

TO: Marie Parker, Town of Carrboro

FROM: Danny Wilson, Freese and Nichols
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SUBJECT: Carrboro Downtown Area Plan Public Hearing Feedback

DATE: 11/11/2025

Public Hearing Feedback

This memo provides brief responses to the feedback received during the public hearing that was opened on October 21, 2025, as part of the Carrboro Town Council meeting. The following includes the summarized question raised, in no particular order, and a response to the question. Additional information regarding engagement can be found in the meeting packet. If Town Council concurs with the edits contained in this memo, the edits can be incorporated into the motion for Plan approval, and they will be made to create the final, adopted Downtown Area Plan.

1. Please evaluate the core primary vs. non-core primary streets to make sure there are no issues with them being incorporated as recommended as part of the entire street network, as these streets continue past the Downtown Area Plan study area.
 - a. Street typologies were identified based on available right-of-way width and intensity of use. The core primary streets are located in the central part of the study area, which is anticipated to see the most concentrated growth and have the highest level of activity. Core primary streets include the most generous pedestrian and bicycle amenities to accommodate the higher concentration of non-motorized vehicular traffic. These streets change character as they move away from the central part of the study area and are treated as non-core primary streets as they connect back into the surrounding areas. Non-core primary streets still include strong pedestrian and bicycle facilities; they are just slightly less robust than what is recommended for the core primary streets.
2. Explain why travel lanes in the sections still show wider than 10' when the recommendations in the text are to have travel lanes that are 10' wide. Brewer Lane is the only road that lists a disclaimer, which helps that road width make sense.
 - a. Update page 45 for the Jones Ferry Road future section to show the future section with a 10' travel lane. A disclaimer will be added to this page that states: "This section of Jones Ferry Road was recently restriped to include a bicycle lane and has 11' travel lanes; however, future road restriping or construction plans should prioritize creating the narrowest travel lane (down to 10') that can still accommodate the transit service that uses this corridor, while maximizing the available space for bicycle and pedestrian

facilities. The Town should coordinate with transit providers to verify roadway design and lane configuration will not have a negative impact on transit service provision.”

3. Implementation item BE-08 describes creating a centralized park in the downtown area; however, having a centrally located park in the downtown area would not result in a park that is within a 15-minute walk from residential areas.
 - a. Update the implementation item description on page 65 to read as follows (strikethrough = delete; underline = add):

“Convert an existing parcel or pursue acquisition of a parcel to create a ~~centrally located~~ public park in the downtown area. This space can help support having a park within a 15-minute walk for all residents. The parcel should be a suitable size for the design and installation of small neighborhood park amenities such as shaded play areas, shade trees, picnic amenities, restrooms, native plantings and a spray plaza (approximately 0.4 - 1.5 acres). This Plan’s renderings show an example of a downtown area park.”
4. Implementation item BE-09 references Complete Streets and the Town is talking about using NACTO standards for Town roads. Can you please verify that identifying Complete Streets is appropriate and does not create a conflict with NACTO standards?
 - a. It was verified that there are no conflicts with Complete Streets and NACTO or SL2025-94 (the recently adopted state law that prohibits localities from establishing or requiring pavement design standards for roads to exceed the minimum NCDOT standard). No change is needed in the Plan as it is currently drafted. Complete Streets is a model that has been referenced by NACTO, as can be seen in the following street design guide link: <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/>
5. Implementation items PR-03 through PR-16 may conflict with the recent UDO update diagnostic report that was submitted by the consultant assisting the Town with that project.
 - a. The Downtown Area Plan, as an example of a small area plan, is intended to help inform and guide changes to the development regulations. As the New UDO moves from the diagnostic phase—which focuses on a review of the current LUO—implementation items from this plan, reaffirmed by community engagement, will provide important context for CodeWright as they begin to draft the new regulations. (staff response)
6. There are concerns over the lack of minority participation, in particular those identifying as Black/African American, in the public engagement process. Can you describe what efforts were made to reach this segment of the population?
 - a. A full summary of engagement, including the results of the demographic information collected at in-person events as a complement to the survey demographics is attached to this memo. More information about engagement can be read about in the plan as well as on the website, and Town staff can continue to develop resources to help respond to this concern as directed. At the May work session, the Council asked staff to conduct focused engagement over the summer to reach out for additional input from

residents of color. A series of open houses and events conducted in Historically Black Neighborhoods and tabling at Juneteenth. At these events we were able to have deeper conversations about the plan, answer specific questions of residents and galvanize them to share with their neighbors. (staff response)

7. Would it make sense to go back and include a topographic map overlay for the Plan to show how water would flow downhill and impact adjacent neighborhoods and take a deeper evaluation of how green infrastructure could direct the overall Plan?
 - a. The Plan includes many recommendations and strategies for intercepting, reducing, and reusing rainfall to lessen the impacts of stormwater runoff. These items have direct positive benefits with reducing downhill/downstream flooding, as well as supporting a more natural groundwater recharge system, while reducing pollutants from reaching surface waters. As the Downtown Area Plan is a higher-level planning document, it does not provide a good basis for understanding specific stormwater runoff, as that is assessed at a property-specific level and based on an individual development project level. If development includes the recommendations and strategies of the Downtown Area Plan, the volume and speed at which stormwater runoff reaches adjacent neighborhoods should be lessened, which will help reduce flooding.

8. The Green Neighborhood Initiative is currently taking off and could be referenced in the Plan as a lens through which green infrastructure could be more prominently woven into the downtown area.
 - a. A presentation about this Initiative can be found in [the linked presentation](#), which was from Amy. Green Neighborhood initiative was a town program with a two-fold purpose: (1) identifying smaller communities for providing more successful, direct engagement and (2) encouraging residents, through small grants from the Town, at a neighborhood level, to do small projects that begin to make a difference in climate action—as identified in the Community Climate Action Plan. Part of the program involves the development of a series of modules that can be shared across neighborhoods and build capacity for individual residents to participate and contribute to the Town’s efforts to mitigate impacts of climate change.

In parallel, the Town continues to build on and explore green development initiatives and incentives, some of which are identified in the Downtown Area Plan. (staff response)

9. Should the Downtown Area Plan include a more robust economic analysis to help the Town support local businesses and understand how the future economy will look in Carrboro?
 - a. The Downtown Area Plan did not include a specific economic development analysis as part of the project scope; however, it does include many elements that help provide guidance for private investment, support local businesses and increase the local tax base. Some of these elements include the following:
 - i. P. 27: Impact of Lot Size
 - ii. P. 27: Land Available for Development

- iii. P. 62-83: There are 36 implementation items that support the Downtown Area Plan’s Economic Sustainability Goal (#4) and Carrboro Connects Economic Sustainability Goal
- iv. P. 111: Strongest Identity Blocks
- v. P. 115: Vacant Land
- vi. P. 117: Ease of Assembly
- vii. P. 118-119: Improvement and Productivity Analyses
- viii. P. 120-121: Development Opportunities and Challenges
- ix. P. 139: Plan Goal #4
- x. P. 143-146: Property Development

An implementation item in the Operational and Programming section can be added, as follows:

Ref #	Recommendation	DAP Goal	C.C. Goal	Time	Entity	Climate	Race / Equity	Est. Budget	Fund.
OP-XX	<p>Economic Market Analysis Complete an analysis of the Town’s economic market to determine appropriate strategies for existing business retention, while identifying approaches to growing the Town’s economic base and supporting new businesses.</p> <p><i>Page References: p. 120-121, 139, 143-146</i></p>	#4	Econ. Sust.	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF

In addition to the elements included in the Downtown Area Plan and the proposed additional implementation item listed above, Town staff will provide information about economic development initiatives and efforts underway to support existing businesses and ways to attract new economic growth.

10. What percentage of the project budget was spent on public engagement?
 - a. Over 40% of the consultant project budget was used directly on engagement efforts, which does not include time spent planning, pre-engagement or post-engagement discussions with staff about engagement events or feedback received. This time also does not include weaving the engagement feedback into the Plan document, analysis of how feedback should direct Plan text and approaches, or time spent preparing for,

attending, or responding to Town Council meetings. Town staff to provide additional information on their efforts spent on public engagement as part of this project.

11. How has the business community been involved?

- a. The business community was involved through the stakeholder meetings and engagement activities. Specific stakeholder sessions were held for downtown area business owners to obtain direct feedback from their perspectives on ways to support businesses downtown. Town staff to provide additional information about business community engagement.

12. Why is a street tree planting strip of zero feet included in the Plan?

- a. The only zero-foot planting strip shown in the Plan is for an existing roadway condition. The size of the planting strip recommended in the Plan is based on the available right-of-way space and does not indicate how a tree should be planted. Detailed information regarding installation specifications for street trees and whether topsoil, structural soil, root bridges, and/or modular pavement support systems should be used to provide adequate soil root volume for healthy tree growth should be contained in a detailed design and/or specifications manual. These considerations should be evaluated during the design phase of each project and weighed with the pros and cons for each approach to support a healthy urban forest.

13. Why does the Mixed-use Development Along a Greenway rendering show a building as 6 stories but the character area only lists buildings up to 5 stories in height?

- a. The Plan includes language about allowing buildings to be taller in certain instances, so this rendering including an example of where a 6-story building may fit without feeling out of place based on the scale of adjacent development. Page 30 includes text describing the additional story in this particular instance.

14. Several questions were raised about specific details that are not listed in the Downtown Area Plan but may be included in the UDO.

- a. The Downtown Area Plan is a high-level plan that provides a narrower focus on the downtown area than is provided by the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan. The Town uses planning documents to focus on a variety of topics, helping to provide specific guidance, while fitting together to move the Town forward in an organized manner. Extremely fine details that deal with property design or development, such as the percentage of commercial to residential breakdown in a mixed-use project or how traffic mitigation will occur for new development, should be contained in a UDO, policy, ordinance, design manual or other document that is intended to specify such level of detail. The strategies and approaches identified in the Downtown Area Plan help provide guidance for future policy, ordinance, and/or design manual creation that can contain those details.