

Land Use Amendment- Residential to Commercial

Statement of Justification

Kent Corner (Kent St. at West Chapel Hill St.)

This Land Use Amendment application is being filed by Chapel Hill Street Development, LLC (CHSD). The project site consists of nine lots located at the southeast corner of the intersections of West Chapel Hill, Kent and Gattis Streets. Seven of those lots are proposed to be rezoned from either CI or RU 5 to CG. 3 of those lots will be involved with the proposed Plan Amendment. The applicant wishes to redevelop the site to allow development of a mix of office and retail uses.

The applicant requests to amend the Future Land Use plan for the three parcels in question from Medium Density Residential to Commercial. The proposed Commercial designation will allow the applicant to apply for the desired General Commercial zoning, which is the only feasible zoning district that allows the flexibility of office and retail uses with shared parking for all tenants across the development site. The remainder of the site not affected by the proposed Plan Amendment already has a suitable Land Use Plan designation to accommodate the intended rezoning.

We feel that the proposed Plan Amendment which is simply a modest shifting of the existing boundary between the Commercial and Residential areas on the map, is warranted and necessary to allow revitalization of this area.. The West Chapel Hill Street business district has a long history of being a center for neighborhood commerce, employment and support services. Over the years the vitality and mix of business has ebbed and flowed, with the boundaries between commercial and residential uses blurring and shifting as time has passed. There are currently no residential uses on the properties proposed as part of this amendment. The proposed CHSD Development project will provide a critical scale of development that is needed for this fragile district to regain the vitality and importance that it once enjoyed.

When the current Future Land Use Plan was created and adopted a half dozen years ago, we believe that the Steering Committee used the best information they had at that point in time to capture what they thought was the current state of mixes between the residential and commercial portions of the neighborhood. We do not feel that the scale of their task (looking at the entire County) gave them sufficient time to really dig into the needs of the community or what would really be needed to allow this District to blossom once again. Since adoption of the plan, there have been several community engagement efforts that have led to a much more focused look and understanding what the needs and desires of this area really are. Those efforts culminated in a series of Workshops and a Community Design Charrette held in 2007 that largely framed the current development proposal by the applicant. Approval of the proposed Plan Amendment will allow this plan to be implemented according to the recommendations of the neighbors who participated in that effort.

For this reason, we feel that our request is justified.