

## **Sustainable Communities Series Links Local Issues To Climate Change And Equity In Chapel Hill And Carrboro**

Public transportation, greenway systems, housing and development are the focus of the Sustainable Communities Series linking local issues with opportunities to act on climate change and advance equity in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Three free workshops will be held on April 16, May 17, and June 6, 2019 at the CURRENT Studio in Carolina Square (123 W. Franklin St. Chapel Hill) to inform and engage community members about these important issues and connect them with local advocacy opportunities. The series is free and open to the public, with refreshments provided, hosted by NEXT Chapel Hill-Carrboro. Seats can be reserved by visiting the NEXT website at: [nextnc.org/events](http://nextnc.org/events).

**Accessible Public Transportation & Greenways** is the first in the workshop series set for Tuesday, April 16 from 6pm to 8pm in the CURRENT Studio. Attendees will learn about the status of plans to improve bike, pedestrian and transit routes, and can participate in a hands-on activity explaining how to streamline your commute using public transportation and bike-ped facilities. Speakers will include Dr. Allie Thomas, professor at UNC's Department of City and Regional Planning; Mark Marcoplos, Orange County Commissioner; Brian Litchfield, Director of Chapel Hill Transit; and Alderman Damon Seils, Mayor Pro Tem Carrboro Board of Alderpersons and Chair of the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization.

**Prioritizing Diverse & Affordable Housing** is the second workshop of the series, to be held on Friday, May 17th from 6pm to 8pm. This workshop will focus on the role of diverse and affordable housing in a sustainable community and the paths to achieving it, from low-income tax credits to tiny home initiatives. Through interactive simulation, participants will learn about the types of affordable housing options that fit the needs of various community members. Presenters will be announced soon.

**Designing for Vibrant Communities** is the final workshop in the series, to be held on Thursday, June 6th from 6pm to 8pm. Local experts will lead a discussion about being intentional with how we build our communities, and our opportunity to improve equity and act on climate change. Attendees will learn about local initiatives and dense development that is aligned with community character. Three presentations will kick off the discussion: a summary of approaches to design and density currently in practice in the Triangle, a description of

innovations incorporating affordable housing option in new developments, and how high density projects can be aligned with, and even enhance, community character. Presenters will be announced soon.

NEXT is dedicated to making sure our work is accessible to the community. The CURRENT Studio is easily accessible by foot, bike, and public transportation (Chapel Hill Transit, GoTriangle, and Orange Public Transportation). There are also indoor/outdoor bike racks and electric charging stations. The entire Sustainable Communities Series is free and open to the public. Come and join us for a conversation about our community! More information about our events, and how to RSVP to them, is available on our website [nextnc.org/events](http://nextnc.org/events).

To launch the series, a Downtown Walking Tour was held on Thursday, March 21st, 2019, as a part of a dialogue about the successes and opportunities to develop dense, walkable/bikeable, affordable downtowns in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Starting in front of the CURRENT Studio and ending at Steel String Brewery in Carrboro, attendees learned about the sidewalks and bike paths that help our community navigate the downtown area. The group also visited the PeeWee homes in Northside to discuss affordability as well as the tiny home design.

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#### **ABOUT NEXT:**

NEXT Chapel Hill-Carrboro is a group of community members who are inspired by the potential of our community to be sustainable, equitable, and diverse. We work to support the vibrancy and values of the community and move towards a future that provides ample housing options, inclusivity, sustainable public transportation, and a thriving economy. Our work is focused on issues such as promoting community diversity, positively impacting climate change, supporting education, achieving equity, and supporting bikeways, greenways, and public transit. Learn more at: [www.nextnc.org](http://www.nextnc.org).