

Mecklenburg Livable Communities

Inviting Destination Think Tank: Meeting 1

Represented Partners & Their Current Initiatives Report-Outs

Keep Charlotte Beautiful:

- Great American Clean Up
- Adopt-a-Street
- Beautification grant – given to groups such as churches or communities who are interested in beautifying their community

Town of Davidson: Public arts program – just finished third project. Davidson College, Downtown Davidson has grown organically and is historic.

Cardinal Innovations: specifically think about reduction and stigma of homelessness and mental health. Refugees that live in this area – how can we make it more inviting for refugees.

Leadership Charlotte: Two-year program – 1st year is for education: tuition partners and corporate partners that put people through the program. Has an Education Day, Healthcare Day, Justice Day, Arts and Culture (9-10 program days). 2nd year – you help instruct the next class that comes in. Strategic visioning process – has good programing, but not the best job at continuing conversation with alumni. Intentional about program to bring them back to leadership charlotte. Emphasis on further bond with tuition partner. Want to make sure that the program is always doing something new. Encounter program: for current residents and new residents – crash course to see how the city operates i.e. History, civil workings of how the city works.

Arts and Science Council: managing public arts program, expanding scope of program, creating opportunity for public art to live and come into being. Education programs that connect providers with school children. Grants and services are designed to fund, support, and incubate arts and cultural programs. Be the advocate for arts creating and inviting destination. Funding for school children related to arts.

City of Charlotte Neighborhood and business services:

- Help neighborhoods create their own to-do list. “How do we empower the city to be responsible for their destiny?”
- Neighborhood matching grant program – give out to neighborhood associations. This grant is for a neighborhood with a great idea i.e. public art, bike racks, skills building opportunity.
- Neighborhood leadership award – celebrate efforts that are already underway in hopes to have them continue what they are doing and inspire others.
- Neighborhood Board Retreat – help neighborhood to decide what their priorities are and come up with their work plans. Connect partners with neighborhoods, depending on what they want to do.

- Trees Charlotte – Free tree planting opportunities to preserve current canopy and expand canopy.

Levine Museum of the new south:

- Exhibits to connect residents, current and new. Orientation tours in the community. Museum educators speaking on and off site. Program series – focus on Charlotte history and facilitate conversation with the community to help them connect with each other. Have exhibit space, interested in collaborating with partners to be able to use that space for an exhibit.
- “NUEVolution” – Latinos of the new south. Documenting, interviewing, to tell the story of the rapid demographic change of the south, and how the Latinos are shaping the south and how the south is shaping the Latino community. Facilitated dialogue to talk about changes, experiences, etc.

CCOG:

- Regional grade mobility plan – a plan on how to move goods between destinations. Deals with economic development as well as traffic congestion. An inviting destination includes a destination with minimum traffic.
- Volunteer transportation service: for disabled, veterans, and seniors (+50) – point to point transportation service with no fare. Help people who are not eligible for the transit systems, either because of where they are located or other reasons.
- Residents and businesses like to see collaborative governance – provide a space for city/county managers, and mayors to convene and collaborate. Connect our future project – tools for governments to create innovative destinations

Center city partners:

- Focused on area between interstate and Uptown, historic south and west end.
- Housing first initiative – seek to house the chronically homeless in the community. Working to recruit retail in uptown.
- Upgrading signage in uptown.
- Public art – have art in different places, by people others would not expect. Art space 525 – property owners with vacant office space to allow artists to use that space to create/display art for the tenants for that building.
- Enliven streets by performances, and make sure that streets are clean i.e. Driveway usage.

Town of Huntersville: local welcome wagons – initiative connected to local realtor. Gathers literature in town hall and gives it to newcomers. North Mecklenburg Collaboration – Cornelius, Huntersville, Davidson.

Gaps & Root Causes Discussion

What gaps exist?

- Limited public access – specific to lake Norman
- Lack of comprehensive mass transit system
- Street names

- Identification of neighborhoods as you drive through
- Demographic segregation among neighborhoods – lack of interaction within communities
- Lack of reverence for history within the community – if people don't get plugged into the history of a location, it's hard to become rooted in that area
- Welcome wagon/packet informing visitors/newcomers about services available in an area
- Organizations are interested in “big fish” that draw in large businesses
- Lack of promotion of how inviting and welcoming our region is

Why do these gaps exist?

- Understanding of what our communities are living in – understanding diversity and socioeconomic differences – understanding our neighbors and neighborhoods
- Things coming together in a very top-down way – there are small groups of people with high levels of privilege that are making decisions that impact the community
 - With new voices and new perspectives, it makes resources and ideas more muddled, therefore needs organization
- Transplants' influence isn't being heard
- Charlotte is always trying to be something else – people are coming from somewhere else and think Charlotte should operate like the place they come from. They get upset when Charlotte doesn't. Charlotte needs a voice
- Overlooking a large possible collaboration with realtor groups – they are not “selling the city” – selling community not the city/total package
 - They are the people that draw others in
- Lack of interest – some people are not interested in the broader community
 - Not enough volunteers and not enough training for people who are interested in being an active part of their community
 - There is a difference between people who are volunteering in their business capacity and people who are volunteering after hours
- Lack of focus on comprehensive long term planning – they are only focused on the short-term – this issue could be developer influenced
- Lack of promotion of opportunities, programs, resources that exist
 - People know within their own industries what is available but not in a wider context, and people don't know what they don't know

Ideas for New Collaborative Initiatives

Initiative: “Ask Your Realtor Today...Do You know Charlotte-Mecklenburg?”

Initiative: “Bring History to the Community”

Initiative: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Welcome Wagon(s)

Initiative: Close N.Tryon to Vehicle Traffic

Initiative: Temporary History Installations: Pop-up Performances, Movable or Temporary Art, etc.

Initiative: Effort to Identify Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Connectors/Gatekeepers to Create a More Intentional, Welcoming Experience for Newcomers (i.e. Realtors, Apartment Managers, Schools, Park and Rec, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Libraries, Workplaces, Healthcare Providers)

Initiative: Effort to Centralize Information on Volunteer/Engagement Opportunities to Increase Awareness About How Citizens Can Get More Involved/Connected in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Ideas for Expanding Current Initiatives

Current Initiative: Wildlife Habitat Development

Current Initiative Owner: Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation

Collaboration Opportunity: Partnership with Duke Energy to Place Pollinator Habitats at Park & Rec Facilities

Current Initiative: Grants for Addressing Food Deserts

Current Initiative Owner:

Collaboration Opportunity: Leverage Resources and Expand Impact with Partnership Between Green Teacher Network, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council, and Keep Charlotte Beautiful

Current Initiative: Energy Efficiency Education

Current Initiative Owner: Duke Energy

Collaboration Opportunity: Partnership with Ada Jenkins to Extend Education to Low-Income Populations

Current Initiative: North Carolina Solar Ordinance Template

Current Initiative Owner: North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association

Collaboration Opportunity:

Current Initiative: Neighborhood Beautification Projects

Current Initiative Owner: Keep Charlotte Beautiful & Keep Mecklenburg Beautiful

Collaboration Opportunity: Leverage Resources and Expand Impact through Partnership with City of Charlotte Water Quality, Catawba Lands Conservancy, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, Catawba Riverkeepers Foundation, and Carolina Raptor Center

Current Initiative: Complete Blocks Program

Current Initiative Owner: City of Charlotte

Collaboration Opportunity: Partnership with Catawba Riverkeepers Foundation, UNC Charlotte, and Sustain Charlotte

Current Initiative: Keeping Watch on Water

Current Initiative Owner: Catawba Riverkeepers Foundation & UNC Charlotte

Collaboration Opportunity: Partnership with Sustain Charlotte

Current Initiative: Gardens at Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

Current Initiative Owner: Green Teacher Network & Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

Collaboration Opportunity: Partnership with Sustain Charlotte and Catawba Riverkeepers Foundation

Current Initiative: Raptor Habitat Development

Current Initiative Owner: Carolina Raptor Center

Collaboration Opportunity: Partnership with Keep Charlotte Beautiful to Develop Raptor Habitats