



Focus Group Meeting #2 – Transportation, Environment and Sustainability Advocates
June 24, 2020

SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The second meeting in a series of Focus Group meetings for the Charlotte Center City 2040 Vision Plan convened on June 25th, 2020. Focus Group #2 included various professionals representing transportation, environment and sustainability organizations and initiatives who were invited to learn about the process and brainstorm

new ideas for Center City’s future

The meeting was conducted via Zoom and was facilitated and recorded by MIG.

INTRODUCTION

Following opening remarks from Michael Smith of Center City Partners, Chris Beynon, Principal with MIG, Inc., opened the meeting with a brief project overview. The PowerPoint presentation, projected via Zoom’s screen share functionality, provided an overview of the project, including community engagement activities, main objectives and goals, draft vision framework elements and focus areas, and a synopsis of the impacts and consideration of COVID-19 on plan outcomes. Immediately after the presentation, Chris Beynon facilitated a discussion with the meeting participants. Discussion topics focused in on the draft plan Vision elements, Goals, and emerging strategies but were also wide-ranging and encompassed an array of subjects, concerns, and ideas. Discussions were documented in real-time through a digital graphic summary shared with attendees through Zoom.

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. An image of the graphic notes recorded at the meeting is included at the end of the document.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Vision and Goals

- Sustainability: Our commitment to this vision needs to be stated more explicitly.
 - Include more programs to support sustainability initiatives with actionable items.
 - Clearly identify the nexus between sustainability and transportation, which is paramount.
 - Tie all sustainability measures to specific, measurable goals such as carbon reduction, more parks and trees and mode shift.
- Equity should be tied to workforce development.

- All Focus Areas are not equal. South End has seen a great deal of investment. It is better to divert resources elsewhere.

Potential Strategies and Recommendations

- Parking
 - Parking is over-built. There are over 50,000 parking spots in Uptown. Reduce overall number by reprioritizing.
 - The City's Transit-Oriented Development code has a parking cap and is a good model.
 - The UMUD still has a huge loophole that allows excessive parking.
 - Eliminate tax incentives and subsidies that create parking decks. Prohibit the use of tax-increment financing (TIF) for parking.
 - Encourage employers to stop subsidizing parking.
 - We need a comprehensive survey of all parking that has been built since the last Center City Plan including the current parking decks in the pipeline. This data is needed to inform the CDOT Strategic Mobility Plan.
 - Create adaptive reuse plans for parking garages.
- Mobility and Circulation
 - Redesign streets for people.
 - Build out the Uptown Cycle Link network in the next two years.
 - Shared streets and bike paths create a much cleaner space—not just with cars and CO, but general litter and beautification.
 - Close Tryon to cars. Look at Boulder's Pearl Street as a model.
 - The plan should include a mode-shift goal for Center City that complements the City's goals.
 - Continue to create mobility hubs.
 - Center City is well-positioned to demonstrate the connection between transportation and sustainability.
- Green Building and Energy
 - Create a framework that promote, incentivizes and delivers more sustainable construction and buildings.
 - Incentivize developers to have rooftop solar, energy efficient buildings, & electric vehicle charging, etc.
 - The Strategic Energy Action Plan (SEAP) as a framework for carbon reductions.
 - Connect to the Bloomberg Climate Challenge and ULI TAP and their work on resilient innovation districts.

Recovery and Near-term Projects

- Ensure short-term products can be delivered as well.
- Short-term COVID strategies are needed.
- Are office buildings half empty? What opportunities does that create?
- The 7th Street Market and its businesses will not make it without office workers and the lunch business.
- There will be huge changes in Uptown businesses in the next 6 - 12 months.
- Could closing Tryon Street help if the downtown daytime employment population declines? It could create the opportunity to serve night and weekends crowd.
- Look for stimulus spending for infrastructure and channel it to bike and pedestrian. These projects result in more job creation!

Other

- Put solar panels on top of all free-standing parking decks.
- There is a big project in Belmont, a hub for circular economy and sustainability. Projects like these raise awareness and visibility and host multiple programs.
- Signage is also important to raise awareness. We need visible messages to support biking, recycling and other measures.
- Re-imagine 277! Bury it, cap it, remove it. There was support about this on City Council during the recent TAP/E meeting.
- The North End Smart District project was a successful model. The important outcome was building projects the neighborhood wanted to see, rather than top-down planning. Neighborhood engagement is critical.
- Keep North End from becoming the next South End.

- Focus Area recommendations should include affordable housing. Changing the neighborhood inevitably pushes people out.



ALL IN 2040 CENTER CITY VISION PLAN

TRANSPORTATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

6/24/2020



vision elements

Thriving	Inclusive	Memorable
Resilient	Sustainable	Loved

- FURTHER EXPAND UPON SUSTAINABILITY
→ A LENS FOR DECISION MAKING
- PLANNING SHOULD GO BEYOND TRADITIONAL VISIONING — MORE ACTIONABLE.



WHAT IF: CHARLOTTE BECAME THE NATIONAL HUB FOR GREEN JOBS / SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY
SUSTAINABILITY WILL PROGRESS IF SUS. LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION IS A PRIORITY.

How DOES THIS TRANSLATE?

goals	IN THE SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
1. Reduce GHG emissions	2. Increase walkability	3. Increase green space	4. Increase green jobs
5. Increase transit ridership	6. Increase bike lanes	7. Increase green roofs	8. Increase green buildings

emerging strategies	1. Increase walkability	2. Increase bike lanes	3. Increase green space	4. Increase green jobs
5. Increase transit ridership	6. Increase green roofs	7. Increase green buildings	8. Increase green infrastructure	9. Increase green infrastructure

- DON'T INVEST ANY MORE IN SOUTHEAST
→ Focus on the areas that need it more
- BIG POLICY MOVES:
→ NO NEW PARKING IN CENTER CITY
- SIDE SUBSTITUTING CAR TRANSIT
→ CRASH OUT PROGRAM INCENTIVE FOR BIKE/WALK
- BUIFY / CAP 277
→ THERE'S ELECTED SUPPORT ALREADY
- TREE CANOPY ACTION PLAN

- TRANSITION TO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY
- SUSTAINABILITY IS: HANDS ON
→ GIVING COMMUNITY THE TOOLS TO DO THAT
→ ULTIMATE GOAL: COL REDUCTION
- UPTOWN BIKE NETWORK
→ CDOT'S ALL-AGES BIKE
→ UPTOWN CYCLE LINK
→ 1/2 FUNDED, COULD BUILD OUT IN 1-2 YEARS
- MORE TALKING ON MASSIVE PARKING STRUCTURES
→ IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME...
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS TO BE PART OF EVERY CONVERSATION — BALANCE.
- ADDITIVE REUSE PLANS FOR PARKING GARAGES

GENERAL COMMENTS

- RELEVANT AREA PROJECT NEEDS ATTENTION
- PROJECT SHOULD RESPOND TO CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
• GOAL: REDUCE OVERBUILT PARKING
- INCLUDE COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY THAT FOCUSES ON PARKING
- U-MIND ZONING HAS A LOOP HOLE (NO PARKING MAP)
- UNLIKE TOD
- TIS: SUBSIDY (TAX) FOR BUILDING PARKING DECKS
• IS THIS STILL APPROPRIATE?
• POTENTIAL NEGATIVE EFFECT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- CHARLOTTE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
• TRANSPORTATION • BUILDINGS • ...
• TECH READY, ENERGY EFFICIENT
- ULI COMPENSATION
• RESILIENT INNOVATION DISTRICT
- PLAN MUST ADDRESS COVID
• U-MIND: OFFICE TOWERS BE 50% OCCUPIED IN COMING YEARS
• VISION PLAN SHOULD BE THEED
- CHARLOTTE PURSUING LEED CITIES CERTIFICATION
• CC: MORE DESTINATION FRIENDLY FOR DIFFERENT USERS, DIFFERENT TYPES OF MOBILITY
- GREAT CITIES ARE MIXED USE
• NORTH END SUMMIT DISTRICT (PROJECT ECONOMIC)
• BUILD WHAT COMMUNITIES NEED BY EXTENSIVE COLLABORATION



- MORE SHADED STREETS
→ TIED TO STIMULUS FUNDING?
- PARKED INFRASTRUCTURE GENERATES 40% MORE JOBS THAN VEHICLE INFRA.

emerging focus areas

Cedar Creek	Silver & Blue Line Crossing	Tryon Street in Uptown	Medical School Opportunity	East Trade / Government District	North End	Broad Street	West Trade Corridor	South End Gateway
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