



# Expedited Review of Affordable Housing **FRAMING CHOICES**



**May 11, 2022**



# BACKGROUND

**September 2021**

Council petition on strategies to promote affordable and missing middle housing production

- *Includes strategy on expedited review process for affordable housing*

**November 2021**

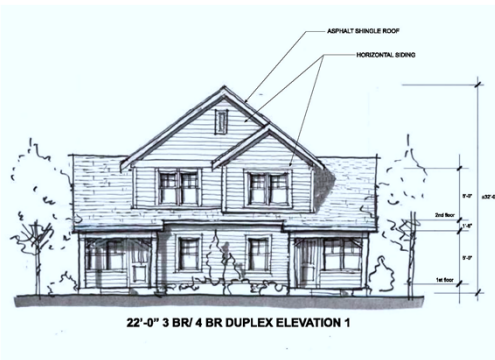
Housing Advisory Board review of petition, recommendation for 6 month process

**November 2021**

Preliminary overall petition response and draft Work Plan shared with Council

**March 2022**

Follow-up response on opportunities and challenges around expedited review shared with Council





## DEFINING THE ISSUE

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The complexity of our development review process limits the production and overall supply of affordable housing in Chapel Hill

- The process adds costs to project budgets and restricts ability to meet funding deadlines
- Some providers may not be participating, given the risk and unpredictability of the process
- Delivery of affordable units struggles to keep up with need

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# INTERESTS

- ❖ Maximize opportunity around tax credits, leverage limited funds
- ❖ Reduce the local barriers to entry and “at-risk” design investment for developers created by our process



- ❖ Expand the suite of strategies to address housing affordability
- ❖ Effectively involve and gather input from the community during an expedited process

# PROCESS



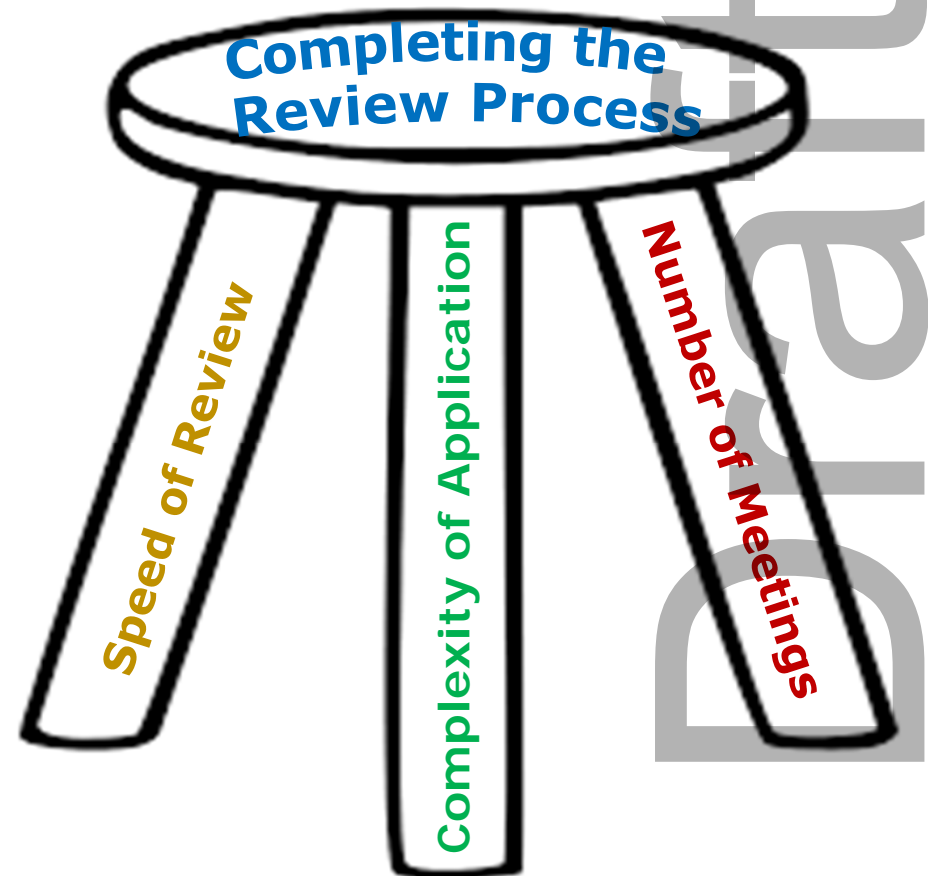


# TRADEOFFS IN PLAN REVIEW

**Review completed in a timely, predictable manner**

**Application detailed enough for thorough consideration**

**Meetings support community input and involvement**





# STAFF REVIEW AND STUDY TOPICS

- **Pilot of strategies** for expedited review with Jay St, Trinity Court, and other projects
- **Existing processes in Chapel Hill** that offer time savings for certain projects
- Approaches taken by **City of Raleigh** and **City of Durham**
- Input from **affordable housing providers** and **other developers** on the value of expedited review
- **Potential candidate projects** that could benefit





## TAKEAWAYS: REVIEW TIMELINE FACTORS

Limited staff capacity

Number of meetings required

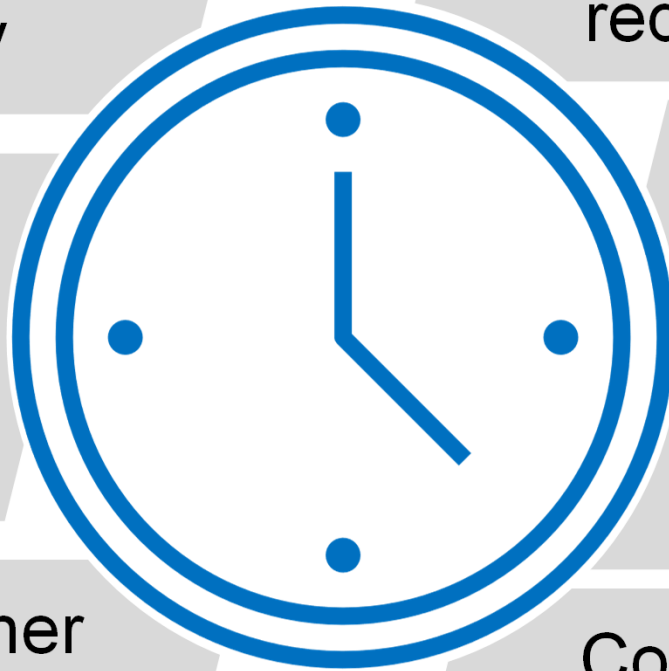
Number of steps in process

Limits on agenda length

Volume of other plan review

Council meeting cycle

Complexity of plans







# TAKEAWAYS: UNDERSTANDING LIMITS



Meaningful change  
to the review timeline  
can't happen  
without...

... a streamlined process

*OR*

... more resources and  
capacity for staff, Boards,  
and Council

*OR*

... extending the timeline for  
other types of projects

*OR a combination of the above*

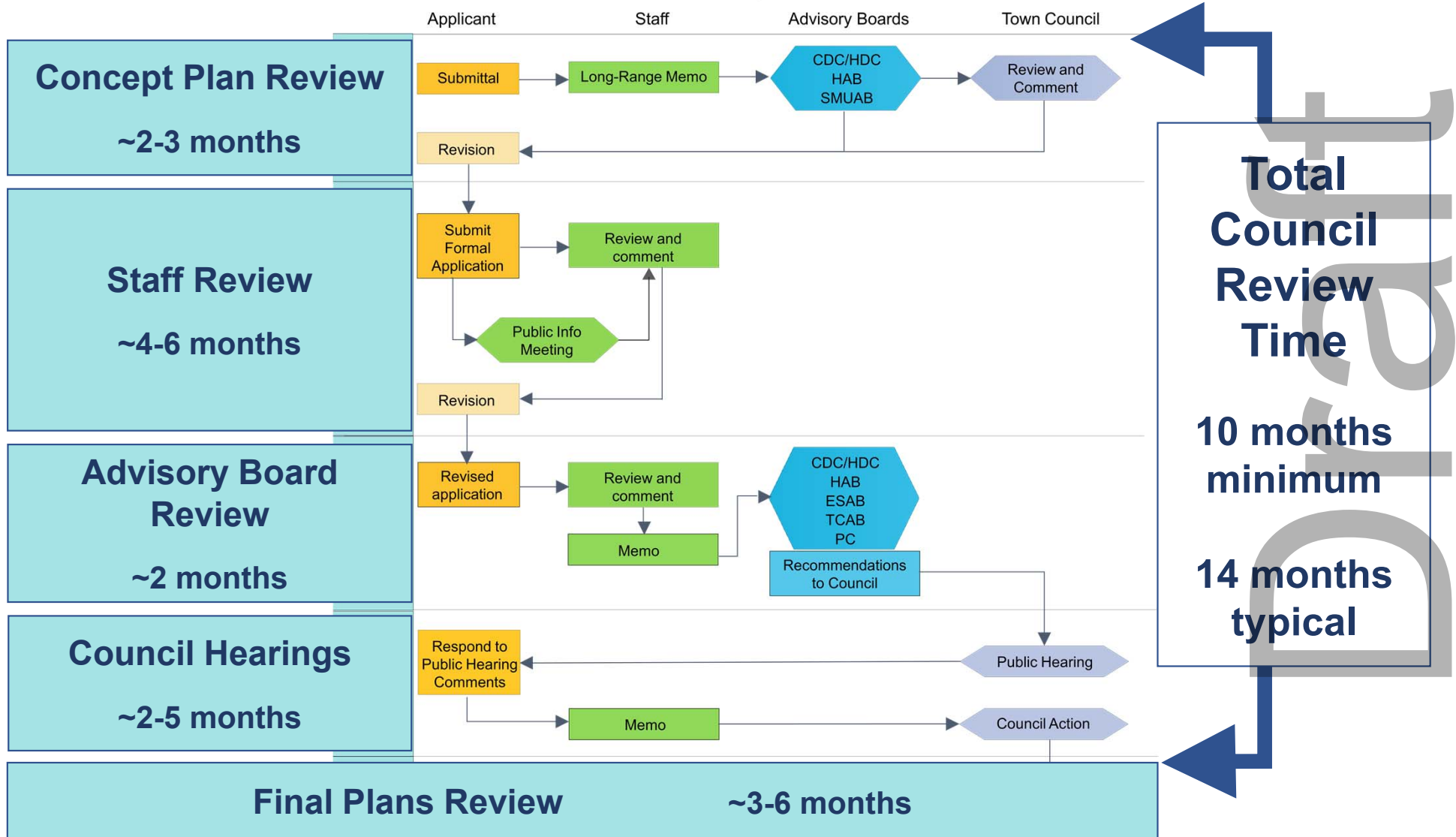
# TAKEAWAYS: INTENDED VALUE OF REVIEW STAGES

<b>Concept Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General design principles</li><li>• Suitability of development program and use(s) for site</li><li>• Alignment with community values</li></ul>
<b>Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compliance with regulations</li><li>• Any needs for modifications</li><li>• Alignment with community values and long-range plans</li></ul>
<b>Advisory Boards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alignment with community values</li></ul>
<b>Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holistic review of all items above by Governing Body</li></ul>
<b>Final Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compliance with regulations</li><li>• Compliance with conditions of approval</li></ul>

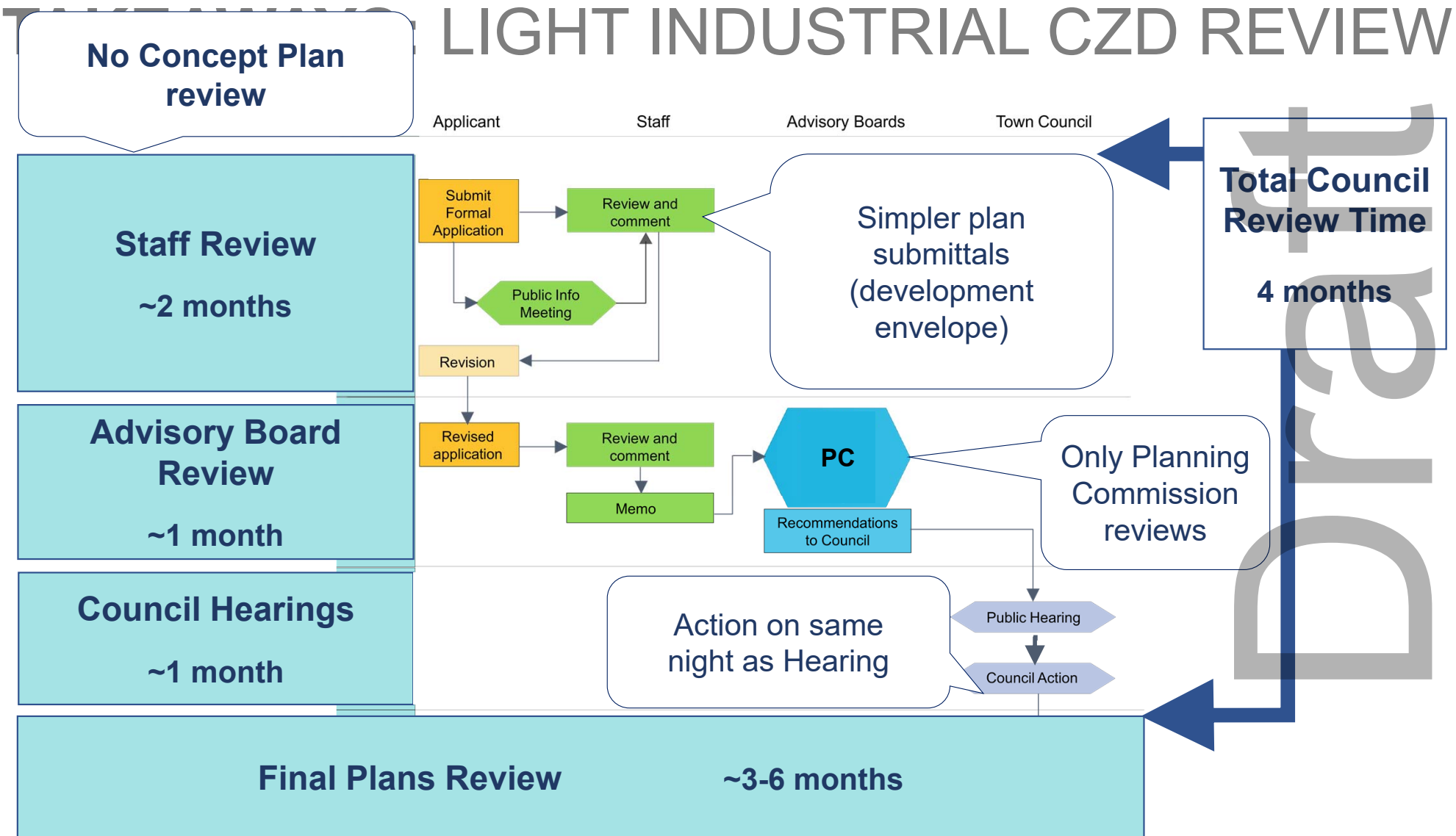
# TAKEAWAYS: CHALLENGES AT EACH STAGE

<b>Concept Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose unclear to applicants</li></ul>
<b>Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High level of at-risk investment in design and engineering</li><li>• Other communities require less detailed design to secure entitlement</li><li>• Flexibility on regulations must be approved by Council</li></ul>
<b>Advisory Boards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competing feedback - risks increase with more groups involved</li><li>• Too much design investment to make substantial change</li><li>• Limited understanding of constraints for aff. housing projects</li></ul>
<b>Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Predictability and removing uncertainty around decision can be <i>as valuable</i> as saving time</li></ul>

### Town Council Development Review Process



# LIGHT INDUSTRIAL CZD REVIEW



# TAKEAWAYS: COST OF ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW

- At least 8 **Advisory Board** meetings per project
- Hours billed for prep, presenting, debrief, and idle time
- Joint meetings: can run long, create extra work for Board members and staff
- Raleigh and Durham: only Planning Commission reviews rezoning cases

## **CDC or HDC**

1. Concept Plan
2. Council Review
3. Final Plans

## **HAB**

4. Concept Plan
5. Council Review

## **SMUAB**

6. Concept Plan

## **ESAB**

7. Council Review

## **TCAB**

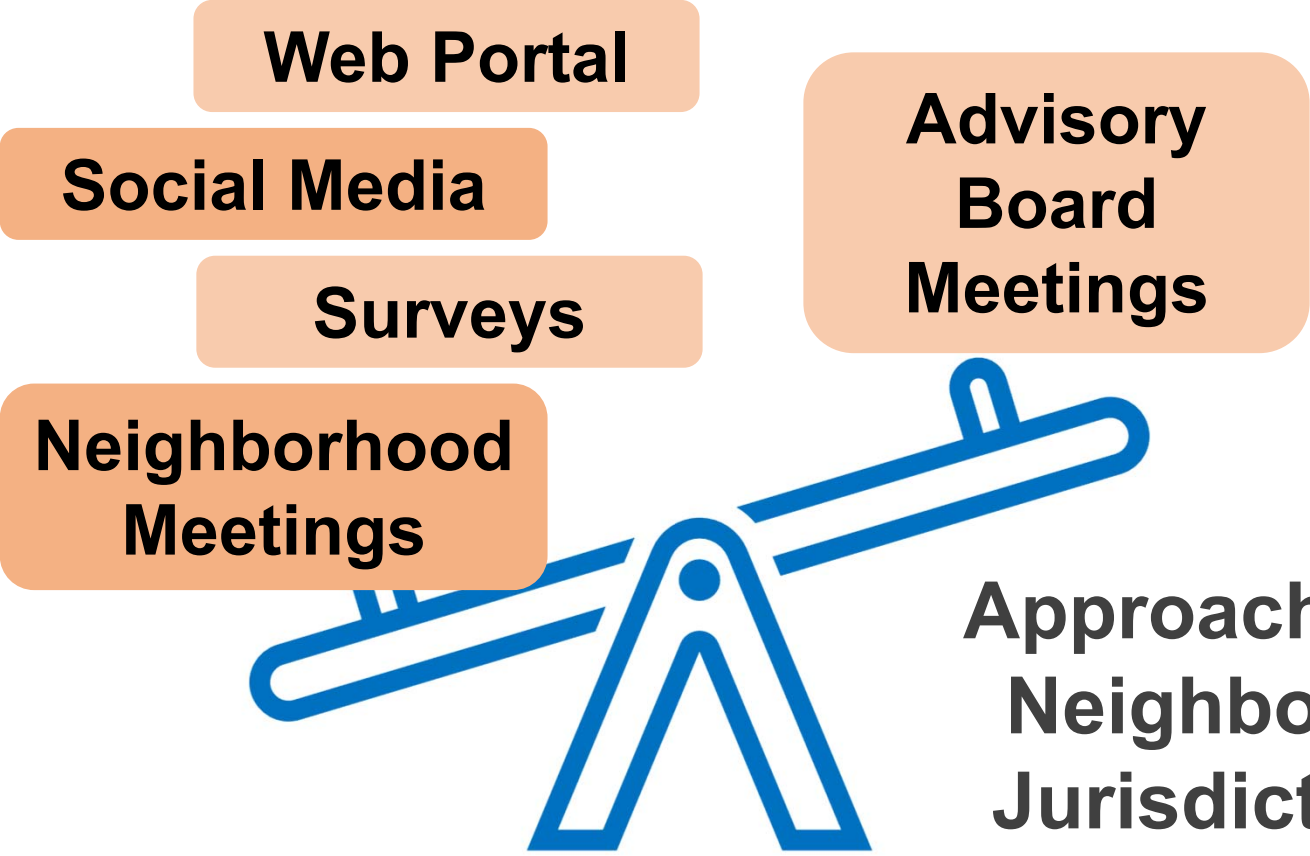
8. Council Review

## **Planning Commission**

9. Council Review

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# TAKEAWAYS: GATHERING COMMUNITY INPUT



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# TAKEAWAYS: PLAN DETAIL

## Conditional Zoning Application Checklist

- **Narratives and Statements**
- **Traffic Impact Analysis**
- **Energy Management Plan**
- Stream/Wetland/Flood Determinations
- Stormwater Impact Analysis
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Detailed Site Plan
- Landscape Protection Plan
- Planting Plan
- Steep Slope Plan
- Grading Plan
- Erosion Control Plan
- Solid Waste Plan
- Construction Management Plan
- Streetscape Improvements Plan
- Building Elevations

## Final Plans Application Checklist

- Stream/Wetland/Flood Determinations
- Stormwater Impact Analysis
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Detailed Site Plan
- Landscape Protection Plan
- Planting Plan
- Steep Slope Plan
- Grading Plan
- Erosion Control Plan
- Solid Waste Plan
- Construction Management Plan
- Streetscape & Street Light Plan
- Building Elevations & Materials Palette
- **Roadway Design Plan**
- **Traffic Plan**
- **Fire Protection Plan**
- **Utility Plans**
- **Transportation Management Plan**
- **Phasing Plan**
- **Lighting Plan**
- **Recorded Easements and Documents**

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## Light Industrial CZD Application Checklist

- Narratives and Statements
- Traffic Impact Analysis
- Rezoning Plan –  
development envelope,  
access points,  
preservation areas
- Stream/Wetland/Flood Determinations
- Stormwater Impact Analysis
- Stormwater Management Plan

## Final Plans Application Checklist

- Stream/Wetland/Flood Determinations
- Stormwater Impact Analysis
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Detailed Site Plan
- Landscape Protection Plan
- Planting Plan
- Steep Slope Plan
- Grading Plan
- Erosion Control Plan
- Solid Waste Plan
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- Recorded Easements and Documents



# POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

**Consolidate steps in review process**

**Consolidated Advisory Board review**

**Simplify application materials for Council review**

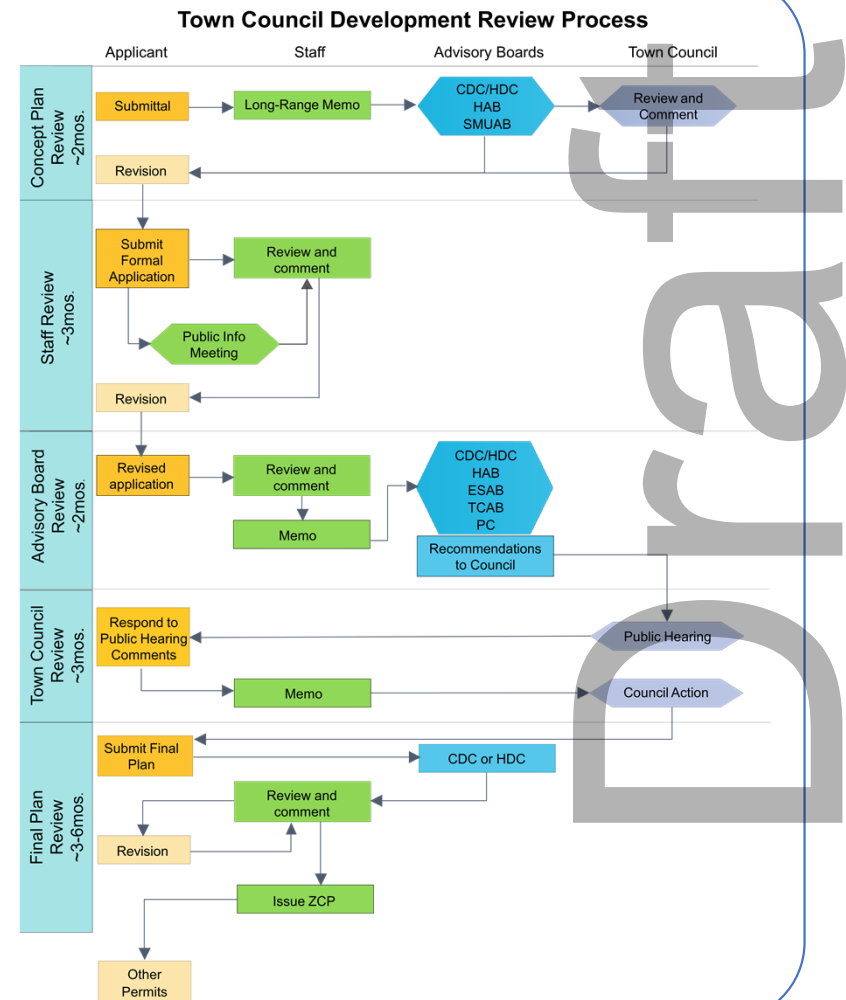
**Increase staff capacity**

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# SOLUTIONS

## Consolidate steps in review process

- Determine at a high level what can be removed or combined to create a process with fewer steps and more certainty



## Consolidate steps in review process

**MECHANISM:** LUMO Text Amendment

**FURTHER ANALYSIS:**

- Determine alternatives for achieving the value of each review stage – adopted guidelines, menus of community benefits, etc.
- Further study of approaches used in other communities

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## Consolidated Advisory Board review

- Fewer Boards -  
whose review benefits affordable housing most?

*AND/OR*

- Fewer Meetings -  
through Joint Advisory Board review

*AND/OR*

- Boards that review at Concept Plan stage don't review again later

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## Consolidated Advisory Board review

**MECHANISM:** Revise Council Policy


**FURTHER ANALYSIS:**

- Cost to project teams for Advisory Board review
- Changes made to recent affordable housing projects as a result of Advisory Board feedback
- Alternative methods for meaningful engagement

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## Simplify application materials for Council review

- Focus on info needed to support Council decisions
- Full technical details provided at Final Plans review

 <span style="float: right;"> <b>CONDITIONAL ZONING APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS</b>                      TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL                      Planning and Development Services                 </span>	
<b>Planting Plan</b>	a) Dimensioned and labeled perimeter buffers b) Off-site buffer easement, if applicable c) Landscape buffer and parking lot planting plan (including planting strip between parking and building, entryway planting, and 35% shading requirement)
<b>Steep Slope Plan</b>	a) Classify and quantify slopes 0-10%, 10-15%, 15-25%, and 25% and greater b) Show and quantify areas of disturbance in each slope category c) Provide/show specialized site design and construction techniques
<b>Grading and Erosion Control Plan</b>	a) Topography (2-foot contours) b) Limits of Disturbance c) Pertinent off-site drainage features d) Existing and proposed impervious surface tallies
<b>Streetscape Plan, if applicable</b>	a) Public right-of-way existing conditions plan b) Streetscape demolition plan c) Streetscape proposed improvement plan d) Streetscape proposed utility plan and details e) Streetscape proposed pavement/sidewalk details f) Streetscape proposed furnishing details g) Streetscape proposed lighting detail
<b>Solid Waste Plan</b>	a) Preliminary Solid Waste Management Plan b) Existing and proposed dumpster pads c) Proposed dumpster pad layout design d) Proposed heavy duty pavement locations and pavement construction detail e) Preliminary shared dumpster agreement, if applicable

**Simplify application materials for Council review**

**MECHANISM:** Revise Application Checklists

**FURTHER ANALYSIS:**

- Consult with full Technical Review Team on information needed prior to Council review
- Mechanisms to modify regulations when needed



## Increase staff capacity

- Could be new positions, contracted services, and/or supportive technology
- Consider measures for all Departments involved in Technical Review
- Less influence over external agencies (NCDOT, OWASA, Orange County)

**Increase staff  
capacity**

**MECHANISM:** Budget allocations

**FURTHER ANALYSIS:**

- Determine opportunities during FY23 budget and 5-year budget discussions



## SOLUTIONS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS...

**Consolidate steps in review process**

**Consolidated Advisory Board review**

**Simplify application materials for Council review**

**Increase staff capacity**

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## Next Steps

- Draft Process Changes based on Identified Solutions:  
**Summer 2022**
- Community and Stakeholder Review:  
**Summer-Fall 2022**
- Council Review and Action:  
**Fall 2022**

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