

PLANNING COMMISSION

The charge of the Planning Commission is to assist the Council in achieving the Town's Comprehensive Plan for orderly growth and development by analyzing, evaluating, and recommending responsible town policies, ordinances, and planning standards that manage land use and involving the community in long-range planning.

RECOMMENDATION FOR GATEWAY AS A CONDITIONAL ZONING DISTRICT APPLICATION

October 3, 2023

Recommendation: Approval Denial with Comments Denial

Motion: Jonathan Mitchell moved, and Theodore Nollert seconded, a recommendation that the Council deny the Gateway Conditional Zoning District Application as an amendment to the Zoning Atlas with the attached matrix as a supplement to their recommendation.

Vote: 7 – 1

Yeas: Elizabeth Losos (Chair), Wesley McMahon (Co-Chair), Chuck Mills, Jonathan Mitchell, Theodore Nollert, and Erik Valera

Nays: Geoff Green

Recommendation: Approval Approval with Comments Denial

Motion: Geoff Green moved, and Jonathan Mitchell seconded, a recommendation that the Council find that the proposed Gateway Conditional Zoning District Application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

Vote: 7 – 1

Yeas: Elizabeth Losos (Chair), Wesley McMahon (Co-Chair), Geoff Green, Chuck Mills, Jonathan Mitchell, Theodore Nollert, and Erik Valera

Nays: Strother Murry-Ndinga

Prepared by: Jacob Hunt, Planner II

Planning Commission Complete Community Matrix for Gateway

#	Complete Community Criteria	Facts	Analysis	Summary of Concerns
1	Land use efficiency (measured as housing density per acre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25.2 units / acre if senior housing built • Low 20s units/Acre if townhouses selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reasonable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concerns
2	Mix of housing unit sizes/configurations that address affordability goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studios 525-550 sq ft • 1-bedroom 700s • 2-bedrooms 1100-1200 • 3-bedrooms 1300-1400 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • favorable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concerns
3	Both walkable and bikeable to several daily needs, such as housing, jobs, schools, recreation. Mixed use buildings encouraged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .75 mile-ish to Wegman's • Limited additional retail currently • Zoned to Durham schools • Probably not walkable to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until other neighborhoods develop, unclear if this will achieve walkable mixed use in practice • Whether this becomes an isolated island or a vibrant complete community is largely dependent on the actions of the surrounding developers and the Town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to address crossing at 15-501 (future) • Access to bus service at Old Durham Rd (current bus option)
4	On bus line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striping a path down White Oak all the way to Old Chapel Hill Rd, which has a bus stop • \$25k payment in lieu from Ernie for new bus shelters in area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacent properties limit the ability to improve access to bus service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus access not likely to be adequate.
5	Parking aligned with Planning Commission recommendations (from 6/21/23 petition to Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.45 spaces/unit, bundled • All surface parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to say if parking is appropriate without knowing proportion of studios to multi-bedroom • Concern by neighbor that there are insufficient spots for senior housing, but PC thought that senior parking was reasonable, especially with ample on-street parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request unbundled parking
6	Quality design, place-making, and prioritization of the pedestrian realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two ponds, dog park, pop-up green space, clubhouse, trail connectivity • Total impervious surface 66.9% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not unusual to see structured parking on a project of this size; currently all surface parking that creates large impervious surface. • Layout of property does not seem to be coordinated w adjacent properties (in part because they are undeveloped). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 ft. sidewalk raises concerns; additional space seems important in an "urban" environment • PC feels strongly that coordination between adjacent projects is important

Planning Commission Complete Community Matrix for Gateway

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway is an entrance into town and makes a first impression, or a definitive impression • Unclear if this + surrounding projects add up yet to a compelling enough vision for this critical gateway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC members tended to agree with a public comment that this property has attention between urban and suburban elements, and as such, the project doesn't present as cohesive and attractive a community as we would like for this in important property.
7	Reasonably respectful of surrounding neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area likely to change significantly over time • Buildings not particularly tall • The other developer (property to the east) along White Oak Rd, Davis Development has walked away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC feels strongly that coordination between adjacent projects is important, perhaps enough to delay this project until a full vision is apparent.
8	Respect for topography and natural landscapes (tree canopy, green space), including any protected natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a decent patch of forest behind the Red Roof Inn. This would be clear cut rather than incorporated into the landscaping. • 2217 Homestead had nice attention to preserving trees as point of comparison • Opportunity to preserve existing large trees and connect forest cover with adjacent properties, creating a forest corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer preserving existing canopy as much as possible vs. cut and plant new trees.
9	Responsive to stormwater concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going to 100-year • 2 ponds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of 100-year standard is responsive to concerns