

Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan



Overview

During the summer and early fall of 2011, the Town of Chapel Hill worked with the Sustaining OurSelves Coalition and the Northside and Pine Knolls communities to jointly develop solutions to the impacts of incompatible development and student rental development on the neighborhoods.

Comprehensive Approach

The Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan sets forth solutions to address the following Community Themes:

1. **Affordable Housing**
2. **Cultural and Historic Preservation**
3. **Enforcement**
4. **Education and Outreach**
5. **Parking**
6. **Zoning**

Format

The Community Plan solutions are described in each section along with the following information:

- **Action Steps:** a description of those actions that would be necessary to implement the solutions.
- **Goal:** a purpose against which to measure the success of the solution, action steps and estimated cost.
- **Potential Partners:** a list of parties that could partner to implement the solutions. The Community Plan was developed by the Town of Chapel Hill and participants from the Sustaining OurSelves Coalition and the Northside and Pine Knolls communities. Outreach to other potential partners would need to occur to establish their involvement.
- **Estimated Cost:** a projection of cost should the solution be pursued. Affordable Housing costs were determined using input from affordable housing providers about subsidy needs and using information about homes that were recently sold in the neighborhoods.



1. Affordable Housing

The Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods are centrally located in Chapel Hill near the University and the Downtown and contain single-family residential houses that sell for prices below the average cost for housing in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Because students are interested in living in these neighborhoods, landlords have been able to rent their properties for more than a family can typically afford, and houses that are available for purchase are often bought by developers at a price that reflects the income that is generated by student rental rates. Residents recognize that the neighborhoods have always had a mixture of student rental housing and family occupied housing, but they seek to maintain the family atmosphere of the neighborhoods through the development of affordable rental and ownership housing opportunities.

	Solution	Action Steps	Goal	Implementation Partners*	Estimated Cost**
Priority	Dedicate general funds for an Affordable Housing program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council approval 	- Share the cost of providing affordable housing throughout the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill Community support 	1 cent for Affordable Housing
	Middle-Income/Workforce Housing Second Mortgage Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with lending institution Establish deferred, low-interest second mortgage fund 	- To encourage investment in the neighborhoods by owner-occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill Nonprofits Employers 	\$10,000-\$20,000 per property
	Major and minor rehabilitation of existing housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with existing programs 	- To help residents remain in their homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill Orange County Nonprofits 	Minor: \$5 -\$20,000 per property Major: \$40-\$160,000 per property
	General Obligation Bond for Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council approval 	- Share the cost of providing affordable housing throughout the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill Community support 	Cost of financing the bond
	Tax Deferral Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify lending institution or nonprofit with financial capacity 	- To help low-income seniors remain in their houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banks Nonprofits 	\$1,500 per household
	Allow duplexes for 100% affordable housing projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Use Management Ordinance Text Amendment 	- Increased density for affordable housing projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill 	Administration Costs
	Purchase properties for affordable housing providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase property Demolish, rehabilitate, and/or rebuild house 	- Preserve existing housing to sell or rent to low-income households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill Nonprofits 	\$100,000-\$320,000 per property
	Right of First Refusal Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Outreach 	- To be notified when a property is available to purchase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill Nonprofits 	Administration Costs
	Rental Subsidy Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an agency or non-profit company to administer the program 	- Assist families to rent homes in the Northside and Pine Knolls communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill Orange County Nonprofits Property Managers Property Owners 	\$2,400-\$4,800 per unit per year

* Potential Partners have not been established or otherwise committed to the solutions presented in the Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan.

** Funding estimates do not represent a commitment to funding by the Town of Chapel Hill.



2. Cultural and Historic Preservation

The rapid development of the historically black-owned business district of “Midway” (at the border of Chapel Hill and Carrboro) and the significant shifts from owner-occupied to student housing in Pine Knolls and Northside have contributed to a sense of loss in historically African-American communities. Renewed efforts to preserve the rich history of these areas have been underway for several years by EmPOWERment, Inc., United with the Northside Community Now (UNC NOW) and the Marian Cheek Jackson Center for Saving and Making History. An increased sense of urgency in the face of change is leading residents to call for a permanent cultural center, an online exhibition of African-American history, and a traveling documentary installation. Such initiatives are integral to ensuring that the diverse character of Chapel Hill is honored and to foster the appeal of the town as a home for a variety of residents.

Solution	Action Steps	Goal	Implementation Partners*	Estimated Cost**
Support cultural and historic preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract with non-profit to Create and maintain a website documenting the history of historically African-American neighborhoods Create a mobile exhibit about African-American history and culture in Chapel Hill to be shared with schools and local organizations Organize events to celebrate the cultural history of these neighborhoods 	- Increase awareness about African-American History	- Town of Chapel Hill - Non-profit - University - Residents	\$10,000
Create community cultural center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term goal to establish a building like the Hayti Center in Durham; Short term goal to provide for interim location Establish seed money to begin partnerships with cultural preservation, youth development, and jobs organizations Opportunities for UNC students to engage in community service projects 	- Develop community ties with student population	- Town of Chapel Hill - Non-profit - University - Residents - Property Managers	\$12,000 a year until a permanent location is established
Establish community advocacy function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract with a non-profit to Create partnerships to support community history, identity and culture Establish communication channels between University and Town, including the designation of a Council liaison to the communities Organize events for students and residents to socialize Advocate for neighborhood interests and perform as a ‘watch-dog’ Serve as a resource to other communities throughout the town Market neighborhoods to families of diverse backgrounds Conduct continued historical research and ongoing cultural preservation initiatives, which will become models for other communities Develop consistent and constructive programming for all local youth with a focus on those who represent the communities in question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish neighborhood advocacy role Create more communication channels between the Town and the neighborhoods 	- Town of Chapel Hill - Nonprofits - Residents	\$25-40,000 a year
Preservation of historic properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a visible, walking tour program that identifies both existing and no longer existing physical landmarks throughout the neighborhoods 	- Education for residents and visitors	- Nonprofits - University - Residents	\$5,000

* Potential Partners have not been established or otherwise committed to the solutions presented in the Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan.

** Funding estimates do not represent a commitment to funding by the Town of Chapel Hill.



3. Enforcement

Many complaints from Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods are associated with the behavior of students living in rental properties. The complaints include: late-night noise, increased traffic, litter, illegal parking, and increased on-street and front lawn parking. Land use regulations can be time-consuming to enforce due to legal requirements for notification, compliance, and appeals that can amount to 15-60 working days from the time that a final written notice is issued. To encourage compliance with Town codes in an efficient manner, there is interest in establishing informal communication channels with property managers and centralizing the Town departments’ data collection for incidents, complaints, and violations in order to identify properties with repeat violations.

	Solution	Action Steps	Goal	Implementation Partners*	Estimated Cost**
Priority	Add code enforcement staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase proactive enforcement efforts • Focus on off-campus student rental education and enforcement 	- Increase compliance with Town regulations	- Town of Chapel Hill	Town of Chapel Hill Administration Resources
	Mutually design a Property Management Communication Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Community and Property Management workgroup to design a voluntary communication program • Use communication program to resolve issues with property owners and property managers before issuing a final written notice 	- To resolve issues without initiating a formal code violation process	- Town of Chapel Hill - University - Property Managers - Property Owners - Residents - Students	Town of Chapel Hill Administration Resources
	Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize a unified work order system to centralize data collection from the Town departments of Police, Fire, Planning, Inspections and Public Works • Add a rental tracking program to the Town’s Land Use Management software tools 	- To reduce complaints associated with particular properties	- Orange County - Town of Chapel Hill	Town of Chapel Hill Administration Resources
	Establish graduated fines for properties with multiple violations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact an amendment to the Town Code • Establish an oversight program for properties with multiple violations 	- To focus enforcement resources	- Town of Chapel Hill	Town of Chapel Hill Administration Resources
	Create student rental information campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile information about Town regulations • Encourage property managers to distribute to renters along with the lease • Encourage University to distribute to students and parents 	- Prevent parking, garbage, and noise violations	- Town of Chapel Hill - Property Managers - Property Owners - University	Town of Chapel Hill Administration Resources

* Potential Partners have not been established or otherwise committed to the solutions presented in the Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan.

** Funding estimates do not represent a commitment to funding by the Town of Chapel Hill.

4. Education and Outreach

UNC students are an important population in the Chapel Hill community, and there is interest from the Town, University, and neighborhood residents in helping students have a safe and positive off-campus living experience. The Town and the University are partners in the Good Neighbor Initiative that conducts outreach to student renters on an annual basis. Based on the success of this effort, the Town and the University would like to expand outreach to off-campus students throughout the year. Because students are transitional occupants of the neighborhoods, the outreach efforts would need to be repetitive and cyclical.

One effort underway is a monthly newsletter entitled the “Tar Heel Citizen Times” that contains an educational component about off-campus living as well as repercussions for breaking the rules and regulations of the University and the Town of Chapel Hill.



Solution	Action Steps	Goal	Implementation Partners	Estimated Cost
Create a document about standards that could be attached to rental leases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create document • Encourage property managers and owners to distribute document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase student renter awareness about ordinances and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town of Chapel Hill - University - Property Managers - Property Owners 	Administration resources
Create a tutor program using UNC students living in the Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize program through property managers and owners in return for money toward a student’s rent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage student involvement in neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Residents - Nonprofits - Property Managers - Property Owners - University 	\$2,000-3,000 per year
Community Clean Up Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop cleaning action plan • Publicize event • Organize event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage student involvement in neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Residents - Nonprofits - Property Managers - Property Owners - University 	Volunteer basis
Preservation Tool-kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide technical expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nonprofits 	\$1,000
Daily Tar Heel ad campaign about Town ordinances and occupancy standards, with standard procedures for dealing with violations (noise, parking, and occupancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with communications team to design campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase student renter awareness about Town ordinances and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town of Chapel Hill - Daily Tar Heel - Property Managers - Property Owners 	Cost of advertisements

* Potential Partners have not been established or otherwise committed to the solutions presented in the Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan.

** Funding estimates do not represent a commitment to funding by the Town of Chapel Hill.

5. Parking

Residents in the Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods note that there are typically more vehicles associated with student rental property than with a property occupied by a family. The neighborhood feels that the aesthetic impact of cars parked on a residential property in view of the street or taking over a side and back yard reduces the feeling of a cohesive residential neighborhood. In addition, residents feel that on-street parking regulations are not adequately enforced and allow too much on-street parking. In summary, one resident stated, “these neighborhoods were not designed for all the parking associated with student rental houses.”



On a larger community scale, residents have expressed the feeling that the Town policies to prohibit and discourage parking have increased the parking pressure on the residential neighborhoods surrounding the University and Downtown.

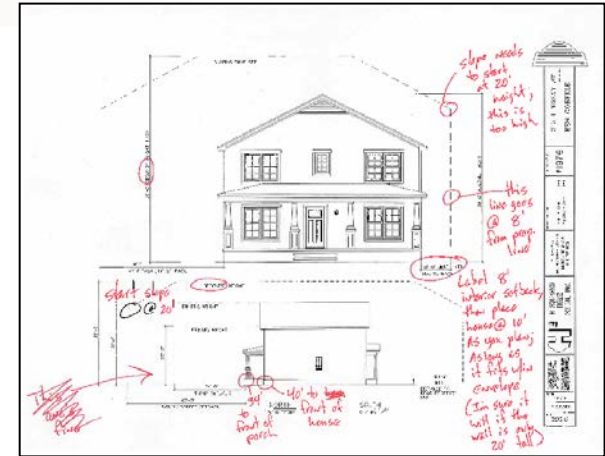
	Solution	Action Steps	Goal	Implementation Partners*	Estimated Cost**
Priority	Conduct a comprehensive on-street parking study for the Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of current on-street parking regulations Review parking permit regulations Review of location of parking signs Conduct resident outreach about on-street parking interests Council approval of new on-street parking regulations Implementation and enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create holistic parking plan for both neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill Professional Consultant 	\$35,000
	Maximum number of vehicles per property. Site Plan Review for an exception for up to 6 vehicles to be reviewed by the Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enact a Land Use Management Ordinance Text Amendment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase family neighborhood atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Chapel Hill 	Town of Chapel Hill Administration resources
	Support the development of affordable large-scale off-campus student rental developments along bus corridors that allow parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider this issue in the context of the new 2020 Comprehensive Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce student rental development pressure on single-family neighborhoods surrounding campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community wide consideration 	n/a

* Potential Partners have not been established or otherwise committed to the solutions presented in the Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan.

** Funding estimates do not represent a commitment to funding by the Town of Chapel Hill.

6. Zoning

Development in the Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods has been a topic of concern for the Town Council for many years. In 2004, the Council enacted the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District; and in 2006, it enacted the Pine Knolls Neighborhood Conservation District. In 2010, the Planning Board and neighborhood residents presented a petition to the Council with a statement that the Neighborhood Conservation Districts were not effective against the current development pressures. In response, the Council adopted a resolution directing the Planning Board to work with staff to develop a Land Use Management Ordinance text amendment proposal with regulations that would more effectively address the spirit and intent of the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District Vision Statement. Below are proposals for new standards for both Neighborhood Conservation Districts that could help to maintain the character of the neighborhoods.



Proposed Regulation	Standard for Northside	Standard for Pine Knolls	Proposed Standard for Northside and Pine Knolls
Maximum secondary building height (single-family residential)	35 feet	35 feet	26 feet
Maximum size for single-family dwelling	2,000 square feet	2,500 square feet	1,750 square feet; Variance provision for up to 2,250 square feet
Maximum floor area ratio for single-family dwelling	.25	.25	.20 Northside .25 Pine Knolls
Maximum number of parked vehicles per property.	n/a	n/a	4 vehicles. Site Plan Approval for an exception to be reviewed by the Planning Board for up to 6 vehicles
Zoning Compliance Permit Notification	Required	Required	Required with a two-week waiting period to allow for resident comments to the applicant
Accessory Dwellings	Permitted	Permitted	Not permitted
Flag Lots	Permitted	Permitted	Not permitted
Rooming Houses	Permitted	Permitted	Not Permitted
Duplexes and Triplexes	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Permitted for projects with 100% affordability
Planning Board Review	n/a	n/a	Demolition and projects adding 250 or more square feet of floor area to a zoning lot
Community Design Commission Review	n/a	n/a	Projects adding 600 or more square feet of floor area to a zoning lot

* Potential Partners have not been established or otherwise committed to the solutions presented in the Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan.

** Funding estimates do not represent a commitment to funding by the Town of Chapel Hill.

Conclusion

Development pressure on the Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods is a result of the neighborhoods’ close proximity to the Downtown and the University of North Carolina and the neighborhoods’ lower than average housing costs for Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Zoning regulations and code enforcement mechanisms are important tools that can be used to address the development pressure facing these neighborhoods, but these tools are not enough. Strategic partnerships, resident organization, and private and non-profit investments must also be present to preserve the culture and history of these important neighborhoods.

Fiscal Note

The Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan presents solutions that would require significant financial investment in the neighborhoods that cannot be borne exclusively by the Town of Chapel Hill. Providing cost estimates for each solution provides information that can be used during outreach to potential implementation partners. As a summary, we provide a total cost estimate for each Community Theme below.

Community Theme	Cost Estimate
1. Affordable Housing	\$10,000-\$320,000 per property
2. Cultural and Historic Preservation	\$115,000 up front; \$75,000 annually
3. Enforcement	Additional Town Administrative Resources
4. Education and Outreach	\$4,000 Annually
5. Parking	\$35,000 up front; Annual Additional Town Administrative Resources
6. Zoning Regulations	Additional Administrative Resources

Additional Considerations

There are several ideas for solutions that were not able to be included in the plan due to time constraints and the need for further research. These issues will be further considered by a group of Town staff, members of the Sustaining OurSelves Coalition, University and Property Management representatives and students during 2013. The topics for additional consideration are listed below.

1. Establishing a development review system for the Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods that allows for an evaluation of how applications meet the goals of the Neighborhood Conservation Districts.
2. Creation of a Rental Licensing Program for properties with repeat violations
3. Research about the applicability of Form Based Zoning for the Northside and Pine Knolls neighborhoods.

Evaluation

Town staff will conduct an evaluation effort of the Northside and Pine Knolls Community Plan in January, 2013.