



Focus Group Meeting #4 – Social Service Providers & Advocates
June 25, 2020

Summary

OVERVIEW

The fourth meeting in a series of Focus Group meeting for the Charlotte Center City 2040 Vision Plan was convened on June 25th, 2020. Focus Group #4 invited Service Providers and Advocates to represent their respective fields and industries in Center City.

The meeting was conducted via Zoom and was facilitated and recorded through a collaboration with staff from Center City Partners and 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

- Inclusion and Equity: There is a difference between these two concepts, but they are both important.
- Inclusion means everyone gets opportunity. Who is getting these opportunities most and are they getting them every time or at a rate more so than others?
- Inclusion means accessibility. Sustainability and Resilience: Having enough capital to support these efforts is the issue.
- A strategic grassroots effort is needed now. We have a window of opportunity.

Engagement and Outreach

- Conduct additional outreach so that more and a wider range of voices can be heard and can weigh in.

- Welcome and include voices of immigrants and mixed-status families, which are increasing cohorts in Charlotte.
- “Nothing About Us Without Us!”
- Immigrant families experience many challenges when it comes to maintaining status and keeping up to date with documentation.
- Camino Community Center University Blvd provides essential services for Latino immigrants.

Potential Strategies and Recommendations

- Some communities have poor access to good, healthy food sources, which is detrimental to individuals’ health and neighborhoods as a whole.
- Improve access to healthy food options. Farmers markets and more grocery stores are needed in locations that better serve key areas.
- Quality of food is important! Low-quality options are currently in-place and not beneficial.
 - Rosa Parks Farmers Market is a proof-of-concept that has demonstrated success. Demand for similar
 - markets/events keeps growing.
- Create environments that accommodate people with disabilities better.
 - Romare Beardon Park was allegedly designed in violation of ADA along MLK Jr Blvd.
 - Many CATS bus stops are not accessible.
 - Many Section 8 voucher holders cannot find units that are ADA accessible.
- The current approach of allowing unmitigated use of scooters is not safe. The City should be enforcing or regulation safe travel.
- More affordable housing is paramount and must be part of the plan. Many communities are becoming increasingly exclusive.
- The Silver Line is an exciting project but there is concern that the planned alignment is very close to where homeless are now (8th and 12th Sts). Concerns of displacement and having them “pushed up” due to redevelopment.
- There is no instant remedy to cure homelessness, but it should be gradually addressed and always be part of the conversation.
- Bring energy and vibrancy to Uptown. It currently feels like a ghost town and should have more activity.
- Historic corridor, landmarks, small businesses, and business support district(s) are important and needed in Uptown.
- There is excitement around the potential Blue/Silver Line hub.
- Many people have been left jobless by COVID-19 and unable to afford previous affordability levels, which can potentially lead to impacts for years to come.

Community Investment

- Find ways to invest capital in a way that is objective based and truly accomplished situations.
- Funds are often restricted in their use which makes it difficult to address the most urgent needs.



ALL IN 2040 CENTER CITY VISION PLAN

DESIGN & REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS



vision elements

Thriving	Inclusive	Memorable
Resilient	Sustainable	Loved

VISIONARY

- + **HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE DIVERSE AREAS**
 - 5 POINTS OF DIVERSE PLACE VALUES 5 POINTS
- + **POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR FOCUS AREAS**
 - CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO COOPERATE / LEVERAGE

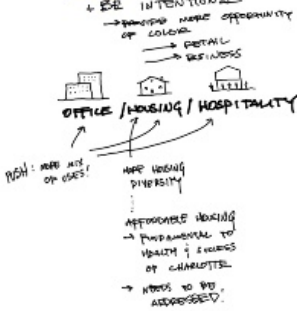
goals

1. Increase the amount of walkable space	2. Increase the amount of green space	3. Increase the amount of affordable housing	4. Increase the amount of public space
5. Increase the amount of public space	6. Increase the amount of public space	7. Increase the amount of public space	8. Increase the amount of public space

emerging strategies

1. Increase the amount of walkable space	2. Increase the amount of green space	3. Increase the amount of affordable housing	4. Increase the amount of public space
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INCLUSIVITY: FRONT & CENTER



+ FOCUS AREAS

- HOW WE MEASURE HOW SUCCESSFUL THE PROGRAMS FEEL ARE?
- QUANTIFIABLE METRICS

HOW DO WE PLAN FOR THE RETURN POST COVID-19?

- + **SUCCESS**: HOW WELL COMMUNITIES WILL INTERACT
 - MEASURED SUCCESS WILL BE ON A DIFFERENT METRIC
- + **UNCERTAINTY**
 - ADAPTING TO WITH / EDUCATION
 - POSSIBLE SHIFT IN OFFICE WORKS TREND
 - "9-5" COLLAPSE
 - POTENTIAL FOR MORE HOUSING UPGRADE
- + **PERMITS TO ENHANCE TO NORMAL**
 - INCREASE MORE DISTANCE TO WORK, RESTAURANTS, SOCIAL LIFE
- + **MOBILITY**
 - BUILD UPON EXISTING WORK (BUS & RAIL LINE) & ADVANCE THEM!



- + FIND APPROPRIATE BALANCE
- + SET GOALS HAPPEN IN COLLECTIVE EMPLOYMENT
- + PARTNER DEVELOPERS w/ SINGLE PARTNER
- + TOP OF DISCUSSION: HOW AFF. HOUSING IS APPROACHED

MORE INTENTIONAL!

[→ CULTURAL APPRECIATION]

[→ CULTURAL ACTIVITIES]

PUSH THESE FORWARD!

NEW YORK, DC, CHARLOTTE!

emerging focus areas

Cooper Yards	Silver & Hart Line Crossing	Town Street in Uptown	Medical School Opportunity	Rail Yards / Government District	Nor In End	Beard Street	West Trade Corridor	South End Gateway
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