



The Charlotte Community Benefits Coalition
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charlotte Community Benefits Coalition Continues the Call for CBAs, Clarity in Planning

As Charlotte continues its unprecedented period of economic growth in the wake of the passage of the city's 2040 Plan, the Charlotte Community Benefits Coalition remains steadfast in its commitment to make economic development a community driven process. It is vital that as the City of Charlotte moves forward with the Community Area Planning process to implement the 2040 Policy Map as well as major infrastructure projects like the Lynx Silver Line that communities are able to determine the future of how their communities grow.

The Community Area Planning process is one that we feel needs clarity as to its implications for communities across Charlotte. Currently, the Community Area Planning process has been noted by members of City Council and City staff as a process that will not change much along the corridors it intends to affect. However, the City's own website notes that whatever is formulated out of Community Area Plans will "provide more detailed guidance for the built environment including land use, design, transportation, and infrastructure." This sounds anything but inconsequential especially given the rapid development Charlotte has seen since the passage of the Charlotte 2040 Plan.

We also need to call into question the timing of when these planning sessions are taking place. Most of the early engagement around the Community Area Planning process is starting in the West corridor, the corridor with the least amount of engagement throughout the entirety of the process. Meanwhile, the sessions end in December with the South Inner geography which includes Dilworth and Myers Park, communities that have been intensely engaged with the 2040 Plan from the beginning.

Another open question is whether or not the maps that communities will engage with at the Community Area Planning sessions will be a true one-to-one translation between current Zoning Classifications and corresponding Place Types, and will communities be able to guide Place Types so that Zoning is neighborhood appropriate. It seems that through the 2040 Policy Map process areas throughout the city have been designated with Place Types that do not fit their current Zoning Classification. Thus, an adoption of a Place Type without any sort of

democratic process (i.e., a public forum and a Council vote) can drastically alter land use without a formal Zoning process. Charlotte City Council and staff have a responsibility to provide clarity through this process so that the public knows exactly what's happening to land use within their neighborhoods. These Community Area Planning sessions should be meetings for community members to learn and fully engage with what their neighborhoods will look like rather than just a planning session for outside developers.

We also want the City to push for Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) to be part of any project that utilizes public dollars and public land. We especially think this is something that needs to be utilized in any transit oriented development that is done for the City's Lynx Silver Line project. As we have seen with the Lynx Blue Line, the development of transit corridors has had an accelerating effect of displacing Black and Brown communities living near the transit development. This is most evident in the South End and NoDa areas where property values have rapidly soared thus raising rents and property taxes which force out working class residents who do not have the ability to pay for those increases.

While these areas received an influx of amenities and vital businesses (grocery stores and healthcare) that were long absent, it was done so after a wave of displacement that never benefited the communities which suffered years of disinvestment. In an effort to ensure that communities who live along the proposed Silver Line do not meet the same fate, we want the City to take seriously the recommendations of the Community Benefits Taskforce and implement Community Benefits Agreements for projects that utilize public dollars and land in order to ensure equitable development.

We are also requesting that the City follow the model set by the city of Austin, TX in terms of [transit tax usage for anti-displacement measures as well as implementing an Equity TOD \(ETOD\) model](#). Instead of planning for Traditional TOD which has historically included certain bonus incentives which have been sidestepped, we'd like to see a robust Zoning designation such as ETOD in Austin that has a comprehensive planning process that allows for fostering of small businesses and housing as well as a strong community input process that identifies communities to be impacted.

Throughout the history of Charlotte in the 20th and 21st century, we have seen how the growth of the City has adversely affected communities first through urban renewal and now through government guided gentrification. The Charlotte Community Benefits Coalition's goal is a future where communities have more self-determination about the development happening in their neighborhoods in order to have development that benefits them rather than displaces them and strains infrastructure. We ask that the City provide the following: (1) clarity in the Community Area Planning process, (2) more time for communities in the Crescent to engage with the Community Area Planning process, (3) implement recommendations made by our organization and the Community Benefits Taskforce, and (4) implement the model for a transit tax and ETOD that is being enacted in Austin, TX.