



Charlotte City Council
Transportation Planning Environment Committee
Summary Minutes
July 27, 2020

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

Silver Line LRT
Comprehensive Plan
Tree Canopy Action Plan
Charlotte Moves Task Force

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present: Julie Eiselt (Chair), Larken Egleston (Vice Chair), Ed Driggs, Matt Newton, Braxton Winston,

Staff Resources: Taiwo Jaiyeoba, City Manager's Office

Meeting Duration: 10:35 am – 12:30 pm

ATTACHMENTS

1. Silver Line LRT
2. Comprehensive Plan
3. Tree Canopy Action Plan

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

Silver Line LRT

John Lewis and Andy Mock from Charlotte Area Transit presented an overview of the LYNX Silver Line progress to date and a summary of the upcoming activities leading to a refined Locally Preferred Alternative (APA).

The Silver Line is a suite of programs; *Design and Environmental Services*, things like brick and mortar, the light rail, the tracks, the power system, things of this nature. The second program is *Transit Oriented Development (TOD)*, the vision and land use patterns around the stations and makes recommendation on how those patterns should be adjusted round of the Silver Line. There is also the *Rail Trail Study* which seeks to identify a vision for a rail trail that goes along the entire length of the Silver Line.

The scope of the Silver Line starts at Belmont in the west and traverses along or adjacent to Wilkinson Boulevard to Center-City, past Charlotte Gateway, around the northern edge of the center city, and parallels Independence Boulevard out to the Village Lake area, then transitioning along the Monroe Road area alignment and terminates at CPCC Levine in Matthews. Additionally, the study is currently accessing the alignment all the way to Indian Trail.

The project consists of three major priorities; *Stakeholder Engagement*, meeting with the major cities who have an interest in the project, to include office and retail developers, Charlotte Airport, CPCC, affordable housing developers and experts in the city as well as parties like NCDOT, CSX Railroad, Norfolk Southern who have interest in the project. Secondly is *Public Involvement*, the first rounds of public involvement were truncated due to COVID-19. Public engagement continues through virtual neighborhood community public engagement meetings, along with an online survey and a virtual public meeting can be viewed on the Government Channel, along with an ask CATS Q&A session with the project managers. Lastly there is the *Alignment Refinement priority*, this is the engineering component and environmental analysis of the project. The corridor is continually evaluated, over time there have been changes to the corridor and continued refinement occurs through engineering evaluation, environmental considerations, lessons learned from the Blue Line and additional coordination with land use and other projects.

Upcoming engagement dates of interest; Individual Council outreach for sensitive areas along the Silver Line will be scheduled in the coming days. Virtual community meetings will be ongoing. Round 2 of Public Meetings scheduled in late September. Special community outreach will be scheduled after round 2 of the Public Meetings. There will also be further Council engagements as the project moves along.

2040 Comprehensive Plan

Alysia Osborn from Planning and Design presented an update on the current work of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the City's shared vision for growth, development and transformative investments for the next 20 years.

The project is divided into four phases; phase I and II establish the foundation for the plan, reviewing existing conditions, demographics, growth trends, assets and opportunities. The equity atlas was established in Phase I and is a key component that helps establish a data driven approach in applying equity in our engagement, developing the plan policies and implementation during the current Phase III portion of the Plan. Phase 4 is review and adoption of the Plan.

Community engagement is paramount to this process, key themes to community engagement are neighborhoods, affordability and access to affordable housing, mobility access to goods and services and access to opportunity like jobs and employment. Four guiding principles emerged from community outreach to help shape the Comprehensive Plan, residence want to see an authentic, equitable, integrated and resilient Charlotte, that is inclusive, livable, connected, health, sustainable, prosperous and has a strong regional presence.

Framework policies for the plan are organized in four big categories; Mobility; Neighborhoods, Health and Environment and Economic resilience and opportunity.

A key component and moving forward with creating a vision for Charlotte is Community Area Planning. The Comprehensive Plan will define community planning areas by identifying priorities for each community planning area. Map future place types and develop small area plans.

Looking ahead there will be continued meetings with Plan Ambassadors and Strategic Advisors in August. A series of Virtual Focus Groups will kickoff in August. There will be Drive-In Community Workshops also in

August. A detailed update to this group – Transportation Planning and Environment committee in September and Council update in October.

Tree Canopy Action Plan

Alyson Craig and Tim Porter presented an update to the Tree Canopy Plan and results from the recent Canopy analysis. In 2017 Council adopted the Urban Forest Master plan, laying out key principles for preserving Charlotte’s tree canopy. City Council reviewed the potential canopy plan in 2018 and made the decision to defer until the Tree Canopy Plan could be made part of the Charlotte 2040 Comprehensive Plan. As part of the UDO the city updated the Tree Ordinance standards creating a Tree Ordinance Text Amendment. Dialogue and passion emerged and confirmed the need for a 2020 Tree Canopy Plan.

Guided by vision and values of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Tree Canopy Action Plan will inform tree policy and future regulations alongside the City’s effort to plan for the future.

Goals and initiatives of the Plan are; honest dialogue, adjust codes and policies to align with community priorities. Key deliverables of the Plan are; analysis and inventory of the tree canopy and waterways; policy recommendations incorporated into the 2040 Comprehensive Plan; ordinance concepts for the UDO and a final report summarizing recommendations.

The Plan stakeholder group made up of 22 neighborhood groups, advocacy organizations, the development community, landscape architects and homebuilders; will guide and advise the project team sharing knowledge and opinions. Next stakeholder meeting July 29.

In 2010 considerations were given to the 50 by 2050 goal; is it attainable, sustainable, inspirational, is it relevant and place specific, is it qualitative and benefits based. A 2020 Stakeholder straw poll was done regarding “thoughts on adjusting Charlotte’s current 50% by 2050 canopy goal? Results were; 10% said keep the goal; 65% wanted to revise the current goal keeping some of the elements of the 50 by 2050, but also include new focus areas; and 25% needed more information.

Initial analysis of the tree canopy data showed a robust tree canopy, with residential areas having the largest canopy area and the greatest canopy loss. Tree save is a major component of single-family subdivisions a project would trigger city permitting. Tree save is a major component of new subdivisions and the project must set aside 10% tree save.

There are several tree canopy programs, a couple of particular notes are the Urban Arboretum Trail initiative, a component of the larger Tree Canopy Preservation Program (TCPP) which is a plan that acquires land for tree preservation. This is a program that acquires properties through developer paid fees and commercial permitting to preserve and protect tree canopies to provide greenspace in communities which help to experience tree canopies.

Timeline going forward; ordinance analysis and peer city review to find what other cities are doing and possibly implement some of those findings in Charlotte. Currently holding stakeholder engagement meetings and later in the summer public engagement meetings will take place virtually and through drive

in meetings. September 2020 a draft plan will be complete and January 2021 will see review; and adoption by council in April 2021 with implementation July 2021.

Charlotte Moves Task Force

Taiwo Jaiyeoba, Assistant City Manager gave an update on the July meeting of the Charlotte Moves Task Force.

This task force provides a platform for community input and dialog. The membership of the task force is made up of all 5 Council Districts comprised of both male and female members of white, African American, Asian American and Hispanic races and ethnicities, gaining representation for all across the city.

Results of a mobility questionnaire were shared with the task force at the July meeting. It's important to hear from the community as well as from other communities; representatives from Austin, Nashville and Broward County Florida were brought in to consult with the taskforce. All of these representatives from other these areas have been through this in the last few years. The goal was to learn from experiences of the other communities and hear about how they selected the plans and projects to move forward their journey leading up to public referendums intended to advance transportation and mobility goals. Key points from the panelists were; having a bold vision; having a comprehensive plan that has broad based benefits that can be easily communicated; and civic engagement, get out and talk to people, and have a data driven plan. The goal of our plan is to deliver a transformation mobility network to Mayor Lyles in December.

This mobility plan has to be impactful, sustainable, about equity and connectivity for our city and region. This plan goes beyond transit, it talks about bike trails, greenways, pedestrian accessibility to different parts of the city including our sidewalks and cycle links.

The next task force meeting is August 20.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2020