

DRAFT LIST OF DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

FOR THE AMERICAN LEGION PROPERTY

1. A Community Gathering Space for Everyone

The American Legion site supports a variety of activities, appealing to many different interests and to people of all ages. The site is accommodating and inviting for visitors of all abilities. The site serves a variety of income levels with free and low-cost activities included. Anybody in Chapel Hill feels welcome and engaged here.

2. A Network of Walkable Paths

Trails, sidewalks, and greenways throughout the site provide access to all facilities, promote physical activity, allow for enjoyment of nature, connect to the surrounding neighborhoods and to the elementary school, and integrate with Chapel Hill's greenway system.

3. Support for Healthy Lifestyles

All uses of the American Legion site support healthy lifestyles through athletic and physical activity and/or interaction with nature. This applies not only to portions of the site devoted to recreation, but also to any commercial or institutional uses. The healthy lifestyle focus can be used as a branding element that generates tourism and economic development for the town.

4. Thoughtful Parking Strategy

The strategy for providing parking is balanced in a way that meets demand during peak site use without being excessive. Enough parking is provided to prevent spillover onto neighborhood streets. Space may need to be reserved for future parking expansion, as demand may increase over time. The Town should also pursue opportunities for shared parking with the Europa Center and others.

5. Mitigation of Impacts on Neighbors

Development of the American Legion site is done in a way that protects the character of nearby neighborhoods. The activities and facilities on the site are an amenity for these neighborhoods and an enhancement to their value. At the same time, appropriate buffering is employed to allow privacy of adjacent lots and to prevent noise and light spillover. The design also prevents traffic spillover, allowing no vehicle entry and exit points from neighborhood streets other than emergency access.

6. Partnership with Ephesus Elementary School

The Town and the School District should work together to identify complementary programs that could be carried out in partnership, with a potential emphasis on arts education. The American Legion site offers a venue for school programs. The network of paths allows students to access the site from the elementary school, and connections to surrounding neighborhoods support walk-to-school programs. Discussions should also be held with the school to explore the potential for shared athletic facilities and shared parking.

7. Clear Guidelines for Public/Private Partnerships

In addition to the elementary school, the Town has a wide selection of potential partners that could help shape programming and facilities for the site. Before any private organizations are chosen as partners, the Town should define criteria for evaluating partnerships and communicate expectations for their performance upfront. There should be an understanding that any partnerships must create a net gain in benefits to Chapel Hill. Any partner offering programs on-site should have free or low-cost options.

8. Existing and Future Water Features

The existing pond does not have to remain in its current location or maintain the same size. Reducing or removing it can provide more flexibility for site planning. Onsite stormwater management can be done more effectively at a different location. Stormwater features double as amenities that provide scenery and/or public enjoyment. Additional investigation of cost and jurisdictional status is needed before further decisions on the pond are made.

9. Visibility and Presence on Legion Road Frontage

Legion Road is considered the main entrance for the community facilities housed on the American Legion site. These spaces are easy to locate and don't feel hidden. A significant portion of the Legion Road frontage is reserved for prominent signage, gateway features, and views into the site.

10. Functional Vehicular Access

A main site entry drive connects to Legion Road and, if feasible, is aligned with Europa Drive. A secondary access point from Ephesus Church Road through Ephesus Park may be used to prevent traffic congestion. However, cut-through vehicle traffic is discouraged and all vehicular access routes maintain pedestrian and bicycle safety.

11. Green Building Standards for All Construction

All facilities on the American Legion site (indoor and outdoor) pursue ambitious standards for using water and energy efficiently, minimizing waste, and avoiding the use of harmful materials. The site design minimizes environmental impact and preserves the tree canopy.