

4/2/2021

To the City Council and Planning Commissioners,

We applaud the Planning Commission on developing a map that clearly depicts South Burlington's natural resources. The map allows for more fact-based decision-making about future land use. Identifying the location of the City's natural resources will instill more predictability for future neighborhood development. We also appreciate the progress the Planning Commission has made toward completing the revised PUD regulations.

As you enter the final stages of interim zoning, we offer these thoughts for balancing the affordability of homes for South Burlington residents and protection of important natural resources.

Balance: the proposed rules balance two objectives essential to sustaining the City's vitality—conservation and growth.

Clarity and Goal Alignment: the proposed rules make clear (1) where and how natural resources are to be protected and (2) that new residential developments shall include elements demonstrated to support healthy neighborhoods, including compact development, which uses less land.

Inclusion and Diversity: requiring multiple housing types produces homes that vary in design and price, thus, increasing opportunities for households with varying incomes to live throughout the City; inclusionary zoning also increases the variation in housing prices.

Stability and Permanence: inclusionary zoning brings stability to households having lesser means because they can count on "forever" affordable rents or mortgage payments; this improves their quality of life. Inclusionary zoning's perpetual affordability requirement adds to the stability of the City's housing stock, thus improving the quality of life in the City, overall. Because inclusionary housing units are perpetually affordable, when they change hands, they are not transformed into high-priced units or short-term rentals. The proposed rules incorporate inclusionary housing units without increasing density.

Population and Property Tax Revenue Growth: the proposed density minimums are consistent with the proposed PUD-defined neighborhood development patterns; they also promote housing that requires less land per unit, thus decreasing the per unit cost of land while preserving more space and natural resources. Young families are more likely to be able to afford and be attracted to the neighborhoods that the proposed density minimums and PUD regulations produce. These neighborhoods are anticipated to accommodate population growth. In addition, more dense development generates more property tax revenue and is less costly in terms of roads, water, sewer, and utility services and their maintenance. With respect to property tax revenue, a five-acre neighborhood developed on the basis of two units per acre with average assessed value of \$600,000 per unit adds \$6,000,000 to the Grand List. A five-acre neighborhood developed on the basis of four units per acre with an average assessed value of \$375,000 per unit adds \$7,500,000 to the Grand List.

Best regards,

South Burlington Affordable Housing Committee: Chris Trombly, chair; Sandy Dooley, vice chair; John Simson, immediate past chair; Leslie Black-Plumeau, Vince Bolduc and Patrick O'Brien