



## Introduction

Carrboro Connects is being built on a foundation of community outreach. In order to frame out the issues and opportunities that will be explored in the comprehensive planning process, a series of twenty-two (22) virtual meetings were held over the summer of 2020. In small groups of three to five individuals, the consultant team and staff interviewed a total of 59 residents, representing a very broad range of expertise and perspectives. The interview questions covered everything from what people loved about Carrboro, why people move to Carrboro, what the Town's biggest challenges and opportunities are, and what people would most like to get out of the plan once it is completed. In addition, participants were asked for ideas for additional people to interview and get involved in Carrboro Connects (particularly those who may not already be involved in the Town).

Interviews, outreach, and other engagement techniques will continue to take place throughout the planning process, with a focus on giving everyone the chance to participate and be heard in the process. A list of everyone interviewed to date is included in the Appendix.

### 1. What do you love about Carrboro? What are its biggest assets?



"How the Town works to be inclusive, open to change and listens to new opinions."

Transportation Advisory Board member

"It's always moving. We have a population that is always churning. Students, faculty. Quickly growing region." Town Council member

"I can walk out my door to Wilson Park, Carolina North. Connection to green space is important to me. I appreciate inclusivity, how outspoken and involved community members are." Stormwater Advisory Commission member

"We are a community that values community." Town Council member

"Carrboro is very different than 40 years ago and that was by design -- I was involved with the charrette from 20 years ago. Happy with what it has become and the fact that we have done so much of what we set out to do is such a wonderful thing. Very different than Chapel Hill – farmers, artists, creative types is such a wonderful thing. Our elected officials listen to us, if we have a complaint, they are on it. It's something you may not find in most towns." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member

"I appreciate the walkability, accessibility of Carrboro, diversity of Carrboro. Moving here recently I was surprised how distinct Carrboro can be." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member

"Carrboro has both the feel of being in and of N. Carolina and also being a very cosmopolitan approach, different from towns of a similar size. Carrboro has a lot of amenities and is close to amenities in Central Carolina." Planning Board member

## 2. Why do people choose to live in Carrboro?



"People are drawn to the sense of community, sense of place, I'm not saying we're perfect, but people are connected--during the current crisis people are trying to take care of each other." Town Council member

"I came here as a student but not considering moving [now] – the amenities here, and the small town feel -- choosing to stay for the accessibility." Stormwater Management Commission member

"Easy decision (not to leave). I was in the movement. All of my friends were moving north. I am going to stay here and change Carrboro. A lot of people come to Carrboro because they feel comfortable. Not many instances where neighbors make people feel uncomfortable in Carrboro. That's not who we are." Planning Board member

"I love it here. Everything that my children need--they could ride to town, Franklin St. I feel comfortable, I walk everywhere." Planning Board member

"I grew up here. Carrboro has changed so much, was a blue collar mill town until 1980s, transformed to eclectic environment with all different types of people living here. Carrboro has adapted well to changing demographics and not tried to stay stuck in time. Welcoming community for people who have lived here their entire lives and for people who have just moved here." Business owner

"Came to the South to go to UNC as a grad student--Carrboro was where grad students lived. It has grown quite a bit, and it's the link to the university that gives a huge vitality, generates different, interesting people, easy living, walking, riding bikes, excellent schools." Planning Board member

"Very diverse group here in Carrboro, we are in a transitional period, very important for towns to look ahead, not just 20 years but 100 years to reorient our economy to a repair economy rather than a use and throw away economy." Retired professor

"People who live in Carrboro have made a very distinct decision to live in Carrboro." Business owner

### 3. What keywords would you use to describe Carrboro?





4. Where would you bring out-of-towners to get a real sense of the community?



"Places like the Farmer's Market and Weaver Street, are they accessible to everyone? What do we mean for a real sense of community?" Transportation Advisory Board member

"We're not just downtown." Town Council member

"Diverse community--like that it is walkable in urban area, with easy access to suburban area. Like locally owned businesses, concept of infill in downtown area is smart, provides more opportunity to live and take advantage of downtown, Music Fest, Arts Fest." Appearance Commission member

## 5. What do you see as the main opportunities in Carrboro today?



### Community and Place

Indoor community spaces

More integration of Weaver St. Market / Lawn

"Utilizing younger folks to build on the Town's representation, progressiveness. Carrboro is already most progressive in NC, but lots of young people starting their careers--living here can be expensive, could drive people to live somewhere else. Encouraging homeownership for younger folks to highlight the DNA of the town." Planning board member

"Get the community involved in strategic planning, this plan, more input from residents." Appearance Commission member

"Need to attract people in through beauty." Appearance Commission member

"Jones Ferry Corridor - entry point from 54 that ties to downtown is not as developed and could tie different parts of town together." Economic Sustainability Commission member

"Scale - promote more density in limited geographic places." Town staff

## Affordable Housing

"Increase and build density in the downtown to address affordability in Carrboro. Number of new houses spring up that are large single-family homes--opportunity to think about different types of residences." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member

"See more opportunities for more housing downtown, 3-, 4- or 5-story--would love to see condos." Economic Sustainability Commission member

"Housing is the biggest challenge, we have a serious problem with affordable housing--really strong will to talk about affordable housing as a value statement, but when it comes to building a new development, we see another side of these neighborhoods come out. Sometimes NIMBYism, but it can be 'I want housing, but not that kind of housing.' I've seen developments strangled by neighborhood complaints. When homeowners come out, they get listened to. Carrboro is getting whiter. The space is getting narrowed." Planning Board member

"Changing parameters of density bonus and expedited review." Developer

## Economic Sustainability

Opportunity for redevelopment

Viable, new investment

Fostering small businesses to work together

High Quality Restaurants, Restaurants in general

Lloyd Farm--connect to downtown

Local Business Start-up

"Business opportunity, maintain the balance of property taxes, residential v. commercial." Town Council member

"Researching the future of work--a lot of the work from home, lots of jobs that can be done remotely, broader pool of employees. We are a place that can have smaller office buildings that could be headquarters. We draw innovative people because of our progressive politics. When this crisis is over, we are going to be in a good position to capture." Town Council member

"This new normal, might become the normal (working from home)--do we need this entire building? We do have space in Carrboro for that--there was a co-working space that is going to close, the rent was expensive. Start-ups don't need to be downtown where properties are expensive." Town Council member

"Opportunities for development, where strategic areas are for change. So much of jurisdiction is developed. Rural buffer restricts development, new development needs to be

infill or displace something that is existing. Don't want to see gentrification take over all of Carrboro." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member

"Breathe some new life into different parts of Carrboro--do it in a very thoughtful way, maintain the feel of Carrboro, but there are opportunities to do it right," Business Owner

## Climate Change

"Very concerned about climate action, given our scale we are supposed to be more nimble. Can imagine a solely bikeable, walkable, transit downtown, aligning ourselves with the science to mitigate climate change in 10 year window--ramping up electric vehicles, solarizing, composting, transportation demand management, aligning ourselves with a necessary future." Town Council member

"New green deal--bring in new live work spaces, small weatherization business, solar panel installation business, businesses that work in triple bottom line. Revolving loan funds can support, support incubation of tech industry, 203 project has opportunity to expand to fourth floor to have more space. Move from restaurant and entertainment destination to those opportunities that are more resilient. What does resiliency look like in the long term?" Town Council member

## Race and Equity

"We can think about a phase of reimagining some of the structures we are under--Town Council already thinks proactively. Form a Racial and Gender Justice Initiative, create a budget to compensate for expertise. Are we capturing everyone's voice?" Greenways Commission member

"Opportunity to be a leader on the forefront of issues on diversity and inclusion." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member

## Recreation, Parks and Culture

Promote more music & arts

Engaging minority owned businesses

Improved trail marks, attract people to visit Carrboro to enjoy the outdoors

"Need for more in-town public usage space, for multi-use activities." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member

"Arts Center – listen to what different communities want, need. What are their priorities? How can I have the most impact with the budget I have." Organization executive



## 6. What challenges exist? What needs to be improved?

### Community and Place

"Almost everything has trade-offs, environmental impacts, housing impacts. The challenge is how to make progress and not close the gate to newcomers."  
Department Head

"Carrboro needs to be redeveloping, stay current, cool place to be. Challenge is to keep the community affordable for residential and commercial [while doing this]." Town Manager

"Carrboro is rigorous (for development approval). I wish people had a better understanding of the relationship between not wanting to pay high property taxes but not wanting more development."  
Town Council member

"I've been on that divide soapbox. You can't just annex - you need to get people engaged. The divide is deep. I'm worried - invisible challenge - our false sense of inclusivity." Department Head

"Update how zoning works." Town Council member

"Totally rethink the planning process--current land use plan, need to simplify land use planning, set the goals and not be as prescriptive. Give the creative license without being so prescriptive." Developer



*"Broadband is very spotty, my friends say 'I may not make it some days.' We live in a technology-oriented way." Connor Lopez, Youth Advisory Board member*

### Affordable Housing

"Housing that is being built is very expensive," Town Council member

"Gentrification - we have lots of very expensive homes, apartments are getting expensive, we make an effort to address the needs of lower-income people, but middle class ignored. We're going to have wealthy liberals to make an effort to take care of poor people. The cooler we become the less I can afford to live here." Town Council member

"Affordable housing, not just for low income, but missing middle. Have larger scale of townhomes, triplexes, but super-high demand, a lot is owned by leasing companies, college oriented market, difficult to retain families who may want to buy, not rent." Town Council member

"Some of our neighborhoods are being gentrified. Don't think there is anything we can do to prevent that. But can we contain it. Especially lower income residents and people who have lived here for generations. Having more housing options." AHAC member

"Biggest challenges are cost of land and time. Rents are going up; wages are not."  
Department Head

"People here always say that diversity is important but we need to do more about affordable housing and access." Planning Board member

"Housing that is affordable. Most [people who work for the Town] have to move further out when many would like to live closer." Department Head

## Economic Sustainability

"Resources of a small town, expectations of a major city." Planning Board member

"Concern of COVID recovery with restaurants." Town Council member

"Postponement of care and maintenance of facilities, tension of how to spend money." Town Council member

"No big businesses--manufacturing to bring the taxes down." Planning Board member

[Strong sources of revenue] Property tax and sales tax, [and the] pandemic cut into sales tax."  
Department Head

## Climate Change

"Getting an understanding of the emergency that is leading to demanding change at a regular level--prioritizing our budget so we are implementing emergency action. Setting up a plan that addresses this emergency. We are not there politically. Especially with COVID we are more atomized. So many other issues that can easily distract. Opportunity to get a sense of interconnectedness of everything." Town Council member

"Fundamentally it is our sense of understanding connection, there's a danger in advancing one without the other (climate change and racial equity). Are we talking about what we mean about equity for a different type of system? We need to get a sense of what is life giving and align our actions with that--maximizing walkability, addressing all of these interconnected things while respecting the bioregion." Town Council member

## Race and Equity

"Voices of all Colors are Heard,"  
Carrboro Connects At-Large  
Task Force member

"How to connect and  
communicate with minority-  
owned businesses." Department  
Head

"Some issues are countywide –  
will be more resources for more  
solutions if Carrboro can work  
with Orange Co, Chapel Hill,  
Hillsborough." Economic  
Sustainability Commission  
member



*"A lot of our citizens don't feel comfortable, competent to sit and talk with some folks. I don't care who it is. You can leave that degree at the door. You should be talking with citizens, about things that interest them. You gotta come. You gotta be heard. If you are staying in some areas of town, people feel like if you stay in an apartment you don't have a voice. That's not true. They gotta hear you, feel what you feel." Braxton Foushee, Planning Board member*

## Recreation, Parks and Culture

"Limited park space" Department  
Head

"Limited outdoor access"  
Carrboro Connects At Large  
Task Force member

## Transportation and Infrastructure

"Would like to see more walkability. Don't want things like storage facilities--pockets of places designed for students to store things rather than places for culture, arts, venues." Planning Board member

"Public works is in a flood zone--huge flood 2 years ago." Town Staff

## 7. What are challenges facing racial, ethnic and income barriers in Carrboro?

"A lot of diverse people would feel welcome but can't afford it." Planning Board member

"Historically African American neighborhoods have been gentrified. Some families have continued to live there. There is no draw for minority communities downtown. I see people at Cook's Meat Market. You're not going to see Black Latinx. Not the type of establishments we frequent. They'll go to Chapel Hill. They'll go to Durham, Raleigh." Town Council member

"Dual pandemics: more obvious than ever before that we have to do something," Department Head

"We do not want to have outcomes determined on race. We have a fundamental commitment to do things differently." Department Head

"Engagement fatigue rooted in historical experience--what it means for certain groups to engage, and feel like they have or haven't been heard. A lot of the time groups get tokenized and that turns people off from participating. We tend to keep going back to the same people rather than authentically communicating. Trying to be more intentional from the very get go in steering the project." Town Council member

"We are living at a time of understanding systemic nature, the way in which historically marginalized have been disinvested from growth. Asheville through reparations. If people are too busy to make ends meet, they don't have the time/energy to engage. Starting to address through police transformation, thinking about community health rather than band aids. Cultural mindset of how we think about things. We've been treating our planet how we have treated people – enslaved people. All levels need to change and change the mindset of what we see, creating space for provision of fundamental needs." Town Council member

"Building on premise of how to best serve the community, looking at racial equity tools and starting to roll out the work now, such as the community ambassador program and listening sessions with minority-owned businesses." Department Head



*"In many instances there is a language barrier, education barrier. People feel like they have to have a certain level of education to participate on these boards. Be mindful of who we want to be involved, and we can get people who have been here for decades but felt they didn't have a degree in the U.S. so they 'weren't qualified.'" Eliazar Posada, Planning Board member*



"There have been many attempts to connect, but the efforts were not uniform. There are structural barriers that need to be overcome. Organization is important to elevate the issues [and be able to follow-through]." Department Head

"Huge divide between white communities and communities of color. Huge part is transportation, huge food access issues, still have food insecurities." Recreation and Parks Advisory Board member

"We need to make sure people feel comfortable participating in government. One of the things that makes people feel comfortable is when people look like them. It takes a more hands-on approach and targeted messages." Town Council member

"What's important to minority businesses – we need to ask rather than rely on assumptions" Department Head

"We need to find non-traditional ways for communication, from yard signs to electronic message boards, to radio programs, posters hung on telephone poles, and other ways." Department Head

"Consider a stipend for people of lower resources to participate in advisory commissions" Town Council member

"Topography leads down to Hwy 54, but physical barriers to accessing downtown, lack of sidewalks, wooded areas, no paths, barrier to NOAH...can't safely walk downtown." Transportation Advisory Board member

"Work with the County, Chapel Hill so that everyone who is homeless has some game plan to end homelessness. Haven't addressed the needs. Mobilizing engagement by going to the neighborhoods. Need to be improved to trust again in government. How do we make sure people are spending your dollars as they need to be spent." Department Head

## 8. What do you think should be Carrboro's main priorities over the next 5-10 years?

### Community and Place

"Housing, race, equity, diversity, inclusion, climate change, environmental justice, bold moves we are making that deal with race, equity, diversity, inclusion. Housing – we missed the mark. We have a lot of high-end homes. We don't have enough affordable housing, workforce housing, middle-class housing." Town Council member

"Opportunity to have a plan – sets out certain expectations of different types of housing types, addressing affordability, making it possible to live in Carrboro, shifting expectations of land use ordinance for how residential and commercial development, affects access, environmental impacts." Town Council member

"We have seen a lot of changes in Carrboro. Plan for ecological impacts, opportunities for retrofitting built out areas of Carrboro, improve stormwater management, ecological health, impacts on property--flooding correlates with property values." Stormwater Advisory Commission

"Inclusive and diverse representation at all levels of government, affordable housing, and climate change." Planning Board member



*"Build relationships with new people and new faces. There is a monolith of thinking that all people need the same things. We need to have a mix of people." Soteria Shepperson, Carrboro Connects At-large Task Force Member*

## Affordable Housing

"Full range of housing, not just low-income and high-income so that a middle-class couple or family doesn't have to qualify for some program to find a place they can afford to live. Preserve our natural infrastructure, our forest and our trees. Need to redouble efforts to be more inclusive community. It's a lot more progressive--a lot less racist on paper but sure is a lot whiter. Include everybody when we say inclusive. We are good with LGBTQ rights. We need to make sure Black rights are just as strong and just as focused." Town Council member

"Maximize limited land availability." Department Head

"Look for opportunities to add affordable housing to existing developments, such as along Highway 54." Department Head

"Provide incentives for more affordable units." Economic Sustainability Commission member

"Would love to have a housing bond."

"When we do weatherization, are there ways to keep property affordable?" Department Head

"Expand affordable housing along transit corridors." Department Head

"Expand tools of Community Home Trust." Town Staff

"Build more affordable units, Town has some land, I would like to see that developed as affordable units--town already owns the land." Department Head

"Housing – have our hands tied into terms of NC laws, but should encourage developers to bring forth affordable housing, should continue to provide social services, food pantry – new building downtown." Town Council member

## Economic Sustainability

"Keyword is sustainability and the breadth of what that can mean--environment, sustainable tax base, sustainable people. Those who want to live in Carrboro can live in Carrboro." Department Head

"Expansion is a huge issue, we want a small community but needs to be financially viable, so how does growth happen, needs to be a limit on growth." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force Member

"Shore up small business community and broaden tax base benefit of maintaining diversity. Limit displacement of long-term residents from gentrification. Develop dense nodes that would be walkable, bikeable, accessible to transport." Town Council member

"Renovating Town buildings--more space or more efficient space. Annual Budget." Town Council member

## Climate Change

"We need to sustain in a systematic way rather than one-off projects." Town Council member

"Biophilic city – urban nature and green strategies." Town Council member

"Climate change - awareness, momentum, a big part is a grassroots effort, talking to neighbors about climate, how we as a town can facilitate these conversations, find the resources they need, especially in post COVID world. Had great successes with volunteer initiatives, clean-up in streams. What can we as a Town do to focus on solutions?" Town staff

"Come up with more certainty of how our Town will grow. Implement the Climate Action Plan to interface with everything we do and promote an equity agenda in everything we do." Town Council member

## Race and Equity

"Helping to support the minority business community." Department Head

"Dismantling systemic racism takes time, but if we have things that are present and harmful to working towards that then we should look at those (street names, statues, etc.). Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member

"Take a racial equity lens in every move that we make—Carrboro may need to get uncomfortable to actually grow." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member

## Transportation and Infrastructure

"No more budget into lane expansions, needs to go into improving bike and pedestrian." Transportation Advisory Board member

"Improving green infrastructure." Greenways Commission member

"Improving bus stops." Greenways Commission member

"Like our environment to stay clean, country living, not being the storage facility for Chapel Hill. Need the outdoor spaces, less traffic." Town Council member

"Look to mobilize our effort – get people to know people – Burmese, Latinx, Tin Top, Old Mill Communities, go to the people and have 6 foot distanced conversations. Engaging only through Zoom isn't going to work, a lot of people are not available on Zoom." Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member



*"We have a transportation problem, not a parking problem. I'd love to take a look at the way we get around without needing a car, make that safer for people, make people aware that it's the preferred method." Abi Raja, Carrboro Connects At-Large Task Force member*

## 9. What would you most like to get out of the Plan once it is complete?

"People come to ask what we want them to do and our Council can't tell. Have more definitive guidance to give persons who want to expand. Use flexible tools that we can use in NC." Town Council member

"Inclusive and equitable plan along racial and ethnic lines, along with deep community engagement. Goes to corralling as many voices as possible." Town Council member

"I'm excited for the Comp Plan to shape the future that is consistent with the values we have as a community." Town Council member

"Ask what is it that you can't find in Carrboro? [We should have] opportunities to be able to do everything you need to do in Carrboro." AHAC member

"Appetite for more defined goals for where we want to be in next 10,20, or 30 years. Opportunity to define areas we want to preserve, areas we want to grow more dense, where we want affordable housing, encourage mixed-use. Create more of a degree of certainty for people who come to us." Town Council member



"In order to reach the vision we have set--monitoring, evaluation and learning plan. Not being afraid to undo what we have done before." Stormwater Advisory Commission member

"Centralized place where everything you need is located, we have so many different plans, created by different bodies of people. Makes our work as staff more difficult."

"Shorter meetings – get people involved in the plan, they would have more sense of what people want, may inform the hearing process."

"I want it to be a comprehensive plan--touch all areas of the town, somehow we will have heard from voices we haven't heard before. Plan to encourage developers to build the kind of units that are missing." Planning Board member

"Best practices for inclusion of affordable housing--how to get developers onboard." Economic Sustainability Commission member

"Plan should enumerate what type of community we want to be. Goal of eventually becoming 80,000 people. How do we do that? We go up, we become dense. Think longer range view. We don't have a whole lot to work with." Former Professor

"Decide what Carrboro wants to be and where it can happen. Need to have a reasonable expectation of what can be approved." Developer



*"What downtown needs to be is a beacon of activity, that people crave to go and experience. If you are in the suburban area, there needs to be a better link to the downtown. Parking is also essential. Once suburban kids get out of school, neighboring counties with lower taxes are attractive to aging parents. The attractiveness of downtown must be maintained."*  
David Markiewicz, Appearance Commission

Who else should be involved? Think about who isn't usually heard from. How do we reach them?

Youth – through the schools, Youth Council

Immigrant groups, Burmese community, important to go to them rather than expect people to come to a meeting

El Centro, Refugee Support Center

Reach out to apartment buildings along 54

Contact the Truth Plaque Committee members – there are years of experience among them

Coordinate with the new Community Ambassadors program

It's a priority to reach out to minority businesses

"Speak to real people. Not just who is most active." Town Council member

"Focus on actionable items that make a difference after talking to people and facilitating meetings," Department Head

"Make sure to get to all of the neighborhoods from Northside, Rogers Road, Weather Hill, Wildwood, bottom of Smith Level," Town Council member

Faith centers and churches

People who invest in Carrboro

Community Works – youth focused non-profit, community members where English is not first language

Orange County literacy center

Orange County Affordable Housing Commission

Carrboro Business Alliance

Yard signs, electronic message boards, posters hung on telephone polls

Local radio show, work with Mayor who is on weekly

"Success of the plan will depend on significant participation by all members of the community," Department Head

## Appendix: Interviews To Date (as of September 4, 2020)

Catherine Adamson Fray, Planning Board

David Andrews, Town Manager

Sara Brown, Transportation Advisory Board

Rebecca Buzzard, Project Manager

Wamiq Chowdhury, Comprehensive Plan Task Force

David Dixon, Comprehensive Plan Task Force

Randy Dodd, Stormwater Utility

Cathy Dorando, Town Clerk

Julie Ecenrode, HR Director

Eliazar Eposada, Planning Board

Miles Fitch, Business

Braxton Foushee, Planning Board

Barbara Foushee, Town Council

Maggie Funkhouser, Rec and Parks Advisory Board

Rachel Gaylord-Miles, Planning Board

Jackie Gist, Town Council

Joe Guckavan Director

Zach Hallock, Planning

Jon Hartmen-Brown, Economic Development Director

Randee Haven. Council Member

Jackie Helvey, Carrboro Connects Task Force

Mariela Hernandez, Orange County Health Department

Walter Horton, Police Chief

Laura Janway, Planning

David Jesse, Economic Sustainability Commission

Lauren Joca, Stormwater Advisory Commission

Lydia Lavelle, Mayor  
Connor Lopez, Comprehensive Plan Task Force  
Elmira Mangum, Planning Board  
David Markiewicz, Comprehensive Plan Task Force  
Daniel Mayer, Econ Sustainability, Arts and Tourism Commission  
Anita Jones-McNair, Recreation, Parks and Culture Director  
Cary McNallan, Finance Director  
Tina Moon, Planning  
Mark Moshier, Business  
Jim Porto, Business  
Eliazar Posada, Planning Board  
Abirami Raja, Carrboro Connects Task Force  
Susan Romaine, Council Member  
Marty Roupe, Public Works  
David Schmidt, Fire Chief  
Elizabeth Scott Bertram, Interim Dept. Head  
Damon Seils, Town Council  
Soteria Shepperson, Comprehensive Plan Task Force  
Amy Singleton, Affordable Housing Advisory Commission  
Sammy Slade, Town Council  
Dan Snipes, Superintendent  
Jackie Thompson, Comprehensive Plan Task Force  
Anahid Vrana, Northern Transition Area Advisory Commission  
Alyson West, Greenways Commission