

# 2022 Downtown Plan Steering Committee



## Meeting #13: Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 3, 2022

Huntersville Town Hall, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

### Attendees:

Voting Members      Nate Bowman                      Gatewood Campbell  
                                 Doug Ferguson                      John Foster  
                                 Barbara Gerhardt                      Charles Guignard  
                                 Lee Hallman                              Janelle Harris  
                                 Elaine Kerns                              Bob Lemon  
                                 Sarah McAulay                              Jesssika Tucker

Ex-Officio Members: Kathy Jones                      Diane McLaine  
                                 John O'Neill

Town Staff:                      Jack Simoneau                      Brian Richards  
                                 Tracy Barron                              Jackie Huffman  
                                 Bobby Williams

Consultants:                      Larry Zinser                              Terry Shook

1. **Call to Order** – Chairperson McAulay called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. A recorded video of the meeting is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jadnzx55Ch4>
2. **Roll Call** – Meeting attendance is noted above.
3. **Approval of Agenda** – Charles Guignard made the motion to approve the agenda; John Foster seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Approval of October 6, 2022 Meeting Minutes** – Charles Guignard made the motion to approve the meeting minutes; Bob Lemon seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
5. **Chairman's Remarks** – Chairman McAuley made remarks from a written statement found as an addendum at the end of these minutes.
6. **General Public Comment** – Stacy Norris Walker expressed her concerns about urbanization in Huntersville, and said she thought that the Plan would make her lose her home. She wanted to support the history and small-town character of Huntersville. Stacy felt that people would be thrown out of their homes and opposed a development-driven Plan. Angela Markou, 9621 Kerns Road, said that she opposes homes being taken due to urbanization. She likes the suburban lifestyle provided in Huntersville. Mike Fitzgerald, 11806 Cupworth Court, said that a number of issues need to be resolved as the Plan moves forward. He asked if property owners had been asked for their consent before taking their homes, and if the homes could be included in the Plan. Let the historic scale of existing buildings serve to guide future development, in terms of

both building heights and footprints, which are currently too high and too large. The Downtown should be designed to serve existing residents and adjoining neighborhoods. Will these residents be enticed to walk into the Downtown – will sidewalks be provided with large shade trees? Mr. Fitzgerald suggested the use of a charrette to discuss walkable design.

- 7. Review / Discussion: Public Forum #3 Results** – Larry Zinser (Shook Kelley) presented the results of the October 20<sup>th</sup> Public Forum, found online at <https://www.letsplanhuntersville.org/publicinputforum> . He indicated that feedback would continue to be solicited. He mentioned that concerns were expressed about building heights and the East-West Connector. Although approximately 20 people responded in real time, others chose to provide comments through a paper survey.
- 8. Presentation: Revisit the Draft Master Plan** – Larry Zinser and Terry Shook revisited the draft Master Plan. For each of the quadrants (NW, NE, SW, SE), changes were made since the October 20<sup>th</sup> Public Forum. Terry Shook indicated that, unless an owner decides change or sell their property, there are no provisions in the Plan to “take” anyone’s property. The Plan suggest what could happen if redevelopment takes place. It was also mentioned that the Plan needs to be viewed incrementally over time. Changes to the draft Plan have been made regarding recommendations for elements such as maximum building heights, Town Hall parking, and catalyst projects. In response to concerns about the East-West Connector, it was suggested that the roadway should remain as an element of the Plan and identified as subject to further investigation. The same was suggested for the connection to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Jack Simoneau asked how Committee feedback should be submitted since the Committee was viewing the new information for the first time. After the meeting, Committee members should send their comments to Jack.
- 9. Committee Discussion: Draft Master Plan** – Committee members continued to discuss the draft plan, citing issues such as which elements of the alternative futures were selected, and how public input influenced the consultant recommendations. Vehicular movement and the provision of on-street parking remain as challenges. Some densities have been lowered and restricted to specific locations. The issue of potential Gilead Road widening, along with the proposed East-West Connector, was discussed as well. Several roadway improvements are either underway or pending that will impact the Downtown, and continued collaboration with NCDOT over the next few years will better inform Gilead Road decisions. The possibility of a round-a-bout at Gilead and NC 115 was brought up – there has been no analysis that shows if such an improvement is feasible. This idea remains on the table for further consideration. Movement of tractor-trailers on round-a-bouts was mentioned as a concern. Another concern raised was the force of an adopted plan, and how implementation could lead to projects not favored by the Committee. Staff responded by saying that the draft Plan will still be reviewed by the Planning Board and the Town Board, and final decisions would be made during the adoption process. The possibility of asking CMS to find an alternative site for its new elementary school was raised and could possibly eliminate traffic concerns. It was suggested that some Plan elements should have contingencies attached to them so that they aren’t implemented unless other conditions are met. The Plan should not be a “catalogue” for developers to exploit opportunities in the Downtown. “Enhanced” transit planning by CATS was also discussed.

- 10. Next Steps** – The presentation will be provided to the Committee; any questions or comments sent to Jack Simoneau will be forwarded to the consultants. Paper copies can be picked up at Town Hall. The Committee was reminded of its next meetings on December 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 11. Adjourn** - The meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.

**Addendum:** Agenda Item #5 - Chairman's Remarks

I can support the middle development plan as presented even though I think middle development will not be an encouragement for retail.

I have included below my edited comments Nov 3rd on East West Connector with the additional recommendations that the E-W Connector should be included in an action item recommendation for a traffic study of entire Town of Huntersville's town limits and the ETJ areas.

I do not think that the current Town Board will approve the current master plan if recommended by the DTSC.

Until the Town of Huntersville has reasonable Town Commissioners open to new capital improvements usually known as development and/or improvements/redevelopments will not occur in the small area allocated for the study area.

I am very disappointed by some DTSC voting and no-voting members think and publicly stating that "developers" as "bad only interested in money". Yes developers want to have a healthy return on their investments. So invest where it is not going to be appreciated not Downtown Huntersville, NC, USA.

I would like a recommendation be that the Town will partner with current food providers and quality new investments in "People Food, cooked or raw, eat on site or take outs.

East West Connector

Nov 3, 2022 Sarah McAulay Comments to Downtown Study Committee

(Edited 11-17-2022 by Sarah McAulay)

I do not support the East West Connector as being presented in Downtown Study Committee planning documents.

Reasons

1. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education reportedly plans to build a new Huntersville Elementary facility in the woods and ball fields replacing the currently school building on Gilead Road, Huntersville NC

if another government entity **will not or does not** fund a new road known as the East West Connector then currently a big ugly black line will be on planning documents

2. If a new school building is built then I would suspect that the old buildings, parking, and open space fronting Gilead Road would be sold for commercial usage providing impressive capital funds for Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education to use outside the North Mecklenburg area.
3. The east west connector would be looking down on some roof top of homes in the long-established Sherwood neighborhood
4. Also the planned East West Connector would be adjutant to the creek along with the recent loss of trees for the new greenway and the planned regional retention pond with the additional of paved 3 or more lanes of asphalt pavement and sidewalks will create real possible flooding some existing homes and properties in the long- established Sherwood neighborhood
5. Property owners at or near Statesville Road Hwy 21 and Old Statesville Road Hwy 115 do not want the planned East West Connector to be included in the recommendations by the Downtown Study Committee.
6. I also do not support 6 lanes on Gilead from Statesville crossing Old Statesville moving on Huntersville Concord Road.
7. There are multi road projects being constructed in or adjutant to the study area so the leading survey question "do you want a new E-W Road" was very miss leading, was very untimely, and in general was just a bad question with no background for responders except they were or had been sitting in traffic backups.
8. Other major existing east west roads just south and north of the study area should be consistent and recommended for expansions and improvement.

## East West Connector

I do not support the East West Connector as being presented in Downtown Study Committee planning documents.

### Reasons

1. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education reportedly plans to build a new Huntersville Elementary facility in the woods and ball fields replacing the currently school building on Gilead Road, Huntersville NC

if another government entity will fund a new road known as the East West Connector currently a big ugly black line on planning documents

2. Then I would suspect that the old buildings, parking, and open space fronting Gilead Road would be sold for commercial usage providing

impressive capital funds for Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education to use outside the North Mecklenburg area.

3. The east west connector would be looking down on some roof top of homes in  
The long established Sherwood neighborhood

182  
11/3/2022  
SRM

4. Also the planned East West Connector would be adjacent to the creek along with the recent loss of trees for the new greenway and the planned regional retention pond

with the additional of paved 3 or more lanes of asphalt pavement and sidewalks

will create the real possible flooding some existing homes and properties in the long established Sherwood neighborhood

5. Property owners at or near Statesville Road Hwy 21 and Old Statesville Road Hwy 115 do not want the planned East West Connector to be included in the recommendations by the Downtown Study Committee.
6. I also do not support 6 lanes on Gilead from Statesville crossing Old Statesville moving on Huntersville Concord Road.
7. There are multi road projects being constructed in or adjacent to the study area
8. Other major existing east west roads just south and north of the study area should be considered and recommended for expansions and improvement.

202  
11-3-2021  
SPM