

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Morgan

FROM: Michael B. Brough

RE: Downtown Vision Report

DATE: March 13, 2002

I have reviewed the final report on the Downtown Visioning Charrette and it is most interesting. One of the questions that always arises in the aftermath of such reports is what the Board is to do with the report. I have some suggestions which you may or may not find useful in making your recommendation to the Board.

First, as I read the report, it consists primarily of the consultant's recommendations (colored certainly by citizen input at the Charrette) as to what Carrboro should do in terms of making public improvements and changing town ordinances to guide private development. Accordingly, I believe the first step should be just to accept the report as the conclusion of the process, without debate as to the merits of any of the recommendations. It would then be clear that the report per se does not constitute an officially adopted plan with which developers are required to comply under the land use ordinance.

The second step, in my judgment, is for the Board to review the report pretty much on a paragraph by paragraph, and sometimes line by line, basis to (1) identify the recommendation or "vision" expressed therein, and (2) make a determination (by consensus or vote) whether the town should *consider* taking further action to implement the recommendation or vision (i.e. whether the staff should include an item in the "implementation consideration report"— see below – to implement the recommendation or vision). Some recommendations or visions might not "make the cut" because the Board simply disagrees with them. Others might not be added to the report because, although the Board agrees the vision is a good one, it concludes that the town does not now have and will not likely have in the foreseeable future the resources or legal authority to bring the vision to reality.

The third step is for the staff to prepare an "implementation consideration report" based upon the results of step two. This report would break the implementation proposals into two major categories – public works and ordinance changes. Within the public works category there would be multiple sub-categories, such as streets, sidewalks, streetscapes, parking areas, and other public spaces. The ordinance changes category would be broken down into similar subcategories. Each subcategory might be further divided, the intention being to present the policy choices to the Board in a manageable fashion that can be acted upon. The report would contain enough information about the costs and impacts of each element so that the Board could make a decision on whether to move forward with the project, and in what order of priority.

The fourth step, and the end product of the Board's review of the third step, would be the adoption of an action agenda that would spell out what the Board wants to accomplish and in what order of priority. Some of the short term items might be added to the "action agenda" adopted as the product of the Board's retreats. Others might be longer term, and would be added to the annual "action agenda" in future years.

I am sure the foregoing needs much refinement. However, it may provide a starting point for discussion.