



## MEETING MINUTES (VISION COMMITTEE)

### JOINT KICK-OFF MEETING OF VISION AND STEERING COMMITTEES

April 11, 2016  
6:00 – 8:00 pm

Suite 220, County Administration Building

#### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representing the Vision Committee: Beth Tipton, Linda Duncan, Niti Patel, Ruth Goode, Thomas Murphy, Tim Dineen, William Endo

Representing the Steering Committee: Betty Pita, Bobby Thomas, R.J. Amos, Claudia Castro, Greg Dolezal, Jayne Iglesias, Liz Shaw

Representing Forsyth County: Tom Brown, Director of Planning and Development; Vanessa Bernstein-Goldman, Deputy Director of Planning and Development

Representing the Consultant Team: Amanda Hatton and Allison Stewart-Harris (Jacobs); Eric Bosman and Jessica Choi (Kimley Horn Associates)

#### JOINT MEETING (6-7pm)

##### Joint Welcome & Plan Overview

- **Planning Team Introductions**
- **Updating Our Plan – Why Now? Recent trends/changes. Top Goals.**
- **The Process & Schedule – General Overview**
- **Roles of The Two Committees**

*Amanda Hatton, project manager with Jacobs, called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm with two members of the Vision Committee and one member of the Steering Committee absent (Steering Committee – Tim Perry; Vision Committee – Kris Darnell, Troy Brumbalow).*

*An over presentation was given - no action taken.*

*Ms. Hatton began the meeting by introducing the planning team members that were present. Introductions were followed by an overview of why the County is updating its comprehensive plan at this point in time. Before completing the overview presentation of the project and planning process, Ms. Hatton along with Eric Bosman, the project's land use lead with Kimley-*



*Horn, provided highlights from existing conditions and trends analysis completed by the planning team. The presentation ended with an overview of the committee meetings as well as the role that the two committees would play in the planning process. The Visioning Committee will provide input to the visioning process and guidance to the development of overarching vision and goals, whereas the Steering Committee will have a longer engagement in the process, providing more targeted guidance to the development of the Future Development Map, other substantive elements of the plan, and the draft plan document.*

### **Joint SWOT Analysis**

*The planning team, led by Ms. Hatton and Allison Stewart-Harris, facilitated a joint brainstorming session with all committee members regarding the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. No action taken. Notes from the brainstorming activity are provided below.*

#### Brainstorming Notes

##### **STRENGTHS**

- *Schools*
- *Parks and recreation*
- *Housing, nice single family*
- *Blend of suburbs and rural*
- *Proximity to city [Atlanta]*
- *Low taxes*
- *Safe (security)*
- *Natural resources (lake, river)*

##### **WEAKNESSES**

- *Infrastructure, road capacity*
- *Cultural/arts, public and private*
- *Lack of center, gathering place*
- *Growth imbalance (concentrated in south) dependent on 400*
- *Schools overcrowded*
- *"brain drain" of talented kids/limited appeal for young professionals*
- *Lack of housing diversity*
- *Lack of entertainment: shopping, restaurants, festivals, events (go to Alpharetta, Roswell, Johns Creek, Smyrna)*

*\*Many of these are tied to growth*



### OPPORTUNITIES

- *Water bodies can be better utilized*
- *Create a town center, one focus... but size of County suggests multiple*
- *Fairgrounds are under-used*
- *GA400 exits can be leveraged for business/tech parks (higher-paying jobs, work closer to home)*
- *Tap into 400 fast internet/fiber*
- *Keep taxes low to entice new residents/investment*
- *Community's affluence: people have disposable income*
- *Maximize parks space through joint use*

### THREATS

- *Need growth to maintain low taxes*
- *Lack of affordable housing*
- *Transient nature of tech employees*
- *Keeping pace / quality of life with growth: i.e. - running out of sports field space*
- *Competition for best jobs, businesses, etc.*
- *Crime + drugs*
- *Traffic, particularly south end*
- *Potential loss of rural areas/agriculture, keep through economic development*
- *Land prices rising, making agriculture difficult*
- *Potential of losing natural beauty*
- *Overcrowding schools/ lack of control: disparity between schools in different areas*
- *General disparity between north and south County opportunities*
- *Lack of infrastructure/ transportation for elderly*
- *Infrastructure maintenance and keeping pace*
- *Water supply for future population*
- *Sewage infrastructure needs to keep up*



## **VISION COMMITTEE SUB MEETING (7-8pm)**

*Sub meeting called to order at 7:10 pm*

### **7:00 Member Introductions**

*Discussion – no action taken*

*Present committee members introduced themselves, their background in the County and identified what brought them to Forsyth County and makes it a great place to live. In addition to great characteristics, a couple challenges were introduced by committee members as well, as documented below in italics.*

#### **WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT FORSYTH**

- *Lake Lanier*
- *Rural Character*
- *Great Place for Kids and Family*
- *Access to Jobs*
- *Schools*
- *Natural Beauty*
- *Families with deep routes*
- *Sense of family, connectedness*
- *Nice people*

#### **Growing Concerns**

- *Lack of suitable housing*
- *Traffic*

#### **Closer Look at the Visioning Process – What are the Key Outcomes?**

*The planning team, led by Ms. Hatton, explained the role of visioning in the Comprehensive Plan. The committee unanimously approved a decision that at least one member of the Vision Committee should be present at each Visioning Workshop and Design Workshop. Linda Duncan made the motion for the Committee to commit to being represented by at least one member at the Visioning and Design Workshops. Niti Patel seconded the motion. All members present unanimously voted in favor of the motion.*

- *April 18 – Tom to attend*
- *April 20 – Beth to attend*
- *April 23 – Tim to attend*
- *April 25 – Ruth to attend*
- *April 27 – Niti to attend*



## **Existing Comp Plan – What It Says About Our Vision & Has It Changed?**

*Discussion – no action taken*

*In the current comprehensive plan, the vision for the county is captured in a variety of policy statements and vision statements specific to different character areas of the County. We are looking at developing one overarching vision statement and identifying key goals for the future as we update the plan, while also revisiting each of the character area visions.*

*The overview was followed by committee members provide in a few words, key words that they felt belonged in a long term vision statement for the County's future.*

*Committee Input – Key Words for the County's Vision Statement*

- *Live, work, play*
- *Diversified population and occupation*
- *Inclusive community (youth, young adult, elderly)*
- *A place for all phases of life*
- *Safe*
- *Sustainable*
- *Livable, quality-of-life*
- *Community recreation (opportunity)*

### **7:35 Discussion of Input Activities at Upcoming Visioning Workshops & Survey**

*Discussion – no action taken*

Discussion Notes

*OUTREACH EVENTS*

*The group discussed outreach events for the comprehensive plan. The planning team asked for suggestions for kiosk events – we are planning activities at parks and one at the Collection during the summer concert series; the following idea was provided: May 7 – Sharon Springs Park is having a lacrosse event; this may be a good option*

*How will people know about Foster Forsyth meetings and events?*

- *Press releases*
- *Forsyth news*
- *FosterForsyth.com*
- *Community leaders – like the committees – helping getting the word out*



*The group discussed that it would be helpful to have a summary sheet of comprehensive plan meetings compared to other plans going on – one sheet provided as a handout at meetings would be helpful for this.*

#### **MEETING ACTIVITY IDEAS**

##### *Questions We May Want to Ask*

- *What do we want more of? What do we want less of?*
- *Prompts for the four elements (land use, transportation, housing, economic development)*
- *One handout with all meetings, including parks plan*

##### *Promotional Material Ideas*

- *“Help Shape” rather than “How will . . .”*
- *We need to encourage folks to participate in our wording*
- *Less wording on fliers to not overwhelm folks and rather encourage them to participate*

#### **SURVEY INPUT**

*Committee members were asked to identify a topic or question that he/she felt belonged in the community survey for the planning effort:*

- *What is the community’s biggest pain point today? Land use, housing, economic development, transportation*
- *What is your top priority for Forsyth County? Housing, land use, economic development, transportation*
- *What is your single biggest concern in future development of Forsyth County?*
- *How likely are you to use public transportation if available?*
- *If you believe housing is the most important area of emphasis in the Co, what aspect of housing is most important to you?*
- *Price*
- *Location*
- *Rent vs. buy*
- *Driving distance*
- *What do you want Forsyth to be known for?*

**The Vision Committee adjourned at 8:06 p.m.**