

Town of Carrboro – Next steps for Housing Policy

Carrboro's Vision 2020 (6.0) states the following: *"The town should develop a comprehensive housing policy that seeks to provide housing for all of Carrboro's citizens."* Further:

6.1 Housing for a Diverse Population

6.11 Town policy should accommodate a variety of housing styles, sizes and pricing. It should also address issues of density, funding and rezoning to allow for more non-detached housing, mixed-use development, and communal living options.

6.12 The variety of strategies to be considered should include the investigation of alternative public and private funding for construction and renovation of low and moderate income housing. A low interest loan pool for individuals and nonprofits that wish to buy and rehabilitate housing is desired.

6.13 The town should review all vacant municipally owned land for the purpose of making unneeded tracts available for housing programs.

6.14 The town should continue to advocate for inclusionary zoning techniques to increase the local stock of affordable housing.

6.15 The town should pursue the development of density bonus provisions for projects incorporating environmentally sensitive development and building practices.

6.16 With our growing population of senior citizens, the town should support the creation of more housing that allows our senior citizens to interact fully with the larger community. Senior access to public transit will become an increasingly important concern.

6.17 The town should interact with non-profit groups that work to provide affordable housing, including but not limited to the Land Trust, Orange Community Housing Corporation, Empowerment Inc., and Habitat for Humanity.

6.18 A minimum of 15 percent of the residential units in any residential development should meet the affordability criteria specified in Section 15-182.4 of the Carrboro Land Use Ordinance. *[Note: The Board will soon be considering a proposal to change this to the following: Reduce the number of affordable units from 15% to 12%, while also reducing the cost of the unit from 80% PMI to 60%].*

To this end, the Affordable Housing Task Force recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt a comprehensive housing policy, updated policy document or update to Vision 2020. The following are action items related to achieving this goal, most of which are from the summary of the Planning Board's affordable housing dialogue sessions presented to the Board of Aldermen on February 19, 2013:

- Make the Affordable Housing Task Force a standing committee of the Board of Aldermen consisting of three Board of Aldermen members. Include representatives on the Affordable Task Force from the Planning Board, Transportation Advisory Board and Economic Sustainability Commission to better collaborate around planning, economic development, and transportation issues. *[There was a suggestion to expand this to include other public and*

private stakeholders, such as affordable housing developers, and advocates, but we recommend not expanding this group beyond BOA and advisory board members given that we understand that there is a similar group currently forming. Rather, our group would liaison to that group when needed].

- The Task Force should initially meet monthly and be charged with actualizing Vision 2020 policy section 6.0: to develop a comprehensive housing policy that seeks to provide housing for all of Carrboro's citizens. This policy should be developed, vetted, and approved by December 2013 and should include clear defining terms and measurable goals against which the Board of Aldermen can measure progress and modify policy over the long term. Once the policy is created, the Task Force will meet on a quarterly basis.

Items for consideration during this process:

- In the comprehensive policy to be developed, consider a staggered approach to income targeting and goals, such that people along the income continuum of very low (less than 50% of median income), to low (50% - 80%) to moderate income (80% - 115%) can benefit in some way from Carrboro's policy efforts and investments.
- Include transportation costs associated with housing location in the Town's consideration of "affordable housing" definitions and calculations. Consider the location and frequency of bus service, as well as walking and bicycling network distances to non-residential destinations when estimating household-level transportation costs. Engage Chapel Hill Transit and Triangle Transit in housing discussions for improved transit frequency and routes.
- Consider modifying parking requirements in the Land Use Ordinance for in-town apartment and condominium housing, especially in areas where public transportation is readily available. Consider a tiered approach—where the number of spaces per use would be reduced over time in tandem with the potential increase of bus and transit service.
- Research possibility of new regulations, bonuses and other incentives for affordable housing:
 - Explore re-zoning infill projects to allow for multifamily housing, connected housing, and zero lot line housing
 - Investigate revising current limitations on or conditions for secondary units (for example, accessory dwellings), particularly near downtown.

- Research effective rental registry models and determine the efficacy of a similar program here to protect renters and neighborhoods from further deterioration of housing stock
- Schedule a board (community) discussion addressing how the current 40% open space requirement and the recreation space requirement impact housing affordability, environmental issues, tax rates, and monthly maintenance costs for homeowners.
- Learn more about affordable housing non-profits that develop new and renovates existing multifamily complexes for affordable housing.
- Develop a master land use plan that clearly displays overlay districts and roadway network connectivity. Such a plan will help developers better understand development and redevelopment priorities and opportunities in Carrboro.
- Consider collaborating financially with affordable housing providers, Orange County government, the university, and others to establish a public-private housing trust fund as a permanent source of matching funds for new construction, rehabilitation, or refinancing of affordable rental and homeownership units.
- Establish parameters for Carrboro's affordable housing trust fund.