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February 13, 2025

Town of Chapel Hill
Planning Department
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

RE: Conditional Zoning Application for 701 MLK

701 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd on the northwest corner at E Longview Street

On behalf of the land developer LCD Acquisitions, LLC, enclosed is a conditional zoning application for the 701 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd project.

The proposed 701 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd Residential project aims to deliver 175 - 200 new residential units at the intersection of E Longview Street and Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. The proposed development will help address the Town's need for housing as noted in Chapel Hill's Projected Housing Needs for 2020-2040, as the report calls for Chapel Hill to increase average annual household production by 35% over that of the 2010s, which will require completing about 485 units per year.

This development will feature up to six stories of residential units built over three levels of structured parking, of which one level is entirely below grade. The project will include a spacious interior courtyard equipped with recreational amenities for residents, alongside a public plaza at the corner of E Longview and Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. This plaza is intended to be a community asset that will complement the planned Bus Rapid Transit stop and feature ground level retail to help activate the public outdoor amenity area.

Spanning just under two acres, the project site currently houses a vacated automotive repair facility and two dilapidated residential structures, all of which will be redeveloped. The concept plan, reviewed by the Council in November 2024, garnered support for its proposed density, public plaza, and residential use. Feedback from the review included requests for upper floor step backs, retail/coffee service space to activate the plaza, and a reduction in on-site parking, all of which have been incorporated into the design development. The project's affordable housing component will align with Chapel Hill's goal of fostering a more inclusive community by offering accessible housing options for a diverse population. The development of this affordable housing offering is progressing but will involve on-site affordable housing units.

This project will offer a varying unit mix that will attract a diversity of tenants. The location of this development will encourage use of alternative transportation modes and will support the existing and proposed public transit in town. The project adds to the overall variety of uses in the neighborhood, thereby adding to the complete community elements.

The applicant is seeking MU-V-CZD zoning, as advised by Planning staff, with a modification request to significantly reduce the non-residential component. This zoning choice is justified by the project's location along an arterial street near downtown Chapel Hill, with the predominantly residential use serving as a buffer between the busy Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and the interior residential neighborhoods.

Lastly, the proposed project is being designed to comply with the Chapel Hill Comprehensive Plan. The proposed multi-family use is consistent with the primary uses encouraged by the Town of Chapel Hill in the subject's South MLK Focus Area, Sub-Area C per the Future Land Use Map and the Town's land use initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wendi Ramsden", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Wendi Ramsden
Project Manager

Conditional Zoning Application - Developer's Program

Project Location and Layout

This project is situated on the northwest corner of Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and E Longview Street, just north of the Town Hall. Covering just under two acres, the development will primarily consist of multi-family residential units with a small retail space on the ground floor. The intended design includes an interior courtyard featuring a pool and various amenities, as well as a fitness center for tenant use. Additionally, there will be a public plaza that serves both residents and the general public.

The project comprises 175 - 200 apartment rental units within a single, eight-story building and an additional parking level entirely underground. Approximately 250 parking spaces will be provided within the urban-style structure. The main pedestrian lobby will be located at the corner of E Longview and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., directly accessible from the community plaza. The building's design leverages the 30-foot elevation difference across the site to conceal the lowest three levels (parking), thereby minimizing the building's visual impact on the neighboring properties to the west.

The layout emphasizes multi-modal transportation, reducing the need for on-site parking while ensuring excellent pedestrian connections to the adjacent sidewalk network and bus stops. The project is conveniently located within 100 feet of a bus stop on the proposed NS BRT route.

Transportation and Services

The site fronts two rights of way: E Longview Street and Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. A bus stop located just south of E Longview is served by four Chapel Hill Transit routes. All tenant vehicular access to the garage will be from E Longview Street, while the service area on the north side of the building will be accessed via the emergency drive off Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. There will not be any vehicular connectivity between tenant parking and the service drive.

Fire and emergency access to the building will be available from Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, with the fire lane accessed from that frontage. Trash service will be managed internally at the ground level on the north side of the building, accessible from the emergency lane. This service will include recycling collection facilities. The project plans to use a private hauler for trash removal and County Solid Waste for recycling pickup.

Streams and Impervious Surface Mitigation

There are no jurisdictional streams on site. Currently, 16% of the site is impervious and lacks stormwater treatment. The project will introduce a new underground mitigation facility designed to control peak flow during a 100-year storm event and improve water quality through treatment.

Tree Coverage and Landscape Buffers

The developer will request a reduction in the minimum tree coverage requirements and landscape buffers along the E Longview Street and Martin Luther King Jr Blvd frontages. However, the buffers between the project and the adjacent residential neighborhood will be fully planted to comply with ordinance requirements.