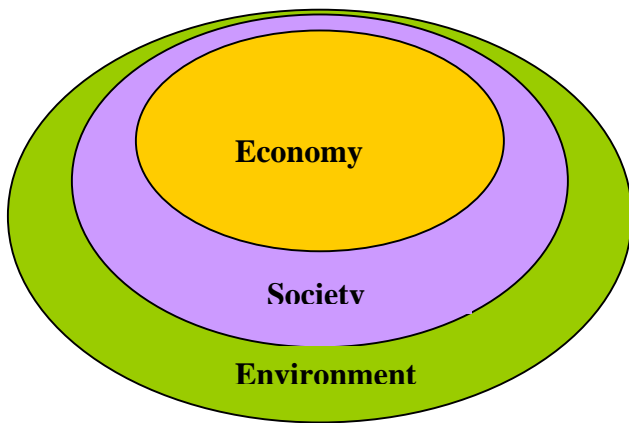


# Toward a Sustainable Community in Southern Orange County

*A report from the Council on a Sustainable Community  
Draft for Community Input  
April 29, 2004*



## **Introduction**

A sustainable community meets our basic resource needs in a manner that can be continued for future generations. A sustainable community means many things to the people who live here. To business owners it means having a healthy economy in which businesses can produce and market their products and services. To parents it means having a safe environment in which to bring up their children, and a wide spectrum of educational opportunities. To workers it means a secure, productive job that is easy to get to. To everyone it means clean air to breathe and clean water to drink; and the opportunity to live in a nurturing community that brings us together to meet our cultural and spiritual needs.

The Council for Sustainable Community has developed a sustainable community concept for southern Orange County. We propose this concept as a starting point for the entire community to come together around a

collective vision for a sustainable future. Once we agree on that vision, we propose government, citizens, business, and civic groups embrace the vision and commit to action steps to achieve it. Finally, we propose the creation of an on going Sustainable Roundtable that will coordinate efforts and report on progress.

The Council on Sustainable Community proposes these eight mutually supporting components as the basis for environmental, social and economic sustainability:

1. Compact urban form with increased density and mixed use that fosters walkability, reduces dependence on fossil fuels, accommodates future growth, and provides affordable housing.
2. Local businesses voluntarily adopt sustainable business practices and strive for a “triple bottom line” of environmental, social, and economic outcomes.
3. A sufficient supply of meaningful jobs so that local residents can work close to where they live, thereby maintaining the social diversity necessary for a strong and vibrant community
4. Multiple forms of transportation to increase connectivity and reduce the impacts on air quality, watersheds and public health that result from dependence on the automobile.
5. A diverse entrepreneurial structure that supports local firms and facilitates them working together to fulfill economic needs.
6. Life-long learning opportunities for everyone.
7. A Growth Boundary that conserves farmland, protects water supplies, open

space and wildlife habitat, and prevents sprawl.

8. Thriving downtowns that are centers of commerce, and mixed-use neighborhood centers with goods and services in walking distance of most residents



These eight components reinforce each other in beneficial ways. For instance, having sufficient local jobs reduces commuting and improves air quality. Concentrating development and increasing density within a growth boundary conserves open space. Mixed-use development means more people will be able to walk to work, shopping, school and recreation. Collaboration between entrepreneurs and the University can leverage our educational system to benefit the local economy. Social diversity means having a broad community resource for creativity and problem solving.

We recommend the following process for achieving the over-arching goal of a sustainable community:

1. Stakeholders discuss the eight components proposed by the Council for a Sustainable Community. The entire community arrives at a consensus on a vision that balances environmental, social and economic needs.
2. The Council for a Sustainable Community has proposed a menu of action steps in each of the eight components. These steps should be added to and prioritized, and then government, civic, and business groups should take responsibility for their implementation.
3. Establish an ongoing “Sustainability Roundtable” that brings key stakeholders together regularly to review and update goals, strategies and actions. The roundtable will track progress toward sustainability goals and offer periodic reports to stakeholders.



## ***Potential Action Steps and Progress Benchmarks for Achieving our Vision of a Sustainable Community***

### **Vision 1: Compact urban form with increased density and mixed use that fosters walkability, reduces dependence on fossil fuels, accommodates future growth, and provides affordable housing.**

Growing awareness of rapidly declining reserves of fossil fuels, in addition to the extensive evidence of multiple negative impacts of dependence on the automobile prompts the community to reassess planning policy. Environmentally sustainable urban form calls for greater density, mixing of uses, supportive transit services and bike & pedestrian infrastructure. (See Vision #4.)



Current municipal density restrictions not only impede achievement of compact urban form, they also prevent creation of a tax base sufficient to fund desired infrastructure and amenities. In conjunction with the Urban Growth Boundary (see Vision #7) municipal density restrictions play an important role restricting supply and causing housing prices to escalate out of reach of much of the workforce.

A community visioning process is convened to develop strategies to achieve, incrementally over time, a more compact and vibrant community, balancing the need for greater density & intensity with the desire to maintain human scale, integrate natural areas throughout the

towns, and provide a sufficient stock of workforce housing.

#### *Potential Action Steps*

1. Area governments adjust zoning to implement consensus vision of desired growth patterns.
2. Increase the density at transportation nodes and corridors in order to mitigate restrictive effects of Urban Growth Boundary on growth and insure that there will be affordable housing
3. Support greater mixing of uses – commercial, residential, schools, cultural/media centers
4. Allow taller buildings in order to enable greater intensity of uses and increase residential density while reducing impervious surface
5. Accommodate high demand for housing through provision of diverse housing options for everyone, including students living off-campus
6. Add new school facilities incrementally as needed through infill and redevelopment projects
7. Towns continue to acquire public open space within their borders.

#### *Potential Progress Benchmarks*

1. Average zoning density within Urban Growth Boundary
2. Density of target areas
3. Availability of affordable housing options
4. Quantity of mixed use development
5. Per cent of homes within 10 minute walk of outdoor public space.

### **Vision 2: Sustainable business practices voluntarily adopted by local businesses to achieve a “triple bottom line” of environmental, social, and economic outcomes.**

Orange County businesses serve as a model for the nation in voluntarily adopting sustainable business practices. The Chamber of Commerce, consulting with UNC, serves as an education clearinghouse on sustainable business practices. The Chamber also offers, in partnership with national non-profit organizations, a sustainable



business certificate program for local businesses that adopt practices contributing to the environmental and social sustainability of the community. Collaborative efforts are formed with local governments and non-profit groups to address specific area needs. A majority of Chamber member businesses have completed the programs and received Certificates of Business Sustainability.



Potential Action Steps

1. Chamber of Commerce creates task force including UNC faculty, staff and students in appropriate departments to develop sustainable business seminars, courses & materials
2. Chamber of Commerce engages national non-profits active in sustainable practices as partners in developing criteria for sustainable business certification.

Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Number of local businesses participating in sustainable practice educational programs.
2. Number of new and renovated commercial projects meeting or exceeding Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards (created by the US Green Building Council)
3. Wage levels
4. Number of local businesses participating in sustainable practice educational programs and receiving sustainable business certification

**Vision 3: A sufficient supply of meaningful jobs so that local residents can work close to where they live, thereby maintaining the**

**social diversity necessary for vibrant community.**

The high price of housing requires much of our low-wage workforce to live outside of town. Meanwhile much of the high-wage employment our residents perform is located away from town in Research Triangle Park and other parts of the Triangle. Both of these factors result in a great deal of commuting that harms the environment, and in limited economic diversity, which impairs the towns' social fabric. And many who might otherwise advance from low- to higher-wage opportunities are unable to.

In response, our community begins to increase the number of jobs filled by residents and decreases the number of residents who work in adjoining counties. This progress is spurred by a meaningful increase of the affordable housing stock, and the creation of new higher wage jobs.

In addition to providing more and better local jobs, we utilize our wealth of knowledge (see Vision #6) so that everyone, regardless of status, roots or age can continue to set and achieve new and higher personal goals. The resultant increase in individual economic status and social diversity empowers the whole community.

Potential Action Steps

1. Designate downtown Chapel Hill and Carrboro 'Workforce Housing Development Zones.' Rework density and floor area regulations to allow multi-story, multi-unit rental and condominium projects. Expedite reviews to reduce cost and uncertainty. Provide fee reductions and tax incentives to lower development costs.
2. Chapel Hill & Carrboro governments, in partnership with advocates for affordable & workforce housing, continue to build on already established housing affordability policies and strategies
3. Designate existing retail and office corridors "Job Creation Zones." Reduce density and floor area regulations to allow development of more local employment facilities.
4. Work town-wide to provide workforce housing that is close to jobs and transportation
5. Identify and address causes of the decline of African American population in the community

6. Eliminate minority achievement gap in our schools
6. Use cultural events as a way to celebrate our cultural differences.
7. Identify and address the needs of the growing Latino populations.
8. Provide daycare services that are affordable to those with modest incomes.
9. Recognize senior citizens as an untapped resource

Use Carolina North as a community asset to help achieve employment and housing goals.

10. Optimize, in conjunction with other initiatives, housing availability for workers at Carolina North.
11. Design university housing stock to reflect the diversity of employees who live and work at Carolina North.
12. Local governments and the university partner in actively recruiting business partnerships to Carolina North that offer high-wage technical, professional and managerial positions.



Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Number of Orange County residents working outside Orange County
2. Number of Orange County jobs filled by Orange County residents
3. Vehicle miles Traveled
4. Ratio of jobs per worker. (There are 88.5 jobs for every one hundred workers in Orange County, and 140 jobs for every 100 workers in Durham County.)
5. Number of jobs for mid-aged women
6. Increase in percentage of African American population in our community
7. Number of minorities in management positions.
8. Minority achievement in schools.

9. Number of new jobs created
10. Availability of affordable housing

**Vision 4: Multiple forms of transportation to increase connectivity and reduce the impacts on air quality, watersheds and public health that result from dependence on the automobile.**

A system of public transportation that is convenient, reliable, comfortable, and safe replaces the automobile as the primary mode of travel for most residents. It provides increased connectivity between commercial, recreational, educational and institutional destinations. In addition, there are transit options for people who work in Chapel Hill and Carrboro and live in other communities including Hillsborough, Pittsboro, Chatham and Durham Counties. Transit is made economically viable by greater residential density. (See Vision #4.) The foundation for this was Chapel Hill Transit’s establishment of fare-free bus service in 2002.

In the short term, development of fixed-guideway transit on the Highway 54 corridor provides a critical regional link for our community. Longer term, Carolina North is a catalyst for the development of additional rail transit in Chapel Hill. The existing Norfolk Southern Rail corridor is upgraded to accommodate passenger rail operations that provide access to key destinations within the community and region as well as links with Intercity High-speed service. As the rail corridor is improved and passenger service established, compact, mixed-use, high-density development or revitalization takes place around rail stations. Parking and bus service for commuters from surrounding rural areas is provided at these rail stops.

Potential Action Steps

1. Local governments, University, NC Legislature, and private companies provide funding to expand bus routes and frequencies; links to educational, training, and commercial opportunities are increased; dedicated bus lanes ensure punctual service

2. Transit service, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure are expanded concurrently with new development
3. Local governments increase their role in regional transportation projects and work with Triangle Transit Authority to reduce traffic congestion by improving transit between urban centers, especially the Highway 54 corridor between Chapel Hill and RTP/RDU
4. A robust marketing campaign informs the public about transportation alternatives including bike and pedestrian routes
5. Fixed-guideway corridors are dedicated for future public transportation modes
6. Local governments, developers, and University provide network of bike & pedestrian paths that are well marked, safe, and practical for getting around Chapel Hill, Carrboro and campus
7. Bus stops are built in safe, well-lit areas; riders are assured safe walking passage between bus stop & home or destination.
8. Local governments and State provide funding/incentives for transit providers to adopt alternative fuel technology to reduce emissions
9. More Park & Ride lots are provided for commuters.
10. Amenities are provided at or close to schools in order to reduce off-campus trips during the day. Walk and bike zones created in close proximity to schools. Public transportation used to serve students living further away.
11. School parking spaces become available for other uses as alternative forms of access reduce the need for students, staff and parents to rely on cars to travel to and from schools
12. Towns & County work together to site schools where public transport exists.
13. 300 to 500 new parking spaces provided in new municipal structure(s) for future needs in downtown Chapel Hill and for the UNC Arts Commons
14. University and local governments work together to establish a plan and identify local, state & federal funding sources for rail development at Carolina North
15. Towns and the County modify their zoning to accommodate desired density and development patterns at rail nodes.

16. Governments and business community work together through the Greater Triangle Regional Council to address the challenges created by the April 15 declaration that our region is in non-attainment of new federal air quality standards.



17. The concept of dedicated local funding sources is supported, through the Regional Transportation Alliance, to address infrastructure deficiencies.
18. Impact of a local airport serving Chapel Hill and Carrboro is studied to determine whether it is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Minutes to destinations
2. Frequency of buses
3. Number of routes/neighborhoods served by public transportation
4. Vehicle miles traveled
5. Bicycle miles traveled
6. Ridership of buses
7. Number of regional and intercity destinations served by rail
8. Improvement in air quality
9. Decrease in fossil fuel consumption
10. Level of noise pollution
11. Improvement in stormwater quality
12. Percent of students and staff walking and biking to schools.
13. Percent ridership of school buses and mass transit
14. Number & extent of transit corridors dedicated for future use.

**Vision 5: A diverse entrepreneurial structure that supports local firms working together to fulfill economic needs.**

This vision has 4 parts:



## 1. Cluster of Entrepreneurs

The greater Chapel Hill area is developing a diverse entrepreneurial structure and a system among its small firms that enables them to offer their goods and services to national and global markets. Many of these enterprises cluster around entrepreneurial opportunities created by UNC research and other local innovations. Both economic and social business activities are encouraged and supported.

These enterprises are supported by public-private organizations that provide training, support services, access to capital, and assistance in identifying opportunities and coordinating contracts. In addition a second tier of support services, such as office cleaning and packaging manufacturing, is provided by small companies connected by the support network. These companies are also entrepreneurial, and offer an opportunity to upgrade this type of work by providing ownership opportunities to service workers.



The University of North Carolina recently received a major grant from the Kauffman Foundation to foster a campus-wide entrepreneurial culture. The Carolina Entrepreneurial Initiative is founded on the belief that most entrepreneurs do not emerge from traditional business schools, but instead from the social, arts and scientific programs. The Initiative will feature internships with local startup companies and internships with non-profits for those interested in social innovation and venturing.

### Potential Action Steps

1. Invest in workforce skills
2. Develop workforce to take advantage of jobs, and develop jobs to take advantage of workforce

3. Develop cooperative education and internship opportunities to interest students in local employment options
4. Develop an infrastructure for collaboration and innovation
5. Develop new format for economic development to replace the Economic Development Commission
6. Develop public/private support organizations
7. Develop business incubators related to the entrepreneurial strategy
8. Coordinate support organizations to focus on the entrepreneurial strategy
9. Leverage relationship with UNC
10. Provide clustered office and flex space
11. Place fiber optic lines, etc.
12. Local governments & employers develop trust and accessibility by hiring minorities as department heads
13. Recruit businesses that address social needs
14. Create opportunities and incentives for people to live close to where they work.
15. Working with DTCC, Kenan-Flagler and the Friday Center, the Chamber creates a Small Business Certificate program.
16. UNC's Carolina Innovations Laboratory, an incubator "that inspires students to work, play, dream, conduct experiments and convert their ideas into action with the support of seasoned entrepreneurs," is located initially in Chapel Hill's business district and then permanently on the Carolina North campus.
17. Starting in the spring of 2005, UNC will host an annual Carolina Entrepreneur Initiative Celebration.
18. Through the Carolina Entrepreneurial Initiative:
  - \* Inspire students to become entrepreneurs
  - \* Teach them how to become entrepreneurs
  - \* Connect them with alumni mentors, academic experts, and private industry
  - \* Create new ventures, new knowledge and new attitudes

### Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Commute time
2. Employment rates of diverse cultures
3. Number and type of classes offered by new community college
4. Number and diversity of new jobs created

5. Commercial tax collection
6. Number of new companies established
7. Capital invested in new and expanding companies
8. Number of spin-offs from UNC retained in Orange County

**2. Sustainability principles utilized in planning, architecture & transportation at Carolina North to create a thriving international destination for research, education and entrepreneurial activity, as well as an attractive social and cultural destination for diverse local groups.**

Potential Action Steps:

University, area governments, community college, public schools, state and regional transportation agencies, and other institutions work in partnership to:

1. Resolve transportation issues (the rail line provides an appealing option to serve employees)
2. Optimize housing availability within Carolina North for people working there
3. Conserve significant quantity of open space on the property now & in the future
4. Create ownership forms at Carolina North that contribute to the tax-base and limit competition with existing businesses in community
5. Increase the availability of training for people who will work at Carolina North
6. Provide infrastructure to accommodate future technological capacity needs
7. Provide other public facility needs to serve the resident community, including a public school site and branch library.

Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Number of UNC spin-offs which locate and stay in Orange County
2. Percentage of Carolina North employees that are also residents of Orange County
3. Level of wealth creation in Orange County
4. Tax revenue generated from Carolina North
5. Amount of alternative transportation (public transit, bike, walk) usage to/from Carolina North
6. Levels of transit service and congestion on existing roads
7. Number of designated Chapel Hill/Carrboro city school sites

**3. Business Growth in Chapel Hill and Carrboro is encouraged, leading to an increased commercial tax revenue base, mitigating tax burden on local residents.**

Local government policy has increased the commercial tax base, effectively decreasing the percent of tax burden falling on residential property taxes. Other area governments have joined Carrboro in setting goals for commercial tax base growth, identifying the type and kind of commercial growth desired, areas in which it will be focused and processes to encourage it. Since commercial property generates more tax revenue than the cost of required government services, while residential development costs more than the revenues added this is an effective and efficient way to fund public needs. In addition to property taxes, healthy businesses contribute to the municipal revenue stream by way of sales and corporate taxes.

An understanding of the economic benefits of locally owned business spurs a particular emphasis on preserving and encouraging these important community resources.

Local business growth allows increased local government spending on desired infrastructure and social programs without increasing residential tax rates. This in turn allows lower income families to afford home ownership, enables more fixed income residents to retain their property, and alleviates a growing tax burden on the middle class.



The farms of Orange County thrive with the support of UNC buying Orange County agricultural products.



### Potential Action Steps

1. Commercial tax growth goals are developed and adopted by local governments.
2. Principles developed to identify the types of businesses that are desired by the community.
3. New local progressive taxes and fees implemented to provide funding for schools, transportation, economic development and affordable housing, while regressive taxes and fees are phased out.
4. Zoning & regulatory structure are provided by area governments to encourage development of an economically thriving area
5. Appropriate infrastructure and amenities to lure and retain businesses are provided by area governments, University, and Chamber of Commerce (pleasant working environments near restaurants, walking paths, a transparent development process for new construction or refurbishments, technological bandwidth and access, reliable and affordable utilities, etc.)
6. Business incubators are created to tap and develop financial resources to nurture a climate for entrepreneurship. (Carrboro's \$1 million community fund is a great example.)
7. Locally owned businesses are encouraged because they retain 40% of revenues in the community, compared to only 15% for national chains.
8. Infrastructure & services to encourage tourism, conferences & sports tournaments are supported by area governments (additional hotel facilities, meeting space, B&Bs, etc.)
9. Lobby for regional tax base sharing

### Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Commercial property tax base
2. Sales tax revenues
3. Percentage of Orange County residents working outside Orange County
4. Percentage of Orange County jobs filled by Orange County residents
5. Median wages
6. Revenues from the central business districts and other transportation nodes
7. Percentage of money earned by Orange County residents that is spent on retail and entertainment in Orange County
8. Number of visitors per year
9. Visitor spending

### **4. A full spectrum of utilities and infrastructure provided to meet desired growth patterns, economic goals, and resource conservation objectives.**

### Potential Action Steps

1. Utility infrastructure provided to compact growth areas (e.g., economic development district around Efland) by local utilities (energy, water & sewer, phone cable, cellular service, solid waste collection, recycling etc.)
2. Provision of utility needs of poor, rural communities in county assured by area governments
3. LEED "green building" standards exceeded in all new public and private construction and renovation projects
4. Participation in the "Million Solar Roofs" initiative intensified by area governments
5. Maintenance of adequate water supply and adoption of gray-water and storm water reclamation practices by Orange Water & Sewer Authority (OWASA)
6. Measures taken by OWASA to reduce the environmental risk of failing septic systems in rural areas.
7. Resolution by County of long-term solid waste issues, including increase in levels of waste reduction and re-use, and reduction of need for land disposal and transfer of solid waste
8. Assurance of stable, predictable funding to support solid waste goals, infrastructure and activities
9. Telephone and wi-fi infrastructure expanded by local telecom providers to meet communication needs of the future

### Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Percentage of households adequately served by utilities
2. Ratio of recycled tonnage to total waste
3. Level and stability of funding for solid waste infrastructure and operations
4. Potable water usage
5. Quality of storm water discharged to environment
6. Digital bandwidth
7. "Wi-fi" accessibility
8. Energy efficiency of buildings and homes
9. Energy consumption from utilities

## **Vision 6: Life-long learning opportunities for everyone.**

Chapel Hill/Carrboro City and Orange County schools have long provided superior education. The school systems are successful in enabling all students, from pre-kindergarten through high school, to acquire the knowledge, skills and insight necessary to live rewarding, productive lives. There is a moral and social commitment to do all that is possible to ensure that every student attains a well-rounded education tailored to his or her life goals. Sufficient classroom space exists within the community. Educational opportunity is expanded by the new Durham Technical Community College campus, life-long learning capacity enhanced by the University and Not-for-profit educational opportunities within the area.

### Potential Action Steps

1. Increase number of teachers certified in their areas of specialty
2. Sustain well-trained workforce for both workforce development and advanced education.
3. Increase number of programs to connect students with jobs
4. Increase number of internships and co-ops in partnership with employers
5. Increase soft skills training, English as a Second Language training, and Advanced Placement class enrollment
6. Implement the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools strategic plan on the schedule indicated
7. Build and open new school facilities as needed, consistent with the theme of the Schools Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. Renovate, remodel and upgrade existing school facilities. Relocate Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools' central office.
8. Reduce footprint of schools (reduce total acreage for school sites).
9. Continue to construct school buildings that exceed LEED standards to save energy, provide a healthful learning environment, and minimize environmental impacts
10. Incorporate schools into redevelopment projects, site them close to transportation, and allow mixed use and higher density residence to be built around them
11. Technologically equip schools for the future

12. Increase percentage of students coming to school on foot versus private transportation.
13. Value Orange County schools as a resource for southern Orange County.



### Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Minority achievement gap for African American and Latino students
2. Rates of Matriculation into post-secondary schools
3. Drop out rate
4. Student satisfaction rate
5. Parent involvement and satisfaction rates
6. Percent of students entering the workforce or pursuing college education
7. Level of differentiated instruction, resources and curriculum
8. Standardized tests results such as SAT and ACT.
9. Student/Teacher Ratio
10. Average distance to school for students and teachers
11. Percent of students and staff walking and biking to schools.
12. Percent ridership of school buses and mass transit outside of areas accessible by walking and biking
13. Enrollment at Durham Technical Community College Orange County campus
14. % reduction in underemployment of minorities.
15. Timely creation of facilities capacity in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City and Orange County school systems

## **Vision 7: A Growth Boundary that conserves farmland, protects drinking water, open space and wildlife habitat, and prevents sprawl.**

In the '70's and '80's our elected officials had the foresight to create an Urban Growth Boundary. This Urban Growth Boundary promotes sustainability by protecting farmlands and open space from sprawl and encouraging more livable urban spaces. It also protects our watershed and our water supply. The Urban Growth Boundary not only protects open space, it also exerts pressure on local governments to make a direct reckoning of what needs to be done within the boundary to foster economic and community vitality.

These important benefits notwithstanding, the Urban Growth Boundary also has unintended impacts on housing affordability and the towns' capacity to fund important infrastructure and amenities, and it can result in development "leap-frogging" into rural areas. These impacts are best mitigated by increasing density and Floor Area Ratios and intensifying mixed uses within the Boundary. (See Vision #1.)

Potential Action Steps

1. Area governments maintain the Urban Growth Boundary (the Rural Buffer Zoning and Urban Services Agreement that limits expansion of utilities) in order to prevent low density "sprawl" development throughout rural areas
2. County and Municipalities expand their acquisition of land for parks, greenways (recreational space) and open space (conservation areas) throughout the towns, and protect Watersheds and wetlands from development.
3. Area governments adopt ordinances transferring density from rural to urban areas in ways that provide economic incentives for farmers to continue farming while reducing sprawl.
4. OWASA works with local governments to protect watersheds and develop water conservation practices throughout the community

Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. Acres of open space conserved

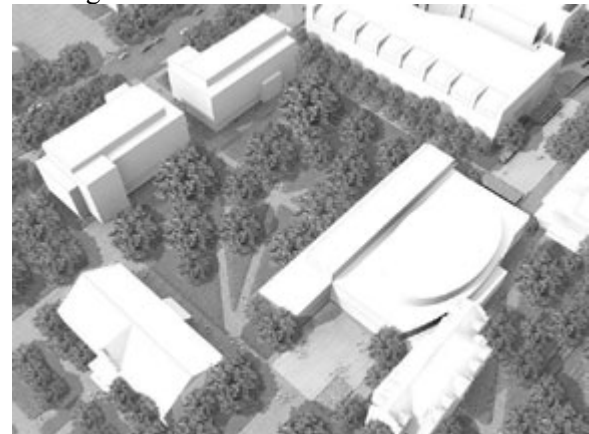
2. Acres of parkland and miles of greenways & trails within the towns
3. Average zoning density within Urban Growth Boundary
4. Density of areas targeted for transit-oriented development
5. Economic health of Orange County farmers
6. Water supply capacity

**Vision 8: Thriving downtowns that are centers of commerce and culture, and small scale "corner store" mixed-use neighborhood centers that put goods and services in walking distance of most residents**

This vision has 2 parts:

1. **Downtown Chapel Hill is a Cultural Magnet and Downtown Carrboro is a Center for Community Arts**

Downtown Chapel Hill is a cultural magnet. Memorial Hall is lit up with several banner shows a week. The Varsity and Carolina Theaters, along with the Planetarium, are bustling, and there is excitement about the coming Arts Common.



The development of mixed-use residential, retail, office and outdoor gathering space on Parking Lots 2 and 5, together with adequate, parking attracts destination shoppers to big-name stores. The Ackland and Chapel Hill Museums, along with historic walking tours, bring daytime visitors downtown. The theaters and restaurants bring in nighttime visitors. Bed and breakfasts in historic buildings welcome

weekend visitors. Some historic buildings provide independent and assisted living for senior citizens. Visitors can either conveniently travel around downtown on a trolley system or walk via the pedestrian walkways to a wide variety of restaurants and specialty shops.

Carrboro's downtown is the center for community arts. Music is performed at Cats Cradle, Temple Ball, ArtsCenter, and Weaver Street Market. Artists are at work at Bleeker Street Studios and new artists lofts. The ArtSchool has an enlarged menu of classes and has brought back community theater. Regular Friday and Saturday dances take place at the Century Center. Cultural events and festivals celebrate the diversity of the community. There is an arts market and bazaar, and regular cultural celebrations and parades. Quirky historical tidbits are commemorated. Main Street is bustling with a new pedestrian-friendly streetscape and the redeveloped ArtsCenter property. The hip culture found in downtown Chapel Hill/Carrboro ultimately attracts a dynamic, entrepreneurial set.

Potential Action Steps – both towns

1. Develop a vision statement for the downtown areas that explicitly indicates what the community wants to accomplish and the kind of businesses they want to attract to the downtowns.
2. Encourage small scale neighborhood “corner store” retail and service nodes to supply everyday needs within walking distance in residential areas
3. Establish concerted marketing plan to attract new businesses downtown
4. Expand and enhance transportation alternatives to bring people downtown
5. Coordinate & enhance public transportation options within the downtowns
6. Change regulations to accommodate bed and breakfasts in appropriate areas
7. Address the needs of disaffected teenagers who frequent the downtown
8. Encourage housing in the downtowns
9. Make the regulatory environment more sympathetic to the needs of business
10. Continue to develop pedestrian-friendly infrastructure
11. Redevelop under-used downtown properties with an eye toward cultural uses

12. Enhance arts organizations as community institutions; increase community funding for arts; create fundraising & marketing collaboration among arts organizations
13. Increase volunteer participation and involvement from throughout the community
14. Enhance cultural diversity
15. Integrate students and youth into downtown life; provide after-school programs related to arts; support student art displays, theatrical performances, and film festivals
16. Encourage street performers and develop a wide spectrum of festive & educational events
17. Incorporate arts into social problem solving; use arts to create dialogue and provide opportunities to uplift people.

Potential Action Steps – Chapel Hill

1. Support implementation of UNC Arts Common.
2. Create a position similar to Carrboro’s Director of Economic Development

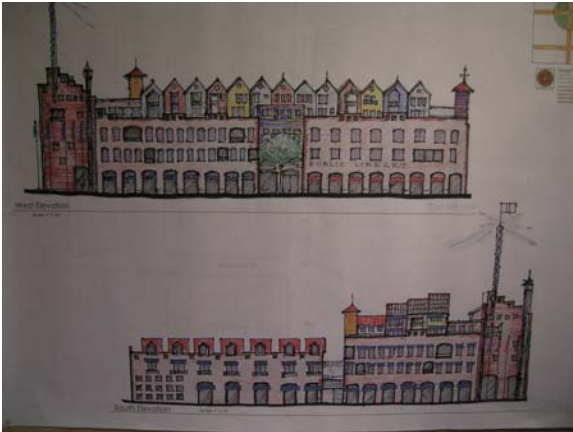


3. UNC create an Arts Director (analogous to the Athletic Director) to coordinate and publicize the expanding arts, entertainment and lecture offerings.
4. Improve Parking (see component 2 below)
5. Develop Parking Lots 2 and 5
6. Have an attractive direct path from Franklin Street to Memorial Hall.
7. Creatively display history of Chapel Hill and University along sidewalks and paths between Chapel Hill Museum and Crooks.
8. Have a community center on Franklin Street for all ages and ethnic backgrounds with classes and opportunities for everyone to mix generations and cultures.



### Potential Action Steps – Carrboro

1. Revitalize Main Street streetscape according to *New Vision for Downtown Carrboro Plan*.



2. Institute Tax Increment Financing district or other vehicle to provide funding.
3. Consider a "Mercado Central" project as a potential use.
4. Develop a hotel in downtown Carrboro so that visitors can stay close to the "action."
5. Identify two or three annual cultural events that would feature the school-based ArtsCenter.
6. Create opportunities and programs that reflect the full spectrum of the diversity of residents.
7. Establish a Carrboro Book Festival.
8. Develop a Carrboro library and media center equipped with latest technology (e.g., wireless internet) and plenty of sitting space including an outdoor courtyard.
9. Reinvigorate community theater.

### Potential Progress Benchmarks

1. *Volume of downtown restaurant sales*
2. *Volume of downtown retail sales*
3. *Amount of parking*
4. *Number of ethnically diverse dining and retail options*
5. *Residential population within downtown zones*
6. *Percentage of Orange County residents' spending for retail, restaurant, and entertainment services actually spent in Orange County*
7. *Percentage of Orange County residents' spending on retail, restaurant and entertainment services actually spent at locally owned businesses*
8. *Number of children in after-school arts programs*

9. *Number of ethnic and racially diverse cultural events*
10. *Level of arts funding*
11. *Number of volunteers in arts organizations.*

## **2. Downtown Transportation and Parking**

There is a need to balance the long-term goals of reducing reliance on the automobile with shorter-term strategies that ensure the economic health of downtown. While we continue to work for mass transit options that are more convenient, safe, reliable and accessible to more people, we must meanwhile insure that downtown businesses have short-term parking so they can effectively compete for customers with nearby local and regional centers. That will help with economic sustainability, induce more shopping in the community and reduce congestion and emissions otherwise produced by trips to outlying centers.

The development of the Arts Commons at UNC will require additional parking facilities to accommodate patrons. The venues coming on stream, Memorial Hall, Ackland Museum expansion, New Music building with performance halls, Person, Gerard, Smith, Old Playmaker's Theater, will not be served by the existing lots or the one new planned underground parking facility. The University and Chapel Hill must share responsibility for the provision of appropriate parking for visitors, guests and shoppers in our downtown while at the same time working for increased transit services that will alleviate some of the need for parking.

In Carrboro, redevelopment on existing parking lots creates the need for a downtown parking structure.

### Potential Action Steps

1. Ensure adequate short-term parking for current and future needs downtown. Construct 300-500 additional spaces to accommodate the expected increased usage and allow downtown businesses to service nighttime event patrons.
2. Maximize existing resources by securing shared parking agreements with private entities, including churches.
3. Build a new parking structure, possibly on Town Lot 2, that is close to transit services

- that connect campus venues & events with downtown dining, shopping and recreation
4. Work to ensure that existing and new parking options are convenient, easy to use and accessible
  5. Conduct marketing campaign and place strategically effective signage that lets people know where parking is located
  6. Set up a simple merchant parking validation program
  7. Explore ways to speed payment and exiting of facilities (such as speed passes or other prepaid options).
  8. Adjust park-and-ride shuttle schedules so that those who wish to visit our community for events can spend time shopping & dining before returning to their cars.

### ***Implementing Our Vision for a Sustainable Community***

#### **Step 1: Governments, citizens, educational institutions, environmental groups, civic groups, and businesses come together around a vision for a sustainable community.**

Over the remainder of 2004, community groups are invited to discuss these eight components of a sustainable community, participate in developing a community-wide consensus, and make a commitment to a sustainable future.

From May to September, the Council for Sustainable Community is available to make presentations and gather feedback from any interested group. Based on these discussions, the Council for a Sustainable Community will revise and redistribute this report in late 2004.

Once the final report is available, organizations will be invited to make a formal statement of support for the elements of a sustainable community, and to commit to participating in initiatives that foster environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

#### **Step 2: The Council has proposed a menu of action steps in each of**

**these eight components. These steps should be added to and prioritized, and then government, civic, and business groups should take responsibility for their implementation.**



All sectors of the community have the potential to participate in creating a sustainable future. For example:

1. Local governments could adopt three-pronged sustainability principles to guide their deliberations.
2. The Chamber of Commerce could actively encourage sustainable business principles among its members
3. Environmental, social advocacy and business groups could commit to regular dialogue.
4. The UNC Business School sustainability program could be a key partner in local sustainable business efforts.
5. New projects and redevelopment could be seen as opportunities to create a more sustainable community, showing how business and environmental interests can coincide to help the community.
6. Educational forums could be an on going opportunity to raise community awareness about sustainability issues.

#### **Step 3: Establish an on going “Sustainability Roundtable” that brings key stakeholders together regularly to review and update goals, strategies and actions. The roundtable will track progress toward sustainability goals and**

**offer periodic reports to stakeholders.**

In the fall of 2004, the Council on Sustainable community will initiate discussions with community leaders regarding the formation of an on-going Sustainability Roundtable. The Roundtable's mission will be to educate its members on issues, expose them to innovative solutions, provide a forum for regular communication, and foster cooperation at the highest levels. The roundtable will ensure that community sustainability is foremost on the agenda of a broad cross-section of the community.



It's envisioned that the roundtable will include the leadership of the area's governments, the University, the private sector and citizen interest groups. It will be a model public-private partnership.

The roundtable leadership would solicit foundation and other grants for ongoing administrative expenses.

An important function of the roundtable would be to provide regular feedback to the community in the form of an annual Report Card about progress on significant sustainability benchmarks.

## About the Council

In August, 2003, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce announced the formation of the Council on a Sustainable Community. It was established as an independent task force that will address how to proactively promote a healthy economy and ensure Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Southern Orange County remain successful and sustainable.

The Council's meetings have been open to the public, inviting participation from any interested parties. Members of the community and the press have attended council meetings.

The Council on a Sustainable Community is comprised of community leaders who believe that a sustainable community is in all of our interests. Our goal is to foster collaboration among the broadest range of our community towards achieving environmental, social, and economic sustainability for southern Orange County.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Howard Lee (Chair)** currently serves as chair of the North Carolina State Board of Education. Lee served as North Carolina State Senator representing District 16 from 1990 to 1994 and 1996 to 2002. He served as Mayor of Chapel Hill from 1969 to 1975.

**Charlie Fisher (Vice Chair)** is the principal of the Lakeside Business Group, a Carrboro-based public policy consulting firm. Fisher is the former executive director of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

**Mark Zimmerman (Secretary)** is an entrepreneur operating his own marketing firm, ZIMarketing, and partnering in a start-up company, Ablatrics. After a long career in marketing and advertising, Zimmerman owned Great Harvest Bread Company in Chapel Hill until 2002.

**Delores Bailey** is a community organizer and associate director of EmPOWERment, Inc., a Chapel Hill-based community development organization. Bailey is a resident of the

Northside Neighborhood and life-long resident of Chapel Hill.

**Barbara Baker** is the vice president for student support services and dean of student services at Durham Technical Community College. Baker has been active in efforts to determine the adult education needs of Orange County in preparation for the construction of a satellite Durham Tech campus in Orange County.

**James Carnahan** is an environmentalist and advocate for walkable communities. Carnahan is a resident of Carrboro, proprietor of Matrix Design, providing architectural and urban design, furniture design & manufacture, and set design for theater. He is chair of the board of directors of the Village Project, Inc.

**Jim Carter** is the senior vice president and senior market executive for Central Carolina Bank. Carter served as chair of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors from 1997 to 1999.

**Mark Crowell** is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Economic Development and Director of the Office of Technology Development at UNC-Chapel Hill. A resident of downtown Chapel Hill, Crowell has a long history in the field of technology transfer and economic development has directed those efforts at both Duke University and North Carolina State University.

**Nick Didow, PhD** was first elected to the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board in 1995 and serves as Professor of Marketing at Kenan-Flagler Business School at UNC-Chapel Hill. Dr. Didow served as chair of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School Board in 1999 and 2001.

**Scott Gardner** is the Manager of Business and Government Relations for Duke Power for the Triangle region. Gardner is the chair of the board of directors of the Triangle United Way and served as the chair of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors in 1999.

**Jim Heavner** is the president and CEO of VilCom, a Chapel Hill-based company principally in the media business. Heavner has been in business in Chapel Hill for more than 40



years and has served many business and community leadership positions.

**John Herrera** is serving in his first term as a member of the Carrboro Board of Aldermen. Herrera is a Costa Rican native and is the chairman of the Latino Community Credit Union.



**Barry Jacobs** has served as a member of the Orange County Board of Commissioners since 1998 and served as chair in 2002 and chaired the OWASA board from 1995-98. Jacobs is an writer ([Golden Glory: The First Fifty Years of the ACC](#), 2003) and caretaker of historic Moorefields in Hillsborough.

**James Johnson, PhD**, is William Rand Kenan Distinguished Professor of Management at the Kenan-Flagler Business School and Director of the Urban Investment Strategies Center and the Center for Sustainable Enterprise at the Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise.

**Mark Kleinschmidt, JD** has been a member of the Chapel Hill Town Council since his election in 2001. Kleinschmidt hold two degrees from UNC Chapel Hill and is an attorney who works at the Center for Death Penalty Litigation.

**Scott Maitland, JD** is the proprietor of Top of the Hill Restaurant and Brewery and is a partner in the law firm of Maitland and Maitland, PLLC. Maitland has been active the Blue Ribbon Mentoring Program and is the immediate past chair of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber Board of Directors.

**Hector Perez** is the executive director of El Centro Latino, a Carrboro-based community organization serving the needs of the Orange

County's Latino population. Perez is a recent graduate of Leadership Triangle and serves on the board of the Orange County Dispute Settlement Center.

**Roger Perry** is the president of East-West Partners Management Company. Perry is a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and immediate past chair of the Triangle United Way Board of Directors.

**Margaret Skinner** is the Director of Marketing for the Carolina Inn and the immediate past chair of the Chapel Hill Downtown Commission Board of Directors.

**Ruffin Slater** is the general manager and founder of Weaver Street Market, a Carrboro-based cooperative grocery, which has recently expanded to a store in Southern Village and Panzanella restaurant in Carr Mill Mall.

**Rosemary Waldorf** is with Bryan Properties, Inc. Waldorf served as Mayor of the Town of Chapel Hill from 1995 to 2001

The council also welcomed the active participation and valuable contributions of the following individuals. We thank them for sharing their data, history, knowledge, ideas and visions.

**Ted Abernathy**, Executive Vice President, Research Triangle Regional Partnership

**Linda Convisor**, University of North Carolina

**Diane Reid**, Orange County Director of Economic Development

**Thatcher Freund**, Author

**James Harris**, Director of Economic Development, Town of Carrboro

**Jonathan Howes**, University of North Carolina

**Winkie La Force**, Executive Director, Leadership Triangle

**Amber Levofsky**, Local Affairs Coordinator, UNC Chapel Hill Graduate and Professional Student Association

**Roger Walden**, Planning Director, Town of Chapel Hill



## Methodology

Our analysis of the health and competitiveness of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro cities is based on Dr. James H. Johnson, Jr.'s conceptual model for enhancing community competitiveness in the

twenty-first-century knowledge-based economy (Johnson, 2002). Dr. Johnson served as both a member of the council as well as in an advisory role, a role he assumes for communities throughout the world.

The community competitiveness model posits that contemporary businesses and workers are consumers of place and communities that have proven to be attractive places to live and do business possess a distinct set of characteristics. These characteristics are sustained by the interaction of six types of community capital assets – polity, physical, financial, human, cultural, and social – that create a healthy community.

The methodology used to assess the health of community through the six types of community capital assets is called Foresight Analysis. In light of the six types of capital assets, the sustainability council formed three subcommittees – social, cultural and education climates, political and business climates, and infrastructure – who then conducted the Foresight Analysis. The subcommittees began with an analysis of where the communities came from by looking at the types of changes that have occurred over the past decade, the community's proactive response or reaction to these changes, the key stakeholders involved and the impact of changes on the current position of the community. The next step in the analysis asked committee members to think about the present circumstances of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro communities by asking members to complete a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis in perspective to their areas of community capital assets. Next, subcommittee members were asked to think about the drivers of future change, with emphasis on the forces or trends that are likely to affect the community in the years ahead. Informed from these steps of analysis, subcommittee members were then asked to construct scenarios for the future of Chapel Hill-Carrboro. Finally, an action plan was crafted by all members of the sustainability committee and focused on competitive repositioning, goal setting, benchmarking and quantifiable measures of success.

### **III. Statement of Principle – Sustainability**

The Council on a Sustainable Community adopted a set of governing principles of sustainability which result in achievement of a triple bottom line:

1. Do no harm to the environment and protect natural resources,
2. Adhere to principles of social justice and equity in economic and community development efforts, and
3. Return strong shareholder or stakeholder values.

These principles often are referred to as a “three legged stool.” For a community to be sustainable, policies need to pursue three goals: a sustainable environment, a sustainable social structure and a sustainable economy. Each of these goals is a requisite complement of the others. If one leg of the stool is missing or shortchanged, the community will ultimately fail to be sustainable. Environmental sustainability is required to provide future natural resources. Without a healthy environment, we will be unable to support future growth and our own health will suffer. Social equity sustainability is required for community stability. Without a healthy socially structure, individuals will be unable to fulfill their potential and contribute the success of the community. Economic sustainability is required to provide financial resources. Without a healthy economy, people will be un- or underemployed and the community will be unable to afford investment in environmental and social programs. Of course, all three also contribute to individual and community quality of life. While complementary in principle, in practice these goals often appear to compete with one another. In such cases, care must be taken to ensure that the needs of each are well balanced against the others.

## **Graduate Student Consultants**

Under the direction of Dr. James Johnson, much of the work of the council was supported through the skills and efforts of five University of North Carolina and Duke University graduate students. As you can see from the following brief biographies, we were fortunate to have their assistance. The council thanks them for their significant contributions to this effort.

**Zola Martin** – Zola is currently finishing her Masters in Business administration at the University of North Carolina Kenan Flagler. Prior to attending Kenan-Flagler, Zola worked at IBM in a multitude of different capacities including distribution manager and project manager for the IBM.com. Zola has a bachelor's degree in commerce from the University of Virginia. At Kenan-Flagler, Zola was the co-chair of this year's food fight, a contest to raise money for the food bank of North Carolina and is active in the Supply Chain club.

**Miriam Onivogui** – Miriam is currently pursuing a master's of business administration at the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School and will graduate in May, 2004 with a concentration in international business and sustainable enterprise. Prior to entering business school, Miriam worked as the Program Director at the Georgia Council for International Visitors, a non-profit located in Atlanta, Georgia. She also spent two years in Guinea, West Africa working in education and community development as a Peace Corps volunteer. Miriam completed her undergraduate degree at Yale University where she earned a BA in History. She intends to pursue international development work with an emphasis on private sector development following graduation.

**Jessica Thomas** – Jessica is currently pursuing a master's of business administration at the Duke University Fuqua School of Business. Prior to attending Fuqua, Jessica founded High Tide Consulting where she worked as a Product Development Consultant for educational toy companies and a Business Development Consultant for small enterprises in Africa. Thomas has a bachelor's degree in General Engineering/Product Design from Stanford

University. At Fuqua, Jessica is Co-Chair of the Social Impact Club, Social Entrepreneurship Chair of the Black and Latino MBA Organization and Co-Captain of the Women's Rugby Team. Jessica is looking forward to pursuing a career in Social Entrepreneurship after she graduates.

**Sheri Willoughby** - Sheri is currently pursuing a master's of business administration at the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School and will graduate in May, 2004 with a concentration in marketing and sustainable enterprise. Sheri is president of Net Impact and a mentor for the Durham Scholars program at UNC. Before starting business school, Sheri worked for 2 ½ years as an environmental scientist for ENSCO, Inc., a research and development company in Melbourne, Florida. Prior to this, she worked as a process analyst at Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) in the San Francisco office. Sheri also holds a master's degree in chemistry and bachelor's degrees in biology and environmental chemistry from the University of California, San Diego. Sheri is looking forward to working in the international sustainable development field after she graduates.

**Susan Zelt**, a consultant in entrepreneurial leadership and business development, has more than 13 years of experience including: business and economic development, healthcare marketing, advertising and communication, program evaluation, health services research and analysis, grant writing, teaching, clinical trial management, financial management, budgeting and project management. Susan's experience has broadly encompassed innovative business, product, and community development initiatives, as well as consumer assessment and business forecasting and analysis; all providing a comprehensive background for advancing the understanding of entrepreneurship across multiple disciplines. Susan holds a BS in Biochemistry from Penn State, a MBA from Seton Hall University, an MPH from Columbia University and is working on a doctorate in public health, health policy and administration at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



## Acknowledgements

Funding for the Council on a Sustainable Community was provided by a grant from the **Kenan Charitable Trust**.

Additional support was provided by:

- RBC Centura Bank
- Top of the Hill Restaurant
- Weaver Street Market
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce.

We are grateful to each for their support.

We also want to express our appreciation to the CCB Bank for the extensive use of their meeting facilities, as well as all those in the community which provided a place for council members to work

The council also thanks members James Carnahan and Ruffin Slater for their skills and efforts in compiling this final report.

## To Comment and for Additional Information:

This is a draft report. We want your input. You can post your comments at our web site. You will also find additional information regarding the council and its work.

**[www.sustainablecommunity.info](http://www.sustainablecommunity.info)**

### Source of Pictures

Page 2, left, Aaron Nelson; right, C. Fisher  
Page 3, 4, 5, James Carnahan  
Page 6, Triangle Transit Authority web site  
Page 7, Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber  
Page 8, James Carnahan  
Page 10, Chapel Hill High School Band  
Page 11, University of North Carolina  
Page 12, University of North Carolina  
Page 13, James Carnahan  
Page 14, James Carnahan  
Page 15 left, Town of Carrboro; right, Charlie Fisher  
Page 17, James Carnahan  
Page 18, Charlie Fisher