

Resident Input on draft Southeast Durham Focus Area Recommendations

Updated 8/20/21

This document shows responses to the survey on the draft Southeast Durham Focus Area Recommendations. There were 368 visits to the online engagement site, Social Pinpoint, and residents submitted 23 surveys. The responses were provided in multiple choice and open ended questions about the draft policies, place type guide, and place type map.

Demographic Highlights

We asked demographic questions in all of our engagement to see who we are hearing from and to ensure we are working towards input that represents the full diversity of Durham. Below is a summary of key demographics.

How do you identify racially?

African American/Black	3
Asian	1
White/Caucasian	7
Other responses	4
No response/Prefer not to answer	8
Total	23

Describe your gender.

Female	4
Male	8
Other response	3
No response	8
Total	23

What is your age?

0-15	0
16-25	1
26-35	0
36-45	3
46-55	2
56-65	3
66-75	3
76-85	1
85+	0
Other response	2
No response	8
Total	23

Responses to the draft Southeast Durham Focus Area Policies

Likert scale question: In general, how well do the draft POLICIES reflect your concerns for this area?

Very Well	8
Somewhat	5
Neutral	5
Not very well	5
Not at all	8
N/A	0

Open Response: Please share more about your response and include suggestions related to anything missing or improvements in the POLICIES you'd like to see.

- Comments are as follows: 3G - this makes NO sense in suburban area. People still need cars to get to work, doctor, hospital, entertainment etc. This is a suburban area not urban core. 4B - this is extremely restrictive and should be changed. 50% is too high. Why not just increase tree save area to 25% so properties with a lot of stream buffers are not as adversely affected. 4D - what if a road is needed to access another property or or to improve flow within a community. Roads should be discouraged but not eliminated when necessary. 4H - this makes no sense at all and is extremely restrivtive to some parcels.
- I don't live in the area but it should become a hot development area and we need planned development not random development.
- Still can not walk to shops or school. Very car-centric for most residents. Need more schools, parks, trees, and less people. Area is being sacrificed for money.
- No police
- Durham is in housing shortage crisis now. Why does Durham try to stop any development in this Future Growth Area? This makes NO sense. Durham should approve more residential development in the area.
- We need more housing in Durham. With the limited housing supply, the house price is increasing every day. The POLICIES suggested not approve development until infrastructure have been funded by Durham which does NOT make any sense. These infrastructure could be funded by private developers. City of Durham shall approve more development project in the area. Additionally, why Durham promote rear loaded TH/SF? People having rear loaded garage tend to park their car on the street (front of their house) which really create a bad walking experience because the entranceways are blocked by parked cars. Actually, I have much better walking experience on the street where houses have front loaded garage because cars park on the drive way or garage instead of street which makes entranceways a much better view.
- We need more housing in Durham, more affordable housing in Durham. The POLICIES suggested not to approve development that would only push existing house price even higher! Durham shall accelerate approving more residential development to provide more housing supply to the market.

- traffic infrastructure needs to come first, then development
- Some of the policies seem very restrictive like discouraging cars in what is a suburban area where people will still need cars to get to work or visit family or friends or attend sporting or cultural events. I agree with encouraging walking and biking but not at the expense of limiting developments that allow cars. I don't know that 15 minute neighborhoods will work in this area and that needs to be very carefully defined and what size development will have to meet these standards. Encouraging or requiring some commercial zoning in this area makes sense but a lot of thought needs to go into it. Market realities need to be taken into consideration. You are not going to get a new grocery store every .5 mile so people can walk to it in 15 minutes. That is not economically viable. Also, the 150 feet buffer around streams seems extremely restrictive and a taking of land for some residents. Tree save area should be allowed everywhere but higher percentages of tree save should be encouraged or rewarded.
- The POLICIES designated north and east of Kemp Rd, east of Virgil Rd as a "Future Growth Area" (FGA) and suggested not approve development until critical service and infrastructure have been funded. This Policy seems not reasonable, nor practical. The SERLS was clearly designed to promote growth in the entire southeast Durham basin. The majority of the infrastructure needed to fulfill the SERLS Basin can only be provided by private developers, which through the required fees that will pay for the SERLS and the needed sewer outfalls as they progress eastward. SERLS is located right on the Kemp Rd. It does NOT make sense to use Kemp Rd as a line to define FGA because the properties immediately adjacent to the east of SERLS would and should be developed first, so that the needed infrastructure for the rest of the SERLS service area can be extended or provided for future growth. The more logical way is to define FGA as East of Southview Rd, East of Vigil Rd because properties east of Southview Rd or Vigil Rd are far from SERL which needs sewer outfall infrastructure to be in place before any development in these area could happen. The other logical way to define FGA should use SERLS as an origin and draw a circle with a 1 or 2 mile radius where properties outside the circle should be FGA. Properties falls within the circle should be developed first because they are so close to the SERLS and their development will support future infrastructure. As to the fire station, if a new fire station is needed, we should ask private developers to contribute/pay for a new fire station instead of waiting for City of Durham to fund such project. Why would City of Durham fund a new fire station if there is no development going on in the FGA? It only makes sense that is to get some developments going (i.e adjacent to SERLS properties) so that these developments can pay for the new fire station.
- Much single family and attached townhomes. This creates great increase and dependence on vehicle traffic
- The plan was created by interviewing 3 people and hosting an 18 person Zoom call for feedback. Only 15% of these people even live in SE Durham. It is statistically irrelevant and completely biased. It should be thrown out.
- see below
- contrary to the recommendation there should be limited provision for areas based on age.
- City council needs to support law enforcement before the city self destructs
- I am not familiar with community engagement efforts made for residents to understand what is outline here in the POLICIES, though I believe this part is the most easy to understand in comparison to the Guide and Map.

- A key takeaway from the POLICIES is to not recommend any development until critical service and infrastructure have been funded. This does NOT make any sense. Does City of Durham has the budget and a concrete timeline to build up the critical infrastructure....? No! Rather, these critical infrastructures could be funded by the new development, which will generate revenue to support such critical service and infrastructure. Why not asking private developers to contribute to building fire station and sewer outfall by approving their projects? We need housing in Durham! With limited supply of houses, the house price has skyrocketed and will continue to be like this unless we speed up the development, responsibly, as opposed to slow thing down. Please approve development in the future growth area to provide more housing to the market.
- I first want to say great work! Coordinating this effort has been a huge task and I truly appreciate the amount of work that has gone into it. Below I have provided comments on some of the policies. The other policies are okay but I am interested to see the next draft. I do hope that a second draft comes out and these do not go straight into new policies without more discussion from both neighbors and developers.
 - Policy 1B If a private developer was to donate land to the City for a Fire Station (like Del Webb Carolina Arbors did), would this allow the project east of Virgil Road to move forward?
 - Policy 2B I am not an attorney but denying an application for a 55+ community may not be legal.
 - Policy 3C Further definition is needed for this policy. What happens if an existing development has no connections for a bike or pedestrian trail connection? Is it still a requirement? What happens if it is required to have a stream crossing to meet this goal?
 - Policy 3G In the SEDFA, Transportation has already stated in previous City Council public hearings that this area will not have mass transit (large busses). How can the City punish developers for now providing something that the City has admitted they will not do?
 - Policy 4B I understand the reasoning behind this policy, but there needs to be a varying scale. What is there is a 50-acre site and 30% of the site is in stream buffers. This already creates more tree preservation then the ordinance requires, and the project will require even more with this addition. This will only bring down the value of the land to the current landowners. Maybe this could be an option that if it is not preserved, it is provided in tree replacement area. That will help provide a mixture of forest type within the community for the future. This policy will also hurt the direction the City Council has headed with wanting more density in the area. Finally, if this is enacted, I do believe some active open spaces allowances, like a dog park, should be able to overlap with tree preservation areas.
 - Policy 4C This policy is vague, expensive and will create less affordability for future home buyers.
 - Policy 4D This contradicts with Policy 3 above. FEMA and USACE will limit these crossings with their environmental permits as well. Some crossing should be allowed, but I agree that it needs to be limited. I think looking at the Wake Durham Transportation Plan needs to be done to review the future road locations along with this focus area policy to review the best place for these crossings. Also, when a crossing is

allowed, a SCM needs to be allowed as well, but only for the treatment of that road crossing. Finally, I believe this policy needs to read stormwater control measures, not infrastructure since the City Stormwater Department currently requires developers to pipe the outlets of the SCM directly to the stream channel.

- Policy 4H Can you please provide me who the Environmental Engineer is that drafted this policy? If one was not used, I strongly suggest an environmental engineer be included in your team. I ask this because larger stream buffers provide NO additional phosphorus and sediment treatment. NONE. The USDA actually suggest a grass strip in zone 3. If the reason for this policy is to provide better stormwater quality, this policy completely misses the mark. I have attached an example of an ‘ideal stream buffer’. If one was to google this term, most states on the east coast use a similar buffer, but varying widths. I truly suggest if the goal of this policy is to provide better stormwater treatment, then an Environmental Engineer needs to be used. As a separate point ,this hurts Policy 4B that much harder to accomplish.

Responses to the draft Southeast Durham Focus Area Place Type Guide

Likert scale question: In general, how well does the PLACE TYPE GUIDE describe the kind of places you’d like to see in this area in the future?

Very Well	2
Somewhat	6
Neutral	2
Not very well	11
Not at all	1
N/A	0

Open Response: Please share more about your response and include suggestions related to anything missing or improvements in the PLACE TYPE GUIDE you’d like to see.

- Are 15 minute neighborhoods going to be required in certain areas. Zoned? This is very confusing and not sure will work in this part of town. Needs to be much better defined.
- Seems like a lot of options to consider
- More and more houses, more traffic, no destinations
- Why does Durham want to see more rear loaded TH/SF? These rear loaded TH/SF are not user friendly and create problems on street parking. Durham should promote more front loaded TH/SF.
- We need affordable housing. However, the restrictions that Durham adds on the new subdivision such as rear loaded TH/SF will increase the construction cost resulting in house price even more un-affordable. Please eliminate the restrictions and let builder build cheaper house for us.
- We need more affordable housing in Durham. But I heard from builders that many features Durham wants add up the construction cost drastically such as rear load garage TH/SF, extensive

tree coverage, grading by phases etc. If Durham really wants to provide affordable housing, please remove/reduce these restrictions/requirements.

- traffic infrastructure needs to come first, then development
- I like some of the ideas but it seems too extreme and restrictive on future development. This should have been done before construction of the SERLS treatment plant. Seems very reactionary rather than well thought out.
- Most of the topography of the Future Growth Area (FGA) is bad. Additionally, the majority of the FGA is made up of land with many creeks, streams and wetlands, and is covered with the heavily wooded forest that makes the FGA more of a residential feel as opposed to “non-auto trip” neighborhoods. The mixed-use development may work on certain land that is adjacent to major intersections, but for the majority of FGA, residential development makes more sense due to aforementioned reasons. Nevertheless, before any possible commercial development, the residential development needs to reach critical mass to support the commercial. Therefore, it is very important to allow residential developers come in developing the land adjacent to SERLS. It does NOT make sense to define east Kemp Rd as FGA without considering the proximity to SERLS and stop any residential development that is right next to SERLS on east side of Kemp Rd.
- None of this can happen without a complete revamp of how new developments are approved. MOney from developers should be used in the area of development- not taken for other Council priorities. NCDOT has no money for roads until 2035, long after the developments already approved are operating. There are no plans for public transportation so new residents will not be able to get anywhere without a car.
- see below
- Not clear that there's enough density anticipated in this area. We should not be allowing garages to face the street. We should be phasing out single-family zoning in newly constructed neighborhoods.
- See comment above
- I am not familiar with community engagement efforts made to ensure residents understand what is happening and how to read the Guide.
- I hope to find a nice house with affordable price. However, the various component Durham is asking like 150' stream buffer, rear load TH/SF, extensive tree preserve etc will dramatically increase the land development and house building cost, which further push the new construction price higher. Why can't Durham simplify/reduce these requirements so that builder can build affordable houses for us? Otherwise we have no choice but to go to other adjacent towns for housing.

Responses to the draft Southeast Durham Focus Area Place Type Map

Likert scale question: In general, how well does the PLACE TYPE MAP reflect your desires for future development in this area?

Very Well	0
Somewhat	7
Neutral	3
Not very well	11

Not at all	1
N/A	0

Open Response: Please share more about your response and include suggestions related to anything missing or improvements in the PLACE TYPE MAP you'd like to see.

- I like the idea of encouraging certain development with density bonus etc. vs discouraging. I like to see carrots rather than sticks.
- Not sure about what planned road improvements will be made to support the plan.
- I understand the need for affordable housing. I don't understand the need to take our property for it. This house and next door neighbor has lifelong residents. Running us out to provide affordable options for someone else seems contrary to the mission. All the Durham residents will have been moved out of this part of Durham when done. I thought we were trying to avoid displacing people that called Durham home. I have lived in this area for 34 years myself.
- Given the location, the Future Growth Area (FGA) appears to be more suitable for mainly residential development.
- The Future Growth Area (FGA) identified appears to be in the middle of nowhere. It seems to not make sense to have so much commercial components in this rural area.
- We need more residential development. The mixed commercial development in this area seems unnecessary and will only push the land value higher resulting higher house price.
- traffic infrastructure needs to come first, then development
- Some of the requirements need to be toned down. The ideas are good but swing way to far to the other side from what has currently been approved. Remaining landowners are being punished through no fault of their own.
- The PLACE TYPE MAP designated the land that is right across the SERLS on Kemp Rd as Recreation and Open Spaces which does NOT make sense. Due to the proximity to SERLS, land across the Kemp Rd from SERLS should be the first property that need to be developed so that sewer outfall infrastructure could be extended by private developer to support future land development in the Future Growth Area (FGA). The more logical way should designate FGA as east of Southview Rd and east of Virgil Rd because these area are far from SERLS and need critical service and infrastructure be in place before they can get developed.
- I'd like less residential/developed land planned and more natural and open spaces.
- Non existent Infrastructure of roads do to increased traffic caused by the plans What is being done to get county and state to improve Leesville rd, andrews chapel rd, doc Nichols rd. Also traffic signals at Leesville and olive branch.
- The "Utopian" plan only works with infrastructure, transportation and commercial building walkable distances from the developments. Otherwise it's all a pipe dream.
- see below
- We should not be allowing cul-de-sacs of any type in any new neighborhood. All should be thoroughly connected.
- See comment above
- The guide and the links on the website help a lot but is still dense for the average person who is trying to navigate this site in order to make an informed decision.

- The PLACE TYPE MAP designated the land, which is far from Durham or Wake Forest, as Future Growth Area (FGA) and ask to build a 15-minutes neighborhood. This does not seem to be reasonable and practical. The area is so rural and the best use is residential.

Suggestions for the overall Comprehensive Plan work

- I expect a comprehensive transportation plan including which streets will be widened, where bus routes will run, placement of green areas, etc to handle the expected number of people residing in the area
- Do what you are going to do. Just don't pretend anything but money matters.
- We need more housing in Durham. Durham shall not stop the residential development. Instead, Durham shall eliminate unnecessary restrictions on real estate development so that builder can build more affordable house for us.
- We need more housing in Durham. City of Durham shall not stop the residential development, but instead shall promote more development to catch up the needed housing market. Durham shall also work with developers to help them reduce the development cost by eliminating unnecessary restrictions on design/development process.
- With more and more people moving to Durham, we need more housing. Durham shall revisit the POLICIES and GUIDE to make sure those recommendation are reasonable and can help builder lower the construction cost. The current drafted POLICIES and GUIDE will only make house even un-affordable!
- traffic infrastructure needs to come first, then development
- It is good to have Transit Opportunity Area so that residence could use public transportation. However, the population in the area needs to reach critical mass to make public transportation needed. Therefore, City of Durham shall not stop the residential development especially for the properties in close proximity to SERLS. The designation of the Future Growth Area (FGA) need to be revised and need to take into consideration of the proximity to SERLS. The more logical way to designate FGA shall be east of Southview Rd and east of Virgil Rd.
- Road improvements. Traffic congestion and speeding traffic is increasing daily in the present. Will be worse in the future. Lack for plans for good public transportation
- Start now - instead of assigning an unmarked section of SE Durham for "future development" later on. Work with developers to connect the polka dot developments and build connectivity at their cost instead of taking money for other things- not relevant to SE Durham.
- The SERLS was clearly designed to promote growth in the entire basin, and the service area plans clearly show future sewer outfalls planned to extend and serve the areas being referred to as the Future Growth Area (FGA) . The vast majority of the FGA is made up of land that is topographically challenging and crisscrossed with creeks, streams, and wetlands. These features lend themselves to residential layouts as opposed to commercial uses that would be difficult to construct with the amount of topo and streams. Further, the heavily wooded characteristics of the FGA lends itself to more of a residential feel as opposed to trying to force commercial uses into the area. So the suggestion that this area should strive for “ non-auto trip” neighborhoods I believe will be difficult to achieve, and again is not necessary as the area is much more naturally suited to residential communities for the reasons stated above. The majority of the

infrastructure needed to fulfill the vision shown on the plans for the SERLS Basin can only be provided by the development community, which thru the required fees will pay for the SERLS and the needed sewer outfalls as they progress eastward. Also, because the SERLS is located directly on Kemp Road I do not understand why Kemp would be the dividing line for this FGA. The property immediately adjacent to the east of SERLS you would think would, and should, be the next properties developed so that the needed infrastructure for the rest of the SERLS service area can be extended/provided for future growth needs. SERLS was built to promote growth, so you would think the properties immediately adjacent to it would be the first logical candidates for development. Because of the natural topo, creeks and vegetation I strongly agree that walking interconnectivity between the developments should be encouraged with bike lanes and greenways a priority to provide access to, and enjoyment of, the natural gifts the area has to offer. Also, the proposed concept of “clustering” the pods of development make some sense in this area because of the natural “dividing” features on the properties. With regard to the affordable housing issue, I would think most everyone agrees that it is important to promote affordable options in the city. However, because as stated above, this area does not naturally lend itself to commercial uses and does not have a strong public transportation component it would make more sense to take the affordable housing contributions from the residential developers in this area and put them to use in the areas of the city that can best maximize those funds. The suggested idea of requiring a mix of housing types does make sense for this region as that will at least help in providing a “range” of housing prices available in the area. One of the conundrums of the affordable issue is while we all want to see affordable options for homebuyers in all areas the “wish list” features that get loaded into the design requirements many times work against the concept of affordability. The price of land in this area is very high on a “useable acre” basis because of all the natural conditions. Couple that with the suggestions for 150’ stream buffers, phased grading, extensive tree preservation, rear load SF and TH design, and a robust system of greenways, etc- all of which add significantly to the cost of development, and you end up with a situation where affordability is very difficult to attain. So, again, why try to fit a “square peg in a round hole” and force uses into this area that the topography, water features, vegetation and desired planning features do not support. The FGA is primed to grow and fulfill the original plan that Durham envisioned when the SERLS Service Area was conceived. New residents to this portion of North Carolina want to live in Durham, and they want to live in this area served by the SERLS, so lets agree to be smart about the residential communities we put in this area and use the natural features to the best advantage, but lets not stop the development of this area because we want it to be something that is not the overall best use. With regard to the Fire service. If a new fire station is needed then lets get the developers to kick in and build a fire station. This is sort of a chicken/egg thing as to what comes first but it seems the way to do this is to get some developments going that can pay for the new fire infrastructure so that it is there when it is finally needed.

- I don't have a direct interest in this region and just studied the new plan. I like what I see however.
- Host webinars about the Guide, Map, and Policies in collaboration with departments and orgs who have direct connections or responsibilities with regard to safety, transit, and community development. The City departments and either grassroots or otherwise organizations should be

willing to collaborate on sharing the information, with intention, about the webinars within the target audiences or networks they serve are supposed to serve.

- With rapid population growth, we need more housing. City of Durham shall not stop the residential development. Private developers shall be required to pay for the needed infrastructure and fire station. Please accelerate approving more development project, with mandates for builders to share the cost, so we as buyers/renters have more options.