cannot be achieved solely through administrative processes. • Streamline processes to reduce uncertainty and encourage infill and middle housing development.
<p>GOAL 2 — Housing Diversity, Attainability & Supply – Increase housing diversity, attainability, and supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase density is interspersed with public amenities and green spaces and connected to destinations by transit lines or greenways. Expand permissions for middle-income and missing middle housing in appropriate areas. • Maintain or increase affordable housing production across town, including within market-rate projects. 	<p>GOAL 2 — Housing Diversity, Attainability & Supply Why: Increase housing diversity, attainability, and supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase density interspersed with amenities and green spaces and connected to destinations by transit lines or greenways. • Expand permissions for middle-income and missing-middle housing in a mindful way

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage smaller, more attainable units. • Ensure context-sensitive infill that fits within existing neighborhoods. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain or increase affordable housing production across town, including within market-rate projects. • Encourage smaller, more attainable units. • Ensure context-sensitive infill that fits within existing neighborhoods.
GOAL 3 — Economic Development & Complete Community Land Use—Supporting a diverse and resilient local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce regulatory barriers for small and locally owned businesses. • Create opportunities for retail and services,, job growth and targeted industries in appropriate areas.. • Expand the commercial tax base through mixed-use and redevelopment opportunities. • Enable adaptive reuse of existing buildings for economic activity. • Support neighborhood-scale commercial uses that provide daily needs close to home and reinforce a balanced jobs-housing mix. • Align land-use patterns with Complete Community principles to ensure equitable access, mixed-use opportunities, and predictable development patterns. 	GOAL 3 — Economic Development & Complete Community Land Use Why: Support a diverse and resilient local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support neighborhood-scale commercial uses that provide daily needs close to home and reinforce a balanced jobs-housing mix. • Align land use patterns with Complete Community principles to ensure equitable access, mixed-use opportunities, and predictable development patterns. • Other suggestions: • Improve connectivity and mobility options for people of all ages and abilities. • Support expansion green space and civic gathering areas that serve multiple functions.
GOAL 4 — Transportation and Parking – Foster a multimodal, climate-aligned mobility system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce car dependency. • Align parking and transportation standards with transit-oriented development (TOD) goals. 	GOAL 4 — Built Environment for a Complete Community Why: Ensure the physical form of the Town supports livability,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development that balances and arranges uses for a Complete Community and attracts/supports small, local businesses. •

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure developments support multimodal access (bike, pedestrian, transit, micromobility). • Improve safety and connectivity that is accessible and intuitive. • Support reduced car dependency through greenway-oriented and transit-oriented design. • Require EV-ready and electric-mobility-ready infrastructure in new development to support long-term electrification and climate-aligned mobility. 	<p>economic vitality, and equitable access to daily needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support accessible and well-distributed civic spaces (parks, plazas, placemaking spaces). • Mobility infrastructure and connections that enable safe, low-car or car-free lifestyles. • Support reduced dependence on parking through context-appropriate standards. • Building form and site design that create walkable, connected, people-centered environments. •
<p>GOAL 5 — Environment and Sustainability – Build resilience and protect key environmental systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Resource Conservation District (RCD) protections and stream buffers to support ecological health and habitat connectivity. • Require low-impact development (LID) and green infrastructure in site design. • Improve tree protection, expand tree canopy, and reduce heat. • Modernize stormwater requirements to mitigate flooding, address climate risk, and improve equity. • Integrate sustainability, resilience, and energy-efficient building performance standards into all zoning districts and development types. • Prioritize resilience strategies in areas with higher climate vulnerability. 	<p>GOAL 5 — Environment & Sustainability Why: Build resilience and protect key environmental systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect Resource Conservation District (RCD) protections and stream buffers to support ecological health and habitat connectivity. • Improve tree protection, expand tree canopy, and reduce urban heat. • Modernize stormwater requirements to mitigate flood and climate risk and improve equity. • Allow incentives for sustainability, resilience, and energy-efficient building performance. • Prioritize resilience strategies in areas with higher climate vulnerability. • Protect land important for conservation, natural stormwater infiltration, or careful use such as greenways.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other suggestions: • .
<p>GOAL 6 — Recreation, Open Space, and the Public Realm – Ensure a healthy town and vibrant public realm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to high-quality, inclusive parks and civic spaces. • Support walkable, vibrant, and climate-responsive public spaces. • Promote equitable access to recreation and green space across all neighborhoods. • Expand greenways, trails, and public spaces. 		

“Hows” are the specific changes that will help us accomplish our specific goals (Why) and Priorities (Whats).

For Wednesday night; we will be focused on the Whys and Whats. I have heard interest from Council Members in providing a way to capture any “Hows” for future consideration. One suggestion is to give Council Members notecards to write them down and submit at the end of the session.

Before the Legislative Process: Using these goals (WHATS) as a guide, we would employ a policy decision matrix, like the one below, to walk through proposed changes (HOWS) that apply to each:

Example: Policy Direction Matrix--LUMO Rewrite						
Topic Area	Background Summary & Why it Matters	Relevant Council Goals/Priorities (from above)	EXAMPLES of Options for Council Consideration (Council partners with planning and legal departments)	EXAMPLES of Tradeoffs and Implications (Council partners with planning and legal departments)	Council Direction	Did we meet relevant goals? How do we measure success?
Middle Income & Missing Middle Housing	Background and summary of what this is, why this is important, why recommendations are what they are. Summary of proposed allowances (triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, etc.) and location criteria. Include any numeric or concrete goals that may have been set or should be considered, e.g.: 485 housing units per year per CC).		A. Allow along arterials/collectors/greenways only B. Broader allowance in residential zones C. Limited allowance with conditions D. Other	Infrastructure capacity; neighborhood impacts; affordability outcomes; workforce v. AH v. market rate	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	