

CHAPEL HILL DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Driving Downtown's Destiny

308 West Rosemary Street Suite 202 Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27516
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December 22, 2005

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RS

Mayor Kevin Foy
Mr. Cal Horton
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dear Mayor Foy and Mr. Horton:

On behalf of the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership Board of Directors, I am writing in support of the proposed *Shortbread Lofts* project. The Board of Directors reviewed this project at their October 31, 2005 board of directors meeting and voted to send a letter to the Town of Chapel Hill.

The Downtown Partnership is very excited about the proposed mixed-use development for Rosemary Street and we see this corridor as having the greatest potential to impact the overall downtown district over the next five years. There are several key elements to this project that our organization is very excited and pleased to see incorporated in the plans.

1. The proposed project is mixed-use development with residential development in the upper floors and retail/service businesses slated for the first floor.
 - Mixed use is the future of downtown. Our goal is to see every building 100% utilized and mixed use is the only way to accomplish this goal.
 - It is vital to incorporate residential development into downtown plans for long-term retention of downtown businesses. Residents increase the need for businesses to stay open longer hours which makes downtown more user-friendly.
 - Residential also improves both the realities and the perceptions of safety in downtown. The more people that are downtown 24/7, the safer that downtown will become.
 - This project will provide space to incorporate convenience / service businesses that are vital to residential development and support a greater downtown office population. In addition, Rosemary Street offers much easier access to convenience / service businesses than Franklin which should be more desirable for those businesses to locate onto Rosemary, and thus may open up some space on Franklin for retail businesses dependent on walk-in traffic.

2. The proposed project offers a more contemporary feel to downtown. Whereas it is vitally important to retain the historic character of Franklin Street, Rosemary Street is ideal for larger structures that support more of an urban feel to downtown.
 - Chapel Hill's eclectic-mix of residents are looking for both options in downtown today.
3. And finally, the Downtown Partnership is encouraged, that in combination with the Wallace Deck project, Lot 5, and Rosemary Village which is almost completed, that this project will spur additional interest in developing mixed-use projects for Rosemary Street.
4. Much of the parking is proposed for underground. For downtown to be successful it is important that parking supports development but does not drive development. Too often today, our built environment is designed around the parking. Shortbread Lofts is designed with a zero lot lines that will create an interesting streetscape for Rosemary.

The Downtown Partnership envisions a well developed district full of retail and office establishments throughout the district, residential apartments and condos with service businesses that support their needs, and cultural and educational venues that attract a larger geographic population. Our goal is to retain and strengthen downtown as the center of activity for Chapel Hill. Development projects like the proposed *Shortbread Lofts* will help us move one step closer to achieving that vision.

The Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership offers our support for the Shortbread Lofts and our assistance in bringing this project to fruition.

Sincerely yours,



Elizabeth H. Parham, CMSM
Executive Director

Cc: Larry Short
Josh Gurlitz