

## Amy Harvey

---

**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2020 9:10 AM  
**To:** jacks004@aol.com  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** FW: Area land use plan and S Columbia Annex  
**Attachments:** south columbia.docx

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



Jeanette Coffin  
Office Assistant  
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)  
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

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**From:** jacks004@aol.com [mailto:jacks004@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 22, 2020 3:29 PM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** Area land use plan and S Columbia Annex

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Please see the attached communication. Thank you for your service to the Town

To: Mayor and Councilpersons of Town of Chapel Hill

From: George and Ronnie; Jackson  
406 Westwood Drive

Re: Concerns regarding Proposed construction at the intersection of South Columbia and the on-ramp to 54West (South Columbia Annex) and changes to the land use focus area

Thank you for your service to the community. You persisted until midnight, at least, on Wed. 11/18 to review this issue. I stayed with you but gave up at about 9:30 as the topic of my concern was last on the agenda.

We have lived at this address for 38 years. I walk South Columbia to the Morgan Creek Trail about 3 times a week. I have a reputation for being the “trash guy” as I pick litter as I walk.

Aesthetics: The area is defined by Merritts and a variety of single family homes , most now rentals. Although the Merritts parking area on the west side of the street is unattractive, it codes a relaxed and functional area which does not need a “cityscape” with a tunnel approach between tall structures. It has become the only entry to the town that has not been “re-developed” to a city-planner's vision. The original land use plan indicated building height limits which has been altered from 4 stories max to 6. This alteration appears to have not been addressed thoroughly. Six story buildings do not fit this area.

Traffic: I am not aware of what the DOT future plans are to address the serious traffic situation at the off ramp of 15/501/54 onto 15/501 South. Prior to CoVid this ramp at certain times backed up on to the freeway. With continued development south of Chapel Hill and the potential at Obie’s Creek the problem is sure to worsen. How will increased development diminish the options for reworking the intersection?

The intersection of Purefoy and South Columbia is the site of frequent accidents ( I commonly pick up remains of typically minor accidents from drivers attempting to exit to the South). The situation is already difficult with drivers accessing Merritts both from North and South bound lanes. This situation will become much more problematic with a left turn lane and a right exit into a new development. This will likely result in the need for a traffic light which will not only slow rush hour traffic to and from UNC but likely contribute to the back up of traffic onto the freeway from the off-ramp. I am not a traffic engineer but foresee nothing but trouble.

Another concern goes beyond this geographic area issue. If I understood correctly the discussion of the increased tax revenue from the Blue Hill redevelopment suggested that these funds could be used for a number of laudable causes such as affordable housing, more park areas, tax reduction. One councilperson appropriately questioned the net revenue gain after adjustment for the cost of increased services to the area driven by increased traffic, basic town services, streets,etc.. The town staff person presenting the information seemed unable to address this rather basic issue. He suggested consultation or a document available to estimate the net revenue. I would think that any town planning activity would have ready access to how to adjust the increased revenue claims of developers for probable increased services cost. It is concerning that City Planning 101 did not include this concept or the algorithm to calculate.

Again thanks for your time. Ronnie and George Jackson

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2020 9:10 AM  
**To:** Anna Creissen  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: Columbia St. Annex Project

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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**From:** Anna Creissen [mailto:anna.creissen@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 22, 2020 3:14 PM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** Columbia St. Annex Project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

To the Mayor and Council,

I am deeply concerned about a six-story development going up a stone's throw away from my neighborhood, **Westwood**, which is a lovely historical neighborhood. As a resident of Chapel Hill over the past ten years we have seen the town ignore residents pleas in terms of over development, whether it be about the Bolin Creek loss of land, or over development along Dairyland. There is no foresight in terms of the town buying land to preserve for parks or forcing developers to include parks in their planning. The plans for the Target downtown had promised a park as part of the project but the small park is a joke and not an area worth walking a dog in.

As a resident of Chapel Hill we expect the Mayor and the town council to represent us. But as far as the S. Columbia Street Annex plan is concerned our worries as residents are being completely dismissed.

1. This area of town has no business in having the proposed increase of traffic and density that this development would bring.
2. Westwood is a quaint **Colonial** neighborhood and putting a **six** story modern building at the end/beginning of the neighborhood is very poor planning. Our neighborhood already has traffic issues with people that live towards the other end of the neighborhood (Coolidge Street) making a shortcut through our area of West University Drive. Recently children were almost run over by somebody speeding through and on another occasion I had to jump out of the way of somebody speeding through a stop sign near our home. If the town were to add this development these incidences will only worsen. Why would the Mayor and town council approve a project that the traffic advisory board has recommended against because of safety concerns? If we cannot count on the council to do the right things by us who can we rely on?
3. I am dismayed by a decision to make the project six stories. It was done on the sly most deliberately it would seem???? Our mayor and town council should not be kowtowing to developers, but it would seem this is the case. Are there not enough of these projects going on around town? Whether it be what is happening at Glenn Lenox or near Rams Plaza, for example. Meanwhile commercial real estate like University Mall is going bankrupt. Do we really need this added mix use development?

I wanted to voice my opinion, as our tranquil neighborhood will not be the same after this.

I recall the Mayor saying last year that we should just get used to the changes going on and that they are inevitable.

I disagree with this sentiment. When a town has a plan in place in terms of what they will allow and what they won't in the future and how they foresee the town twenty years from now then they will not just be reacting to the developers that beckon at our door for every scrap of land. A budget should be set aside for the town to buy land for parks. We cannot just be reacting, but should be planning. As far as the Columbia Street project is concerned I will again conclude the traffic and safety concerns are being dismissed. All of us that live in Chapel Hill are the ones that will pay the price when a project like this is given the green light. The only person winning is the developer.

Please know that I am vehemently against this development.

Thank you,

Anna Creissen

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2020 9:11 AM  
**To:** Helen Lancaster  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: Building across from Merritt's on Hwy 86

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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Office Assistant  
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[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
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**From:** Helen Lancaster [mailto:htlancaster@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 22, 2020 10:49 AM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** Building across from Merritt's on Hwy 86

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

A 4-6 story building along this corridor would increase the already-steady volume of traffic, start a new trend of high-rise construction in the neighborhood, and I am totally against it.

Chapel Hill is already besieged by high-rise apartments which decrease the beauty of the town. Why not build affordable 2-story town houses ? That would be more in keeping with the atmosphere and fewer cars added.

This project puts money in the pockets of a few and decreases the charm, ease, and livability of the many residents who use this route daily.

Thank you for your consideration.

Helen Lancaster, UNC '70  
325 W University Dr  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

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Get the new AOL app: [mail.mobile.aol.com](http://mail.mobile.aol.com)

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2020 9:12 AM  
**To:** allentorrey1@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** FW: South Columbia St. planning issues  
**Attachments:** Screen Shot 2020-11-22 at 7.54.58 AM.png

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
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**From:** Allen Torrey [mailto:allentorrey1@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 22, 2020 10:16 AM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** South Columbia St. planning issues

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Mayor Hemminger and Council members: Regarding Claire Horne's account (which I've pasted below), please let me know 1) whether you agree that the apparent change from a maximum of four stories to a maximum of six stories was not adequately conveyed to the public and 2) whether you think that allowing six-story buildings at the South Columbia-Fordham Boulevard intersection is a good idea.

Thanks much,  
Allen Torrey  
501 Dogwood Drive  
[allentorrey1@gmail.com](mailto:allentorrey1@gmail.com)

[Claire's account] On 11/18 the town council discussed two related issues for the S Columbia Street area: **1. the focus area for new building around Merritt's Grill and 2. the first actual building planned for the area, the S. Columbia Street Annex project**

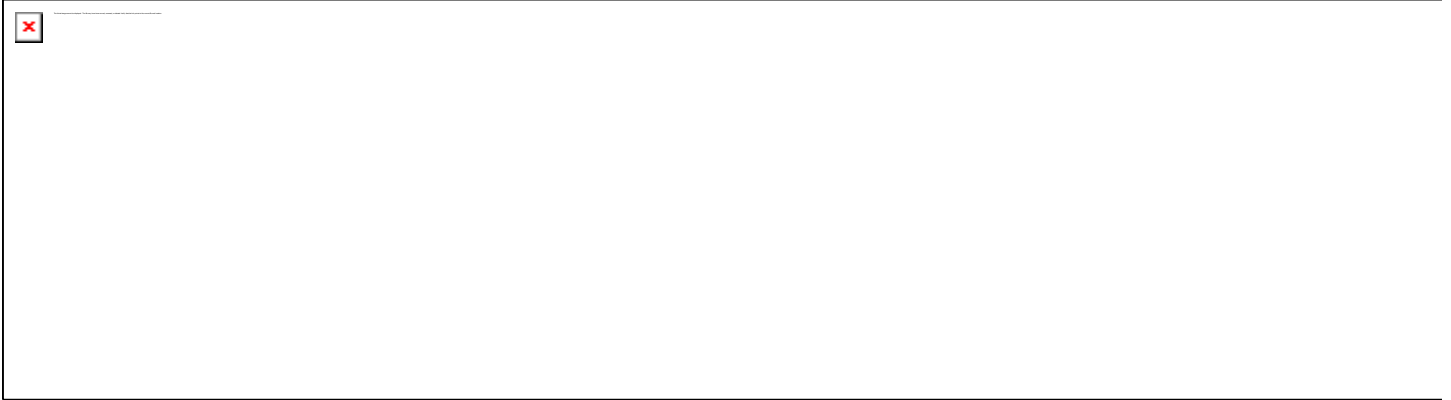
1. The focus area for the South 15-501 / South Gateway at Merritt's defines the type and size of new development in a circle by Merritt's that includes about a dozen parcels of land. **Town council voted on Wednesday to allow buildings up to 6 stories on S. Columbia street.**

In all public documents and meetings on "Charting the Future" in 2018 and 2019, **building height had always been stated at 4 stories or less.** In the spring of 2020 **the height was changed from 4 to 6 stories along S. Columbia St.** There was no notification to anyone who attended previous planning meetings or participated in this process (as I had in 2018, signing up to receive emails and updates, but receiving nothing after 2 emails in fall 2018).

The new 2020, 6-story plan apparently worked its way through advisory boards and at least one meeting with the council for input, but the November meeting was the first our neighborhood knew of changes to the plan in our area. **To my knowledge, the only way you'd have known of the height change in 2020 was to click [here](#), open the third document, scroll down to p. 59, and scan the info for new heights.** Which are not called out as changes from what was shown and discussed with the public in 2018-2019.



Also at this link, in the file marked “email from the public” a resident in a different part of town had this to say about the process:



There are similar comments, showing a larger pattern of planners seeking input, presenting a plan, then making a key change without any mechanism to inform people who participated in the process in good faith. In a pandemic, no less.

This Land Use Map (attached) is essentially the SAME proposed Land Use Map that you sent me in 3-05-20 (Rev 2-20-20). However, you have made one little change that you and the Planning Dept apparently did NOT think we would catch. Sub-Area C in the 2-20-20 Map showed it had 4-story structures, which we strenuously opposed since we are part of this neighborhood that includes and is surrounded by 7-subdivisions with 578 homeowners, ALL being 2-3 stories. Now in this new Map dated Mar, 2020 (ENCLOSED) you have slipped in a new change. Instead of 4-Story in your DRAFT Map dated 2-20-20, the new Map dated Mar, 2020 shows our area (in Sub-Area C) with a typical height of "4-6 Stories." Another words-- who's going to notice structures that are 2-3 additional stories in our area?

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2020 12:39 PM  
**To:** Ruchir Vora  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: S. Columbia Annex

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Again, thank you for your message.

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Jeanette Coffin



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[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
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**From:** Ruchir Vora [mailto:ruchir.is@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2020 12:06 PM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** S. Columbia Annex

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Hi,

I am an environmental engineer that lives and works in Chapel Hill. I have just rolled off the OWASA Board of Directors as a Chapel Hill appointee. I own two properties in the Westwood neighborhood. I would like to comment on the South Columbia Annex and the FLUM, in general.

1. The Land Use Ordinance seems to have quietly gone from 4 stories to up to 6 stories, without appropriate public notice. The LUMO in 2018-2019 states up to 4 stories. And, the first time 6 stories was up for public comment in the Land Use Map was in the TC meeting last week.

2. Personally, the two main issues I have with the South Columbia Annex proposal is that I believe developing within a perennial stream is illegal per the Clean Water Act, not to mention irresponsible by the Town Council to approve such a waiver to the RCD. The other main concern is regarding traffic safety. I can see no real method of safe entry/exit at this location.

Thank you,  
Ruchir Vora

## Amy Harvey

---

**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2020 12:39 PM  
**To:** Adrian Bischoff  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: The S. Columbia St Annex Project

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Jeanette Coffin



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---

**From:** Adrian Bischoff [mailto:[adrian@adrianbischoff.com](mailto:adrian@adrianbischoff.com)]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2020 11:47 AM  
**To:** Town Council <[mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org)>  
**Subject:** The S. Columbia St Annex Project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Good morning, Mayor Hemminger and Council members.

I was not able to attend the meeting Wednesday which discussed the South Gateway and S. Columbia St Annex. I would like to write briefly to support high density buildings and infill like the Annex project. Chapel Hill has gotten to the point where many people who work here cannot live in Chapel Hill. This is bad for those workers, of course, but it's also bad for neighboring residents (such as my family, on McCauley St) because it creates more car traffic, making the roads more dangerous for people who bike and walk places and kids, who should be able to cross the street without fearing the drivers of cars speeding while taking shortcuts through our neighborhood streets to get to these jobs.

Thank you for your time.

Cheers,  
Adrian

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 11:31 AM  
**To:** Elisa Takalo Lund  
**Cc:** Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: Columbia St Annex Project

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Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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Office Assistant  
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[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

---

**From:** Elisa Takalo Lund [mailto:elisatak@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 9:30 AM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** Columbia St Annex Project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Hello,

I wished to express my concerns regarding the Columbia St. Annex Project. I am an anesthesiologist at UNC and live in the Westwood Neighborhood. My daughter goes to Spanish For Fun Academy School just north of Merritt's. My mother walks my 4 year old from our home to school in the morning. The only "safe" way to walk to school is to walk south to the pedestrian crosswalk at Merritt's. Everyday I fear for my daughter and mother's lives as they cross that busy intersection. Even with a pedestrian crosswalk, there have been multiple incidences of cars narrowly missing my family. The curve in the road causes a blind corner and traffic heading south from downtown is frequently speeding due to the steep incline.

I love the idea of developing this neighborhood and would love to see more affordable housing. And I greatly appreciate the emphasis on balancing a respect for our history and accommodating for our future. However, I strongly request care be taken in considering the size of such a development and it's impact on safety. Just last month we saw a bicyclist be hit by a car driving south on Columbia. I pray each day that isn't my daughter.

-Elisa Lund, 510 Dogwood Dr, Chapel Hill, NC 27516



## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 1:23 PM  
**To:** Leigh Copeland  
**Cc:** Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: Project by Merritts

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Jeanette Coffin



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[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
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(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

---

**From:** Leigh Copeland [mailto:leighcopeland@outlook.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 12:18 PM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** Project by Merritts

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Hello!

I am writing quickly to share my concern over the projected 6 story development near the S. Columbia and Purefoy area.

When we moved into the neighborhood of known as the Westside Historic District across from campus 15 years ago, we watched the construction on S. Columbia road occur that enhanced that approach to campus and downtown, provide bike lanes and a safer pedestrian access for both sides. The traffic did not decrease and when not in covid times is quite busy with trucks and busses adding to the already busy roadway.

Adding a 6 story building to this area sounds ludicrous given the intersections surrounding it, the current roadway, the neighborhood adjacent and the visual of entering that corridor. I say it is too much! Too much additional new development, too much new apartments, too much traffic, too much of not considering existing neighborhood feedback.

Thank you for considering my reaction to this potential development.

Leigh Copeland  
2 Briar Bridge Lane

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## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 1:24 PM  
**To:** Franklin Tew  
**Cc:** Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed South Columbia Project

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Sincerely,

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[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
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---

**From:** Franklin Tew [mailto:ftew5023@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 12:03 PM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Cc:** Westwood List Serve <w-w\_list@googlegroups.com>  
**Subject:** Proposed South Columbia Project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

To the Mayor and Town Council members,

The proposed South Columbia Annex Project is not appropriate for the area.

Reasons:

1. **Traffic congestion** will be go from bad pre-COVID to terrible.
2. **Vehicle and pedestrian accidents** will increase.
3. **Emergency vehicles will be delayed** getting to the hospital.
4. **Likely increased services needs will lead to higher property taxes.**

5. Previous plans for **increased taxes from new businesses doesn't seem to have worked out as well as projected.**)

Thank you for considering my objections.

Franklin T. Tew, MD  
511 Dogwood Drive  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 02, 2020 9:32 AM  
**To:** Helen Lancaster  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: COL South Annex Project

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Sincerely,

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**From:** Helen Lancaster [mailto:htlancaster@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 1, 2020 7:51 PM  
**To:** Pam Hemminger <phemminger@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Cc:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** COL South Annex Project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

My husband and I live in the Westwood area of z Halle Hill and are strongly against the proposed 6-story building on S. Columbia.

First, it is not in keeping with this neighborhood. Except for the hospital area, the neighborhoods all around nearby have NO tall buildings. As a student here in the 60s and all the years I returned to visit , I loved the charm of the village atmosphere. So we moved here but now downtown has become a hodgepodge, HUGE apartment buildings are appearing all over town (where are all those cars going??) and the appeal and character of Chapel Hill is diminishing. At least there are still surrounding neighborhoods that are still intact and one of them is Westwood.

Secondly, It is already a heavily trafficked corridor (in normal times) and It takes us quite a while to get to and from turn-off to 15-501 during rush hour. Even worse for the community, this intersection is a main entrance and exit for drivers going to and from the Hospital, the campus, the sports events, and downtown Franklin Street. I ne in horror of the negative impact of the increased traffic.

We strongly suggest that you reconsider this proposal for the benefit of this community.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Helen Lancaster

Neil Bailey

325 W University Dr

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 02, 2020 11:39 AM  
**To:** Aris Buinevicius  
**Cc:** Colleen Willger; Judy Johnson; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: opposition of proposed S Columbia project

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



Jeanette Coffin  
Office Assistant  
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)  
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

---

**From:** Aris Buinevicius [mailto:arisbu@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 2, 2020 10:44 AM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Subject:** opposition of proposed S Columbia project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

To the Mayor and Town Council members,

I wanted to express concern for the current South Columbia Annex Project as currently proposed.

When traveling in this area (including walking and biking), it is obvious that this is a tricky and unsafe section of road.

- Drivers often take chances to beat traffic from Purefoy road to perform dangerous merges to S Columbia
- The bike lanes in that area (while appreciated to exist) can feel very imposing when surrounded by traffic

- Traffic here is often hospital related, including drivers not familiar with bike lanes and pedestrian right of ways
- Conversely, pedestrians will often cut across the street from Merritt's Grill to the other side, ignoring painted right of ways

Adding a 6 story building to this area will increase traffic and increase the chance of accidents and danger. It will also make using a bike in the south travel lanes even more claustrophobic and risky than they already are.

For these reasons I oppose the proposed scope of this structure and urge you to modify this plan accordingly. Thanks for your time and consideration

Aris Buinevicius  
404 Westwood



## Amy Harvey

---

**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Friday, December 04, 2020 9:06 AM  
**To:** Capowski, Joseph John  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: South Columbia Street Exchange Project

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



Jeanette Coffin  
Office Assistant  
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)  
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

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**From:** Capowski, Joseph John [mailto:capowski@live.unc.edu]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 9:30 PM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Cc:** Kimberly Brewer <brewerunnin@gmail.com>; Claire Horne <mclairehorne@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** South Columbia Street Exchange Project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

From: Joe Capowski, 404 Coolidge Street, Chapel Hill  
[capowski@email.unc.edu](mailto:capowski@email.unc.edu)  
919-929-1670

Re: South Columbia Exchange project

I have lived on Coolidge Street since 1982 and know the intersection of South Columbia Street, the bypass, Mt Carmel Church Rd, Culbreth Rd and 15-501 south very well, as a driver, pedestrian and bicyclist.

This intersection has evolved over many years into a confusing mess, totally clogged at rush hour.

If this project's auto access onto South Columbia street is only a driveway opposite Purefoy Rd, and which, according to NCDOT cannot have a traffic light, I do not see how the tenants and customers of the project will access South Columbia St in a car. NCDOT proposed a right-in right-out only access. This itself is grossly flawed. A driver leaving the exchange project who wishes to turn left and to go up the South Columbia hill toward the UNC campus will go right, away from campus. However there is no place for him/her to do the U-turn within a mile. Please ask the applicant where a driver would do a U-turn.

Unless Phil Szostak has civil engineering magic that I don't understand, the Exchange tenants and customers will strongly look for some other auto access to South Columbia. The nearby roads are Monroe, Dawes, Coolidge, Smith, and Old Pittsboro. These are all narrow, 2-lane streets with neither curbs and gutters nor sidewalks. The asphalt in front of my house at 404 Coolidge is only 17 feet wide. There is much UNC student housing in the neighborhood, and a bus stop at Coolidge and South Columbia. Consequently there is much pedestrian and bicycle traffic, all on the pavement. It is an adventure when a car comes down the street. The last and most dangerous thing we need is car traffic from the Exchange.

Consequently I ask you to require in writing that the project be designed in such a way that it is not possible that the project's auto access to South Columbia St use the streets named above.

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, December 07, 2020 9:19 AM  
**To:** Eric Stein  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Loryn Clark; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: Columbia Street Annex

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

If your email is related to a development application or a particular issue being addressed by the Council, your comments will be made part of the record. If applicable, we encourage you to attend any public meetings related to the items addressed in your email.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



Jeanette Coffin  
Office Assistant  
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)  
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

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**From:** Eric Stein [mailto:[ericsearsstein@gmail.com](mailto:ericsearsstein@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 6, 2020 10:24 PM  
**To:** Town Council <[mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org)>  
**Subject:** Columbia Street Annex

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Dear Mayor Hemminger and Council Members:

In my mind, two of our largest challenges as a country and a town are climate change and the lack of affordable housing. This development will help, in the small way that local actions can, with both problems.

This project would make Chapel Hill more climate resilient. The huge increases in traffic over the last ten years are primarily due to people commuting into, out of, and through Chapel Hill, not from building housing in town. 41,000 people commute into Chapel Hill every day -- [that is the source of our traffic problems](#) and our increase in carbon emissions. If we build more housing in town, people will be able to live and work here, leading to a reduction in traffic. Further, the infill development is on the direct bus line to UNC and the hospitals. The Town's climate and transit plans and soon-to-be-approved future land use map all call for increased density along key transit corridors.

There is an acute shortage of affordable housing, particularly in town. This development meets the Town's inclusionary zoning affordable housing requirement, which means that 8 individuals/families can own an affordable home in the heart of town who likely otherwise could not. We don't know who these families are, and they are unlikely to make their views known to the Council, nor be in a position to vote for a Council Member. (A superb [NY Times op ed](#) discusses this problem in California.) But we can support them, and I hope you will.

Best,

Eric Stein  
222 Vance Street

## Amy Harvey

---

**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, December 07, 2020 9:24 AM  
**To:** Lisa Parker  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: South Columbia Annex project and FLUM land use map

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



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Office Assistant  
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[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

---

**From:** Lisa Parker [mailto:[liparker@yahoo.com](mailto:liparker@yahoo.com)]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 4, 2020 5:54 PM  
**To:** Town Council <[mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org)>  
**Subject:** South Columbia Annex project and FLUM land use map

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Dear Mayor and town council members,

I understand you are still considering the South Columbia Annex project and just wanted to again re-iterate that we would like you to consider the requests of the community that currently lives in this area. We are very concerned about potential traffic safety issues as this is already a current concern and we do not feel this development fits with the current neighborhood and would have a negative impact on this area.

Likewise, while the FLUM land use map was approved we would like to request that the South Columbia gateway focus area be removed from future land use maps. Our neighborhood has been expressing our concerns with this over many years and feel our concerns have not been adequately addressed.

Thank you for considering all you do in our community.

All the best,

Lisa Parker  
305 Purefoy Road

## Amy Harvey

---

**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, December 07, 2020 9:53 AM  
**To:** Franklin Tew  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Loryn Clark; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: [Westside Westwood List] Wed 12/9 meeting on S. Columbia Annex project

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



Jeanette Coffin  
Office Assistant  
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)  
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

---

**From:** Franklin Tew [mailto:ftew5023@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 9:41 AM  
**To:** Claire Horne <mclairehorne@gmail.com>; Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Cc:** Deborah Barrett <d Barrett@email.unc.edu>; Craig Burnside <a.craig.burnside@gmail.com>; Westwood List Serve <w-w\_list@googlegroups.com>  
**Subject:** Re: [Westside Westwood List] Wed 12/9 meeting on S. Columbia Annex project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Stating that the proposed annex on South Columbia will reduce pollution is a false equivalence. There will be very little reduction in traffic. Furthermore, trees ("pollution fighters") will be cut down, there will be construction pollution, slower traffic (ambulances affected) and increased danger to drivers and pedestrians alike.

Housing? There are many new apartments on Eubanks, plus the 3 apartment projects near each other on 15-501 (Glen Lennox area, The Elliott, and the project at Rams Plaza). A 6 story building on South Columbia isn't needed and has many more negatives than positives.

It seems that the Annex is one of the last items on the Town Council's agenda again.

Frank Tew

On Dec 7, 2020, at 8:26 AM, Craig Burnside <[a.craig.burnside@gmail.com](mailto:a.craig.burnside@gmail.com)> wrote:

For me the precise location is the biggest issue with the project. When they redid Columbia street a few years ago, they turned the road between Purefoy and the traffic light into a dizzying array of crosswalks, strange paint patterns and medians. So I agree that, as the area (including the bridge) stands at the moment, it is unsafe for pedestrians and bicycles. Just two weeks ago I was very nearly rear-ended after stopping for a group of people on the crosswalk at Merritts. Of course, the city/developers may have grand plans to make the area safe, but I think it will be rather challenging for them to do it successfully. Truly bizarre road engineering abounds in Chapel Hill, and I can't see how they will suddenly master it when it comes to this very tight spot on the map.

On Dec 7, 2020, at 7:39 AM, Claire Horne <[mclairehorne@gmail.com](mailto:mclairehorne@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thanks Debbie, Eric, and Nancy. Everything you mention is important.

When our family was in Cary this weekend, the topic of sprawl came up in conversation. I said to our 16-year old that projects like the Annex, as "infill," can be an antidote to sprawl.

But a project should be evaluated based on its proposed site. For me, the Annex is a too-big building at a difficult site. A 3-story Annex could also include affordable units and solar panels.

As someone who no longer walks to the local greenway b/c the bridge over 15-501 is terrifying, I'd like to see connectivity across 15-501 addressed and bike / pedestrian safety issues addressed in this area before large projects happen. We haven't seen that yet.

Attend the meeting and make your views known! Is 6 stories the right number, or is it closer to 3?

Thanks,  
Claire

On Dec 6, 2020, at 6:53 PM, Barrett, Deborah  
<[dbarrett@email.unc.edu](mailto:dbarrett@email.unc.edu)> wrote:

Hi Neighbors!



I'm impressed by how this community can come together and mobilize. At the same time, I worry about unintended side effects of fighting development that may go against values of affordable housing, lowering carbon footprint, reducing commutes for UNC and downtown staff, etc.

I've been wondering what construction in this unused parcel would be welcomed?

I too want to keep buildings and traffic low. And as we know, the enormity of UNC hospitals and campus contribute magnitudes more than one building possibly can. From what I can tell, this project was first proposed in 2007 and has changed numerous times in response to resistance. Looks like they're planning for solar panels on roof, restrictions on cars (one per residence), significant garage space for bikes, less commercial space, walking area that would help connect Westwood to the Merritt pasture.

And... more provocatively, is this "our" decision to be making on the grounds that we already have secure housing near a site? In other words, whose voices are not being heard from? Here's a good, short op-ed on this issue, from the authors of a recent book on the politics of local development.

<https://www.dataforprogress.org/blog/2019/3/12/neighborhood-defenders-and-the-capture-of-land-use-politics>

Race	Voters (%)	Commenters (%)
White	~85	~95
Black	~5	~5
Hispanic	~10	~5
Asian	~10	~5
Other	~5	~5

[Neighborhood Defenders and the Land Use Politics](#)

Many American cities are facing housing crises, with prices placing homeownership, reasonable commutes, and secure housing out of the reach of middle- and lower-income Americans. Most economists believe that, to address this, we need to increase the supply of

[www.dataforprogress.org](http://www.dataforprogress.org)

**My ask:** Those who value **diversity** and **affordability** in our neighborhood – in addition to our values of safety, traffic, tree cover, housing value, etc. – keep these values in mind as you think about this proposed development.

Beyond this particular building, I propose a **working group** to develop ideas for diversity, affordability, walkable shopping, etc. proactively, rather than reacting repeatedly to proposals by developers and city officials.

Full disclosure: I am no expert on city planning, nor do I have any financial interests or other connection to this building.

your neighbor on Penick lane,

Debbie Barrett  
[dbarrett@unc.edu](mailto:dbarrett@unc.edu)  
919-259-2985

---

**From:** [w-w\\_list@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-w_list@googlegroups.com) <[w-w\\_list@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-w_list@googlegroups.com)> on behalf of Claire Horne <[mclairehorne@gmail.com](mailto:mclairehorne@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 6, 2020 5:15 PM  
**To:** [w-w\\_list@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-w_list@googlegroups.com) Westside Westwood Neighborhood <[w-w\\_list@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-w_list@googlegroups.com)>  
**Subject:** [Westside Westwood List] Wed 12/9 meeting on S. Columbia Annex project

Hi all,

**This Wednesday is the continuation of the public hearing for the 6-story Annex project across from Merritt's. From what we're hearing, there may be momentum in the council for approval.**

**Your attendance and comments at the Wednesday 12/9 meeting can certainly affect the outcome. Traffic and safety issues and the perception that this is a difficult site will be helpful to reinforce. Council members seem very interested in folks' experience driving, walking, biking, etc, on S. Columbia near Merritt's.**

**Please sign up to attend this week's zoom meeting and speak. See below for instructions.**

**The Annex discussion is item 15, near the end of the agenda. If you'd prefer not to listen to the entire meeting, you're in good company. :-)**

**However you can sign in to the meeting at 7 and tune in — or out — until item 15 is up for discussion.**

Over 25 years multiple projects have been proposed on the land across from Merritt's. They've all been denied due to traffic complexities and difficulties of the site. The town's planning commission calls the area "a terrible intersection." The town's transportation and connectivity board voted in September to deny approval of the project. However other town boards voted to approve and several council members like the current project.

See Annex project materials [here](#). Wednesday's 7 pm meeting agenda is [here](#). Below is meeting signup info.

**Potential good news** – we're anticipating progress on the Merritt's Grill "focus area." Neighbors' feedback has made an impact. A building height change will hopefully be voted on this week. To follow the focus area / land use issue, attend Wednesday's [meeting](#) and listen to the Charting our Future discussion for item 11.

Thanks for your persistence and time!

Thanks,  
Claire

Zoom:

Register to attend and speak

at: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_I\\_NhzdvoRP2Ole6xzTeGqg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_I_NhzdvoRP2Ole6xzTeGqg)

On Wednesday you'll be called to speak in the order they have you registered, or you can "raise your hand" to be called on if you haven't pre-registered as a speaker.

<Screen Shot 2020-12-06 at 8.49.25 AM.png>

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[w-list+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-list+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com).

To view this discussion on the web

visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/w-list/060A971C-BD41-44FC-8A42-086124CEA0DB%40gmail.com>.

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To view this discussion on the web visit [https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/w-w\\_list/E50BD9BA-1BC8-4D85-A58B-9A0546AF4E47%40gmail.com](https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/w-w_list/E50BD9BA-1BC8-4D85-A58B-9A0546AF4E47%40gmail.com).

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To view this discussion on the web visit [https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/w-w\\_list/70CA7297-D3C9-4AB4-B3AC-171E406BFE0A%40gmail.com](https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/w-w_list/70CA7297-D3C9-4AB4-B3AC-171E406BFE0A%40gmail.com).

## Amy Harvey

---

**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Monday, December 07, 2020 11:14 AM  
**To:** Ruchir Vora  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Loryn Clark; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: [Westside Westwood List] Wed 12/9 meeting on S. Columbia Annex project

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If your email is related to a development application or a particular issue being addressed by the Council, your comments will be made part of the record.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



Jeanette Coffin  
Office Assistant  
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)  
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

---

**From:** Ruchir Vora [mailto:daddyruchir@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 10:55 AM  
**To:** Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Cc:** Westwood List Serve <w-w\_list@googlegroups.com>  
**Subject:** Re: [Westside Westwood List] Wed 12/9 meeting on S. Columbia Annex project

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Hi,

Very good points on the discussion. For me, the two biggest concerns are safety/traffic and environmental. I think the project should be denied on the traffic safety concerns alone. Many drivers treat Columbia St. like a downhill slalom course. It's interesting to note that all seven members of the town's Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board voted to deny the application. A larger issue is why the Town Council (TC) doesn't take the advice/recommendations of their advisory boards more seriously.

I don't have any background in the affordable housing issue, but as Nancy Oates pointed out, it's very possible that the limited 8 units will be decreased based on other project histories.

But, the environmental concerns are also important. The EPA, state, and local government are supposed to abide by the riparian buffers to land development, of which the Jordan Lake watershed is further constrained. The proposed area has a perennial stream. I recognize some of the green initiatives the development includes, but allowing variances on building on or that close to a perennial stream doesn't seem legit. I basically have an unused 20 year old environmental engineering degree, so what do I really know? I gather that the developer is proposing several mitigation measures to offset the development, and that seems to have met the blessings of the environmental stewardship advisory board. Fine. Hope that's true. I think all the excellent people on the advisory boards that have researched their topics in much greater detail than any of us can, probably have good ideas.

But, there is another board that reviews stormwater impacts that has not reviewed the project, which the Environmental Stewardship Board included as part of their recommendation. I think that the Stormwater Advisory Board should also review the project, and it seems weird to me that they don't have to. I served on a board like this (Cambridge Conservation Commission), and we were legally required to review projects this close to a waterbody and its impact to stormwater. If NC doesn't require this, there's nothing that says Chapel Hill can't.

I encourage and petition TC members to require review by the Stormwater Advisory Board for this and any other project within 100 feet of a wetland, waterbody, or floodplain. Or, the Stormwater Advisory Board should serve under the Environmental Stewardship Board--whatever it takes to make sure all projects are properly reviewed on its complete environmental impacts, including stormwater.

Excerpt from Staff Report:

**Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board:** At the [September 14, 2020 meeting](#), the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board recommended approval with the following modifications to Ordinance A:

- Request that the Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board make recommendations on the applicant's proposal for stream restoration, including more details about flora and fauna.

*Staff Response:* The Council has not required the applicant to present to the Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board, and the applicant has not volunteered to attend at this time.

My point is that building on a perennial stream (or upland areas), causing unexplored stormwater impacts, and simply slapping on some solar panels and EV charging stations doesn't seem environmentally sound. This, and the traffic/safety concerns should be enough to deny the application.

My \$0.02.

Ruchir Vora

On Monday, December 7, 2020, 09:40:54 AM EST, Franklin Tew <[ftew5023@gmail.com](mailto:ftew5023@gmail.com)> wrote:

Stating that the proposed annex on South Columbia will reduce pollution is a false equivalence. There will be very little reduction in traffic. Furthermore, trees ("pollution fighters") will be cut down, there will be construction pollution, slower traffic (ambulances affected) and increased danger to drivers and pedestrians alike.

Housing? There are many new apartments on Eubanks, plus the 3 apartment projects near each other on 15-501 (Glen Lennox area, The Elliott, and the project at Rams Plaza). A 6 story building on South Columbia isn't needed and has many more negatives than positives.

It seems that the Annex is one of the last items on the Town Council's agenda again.

Frank Tew

On Dec 7, 2020, at 8:26 AM, Craig Burnside <[a.craig.burnside@gmail.com](mailto:a.craig.burnside@gmail.com)> wrote:

For me the precise location is the biggest issue with the project. When they redid Columbia street a few years ago, they turned the road between Purefoy and the traffic light into a dizzying array of crosswalks, strange paint patterns and medians. So I agree that, as the area (including the bridge) stands at the moment, it is unsafe for pedestrians and bicycles. Just two weeks ago I was very nearly rear-ended after stopping for a group of people on the crosswalk at Merritts. Of course, the city/developers may have grand plans to make the area safe, but I think it will be rather challenging for them to do it successfully. Truly bizarre road engineering abounds in Chapel Hill, and I can't see how they will suddenly master it when it comes to this very tight spot on the map.

On Dec 7, 2020, at 7:39 AM, Claire Horne <[mclairehorne@gmail.com](mailto:mclairehorne@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thanks Debbie, Eric, and Nancy. Everything you mention is important.

When our family was in Cary this weekend, the topic of sprawl came up in conversation. I said to our 16-year old that projects like the Annex, as "infill," can be an antidote to sprawl.

But a project should be evaluated based on its proposed site. For me, the Annex is a too-big building at a difficult site. A 3-story Annex could also include affordable units and solar panels.

As someone who no longer walks to the local greenway b/c the bridge over 15-501 is terrifying, I'd like to see connectivity across 15-501 addressed and bike / pedestrian safety issues addressed in this area before large projects happen. We haven't seen that yet.

Attend the meeting and make your views known! Is 6 stories the right number, or is it closer to 3?

Thanks,  
Claire

On Dec 6, 2020, at 6:53 PM, Barrett, Deborah <[dbarrett@email.unc.edu](mailto:dbarrett@email.unc.edu)> wrote:

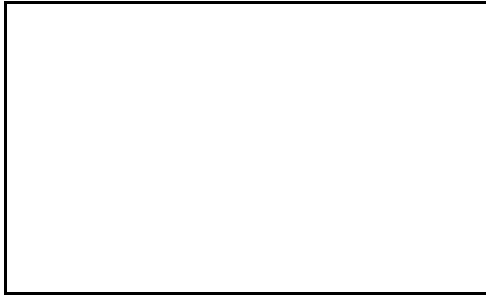
Hi Neighbors!

I'm impressed by how this community can come together and mobilize. At the same time, I worry about unintended side effects of fighting development that may go against values of affordable housing, lowering carbon footprint, reducing commutes for UNC and downtown staff, etc.

I've been wondering what construction in this unused parcel would be welcomed?

I too want to keep buildings and traffic low. And as we know, the enormity of UNC hospitals and campus contribute magnitudes more than one building possibly can. From what I can tell, this project was first proposed in 2007 and has changed numerous times in response to resistance. Looks like they're planning for solar panels on roof, restrictions on cars (one per residence), significant garage space for bikes, less commercial space, walking area that would help connect Westwood to the Merritt pasture.

And... more provocatively, is this "our" decision to be making on the grounds that we already have secure housing near a site? In other words, whose voices are not being heard from? Here's a good, short op-ed on this issue, from the authors of a recent book on the politics of local development.



## [Neighborhood Defenders and the Capture of Land Use Politics](#)

Many American cities are facing housing crises, with rapidly escalating prices placing homeownership, reasonable commutes, and even safe and secure housing out of the reach of middle- and lower-income Americans. Most economists believe that, to address this problem, we need to increase the supply of

[www.dataforprogress.org](http://www.dataforprogress.org)

**My ask:** Those who value **diversity** and **affordability** in our neighborhood – in addition to our values of safety, traffic, tree cover, housing value, etc. – keep these values in mind as you think about this proposed development.

Beyond this particular building, I propose a **working group** to develop ideas for diversity, affordability, walkable shopping, etc. proactively, rather than reacting repeatedly to proposals by developers and city officials.

Full disclosure: I am no expert on city planning, nor do I have any financial interests or other connection to this building.

your neighbor on Penick lane,

Debbie Barrett  
[dbarrett@unc.edu](mailto:dbarrett@unc.edu)  
919-259-2985

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**From:** [w-w\\_list@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-w_list@googlegroups.com) <[w-w\\_list@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-w_list@googlegroups.com)> on behalf of Claire Horne <[mclairehorne@gmail.com](mailto:mclairehorne@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Sunday, December 6, 2020 5:15 PM

**To:** [w-w\\_list@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-w_list@googlegroups.com) Westside Westwood Neighborhood <[w-w\\_list@googlegroups.com](mailto:w-w_list@googlegroups.com)>

**Subject:** [Westside Westwood List] Wed 12/9 meeting on S. Columbia Annex project

Hi all,

This Wednesday is the continuation of the public hearing for the 6-story Annex project across from Merritt's. From what we're hearing, there may be momentum in the council for approval.

Your attendance and comments at the Wednesday 12/9 meeting can certainly affect the outcome. Traffic and safety issues and the perception that this is a difficult site will be helpful to reinforce. Council members seem very interested in folks' experience driving, walking, biking, etc, on S. Columbia near Merritt's.



Please sign up to attend this week's zoom meeting and speak. See below for instructions.

The Annex discussion is item 15, near the end of the agenda. If you'd prefer not to listen to the entire meeting, you're in good company. :-)

However you can sign in to the meeting at 7 and tune in — or out — until item 15 is up for discussion.

Over 25 years multiple projects have been proposed on the land across from Merritt's. They've all been denied due to traffic complexities and difficulties of the site. The town's planning commission calls the area "a terrible intersection." The town's transportation and connectivity board voted in September to deny approval of the project. However other town boards voted to approve and several council members like the current project.

See Annex project materials [here](#). Wednesday's 7 pm meeting agenda is [here](#). Below is meeting signup info.

**Potential good news** – we're anticipating progress on the Merritt's Grill "focus area." Neighbors' feedback has made an impact. A building height change will hopefully be voted on this week. To follow the focus area / land use issue, attend Wednesday's [meeting](#) and listen to the Charting our Future discussion for item 11.

Thanks for your persistence and time!

Thanks,  
Claire

Zoom:

Register to attend and speak

at: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_1\\_NhzdvoRP2OIe6xzTeGqg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1_NhzdvoRP2OIe6xzTeGqg)

On Wednesday you'll be called to speak in the order they have you registered, or you can "raise your hand" to be called on if you haven't pre-registered as a speaker.

<Screen Shot 2020-12-06 at 8.49.25 AM.png>

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## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Jeanette Coffin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 08, 2020 9:04 AM  
**To:** Geoffrey Green  
**Cc:** Judy Johnson; Colleen Willger; Dwight Bassett; Allen Buansi; Amy Ryan; Hongbin Gu; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Shakera Vaughan; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Flo Miller; Laura Selmer; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver  
**Subject:** RE: Support for Columbia Street annex

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

If your email is related to a development application or a particular issue being addressed by the Council, your comments will be made part of the record.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin



Jeanette Coffin  
Office Assistant  
[Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office](#)  
[405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.](#)  
[Chapel Hill, NC 27514](#)  
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

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**From:** Geoffrey Green [mailto:[geoff@stuebegreen.com](mailto:geoff@stuebegreen.com)]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 7:01 PM  
**To:** Town Council <[mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org)>  
**Subject:** Support for Columbia Street annex

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Mayor and Council members:

I urge your support of the proposed Columbia Street annex. It's an important project that provides additional much-needed housing in a convenient location that includes commercial space. It addresses multiple town goals by including affordable housing units mixed in with market-rate units. The project complements the Town's public efforts to fight climate change through the private construction of energy-efficient multistory housing with great access to transit. Finally, approval of the project will demonstrate to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that Chapel Hill is serious about making sure its bus

rapid transit line is a success, increasing the chances that the federal government will reward Chapel Hill with tens of millions of dollars to support the project.

First, the project provides 57,000 square feet of new residential space. It's true that Chapel Hill has seen extensive apartment construction, largely because the implementation of the Blue Hill form-based district unlocked long-suppressed demand for modern multifamily housing options. But there's no sign that we've reached equilibrium. People continue to flock to the triangle region, and Chapel Hill needs to continue to build more housing if we want to have a handle on housing prices and force fewer people to live in Mebane and Chatham County. Moreover, unlike most multifamily development projects within the town, the Columbia Street annex project is offering eight affordable units mixed in with the market-rate units. The offer for additional adorable housing that is fully integrated with market-rate housing is a valuable opportunity that the town should be loath to pass up. The fact that the project doesn't displace existing low-income residents is a bonus.

Second, the Columbia Street annex project is fully in line with the town's ambitious efforts to address climate change. The town's draft Climate Action and Response Plan identifies sustainable development as key to reaching our climate goals. Households who live at the Columbia Street annex will have significantly smaller carbon footprints than most residents of our region, such as the many Chapel Hill residents (myself included) who live in single-family homes. The project will provide housing for up to 52 households less than one mile from the huge hub of jobs at the UNC Medical Center. If it's not built, those 52 households may live in western Orange County or Alamance County and drive into work. (Or, they may decide it's not worth it to work for UNC or our other employers and instead choose to live and work in Durham or Wake County.) Not only will the project be walking distance from the hospital, it is located directly next to one of the stops on the proposed North-South Bus Rapid Transit (NS BRT). Residents will have convenient transit access to the medical center, university, downtown Chapel Hill, the shopping and service opportunities along MLK Jr. Blvd., and numerous other destinations throughout the town and the region. Allowing projects like Columbia Street annex will help unlock the full potential of the town's extensive investment in transit.

I do respect the concerns that neighbors and the TCAB have shared. South Columbia Street does have bike lanes and sidewalks in front of the project. In non-pandemic times, I bike through the area frequently on my way to work and believe it's a good, not great, facility. Clearly there need to be improvements, particularly to make it easier to cross the street. But the needed improvements are unlikely to occur except as part of the construction of this project. The town has many roads without bike facilities or sidewalks which should be a higher priority. And the cash-strapped North Carolina Department of Transportation, which owns South Columbia Street, has investment priorities that largely differ from the town's.

Finally, I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that your decision on this project may seal the fate of the town's application for nearly \$100 million to help build the BRT project. In its initial rating back in February, FTA gave the project a medium score, the lowest score that would qualify the project for funding. Among the subcategories, the project received its lowest score on the land-use metric, garnering only a medium-low. The Small Starts program is competitive, and it may not be enough to clear the absolute lowest hurdle. Adding additional market-rate and affordable housing among the corridor could make the difference between a \$100 million federal investment in our transit system or throwing away all the hard work we've done getting the project to this point.

I agree with most of the advisory boards that have reviewed this project and encourage you to approve the conditional zoning and land use plan amendment for the Columbia Street annex.

Very truly yours,

Geoff Green  
111 Simerville Road