



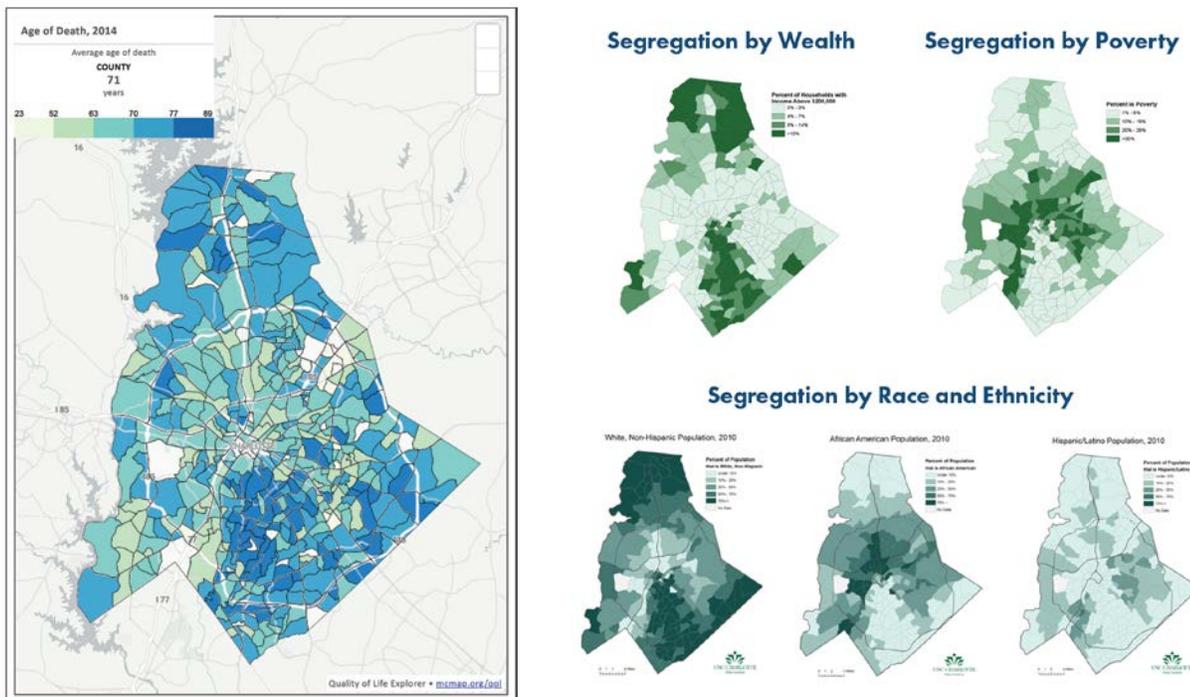
July 16, 2018

Ms. Kitty Hsu Dana, Senior Health Policy Advisor
National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education and Families
660 North Capitol St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Dana,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this expression of interest for the City of Charlotte to participate in the *Cities of Opportunity* pilot project. Increasing health and well-being, providing economic opportunity and ensuring affordable and safe housing for everyone in our community are high priorities for Charlotte.

According to recent data, the average age of death in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County is 71. However, when we map this data we see a stark pattern. Our [Quality of Life Maps](#) show what looks like a piece of pie to the south. In this wedge-shaped area the average age of death is 79 and in a crescent shaped area around it the average age of death is 67, over a decade difference. This pattern is the same for income levels, education levels, and racial composition. We are working to change this.



Charlotte is creating the first Comprehensive Plan in nearly 45 years. We believe this is a major opportunity to develop a new growth framework that will result in a more integrated city with a more equitable distribution of investments and increased health for all of our residents. A key to the success of this initiative is developing policies and implementing strategies that create more complete neighborhoods with access to a range of opportunities such as housing, parks, transportation options, and services.

This process will build upon past efforts and learning around equity in government practices, community capacity building, and civic engagement. The *Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan* process will kick off this fall and will establish a shared community vision for future growth and the policies and actions to achieve it.

The *Charlotte Future 2040* will have two parts:

1. Establishing a Growth Framework that Achieves the Community's Vision and Values around being a(n):
 - Livable & Connected City – The Built Environment
 - Inclusive City – The Social Environment
 - Healthy City – The Natural Environment
 - Regional City
2. Our Vision Realized – Implementation Strategies, Action Plans, and Monitoring Metrics

The *Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan* will follow three principles:

Principle #1: Authentic and Equitable Participation. *Building a sense of community and collaboration between the community and government was one of the top three concerns identified in a recent community-wide survey. (October 2017, Community Letter Take10CLT – 1,500 community members provided ideas on what engagement should look like.)* The development of the Comprehensive Plan will involve inclusive community engagement across different platforms to ensure integration of voices often left out of or uninterested in the planning processes (including but not limited to those excluded because of race, citizenship, language, age, ability, income, or transportation access). Engagement is envisioned to include training community advocates on the tradeoffs and tools around growth; and equipping neighborhoods and businesses to be active participants in achieving a shared vision.

Principle #2: Interwoven Equity. *Seeking equitable outcomes in our engagement and structuring our policies to address the legacy of segregation that continues to divide our city and present barriers for upward economic mobility is critical. (2014, Harvard-Berkley Study – Charlotte is ranked 50th out of Charlotte's 50 largest cities for upward economic mobility, especially for those born in poverty).* The Opportunity Task Force [found](#) that interventions that change and improve underlying policies and practices are needed to promote upward economic mobility. The Comprehensive Plan and the process to develop it provide valuable opportunities for addressing this structure. Charlotte is committed to moving forward sustainability and acknowledges that the physical development of the city (where people live, work, and play) influences our residents' access to jobs, education, affordable housing, health, and other community assets.

Principle #3: Integrated Framework for Growth, Development and Community Design. *Growing more integrated; having clearer city policies and practices; and using data more innovatively to measure outcomes will require more integrated relationships between programs and agencies.* The City has various goals, strategies, policies, plans, and regulations related to growth and investment that will be updated and coordinated to achieve consistent outcomes in the Comprehensive Plan.

Charlotte has a host of progressive strategies, projects, and programs that address the three priority areas outlined in the invitation, including but not limited to:

- **Economic Opportunity** – Project P.I.E.C.E. creates employment opportunities for individuals with multiple barriers to employment through training and partnerships with area employers; Mayors Youth Employment Program provides paid internships to local high school students; The Nest (North End Smart District-NESD pilot project) provides community members with the venue and partnerships to host training sessions from financial planning to internet security to career readiness; commercial building façade improvement program provides matching grants to businesses; and the Community Investment Plan (CIP) allocates bond funding to public realm improvements while promoting public-private partnerships for funding and community engagement.
- **Affordable and Healthy Housing** – Critical Home Repair, Weatherization, and Lead-Safe programs help maintain healthy and affordable housing; tax abatements assist disabled and senior fixed-income homeowners through North Carolina's Homestead Act; Down Payment Assistance program promotes home ownership; Housing Partnership and Charlotte Housing Authority help direct funds and manage affordable housing investments; Housing Charlotte Report provides important market data and opportunities to provide affordable housing; Smart Homes (NESD pilot project) works with the private sector to provide social capital and test smart home technologies to lower utility costs; Healthy Communities program works with communities to have a healthier environment through waste reduction; Mobile Market and Farm Stand (NESD pilot project) promotes neighborhood access to fresh produce, healthy eating, and social capital (community support and classes);

development incentives create affordable housing and promote complete neighborhoods; Neighborhood Matching Grants promote investment in community collaboration around a variety of topics; and Mecklenburg County Food Access farmers market pilot program promotes fresh food access in food desserts.

- **City Planning & Design** – Envision My Ride engages the community around public transit and identifies needed changes to the system; First-Mile Last Mile pilot project, a collaboration between CATS and Lyft, promotes easy access to the light rail line; Vision Zero initiative is aimed at eliminating bicycle and pedestrian fatalities through a variety of safety measures; Open Streets 704 promotes community movement and civic engagement; Stitch Together CLT pilot program brings community leaders together to address big equity issues at a neighborhood level; The Placemaking Hub facilitates community efforts to improve the public realm and produces projects that promote a sense of community and place; Community Planning Academy teaches community members about the planning process and equips them to be advocates for good investments in their neighborhood; Civic Leadership Academy shows community members how the city does business across all departments and equips them to be leaders on local boards and commissions; several city departments have received Government Alliance on Race and Equity training to achieve a shared understanding of racial inequity in our city and tools to address structural norms that perpetuate it; the North End Smart District tests out innovative ways of engaging community members who have typically not had a seat at the table, improving service delivery, and building community capacity; Better Block and the Community Building Speaker Series brings in experts to share their experiences and tools to create stronger communities; Place Types project engages the community through expert speakers, games, meeting-in-a-box, pop-up meetings, and social media to help streamline and update planning policies.

We are proud of all of these initiatives and want to grow and reproduce them, and develop other projects, to benefit all of Charlotte. The biggest challenges we face in doing so are:

- communication and information access (information is sometimes buried or unclear, paperwork and legal language can be onerous, smaller projects and programs lack the staff resources for getting the word out);
- coordinating projects and programs with different timeframes, financing, operating procedures, and strategies;
- lack of shared ownership and structure for cross-agency collaboration;
- strategies and goals based on political timeframes; and
- low expectations and accountability for these services to exist or be accessible to some parts of our community.

We believe that *Charlotte Future 2040* will provide a good foundation for addressing these concerns. This collaboration with *Cities of Opportunity* will give us a chance to interact with experts and peer cities and incorporate our learning to communicate more effectively, grow cross-agency partnerships, and promote public accountability in the planning process. When *Charlotte Future 2040* is complete in two years, we will have a new vision, growth framework and implementation strategies and strengthened community relationships and cross-agency partnerships that result in equitable outcomes.

Our team members will be:

1. Todd DeLong, Redevelopment Manager, Charlotte Economic Development
2. City Council or Planning Commission Member
3. Dennis LaCaria, Senior Assistant to the County Manager, Mecklenburg County
4. Garet Johnson, Assistant Director, Charlotte Planning, Design and Development
5. Rachel Stark, Principle Planner & Urban Designer, Charlotte Planning, Design and Development

Thank you for your consideration of Charlotte in joining the cohort of pilot *Cities of Opportunity*.

Kind regards,



Taiwo Jaiyoba, Director of Charlotte Planning, Design and Development



July 12, 2018

Ms. Kitty Hsu Dana, Senior Health Policy Advisor
National League of Cities
Institute for Youth, Education and Families
660 North Capitol St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Dana,

I am pleased to support the City of Charlotte Team's application as a pilot city in the NLC *Cities of Opportunity*. The team would be a valuable addition to your cohort of pilot cities to share in knowledge and co-create solutions. The learning from this cohort of cities will help inform the development of Charlotte's 2040 Comprehensive Plan which will launch this fall. The *Charlotte Future 2040 Plan* is envisioned as a unifying plan that will provide a framework for consensus on future growth and will result in equitable outcomes for our community.

The work of the *Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan* will examine the state of our city as a place of opportunity for all and will provide updated policies and action plans to address the challenges we face as a rapidly growing and diversifying city. One challenge the plan will examine is upward mobility relative to the built environment. This is particularly important in light of the 2014 Harvard-Berkley Study in which Charlotte was ranked 50th out of the 50 largest US cities for upward economic mobility. Investments directed at equitable economic development, affordable and healthy housing, transportation, and places where residents are connected to social capital are vital as we chart the future of the city's physical development.

The *Cities of Opportunity* collaboration over the next 8 months will help us learn from peer cities, establish critical knowledge base, and guide our equity-focused work in the Comprehensive Plan. I also believe our team has valuable skills and expertise in addressing tough issues that we can share with the other peer cities.

If Charlotte is awarded a place in the *Cities of Opportunity* cohort, the City of Charlotte is committed to devote the time necessary to collaborate in the development and implementation of strategies created through this process.

Regards,

Vi Alexander Lyles
Mayor