

## Tara Hall

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**From:** Sarah Vinas <svinas@townofchapelhill.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 13, 2023 10:38 AM  
**To:** RentalHelp  
**Cc:** Emily Holt  
**Subject:** 2024 QAP Comments

Dear Ms. Hall,

First, the Town of Chapel Hill would like to thank you for your opportunity to provide comments on the first draft of the 2024 QAP. We have been celebrating two consecutive 9% LIHTC awards in the last two application rounds, which are the first in several years for Orange County. These projects will bring more than 100 direly needed affordable housing units to the Town. The successful financing of these projects solidify the success of one of our key affordable housing strategies, which is to use Town-owned land to help grow the local inventory of affordable housing.

We ask that NCHFA considers finding a way to address the impact of its very limited list of qualifying shopping establishments. Due to the urban services boundary establishing the limits of Chapel Hill's growth, the Town has limited land available for commercial development and no ability to expand its borders. As a result, we have little opportunity for big box stores within Town limits and rely on strip malls outside of our borders for this type of shopping need.

The Town is aware of at least 4 (either controlled by the Town or our partners) otherwise well-located sites along our central corridor that are well-served by other key amenities and are within a ½ mile of our planned Bus Rapid Transit line. If not for the narrow list of qualifying shopping stores, these sites would likely be excellent 9% LIHTC sites.

The Town values opportunities to develop affordable housing in centralized locations, close to our central business district and well-served by transportation, rather than on the periphery of Town. The qualifying shopping establishments that we do have in more centralized parts of Town have a smaller, more urban footprint, which is less common among big box stores. These footprints are similar in size and inventory to smaller shopping options such as a Walgreens, which the Town does have within close proximity to several of its potential LIHTC sites.

We believe there are several possible avenues to address this challenge, including:

- \* Combine the Shopping and Retail categories to broaden the Shopping category and allow for a more qualitative assessment of shopping establishments not on the current QAP list.
- \* Add stores traditionally considered to be "drug stores", such as Walgreens, to the list of qualifying shopping stores.
- \* Allow multiple points in a single category to make up for points missed in the Primary Amenities.

The Town would support these or other approaches that address the concern about the mismatch of existing shopping opportunities near well-located sites and the qualifying shopping list in the QAP.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Vinas

Sarah Osmer Viñas, Director

Affordable Housing and Community Connections Department

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Pronouns: She/Her/Hers