



Hillsborough – Orange County Strategic Growth Plan

Draft

Meeting Summary – Steering Committee (4th meeting 4/27/06)

This is a summary of the fourth meeting of the Strategic Growth Plan Steering Committee, which was held at the Hillsborough Town offices from 6:00 to 7:30 pm on April, 27, 2006. This was the fourth in a series of 12 meetings to develop and refine a strategic growth plan for areas surrounding Hillsborough. This effort is being jointly undertaken by the Town of Hillsborough and Orange County through a Steering Committee and with the assistance of a team of consultants. The Steering Committee, Staff and Consultant Team are listed in the box to the right.

The Strategic Growth Plan is intended to clarify the most desirable rate, timing, and location for future growth occurring over the next 20 years within and around the Town of Hillsborough. This effort builds upon the previous work of the Hillsborough *Vision 2010 Plan*, and the Orange County/Town of Hillsborough *Urban Transition Area Task Force*, which prepared a Principles of Agreement document between the two jurisdictions regarding land use planning and public utility extension in areas around Hillsborough. Additional information on the *Strategic Growth Plan* and these prior efforts is available on the Town of Hillsborough’s website at <http://www.ci.hillsborough.nc.us/>.

The following paragraphs summarize the proceedings of the Steering Committee’s fourth meeting.

THIRD MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting was opened by Eric Hallman, and the first order of business was approval of the March 22, 2006 Steering Committee meeting minutes. The minutes were approved with a minor correction. Under the heading “Public Forum On Transportation Issues”, the third sentence was revised to read as follows: “One of the most significant issues discussed was the fact that no major funding for roadway projects will be forthcoming over the next five years...”

NEXT MEETINGS

The next order of business was setting the dates, times, and locations for the next two meetings.

The 5th meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for **Thursday, May 25th at 6:00 pm**. The Committee will schedule the 6th meeting at the May 25th meeting.

Steering Committee Members:

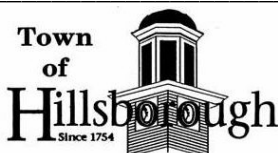
Eric Hallman (Hillsborough)
Barry Jacobs (Orange Co.)
Kent Corley (Hillsborough)
Lauri Michel (Hillsborough)
Ted Triebel (Orange Co.)
Alois Callemyn (Orange Co.)
Paul Kimple (Hillsborough)
Paul Newton (Hillsborough)
Pam Paul (Hillsborough)
Hervey McIver (Orange Co.)

Staff:

Margaret Hauth (Hillsborough)
Craig Benedict (Orange Co.)

Consultant Team:

Roger Waldon (Clarion)
Scott Radway (Radway & Weaver)
George Alexiou (Martin/Alexiou/Bryson)



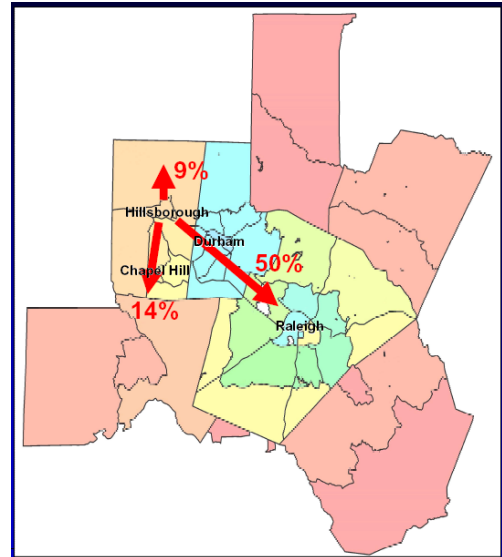
WATER CONSERVATION

The recent Cost of County Services report was briefly mentioned and is available through Orange County's website at <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/>. Eric Hallman discussed a water conservation report that was published in the *News & Observer* and stated he would provide copies of the article to the Steering Committee. Roger Waldon of Clarion Associates mentioned that Ed Holland of OWASA had prepared information on water conservation tools and techniques, and this information will be forwarded to the Steering Committee.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

George Alexiou of Martin/Alexiou/Bryson presented information on existing and projected transportation conditions in Hillsborough, planned transportation projects, and recommendations for addressing transportation capacity issues. The powerpoint presentation is available on the Town of Hillsborough's website at <http://www.ci.hillsborough.nc.us/>.

According to the U.S. Census and the Triangle Regional Transportation Model, 75% of Hillsborough residents commute to locations outside of town for work. This results in consistent congestion along north-south corridors, such as along S. Churton Street. The map to the right illustrates the commuting patterns of Hillsborough's residents to areas within Orange, Durham and Wake counties. Further aggravating the congestion problem are continued regional growth, few available alternative modes of transportation, and the lack of funding needed for local transportation improvements.



Regional Transportation Priorities

High Priority Improvements:

- Orange Grove Road Pedestrian Bridge
- Elizabeth Brady Road
- S. Churton Street
- US-70 Bypass Widening

Medium Priority Improvements:

- NC-86 Bicycle Improvements
- Eno Mountain/Mayo/Orange Grove
- Western Bypass
- Orange Grove Road Extension

Low Priority Improvements:

- I-85 Widening (funded, NC-DOT top priority)

Other TIP Projects:

- Widening I-40 & HOV Lanes
- Old NC-86 Widening
- NC-86 Widening
- Churton Street Connector

A variety of plans address transportation needs in the Hillsborough area, including the Hillsborough *Vision 2010 Plan*, the DCHC-MPO *Long-Range Transportation Plan*, the NC-Department of Transportation's *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*, the *Elizabeth Brady Road DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Study)*, and the *Churton Street Corridor Strategic Plan*. A list of regional transportation road improvement priorities, developed by the DCHC-MPO, are listed in the box to the left.

Analysis of 2002 and 2030 traffic conditions were presented to the Steering Committee. The 2002 analysis revealed that Churton Street, U.S. 70 and the U.S. 70-bypass are all operating over-capacity. The stretch of NC-86 heading south of town and sections of I-40 and I-85 near town are also operating over-capacity. The Triangle Regional Model, which incorporates the proposed Elizabeth Brady Road extension, projects that the extension would relieve traffic on Churton Street in 2030, although Churton Street would still operate over capacity. The model projects significant traffic increases on Churton Street through town, US-70 between Churton Street and the proposed Elizabeth Brady Road extension, US-70 Bypass and NC-86 north and south of town. The model shows a directional bias for traffic moving

from downtown to the north, with higher traffic counts for traffic moving southward through town to the interstates in the morning peak period, and higher traffic counts for traffic moving north through town in the afternoon peak period.

Key conclusions comparing the 2002 and 2030 model results were presented:

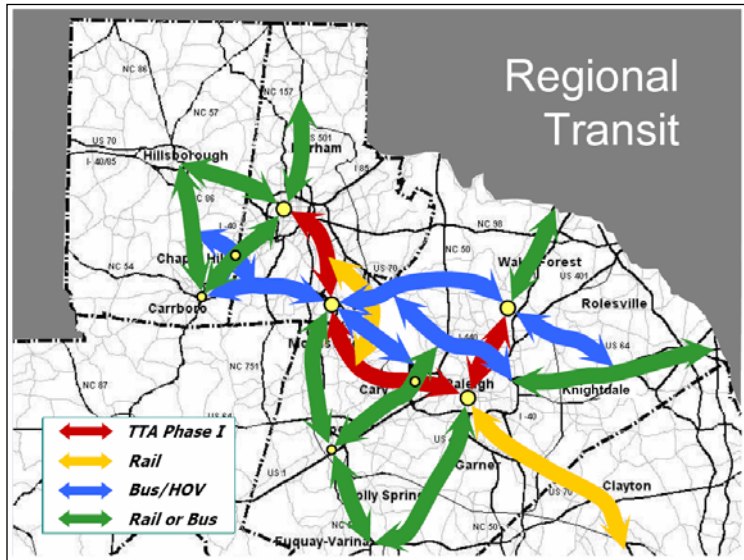
- Churton Street is still over-capacity in 2030.
- Even with increased capacity, I-40 and I-85 are congested in 2030.
- US-70 and US-70 Bypass are less congested in 2030 because of Elizabeth Brady Road Extension.
- Rural road network is equally congested in 2030 as in 2002.

Following discussion of the 2030 traffic model were several requests for additional traffic information, including: traffic volumes for Efland/Cedar Grove Road, Lawrence Road as a potential bypass for Churton, and the 2030 model without the Elizabeth Brady Road to model effects on Churton Street.

TRANSIT

Mr. Alexiou presented the Committee with an update on regional transit opportunities. A new TTA bus route between Hillsborough and UNC Memorial Hospital has been established, and Orange Public Transportation (OPT), which now provides two bus routes between Hillsborough and Chapel Hill/Carrboro, will be operated by the TTA.

The 2000 Regional Transportation Vision (shown below), developed by Triangle area officials, includes multi-modal regional transit options, such as rail, bus, HOV lanes and the proposed TTA regional rail project. But a lack of funding has forced the region to rethink the plan. One of the critical factors is that funding for transit is diminishing at both the federal and state levels. This has affected TTA projects, as well as delaying several TIP projects. Over the past several years, there has been more focus on private funding of transportation improvements, such as toll roads, impact fees, developer improvements and developer land contributions. An example is Waterstone Drive in the new Waterstone development south of Hillsborough. The developer agreed to develop the road as part of the project's development approval.



The Committee discussed the idea of purchasing lands for a future rail corridor in light of the uncertain future of the TTA regional rail project. Alexiou remarked that it is beneficial for the Town to acquire these lands while the land is available and more affordable, and mentioned that UNC has been requested by the Town of Chapel Hill to provide rail corridors as part of the Carolina North plan.

A member of the Committee questioned the impact of existing land use patterns in the region, and the effect of these patterns on the future commuter rail prospects. Mr. Alexiou responded that sprawl has been a key factor in the successfulness of commuter rail. Transit typically operates more efficiently when it connects higher density nodes, and therefore sprawling land use patterns may not efficiently support a regional transit system. However, he stated that over time, regional rail may create a framework for more compact development.

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Alexiou presented to the Steering Committee the interacting impacts of land use and transportation. He noted that the type, location and intensity of land uses in an area are key factors of a transportation system's success. In general, mixing land uses provides greater accessibility to alternative transportation modes and helps to relieve traffic congestion. Placing development near transit stops that have access to other key destinations throughout the town and the region is a very opportunistic way to plan.

The Steering Committee was presented with two contrasting scenarios of a 38-acre development on the north-side of town and their impacts on the transportation system. The first case was a residential development with 120 single-family units, and the second case was a non-residential development consisting of 228,000 gross square feet of light industrial. The residential land use put 60 morning peak hour trips on the already congested Churton Street corridor through town, while the light industrial put only 15 trips on that same corridor in the morning peak hour. The analysis illustrated the impacts of different land uses in the same location.

CONCLUSIONS OF TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

In conclusion, Alexiou provided the following recommendations for the Steering Committee:

- Limit residential development north of Town and instead encourage development of employment centers;
- New development is best located to the east and south of town based on existing road capacity;
- Housing and jobs should be balanced to maintain an efficient transportation system in and around the town; and
- Mixed-use developments and alternative transportation modes (i.e., TDM, transit, bus) are encouraged to provide more accessibility to residents and greater mobility.

DISCUSSION OF LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

The Committee asked Alexiou if there are other land use / transportation solutions that the town and county should be reviewing. Additional solutions discussed by the Committee included:

- Providing bus/shuttle circulators to major destinations;
- Synchronizing traffic signals throughout town;
- Encouraging connectivity and accessibility between developments;
- Providing connectivity between smaller connector roads and major arterials to relieve traffic on arterials and larger connector roads;
- Working with major employers to subsidize transit for employees;
- Enacting a new sales tax to pay for HOV, transit, other solutions to fund transportation and possibly invigorate Orange Public Transit;
- Developing a public ridesharing program to provide employees with additional opportunities for commuting to employment centers; and
- Developing more park-and-ride lots.

A Committee member questioned the consultant team about the effects of fuel costs on land use planning. Mr. Waldon responded that air quality may be more of a regional planning factor today than the costs of fuel, but that changes in demographic patterns and the lifestyles of retirees and young professionals transitioning back to downtown will likely create more compact growth in town/city centers in the future.

A question was asked about the growth rate of subdivisions to the north of town. Tom Altieri of Orange County Planning responded that there has been a slight increase in the growth rate of 10-acre residential lots and minor subdivisions to the north, but that there have been recent increases in major subdivisions of a rural nature that are developed without water and sewer connections.

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A Committee member noted that the County is looking at providing shuttle service to County offices from park and ride lots. Mr. Alexiou mentioned that UNC offers employee incentives to use transit/van pools, and that the County may want to work with UNC as they share the same goal of decreasing traffic and parking needs. Eric Hallman noted that emergency vehicle access and fire ISO ratings are an important issue to consider when looking at transportation solutions.

NEXT STEPS

Roger Waldon wrapped up the meeting with a short discussion on next steps. During the first part of the May 25 meeting, the consultant team will present the three land use scenarios (i.e., Status Quo, Market Realities, and Planning Ideal) in draft form. The key constraint for the scenarios will be raw water capacity available after the planned upgrade of Hillsborough's water system. The Steering Committee will discuss and provide comment on the three scenarios. During the second half of the May 25 meeting, the Steering Committee will explore and discuss the policy objectives for the 4th scenario -- "Hillsborough's Vision," which is a more flexible scenario that will focus less on capacity constraints and more on the future vision for the Town.

The consultant team will host booths at both Hog Day and at the Last Friday in June to educate the public about the Strategic Growth Plan effort and to survey citizens about their vision for Hillsborough.