

Outreach Team Meeting Agenda and Notes

February 10, 2021 6:00 –7:30 PM

ZOOM Meeting

1. Welcome & Introductions

14 members of the OT were present.

2. Goals & Guiding Values

Background: Our team wants to share the rest of the pieces that go along with the 33 draft objectives that you have helped us review. We have been working on creating goals and a guiding values statement that will introduce the objectives in their final form. There are 9 goals which center around the different objective clusters: Housing and Neighborhoods, Sense of Place, Community Engagement, Transportation, Training and Jobs, Environment, Public Spaces and Recreation, Education, and Health and Wellbeing. We'd like your feedback on this content and language used. We're also hosting sessions with Engagement Ambassadors, starting next week, to get input on these drafts. We are also asking for your feedback today on how the survey works so we can make changes/improvements before using this for those additional input sessions. For folks who are on the Outreach Team and are also Ambassadors, you can either submit the survey through today's meeting or through an Ambassador session.

Three questions for goal statements

- Do these **goals** feel true for you and your community? (Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
- Do you think these goals reflect the big picture values in this group of objectives? (Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
- What's missing? What suggestions do you have? Are these specific enough? (open ended text response)

Three questions on the overall Guiding Values statement

- Does this statement reflect the overall values from the draft objectives we reviewed? (Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
- Is a commitment to these values something you want to see from our local government? (Strongly agree to strongly disagree)
- Is it clear? Is something missing? What suggestions do you have for improvement? (open ended text response)

Big picture Questions and Feedback from the Team

- Why was the decision made to have demographic questions in the beginning?
 - This is a similar structure to what EAs do. There is a commitment to asking these questions.
- Previous Comprehensive Plans are mostly about land use and now we're getting into quality of life. Does this come up?
- Is there a centering statement or question at the beginning of all this like "Durham is doing a new comp plan and we're trying to include objectives etc. Etc.)?"

- There needs to be more clarity on who the audience is when we're wordsmithing – we need the right balance for residents and elected officials.
- We need to figure out how to paraphrase what's written here – it's a red flag. We need to make sure this is accessible and resonates with those who will be impacted.
- Put some multiple choice on some of these? The link to goals and objectives can be confusing since the “next” button is not as prominent. Following along with the survey was confusing for some folks
- Read “does this goal feel true” seems like it means currently, not aspirational. Should reframe and clarify this question.
- Reading level seems too high on the goal statements
 - What does rooted mean, what do we mean by this?
 - Somewhere in here, it needs to say gentrification because it's not clear what we mean here.
- Community relationships goal
 - The goal for local government is to do engagement—seems vague
- Training and Jobs
 - It would be helpful to have the word “goal” in front of the goal so that it stands out.
 - Looking for where it says people are adequately compensated –like a living wage.
- Transportation – no comments.
- Environment
 - There's a sustainability piece missing.
 - Some people might ask what is harmonious development? It needs to be more clear and concise so people don't spend so much time trying to decide what the words mean.
 - The objectives at the top seem confusing—what are we directing attention to?
- Public Spaces
 - Like this one- seems clear and succinct.
- Education – no comments
- Health and Wellbeing
 - Feels awkwardly worded “Durham centers” - how about Health and Wellbeing is at the center.
 - The way center is used in this one and the one before (education) feels weird. How about focused.
 - Should opportunities be highlighted somewhere?

Discussion & Reflection Notes

Engagement Ambassadors will be using this survey for our winter feedback sessions. Do you have any feedback/reflections on the survey or this process?

- Is it possible when you lengthy statements like this to have an audio component?
- If I was taking the survey and I had to read this survey, it would be off-putting. Having a voice reading through the survey with you is helpful.
- Visually bullet points would help.
- How do we maintain people's interest? Shorten this whole thing so people can respond.
- We need to educate community members on what the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and the expected outcome is. It might be helpful to go straight to that. What the ultimate intention is and educate the average reader. What it's going to accomplish and what can be done.
- Education will help to increase engagement. It is telling that even on this committee, I don't know what this all means.
- Under “accountable” in the very last sentence “white supremacist culture” - I think we can acknowledge this in a different way. I understand why we're using it but if someone picks this up 50 years from now, is that something we want to emphasize? It seems like a personal indictment. Systematic racism brings in more people and more focus on a broad sense of the problem than focusing on that one name, that one group, it's broader than just that. Maybe use “systemic racism” instead.

- I agree- even though we know what it is, calling it out in a such a strong way can make people react more negatively than we want them to. At the end of the day these issues are economic and affect black and brown communities as well as lower income white communities.
- We may need a larger, more encompassing word that includes other types of discrimination?
- What about something having to do with the power imbalance that is played out?
- Capitalism is the overload or overpowering – economic injustice, social injustice—something other than bam here it is in your face. It’s good to point it out but we have to be careful about how we point it out or people reading will shut down.

3. What’s next for this plan?

We couldn’t have gotten this far without your patience and belief in this work. You all have given us your time, expertise, and feedback that has allowed us to learn from you, build relationships with you all, and shape this process to be more equitable.

The next phase of this work is probably the most challenging. Planners notoriously have trouble communicating land use planning, processes and all the technical steps it takes to create a Comprehensive Plan. We’re really relying on your expertise and feedback to get this right.

We’ve spent the last 7 months together getting really familiar with how community input can form the goals and objectives for the Plan. This was a brand new process for us too and we’re hearing a lot of great feedback that the time we spent together has resulted in a thoughtful and intentional vision for the plan. Now is the time to start writing how we implement that vision.

The next phase of the plan is to create a map and policies for how development happens. This is the primary function of a Comprehensive Plan: to guide how new development is designed, where new development happens, when it happens, and what the community wants to see there.

But we know from our goals and objectives, that’s it’s not just about **new** development, but also about the decisions that local government makes to care for it’s residents. We need to design this process together to make sure the map and policies are working to achieve the goals and objectives.

We need to create this map and policies to cover the entirety of Durham city and county. We need to get to an appropriate level of detail to have a useful plan to inform what infrastructure decisions the city makes, what new development is expected to create, and how it benefits residents. We have a general approach that focus areas are how we can take a detailed look into specific parts of Durham and see which objectives and goals can be furthered in those areas and potentially applied to other areas. And we need general policies that apply to everywhere so we can ensure it all works together and we’re thinking holistically about the future we want for Durham. We also need to be honest and real about what’s possible and what it’s going to take to achieve our goals.

So with that, before we dive into the next phase, we want to hear from you. We want to make sure we’re preparing the right information for next meeting and being respectful of your time and expertise. What questions do you have about this important work that we can be sure to answer during or before our next discussion?

Discussion:

What questions do folks have that we can try to answer as we get into land use and policies in our next meeting?

- What ever happened to the flyer we put together?
 - We've been using it as a template for different events – used for promoting the comp plan, to recruit Ambassadors, used on social media.

- What information do we have now – are we through the part where we’re getting input from folks?
- Even though it’s called the Comprehensive Plan, it is hard to get your head around how comprehensive it really is. I’m not sure how to communicate that in a way that most people would understand. Would have to start with something that people on the street could understand, 15 sec elevator pitch, I think we’ve worked on that some.
- Objectives, guiding values- how do they all relate?
 - Preamble – we worked backwards
- Zoning – I know that’s a thing and vaguely understand that there are different types of zoning. To what extent will people get to decide what zones will be where, is part of the plan what’s included and what’s allowed in different types of zoning?
- One of my interests going forward in zoning and land use is resident oriented rather than dictated by developers, the tide is turning, a lot more pressure on developers to do what’s right for the people, hoping that what we do in this effort centralizes residents over developers.
- Is there a question that can be consistently asked throughout the process moving forward to get a sense of mistrust of developers and government - things that may be influenced by things in Washington or other national events. I’m interested in whether public sentiment around institutional mistrust continues through this whole process.
- Legislative changes that took away resident voices, taking away rights of petition, brings about some mistrust. My biggest concern as development moves into rural areas, and wetlands, not slated for dense development is that we look at those things more carefully before saying ok you have the land build whatever you want to build, more consideration. The City and the State DOT need to work together more closely on repairing infrastructure in corridors before more housing is built and builders need to have more stake in this too, not really giving anything back to these communities.
- I agree - We attend a lot of the same meetings together, developers used to not even contribute anything to the schools, but development on busy streets aren’t willing to put in a sidewalk to get from that development to commerce safely. Developers think that’s the City and County’s problem, approach as resident centered instead, really like the reference to institutional mistrusts, that is a factor.
- Another process question (also based on my direct experience with local government) - How much decision-making power do staff versus elected officials have to enact and enforce Comprehensive Plan things? I know that elected officials technically have the final say on things at the end of the day, but what kind of decisions are being made by staff that the general public isn't necessarily aware of?
- Will we need to consider the Comprehensive Plan and impacts to public housing complexes?
- Will information on projects that have already been planned and approved but not yet begun be included in the plan to bridge between the "old" system and the "new" Comprehensive Plan?

4. Finishing up (5 minutes)

- Notes from this discussion will be posted on the ENGAGEDurham website as well as included in a meeting follow-up email
- Engagement Ambassadors are finishing up seeking input about all objectives other than housing/neighborhoods through the end of February
- Social Pinpoint is open for input on Objectives through February 19th - help us spread the word!
- Please reach out if you are interested in helping to review the Durham Transit Plan’s ENGAGEDurham website. The Transit Team is hoping to update the site for readability and accessibility. Email brooke.ganser@durhamnc.gov if your interested!
- Are there any other announcements the group would like to share?
- Is there any feedback/suggestions on how we can improve our communication with you all and facilitation of meetings?
- Thank you!