



# **NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT**



**August 22, 2020**

**Howie Acres Community**

Hosted online by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services

## Howie Acres Community

### 2020 Board Retreat

#### Background

On Saturday, August 22, 2020, the board members of the Howie Acres Community 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:

- Vickie Hayden
- Roma Johnson
- Jennifer Dube
- Stephane Berwald
- Pamela Faggart

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 September 1, 2021 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>• Family community</li> <li>• Neighbors worked together</li> <li>• Kids were respectful</li> <li>• Strong sense of community</li> <li>• Everyone knew everyone</li> <li>• “Village” mentality</li> <li>• Safe place</li> <li>• Quiet</li> <li>• Supportive caring neighbors</li> </ul> <p><b>Worst</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime</li> <li>• Drugs</li> <li>• Shooting death</li> <li>• Negative policing</li> <li>• Developers encroaching on property</li> <li>• No support for neighborhood concerns</li> <li>• No grocery store</li> </ul>	<p><b>Would</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly</li> <li>• Cleanliness</li> <li>• Proximity- close to light-rail, No Da, and Uptown</li> <li>• Large lots</li> <li>• Trees</li> <li>• Neighborhood has character, pleasant, and quant</li> </ul> <p><b>Would not</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of access to necessities (such as a grocery store, restaurants, etc.)</li> <li>• Crime</li> <li>• Absent home-owners not properly vetting renters</li> </ul>	<p><b>Wishes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome new neighbors</li> <li>• Reimagine community space</li> <li>• Eliminate violence</li> <li>• Improve hospitality committee</li> </ul>

**OUR VISION:** *Howie Acres is an established, family-oriented jewel centrally located with natural beauty that embraces diversity.*

### 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 categories and action items being identified as important within our community:

- **Community Engagement**
  - Create a welcome kit for new neighbors
  - Hold neighborhood activities
  - Host activities to celebrate 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- **Neighborhood Improvement**
  - Improve cleanliness
  - Add sidewalks
  - Have a small community center with a community garden
- **Communication**
  - Develop a communications plan using social media
- **Branding**
  - Obtain Historic District designation

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. 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.

## 2020 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

### Howie Acres Community

**OUR VISION:** *Howie Acres is an established, family-oriented jewel centrally located with natural beauty that embraces diversity.*

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

**1**

**Community Engagement**

**2**

**Branding**

**3**

**Community Engagement**

**IN 2020-2021, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:**

Create a welcome kit to engage new neighbors by the end of December 2020.

Research and educate neighbors on the pros and cons of being designated a historic district by October 2020.

Establish a planning committee to celebrate the neighborhood's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary November 2020.

**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	Potential Resource Categories of Interest
<b>Create a welcome kit to engage new neighbors by the end of December 2020.</b>	Community Engagement
<b>Research and educate neighbors on the pros and cons of being designated a historic district by October 2020.</b>	Branding
<b>Establish a planning committee to celebrate the neighborhood's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary November 2020.</b>	Community Engagement

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

[csduncan@charlottenc.gov](mailto:csduncan@charlottenc.gov) or 704-336-2173