

next STEPS PLAYING & CONNECTED COMMUNITY

In response to the high interest of the community at the August 2, 2012, Community Conversation, Clarkston Development Foundation scheduled a list of dates to discuss next steps and evaluate potential projects or activities in each of the identified focus areas. On January 24, 2013, CDF hosted the fourth in a series of Next Steps Sessions. The Session focused on the Playing and Connected Community.

The evening included a sharing of ideas generated at previous meetings. This report¹ reflects the comments and opinions of the attendees as documented at the Next Steps Session: Playing and Connected Community.

Process

Over 25 people attended and divided into small groups based on their interests. Three groups met. While in small groups, participants discussed their visions for a safe community and identified projects for group consideration and implementation. Participants were asked to consider these primary questions:

1. What vision of playing and connected do we have with respect to the topic chosen?
2. What needs to be done generally to achieve that vision?
3. What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?
4. Given the actions identified, what are the specific projects this group can commit to undertaking?
5. What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

Participants met in small groups on the topics below. The numbers of corresponding groups were as follows:

- Connecting People to People (2 group2)
- Being Artful and Playful (1 group)
- Creating and Engaging Public Spaces (1 group)

Themes

Over the course of the evening's conversation core themes arose. Participants were clearly interested in solutions that present the positives of Clarkston, highlight multicultural and U.S. born residents, and include cross cultural understanding. As in previous meetings, participants

¹ Report prepared by Clarkston Development Foundation. An appendix is also available for download so that the reader can see every idea written on the easels by each group.

expressed interest in building on existing projects. The themes referenced here are not exhaustive, but are reflective of the types of discussions that occurred throughout the evening.

Next Steps: Projects/Actions

Out of these conversations, groups identified the following projects for further consideration and planning:

- Support existing international festival with fundraising
- Seek educational opportunities on fundraising
- Host outdoor film screening and potluck
- Support and grow the existing Clarkston Active Living Initiative (C.A.L.I.)
- Create downtown plaza for people to engage in social and business transactions

Connecting People to People – Easel 7

(Note: two groups met to discuss this topic. They are summarized separately)

What does “connecting people to people” look like to this group?

- Connecting different socioeconomic groups
- Strong local connections that are mirrored in civic representations (in office)
- More connections between ethnic and U.S. born
 - Reaching out to white and U.S. born
 - Improving perceptions
- Group projects that address problems and build relationships
 - Clean up
 - Edible landscapes
 - Apartments
 - Like Indian Creek Elementary clean up
- More spaces that bring people together
 - Open places/ markets that allow people to share their life experience through commerce and bridge the cultural gaps
- Life long mentoring efforts
 - Develop youth and community liaisons
- Building understanding
- Bhutanese connecting with U.S. born to better understand culture/systems allows us to learn about job opportunities
 - Create a web of connections

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Identify groups or interested parties in Clarkston who might want to get word out and connect with others
- Identify community partners who are willing to provide space
- Sharing in community conversation what makes this community connected
- Storytelling in different languages
 - Around town
 - Festival and multicultural
- Playing games
 - Allow people to connect without languages
- Community meeting or conversation
- Meeting new people leads to connection to community actions and existing conversations
- Taking games to apartments

- Setting up tables in parking lot to barter or trade, etc.
- Connection to existing farmer's market
- Have a breakout group around plaza idea
 - Develop plan to share with city manager
 - Land bank concept idea
 - Involve local business

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Share some organization resources from Welcoming America with interested groups wanting to bring people together
- Identify grants and other funding opportunities, to look at economic level of plaza
- Start connecting with different cultural food
- Celebrate the diversity in the County
- Education of other cultures

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- Share some organization resources from Welcoming America with interested groups wanting to bring people together -Rachel
- Identify grants and other funding opportunities, to look at economic opportunity for a downtown plaza in Clarkston
 - Rodney is interested in being a part of group to develop a plan for plaza/ market idea
- Start connecting with different cultural food
 - One group member is a chef and could cook for gatherings
- Rodney will connect with Stan Watson about festival in Dekalb County
 - Dean will connect with Keith Barker for his involvement and input

Being Artful and Playful – Easel 8

What does “being artful and playful” look like to this group?

- Day of painting hosted in a park or a gym with a local art teacher instructing
- Multicultural community with lots of color; All people together- young and elderly
- Music, Color, Activity, Food, Dance, Gardening, Poetry, Sport, Physical activity, Laughter
- Multigenerational
- Connecting Play and Learning
- Color in public places: Murals
- Because people walk often, beautification is essential
- Bicycling and community support for cycling
- Communication: nonverbal and deep, through arts
- Infuse the connected community with artful and playful spirit
- Play would be the fabric of everyday life and would give you a feeling of civic pride
- Animals: our dogs, cats, fish, birds
- Balancing time for serious work with opportunity for outlet and release

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Gathering volunteers, reserving places
- Find existing talents in the community
- Fundraisers: people put talents up for auction
- Forming clubs – based on playful and artistic interests
- Astronomy, cooking, chess, cycling
- The clubs can offer classes
- A regular open mic where people can show up and perform what they want
- Dance party, movie night in the park, or film festival
- A centralized place to post events
 - Raising awareness of what’s here, like Common Place
 - Can we post things physically
- Some of the ideas are easy to implement but the challenge is raising awareness, energizing people, spreading the word
- Festival (a platform for many of the groups, activities)

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Beautification day
- Arts and Culture Festival
- Culture is broadly defined: food and culture and sports
- This would be a good place to fundraise: display and sell people's art
- Greater Atlanta Community Foundation_has funded arts festivals in the past
 - They have a webinar next Tuesday from 6-8 p.m.

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- Tap into existing resources
- Bring an energy for arts and dance to existing festival
- Coinciding events: a strong core of people can do good work
- Could we devote ourselves to a :
 - Fundraising arm of the existing festival?
 - Promotional
 - Awareness raising
- We should connect with existing Festivals
- Work to sustain festivals throughout the year
- Next Tuesday, listen to the webinar: Feb. 29 6-8 p.m.
- Research existing Festivals
- Amy will offer awareness-raising and small-scale fundraising, and connect greater Atlanta.
- Use Access Atlanta?
 - Daniel has a conference room on Clairemont
 - 6:30 Thursday the 7th

Connecting People to People – Easel 10

(Note: two groups met to discuss this topic. They are summarized separately)

What does “connecting people to people” look like to this group?

- A variety of activities that engage across cultures, etc.
- A plethora of sports and open play activities
- Organized enough to have an intentional rainbow of people connected
- Building on existing
 - Kim Ault’s international festival
 - Make it annual, featuring arts and culture (high quality)
 - Put Clarkston on the map with pride
- Cross racial, refugee and African American, White
 - More activities bringing together, address racism
- Arts Camps, theater
 - Focus some energy on each
 - Federally funded positions for all
 - Look to other examples
 - Learn from Civil Rights movement

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Nonviolence type training by Bernard Laggrette
- Recruitment intentionally cross-cultural
- Get them around a common interest, they’ll form friendships
- Common interests
- Build on existing dance classes- integrate them even inside CCC
- Remembering to also respect identity groups
- Not infiltration but invitation
- Create the expectation that activities will be cross-cultural (Quotas?)
- Schools: everyone goes! Community involvement in schools
- Eric’s success story about soccer in schools involving people (More recreational opportunities)
- Schools are focused on academics, we’re focused on antibullying, etc.
- Look at funding, sources to serve specific populations
- Come together to advocate for funding to reconsider type
- Also pair programs with different funding

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Focus on cross cultural engagement
- Festival, focus on including all
- Using market as an experimental space, themes
- More sports and recreation, excuse to come together
- Photos and Film series focusing on different cultures long-term to keep engagement
- More partnerships, invite in wider Atlanta
- Continue this conversation
- Talent show, traveling space known as Clarkston
- Screen and potluck
 - Outdoor, Milam Park
 - Plan a year-long program

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- At apartment complexes
- Can be connected to recreational activities like at First Baptist (Movie and Basketball)
- Open play while wait until dark for film
- Nikhil and McKenzie will convene next meeting with doodle poll. Next meeting is within the month. Need two weeks notice. Lunch and evening options.

Creating and Engaging Public Spaces – Easel 11

What does “creating and engaging public spaces” look like to this group?

- Public Space
 - Complete streets: turn lanes, lighting, medians
 - Bicycle parking and sitting areas around the community
 - Safe Railroad crossing (Pedestrian and Bike) ADA
 - Re-design Church, Ponce, Indian Creek crossing area
 - Upkeep/ restoration of fences (behind library) leads to increased safety
 - Beautification/ aesthetics
 - more trees, more green
 - less litter
 - Clarkston Ambassadors
- Pedestrian and Bike Safety
- Key themes for public spaces
 - Safe places
 - Accessible places
 - “pretty places”

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Work with government officials
- Direct action: litter clean-up
- Involve various community groups- volunteers
- Identify funding: grants
 - Fundraising event
- Engage business groups
 - business associations
- Engage apartment owners

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Develop, Strengthen, Support Clarkston Ambassadors
- Engage more people in public clean-up
- Promote and Support Streets alive
 - Involvement with Clarkston Active Living Initiative (C.A.L.I.) by residents
- Be good advocates

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- Support C.A.L.I.
 - Attend monthly C.A.L.I. meeting (Feb. 13) 12-1 p.m. (1st Wednesday of month)
 - Expand C.A.L.I. membership and scope through new groups and actions
 - Come to meetings
 - Recruit people to come to meetings
- Sat. Feb. 16th Street Clean-up
- Be the squeaky wheel