

Northeast Central Durham Livability Initiative

Innovation Study

Application

**Neighborhood Improvement Services Department
City of Durham**



2012

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Sustainable Communities:

City of Durham Response to Northeast Central Durham (NECD) Challenges

SYNOPSIS

The City of Durham has adopted several goals and initiatives to ensure the City of Durham is a “well-managed city”. One of the goals for the purpose of this study we will concentrate on Goal 3: Thriving Livable Neighborhoods – strengthen the foundation, enhance the value, and improve the quality and sustainability of neighborhoods.

How can the city address and change the perception of the overall quality of the neighborhood? All citizens deserve a living environment that is free of blight and economically viable.

How can the city revitalize neighborhoods and encourage neighborhood pride? Encouraging investment in neighborhoods maximizes the utilization of existing infrastructure, public facilities, and services.

How can the city increase transportation choices and local and regional connectivity? Residents of the City of Durham are spending an unbalanced amount of their income on transportation; if transportation choices are improved, residents can reduce their transportation costs. Public transportation options expand employment and post-secondary or vocational educational opportunities for Durham’s most vulnerable populations.

Strong and vibrant neighborhoods are key elements of a prosperous city. Tracking indicators of housing and community infrastructure, a strong social fabric, economic development, environmental quality and crime will allow citizens and decision makers to make strategic investments that build upon neighborhood assets while addressing neighborhood shortcomings.

A New Federal Approach –

A New City of Durham Approach Can It Work Here?



On June 16, 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) joined together to help communities nationwide improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment.

The three agencies agreed to collaborate to help communities become economically strong and environmentally sustainable. Rebuilding national prosperity starts with individual communities where generations from now and years to come can find good jobs, good homes, and a good life.

The partnership agencies incorporate six principles of livability into federal funding programs, policies, and future legislative proposals.

Awesome Example! Agencies throughout the federal government recognize the value of this new citizen participatory model of collaboration and so does the City of Durham. These words explain it all! The City of Durham has begun to discuss its communities as we embark on a new chapter of revitalization and possibilities. All changes begin with conversations and collaboration. On May 3, 2010 and May 4, 2010, dialogue between the community and various agencies led to both a heightened awareness and a comprehensive vision for Northeast Central Durham (NECD). This vision sets a foundation for a sustainable-livable community. Sustainable defined as a way of life dedicated to inclusiveness, education, diversity, economic stability, history, and service. These two days of intense discussion and deliberation between

community activists, federal, and local agencies reflects not only a new federal administration, but a movement necessary to leave rich legacies for future generations.

Positive development follows positive perception of place. Successful communities begin with establishing identity, marketing that identity, and then using that identity to physically impact current and future development. Conversation between the NECD community and agencies will create this identity and the goals to maintain its longevity

NECD Livability Study

Through discussion of ideas, the following areas are documented in this study: (1) a historical account of NECD, (2) a community vision, (3) a summary of neighborhood livability schemes and recommendations set forth by the NECD community and agencies, (4) the projects and goals set forth from the schemes, and (5) an action plan. The implementation of this study will set precedence for other Durham communities, and are also replicable for other cities around the country. All agencies, federal, state, and local have a place at the table and in the recipe. The agencies and the community are the key spices.

History

NECD is one of five distressed Durham communities severed by an inner-city highway construction project in the 1970s'. The highway 147, Durham Expressway (NC-147), created poverty, consigned the neighborhood to disfigurement and abandonment, damaged social networks, and expunged human capital. Divided by a crest, this once culturally and economically viable neighborhood is now an island floating in a sea of poverty, inequitable development, and substandard housing conditions. NECD: (a) is economically distressed, (b) has high crime rates, (c) lacks quality housing, (d) lacks transportation choices, and (f) has a high unemployment rate. Originally, NECD was once a stable and thriving African-American neighborhood with flourishing black-owned businesses and institutions. This study will discuss place-based outputs, schemes, specific to the historical charter-the dialect of place.



Innovative Vision

NECD proposes to create an awesome community through the HUD, DOT, and EPA sustainable communities' partnership. With a "complete streets" mentality, the community will re-stitch NECD through a master plan that promotes inclusiveness and opportunity for residents, while creating policies that will reweave the social and cultural fabric that once bridged the citizens, engaging new generations with the rich history of collaboration, innovation, education, economic development, and quality housing.

Sustainable, or all-inclusive communities as defined by NECD citizens, are resilient communities. This resiliency successfully integrates resources, so that communities respond to change and adapt to outside pressures. We believe that the six livability principles support this resilience.

Innovative Characteristics - The Schemes & Goals

Four schemes based off of livability principles were created through various meetings between local NECD stakeholders and state and federal agencies. The goals are target programs and projects – both existing and new. The four schemes that make up our livability initiative are:

Workforce and Economic Development – this community scheme focused on entrepreneurial education, attracting the creative class, attracting industry, Brownfields development, providing access to quality-locally-owned affordable foods,

local investment, and streetscapes. The citizens in this group want to increase the quality of life for citizens in NECD through employment training, stabilizing tax base, job creation and redevelopment.

The goals are:

- Entrepreneurial and life-long training
- Brownfields site development
- NECD marketing strategy
- Locally-owned fresh, affordable, and quality grocery store
- Create and attract innovative small business
- Streetscape improvements

Workforce & Economic Development
Scheme Leaders: Marion Lamberth & Frankie Bates

Liveability Principles
Enhance economic competitiveness
Coordinates policies and leverage investments
Support existing communities



To Increase The Quality of Life For Citizens in NECD Through Employment Training, Stabilizing Tax Base, Job Creation, And Redevelopment

Safe and Healthy Environment – “Politics of Happiness.” This community scheme focused on housing, social services, community mobilization, and safety. The citizens in this group want to increase homeownership, financial literacy, access to quality education, decrease crime, and promote better health.

The goals are:

- Housing diversity
- Affordable housing
- Hope VI revitalization program
- Student and Workforce housing
- Mixed-use and mixed-income communities
- Walking club for health and safety
- Energy savings reduction program
- Volunteer mobilization for community cleanups
- Vacant lot acquisition

Safe & Healthy Environment
Scheme Leaders: Aidil Collins and Lenora Smith

Liveability Principles
Promote equitable, affordable housing
Support existing communities
Value communities and neighborhoods



To Increase Homeownership, Quality Housing, Financial Literacy, and Safety; Increase Crime, and Promote Better Health



Coordinated Public Transportation – This community scheme focused on streetscape design, transportation alternatives, pedestrian safety, housing, streetscape enhancement, existing transit improvements, transit expansion, and regional connectivity. The citizens in this group want to reflect what the community wants and provide a blue print as to how to get there.

The goals are:

- DATA/TTA route enhancement
- Pedestrian bridge connection
- Bull City Connector expansion
- Reestablish trolley
- Transit-oriented development
- Regional rail
- Streetscape enhancements (lighting and sidewalks)
- Community street tree program
- Improved bus stop and shelters

Coordinated Public Transportation
Scheme Leader: Dawn Hill-Alston

Liveability Principles
To provide more transportation choices
To support existing communities



To Reflect What The Community Wants and Provide A Blueprint As To How To Get There.

Multifunctional Community Open Space – This community scheme focused on green spaces, energy programs, and education. The citizens in this group want to encourage local food enterprise, improve the environment, improve health, and educate the community.

The goals are:

- Green Necklace Master Plan
- Outdoor classrooms at local elementary, middle, and high schools
- Multi-use trails, parks, amphitheatre, and botanical garden
- Community wetland cleanups
- Litter education day
- 'Green' community lectures and programs
- Neighborhood energy retrofit program and expansion
- Neighborhood urban garden program

Livability Principles
Coordinate policies and leverage investment.

Value communities and neighborhoods.



The Partnership's First Year: May 2010 – June 2011

Over the past thirteen months, the City witnessed an invigorated energy and interests in the revitalization of Northeast Central Durham (NECD). Most importantly, NECD residents have taken ownership of the revitalization through the implementation of the specific projects through their active participation in the NECD Livability Initiative, a citizen-led planning and implementation process.

Innovative Characteristics

The NECD Livability Initiative is a community driven project, created to make certain that public-private efforts are coordinated to make NECD a truly sustainable community. This initiative has changed silo-operating mindsets to collaborative-innovative partnerships and ventures. NECD is a culturally diverse community that boasts of its historic significance and dedicated community leadership. The City of Durham's Department of Neighborhood Improvement Services (NIS) provides NECD Livability Initiative project oversight in conjunction with hundreds of stakeholders, partners, and team members. In this initiative, the term "team members" is synonymous with resident/community members. More importantly, team members in partnership with city staff, state staff, federal representatives, and local agencies and organizations have catapulted the NECD Livability Initiative to the forefront as a nationally recognized initiative that adopted and operates under the six Livability Principles.

Obstacles and Results

Perhaps one of the most significant challenges for the NECD Livability Initiative has been a lack of resources. The current economic downturn presents an *almost* insurmountable resource development challenge. The NECD Livability Initiative utilizes a new community engagement approach to revitalization. The citizen participatory model used by the NECD Livability Initiative does not only engage residents; it engages federal, state, and local agency representatives, non-profits, institutions of higher learning, and city and county departments, all at one time. The process is facilitated by greenschemes, a nationally recognized consultant through the Technology of Participation (ToPs) Facilitation method. Boundless inroads to resources have been fostered over the past year through the NECD Livability Initiative. The North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation on June 30, 2010 establishing a Sustainable Communities Task Force and instituted grant funding through the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Neighborhood Improvement Services received a \$40,000 grant award for NECD Livability Initiative planning projects. Other grantors, contributors, and funding sources such as Feed My Sheep, Sherwin Williams and EPA are to be commended for their devotion to the NECD Livability Initiative. More than 100 stakeholders and team members have partnered to create a sustainable Northeast Central Durham.

New Issues, Problems, Consequences Identified

Time constraints for residents, stakeholders, team members and staff weren't anticipated at such a great level.

Innovation/Creativity

The NECD Livability Initiative and its efforts created synergy that does not supplant, but enhances tighter City of Durham department budgets. Livability Initiative efforts align with the City's strategic goals, specifically with that of being a well-managed city. Neighborhood Improvement Services (NIS) department partnered with greenschemes to facilitate the process. Greenschemes is nationally known for implementing the Technology of Participation (ToPs) Facilitation method. An outstanding citizen participatory model has been created as a result of this partnership. Greenschemes staff facilitates and co-facilitate annual and quarterly NECD Livability Initiative meetings. Together, a Northeast Central Durham specific process has been developed. NIS staff works with Elaine Stover, Principal of greenschemes greenschemes@bellsouth.net to maintain momentum provide support for this community led initiative.

Outcomes Achieved

The beauty of the NECD Livability Initiative is its citizen participatory model allows residents to identify needs and convey concerns and expectations directly to federal, state, and local process owners in both formal and informal settings. Workforce and Economic Development scheme needs include but are not limited to: Job Creation, Economic Re-Development coupled with Social Development, and NECD Marketing Campaign. Safe and Healthy Environment scheme needs include but are not limited to: Affordable Housing, Increased Access to Exercise Opportunities, and Energy Efficient Housing. Multifunctional Open Space scheme needs include but are not limited to: More Parks and Sidewalks, Developing Green Infrastructure to Enhance the NECD, and to Encourage Local Food Enterprises. Coordinated Public Transportation scheme needs include but are not limited to: Connecting Light Rail to NECD, the Complete Street System, and Access to Free Bus Service. Service delivery has been enhanced through this initiative by incorporating all-inclusive community engagement processes in program/project development and policy implementation. Residents and city staff work together to develop walking trails, increase access to exercise, develop marketing slogans, and design street widening projects. Non-traditional partnerships have been created between resident and government staff. The health of NECD residents has been improved by creating more access to fresh fruits and vegetables (garden projects), creating walking clubs for safety and health at a local recreational facility and on NECD trails, brownfield identification, focusing on complete street designs that encourage bicycling, and designating a safe-haven in the NECD community.

Results and Real World Practicality

Fortunately, each component of the NECD Livability Initiative has been exercised through practical application. Community led schemes meet regularly. Scheme specific events, activities, and partnerships are on-going. Projects are aligned with City of Durham Strategic Plan goals and action items from previous Northeast Central Durham plans. Real world circumstances were the impetus for the NECD Livability Initiative-Partnership for Sustainable Communities. This concerted effort is the first of its kind in the area to sync real world practicality with viable partnerships to create a sustainable community. NIS and greenschemes staff recently started documenting the process in detail. Other local governments could benefit from reviewing the process design as well as the uniqueness of this collaborative process. We will share results of establishing traditional and non-traditional partnerships and benefits of community led efforts producing community embraced outcomes. We will measure the positive impact on increasing access to exercise as well as access to health care and healthy foods. Housing stock will be monitored - home sells, affordable units, and rental rates. Safety for NECD residents has always been important and trends will continue to be measured and reported. The impact of economic growth and development will be recorded. In addition, access to affordable transportation and jobs creation measured in Northeast Central Durham.

Innovation Study Presentation

The NECD Livability Initiative-Partnership for Sustainable Communities study presentation will consist of a PowerPoint presentation with a video. Handout materials will be supplied and interactive group activities may be incorporated depending upon group size and if time permits.

Workforce & Economic Development Accomplishments

Scheme Leader: Marion Lamberth & Frankie Bates

Partnership for Sustainable Communities
Northeast Central Durham Livability Initiative



→ NECD Marketing Strategy:

- Developed a marketing slogan “NECD: Where Access Meets Opportunity”

→ Create & Attract Innovative Small Businesses

- \$344,679 in grants to small businesses since 2008
- Joe’s Diner, Union Independent School, John O’Daniel Business Exchange

→ Adopted Angier-Driver:

- Streetscape Projects
- Angier-Driver soon to be underway – 3.5 million

→ Brownfield Assessment Project: Phase I

- 832 Ridgeway Avenue
- 1901 Angier Avenue
- 502 North Roxboro Street

→ Quality Assurance Project Plans: Phase II

- 1901 Angier Avenue
- (15 Parcels) Plummer Properties – S. Holman, Angier Avenue, & Morven Place
- (12 Parcels) Tucker Properties – E. Pettigrew Street, Bernice Street, Joplin Street and Bacon Street

Workforce & Economic Development Investments

Workforce Development Total Investments

\$1,120,000

Economic Development Total Investments

\$4,444,679

Overall Total Investments

(Excluding staffing resources)

\$5,714,679

Workforce & Economic Development Future Projects



Development of economic Infrastructure:

Purpose is to aid the community in supporting a physical infrastructure necessary for the creation or retention of jobs, especially those improvements linked with transportation corridors – both highway and rail systems

Create & Attract Innovative Small Businesses:

Purpose is to create an economic climate conducive to the birth, attraction, and retention of innovative entrepreneurial firms which create new products and expand into new markets

Lifelong Learning, Training Programs and Entrepreneurial Training:

Purpose to enhance the NECD Livability Initiative area workforce to prepare residents for future employment – not just jobs currently available

Continue Discussion and Partnership Opportunities:

Planning and Development of NECD Marketing Plan with Office Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and Downtown Durham Inc. (DDI)

Brownfield Assessment Project (ongoing)

Designed to rehabilitate vacant commercial property

Safe & Healthy Environments Accomplishments

Scheme Leaders: Aidil Collins and Lenora Smith

Partnership for Sustainable Communities

Northeast Central Durham Leadership Initiative



→ **Uplift East Durham Open Home Tour**

→ **Neighborhood Clean-Up**

- Partnered with Multi-Functional Open Space
- Energy Retrofit Program
- ComNET

→ **Residential energy Reduction Program**

- Partnered with Clean Energy Durham
- Hired two staff members
- Conducts workshops in Northeast Central Durham homes

→ **Walking Club for Safety & Health**

- Based out of Holton Career & Resource Center
- Partnered with Lincoln Health Center and observed walking club
- Walking together in NECD will foster a sense of community by building relationships among residents. **Safety:** Opportunities to anonymously report suspicious behavior and activities. **Health:** Increased activity level in NECD will heighten our quality of life, general health, obesity & diabetes, range of motion, freedom from pain and mental & physical attitude

→ **Northeast Central Durham Bull City Open Streets**

→ **NC Communities Putting Prevention to Work Project**

- Health Impact Assessment Workshop

- Two NIS Staff support members attended free two-day workshop sponsored by the NC Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch of Division of Health and Human Sciences

→ **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

- Partnered with Partners Against Crime (PAC1) to assist with the distribution of District 1's Emergency Preparedness Plan upon review by the County of Durham Emergency Management Department

→ **Residential Energy Reduction Program (ongoing)**

- The Residential Energy Reduction Program commences in NECD. The project builds a greater sense of community while focusing on energy reduction efforts at the neighborhood level

Safe and Healthy Environment Future Projects

Impact Team Office:

The Impact Team Building has space available to offer similar to a "Safe haven" to foster the perception of a safer community in NECD

To address lead paint rules and potential business and workforce development opportunities:

Examination & Education of Neighborhood Challenges:

Partner with Bicycle Coop:

Promote Bicycle Transportation & Repair Services
Family riding together

Interior rental property improvements program

Rent-to-own training and rehabilitation program

Neighborhood Vitality Index

Homeownership, safety, educational programs

Coordinated Public Transportation Accomplishments

Scheme Leader: Dawn Hill-Alston

Partnership for Sustainable Communities
Northeast Central Durham Leadership Initiative



→ Transit Transit/Durham Area Transit Authority (DATA):

- Stops and Shelters Assessment (2 completed)
- Assessment incorporated in Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) Plan

→ R. Kelly Bryant Pedestrian Bridge:

- Connectivity to open space and trail program
- Trail maintenance from bridge to Alston Avenue
- Trail Assessment from bridge completed

Coordinated Public Transportation Future Projects

Angier/Driver Streetscape Project

Economic development
Housing development
Good design (walkable)
Bull City Connector expansion

Alston Avenue Widening:

Grocery Store
Pedestrian connections from Alston Avenue to Triangle Transit Station
Safety
Good Design
Bicycle-friendly streetscape
Signage
Main Street streetscape expansion from downtown to Alston Avenue
Environmentally friendly
Economic development

Highlight Projects

TTA/DATA: Stops & Shelters



Weedy stops



Shelters as protection from elements



No shelters at key stops



Health and safety concerns

Multi-Functional Community Green Spaces Accomplishments

Scheme Leader: Thomas Poole

Partnership for Sustainable Communities
Northeast Central Durham Livability Initiative



→ Neighborhood Clean-up

- Partnered with Safe and Healthy Environment
- Energy Retrofit Program
- ComNET

→ Eastway Elementary School

- Tree planting
- Spring bulb planting

→ Adopt-a-Garden (NEEM Urban Gardens)

- Completed 50 gardens in the NECD Livability Initiative area

→ Multi-Use Trail System: The Green Necklace

- Neighborhood clean-up north and south of Pedestrian Bridge
- Assessment of Existing Trails
- Three surveys to identify walking/biking trails

→ Ecological Programs (Eastway)

- Indoor/Outdoor Classroom
- Ecological Curriculum Developed
- Collaboration with principal and teachers

Multi-Functional Community Open Spaces Future Projects

R. Kelly Bryant Pedestrian Bridge

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – R. Kelly Bryant Flower Park

Marking of pedestrians walking trails and bicycle trails

Neighborhood beautification project on north side of R. Kelly Bryant Bridge

Collaboration with Durham Open Space & Trail Commission

Eastway Village Education Project

Provide Goose Creek Education materials

Presentation at Homeowners Association

New Greater Wall Zion Church Vision Project

Adopt-a-Stream Goose Creek Proposal

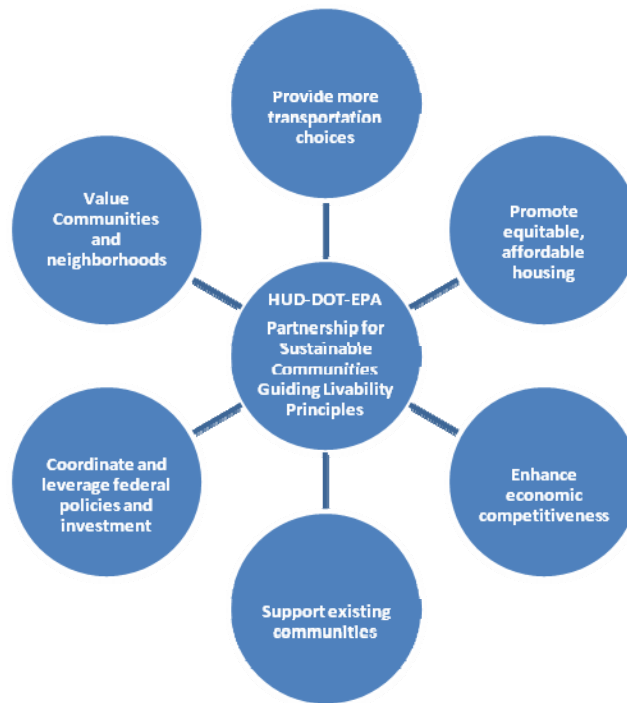
Stream Clean-up

Water quality monitoring

Yearly training



Livability Principles



Definition of the Livability Principles

Provide more transportation choices. Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

Promote equitable, affordable housing. Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

Enhance economic competitiveness. Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.

Support existing communities. Target federal funding toward existing communities - through strategies like transit - oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling - to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment. Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

Value communities and neighborhoods. Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walk able neighborhoods – rural, urban, or suburban.

In conclusion, NECD's Livability Initiative leads the way in the race to become a sustainable community; that is, in less than two years of the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities Program's inception. Durham was the first community in North Carolina to respond on how to create a sustainable and livable community in Northeast Central Durham. Concepts of sustainability and livability constitute the framework for the NECD Livability Initiative. The theoretical basis for such an initiative was conceived by and through efforts of the Northeast Central Durham Leadership Council. The NECD Leadership Council is a diverse twenty member body dedicated to the revitalization of NECD whose mission statement reads as follows.

"Northeast Central Durham Leadership Council's mission is to facilitate and promote revitalization of NECD. The Council shall be a catalyst in the economic and human capital development in our historic community."

This innovative approach to creating a sustainable community – Northeast Central Durham, was formalized nearly a year ago. However, the groundwork began over ten years ago. Engaging the community and fostering strong community leaders allows Northeast Central Durham and the City of Durham to celebrate the benefits of implementing an all inclusive citizen participatory model.