



## Carrboro Connects – Task Force Meeting #2 Summary

301 West Main Street, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

### October 22, 2020 – Remote Meeting via Zoom

Task Force Members	Public	Town Staff	Consultant Team
Catherine Fray (Chair)	n/a	Ben Berolzheimer (Planning)	Cyatharine Alias
David Jessee (Co-Chair)		Rebecca Buzzard (Housing Community Development)	Marcella Bondie Keenan
Quinton Harper (Co-Chair)		Zachary Hallock (Planning)	Carol Brobeck
Tim Turner (Co-Chair)		Charles Harrington (RPCR)	Benito Garcia
Sarah Brown		Laura Janway (Planning)	Scott Goldstein
Wamiq Chowdhury		Anita Jones-McNair (RPCR)	Teresa Lockamy
Lorie Clark		Catherine Lazorko (Communications)	Heidy Persaud
David Dixon		Patricia McGuire (Planning)	Francie Sallinger
Miles Fitch	<b>Town Council</b>	Tina Moon (Planning)	
Maggie Funkhouser	Sammy Slade	Marsha Pate (Planning)	
Rachel Gaylord-Miles		Wendell Rodgers (RPCR)	
Jacqueline Helvey			
Lauren Joca			
Conner Lopez			
Elmira Mangum			
David Markiewicz			
Dan Mayer			
Jim Porto			
Eliazar Posada			
Soteria Shepperson			
Amy Singleton			
Jacqueline Thompson			
Rasam Tooloee			
Anahid Vrana			
Alyson West			

Task Force Members Not in Attendance: Braxton Foushee, Mariela Hernandez, Mark Moshier, Abirami Raja

## OVERVIEW

On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 the Carrboro Connects Task Force convened virtually for their second meeting. Held on Zoom from 5:30-8:00 PM, 46 people participated, including Task Force members, Town staff, Town Council and the consultant team. Task Force members were asked to complete some pre-meeting homework: complete three “Conversation Café” interviews to gather additional input on the comprehensive plan, read and review the Draft Issues and Opportunities Report on Climate, Ecosystem, and Social Equity, and continue to send in photos of Carrboro places along with a description of why each place is meaningful.

The first meeting focused on the vision for the plan, an overview of community engagement, and breakout discussions about issues and opportunities by each plan topic area. This second meeting was a deeper dive into social and racial equity, climate change and natural resources.

## OPENING AND INTRODUCTIONS

Catherine Fray, Task Force chair, opened the meeting with a quick recap of the first meeting and setting expectations for the second meeting:

“At the first meeting we were talking at a broad visioning level – we heard remarks from the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, we shared thoughts on what we would like Carrboro to be in 20 years and what challenges the Town faces through a Mentimeter exercise, we discussed engagement methods and then we got a taste of the plan by breaking down into smaller groups to discuss issues and opportunities by topics. Tonight, we are going to focus on digging deeper into 3 related issues – Climate, Ecosystems and Social Justice, starting together and then breaking down to discuss the issues in more detail.”

## TOWN COUNCIL MEMBER WELCOME

Council Member Sammy Slade joined the meeting to offer his thoughts on the comprehensive plan effort and share some motivating remarks related to the evening's focus on the Environment:

“Both of these issues (climate change and equity) are so important for Carrboro – we want to take this on and model for other places what is necessary – not about what is politically possible but what is necessary. Equity is fundamental – the people who are first feeling effects of the climate emergency are the marginalized in our society.

Our climate justice goal is to be 80% below 2010 levels by 2030. Why are we doing this? Think about the places and people you love – these are all the reasons why we want to safeguard the place where we live. That's what is at stake.”

## MEETING 1 AND CONVERSATION CAFÉ RECAP

Next, the three co-chairs of the Task Force shared a recap of Meeting #1 (including new co-chair Tim Turner, Chair of the Environmental Advisory Board):

Quinton Harper – “I echo Sammy's words about knowing your why – my why is having a vision for our community. Let's be visionary, let's be bold and let's do this!”

David Jessee – “Last meeting I asked everyone to type in the chat a word to describe how you are feeling about starting the comprehensive planning process and the responses were all positive.”

Tim Turner – “I think we need to be creative in how we continue...my vision is that everyone can get from anywhere in Town to anywhere else easily, and for Carrboro to become a net energy producer.”

Teresa Lockamy of the consultant team then explained the purpose behind the Conversation Café interviews. This activity is a great way to learn another perspective, new ideas, and broaden the reach of engagement as part of Carrboro Connects. Task Force members who have completed interviews were asked to share some takeaways from their discussions.

- Wamiq Chowdry heard ideas about food insecurity, affordable housing and community land trusts, racial segregation and the resulting achievement gap, and maintaining the Town's diversity.
- Maggie Funkhouser's conversations echoed some similar themes including affordable housing, food insecurity, greenways and green space, and safe transportation.
- Amy Singleton interviewed a 30-year resident who thought that Carrboro is getting “fancy.” Other themes included connectivity between different transportation modes and affordable housing.

## CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Laura Janway, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator for the Town of Carrboro, then provided an update on the Town's progress to date towards the goals set forth in the 2017 Community Climate Action Plan. Much has been done to advance the goals, including the following current activities: Green Neighborhoods Initiative, invasive species removal events, Climate Action Plan Survey, Legacy Tree Fund Grant, Transportation Demand Management, and collaboration with the Cities Initiative and Orange County Climate Council.

The Town's existing efforts and progress towards environmental goals are important to consider as we develop a vision and goals for this element of the Comprehensive Plan. As has been discussed previously, this Plan is not reinventing the wheel – rather, it is about building upon and synthesizing all the work Carrboro has already done/continues to do. A copy of the presentation is [here](#).

## CLIMATE, ECOSYSTEM, AND SOCIAL EQUITY

Marcella Bondie Keenan from CNT and the consultant team began with a summary of what was heard in the Environmental break-out group's discussion from Task Force Meeting #1. Answering the question “Where would you like Carrboro to be in 20 years?” participants said:

- Actively addressing racial equity in climate resilience
- Better stormwater management in built out areas
- Better walkability for those with mobility issues
- Greater investment in outdoor spaces
- Smaller energy footprint
- Thoughtful + climate-resilient development policies and practices

She then presented a summary of the *Climate, Ecosystem, and Social Equity Issues and Opportunities Report* ([which can be viewed here](#)).

Marcella described the connection between equity and the environment. As both a process and an outcome, we achieve equity when life outcomes cannot be predicted by demographics. To get to equity, we have to use equitable processes, shifting decision-making authority and resources to those who are most impacted by current and historical inequities. She described examples of these historic inequities, such as racial covenants, municipal underbunding, and community exclusion. Impacts of such processes result in persistent racial segregation and wealth gaps, environmental racism (i.e. urban heat islands, less access to outdoor spaces, and higher exposure to pollution sources), and worsened community health outcomes. Strategies to target these negative impacts include targeted community engagement, inclusive decision making, and equity commitments and follow-through.

Climate resilience is the second major theme of this topic area. To get to climate resilience, there are two general strategies – adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation is taking actions that cope with or adjust to current and future climate change impacts (i.e. relocating buildings out of floodplains). Mitigation is taking action that reduces or prevents greenhouse gases, in order to prevent future climate change impacts (i.e. retrofitting a building to be more energy efficient and use solar power).

Key findings include:

- There are limitations to a municipal-only climate strategy (residents, businesses, and institutions also have a role to play)
- Climate change is causing increasing temperatures, which will lead to higher energy use in buildings and degraded air quality
- Increased precipitation and droughts will induce stress on agricultural crops and natural areas while also increasing flooding

Strategies to lessen these climate change impacts include updating the Town's land use ordinance and building code requirements, re-engineering infrastructure and existing developments with resiliency measures, and reducing greenhouse gases. Other mitigation strategies include the greenhouse gas inventory and goals, investment in reducing municipal operations, and supporting community efforts to reduce emissions.

The third and final theme Marcella covered is the preservation of natural areas. Past development patterns and practices are a threat to maintaining high-quality natural areas. By developing land with paved roads and turf lawns, the landscape loses its natural ability to regulate climate impacts and support wildlife, resulting in more stormwater runoff, damage to ecosystems and native species, and disrupting wildlife habitat.

Green stormwater infrastructure is one broad approach to adapting to and mitigating climate change, while also restoring natural areas. Green infrastructure can promote social equity, if it is carefully designed in partnership with the most community members. For example, there could be a program that employs youth to build and maintain sidewalk rain gardens—this meets equity and wider climate change mitigation goals.

Major themes and goals identified in Carrboro's existing, adopted plans:

- **Build Better:** Update the comprehensive land use ordinance, Implement policies to change development patterns, Retrofit infrastructure and buildings
- **Repair Ecosystems:** Conserve and restore watersheds, ecosystems, and native species
- **Focus on Community:** Support community-based climate actions, Provide financial protections to lower-income residents, Target outreach to marginalized residents
- **Municipal Leadership:** Fund climate resiliency plans + implementation, Coordinate program delivery across town departments + external partners, Offer technical assistance and cost share programs to residents

To get everyone brainstorming for their breakout group conversations, Marcella posed these questions (followed by Task Force members' answers).

- On what issues discussed today has Carrboro been making steady progress?
  - Stormwater levy and staff commitment to these issues has been great
- What issues do we need to focus more on as a community to have a greater impact?
  - Become an energy generator – more efficient use of land and better preservation of open space by building denser buildings
  - Systems approach—need progress on all fronts to have cohesive progress across the board (for example, need better public transit to reduce carbon emissions—create actionable strategies and empower people to contribute to our goals through actions they already take everyday)
  - Cost/benefit analysis—what is the biggest bang for our buck, or 3 biggest things to focus on? Narrow down priorities since we can't afford to do them all right away.

## BREAK OUT DISCUSSIONS

All meeting participants were assigned to a breakout group for more in-depth, facilitated discussion in smaller groups in order to discuss a vision and goals for social and racial equity (related to environment), climate resiliency, and natural resources. "Vision" was defined here as: the big picture of what we want Carrboro to be, and "Goals" as the outcome focused aspirations to achieve the vision.

### **BREAKOUT GROUP 1**

Facilitators: Heidi Persaud, CNT and Francie Sallinger, Teska Associates

Participants: Wamiq Chowdhury, David Dixon, Elmira Mangum, Dan Mayer, Trish McGuire (Staff), Amy Singleton, Rasam Tooloee

- Social and racial equity:
  - Inclusion across everything – equity needs to be thought of first and foremost in processes and practices
    - Have a person at the table when decisions are being made
  - Important to educate people about our community-wide emissions and the impacts that individual behavior can have
  - 2 themes: 1) inclusivity in long term planning and 2) short term: if there are inequities that can be acted upon quickly, what are they and how do we fix them?
  - People first – rather than cost/benefit. When it comes to equity, cost benefit maybe isn't the primary driver. Social justice isn't something you can assign value to.

- Vision: Carrboro is a place where residents can adapt to the stresses of climate change regardless of race/income.
- Climate resilience:
  - Greatest point of leverage is through our citizens – if we engage citizens to take ownership we can have impact faster. Engaged, involved citizenry that is aware of these problems and doing their part.
    - Empower people to do what they can through outreach and education
  - A lot of folks who are most adversely affected are those who may not have time/resources to 'do their part' – how can we support lower income communities and reduce the burden of climate change on them as much as possible?
    - Low cost retrofits, subsidy programs
- Natural resources:
  - Built environment—we can all do our part in little ways
  - Invest in what we are already doing – get volunteers to help, invest in these established initiatives
- Development of renewable energy sources in Carrboro—efficiency, retrofits, behavioral changes can only do so much. If all electricity is still coming from dirty sources, then we can't make a difference. If we can generate our own energy or sell it back to the grid, then maybe we can use those costs to provide resources for low income communities

## **BREAKOUT GROUP 2**

Facilitators: Marcella Bondie Keenan, CNT and Teresa Lockamy, Lockamy Consulting

Participants: Rachel Gaylord-Miles, Lauren Joca, Conner Lopez, Marsha Pate (Staff)

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- "Less communication, more doing." – member shared story of general public (not customers) passing by her small business using composting trash cans to discard dog poop which introduces contaminants. When she inquired of the Town about getting a dedicated dog waste container, she learned she had to pay for it herself. This was too much of an expense for a small business trying to do the right thing -- "Need a top-down approach to address real-life problems!"
- Community needs to be thorough in thinking systemically/holistically about unintended consequences of actions
- Story of lack of racial diversity in school's AP classes. Options should be explored to remedy this issue. Potential payoffs of improved diversity help students, community & climate
- Member shared story of clothes online destroyed...related it to disparate impact.
- Give children bikes who may not otherwise be able to afford them, to utilize community bike trails and ride to/from school.
- Need for equal access to nature trails and transportation.
- Share authority and power to follow-thru to make changes.

## **BREAKOUT GROUP 3**

Facilitators: Scott Goldstein and Carol Brobeck, Teska Associates

Participants: David Markiewicz, Catherine Fray, Jim Porto, Lorie Clark, Sarah Brown, Jackie Thompson

- Social and racial equity:
  - Biggest impact will come from citizens
  - Innate focus on downtown – not looking at all areas of town equally or proactively
    - Community orgs have been main force to improve neighborhoods– Town should be proactive in finding out what they need

- Process should include whole community – look at town limits – different densities – need a simplified land use plan.
- Use the land use plan as a concrete vision – visual vision helps
- Traditionally historically African American neighborhoods have not been involved in this type of planning - would be great to get them involved.
- Lots of gentrification – some residents are older and don't know what's happening
- Some communities have been included – need to get Black residents and other groups more involved.
- Accountability in the process – need to hear voices – focus on engagement where there hasn't been much
- Need to go where people are – concern about how to do so with COVID.... Access to the process is a concern
- WISE is an equity program—but only those already involved in the Town know about it – break the loop and do outreach in new and different ways
- Climate change:
  - Theme of density is common to reduce cost of homes, double down on multifamily
  - Use density to create transit hubs – work with density
  - There are opportunities that require less town funding-- 2 groups of action
    - What the town can finance
    - Standards the town can set for others to make it clear what we want – they build it
  - The community drives actions, but we think in simple choices. Need to edit and set priorities
  - Momentum will occur when we get organized
  - More resources: we have 1 staff person (on environment)
  - Consensus driven options → harder to get it done
- Natural Resources
  - Find ways to make more efficient use of land economically and physically – such as higher density on donated land
  - Development is a painful process – need to streamline the land use plan [to focus on achieving our shared goals]

#### **BREAKOUT GROUP 4**

Facilitators: Benito Garcia, Teska Associates and Cyatharine Alias, CNT

Participants: Maggie Funkhouser, Jackie Helvey, David Jessee, Tina Moon (Staff), Rustin Murray, Wendell Rogers (Staff), Tim Turner, Anahid Vrana

- Social and racial equity:
  - Engage community members as advisors not just stewards of information
  - Engage communities most impacted – allocate resources so that the communities can determine their own fate
  - In the Lincoln Heights/Pine Knolls neighborhood people feel disenfranchised by the local government
  - Help other neighborhoods get visible and organized.
  - Improve road infrastructure.
  - Lack of communications and transparency about the development of housing
  - Don't think about communications only in terms of different languages. Because there are also times when English speaking residents aren't served by current outreach strategies.
  - Create a neighborhood liaison program
- Climate change:

- Have visions trickle down into the decisions that are made, not just lofty goals
- Do better with transportation alternatives to a car
- Complete the sidewalks and bike system to create a complete network. Trail system that is integrated through the neighborhoods.
- Think out of the box – not limited by budget
- Stormwater affects poorer people disproportionately because lower land is more affordable -- The town responds to specific permits, variances, plans, but the big picture gets lost.
- Guiding documents are just guidelines – they have more power when they are in the land use ordinance.
- Expand free bus system through the day and night and weekends. Have varied fleet, not just a big bus, to provide other opportunities for rides (not just commuters)
- Making sidewalks accessible – with wider sidewalks.
- More solar rooftops
- Natural resources
  - Cultivate green spaces on residential and commercial levels.
  - Help neighborhoods tackle their lawns and be on the flip side to the emissions by creating green spaces.
  - Service industry workers are an important resource that need to be valued.
  - Increase spaces of native species and remove invasive species in new parks.

## ENGAGEMENT UPDATE / NEXT STEPS

To close out the meeting, Scott Goldstein shared an update on engagement and outreach efforts leading up to the first Community Meeting, taking place November 19<sup>th</sup>. First and foremost, the project website is now live – everyone is encouraged to go visit [www.carrboroconnects.org](http://www.carrboroconnects.org) to register, explore the site, and begin sharing ideas.

To promote the November 19<sup>th</sup> Community Meeting, the project team has created a suite of materials to reach as many people as possible, in a variety of formats (digital and print, English and Spanish) that the Town has already posted on social media. Please share the social media links below!

- Postcards
- Posters
- Social Media Graphics ([Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Next Door](#))
- Banner (8 foot x 4 foot)

We need help from all of the Task Force to share and circulate these materials widely.





All materials are posted to the website's [Documents page](#) to encourage everyone—not just Task Force members—to download and spread the word. Thank you in advance for your help!

Patricia McGuire shared upcoming dates and next steps and challenged the Task Force to reach 300 attendees at the November 19 Community Workshop.

### Upcoming Dates

- Nov. 12 @ 5:30, Task Force 3
- Nov. 19 @ 7:00, Community Meeting 1
- Jan. 19 @ 5:30, Task Force 4
- Feb. 18 @ 5:30, Task Force 5
- Mar. 18 @ 7:00, Community Meeting 2

### Next Steps

- 1) Finish your three interviews
- 2) Post Community Meeting announcement on social media
- 3) Provide an update to and get input from your Advisory Board
- 4) Distribute postcards and posters if you can
- 5) Continue to share ideas on how to get people involved in the plan and attend first Community Meeting

## ADJOURNMENT

Task Force Meeting #2 adjourned by 8:15PM. Thank you to all Task Force members and Town Staff for contributing to another productive and positive meeting for Carrboro Connects!