



Focus Group Meeting #6 – Hospitality, Culture and Entertainment Professionals

July 9, 2020

Summary

OVERVIEW

The sixth meeting in a series of Focus Group meetings for the Charlotte Center City 2040 Vision Plan was convened on July 9th, 2020. Focus Group #6 heard from representatives in Hospitality, Culture and Entertainment in Uptown Charlotte.

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

INTRODUCTION

Following opening remarks from Michael Smith of Center City Partners, Mark de la Torre, Project Manager of MIG, 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 work performed so far, 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, Mark de la Torre facilitated a discussion with the meeting participants. Discussion topics focused in on the Vision, Goal, and Strategy words of the draft vision framework but were also wide-ranging and encompassed an array of subjects, concerns, and ideas. Discussions were documented in real-time through a digital wall graphic projected to 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 Elements

- Loved is a good vision element.
- For some, Charlotte does not feel like home and there are very little emotional ties. Seek ways to create more pride and meaningful moments and impressions and build a sense of community.
- Thriving: Historically, Uptown has not been “thriving.” This has changed over time with additional destinations and visitors but there are other challenges.
- Uptown must be safe, active, easy to use, attractive to visitors and residents and make everyone want to go to Charlotte.

Goals

- Create more walkable and vibrant streetscape environments throughout Uptown.
- Enhance existing sidewalks but *do not close streets to traffic*. We have invested heavily in Uptown infrastructure and closing streets not sustainable.
- There should be less focus on physical infrastructure and more on activity and vibrancy.
- Cultivate a unique and memorable Charlotte experience with the Center City as a destination for dining, events, and entertainment.
- One out of nine jobs in the city is in the tourism/event industry.
- Enhance connectivity through transportation and other means to increase access to Uptown from the rest of the City.
- Unlock the potential of new areas of the Uptown to create additional nodes of vibrancy.
- Support businesses through COVID-19. Help them recover and seek opportunities to build upon pre-pandemic energy by finding ways to create more activity and entertainment options.
- Restore consumer confidence by maintaining heightened standards of cleanliness across the City and use outside certification through partnerships with sanitation experts.
- Consider how to pivot post-pandemic to set the Center City apart.
- Create more diversity in things to do through complementary options in music, entertainment, and dining.

Strategic Enhancements

- Brevard Street
 - Its proximity to the Convention Center and Spectrum Center offers a lot of opportunity for new projects and entertainment options. Improvements should include:
 - Enhancing walkability
 - Creating a “canopy” to cover the street
 - Recruiting food trucks and dining options
 - Increasing connectivity between Stonewall and the Spectrum Center
 - Adding live music and entertainment
- Cedar Yards
 - Stadium neighborhood can become a new focal point and gateway based on future multimodal transit station and planned Silver Line.
- The Epicenter - Rethink it! There is potential for an update and/or infill development.
- Convention Center
 - Activate the streetscape.
 - Whole Foods is a major asset for recruiting events to the Convention Center and adds vibrancy to area.
- Tryon Street
 - North Side of Tryon could use more activation through retail, entertainment, live music, and installation of pop-up spaces for artists, such as shipping containers. Cater to the creative community.
 - Tryon and 7th Street parking lot is opportunity for live music, outdoor events, and food trucks.
- Enhance streetscaping and walkability throughout Uptown, including:
 - wider sidewalks width and more street trees and/or canopy
 - iconic, well-designed hardscaping
 - integrated smart city technology
 - more gathering places in the public realm -- parks as well as hardscaped features, and
 - restaurants pilling out onto streets to create active frontages and vibrancy.
- Increase connectivity and transportation options to and from and within the Uptown.

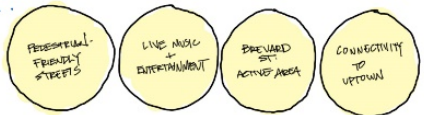
- Improve the bus station and potentially underground it. Make the area more inviting and safer to benefit Spectrum Center and Epicenter.
- Explore establishing a shuttle system to bring more visitors into the Uptown from surrounding areas.
- Links to the South End, the Whitewater Center, and other places of interest.
- Promote a mix of entertainment options including arts, cultural, events, live music, competitive sports and creative exhibitions.
 - Live music is very important for Uptown entertainment but there is a current gap.
 - People living Uptown have contributed to its overall vibrancy, and additional residential development will help.
 - Create the right mixture of dining, entertainment and activity that is accessible, unique, and memorable so people keep coming back.
- Enhance the variety of restaurants. The current culinary landscape is dominated by large, expensive establishments. Support a range of dining options by finding ways to boost smaller restaurants. Make Charlotte a culinary success story!

Other

- Tryon Street will continue to be the business center of Uptown Charlotte. It would benefit from enhancements to pedestrian accessibility.
- Address gaps in events programming caused by the pandemic.

ALL IN 2040 CENTER CITY VISION PLAN

HOSPITALITY, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT



vision elements

Thriving	Inclusive	Memorable
Resilient	Sustainable	Loveable

GENUINE EXPERIENCE
WHAT CAN WE DO TO FOSTER THIS?
↳ BREVARD ST TO CORNER OFF TO PERFORM

- + **PERSE** - creates more openings for people to connect to each other
- + **HELP** - activate the idea of Charlotte being "home" + welcoming
- + **THINKING** - how do we keep up the energy? → ADDRESS SOME PROBLEMS → bring people from outside uptown in from adjacent neighborhoods → easy / ATTRACTIVE to use

goals

1. Access to mobility	2. Support diverse transportation	3. Public space connectivity	4. Transit to and from uptown
5. Open space opportunities	6. Economic vitality	7. Cultural, arts and entertainment	8. Quality of life

emerging strategies

Develop mobility programs	Partner with private and public transportation	Develop diverse transportation and resources	Improve outdoor recreation
Expand public space and programming	Partner with local businesses and organizations	Support the arts and cultural development	Partner with local organizations and businesses

COVID-19 RECOVERY
NEAR + LONG TERM RESPONSE

- **TRION PARKING LOT** - FOOD TRUCKS + LIVE MUSIC → **ACTIVATE** - NEEDS TO HAVE USER FRIENDLY ACTIVATION
- **SOMETHING ICONIC NEEDED** → **OPPORTUNITY!**
- **CREATE THE UPTOWN AS SAFE + CONVENIENT**
- **NETWORKING EVENTS**: HOW DOES CHARLOTTE ADAPT? SHOW RESILIENCE



+ **CONNECTIVITY TO UPTOWN**

- **REMOVE BARRIERS TO ACCESS?** → ENJOY THE UPTOWN PROGRAM OUTSIDE NEIGHBORHOODS
- **TRANSIT / BIKES**
- **NORTH OF TRION**

- **PARENT SPOT** - outdoor dining

- + **TECHNOLOGICAL APPROACH** → "SMART STREETS" - LIGHTING, INFORMATICS

+ **QUALITY OF PEDESTRIAN ENV.**

- **ANTICIPATED DEMAND**
- **MIX OF OPTIONS**



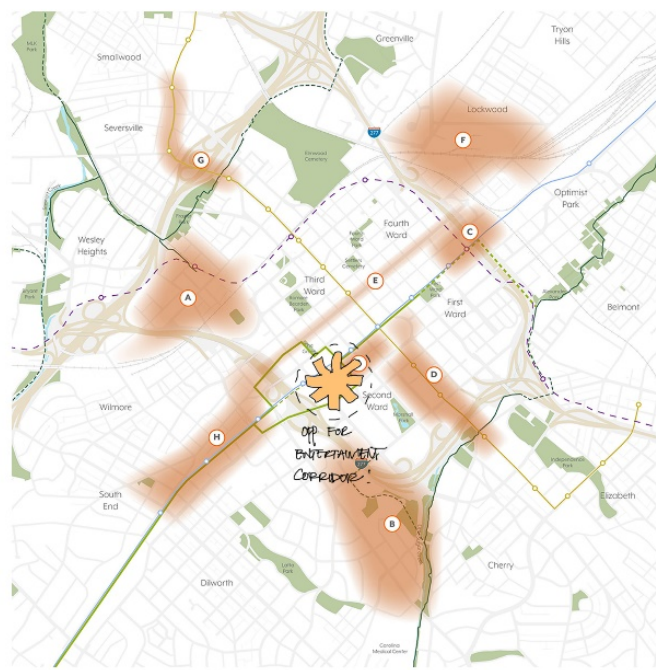
- + **EXTEND ENERGY OF CONV CENTER TO STREET**

WHAT IS UNIQUELY CHARLOTTE?

- **NOT JUST ONE THING** → **CULINARY SUCCESS STORY**

emerging focus areas

Color Walls	Silver & Blue Line Crossing	Trion Street in Uptown	Medical School Opportunity	East Trade / Government District	North End	Brevard Street	West Trade Corridor	South End Gateway
-------------	-----------------------------	------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------	----------------	---------------------	-------------------



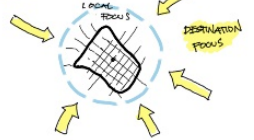
↑ **WALK THIS OUTDOORS** - HAVE NEED FOR OPEN SPACE DUE TO COVID!

ICONIC PLACES IS THERE A NEED?

- **WALKWAY IS PRIORITY** - OTHER CITIES: WALK (SHOP / COFFEE) EXPERIENCE

- + **FAMILY-ORIENTED SPACES / SERVICES**
- + **CONVIVIAL: MEETING MORE LOCALS** - BLM

DIVERSE!



- + **THINK FOR PEDESTRIANS**: IMPROVE AL THING EXISTING - IMPROVEMENT / DEVELOPMENT

- + **COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES**: → **STREETS (WALKS!)**

- **BEST RESTAURANTS** - "SHOW THEM WE'RE SAFE + ACTIVE"

- VISITORS**: - MIXED USE? - LOCALS + OUTSIDE VISITORS - **EX: WHOLE FOODS**

- + **LIVE ENTERTAINMENT**: → **CONTRIBUTES TO SUCCESS OF PLACE** → **GOOD FOR LOCALS / VISITORS** → **LIVE MUSIC: CURRENTLY A GAP!**

+ **BREVARD ST**

- **DESIGNING IT TO ACCOMMODATE RETAIL / ENTERTAINMENT**

- **CREATE A CANOPY IN LOWER PART OF CORRIDOR**

OVERALL: RETHINK PEDESTRIAN STRATEGY!