



## **Carrboro Connects – Community Workshop #1 Summary**

301 West Main Street, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

**November 19, 2020 – Remote Meeting via Zoom**

*View the meeting agenda, presentation, live poll results, and recording at*

[www.carrborconnects.org/events](http://www.carrborconnects.org/events)

### OVERVIEW

On November 19, 2020 the first community workshop for the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan was held virtually on Zoom from 7:00-9:00 PM. At least 140 people tuned in on Zoom—and others joined via the live stream on YouTube—to listen, learn, and discuss Carrboro’s future together.

The workshop was designed to be both educational and interactive. The first half included a variety of presentations and reflections from Town leaders, Town staff members, members of the [Carrboro Connects Task Force](#), and members of the consultant team. In the second half, participants were divided among different breakout groups to discuss questions related to the different topics that will be explored in the comprehensive plan.

Using the Zoom “interpretation” tool, the workshop was available in both English and Spanish. A local translator, Murtado Bustillos, provided Spanish translation of the opening presentations for anyone who selected Spanish as their preferred language, and one of the breakout groups was conducted entirely in Spanish.

Outreach efforts for this workshop were wide-reaching and thorough, in hopes of hearing from a wide range of Carrboro residents, organizations, businesses and employees that reflect the demographics and interests across the Town of Carrboro. A brief and voluntary poll was posted during the meeting that asked a number of questions to gauge participant demographics. Poll results showed that participants came from every racial/ethnic background, age group, and gender identity; were residents, business owners, students, and Carrboro workers; and had heard about the workshop from a variety of sources (word of mouth, email, social media, Town website, and print materials posted around Town).

## WELCOME – MAYOR LAVELLE, CATHERINE FRAY, AND FRED JOINER, POET LAUREATE

To begin the workshop, Mayor Lavelle welcomed everyone and shared her thoughts on why it is so important to work together as a community to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that puts vision into implementation.

Catherine Fray, Chair of the Carrboro Connects Task Force, introduced the Task Force and asked any of its 26 members present to raise their hands to be recognized. These members serve as the comprehensive plan's liaisons to the Carrboro community. The volunteer-led body represents all aspects of the community, including all boards and commissions as well as members at-large in which this is their first appointment to the Town. The group has had their first three meetings and is looking forward to hearing from the wider community as the process continues.

Fred Joiner, Carrboro's Poet Laureate, recited the Community Poem which was first prepared in October.

## #IAMCARRBORO PEOPLE PHOTO ALBUM

Catherine Lazorko, who serves as Communications Manager for the Town, introduced the #IamCarrboro People Photo Album. This crowd-sourced photo collection is a simple way to catch up with other Carrboro neighbors by sharing snapshots. The faces of the community at this moment in time can be looked back on, much like photos in a family album.

The Carrboro People Photo Album is available at <https://youtu.be/yw3S7a65nLs> and will continue to be updated over time. Feel free to post your photos to social media and tag the Town of Carrboro or #IamCarrboro. Residents can also send their photos to Catherine Lazorko at [clazorko@townofcarrboro.org](mailto:clazorko@townofcarrboro.org).

## RACE & EQUITY PRINCIPLES & GARE

Anita Jones-McNair, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Resources Director for the Town of Carrboro, provided an overview of the Town's ongoing efforts towards race and equity:

- The Town Council voted unanimously to begin race and equity work in October 2018
- Town joined GARE (Government Alliance for Race and Equity)
- Created a CORE Leadership Team
- The CORE Team is participating in NC Learning Cohort
- Working with Orange County jurisdictions and regional partners
- Reviewing Town practices and procedures using a racial lens
- Training

Anita also shared the Town of Carrboro's Vision statement on race and equity:

*The Town of Carrboro envisions being a community where race does not determine outcomes and all have equitable opportunities and resources. We envision a time when participation in community events, programs and advisory boards represent community demographics. All will feel safe, secure and know their voice is valued. We strive to be an inclusive and open minded organization that has a culture created by its diverse staff, which serves the public through a social (racial) justice lens.*

## THE POWER OF PLANNING

Patricia McGuire, Planning Director for the Town of Carrboro, moderated a panel discussion on “the power of planning” with Carrboro Connects Task Force members Catherine Fray, Chair; Quinton Harper, David Jessee and Tim Turner, Co-chairs; and Braxton Foushee, Planning Board. Themes discussed included: expressing the will of the people through the comprehensive plan, focusing on specific areas important for change, inclusivity in the process, thinking big and identifying new funding/revenue sources, taking an interconnected and unified approach, and building the value of the people into the plan.

## PERSPECTIVES FROM CARRBORO CONNECTS TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Task Force members Wamiq Chowdhury, Amy Singleton, and Mark Moshier shared their perspectives on developing Carrboro's first comprehensive plan. Ideas that were mentioned included: providing services for everyone in Carrboro; continuing to make Carrboro as inclusive and welcoming as possible; working towards a common goal; having an economically vibrant, connected, affordable, and environmentally conscious community; envisioning Carrboro as a place where the old and new can exist together; and taking pride in being unique -- “Carrboro is a choice.”

## OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

Scott Goldstein, Project Manager for the Carrboro Connects consultant team, introduced the full team: Teska Associates which is leading the process with Town staff, Center for Neighborhood Technology, and Lockamy Consulting. Scott provided a general overview of the main topics that will be addressed in the plan: Environment, Transportation, Economic Sustainability, Affordable Housing, and Recreation/Parks/Cultural Resources.

## HOW TO ENGAGE IN THE PLAN

Teresa Lockamy of the consultant team shared details on engagement and outreach efforts, and the importance of getting everyone in Carrboro involved in the planning process in some way. All are encouraged to visit the project website, [www.carrboroconnects.org](http://www.carrboroconnects.org), to sign-up for all project updates and share ideas. Other outreach techniques include interviews, focus groups, pop-up events, speaker series, and many other opportunities to engage both in-person and on-line. We hope that everyone spreads the word and has conversations with friends, family, and neighbors to help them engage with the plan. To help guide conversations, there is a Conversation Café 'menu' of topics available to download in English and Spanish on the [Documents](#) page of the website. Other [resources](#) and project documents are posted to the website as well, and the best way to stay engaged is by registering with the site for important email updates such as meeting announcements and special events.

## INTERACTIVE POLL

Teresa Lockamy led the group in an interactive, live polling exercise. Using a website called Mentimeter, participants were asked to take out their phones and go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com), where they were guided through a brief Q&A. Most of the responses are illustrated below, and [the full results can be viewed on the projects website's Meetings page](#).

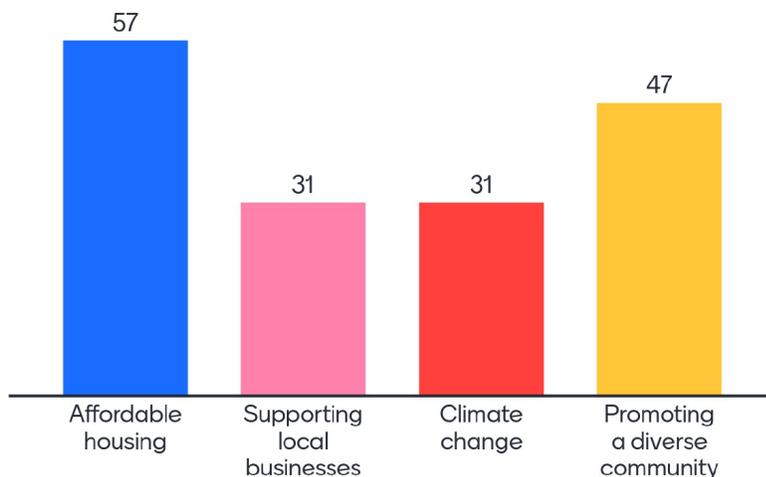


# How can we support Carrboro's local and BIPOC owned businesses?

See full results [here](#).

Advertising	Shop	Unions
Shopping there	Prioritize shopping at them	Engage and build relationships
Publicize them	Comprando con gratitud	Seek them out intentionally
Rent and property cost controls	Highlight them on social media (for free)	Resource center
With intention at each step	Patronize and advertize them	Stipends
Walk in their doors	better way finding	Laissez Faire Capitalism
Awareness	Farmers market representation	Highlight them
Unions	Rental subsidy	Offer start up funding , waivers
Government contracts	Be truly inclusive not just 2 Carrboro Residents	Spend money duh!

## What are Carrboro's greatest challenges?



## FILM FEST + VISIT CARRBORO VIDEOS

While participants were assigned to breakout groups, two videos were played that represent a snapshot of some of what makes Carrboro special: first was a trailer for the Carrboro Film Fest, and then a newly released [Visit Carrboro](#) video.

## BREAK-OUT DISCUSSIONS

All workshop participants were divided into smaller breakout groups (four English-speaking groups and one Spanish-speaking group) for a facilitated discussion. Themes and takeaways that arose from these discussions are highlighted below:

### **What are your hopes and dreams for Carrboro?**

- Ensure that Carrboro is affordable
- Inclusive, free, and happy
- Don't stop development
- More businesses owned by people of color
- More efforts to preserve natural areas
- Become a less-car dependent community
- Maintain the friendliness of the Town
- Connect the voices that are not around this table, because we need to hear from everybody to make these hopes and dreams come true. We are missing the indigenous communities, community from Burma, and Khmer community.
- Sustainability and climate related measures, climate friendly community
- More small green spaces around town. "Lots of sidewalks and streets, but not many resting spots for people to read under a tree."

### **What are the greatest challenges facing Carrboro?**

- Status and inclusivity of residents in the Northern Transition Area who are affected by Carrboro's planning decisions but cannot vote
- Develop but still maintain open/green space
- Conserve essence of Carrboro
- Need more Latinx representation – Town has made an effort, but we feel that we have to work harder to be represented
- How to increase services without taxes; concerned with trade-offs for more property taxes; need to increase tax base
- Costs of addressing stormwater and climate change with flooding
- Risks of gentrification
- Move beyond diversity to genuine connections & inclusion; move beyond our silos
- Create more jobs

*"Artists are leaving / getting pushed out, we risk losing character. That's not the type of Carrboro I want to live in."*

*"Carrboro has big city dreams on a small-town budget"*

## **How important is it to you to have more affordable housing opportunities in Carrboro? What kind of housing is needed?**

- Wide range of housing types: more middle tier housing (i.e. townhouse), small apartment buildings (2-3 stories max), container homes / tiny houses, studios/1 bedrooms
- Senior affordable housing – allow for aging in place
- Consider strategies to lower HOA fees
- Housing subsidies or tax reduction for everyone
- Land is limited so increasing density is needed
- Pursue community land trust
- Fund affordable housing through infrastructure bonds
- Create zoning to allow more multi-family housing to be built
- Affordable housing for the very lower end, not just the middle class or town employed
- Creative financing structures, like co-ops to keep prices down
- More programs to teach youth about finances

*“Workers who work in town should be able to afford to live in the town.”*

## **What are the most important things the Town and individuals can do to address climate change?**

- Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Enhance building/energy efficiency
- Reduce the need for and use of cars
- Provide greater connectivity: bikeways, trails, neighborhoods
- Information campaigns to give people knowledge and motivation to make better choices (i.e. composting, recycling)
- Town grants to help with stormwater mitigation (like FEMA grants for raising homes)
- Consider community swapping/sharing to reduce impacts

*“Provide people with information about how they can participate in protecting the environment—help them understand their impact so they are conscious and can take better choices.”*

## **What are the best ways to encourage walking, biking and transit?**

- Connectivity for all modes
- Attract jobs near transit hubs
- Connections to NTA and Triangle Transit
- Sidewalks to encourage walking
- Having enough places to park bikes when you get to a destination
- Encourage bike donations
- Bus service is excellent—help promote this and educate people on where the buses go
- Improve connectivity of bus routes; expand routes to cover more areas (hospital, business, retail, other popular destinations)
- Bike Paths – Route 86 is not safe
- Emphasize the dedicated bike lanes to expand network so it's easier to get from point a to point b through town
- Enhance bike safety for children going to from school
- Integrate multi-use pathways

- Focus on the barriers—why aren't people walking/biking/taking transit?
- Consider charging for parking in the downtown – use monies toward affordable housing
- Concerns about walking around town due to high volume of off-leash/roaming dogs; huge safety concern (both perceived and real) for people
- Safer crossings (54 and N. Greensboro to Carrboro Elementary School)
- Encourage more telecommuting a few days a week (even after COVID)

*“Help people make trips to popular destinations more easily via transit. why spend time looking for parking if it's easier to take the bus?”*

*“Add a road or bike lane between Lake Hogan Farm Road and Morris Grove School so kids can bike safely.”*

### **What are the best ways to support local and BIPOC businesses? What goods and services do you leave Carrboro to get?**

- More creative outreach to BIPOC Businesses
- Accurate reporting and representation: huge number of residents who operate businesses out of their home and in the county
- Create a guide to local BIPOC businesses (also identification signs?)
- Promote: “Give us a shot! I'll give everyone who attended this workshop 10% off – keep coming to Johnny's for coffee.”
- Rent for businesses is high and often absorbs all sales – reducing rent would help
- Cultural gallery idea – multiple vendors contribute and cover costs together
- Advance BIPOC biz in Town's social media
- Create business foundation for BIPOC financial support
  - Community Fund (GoFundMe-type) opportunity since obtaining credit will likely be difficult for local and/or BIPOC businesses
- Business incubator to help with start ups
- Everyday stores are needed (selling clothing, books, etc. –not specialty stores)
- Sponsor small local business fair, e.g. Yelp provided BIPOC after recent Black Lives Matter movement
- Highlight a business a month; free advertising or a business fair; Carrboro dollars/credit/coupons to BIPOC businesses.
- Currently leaving Carrboro for: technology, bookstores, affordable clothing, many household items, international foods, furniture, home goods
- What is the new frontier for retail? Future may be different – think entrepreneurial rather than brick and mortar.
- More family friendly dining opportunities. People like variety.
- Living wage to support workers living and spending money in Carrboro
- More job training and more available business spaces

*“More business assistance, support, and coaching to help with reviewing business plans and financing can give more people opportunities to succeed.”*

## How can Carrboro support more cultural inclusion across the arts and recreation? What additional park facilities are needed?

- Grateful for MLK Park, more of that is needed
- Twins Creek Park off Old 86 – partner to get this developed, so under used
- Hard to find / buy sports equipment in town
- Splashpad for kids in the neighborhood
- Larger outdoor spaces for multicultural events (i.e. give Festival Latino room to grow!)
- Skateboard park and skating rink (what the young people are doing)
- Community garden spaces
- Preserve: undeveloped land in Bolin Forest, space behind the farmers market
- Developers could contribute a payment-in-lieu toward community open space
- More accessibility for parks and natural spaces

*"We should take advantage of holidays from all of Carrboro's represented countries so the whole community can celebrate together!"*

## What did you learn from listening to others tonight?

- Challenges associated with the Northern Transition Area representation
- Issues associated with affordable housing; it's more than just housing
- The Town should renovate building(s) for training and incubator for BIPOC [possible example the Piedmont Food & Processing Center in Orange County]

## CALL TO ACTION FROM CARRBORO'S TOWN COUNCIL

A short video featuring all of the Carrboro's Town Council members highlights some of their thoughts on the importance of this comprehensive planning effort. View the call to action video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dVDLPSi87A>

## CLOSING, CATHERINE FRAY

Catherine Fray, Carrboro Connects Task Force Chair, closed the workshop by giving thanks to everyone for participating and echoing the Council's call to action. She encouraged folks to: stay tuned by [registering at CarrboroConnects.org](https://www.carrborocconnects.org), look out and share other social media for ways to provide more input; download a Conversation Café form and reach out to someone for their thoughts; take a photo on your next walk or bike ride around Town and share it; support local restaurants, cafes and businesses; and reach out with other ideas for how to get even more input in this plan. Thank you for being involved in this important effort and being committed to the Town of Carrboro!

The workshop adjourned just past 9:00 PM.