



Carrboro Connects – Task Force Meeting #5 Summary

301 West Main Street, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

February 18, 2021 – Remote Meeting via Zoom

Task Force Members	Public	Town Staff	Consultant Team
Catherine Fray (Chair)	n/a	Ben Berolzheimer (Planning)	Benito Garcia
David Jessee (Co-Chair)		Charles Harrington (RPCR)	Scott Goldstein
Quinton Harper (Co-Chair)		Jon Hartman-Brown (Economic Development)	Teresa Lockamy
Tim Turner (Co-Chair)		Laura Janway (Planning)	Francie Sallinger
Sarah Brown		Anita Jones-McNair (RPCR)	
Wamiq Chowdhury	Town Council	Patricia McGuire (Planning)	
Lorie Clark	Susan Romaine	Cary McNallan (Finance)	
David Dixon		Tina Moon (Planning)	
Miles Fitch		Wendell Rodgers (RPCR)	
Braxton Foushee		Marty Roupe (Planning)	
Maggie Funkhouser			
Rachel Gaylord-Miles			
Lauren Joca			
Jacqueline Helvey			
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Dan Mayer			
Mark Moshier			
Jim Porto			
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Soteria Shepperson			
Amy Singleton			
Jacqueline Thompson			
Rasam Tooloee			
Anahid Vrana			
Alyson West			

OVERVIEW

The Carrboro Connects Task Force met virtually for their fifth meeting from 5:30-8:00 PM on Zoom on Thursday, February 18th. The Task Force was asked to spend time reviewing materials ahead of the meeting:

1. Affordable Housing Vision, Goals and Strategies – this draft document lays out initial ideas that have been identified in existing plans and programs discussions at Task Force meetings, input from the Community Workshop held on November 19, 2020 and interviews with various stakeholders.
2. Recreation, Parks and Cultural Resources Issues and Opportunities Report

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. Meeting 4 was two more plan topics: Transportation/Infrastructure and Economic Sustainability. The focus at Meeting 5 was Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Resources and Public Services/Capital Improvement Plan.

The meeting agenda, presentation, and this summary can be viewed at www.carrboroconnects.org/events.

OPENING & TOWN COUNCIL MEMBER WELCOME

Catherine Fray, Task Force Chair, opened the meeting and recapped where the planning process has been thus far. She then introduced Town Council Member Susan Romaine, who was featured in a pre-recorded video:

"Tonight's agenda touches on some of the most fundamental roles of local government—our parks and recreation, cultural resources, police and fire protection, and our public works department. I'm standing in Hank Anderson Park and this wonderful refuge begs a really important question—do all our residents have equal access to our town's programs and services, as well as amenities and infrastructure? For example, is our town's greenspace just as accessible to community members of color as it is to folks like me? When we paint murals and bike lanes, are they in all neighborhoods?"

Council Member Romaine also attended live to share several updates from the Town Council relating to the evening's topics:

- New Police Chief hired
- First ever task force to explore new approaches to public safety that look beyond traditional policing
- Recruiting for racial equity commission
- ArtsCenter building a brand new space
- New murals in the downtown
- Breaking ground on the 203 Project later this year

- Renovations being considered for Public Works department, Town Hall, Century Center
- Construction on South Greensboro sidewalk
- Estes Dr and North Greensboro street roundabout to be completed next year

MEETING 4 RECAP

Task Force Co-Chair David Jessee provided a recap of Task Force Meeting 4. The full meeting summary (and all other past events) can be found on the project website at www.carrboroconnects.org/events.

REVIEW OF DRAFT VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

Scott Goldstein of Teska then presented the draft vision, goals, and strategies document that the project team prepared for the Affordable Housing chapter. Task Force members had the opportunity to review this document before the meeting, and the goals can be viewed in the [presentation here](#).

RECREATION, PARKS, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Then Francie Sallinger of Teska presented the key issues and findings for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Resources plan topic area. This overview can be found in the [presentation](#) on slides 10-20.

Anita Jones-McNair, Director of Carrboro's Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Resources (RPCR) Department posed a trivia question to the group (What Carrboro park was named after a man who served on the Carrboro Board of Aldermen and Director of the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department? Answer: Hank Anderson) and also presented the questions for the breakout group discussions, which will be detailed in the Break-Out Discussion summary below.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Patricia McGuire, Planning Director for Carrboro, and Cary McNallan of Carrboro's Finance Department then gave presentations on the Town's Public Services and Capital Improvements Plan ([slides 22-51](#)). Trish provided a grounding in Town history, the Town's code, and government structure. Cary detailed the major elements of Carrboro's budget and capital planning process.

Below is a summary of some of the Q&A discussion inspired by these presentations:

- Does the Town build anticipated growth into its budget forecasts?
 - Yes, there is a modest estimate if population/tax base growth built in
- Why is the \$10 million reserve fund so important?
 - This, along with debt ratios, is what credit rating agencies look at
- What percent of the Town budget is spent on police services?
 - A: 17%
- When thinking about taxes, it is important to consider the quality of services provided – balancing act between going into debt to support all that the Town needs and being fiscally conservative but providing lower level of service
 - Plan can help identify new ways to add to the tax base and bring in additional revenue (i.e. considering paid parking, increasing density, etc)

BREAK-OUT DISCUSSIONS

In keeping with the format of previous Task Force meetings, all participants were assigned to one of two breakout groups for a 50-minute discussion focused on questions relating to recreation, parks, and cultural resources.

GROUP 1

Have community needs changed around parks and programming? Emerging sports, activities, etc.?

- Still desire for a public swimming pool – this is an amenity but also a life skill important for all populations to learn
- Pickle ball is an emerging sport, popular for all age groups
- Open fields for soccer
- The Town does have multi-purpose fields available for reservation, but not enough people know about that
- Dog park
- Adding greenways that connect with Chapel Hill system

Which physical spaces/programs/services/events are working well? What could be enhanced or expanded upon? What is missing?

- Mountain biking for kids / programming that includes bicycle activities
- Pump Track, contained park and building a track
- Incorporate these services in other parts of the town
- Plan for greenways that connects Carrboro neighborhoods
- People in Hogan Farms are disconnected -- Limited or no access
 - Middle school development could encourage additional tracks for recreation and park usage
- All residents being able to walk to a park is a good goal
- Some facilities are not well maintained -- stormwater management is an issue at new MLK park
 - Trail has roots, surface degradation
 - Bikeway is fair but does exhibit some maintenance issues
- Wilson Park is well used -- maybe used to its max limits
- Recreation programs for 18-25 age group
 - Could generate additional revenue
 - Initiating kick-ball league or similar

Which populations might be overlooked? How can we improve equitable access and participation?

- Latinx community seems overlooked
 - Various services are lacking for Latinx community
 - need to first establish connection and identify specific needs
- Improve and have more transparency of services available
 - Connecting individuals to those services

- More targeted approaches
- Having a local resident/rep helps to gain trust
- Organizing events targeted to specific populations helps

Telling the Carrboro story: what elements from the past and present can be celebrated?

- Latinx day (proposing)
- Similar event for African American community and other race/ethnicities
- Merge different holidays, activities, and culture into events
- Organize events that celebrate sports, pride, and people

Should the plan consider historic preservation / additional historic districts?

- Not the highest priority
- There are plenty of historic houses, but nothing is too significant
- Nice to have signage that tells the story of key locations and highlights significant sites, importance

GROUP 2

Have community needs changed around parks and programming? Emerging sports, activities, etc.?

- Swimming opportunities
- Orange Co Sports Plex in Hillsborough – far away but it's a hub for young people
- Opportunities for youth in the community, people are not coming into Carrboro along Franklin St. anymore
- Would like more indoor activities - basketball
- Walking, running, biking – dangerous for people of color
- Has Carrboro thought about full day summer camp?
- Carrboro is a go to place for baseball, can this be leveraged into better facilities

Which physical spaces/programs/services/events are working well? What could be enhanced or expanded upon? What is missing?

- Farmers Market area -- used for other events, need outdoor spaces
- Events work well – Carrboro Music Festival, Film Festival, poetry
- Open Streets Day – lots of people come
 - expand the program so that it moves around to different neighborhoods periodically, or have a [Play Streets](#) program that can happen in any part of town
- Programming at Century Center – dance classes, important for seniors and all age groups
- Weaver St. Market – all the programming, did need to have anything special
- Focus on what do we really want to excel at – Farmers Market, Weaver St, festivals, expand on excellence
- Needs to go out as well, downtown is ok to be the beacon, but there should be opportunities in other areas – build up excellence in those activities
 - Have other nuclear spaces outside of downtown, be more accessible and inclusive
 - Highlight privately owned public spaces – they are outside of downtown

- Signage restrictions – difficult to promote your business (e.g. Soteria)
- Two Carrboros
- Cats Cradle – doing a lot of remote for now – may need more affordable space
- Henry Anderson Park not walkable to Carrboro Plaza -- no bus, needs better connection

Which populations might be overlooked? How can we improve equitable access and participation?

- How to make parks and outdoor spaces safer for people of color without putting police on every block?
 - Put up cameras as a deterrent
- Making parks and playground more accessible for people with different abilities – some playgrounds are fully designed to be accessible, MLK Jr Park was designed to be accessible
- More outdoor programming for older adults
- Improve sidewalks, bike paths, transit to parks
- Improve access to underserved areas – create pocket parks, nodes for recreation, like Simpson St., 1 acre or less

Telling the Carrboro story: what elements from the past and present can be celebrated?

- Murals on picnic tables, bring in artists, kids, celebrate the town, bring awareness to social justice
- Broadmoor neighborhood, Tin Top, what used to be here? Celebrate our growth and honor those who created this community
- Shelton Station – hired artist that sits in front, artist did research, famous for making cross ties for the railroads, Carrboro was once largest manufacturer of cross ties
- We need to find out more, share – why is this building still standing?

Limited land requires innovative solutions and partnerships...what could this look like?

- Pocket parks -- don't want to take a lot of space that could have housing
- Residential lot is required to have a certain amount of open space, incentivize to be collected together and open to the public?
- Allow greater density in exchange for affordable housing and open space
- Work with privately owned landowners to support in reimagining their space
- Opportunity to share space, e.g. Weaver St.
- What is long term possibility for restaurants that are now street facing, like Steel String, create a community activity on their space
 - that's Europe, where you are out
 - Front porch culture brought to a commercial business
- Improve partnership with NCDOT to make more walkable bikeable
- Road diet – NCDOT did one on Jones Ferry, provided more median space, why not low vegetation not just grass
- Change the "man" in the ped light – should be green, not white – systematic racism
- Containers – office spaces, small businesses – Present Day
- Convert some parking into parks and/or housing

Should the plan consider historic preservation / additional historic districts?

- Tin Top, Lloyd, Broad, North Side – historic Black neighborhoods – train tracks to St. Joseph Church – create historic preservation neighborhood, bring in funding for affordable housing
- Historical place – at Century Center – museum? Place to showcase?

ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Benito Garcia, Teska provided an engagement update. First, the website continues to be well used though we want to continue efforts to attract new users and idea-sharing. As of this meeting, there were nearly 1,400 website visitors, 231 activated registrations, 188 visits to the [Share Ideas](#) page, and 100 comments placed on [Map Input](#) tool. Other stats include: 63 interviews conducted, five task force meetings, and 150 attendees at Community Workshop #1.

The next outreach event will be targeted towards the Latinx community and is being hosted in partnership with El Centro Hispano. On March 4th at 6pm on Facebook Live (via the El Centro Facebook page) we will be hosting a listening event featuring a panel of residents and Mayor Lavelle and Council Member Foushee. The conversation will be in Spanish with English translation provided. Spanish speakers can view the event on Facebook Live. English speakers can contact Ben Berolzheimer to log into the Zoom for English translation.

Next up is the second Community Workshop on March 18th at 7pm. The focus will be pivoting from the big picture vision to brainstorming about strategies and projects. Social media graphics and printed materials will be shared soon and we will need Task Force members' help to promote this workshop and continue momentum from the first one last November.

MEETING DEBRIEF

Tim Turner shared closing remarks: "I continue to be amazed by all the moving parts and hard work that is being done in town and in this planning effort. There is such a spirit here and I'm excited about the process and where we can go with it!"

NEXT STEPS

Trish McGuire shared upcoming dates and next steps:

Upcoming Meetings:

- March 4 @ 6:00 Facebook Live Spanish Event (visit El Centro Hispano Facebook page to attend in Spanish or contact Ben Berolzheimer at bberolzheimer@townofcarrboro.org for login information to the Zoom English translation)
- Mar. 18 @ 7:00, Community Workshop 2 via Zoom, login information to be provided to all Task Force members to promote to all of the Carrboro community
- May 13 @ 5:30, Task Force 6 - Workshop on Goals, Strategies and Projects

Homework:

1. Submit comments on Affordable Housing Draft Vision, Goals & Strategies [via web site](#) or email

Task Force Meeting #5 adjourned at 8pm. As always, the Carrboro Connects project team is very grateful to the Task Force members and Town Staff for the time and energy they dedicate to help shape Carrboro Connects.

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