

Engagement and Communications Report

Current as of April 5, 2024

1. Overview

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

Summaries included in this report:

- [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](#)

Please see 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. The data in the tables below are updated from the 2021 estimates provided in the March work session 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](#)
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- [March 30, 2024 – Pop-up event](#)
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- [April 4, 2024 – Stakeholder meeting](#)

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 prescriptive 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.
- 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.

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

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 | Chapel Hill Town News | 6,000 – 7,000 Subscribers |
| March 20, 2024 | Affordable Housing and Community Connections Newsletter | 300-400 Subscribers |