



Hillsborough – Orange County Strategic Growth Plan

Meeting Summary – Steering Committee (6th meeting 6/15/06)

This is a summary of the sixth meeting of the Strategic Growth Plan Steering Committee, which was held at the Hillsborough Town Hall Barn from 6:00 to 7:30 pm on June 15, 2006. This was the sixth in a series of 12 meetings to develop and refine a strategic growth plan for the Town of Hillsborough around its immediate environs. This effort is being jointly undertaken by the Town of Hillsborough and Orange County through a Steering Committee and with the assistance of three planning 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 Hillsboro. 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 sixth meeting.

DRAFT CHURTON STREET CORRIDOR PLAN

Margaret Hauth, Hillsborough Planning Director, delivered a powerpoint presentation summarizing the draft Churton Street Corridor Strategic Plan. The plan was developed by a committee comprised of elected officials and Planning Board members of Hillsborough and Orange County, planning staff, consultants from the NC Division of Community Assistance, and members from the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce and Alliance for Historic Hillsborough. Citizens provided input into the plan throughout the process, beginning with the initial public workshops and visual preference survey. The plan encompasses a 4.5 mile corridor along Churton that includes all properties with frontage on Churton. The plan divides the corridor into four “districts” (as shown on the right). The districts were identified as a way to promote the concept of place-making and to create a basis for district specific planning solutions.

Steering Committee Members:

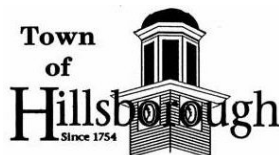
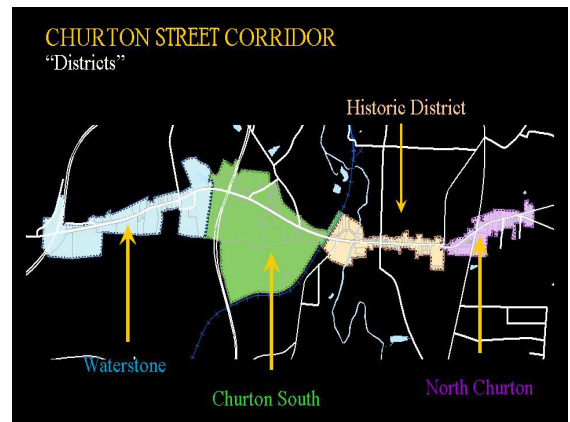
Eric Hallman (Hillsborough)
Barry Jacobs (Orange Co.)
Kent Corley (Hillsborough)
Lauri Michel (Hillsborough)
Crauford Goodwin (Orange Co.)
Alois Callemyn (Orange Co.)
Paul Kimple (Hillsborough)
Paul Newton (Hillsborough)
Pam Paul (Hillsborough)
Hervey McIver (Orange Co.)

Staff:

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

Consultant Team:

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



The Plan is guided by four main goals:

1. Improve the appearance and economic vitality of the Churton Street Corridor;
2. Protect & celebrate the diverse historic and cultural identity of the town;
3. Promote environmental stewardship; and
4. Encourage and support an active lifestyle.

Through the public workshops, an inventory of strengths, weaknesses, key issues to address and solutions were identified. The **top 9 issues to be addressed through the plan** include:

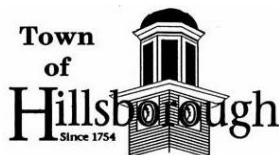
1. Emphasize walkability, pedestrian safety, and trail links throughout the corridor;
2. Bury utility lines;
3. Develop strategies for managing traffic flow and congestion along Churton Street;
4. Reduce sign clutter;
5. Develop and implement clear building design and sign guidelines that emphasize local design cues over corporate identities;
6. Make landscaping a prominent component of Churton Street roadway and streetscape design;
7. Ensure proper maintenance of landscapes;
8. Plan for the redevelopment of existing commercial development; and
9. Provide public transportation links between Chapel Hill and Hillsborough.

Potential solutions to these issues were narrowed down to three key areas:

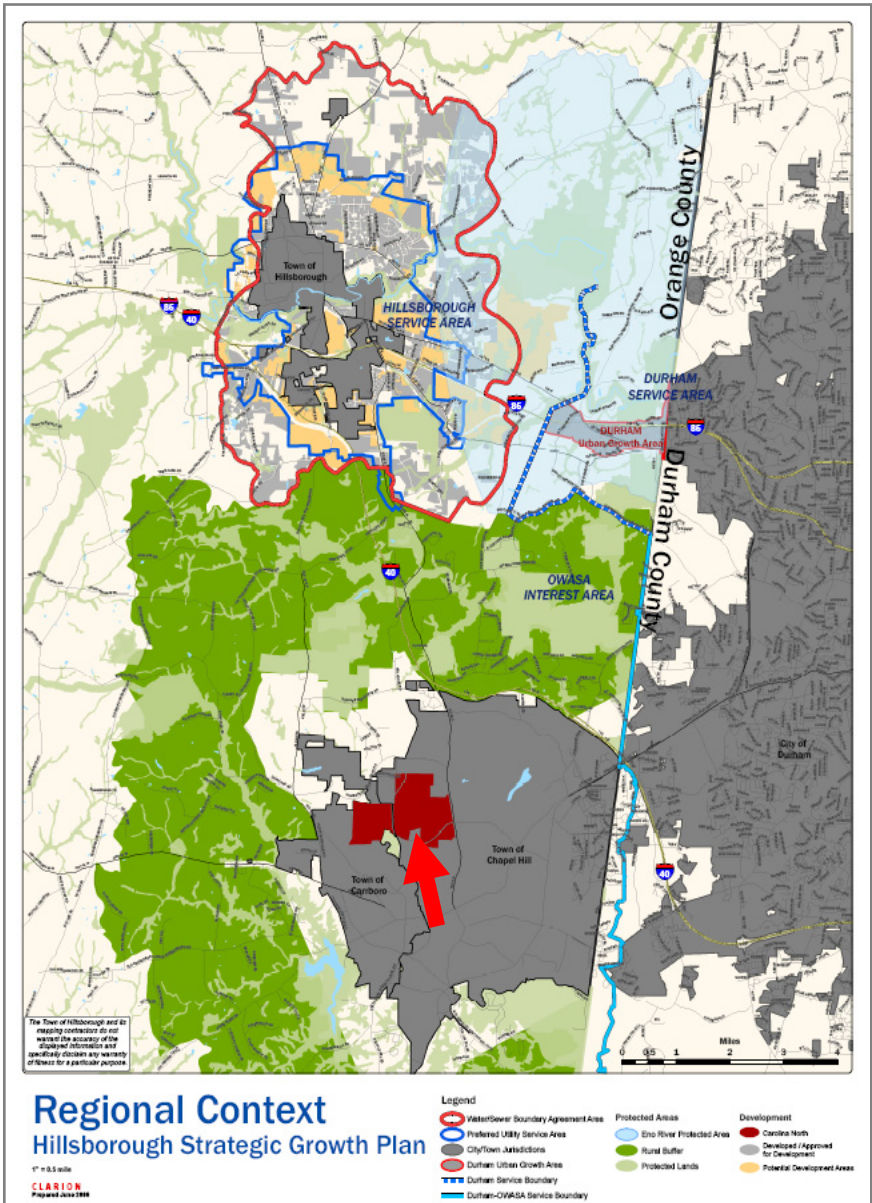
1. **Transportation Improvements**, including installation of planted medians where feasible; minimizing curb cuts; minimizing traffic signals and left turns through the use of roundabouts; incorporating striped bike lanes; installing continuous sidewalks; installing crosswalks with pavers; improving landscaping at street edges; and replacing overhead utility wires with underground utilities and light poles.
2. **Sign Improvements**, including updating the sign ordinance and making sign enforcement a town priority; developing a coordinated town-scale way-finding signage system; and working with NC-DOT to replace and relocate outdated and excessive highway signage.
3. **Corridor Revitalization**, including identifying and considering future development potential along the corridor; establishing district identities emphasized by discernable edges and functions; and improving gateways to town.

The town is currently receiving public comment on the draft plan, which will continue through July 2006. It is expected that the Town Board of Commissioners will make a decision on the plan in early fall 2006. The final plan will consist of a design guidelines manual. It is the intent that upon adoption both the Churton Street Corridor Strategic Plan and the Strategic Growth Plan implementation items will be incorporated into the Town's zoning ordinance.

The presentation was followed by a Steering Committee discussion. One Steering Committee member noted that there are good existing examples of new development that is integrated with older development, such as the Italian restaurant on Churton Street. He also noted a preference to have bike lanes separated from automobile lanes by a physical buffer/vegetated strip because of safety concerns. Another member questioned why the Daniel Boone Village property was identified as "ripe for redevelopment". Ms. Hauth responded that the site hasn't seen significant redevelopment activities in 15 years and is prime for redevelopment. It was also noted that the plan offers several options for incentives to owners of existing developments to come into compliance with new design guidelines that may result from this plan. One such option is a façade grant from the town to improve façade design.



Roger Waldon then presented a third map showing the larger regional context. This map shows Hillsborough in the context of Durham's future growth plans to the east, and the Carolina North project to the south in Chapel Hill (see map to the right, Carolina North marked by red arrow). Barry Jacobs discussed the recent Orange County presentation to the Carolina North Advisory Committee. Because Hillsborough is located at the next I-40 interchange after Chapel Hill, it is expected that much of the new development that will occur as a result of Carolina North will be located north of Chapel Hill and proximate to Hillsborough. The Committee also discussed that development is likely to occur near Hillsborough due to the difficulties of developing within the rural buffer that separates Chapel Hill/Carrboro and Hillsborough (shown on the map to the right as the green areas). Poor soils, lack of public water/sewer, and density restrictions make it difficult to build larger developments in this area, leaving the areas around Hillsborough as prime locations for new development.

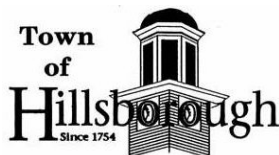


GROWTH SCENARIOS

During The next portion of the meeting, Roger Waldon led the Steering Committee in a discussion of the three growth scenarios prepared by the consultants and presented maps of each. These maps are available on the Town of Hillsborough's website at <http://www.ci.hillsborough.nc.us/>.

The purpose of the scenarios is to have a set of alternate land use patterns that describe the ways in which Hillsborough might grow in the future, and to compare the impacts of these scenarios. The development allocated in the scenarios is based upon the amount of development that can receive public water service after completion of the water system expansion.

The first scenario ("Status Quo") uses existing development policies and growth patterns. The second scenario ("Planning Emphasis") creates a more compact growth form than scenario 1 by limiting development to areas proximate to existing town limits, limiting development north of town, and by



increasing development densities. The third scenario (“Market Realities”) is a blend of scenarios 1 and 2. New development in the third scenario is located in areas prime for development/redevelopment, but also limits development north of town and includes higher density development than allowed under scenario 1.

A Steering Committee member noted that the maps included new “protected lands” information and asked what the criteria was for developing those designations. Orange County Planner, Gene Bell, responded that the “resource conservation areas” include public and/or institutionally owned lands that are permanently protected, as well as environmentally sensitive lands, such as steep slopes, river buffers, floodplains, and other identified lands. The Steering Committee went on to discuss the need for consultants to prepare recommendations on the appropriate mix of residential and non-residential uses and the locations of these uses as part of the Strategic Growth Plan. Eric Hallman questioned whether or not the current tax revenue ratio that exists in Hillsborough -- 60% non-residential to 40% residential -- was sustainable for a small community experiencing significant growth pressure. Another member asked what ratio could provide a good balance of services to local residents without requiring regional demand to keep non-residential development viable.

Roger Waldon then led the Steering Committee in a discussion of the fourth scenario (“Vision for Hillsborough”) that was developed by the Steering Committee at the 5th meeting in May, and presented a map of the scenario. The Committee allocated much of the development to the southern parts of town, near the I-40 interchange, in a mixed-use pattern. Steering Committee members noted that the Daniel Boone property should be included as part scenario 4. Roger Waldon confirmed that this change would be made. The Committee went on to discuss that the town may want to think about providing incentives to properties like the Daniel Boone village that may be prime for redevelopment, but whose owners aren’t actively planning redevelopment.

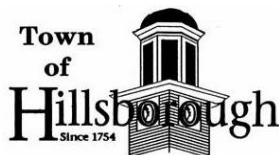
The Committee also discussed mobile home parks and the choice between redeveloping them to another use, or protecting them as an existing supply of affordable housing. Scott Radway of Radway & Weaver consulting noted that mobile home park ownership patterns play a key role in the redevelopment potential of these sites. Mobile home parks under single ownership have higher redevelopment potential, whereas mobile home lots owned by multiple owners may be more difficult to redevelop as there is development risk in acquiring multiple properties. He recommended that the town should think about policies for existing mobile home parks and lots in light of the potential for redevelopment of these sites.

The Steering Committee requested that the consultants make suggested changes to the scenarios and gave their approval to move forward with the analysis of the scenarios.

PUBLIC OUTREACH EVENTS

The next part of the meeting focused on public outreach events. The town will be hosting a tent at the June 17 *Hog Day* event to provide general information on the Strategic Growth Plan process, and to seek public input to use as part of the Strategic Growth Plan process. Roger Waldon provided the Committee with a draft copy of a survey to be handed out to persons visiting the town’s Hog Day booth. The intent of the document is to survey area residents on their opinions of the planning options being evaluated through the Strategic Growth Plan process. Specifically, the survey will ask responders what type of development approach they would prefer for Hillsborough and its surrounding environs. Steering Committee members requested that the survey be revised to identify if residents lived in Orange County within the Hillsborough ETJ, but outside town limits. Another requested that the survey specifically ask responders what their reaction was towards increasing densities in parts of Hillsborough. Roger Waldon confirmed that the changes would be made. He noted that the town would be collecting information in a similar format on June 30th as part of the town’s *Last Friday* event.

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NEXT MEETING

The final order of business was setting the date, time, and location for the next meeting. The Committee decided not to meet in July. The 7th meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for **Thursday, August 24th at 6:00 pm** in the Orange County Planning Department Food Laboratory.

