

From a workshop sponsored by the EDAB and attended by businesses, real estate companies, residents, government

Vision:

1. Preserve and protect the natural and cultural attractions that are the source of our competitive advantage and value creation in COBX. Maintain the niche this area has within its global context. There are not many places like this in the US, NC or for that matter the world. There is a tremendous future value in protecting this positioning.

Attract tourists that will bring resources to the area, but who will also protect the environment and respect the community. Bring tourists that maximize revenue per tourist, versus lowering standards to maximize volume of tourists with resultant negative impacts on the environment.

- For the paved road: Allow development to full capacity, but guided by standards and constraints that protect the environment, our market's competitive advantage and the value of existing property. Preserve our niche in the up-scale tourist market
 - For the off road: Our area will remain remote, residential with significant conservation areas. The value is based on the uniqueness of the natural environment—Our vision would be where this remoteness and low density translate into an increased value for visitors, and increased revenues for the county. Help tourists to enjoy and value the remote experience, residential nature, and respect the natural environment, the wild horses, and the community.
2. Have a system that balances the potential for eco-tourism with the sustainability of the environment and natural conservation areas.
 - For paved and off road: Manage and ensure that there is not exploitation and over-use and that eco-tourism doesn't overcome the environment.
 - For paved and off road: Ensure that the wild horses are free to roam the entire off road, without threat from man—and continue to live as the State Horse of North Carolina and protected for future generations.
 3. Preserve the quality of life for year-round residents who will likely become a larger portion of the population
 - For the paved road: Whether well and septic or central services, ensure adequate clean water and low enough impact of waste water and storm water to guarantee our environment's long term health.
 - For the off road: We would see an area that is much like it is now, sure with some growth in residential homes, but we would protect our natural environment and residential nature. Others in the county would understand the unique area and embrace why we chose to live and work here, as it is without the "convenience of a shop nearby". Our vision is for a residential community only, protecting the trees, natural vegetation, natural resources (water, wetlands), dunes, and maritime forests.

Challenges

Paved Road

Challenge	Proposed Solution
<p>MCB is viewed as a threat if it comes: a) because it may bring more people than our natural areas can handle, b) increase in crime, c) more day trippers that just buy air for their tires.</p> <p>but not in my back yard, at the expense of my property values - terminus options</p>	
<p>Concern that we are losing the top end of the family vacation market who come for a quality experience in our unspoiled natural surroundings and are willing to pay a premium</p>	<p>Cultural centers should coordinate more special events throughout the year - like WHC and the lighthouse have done with the tree lighting ceremony – and get tourism to sponsor more off season activities that appeal to the high end market segments that value our uniqueness</p>
<p>Concern that actions taken and not taken are increasing the appeal to a lower end of the vacationer market that has demonstrated a lack of respect for the natural beauty, the law and regulations on litter, parking, or private property</p>	
<p>Allowing an increase in the number of bedrooms per house above the current averages is a cost to all in increased crowding and environmental impact</p>	
<p>Filling of wetlands by developers, residents and/ or polluting the natural areas with the effluent from too many visitors per acre.</p>	
<p>Use of the 4WD beach as a highway and parking lot has safety and environmental impacts</p>	
<p>Clean beaches in jeopardy today - need to enforce clean beaches ordinance</p>	
<p>Crowded beaches may be a significant issue in the future with full build out and erosion.</p>	
<p>Worry that lighting needs to be regulated to protect night sky views</p>	
<p>Wild Horse tours are a great attraction, but there are too many companies and no regulation or enforcement to protect the natural habitat and peace of the animals, while allowing viewing in their natural environment. Wild horses habitat may become threatened. Concern that horse tours, while important, need to be regulated to protect the horses</p>	
<p>There is concern that our natural attractions face threats from full development unless the county imposes stricter requirements for both residential and commercial</p>	
<p>2x to 3x growth in peak season could ruin the natural attractions that drew them here, leading to declining rents and property values</p>	
<p>Concerned for security of their property and for actions that preserve the high rental rates and continued property value appreciation that justified their large capital investments</p>	
<p>The seasonal business model for business cash flow means that poorly capitalized businesses sometimes lack the time to learn and adapt before they run out of money</p>	

Off Road

- While eco-tourism is a good potential area for growth—and consistent with the vision of protecting the natural environment, members of the group felt that we should be very careful in how this is managed. In many areas the very attractions that were the basis for eco-tourism are overrun with tourists, and thus destroy the reason why people came to begin with. This is starting to happen now, with the jeep tours, etc. We need to have an eco-tourism industry that doesn't overcome the environment.
- The group recognizes the value of tourists who rent homes for vacations, and that these visitors come to the area for its remoteness. They felt that this niche might be threatened by the increasing influx of daily tours and day trippers, many of whom come from Dare County who do not spend any money in Currituck but take away much of the reason that the other tourists come and stay in the off road area. Members of the group stressed the necessity to keep the area residential and for SFH rentals in order to keep the tourism niche.
- There was some concern that the vision by the EDAB might be driven by a simple quantification of dollars and cents (e.g. rental values/property values, tax revenues) without capturing the harder to quantify value in the long term of maintaining this natural environment with low density, residential nature and remoteness. The value is hard to quantify, in terms of a strict capitalist point of view. The area is unique and people come to it because of what it is and not despite of what it is. The group suggested that a study that captures the value of eco-services (e.g. the fact that leaving some land natural means that there is less need for county funds for services; the value of protection of the barrier island for the mainland) and the value of the remoteness as a competitive advantage in the tourism sector (e.g. a longer term focus on what will be valued in the years ahead, as opposed to only looking at the current returns); and the value of property in the longer terms (proximity to natural parks shows higher property values). We believe that higher property values equal higher rental dollars due to the remote and unique nature of the area.

Challenge	Proposed Solution
<p>Recognition that the value of the area is in keeping it remote and natural. We must always recognize the distinction between the off road and the paved road. They are very different in what the people come for, the challenges, and the desires of the community.</p> <p>There seems to be a misunderstanding by some who do not live in the area that we “need” stores, services, convenience.</p>	<p>Hopefully the economic visioning will recognize this.</p> <p>However, this is not the case, as many felt that the lack of these things was exactly why they, and many of the tourists, came to and return to the area.</p> <p>There was a discussion that while there are a number of platted properties, the fact that flood insurance is getting more expensive may impact any “exponential growth” that might be perceived. In addition plans to put some properties into conservation easement could help to reduce the threat of future pressure on the resources.</p>
<p>What happens on the paved road in Corolla impacts what happens in the off road. If there are more and more homes and attractions in Corolla, then people just come to the off road to use it as a parking lot or fun park. This negatively impacts the tourism sector (why people come to the off road) as well as the community.</p>	<p>Some mechanisms to control the number of day trippers on the beach during the summer (daily permit system that enables residents, property owners, workers, Currituck residents to access and then daily permits are issued)</p>

<p>More and more daily traffic congestion is coming to the off road due to limited beach access on the paved road, closed beaches in Hatteras, and more day trippers from Dare. This is not increasing the value of the experience in the off road for the tourists who rent, nor for the residents, and threatens the niche that the off road has.</p>	<p>It was noted that a committee is being formed to look at issues of traffic volume and beach safety. Any suggestions should come to that group. There are traffic counts and surveys that will be useful for that group.</p> <p>This may require solutions that are also on the paved road—such as more public beach access points on the paved road.</p>
<p>Horse tours are out of control and disrespectful. They trespass on private property and are not always compliant with Currituck’s ordinance on distance to the horses.</p> <p>There may be too many horse tour companies.</p>	<p>There is a committee that is working on the situation with the jeep tours. Any comments or suggestions should be provided to that group.</p> <p>Better enforcement, limiting the number of horse tour companies and horse tours operating per day.</p>
<p>There is only so much land carrying capacity in the off road. At some point there will be a limit on the amount of homes that can be built, given the resource base (septic, water)</p>	<p>A proposal was made to look at the land and where there are unbuildable lots (e.g. wetlands) or owners to multiple lots to determine if the owners would be willing to put the land in conservation easement for a tax credit. There might also be some land trusts or non profits that could purchase tracks of land It was felt that if the community made an effort to remove some of the platting lots from the possibility of building in the future, that we could see a value to the property owner, the community, and the environ.</p>
<p>ATVs are destroying the dunes, riding on personal property, and hurting the natural environment</p>	<p>Better enforcement</p>