September 16, 2019

Larry Jarvis  
Director, Housing and Neighborhoods  
City of Raleigh  
421 Fayetteville Street  
Suite 1200  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Larry,

On behalf of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce and WakeUP Wake County, thank you for meeting with us to discuss the potential March 2020 Affordable Housing Bond Referendum for the City of Raleigh. We applaud the city’s commitment to affordable housing. Cities across the nation are grappling with shortages of housing, a need that is felt most keenly by our lowest income residents. As leaders in growth; we believe that it is essential for Raleigh and Wake County to plan thoroughly and efficiently to address this important need. We support an effort to develop a plan that is reflective of citizen’s concerns, that fully engages our broad community of stakeholders, and that utilizes a comprehensive toolset of finance, policy and zoning opportunities. This is also where we see a challenge with a successful bond referendum campaign in March 2020.

Based on our past experience from working on successful bond referendum campaigns, on a variety of community issues, our organizations’ staff have come together to develop a list of areas that should be addressed in order to maximize the outcome and lead to a successful affordable housing bond referendum:

- **Stakeholder Engagement**: There is a need to garner stakeholder support, from all stakeholders including the business community. At the meeting on August 20th, Councilors Crowder, Thompson, and Stewart suggested that stakeholders should be a large part of this process. We agree, an effective public process with meaningful engagement opportunities is imperative for the success of this type of project.

- **Funding**: The campaign requires financial support and a cross section of different interests that provide support throughout the entire community. A clear and specific plan is needed for effective fundraising to support the campaign.

- **Time**: A successful bond campaign not only needs input from stakeholders and funding to reach every community, but it also takes time to develop materials and other resources to implement the campaign. Sufficient time to vet options for deploying potential bond proceeds to optimize effectiveness and equity is necessary to achieve the desired outcome.

- **Comprehensive Plan**: A comprehensive plan must be developed that includes details regarding planned expenditures that take advantage of the opportunity to use zoning and policy tools to scaffold and enhance the impact of this effort. Some examples are:
- The use of specific policy actions around transit and land use.
- Creation of congruent land use policy to support bond goals.
- Review of alignment and congruency between current policy and bond goals.
- Streamline policy and procedures to facilitate the creation of housing stock that will supplement the bond’s projects.
- Incorporation of recommendations from the Consolidated Plan to determine projects that could be incorporated into proposed program buckets.

Given the scope of these challenges outlined above, we believe that proceeding now would create a rushed process, lacking meaningful engagement. Further, we believe without congruent municipal land use policy making it will be difficult to achieve the bond referendum goals. In looking at the prospect of an affordable housing bond campaign, our organizations agree that there are great peer examples of comprehensive plans that included a wide range of stakeholders and took the time to put both the funds and the tools in place to address the affordable housing needs in their communities. Wake County and Durham are two local examples of successful comprehensive plans to establish a new revenue source for affordable housing with tools to ensure successful outcomes. We encourage you to explore these programs before a process is launched in Raleigh.

Thank you again for the opportunity to express our concerns and suggestions regarding an affordable housing bond for the City of Raleigh. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Cole, President and CEO
Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce and

Heather V. Keefer, CFM, LEED GA
Executive Director, WakeUP Wake County

cc: Nancy McFarlane, City of Raleigh Mayor
Raleigh City Council
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