

Recommendations to the Town Council re: OI-4 zoning in the Development Ordinance June 3, 2002 Elaine Barney

From June-October, 2001, residents of the Westwood, Westside, and Mason Farm neighborhoods attended Town/Gown Committee meetings, Planning Board hearings and Town Council Public Hearings re: UNC's Master Plan and the OI-4 Ordinance. Due to the fast pace with which the OI-4 zoning was approved, a number of ideas were put forth by neighborhood residents and other citizens that have not yet been adequately reviewed. Please incorporate consideration of the following ideas and suggestions into the next draft of the Development Ordinance.

1. The Development Ordinance needs strong reworking in order to be able to carry out the Comprehensive Plan's stated mission of protecting vulnerable near-by neighborhoods from proposed development through the creation of "residential conservation neighborhoods."
2. Development of a process that should allow ample time and opportunity for neighborhood residents to review not only the Development Plan but the Individual Site Development Plan(s): "Design Workshops." Those who live close to the proposed area would be most familiar with the topography and the impact that the proposed development could have on their quality of life.
3. Notification of property owners within **1,000 feet** of proposed buildings that could impact residents or neighborhoods, especially those in Perimeter Transition Areas.
4. Buffer zones should start at the property line, not the edge of the OI-4 zone. There should also be a transitional buffer zone where building heights would be compatible with the adjacent residential zone. For buildings on the edge of property adjacent to residential neighborhoods, it's recommended that a review of individual buildings should be conducted with residents' involvement in the process. Such meetings should take place with the Director of the Town Planning Department's participation ~~and~~ to ensure a level of accountability re: the process.
5. Sound abatement techniques should be designed in all new buildings and special attention should be paid to lighting to prevent light pollution at night. Storm water management needs to prevent run-off onto existing neighborhood properties.
5. Any Development Plan for perimeter areas should go before the Town Council rather than the Planning Board to allow for the full involvement of our elected officials and to promote additional citizen input at Public Hearings. Time limits for completion of the Plan should be established, after which another plan must be submitted and approved. Periodic reviews on the progress to date should also be considered. Additionally, the use of street views and "As Built" drawings should be incorporated into the site plans: what will the building look like? Scale? Landscaping? Lighting? Visual impact?

Recommendations for Improving Watershed Protection: Town of Chapel Hill Proposed Development Ordinance

Philip R. Berke, June 3, 2002

- 1) The RCD ordinance should include criteria for identifying intermittent streams and should require buffers along these streams. Disturbance of the buffer along intermittent streams can result in considerable downstream degradation, as the banks along these streams are often unstable and prone to erosion. Lack of intermittent stream designation and protection can significantly reduce the benefits of downstream watershed protection practices.
- 2) The language for the uses in the three zones of the RCD should be more concise and tightened. Vegetation targets should be more specific by zone. For example, the language should indicate a vegetative target of "undisturbed forest, or reforest if grass or bare ground" for the stream side zone; or "managed forest, some clearing allowable" for the managed use zone. The stream side zone, for example, should have a vegetative target of a mature riparian forest that can provide shade, leaf litter, woody debris, and erosion protection to the stream.

Moreover, the permitted uses seem to be excessive as exemplified by the permitted uses in the stream side zone which indicate include "open space, parks, and other similar public and private recreational uses..." (see Table 3.6.3-2). The range of land use activities under "open space and "parks" is broad and can include intensive land uses. The language needs to be more specific in terms of the types of uses and should emphasize that this zone should be considered very restrictive in land use. The word "similar" is too vague. The concern of weak language applies to the other two zones within the RCD, as well.
- 3) Planning for stormwater management should account for the watershed scale. The section on Stormwater Management (5.4) only focuses on planning at the scale of the development site. Land use change (and associated changes in impervious cover) has a strong impact on the future condition of water resources. Planning at the watershed scale should do the following:
 - a) predict what will happen to water resources in the face of future change, particularly in accordance to the Town's zoning provisions;
 - b) obtain consensus on the most important water resource goals;
 - c) propose future land use patterns that are compatible with goals for sub-watersheds -- this requires reducing or shifting impervious cover, and creating strategies that integrate different types of low impact design techniques that are tailored to different types sub-watersheds.
 - d) integrate watershed protection goals and program with other local goals and programs involving smart growth principles, and transportation and infrastructure systems, and
 - e) develop a watershed monitoring program to determine degree of compliance to watershed plan and the level of effectiveness of different techniques in achieving goals;