

**Town of Carthage CTP Presentation**  
**Staff Meeting Minutes**  
March 29, 2011, 10:00 AM

**Attendees Present:**

Scott W. Walston, PE	NCDOT - TPB
Frances D. Bisby, EI	NCDOT - TPB
Lauren Nicholls	NCDOT - TPB
Chuck Dumas, PE	NCDOT – District 2
Joey Raczkowski, AICP	Moore County, Planning and Community Development
Debra Ensminger, CZO	Moore County, Planning and Community Development
Jeremy Rust	Moore County, Planning and Community Development
Carol Sparks	Carthage Town Manager
Monita McLaurin	Division of Community Planning
Jeffrey D. Burdick	Division of Community Planning

**Introductions:** Meeting was opened by Frances Bisby of NCDOT and introductions made welcoming Monita McLaurin and Jeffrey Burdick to the CTP process. Ms. McLaurin and Mr. Burdick are planners with the North Carolina Department of Commerce’s Division of Community Assistance and are currently updating the land use plan for the Town of Carthage. The primary purpose of the meeting was an outreach initiative between NCDOT and the town planning staff to strengthen working relationships, conduct a brief overview of the CTP process for the land use development team, discuss NC 24/27 in regards to the CTP, review data collected for the Carthage Focus Area, and open most current charrette mapping for review and comment by town planning staff.

**Presentation:** There was a brief update of the progress made since December 6, MCTC Meeting: data collection and project histories, Rail Division assistance, Moore County’s strategic highway corridors importance to Fort Bragg, and Walthour-Moss letter to the Secretary. However, the primary focus and reason for the meeting was expressed as NCDOT’s desire to address the issues and concerns of the Town of Carthage going into the Charrette process and to separate the CTP process from the previous TIP project, R-2212. NCDOT is aware of the emotional tie Carthage citizens and officials still have with the Carthage Bypass project and would like to emphasize that this project has indeed been deferred. All project activities have stopped including planning, design, and pre-construction initiatives.

Carol Sparks, Carthage Town Manager, spoke to the concerns of the past as being predominantly the perceived economic impact of the bypass to business downtown and the direct impact several of the alternative routes posed to key Carthage neighborhoods. Monita McLaurin interjected the benefits of teaming the land use plan and the CTP together could actually support economic development efforts. Jeffrey Burdick has worked closely with these efforts in multiple locations and also feels that by combining the resources of the Commerce Department with NCDOT’s Transportation Planning Branch much could be done to actually support economic benefits. Frances Bisby cited examples of creating gateways to the downtown that could be used as both an entrance

into the central business district and as a terminal access to the bypass facility. She also referred to efforts made by other rural communities to revitalize their downtowns such as Mt. Airy, Apex, and Fuquay Varina. Monita McLaurin pointed out that these were achieved through mix-use design and these same efforts could be used for Carthage. Apex and Fuquay Varina have one set of businesses by day and have others that open up at night. Some businesses even extend hours to accommodate downtown nightlife. Sidewalks and streets are decorative and festive in the evening and filled with both individuals and families.

This was an excellent example of how a CTP differs from a single proposed project. Frances Bisby pointed out that the CTP proposes a system network of improvements instead of just one and this system can be used to bring in greenways, bike and pedestrian facilities downtown, and work in tandem with the Community Planning Division's plan for economic development. Carol added that many citizens are skeptical about the prison facility downtown in terms of drawing families and included the fact that the facility is expanding significantly.

Scott Walston added that if businesses were concerned that development would move out with the introduction of the bypass, one way to reduce that occurrence would be to make the bypass a freeway. This would enact closed access along the length of the facility and the only opportunity for development would be only at the access points. Access could be limited to one access point on either end of Carthage getting back to the gateway examples. The strategic corridor criteria call for a minimum expressway classification. There is nothing to prohibit an upgrade in the classification.

**Charrette preparation:** Following a review of the CTP process and its benefits, the presentation moved into the charrette preparation. The charrette is designed to be an exercise in Local Vision Planning and facilitate the collection and identification of local visions and goals, expected outcomes, priorities, and encourage land use compatibility. The NC 24/27 Carthage Expressway was the only focus area reviewed in the presentation. The original purpose and need of the R-2212 project was listed as follows: growing traffic volumes on NC 24/27 reducing the level of service, high truck volumes in the downtown area contributing to excessive noise, trucks navigational difficulties with the courthouse traffic circle, the protection of mobility and connectivity function of the NC 24/27 corridor as part of the Strategic Highway Corridor Vision Plan. These issues remain the same today. Over time, the increase in military operation, growth in expected traffic volumes, public safety and welfare, as well as national security are likely to become over riding factors.

The primary issues for Carthage:

- No corridor is presently being preserved;
- NC 24/27 is a strategic highway corridor and designated as a minimum classification of expressway. By NC law, facility upgrade to expressway will be scheduled at some point in the future.
- R-2528, R-2212, R2529, are the transportation improvement projects associated with corridor #25 of the Strategic Highway Corridor Vision Plan governed by G.S. 136-179 which establishes Highway Trust Fund projects to construct four lanes along NC 24/27 from Charlotte to Moorehead City.

- R-2528 and R-2529 have been estimated and proposed as 4-lane facilities with 46 foot medians. These are excellent candidates for superstreet design concept. Currently unfunded, but defined under state law.

Other considerations:

- Role of effective land use planning and economic development coordination with supportive transportation improvements
- Importance of NC 24/27 to Fort Bragg's operation
- What freight is being transported through town?
- Getting historic sites on the National Register
- Getting Voluntary Agricultural Districts registered
- Significant pedestrian volumes near downtown traffic circle
- NEPA and SEPA law mandates the study of alternatives

These are the points that deserve time to detail and fully discuss in the sub-committee meeting. Moving forward, the group discussed impressions of the mock charrette held December 6, 2010, and the lessons learned. NCDOT staff pointed out the need to modify "How to Get Started..." from the Guidelines developed for the charrettes. Frances Bisby cited one lesson learned was the need to add a Vision Planning Session at the beginning of each charrette to note the focus area objections and try to address a positive response. This may also be a good idea for the sub-committee meetings as well to be used as an opportunity to hear what the arguments are going to be and prepare for them ahead of time. The first try will be at the next MCTC meeting. Also, a focus area leader who is staff level was missing from the equation at the December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Carol Sparks suggested that these leaders should be equipped with talking points, answers to FAQ's, and a brief elevator speech for most important points and benefits.

**Other Discussions:** NCDOT staff requested the names of those thought to be able to help relay the local concerns in detail about the past bypass project for assistance with the next Moore County Transportation Committee Meeting. Carol suggested Town Board members Artie Barber and Milton Dowdy as they were outspoken in their opposition to the previous project, R-2212. NCDOT staff offered to present the CTP process and progress report in Carthage should that be of interest. Carol Sparks included an opportunity for both NCDOT and the Division of Community Assistance to speak at an upcoming public workshop for the Town of Carthage Board Members – date and time to be determined.

Carol Sparks described two new communities that are substantial and directly impact NC 24/27. One has the potential for as many as 300 units. The other is approximately 70 units. Neither is built out, but the influx of military families has become a driving factor in lot sales. NCDOT asked if there was a noticeable impact to traffic on NC 24/27 from military traffic. Carol Sparks cited several locations/ intersections where turning onto NC 24/27 is difficult when convoys of military equipment are utilizing the roadway. With no further questions or comments, the meeting was adjourned.

Action items: Contact Milton Dowdy and Artie Barber, Develop economic Development and Transportation System Concurrence Presentation with Montia, complete mapping.