



# Development Update

May 2010

The Town of Chapel Hill will innovatively and proactively diversify local economic opportunities by retaining and supporting existing jobs, and attracting new, desirable jobs in locations convenient to transit and housing. Our goal is to build a sustainable economy within the context of the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan which places importance on the built and natural environment, community character, transit orientation, social equity and quality of life.

## - Economic Development Strategy Statement

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### Economic Development Updates: (Click for more info)

- [Ephesus Church Road/Fordham Boulevard Small Area Planning/Traffic Analysis](#)
- [Downtown Development Framework and Action Plan](#)
- [Office Market Study](#)
- [April 2010](#) (e-News)
- [2009 Year End Economic Development Report](#)

### Downtown Planning

At the 2009 Town Council retreat, Council adopted a goal to update the plan for downtown and to use this as an investment guide. In October 2009 the Downtown Partnership in conjunction with the Town's Economic Development Officer [answered questions](#) asked by Council at the 2009 Retreat and proposed a process for moving this forward. Town Council budgeted \$50,000 to match the Downtown Partnership's \$20,000 for the planning initiative.



In November 2009 a RFP was released to select a consulting team to guide the process. Kling-Stubbins was hired as the lead consultant in conjunction with Stewart Engineering and Strategy 5 - economic development consulting. In early April, Public Input Sessions were held and these questions asked:

- > Where are the best opportunities for new development to take place in downtown?
- > What public improvements can we make to shape/support the new development?
- > What are the obstacles to new development?

### Development Review in Chapel Hill

When Town Manager Roger Stancil was hired in 2006 he held listening sessions with the community to better understand what was working well for the Town, and what specific areas needed attention. He heard a message from all of the groups that they liked the community and the outcomes from the Development Process but felt there were opportunities for improvement in the process.



Over the last two years the Town began a process for an Internal Review of the Development Process. These are items that

Town Staff can affect. From those meetings with

Information from these sessions is available on the [Downtown Partnership's web site](#). In June the Planning Team will hold a Design Charette to offer the public a chance to review design ideas that came out of the planning sessions. The draft concepts will also be presented to the Downtown Partnership and Council Committee on Economic Development.

Once the community weighs in on the concepts, the

Town Staff, three goals were adopted:

- 1) Halt incomplete applications early, allowing complete applications to move through the process more efficiently.
- 2) Differentiate application types so those that require fewer reviewers or that meets adopted guidelines are handled more efficiently.
- 3) Develop a technology solution to assist in tracking application review and approval.

The first two tasks are being accomplished by Town Staff and we have interviewed four finalist to provide technology solutions to assist in creating a more transparent and trackable development process.

The next step is to evaluate the roles of Advisory Boards and Town Council in the Development Process. The Town Manager will be hosting a Listening Session to hear from the development community. If you participate in the development process in Chapel Hill you should plan to attend.

**WHEN:** May 18th, 2010, 5:30pm  
**WHERE:** Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce

The Manager will meet with Town Staff, Advisory Boards and the Development Community for these Listening Sessions. The results of these Sessions will be shared with Council in June 2010 and further action will be sought.

Planning Team will refine the ideas and bring them back to the public for review. It is our goal to complete this planning initiative by fall 2010 and present to Council for further consideration.

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**Council Committee on Economic Development**

The Council Committee on Economic Development will meet on **May 13, 2010** beginning at **4:30pm** in the **1st floor conference room of Town Hall** The Committee will be discussing work for the 2010-2011 year and tasks that come from several sources:

- 1. Office Market Study
- 2. Barriers to Small Business Development
- 3. Shared interests in economic development

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**Ephesus Church - Fordham Boulevard Planning**



The Town has issued an [RFP](#) (request for Proposals) and will be selecting a firm to lead small area planning and traffic analysis for this area. The purpose of the Ephesus Church/Fordham Small Area planning initiative is to consider current transportation conditions, define future land uses and to determine solutions for the existing transportation network in order to encourage reinvestment in properties within the study area. This project is to assist in helping to grow the non-residential tax base in Chapel Hill.

There has been interest expressed from property owners in this area to consider redevelopment. We as staff understood that Council would have difficulty in approving new projects for this area due to the traffic issues at this intersection. This study will provide guidance to investment and hopefully a solution to traffic issues at this intersection. Look for future notices as we hope to kick the planning off in early June.

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