

April 4, 2022
Good afternoon,

On behalf of the *Booker Creek Neighborhoods Preservation Alliance*, in advance of your meeting tonight, I would like to submit our support and recommendations for the proposed draft recommendations of the Working Group, as follows:

We would like to commend the Working Group for all of its hard work and research that has resulted in a very positive set of recommendations that I believe will set a new course, a green infrastructure course, for the Town of Chapel Hill. We support the tentative recommendations for a green infrastructure grant program, entry into the FEMA Community Rating System, policies and programs that will strengthen the protections of mature bottomland forests through targeted regulation, minimizing the use of impervious surfaces in developments (LUMO), and efforts to reduce floodwater damage while still protecting riparian forests and habits that exist along all creek corridors in Chapel Hill.

In addition, we would urge the Working Group to consider the following additions to these recommendations:

1. Add to the document the explicit permanent removal of the 6 Booker Creek neighborhood forests identified in our September 13, 2021 presentation to a Town Council forum on Booker Creek, from any and all future consideration by the Town government for floodwater retention ponds
2. Ensuring that there is Town-wide protection and preservation of all forested watershed corridors as Town policy and practice
3. Subordinating all future land development and stormwater plans to the principles and provisions of the Town's Climate Action Plan—we are in a climate emergency and need to make the reduction of CO² a priority

Finally, Chapel Hill used to be a leader in the environmental movement 30-40 years ago. We were known as a town of “tree huggers”. Now we’re cutting down those trees at an increasingly rapid rate as outside developers carve up our town in the interest of their own bottom lines. Chapel Hill now is dead last in green and open space among any towns/cities in the region. According to the *News & Observer* (11/7/21), Chapel Hill “ranks last regionally in the percentage of land used for parks, and parks within a 10 minute walk for citizens.” Apex has 11.8% green and open space and is acquiring more green space as part of the land use plan. Durham has a progressive Urban Open space Plan. Raleigh is #21 on the country's top cities with green and open space (Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

Chapel Hill now, with the Working Group's report, has the opportunity to reclaim our position as an environmental leader in North Carolina by ensuring their draft recommendations are implemented, and also include these items:

1. There is a policy commitment from the Town Council that our flood mitigation and future land development programs have green infrastructure and climate action as priorities for Chapel Hill
2. Create a new rule that is enforced without exception that all new developments must have more than 50% of the land be permeable and/or green infrastructure. Attached please find more than 24 green infrastructure alternatives we proposed to the Town Council September 13, 2021
3. Significantly increase the percentage of green and open space, and dramatically increase in tree planting across the Town

Thank you for including these recommendations in your final report to the Town Council. Please include these comments and recommendations in the Booker Creek Watershed records of the Town Government.

Cordially,

Edward

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