



## Carrboro Connects – Task Force Meeting #4 Summary

301 West Main Street, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

### January 21, 2021 – 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)		Jon Hartman-Brown (Economic Development)	Benito Garcia
Quinton Harper (Co-Chair)		Zachary Hallock (Planning)	Scott Goldstein
Tim Turner (Co-Chair)		Laura Janway (Planning)	Teresa Lockamy
Sarah Brown		Anita Jones-McNair (RPCR)	Heidy Persaud
Wamiq Chowdhury		Patricia McGuire (Planning)	Francie Sallinger
David Dixon	<b>Town Council</b>	Marsha Pate (Planning)	
Miles Fitch	Randee Haven-O'Donnell	Marty Roupe (Planning)	
Braxton Foushee			
Maggie Funkhouser			
Rachel Gaylord-Miles			
Lauren Joca			
Conner Lopez			
Elmira Mangum			
David Markiewicz			
Dan Mayer			
Mark Moshier			
Jim Porto			
Eliazar Posada			
Soteria Shepperson			
Amy Singleton			
Jacqueline Thompson			
Rasam Tooloee			
Anahid Vrana			
Alyson West			

Task Force Members Not in Attendance: Lorie Clark, Jacqueline Helvey, Mariela Hernandez, Abi Raja

## OVERVIEW

The Carrboro Connects Task Force held its fourth virtual meeting on Zoom from 5:30-8:00 PM on Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. Over 40 participants attended the meeting, including Task Force members, Town staff, Town Council and the consultant team. A pre-meeting homework assignment asked Task Force members to a) read and review a Draft Vision, Goals, and Strategies document for the Climate Change and Environment/Ecosystem chapter b) read and review issues and opportunities reports for the Transportation & Infrastructure and Economic Sustainability topics.

Where we've been: Task Force Meeting 1 focused on the vision for the plan, an overview of community engagement, and breakout discussions about issues and opportunities by each plan topic area. Meeting 2 was a deeper dive into social and racial equity, climate change and natural resources. Meeting 3 focused on issues and opportunities relating to Town demographics, land use, and affordable housing. The emphasis for Task Force Meeting 4 was two more plan topics: Transportation/Infrastructure and Economic Sustainability.

The meeting agenda, presentation, and this summary can be viewed at [www.carrboroconnects.org/events](http://www.carrboroconnects.org/events).

## OPENING AND INTRODUCTIONS

Catherine Fray, Task Force Chair, gave opening remarks: "At the outset we may not have realized just how important this process would be and the challenges that Carrboro would be facing with the pandemic, racial justice, climate change and the economy all at once....this has been a great way to feel connected to our community during this time of isolation." Catherine also explained that due to feedback heard from previous meetings, the format for Meeting 4 has changed and participants will be assigned to just one breakout session to allow for deeper discussion with more time. A survey link was sent out prior to the meeting so that people could select their preference between transportation/infrastructure or economic sustainability. Both topics will be presented to the full group before breakout discussions.

## TOWN COUNCIL MEMBER WELCOME

Council Member Randee Haven-O'Donnell attended the meeting and shared her perspective on the importance of the comprehensive plan and the two topics at hand:

"We are respons-able – responsible and able to enact a plan that is dedicated to equity, justice, and community, unity and all its endeavors. Consider the interdependency of transportation and infrastructure--infrastructure determines the effectiveness of our built environment; transportation – why, how, and where do we move in Carrboro. We are multimodal; people bike, walk, drive – how is the nature of our community changing transit needs? ...Economic development—what is our personal and communal economy? Our sustainability and resilience depend on forming a solid robust economy in which all of our community are stakeholders."

## MEETING 3 & COMMUNITY MEETING RECAP

Task Force Co-Chair Quinton Harper provided a recap of Task Force Meeting 3 and the first Community Workshop which both took place in November 2020. The full summary from those

meetings (and all other past events) can be found on the project website at [www.carrboroconnects.org/events](http://www.carrboroconnects.org/events).

## REVIEW OF DRAFT VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

Heidy Persaud, CNT briefly presented the draft vision, goals, and strategies document that the project team prepared for the Climate Change & Environment/Ecosystem chapter. The full document was sent to Task Force members ahead of the meeting. Heidy explained that this document is very much in draft stage – most of the goals and strategies come from existing plans (such as the Climate Action Plan) and/or feedback heard thus far in the engagement process for Carrboro Connects or best practices from other communities. This represents a first pass at developing preliminary goals for this topic. The team hopes to ‘take the temperature’ of the Task Force and understand if we are on the right track in order to go forward and refine further. It is important to note that racial equity will be an overarching theme across all plan topics and considered as part of all goals and strategies.

The goals can be viewed in the [presentation](#). Feedback from Task Force members on these draft goals and strategies included:

- Better to include racial equity explicitly in vision statement for all topics
- Include one or two really large scale, impactful projects – sometimes it helps to focus on one big exciting idea to generate momentum and make impact and then other projects are more likely to move forward from there
  - Example: massive solar project that could become a revenue source and fund other goals/projects
- Think about interrelatedness of all the topics and pick strategies that link them

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Next, Heidy walked through an overview of the Transportation & Infrastructure Issues and Opportunities report. This report covers four main issue areas: transportation, water, green infrastructure (which includes stormwater management and natural resources), and energy. Her presentation can be viewed on slides 17 through 26 of the [presentation](#). Comments raised from Task Force members included:

- Make sure we look at transportation's huge role as an energy contributor
- Think about equity in energy—for example does OWASA cut off water due to inability to pay?

## ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Following Heidy's presentation Scott Goldstein of Teska and Jon Hartman-Brown with the Town of Carrboro presented on Economic Sustainability. Scott began by reiterating that this topic is really about promoting inclusive equitable growth and creating a ladder of opportunity that connects people to good paying jobs at all ends of the education spectrum. Considerations include... how to capture some of the \$161 million (half of the money that is being earned locally) that is leaving Carrboro annually, while still maintaining a balance of a small town feeling and strong local business environment? Where are opportunities for a people-centered (not just place-centered) economic development strategy?

Jon Hartman-Brown, Economic Development Director for the Town, discussed how Carrboro is not an isolated economy, as it functions in a much larger regional/state economy. It is important to understand where the region is headed to craft a local strategy, and the Economic Sustainability Commission is currently working on a new strategic plan. Scott and Jon's slides are 27 through 33 of the [presentation](#).

## BREAK-OUT DISCUSSIONS

Meeting participants were assigned to one of two breakout groups for a 50-minute discussion and Q&A around a vision and goals for either transportation/infrastructure or economic sustainability. "Vision" was defined as: the big picture of what we want Carrboro to be, "Goals" as the outcome-focused aspirations to achieve the vision, and "Strategy" as the "how" to achieve a goal. Below is a summary of the input heard across both groups.

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

*Participants: David Dixon, Anahid Vrana, Trish McGuire, Connor Lopez, Maggie Funkhouser, Catherine Fray, Tim Turner, Zach Hallock, Alyson West, Eliazar Posada, Lauren Joca, Sara Brown, Tina Moon*

### **Vision: Prior input from Task Force (Where would you like Carrboro to be in 20 years regarding transportation and infrastructure?)**

- Transportation/Parking
  - Fewer cars, more focus on mobility justice, address disability access
  - Fewer fossil fuel powered vehicles
  - Health and wellbeing should be metrics in transportation as opposed to auto-based metrics (thruput, delay, congestion, etc.)
- Green Infrastructure/Stormwater
  - Use the Public ROW for green infrastructure
- Energy
  - Make the grid more resilient – such as battery backup in MF so can store in off-peak and use in peak
  - Climate Change/Energy can be polarizing, because it's often an all-or-nothing strategy, need aggressive but achievable strategies/benchmarks. Self-sustaining in 20 years would be great
  - Nuclear viable stopgap during transition from fossils to renewable

### **Transportation – What principles should be used in making investment decisions?**

- Prioritizing populations that have historically lacked resources
- Weighting towards those who have less access/have been excluded
- Build for what we want, not what we have now – prioritize designs that get us towards our goals, rather than working from current metrics
- Using health as a metric—historically have located pollution sources in low income areas
- Community benefits rather than metrics

- Fact vs fears -- Let's not let controversy prevent us from moving forward / represent the community as a whole, not just loudest groups (ie greenways, parking, energy, affordable housing)
- How can the Town grapple with vested interests?
- Policy vs politics
- Connectivity to neighborhoods in NTA
- Supporting and prioritizing neurodiverse community members

**Transportation: How does Carrboro balance the need for parking to support businesses with the goal of encouraging biking, walking & transit?**

- Collect parking and then make that parking accessible to other modes (formal park n ride or informal clustering)
- Other communities are getting rid of parking minimums—consider for Carrboro?
- Still including accessible spaces, but letting individual users determine their specific parking needs
- Infrastructure needs to support this balance for all users (connected sidewalks, safe crossings, etc.)
- Think of bus system beyond just commuters—longer hours and weekends so that it becomes a full alternative
- Bike lane connectivity, greenway connectivity
- Gold standard of safety (and accessibility) is fully protected, separated
- Pricing structures for parking -- dynamic pricing, CMAQ funds
- Collaboration with Chapel Hill—how many people park for free in Carrboro and visit CH businesses?

**Water / Green Stormwater Infrastructure – What are the most critical initiatives to conserve water by residents, businesses and public facilities?**

- Residents:
  - Laundry facilities in multi family housing (ie upgrading appliances to conserve water)
  - Low water gardening as opposed to lawn
  - Native plantings
  - Raleigh program rainwater rewards – subsidies for GSI
  - Education / outreach -- hesitancy re: burden being placed on individual; much of the issue is out of their control
  - More education towards solutions focused on detention/slowing of water
  - Microwater sheds
  - Tom's Creek, South Greensboro
  - Help to people affected by flooding – create a fund
- Businesses
  - Off hours on heat, cooling, and light
  - Gray water systems
  - Advanced irrigation systems (drip, center of gravity)

**Energy – What are the most critical initiatives to lower energy use by residents, businesses and public facilities?**

- Residents
  - Expand WISE program for low income residents – provides funding for energy audits + improvements; current program uses reimbursements which can limit accessibility
  - Weatherization that prioritizes equity
  - Align financial incentives for renters and owners
- Businesses
  - Public facilities
  - Future proof -- Forward thinking in building process; passive and active solar, prove how building can earn back initial investments later on
- Town
  - Solar—companies that install solar roofs and lease
  - Can Town help vet these companies and facilitate process with homeowners

## ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

*Participants: Randee Haven – O'Donnell, David Markiewicz, Wamiq Chowdhury, Braxton Foushee, David Jesse, Jim Porto, Amy Singleton, Daniel Mayer, Elmira Mangum, Rachel Gaylord-Miles, Mark Moshier*

### **Vision: Prior input from Task Force (Where would you like Carrboro to be in 20 years regarding economic sustainability?)**

- Support small, local businesses because they tend to better support the community
- Business-friendly environment that allows for the creation and growth of small businesses
- “Economic sustainability should make sure people can live, work and play in Carrboro. Many people can do only 1 or 2, not all 3. The Comprehensive Plan needs to outline the principles around how we make decisions to apply a consistent framework in the review of development proposals.”
- “Many chain stores in Carrboro are the highest producing stores, which is great, but it increases the price to do business and makes it more difficult for small businesses to open and operate.”
- “We want sustainable, equitable, livable—to have that it will take a systems approach wherein we don't gain one at the expense of another. We need to make sure that businesses can market themselves. The Town needs to be welcoming to business owners.”

### **How can we create a more inclusive (occupation, wages, education level, race) economy?**

- Does revolving loan fund still exist? Yes, has helped lots of small businesses
- Mentorship and apprentice programs, incentives & stipends
- Examples: Hope Renovations, 12 week program for women in construction industry, they are in Fitch Lumber warehouse; Arts Commission gives student internships
- Create summer youth employment program
- Jackson, Miss – worker-led business development, culture of diversity, providing resources for new approaches to start businesses

### **How can our economy be more place-based, resilient, and more walkable?**

- Increase residential density, allow the town to build up

- Higher density to attract businesses
- Infrastructure – need broad sidewalks
- Be a destination--are we promoting our creeks, open spaces, attracting visitors, visit Weaver St? Also to bike, visit trails, invest in itself to attract people
- Hospitality industry – B&Bs
  - Hotel is one of the busiest in the region
  - Take another look at AirBNB? Need a full package – otherwise stay in Chapel Hill
- Arts & tourism
- Town festivals
- Tourism Development Authority
- Add wayfinding, there was a study and proposal, needs to be implemented
- We're proud of being a little scruffy, but we could polish up a bit, it will draw people in with the arts
- Walking trail to connect destinations and tourism

### **How can we grow the arts and entertainment sector?**

- Provide more indoor and outdoor venues
- Promote public art, sculpture and murals on public and private property
- Guided tours of the arts
- Embrace creative economy as a whole, high tech, arts are all related, find the overlaps
- Festivals – continued support of the Music Festival, Film Festival, look at arts and crafts fairs
- Artist incubator

### **How can we reduce friction-barriers to redevelopment?**

- Amend the codes to support the goals of the plan
- Simplify the code, overlays get very complicated, make it more outcome-oriented
- Limited square footage – 10,000 sq ft
- Bilingual staff to work on permits and zoning
- When you add up the process all together, stormwater, public art, it is difficult to execute and make it work
- Need to lead a conversation about redevelopment, how much do people want downtown Carrboro to change, difficult to read the pulse of the community

## **BREAKOUT SESSIONS REPORT BACK**

Teresa Lockamy of the project team then led a short debrief of the breakout sessions:

“We should be creative about how we present our transportation options, we could have our unique Carrboro stamp on things (like the Metro in Paris). Keep appearance in mind as we think about cutting across the different sections.” - Jim Porto

“Treat all areas equally for transportation – specifically with bus shelters. Some places have them and some don't. We need to overinvest in underinvested areas where we have historically failed.” - Braxton Foushee

## ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Francie Sallinger, Teska shared a brief update on engagement and the different tools available on the website to continue encouraging folks to share ideas. Plans for upcoming outreach will focus more on non-digital based activities over the next couple of months, including posting information in the Town's new Neighborhood Message Center information kiosks, and also printing new project postcards that have a couple of questions or ideas people can fill out and drop off at a physical location.

The team will be asking the Task Force for help in promoting the next community meeting which will take place in March.

## MEETING DEBRIEF

Tim Turner shared a final word on how the fourth Task Force meeting went overall: "I really appreciate this process for the way it exposes us to all these different aspects we might not be used to hearing about."

## NEXT STEPS

Trish McGuire shared upcoming dates and next steps:

### Upcoming Meetings:

- Feb. 18 @ 5:30, Task Force 5 - Recreation, Parks & Culture and Public Services
- Mar. 18 @ 7:00, Community Meeting 2
- May 13 @ 5:30, Task Force 6 - Workshop on Goals, Strategies and Projects (note: this was originally scheduled for April 15)

### Homework:

1. Review and submit comments on Climate and Environment/Ecosystem Draft Vision, Goals & Strategies via web site or email
2. Provide an update on Carrboro Connects to your Advisory Board

## ADJOURNMENT

Task Force Meeting #4 adjourned a few minutes past 8pm. The project team thanks all Task Force members and Town Staff for another productive and positive meeting for Carrboro Connects!