

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2019 11:20 AM
To: wego4@mac.com
Cc: Judy Johnson; Brian Litchfield; Henry DePietro; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Donna Bell; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Nancy Oates; Pam Hemminger; Rachel Schaevitz; Tai Huyn; Amy Harvey; Carolyn Worsley; Catherine Lazorko; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ralph Karpinos; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: FW: Kidzu and the proposed Redevelopment of the Southern Village Park and Ride
Attachments: Southern Area Focus Concerns.docx; ATT00001.txt; Charting our Future 2019 revised.pdf; ATT00002.txt; Screen Shot 2019-11-19 at 5.12.59 PM.png

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

If your email is related to a development application or a particular issue being addressed by the Council, your comments will be made part of the record. If applicable, we encourage you to attend any public meetings related to the items addressed in your email.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin

Jeanette Coffin
Office Assistant
Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

-----Original Message-----

From: John Christian [mailto:wego4@mac.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2019 11:06 AM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Cc: Maurice Jones <mjones@townofchapelhill.org>; Mary Jane Nirdlinger <mnirdlinger@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Kidzu and the proposed Redevelopment of the Southern Village Park and Ride

External email: Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to reportspam@townofchapelhill.org

I understand you will be getting a briefing by the new Mayors Southern Area Focus Committee tonight. I wanted to make you aware of my concerns with these projects and urge you to proceed cautiously. I am not opposed at this point to either private development but I do have concern about using public land for them. IF they do go forward it must be totally LEGAL and there should be a clear showing of public benefit (and compensation) that exceeds their current value. If not, it will be seen a public land giveaway by the Mayor and Council for the private interests that lobbied for them.

I also understand that some of my concerns and questions may already have been answered and I am just not aware of what has happened behind the scenes. But I would hope that a more rigorous transparent planning process results that will address all of these concerns and questions.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion. My detailed concerns and questions are attached below.

John Christian
121 Tharrington Dr
612-599-0704

Questions/Concerns over Southern Area Focus Area Planning and the Redevelopment of the Southern Village Park and Ride and Adjacent City Owned land for Kidzu Building

My overall concern is that both the Kidzu private nonprofit project and the redevelopment of the Park and Ride are being driven by private development interests and are not being driven by overall City Strategic goals or full consideration of the public interest. I am very concerned about the lack of transparency and what appears to be an uncoordinated and poorly managed effort by the City.

I also have a major concern about turning over City owned property to private interests (nonprofit or for profit) either by sale or lease. Is it even legal? Land is at a premium in CH and using it for City facilities or services that benefit the public should be the primary consideration.....not doing questionable deals to turn over valuable City property to private interests.

I am not opposed, at this point, to either private development but I do have concern about using public land for them. IF they do go forward it must be totally LEGAL and there should be a clear showing of public benefit (and compensation) that exceeds their current public value (including monetary). **If not, it will be seen as public land giveaway by the Mayor and Council to private interests.** I urge you to be very careful with this. It's very different than a \$ incentive package that can be justified by new jobs, affordable housing and increased tax base.

At this point, in my opinion, the effort is not well planned or managed. Perhaps this is the "storming" phase of idea development, but it needs to now rapidly move into the "norming and performing" phase to get it on a responsible planning and decision track if it is to be pursued.

I also recognize that some of my concerns or questions may have been addressed adequately and I am just not aware of those efforts. I am very open to learning more about what has been done to address my concerns. I would hope a more orderly and responsible future public process would provide that information.

NOTE: The private non-profit Kidzu project and the Park and Ride redevelopment project could possibly move forward separately but they are strongly interconnected in a number of major ways, including parking, road modifications, sewer, storm water abatement, water supply, etc. At this point I would NOT recommend moving the Kidzu project forward separately as long as the Park and Ride redevelopment is under consideration.

Concerns and questions:

1. There is a draft change in the Charting our Future 2020 plan (re-labeled as the 2019 revised plan for 2049) for the Southern Focus area to change the land use designation from Institutional (City owned) to Commercial (multiple use up to 4 stories). There was no explanation for this proposed change. I also saw no comments in the open comment period that suggested the Park and Ride should be made available for commercial development.

- What is the rationale for this change? Who proposed it? Was there broad public support?
- Why is no explanation of the rationale? It just appears buried in the documents.
- What is the status of this land use change proposal? Is there an active process to change the land use designation without public notice? Who is pushing this?
- Why the lack of transparency?

2. The City Council directed that a development agreement be drafted by the Town Manager for a private nonprofit Kidzu Children's Museum to locate on City owned forested property in the Southern Focus area. I understand there are discussions to lease the property for \$1 per year.

- Is it legal to sell or lease City property to a private developer? If legal, what is the public benefit to be realized that will offset the cost to taxpayers? I understand the land is valued at 2 Million dollars. Will the public be compensated 2M for the use of this land?
- Will property taxes be waived by the City for the nonprofit? If so, what is the public benefit that would justify this action?
- How does this fit with a long term strategic plan for City facilities or services? Given that developable land is in short supply in CH would a better use of this land be for a future city government facility or service?
- Are there Federal or State cost sharing funds that purchased this property that would dictate conditions for future sale or lease of the property? What are those conditions and are they compatible with private development of these properties?
- What are the public benefits from this lease arrangement? How does the public benefit? Will there be areas in the building and on the grounds that will be open to the public without charge?
- What are the plans for additional parking at the new Kidzu facility? Will it impact and reduce the parking available for the Community Park? Will there be additional parking made available funded by Kidzu?
- The current site is a nice wooded buffer for the Community Park. Will there be consideration of landscaping to minimize the hardscape of the building?

3. There is activity to plan a redevelopment of the Southern Park and Ride lot that I understand a local private developer has proposed. I understand this would result in the sale or lease of the land to that private developer who would build retail and offices on the site.

- What overall public benefits would be served to justify such a proposal? Beyond additional property tax income?
- Who is behind this redevelopment proposal and what are their interests?
- Is there a specific development plan that has already been developed?
- Is it legal for a government to sole source a major development to be built on public land?
- Has there been contact and discussions with other stakeholders including the church, Scroggs school, dog park and community park managers, transit authority including Park and Ride

managers, BRT planners, park and ride users, dog park users and Southern Community park users?

-What would be the plan for the BRT station which now is planned for the park and ride lot?

-Would the Park and Ride lot be relocated and paid for by the developer? To where? Would it be expanded? Or have less capacity?

-Would the dog park be affected? This public amenity is important to many residents.

--How does this fit with a long term strategic plan for City facilities and services. Given that developable land is in short supply in CH would a better use of this land be to keep it in reserve for a future public purpose?

-Are there Federal or State cost sharing funds that purchased this property that would dictate conditions for future sale or lease of the property. What are those conditions and are they compatible with private development of these properties?

-Who would pay for any new infrastructure such as sewer, water lines, storm abatement facilities, road or traffic improvements needed?

- Why the lack of transparency about the development of this proposal until recently? What is the timeline for this redevelopment planning and what is the public information and review schedule?

- What is the function of the Mayors special Southern Area Focus Group Committee? Are they to provide oversight and represent the public interest? Or are they expected to rubber stamp what has been developed behind closed doors between City personnel and the developers? I understand that both Kidzu representatives and developer representatives are on this committee. They will certainly attempt to influence the Committee to support their projects and the report will be subject to bias. The fox is clearly in the henhouse with this Committee.

- What is the relationship of the Park and Ride project to the Obey Creek Project? Is this new development needed? Obey Creek has not gone forward for economic reasons as I understand it. Why does the City think that the Park and Ride redevelopment has a better chance?

What to do going forward?

The City should assign more direct responsibility to the professionals in the Planning Department for further action. The Planning Department should develop an action plan and timeline for both the Kidzu project and the redevelopment planning effort. The effort should move forward in an adaptive mode so that as new information or constraints are identified, the redevelopment plan can be modified accordingly. Along with the Planning Department, the Public Affairs department should develop a public information and involvement strategy to ensure transparency and appropriate citizen involvement.

The action plan should include:

1. A Vision Statement and goals for the effort to be adopted by the City Council. The Vision statement should clearly reflect that the public interest is the primary driver and that any proposal would need to clearly demonstrate enhanced public benefits (net gain) over the baseline. Perhaps this would be a good task for the Mayors Southern Area Focus Group (but developed without input from the project proponents who are currently seated on this

committee....). The SAFG could also continue to provide oversight over the effort and receive regular briefings from City staff.

2. A series of working group meetings with key stakeholders to develop optional scenarios along with statements of costs, benefits and constraints. The public should be invited to observe these meetings and given a structured opportunity to provide input and ideas for consideration at the beginning or end of each meeting.

The current list of major stakeholders seems to include:

- Kidzu Children Museum Representatives
- DR Bryant, Southern Village Developer
- Market Street Church
- Scroggs School
- CH Bus/Transit Department
- CH Recreation Department (Dog Park and Southern Community Park)
- CH Public safety and traffic officials
- CH and Orange County BRT Officials
- State DOT (for any modifications to 15/501)
- Federal agencies that may have provided grants to the City for the Park and Ride Property or the adjacent City owned land parcel
- Dog Park Users
- Park and Ride Users
- Southern Community Park Users
- Adjacent landowners
- General Public in the southern area

3. As constraints are identified, City staff should be assigned to research those constraints for the stakeholder group to feed into the evolving plan. A major example is any requirements that Federal or State agencies put on the properties as a condition of a grant that supported the purchase of these parcels.

4. The action plan should also review the City's strategic plan for future public building or facility needs to determine if these sites might be needed in the future. If there are such future needs, they should not be given to private interests. An example might be Park expansion, police substation, new City Hall, Indoor teen or senior recreation center, swimming pool, etc.

5. A timeline should be developed that includes appropriate public involvement and opportunities for input....both in the early stages of the planning and then for final decisionmaking.

6. Any final decision by the City Council should be backed up by a written decision document that clearly lays out the public benefits of the action and a clear demonstration that there will be a net gain of public benefit that will offset the loss of these public resources. This should

also include a showing that the monetary value of the land will be fully compensated by the developer.

Charting Our Future

A Story Map



Comparing the Existing Land Use Plan with the proposed Future Land...

What is Charting Our Future?

Charting Our Future is a unique Town project designed to chart the next course and to think about future growth and development in Chapel Hill.

The Town is updating the **Land Use Plan in Chapel Hill 2020**, which depicts intended future uses for each piece of property in Town. This update is predominantly limited to commercial areas in Town, so most land uses will not change.

This revised Plan will guide revisions to the Town's Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) or "rule book" for development.

What do you think?

The map on the **right** is the Land Use Plan from **Chapel Hill 2020**, which the Town Council adopted in 2012. The map on the **left** depicts the **proposed** Future Land Uses for these Focus Areas.

Click on either map to compare the proposed Future Land Use Map designations with the Land Use Plan from **Chapel Hill 2020**.

Submit a comment on the draft Future Land Use Map by clicking here or on the comment link in the pop-up messages that appear when you click on either map.

For more information about Charting Our Future including additional public



South 15-501/Gateway

This area is located in the **South 15-501/Gateway** land use planning focus area.

The land use class designated for this area in the CH 2020 plan is **Commercial Mixed Use - Max 4 Stories**.



600 ft



15-501 South Institutional

This area is located in the **15-501 South** land use planning focus area.

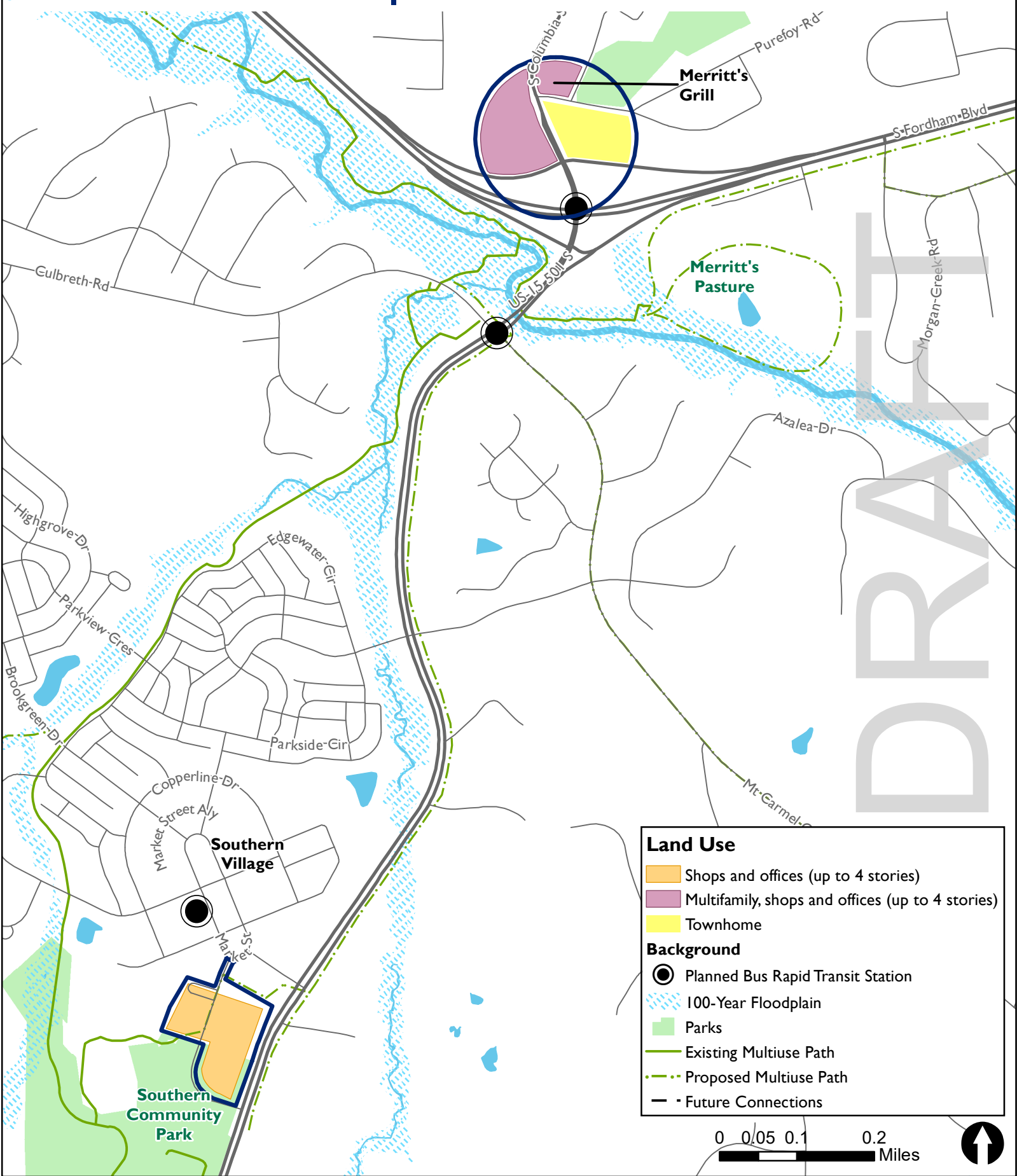
The land use class designated for this area in the CH 2020 plan is **Institutional**.

If there is a prescribed unit density for this use class it is listed here:



South I5-501 Gateway

Future Land Use | In 2049

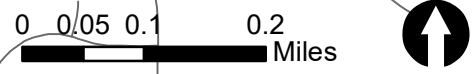


Land Use

- Shops and offices (up to 4 stories)
- Multifamily, shops and offices (up to 4 stories)
- Townhome

Background

- Planned Bus Rapid Transit Station
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Parks
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Proposed Multiuse Path
- Future Connections



South 15-501 Gateway/Southern Village Park and Ride

Gateway nodes providing a mixture of uses and housing types.

As two gateway nodes on the southside of Chapel Hill, this Focus Area includes a mixture of uses, housing types, and open spaces that respect the differences of the South 15-501 Gateway and the Southern Village Park and Ride. These areas are envisioned to improve connectivity within and to the Focus Areas as well as to future transit service.

Overview of Current Conditions

This Focus Area includes two redevelopment areas in the southern portion of the Town. The first area includes a gateway node on South Columbia Street just north of NC 54. This area was selected for additional study due to the broad interest in taking a proactive approach to planning the town's major gateways. The second portion of the Focus Area is two parcels centered on Town-owned land near Southern Village. One parcel is currently used as a park and ride lot and is slated to become the terminal station of the Chapel Hill Bus Rapid Transit system. The second parcel is open space. Future premium transit has the potential to change the development context in the surrounding area, necessitating a proactive planning effort to determine the best use of this small Focus Area. This area also has been identified as the future home of Kidzu Children's Museum, which will occupy a small part of the Town-owned land and will serve as an economic driver for the node.

Focus Area Principles

Connectivity & Mobility

- Bicycle and pedestrian connections should link complimentary uses and users to the multimodal network, including existing bike lanes on South Columbia Street and the Morgan Creek Trails and Merritt's Pasture.
- The location and visibility of these nodes, including access to existing and future transit service, and proximity to major roadways should be enhanced with improved access to adjacent neighborhoods, employment, or amenities.
- The development should provide pedestrian and vehicular connections within the nodes and to adjacent areas.
- Connectivity and mobility improvements should make it easier to traverse South Columbia Street.

Land Use

- Changes to the area should be complementary to existing residential uses. Areas outside the Focus Area with a low density residential land use designation will remain, including those on the west side of South Columbia Street.
- New housing should be incorporated into the gateway node due to its proximity to future transit service.

Placemaking, Street Character, and Urban Form

- Reinforce the southern gateway role of these areas with unique and coordinated design elements such as landscaping, signage and branding, and streetscape development.
- The form, use, and design of the nodes should include transitions to align with the character and fabric of the existing community.
- The form and pattern for future development should reflect the 2015 scenario planning process for the park-and-ride location, which includes shops and offices that front internal and external streets, structured parking wrapped with buildings, and on-street parking where appropriate.



- Active frontages are encouraged to create vibrancy and ensure pedestrian activity over time. These frontages should consider the placement of buildings on the site, the location of primary building entrances, streetscapes, and pedestrian-scaled amenities. In some cases, active frontages may mean that retail and services should be allowed on the first floor within the Apartment character type. Active frontages in this Focus Area should include South Columbia Street within the South 15-501 Gateway node and streets internal to the Southern Village Park and Ride site. (See Activated Street Frontage Map.)

Density & Intensity

- Promote development at a scale that complements the surrounding area.
- As the terminal station for the bus rapid transit system, transit-oriented development should be encouraged with apartments and a mix of uses.

Environmental

- Stormwater management strategies shall be coordinated and applied within the two nodes.
- Green building concepts such as sustainable siting, energy efficiency, water efficiency, and sustainable construction materials should be encouraged.

Character Types

Predominant Uses

Townhomes, etc. In the South 15-501 Gateway node, this character type maintains the residential use south of Purefoy Road but increases to a medium density with townhomes, duplexes, and small-lot single-family homes.

Shops and Offices (up to 4 stories). Located in the Southern Village Park and Ride node, this character type provides a high-intensity commercial node near the planned terminus of the Chapel Hill Bus Rapid Transit system. This character type reflects previous planning efforts by the Town.

Multifamily, Shops, and Offices (up to 4 stories). This character type accounts for more than half of the South 15-501 Gateway node to promote smaller scale walkable activity nodes in proximity to the future bus rapid transit station. Uses may include retail, office, neighborhood-scale services, and multifamily residential.

Parks & Open Space. The South 15-501 Gateway node preserves the existing open space located northwest of the intersection of Purefoy Road and Howell Street.









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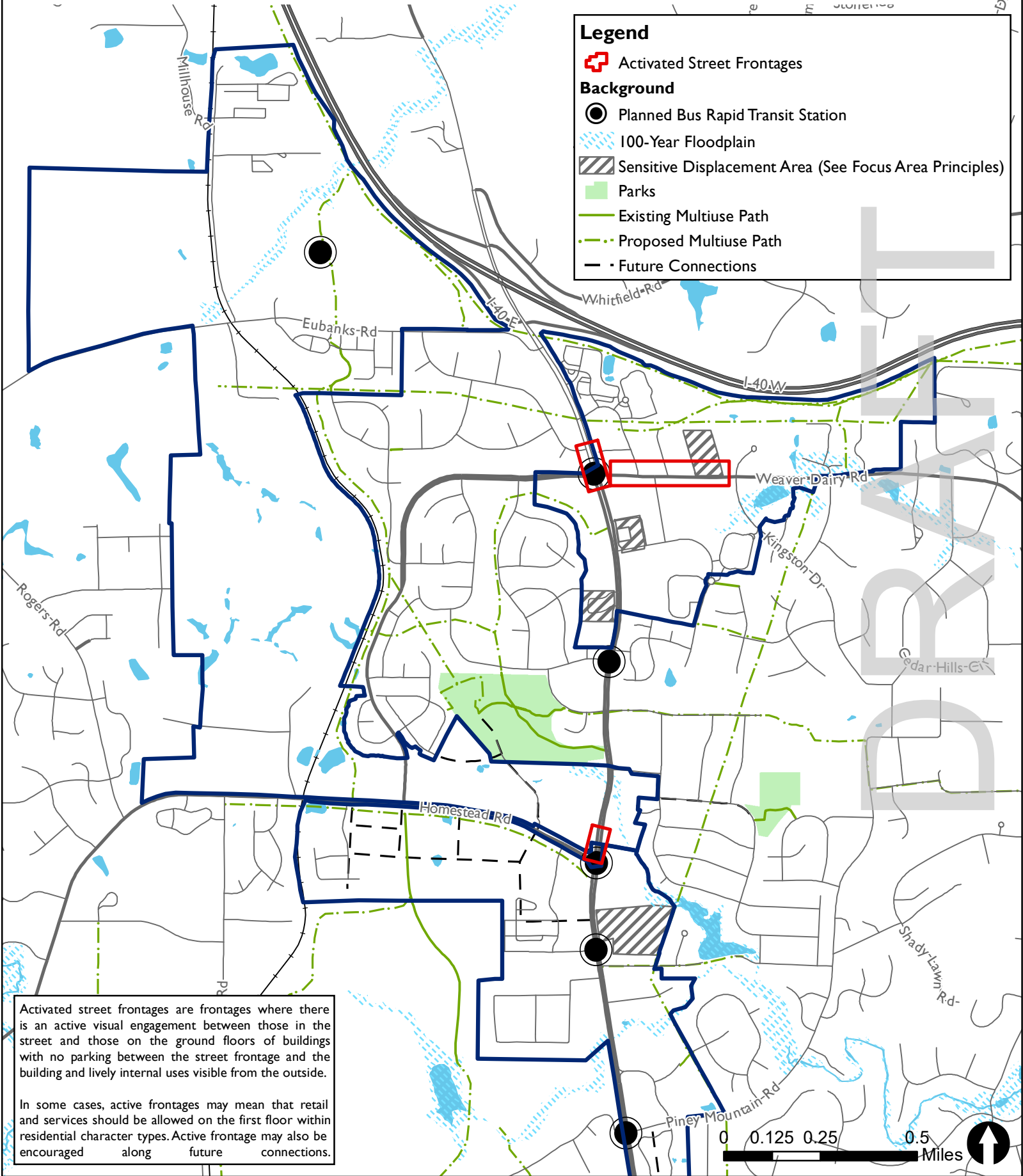


North Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

Activated Street Frontage | In 2049

Legend

-  Activated Street Frontages
- Background**
-  Planned Bus Rapid Transit Station
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  Sensitive Displacement Area (See Focus Area Principles)
-  Parks
-  Existing Multiuse Path
-  Proposed Multiuse Path
-  Future Connections



Activated street frontages are frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floors of buildings with no parking between the street frontage and the building and lively internal uses visible from the outside.

In some cases, active frontages may mean that retail and services should be allowed on the first floor within residential character types. Active frontage may also be encouraged along future connections.

