



CONSIDER A LAND USE MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT - PROPOSED CHANGES TO SECTION 3.11 REGARDING MASSING AND PERMEABILITY IN THE BLUE HILL DISTRICT

STAFF REPORT

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PLANNING DEPARTMENT
 Judy Johnson, Interim Director
 Corey Liles, Principal Planner

PROJECT LOCATION Blue Hill Form District	REGULAR MEETING DATE February 19, 2020	REQUESTED BY Town of Chapel Hill
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ITEM OVERVIEW

This text amendment would update existing standards for massing in the Blue Hill District, in response to a petition received by Council on [March 14th, 2018](#)¹. Proposed modifications to Section 3.11 of the Land Use Management Ordinance include:

1. Adding Maximum Building Dimensions (measured along street frontage and perpendicular to streets)
2. Adding Minimum Separation between buildings, with criteria to make this inviting space
3. Including options for small townhome and stacked townhome projects that do not include commercial space
4. Reducing the number of parking spaces by 50% spaces for mixed use projects
5. Allowing standalone parking decks to be located closer to the sidewalk, if thoughtfully designed
6. Not requiring smaller upper-story floor plates for 4-story buildings

UPDATES SINCE PUBLIC HEARING (held on [January 8, 2020](#)²)

- Vehicular drives are allowed in a building separation area, but they do not count towards meeting the minimum separation width between buildings unless properly designed as a 'shared space' with pedestrians.
- Limiting the range of townhome projects that are exempted from commercial space requirements – only achievable if (i) the project has no more than 60 units and (ii) at least half of the units are less than 1800 sq ft.
- Limiting the locations where standalone parking decks can have a reduced street setback through a Design Alternative – not available along Type A frontages.

TOWN MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

I have reviewed and discussed key issues with Town staff. Based on the information in the record to date, I believe the Council could make the findings required to approve the proposal, and therefore should:

- 1) close the public hearing;
- 2) adopt the Resolution of Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan; and
- 3) enact Ordinance A to amend Section 3.11 of the Land Use Management Ordinance

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

- The objectives of new massing standards include increasing pedestrian connections, increasing visual permeability, and reducing the visual impact of taller buildings.
- The recommendations are based on economic analysis done by Noell Consulting, primary urban design evaluation done by Civitech, Inc., and an additional assessment by the Town's urban designer.
- The current work on Blue Hill Massing builds on a text amendment adopted on [June 27, 2018](#)³ that encourages recreation space to be integrated into the public realm.

FISCAL IMPACT/RESOURCES

Tony Sease of Civitech, Inc., has served as an urban design consultant for massing study, under a contract with the Town of Chapel Hill not to exceed \$27,010.

Noell Consulting Group completed a market analysis in support of the study, under a contract with the Town for \$12,000.

PROCESS

- 1 Receive and Refer Council Petition
- 2 Recreation Space Amendment
- 3 Research Additional Potential Standards
- 4 Council Work Session
- 5 Economic Analysis and Further Research
- 6 Advisory Board Review
- 7 Council Public Hearing
- 8 **Consider Action on Text Amendment**

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3378092&GUID=CF613ECB-AE0E-4A16-8801-9292A08A4231>

² <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4293232&GUID=359944EB-24ED-41F0-A471-867F9DF6E9AB>

³ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3537544&GUID=633504CC-12D7-458A-8158-8CDEF868585F>

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Staff Presentation
2. Technical Report
3. Resolution of Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan
4. Ordinance A (Enacting the Text Amendment)
5. Resolution B (Denying the Text Amendment)
6. Town of Chapel Hill Urban Designer Review
7. Community Design Commission Comments
8. Planning Commission Recommendation