

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Workshop on Monday, November 3, 2014 at 5:13 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Dan Clodfelter presiding. Councilmembers present were Al Austin, John Autry, Michael Barnes, Ed Driggs, Claire Fallon, Patsy Kinsey, Vi Lyles, LaWana Mayfield, Greg Phipps and Kenny Smith.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember David Howard

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## CLOSED SESSION

Motion was made by Councilmember Barnes, seconded by Councilmember Phipps, and carried unanimously to go into closed session pursuant to (A) NCGS §143-318.11 (a) (4) to discuss matters relating to the location of an industry or business in the City of Charlotte, including potential economic development incentives that may be offered in negotiations; and (B) NC General Statute §143-318.11 (a) (3) to consult with attorneys employed or retained by the City in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege and to consider and give instructions to the attorneys concerning the handling or settlement of Georgia Ferrell, as Administratrix of the Estate of Jonathan A.P. Ferrell v. City of Charlotte, Randall W. Kerrick, et al., 3:14-CV-47.

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## THESE THINGS MATTER FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY

**City Manager Ron Carlee** said the first presentation we have tonight is from Rebecca Hefner from Neighborhood and Business Services. She is going to abbreviate her presentation if you would be interested in having a more detailed presentation we will be happy to arrange that for you. She is going to report on one of the most publicized pieces of research that has come out related to the City of Charlotte. This is the report on economic mobility that ranks Charlotte 50 out of 50, with 50 being on the bottom of cities where there is economic Mobility. Ms. Hefner has done a lot of research on this report; it is being quoted in just about every meeting I go to in Charlotte, although the depth of knowledge about the report I would say is more shallow than deep. The report itself, as she will describe to you, has some fairly significant methodological and data constraints and it would be very easy to get bogged down in an analysis of the analysis, which we are going to try not to do. What is important is the underlying theories of what promotes economic mobility and what we are suggesting is that rather than getting bogged down in the ranking is that we look very closely at the underlying theories and assess where are we in the things that matter about economic mobility, thus the title of Ms. Hefner's presentation. We also sent to you the most recent version of strategic framework on the Mecklenburg Livability's Plan. We are not going to talk about that tonight; I will be sending you some additional information about that later in the week. I think it is important that you also look at that framework and think about how this analysis and what we do about it may relate to that larger framework; likewise in the Sustainability presentation and Parks and Recreation presentation which you will be getting later tonight.

Finally, I do want to reiterate there is a lot of discussion about this report and about what the real capacity is for people to move up economically in this community and I am actively engaged in discussions with both the county and the Foundation for the Carolinas to look at how we might come together at a community level in order to expand economic opportunity going forward in this community. With that I will turn it over to Ms. Hefner for her abbreviated presentation which I hope will whet your appetite and you will demand that she comes back and does more.

**Rebecca Hefner, Neighborhood and Business Services** said thank you for having me here tonight. I will try to go quickly. I have a tendency to get lost sometimes in the analysis of the analysis but I will move through it tonight. I was introduced last week; I think the best introduction I've gotten in a long time from Carol Jennings, if I can put her on the spot. She called me a data geek with a heart, so that is just to let you guys know what you are in store for tonight.

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I am here to talk about the Quality of Opportunity Project; Charlotte got a lot of attention and has had a lot of attention about this nationally. When you rank 50 out of 50 you get compared top to bottom. I would just say there are a lot of limitations to the study; what they looked at and what they are defining is Economic Mobility which is the odds of moving from the bottom 20% of incomes to the top 20% of incomes. I am happy to talk about these measures in more detail but this is the part I'm going to skim through a little bit. I think Manager Carlee did a good job of introducing that there are some limitations here and we will look at what is really important about this tonight and we can talk more about this at another time if you are interested. This is the map that came out with the study and the headlines are splashed across lots of newspapers really showing not just when you look at the rankings, but saying there are really these broad patterns around economic mobility. They vary substantially at the regional level. Two of the things that pop out; one is the lighter colors here, is the higher economic mobility so rural areas tend to exhibit higher levels of economic mobility in part due to the movement of people from rural areas to the city and then the most obvious pattern, really is the mobility is lower in areas with larger African-American populations and what they really looked at is this tends to be the case for all people in particularly the southeast, but there is lower economic mobility for both blacks and whites. We really are not so much following along a ranking of one to 50, but Charlotte is part of a cohort of cities in the southeast that have a history of discrimination and disenfranchisement. That is history that is on the ground that has kept people and the community as a whole from achieving its full potential. The relevant question for the study is not really how do we rank, although we've gotten a lot of attention for that and it has brought important attention to this issue in our community, but the relevant questions are really what is the opportunity that people have in our community, how do we know, what are the community characteristics that can help people achieve and then how can we work broadly and collaboratively both within the City and across the community to create a community that has opportunity for all. What is really valuable about this study is if you start to dig deep into it, somewhere in the hundreds of pages of the technical appendices where I found myself one lonely afternoon; there really is an underlying theory here about what matters for economic mobility.

I'm going to take a quick look at the variables that they looked in the study. They looked at a set of variables and it is not necessarily those variables that are important, it is what makes up those variables that matters. They looked at a whole wide range of things that relate to community. On the left here you have factors that are related positively so as these go up in a community, economic mobility goes up and then on the right negative correlates, meaning as those things go up, economic mobility goes down. It is really looking at not so much what are the individual factors that help an individual person achieve but what are the community level factors. Some of them provide for more opportunity and some of them diminish opportunity. I'm not going to go through each one; I'm just going to talk a little bit about where we are on some of them and how they relate to the work we are doing in the city and what we are doing as a community.

**Councilmember Smith** said I understand segregation, share of single mothers and high drop-out rate. Will you help me understand income inequality? I understand what the premise of income inequality is but in particular how it relates to Charlotte, I'm curious.

Ms. Hefner said we will talk about it in a little bit here; it is not one in particular that I've highlighted for the presentation. What they've done is take a look at a whole broad variety of variables and some of them had significant relationship and some of them didn't and this is for the whole national data set. I haven't looked at specifically what this means in Charlotte, but it is something that I can do. This is looking at the national data set which covers 6.5 million children across the whole entire country.

Mr. Smith said fair enough, thank you.

**Councilmember Lyles** said could you do a quick definition of what it meant nationally?

Ms. Hefner said yes, they looked at a measure that was related to the top 1% of incomes and how far away that is from the bottom 99% so nationally, I don't remember the exact numbers on it, but it is what that gap is. I'm happy to follow-up with that in more detail if you are interested in learning more about that.

Looking at “These Things Matter”; the first is diversity. They looked at a lot of measures in the study related to segregation so let me preface this part of the presentation; there are a couple of maps that go along with these slides. They are really for illustration to think about how you can start to use this data. This presentation is not an analysis unto itself, so when we start with diversity we are looking at diversity within neighborhoods, housing diversity, diversity in schools and the benefits that come to people when they have exposure to diversity, exposure to social and labor networks, new possibilities, exposure to new mentors, but also the fact that all of our children will be operating in a very diverse world and that exposure helps everyone learn how to operate with others. This idea that segregation is important continues and they looked at a variable about a short commute and this is really not necessarily about the length of the commute in general and in Charlotte we have about 40% of people that have a commute that is less than, we measure at 20 minutes, they measured it at 15. This is really more about urban form; it is telling us that sprawl and segregation, land use and transportation and vehicle dependency; that these things matter. You think about, just for example, the accessibility of jobs and where affordable housing is in relation to those jobs, looking at vehicle dependency and as you start to dig into this variable about short commute you get new information about what promotes opportunity for people. Another ranking that we received recently, the Charlotte Metro Region ranks the fifth most sprawling large metro in the United States so that sprawling pattern of development which also tends to create sorting out and segregation along income and racial and ethnic lines has been our past. We are ranked high on that but we are also looking as a city at a Community Investment Plan (CIP) that really looks at how do people get around, how are we connected, how do we have housing diversity and access between jobs and neighborhoods. It is an important component of economic mobility because we know that these things matter.

The next variable that they looked at was single mothers and as you dig into this one, what we are really looking at is that family support matters. They looked at the percent of families with children with a single female head of household. If you look at little more broadly in Charlotte, 49% of children are raised by single parent families and around 44% of those children are living in poverty. A single family parent family can compound stress and reduce time that is available to spend with children in schools particularly if there are long commutes or mismatch between housing and jobs. Family support is really critical and also when you dig into this variable a little bit you have to understand that mother’s age and education matters; it is not just family structure. But family support does matter; this is one of the most robust correlates to Economic Mobility and the City provides family support primarily through housing programs as well as a number of programs that support children and youth, which we will talk about a little bit later.

The next component of These Things Matter is engagement, so when you look at social capital Charlotte is a really generous and engaged community and it is hard to imagine that Charlotte ranks low on social capital, it doesn’t always resonate with us, but we do. It is because of an index like this where the components are voter participation, whether or not people return their census forms and then participated in community organizations. Here you can see this as a proxy for people who have trust in civic institutions and who believe that their voice matters, that they have a say and what they do and say makes a difference. It was illustrated just quickly in Charlotte, this is a map of voter participation, the darker color is the higher percentage of voter participation and then the dots are neighborhood organizations that participated in the last neighborhood board retreat that was hosted by the city of Charlotte. Places where neighborhoods are engaging with the city where people are encouraged to get involved, where individuals are being empowered, they are made to feel that their voice matters and that their actions make a difference and all along building trust with local government. These are really important components of social capital and an important component of building efficacy and engagement and social ties and trust in civic institutions. These things contribute to and promote economic mobility.

Two about youth and then I will summarize. The next variable they looked at was the Teenage Labor Force Participation Rate and of the really many things they studied, this is interesting because it had one of the strongest correlations, more so than things you might expect like the divorce rate or test scores or even segregation. The teenage labor force participation was a really robust correlate to economic mobility. It underscores how important it is for teens to enter the labor force, to get work experience now that helps them get jobs later. They get exposed to the

world of work; they have access to labor market networks and new mentors, but they are also getting experience that helps them understand their part in the community and that what they do and say matters; just a quick illustration of the Mayor's Youth Employment Program and where interns and employers are located throughout the city.

Mr. Smith said can you explain the dots.

Ms. Hefner said the red dots on this map were the interns and the home location of the interns and then the purple squares are where the employers were located. They don't match one to one because some employers had more interns.

Finally, Student Support matters. They measured the drop-out rate and their surprise was a strong correlate to economic mobility but it is not really just about graduating from high school. It is really this cradle to career path that a community has that supports children and their success and all their steps along the way that gets them to high school graduation so it is not necessarily a measure of school success so much as it is a broader measure of the community and how it supports children as they progress through that pathway. The city provides support in a number of ways to students through programs like the Mayor's Mentoring Alliance and the Neighborhood School Partnership Initiative and Out of School Time funding and this map just shows the location of Out of School Time Programs and the Neighborhood School Partnerships that are related with the drop-out rate for neighborhood profile areas.

I've rushed through it as quickly as I can but I just want to leave you with this summary which is really this underlying theory that not so much the specific variables that were looked at in this study, but what those variables are telling us about what matters for economic mobility. It is simple at its core that community matters and people matter so in places that are more diverse and not just the population, but job diversity and housing diversity, income diversity, places that are more inclusive so all of those different populations have a voice and feel they are a part of the community, where communities are more connected, both physically and socially and where they are more compact with better access to jobs and housing and shopping and amenities. Those are places that tend to exhibit higher economic mobility and then on the individual side where people have a voice, where they feel like they matter in the community, where they believe that their actions make a difference and that they can accomplish things and where they are empowered, those are the places that exhibit greater economic mobility as a community. It is a little different from those individual level factors but it is really the message that we hear if you take a look and do a little deeper dive into those variables.

Mr. Carlee said again we would like to make a deeper dive into this available. Different council committees may be interested in having a presentation and seeing a deeper look at it. We are taking it very seriously and as I said we are engaged with a conversation with our other partners because obviously to affect economic opportunity one organization can't do it by itself, it really takes all of us coming together and we had I think a very constructive meeting last week and have others planned.

**Mayor Clodfelter** said just the start of a long process of discussions.

Ms. Lyles said I loved the presentation and it is great to have a geek doing some of this work because there is a lot of geek work around this to be done so I'm going to ask you if you could help me with two things. Ruby Payne did this whole thing on poverty in 2005, 2006 and 2007 and I was wondering how that might relate because that very much dealt with the people side of it and then I think Eugene Robinson wrote a book, Disintegration and basically said there were not three classes, there were four and the third class is where our focus ought to be. Again, just a little bit of what I'm saying is there is tons of data out on these things; there are lots of theories so when we are starting to talk about this, I know they have written this great study and I haven't had a chance to go through all of it, but I just wonder where does it fit altogether and if you've got some time to kind of help us understand that I'd be delighted to hear a perspective on it. I think it is important because if we start on this task force manager and we are talking about this thing I'm just concerned the latest and the greatest with the nicest graphics versus what has been discussed and brought forward and evaluated as successful in dealing with some of these, it really does make a difference if you're switching up all the time. It is like to program to program  
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to program; I just wonder where the foundations are between all of this work that ought to be a focus for us and do that in a way that is valid.

Mr. Carlee said I very much expect that will be part of our collective effort, including in there we will be looking at leading practice that is really evidence based so that as we try to affect change we do so in ways that have some proven experience behind them. Rebecca will be a part of that effort again collectively bringing in some other resources to understand that larger context, very good question.

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## **SUSTAIN CHARLOTTE REPORT CARD**

**City Manager Ron Carlee** said we would like to bring Sustain Charlotte up next if that is alright and you will see some overlap in some of the concepts that are discussed between the first presentation and this one and then I think you will see some overlap with the middle presentation and the third one.

**Meg Fencil, Sustain Charlotte** said I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share some important information with you tonight that we believe will help us all make more informed decisions about where we need to focus our limited time and resources. We'd also like to thank the many city and county staff who provided data for the report as well as reviewed for accuracy. Sustain Charlotte in case you are not familiar with us is a local non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring choices that lead to a healthier and more vibrant community for generations to come. In August we published the first independently researched and written sustainability report card for Charlotte and Mecklenburg County using publicly available county wide data. We wrote the report to not only inform elected officials and staff but all residents of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and the report is available as a free download at [sustaincharlotte.org](http://sustaincharlotte.org). Assessing our sustainability is important because it is an indicator of a community's long-term economic, social and environmental health. After viewing similar studies done around the country, we decided to analyze nine dimensions on sustainability and those are air quality, energy use, equity and empowerment, food, jobs and income, land use, transportation, waste and water use. The report covers 57 metrics and offers 94 recommendations. Within each dimension we analyzed several different metrics and calculated a grade for each metric as well as for each dimension and when adequate data was available we calculated two scores for each metric, a local trend score and a national comparison grade.

The local trend grade asked the question, are we making progress, staying the same or losing ground on this metric locally over time. If a metric improved on average by 5% or more per year it received an A; if it improved by 1% to 5% percent per year it received a B, if it changed less than 1% per year it received a C and so on for D and F. The national comparison grade answers the question how well are we performing compared to the national average or in some cases the national comparison of metro areas. This grade was based on the difference between the national average and our performance for the most recent year that data was available. If we performed 30% better than the national average we received an A; if 6% to 29% a B, if within 5% a C and so on for D and F.

Now I will show you the individual slides for each of the nine dimensions so you can see how well we are performing by issue and you will notice that some of the metrics have no grade; there is just a horizontal slash. For some metrics we were unable to draw comparison to a number of causes such as too few years of data to confidently calculate a trend. Data that was collected in different ways locally and nationally, problems with spatial scale or lag time in reporting of national data. First we will look at the ability of our residents to find and maintain a job that provides sufficient income to meet their household needs. We found in 2013 our unemployment rate of 9.3% was three times higher than it was in 2000. The percent of families and children in poverty doubled between 2000 and 2011. The good news is that with our growth of clean jobs, which are jobs that produce goods and services with an environmental benefit exceeds the national average, but unfortunately the wages for those jobs do not. We recommend increasing communication between employers and education providers to insure that graduates possess skills that are in local demand and developing workforce training programs to close the skills mismatch between unemployed workers and employer needs.

A sustainable community provides all of its residents with fair access to livelihood, education and resources, full participation in political and cultural life and self-determination in meeting their basic needs. We found an increasing number of residents, including 53% of renters in Mecklenburg County are spending over 30% of their income on housing. We also spend 26% of our income on transportation costs compared to a national average of only 19%. The good news is that despite our increasing household expenses we are generous in Charlotte. Over time our per capita giving to charities has increased dramatically. We recommend prioritizing existing communities for economic development and redevelopment, encouraging compact mixed use developments so residents can spend less on transportation and live close to their daily destinations and expanding transit biking and pedestrian infrastructure to increase access to jobs and education. Our Metro area, as you just heard, is one of the fastest growing in the county and with that growth of course comes land use challenges. Unlike many pedestrian oriented cities in the northeast we really experience most of our growth during the era when most households owned at least one car, so we've inherited these auto oriented land use patterns and many associated sustainability challenges with them.

In 2014 the Charlotte, Gastonia, Rock Hill area was ranked the fifth most sprawling large metro in the US. We have 21% more developed land per person than the national average and the trust for public lands parks score ranked Charlotte 57<sup>th</sup> out of the 60 largest US cities. We are building more parks but our park growth hasn't kept up with our population growth. Our park acreage per person actually declined 8% between 2007 and 2011. The good news is that we are setting aside more land for preservation and our parks on average are very large. Our residential density has increased an average of three percent per year since 2000 and increasing residential density reduces sprawl and its associated cost. We recommend planning future land use by developing policy documents with measurable goals, offering smart growth alternatives to zoning regulations that encourage sprawl, supporting sustainable redevelopment of vacant properties and implementing the updated Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Master Plan which will greatly improve our access to parks.

Of course the farther that people live away from their jobs, their children's school and the grocery store and all of those daily amenities the more time they are likely to spend caught behind the wheel and stuck in traffic. About 93% of us commute to work by car and 83% of those trips are taken alone. In 2011 only 42% of our roads in Charlotte had a sidewalk on at least one side, but the good news is that transit ridership on CATS' buses and light rail has more than doubled between 2000 and 2012. In 2003 we only had one mile of bike lanes and now we have 174 with more being built all the time. We recommend increasing funding for bike and pedestrian infrastructure, securing funding to execute the remainder of the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan and converting existing streets to complete streets that have pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks and bicycling infrastructure such as bike lanes.

The ways that we travel also strongly influences our air quality. Mecklenburg County exceeds the federal safety limit for ground level ozone also known as the precursor to smog. Smog is especially dangerous to children because their lungs are still developing, to the elderly who often have diminished lung functioning and people with respiratory or circulatory problems. Most of the smog forming emissions, 87% of nitrogen oxide emissions and 51% of volatile or organic compounds comes from vehicles and construction equipment. Also our levels of fine particulate matter which is PM 2.5 are within the federal safety limits, but they are still 7% higher than the national average and about 91% of Mecklenburg County's particulate matter comes from vehicles and construction equipment. We recommend providing safe, affordable, convenient alternatives to driving, replacing sprawl with compact, walkable and transit oriented development and replacing diesel powered construction equipment with less polluting models.

Reliable access to healthy fresh food that is affordable is foundational to basic human health. About 17% of households between 2009 and 2011 suffered from food insecurity which is defined as the inability to know where your next meal is coming from. The percentage of households receiving food assistance more than doubled between 2005 and 2012 and in 2010 there were 60 census tracts within Mecklenburg County or food deserts, so that means that they are more than one mile from a full service grocery store in an urban area of 10 miles in overall area. The good news is that our ratio of farmers markets to residents has increased over time but

it is still lags pretty far behind the national average. We recommend identifying and implementing strategies to promote construction of full service grocery stores in food deserts, allowing temporary farmers markets on public property and providing nutritional education to both parents and children.

As a rapidly growing country we need to sustainably dispose an increasing amount of waste generated by both residents and businesses. The waste metrics were calculated differently throughout the country, so we don't have any national comparison grades. We found that the per person residential recycling rate remain relatively unchanged for the past 15 years. Many large apartment properties do not offer residential recycling and they are not required to by law. The good news is the amount of yard debris that is being collected has increased over time which is good because we basically live in an urban forest and the amount of commercial and construction and demolition waste that is being landfilled has decreased over time. We recommend enacting a pay as you throw pricing system for waste pick-up, establishing a comprehensive recycling law with minimum requirements for residential, commercial and industrial, setting a goal and creating a plan to work toward zero waste and providing small businesses with recycling services and requiring participation.

**Councilmember Smith** said this is anecdotal at best but I'm curious, and I think I understand you correctly, but you are saying that our recycling per person hasn't increased over the last 15 years?

Ms. Fencil said the shear tonnage has but we took the tonnage being recycled and divided it by population for each year and we found that it has not changed significantly. All of the numbers that we used are in the appendix at the back of the report. We will be happy to follow-up.

Mr. Smith said anecdotally I know that I got a lot of calls when Inland wasn't performing properly and all the recycle bins on my street tend to be jam packed and I run out recycling room so I was just curious as to how resulted in a net decrease.

Ms. Fencil said energy use was one of the highest scoring dimensions in our report and of course our economy and our lifestyles are dependent on a constant supply of energy. We use about 21% more electricity than the average American but we use less natural gas. That is largely due to our climate. We are warmer on average than most of the US. Our number of LEED certified buildings; that is Leadership, Energy and Environmental Design, has increased over time but still lags the national average. A really bright spot on the energy dimension is that Charlotte has the 11<sup>th</sup> highest number of energy star buildings per person nationally. An energy star building must be more energy efficient than 75% of similar buildings nationwide. We recommend providing residents with energy efficiency educational materials, setting ambitious goals for increasing low goal renewal for energy production years and insuring that state and federal tax credits for renewable energy and energy efficiency are continued.

Our population is growing but the amount of water available to us of course remains unchanged. Our analysis is limited to water use but in future reports we plan to evaluate water quality as well. By 2050 our region's demand for water is expected to exceed supply in drought years. We found that in light of recent water pollution incidents we need to better understand patterns of water usage as well increase security of our waterways. Eight-one percent of Mecklenburg streams are impaired which means they are not suitable for their primary purpose of recreation. The good news is that both our residential and per capita water consumption is decreasing. We recommend educating residents about the benefits of water saving products, identifying opportunities to harvest and reuse water and regulating water quality near coal burning power plants. We also believe it is very important that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department continue water audits, benchmarking and incorporating impacts of climate change into their long-term plans.

This final slide shows both local and national comparison grades for each dimension averaged over the metrics. We recommend that the city set short, medium and long-term goals around all of these metrics, determine what policies and strategies are needed to reach those goals and engage residents, businesses and non-profits to assist in executing those strategies. We hope you will continue to engage Sustain Charlotte as a trusted partner in moving Charlotte towards its

long-term sustainability. We are eager for your feedback, either now or we'd be happy to meet with you individually and we hope that you will use the report as a great resource and we look forward to speaking to you again.

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## **MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION PLAN**

**Director of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Jim Garges** said I appreciate the opportunity to come tonight and this is just a brief overview; you've got the slides and you can get into more depth about this later. I want to talk a little bit about where we are with the Master Plan. Back in 2008 we really did our first Master Plan for Park and Recreation and that was the base line and benchmark. Since that time we've done an update of the Master Plan. I think the good news is in a lot of the reports that you saw tonight is there is work that needs to be done, there are things that we can do, but the good news is here in Charlotte we can do these things. If we want to make a change in land use, if we want to make more parks available to people, if we want to do these things we've got the capability to do it. The Plan kind of gives you a snapshot of where are we currently since 2008, where can we go, what do people want to see us do and then the other important part of any Plan is how are we going to get there, what are we going to do about it and what are the recommendations. That is really what you have in the heart of a Master Plan. There are over 1000 different pages and we won't go through every one of those tonight, but what we do in the Plan is give you an opportunity to go through some of these recommendations. A lot of things are in the Plan, it is not just a capital plan, it is a management plan, it is a land use plan, it gives our department an opportunity to manage based on what the citizen's needs are.

This Master Plan is built entirely on what the citizens of Mecklenburg County told us they want and what they need. The first part of the plan spent a lot of the time; just like it did in 2008, going out and scientifically asking people what do you want, what do you need and when do you need it. There is a whole series of results that came out of that part of the plan that I think are important. And these are some of the things that came out of there. What people want are more parks, more greenways, they want them closer to home and they want them sooner and that is the challenge that we have. In the plan you will see a lot of priority rankings and rankings are important; it doesn't mean that if your need for an equestrian trail is number 30, it doesn't mean we are not going to do any equestrian trails, but what it does say is the most important needs are ranked up at the top. If we have limited resources and the majority of the people want things closer up to the top, try and meet some of those needs earlier rather than later if you can. This is an important chart I think for you to look at later.

This is an important one because we hear a lot of conversation about what is going on in America, what is going on in Mecklenburg County in terms of trends. These are national averages in terms of activity levels. It is important to look at national averages, compare it to home, make some judgments based on that and then that helps develop the plan. There are just some interesting things happening; football as an example is going down, you may know that yourself. A lot of field sports are going up like lacrosse, a lot of sports that we don't think that much about, or we didn't participate in when we were younger, have really kind of fired up so you need to pay attention to some of the trends. The other thing that is important, and you can't see it up here, is what is your level and your standard; where do you want to be as a community. We do that by looking at national trends, looking at national standards, taking a look at what works for Mecklenburg, not just what works in Cincinnati or what works in Philadelphia, what works here, what makes sense here. It is a blending of those trends, it is a blending of professionals and it is a blending of what the top 40 communities do across the country and you come up with standards. For instance we want to have more park land than the average; we are at 22,000 acres right. We've picked up 5,000 acres of park land in the last five years and that is a good thing, but we still have a long way to go to meet some of these things.

These are core program areas, interesting things that we provide and then you will get into a number of recommendations in the plan. What you will see is the full plan later on this year and then I will be going out to all the different towns and presenting the plan in its entirety and asking for the plan to be adopted. This is what we did in 2008; we went to the towns, we came



back to the City of Charlotte, then we came to the Board of County Commissioners for full adoption of the plan and it worked great. Then all the towns, including obviously the City of Charlotte endorsed the plan the last time and I'm sure that you will again. There are a lot of different recommendations in here, but I think it is important to kind of keep in line with some of the buckets. We've got all the indoor activities that occur within our community centers, we need these large recreation centers to meet the needs of the community. We need to expand existing community centers that we have in the neighborhoods. If we do those things over the next few years we are going to meet some of these indoor recreational needs. We've got to make sure that we get out and make these sensitive areas that are left in the county before development occurs. We are on it; Trust Republic Land buys all of our large land acquisitions, we internally buy a lot of the smaller ones and then we have brokers that go out and get greenway property. Every possible way, every possible group that is out there to help us buy land we are moving and the county has been behind it completely. We just purchased about 1,300 acres of land over the last year and a half so we are moving in the right direction.

Rec Centers, I talked about that. You will see maps to show you where these things are. That is not a pool we are going to build, I wish we could but there are lots of pools. Playgrounds are important and this is the capital plan that you will see in there. I'm going to close with just one comment. What is important in Parks and Recreation delivery is that it is accessible to all; that means you can get to it; that means you can afford to participate when you get there. Our rule is to make sure that we do those two things in this plan and we do that primarily through good quality staff participation. Everybody in this room on this side and some of the other side that are your staff members have worked actively on this plan and have done a wonderful job. Ryan has been here a short period of time and he has been on it. I appreciate the time tonight; I'll be back a little bit later and give you more details of the plan, but don't hesitate to send or ask any questions.

**Councilmember Smith** said my wife is from St. Louis and when you go to some of these old line national cities you end up with a lot of public parks that were donated from the private sector and a lot of this probably goes back to the turn of the century. What percentage of our park land is donated by individuals to the county for use and how does the private sector fit into this for some of their philanthropic goals? Are we able to leverage some of our resources from some other folks in trying to achieve this?

Mr. Garges said let me start with the last one because it has been a challenge I think; when it comes to the arts and it comes to education, to the philanthropic world we do great, when it comes to parks, not so good. I would probably put it at a D- and there are probably a number of reasons for that. I think the way the county has developed over the years is perhaps one; maybe we don't do a good enough job asking. I think there is a lot of interest in parks, but it has traditionally been; well I think the county does that or the city does that and that becomes a challenge when you go into the philanthropic world to ask for money. I think the other parts of the question in terms of the parks and how they developed; many of our parks were not given to the city, but a few were. Greenway land is primarily donated but that is because it is in the floodplain and you can't do anything with it. We don't take development to the point where you have a cash or dedication in lieu of ordinance; we've not exercised that kind of right. North Carolina's laws are a little bit different than some other parts of the county when it comes to some of those things. I think the good thing here is when it comes to park land is that we've got 22,000 acres and that is a good thing. I think the challenge we have is to make those parks accessible as we grow and accessible means you can have a park but if it is across I-277, you can't get to it. So the goal is a park of some type within six blocks, a ten minute walk of every resident. That is a big charge in a county like we have but I think over time we can do a better job.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said this is for our City Manager; how are we relating the two previous conversations that we had with this conversation to make sure that we are looking at a comprehensive approach? Even though we didn't get a chance to spend a lot of time on the outdoor pool capital improvement, when you look at it you see that there is a suggestion of constructing six new outdoor family aquatic centers and renovate/expand one existing pool from 25,000 square feet to 30,000 square feet. So how are we identifying where those six are going to be constructed so that it actually ties in with the conversation that we are having regarding

upward mobility like we know libraries were closed. We know that stronger communities are communities that have libraries and the libraries that were chosen were in communities that were predominantly lower income so that was an impact. How are we balancing these conversations to have a comprehensive approach?

**City Manager Ron Carlee** said we are largely doing that by each of the processes trying to be inclusive and collaborative just as Mr. Garges talking about including a lot of people in the development of the plan. What we don't have is an overall framework that systematically connects all those dots. That is why I keep coming back to the Mecklenburg Livability Plan as potentially one framework that could help us look at the system as a whole and how the different pieces fit in. Overall I would say we are doing reasonably well without that from the standpoint of everybody trying to include as many people as they can in the individual processes so that people are not creating plans like this one within a vacuum.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CITIZENS FORUM

### **CATS Route 11-U Service Discontinued to the Pavilion**

**Brandi Martin, 10343 Wheatside Drive** said our issue is with the 11-U and the changes that they made recently. They took the bus away from the Pavilion area which was our bus stop. We have to walk 20 to 30 minutes just to catch the bus and there is no sidewalk where we are and there are no street lights. We are pretty much walking that distance to catch the bus. Early in the morning when it is dark and it is freezing cold and there is also other people that take the same bus. They live a little further than we do and they have to get a cab just to catch the bus. We've called CATS and tried to talk to everybody and nobody will give us any feedback or do anything about it so we just had to bring it to you. We just want the bus back over there because it is really inconvenient for us to walk 30 minutes just to catch the bus.

**Mayor Clodfelter** said where do you have to go now in order to.....

Ms. Martin said my aunt takes it downtown; she has to take the bus to work every morning and she leaves at 6:00 so she walks up there. I go to an internship downtown so I have to take the bus down there too.

Mayor Clodfelter said what is the closest stop that you have now?

Ms. Martin said the Circle K on University City Boulevard. The bus sits there for a good 15 to 20 minutes so it doesn't make sense why it can't just come straight up North Tryon; there is no construction up there that is stopping it for it not to be able to come and go to Circle K from there.

**Maria Johnson, 10343 Wheatside Drive** said this is also affecting the people that work overnight at UNCC that takes the bus with us and for me it is inconvenient because I have to take the bus and change over to #15 Cotswold and I noticed there is other construction going on uptown. Instead of me being at work at 8:15 I'm still in Billingsley Road because of the construction going on. With the bus not going to Pavilion it is not safe because I have to walk by myself. I started to leave my house at 5:50 a.m. and when I'm close to Mallard Creek I notice the bus is already sitting at the Circle K and then I started cutting it down to 6:00. We had it coming to Pavilion at 6:20 a.m. and it goes right through Deck E at UNCC and went to transit from there. What I'm asking is to find a way to reinstate that because it is not safe for me or for other people. This man is taking a cab from Wexford apartments every morning. He is paying \$5 to get dropped off at the old stop and then walk to Circle K. That is \$25 unless CATS is willing to reimburse that then I suggest that bus goes back or find other ways; one of those shuttle buses or something for us.

Ms. Martin said it just doesn't make sense that the bus can't come down to Pavilion if it is going straight up North Tryon and turn on Mallard Creek, it can just go straight up North Tryon and

turn on Pavilion and go to Circle K. It sits there for a good 15 to 20 minutes so it takes nothing but a minute or two to get there.

**City Manager Ron Carlee** said we've had a number of changes in this area due to construction and other items. What I would request is if our speakers could check with Assistant City Manager, Debra Campbell and CATS Director, Carolyn Flowers outside and talk a little bit about their issues and their ideas and then I'll be happy to follow-up with a full report to Council.

Ms. Johnson said I've been trying for three weeks to get in contact with Ms. Flowers. I have not gotten any feedback so I guess today is the day. I had a feeling I would get a call back today and I did get one from Pamela Wideman; this is after waiting three weeks.

Mayor Clodfelter said she is right over there in the corner and you are going to get her tonight.

Mr. Carlee said and Assistant City Manager, Debra Campbell.

### **Goode Development Complaint (Silver Oaks Apartments)**

**Erik Johnson, 1200 West Sugar Creek Road** said I might say some things that are going to ruffle your feathers because I have spoken to you about this situation. On September 16<sup>th</sup> I got a phone call that there was no reason for me to come downstairs and talk about my situation because it was a civil matter, but the young lady that has spoken to you about the business situation was dead on. Basically I have spoken to you all and Mr. Burney about my situation and about other situations about this eviction thing that is going on and it is not a Charlotte thing, it is share a thing. Basically what I'm saying is enough is enough because nobody should have to live in poverty. This eviction with the Silver Oaks thing where I paid my money, I'm out of thousands of thousands of dollars. For the last time I'm asking you all to show some compassion because there is no way in the world you can tell me it is a civil thing where I and my family is breaking up, where you have to make a meal out of our bathroom sink. Living in a hotel these many years ain't civil at all. These people have taken me to court and refused; this is half of the things I have on them and they refuse to come to court. There is no way in the world we have to live in poverty, it is just unbelievable; have to stay in a hotel because of eviction for three years. I just don't get that, I just don't. I spend my money, I work and stuff like that, I can go to every center, I can buy a car but I can't get a home. I can do anything I want, I don't break no laws or something like that and you mean to tell me I can't put my key in a door and get a home for an eviction that shouldn't be on me. Excuse me but I'm a little high pitch and I'm high tone Mayor, but enough is enough. Me and Mr. Burney have bumped heads about this and enough is enough. I have been all around the world with Ms. Pamela Wideman; I've done got the run around from this. Mr. Goode keep ducking and dodging me and they do all this type of stuff in these courts and like I said this is just half of what I have on them. I done went to the Secretary of State, anything that I had to do, not even to get my money back; just to get this eviction off of me. My wife just text me; my family is breaking up for eviction and it just blows my mind.

**Mayor Clodfelter** said the City doesn't normally deal with the eviction process, the court does. Let me ask you this, has legal services provided you some assistance?

Mr. Johnson said no, they said they don't the funds for this case. I went to Community Link and they have sent me to the Salvation Army and I've talked to Mr. Autry; I done been all over. I'm not trying to make nobody do nothing special or something like that but it isn't just me, I'm seeing school kids coming out of this hotel, hopping on a school bus because these landlords are just doing things. Why should people have to live in poverty and you can't have a place to live in three years because you have an eviction. I have an eviction that shouldn't even be on me. It just don't make no sense sir.

Mayor Clodfelter said have we put Mr. Johnson in touch with Legal Services, the Volunteer Lawyers Program?

**Alban Burney, City Manager's Office** said I have reached out to Mr. Johnson and worked with a group called Legal Shield. Someone from Legal Shield, they used to be prepaid legal, has

contacted him. I don't know what the outcome of the conversation was but again I reiterated the same thing that you just told him. At this point it is a civil matter.

Mayor Clodfelter said it is a court matter and only the court can solve the problem.

Mr. Johnson said Mr. Mayor I understand that but this is the problem I'm having. They came into your courtroom. You all are saying this is a court matter and that is what you all get with this policy, what this three-year eviction that is going on. It has taken three years. If you have an eviction you cannot get a place in three years and it just blows my mind.

Mayor Clodfelter said let me talk to Mr. Burney about some other ideas.

Mr. Johnson said I don't want to talk to him.

Mayor Clodfelter said no, I'm going to talk to him about some other ideas about some folks that might be able to get the court issue dealt with for you. The City doesn't run the court system; we don't run the court system, but let me talk to Mr. Burney about a couple other ideas and some people that may be able to help you.

Mr. Johnson said thank you.

Mayor Clodfelter said I will see if there are some other groups that we can come up with that can help you. I understand your situation.

### **I-485 MADD Dash**

**Warren Cooksey, 12033-G East Independence Boulevard** said I am Director of Outreach and Community Affairs for the North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 10 and I'm here tonight to let you know a few things about a great event that occurred. I regret that Councilmember Phipps stepped out. In District 4 yesterday, the first and only I-485 MADD Dash, the 5-K and 10K race on the unopened portion of I-485. NC-DOT partnered with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, hence the MADD part of the MADD Dash to host this fund raising event and I'm pleased to tell you it went off swimmingly; we had 798 runners run from Prosperity Church Road and a little over half of them made it to the 5-K turnaround at Mallard Creek. The other, little less than half made the 10-K turnaround at the I-85 Turbine Interchange and a good time was had by all. We had great weather, apart from some wind, but I'm here for a couple of particular reasons for the city. First of all, I sent the Chief's notes but I wanted to let you know that we are very appreciative that the Charlotte Fire Department provided an EMT for us, who fortunately was not even needed, which is exactly what you want to have happen when an EMT is present. Secondly, Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department were out in force to support the message of MADD and they also provided us with some traffic control. We were parking cars on the interstate on the other side of the concrete plant, because we knew that we didn't have a problem with parking for this race because we had a lot of space to do that. Again thanks to the Charlotte Fire Department and Charlotte Police Department for helping with such a successful run yesterday. Also I am here because one of your own ran and then left before the awards ceremony so I'm pleased to note for the record that Councilmember Lyles came in first in her age category and I'm not going to say what that category is so I'm here to present her with her award, which is a slice of I-485 from our materials and test with the MADD Dash I-485 badge on it, First Place 2014.

Mayor Clodfelter said did Phipps run?

Mr. Cooksey said I didn't see Councilmember Phipps run but he was out there yesterday.

Ms. Lyles said he walked.

Mr. Cooksey said I had the privilege of reading the names of every winner and when Councilmember Lyles came up, wow; Councilmember Lyles won, but you had gone by then so I'm glad to be able to come by tonight to make sure that you get your piece of 485 in recognition of your extraordinary first place finish in your age category.

mpl

**Councilmember Mayfield** said I was just wondering Mr. Mayor if the fundraiser was to help pay for the completion of I-485?

Mr. Cooksey said it is paid for it is just a little behind the accelerated schedule. I've lost track of the I-485 schedule but this time next year we will all be on it.

**Councilmember Driggs** said I was just wondering if Mr. Cooksey wants his seat back.

Mr. Cooksey said that and the tray table in the upright position.

**Councilmember Smith** said was there a toll associated with the race?

Mr. Cooksey said actually there was a charge to run because it was a fund raiser. I will not steal MADD's thunder by announcing the amount but when I asked a MADD representative yesterday how did you do and they were beaming with joy so I look forward to their announcement about how much we raised.

**Councilmember Barnes** said I actually have an issue to raise and I can't laugh about this with Mr. Cooksey and his official capacity. You will recall a few years ago Mr. Cooksey that former Mayor, now Governor McCrory had a lot of passion around the lighting along I-85 and I-77 and I have noticed that the lighting along I-85 through District 2 and into District 4 is out a lot in a lot of places all the time and it had been fixed during the DNC and now it is back to darkness. I will have our staff reach out to the Governor, but I wanted to reach out to you since you are here tonight to see if you could do something to help us get that lighting repaired for the safety of the traveling public on our interstates.

Mr. Cooksey said that is also what I'm here for. Thank you Mayor Pro Tem, I'll take a look into it.

**Councilmember Kinsey** said I want to piggy back on that; put I-277 on that list as well. It is totally dark. The one I noticed mostly was the John Belk Freeway as I was going to the Airport.

**Councilmember Fallon** said the other thing is the exit roads are not highway roads; they are using the right lane as an access road because the traffic backs up so much. I'm worried about a very bad accident.

Mr. Cooksey said which they?

Ms. Fallon said Sunset Road; every exit Sunset Road has it as you drive up. People are backed right into the highway trying to get off.

Mr. Cooksey said I will certainly take that up with the Highway Patrol and CMPD. We don't get to enforce anything we just get to build it.

Ms. Fallon said there has got to be something, some of those orange cones or something to keep them off. They can't keep off the highway because that is where they are waiting now to get back on the exit. That is happening all over Charlotte.

Mr. Cooksey said thank you Ms. Fallon, I will look into that too.

Mayor Clodfelter said aren't you glad you came?

Mr. Cooksey said absolutely; this is my third visit to the building today. I had a morning meeting, an afternoon meeting and tonight's meeting and I was just particularly delighted in the elevators to hear people talking about how well the race went yesterday. So again I appreciate the city staff that ran in the race in addition to Councilmember Lyles because they've been talking about it all day from what I can tell.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Councilmember Barnes, seconded by Councilmember Smith, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.



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Emily Kunze, Deputy City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 2 Hours, 45 Minutes  
Minutes Completed: November 11, 2014