March 8, 2016

Planning Commission Written Comments

ERWIN ROAD COMPACT NEIGHBORHOOD (A1500017)

Brine – In many respects this proposed compact neighborhood is a reconfiguration of a previously approved compact neighborhood. It is also close to (in fact, one piece is adjacent to) the Ninth Street Compact Neighborhood. It seems logical to assume that the design district standards for the Ninth Street Compact Neighborhood could be applied here. However, I am not entirely sure about that.

My particular concern here is the Crest Street Neighborhood, which has been removed from the existing compact neighborhood (a move that I support). Nevertheless, the Crest Street Neighborhood is definitely being "squeezed" by all the development around it. Redevelopment of the area of apartment complexes and townhouse communities (number 7 in Figure 8) at compact neighborhood densities could have a further negative impact on the Crest Street Neighborhood. Therefore, in the design of the proposed compact neighborhood, I believe that development density needs to be tapered down so that the development immediate adjacent to the Crest Street Neighborhood is similar in density to that found in the Crest Street Neighborhood. Doing this may require design standards different from those used in other compact neighborhoods.

Because I again believe that concurrent design work is needed, I voted against this proposed compact neighborhood.

I note that staff also proposes to change the land use designation of some Duke University property from commercial to institutional (Figure 5). I support this change. I recommend that staff present it separately to Council and that Council approve it.

I also recommend that the small piece of the proposed compact neighborhood adjacent to the Ninth Street Compact Neighborhood be incorporated into the Ninth Street Compact Neighborhood.

Buzby – This is a well-designed compact neighborhood that implemented the feedback of community members. Therefore, I vote to approve.

Freeman – Boundary should remove Alabama Ave. otherwise fine as drawn. There is a compact design district that has been developed but the affordable housing design district. The affordable housing district will need to be developed + defined to ensure long term affordability along the rail line.

Ghosh – Voted in favor.

Gibbs – (Crest St. neighborhood question) Voted to move forward to C.C. with favorable recommendation.

Harris – Voted yes.

Huff – I urge the elected officials to vote against all of these amendments to the Future Land Use Map. We are being asked to create a group of Compact Neighborhood Tiers that will later become Design Districts each of which will have its own very specific attached zoning. We are asked to determine these boundaries without knowing what sort of configuration will exist within them. Once the Compact Neighborhood Tier is designated, the property will become more desirable and developers may seek to develop property without being subject to the Design District rules. It seems reckless to invite that. Also it is entirely possible that under the closer scrutiny occasioned by the actual establishment of real zoning there will be a need to adjust the overall boundaries we are presented with today. If they are already set, that will be a problem. Finally, and I believe most importantly, these Compact Neighborhood Tiers and the accompanying Design Districts are supposed to provide affordable housing to those people using the transit system. Without strict enforceable regulations in place, those regulations that go with the actual creation of the Design Districts, we won't get for our community what we must as regards housing. So until these vital components are in place, I believe we should not draw the Compact Neighborhood Tier boundary lines. There are other specific problems with several of these proposed districts. The boundaries on these districts don't seem obviously problematic. I objected to approving the plan amendment for the reasons stated in the first paragraph.

Hyman – Move forward to the City Council w/ a favorable recommendation. * Motion approval.

Kenchen – No comments.

Miller – The council should vote in favor of changing these compact neighborhood tier boundaries. It is very important to note that this case (and the Alston Avenue case that follows) is very different from the Leigh Village, Patterson Place, and South Square cases. In those case we are asked to create new compact neighborhood tiers without completing the design district planning that is already underway. In this case, we are only asked to change the boundaries of a compact neighborhood tier that already exists. The question here is not whether what we do will interfere with or place at risk a planning process, but whether the proposed new boundaries are better than the current ones.

In this case, I believe the new boundaries are significantly better. They exclude the Duke University property which is governed by the UC zoning awarded to that institution and , more importantly, the new boundaries exclude the established Crest Street neighborhood. This recommendation comes with strong favorable input from the members of the community who have been involved in the planning process to date. Also the proposed boundaries improve the rump of the tier left on the north side of the freeway. Usually I do not like isolated islands in planning cases, but in this a case I believe that shrinking the boundaries to remove the single family area along Alabama Avenue is a positive step. Also, I think that marking the Hillsborough Road area for expansion of the Ninth Street design district is a good thing because the existing zoning in the strip is an undesirable mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial zoning that in no way reflects what future development in the corridor should look like.

Unlike the other areas under discussion, the Ninth Street design district exists and its system of regulations exists. It should be a simple matter to incorporate this part of the compact neighborhood tier into the Ninth Street district by rezoning it all support 2. The city should direct the planning staff to commence that process immediately. The staff should convene a meeting of the Ninth Street stakeholders. They are all still very much involved in their communities.

Riley – Voted yes.

Vann – I guest speaker spoke in regards to the removed of houses on Alabama Street. Already a neighborhood compact tier. I voted yes – the motion passed.

Whitley – I vote to approve.

Winders – See GENERAL comments under A1500014.

ERWIN ROAD SPECIFICS:

- Since all of the land to be included in this Compact Neighborhood is currently part of the Compact Neighborhood Tier and the area is already very urbanized, there would be little harm in adopting this amendment. However, it would still be a good idea to review the need for UDO changes. For consistency, I voted against this amendment too.
- The opportunity to convert a Duke-owned railroad bridge to a pedestrian bridge across 147 should be explored.