



Catawba

area plan

Advisory Group Summary

Meeting Notes for September 30, 2008

Shady Brook Baptist Church/Fellowship Hall

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Advisory Group Attendees: Suzanne Gosney, Mike Hanberry, Duke Jones, Kathy Reinecker, Fran Reinecker, John Springfield, Dan Tyson, Elaine Powell

Staff:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department - Wendy Martz, Alberto Gonzalez, Melony McCullough

Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) - Brian Horton

Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) - Jack Stutts

Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Department - Jason Pauling

1. Welcome and Introductions

Wendy Martz (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department) welcomed participants, reviewed the agenda and meeting materials. She explained the purpose of this meeting is to continue the discussion on existing conditions and policies regarding the natural environment. Ms. Martz briefly reviewed last week's focus on water quality and noted that tonight's agenda would be land and air quality. She then introduced Jack Stutts.

2. Natural Environment – Part II

- a. **Jack Stutts** – (LUESA) – Mr. Stutts displayed a map identifying 16 sites in the plan area with known contamination. Contamination, he explained, is defined as a “release of a man-made containment.” This contaminant then leaks into the aquifer. The most commonly released substances are industrial chemicals, such as “PCE” which is a degreaser used by dry cleaners. The goal of all clean-up efforts, he explained, is to lower the level of the containment to acceptable standards. Mr. Hanberry (Advisory Group) inquired as to the status of the cleanup at Clariant. Mr. Stutts explained that groundwater remediation is in progress, but that this is an active, on-going clean up task undertaken by Clariant under the supervision of the EPA. Mr. Stutts expressed caution with regard to future land uses adjacent to properties with a known contaminant. He then discussed air quality permits. There are four air quality permits in the study area that are classified as “minor generators.” Mr. Stutts then explained that contaminated sites are typically identified by periodic sampling in the area, reported incidents to the State, complaints that are investigated and completing an EIS during a pre-purchase assessment. Most of the sites that he identified are under the regulations of the State, with the exception of the Clariant site which is under the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency. He also urged any Advisory Group member with questions to contact him at 704-336-5438
- i. **Brian Horton** – CDOT – Mr. Horton explained that collectively, emissions are the biggest problem that impacts air quality. His presentation identified Catawba as an “exurban” area; it will not operate like a center city with a grid pattern and several transit options. However, in order that the plan area does not repeat mistakes of other suburban areas (such as separation of land uses and lack of connections between uses), he emphasized that providing connectivity in

the area, will reduce demand on major streets, thereby reducing transportation congestion and thus improving air quality. He asserted that key issues for Catawba include connectivity, proving greater travel options, shorter vehicular trips and a reduction in the use of the car due to sidewalks, or bicycle options. He explained that the block structure (typical of more urban areas) provides options for walking, cycling and transit which will ultimately improve overall air quality by reducing the VMT or vehicle miles travelled. "With an increase in development, we must increase route choices by dispersing traffic," he said. Some questions then arose from the Advisory Group, such as the alignment of Belmeade Road, and the rationale for traffic circles at the interstate ramps. ***Staff will add these issues to the parking lot and address at a future meeting.***

- b. **Jason Pauling** – (Parks and Recreation Department)- Mr. Pauling started his presentation by defining three types of parks:

Regional: 100 acres+, "superplexes" for variety of competitive athletics, maximum 20 minutes drive time, passive and active recreation opportunities.

Community: 20-100 acres, maximum 15 minutes drive time, passive and active recreation, but not as developed as a regional park

Neighborhood: 2-20 acres, citizens should be able to walk or bike to them; amenities could include playgrounds, shelters, trails and smaller athletic fields.

At present, there are no neighborhood or community parks in the study area. The closest community parks include Shuffletown and Robert Smith. The Historic Tuckaseegee Ford park is classified as a Regional Park. Mr. Pauling then explained that park development is based upon population density. He mentioned that there is a need for neighborhood and community parks in the plan area. As far as planning for the Long Creek Greenway is concerned, it has been identified on the Master Plan, but no land has yet been acquired. However, possible funding sources are threefold: Carolina Thread Trail, County Bonds, and working with area developers to request dedication of land for greenways along the SWIM buffers and floodplain. He mentioned that Park staff has been working with the Crosland development to identify the greenway alignment. He also introduced the concept of "blueways," that is land banked properties that form a water based trail along the Catawba River. Mr. Pauling then ended his discussion with a brief discussion of priorities for the plan area, including acquiring land along Long Creek for the greenway, identifying land for community and neighborhood park opportunities, working with CMUD, Clariant and Duke Energy to determine the best routing for a pedestrian bridge over the Catawba River, working with CMS to provide pedestrian connections to the new school sites and working with CDOT to install pedestrian routes along Belmeade and Moores Chapel Roads.

Before the evening ended, questions arose from Advisory Group members:

1. What about bus routes from Uptown to the Whitewater Center? ***CATS staff will be asked to attend a future meeting to discuss.***
2. Mr. Tyson suggested replacing the word "should" in the draft vision statement with the word "should." ***Staff explained that the vision will be refined and revisited later in the process.***

Ms. Martz then wrapped up the meeting by explaining that staff had met with a representative from Duke Energy to clarify questions concerning development along the Catawba River. Three key points emerged:

1. Duke Energy owns the right to manage the waters and shoreline along the Catawba River. Duke Energy manages this for the Federal government. All development along the river must adhere to federally approved Shoreline Management Guidelines. To view these guidelines, visit <http://www.duke-energy.com/shoreline-management/catawba-wateree.asp>.

2. Saddler Island is owned by Duke Energy and may be leased to the USNWWC for environmental educational and recreational purposes.
3. The only property owners along this portion of the Catawba River are Clairant and Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Martz distributed a handout titled “Duke Energy /Catawba River Information Sheet” which discussed Duke Energy’s policies and responsibilities regarding development along the shoreline.

3. Wrap Up and Next Steps

The next meeting is in one week; the focus will be land use and transportation. Representatives from CDOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation) and CATS (Charlotte Area Transit Service) will also attend.