



## PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR'S REPORT

**Date:** February 9, 2025

**To:** Durham Board of County Commissioners  
**From:** Sarah Chagaris, Durham Planning Commission Chair  
**Subject:** 2025 Planning Commission Annual Report

In compliance with the Planning Interlocal Agreement, I am submitting this report on behalf of the Durham City-County Planning Commission. This report covers the 2025 calendar year. My first term as Chair began in September 2025; Kim Cameron, the former Chair, was elected Vice-Chair at that time.

Over the past year, the Planning Commission heard a total of 40 rezoning cases. Of these, seven were direct translational annexations. Twenty-two of the rezoning cases that were not direct translational contained a committed residential component, with 14 of them having affordable or income-restricted housing committed. In addition to these zoning cases, three UDO Text Amendment cases, six independent Place Type Map changes (as part of the biannual Evaluation and Assessment Report or EAR), one set of policy amendments to the Comprehensive Plan (also as part of the EAR), and one small area plan. In addition, the commission adopted an updated set of Rules of Procedure based on a framework it reviewed at its retreat in October 2024.

The Planning Commission as a collective worked as a proponent for sustainable developments that were inclusive, contained components of affordability, a variety of uses/housing and were walkable to services/amenities. This year commissioners also focused on improved environmental commitments and are keenly aware of the desire of Durham's elected officials to promote new development that fosters environmental protection.

There has been significant turnover of commissioners over the last couple of years, as evidenced by the seven new members that we welcomed to the commission in 2025: Corrie Piontak, Henry Capers, Diana Neunkirchner, Anitra Bailey, Ramsey Ritchie, Juan Montes, and America Juarez-Maldonado. Former commissioners Malcolm Gregory and Tai Hunyh resigned, the latter due to moving out of Durham. Matthew Kopac resigned in November due to his election to Council, and Garry Cutright decided not to seek a second term. Currently, the Commission stands at 12 members, with two vacancies, both of which are County appointees (one of which is Commissioner Maclver, who continues to attend when needed per the interlocal agreement). The Commission is authorized to have up to 14 per the interlocal agreement, and eight are required for a quorum.

The Planning Commission has appointed a special committee to review the UDO once the draft is ready and has met with staff to provide input and expertise to the commission when it is heard in February 2026. This special committee is chaired by Commissioner Ritchie.

Planning Commissioners participated in our Annual Retreat on October 8, 2025, to cover several important topics, including:

- An update on the development of the new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO);

- A primer on site plan, stormwater, transportation, and building permit review processes;
- Best practices and limits of sedimentation and erosion control; and
- A legal and legislative update regarding recent state legislation, open meetings requirements, and the role of the Planning Commission.

Several commissioners have requested an additional retreat this spring as these topics were very informative and commissioners are interested in a deeper exploration of some of these themes. Staff has indicated they will look to find a way to accommodate this request after the new year.