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## TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION

# CONCEPT PLAN APPLICATION

### *Applicant Information*

Name: Corley Redfoot Zack, Inc.  
 Address: 222 Cloister Court  
 City: Chapel Hill State: NC Zip: 27516  
 Phone (Work): 401-8586 FAX: 493-7306  
 E-Mail: mhammer@corleyredfootzack.com

### *Development Information*

Name of Development: Town Operations Center  
 Tax Map: 7 Block: 18 Lot(s): 7A  
 Address/Location: Millhouse Road  
 Existing Zoning: MU-R1, RB  
 Proposed Size of Development: 88.6 AC  
 Permitted Floor Area: 150,000 SF  
 Proposed Floor Area: 145,494 / SF  
 Minimum Number of Parking Spaces Required: 416  
 Proposed Number of Parking Spaces: 276

The undersigned applicant hereby certifies that: a) the property owner authorizes the filing of this application; b) authorizes on-site review by authorized staff; and c) to the best of his/her knowledge and belief, all information supplied with this application is true and accurate.

Signature:  Date: 10/09/03

Please submit **20 sets** of all materials, no later than the first day of the month. Materials must be collated and folded to fit into a 12" x 15" envelope.

The Community Design Commission meets regularly on the third Wednesday of each month. For confirmation of a meeting date and the placement of your request on the agenda, please call the Planning Department at (919) 968-2728.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: MEMBERS OF TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL  
COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION  
FROM: Michael L. Hammersley, PE: Corley Redfoot Zack, Inc.  
RE: TOWN OPERATIONS CENTER CONCEPTUAL PLANS  
DATE: October 13, 2003

Since the courtesy review of June 18, 2003, by the CDC, the Designer and the Town have been revising the plans to respond to requested budget reductions. A revised budget will be reviewed by the Town Council on October 27, 2003. The attached Concept Plan dated October 8, 2003, reflects the following revisions to the May 23, 2003, plan, as previously reviewed by the CDC. The major changes are as follows:

- A. A building area reduction of 34,917 square feet. This includes deletion of the Engineering Department, Public Housing Maintenance and Archive programs, along with reductions in other program spaces.
- B. The build-out year for the facility is revised from 2036 to 2021; therefore, the following reductions have occurred:
  - 1. Bus Storage is reduced to 125 buses (2021)
  - 2. Storage area for police and auction vehicles is reduced to:
    - 77 vehicles (2021)
    - 63 vehicles (2021)
    - 140 total
  - 3. Employee Parking is reduced:
    - Transportation: 166 total (2021)
    - Public Works: 170 total (2021)
    - 336 total
  - 4. Fuel lanes at Public Works are reduced from 8 to 6.

Please note the responses to the June 18th review comments attached to this document.

BACKGROUND

The Public Works and Transportation Departments are located on the Horace Williams Tract, on land leased from the University of North Carolina. The term of the lease expires on December 31, 2006, and will not be extended.

The Council has acquired 88.6 acres of land for a new site on Millhouse Road, north of Eubanks Road, between I-40 and the railroad. On December 13, 2002, the Council authorized a contract with a consultant team lead by Corley Redfoot Zack, Inc., to prepare a site analysis, needs assessment, conceptual site plan, and preliminary cost projections for the new operations center.

Since mid-December, 2002, surveys and site analyses have been completed, as well as a design criteria manual, which included input from employees in the Public Works, Transportation, Engineering, and Public Housing Maintenance departments. Based on the information described above, and after two four-day interactive workshops on site with a staff group, many employees from the affected departments and the *ad hoc* Design Advisory Committee, the consultants developed a draft conceptual site plan. These drawings should not be mistaken for plans. They still are at the conceptual level, and will need to be refined through further iteration.

On September 8, 2003, the Council submitted various comments and requested further information on the budget for the project. A revised budget and plan will be reviewed on October 27, 2003.

### DISCUSSION

#### Existing Site Zoning:

The creek that runs through the middle of the property is also the jurisdictional boundary between the northern 29.7 acres in Orange County's planning jurisdiction and the southern 58.9 acres in the Town's planning jurisdiction. Considering the Resource Conservation District overlay in the Town's jurisdiction, the site includes the following three zoning districts:

Chapel Hill Mixed Use Residential-1 (MU-R-1)	44.9 acres
Chapel Hill MU-R-1 in Resource Conservation District	14.0 acres
Orange County Rural Buffer (RB)	<u>29.7 acres</u>
Total Site:	88.6 acres

In the Chapel Hill MU-R-1 district, development of a "Public Use Facility" is a permitted use requiring approval of a Special Use Permit, if more than 40,000 square feet of land disturbance is proposed. In the Resource Conservation District, development is restricted.

In the Orange County Rural Buffer district, development of a "Government Facility or Office Building" is a permitted use, but the approval process is not under the purview of the Town Council. It is also possible that an amendment would be needed to the Joint Planning Land Use Plan; such an amendment would need to be approved by Orange County and the Towns of Carrboro and Chapel Hill.

Site Context Issues:

I-40 borders the site on the east, and this proximity results in relatively high ambient-noise levels on the eastern portion of the site. The railroad tracks on the west side separate the site from seven residential properties along Millhouse Road. One residential property on Millhouse Road is surrounded by the Town property to the north, east and south.

Existing Vegetation:

The site is a mix of open and wooded areas, including a large central field, several areas dominated by young pine trees and stands of mature hardwoods around the three streams that cross the property. In addition, two other stands of significant trees are noteworthy, including a concentration of large hardwoods on the slope north of the existing pond and a large area of mature hardwoods south and east of the site's central field. A small area above the pond, where no site disturbance is anticipated, meets the Army Corps of Engineers' Wetlands definition, and additional areas are likely along Old Field Creek as well. A final delineation by the Army Corps of Engineers will be completed later this year.

Existing soil and Subsoil Conditions:

In general, the soils on all of the upland sections of the site are suitable for development, with most of the MU-R-1 zoning district being in the "Greenville" soil series, which is suitable for urban-type uses. Although a complete analysis of recent subsurface borings is still being completed, preliminary information indicates that subsurface conditions are not anticipated to constrain development on sections of the site outside of the Resource Conservation District.

Existing Topography:

With the exception of limited areas within the Resource Conservation Districts, essentially the entire site includes slopes less than 10%, with the large majority of this area with slopes less than 5%.

Anticipated Buffers and Buildable Areas:

The buffers anticipated for the development include the required 100'-wide Type "E" buffer along I-40 and the required and proposed buffers around the remaining property. Considering the anticipated buffers along with stream setback requirements consistent with the Town's Resource Conservation District regulations, two "buildable envelopes" can be quantified. These envelopes include approximately 20.2 acres in the Orange County's Rural Buffer zoning district and approximately 30.9 acres in Chapel Hill's MU-R-1 zoning district.

Drainage Patterns:

In general, natural surface drainage flows to the site's three streams, which then cross under I-40 in existing culverts. Drainage flow onto the site from surrounding properties is essentially non-existent due to grading associated with the railroad tracks along the western property line. Three low areas exist on the site, outside of the Resource Conservation District, that are suitable locations for stormwater ponds.

Existing Municipal Operations Facility:

For purposes of comparison, the Town's leasehold on the Horace Williams Property includes 24.2 acres. This site is approximately 70% impervious surface, and includes no surface stormwater improvements.

Traffic Impact Statement:

A. The Town Operations Center Traffic Impact Analysis Report, dated May, 2003, was prepared for the Town of Chapel Hill in its role as Regulator by HNTB North Carolina, PC. Recommendations for improvements are as follows:

- Improve Millhouse Road to a collector street standard, which includes a 5'-wide sidewalk along the east side, and wide travel lanes to accommodate bike lanes.
- Provide new exclusive right-turn lane from Eubanks Road onto Millhouse Road.
- Provide new exclusive right-turn lane from Millhouse Road on to Eubanks Road.
- Widen Eubanks Road to include two 12'-wide travel lanes and bike lanes.
- Provide turn-lanes from the new driveways exiting from the Operations Center
- Align the railroad crossing to provide a four-way perpendicular intersection on Millhouse Road at the entrance to the Town Operations Center. (This change, and possibly all improvements to Millhouse Road, will require the approval and cooperation of Norfolk Southern Railroad).
- Eubanks Road at Airport Road needs to be widened to accommodate:
  - 12'-wide travel lanes at the intersection
  - Storage of left-turn lane be lengthened to 300' to accommodate future traffic.

B. In addition to these recommendations, we recommend the following improvements at the intersection of Millhouse Road and Eubanks Road:

- Install a four-way traffic signal at intersection of Millhouse Road and Eubanks Drive. Traffic signal warrant analysis at the intersection of Millhouse Road and Eubanks Road "marginally" met the MUTCD warrants based on the 2006 projected volumes. Due to the nature of the traffic (buses and heavy equipment making left turn from Millhouse Road to Eubanks Road) from the proposed Town Operations Center, we strongly recommend a traffic signal at this location to minimize the delay to the side street traffic and reduce potential accidents.
- Widen Eubanks Road to provide an exclusive left-turn lane from Eubanks Road to Millhouse Road.

**DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN DATED OCTOBER 8, 2003**

Buildings:

- Transportation Department Administration and Operations.
- Transportation Maintenance Department.
- Public Works Administration (no Engineering).
- Public Works Operations.
- Public Works Fleet Maintenance.

- Public Works Building Maintenance.
- Surplus Storage.

Fuel and Wash Facilities:

- Public Works (2 less lanes for 2006)
- Transportation)

Bus Storage:

- 2006: 101 buses
- 2021: 125 buses

Miscellaneous:

- 2021: 98-vehicle Police impoundment lot  
42-vehicle auction storage lot.

Employee parking spaces:

- 2006: 276 spaces
- 2021: 336 total spaces

Operational Issues:

- Two points of access from Millhouse Road
- Separate access for Transportation Department and Public Works
- Public and employee parking separated from work areas by security measures.
- Fueling area separated from public access
- Emergency access connection between the compounds
- Shared areas centrally located on the site and available for public access
- Material-handling area located north of the site, away from compound
- Limit internal movements around fleet maintenance areas
- Ice machine located adjacent to exit route at pull-off area
- Safe pedestrian access throughout the compounds
- Provide additional space on the site for the Orange County Animal Shelter and a daycare center.

Sustainable Design (if budget allows):

- Single-story buildings and their orientation allow utilization of daylighting
- Design of energy-efficient building systems.
- Allow for reuse of stormwater runoff for supplementing the wash bays.
- Allow for reuse of stormwater runoff for toilet flushing and irrigation
- Allow for use of photovoltaic system
- Allow for use of solar hot-water-heating system
- Allow for use of alternative fuels

Environmental Sensitivity:

- A large portion of the development is located within the existing open field.
- Plan will preserve large areas of existing specimen trees
- Plan will preserve large, undisturbed areas in the rural buffer
- Stormwater management is possible through natural means, along with treatment via wet ponds, open grass swales, bioretention areas, filter strips, etc.
- A large passive recreation area is available through a future trail system and greenway

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- Large natural area and RCD allow connector for wildlife corridors
- Public and administration buildings are located next to green spaces and have easy trail access
- Limit amount of impervious surface by use of permeable pavements and phasing of construction.

Fiscal Prudence:

- Plan minimizes use of retaining walls to limit grading
- Stormwater management in natural areas with low maintenance
- Balancing earthwork
- Utilizing existing fields/cleared areas to reduce sitework; leave natural buffers

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**RESPONSES TO SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMISSION ACTION**

**Subject:** Town Operation Facility – Courtesy Review  
**Meeting Date:** June 18, 2003  
**Recommendation:** The Community Design Commission conducted a courtesy review and agreed to forward the below comments to the Town Council.

Corley Redfoot Zack, Inc., offers the following responses to the comments:

General Site Design

1. In case the residential property situated between the public works area and the transit complex is acquired by the Town at a future date, the design should remain flexible and permit reconfiguration of uses.  
Response: The parking areas for Public Works and Transportation could be expanded into this area, as designed.
2. A concern about locating the vehicle wash center and fueling station near the Resource Conservation District was expressed by a Commission member.  
Response: We will provide the latest state-of-the-art leak detection, maintenance, testing and equipment to protect the RCD.
3. One Commission member asked about the proposed use of the disconnect portions of Town property situated west of the railroad tracks.  
Response: A use for that property has not been identified at this time.
4. Use of permeable pavement, in vehicle parking areas and sidewalks, was commended.  
Response: Permeable pavement will be utilized, if budget allows.

Vistas and Views

1. Since the site is located adjacent to Interstate 40 and near a major entranceway into Town, members noted that it's important that the applicant be sensitive to the view shed into the site. Loss of the pastoral landscape along this portion of the Interstate would be unfortunate.  
Response: We will consider these views as we move forward with the design.
2. The appearance of the project from the immediate surrounding neighborhood along Mill House Road was also of considerable interest. Designing a "neighbor friendly" complex will be challenging.  
Response: We will try to maintain existing buffers and use landscaping to achieve this goal.
3. Although massive parking areas (bus parking lot) and similar bulky storage areas may be unavoidable, screening and attempts to break up outside views of such areas should be pursued.  
Response: Use of existing natural buffers, screenwalls, and new landscaping will be pursued.



Rural Buffer

1. Members note that an impoundment lot and material storage area, although permitted in the Rural Buffer, are not desirable land uses.  
Response: So noted.
  
2. The Rural Buffer is an area that should be protected. Members agreed that locating the animal control facility in the Rural Buffer is not an ideal use for this portion of the site. This facility could result in increased traffic and negatively impact the adjoining neighbors to the west.  
Response: So noted.
  
3. A member stated that no improvements should be located within the Rural Buffer and although proposed use is permitted, locating the impoundment lot and storage area in the buffer is objectionable.  
Response: No other location is available at this time.

Landscape Buffers, and Open Space

1. One member stated that the buffer along Interstate 40 should be protected and maintained.  
Response: So noted.
  
2. Another Commission member stated that the landscape buffers, adjacent to the residential property south of the public work/north of transit, should be increased from the proposed 20 feet to 50 feet. It was particularly noted that the bus traffic traveling back and forth, near the southern edge of this residential property, would likely be a greater nuisance than the nearby buildings.  
Response: We will supplement these buffers with additional plantings.
  
3. A Commission member noted that extra effort should be undertaken to preserve the significant tree area identified as potential future bus parking lot.  
Response: We will identify the significant trees and we intend to preserve them at this time.

Architecture

1. A member noted that due to the possibility that the project may be highly visible from I-40, the architectural quality of structures should be exceptional and avoid the typically metal-type buildings usually found with this type of facility.  
Response: So noted.
  
2. Buildings should not be unaesthetic. Architectural style should attempt to break up building mass. Building material tonal pallet should be darker tones in order to recede into the background.  
Response: So noted.

Day Care

- 1. Though several members agreed that the proposal to locate a day care on this site was a good idea, some expressed safety concern. Safety issues noted included locating a day care close to a land use that is somewhat industrial in nature and contains fuel storage areas. One

member also voiced a safety concern stating that one needs to remain mindful of governmental facilities as potential targets of sabotage.

Response: So noted. Council to discuss Daycare on October 27, 2003.

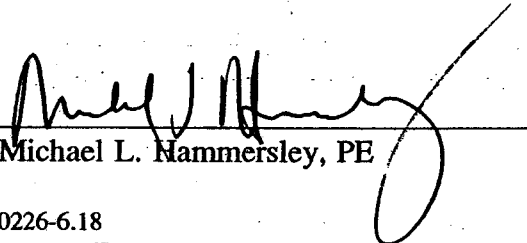
Access and Circulation

- 1. Recognizing the limitations imposed by trying to accommodate multiple Town operational functions on an irregularly shape property that is encumbered with environmental and man-made barriers, it was noted by a member that the proposed development does not lend itself to good access nor opportunity for effective internal circulation patterns.

Response: We will provide the best operational circulation available.

- 2. A Commission member encouraged a second access drive to the area identified as future bus parking area should be investigated.

Response: We have an emergency connector to that area which preserves additional specimen trees.



Michael L. Hammersley, PE

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cc: Terry Eason, CDC  
Gene Poveromo, Staff