



## Stakeholder Workshop Summary

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Charlotte's Applied Innovation  
Corridor North End

*Charlotte, North Carolina*  
October 2015

# Charlotte's Applied Innovation Corridor North End: **Stakeholder Workshop Summary**



**CHARLOTTE.**

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

The Extravaganza Depot

1610 North Tryon Street

Charlotte, NC 28206



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# 1. Introduction

In 2013, the City of Charlotte (City) approved the Community Investment Plan (CIP) to improve infrastructure and leverage private investments throughout the city. The goals of the CIP are:

- Creating jobs and growing the tax base
- Leveraging public and private investment
- Enhancing public safety
- Enhancing transportation choices and mobility
- Ensuring housing diversity
- Providing integrated neighborhood improvements

One of the areas identified to incorporate these improvements is Charlotte's emerging North End within the Applied Innovation Corridor, which consists of neighborhoods adjacent to Uptown in the Statesville Avenue, Graham Street, North Tryon Street, and North Davidson Street areas. Drawing from various existing planning documents and stakeholder input, a list of 10 potential large infrastructure projects was prepared in 2014 for consideration by the project team and community:

- Graham Street Streetscape
- Matheson Avenue Bridge Streetscape
- Woodward Avenue / 24<sup>th</sup> Street Intersection Realignment
- 16<sup>th</sup> Street Streetscape
- New connection between Statesville Avenue and Graham Street (Oaklawn Avenue / Sylvania Avenue Extensions)
- Ware Avenue / 36<sup>th</sup> Street Extension
- N. Tryon Street Improvements – provide bike lanes and pedestrian improvements beyond the current streetscape project
- N. Davidson Street Bicycle Lanes
- Uptown / North End Gateways – provide aesthetic features to structures over N. Tryon Street, Church Street, and N. Graham Street
- Multi-use path connections from Statesville Avenue to N. Graham Street to N. Tryon Street

In addition, smaller “Connectivity Projects” that were identified through the North Tryon Area Plan, adopted by Charlotte City Council May 24, 2010, and through stakeholder input are being considered.

On Wednesday, March 11, 2015, the City held a Stakeholder Workshop to present the potential projects, obtain input on these presented projects, and receive additional project suggestions from North End stakeholders. The workshop was held at The Extravaganza Depot at 1610 North Tryon Street from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. This document presents the results from that event.

## 1.1 Project Team

The City and their consultant, HDR Engineering, planned the Stakeholder Workshop. Thirteen people staffed the event and each representative wore a name tag identifying themselves and their affiliation. The project team greeted workshop participants, provided information, facilitated small group discussions, and answered questions. The project team included the following people:

### City of Charlotte

Tim Greene  
Leslie Bing  
Jim Keenan  
Johanna Quinn  
Mandi Vari  
Todd DeLong

### HDR Engineering

Michelle Podeszwa  
Kirk Stull  
Alex Cousins  
Doug Zenn  
Krista Lee  
Brad Taylor  
Shane Shape

## 1.2 Stakeholder Identification

At the onset of the project, an initial list of stakeholders was identified through conversations with City staff, identifying key stakeholders from the 2014 Urban Land Institute Report, previous project stakeholder lists, and desktop research. In fall 2014, members of the project team contacted individuals from the initial list of key stakeholders to hold one-on-one interviews in order to obtain information and opinions regarding potential development and concerns in the project area. A summary of the stakeholder interviews have been documented in a separate similar report.

## 1.3 Meeting Announcements

A “save the date” email alert was sent to a list of over 100 identified stakeholders on February 25, 2015, notifying them of the Stakeholder Workshop date, time, and location. This was followed by a meeting invitation postcard that was also sent via first-class U.S. Mail on February 25, 2015. A copy of the postcard can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, follow-up phone calls and e-mails were made during the week leading up to the event to obtain RSVPs.

## 1.4 Meeting Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the Stakeholder Workshop was to engage interest groups and key stakeholders in the planning process and solicit their feedback on the identified potential projects within the North End study area. Additionally, the project team wanted to gain insight about any additional



projects suggested by the stakeholders. Workshop participants could learn about the identification process of potential projects, review maps showing their locations, ask questions, and share ideas with each other and members of the project team.

The goals of the Stakeholder Workshop included:

- Inform stakeholders about the CIP, the Applied Innovation Corridor, and the North End study area;
- educate stakeholders about potential infrastructure projects;
- gain insight into community issues/concerns in the study area;
- solicit feedback and prioritize a list of potential infrastructure projects; and
- encourage individuals who live, work, and have an interest in the study area to remain engaged in improving their community.

## 1.5 Meeting Format

The three-hour meeting had two parts: a one-hour Open House followed by a two-hour Workshop. The Open House featured two information stations about the North End of the Applied Innovation Corridor and five additional stations staffed with representatives who could provide information on additional projects within the North End. Participants were provided the following handouts (see Appendix B for copies of these documents):

- Project fact sheet with a map of potential projects
- A handout (list) of potential projects
- Brochure about the CIP
- Comment card

At the end of the Open House, everyone was asked to take a seat at one of seven round tables for a formal PowerPoint presentation and workshop activities. Table 1 below shows the agenda for the meeting.

**Table 1 Agenda**

Time	Activity
5:00 – 6:00	Open House
6:00 – 6:05	Workshop called to order & Welcome
6:05 – 6:30	CIP and Applied Innovation Corridor Overview / Presentation
6:30 – 7:15	Facilitated table discussions, including maps and questions to work through in table groups
7:15 – 7:35	Table facilitators report summaries of table discussions
7:35 – 7:50	Dot exercise; individuals given sticky dots and asked to place dots on boards representing their project priorities
7:50 – 7:55	Recap of dot exercise outcomes
7:55 – 8:00	Next Steps and Thank You



*Fifty-nine participants signed in for the Open House and Workshop.*

## 2. Open House & Workshop Proceedings

### 2.1 Room Layout & Displays

The Extravaganza Depot is a multi-purpose event venue located within the North End study area. Outside of the building entrance, participants were directed from the parking lot to the entrance door by a directional lawn sign that pointed to the meeting entrance. Inside, the meeting room was separated into two areas: one area for the Open House and the other for the Stakeholder Workshop.

Participants were greeted by project team members at a sign-in table where they signed-in, received a color-coded name badge, and were provided handouts and information materials. Fifty-nine stakeholders signed in for the meeting. See appendix C for the participant sign-in sheet.

#### Open House

Two project overview stations were placed at either end of the Open House area, each containing a project area map, typical road section and project information sheets.

Five additional stations lined the side area of the Open House and were staffed by representatives who could provide information on additional projects within the North End. Each representative brought their own materials to be displayed at their table. The stations included the following representation:

- CATS – Brian Nadolny
- Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation – James Williams
- City Project - Cross-Charlotte Trail – Vivian Coleman
- City Projects - N. Tryon Street Business Corridor Improvements and Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Projects – Tom Russell
- City Local and Neighborhood Street Improvement Programs – Chip Gallup



#### Stakeholder Workshop

At the beginning of the workshop, a PowerPoint presentation was given by members of the project team. The presentation provided background information about the City's CIP and the Applied Innovation Corridor, as well as an overview of the individual potential infrastructure projects.



Seven round tables were available for participants in the workshop. Each table was identified by a color (Black, Blue, Red, Purple, Green, Pink,



Orange). In order to distribute participants, each person was asked to take a seat at the table with the same color as the dot on their name tag.

Each table contained three large maps displaying different potential projects. The maps included: a map for the ten large potential infrastructure projects, a map for potential connectivity projects and a map for bicycle/pedestrian connections. The maps were provided as discussion aids and for participants to write on during the small group discussions. Copies of the maps can be found in Appendix D.

To the side of the room, 10 boards representing potential infrastructure projects (sized 30" x 40") were stationed on easels for the Dot voting exercise. Each board showed a different potential project location on a map and a visual of what the current location looks like today. Copies of the boards can be found in Appendix E.

## 3. Stakeholder Feedback

### 3.1 Small Group Discussions

Members of the project team were stationed at each table to facilitate small group discussions and record flip chart notes based on comments and input on the list of potential projects and project maps. Other members of the project team roamed throughout the room as “floaters” to answer questions. Workshop participants were encouraged to identify additional projects that they would like to see implemented. Collective feedback is summarized below.

#### General Feedback about the North End

Workshop participants were generally supportive of all the projects in varying degrees, agreeing that they largely meet the stated goals for the area. Beautifying the entrances into the North End from Uptown was a popular idea. However, some who supported the Uptown/North End Gateways were interpreting that would mean moving the social services providers from the area. The concentration of social services providers is largely seen as an obstacle to re-development for the North End. Homelessness and loitering are viewed as significant problems for real or perceived public safety. Dillehay Courts also creates issues with safety and perception. It was recognized that while these services may be necessary, their presence would continue to pose a challenge to changing public attitudes about the North End. Some suggested working with the social service providers and the City to discuss the possibilities of a coordinated a unified campus that could better provide such services.

Participants generally would like the streets to be greener and more bike/pedestrian friendly. Residents want more transportation options as well. Walkability and safety are important. Burying overhead utilities is desirable. More retail and grocery options in the area would be highly valued improvements. Better connections to local and regional trails and more greenspaces and parks were mentioned often. Connecting disconnected streets was viewed favorably as long as existing, viable businesses were not harmed. People seem to recognize the importance of the industrial activity in the area and suggested embracing it rather than trying to change it. Reusing existing, vacant industrial buildings with new mixed-uses was supported.

Small business incubation, tech start-ups and housing to support tech workers would be welcome in the area.

The Workshop had a lot of positive energy. Participants seemed to appreciate diversity of perspectives and the opportunity to weigh in on the list of projects and brainstorm new ideas together. There was a palpable sense of excitement that the North End is a priority for new investment and change.

## Large Infrastructure Projects

### GRAHAM STREETScape

- Streetscape project is a good idea, but the area lacks development / investment. It is a narrow street.
- Beautification should embrace the industrial character. Street connections to Graham Street are not strong.
- Eyesores along the roadway (i.e. Waynes) and an industrial street. This area along Graham Street is also a Gateway.
- Bike / pedestrian improvements recently implemented on Statesville Avenue would work well for Graham Street too.

### MATHESON BRIDGE STREETScape

- An east-west connection is needed between the area west of the rail yard and NoDa. The current pedestrian facilities are uncomfortable – too narrow. There could be opportunities to connect to the proposed Cross-Charlotte Trail in the area.
- Develop 36th/ Matheson Avenue Infrastructure to allow for more growth.

### 16<sup>TH</sup> STREET STREETScape

- Consider the relationship with the N. Tryon Street Gateway. It is currently invisible.
- Considered by some as a lower priority and by others as a high priority.
- Many people don't realize that 16th Street crosses the rail. Some felt this streetscape project is important in order to provide sidewalk connection.

### N. TRYON STREET IMPROVEMENTS

- Would like to see better sidewalks on N. Tryon Street.
- Gateways on N. Tryon Street are important.
- Bus turnouts on N. Tryon Street would be helpful.

### OAKLAWN AVENUE/SYLVANIA AVENUE

- One small group did not find value in bridging a new connection over the rail line.
- Oaklawn Avenue / Sylvania Avenue connection not among the top choices for investment.
- Some Lockwood residents specifically did not like the extension because they felt it would turn Sylvania Avenue into a thoroughfare.

#### WARE AVENUE/36<sup>TH</sup> STREET

- Low priority, but provides a nice connection between The Plaza and N. Graham Street.
- Some attendees stated Ware Avenue is better for cars than bikes / peds and others felt the bicycle and pedestrian improvements are important to implement.

#### WOODWARD AVENUE/24<sup>TH</sup> STREET ALIGNMENT

- Intersection is currently confusing and dangerous. The improvement is very important.
- It was also noted that with the realignment, this intersection could become a stronger retail node.

#### NORTH DAVIDSON STREET BICYCLE LANES

- Bike lanes are not important – investment should focus on cars and pedestrians
- The area west of the rail yard needs more help than NoDa – bike lanes on N. Davidson Street are a lower priority.
- Proposed improvements for N. Davidson Street should not impact existing houses. The right-of-way and easements should not be affected.
- Utilize share the road for bikes and be mindful of pedestrian improvements.

#### UPTOWN/NORTH END GATEWAYS

- Gateway on N. Tryon Streetscape to downtown: railroad is a barrier. Beautify it, integrate it, space is “too tight.” Loitering is a concern.
- Until the environment changes at the N. Tryon Street gateway into uptown, the North End area will have a tough time evolving.
- The gateway area is most important in order to make the connection with Center City and not leave a gap between the new Applied Innovation Corridor core and Central Business District.
- Signage is needed at the gateways to identify “North End”.
- Gateways are important! They are the front door of our community.

#### New Project Ideas

- Realign Newland Road / Norris Avenue at Statesville Avenue for better truck access to support retail development.
- Consider previous study’s recommendations to implement a roundabout at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and N. Tryon Street and eliminate the 12<sup>th</sup> Street ramp at I-277.
- Open up the ally way on Wadsworth Place by the Men’s Shelter.



## Bicycle / Pedestrian Improvements

- East / west greenways make good connections and are budget-friendly improvements.
- Potential multi-use paths along Duke Easement have the potential similar to the pedestrian projects that were installed in Wesley Heights neighborhood (adjacent to Third Ward), which had a positive impact on the community and have been expanded upon.
- Connect Druid Hills Park to the potential multi-use trail within Duke Easement.
- Connect the proposed Cross-Charlotte Trail to Matheson Bridge. This will also provide a connection between Brightwalk and NoDa.
- Make the streets walkable.
- The recent improvements that have been implemented along Statesville Avenue would work well for Graham Street, Church Street, and N. Tryon Street.
- Extend the potential multi-use path from Norris Avenue / Statesville Avenue area to the Mooresville-to-Charlotte Trail.
- Maximize connections between Cross-Charlotte Trail and Mooresville-to-Charlotte Trail.
- Enhance east / west connections, especially if they could link the greenways to the potential multi-use paths.
- If Ware Avenue is improved and connected, make sure to include good bike lanes and sidewalks.
- Consider a bike / ped connection between Ware Avenue northwest to the Mooresville-to-Charlotte Trail.
- Need more amenities, such as parks, to make the bike / ped connections more worthwhile. “The connections don’t matter if there’s not a place to connect to.”
- Provide pedestrian exits from I-277 between 16th Street and 12th Street to allow for more accessibility to the area for pedestrians.
- Provide a bike / ped route at Matheson Avenue connecting to N. Tryon Street.
- Provide bike / ped connecting 36<sup>th</sup> Street to N. Tryon Street.
- Provide a shared bike lane on N. Davidson Street.
- Greenways should link neighborhoods with schools.
- Provide bike lanes on Statesville Avenue north from Atando Avenue.
- Provide sidewalks on W. Craighead Road.
- The multi-use path Connectivity Project from N. Tryon to Statesville Avenue is highly needed and wanted. It would be great if it could extend to the Blue Line Extension and N. Davidson Street.
- Provide a greenway through cemetery to Oaklawn Language Academy.
- Provide greenways to connect on both sides of I-277.
- Provide pedestrian crossings at the Matheson Avenue intersection.
- Provide pedestrian crossings on Statesville Avenue.

## Connectivity Projects

- One small group liked focusing projects in the 24<sup>th</sup> Street business area.
- Consider the impacts to existing businesses.
- The majority of the participants were generally in favor of connectivity.



- Connections to / from the Dalton Avenue / N. Tryon Street /12<sup>th</sup> Street area and in vicinity of the Old Tryon Meadows neighborhood would be more successful with a park in the vicinity.
- Restore the grid: improve the grid-like sections of roads for safer travel and more aesthetic appeal.
- Rodney Avenue splits the Druid Hills Park, which seems to stall projects for Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation. If you close Rodney Avenue, Poinsett Street needs to be extended.
- Some participants did not support the Catalina Avenue connection.
- Small connections are needed to connect neighborhoods to one another.
- Removing dead end streets would help with safety.
- Poinsett Street Extension with removal of the Rodey Avenue through Druid Hills Park stands out as a good connectivity project.
- Catalina Street and Pine Street would be highly beneficial connections.
- The extension of Catalina Avenue to Dalton Avenue is a good connectivity project.
- The N. Poplar Street extension between 24<sup>th</sup> Street and 25<sup>th</sup> Street is a good connectivity project.
- Connecting the area between Dalton and 12<sup>th</sup> Street with the Music Factory would be a good connection for the area.
- Connections in the Lockwood area are needed. 16<sup>th</sup> Street is a higher priority.
- Avoid spending public dollars improving connectivity in commercial areas.
- The 25<sup>th</sup> Street NECI Project needs to be identified.
- The extension of N. College Street from Wadsworth Place to 16th Street is a good connectivity project.
- Connect 32<sup>nd</sup> Street to Dogwood Avenue.

### Local and Neighborhood Street Improvements

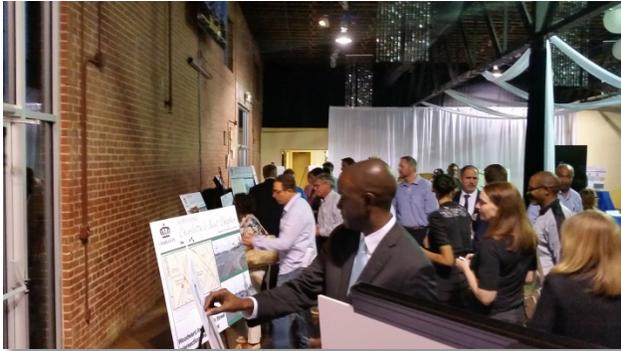
- Druid Hills Neighborhood needs lighting; particularly Norris Avenue.
- Genesis Park Neighborhood needs lighting.
- Provide traffic circles at Jordan Place and N. Davidson Street.

### Other Improvements

- The current planned N. Tryon Business Corridor Improvements (N. Tryon Street Streetscape) creates challenging access to the City North Business Center and impacts the WSOC-TV station site.
- Landmarks in the area should be celebrated with signage and / or wayfinding.
- More parking in the area is needed.
- The Community Crisis Center needs more parking – customers arrive by car and have to circle around.
- Connections to the new light rail stations are important and the Amtrak Station needs beautification.
- The Asian Corners Mall (outside of study area) is a big re-development opportunity for nearby retail.

### 3.2 Dot Voting Exercise

Following small group discussions, workshop participants had the ability to provide input on their preferences of the identified large potential projects. Display boards of the projects were placed around the room and participants were given five sticky dots to place on the boards to identify their preferred projects. They could put one or more dots on up to five projects of their choice. One of the dots had a white circle on it, indicating that it was a “super-dot.” Participants were asked to use it for their top project choice. More than 40 people participated in the dot exercise.



From the resulting votes, several projects emerged with higher numbers of dots. The Uptown / North End Gateways project received a significant more number of dots and super dots. As noted earlier, some of this support was based on an assumption that the social service agencies might move associated with the gateways. Graham Street Streetscape and the multi-use paths received higher numbers of dots relative to the other projects.

Three projects received relatively moderate numbers of dots from participants; Woodward Avenue / 24th Street Intersection, Matheson Avenue Bridge Streetscape, and N. Tryon Street Improvements.

While all projects showed support from at least some of the participants, four resulted in lower dots than the others; Oaklawn Avenue / Sylvania Avenue Extension, N. Davidson Bike Lanes, Ware Avenue / 36<sup>th</sup> Street Extension, and 16th Street Streetscape.

Table 2 below shows the final results and ranking from the dot voting exercise.



**Table 2 Dot Exercise Results**

Ranking	Potential Large Projects	Total Dots (Super Dots)
<b>Highest Results</b>		
1	Uptown / North End Gateways	49 (11)
2	Graham Street Streetscape	28 (8)
3	Multi-Use Paths (Statesville Ave. to N. Graham St. to N. Tryon St.)	25 (7)
<b>Moderate Results</b>		
4	Woodward Avenue / 24th Street Intersection	21 (5)
5	Matheson Avenue Bridge Streetscape	18 (4)
6	N. Tryon Street Improvements	25 (1)
<b>Lower Results</b>		
7	Oaklawn Ave. / Sylvania Ave. Extension	14 (2)
8	N. Davidson Street Bike Lanes	13 (1)
9	Ware Avenue / 36 <sup>th</sup> Street Extension	7 (1)
10	16 <sup>th</sup> Street Streetscape	2 (1)

Following this exercise, the project team reviewed the results for each of the projects.

## 4. Comments

Comment forms were provided and the participants were informed that they could provide any additional comments on these forms. Only one comment form was received, which is provided in Appendix F.

In addition, a form was provided for participants to identify project improvements for local and neighborhood streets. It was explained during the presentation given at the beginning of the workshop that these types of projects would not likely be funded through the CIP and the City has other programs available. Chip Gallup was attendance as a City representative who could provide more information on these programs. The completed form is provided in Appendix G.

## 5. Next Steps

At the end of the meeting, participants were thanked for their time and participation and informed of the next steps. The next steps include ranking each potential project to lead to a prioritized list of identified projects that would progress into design and construction. The results of these rankings / priorities will be made available.

