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City Manager

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# Memorandum

**TO:** Shontell Robinson, County Manager  
**FROM:** W. Patrick Pate, City Manager  
**DATE:** August 6, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Request for Joint City/County Housing Initiative

## **TREBIC/Realtors Association Request**

In 2024 the North Carolina Realtors Association released the *Carolina Core Housing Study*. This report summarized the state of housing within a 150-mile-wide area in central NC containing 21 counties. They have asked local jurisdictions to step-up with plans to address this housing shortage. Upon reading the report, City of Greensboro staff recognized that Guilford County had a significant housing deficit (over 30,000 additional units needed by 2030) and started developing a policy initiative to promote housing production within their jurisdiction. Greensboro City Manager Trey Davis publicly launched the “Road to 10,000” initiative in February 2025. The City of Greensboro hopes to spur construction of 10,000 additional housing units by 2030.

The “Road to 10,000” has the explicit goal of providing housing for economic development projects coming to the broader Triad area such as Boom Supersonic at PTI Airport and the Toyota facility at the Guilford/Randolph County line. The initiative also has the goal of stabilizing rapidly rising housing prices in the city. The City Manager’s Office put together a steering committee consisting of developers, related professionals, and neighborhood advocates who will work with staff on implementing the plan.

At this point, few concrete action items have been developed. The Manager’s Office has identified the following items at this point:

- Council dedicated \$11 million for housing production and supportive services for the unhoused.
- Staff will study City owned lots for possible residential development sites and prepare a list of potential developers.
- An economist was brought to the Council’s strategic retreat to discuss the need for housing at all price points, and how provision of a wide array of housing could ultimately lead to price stability and greater affordability.
- Council adopted LDO amendment 2025-127 in February 2025 to increase development flexibility by allowing alternate street design and off-street parking requirements in Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).
- Zoning and permitting processes will be examined, with a focus on identifying barriers to development.
- A project website was launched in May 2025 which tracks the number of new residential units permitted since the start of the project. This data is broken down by unit type and includes a map showing where housing units are located within Greensboro.

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**City Council:** Mayor Allen Joines; Denise D. Adams, Mayor Pro Tempore, North Ward; Barbara Hanes Burke, Northeast Ward; Robert C. Clark, West Ward; Vivian V. Joiner, South Ward; Regina Ford Hall, Northwest Ward; Scott Andree-Bowen, Southwest Ward; Annette Scippio, East Ward; James Taylor, Jr., Southeast Ward; City Manager: W. Patrick Pate

### **Winston-Salem – What’s Been Done**

Over the past several years, the City of Winston-Salem has also recognized the housing deficit affecting our community and undertaken several steps to address housing needs. The City has identified the need for additional housing options in the last two comprehensive plans: *Legacy 2030 Update*, adopted in 2012, and *Forward 2045*, adopted last year. As part of the implementation of *Legacy 2030 Update*, multiple text amendments were adopted that relate to various aspects of housing development.

- UDO 253 (2014) revised the platting requirements for private infrastructure in multifamily developments.
- UDO 280 (2017) amended bufferyard requirements to allow for more flexibility while providing adequate screening. The amendment streamlined the ordinance and simplified its use by petitioners and staff.
- UDO 283 (2018) amended permitted uses to allow multifamily residential uses in Highway Business (HB) and General Office (GO) zoning districts with City-County Planning Board review.
- UDO ClearCode (2019) reorganized the Unified Development Ordinances (UDO) to be more user friendly.
- UDO-CC1 (2020) amended the provisions for Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) to improve the location and design of active open spaces.
- UDO-CC3 (2020) and UDO-CC24 (2023) amended the UDO to include new isometric graphics that articulate various regulations in a visual manner to improve the user experience.
- UDO-CC7 (2021) amended the provisions for Bonus Density for Affordable Housing to meet current State and Federal guidelines and included a parking reduction for multifamily housing developments near transit, activity centers, and growth corridors.
- UDO-CC8 (2021) added the use Cottage Courts to the UDO and amended the Mixed Use (MU-S) zoning district to function more closely to a Planned Unit Development (PUD) by simplifying the provisions of the ordinance.
- UDO-CC15 (2022) amended the approval process for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the City to be permitted by-right with conditions.
- UDO-CC25 (2024) amended the UDO to allow an increase in the number of attached units per building in the Residential Multifamily (RM5) zoning district and increased the permitted maximum building height in Residential Multifamily (RM8, RM12, and RM18) zoning districts.
- UDO-CC28 (2025) amended the minimum lot size requirements for single-family residential uses in multifamily residential districts.

In addition to the text amendments listed above, the City has undertaken and participated in many housing related initiatives over the past several years, including:

- Commissioning the *Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Housing Study and Needs Assessment* (2018)

- Participating in Grounded Solutions Network’s initial “For Everyone Home” housing technical assistance program
- Establishment of the City’s Affordable Housing Coalition
- Advocacy for Session Law 2021-44 which allows the City to convey property for affordable housing purposes without going through the upset bid process
- Establishment of a program for allocating vacant City owned parcels for future affordable housing development
- Establishment of an annual process for review and funding of LIHTC projects and scattered infill housing developments
- Participation in Winston-Salem Foundation’s Housing Trust Fund discussions
- Securing the \$30M Choice Neighborhood Initiative implementation grant to redevelop a former public housing site and decommissioned elementary school site
- Placing an emphasis on housing preservation by providing grants to owner-occupied housing units in blighted areas
- Establishment of a program to purchase foreclosed properties, rehabilitate them to livable conditions and sell them to income eligible buyers
- Establishment of a program to provide down payment assistance to income eligible buyers with Forsyth County Community and Economic Development Department
- Partnering with Piedmont Triad Regional Council for an annual Regional Housing Summit
- Establishment of an annual process for interested organizations to apply to become the City’s selected Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)

### **Winston-Salem – What’s on Tap**

*Forward 2045* acknowledges the current housing issues related to supply and affordability that face our community. One of the five Vision Themes that serve as the foundation for the plan specifically addresses attainable housing. The Theme contains five goals and multiple recommendations that focus on different factors influencing the current state of housing. The goals focus on:

- Making housing abundant,
- Using resources to create and preserve more affordable housing for low- to moderate-income families,
- Acknowledging and addressing past injustices and inequities of past policy decisions,
- Creating well-designed neighborhoods, and
- Minimizing factors leading to housing insecurity and homelessness.

City staff will start the implementation process for the recommendations listed with these goals this summer. Staff anticipates holding multiple public outreach meetings in late summer to gather input on potential changes to the UDO that will focus mainly on housing supply concerns but could possibly include changes to reduce certain development cost. Once staff has gathered and reviewed the input received during these

meetings, they will begin drafting UDO text amendments for City Council and public review.

In addition to the long-range planning efforts and UDO amendments, the City staff also holds weekly sketch plan meetings where developers can receive input on preliminary projects from multiple City and County departments. These meetings allow staff to assist potential developments through the process and provide comprehensive input on what will be required of the developer. These meetings are held free of charge. Staff also routinely participates in the Quarterly Development Forum which allows staff to build relationships with area developers and housing groups and gather insight on factors impacting our community.

In addition to the planning-related initiatives listed above, the City also anticipates having a role in the Housing Trust Fund being contemplated by the Winston-Salem Foundation. The City is currently underway in its second round of project review for LIHTC projects and scattered single family lot development. From an administrative perspective, the City is also currently recruiting a Housing Director to oversee its housing division.

**Recommendation:**

To address the request presented by TREBIC and the Realtors Association, the City and County have an opportunity to partner on the establishment of a housing goal for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. This goal can be used as a strategic benchmark and show the community's commitment to housing at multiple price points and types to appeal to the housing needs of current and future residents.