

Staff Memorandum



Charting Our Future – Reconsideration of Petition from Residents of Glenn Heights

Background:

During the engagement opportunities for draft Focus Area Maps and Principles, the residents of the Glenn Heights (Windsor Circle) neighborhood, which is located adjacent to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard between Estes Drive and Homestead Road, petitioned the Town Council to remove their neighborhood from the South Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Focus Area. The Town Council originally heard their request on [October 2, 2019](#)¹ and will consider the neighborhood petition again this evening since they did not come to consensus.

Glenn Heights – Windsor Circle and the Draft Focus Area Maps

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 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. Because the residents of Glenn Heights object to this Townhouse etc. designation, they requested removal from the South Martin Luther King Jr. Focus Area.

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;
- 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, which would translate into, more than likely, the neighborhood retaining its R-1 zoning. As an alternative to removing the neighborhood from the S. MLK Focus Area, the Council could:

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4148988&GUID=CEFDBA84-55F1-49EE-B587-9F41361B59E5>



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- a) Assign a new Character Type to the neighborhood that better reflects the existing pattern of development and does not include townhouses. Examples of two such Residential Character Types are below.

Residential Character Types

The following Character Types provide a medium-intensity residential opportunity that diversifies housing options within the Town by filling a gap between large lot single-family homes and multi-unit residential buildings. These Character Types allow for sensitive infill and are appropriate adjacent to transit.

1. **Small Lot Single Family**: This Character Type is characterized by detached dwelling units and includes single-family detached homes on small individual lots as well as dwelling units clustered together in a cottage court.
2. **Traditional Neighborhood Residential**: In order to maintain the existing pattern and scale of low density residential development, this Character Type includes detached single-family homes and low intensity multi-family uses such as duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes that are of a scale no larger than a single-family detached home. On larger lots, cottage courts, where detached dwelling units are clustered together, would also be permitted.

Staff developed the Traditional Neighborhood Residential Character Type after conversations with some Glenn Heights' residents who expressed a desire to maintain the current rhythm or pattern of development in their neighborhood where there are individual homes on larger lots separate from each other by expanses of lawn. They also expressed some openness to multi-unit buildings provided these multi-unit buildings were the same scale as a single-family detached dwelling. They were also conceptually open to cottage courts on the larger corner lots since such development on these lots would not disrupt the established neighborhood rhythm.

- b) Ask that the Townhouse etc Character Type be renamed to "Low/Medium Residential" and revised to include low density single-family detached dwellings.

Next Steps: Following tonight's decisions, the draft Focus Area Maps and Principles will be revised, as appropriate.

