Betton Hills Neighborhood Association P.O Box 15162, Tallahassee, FL 32317 | bettonhills.org

June 10, 2025

Dear City of Tallahassee Commissioners:

The Betton Hills Neighborhood Association (BHNA) Board of Directors, on behalf of our over 2,000 residents, thanks the City Commission, and particularly the Planning staff, for their engagement on the Comprehensive Plan amendments to guide our city's responsible growth and vitality through 2050.

BHNA recognizes the challenges of fostering responsible development without stifling economic growth. We believe the City can meet those challenges while **also** honoring and preserving the very real, historic contributions that established neighborhoods like Betton render to the City's vitality and its unique profile among Florida's best places to call home.

Based on recent conversations between BHNA and the City's Planning Department (Artie White, Susan Poplin, and Tyler Moldanado), as well as representations made at the June 3, 2025 community forum at the Los Robles Woman's Club, BHNA does **not** object to its inclusion in the proposed Sub-Urban *Residential Preservation* Land Use Category (emphasis added). This is because we have been informed that the current RP-1 zoning district contained within the Land Development Code (section 10-170) will be retained and applied to Betton Hills (as will the RP-2 zoning district, which will be retained and applied to the west side of Mitchell Avenue). This is what "residential preservation" is about.

Since its founding in 1973, BHNA has sought to protect this historically stable, viable, and desirable neighborhood from incompatible land uses and density intrusions. The resulting preservation of **single-family homes**, and **low housing density**, are the foundation of our established neighborhood character. We believe that continued preservation of these neighborhood attributes also contribute to the City's diverse landscape, economic vitality, and quality of life. How so? Here are just a few examples:

- True to its name, Betton Hills has many hills. Our single-family home sites, situated on-handsome lots with mature trees and landscaping, are natural stormwater absorbers of Tallahassee's frequent rainfall. This helps mitigate the adverse environmental effects that overdevelopment and/or higher densities can cause in such hilly terrain.

· The large canopy trees commonly found on Betton's home sites provide a range of ecological services not only to our residents, but to the City at large. Together, these trees and home sites provide habitat for wildlife, carbon storage, air purification, shade, and help absorb rainwater and lessen urban runoff. Overdevelopment and/or higher densities threaten these treasured, ecological service providers.

· Betton's single-family home sites need only narrow streets. Even without sidewalks, these walkable neighborhood streets support pedestrian safety due to minimal cut-through traffic and reduced in-neighborhood traffic (due to lower housing density). These walkable neighborhood streets promote fellowship among not only Betton residents, but also with those from adjacent neighborhoods who commonly seek out the safety and beauty of our walkable neighborhood streets and parks. Overdevelopment and/or higher densities tend to undermine all of this.

Betton Hills residents make friends with their neighbors. They enjoy socializing together. They watch out for each other. They support their neighborhood association and its events. We believe this neighborliness is a natural outgrowth of our established **single-family home and low housing density** DNA. This neighborliness doesn't stop at the Betton Hills boundaries. Betton Hills residents have always been active in supporting Tallahassee's diversity of neighborhoods, its local businesses, its natural environment, and its responsible governance. It's part of the Betton Hills neighborhood character to give back to the City for its support for the preservation of our single-family neighborhood. You can be sure that we plan to keep on doing that.

We thank the Commissioners, and City planners, for listening to us and working with us to preserve and honor what's most valuable in Tallahassee for the long haul.

Best regards,

James Ward – President, Betton Hills Neighborhood Association

cc: Artie White; Susan Poplin; Tyler Moldanado