

3. RTP 3.0 Zoning Text Amendment Justification

This zoning text amendment is being proposed to implement the Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina's (RTF's) proposed long-range plan for Research Triangle Park (RTP), RTP 3.0.

The purpose of this zoning text amendment is to accommodate a new pattern of growth and development consistent with the 2023 Durham Comprehensive Plan's vision for the Park while also advancing RTP's core mission of business and scientific research and development, training, and production. More specifically, this zoning text amendment will promote dense, walkable mixed-use in the center of the Triangle region while making RTP more attractive to the next generation of workers.

Since early 2022, RTP has been collaboratively working on a long-range planning initiative known as RTP 3.0. The goals of RTP 3.0 are to align future development patterns in RTP with recent trends in innovation district development and enable the mixed-use, accessible infill development envisioned for Employment Campuses in the Durham Comprehensive Plan. Over the past 25 years, business parks and innovation districts have moved toward more urban development patterns that promote greater density and a broader mix of uses to establish fully inclusive live-work-play innovation neighborhoods. Since its inception, RTP has followed a low-density corporate campus development model enforced through local zoning ordinances in Wake and Durham counties as well as through RTP's land covenants. As a result, RTP's development pattern is now out-of-step with industry peers and Durham's growth management strategy.

To address these challenges, RTF, as the non-profit administrator of RTP, has been leading the RTP 3.0 planning process in close collaboration with RTP companies and organizations. The culmination of this process is a consensus among RTP stakeholders to implement RTP 3.0 by (1) amending the RTP land covenants and (2) requesting Durham and Wake counties consider changes to their zoning ordinances to allow new and different types of development in RTP, including residential development, non-research commercial development, and more urban development patterns.

RTP 3.0 and this proposed zoning text amendment advances the 2023 Durham Comprehensive Plan's vision for the Park as an **Employment Center**. It does so by furthering a number of the Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives, and policies. Specifically:

- This zoning text amendment supports and implements **Durham's Equitable Growth Framework** by identifying RTP as an area where future growth is desired and should be concentrated. RTP is fully within Durham's urban growth boundary and is already served by City and County utilities. Additionally, this zoning text amendment will improve residents' access to daily needs by supporting the continued creation of jobs while also introducing housing and retail to RTP to allow for close proximity of all of these needs. This zoning text amendment will also allow for RTP to, over time, dramatically shift away from its historic car-centric development patterns and focus on land use and transportation investments that are multimodal and complementary to a wide range of mobility options. By introducing housing in RTP, this amendment will also prioritize affordability and diversity of housing in our community.
- This amendment advances the Comprehensive Plan's **15-Minute Community** growth management strategy. Residential neighborhoods in RTP will be regulated by additional private regulations and standards enforced through the RTP land covenants. These regulations will limit residential neighborhood development to walkable, connected communities that align with the 15-minute community model and ensure that retail amenities and services are also included in town centers in these new neighborhoods.
- In terms of the Comprehensive Plan's **Sense of Place** goal, this amendment will facilitate **Multi-Generational, Diverse, Resilient, and Inclusive Neighborhoods**. A diversity of housing types is essential to the residential development envisioned under RTP 3.0, with the goal of providing a full spectrum of housing options that will appeal to individuals at a variety of life stages.
- RTP 3.0 advances **Community Relationships** by serving as an example of **Intentional Planning and Decision-Making**. The RTP 3.0 process that led to this text amendment included over 120 meetings with RTP companies and external stakeholders to shape the vision and direction for the future of RTP.
- The **Housing and Neighborhoods** goal is supported through this text amendment through the proposed creation of **Complete Neighborhoods**, the introduction of **Creative and Varied Housing Solutions**, and approaches to new neighborhood development that **Design for Everyone**.
- **Transportation** is a key component of the overall RTP 3.0 vision. By allowing new, different, and denser development, this amendment will support the implementation of **Intentional and Coordinated Transportation and Land Use** planning. **Connectivity** will also greatly increase in RTP under this amendment as a gridded road network that supports multimodal transportation is built out as new development comes online.

- From the perspective of the **Environment**, this amendment exemplifies **Harmonious and Respectful Development**. By concentrating growth in already-served areas of the County, RTP 3.0 mitigates sprawl, reduces vehicle miles traveled, and supports resilient, low-carbon urban form, helping Durham move toward its **Carbon-Neutral, Biodiverse, and Generationally-Oriented Communities** vision.
- Providing robust **Public Spaces and Recreation** opportunities is included as part of the overall RTP 3.0 vision. Creation of new mixed-use centers and residential communities will include **Equitable, Safe, and Well-Maintained Public Spaces** to enhance the vibrant, innovation-forward community envisioned for RTP's future.
- As Durham County's largest job center, RTP has long been a key part of advancing **Jobs and Training** in our community. Under this amendment, RTP will remain anchored by well-paying research and development jobs – essential to advancing the Comprehensive Plan's **Sustainable, Supported, and Dignified Jobs** goal.
- **Education** has long been a critical component of RTP's mission, as educational opportunities are essential to supporting the workforce and talent pipelines into RTP companies. Going forward, this amendment will enable new and exciting opportunities for the location of innovative educational approaches in direct proximity to RTP's businesses, supporting the creation of **Innovative and Accessible Community-Oriented Schools** in a part of our community that has never before had significant access to K-12 education.
- **Health and Well-being** will be advanced by this amendment by allowing for new **Equitable and Affordable Health and Wellness** opportunities in RTP, including easily accessible health services, senior care homes, and pharmacies.

To summarize, this amendment will align RTP with the Employment Campus place type and all of the goal areas targeted in the 2023 Comprehensive Plan. This is in contrast to current zoning and land use regulations in RTP, which restrict the Park to low-density, single-use development that is contrary to the ambitious vision and goals outlined in the 2023 Comprehensive Plan. Adopting this amendment brings RTP in line with Durham's collective vision and strongly serves the public interest.