

## Kickoff Meetings Summary

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### Town of Huntersville Engineering Department & Transportation

#### Meeting Information

Date: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Time: 2:00PM  
Location: Huntersville Discovery Place, Rotunda Meeting Room  
105 Gilead Road, Huntersville, NC 28078  
Attendees: Stephen Trott, Lora Mastrofrancesco

#### **Discussion Items**

- Three electric providers: Duke (east side and the nuclear power plant), Electricities (central), Energy United (western side)
- Water and Sewer handled by the county.
- Engineering maintains roads, construction details, specifications, street cross-sections, and handles pre-construction services.
- Engineering dept. is new as of July 1<sup>st</sup> this year.
- Public works takes over projects when construction begins.
- First street/standards design manual was written in 2009.
  - Pavement structure standards increased recently
  - Parking is an issue in some neighborhoods
  - Concern over maintaining minimum clearance for emergency vehicles
  - Have had to disallow parking from one side of the street in some circumstances
- Fire Department is volunteer. County fire marshal.
  - Fire code requires subdivisions with over 30 units to have two accesses.
- Development that is spread out comes with significant maintenance obligations that are not quite accounted for. For instance, road maintenance

is only dealt with through Powell Bill funding. Only recently have larger maintenance projects been tackled. Website has a Powell Bill map on it – about 210 miles of town-owned and -maintained roads.

- Resurfacing plan for town-owned roads every 30 years
- Funded through Powell bill
- Costs are significant, for example: \$1.7M for 7 miles of resurfacing, \$1.4M for 6 miles of resurfacing
- Receiving \$1.6M in Powell Bill per year, but that’s not enough. Have had to dip into surplus funds to pay for projects.
- Still a bedroom community. Many previous subdivisions limit connectivity. Pedestrian-only connections could be an option to increase connectivity in older neighborhoods.
- Most transportation projects to date have been small turn-lane projects that make minor, incremental improvements.
  - Easy projects have been completed. Only the more difficult projects are left.
- Gilead Road widening from 2 to 4 lanes is in engineering phase. Utilizing CRTPO funds. Bridge over the creek is expensive.
- Huntersville-Concord Road and Beatties Ford Road are main thoroughfares but only two lanes. Other road connections needed.
- Verhoeff Drive extension, 1.7 miles, \$30M, would serve industrial park and serve east/west but doesn’t have a direct connection to interstate.
- NC 73 widening around 77: Right-of-way in 2021, Construction in 2023, design not finalized
- Main Street project will create two two-way pairs and should improve pedestrian connectivity. Construction will be in 2020.
- Multi-modal on-street bike facilities needed in more urban areas. What is vision for rural area, and what type of multi-modal facility is appropriate? Greenways? Bikeways on-road?
- Where are the origins and destinations? How to maximize the use of infrastructure, esp. when the more rural areas may not develop with enough density for developers to provide connected, enhanced facilities?

- Traffic movement (widenings, one-ways, etc.) is always a concern, but who are we making these improvements for? Locals? Or for people commuting through?
- Staff has a map and table on the town website that details what stage of development each transportation project is in.
- Would like the Community Plan to have some recommendations prioritizing the future transportation projects. Would be a cohesive plan that phases and influences the design of transportation projects based on coordination with land use and infrastructure investments.
- Also, there is a need to evaluate planned new-location roads and coordinate land use and investments on the edges, adjacent to neighboring communities.
  - Do dashed thoroughfares match intended land use in east and west areas?
  - What should the plan be for “edge” roads like Eastfield Road?
  - Coordination with the Town of Cornelius, Town of Davidson and City of Charlotte needed.

## **Town of Huntersville Parks & Recreation**

### **Meeting Information**

Date: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Time: 2:45PM  
Location: Huntersville Discovery Place, Rotunda Meeting Room  
105 Gilead Road, Huntersville, NC 28078  
Attendees: Michael Jaycocks, Tracy Houk

### **Discussion Items**

- Parks & Rec manages the comprehensive bicycle plan – first open house is next week; survey is in process; first steering committee meeting has happened. (Alta is facilitating the Town’s bike plan). People are comfortable riding around their neighborhood but cannot leave and go to another neighborhood.
- Possibility to combine bike planning efforts into the comp plan public meeting (perhaps) at the late Jan/early Feb. charrette.
- ~6 miles of greenways in design, funded, etc. Most of the funds County or State, with some matching town funds. ~3 miles of greenway on the ground already, including ~800 feet of the Mooresville-to-Charlotte Trail.
- Most of the park land in the town is County-owned, and the town has a long-term lease for operations and maintenance.
- There are ten joint use agreements with 4 different school systems. This cooperation is by necessity for providing services for the explosive growth in the area.
- Accomplishments
  - Veteran’s Park completed last year. 40-50 events a year programmed.
  - Huntersville Recreation Center, opened last year.
  - Bradford turf field improvements (2<sup>nd</sup> phase), \$3.2 million
  - Ranson Park (behind the Publix) currently being master planned for upgrades. It is a neighborhood park.

- Master plan for Ranson / Rosedale park (land donated to town) is underway. First neighborhood park in years.
- North Meck Regional Recreation Center planned in the Town of Cornelius
- Parks Master Plan update underway
- Rural Hill Park has big events; not affiliated with the town. They lease the land from the County.
- Town would prefer to stay out of the maintenance business for greenways and new subdivision open space.
- Town requires new subdivisions to build any greenways that are on the approved map and within the project boundaries. County inspects and takes over maintenance.
- 880' greenway section – Mooresville-to-Charlotte Greenway Trail.
- County owns land for potential future parks on the west side: Ervin Cook Rd and also on McIlwaine Rd. County also owns land on east side off of Eastfield Rd.
- Most visited parks: Holbrook and North Meck Parks. Bradford parks is most visited for organized sports because of the new soccer turf fields.
  - Christmas tree lighting and Huntersville Christmas – 8,000 people expected, first of December
  - Hello Huntersville – Weekend in May, music and arts festival
  - Jazz festival - Every Saturday in April
- Smallest park: Greenway (just south from Craft Beer Guys), or Abernathy.
- #1 park goal for Parks Director: Holbrook Park expansion (area is north/northwest of the Town Hall). Funds programmed in 2-year capital improvements plan for this enhancement.
- Huntington Green (the mobile home park) may be underserved area for recreation. There is a church there with playground, but no current prospects for long-term partnering. Sidewalk programmed for McCoy Road nearby.

## Town of Huntersville Planning Department

### Meeting Information

Date: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Time: 3:30PM  
Location: Huntersville Discovery Place, Rotunda Meeting Room  
105 Gilead Road, Huntersville, NC 28078  
Attendees: Jack Simoneau, Dave Hill, Brian Richards, Sierra Saumenig, Lauren Speight, Brad Priest, David Peete.

### **Discussion Items**

- Tree-save/tree-mitigation effort to improve canopy retention in new development.
  - Planning Board has appointed tree mitigation committee and is looking for opportunities to preserve tree canopy.
  - There is frustration about new development clearcutting and mass grading.
  - Inventory of trees needed. Planning Board has requested a baseline for how much tree canopy exists. Charlotte goal of 50% tree canopy referenced.
  - Current ordinance requires some mitigation. Different zones have different tree saves, maybe we have too many or not enough. Buffers needed, i.e. if you want 20 functional feet, you need to save 30 to protect roots, etc.
  - Open space percentage required, but meaningful stand of trees not saved in some occasions. No incentives or requirements to save. Negotiations are done at the staff level, but there are no strong regulations.
- Open space preservation should be coordinated with tree canopy protection. Commercial and non-residential trends.
  - Big emphasis lately on flex space: office, commercial, and industrial.

- Potentially doubling the amount of square footage in the near future. Huntersville still has some available land.
    - Topography and sewer service provision are difficult in the SW of I-77, where additional land has been zoned Corporate Business (CB).
  - Lots of inquiry about retail/restaurants demand south of downtown.
- Equity in new residential development is a concern, especially since new housing is expensive.
  - Providing housing near parks and goods-and-services of everyday life can contribute to higher quality housing and potentially more equitable as well.
  - It's possible that the community does not really understand the affordable housing problem. Comp Plan should still address this.
  - Town has progressive ordinance, i.e. no minimum lot size in high intensity area.
  - Need housing close to transportation that is affordable.
  - Affordable includes workforce housing--~\$200k.
  - Attached units and apartments that are coming are market rate and are not affordable.
- 6-7 Nodes identified in outer areas
  - Limited traction except for 2 southern nodes.
    - Beatties Ford Rd / Mt Holly / Huntersville Rd
    - Eastfield/Prosperity Church Rd
  - These and others are opportunities to address tax base balance and serve local areas with commercial
  - Could also be a place for attached housing product
  - Types of nodes allow different intensity. Currently, the Community Plan identifies 3 types of nodes: rail-supported, TND, and general activity areas.
  - Rosedale node and Birkdale nodes are great counterpoints for each other. Rosedale is the "working man's" Birkdale.

- Will have different forms of nodes. Some concern over storage areas going in at the Beatties Ford Rd / US 73 mixed use node. Although units fronting the street will be office space.
- Zoning enforcement is largely complaint-driven.
  - Concerns over home occupations (i.e. autobody repair in garages). Agri-tourism bill is also particularly troublesome for this town.
  - Have one full time code enforcement technician, and a part time of zoning officer too.
- Transportation
  - Centers and Corridors Plan (1998) shaped region
  - Huntersville has proactively encouraged density into the north-south corridor.
    - Cornelius and Davidson also have similar TOD zoning areas that are sidelined by the Norfolk Southern decision to halt commuter rail opportunities. Three nodes were identified in the land use plan of “intensity zones” to be TOD nodes.
  - Norfolk Southern Railroad has not been supportive in getting commuter rail.
  - BRT is the plan in the near-term.
    - There is an opportunity to use BRT (and commuter rail stops) to increase private investment.
    - Potential Transit Oriented Development (TOD) opportunity. How to provide balance, jobs in Huntersville to create bi-directional travel and local investment?
  - NCDOT investments in the area roughly total \$500 million to \$1 billion.
    - Superstreets are a key component. Bastian Schroeder (Kittelson) is working (with the town and NCDOT) on what an appropriate design for pedestrian accommodations on superstreets would be for suburban implementation.



- The town will get superstreets (from NCDOT) on US 73 and Statesville Rd, so how to align these projects with the goals of the town and land use plan.
- Need to shape the design of projects and the transportation investment process to reinforce land use plan.
- Downtown has a two-way pair expansion for the roads, but discussion about widening from I-77 has the potential to blow out the downtown with 4-lane highways.
- Need to coordinate land uses with future transit and at the nodes and in commercial corridors.
  - There are caps on percentage of attached housing based on zoning district. Proposal to allow 100% attached housing in Commercial Highway district, especially along the Hwy 21 (Statesville Road)/I-77 strip.
    - Lots of flexibility exists in the HC district. Birkdale is in HC.
  - Concern about apartments when there is no commuter rail system. Lots of apartments have been entitled (ex – Bryton) that have not been developed.
    - May need to meet design characteristics to become compatible.
  - After Super Streets.... Corners will not be as special for commercial.. No left turns will be allowed.
- Form Based Code
  - Characteristics of development are more important than density
  - Potential for clarity in the Higher Intensity Zone
    - Maybe transit supportive development can go in certain areas (where TOD should go)
- Concern about scale of development downtown.
  - TND can be 100% attached. Would be more appropriate downtown than TOD.
- Strategic ED Plan included policies about protecting prime land
  - Conflicted with policy about saving trees.

- Going from IND to residential policies were conflicting.
- How do tradeoffs get weighed? What is the goal for saving industrial land, how about trees, providing for residential development...
- How much inventory of land is enough for economic development?
- How much nonresidential land use is needed to balance the residential uses? Also vacant res/nonres, and how much supply to keep? How does tax value of these uses play into the overall balance of maintenance and land supply?
- What are the implications of chipping away at the prime industrial lands?
- Rural and Transitional areas
  - (R) and (TR) zoning districts
  - Can't administratively revert to other
  - Need to continue to review and revise policies based on recent designs
- Other Policies
  - Big to little. Policies needed to cover things unforeseen
  - Need comp plan reference to respond and to state law changes. Clean up tool needed.