

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 9:04 AM
To: Eric Stein
Cc: Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Anya Grahn; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: S. Columbia Street Annex

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.

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

From: Eric Stein [mailto:ericsearsstein@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 21, 2021 8:57 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: S. Columbia Street Annex

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

Dear Mayor Hemminger and Council Members:

I write in support of the South Columbia Street Annex project because it addresses, in a modest and local way, two of the most urgent priorities that Chapel Hill faces.

First, the extreme weather we've been experiencing this year makes clear that climate change is an existential threat. We need more transit-oriented, dense, climate-resilient developments exactly like this one; everyone must live somewhere and housing that gets people out of cars -- close to town and accessible to mass transit -- will reduce carbon emissions. This project is on a major transit corridor, on existing bus lines and the future route of the bus rapid transit line, less than a mile from UNC, walkable and bikeable to Southern Village, parks, and other amenities. 41,000 people

commute into Chapel Hill every day -- that is the [source of our traffic problems](#). According to the new Traffic Impact Analysis, the project will generate less traffic than Merritt's does on a daily basis.

Second, there is a profound scarcity of affordable and even middle-income housing in our country, even more so in our town, both rental and homeownership. This project includes eight units of affordable housing, unless the total number of units has been reduced as a result of the height limit, due to our inclusionary zoning requirement. The affordable homes are ownership, not rental. These families would otherwise be highly unlikely to be able to live in such a terrific location and school district. Unfortunately, they don't have a say in whether the project proceeds. This project provides one of the few opportunities to promote even the possibility of racial integration close to our neighborhood, given how expensive housing is in this area.

A common complaint about development is that it is driven by "outside developers" looking to maximize profit and who don't care about the community. In this case, it is the opposite. Architect Phil Szostak lives and works in Chapel Hill and the Triangle. He's an NCSU design school graduate who has devoted his incredible career to NC. He is a gifted and famous architect, including as the designer of DPAC. He cares deeply about the community, including making investments in the project that would restore the polluted stream on the property and greatly improve the bike/pedestrian infrastructure and safety for walkers, bikers, and drivers.

Best,

Eric Stein
222 Vance Street

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 9:06 AM
To: Rudy Juliano
Cc: Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Anya Grahn; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: Columbia Street Annex

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From: Rudy Juliano [mailto:rudyjuliano@hotmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, February 20, 2021 10:57 AM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Columbia Street Annex

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

Dear Mayor and Council

Although I cannot attend the public hearing Feb 24, I would like to comment on this project.

The project was discussed at a recent TCAB meeting that I participated in. I wish to raise the same concerns that I did at that time.

Most importantly, the implementation of this project is likely to impede traffic flow on S. Columbia at critical times and thus also impede the operations of the BRT (which shares traffic lanes with cars on this part of its

route). The design of the project has resident's cars left turning across busy traffic lanes- for example across southbound S. Columbia during the evening rush hour from the UNC campus. This is sure to cause further delay on an already congested thoroughfare for both motorists and the BRT. Why spend huge amounts of money on the BRT and then strangle its operations?

A second more general concern is that this project, with numerous parking spots, is very far from being 'transit friendly'.

This is a critical site and the Town needs a project that is more consistent with its long-term transportation goals.

Sincerely

RL Juliano
Chapel Hill

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 2:19 PM
To: msJuliemclintock
Cc: Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: Letter opposing So Columbia Annex

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.

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(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

From: msJuliemclintock [mailto:mcclintock.julie@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 2:15 PM
To: Pam Hemminger <phemminger@townofchapelhill.org>; Michael Parker <mparker@townofchapelhill.org>; Jess Anderson <janderson@townofchapelhill.org>; Hongbin Gu <hgu@townofchapelhill.org>; Karen Stegman <kstegman@townofchapelhill.org>; Allen Buansi <allenbuansi23@gmail.com>; Tai Huynh <tai.tr.huynh@gmail.com>; Amy Ryan <amymorrisryan@gmail.com>
Cc: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Letter opposing So Columbia Annex

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February 24, 2021
Re: Columbia Street Annex

Dear Mayor Hemminger and Town Council Members:

There is an expression that “you can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear”. Putting anything more than a low density use for this piece of land that is sandwiched next to the west bound on-ramp of 15-501, has a difficult topography - a perennial stream running through it - and is located on an entranceway to the UNC medical campus at a busy confluence of cars, pedestrians and transit stops. All these factors combine to make this site incredibly difficult to develop safely and responsibly.

Certainly we applaud the efforts by the applicant to make improvements, such as limiting the impact visually by reducing to four stories and proposing stream restoration. The Transportation Board has struggled to make recommendations to make the area safer. However, the additional cross walks won’t be safe given the number of turning movements already in place near Merrit’s Store and Purefoy Road. The additional cars and pedestrians brought by this project would place them in danger as well, especially taking into consideration the lack of sight distance for drivers barreling down South Columbia toward the James Taylor Bridge.

The application continues not to satisfy two areas of concern: public safety and town environmental regulations. We believe that the natural constraints of the parcel make it impossible to approve this proposed plan given the unique site characteristics of this parcel.

1. Public safety. Sight distances and cars pulling out from Purefoy Road next to Merrit’s Store will continue to make this a dangerous intersection for drivers and walkers. The crash history at the Purefoy Road intersection is significant now. Adding residences at this intersection introduces a further complexity to the mix that will make an existing public safety problem much worse. Indeed, the recent nine crashes don’t account for the number of times cars have crossed the median to hit the metal sign posted there warning cars to stay to the right of the raised median. That sign is regularly bent from regular hits by passing cars.

The proposed blinking light cross walks are a well intentioned solution. However, given they would be placed at the bottom of a steep curved hill, walkers will be taking an unacceptable risk.

The addition to this mix of the BRT transit station south of the ramp raises many questions about whether the DOT has conducted a complete safety analysis for this station. This would appear to be a very dangerous area to place a station stop.

Finally, the planned egress and ingress for the proposed Annex development itself remains dangerous for the drivers making these turns.

2. Environment. The location of this small lot is challenging since it is sandwiched between the Westwood neighborhood and the on ramp to the 54 west by-pass, and across the street from Merritt’s Store. The corner of the restaurant and Purefoy Road is already a dangerous intersection. A perennial stream runs through the tract and parts are quite steep.

The applicant wants variances in order to place buildings and parking lots within the Resource Conservation District (RCD). The RCD was designed to protect water quality, ecology, and wildlife habitat. The most serious exemptions requested is that the plan calls for significant incursions into the RCD. Over 50% of the managed and upland portions of the overlay district will be disturbed. This is a topographically steep parcel of land. Allowing an incursion of a structure into the RCD next to a perennial stream must not be allowed.

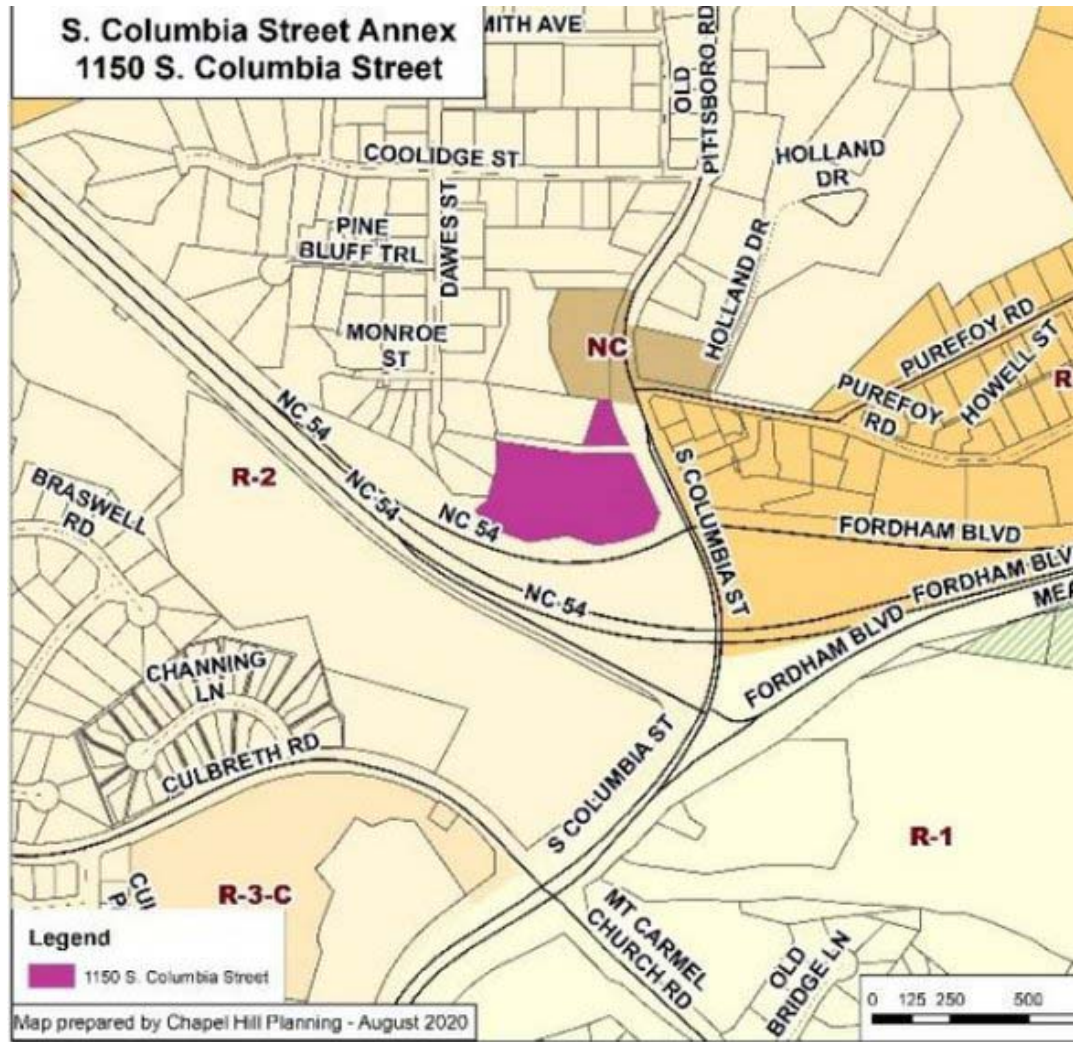
Too often we've seen the town give exception to our RCD rules. In this case, if the applicant's request for an exception were granted then this would establish an alarming precedent of allowing parking lots and buildings within the RCD.

Stream restoration is desirable. However it is often conducted when environmental damage has already occurred. If the Council were to allow exceptions then there would be no guarantee that stream restoration would be successful. Stream restoration work quite often fails and experts agree that preventing damage is preferable to causing damage and then trying to fix it. It would be a long shot indeed to expect that the stream restoration offered by the applicant would restore sensitive stream buffers and the hydrological functions of this site.

The fact remains this is a difficult site with unaddressed public safety and environmental issues. This parcel was never intended to safely contain such a proposed use. Please turn down this permit application.

Julie McClintock, Linda Brown and addition signers coming along at the public hearing.

Southern gateway



Resource Conservation District (Sec. 3.6)

RCD Zone	Land Disturbance	Imper Surface
Streamside	2,210 sf 6.2%	
Managed	23,100 sf 59.8%	
Upland	18,300 sf 52.8%	1

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 4:24 PM
To: John Rees
Cc: Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: Endorsement of Columbia St Annex

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.

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

From: John Rees [mailto:jreesnc@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 3:31 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Endorsement of Columbia St Annex

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

I am writing you today as a resident in favor of the Columbia st annex project.

Unlike the 1200 MLK property you are also considering tonight, this project is the exact opposite and a very appropriate development for the location and the towns plans for transit oriented development (TOD) along the North South BRT corridor.

Key items in favor:

- Perfectly sited on the BRT corridor
- Developed by an acclaimed, nationally known and local architect – not a cookie cutter building

- Provides affordable housing on a percentage of the units.
- Greatly **IMPROVES** the area for pedestrians, by delivering a sidewalk and an open plaza on the west side of Colombia St. This makes the bus stop much safer and comfortable for transit riders to use
- Add pedestrian signal heads on other improvements for the area.
- Is a short walk from UNC – many could walk to work on a nice day
- Even forgetting about the BRT, there are 3 Chapel Hill Transit routes that stop in front of this project. The NS, the J and the D. If you are just headed up the hill to campus or the hospital, any of those three buses will do, which means yo never wait very long to catch a bus.

To be honest, this is a **case study** of what the council should be asking developers to deliver. This is exactly what should be endorsed for this key corridor in the towns future land use plans.

As far as traffic concerns. The traffic along Colombia st has declined dramatically over the years. Likely the result of the great work the town's Transportation Demand Management and CH Transit have done to encourage non car commuting. Here is the data from NC DOT

Average daily trips, collected from a point just north of this project

AADT_2003 17,000
 AADT_2005 15,000
 AADT_2007 16,000
 AADT_2009 16,000
 AADT_2011 13,000
 AADT_2015 14,000
 AADT_2017 14,000

Counts are typically collected every 2 years, I do not know why there is not a 2019 number, but there has been a clear trend downward. The number of trips generated from this project clearly meets the capacity of the road as it is currently built.

As far as the building height. Please note that limiting the height of the building is also **limiting the total number of affordable units** the applicant can provide on the project. So the arbitrary shorting of the building is taking away some important community benefits

Thank you
 John Rees
 Chapel Hill

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2021 10:47 AM
To: Geoffrey Green
Cc: Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: In support of Columbia Street Annex project

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.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin

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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: Geoffrey Green [mailto:geoff@stuebegreen.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 9:18 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: In support of Columbia Street Annex project

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

Council members —

I think everyone agrees that on its merits, the 1200 MLK proposal is a bad project. The large self-storage facility is a horrible use to place adjacent to a stop on the proposed North-South BRT corridor.

However, at the same meeting that you approved the first reading of the 1200 MLK project ordinance, you heard more from the public about a project that is fully in line with the Town's vision and perfectly complements the BRT project. The Columbia Street Annex is an appropriately dense project that adds market-rate and affordable housing in an

amazing location. It is walking distance from UNC and, with its proximity to the future BRT (and current high-frequency bus service), provides excellent accessibility to destinations throughout the town and regionally. That site is challenging to develop, and the applicants have done a good job developing an attractive building that minimizes its environmental impacts while adding much-needed housing along the BRT line.

Since the Town will soon be applying to the federal government for millions of dollars to help build the North-South BRT, it is important for the Town to show the Federal Transit Administration that it will support transit-oriented development along the line. Approval of the Columbia Street Annex approval would be a big show of the Town's support by allowing development that will make full use of the federal government's transit investment.

We need more projects like Columbia Street Annex that wholeheartedly support the Town's efforts to build a high-quality transit system. I strongly urge you to support it.

Very truly yours,

Geoff Green
Chapel Hill

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021 9:14 AM
To: Nina East
Cc: Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: South Columbia Annex and other general comments

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.

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[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

From: Nina East [mailto:ninaeast19@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2021 11:01 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: South Columbia Annex and other general comments

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

Dear Town Council Members,
Thank you for all your hard work and diligence as you steward Chapel Hill through our growing opportunities. I really mean that - not just a platitude.

I have 3 points I'd like to share with you:

1. Plant material exception requested by S Columbia Annex applicant
2. The role of regulations such as stream encroachment and plant material
3. The serious traffic hazards at intersection of S Columbia and Purefoy Rd

1. The S Columbia Annex applicant has stated 2 different exceptions in the submitted documents. In the letter he requests a 30% reduction in plant material; and in the revised notes for the application he requests a 70% reduction in the requirement. I suspect this is a typo, but should be clarified in writing so there are no surprises.

2. Comments from some Council members in the past, and from this applicant repeatedly, indicate the regulations, particularly the one regarding the evaluation of the stream on the property, are insignificant. The applicant repeatedly stated the stream was classified as Perennial by only 0.1 point.

I can only imagine his frustration with this changing stream. But we have to remember that environments are not static. The climate and the environment continue to change. The stream has changed since the beginning of the century and will continue to do so. It's fair to say it will change significantly as development occurs.

If it meets the parameters for a perennial stream, then it's a perennial stream. If regulations and parameters are discounted when the item in question is only 0.1 over the lower classification, then what's the point of having regulations?

Regulations are not designed to thwart development. They are designed to support development by supporting the vision Chapel Hillians have for our town.

A better way to think of regulations is that they are Promises.

Promises the Council and Town need to keep.

3. The intersection at S Columbia and Purefoy needs considerable thought and planning. I'm not sure it's fair or appropriate to put so much of the responsibility on the developer. The problems already exist due to a number of factors, including DOT changes and decisions made by the Town Council. I believe the town needs to take the lead in shepherding a solution to this problem.

Several years ago the Council approved a development at the intersection of Purefoy Rd. and Howell St. This development added 60 cars to Purefoy Rd. The Council approved another development on Chapel Hill that will add a substantial number of cars (though some of these will probably use a campus cut-through based on their location).

I live at the corner of S Columbia and Purefoy Rd, so have a front seat. The accident data you received doesn't tell the whole story. I hear screeching tires every single day, except for this past March-June when traffic was reduced due to the pandemic. Rarely is there a car-on-car collision, but the screeching and swerving to avoid a collision puts everyone else at risk, and are an indication of the intensity of the problem.

The locals call the crosswalk the Dash of Death because cars are coming from all directions at high speeds. Even the cars turning from Purefoy are accelerating quickly in order to be able to make the turn, and to avoid collisions.

There is a traffic warning sign in the median that has to be replaced frequently due to cars knocking it down - driving too fast on S Columbia as well as from drivers turning left from Purefoy Rd while looking north in order to avoid being hit by southbound traffic traveling at a high rate of speed. The sign is probably replaced monthly on average. These do not show up on the accident report because the driver leaves the scene quickly.

Even though DOT seems to control the final outcome for this intersection, and they move at a sloth-like decision making pace, the danger at the intersection is a town problem because it puts our community at risk, one which I believe the town needs to take the lead in coming up with a solution.

As always, thank you for your time and diligence on this project as well as the whole Land Use project.

Nina East
1101 S. Columbia St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919-357-2728

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021 9:16 AM
To: msJuliemclintock
Cc: Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: RE: Additional comment on So Columbia Annex for public record

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Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2021 7:16 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Cc: Pam Hemminger <pshemminger@gmail.com>; Ernest Odei-Larbi <eodei-larbi@townofchapelhill.org>; Kumar Neppalli <kneppalli@townofchapelhill.org>; Maurice Jones <mjones@townofchapelhill.org>; Colleen Willger <cwillger@townofchapelhill.org>; Chris Roberts <croberts@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Additional comment on So Columbia Annex for public record

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Mayor Hemminger and Council Members

We appreciate your careful consideration of the Annex proposal at last night's long council meeting. We agree the new site building drawings suggest an attractive 4 story building of condos can be built on this site with the kind of mid-pricing that the council is seeking. The building design is much improved from the original.

We regret the Town Council made no adjustment to the extensive incursion into the RCD. Also of concern, the late night consideration limited a full discussion of the transportation movements taking place in the area at the Purefoy Rd intersection and south along 15-501.

Given a likely approval of the Annex permit at the next public hearing, please consider the following comments:

1. **Stormwater.** Our first goal is to ensure that the promises made during the hearing about environmental protection actually become conditions in the permit. We understand the stormwater staff is writing conditions to ensure that creek restoration is carried out in a way that will ensure success. The stormwater staff is busy today responding to new stormwater information just received yesterday from the applicant and not included in the public hearing last night - this information should be included in those conditions as well.

2. **Transportation Movements.** The Town is obligated not to cause dangerous conditions for pedestrians and drivers. Therefore we need reassurance that the proposed egress/exit won't cause dangerous conditions. The recommended signalized LED cross walks and transit stops locations must not jeopardize public safety. Full information for all the planned changes in this area were not reported at the public hearing, For example, DOT is planning a new west bound ramp right next to the proposed project.

Therefore we request that the Council add these conditions to the permit in the next public hearing:

- **Write conditions to ensure proper construction and maintenance of stormwater facilities, as well as the stream restoration.**
- **One year following completion of construction, insert a condition in the permit that Chapel Hill will conduct a physical inspection of the Annex stormwater facilities and require that repairs are made if needed and report to the Council;**
- **One year following completion of the Annex project, conduct an evaluation of area traffic conditions and report to the Council; the permit owner would participate in making needed improvements.**

And

- **Request that DOT and the Chapel Hill Traffic engineer present a mapped update of the pedestrian, bike and auto turning movements in the area of So Columbia and Purefoy Road at an upcoming meeting.**

Thanks!

Julie McClintock

Below are the remarks I made at the Feb 24th public hearing with additional signatures for the record.

February 24, 2021

Dear Mayor Hemminger and Town Council Members:

There is an expression that “you can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear”. Putting anything more than a low density use for this piece of land that is sandwiched next to the west bound on-ramp of 15-501, has a difficult topography — a perennial stream running through it, and is on an entranceway to the UNC medical campus at a busy confluence of cars, pedestrians and transit stops, combines to make this site incredibly difficult to develop safely and responsibly.

Certainly we applaud the efforts by the applicant to make improvements, such as limiting the impact visually by reducing to four stories. The Transportation Board has struggled to make recommendations to make the area safer.

However, the additional cross walks won’t be safe given the number of turning movements already in place near Merrit's Store and Purefoy Road. The additional cars and pedestrians brought by this project would place them in danger as well, especially taking into consideration the lack of sight distance for drivers barreling down South Columbia toward the James Taylor Bridge.

The application continues not to satisfy two areas of concern: public safety and town environmental regulations. We believe that the natural constraints of the parcel make it impossible to approve this proposed plan given the unique site characteristics of this parcel.

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The addition to this mix of the BRT transit station south of the ramp raises many questions about whether the DOT has conducted a complete safety analysis for this station. This would appear to be a very dangerous area to place a stop.

Finally, the planned egress and ingress for the proposed Annex development remains dangerous for the drivers making these turns.

2. Environment. The location of this small lot is challenging since it is sandwiched between the Westwood neighborhood and the on ramp to the 54 west by-pass, and across the street from Merritt's Store. The corner of the restaurant and Purefoy Road is already a dangerous intersection. A perennial stream runs through the tract and parts are quite steep.

The applicant wants variances in order to place buildings and parking lots within the Resource Conservation District (RCD). The RCD was designed to protect water quality, ecology, and wildlife habitat. The most serious exemptions requested is that the plan calls for significant incursions into the RCD. Over 50% of the managed and upland portions of the overlay district will be disturbed. This is a topographically steep parcel of land. Allowing an incursion of a structure into the RCD next to a perennial stream must not be allowed.

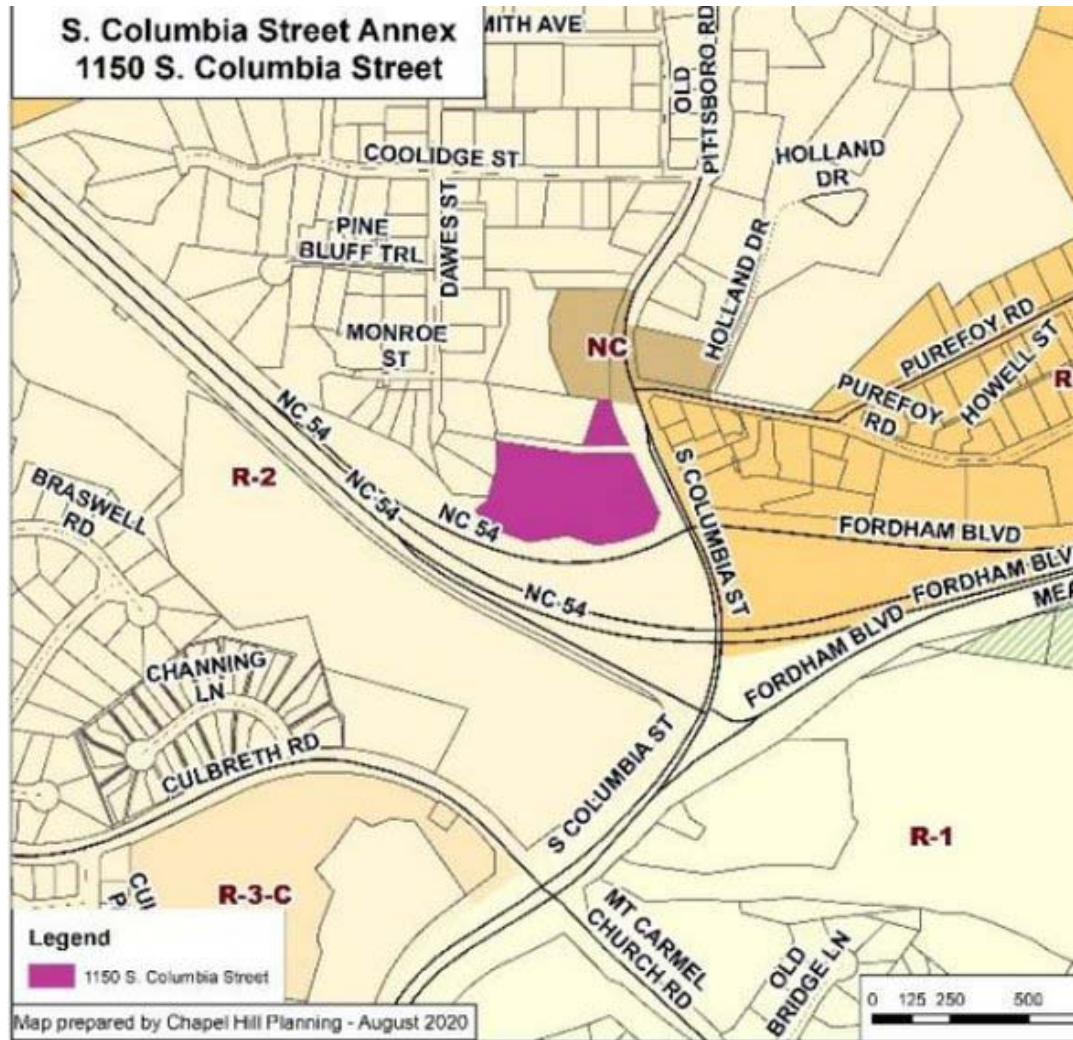
Too often we've seen the town give exception to our RCD rules. In this case, if the applicant's request for an exception were granted then this would establish an alarming precedent of allowing parking lots and buildings within the RCD.

Stream restoration is desirable. However it is often conducted when environmental damage has already occurred. If the Council were to allow exceptions then there would be no guarantee that stream restoration would be successful. Stream restoration work quite often fails, and experts agree that preventing damage is preferable to causing damage and then trying to fix it. It would be a long shot indeed to expect that the stream restoration offered by the applicant would restore sensitive stream buffers and the hydrological functions of this site. The newest plans show disturbance within 2 feet of the creek.

The public safety and environmental issues must be addressed.

Thank you!

Charles Berlin, Linda Brown, Sylvia Clements, Ramon Fenandez, Debbie and Arthur Finn, Joan Guilkey, Tom Henkel, Charles Humble, Fred Lampe, Julie McClintock, Molly McConnell, Susan Morance, Michael Murphy, and Gordon Whitaker



Proposed South Columbia Street Annex Public Hearing Opened 18th

The Chapel Hill Town Council will receive comment on the proposed Zoning application for the Columbia Street Annex on Wednesday, November 18th in a virtual meeting. The owner and developer is asking for a zoning change from residential 2 to mixed use village conditional zoning district. The applicant is proposing a 6 story building (now reduced to four) into the slope of South Columbia made up of 52 housing units. The proposal includes units of affordable housing, less than the 15% requirement. A maximum of one is specified for retail and office.

The location of this small lot is challenging since it is sandwiched between the Westwood neighborhood and the on ramp to the 54 west by-pass, and the street from Merritt's Restaurant. The corner of the restaurant and Road is already a dangerous intersection. A perennial stream runs through the tract and parts are quite steep. The applicant wants variances in order

buildings and parking lots within the Resource Conservation District (The RCD was designed to protect water quality, ecology, and wildl

Because of the site challenges, a number of variances from town ru requested. The most serious is that the plan calls for significant inc the RCD. Over 50% of the managed and upland portions of the ove will be disturbed. See table below..

Resource Conservation District (Sec. 3.6)	RCD Zone	Land Disturbance	Imper Surface
	Streamside	2,210 sf 6.2%	
	Managed	23,100 sf 59.8%	
	Upland	18,300 sf 52.8%	1

The Town Council has the authority not to grant a rezoning request. Staff informs the Council when a project plan does not meet the or. However, it's up the the elected Board, the Town Council, whether allow exemptions from our town regulations.

In addition to the RCD exceptions the applicant is requesting, they asking for variances from our steep slopes ordinances, reductions landscaping standards, and even a variance from the mixed use v mix zone they are seeking.

Looking at the big picture, the most serious obstacles to app South Columbia Street Annex project are:

- Significant incursions into the steep slopes and the Resource Conservation District which will cause significant harm when parking lots are put in these protected areas.
- Public safety is compromised by a proposed driveway entrance and turns will be dangerous for pedestrians in an already pro area. (The sign that directs traffic on the pedestrian island is flattened by passing automobiles.)
- The scale and massive appearance of the building is not cor ambient character of southern Chapel Hill — specifically the homes in Westwood, the historic Purefoy neighborhood, or t village feel of Southern Village.
- NC DOT has not yet weighed into a long-term transportation this area and any rezoning here will limit future solutions.

- Applicants often select mixed use but the retail and office components are seldom achieved and the town loses out in gaining the commercial base.

Amy Harvey

From: Nina East <ninaeast19@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021 10:44 AM
To: Jeanette Coffin
Cc: Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: Re: South Columbia Annex and other general comments
Categories: COVID-19

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

Thank you, Jeannette. I just noticed an important typo in my 3rd point. I say there is an additional development "on Chapel Hill" in regards to a set of apartments. This should have read "on Purefoy Rd".

Nina East

On Fri, Feb 26, 2021 at 9:14 AM Jeanette Coffin <jcoffin@townofchapelhill.org> wrote:

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.

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

From: Nina East [mailto:ninaeast19@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2021 11:01 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: South Columbia Annex and other general comments

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

Dear Town Council Members,

Thank you for all your hard work and diligence as you steward Chapel Hill through our growing opportunities. I really mean that - not just a platitude.

I have 3 points I'd like to share with you:

1. Plant material exception requested by S Columbia Annex applicant
2. The role of regulations such as stream encroachment and plant material
3. The serious traffic hazards at intersection of S Columbia and Purefoy Rd

1. The S Columbia Annex applicant has stated 2 different exceptions in the submitted documents. In the letter he requests a 30% reduction in plant material; and in the revised notes for the application he requests a 70% reduction in the requirement. I suspect this is a typo, but should be clarified in writing so there are no surprises.

2. Comments from some Council members in the past, and from this applicant repeatedly, indicate the regulations, particularly the one regarding the evaluation of the stream on the property, are insignificant. The applicant repeatedly stated the stream was classified as Perennial by only 0.1 point.

I can only imagine his frustration with this changing stream. But we have to remember that environments are not static. The climate and the environment continue to change. The stream has changed since the beginning of the century and will continue to do so. It's fair to say it will change significantly as development occurs.

If it meets the parameters for a perennial stream, then it's a perennial stream. If regulations and parameters are discounted when the item in question is only 0.1 over the lower classification, then what's the point of having regulations?

Regulations are not designed to thwart development. They are designed to support development by supporting the vision Chapel Hillians have for our town.

A better way to think of regulations is that they are Promises.

Promises the Council and Town need to keep.

3. The intersection at S Columbia and Purefoy needs considerable thought and planning. I'm not sure it's fair or appropriate to put so much of the responsibility on the developer. The problems already exist due to a number of factors, including DOT changes and decisions made by the Town Council. I believe the town needs to take the lead in shepherding a solution to this problem.

Several years ago the Council approved a development at the intersection of Purefoy Rd. and Howell St. This development added 60 cars to Purefoy Rd. The Council approved another development on Chapel Hill that will add a substantial number of cars (though some of these will probably use a campus cut-through based on their location.

I live at the corner of S Columbia and Purefoy Rd, so have a front seat. The accident data you received doesn't tell the whole story. I hear screeching tires every single day, except for this past March-June when traffic was reduced due to the pandemic. Rarely is there a car-on-car collision, but the screeching and swerving to avoid a collision puts everyone else at risk, and are an indication of the intensity of the problem.

The locals call the crosswalk the Dash of Death because cars are coming from all directions at high speeds. Even the cars turning from Purefoy are accelerating quickly in order to be able to make the turn, and to avoid collisions.

There is a traffic warning sign in the median that has to be replaced frequently due to cars knocking it down - driving too fast on S Columbia as well as from drivers turning left from Purefoy Rd while looking north in order to avoid being hit by southbound traffic traveling at a high rate of speed. The sign is probably replaced monthly on average. These do not show up on the accident report because the driver leaves the scene quickly.

Even though DOT seems to control the final outcome for this intersection, and they move at a sloth-like decision making pace, the danger at the intersection is a town problem because it puts our community at risk, one which I believe the town needs to take the lead in coming up with a solution.

As always, thank you for your time and diligence on this project as well as the whole Land Use project.

Nina East

1101 S. Columbia St.

Chapel Hill, NC 27514

919-357-2728