

PLANNING COMMISSION

The charge of the Planning Commission is to assist the Council in achieving the Town's Comprehensive Plan for orderly growth and development by analyzing, evaluating, and recommending responsible town policies, ordinances, and planning standards that manage land use and involving the community in long-range planning.

RECOMMENDATION FOR CONDITIONAL ZONING APPLICATION FOR ST. PAUL VILLAGE

August 22, 2023

Recommendation: Approval ☒ Approval ☐ Denial with Comments ☐

Motion: Theodore Nollert moved, Erik Valera seconded, a motion to recommend that the Council approve Resolution A (Resolution of Consistency).

Vote: 9 – 0

Yeas: Jonathan Mitchell (Chair), Elizabeth Losos, Wesley McMahon, Chuck Mills, Theodore Nollert, Louie Rivers, Geoff Green, Stother Murray, and Erik Valera

Nays:

Recommendation: Approval ☐ Approval with Comments ☒ Denial ☐

Motion: Theodore Nollert moved, Wesley McMahon seconded, a motion to recommend that the Council adopt Resolution A (Approving the Application) with the attached matrix and a comment highlighting that connectivity to other transit nodes in Chapel Hill and Carrboro through greenways to this site will be an important factor to ensuring that this project is successful.

Vote: 9 – 0

Yeas: Jonathan Mitchell (Chair), Elizabeth Losos, Wesley McMahon, Chuck Mills, Theodore Nollert, Louie Rivers, Geoff Green, Stother Murray, and Erik Valera

Nays:

Prepared by: Jacob Hunt, Planner II

Planning Commission Complete Community Matrix for St. Paul Village

On August 21, 2023, the Planning Commission voted unanimously (9-0) to recommend St. Paul Village, without reservation. The Planning Commission also unanimously voted that St. Paul Village is consistent with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. We wish to highlight to the Town Council (and staff) the importance of an eventual greenway connection from Purefoy Drive to the east, which will better connect this project with the MLK corridor and Timberlyne.

#	Complete Community Criteria	Facts	Analysis	Summary of Concerns
1	Land use efficiency (measured as housing density per acre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 residential units/acre, plus significant non-residential uses Because only about half of the site is buildable, the effective density is higher Future Land Use Map (FLUM) calls for “high residential, general 8-15+ units/acre” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed density uses the land reasonably efficiently, aligns with FLUM 5-story height of northern multifamily building enables medium density overall, even with large natural area in the center of the site See #7 for discussion of neighborhood compatibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
2	Mix of housing unit sizes/configurations that address affordability goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly 2br units. Some 1br, lesser number of 3br 100% rental Approximate unit sizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,000 sq. ft. 1brs 1,200 – 1300 sq. ft. 2brs 1,400-1,500 sq. ft. 3brs 25% of total units are designated affordable units, spread across both buildings (60-80% AMI). The ratio of affordable units to market rate units is 34% (88 affordable units to 262 market rate units) 100 of the units will be designated for residents 55 or older Units otherwise will be open to the all, regardless of affiliation with St. Paul AME 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the Town has an acute need for low-cost owner-occupied units, it also has a need for rental units (particularly in the non-student space), and there is no Town policy against 100% rental developments. Based on the concept plan hearing (June 2021), St. Paul AME seems to have given this careful thought. Query whether Town would prefer lesser overall number of affordable units at lower AMI levels (e.g., 50%). Some other developers have proposed a menu of options that are economically equivalent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
3	Both walkable and bikable to several daily needs, such as housing, jobs, schools, recreation. Mixed use buildings encouraged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 9x the required recreation space provided, including large amounts of both active and passive recreation amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketball, pickleball, fitness gym, pool, etc. (these primarily for residents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Paul Village features an unusually diverse mix of uses and is in this sense (and others) a model Complete Community project While the “active” recreation facilities at the northwestern end of the site are primarily for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Town should plan to provide for bike connectivity through the Greene Tract to

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Large preserved green space with paths in the center, small park area along Purefoy Drive at the southeast corner of the site (these accessible to wider community) • ~14,000 sq. ft. of ground level retail/commercial on-site • Sanctuary and separate community building on-site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education space and meeting space in community building to be made available to wider community to the extent possible • Site is adjacent to the RENA Center • Site is ~10 min. walk from the 164-acre Greene Tract, jointly owned by Orange County, Chapel Hill, and Carrboro. Plans for the Green Tract (purchased in 1984 as a potential future landfill site but never actually used for that purpose) to include a future elementary school, park, and affordable housing • Rogers Road is bikable (via sidewalk) to Homestead Rd., which will soon be bikable all the way to MLK. Rogers Road is not bikable to MLK via Eubanks. • In the future, Purefoy Drive presumably will be bikable to Weaver Dairy Extension and, ultimately, to Timberlyne. 	<p>(as they probably must be for practical reasons), the other amenities – green space, walking paths, ground floor commercial, community center – will be accessible to the broader Rogers Road community. These provide a strong value proposition for the existing neighborhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike connectivity to MLK currently is unsatisfactory (although soon it will at least be possible via the Rogers Road sidewalk and the paths along Homestead Road). It will be important for the Town to invest in bike connectivity from Purefoy Drive through the Greene Tract to Weaver Dairy Extension. That will enable residents to conveniently bike from St. Paul Village to the future NSBRT. 	Weaver Dairy Extension.
4	On bus line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes (Rogers Road) • St. Paul's plans to provide a bus stop along the property, but not a shelter, since riders will typically exit at the stop but will not wait for buses there. Those waiting for the bus typically get on the south-bound bus, which is on the other side of Rogers Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is served by transit. • If future NSBRT stations have bike parking (?), residents will be able to bike (but not walk) to the NSBRT, which they could take directly to jobs at UNC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
5	Parking aligned with Planning Commission recommendations (from 6/21/23 petition to Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 575 parking spaces proposed • Ratio = 1.6/unit • Predominantly structured parking • Proposal contemplates bundled parking cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parking ratio seems reasonable, considering that there are significant non-residential uses • We would like to see the cost of parking unbundled from the cost of housing. The development team indicated they would consider this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We suggest unbundling the cost of parking from the cost of housing

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6	Quality design, place-making, and prioritization of the pedestrian realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site plan features extensive walking paths, predominantly structured parking • Multifamily buildings overlook large natural area in the center • Community building, which includes commercial space, is by its nature a public gathering space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integration of large natural areas and inclusion of public meeting space make this proposal attractive from a place-making perspective • Sparing use of impervious surfaces and inclusion of ground-level commercial uses contribute to the pedestrian experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
7	Reasonably respectful of surrounding neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrounding neighborhoods has a rural character. • The document “Rogers Road: Mapping Our Community’s Future” (2016) – the result of a 9-month community planning effort – does not contemplate the proposed heights of 3-5 stories, or anything like the proposed density. It does call for balancing “land conservation with modest density to reduce suburban sprawl” and support opportunity, affordability, and a mixed community • On the other hand, the project pushes taller buildings far away from Purefoy Drive and Rogers Road, which mutes the visual impact from the street. In addition, the property slopes down immediately adjacent to Purefoy Drive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Paul Village is significantly denser than envisioned by “Rogers Road: Mapping Our Community’s Future.” But the highest density is interior to the site. The Rogers Road community could reasonably view the housing proposition (which is partly enabled by the density) and ample mixed-use amenities as a favorable trade-off for higher density that might otherwise strike neighbors as incongruous. Public comment on this aspect should be sought by the Town. The Planning Commission did not receive any public comments at its meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town should reach out to residents of the Historic Rogers Road neighborhood to gather input (as St. Paul AME has apparently done), thereby preventing any surprises
8	Respect for topography and natural landscapes (tree canopy, green space), including any protected natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal calls for restoration and reforestation of natural area in the center of the site. Currently this part of the site serves as a stormwater basin, more so than historically, due to adjacent development, complications from previous sewer pipe installation, etc. This has caused deterioration of the prior woodlands. • Proposed retaining walls involve incursion into the RCD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roughly half the site is preserved (and unbuildable), and the project promises not only to protect but to enhance it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
9	Responsive to stormwater concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently a 25-year storm standard is contemplated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We requested that the applicant be prepared to discuss with the Council the possibility of meeting a 100-year storm standard, and any incremental costs that would be associated with doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further analysis and discussion are needed regarding the appropriate stormwater standard