

MEETING SUMMARY | Steering Committee Meeting 8

June 7, 2019

The following is a summary of the eighth meeting of the steering committee for Tuscaloosa's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update process. Attached to this summary is the meeting attendance sheet, agenda, and presentation slides.

Elevate Updates

Committee members were updated on the status of Elevate Tuscaloosa. The Elevate Advisory Council will meet for the first time on June 12. Updates regarding the integration between specific Elevate initiatives and Framework will be provided at the August 21 Steering Committee meeting.

Discuss Updates to Future Land Use Map

The team shared a working copy of the "Growing" Chapter, which includes the draft principles, conceptual map, future land use map, and supporting actions under development. Based on comments from the May 1 meeting, three of the future land use types were modified significantly: Traditional Neighborhood, Traditional Neighborhood Attached, and Residential Single Family (shown in red text within the document). The Committee discussed these changes and other needed clarifications.

Outcomes of the discussion were:

1. Consider simplifying the future land use types and defining neighborhood types by geographic attributes. The names of the types create some confusion as to where they apply, particularly residential single family, which covers a wide range of conditions.
2. Rename Core Neighborhood as "Urban Core Neighborhood" and keep it distinct (on the map) from other neighborhood areas.
3. Consider applying Traditional Neighborhood to the other established neighborhoods between "urban core neighborhood" and Residential, single family.
4. Consider distinguishing between "Residential, single family" areas, perhaps through use of the term "suburban."

5. Support for “Lakeside Living” definition as proposed. Small lot cluster development with preserved land and shared docks was supported based on photos. Mostly positive reaction to small-scale attached housing with additional open space preservation.
6. Consider actions for preserving open space around the Lake Tuscaloosa.
7. Identify currently industrial areas where a different future use would be desirable and consider an appropriate designation for each area on the Future Land Use map.

Discuss Concentration Areas

The team introduced the Concentration Areas section of the Growing chapter which will provide more detail on the opportunities and intent within five areas of the city. One of the areas, the Downtown / Campus area, was the focus of the conversation. The team described the University Area Neighborhood’s current definition and boundaries as well as the origin and intent behind “The Box.” Building off the recent subcommittee work, the following questions were introduced and discussed:

1. Do we need these areas, do they serve a purpose?
2. If so, can we combine the UAN and The Box into one concept?

Based on subcommittee input, the team made a proposal for committee reaction and debate. The following summarizes the direction that came from the discussion (which varies from the initial proposal):

- a) Combine the UAN and “The Box” into one concept.
- b) Call it “University District” (or something similar).
- c) Boundaries would generally be McFarland Blvd and west of the Hospital, 15th Street, Queen City Avenue, and Jack Warner Parkway.
- d) There would be multiple distinct zoning districts within the area – single family, attached residential, apartments, commercial etc.
- e) Emphasize design quality with higher standards for materials, landscaping, lighting, etc.
- f) Keep Downtown a separate and distinct district.

There was some interest in establishing more proscriptive architectural design standards to create a cohesive feel to the district. This could also be achieved through public realm features such as landscaping, paving, and lighting.

There was a short discussion of how the planned extension of 2nd Avenue will impact the area. Based on committee input, the intent should be:

- a) Locate appropriate location for a walkable commercial area (campus services or neighborhood commercial)
- b) Encourage a range of small lot, attached residential, and alternative housing types such as live-work units and accessory dwelling units.

Next Steps

- The next meeting is August 21.
- A tentative additional meeting has been identified for September 4.
- Committee members are strongly encouraged to meet with Ashley Crites between now and August 21 to comment on the draft future land use map.