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DATE: October 22, 2019

RE: CONCEPT PLAN APPLICATION NARRATIVE  
BELLA VISTA AT MEADOWMONT VILLAGE CENTER  
Developer's Program  
Statements of Compliance

### **Developer's Program – Strong Chapel Hill Roots**

Having grown up in Glen Lennox apartments and graduated from Chapel Hill High School, the developer, Mariana Molina of Bella Vista Development Group LLC ("Bella Vista"), has a strong personal connection with her Chapel Hill roots. Though she moved away to attend college, she has maintained close ties to Chapel Hill. Her bond with Chapel Hill grew stronger when she married Craig Davis of Craig Davis Properties, Inc., the original developer of the Meadowmont Village Center.

Bella Vista is a NC company dedicated to creating environments that are sustainable, beautiful, and functional. By promoting the advancement of women in the commercial real estate industry, Bella Vista has created a unique, team-driven approach to the development process where greatness is measured by the success of our projects. Currently all consulting, design and construction firms associated with the project are majority woman-owned, local NC companies.

Her Bella Vista team recognized the demand for commercial space in Chapel Hill and the opportunity for a sustainable, beautiful, and functional building at Meadowmont. This enhancement to the Meadowmont Village Center is proposed with a new building to be primarily office. In addition to office, structured parking and commercial restaurant space is proposed, with the potential for a small residential condominium component.

The development is proposed with the support of the master developer of Meadowmont, East West Partners Management Company.

### **Location**

The proposed development is to be located in the western portion of the Meadowmont Village Center on the south side of West Barbee Chapel Road. As part of the Village Center, the new building is proposed in the existing surface parking lot located on the western edge of the Village Center. The new building will be constructed on structured parking. As anticipated by the 1997 Master Land Use Plan document, the Bella Vista project will provide a building face on West Barbee Chapel Road. The Bella Vista building will also provide vistas of the meadow between Barbee Chapel Road and the UNC Health Care building.



The Bella Vista project area is accessed from Meadowmont Lane and/or West Barbee Chapel Road. The new building, as part of the Village Center, borders the meadow and is across the street from the Greenway Condominiums and the ARC of Chapel Hill apartments.

### **Proposed Use**

The Bella Vista Building will be primarily office use but will also provide accessory commercial/restaurant space located on structured parking. In addition, the idea to include a residential condominium component is being explored.

As part of the development, affordable entrepreneurial space is being considered as a component of the new development.

### **History of Site**

The Meadowmont Master Land Use Plan was initially approved by the Town in 1995. Development continues to occur. A number of adjustments to the Master Land Use Plan have occurred over the years. Several lots remain which have assigned development allocations of floor area but have not yet been built. For example, lots at the northeast and southeast corners of Meadowmont Lane at Barbee Chapel Road are approved for future development. Also, we understand there is an undeveloped lot on the south side of Hwy. 54.

Additionally, the Village Center has identified development which has not yet been constructed. The Village Center site within Meadowmont was originally approved as part of the 1995 Meadowmont Master Plan. The Village Center is not complete: Committed floor area has not yet been constructed. Within the Village Center, the Master Plan identifies a building on West Barbee Chapel Road at this location, between the existing UPS Store and the main meadow, as well as residential development lining the main meadow between West Barbee Chapel Road and the UNC Health Care building.

The existing parking lot at this location is where the Bella Vista project is planned. As anticipated by the 1997 Master Plan, the Bella Vista building is to front West Barbee Chapel Road and create a presence on the street.

The proposal involves a rezoning to allow additional floor area at the Village Center to complete this vision. The Village Center was not built to what zoning allowed at the time. Approximately 131,000 square feet of floor area attributed to the Village Center was not assigned to the Village Center Special Use Permit. We understand that some of that Village Center floor area was subsequently reallocated to development on the south side of Hwy. 54.

Of the floor area not committed to undeveloped lots from the Master Land Use Plan, approximately 22,000 square feet remains available. Based on preliminary meetings with town staff, we believe the construction of this new Bella Vista building will require an approximately 130,000 additional square foot allocation. Therefore, a rezoning application is anticipated.



Following Concept Plan review, we will submit:

1. A Master Land Use Plan Modification to replace development within this portion of the Village Center parking lot and allow additional floor area at this location.
2. A rezoning application to supplement the remaining allocation of floor area and claim the allocated floor area for this project.
3. A new Special Use Permit application to allow construction of the new office/commercial restaurant/parking deck structure with potential for residential condominium.

We are excited to request modification of the Meadowmont Master Land Use Plan to complete the Village Center with the Bella Vista project. A commercial subdivision is anticipated for the future lot.

### **Existing Site Conditions**

The approximately 2-acre site fronts West Barbee Chapel Road and is currently a surface parking lot. Little encroachment into the existing landscaped border is anticipated though required utility connections and other site considerations are being explored.

The topography of the site is such that storm drainage is anticipated to continue to drain to the stormwater pond at the base of the main meadow. The existing stormwater pond capacity is under review to determine if additional stormwater detention will be necessary. A buffered intermittent stream is present along the western boundary of the site area.

### **Proposed Concept Plan**

The Bella Vista proposal will be primarily office use but will also provide accessory commercial/restaurant space as well as structured parking. Further, the idea to include a residential condominium component is being considered. Bella Vista is anticipated to be approximately 150,000 square feet in floor area with structured parking below. The structure is expected to include elements with an average of about 90 feet in height, with design considerations in process.

The building placement is positioned to take advantage of internal enhanced connections to the heart of the Village Center, to explore the vistas offered of the meadow, create strong pedestrian connection within the Village Center, and to architecturally address West Barbee Chapel Road. The development is proposed to compliment the neighboring properties and offer a new destination within the community.

New plantings are proposed around the perimeter of the new building as well as at important roof top locations. New plantings located in the area will help to highlight new community space as well as accent access points. Plant material will be sized to provide a maturing form and size within a few years of planting.

## Traffic

Meadowmont's infrastructure as a planned community, including roadways and bicycle/pedestrian improvements, has been built to accommodate the undeveloped properties.

And outside the Meadowmont development, NCDOT has Hwy. 54 Corridor Improvements in the conceptual design stage.

Adjustments for internal capture, pass-by trips, and/or transit/bicycle/pedestrians will also be important considerations. Although the Meadowmont Design Guidelines allow parking to be provided at 80% of the required ratios, we don't anticipate going below the required parking ratio to minimize any potential negative impact on others at the Village Center. Work is anticipated to begin this fall on the required Traffic Impact Analysis required as part of the project's Special Use Permit application in order for any potential traffic impact to be fully studied.

## Bella Vista: Key Summary Points

- A unique team promoting the advancement of women in real estate has been brought together to develop this Bella Vista project with a focus on creating a sustainable, beautiful, and functional addition to the Meadowmont Village Center.
- The Meadowmont community is approaching its 25th anniversary since approval. In addition to remaining undeveloped lots and floor area allocations, there are opportunities to grow and improve the planned community.
- Regarding the Village Center, the 1997 Master Plan indicates that the western parking lot of the Village Center anticipated future development lining both the meadow and West Barbee Chapel Road.
- The new Bella Vista proposal will provide office development with commercial restaurant space and structured parking, and potentially residential condominiums. The project will enhance the livability and economic viability of the Village Center, the Meadowmont development, and the broader community.
- New development along West Barbee Chapel Road in place of the existing surface parking lot will reinforce the street edge by continuing the rhythm of architectural form that addresses the street.
- Because development will occur primarily within an existing surface parking lot, conditions are optimal with no major environmental disturbance anticipated. Stormwater capacity will be studied at this location to determine what supplemental features may be needed to comply with the today's regulations.
- The Bella Vista project will be an important part of the Meadowmont Village Center. It will continue to be connected to all Meadowmont residents and the nearby community.
- Easy access to the greenway, sidewalks, bike lanes, bikeways, and mass transit will remain.



## **Statement of Compliance with the Chapel Hill Comprehensive Plan**

The project proposal is consistent with the Chapel Hill 2020 Comprehensive Plan's overall themes and goals as well as the Town's Land Use Plan:

### **1. A Place for Everyone**

Since the time it was created, Meadowmont has been envisioned as a place for everyone. As a master planned community, the development concept for Meadowmont is to be a community with a mix of land uses where it is possible to live, work and play. The Bella Vista proposal will continue the development concept.

### **2. Community Prosperity and Engagement**

The Bella Vista proposal will provide considerable tax benefits to help Town finances. In addition, the proposed development will support community engagement as a new hub in the Village Center and for the community in general.

### **3. Getting Around**

The Village Center at Meadowmont is the ideal location to add intensity to encourage and support public transit and general mobility around the community. Bella Vista is being located at a major transportation corridor (Highway 54) served by regular bus service with the long-term likelihood of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). And outside the Meadowmont development, NCDOT has Hwy. 54 Corridor Improvements in the works to ease the approach to the I-40 interchange.

### **4. Good Places, New Spaces**

The Bella Vista project will add new desirable development to help complete the Village Center. A key element of the design will be the coordination and connectivity with the neighboring structures. The building will add new commercial space reinforcing the character of West Barbee Chapel Road, with scenic views of the meadow. In addition to important new connections interior to the Village Center, the new building will enjoy direct access to recreational amenities with the adjacent greenway trail providing direct access to the larger Meadowmont community as well as the shopping and entertainment destinations at East 54, the Glenwood Square shopping center, Glen Lennox and ultimately the University.

### **5. Nurturing Our Community**

The Bella Vista proposal will be built with methods that reflect the community's sustainability and environmental values. As an existing parking lot today, construction will complete this portion of the Village Center to better connect with the neighboring structures while protecting the natural environment. Study is underway to evaluate the stormwater capacity of the main meadow stormwater pond.



#### **6. Town and Gown Collaboration**

The new Bella Vista development will provide space that is conveniently located to existing UNC Health Care clinics, the UNC main campus and UNC Hospitals. This means that the building will be attractive to users within Town as well as the University and/or Health Care System and will be viewed as a space to retain businesses spun out by University faculty and students.

#### **Chapel Hill 2020 Land Use Plan**

The Chapel Hill 2020 Land Use Plan identifies Meadowmont as a Town/Village Center just as the Chapel Hill downtown. The Chapel Hill 2020 Land Use Plan is also a component of the Chapel Hill Comprehensive Plan.

## **Statement of Compliance with Chapel Hill Design Guidelines**

The Town of Chapel Hill has developed design principals that serve to communicate what is expected of 'good design'. Their purpose as design guidance is 'to assure that new designs remain in continuity with the Town's existing design "successes," and at the same time inspire exciting and creative additions to the community's blend of distinctive buildings from many eras.' (p. 1)

The Chapel Hill Design Guidelines provides categories of town-wide criteria for design. The following Statement of Compliance identifies areas where these principals are integral in the proposed plans for the Bella Vista Project.

### **Design Criteria: Livability**

Buildings and outdoor spaces should be designed to fit human scale, harmonize with design of streets, and accommodate pedestrian traffic.

The Bella Vista project has been designed to provide an architectural face on West Barbee Chapel Road. This new building will minimize the visibility of parking and service facilities. The primary entrance will provide a strong connection to the heart of the Village Center and will be inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists. Benches and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities will be provided to maximize enjoyment of the outdoor space.

### **Design Criteria: Visual Impact**

New public and private projects should be visually appealing, and compatible with other development in the surrounding area.

The architecture and site design for the Bella Vista project will be visually appealing. It will make use of complimentary materials and will conform to the adopted Meadowmont Architectural Guidelines. As included in the Meadowmont Design Guidelines, the project will:

- Include visual variety and also maintain a strong sense of unity.
- Include a high level of architectural detailing to help maintain a sense of scale.
- Buildings and open spaces will work together to provide a pedestrian friendly sophisticated project with a strong low-density urban character.
- Individual building volumes and form will include an order of scale and rhythm.
- Massing will reflect defined entry points and help to orient users.
- Outside spaces will be designed with attention to their vertical and horizontal dimensions for maximizing the comfort of users.
- Individual building elements will include proportional and scaled elements that relate to the physical and physiological parameters of people.
- The building massing is to be broken up into human scaled elements whenever possible.

- The project will create a visually comprehensible environment using rhythm of building massing.
- Entrances will be articulated for easy identification.
- Detail elements will be included especially at the ground or sidewalk level, to create visual interest and help reinforce project unity.
- Roof forms can be used to identify and establish entry points and orientation from a distance.

#### **Design Criteria: Vegetation**

Landscape design concepts should preserve existing trees and incorporate native new trees and shrubbery. The landscape theme should be aesthetically compatible with that of the surrounding neighborhood.

Bella Vista's landscape theme will be aesthetically compatible with the neighboring area. Special attention will be provided to the meadow to the west and other adjacent development. Compliance with the Town's tree canopy coverage requirements will ensure a compatible landscape theme for the development. And, in furtherance of Bella Vista's sustainability goals, we anticipate installing some green roof areas. As included in the Meadowmont Design Guidelines, the project will:

- Utilize plant materials that will make the least demands on water systems and will have the best opportunity to survive, without excessive watering, during the dry cycles we experience in this climatic zone.

#### **Design Criteria: Mobility**

Land design concepts should provide a network of roads, bicycle paths and lanes, and sidewalks that give strong consideration to the safety of motorists, cyclists, joggers, and walkers. One of the key attractions of the Village Center is the adjacent greenway, bike lanes, bikeways, and sidewalks. This existing infrastructure makes it easy and convenient to choose from a variety of transportation options.

#### **Design Criteria: Activity Centers**

Structures and complexes should enhance community life by use of "destination points" such as arcades, lobbies, and ground-level retail stores, while at the same time providing for safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

The Bella Vista project will be a destination point within the Village Center. Its main entrance will be designed to visually punctuate the site and reinforce a sense of arrival. As a destination point, the Bella Vista project will create both formal and informal gathering places. The project will promote safe movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles by design.





### **Design Criteria: Views**

Streets, buildings, and parking lots should enhance the urban environment by providing pleasant vistas and geographic orientations.

The Bella Vista project will provide enhanced views from the new building as well as from the surrounding areas. Setbacks, building facades, and roof lines will be carefully designed for compatibility. An architectural face will be provided along West Barbee Chapel Road at this location. New street tree planting will promote views that are aesthetically pleasing. Solar orientation and sun light exposure will be optimized.

### **Summary**

The Bella Vista project will create an environment that is sustainable, beautiful, and functional while promoting the advancement of women in the commercial real estate industry. Bella Vista has created a unique, team-driven approach to the development process where greatness is measured by the success of our projects.