



2022 Downtown Plan Steering Committee

Special Called Meeting

Thursday, February 3, 2022

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Huntersville Town Hall



Why Have This Meeting?

- Clarify the Planning Process
- Define the Committee's Role
- Outline Project's Roles & Responsibilities
- Provide Constructive Criticism for the Project & Process
- Need for Agreement on How to Proceed
- Need for Committee Discussion by Itself



Meeting Organization*

- Part 1: Brief Staff Presentation
- Part 2: Committee Discussion

* Meeting agendas and Committee communications are now coordinated and managed by the Chair & Vice-Chair.



Part 1: Staff Presentation*

- Staff will cover the following topics:
 - Transit Station & The Red Line Rail
 - Planning Process / Scope of Work
 - Plan Roles & Responsibilities
 - The Steering Committee

* The Chair & Vice-Chair have asked that the Committee hold questions & comments until Committee Discussion begins.



Transit Station & the Red Line Rail

- On January 18, 2022, the Town Board instructed Planning staff to begin preparation of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance *[Sections 3.2.4, 3.2.5, 3.2.6, 3.2.7, d) 3) & 4)]*

3) In major subdivisions and planned developments, the aggregate number of dwelling units contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings shall not exceed 30% of the total number of dwelling units in a project.

4) Notwithstanding the limitations of 3), above, in any portion of a major subdivision located within ¼ mile of a designated rail transit station, the percentage of dwelling units contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings is not limited. Higher overall density is encouraged within ¼ mile of rail transit stations. Rail transit stations are those locations designated by a resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Huntersville.



Transit Station & the Red Line Rail

An Important Distinction

- Town of Huntersville Zoning Ordinance
 - The Text Amendment being prepared will remove provisions that allow more than 30% attached housing within ¼-mile of a designated rail transit station. This is a local land use issue governed by the Town.
 - If or when the Red Line Commuter Rail becomes a reality, this issue can be revisited.
- Regional Transit Plans
 - The Red Line is a planned transit route shown on officially adopted regional transportation plans (CATS & CRTPO).
 - This is why the Red Line & Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives are shown on the Public Forum #1 maps.



Transit Station & the Red Line Rail

From CATS 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan, adopted Nov 2006.

Plans show that Commuter Rail and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) have been envisioned to operate in tandem.

North Corridor BRT Service is not intended to replace Commuter Rail.

CONNECTING THE FUTURE



LYNX Red Line

From bustling Center City to the beautiful Lake Norman area to roaring Race City, USA, the LYNX Red Commuter Rail Line will connect the towns of Davidson, Cornelius and Huntersville to Center City Charlotte at the proposed Charlotte Gateway Station. The commuter rail line would operate along Norfolk Southern Railroad's O-Line rail corridor. Once at the Charlotte Gateway Station, customers will have access to arts, sports, cultural and employment opportunities through connections on the CityLYNX Gold Line along with connections to CATS bus routes and intercity rail and bus lines.

While the LYNX Red Line remains the locally preferred alternative, CATS will also implement the rapid transit option in the North, including MetroRAPID Enhanced Bus.

Center City to Mount Mourne

- 25 miles
- 10 stations
- 9 park and ride locations
- 1,200 parking spaces
- 4,600 estimated daily ridership



MetroRAPID Bus Rapid Transit

In 2020, CATS will introduce enhanced bus services to North Mecklenburg County with MetroRAPID Bus Rapid Transit service. Twelve new MCI over-the-road coach buses will serve the 48X Northcross Express, 53X Northlake Express, 63X Huntersville Express, and 77X North Mecklenburg Express.

Center City to North Mecklenburg County

- Component of CATS Envision My Ride initiative
- Addition of 4th Express Bus Route to North Mecklenburg County
- Utilize I-77 Express Lanes; cost included in CATS fare
- Direct service from all 4 park and ride locations in North Mecklenburg
- Routes to operate every 10-20 minutes during rush hour



The Hambright Direct Connect provides direct access to I-77

Center City to Mount Mourne

Center City to North Mecklenburg County

Destinations



- CPCC Huntersville
- Davidson College



- Lowes Corporate Headquarters



- Lake Norman Regional Medical Center
- Novant-Huntersville Hospital

Community Investments by 2035



- 16,391 new residential units
- 3.1 million sq. ft. new office space
- 2.3 million sq. ft. new retail space



- \$5.4 billion transit oriented development





Planning Process / Scope of Work

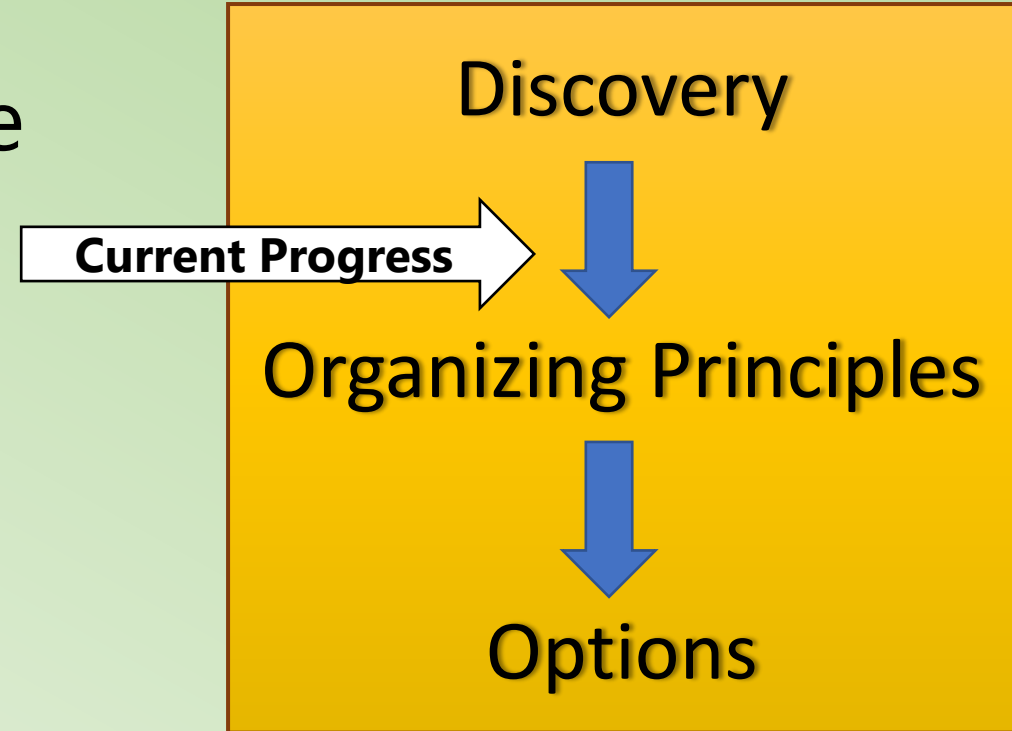
- The Scope of Work governs the services to be provided by the Consultant in terms of tasks, schedule & compensation.
- The process used is typical of the many Small Area Plans that have been adopted by the Town.
- 3 Major Phases
 1. EXISTING CONDITIONS (Discovery)
 2. PLAN OPTIONS (Alternative Futures)
 3. FINAL STRATEGY & PLAN (Actions)
- Current Work: Respond to correction / revision comments to complete the Discovery phase; Plan Options will come in March



Critical Downtown Issues

The Committee will soon face several challenging issues:

- **Transportation Systems**
- **Market Reality**
- **Drainage System**
- **Utilities**
- **Land Use Compatibility / Density**
- **Business Retention / Redevelopment / Recruitment**
- **Town's Role in Downtown Improvements**





How Was the Plan Authorized?

- During the formation of the 2040 Community Plan, the Downtown emerged as its own topic because of public input.
 - Discussion and adoption of the 2040 Plan led to agreement by the Steering Committee, Planning Board, and Town Board that the Downtown Plan would be a top priority.
- The Downtown Plan was discussed at the January 2021 Town Board Retreat.
- During FY 2021-22 Town budget preparation, Planning staff developed a highlighted list of topics to be addressed for a new Downtown Plan. Staff was instructed to develop a plan that stressed implementation.
- The Town Board adopted the FY 2021-22 budget with \$150,000 reserved for the Downtown Plan and made it a top priority.
- In August 2021, the Town issued a Request for Proposals for consultant services and selected Shook Kelley from a short list of 3 interviewed firms.
- In November 2021, the Town Board approved the contract & Scope of Work.



Committee Creation Process

- The Downtown Plan Steering Committee was created based on the success of the 2040 Plan Steering Committee. The Planning Board had served in this role previously, but monthly agenda workload had increased significantly.
- The Town Board created the 2040 Plan Committee and appointed 15 members (out of 51 applicants); the Downtown Plan Committee was created using the same process, appointing 15 members (out of 64 applicants).
- The Downtown Plan Committee, however, was structured to ensure representation from neighborhoods, business & commercial property owners, and the community at-large.
- The broader objective was to address the Downtown as a whole, rather than having to make decisions and face potential conflicts on a project-by-project basis.
- Under no circumstances was the Committee design intended to assign members to represent only their interests.



Plan Roles & Responsibilities

Town Board

- Reviews Plan Concepts (Annual Retreat / Periodic Reviews)
- Allocates Project Funds (Annual Budget)
- Creates the Steering Committee & Appoints Members
- Authority to Approve, Amend or Rescind Consultant Contract
- Adopts the Final Plans / Makes Revisions

Planning Board

- Has Extensive Development Application Review Experience
- Reviews the Final Plan
- Makes a Recommendation to the Town Board



Plan Roles & Responsibilities

Downtown Plan Steering Committee

- Serves as an ad hoc Advisory Board
- Follows the Approved Project Scope, Schedule, & Budget
- Reviews Consultant Products, Receives Public Input, & Gives Input and Comments to the Consultant
- Promotes Public Engagement / Encourages Public Participation
- Use Public Input to Influence Committee Recommendations
- Presents the Final Plan to the Planning Board & Town Board to Signal the Start of the Formal Adoption Process
- **May Make ANY Recommendation It Wants**
 - The Committee does not have to receive direction from the Town Board for the Red Line or a new Town Hall
- Recognize that changes to the Plan will be made later



Plan Roles & Responsibilities

Town Staff

- Provides support for the Plan
- Is Responsible to the Town Board for Successful Completion
- Facilitates Community Input & Dialogue
- Provides Logistical & Technical Support to the Committee
- Manages Consultant Contract
- NEVER gets Involved in Politics or Advocacy
- Must Adhere to Professional & Ethical Standards of Conduct

Consultant Team

- Contracted Services (Scope, Budget, Schedule)
- Major Deviations = Contract Amendment
- Is Hired to Provide its Best Professional Advice
- Must Adhere to Professional & Ethical Standards of Conduct
- May Enter Into, Accept Amendments to, or Rescind Contract



Committee Boundaries

- Project Contract (Scope of Work, Schedule, Budget)
- Open Meetings / Posting of Agendas / Minutes
- Advisory Role
- Accept & Consider All Interests
- Inform & Obtain Input from Other Boards (Ex-Officio Members)
- Understand that the Consultant is tasked to produce feasible implementation actions
- Individual members need Committee approval



Committee Options

- Extra Meetings / Hearings
- Expand Public Engagement Program
- Formation of Subcommittees
- Planning Board / Town Board Briefings or Updates
- Recommendations should include both majority & minority opinions
- Recommend project changes
 - Minor – Consultant will flex as much as possible
 - Major – Contract amendment would need Town Board approval

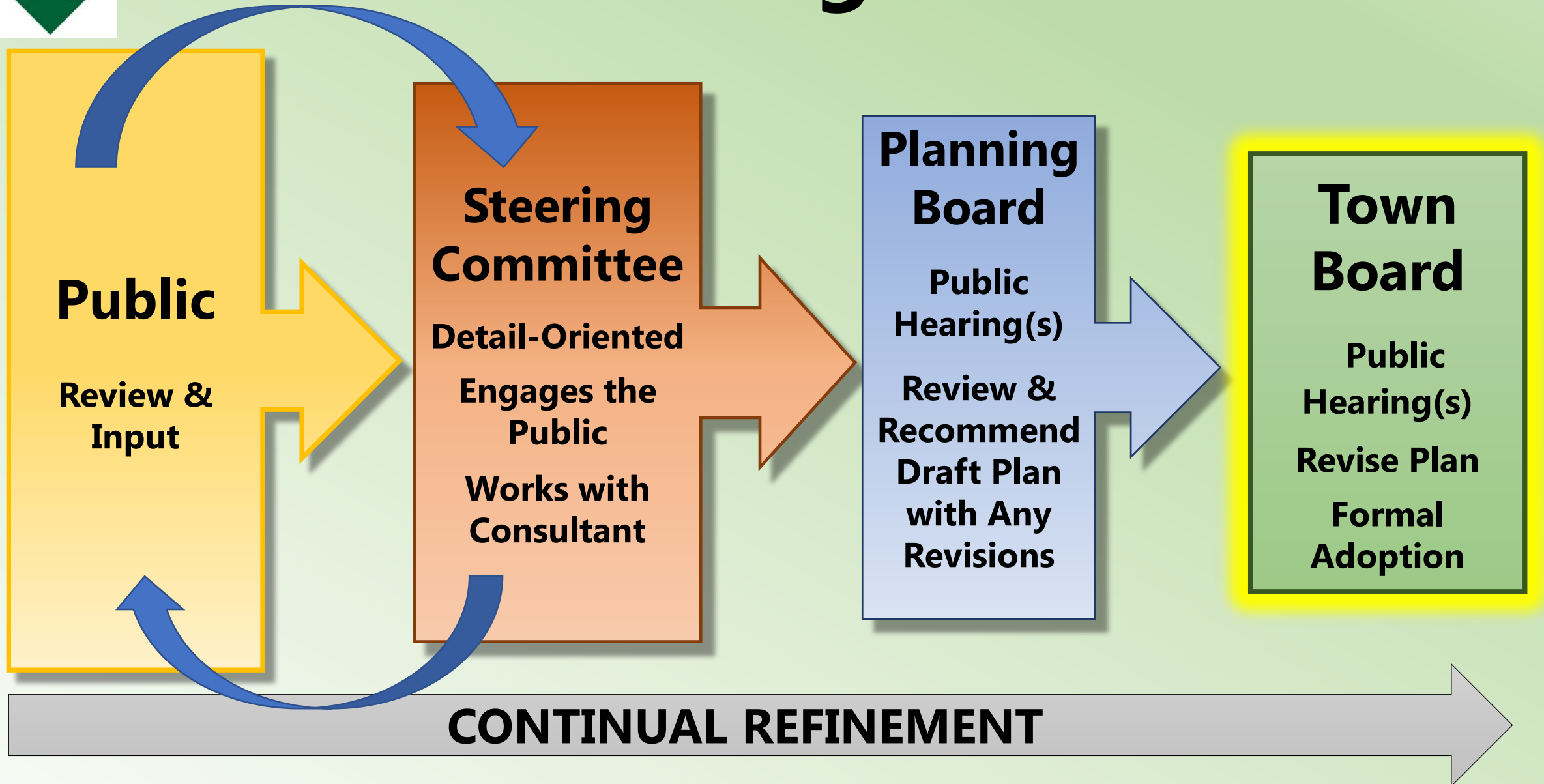


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 - Major – Contract amendment / Town Board approval



Plan Vetting Process





Public Engagement

Public Forum #1

Participation as of 2/3/2022 (7 Days)

- Facebook Views of Presentation: 930
- Live Facebook Comments: 86
- YouTube Views of Presentation: 70
- Survey Participation: 495 Starts; 325 Completions
- Interactive Map: 688 Views / 697 Individual Comments
- Town Hall Display: Will be open & announced on 2/7
- Committee Update: Feb 10th; Final Report after 2/28

These are good results given the timeframe.



Part 2: Committee Discussion

- Process Improvements Moving Forward
- Committee Interactions with Consultant Team
- Public Engagement Improvements
- Committee Communications / Engagement
- Consideration of Different Interests
- In-Person Meeting on February 10th?