



## TOWN OF CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

### TRANSMITTAL

### PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**DELIVERED VIA:** ☐ *HAND* ☒ *MAIL* ☐ *FAX* ☐ *EMAIL*

**To:** David Andrews, Town Manager  
Mayor and Board of Aldermen

**From:** Tina Moon, Planning Administrator

**Date:** May 31, 2019

**Subject:** Follow-up Information Relating to Preliminary FLX District Materials from April 9, 2019

### **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a summary of information prepared in response to Board of Aldermen questions and comments at the April 9, 2019 meeting with regard to the preliminary FLX District materials. Topics are roughly organized in the following way: Background, Development Proposal, Transportation, Environment, Consistency with DAD workshop, Procedure/Next Steps. There are a couple of other topics, for which staff has reached out to other agencies but has not yet received responses, and anticipates having more information to report at the meeting.

### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the Facilitated Small Area Plan for Carrboro's Northern Study Area, adopted by the Town of Carrboro and the Town of Chapel Hill, and Orange County in 1998 and 1999, was to plan for the future of development in Carrboro's transition areas. Work on the plan began with a two-day open forum facilitated by the Orange County Dispute Settlement Center and Randall Arendt, known for his approach toward conservation subdivision design. (The residential subdivision standards outlined in the land use ordinances for Town of Carrboro and Orange County follow Arendt's conservation subdivision methodology, including the incorporation of open space based on natural constraints.) One of the key recommendations of the Small Area Plan was the use of mixed-use village centers, village floating zones or floating mixed-use centers to provide opportunities for nonresidential uses at appropriate scales, and in 1999, the Town established the Village-Mixed Use District (Section 15-141.2) to realize this development model. In 2007, the Board of Aldermen appointed the Northern Study Area Plan Implementation Review Committee (NSAPIRC) to study other types of zoning mechanisms to allow for opportunities for commercial uses at a neighborhood

scale subject to performance standards. The recommendations of the NSAPIRC lead to the Town sponsored design workshop of the Parker Louis, LLC property at the northeast corner of Old NC 86 and Eubanks Road, facilitated by the Durham Area Designers (DAD) in February 2011 and the subsequent establishment of the Site Specific Flexible Development District (FLX) in June 2016. To be considered for a FLX district, the property in question must meet certain criteria relating to ownership, size, access to major arterial roads, and in particular, must have been the subject of a site specific planning study by the Town to determine the most appropriate development options for the site.

## **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

Adam and Omar Zinn, the owners of Parker Louis LLC have submitted a request to rezone the six parcels that were the subject of the 2011 DAD study to a Site Specific Flexible Development District (FLX). As proposed, the district would contain four use areas: single-family residential, multi-family residential, mixed-use, and commercial. Process for developing a FLX district, is by ordinance, an iterative one intended to provide opportunities for input and collaboration from the Board, advisory boards and members of the public at key intervals. As such, the preliminary materials—conceptual master plan and draft ordinance presented to the Board on February 26, 2019 and referred to advisory boards on March 7<sup>th</sup> are not yet complete. Staff anticipates that the next iteration shared with the Board will include additional layers of detail on the conceptual master plan, and the draft ordinance.

## **CONSISTENCY WITH DAD WORKSHOP**

By ordinance, the conceptual master plan, ordinance, etc.--must demonstrate compliance with the findings from the planning study. Since the DAD workshop yielded five conceptual plans, staff has referenced the common elements within all of the plans to use as the baseline for determining consistency and for inclusion in the conceptual master plan and draft ordinance. These include:

- commercial uses at a neighborhood or community scale
- diversity of housing types and sizes
- shared green spaces
- bicycle and pedestrian connectivity
- designated locations for transit service inside and outside the district
- central parking areas that can be shared among uses
- opportunities for uses intended to provide services for senior or elderly populations
- retaining a rural setting through the use of undisturbed buffers, building setbacks, landscaping, including, to the extent practicable, existing trees and the natural topography
- open space.

(The *Northern Study Area – Eubanks Site Report* may be found at the following link: <http://www.townofcarrboro.org/DocumentCenter/View/122/NSA-Workshop-Final-Report->).

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transit Service – Staff met with Chapel Hill Transit to discuss options for providing bus service to the proposed FLX development, and particularly whether to provide service within the project or

along Eubanks Road. CHT's initial recommendation is to add bus stops along both sides of Eubanks Road near the existing roundabout and, if possible, to provide bus pull-offs.

Traffic Impact Analysis - The Zinns engaged Kimley-Horn and Associates to conduct a Traffic Impact Analysis for the development proposal. The TIA has been sent to NCDOT and is currently under review.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

As a follow up to questions regarding ecological studies, Town staff has reached out to the Orange County Department of Environment, Agriculture and Resource Conservation, the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, the Army Corps of Engineers, Duke Forest and others to gain a better understanding of the role of these organizations in identifying environmental assets and regulating them. The Natural Heritage Program provides information in the form of a statewide GIS/database of natural areas, managed areas, rare species plants and wildlife species. The mapping tools represent areas with a broad brush based on natural features such as drainageways, soils, topography, tree cover etc. and can be used to assist with the identification of resources for grant applications, such as the Clean Water Trust Fund, for lands suitable for conservation easements or managed lands like Duke Forest or as a guide to development using design tools such as a conservation subdivisions. The Town and Orange County have prepared repositories of information in reports such as the 2004 Inventory of Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats for Orange County, North Carolina (<https://www.townofcarrboro.org/DocumentCenter/View/563/Inventory-of-Natural-Areas-and-Wildlife-Habitats-for-Orange-County-PDF>), and the Town's natural development constraints mapping layer in GIS <http://gis.ci.carrboro.nc.us/Carrboro/CarrboroGIS/>. (Town GIS data presents layers the Town maintains (stream buffers, hardwoods, etc.) and layers provided by others; it is for planning purposes and needs to be field verified.) A similar forthcoming effort is the Eno-New Hope Landscape Conservation Plan, intended to augment current information about the locations of critical pathways for native animals and plants to travel between the many discrete natural areas located throughout the study area. Unless a development project is seeking state or federal funds, such as a transportation project, the information from these sources is non regulatory.

Ecological assessments typically fall under the category of environmental assessments or environmental site assessments (ESA) and are conducted as part of the due diligence process for the purchase of property. There are three levels of assessments based, in part, on the amount of field work involved. While wetlands are not typically included as part of a standard ESA, wetlands assessments are similarly classified by three levels; a consulting firm conducted the analysis which is then reviewed and approved by the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Assessments for ecological purposes are more focused in that the surveyor is looking for a particular species, during a particular season.

Staff is researching the costs associated with this type of work. The type of work described at the Board's meeting in April would likely be considered a phase 2 assessment.

### **PROCEDURE/NEXT STEPS**

The Board is scheduled to see the next iteration of the FLX proposal—conceptual master plan and text amendment on June 25<sup>th</sup> as part of a request to set a public hearing for the early fall. Staff would anticipate holding a second public drop-in session over the summer or in early September and bringing the item to the joint advisory board meeting on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Staff will look for a location in the vicinity of the site, such as the Morris Grove Elementary School to hold the drop-in session.