



**February 27, 2021**

**CharlotteEast**

**Hosted online by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services**

## CharlotteEast

### 2021 Board Retreat

#### Background

On Saturday, February 27, 2021, members of CharlotteEast participated in the virtual Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte online. The following board members and/or community members participated in the retreat:

- Greg Ascitutto
- Maureen Gilewski
- Michael Haithcock
- Mike Sullivan
- Kathy Buckley
- Christina Danis

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 match credit toward a Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG) to help execute one of the projects we identified.

To receive this credit, we'll submit a copy of the Developing Your Ideas worksheet with our NMG request. This credit will expire following the June 1, 2022 NMG application deadline.

#### 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
- Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Developing Strategic Priorities
- 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 group discussion 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

Our discussion helped us to find 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</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer Advocacy – Eastland Area Strategy Team</li> <li>• “Taste of the World” event</li> <li>• Diverse neighborhoods</li> <li>• Diverse restaurants and businesses</li> </ul> <p><b>Worst</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taste of the World – 6 months to plan, used a lot of resources/missed opportunities, overshadowed other work</li> </ul>	<p><b>Would</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable for Business</li> <li>• Diverse</li> <li>• Strategic &amp; mindful about gentrification</li> <li>• Major developments in transportation</li> </ul> <p><b>Would not</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inequitable wealth distribution in education</li> <li>• Socio-economic segregation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Wishes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain families in East Charlotte</li> <li>• Connect all (100+) neighborhoods and serve as advocate for all of them / diversity and multiple languages are a benefit and a challenge.</li> <li>• Unite Near/Middle/Far east communities</li> <li>• Use social media to market businesses and post about history of East Charlotte</li> <li>• Change the perception... East gets left off “best of” lists even though there are lots of very good, diverse restaurant choices.</li> <li>• When bad things happen, wish the media would not lump all “east” together, instead of saying the specific neighborhood</li> </ul>

## 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. This activity led us to the following priorities/action items being identified as important within our community:

- Expand external outreach -- increase awareness that Charlotte East is rich in culture and diversity (restaurants, destinations/activities, public spaces, parks, city walks
- Build community through two-way communications/engagement activities
- Host an eastside retreat -- build lists and establish communication among civic organizations, neighborhoods, etc. – discuss projects and needs
- Walking Tours
- Public art (wrap trash cans like NoDa)
- Add a high school student to the board
- Create a showcase event

The three priorities receiving the most votes are the strategic priorities that are most important for us to begin working on to achieve our vision. Within these three categories, there were three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities.

The strategic priorities and activities are summarized on the following page.

## 2021 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

### CharlotteEast

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

<p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">1</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">Add a non-voting 1-year student term to the Board of Directors</p> <p style="font-size: 12px; margin: 10px 0;">(Draft parameters, June; Introduce concept to schools, summer; Formal invite to schools, Sept, via Environmental Committee)</p>	<p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">2</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">Develop Walking Tours of East Charlotte</p> <p style="font-size: 12px; margin: 10px 0;">(Determine if tours can be in person or by video, Fall; Partner with business owners/showcase assets &amp; institutions)</p>	<p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">3</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">Public Art: Install painted trash cans to beautify areas along main bus routes</p> <p style="font-size: 12px; margin: 10px 0;">(Determine resources and narrow down area, create inventory of existing projects, List Eastside artists, Connect with NoDa)</p>
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**IN 2021-2022, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:**

<p style="font-size: 14px;">Create new board role for high school student to begin 1-year, non-voting term by Oct 1, 2021.</p>	<p style="font-size: 14px;">Develop walking tours and apply for Neighborhood Matching Grant funding for Spring 2022. (Application deadline: March 1, 2022)</p>	<p style="font-size: 14px;">Develop plan for painted trash cans and apply for Neighborhood Matching Grant funding by the June 1, 2021 deadline.</p>
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**Resources to Get Started-** You've rolled up your sleeves and established your vision. We have compiled resources that may assist your organization in achieving your goals on our Neighborhood Training Programs and Resources [website](#). We have identified resource categories that may be applicable to your projects below; please do not hesitate to explore more categories as you undertake your work! Links and contact information are provided for information only and are subject to change.

Project	Categories of Interest/Potential Resource
Add a non-voting 1-year student term to the Board	Board Development
Develop Walking Tours of East Charlotte	Community Engagement- <a href="#">NMG Program</a>
Install painted trash cans to beautify areas along main bus routes	Neighborhood Improvement- <a href="#">Placemaking Hub</a> , <a href="#">NMG Program</a>

Your community is located within Charlotte's Northeast Service Area. Your staff contact for following up and community assistance is:

Charlenea Duncan, Northeast Community Engagement Manager	
charlenea.duncan@charlottenc.gov	704-336-2173