



**CHARLOTTE™**

# **2015 NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT**



**South End Neighborhood Association**

Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at UNC Charlotte Center City

# South End Neighborhood Association

## 2015 Board Retreat

### Background

On Saturday, July 18, 2015, the board members of the South End Neighborhood Association participated in a board retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at UNC Charlotte Center City. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Jen McCartney
- Sara Zaverl
- Krissy Oechslin
- Sherri Thompson

The City of Charlotte values citizen leadership and its ability to make an impact in the communities, in which we all live, work, play and shop. With this in mind, the board retreat process was initiated to help neighborhood based organizations develop strategic plans to improve quality of life in their communities.



### Purpose

The purpose of the board retreat was to

- Generate meaningful conversations around improving quality of life in our community
- Set clear goals and priorities for the upcoming year(s)
- Develop a vision and strategic priorities for our community

By participating in the retreat, our board earned a \$1,500 Neighborhood Matching Grant credit to help execute one of the projects we identified.

### Process

Our board retreat was conducted by trained facilitators tasked to keep our conversations on-task, productive, and focused on achievable objectives. The process was designed to help capture the best of the past, the best of the present, and how we can add to our strengths to build a better future. The focus was:

- Developing a vision to guide our decision making and activities
- Developing strategic priorities that aligned with our vision
- Developing project ideas

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 conversations.

<b>Where We Were:</b> Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	<b>Where We Are:</b> Why would or wouldn't a person/business want to move into our community?	<b>Where We Want to Be:</b> If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?
<p><b>Best Moments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active involvement</li> <li>• Many small improvements (safety, beauty)</li> <li>• Leagues (e.g. Charlotte Art League)</li> <li>• Publix</li> <li>• Design Area</li> <li>• Artsy feel</li> <li>• Food Truck area</li> </ul> <p><b>Worst Moments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall off in engagement</li> <li>• Lack of respect by developers</li> <li>• Design of apartments is too bland/ cookie-cutter</li> <li>• No public parking garage yet/ lack of free parking</li> <li>• Unsafe crossings on Rail Trail (biking/pedestrian/auto conflicts)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Would</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population growth</li> <li>• Convenient location/ proximity to Uptown</li> <li>• Blue Line</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• More affordable than Uptown</li> <li>• Urban density—appeals to Millennials</li> </ul> <p><b>Would Not</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited commercial space available</li> <li>• Limited parking</li> <li>• East-West transportation does not exist via rail and lack of education on how to navigate buses</li> <li>• Light Rail not convenient unless you already reside in South End (parking concerns)</li> <li>• Party mentality; may be supported by multifamily building management (activities, etc.)</li> <li>• Limited housing options (styles/ prices)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Maintenance of personality/ character of neighborhood</li> <li>• Use Camden as pedestrian-friendly Main Street area</li> <li>• Add more art to break up the concrete</li> </ul>

## 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:

**South End Neighborhood Association engages the community and promotes the vibrant and unique character of the neighborhood**

## 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:

Development	Pedestrian walkability	Environment	Neighborhood Board Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meet developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Educate residents on walkability and interplay among bikers and runners</li> <li>○ Sidewalk expansion</li> <li>○ CATS/ CDOT interplay for pedestrian safety</li> <li>○ Public parking garage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Garden areas/ green spaces</li> <li>○ Parklet</li> <li>○ Community garden</li> <li>○ More public art</li> <li>○ Get the neighborhood park up and running</li> <li>○ Promote healthier lifestyle</li> <li>○ Community service/ arts projects</li> <li>○ Rail Trail improvements/ "moments"</li> <li>○ Adopt-A-Street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Holiday events</li> <li>○ SENA t-shirts or pint glasses (awareness/ fundraising)</li> <li>○ Bi-monthly meetings</li> <li>○ Social communication with residents</li> <li>○ Add active members to the association</li> </ul>

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:

1

Support neighborhood association development

2

Improve the pedestrian and biking experience

3

Enhance the environment of South End

**Action Items for 2015-2016**

The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2015-2016 are:

Increase regular, active members in the association by at least 10 within the next year

Add 1 B-cycle location in South End within the next year and explore augmenting its setup

Host two community days in the next year to potentially include: arts, cleanup, National Night Out

**South End Neighborhood Association**

**OUR VISION:**

South End Neighborhood Association engages the community and promotes the vibrant and unique character of the neighborhood

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

1

Support neighborhood association development

2

Improve the pedestrian and biking experience

3

Enhance the environment of South End

**IN 2015-2016, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:**

Increase regular, active members in the association by at least 10 within the next year

Add 1 B-cycle location in South End within the next year and explore augmenting its setup

Host two community days in the next year to potentially include: arts, cleanup, National Night Out

## Resources/ Tools for Success:

### Support neighborhood association development

- Regular communication and follow-up
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Web
  - NextDoor
- Regular events (e.g. National Night Out)
- Apartment Complexes and Developers (to support SENA)
- National Night Out
- Utilization plan for neighbors who want to help

### Improve the Pedestrian and Biking Experience

- B-cycle
- City/ County (Rail Trail)
- NMG (for augmentation)
- Commercial partner(s) for land
- Swings in Plaza Midwood (ideas for augmentation)

### Enhance the Environment of South End

- Tool Bank
- Charlotte Art League
- ASC
- Local galleries
- Center City Partners (microgrants)
- NMG
- KCB
- Business or non-profit partner to host or be starting point

Parking Lot Items for follow-up:	
John Howard: research what it may take to make South End a true historic district (building standards/building preservation)	John Howard <a href="mailto:jghoward@charlottenc.gov">jghoward@charlottenc.gov</a> 704-336-5994 <a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/planning/HistoricDistricts/Pages/home.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/planning/HistoricDistricts/Pages/home.aspx</a>
Need to research a transition plan for the neighborhood: how will we move the Association to the next level?	BoardSource <a href="https://boardsource.org/eweb/">https://boardsource.org/eweb/</a>

## Resources to Get Started

<p>Project 1:</p> <p>Increase regular, active members in the association by at least 10 within the next year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find fun ways to engage residents and recruit board members</li> <li>• Giveaways for new participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recruiting potential board members:</b> <a href="http://www.hoaleader.com/public/351.cfm">http://www.hoaleader.com/public/351.cfm</a></li> <li>• <b>Increase neighborhood participation:</b> <a href="http://atlantahoamanagement.wordpress.com/2011/09/27/how-to-increase-attendance-or-participation-inhomeowner-committees/">http://atlantahoamanagement.wordpress.com/2011/09/27/how-to-increase-attendance-or-participation-inhomeowner-committees/</a></li> <li>• <b>Four Rules for Social Media Contests/Giveaways:</b> <a href="http://mashable.com/2011/11/29/social-media-contestsweepstakes/">http://mashable.com/2011/11/29/social-media-contestsweepstakes/</a></li> </ul>
<p>Project 2:</p> <p>Add 1 B-cycle location in South End within the next year and explore augmenting its setup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research other cities</li> <li>• See the City resources for cyclist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bike League</b> <a href="http://bikeleague.org/bfa/toolkit">http://bikeleague.org/bfa/toolkit</a></li> <li>• <b>Charlotte Department of Transportation</b> <a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/PedBike/Pages/Additio%20Resources.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/PedBike/Pages/Additio%20Resources.aspx</a></li> <li>• <b>Charlotte B-Cycle™</b> <a href="http://www.charlottebicycle.com">www.charlottebicycle.com</a></li> </ul>
<p>Project 3:</p> <p>Host two community days in the next year to potentially include: arts, cleanup, National Night Out</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about funding opportunities through Neighborhood Matching Grants</li> <li>• Plan a great event</li> <li>• Apply for the appropriate permits though the City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Neighborhood Matching Grants</b> Contact Atalie Zimmerman at <a href="mailto:azimmerman@charlottenc.gov">azimmerman@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-4594 <a href="http://www.charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx</a></li> <li>• <b>Neighborhood Event Planning Toolkit</b> <a href="http://www.sdsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Block-Party-Kit.pdf">http://www.sdsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Block-Party-Kit.pdf</a></li> <li>• <b>Charlotte Department of Transportation for information on street closure procedures and approval</b> <a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx</a> <b>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for sound permits</b> <a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CMPD/Pages/default.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CMPD/Pages/default.aspx</a></li> </ul>

Your community is located within Charlotte’s South West Service Area, your staff contacts for following up and community assistance are:

Millicent Powell, Community Engagement Specialist	Eugene Bradley, Community Engagement Lead
<a href="mailto:mpowell@charlottenc.gov">mpowell@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-432-6814	<a href="mailto:ebradley@charlottenc.gov">ebradley@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-432-1579

