

DRAFT 5-13-09
Progress Report from
Intergovernmental Task Force
Studying Merger of the Planning and Inspections Departments
and Other Related Functions
For Guilford County, City of Greensboro, & City of High Point

1. BACKGROUND

- a. **Resolutions** authorizing establishment of a task force passed three governing bodies in February and March of this year.
- b. **Citizen appointments** totaling 18 persons were made to the task force by City and County Managers for each jurisdiction, with 8 from Guilford County (including 3 from smaller municipalities), 5 from Greensboro and 5 from High Point.

2. PROGRESS TO DATE

- a. **The first two Task Force meetings** were held on April 22, with a second meeting held on May 6, 2009. Both meetings were held in the Blue Room of the Old County Courthouse. A third meeting has been set for May 27, with meetings in subsequent months on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 3 pm.
- b. **Background information** was distributed, including
 - i. Authorizing resolutions and charge for the group.
 - ii. Information on the operations of related staff from the jurisdictions.
 - iii. Copies of interlocal cooperation agreements from three merged planning operations in the state.
 - iv. Copies of service contracts between the County and smaller municipalities.
 - v. State enabling legislation for such agreements, and
 - vi. Two reports:
 - 1. a recent brief issues summary by a consultant.
 - 2. a 1994 report on city and county planning merger from the UNC Institute of Government.
- c. **Requests for presentations** were made from the Task Force, to be made during early meetings by:
 - i. Directors of merged NC planning & inspections operations.

- ii. Some jurisdictions that have separated from merged operations.
 - iii. UNC School of Government staff knowledgeable about NC merger history and issues.
- d. **List of issues to review** were prepared by the Task Force, which would be undertaken following the initial presentations noted above. These issues include:
- i. Merger impacts on customer service and convenience.
 - ii. Merger impacts on cost efficiency of operations.
 - iii. Combining of boards and commissions.
 - iv. Combining of ordinance regulations.
 - v. Combining of long-range planning efforts.
 - vi. Work plan priorities for merged operations.
 - vii. Funding options and formulas for merged operations.
 - viii. Hiring and firing of staff director(s), rest of staff.
 - ix. Locations of merged operations office(s).
 - x. Permitting and fees – options in merged operations.
 - xi. Technology issues – software operating systems (e.g. Accela), databases, GIS, interactive voice response system (IVR), workload management software, plan tracking systems, electronic plan submittals, mobile work stations.
 - xii. Merged inspections operations study has fewer issues.
 - xiii. Coordination issues: relationships with other development review offices, watershed regulations, environmental health, soil & erosion, process flow charts, regular informal meetings of city & county officials.
 - xiv. Jurisdiction issues: future of WSSA, greater use of ETJ, jurisdictions not participating.
 - xv. Other: county water-sewer functions, annexation.

3. ESTIMATED TIMETABLE (based on discussions to date)

- a. **Presentations** from merged operations and others – 5 meetings, to 7/22/09.
- b. **Review of issues** – 15 issues, at 3 per meeting – 5 meetings, to 10/14/09.
- c. **Final report** – wrapup issues, review & approval of task force report – two meetings to 11/11/09.
- d. **Reports to elected bodies** – 2nd meetings in November, 2009.