

Summary of event

- 65 participants & 45 organizations represented from across education, government, business, and nonprofit sectors
 - 95% of event participants met a new contact
 - 9 breakout discussion groups
 - Identified 5 (and counting!) new opportunities for partnership
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Breakout Discussion Notes

Adaptive Reuse

Discussion context: How can we rethink the use of items we throw away and the culture of “new is better”.

- Public engagement through tours of landfill
- Promotion of hazardous waste drop off
- Dumpster diving is illegal so there’s a need to intercept waste before it gets to landfill
- Systems designed to promote waste - “we can always buy more!”
- Healthcare
 - Single use is promoted by suppliers
 - Mindset of contamination & “difficulty” to clean
- People need direction and tips on how to reuse items
- Our society values consumption
- What inspires you to think differently?
 - Quality → experiencing it
 - Crafting
 - Seeing how things are done differently
 - Realizing that consumption creates voids and doesn’t fill them
 - Learning we have 15-20 years of landfill space
- So what? What if?
 - Education on what adaptive reuse is & highlight challenges then show what’s being done through case studies & best practices; Show various scales of practice
 - Explain what people can do
 - Embroider clothes
 - Recycle supplies into art
 - Take the next step to push beyond the easy
 - Education of designers and engineers about life cycle of materials
 - Kickstart a local circular economy → model after Innovation Barn in CLT
 - Continue making art that reuses materials to inspire

Civic Engagement

Discussion context: Representation is important on local city and county committees because we don’t need experts as much as we need folks who want to be involved in the decision making process.

- Citizens participate in civic engagement in numerous ways:
 - Volunteering, voting, town halls, public meetings, hosting events
- Civic engagement is not just local government ; it is engaging with fellow citizens in any capacity

- The group feels motivated to participate because they want to leave a better world for the next generation
- Civic engagement is a way to help others learn and get engaged
- There are several key needs to creating more representative city and county committees
 - Awareness of the existing structure
 - Overcoming feeling of intimidation
 - Accessibility - cost to attend might include transportation, child care, time off work
- Who is currently not seen on many city or county committee
 - Young people
 - Unhoused folks
 - Undocumented folks
 - Folks with a criminal history
- Some strategies for increasing representation on committees
 - Offering child care
 - Better using social media as a communication tool
 - Multilingual support
 - Reaching out to BIPOC communities to demystify the process
 - More welcoming and transparent working environment
- Must directly counter the “nothing will change” attitude
- Collaboration is important for increasing public awareness about committees ; offer multiple touch points for folks to learn about opportunities

Environmental Education

Discussion context: Environmental education field trip opportunities with WSFCS.

- This type of educational event demystifies natural environment, boosts student confidence, and builds an appreciation for nature
- Offers opportunity to make connections, expand daily experiences, and get students out of comfort zone
- There are numerous partnership opportunities ; 25 organizations county wide
- Station types could include creek walk, water testing, nature art, meditation, plant identification, scavenger hunts, and more
- Numerous location possibilities ; 20+ locations county wide
- Must get buy in from principals and teachers
- Questions around how to get volunteers and it not feel like one more ask
 - How to fill up people’s cup instead of ask feeling draining

Food Resiliency

Discussion context: The City of Winston-Salem is conducting a food resiliency assessment.

- Possible strategies to pursue to help build food resiliency
 - Transportation to access food
 - Recovering more food from grocery stores or farms
 - Additional support for community gardens
 - Convening stakeholders via public and private collaborations
 - Additional education about food system and food cultures
- In the event of a hazard, our local food system has dwindling capacity to assist folks who need help accessing food
- There are numerous organizations working on food and/or food resiliency in our area:
 - Atrium Wake Health

- Salvation Army
- Many community gardens
- Food pharmacy
- Second Harvest
- Campus Kitchen
- Harvest Table
- Lean Back Soul Food
- Resilient Trails Network
- Many more
- SWOT analysis of transportation as it relates to food resiliency
 - Strengths - existing resources are targeted for equity
 - Weakness - food deserts, which often overlay historically redlined communities
 - Opportunities - public transportation evaluation underway and community involvement in that process
 - Threats - costs and money for infrastructure

Green Jobs

Discussion context: In the last year PEA launched the Triad Green Jobs Center to elevate the conversation about green jobs and provide resources for employers and job seekers.

- Group discussed the need for employer/industry associations, say, the Homebuilders Association, to more boldly embrace sustainability terms and commitments
- It's important to reiterate that green job increases access to environmental benefits, most notably air and water quality and literal access to public green space
- The importance of apprenticeships and other learn-and-earn opportunities are critical, especially for non-degree seeking younger folks, and even folks mid-career who want to pivot into the clean energy economy
- The private sector needs more incentives to 'go green', to include more positive case studies that sell the ROI for doing so
- Job-seekers need mentorship; and they need the time, space, and support to pursue sustainability focused projects inside the organizations they already work for
- It was noted that job-seekers and employers need to understand how green jobs can help better build pride in a sense of place. For example, if a position helps restore air and water quality to a specific place, those benefits should be amplified, etc.
- Our table discussed the importance of workers understanding that staying with an organization that is not so environmentally friendly could be a major opportunity: divesting retirement benefits from fossil-fuels; accelerating EV charging at work; more ethical sourcing
- Some obstacles to be aware of:
 - Lack of access, literally, in a geographic sense, and historically with respect to discrimination
 - A lack of urgency, with respect to climate action, is a major hurdle. Also an issue when we think of taking advantage of federal funding to support this shift. These dollars will sunset sooner than we think.
 - Green-washing is a concern, thinking that ESG might breed cynicism amongst folks we need to persuade
 - The fear of political backlash was discussed. How might sustainability commitments lead to green-hushing or slow-walking change.
- Some things organizations need:

- Employers need time and capacity to unpack federal/state legislation that could accelerate this transition (what is in the Inflation Reduction Act for us? etc.)
- Employers need more information about how best to transition their internal entry and mid level training programs, so to incorporate sustainability into their business models
- Internal trainings; and space for internal sustainability committees were top topic

Solarize the Triad campaign

Discussion context: Solar Crowdsorce is currently creating a community-driven solar installation initiative to increase solar energy adoption in The Triad!

- Group discussed what is interesting about solar energy
 - Workforce development potential
 - Helping people save on energy bill costs
 - Better air quality because burning less stuff that emits carbon or methane
 - Resiliency effects
- Groups discussed what they are worried about with solar energy
 - Equal access to technology
 - Political will to build needed infrastructure
 - Legal frameworks
 - Resistance from utilities
 - Durability of roof and panels
- Campaign considerations
 - Buy-in and marketing
 - Local elected official changes coming
 - Grant writing
 - Needs for repairs before solar install
- Who is partnered with Solar Crowdsorce already
 - PTRC
 - Forsyth Tech ; potential for Guilford Tech to get involved
 - Housing Authority of WS
 - Faith based communities
 - Many more!

Sustainable Land Management

Discussion Context: The City of Winston-Salem could use help training their Vegetation Management staff on sustainable land management practices.

- Considerations must be made of the interjurisdictional nature of this work, affects more than one set of staff
- There is a lot of possibilities for collaboration between public and private
 - Already see this with native garden example with Bashavia Gardens
- Local homeowner have limitations → time, knowledge, permission (HOA ordinances)
- Ideally, professional tree surgeons would be accredited
- There are many effects from planning and zoning boards
 - Folks sitting on those boards might need better information too
- Culture values on accumulation and growth ; how can we better frame land management as sustaining
- Possible strategies to assist City of WS to train vegetation mgmt staff
 - Politics - change wording to reach as many as possible

- WS ordinance to require 18% tree cover for new development projects
- Present biodiversity as a tool for resiliency
- Native garden tour for staff
- Native plant app
- Use AI app to design a native garden

Transportation

Discussion context:

- Group discussed the numerous partners working on transit in our county
 - DOT / MPO / Planning Department
 - Bike/Ped Committee
 - Island cultures in East Winston
 - WSFCS
 - Engineering firms create design plans
 - Bike benefit business
 - WSTA ; PART ; Transaid
 - Creative Corridors Committee
 - WFU Health Equity Center
 - Hospitals
 - Employers with carpool incentive
- There are many felt needs in our area's transportation system
 - Need more density for better land use
 - Need design guidelines for street design
 - Need enhanced public transportation system
 - Expansion
 - More flexibility
 - Availability
 - Need expansion of access to non-vehicle options
- Strategies to involve more residents in non-car forms of transportation?
 - Frequency and geographic reach of public transportation
 - Education on air pollution
 - Microtransit
 - SRTS - 'walking school bus'
 - Walk audits
 - Connected greenways
 - Protected bike lanes
 - Incentives - bike rewards / commuter rewards
 - Continuing ed requirement through DMV
- Group discussed a hope for combining sustainability and transportation goals
- Group identified that elected officials need more knowledge on transportation needs and strategies ; which also highlighted a staffing need in local government

Workplace "Green Teams"

Discussion context: Green Teams in workplaces range from highly effective to mandatory extracurricular.

We'd like to see these types of teams transform workplace practices.

- Practices in workplace are numerous and varied

- Recycling
- Climate targets
- Using reusable supplies
- Being mindful of waste and electricity and water usage
- Create a green office purchasing policy
- Justice & equity - philanthropy - climate
- Habits are hard to change
- It is difficult to take time away from general work commitments
- More buy in from staff is needed
- FOIks want to know they're doing this for the future, my future
- Create ways for teams to integrate practices with career development opportunities / chance to shine in front of leadership
- Want to feel it matters (want to see quantifiable change)
- Provide guidance - don't send me off on my own to figure it out, give direction
- Staff needs to have clear communication around office green practices - time commitment, goals, who is involved
- Best to engage the "fun team". Get internal influencers on board
- Staff want to know how practices connect to the bigger picture (work perspective wise)
- Best ways to get excited are identifying / knowing the impact behind (#s, stats, etc.)
- People want personal invitation to get involved
- Excited leaders are critical (team will not be more excited than leadership)
- Multiple touchpoints - follow up!
- More willing to participate if asked to do something on someone else's behalf