

Community Forum on Building Strategic Alliances to Address Community Issues

Forum Goal: To increase understanding of key issues and provide a greater voice in decisions that affect the community; increase civic participation, and promote more involvement in solutions.

Sponsored by the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, in partnership with the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, Cobb County NAACP and ARC

Attendees- 55 representing the membership of the aforementioned organizations. Attendees were from Cobb, Douglas and Cherokee.

Handouts: Distributed Regional Assessment and Online Survey card

ARC Presentation included: description of ARC, planning process and PLAN 2040; emphasis on vision components (social, environmental economic) and guiding principles. Participants were asked to share ideas on directions that would move the region forward.

COMMENTS

Funding and Investments

- Stable funding needed that will result in a connected and affordable transportation.
- There should be more funding for public transit and more support for improving mobility for minority and low income citizens. ARC should develop a strategy bringing community groups into the loop as allies to mobilize citizens for new funding resources.

Equity

- Transportation investments must be equitable and measurements in place so it is clear that there is equitable distribution.
- Identify and publicize where resources are being placed, particularly in communities of color
- We need enforceable standards for equity so that some areas do not benefit more than others. This should be built into the plan.
- Community groups must be drawn in to support the development and implementation of policies that are improve quality of life for all
- Racism continues to contribute to the lack of progress related to a regional transportation system. This needs to be confronted and work together to bridge the gaps and rid us or at least minimize the stereotypes and fears.
- Population very different, more diverse in Cobb and Cherokee and a new paradigm of multi-cultural strategies must be developed to bring the communities together.

Health

- Policies need to promote environmental health; more emphasis should be placed on disparate impacts
- Air quality and health—major interrelated factors that should be addressed in the plan
- Measures linking health and transportation must be developed.
- Population very different, more diverse in Cobb and Cherokee and a new paradigm of multi-cultural strategies must be developed to bring the communities together.

- ARC should be a leader in doing research on how health is impacted in our communities by policies and decisions; colleges and universities in this area should be a major resource in this arena
- Walking and sidewalks should be promoted

Accessibility and connectivity

- Some things can be addressed by transportation solutions and others may need other means such as affordable housing. All should be looked at as connecting.
- We need to know how communities are impacted by these major plans and development decisions. The leaders must be accountable for their decisions.
- Access and connections are the key – public transit, transportation options, affordable housing and access to economic opportunities are connected and should be evaluated that way.
- Access to jobs, hospitals, grocery stores are not available to the extent needed