

HOW TO SUPPORT NORTH RIVER VILLAGE

BEFORE PUBLIC HEARING			
Now – June 5	Write Letters		
	City Council	Council@DurhamNC.gov	Office of City Council 101 City Hall Plaza Durham, NC 27701
	News & Observer	forum@newsobserver.com	The People’s Forum PO Box 191 Raleigh, NC 27602
	Herald Sun	letters@heraldsun.com	1530 N. Gregson St Suite 2A Durham, NC 27701
	Indy Week	backtalk@indyweek.com	201 W Main St Suite 101 Durham, NC 27701
PUBLIC HEARING			
Monday, June 5 at 7PM	General Info and Points of Consideration		
	Location: 101 City Hall Plaza Durham, NC 27701 (Same as Planning Commission)	Arrive early! We suggest arriving around 6:15 PM to find parking and grab a seat.	Consider carpooling, as parking may be limited. Parking is free after 7PM in most lots, and \$1.25/hr before 7PM.
	It may be a long meeting, so bring a bottle of water and something to snack on	This is a business meeting. Applause, jeering, or commenting from the audience is inappropriate.	If you agree with something a speaker says, you can show your support silently, perhaps by nodding or giving a thumbs-up.
	Show Your Support		
	Try not to wear red, as that generally is the color that opponents wear	When you arrive, find one of us to get a green sticker	Consider speaking. Generally, the Mayor gives each speaker about 2 minutes to speak.
	Ideally, we would like to have as many speakers as possible in support of the project, so long as the message is not repetitive.	Talking points are on the back of this page. It may be helpful to coordinate within your neighborhood which speakers will speak to which talking points so as to avoid repetition.	If you are going to speak, it is important that you sign up to speak when you arrive at City Hall. Generally, only those who have signed up to speak will be recognized.

A list of suggested talking points appears on the back. These points can be incorporated in your letters or spoken comments. A coordinated effort presenting many different reasons to support this project is the best approach. We think that if City Council hears different points from different people, they will better understand that this project has widespread support from all types of people who live in our Northern Durham Community. If you do plan to speak, we find it is best to prepare written comments ahead of time and practice to make sure you can stay within the allotted time limit.

POSSIBLE TALKING POINTS

Going Unheard – At the Planning Commission hearing, there were far more proponents present than opponents. While a zoning decision is not a popularity contest, many of the commissioner’s comments made it very clear that the voices of the proponents were not being heard or taken seriously. Comments such as “This is not about a Publix,” or “Publix is not guaranteed,” were commonplace. Please know that we are very aware of this fact and have chosen to support this project nonetheless. After carefully evaluating the project, we chose to support North River Village because of the benefits that we believe will stem from this new development.

Traffic – The traffic issues on Latta Road are existing. The problem with this 2-lane country road from years ago is that it has remained a 2-lane country road. While NCDOT and the City of Durham will improve the intersection of Roxboro and Infinity, plans for Guess Road at Latta do not appear even in their long range plans. If traffic at this intersection is a concern, then doing nothing is not an option. At the very least, the proposed plan adds additional capacity at the intersection thereby reducing queue lengths and better addressing the background traffic that is coming anyways.

Property Values – In the last 30 years, there has been very little economic investment in Northern Durham from private developers and even the City. In that same time, we have seen the revitalization of Downtown Durham and the progress of Southwest Durham. Property values in some of those areas have increased rapidly. In Northern Durham, the story is not the same. Property values have, in large part, flattened, and in some cases have even dropped. How long do Northern Durham residents have to wait to receive these same economic benefits? Is it fair to North Durham residents to put all of the new development in Downtown and Southwest Durham? Is it fair to Downtown and Southwest Durham residents?

Convenience – The proposed location for this project is an ideal place to provide goods and services, whatever they may be. The fact is that many families pass this site every day on their way to grocery shop, get medications, eat, bank, and more. The provision of goods and services in close proximity to residential uses is a good thing and approaches something more akin to mixed used than the current pattern of development on Guess Road. Moreover, this particular project is a mixed used project that provides a convenient way for residents of the project to get to the non-residential uses without getting in a car. It will be easier for North River Village residents to walk to the businesses than it will be for them to drive there.

Compatibility – Many of the opponents of the proposed mixed use project argue that the introduction of non-residential uses to this area would be incompatible with the existing residential uses. Many of these opponents, however, already live adjacent to a non-residential use, Easley Elementary. Some live across Guess Road in a gated community where literally zero extra cars will traverse their neighborhood roads regardless of the type of development at the proposed location. The non-residential portion of the development is proposed to front along the already busy Guess Road where single family homes would not be very compatible. The residential portion of the project is slated to be adjacent to existing residential uses, which will provide an appropriate transition from the residential towards the intersection. The proposed project is very compatible with the area and provides for much needed road improvements that would not be provided under a purely residential development at this site.

Personalize – One way to avoid repetition when addressing City Council is to put your personality into the message. Some of the points listed apply to you, but maybe for different reasons. For example, you might support this project because you have just started a family and want to be closer to goods and services. Alternatively, you might be an empty-nester hoping to see property values increase so you can sell your home. Adding a personal touch can also include mentioning where you live and how long you have lived there, if you or your kids went or go to Durham Public Schools, and more. Whatever your message to City Council is, make sure it is personal to you.

Effectiveness – We believe emails to City Council are the most important step in this process. Many emails from different people each day will serve as a constant reminder to City Council of how the majority of North Durham residents want this project. We strongly encourage you to solicit the help of your friends, family, and neighbors in reaching out to City Council.