



Compact Neighborhood Planning

Future Land Use Map Updates

Frequently Asked Questions



What are Compact Neighborhoods?

Compact Neighborhoods are areas near planned rail transit stations that are envisioned, over the long term, to host additional development that is higher density, mixed use, and walkable. Characteristics may include:

- » A mix of residential, retail, office, and other uses
- » Urban densities
- » Street-oriented buildings
- » A connected street network
- » Appropriately scaled streets
- » Transportation choices

Why do we need Compact Neighborhoods?

The Triangle is one of the fastest growing regions in the country, and evidence points toward this trend continuing. As more households and jobs locate in Durham, the pattern of development will need to shift to a more compact form. In general, supporting compact development in connection with transit can be beneficial in a variety of ways. It can:

- » Alleviate traffic congestion
- » Improve public health by increasing opportunities to walk
- » Decrease transportation expenses
- » Connect people, who do not have access to cars, with jobs
- » Reduce suburban sprawl, thus protecting the environment and rural character

Why is a Compact Neighborhood Proposed Here?

Compact Neighborhoods are proposed in areas surrounding the planned Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit corridor stations. GoTriangle is planning to begin operation in 2026, with construction starting around 2021. For more information on the transit project visit:

www.ourtransitfuture.org.

What is the purpose of this planning process?

This planning process will define how Compact Neighborhoods are drawn on Durham's Future Land Use Map, which acts as policy vision and guide for future development.

What is the Future Land Use Map? How is it different from the Zoning Map?

The Future Land Use Map provides guidance for how land should be developed (or preserved) in the future, with different colors indicating different land uses (i.e. commercial, industrial, residential, etc.). Though the Future Land Use Map is closely allied with the Zoning Map, they serve different functions. While the Future Land Use Map reflects policy (community vision statements about how development *should* occur in the future), the Zoning Map is a regulatory tool (a legal document articulating how the property can develop today). If there is a request to rezone a property, the request must be consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

More Information

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What are the advantages of being included in the Compact Neighborhood Tier?

If you want to keep using your property as its current use, there will be no changes. If you want to redevelop your property, there are some advantages to the Compact Neighborhood designation such as lower parking requirements, greater density allowances, and smaller setbacks.

What are the disadvantages of being included in the Compact Neighborhood Tier?

If the Design District Future Land Use Designation is applied, the only rezoning request that staff would support is one to a Compact Design zoning district.

Will the City be redeveloping these areas?

No, the City of Durham does not intend to acquire property for redevelopment purposes. Change in the area will likely be incremental and will occur through private development over several decades. Private developers cannot use eminent domain. In other words, redevelopment requires a willing seller and willing buyer.

Will single family houses be allowed in the Compact Neighborhood Tier? {REVISED}

New rules and regulations about uses and structures go into effect only after rezoning occurs. In Design zoning districts, new construction of single family houses is restricted; however, existing houses are allowed to remain and routine maintenance is encouraged. Houses built prior to 2006 are now allowed to be expanded with no special approvals, following updates made to the Unified Development Ordinance in 2016.

What opportunities will there be for public comment and input?

Following community meetings scheduled in April, June and October 2015, recommendations developed with input from stakeholders will be brought through the public hearing and adoption process. At least two public hearings will be held: the Durham Planning Commission followed by the Durham City Council or the Board of County Commissioners (both, in some instances). Members from the public are invited to speak at these hearings. Of course, the Planning Department would always like to hear what you think. If you have questions, concerns or comments please contact us. We're happy to talk with you to hear your ideas.

What happens next?

Land use planning for the Durham-Orange Light Rail station areas is a three-step process. This process of defining where Compact Neighborhoods are appropriate and updating the Future Land Use Map is only the first step (commonly referred to as a "Plan Amendment"). The second step involves revising and updating chapters of the Unified Development Ordinance that outline Durham's form-based code, known as the Compact Design district (commonly referred to as a "Text Amendment"). The final step involves implementing the Compact Design zoning district to areas identified previously as a Compact Neighborhood (commonly referred to as a "Zoning Map Change"). Each step is a separate public process with opportunities for public comment and input.

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REVISED JUNE 8, 2016