



## MEMO

Date: June 6, 2016  
To: Town Board  
From: Chad Hall, Senior Planner  
Re: Summers Walk, Master Plan Amendment

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### APPLICANT INFO

- **Owners:** Summers Walk Investments, LLC
- **Representative:** Jeremy Horton (Cole Jenest & Stone)
- **Location:** Summers Walk Boulevard (Parcel ID: 00747112 and 00747113)
- **Area:** 2.1 acres (portion of Phase 6)

#### REQUEST

The applicant requests a Master Plan Amendment to remove the requirement for a storefront/workplace/civic component on the west side along the entrance drive into Summers Walk. As part of the proposed Phase 6 Master Plan, that area would be developed with townhomes which may include affordable housing.

#### SUMMARY OF PETITION

The applicant proposes to remove storefront/workplace/civic component from development on the west side of Summers Walk Boulevard. The storefront/workplace/civic requirement is site-specific and vested components of the approved master plan. This change constitutes a substantial change to the master plan (per Section 14.17 of the Davidson Planning Ordinance: *“a reduction in more than 15 percent of the non-residential square footage”*). As such, any amendment to approved plans deemed substantial would need to be approved or denied by the board or agency which approved the plan originally – in this case, Planning Board and the Town Board.

The applicant has met the documentation and public notice requirements as set forth in the DPO.

### 2. PLANNING STAFF REVIEW

#### BACKGROUND

The design team has met with planning staff multiple times since August 2015 to discuss this potential change to the approved Master Plan for Summers Walk.

Summers Walk was originally developed under the Rural Planning Area with Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay (TND-O) regulations. The approved Master Plan, as amended in 2012, illustrates a “Future Phase 6” which flanks Summers Walk Boulevard nearest its intersection with Davidson-Concord Road (NC 73). This future phase of the master plan does not indicate roads or lots and is simply described as an area for future development. However, on the west side of Summers Walk Boulevard, 2.1 acres is indicated as having a storefront/workplace/civic component. The applicant is asking for relief from the previous approval for storefront/workplace/civic with the intent to develop the site with townhomes. These townhomes may be constructed as affordable units, but payment-in-lieu is also an option to satisfy the affordable housing obligation.

With the most recent rewrite of the Davidson Planning Ordinance, adopted in May 2015, the Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay was removed, citing that the overlay was not creating intended results. Minutes from 2011 indicate that the Town Board was considering removal of the TND-O district years prior to this new ordinance. The property is now within the Neighborhood General Planning Area (NG), with the stated intent to accommodate medium density development with a variety of housing types within cohesive neighborhoods in close walking or biking proximity to Davidson’s planned mixed-use nodes and employment centers. The requirement for any retail in the NG planning area has been eliminated.

An outstanding issue within Summers Walk is the existing conditions of the roads, and the potential for damage by construction traffic which will use Summers Walk Boulevard to access Phase 5 in Cabarrus County. Staff is working with the developer to address the outstanding street improvement issue.

This proposal was submitted on October 21, 2015 and the application was deemed to be complete.

This request was originally presented to the Davidson Planning Board on November 30, 2015. Members expressed concern about agreeing to the removal of commercial space without a clear plan for what would replace the commercial space. Members discussed the impacts of the plan on existing/proposed connectivity, open space, and neighborhood features such as a dog park. Members were not necessarily concerned about the removal of commercial space but recommended that the developer bring the request to remove the commercial component forward along with a detailed revised master plan showing what is proposed in lieu of the commercial space.

This review considers compliance with the DPO adopted May 1, 2015, as amended.

### 3. PLANS AND POLICIES

Below is a list of town-adopted plans and policies summarizing each document’s applicability to the proposed master plan amendment.

- The **Davidson Comprehensive Plan’s (2010)** Targeted Growth Plan illustrates a Neighborhood Service Center in close proximity (1/2 mile) to Summers Walk; the center would be a ten-minute walk – and shorter bike ride – from Summers Walk and would adequately provide services nearby. Retail near the entrance of Summers Walk, along a very busy thoroughfare, may be problematic in a neighborhood that currently has limited external connectivity.
- The **Davidson Planning Ordinance (2015)** contains several references that speak directly to this proposal, including:

### *Principles*

- We must create an environment that fosters diversity (General Principles Item 4);
- We must enhance our quality of life through architecture and design: Livable environments include well-designed buildings, a dynamic public realm, and seamless connections between the two (General Principles Item 7).

### *Consistency with All Adopted Plans*

- Any amendments to, or actions pursuant to, this ordinance should be consistent with these adopted plans and policies, as amended (1.5.1).

### *Neighborhood General Planning Area, Description*

- The Neighborhood General Planning Area is established to accommodate medium density development with a variety of housing types within cohesive neighborhoods in close walking or biking proximity to Davidson's planned mixed-use nodes and employment centers. These neighborhoods should be designed at a pedestrian scale with parks and other public amenities as gathering places. (2.2.13.A).

These references underscore the DPO's emphasis on interconnected policies and land use patterns that support the diversity of residential areas, including higher density building types, especially in proximity to identified nodes.

## 4. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The **Davidson Comprehensive Plan's (2010)** Targeted Growth Plan illustrates a future Neighborhood Service Center in close proximity (1/2 mile) to Summers Walk; the center would be a ten-minute walk (and shorter bike ride) from Summers Walk and would adequately provide services nearby.

Save for access to NC73, Summers Walk currently has no external connectivity, though it is anticipated that external connections will occur as surrounding properties develop over time. Retail near the entrance of Summers Walk - along NC73 - could be problematic in a neighborhood that currently has such limited connectivity.

There are outstanding issues with the current streets and required street improvements. The developer will need to work with staff to address the street improvement issue, exacerbated by construction traffic travelling to Phase 5 in Cabarrus County via Summers Walk Boulevard.

Removal of the retail component would not adversely impact the neighborhood. The addition of townhomes is consistent with adopted plans and policies, the existing neighborhood and proposed development in the general area.

In conclusion, the recently-adopted DPO's change of planning area designation signifies that this master plan amendment is appropriate and in line with the town's current development policies. The proposed master plan amendment presents a request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff recommends approval of the master plan amendment, as proposed.

## 5. PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

At the May 23, 2016 meeting, the proposed Master Plan Amendment (MPA) went before the board for a formal recommendation. The Planning Board unanimously to approve the MPA. The board believed that this change is consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

For informational purposes, the Planning Board reserved several remarks for their Review and Comment of the Master Plan. Here is a summary of their commentaries:

- Provide summary timeline for completing streets, including topcoat.
- Street signage should be consistent throughout development and as provided in the first phases of development.
- Street light plan is needed.
- NC 73 Parallel St./Connectivity: Review the NC 73 plans to determine if the parallel street network shown in the plans still makes sense.
- On-street parking in front of townhomes: Should be located out of the travelway within bump-out curb areas.
- A Dog Park should be included, since the existing one is being removed for development.

As additional research, staff explored the proposed parallel road to NC73 indicated in the adopted NC73 Small Area Land Use and Economic Study. Staff believes this is still a fundamental facility, but should also continue to make turns amongst neighborhood streets as opposed to being a direct, parallel route.

## 6. RESOURCES & ATTACHMENTS

- Resources: Links to referenced policy documents.
  - Davidson Planning Ordinance (2015): <http://www.townofdavidson.org/1006/Planning-Ordinance>
  - Comprehensive Plan (2010): <http://www.townofdavidson.org/340/Davidson-Comprehensive-Plan>
- Maps:
  - Approved Master Plan (2012)
  - Master Plan for Phase 6 (2016)