

# Chapel Hill North Self Storage

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## Concept Plan Developer's Program – Written Narrative

December 17, 2015

**Location** – The proposed Chapel Hill North Self Storage site is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of US 40 and NC 86/Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. (MLK, Jr. Blvd.) within the existing Chapel Hill North retail development. The property is a gateway location into the Town of Chapel Hill from Interstate 40.

**Site Conditions** - The site is surrounded on four sides with the following uses: North: Interstate 40, West: Harris Teeter parking lot, South: Entrance to the Harris Teeter anchored shopping center and East: MLK, Jr. Blvd. The site is 2.016 acres consisting of predominately pine trees. Substantial topography (16' change in elevation) exists from MLK, Jr. Blvd. to the west as the high point and the east corner of the property adjacent to Interstate 40 as the low point. The site is bisected by a 30' foot Duke Power easement which can be relocated along the southern edge of the I-40 buffer. Public sewer and water currently serve the site and are adequate for the use proposed.

**History** - The 2.016 acre site was proposed for development through the approval of the Chapel Hill North Master Land Use Plan (MLUP) in 1990. The 1991 Phase-1 Special Use Permit further defined the site but included adjustments to the MLUP stipulating a shift of a proposed building, previously shown on the subject lot, to a newly created lot previously reserved for a park & ride facility. That site was recently developed for use as an Orange County ABC store.

The subject property was created through the subdivision of the Harris Teeter site and access easement provided for future development. It has remained on the Orange County tax records, valued at \$960,400, and remains undeveloped to this date. All remaining parcels encompassed by the MLUP have been developed, however, 167,551 sf (26%) of the total floor area approved for Chapel Hill North (633,400 sf) remains unbuilt.

**Context** – The 2008 Northern Area Task Force report suggested a restaurant as a possible use for the subject property however site conditions, buffers, easements, restricted access and parking, limited visibility and traffic concerns combine to render the site impractical for use for a restaurant site or any other viable retail or office concepts.

- The site has very limited access through the existing Harris Teeter parking lot and a restricted developable area that limits the ability to expand parking significantly.
- A 100' buffer along I-40 and a 30' buffer along MLK, Jr. Blvd., restrict the developable area to .9 acres (45% of the site).
- Significant traffic increases to the MLK, Jr. Blvd./I-40 Interchange and to Weaver Dairy Rd. are of concern to the Town, its residents and NCDOT.

- The 16' difference in grade from MLK, Jr. Blvd. to the building pad necessitates a multi-story building in order to provide a relationship to the street level.

**Market Demand** – As Chapel Hill residents are increasingly choosing smaller multi-family housing, the need for additional storage has grown; creating a new market for convenient facilities that fit within the urban context. Start-up businesses and sales representatives for a variety of businesses (IT, pharmaceuticals, etc.) also create a need for convenient storage facilities. Combining these with limited, adjoining work spaces and small meeting facilities is also a growing demand. The proposed development seeks to respond to this need on a parcel with very limited potential for the development of other possible uses.

**Project Description** - Chapel Hill North Self Storage will provide an important entry point into the northern portion of the Town of Chapel Hill. The proposed Chapel Hill North Self Storage development totals 126,000 square feet in a building programmed for five stories. Approximately one and a half floors will be sited below the existing grade of MLK, Jr. Blvd. with a building step back proposed for the fifth level. All of the parking and loading is programmed in the southern portion of the site under the structure to screen loading from the street. The architecture utilizes design elements from the surrounding properties to maintain a level of architectural continuity while expanding on recently-approved architectural themes in order to produce a signature facility fitting of its gateway location.

Starting from the corner closest to Interstate 40 and MLK, Jr. Blvd., the proposed project contains a pleasing signature glass architectural feature. It may be possible to integrate green walls and/or public art into the architecture. Moving south along MLK, Jr. Blvd. toward the entrance of Chapel Hill North Shopping Center, the middle of the structure contains an inviting entry point that engages the street. Continuing on, the façade along MLK, Jr. Blvd. contains ample windows and architectural elements to create a pleasing façade along MLK, Jr. Blvd. An urban streetscape lined with street trees and shrubs will transform this entryway while preserving the goals for a green corridor along MLK, Jr. Blvd. Access to the site is provided through the internal drive system of Chapel Hill North.

**About the Developer** - Founded in 1967 and based in Raleigh, North Carolina, Rivercrest Realty Investors is a privately owned and operated commercial real estate company specializing in the acquisition, long-term ownership and management of commercial real estate throughout the eastern United States. Our investment strategy focuses on acquiring and developing quality real estate as well as creating value through first-rate management of those assets. We understand that every income producing property is a distinct small business and will perform best when intensively managed by its proprietor.

**Existing Zoning and Proposed Dimensional Standards** – Chapel Hill North Self Storage is part of a larger MU OI-1 Zoning District which includes all of Chapel Hill North. MU OI-1 is a zoning category that was developed for suburban office parks with commercial or residential uses included. It is no longer used for new districts.

Dimensional standards prescribed by the Town’s LUMO are listed below along with proposed standards and modified where noted.

<u>Dimensional Standard</u>	<u>LUMO Requirement</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Minimal Tract Size	n/a	2.016 acres	
Setbacks:			
Street – NC 86 MLK	0’	30’	MLUP proposed 100’ Building setback
Interstate 40	0’	100’	
Interior	0’	0’	
Parking Setback (perimeter of zoning tract)		30’	
Max Bldg. Height:	90’	56’ above MLK Jr. Blvd.	
Primary	44’	44’	
Secondary	90’	56’	
Permitted Uses	Office, retail	Enclosed Conditioned Storage	Not currently a defined use in the LUMO
Max FAR Ratios Limits	.264	1.43	
Buffers:			
MLK Jr. Blvd Arterial	30’ Type ‘D’ per SUP	30’ Alternative Buffer	Alternative buffers are proposed to provide for street tree plantings and screening hedges
Interstate 40	100’ Type ‘E’ per SUP	100’ Type ‘E’ alternative	

**Key Points:**

- **Balances fiscal needs as outlined in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan resulting in net positive revenue for the Town, site is currently vacant;**
- **Responds to a growing market demand for self-storage precipitated by increasing urbanization and current housing choices;**
- **Sustainable, signature architecture proposed along MLK, Jr. Blvd.;**
- **Visually engages the street along an important entrance gateway into Town;**
- **Generates minimal trips and traffic impacts;**
- **Imposes negligible impact on Town services.**