

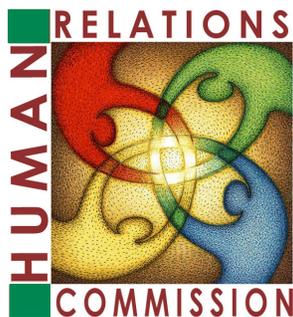


City of Raleigh Human Relations Commission

2010 Community Dialogues "Many Faces, One Community"

Report and Recommendations to the
Raleigh City Council

March 15, 2011



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I. Introduction

The City of Raleigh Human Relations Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council. It promotes activities, education and programs that support equal opportunity, human dignity and mutual respect among Raleigh's citizenry. In pursuit of this mission, the Commission held a series of five public dialogues in 2010 to involve Raleigh's residents in a public discussion about the strengths and challenges facing the city as it continues to grow and its population becomes increasingly diverse.

The impetus for the series, "Many Faces, One Community," came from the Mayor's Unity Day Breakfast in 2009. The dialogues focused on issues of diversity; youth; the aging population; the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community; and the poor. Throughout the series, participants discussed policies related to community outreach and access to information, housing, transportation, economic security and development, health and recreation, and inclusivity. The Commission's recommendations to the Raleigh City Council fall within these six categories.

This report summarizes the themes that dialogue participants felt the City Council can influence. It highlights recommendations that emerged more than once throughout the series of dialogues. Participants in the 2010 Mayor's Unity Day Breakfast reviewed the recommendations and voted on their order of priority. Each section of the report presents the recommendations in this order of priority. A full report on each of the five dialogues appears in the appendices to this report.

II. Dialogue Participants

A survey taken at each dialogue revealed that a diverse cross-section of residents is eager to be engaged in the improvement of Raleigh. Approximately 100 different individuals attended at least one of the dialogues. The dialogues attracted residents from all areas of Raleigh, reflecting racial, ethnic, age and socioeconomic diversity.

Those who attended the dialogues represented an active and well-rounded population of local residents. According to the survey:

- 89 percent of participants had volunteered in the community within the past year.
- 48 percent had attended a City Council meeting within the past year.
- 38 percent had attended a Citizens Advisory Council meeting.
- 61 percent always vote in municipal elections.

These participants shared their unique experiences, knowledge and wisdom in the spirit of service to the city. The Human Relations Commission greatly appreciates their input.

III. Recommendations

The following recommendations are organized according to the six major policy areas that emerged during the dialogues.

A. Access to Information/Community Outreach

Dialogue participants repeatedly expressed concern that many residents do not know about and are not engaged in the City of Raleigh's ongoing initiatives and resources.

The Commission recommends that the City of Raleigh:

1. Identify and pursue proactive strategies to communicate with residents at the grassroots level.

Participants expressed concern that information about City of Raleigh programs and initiatives is not always disseminated effectively. Information is available for residents who actively seek it, but many others are not familiar with City resources. Participants agreed that the City should use new strategies to encourage and enhance public awareness and civic engagement. They suggested that the City more frequently use nonprofits, faith-based organizations, senior centers, community leaders, schools, supermarkets and utility payment centers to advertise programs and services, including public transportation information.

2. Provide translations of public outreach materials.

Dialogue participants emphasized the importance of providing translations of City brochures, fliers, website information and other communications material. Priority should go to translating these materials to Spanish, with other languages to follow. As the Hispanic population in North Carolina has grown from 4.7 percent in 2000 to nearly 8 percent in 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, outreach to this group is becoming increasingly vital. Some participants said a bilingual helpline could overcome the language barrier and get out information about programs and services to a wider range of residents.

3. Expand access to the Internet for all Raleigh citizens.

Participants expressed a concern about the lack of regular access to the Internet in many communities. While the Raleigh Connected project is

addressing the issue by providing free wireless Internet connections to 1,877 affordable housing units in Raleigh, participants agreed on the need for a more comprehensive strategy. They urged more public-private partnerships to assess and treat this accessibility gap. Participants also said they would like to see greater computer and Internet access at Parks and Recreation facilities.

4. Develop resource databases searchable by population subgroups and topic.

A recurring recommendation from the dialogues involved the creation of public databases of resources available within the City. The Raleigh Beehive website offers a resource database, but dialogue participants proposed other databases, as well. For example, at least one dialogue participant suggested that the City create a section on its website with information for seniors about their rights and the programs that the City offers for them. The person making this recommendation said such a comprehensive section would be invaluable, especially to seniors who lack experience with the Internet. Other types of proposed resource databases would target youth, the LGBT community, local health care resources and important legal information.

B. Housing

Participants in several dialogues expressed concern about the lack of affordable and safe housing within the city. They identified gaps in availability and room for improvement. Discussions reiterated the idea that these baseline needs must be met before Raleigh can truly ensure fair access to opportunity as it grows and transforms.

The Commission recommends that the City of Raleigh:

1. Continue and expand efforts to combat homelessness.

Homelessness is one of Raleigh's leading problems, participants in several of the dialogues said. They recommended that the City invest more resources in homeless shelters and services for homeless youth, as well as existing programs and initiatives of local organizations, government agencies and even private efforts, such as the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce's Employment Initiative. Several participants also expressed a need for the City to partner with local faith-based organizations to better combat homelessness. Given a shortage of affordable housing, participants suggested that the City look into providing locally-funded housing vouchers for residents most in need. Finally, participants said the City should

determine whether existing homeless shelters and programs adequately address the needs of the Raleigh's diverse population, including homeless LGBT youth.

2. Continue to encourage the development of affordable housing.

Participants stressed the need for affordable housing units but also emphasized that, to be effective, these units must be in mixed-income developments and in areas with diverse zoning and inclusionary zoning policies. Participants said affordable housing must be near commerce and job opportunities to perpetuate growth and improvement. Senior stakeholders were particularly concerned about this topic and expressed a desire for well-kept, accessible, safe and generally senior-friendly affordable housing developments. Additionally, participants at more than one dialogue expressed a concern about affordable housing for people post-incarceration. They suggested that the City encourage owners of housing developments to remove the criminal history question from their initial applications so that these men and women are less likely to repeat criminal behavior out of desperation.

C. Transportation

Transportation was a recurring theme throughout many dialogues. Participants discussed ways Raleigh can develop a more equitable, effective and safe public transportation system.

The Commission recommends that the City of Raleigh:

1. Foster a walkable community, including more sidewalks throughout the city and enhanced public mobility in general.

Participants would like to see more neighborhood development that encourages walking as a preferred method of transit. They saw sidewalks and bike paths as vital to the safety of Raleigh's youth, senior citizens and general population and as a way to make Raleigh a less auto-dependent city. Participants also called for construction of emergency alert posts.

2. Collaborate with other municipalities, Wake County, and the business community to develop regional transportation plans.

Participants recommended that the City collaborate more with neighboring towns, counties and local business resources to develop and share the cost of transportation systems. They pointed to the lack of a comprehensive,

countywide public transportation system. And they suggested that institutionalized relationships such as the Triangle J Council of Governments could help reach these desirable outcomes.

3. Evaluate access to public transportation when deciding whether to approve new development.

Dialogue participants were concerned about the absence of public transportation serving new developments, particularly in Southeast Raleigh. They said Raleigh's bus system should be more responsive and nimble in serving developments on the city's periphery.

4. Support a half-cent sales tax for public transportation.

Participants acknowledged the financial challenges of meeting public transportation demands in an economic downturn. Nonetheless, they felt strongly that robust public transit is essential to the city's continued success. Many voiced support for a half-cent sales tax for public transportation.

5. Perform a complete assessment of public transportation routes to ensure people who are dependent on public transportation have access to basic services.

The theme of equitable access to transportation arose in several dialogues. Participants said the distance of pick-up and drop-off points from senior-occupied housing is a major hindrance for senior citizens. They also pointed to a lack of access to basic services, such as grocery stores, for people dependent on public transportation.

6. Reinstate subsidized Tier 1 transportation to seniors and the disabled.

In more than one dialogue, participants recommended that the City reconsider its recent elimination of Tier 1 transportation, which provided affordable transit for the disabled, seniors, and others without driver's licenses. This service was supplementary to Tier 2 and provided a higher level of service, taking those in need directly where they needed to go. Dialogue participants disagreed with reductions in transportation programs for those in need, even with the current budget constraints. They also called for subsidized transportation to take senior citizens to medical and other crucial appointments as well as errands.

7. Construct lighted shelters at existing bus stops.

The lack of shelters at bus stops is a major challenge for people who use public transportation, participants said. Lighted shelters would provide cover from weather as well as increased safety for those riding the bus at night or early in the morning.

8. Continue to pursue the creation of a light rail system.

Many dialogue participants expressed support for the construction of light rail along with other types of mass transit systems. They saw light rail and other mass transit as a benefit for current residents and a way to encourage the city's future prosperity.

D. Economic Security and Development

Recommendations related to economic security and sustainability surfaced repeatedly throughout the dialogues. These recommendations reflected concerns about certain areas and certain groups of residents being left behind as the City responds to the current economic downturn and continues to grow. While the final dialogue focused on economic disparity, participants in all of the dialogues shared ideas on how Raleigh can better ensure access to economic prosperity and opportunity for all of its citizens.

The Commission recommends that the City of Raleigh:

1. Increase grant funding to nonprofit agencies.

Participants in each of the five dialogues often discussed the invaluable work of many nonprofit agencies in the Raleigh area. However, they also were concerned about insufficient resources to meet Raleigh's growing needs. In several dialogues, participants said that an increase in grant allocations to organizations serving Raleigh residents would reflect a stronger commitment to access to opportunity and prosperity for all. They also suggested that the City Council meet with local nonprofit leaders to assess their needs and foster collaborative relationships.

2. Provide and promote job and computer training.

In several dialogues, participants noted that many residents of low-income communities are unable to compete for limited available jobs. They pointed

to a need for training courses, leadership seminars, and internship opportunities. Computer training classes especially would increase not only job readiness but also job awareness. At-risk youth, low-income residents and former inmates would particularly benefit from such programs. Participants said these initiatives would make Raleigh a more tech-savvy city, giving residents valuable advantages in tough times. They suggested that Raleigh seek more public-private partnerships to pursue this goal.

3. Explore ways to provide incentives for businesses to locate in economically depressed sections of the city.

Participants repeatedly expressed concern that one of the barriers to economic opportunity is the lack of incentives for businesses to locate in lower income areas of Raleigh. It was conveyed that while Raleigh grows, the lack of development and commerce in low-income areas places those residents at an even greater disadvantage. Tax and utility rate incentives were proposed as possible ideas.

4. Work to ensure fair hiring practices and promote diversity throughout the city.

In several dialogues, participants expressed the need for nondiscrimination assurances in the hiring practices of Raleigh's businesses, organizations and agencies. Many said Raleigh should add gender identity and expression to its own nondiscrimination policy, and they called for an ordinance prohibiting local businesses from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Advocates of these ideas said they might draw a more diverse workforce and businesses to the city. Participants also were concerned that residents who have been incarcerated have difficulty getting employment because most employers ask about criminal history on job applications. Applicants who have experienced incarceration often don't make it to the interview stage. Dialogue participants suggested that the City of Raleigh develop incentives for businesses to remove such questions from applications so that such residents have a fair shot to prove their qualifications.

5. Expand access to free wireless Internet and other technology services throughout the city.

Participants emphasized that Raleigh could be at the forefront of cities by striving to be more technologically apt. The subsidizing of free wireless Internet throughout the city was mentioned as a way to attract entrepreneurs and increase the ability of residents to be economically

engaged. Providing computer and Internet access would help keep lower-income residents who cannot afford computers and Internet connections from being left behind. Thus, access to opportunity would be more equitable.

E. Health, Public Safety and Recreation

Participants recognized that public safety, health and recreation opportunities help shape the quality of life in Raleigh.

The Commission recommends that the City of Raleigh:

1. Increase collaboration with other local government agencies, nonprofits and businesses.

Participants stressed the importance of collaboration with Wake County and other local entities to improve health, safety and parks and recreation programs. A participant added that the potential for burden-sharing between Wake County and the City of Raleigh in these areas has not been fully realized. For example, Raleigh's Parks and Recreation Department could partner with Wake County to provide more affordable programs for youth, bolstering participation.

2. Conduct a "senior audit" to identify and assess steps to make the city more accessible for its aging population.

Participants spoke out about their hopes that the City of Raleigh would strongly consider the health and safety of seniors as it continues to develop. Beyond transportation and housing, they emphasized the need for an overall review of accessibility. Additionally, they suggested that the City provide information to seniors through its website, pamphlets and other media on subjects such as home safety, Internet scams, fraud prevention, consumer protection, and nutrition.

3. Increase community policing throughout the city.

The value of Raleigh's community policing effort came up at the dialogues; participants said the effort should expand and be implemented in all of Raleigh's communities. They also recommended that the Raleigh Police Department collaborate with local mental health centers so that officers are able to make referrals.

4. Expand teen participation at parks and recreation facilities.

Participants expressed concerns about the lack of participation by Raleigh's teens in Parks and Recreation facilities and programs. They recommended that the City reconsider its incentive structure in favor of more effective strategies to improve teen participation. Those recommending this change said that increased teen participation would not only benefit teens but also make Raleigh safer by keeping teens from turning to gangs and crime.

5. Place a focus on family- and parenting-oriented programs

Participants in the second dialogue, relating to the needs of youth, cited a strong need for support programs for parents, especially single parents. At least one participant recommended the City institute family planning programs and help to fund currently existing family planning clinics.

6. Review the practices of the Parks and Recreation Department relating to equity.

Dialogue participants called for a review of Parks and Recreation facilities to ensure that people are able to participate regardless of socio-economic status, language, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation. Participants were concerned that some residents cannot afford to participate in Parks and Recreation programs or lack appropriate opportunities. An audit potentially would help the Parks and Recreation Department to implement effective strategies, goals and objectives, dialogue participants said.

F. Promotion of Diversity

Raleigh is increasingly diverse. Ensuring a good quality of life must include an active effort by the City of Raleigh to promote practices and policies that embrace our city's diversity and allow all residents to feel comfortable and safe.

The Commission recommends that the City of Raleigh:

1. Develop diversity training for its employees, including officers of the Raleigh Police Department.

Some participants expressed concern that City employees and police officers inappropriately respond to citizens of various backgrounds. They suggested that police officers receive training about the LGBT community in Raleigh with the goal of improving responses to this community. Participants also

recommended that the City include awareness of diversity in its performance evaluations.

2. Continue hosting community dialogues.

Participants expressed appreciation and support for the dialogue process throughout the series. They valued the opportunity to discuss our city's challenges and provide recommendations. The dialogues fostered an environment in which a cross-section of Raleigh residents came together to discuss the issues of greatest concern to the community. New ideas for dialogue topics included the faith-based community, immigration and Spanish-speaking residents.

3. Embrace and accept the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Participants recommended that the City of Raleigh become more involved with LGBT issues and develop collaborative partnerships through the LGBT Center of Raleigh and the Center at N.C. State University. Adding gender identity and expression to the City's nondiscrimination policy and providing domestic partner benefits to City of Raleigh employees would show a commitment to this community. Participants also voiced the hope that the City will formally recognize the contributions of its LGBT community by developing initiatives, offering statements of support, sponsoring events and making appointments to boards and commissions. The LGBT community adds to the economic vitality and culture of our city, and its members are active in every part of Raleigh's economy.

4. Promote art and cultural diversity as avenues to expand understanding among our community's residents and to build shared experiences.

In several dialogues, participants expressed a desire to see Raleigh become a more culturally and artistically enriched city. Initiatives such as community gardens, public art projects and neighborhood block parties are avenues to enable residents of diverse backgrounds to share common experiences. Dialogue participants also recommended that the City sponsor more summer arts programs for youth and youth-directed events celebrating art and various multicultural groups. Participants proposed free admission for youth attending City-sponsored cultural and arts events.

IV. Survey Data

Participants at each dialogue completed a survey. To ensure that duplicate submissions were not included in the counts, participants were asked to fill out the survey only once. Additionally, one of the survey questions asked whether participants had taken part in a previous dialogue. The survey was designed to gauge residents' general feelings about diversity, their degree of civic engagement and their ratings of various City of Raleigh services. The survey also captured basic information about dialogue participants. The questions at the beginning of the survey served as a lead-in to each dialogue, encouraging people to think about their own perceptions and conceptions before delving into constructive conversation. While the survey was not a scientific sampling of Raleigh's population, it does provide a sample of Raleigh residents who are politically engaged and socially conscious. A copy of the survey, including a summary of responses for each question, is included in Appendix 1.

Survey Data Analysis:

Survey responses may be useful to the City of Raleigh as it moves forward. The percentages shown below are based on the total number of respondents. The survey appendix provides comprehensive response rates for each possible selection.

Total Unduplicated Respondents: 85

Basic Information:

Gender:

Female: 54% Male: 36% Transgender: 1% No Response: 9%

Age:

<21: 5% 33-43: 16% 55-66: 19%
21-32: 6% 44-54: 32% >66: 13%
No Response: 9%

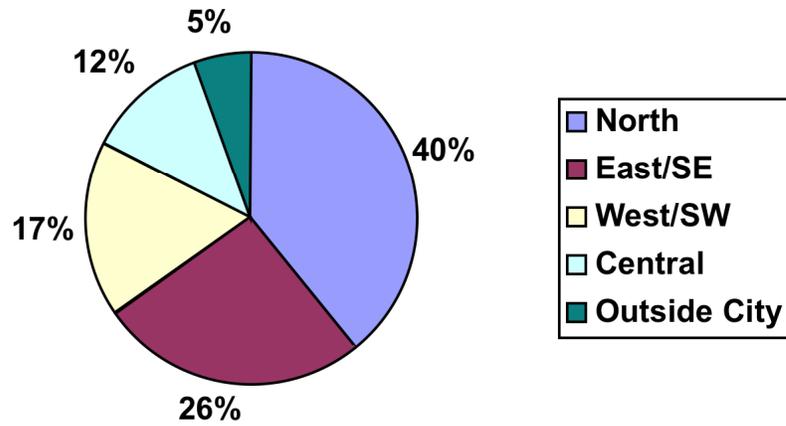
Annual Family Income:

<20K: 6% 32-50K: 14% 75-100K: 21%
20-32K: 6% 50-75K: 14% >100K: 22%
No Response: 17%

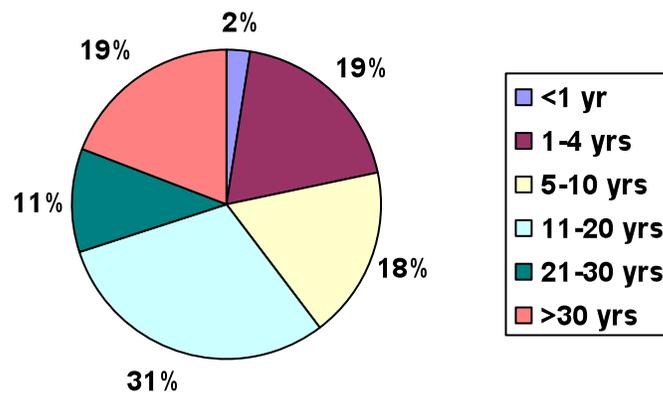
Race/Ethnicity:

White/Caucasian: 49%
Black/African-American: 31%
Latino: 4%
Multiethnic: 5%
Asian: 5%
No Response: 6%

Region of City (Approximated by Zip Code)



Years lived in Raleigh



Ratings of City Services/Infrastructure (1-5 scale):

Survey respondents generally rated Raleigh as a good place to live for most subgroups. Well over half of the respondents rated Raleigh as a 4 or 5 for families with children under 18, young people (13-21), single adults, and senior citizens.

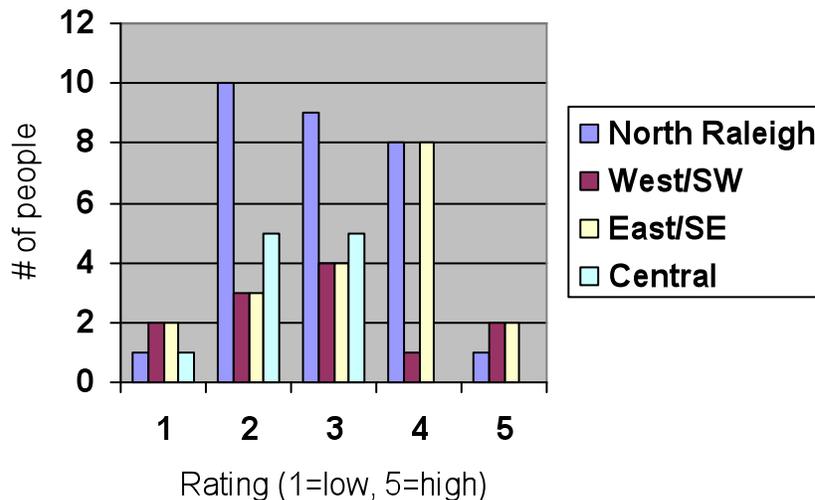
More than half of respondents also rated most of Raleigh’s services and infrastructure a 4 or a 5. Of respondents, 72% rated Raleigh’s trash removal a 4 or a 5, 67% rated public safety a 4 or a 5 and 66% rated park facilities a 4 or a 5.

The survey results suggest there are some areas in which the City could improve. These areas are described below:

City Streets: 16.5% of respondents rated Raleigh’s streets a 2 or lower. Of these, 43% responded that they live in a Southeast Raleigh zip code.

Bus Service: Of the 34% of respondents who rated Raleigh’s bus service a 2 or lower, 38% responded that they live in a North Raleigh zip code, and 38% responded that they live in either a Southeast Raleigh or Central Raleigh zip code.

Rating of Raleigh Bus Service (1-5)



Public Safety: About 10.5% of respondents rated Raleigh’s public safety a 2 or lower. Of these, about 44% said they resided in a Southeast Raleigh zip code.

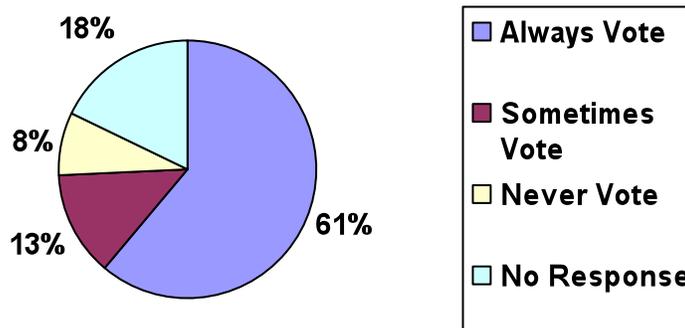
Quality of life ratings for particular subgroups:

A small percentage of respondents rated Raleigh as a bad place to live for any particular subgroup. However, 34% of respondents rated Raleigh as a 2 or below for transgender persons, 16.5% rated Raleigh as a 2 or below for immigrants, and 16.5% rated Raleigh as a 2 or below for disabled persons. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender residents were the only other subgroup in which more than 10% of respondents rated Raleigh a 2 or below (15%).

Civic Engagement:

Municipal Voting: 61% of respondents reported that they always vote in municipal elections. There was no clear demographic correlation to this variable. Those who responded that they had not attended a CAC meeting in the past year were 13% more likely to say that they do not always vote in municipal elections.

Participant Municipal Voting Patterns



Volunteering: 89% of respondents reported that they volunteered in their community in the past year. Of the 11% who said they did not volunteer in their communities, more than half also reported that they did not always vote in municipal elections or left the answer blank.

City Council Meeting: 48% of respondents reported that they attended a City Council meeting within the past year. Respondents who reported that they had attended a City Council meeting within the past year were about 11% less likely to report that they always vote in municipal elections.

Citizens Advisory Council: 38% of respondents reported that they had attended a Citizens Advisory Council meeting within the past year.

Community Sponsored Activity: 85% of respondents reported that they had attended a community sponsored activity within the past year.

Letter to City Councilor: 46% of respondents reported that they had sent a letter to a City Councilor within the past year. Of those, 80% reported that they always vote in municipal elections.

Received Assistance from a City employee: 55% of respondents reported that they had received assistance from a City of Raleigh employee within the past year. Of those, zero respondents gave a rating of 2 or below when asked whether the employee was professional and only one respondent gave a rating of 2 or below when asked whether the employee had treated them fairly.

V. Methodology

The Raleigh Human Relations Commission decided to host the 2010 series of dialogues following the success of the 2009 Mayor's Unity Day Breakfast. After discussing pertinent topics, the Commission decided on five areas of focus, with a dialogue devoted to each area.

The series commenced in March and proceeded bimonthly. Dialogue topics included:

- The Value of Diversity (Appendix iv)
- Youth (Appendix vi)
- Raleigh's aging population (Appendix x)
- Raleigh's LGBT community (Appendix xii)
- Raleigh's economic future (Appendix xv)

The dialogues were successful in bringing together motivated citizens to discuss important and sometimes difficult topics. Each dialogue was held at a different City of Raleigh facility, including Chavis Heights, the Wetlands Center, Barwell Road Community Center and Sertoma Arts Center. The diversity of locations allowed the Commission to engage various local residents and community leaders right in their neighborhoods. This grassroots approach to public feedback was reaffirmed throughout the series.

Relating to the Commission's focus on issues of diversity, each dialogue aimed to identify Raleigh's strengths surrounding each topic as well as areas in which Raleigh could be more inclusive.

A trained facilitator and an intern from the MPA program at N.C. State University executed the dialogues. The intern prepared handouts for each dialogue with locally specific

information and statistics to serve as a foundation for discussion. Additionally, he promoted the dialogues, invited stakeholders and administered the survey. (Appendix 1)

The Commission promoted each dialogue in advance to encourage public participation. Fliers were displayed at community centers and park facilities throughout the city. Information about each dialogue was posted on community calendars maintained by local radio and TV stations and community organizations. A commissioner made appearances on NBC 17 and a local radio station to talk about and promote the dialogues. Numerous organizations, businesses, community leaders and public activists received invitations to the dialogues. The dialogues also were promoted through email lists, Citizens Advisory Councils, the City of Raleigh's website and Facebook.

At each dialogue, the facilitator invited participants to discuss the topic as it related to their own lives and personal experiences. She then guided the discussion to the city's strengths and weaknesses surrounding each topic. Each dialogue culminated with time for participants to make recommendations. Participants usually recorded their insights on flip charts throughout the room, each designating a subtopic of the dialogue's primary focus.

An analysis of the recommendations made throughout the dialogues revealed some common themes. The recommendations were subsequently arranged into common topic areas and then blended and consolidated into the six main thematic areas of focus as they appear in this report. The information within each of the themes reflects the majority of the recommendations made by participants, with an attempt to focus on issues within the City of Raleigh's potential realm of influence. Every recommendation made throughout the series is included within the individual dialogue summaries found in the appendices of this report.

At the annual Mayor's Unity Day Breakfast in December 2010, participants were given a draft copy of the recommendations and invited to reflect on the recommendations and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. Participants were asked for input not only on the wording of the recommendations but also what assets and strategies would make the recommendations a reality. Relevant input from this event is integrated into the main body of this report.



Community Dialogue Survey



Community Dialogue Survey

Thank you for attending today's Community Dialogue. We would like to invite you to answer a few questions that may help us to assess community perceptions relating to diversity, City of Raleigh services, and political engagement. All of the information you provide is completely anonymous and your participation in the survey is greatly appreciated. There are three pages (*22 questions total*) and the survey takes only a few minutes to complete.

Questions:

1. I live in a neighborhood where people are different from me. (Different includes people of a different race, ethnicity, religious tradition, sexual orientation, and/or socioeconomic status)
Agree: 88% (75) Disagree: 11% (9) No Response: 1% (1)
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing never and 5 representing very frequently, about how often do you spend time with people who are different than you? (Different as defined by any of the factors mentioned in question 1) (Circle your choice)
1- 1% (1) 2- 2% (2) 3- 25% (21) 4- 24% (20) 5- 48% (41) NR (0)
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing very uncomfortable and 5 representing very comfortable, how comfortable are you when interacting with people who are different than you? (Define by any of the factors mentioned in question 1)
1- 2% (2) 2- 1% (1) 3- 5% (4) 4- 28% (24) 5- 62% (53) N- 1% (1)
4. When I think about people who are different than me, the word "different" most often makes me think about...(circle your choice)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>a. Race- 13% (11)</i> | <i>d. Religion- 2% (2)</i> |
| <i>b. Ethnicity- 2% (2)</i> | <i>e. Two or more of the choices- 59% (50)</i> |
| <i>c. Sexual Orientation- 5% (4)</i> | <i>f. Other- 11% (9)</i> |
| <i>No Response- 8% (7)</i> | |
5. I am open to different perspectives and values.
Agree- 100% (85) Disagree- 0% (0) No Response- 0% (0)
6. I look forward to experiences that invite me outside of my comfort zone.
Agree- 94% (80) Disagree- 4% (3) No Response- 2% (2)

7. My identity (culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender orientation and expression, religion, class, age) has a large impact on my perceptions.
Agree- 82% (70) Disagree- 16% (13) No Response- 2% (2)
8. My identity (culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender orientation and expression, religion, class, age) has a large impact on other people's perceptions of me.
Agree- 78% (66) Disagree- 19% (16) No Response- 4% (3)
9. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing very bad and 5 representing excellent, do you think that Raleigh is a good place to live for...
- | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| 9a. Immigrants? | 1- 2% | 2- 14% | 3- 33% | 4- 24% | 5- 21% | NR- 7% |
| 9b. Racial/ethnic minorities? | 1- 0% | 2- 11% | 3- 39% | 4- 26% | 5- 19% | NR- 7% |
| 9c. Persons with disabilities? | 1- 4% | 2- 9% | 3- 31% | 4- 25% | 5- 11% | NR- 9% |
| 9d. Gays, lesbians and bisexuals? | 1- 2% | 2- 15% | 3- 42% | 4- 21% | 5- 8% | NR- 12% |
| 9e. Persons who are transgender? | 1- 9% | 2- 24% | 3- 36% | 4- 12% | 5- 5% | NR- 16% |
| 9f. Families w/ children under 18? | 1- 1% | 2- 6% | 3- 11% | 4- 36% | 5- 33% | NR- 13% |
| 9g. Young persons (13-21) | 1- 0% | 2- 7% | 3- 17% | 4- 31% | 5- 26% | NR- 8% |
| 9h. Single adults? | 1- 1% | 2- 7% | 3- 9% | 4- 42% | 5- 32% | NR- 8% |
| 9i. Senior citizens? | 1- 1% | 2- 7% | 3- 18% | 4- 41% | 5- 26% | NR- 7% |
10. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing very poor and 5 representing excellent, how would you rate the following City services in your area of the city?
- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 10a. Streets and Sidewalks | 1- 1% | 2- 15% | 3- 33% | 4- 41% | 5- 7% | NR- 2% |
| 10b. Bus Service | 1- 11% | 2- 24% | 3- 32% | 4- 22% | 5- 8% | NR- 4% |
| 10c. Park Facilities | 1- 4% | 2- 6% | 3- 19% | 4- 42% | 5- 24% | NR- 6% |
| 10d. Public Safety | 1- 6% | 2- 5% | 3- 20% | 4- 49% | 5- 18% | NR- 4% |
| 10e. Trash Removal | 1- 1% | 2- 6% | 3- 16% | 4- 41% | 5- 31% | NR- 6% |
11. In the past year, have you...
- | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|------------|
| 11a. Volunteered in your community? | Yes- 89% (76) | No- 11% (9) | NR- 0% (0) |
| 11b. Attended a City Council meeting? | Yes- 46% (39) | No- 52% (44) | NR- 1% (1) |
| 11c. Attended a Raleigh Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting? | Yes- 36% (31) | No- 62% (53) | NR- 1% (1) |
| 11d. Participated in a community sponsored activity? | Yes- 85% (72) | No- 14% (12) | NR- 1% (1) |
| 11e. Written a letter or called a City Council member about an issue? | Yes- 46% (39) | No- 53% (45) | NR- 1% (1) |
12. In the past year, have you had to seek assistance from or respond to a City of Raleigh employee?
 Yes- 53% (45) No- 42% (36) NR- 5% (4)

13. If you answered Yes to question 12, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing do not agree and 5 representing completely agree, please respond to the following two statements. If you answered no to question 12, please continue to question 14.
- 13a. The employee was professional* 1- 0% 2- 0% 3- 4% 4- 29% 5- 64% NR- 2%
- 13b. The employee treated me fairly* 1- 2% 2- 0% 3- 4% 4- 25% 5- 64% NR- 4%
14. Keeping in mind that municipal elections are where the City of Raleigh's mayor and members of the City Council are elected and that they are held in odd numbered years (for ex., 2009), which of the following statements is most accurate? (circle your choice)
- a. I always vote in municipal elections-* 61% (52)
- b. I sometimes vote in municipal elections-* 13% (11)
- c. I never vote in municipal elections-* 8% (7)
- No Response: 18% (15)*

BASIC INFORMATION

15. What is your age?
 <21: 5% 22-32:7% 33-43:16% 44-54: 32% 55-65:19% >66:13%
 No Response: 8%
16. What is your annual household income?
 <\$20,000: 6% \$20,000-\$32,000: 6% \$32,000-\$50,000: 14% \$50,000-\$75,000: 14% \$75,000-\$100,000: 21% >\$100,000: 22%
 No Response- 16%
17. What is your sex?
 Female- 54% (46) Male- 36% (31) Transgender- 1% (1) NR- 8% (7)
18. What is your race/ethnicity?
 White/Caucasian- 49% Black/African-American- 31% Latino- 4% Multi-Ethnic- 5% Asian- 5% No Response- 7% (6)
19. What is your zip code? (Region approximated using zip code map)
 North Raleigh- 38% Southeast/East/Downtown Raleigh- 34% Southwest/West Raleigh- 15% Outside Raleigh- 5% No Response: 8%

20. How long have you lived in Raleigh?

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Less than 1 year:</i> 2% | <i>5-10 years:</i> 15% | <i>20-30 years:</i> 9% |
| <i>1-4 years:</i> 16% | <i>10-20 years:</i> 25% | <i>30+ years:</i> 16% <i>NR:</i> 17% |

21. How did you hear about this dialogue? (Most common was email invite)

22. Did you attend a previous dialogue and if so, which one(s)? N/A

Community Dialogue Reports

Community Dialogue: The Value of Diversity

03/25/2010

Chavis Community Center

6:00PM-8:00PM

Members of the community arrived at the Chavis Community Center for the first of the planned Community Dialogues on the evening of March 25, 2010. Each person received a folder containing a 22 question survey, a site list for the future dialogues, a copy of the City of Raleigh's 2009 Community Profile, and a handout discussing the new 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Michael A. Leach, chair of the Human Relations Commission (HRC), began with an introduction in which he thanked the participants for coming and explained that the purpose of each dialogue is to bring awareness and understanding to residents of Raleigh.

This purpose was furthered by Vice Chair Lorrin Freeman who described the intention of the HRC to bring together people from all parts of the city and engage them on a variety of relevant issues. Additionally, Freeman provided some background information about the HRC and explained that the Commission would use information gathered at the dialogues to make recommendations to the City Council. Emphasizing the projected growth that Raleigh is expected to face in the coming years, Freeman stressed the importance of helping to shape the community rather than passively sitting by while the growth occurs. Freeman then introduced the facilitator for the dialogues, Evangeline Weiss.

Weiss began by giving a brief background of her life and professional experiences before delving into the topic of the dialogue. Bringing attention to the broad definition of diversity, Weiss invited the community participants to call out words that come to mind when thinking about diversity. Responses included; strength, equity, inclusion and culture. Weiss then posed the question, "What is one way diversity has gifted you?" Participants were asked to share their responses with the people around their table. This question spurred discussion, conversation and story sharing at each table. After 10 or 15 minutes of this, the focus was realigned and a spokesperson from each table shared some overall themes from the side discussions. The various themes included; community

building, community enrichment, the many dimensions of diversity, embracing (rather than merely accepting), exposure to a breadth of ideals, regional diversity and commonality, global knowledge, different upbringings, togetherness, quality of life, and the appreciation of unity.

The 2nd question served as the antithesis to the first. Weiss asked participants “What are some ways that diversity is a struggle?” After people discussed their feelings and experiences relating to the question, Weiss brought the attention back to the front of the room and invited each table to share some of the themes of their discussion. Weiss recorded the themes on flipchart paper, which included; negative stereotyping, the lack of diverse representation, selfishness, apathy, incivility, ingrained attitudes, subconscious assumptions/biases, selfishness, moral judgments based on education level or socioeconomic status, the lack of integration, the lack of opportunities to integrate, resistance to change, fear, language barriers, equal access to opportunities and resources, educational disparities, and lingering discrimination.

After generating discussion, reflection and critical thinking on the gifts and struggles of diversity, attention was then brought to a more specific question. “What can the City of Raleigh do?” The fundamental idea behind this question was figuring out if there were ways in which the City of Raleigh could maximize the gifts of diversity while minimizing the struggles. The question produced a series of meaningful ideas and recommendations such as:

- Providing more information to citizens about how to become more engaged (advisory groups, committee meetings etc.)
- Providing more affordable housing
- Providing more affordable housing in mixed income areas
- Policy development to support domestic partner benefits
- Performing an audit of the city’s neighborhoods to access community needs
- Providing incentives for businesses to be based in neighborhoods that are struggling
- Providing job training in struggling areas of the city
- Revisiting policies to better understand impact of these policies on people from various economic circumstances (e.g. policy of no parking cars on lawns – if you can’t afford a 3 car garage, you’re penalized)
- Reviewing Parks and Recreation policies and practices– is access and use equitable among citizens, regardless of ethnicity, language, and socio-economic status?
- Providing Spanish translations of official City of Raleigh communications
- Ensuring that there is equal access to transportation
- Reaching out beyond Citizen Advisory Councils to include more people in the political process who may not have the time or ability to attend these meetings
- Use of grassroots outreach and a wider variety of communication strategies to reach people who may not have Internet access or be able to watch the evening news
- Commitment through resources (engaging the community through tangible means beyond the act of listening)
- The City could play a more strategic role when funding community-based organizations to encourage collaboration between organizations representing

different constituents and partnering between organizations with similar constituents

One specific complaint referenced the inclusion and openness of Parks and Recreation facilities in the city. A participant spoke of the local public basketball courts in her community being booked for entire weeks at a time, which results in local kids not being able to go there. Several dialogue participants seemed to share an adamant concern about such occurrences.

Participants in the March 25 dialogue were asked what they liked about the forum and what they thought could be done better. The positive points included; the table talk, the facilitator, the listening, the diversity of the crowd, the size of the crowd, the recommendations, and the timeframe. Some ideas about what could be done better included better promotion, better sound (room acoustics), and more elder and youth participation.

The first dialogue appeared to be very successful in bringing together people from various walks of life to discuss issues facing their communities. There was a lot of story telling and idea sharing among people from many different backgrounds. This all seemed to culminate with a greater sense of common purpose. The broad approach of the Value of Diversity fittingly set the stage for the more specific topic areas that are to be visited in future dialogues.

Community Dialogue Report: Tomorrow's Citizens

05/23/10

The Wetlands Center

3:00PM- 5:00PM

People arrived at the Wetlands Center on the afternoon of May 23, 2010, for the second of Raleigh's "Many Faces, One Community" series of community dialogues. Each attendee received a folder containing a survey, information about future dialogues, a list of City-sponsored youth initiatives, a handout about the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and a few handouts with statistical data focusing on education, delinquency and miscellaneous figures about young people residing in Raleigh and Wake County.

Human Relations Commissioner Adam Terando welcomed participants to the second Community Dialogue. He explained that the focus of the dialogue was youth-related issues and briefly revisited the overall themes of the public conversations as well as their intended purpose. He then introduced the facilitator, Evangeline Weiss.

Weiss began by asking everyone to share with each other some things that they enjoyed doing as a child. Participants were seated at tables of about six people, and each table spent several minutes introducing themselves and sharing stories from their childhood. After this, Weiss asked each table to call out some of the activities that they remembered fondly. While she recorded these activities on flip chart paper, Weiss invited participants to snap

their fingers if they shared any similar childhood recollections. It soon became apparent that regardless of the multifaceted diversity of the attendees, many had enjoyed similar interests and pastimes as children. Weiss helped establish this frame of mind to transition into a broad question. “What do we want to ensure that our youth to have access to in Raleigh?” Responses to this question included; safe transportation, libraries, technology, a sense of belonging and community, arts, diverse education, sidewalks, greenways, parks, and opportunities for community service.

Weiss then asked everyone in the room to line up by their year of high school graduation and count off by fives. They were then asked to sit at the table with other participants of their same number. This strategy was employed to ensure that each table had maximum age diversity for the remaining activities.

After attendees relocated to their new seats, they were asked to take some time to discuss what they believed was going well in Raleigh with regards to youth. When each table was asked to share with the whole group, some positive perceptions that were mentioned included:

- More nonprofits seem to be getting involved and are finding new ways to identify at-risk youth
- Some programs are popping up that aim to teach skills to youth that can be taken home (i.e. gardening)
- Juvenile delinquency complaints are down in Wake County
- There are some community programs focused on targeting youth
- Some free activities are being offered for youth (i.e. at libraries)
- There are some mentoring efforts going on around the city (i.e. Foster Grandparent Program)
- Community Policing is taking place in some areas of Raleigh
-

Dialogue participants were also asked to discuss the gaps that exist in Raleigh with regards to youth residents. Major concerns that were voiced included:

- Many at risk youth are not being identified and are falling through the cracks
- There is a lack of a “sense of community” accompanied by a lack of community leaders to steer the ship
- There is not enough communication about what youth programs are available
- There is a lack of youth employment opportunities and job training programs to provide valuable skills and experience
- There are not enough bilingual communication mediums available
- There is a need for an increased amount of age appropriate recreational space and facilities
- Many neighborhoods are in need of care and beautification efforts

After some in-depth discussion of the perceived gaps, dialogue attendees were given the opportunity to voice their recommendations for what could be pursued to address the gaps and to make Raleigh a better place for young people’s lives to flourish. Mrs. Weiss placed sheets of flip chart paper on the walls of the room, each designating a different category of

recommendations. The seven categories included health and safety, jobs and leadership development, family support, parks and recreation, arts and cultural events, schools and miscellaneous. Before ending the dialogue, participants were invited to record their recommendations at any of the categorized stations in the room. Additionally, participants were given the option to be more discreet and record their recommendations on a sheet of paper included in each of their folders.

Recommendations by category:

Health & Safety:

1. Place a stronger emphasis on the construction of sidewalks
2. Encourage more community policing efforts throughout the city to combat gangs and delinquency
3. Construct more emergency alert posts throughout the city
4. Sponsor opportunities for youth to become involved with health and safety programs in Raleigh

Jobs and Leadership Development:

1. Sponsor community mentoring initiatives in which leaders from strong communities are able to share ideas and provide inspiration to leaders and members of struggling communities
2. Sponsor initiatives to aggressively recruit mentors for at-risk youth
3. Subsidize the hiring of youth directors at community serving organizations to get more young people involved with service
4. Offer and sponsor vocational training for youth (especially at-risk youth)
5. Offer more City-sponsored youth internships

Parks and Recreation:

1. Provide greater incentives to expand teen participation at parks and recreation facilities
2. Provide more technology at parks and recreation facilities (i.e. computer learning centers)
3. Evaluate the relative need for more age appropriate zones at the City's parks and recreation facilities
4. Collaborate more with Wake County to provide affordable programs to youth
5. Collaborate with local schools to help inform more people about parks and recreation events and opportunities
6. Allow for more free play times instead of an overwhelming amount of sports leagues
7. Offer more bilingual educational and promotional materials
8. Provide summer soccer programs

Family Support:

1. Provide City-funded programs for teens in single-family housing.
2. Offer parenting skills classes

3. Subsidize more mixed use housing throughout the city.
4. Offer family planning clinics
5. Consider offering conflict resolution and anger management programs (especially for recipients of subsidized housing)
6. Construct community resource centers in newer areas of southeast Raleigh to address youth/family programs

Arts and Cultural Events:

1. Offer more summer programs in the arts for youth
2. Allow for “freedom of expression walls” to cut down on graffiti
3. Sponsor teen-directed city celebration events
4. Fund more technological improvements in museums to draw in more youth
5. Offer free cultural events and shows for youth on special nights/days

Miscellaneous:

1. Provide free Wi-Fi throughout Raleigh
2. Construct matrix organizations with city and county government agencies that focus on youth initiatives
3. Offer more safe spaces for LGBT youth
4. Provide more grants funding to RHRC to serve proven organizations in the community
5. Create a program that focuses on restructuring neighborhoods to be more appealing to the eye
6. Provide public transportation to and from Southeast Raleigh (i.e. Poole Road and Barwell; Rock Quarry and Battle Ridge) which would serve about 6 new developments
7. Raise the minimum wage in Raleigh
8. Offer more youth programs that are not focused on what youth are doing wrong but rather how they can get ahead and get involved in the community

Additional recommendations were made with regards to the school system which is not the domain of the City of Raleigh. However, these recommendations reflect some of the attitudes and perspectives of city residents, which still may be valuable to the governance of Raleigh and the City of Raleigh’s approach to youth-related issues.

Education Related Recommendations:

1. Pursue collaboration with nonprofits to assist school resource officers on gangs/delinquency
2. Offer job focused education initiatives
3. Provide diversity training for all school employees within city limits (including LGBT issues)
4. Push for municipal government representation on, or collaboration with, the Wake County School Board
5. Promote the replacement of abstinence based education with comprehensive sex education (including dating, violence and LGBT Issues)

In all, the youth dialogue went very smoothly. There was a great deal of discussion and idea sharing amongst the attendees which culminated with a high amount of participation in the recommendation phase of the dialogue. When asked what participants liked about the dialogue, responses reflected that they enjoyed the interaction with the diverse group of people present, the emphasis on feedback, and the location. When asked what they thought should be done differently, responses reflected a desire for more stakeholders to have been present and for more youth to have been directly involved.

Community Dialogue Report: Is Older Better?

07/24/10

Barwell Road Community Center

10:00AM- 12:00PM

Participants arrived at Barwell Road Community Center in the morning on July 24, 2010, for the 3rd dialogue in the series of dialogues being promoted by the Raleigh Human Relations Commission. Each person in attendance received a folder containing an article relating to the population growth of baby boomers, a handout about volunteer opportunities for seniors, a handout about resources for seniors in Raleigh, a copy of the survey that has been given out at each dialogue, a handout about Raleigh's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, a site list for upcoming dialogues and two brochures relating to disaster preparedness. The article was from USNews.com and mentioned that, according to a Brookings Institute Analysis, the Raleigh-Cary area is expected to have the highest senior growth rate (31.6%) of all the country's metro areas over the next decade.

Human Relations Commissioner Jane Albright opened the dialogue with an introduction and a brief overview about the series of dialogues. She mentioned that the topic of the day's dialogue was Raleigh's aging residents and how the City can better approach their needs and concerns. Commissioner Albright then introduced the facilitator, Evangeline Weiss.

Mrs. Weiss briefly discussed the agenda for the dialogue, which included a welcome and introduction in which the participants joined together in two tables to meet each other, state their names and either the organization that they represent or a hobby that they are involved with. Each person was then asked to briefly share what they value the most about their quality of life. After the introduction portion of the dialogue wrapped up, Mrs. Weiss wished to direct the focus of the dialogue onto the current state of affairs for seniors living in Raleigh. To discuss this, she suggested that each table come up with a list of strengths and weaknesses that Raleigh has relating to issues of importance to the senior population and the rising senior population.

The strengths mentioned included the Parks and Recreation Department's Adult Leisure Program; the GO Pass; Resources for Seniors (and other nonprofits that deal with senior issues); quality health care; and the fact that there is a higher amount of activities available to seniors today than previous generations have been able to enjoy.

The areas of weakness included the availability of affordable transportation; appropriate routing for existing public transportation (need to ensure that there are stops next to all low-income senior housing); the types and amount of information dispersion relating to senior services and programs; the amount of facilities for middle-income seniors; and the proximity of shopping locations (grocery especially) to low-income senior housing. One participant elaborated on one of these weaknesses by pointing out that when she takes the bus to Wal-Mart and Kroger, the stop requires her to make a long walk down and up hills. For seniors, such a walk may be difficult, especially when carrying groceries.

Mrs. Weiss then wrote five categories on pieces of flip chart paper, which she spaced at different stations throughout the room. She asked participants to visit each station and write recommendations as to how the City can better approach the needs of seniors in the future. Mrs. Weiss also asked that below the recommendations, the participants write something about their ideal picture of Raleigh for future generations relating to each topic area. The recommendations were as follows:

Housing:

1. More affordable housing for middle-income seniors who want to downsize with a smaller home. (Not just really expensive and extremely low-income housing)
2. Nicer and well kept low-income housing
3. An appropriate amount of safe and accessible housing for Raleigh's senior population
4. City of Raleigh website should have a section and a link to information that will educate seniors and caregivers about their rights and the services available to them as well as how to keep and maintain their property

Picture of Raleigh for future:

1. Affordable services for independent seniors
2. Roommate support for cross-generational living
3. Senior villages

Information and Communication:

1. Information about seeking legal assistance and when to pursue legal action
2. More accessible City of Raleigh marketing information.
3. Computer training and encouraged usage at libraries and training facilities.
4. More efficient means of distributing information pertaining to available resources and services.
5. Market materials to different age groups amongst seniors.
6. Central location where seniors can access information, have questions answered and use any necessary tools to assist with relevant needs.

Picture of Raleigh for future:

1. Information dispersed easily and quickly to all residents of the city
2. Free computer training classes readily available to seniors throughout the city
3. Linkages with doctor offices to supply resources to senior citizens

Safety and Security:

1. More seminars for seniors (home safety, shopping etc.)
2. Assistance with online security information (scam prevention etc.)
3. Security guard(s) provided regardless of location or income status of living facility
4. Consumer protection education

Picture of Raleigh for future:

1. Great lighting for streets and sidewalks
2. Better gun control

Services and Access to Food:

1. Provide more funding for seniors who need help in their homes for various reasons
2. More accessible grocery stores (e.g. downtown)
3. Encouraged senior nutrition (education and access)

Picture of Raleigh for future:

1. Available resources for home repair
2. Youth and families that partner with seniors to support their needs such as shopping, laundry etc.
3. Community gardens

Transportation:

1. Access to public transportation (affordable transportation for low-income seniors)
2. Proximity of pick up/drop off points to senior residence facilities
3. Re-visit the price break on public transportation for seniors
4. More complete transportation to the Triangle, Durham and neighboring counties
5. Van transport to take seniors to medical appointments etc.
6. Conduct a Senior Livability Audit

Picture of Raleigh for future:

1. High speed rail/subway
2. A city full of sidewalks, bike lanes and adequate lighting
3. Covered bus stops with benches

Mrs. Weiss brought the group back together and thanked them for participating in the Community Dialogue. Participants were also asked to record their name and address on a piece of paper if they wished to receive a Directory of Resources for Seniors provided by the nonprofit Resources for Seniors. Participants were also asked to fill out the survey, and if they had already filled it out at a previous dialogue, then to just fill out the basic information section on the last page. The 3rd of Raleigh's Community Dialogue adjourned at approximately 12:00 noon.

Community Dialogue Report: Embracing Raleigh's Rainbow

09/19/10

Sertoma Arts Center

3:00pm- 5:00pm

Participants arrived at Sertoma Arts Center for the 4th Community Dialogue in the series of dialogues entitled "Many Faces, One Community." The purpose of this dialogue was to capture recommendations as to how Raleigh can be a better place to live for its gay, lesbian and transgender residents. In a folder, participants at the "Embracing Raleigh's Rainbow" dialogue received a copy of the survey that has been administered at each dialogue; a handout referencing Raleigh's strategic plan; a list of LGBT owned/welcoming businesses, organizations, and religious institutions provided by the LGBT Center of Raleigh; a compilation of recent examples where various local governments throughout the US engaged LGBT related issues; a copy of the City of Raleigh's current non-discrimination policy; and a handout referencing the various NC local government policies relating to the LGBT population of Raleigh. The purpose of these handouts was to serve as reference for possible discussion topics that could arise.

Commissioner Jimmy Creech welcomed participants to Sertoma and thanked them for coming out to be a part of the dialogues. He explained the origin of the dialogues and their intended purpose. He then introduced the facilitator of the dialogues, Evangeline Weiss.

Mrs. Weiss explained the basics about how the dialogue should proceed and asked the participants to reorganize themselves so that they could be sitting next to people who they were not familiar with. She did this by asking everyone to line up in order by how long he or she had lived in Raleigh. Everyone then counted off by 4 and moved to a table with people of their corresponding number.

Once at their tables, participants were asked to introduce themselves to one another and share one thing they believe Raleigh is doing well in regards to the LGBT community, and one thing that Raleigh is struggling with. After about 10 minutes of discussion, Mrs. Weiss refocused the group to the front of the room where she had flip chart paper ready to record the positives and negatives that each group had mentioned.

When asked what Raleigh was doing well with respect to LGBT issues, these points were included: The LGBT Center (establishment without a fight or backlash), a general feeling of safety, a decently sized single LGBT population, the City's non-discrimination policy's inclusion of sexual orientation, and the many LGBT community assets that exist.

When asked what Raleigh was not doing well, or needed to improve on, with respects to the LGBT community, responses included: Lack of domestic partner benefits, a lack of awareness and sensitivity with regards to the Raleigh Police Department, lack of recognition of the LGBT community's contributions, youth homelessness, and the lack of social services (for youth and LGBT otherwise). After this, the groups were asked to reflect on the values that they would like to see carried forward as Raleigh becomes more diverse

and continues to grow. This broad idea needed further explanation and Mrs. Weiss elaborated that she believed discussing this would help frame the issues with a broader scope before the group delved into making recommendations. A few of the broader concepts reflected upon were safety, human rights and leading by example.

While participants discussed the value framing, Mrs. Weiss placed flip chart paper at several different stations, each with a different topical area. Participants were asked to make recommendations at each station for which they had ideas. After they were through with this, they were each given two stickers to put next to recommendations they felt were the most important. The top 5 recommendations after prioritization were:

1. A homeless shelter for LGBT youth
2. Domestic partner benefits
3. Ongoing funding for nonprofit LGBT initiatives
4. LGBT representation on boards/commissions (diversity beyond race/gender)
5. Non-discrimination and harassment policy for City of Raleigh to include gender identity and expression

The additional recommendations, sorted by category, are listed below.

Business Community:

- Recognize the positive impact from the LGBT community in local business
- Maintain list of LGBT owned and friendly businesses
- Non-discrimination in hiring practices (ordinance for all Raleigh businesses)
- Recruit businesses with excellent diversity records to relocate to Raleigh
- Outlaw sexual harassment
- Insurance for gender reassignment surgery

Policy Specific:

- Adoption benefits
- Non-gender specific bathrooms in all public buildings
- Resolution in support of marriage equality
- Resolution celebrating contribution of LGBT community

Seniors and Special Needs Population:

- Senior programs specifically addressing LGBT issues (assisted living, nursing homes, counseling, financial, estate planning)
- Senior social and recreational activities directed towards LGBT seniors
- Adult protective services needs to be trained to be respectful towards transgender and LG couples/people
- Affordable senior housing

Parks and Recreation:

- Designated P&R programs for LGBT youth (specifically developed in P&R program guide and developed by LGBT youth)
- Safe designated places for LGBT youth in policy and in practice

Miscellaneous:

- Database of resources for LGBT community
- No RPD arresting for “Crimes Against Nature” (as in West Raleigh in 2007)
- LGBT related festivals or street fairs
- Recognition/acknowledgement of LGBT community officials and legislators
- Regular sponsored meetings of LGBT resources/support services to strategize (include other community leaders as well)
- Diversity training in all public departments

Health and Human Services/Housing:

- Placement options given for LGBT foster/adoption/group home
- Social service liaisons or DSS staff tolerant and accepting with LGBT kids and couples
- Transitional housing program for LGBT community
- LGBT adoption acceptance
- Educate foster/adoptive parents on LGBT community
- Health benefit options for transgender community
- List of physicians that understand LGBT issues

Youth:

- Support for gay-straight alliances in schools (inclusive of transgender students)
- More resources for social services
- Pull together leadership within LGBT youth community and partner with College and University resources
- Educate Raleigh schools and administrators on LGBT issues
- Grant money designated to creating an at-risk GLBT success program (academic, social, etc.)

Discussion about community and civic involvement continued after the recommendations were prioritized, and information about City resources, boards and commissions was shared with participants by RHRC commissioners who were in attendance. An additional recommendation was made that the Commission should ask people at the Unity Day Breakfast to sign the final report to show the amount of community backing this type of engagement has. The dialogue ended at about 4:40 pm.

Community Dialogue: A Rising Tide:

11/20/2010

Method Pioneers Building

10:00AM-12:00PM

Dialogue participants arrived at the Method Pioneers Building on the morning of Saturday, November 20 to engage in a conversation about how Raleigh can better ensure access to opportunity and prosperity for all of its residents. The dialogue was entitled “A Rising Tide” to capture the notion that as Raleigh continues to grow, the population of Raleigh must rise together to seize opportunities and overcome challenges.

Participants were given a folder that contained a couple of handouts with various economic indicators and demographic data, an article from the Raleigh Public Record about homelessness in Raleigh, a handout about Raleigh’s 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and the survey that has been administered at each dialogue.

After giving some extra time for latecomers, Vice Chair of the Raleigh Human Relations Commission Lorrin Freeman greeted the dialogue participants. She gave an overview of the background and purpose of the series of community dialogues that the RHRC is sponsoring. After explaining that the dialogues would culminate on December 4th, 2010 with the Mayor’s Unity Day Breakfast, she handed the floor over to the facilitator for the morning, Kathleen Clark.

To start off, Ms. Clark allowed participants to introduce themselves and share with the group the personal stake that he or she has in talking about economic prosperity in Raleigh. There was a diverse group of people in attendance including people representing nonprofit organizations, the local Method community, government agencies and faith based organizations. The dialogue was also attended by City Councilor Thomas Crowder.

After each participant got a chance to briefly share where he or she was coming from, Ms. Clark asked the group to break up into three discussion groups. The first topic for discussion in the small groups was “What are Raleigh’s strengths and successes in the arena of economic prosperity?” After 10-20 minutes of discussion, each group shared their main themes with the group at-large while Ms. Clark recorded them on flip chart paper.

The list of strengths included:

- The YMCA partnering with smaller groups advocating for at-risk youth
- Chief of police spearheading larger groups collaborating with smaller groups for gang prevention
- Raleigh’s thriving nonprofit community
- Raleigh weathered the storm better than other areas in the state and country
- Collaboration heightened through recession (must keep networks intact afterwards)
- Interact
- Businesses collecting clothes for Interact

- A lot of businesses collecting food, items of need
- Raleigh Area Development Authority
- Raleigh Neighborhood College empowering individuals
- Raleigh Chamber of Commerce Employment initiative (homeless to find work)
- Partnership to end homelessness (City of Raleigh appoints City Council member and half-time city planner to help with this partnership)
- Haven House (example: its boxing program)
- Human Services agency grants
- Interfaith Food Shuttle
- Triangle Family Services (foreclosure programs)
- Fair Housing- tenant rights
- Legal Aid (50k from City for housing specialist)
- Step-Up Ministries
- Raleigh Urban Ministries- housing for homeless, grant from City

This list of strengths reflected the notion that Raleigh has a lot of initiatives and organizations working toward important missions. The identification of these initiatives and organizations may serve as a recommendation to the City in itself to continue to fund and/or provide funding to organizations involved in these or similar activities.

Participants were then asked to identify the areas of weakness or challenges facing Raleigh residents and discuss them in their groups. When the focus came back to the group as a whole, each group shared their ideas. These included:

- Jobs -- too few of them
- Lack of training opportunities for jobs that are available
- Lack of collaboration between government and their grantees
- Communication lacking about what services are available
- Communication between nonprofits needs to improve (City's role)
- Revenue is down
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Public transportation stops at midnight
- There is no public transport to peripheral areas
- Lack of trust in government that they will listen
- Lack of education
- Apathy (stuck and don't know what else to do)
- Neighborhoods disconnected
- Individuals struggling with bad credit
- Case management is not happening (holistic approach to care)
- Affordable housing is scarce as there is a lack of mixed-use and mixed-income developments
- The lack of chances for former felons to get hired (stigma pushes into cycle of poverty)

Finally, participants were asked to identify potential solutions to these challenges and weaknesses. After sharing a few with the group as a whole, participants were allowed to go

to different pieces of flip chart paper throughout the room and record recommendations under different categories.

These recommendations included:

Work with nonprofits/City agencies:

- 1) Plan a meeting between grant receiving agencies and City Council members to address concerns and needs.
- 2) Establish attendance standards for outside organizations to attend planning/decision making meetings (certain % present to proceed). This could foster collaboration, transparency and trust.
- 3) Increase grant funding to human services nonprofits

Housing:

- 1) Inclusionary zoning policies to encourage development of affordable housing
- 2) Creation of locally funded housing vouchers for people at 40% or below of the median income level. (Federally funded Section 8 vouchers are in short supply and could be further reduced.)
- 3) Mixed use development projects
- 4) Collaboration between RADA and 10-year homelessness initiative

Transportation:

- 1) Collaborating nontraditional transportation efforts to get people places
- 2) Funding for organizations that provide transportation to various populations who are not Medicaid recipients.
- 3) Collaboration between municipalities and county governments on regional planning initiatives

Miscellaneous:

- 1) Raleigh should provide a “hub” of opportunities for people in different places of need. The creation of a flow chart of nonprofits/opportunities may be valuable.
- 2) Informing about what is available
- 3) Neighborhood block parties
- 4) Information dispersal
- 5) Centralized public information campaign
- 6) Initiative to get a handle on who is coming from outside the city and using City of Raleigh services (Triangle J Council of Governments)
- 7) Vote for a half-cent sales tax.
- 8) City giving more of an audience to people affected by particular issues

The dialogue culminated at 12:00PM and participants were also told that they could continue the conversation on Facebook, as well as by attending the Mayor’s Unity Day Breakfast on December 4.

*Produced by the
City of Raleigh
Community Services Department*

02/2011