

CHAPTER V: COMMUNITY VISIONING

Unlike many other local government plans, the development of the Joint Henry County/Cities CTP was conducted concurrently with the development of the local government comprehensive plans of all of the jurisdictions. This timing provided both challenges and opportunities. Among the challenges were the need to inform citizens and local decision-makers about the relationship between land use/development and transportation decisions as well as undertaking an effort to help citizens and stakeholders envision a future for Henry County and its Cities. Both of these challenges directly involved the CTP Project Team. The opportunities included the ability of Henry County and its Cities to think about how the organization and management of land uses in the County and Cities could either help support or thwart efforts to improve transportation system performance and mobility. Thinking through these issues is complex and requires a broad range of community perspectives. The CTP Public Involvement Advisory Committee, the CTP Technical Steering Committee, and the staff members of Henry County and the Cities all played an essential role in exploring these issues in depth during the development of the CTP.

During the development of the CTP, emphasis was placed on providing information and opportunities to discuss the relationship between land use patterns and transportation in the context of the future vision of Henry County and its Cities. The CTP places a very strong emphasis on the need to coordinate transportation and land use decisions in a comprehensive manner. More information on this aspect of the Plan can be found in Chapter VII.

CTP Peer County Panel/Shared Agenda Workshop

As mentioned previously, the development of the CTP was the first joint transportation planning effort conducted by Henry County and its Cities. At the time, there was no permanent institutional framework for this type of discussions to occur across all political jurisdictions in Henry County. For the CTP process to be successful, local elected officials and community leaders had to be involved in learning about the relationship between transportation and land use planning, discussing potential future land use and transportation concepts to meet County and City goals, and discussing how the transportation planning process should be conducted to meet the travel needs of Henry County citizens living in a high growth environment.

In early 2006, in order to facilitate the CTP and Comprehensive Plan processes and help strengthen public and private sector partnerships in the County, the Henry County Chamber of Commerce and Henry County decided to hold a joint CTP Peer County Panel and Shared Agenda Workshop for all local elected officials in the County and Cities. The activities conducted during this event formed an important part of the community visioning process for Henry County.

Lessons Learned from Peer Counties

In order to create a positive and productive environment that would stimulate discussions about transportation and land use strategies, the agenda for the CTP Peer County Panel/Shared Agenda Workshop included presentations from other rapidly growing suburban areas that were proactively planning for their future. Three (3) peer counties were invited to present their thoughts on the challenges of growth management and multimodal transportation planning to their peers from Henry County. The peer county participants included:

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
 - City Commissioner
 - President of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Home Builders Association
- City of Rock Hill, South Carolina (a suburban county near Charlotte, NC)
 - City Council Member



- Osceola County, Florida (part of the Greater Orlando, Florida region)
 - County Commissioner and current Chairman of Metroplan Orlando, the MPO for the Greater Orlando area
 - Former County Commissioner and professional city planner

Following the peer county presentations and discussion period, workshop participants were given a set of proposed transportation and land use goals that could form the basis of the CTP. Additionally, six (6) initial land use concepts and twelve (12) transportation investment strategies were presented to local officials.

Land Use Concepts refer to different forms that new land development might take in Henry County in the future. For example, a land use concept may focus new development around existing communities and would result in a markedly different pattern than development that is located along arterial roadways.

Transportation Investment Strategies refer to broad categories of transportation system improvements or travel modes. For example, improvements to I-75 might include adding new highway lanes, modifying the design of the road where bottlenecks occur, or improving on and off-ramps to improve the flow of traffic.

Workshop participants were asked to vote on (1) nine proposed goal statements; (2) the land use concept they thought best met the overall goals of Henry County and its Cities and (3) the transportation investment strategies that best served or were most appropriate for their desired land use concepts. Table V - 1 lists the goals.

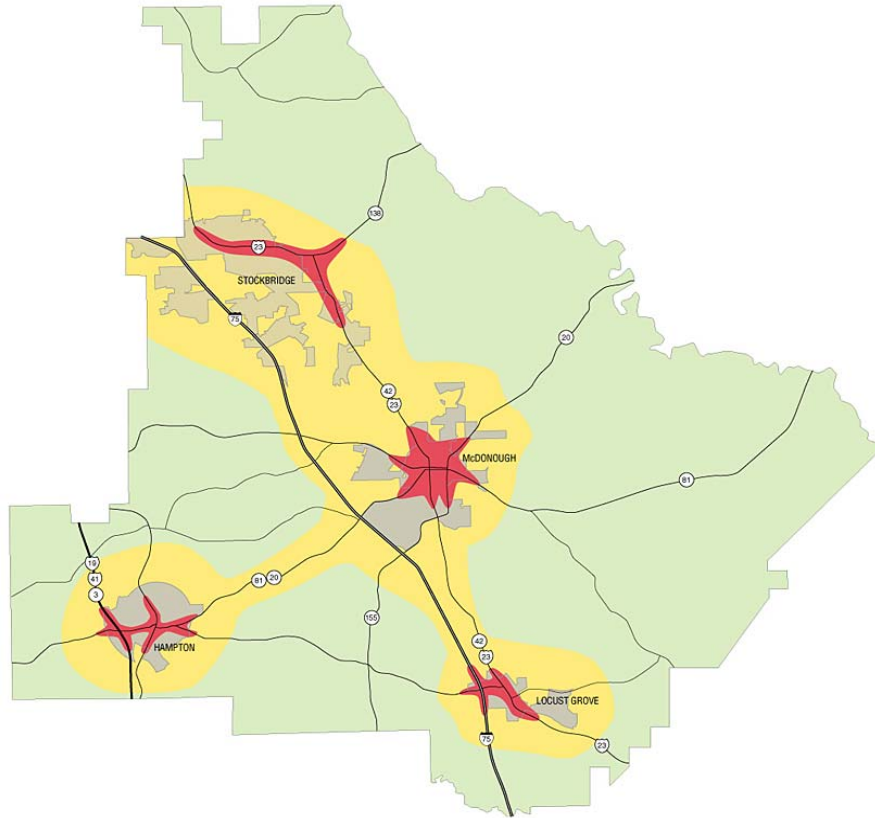
A very important feature of the exercise was the presentation of information by the CTP Team to the community leaders about the implications or likely consequences of the various growth patterns on transportation system performance and mobility. An example concept is shown in Figure V - 1. The general land use concept descriptions presented to the Shared Agenda Workshop attendees included:

- Continuing a uniform low-density growth pattern
- Focusing new development along arterial roadways in Henry County
- Focusing new development along the I-75 Corridor
- Focusing new development around existing communities (four Cities)
- Focusing new development around activity centers
- Focusing new development around new school complexes

Each of the community leaders was assigned to a small group that focused on discussing the preferable land use concepts to meet Henry County's and the Cities' long range goals. The development scenarios used to identify transportation needs, summarized in Chapter IV, were based upon the outcome of these discussions. Each individual was then asked to vote on the most appropriate transportation investment strategies given the desired land use concepts. The results of the voting are shown in Table V - 1 through Table V - 3.



Figure V - 1: Example Land Use Concept From Shared Agenda Workshop



This concept would focus future growth around the Cities of Hampton, Locust Grove, McDonough, and Stockbridge, channeling retail and office space in the centers of existing communities, and concentrating residential uses in the area surrounding the city centers. The development pattern has the following implications:

- Effectively utilizes existing infrastructure.
- Provides opportunity to preserve green space elsewhere in the County.
- Reinforces existing cities and communities.
- Provides better opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- May create localized traffic congestion.

Transportation Investment Strategies

In order to determine a sense of transportation investment priorities among the participants, each attendee was given \$ 1,000 in “Henry Bucks” which could be “spent” on the transportation investments that he/she considered best for Henry County/Cities to meet their long-range community goals given their desired land use concepts. The possible transportation investments included:



- **Improvements to I-75**

This strategy includes improvements that add new lanes to I-75, eliminate bottleneck locations, create new service roads along I-75, or improve interchange on- or off-ramps or nearby intersections to ease traffic flow between I-75 and connecting arterial roads.
- **Adding New Major Roads**

This strategy entails the creation of new arterial roads that can help relieve traffic from the existing arterial street network.
- **Widening Existing Major Roads**

This strategy would increase the capacity of existing arterial roads by adding additional travel lanes.
- **Access Management along Major Roads**

This strategy would improve the performance of existing arterial roads by adding medians, reducing the number of driveways that connect to the arterial system, and creating inter-connections among individual developments that are adjacent to arterial roads.
- **Intersection Improvements**

This strategy focuses on reconstructing unsafe or underperforming intersections, adding turn lanes or traffic signals, where needed, or otherwise redesigning the intersection to make it operate more efficiently and safely.
- **Roadways Over/Under Railroads**

This strategy would focus on redesigning locations where railroads and roadways cross each other to improve safety, as well as to improve traffic flow.
- **Traffic Signal System Improvements**

Traffic signal improvements could include adding new signals at key intersections, adjusting the timing of existing signals to improve traffic flow, or coordinating the timing of multiple traffic signals at nearby intersections.
- **Improvements to Local/Neighborhood Streets**

This strategy improves the County's network of local roads and may entail paving unpaved roads, enhancing the safety or performance of existing local roads, creating better connections among existing local roads, adding new local roads, or improving the sight distance along existing roads.
- **Local/Community Transit Service**

This strategy includes the new and/or improved bus, streetcar/trolley, or van services to provide access to destinations within Henry County and its Cities. This may include "dial-and-ride" shuttle service, local bus service, or streetcar/trolley service to connect Henry County's communities.
- **Express Bus/Bus Rapid Transit Service**

This strategy could include the expansion of the current express bus service operating between Henry County and Atlanta, either by serving more locations in Henry County, serving more work destinations, or offering more frequent service. This option could also include operating express bus services along high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-75 or creating bus priority lanes on key arterial roadways.
- **Commuter Rail Service**

This strategy would involve linking Henry County and its Cities to the City of Atlanta through new rail service that would operate primarily during the morning and evening commute periods.



Parking areas would be provided for users and feeder and distributor bus services would also be needed to complement the rail service.

- Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Networks

This strategy involves improving existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Henry County and its Cities, adding sidewalks and bike lanes to existing and future streets, building new sidewalks, bike paths, and multi-use trails in appropriate areas, as well as improving pedestrian crossings.

- Other (please identify)

This strategy could include teleworking, flextime, or other transportation strategy not already identified in the list.

Table V - 1: Shared Agenda Workshop – Voting Results On Goal Statements		
Votes	Percent	Goal Statement
28	23.3%	Ensure that all new growth and development are high quality and fiscally-sustainable.
19	15.8%	Ensure coordination between the planning and development activities of the County and its Cities.
17	14.2%	Preserve the County’s rural, natural, and environmentally-sensitive areas for future generations.
14	11.7%	Ensure mobility for the movement of people, goods, and services within and through Henry County.
13	10.8%	Provide travel choices for residents and visitors in the County’s Cities and other communities.
13	10.8%	Protect and enhance the health, safety, and quality of life.
10	8.3%	Preserve and enhance the character of the historic and existing communities in Henry County.
4	3.4%	Provide a diverse array of housing options for County residents.
2	1.7%	Improve air quality in the County.
120	100.0%	TOTAL VOTES

Note: each participant was given the opportunity to vote on their four (4) preferred goal statements.



Table V - 2: Shared Agenda Workshop – Voting Results On Land Use Concepts		
Group No.	Preferred Concepts	Remarks
1	Likes a combination of # 4 (Existing Communities), # 5 (Activity Centers), and # 6 (Schools)	There is consensus around developing a Land Use Concept that includes “centers” or “nodes”, either in existing communities or activity centers or both. The nodes could also include schools. To some, I-75 is still an important element. To some, an Urban Growth Boundary around the cities is desired.
2	Likes # 4 (Existing Communities) with selected additional activity centers and # 5 (Activity Centers) together with Urban Growth Boundary	
3	Likes # 5 (Activity Centers) with expanded definition of activity centers to include schools.	
4	Likes combination of # 3 (I-75), # 4 (Existing Communities), and # 5 (Activity Centers) and combination of # 3 and # 4	

Table V - 3: Shared Agenda Workshop – Voting Results On Transportation Investment Strategies		
Amount Invested	Percent	Transportation Investments
\$ 3,950	14.6%	Commuter Rail
\$ 3,700	13.7%	Access Management Along Major Roads
\$ 3,300	12.2%	Intersection Improvements
\$ 3,250	12.0%	Adding New Major Roads
\$ 2,550	9.5%	Widening Existing Roads
\$ 2,350	8.7%	Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Improvements
\$ 2,150	8.0%	Traffic Signal Systems
\$ 1,600	5.9%	Improvements to I-75
\$ 1,350	5.0%	Express Bus/Bus Rapid Transit
\$ 1,100	4.1%	Improvements to Local Streets
\$ 900	3.3%	Roadways Over/Under Railroads
\$ 650	2.4%	Local Transit Service
\$ 150	0.6%	Other – Telecommuting Incentives
\$ 27,000	100.0%	TOTAL AMOUNT INVESTED

Following the allocation of “Henry Bucks,” the results of the collective investments were presented and discussed by the participants, with special focus on the pros and cons of various development patterns, the desired future vision of Henry County and its Cities, and community preferences in terms of land use patterns and transportation system development. This information was used to develop a transportation



vision for the CTP; identify the goals, objectives, and performance measures to guide the Plan; and better refine the transportation and land use concepts that were incorporated into the travel demand model for the analysis of future transportation conditions.

Community Visioning Workshops

In March 2006, a set of Community Visioning workshops were held throughout the County to provide citizens and community stakeholders an opportunity to learn about and comment on potential future land use and transportation visions for Henry County. Voting exercises similar to the ones conducted during the CTP Shared Agenda Workshop were held at the final visioning workshop held on March 13, 2006. The voting results from this workshop are shown in Table V - 4 and Table V - 5. As with the results of the Shared Agenda Workshop, the results of the final Community Visioning Workshop helped form the basis of the County/Cities transportation vision, the goals and objectives for the CTP, and the future transportation and land use concepts analyzed as part of the CTP development process.

Concept Number	Land Use Concept Description	No. of Votes	Percent of Total Votes
1	Development Based on Current Trends	9	8%
2	Development Focused Along Arterial Roads	13	12%
3	Development Focused Along I-75	4	4%
4	Development Focused Around Existing Communities	28	25%
5	Development Focused Around Activity Centers	44	40%
6	Development Focused Around Schools	12	11%
	TOTAL VOTES	110	100%



Table V - 5: Final Community Visioning Workshop – Voting Results On Transportation Investment Strategies

Concept Number	Transportation Improvement Type	Amount of Money Spent	Percent of Total Money Spent
1	Improvements to I-75	\$ 1,000	4%
2	Adding New Major Roads	\$ 1,600	6%
3	Widening Existing Major Roads	\$ 5,400	20%
4	Access Management Along Major Roads	\$ 1,200	4%
5	Improvements to Local/Neighborhood Streets	\$ 1,500	5%
6	Intersection Improvements	\$ 3,800	14%
7	Roadways Over/Under Railroads	\$ 2,600	9%
8	Traffic Signal System Improvements	\$ 2,300	8%
9	Local/Community Transit Service	\$ 500	2%
10	Express Bus/Bus Rapid Transit Service	\$ 700	2%
11	Commuter Rail	\$ 2,500	10%
12	Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Networks	\$ 3,800	14%
13	Other – private bus services	\$ 500	2%
	TOTAL MONEY SPENT:	\$ 27,500	100%

Business and Development Community Involvement

In addition to the continuous input provided through the Public Involvement Advisory Group and the community visioning workshops, the business and development community had a special opportunity to contribute to development of the transportation vision for Henry County. In the Spring of 2006, a CTP briefing session was held with the Henry County Council for Quality Growth. The session was attended by over 100 participants and included some voting exercises on land use concepts and transportation investment strategies similar to the ones previously held with local elected officials and citizens. The results of the voting generally mirrored those of previous exercises. The preferred land development concepts reflected a desire to focus development around existing communities or activity centers.

Preferred transportation strategies involved widening existing roadways, improving the traffic flow through operational improvements, and providing more sidewalks, bicycle paths, and public transportation opportunities.

Shared Transportation Vision

Using input from the CTP Peer County Panel and Shared Agenda Workshop, input from the Public Involvement Advisory Committee and Technical Steering Committee, and feedback from local elected officials, citizens, and community stakeholders participating in the Community Visioning Workshops and project briefing at the Henry County Council or Quality Growth, Henry County and its Cities developed a



shared vision for the transportation system in the County for the mobility of people and goods. The County/Cities shared vision is stated below.

Henry County and its Cities will create a sense of community by working together in a way that respects the role and place for both rural and urban development. The County and Cities will link their land uses with a safe, efficient, balanced, and environmentally friendly transportation system that meets the public's needs, fosters strong economic opportunities, and helps create a high quality of life for future generations.

