



Knoxville Tennessee Branch

NAACP

Recode Knoxville Affordable Housing Choices

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Single-family homes are the most common housing choice in the Knoxville region. While they will continue to be a major component of housing stock for our growing population, new multi-family and rental units are needed to increase affordable housing and to serve increasingly diverse residents.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

53% of Knoxville residents rent their housing. Half of renters are cost-burdened. While 70% of white American are homeowners, only 50% of African-Americans own their homes, a gap that continues to widen. Growing economic inequities make it increasingly difficult to become a homeowner. Multi-family units can be both high-quality and affordable, in part because they can be in walkable or transit-friendly locations, reducing the need for costly automobile travel.

WHAT'S SO URGENT?

The Recode Zoning Map has drastically reduced where small multifamily housing can be developed throughout the city. The proposed zoning map makes it very difficult to develop small multifamily housing (a building with 2-8 units.) Areas that had been zoned for small multi-family are now restricted to single family homes.

Further, the new Recode Zoning Map does not align with the community vision embodied in PlanET and the 2040 Mobility Plan. An extensive public engagement process identified that those who live in Knoxville want more affordable housing, more public transportation, and a more walkable and bikable city. The Recode Zoning Map takes us even further away from that vision than our current zoning map.

Knoxville NAACP Positions on Revising the Knoxville Zoning

- Return to the proposed zoning map all areas zoned for multifamily housing in the current zoning map.
- Reduce zoning constraints on housing types or change to more flexible zoning ordinances to allow by right a variety of housing choices while maintaining neighborhood character.
- Allow by right in low-density residential zones duplexes, three-flats, and small four-unit buildings within single family areas. Such modest increase in density potential immediately opens up huge development potential without threatening the existing character of neighborhoods.
- Develop standards for new construction that ensure new housing types are compatible with existing housing.
- Revise the Recode zoning map to provide opportunities to build small multifamily housing (2-8 units) by right (RN-4):
 - On and near transit corridors.
 - As a transition from commercial to single family zones.
 - In areas with a significant presence of existing small multi-family housing.
 - On vacant land.
- Promote dynamic new centers that provide a mix of land uses, including affordable housing, that are aligned with moving our city toward public transportation, walkability, and accessibility to jobs, retail, recreation, and amenities. Adopt development standards such as site design requirements and buffering requirements that allow residents to live in closer proximity to their jobs, transportation system and markets.