

Blue Ribbon Committee on the Future of Wake County

Meeting Summary

**Inaugural Meeting – Tuesday, January 3, 2006
RBC Center, 9:30 am – 11:30 am**

Outcomes

1. Orient members to the purpose of this committee.
2. Find out who we are and why we're here.
3. Describe how infrastructure relates to the Wake County committee members want to live in.
4. Identify infrastructure challenges and use these to frame a shared understanding and shared responsibility for the success of this committee.
5. Identify next steps, timetable, 2nd meeting.

Agenda

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Tony Gurley, Chair, Wake County Board of Commissioners
- Fred Day and Frank Holding, Jr., Co-Chairs

Getting Started – Who Are We?

Why Are We Here? – What Is Our Purpose?

In small groups, committee members discussed what the Wake County they want to live in today, tomorrow, and 20-30 years from now looks like. Each group then selected 5 key features they discussed and reported those out to the whole committee. The committee addressed six broad areas:

- 1. Public Finance, Resources, Investment, and Economic Development**
 - A public finance system that has growth pay for itself and is transparent
 - Attract diverse business and industry
 - Equitable and adequate resources and investment – infrastructure, schools, water, sewer, roads, housing, economic development, jobs, public health, transportation
 - Taxation appropriate to services needed
- 2. Land Use, Growth, and Population**
 - A vision of land use that allows for more choices, smart growth options
 - Develop SE Raleigh with City Park as anchor and Dix and Wake Med as bookends
 - Manage population density
 - Planned, thoughtful development

2. Land Use, Growth, and Population (cont'd)

- Preserve balance between agrarian and urban communities
- Reduce sprawl and crawl
- Strong infrastructure to support and handle growth

3. Transportation

- All of I-540 exists and is paid for
- Transit options
- Transportation network
- Transportation, including I-540

4. Education

- More and better schools
- Public schools and universities
- Quality schools
- Smaller schools/classes
- Strong educational institutions
- Strong public education
- Top public education in the country

5. Family, Community, and Quality of Life

- Low crime rate, safe communities
- Maintain and enhance quality of life – parks, clean air and water, open space, green space, culture
- Maintain mobility for increasing elderly population
- Strong community engagement
- Strong family values
- Wake emulates 15th century Florence – becomes a mecca for intellectual, cultural, and artistic talent

6. Regional and Intergovernmental Planning and Decision Making

- A unified region
- Aggressive leadership
- Cooperation among municipalities
- Coordinated planning and services across jurisdictions
- Establishing appropriate means and methods to make collective decisions
- Governmental collaboration
- Long-term and strategic planning rather than crisis management

In small groups, members identified challenges, barriers, and obstacles the committee and Wake County face or will face in developing an infrastructure plan that will help create and maintain the Wake County they described previously. The committee identified four broad sets of challenges:

1. Creating a Shared Vision and Plan

- A shared vision for corporate and municipal cooperation
- Agreeing on priorities
- Agreeing on the assumptions about future growth

1. Creating a Shared Vision and Plan (cont'd)

- Agreeing on the current state of Wake County and its infrastructure
- Bringing everyone to the table
- Creating a good plan and road map
- Creating a shared vision
- Defining and agreeing on who and what we want to be as a county
- Developing and designing systems for water, sewer, education, etc.
- Lack of a 25-year plan
- Maintaining the hearts of downtown Raleigh and RTP

2. Leadership

- Building and sustaining strong leadership
- Cooperation
- Coordination
- Creating effective communication
- Establishing the right focus
- Facilitating and encouraging appropriate state responsibility
- Getting bright people together to focus on the right issues
- Not getting derailed by crises – media attention
- Overcoming complacency resulting from the county's current success
- Potential political liability of leading/supporting long-range decisions
- Reconciling special interests
- Resolving and avoiding turf battles
- Setting priorities
- State constraints
- Staying nimble and open-minded

3. Communicating With and Engaging the Public

- Addressing and overcoming public inertia/resistance
- Communicating how our plan addresses equity issues such as who benefits more or less, poverty, etc.
- Communicating, marketing, and selling the enormity of the vision to the public and government leaders
- Creating a picture of this opportunity for the public
- Educating the community about the needs and how to pay for them
- Recognizing and addressing the mixed bag of growth

4. Funding and Financing

- Figuring out how to pay for it
- Fiscal realities
- Funding
- Funding
- Funding
- Funding equity
- How to obtain adequate funding
- How to pay for it
- Limited resources

Members were asked to respond to the following questions: What do these challenges mean for this committee? Who owns these challenges, who is responsible for them? Which of these challenges can any sector (business, government, not-for-profit) or jurisdiction (state, county, municipality, school district) address alone? What does this mean for how members of this committee will need to work together to accomplish their task? Committee members made the following observations and suggestions:

- The challenges we identified belong to everyone, not to a single sector or jurisdiction.
- No one sector or jurisdiction can create a vision for Wake County.
- No one sector or jurisdiction can address the challenges, obstacles, or barriers to realizing this vision.
- Members will need to emulate effective communication, participation, and collaboration.
- Every member's ideas and contributions deserve thoughtful discussion and consideration.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 24, 8 – 11:30 a.m. (continental breakfast available at 7:30 a.m.)