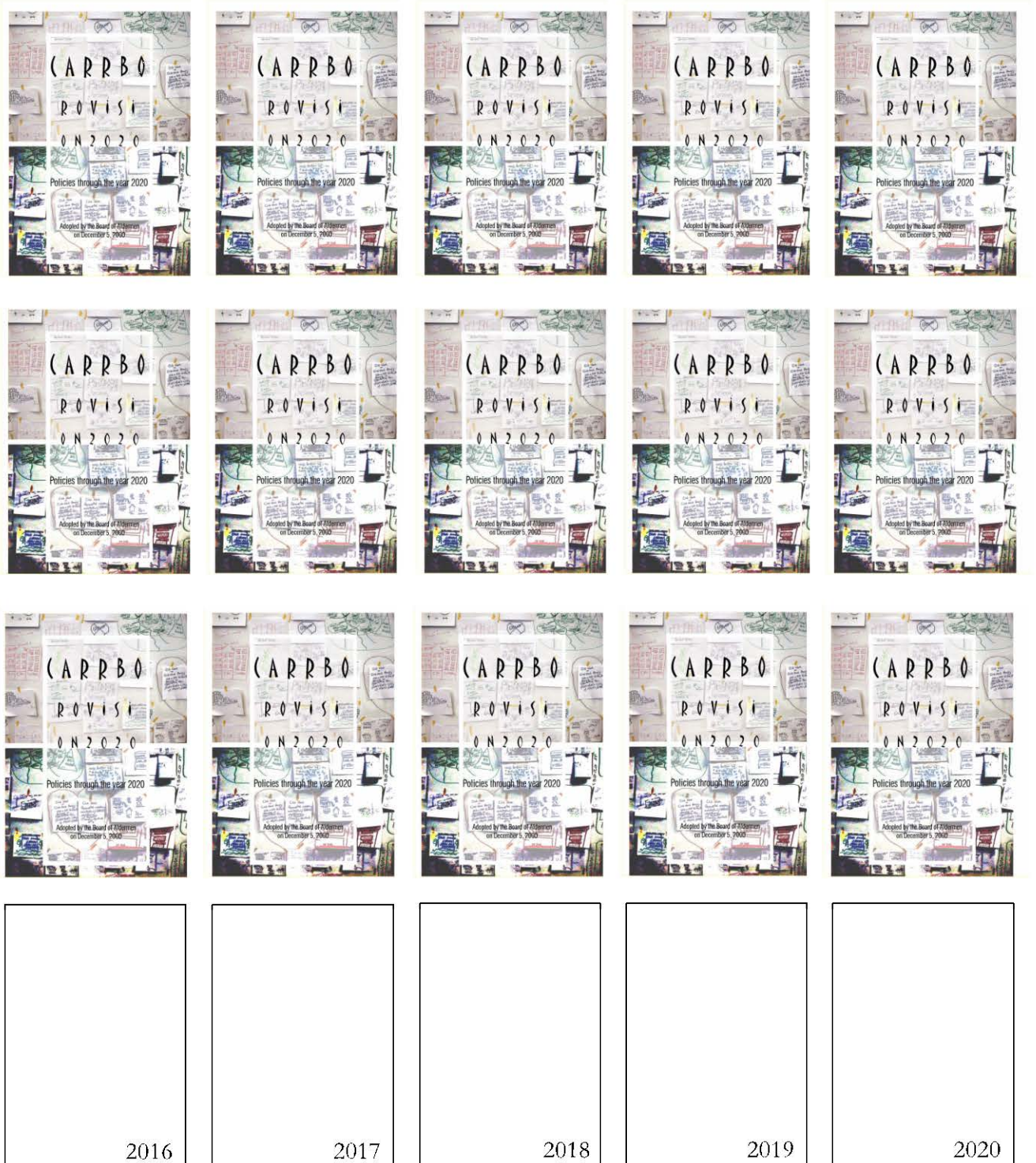


VISION 2020/2015

an assessment by the advisory boards at the fifteen year mark



Acknowledgments Vision 2020/2015

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Introduction 2020/2015

In the summer of 2015, the Planning Board proposed that the advisory boards' annual project be to assess and comment on Carrboro *Vision2020*. The *Vision2020* document has been a principle-guiding document for the Town since it was adopted in December 2000. As 2015 marks the three quarters of the way through the period contemplated by Vision 2020, it is a propitious time to review our progress toward the vision. This document attempts to do that by assessing the accomplishments of the last 15 years and providing guideposts for the next 5 years.

In 2020/2015, comments from the advisory boards have been inserted into the original *Vision 2020* document. The comments are italicized and placed directly below the original text to which they refer. The amended document, a living vision, will go to the Board of Aldermen.

The word "character" appears frequently in *Vision 2020*. A whole section is devoted to it. In the larger sense, the entire document speaks to Carrboro's character – the goal of affordable housing, the encouragement of public and alternative modes of transit, the preservation of the environment – all can be said to be part of Carrboro's character. Each of the advisory boards, in its comments, addresses the character of Carrboro. Some of the comments affirm the original vision, and others push the vision in a different directions. The Planning Board has attempted, with its comments, to bring Carrboro's unique qualities to the built environment – at the street level, in the neighborhoods and the downtown.

Planning Board
Fall, 2015

Introduction

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.

Draft - 2

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Vision2020 Policies

1.0 PROGRAMMING, SERVICES, AND AMENITIES

Many of Carrboro's existing programs and services were examined by the Vision2020 Steering Committee. Recreation and parks, arts and culture, human services, and such critical town services as police, fire, and public works contribute greatly to the quality of life in Carrboro. As such, these programs and services deserve the town's ongoing support.

1.1 Recreation and Parks

Carrboro's recreation and parks amenities play a large role in our citizens' quality of life and sense of community. Carrboro citizens have identified a need for public places where citizens can meet and mingle. Citizens have also identified a need for locally available activities for young adults which can be easily accessed by various transportation modes.

- 1.11** The town should encourage and support the development of greenways and parklands dedicated to public use along streams and easements. There should be a network of connected greenways throughout the town. These greenways should serve as nature trails, biking and walking trails, wildlife corridors. All should protect our natural environment.

Greenways Commission: The town should endeavor to balance the preservation of natural areas with public use of them, particularly along streams and utility easements. The town should designate nature preserves with limited public use within new and existing greenways. All should protect our natural environment.

Northern Transition Area (NTA) Advisory Committee: The network of connected greenways should extend to and be developed within the Northern Study Area (NSA).

- 1.12** The town should continue to maintain existing parks and anticipate the need for more parks and recreation facilities. There should be a park or play field within walking distance of every residence in Carrboro.

Recreation and Parks Commission: In addition to parks and recreation facilities, the town should strive for natural spaces, open or wooded, that are convenient to every residence in Carrboro.

Environmental Advisory Board: The town should practice and encourage ecologically sound and sustainable maintenance of open space, including parks and greenways. Maintenance practices should align with: least-toxic/integrated pest management; encouragement of native plants and discouragement of

invasive plants; minimizing fossil fuel use and maximizing renewable energy generation; maximizing infiltration and improving soil quality while minimizing runoff and impacts to surface and ground waters.

(Comment from Recreation and Parks Commission: should this comment move to 1.15)

NTAAC: 1.12 Is a worthy goal but only limited progress has been made on the Twin Creeks Park located off old Hwy 86 in the NSA. (Achieved Formation of the Twin Creeks Park Committee for planning the park but still confusion as to how residences will access the park. Can this be done through Morris Grove rather than off Old Hwy 86?)

- 1.13 The town should fund and implement the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, developing a long-range financing plan to fund recreation needs. Payment-in-lieu funds, state and federal grants, and local revenue could all be considered. The town should seek to collaborate with neighboring towns, Orange County and the school board for the joint provision, purchase and operation of recreational facilities.

Greenways Commission: The Recreation and Parks Master Plan and the adopted Greenways plans require a commitment to long-range financing for recreation needs, preserves and trailways. A periodic review of the plans should be undertaken to create resilience and mitigate climate change effects.

- 1.14 Recreation programming should be expanded, with a broader range of programming for all interests and age groups (youth, adults, and seniors). Carrboro citizens express a strong desire for a town pool, an outdoor theatre/amphitheater, soccer fields, dance space, and a gymnasium. There should be music in the parks regularly, lots of activity at the Century Center, and a kids' park.

Recreation and Parks Commission: The town and the Recreation and Parks Commission should continuously evaluate community needs and make recommendations for programming and facilities that meet all interests, abilities and age groups. Recreation and Parks Commission new language: Including both indoor and outdoor programming. Communication regarding parks and recreation programs and facilities should be useful and useable to the public.

Planning Board: Although recreation programming has been expanded, key recreational amenities are still neither available nor being planned for. For example, there is still no soccer field within the Carrboro planning jurisdiction. Reaching this goal will require the town to engage in more focused planning for capital recreation projects.

- 1.15 The town should practice and encourage ecologically sound and sustainable maintenance of open space, including parks and greenways.

Greenways Commission: The ecological integrity of the last few areas that are not developed should be preserved.

- 1.16 ***Recreation and Parks Commission: Trails and greenways that increase connectivity to parks and recreation fields and facilities should be encouraged.***

- 1.17 ***Recreation and Parks Commission: Increase opportunities for collaboration between governmental agencies, schools, private organizations and individuals to expand programming and facilities.***

1.2 Arts and Culture

Art and culture play a very large role in Carrboro's distinctive appeal. Carrboro is an integrated community. We need to understand each other, accept each other, appreciate each other, interact with each other, work, live, and recreate together. Much town pride is evident at community gatherings. The town should continue to encourage and support artistic and cultural activity. The town should also take measures to ensure that the public transportation system enables our citizens to take advantage of the cultural and educational opportunities available at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Arts Committee: The town should continue to pursue the recommendations of the 2015 Creative Carrboro report, including branding Carrboro as a creative community, organizing and facilitating efforts to support Carrboro's arts community and creative economy, providing affordable living and working space for artists and creative enterprises, and developing markets for Carrboro artists and creative enterprises.

- 1.21 The town should plan and support regular music events and festivals in our parks and the Century Center. Additionally, the town should complete the bandstand at the Town Commons for regular concerts and artistic events.

Arts Committee: The bandstand and the Town Commons have proved excellent venues for music events. The town should continue to work with local businesses and organizations to increase and expand free concert opportunities for the public.

- 1.22 The town should support a centrally located and conveniently accessible library.

Planning Board: A centrally located library is a worthy goal and should continue to be pursued, possibly by public/private partnership in which commercial uses are located in the same building as the library.

Arts Committee: The new library should include spaces for arts programming.

- 1.23 The Carrboro Century Center should be developed to its fullest potential. This facility, complementing the ArtsCenter, should become the cultural center of Carrboro, drawing people downtown, creating a sense of place, and serving all citizens.
Arts Committee: The new spaces for arts programming in the library should be considered in conjunction with the current Century Center spaces so that each facility is used to its best advantage, with particular focus on a new indoor concert venue.
- 1.24 The town should support efforts to honor and celebrate the diversity of our citizenry through activities at the Century Center, and by supporting cultural centers, festivals, and musical and arts events. centers, festivals, and musical and arts events.
NTAAC : 1.24 is a worthy goal and examples can be sited to support its achievement (IE the West End Poetry Festival, 2nd Friday Art Walk, Carrboro Music Festival, etc.)
- 1.25 The town should continue to support, as well as encourage its residents to support, the ArtsCenter, which is an integral part of the town's cultural life.
Planning Board: Town support for the ArtsCenter will be especially critical through 2020 as it enters a new chapter and faces a transition to a new building.
- 1.26 The Town should preserve and celebrate its history through continuing installations and display and continued support of Carrboro Day.
Arts Committee: More could be done to preserve and celebrate Carrboro's history. The Town historian (a volunteer position) could assist in this worthwhile effort.
- 1.27 The town should support, fund and purchase public art, including sculpture and murals, and encourage public art projects like The Public Gallery of Carrboro's Art on Weaver.
Arts Committee: Public murals and sculpture should be encouraged by the town. The town could partner with artists, private donors and property developers to further this effort.
- 1.28 The town should encourage year-round use of its nationally acclaimed Farmer's Market. While seasonal use will vary, the town should also encourage additional, compatible uses, such as a regular crafts and arts market.
Economic Sustainability Commission: The Farmers Market is in year-round use, and the town should make a space for an arts and crafts market. (Comment from Recreation and Parks Commission: this should reflect that an Arts and Crafts market started in 2015)
- 1.29 A celebration should be developed in which art galleries, the town, and local restaurants sponsor arts-related activities on a regular basis.

Arts Committee: 2nd Friday could be expanded to include downtown restaurants and other downtown entertainment venues.

1.3 Human Services

Carrboro citizens are vocal in their concern for each other. Our citizens also desire the security of knowing how their town works, thereby facilitating our delivery of human services.

- 1.30** The town should continue to look for unmet needs, to inform the Orange County Commissioners of those needs, and to urge them to address those unmet needs.

Human Services Commission: The town should partner with appropriate agencies and organizations to determine unmet needs of its citizens.

- 1.31** The town should continue to support human service needs that are above and beyond those met by the County.

Human Services Commission: The town currently supports needs through its Human Services grant program and should continue to do so.

- 1.33** The town should develop a comprehensive plan for supporting the needs of special populations, including senior citizens and immigrants, in which these populations identify their needs rather than the community at large. Such a plan would focus particularly on transit needs easy access and proximity to health care and integration into the greater community.

Human Services Commission: The town should evaluate with other stakeholders and services the needs of special populations to understand current state and plan next steps.

- 1.34** The town should follow through on citizens' interest in maintaining a senior center in Carrboro.

Human Services Commission: The town should evaluate how maintaining a senior center dovetails with opportunities noted in item 1.3 and what services should be provided there.

- 1.35** The town should consider the impact of its ordinances and policies on the wellbeing of its most vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, children, those with disabilities and those living on low-, middle-, or fixed incomes.

Human Services Commission: The town should evaluate ordinances and policies prospectively for citizen impact

1.4 Town Services

The Town plans to utilize electronic technology to the fullest in order to be a "Community on the Web." Access to public documents and community updates should increase flexibly and swiftly in response to changing community needs.

- 1.41 Carrboro should encourage paperless transactions to minimize solid waste disposal. All town services should be made available on-line, including information, town forms, ordinances, and payments.
 - 1.42 Carrboro town staff should remain dedicated to fast, efficient public service, employing new technologies and skills toward increasingly cost-effective and environmentally friendly town services.
 - 1.43 Carrboro should continue to provide a high level of police, public works and fire service to its citizens.
 - 1.44 The town should continue to seek opportunities to exercise more local control of revenue options and community health and welfare options.
 - 1.45 The town should continue to encourage the active participation of its citizens in community planning.
 - 1.46 Carrboro should continue its efforts towards community building by encouraging the use of facilitation and conflict resolution. The town should also seek alternatives or supplements to the traditional public hearing format when controversial issues are before the Board.
- 1.5 Adult Education**
- 1.51 The town should work to bring a community college to the area.
 - 1.52 The town should create a "Communiversities" to provide learning opportunities at all stages of life. With adult students and retirees in mind, one model for this program might be Elderhostel.
 - 1.53 The town should promote the Century Center's adult education offerings and use this facility to its fullest potential as a venue for educational opportunity.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT

Carrboro's development should take place in a manner consistent with a set of adopted values. The health and safety of citizens should be protected. Respect for and protection of the natural environment should be integrated into the town's policies as a high priority in enriching the quality of life. As much as possible, Carrboro's town character should be preserved; and the town should respond to citizen initiatives toward that goal. The community should continue to foster diversity, welcoming people of all races, ages, ethnicity, sexual orientations, and social and economic backgrounds. Growth should occur in a balanced fashion, and at a rate that does not jeopardize the values set forth by Vision2020. The interests of all members of the community, including property owners, neighbors, and other interested citizens should be considered when making development decisions.

NTAAC: This is a worthy goal but as already stated, the NSA has not been specifically considered though these sections were referenced by the staff in its report on the proposed flex zone. We recommend changing the language in the opening paragraph in lines 4 and 5 to the following:

“Carrboro’s town character should be preserved, and the town should respect, respond to and support citizen initiatives toward that goal.”

2.1 Avoidance of Adverse Effects on Public Health and Safety

- 2.11 Infill development should take place in a manner that fulfills the town’s goals and enhances neighboring areas. The town should develop policies that mitigate the adverse impact of infill development, with particular consideration given to roads, sidewalks, and aesthetic compatibility. The town should develop a process to mediate disagreements between developers and residents of existing neighborhoods.

Planning Board: Infill development and redevelopment of existing lots to higher intensity uses should be encouraged within the boundaries of the historical downtown. Infill in the downtown increases density without encroaching on the existing adjacent neighborhoods.

NTAAC 2.11 is a worthy goal but we are unaware of a specific process to mediate disagreements between developers and residents of existing neighborhoods. Is this to be done by the dispute settlement center, a mediator, or a neighborhood charrette?

In addition, the goal has failed to be achieved in terms of mitigating the additional traffic resulting from the past 15 years of new development along the East side of Old Hwy 86. (IE. The 2003 Hogan Farm Extension to Old 86; the 2008 opening of Morris Grove Elementary School; ~ 2008 Ballentine Development.) Currently, Homeowners and already establish neighborhoods off Old 86, are unable to make a left turn onto this main arterial corridor during ‘rush hour’ time periods. The NTAAC has presented this issue many times over the past few years to both the BoA and County Commissioners, but nothing has been done to address NSA resident’s concerns.

In 2014 the NTAAC made these recommendations for Improvements to Public Engagement Processes to the planning board:

NTAAC members expressed significant concern about the public input process for proposed changes to the Claremont CUP in 2013 that could have resulted in the placement of a relatively large school on a planned commercial parcel. Neighbors and neighboring subdivisions were caught off guard by the proposed change and were frustrated by a lack of notification and a roadmap for information to learn more about the proposal. They also lacked basic information about allowable uses and the decision-making tools the Town could require in evaluating these

uses, in this case, a traffic study and due consideration for the modes of transportation that would be utilized by students and teachers before, during and after school.

Several concrete suggestions came from this discussion that affirm the Planning Board recommendations that were submitted to the Board of Aldermen earlier this year as a follow-up to our outreach conversations:

•The Town should make information about pending and currently-permitted projects available and transparent on-line so that residents have more immediate access to the information they need as a project progresses or changes.

•Clear contact information for individual projects or planning processes should be clearly identified to minimize confusion for residents seeking answers to their questions. As a ‘customer’ group, residents need better service. Town staff also would benefit if the public were better directed to the information they need.

•The Town’s notification standards should be changed to recognize that certain projects affect an entire subdivision, not merely adjacent properties or those within a certain distance from a lot line. In the case of the proposed school, which would have affected traffic patterns significantly around more than one subdivision along Homestead Road, it would be reasonable for every household in the Claremont subdivision to expect notification, as well as residents of other subdivisions.

•Notification should be more detailed and provide a link to information about the project and/or a primer on the zoning or permitting question at hand. Currently notification is both terse and lacking the most useful content.

- 2.12 The town should limit development in sensitive areas such as the watershed, wetlands, and other areas the development of which could adversely affect water supplies and habitat. The town’s restrictions on development within the University Lake Watershed should be retained and enforced.

Economic Sustainability Commission: In the Hwy 54 corridor Light Manufacturing zoning overlaps watershed protection zoning. The town should review the condition and determine if it discourages development.

Environmental Advisory Board: The Town should continue to require the preservation and maintenance of open space, when land is developed, to enforce restraints on clear-cutting, and to require adequate visual buffers.

- 2.13 ***Economic Sustainability Commission: The town has used mediation to resolve disputes between developers and neighbors. The effectiveness of this strategy should be compared to the more traditional approaches to resolution of development differences in producing effective results.***

2.2 Preservation of the Natural Environment

- 2.21 The Town should continue to require the preservation and maintenance of open space when land is developed, to enforce restraints on clear-cutting, and to require adequate buffers.

Environmental Advisory Board: The areas to be maintained should include wetlands, floodplains, stream buffers, steep slopes, hardwood stands and the tree canopy.

NTA Advisory Committee: Specific regulation on clear-cutting should be developed and enforced.

- 2.22 Where development is deemed acceptable, there should be well defined dense development with areas of well preserved open space.

Planning Board: Density should be prioritized over open space in the downtown.

- 2.23 The town encourages the planting of native plant species, as well as non-native species that are not invasive. Removal of invasive species is encouraged. The town supports education on this topic and encourages the public to become aware of the list of invasive plant species found in Appendix E-17 of the Town of Carrboro Land Use Ordinance.

Environmental Advisory Board. The planting of native species is an important step towards preserving healthy pollinator populations, since native species act as the host plants for most of our native insects. The town should expand Appendix E-17 to include information on landscape design and maintenance to maximize ecosystem health.

- 2.24 ***Greenways Commission: Urban greenways, utility lines, and other corridors are becoming more important as refugia and actual habitat for plant and animal life. As such, these areas should be managed to maximize ecological quality.***

2.3 Attractiveness of the Developed Environment

- 2.31 The town should continue to encourage developers to apply adopted downtown design guidelines when planning and building new structures in the downtown area. Additionally, the town should continue to encourage developers to follow architectural guidelines for residential property. The town should periodically revisit the architectural guidelines to evaluate their effectiveness and their impact on other policy areas (See 2.52 and 6.0).

Planning Board: The town should enhance the architectural guidelines to encourage a historically-based contextual architecture that reflects, without slavish imitation, the qualities of Carrboro's existing architecture—masonry detailing (patterns and corbelling), recessed

entrances, articulation of the building form and pedestrian-scaled proportions.

Economic Sustainability Commission: The architectural guidelines need to be strengthened in order to discourage “value-engineered” commercial development. The town should encourage quality architecturally detailed buildings, especially in the downtown area.

NTA Advisory Committee: Commercial architectural guidelines, in keeping with Carrboro's town character, should be developed and approved for the Northern Study Area (NSA). Also if following the architectural standards is required, then Carrboro needs to enforce the standards. More work needs to be done to require developers to use the Vernacular Standards sections of those guidelines, and there needs to be an assessment/evaluation to see to what extent they are being followed, and if they are not, strengthening the criteria and requirements should be made.

- 2.32 New development that blends single-family and multi-family units should be designed and landscaped to ensure compatibility.

Planning Board: By encouraging different housing types and a variety of design in new residential developments, these developments will become architecturally richer environments, contributing to their sense of place and identity. (See 2.52)

2.4 Carrboro's Character

- 2.41 The town should support the evolution of a downtown district that embodies Carrboro's character. The downtown district should have medium-rise buildings appropriately sited with adequate public access, and it should provide shopping opportunities that meet our citizens' everyday needs. The downtown should remain a center for the community where people work, gather, shop, socialize and recreate. The Century Center should serve as a focal point for the downtown.

Planning Board: Future downtown projects should be aesthetically and functionally integrated with the existing downtown fabric and not realized as enclaves of private development. The town should continue to strive for a downtown that is interwoven and human-scaled, with an emphasis on lively streets and pedestrian activity at day and night.

Economic Sustainability Commission: The main entrances to the Century Center should be improved to enhance accessibility by the public and to reinforce the Center's role as the focal point of the downtown.

- 2.42 Development throughout Carrboro should be consistent with its distinctive town character. The town should adhere to policies that limit the widening of roads, encourage plantings alongside roads, preserve historic areas, buildings and older neighborhoods, and retain unspoiled green spaces and other natural areas.

NTA Advisory Committee: The same effort should be extended to include the Northern Study Area. Limits to widening Old NC 86 and Homestead should be specifically stated in the Town's transportation plan.

- 2.42.1 Carrboro should plan and encourage the growth of tree canopies over roads to mitigate the heat and smog effect caused by superheated pavement. Carrboro should strongly encourage the electric utilities to put their lines underground to allow for full canopy coverage.

- 2.43 ***Environmental Advisory Board: Solar power and other renewable sources of energy should be incorporated into the town infrastructure. Other green infrastructure - green roofs, green walls, curb cuts, mini rain gardens, porous pavement with buried cisterns, among other Best Management Practices (BMPs), should be built throughout the town.***

- 2.44 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The town should be known as a practitioner of climate change mitigation and adaptation practices. The town should make an effort to attract businesses and manufacturing that will contribute to an economically and environmentally sustainable future.***

2.5 Balanced and Controlled Growth

- 2.51 The town should support the implementation of our Small Area Plan.

Planning Board: The town should develop and actively implement Small Area Plans and/or flexible zoning options in the Northern Transition Area, the Jones Ferry Road corridor, the downtown and other areas identified for commercial development. These plans should provide certainty for current owners as to expected uses and direction to potential developers

- 2.52 The town should continue to require the construction of a diverse housing stock.

Planning Board: The town should encourage the construction of a more diverse and affordable housing opportunities by allowing accessory dwelling units, small lot subdivisions, density bonuses, SROs, live-work flats and other options that make housing available to a wider range of incomes.

Economic Sustainability Commission: The town should support and pursue the Affordable Housing Task Force strategies.

Transportation Advisory Board: Housing stock should be built along transit routes to give residents transportation options.

- 2.53 Careful attention should be paid to the carrying capacity of the existing infrastructure as growth occurs.

NTA Advisory Committee: In addition to carrying capacity, the review of new developments should include a consideration of the impact of them on existing infrastructure and existing use patterns and practices. There are significant Traffic issues resulting from the past 15 years of development along the East side of Old Hwy 86. Currently, Homeowners and already establish neighborhoods off Old 86, are unable to make a left turn onto this main arterial corridor during ‘rush hour’ time periods. The NTAAC has presented this issue many times over the past few years to both the BoA and County Commissioners, but nothing has been done to address NSA resident’s concerns or mitigate the traffic. In addition, proposed a Twin Creek Park entrance is off Old NC 86 via an existing farm road which straddles the property line between the Ballentine subdivision and the Twin Creek Park Site. (The County's internal working title for this road has been "Twin Creeks Parkway"). This ‘farm road’ is in a dangerous location given the hill just south which limits the sight distance for traffic traveling north on Old NC 86. The location of this road into the park is another significant failure to consider carrying capacity of the existing infrastructure as growth occurs.

- 2.54 ***NTA Advisory Committee: The Town should make information about pending and currently-permitted projects available and transparent on-line so that residents have more immediate access to the information as a project progresses or changes. Contact information for individual projects or planning processes should be clearly identified to minimize confusion for residents seeking answers to their questions. Notification should be more detailed and provide a link to information about the project and/or a primer on the zoning or permitting question at hand.***

3.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

With the population of Carrboro expected to increase during the Vision2020 period, additional commercial development should be anticipated both downtown and in peripheral areas. Carrboro should seek to reduce the tax burden on single-family owners by increasing the percentage of commercial space in town.

Economic Sustainability Commission: The town should strive to become a regional leader and exemplar for BALLE (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies.)

3.1 Nature of Development

In the interest of environmental preservation, new commercial development must minimize negative environmental impact, it must emphasize appropriate buffers, and it must not compromise the integrity of established neighborhoods.

Economic Sustainability Commission: Guidelines should be developed to specifically address the tension created when a new development is proposed adjacent to an existing neighborhood so that both parties know what to expect and how their needs will be met. The guidelines should include steps to be taken by developers in working with the neighborhood(s).

NTA Advisory Committee: In addition to commercial development, the effect of utility infrastructure should be considered as well. For this goal to be achieved within the NSA, the NTAAC recommends that Board of Aldermen visit the NSA in order to become more familiar with this area and the issues that new developments have created over the past 15 years.

Appearance Commission Members: Commercial developers should be encouraged to use green building materials in remodels of current buildings and new development

3.2 Downtown Vitality

Downtown Carrboro should be nurtured as the social, cultural and economic center of our community. The downtown should include public social spaces as well as a mix of business types.

3.21 The town should develop a plan to govern the continuing development of downtown. Toward this end, the town should adopt the following goals:

- To double commercial square footage in the downtown from that existing in the year 2000.

Economic Sustainability Commission: The town should continue to encourage commercial development and should include, as well, areas outside of the downtown in the goal for doubling square footage.

- To accommodate additional square footage by building up, not out.
- To increase the density of commercial property in the downtown area.
- To improve the downtown infrastructure (e.g. parking facilities, sidewalks, lighting, shading) to meet the needs of the community.
- To develop transit and traffic initiatives which enhance the viability of downtown.

3.22 Carrboro should encourage the development and placement of architecturally significant commercial and civic buildings.

Planning Board: New commercial buildings that are larger and taller than the historical buildings of the downtown should be designed to reflect the salient

qualities of the historical downtown architecture. (See 2.31)

NTAAC: This is a worthy goal but we are unaware of the development of any architecturally significant commercial or civic buildings.

- 3.23 Other downtown commercial activity could include restaurants, entertainment venues, technology companies, lodging, and offices.

Planning Board: The town should increase efforts to attract more offices. The number of restaurants and bars featuring entertainment has increased significantly, but businesses that generate all-day activity have not. Offices would not only contribute commercial taxes but also bring a larger number of jobs to downtown than further retail development. Currently Carrboro has the dubious distinction of having the highest percentage of its population commute to another municipality for work of any town in North Carolina. Increasing employment in the town's key commercial districts would positively impact the town's energy efficiency, walkability, affordability, and tax stability.

- 3.24 Frequent, accessible public transit is necessary for a thriving downtown. Multi-modal access to downtown should be provided. As traffic increases, Carrboro should consider perimeter parking lots served by shuttles to bring people downtown.

Planning Board: This goal was extremely forward-looking when it was adopted. More attention to advance transportation planning is needed urgently to achieve it. Peripheral structured parking combined with shuttle service is one of few viable solutions to downtown traffic congestion and parking inefficiency.

- 3.25 Walkability should be encouraged downtown and pedestrian safety and comfort should be a goal. The town should improve lighting and shading, and create auto barriers.

Economic Sustainability Commission: More street benches and bicycle parking will encourage greater non-vehicular use.

Transportation Advisory Board: Walkability and bikeability should be encouraged throughout town, not just downtown. Streetscape upgrades, which increase the safety of vulnerable road users, should be a priority.

- 3.26 Carrboro should continue to use the revolving loan fund to support the development of locally owned and operated businesses and encourage micro-enterprises through education and loans.

Economic Sustainability Commission: The fund should be open to non-profits as well as to for-profit businesses.

- 3.27 Carrboro should consider pedestrian-only spaces downtown.
Economic Sustainability Commission: The town should study East Weaver St. as a potential pedestrian-only street.
- 3.28 Carrboro encourages a variety of appropriate residential developments – single-family, multi-family, SROs, et cetera – in the downtown especially as part of mixed-use developments.
- 3.29 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The Town should work with citizens to protect and maintain the health of the urban forest. These trees are important for reducing storm water runoff, cleaning the air, providing habitat, increasing the economic value of neighborhoods, and sequestering carbon.***

3.3 New Commercial Growth

Opportunities for new commercial growth exist primarily in four areas: downtown, across from the Carrboro Plaza Shopping Center, within the commercial core of a village mixed-use development, and within new office/assembly conditional use developments. The latter two options are most obviously appropriate in the transition areas, but may be approved throughout the town’s jurisdiction.

- 3.31 **Shopping Centers**
Before creating new shopping centers, the town should encourage those that exist to maximize their potential by adding stories when and where practical.
NTA Advisory Committee: The town should be more intentional in directing existing shopping centers to build up before considering such development in the NSA.
Appearance Commission Members: Let’s be sure that “building up” shopping centers do not create over-shadowing for neighbors who may be residents next door/nearly next door.
- 3.32 All shopping centers should be connected to residential areas with increased pedestrian access.
- 3.33 ***Planning Board: The town should discourage the construction of new strip malls – single story, predominantly retail properties, with the parking situated between the building(s) and the street. To this end, the current relevant ordinances allowing “shopping centers” should be altered. New development should be mixed-use.***

3.4 Technology

- 3.41 The town should research ways to support telecommuting.

Economic Sustainability Commission: The town should encourage co-working and other creative solutions for working spaces for the large number of self-employed entrepreneurs in the community.

3.42 Carrboro should continue to explore new technologies and should actively recruit private companies to supply Carrboro with the most up-to-date technology available, encouraging its distribution throughout the town.

3.43 Carrboro should help local businesses grow and expand by taking full advantage of the Internet and other new technologies that become available.

Economic Sustainability Commission: Broadband availability should be expanded as part of bridging the digital divide.

3.5 Home Businesses

Carrboro should encourage small, low-impact home businesses. The town should revise ordinances to remove any unnecessary obstacles to appropriate home businesses, and should encourage developers to accommodate home businesses in all new developments.

Planning Board: The town should allow and encourage artisan living units that allow limited craft manufacturing and commercial activity as part of increasing economic diversity.

3.6 Economic Diversity

3.61 While our citizens may not be able to meet all of their consumer needs in Carrboro, it is important that the town encourage the widest possible diversity of locally operated businesses. The objective is a balanced portrait of convenience: a movie theater, overnight accommodations, home businesses, technology, retail, a variety or department store, restaurants and entertainment.

3.62 Carrboro is a town rich in economic diversity. The town should strive to continue this tradition by adopting ordinances and policies that recognize diverse employment types and pay scales.

3.63 The town should encourage the development of underutilized property in the downtown area.

Appearance Commission Members: Yes, let's encourage CVS to clean up their property right in the heart of town! At least, tear the old bank building down and create a mowed empty lot or park until the right building comes along.

3.64 ***Economic Sustainability Commission: The town should support the living wage movement.***

4.0 TRANSPORTATION

The safe and adequate flow of bus, auto, bicycle and pedestrian traffic within and around Carrboro is essential. The public transit system serves to encourage non-auto travel and reduce congestion on existing roads. The town's Land Use Ordinance and economic development policies both address traffic flow in this expanding municipality.

4.10 Planning

- 4.11 The Town of Carrboro should adopt a comprehensive transportation plan. The plan should address population growth projections for the town, its planning jurisdiction and expected growth in adjoining jurisdictions.

- 4.12 The Town should continue to implement its connector roads policy.

Planning Board: The town has proved too ready to accommodate neighborhoods when they object, in their own singular case, to connectivity. The policy is intended to benefit the whole of the town.

NTA Advisory Committee: This is a worthy goal but has not been achieved within the NSA. Speed calming devices on connector roads appear antithetical to the use of the road as a connector for through traffic. The North-South Connector Road via Lake Hogan Farms Extension has not been completed and the planning for this to connect up to Morris Grove is stalled since it's depended on the Ballentine Developers. The NTAAC believes this is a significant failure of the connector plan. Also any new connector road needs to include the placing of speed calming devices such as has been done in the developed section of Lake Hogan Farms, is antithetical to the use of the road as a connector for through traffic.

Transportation Advisory Board: Connectivity should accommodate the needs of all road users, not just motorists.

- 4.13 The town should cooperate with Chapel Hill and other regional entities in a comprehensive transportation plan to include: regional transit service conducted by the Triangle Transit Authority, seamless connections among all the region's public transit systems, and shorter routes and more frequent service.

Transportation Advisory Board: The town should continue to cooperate with Chapel Hill and other regional entities to further broader regional transit services, seamless connections between them, shorter routes and more frequent service.

- 4.14 Carrboro should support a passenger rail connection between the Horace Williams' property, through Carrboro's downtown, and the main campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Transportation Advisory Board: This goal is not relevant any longer. Carrboro should support the regional light rail

project connecting Durham to UNC Hospitals, with a possible future extension into Carrboro.

Transportation Advisory Board: Carrboro should support Bus Rapid Transit model where it's appropriate.

- 4.15** As public transit routes are identified, the town should locate new high-density development along such routes through changes to the zoning ordinance and map.

NTAAC: 4.15 is a worthy goal but needs to be revised to include the NSA whose residents promote more modest development. We recommend adding “so long as the development does not conflict with the other provisions of Vision 20/20 or the separate goals for the NSA.” The NTAAC also recommends that Board of Aldermen visit the NSA in order to become more familiar with this area and the issues that new developments have created over the past 15 years.

4.2 Public Transit

- 4.21** The system should continue to facilitate access to youth activities and special events and educational opportunities at UNC-Chapel Hill and should enhance access to employment opportunities. Additional park and ride lots should be built for easy public transit access.

Transportation Advisory Board: Existing park and ride lots are underutilized, and building new ones is not the most valuable land use.

- 4.22** Carrboro should expand its participation in organization and planning for the community bus system and continue in its efforts to share the costs of the system equitably with Chapel Hill and the University. Costs of the system should be subsidized by federal and state grants as well as appropriated town revenues.

- 4.23** The town should support transportation services that meet the special needs of its disabled citizens.

- 4.24** *Planning Board: The town should work to expand current public transportation destinations beyond Chapel Hill.*

4.3 Bicycle and pedestrian traffic

- 4.31** The town should fully implement its bicycle and pedestrian network plan. This plan should identify links needed now as well as links that will be needed by 2020.

NTA Advisory Committee: The network plan should be extended into the Northern Study Area.

Transportation Advisory Board: The town should update the bike and pedestrian plans every 5 years, or as needed, until a to-be-determined mode-share goal is reached.

- 4.32 The town should establish connections with bicycle and pedestrian ways in other jurisdictions.

NTAAC 4.32 is a worthy goal but only limited achievements have been obtained in the NSA. The NTAAC has explored and advocated for a bridge or cross walk on Homestead Road for bicyclists to cross as well as a bicycle/pedestrian path along the south side of Homestead Road at this point so that riders and walkers can access the community to then wind their way into town on designed bike lanes. The NTAAC has also advocated for an off road, ten foot bike/pedestrian path along the east side Old NC 86 from its intersection with Homestead Road all the way to the Park. An example has already been built in front of the Ballentine Subdivision on Old NC 86 across from Deer Ridge Drive.

- 4.33 The maintenance of these paths and ways should continue to be a high priority.

Planning Board: The town should increase pedestrian links, walks and alleys, from neighborhood to neighborhood, from neighborhoods to nearby commercial locations, and within the downtown.

- 4.34 *Transportation Advisory Board: The town should formalize a collaboration with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools to implement Safe Routes to School infrastructure and programming.*

- 4.35 *Transportation Advisory Board: The Town should increase police enforcement of crosswalk, speeding, and parking violations in order to improve the safety of Carrboro's bicycling and pedestrian environment.*

4.4 Established Roads

- 4.41 As a general policy, established roads should be widened to accommodate bike lanes and sidewalks, but not to provide additional lanes for automobiles.

NTAAC: 4.41 is a worthy goal but all the main arterial roads within the NSA (Old NC Hwy 86, Eubanks, Dairyland, and Homestead Roads) remain dangerous for bicyclists, and pedestrians. In particular, Old 86 over the past 15 years has not significantly changed though the neighborhoods on the Eastside have grown. It remains a narrow winding road with blind hills and no shoulders where motorists drive aggressively and routinely exceed the speed limit. In addition deer frequently cross this section of the road. There are no bike lanes and the shoulders are too narrow for pedestrians use.

4.5 New Development

- 4.51 The town should continue to require developers to install sidewalks and bicycle paths in new developments.

Transportation Advisory Board: Road width and design should be catered to the development in order to make the environment comfortable for pedestrians, bicyclists and children. Context-sensitivity.

- 4.52 New developments should bear the costs of upgrading connector and arterial facilities in the areas adjacent to their properties to the extent appropriate, including upgrades to serve pedestrians and bicycles, given the added load to the infrastructure and anticipated use of facilities.

4.6 Funding

- 4.61 The comprehensive transportation plan should propose and recommend alternative funding mechanisms to finance infrastructure improvements.

5.0 Environmental Protection and Promotion

The town should serve as a leader in protecting the environment and protecting its residents.

5.10 Solid Waste

- 5.11 The town should aim to recycle all solid waste as a “No Waste” community, and should devise strategies to minimize landfill waste. The town should encourage source reduction through all available means (e.g. mandatory or “pay as you throw” collection of recyclables).

Environmental Advisory Board: The transition to single stream recycling was a step towards simplifying recycling for citizens – increasing participation and optimizing collection costs.

- 5.12 Carrboro should develop and encourage a network of neighborhood composting facilities. The town should also explore the creation of a town compost heap that would benefit the community’s gardeners.

NTAAC 5.12 This remains a worthy goal but the NTAAC is unaware of any neighborhood composting facilities.

- 5.13 Recycling facilities should be readily available throughout the town.

- 5.14 The town should investigate ways to increase the life span of the current landfill.

Environmental Advisory Board: The town should pursue a low-cost, long-lived, local landfill or waste transfer station for Carrboro or investigate optimal partnerships with adjoining governmental and non-governmental organizations.

- 5.15 Carrboro should work with the county to educate all citizens about waste reduction. Creative, non-traditional programs, such as turning garbage into art, should be pursued.
- 5.20 **Water**
- 5.21 Carrboro should work with OWASA to develop the policies and infrastructure necessary for water conservation (e.g. encourage the re-use of grey water, replacing fixtures with low-flow models, and collecting stormwater for watering gardens).
Environmental Advisory Board: Efforts in this area need to be redoubled. The town should work with homeowners and business owners as well as OWASA toward this goal.
- 5.22 Carrboro should adopt a strategy and set of policies to protect all of our creeks, streams, ponds, and lakes.
NTAAC 5.22 This remains a worthy goal but what the town has done to protect all of the town's creeks, streams, ponds and lakes is not clear and needs first to be listed, along with the applicable LUO regulations, and second, assessed on the ground through walkabouts to see whether this goal has been achieved. The regulations should be strengthened.
- 5.23 Carrboro should be proactive in managing its stormwater, promoting active maintenance of facilities, reducing impacts of increased impervious surface, and minimizing impacts on waterways.
- 5.24 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The Town should undertake development of an independent stormwater utility or partnering with other localities to leverage their existing utilities.***
- 5.25 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The Town should undertake efforts, either on its own or in cooperation with other jurisdictions, in the restoration of creeks, streams and lakes, especially those that contribute to the health of Jordan Lake.***
- 5.30 **Open Space, Greenways, and Natural Areas**
- 5.31 Carrboro should work to preserve open space and greenways through all available means, such as direct purchase, conservation easements, donations, and federal and state grants.
Environmental Advisory Board: Accomplishments in this area include the procurement of the Adams tract, working with UNC on conservation easement in Carolina North and starting of implementation of the Greenway network. These efforts should be continued.
- 5.32 The town should map a connected series of greenways that are large enough to serve as wildlife corridors.

Greenways Commission: As part of the mapping of greenways and natural areas that serve as wildlife corridors, unique habitats within them should be identified and mapped.

5.33 ***Environmental Advisory Board: In order to lower Carrboro's carbon footprint, promote general health and welfare of its citizens through exercise, promote access to wildlife for study and relaxation for both disabled and non-disabled citizens, off-road, stable, easily traversed greenways that connect both points within the town (north-south and east-west connectivity) and other communities (Hillsborough, Chapel Hill and Durham) should be constructed. These should be constructed using best engineering practices to minimize or eliminate other environmental impacts such as runoff and habitat bisection.***

5.34 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The Town should work towards linking all residential areas to natural areas and parks by means other than roadways (i.e. bike paths, greenways, etc.) and, then promote the use of these areas to all residents.***

5.40 Construction

5.41 The town should encourage the reduction of waste materials in the course of new construction or renovation. The town should promote, be a leader in, and require, where practical, the use of recycled building materials, recycling plans for construction and demolition materials, and the extent to which "green building" techniques are being employed.

5.50 Energy

5.51 The town should publicly promote every available means of energy conservation. The town's own alternative and renewable energy targets should include passive and active solar, and composted waste co-generation to fuel public vehicles and the heating of town facilities

5.52 The town should set a goal of reduced energy costs in all town buildings and increased fleet mileage for all town vehicles.

Environmental Advisory Board: The town should set a goal for lower emissions for all town vehicles.

5.53 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The town should set a goal of reduced energy costs for streetlights, as well as reducing night-sky light pollution.***

5.54 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The town should consider implementation of geothermal on any future governmental projects such as libraries, art centers, and other government-owned buildings.***

5.55 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The town should encourage and promote efficient generation of renewable energy and alternatives to***

fossil fuels, whether through public private partnerships (Carrboro Community Solar's installation of solar panels at the Farmers Market) or by supporting residential initiatives such as Solarize Carrboro. Additional opportunities and expansion of these models need to be replicated and expanded to commercial spaces. Further, the town should be more proactive in working with intergovernmental organizations and other governmental organizations to promote a regulatory environment that is supportive of these goals.

5.6 Farmland Preservation

- 5.61 The town should adopt incentives to help limit the conversion of farmland to developed uses that bridge the transition areas. These incentives should be designed to preserve small farms, farm co-ops, and organic farming within new conservation subdivisions and elsewhere.

NTA Advisory Committee: The town should promote and encourage farm owners to consider the County's Land Legacy program. NTAAC 5.61 is a worthy goal but unfortunately Farm land preservation has not been achieved. If there are LUO regulations regarding this goal, they should be identified and strengthened. If there are none, they should be created. The town should promote and encourage farm owners to consider the County's Land Legacy program.

5.7 Toxic Use

The town will work to reduce its use of hazardous and toxic products in town operations and will expand, promote, and provide public education on such efforts as with its least toxic integrated pest management policy.

5.8 Urban Forests and Open Space

- 5.81 ***Environmental Advisory Board: The Town should work with citizens to protect and maintain the health of the urban forest. Trees are important for reducing storm water runoff, cleaning the air, providing habitat, increasing the economic value of neighborhoods and sequestering carbon.***

- 5.82 ***Environmental Advisory Board. In the development of open spaces, emphasis should be placed on development of natural areas as open space in addition to developed or paved open spaces.***

6.0 HOUSING

The town should develop a comprehensive housing policy that seeks to provide housing for all of Carrboro's citizens.

6.1 Housing for a Diverse Population

- 6.11 Town policy should accommodate a variety of housing styles, sizes and pricing. It should also address issues of density, funding and rezoning to allow for more non-detached housing, mixed-use development, and communal living options.
- NTAAC 6.11 remains a worthy goal and some progress has been made within the NSA (Affordable housing in Winmore, the subdivisions on Homestead Road, and Ballentine (adjoining Lake Hogan Farms) as well as housing built in Lake Hogan since 2000. That being said many employees at Carol Woods, and UNC Hospitals are unable to find affording housing close to their place of employment.*
- 6.12 The variety of strategies to be considered should include the investigation of alternative public and private funding for construction and renovation of low and moderate income housing. A low interest loan pool for individuals and nonprofits that wish to buy and rehabilitate housing is desired.
- 6.13 The town should review all vacant municipally owned land for the purpose of making unneeded tracts available for housing programs.
- 6.14 The town should continue to advocate for inclusionary zoning techniques to increase the local stock of affordable housing.
- 6.15 The town should pursue the development of density bonus provisions for projects incorporating environmentally sensitive development and building practices.
- 6.16 With our growing population of senior citizens, the town should support the creation of more housing that allows our senior citizens to interact fully with the larger community. Senior access to public transit will become an increasingly important concern.
- NTAAC 6.16 remains a worthy goal but we are unaware of any retirement opportunities except on Smith Level Road.*
- 6.17 The town should interact with non-profit groups that work to provide affordable housing, including but not limited to the Land Trust, Orange Community Housing Corporation, Empowerment Inc., and Habitat for Humanity.
- 6.18 A minimum of 15 percent of the residential units in any residential development should meet the affordability criteria specified in Section 15-182.4 of the Carrboro Land Use Ordinance.
- Planning Board: The town must increase and align its efforts in pursuit of this principle. The payment-in-lieu option should be evaluated to determine if the fee is adequate or needs to be increased in order to properly incentivize actual construction of affordable units integrated within residential developments.*