

Engagement and Communications Report

Current as of April 26, 2024

1. Overview

This report is a living document that will summarize community engagement efforts for Rewriting Our Rules. This report covers public information meetings, pop-up events, and other stakeholder meetings and includes information such as how many people attended the meeting, topics shared by staff, and feedback received from attendees.

Staff analyzed attendee feedback and identified the themes, listed below.

1. Comments about the desire for more diverse housing options and more affordable housing options throughout Town (most frequent comment from all participants).
2. Comments about the desire for more walkable and bike-friendly areas in town.
3. Comments about the desire to promote higher density development and transit options.
4. Comment about the need to revisit stormwater regulations.
5. Question about the relationship between the Rewriting Our Rules project and previous Housing Choices text amendments.
6. Question about how new rules would be enforced.
7. Question about how attendee input would inform the new LUMO.
8. Question about the potential changes to zoning and land use rules.
9. Question about the timing of the project.

Please review the summaries included in this report for more information on the outreach and engagement staff conducted. Visit the **Policy Discussion and Outreach Schedule** for more on future events.

2. Demographic Data

U.S. Census Bureau 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey for the Town of Chapel Hill, the Durham-Chapel Hill Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and the State are shown below. This data is current as of 2022 and is context for the demographic information shared throughout the report.

Estimates of Population by Race						
	Town of Chapel Hill		Durham-Chapel Hill MSA		State of North Carolina	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
White	40,055	68%	379,541	58.6%	6,800,458	65%
Black or African American	6,161	10.5%	163,535	25.2%	2,192,455	20.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	228	0.4%	2,947	0.5%	109,600	1.1%
Asian	9,305	13.4%	30,202	4.7%	325,670	3.1%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	1	0%	411	0.1%	6,948	0.1%

Some other Race Alone	1,648	2.8%	29,851	4.6%	421,954	4%
Two or more races	2,926	5%	41,579	6.4%	613,129	5.9%
Total	58,919	100%	648,066	100%	10,470,214	100%

Estimates of Population by Ethnicity						
	Town of Chapel Hill		Durham-Chapel Hill MSA		State of North Carolina	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Not Hispanic or Latino	54,928	92.8%	573,572	88.5%	9,419,209	90%
Hispanic or Latino	3,991	7.3%	74,494	11.5%	1,051,008	10%
Total	58,919	100%	648,066	100%	10,470,214	100%

Estimates of Population by Sex						
	Town of Chapel Hill		Durham-Chapel Hill MSA		State of North Carolina	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Male	27,817	47.2%	313,505	48.4%	5,131,370	49%
Female	31,102	52.8%	334,561	51.6%	5,338,844	51%
Total	58,919	100%	648,066	100%	10,470,214	100%

Estimates of Population 5 Years and Over by Language Spoken at Home						
	Town of Chapel Hill		Durham-Chapel Hill MSA		State of North Carolina	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
English only	45,171	79.3%	516,920	84.2%	8,663,829	87.7%
Language other than English	11,811	20.7%	96,811	15.8%	1,216,618	12.3%
Total	56,982	100%	613,731	100%	9,880,447	100%

Estimates of Population by Age						
	Town of Chapel Hill		Durham-Chapel Hill MSA		State of North Carolina	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Under 18	9,429	16%	128,550	19.8%	2,283,888	21.8%
18 - 24	19,214	32.6%	73,191	11.3%	1,014,214	9.7%
25 - 34	7,214	12.2%	95,016	14.7%	1,394,673	13.3%
35 - 44	5,337	9.1%	83,443	12.9%	1,321,715	12.6%
45 - 54	6,122	10.4%	81,332	12.6%	1,354,229	12.9%
55- 64	4,572	7.8%	81,754	12.6%	1,353,570	12.9%
64 - 74	3,945	6.7%	63,911	9.9%	1,051,212	10.0%
Over 75	3,086	5.3%	40,869	6.3%	696,713	6.7%
Total	58,919	100%	648,066	100%	10,470,214	100%

3. Engagement Summary

This section includes brief summaries of the following events attended or hosted by Planning Department staff:

- [January 24, 2024 – Pop-up event](#)
- [January 31, 2024 – Public Information Meeting](#)
- [February 14, 2024 – Pop-up event](#)
- [February 24, 2024 – Pop-up event](#)
- [March 4, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting](#)
- [March 12, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting](#)
- [March 19, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting](#)
- [March 25, 2024 – Public Information Meeting](#)
- [March 27, 2024 – Public Information Meetings](#)
- [March 30, 2024 – Pop-up event](#)
- [April 2, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting](#)
- [April 4, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting](#)
- [April 9, 2024 – Pop-up event](#)
- [April 10, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting](#)
- [April 13, 2024 – Pop-up event](#)
- [April 16, 2024 – Stakeholder Meeting](#)
- [April 18, 2024 – Stakeholder Meeting](#)
- [April 25, 2024 – Pop-up event](#)

January 24, 2024 - Pop-up Event

Location: South Estes Public Housing Community Center

Overview: Planning Department staff joined a “Cookies and Community” monthly event hosted by the Affordable Housing and Community Connections Department. These events provide an opportunity to share information about Town-sponsored services and activities with residents of various communities throughout Chapel Hill.

Location Demographics

- A large share of public housing residents identify as Black or African American, Immigrant or Refugee, Low-Income, and all are Renters.
- These community members speak a range of languages, including Arabic, Burmese, English, Spanish, and Karen.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees’ questions and comments included:

- The proximity of school and parks to young attendees’ homes.
- What surrounds a school facility and why.
- How they travel around Town – by walking, biking, or car.

January 31, 2024 - Public Information Meeting

Location: Chapel Hill Public Library

Attendance: 17

Overview: Staff hosted a public information meeting at the Chapel Hill Public Library on January 31, 2024. The meeting began with a poster session where attendees could learn more about potential changes included in the new LUMO. Staff then presented the project's goals and timelines and summarized Council's discussion during the January 17 work session. The meeting concluded with another opportunity for attendees to review posters and discuss the new LUMO with staff.

Attendee Survey

Survey Respondents: 9

- Majority of respondents had attended a public meeting before and heard about this event through TownNews.
- 44% of respondents "disagree" with the statement "I learned something new about how land use rules impact my life and/or my property."
- 44% of respondents were "neutral" with the statement "I learned something new about how zoning and land use rules have changed over time." 44% of respondents "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with that statement.
- 66% of respondents "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the statement "I learned why our land use rules (LUMO) need to be updated."

Attendee Demographics

- All survey respondents identified as White, non-Hispanic, and spoke English at home.
- 1/3 of respondents identified as over the age of 75.
- 1/3 of respondents identified as under age 55.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees' questions and comments included:

- How changes to the land use rules can support the Town's goal of more affordable housing.
- The relationship between the Rewriting Our Rules project and last year's Housing Choices text amendments.
- What land use rules may be changed and what land use rules may stay the same.
- Opportunities to strengthen existing elements of our ordinance, such as tree protection requirements.
- The timing of any rezoning to implement an updated LUMO.

February 14, 2024 - Pop-up Event

Location: Airport Gardens Public Housing Community Center

Overview: Planning Department staff joined a "Cookies and Community" monthly event hosted by the Affordable Housing and Community Connections Department.

Location Demographics

- A large share of public housing residents identify as Black or African American, Immigrant or Refugee, Low-Income, and all are Renters.
- These community members speak a range of languages, including Arabic, Burmese, English, Spanish, and Karen.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendee's questions and comments included:

- When asked "If you could choose what you live next to, what would it be?", young attendees responded, "my friends".
- The proximity of school and parks to their homes.
- How they travel around Town – by walking, biking, or car.

February 24, 2024 - Pop-up Event

Location: Chapel Hill Farmer's Market

Attendees: Approximately 20

Overview: Planning Department staff tabled at the Chapel Hill Farmer's Market located at University Place from 10 am and 12 pm.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees' questions and comments included:

- What the Planning department does.
- The relationship between the Rewriting Our Rules project and last year's Housing Choices text amendments.
- If and where the Town can accommodate growth.
- The land use rule changes should make it easier for property owners to build accessory dwelling units.
- The timing of the project and when Council could make a decision.
- Infrastructure like protected bike lanes is needed with new development.
- How our land use rules relate to stormwater management.

March 4, 2024 - Stakeholder Meeting

Location: UNC-Chapel Hill BuildUp Member Meeting

Attendees: Approximately 15

Overview: Planning Department staff joined a meeting of BuildUP, a group of UNC undergraduates that are interested in urban planning. The attendees did not complete a survey as a part of this meeting.

Attendee Demographics

- The membership of BuildUP is students and young adults.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees' questions and comments included:

- Housing costs for students off-campus and limited housing supply on-campus
- Lack of groceries around campus and limited affordable food options

- General urbanist themes of denser development, transit options, and prevention of sprawl
- Limitations of Historic District and Neighborhood Conservation Districts near campus, and how they relate to opportunities for new housing.

March 12, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting

Location: Northside Compass Group monthly meeting

Attendees: Approximately 20

Overview: Planning staff presented information about the LUMO Update and its potential impacts to Northside Compass Group as part of their monthly meeting.

Attendee Survey

Survey Respondents: 11

- 6 respondents “agree” and 4 respondents “strongly agree” with the statement “I learned something new about how land use rules impact my life and/or my property.” One respondent was “neutral”.
- 7 respondents “strongly agree” and 3 respondents “agree” with the statement “I learned something new about how zoning and land use rules have changed over time.” One respondent was “neutral”.
- 9 respondents “strongly agree” and 2 respondents “agree” with the statement “I learned why our land use rules (LUMO) need to be updated.”

Attendee Demographics

- Majority of respondents heard about the meeting from the Jackson Center and have attended a public meeting hosted by the Town before.
- Majority of respondents identified as Black or African American, not Hispanic or Latino, and speak English at home. One respondent speaks Spanish.
- The age of respondents was evenly distributed between age 18 to over 75.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees’ questions and comments included:

- How do long term residents find out about and get priority for designated low-income housing?
- How do new LUMO rules deal with state legislature restrictions? What are those restrictions?
- How can we make welcoming, affordable environments for families with young children?

March 19, 2024 - Stakeholder meeting

Location: Northside Neighborhood Meeting, Jackson Center

Attendees: Over 30

Overview: Planning staff presented information about the LUMO Update and its potential impacts to the Northside neighborhood and the W. Rosemary Commercial District as part of their monthly meeting. The attendees did not complete a survey as a part of this meeting.

Questions and Comments:

- Long-term residents and property owners shared their pressing concerns, including the ability of their properties to meet their needs, increasing property taxes, displacement of affordable housing residents, and increasing numbers of student rentals.
- Many residents felt that student housing landlords had more development opportunities in Northside than they did.
- Others spoke to changes along Rosemary Street and its potential impact and relationship to the neighborhood.
- They called for more affordable and attainable housing that would allow multi-generational families to remain in the neighborhood.
- Many expressed frustration that they were not included in creating the NCD in 2002 and felt that the NCD regulations were a hinderance.
- People asked how the feedback provided will impact the development of the LUMO.

March 25, 2024 – Public Information Meeting

Location: Chapel Hill Public Library

Attendance: 13

Overview: Staff hosted a public information meeting at the Chapel Hill Public Library on March 25, 2024. The meeting began with a poster session where attendees could learn more about potential changes included in the new LUMO. Staff then presented the project's goals and timelines and summarized Council's discussion during the February 21 and March 13 work sessions. The meeting concluded with another opportunity for attendees to review posters and discuss the new LUMO with staff.

Attendee Survey

Survey Respondents: 12

- Majority of respondents had attended a public meeting before and heard about this event through TownNews.
- 5 respondents are "neutral" with the statement "I learned something new about how land use rules impact my life and/or my property. The remaining respondents (6) were equally distributed between "disagree", "agree", and "strong agree".
- 4 respondents "agree" and 2 respondents "strongly agree" with the statement "I learned something new about how zoning and land use rules have changed over time." The remaining respondents (6) are equally distributed between "disagree" or "neutral" with that statement.
- 4 respondents "strongly agree" with the statement "I learned why our land use rules (LUMO) need to be updated." 3 respondents either "agree" or is "neutral" to this statement. 1 respondent answered "disagree".

Attendee Demographics

- The majority of respondents identified as White, non-Hispanic, and spoke English at home. One participant identified as Asian.
- 2/3 of respondents identified as over the age of 56, with the highest attendance rate among people who identify in the 66-75 age range.
- 1/3 of respondents identified between the ages of 18 and 45.

Questions and Comments

Staff asked participants to reflect on the possible positive and negative impacts of proposed changes, these are summarized below.

<i>Perceived Positive Impacts</i>	<i>Perceived Negative Impacts</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity to implement Complete Community• Well-designed buildings that engage pedestrians• Improving our sustainability• More housing, retail, and greenways in existing neighborhoods• Higher density and mixed-use development• Better use of rapid transit and other types of auto-alternative modes• Relieving restrictions on housing supply• A cost-benefit decision making process for future development• Prioritize diverse affordable housing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poorly designed site plans and structures that are not context-sensitive• More costly housing in certain areas of Town• More traffic with more people• Impact of increasing density in single-family neighborhoods is not equitably shared across Town

- Are some of the ideas presented viable?
- How will these rules be enforced?
- How quickly could we feel the impacts of these changes?
- Would by-right impact the speed of development review?
- How will public input be used in this project?
- When will the product be available for public view?
- What percentage of land is in the historic districts and the Neighborhood Conservation Districts?
- What amount of population growth is being planned for?
- How are smaller-scale businesses supported by these rules?

March 27, 2024 – Public Information Meetings

Location: Zoom

Attendees: 7

Overview: Staff hosted two public information meetings in a Zoom webinar format on March 27, 2024. The meetings took place at 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. Staff presented the

project's goals and timelines and summarized Council's discussion during the February 21 and March 13 work sessions. The meetings concluded with an opportunity for attendees to discuss the project with staff.

Attendee Survey

Survey Respondents: 7

Attendee Demographics

- All respondents identified as non-Hispanic. One identified as Black or African American, another selected "Prefer not to say", and five participants identified as White. Two did not respond to this question. No respondents reported their gender.
- The age distribution of respondents was between 26 and 75. Two participants responded that they identify in the 36-45 age range.
- The majority of respondents "strongly agree" with all statements in the survey.

Questions and Comments

- How will the new LUMO promote affordable housing?
- Is the low turnout at virtual PIMs troubling? Is enough being done to get the word out about this project?
- Will all neighborhoods be impacted equally by the LUMO changes?
- How can we allow or promote building more densely in areas of town that have been downzoned over time?
- How can we avoid "designing by committee?" Can we limit how proscriptive we get with design standards and let people express their own tastes over time?
- Can we increase the amount of by-right development allowed in Town?
- How will neighborhoods with covenants be impacted? What did the Local Reporter mean when it said that neighborhoods with covenants would not be impacted?
- How will you increase density around bus stops/BRT stations?

March 30, 2024 – Pop-up event

Location: Chapel Hill Farmer's Market

Attendees: 6

Overview: Planning Department staff tabled at the Chapel Hill Farmer's Market located at University Place from 10 am and 12 pm.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees' questions and comments included:

- How can we strengthen our stormwater regulations?
- Are we accounting for potential water shortages in the future?
- How can we make more walkable areas of Town like Blue Hill?
- What are the biggest changes we are likely to see in the new LUMO?
- How can we get more affordable housing in town?

April 2, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting

Location: Homebuilders Association of Durham, Orange and Chatham Counties Land Use and Government Affairs Committee

Attendees: 13

Overview: Planning staff presented information about the LUMO Update as part of their monthly meeting. Members of this group are frequent users of the ordinance and have experience using ordinances in neighboring jurisdictions. The attendees did not complete a survey as a part of this meeting.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees' questions and comments included:

- Consolidating zoning districts to reduce redundancy.
- Reconciling conflicts between LUMO and the Public Works Design Manual
- Tax efficiency of smaller frontages associated with flag lots.
- Removing advisory boards if administrative approval is appropriate.
- Increase the threshold for Council review from the existing limit.
- How to amend the ordinance in future iterations.
- The types of housing that could be allowed in the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Districts
- Regulatory incentives for adaptive reuse

April 4, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting

Location: Chamber of Commerce for Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Government Affairs Committee

Attendees: 15

Overview: Planning staff presented information about the LUMO Update as part of this committee's meeting. Members of this group "meet monthly to prepare policy positions and advocate for business interests of Greater Chapel-Hill Carrboro."¹ The attendees did not complete a survey as a part of this meeting.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees' questions and comments included:

- How we will translate from the current zoning districts to proposed zoning districts.
- When will the comprehensive plan be updated and how does that timeline relate to this project?
- An interest in more frequent and less cumbersome LUMO text amendments to respond to changing markets.
- Why does Town review a change in use for existing retail spaces? This burdens small-scale business owners and benefits larger companies that can afford the cost of permitting.

¹ <https://www.carolinachamber.org/advocacy/>

- The extent of Special Use Permits throughout Town and how those will be handled with the new ordinance.
- A separate fee schedule should be considered for smaller infill sites.
- It should be easier to do a cluster subdivision.
- The reduced time of permitting as a benefit of by-right development and administrative approval.
- A request to revisit the sign ordinance.

April 9, 2024 – Pop-up event

Location: First Baptist & Manley Estates Apartments

Attendees: Approximately 10

Overview: Planning Department staff joined a “Cookies and Community” monthly event hosted by the Affordable Housing and Community Connections Department.

Location Demographics: Residents of this community are seniors on a fixed income. Some residents are Black, some are immigrants, and some residents communicate in Mandarin.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees’ questions and comments included:

- Nearby construction and concern for building heights
- Desire for additional affordable senior options and general enjoyment of their residence
- Transit and potential changes, especially to paratransit services
- How to include affordable housing in new development

April 10, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting

Location: Orange County Affordable Housing Coalition Development Committee

Attendees: 9

Overview: Planning Department staff presented to a group of affordable housing developers and advocates. Staff shared information regarding SB Friedman’s economic analysis on affordable housing and ways in which the new LUMO could support housing development.

Questions and Comments

- Attendees had limited questions and comments but were interested in learning more about the project.

April 13, 2024 – Pop-up event

Location: Friends of the Library Book Sale, Chapel Hill Library

Attendees: Approximately 50

Overview: Planning Department staff tabled outside of the Friends of the Library Book Sale located at the Chapel Hill Library from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees' questions and comments included:

- A concern that tall buildings may destroy the town's character.
- The need for more greenspace and gathering spaces.
- The need for improved and connected bike lanes and sidewalks.
- The need for affordable housing.
- A concern that parking minimums would be removed and there wouldn't be enough parking.
- A need for a public restroom near Franklin Street for people experiencing homelessness.
- A concern about traffic.

April 16, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting

Location: Habitat for Humanity Orange County Policy Committee

Attendees: 10

Overview: Planning Department staff presented to a group of affordable housing developers and advocates. Staff shared information regarding SB Friedman's economic analysis on affordable housing and ways in which the new LUMO could support housing development.

Questions and Comments

- Attendees were very interested in opportunities for code-based support for affordable housing and noted that it could make a significant difference on projects.
- Attendees expressed that increasing opportunities for by-right development could mean more development options for affordable housing providers.
- There was some concern that more by-right development may increase land values and crowd out affordable housing developers.

April 18, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting

Location: Orange and Chatham Association of Realtors

Attendees: Approximately 25

Overview: Planning staff presented information about the LUMO Update as part of this committee's meeting. Attendees did not complete a survey.

Questions and Comments

Common themes of attendees' questions and comments included:

- The importance of a more diverse tax base with commercial businesses
- An interest in expedited permitting for accessory dwelling units that use pre-reviewed plans
- How university-driven housing demand impacts the supply of housing in town
- A request to provide information in plain language

April 25, 2024 – Pop-up event

Location: Chapel Hill Public Housing Spring Pop-up Series, Craig Gomains Housing Community

Attendees: Approximately 25

Location Demographics

- A large share of public housing residents identify as Black or African American, Immigrant or Refugee, Low-Income, and all are Renters.
- These community members speak a range of languages, including Arabic, Burmese, English, Spanish, and Karen.

Overview: Planning Staff joined the Public Housing Department’s pop-up event at the Boys and Girls Club in the Craig Gomains Housing Community. Staff engaged youth participants in a game about the ways that planning and land use impact our lives. Youth attendees answered questions about the parks they enjoy visiting and where they are in relation to their home, how they get around Town and to school, and how far their families travel to get to work.

4. Communication Summary

This section summarizes digital communications shared by Town staff using a variety of platforms.

Date(s)	Activity	Reach
October 2023	Project Newsletter	81 Subscribers
July to October 2023	Social Media	3 posts 9,562 Twitter ("X") impressions 90 Instagram likes
November 2023	"What is Zoning" video, social media post	Instagram - 43 likes, 1262 accounts reached, 11 shares, 1 save Facebook - 2 likes, 400 people reached, 2 shares Twitter - 10 likes, 5 reposts, 1415 impressions, 322 unique views
December 2023	"Why do we Plan" video, social media post	Instagram - 43 likes, 1058 accounts reached, 1 share, 1 save Facebook - 3 likes, 407 people reached Twitter- 1 like, 541 views
January 2024	Project Newsletter	110 Subscribers
January 2024	Affordable Housing and Community Connections Newsletter	300-400 Subscribers
January 11, 2024 January 19, 2024 January 25, 2024	Chapel Hill Town News	6,000 – 7,000 Subscribers
February 2024	Project Newsletter	120 Subscribers 41 direct outreach emails
February 2024	Affordable Housing and Community Connections Newsletter	300-400 Subscribers

Date(s)	Activity	Reach
February 15, 2024 February 22, 2024 February 29, 2024	Chapel Hill Town News	6,000 – 7,000 Subscribers
March 5, 2024	Project Newsletter	142 subscribers 71 direct outreach emails
March 7, 2024	People’s Academy	Approximately 50 attendees
March 11, 2024	Email update for Public Information Meeting	145 subscribers
March 14, 2024 March 22, 2024	Chapel Hill Town News	6,000 – 7,000 Subscribers
March 20, 2024	Affordable Housing and Community Connections Newsletter	300-400 Subscribers
April 9, 2024	Project Newsletter	152 Subscribers
April 3, 2024 April 17, 2024	Affordable Housing and Community Connections Newsletter	300-400 Subscribers
April 18, 2024 April 22, 2024 April 25, 2024	Chapel Hill Town News	6,000 – 7,000 Subscribers