

April 5, 2021

Dear Transportation and Connectivity Board Members,

Estes Neighbors is a grass roots group organizing to make people aware of the consequences of the Aura plan and to advocate for development that will ensure Estes Drive remains mobile. We believe the Aura proposal will add appreciably to congestion on Estes Drive with the addition of 650 parking spaces and 3,000 daily automobile trips --- most via the primary entrance which is 800 feet from the major Estes/MLK intersection, to Estes Drive. This is Vehicle Oriented Development, not the desired Transit Oriented Development.

Therefore we urge you to recommend that the Town Council postpone further consideration of this project - at least until the Town develops a holistic plan for allocating traffic capacity on N. Estes Drive among the various parcels awaiting development. A comprehensive traffic plan is important to keep Estes Drive mobile because Trinsic is not the only developer who wants to develop land in the immediate area. There are a number of additional land owners near the MLK/Estes intersection with plans for development or redevelopment in the near future beginning with Whit Rummel on the north side of Estes, as well as Sherman Richardson, Lucy Carol Davis, the Farrars, and the YMCA on the south side. Note that all of the properties along the south side of N. Estes recently were designated as a federal "Opportunity Zone" for purposes of spurring development.

A holistic approach to traffic planning will promote better outcomes in terms of roadway configurations (driveway locations, connections) and alignment of area density to Estes roadway capacity. In contrast, a fragmented, "first mover" approach could foreclose some solutions and leave the Town in an awkward or untenable position vis-a-vis future applicants.

A number of us have been studying the traffic information and attending the three Town sponsored traffic meetings held so far - just on this Aura application. The February meeting was attended by over 80 people including staff and consultants. The two March meetings, one on the TIA and one on the Town-wide traffic model were also well attended by concerned and interested neighbors and Estes drivers. We are sharing with you our observations and comments about these meetings below.

**Key findings from TIA are provided in the Executive Summary here:**

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=48099>

**Important details are hidden in the bowels of the full study here:**

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=48101>

For example, direct your attention to the projections of vehicles exiting onto Estes from the Aura development, as listed on P.388. The analysis of these data indicate that the 1% of the 650 parked cars exiting during PM rush hour will have less than 2 seconds on average to complete a right turn to travel westbound on Estes or Southbound on MLK, or even more difficult, will be the left turn to travel eastbound on Estes to fit into the flow of eastbound and westbound Estes traffic.

Given the LOS = F, if as few as 6 (1% of parked cars) cars try to exit at the same time from Aura onto Estes, the data show that the last car will have to wait 10 minutes to exit. The proposed improvement to reduce traffic congestion on Franklin at Estes by adding right turn on southbound Franklin is completely theoretical because DOT has no further right-of-way at that intersection. Many other anomalies are buried in the TIA. Specific stop light timing required to accommodate senior pedestrians and cars rolling through major intersections are not apparent. Estes Drive pedestrians will have 5 full width lanes to cross at the

westbound MLK intersection making the intersection similar to the dangerous Weaver Dairy - MLK intersection.

**Town wide traffic simulation model as applied to Aura.** The results of the model are important because it can measure cumulative traffic from development all over town, as well as new projects nearby, such as the 10 or so parcels nearby and the planned redevelopment of University Place. So far we've been unable to get adequate answers about what has been included and what has not been put in the model. Projects coming on-line along MLK Jr Blvd and University Place on Estes Drive, as well as adjacent property owners' plans, must be included in the model runs to model Aura to ensure an accurate and complete picture of Estes Drive traffic.

At the same time, the recent public meetings about the Town-wide model demonstrated the relative ease with which Town staff can model scenarios such as extending Aura's proposed density across adjacent undeveloped properties. It appears that time and resources pose no serious obstacle to the kind of holistic planning needed. We simply need to recognize the problem and affirmatively choose to address it. The steps required could occur in short order: (1) speak with the relevant landowners to understand their plans; (2) use the Town-wide model to understand the ramifications of various scenarios; and (3) develop equitable solutions.

Finally, the approval of Aura Plan as proposed would close off future transportation options for Estes Drive. Without a comprehensive plan for handling traffic, no additional projects should be approved.

Thank you.

[Estes Neighbors](#) with multiple signers.

Jim and Joan Bettman, Somerset - Huntington  
Jill and Dick Blackburn, Coker Hills  
Tom and Betty Bouldin, Somerset - Huntington  
Watson Bowes, Somerset - Huntington  
Linda K. Brown, Summerfield Crossing  
Scott and Lea Ann Buck, Somerset - Huntington  
Scott Burian and Elizabeth Harris, Coker Hills West,  
Meredith Canterbury, OD, Coker Hills West  
Sueyoshi Chizuko, Coker Woods  
Carolyn Cole, Lake Forest  
Brian Daniels, Somerset - Huntington  
Elizabeth and David DeLong, Somerset - Huntington  
Sandy Douglass and Susan Hester, Coker Hills West  
Susan Eastman, Hidden Hills  
Debra and Avram Gold, Somerset - Huntington  
Joan Guilkey, Gimghoul Historic District  
Steve Fleck, Mount Bolus  
Megan Foureman, Estes Hills  
Mark and Elise Fradin, Coker Hills West  
Paul and Adrienne Gibilisco, Estes Hills  
Lindsay Garrison and Dan Sissors, Kirkland  
Nicolas Gourdet, Estes Hills  
Lynda and Robert Haake, Booker Creek  
Jan Hendrickson-Smith, Estes Hills

Scott and Tara Harrison, Forest Creek  
Samuel H. Horowitz, Somerset - Huntington  
Marsha A. Horowitz, Somerset - Huntington  
Michael and Susan Kline, Somerset - Huntington  
Willemien Insinger, Hidden Hills  
Ian Jackson, Coker Hills  
Fred Lampe, Coker Hills  
Emily Lees, Estes Hills  
Michael and Susan Kline, Somerset - Huntington  
Carol and Mitchel Krucoff, Somerset-Huntington  
Debbie and Ted LaMay, Hidden Hills  
Katherine C. Leith, The Meadows  
Rita M May, Mt Bolus  
Julie McClintock, Coker Hills West  
Jenny McMillan, Lake Forest  
Jon Mitchell, Somerset - Huntington  
Susan Morance, Franklin Street near Estes  
John N. Morris, Coker Hills West  
Betsy Newton, Parkside  
Pat Oglesby, Lake Forest  
Tobias Overath, Somerset - Huntington  
Chris Parker, Lake Forest  
Sally and Bruce Persing, Estes Hills  
Lilian Pierce, Somerset - Huntington  
James Ricci, Hidden Hills  
Laura Shadburn, Hidden Hills  
Judith Shaver, Estes Hills  
Heather Stein, Booker Creek  
Del Snow, Northwoods  
Nick Strange, Estes Hills  
Elizabeth and Jeff Stringer, Estes Hills  
Helen Tauchen, Somerset-Huntington  
Melanie Thomas, MD, Estes Hills  
Patrick A. Thompson, Estes Hills  
Sandy Turbeville and Glen H. Elder, Jr., Somerset – Huntington  
Terry and Robert Vance, East Franklin St.  
Carol Verner, North Forest Hills  
Tatsuya and Chizuko Sueyoshi, Coker Woods  
Tracy Yan, Estes Hills  
Iris Yim, Coker Hills West  
Hong Zhan and Hui Ding, Coker Woods  
Roland Zapfe, Coker Hills  
Susan Zeisel, Coker Hills West

