



September 15, 2015

## **DARLENE HEATER** **University City Partners**



As members were leaving there was a distinct buzz in the room. I'm not quite sure many of our members were aware of the magnitude of growth and changes in the University City area. Someone remarked to me that if you haven't been there in 10 years you'll be astounded. I responded, if you haven't been in the past few months – especially out North Tryon St. – you'll be blown away.

On last minute fill-in speaker – Darlene Heater, University City Partners' executive director, gave a *brehtaking* overview of one of the faster growing regions in the entire country. The 17-year resident cited statistic after statistic that confirmed the off-the-chart residential and economic growth in the former farmland around what was once two-year Charlotte College.

The transformational driver of change under construction now is the LYNX Blue Line Extension, Heater said. The 9.3 mile north extension will extend from Seventh Street Station north – mostly along Tryon Street – through University City to the UNC Charlotte where it will terminate across from the student union. Heater said CATS officials promise the new service will be in service August 2017.

It will include 11 new stations and peak service every 7.5 minutes and about a 25 minute trip from Center City Charlotte. "It will be a bit of a roller coaster ride," the ED said, because the train will bridge over most main thoroughfares so it will not impede vehicular street traffic.

Four of the new stations will be in the University City area at University City Blvd., McCullough Dr., J.W. Clay Blvd. and UNC Charlotte. Two will have park and ride stations.

The Lynx extension is giving new impetus to developing shopping, living and working spaces that are more pedestrian friendly. A greater density of development is expected especially along the rail lines as well as a much greater level of connectivity.

University City Partners is a municipal service district similar to Center City Partners. It is supported by a small tax in the area. It was established in 2003 on the east side of I-85 where most of the retail, the university and the hospital are located. It was united with the business parks on the west of I-85 in 2007.

Heater described UCP's role is to work to ensure the economic vitality and livability of the area – a place that offers diverse and unique choices to live, work, play and learn. The cornerstone is the university.

She cited some amazing statistics about the university including more than \$1.1 billion in building growth in past decade.

- 1,000 acre campus

- 28,000 students (& residents)
- 4,000 faculty and staff
- 28% increase in enrollment in 8 years -- *45% of UNC system growth in that period.*

University City is Charlotte's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest employment center with 75,000 employees, 11 million square feet of office space, 23 Fortune 500 companies represented and three headquarters' locations (Electrolux, Areva and Rack Room Shoes). Largest employers in the area are Wells Fargo, TIAA CREF and UNC Charlotte. Since March 2013, the Ohio native said, more than 8,000 jobs have been announced.

In recent developments

- Duke Energy purchased 94 acres in University Research Park and is constructing an engineers' campus.
- Electrolux is expanding its headquarters for 800+ new senior level jobs.
- Rack Room Shoes recently expanded its campus to house subsidiary, Off Broadway Shoes.
- Wells Fargo leased an additional 150,000 sq. ft. office space in the University Research Park.
- Red Ventures recently announced major jobs' expansion.

There are four major office parks: Innovation, University Research, University Executive and PORTAL, a new business incubation and innovation center on the campus of the university. Some three-fourths of a billion dollars have been invested in the area.

University City's retail lease rates are at their highest level area. Vacancies are at pre-2010 levels. There are 430 retail locations, 130 Restaurants (45+ international) and 2,100 hotel rooms. Nearby is N.C.'s top tourism destination – Concord Mills with 30 shopping destinations and more than 17 million annual shoppers. IKEA boasts more than 1.7 million annual shoppers.

The area's 160,000+ population makes it larger than High Point, Heater said. It is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest city in N.C. by population and *the 6<sup>th</sup> most moved-to neighborhood in the nation.* Median age is 29.5. The area offers a variety housing options with many price points. Some 2,600 housing units were delivered in 2014, many of them apartment designed for students at the university, she noted.

The area boasts easy access to major entertainment options including the Charlotte Motor Speedway, PNC Pavilion, and UNC Charlotte performances and athletic events. Heater said the presence of a new football team and stadium at the university are already being felt. "For the first time," she said, "we're getting requests from other teams for places to tailgate."

University City is a most accessible area, the mother of two UNC Charlotte students said. There are three major interstates (I-77, I-85, and I-485). The opening of the last section of 485 and the just-opened new leg of 85 have reduced commute times and congestions immensely, she said with a smile. And more improvements are on the way.

The area has an extensive greenway system which connects to the Cross Charlotte Trail, but one area of concern being addressed now is a lack of adequate parks. UCP is working with Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation to find new parks. A just-completed master plan by university students is helping guide those efforts. Heater said a new 22-acre site has just been just been purchased off Back Creek Church Road.

Head Table: Ravi Thakkar, Courtney Ramey, Tom Bartholomy, Ron Kimble, Bill Bradley, Mike Hawley; Invocation: Don Steger; Visitors & Guests: John Cantrell; Song: Angela Broome; Health, Happiness & History: Mac McCarley; AV: Jessica Dupree; Photos: Jessica Whitaker

## Club News

**Jerry Coughter** serves as the District's committee chair and works to increase awareness of the Paul Harris Society, which means an annual pledge of \$1000 to The Rotary Foundation. Contact Jerry or the Rotary office if you would like to increase your quarterly pledge to \$250 or sign up for Rotary Direct (monthly, quarterly, one time donation).

Busy time even getting into the luncheon room on Tuesday....when you got by **Catherine Browning & Marilynn Bowler** to get your Flu shot, you were greeted by **Denise Hallett** to buy raffle tickets to benefit the Golf Tournament. Great club involvement!

Charlotte Rotary had 15 or 20 people who attended the weekend Duck Race at TailRace Marina on Sunday...good event; **Bryan Adams** and **Phil Van Hoy** are in Best Lawyers in America; Caught on camera...**Marilynn Bowler, Colleen Brannan, Chris Kemper, George Cochran & Bill Constangy** at the Goodwill Industries Cornerstone Celebration; **Natalie English & Wes Jones** at the MeckEd Teachers of Excellence event; **Nancy McNelis** at WINGS Scholarship Program.

Jessica Whitaker is involved as a Wish Granter/Volunteer for Make-A-Wish and is tasked with raising \$6000 by the end of October. Additional information is found at: [ncwishesociety.kintera.org/charlotte2015/jessicawhitaker](http://ncwishesociety.kintera.org/charlotte2015/jessicawhitaker).

Remember...**Ty Hands'** grandmother, who is recovering from a heart attack; **Marcus Lee** lost his mother to cancer this week/details not yet available; the family of former member, Major Tom Sadler, who passed away September 7.

## PROPOSED FOR MEMBERSHIP (comments to Rotary office by 09/22/15)

Marylauriel Eberhart

Apollo Sports & Entertainment Law Group (Law: Sports, Entertainment, Business)

Sponsor: Meg McElwain

## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS (09/22/15 – 09/28/15)

09/22 Joey Godbold, Bob Phifer, Rudy Rudisill, Chris Connelly

09/23 Karen Bentley

09/24 Joe Penner

09/26 Tom Burgess, Kristina Aquilone

09/27 Harriman Jett, Tim Newman

09/28 Lisa Mask

## UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES (09/22/15 – 09/28/15)

09/25 Miriam & Jon Hannan

09/26 Robin & Todd Stevens

09/28 Michelle & Vernon Menard

Visitors & Guests	6
Club Members	160
Total	166
Percentage	55.4%

## MEMBERSHIP

06/30/2015 319  
09/15/2015 325  
Net Increase: +6

*New Members:* Jennifer Marshall, Greg Reagan

*Resignations:*

*Guests:* Susan Nestor, Larry Broome, Anna Sybrecht, Becky Makla, Scott Whitlock, Lutz Schminke

## UPCOMING LUNCHEONS [www.charlotterotary.org](http://www.charlotterotary.org) and click on the events tab)

09/22 - Carla Tweddale, President, Lillypad Haven (human trafficking problem in Chlt)

**09/29 – GOLF TOURNAMENT – MEETING IS CANCELED**

10/06 - District Governor Ineke Wilson

10/13 - Anne Matthews, Past Rotary International Vice President

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Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on **Flickr** [Click here](#)





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