

Comprehensive Plan & Comprehensive Transportation Plan Steering Committee

Meeting Summary

October 10, 2011 | Sawyers Creek Fire Station | 11:00am-1:00pm

STEERING COMMITTEE ATTENDEES

Danielle Borrow
Dorothy Drake, Senior Services Advisory Board
Butch Flythe, Coast Guard
Gloria Gallop, Neighborhoods/Community
Larry Glasscock, Business Representative
Joy Greenwood, Dismal Swamp State Park
Fletcher Harris, Planning Board
Jimmy Harrell, Farm Owner
Janice Hassell, Realtor
Steve Lambert, Albemarle Commission (RPO)
David Moehring, Faith Community
Herb Mullens, ICPTA
Christian Overton, Board of Education
David Simpson, Northeastern Work Force Board
Donna Stewart, Tourism Development Authority
Sam West, Banker
Cathy Williams, Health Community

TECHNICAL STAFF/CONSULTANTS

Tony Perry, Sheriff
Dan Porter, Planning Director
Dave Parks, Flood & Zoning Officer
Amy Barnett, Administrative Assistant & Planning Permit Clerk
Roger Waldon, Clarion Associates
Leigh Anne King, Clarion Associates
Ivo Dernev, NC Department of Transportation
Pat Mansfield, NC Department of Transportation

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Steering Committee members were introduced to the consultant planning staff from Clarion Associates and NC Department of Transportation. Committee members introduced themselves and their business or community affiliations.

2. COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)

Ivo Dernev presented an overview of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) project to the Committee. Topics presented include (see presentation at end of summary for more details):

- Need for transportation planning
- Purpose of CTP
- New Planning Approach: From Thoroughfare Plan to CTP
- Process for Road Development and Role of CTP in Process
- Strategic Highway Corridors designated in Camden County: US 17 and US 158. Strategic Highway Road Corridors are protected through long range planning to ensure long term mobility and safety for high traffic roadways.

- Status of CTP Project:
 - Completed: Initial meetings with staff, preliminary data collection, development of public survey, formation of CTP Steering Committee
 - Next Steps: Develop CTP Vision Statement, distribute survey, complete deficiency analysis, Draft CTP
- Timeline: Complete CTP by End of Year 2012, with possible completion earlier in year

DISCUSSION

- US 158 requires an upgrade due to its status as a strategic highway corridor. It is impossible to achieve these improvements through downtown Elizabeth City. A bypass is needed and will likely be to the north or south of the city. No specific plans are yet in place and the exact alignment has not been determined. This is a long term project – possibly 30 years+ before completed.
- There is a desire to connect US 17 and NC 168 in Currituck County close to the Virginia border thus avoiding using Old Swamp/S Mills Rd which are in poor condition.
- Camden County CTP Vision Statement was made available to the Committee for their review. Also emailed to Committee post meeting. Also available on the project website (<http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/tpb/planning/CamdenCo.html>)
- The capacities of roads in the County’s road network will be analyzed for a level of service (LOS) “D”. This level of service is defined on the CTP project website (listed in previous bullet)

3. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Roger Waldon provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan project. The Comprehensive Plan answers three questions: Where are we? Where do we want to go? And how do we get there? It builds on the County’s existing plans and policy documents and synthesizes these into one long-range plan for the community. He explained the Comprehensive Plan is being developed using a three part planning process: identify planning influences and opportunities, develop a community vision, construct a policy framework and implementation plan. The plan is scheduled to be developed within a year (July 2011 – June 2012).

Leigh Anne King delivered a presentation on the working draft of the Community Assessment Report. Highlights from report include (see presentation at end of summary for more details):

- Purpose of report – to provide factual basis for development of policy framework
- Report divided into three parts:
 - Summary of past planning initiatives
 - Summary of existing conditions
 - Summary of key planning influences and opportunities
- Key County attributes: location in Hampton Roads Region, natural features/resources, affordable cost of living, well educated workforce, schools

- Population: very healthy growth rate over last decade (3.8% annual average growth) and was the highest growth County in region. Population projections vary by source. State Demographer projects slower growth at 0.75% over the next decade. A national source (Woods & Poole Economics) projects slightly higher at 1.8%. The Committee will need to decide what projections to use for development of alternative scenarios.
- Housing: Housing stock in Camden County in good condition, but lacks diversity. 99% of homes are single-family units. National real estate analyses project future housing demand for rental, multifamily, and more walkable communities near services and amenities and less demand for conventional single-family residential subdivisions. Will need to address this issue in the plan and get feedback from the community on appropriate housing types for the County.
- Incomes and Employment: Households have higher median income and workers have lower unemployment rates than in Currituck County and state overall.
- Agriculture: Farming is an important component of the local economy. The market value of agricultural products sold from Camden County farms was \$28,232,000 in 2007. The number of farms in the County increased between 2002 and 2007.
- Work Commutes: Camden County residents commute out of County to work – 29.3% to Pasquotank County and 23.6 % to Hampton Roads area .
- Natural Systems and Hazards: Natural features are in abundance in Camden County and limit development potential. The plan should address the adequacy of current natural resource protection mechanisms.
- Land Use and Development: Majority of County land is in a natural state, agricultural, or low-density single family development (1 acre +). Existing plans for land development in the County are focused along the northern section of US-17 corridor and the Town Center plan near Camden County Courthouse at US-158 and NC-343.
- Transportation: Road infrastructure is adequate, but limited to vehicular travel.
- Stormwater: Managing stormwater is a critical challenge. Low topographic relief, high groundwater tables, and poor draining soils limit the ability to employ best management practices and low-impact development techniques to manage stormwater. This will be an important topic to address in plan.
- Water / Wastewater: Raw water supply is needed to meet needs of future populations in South Mills Service Area. Wastewater treatment is a critical challenge; many septic systems are inadequate and expected to fail. The current Water and Sewer Master Plan identifies the need for three localized wastewater treatment systems to expand needed service, which may be cost prohibitive.
- Recreation: Programs have increased in recent years. Large opportunity to expand recreational offerings in County and provide solid base for eco-tourism industry.
- Community Health: Community Health Assessment Conducted in 2010. Cancer and heart disease are number one causes of death for Camden County citizens.
- Public Services and Facilities: County has need for new public facilities – high school, administrative office space, expansion of reverse osmosis water treatment plant, sewer system

expansion. County also needs a long-term strategy for solid waste / recycling collection and disposal.

- Key Influences and Opportunities (preliminary as identified at this stage in the planning process – will be revised through stakeholder interviews and feedback from community)
 - Economic Development: Capturing a Portion of Regional Growth
 - Natural Assets: Capitalizing on Eco-Tourism and Recreational Opportunities While Protecting Valued Resources
 - Place-Making: Building on the County’s Existing Framework
- List of Steering Committee issues discussed at previous meeting. Requested members to give thought to any additional topics that should be addressed by the plan and to let Dan Porter know in the next few weeks.

DISCUSSION

- Committee member questioned what Clarion Associates about the meaning of the term “affordable housing.” The term is used to describe affordable housing for working residents of the County; it is not intended to describe subsidized public housing. To clarify, the term in the report will be changed to “workforce housing.”
- Question about the interpretation of industry data for Camden County – are the trends reflective of the workforce or jobs in County? Clarion to review data and clarify in report.
- Question about how existing land use data was developed and why it showed a large retail establishment at south end of County. Existing land use information was generated by comparing the County’s GIS layer (residential, wetlands, floodplain, agriculture) and the County’s zoning GIS layer. Follow up analysis will be conducted by staff and planning consultant to ensure that this information is accurate.
- Recreational facilities should be included in the list of needed government facilities.
- Topics raised by Steering Committee for inclusion in the plan:
 - Need to include recreational opportunities in list of topics to address in plan
 - Zoning conflicts refers to the mismatch between zoning districts and actual existing land use
 - Agriculture is an important topic to address, particularly how to protect the viability of farming. Concerns about encroachment on agricultural lands by suburban development and the need to buffer farms from subdivision development should be addressed in plan. The County does not currently have a Farmland Preservation Plan or a Voluntary Agricultural District program to assist farmers. These solutions have been explored previously with members of the farming community, but never implemented.
 - Property rights is an important community value that should be infused throughout the plan.

4. COMMUNITY SURVEY

Ivo Dernev presented the draft community survey to the Committee. The survey is designed to acquire feedback for use in developing both the CTP and the Comprehensive Plan. The survey will be available online through survey monkey and in hard copy versions that will be distributed to key public facilities and available through the County's Planning Department. Steering Committee members discussed adding questions to the survey to identify the location of residence of the respondent. The Committee was given two weeks to review the survey and get comments back to Dan Porter. The survey is to be released the week of October 24 and will be conducted through the end of the calendar year.

5. ENVISION CAMDEN COUNTY PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The first public event to kickoff the Comprehensive Plan process is scheduled for November 14 at the Camden County Middle School. The proposed format is a public open house with scheduled presentations in the afternoon and evening. The presentation will include a keypad polling exercise, a visioning exercise, mapping exercise and a small group exercise. Comment forms, "meet with planners" other opportunities will be provided to get open-ended feedback from participants. Staff are working to publicize the workshop on the County's website, through a local mailer, and through Emergency Management community message board. Discussed County's presence on Facebook:

- Visit Camden County <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Camden-County-NC/222536747776124>
- Pasquotank/Camden/Elizabeth City Emergency Management <http://www.facebook.com/CamPasqEM>
- Camden County Government (older page that is now inactive) <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Camden-County-North-Carolina/163276613419>

Steering Committee members are encouraged to attend the public workshop and to ask friends, neighbors, and colleagues to attend.

6. NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING – JANUARY 2012

The Committee will meet next in January 2012 to discuss the outcomes of the *Envision Camden County* public workshop, the initial work to develop the land suitability analysis/alternative development scenarios, and to provide direction regarding the types of land development scenarios to be tested and the population projections to use to develop the scenarios. The meeting will be scheduled for the second or third week of the month.

