

Complete Community Criteria (mostly based on 12/7/22 Keesmaat presentation to Council)	Facts	Analysis	Other Open Questions
Mix of housing unit sizes/configurations that address affordability goals	688 residential units, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 526 condos (studio, 1, 2, 3-brs) • 102 townhomes (2, 3, 4-brs) • 60 rental units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of configurations (studio to 4br) responds to the Town’s housing needs. • Even within the townhome segment, the elevations show unusual diversity of unit shapes and sizes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the range and distribution of unit sizes (by square footage)? • Assuming today’s market environment, what selling prices would be anticipated for the market-rate units?
Walkable proximity to several daily needs, such as housing, jobs, schools, recreation. Mixed use buildings encouraged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Village retail/office amenities (including Weaver Street Market) located across the street • Southern Community Park and Scroggs Elementary also across the street • ~31,000 sq. ft. of on-site office/retail proposed. Rental units are above ground-level commercial space • Walking paths planned along the creek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the numbers, this is an extremely walkable location, and the (modest) commercial/retail component internal to the site, as well as the walking paths, will enhance the amenity package for the overall neighborhood. • Robust connectivity to Southern Village is key to fulfilling the complete community promise of this location, particularly given the relatively small percentage of on-site commercial/retail uses proposed. See two rows down for considerations related to the 15-501 pedestrian crossing. • If the ~80 acres across the creek is set aside as a preserve (see penultimate row), pedestrians and cyclists will need a walking bridge from South Creek to access any trails – possibly a basic corten steel structure similar to the walking bridge at Umstead Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will control the adjacent ~80 acres across the creek, and what binding commitments, if any, are made regarding that land in connection with this application? What commitments <i>should</i> be made? • The application narrative mentions an “exchange” of 2.19 acres of Town owned land within the site. Where is this land, and what is the Town receiving in return? • How was the figure 31,000 sq. ft. of commercial arrived at? Could it be increased? What kinds of commercial/retail tenants are envisioned?
Abundant greenway and transit connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “NS” bus currently connects Southern Village to campus. We understand that it departs approximately every 7 minutes during peak commuting times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This parcel is an excellent candidate for dense, transit- and greenway-oriented development. • The South Creek property already has high-frequency transit connectivity to UNC campus. The NSBRT project will enhance it further. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Village Park and Ride (across the street) will be a NSBRT station, and South Creek may also have its own BRT station. • Currently casual bikers do not have a “good” route from Southern Village to UNC campus (although some do it). • The NSBRT plan includes a major greenway and bike lanes from UNC campus to this location along 15-501/South Columbia. The South Creek property is 2.6 miles to the UNC hospital complex on Manning Drive – a short commuting distance by bike. • Meanwhile, funded work in progress on the Morgan Creek greenway will enable residents of the South Creek property to bike to areas such as Glenwood Square shopping center and ultimately the Blue Hill area (among other areas). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The planned greenway and bike lanes from Southern Village to UNC campus will enable large-scale bike commuting in the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, funded work in progress on the Morgan Creek greenway will significantly expand cycling options to/from the Southern Village area. • But the generous parking configurations of the proposed townhomes (see next row) risk undercutting the Town’s active transportation strategy/investments. 	
<p>Place-making and prioritization of the pedestrian realm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential units are separated from 15-501 by a vegetative buffer and internal street. The speed limit on 15-501 is currently 35mph (rarely heeded) along the frontage, with two lanes in both directions, plus turning lanes at the intersections. • The developer has offered to build the pedestrian/bike path along the frontage. • Under the development plan, Market Street is extended from Southern Village across 15-501 into South Creek, terminating in an "open tower" focal point, surrounded by a park accessible to the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the public realm around the commercial spaces and internal parks is difficult to assess based on the level of detail provided (i.e., no recent elevations for these areas furnished). Per Brian Peterson, the concept looks very promising, but the design details will make or break the place-making result. • The view from 15-501 into the development is also unclear. A preferred approach would entail rows of boulevard-style large shade tree plantings overhanging the side path—similar to a Parisian allée—creating a sense of place for passersby. Quality plantings in the 15-501 median and other streetscaping treatments could further define the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FLUM designates land directly across the street (including the Town-owned park and ride lot) for 6 stories facing 15-501. What are the Town’s long-range plans for that area, and for the 15-501 corridor just north and south of the South Creek site? • Regarding the developer’s proposal for public art, have any local art groups been approached? • Regarding the civil rights heritage site, has the developer engaged community leaders?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sumac Road is extended into South Creek as well, terminating in a "mini Southern Village Green" with a pavilion/bandstand. • The plan includes "pocket parks throughout," particularly at the ends of buildings. • There are preliminary plans for a heritage site with historical information about Watts Restaurant and Watts Motel (the site of civil rights protests in the '60s). • Condo buildings will feature garage parking underneath, benched into the grade. Parking will be accessible from the downhill side (ground-level), where it will dominate the lower facade. From the uphill side, it will be dug into the grade and not visible. Each condo will have one guaranteed garage spot (semi-underground), in addition to internal street (parallel) parking, some of which "might" be sold to individual condo owners. The condos have a proposed parking ratio of 1.3, compared to a LUMO minimum of 1.2 for the proposed mix of units. • Townhomes will be rear-loaded with mostly 2-car garages, plus driveways, plus 88 street parking spots in front of the townhomes. Total = 257 spots (not counting driveways) for 102 townhomes. • The rental units have a proposed parking ratio of 1.3, compared to a LUMO minimum of 1.2 for the proposed mix of units. • The aggregate parking ratio for the residential component is 1009 spots / 688 	<p>frontage and signal to motorists that this section of South Columbia is not a highway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will inevitably drive between South Creek and Southern Village, or drive elsewhere instead, unless the 15-501 pedestrian crossing is pleasant and inviting. To date the applicant has provided limited information about the crossing(s). A pedestrian bridge (perhaps originating from the second floor of one of the retail buildings) or below-grade tunnel seems imperative to ensure success. For example, parents must be comfortable escorting their Scroggs Elementary students across the road. We strongly urge the Council to sort this out before moving forward. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In its December 2013 report to the Council, the Obey Creek Compass Committee included in its "vision": "Creates synergy with Southern Village Market Street by planning for development on both sides of S15-501, linking them physically with a well-placed, iconic pedestrian bridge and multiple at-grade crossings." ○ The Town should explore a cost-sharing arrangement with the developer for an above or below-grade crossing. • Parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of structured parking (under the condos), combined with rear-loaded units, creates relatively favorable conditions for pedestrians. ○ However, we feel strongly that the proposed townhome parking ratio (2.5 spots/unit plus driveways, putting the real-world total much higher) is incompatible with transit-oriented development principles. It is well above the 	
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	<p>units = 1.5 (not counting townhome driveways).</p>	<p>Town-wide maximum of 2 proposed by staff in connection with the “Housing Choices for a Complete Community” proposal. This could be rectified by shifting toward 1-car garages, reducing or removing driveways, and removing extra parallel parking spots. Townhome residents could potentially use the condo garages as extra parking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The condo and rental parking ratios are between the Town’s current minimum and maximum requirements. We would like to see these ratios not exceed the Town’s minimums. ○ All parking that is not physically attached to specific units should be fully unbundled cost-wise. 	
<p>Land use efficiency (measured as housing density per acre)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This 43 acre parcel is part of a larger ~120 acre contiguous tract transected by Wilson Creek. The remaining ~80 acres is proposed as a preserve. The current proposal for 688 units (plus commercial) on 43 acres translates to 16 units/acre. Measured in relation to the entire ~120 acre tract, it’s 6 units/acre. ● The FLUM does not address this parcel because it is subject to an existing development agreement (which would be superseded by this proposal). However, the FLUM designates land directly across the street (including the Town-owned park & ride lot) for 6 stories facing 15-501. The proposal for South Creek generally has 2-4 above-grade stories facing 15-501. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In his Nov. 7, 2022 presentation to the Council, consultant Rod Stevens warned against “wasted opportunities” for higher density in the current development pipeline. The “capacity analysis” calculation spreadsheet provided with his Dec. 8, 2022 “Complete Community Trade-off Analysis” includes low, medium, and high production scenarios for the 158-acre greater Obey Creek area. The production quantities that Rod posited for these scenarios are 1,319, 1,978, and 2,637 units, respectively. ● The South Creek proposal contains 688 units on 43 acres, with the balance of the ~120 acre parcel or collection of parcels set aside as a preserve. This leaves a gap of 1,290 units in relation to Rod’s “medium” production scenario for the larger 158-acre area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Might it be possible to add an extra floor to the condo buildings without necessitating concrete construction?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part of the discrepancy relates to the proposal to set aside ~80 acres opposite South Creek as a preserve, which is consistent with the current (soon to be superseded) development agreement for this site. Rod's Complete Communities Trade-Off Analysis says, "[t]he Town should also explore development on both sides of Obey Creek in return for the dedication of subsidized housing sites. This swap would allow the conservation of the Bennett property."• The current design of this project may effectively cut off vehicular access to the ~80 acres from 15-501. The Planning Commission lacks sufficient information to evaluate the development potential of the ~80 acres (see this document, pages 6-7, for maps showing slopes and RCDs).• At the same time, without understanding the importance of the ~80 acres in the context of Town-wide natural areas planning, the Planning Commission cannot meaningfully evaluate the proposal to preserve it.• We urge the Council to take some time to investigate these matters sufficiently to have confidence in the chosen development/preservation strategy. The rationale behind the preservation strategy embedded in the legacy development agreement might or might not make sense today. To be clear, the Planning Commission believes that the Town should build densely in some areas while leaving others in a natural condition; this is part of the complete community vision. The question is how to balance competing goals in this 120 acre area, in a way that reflects thoughtful Town-wide planning.	
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<p>Respect for topography and natural landscapes, including protected natural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development plan calls for a stepped design as the buildings proceed down the slope toward the creek. The developer will bring in fill to smooth out the grade. • The plan includes some isolated incursions into the creek setbacks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the CDC noted, the stepped site plan seems to work well with the existing topography. Clear-cutting seems unavoidable. • The RCD currently has significant erosion along the creek banks. It’s possible that the limited incursions 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The plan treats the land across the creek as a featured view shed.	<p>proposed could improve existing conditions, as the developer contends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See previous row for discussion of proposed ~80 acre preserve.	
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