



# TOWN OF CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

## STAFF MEMORANDUM

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**To: David Andrews, Town Manager  
Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

**From: Patricia J. McGuire, Planning Director**

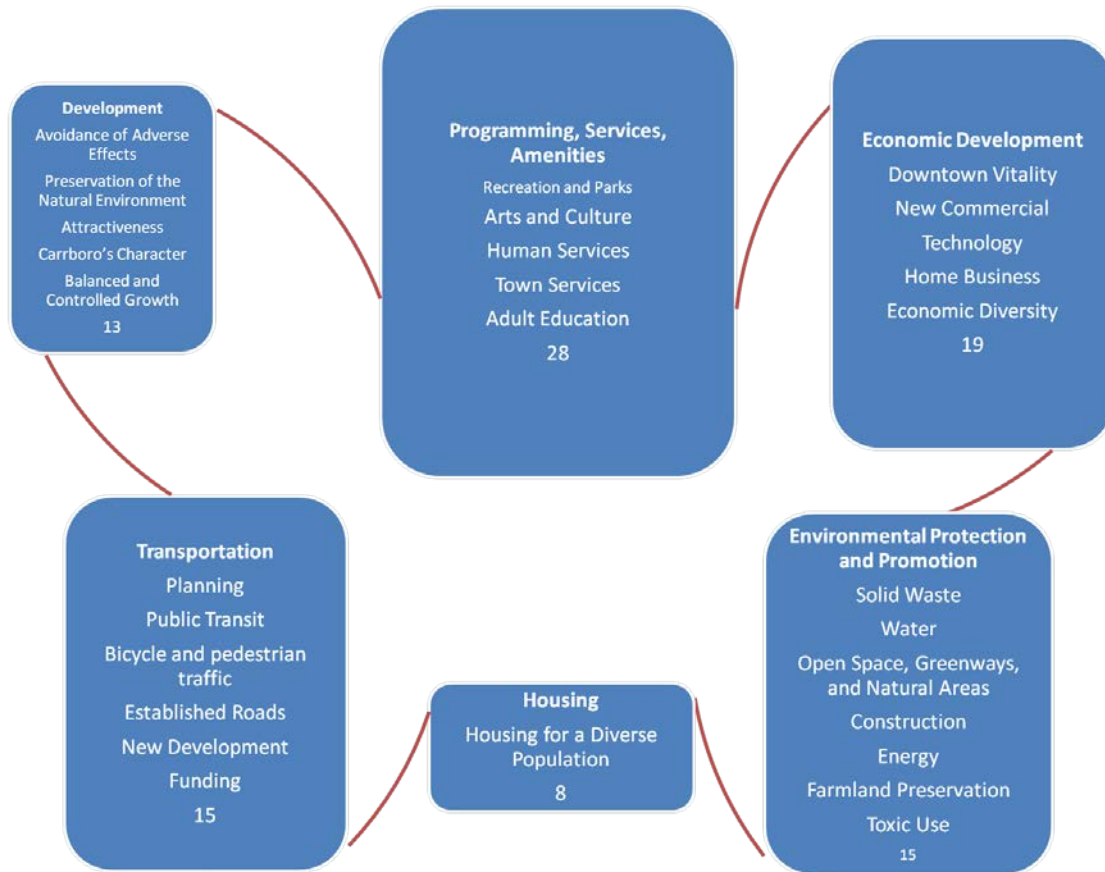
**Date: September 18, 2015**

**Subject: Carrboro Vision2020 – Role in Policy Decisions/Justice Considerations**

Introduction. Carrboro Vision2020 was adopted on December 5, 2000, resulting from the work of a citizen- and Board of Aldermen-member task force to evaluate the preceding strategic policy framework (Year 2000 Task Force Report) and gather community input on concepts that could frame growth and development through the year 2020. The slim volume (<http://www.townofcarrboro.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1371> Attachment D) organized into six topical areas, has served to inform public discourse, budgeting, policy, and regulation since its adoption.

During its retreat on February 15, 2015, the Board of Aldermen explored values and decision making strategies. Included with the agenda materials was an essay from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) on John Rawls' Theory of Justice (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/original-position/>) and the meeting agenda outlined the discussion to include the Board considering using justice as a fundamental element of decision-making and possibly communicating this in a statement. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Board of Aldermen would have a work session to discuss the usefulness of Vision2020 in decision-making, especially in relation to social impact and equity.

This memo provides an overview of the manner in which Vision2020 has been used in the Town's decision-making and notes how equity and justice considerations are informing planning efforts in a few US locations.



**Figure 1. Policy Areas/sub topics (#s represent the number of policy statements)**

The Introduction to the Carrboro Vision2020 document is as follows:

*Vision2020 is a policy-making document for the Town of Carrboro to use in the planning of its future. It is a caretaking tool, as well, designed to preserve the Town's history and qualities in an atmosphere of desirable growth.*

*This document reflects the direct input of over 100 Carrboro citizens. Every man, woman and child in Carrboro was invited to participate in a facilitated, citizen-based brainstorming session on March 25, 2000. Nearly 100 citizens chose to participate that morning. At this session, citizens were encouraged to draw, write, and verbally express their hopes, dreams, and visions for their community.*

*Hundreds upon hundreds of ideas were generated and an overall vision for the future began to emerge based on this citizen input. The Steering Committee, which consisted of representatives of all of the town's advisory boards plus several citizens-at-large, then took this emerging vision and crafted the following document.*

*The process by which the Vision 2020 policies were developed reflects the town's commitment to crafting policies that reflect the will of the citizens after a great deal of input and discussion. The Committee wishes to thank all of the participants in Vision2020.*

The Board of Aldermen adopted Carrboro Vision2020 as nonbinding policies towards growth and development. Soon after its adoption, Carrboro Vision2020 was put to use, launching other efforts ranging from studies to implement its Zero Waste policy, to the Downtown Visioning effort that identified interest in allowing additional building height, updating parking standards and coordinating parking space management, and renewed and continued interest in a County-based community college and Carrboro-based library, among others. Searches of Board meetings before and since 2013 yield hundreds of references to the document and verify the extent to which the aspirations and intentions captured have been considered, evaluated, and achieved.

Specific, extensive evaluations of the document have also taken place. In 2007, a review of the Vision2020 (2000) in relation to the Facilitation Small Area Plan for Carrboro's Northern Study Area (1999) and Downtown Carrboro: New Vision (2002) was completed. In 2010, a policy-by-policy report was provided for the Board's retreat (*Attachment E*), and in 2014, a focus on how Vision2020 has informed joint efforts, particularly related to the Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools, was shared with the Board of Education.

The Board's Strategic Priorities encapsulate the overall interests expressed in Vision2020:

- 1. Diversify revenue stream to maintain ethnic and economic diversity*
- 2. Protect historic neighborhoods and maintain Carrboro's unique identity*
- 3. Improve walkability and public transportation*
- 4. Encourage development that is compact, dense, and appeals to diverse lifestyles and incomes*
- 5. Enhance and sustain quality of life/place issues for everyone*

A fair and impartial point of view is noted as fundamental to John Rawls' perspective of 'justice as fairness.' The SEPs overview (linked above) of these concepts describes historical background, definitions and principles in relation to other theoretical frameworks seeking to explain individual and social behaviors.

Social justice is not referenced, per se, in Vision2020 or the strategic priorities, but is more directly referenced in policy and planning efforts elsewhere. A few local governments that are specifically developing tools to use in planning/policy development and implementation are noted below.

City of Seattle Racial and Equity Analysis and Toolkit

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web\\_informational/p2273983.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web_informational/p2273983.pdf) (*Attachment F*)

[http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit\\_FINALE\\_August2012.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit_FINALE_August2012.pdf) (*Attachment G*)

King County Washington Equity and Social Justice Initiative -

[www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice.aspx) (*Attachment H*)

Muscatine Iowa Social Justice Intervention Plan

<http://www.muscatineiowa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10736> (*Attachment I*)

It will be noted that these tools are customized to each particular place, its history, needs, and vision – there does not appear to be a standard format in use at present. A point of beginning for the Town, should movement in this direction continue, will be defining the terms and parameters so that data collection and monitoring/measurement could also be developed. Direction from the Board regarding its interest in doing so is requested.