



# Instructions for Statements Regarding the Public Interest

## Planning

City-County Development Services Center

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Applicants requesting a Zoning Map Change are now required to provide a statement explaining how their request is reasonable and in the public interest, which is a consideration the governing body must take into account when rendering their decision on the proposal.

The guidance below is intended to help applicants develop their statements regarding the public interest. It will also help both staff and the applicant understand how this project will benefit the community in which it is located.

### Public Interest Elements

The public interest elements were derived from the Comprehensive Plan's Listening and Learning Sessions. A summary of this information can be found [here](#). This list, reflective of community input, has been incorporated into an expanded assessment of whether proposed developments are "reasonable and in the public interest" through case staff reports. This will provide an opportunity for staff, Planning Commissioners, elected officials, and developers to better understand how a development can play a role in assessing and prioritizing the community's needs. These elements will also serve to address a recurring theme we hear from community members: that we need to increase government accountability in the development process.

The statement regarding reasonable public interest must address each of the following **Public Interest Elements** below:

1. Describe the existing infrastructure locations and conditions, and address whether they are sufficient to support this proposal. If the current infrastructure is not sufficient, describe what improvements are planned to address the deficiencies or lack of infrastructure. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. Water and Sanitary Sewer
    - i. Capacity and demand
  - b. Roadways
    - i. Estimated vehicle trips
    - ii. Roadways impacted within ½ mile of the site
  - c. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
  - d. Sidewalks
2. Describe the existing public services and if those are sufficient to support this proposal. If the existing public services are not sufficient, then what improvements are planned to address the deficiencies in existing public services? Public Services include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Police, Fire, EMS, and 911 Services
  - b. Schools, Libraries, Community Centers and Educational Opportunities
  - c. Parks, Trails, Greenways, and Open Space
  - d. Solid Waste Services
  - e. Access to Public Transit Services
3. Describe the development pattern and intended uses and their potential impacts on adjacent properties. If the request is to change the zoning to a non-residential use, what measures will be taken to minimize potentially negative impacts on adjacent properties? If the request is to a denser or more intense residential use, what measures will be taken to minimize potentially negative impacts on adjacent properties? Does the development offer continuity between existing and proposed uses, does it act as a transition or buffer between existing and proposed uses?

4. Describe any potential impacts to environmentally sensitive areas and how those impacts will be mitigated:
  - a. Floodplain or floodway development (DFE or BFE, etc.)
  - b. Upstream and downstream impacts
  - c. Stormwater management
  - d. Native tree stands or vegetation
  - e. Rare or ecologically valuable plant or animal species, such as those identified in the Natural Heritage Program
5. Where are the nearest residential, commercial, or employment opportunities that will support or complement the proposal? If potential employment opportunities will be provided by the proposal, how many jobs would potentially be created? What would wages, especially entry-level wages be?

**Additional Public Interest Considerations:** The need for flexibility in development decisions is vital for both the community that the development impacts, and for you as the applicant. In order to balance development impacts with the public interest, choose as many of the following twelve (12) additional public interest elements as applicable and describe how the proposed zoning change will address the community’s needs for those respective elements:

Public Interest Element	Description	Example
Affordable Housing	This should address not just the affordability and price-point component of the housing unit, but also the quality of the housing being built. Additional considerations may include accessibility and universal design.	<i>“This proposed zoning change to PDR X.XX will provide for a commitment to higher quality affordable housing and better overall housing conditions rather than just the economic threshold for affordability.”</i>
Places to Learn and Play	This should address how either the allowed mix of uses, or the built environment itself, creates spaces that foster activities, educational opportunities, and/or recreation.	<i>“The proposed zoning change and development plan will seek to create a public space where the adjacent community can come together for community-led events, activities, and involvement.”</i>
Safety	This element should address how the proposed re-zoning will address the feeling and perception of safety, and/or work to reduce crime.	<i>“This proposed zoning change will seek to create opportunities and spaces for the youth, especially the black community. The design of the spaces, and the allowed uses, will encourage more activities for youth to help keep them engaged and out of trouble.”</i>
Gentrification & Displacement	This element should seek to address how displacement will be avoided or how gentrification will be mitigated. Additional considerations may include: education and engagement around protecting black and brown wealth and investments, protection of neighborhood cultures and demographic make-ups, and ways to mitigate development pressures.	<i>“The proposed zoning change seeks to allow for a varied mix of dwelling units that offers units at both market-rate and below market rate price points.”</i>  <i>“Through the neighborhood meeting and subsequent community notices, this zoning change will seek to educate nearby and impacted homeowners of the value of their homes.”</i>
Walkability	This element should address how the proposed re-zoning seeks to	<i>“Development on this site will seek to create not just an</i>

	ensure the development is walkable within the proposed development, and amongst neighboring parcels. Additional considerations should include: access to transit, bike racks, bike amenities for mobility, etc.	<i>interconnected pedestrian system that connects to the master trails plan, but also ensure the elements to move through these spaces – such as trees, benches, lighting, etc. are all considered while making these connections.”</i>
Health & Wellness	This element should seek to demonstrate how the proposed re-zoning assesses and addresses the health impacts of the development or mitigates current health disparities. This could also include aspects of walkability, bike-ability, clean drinking water, reduced exposure to emissions, social cohesion elements, and access to healthful food.	<i>“The proposed zoning change will allow for the siting of smaller footprint physical and mental health facilities that serve the needs of the adjacent residents. As part of the development plan’s text commitments, the applicant seeks to do a health impact assessment in partnership with Durham County Public Health.”</i>
A Sense of Belonging	This element should seek to create a sense of belonging for the businesses and residents impacted by the proposal. Answer the question: how does the proposal compliment the existing community of businesses, residents, etc. How does the proposal create spaces that make people feel welcomed.	<i>“This zoning change and development plan will commit to visible elements of neighborhood identity – such as neighborhood markers, signs, placemaking, etc., that create a place of “open community” where all are accepted &amp; welcome to live, work, and play.”</i>
Access to Quality Food	This element should seek to show how residents will have expanded or new access to healthy and affordable food options through local markets, co-ops, supply chain infrastructure, etc.	<i>“The proposed zoning change and/or development plan will allow for the use of a local supermarket that could provide access to healthful food choices to nearby residents.”</i>
Racial Justice	This element should seek to address the social, institutional, fiscal or environmental factors that contribute to furthering racial equity. Additional considerations: how will the applicant center the community’s voice in the development process itself, how will the applicant incorporate feedback and inputs heard at the neighborhood meetings into the project, etc.	<i>“The proposed zoning change seeks to close the wealth gap by increasing homeownership rates for communities of color and provide community assets within communities of color.”</i>
Opportunities for Good Jobs	This element should demonstrate how the proposal either creates, or provides access to, high quality, well-paying, benefited jobs.	<i>“This proposed rezoning seeks to locate dwelling units within X miles of these types of jobs. The jobs located within x miles of this proposal pay an average of X dollars and provide ...</i>
Durham’s Identity	This element should address how the development will contribute to enhancing or preserving Durham’s	<i>“This development will potentially create a place that displays the African-American history that was</i>

	<p>unique identity.</p>	<p><i>historically a part of this area's fabric."</i></p> <p><i>"This zoning change will allow for a mix of uses that will help Durham to continue to be a place with creative spaces, culture, music, and food."</i></p>
<p>Clean Environment</p>	<p>This element should address how the development will preserve, protect or enhance environmental features on or near the site such as streams, steep slopes, open spaces, drinking water supplies, wetlands, watersheds, floodplains, tree coverage, and local air quality. Additionally, this element should address how the development is furthering the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resiliency to loss of life and loss of property due to predicted increases in frequency and intensity of natural hazards.</p>	<p><i>This development includes elements to extend stream buffers beyond the minimum UDO requirements. The overall layout of the site is designed to minimize or eliminate the needs for clear-cutting, to preserve or create contiguous open space, and to entirely preserve areas identified in the Natural Heritage Inventory. New impervious surface proposed for the project is minimal. The development is integrated into existing or proposed transportation infrastructure such as bus lines, or bicycle and pedestrian improvements to minimize overall VMT and to minimize the percentage of trips to and from the development using single occupancy automobiles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</i></p>