



NEXT Chapel Hill-Carrboro
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June 18, 2021

Dear Mayor and Council of Chapel Hill,

We are writing as members of NEXT, a local organization that advocates for economic development, affordable housing, and transportation alternatives. In the coming year, the Town of Chapel Hill will be considering a proposal to build an affordable housing community at 110 Jay Street, a 7.5 acre site. We believe that this project has the potential to create a sustainable community in the heart of Chapel Hill that will make our town more diverse, inclusive, and equitable. Because this project is in the early stages, we encourage the town to push for a development that creates the most affordable housing opportunities while embracing forward-thinking ideas about land use, climate change adaptation, and alternative transportation.

Scale matters. Consider ways to add units and lower building costs.

Chapel Hill has a limited supply of land, so it's important to make the most of each new development. We encourage the town to work with Community Home Trust to add units, either through making the building taller or using the space more efficiently. Increased height could help address concerns about the loss of green space as well. In addition, we hope that the developer is willing to consider exploring newer construction techniques, such as modular construction, that has sharply lowered construction costs in other communities.

Reduce parking, and add permit parking in the neighborhood.

Local residents have already voiced concerns about parking, and have pushed the developer to build an excessive number of parking spaces, more than two for every unit. We believe that this is too much parking, particularly for a project located on a major greenway and with frequent bus service. In many empirical studies, excessive parking has been shown to induce driving while suppressing other means of getting around, such as biking, walking, and riding transit.¹ We believe the developer should convert some of the parking spaces to other uses and consider adding units. In order to alleviate parking demands in the neighborhood, the town could

¹ For example, see Michael Manville, Alex Beata & Donald Shoup (2013) "Turning Housing Into Driving: Parking Requirements and Density in Los Angeles and New York," *Housing Policy Debate*, 23:2, 350-375.

introduce street permitting, which would help ensure that nonresidents are not storing cars in the neighborhood at peak times.

Build a greenway connection to Broad Street

The south end of this project abuts Broad Street in Carrboro, which connects via safe, low-stress streets to downtown Carrboro, facilitating access to grocery stores, restaurants, services, and many other amenities. Building a short greenway connection to Broad Street will benefit residents of this project as well as many other neighbors, some of whom currently risk their lives by crossing railroad tracks to get to Carrboro. With this connection, Jay Street residents will be a 10-minute walk from downtown Carrboro. Without it, walking downtown will take almost three times as long.

Integrate secure bike storage into the site.

We applaud the developer's proposal to build a connection to the Tanyard Branch Trail, which will provide a safe connection to schools, jobs, shopping, and parks. But, currently the project does not have a secure and sheltered bike storage facility for residents. If residents are not able to safely store their bikes, they will be less likely to use them.

Because the Town of Chapel Hill is developing this project, it has the opportunity to push for all of its values, including diversity, inclusivity, and connectivity. By adding units, reducing parking, adding connectivity, and creating bike storage, the Town will be able to create a project that makes our community safer, more connected, and affordable.

We support Community Home Trust's Jay Street development and encourage the above changes to make it an even stronger project.

Sincerely,

The members of NEXT, including:

Ryan Byars
Allison De Marco
Molly De Marco
Martin Johnson
Seth LaJeunesse
Danny Nowell
Alyson West