

**Rail Station Task Force
Meeting Summary
April 28, 2010
5:00 PM**

Task Force Members Present:

Name	Agency Represented
Mike Gering-Chair	Town Board of Commissioners
Mike Oechsle	Landscape Architect; HYAA
David Daniel	Architect; HYAA
Mary Donegan	Planning/Economics
David Remington	Planning Board
Elizabeth Read	Alliance for Historic Hillsborough
Tom Campanella	Rail Station Task Force; Planning Board
Paul Guthrie	Orange Unified Transportation Board; Rail Station Task Force
Bryant Warren	Planning Board; Parks & Recreation Board

Task Force Members Absent:

Name	Agency Represented
Mike Oechsle	Landscape Architect; HYAA
David Daniel	Architect; HYAA
Tom Campanella	Rail Station Task Force; Planning Board

Staff Present:

Name	Department
Tom King, AICP, CZO	Senior Planner, Town of Hillsborough
Aspen Price	Planning Intern

Other Attendees:

Name	Representing:
Jim Parker	Engineer-Summit Consulting
Reid Saunders	MS Consultants, Inc.
George Horton	Developer
Craig Newton	North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division
Tracy Melvo	
Rollin Russell	Resident of Saponi Drive
Mrs. McCarthy	Resident of Winnawa Walk

Gering opened the meeting around 5:00 PM.

Item #1: Approval of Meeting Notes from February 15, 2010

Guthrie moved that the group approve the meeting notes. Remington seconded. The meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Item #2: Update on NCDOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation) Rail Division's Station Improvement Program – Craig Newton, NCDOT Rail Division

Gering introduced Craig Newton with the NCDOT Rail Division.

Newton stated that, other than the public input session held on March 31, 2010, this was his first involvement with the Town's rail station planning effort. He went on to state that he looked forward to working with the Town on this project. Newton stated that his official title is "Station Project Manager", and that he has managed 16 station projects since the year 2000.

Newton went on to state that NCDOT Rail has made a concerted effort to get stations constructed in North Carolina and to ensure that the State's stations the best in the Country. He emphasized that the State is interested in increased ridership and revenue and informed the group that more information on the State's rail efforts, including station improvements, could be found on their website at www.bytrain.org.

Newton stated that two of the State's most recent projects included a new canopy at the Salisbury station, and the construction of Durham's new station. He noted that the following projects are under design and are awaiting funding: the Cary depot; Burlington's platform extension; parking expansion at the High Point station; restoration work at the Goldsboro station; and surveillance camera installation at Charlotte's station; and the installation of public announcement features at all stations that would help blind and deaf rail travelers.

He went on to states that he heard a lot of interesting questions raised at the march 31, 2010 public information session and that he was willing to help answer any questions. He noted that he was responsible for scoping, design, and the oversight of station construction. He ended by saying that the way the station funding works is that NCDOT will secure 90% of the funding with a 10% local government match. At this point he opened the floor for questions.

Guthrie asked if NCDOT Rail had any concepts for getting passengers to the rail stations. In other words, do they consult and work with transit carries and other modes of transportation? Newton stated that the NCDOT Public Transportation Division is just down the hall from his office and that they do work together to coordinate transit and train service wherever possible. NCDOT encourages MMTCs (Multi-Modal Transportation Centers) which consolidate multiple modes in a single facility.

Read asked if Newton had any advice for obtaining funding to get a station built and if he anticipated that TEA-21 (21st Century Transportation Enhancement Act) funding will be available. Newton stated that the Town of Cary built their station in 1996 and that they got money through TTA (Triangle Transit Authority) at that time because their station could function as a TTA hub for bus service. He went on to state that Cary leased a portion of their station (for 10 years) to the State Department of Motor Vehicles which generated revenue to help

pay for the station. Newton went on to state that a building could be constructed that only contains a small area for the station itself and using rent from the remainder of the building to finance the structure itself. Newton went on to state that it does not appear that the TEA-21 funding will include money for new station construction. He noted that having a good solid plan for the station design will increase the chances of getting funding from other areas.

Read asked how the 90/10 funding worked. Newton stated that the funding for new stations starts from the top down. The Town requests a station and NCDOT starts the process of obtaining funding. In most instances where this has been done it has been from a station restoration project and not for new construction, though there have been new stations in Cary and Kannapolis.

Guthrie asked if NCDOT Rail kept up to date with the NCRRA's (North Carolina Railroad Company) progress and upgrades. Newton stated that NCDOT Rail and NCRRA work closely together. For example, if double tracking is proposed, NCDOT Rail will not install a platform where the second track is to be installed.

Gering asked about the relationship between funding and at-grade crossing closures. Newton stated that the first step would be to have a TSS (Traffic Separation Study) which would analyze traffic patterns and volumes, determine if there are any feasible rail crossing improvements, closings, or separations, and recommend improvements to be made pending funding. Funding for the study would come from the NCDOT and USDOT (United States Department of Transportation) with a local match. Newton stated that Paul Worley of NCDOT Rail oversees this program and suggested that the Task Force report include a recommendation for the Town to work with NCDOT to conduct a TSS.

Read noted that NCDOT Rail received an award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for their station improvement program.

Item #3: Staff Updates

Congressional Appropriations: King stated that the Town's request for \$445,000 for station planning and design work is currently on Congressman David Price's website under Fiscal Year 2011 project requests. It is listed as the "Town of Hillsborough, Multi-Modal Station."

May 11, 2010 Progress in Motion Forum: King stated that he and Assistant Town Manager Nicole Ard will be attending the Progress in Motion forum put on by the NCRRA (North Carolina Railroad Company). King stated that NCRRA President Scott Saylor, during his opening remarks, will be recognizing the Town's rail station planning efforts; making special note of the Town's inclusion of NCRRA into the station planning process. The presentation boards shown at the March 31, 2010 public input meeting will be on display at the forum.

Item #4: Discussion of Public Comments Received from March 31, 2010 Public Input Meeting

King began by stating that the public input station was overall a success. Thirty-three comment card responses were received from the meeting, with the majority submitted on line. King also

noted that he had received some comments directly by e-mail. He noted that many of the comments received dealt with the proposed building style and architecture shown on Tom Campanella's renderings. Guthrie stated that it should be made clear that the graphics provided were Campanella's efforts to quickly show how the site could be developed. Gering noted that he saw comments related to the number of floors proposed, the types of dwelling units and density.

Guthrie stated that he had also seen where there were concerns as to the amount and degree of parking proposed. He stated that the group may need to spend time on this issue. Parking location was raised in the comments. He stated that it should be made clear that the proposed parking is sequential and related to the need for parking relative to the proposed land uses. Donegan noted that she thought the proposed parking was based on known requirements. Gering stated that there may need to be changes made in the Town's development ordinances. Warren noted the proposed UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) and that parking will be an issue to be addressed in the writing of that document. Guthrie stated that there needs to be better information to explain the proposed parking need. Donegan suggested that off-site parking arrangements could be explored.

Read suggested that one recommendation to the Town Board be to conduct a traffic impact study for the site to assess its impact on traffic circulation in the adjacent roads and neighborhoods and related parking demand.

Guthrie stated that the group needed to look beyond the date of a potential station opening and the number of proposed riders. It should be clear that we are looking at an AMTRAK stop now, but there is the need to be aware of other steps being taken with rail traffic along the rail corridor. In other words, we need to be clear that we are looking forward 20 to 30 years.

Donegan noted the theory of "induced demand" in that adding new lanes to a road only seems to generate more traffic. She went on to state that building ridership ties into residential density. This needs to be touched on in the report. Gering noted that, in relation to public concerns over density, it should be noted that the Town is still limited as to how much it can grow by water capacity. He noted that 5 and 6-story clusters of housing does not fit into Hillsborough's character and suggested that maybe Campanella could rework the renderings.

Gering went on to state that a recommendation should be that density and intensity of land uses should be designed so as to enhance the character of the Town. It should be clear that other uses are proposed like retail, hotel, mixed-use and other possibilities. Remington noted that one person had noted in their comments that a grocery store was needed. He suggested that the group could emphasize the fact that the mixed-use development should include vertical integration of homes, offices and shops. Donegan noted the need to balance free-market goals with planning goals.

Remington asked if the group was being descriptive or prescriptive. He stated that the concerns of the Tuscarora neighborhood are a case in point. Gering suggested that there may need to be changes in the Town's land use plan in the areas around the station so that the station can coexist with the surrounding neighborhood.

Guthrie noted the comments received from the Goode's regarding the proposal for Orange Grove Street extension to tunnel under the tracks and cross their property so as to connect with US 70-A East. He also noted their comment about placing residential uses near the proposed station. He went on to state that the road crossing issue needs to be addressed somehow. He also noted that noise from the trains could be addressed through the use of sound barriers. Gering stated that noise issues should be identified in detail. Donegan questioned if the noise issue would go away with the at-grade crossing closure. Read said that a common complaint relates from brake noise as the train stops.

Remington mentioned bicycle connectivity going east toward the Eurosport property. Gering stated that connectivity items associated with this plan should match up with the Town's Connectivity Plan. Warren asked that, if the station is built, will the corridor study need to be reconsidered. He stated that any greenway connections proposed in this plan should connect to the proposed Cates Creek greenway. Gering suggested showing a connectivity map that identifies connectivity "problem areas" in this plan.

Warren noted a comment regarding the need to keep the HYAA ball fields. He stated that the final report should note the phasing out of the ball fields, and that the Task Force did look at relocating the fields on-site but rejected the idea due to the cost, and that the Town will explore other viable options. Read asked if this could be spelled out as an action item for the Town Board in the recommendations section of the plan; noting that the Town should take action on this item.

Warren noted a comment about connection between the proposed station site and the Durham Technical Community College site.

Gering stated that the plan should mention the proposed in-town bus circulator. A map should be added. Read stated that some information should be provided that notes how the proposed station is located on the in-town circulator route as well as the 420 and TTA (Triangle Transit Authority) bus route.

Guthrie noted a comment about the need for the station to be in character with the Town.

Read noted that a few of the comments received deal with the need for a visitor's center. She asked if the Town could make a request to see about adding a kiosk in the Daniel Boone area with possible use of TEA-21 funds. She went on to state that the plan could identify a visitor's information center on the site.

Remington noted Newton's discussion about leasing portions of the station building to other entities. He asked that if a building were built in the interim, could it be used for other uses in order to generate funds for the station. Guthrie stated that a building could be built for a police substation as well as another business to generate funds to help pay for it. Warren asked who the Town would lease the space to.

Read suggested asking the Town's Historic District Commission to look into performing an archaeological survey of the property.

Warren stated that at least one comment noted that taxi service would be good. Read stated that this is a good idea as taxi services have had issues at other stations. Donegan asked about ZIP cars.

Gering recommended that the Town will need to update its water capacity model. Warren noted a comment received about keeping large truck traffic out of the area, noting that this may be difficult.

Read stated that a recommendation should be that a dialogue with the Tuscarora neighborhood be established. Gering stated that the recommendation should be that a public hearing be held on the plan. Donegan asked about the potential to establish a neighborhood conservation district in the area to protect the adjacent neighborhoods. Warren noted a comment about this area becoming “an ugly strip”.

Read stated that a recommendation should be that the Churton Street Corridor Plan be amended to include the Rail Station Small Area Plan.

Remington stated the need to update the Connectivity Plan and Wayfinding Plan.

Item #5: Discussion of Next Steps and Plan Finalization

Gering asked if the group felt like the drawings should be amended. Reads suggested that some statement should be added that the renderings are conceptual only, and that they do not represent how the buildings are to look.

Gering asked King to have a draft copy of the plan report ready a week before the next meeting. Guthrie stated that the draft may should de-emphasize the renderings and focus more on the site layout.

Russell addressed the group and thanked them for their comments and noted the Tuscarora neighborhood’s appreciation that the group is recommending that discussions with them be opened.

Follow-up Items for May 26, 2010 Meeting

King is to have a draft final plan document for review by the group.

Item #6: Adjourn

Gering adjourned the meeting around 6:30 PM.