



CITY OF DURHAM | DURHAM COUNTY  
NORTH CAROLINA



**Date:** June 6, 2016

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

**Through:** Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager

**From:** Steven L. Medlin, AICP, Planning Director

**Subject:** South Square/MLK Jr. Parkway Compact Neighborhood (A1500016)

**Summary.** Over the past year, the Durham City-County Planning Department has re-evaluated the Future Land Use Map of the *Durham Comprehensive Plan* to better align Compact Neighborhood Tier boundaries with the planned Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (D-O LRT) system, recently endorsed by Durham elected officials and the Metropolitan Planning Organization Board. With input from the community, five areas along the D-O LRT corridor were studied. The intention of this memo is to summarize staff's recommendations for the South Square/MLK Jr. Compact Neighborhood. Full documentation is available in Attachment 1.

**Recommendation.** Staff recommends that the City Council approve Plan Amendment Case A1500016, South Square/MLK Jr. Compact Neighborhood. By doing so, the Council adopts:

1. Converting the Suburban Transit Area to a Compact Neighborhood Tier with amended boundaries per Comprehensive Plan policy 2.4.1e.
2. Amending the adopted future land use designations within the Compact Neighborhood Tier to Design District.
3. Correcting minor mapping errors resulting in small (approximately 1 acre or less) changes to the Future Land Use Map.

The Planning Commission recommended denial, 6-7, on March 9, 2016.

**Background.** The Future Land Use Map currently designates an area centered around the South Square shopping center as a 366-acre Suburban Transit Area. This original boundary made sense in 2005 when plans for the regional rail corridor included a rail station on Pickett Road and a South Square station site option on Westgate Drive. However, current light rail transit plans include a new station location near the intersection of MLK Jr. Parkway and University Drive and a South Square station location on Shannon Road between Durham-Chapel Hill Boulevard and University Drive. As plans for the Durham-Orange Light Rail station locations have changed over time, conversion from a Suburban Transit Area to a Compact Neighborhood Tier needs to be considered, along with re-assessment of the boundaries. Staff recommends three-part amendments to the Future Land Use Map:

- 1 Development Tier.** Amend the boundaries and convert the Suburban Transit Area to a Compact Neighborhood Tier per Comprehensive Plan policy 2.4.1e.
- 2 Future Land Use Designations.** Amend the adopted future land use designations to Design District.

Adopted Land Use Designation	Acres	Proposed Land Use Designation
Commercial	345	Design District
Medium Density Residential	189	Design District
Office	114	Design District
Low-Medium Density Residential	40	Design District

- 3 Technical Updates.** Correct minor mapping errors resulting in small (approximately 1 acre or less) changes to the Future Land Use Map.

**Reference in Report**

Attachment 1,  
Page 3

Attachment 1,  
Pages 4-5

Attachment 1,  
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**Issues.** The report found in Attachment 1 summarizes challenges and opportunities for future compact neighborhood development in the South Square/MLK Jr. Parkway area and evaluates the potential impact of making such a policy decision on issues like environmental protection, housing and property values, transportation, and other infrastructure and services.

**Staff Contact.**

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**Attachment 1,** South Square/MLK Jr. Parkway Compact Neighborhood Report

**Attachment 2,** Planning Commission Written Comments

**Attachment 3,** Resolution

Appendices can be found online at [www.durhamnc.gov/compactneighborhoods](http://www.durhamnc.gov/compactneighborhoods)