



Focus Group #12: HWENA & Northwest Corridor Council of Elders
August 27, 2020

SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes the information and ideas covered in the meeting, organized by topic. The Project Team will use the feedback collected during this session to revise the Plan Framework and inform draft plan recommendations.

ATTENDEES

Rev. Cornelius Atkinson – Moderator
Alysia Osbourne
Dorothy Counts-Scoggins
Nancy Stroud
Clay Ambrister
Themla Byers-Bailey
Shannon Hughes
Bernetta Powell
J'Tanya Admas
Mattie Marshall
Mary Johnson
Natalie Kennedy Beard
Rev. Mildred McCullough

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Thinking into the future, what are the missing pieces in our downtown and center city neighborhoods that would make this a better place for all?

Mattie

- What's missing is more connectivity – we often look at small segments here and there
- We really need to get down to addressing equity – what are we truly saying? Are we really being authentic?
- We are looking forward to 2040 that will bring less cars, more transportation needs; the gold line is an economic engine for the corridor
- We really need to look at the policies that that have stopped these communities from thriving

Tammy

- Have we looked at the rock quarry? What can be done with it moving forward?
- We need to think about this in relation to greenways because the water runs from the quarry to the greenways

Mattie

- We must truly dig deep on what equity really means to stakeholders

Nancy

- What plans are already in motion for the corridor?
- We need major economic investment in the corridor
- What is being done now to *actually* get us to a point to even visualize 2040

Do you think that Uptown & other parts of Center City are welcoming, inclusive & equitable places? If not, what could be done to make them more welcoming?

Nancy

- I'd like us to see a gateway entrance in the Historic West End corridor
- Some type of gateway to the area; something distinguishable
 - Tracy: This could display some history about the past

Rev. Atkinson

- We need economic diversity from center city coming into the corridor
- We need amenities that call can enjoy and be safe
- Most historical aspects in Uptown have been torn down and replaced
- There is even a lack of signage about that places that helped shape Uptown

Mattie

- We can build upon our rich history and legacy
- We have a rich history of music that can be built upon
- We need to create more public spaces for these programs

Grant Meacci

- Greenways can provide safe connectivity throughout Charlotte – while informing, in a beautiful way, about the history and culture in the area

Mattie

- We have a beacon of hope along the corridor with JCSU

- We need to build upon and support JCSU

We have been living through this “new normal” with the COVID pandemic for months now. What aspects of your daily life have become more important? i.e. sidewalks & public space, etc. What things have you missed?

Rev. Atkinson

- What has been apparent is the demand for basic necessities of needs in a short distance
- At one point, this corridor had all the amenities that didn't require a car
- Having these amenities close is key!

J'Tanya

- It has further stress tested things that were already stressed
- The gaps and lack that was present before were exposed by COVID-19
- The challenges are deeper and more pronounced

Additional Comments

Thelma

- When I grew up, I enjoyed the pharmacy, ice cream, soda, and sandwich shop
- If these spaces were here right now, they would have a steady stream of customers

Nancy

- I want people who come to this corridor to leave satisfied from their experiences

Mattie

- I see the Historic West End as a destination

Mary

- As a corridor, we need to have a vision for what we want to be known for
- We need to make a destination for people to come and see

Rev. Atkinson

- There should be a smooth transition from Center City to the Historic West End – it needs to be enticing and inviting
- People need to have an emotion connection to Historic West End

Tammy

- There needs to be one corridor, right now it seems divided
- The corridor starts one way then transitions

Mary

- We talk about the corridor as if it stops at Oaklawn Ave. – we need to plan as the complete 8-mile corridor

Tammy

- We have to work on trust building

J'Tanya

- It's a challenge to hear people talking plans then never doing them
- We need to make our own plans

Mattie

- We need to be truthful about what we are saying
- We need to be intentional about what we are going to do and how

Nancy

- If we only looking at 2 blocks over the next 20 years – that doesn't seem right

J'Tanya

- We could benefit from a nodal plan

Rev. Atkison

- We can't have people come into the community and doing another plan
- We have had trust broken with no accountability in the plans to be implemented along the corridor
- Accountability - when will *our* plan and need be received verses what the outside community *thinks* we need

Nancy

- I look forward to the day the city *really* invests in the corridor

J'Tanya

- We have the increasing property values and taxes, yet we have unnecessary blight that should be handled by our tax dollars

Thelma

- We won't simply be happy with a streetcar

Rev. Atkinson

- The city and county are practicing systemic racial bias on our community

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Guiding Principles, Vision and Goals

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Neighborhood Investment

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- We have the increasing property values and taxes, yet we have unnecessary blight that should be handled by our tax dollars
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- We need to make a destination for people to come and see
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