



Charlottesville-Albemarle
Affordable Housing Coalition

memorandum

TO: Members of Charlottesville City Council
Members of Charlottesville Planning Commission
Maurice Jones, Charlottesville City Manager

CC: Alex Ikefuna, Director, Neighborhood Development Services
Stacy Pethia, Housing Program Coordinator, Neighborhood Development Services
Brenda Kelley, Redevelopment Manager, Charlottesville
Kaki Dimock, Charlottesville Director of Human Services
Mike Murphy, Assistant City Manager
Greg Powe, CADRe
Anthony Haro, TJACH
Elaine Poon, CLIHC
Sean Tubbs, *Charlottesville Tomorrow*

RE: Additional information supporting CHAAHC's January 3, 2018 letter

DATE: January 3, 2018

This memo provides more detailed explanation around our recommendation set forth in our January 3, 2018 letter.

Recommendation

Approve a resolution to delay completion of the Comprehensive Plan update pending completion of the following:

- i. a quantitative and qualitative housing needs assessment*
- ii. a third-party economic analysis of any proposed land use designations*
- iii. a comprehensive, community-responsive Housing Strategy that provides safe, decent, and affordable options for people of all incomes, particularly those with the lowest incomes, and actively promotes and provides opportunities for movement up the housing and economic ladders*

It is our understanding that City Council has imposed a requirement on the Planning Commission to complete a recommended update to the Comprehensive Plan by June 2018. We recognize significant work and traditional community outreach has gone into the current update of the plan. We are grateful to the Commissioners and City staff for their efforts thus far and their push for action and results.

Given the post-August 12th community landscape, however, we need to build on and strengthen these efforts by making sure the process incorporates necessary data collection. We're deeply concerned that if the process continues without adequate data collection—specifically inclusive of grassroots listening—it would not adequately reflect our community's critical conversation about housing. Failing to incorporate the necessary data

would likely intensify community outrage, undermining both action and results, chilling efforts to preserve and create affordable housing.

Essential City planning initiatives that are now in process, such as the Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Housing Chapter updates, require a pause to thoroughly collect and analyze community data. This data will inform the Housing Strategy, which will then inform city-wide planning efforts.

In addition, this data will be enormously helpful to City housing and human services staff and to City Councilors in their day-to-day work of policymaking and problem-solving.

As affordable housing experts in the community, we believe that these components are critical to informing an effective and responsive Comprehensive Plan update:

- I. **A City and regional housing needs assessment that is:**
 - A. **quantitative.** Identifying how many units are needed at what incomes.
 - B. **qualitative.** Identifying the real barriers that exist to better housing outcomes from the perspective of local, extremely low-wealth and low-wealth individuals.
 - C. **based on interest and not just perceived need.** Identifying needs and solutions must incorporate grassroots community conversations intended to find out what extremely low-wealth and low-wealth individuals want and are willing to do to achieve their goals.
 - D. **cognizant of the nexus of historical patterns of racial and economic segregation and calcified zoning patterns.** For example, are there structural inequities baked into the current zoning map?
- II. **A thorough economic analysis of proposed future land use designations.**

We are very concerned that the Planning Commission draft land use plan—which includes a welcome gesture toward height bonuses for provision of on-site affordable housing—is not based on substantive economic analysis.

Specifically, we suspect that the proposed amount of bonus height, relative to the by right height allowances, will not create economic conditions that stimulate development of affordable units. In fact, by lowering the by right height relative to allowances currently available by Special Use Permit in many districts, we believe that the plan, if approved, may in fact create further inventory constraints and thus exacerbate the affordable housing crisis.

We believe that the correct ratio of by right height to bonus height, including site intensity, can indeed be identified via economic analysis. We would only support a future land use map if a credible third-party evaluated and informed the height ratios in order to adequately incentivize on-site affordable housing available to people at all income levels.

Without such data, the plan may end up being counterproductive, and, if adopted as is, may have the unintended effect of further codifying more than a half-century of code-driven racial and economic segregation.

III. A comprehensive, community-responsive Housing Strategy that provides safe, decent and affordable options for people of all incomes, particularly those at the lower end of the AMI scale, *and* actively promotes and provides opportunities for movement up the housing and economic ladders.

In addition to incorporating existing staff and Council expertise, we believe the Housing Strategy should:

- ... be a product of intensive community conversation
- ... be based on an equity model
- ... be stewarded by the Council-appointed Housing Advisory Committee, in collaboration with staff and stakeholders
- ... be based upon qualitative and quantitative data
- ... include strategies for creating and preserving housing opportunities of all types (homeless services, transitional housing, low-income rentals, affordable homeownership, rehab and repair, etc.), and,
- ... be completed prior to the Comp Plan so that it can inform key housing and land use aspects of the Comp Plan and the tactics, deliverables, performance measures, and timetables therein.

We believe these aspects are vital to public enthusiasm and embrace for the plan.

We want to ensure that housing planning in Charlottesville becomes a transformative model of community transparency, participation, and good faith. This will lead to more stable and successful products, programs, and partnerships for the long term.

Contact

CHAAHC Steering Committee

AHIP

Charlottesville Redevelopment & Housing Authority

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville

Piedmont Housing Alliance

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