

MEETING SUMMARY | Housing Subcommittee Committee Meeting 1

November 1, 2018

The following is a summary of the first meeting of the Housing Subcommittee for Tuscaloosa's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update process. Attached to this summary are the meeting attendance sheet, agenda, and additional documents.

Process Overview

During the process overview, the subcommittee job description was reviewed alongside the intent of the subcommittee. Michele Coley was selected to serve as the subcommittee's representative at Steering Committee meetings.

Group Discussion

During the group discussion regarding the Housing Study, subcommittee members were asked to provide their thoughts and major takeaways.

1. Why were the statistics about home improvement loans included? The number of loans applied for seems too small to include. What is the relevance of this to the market or the overarching conversation about housing?
2. How is affordable housing being defined?
3. Why were the District 6 and 7 plans combined in the existing policy review?
4. Is \$175-300K really moderate pricing for homes?
5. Concerns were raised over using the online sites to identify and price student housing in the area.

In the discussions on the focused categories of workforce housing and student housing, the group identified both desired outcomes and critical information they need in order to make decisions. The following comments, questions, and concerns arose during the discussion of two subtopics – workforce housing and student housing.

Workforce Housing:

1. What steps can be taken to help ensure that middle and lower income housing is available while ensuring neighborhood compatibility is maintained?

- a. Suggestions included ensuring that adequate amenities are provided in the area, that design standards and guidelines are required, and that infill lots are utilized.
2. Concerns were raised that we are negatively impacting property values, increasing traffic, increased transient use of housing stock, and the lack of various housing types.
3. Knowledge-based jobs will increase in the next five to ten years.
4. Locate funding sources for lower to middle-income homes to renovate existing housing stock to maintain or increase property values.
 - a. Chattanooga has done some interesting things with the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise: www.cneinc.org
5. Obstacles, market trends, and geography need to be considered with addressing opportunities and constraints for workforce housing.
6. Game day homes may be taking up workforce housing – how do we meet the needs of both? With 19% of our housing units being seasonal, is there another solution for game days?

Student Housing:

1. Concerns were raised that student residency data was not included in the report. It was determined that there are resources for off-campus data to better inform the study.
 - a. UA representatives Tim Leopard and Nicole Prewitt were going to retrieve this data and send it to the City.
2. Concerns regarding public infrastructure within the university area.
 - a. Discussion of “the Box” and the proposed moratorium for the bonus height provision allowed within the University Area Neighborhood.
3. Concerns related to developments on the perimeter that have been constructed specifically for students – how do these developments adjust over time? Do they become workforce housing if they are able to transition?
4. Keep in mind public safety.
5. Determine a solution to offset University of Alabama’s decline in enrollment.
6. What would increased density look like?

Next Steps

The subcommittee decided to meet again for two hours in January, allowing time to talk to subject matter experts and for staff to complete various analyses. The group decided to take one subtopic at a time instead of covering both subtopics at each meeting. The next meeting will discuss the University Area Neighborhood. Staff discussed available resources, including MLS data and a 3D model of the University Area Neighborhood.