



## Steering Committee Meeting #1

7 August 2019

# Meeting Summary

### OVERVIEW

The first Steering Committee for the Charlotte Center City 2040 Vision Plan convened on August 7, 2019. The Committee is an advisory group composed of a diverse group of distinguished leaders in Charlotte’s public, private, and nonprofit sectors who are tasked with providing direction on the planning process and reviewing draft deliverables at key milestones. The Steering Committee is chaired by Jennifer Appleby, President and Chief Creative Officer of Wray Ward, and Clay Armbrister, President of Johnson C. Smith University. The purpose of this first meeting was to articulate the “big ideas,” opportunities, and principles that will form the foundation of the Plan’s Vision Framework.

Michael Smith, President of Charlotte Center City Partners (CCCP), welcomed participants and defined the charge of the Steering Committee. He introduced and thanked Dr. Tony Marciano of the Community Matters Café, which hosted the meeting. Community Matters Café is a new, full-service café and program of the Rescue Mission, helping program participants build life and professional skills. Next, Steering Committee members introduced themselves, followed by remarks from Taiwo Jaiyeoba, the City of Charlotte’s Planning Director and Assistant City Manager. Taiwo discussed the history of planning in Charlotte and how regional collaboration has resulted in several successful and transformative projects. Next, Jennifer Appleby introduced and explained the meaning behind the planning effort ‘ALL IN 2040’ brand. Clay Armbrister then addressed the importance of furthering equity and opportunity as an outcome of the Vision Plan.

### SETTING THE STAGE

Chris Beynon, Principal of MIG, Inc. and leader of the consultant team, conducted a brief presentation that summarized Center City’s planning legacy, current development context, and emerging trends that are reshaping and redefining the dynamics of urban living across the globe. The presentation was followed by a group discussion in which Steering Committee members highlighted Center City’s assets, challenges, and opportunities that should be leveraged or addressed in 2040 Vision Plan. The group also brainstormed big ideas that could transform Center City for the next generation. The meeting then closed with a summary of the group discussion and outline of next steps.

This document summarizes the information and ideas covered in the meeting, organized by topic. MIG will use the feedback collected during this session to inform the development of a Vision Framework and to guide Plan development. An image of the graphic notes recorded at the meeting is included at the end of the document.

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY

### Themes & Aspirations

- Charlotte is a **city for everyone**.
- Center City will be **intentionally inclusive and diverse**.
- We need to **“Tell the Story of Charlotte”** and understand our history.
- A **fully linked and coordinated, safe mobility network** is critical to growth.
- Center City and its distinct neighborhoods will be **connected and accessible**.
- **Economic mobility** will be a key driver of the ALL IN 2040 Plan.

### Assets

- There is a sense of optimism, momentum and new energy in Center City.
- Center City has a strong arts and cultural base on which to build.
- Charlotte is a destination for many tourists, with sports and convention centers, a vibrant urban core and an accessible airport.
- Center City is a dynamic tourist destination that offers visitors an “urban core” experience, sports events, and recreational amenities.
- The expanding light rail system will continue to improve access to new destinations.
- A growing network of greenways and micro-mobility options are supporting a growing mobility network.
- Cooperation and collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors are a major asset.
- Charlotte and Center City are open, welcoming and friendly to newcomers.

### Challenges

- Center City’s “new urban form” lacks history and does not feel organic. There is a lack of interest in preservation.
- Ground-floor architecture and the public realm (e.g., sidewalks) are neither welcoming nor visible, which creates a poor retail environment. The retail landscape downtown has a “long way to go.”
- Physical connectivity is lacking – the built environment is big and spread out, making it hard for many to feel connected to Uptown.
- Signage and wayfinding are lacking, making it hard for people to navigate the area.
- There are many vacant and underutilized sites that create “gaps in the urban fabric.”
- Uptown is most active during daytime working hours and needs more activities for residents and pedestrian activity around the clock.
- The City and County have different visions and processes than the State government.

## Opportunities

- Increase social capital to help close the gap in economic mobility and opportunity.
- New development at West End needs to prioritize equity and inclusivity and bring new assets to the area.
- Increase access to fresh foods to create healthy neighborhoods.
- Ensure that accessibility for all ages and abilities remains a priority in planning and design.
- Prioritize a high-quality interface between buildings and the public realm, especially on the ground floor.
- Accommodate business spillover into the streets.
- Pursue new development on vacant and underutilized land to help fill in the gaps in the built environment.
- Cultivate “organic” experiences that reflect the area’s history.
- Integrate technology with history to enhance the user experience.
- Create more public spaces to facilitate community building.
- Pursue policies and programs that allow people to age in place.
- Destigmatize and activate the use of public buses. Make buses sexy!
- Consider innovative housing options to increase affordability, such as adult dormitories.
- Pursue signature development at the intersection of Trade and Tryon Streets, which can become a major destination given its historical significance.
- Create a feature asset west of Uptown, such as a 70-80-acre central park, and leverage the streetcar to transport people there.
- Improve and consider integrating K-12 and higher education systems.
- Create a High School in Second Ward.
- Provide commuter amenities for bikers that makes it easier and more appealing to cycle in hot weather.
- Create unique and local retail environments.
- Over-invest in under-invested communities.
- Bring more higher education and employment opportunities to City Center, including a design school and medical school / teaching hospital / research institution.
- Devise solutions to homelessness.
- Bring telemedicine options to neighborhoods.
- Expand access to technology and provide free Wi-Fi services.
- Address and remedy the barrier to Uptown by capping or reshaping 1-277.

