



CHARLOTTE™

2015 NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT



Optimist Park Community Association

Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at CPCC Main Campus

The agenda for the day was as follows:

- Introductions
- Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?: Arrow Activity
- Where We Want to Be: Vision Statement Exercise
- Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Developing Strategic Priorities
- Working Lunch – The Year Ahead
- Idea Development – Time for participants for develop an action plan for goal achievement.

Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been?

We began our day with paired interviews, using the “Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been?” activity. The activity was intended to help us reflect on:

- What we value
- What are the best things about our community and the people who live here
- What are our past successes
- Where are the potentials and possibilities

After interviewing our partners we shared our discussion with the group, finding commonalities in our conversation

Where We Were: Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	Where We Are: Why would or wouldn't a person/business want to move into our community?	Where We Want to Be: If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?
<p style="text-align: center;">BEST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Access to affordable housing -When Jimmy Carter came to Optimist Park to help build houses -When the drug dealer we removed <p style="text-align: center;">WORST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -When the library closed -Drug Problems -The club house and criminal activity that surrounded it -Had the store that sold alcohol -Challenges that come with homeownership -Traffic and people running stop sign 	<p style="text-align: center;">WHY WOULD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It's a peaceful community -It has good access to public transit into downtown and night life -It has a great view of the City of Charlotte - There are good opportunities for business growth <p style="text-align: center;">WHY NOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There are no stores or amenities There is low income and unemployment -It is a predominately black neighborhood -There are a lack of single family houses -There are too many rentals -New neighborhood condos are too expensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More participation from neighbors in the Optimist Park Community Association – and an association that works Build a community center Correct the sign at Parkwood and Davidson Streets to reflect the Optimist Park neighborhood

Our Vision

Our vision is the unifying statement for our community that will guide our decision making and reminds us of what we are trying to reach. It is based on our shared values and preferences for our community's future. It combines the best of what was, what is, and what could be.

OUR VISION:

Optimist Park: Planting positive and productive seeds for growth.

Strategic Priorities

After committing to a shared vision, the board began to brainstorm on strategic priorities. This is where we began to define what is most important to us in order to achieve our vision. Strategic priorities are initiatives that will help us move closer to our vision of our community. The idea is to focus on a few things and do them very well as opposed to many things and missing the mark.

We started out thinking big and then narrowed down our focus using the Affinity Mapping Process, detailed below:

- Grab some sticky notes from the table. Keeping the vision statement in mind, write down as many of the following as you can think of, one per sticky note:
 - Current action items getting you closer to our vision.
 - Possible priorities/actions items to get us closer to our vision.
- Place the sticky notes on the wall.
- Organize the ideas by natural categories, once everyone agrees on the groups, give each one a name.



This activity led us to the following categories and action items being identified as important within our community:

Communications

- Help get more people to come to meetings
- Get more people to speak out at meetings
- Connecting with the community
- Tell/Inform more neighbors about things
- Going on in the community

Recognition for Optimist Park

- Demonstrating the community matters
- Get ID signs for Optimist Park
- Work to change the name at N. Davidson & Parkwood Ave

Each participant was provided three (3) stickers to be used for voting. Stickers could be placed all on one or two items or shared amongst all of the ideas identified. The three categories receiving the most votes are the strategic priorities that are most important for us to begin working on to achieve our vision, these are:



Action Items for 2014-2015

The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2014-2015 are:



2015 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Optimist Park Community Association

OUR VISION:

Optimist Park: Planting positive and productive seeds for future growth.

TO HELP US REACH OUR VISION; WE WILL FOCUS ON THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

1
Communications

2
Neighborhood
Recognition

IN 2014-2015, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:

Growth of the
neighborhood
newsletter

Get a neighborhood
sign for Optimist Park

Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
Project #1 Growth of the neighborhood newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider an online newsletter rather than printed 	<p style="text-align: center;">Mail Chimp: Free online newsletter creator: www.mailchimp.com</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tips on writing a neighborhood newsletter 	<p style="text-align: center;">Neighborhood Newsletter Guidelines: http://archive.ci.falcon-heights.mn.us/nlhandbook/com_tips.html</p> <p style="text-align: center;">More newsletter tips http://www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/planning/neighbor/creatingnewsletter.pdf</p>
Project # 2 Get a neighborhood sign for Optimist Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try hosting a fundraiser 	<p style="text-align: center;">Neighborhood fundraiser ideas: http://www.useful-community-development.org/how-to-fundraise.html</p> <p style="text-align: center;">More fundraising ideas: http://www.ehow.com/way_5208916_fundraising-ideas-neighborhood-association.html</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for a Neighborhood Matching Grant 	<p style="text-align: center;">Neighborhood Matching Grants http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx?NotFoundURL=http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communitycommerce/Pages/NMG.aspx&Referrer=</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact: Atalie Zimmerman, 704-336-4594, azimmerman@charlottenc.gov</p>
<p>Parking Lot:</p> <p>Previous Optimist Park Neighborhood Association Grants: Contact Atalie Zimmerman Atalie Zimmerman, 704-336-4594, azimmerman@charlottenc.gov</p> <p>Questions About Quality of Life Study: Contact Rebecca Hefner Rebecca Hefner, 704-336-2237, rhefner@charlottenc.gov</p>		

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