

Outreach Team Meeting

May 17, 2022

6:30-8:00 PM

Zoom Meeting

Agenda

1. **Welcome and Icebreaker** - What are you looking forward to this summer?
 - a. 12 Outreach Team members and 4 members of the City-County Planning Department were in attendance
2. **Updates on closing out Place Type engagement since last OT meeting**
 - a. Staff provided an update on the close out of the Place Type engagement phase, including publishing an engagement summary of that phase as well as a list of technical corrections for the place type map
 - b. Any questions?
 - Can PACs still give input (on the map?) Will there be opportunities for more engagement on the map for the public?
 - Response: There will be opportunities for engagement and feedback on the full plan (which will include the map and guide) later this year and then also the public hearing process after that
 - Are PIDs on technical corrections list organized, grouped in certain parts of community? Is there a distinct pattern to where the technical corrections were made?
 - Response: There isn't a distinctive pattern to the changes that we could see. We'll be sure a new map is clear about changes from the first map to the revised one
3. **Update on Policy Working Groups**
 - a. Staff provided an update on the work that the Policy Working Groups did to develop draft Policies for the Comprehensive Plan, leading up to the beginning of this current engagement phase.
 - b. Any questions or reflections on the Policy Working Groups?
 - Appreciation for Staff and their leadership in their group, applaud the planning team for taking on this process, very obviously intentional effort to think through all the things, and more intentional effort planned ahead.
 - Felt like we could have used more time in the PWG meetings; also I learned something really important from PWG. Issue: the school system in Durham can't build a new school anywhere until the system is 2% or more over capacity. This is state law.
 - Response: There are many things under different topics where there are changes at state level of law needed to do the things we are hearing that are important for the community.
 - We need references to those laws in the plan document (and include specific citation with links to the laws)
 - My group was working with many words we were not used to dealing with, so we spent time trying to figure that out. There were lots of staff members in that group, some struggles when folks didn't show up, and it was somewhat intimidating to be in a place with Staff.
 - I have heard "this is how the City does things," but I don't work for the City. This needs to shift.
 - I think this was really important. Back in 2005 we didn't have a chance to be in the space where policies were developed. Hopefully our futures and our children's futures will be better because of this work.
4. **Engagement on the Policies**

- a. Staff provided an update on how this current engagement phase focused on the policies is being designed and how it's going so far.
- b. Any questions?
 - Just to make sure I'm following: I understand there are Ask a Planner sessions and Engagement Ambassadors leading sessions. Do we have experience bringing engagement to other existing groups that are already meeting?
 - Response: When engagement started we sent emails to boards, commissions, committees, taskforces, and local organizations with a request to help share the opportunity and to engage on policy. Our hope is some of the groups that have more ability can look at policies themselves and then Ask A Planner sessions are to provide support for that. As the full plan comes together later this year it will likely get more attention.
- c. Discussion. What draft policies are you most excited about? Any other reflections on the work of the Policy Working Groups?
 - My experience in Environmental group: it was really a good experience, lots of people are knowledgeable about the topic, everyone was very busy, Carl took notes so that folks could spend time with in a google doc outside of meetings. A lot of policies in that group are about maintaining more green space, which is really important. Folks weren't really focused on air quality but I brought that perspective to the group.
 - I haven't looked at policies yet, but I used to be consultant and helped companies determine their strategic policies and objectives. It's often hard to know the difference between policy and what we want to have happen to make the policy real. What are words that will direct people in the future to know what the vision is. A lot of experts in the group, but folks didn't necessarily understand the difference between policy and vision; it's really hard to imagine what the world will be like in 20 years, in part has to be philosophical rather than predictive
 - Response: We describe what we want to see in the Community Goals and Objectives and the Policy needs to be focused on opportunities to make the most impact. What are the words that will get us to the outcome we want?
 - Thinking about the issue with school capacity and state law raised earlier in this meeting: There are two elementary schools at capacity. With new development, schools will be over capacity because of building new homes. How can we address this? Also, looking at mitigating climate change, what kind of policies can we put in place to mitigate?
 - This was a good intentional effort to get at so many different areas. Any thoughts from the group on doing something like with Expanding Housing Choices (EHC), where planning engaged developers directly but got negative feedback on that. Could there be some opportunity to have a semi-public setting to engage developers on the policies?
 - OT member response: They said EHC, it's my open nerve. Planning continues to have meetings with developers and they continue to not have meetings with residents other than in Comp Plan framework. EHC for many folks has been EHP, "expanding housing profits."
 - I am a firm believer in "buy small" and "buy local" to support our local community and economy. Developers not from Durham have no vested interest here other than making money and leaving. Inviting developers into this sort of process....they aren't going to like anything that takes money out of their pocket. They could lobby the state legislature to work against our policies if they don't like them. Developers give pennies on the dollar. A developer was doing something in the Gorman area to give to Glenn School elementary a playground. Insultingly small contribution, given how much money they will make.

- I appreciate the input, the way I think of it, most of our regional workforce is out of town companies. I think about the job and neighborhood link a lot and I love hearing what outside companies think is wrong with Durham, sometimes good points, sometimes it's things we actually like about our community. Getting first hand info at this time in the process could be really valuable from developers (local and out of state)
- I hope we learn to say yes and also no to developers. It bothers me to see development happening and no indication of what is coming (signage)
- Northgate developer responded to community's dislike for the plan they published and that it didn't have affordable housing and the open space was closed to community. Their press release after that was basically: we don't have responsibility to take care of problems that Durham has created for itself
- Staff: we'll be focusing on the UDO changing to support policy and vision from this plan once the plan is adopted
- We need to know state laws that conflict with what we want to do, in the UDO. I want to create a list of all those state laws and start working on that.
- We need not just places to live but places to shop, go to the clinic, and bus service. We need the infrastructure in place, like how there's no more movie theater at northgate, for instance
- The way transportation looks at things, they look at destination rather than where people live and where they need or want to go, even looking at the food lion in two different neighborhoods on 98. One in rich neighborhood, one in poor neighborhood, there's different food in each store even though they're both Food Lion. Also, when you have a ton of industrial area in poorer areas and no commercial; historically redlined communities that are now being gentrified, what happens when they try to go for loans
- Race equity in policies – we need an expanded infrastructure definition because of this. Neighborhoods needs pharmacies and gas station and ev plug in for cars and grocery stores
- With all the development does it look as if supply chain issues are going to impact timeliness of development (building new houses)?
 - Response: That's a good question that a lot of people in the country are wondering about. Planning staff thought that at the start of the pandemic that development might slow down, but it went as fast as ever. But yes, the supply chain issues with things like lumber can and will continue to impact construction costs and housing affordability.
- We need to make sure that people understand what "affordable" is. Needs to be 40 or 50%AMI not 60 or 70% AMI. People are saying that things are "affordable" but it's really only 90% AMI or something like that. We need to support people with the lowest incomes.
- Infrastructure group spent a lot of time pushing back against the "traditional" idea that a Comprehensive Plan only focuses on built environment for new development. We felt, as a group, that the needs and disparities present in the existing built environment should be equally addressed.

5. Finishing up

- a. For our next meeting, we will have completed this engagement phase and will be working to revise the Policies. We will also be working on putting together a full draft of the Plan.
- b. Meeting notes will be shared with this group and posted on the EngageDurham site after everyone has had time to review.
- c. Our next OT meeting (likely around September) will be our last OT meeting before the comp plan adoption begins. At our next meeting, we'd like to think about how we can continue to work together after the Comp Plan is adopted. We'll also be sharing out what we've learned from this phase of engagement on the policies.
- d. Are there any announcements that anyone would like to share with the group?
 - i. No announcements

e. Thank you!