



BUSINESS

Amid traffic concerns, Charlotte council approves two rezonings for 160 townhomes

By Desiree Mathurin

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'We've seen this happen before': Charlotte residents demand action against I-77 project in council meeting

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At a recent Charlotte City Council business meeting, community advocate Vera Falkner delivered a powerful testimony against the "capital greed" driving infrastructure projects in West Charlotte. Falkner highlighted the ongoing displacement of families in neighborhoods like Steele Creek, Berryhill, and Clanton Park due to the expansion of I-77.

By DIAMOND VENCES | ZACH DENNIS | EMILY BROYLES

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[Traffic congestion](#) and location were the major talking points during Charlotte City Council's rezoning meeting on Monday.

But while some council members and residents [rejected the rezoning requests](#) that would add 95 and 65 homes on two busy corridors, the petitions were ultimately approved.

Up to [95 for-sale townhomes will be added along Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road](#) near Bellhaven Boulevard in the Mountain Island neighborhood, an area where for decades residents have asked for a slowdown on development.

And [65 townhomes, which will be sold or leased at affordable prices](#), will be developed at the United Methodist Church University City property at the intersection of W. Sugar Creek Road and W.T. Harris Boulevard. Residents nearby also voiced their concerns about congestion along the residential streets.

Both properties are in Councilmember Malcolm Graham's district and he voted against both petitions because of traffic concerns.



“This is an issue with the location of the site, not the purpose of the site,” Graham said during the meeting. “It’s not that the residents are opposed to housing, they are opposed to housing at this location.”

Residents [overwhelming were against](#) both developments, Graham said.

But both petitions were approved. The Mountain Island petition passed with a 7-3 vote and the United Methodist petition passed with a 6-4 vote.

Development in Mountain Island

With the rezoning approval, RED Partners under Tryon Advisors [will add the 95-townhome development](#) on almost nine acres owned by the Cooks Memorial Presbyterian Church.

It’s a change from the developer’s initial proposal to add 70 townhomes and an approximately 18,000-square-foot day care center.

Other changes include creating one driveway onto Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road instead of two and the developer will provide \$100,000 toward future intersections improvements at Rozelles Ferry Road, instead of \$50,000.



There are several rezoning notices, such as this one located along Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road for petition 25-30, indicating areas where more development will be taking place. Due to an influx of development of housing and shopping centers, the amount of traffic along this two-lane road has become increasingly congested with traffic. Melissa Melvin-Rodriguez mrodriguez@charlotteobserver.com

RED Partners upped that investment to \$100,000

Because of these changes, Councilmember LaWana Mayfield voted to approve the petition, though she's been vocal about traffic concerns and development along Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road. In August, [she voted against two housing projects](#) along the corridor because of congestion on the corridor.

Infrastructure concerns on Mt Holly-Huntersville Road

Traffic along Mt Holly-Huntersville Road has been an issue for residents over the past decade.

Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road is a two-lane, 15-mile-long, state-owned road that stretches from Northlake Mall to the Catawba River. Longtime residents say [the road is a nightmare to travel](#) at anytime of day, particularly from Brookshire Boulevard to Mt. Holly Road.

A half-mile drive could take upward of 10 minutes.

But the area is a magnet for growth.



Construction is underway for a new housing development at the intersection of Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road and Oakdale Road in Charlotte, NC on Monday, August 4, 2025. Due to an influx of development of housing and shopping centers, the amount of traffic along this two-lane road has become increasingly congested with traffic. Melissa Melvin-Rodriguez
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Construction is underway on several developments in the area, including 240 apartments at the intersection of Mt. Holly Road and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road.

Last March, rezoning was approved [for an 80-unit affordable senior housing apartment](#) complex on Couloak Drive. This project is across the street from the rezoning that was approved Monday.

And in August, [two rezonings were approved](#) in the area to allow for about 150 townhomes.

With the approved rezoning today, about 565 households will be added to a 3-mile stretch of Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road.

Affordable housing at United Methodist Church

Similar infrastructure concerns were expressed for the 65-townhome development at the United Methodist property.

The project stems from a partnership between the church and [True Homes, a North Carolina developer that focuses on affordable housing](#).

The three-bedroom, two-bathroom townhomes would be sold or leased to people making 80% of the area median income. For a family of four, that's an income of \$89,750.

Graham [initially praised the project](#) during the public hearing in February. But Monday, he said residents were overwhelmingly concerned with congestion.

The development's primary access point will be on Brookstone Drive, a half-mile long local road.

But the roadway is already the primary street for several subdivisions, including the Brookstone Apartments, which has over 220 units, and the Mallard Grove housing subdivision, which has 114 homes.



A car drives by the construction site for a new police station on Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, which has been one of the many sources of traffic congestion along this two-lane, almost 15-mile road in Charlotte, NC. Residents who live in the area have been asking for improvements, mainly to widen the road to accommodate the growth. Melissa Melvin-Rodriguez
mrodriguez@charlotteobserver.com

And the intersection of Brookstone Drive and W. Sugar Creek Road has no traffic light, only a stop sign.

“Adding more homes at this location will only make an already difficult situation worse,” Graham said. “Many residents support affordable housing but this is the wrong location and will intensify traffic and congestion.”

Charlotte City Council rezonings

While city council rarely denies rezoning requests, the body on Monday did vote against a proposed gas station on the corner of East W.T. Harris Boulevard and Idlewild Road.

However, the city’s pro-growth attitude usually leads to rezoning approvals. And developers of contentious rezonings typically withdraw their requests.

A [2019 study from UNC Charlotte](#) showed that between 2009 and 2019, city council denied 27 petitions out of more than 1,200 filed, while 115 petitions were withdrawn.

Councilmember Ed Driggs echoed the sentiment that council doesn’t often deny requests.

“There are issues as there are in most locations,” Driggs said. “If we hold out to find a location where nobody is opposed, we’re not going to get much done.”

In particular, Driggs said that if the affordable housing petition was denied it might deter other developers from coming forward with a similar plan. He added that denial would be “an act of hostility.”

Graham disagreed and asked Driggs to consider his wording.

Councilmember JD Mazuera Arias also said hostile was not the correct word. Mazuera Arias voted to approve the Mountain Island petition but joined Graham in denying the United Methodist petitions.

He said councilmembers have received numerous emails from residents against the affordable housing project.

If residents are against the rezoning petitions, Mazuera Arias said councilmembers should vote no, though he did vote for the Mountain Island petition.

“What is representative democracy if we’re not listening to the people that elected us to these seats to begin with,” Mazuera Arias said.

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Desiree Mathurin covers growth and development for The Charlotte Observer. The native New Yorker returned to the East Coast after covering neighborhood news in Denver at Denverite and Colorado Public Radio. She's also reported on high school sports at Newsday and southern-regional news for AP. Desiree is exploring Charlotte and the Carolinas, and is looking forward to taking readers along for the ride. Send tips and coffee shop recommendations.



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