

SUMMARY OF A CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW
1000 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BOULEVARD
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION

March 26th, 2019

The Community Design Commission conducted a concept plan review for 1000 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on March 26th, 2019. The project proposed construction of a mixed-use development including office, retail and residential. Additional surface parking, stormwater controls and amenities were proposed. Key points made by members of the Commission and Public about the concept plan include:

- This site should serve as a significant BRT node along Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The site could be a template for what a BRT node could look like.
- High-quality architecture for this site is a must. The intersection of N. Estes Dr. and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd is one of the most prominent in the Town, and the architecture on this corner should make a gesture to the intersection. The corner building design should make an impact. Some members suggested placing a plaza there.
- Members emphasized the importance of making this location attractive for people to stay and to use public transport.
- Suggest drawing the public into the site with pedestrian gathering spaces along the internal axis (reducing the impact of traffic noise and exhausts while dining outside). There should be more community gathering spaces provided.
- There is an over-abundance of parking spaces provided and the ratio of parking to related uses is too high. Providing 1300 parking spaces cannot work at this intersection.
- Suggest consult the Central West Small Area Plan for proposed street layout and building heights.
- The project access points are too close to the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and North Estes Drive. The distances for NCDOT approval seem problematic.
- Members split over grid nature of the layout.
- The two large buildings along Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. need reconsideration. Some members deemed the corner one too high and monolithic. Other members felt the building at the corner might be undersized. The corner may be the more appropriate location for the proposed office building which may provide more opportunity to create a landmark.

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- Members appreciated how the gridded plan feathered out to connect to neighboring sites and greenways or offer opportunities for future connections. Members expressed concern over the mixture of uses, specifically related to the percentages present and potential lack of critical mass for attracting retail.
- Members expressed concern regarding the residential over parking fronting N. Estes Drive and the lack of activation (attractiveness to pedestrians) this set up creates. One suggestion was for live/work town homes. There should be ground level units with entrances facing the street.
- There is insufficient open/green space and amenity space. Consider providing more open spaces clustered between housing, and consider underground parking to provide more open space, as suggested by a citizen.
- Make the project inviting to the senior apartment dwellers to be living nearby on N. Estes Drive.
- The parking decks should be wrapped on all sides. The decks are lower than the structures surrounding the decks; would like examples of how this would look to residents in the upper units.
- Applaud the provision of affordable housing for 80-100% of median but suggest considering affordability below 80% AMI as well.
- Consider green building approaches to emphasize the cutting-edge nature of the development.
- What is the status of the Town road improvements and bicycle path, and how will it be coordinated with this project?
- The Council should consider NC law provisions which allow the Town to deny a building permit, or refuse to approve a formal application for 3 years after timber harvest.
- The reduction in the tree canopy is troublesome, and the applicant should make every effort to provide the community with a well-designed project that also replaces some of the trees.

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- Three citizens spoke and expressed concern over traffic impacts along Martin Luther King and N. Estes Drive, the proposed density at a very difficult intersection, stormwater controls, and the lack of diversity in the plan; suggestions were made concerning the desirability of green rooftops, the design of amenity spaces between housing units, and using underground parking to create more green space.
- A citizen group spoke out in support of the project including its connection to adjacent communities and its consistency w/ the small area plan.

