



Charlotte City Council  
Workforce & Business Development Committee  
Summary  
November 9, 2020

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**COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS**

Workforce Policy Update  
Tax Increment Grant Policy  
Charlotte Tech Talent Study (*item was deferred to December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting*)  
Open for Business  
Corridors of Opportunity Update and Overview (*Due to time constraints, overview was not presented at committee meeting but was later presented at City Council Business Meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>*)

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**COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

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**Committee Members Present:** James Mitchell (Chair), Tariq Bokhari (Vice Chair), Malcolm Graham, Dimple Ajmera and Renee Johnson

**Others:** Denada Jackson, Office of Constituent Services

**Staff Resources:** Tracy Dodson, City Manager's Office  
Fran West, Economic Development Department  
Todd DeLong, Economic Development Department  
Holly Eskridge, Economic Development Department  
Emily Cantrell, Economic Development Department

**Meeting Duration:** 2:00pm-3:30pm

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**ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Agenda – November 9, 2020
2. Presentations – Workforce, TIG Policy, Open for Business and Corridors of Opportunity

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**DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS**

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Chairman Mitchell called the virtual meeting to order and asked Committee members, City staff and guests to introduce themselves. Councilmember Mitchell also recognized Economic Development staff for their presentation during the joint economic development meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup> between the Workforce & Business Development Committee and the County's Economic Development Committee. He then turned the meeting over to Assistant City Manager Tracy Dodson to introduce the agenda topics.

## **Workforce Policy Update**

Tracy Dodson introduced the agenda items and talked about the Workforce & Business Development Committee referrals, specifically the Mayor's three referrals around workforce and how they were condensed into one. She shared the purpose of today's meeting was to discuss options and get the committee's input to create a strategy on workforce policy opportunities. Staff will then come back with next steps/recommendations for discussion in December and January.

Fran West provided an overview on the efforts to date to advance the workforce policy initiatives and what the City can do to address our workforce as we look at who is unemployed and why, if the right jobs are available for people who are unemployed and what the City can do from a policy perspective to eliminate barriers for people in high unemployment zip codes. Ms. West highlighted in her presentation that the City cannot mandate hiring practices but can set expectations for industries by building trusted relationships and investments in our business community to influence hiring practices. She presented four policy strategies for the committee's consideration and possible solutions to move them forward in 2021:

- **City Construction Projects**
- **Workforce Ecosystem Alignment around Job Placement**
- **Eliminate barriers by adding capacity to organizations excelling at this work**
- **Stand up new construction initiative to drive employment in construction and skilled trades**

Ms. West also shared Economic Development's efforts to partner with the General Services Department on City construction projects, combining our strategies with Ernst & Young's labor study in the corridors to tackle barriers for people who are unemployed, determining the City's financial capacity in 2022 to invest in the strategies; and, convening our workforce partners, both grassroots and established organizations to inform our city-wide jobs plan. The City will also survey residents to get their input on barriers they're facing to unemployment. Staff will share the data once the survey is complete.

## **Tax Increment Grant Policy**

Tracy Dodson shared information with the committee on the Tax Increment Grant (TIG) policy and how it works, particularly noting the committee's input will determine how we tweak the program but that the Economic Development Department is also looking at other tools.

Todd DeLong provided an overview of the Tax Increment Grant policy approved by Council in 2007 and the importance of public-private partnerships for our transformative development projects. Though not one size fits all, the City has had a long history of successful P3s over the last 15 years with some participation by the County. The grants have been used for public infrastructure, cultural facilities and public parking facilities and are made on a reimbursement basis only. Mr. DeLong provided the following summary of activities:

### ***Since 2015, Council has approved four TIGs***

- All four will reimburse the developer for designing and constructing public infrastructure improvements
- Three of the four include terms requiring the developer to expand the supply of affordable and/or workforce housing
- County's participation in most agreements, but not all

### ***Since 2004***

- 16 TIGs approved by City Council
- 12 reimburse developer for public infrastructure
- Two will reimburse developer for building public parking
- Other – Double Oaks/Brightwalk and Cultural Facilities campus
- Six include terms to build workforce/affordable housing

### ***Private Leverage***

- Goal – 10:1
- Since 2004 – 28:1
- Since 2015 – 119:1

Staff will continue to focus on enhancing the Tax Increment Grant Policy to meet the current community goals and objectives and the needs of Council. Eastland Mall is the latest public/private partnership project to be considered for approval by Council at their Business Meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Open for Business**

Holly Eskridge provided an update on the Open for Business initiative. She started her presentation with the latest updates to the Open for Business website which includes our small business programs. The City also recently debuted our new #MeetCharlotte campaign on the website. This section will continue to be built out but features the Meet Charlotte video, Charlotte rankings, recent job announcements and economic impact, and a link to download our pitch book.

Ms. Eskridge also shared highlights on the grants awarded through our Open for Business initiatives:

- **Small Business Recovery Fund** - 2,466 awards totaling \$30m, businesses will be surveyed in December
- **Food and Beverage Support** - 123 awards to date for \$2,595,000
- **Hotel/Motel Support** - 123 applications submitted, finalizing review and documentation approval
- **Music Venue Support** – eligible venues will receive a nine-month subsidy towards rent or mortgage assistance. Staff is reviewing and finalizing the awards to grant recipients and looking to fund \$757k
- **Resilient ReUp** - Program is open, curriculum will provide cohort-based training approach to risk/crisis management and business continuity and will serve up to 60 small businesses
- **Small Business Partner Support** - \$1.96M awarded to 12 Small Business Resource Partners in June. Projects started in July/August and are on track to be completed by December 30
- **Workforce Partner** - Grants provided to workforce development and education organizations who provide direct services to Charlotte residents. \$3.5 Million has been awarded to 25 organizations
- **RENEW** - provides paid skilled training for Charlotte residents to prepare them for careers in HVAC and electrical occupations, 50 participants enrolled in training classes and the first cohort will graduate on December 10

- **Thrive Hiring Grant** - awards mid-sized companies \$5,000 per hire for all Charlotte residents hired into open positions. Ten applications have been received and two awarded so far totaling \$110,000.

The Charlotte Tech Talent Study was deferred to the December 14<sup>th</sup> committee meeting. Due to time constraints, the Corridors of Opportunity item was not discussed at the committee meeting but was later presented at the City Council Business Meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30p.m.