



THE DAILY COLLABORATOR

PRESENTING SPONSORS:



WRAP-UP EDITION

CHARLOTTE SESSION SUMMARIES | SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2014

Photos by Bill Straus Photography unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

For the second time since 2010, Commerce Lexington Inc. and Greater Louisville Inc. partnered for a joint Leadership Expedition - this time to Charlotte, North Carolina, June 1-3. Nearly 300 Lexington and Louisville leaders participated in the trip presented by **CHASE / J.P. Morgan and LG&E/KU**.

Charlotte is not only known as one of the most vibrant cities in the nation, but is also among the best cities for jobs, business, affordability, entrepreneurial activity, homeownership, small businesses, and more. While Charlotte has the second-largest banking center in the U.S., its manufacturing, healthcare and energy industries are key components of the economy. Charlotte is also a national leader in workforce development and educational attainment, and has been able to leverage its talent in creating a high quality of place and a region that's "on the move."

Welcome to the Queen City Charlotte Mayor Dan Clodfelter

New Charlotte Mayor Dan Clodfelter welcomed the Lexington and Louisville leaders to Charlotte at CenterStage in NoDa - a recently developed arts and entertainment area. He noted that it was the second trip for each community to Charlotte. Both Lexington and Louisville visited the city separately in the early 1990's.



Mayor Clodfelter noted some of changes since those earlier trips, including the fact that Charlotte's population has doubled since then, and it is now the 16th largest city in the United States. He mentioned that the single most remarkable thing about this return visit to Charlotte was that no one back then would have ever suggested that the groups visit the very location that this year's dele-

gation opened the trip.

Known back then as North Charlotte, the area had become essentially an older population that was cut off from the rest of the city. Mayor Clodfelter noted that Charlotte has always "punched well above its weight class" when it came to public-private fundraising for the arts, and over time began to attract the type of young people he called "artistic entrepreneurs."

In the late 1980's, "a lucky thing" happened that would begin to transform the area called NoDa. "The arts found North Charlotte," said Mayor Clodfelter. A young artist couple found that the buildings in North Charlotte were not only cheap, but were also great locations for art galleries. "They began what has been an unstoppable turnaround for North Charlotte."

Now known as NoDa, the area has been a magnet for residents and newcomers and especially young people who are drawn to its open and eclectic environment. This transformation, he said, would not have been possible without the city's commitment to the arts.

Clodfelter said that if he had to pick a theme for what has occurred in Charlotte over the last 25 years, it would be "massive diversification" of the population, the economy, and of its public and nonprofit institutions. Like many cities, Charlotte "suffered greatly" during the financial downfall in 2008, but its balanced and diverse economy saw it through to the other side.

Watch Charlotte Mayor Dan Clodfelter's full remarks at <http://youtu.be/5BCa4QMhUEM>



Photo by Mark Turner | CLX Staff



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Charlotte: In The Pole Position Charles Bowman, Bank of America

Our luncheon keynote speaker on day one at CenterStage in NoDa featured Charles Bowman, Market President, North Carolina and Charlotte for Bank of America. He began this particular session by highlighting several key places in and around Charlotte to help trip participants get a sense of where they were in relation to downtown Charlotte.



Mr. Bowman opened his remarks by saying, “For many of you, this may be the most important trip that you’ve ever taken. Why do I say that? Because I believe that you are part of a revolution. I think what you’re doing is going to change America.”

He added that the federal government is in gridlock, states mostly have no money, “and it will be the cities that will change our economy.” The majority of people in North Carolina live in a city, and about half of the world’s population lives in cities, so because of future growth, it will be the cities that will need to solve problems.

In talking about how Charlotte got to where it is today, Mr. Bowman stressed that it was due in large part to great leaders who saw change as an opportunity. He had moved to Charlotte in 1983, and said that at that time, not many people wanted to be downtown. A big debate at the time was how the city could bury its telephone and electric wires.

The biggest driver of change at the time was a man named Hugh McColl, who was all about the concept of “building a city” while he grew his bank. According to Bowman, McColl and other leaders saw change as an opportunity.

McColl was building a great company, but he knew he needed to attract the best talent to Charlotte in order to do that. McColl challenged the community and business leadership to enhance the downtown and give money to the arts and arts venues, so that young creative people would want to move to the area.

The 1980’s were focused on improving infrastructure and the downtown area, while the 1990’s were focused on arts and culture. Bowman said, “Arts support a high quality of place, create excitement, and made Charlotte a place where people wanted to live.”

Rapid growth was achieved through strong public-private partnerships, and the results were things like improved transportation and healthcare, the U.S. National Whitewater Rafting Center, a new arena and stadium, and professional sports. Bowman stressed that it took a lot of collaboration to get to where

Charlotte is today, and much of what participants would see from the Westin Charlotte did not exist in the early 1980’s.

Today, Charlotte’s demographics are constantly changing, with a growing Hispanic population. There is very strong community college enrollment, and young professionals want to live downtown and be able to get around without a car. He said that the community is very proud of its light rail, and business and development has been spurred because of it.

Where is Charlotte headed for the future? Bowman said, “It will depend on the innovation of our people and the intellectual capital of our people.”

Watch Charles Bowman’s full remarks on-line at http://youtu.be/DJH9c9ID_MQ

Setting the Pace: Mayors’ Panel Lexington Mayor Jim Gray Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer

Moderated by Bob Babbage (Babbage Cofounder), Lexington Mayor Jim Gray and Louisville Mayor covered a number of topics, including the biggest challenges, top priorities, and collaborative opportunities for their respective cities. The two Mayors began by talking about the BEAM initiative, or Bluegrass Economic Advancement Movement, which has brought together Kentucky’s two largest cities in a way that can leverage their strengths in advanced manufacturing.

Mayor Fischer compared the collaborative effort to running a small business. He said, “Just like a small business, how can we be good even though we’re small. So, you have to be more nimble, closer to your customer, and move faster. How can we harness our 2.5 million people in our metropolitan area and work together?”

Mayor Gray pointed out one of the key outcomes from the BEAM initiative so far has been the new KCTCS/Toyota Training Center in Georgetown, Kentucky. He said, “Charlotte is known as one of the best of the best for workforce training. We benchmarked this area for its exceptional workforce training.”

Mayor Fischer cited the lack of a local option tax and the opportunity for citizens to vote on capital projects as an impediment to progress in Kentucky and our two cities. He was quick to point out that almost every city we’ve visited on these inter-city trips has the opportunity to consider local projects.

“We’re insulted in Kentucky by not even having the right to vote on specific projects,” said Fischer. “So, we’re trying to get the State Constitution changed through LIFT – Local Investments For Transformation. We had a big push in the 2014 Legislative Session, and it’s absolutely essential to the economic well-being

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of our cities for us to work together and move forward on it.”

When asked about the top priorities in Louisville, Mayor Fischer named public safety, jobs, education, and the opportunities that would be available through local option. In Lexington, Mayor Gray responded that public safety, quality of life, creating jobs, government efficiency, and building a Great American City were the top priorities.

Because of the size and close proximity of the two cities, Mayor Fischer said that Lexington and Louisville are in an ideal position to build a great global region for America. “We should set the agenda for the state,” he said. “In the same way you would do for your business, we need to feed the cities, which is where the growth is. We have different needs than our rural areas, with roads and bridges and other infrastructure needs.”

The two Mayors have created the Metropolitan Alliance for Growth, which includes officials in our region – from Louisville to Lexington to Northern Kentucky to Bowling Green and Owensboro – working together with the micropolitan areas to ensure that the needs of our cities are being addressed.

Mayor Gray cited the recovery of manufacturing in both Lexington and Louisville, with strong job growth and lower unemployment as positives for the region. “People want to move to our cities, and that brings greater challenges, greater needs in social services and affordable housing,” said Gray.



Mayor Fischer closed by saying that one of the biggest challenges in our cities, our region, and the state is that we need more entrepreneurial thinking or “can do” thinking. “How do we take it up another notch?” he said. “The goal is not to measure Louisville against Louisville or Lexington against Lexington. It’s us against the best cities in the world.”



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