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March 19, 2012

Mr. Jim Sibley  
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Cashiers Village Council  
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RE: Project Description and Map Poster  
Cashiers Transportation Plan and Strategy

Dear Jim:

We have compiled the following narrative and project descriptions, and the attached map poster articulating the Transportation Plan for Cashiers. The narrative recaps the history of the Plan, follows through on the October 2011 worksession, and provides a description of each potential project by category: Roadway, Pathway, or Policy. The map poster graphically depicts the Plan components along with a description of each project and priority for implementation.

## **Project History**

The Cashiers Transportation Priority Plan was created out of the Mountain Landscapes Initiative (MLI) project of 2007/2008, led by the Southwestern Commission. MLI was a regional study led by The Lawrence Group to develop a toolbox of smart growth policies and techniques to insure that future development in the seven westernmost counties of North Carolina would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Region, and would incorporate a context-respectful planning process that allowed new and redevelopment to blend holistically with the spectacular natural surroundings. As part of that effort, case studies were conducted to test and refine policies using actual communities; one such case study was the Cashiers Village Center and Crossroads area. The plan developed for Cashiers included a number of transportation-related initiatives, such as development of an ancillary local roadway network to afford alternate routes within and around the Village, thereby relieving pressure on US 64 and NC 107; changing the character of NC 107 and US 64 as they bisected the Village to "look" and perform more as Village Main Streets; connecting the network to the regional roadways via a series of gateway roundabouts; replacement of the signalized intersection at US 64 and NC 107 with a signature roundabout at the Crossroads; and development of a comprehensive series of pathways to afford pedestrians access around the Village. After the MLI Plan was completed, the formation of the Cashiers Village Council was undertaken at the recommendation of the Study, and the Council has been instrumental in forwarding the agenda of projects,

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especially demonstrated by the construction of Frank Allen Road and the implementation of many pathways as recommended.

### **Plan Update Worksession**

In October 2011, the Cashiers Village Council convened a community worksession to reaffirm the direction of the overall Transportation Priority Plan and to gather community input as to what may have changed since the original plan was adopted, as well as solicit input toward any modifications that the community may want to see from the Plan. Attended by approximately 50 residents, the evening culminated with a series of table worksessions in which residents were asked for their input regarding modifications to the Plan or additional elements that should be included in the update. Specific questions asked were as follows:

- What do or don't you like about the original MLI Transportation Plan?
- Are there certain things you would refine or change about the MLI Transportation Plan?
- How would you prioritize the specific transportation projects that comprise the Plan?

There appeared to be broad consensus in support of the overall direction of the original MLI Transportation Plan. As far as requested modifications to the original plan, they included the following:

- The north 107 roundabout/intersection should be shifted north to Slab Town Road and that
- The west US 64 roundabout/intersection should be shifted east to Frank Allen Road;
- The proposed character change on US 64 and NC 107 should be undertaken from roundabouts through Village Crossroads in order to make the roadways more walkable/crossable and to slow vehicular speeds;
- Cashiers-appropriate streetscape should be installed within the roundabouts and Crossroads area;
- Sidewalks should be constructed along NC 107 and US 64 within the Village area, from the roundabouts through the Crossroads;
- Parking was needed for events, and that it could be located remotely as long as trolleys or shuttles were available; and
- Parking should be located behind buildings and not between the buildings and roads.

## The Updated Plan

After the worksession, the consulting team was asked to update the original Plan to reflect the outcome of the worksession as well as projects that had been constructed, and to articulate each project via description and illustration on a map poster. The attached map poster forms the basis for the Cashiers Transportation Priority Plan. At this time, there are no assumptions regarding the implementation of these projects with regard to public or private property, or to NCDOT rights of way. Specific projects are divided into three categories: Roadway, Pathway, and Policy. Each project in the Priority Plan is briefly described as follows:

### Roadway Projects

- A. Character Change: US 64 from Frank Allen Road to T.S. Lance Road – The initiative includes measures to realign the character of US 64 through the Village to more of a Main Street than a rural state highway. Specific measures include travel lanes of 10 or 11 feet in width, innovative stormwater facilities such as rain gardens, enhanced pedestrian crossings, on street parallel parking, hardened surface pathways (materials to be Cashiers-consistent, such as fixed brown pebble or mossy stained concrete), and Cashiers-consistent streetscape treatments including plantings and street furnishings.
- B. Character Change: NC 107 from Slabtown Road to Frank Allen Road – Similar to the US 64 initiative, this project includes eliciting a change from the existing state highway character along NC 107 through the Village to more resemble a Main Street. Elements such as lane narrowings, provision of on-street parking, hardened surface pathways, and streetscape and pedestrian enhancements are included.
- C. Connector: Southeast Quadrant Connector from US 64 to NC 107 – Part of the overall ancillary network concept, this connector will provide an alternate route for local access and will also afford an option for motorists traveling between NC 107 South and US 64 East. It is anticipated that this connector will be a low-speed two-lane facility, with Cashiers-consistent streetscape and provisions for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.
- D. Connector: Northeast Quadrant Connector from US 64 to NC 107 – Also part of the Village network concept, this facility is envisioned as a low speed local roadway, with two travel lanes and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. It will also incorporate Cashiers-appropriate streetscape and afford local access as well as regional access between NC 107 North and US 64 East. As this quadrant contains more individual properties than the other three, it is slated as the lowest priority of the Connectors and will likely only be implemented as development/redevelopment occurs.
- E. Connector: Northwest Quadrant Connector from US 64 to NC 107 – The third element of the local network concept, this connector provides access for local

- traffic as well as for motorists traveling between US 64 West and NC 107 North. The roadway will be characterized by two narrow travel lanes, on street parking, Cashiers-appropriate streetscape, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- F. Connector: Southwest Quadrant Connector from US 64 to NC 107 – The project in this quadrant consists of enhanced streetscape, assessing the need for and provision of on-street parking where appropriate, and designating bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as insuring the streetscape is consistent with the other three Quadrant Connectors. The final leg of the network concept, this connector is currently in place and was constructed after the MLI charrette as Frank Allen Road. It affords access to the Library and other community facilities, as well as serving as a regional alternative for motorists traveling between US 64 West and NC 107 South.
- G. Roundabout: Roundabout at US 64 West and Frank Allen Road – The proposed roundabout at this location serves as a gateway to the Village, a transition point for the character change between the rural and Village sections of US 64, and the traffic control measure to afford connectivity from US 64 to the Northwest and Southwest Quadrant Connectors. The roundabout is envisioned as a single circulating lane with a significant streetscape/gateway element in the center island.
- H. Roundabout: Roundabout at US 64 East and Monte Vista Road – This roundabout serves as the connection between US 64 and the Northeast and Southeast Quadrant Connectors. It also serves as a gateway from US 64 to the Village, and denotes the transition point where the character of US 64 is intended to change from the highway to Village character. The roundabout is intended to have a significant gateway/streetscape element in the center island.
- I. Roundabout: Roundabout at NC 107 South and Valley Road/Frank Allen Road – This single lane roundabout will serve as the connection point between NC 107 and the Northwest and Southwest Quadrant Connectors. Again, it provides a gateway feature to the Village and delineates the change in character along NC 107 from the rural highway to Village Main Street. The roundabout is anticipated to have gateway-appropriate streetscape in the center island.
- J. Roundabout: Roundabout at NC 107 North and Slabtown Road – The final roundabout in the network elements, this single lane roundabout forms the connection between NC 107 North and the Northwest and Northeast Quadrant Connectors. The roundabout will serve as the northern gateway to the Village and provide a transition point between the rural character of NC 107 to the north and the desired Main Street character of NC 107 through the Village of Cashiers.
- K. Roundabout: Roundabout at US 64 and NC 107/Village Crossroads – The concept of replacing the existing signalized intersection at US 64 and NC 107 has been discussed previously, and was studied by NCDOT in a study completed in 2007. It was also articulated by the Community as a desired element both during the MLI charrette and the October 2011 worksession. By providing the Quadrant

Connectors and roundabouts, it is anticipated that traffic volumes will be relieved somewhat at this intersection, allowing for a significant gateway statement to be accomplished through the development of a signature roundabout at the heart of the Village. Due to the geometric skew of the intersection of US 64 and NC 107 at this location, it may be appropriate to consider a larger, plaza or Village Green roundabout or possibly an oval configuration; however, the project should incorporate a very high level of Cashiers-appropriate streetscape, and should be designed to comfortably accommodate pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles. Although all the proposed roundabouts will require coordination with NCDOT, it is anticipated that this location will be of particular interest.

- L. Traffic Signals: Evaluate traffic signal cycle for evening flash – Conduct evaluation to determine if signal at US 64 and US 107 could be set to flash in the evenings.

#### Pathway Projects

- M. Pathway: Hardened surface pathway along Frank Allen Road – To bring the construction of Frank Allen Road into consistency with the rest of the Village Transportation Plan and Quadrant Connectors, a 5-foot hard surface pathway should be constructed along both sides of Frank Allen Road.
- N. Pathway: Hardened surface pathway along Burns Street and parallel network – This project consists of retrofitting 5-foot hardened surface pathways to one or both sides of Burns Street in the Southwest Quadrant to afford better pedestrian access along existing facilities.
- O. Pathway: Hardened surface pathway along US 64 from T.S. Lance Road to Ingles Shopping Center – As a direct result of the October 2011 worksession, this project has been added to the Plan to afford pedestrian connectivity to the Ingles Shopping Center from the Village Center. It is anticipated that a hardened surface, 5-foot pathway be constructed along the north side of US 64 East between the proposed roundabout and the Ingles Shopping Center.
- P. Nature Trail: Village Green trail connector – Continuing along the direction of providing off-road natural pathways as articulated in the MLI Plan and exercised by the Village Council, this project consists of a 10 foot natural surface trail to afford access to and through the Village Green trail network from Frank Allen Road.
- Q. Nature Trail: Boardwalk around Cashiers Lake – Although technically outside of the Village Center, it is recommended that a 10-foot natural surface trail be constructed to connect the area around the Library and Frank Allen Road to Cashiers Lake just south of the Village. Construction of this facility will provide access to this natural amenity for residents and visitors to Cashiers.
- R. Nature Trail: Northwest quadrant/Inn Trail – An opportunity exists to construct a natural surface multi-use trail within the Northwest Quadrant. It is anticipated that

the trail will be constructed with a width of 10 feet and would be consistent with anticipated development in that Quadrant.

- S. Nature Trail: Connection to Ingles Shopping Center – Mirroring the sidewalk on the north side of US 64, this natural-surface facility would serve people on the south side of US 64 desiring to access the Ingles Shopping Center by foot.

### Policy Projects

- T. Adopt Complete Streets Policy – The Village should develop a policy for design and implementation of Complete Streets throughout the Village. Complete Streets is a term that refers to a design philosophy that insures that new roadway and rehabilitation projects are designed to balance the needs and safety of all users, not just the motor vehicle. Facilities for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit users are all holistically integrated into the design and construction process. Currently, the NCDOT has an adopted Complete Streets Policy; and is developing design guidance for Complete Streets. Any new Village streets or proposed NCDOT projects should adhere to the principles of Complete Streets.
- U. Investigate Secured Funding Sources and Partners – Finally, the Village should seek funding partners and sources of funding to realize the Vision of the Cashiers Transportation Priority Plan. The Village should coordinate with Jackson County and NCDOT to collaborate on opportunities to realize various projects that would be beneficial not only to the Village, but also to the overall region. This type collaboration can reveal opportunities to dovetail initiatives with regularly-scheduled improvements such as resurfacing. The Village should also evaluate the project list and determine potential funding sources through federal and state grant programs. Finally, coordination with the private development community may reveal opportunities to accomplish objectives through public-private partnerships. Federal funding opportunities are outlined in the attached table of funding sources for Complete Streets.
- V. Develop and Implement Wayfinding Plan: The Village should develop a wayfinding plan to standardize directional and informational signage within the Village. The Village should also implement the recommendations of the Plan as funding allows or in conjunction with other projects. To insure that the recommended signage is utilized in future projects, the Wayfinding Plan should be completed as soon as possible to inform other pending projects.
- W. Evaluate Speed Zones: Recognizing that the character changes along the Village Center segments of US 64 and NC 107 will result in more Village-consistent traffic speeds, the Village should monitor vehicular speeds and make recommendations for adjustments to NCDOT during the implementation of all Plan elements. The adjustment of speed zones will insure compatibility among all modes of motorized



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and non-motorized travel, and can be phased over time concurrently with roadway projects that impact the travel speeds.

Thank you for your collaboration on this preparation of the Transportation Plan, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Village Council on realizing a successful Transportation Plan for Cashiers.

Sincerely,

G. Wade Walker, P.E.

c: Monica Holmes, The Lawrence Group