



# THIS WEEK'S SPEAKER

June 22, 2021

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## Taiwo Jaiyeoba, Asst City Manager, Director of Planning, Design & Development, City of Charlotte, NC

### Planning Charlotte's Future by Rick Handford

Carol Hardison welcomed Taiwo Jaiyeoba, the City of Charlotte's Assistant City Manager and Director of Planning, Design and Development. He has led the work on the development of the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan (the "Plan") that was approved yesterday by the City Council in a 6-5 vote.

With nearly 30 years of regional, municipal and private sector service, Taiwo has extensive experience leading planning and transportation initiatives nationally and internationally. Before joining the City of Charlotte, he served as Director of the Sacramento Regional Transit District in California, and Director of Planning and Development in Grand Rapids, MI.

Jaiyeoba currently serves as a member of the Zoning Adjustment Board for the Town of Wesley Chapel. He is a board member of Habitat for Humanity, University City Partners and Charlotte Center City Partners. In addition, Jaiyeoba participates in missions to Botswana through Livingspring International, a non-profit organization. He earned his bachelor's degree in Geography and his Master of Science degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Ife University in Nigeria.

Taiwo began by discussing the vote on the Plan, which he pointed out was only a part of the work to be done. He and his staff will work on the issue that

seemed to generate the most resistance as they prepare the Policy Map for presentation in February 2022, and hope to get increased support in that vote. He also noted that the vote was a sign that the larger community “doesn’t completely embrace the Plan, either because there are certain aspects of the plan that they do not understand, or they just don’t feel comfortable with that”.

He presented a series of slides of Charlotte’s history of growth during the period from 1950 to 2020 to show the major trends that led to the current Plan, noting that the Plan includes 30 to 40 pages to tell the story of “redlining, inequity, segregation”, none of which is unique to Charlotte. The Plan shows that people can live and do business in a manner that brings us together—diversity, equity, inclusion. In 1950, Charlotte had a population of 134,042 (4,500/square mile) and was the 70<sup>th</sup> largest city in the US, compared to 2020, with 900,350 people (2,960/square mile) and the 15<sup>th</sup> largest city. Latest census data shows that we are also the sixth fastest-growing city in the country. It is estimated that we will add another 400,000 people over the next 20 years.

While we rank 5<sup>th</sup> in the number of millennials moving here, our average age is also increasing, and it is estimated that by 2030, one in every four residents will be over sixty years old. These major demographic changes, among many others, are what shape the planning for Charlotte’s future. With growth comes challenges, of housing, mobility, infrastructure, inequity, and sustainability. He notes that since 2000, single-family housing development has slowed, and multi-family housing is exploding. We lack infrastructure to support this, and are still using suburban development rules in an increasingly urban environment.

The Plan has 10 main goals, of which he discussed three due to time constraints. “*10-Minute Neighborhoods*”, where you can access jobs, services, transportation (out of the neighborhood), parks, schools & libraries, and community & senior centers, all within a ten-minute walk.

“*Neighborhood Diversity and Inclusion*” includes as a focus “Allowing more housing types in traditional single-family zoning districts to encourage housing diversity everywhere in our community”. He noted that almost 80% of the city’s land area is zoned for single-family housing, which drives up the cost of housing and forces lower-income people to move out of the city to find housing.

“*Safe and Equitable Mobility*” seeks to provide “safe and equitable mobility options for all travelers regardless of age, income, ability, race, where they live, or how they choose to travel” through “An integrated system of transit, bikeways, sidewalks, shared-use paths, and streets”, that will sustainably connect “all Charlotteans to each other, jobs, housing, amenities, goods, services, and the region.”

The Plan seeks to facilitate the creation of complete/equitable communities within the city.

The presentation included too much information to be completely covered here, and I urge you to follow the link in this week’s Reporter to see the entire presentation, not only for content but to get a feeling for Taiwo’s passion and priorities. I would also recommend that you actually read the Plan itself (recognizing that 240 pages will take several sittings), which can be found at [cltfuture2040.com](http://cltfuture2040.com) .

Thanks to Taiwo for his time and excellent presentation.

\*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/566262516>  
Mr. Jaiyeoba's introduction begins at approximately 15:25 minutes.