

# Healthy Durham 20/20

*A New Vision...Join the Movement!*

## **Fall 2017 Community Listening Sessions**

### **Report**

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## Introduction

### Summary

The Healthy Durham 20/20 Community Engagement Team was tasked with the responsibility to engage and listen to the ideas of community members about ways to help Durham work collectively to achieve the vision of becoming the healthiest county in the nation. The Community Engagement Team is comprised of Niasha Fray (Program Director for Healthy Durham 20/20), Camryn Smith (Asset Based Community Development Facilitator), and Kevin McLeod (Director of Operations & Strategy, Duke Division of Community Health). This team held four community listening sessions at the beginning of October 2017 and throughout November 2017. Two of these four sessions was co-hosted by the Partnership for a Healthy Durham and co-facilitated by Marissa Mortiboy (Partnership for a Healthy Durham Coordinator) and Denver Jameson (Epidemiologist). At these listening sessions a diverse group of more than 35 community members, stakeholders, and leaders from local organizations shared their viewpoints with the community engagement team.

### Participation

Attendance was a good mixture of community residents, college students, community based organizations, community rooted organizations, and community activists. The community based and rooted groups represented a range of perspectives and services pertaining to anti-racism, equitable development groups to groups focusing on education, health inequality, issues impacting the safety and thriving of undocumented citizens, food access, business development, faith community, and entrepreneurship. People from broad racial, socio-economic and educational backgrounds attended.

Healthy Durham 20/20 Community Listening Session Engagement		
Date	Location	Attendance
Oct. 27, 2017	ReCity Durham	8
Nov. 3, 2017	Stanford L. Warren Library	6
*Nov. 14, 2017	Immaculate Conception Church	10
*Nov. 18, 2017	Blacknall Memorial Presbyterian Church	15

*\*Community Listening Sessions cohosted by the Partnership for a Healthy Durham*

Healthy Durham 20/20 is committed to continuing to host community listening sessions throughout our development in order to improve broad community participation in this movement. This will involve working to reach other parts of Durham, utilizing varied types of venues, as well as targeting the cultural/ethnic diversity of Durham.

### Methods

The Community Engagement Team began the first two of four meetings with the brief Healthy Durham 20/20 informational slide presentation and then followed with the short video called "The Tale of Two Zip Codes". Afterwards these listening sessions continued with discussion questions to spark reactions

and brainstorming. The team used Asset Based methods of Appreciative Inquiry by posing questions that were open-ended and encouraged deeper discussion and reflection. The team's facilitation of the listening session encouraged the participants to engage in discussion with one another to encourage cross-pollination of ideas, perspectives and to help form connections during each session.

<b>Healthy Durham 20/20 Community Listening Session Questions</b>
<b>1. What can we do to make sure that your ideas are used to improve the health of our community?</b>
<b>2. How do we engage the community in sustainable ways? (Additional prompt for clarity if needed: What resources are needed to support work in our neighborhoods that will improve our community health?)</b>
<b>3. Is this type of meeting the best way for us to reach you and keep you engaged or would some other platform, location, time, etc. better suit you?</b>

Depending on the size of the group, we engaged in a collective group discussion format or broke out into smaller groups usually delineated by tables or proximity. Every session was highly interactive and filled with insights from all involved. There were note takers at each session to insure the complete gathering of ideas from each session.

The sessions co-hosted by the Partnership for a Healthy Durham included a presentation on the 2016 Community Health Assessment. Following the presentation, the facilitators led the community participants in a brainstorming and feedback session on the top health priorities for Durham.

### **2017 Durham Health Summit Community Voice Integration**

In preparation of writing the findings of this report the Community Engagement Team reviewed the 2017 Durham Health Summit Community Voice (DHSCV) report. This report is critical to the development of Healthy Durham 20/20, because it was the first public effort of the convening group to (1) strategize an effective cooperative conversation with the Durham community that empowered them to express their concerns and ideas; and (2) convey cohesive (not exhaustive) assets and needs of the Durham community. Overlapping and complimentary themes from the DHSCV are highlighted in the findings section of this report.

### **Findings**

Each of the discussion questions yielded different answers at each community listening session, but many of the unique answers fell into three large categories. One category was related to community engagement and how Healthy Durham 20/20 can build a more accountable and representative community voice as well as develop better community relations. Another set of feedback falls into the category of the nuances of outreach, whereby it's acknowledged that not all communities are the same in Durham and there are specific things Healthy Durham 20/20 can do to be sure their outreach recognizes these differences and attracts a broad audience. The last category is access to resources where issues of building community rooted solutions to address health disparities is seen as critical to this audience of participants. In the following sections you will gain a more detailed insight into these categorized findings with direct quotes from note takers in italics.

## Community Engagement

As recommended by the 2017 DHSCV report the primary approach to the community engagement discussion was to draw on the shared and unique experiences, resources, and understanding of the participants. As suggested by the DHSCV actively going into the community to hear voices was the key strategy of the community engagement discussions. This approach also allowed participants to share their perceptions of their family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. who live, work and play in Durham. Participants shared with us their ideas about how to build a more accountable and representative community voice.

- *Actively go into the community to hear community voices.*
- *Participate in or organize community potlucks and share information during these events.*

It was also important to the participants that the Durham community needs to engage in some challenging discussions in order to address the problems we are aiming to address.

- *Don't shy away from the hard conversations especially if it effects the community.*
- *Exposing systemic structures that are blocking growth.*

In addition to having these hard conversations it is important that those involved in the process of creating and implementing solutions are willing to be transparent to the community and welcoming of community participation.

- *Collect and distribute information to make sure we are following up and hear everyone's voice.*
- *Check in process with the community and place for them to update us.*
- *Have a mutual respect, ask if on the right track, ask how to partner.*

People also felt strongly that many people/families, companies, industries, etc. have decided that the solution to the problems experienced in Durham, has been to move out to other neighboring counties with different opportunities and available resources. This group felt strongly that this strategy was not going to help improve Durham or make the lives of those living in Durham any better. In fact, it only can help those with the means and resources to move, and not every Durhamite has that privilege or desire.

- *The solution isn't moving out of Durham!*

Instead it was suggested that there is more that can be done to improve community relations, enhance opportunities, and increase resources in Durham.

- *Business owners and employers live the life of their employees who are living on minimum wage*
- *Give our community credit for what we are doing that is empowering our community*
- *Give communities sustainability around what they're already working on and build off that momentum*
- *See what is working with communities and see if it can be replicated in other communities*
- *Create a community toolbox for community members to see what has been done or tried in the past*
- *Capture stories of successes and failures, use stories to have people become proactive around health*

- *Design thinking*
- *Reexamine past ideas/projects to see if what didn't work can be applied now*

## **Nuances of Outreach**

Even though community engagement was discussed at length, participants shared a variety of perspectives on the nuances to effective outreach. It is also important to note that this distinction was made by 2017 DHSCV participants. One nuance was how to engage the community through various communication platforms and outlets. The participants particularly recognized how there have to be communication efforts that take into account different communities and generational groups. Multigenerational communication efforts were identified in the DHSCV report as a critical feature of engagement, which we aimed for and accomplished in our Fall 2017 community engagement discussions, but realize that we need to build on this success for future engagement endeavors.

- *Messaging needs to be done in different ways, knocking on doors can be effective, ambassadors can be helpful*
- *PAC meetings, Durham buses with wifi, community centers, faith communities*
- *Found out about event through Facebook*
- *Tapping into employees at Duke besides research and faculty to get the word out*
- *Multigenerational communication efforts*
- *Mega-churches involvement*
- *Youth inclusion in the conversation*

The participants also discussed how it is important to speak the community's language so that they can see themselves in this movement and feel motivated to get involved and participate. It is important to acknowledge that for many communities their values and goals are colored by their intersectional reality. For example, the Latino community is often times faced with similar goals and aspirations of any other community, but they must navigate it through the lens of immigration. Specifically they cannot simply strive for a career, but a career that will not be hindered by their or their family's immigration status. Another example of an intersectional reality is that faced by many people of color, or more specifically African Americans. African American participants talked about how their life goals and aspirations pertaining to, for example, home ownership was often times diminished by issues of racial inequity, which hinders access, despite financial/credit viability.

- *Immigration*
- *Racial Equity*

If the Healthy Durham 20/20 movement doesn't acknowledge and strive to deal with and protect the everyday citizens from these hindrances, then people will have a hard time committing to a movement that doesn't reflect their reality. Participants also shared that in order for the movement and leadership to be taken seriously by the everyday people of Durham, they wanted to see the leadership of Durham participating in community outreach and engagement meetings, so that they can see, hear, learn and exchange ideas with the people directly.

- *More people of power to meetings, the better.*

## Access to Resources

In order to keep people at the table and sustain their interest in Healthy Durham 20/20, participants shared that access to resources would make the biggest difference to the community. Participants felt that an acknowledgement that those who have money have power sets the stage for more honest and transparent dialogue. It was also acknowledged by participants that not everyone in Durham is going to recognize the need for a more equitable Durham. Even though this ideological tension may persist in certain segments of the community, it was clear that participants felt Durham had a variety of resources to offer those who live, work, and play in Durham. Participants stressed the importance of having more ambassadors to share information about resources with the community to improve access.

- *Acknowledge who has the money has the power*
- *Talk to people and don't be intimidated that not everyone will accept the message of equity*
- *Be ambassadors help people understand the resources available without creating a new "wheel"*

In addition to sharing information about resources, it was important to participants to begin to shift resources and opportunities to the community, so that communities own the resources and determine the opportunities that will help them thrive. Participants discussed how it is important for communities to find ways to fill the gaps that social services and other community agencies do not or cannot address for people in order to become more collectively-reliant and collectively-sufficient. In order to accomplish this participants felt that community capacity building as well as training and skills development for community leaders should become the focus of large community stakeholders and sectors. The need for training and skills development for community leaders was also discussed at the 2017 DHSCV and featured in the report.

- *Community rooted- ownership*
- *Finding ways to fill the gaps that social services doesn't meet*
- *Community Capacity building / training and skills development for community leaders*

Along these lines, the presence of incubator organizations in Durham were discussed by participants. In this discussion, participants expressed their desire to see more equitable opportunities for community members to access this resource to develop entrepreneurial solutions. Participants even shared their desire to hold all companies, especially incubator organizations, responsible for employing equitable practices, like a living wage, as strategy screens for investing community resources. Entrepreneurial efforts were also mentioned in the 2017 DHSCV report as a means to establish sustainable engagement.

- *Engage equitable opportunities for incubator organizations*
- *Develop strategy screens*

Another important resource for participants is access to beneficial, fresh, healthy, affordable food as well as resources to support those who need to utilize alternative medicine. Some participants talked about their health journeys that now require them to eat a very restricted and expensive diet and practice alternative medicine in order to thrive. These participants were dismayed by the prospect of how many people do not have financial access or educational exposure to know how to utilize these resources to live a healthier life, and thus suffer with an incompatible diet and medicine and/or die.

- *Access to beneficial fresh food*
- *Improve access to healthy food and resources*
- *Access to affordable, alternative medicine, access to affordable, clean foods, education on why it's important, how to prepare it, reprogram the palate for clean foods*

A key resource to every community are their children, and Durham is no different. Participants wanted to see more communities that were created and developed with children as the focus. The imperative need for all parents to send their children to a high quality preschool that meets their educational needs (including those with disabilities) was discussed by participants. Participants also felt it was important for there to be a considerable community investment in improving Durham Public Schools.

- *community created around our children*
- *universal preschool*
- *Improving Durham public schools*

Along the lines of improving Durham Public Schools was the concept of engaging a more equitable tax base, by creating more combined income communities and neighborhoods through mixed income housing developments. Living wages, was also a topic of discussion amongst participants who were interested in seeing more reinvestment into the local economy.

- *Living in combined income communities – mixed income housing*
- *paying living wages encourages people to reinvest into the local economy*

### **Suggested Next Steps**

Based on the insights and feedback provided by the Healthy Durham 20/20 Fall 2017 Community Listening Sessions we should strongly consider moving forward with the following steps:

- Target different segments of the Durham Community in future engagement discussions
- Deploy Healthy Durham 20/20 community ambassadors to let people know about upcoming community engagement discussions with more lead time (4 to 8 weeks)
- Ask specific leaders and citizens from each community that have a fuller understanding of population health and social equity to come and contribute to the discussion
- Share our findings from previous community engagement discussions and ask people to let us know what we're missing
- Set up a question on the Community Listening Session attendance sheet to ask for permission for one-on-one discussions with people who attend and engage them in more specific conversations about Healthy Durham 20/20 and how we can work together to improve our community
- Begin to discuss each of the focal areas with the community and ask for input on solutions to their challenges around each one
- Engage each sector in discussions about how each of their organizations can or does effect the landscape of each focal area in Durham
- Encourage each sector of Healthy Durham 20/20 to work together to create community training programs based on what's next for the future of our community

- Facilitate innovation and solution oriented networking and brainstorming at Health Summits by inviting entrepreneurial/incubator agencies to help multi-sectoral teams spark community rooted solutions to address the Healthy Durham 20/20 focal areas