

# Durham Comprehensive Plan

City of Durham and Durham County, North Carolina

**DRAFT** | JANUARY 2023

**ENGAGE**Durham



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# **Section 1**

## **Context**



# 1.1 Shaping Durham's Next 30 Years

**The Durham Comprehensive Plan is a broad policy guide that shapes how Durham, city and county, will grow and change.**

A Comprehensive Plan directs what should be built where in Durham. It guides what size and kind of homes should be built in different parts of the community, where schools and businesses should be located, and where streets should be built. The plan acts as a blueprint for where and how Durham will develop today and in the future. The plan includes recommendations for big decisions that our local government may make. How should Durham care for its existing neighborhoods and longtime residents, particularly those who have been ignored or harmed by big decisions in the past? What are Durham's infrastructure needs, like water, sewer, or transportation? What kind of environmental protections should we have? How and where should farmland be preserved? How do we connect more residents to jobs, housing, schools, and resources?

In recent years, the pace of new development, an outdated land use plan ([2005 Comprehensive Plan](#)), and a global pandemic have accelerated inequities in our community. While this new plan cannot predict all future challenges, it provides a framework for solutions that work towards greater equity and accessibility for Durham residents. It also sets up a framework for accountability by local government (see more in [Guiding Values on page 14](#)).

Durham looks the way it does because previous plans and policies determined how it could grow and develop. In the past, city government officials, who were usually white, decided what the rules would be for how the community would grow. These rules have often been very unfair to residents of color. Government officials decided to build a freeway through the thriving Black neighborhood of Hayti and to allow industrial areas that cause pollution to be placed in Black neighborhoods instead of white ones. Many of these rules, and their consequences, have long-lasting impacts that are still felt today.

To learn from our history and plan for a future that works for those who have been historically excluded from decision-making, we began by engaging community members so that we can understand, honor, and listen to what Durham residents say they value and want to see for Durham's future. For this new Comprehensive Plan, we wanted our residents, especially our residents of color, to help write this plan. We know that the rules of the past have not benefited people of color, often because they were written by and designed to benefit white people. Our Comprehensive Plan needs to be written to address racial equity in how we grow, to reflect the needs and priorities of our entire community, and to begin to address the historical inequities of past decisions (see [Honoring and Celebrating Culture and Communities on page 23](#)).

This Comprehensive Plan is a culmination of three and a half years of work engaging and partnering with residents to develop a strong foundation ([Community Goals and Objectives on page 17](#)), clear policies and actions for change ([Policies and Actions on page 110](#)), guidelines for how places should change over time ([Place Types on page 179](#)), and strategies for making Durham's vision a reality ([Implementation on page 225](#))



*Pettigrew Street circa 1940. Photo courtesy of Durham County Library.*

## 1.2 Equitable Engagement Process

The Durham we live in today has been significantly shaped by previous plans. Durham's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 2005. Since then, Durham has struggled with using an outdated plan, changing priorities in the face of rapid population growth, fast-paced new development, soaring housing costs, and increasing property values. Not all residents have benefited from Durham's growth and development.

In writing this plan, staff has worked to prioritize equity for Durham residents as a foundational value. You will see equity mentioned throughout the document and see the naming of specific groups or people who may be more adversely impacted by land use decisions. We must be committed to equity in our process and our outcomes to address the challenges residents experience with how we've planned our community in the past (see [Guiding Values on page 14](#) and [Community Goals and Objectives on page 17](#))

Our work has incorporated key components of the [City's Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint](#), created by the City's Neighborhood Improvement Services (NIS) Department. In our work to equitably engage with Durham residents, the ENGAGEDurham brand and website were created to help connect more residents to City and County engagement opportunities. This effort prioritizes racial equity so that those who have been historically excluded from decision-making have a voice. In addition, we have worked to coordinate with other departments, projects, and organizations throughout the process to try and make it easier for residents to engage on more than one effort at once. The work towards equitable engagement has been a new process for our team. We have heavily relied on community members' feedback along the way to continuously try to improve equity in this work from each phase to inform the next.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the challenges and inequities in our community became starker as different groups in our community felt disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 in their daily lives. Both the need for improving equity and the challenges of equitable engagement significantly increased. Our planning process had to shift, and we have worked to try new methods to equitably engage different members of our community.

Throughout the planning process we engaged residents by establishing an Outreach Team (residents we regularly met with to advise on engagement strategies), Engagement Ambassadors (who helped engage residents on all elements of the plan), and Policy Working Groups (groups of staff and residents who helped draft and edit the [Policies and Actions on page 110](#)) in addition to focus groups, community meetings, and online engagement opportunities.



*Listening and Learning Session, November 2019.*

## Engagement Highlight

The Engagement Ambassador program is a new approach that recruits residents with connections to marginalized communities in Durham to directly engage their neighbors, friends, and family members. Ambassadors received a stipend for this work to try to remove some of the barriers that marginalized communities in Durham face when engaging with local government. Another focus of the program is to hear from Ambassadors on how to improve the program, to change our approach to address and reflect that input, and to keep working towards more equitable engagement in each iteration.

Ambassadors are recruited to help make connections to parts of our community that staff may not be able to successfully engage, often because of a lack of trust. Ambassadors are engaging underrepresented communities they are in relationship with to make sure these residents are included in the process and that their voices are heard. As part of ENGAGEDurham, Engagement Ambassador work has been incorporated into other City or County projects, most notably the Durham County Transit Plan process.

Engagement Ambassadors are residents who hold one or more of these identities:

- » Residents who live in Durham Housing Authority properties
- » People who have had housing insecurity
- » People with low incomes
- » Youth
- » Seniors
- » People with Disabilities
- » Public Transit Riders with no regular access to a car
- » Latino/Hispanic residents and residents of color
- » People who are or have been justice involved

*More information on the process and what residents said can be found on the web at [engagedurham.com/161/Process-and-Timeline](https://engagedurham.com/161/Process-and-Timeline)*

## **The Comprehensive Plan works within a system, and alone, cannot solve every problem.**

Durham City and County operate under the rules granted by the North Carolina State Legislature. The Legislature limits Durham's authority to both create tools and enforce rules that may lead to outcomes that residents want and need.

Overall, the plan guides decisions made by local government about where and how new development happens. Plan recommendations for how to change the rules for development (through amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance) are one of the most significant ways the plan will impact what gets built on the ground. Property owners have the right to develop their land, but the Comprehensive Plan can guide what is built to fit into a larger community vision.

The [Community Goals and Objectives on page 17](#) describe what residents need, regardless of how they fit into a legal framework. The recommendations in the plan, the [Growth Management Strategy Section on page 105](#), [Policies and Actions on page 110](#), and [Place Types on page 179](#) are our best attempt to work within the constraints of a system that often leads to decision-making that is inequitable. While we know we must work with this system, we heard a strong desire from residents not to limit our vision for our community by what is possible now. This has allowed us to identify areas where we need to try to change this system in order to meet the needs of our residents.

Many of the Community Goals and Objectives cover topics explicitly about land use and are typically found in comprehensive plans. Topics around land use and development are also what the Durham Planning Department can directly influence, like development regulations, zoning, and environmental protection. For other objectives, the land use connection is not as clear, and it may not be immediately obvious how the Comprehensive Plan, focused on land use, could influence some of the topics discussed. Examples of these topics include funding for school programs and operations, job training programs and partnerships, and youth and senior programs and resources. Despite these topics not having as many land use connections, there are plans or processes outside of the Planning Department designed to address these needs for residents. For the objectives without direct land use connections, we are committed to identifying partners better suited to implement those elements of the community vision. Information and feedback related to objectives outside the scope of the Planning Department will be sent to other partners to inform their plans, policies, and programs. Coordination between City and County Departments as well as community organizations and institutions is an important step in responding to resident input and making the objectives our reality.

## 1.3 How to Use the Plan

**This plan has been intentionally designed to be more accessible to Durham residents, particularly residents who may not have technical backgrounds and those who will be most impacted by land use decisions.**

Traditionally, Comprehensive Plans in Durham have been a tool for managing private property that required specialized knowledge to use and understand. Land use planners, developers, and property owners, through legal limits of private property ownership, have generally been the intended audience of previous plans. The plan's focus, word choice, and structure leads with stories of lived experiences from Durham residents. Then, the plan builds from those stories the technical elements of land use planning that ultimately impacts how a community functions in our built environment.

Here are how different audiences may use this plan:

### **Elected officials**

Durham City and Durham County Government leadership should demonstrate commitment to the plan's goals and recommended actions. Legislative bodies of the City and County should adopt the plan and ensure consistency in applying the plan to land use decisions. Policy and investment decisions made by elected officials, such as approving budgets and Capital Improvement Plans, should be informed by the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Departments and Agencies**

City and County Departments and Agencies (ex: Durham Public Schools, Durham Housing Authority, etc.) should be familiar with the plan recommendations. Policy and investment decisions should be guided by the plan, and implementation should be carried out by coordinating with the Planning Department when there are decisions that impact land use.

### **Developers and Property Owners**

Developers and property owners should familiarize themselves with the [Community Goals and Objectives on page 17](#) and think specifically about how development has contributed (positively and negatively) to the issues and



challenges residents described. When proposing new development, developers and property owners should consult the plan regarding recommendations that are specifically development related (indicated with (D)) and connect that to the intended outcomes written in the Community Goals and Objectives. The plan provides guidance on desired forms, uses, and character of development in the Policies and Place Types sections.

## Community Organizations

Community organizations can use the plan to advocate for the recommendations in the plan, including the [Guiding Values on page 14](#), [Community Goals and Objectives on page 17](#), [Policies and Actions on page 110](#), and [Place Types on page 179](#). Community organizations will be key partners in implementing many of the recommendations.

## Community members

Durham residents were significantly involved in the creation of the plan and should advocate for decisions and proposals in line with the spirit and intent of the plan. Implementation of the plan can be a primary way for residents to advocate for accountability. Residents are the experts of their neighborhoods and should continue to shape implementation through their advocacy, actions, and partnership with the City and County.



*Durham Neighborhood College, 2019.*

## Plan Components

The components of the plan are used together in three main ways: to evaluate new development proposals for applications that require decisions made by elected official, to inform City and County work (such as projects, programs, or initiatives), and to write new development regulations (which are legally binding) in the Unified Development Ordinance that affect what property owners can do.

### New development proposals

Once adopted, the recommendations in the plan will be used to guide decisions made by elected officials as they consider approving new development. For example, if a property owner wants to change what they are allowed to build on their property, that change must be reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by either the City Council or the Board of County Commissioners. To evaluate proposals these sections should be used:

- » The plan's goals ([Community Goals and Objectives on page 17](#)) which are intended to state the plan's intent as clearly as possible so that staff, elected officials, and community members know what we are working toward and who may be impacted by the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. Created from significant and candid community input at the beginning of the planning process, the City Council and Board of County Commissioners adopted the Goals and Objectives in June of 2021 to provide interim direction to staff before the new Comprehensive Plan was adopted.
- » The [Growth Management Strategy Section on page 105](#), [Policies on page 110](#), and [Place Types on page 179](#) which describe what the community wants to see and does not want to see in new development. These sections will be used to evaluate whether a proposed development matches what the Plan envisions; or if the proposed development conflicts with the Plan.

### Inform City and County Department Work

Some work the City and County can take on is not related directly to new development (ex: publicly funded infrastructure projects or educational programs). The Plan's Policies lead to Actions which are ideas the Planning Department and other departments and organizations in the City and County should be working on in the coming years. For example, identifying areas of the community where further studies are needed to provide more guidance for how development should occur. The Policies and Place Types also guide decisions about where to extend water and sewer lines or add new bus routes and sidewalks. The policies can also guide the creation of new programs, incentives, or budget requests to help create the kind of community that residents want in Durham.



### **Development Regulations in the Unified Development Ordinance**

A specific way the [Actions on page 110](#) lead to implementing the plan is by recommending changes to the Unified Development Ordinance. The Unified Development Ordinance is a legally binding set of rules that regulates how physical development of land is allowed to occur in both the City and County. It is called a “unified” development ordinance because it includes regulations for a variety of things including zoning and subdivision of land. This is important because when an idea in the plan is adopted into the Unified Development Ordinance, it becomes law that developers and property owners must follow.



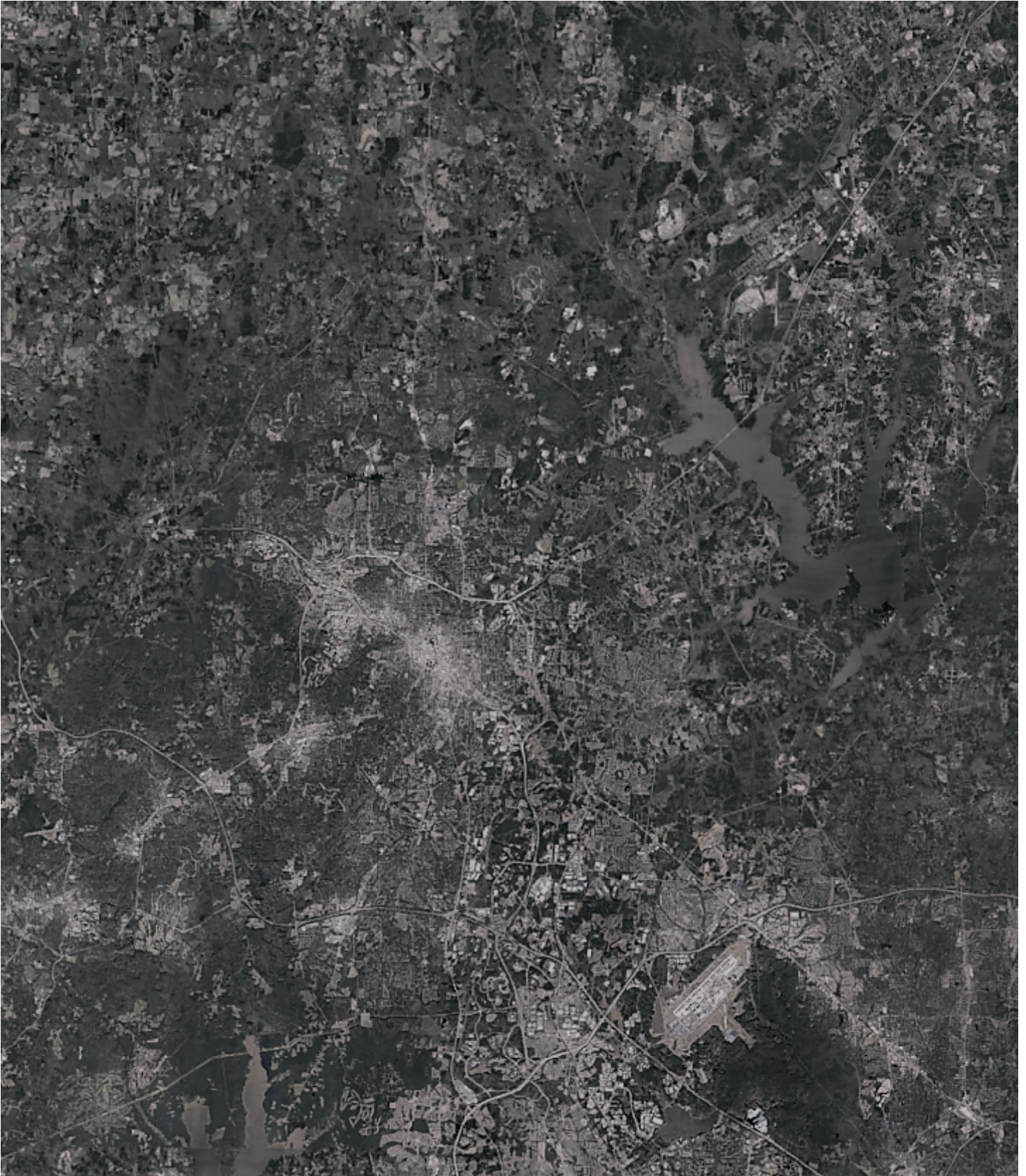
*Durham City Council Meeting, 2020.*

## **Section 2**

# **Durham's Equitable Growth Framework**

- » Focuses more growth within the existing City footprint
- » Identifies areas where future growth may be desired
- » Improves residents' access to daily needs
- » Focuses on transportation improvements that are not car-centric
- » Coordinates existing and planned transit investments and housing placement
- » Prioritizes affordability and diversity of housing in all places
- » Improves community resiliency and sustainability
- » Ensures we are working towards equity in all work





*Aerial Image of Durham, 2022.*

## 2.1 Guiding Values

The Guiding Values are the key overarching priorities we heard from residents during the community engagement process for creating the Comprehensive Plan. Equity, accountability, accessibility, and well-being are values local government should hold and commit to in all our work.

### Read the Guiding Values if you:

- » Want to find a brief summary of how different topics impact residents' lives and overall well-being
- » Seek to understand the values that guide local government staff during and after the Comprehensive Plan adoption
- » Want to know what we mean by equity in the Plan



**During the year and a half of engagement that shaped the Community Goals and Objectives of this Comprehensive Plan, residents often spoke about wanting to live in a community where we invested in and acted upon our values.**

Several key values emerged: Equity, Accountability, Accessibility and Well-being. These values form the foundation of all goals and objectives in this Comprehensive Plan and are deeply connected to each other. The descriptions below are written in the voice of our local government staff and elected officials to reflect our commitment to uphold the values we heard our residents care most about.

## **EQUITY**

Equity means a Durham where one's race, ethnicity, physical ability, age, income, gender identity, or sexual orientation are not barriers to living the life one wants to live. Equity in a Comprehensive Plan for Durham means being intentional about making decisions that create more choices, opportunities, and access for those who currently have the least. It means moving beyond good intentions and taking deliberate action that leads to equitable outcomes for this community. We must equitably invest in our community by shifting resources to parts of the community that we have neglected in the past, especially because resources for our community are limited. We want a Durham where all people, particularly Black and brown residents and low-wealth residents, can live safely and securely; move around in the ways they want; and access healthcare, jobs, education, and recreation. Equity requires acknowledging, as a government, that our history and past decisions have created a society that is deeply fractured and unequal. We have to be intentional about working toward racial justice and undoing those harms.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

To be truly committed to an equitable community, we must be accountable to our community, with a clear purpose toward equitable outcomes. We must intentionally involve and empower residents in the planning and development processes and invite and encourage developers to work with us toward our Community Goals and Objectives. We must invest our resources in ways that will achieve the values our community members say are important—like equity,

accessibility and resident well-being. We must be true to our word, transparent in our actions and efforts, and communicate what we are doing clearly and accessibly. We must intentionally reverse the impacts of racist policies and practices and take responsibility for our organization's role in creating or perpetuating those policies and practices. Without that accountability and intentionality, social injustice, economic injustice, and systemic racism will continue.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

To become more equitable, we must reduce barriers and ensure accessibility in the broadest sense. We must create access for residents to be meaningfully involved with ongoing decision-making, shifting influence and power to the community, and working together to build a future with equitable outcomes. Accessibility also means ensuring resources are convenient to reach, equitably distributed, universally designed, financially attainable (or affordable), and welcoming to each resident. Intentionally creating access to resources in an equitable way is necessary for Durham residents to connect with each other and thrive in their daily lives.

## **WELL-BEING**

We must support residents in building community, relationships, and social connections so that together we can create networks of safety and care that allow all people to thrive. We must work toward a future where residents have good physical and emotional health. We want communities that are welcoming, safe, healthy, stable, and protected. We must support and invest in residents through training and education and in sustainable jobs. We must work toward solutions that fit the unique needs

As you read through the Community Goals and Objectives, you will hear the stories of the lived experience of Durham residents. These stories envision the future our residents want to build for Durham. We want the Comprehensive Plan to reflect our shared values of Equity, Accountability, Accessibility, and Well-being. These values will guide how we build our future together.

## 2.2 Community Goals and Objectives

The Community Goals and Objectives form the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan and guide all the technical planning tools described in subsequent sections (Growth Management Strategy on page 105, Policies and Actions on page 110, Place Types on page 179, and Implementation on page 225).

### Read the Community Goals and Objectives if you:

- » Are looking for an overarching vision for how Durham grows and changes in the future
- » Need to know what outcomes residents are looking for from new development
- » Want to read what residents say they need and the current conditions impacting their lives in Durham
- » Want to know how the Goals and Objectives connect to the Policies and Actions
- » Need to know how your department or organization's plans and initiatives can support the Goals and Objectives
- » Need more information, context, and intent for the Growth Management Strategy, Policies and Actions, and Place Types

## **How the Community Goals and Objectives are organized:**

- » Each goal is written as a big picture statement that describes the desired future for residents and summarizes the objectives on that topic. The goals describe what we want that part of life in Durham to be like in the future.
- » Each objective includes multiple parts:
  - a title identifying the overall topic and values
  - an initial objective paragraph
  - supporting background paragraph(s) providing context based on residents' current experiences
  - a final objective paragraph
  - a group of verbatim resident quotes that were used to help draft the objective
- » The term objective refers to the whole of the multiple parts listed above. The initial and final objective paragraphs are written in the voice of residents. The phrases "we need" and "we want" state the needs and wants expressed by Durham residents. Each objective must be considered in its entirety to understand the full picture of what residents want for their future.



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# Sense of Place Goal

By 2050, the history and culture of Durham will be more fully and equitably told, acknowledged, and celebrated. Residents can remain rooted in their neighborhoods and connected to their communities and those histories. Neighbors will benefit from the stability and resiliency of living in diverse, multigenerational, and interdependent communities.

## Objectives

[Honoring and Celebrating Culture and Communities on page 23](#)

[Multi-Generational, Diverse, Resilient, and Inclusive Neighborhoods on page 25](#)

[Rooted and Connected Communities on page 27](#)

***16 policies under 5 groupings relate to the Sense of Place Goal and Objectives***

*Refer to the groupings listed below to read the content of each policy*

[Investments in Neighborhoods on page 121](#)

[Preventing Displacement on page 121](#)

[Historic Resources on page 122](#)

[Development in Neighborhoods on page 122](#)

[Neighborhood Design on page 123](#)



Hayti handdrawn map undated. Photo courtesy of Durham County Library.

## Honoring and Celebrating Culture and Communities

### Objective

We need to acknowledge and tell the full story of Durham’s rich culture, history, and the strength of its communities, particularly Indigenous, Black, and Hispanic/Latino communities. We need to recognize that a community is built by the contributions of all its people and that honest public history is not just a record of wealth and privilege. We need to preserve and create physical evidence of that history in our community so that Durham’s residents—particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) residents—can see their past, present, and future reflected in this place. We need to recognize Durham’s historic buildings and places as living artifacts of our shared public history and thoughtfully preserve them to enrich our future. We need to empower residents to tell the stories of their own cultures and history, and combat systems that benefit from erasure or minimization of that history.

### Background

Although the City of Durham was incorporated in 1869, communities have inhabited this place for far longer. Prior to settler colonialism, Indigenous peoples, including the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation and the Eno, lived and thrived in what we now call Durham. Settler colonialism violently disrupted a healthy state of relationships and systems based around the caretaking of the land, all life, and each other. On this stolen land, white landowners built wealth by enslaving people of African ancestry in race-based chattel slavery. Formerly enslaved people, including those from Stagville, used kinship and community, forged in bondage, to build the foundations of the Durham we know today. Amid the pressures of the White supremacist Jim Crow South, Black residents made Durham a haven for Black business, community, and culture. In the 1960s, our local government’s broken promise of “urban renewal” destroyed

or damaged the thriving Black communities of Hayti, Hickstown, and Crest Street, leaving Highway 147 where homes and businesses once stood. Since then, local government and private development have often divested from historically Black neighborhoods and excluded Black residents from important decisions. In the last few decades, Latinos and other immigrants have become part of the fabric of the Durham community. Today, Durham is advertised to newcomers in ways that omit these histories or tout diversity without benefiting or supporting residents of color. Residents recognize that we cannot have meaningful conversations about land use and Durham’s future without understanding our history and where we have been.

We want to celebrate the stories of our community elders, the cultures of Indigenous peoples on whose land we reside, and achievements of our Black residents. We want to acknowledge past wrongs, actively work to right them, and support communities telling their own stories.

### Quotes from Residents

*"I don't want to be a plaque, this is where Black people used to live, it's like we're a dying breed and it shouldn't be that way"*

*"What made these black neighborhoods special is that they literally came off of a plantation and built the communities themselves"*

*"Race, making sure people of color are recognized, acknowledged and taken care of in the city of Durham"*

*"Durham was a safe haven for Black people. now largely living in poverty. no jobs, transportation. something drastic happened. Urban renewal-147 did this. broken promises made to Black people"*

*"Remember the legacy by taking care of the ancestors; Bull City was Built by hands of our ancestors, continue their legacy by ensuring their descendants voices are heard and needs are met. #BullCityLegacy"*

*"People who have grown up in other communities should have access to afford to move back into these communities after development."*

*"Durham used to be a safe haven for p.o.c to have a dream or an opportunity for better quality of life"*

*"Durham needs to honor the historical contribution of African Americans in a real tangible way that center equity in any major plans and respects native Durham voice and experiences"*

*"It gets to the heart of one of Durham's oldest problems...that being lack of attention to communities of color, especially the Black community, who helped to build Durham from the ground up. Our ancestors worked at the tobacco factories, the chicken processing plants, and in the homes of Durham's wealthy land and yes, slave owners to build this city. It should be embarrassing to city leaders to have ignored our communities to the extent they have, which has led to communities such as McDougald Terrace and others who are living in less than substandard conditions just a few miles from properties that they cannot afford to live in, yet their fore parents made it possible for Durham to "thrive" while they can barely "survive."*

## Multi-Generational, Diverse, Resilient, and Inclusive Neighborhoods

### Objective

We need inclusive neighborhoods made up of diverse housing, where people of different races, ethnicities, ages, and incomes can live together in safety and stability, particularly Black and Hispanic/Latino residents, low-wealth residents, youth, and seniors. We need diverse neighborhoods where residents can remain rooted and that offer opportunities to share resources, care for neighbors, and learn from one another's life experiences.

### Background

Our current housing options isolate older adults, people who need assisted living, and people with lower incomes. Zoning rules and development result in separated housing types. This produces segregated or gentrified neighborhoods where resources are concentrated in higher-wealth areas. Residents see whitewashed and cookie-cutter neighborhoods where the arrival of mainly white people with money inflates housing prices. This pushes residents of color out of their homes and signals the end of decades of culture and community.

We want to actively ensure that communities are not torn apart when establishing sustainably diverse and inclusive communities. We want equitable inclusion that allows residents to thrive in neighborhoods that reap the benefits of racial, cultural, socioeconomic and multigenerational interdependence.

### Quotes from Residents

*“A Durham that is truly integrated - economically, racially, culturally, where everyone feels at home”*

*“Affordable housing has to be integrated—can’t be isolated and stuck there forever. Look at cooperative integrated models.”*

*“Clusters of community that foster interaction and de-silo our digital world”*

*“Diversified living spaces for all people: more integration throughout Durham”*

*“As I get older I want to be independent for as long as possible, don’t have family to rely on as vision is degenerating – alternatives for living, 55 plus”*

*“New housing plans for public housing residents- (select plans from the best models in other cities) or move these residents into the greater community (not packing them all together as currently done)”*

*“And we need to invite residents between different neighborhoods to get to know the diversity of Durham”*



## Rooted and Connected Communities

### Objective

We need to protect our communities from displacement so that people can remain rooted in and engaged with their current neighborhoods, connected to one another and to resources. We need to ensure that residents are not displaced from their neighborhoods and can benefit from Durham's growth, particularly Black and Hispanic/Latino residents, low-wealth residents, youth, and seniors.

### Background

Rising housing costs and property taxes are displacing residents from their communities, and people are losing a sense of belonging as a result. Particularly in the last twenty years, a combination of policies, market forces, government investments, and other land-use decisions have led to runaway displacement and gentrification, particularly for Black communities in Durham. In addition, the proposed redevelopments of Durham Housing Authority properties will likely move residents from current communities to different places, which would disconnect residents from each other. There is a sense of stability in being connected to a particular place and the people and resources that exist there. Without this, residents experience significant negative mental and physical health impacts as they increasingly feel unwelcome and unsafe in their own neighborhoods and are threatened by displacement or eviction.

Much of the current development happening is not rooted in Durham's history; the housing and neighborhoods that result do not reflect community culture. Development that is not rooted and connected causes fragmentation, displacement, and eventually destruction of existing communities.

We want stability, connectedness, and a sense of rootedness, particularly for communities of color, so that all Durham residents can live in communities that are supportive and nurturing. We want new development designed to respect, support, and fit into existing neighborhoods and for residents to be involved in those decisions. We want residents who have already been displaced to be able to return to their neighborhoods.

### Quotes from Residents

*“When people are able to establish roots they are able to effect the soil, much as deep rooting plants keep the soil from eroding, replenishing part of the soil as it lives off of it as well, a mutually beneficial relationship. What is missing is stronger language to illustrate this, as it is vital for the long term growth of the community both culturally and economically.”*

*“I live in Durham but do not feel connected to Durham”*

*“Soul and character preservation”*

*“People who have lived in older neighborhoods permitted to return to those neighborhoods to live in clean, safe, affordable housing”*

*“Displacement leads to desperation- stripped away, taken, made to feel they don’t belong”*

*“Residents are at risk of being lost in the shuffle in the proposed redevelopment of DHA property”*

*“Durham was community-oriented and residents can see that it is different now - people don’t talk to their neighbors, due to income inequality; people just waiting to see who will be displaced next”*

*“Social determinants of peoples’ health is so tied to belonging so people don’t know what to do or who to trust if they don’t have this sense of belonging”*

# Community Relationships Goal

By 2050, Durham's local government will engage the community intentionally, consistently, and equitably to build relationships and community capacity. Local government, including elected officials, will be accountable to the community in its commitment to equitable engagement, actions, and outcomes.

## Objectives

[Informed and Involved Community Engagement on page 31](#)

[Intentional Planning and Decision-Making on page 33](#)

***43 policies under 8 groupings relate to the Community Relationships Goal and Objectives***

*Refer to the groupings listed below to read the content of each policy*

[Equitable Engagement on page 115](#)

[Engagement on New Development on page 115](#)

[Engagement in City and County Governments on page 116](#)

[Accessible Information on page 117](#)

[Growth Management on page 154](#)

[Planning Tools for Growth Management on page 155](#)

[Resiliency on page 157](#)

[Infrastructure on page 157](#)



*Durham Planning Academy, 2019.*



*Listening and Learning Session, 2019.*

## Informed and Involved Community Engagement

### Objective

We need communication and engagement processes that are accessible, transparent, equitable, ongoing, and representative of community input that lead to equitable outcomes. Engagement efforts need to prioritize and be designed specifically to address the needs and concerns of those who are most likely to be adversely impacted by public or private initiatives.

### Background

Many residents, particularly in Black and Hispanic/Latino communities, have a deep-seated distrust of the City and the County. Historically they have not had access to information, have received misleading information, have been actively harmed by City- and County-initiated projects like urban renewal, and have not seen their needs reflected in decisions made after engagement happens. Local officials and government staff have not had success consistently identifying and removing barriers to participation and coordinating engagement activities with other departments and agencies. These barriers can include: ADA accessibility, language accessibility, information that is understandable to residents, compensation for participation, clear information about opportunities to influence decisions and outcomes, and different methods to reach people who may not have digital access to information and engagement.

We want engagement to be honest, relevant, efficient, and effective; information to be clear, accurate and timely; and for resident perspectives to have a meaningful impact on outcomes. We want residents—including youth and seniors—from underrepresented communities involved in, and compensated for, planning and carrying out community engagement.

### Quotes from Residents

*“We need community forums with public officials designed to express the needs and desires of the underserved communities of Durham. They cannot sit in their offices and in board meetings, and know what is on our minds. They need to talk TO us. They have talked ABOUT us long enough.”*

*“Need to ensure decision-making is convenient, transparent, equitable, representative of community input.”*

*“Holding officials accountable only happens when those most affected have a voice. This crisis with McDougald had highlighted the challenges of parceling off sections of a community and not seeing them as contributors. We should not make that mistake again.”*

*“Stop having people volunteer to do things, give input, for free. Don’t ask for our input and service on committees for free.”*

*“Our word won’t make a difference. Government doesn’t listen to us.”*

*“Access to necessary resources for families not receiving the help and support they need because of language barrier, transportation, etc.”*

## Intentional Planning and Decision-Making

### Objective

We need to be intentionally involved in determining our community's future and ensuring that development serves residents. We need equitable, sustainable, and proactive solutions to systemic issues to ensure that our future benefits residents who have been ignored, pushed out, and harmed by the status quo.

rather than temporary fixes that are costly and ineffective. We believe that how we invest, who and what we invest in, and who makes these decisions reflects our community values. We want to see intentional long-term investments in people and places that promote inclusion, connection, and well-being for all Durham residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

### Background

Currently, residents feel growth is happening too fast and is not benefitting many existing residents and neighborhoods, particularly in Black and Hispanic/Latino communities. As housing costs skyrocket in central neighborhoods inhabited by lower-income renters and Black homeowners one generation ago, residents see that our remaining available land is often developed with one type and cost of housing (ex., expensive single-family dwellings), located far from needed services or amenities, and without a connected transportation system. Many residents feel left out of a development process that could end up pushing them out of the communities they have lived in for generations. Some people in Durham do not see themselves fitting into Durham's future and are worried they will be left out of it. There is little clear and accessible information about how community growth and development occurs and if there is opportunity to meaningfully change an outcome. Many feel that City, County, and private investments do not address the systemic or long-term issues residents face. The way people are treated and how information is shared during engagement around new development leaves residents feeling unheard and undervalued.

We want community members to be able to participate in a timely and meaningful way in development decisions that will affect residents' daily lives and the future of Durham as a whole. We want comprehensive solutions to issues

### Quotes from Residents

*"We have a unique opportunity to be an example of what happens when intention meets attention meaning we can make the choice to be focused on our development of communities are now marginalized and truly have a Durham that works for most not a select few."*

*"Would like to see homes developed, but also people-what's being done to build the people? if community is empowered, they have a sense of dignity. people from here fear that the people that built this city will be left out"*

*"McDougald Terrace dealing with a short-term Band-Aid effect without a long- term solution."*

*"We're in the middle of crisis of displacement for more vulnerable residents. People are being pushed out of city so fast, that the people who should be at the table won't be here to provide their input "people most effected, won't find out about this until too late"*

*"Thoughtful growth and investment in existing spaces/buildings in the community to make them healthy, safe, beautiful, and accessible to all"*

*"High rise, high priced condos keep going up downtown Compare that to the homeless people living under overpasses in downtown and to what is happening in McDougald Terrace is the perfect illustration of Durham's priorities"*

*"Native Durham residents being left out of the city's progress -- Stagville Plantation descendants --rebuilding of communities destroyed by 147"*

*"Plans that are intentionally focused on not extracting the soul & character of POC communities during revitalization."*



# Housing and Neighborhoods Goal

By 2050, Durham's local government will engage the community intentionally, consistently, and equitably to build relationships and community capacity. Local government, including elected officials, will be accountable to the community in its commitment to equitable engagement, actions, and outcomes.

## Objectives

[Complete Neighborhoods: Resources for Thriving Lives on page 29](#)

[Creative and Varied Housing Solutions on page 39](#)

[Accessible Housing and Neighborhoods: Designing for Everyone on page 41](#)

[Affordable Housing on page 43](#)

[Healthy, Dignified, and Welcoming Neighborhoods on page 45](#)

[Safe and Protected Neighborhoods on page 47](#)

***29 policies under 8 groupings relate to the Housing and Neighborhoods Goal and Objectives***

*Refer to the groupings listed below to read the content of each policy*

[Affordable Housing on page 128](#)

[Accessible Housing on page 129](#)

[Tenants' Rights on page 129](#)

[Investments in Neighborhoods on page 121](#)

[Preventing Displacement on page 121](#)

[Historic Resources on page 122](#)

[Development in Neighborhoods on page 122](#)

[Neighborhood Design on page 123](#)



*Newly constructed Affordable Housing, Willard Street Apartments, 2021.*



*House under construction in Durham, 2019.*

## Complete Neighborhoods: Resources for Thriving Lives

### Objective

We need walkable, complete neighborhoods where housing, jobs, schools, and destinations are close together. We need neighborhoods that make it easy for residents, particularly Black or Hispanic/Latino residents, youth, seniors, low-wealth, and people with disabilities to access the resources they need to thrive without having to get in a car.

### Background

Many of the resources that residents need, such as nutritious food, jobs, healthcare, schools, and opportunities for wellness and play, are not present in some neighborhoods. Many residents do not have safe ways to get from their homes to the resources they need without a car because of physical barriers like dangerous roadways with no sidewalks, and little to no access to transit. As development continues to expand throughout the county, minimal assessment has been done regarding how residents, including youth and seniors, in new and existing neighborhoods will be able to access needed community resources without personal vehicles.

We want every resident to be able to access essential daily needs within a 15-minute walk, roll, or bike ride. We want neighborhoods that promote health and economic stability through the presence of quality community resources such as grocery stores with healthy food options, natural and naturally landscaped areas, parks and recreational opportunities, local jobs, community healthcare, and community schools.

### Quotes from Residents

*“Accessible Housing and Neighborhoods should take a more holistic approach to planning. There doesn’t need to be a gas station (or church or grocery store or bank or yoga studio or doctor’s office ... on every block), but there should be a safe way to get to those things and if it’s by bus or transit and cost is a factor, then free transit via reduced fare.”*

*“A patchwork of complete communities”*

*“Mixed-use development so people live closer to the places they want and need to go to. Easy-to-use and free public transportation.”*

*“Focus on neighborhoods so unique identities can show thru but still be connected to one another”*

*“More doctor offices in the county, grocery stores, entertainment with all the building they’re doing”*

*“Equitable distribution stores (grocery) and not convenient stores”*

*“Keep the bus transit going with proper sidewalks to get to transit area. Some people don’t have cars need for getting to work, doctors’ appointments and to get to grocery stores”*

*“Would like an equitable Durham accessible to people from all areas of all the abilities + at all work shifts.”*

*“Housing – visited someone who lived closed to grocery store and strip mall, but the sidewalks were all torn up and not necessarily a safe neighborhood, safer place to live that has access to walking distance access to resources banks, grocery stores, concerns where kids steal food and then there’s a restraining order on the parents at the grocery store within walking distance.”*

## Creative and Varied Housing Solutions

### Objective

We need new and creative housing solutions to solve the housing affordability crisis and development regulations that support this. These solutions should serve a diversity of needs, income levels, family structures, and lifestyle choices, prioritizing residents with the greatest barriers to affordable housing. We need varied housing with a range of heights, units, and densities designed to respect and fit into existing neighborhoods.

### Background

Current regulations get in the way of innovation and community solutions to housing access, such as creating small homes, cooperative housing, and co-living options. Many residents feel that regulations are written to benefit developers who can afford to assemble land to build housing for higher-wealth people. This results in new subdivisions built with one type of low-density housing at unaffordable prices, contributing to unsustainable growth patterns and high housing costs. Due to the history of suppressing Black home ownership, in part through government regulations, these higher-wealth people are predominantly white. Those with lower wealth, many of whom are people of color, do not benefit from these regulations and instead are often harmed by development in their neighborhood, resulting in gentrification and displacement. Additionally, existing regulations make it difficult to create supportive housing options for transitioning populations, including those who are justice-involved, experiencing houselessness, or escaping violent circumstances.

We want the freedom to explore new ways of imagining how houses, neighborhoods, and communities can be designed and built to allow more residents to have a variety of options for affordable rental housing and paths to home ownership.



### Quotes from Residents

*“Affordable Housing desperately needs new options”*

*“This needs to be more specific about providing housing for poor and marginalized people. We don’t need “diverse” housing in the form of more large homes or expensive condos.”*

*“More affordable housing with unique approaches like co-living, small homes, rent control, etc.”*

*“Reformed zoning laws to broaden housing options”*

*“New housing plans for public housing residents or move these residents into the greater community”*

*“Has the City considered implementing tiny house communities to address homelessness?”*

*“As long as the RULES don’t bring harm to black and brown people.”*

*“More housing options for the homeless that are long-term and outside a shelter.”*

## Accessible Housing and Neighborhoods: Designing for Everyone

### Objective

We need housing and neighborhoods that are physically accessible for Durham residents regardless of ability or age. Seniors and residents with disabilities, low incomes, or fixed incomes need housing like single-story homes, senior care homes, and group living communities that are physically accessible and located throughout Durham. Residents need to be able to age in place to stay rooted in their communities even as their physical or mental abilities change.

### Background

Housing for older people or people with disabilities are currently segregated leaving few opportunities for residents to find affordable and accessible housing in their communities. Residents need ADA accessible housing available in different parts of the community, integrated with residents of different ages and abilities. Even when this housing exists, residents with mobility and visual needs have difficulty using the neighborhood surroundings, like parks, community spaces, sidewalks, and bus stops.

We want neighborhoods that have infrastructure and housing intentionally designed for everyone in mind. Sidewalks, greenways, and bus stops need to be safe and accessible to people of all ages and physical abilities, and to connect residents to the services they need. We want homes and neighborhoods designed with physical spaces that are enjoyable for people of all abilities and ages.



### Quotes from Residents

*“More accessible housing in all areas of the city (decent and safe)”*

*“Handicapped accessible housing increased. Do not isolate in areas but in a mixed area with few children, consider ground build units”*

*“Housing for the elderly, safe travel for the elderly, housing affordability for seniors, placement of senior housing”*

*“All areas of city accessible to people with disabilities”*

*“All facilities would have access for wheelchairs or baby carriages. Everything would be handicapped accessible.”*

*“We need homes with 1st floor master bedroom. Most town homes are built with bedrooms all on the second floor. We have many residents with back and knee problems and require us to sleep in the dining room or on the couch”*

## Affordable Housing

### Objective

We need every Durham resident to have affordable housing that meets their needs. We need easy paths to renting and owning homes that are physically accessible, stable, well-maintained, and consistently affordable to a variety of income levels throughout Durham, prioritizing those with the lowest incomes in our community.

### Background

The current system of housing management, ownership, and development allows landlords, investors, and developers to control the price of rent, how well a house is maintained, and the cost of homeownership. This leads to rapidly increasing housing prices and property taxes that makes homeownership increasingly difficult and leaves many residents vulnerable to eviction and displacement. Without reliable low- cost transportation options, residents have to pay more in combined housing and transportation costs than they can afford. Past and present housing policies and practices have made it particularly hard for many Black residents to own homes, which has long-lasting negative effects on opportunities for generational wealth-building.

We want a consistent long-term investment of resources to ensure equitable access to housing that includes the promotion of generational wealth-building, the preservation of affordable units, property tax relief, and the care and maintenance of high-quality public housing.

### Quotes from Residents

*“Programs that are fair and honest to help Blacks own their homes in Durham.”*

*“Who is holding landlords accountable? Auditing their finances, their maintenance? Why are they still renting properties out with lead paint and mold?”*

*“Housing that is affordable all citizens no matter the income restrictions and can each citizen progress for with housing and home ownership.”*

*“In the Durham of my dream affordable housing would be accessible to everyone, effectively having positive impacts on school performance, the ability to access quality foods, and ameliorate public health [issues]”*

*“In the Durham of my dream everybody has a place to call home that is safe, stable affordable relaxing and full of joy that’s what equitable housing would be, we call have a place to call home and be happy and safe in that home”*

*“Shouldn’t take THREE jobs to survive”*

*“The redlined (historically and forcibly segregated) neighborhoods are now being purchased by white people.”*

*“We have no one to bring our problems or no one to call if we have a problem. All the rent we pay and can never own anything, because there’s no one caring enough to help. They just keep going up on the rent. They building everything around us and just wanting to put us in a little corner of the community.”*

*“The quality of the homes offered to lower income communities. Less money should equal less space not poor living conditions.”*

*“(NIMBYism dressed up as social justice)”*

## Healthy, Dignified, and Welcoming Neighborhoods

### Objective

We need healthy, dignified, and welcoming neighborhoods that promote mental and physical well-being for all residents, particularly our elders, our youth, residents of color, LGBTQIA+ residents, those in public housing, those with low incomes, and those with physical and mental disabilities. We need homes that are safe and clean inside, with walkable and natural surroundings that are cared for, maintained, pleasant, beautiful, and bring us joy.

### Background

Currently, some residents in public housing and rental properties are living in unhealthy spaces with black mold, plumbing issues, lead paint, or high carbon monoxide levels. In addition, many residents see that their neighborhoods are not as aesthetically pleasing, cared for, or well-maintained as other neighborhoods. Seeing that some places are better cared for and more welcoming than others has a negative effect on physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Unhealthy housing contributes to a cycle of poverty where residents are forced to focus on immediate physical and mental health concerns, lessening their ability to get involved in and invest in their community, move out of poverty, or build generational wealth. It is hard or almost impossible for hopes and dreams to seed or grow in places that are not healthy and dignified.

We want affordable housing, including public housing, and resources for maintaining open and green spaces to be equitably distributed, visually welcoming, environmentally healthy, and able to provide dignified living throughout Durham.

### Quotes from Residents

*"It can be mentally damaging if it looks and feels like you're in prison when you haven't done anything wrong and that changes your mental state."*

*"Every human being desires a place to live that they can feel pride in"*

*"Now it seems there is a growing number of homeless that even while the city and state "grows," they are left behind."*

*"People feel like the lost, forgotten, that no one cares about. Either people in control of the village will surround people to make sure they're warm or the rebels will burn it down so they can be warm. Not because they're malicious, but just because they're cold. We don't understand that we make people monsters in our society and our inability to act helps perpetuate that. There's no human alive that doesn't want their existence acknowledged in some way."*

*"We're still feeling displaced even though you have a roof. That's not something people acknowledge. You might have a roof but you don't want to go back to it."*

*"Put the appropriate amount of pressure on Durham Housing Authority to make the necessary changes needed so people can live in a clean and healthy home. Also, I would like to see an accountability review board set up by the residents for Durham Housing Authority for each community that is stipended for the residents to go over the processes of requests that have been made for repairs, make sure that it is followed through and if not, it is re-reported so that it is accurately handled. There's no process currently to review how these are handled and DHA is severely understaffed."*

*"Please break up/space out low income housing. Having a large low income housing community isn't helping anything but dividing people. Look to cities like Fort Worth and Dallas, TX who have made efforts to break up low income housing"*

*"The black community always get over looked or they tear it down and move people out of their home. What's fair about that. Not having a lot of money, doesn't mean u don t deserve a nice place and safe place to live."*

## Safe and Protected Neighborhoods

### Objective

We need all Durham residents to feel safe and protected in their homes and neighborhoods and free of violence, prioritizing the needs of residents with disabilities, those who are Black and Hispanic/Latino, low-wealth, youth, seniors, LGBTQIA+, justice-involved, undocumented, houseless, or living in public housing. We need to prioritize building community trust and relationships in our systems of community safety and mental health support. We need to build physical infrastructure that creates safe environments by lowering traffic speeds and creating protected, appropriately lit spaces for people walking, biking, rolling, or waiting on the bus. We need to do this without displacing residents, particularly in neighborhoods that have not had this investment.

### Background

Not all residents feel safe going out in their neighborhoods and many are concerned with rising crime and gun violence. Residents feel too many resources are spent policing houselessness instead of providing needed support for houseless individuals. Undocumented people experience intimidation and fear because of the possibility of interacting with immigration enforcement. People see the lack of investment in necessary services like physical and mental healthcare, maintenance and environmental cleanup, housing and job assistance, or access to food to be at the root of unsafe neighborhoods. Residents, especially families and children, feel unsafe on existing streets, bus stops, and parks because of poor lighting, missing sidewalks, and speeding traffic. Many young people do not feel safe in their neighborhoods, at bus stops, or on the bus. However, residents are concerned that any investments to make their neighborhoods safer will also attract wealthier residents and cause their displacement.

We want neighborhoods where residents feel seen, heard, and protected. We want to remove violence and its root causes from communities across Durham to allow all residents to thrive. We want support built on trust and community relationships, and the necessary infrastructure in place that makes us feel safe in our communities and shows investment, security, and care for our well-being.

### Quotes from Residents

*"The prettiest thing in McDougald right now is balloons from a vigil."*

*"No crime in Bragtown and not moving black people out; once the crime is cleaned we want safe places to live also."*

*"When People have No hope they tend to commit more Crime!"*

*"Lighting along streets creates dark conditions not much lighting creates dangerous conditions"*

*"A place where more than the wealthy can enjoy a safe and healthy place to live"*

*"More community involvement in public safety"*

*"Protection of trans community"*

*"Talk about safety among young people, violence in particular"*

*"Displacing people because of a dollar, is a hurtful thing. When people have live all there live and build on it and how because we have nothing affordable to go to, its on the street we go and no one cares."*

*"Durham Law Enforcement will play a more proactive role in the health and safety of its citizens regardless of race, creed or color. Initiatives and programs that support community safety such as "Neighborhood Watch" and "Community Policing" will work seamlessly with existing Law Enforcement to protect Durham citizenry."*

*"This is a strong community-builder. While infrastructure is important, it is more important that residents be able to trust those in authority to do the right thing and represent them fairly and equitably in matters of justice and equal treatment as those persons in non-threatened communities."*



# Transportation Goal

In 2050, Durham residents will have safe, affordable, dignified, sustainable, connected, and physically accessible transportation to move around Durham.

## Objectives

[Intentional and Equitable Transportation Investment on page 51](#)

[Healthy, Safe, and Dignified Transportation on page 53](#)

[Accessible Transportation: Designing for Everyone on page 55](#)

[Intentional and Coordinated Transportation and Land Use on page 57](#)

[Connectivity on page 59](#)

***20 policies under 5 groupings relate to the Transportation Goal and Objectives***

*Refer to the groupings listed below to read the content of each policy*

[Sidewalks on page 136](#)

[Transportation Investments on page 137](#)

[Accessible Transportation on page 138](#)

[Equitable Engagement in Transportation on page 138](#)

[Land Use and Transportation Coordination on page 139](#)



*Glenn View Station Bus Stop, 2022. Photo courtesy of GoDurham.*

## Intentional and Equitable Transportation Investment

### Objective

We need to intentionally and equitably invest in the freedom of Durham residents to walk, roll, bike, ride transit, or drive. We need safe and connected sidewalks, bicycle paths, roads, and public transit, prioritizing Black and Hispanic/Latino, low-wealth, and rural residents, along with residents who do not primarily depend on cars, like youth and seniors. Residents in these communities need transparency and meaningful opportunities to have a voice at the table for deciding how and where this money is invested, to ensure that the community benefits.

### Background

Current and past transportation funding has focused primarily on cars and highways while neglecting the needs of residents who rely on walking or taking the bus, or who cannot access or afford a car. Widening roads to create more space for vehicles encourages higher traffic volumes and prioritizes drivers. Investment in road, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure has often prioritized higher-wealth residents, leaving lower-wealth and rural residents with far fewer options to safely and easily move throughout our community. New investments in areas without meaningful community participation could lead to displacement and gentrification.

We want transportation infrastructure to be equitably planned, designed, built, and maintained so that all residents can safely and easily walk, ride, and drive to the resources they need to thrive within Durham and surrounding communities.

**Quotes from Residents**

*“Equitable placement of sidewalks/crosswalks in underserved communities”*

*“Equitable attention to infrastructure and road conditions in all neighborhoods”*

*“I wouldn’t have sidewalks by my house at all if the City wasn’t widening the road”*

*“Government fixes the roads on their own time. Some roads in some neighborhoods don’t get fixes.”*

*“Where everyone lives in a stable, walkable area and all people have meaningful and real participation.”*

## Healthy, Safe, and Dignified Transportation

### Objective

We need to be able to walk, roll, bike, ride transit, and drive throughout Durham safely and with dignity, prioritizing Black and Hispanic/Latino residents, low-wealth residents, youth, single parents, and those who cannot access a car. We need streets that are safe, walkable, and pleasant places to be, not just places to move through.

### Background

While Durham has funded sidewalks, bus stops, speed bumps, and bike paths in some neighborhoods and in downtown, residents in low-wealth neighborhoods, who rely on walking or use of public transportation, do not see this investment in their neighborhoods. Instead, they often face poorly maintained roads; unpleasant sidewalks that end abruptly and have no shade; busy, loud, and polluting traffic while trying to cross streets; and unmarked and inadequate bus stops with no landing pad, shelter, or bench. Some residents are forced to take long, treacherous walks to reach their destination or take multiple bus transfers to get where they need to go. Likewise, rural areas have few sidewalks or crosswalks, and none are currently required with new development.

We want residents to have healthy, safe, and dignified transportation that eliminates traffic injuries and deaths and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. We want to design right-sized roads, widening roads only where necessary, implementing traffic-calming measures, and improving conditions at intersections and freeway exchanges.

### Quotes from Residents

*"Buses let you off right there in the ditch"*

*"Bus stops in poorer neighborhoods are not maintained"*

*"I have to cross a busy intersection to check my mail"*

*"My neighborhood has sidewalks to nowhere and then we have to walk in the street"*

*"Would like to see more sidewalks and bike lanes, particularly on busy corridors. The lack of these facilities forces pedestrians and bikes into the street, which is unsafe and can back up traffic."*

*"They've got this 'cute' walkable city idea, but no one can walk there. They've created this fake Disneyland."*

## Accessible Transportation: Designing for Everyone

### Objective

We need transportation that is intentionally designed for people to walk, use a wheelchair, ride the bus, and use paratransit to get around Durham. Infrastructure, like sidewalks, roads, paratransit, and public transit, needs to be designed for residents of all abilities and ages to comfortably, safely, and conveniently move around Durham.

### Background

Sidewalks with broken and unmaintained pavement create barriers for residents with mobility challenges, such as those with physical abilities and seniors, or anyone who uses a wheelchair, a cane, or a stroller. Many places are missing curb cuts or ramps to actually access the sidewalks, forcing residents to move in the street with traffic. Crossings often do not have ramps with raised bumps or appropriately timed and audible signals, causing unsafe conditions for residents with visual impairments.

Residents feel that many drivers do not have sufficient awareness of visually or otherwise physically disabled residents to drive around them safely, and that the built environment prioritizes movement of cars over people. Residents who rely on paratransit systems like Durham ACCESS feel that the system is inconvenient and undignified. These transportation barriers discourage and prevent people from participating in community life in Durham.

We want sidewalks and street networks connected to transit lines and bus stops intentionally designed for everyone, prioritizing those with physical or mental disabilities along with seniors. We want on-demand, rideshare, and paratransit system improvements that are convenient, with reasonable wait times and multiple options for getting a ride.



### Quotes from Residents

*“What looks like a short distance on a map is often a quarter mile to walk from a bus stop. There are NO sidewalks along much of Durham’s roadway. If you use a walker or wheelchair-- Forget it.”*

*“Think about folks who don’t have access to a car or have disabilities or cannot access a bus stop”*

*“All facilities would have access for wheelchairs or baby carriages. Everything would be handicapped accessible.”*

*“Citizen who is blind need more opportunities for mobility. Greater access to pedestrian mobility; more bus shelters; ADA access, bus stop access regarding crossing ability; walkable access to bus stops; trash cans next to bus stops, solar compactors at stops would be feasible”*

*“They have to call [Durham ACCESS] two weeks out but not before, what if I have an emergency, they should be able to accommodate those situations, better quality riding buses some of the streets are really bad, sometimes I go home with a headache from being on the bus for 3 hours”*

## Intentional and Coordinated Transportation and Land Use

### Objective

We need housing, jobs, schools, community resources, and services intentionally planned in coordination with the transportation needed to easily reach them. We need a transportation system that allows all residents, especially Black and Hispanic/Latino, low-wealth, and houseless residents, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities, to safely, easily, and affordably access the resources they need to thrive.

### Background

Poor coordination between new developments and transportation plans has created challenges for residents moving around Durham and to surrounding communities. Currently, residential development is often proposed on undeveloped land far away from existing services and transit connections. The roads in these areas are not designed to safely connect people to resources through multiple modes.

Currently, our public transit system requires downtown connections, has limited connections within Durham, and has sparse service to more affordable outlying areas. This leaves many residents without easy or direct access to the places they need and want to go to in our community, especially healthcare and other key services. With limited options, people are forced to drive cars, resulting in excessive amounts of land in Durham dedicated to parking that could otherwise serve other uses that improve residents' quality of life.

We want to ensure that new mixed-use development areas are served by existing or new high-quality transit. We want transportation services equitably planned in coordination with new development so that all residents, especially those who cannot access a car, can still reliably get to where they need to go. We want coordinated land use and transportation planning that reduces auto emissions and decreases personal costs for transportation so that our community can sustainably and resiliently thrive into the future.

### Quotes from Residents

*“Neighborhood walkable amenities such as grocery, pharmacy, and restaurants”*

*“Decentralizing bus hubs to help influence transfers, preventing people from going out of their way”*

*“In an ideal Durham, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers would have access to connect their homes to their needs and entertainment with roads that are appropriate for every need.”*

*“Keep the bus transit going with proper sidewalks to get to transit area. Some people don’t have cars need for getting to work, doctors’ appointments and to get to grocery stores”*

*“A transit system could allow for people living outside of town (where housing is cheaper) to still be able to get into and back out of the city easily and ease the amount of road traffic.”*

*“What the city has done has created more sprawl to Mebane, to Sanford. Creating longer commutes, more pollution. Rocky MT-Wilson is now a bedroom community of Raleigh.”*

*“Traffic congestion. Cars are the only way to get around. Don’t want to go downtown.”*

## Connectivity

### Objective

We need a better, continuous, more interconnected transportation system that lets people easily and conveniently walk, roll, ride transit, bike and drive to where they want and need to go within Durham and surrounding communities. Improved street, sidewalk, and bicycle path connectivity will reduce traffic congestion, pollution, and unsafe streets for all Durham residents, particularly those who cannot access a car.

### Background

Walking and biking paths start and stop abruptly, and do not create connections across Durham. This deters people from walking, biking, or taking transit, and instead leaves people feeling like driving is the only feasible option. Those who do not have options are forced to use unsafe paths with no protection from oncoming traffic or wait a long time for bus transfers to get to where they need to go. Road networks built out by new developments include long blocks and often do not connect to many other roads, leaving limited routes for residents to use, particularly when walking, biking, or taking transit. Traffic is funneled onto existing roads that are already congested, causing overcrowding, unsafe driving behaviors, and pollution.

We want an interwoven community-wide transportation network that creates complete connections and easy links between walking, riding, and driving. We want to improve connectivity of sidewalks, bus routes, roadways, trails, greenways, and bike paths, and create safe connections, especially at crossings or intersections. Creating connections between driving and other modes, like park-and-ride, can provide easy and sustainable ways for people to move between the places they need to go.

### Quotes from Residents

*“Take too long to get anywhere bus early/late/too full. They’re building all these buildings but we can’t get there.”*

*“Get from one end to the other end of Durham easier and with the least amount of trouble. Alternative routes and connectivity.”*

*“I have asthma now that I attribute to the pollution and the increase in traffic on my street”*

*“More sidewalks. Better street crossings. Curb cuts at corners. More ramps. A plan that addresses lack of pedestrian connections. Up-and-over connections over highways”*

*“Strange we only have one central hub - I have to come into downtown to go 8 streets over. Connect outside of downtown. 2 hours Southpoint to downtown to Raleigh? Too long. Libraries as localized transit hubs so they get highest transit level of service and other services”*

# Environment Goal

By 2050, Durham will be a carbon-neutral, biodiverse community that balances preservation and restoration of the natural environment with sustainable and harmonious development. Durham will prioritize the health and well-being of residents by correcting environmental racism, connecting people to nature, and ensuring access to healthy food and prioritize the health of the environment, as it has a direct impact on the health of residents.

## Objectives

[Equitable Access to Green Space on page 63](#)

[Healthy and Clean Air, Water, and Land on page 65](#)

[Harmonious and Respectful Development on page 67](#)

[Resilient, Carbon-Neutral, Biodiverse, and Generationally-Oriented Communities on page 73](#)

[Healthy Food Access on page 71](#)

***41 policies under 8 groupings relate to the Environment Goal and Objectives***

*Refer to the groupings listed below to read the content of each policy*

[Climate Change on page 143](#)

[Protecting Sensitive Land on page 144](#)

[Air and Water Quality on page 145](#)

[Farmland, Working Land, and Food Access on page 145](#)

[Environmental Justice on page 146](#)

[Biodiversity on page 146](#)

[Access to Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Recreation on page 147](#)

[Green Infrastructure and Sustainability on page 148](#)



*Durham County, 2019.*



## Equitable Access to Green Space

### Objective

We need safely accessible green spaces, continuously woven throughout our community, without putting residents of color at risk of displacement as this investment is made. Pocket parks, street trees, and public park facilities need to be equitably distributed to provide residents with relief from pavement and buildings. Whether at a park, on a trail, or just looking out the window and seeing trees, everyone should be able to enjoy the physical and emotional benefits of being close to nature.

### Background

Some neighborhoods, particularly those where residents are primarily Black or Hispanic/Latino, are missing trees and green spaces that are present in other areas of Durham. Residents feel the physical and mental effects of this unequal distribution in tangible ways, such as the cost of air conditioning or a greater incidence of asthma because of hotter temperatures in areas with fewer trees. In addition, residents see swaths of trees removed for new development and are concerned about losing the green spaces that have been part of Durham's character for so long.

We want to be involved in decision-making when greenspace improvements are considered in our neighborhoods. We want equitable investment in maintenance and placement of green spaces throughout the community so that everyone enjoys the benefits and beauty of nature.

### Quotes from Residents

*“No green space in a community = pay higher AC, more asthma, poorer communities”*

*“More open spaces with grass, plants, etc.”*

*“Tree canopy. Willow, oaks are aging out. Expand distribution within neighborhoods. Psychological and safety benefits of trees.”*

*“Want Durham to preserve the trees!”*

*“You got Hillside Park. It’s beautiful. The basketball court is beautiful. The swimming stuff is nice over there. Park by Northgate is nice. East Durham is good--they did some mulch. When people there complained, they did something there. But look at McDougald Park. It’s not like that.”*

*“Trees are being placed in our neighborhoods without consideration of safety. I.e., in my community magnolia trees are being placed on the edge of people’s yards in the path where residents have to walk, endangering their lives because in order to get around the tree they will have to go into the streets. The trees will eventually block motorists sight when entering main thoroughfare creating the potential for motor vehicle accidents. Other trees being placed in our neighborhoods will not offer much shade for the community”*

*“They could be KIDS in the WOODS. One of the healthiest things that can developmentally happen for children.”*

## Healthy and Clean Air, Water, and Land

### Objective

We need clean air to breathe, water to drink, and land that sustains a healthy life for all residents. We need to trust that the City and County are protecting critical drinking water sources, regulating air pollution and hazardous or solid waste, and cleaning up existing polluted areas. The environmental harms of pollution from industries and infrastructure, disproportionately placed in historically Black neighborhoods, must be corrected.

### Background

Local government planning practices in the past placed pollution-generating sources such as cement manufacturing plants, incinerators, landfills, and busy highways in or near historically Black neighborhoods. Industrial uses that are no longer allowed near residential areas still exist in some historically Black neighborhoods because the use pre-dates current regulations. Exposure to these uses has long-term negative effects on residents' health, decreases generational wealth through lower property values, and creates a justifiable mistrust in government. In some cases, residential areas are zoned industrial, and that impacts what residents can do with their property. Streams and creeks are seen as not equally clean and maintained throughout Durham. Residents living in the county or outskirts of the city, who rely on wells and septic systems, are vulnerable to soil and groundwater pollution that could make their water sources unsafe to drink.

We want a protected, safe, and healthy environment to support life in Durham. We want regulations and remediation efforts that restore polluted areas intentionally placed near historically Black communities. We want to have confidence that local government is ensuring their environment is healthy and safe.

### Quotes from Residents

*"The rich create sacrifice zone that basically have low income people who are around chemicals, highways and chemicals which affect area in growing greens"*

*"Water and air quality--safe drinking water, asthma and health"*

*"Industrial or locally unwanted land uses (factories, highways, etc) that are close to people or neighborhoods. Psychological and physical well-being is impacted."*

*"Last week, they were out in McDougald testing the water. They said they were just checking it, but you can smell it. If they had more communication, people could have found out information by calling a number or checking out the social media. I didn't even know about the chemical. I thought it was a body. We thought someone was dead. We know what a dead body smells like."*

*"Dirty water in the neighborhood, dirty water in people's homes--even if the tap water is award winning, if people see their neighborhood water sources as dirty and the water coming out of their pipes is dirty, they won't drink it."*

*"Streams and creeks are not clean in my community. They have a lot of trash. The City should work on cleaning and beautifying."*

*"They came out and pretended to check the water. I know there's something in the water because there's algae in the water. It's been raining. When you run the water, you have to let it run otherwise you're bathing in sewage and dirt."*

*"It's very worrisome to read the comments that show such mistrust about water quality and safe living conditions nonpublic housing. This mistrust must be addressed. It seems people feel ignored and powerless."*

## Harmonious and Respectful Development

### Objective

We need to build in harmony with the environment in a way that respects, protects, and regenerates the environment for the benefit of all living things. We need to design new development to protect our remaining natural areas, including wetlands, floodplains, lakes, rivers, streams, mature forests, and the native plants and animals that rely on them to live. We need to stop development practices that contribute to loss of biodiversity and to manage the landscape in ways that promote a healthy environment. We need to protect the plants, animals, and insects that are native to Durham and essential for all life and restore them when possible. We need green infrastructure to protect residents and the environment from the effects of pollution and flooding. Whenever possible, we need to make use of the resources we already have, like existing buildings and infrastructure, so that we do not have to always create new things from scratch.

### Background

As land in the central parts of Durham has filled up with development, there is increasing pressure to build on cheaper land on the outskirts of the city. This brings development closer to farmland, lakes, rivers, streams, and other sensitive environmental areas. As this kind of development occurs, the backbone of our natural communities and corridors is disrupted and fragmented, leaving only small pockets of non-biodiverse nature that will eventually disappear entirely. Native plants have been increasingly replaced with those not native to Piedmont North Carolina, and in many cases these non-native plants are invasive, and displace native plants over time.

Remaining undeveloped land in Durham often has steep slopes, extensive floodplains and streams, and mature forests. Currently, new development strips the land of natural features by removing trees and disrupting streams with new infrastructure and buildings. Some residents experience downstream flooding as new development occurs, leading to standing water or property damage. Within our community, there are places that are underutilized, with large amounts of the land dedicated to parking, commercial strip malls, and very low-density development. These areas are valuable for Durham residents, given their proximity to businesses, schools, workplaces, and City and County infrastructure and services.

We want to prioritize protecting the environment and existing farmland when new development occurs—including protecting residents from adverse flooding impacts. We want to ensure new construction works harmoniously with the environment, by focusing on filling in underused land while preserving natural areas, and efficient and sustainable building design.

### Quotes from Residents

*“Concerned because with all this new development coming into Durham we’re building out toward the county. We’re concerned about the waterways. We’re in the Ellerbe creek watershed and we want thicker buffers between the construction and the watershed. When you mess with the waterway – you’re messing with the ecosystem and the animals in the system.”*

*“Like with the new affordable houses – what about the green infrastructure pieces; how the new houses might increase flooding on the older houses already in the community. “*

*“I have concerns about the new houses that are being built and how they are contributing to the flooding in the neighborhood. Are they following the best practices to install and build them as it relates to flooding and runoff? My inclination is that they are not. There needs to be thought given to how the new houses affect other properties.”*

*“Lots of trees, I don’t like clearcutting for development. I understand the need for density in some places. I hate the way Raleigh is sprawled. I love that in Durham, I can be in the woods in 15 minutes.”*

*“Environmental protections are almost non-existent for sensitive natural areas- Developers are allowed to cut down forests with almost no restriction”*

*“Strongly agree. No more cheap buildings and homes. We need to update and maintain historic infrastructure. Usually older buildings are better quality anyway & built for longevity (even if they need some work)”*

## Resilient, Carbon-Neutral, Biodiverse, and Generationally-Oriented Communities

### Objective

We need a healthy, resilient and generationally-oriented community that is carbon-neutral and prepared to weather the irreversible impacts of climate change. Durham urgently needs to stop emissions of greenhouse gases that cause climate change. We need to retrofit our built environment and also prepare our communities, by building community capacity, to be more resilient to natural disasters and unexpected disruption. Low-wealth communities and communities of color in Durham will be most impacted by climate change, therefore, Durham needs to prioritize BIPOC communities in planning for a sustainable future.

### Background

Climate change leads to harmful social, economic, public health, and environmental consequences. Our past and current patterns of development significantly contribute to climate change through suburban, car-oriented development, low-density family housing, and separation of homes from businesses and services. These patterns lead to increased automobile emissions, high energy use, and unsustainable land development and disruption or outright destruction of native ecosystems that support all life. Due to past racist practices in the allocation of land, communities of color and low-wealth communities are more likely to live in low-lying areas with fewer green spaces and more paved surfaces. These communities are more likely to experience adverse impacts from serious weather events like flooding and extreme temperatures. Moving to a carbon-neutral Durham will require radical, transformational change in our energy production systems, job markets, transportation, industrial and business sectors, building codes, land use planning, and more. Our current model of infinite growth and production is unsustainable because resources and materials are finite.

We want to create systems where Durham residents have carbon-neutral ways of living and moving around. We want to simultaneously work to stop emissions while retrofitting and constructing both our built environment and societal conventions to prepare for unpredictable disruption. We want whatever changes, tradeoffs, and sacrifices our community must make to address climate change to be distributed equitably among the community, with a particular focus on ensuring that adaptation and mitigation measures will not disproportionately impact our low-wealth communities and communities of color.



### Quotes from Residents

*“Development is equitable + planned with climate change in mind (knowing climate change affects the most vulnerable)”*

*“Resiliency is intertwined with all of the other objectives. If we are car-centric and have no enforcement of inadequate mufflers and car emissions, with sprawling development and no comprehensive public transit and inadequate green space than we are not resilient.”*

*“Would like Durham to be focused on environmental sustainability –came from CA reducing single use plastics, a lot of consideration about that in Durham’s’ future to find alternative ways of doing things so the impact on the environment isn’t so great, solar power, likes green stuff, renewable energy”*

*“100% Greenhouse gas neutral-more easily accessible solar, energy sustainability, renewable energy, how we build our city. We’re forcing people to drive to areas, use more resources. Grey Water Infrastructure ‘reused water’”*

*“Because global warming is going to affect everyone across the planet, and everyone in Durham, I think it’s critical that the city and county governments do everything possible to address it. We don’t have time to wait. In this context, I’m concerned about how developers are allowed to remove so many trees, often clear cutting. We need trees to protect against climate change, flooding, pollution, and warming temperatures.”*

*“Make people more aware of the resources that’s available about how the City can install rain gardens and cisterns and putting in potential ways to reduce/alleviate the problems.”*

*“There is a huge part missing regarding the health impact of climate change - increase in asthma cases, spread of infectious disease and water borne pathogens - that should also be considered especially in minority communities”*

## Healthy Food Access

### Objective

We need healthy, nutritious, and local food located equitably throughout our community so that is easy to get to, and so that all residents have food security. Residents need access to affordable, fresh, and healthy food located either in or near their neighborhoods or in schools, particularly in Black and Hispanic/Latino communities. We need to preserve farmland to protect our future food needs.

### Background

Government regulations create barriers for groups that provide creative ideas or alternatives for sourcing local food, like community gardens, market stands, food banks, and community-supported agriculture. For instance, regulations for farmers' markets are much more flexible than those for flea markets or informal food stands. Farmers markets tend to attract higher-wealth residents, while, in contrast, flea markets or informal food stands typically serve Black and Hispanic/Latino residents. This results in disparate regulation of similar uses. In addition, Black and Hispanic/Latino residents in Durham are less likely to have access to affordable and healthy grocery stores in their neighborhoods, known as food apartheid. Even when healthy food options exist, they are often not easily or safely accessible because of lacking sidewalks and bus access. As demand increases for more housing and development, the pressure to convert farmland into other uses grows, leaving less capacity for Durham to grow its own local food.

We want creative, affordable, and secure food options like food trucks, market stands, neighborhood markets, and community gardens. We want flexible and equitable regulations that allow people to safely produce, share, and sell nourishing foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables. We want intentional transportation systems that connect people to food. We want investment in Black and Hispanic/Latino farmers and gardeners to sustain a thriving local food economy. We want innovative urban farming and protections for farmland to sustain future generations.

### Quotes from Residents

*“Mainstream grocery chains charge higher prices in Black and Hispanic/Latino communities. Opportunities to own/operate their own grocery stores would lessen the impact of food insecurity in these communities.”*

*“You should consider how to make healthy food accessible to those who don’t have transportation or use food delivery services.”*

*“Utilizing black farmers; funding them”*

*“Equitable distribution stores (grocery) and not convenient stores”*

*“I have to get in my car to get mustard.”*

*“City sponsored programs showing people how to grow their own food and incentivize growing your own food”*

*“Food insecurity - 1000 people visit school pantry a year. food banks available isn’t enough to provide for all the families that need food.”*

*“We need to support Black/POC non-corporate farmers & agriculture too. Companies like Smithfield and Dominion are destroying the quality of life in black rural communities, we need to lessen our reliance on these companies and support small local farmers of color”*

*“Incentivizing labor unions locally. To give workers more wages and money so then they could spend money on food.”*

# Public Spaces and Recreation Goal

By 2050, Durham residents will be able to enjoy public spaces that are physically accessible and equitably distributed throughout the community. Recreational opportunities will be affordable, culturally relevant, and designed by and for residents.

## Objectives

[Equitable, Safe and Well-Maintained Public Spaces on page 75](#)

[Affordable and Intentional Activities and Events on page 77](#)

[Welcoming, Inclusive, and Celebratory Publics Spaces and Events on page 79](#)

***5 policies under 1 grouping relate to the Public Spaces and Recreation Goal and Objectives***

*Refer to the grouping listed below to read the content of each policy*

[Access to Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Recreation on page 147](#)



*Durham Parks and Recreation “Knock Your Socks Off” Event, 2019.*

## Equitable, Safe and Well-Maintained Public Spaces

### Objective

We need publicly available parks and natural and naturally landscaped areas, community centers, libraries, and outdoor recreation facilities that are safe to use, easy to get to, well-maintained, designed for everyone, and equitably located throughout Durham’s neighborhoods and rural communities. We need to make the most of existing public spaces and provide innovative and creative spaces for play. Everyone in Durham needs to be able to use and have convenient access to these community resources, particularly youth, seniors, people with disabilities, people who do not use a car, rural residents, and Black and Hispanic/Latino residents.

### Background

Not every Durham resident has a community park or recreation center near where they live, especially those in rural and historically disinvested communities. A lack of bus access, continuous sidewalks, and transportation options prevent some residents from easily and safely accessing public spaces. Even if residents can reach public spaces, they are often not designed for people with limited mobility, in that they lack ramps, railings, and a universal design. Facilities like playground equipment, basketball courts, gyms, and indoor spaces are not equally maintained across the community, with some neighborhoods seeing deteriorated and rundown equipment. Unmaintained equipment and facilities with poor lighting cause residents to feel unsafe and concerned about criminal activity. As Durham grows, purchasing land becomes more difficult, and residents would like to see innovative solutions to address recreational needs.

We want spaces to connect with our neighbors and build community relationships. We want innovative solutions that make the best use of existing space, like co-locating schools and recreational facilities, creating multipurpose community centers, or creating mobile recreational opportunities.

### Quotes from Residents

*“School bus routes and public transportation more for residential parks for children and neighborhoods.”*

*“Safe spaces for our children to play and engage with one another. Outdoor space and parks that also accessible to children with disabilities.”*

*“Raleigh DPR has transportation through parks and rec for folks with disabilities”*

*“Durham in the future will have more fun activities to do and we will be more resourceful and it won’t gloomy anymore.”*

*“Reimagine school property as public property (i.e. playgrounds)”*

*“Move community centers where people can meet - libraries are good, but would be good to have more neighborhood places for connection (information, hangout space, restrooms)”*



## Affordable and Intentional Activities and Events

### Objective

We need cultural and recreational opportunities, events, and activities that are affordable to all Durham residents, particularly those with low incomes, families, children, youth, seniors, and Black and Hispanic/Latino residents. We need to intentionally invest our taxes in recreational opportunities that prioritize and benefit those in the community who would otherwise be unable to participate. Free or reduced- cost recreational and cultural resources need to be widely advertised, clearly communicated, and easy to access.

### Background

For many low-income families who struggle to balance their budgets every month, recreation is often the first thing cut. This leaves children and young people without enriching and necessary ways to play, learn, and grow in their communities.

Even with adjusted fees, some of Durham’s poorest residents cannot access Parks and Recreation programming because of long waiting lists, difficult processes for reserving spaces and applying for programs, and a lack of effective communication about available opportunities. Likewise, large cultural institutions, such as the Museum of Life and Science and the Durham Arts Council, provide programming and host events that many residents feel are exclusive and prohibitively expensive.

We want a system of creating recreational opportunities that prioritizes those who have the fewest resources and options. We want residents to have an active role in determining how public money is spent on public spaces, recreational opportunities, and cultural events.

### Quotes from Residents

*“They want these kids to have a Play More pass when you have parents struggling to pay for rent and food each month. \$10 to \$15 a month is a lot because they need to pay for gas. Yeah, it’s a sliding scale but your version of sliding scale is not my version of sliding scale.”*

*“There are all kinds of cultural and sports activities available in Durham-- but ONLY for the affluent. How come HIS children don’t get to see shows at DPAC or Durham Bulls games? Make it a \*reward\* for attendance & grades. Support the kids who seek to excel in SPITE of what may be happening at the HOUSE.”*

*“How can we make opportunities for low-wealth people to enjoy the cultural offerings in Durham: American Underground, DPAC, and Durham Bulls?”*

*“Need to make the process for using community spaces easier to use. No credit cards, clear contact info that is the same across the system”*

*“More stuff for teens. More up to date basketball courts and sponsorships to have the opportunities to expand horizons (DPAC plays, engage swaps)”*

*“The Museum is down the road but there’s a fee.”*

## Welcoming, Inclusive, and Celebratory Public Spaces and Events

### Objective

We need to welcome and celebrate the diverse identities of Durham’s residents through our recreation centers and activities, cultural events, and public spaces. We need community members to be directly involved in planning and creating recreational spaces and opportunities. We need spaces that are welcoming to, reflective of, and relevant to residents, particularly our youth, seniors, Black and Hispanic/Latino residents, LGBTQIA+ residents, and those with disabilities.

### Background

Residents want to see more events that bring together people with differing identities and celebrate the rich variety of Durham’s culture. Seeing the Bimbe Festival remain outside of the downtown while CenterFest has been brought back to the center of Durham contributes to the feeling that Durham is not investing equitably in Black residents and culture. Our growing Hispanic/Latino population and cultures are not celebrated as much as residents would like to see. Young people see many options in Durham that either are not open to them or are only open to them during certain times, and do not see the community creating spaces and activities with them in mind. Event organizers and space programmers often do not look like, relate well to, or have similar experience as those they are aiming to serve. This results in opportunities that do not feel safe, welcoming, and inclusive to all residents.

We want to invest in residents’ abilities to make spaces that are of, by, and for the community. We want residents to easily reach and know about events because they are directly involved in creating them. We want people leading in these spaces that are reflective of the identities of participants, whether focused on youth, LGBTQIA+ residents, or Black and Hispanic/Latino residents.

### Quotes from Residents

*“We need to FUND existing POC owned and operated community spaces and make it easier for them to thrive. What we don’t need is white-led nonprofits to enter these neighborhoods with the intention of “welcoming” Black/Hispanic residents. We need the leadership in these spaces to come from the community and be accountable to the community”*

*“Want more inclusion, community involvement, community event (carnivals, festivals, free community events with vendors, more activities for youth (both in each neighborhood and downtown)) Example for event in Bragtown = big public cookout with games, music, free to the public”*

*“Events that bring people together of all colors”*

*“Organizations / groups who have historically been able to hold festivals and celebrations in downtown and desirable places should be given an equitable way to continue to do so without getting priced out.”*

*“Need more programs for poor/middle class families; community centers, before and after school programs, home ownership, better parks, more black culture events in different areas of Durham and downtown, keep Northgate open.”*

*“Welcoming to all cultures by hosting different events as well as different art work around the town”*

*“Free or reduced recreational and cultural resources need to be widely advertised, clearly communicated, and easy to access. This is of utmost importance in underserved communities who might not have easy access to internet, computers, etc. When these opportunities are available, we should include all Durham residents.”*

# Jobs and Training Goal

By 2050, Durham residents will have access to affordable and supported training opportunities that lead to a variety of stable and sustainable living-wage jobs.

## Objectives

[Sustainable, Supported, and Dignified Jobs on page 83](#)

[Accessible and Innovative Jobs on page 85](#)

[Accessible, Affordable, and Supported Training Opportunities on page 87](#)

***16 policies under 4 groupings relate to the Jobs and Training Goal and Objectives***

*Refer to the grouping listed below to read the content of each policy*

[Jobs for Durham Residents on page 161](#)

[Resiliency and Jobs on page 161](#)

[Access to Childcare on page 162](#)

[Access to Training for Durham Residents on page 162](#)



*Innovate Durham Initiative, 2019.*

## Sustainable, Supported, and Dignified Jobs

### Objective

We need a diversity of jobs with wages that allow residents to afford and sustain life in Durham. We need to focus on employing, training, and investing in Durham residents. Jobs need to be created specifically to be attainable for people in the community who have traditionally been excluded from the job market. This includes Black and Hispanic/Latino communities, youth, seniors, houseless residents, justice-involved residents, single parents, those with physical or mental disabilities, and those without formal degrees or education.

### Background

Many residents find that the cost of housing and available job wages do not allow them to afford their daily needs with just one job. This results in having to work multiple jobs and make hard choices between feeding their families, paying utility bills, or paying rent. Many residents, particularly Black and Hispanic/Latino residents, who want to start businesses lack access to resources, physical space, and financial support to be successful. Residents who may not have formal education or degrees are looking for opportunities for training that lead to local jobs and which build their capacity. Residents who have been involved in the criminal justice system are often shut out of both job and housing opportunities, adding to the challenges they face in trying to get back into the community. Parents face additional barriers to job opportunities because they lack accessible and affordable childcare while they are at work, contributing to the overall unaffordability of life in Durham.

We want a variety of jobs that are available and attainable to all Durham residents. We want more working class and trade jobs, along with those which do not require a college degree. We want living wage jobs that allow residents to have a path out of poverty, to be self-sufficient, and to afford housing, childcare, and other essential life needs. We want jobs that provide growth opportunities for people. We want community support systems to help residents access loans, scholarships, and grants to build businesses owned and operated within Durham.



### Quotes from Residents

*"We need to hold employers accountable and support employers in providing quality jobs, meaning living wages, benefits, stable scheduling, family friendly policies, a workplace free from harassment, etc. While training and education are important, too much emphasis on the individual ignores the larger systemic systems of oppression. Employers have more money and power, and they hold responsibility to provide equitable access to high quality jobs"*

*"Business Loans and grants to start small businesses of color."*

*"Shouldn't take THREE jobs to survive"*

*"Better jobs that let me be able to feed my kids next week."*

*"More business opportunities for native Durham residents (particularly African American)"*

*"I would like to see more job and job training opportunities to help or aid balancing income."*

*"Offer felons better jobs and skill training to enter society again to become successful."*

*"We need to attract businesses that will hire persons that traditionally cannot find a job with their limited skills."*

## Accessible and Innovative Jobs

### Objective

We need jobs that fit our skills, interests, and needs, and are located near where we live. We need to improve access to innovative jobs for all people in the community, prioritizing those who have traditionally been excluded from the job market. This includes residents who are Black and Hispanic/Latino, youth, seniors, houseless, justice-involved, single parents, have physical or mental disabilities, and those without formal degrees or education.

### Background

Large institutions and businesses that provide most of our local jobs are located far from many affordable residential and public housing areas and may not be connected by transit. Residents who try to innovate with food trucks, flea markets, pop-up stores, and home businesses are often met with regulatory barriers. These barriers, which include difficult permit applications, seemingly arbitrary restrictions, and costly requirements, particularly impact Black and Hispanic/Latino residents.

We want to remove regulatory and transportation barriers so that residents have opportunities to learn about and obtain new jobs in Durham. We want jobs that allow people to build skills, grow professionally, make money, and develop generational wealth. We want regulations that protect the health and safety of Durham residents while also allowing opportunities for innovative jobs that serve the community, especially jobs in environmental, sustainability, and technology sectors.

**Quotes from Residents**

*“More job creation (all kinds of work for different skills and abilities)”*

*“Diversity of business types in different areas. Change zoning to allow mix of use types throughout city/county.”*

*“Opportunities for cooperatives, collaboratives, open air markets,”*

*“Need more entry points (farmers market, incubators for restaurants, construction and technology)”*

*“A successful way to identify jobs that would fit the needs of the community instead of others making assumptions about what jobs would be great to bring to our community”*

## Accessible, Affordable, and Supported Training Opportunities

### Objective

We need accessible and affordable opportunities for Durham residents to gain life skills and job training to improve their quality of life and build generational wealth. We need to ensure local residents receive the job training needed to get hired in jobs being created in our community. We need partnerships, with organizations like Durham Public Schools, Durham Tech, NCCU, and Duke, to create community programs that connect residents to needed training. Durham needs equitable training and employment, prioritizing young people, seniors, houseless residents, justice-involved persons, non-native English speakers, single parents and those without formal education, living in public housing, recovering from addiction, or with disabilities.

### Background

Currently, residents do not see local government investing in their personal and professional growth or development. People face transportation, financial, and technological barriers to accessing important training for computer and digital expertise, financial literacy, parenting knowledge, civic engagement, and other life skills. Many residents want to gain new skills for jobs, find and interview for open positions, or start their own businesses but do not hear about opportunities in Durham to learn how to do these things. When trainings do exist, barriers like cost, schedule, location, language, and physical accessibility prevent many residents from participating.

We want government, institutions, and private organizations to support and prepare Durham residents for job placement in trade, manufacturing, and “green” jobs. We want to support entrepreneurship. We also want training focused on life skills and home ownership. We want residents to have equitable access to digital resources for training, employment, and life skills. We want training to begin at an early age for residents, with safe and easy-to-access opportunities.

### **Quotes from Residents**

***“We need programs, training, workshops, webinars etc. that allow Durham’s residents to become certified in different fields”***

***“Job training to help citizens learn new skills, amp up existing skills, and also to teach citizens the fundamentals of job training, searching, and obtaining employment”***

***“City government needs to do more training for open positions. There aren’t many jobs that don’t require college degrees or skills like HTML”***

***“Partner with Duke, NCCU, Durham Tech for continuing education programs that are income based and free”***

***“Summer training and job training programs like they use to have at Durham Tech. and Rec Centers”***

***“Sometimes colleges require you to complete certain requirements including volunteering. They should focus more on students’ goals. A student might not do well in school but is good at other things. We need a training center for students with workshops where students can learn carpentry, electrical work, etc. This would allow them to get back to school because they feel like they will never get ahead in college because of their status, etc. t and they will have a better future and get out of poverty.”***

***“Increase local training in the trades. The city and county governments should work with small business owners in creating a mentorship/internship program to provide an on the job training program.”***

# Education Goal

By 2050, Durham schools will be integrated into neighborhoods, equitably and substantially invested in, and well-maintained. Durham students, parents, staff, and the community will have access to shared resources, through schools that center their health, safety, and well-being.

## Objectives

[Innovative and Accessible Community-Oriented Schools on page 91](#)

[Safe, Supportive, and Nurturing Schools on page 93](#)

[Equitable Investment in Schools on page 95](#)

***12 policies under 4 groupings relate to the Education Goal and Objectives***

*Refer to the grouping listed below to read the content of each policy*

[School Site Development on page 166](#)

[Transportation Connections to Schools on page 166](#)

[Access to Community Spaces on page 167](#)

[Youth Engagement on page 167](#)



*Walk Bike to School Day, 2022.*



## Innovative and Accessible Community-Oriented Schools

### Objective

We need accessible and innovative neighborhood schools that are located and designed to bring community members together and connect residents to resources within their communities. We need to creatively, sustainably, and effectively use publicly-owned school land to incorporate community resources. This includes community gardens, recreation or community centers, training and job preparation, lifelong learning, mental and physical healthcare, and affordable housing for teachers and staff. We especially need these resources in low-wealth and Black and Hispanic/Latino neighborhoods.

### Background

Residents have identified a number of community needs that require land, which is in short supply throughout many parts of Durham. Some residents have envisioned schools being used in more efficient and creative ways to provide training, housing, and spaces for meeting and learning, benefiting students, teachers and the rest of the community. As large landholders, publicly-owned schools have opportunities to demonstrate sustainable land practices, biodiverse natural and naturally landscaped areas, provide space for community resources, and bring communities together.

Currently, school properties are disconnected from surrounding neighborhoods due to long drop-off lanes required for personal vehicle access in front of schools. Buildings located far from streets, often without connecting sidewalks, are not easily accessible to those needing to walk, bike, or take the bus.

We want schools to play an integral role in neighborhoods, as a transformative community asset. We want schools to be central to neighborhoods, connected to nearby parks and trails, so that residents can live, learn, play, grow, feel connected to, and feel pride in their community's schools. As Durham grows, we want new schools designed to be smaller and fit into existing communities throughout Durham, creating safe, active routes to access schools and creating stronger centers of community.

**Quotes from Residents**

*“Schools as neighborhood centers-become the focus of a community similar to a park”*

*“Some sort of transportation at every school, when building schools, transportation should come hand in hand”*

*“The school teachers can’t afford to live near their schools”*

*“Reimagine school property as public property (i.e. playgrounds)”*

*“Schools as community spaces for ppl to gather. => encourage parents to participate”*

*“Make schools about more than just parents: use as event spaces/community functions”*

## Safe, Supportive, and Nurturing Schools

### Objective

We need all students to feel safe, supported, and nurtured. We need community-centered solutions to conflict resolution, mental health counseling, affordable healthy food access, and family support in our schools. We need innovative alternatives to existing security procedures, focusing on restorative justice and community-centered counseling rather than processes that funnel students into the criminal justice system. We need to equitably support and compensate teachers across Durham, focusing on hiring and retaining diverse teachers and staff so that students can see themselves reflected in school leaders.

### Background

Currently, many students say they do not feel physically or mentally safe while attending school in Durham. Youth, particularly youth of color, report feeling unsafe in school because of police presence and the swift, punitive measures used when conflicts arise. Frequent and unannounced active shooter drills create mental and emotional stress as both students and teachers face the terrifying possibility of this situation. Many students in Durham rely on school to provide nutritious food and a quiet, safe learning environment. Residents are concerned that detention, suspensions, and other disciplinary measures are disrupting students' learning and impeding their future opportunities. Residents want to see an end to the school-to-prison pipeline.

We want schools that are designed with the health and well-being of students, parents, staff and the community in mind, prioritizing the needs of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ students, and students with special learning needs.

**Quotes from Residents**

*“If kids fight at school, they get helped, not sent to jail. No suspensions. Instead, do job training.”*

*“DPS should recruit teachers from within our community with local expertise- give our students pride in our and its history”*

*“At the schools, there are empty pill bottles in the school yard”*

*“Destroy school to prison pipeline”*

*“Eliminate public school truancy and expulsion rates (address the root causes of the problems)”*

*“Working with minority teachers to keep them. Too much paperwork for teachers, not enough support for them”*

## Equitable Investment in Schools

### Objective

We need equitable and substantial investment in the quality of our schools throughout Durham. We need to invest in the physical facilities, and in the resources made available to students, their families, and teachers, to ensure we are investing in the future of Durham. We need to coordinate land use and school planning to ensure school funding and facilities can accommodate new students with reasonable capacity. We need to prioritize funding and resources that serve English Language Learners, students with disabilities, students of color, LGBTQIA+ students, low-income students, and neighborhoods with historical disinvestment. We need to hear directly from these communities in making decisions in our schools.

### Background

Durham's legacy of racially segregated neighborhoods and method of funding and assigning schools, along with the increase in charter schools, means that our schools are once again highly segregated. Residents experience barriers to accessing and providing quality education because of the historic disinvestment in school facilities, teachers, and students in Black and lower-income communities. As families with privilege change neighborhoods to access higher-performing public schools or choose private schooling, many schools are left with limited funding sources and a higher concentration of students of color and families with lower incomes. This has led to less funding for up-to-date textbooks, multilingual student and teacher support, technology, extracurricular opportunities, mental health services, and employment or internship connections in these schools. This lack of investment reduces these students' chances of success.

We want the quality of schools in Durham to reflect our focus on the future of this community, through our students. We want students, regardless of where they live in Durham, to have access to highly-resourced schools where they can thrive in their learning environment. We want the allocation of funding and resources for our schools to be done with a focus on racial equity.

### Quotes from Residents

*"All schools should have access to same resources (healthy food, technology, school nurses, etc.)"*

*"ESL Teacher that can understand the language of the kids coming from all over the world"*

*"Education should be accessible for everyone."*

*"A thriving public school system: resources placed to attract better teachers, great schools in the area but they're not equitable, the same resources per person, charter schools have become much more expansive in Durham, People tend to live in other counties, based on school system and neighboring counties aren't playing well, more walkable schools, Diversity and inclusion in the system, consistency across the schools"*

*"Funding for public schools; State legislature; Durham Public Schools underfunded. Wealthy people sending kids to private schools which increases segregation. Want to send my kid to public school but also want them to have a good education and opportunities"*

*"Segregation in schools is a big problem. Busing. Charter schools. Redlining connection."*

*"School are 'uneven.' Uniform high quality schools."*

*"Public educations going from my neighborhoods middle schools to non- neighborhood high schools. Drains high achieving students to other places."*

# Health and Well-being Goal

By 2050, all Durham residents will live healthy lives in the “City of Medicine,” prioritizing their health, well-being, and resiliency. The well-being of young people and our elders will be invested in so that they feel valued, empowered, and have a place in Durham’s future.

## Objectives

[Intentional and Supported Youth Opportunities on page 99](#)

[Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities on page 35](#)

[Equitable and Affordable Health and Wellness on page 103](#)

*The priorities discussed in the Health and Well-being Goal and Objectives are interwoven across 7 policy topics*

*Refer to the grouping listed below to read the content of each policy*

[Housing Policy Topic on page 127](#)

[Neighborhoods Policy Topic on page 120](#)

[Community Relationships Policy Topic on page 114](#)

[Transportation Policy Topic on page 135](#)

[Environment and Public Spaces Policy Topic on page 142](#)

[Jobs and Training Policy Topic on page 160](#)

[Education Policy Topic on page 165](#)



*Durham Vaccine Equity Program, 2021.*



## Intentional and Supported Youth Opportunities

### Objective

We need to invest in, empower, value, and support young people in Durham, from early childhood to adolescence, to ensure they play an integral role in shaping Durham’s future. We need to prioritize equitable access to leadership, social, and work opportunities among youth, ensuring that Black and Hispanic/Latino, LGBTQIA+, low- wealth, and unhoused young people can participate. We need young people to have the power to design and determine the use of resources that are intended to benefit them. We need to implement innovative ideas that support youth in participating in local decision-making, including voting and political leadership opportunities.

### Background

Currently, many young people feel their voices do not matter and that they are not given opportunities to be heard. Young people want to have a voice in Durham, in our government, in their schools, and in the broader community. These spaces often lack the creativity and innovation that young people can bring to the table. In addition, young people often do not have the kind of support they need, such as financial compensation, Internet access, language services, transportation, food, and childcare, to participate in leadership opportunities. Many work opportunities are not accessible to young people because of their age, level of experience, family responsibilities, or education. Young people do not often see social and recreational opportunities, like clubs and activities, that are accessible for them where other people who look like them are participating.

We want young people in Durham to be able to imagine themselves in their fullest power, bringing their experiences, creativity, and future-oriented perspectives into engagement and decision-making. We want to intentionally create youth-specific or youth-designed opportunities for young people to work and play, while gaining life and professional experience.

### Quotes from Residents

*“These young people are the leaders that will be making decisions for us in the future. We MUST invest in them now, or they will not be able to invest in us later.”*

*“If we direct resources toward our youth, we would reap the benefit by making them feel a sense of worth in the community. This can only help in our effort to teach and train Durham’s future leaders. That leadership needs to be represented by those in underserved communities.”*

*“We need to center values of youth-leadership as we put resources toward this work, and listen to what youth want and need when budget priorities are being set, initiatives launched. Programming for young people should not be created without young people at the table as valued thought partner and decision makers.”*

*“Durham has not historically provided Black/Brown youth the same opportunities as Euro-American youth. It is past time for that to change.”*

*“More jobs for youth, more education and training programs for youth”*

*“Youth should have an opportunity to engage with this process and the development of Durham”*

*“Access to things for young people to do that is constructive and safe”*

*“If we invest in our children, we will have a safer, better Durham going forward. If we do not, all of us will realize our failure. It will come back to haunt us.”*

## Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities

### Objective

We need to value, design for, support, and include senior residents in shaping Durham, particularly seniors who are Black, Hispanic/Latino, houseless, living in public housing, without digital access, or who have physical or mental disabilities. We need to ensure that seniors are able to stay in the homes and communities they have helped build. We need to create intentional intergenerational spaces where older adults can live their full lives within communities, and where those communities can benefit from the wisdom of elders.

### Background

Older adults in Durham do not see new development and government initiatives designed to fit their needs as they age, such as public transportation; access to senior care homes, healthcare, and clinics; and one-story homes. Older adults living on fixed incomes are at a greater risk of displacement from their homes as property taxes and upkeep costs increase. They find they can no longer remain in their current homes and have extreme difficulty finding other housing, such as senior living residences, in their neighborhoods. Those who cannot afford to retire may encounter age discrimination and a lack access to affordable opportunities to learn new skills. When assistance is available for seniors, it is not communicated effectively, mostly making use of digital formats, leaving some older residents without essential information.

We want seniors in Durham to live in and remain connected to their neighborhoods as they age, and to have the freedom to move around without a car. We want seniors to have easy access to tools and resources necessary to thrive through all stages of life. This includes access to all relevant care; job, volunteer, or civic opportunities; appropriate housing; and information. We want older residents to feel valued and empowered, and to have a place in Durham's future.

### **Quotes from Residents**

***“Our seniors are who shaped Durham. Can we afford to forget them and their contributions to Durham’s success?”***

***“More affordable housing for seniors, in good condition, rent under 1k. Fixed income minimum wage, they can’t afford to stay - could fix homelessness”***

***“Elderly people are showing up at the hospital b/c they cannot live alone and have no resources”***

***“Heated pools and facilities for elderly near Duke - This needed in South Durham - there needs to be an equitable spread of clinics and facilities across Durham”***

***“Housing for the elderly, safe travel for the elderly, housing affordability for seniors, placement of senior housing”***

***“More news in the community needs to get out to the senior community such as morning glory”***

***“Don’t overlook poor and old people!”***

***“Senior Citizens: educating them on resources, help not be displaced by gentrification. (‘Resources’ meaning who to call when you need help, if your family doesn’t live nearby?)”***

## Equitable and Affordable Health and Wellness

### Objective

We need equitable, easily accessible, and affordable health services like primary care, dental and vision care, mental health counseling, rehabilitation centers, childcare, senior care homes, and pharmacies. We need innovative ways to provide and physically access these services, such as mobile and remote clinics, provided at convenient community spaces like schools, parks, and places of worship. We need all residents to be healthy and well cared for, prioritizing people of color, residents with disabilities, seniors, youth, LGBTQIA+, rural residents, and those who are unhoused or have low wealth.

### Background

Not all communities in Durham have access to basic health and wellness services, leaving many residents struggling with physical and mental health issues and limited or no ways to get treatment. Many residents find that existing health services are unaffordable, not located in all neighborhoods, and difficult to get to without a car. Public options for community healthcare, such as the Lincoln Community Health Center and Durham County Health and Human Services, are often overcapacity, with long wait times for appointments. Zoning regulations, designed to ensure safe and orderly distribution of healthcare services, impose additional restrictions on group homes and transitional housing, making it challenging to locate these in neighborhoods. Current regulations also make it difficult to locate and provide innovative small-scale health and wellness providers, like childcare, senior care, or transitional homes, within or close to neighborhoods.

We want equitable and accessible solutions for healthcare and wellness so that all residents can live healthy lives in the “City of Medicine.” We want mobile and remote healthcare options and intentional regulations that serve communities that are the most in need of care. We want reliable, frequent, and accessible communication about these services when provided.

### Quotes from Residents

*"My people are suffering from a lack of good dental care. Many people I spoke to have teeth missing. This certainly has a bearing in employability-- as my lack of orthodontia \*certainly\* limited some of my options. It must also affect self- concept and self-esteem. This is the "City of Medicine." Durham is FAILING its poor & working class residents."*

*"How can we make health care more accessible to more people?"*

*"Mental health - visible and invisible. Ex. organizations for mental health are overburdened, long waitlist"*

*"PTSD is a big issue here related to crime, lack of jobs, resources, shooting. Car speeds down street and kids start running."*

*"Syringe exchanges to prevent people from dumping them in parks"*

*"I live in the homeless shelter and have to take the bus everywhere like doctor's visits and over here (Durham Health and Human Service) because I have a free bus pass, but only for those locations. I have to walk everywhere else."*

## 2.3 Growth Management Strategy

Durham's Growth Management Strategy is a comprehensive strategy for how Durham should grow. This section shares the history of past plans for growth, how that has impacted residents, and the major overarching strategies to change how we are growing and changing as a community.

**Read the Growth Management Strategy if you:**

- » Want an overall view of Durham's priorities for managing growth and development
- » Need a high-level overview of how places may change over time
- » Seek an understanding of the Urban Growth Boundary and Future Growth Areas
- » Are interested in coordinating your department or organization's capital projects and planning with land use

**21 policies in 4 groupings relate to Durham's Growth Management Strategy**

Refer to the groupings listed below to read the content of each policy

**Growth Management on page 154**

**Planning Tools for Growth Management on page 155**

**Resiliency on page 157**

**Infrastructure on page 157**

**Growth, and the change that comes with it, is inevitable in Durham. But the intense growth that Durham has experienced since the adoption of the last Comprehensive Plan has not benefited our whole community. As housing costs, property values, transportation costs, and commercial rent increase, many in Durham, and particularly those in low-income and communities of color, have been actively harmed by this growth.**

A growth management strategy is a set of broad strategies that inform how the City of Durham and County of Durham make decisions about where to direct new development, what infrastructure to invest in, and what kind of development to approve. Durham needs a growth management strategy that helps us build the kind of community residents want to see and increases access, equitably, in our community. As Durham's grows and invests in equitable access to transportation, housing, and daily needs, new public and private development, projects, and initiatives should assess, acknowledge, and mitigate any negative impacts and potential displacement in the community.

While the place types (see [Place Types on page 179](#)) help us understand what residents desire for a specific site, the growth management strategy takes a comprehensive view of how larger areas may change. There are three broad strategies that Durham should use together to limit city expansion, manage orderly growth and development, and encourage small-scale changes in existing neighborhoods:



*Intersection of Angier St. and Driver St. Durham. 2023.*



## 15-Minute Community

During the Comprehensive Plan engagement process residents shared a desire for all areas of Durham to meet the needs of nearby residents and workers. Durham residents expressed the need for access to their everyday essentials as well as parks, shops, restaurants, trails, and community centers near where they live. In Durham's Community Goals and Objectives, residents have clearly stated the kinds of places they want to have in Durham. Residents see a Durham where all neighborhoods provide people with safe and convenient choices for goods and services, jobs, and housing options that are equitable, accessible, and affordable.

Many neighborhoods in Durham today have more or less a single use. For example, residential neighborhoods made of one type of housing, like single-family homes, limit what residents with differing income levels or housing needs can attain. Similarly, housing located far away from stores, schools, and employment places means residents must travel long distances, usually by car, to get to these essential places. These single-use areas mean that Durham residents must travel further to access all of their needs, causing traffic congestion, stress, poor air quality, and environmental impacts. It also means that those who have limited or no access to driving may not have their needs met. A community with primarily a single use negatively impacts equity, transportation, health, and the environment.

Looking forward, residents called for a Durham that includes complete neighborhoods where residents can access their daily needs by foot, bike, or transit ride within a 15-minute trip. This kind of community requires existing spaces to incrementally change, especially in communities where there are currently little or no options for accessing daily needs.

### **The Place Types, when working together through the Place Type Map, form a larger community with these key concepts:**

- » All existing neighborhoods should change incrementally to incorporate a variety of housing options with a mix of units, heights, and densities, including accessory dwelling units, garage apartments, and tiny homes, that are affordable and attainable to those with the least access to housing
- » Residents should expect to see vacant lots in already developed areas filled in with new uses that provide access to daily needs and that fit in with the scale of the neighborhood even as additional units, densities, and uses are mixed in
- » All places should have an improved transportation network and connectivity by prioritizing residents who walk, bike, roll, or ride transit
- » Car-oriented places, like suburban shopping areas with large parking lots, should incrementally change through the addition of buildings and retrofits of existing sites. These places should become more walkable, with safe pedestrian, bike, and transit access to and from the site.
- » Development should preserve the surrounding natural areas and promote and encourage walkability in neighborhoods by clustering homes together with good transportation connectivity
- » All neighborhoods should have safe and easy walkable access to schools, community centers, shopping areas, restaurants, and green space, integrated within and around neighborhoods, to allow residents to access their daily needs, connect with one another, and build relationships

## Urban Growth Boundary

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan established a Development Tier system to help distinguish different types or amounts of growth in Durham. In that plan, the Suburban Tier boundary acted as an Urban Growth Boundary. The rural tier, which includes all areas outside the Suburban Tier boundary, was to remain rural in character. Areas within the Suburban tier were envisioned to urbanize.

Durham's new Comprehensive Plan proposes not to retain the Tier system but establishes one boundary, an Urban Growth Boundary, instead. This is an area beyond which annexations and utility extensions should not occur, limiting significant development. The proposed Urban Growth Boundary is smaller than the previously approved Suburban Tier. The Urban Growth Boundary balances the desires and needs to protect rural character, drinking water, and environmental

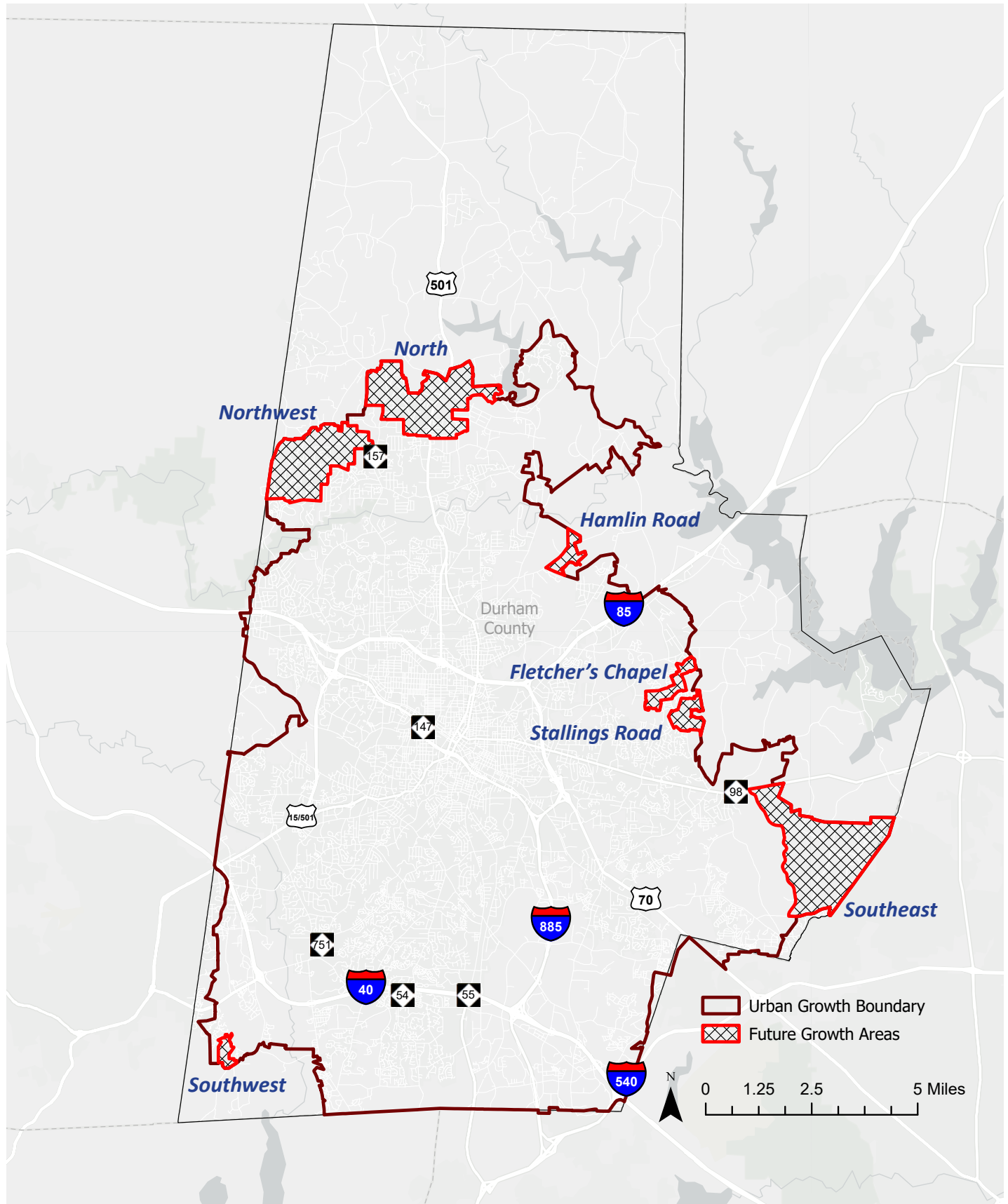
lands, and the desires and needs to accommodate existing residents and to provide enough housing for population growth ([Urban Growth Boundary and Future Growth Areas on page 109](#)).

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## Future Growth Areas

Future Growth Areas could become the next places to see development activity and are generally found on the fringes of the city limits ([Policy 120 on page 156](#), [Planning Tools for Growth Management on page 155](#), and [Urban Growth Boundary and Future Growth Areas on page 109](#)) Future Growth Areas are parts of Durham within the Urban Growth Boundary that are currently undeveloped or sparsely developed and need critical infrastructure upgrades (like water, sewer, or fire service) to serve new development. These infrastructure upgrades could be provided through City and County departments' long-range service planning, funding in City and County capital improvement programs, or development by private investment. Future Growth Areas are represented as a boundary on the Place Type Map with Place Types underneath to give guidance on what would eventually be desired in each area.

## Urban Growth Boundary and Future Growth Areas



## 2.4 Policies and Actions

Policies are the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan that work towards the community's vision (see the Community Goals and Objectives on page 17). Policies guide how future development should happen, help local leaders make decisions, and give guidance on what the Planning Department and other departments or organizations should be working on (listed as Actions for each topic). Actions are a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan.

### Read the Policies and Actions if you:

- » Need to find what outcomes the Durham community wants to see in development proposals, projects, or initiatives
- » Want to know which policies most directly related to new development cases (indicated with a (D))
- » Seek to understand how the Community Goals and Objectives may be implemented in Durham
- » Are looking for a list of policies to inform your department or organization's plan or initiative
- » Are interested in actions your department or organization can take to further the policies

## **How the Policies and Actions are organized:**

- » The policies are organized under broad policy topics (ex. Housing, Transportation, Environment) to orient you to the type of policies you will find
- » Each policy is grouped under a common group name (ex. Affordable Housing, Land Use and Transportation Coordination, Environmental Justice) to give you an understanding of the kinds of ideas the policies address
- » Each policy has a reference number (for example: Policy 1, Policy 2, Policy 3, etc.) for easy citing in other documents
- » Each policy topic (ex. Housing, Transportation, Environment) has a list of Actions that could work to implement the policies of that topic

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# Community Relationships

## Policy Topic

Policies related to equitable community engagement, transparency, and information about development and local government projects and programs

**Related Goals:**

[Community Relationships Goal on page 29](#)

[Health and Well-being Goal on page 97](#)

**Related Objectives:**

[Informed and Involved Community Engagement on page 31](#)

[Intentional Planning and Decision-Making on page 33](#)

[Intentional and Supported Youth Opportunities on page 99](#)

[Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities on page 35](#)



## Equitable Engagement

<b>Policy 1</b>	Partner with new and existing youth and older adult-serving organizations to improve the promotion of programs and services that pertain to each age group. Work with each group to learn the best ways to share information.
<b>Policy 2</b>	Prioritize those with the lowest incomes and the fewest options when using public funds to support or design public activities and events.
<b>Policy 3</b>	Prioritize the support of BIPOC and community neighborhood groups impacted by development and encourage residents to build alliances and partnerships within their communities. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 4</b>	Engage impacted and nearby communities in the process of identifying and remediating brownfield sites.

## Engagement on New Development

<b>Policy 5</b>	Ensure accessible, timely, and updated information about new development applications for residents, also informing them about how to impact the decision-making process. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 6</b>	Prioritize equitable engagement in land use planning initiatives, including the development of long-range plans, zoning map changes and annexations, Unified Development Ordinance updates, and other projects with public processes or impacts. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 7</b>	Ensure that the Zoning Map Change and Annexation application processes engage residents, and engage them equitably, especially reaching residents with the least access to public processes, such as Black and Hispanic/Latino, low-wealth, and rural residents. Applicants should contact nearby residents and organizations to identify key stakeholders and the best methods to reach them, per the City's Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 8</b>	Collaborate with residents on proposed mixed-use or transit-oriented communities, focused on those most in need of affordable housing and transportation. <b>(D)</b>

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Engagement in City and County Governments

<b>Policy 9</b>	Ensure multi-departmental, collaborative, and equitable community engagement for harmonious, cohesive, and strategic resident participation and communication.
<b>Policy 10</b>	Encourage and incentivize City and County departments to build on-going relationships with community members and community organizations.
<b>Policy 11</b>	Use the Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint to engage residents on regular updates of the Comprehensive Plan.
<b>Policy 12</b>	Coordinate with transportation planning agencies to ensure equitable engagement and outcomes through community engagement. Evaluate and anticipate project impacts in historically Black or disinvested communities.
<b>Policy 13</b>	Collaborate with other departments on plans and initiatives, and advocate for projects, policies, and processes that further the Community Goals and Objectives.
<b>Policy 14</b>	Encourage the use of both quantitative and qualitative data to show the impacts of growth and development on our community. Ensure that residents' input on how to better address residents' needs informs relevant plans and initiatives. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 15</b>	Provide forums for stakeholders to explore strategies and resources to guide investment and preservation in their communities.
<b>Policy 16</b>	Provide regular and equitable opportunities for residents to learn about planning (such as Planning Academy). Partner with local educational institutions to provide planning curriculum.
<b>Policy 17</b>	Acknowledge, promote, and recognize community-generated ideas and programs as well as community collaborations with City and County departments.
<b>Policy 18</b>	Collaborate with residents to identify sites for green space, parks, or recreation centers in low-income, Black, and Hispanic/Latino neighborhoods. Identify and address maintenance improvements needed for existing sites.

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Accessible Information

<b>Policy 19</b>	Utilize existing and develop new methods to ensure residents have easy access to information and resources regardless of identity, language, or physical or mental disability. These methods include, but are not limited to, the use of audio description, close captioning, sign language, alternative text, braille, and alternative print formats to convey information to people with disabilities. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 20</b>	Proactively ensure that all residents have equitable access to information resources, particularly those related to jobs and training resources. In addition to providing broadband access and information kiosks, use analog communication methods to share such opportunities with residents (such as through the water bill newsletter, radio and public television announcements, paper flyers, and neighborhood-based communication methods).
<b>Policy 21</b>	Create meaningful, accessible, and transparent engagement and decision-making opportunities that enable community members to help determine how transportation dollars are spent in their neighborhoods. Using the City's Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint, prioritize quality transportation that is equitably planned, designed, built, and maintained for low-income residents and communities of color.
<b>Policy 22</b>	Encourage equitable community participation in decision-making by reducing barriers for residents who have been excluded and negatively impacted by government decisions. This should be done by providing stipends, childcare, and other necessities.


**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases



## Community Relationships Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Community Relationships topic.

1. Work with transportation agencies (such as GoTriangle, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC-MPO), and regional jurisdictions) to develop a plan for equitable regional transportation planning engagement with residents.
2. Create a transportation funding transparency report for residents. Provide engagement and feedback opportunities for determining which transportation investments will be funded.
3. Work with the City's Equity & Inclusion Department and the County Racial Equity Officer on inter-departmental and inter-agency collaborations on equity in working towards the Community Goals and Objectives.
4. Conduct transit stop assessments to determine equitable placement and frequency.
5. Explore broadening the geographic range for notification of nearby property owners for zoning and development processes, improving notifications for nearby people who are not property owners, and using more accessible and timely methods of disseminating information about new development applications.
6. Expand language access for all Planning department communications and engagement.
7. Develop partnerships with local organizations and groups to improve equitable community engagement opportunities and participation.
8. Incorporate the use of non-digital methods to notify residents of planning processes, such as mailed notices, radio and public television announcements, paper fliers, and neighborhood communication methods.
9. Develop plans for remediation of former industrial sites, particularly in East Durham. Collaborate with city-, state-, and federal-led initiatives to remediate brownfield sites.
10. Develop a plan to protect and support undocumented residents and mixed status families. This should include providing access to local resources and allowing alternative identification documents as needed.
11. Use resident input and the Community Goals and Objectives to revise the Planning Academy curriculum and develop a viable plan for regular and frequent sessions for the community.
12. Use the Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint to develop a new process for engagement on changes to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) (via text amendments).

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13. Use the Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint to continue to update expectations and requirements for community engagement in applications for zoning map changes and annexations.
  14. Expand accessibility of City and County departmental communications and engagement so that residents with physical or mental disabilities have access to information and opportunities to engage.
  15. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to reduce the number of development approvals that require quasi-judicial hearings. (The quasi-judicial process requires things like expert testimony related to specific review factors only, extra fees, and an extended process which make this type of hearing inaccessible both for residents who wish to participate and for individual or small-scale applicants to submit projects that require this review.)
  16. Develop a planning hub in public libraries to give residents access to digital and hard copy resources of planning engagement, the comprehensive plan, and other public materials.
  17. Start equitable engagement on city and county projects and investment early in the process to allow input before most of the design work is complete and to prevent unintended consequences.

# Neighborhoods

## Policy Topic

Policies related to neighborhoods, urban design, and preventing displacement

**Related Goals:**

[Sense of Place Goal on page 21](#)

[Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities on page 35](#)

[Health and Well-being Goal on page 97](#)

**Related Objectives:**

[Honoring and Celebrating Culture and Communities on page 23](#)

[Multi-Generational, Diverse, Resilient, and Inclusive Neighborhoods on page 25](#)

[Rooted and Connected Communities on page 27](#)

[Safe and Protected Neighborhoods on page 47](#)

[Healthy, Dignified, and Welcoming Neighborhoods on page 45](#)

[Complete Neighborhoods: Resources for Thriving Lives on page 29](#)

### Investments in Neighborhoods

<b>Policy 23</b>	Expand and promote opportunities for all residents to connect socially and participate fully in the vitality of their community.
<b>Policy 24</b>	Expand broadband internet access in areas where currently not available, particularly in the County.
<b>Policy 25</b>	Develop strategies for community safety by working with residents to create the type of environment where even the most underrepresented and vulnerable residents feel safe. Do not create hostile, surveillance- and defensible space-based environments, such as adding spikes to benches or walls as an anti-crime strategy or anti-homelessness strategy. Help reduce crime and homelessness by supporting new and existing community centers, mental health resources, and after-school care.

### Preventing Displacement

<b>Policy 26</b>	Develop programs and policies to proactively intervene before residents (whether owners or renters) and businesses are displaced. These programs and policies should be designed to identify early indicators of neighborhood change and ensure that residents and small business owners can remain in their existing neighborhoods and communities.
<b>Policy 27</b>	Work with residents to determine whether public projects will cause involuntary displacement. Modify the projects to reduce or eliminate displacement.
<b>Policy 28</b>	Ensure that local communities benefit from new public investment, new public development, and new private development that receives public incentives. This could include investing in people, programs, or services in nearby neighborhoods or by prioritizing local contractors, workers, and consultants, or by training local residents to fill these roles. <b>(D)</b>

***(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*

## Historic Resources

<b>Policy 29</b>	Focus public funds and publicly supported programs for historic preservation on telling BIPOC histories that have gone untold, and on physically preserving and memorializing them. Strive for a more inclusive telling of our history, including indigenous and pre-colonist histories, rural histories, immigrant and refugee histories, and Black histories (including the contributions of enslaved persons within our community), through preservation of relevant buildings and sites, placement of neighborhood identification signs and public art, educational signage in relevant locations, and other means.
<b>Policy 30</b>	Develop strategies to address current and historic land use inequities affecting BIPOC communities. Historic land use inequities have included the lack of acknowledgment of indigenous communities prior to colonization, the lack of maintenance and recognition of Black cemeteries, community displacement and other negative impacts of the Durham Freeway, and the location of industrial uses or lands near historically Black neighborhoods. (D)
<b>Policy 31</b>	Encourage the preservation and the incorporation of historic resources (buildings, structures, or sites) in the design of new developments. Promote new developments that are compatible with the architectural elements of significant historic resources. (D)

## Development in Neighborhoods

<b>Policy 32</b>	Discourage development patterns, such as exclusively single-family neighborhoods, that segregate and concentrate high-wealth communities. (D)
<b>Policy 33</b>	Encourage the retrofit of aging and vacant shopping centers and excess parking areas for the development of pedestrian-oriented places that include small or tiny homes and affordable housing, and which provide residents nearby access to necessary goods and services. (D)
<b>Policy 34</b>	Encourage neighborhood-scale clinics and pharmacies that give people in underserved areas nearby access to healthcare providers. (D)

*(D) Policies indicated with a (D) symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*



## Neighborhood Design


<b>Policy 35</b>	Design infill development and new neighborhoods with elements of Durham’s historic architecture and neighborhood patterns to be rooted in and connected to Durham’s history and surrounding neighborhoods. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 36</b>	Design new developments to prioritize pedestrians in ways compatible with existing neighborhoods, such as by placing buildings close to the street, oriented toward sidewalks, green spaces, or community areas where people gather; locating vehicle access and parking to the side or rear of buildings and lots; maintaining connected streets and frequent intersections; and designing buildings to engage with the street through stoops, porches, or other welcoming entranceways. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 37</b>	Retrofit buildings, sites, and neighborhoods to improve transportation options for residents not in vehicles and of varied mobility needs. Strategies could include placing buildings close to the street and orienting them towards the sidewalk; providing green space, shade trees, or community areas where people gather; locating vehicle access and parking to the side or rear of lots and buildings; and designing buildings to engage with the street through such elements as stoops, porches, or other welcoming entranceways. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 38</b>	Preserve and create natural areas, open spaces, community gardens, and trees within new housing developments or redevelopments—particularly for affordable housing—to improve the physical and mental health of residents. Set aside land for open space by allowing greater building heights or densities when designing housing. <b>(D)</b>


**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Neighborhoods Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Neighborhoods topic.

1. Review and revise the infill standards in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to reflect surrounding neighborhoods and Durham's history while still allowing for a mix of housing types.
2. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to require connections between new neighborhoods and existing adjacent neighborhoods, especially enforcing bike and pedestrian connections when vehicle connections are not feasible.
3. Evaluate vacant lots inside the Urban Growth Boundary to determine whether they are best suited for use for housing or green space and work with property owners to develop a plan for the best use of these lots to meet the Community Goals and Objectives.
4. Increase tree planting efforts in existing neighborhoods, using equity to establish priority neighborhoods.
5. Work with community members to ensure sufficient and desirable lighting levels on streets, sidewalks, and trails, in a manner that ensures a comfortable environment, contributes to pedestrian safety, and conserves energy. Work with community members to ensure that lighting on development sites does not negatively impact nearby residents.
6. Review and revise Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) lighting standards with community input to address safety concerns and effects of light pollution.
7. Remove Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design from use by City and County department policies and standards.
8. Evaluate public investments to determine whether they will cause involuntary displacement. Create strategies to prevent displacement when possible and mitigate it when prevention is not possible. Assess the feasibility of including affordable housing as a routine step in designing every public project.
9. Coordinate Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects with other City and County departments that can provide programs and services to support residents in neighborhoods where an investment is planned, ensuring that current residents can benefit from that investment.
10. Look at rents and other early indicators of neighborhood change to determine areas where anti-displacement and housing affordability programs should focus.
11. Identify neighborhoods where displacement has occurred and develop programs to support residents' return to those areas. Connect this work to development of a racial equity fund.

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12. Monitor and publicize developers or companies who are buying up multiple homes and lots for public awareness, as recommended by the Racial Equity Task Force.
  13. Analyze the impact of property tax trends on homeowner displacement and develop strategies to reduce displacement.
  14. Develop a local housing trust fund to support anti-displacement activities and increase affordable housing options.
  15. Institutionalize story-gathering and storytelling efforts to bring forth the variety of perspectives that shape Durham's unique history; house these stories in permanent and accessible physical and digital venues, as recommended by the Racial Equity Task Force.
  16. Work with tribes and local experts (including OBSN Tribal Council, Catawba Nation, Trading Path Association) to document and protect the location and natural markers of the Indian Trading Path and relevant indigenous sites.
  17. Coordinate with North Carolina Office of State Archeology to ensure significant archaeological sites will remain protected during reviews of new development proposals, understanding that the exact locations of potential archeological remains must also remain protected.
  18. Utilize resources such as matching grants (through local, state, and federal funding) to conduct boundary and ground-penetrating-radar surveys for known Black cemeteries on public land, inventory their contents, improve pedestrian access, prevent theft or vandalism, and make repairs.
  19. Work with property owners to document and protect Black cemeteries on private land; seek and maintain access for the descendants of those buried.
  20. Include a summary of a site's demographic context in every rezoning staff report. Use this information to flag proposals for new industrial sites or other intense uses near historically Black neighborhoods.
  21. Include a summary of a site's historical context in every rezoning staff report, using data from Office of State Archaeology (OSA)/ State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and HPOweb.
  22. Maintain Durham's Architectural Inventory with regular (10-year) updates.
  23. Acknowledge, apologize for, and redress the local government's historical compliance in colonization and indigenous erasure, redlining, discrimination in housing covenants, urban renewal projects, and the neglect of historically Black cemeteries, as recommended by the Racial Equity Task Force.
  24. Create a local racial equity fund through City, County, and community partnerships aimed at closing the racial wealth gap, as recommended by the Racial Equity Task Force.
  25. Create interim solutions for providing internet access to those who currently live outside of broadband areas and encourage broadband expansion into these areas.

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26. Develop a list of core health services, which all neighborhoods should be able to access. Support and expand neighborhood health services (such as mobile clinics in neighborhoods without medical clinics).
  27. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and other regulatory documents to eliminate barriers to the installation of neighborhood identification signs and other memorial markers.
  28. Support and fund community-led public art that focuses on sharing the history and culture of BIPOC communities in Durham. Prioritize local artists in this work.
  29. Provide more secure drop boxes for the proper disposal of unneeded medications.
  30. Provide clean and safe public restrooms throughout the city. Establish “health kiosks” for houseless individuals, providing information, sanitation options, supplies, and intervention opportunities.
  31. Seek legal authority to develop municipal broadband.

# Housing Policy Topic

Policies related to accessing housing, including finding and affording housing, and reducing barriers to getting housing

**Related Goals:**

[Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities on page 35](#)

[Health and Well-being Goal on page 97](#)

**Related Objectives:**

[Creative and Varied Housing Solutions on page 39](#)

[Accessible Housing and Neighborhoods: Designing for Everyone on page 41](#)

[Affordable Housing on page 43](#)

[Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities on page 35](#)

## Affordable Housing

<b>Policy 39</b>	Affordable housing should be included in new development proposals. Encourage and incentivize housing that meets the needs of Durham residents in terms of cost, unit size, housing type, ADA accessibility, and location. Tenures for housing affordability should run, where feasible, with the land in perpetuity. When this is not possible, affordability tenures should last for a minimum of 30 years and have an associated deed restriction. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 40</b>	Preserve existing affordable housing, both regulated (particularly public housing) and unregulated (private property), in good repair. Support government agencies (such as Durham Housing Authority) and private property owners in updating and maintaining low-cost housing through financial assistance, grants, or incentives.
<b>Policy 41</b>	Produce more affordable housing of all types, prioritizing types that accommodate households earning at or below 30% and 50% of area median income (AMI). Develop affordable housing to follow an accepted design standard and set of amenities. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 42</b>	Create strategies that reduce the cost of affordable housing, through innovative technologies (such as prefabricated or modular housing, or tiny homes); reuse of existing structures (such as conversion of hotels, offices, or retail spaces); creation and use of public subsidies; and reduced process or regulatory barriers.
<b>Policy 43</b>	Equitably distribute housing throughout Durham that is accessible to those with low incomes. Identify and ensure appropriate locations for affordable housing, public housing, and supportive housing near jobs, services, and existing or planned transit services.
<b>Policy 44</b>	Increase access to homeownership, especially among low-income residents, people of color, and indigenous people to counteract historical policies and programs, such as redlining, that have restricted access to ownership, and wealth-building. In addition to traditional ownership models, this access may be achieved through alternative paths to wealth-building, such as community land trusts and community ownership.

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Accessible Housing

<b>Policy 45</b>	Allow and incentivize housing of varied unit types, heights, and densities in all neighborhoods, prioritizing homes that are affordable and accessible to those with the greatest need. This housing variety should include accessory dwelling units, garage apartments, tiny homes, and middle-density housing (such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses/row homes, or small apartment buildings), and should, through size and form, respect existing neighborhood character.
<b>Policy 46</b>	Encourage, incentivize, and require a variety of housing types in new developments that allow for a mix of age groups, and discourage developer commitments that isolate seniors by restricting housing based on age. (D)
<b>Policy 47</b>	Work towards healthier housing and lower utility costs for residents by using green building techniques and technologies (such as solar panels, passive solar design, low VOC materials), particularly in affordable housing units. Use durable, environmentally sustainable materials in publicly and privately funded affordable housing to create healthier homes.
<b>Policy 48</b>	Encourage the location of new residential development such that homes are within a safe ten-minute walking distance (approximately one-half mile) of public parkland. (D)

## Tenants' Rights

<b>Policy 49</b>	Develop strategies to support tenants and work towards a right to housing for residents in Durham. Seek legal authority for specific strategies that support this goal.
<b>Policy 50</b>	Encourage the preservation of existing mobile home parks. Provide a re-housing plan for residents when mobile home parks are redeveloped, prioritizing locations near existing parks or with similar access to amenities. (D)
<b>Policy 51</b>	Encourage maintenance of common areas and infrastructure in mobile home parks.

*(D) Policies indicated with a (D) symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*




## Housing Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Housing topic.


1. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to incentivize development that provides housing at affordable price points and of varied types. Incentives could include density bonuses, parking reductions, expedited processes, and other strategies.
2. Encourage the use of proffers or statutory development agreements to commit to the development of affordable housing and to the acceptance of housing vouchers in new development.
3. Ensure that affordability commitments are included in any development receiving or set to receive public funding or tax incentives from the City or the County. Encourage commitments to provide affordable housing and other community benefits that are aligned with the Community Goals and Objectives when discretionary approvals, easements, or favorable infrastructure arrangements are granted.
4. Seek legal authority (through state-enabling legislation) to require the inclusion of affordable housing units in new development and in redevelopment.
5. Publicize affordable housing developments that have met the priorities of the community as examples from which other builders can learn.
6. Create tools to develop quality affordable housing on vacant or abandoned property. These could include City lien removal; other public assistance and incentives to property owners; or partnerships with local universities, institutions, businesses, and property owners to convert or create affordable housing.
7. The Planning and Community Development departments should work together to maintain a regular assessment of housing needs and housing construction feasibility in Durham. These efforts would include collecting and analyzing relevant data and possibly a housing market study.
8. Create or expand programs to support property owners who maintain affordability (either regulated or unregulated) when updating currently affordable rental housing units.
9. Explore opportunities for vacant or abandoned homes to be made active housing units, seeking legal authority where needed.
10. Support the Durham Housing Authority (DHA) efforts to rehabilitate or redevelop existing public housing units, ensuring that existing residents are involved in the design process and other decision-making, and can remain in their communities. Support DHA and DHA residents in the transition process as units are renovated or redeveloped, as recommended by the Racial Equity Task Force.



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11. Work with Durham Housing Authority (DHA) to establish a financially sustainable system of continuous upkeep and maintenance of public housing communities, prioritizing the health and safety of residents. This should include clear communication with and accountability to DHA residents.
  12. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to increase the presence of middle-density housing (duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes or rowhomes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), small apartment buildings, and other small lot housing types), and ensure that land use regulations allow for flexibility in the creation of new housing within neighborhoods.
  13. Develop and expand programs that remove barriers to housing access, such as by eliminating background checks and application fees, seeking legal authority to apply these strategies where needed.
  14. Work to protect residents from significant rent increases to reduce displacement of low-wealth residents. Seek legal authority to apply these strategies where needed.
  15. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to incentivize new development and redevelopment that includes middle-density housing, particularly for homes that are affordable to lower-income residents.
  16. In neighborhoods that already include varied housing types (small apartments, triplexes, duplexes, and so on), review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to allow that same mix of units per lot to continue, with a focus on adding affordable units.
  17. Work to eliminate zoning districts and neighborhoods with exclusively single-family zoning. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to allow and create middle-density housing options in areas that currently only allow for or contain single-family housing, with a focus on adding affordable units.
  18. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to ensure that new development is compatible with and respects existing neighborhood character and history, particularly when allowing for more varied housing options; this could include creating form-based codes or revising infill standards.
  19. Review and revise existing policies, programs, and regulations to remove barriers and create support for innovative, energy-efficient, and creative housing options, such as multigenerational housing that supports large family structures, single-room occupancy, shared housing, cohousing, senior care homes, and cooperative housing.
  20. Review and revise zoning district requirements and locations to focus density increases in areas accessible to transit and remove parking requirements in those districts.

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- 21. Incentivize homeowners to create affordable additional or accessory housing on their property to increase housing options.
  - 22. Encourage the inclusion of units that can accommodate families (such as those having three or more bedrooms) in new and rehabilitated multifamily housing developments, including units designed to flexibly serve single- or multi-family households.
  - 23. Create and expand programs to provide training, education, assistance, and strategies for residents to financially prepare for and otherwise move towards homeownership and wealth-building.
  - 24. Allow, create, and support alternative ownership models (rather than the traditional mortgage-based, single-family model), such as local land trusts, shared housing, and housing cooperatives; create affordable housing options that allow renters to build equity and create pathways to ownership.
  - 25. Expand programs that support existing homeowners in affording, updating, and maintaining their homes, such as by expanding property tax relief programs, providing funding for necessary repairs for low-income homeowners, or providing access to low-cost forgivable loans. Focus on people of color, indigenous people, and vulnerable populations, such as low-income households, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
  - 26. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to incentivize affordable housing, and develop mixed-income housing, along accessible and high-frequency transit corridors.
  - 27. Allow and develop innovative, affordable housing on public and institutional properties (including schools, libraries, places of worship, and colleges) and particularly providing affordable, quality housing for schoolteachers and staff.
  - 28. Prioritize the creation and preservation of housing that is affordable to existing low-income residents in the production of affordable housing citywide, and particularly in historically lower-income neighborhoods experiencing growth pressure. Explore the use of housing plus transportation costs in determining affordability levels.
  - 29. Invest in affordable housing in historically redlined areas and neighborhoods impacted by gentrification and displacement. Develop a map of these neighborhoods, in collaboration with community partners.
  - 30. The Planning, Community Development, Economic and Workforce Development, and Transportation departments should work together to coordinate effective placement of affordable housing, jobs, and transit services.
  - 31. Work with residents who use rental housing vouchers to improve their access to housing options. Encourage landlords to accept these vouchers and require voucher acceptance where the City or County is providing financial or infrastructure investments for housing development.

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- 32. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to remove regulatory barriers to creating supportive, shared, transitional, or emergency housing.
  - 33. Ensure that all housing units created with public assistance funds remain affordable.
  - 34. The City and County should work together to implement a land banking program to proactively purchase properties and resell them to developers in return for specific public benefits aligned with the Community Goals and Objectives, primarily providing affordable housing for those with the greatest need.
  - 35. Encourage, allow, and support the conversion of unused buildings (such as City or County owned buildings and former hotels/motels) to temporary, emergency, or permanent affordable housing.
  - 36. Expand Durham's gap financing program to assist in the creation of new affordable housing units.
  - 37. Create an affordable housing preservation fund to help retain the affordability of unregulated (naturally occurring) housing units as they are updated and maintained.
  - 38. Support developers interested in providing affordable housing units in new developments or existing buildings through collaboration and education.
  - 39. Review regulations and remove barriers to the use of innovative technologies for housing.
  - 40. Provide examples of plans demonstrating sustainable home designs for use by applicants and developers.
  - 41. Create and expand programs that provide education and financial support (around weatherization; lead paint, asbestos and hazardous materials remediation; installation of solar panels, rain gardens, and shade trees; use of low VOC paints and materials, high-efficiency appliances, and home systems) to residents, in support of healthier homes
  - 42. Incentivize developers to create or retrofit healthy, sustainable, and affordable homes.
  - 43. Seek legal authority (through state-enabling legislation) to establish a local Tenants' Bill of Rights, as recommended by the Racial Equity Task Force.
  - 44. Create and maintain a list of Durham landlords to improve communication and accountability related to rental properties.
  - 45. Assess all proposed housing developments for proximity to parkland and require or incentivize inclusion of new public parkland where such development is not within one-half mile of existing parkland.
  - 46. Work with the Community Development department and owners of rental properties, including mobile home parks, to rehouse residents when needed.
  - 47. Seek legal authority (through state-enabling legislation) to protect mobile home residents as part of a tenant's bill of rights.
  - 48. Reassess renovation requirements for moving mobile homes, providing educational and financial support to residents as required.

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49. Develop or support programs that help residents in updating, renovating, and moving mobile homes.
  50. Revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to create a new Mobile Home Park zoning district designation to preserve existing parks and provide greater protections and predictability for mobile home park residents. Apply zoning map changes for all existing mobile home parks to incorporate them into these new zoning districts.
  51. Establish minimum site standards for mobile home parks and add site standards to the minimum housing code, where permitted by law.
  52. Develop or support programs to upgrade and update common areas and infrastructure in mobile home parks.
  53. Develop tree-planting, community gardens, and beautification programs in mobile home parks.
  54. Provide regular community updates on City affordable housing investments and programs (including bond funds) to meet the needs of low-income families.
  55. Support and expand coordinated efforts to provide resources and assistance to houselessness individuals, working with inter-agency staff and community partners.
  56. Explore revisions to the Affordable Housing Density Bonus in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to increase utilization, such as allowing affordable rental units with an average affordability level of 60% Area Median Income (AMI) or lower.

# Transportation Policy Topic

Policies related to public transit, bicycle and sidewalk infrastructure, and streets

**Related Goals:**

[Transportation Goal on page 49](#)

[Health and Well-being Goal on page 97](#)

**Related Objectives:**

[Intentional and Equitable Transportation Investment on page 51](#)

[Healthy, Safe, and Dignified Transportation on page 53](#)

[Accessible Transportation: Designing for Everyone on page 55](#)

[Intentional and Coordinated Transportation and Land Use on page 57](#)

[Connectivity on page 59](#)

[Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities on page 35](#)

[Intentional and Supported Youth Opportunities on page 99](#)

## Sidewalks

<b>Policy 52</b>	Create and maintain a complete, safe, and accessible community-wide sidewalk network that connects residents within the Urban Growth Boundary to the resources needed to fulfill daily needs. Ensure this sidewalk network serves everyone in Durham, prioritizing residents who do not have access to a car, areas with high pedestrian injuries and fatalities, and neighborhoods where residents have few transportation options. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 53</b>	Fill in gaps in the existing sidewalk, bicycle, and transit infrastructure to create an accessible, safe, and direct transportation network for all residents. Focus on improving residents' access to needed resources, including healthcare services, grocery stores, employment areas, and schools. Using equity and safety measures, prioritize improvements for the most vulnerable and at-risk transportation network users throughout Durham City and County. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 54</b>	Strategically invest in and maintain sidewalk infrastructure outside of the Urban Growth Boundary to provide safe access for rural residents who do not have a car. Sidewalks or off-road paths should be placed in areas where a concentration of residents live, near schools, or in surrounding commercial areas.

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Transportation Investments

<b>Policy 55</b>	Encourage new developments to fill in gaps or upgrade transportation infrastructure by building or dedicating rights-of-way within and adjacent to the project site.
<b>Policy 56</b>	Reduce and eliminate traffic deaths, injuries, and crashes, in alignment with the Vision Zero Program, by redesigning streets for safe travel and lower speeds. Improve pedestrian safety and circulation barriers and discourage speeding traffic and unsafe turning movements. Include traffic-calming measures such as reducing lane widths, creating protected bicycle lanes, building off-road bicycle and pedestrian paths, and reducing pedestrian crossing distances through curb extensions or pedestrian refuge medians. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 57</b>	Drastically reduce automobile dependency and the use of fossil fuels by encouraging public and private investment in pedestrian, transit, paratransit, bicycle, carpooling, and electric vehicle facilities. Limit investment in infrastructure that prioritizes single-occupancy gas or diesel cars. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 58</b>	Sustain a high-quality, fare-free transit system within Durham as well as affordable regional transit options.
<b>Policy 59</b>	Improve regional transportation options to destinations in the Triangle. Prioritize transportation services for residents without access to a car, including pedestrians, transit riders, paratransit riders, and bicyclists, over vehicle drivers.
<b>Policy 60</b>	Streets maintained by the City should have a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 56 or higher, with equity used as a primary criterion for prioritizing streets for maintenance.

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Accessible Transportation

<b>Policy 61</b>	Improve ADA accessibility at crosswalks, sidewalks, and bus stops for all people, regardless of ability or age. Improve pedestrian infrastructure, including street crossings, intersections, signals, wayfinding, and sidewalks prioritizing the safety of people with disabilities, senior citizens, students, and families with young children. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 62</b>	Improve and modernize the paratransit system (Durham ACCESS) to better serve those who rely on it. Invest in efficient, reliable, and dignified paratransit services through on-demand paratransit options, efficient scheduling methods and protocols, and disability awareness training for paratransit professionals.
<b>Policy 63</b>	Prioritize sharing transit and transportation information and materials, including transit schedules, route maps, surveys and announcements, Web content, bus shelter signage, paratransit materials, and smart device apps, in formats that are accessible to all people, particularly residents with disabilities.

## Equitable Engagement in Transportation

<b>Policy 64</b>	Support and resource a community-led effort to remediate past harms from the development of the Durham Freeway. This could include reconnecting neighborhoods and restoring or creating desired services, infrastructure, housing, employment, green space, and other amenities as well as improving bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connections between the north and south sides of the Durham Freeway.
<b>Policy 65</b>	Equitably engage with communities early in the design of new transportation projects or investments to ensure these are aligned with community needs and priorities and are designed to prevent unintended consequences such as displacement. Prioritize transportation investments in communities not prioritized in the past (such as Bragtown, Walltown, Merrick Moore, the Holloway Street corridor, and East Durham).

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases



## Land Use and Transportation Coordination

<b>Policy 66</b>	Plan future transit corridors near existing jobs, education, commercial, and mixed-use centers to support an accessible, convenient, safe, and direct transit network. Prioritize existing public transit and public transit riders over new modes and users.
<b>Policy 67</b>	Improve transportation and land use planning coordination efforts to proactively design future transportation systems that are healthy, safe, dignified, equitable, and sustainable. Reduce Durham's carbon emissions by supporting coordinated transportation and land use policies and programs that reduce overall vehicle miles travelled (VMT).
<b>Policy 68</b>	Reduce the amount of land used for automobile travel and parking and encourage pedestrian- and transit-friendly design. Discourage conversion of land into uses primarily or exclusively supportive of automobiles, such as gas stations and car washes. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 69</b>	Plan transportation connections between affordable housing, public housing, and shelters for low-income and houseless residents to offer safe access to nearby jobs, education facilities, services, and transit.
<b>Policy 70</b>	Ensure new development is connected to adjacent neighborhoods and commercial areas with walking and biking infrastructure. This can include building, improving, or dedicating right-of-way for sidewalks, and constructing bicycle paths, greenways, off-street bicycle and pedestrian connections, bus stop infrastructure, and collector streets, as called for in locally adopted transportation plans. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 71</b>	Support improvements for youth who walk, bike, or roll to school by creating safe routes that connect schools to adjacent neighborhoods, transit stops, and youth-serving destinations.


**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Transportation Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Transportation topic.

1. Assess and revise transportation projects and programs so that they prioritize low-income and BIPOC communities with fewer transportation options.
2. Coordinate paratransit operations and Durham Public Schools Transportation to provide access for students with special needs.
3. Explore options for updating the Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) process to prioritize pedestrians, transit riders, paratransit riders, bicyclists, and persons using other non-vehicular modes of travel when reviewing new development applications.
4. Create off-road paths between streets (ex: dead-end streets, cul-de-sacs, etc.) within and between neighborhoods to increase bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.
5. Continue to preserve rights-of-way for future transit, trails, sidewalks, and bicycle paths, and require that new development provide transportation easements for planned alignments and transit stops.
6. Create plans and policies for street designs that prioritize the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.
7. Explore the City taking over maintenance responsibility of key streets currently maintained by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to more easily retrofit them in ways that further local priorities.
8. Create stronger non-automobile regional transportation connections (ex. Chapel Hill, Raleigh, and Raleigh-Durham International Airport).
9. Right-size City and County vehicles to navigate narrow streets including small vehicles in high-density areas such as downtown.
10. Assess and update the previous benchmark of reducing daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita to 30 by 2040, to more significantly reduce VMT.
11. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) off-street parking requirements including removal of minimum parking requirements where possible.
12. Expand transportation demand management programs by encouraging and incentivizing employees to carpool, ride transit, bike, walk, or telecommute.
13. Assess and improve bus shelters and the surrounding sidewalk network for accessibility upgrades, especially in communities with residents who currently rely on the bus system.
14. Change street designs through restriping or redesigning to reduce vehicle speeds, especially on streets that are shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

Consider funding mechanisms and financial impacts in this exploration.

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15. Advocate at the state level for transportation funding that prioritizes pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure and reduces funding that is restricted to highway projects.
  16. Proactively plan for impacts of automated and connected vehicles.
  17. Fill in sidewalk, bicycle, and transit network gaps, prioritizing areas and communities with the least mobility.
  18. Increase funding and expedite processes to make improvements at bus stops.
  19. Revise the Reference Guide for Development and/or the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to include Complete Street cross sections for all streets based on street type and Place Type. Streets generally should be no wider than necessary from curb to curb, to limit pedestrian crossing distances.
  20. Expand use of the sidewalk payment-in-lieu program and explore payment-in-lieu options for other transportation improvements to apply in development applications. Complete regular updates of payment-in-lieu fees for transportation improvements.
  21. Continue and expand on a prioritization model for building sidewalks based on equity, transit access, engagement, and pedestrian traffic.
  22. Review and improve the paratransit system by making the scheduling process more efficient, expanding on-demand paratransit service, and providing training for paratransit professionals on engagement with people with disabilities.
  23. Collaborate with Durham County on the implementation of a Transit Plan paratransit study and improvements.
  24. Develop and fund a program to build and maintain sidewalks in unincorporated Durham County.

# Environment and Public Spaces Policy Topic

Policies related to green space, environmental justice, farming, healthy food, climate change, sustainability, and resiliency

## Related Goals:

[Environment Goal on page 61](#)

[Resilient, Carbon-Neutral, Biodiverse, and Generationally-Oriented Communities on page 73](#)

[Health and Well-being Goal on page 97](#)

## Related Objectives:

[Equitable Access to Green Space on page 63](#)

[Healthy and Clean Air, Water, and Land on page 65](#)

[Harmonious and Respectful Development on page 67](#)

[Resilient, Carbon-Neutral, Biodiverse, and Generationally-Oriented Communities on page 73](#)

[Healthy Food Access on page 71](#)

[Equitable, Safe and Well-Maintained Public Spaces on page 75](#)

[Affordable and Intentional Activities and Events on page 77](#)

[Welcoming, Inclusive, and Celebratory Public Spaces and Events on page 79](#)

[Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities on page 35](#)

[Intentional and Supported Youth Opportunities on page 99](#)

## Climate Change

<b>Policy 72</b>	Transition to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in Durham by 2050, creating new and more abundant opportunities to reduce and eliminate emissions in the ways we live, work, learn, and play. Reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by 30% compared to 2005 levels by 2030. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 73</b>	Encourage and create local, distributed, and decentralized methods of energy production and renewable energy, such as solar energy and geothermal energy.
<b>Policy 74</b>	Discourage the expansion of natural gas infrastructure, particularly for new developments. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 75</b>	Phase out and eventually eliminate fossil fuel use in Durham.

***(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*

## Protecting Sensitive Land

<b>Policy 76</b>	Ensure that a minimum of 30% of the land area of Durham County is placed in permanent conservation by 2050. Encourage permanent conservation of land, especially publicly owned land, that is most suitable for permanent protection, such as natural heritage areas, forested tracts, and bottomlands. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 77</b>	Protect Durham’s most sensitive natural areas (including floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitats, hillsides, drinking water sources, critical watersheds, and natural heritage areas) from the impacts of development. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 78</b>	Ensure that new developments are designed to protect the integrity of nearby public parklands and nature preserves. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 79</b>	Locate open space in new development so that it protects the most environmentally sensitive portions of the site and creates large and contiguous habitat areas, rather than narrow and disconnected strips of open space. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 80</b>	Encourage stream buffer widths of 300 feet on each side of perennial streams (600 feet total) where feasible, to create and protect wildlife habitat corridors. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 81</b>	Existing habitat areas and wildlife movement corridors should be left largely undisturbed to remain in their natural, vegetated state and to avoid fragmentation and disruption. These areas include Wildlife Habitat Areas or Natural Corridors in adopted open space plans or identified NC Natural Heritage Areas. Some disturbance may be allowed for road crossings, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure, if minimized. Staff will recommend against proposed structures or parking in these areas. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 82</b>	Discourage development that contributes to a loss of biodiversity, particularly through disruptive clear-cutting and mass grading. Mass grading should be discouraged for new residential projects. When mass grading of new development sites is proposed, it should occur in phases rather than across the entire area at once, to reduce on-site stormwater runoff and erosion, and to retain tree cover between the phases of construction. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 83</b>	New developments should include tree coverage beyond that required by development regulations. Tree canopy should be distributed throughout new developments to maintain a consistent mature tree canopy wherever possible. <b>(D)</b>

***(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*

## Air and Water Quality

<b>Policy 84</b>	Protect Durham’s drinking water sources. Ensure that all residents have access to clean drinking water following equitable investment in water infrastructure. Protect water sources that provide drinking water for adjacent counties.
<b>Policy 85</b>	Reduce water usage in Durham to increase drought resilience and reduce strain on water supplies and treatment systems.
<b>Policy 86</b>	Strongly discourage new development that will worsen air quality, particularly when it will impact nearby residents. (D)

## Farmland, Working Land, and Food Access

<b>Policy 87</b>	Protect, preserve, and support farmland, working land, and farmers, particularly among BIPOC communities and others who have been historically disadvantaged.
<b>Policy 88</b>	Eliminate food apartheid by supporting and creating ways for residents to access healthy foods (encourage small-scale grocery and food markets in communities with limited access to healthy foods and help to facilitate local supply chain distribution between growers and grocery stores). (D)
<b>Policy 89</b>	Encourage sustainable and biodiverse agricultural practices.

*(D) Policies indicated with a (D) symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*

## Environmental Justice

<b>Policy 90</b>	Remediate, enhance, and protect Durham’s water, air, and land resources so that everyone benefits from a clean and healthy environment. Prioritize communities historically burdened by pollution.
<b>Policy 91</b>	Remediate the ongoing legacy of environmental racism and the impacts of highways, industrial uses, landfills, incinerators, and other disruptive land uses on human health.
<b>Policy 92</b>	Increase Durham’s urban tree canopy, prioritizing neighborhoods and communities with comparably less canopy. Prioritize native trees in replanting efforts. Achieve 55% tree canopy coverage in the City by 2040. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 93</b>	Strongly discourage new development in floodplains. For existing development in floodplains, support and encourage retrofits to increase flood resilience. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 94</b>	Implement strategies to reduce the heat island effect and its impact on residents. Ensure that new developments mitigate the urban heat island effect in areas currently experiencing it. Encourage new developments that minimize impervious surfaces and include green infrastructure, reflective materials, and plentiful tree canopy. <b>(D)</b>

## Biodiversity

<b>Policy 95</b>	Protect and regenerate the natural environment and biodiversity in Durham by incentivizing development that prioritizes reuse, infill, and low-impact buildings and facilities. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 96</b>	Encourage the creation and preservation of natural wildlife habitat, particularly for pollinators and birds, on both public and private land. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 97</b>	Eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides on publicly owned and maintained land, except in cases where needed to control invasive, exotic, and nuisance species, or to maintain stormwater control measures.
<b>Policy 98</b>	Support ecological restoration of existing green spaces to improve their function and quality.
<b>Policy 99</b>	Encourage new development that incorporates native plants, wildlife habitats, natural landscaping, and that discourages invasive exotic species. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 100</b>	Decrease and mitigate light pollution to reduce its impact on humans and wildlife. <b>(D)</b>

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases



## Access to Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Recreation

<b>Policy 101</b>	Ensure that all residents living within the Urban Growth Boundary are within a safe ten-minute walking distance of a public park. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 102</b>	In new development, dedicate parks, recreation facilities, and other amenities for public use rather than as private space. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 103</b>	New developments should build or dedicate right-of-way for trails and greenways as per adopted trails and greenway plans. The trails and greenways system should link residential areas, schools, parks, institutions, shopping centers, and other greenway corridors. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 104</b>	Equitably invest in park maintenance, activities, special events programming, and accessibility upgrades throughout Durham.
<b>Policy 105</b>	Work with residents to design park activities, events, and special programming that reflect, honor, and welcome youth and seniors; LGBTQIA+, Black, and Hispanic/Latino communities, and other underserved residents.

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Green Infrastructure and Sustainability

<b>Policy 106</b>	Encourage green infrastructure, such as native trees and vegetation, protected green spaces, green roofs and walls, bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable pavement. Green infrastructure should be prioritized in low-income and BIPOC communities if desired by those communities. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 107</b>	Encourage and incentivize innovative building practices that achieve energy and water efficiency gains while increasing resilience to hazards. Use features such as solar panels, green infrastructure, heat pumps, WaterSense products, improved insulation, and LED lights. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 108</b>	Encourage households to transition energy usage away from fossil fuels and toward renewable sources. Support and create improvement programs for buildings, prioritizing communities most vulnerable to increases in utility costs and extreme temperatures.
<b>Policy 109</b>	Encourage innovative stormwater management practices that will preserve and enhance water quality and will not increase the quantity of water discharged downstream of new developments. Encourage innovative stormwater management practices that will prepare our community and its infrastructure for increasingly heavy precipitation events. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 110</b>	Use publicly owned land, including parks, schools, and libraries to support equitable community access to green space, recreational opportunities, cultural and historical sites, public art, adequate stormwater management, energy production, community gardens, and urban agriculture.
<b>Policy 111</b>	Implement solutions that reduce local pollution and waste. Reduce Durham's contribution to global pollution and waste.
<b>Policy 112</b>	Encourage reuse of existing buildings, infrastructure, and construction materials, rather than their new creation from scratch. Ensure that existing infrastructure is adequate for infill development, upgrade if not. <b>(D)</b>

***(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*


## Environment and Public Spaces Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Environment and Public Spaces topic.

1. Update the Durham City-County Greenhouse Gas Emission Local Action Plan to chart a viable pathway to a 30% reduction in community greenhouse gas emissions between 2005 and 2030, and a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions level by 2050. Set a 2040 reduction pathway and assess where current reduction goals should be accelerated as part of the Local Action Plan update.
2. Develop a methodology for City and County staff to estimate the expected greenhouse gas emissions of a new development and to use this calculation when considering discretionary approvals such as rezonings.
3. For Policy 76 perform an analysis to define what qualifies as “permanent conservation,” the percentage of land area in Durham that is currently conserved, and whether 30% is an appropriate conservation goal. Revise the policy and regulations as needed per this analysis.
4. Pursue the permanent conservation of parcels designated as Recreation and Open Space on the Place Type Map, except for parcels in active use, such as parklands.
5. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to increase open space and tree canopy coverage requirements for development to align with conservation and mobility goals, including the goal of 55% overall tree canopy coverage in the City by 2040.
6. Seek legal authority to increase required stream buffer distances where appropriate.
7. Develop funding mechanisms to acquire high-priority land, such as “urban gems” and “keystone” properties, as identified in Watershed Management Plans and the Critical Areas Protection Plan, and other areas identified in adopted open space plans. Place these lands in permanent conservation.
8. Pursue permanent conservation of ecologically important lands, using tools such as acquisition, permanent conservation easements, and Dedicated Nature Preserves.
9. Develop open space preservation strategies for areas of the County not currently under an adopted open space plan; work to create open space strategies for those “unplanned” areas and update open space plans developed prior to the adoption of Durham’s Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint.
10. Develop an inventory of priority conservation land in Durham County and implement regulatory changes to protect these areas from development. Explore adoption of a Conservation Overlay zoning district.
11. Work with homeowners’ associations to develop innovative management plans for dedicated open space, prohibit pesticide use, encourage native plantings, and otherwise encourage sustainable land management.

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12. Work with City Parks and Recreation Department to create a public parkland walkshed map, showing which homes in Durham are not currently within a safe ten-minute walk of public parkland.
  13. Develop new public parks in gaps identified through public parkland walkshed mapping.
  14. Establish an air quality monitoring program to understand and map low air quality, ensuring that impacted communities have access to this information. Support and enact programs to remediate air quality “hot spots,” informed by monitoring program data.
  15. Prioritize the use of air quality sensors in neighborhoods near noxious industrial sites and adjacent to hazards and brownfields. Explore the placement of an additional air quality monitor in Durham County to supplement the existing monitor at the Durham Armory.
  16. Establish an urban heat island monitoring program to collect localized temperature data and identify existing urban heat islands, particularly in historically Black neighborhoods. Create programs, incentives, regulations, and design standards for impervious surface reduction, shade structures, reflective surfaces, and green spaces in those areas. Utilize existing datasets to understand the location of heat islands, if applicable.
  17. Coordinate with green and equitable infrastructure investment projects to ensure alignment with the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan.
  18. To support farmers and farmland, continue and potentially expand the following programs: Agricultural Priority Areas, Voluntary Agricultural Districts, and Present Use Valuation Programs.
  19. Remove barriers to and provide support for increased land access and ownership for BIPOC farmers.
  20. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to ensure that land use regulations allow agricultural activities by right within the Rural and Agricultural Reserve place type.
  21. Continue to work with and encourage energy providers, such as Duke Energy, to switch to renewable and carbon-neutral sources.
  22. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to create incentives and requirements for the incorporation of green infrastructure and sustainability measures in new construction and redevelopment.
  23. Develop methods to evaluate the need for and equitable access to electric vehicle charging stations. Develop policies and incentives to provide adequate and equitable charging station availability in Durham.
  24. Explore and implement regulatory options for requiring publicly accessible parks, recreational spaces, and amenities in new residential developments.

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- 25. Inventory City- and County-owned surplus properties. Identify, prioritize, and implement innovative and beneficial uses of surplus land, which may include access to green space, recreational opportunities, cultural and historical sites, incorporation of stormwater management systems, sustainable energy production, community gardens, and urban agriculture. Conduct robust community engagement around this effort.
  - 26. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to decrease the impact of new development on bird, reptile, and amphibian populations.
  - 27. Develop partnerships between the City, the County, community groups, and nonprofits to support open space acquisition, management, and programming efforts.
  - 28. Explore reestablishing a City revolving fund for Brownfield assessment and mitigation.
  - 29. Explore funding mechanisms for weatherization and green infrastructure projects, particularly in historically Black neighborhoods.
  - 30. Develop and expand building retrofit programs, particularly in historically Black neighborhoods, to increase sustainability, reduce utility costs, and increase resiliency. Include a fuel-switching component to reduce and eliminate fossil fuel dependency, such as replacing petroleum-powered appliances and equipment.
  - 31. To help protect residents from extreme heat, explore adopting a county-wide maximum allowable indoor temperature for residential buildings when the outdoor temperature is above 90°F, similar to the minimum allowable indoor temperature regulation that already exists for outdoor temperatures below 68°F.
  - 32. Expand public composting programs and initiatives to minimize organic waste transported to landfills.
  - 33. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to create incentives for the reuse of existing structures and building materials in new development.
  - 34. Develop and implement initiatives to reduce plastic pollution in Durham, such as a single-use plastic bag fee.
  - 35. Explore establishing requirements for diversion of construction and demolition waste from landfills.
  - 36. Explore the creation of a materials marketplace or other infrastructure to encourage the reuse of surplus materials, including building materials.
  - 37. Explore performing a baseline materials flow assessment in Durham to identify opportunities for reducing waste and reusing building or other materials.
  - 38. Enhance regulations for redevelopment and infill development to create improved existing stormwater conditions.

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- 39. Work with City and County stormwater staff to determine appropriate allowable stormwater management uses on land dedicated for permanent conservation and in other environmentally sensitive places such as Natural Heritage Areas.
  - 40. Perform an equity analysis of floodplain regulations. Explore and implement programs to address flooding issues, particularly in historically Black neighborhoods.
  - 41. Continue to explore methods of incorporating climate change forecasts into stormwater modeling work.
  - 42. Coordinate with City Water Management when new water and sewer infrastructure is proposed to minimize disturbances to sensitive environmental lands, such as Natural Heritage Areas.
  - 43. Review and revise Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) lighting standards with community input to address safety concerns and effects of light pollution. (Also listed in Neighborhoods)
  - 44. Work with City and County Departments such as General Services to eliminate pesticide and herbicide use on public land except when strictly necessary.
  - 45. Develop programs, incentives, and initiatives to discourage invasive species and pesticide use on private property.
  - 46. Revise the “Durham Landscape Manual” to further align with Comprehensive Plan policies, particularly related to biodiversity and conservation goals.
  - 47. Increase emergency preparedness efforts for extreme temperature and flooding events through things like public education programs and advanced notification systems. Ensure these programs are designed to prioritize providing those most vulnerable to hazards with resources and information.
  - 48. Assess and address existing regulations that hinder the opening of food-related businesses.
  - 49. Explore implementing a program to phase out and eventually eliminate the use of gas-powered leaf blowers and other yard-care equipment.
  - 50. Continue the City of Durham’s program to equitably plant 1,500 new street trees per year through 2025. Expand this program as needed to achieve 55% tree canopy coverage city-wide.
  - 51. Mitigate the impacts of industrial land uses on adjacent communities. Focus these efforts particularly communities of color and low-income communities.
  - 52. Work with the Stormwater and Erosion Control Division to develop and implement strategies to reduce erosion and sediment runoff on active construction sites.

# **Growth Management and Infrastructure**

## **Policy Topic**

Policies related to guiding sustainable development, providing public services, and restricting city-expansion that only benefits a few, requires expensive new infrastructure, and causes environmental damage

**Related Goals:**

[Community Relationships Goal on page 29](#)

[Growth Management Strategy on page 105](#)

**Related Objectives:**

[Intentional Planning and Decision-Making on page 33](#)

## Growth Management

<b>Policy 113</b>	Focus new development and redevelopment in central and underutilized areas of Durham that are served by existing infrastructure. In these areas, encourage reimagining and repurposing of vacant infill land, underused commercial and industrial buildings, and excessive parking areas as green and pedestrian-oriented development. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 114</b>	Build or add land uses that form complete communities in Durham so that all residents have safe and easy access to their daily needs including neighborhood services, healthy food, green space, healthcare facilities, community places (libraries, community centers, places of worship, etc.), jobs, or schools. Allow for increased housing supply within and adjacent to commercial and mixed-use areas. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 115</b>	Adequately assess the costs and benefits of new development before rezoning or annexation approval. Provide best estimates for the true impact of new development on City and County revenues as well as services, including water, sewer, transportation, safety, greenhouse gas emissions, school capacity, and potential long-term maintenance needs. <b>(D)</b>

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases



## Planning Tools for Growth Management

<b>Policy 116</b>	Establish an Urban Growth Boundary to discourage development on the edge of the city that strains existing infrastructure or prompts significant public investment in new infrastructure. Public sewer and water should not be extended past the Urban Growth Boundary, with limited exceptions to protect public health and safety. (D)
<b>Policy 117</b>	Ensure new developments within the Urban Growth Boundary are within the established level of service for emergency services (such as fire, emergency medical services, police, and community safety). (D)
<b>Policy 118</b>	Protect the rural character of Durham outside the Urban Growth Boundary. (D)
<b>Policy 119</b>	<p>Only low-intensity Place Types that support the needs of rural residents and agricultural functions should be allowed outside of the Urban Growth Boundary, as identified in the list below (D):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural and Agricultural Reserve;</li> <li>• Rural Commercial;</li> <li>• Utilities and Public Works Facilities;</li> <li>• Institutional Campus;</li> <li>• Community Institution;</li> <li>• Recreation and Open Space;</li> <li>• Established Residential (Only in the historic centers of Bahama and Rougemont).</li> </ul>

	<b>Planning Tools for Growth Management Continued</b>	
<b>Policy 120</b>	Designate Future Growth Areas on the Place Type Map where infrastructure and service upgrades are needed. Development in these areas would require the following public infrastructure and services in the future <b>(D)</b> :	
	<b>Future Growth Area</b>	<b>Infrastructure for Future Growth</b>
	Fletcher's Chapel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire Service</li> <li>2. Upgraded sewer capacity in the Fletcher's Chapel Pump Station</li> </ol>
	Hamlin Road	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire Service</li> </ol>
	North	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire Service</li> <li>2. Public utilities to neighborhoods with failed wells or septic tanks</li> </ol>
	Northwest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public utilities to neighborhoods with failed wells or septic tanks</li> <li>2. A new High-Pressure Zone (for example a water tower)</li> </ol>
	Stallings Road	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire Service</li> <li>2. Upgraded sewer capacity in the Fletcher's Chapel Pump Station</li> </ol>
	Southeast	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire Service</li> </ol>
	Southwest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Upgraded sewer capacity in the Montclair, Downing Woods, Downing Creek and Celeste Circle Pump Stations</li> </ol>

## Resiliency

<b>Policy 121</b>	Build and increase resiliency of people and infrastructure in Durham by preparing for disasters like extreme weather events, climate change, pandemics, economic recession, and other unpredictable disruptions. Invest in stable, secure, and affordable housing, multimodal transportation options, diverse jobs and career pathways, and strong community networks that support and care for residents. Prioritize resiliency efforts in low-income, Black and Hispanic/Latino neighborhoods, and other areas that will be disproportionately impacted.
<b>Policy 122</b>	Prioritize programs, services, and infrastructure investments in historically Black neighborhoods and in communities that have been excluded from or harmed by public and private actions and inactions.

## Infrastructure


<b>Policy 123</b>	Maintain and enhance development regulations that protect the City of Durham and Durham County's water quality and supply. (D)
<b>Policy 124</b>	Focus infill development in areas already served by public water and sewer with unused capacity. (D)
<b>Policy 125</b>	Ensure adequate water pressure to extinguish fires based on each Place Type on the Place Type Map.
<b>Policy 126</b>	Ensure upgrades to the existing sewer system that are required to serve development are provided by the associated developer. (D)
<b>Policy 127</b>	Focus and prioritize public sewer and water improvements and investments in Transit Opportunity Areas.
<b>Policy 128</b>	Support the health and safety of County residents with water and sewer upgrades where needed and available.
<b>Policy 129</b>	For new development, encourage stormwater management practices that will mitigate downstream or nearby flooding. (D)
<b>Policy 130</b>	Ensure new and existing stormwater management systems can handle higher volumes of stormwater expected due to climate change. (D)
<b>Policy 131</b>	Significantly reduce the per household amount of residential solid waste that goes in the landfill.
<b>Policy 132</b>	Maintain a system of exceptional public libraries that serve as community hubs and a place for all cultures. Libraries should provide access to the Internet, computers, classes, local history, and resources for immigrant communities.
<b>Policy 133</b>	The creation of privately owned and maintained infrastructure such as streets, sewer, and water in new development is discouraged. (D)



## Growth Management and Infrastructure Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Growth Management and Infrastructure topic.

1. Expedite repairs to libraries, particularly when branch closure is required. Ensure that nearby residents can utilize temporary services during branch closures.
2. Explore the use of innovative technologies for monitoring water or sewer flow and usage.
3. Continue and expand programs to incorporate solar power generation into City and County buildings.
4. Develop an inventory of paper streets and alleys (right-of-way that is dedicated but improved or accepted by the City for maintenance) and conduct an assessment to determine future use.
5. Develop a program to assess, prioritize, and proactively connect neighborhoods that have failing wells or septic tanks to public utilities, to protect public health and environmental quality.
6. Develop a map of areas that should be prioritized for equitable investments (such as Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects). Work with residents to develop this map.
7. Assess and revise level of service standards for public safety (including police, fire, and EMS). Improve the process of establishing level of service for public safety services.
8. Amend the city code to prohibit water and sewer extensions beyond the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), except in circumstances to protect public health and safety; maintain adequate utility operation within the UGB.
9. Coordinate with City Solid Waste to develop programs and policies that result in a 50% reduction of per household solid waste by 2040.
10. Develop a fiscal and service delivery analysis tool to be used for rezoning cases to determine the true cost and benefit of proposed development to the public.
11. Review and revise regulations that encourage new development to build infrastructure that is privately owned and maintained.
12. Revise stormwater management infrastructure design requirements to meet the need for higher capacity expected due to climate change and increased rainfall.
13. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) infill standards to encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties and to transition to more pedestrian-oriented and sustainable development.
14. Incentivize new development or redevelopment of underutilized properties within the City, particularly those designated as Transit Opportunity Areas, Mixed Employment, Employment Campus, Suburban Commercial, and Neighborhood Services Place Types.

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15. Explore ways to continue or expand pandemic-era programs to distribute lost cost or free food within the community, such as through schools.
  16. Develop a proactive approach to building communities that connect people to all the services they need. Identify areas where residents need improved access to essential services, prioritizing equity and neighborhood stabilization.
  17. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to create or amend zoning districts that implement the kind of development described in the Transit Opportunity Area Place Type. Explore density bonuses, prohibitions of car-related uses, and requirements for mixed use development.
  18. Develop a methodology for City and County staff to estimate the long-term maintenance cost of public infrastructure that primarily supports private development. Use this assessment when considering discretionary approvals such as rezonings.

# Jobs and Training Policy Topic

Policies related to workforce development, access to jobs, programs, or commercial and non-residential development

**Related Goals:**

[Jobs and Training Goal on page 81](#)

[Health and Well-being Goal on page 97](#)

**Related Objectives:**

[Sustainable, Supported, and Dignified Jobs on page 83](#)

[Accessible and Innovative Jobs on page 85](#)

[Accessible, Affordable, and Supported Training Opportunities on page 87](#)

[Inclusive and Intentional Senior Opportunities on page 35](#)

[Intentional and Supported Youth Opportunities on page 99](#)

## Jobs for Durham Residents

<b>Policy 134</b>	Increase the availability of jobs for local residents with a diversity of skillsets and backgrounds, especially in jobs that become available through capital improvement projects or government-funded initiatives. Prioritize making jobs accessible to those without formal degrees or those who are typically left out of the technology and biotechnology jobs in Durham. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 135</b>	Employ, train, and invest in Durham residents by supporting programs that help residents gain life skills to participate in economic and social life. Increase access to training opportunities related to digital expertise, financial literacy, language access, parenting, or civic engagement.
<b>Policy 136</b>	Make an intentional effort to recruit and hire more locally. Use outreach strategies such as job fairs, online resources, and flyers with QR codes.
<b>Policy 137</b>	Support and encourage local businesses and programs that embrace and celebrate young people and older adults.
<b>Policy 138</b>	Support and advocate for living wages that support life in Durham, including housing, transportation, and childcare costs.

## Resiliency and Jobs

<b>Policy 139</b>	Support local farmers, farmer's markets, community gardens, and other food system infrastructure to provide reliable, accessible venues for healthy and affordable food. Prioritize BIPOC farmers in these efforts.
<b>Policy 140</b>	Encourage a diversity of jobs in Durham, including jobs from future-oriented economic sectors, such as the sustainability and technology sectors. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 141</b>	Pursue public and non-profit incubator and co-op spaces including shared commercial kitchens, workshops, and access to technologies and equipment.

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Access to Childcare

<b>Policy 142</b>	Increase the accessibility and availability of affordable high-quality childcare services. Support programs that reduce the cost of childcare, especially for low-income, Hispanic/Latino, and Black residents.
<b>Policy 143</b>	Co-locate childcare facilities within or adjacent to employment centers, education and medical institutions, and community and civic places. <b>(D)</b>

## Access to Training for Durham Residents

<b>Policy 144</b>	Reduce barriers to accessing training opportunities by providing financial assistance, childcare, and language access and by removing drug testing requirements for local residents.
<b>Policy 145</b>	Support training programs and stipends for residents who are navigating how to open and operate businesses in Durham, particularly for low-income, Black and Hispanic/Latino, youth, houseless, justice-involved residents, and residents with disabilities.
<b>Policy 146</b>	Increase job training, apprenticeships, and transitional and temporary employment opportunities for young people.
<b>Policy 147</b>	Pursue partnerships with institutions and agencies such as Durham Public Schools, Durham County Libraries, Durham Technical Community College, Duke University, and North Carolina Central University to create community-oriented programs and trainings, especially for youth, seniors, justice-involved residents, and residents with disabilities.
<b>Policy 148</b>	Clarify and streamline City and County development processes to make it easier to improve, renovate and retrofit properties, specifically for local residents.
<b>Policy 149</b>	Support programs and training for local builders, developers, and aspiring developers who are connected to Durham communities.

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases






## Jobs and Training Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Jobs and Training topic.

1. Explore ways to create economic development agreements in the rezoning and/or annexation process to hire and train local residents for jobs coming to Durham.
2. Explore incentives or support programs from the City and the County to improve access to childcare.
3. Explore incentives for development proposals and/or proffers that increase the availability of childcare.
4. Advocate for the reduction of barriers to becoming a childcare provider.
5. Conduct additional engagement with childcare providers to understand how processes are working or not working to reduce barriers in the permitting process.
6. Partner with Durham Technical Community College to support training and certifications for residents opening childcare facilities.
7. Consider ordinance regulations that require childcare spaces and operations set aside in new developments of specific sizes or certain uses.
8. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to allow childcare facilities to locate near employment.
9. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to include childcare facilities as a “by-right” use (meaning, a childcare facility is allowed without special approval and can be opened with fewer administrative barriers).
10. Explore creating a City and County multi-departmental educational program that helps residents navigate how to open a business in Durham.
11. Explore creating City and County multi-departmental support system for local developers and builders.
12. Evaluate regulatory barriers such as permit applications and financial requirements for food trucks, flea markets, pop-up stores, and home businesses.
13. Review and revise rules and permitting processes to remove barriers to pop-up opportunities for farmers and vendors to serve communities without being policed or fined.
14. Encourage job training for local residents as part of economic development agreements for any companies receiving City or County incentives for coming to Durham.
15. Continue or expand “Fair Chance” programs that employ and train justice-involved residents.

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16. Advocate for establishing living wage standards or increasing the minimum wage in Durham and in North Carolina.
  17. Support employers who provide quality jobs, living wages, benefits, stable scheduling, family-friendly policies, and workplaces free from harassment. Encourage partnerships with organizations that train and recruit Durham residents for jobs that do not require formal degrees.
  18. Evaluate regulatory barriers such as permit applications and financial requirements for cooperative spaces such as commercial kitchens, workshops, or informal economies that serve communities.
  19. Explore providing community support services at libraries or other public buildings, such as providing meeting spaces, food drop-offs, or multilingual courses.
  20. Advocate for commitments from companies receiving incentives to hire youth and provide job-readiness programs.
  21. Explore how the YouthWorks Program can expand (for instance, to be made available all year and not just in summer), and partner with Durham Public Schools to strengthen these initiatives.
  22. Expand co-op programs where high school students can earn credits and wages while building skills.

# Education Policy Topic

Policies related to schools, universities/colleges, and childcare facilities

**Related Goals:**

[Education Goal on page 89](#)

[Health and Well-being Goal on page 97](#)

**Related Objectives:**

[Innovative and Accessible Community-Oriented Schools on page 91](#)

[Safe, Supportive, and Nurturing Schools on page 93](#)

[Equitable Investment in Schools on page 95](#)

[Intentional and Supported Youth Opportunities on page 99](#)

## School Site Development

<b>Policy 150</b>	Coordinate school planning and land use planning to proactively prepare for increased student growth from new development. When a proposed residential development causes a school region to be over-capacity, Durham Public Schools, the Durham City-County Planning Department, and the development team should consider mitigation measures for the school system (ex: land dedication, payments in-lieu-of improvements, or other proffers). Coordinate with Durham Public Schools to calculate what mitigation is necessary based on the best available estimates. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 151</b>	Identify small infill sites for new schools within existing neighborhoods through coordinated land use and school planning.
<b>Policy 152</b>	When a new school is needed in a region it should be placed in a central location to nearby existing or proposed neighborhoods. Work with applicants and Durham Public Schools to locate school sites and provide connections for students and staff to walk, bike, roll, or take transit from nearby housing. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 153</b>	Land dedication for school sites should be 10 acres or fewer or as determined by Durham Public Schools and guidance from the North Carolina Department of Instruction. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 154</b>	Encourage outdoor learning environments for recreation, social activities, habitat conservation, and community gardens on land surrounding community institutions (ex. schools, libraries, or community centers).

## Transportation Connections to Schools

<b>Policy 155</b>	Prioritize access to pre-K, K-12 schools and universities, institutions of higher learning, places of employment, and childcare services when planning public transportation investments such as sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, and transit routes and stops.
<b>Policy 156</b>	Collaborate with City and County departments and educational institutions when making decisions about trail alignments and park facilities near a school or childcare facility. Design parks, trails, and sidewalk connections so that they provide safe access and connections for students and staff.
<b>Policy 157</b>	Design vehicle drop-off lanes and parking areas at schools and childcare facilities to reduce negative impacts of air pollution and congestion in the surrounding community. Improve walking, biking, and transit access to school sites. <b>(D)</b>

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Access to Community Spaces

<b>Policy 158</b>	Collaborate with residents to transform schools and other community institutions into publicly accessible community spaces. Partner with Durham Public Schools, youth, students with disabilities, and residents in Black and Hispanic/Latino neighborhoods to identify and reduce barriers to accessing properties for community use.
<b>Policy 159</b>	Coordinate with private and charter school development projects to provide public access to school buildings and property, including playgrounds, outdoor spaces, gathering spaces, and community resources on school property.

## Youth Engagement

<b>Policy 160</b>	Support organizations and departments working to correct racial inequities in schools. Partner with schools on projects or programs that introduce and expand access to urban planning and local government for youth, particularly Hispanic/Latino, Black, and low-income students.
<b>Policy 161</b>	Partner with and support youth and youth-serving organizations to identify land use and transportation barriers and safety concerns around schools.

*(D) Policies indicated with a (D) symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*



## Education Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Education topic.

1. Durham Public Schools and Durham Planning should work together to conduct a feasibility study for new school sites throughout the community.
2. Identify opportunities to include trade work and job preparation in schools (ex: carpentry, masonry, or automobile and bike repair) to create more access to jobs.
3. Continue Durham PreK, Durham County's universal pre-kindergarten program.
4. Research and publicize examples of plans that provide guidance for how schools can be successfully sited within neighborhoods.
5. Encourage proffers in the development process that allow public access to charter and private schools property.
6. Incorporate safe access to schools from neighborhoods and commercial sites in transportation, trails, and greenways plans.
7. Reassess and revise school impact assessments completed for proposed annexations and zoning map changes to better plan for and reflect growing school population and educational needs.
8. Coordinate with Durham Public Schools to provide estimates for expected new students generated by proposed residential developments and discuss mitigation strategies and developer commitments when the estimated school enrollment causes a school region to be over capacity.
9. Durham Public Schools should reassess school boundaries on a regular basis to account for student population growth.
10. Review the approval process for building new schools or improving existing schools to find opportunities to reduce approval process barriers and meet community needs.
11. Develop a process for setting aside land for a new school site in new development proposals that includes Durham Public Schools' review and approval.
12. Explore creating stronger connections between older adults and students enrolled in tutoring, mentorship, or other programs.
13. Encourage sustainable renovations to existing school grounds and buildings.
14. Include adequate lighting in parks, especially when sited near schools.
15. Develop or expand training programs for construction and local trade work in public schools.

# Administrative Policy Topic

**Policies that primarily deal with instances of amending the plan or its components**

**Related Goals and Objectives:** There are no directly related goals and objectives for administrative policies. These policies were primarily generated from staff to inform process improvements related to administrative functions.

## Adopted Plans

<b>Policy 162</b>	The Comprehensive Plan is intended to work in harmony with other community plans adopted by the City, County, and other governing authorities. When conflict exists between multiple plans, the Planning Director shall use the Community Goals and Objectives from the Comprehensive Plan to determine which policy will be used. (D)
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## Annexations

<b>Policy 163</b>	<p>Annexations into the City of Durham should be contiguous with the existing City limits and should not cause service delivery or operational issues for the City or County. Staff will recommend against approval of annexations that create donut holes, enclaves, satellites, or difficult to develop remnant properties. (D)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annexations comprising parcels where one or two single-family homes could be developed should be considered for annexation, even when they do not meet the criteria above, if they cannot be served by well or septic, and/or when it creates an undue burden on the landowner.</li> <li>• Annexation into the City limits should only be considered when a substantial benefit to the community can be demonstrated. Annexations that substantially reduce existing enclaves or donut holes are exempt from this policy.</li> </ul>
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*(D) Policies indicated with a (D) symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases*



## Comprehensive Plan Updates

<b>Policy 164</b>	<p>Approximately every other year, the City-County Planning department shall prepare an Evaluation and Assessment Report including the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress on the implementation of adopted policies;</li> <li>2. Minor changes to the Place Type map based on changes in conditions;</li> <li>3. Addition of new permanently protected Open Space to the Place Type Map;</li> <li>4. Recommended amendments, additions or deletions of policies, action items, and other text including the Place Type guide;</li> <li>5. Recommended addition or removal of Future Growth Areas;</li> <li>6. Identify comprehensive amendments to the Place Type Map needed because of development activity or changes in conditions, including new major public investments.</li> </ol>
<b>Policy 165</b>	<p>Amendments to the Place Type Map shall only be permitted when the proposal demonstrates that adequate public utilities, emergency services, transportation services, and public schools are available to accommodate the request and at least one of the following <b>(D)</b>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Significant changes have occurred since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and necessitate the proposed amendment;</li> <li>2. Inconsistencies in land use or other plan policies exist in the adopted Comprehensive Plan that affect Durham’s orderly growth and development;</li> <li>3. Durham’s ability to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan will be increased.</li> </ol>
<b>Policy 166</b>	<p>Proposed changes to expand the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) should only be made when the proponent can demonstrate all three of the following <b>(D)</b>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The change does not expand the UGB further into a Critical Watershed.</li> <li>2. The change does not significantly increase long-term infrastructure maintenance costs for the City or County; and</li> <li>3. The change would address a clear need for the community based on the adopted Comprehensive Plan policies.</li> </ol>

# Place Types

## Policy Topic

Policies about specific place types (land use categories on our new future land use plan (Place Type Map))

**Related Goals:** See [Place Types on page 179](#)

**Related Objectives:** Place Types were developed using many objectives and quotes where residents described the types of places they want to see in Durham.

## Mixed Use Places

<b>Policy 167</b>	The Downtown and Transit Opportunity Area Place Types, should provide a sensitive transition to nearby neighborhoods through building placement, design, massing, and step-down height. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 168</b>	Transit Opportunity Areas should respect the surrounding neighborhoods in scale and design. Larger, regional-oriented Transit Opportunity Areas should be tall and dense to support transit but not as intense as the Downtown Place type. Neighborhood-oriented Transit Opportunity Areas should include shorter heights and less intensity, while still supporting transit. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 169</b>	Development in the Mixed Use Neighborhood Place Type should include a mix of residential and non-residential uses and a mix of housing types and sizes. Non-residential uses should be located within a 15-minute walking distance of all residential uses. Residential uses should be provided at a variety of price points, with a portion being housing that is accessible to those with low incomes. <b>(D)</b>

## Residential Places

<b>Policy 170</b>	Reduce public and private barriers to middle density housing in existing Planned Suburban Neighborhoods to allow a greater variety of housing types and price points. Potential barriers include zoning restrictions, out-of-date development plans, private restrictive covenants, and Homeowner's Association rules. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 171</b>	Encourage more residential units on smaller sites in the Apartment and Townhouse Place Type. Larger sites should include a mix of densities and housing types. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 172</b>	Housing types should be mixed throughout Mixed Residential Neighborhood Place Types and not isolated in discrete parts of the development. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 173</b>	Mixed Residential Neighborhoods smaller than 20 developable acres should increase the mix of housing types in the immediate vicinity. Mixed Residential Neighborhood Place Types generally between 20 and 50 developable acres should include a mix of at least two housing types. Mixed Residential Place Types generally more than 50 developable acres should include a mix of three or more place types. All Mixed Residential Neighborhoods should include housing at a variety of price points and sizes. <b>(D)</b>

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Community Places

<b>Policy 174</b>	Locate Community Institutions (such as libraries, schools, and community spaces) in areas with existing safe and accessible public transit connections and with existing services and community resources. Ensure they are designed and sited for orientation to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 175</b>	Incorporate Community Institution Place Types within new mixed-use communities and on small infill sites within existing neighborhoods. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 176</b>	Co-locate libraries, schools, and other public and private Community Institution Place Types to create welcoming spaces that connect residents, youth, and English Language Learners to local resources, information, internet, and gathering spaces for creative, athletic, social, and academic uses. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 177</b>	Encourage the use of Community Institution Place Types for secondary purposes during days and times when the primary institution is not using the facilities. New Community Institutions should include multiple community-oriented uses and activities and should serve as a central gathering place that is walkable and accessible for meetings and events for the community. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 178</b>	Encourage the development of affordable housing as a secondary use within Community Institution Place Types. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 179</b>	Collaborate with nearby residents on the design of Community Institution Place Types to ensure they will enhance and support the neighborhood. <b>(D)</b>

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Commercial Places

<b>Policy 180</b>	Allow Neighborhood Services, Community Institutions, and other small scale commercial and civic uses to locate near neighborhoods, where they do not already exist within a 15-minute walk, to improve access to essential goods and services. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 181</b>	Areas designated as Neighborhood Services Place Types should provide opportunities for neighborhood-scale commercial, intended to serve and be directly accessible from surrounding residential neighborhoods. Residential should only be allowed as a secondary use. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 182</b>	Encourage areas designated as Suburban Commercial Place Types to change to the Transit Opportunity Area Place Type as conditions and transit access change over time. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 183</b>	Encourage areas designated as Suburban Commercial Place Type to become more sustainable and walkable over time by adding buildings, green space, green stormwater infrastructure, and pedestrian-oriented connections in existing parking areas. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 184</b>	Areas designated Highway Commercial Place Type should be reserved for auto-dependent uses that are not appropriate in other commercial and mixed-use place types. The addition of new Highway Commercial Place Type designations is discouraged. <b>(D)</b>

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Employment Places

<b>Policy 185</b>	Encourage conversion of some existing non-residential uses to housing within Suburban Commercial, Employment Campus, Mixed Employment, and Community Institution Place Types, especially if this conversion creates a greater mix of uses within the place type. Include residential on upper floors in Neighborhood Service Place Types. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 186</b>	Encourage existing Employment Campus Place Types to use vacant or underutilized land to include a greater mix of uses to be more walkable and accessible to transit. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 187</b>	Encourage Institutional Campus Place Types to grow within their existing footprint, especially where expansion would negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 188</b>	Encourage Institutional Campus Place Types to include safe and affordable housing for students and staff. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 189</b>	Encourage the adaptive reuse of older industrial and commercial property in Mixed Employment Place Types, including reuse that results in a change to a non-industrial use. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 190</b>	Allow Mixed Employment Place Types to change to a non-industrial Place Type as conditions change provided that any environmental contamination has been remediated. Sites identified in Policy 194 should remain industrial to ensure an adequate supply of industrial uses in Durham. <b>(D)</b>

**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases

## Industrial Places

<b>Policy 191</b>	Reduce or mitigate historic inequities in the siting of utilities and public works facilities when designating new Utilities and Public Works Facilities Place Types. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 192</b>	New Resource Extraction Place Types should be discouraged. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 193</b>	Equitably site industrial facilities when designating new General Industrial Place Types, ensuring that communities of color and low-income communities no longer have a concentration of these uses. <b>(D)</b>
<b>Policy 194</b>	Reserve areas with limited environmental constraints and with supporting infrastructure, such as access to rail and major roads, as industrial Place Types (including General Industrial or Mixed Employment). <b>(D)</b>

## Rural Places

<b>Policy 195</b>	Maintain and support existing Rural Commercial outside the Urban Growth Boundary and discourage the addition of new Rural Commercial Place Types. <b>(D)</b>
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**(D)** Policies indicated with a **(D)** symbol are ones that have the greatest impact on development cases



## Place Types Actions

The following list is a menu of projects, initiatives, process improvements, and other types of actions that could be undertaken by local government to work towards the vision of the plan under the Place Types topic.

1. Revise the Place Type map along the U.S. Highway 70 corridor once a new study for the corridor is completed.
2. Revise the Place Type Map for the Research Triangle Park (RTP) once a new master plan for RTP is completed.
3. Update the Place Type Map to show new conservation lands and easements as Recreation and Open Space.
4. Continually review and identify areas on the Place Type Map where comprehensive updates are needed.
5. Review and revise the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to develop zoning district that correspond with the description and intended outcomes of the Place Types.



## 2.5 Place Types

The Place Types of the Comprehensive Plan shows where, geographically on a map (called the Place Type Map, on page **182**), different types of land uses (ex. houses, businesses, farmland etc.) should be in the future.

Place Types, on page **184**, are categories that help organize similar types of places found throughout Durham (and some new places that have not been built yet). They describe the character of different places and how they may change in the future.

### Read the Place Types if you:

- » Want to know the vision for the types of places Durham sees for the future
- » Need to know how potential development proposals may align with what is envisioned for a property
- » Are interested in where Durham intends to allow development, what kind, and how much
- » Need to know what the future plans are to inform your department or organization's planning or service needs to support future growth
- » Are a decision-maker considering a development proposal and need to know if it aligns with the community's adopted Comprehensive Plan

### How the Place Types are organized:

There are two parts to the Place Types: The Place Type Map, showing where the place types are on a map of Durham, and the Place Type section, describing the characteristics of each Place Type.

Each Place Type starts with a title of the Place Type, a paragraph describing the place, and key characteristics about land use, mobility, green space, and what services will be needed to support that place.

**In the Community Goals and Objectives, the Durham community articulated a strong vision for how residents want to see our community grow and develop into the future.**

In land use planning, we develop a community-wide land use plan, called a Place Type Map that applies the community's vision geographically. Place Types are detailed descriptions on a map that show how land should be used in the future. Place Types include two main parts: a list with detailed descriptions of the places that we want to see and a map showing where these places should be across all of Durham County, called a Place Type Map.

Land use planning has been happening in the area we now call Durham even before its incorporation as a City and County, and before the first of several Comprehensive Land Use Plans for Durham created almost 100 years ago. The decisions our community has made over time about who to plan for, what places we want in our community, like neighborhoods, commercial areas, industrial areas, parks, schools, and more, can be seen in how our community is physically organized today. Land use planning decisions can also be seen by looking at who in our community has convenient, affordable, and equitable access to resources residents need to thrive. Access to housing, jobs, schools, and nature has not been shared fairly in Durham.

In the past, government and private decisions about where to locate land uses, both desirable and less desirable, have not been equitable. This is not an accident and is one of the primary ways that racial discrimination is seen in our physical environment. For example, less desirable industrial land uses like incinerators, landfills, factories, and salvage yards have been placed within or near traditionally Black neighborhoods and away from traditionally white neighborhoods. At the same time, desirable land uses that are necessary for people to access daily resources, like small commercial areas and parks, are lacking or missing in many traditionally Black neighborhoods. Equitable access to the benefits of growth, development, and land use decisions are foundational to Durham's Guiding Values and forms the basis of the Place Types.

The Place Types are shown as a list of all the types of places the community would like to see in the future, including a description of how each place will look and function for all of Durham City and County. The Place Types are a key to understanding the Place Type Map. The Place Types also include information about desired features of each place type, such as land uses; development patterns; building heights and placements; more detailed uses allowed; parking location; infrastructure, like transportation and sewer service; and desired green space.

Some of the places in the Place Types that exist today and are unlikely to see change in the near term because of legal limitations, like homeowners' association (HOA) covenants. There are also places that exist today, like some suburban shopping areas or highway commercial uses, that may be undesirable or outdated in relation to the Community Goals and Objectives because of their limited ability to serve those who aren't driving. We have mapped and created a Place Type for these areas and noted where newly created places like these are not desirable and ways in which these places should change over time to be more in line with the Community Goals and Objectives.

Different Place Type designations work together on the Place Type Map to move Durham towards a 15- minute community, part of Durham's Growth Management Strategy. However, there are some Place Types that have a greater impact on reaching this goal, particularly when incorporated into areas that currently only have a single use. These Place Types include:

- » Transit Opportunity Area
- » Mixed Use Neighborhood
- » Mixed Residential Neighborhood
- » Apartment and Townhouse Neighborhood
- » Neighborhood Services
- » Community Institution

### **How to Use the Place Types**

As new developments are proposed in Zoning Map Change applications and Annexation applications, Planning staff, City Council, County Commissioners, Planning Commission, and residents will use the Place Types, Place Type Map, and Policies to evaluate whether or not the development proposal meets the community's vision.

Place Types are not legally binding and do not change a property owner's rights under the existing zoning. Where the Zoning Map is legally binding and shows what is allowed to be built on a property today, the Place Type Map is a guide for future decision-making. Local government staff use it to evaluate requests for new development; to inform decisions about infrastructure investments like extending water and sewer or adding new roads, sidewalks, or bus routes; and to guide how departments and agencies plan their facilities and programs to serve Durham residents.

## Place Type Map

The Place Type Map shows every property in Durham assigned a Place Type. The Place Type Map is a geographic depiction of how the community has said it wants to look over the next several decades. For example, the map shows where the community wants houses, stores, businesses, or schools to develop, or where to protect farmland and green space.

The Place Type Map is also where you can see how the Growth Management Strategy functions geographically. The map shows the Urban Growth Boundary, Future Growth Areas, and all the Place Types that work together to guide how Durham develops.

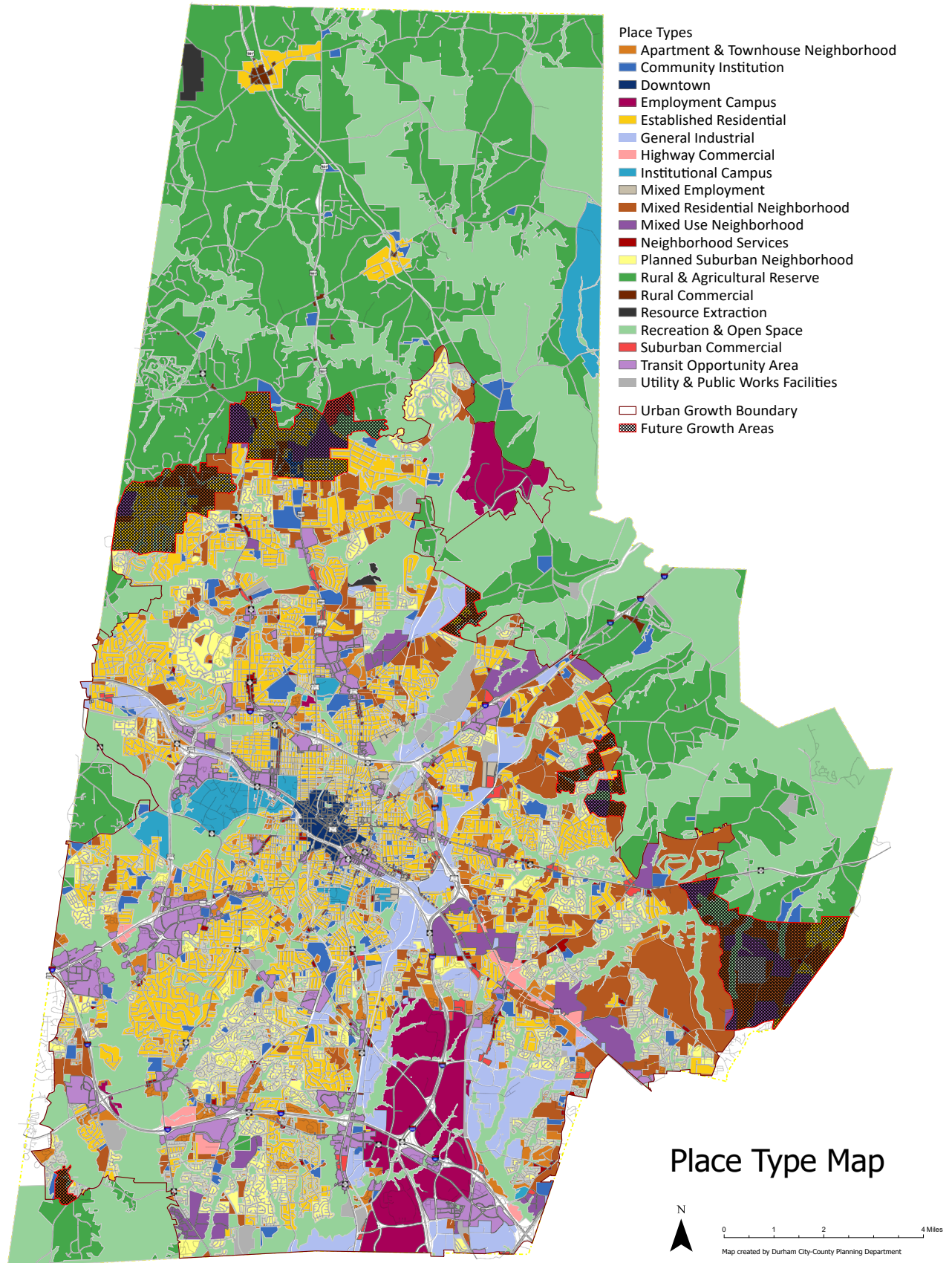
There are two maps that give more context to the Place Type Map:

**Environmental Resources Map** [Appendix B on page 243](#)

A map showing key county-wide environmental and agricultural features that were used to inform where certain place types and the Urban Growth Boundary are placed on the Place Type Map. This map includes Critical Watersheds Protection Overlays, Natural Heritage Areas, 100-year floodplains, parks, and Voluntary Agricultural Districts

**Land Use and Transportation Coordination Map** [Appendix C on page 244](#)

A key policy shift for this Comprehensive Plan is moving away from car-centric development patterns, moving towards a community with compact development centered around transit access. A map showing where Durham's major activity centers, employment and educational hubs, and mixed-use areas are located; and how they are connected by existing or planned transit highlights this policy shift. Location of Place Types envisioning a higher density of housing and greater mix of uses, such as Transit Opportunity Areas, are informed by employment and transit in Durham. These are areas where more housing and employment growth may be placed in the future.



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## Transit Opportunity Area (TOA)

Transit Opportunity Areas are moderately-sized places found throughout our community at the junction of major transit stops with development that supports the use of transit as a primary mode of transportation. Transit Opportunity Areas are important for connecting neighborhoods to transit service, and transit riders to where they need to go without using a car.

The design of these areas is focused on moving people rather than moving vehicles, with infrastructure to support and encourage safe walking, biking, rolling, and riding transit. Uses that are exclusively designed for automobiles should not be in these areas. Buildings are located close together, with a mix of uses, easy access to the street, integrated with public green spaces, and designed to serve the daily needs of residents. A high concentration of restaurants, pharmacies, community centers, or stores are located on the ground floor with housing or offices on upper floors.

Development of new Transit Opportunity Areas should seek to find spaces already served by transit, filling in vacant lots or parking lots, and protecting natural spaces that preserve environmental resources.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 167 on page 173** *“The Downtown and Transit Opportunity Area Place Types, should provide a sensitive transition to nearby neighborhoods through building placement, design, massing, and step-down height.” (D)*

**Policy 168 on page 173** *“Transit Opportunity Areas should respect the surrounding neighborhoods in scale and design. Larger, regional-oriented Transit Opportunity Areas should be tall and dense to support transit but not as intense as the Downtown Place type. Neighborhood-oriented Transit Opportunity Areas should include shorter heights and less intensity, while still supporting transit.” (D)*

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » A mix of uses within buildings and the surrounding area. Vertical-mixed used is preferable to accommodate density.
- » Car-oriented uses, such as gas stations, mechanics, and carwashes should not be in these areas
- » Housing should be provided in all Transit Opportunity Areas. Housing mix includes apartments, condominiums, townhouses, senior residences, upper-story residential
- » Buildings set close to the street with short block lengths
- » Buildings may be tall and dense to support transit but not as intense as the Downtown Place type and should provide a sensitive transition to nearby neighborhoods through building placement, design, massing, and step-down height
- » Development in Transit Opportunity Areas should be compactly designed well served by transit, and designed to minimize impacts on adjacent neighborhoods
- » Street frontages occupied by buildings and urban open spaces, particularly along transit routes and heavily trafficked streets

### Mobility

- » Existing or planned high quality transit with refuge areas and cover for those waiting for the bus
- » Sidewalk, bike connectivity, and safe crossing infrastructure within and outside the site
- » Direct and dedicated routes for bicyclists and pedestrians to access transit stops
- » Bicycle parking and protected bicycle lanes where possible
- » Good street connectivity with multiple access points. Ideally a grid pattern would be planned for maximum connectivity and access.
- » Street parking and drop off zones
- » Pedestrian-oriented pathways with wide sidewalks and amenities such as seating, landscaping, lighting, and wayfinding signage

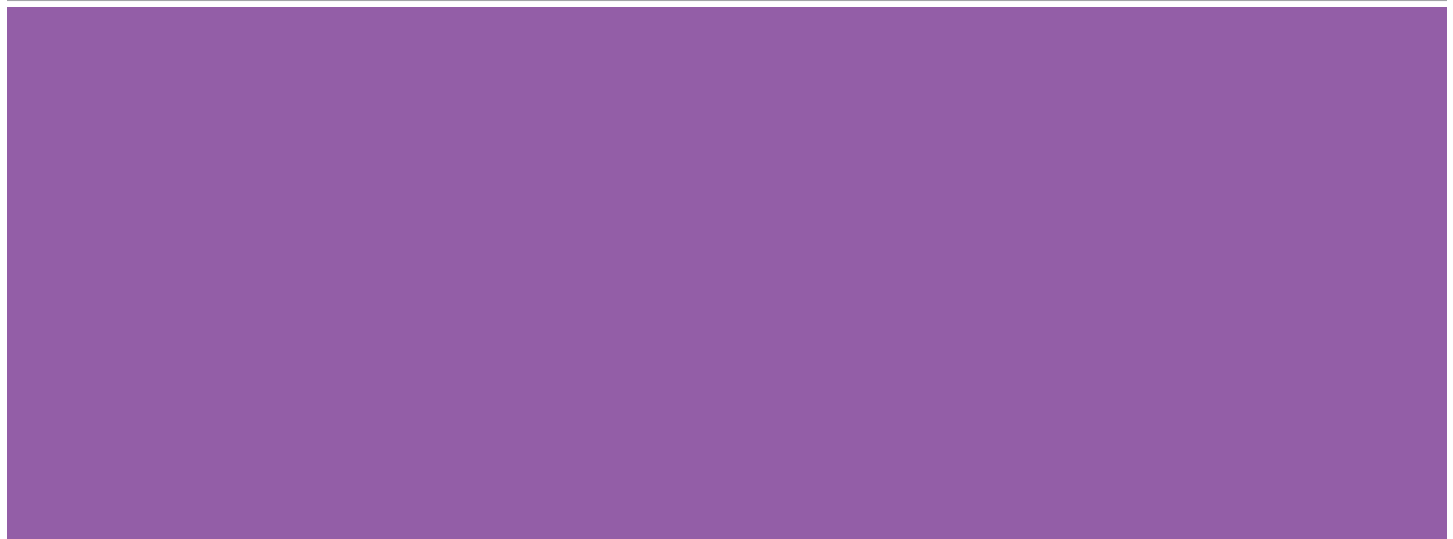
### Green Space

- » Preserve environmentally sensitive areas by clustering development on the least sensitive portions of the site
- » Provide small pocket parks and publicly accessible greenspace within the site
- » Trees dispersed through the area also provide shade along streets

### Service Provision

- » Development of new Transit Opportunity Areas should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements





## Mixed Use Neighborhood (MUN)

Mixed Use Neighborhoods are built on large, previously undeveloped, or forested land on the outskirts of the city but within the Urban Growth Boundary, or on large vacant sites within developed areas. These neighborhoods include centrally located civic, institutional, and commercial uses like shops, pharmacies, restaurants, offices, schools, and libraries that can be easily accessed by residents living in the surrounding homes. Non-residential uses should be located within a 15-minute walking distance of all residential uses.

Transportation infrastructure should support and encourage safe walking, biking, rolling, and riding transit. The mix of housing types envisioned in Mixed Use Neighborhoods should be at a high density, with a variety of heights, and price ranges to serve a diversity of needs. Green space and recreation should be integrated throughout the residential and non-residential parts of the neighborhoods in the form of playgrounds, parks, trees, and forested areas.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 169 on page 173** *“Development in the Mixed Use Neighborhood Place Type should include a mix of residential and non-residential uses and a mix of housing types and sizes. Non-residential uses should be located within a 15-minute walking distance of all residential uses. Residential uses should be provided at a variety of price points, with a portion being housing that is accessible to those with low incomes.” (D)*

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » Dense, walkable neighborhoods with centrally located neighborhood businesses
- » Development should provide a sensitive transition to nearby neighborhoods through building placement, design, massing, and step-down height
- » Buildings set close to the street with porches, stoops, and short block lengths
- » Ground floors of buildings should create street level activity, a large amount of windows, tall floor to ceiling heights, and architectural detailing
- » Mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and civic spaces
- » Housing mix includes apartments, condominiums, townhouses, senior residences, single-family homes, duplexes, accessory dwelling units, and tiny homes

### Mobility

- » Sidewalk and bike connectivity within and outside of the neighborhoods
- » Direct routes for bicyclists and pedestrians to access transit stops located on major roadways
- » Good street connectivity with multiple access points. Ideally a grid pattern would be planned for maximum connectivity and access
- » Street parking, structured parking, and drop off zones

### Green Space

- » If on a site with sensitive environmental resources: preserve these spaces as open space and cluster development on the least sensitive portions of the site
- » Provide street trees, landscaped parking lots, plentiful tree preservation and replacements, generous stream buffers, and minimal grading
- » Publicly accessible recreational space should be provided with safe and easy access to surrounding neighborhoods

### Service Provision

- » Development of new Mixed-Use Neighborhoods should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements

## Mixed Residential Neighborhood (MRN)

Mixed Residential Neighborhoods are new places typically built on previously undeveloped or forested land. These neighborhoods are designed to add a diversity of housing types at different price points and densities to serve residents with a diversity of needs, ages, incomes, and lifestyles. While the primary use is residential, residents are served by supporting commercial, civic, and institutional places in the immediate area, like schools, community centers, libraries, and small-scale grocery stores. Residents living in Mixed Residential Neighborhoods can easily and safely walk, bike, and roll within and around their neighborhoods to get to supporting places and transit stops. Publicly accessible amenities like parks, trails, and recreational facilities are found throughout.

Conservation design should be used when sensitive environmental features are present on the site. Buildings should be clustered close together on the least sensitive portions of the site to protect and preserve streams, wetlands, floodplains, natural heritage areas, steep slopes, open space corridors, and trees.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 172 on page 173** *“Housing types should be mixed throughout Mixed Residential Neighborhood Place Types and not isolated in discrete parts of the development.” (D)*

**Policy 173 on page 173** *“Mixed Residential Neighborhoods smaller than 20 developable acres should increase the mix of housing types in the immediate vicinity. Mixed Residential Neighborhood Place Types generally between 20 and 50 developable acres should include a mix of at least two housing types. Mixed Residential Place Types generally more than 50 developable acres should include a mix of three or more place types. All Mixed Residential Neighborhoods should include housing at a variety of price points and sizes.” (D)*

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » Primarily residential, with a mix of uses within the surrounding area
- » Housing mix includes apartments, condominiums, townhouses, senior residences, single-family homes, duplexes, accessory dwelling units, and tiny homes
- » Different housing types are mixed together throughout the place type and not isolated in discrete parts of the development
- » Development has short block lengths for connectivity
- » Preferably buildings are set close to the street with porches or stoops. However, this may vary
- » Small-scale commercial and institutional uses can be included to serve surrounding residences

### Mobility

- » Sidewalk and bike connectivity within and outside of the neighborhood
- » Direct routes for bicyclists and pedestrians to access transit stops located on major roadways
- » Good street connectivity with multiple access points
- » Off-road connectors between neighborhoods for bike and pedestrian connections

### Green Space

- » If on a site with sensitive environmental resources, preserve these spaces as open space and cluster development on the least sensitive portions of the site
- » Provide plentiful tree preservation and replacement, generous stream buffers, and minimal grading
- » Dedicate parks, recreation facilities, and amenities for public use, rather than as privately provided space

### Service Provision

- » Development of new Mixed Residential Neighborhoods should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements



## Established Residential (ER)

*Specific Place Type Policies: N/A*

Established Residential areas are primarily neighborhoods or residential areas providing a variety of housing types, including single-family houses, duplexes, townhouses, and small apartments. Established Residential areas have been traditionally built without homeowners' associations, stormwater retention ponds, or private, common open space. Other uses include neighborhood-scale community institutions, such as day cares or churches, but commercial activities are limited.

Established Residential areas also include smaller infill sites which are often difficult to develop, require flexibility in design, and change incrementally. Reuse of buildings should be considered to maintain the established residential character when a mix of housing types or new uses are added to the neighborhood.

These neighborhoods typically have connected, gridded, or semi-gridded streets, with slow traffic speeds serving residents who want to walk, bike, roll or ride transit. While there are typically no green space requirements for Established Residential areas, trees, natural areas, and parks should be preserved for the benefit of community members. Established Residential areas should change incrementally through the addition of accessory dwelling units and updated or new public or private stormwater infrastructure where needed.

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » The existing housing mix includes mostly single-family homes and duplexes with some townhouses and small apartments
- » Over time, a mix of other residential options should be added, and as that happens, accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, middle-density housing, cottage courts, and other housing options should be found in these neighborhoods
- » Preferably buildings should be set close to the street with porches, stoops, and short block lengths. However, this may vary

### Mobility

- » Safe pedestrian and bicycle access to nearby public parks, bus stops, and Neighborhood Services and Community Institutions
- » Sidewalks and safe crossings connect residents between neighborhoods and to other destinations and transit
- » Parking is usually on-street and in driveways

### Green Space

- » Street trees and other tree canopy are prevalent providing shade and green space in throughout the neighborhood
- » Public parks should be found nearby

### Service Provision

- » Established Residential areas should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements



## Apartment and Townhouse Neighborhood (ATH)

Apartment and Townhouse Neighborhoods are primarily residential areas that include existing multifamily communities or future infill sites suitable for multiple buildings. These buildings are typically low- and mid-rise apartment buildings or townhouses but may include high rises and ground floor non-residential as well.

Apartment and Townhouse Neighborhoods serve all residents, including renters or residents with low-incomes, and should be found throughout Durham's neighborhoods. Residents access Apartment or Townhouse Neighborhoods by transit or bus routes along major roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes or bike paths. Parks, community gardens, and trails should be provided throughout the neighborhood and connect with other green spaces in adjacent areas.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 171 on page 173** *"Encourage more residential units on smaller sites in the Apartment and Townhouse Place Type. Larger sites should include a mix of densities and housing types." (D)*



## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » Housing mix should include townhouse buildings or apartments. Single-family housing should not be in these areas
- » Buildings should be set close to the street with porches, stoops, and short block lengths
- » Increased density should be provided on smaller sites of this place type
- » Larger Apartment and Townhouse place type sites should include a mix of densities and housing types
- » Development should provide a sensitive transition to nearby neighborhoods through building placement, design, massing, and step-down height

### Mobility

- » Safe pedestrian and bicycle access to and from these sites to surrounding neighborhoods, commercial areas, and transit stops
- » Street parking, driveways, or structured parking designed to prioritize pedestrian access

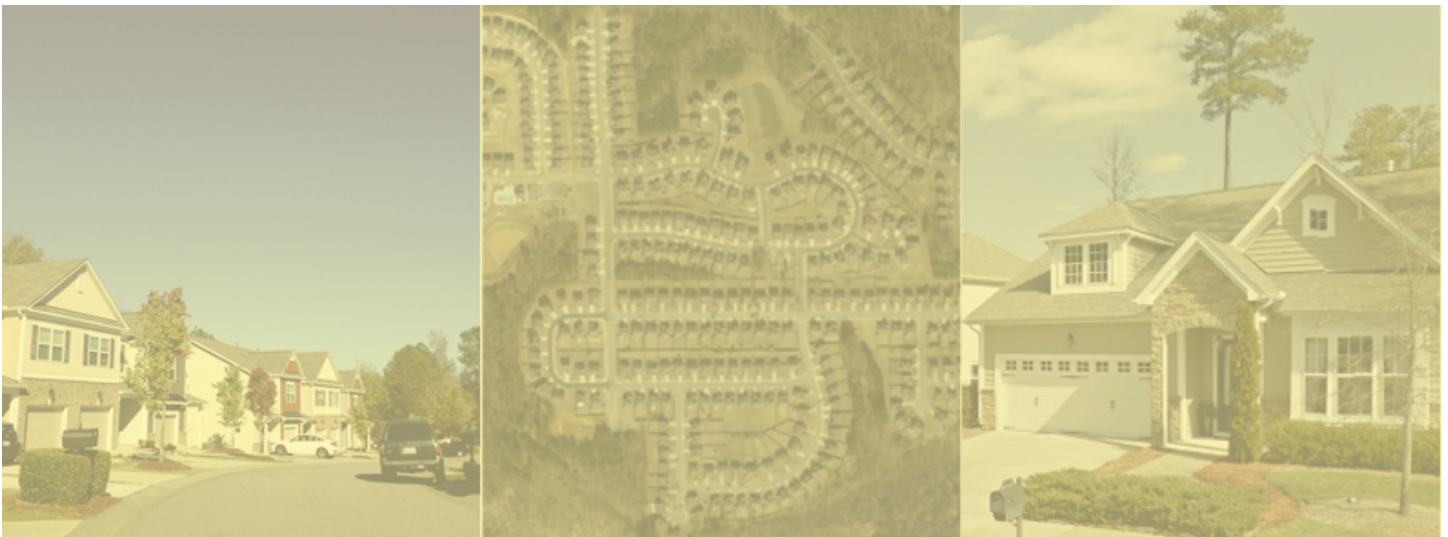
### Green Space

- » Street trees and other tree canopy are prevalent throughout the neighborhood
- » Residents should have access to community green spaces within the neighborhood and to nearby public parks
- » Natural and environmentally sensitive areas within these neighborhoods should be preserved

### Service Provision

- » Apartment and Townhouse Neighborhoods should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements





## Planned Suburban Neighborhood (PSN)

Planned Suburban Neighborhoods are existing areas made up of homes created as larger, planned subdivisions. Homes in Planned Suburban Neighborhoods can range from single-family to townhouses or low-rise, walk-up apartments, and include planned mobile home communities. Homes are typically similar in appearance, size, and design, and parking is accommodated in either garages, driveways, or parking lots. Roads and driveways in Planned Suburban Neighborhoods are internal to the development, often with limited access points to adjacent roadways. Planned Suburban Neighborhoods have dedicated green space and recreation that solely serve the residents within that neighborhood and are usually managed by a homeowner's association (HOA).

Planned Suburban Neighborhoods as they exist currently are not a future place type desired by the Durham community because they generally contain exclusionary and private open space, car-oriented designs, and single-family homes rather than a mix of housing types. However, existing Planned Suburban Neighborhoods are likely to remain for at least the next 30 years.

Planned Suburban Neighborhoods should change incrementally to incorporate various housing options like accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, and middle-density housing and seek to improve transportation network connectivity by providing safe and accessible routes that connect residents to nearby neighborhoods, transit stops, and new or existing commercial uses.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 170 on page 173** *"Reduce public and private barriers to middle density housing in existing Planned Suburban Neighborhoods to allow a greater variety of housing types and price points. Potential barriers include zoning restrictions, out-of-date development plans, private restrictive covenants, and Homeowner's Association rules."*(D)

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » Existing housing mix includes mostly single family, townhome, or multifamily communities
- » Over time, a diversity of residential building types should be added, such as accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, middle-density housing, or other housing options that provide a wider price range

### Mobility

- » Safe sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and bus stops should be added as needed
- » Pedestrian and bike connections should create connectivity, particularly where dead end or cul- de-sac streets exist. These connections should provide access to nearby parks and greenways
- » Connected greenways, bicycle facilities, or off-road paths that connect neighborhoods

### Green Space

- » Green spaces should be found throughout Planned Suburban Neighborhoods, often provided as community spaces on homeowners' association land
- » Recreational areas should become publicly accessible where possible
- » Street trees and other tree canopy are found throughout the neighborhood
- » Natural and environmentally sensitive areas within these neighborhoods should be preserved

### Service Provision

- » Planned Suburban Neighborhoods should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, stormwater systems, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements



## Community Institution (CI)

Community Institutions generally include a single building on a moderately-sized property that provides cultural, civic, recreational, communal, or educational opportunities for nearby residents. Uses include libraries, places of worship, museums, schools, and community centers. Community Institutions also include important services for community safety, like fire and EMS stations. Supportive residential units may be appropriate on these sites, but in general these should be nonresidential. They may vary in scale and height and should be designed to fit in with the size of nearby buildings. While older sites often include many parking spaces on surface lots, the design of these areas in the future should make it easy for nearby residents to walk, bike, roll, or ride transit to reach these places and to move within them. Green space should be preserved throughout the site, and there may be opportunities to convert large parking areas to green space.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 174 on page 174** *“Locate Community Institutions (such as libraries, schools, and community spaces) in areas with existing safe and accessible public transit connections and with existing services and community resources. Ensure they are designed and sited for orientation to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.” (D)*

**Policy 175 on page 174** *“Incorporate Community Institution Place Types within new mixed-use communities and on small infill sites within existing neighborhoods.” (D)*

**Policy 176 on page 174** *“Co-locate libraries, schools, and other public and private Community Institution Place Types to create welcoming spaces that connect residents, youth, and English Language Learners to local resources, information, internet, and gathering spaces for creative, athletic, social, and academic uses.” (D)*

**Policy 177 on page 174** *“Encourage the use of Community Institution Place Types for secondary purposes during days and times when the primary institution is not using the facilities. New Community Institutions should include multiple community-oriented uses and activities and should serve as a central gathering place that is walkable and accessible for meetings and events for the community.” (D)*

**Policy 178 on page 174** *“Encourage the development of affordable housing as a secondary use within Community Institution Place Types.” (D)*

**Policy 179 on page 174** *“Collaborate with nearby residents on the design of Community Institution Place Types to ensure they will enhance and support the neighborhood.” (D)*

**Policy 180 on page 175** *“Allow Neighborhood Services, Community Institutions, and other small scale commercial and civic uses to locate near neighborhoods, where they do not already exist within a 15-minute walk, to improve access to essential goods and services.” (D)*

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » Community Institutions include uses that support surrounding neighborhoods like libraries, museums, community centers, schools, places of worship, fire and EMS stations, or government buildings
- » As Community Institutions change, these areas should see the addition of buildings that include a greater mix of uses, including residential uses, preferably affordable housing
- » Community Institution Place Types should seek to add secondary purposes during days and times when the primary institution is not using the facilities
- » New Community Institutions should include multiple community-oriented uses and activities and should serve as a central gathering place that is walkable and accessible for meetings and events for the community

### Mobility

- » Strong walking, biking, and transit connections are important, both for getting to the site and moving within the site and surrounding neighborhoods
- » New Community Institutions should be located in areas with safe and accessible public transit
- » Buildings should be placed close to the street with good sidewalk connections to allow easy access to residents walking or biking

### Green Space

- » Preserve as many existing trees as possible
- » Green spaces and tree canopy should be incorporated into the site
- » Provide learning opportunities for sustainable land practices and use natural means of stormwater mitigation
- » If not including the above practices, this use should be as compact as possible

### Service Provision

- » Community Institutions should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements



## Recreation and Open Space (ROS)

*Specific Place Type Policies: N/A*

Recreation and Open Spaces are areas that will remain free from development, with the exception of minimal buildings or structures to support recreational and cultural activities where desired and appropriate. Open Spaces not suitable for recreation should have no development and be permanently protected with public ownership or permanent conservation easements and include areas like floodways, wetlands, and land around water sources.

Where appropriate, supportive development like trails, restrooms, resting places, and places for learning may be included to provide nearby residents with access to recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities through parks, trails, preserves, and cemeteries. These facilities should be accessible to all who want to walk, bike, or take a bus, and should discourage extensive car access. Open Space may be under private ownership, such as land set aside by homeowners' associations as part of a residential development. Care should be taken to intentionally add or preserve open spaces in places that do not currently have as much.

## Characteristics

### Land Uses

- » Primary land uses include the protected open space or recreation area
- » Secondary land uses include small buildings with recreation and open space support functions such as restrooms, learning spaces, and rest areas

### Mobility

- » Public recreational open space should be accessible by transit, walking, and biking when adjacent or in proximity to neighborhoods and other development

### Green Space

- » Development should be discouraged or prohibited in environmentally sensitive open spaces
- » Only minimally intensive supportive uses should be allowed in recreational spaces
- » Natural features and environmentally sensitive areas should be preserved or restored in all Recreation and Open Space Place Types

### Service Provision

- » Services like utility lines, parking areas, or roadways that support accessory uses within Recreational Space should be discouraged unless absolutely necessary. In those cases, these services should be designed to minimize environmental impact. These uses are not appropriate for environmentally sensitive open spaces that should remain closed to the public
- » For recreation areas and parks, services like utility lines and parking areas should avoid disturbing the most sensitive areas of the site





## Neighborhood Services (NS)

Neighborhood Services provide ways for residents in nearby neighborhoods to access daily needs and services like daycares, pharmacies, community spaces, offices, and small-scale stores. These areas are located along main streets, with buildings close to the street. Existing areas sometimes include former homes that have been converted into businesses and often have little or no off-street parking options.

Neighborhood Services are designed to let residents in nearby neighborhoods access daily needs by walking, biking, riding transit, or rolling from their homes to these resources. Where possible, pocket parks, street trees between the road and the front of buildings, and trees in parking areas should be included in these areas.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 180 on page 175** *“Allow Neighborhood Services, Community Institutions, and other small scale commercial and civic uses to locate near neighborhoods, where they do not already exist within a 15-minute walk, to improve access to essential goods and services.” (D)*

**Policy 181 on page 175** *“Areas designated as Neighborhood Services Place Types should provide opportunities for neighborhood-scale commercial, intended to serve and be directly accessible from surrounding residential neighborhoods. Residential should only be allowed as a secondary use.” (D)*



Characteristics

Land Uses

- » Land uses for Neighborhood Services includes small-scale stores, pharmacies, community spaces, offices, and restaurants
- » Buildings are usually one or two stories and placed close to the street with short block lengths
- » Ground floors of buildings should create street level activity, a large amount of windows, tall floor to ceiling heights, and architectural detailing

Mobility

- » Provide or maintain strong walking, biking, transit, and rolling connections, with sidewalks in front of buildings along the street. There is little or no off-street parking
- » Street parking, driveways, or structured parking should be designed to prioritize pedestrian access

Green Space

- » Green space within the Neighborhood Services Place Type should include pocket parks, street trees, and trees within parking areas

Service Provision

- » Neighborhood Services should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements





## Suburban Commercial (SC)

### Existing Conditions

Suburban Commercial places are existing shopping areas along larger, busy roads, often separated from, but adjacent to, residential neighborhoods. Large parking lots located between the street and commercial buildings and the car-oriented design of these places exclusively serve residents, workers, and visitors who drive.

### Future Conditions

Suburban Commercial Areas typically have one or two-story buildings and include stores, restaurants, and banks. These areas should add uses like pharmacies, community centers, offices, and other stores that serve residents' daily needs. These areas should transition to walkable areas with safe pedestrian paths within the shopping area and safe, walkable connections to neighborhoods adjacent to the area and to nearby transit stops. These areas should include access to green space, potentially transforming parking areas to pocket parks, planting trees throughout, and adding landscaping stormwater infiltration, such as rain gardens. Residential uses can be added through infill and upper-story mixed use.

### Specific Place Type Policies:

**Policy 182 on page 175** "Encourage areas designated as Suburban Commercial Place Types to change to the Transit Opportunity Area Place Type as conditions and transit access change over time." (D)

**Policy 183 on page 175** "Encourage areas designated as Suburban Commercial Place Type to become more sustainable and walkable over time by adding buildings, green space, green stormwater infrastructure, and pedestrian-oriented connections in existing parking areas." (D)

## Characteristics

### Land Uses

- » Uses should include restaurants, pharmacies, community centers, banks, offices, hotels, and stores
- » These areas often have a typical suburban strip-mall design now, but should transition to more walkable building placement and design, with infill development of more buildings placed closer to the street and structured parking where feasible

### Mobility

- » Currently, these areas are designed around cars, but should transition to focus on high quality pedestrian, bicyclist, and transit rider access throughout the area

### Green Space

- » Suburban Commercial developments should add pocket parks, plant additional trees, add landscaped stormwater infiltration
- » Preserve existing trees and other environmental features
- » Impervious surfaces should be converted to green spaces wherever feasible

### Service Provision

- » Suburban Commercial areas should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements



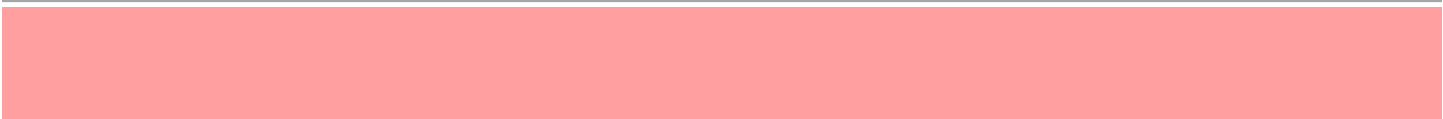
## Highway Commercial (HC)

Highway Commercial places are existing commercial sites along or adjacent to highways or freeways. While Highway Commercial places are present in the community today, this is not a desired future Place Type. These areas are car-oriented with large parking lots surrounding the buildings. Buildings in Highway Commercial areas are usually one or two-story and include gas stations, convenience stores, car dealerships, car washes, moving truck rentals, and personal storage places.

Highway Commercial Place Types are located in areas with limited access, often to interstates and highways, that make other types of development difficult and primarily serve travelers or commuters. These areas often have limited connections to adjacent uses and to transit, but walking, biking, and transit connections to surrounding areas should be included to serve workers. Unless conditions like transit access change, Highway Commercial place types should be reserved for auto-oriented uses so that other place types such as Transit Opportunity Areas and Neighborhood Services can become more walkable and neighborhood-serving. These sites should preserve any remaining trees and environmental resources and plant new trees on site.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 184 on page 175** “Areas designated Highway Commercial Place Type should be reserved for auto-dependent uses that are not appropriate in other commercial and mixed-use place types. The addition of new Highway Commercial Place Type designations is discouraged.”(D)



Characteristics

Land Uses

- » Highway Commercial areas are existing places in Durham that include car-oriented uses, such as gas stations, convenience stores, car dealerships, car washes, truck rental businesses, and personal storage places

Mobility

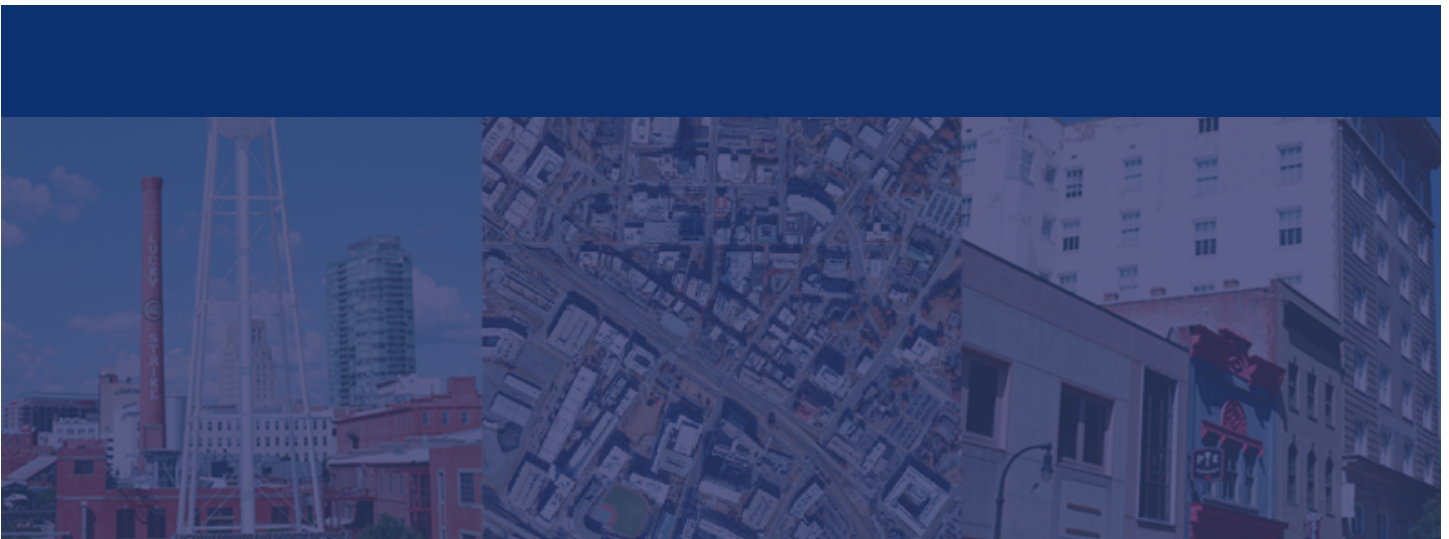
- » Highway Commercial places are located on or adjacent to major roadways with limited connections to adjacent areas
- » These areas should provide walking, biking, and transit connectivity to surrounding places and connect with existing transportation infrastructure

Green Space

- » Highway Commercial developments should plant additional trees and vegetation
- » Preserve existing trees and other environmental features

Service Provision

- » Highway Commercial sites should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements



## Downtown (DT)

Downtown Durham is the historical center of economic activity in the city and county. The Downtown area serves Durham residents, workers, and visitors with places to dine, shop, recreate, work, and live, with a variety of land uses such as multifamily housing, commercial spaces, restaurants, offices, and small parks and green space. Land uses are interwoven within the community and include connected sidewalk, bike lane, and transit infrastructure, making the area easily accessible by walking, biking, rolling, or riding a bus from areas within and outside of Downtown. Green space within the Downtown Place Type should be easily accessible for all residents to enjoy, and includes small parks, plazas, and trails.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 167 on page 173** *“The Downtown and Transit Opportunity Area Place Types, should provide a sensitive transition to nearby neighborhoods through building placement, design, massing, and step-down height.”(D)*

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » Mix of uses within buildings and the surrounding area, including stores and restaurants, housing, offices, laboratories, places of worship, community spaces, recreation, entertainment, hotels, government services, and green space
- » Housing mix includes apartments, condominiums, townhouses, upper story residential, lofts, and senior residences
- » Buildings set close to the street, with short block lengths
- » Mix of building heights, including much taller buildings than elsewhere in the community and provide a sensitive transition to nearby neighborhoods through building placement, design, massing, and step-down height
- » Downtown should be designed to create a pleasant, safe, walkable experience for residents at street level
- » Street frontages occupied by buildings and urban open spaces, particularly along transit routes and heavily trafficked streets

- » Ground floors of buildings should create street level activity, a large amount of windows, tall floor to ceiling heights, and architectural detailing

### Mobility

- » Existing and planned high-quality transit serves Downtown, with refuge areas and cover for those waiting for the bus
- » Sidewalk, bike connectivity, and safe crossing infrastructure within and to areas outside of Downtown
- » Direct dedicated routes for bicyclists and pedestrians to access transit stops
- » Good street connectivity with multiple access points
- » Street parking, bicycle parking, drop-off zones, and structured parking

### Green Space

- » Small pocket parks, landscaped plazas, and trees should be dispersed throughout the area
- » Green spaces should include sculptures, murals, and other public art installations, both temporary and permanent

### Service Provision

- » Downtown should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements. In many cases, upgrading infrastructure may be necessary due to the age or capacity of existing infrastructure





## Mixed Employment (ME)

### Existing Conditions

Mixed Employment Place Types are historically industrial areas, often located near Established Residential areas. These areas typically consist of older buildings, some of which have been converted to new uses. Typically, historical uses include light manufacturing, contractors such as plumbing and similar trades, repair services, storage, and wholesale. Mixed Employment Place Types are usually located along main streets, with buildings oriented close to the street.

### Future Conditions

Reuse of these structures provides ways for residents in nearby neighborhoods to access jobs. Uses could transition to include commercial, such as stores and restaurants, and may include residential. Retrofitting and adaptive reuse of buildings are strategies that may aid in the transition of the uses on site. Mixed Employment areas can give nearby residents and others access to jobs by walking, biking, riding transit, or rolling from their house to these locations. Since the areas often contain very few existing green spaces, they should be designed to include pocket parks, street trees, and trees in parking areas. Greater environmental remediation may be required to redevelop some industrial sites.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 185 on page 176** “Encourage conversion of some existing non-residential uses to housing within Suburban Commercial, Employment Campus, Mixed Employment, and Community Institution Place Types, especially if this conversion creates a greater mix of uses within the place type. Include residential on upper floors in Neighborhood Service Place Types.” (D)

**Policy 189 on page 176** “Encourage the adaptive reuse of older industrial and commercial property in Mixed Employment Place Types, including reuse that results in a change to a non-industrial use.” (D)

**Policy 190 on page 176** “Allow Mixed Employment Place Types to change to a non-industrial Place Type as conditions change provided that any environmental contamination has been remediated. Sites identified in Policy 194 should remain industrial to ensure an adequate supply of industrial uses in Durham.” (D)

**Policy 194 on page 177** “Reserve areas with limited environmental constraints and with supporting infrastructure, such as access to rail and major roads, as industrial Place Types (including General Industrial or Mixed Employment).” (D)

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » Existing land uses include small-scale contractors, plumbing and similar trades, repair services, storage, wholesale, fabrication, commissaries, laboratories, and other light industrial
- » Encourage adaptative reuse of older industrial into commercial, such as stores and restaurants, and residential
- » Buildings are one or two stories and placed close to the street, with short block lengths, and often include older buildings converted to new uses

### Mobility

- » Strong walking, biking, transit, and rolling connections, with sidewalks in front of buildings along the street, and often with little or no off-street parking
- » Street parking, driveways, or parking to the sides or rear of buildings, designed to prioritize pedestrian access

### Green Space

- » Green space should include pocket parks, street trees, and trees within parking areas
- » Existing impervious services should be converted to improve stormwater conditions
- » Any environmental contamination should be remediated as the industrial uses change to other uses and green space

### Service Provision

- » Traditional Manufacturing Areas should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements





## Institutional Campus (IC)

Institutional Campuses are primarily existing areas where large institutions, like universities or hospital centers, have created privately planned campuses. These areas contain a mix of building types and uses serving a single institution and the public, including offices, laboratories, classrooms, residential dormitories, and recreational facilities, with smaller supporting uses like professional offices, food service, restaurants, pharmacies, bookstores, and convenience stores.

These Place Types are typically located near major transportation corridors and have centrally located surface parking lots or structured parking where visitors and employees park once and walk to the one or more campus buildings they need to access. Institutional Campus buildings have surrounding sidewalks, trails, and passive green space designed for recreation. They should be designed to be safe, walkable, and connected by sidewalks internally and to transit service. Institutional Campuses should incorporate green space throughout the campus that is publicly accessible, where possible, and should preserve trees and sensitive environmental features.

Institutional Campus Place types are encouraged to growth within their existing footprint, especially where expansion would negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 187 on page 176** *“Encourage Institutional Campus Place Types to grow within their existing footprint, especially where expansion would negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods.” (D)*

**Policy 188 on page 176** *“Encourage Institutional Campus Place Types to include safe and affordable housing for students and staff.”(D)*

## Characteristics

### Housing and Land Uses

- » Large, planned areas by large institutions or organizations
- » Land uses include hospitals, colleges and universities, and correctional facilities containing offices, classrooms, laboratories, recreational facilities, residence halls, other supportive housing, and supporting uses like restaurants, pharmacies, bookstores, convenience stores and often with hotels nearby
- » Building patterns range from gridded, close together, and highly connected buildings to buildings spread apart and less connected
- » Include safe and affordable housing for students and staff

### Mobility

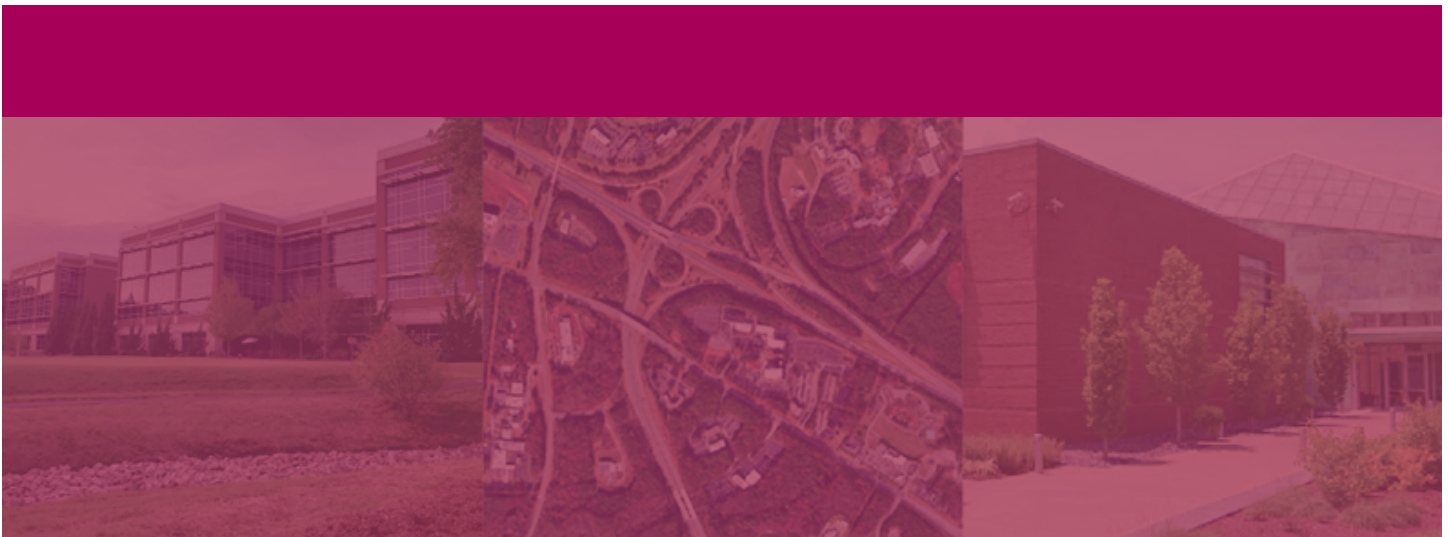
- » Abundance of surface and structured parking centrally located in these areas
- » Areas within and outside of this Place Type should be connected by sidewalks and transit service

### Green Space

- » These areas should retain and incorporate new accessible and public green space with trees and landscaping Preserve existing trees and other environmental features

### Service Provision

- » Institutional Campuses should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements



## Employment Campus (EC)

### Existing Conditions

An Employment Campus is an area planned by large organizations or companies that draws a large number of employees from Durham and neighboring communities. Primary land uses in these areas include offices, government buildings, light manufacturing or industrial, and laboratories or research facilities. These Place Types are currently car-oriented, located near major transportation corridors, and contain large, surface parking lots or structured parking. Employment Campus buildings are often spread far apart and surrounded by sidewalks, trails, and forested area.

### Future Conditions

As this place type evolves in the future, development should fill in the existing area rather than expanding outwards. Infill development should include a mix of uses that support everyday life like housing, restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores, retail, medical offices, and natural areas. Trails and sidewalks should be used to increase connectivity with the campus and provide access to transit where applicable.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 185 on page 176** “Encourage conversion of some existing non-residential uses to housing within Suburban Commercial, Employment Campus, Mixed Employment, and Community Institution Place Types, especially if this conversion creates a greater mix of uses within the place type. Include residential on upper floors in Neighborhood Service Place Types.” (D)

**Policy 186 on page 176** “Encourage existing Employment Campus Place Types to use vacant or underutilized land to include a greater mix of uses to be more walkable and accessible to transit.” (D)



Characteristics

Land Uses

- » Primary uses include light industrial, laboratories, and research facilities
- » New infill development should be mixed-use, intended to serve employees in the area including grocery stores, restaurants, banks, or medical offices

Mobility

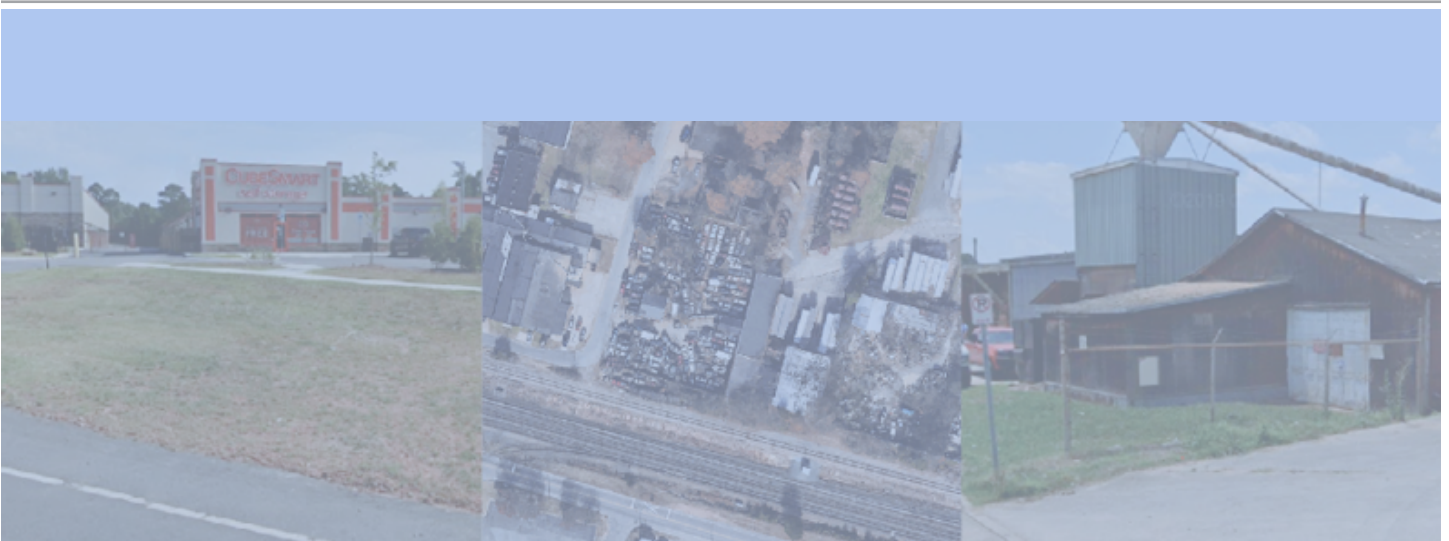
- » Increase connectivity within campuses through sidewalks and trails
- » Where possible increase transit connectivity

- » Preserve forested areas and protect creek corridors and environmentally sensitive areas as new development infills this Place Type

Service Provision

- » Employment Campuses should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements

Green Space



## General Industrial (GI)

General Industrial places include heavy industrial uses like manufacturing and warehousing and are usually located along major roadways or railroad corridors. General Industrial places exist in Durham today and are needed by the community. These uses were predominately placed in communities of color in the past. Any new areas of this kind should seek to be equitably placed in the future, ensuring that communities of color and low-income communities no longer have an inequitable concentration of General Industrial uses. These areas may have negative impacts on people living nearby, such as unpleasant odor and noise, and should be located and designed to minimize those impacts as much as possible.

These areas usually require access for larger trucks or railroads to bring goods in and out of the sites. General Industrial sites should include sidewalk connections along street frontages and, if access for workers is needed on site, should provide safe sidewalk connections from transit stops on adjacent larger roadways and into the site. These developments should preserve any remaining environmental resources, preserve existing, healthy trees, plant new trees on site, protect any nearby water sources, and protect nearby property from contamination.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 193 on page 177** *"Equitably site industrial facilities when designating new General Industrial Place Types, ensuring that communities of color and low-income communities no longer have a concentration of these uses." (D)*

**Policy 194 on page 177** *"Reserve areas with limited environmental constraints and with supporting infrastructure, such as access to rail and major roads, as industrial Place Types (including General Industrial or Mixed Employment)." (D)*

## Characteristics

### Land Uses

- » Heavy industrial uses, such as concrete and asphalt plants, manufacturing, and warehousing are common land uses for General Industrial sites
- » These uses are typically necessary for the Durham community but often have harmful consequences like pollution that should be mitigated to the greatest extent possible

### Mobility

- » These places may require clearance for larger truck traffic or for rail access to go in and out of the sites
- » They should provide sidewalk connections along the front of the sites and create pedestrian connectivity to other nearby areas where possible
- » If access for workers is needed on site, provide transit access on adjacent larger roadways and sidewalk connections and safe crossings into the site

### Green Space

- » General Industrial developments should plant additional trees and vegetation and preserve existing trees and other environmental features
- » General Industrial should not be placed in areas with water bodies, steep slopes, floodplain, stream buffers, wetlands, or natural heritage areas

### Service Provision

- » General Industrial places are often supported by railroad infrastructure and major water utilities due to high demand for water resources. General Industrial areas should be already supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements





## Utilities and Public Works Facilities (UPW)

Utilities and Public Works Facilities are places that provide essential infrastructure support for all place types. These areas include water and sewer facilities, electrical sub-stations, government maintenance facilities, landfills, and recycling centers. These areas may have negative impacts on people living nearby, including unpleasant odor and noise, and should be located and designed to minimize those impacts as much as possible.

When designing new Utilities and Public Works Facilities Place Types, historic inequities of siting these uses should be reduced or mitigated. Utilities and Public Works Facilities usually require clearance for larger truck traffic to go in and out of the sites. Sites should include sidewalks along street frontages and, if access for workers is needed on site, should provide safe sidewalks and crossings from transit stops on adjacent major roadways and into the site. These sites should be built out as compactly as possible, preserving as many environmental resources and existing trees as possible.

*Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 191 on page 177** *"Reduce or mitigate historic inequities in the siting of utilities and public works facilities when designating new Utilities and Public Works Facilities Place Types." (D)*



## Characteristics

### Land Uses

- » Land Uses include infrastructure and maintenance buildings for a variety of government and public utility needs, like water and sewer facilities, electrical sub-stations, government maintenance facilities, landfills, or recycling centers
- » Buildings should be compactly sited with easy and convenient ways for workers to access the site

### Mobility

- » Transit access should be located along major roads near these sites
- » Safe bus stops, sidewalks, and bicycle and pedestrian crossings should be located in areas where workers need to access the site

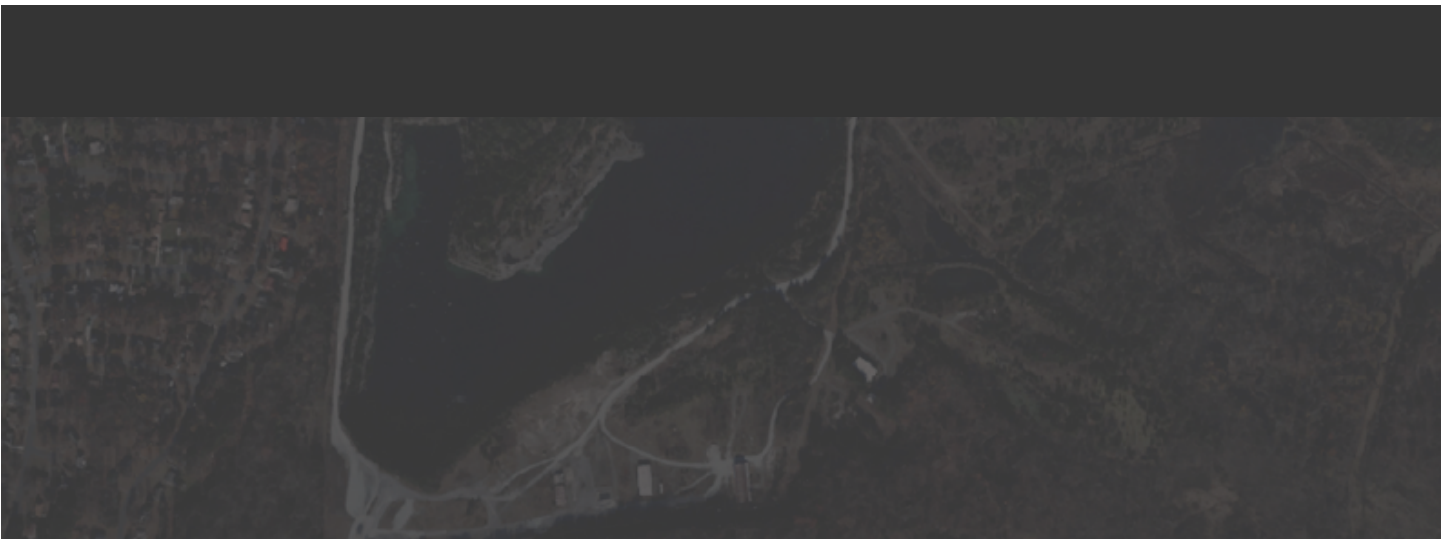
### Green Space

- » Utilities and Public Works Facilities should be as compact as possible
- » On larger sites in this Place Type preserve existing trees and environmentally sensitive areas as part of the site

### Service Provision

- » Utilities and Public Works Facilities generally need utilities to support administrative buildings or maintenance facilities. These areas should be supported by existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and roads, or phased to coincide with capital improvements



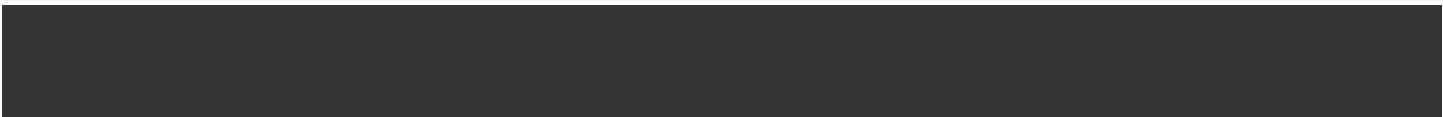


## Resource Extraction (RE)

Resource Extraction areas are where resources, such as stone or soil, are extracted from the ground and then transported off-site. While Resource Extraction places are present in the community today, this is not a desired future Place Type. Direct access to major transportation corridors is essential for this use. Residents who live nearby may be impacted by noise, vibrations, and pollution from associated machinery and heavy equipment. Therefore, these place types should be located far away from homes, and placement of new residential areas near Resource Extraction areas should be discouraged. Road access to the site is limited but should support truck traffic. Trees and landscaping features should be incorporated to visually screen this use from adjacent uses. Once resource extraction is complete, these areas should be safely decommissioned and naturally landscaped, to the extent possible.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 192 on page 177** *“New Resource Extraction Place Types should be discouraged.” (D)*



Characteristics

Land Uses

- » Industrial land use
- » No other land uses are appropriate for these sites while resource extraction occurs
- » May be appropriate to safely transition to Recreation and Open Space, once decommissioned

Mobility

- » Residents should be able to safely avoid interfering with operations within these areas as they travel past the site
- » Direct connectivity to major transportation corridors to minimize disruption as equipment moves in and out

Green Space

- » Natural areas on the site, not directly impacted by resource extraction, should be preserved
- » Trees and other landscaping should screen the site from adjacent property and uses

Service Provision

- » Resource Extraction sites do not require existing public infrastructure like water, sewer, transit service, and internal connecting roads. Any services needed to support transition after resource extraction is complete should be phased with that transition



## Rural and Agricultural Reserve (RAR)

*Specific Place Type Policies: N/A*

Rural and Agricultural Reserves are generally located outside of Durham’s Urban Growth Boundary and within the County limits. They consist of a significant amount of undeveloped or forested land, both large-scale and small-scale agriculture, and single-family homes on moderate or large-sized lots.

Rural and Agricultural Reserves maintain their rural character and contribute to Durham’s ability to provide local food access. Residents access recreational, commercial, and institutional places like parks, stores, and schools primarily by car or on-demand transit service. Intentionally placed sidewalks, bike paths, and crosswalks connect residents to and from nearby destinations like schools and small shopping areas. Limited development, including buildings and pavement, helps to preserve Durham’s drinking water resources, habitat for wildlife, and resiliency of the natural environment.



Characteristics

Housing and Land Uses

- » Housing mix includes primarily single-family homes, mobile homes and manufactured homes, and accessory structures
- » Agricultural and working lands, low-density residential, and supportive small-scale commercial places are found in this Place Type

Mobility

- » Rural or local roads connect homes to major roadways
- » There is limited sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure access from homes to key destinations
- » On-demand transit or limited bus service are available in some places

Green Space

- » Lakes, rivers, wetlands, floodplains, and other sensitive environmental areas are left undeveloped, creating large portions of undeveloped green space

Service Provision

- » Rural and Agricultural Reserves are not served by public water and sewer



## Rural Commercial (RC)

Rural Commercial Place Types are located outside of Durham’s Urban Growth Boundary and provide for the basic daily needs of the surrounding rural community. They often include small-scale gas stations, grocery stores, restaurants, or general stores. These businesses are typically freestanding rather than part of a shopping complex and are often located, along or at the intersection of major roads. Residents access Rural Commercial areas primarily by car or on-demand transit service. These areas should have safe sidewalks, bike paths, and crosswalks for residents not using a car. Trees, large green spaces, cemeteries, and parks can be found in Rural Commercial areas.

### *Specific Place Type Policies:*

**Policy 195 on page 177** “Maintain and support existing Rural Commercial outside the Urban Growth Boundary and discourage the addition of new Rural Commercial Place Types.” (D)



Characteristics

Land Uses

- » Primarily nonresidential land uses like general stores, gas stations, post offices, or restaurants are found here
- » The addition of new Rural Commercial Place Types is discouraged

Mobility

- » Residents primarily access Rural Commercial areas by car
- » Sidewalks or off-road paths should be placed in areas with a concentration of activity

Green Space

- » Trees, open areas, cemeteries, or parks are found nearby and within the Rural Commercial Place Type

Service Provision

- » Rural Commercial Place Types are not served by public water and sewer

# Section 3

## Implementation

**Implementing a Comprehensive Plan happens over many years and involves many partners working together to make the community's vision a reality. Local government, in particular, has discrete departments and partner agencies that work on specific topics that impact our lives in Durham.**

The Planning Department is a leader and champion of the Comprehensive Plan but does not have all the tools or influence to impact every idea in this plan. Additionally, the North Carolina State Legislature and the U.S. Federal Government and their departments have power to limit Durham's ability to pursue the local community's priorities.

Implementing the plan can happen through:

- » Using the plan's Policies and Place Types to evaluate individual development cases or proposals
- » Using the Actions to inform the work City and County departments do (including the Planning Department)
- » Using the Community Goals and Objectives to advocate for what residents need

Legislation, funding, economic conditions, and global conditions will change over time. The Implementation Framework is meant to be flexible to adapt to new ways of implementing the community's ideas.

To stay accountable, track progress, and continue the conversation, the Community Goals and Objectives Report Card is a tool to keep the Comprehensive Plan as a living document that adapts as our community changes.





*Durham City Hall On the Go, 2021.*



# 3.1 Implementing the Plan

Implementing the Plan is about the strategies or processes the City and County local governments can pursue to implement the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan (Section 2: Durham's Equitable Growth Framework on page 12). This section also includes a process for reporting progress on implementation.

Read Implementing the Plan if you:

- » Seek to understand what strategies, processes, or mechanisms exist to implement the recommendations in the plan
- » Want to know how we plan to track progress toward implementing the Community Goals and Objectives on page 19
- » Are looking for ways your department or organization can help collect data or information to add to the Community Goals and Objectives Report Card on page 230

## 3.2 Implementation List

The implementation list is how we are going to do the work described in the Policies and Actions and is guided by the Community Goals and Objectives. The list will identify who within the City or County would lead the work on each of the action items and list other departments that should be involved. It also specifically calls out actions where inter-departmental coordination will be essential. The list will then be used to determine City and County departmental work each year, ensuring that we are working towards the Plan's vision. The list indicates which actions we believe we have legal authority to pursue now, and which will require legal authority to pursue. This information can inform future legislative agendas at the state level.

The implementation list will be organized by primary responsible party for each of the actions. The implementation list itself is not a part of the adopted Plan but is included for reference during the plan adoption process. This list may be updated or revised as the City and County determine different ways to work towards the policies and actions, particularly in response to resident feedback.

After the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, staff will continue to add details to the Implementation List, including strategies and collaborations. This work will be evaluated on an annual basis, during which items from the implementation list can be added to departmental work programs, business plans, and strategic plans, as appropriate.

Implementation tasks could include:

- » Changes to Planning Department work policies and procedures (ex: communication and engagement around proposed development)
- » Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) updates, with clear support of the Community Goals and Objectives
- » Selective rezoning of land to have the zoning better match place types
- » Changes to City and County policies and procedures (ex: Capital Improvement Plan scoring process)
- » Continued long-range planning through potential further studies

As equity and accountability are among our guiding values for the Comprehensive Plan, we developed a way for the community to monitor the progress of our implementation of the policies and actions. The Community Goals and Objectives Report Card works to track that progress.



*Staff Technical Team for Durham's New Comprehensive Plan, 2019.*

## 3.3 Community Goals and Objectives Report Card

**The Community Goals and Objectives articulate a clear vision for Durham, including where we currently are as a community, and where we want to go. As we work together to implement the Comprehensive Plan, we need to track our progress and adjust as we learn about the impact of decisions and recommendations from the Plan.**

The Community Goals and Objectives Report Card is the framework for tracking progress once the Plan has been adopted. While the report card itself will not be developed until after the plan has been adopted, this part of the Plan describes the Report Card intent, the process to regularly create and share the Report Card, how the Report Card results will be used to inform future work, and the Equity Indicators that make up the Report Card.

### **Equity and the Report Card**

Equity is a Guiding Value for the Comprehensive Plan and the Report Card framework reflects that in its structure and focus. The Report Card acknowledges that land use planning and the use of land has historically benefitted white landowners. Due to the inequity of land use in the past, the plan focuses on how to work towards equitable outcomes in the future. Therefore, the Report Card focuses specifically on how the recommendations and guidance from this plan influence outcomes for those in our community who have been given less privilege and access. It is framed around the specific ways that inequities in Durham's built environment exist. The demographic identities that the report card will focus in on, in addition to looking at broad community impacts, are BIPOC, low-income, Spanish-speaking, immigrant and refugee, disabled, senior, youth, houseless, and justice-involved residents.

### **Report Card Limitations**

The Comprehensive Plan primarily impacts decisions and policy for land use. How we use land influences many aspects of life in Durham, but a local government's land use policy is only one part of the equation that makes up a community. Because of that limitation, the topics covered in the Report Card focus on the specific ways that land use decisions can influence life in Durham and is not a comprehensive review of all aspects of life in Durham.

### **How often is a Report Card released?**

The Comprehensive Plan Report Card will be created and published every two years. The Report Card will be presented to the community and elected officials by Planning Staff. Staff will work to make connections between actions, as described or called for in the Comprehensive Plan, and the observable outcomes, as described in the Report Card.

Staff are committed to using the report card as an opportunity to be in conversation with community members and to check in on whether the needs and priorities we heard during plan development have changed. Hearing from the community, we can then use that input to inform upcoming initiatives. Initiatives could include proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan itself, changes to the implementation list or their prioritization, budget requests for the Planning Department, determining the next year's work program, or raising community concerns around new development when cases come to the elected boards.

The engagement around the release of the report card has not been designed, but staff is committed to creating space for community conversation related to the report that can lead to new strategies and priorities. As we have done throughout the Comprehensive Plan development process, we will ask residents for feedback following engagement around the report card and will revise future engagement strategies to be more accessible and effective from residents' perspectives.

### **What's in the Report Card?**

The Report card is organized around eight Equity Indicators. These Equity Indicators summarize key themes that are found in the Community Goals and Objectives that move Durham towards greater access and equity in land use decision-making and outcomes. For the Report Card, each Equity Indicator will be assessed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative information, to be determined based on data availability and community input. Below is a description of each Equity Indicator:

## **Comprehensive Plan Equity Indicators**

### **#1: Neighborhood Change**

The Neighborhood Change Equity Indicator will look at whether and how residents are being displaced from our community. This may draw on the County's Displacement Index work currently in progress. It will look at whether changes in growth and development in Durham are reducing or increasing the displacement risk of existing and long-term residents. Data points could include the number of new residents moving into Durham, number of residents leaving Durham, the demographic characteristics of those residents, the cost of housing and cost of living, and the availability of different types of jobs. Since we know that specific communities are at greater risk of displacement, in addition to looking at the community broadly, we will look specifically at neighborhood change in historically Black neighborhoods, low-income neighborhoods, Hispanic and Latino communities, and rural locations. We anticipate that the engagement on the report card will directly generate qualitative data from residents as well.

### **#2: Building Relationships with Residents**

The Building Relationships with Residents Equity Indicator will look at how residents' access to local government education, programs, staff, and processes has changed and how residents are impacted by our community's growth. This may include data around residents' engagement in Planning Academy and the development process, and overall language accessibility of government. To understand resident satisfaction, the assessment of this Equity Indicator may also pull data from the Durham City and County Resident Survey. We will look at these factors both broadly for our general community and specifically at how this data has changed for BIPOC, low-income, Spanish-speaking, disabled, senior, youth, houseless, and justice-involved residents.

### **#3 Access to Housing**

The Access to Housing Equity Indicator will look at how access to housing is changing in Durham. For our purposes, access will be viewed in a broad sense, including ADA accessibility, level of affordability of new housing, number of houseless individuals, number of transitional or supportive housing units created, availability of different types of housing, and homeownership rates. For each of these data points we will look at how residents with less access and privilege are faring in access to housing, particularly BIPOC, low-income, Spanish-speaking, immigrant and refugee, disabled, senior, youth, houseless, and justice-involved residents. This will also connect to the Access to Daily Needs and Access to Transportation Equity Indicators as where housing is located and what transportation options exist are important parts of that access.

## **#4: Access to Daily Needs**

The Access to Daily Needs Equity Indicator will look at whether daily needs are nearby housing and neighborhoods, building on the 15-minute community idea. These uses could include jobs, banks, education, health care, childcare, healthy food, green space, and recreational opportunities. This will tie into the Access to Transportation Equity Indicator as it can look also at how residents can travel to those uses from their homes. This Equity Indicator should also include availability of high-speed internet since digital access is so important. Since we know that specific communities have often been denied access to these things, we will look at how residents' access to these uses has changed in Black neighborhoods, low-income neighborhoods, Hispanic and Latino communities, and rural locations.

## **#5 Access to Transportation**

The Access to Transportation Equity Indicator will look at how options that residents have for safely and easily moving around the community have changed. This may include new sidewalk or greenway construction, new or expanded bus service, new or expanded paratransit services, the creation or retrofit of complete streets, the maintenance of streets, and new developments approved or constructed with safe and easy access to transportation. For each of these data points, we will look at how residents with less access and privilege are faring in access to transportation, particularly BIPOC, low-income, Spanish-speaking, disabled, senior, youth, houseless, and justice-involved residents.

## **#6 Environmental Justice**

The Environmental Justice Equity Indicator looks at the specific ways that low-income and BIPOC communities in Durham have been harmed by previous land use decisions regarding access to nature and open space, proximity to hazardous land uses, and vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events. Specifically, the Environmental Justice Equity Indicator should report the status of equitable distribution of tree canopy, progress towards placing 30% of the land area of Durham County in permanent conservation, the quality of air and water in different areas of Durham – particularly for low income and BIPOC communities near noxious land uses, changes in the risk of residents in areas prone to flooding or extreme heat, equitable progress towards becoming a carbon neutral community, and the availability of green infrastructure and sustainable building designs for low income and BIPOC residents.

## **#7 Access to Economic Opportunities**

The Access to Economic Opportunities Equity Indicator will look at residents' access to jobs. As we look at job access relevant data may include living wages, job training availability, wealth-building, and specifically how existing residents get connected to new jobs in our community. This will also connect to the Access to Daily Needs and Access to Transportation Equity Indicators as where jobs are located and how residents can travel to those jobs are important parts of that access. In addition to specifically looking at how existing residents are faring, we will also look at access to economic opportunities for BIPOC, low-income, Spanish-speaking, disabled, senior, youth, houseless, and justice-involved residents.

## **#8: Health and Well-being**

The Health and Well-being Equity Indicator will look at residents' ability to live a physically and mentally healthy life in Durham. This should draw from the Community Health Assessment that is completed through the County's Public Health Department every two years. It may include data around access to health care and health services and will also look at how all aspects of life in a community (inclusive of the indicators above) are impacting our residents' well-being. We will look both broadly at these factors for our community and specifically at how this data has changed for BIPOC, low-income, Spanish-speaking, disabled, senior, youth, houseless, and justice-involved residents.



# **APPENDICES**

# Appendix A:

## Glossary of Terms

**ADA** – An acronym that refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a federal law that prohibits discrimination and requires accommodations for individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

**Annexation** – When the lines that define the City limits change so that a property that is not within City limits becomes part of the City. This usually happens with properties in county near the City limits. City Council's approval is required.

**Biodiversity** – The term biological diversity, or biodiversity, means the diversity of life forms on Earth, including plants, animals, and fungi. It applies to the large number of species we have on Earth, and the many differences in their genes. Biodiversity is an important way to understand the health of an environment. Areas with very little biodiversity are less healthy overall and less adaptable to changes. A mature forest with many different kinds of plants, animals, and fungi is much more biodiverse than a lawn in front of a house with just a single species of grass.

**BIPOC** – BIPOC stands for: Black, Indigenous, People of Color. The term people of color is primarily used to describe anyone who is not white.

**Block Length** – The length of a block between two adjacent streets. Blocks are defined by streets or rights-of-way at their edges.

**Brownfield** – A site or location that has been polluted because of the way it was used in the past (like for dry-cleaning or an industrial factory).

**Carbon-neutral** – When the overall carbon dioxide (and other greenhouse gas) released into the environment is zero. This means either reducing the amount of carbon released to zero or removing an amount of carbon dioxide from the environment equal to the amount produced and released into the environment.

**Clear-cutting** – a land clearing practice where most or all trees are cut down and removed from a property or area.

**Climate change** – Environmental change caused by the emission of greenhouse gases due to human activity and associated technology powered by fossil fuels like coal and oil. Previously referred to as global warming, climate change is an expanded term that acknowledges that the impacts of climate change go beyond just increased temperatures. Climate change has caused, and will increasingly cause, frequent and intense changes in temperatures (both hot and cold), increased pollution, drought, loss of plant and animal life, flooding, and human health impacts like asthma and heat stroke. Climate change is an existential threat to our society and is sometimes also referred to as the climate crisis.

**Co-locate** – to share land or buildings with different uses or groups; for example, locating housing on portions of school sites.

**Critical Watersheds** – a set area of land around a drinking water supply, such as Falls Lake and Jordan Lake, Lake Michie and Little River, and the Eno River. This area puts limits on construction to protect drinking water quality.

**Complete neighborhoods** – A “complete neighborhood” is an aspirational neighborhood with the following characteristics: a place where residents live and are able to easily access daily needs like food, medicine, school, work, and recreation without having to travel long distances in a car. A complete neighborhood provides all of the basic necessities within a 15-minute walk, bus, or bike ride.

**Defensible Space** – part of an idea that crime can be controlled and reduced by how we design our surroundings (part of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED).

**Density** – The number of homes per acre of land. For example, if there are two homes on one acre of land, the density is 2 dwelling units per acre.

**Displacement** – The pushing out of community members from their homes and businesses from a part of the community, often as redevelopment occurs.

**Donut Hole** – County land that is not within the City limits but is completely surrounded by land that is in the city. On a map, this looks like the hole in a typical donut.

**Dwelling unit or unit** – An individual living space for a person or a family. Examples include an entire house, apartment unit, or townhouse unit.

**Easement** – an area of land that the owner legally allows to be used for specific purposes by another person or group.

**Ecological (restoration)** – the process of repairing or restoring areas where nature has been damaged or destroyed. Nature includes things like plants, animals, and insects.

**Enclave** – an area of land mostly surrounded by a different area of land, like where property in the county is annexed into the city in a way that leaves an “enclave” of county property surrounded by city property.

**English language learners** – A person learning the English language in addition to their native language or any other language.

**Environmental racism** – The institutional rules, regulations, policies or government, and corporate decisions that deliberately target certain communities for locally undesirable land uses and lax enforcement of zoning and environmental laws, resulting in communities being disproportionately exposed to toxic and hazardous waste based upon race.

**Food apartheid** – Sometimes also known as food deserts, food apartheid refers to a condition where specific parts of a community do not have access to fresh, affordable, and nutritious food because of systemic racial and economic inequality and segregation.

**Form Based Code** – A type of development regulation that defines the allowable physical form that buildings or development can take. This is used in contrast to use-based regulation that is focused on the uses allowed more than the form.

**Formal education** – Structured educational degrees or programs like a high school diploma, GED program, Bachelor’s Degree, Master’s Degree, or other programs and certifications.

**Gentrification** – Often in places where investment has been withheld historically, investments made that increase rent, property values, and taxes and make the area unaffordable to folks who have lived in that area. It also often includes policing of the culture of those being pushed out.

**Green** – A term associated with ecological, environmental, and sustainable developments, practices, and lifestyles.

**Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions** – Gases released by human activity into the earth’s atmosphere. These gases absorb and trap heat, called the greenhouse effect, which warms the earth’s surface and air above it. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxides, and chlorofluorocarbons. Emissions from the engines of vehicles like cars and trucks make up the largest amount of GHG released in Durham County each year.

**Green Infrastructure** – A range of systems, engineering designs, and practices that use vegetation, soils, and other ecological elements to control water that falls on developed areas—particularly areas with a lot of impervious surfaces. Examples include rain gardens, green roofs, bioswales, permeable pavement, and keeping natural areas in permanent conservation.

**Greenway** – A paved or unpaved path, separated from the roadway, used by pedestrians and bicyclists for transportation or recreation.

**Heat Island Effect** – When areas with more development, like buildings and other impervious surfaces, are warmer than areas with less development. These areas become an “island” of heat because materials like metal and asphalt absorb and re-emit the sun’s energy. The heat island effect can be mitigated with the installation of green infrastructure, like trees.

**Historically Black neighborhood** – A neighborhood where people who identify as Black or African American made up a majority of residents living there at a point in history. Historically Black neighborhoods are often characterized by a legacy of disinvestment and may or may not have the same racial demographics today.

**Houselessness** – The lack of stable or appropriate housing.

**Incentives** – Something that encourages or motivates someone to do something. For this plan, generally referring to a regulatory structure where a developer will get something beneficial for their project, in exchange for providing something that they otherwise might not be inclined to include. For example, permitting a greater overall number of houses in a project, so long as a certain amount of affordable housing is included.

**Inequity** – where different aspects of an individual’s identity (ex., race, age, gender identity) can predict individual or group outcomes (ex., wealth, income, employment, criminal justice, housing, health care, education).

**Infill** – Placing new development in urbanized areas where development does not currently exist. Infill development is in contrast to new development that expands the urbanized area.

**Infrastructure** – The physical resources and services needed to maintain a livable city and county. Traditional types of infrastructure include drinking water, wastewater, emergency services, solid waste, transit, roads and streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, parks, and street trees. Additional types of infrastructure include schools, libraries, public health facilities, broadband (Internet), arts and culture spaces, childcare facilities, and public housing.

**Impervious surface** – Artificial, water resistant structures and materials such as roads, parking lots, and rooftops, typically built with asphalt, concrete, brick, or stone. These materials prevent water from being absorbed into the ground and can cause or increase the amount of flooding in an area as water is trapped by these materials. Water that cannot easily be absorbed into the ground is known as run-off as it moves over impervious surfaces, and can contribute to pollution and erosion.

**Justice-involved** – People who have been involved with the criminal justice system.

**LGBTQIA+** – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual or androgynous. The plus stands for pansexual and two-spirit (2S).

**Land Use** – the way land is used, like whether it contains buildings or park space. The term also describes how buildings are used, like for homes, businesses, or services. Land use can refer to what is happening with the land now or how it should be used in the future (ex., future land use).

**Legislative** – a type of decision made by groups of people who are elected (ex., City Council, Board of County Commissioners). These groups make decisions by voting and can approve or deny a request related to changing or building on land based on their personal opinions.

**Living wage** – As opposed to the minimum wage, a living wage is enough money to afford rent and basic food and medical needs in an area. As of 2021, the North Carolina minimum wage of \$7.25 is not sufficient to afford rent and live on in Durham.

**Low-wealth vs. low-income** – Income refers to how much money a person receives per year from wages, benefits, and other forms of payment. Wealth refers to the total amount of saved resources that a person has access to. Systemic racism and economic exclusion has ensured that methods of accumulating wealth, like owning property and a home, are far less accessible to people of Color.

**Massing** – The three-dimensional size and shape of a structure, especially its scale when viewed by a person standing near it.

**Mass Grading** – a process where heavy machines like bulldozers cut down all the trees and plants and then move the dirt around to make it flat so that it's easier to build on.

**Middle-density housing** – housing units that are more dense than single family homes and less dense than apartment blocks. This includes duplexes, triplexes, townhouses/row homes, or small apartment buildings.

**Mitigate** – to make something less harmful.

**Mixed use** – Buildings or development area that has a mix of residential uses, like homes and apartments, and commercial uses, like stores, businesses, and offices.

**Modes or Transportation Modes** – Different ways people move from one place to the other by walking, driving, biking, or riding transit.

**Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)** – This refers to residential rental units that are affordable but are not subsidized. Their rents are low compared to other housing units in the area.

**Net-Zero** – See “Carbon-Neutral”

**Non-residential** – Uses that are not related to where people live, such as commercial, industrial, or institutional activities.

**Paratransit** – A transit service that takes people with disabilities to and from destinations, such as doctor appointments and grocery stores. This service can be requested by people each time they need it. Durham ACCESS is an example of paratransit.

**Permeable (pavement)** – Pavement that lets water flow through it to the ground underneath rather than remaining trapped above the surface. The water can then be absorbed back into the earth, causing less flooding.

**Perennial streams** – The bigger streams in Durham that always have water in them. These are different than the smaller streams that only have water in them for a short time after it rains.

**Place type** – A way to categorize similar types of development that share the same characteristics including building design, land uses, transportation infrastructure, and green space.

**Proffer** – Something that a developer voluntarily agrees to do as part of a legislative hearing like a rezoning. Proffers are at the discretion of the applicant to propose, but once adopted they are legally binding. For example, a proffer might be to contribute a specific amount of money to the affordable housing fund.

**Pocket parks** – A small park accessible to the general public. Pocket parks can be created on small, irregular pieces of land, in vacant building lots, along the centers of broad avenues, or even in parking spots.

**Redline (redlining, redlined)** – A racist practice used by financial institutions in the 1930s to label different parts of a city as “riskier” than others when deciding whether to lend money to residents. In practice, neighborhoods with Black residents were labeled “risky,” and prospective owners were denied mortgages for houses and the opportunity to become homeowners. These neighborhoods were outlined in red on city maps. Redlining is a big part of why Black and Brown families in the United States have less wealth than white families.

**Residential** – Uses that are related to where people live. Residential land uses include any kind of homes, such as single family houses, duplexes, mobile homes, tiny homes, apartments, townhomes, and condos.

**Resiliency** – The ability of a person or a community to respond, adapt, or bounce-back from an unexpected or disruptive event like a natural disaster or pandemic. Individual or community wealth directly influences how resilient a person or place is.

**Retrofit** – To upgrade or otherwise make improvements to something existing. For example, retrofitting houses by replacing older heating and cooling systems with a new energy efficient version.

**Rideshare** – A program or business that allows people to participate in an arrangement in which a passenger travels in a private vehicle driven by its owner, for free or for a fee, especially as arranged by means of a website or app. Presently, the rideshare market is dominated by the companies Uber and Lyft, but other kinds of rideshare programs could become more common in the future.

**Roll (transportation mode)** – Ways people move around that can include using a wheelchair, scooter, bicycle, stroller, or other equipment with wheels.

**Satellite** – an area of land completely outside of and separate from a different area of land, like where property is annexed into the City of Durham in a way that is not connected to any other City of Durham land.

**School-to-Prison pipeline** – A system designed to funnel youth, minors, and young adults into the criminal justice system by criminalizing behavior at schools through harsh disciplinary policies and procedures. There is a disproportionate tendency for students of color, students experiencing poverty, students with disabilities, and LGTQIA+ students to experience the school-to-prison pipeline.

**Step-down Height** – The reduction of building height near surrounding buildings with significantly lower heights. This could include changes of building height within a single building or of multiple buildings on a site.

**Stream Buffer** – An area around a stream where building on or changing the land is not allowed. This buffer protects the stream and the plants and animals that use the stream. In Durham, stream buffers generally range from 50 to 300 feet wide.

**Seniors** – People over the age of 65.

**Settler colonialism** – Colonialism is a power dynamic and a process by which colonizers extract resources, such as land, labor, materials, and culture from existing communities and spaces. Settler colonialists, specifically, not only extracts resources, but also physically occupy the land where the extractive process is happening.

**Sustainability** – Ensuring present environmental, social, and economic needs are being met without compromising the needs of future generations.

**Universal design** – The design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors.

**Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)** – A legally binding set of rules that regulates how physical development of land is allowed to occur in both the City and County. Called a “unified” development ordinance because it includes regulations for a variety of things including zoning and subdivision of land.

**Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)** – A line that defines the future growth of the city limits. This area is not all urban but may be in the future. Development outside of the Urban Growth Boundary will be limited.

**Vertical Mixed Use** – A land use design where multiple uses are integrated into a single multi-story building. A common example is a 5-story building with retail stores on the first floor, offices on the second floor, and housing on the upper floors.

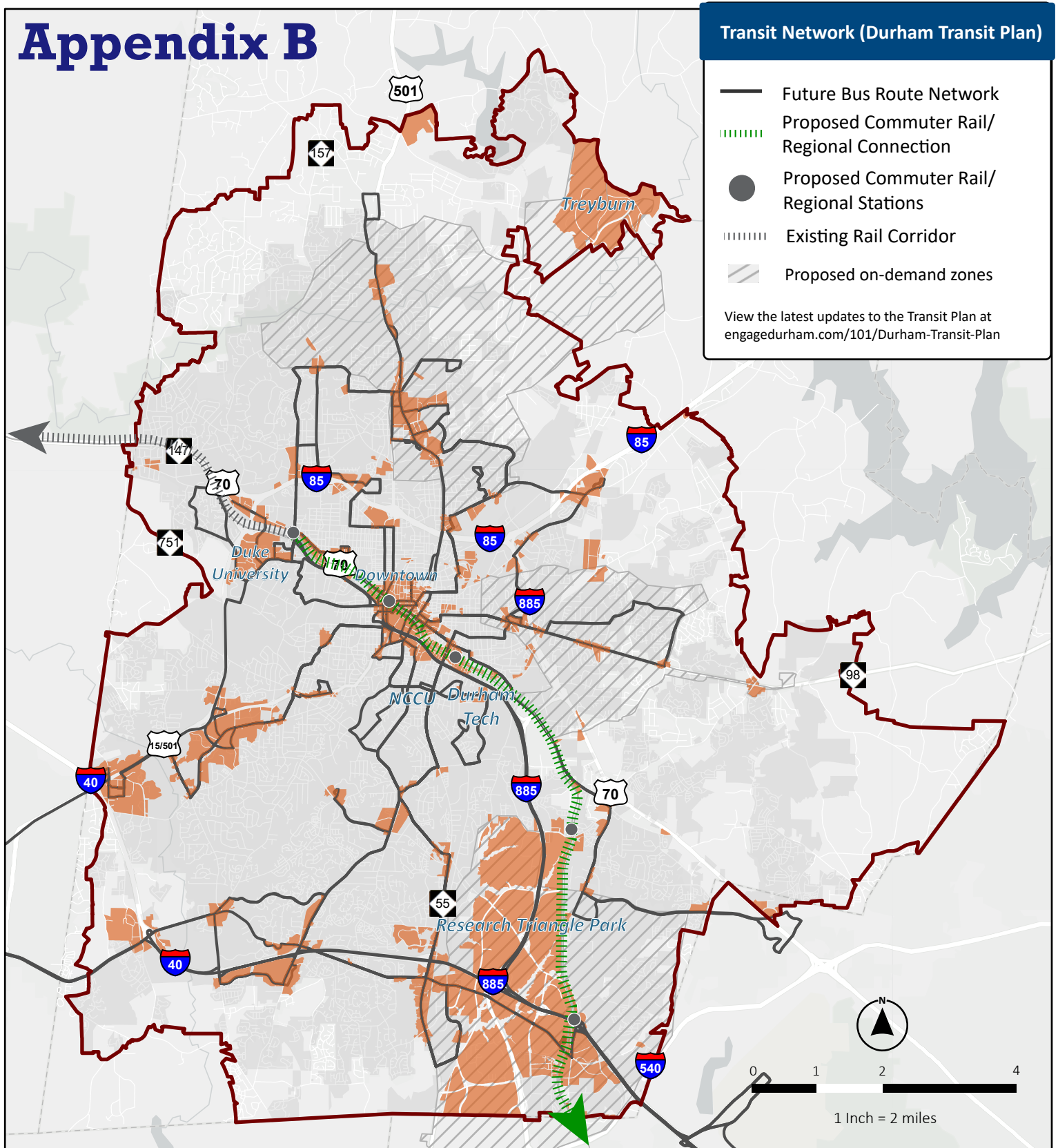
**Walkability** – How friendly an area is to people walking. This can refer to physical infrastructure, like sidewalks, street trees, or benches and the surroundings that make it pleasant for people to walk like shade, social activity, distance from car traffic, proximity and access to buildings, among other factors.

**Youth** – The City of Durham Office on Youth defines youth as any person between the ages 13-24 years.

**Zoning Map Change or Rezoning**– Zoning maps include rules for what can be built for different “zones” in a city. Every property in Durham is in a specific type of zone, such as a zone for businesses or a zone for homes. If someone wants to build or change certain things on their property, but their zone’s rules don’t allow them to, they can ask to change the type of zone to one that has different rules. This is called a Zoning Map Change. An example would be if someone wants to build a corner store on a property zoned for homes. A zoning change has to be approved by City Council or County Commissioners.



# Appendix B



## Transit Network (Durham Transit Plan)

- Future Bus Route Network
- Proposed Commuter Rail/Regional Connection
- Proposed Commuter Rail/Regional Stations
- Existing Rail Corridor
- ▨ Proposed on-demand zones

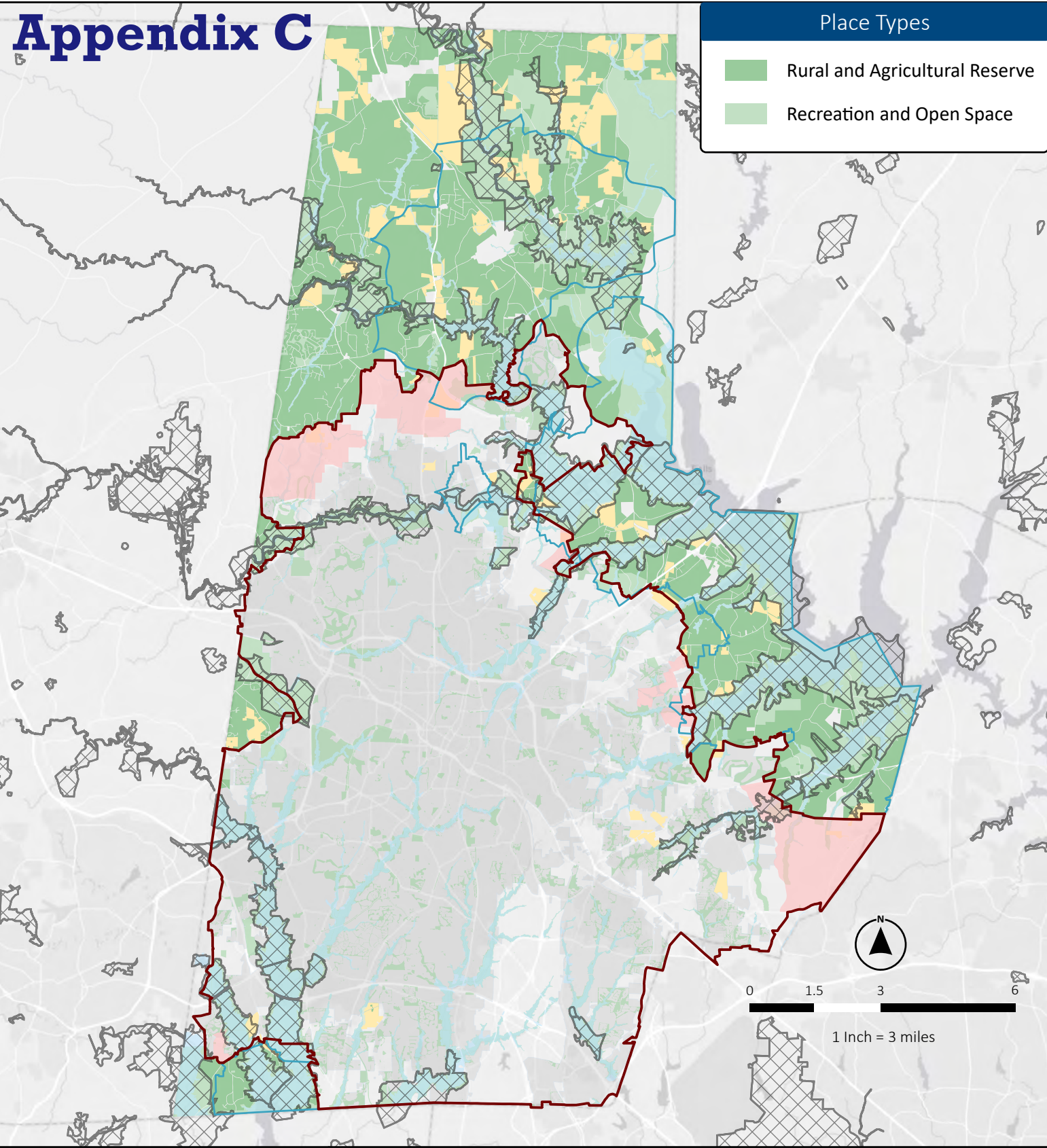
View the latest updates to the Transit Plan at [engagedurham.com/101/Durham-Transit-Plan](http://engagedurham.com/101/Durham-Transit-Plan)

**Activity and Employment Nodes**  
(includes these place types: Downtown, Employment Campus, Mixed Employment, Suburban Commercial, Transit Opportunity Area)

County Limits  
City Limits

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

# Appendix C



Place Types

Rural and Agricultural Reserve

Recreation and Open Space

Voluntary Agricultural District

County Limits

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

Natural Heritage Area

City Limits

Future Growth Area (FGA)

Critical Watershed Protection Overlay

# Appendix D:

# Acknowledgments

This Comprehensive Plan is the result of extensive community input, collaboration, and hard work. We want to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of so many members of the Durham community. Durham residents led engagement to help us hear from segments of our community who are most impacted by land use decisions. Durham residents challenged us to take our first steps as a City-County Planning Department toward more equitable engagement. Durham residents participated in focus groups, working groups, community meetings, virtual sessions, interviews, and surveys to review the plan components, revise them so that they speak to their lived experiences, and help us ground this work in equity. This has truly been a collaborative effort over three and a half years.

Aidilisms	I-Team
Bilingual Communications	Neighborhood Improvement Services
Boards, Commissions, Committees	Office On Youth
City-County Planning Department	Outreach Team
Durham Board of County Commissioners	Participatory Budgeting
Durham City Council	Planning Commission
Engagement Ambassadors	Policy Working Groups
General Services	Staff Technical Team