

# Rooted and Connected Communities

**OBJECTIVE:** We need to protect our communities from displacement so that people can remain rooted in and engaged with their current neighborhoods, connected to one another and to resources. We need to ensure that residents are not displaced from their neighborhoods and can benefit from Durham’s growth, particularly Black and Hispanic/Latino residents, low-wealth residents, youth, and seniors.

**BACKGROUND:** Rising housing costs and property taxes are displacing residents from their communities, and people are losing a sense of belonging as a result. Particularly in the last twenty years, a combination of policies, market forces, government investments, and other land-use decisions have led to runaway displacement and gentrification, particularly for Black communities in Durham. In addition, the proposed redevelopments of Durham Housing Authority properties will likely move residents from current communities to different places, which would disconnect residents from each other. There is a sense of stability in being connected to a particular place and the people and resources that exist there. Without this, residents experience significant negative mental and physical health impacts as they increasingly feel unwelcome and unsafe in their own neighborhoods and are threatened by displacement or eviction. Much of the current development happening is not rooted in Durham’s history; the housing and neighborhoods that result do not reflect community culture. Development that is not rooted and connected causes fragmentation, displacement, and eventually destruction of existing communities.

We want stability, connectedness, and a sense of rootedness, particularly for communities of color, so that all Durham residents can live in communities that are supportive and nurturing. We want new development designed to respect, support, and fit into existing neighborhoods and for residents to be involved in those decisions. We want residents who have already been displaced to be able to return to their neighborhoods.

## Quotes from Durham Residents

“When people are able to establish roots they are able to effect the soil, much as deep rooting plants keep the soil from eroding, replenishing part of the soil as it lives off of it as well, a mutually beneficial relationship. What is missing is stronger language to illustrate this, as it is vital for the long term growth of the community both culturally and economically.”

“I live in Durham but do not feel connected to Durham”

“Soul and character preservation”

“People who have lived in older neighborhoods permitted to return to those neighborhoods to live in clean, safe, affordable housing”

“displacement leads to desperation--stripped away, taken, made to feel they don't belong”

“Residents are at risk of being lost in the shuffle in the proposed redevelopment of DHA property”

“Durham was community-oriented and residents can see that it is different now - people don't talk to their neighbors, due to income inequality; people just waiting to see who will be displaced next”

“Social determinants of peoples’ health is so tied to belonging so people don’t know what to do or who to trust if they don’t have this sense of belonging”