

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 FUTURE LAND USE MAP DRAFT REVISIONS

January 7, 2020

Recommendation: Approval Approval with Conditions Denial

Motion: Neal Bench moved and Whit Rummel seconded a motion to recommend that the Council approve the draft map and memo (updated on January 7, 2020) as presented, with a condition that additional discussions integral to the process take place during future phases of the Land Use Management Ordinance rewrite regarding affordable housing, climate change, transportation, and economic realities.

Vote: 8 – 0

Yeas: John Rees (Chair), Louie Rivers (Vice-Chair), Neal Bench, Michael Everhart, Melissa McCullough, Whit Rummel, Buffie Webber, Stephen Whitlow

Nays:

Prepared by: John Rees, Chair
 Michael Sudol, Planner II



To: Planning Commission
From: Alisa Duffey Rogers, LUMO Project Manager
Date: January 7, 2020
Subject: Proposed Changes to the September 5, 2019 Draft Focus Area Maps & Principles

As discussed at the Planning Commission meeting on December 3, 2019, the FLUM sub-committee of the Planning Commission met six times to discuss the September 5, 2019 draft of the Focus Area Maps and Principles. Below is a summary of their recommendations.

A. Add the following Focus Area Principles to all Focus Areas:

1. In general, building height and massing, at the front setback line, as well as the streetscape should be roughly the same on both sides of the street in order to properly frame the street. In some instances, the core heights may differ from one side of the street to the other due to site constraints and surrounding land uses.
2. In order to ensure a human-scaled built environment, as building height increases at the front setback line, sizable street trees, breaks in street walls, and wider sidewalks should be utilized, as appropriate to the surrounding context.
3. Utilize climate responsive design including green infrastructure, green stormwater infrastructure (including within Town rights of way), living landscapes, and other vegetative solutions to mitigate the urban heat island effect and create more shaded and walkable streets throughout the Town as well as to mitigate flooding and stormwater concerns.
4. As large parcels redevelop, regulating plans, which include a street/multi-modal grid, should be provided in order to address connectivity and activation.

B. For the Focus Areas that contain gateways to Town, North Martin Luther King Jr.; North 15-501; NC 54; and South 15-501 Gateway, add the following Focus Area Principle:

Because the Town is a Tree City USA, as designated by the Arbor Day Foundation, significant tree stands at Town entrances, as appropriate to the location, should be maintained and/or enhanced. For example, when entering Town from the rural buffer, dense development may be jarring, and consequently, density should build from the edge of the rural buffer toward the more developed portions of Town. In all instances, the entrances to Town must signal that you have entered a different and distinct community and must demonstrate the uniqueness that is Chapel Hill.

Changes Specific to Each Focus Area - Below, listed by Focus Area, are suggested map changes and changes to the Focus Area Principles.

C. Downtown

1. The north side of West Rosemary, from Mitchell Lane to Graham Street, should have typical building heights of four stories with no permitted core height.
 2. The upper limit for Downtown core heights should typically be eight stories.
 3. Along West Franklin from Mallette to Graham Streets, the typical height should be 3 stories at the front setback line.
 4. Include in the map key or the Sub-Area Matrix the following: “Adjacent to lower scale residential uses, step backs or other transitional methods are usually necessary to ensure harmonious transitions.”
 5. Remove the parcels on the north side of E. Rosemary, east of Spring Lane from the Focus Area and include the area in the new Traditional University Supportive Uses Land Use Category.
 6. Overlay the Historic Districts on the Downtown Focus Area Map and revise the text to reflect the influence of these Historic Districts on the Downtown.
 7. Include the following Focus Area Principle: When core heights are utilized, large step backs from the front façade are desirable to create a more human-scaled public realm.
- D. North & South Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. - Update the vision for these areas to explicitly state that the vision for this corridor as follows: At larger Bus Rapid Transit Stations, move buildings (development) closer to the street in order to create highly functional, walkable destinations for both transit riders and adjacent neighborhoods. Between these BRT stations, buildings are pushed back with significant front yard landscaping.
- E. South Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. - To reinforce the goal to extend Downtown to Hillsborough Street:
1. Depict land uses, such as commercial/office & multi-family shops and office that reinforce the goal to extend Downtown to Hillsborough Street;
 2. From Rosemary to Hillsborough Street, permit typical core building heights up to eight stories with four stories at the front setback line; and,
 3. Include in the map key or the Sub-Area Matrix the following: “Adjacent to lower scale residential uses, step backs or other transitional methods are usually necessary to ensure harmonious transitions.”
- F. NC 54 – Increase the typical building height at the corner of NC 54 and Fordham Road to six stories



- G. South 15-501 Gateway/Southern Village Park and Ride – No changes except change the name to reflect the new name of S. Columbia and include the parcels adjacent to Southern Village as previously discussed by Council on October 2, 2019.

Below are substantive changes being considered by Council tomorrow that were not specifically discussed by the FLUM sub-committee of the Planning Commission.

H. North 15-501 Focus Area

1. Remove the Parks & Green/Gathering Space designation on the south side of Estes Drive except where the Town owns parcels, such as the Community Park, or expects to own parcels in the near future.
2. Remove the designation for the American Legion Property and label as “Area subject to concurrent planning process.”
3. Remove the South Estes Drive Public Housing Community from the Focus Area and retain the existing Land Use Category, which is Medium Density Residential.

