

Residences at Grove Park
425 Hillsborough St.
Chapel Hill, NC



Special Use Permit Application
Statement of Justification

February 25, 2008

Introduction

This is a request for a Special Use Permit to facilitate the development of the Residences at Grove Park on a recombined portion of four contiguous parcels 425 & 429 Hillsborough St. and 624 & 626 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., a redevelopment of the Townhouse Apartments Parcel and additional abutting property. Our redevelopment plan for the nearly clear-cut 10 acres outside of the Resource Conservation District calls for replacing the existing 111 dilapidated apartments with a mix of 40 town homes in scale with the Hillsborough St. neighborhood, 26 affordable town home units at the center of the site, and 3 additional condominium buildings built adjacent to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Located less than 4/10 of a mile from Downtown and connected by a system of pedestrian walkways and bus routes, the project currently lies predominantly in the R-4 zoning district allowing just 10 units/acre. However, accompanying this SUP application is a zoning atlas amendment to rezone the properties to the new conditional R-HD-3 zoning designation proposed by the Planning Department with the dimensional modifications required for appropriately located, healthy density to support the burgeoning revitalization effort in Downtown Chapel Hill.

Background

Since early 2006, we have been working on Grove Park, formerly known as the Townhouse Apartments, because the property offers a unique opportunity for a meaningful infill re-development that fulfills the Town of Chapel Hill’s initiative for significant, sensitive, and sustainable redevelopment.

The first theme of the Town of Chapel Hill’s Comprehensive Plan is preservation of the Rural Buffer by better utilizing the land within the existing Urban Services Boundary. However, since the Urban Services Area is nearly 94% built out, in order to fulfill the Town’s Comprehensive Plan goals and meet the growth needs projected in the 2035 Long Range Plan, creative infill redevelopment of existing properties must occur to maintain and improve Chapel Hill’s vibrant cultural center. The challenge is to intelligently locate redevelopment on sites that provide the necessary amount of healthy density to support growth, while preserving the natural amenities and atmosphere that define Chapel Hill. We believe the combination of these parcels creates just that kind of site.

Our plan for this site grew up around the Urban Land Institute’s research that details the densities necessary to support a thriving downtown area like Chapel Hill’s in a sustainable and conscientious way. According to the ULI’s New Urbanism text of best practices, the EPA’s life cycle assessment development standards state that well-planned, sustainable downtown areas are built on the following model:

Region of Town

TOWN CORE:	ABOVE 35 UNITS PER ACRE
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER:	18-35 UNITS PER ACRE
NEIGHBORHOOD GENERAL ZONE:	6-18 UNITS PER ACRE
NEIGHBORHOOD EDGE:	3-6 UNITS PER ACRE

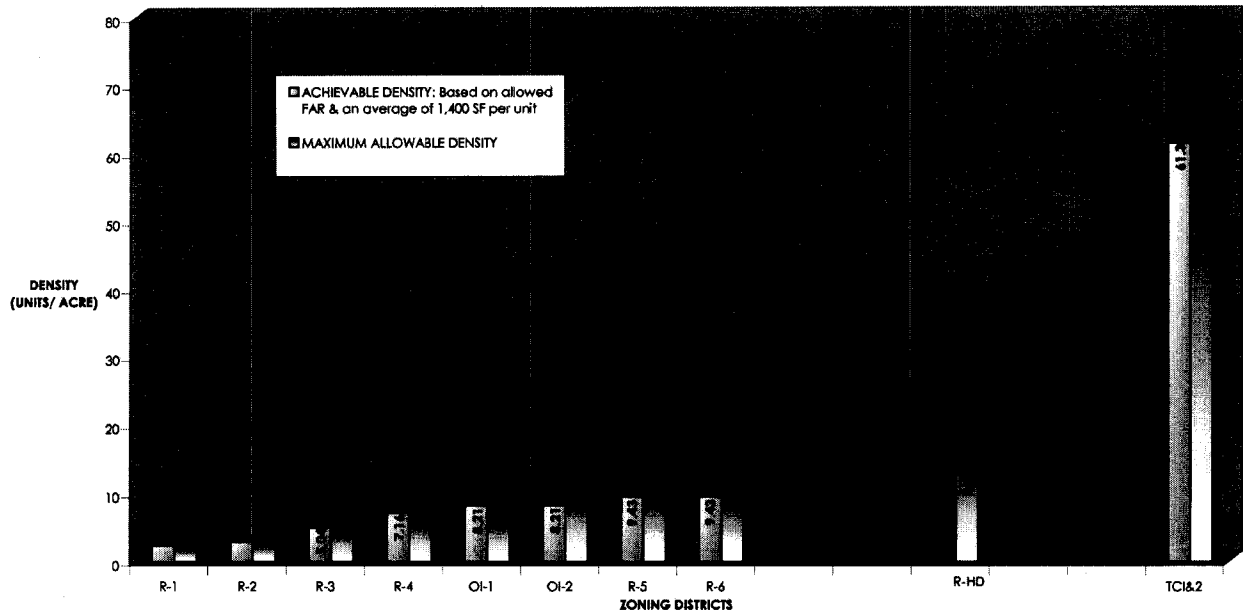
Essentially, in order to preserve the natural resource of a rural buffer area, the highest and best use of redevelopable land needs to be created around the Town's core at densities that support its vitality. Applying this matrix to Chapel Hill, the Town core would center on the Town Center Zones around Franklin St. with better than 35 residences per acre, while the areas immediately surrounding it, like our site, would be the supporting neighborhood center at a minimum of 18-35 residences per acre. However, in Chapel Hill we have the unique amenity of the historic Franklin-Rosemary Neighborhood and the Northside Neighborhood conservation district directly bordering the Town's core. These significant but low density areas drive the average count of homes closer to 4 or 6 per acre. In order to preserve these unquestionably valuable cultural resources, even more care should be taken to locate properties that can effectively support greater densities to bring the average residences needed to effectively support the Town Center without impacting the amenities the Town is known for. That requirement is what makes the Grove Park parcels so unique. On this essentially clear cut site, the sloping topography and the towering trees of the surrounding Resource Conservation District allows our plan to provide the much needed increased number of residences while keeping them almost completely concealed from the surrounding low scale neighborhoods and the public right of way.

The other key sustainable precept we are trying to fulfill with this plan revolves around providing more residences to meet growth needs while minimizing the infrastructure demands on the Town. That concept fulfills itself through our plan in two critical ways. First, by redeveloping an underutilized multifamily property, no utility extensions or new Town service areas need to be created to support our development. Therefore, the Town and county will not have to pay for any new services to support the increased property tax base they will now benefit from. Secondly, based on extensive research by the Sierra Club in conjunction with the Urban Land Institute, higher density multifamily developments near Town Centers just like this one, attract fewer families with children that contribute to the overburdening of the school system. Thus, as with the first benefit, the Town can provide for and reap the benefits of smart growth without further taxing its resources.

Finally, our plan aims to fully support and strengthen the public transit and future mass transit systems by developing sites properly located and connected to the Town Center. According to the Urban Land Institute's *Ten Principles for Successful Development around Transit* a minimum average of 15 units per acre within the 2 mile area surrounding a Town Center is required to support frequent bus service. Accordingly, to encourage the conservation of resources by utilizing mass transit as Chapel Hill grows, increased density on well located sites around Downtown along the bus routes are required. Since our site borders two major bus corridors on either side of the site and connects directly to the heart of Downtown Chapel Hill in ten minutes or less via any of a number of well-used pedestrian routes, locating an increased number of residences here makes the best sense for a sustainable development plan. By encouraging bus ridership via convenience and potential bus stop improvements, individual automobile trips can be greatly decreased. Furthermore, based on the proximity of the site to the majority of the Town's amenities and services, any trip that is taken will be far shorter than from a typical suburban sprawl development. Better still, because the site is within 4/10ths of a mile of the re-emerging Downtown amenities and so well connected with pedestrian routes, the majority of resource wasting trips of any sort can be eliminated with a short walk.

Our proposal to support the Comprehensive Plan's Themes and the Town's number one goal of Downtown revitalization only lacks a fully defined zoning that provides for the increased sustainable density that this site could support. Currently, there is a major gap between the allowable number of units in the highest level R-6 zoning, 15 units/acre, and the Town Center Districts that can allow approximately 61 Units/acre based on their FAR restrictions. Clearly, this site is not a Town Center. However, being directly adjacent to the Downtown amenities and directly connected to them via pedestrian and mass transit routes, an increase in allowable density beyond the existing R-4 zoning restriction of 10 units per acre is also clearly warranted if it can be done in a sensitive and sustainable way.

The Planning Department’s newly proposed R-HD-3 zoning designation could provide Chapel Hill with the tool to fill this zoning gap and encourage healthy density and sustainable growth. This designation as outlined in by the Planning Department provides a means for the Town to assign the proper dimensions and healthy density to sites adjacent to Downtown and along identified transit arteries like Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. With this SUP, we are also submitting requests for the new R-HD-3 rezoning and will propose modifications to the proposed zoning to define the dimensions and density that can promote the healthy growth Chapel Hill’s revitalization needs, while preserving the unique natural amenities and neighborhood culture the Town already enjoys.



We have taken this plan through two CDC review sessions and neighbor meetings to revise our design and address the concerns and desires of our neighbors and the Commission. After discussing with neighbors their chief concerns about the size and density of the plan, as well as the traffic that they felt would go along with it, we revised our proposal and arrived at the plan we present now for SUP review and approval. These changes included a reduction in the number of units by nearly 60, reduction in parking spaces by better than 150, and redirection of ingress and egress paths to make Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd the main entrance to the development. We have even purchased additional property along the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd entrance to make a more prominent egress point to further encourage the use of the Martin Luther King Jr. access and drive traffic away from the delicate fabric of Hillsborough St. Also included are large increases in significant green space and saving of the sites largest tree, elimination of one of the tallest structures previously shown, and a larger town home component along the Hillsborough St. edge to better buffer the existing neighborhood from the taller buildings. With these changes, the plan can now meet the Town Council’s vision for increased density to support Downtown Revitalization while using the natural buffers and sensitive development along the Hillsborough St. edge to almost completely mask the increased density components from the surrounding neighborhoods. By matching the goals of the Council to these neighborhood concerns, we believe this plan delivers an ideal solution for the redevelopment of this Downtown perimeter site.

General Site Description

The property consists of two parcels along Hillsborough St. and a recombined portion of 624 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., approximately 12.93 acres. The entire Grove Park parcel lies 4/10ths of a mile from the Downtown Core and spans well established pedestrian corridors and is bound by two major public transportation routes along Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd and Hillsborough St. Ram Development Company is looking to the new R-HD-3 zoning designation to achieve the highest and best use of the property and replace the dilapidated collection of apartments and asphalt parking lots that essentially clear cut the site in the early 1960's. Resource conservation districts buffer the northern and western edges of the property, while high, mid, and low rise multifamily developments mask the southern edge and remainder of the western boundary along Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The small amount of frontage along Hillsborough Street offers connections to a popular downtown pedestrian route and an opportunity for improved pedestrian connections with our site. Additionally, significant improvements can be made to a currently unsafe Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. entrance including a new sidewalk, Town standard drive ways, and dual egress lanes with improved sight triangles to make it the safer, more prominent entrance for the development. The properties' two entrances that access Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and Hillsborough St.'s bus routes, as well as the myriad of accessible pedestrian routes, make the parcel an ideal candidate to house the sustainable density that will help ensure the success of the Downtown revitalization effort.

Program Overview

Ram Development Company envisions the redevelopment of Grove Park as a vital residential development located within walking distance of downtown Chapel Hill's urban core and positioned along transit corridors to make it a model development of residential support for the Downtown Core.

In direct response to the CDC and neighborhood's comments, the important portion of the site along the Hillsborough Street Corridor has been redesigned with an increased depth of town homes and the height and size of the multifamily building closest to the historic neighborhood has been decreased to respect and enhance the character of the residential neighborhood. While the project does not lie in the Historic District, architectural elevations take cues from the well established neighborhoods in the area to not only ensure the development is well-integrated, but to also ensure the project preserves and enhances the unique character of this important Chapel Hill neighborhood. With these town homes preserving the Hillsborough Streetscape, the trees of the north and west Resource Conservation Districts, and the surrounding high, mid and low rise multifamily developments along Martin Luther King almost completely mask a potential higher density development area that will not obscure the vistas or detract from the character of Chapel Hill. To take advantage of this unique location, we are proposing four reduced condominium buildings, the largest ones on the extreme northern and western edge of the project to eliminate their impact on Hillsborough St. and to keep them hidden from Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. by the RCD tree line. In response to neighborhood input, we have reduced the overall number of units on the site by nearly 60 units from the original number but still maintain a number that provides for a development that effectively supports Downtown. Even though taller buildings would be predominately hidden by the tree line and well-buffered from Hillsborough St., our buildings will be no higher than their existing 6 and 7 story neighbors along Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and will have far more significant architectural designs.

We have gone to great lengths to create a sense of place where residences overlook now even larger green spaces with beautiful views and drives that are attractive and possess a sense of purpose. To that end, buildings are set apart allowing light to enter throughout the project, amenities have been located to take advantage of natural views, and the lanes and minimal visible parking have been designed to convey a sense of arrival for the residences rather than a "sea of parking". In order to accomplish this, the major expense of parking beneath the residential buildings has been undertaken. In addition to reducing the

amount of impervious area needed to sustain a similarly sized development, parking under the buildings allows us to maximize the remaining land for public green space to replenish the clear cut site. Our plan will then leave only minimal parallel parking along the streets to give a sense of neighborhood to the development. In response to the CDC's concerns and the neighbor's comments in July, our redesigned plan has taken a considerable number of parking spaces out of the original design, reducing our parking ratio to 1.67 spaces per unit while still keeping nearly 80% of the parking underneath the buildings or inside structures. Additionally, we have reconfigured what surface parking there is to save a greater number of specimen trees, including the largest tree on the interior of our site. All these efforts will provide for truly meaningful open spaces and community areas that promote outdoor activity, gathering and neighborhood interaction.

In addition to replenishing the clear cut areas, investment will be made to rejuvenate the Resource Conservation Districts currently over run with kudzu and invasive plants to help preserve a natural amenity for our residences and the public to enjoy. With the support of the Council, CDC, and our neighbors, we plan to submit to the Town Council a design that improves the prominence and functionality of access along the existing road that crosses the RCD with minimal additional impact. However, because the RCD requirements restrict any work in the RCD a zoning modification will be needed to improve the degraded RCD and provide safe pedestrian amenities to connect the site to the Martin Luther King Jr. entrance. We would very much appreciate the continued input and support of the Commission and neighborhood groups to help us deliver a beautified main entrance to the development along this existing road. With the Town's help we can truly make this overrun RCD an amenity the public can enjoy.

To compliment our RCD work, the final piece of the program will be the complete redevelopment of the entrances at both Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. and Hillsborough Street. Ram plans to provide complimentary improvements at both entrances to the site to encourage pedestrians and ridership on public transportation for our residents and further reduce other vehicular traffic. In response to the neighborhood's concern about Hillsborough St. traffic, we have downsized the project from the original plan along Hillsborough St., eliminated one entrance on Hillsborough St., and significantly redeveloped the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd entrance to become the primary traffic entrance for the development. Additionally, we are laying out these improvements to maximize their calming effect on traffic along Hillsborough combating our neighbor's major concern about speed along this historic street. Perhaps most significant though, our new plan has completely restructured all the interior drives to discourage traffic from leaving onto the Hillsborough Street. We are also engaging NC DOT to investigate installing a signal at the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd entrance to make it the safest and most convenient ingress and egress point for the site. Unfortunately, we can not separate the sides of the site completely because of civic requirements to maintain the connection for emergency and public works vehicles. However, to further reduce vehicular traffic and encourage pedestrians, investment connecting our bordering pedestrian thoroughfares with the new development will ensure that Grove Park is a truly sustainable development providing a sensitive and significant boost to the economic and environmental vitality of Chapel Hill's Downtown Community.

Goals & Objectives

This site offers unique opportunities that can be maximized by sensitive, sustainable and significant development made possible only through the collective efforts of community leaders and private enterprise. At Grove Park, it is our desire to create a model development that will be a cornerstone of the Downtown community where people can "live, work, and play" in a well-connected, well planned, and well integrated Chapel Hill.

Redevelopment of properties that are at the end of their effective lifecycle and in decline provide opportunities to add value and create places where our communities can grow and thrive while

minimizing the impact on infrastructure and our natural resources. Our proposed redevelopment utilizes infrastructure already in place thereby decreasing the need for additional public investment, enhancing the efficiency of the property, and creating healthy increased density. By appropriately locating higher density developments in areas like Grove Park, the Town of Chapel Hill can use healthy density to offset the significantly increased cost of redeveloping dilapidated properties detrimental to the heart of its Core Urban Area. By allowing increased density on well-located sites adjacent to Downtown, projects like this one can encourage pedestrians and public transportation usage, reduce traffic congestion, and increase the tax base and economic vitality of the Downtown Business District, while helping to reduce detrimental and unsustainable suburban sprawl.

The goal of this project is to provide that much needed healthy and appropriate density in a sensitive way, so that the natural features and bordering neighborhoods are not simply protected, but enhanced by a development that helps drive the vitality of Downtown Chapel Hill's resurgence. With the Planning Department's concurrent proposal for the R-HD-3 zoning designation accompanying this SUP and Zoning Atlas Amendment, we hope to help establish a sustainable zoning designation in R-HD-3 that provides for the growth to revitalize Downtown, while preserving the Rural Buffer and cultural amenities for the entire community to enjoy.

Findings of Fact

Based on Article 4.5.2 of the Land Use Management Ordinance for Chapel Hill, four findings of fact must be confirmed in order to be granted a Special Use Permit. The following information outlines how the proposed Grove Park redevelopment fulfills the requirements of each finding.

Finding #1: That the use or development is located, designed, and proposed to be operated so as to maintain or promote the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Based on the needs for growth and projections outlined in the 2035 Long Range Plan, we believe sites along the arterial Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. corridor and supporting the Downtown core need to be designed to properly handle increased density and allow Chapel Hill to grow in a sustainable way that preserves its natural and cultural amenities. This site, including 425 Hillsborough St. and adjacent properties, with its sloping topography and RCD trees concealing almost all of the proposed development is ideally suited to meet that goal. Also, because of Grove Park's close proximity to Downtown amenities and emphasis on pedestrian and mass transit connectivity, we believe the public health will be greatly improved by the reduction in number of automobile trips and the reduction in suburban sprawl development made possible by our project. Mainly, as people are given a viable option for enjoying all Chapel Hill has to offer without crowding its vistas with emissions or poorly designed developments, we believe this type of project will thrive. Furthermore, since Downtown commercial and office locations are so close, as well as retail and future office centers along Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd to the north, the use of the property should be limited to higher density residential development to preserve the atmosphere and culture of the surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, where as the concealing trees and topography are a benefit to residential development, the lack of visibility would be critically detrimental to any commercial or mixed use development. Therefore, we believe the most beneficial plan for the public would be to properly develop as much healthy residential density on the site as needed to support the retail and commercial projects already Downtown. We further believe this is the kind of development the Planning Department and Town are supporting with the new R-HD-3 zoning.

We feel our plan with the primary entrance on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and mix of low rise and mid-rise products is properly designed to promote the health, safety, and general welfare by buffering neighbors from traffic and building impacts. Further, this plan will encourage any traffic onto Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd were it can be properly handled rather than onto Hillsborough St., a major pedestrian and family area. Additionally, with our continued efforts to get some signalization at the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd entrance, we hope to encourage additional safety with pedestrian signaling. At the center of the site we plan a complete replanting program to rebuild some significant public green space for the

public to enjoy. By locating the majority of the parking underground, we feel the public welfare will be greatly improved going forward when our residents get to enjoy the new green walking corridors and our planned RCD investments without a sea of parking or the danger of through traffic on the site. For these reasons, we believe the Residences at Grove Park to be an ideal project for a R-HD-3 designation that will deliver a healthy residential growth opportunity for the public benefit of Chapel Hill.

Finding #2: That the use or development would comply with all required regulations and standards of the Land Use Management Ordinance.

The parcels making up the Residences at Grove Park development, including 425 and 429 Hillsborough and portions of 624 and 626 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. which will be recombined into two separate parcels as part of the development process, are predominantly zoned R-4 allowing just 10 units per acre and minimal redevelopment opportunity. With this submittal we will be requesting a rezoning to the Planning Department’s proposed R-HD-3 designation area with two requested modifications to provide the healthy growth opportunity the Town of Chapel Hill is seeking. The following dimensional matrix outlines the restrictions of the current zoning as well as the proposal for the dimensions of the new zoning area we are requesting. The modifications are described below.

Dimensional Matrix	R-4 Zone	Proposed R-HD-3
Max. Density	10/acre	N/A
Max. Height (Primary)	39’	50’
Max. Height (Secondary)	60’	90’
Maximum Impervious Ratio	.24/.5/.7	.24/.5/.7
Maximum FAR	0.230	0.918

Based on the new R-HD-3 zoning description proposed by the Planning Department, we believe the Grove Park site will best serve a higher density residential use. With its direct connection to major pedestrian and bus connections, location within a ½ mile of the Downtown Commercial Core, and close proximity to increasing retail and office destinations, Grove Park is positioned to positively encourage sustainable transit and revitalization goals. This new plan will require the site to be rezoned to the newly described R-HD-3 zoning with a Zoning Atlas Amendment. Only minor modifications are required to make this zoning designation truly effective for the unique Grove Park site.

1. The first required modification to the zoning allowances is a change to the disturbance allowances for the RCD that will allow us to revitalize the area and create a safe entryway and public amenity where now there is only a choked stream. When compared to the current level of disturbance in the RCD, we are affecting considerably less area in the in all of 3 of the RCD zones than currently has been disturbed and only requesting an increase in the least critical Upland Zone solely to facilitate public roadway and sidewalk improvements. As can be seen in the following charts, we are only requesting an increase in the allowable disturbance area ratio for the Upland Zone of the RCD, even though past disturbance in this zone was clearly far more extensive than what we are proposing now. To offset even this lesser increase, we are keeping well below the allowable limits for the two more sensitive lowland zones and affecting 30,000 SF less than has been disturbed in these two zones previously.

RCD Disturbance Summary:

RCD Zone	Total Area (s.f.)	Disturbance Area Ratio*	Allowed Disturbance (s.f.)	Existing Disturbance (s.f.)	Proposed Disturbance (s.f.)
Streamside	48,250	0.20	9,650	15,263	9,270
Managed Use	48,377	0.40	19,351	34,541	10,161
Upland	46,335	0.40	18,534	48,525	37,955
	142,962		47,535	98,329	57,386

This chart reflects the needed disturbance area to provide permanent improvements including side walks, safe drive aisles, and accepted storm water management facilities. Based on the review of Sue Burke with the Town of Chapel Hill Storm Water Management Department, an additional 18,000 SF of disturbance will be required for temporary, non-permanent erosion control measures while we install these improvements and enhance the RCD. Our total projected maximum disturbance will be 75,000 SF, confined primarily to the Upland Zone, overall far less than the 98,000 SF disturbed in past phases of development and without the projected benefits.

Finally, we are not asking for this increased level disturbance in the Upland Zone to increase building area, but only to create a safe pedestrian connection to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., to build Town standard driveway widths in place of the substandard existing roadway, and allow for dual egress lanes at the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. entry to ensure vehicular safety in and out of the entrance our neighbors have asked us to make the most prominent. Thus, we are asking for these modifications in the name of safety and access rather than for any increased development size. With these features included where no such improvements exist today, we will be able to provide a safer environment for the public without further impinging, but instead improving the condition of our Resource Conservation District.

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2. The only other required modification to the zoning allowances proposed for this property is a change to the impervious surface allowances for the RCD that, coupled with the disturbance area allowance, will provide for the revitalization of the site and the safety improvements mentioned above. Though we are asking for an increase amount of impervious surface in the Upland Zone, we are affecting considerably less area and actually removing detrimental impervious surfaces from the critical lower zones to make up for the required increase. As can be seen in the following charts, we are only requesting an increase in the impervious area ratio for the Upland Zone of the RCD and keeping well below the limits for the two more sensitive lowland zones. In total we are removing better than 6,000 SF of impervious area from the critical Streamside and Managed Use Zones and pushing the required drive lanes as far out of these zones as the topography will allow. However, due to the challenges of the site's topography we cannot push the existing drive lanes completely out of the RCD. In order to limit any additional disturbance we have kept the same general road layout, removed excess pavement where the existing streets were poorly laid out, and added impervious surface only where Town Standard road widths were required and a sidewalk pedestrian connection was needed. In total we need to add approximately 2,000 SF for a new sidewalk connection to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. where none exists today. The remaining approximately 5,000 SF above the allowed combined

impervious surface in the RCD will be used to create the Town standard drive lanes needed to safely connect to our main entrance.

RCD Impervious Summary:

RCD Zone	Total Area (s.f.)	Impervious Surface Ratio*	Allowed Impervious Surface (s.f.)	Existing Impervious Surface (s.f.)	Proposed Impervious Surface (s.f.)
Streamside	48,250	0.10	4,825	4,305	3,528
Managed Use	48,377	0.20	9,675	8,843	3,539
Upland	46,335	0.20	9,267	12,401	23,676
	142,962		23,767	25,549	30,743

* Per Table 3.6.6-3: Dimensional Regulations in RCD

Like the disturbance area modification request, the increase in impervious area we are requesting in the Upland Zone is not for any increased building area, but for creating a safe pedestrian connection to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., creating Town standard driveway widths across the existing roadway, and allowing for dual egress lanes at the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. entry to ensure vehicular safety in and out of the entrance our neighbors have asked us to make the most prominent. Thus, we are asking for these modifications in the name of safety and access rather than for any increased development size. With these features included where no such improvements exist today, we will be able to provide a safer environment for the public without further impinging, but instead improving the condition of our Resource Conservation District.

We are requesting these modifications to the dimensional requirements and current zoning based on the following significant public benefits and community amenities provided by the Grove Park redevelopment proposal:

1. The development is designed for providing healthy density in a unique well located parcel that will support the growth projected in the 2035 Long Range Plan without impacting the surrounding neighborhoods or harming the beauty of Chapel Hill’s vistas.
2. With 346 new residences, the proposed project could generate large increases in annual property taxes for the entire region and also increase sales taxes as the new residents enjoy the walkable Downtown commercial district. More importantly, these increases to the tax base will come with little additional burden to the Town’s infrastructure as all the needed utilities and services are already in place with easy access to the site.
3. A major component of our redevelopment plan and budget is being allotted for the construction of green space, active open space, and RCD improvements for pedestrian connectivity and improved safety on the site. These investments will include extensive improvements to the RCD, bus stop improvements, a continued push for signalization at the Martin Luther King. Blvd entrance, and pedestrian amenities along with better drive lanes to improve public safety.
4. Based on our ongoing discussions with Orange County Housing and Land Trust, we understand that the amount of condominium projects coming into the Chapel Hill market has caused an influx of affordable condominium units, and single bedroom units in particular, that the Land Trust has serious concerns about being able to place. In order to give the Town and Land Trust flexibility to address these concerns, we are proposing to fulfill the Town’s Affordable Housing and Inclusionary Taskforce

Initiatives by providing our 15% affordable housing requirement with 52 affordable bedrooms in a mix of one and two bedroom condominiums. The final mix of unit types will be determined in consultation with the Land Trust and approved by the Town Manager prior to the issuance of the Zoning Compliance Permit.

5. The influx of new Downtown residents will not only contribute to the economic vitality of the Downtown and greater Chapel Hill Area but also contribute to the safety of Downtown Chapel Hill by getting more eyes into the Downtown and surrounding community.

Finding #3: *That the use or development is located, designed, and proposed to be operated so as to maintain or enhance the value of contiguous property, or that the use or development is a public necessity.*

Aside from the benefit of replacing dilapidated apartments well past their usable life cycle, the proposed Grove Park project has been sensitively developed to protect not just the adjacent properties but also the surrounding vistas and landscapes that the whole Town enjoys. Based on the responses and neighborhood concerns we received during the CDC process, we increased the number and depth of the town homes on the Hillsborough St. side of the project to protect, preserve and enhance the nearby Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. Our budget also includes significant reinvestment in open green space, the realignment of buildings and parking to preserve specimen trees, and RCD improvements that the surrounding properties will also benefit from as a solution is sought for our currently kudzu choked western RCD. Additionally, we have designed the parking and inter-site roads to discourage traffic going out onto Hillsborough St., hopefully dramatically reducing it from the existing level caused by the Townhouse Apartments. For the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd side of the site, our mid rise buildings are of the same or lower elevation than their neighboring structures. However, all of our structures take care of the majority of their parking needs in structured garages underneath the buildings and are almost completely hidden from the view of the public on the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd right of way. Thus as the entire Town enjoys the benefits of this well located and well planned infill project, they will also continue to appreciate their own property's value and the vistas they have always enjoyed.

Finding #4: *That the use or development conforms to the general plans for the physical development of the Town as embodied in the Land Use Management Ordinance and in the Comprehensive Plan.*

The Finding required for the Special Use Permit and the requirements for justifying the proposed rezoning and text amendments can best be demonstrated by the proposed development's fulfillment of the core themes of the Comprehensive Plan.

Themes of the Comprehensive Plan

1. Maintain the Urban Services Area/Rural Buffer Boundary

By redeveloping a Downtown site rather than challenging the buffer with additional suburban track development, the Residences at Grove Park project alleviates suburban sprawl by providing a significant choice for new residential development on one of the few remaining sites where such development is encouraged and appropriate. Additionally, this new opportunity for healthy density is created with little additional infrastructure required since the utilities and base services are already present.

2. Participate in regional planning

Forward thinking, sustainable growth projects like the one proposed for Grove Park can give Chapel Hill an example project to act a model for the rest of the region.

3. Conserve and protect existing neighborhoods

Since the area inside the Urban Services Area is approximately 94% built out, one of the few remaining opportunities for Chapel Hill to accommodate the nearly 50% population growth forecast in the

2035 Long Range Plan is to seek out sustainable urban redevelopment sites like 425 Hillsborough St. With developments like Grove Park handling the new growth, the character and nature of Chapel Hill's historic neighborhoods can be protected.

4. Conserve and protect the natural setting

As with neighborhood protection, assigning growth projects to locations like the Residences at Grove Park with its unique benefits of topography and the RCD's tree buffer, sensitive responsible redevelopment can make sure the natural vistas of Chapel Hill remain unblemished. To further protect the greater environment, we will create an energy management plan for Grove Park with the goals of increasing energy efficiency 20% above the current ASHRAE standards and seek ways to reduce our carbon footprint over typical developments.

5. Identify areas where there are creative development opportunities

As detailed before, 425 Hillsborough Street's unique Downtown location and natural benefits ensure that no better site exists than at Grove Park for a well planned, sustainable density development to provide for Chapel Hill's growth while protecting its beauty.

6. Encourage desirable forms of non-residential development

By encouraging higher residential intensities in specific locations that support the Downtown commercial area, the Town can do the best thing for encouraging Downtown non-residential development by providing those projects with nearby residents to patronize them. With Grove Park being all of 4/10ths of a mile from the Downtown core and tied into it by a series of pedestrian and mass transit connections, our site is an ideal project for just this type of non-residential encouragement.

7. Create and preserve affordable housing opportunities

In cooperation with the Town and Orange Community Housing and Land Trust, we will provide our 15% affordable housing requirement with 52 affordable bedrooms in a mix of one and two bedroom condominiums in order to provide a flexible affordable housing opportunity that meets the needs of the community.

8. Cooperatively Plan with the University of North Carolina

Every effort has and will continue to be made to include the University of North Carolina in the benefits the Residences at Grove Park hopes to provide to Chapel Hill. We believe this site will be an ideal location for supporting the University's current campus and the plans for Carolina North.

9. Work toward a balanced transportation system

By design, the Residences at Grove Park bring more residents to the walkable Downtown environment. The proximity of these new residents to downtown should reduce overall automobile trips as well as providing the necessary density to properly support the growing bus system provided by Chapel Hill. More directly though, the improvements Grove Park brings to the pedestrian connections already on our site and the bus corridors it borders will encourage pedestrians, bikes, and bus ridership through out the area and be a model for other developments along the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd transit corridor.

10. Complete the bikeway / greenway / sidewalk system

The new pedestrian and bicycle amenities provided by the Grove Park design are built specifically to provide connectivity to Downtown and encourage its revitalization. Along with the Downtown connections and our RCD improvements, we are dedicating a greenway easement to improve connectivity to the Bolin Creek Greenway system and other established pathways for the Town.

11. Provide quality community facilities and services

From the well-lit and secure subterranean parking decks to the expansive green spaces and active recreation areas enjoyed by all our residences, the Grove Park project will improve the RCD and the currently clear-cut site to make it a model community for sustainable infill and renewal.

12. Develop strategies to address fiscal issues

By generating substantial new property tax revenue per annum for the region as well as additional sales taxes from nearby Downtown retailers, Grove Park gives Chapel Hill additional funding to address future fiscal issues without requiring additional infrastructure and service investments from the Town.

Request

For its support of all the major themes of the Comprehensive Plan as well as the Town's goals for Downtown revitalization, we request that the Council support the Planning Departments new proposed R-HD zoning designations and grant the Special Use Permit and Zoning Atlas Amendment to designate a new R-HD-3 zoning for the Residences at Grove Park. With your approval, we will develop and construct this sustainable infill redevelopment and deliver to Chapel Hill a model project to welcome in its new era of growth, while protecting the rich history and stunning vistas it has always enjoyed in the past.