

2040 Plan Steering Committee

Meeting #6 Minutes

- **Meeting Information**

Date: → Wednesday, July 22nd, 2020

Time: → 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Location: → Virtual Meeting

Virtual Meeting Information

Members of the public may view the recorded meeting at <https://facebook.com/ToH2040>.

Chairman Carbonell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1. Roll Call

The following Steering Committee members were in attendance:

- John Carbonell
- Kim Aichele
- Tim Bender
- Ross Boner
- Randy Brawley
- John Forehand
- Erin Gillespie
- Scott Harrington
- Joshua Helm
- Kristin Ingram
- Eric Rowell
- Kaitlyn Sisson
- George Solomon

Staff & Consultants

- Jack Simoneau, Dave Hill, Tracy Barron
- Jake Petrosky, Stewart

Chairman's Remarks

John Carbonell called the meeting to order and provided opening remarks. Reminder that due to the Town's, County's and State's declaration of emergency due to COVID-19, the meeting tonight is being conducted remotely. John provided an overview of the agenda and topics.

2. Approval of June Meeting Summary

Scott Harrington - motion, George Solomon - Second. Approved unanimously.

3. Project Schedule & Public Outreach

- Dave Hill went through schedule for next 3 months.
- Survey #3 will run from August thru September 18.
- Draft plan will be released end of August in online and newsprint versions.
 - Planning on newsprint version of the draft plan mailed to citizens towards the end of August
 - Print version will have a paper survey
 - Estimated cost of printing. \$8k. This will be considered as part of a contract amendment at the Aug 3rd town board meeting.
- Question from Erin: Is this similar to schedule initially? How has quarantine changed things
 - Schedule was delayed a bit in order to allow time for formatting of a print version of the plan.
- The next Steering Committee meeting will be in September.
- Potential for SC to want additional meetings. These could occur before the joint work session planned with the Town Board, Planning Board and Steering Committee in Early October.
- There is a potential for drop-in public meetings but these are dependent on state/town policies
- There will be a public hearing on the plan. This is tentatively scheduled for October 19th.
- Themes from the Plan Framework Survey were discussed. These included:



- Vision and goal comments
 - Top priority goals were Growth Management, Downtown, Greenways & Trails
 - There is a need to define and clarify “livability” in draft plan
 - There needs to be a balance between revitalization and neighborhood preservation
 - Diversity and inclusion: many comments on this. We could potentially modify a housing goal and/or the vision statement to address these comments.
 - Need to emphasize identity and “sense of place”
 - Public safety and education are seen as key public services. Need to be clear about town’s role on education, what they can do and what they do not control.
 - Housing diversity mentioned as key to potential employers.
- 58% of people have a preference for limiting growth more than the adopted land use plan
- Option on housing options is split, some feel more options are needed, some feel there are adequate options for older people and young people in town
- 53% of respondents (out of 210 surveys completed) think the town should still plan for commuter rail even though the railroad would have to change its policies and it may only be a long-term option.
 - Scott mentioned that he was not aware of a feasible path for rail service. It was noted that transit will be discussed later in the agenda.

4. Public Comments / Listening Session

- There were no public comments

5. Discussion on Outstanding Issues

- Sam Furr Corridor / Activity Centers Discussion
 - Many would be concerned about encouraging more growth

- Senior apartments are ok. These do not impact schools or roads as much.
- Growth management is important. (x2)
- Senior development that was recently approved (along NC 73) is more of an anomaly.
- Most prefer the growth management option (Option A) presented for NC 73. Mentioned that a blend with some of the moderate growth scenario may be ok.
- Need to include most current info on NCDOT project delays.
 - Need to get an update and convey this as part of the plan.
 - More justification for managing growth due to projects slipping farther into the future.
- Urban Form and Public Streets
 - Comments on NC 73, what do you do with a super street? Will need specific recommendations on that. May need a modified building/street edge.
 - How to have safe bike/ped crossings.. with no signalize intersections.
 - This is an equity concern for some areas. Cannot be livable for ages 8-80 if you cannot walk to the store.
- Affordability
 - Other areas (i.e. NY) have inclusionary zoning. Required mix of homes.
 - What policy recs are we considering?
 - In North Carolina inclusionary zoning (requiring a certain number of affordable units) is illegal. But the town does have policies that specify a mix of lot sizes is required.
 - Incentives are another route that can be used to get more variation in housing type. These can be different for different areas of town (Town Core, vs Suburban or Rural)



- Discussion of a housing trust. Would this be something that the town could do? Some members in support of this, some are against a larger affordable or workforce housing role for the town.
 - Young families need a start. Need to keep kids here.
 - This is a key policy issue. No right or wrong answer.
 - More input on survey needed.
 - What are options, are they willing to pay for it.
 - Are doing some good things, zoning allows it.
 - Dev standards: do not allow min lot size or lot with. 30% can be attached
 - Allow accessory dwelling on lots.
 - SF home prices are not as high as other areas.
 - This has allowed prices to remain competitive
 - Barriers, incentives, housing trust...
- Downtown
 - A Downtown Concept plan will be generated during the next month. Will be considered as part of the plan.
- Transit and Red Line Discussion
 - Eric Rowell made a motion: All references to a specific commuter or light rail project (i.e. the red line), any 2040 action items or policies be neutral toward commuter rail or light rail projects as opposed to advocating for the project.
 - Many seconds to the motion.
 - Argument for the motion:
 - Continuing to focus efforts on rail that is unlikely to come. We will have to deal with density related to multifamily development and more dense units near the proposed line.
 - Rail does not help east to west movements
 - Have been planning for this transit project for a long time. 20 years. But no closer to getting it started.



- Town has to deal with other infrastructure challenges. That should take a priority.
- Questions for staff:
 - In your opinion, history of the town, etc. and planning behind the red line. Is Norfolk southern likely to allow commuter rail.
 - Answer: Possibly in 20 or 30 years. It could happen. Also note that only 1 development zoned as TOD. Bryton, and they had to do a traffic impact study. Widening of NC 115 resulted.
- If someone were to propose a TOD, they would have to do a traffic impact analysis, given there is no train.
- Question about who pays for the train and any associated infrastructure. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) was discussed a decade ago, but no discussion recently. Regional funding sources would be tapped, but any other funding questions are speculation at this time.
- Comments against the motion (for keeping rail as an option)
 - It would be short-sided and a violation of the public trust in the steering committee to attempt to lock Huntersville into a specific action or categorically eliminate options for future planning –including attempting to eliminate light rail as a course of action
 - Strategy is to allow flexibility
 - Norfolk Southern was looking for a deal to provide long-term access to a Greensboro-CLT line owned by the state. Lease to track ends in 2029.
 - Disregarding public opinion
 - Residents desire mass transit per comments from survey



- Suggesting that community survey respondents don't know what they are talking about is condescending and inappropriate
- The steering committee's charter is to seek public comment not ignore it
- Benefits of Rail
 - Blue Line spurred \$2.1 Billion in economic development in on year.
 - Environmentally beneficial
 - Provides transportation options
 - May improve diversity
- Recommendation
 - Do not lock the city into narrow decisions or categorically deny any courses of action, including light rail
- Other comments
 - This discussion is not different than other policy discussions. Trying to shape the 2040 plan.
 - Not trying to be condescending to survey respondents.
 - People may not understand implications of cost.
- People know that there are cost implications.
- Is there a way on survey to understand cost.
- Regional line, would be funded by regional funds that are funded by 5 cent sales tax that has been in place.
- Why would we want to eliminate anything that would help the town in the future. Having it mentioned would not hurt anything. Eliminating it from discussion would not be good.
- Cost and economic activity would need to be considered.
- Part of tradeoffs and priorities that need to be understood.
 - More development on 73, losing character
 - Eliminating it would have consequences down the line, potentially losing transit as an option.



o Vote on the motion:

- Motion: All references to a specific commuter or light rail project (i.e. the red line), any 2040 action items or policies be neutral toward commuter rail or light rail projects as opposed to advocating for the project.
 - Kim Aichele - no
 - Tim Bender - no
 - Ross Boner - no
 - Randy Brawley - no
 - John Carbonell - no
 - Erin Gillespie - no
 - Scott Harrington - no
 - Joshua Helm - no
 - Kristin Ingram - no
 - Eric Rowell - yes
 - Kaitlyn Sisson - yes
 - George Solomon – no

The motion failed by a vote of 11-1.

6. Next Steps

- Draft Plan Survey (Survey #3) – End of August – Sept 18
- Draft Plan Release and Review – End of August
- SC #7: Implementation – September 16th

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.