

Discussion and Action Item 2:

Town of Chapel Hill – Projected Housing Units/Acre for Planning

Executive Summary:

Obtain consent from the Board of Directors to formally request the Town of Chapel Hill provide an update on the Town’s vision on the anticipated number of housing/units per acre for water and sewer infrastructure planning purposes.

Background:

In consultation with Town planning staff, OWASA staff developed the following density assumptions, documented in a letter to the Planning Director dated November 9, 2023.

Lot type	# Dwelling Units Low density scenario	# Dwelling Units High density scenario
Undeveloped	3 per acre	6 per acre
Developed, less than or equal to 2 acres	2 total (1 new)	2 total (1 new)
Developed, greater than 2 acres	3 per acre	6 per acre
Total number of dwelling units	1170	2202

Table 1: Development Assumptions for Water Demand Projections

Development trends in Chapel Hill and elsewhere suggest those assumptions may warrant revisiting. Some recent projects targeted for middle-income households have been built at higher densities: 20–25 units per acre for apartments, 10–14 units per acre for townhouses, and 5–6 units per acre for small lot detached homes, duplexes, or quads. However, some portions of the southern expansion area may see little or no change, and the average density across the area as a whole will depend on the Town Council's vision.

OWASA is therefore requesting that the Town Council share its vision for the southern expansion area so that infrastructure capacity for domestic water supply, fire flows, and sewer returns can be planned accordingly. This will allow OWASA to update its planning assumptions to reflect the average density the Town Council envisions for the area as a whole.

Discussion:

Comments from the Board and Staff.

Action Requested:

Consent from the Board to forward the request to the Town of Chapel Hill.

March 12, 2026