



# REBOOT REIDSVILLE

Stakeholder Summary Report 10-16-23

On October 6, 9 and 10, 2023, the CodeWright team conducted interviews with stakeholders who had been identified by the City Staff. These teleconferencing interviews are an integral part of the UDO development process. The input gathered during the interviews is instrumental in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the issues from diverse perspectives.

Interviewees were explicitly informed that their comments would be held in strict confidence. The statements made during these interviews have been summarized in this report, organized by topic area with no identification of the source of the statement.

## STAKEHOLDERS

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
David Bracken	Fire Chief	City of Reidsville
Dawn Charaba	Executive Director	Reidsville Area Foundation
Leah Cockram	Director	Rockingham County Economic Development and Tourism
Donald Gorham	Mayor	City of Reidsville
Stokes Ann Hunt	Executive Director	Office of Philanthropy, Cone Health
Ashton McLaurin	Manager	McLaurin-Harris Funeral Home
Diane Sawyer	President	Reidsville Chamber of Commerce
Steve Scott	Business owner and lives downtown	Tri-State Steel
John Stover	Superintendent	Rockingham Public Schools
Erselle Young	Director of Operations	
Chris Cox	Director of Transportation	

## QUESTIONS

The following were the questions provided to the stakeholders via email prior to the actual interview:

1. Tell us about your interest in the UDO process.
2. What concerns do you have regarding the existing code that you'd like to see changed whether they be process changes or changes to the requirements or both?
3. What are some things about the existing code that you feel like are on point and don't need changing – things that work well and/or have been recently updated?
4. What are some of the things that you'd like to see in the new code?





## TAKEAWAYS FROM INTERVIEWS

- The Stakeholder interviews revealed a unanimous consensus that the current City Code is perceived as antiquated and has contributed to the perception that Reidsville is not business friendly. However, there is shared hope among all stakeholders that the UDO update process will serve as the catalyst needed to transform the community.
- There were repeated accounts of staff being conservative with the interpretation of the code; it is unclear if this is a legacy mindset or if there is no feeling of empowerment. It is essential to foster a culture of trust and empowerment to help staff feel more comfortable exploring possibilities and making informed decisions while maintaining quality and safety standards.

## COMMENT SUMMARY

The comments collected during the interviews are summarized by topic area below.

### SIMPLIFY CODE

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- Issues expressed with interpretation and customer service, the issue with interpretation is that it has been too rigid and has resulted stifling innovation of potential businesses
- Reduce the number of zoning districts and align districts with the county and other municipalities within the area
- Reduce the size of the code from 100 pages to 20 pages
- Condense code, existing code is long and cumbersome
- Make code more predictable so developers can know what to expect
- Make code easier to understand and use
- Look at other local government codes where they have been successful (Eden, Greensboro, Graham)
- Allow more than one use on properties in commercial districts

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

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- Stakeholders support business friendly codes that allow innovative land use and design
- Architect is required for changing use of existing buildings, specifically 2nd and 3rd floor conversions when other jurisdictions do not require this added expense
- Town is perceived as anti-business
- Enforce existing code, storage downtown is not permitted but being allowed to continue
- Need less restrictive stance to allow more flexibility in development standards, promote the city's opportunity or growth through potential job creation
- Codes needs to be easier to understand and use
- Include school board staff in plan review to be aware of new development and to comment on plan designs





## **FLEXIBILITY**

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- Need a less restrictive environment
- Contractor wanted to develop a special housing community with smaller lots with neighborhood commercial uses but it was not allowed in current code
- Need more flexibility to allow things that line up with the community vision and intent of the ordinance, as well as provide opportunities to grow
- Developers aren't afraid of rules as long as they understand them at the outset of a project
- Cannot have a bagel shop downtown

## **DOWNTOWN**

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- Incentivize small businesses
- Allow alcohol downtown, some efforts to allow this need to be expanded
- Old buildings need to be useable, change of use easier
- Establish social district
- More commercial businesses, specifically restaurants. which would boost the economy – place for people to go see, visit and spend their money
- Older buildings could be restored or maintained to provide placemaking value
- Most of the buildings are old. Work with owners of older properties to get them renovated and allow more uses downtown
- Attract entertainment businesses and uses
- Building owners increase rent causing tenants to leave
- Discourage large truck traffic in downtown
- Add benches downtown
- Allow for use of 2nd and 3rd floor of building without having to hire an architect

## **RESIDENTIAL**

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- Reduce setback standards
- Reduce lot size requirements
- Add flexibility for non-conforming lots and structures to promote redevelopment and expansion
- Focus on transportation (bike lanes and walkability)
- The community has limited housing for low to moderate income households.
- Enforce violations on vacant lots
- Incentivize workforce (multi-family) housing
- Allow and promote ADUs
- Homes on East Morehead Street across from the funeral home should be annexed
- How can we provide incentives to developers who are being thoughtful to preserve through infill redevelopment?
- Vacant homes could be renovated to help meet the housing needs of the City
- Child care centers in homes – encourage home-based facilities – childcare shortage





- Develop sheltered community bus stops
- Require turn around to be adequate for school buses and emergency vehicles
- Planning neighborhoods to make sure that there are sidewalks and greenspaces and connection to other parts of the community

#### **COMMERCIAL AREAS OUTSIDE OF DOWNTOWN**

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- Signs
  - Issue with size and placement – no specifics given
  - Complaints voiced about the Cookout sign
  - Don't make requirements too restrictive
- Landscaping
  - Not too restrictive
  - Require parks and greenways
- Stormwater (Local Rules)
  - Protection of water quality
  - Protection of streams
  - Rules for large-scale developments
  - More curb and gutter for residential subdivisions

The information contained in this summary will be integrated into the set of key recommendations for change included in the forthcoming Code Assessment. Additional project information is available at [www.rebootreidsville.com](http://www.rebootreidsville.com).

