

CAHT Statement for Hearings for the Ordinance to amend the Unified Development Ordinance Regarding Affordable Housing Parking and Density Bonus (TC1500003) Text changes approved at CAHT meeting 7/20/15

Last year, the Coalition for Affordable Housing and Transit lobbied staff and elected officials to pass a resolution setting the goal that 15% of housing located within ½ mile of proposed transit stops be affordable to individuals making at or below 60% of the Area Median Income. We want to thank you again for passing the resolution and for working hard to promote equitable transit oriented development. We also want to thank the Planning Department. They have engaged in a great deal of research, analysis, and communication related to the affordable housing and transit issue. They have provided an incredible number of presentations, memos, and reports to various governmental audiences and provided many opportunities for public education and comment. As a result, we have moved forward as a community in our understanding of the issues. We appreciate the staff's hard work, professionalism, accessibility, and inclusiveness. The Coalition appreciates the opportunity to comment on this important element of the "toolbox" to incentivize affordable housing. We would like to make three points:

First, the ordinance under consideration, proposes amending parts of **Article 6** to adjust the density bonus and to add a parking incentive for affordable housing. **The Coalition for Affordable Housing supports approval of these changes** as a good first step toward strengthening regulatory incentives.

Secondly, we also urge our elected officials to take this opportunity incorporate goals of equity and socioeconomic diversity into Article 4 of the Unified Development Ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan and UDO support community values about boosting economic development that generates jobs and business opportunity for our residents, encouraging dense, walkable, mixed use urban areas in addition to traditional suburban and rural communities, and protecting the natural environment. The Durham community also strongly supports the values of equity and socioeconomic diversity, but our development documents give these values short shrift. The City Council and County Commission have adopted the goal to preserve and increase affordable housing around transit stations and bus hubs. This commitment to equity and social economic diversity should be made explicit in the definitions of the tiers and zoning districts Adding equity and mixed-income values to the fundamental concepts of “downtown” neighborhood and “compact” neighborhoods would change the framework for designing and evaluating development. The socio-economic impact of plans could be evaluated along with the infrastructure and environmental impacts. We might conclude that negative social impacts of intense urban development require mitigation..

The following revisions are suggested to the proposed ordinance to amend the UDO:

Add a Whereas to the beginning of the ordinance to amend.

Whereas, the Durham Board of County Commissioners/Durham City Council has adopted the goal to preserve and increase the stock of affordable housing within a half-mile of each of the proposed Durham-Orange rail transit stations and the objective of achieving at least fifteen percent (15%) of housing units within one

half-mile of each rail transit station and bus hub be affordable to families with income less than sixty percent (60%) of area median income

Add the following changes to the text of the UDO:

The Compact Neighborhood Tier – That area near planned transit stations, within which development is intended to be transit-, bicycle- and pedestrian-oriented to enhance the street level experience and provide a mixture of goods and services to be available and useful to residents and visitors of all ages, ethnicities, gender orientations and income levels. Auto-oriented and low intensity uses shall be discouraged, and affordable housing opportunities are to be encouraged. (UDO 4.1.2.A.4)

The Downtown Tier – That area covered by the Downtown Master Plan within which development is intended to be transit- and pedestrian-oriented in order to enhance the street level experience and provide a mixture of goods and services near transit services to be available and useful to residents and visitors of all ages, ethnicities, gender orientations and income levels. Auto-oriented and low intensity uses are discouraged, and affordable housing opportunities are encouraged (UDO 4.1.2.A.5), refining slightly language originating in the Comprehensive Plan.

Residential Compact (RC)

The RC District is established to promote well-integrated new residential and civic development close to designated and future regional transit stations. The district is intended to ensure that new development takes advantage of compatible, higher density, transit friendly design opportunities in close proximity to transit systems and that people of all demographic and economic groups will be able enjoy the benefits of the available amenities and convenience. New development in this district requires both pedestrian orientation and human scale in architecture at the street level. The RC District is used to implement the Comprehensive Plan within those areas shown as the Compact Neighborhood tier and the Suburban Transit Areas (as designated in the Comprehensive Plan) within the Suburban Tier.(UDO 4.2.4)

Downtown Design (DD)

The Downtown Design (DD) District is established to encourage intense development and pedestrian activity through regulations appropriate to the downtown area. It focuses on the form of the private and public realm instead of on use and intensity. The standards encourage a vital downtown economy that enhances Durham's position as a commercial, cultural and entertainment hub of the region while increasing livability and preserving equity and socio-economic diversity. The DD district is intended to work in tandem with the Downtown Durham Master Plan and updates. Downtown Design District Core, Support 1,

and Support 2 are the only districts allowed in the Downtown Tier. Therefore the Downtown Tier boundary and the Downtown District boundary are the same. (UDO 4.5.1)

Compact Design (CD)

The Compact Design (CD) District is intended to encourage development of appropriate urban intensity and pedestrian activity by focusing on the form of development and how it shapes the streetscape. The CD District includes the dense core surrounding the future transit station area as well as adjacent areas that provide a transition from the dense core to less intense, surrounding areas.

The goal is to achieve at least fifteen percent affordable housing units within one-half mile of each transit station and bus hub. (UDO 4.5. 2)

Finally, we need to keep on working to strengthen regulatory incentives for mixed income housing. We should search for additional ways to create voluntary zoning incentives by adding equity and mixed-income considerations to the intensity, design, storm water, etc. standards and provisions currently in the UDO.