



Reflecting Raleigh Civic Assembly Final Recommendations

Recommendations from Civic Assembly participants,
compiled and published with support from Raleigh
Planning and Development, Raleigh Community
Engagement, and the National Civic League.

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A note from City staff:

Raleigh's Comprehensive Plan serves as the city's long-term vision for the built environment. Reflecting Raleigh is the process of developing the Next Comprehensive Plan, which will include a focus on sustainable and equitable growth, aligning adopted City plans and priorities, and enhanced community engagement.

The Reflecting Raleigh Civic Assembly was organized to serve this goal of enhanced community engagement goal. Raleigh City Council directed the Civic Assembly to answer these questions, their remit:

“Raleigh is in the process of improving transit service around the city. How should the next comprehensive plan help improve access to the new service? What should the neighborhoods around frequent transit look like?”

The assembly was selected to broadly reflect the demographic composition of the entire city. To ensure the assembly reflected a cross section of the city, a total of 10,000 invitations were mailed to residents and distributed through community groups. Over 270 residents responded to the invitations. From that group, an assembly of 40 members was formed. From the 40 members selected, 32 Raleigh residents participated in the full process.

The assembly met over six Saturdays to learn, deliberate, write, and vote on their final recommendations. The initial sessions brought speakers to the assembly to help members better understand the context of their remit and the broader Comprehensive Plan rewrite process. Early speakers included City and County staff, community historians, and community members familiar with the development process. Following this initial programming the assembly requested additional speakers and research opportunities. Planning experts from peer cities were brought in and some assembly members toured neighborhoods that will be impacted by their recommendations via bus tour.

Following their education, the assembly formed small groups that drafted recommendations based on their areas of interest. The recommendations in this document were entirely written by the assembly. The assembly agreed that any recommendation that received 75% or more support would be included as a recommendation. Once the recommendations were drafted, the assembly held a vote on each item individually. Those votes are included in the final recommendations.

These final recommendations will be shared with Raleigh City Council and used to develop the City's Next Comprehensive Plan.

Introduction

In the fall of 2025, our group of 32 was invited to participate in Raleigh's Civic Assembly. We are a cross section of the city's demographics and were invited for six Saturdays to engage in thoughtful conversation about the land use along the future transit corridors. We spent our first couple sessions learning about city history and planning, affordable housing, land use, environmental impacts, and the transit system. These presenters provided valuable context and information that the group accessed throughout our upcoming sessions. Despite the uncharacteristic Raleigh snowfall, we then gathered for our next sessions that involved work shopping, discussion, and eventual drafting of our proposal. We are excited as a group to present to you our recommendations for the remit. Our proposal provides City officials guidance on what the citizens of Raleigh would like prioritized in the Next Comprehensive Plan regarding the neighborhoods accessed by frequent bus services.

Values

- Support growth that enhances quality of life for residents of all socioeconomic statuses.
- Provide safe, reliable, and convenient transit access to connect residents to opportunities to live, work, and play.
- Honor the rich cultural history of Raleigh's neighborhoods to ensure their role in shaping the vibrant city is not forgotten.
- Commit to environmentally responsible and ecologically minded growth to ensure Raleigh remains a sustainable, resilient, and thriving community for all current and future residents.

Recommendations

Zoning and Land Use

Proposal 1

Create specialized zoning and development requirements for transit corridors. Different segments of the corridor may warrant different standards, depending on the context. – **93% support**

Proposal 2

In order for riders to have a destination, there should be active, mixed-use centers along major transit corridors. Consider allowing major entertainment hubs (i.e., Lenovo Center, Walnut Creek, Fairgrounds) at the ends of transit corridors. – **100% support**

Proposal 3

Focus high-density and mixed-use development in growth zones and corridors. – **90% support**

Proposal 4

Develop complete neighborhoods by including essential services, as identified by residents in corridor planning. Residents should be able to access everything they need within a transit corridor. – **100% support**

Proposal 5

Integrate public land, including the greenway system, into bus routes and multimodal access to bus stops. Include appropriate landscaping and/or green space at bus stops. – **97% support**

Affordability and Housing

Proposal 6

Promote affordability along Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) by recognizing that high-density construction will increase supply and likely stabilize housing costs. Improve protections for existing low-income BRT neighborhood residents to combat displacement and homelessness using national best practices. – **93% support**

Safety and Density

Proposal 7

Improve safety across high-volume bus routes such as: 15, 19 (New Bern Ave./WakeMed), 16 (Crabtree Valley Mall), 9 (Western Blvd.) 4 (Rex Hospital), and routes toward S. Saunders (40X, etc.):

- Through increased density in these corridors of the proposed BRT plan. Higher density results in increased populations, public infrastructure, and higher levels of accessibility. Additionally, individuals tend to feel safer in more concentrated areas rather than desolate streets. Further, if density is increasing, it's crucial for riders to access their stops without hazards. – **90% support**
- By focusing on safety improvements that result from increased density. These safety improvements include (but are not limited to): pedestrian infrastructure, connectivity, slower speeds, wider sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, more populous and safer streets. – **90% support**
- By focusing on safety improvements that result from better land use patterns. More specifically, zoning decisions being made with the area and existing citizens' best interests in mind (no high rises/condos/buildings in communities that are unrealistic for this type of infrastructure). Better land use may also look like using City-owned property to create safe and accessible spaces (parks, community centers, libraries) along the routes. – **76% support**

Pedestrian Access and Infrastructure

Proposal 8

Some roads have areas without continuous sidewalks. The City needs to encourage sidewalk continuity to make it easier to access the bus corridors. – **100% support**

Proposal 9

Safe and direct pedestrian routes means sidewalks need to be safe by not imposing a risk of someone being in danger due to a lack of continuity of the sidewalks. If we had continuous and direct sidewalk routes then we would have an increased amount of safety for pedestrians. – **90% support**

Proposal 10

Ensure that all City pedestrian infrastructure is ADA compliant. – **90% support**

Proposal 11

Improve pedestrian safety along the bus corridors by ensuring:

- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks
- Appropriate lighting where needed
- Make sure easements with sidewalks include trees providing shade, setbacks of sidewalks from the roads, bushes & bollards between road and sidewalks. Try to make bus stops more accessible by providing benches, shelters, and trash cans. – **93% support**

Proposal 12

Improve safety by ensuring every bus stop includes:

- Benches and shelters – **93% support**
- Trash cans – **93% support**
- Informational kiosks: Help people understand the bus routes by having informational signage at bus stops. Encourage kiosks at higher frequency bus stops. Consider selling advertisement space or having corporate sponsors to fund bus stop infrastructure. – **79% support**

Proposal 13

Expand overall pedestrian infrastructure by:

- Increasing sidewalk mileage – **93% support**
- Adding more crosswalks – **93% support**

- Adding pedestrian-scaled lighting – **85% support**

Proposal 13

Encourage bus stop design that feels inviting to pedestrians to make it more appealing and encourage ridership – **83% support**

Neighborhood Impact

Proposal 14

Minimize negative impacts of population and infrastructure growth, including more buses and BRT lines on neighborhoods, such as:

- Traffic - Mitigation could include: smart street design such as bus pull-off lanes to reduce vehicle congestion behind bus stops and hawk signals to assist pedestrian safety. – **90% support**
- Trash/Litter - Mitigation could include: enforce litter removal on private property to the full extent possible; make it easier for residents to report litter buildup on City-maintained property; proactively plan/dedicate additional resources to cleaning up City property in places where density is increasing; and strongly and consistently advocate for the county and state to maintain their roads/property more effectively. – **90% support**
- Noise Pollution - Mitigation could include: tasteful sound barriers and landscaping designed to block sound bleed through, and investing in quieter buses or maintaining buses to minimize engine sound. Additionally, noise ordinances should be planned to accommodate/match land usage, such as different noise ordinances in low density vs. areas with night life vs. high-density mixed use. – **90% support**
- Light Pollution - Mitigation could include: street lamps with covers, enclosed lightpole caps to ensure light is only pointing downwards, and prioritizing low-level/human height light bollards with dim lighting to ensure nighttime walking visibility/safety without contributing to light pollution. – **90% support**
- Impervious Surfaces - Mitigation could include: rain gardens in City-owned easements planted with native and biodiverse flora to minimize flooding, runoff, and ecological decline. Provide habitats for keystone species; planting more trees on City property to maximize shade; use “cool pavements” and smart usage of reflective materials to minimize heat islands; minimize expansion of roadways to protect wildlife; improve ease of reporting of

road infrastructure issues like potholes; and proactively repair potholes (etc.), especially on bus routes and high-density areas. – **90% support**

Proposal 15

Establish convenient pick-up/drop-off areas to support multimodal connections, if feasible. – **93% support**

Proposal 16

Establish access to park-and-go options for bus riders at the end of corridors. – **86% support**

Proposal 17

Consider micro-transit options to promote easier access to transit corridors from adjoining neighborhoods. – **97% support**

Proposal 18

Prioritize the co-location of bus stops with community spaces/centers, libraries, etc., to promote safety. Site bus stops near public spaces so people don't feel alone or unsafe. – **93% support**

Equity and Gentrification

Proposal 19

The City of Raleigh should emphasize equitable standards for neighborhood development and transit access to prevent disproportionate disintegration of our neighborhoods, especially around the corridors. – **93% support**

Proposal 20

Protect against the displacement of residents. In order to keep housing prices stable, promote higher density in neighborhoods that are likely to be gentrified, as well as neighborhoods in close proximity to transit routes. – **86% support**

Cultural Preservation

Proposal 21

To preserve the cultural and historic aspect of an area, future land uses should include honoring and promoting the existing and past cultures and communities. – **90% support**

Proposal 22

Proactively install historical signs and sponsor historical communities in cultural programming. – **79% support**

Proposal 23

Proactively analyze and evaluate new construction and its potential negative impacts on existing underserved communities. – **83% support**

Housing Types and ADUs / Creative Property Use

Proposal 24

To encourage flexible housing solutions and increase housing availability along the BRT, the City should be more lenient in permitting creative residential uses on existing residential properties (such as ADUs, duplex/triplex, co-living arrangements, and other residential specific uses). – **76% support**

Proposal 25

The City should permit small-scale, “neighborhood-serving commercial uses” along the BRT to encourage small businesses in solely residential spaces, helping to activate “underused spaces,” and create walkable corridors that have many services in a smaller area. – **79% support**

Resident Incentives

Proposal 26

Offer tax credits or similar incentives for residents who build on their property in ways that support transit-oriented development. – **66% support**

Proposal 27

Establish a local REIT to purchase the single-family homes owned by the City of Raleigh used as affordable housing at current market rate. Raleigh can then take that money and purchase additional homes on the BRT route. – **52% support**

Proposal 28

Build age-appropriate facilities and sports complexes. – **48% support**

NOTE: Many assembly members felt that this was outside the remit, but may support this recommendation generally.

Regional Coordination

Proposal 29

Coordinate NCDOT improvements with Raleigh's densification. – **93% support**

One assembly member wishes to include the following comment:

My biggest concerns are that the current plans are not inclusive for families, especially larger families. They are not affordable for those families either. It will effectively increase rent and in turn lead to those who are lower income and needing more space to have to move.