

# Raleigh's New Development Code

Building a 21st Century City



October 19, 2009

## Listening Session No. 1: North Raleigh Church of Christ

- Process should be more user-friendly
  - Development/rezonings encroaching on existing neighborhoods without adequate transitions
  - Existing neighborhoods being severely impacted (natural systems) by unregulated development
  - Lack of prescribed urban form
  - Piecemeal rezonings
  - Zoning severely segregates land uses (no opportunity for "Mom & Pop Grocery")
  - Variety of housing choices limited
  - There is currently a lack of clarity to case processing; it is difficult to determine what process to go through
  - Would like to see more predictability
  - Don't like the policies in the new Comprehensive Plan that could restrict development in the flood plain
  - Don't like the idea of mandatory inclusionary zoning
  - The current code encourages increased density and mixed-use, but it is difficult to achieve
  - Would like to see more neighborhood notification of development – not just rezonings and public hearing items
  - Like the idea of context-sensitive infill
  - Don't want the new regulations to be too complex
  - Wonder if the new code update can handle the diversity of development
  - Would like to see more mixed use (in the right places)
  - Like the idea of allowing small neighborhood retail in areas largely used for residential
  - Need to find the balance with the regulations while still allowing the market to be creative
- Top issues stated:**
1. Balance between uses; flexibility
  2. Public involvement is important
  3. Predictable approval process
  4. Mixing of uses is important
  5. Focusing urbanization within core areas
  6. Variety of housing choices
  7. Redevelopment of existing strip centers
  8. Piecemeal rezonings
  9. Altering traffic patterns
  10. Design and urban form
  11. Affordable housing
  12. Building context/site-design context in the code
  13. Public education

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## Listening Session No. 2: All Saints Chapel

- Why does "infill" require City Council approval
  - Amount of open space in neighborhoods – more useful space than perimeter areas
  - Current tree code is "wrong"
  - Get rid of asterisks in the code/cross-references
  - Tree conservation & Comprehensive Plan vary
  - Old code – afraid to lose some "good" items – leave densities in older/historic neighborhoods
  - Densities in the right place
  - Concerned about impact on older neighborhoods
  - Predictability in transit
  - Transportation areas – need more scattered
  - Bus service – more park & ride
  - Even staff confused by code – get rid of outdated sections
  - Day cares are problems for neighborhoods
  - "Conditions" imposed to rezone – at mercy of approval
  - Need more parking in high density residential (NCSU)
  - Rezoning process (community and developers pitted against each other)
  - Accountability (bait & switch) of appearance of final product
  - Ease of use and organization of code
  - Existing zoning does not reflect built environment within older neighborhoods
  - Lack of contextual standards
  - Need for form-based zoning comprehensively throughout the city
  - High density is not inherently evil...when done in proper context
  - Public open space should lead land-use planning
  - Code should provide flexibility to address market changes and design flexibility
  - Need to define neighborhoods for character purpose (small retail, mix of densities)
  - Neighborhood input comes too late in the process
  - Good design principles need to be in the code and not guidelines/policy
  - Need to retain history and sense of place
  - Need to nurture diversity throughout entirety of city
- Top issues stated:**
1. Green balance – how we use the land (i.e. parks/ greenway/public space); public space guidelines
  2. Transit – park & ride initiatives; mixed-use to support transit
  3. Protection of older neighborhoods; diversity of neighborhoods
  4. Code clarity; ease of use of code w/ predictability; process improvement
  5. Code consistent with Comprehensive Plan
  6. Leadership to support application of the Comprehensive Plan
  7. Transitions (use & bulk)
  8. Impacts from institutional uses
  9. Design and urban form
  10. Affordable housing
  11. Building context/site-design context in the code
  12. Public education

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## Listening Session No. 3: Memorial Auditorium

- Code requires setbacks that are too large
- Parking regulations require more parking than is needed; huge parking fields, if they are going to be built, need to be broken up more with trees and landscaped areas
- The spatial context of the area needs to be factored in
- Tree Conservation Areas are in conflict with the Urban Design Guidelines
- There are too many conflicting layers of regulations and overlays
- Multi-story/multi-use buildings are not warranted in many locations especially along major roadways that don't support walkability (high-speed/multi-lane)
- Roads are designed for getting cars from point A to point B as fast as possible without respect for pedestrians/bicycles
- You can't have one-size-fits-all zoning
- How do you make a good transition from urban to suburban
- Stop dead-end neighborhoods and cul-de-sacs
- Fake "Main Street" developments are not the answer
- More on-site bio-retention is needed to protect water quality
- Don't implement parking maximums
- How can the code encourage the density to support mass transit
- Code needs incentives to promote transit
- Mixing uses on small sites often is not practical
- Redevelopment is the future of development
- Planning Department approvals are not always neatly followed by the Inspections Department; sometimes things are lost as a project transitions through the pipeline
- The political process should not dictate development, the code should
- Get the code right so staff can be more empowered to approve projects
- Flexibility is key to development – predictability is needed: meeting the code should qualify a project for approval; take politics out of the process
- Graphic representation for urban form and land use transition (user-friendly)
- 3-D tools visualization

### Top issues stated:

1. Better define density (one-bedroom apt. and four-bedroom apt. both equal one dwelling unit)
2. Density has a place
3. Mixed-income housing in all parts of the city
4. Graphic representation (3-D)
5. Edge planning
6. City needs to be proactive in designing growth centers and zoning
7. Too much required parking
8. Too auto-oriented; need transit-oriented
9. Tools needed for redevelopment in accordance with Comprehensive Plan
10. Connectivity
11. Balance between administrative approval and public input
12. Predictability in the process
13. Form-based zoning
14. Sustainability