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# News Release

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## Durham to Host New 'Ask a Planner' Sessions

*Sessions Held Prior to Monthly Durham City-County Planning Commission Meetings*

DURHAM, N.C. – Want to know more about potential land use changes and other public hearing items being heard by the Durham City-County Planning Commission, and ultimately the Durham City Council and Durham County Board of Commissioners? Now you can do so during monthly 'Ask a Planner' sessions.

On the second Tuesday of every month before the regularly scheduled [Durham City-County Planning Commission meetings](#) that begin at 5:30 p.m., Planning Department staff will be available to provide information about public hearing items on the agenda for that evening's meeting. The case planners will be in the City Council Chambers, located on the first floor of City Hall at 101 City Hall Plaza, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. The first 'Ask a Planner' session will be held immediately preceding the August 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission Meeting.

According to Durham City-County Planning Manager Grace Smith, this new initiative is designed to help residents and other stakeholders better understand the planning process and how agenda items that come before the Planning Commission can impact their neighborhoods. "Our staff recognized a need for additional education regarding the rezoning process as well as a way to address concerns or questions about how specific proposals may impact surrounding properties," Smith said. "Our 'Ask A Planner' initiative offers an opportunity for people to see the proposal in person rather than online, and ask questions that might not be as easily discussed through a phone call or email exchange."

According to Smith the types of cases typically heard during the Planning Commission meetings are as follows:

- Zoning Map changes, which are changes to the existing zoning of property. Zoning is a series of laws that regulate the density, location, size, and type of buildings allowed on parcels of land. A Zoning Map change refers to the process by which an owner or other proponent request to change the zoning designation for a particular parcel or set of parcels, often resulting in a different set of uses, densities, intensities, and other site characteristics than those currently allowed.
- Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendments, which are changes to the map that designates the future land use of a property. While the Zoning Map legally regulates how a parcel can currently be developed, the FLUM envisions how a parcel should be developed in the future. It forms part of the [Durham Comprehensive Plan](#), an overarching guide to Durham's development that seeks, among other things, to ensure that land and resources are sustainably managed into the future.
- Text changes are changes to the text of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), which is a locally adopted set of laws adopted into one instrument that combines traditional zoning and subdivision regulations, along with other regulations, such as design guidelines, sign regulations, and floodplain and stormwater management, into one document.

- Comprehensive Plan amendments, which are changes to the policy document that provides guidance for growth and development that seeks to ensure that land and resources are sustainably managed into the future.

For additional information about 'Ask a Planner' sessions, email [LandUse@DurhamNC.gov](mailto:LandUse@DurhamNC.gov) or call (919) 560-4137.

### **About the Durham City-County Planning Department**

The [Durham City-County Planning Department](#) is the planning agency for the City and County of Durham. The department works with the community to develop long-range and special area plans containing policies to direct growth. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the department helps to make Durham a great place to live, work, and play by working to create a strong and diverse economy, and thriving and livable neighborhoods.

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