

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Dwight Bassett, Economic Development Director
Jennifer Keesmaat, The Keesmaat Group
Date: December 7, 2022
Subject: Complete Community Framework and Pilot Projects

Overview: The [Complete Community initiative](#) is a follow-up to the 2021 Housing Report to:

1. Put "instruments in the cockpit."
2. Look at everything on the map.
3. Hire a top-level planning consultant to chart alternative strategies.
4. Hold deep conversations with the community about needs, options, and trade-offs.

The Complete Community Strategy provided a process update, an overview of the capacity analysis, and introduced the long list of pilot projects and evaluation criteria for the pilot projects.

The capacity analysis reviewed recent development patterns, presented a series of maps related to topography and development areas, and reviewed criteria for trade-offs for discussion.

Background

- The Town worked with the Housing Report consultant (Business Street) to develop an Request for Proposals (RFP) for a team to conduct a future vision based on "meeting the need" for housing.
- The Town hired a team comprised of Jennifer Keesmaat & Alex Mather with The Keesmaat Group, Jennifer Hurley with Hurley~Franks & Associates, and Rod Stevens with Business Street to complete the Team.
- At the June Council Committee on Economic Sustainability, Jennifer Keesmaat was introduced to the Council.
- The Team worked to develop a list of individuals to talk about this plan and gain perspective. At the same time, the Team developed a Capacity Analysis for the future housing growth of Chapel Hill and where it might occur.
- There were public meetings, interviews, focus groups, and meeting with many stakeholders. This process led to developing the framework for a Complete Community strategy and recommendations for a pilot project as a stake in the ground for this new way of thinking.

Other Materials:

- Housing Report - ([Housing Report](#))([Presentation from September 2021](#))
- [Input from the first round of interviews](#)
- [List of individuals to be interviewed for the second round.](#)
- [Final input from interviews](#)
- [Steering Committee](#)

Meetings:

- Council Meeting, November 30, 2022 - [Presentation](#)
- Council Meeting, November 2, 2022 - [Presentation](#)

- Council Committee on Economic Sustainability, October 7, 2022 presentation on Planning Systems Evaluation (**separate project**) [Presentation](#), [Video](#)
- [September 28, 2022, Regular Council Meeting -Update](#)
- [Updated Work plan 9-2022](#)
- [September 15, 2022 - Community presentation](#)
- [Input from the first round of interviews](#)
- [List of individuals to be interviewed for the first round.](#)
- Council Committee on Economic Sustainability (September 9, 2022) - [Presentation](#), [Video](#)
- Council Committee on Economic Sustainability - [Special Meeting, August 18th \(video\)](#)
- Council Committee on Economic Sustainability -Jennifer Keesmaat introduction (June 2022) - [Presentation](#), [Timeline and work plan](#), [Video](#)
- [Housing Report](#)
- [Presentation from September 2021](#)
- Council Work session, June 21, 2022 - [Council meeting](#)

Implementation of the Strategy:

Based on the discussion during the Council's November 30, 2022 work session, staff recommends the following steps to begin implementing the strategy:

- Update the Town's Comprehensive Plan with Complete Community Framework as the guiding vision
- Update the Town's Comprehensive Plan to include the Everywhere to Everywhere Greenways Plan.
- Initiate the Everywhere to Everywhere Greenway pilot project by pursuing federal funding and providing updates to the Council on resource needs for implementation through the 5-year budget strategy and annual budget processes.
- Initiate the Midtown (short-term) Pilot Project and the Parkline (long-term) pilot project.
- Develop a process for regular reporting by staff on implementation status should the Council and community can track progress on implementation.

Implications:

- A public hearing process will be needed to update the Comprehensive Plan. That update can include elements such as the Everywhere to Everywhere Greenway Plan, a study of Natural Areas, and coordination across existing plan components to clarify the Strategy's guiding role.
- Town staff can begin implementing the pilot project to pursue federal funding for greenways immediately.
- Additional resources will likely be required if funding is secured to manage and construct a large-scale greenways program or other changes to the development management process. These needs can be an ongoing topic in the Town's 5-year budget strategy and annual budgeting processes.

Conclusion:

Acceptance of the strategy and the pilot projects is the beginning of a new way of envisioning and creating the future of Chapel Hill. While the pilot projects set the direction, the strategy and the follow-on work, including comprehensive plan updates, a review of the planning system (underway), and future updates to the regulatory system in Chapel Hill, including the Land Use Management Ordinance, will make the bold ideas from the Strategy the regular way of managing growth and change in the community.