



Amended, November 6, 2017

Please note that policies which have been fully implemented are shown in gray.

# Durham Comprehensive Plan

## Chapter 4 Community Character and Design Element

Durham City-County Planning Department

# The Durham Comprehensive Plan

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# Chapter 4, Community Character and Design Element

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# Community Character and Design Element

Durham’s character is unique and diverse, including picturesque farmlands, turn of the century urban neighborhoods, modern suburban developments, historic downtown warehouses, and scenic natural areas. As Durham continues to evolve, it is important to preserve the positive aspects of the community and enhance existing development. A vision for community character and design should guide future development, creating functional, aesthetically appealing, and people-oriented places.



*Summary of Issues*  
*Goal 4.1, Community Design Guidance*  
*Goal 4.2, Design Quality*  
*Goal 4.3, Contextual Design*  
*Goal 4.4, Roadway Image*  
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## Summary of Issues

- 1. Approaches to Community Design.** Durham’s development standards require amendments to produce more attractive new development that is appropriate to its context. In addition, Durham should create regulations that require and incent design characteristics that improve the urban fabric and function of new development and redevelopment.
- 2. Community Maintenance.** While the appearance of new development is a central focus of community design and character, the on-going maintenance of Durham’s built environment makes a greater visual impression. Durham should encourage private property owners to maintain their buildings and land, as well as require the City and County to maintain their public rights-of-way, buildings and grounds to enhance the visual appearance of the community.
- 3. Protecting Rural Character.** Citizens are concerned that Durham’s rural areas are threatened by encroaching urban and suburban development. Durham should protect aspects of its valuable rural character in an increasingly urban County.
- 4. Improving Gateways.** City and County leaders have expressed interest in improving the appearance of major gateways into the Durham community. Durham should take steps to improve the appearance of road corridors and gateways into Durham.

5. **Form Based Zoning/Design District.** In more urban areas, design districts utilizing form based zoning concepts should be applied to create a more urban form, a pedestrian and bicycle friendly character, and to support future potential transit.
6. **Infill Development.** Both urban and suburban infill development become more important as the population of Durham continues to grow. Infill development, including residential, non-residential, and mixed use, are an important aspect of smart growth and will help support transportation alternatives and alleviate congestion related issues.
7. **Urban Tree Canopy.** Durham’s existing street trees are a pleasant and attractive amenity for many of its older neighborhoods. Yet many of Durham’s majestic street trees may reach the end of their natural life over the next two decades. Durham should address this potential loss of street tree canopy through appropriate development regulation and streetscape standards.
8. **Underground Utility Lines.** The issue of buried utility lines has been a much discussed topic in Durham for many years, both with the elected officials and the general public. Durham should continue to look at ways to promote the burial of utility lines.
9. **Facade Variety.** A growing concern in the Durham community is that of facade monotony in new housing developments. Durham should develop regulations that balance consistency with variety.
10. **Public Spaces.** The incorporation of a variety of public spaces is an amenity frequently sought after by both citizens and public officials. Durham should look at policies that encourage, incentivize, and/or require the provision of public spaces.
11. **Transit Stops.** As transit becomes a more feasible and convenient option, transit stops will likely become more prominent in the community. Durham should ensure attractive designs for transit stops.
12. **Sustainability.** Sustainable communities are increasingly desired and necessary. Durham needs to devise ways to promote sustainability through renewable energy, energy conservation, water conservation, enhanced water quality, food security and other measures in a way that maintains or enhances community aesthetics and quality of life.

### Goal 4.1, Community Design Guidance

Provide guidance in the design and development of the community to ensure a visually appealing, functional, and sustainable built environment.

### Objective 4.1.1. Design Guidelines and Standards

Develop guidelines and standards for the design of new development that promote quality design.

**Policy 4.1.1a. Tier Specific Standards.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, develop design standards tailored to each development Tier to maintain each area's unique character. Tier specific standards should include parking provisions and street cross-sections.

**Policy 4.1.1b. Design Districts.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, develop and maintain design districts, such as the Downtown Design District and Compact Design Districts. Review and update design standards within each of these design districts periodically to ensure they are producing the desired type of development.

**Policy 4.1.1c. Building Placement.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish Tier-appropriate standards for building placement in relation to the street. Use build-to lines in the Downtown and Compact Neighborhood Tiers. Use minimum setbacks in the Suburban and Rural Tiers and maximum setbacks in the Urban Tier.

**Policy 4.1.1d. Building Coverage.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish standards for building coverage by districts and/or tiers.

**Policy 4.1.1e. Height.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish standards for building heights by districts and/or tiers.

**Policy 4.1.1f. Housing, Building, and Frontage Types.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish and maintain housing, building, and/or frontage types by tier:

- i. In the Suburban Tier, provide for a broad variety of housing and building types, lot sizes and design elements to encourage diversity within communities and achieve efficient use of infrastructure;
- ii. In the Urban Tier, provide for a variety of housing and building types with varying building placement requirements to encourage a more urban form and efficient use of infrastructure;
- iii. In the Compact Neighborhood and Downtown Tiers, provide for a variety of building and frontage types to encourage density and diversity within communities, achieve efficient use of infrastructure, and generate a foundation of support for neighborhood centers and transit.

**Policy 4.1.1g. Project Boundary Buffer Requirements.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, maintain standards for project boundary buffers that:

- i. In the Rural and Suburban Tiers, minimize potential adverse impacts associated with differing uses by focusing on opacity and physical separation of uses;
- ii. In the Urban Tier, focus on issues, such as opacity rather than physical separation of uses, respecting the urban form in these areas; and
- iii. In the Compact Neighborhood and Downtown Tiers are not required unless they abut residential development in the Suburban or Urban Tier.

**Policy 4.1.1h. Landscaping Requirements.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, maintain standards for landscaping that:

- i. In the Suburban Tier, emphasize preservation of tree cover and both natural and manicured visual appearance, encourage the use of native species and water-wise landscaping to minimize the impacts of drought events on the suburban landscape, and require measures to ensure the long-term stability and survival of required landscape materials;
- ii. In the Urban Tier, provide standards for landscaping that result in a more formal and manicured visual appearance, and focus on the visual appearance of the community from the streets; and
- iii. In the Compact Neighborhood and Downtown Tiers, require that plantings be compact and adopted to urban growing conditions, allowing non-traditional vegetation such as green walls, screens, and roofs in addition to planters and other streetscape landscaping.

**Policy 4.1.1i. Parking Standards.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish parking standards for all motorized and non-motorized vehicles that incorporate *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) principles, parking ratios appropriate to each Tier, utilize landscaping guidelines that consider environmental issues such as heat, glare, and aesthetics, and:

- i. In the Suburban Tier, require parking spaces to meet but not exceed the needs of the development, and provide for alternative parking arrangements where appropriate because of transit services or unique site conditions;
- ii. In the Urban Tier, allow alternate parking standards and direct new surface lots to the side and rear of buildings rather than to street yards to avoid creating expanses of surface parking and encourage more walkable communities; and

- iii. In the Compact Neighborhood and Downtown Tiers, apply maximum parking provisions, allow alternate parking standards, and encourage structured and shared parking, and allow on-street parking where road rights-of-way can accommodate on-street parking to avoid creating expanses of surface parking and encourage more walkable communities.

**Policy 4.1.1j. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.**

Continue consideration of *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) strategies in site design through integration of CPTED principles in the Unified Development Ordinance and design guidelines. (See Policy 12.3.2b, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.)

**Policy 4.1.1k. Design Standards for Government Projects.**

In order to enhance their design and appearance, the City-County Planning Department shall establish architectural and streetscape standards for all proposed major public development projects that do not otherwise require review by the Historic Preservation Commission, including buildings, Durham-funded parking projects, public signage programs, significant state projects, excluding university or college projects within an Internal Campus, and NC DOT projects within Durham County.

**Policy 4.1.1l. Sustainable Design.**

The City-County Planning and City-County Inspections departments shall research and propose regulations that, to the maximum lawful extent, require or allow sustainable design features and that provide incentives for sustainable design through tax credits, density bonuses, fee reductions, streamlined processing or other means.

## Goal 4.2, Design Quality

Encourage quality at all levels of design. Design quality impacts the actual function, sustainability and appearance of a place as well as the perceptual feel of that place.

### Objective 4.2.1. Design Features

Encourage high quality, well-designed developments that create desirable community spaces, use resources efficiently, maximize site amenities, and preserve important features.

**Policy 4.2.1a. Unique Site Features.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, continue to encourage or require the retention and incorporation of unique site features into required open space. Unique site features include rock outcroppings, wetlands, streams, steep slopes, cemeteries, and Durham Inventory Sites.

**Policy 4.2.1b. Historic Resources in New Development.**

Through the Unified Development Ordinance, encourage the preservation and/or incorporation of historic resources in the design of new development.

**Policy 4.2.1c. Open Space in New Development.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, continue to require new developments to provide and maintain open space. Create standards for the amount and character of open space for each Tier. Open space requirements shall range from a small amount in the Downtown Tier to a significant amount in the Rural Tier. Mixed use districts should provide specific open space parameters.

**Policy 4.2.1d. Specimen Trees Preservation.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, require the preservation of perimeter specimen trees in required project boundary buffers and incentivize the preservation of specimen trees in other areas.

**Policy 4.2.1e. Public Art.** The Durham Cultural Arts Board shall explore how to encourage the incorporation of public art in new development projects, particularly in the Downtown and Compact Neighborhood Tiers.

**Policy 4.2.1f. Mixed Use Development Design Criteria.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish criteria for Mixed Use Development in order to provide more visual appeal, to ensure integration of uses, and to ensure a compatible design theme throughout the development.

**Policy 4.2.1g. Sustainability.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, encourage development to incorporate best practices in sustainability features to ensure quality design.

**Objective 4.2.2. Attractive Residential Development**

Encourage attractive and varied residential development throughout the community.

**Policy 4.2.2a. Varied Housing in New Development.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, continue to provide variability of lot size and allow a variety of housing types and styles in new residential developments to avoid monotony.

**Policy 4.2.2b. Garage Placement.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, continue to provide opportunities to vary the location, setback, and orientation of residential garages to avoid prominent and repetitious garage placement.

### Objective 4.2.3. Attractive Nonresidential Development

Incorporate attractive nonresidential development into the existing community character, ensuring that it is made an integral and appealing part of the built environment.

**Policy 4.2.3a. Commercial Development Design.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, discourage auto-oriented strip commercial development and instead encourage commercial “nodes” with appropriately designed internal connections. Develop design standards to limit expansive parking lots in front of strip commercial development. (See Policies 2.2.2e, Suburban Tier Commercial Development and 2.2.3d, Urban Tier Commercial Development.)

**Policy 4.2.3b. Nonresidential Building Types.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, develop architectural standards for nonresidential building types outside of Design Districts.

**Policy 4.2.3c. Nonresidential Signage.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, develop different design standards for attractive nonresidential signage appropriate to each development Tier. Signs within projects in the Suburban and Rural Tiers shall be compatible in appearance, while signs in the Downtown, Urban, and Compact Neighborhood Tiers shall be allowed greater variety and flexibility in their design.

**Policy 4.2.3d. Nonresidential Maintenance Standards.** The Governing Bodies shall establish a “nonresidential code” to set maintenance standards for nonresidential development, which at a minimum cover buildings, parking lot surfacing, landscaping, and lighting.

### Objective 4.2.4. Attractive and Efficient Parking

Encourage the design of attractive and efficient parking solutions, which are visually appealing, safe, and easy to use by both pedestrians and motorists.

**Policy 4.2.4a. Parking Design Standards.** The City-County Planning Department, in conjunction with the City Transportation Department, shall review, revise, and continue to enforce design standards in order to encourage the provision of well designed, efficient, and attractive parking facilities in connection with new development projects. Explore limiting street frontages, increasing landscaping, requiring pedestrian walkways throughout parking areas, and encouraging that large lots be designed as a series of smaller lots.

**Policy 4.2.4b. Parking Requirements.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, redefine parking standards in all Tiers. Explore opportunities for shared parking.

**Hardscape** is all non-landscaped areas, usually treated with materials such as stone, brick, concrete or asphalt.

**Policy 4.2.4c. On-Street Parking.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, provide for on-street parking to count toward required minimum parking requirements in the Suburban, Urban, and Compact Neighborhood Tiers, and encourage the provision of on-street parking in the Downtown Tier, in order to minimize the size of lots and garages, maximize access, and provide additional street activity. Attractive on-street parking can be achieved through landscaped or hardscape bump-outs that break up lengthy street parking, shade trees and decorative lighting along the street, and decorative paving for the parking lanes.

**Policy 4.2.4d. Structured Parking Design.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, require street front parking structures to be architecturally compatible with the surrounding area's character. Require that parking structures be designed to include present or future street level retail or office space.

**Policy 4.2.4e. Structured Parking Incentives.** The City Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the City-County Planning Department shall work with various entities, including the private sector, to explore options for incentives to encourage parking in structures rather than surface lots in the Downtown, Urban, and Compact Neighborhood Tiers.

**Policy 4.2.4f. Alternative Vehicle Program Incentives.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, the City-County Planning Department, in conjunction with the City Department of Transportation, shall develop an incentive program for developments that establish car-sharing programs utilizing hybrid or electric vehicles and which incorporate electric car charging stations.

#### Objective 4.2.5. High Performance Design

Encourage new construction that uses high performance design, including energy and water efficient design, minimizing construction waste; and use of renewable, recycled or reused building materials.

**Policy 4.2.5a. Design of Public Buildings.** In the design of public buildings, the City and County shall require the incorporation of environmentally responsible building practices through compliance with *LEED™ (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)*.

**Policy 4.2.5b. Recognition of Private Sector Efforts.** The Environmental Affairs Board shall identify and encourage recognition of private sector examples of high performance design by publicizing compliance with *LEED™ (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)* or other high-performance guidelines.

**Policy 4.2.5c. Daylighting in Schools.** Through the design standards for government projects (see Policy 4.1.1k, Design Standards for Government Projects), require that designs for new schools and major school renovations daylight 75% of classrooms and core learning spaces to maximize student performance. (see Policy 11.2.3c, Daylighting.)

**Policy 4.2.5d. Health and Environment.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, encourage or incentivize design features that increase the use of solar power or wind power, reduce energy consumption, improve air or water quality, increase food security through local agriculture, or otherwise enhance the health of citizens and the environment.

### Goal 4.3, Contextual Design

Encourage development that is designed to be conscious of and sensitive to its surroundings. Contextual design considers the setting as much as the project itself, is applicable in a variety of areas and situations, and should guide any development.

#### Objective 4.3.1. Protecting Rural Character

Identify, protect, and reinforce the character of Durham’s rural areas, and recognize and protect the unique aesthetic qualities of scenic roadways and rural vistas.

**Policy 4.3.1a. Bahama Design Guidelines.** The City-County Planning Department shall explore village design guidelines to protect the character of Bahama by encouraging appropriate and compatible infill and development (See Policies 2.2.1e, Rural Villages, 2.5.3c, Rural Village Plans, and 5.1.2d, Historic Rural Villages.)

**Policy 4.3.1b. Clustered Development.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, provide opportunities for clustered development in order to preserve farmland, open spaces, historic resources, views and vistas, and other elements of Durham’s rural character.

**Policy 4.3.1c. Scenic Roads Identification.** The City-County Planning Department, in conjunction with the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission, shall identify scenic rural roads that are not currently designated as NC Scenic Byways, and develop proposals to preserve native and natural vegetation and discourage invasive species along those roads.

**Policy 4.3.1d. Scenic Vista Preservation.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, protect scenic vistas through viewshed protection measures, such as expanded rural frontage setback requirements.

A viewshed is the portion of the landscape that is visible from the roadway or a certain point.

**Policy 4.3.1e. NC Scenic Byways.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, protect Durham’s Scenic Byways, through viewshed protection measures such as expanded rural frontage setback requirements. See Map 4-1, Scenic Byways.

### Objective 4.3.2. Compatible Infill

**Infill** is development of vacant land, usually individual lots or leftover properties, within areas that are already largely developed.

Preserve the character and integrity of existing viable neighborhoods by promoting compatible urban and suburban infill.

**Policy 4.3.2a. Infill Development Standards.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, encourage and promote compatible residential and non-residential infill on vacant or under-utilized property within developed portions of the community to reinforce the existing character. Include provisions for contextual design of both residential and nonresidential infill projects in the Urban and Compact Neighborhood Tiers. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings. (see Policy 2.3.4d, Infill Development Standards).

**Policy 4.3.2b. Neighborhood Protection Overlay Districts.** To protect the character of existing neighborhoods, the City-County Planning Department shall, through the Unified Development Ordinance, maintain the ability to establish Neighborhood Protection Overlay Districts.

### Objective 4.3.3. Appropriate Design

Ensure that the design of development is appropriate and compatible with its surroundings, acting as a visual and functional asset to nearby residential areas, and reinforcing the existing community character.

**Policy 4.3.3a. Standards for School Site Sizes.** The Durham Public Schools shall utilize the standards set by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (See Policy 11.2.2e, Standards for School Site Sizes (See Policy 11.2.2e, Standards for School Site Sizes.)

**Policy 4.3.3b. Retrofit Strip Development.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, develop incentives to encourage the retrofitting of strip development and aging and vacant shopping centers into pedestrian-friendly mixed use centers. (see Policy 2.3.1f, Retrofit Strip Development).

## Goal 4.4, Roadway Image

Project an attractive community image along Durham’s roadways. Roadway appearance is a critical component of community character, unifying areas, acting as the foreground for developments, providing views, and even

functioning as a series of outdoor rooms. Roadway image sets the scene for the community's built environment.

#### Objective 4.4.1. Streetscape Appearance

Enhance the general appearance, street tree canopy coverage, and unique visual character of Durham's streetscapes. Create an attractive visual image along major corridors and around prominent entryways. Design streets to be compatible with green infrastructure while maintaining the character of the area they serve and including a Complete Streets policy approach that integrates bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The streetscape is the space in the public right-of-way between the buildings on either side of the street. It may include the sidewalk, streetlights, street trees, landscape strip, and street furniture.

**Policy 4.4.1a. Tier-Specific Streetscape Standards.** The City-County Planning Department, in conjunction with the City Transportation Department, the Urban Forestry Division of the City General Services Department, and the City Public Works Department, shall develop several street section designs for each Tier that set up or reinforce themes appropriate to those areas and ensure long-term viability of and maximum benefits from landscape material. Street tree planting details that feature large tree lawn setbacks in the Rural Tier, medium tree lawn setbacks in the Suburban Tier, and augmented soil volume details in the Downtown, Compact Neighborhood, and Urban Tiers shall be a part of the standards.

**Policy 4.4.1b. Sidewalk Requirements.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, maintain tier specific sidewalk requirements and continue to allow alternative pedestrian networks.

**Policy 4.4.1c. Pedestrian and Cyclist Mobility.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, make walking easy by requiring internal pedestrian walkways on sites with multiple buildings, courtyards, or other exterior on-site shared spaces. The Unified Development Ordinance shall require bicycle and pedestrian lanes to connect cul-de-sacs and to provide access to open space areas.

**Policy 4.4.1d. Pedestrian Amenities.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, require pedestrian amenities on streets and in open space in the Downtown, Urban and Compact Neighborhood Tiers, and in mixed-use developments in the Suburban Tier. Amenities may include seating, waste receptacles, information kiosks, shaded areas, water features and landscaping.

**Policy 4.4.1e. Buried Utility Lines.** The City-County Planning Department shall continue to require the underground burial of utility lines in new subdivisions, and encourage retrofitting in other areas.

**Policy 4.4.1f. Consolidated Utilities.** The City Transportation Department and City Public Works Department shall explore opportunities to consolidate utilities and pole-mounted elements to minimize visual clutter along the street in the Downtown and Compact Neighborhood Tiers.

**Policy 4.4.1g. Major Transportation Corridor Overlay District.** The City-County Planning Department shall continue to apply the Major Transportation Corridor (MTC) overlay district along specific segments of major roads.

**Policy 4.4.1h. Gateway Plans.** The City-County Planning Department shall identify key gateways into and within the Durham community and shall prepare plans, including design guidelines, to create focal points and enhance their appearance. Consideration shall be given to the following gateway locations:

- i. I-85 and NC 147;
- ii. NC 147 and Briggs Avenue;
- iii. I-40 and US 15-501;
- iv. I-85 and Duke Street;
- v. US 70 and Page Road;
- vi. Old Five Points;
- vii. I-40 and I-540; and
- viii. I-85 and Falls Lake.

**Policy 4.4.1i. Central Durham Gateway Plan.** The City General Services Department, in conjunction with the City Transportation Department, the City-County Planning Department, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, shall implement the adopted Central Durham Gateway Plan.

**Policy 4.4.1j. Urban Tree Canopy Establishment.** The Urban Forestry Division of the City General Services Department shall develop a comprehensive plan for urban tree canopy establishment in the Downtown, Compact Neighborhood, Urban, and Suburban Tiers in order to reduce air pollution, improve water quality, improve the quality and reduce the quantity of stormwater runoff, ameliorate heat retention, and provide aesthetic benefits to Durham residents. (See Policy 7.1.4c, Tree Canopy).

**Policy 4.4.1k. Wayfinding.** The City General Services Department, in conjunction with other City and County departments and agencies, shall develop a comprehensive wayfinding plan for Durham.

## Goal 4.5, Compact Neighborhood Design

In the Compact Neighborhood Tier, promote development and design that supports transit and its related uses and activities. Transit supportive design must coordinate the scale of development on the site and pedestrian amenities, and minimize auto dependence.

### Objective 4.5.1. Compact Neighborhood Plans

Plan for and reinforce the transit-oriented nature of development in the Compact Neighborhood Tier through appropriate site and building design.

**Policy 4.5.1a. Compact Neighborhood Zoning.** Design District zoning shall be applied to all Compact Neighborhoods.

**Policy 4.5.1b. Compact Neighborhood Boundary Amendments.** Amendments to an existing Compact Neighborhood Boundary and re-zoning of properties to a Design District should only occur if that property is at the edge of the Tier. Properties should only be removed from the Compact Neighborhood Tier if they adjoin another Tier, and if so the Design District zoning should be removed, if applicable.

### Objective 4.5.2. Transit-Oriented Parking

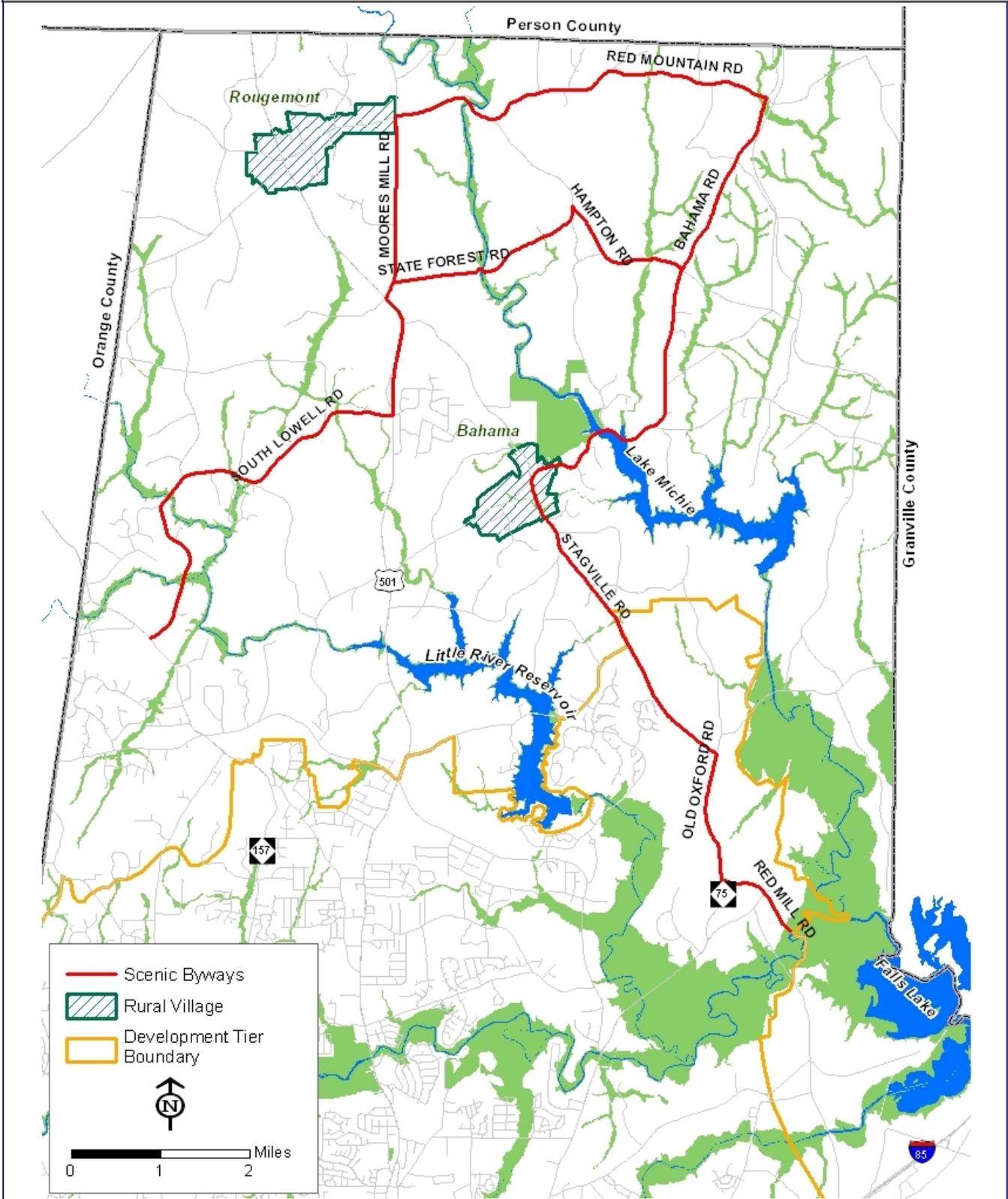
Design parking areas in the Compact Neighborhood Tier to support transit-oriented development. De-emphasize private car usage and minimize the visual prominence of parking facilities.

**Policy 4.5.2a. Surface Parking Lot Frontage.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, require that nonresidential surface parking lots be located in the rear, away from the street, and limit parking lot street frontage to 65 feet in the Compact Neighborhood Tier. Require parking lot street frontages to meet standards to maintain the existing building facade lines of the block.

**Policy 4.5.2b. Compact Neighborhoods Surface Parking.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, limit the contiguous surface area of parking lots in the Core Areas of Compact Neighborhoods, except for transit supportive park-and-ride lots. As an interim measure, restrict surface parking to locations that could become future building sites.

**Policy 4.5.2c. Compact Neighborhoods Core Area Parking.** In Core Areas of Compact Neighborhoods, opportunities for long-term parking close to the transit stations for park-and-ride commuting options, and short-term parking opportunities near retail establishments shall be encouraged.

### Map 4-1, Scenic Byways



## Amendment History

### Amended – June 26, 2006

**Policy 4.4.1a. Corridor Plans.** ~~The City and County Planning Department and, in conjunction with the~~ Appearance Commission, shall prepare corridor plans to improve the function and appearance of major roadways into and through Durham. Corridor plans shall recommend appropriate land uses, design standards, development controls, landscaping, signage regulation, access management strategies, public facilities capital improvements, underground utilities and/or other measures. Consideration shall be given to the following roadway corridors, as shown on Map 4-2, Proposed Corridor Plans. Duke Street, from I-85 to Roxboro Road; Guess Road, from Club Boulevard to the Eno River; Hillsborough Road, from Fulton Street to Cole Mill Road; Roxboro Road, from Duke Street to Milton Road; NC 98, from US 70 Bypass to Lynn Road; US 70 from NC 98 to the Wake County line; Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway, from University Drive to NC 55; NC 54, from the Orange County line to the Wake County line; NC 55, from the NC 147 to the Wake County line; Fayetteville Street from NC 147 to Renaissance Parkway; and US 15-501, from Orange County to University Blvd. (See Policy 2.3.6b. Corridor Plans.)

**Policy 4.5.2c. Compact Neighborhoods Core Area Parking.** In Core Areas of Compact Neighborhoods, ~~the Board of Commissioners and the Durham City Council shall provide for offer~~ parking near transit stations through station area plans and the Unified Development Ordinance. Provide opportunities for long-term parking close to the transit stations to encourage park-and-ride commuting, and offer limited short-term parking opportunities near retail establishments.

### Amended – October 26, 2009

**Policy 4.1.1e. Appearance Commission Review of Government Projects.** In order to enhance their design and appearance, the Durham Appearance Commission shall review and comment on proposed major public development projects that do not require review by the Design District Review Team or the Historic Preservation Commission, including buildings, Durham-funded parking projects, public signage programs, and significant state projects, including NC DOT projects within Durham County.

### Amended – February 1, 2010

**Policy 4.1.1b. Design Districts and Overlay ~~Districts.~~** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish design districts and overlay ~~districts~~, such as a Downtown Design ~~Overlay~~ District and Neighborhood Protection Overlay Districts. Develop design review guidelines for application within each of these design districts.

**Policy 4.1.1c. Building Arrangement.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish Tier-appropriate standards for building placement in relation to the street. Use build-to lines in the Downtown Tier. Use maximum setbacks in the Urban, and Compact Neighborhood Tiers. Use minimum setbacks in the Suburban and Rural Tiers.

### Amended – May 14, 2012 – See Appendix X

### Amended – February 25, 2013

**Maps.** Amend the maps of the *Durham Comprehensive Plan* by removing the Urban Growth Area.

**Policy 4.1.1b. Design Districts.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, develop and maintain design districts, such as the Downtown Design District, and Compact Design Districts, and Neighborhood Protection Overlay Districts. ~~Develop~~ Review and update design standards ~~for application~~ within each of these design districts periodically to ensure they are producing the desired type of development.

**Amended – June 10, 2013**

**Policy 4.1.1k. Design Standards for Government Projects.** In order to enhance their design and appearance, the City-County Planning Department shall establish architectural and streetscape standards for all proposed major public development projects that do not otherwise require review by the Historic Preservation Commission, including buildings, Durham-funded parking projects, public signage programs, significant state projects, excluding university or college projects within an Internal Campus, and NC DOT projects within Durham County.

**Amended – June 2, 2014**

**Policy 4.1.1c. Building Arrangement Placement.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish Tier-appropriate standards for building placement in relation to the street. Use build-to lines in the Downtown and Compact Neighborhood Tiers. Use minimum setbacks in the Suburban and Rural Tiers and maximum setbacks in the Urban Tier.

**Policy 4.1.1d. Building Coverage.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish standards for building coverage by ~~uses~~ districts and/or tiers.

**Policy 4.1.1e. Height.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish standards for building heights by ~~uses~~ districts and/or tiers.

**Policy 4.1.1f. Housing, Building, and Frontage Types.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish and maintain housing, building, and/or frontage types by tier:

- i. In the Suburban Tier, provide for a broad variety of housing and building types, lot sizes and design elements to encourage diversity within communities and achieve efficient use of infrastructure;
- ii. In the Urban Tier, provide for a variety of housing and building types with varying ~~setback~~ building placement requirements to encourage a more urban form and efficient use of infrastructure;
- iii. In the Compact Neighborhood and Downtown Tiers, provide for a variety of building and frontage types to encourage density and diversity within communities, achieve efficient use of infrastructure, and generate a foundation of support for neighborhood centers and transit.

**Policy 4.2.3b. Nonresidential Building Types.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, develop architectural standards for nonresidential building types outside of Design Districts.

~~**Policy 4.2.3d. City and County Government Facility Standards.** Require all City, County, and Durham Public Schools government facilities to meet the design standards set for private development.~~

**Policy 4.2.5a. Design of Public Buildings.** In the design of public buildings, the City and County shall require the incorporation of environmentally responsible building practices through compliance with LEED™ (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or the Triangle J Council of Governments' (TJCOG) High Performance Guidelines.

**Policy 4.2.5c. Daylighting in Schools.** Through the design standards for government projects (see Policy 4.1.1k, Design Standards for Government Projects), require that ~~in order to maximize student~~

~~performance~~, designs for new schools and major school renovations shall daylight 75% of classrooms and core learning spaces to maximize student performance. (see Policy 11.2.3c, Daylighting.)

**Policy 4.3.1a. ~~Rural Village~~ Bahama Design Guidelines.** The City-County Planning Department shall ~~explore develop~~ village design guidelines to protect the character of ~~Durham's rural villages, Bahama and Rougemont~~, by encouraging appropriate and compatible infill and development ~~design~~ (see Policies 2.2.1e, Rural Villages, 2.5.3c, Rural Village Plans, and 5.1.2d, Historic Rural Villages.)

**Policy 4.3.1b. Clustered Development.** Through the Unified Development Ordinance ~~and site design guidelines~~, provide opportunities for clustered development in order to preserve farmland, open spaces, historic resources, views and vistas, and other elements of Durham's rural character.

**Policy 4.3.2b. ~~Traditional Design Elements~~ Neighborhood Protection Overlay Districts.** To protect the character of existing neighborhoods, the City-County Planning Department shall, through the Unified Development Ordinance, maintain the ability to establish Neighborhood Protection Overlay Districts.

**Policy 4.3.3a. ~~Nonresidential Design Standards.~~** Through the Unified Development Ordinance, establish ~~design standards for new nonresidential development in the Suburban Tier.~~

**Policy 4.4.1a. Tier-Specific Streetscape Standards.** The City-County Planning Department, in conjunction with the City Transportation Department, the Urban Forestry Division of the City General Services Department, and the City Public Works Department, shall develop several street section designs for each Tier that set up or reinforce themes appropriate to those areas and ensure long-term viability of and maximum benefits from landscape material. Street tree planting details that feature large tree lawn setbacks in the Rural Tier, medium tree lawn setbacks in the Suburban Tier and Compact Neighborhood Tiers, and augmented soil volume details in the Downtown, Compact Neighborhood, and Urban Tiers shall be a part of the standards.

**Policy 4.4.1i. Central Durham Gateway Plan.** The City General Services Department, in conjunction with the City Transportation Department, the City-County Planning Department, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, shall implement the adopted Central Durham Gateway Plan.

**Policy 4.5.1a. ~~Compact Neighborhood Plans~~Zoning.** ~~The City-County Planning Department, in conjunction with Triangle Transit and other interested parties, shall develop or participate in the development of Compact Neighborhood Plans, which shall apply the Compact Design zoning dDistrict zoning, and its sub-districts, shall be applied to all Compact Neighborhoods.~~

**Policy 4.5.1b. ~~Compact Neighborhood~~ Boundary AmendmentsZoning.** ~~Compact Neighborhood Plans shall allow each Compact Neighborhood to be assessed and planned as a whole. Once Amendments to an existing Compact Neighborhood Boundary and Plan and Tier-wide re-zoning has been completed, re-zoning of properties within that to a Design dDistrict should only occur if that property is at the edge of, and removed from, the Tier. Properties should only be removed from the Compact Neighborhood Tier if they adjoin another Tier, and if so the Design District zoning should be removed, if applicable.~~

**Amended – August 17, 2015**

**Policy 4.5.2c. Compact Neighborhoods Core Area Parking.**—In Core Areas of Compact Neighborhoods, the Board of Commissioners and the City Council shall provide for structured parking near transit

~~stations. Provide opportunities for long-term parking close to the transit stations forto encourage park-and-ride commuting options, and offer limited short-term parking opportunities near retail establishments shall be encouraged.~~

**Amended – November 6, 2017**

**Policy 4.3.3a. Standards for School Site Sizes.** The Durham Public Schools shall ~~establish alternative standards for the size of elementary, middle and high school sites appropriate to each Tier~~ utilize the standards set by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (See Policy 11.2.2e, Standards for School Site Sizes.)

**Implemented Policies**

The following policies in Chapter 4, Community Character and Design, have been fully implemented as of November 6, 2017.

Policy	Implementation Tool
4.1.1a. Tier Specific Standards	Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), article 6
4.1.1b. Design Districts	UDO, section 6.12
4.1.1c. Building Placement	UDO, section 6.12
4.1.1d. Building Coverage	UDO, article 6
4.1.1e. Height	UDO Article 6, paragraphs 3.5.1, 4.6.5, 4.8.3E, 4.10.5E, and 6.12.3D, and through UDO text amendment TC0800001 – IL/Compact Neighborhood Height, adopted in 2008.
4.1.1f. Housing, Building, and Frontage Types	Implemented through UDO sections 6.1 and 7.1
4.1.1g. Project Boundary Buffer Requirements	UDO, section 9.1
4.1.1h. Landscaping Requirements	UDO, article 9 and the <i>Landscape Manual for Durham, North Carolina.</i>
4.1.1i Parking Standards	UDO, article 10, and UDO text amendment TC0900004 – Compact Neighborhood Tier parking, adopted in 2009.
4.2.1c. Open Space in New Development	UDO, section 7.2, paragraph 8.3.1, and text amendment TC0700004 – Open Space, adopted in 2007.
4.2.1f. Mixed Use Development Design Criteria	UDO, paragraphs 3.5.6D, 3.5.12A, and 6.11.7
4.2.2a. Varied Housing in New Development	UDO, paragraphs 4.4.1, 5.1.2, 6.11.3, and 6.11.7
4.2.2b. Garage Placement	UDO, paragraphs 6.8.4E and 6.11.3H
4.2.3b. Nonresidential Building Types	UDO, paragraphs 3.5.6D(8), 3.5.12, 6.8.1D, 6.8.5(2), 6.11.3C, 6.11.3C, and sections 6.9, 6.10, 6.12, 6.13, 7.3

4.2.4b. Parking Requirements	UDO, article 7. UDO text amendment case TC0900004, adopted in 2009, addressed parking within the Compact Neighborhood Tier. UDO text amendment case TC1500005, adopted in 2015, addressed affordable housing and parking.
4.2.4c. On-Street Parking	UDO, paragraph 10.3.1C(2)
4.3.1b. Clustered Development	UDO, section 6.2.4
4.3.2a. Infill Development Standards	UDO, section 6.8
4.3.2b. Neighborhood Protection Overlay Districts.	UDO, section 4.6, the Tuscaloosa-Lakewood NPO was adopted via UDO text amendment case TC0600008 in 2008.
4.4.1b. Sidewalk Requirement	UDO, sections 6.11, 6.12, 12.4 and paragraphs 7.2.4, 7.2.5, 9.6.4, 9.8.1, 10.3.1B, 10.4.4B, 11.5.2, and 12.3.1A. UDO text amendment TC07-20, adopted in in 2008, added additional sidewalk requirements to the UDO.
4.4.1e. Buried Utility Lines	UDO, paragraph 12.9.1B
4.5.2a. Surface Parking Lot Frontage	UDO, paragraphs 6.114H, 9.8.1, and 9.8.2B

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