



Meeting Notes  
Community Advisory Board (CAB)  
February 17, 2021  
2:00pm – 4:00pm  
Virtual Meeting – WebEx

---

Meeting attendance available [here](#). | Recording of meeting available [here](#).

---

Introductions

- We'll be posting a recording of this meeting on the web. Meeting is being livestreamed thought YouTube.
- Objectives
  - Highlight CAB engagement opportunities
  - Summarize recent stakeholder engagement efforts
  - Reminder of upcoming stakeholder efforts
  - Collect feedback on community survey
  - Provide objectives & key takeaways for March meeting

CAB Engagement Update

- We want CAB to engage & feel connected. Current CAB engagement opportunities:
  - One-on-one meetings with CAB members organizations
  - Willing to host a dedicated stakeholder meeting for a group within your network or within a network not yet engaged?
  - Thus far – have only heard from Amy.
  - Please reach out to Mike to schedule.

CAB Name Change

- The CAB, formerly known as the "Citizens Advisory Board" will now be known as the "Community Advisory Board."
- Feedback?
  - Michael and Tom – all for it.
  - No other comments.
- Change will be made.

2021 Timeline (Recap from January CAB Meeting)

- Look ahead to 2021
  - January – February
    - Charrette 1: Community & Equity (completed)
    - Charrette 2: Clean Energy Economy (completed)
    - Charrette 3: Intersection of the Natural & Built Environments (completed)
    - Stakeholder, ACCGov interviews (ongoing)
  - March – April
    - Public outreach begins
    - Community conversations
    - Survey deployment & results analysis
    - Plan outlining, development begins
  - May – September



- Plan development and revisions
- CAB feedback
- October – December
  - Plan completion
  - Commission presentation and vote for adoption

### Stakeholder Charrette Engagement – Summary of Feedback

- Round One Charrettes Completed:
  - Community & Equity, 01/28
    - 13 participants, 3 CAB, 8 staff
  - Clean Energy Economy 02/02
    - 9 participants, 3 CAB, 8 staff
  - Intersection of the Natural & Built Environments, 02/03
    - 11 participants, 4 CAB, 8 staff
- Stakeholder Organizations – Participants in Charrettes
  - 100% Athens
  - AADM
  - Action, Inc.
  - Alliance for a Social Bill of Rights
  - Architectural Collaborative
  - Athens Anti-Discrimination Movement
  - Athens Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Athens Area Community Foundation
  - Athens Area Habitat for Humanity
  - Athens Area Homeless Shelter
  - Athens Housing Authority
  - Athens Land Trust
  - Athens-Clarke County Community Tree Council
  - Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services
  - Bigger Vision of Athens
  - BikeAthens
  - CIL
  - East Athens Development Corporation
  - Fc cis
  - Georgia Climate Change Coalition Inc.
  - Georgia Power Company
  - Greenlink Analytics
  - Hancock CDC
  - Historic Athens/Hands on Historic Athens
  - Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful
  - Multiple Choices CIL
  - Oconee River Land Trust
  - Peachy Green Clean Coop
  - SCANA Energy/IGS
  - Southface
  - UGA Sustainability
  - UOWN, Upper Oconee Water Trail Chair
  - Upper Oconee Watershed Network
  - W&A Engineering
- Recap from January CAB Meeting: Charrette Discussion Questions
  - What are your initial reactions?
  - What does success look like for you?
  - What are opportunities for partnership?
  - What are the primary opportunities, priorities, and concerns that you see?
  - How do you want to hear from us going forward?
- Responses common to *all 3* charrettes – Opportunities & priorities heard in all the sessions:
  - Substantial need for education & increasing community awareness around:
    - The city's clean energy priorities, and solutions.
    - Basic understanding of energy literacy
    - The financial pros and cons of a clean energy economy
    - Understanding the high energy burdens in Athens, and methods of energy efficiency.
    - Highlighted demographics
      - Elected officials (all levels of government), business owners (all sizes), homeowners, schools, marginalized groups.
  - Need to deepen knowledge on pathways to achieve alternative energy transition



- Pushing for solar panels and incentives for both residential & commercial property owners.
- Investing in renewable energy infrastructure
- CDBG funds and new funding sources from the current administration
- Creating prime real estate for solar & EV charging
- Emerging technologies (E.g., nuclear, battery storage, methane pyrolysis, anaerobic digestion)
- Responses in *Community & Equity* charrette
  - Equity
    - Prioritizing equity in traditionally overlooked or marginalized communities.
      - Ensure energy savings tech & equipment is affordable,
    - Promote partnerships between building owners and tenants.
      - Incentivize weatherization program, code enforcements that help residents, need for affordable housing, and home energy audits.
    - Highlight Athens' high energy burdens
      - Water-bill mailers and energy burden maps.
    - Adjustments needed at the city level
      - Community Energy Fund policy, expand Athens Land Trust West Broad, partnerships with Envision Athens.
  - Transportation
    - Demonstrate the economic, real-life, benefits of enhancing EV & alternative transportation sources.
      - Incentives for residential & commercial EV.
      - Leverage early adopters
    - Normalizing alternative transportation, and transitioning away from "car culture"
      - Access to multimodal transit, and zone to increase usage
      - Enhancing safety for alternative transportation methods such as biking
    - Infrastructure
      - Emphasized need for public charging stations, and requirements for residential buildings
      - Expand transit across county lines or high speed rail conversations (i.e. Athens-Atlanta connection)
- Responses in *Clean Energy Economy* charrette
  - Business
    - Incentives for businesses
      - Bring new business on board by offering help if they use clean energy
      - Highlight the local businesses currently using clean energy technology, and promote their ROI.
      - Apply discounts/incentives for green businesses/certificates achieved/performance.
      - Tie in workforce development & job training to the incentives plan
    - Keep them informed
      - Help with understanding energy bills, rate analysis, & demand management
      - A need at all business levels for increase energy literacy/education.
      - Help align local business's goals with what the County is doing
    - Development of clean energy economy in Athens
      - Clean Energy Fund outreach
      - Circular economy transitions & investments
- Responses in *Intersection of the Natural & Built Environments* charrette
  - Natural Environments



- Strategic master plan for tree cover and land incorporation
  - Planting native species
  - Ordinances to address soil volume
  - Natural Asset Management
- Stormwater management & initiatives
  - Evaluations of greywater usage, riverways, and runoffs.
  - Strategic partnerships with local organizations e.g. Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority, Northeast Georgia Regional Commission
  - Increased need for green water management infrastructure,
  - More residential tax breaks/incentives such as adjusts stormwater utility fee based on efficiency,
  - Water efficiency, factoring water benefits in project design
- Land Use
  - Reductions in impervious surfaces/large parking lots
  - Green spaces add value to residential & commercials real estate. Highlight their benefits.
  - Zoning codes are instrumental pathway for ensuring sustainable development
    - Strong cross-departmental collaboration within ACCUG required on initiatives

#### Charrette Responses – Concerns

- Equity
  - Career displacement potential --> a just transition to new workforce
  - Landlord buy-in (for low-income residents)
  - Energy burden --> homelessness
  - Resident empowerment and protections
- Energy policy
  - Political landscape in Georgia remains a challenge; Leadership at (and partnership with) the State government required
  - Ability to influence generation sources locally
  - Standard budgeting processes (year-to-year) make it challenging to make long-term investments in higher-ticket/slower payback EE/RE projects
  - Nuclear consideration as clean energy pathway
  - Renewable Energy Credit (RECs) purchasing difficult to justify / not ideal
- Business
  - Payback periods / ROI - short-term priorities
  - Incentives need to be there and be meaningful, particularly for developers
  - Would like to see more business/for-profit stakeholders at the table
- Education
  - Workforce development is key; training needs to have actual connectivity to jobs
  - Ongoing education and engagement of the community - no way to achieve 100% goal without shared understanding of why and role of community members
  - "Energy literacy" training opportunities
- Natural environment / Stormwater
  - Stormwater utility fee a strong pathway
  - Tree maintenance is as important as tree planting; resources are also needed to maximize functionality and service life - not just planting
  - Sufficient opportunities to increase and maintain tree cover as much as possible; consideration of optimal tree placement
- Transportation



- Limited access to EV charging at residential properties at present
- Priorities seem to be in order of: car, pedestrian, bike. How can we shift this?
- How can we balance competing interests in different departments within the City?
- Navigate local versus state control of transportation infrastructure

### Public Engagement Lookahead

- Moving from stakeholder into the public outreach phase (March-April)
  - Community conversations (5)
  - Community outreach survey - CAB support
  - Launch public marketing campaign
    - Mailer & Radio PSA
  - CAB feedback opportunities throughout Plan writing / development

### Community Survey – Context

- Goals for this Exercise:
  - CAB to gain understanding of the survey's structure & effectiveness
  - CAB provide structured and specific feedback
  - Gauge CAB's interpretation as a third party
- Survey Context
  - The primary goal of good surveys is to gather generalizable information about a population from a smaller sample
    - Typically composed of descriptive (attributes) and analytical (relationship-driven) statistics
    - Focused on characteristics and experiences
  - Key Questions:
    - Who is being studied?
    - How is the sample being identified and how are they selected?
    - How is the data collected?
    - Is the survey ongoing or one-time?
  - Deriving valid conclusions requires attention to:
    - Purpose and objectives
    - Sample selection and data collection
    - Question construction and instrument design
  - Purpose
    - What are the objectives of the survey?
    - Answering this question informs everything else
  - Sample Selection and Collection
    - Gold standard is randomized sample that matches target population
    - Next-best requires weighting respondents in accordance to their representation in the population
    - Both have potential issues of sampling and unobserved errors that shrink with increased sample size
    - Concentrate survey data collection time window; opinions can change over time and challenge validity
  - Question Construction and Survey Instrument Design
    - Avoid leading or biased questions
    - Choose question formats that result in answer-types you want (4 or 5 unit Likert Scale)
    - Design questions to align with your controls and weights



- Design survey to flow; this helps avoid confusion and provide a better survey experience
- Know your audience to gauge appropriate time-to-complete
- Test the instrument before full deployment
- Purpose:
  - Understand public values regarding the goal
  - Understand public awareness and support of the goal and existing clean energy options
  - Understand opinions and preferences regarding policy actions and energy resources
  - Gather sufficient descriptive data to generalize using Census data
- Drawing on the requirements in the prior slides:
  - Target population: Residents of Athens
  - Data collection: One-time digital questionnaire
  - Instrument has been tested in multiple jurisdictions

### CAB Feedback on Community Survey

- Questions for Consideration:
  - Does the survey support the goal of the exercise effectively?
  - What about the structure of the survey do you like or dislike (e.g., question types, question order)?
  - Are there questions you see as biased?
  - Is there a section that should be removed or added?
  - Is the survey easy to understand?
  - Other comments or general impressions?
- Feedback – Business-focused considerations
  - Some questions bring up specific policies for business, but not so much for residential/
  - Mike: We've been hearing that businesses are having issues with ROI; it's hard for us to hear from them what the ideal ROI is.
    - Tom - It's different for all businesses.
    - Megan - ROI question might best be asked in 1:1s rather than in survey.
    - Ilka – Maybe a question should precede Question 6
  - *Add a question: Are you a business owner?*
  - Do we need to have separate survey for business v/ residents?
    - →No
  - For Matt: should we add more questions for business owners?
    - Validity , wouldn't hurt. But would add length especially for people who are both residents and business owners/leaders
- Feedback – Consistency / clunkiness
  - Q1 - How do you know about the survey... but Q2 says "I was not previously aware"
    - *If we're doing a paper version, keep both. If digital only, remove Q1. Non-English speaking populations prefer the Q1*
  - Q4 - More expensive is an option; we say "affordable" and "more affordable"
    - *Make this change.*
  - Q16, 17 – We don't give them the option to choose not to invest in CE
    - *Add this option, but be careful with this language - use next question lang "I would not switch"*
- Feedback – Potential Bias
  - Q6 – Residential policy options alongside the commercial one
    - Ilka wonders - we'd need to make sure we have the right options



- What would be the enforcement mechanism for residential homes?
- Assumes a regulatory approach
  - Amy - concerns about this as well
  - Don't want to put people off with these questions
  - It seems like we're actually trying to gain an understanding about ppl's appetite for certain policies.
  - This question seems extremely biased - toward changing building codes
  - People are going to use their imaginations; A survey starts to create expectations
    - Megan - we have not seen that in other jurisdictions.
- 3 things to get at:
  - What are we asking of residents?
  - What are we asking of our govt?
  - What are we asking of our businesses?
- Matt - this question asks about all three types of policy options:
  - Financial (1)
  - Regulatory (2,3)
  - Information based (4)
- Megan - we could give examples of each of these policies to help people understand it better
  - Remind people of timing - this is a 30 year effort.
- *We can add more detail about the various "flavors of ice cream" (aka policy options – give examples).*
- Feedback – Accessibility
  - Need some education, accessibility of language
  - Amy agrees - we want to share education
  - Matt: Using the survey to educate people is tricky bc it skews toward advocacy
    - We want to understand how much people already understand
  - Pretty significant socio-economic divide
    - Don't want to create a scenario where we don't receive feedback from some people because they don't have the tools to understand
  - *Streamline / Simplify the language - on Q2, and throughout as possible.*
- Feedback – Question 5
  - Should we add the option for reducing energy costs
  - Should we tell people that these options are possible - an educational moment
  - Are we trying to get at: Do people think it should be a priority for reducing energy costs for those struggling most?
- Feedback – What should your power company do?
  - This is a great opportunity to educate people.
  - Matt - I agree. We can share these kind of community desires to educate utilities on what their customers actually want.
  - *Educational info at the end --> include links to electric utilities*
- Feedback – Question 12
  - Add open-ended answer choice: If "no" then why?

## Conclusion

- Key Takeaways:
  - Recapped CAB engagement opportunities
  - Overview of stakeholder charrettes
  - Reviewed community survey



- Objectives for March CAB Meeting
  - Mailer & Radio PSA; last discussed Fall 2020
    - CAB to review final versions, and let us know which one you like best?
    - CAB provide additional suggestions as needed.
  - We will be starting to push the community survey, marketing materials
    - Work closely with CAB to share PSA materials & survey within CAB members' networks
  - We will present the feedback from our 1:1 meetings with businesses leaders & power providers during our March CAB meeting