



WEST BOULEVARD COALITION

2012 BOARD RETREAT

HOSTED BY THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE AT
FOUNDATION FOR THE CAROLINAS

2012

WEST BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION

2012 BOARD RETREAT

Background

On Saturday, July 14, 2012, the board members of the West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition participated in a board retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at Foundation For The Carolinas. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Dorothy J. Waddy, President
- Freida Brown
- Oronde McLean
- John Howard

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

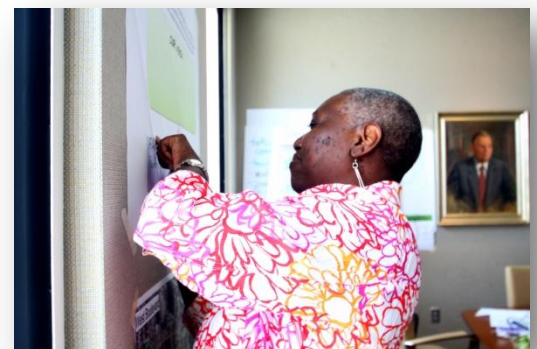
The purpose of the board retreat was to

- 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

Our board identified the following outcomes for the retreat:

- Set reasonable targets and follow through
- Understand processes (how to be effective)
- Understand strengths and weaknesses
- Develop strategies to increase involvement from residents
- Identify community resources and partners

By participating in the retreat, our board earned a \$1,500 Neighborhood Matching Grant credit to help execute one of the projects we identified.



Process

Our board retreat was conducted by an external facilitator, tasked to keep our conversations on-task, productive, and focused on achievable objectives. The process was designed to help us capture what was the best of the past, what is 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
- Where We Want to Be: Vision Statement Exercise
- Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Developing Strategic Priorities
- Working Lunch – The Year Ahead
- Where's the Energy – Energygram Exercise
- Project Planning Worksheet Review

Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been?

We began our day with paired interviews, 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

After interviewing our partners we shared our discussion with the group, finding commonalities in our conversations.



Where We Were: Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	Where We Are: Why/why not would a person/business want to move into our community?	Where We Want to Be: If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?
<p style="text-align: center;">Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transitioning neighborhoods - Community policing - Feeling of community and family - Community events <p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions of being an unsafe community - Transitioning neighborhoods - Loss of Amay James - Loss of retail - Loss of pool and park 	<p style="text-align: center;">Why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good location (near airport, uptown, major roads) - Quality public investments (Arbor Glen, golf course, recreation centers, library, greenway) - Housing affordability and quality of construction - Neighborhood activities - Supportive services (Thompson Family Care, CMPD) <p style="text-align: center;">Why Not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of diversity in household income - Lack of retail diversity - Negative perceptions - Test scores and dropout rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of creative arts - Neighborhood residents and organizations acquiring vacant houses, land, and problem properties - More community gardens to assist families

Based on this activity, our group identified shared values that would help us craft the vision for our community:

- Taking control of our own community
- Teaching others to fish. **“Give a man a fish and he will have food for the day. Teach a man to fish, he has food for a lifetime.”**
- Serve as an example for community involvement



Our Vision

Our vision is the unifying statement for our community that will guide our decision making and reminds us of what we are trying to reach. It is based on our shared values and preferences for our community's future. It combines the best of what was, what is, and what could be.

OUR VISION:

EMPOWER WEST BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOODS BY EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, MODELING POSITIVE BEHAVIORS FOR OUR YOUTH, AND PROMOTING COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL.

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 for 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. We utilized the Affinity Mapping Process, detailed below:

- Grab some sticky notes from the table. Keeping the vision statement in mind, write down as many of the following as you can think of, one per sticky note:
 - Current action items getting you closer to our vision.
 - Current realities keeping you from our vision.
 - Possible priorities/actions items to get us closer to our vision.
- Place the sticky notes on the chart paper.
- Organize the ideas by natural categories. Which ideas go together? Feel free to move any post-it note to another place. Move yours, move those of others, and feel free to do this. Do not be offended if someone moves yours to place where you feel it does not belong, just move it where you believe it goes.
- Once everyone agrees on the groups, give each one a name.

This activity led us to the following categories:

- Education
- Reinvestment
- Behavior Modeling

The board then identified the three priorities that were most important for us to begin working on to achieve our vision:



Potential Projects

The board then began to brainstorm on possible projects or activities that aligned with their strategic priorities:

Family Involvement and Education

- Strengthen relationships with Barringer, Reid Park and Harding University administration
- Work with CMS to increase parental engagement
- Assist feeder high school (Harding) with mentoring for students

Reinvestment

- Identify vacant and foreclosed houses,
- vacant land and other distressed properties
- Develop a **property acquisition** committee within the Coalition

Modeling Positive Behaviors

- Strengthen relationships with Barringer, Reid Park and Harding University administration
- Work with CMS to increase parental engagement
- Assist feeder high school (Harding) with mentoring for students

Action Items for 2012-2014

After identifying potential projects, the board voted on one project to pursue for each strategic priority in 2012-2014:



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IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION, WE WILL FOCUS ON THESE THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



THROUGH 2012-2014 WE WILL FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITY:

