

From: Alan Tom <alantom@mindspring.com>
To: Megan Wooley <mwooley@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: For posting in community comment for Central West
Sent: Sun 7/28/2013 4:58 PM

Megan, In addition to sending this message to the Steering Committee, could you also post it in the Central West community comment section. Thanks. Alan

At the end of last Monday's SC meeting you were trying to choose between "assessing" and "considering" for Principle 13 (current wording of this principle is at the bottom of this email). Some seemed to think that "assessing" was too evaluative while others thought that "considering" was too vague.

It struck me that you need a word which describes what you actually want to occur, and I think that "estimating" (or something similar) is better than either of the two alternatives you were looking at because "estimating" describes what you actually would do, that is, try to generate information about different kinds of economic impact.

An example of how the "estimating" process might work was provided Monday by David Bonk for another issue. At one point in his transportation presentation Bonk made estimates about the traffic impact of two development concepts. In a parallel sense, it seems to me that you want to encourage the generation of information about economic impacts, that is, make estimates about the impact on school enrollment of a development proposal, about the economic impact on Town finances of a development proposal, etc.

The advantage of approaching the economic principle by making estimates is that the assumptions needed to do such estimates would naturally need to be spelled out as part of this process – something that was noted during the Monday discussion of the estimating process. As such assumptions are identified it would then strengthen the case for a particular development proposal if the reasonableness of those assumptions could be explained and defended.

So by asking that estimates be made about the economic impacts identified in Principle #13, you'd not only get data projections but also a case for why these data projections are reasonable.

Alan Tom

PRINCIPLE 13: Assess [Consider] Economic Impacts

As part of the planning process, assess [consider] the fiscal impact and economic viability of proposed development in the area.

Objectives for Principle 13

- Design for commercial success. Cluster retail development to create enough critical mass for the shops to succeed.
- In making land use recommendations, recognize the importance of economic viability for those who will build.
- Assess the impact of the plan on the town's fiscal health.
- Assess the impact that development in the area will have on the Chapel Hill–Carrboro school system.