

## Center Of the Region Enterprise (CORE) participants,



Thanks to those of you who were able to attend the CORE work group meeting on February 12th. We heard TJCOG's very own Housing Program Manager, Erika Brown, provide a presentation on linking housing affordability to transit investments in the CORE region. A more in-depth analysis is provided below. Want to continue the conversation? Reach out to Erika Brown at [ebrown@tjco.org](mailto:ebrown@tjco.org). Interested in viewing Erika's full presentation? Slides can be found [here!](#)

Please contact Lindsay Whitson at [lwhitson@tjco.org](mailto:lwhitson@tjco.org) with any questions related to current or upcoming CORE work group meetings.

Mark your calendars for upcoming meetings of the the CORE work group over the next year:

- **Friday, May 14, 2021**
- **Friday, August 13, 2021**
- **Friday, November 12, 2021**

All meetings will continue to be held virtually on Microsoft Teams until further notice and are open to the public.

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## THE FACTS!

Erika Brown's presentation set the stage for housing affordability in the CORE region, where she highlighted some of the following key trends:

- **Population Growth:** CORE region is looking at approximately 54% population growth from 2010 to 2040.
- **Household Income:** Continues to rise in CORE communities in tandem with the explosion of growth in high-wage jobs.
- **Commuting and Cost-Burden:** When a household spends more than 45% of their income on housing plus transportation, they are considered cost-burdened. All of the CORE communities are currently hovering right at that threshold.
- **Housing Supply vs. Housing Demand:** As demand continues to increase and supply remains minimal, housing values in the CORE region continue to swiftly increase. Since 2004 there has been a 40% increase in average home value over time in the CORE region, compared to 13% for the U.S. average.
- **Housing Stock:** Not all households are going to be 3 plus people, so constructing units for 1 to 2-person households is particularly important to ensure that types of available housing meets the needs of varying household sizes.
- **Age of Housing Stock:** There are a fair amount of NOAH (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) units in the CORE region and the health and safety of such properties must be monitored as they age.

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## Linking Housing Affordability & Transit Investments!

Erika Brown shared the key preliminary affordable housing take-aways in connection with the proposed Commuter Rail in the Triangle (CRT), extending from Garner to West Durham.

1. There is a substantial amount of LBAR housing along the rail corridor, especially in Wake & Durham Counties, which can be linked to major job hubs by CRT.

2. There is a substantial amount of multi-family NOAH along the rail corridor, including a large percentage of Johnston County multi-family NOAH units.
  3. Housing Authority plans and LIHTC awards would more than double the number of LBAR affordable housing units within station study areas.
  4. Existing affordable housing would earn a "medium" score in federal funding competition; future affordable housing would likely raise this score
  5. Based on "first pass" analysis, there are opportunities for more affordable housing using public and anchor institution land along the rail corridor, should communities and partners wish to pursue this option.
  6. Safe and seamless "first-mile/last-mile connections" will be important to serve affordable housing.
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## Civic Conversation Recap

In a facilitated discussion, CORE participants were asked to think "how" efforts in housing affordability and diverse housing practices might succeed in the CORE region. This time was used to ask questions, share best practices, voice concerns, and collaborate amongst the varying jurisdictions and partnerships. Tips for addressing displacement, data centered on first mile/last mile connections, concerns with expiring LBAR (Legally Binding Affordable Restricted) housing, and the intersection between affordable housing, transit, AND jobs were just a few talking points that were discussed among participants.

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## Community & Organizational Updates

**CAMPO** - The Triangle Bikeway Study has an orientation with the work group and discussed alignments to be refined and incorporated into regional transportation plans. Looking into housing and access to bike/pedestrian amenities is a part of the project's discussion.

**Cary** - Currently working with the Town's largest NOAH developments - Arbors at Cary. In an upcoming council agenda the Town will be asking for rezoning in exchange for preserving housing affordability and entertaining the idea of increased number of units allowed to maintain NOAH units in Cary with financial viability. Housing, transportation, and environment are three things consistently elevated more than others on the council agenda. Continuing to look for opportunities to collaborate at the state level to help move the needle.

**Durham County** - Liked the idea of local governments collaborating on legislative policies related to affordable housing in the CORE region, especially since there are a lot of barriers related to transit funding in the state and the ability to pursue local affordable housing. With every survey recently conducted with constituents, the number one identified concern for Durham residents continues to be housing affordability. The coronavirus pandemic has only accelerated the current housing crises, which is a fundamental component of public health.

**Morrisville** - Morrisville is working to build capacity for residents that need more housing options through the adoption of policy to address the affordable housing gap. Specific initiatives have not yet been identified, but policymaking is the first steps to be taken in the right direction. The Town is currently at a crossroads in terms of where they are wanting to go as the Town is approaching buildout with no more available land to grow. Do we upzone? Not upzone? And affordability vs. density are a few questions that the Town will need to address in the near future.

**Wake County** - In the final stages of PlanWake. While updating the plan, it became apparent that policies originally set forth helped drive the sprawl that is seen today in Wake County. Throughout engagement efforts there was a lot of response received that issues focused on affordable housing must be prioritized.

**TJCOG** - Findings of the relocation of the regional transit center found that the preferred site is to relocate within the CRT study area and along Wake County's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that already has state funding to link from RTP through Morrisville, Cary, Raleigh, into Johnston County. Also, there are three CRT opportunity analyses - housing (already completed), travel markets, followed by land use analysis.

Additionally, TJCOG continues to seek out opportunities to implement action plans highlighted in the regional comprehensive economic development strategy, *Strength in Numbers*. The intersection between transit, housing, and jobs continues to be a prioritized topic as noted in the plan and among various stakeholders involved with the development of the plan.



### **About Triangle J Council of Governments**

Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) is the lead regional planning organization for North Carolina's Region J, encompassing Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange and Wake counties. TJCOG promotes collaboration among local governments, stakeholders and partners, tackling challenges that cross jurisdictional lines.

Find more about TJCOG [here](#).