

# Webinar

## ULI Charlotte: Rebuilding After Hurricane Helene

Date: February 05, 2026

00:00:13 --> 00:00:15: Hello everyone.

00:00:15 --> 00:00:17: I think we we only have about 25 participants in

00:00:17 --> 00:00:19: the room so far, so I don't know Theresa, I

00:00:20 --> 00:00:22: think you said there's going to be more in here,

00:00:22 --> 00:00:24: so do you want me to wait a few minutes?

00:00:26 --> 00:00:28: I know you just said to go ahead and start

00:00:28 --> 00:00:29: but I got a little nervous as I saw only

00:00:30 --> 00:00:31: 25 out of the registered.

00:00:37 --> 00:00:37: Started.

00:00:38 --> 00:00:39: Yeah, it's recorded.

00:00:39 --> 00:00:41: So you can go ahead and get that right.

00:00:41 --> 00:00:42: All right.

00:00:42 --> 00:00:43: Well, welcome everybody.

00:00:43 --> 00:00:44: Thank you so much for joining us.

00:00:45 --> 00:00:46: I am Rachel Krenz.

00:00:47 --> 00:00:50: I'm with the Laniap Group, a real estate development  
Consulting

00:00:50 --> 00:00:53: Group, represents developer owners and municipalities.

00:00:53 --> 00:00:57: And more importantly, I'm the chair of ULI Charlotte, which

00:00:57 --> 00:01:00: has been such a wonderful experience to be chair

00:01:00 --> 00:01:00: of.

00:01:00 --> 00:01:04: ULI Charlotte spans the western side of the Carolinas.

00:01:04 --> 00:01:09: I'm from Greensboro and obviously includes Asheville in it  
today.

00:01:09 --> 00:01:11: I am so pleased to welcome you guys to the

00:01:11 --> 00:01:16: webinar focused on rebuilding after Hurricane Helene,  
economic impacts and

00:01:16 --> 00:01:17: community resilience.

00:01:18 --> 00:01:20: This is a very important conversation that has been going

00:01:20 --> 00:01:23: on for a little while and we're really glad that

00:01:23 --> 00:01:24: you're joining in it today.

00:01:24 --> 00:01:28: This program is going to bring together, utilize member

experts  
**00:01:28 --> 00:01:31:** and then local community leaders to share insights of on  
**00:01:31 --> 00:01:34:** the ground work that's underway to help build Asheville back  
**00:01:34 --> 00:01:35:** better.  
**00:01:35 --> 00:01:38:** One of Uli's strengths, if you aren't already aware of  
**00:01:38 --> 00:01:42:** this, is that the sharing of knowledge across the network  
**00:01:42 --> 00:01:43:** is is wonderful.  
**00:01:43 --> 00:01:47:** In August, Uli's Advisory Services team well brought together  
member  
**00:01:47 --> 00:01:51:** experts to work directly with the Asheville community in  
response  
**00:01:51 --> 00:01:55:** to the challenges that were created by Hurricane Helene in  
**00:01:55 --> 00:01:56:** 2024.  
**00:01:57 --> 00:01:59:** Before I begin and kind of going into the weeds,  
**00:01:59 --> 00:02:01:** I do want to make sure to call out the  
**00:02:01 --> 00:02:01:** sponsors.  
**00:02:01 --> 00:02:04:** If you don't mind putting up a sponsor slide, Jonathan,  
**00:02:04 --> 00:02:07:** we are so fortunate to have a great group of  
**00:02:07 --> 00:02:10:** sponsors through ULI Charlotte that make programs like this  
happen.  
**00:02:11 --> 00:02:14:** If you get the opportunity to meet anyone with these  
**00:02:14 --> 00:02:18:** groups, please thank them and for their sponsorship and  
supporting  
**00:02:18 --> 00:02:19:** ULI Charlotte.  
**00:02:19 --> 00:02:22:** It's what helps to advance our mission here in this  
**00:02:22 --> 00:02:22:** region.  
**00:02:23 --> 00:02:28:** So about today, this Advisory Services team started at the  
**00:02:28 --> 00:02:30:** request of the City of Asheville.  
**00:02:31 --> 00:02:34:** You and I convened this the Advisory Services Panel to  
**00:02:34 --> 00:02:37:** support the city as it recovered from the devastating impacts  
**00:02:37 --> 00:02:38:** of the hurricane.  
**00:02:39 --> 00:02:42:** The Advisory Services program pairs some of the brightest  
minds  
**00:02:42 --> 00:02:44:** in real estate and land use with the toughest challenges  
**00:02:44 --> 00:02:45:** facing our cities.  
**00:02:46 --> 00:02:50:** And by combining this cross disciplinary leaders for  
immersive on  
**00:02:50 --> 00:02:55:** site panels, the program delivered holistic and practical  
recommendations that  
**00:02:55 --> 00:03:00:** help communities navigate complex recovery, resilience and  
development issues.  
**00:03:00 --> 00:03:03:** This panel has been something that our communities have  
been  
**00:03:03 --> 00:03:04:** talking about for a while.

**00:03:04 --> 00:03:07:** It's been so successful and it's great to continue the conversation.

**00:03:07 --> 00:03:08:** To share more about the work.

**00:03:09 --> 00:03:11:** We have two members of the Advisory Services panel team.

**00:03:11 --> 00:03:15:** So first is Jim Hyde.

**00:03:16 --> 00:03:17:** It's a nationally recognized urban strategist, developer and author whose

**00:03:18 --> 00:03:22:** work focuses on resilient human centered community development.

**00:03:22 --> 00:03:25:** And then we're also joined by John and we made

**00:03:26 --> 00:03:28:** a joke about his name, Macomer, and he said not

**00:03:28 --> 00:03:31:** to say cucumber.

**00:03:31 --> 00:03:32:** And that's all I can hear.

**00:03:32 --> 00:03:33:** He was so right.

**00:03:33 --> 00:03:34:** He cannot hear cucumber when you read his name.

**00:03:34 --> 00:03:37:** But he is a senior lecturer at Harvard Business

**00:03:38 --> 00:03:41:** School where his work centers on infrastructure, finance and

**00:03:41 --> 00:03:44:** climate

**00:03:44 --> 00:03:45:** resiliency.

**00:03:46 --> 00:03:49:** And then following the overview from those two panelists, we'll

**00:03:49 --> 00:03:52:** hear from some folks from the city of Asheville, both

**00:03:52 --> 00:03:55:** Ben Woody, Assistant City Manager, and Rachel Taylor, the economic

**00:03:55 --> 00:03:58:** development specialist who serves at the city's business liaison.

**00:03:58 --> 00:04:01:** We'll both share some of their thoughts.

**00:04:01 --> 00:04:05:** And then after that we can have some discussion, Q&A.

**00:04:05 --> 00:04:10:** So we encourage you to submit questions throughout the process.

**00:04:10 --> 00:04:12:** We are going to hold off on addressing them until

**00:04:12 --> 00:04:13:** the end of the four of them speaking.

**00:04:14 --> 00:04:16:** But if you go ahead and use that Q&A feature,

**00:04:16 --> 00:04:18:** we have time at the end where we'll make sure

**00:04:18 --> 00:04:21:** to go through all those questions and make sure we

**00:04:21 --> 00:04:21:** address them.

**00:04:22 --> 00:04:23:** So we'll go ahead and get started.

**00:04:23 --> 00:04:25:** Thank you guys again for joining us.

**00:04:25 --> 00:04:27:** And Jim, I'll let you take it over from here.

**00:04:28 --> 00:04:28:** Great.

**00:04:28 --> 00:04:29:** Thank you, Rachel.

**00:04:29 --> 00:04:30:** Everybody hears hearing me.

**00:04:30 --> 00:04:31:** OK.

**00:04:31 --> 00:04:33:** Looks like we're up to 37 people attending, so that's

**00:04:33 --> 00:04:34:** good.

**00:04:34 --> 00:04:37:** So yeah, great to be here today and great to talk about this project.

**00:04:37 --> 00:04:39:** This was, I think, the 17th panel I've done.

**00:04:39 --> 00:04:42:** If people in the audience have never done one of these, but you would like to, I'd encourage you to

**00:04:42 --> 00:04:44:** reach out to Uli.

**00:04:44 --> 00:04:46:** It's one of the best things you get to do

**00:04:46 --> 00:04:47:** professionally, work with great people, go to interesting places and

**00:04:47 --> 00:04:49:** deal with tough issues that deal with the built environment.

**00:04:49 --> 00:04:53:** Thank Jonathan, you go to the next slide.

**00:05:00 --> 00:05:03:** This was a particularly complex assignment as they seem to

**00:05:03 --> 00:05:05:** be getting to be more and more in the time

**00:05:05 --> 00:05:06:** that I've been doing these.

**00:05:07 --> 00:05:10:** But it couldn't have been possible without the support of

**00:05:10 --> 00:05:13:** a number of sponsors who helped underwrite both the program,

**00:05:13 --> 00:05:16:** but also helped facilitate a lot of the community outreach,

**00:05:16 --> 00:05:18:** which was extremely important part of our work here.

**00:05:19 --> 00:05:20:** Go ahead and go to the next one.

**00:05:23 --> 00:05:25:** So the so many of you are probably familiar.

**00:05:25 --> 00:05:30:** This was really focusing on the after effects of Helene

**00:05:30 --> 00:05:34:** and how to build back differently or build back Asheville

**00:05:34 --> 00:05:38:** after all of the the various climatic and you know,

**00:05:38 --> 00:05:42:** weather event caused damage that happened there.

**00:05:42 --> 00:05:45:** And because that was such a big task and you

**00:05:45 --> 00:05:49:** know, really dealt could deal with a systems level throughout

**00:05:49 --> 00:05:52:** the region, we were given 2 specific sites to look

**00:05:52 --> 00:05:55:** at as kind of proxies for policies that would allow

**00:05:55 --> 00:05:59:** us to bring things forward that then the community could

**00:05:59 --> 00:06:03:** explore, implement, and then take to a broader canvas across

**00:06:03 --> 00:06:04:** the city.

**00:06:04 --> 00:06:07:** And those two areas, the French Broad River area and

**00:06:07 --> 00:06:10:** then the Swannanoa River were the two areas that flooded

**00:06:10 --> 00:06:11:** the heaviest.

**00:06:11 --> 00:06:14:** And we had kind of an interesting mix that was

**00:06:14 --> 00:06:18:** the Biltmore Village, which was kind of a historic series,

**00:06:18 --> 00:06:22:** kind of a place based walkable neighborhood, primarily a lot

**00:06:22 --> 00:06:24:** of very good high end commercial activity.

**00:06:25 --> 00:06:28:** And then the other one was kind of the funky,

**00:06:28 --> 00:06:31:** cool, adaptive reuse of the old warehouse areas that had

**00:06:31 --> 00:06:34:** really become the center point for a lot of the  
**00:06:35 --> 00:06:36:** artist community.  
**00:06:36 --> 00:06:40:** Very, very vibrant, 203 hundred artists working and practicing  
and  
**00:06:40 --> 00:06:44:** and really building an artistic and cultural creative ecosystem  
there.  
**00:06:44 --> 00:06:45:** And go to the next slide.  
**00:06:47 --> 00:06:50:** So as these assignments always go, there's a series of  
**00:06:50 --> 00:06:52:** questions that the panel is asked to address.  
**00:06:53 --> 00:06:56:** They fall into 4 categories.  
**00:06:56 --> 00:06:59:** And again, over time, these have morphed from the  
traditional  
**00:06:59 --> 00:07:02:** kind of linear real estate process to much broader kind  
**00:07:02 --> 00:07:04:** of policy and built environment process.  
**00:07:04 --> 00:07:08:** But the first was addressing the economy and industry and  
**00:07:08 --> 00:07:12:** resilience and really looking at tools and regulations to help  
**00:07:12 --> 00:07:15:** local businesses come back stronger.  
**00:07:15 --> 00:07:19:** The second one was dealing with workforce because  
Asheville was  
**00:07:19 --> 00:07:22:** a place that was really going through a lot of  
**00:07:22 --> 00:07:25:** transition in terms of becoming a more and more of  
**00:07:25 --> 00:07:27:** a a tourism economy and all the things that come  
**00:07:27 --> 00:07:29:** with that that are good and bad.  
**00:07:29 --> 00:07:33:** And so how could they create more living wage and  
**00:07:33 --> 00:07:37:** career oriented jobs using the events of Helene to try  
**00:07:37 --> 00:07:40:** and create a new momentum for new kinds of job  
**00:07:40 --> 00:07:41:** development.  
**00:07:42 --> 00:07:44:** The third one being the Urban Land Institute was focused  
**00:07:44 --> 00:07:46:** on real estate and it really related to those two  
**00:07:46 --> 00:07:47:** areas that I mentioned.  
**00:07:47 --> 00:07:50:** And what do you do to build back there or  
**00:07:50 --> 00:07:52:** do you build back there?  
**00:07:52 --> 00:07:54:** And if you do, how do you do that in  
**00:07:54 --> 00:07:57:** a way that makes economic sense but also is protected  
**00:07:57 --> 00:07:58:** from future events?  
**00:07:59 --> 00:08:02:** And then the last one was dealing with infrastructure and  
**00:08:03 --> 00:08:06:** public investment and the city was blessed to be getting  
**00:08:06 --> 00:08:08:** some very large grant monies.  
**00:08:08 --> 00:08:10:** And so part of this task was how do you  
**00:08:10 --> 00:08:11:** use that effectively?  
**00:08:11 --> 00:08:13:** What infrastructure do you put it in?  
**00:08:13 --> 00:08:16:** So you really are building better for the future and  
**00:08:16 --> 00:08:18:** not just simply repairing damage that was done.

**00:08:18 --> 00:08:19:** And go to the next slide.

**00:08:21 --> 00:08:24:** So the process five days we come in, we meet a lot of people, we see the site.

**00:08:24 --> 00:08:27:** The city did an amazing job, Probably the best community

**00:08:30 --> 00:08:32:** outreach program that I've ever seen.

**00:08:32 --> 00:08:33:** A lot of people came out from the community.

**00:08:33 --> 00:08:36:** And it's one of the things that we quickly learned

**00:08:36 --> 00:08:39:** about this place is it's a very active and engaged

**00:08:39 --> 00:08:39:** community.

**00:08:40 --> 00:08:44:** The nature of the arts was not just serendipitous, there

**00:08:44 --> 00:08:48:** was a long standing culture of, of arts and creativity

**00:08:48 --> 00:08:52:** and craft, but also a very strong entrepreneurial spirit.

**00:08:53 --> 00:08:56:** The other thing that we saw a lot of were

**00:08:56 --> 00:09:00:** the role of nonprofits that were very active and of

**00:09:00 --> 00:09:05:** large portfolio nonprofits doing really incredible work in that region

**00:09:05 --> 00:09:08:** and a a great chassis to build some of these

**00:09:08 --> 00:09:09:** programs on.

**00:09:10 --> 00:09:13:** And, and then of course, being where it's located in

**00:09:13 --> 00:09:15:** the mountains place of real beauty.

**00:09:15 --> 00:09:17:** And we heard a lot about how people are actually

**00:09:17 --> 00:09:17:** drawn to it.

**00:09:17 --> 00:09:20:** And people spoke very passionately about the area as a

**00:09:20 --> 00:09:22:** place that they were drawn to, not just as a

**00:09:22 --> 00:09:25:** place to go, but you know, it's mentally and spiritually

**00:09:25 --> 00:09:27:** found themselves really wanting to be there permanently.

**00:09:28 --> 00:09:31:** And that really fed into a very active recreational lifestyle,

**00:09:31 --> 00:09:34:** which we're seeing as a an economic driver through a

**00:09:34 --> 00:09:36:** lot of communities across the country.

**00:09:36 --> 00:09:37:** Go to the next one.

**00:09:40 --> 00:09:43:** So the, you know, we were presented with a lot

**00:09:43 --> 00:09:47:** of the, I mean really unbelievable things that took place

**00:09:47 --> 00:09:48:** post Helene.

**00:09:48 --> 00:09:52:** And again, the level of creativity and entrepreneurship that

**00:09:52 --> 00:09:55:** came

**00:09:55 --> 00:09:58:** from the city and the citizens to kind of weather

**00:09:58 --> 00:10:01:** that storm was, was truly impressive.

**00:10:01 --> 00:10:04:** But I think it left the panel as we started

**00:10:04 --> 00:10:06:** to formulate our our recommendations with a little bit of

**00:10:06 --> 00:10:09:** a a question that we were able to pose as,

**00:10:09 --> 00:10:12:** as the launching point for what John's going to talk

**00:10:12 --> 00:10:13:** about, which was how do you deal with an event

like that?

**00:10:13 --> 00:10:16:** You know, does it was so traumatic and people talked about the the trauma and the the pain and just

**00:10:16 --> 00:10:19:** challenges that they lived through 52 days without any running

**00:10:19 --> 00:10:23:** water.

**00:10:23 --> 00:10:23:** Do you look back on Helene and say that that, you know, was this awful moment in time that, you

**00:10:27 --> 00:10:29:** know, we never want to visit again?

**00:10:29 --> 00:10:31:** Or John, go to the next slide, Jonathan.

**00:10:31 --> 00:10:33:** Or do you look at it as a milestone and

**00:10:34 --> 00:10:37:** an inflection point where it really galvanizes the community, the

**00:10:37 --> 00:10:42:** policy makers, the development community to think differently about the

**00:10:42 --> 00:10:47:** future and how do you build back to create a legacy based on renewal and and resilience?

**00:10:47 --> 00:10:50:** And so with that, you know turn it over to

**00:10:50 --> 00:10:53:** John kind of talk you through some of our high

**00:10:54 --> 00:10:56:** level and what we thought were some of the most

**00:10:56 --> 00:10:58:** profound recommendations.

**00:10:58 --> 00:11:00:** Thank you very much, Chairman.

**00:11:00 --> 00:11:01:** Thank you all for being here today.

**00:11:05 --> 00:11:06:** On the next slide, you can see a picture of

**00:11:06 --> 00:11:07:** water.

**00:11:08 --> 00:11:11:** Now can you turn to that, please, Jonathan?

**00:11:11 --> 00:11:11:** And I'm going to talk about water as critical infrastructure, and I'll also talk about real estate because that's what

**00:11:12 --> 00:11:13:** I teach at Harvard.

**00:11:15 --> 00:11:18:** On the next slide, please.

**00:11:18 --> 00:11:20:** These are image or a graphic of how the water

**00:11:20 --> 00:11:21:** system comes together in Asheville, which is a lot like

**00:11:22 --> 00:11:23:** many towns in the central US.

**00:11:24 --> 00:11:28:** And I've been on ULI panels before on the coast.

**00:11:28 --> 00:11:32:** I've looked at flood in Miami and Norfolk.

**00:11:32 --> 00:11:35:** I've looked at wildfire in Sonoma with ULI.

**00:11:35 --> 00:11:38:** I hadn't looked in the internal mountain cities.

**00:11:38 --> 00:11:40:** And what happened in Asheville.

**00:11:40 --> 00:11:42:** If you think about how the water comes in, this

**00:11:42 --> 00:11:45:** horrible disaster was partly triggered by the water, the amount

**00:11:45 --> 00:11:47:** of moisture in Helen, but also the moisture was trapped

**00:11:47 --> 00:11:49:** by the two tallest mountains on the East Coast, Mount

**00:11:49 --> 00:11:52:** Mitchell, Mount Pisgah.

**00:11:59 --> 00:12:02:** So that it was coming down the slopes of those mountains where there's a pristine forest which has filtered the water and held the water for generations.

**00:12:02 --> 00:12:06:** And that's why the water Nashville is so clear.

**00:12:06 --> 00:12:08:** But if you get that much saturation on the ground gets soft and you get that much wind, trees slow

**00:12:11 --> 00:12:14:** down and 30 to 40% of the standing wood in

**00:12:14 --> 00:12:16:** the National Forest above Asheville blue down.

**00:12:17 --> 00:12:19:** So this means two things.

**00:12:19 --> 00:12:22:** One, in the short term that the water no longer hangs on the branches and the needles and the earth.

**00:12:22 --> 00:12:23:** It runs down in rivulets and little gollies become raging

**00:12:26 --> 00:12:28:** creeks.

**00:12:29 --> 00:12:33:** Raging creeks become deep corrosive rivers, and the main

**00:12:33 --> 00:12:38:** river rolling down from the dam eroded down about 20 feet.

**00:12:38 --> 00:12:42:** The bank can tell you about cut through the main

**00:12:42 --> 00:12:44:** water pipes, cut the water supply from Asheville.

**00:12:44 --> 00:12:47:** The river, the water and the lake got silty.

**00:12:47 --> 00:12:50:** And going forward, there's concern about wildfire up in the

**00:12:50 --> 00:12:54:** woods among these now downed trees.

**00:12:54 --> 00:12:56:** That's the start of the system.

**00:12:56 --> 00:12:57:** As you come farther down, the water can't be distributed

**00:12:58 --> 00:13:00:** to the town because it's silty and gross and because

**00:13:00 --> 00:13:03:** the pipes are broken within the town.

**00:13:03 --> 00:13:05:** Like most communities in America, particularly in the

**00:13:05 --> 00:13:09:** mountain SE,

**00:13:09 --> 00:13:13:** the drainage isn't necessarily adequate to handle this amount of rain.

**00:13:13 --> 00:13:13:** So there's erosion in the towns, and then the septic

**00:13:16 --> 00:13:18:** system also gets messed up.

**00:13:18 --> 00:13:20:** So This is why the town was without town water

**00:13:21 --> 00:13:23:** for almost two months, which Ben can talk about in

**00:13:23 --> 00:13:24:** more detail.

**00:13:24 --> 00:13:27:** One needs to think about water as one system, as

**00:13:27 --> 00:13:28:** one water from how do we get the water to

**00:13:28 --> 00:13:30:** how do we store the water to how do we

**00:13:30 --> 00:13:32:** move the water to how we drink the water.

**00:13:32 --> 00:13:36:** As Asheville thinks about rebuilding, they have to think about

**00:13:36 --> 00:13:39:** all these aspects of it, not just the piece, the

**00:13:39 --> 00:13:43:** elements of water that actually wash buildings away.

**00:13:43 --> 00:13:45:** You think about the floodwaters and the immediate damage.

**00:13:45 --> 00:13:47:** But once the flood recedes, that can be a very

**00:13:47 --> 00:13:48:** long time without water after that.

**00:13:49 --> 00:13:50:** So the next slide, please.

**00:13:53 --> 00:13:56:** So as we thought about Asheville's water, resilient water future,

**00:13:56 --> 00:13:59:** we thought about what the the city in Buncombe County

**00:13:59 --> 00:14:00:** have to do for water anyway.

**00:14:00 --> 00:14:02:** And also some of the grant money that would come

**00:14:03 --> 00:14:05:** in from FEMA, from the state and from other locations.

**00:14:05 --> 00:14:08:** Thinking, are we just looking to get back up in

**00:14:08 --> 00:14:11:** the short term, we're looking to build back the way

**00:14:11 --> 00:14:13:** it was, or we're looking to build back a resilient

**00:14:14 --> 00:14:16:** system that can last, that can serve to maybe a

**00:14:16 --> 00:14:20:** population of 200,000 people as Asheville grows over the decades,

**00:14:20 --> 00:14:22:** if there might be more incidents like this as the

**00:14:22 --> 00:14:26:** atmosphere gets warmer, that's the water aspect as part of

**00:14:26 --> 00:14:27:** the critical infrastructure.

**00:14:28 --> 00:14:29:** Let's go forward on the next slide and then I

**00:14:30 --> 00:14:31:** can talk more about the real estate pieces.

**00:14:32 --> 00:14:36:** So building for a resilient tomorrow includes building for a

**00:14:36 --> 00:14:38:** tomorrow that can withstand shocks like this.

**00:14:38 --> 00:14:41:** Again, Helen was said to be maybe once in 500

**00:14:41 --> 00:14:44:** year storm, but they might happen more frequently and certainly

**00:14:44 --> 00:14:46:** the once in 20s and once in 30s happen on

**00:14:46 --> 00:14:47:** this one.

**00:14:47 --> 00:14:47:** Oh no.

**00:14:47 --> 00:14:48:** And the French Broad.

**00:14:48 --> 00:14:51:** Anyway, this picture is actually from the Asheville Buncombe Damage

**00:14:51 --> 00:14:52:** Reduction Task Force.

**00:14:53 --> 00:14:56:** It's a rendering, but this is what the flood water

**00:14:56 --> 00:14:58:** looks like in the River Arts District in September a

**00:14:58 --> 00:15:00:** year and a half ago.

**00:15:00 --> 00:15:03:** These grants might come in, but the question will be

**00:15:03 --> 00:15:04:** how to spend them.

**00:15:04 --> 00:15:07:** Do you spend them just rebuilding what was there before?

**00:15:07 --> 00:15:09:** That's kind of how we think about insurances.

**00:15:09 --> 00:15:10:** Let's just build back what I had with the other

**00:15:10 --> 00:15:11:** time.

**00:15:11 --> 00:15:14:** This is an opportunity to build back much better, to

**00:15:14 --> 00:15:17:** take us a community that was put together by increments over decades and think about Amosa, Tabla, Raza or a clean slate for urban planning.

**00:15:17 --> 00:15:21:** And also to think about, are we just going to put the stuff in the same locations and get flooded again or we think of some way to restrict it?

**00:15:21 --> 00:15:23:** Or should we think about how the usage should apply going forward?

**00:15:24 --> 00:15:26:** Next slide, please.

**00:15:26 --> 00:15:28:** So there were three big takeaways for us.

**00:15:28 --> 00:15:30:** Here's the picture again of the River Arts District in the French Broad in September of 2024.

**00:15:30 --> 00:15:33:** One is to the River Arts District, which is so much of the character of Asheville.

**00:15:33 --> 00:15:33:** We're so devastated that perhaps it shouldn't go back in the same place to be a subject to the same flood.

**00:15:34 --> 00:15:35:** Partly the artists were there, it seems historically, because the buildings were cheap.

**00:15:37 --> 00:15:39:** The buildings were cheap because they've been flooded before.

**00:15:39 --> 00:15:42:** So these these might have been some robust brick buildings from 100 years ago, but the industries are long gone.

**00:15:42 --> 00:15:44:** The second piece is that rather than think about individual lots parcel by parcel for what somebody might get from their insurance, or somebody might rebuild, or somebody might get

**00:15:44 --> 00:15:46:** from FEMA or somebody might get from the state, why not think about aggregating all that money and all that planning into something that makes sense going forward?

**00:15:46 --> 00:15:48:** The third is that the funds from FEMA are limited.

**00:15:49 --> 00:15:52:** The amount that's announced was limited.

**00:15:52 --> 00:15:54:** The amount that's actually been received is even further limited.

**00:15:55 --> 00:15:55:** So how do you think those used to use those funds strategically and not just spray them all over everywhere

**00:15:55 --> 00:15:58:** to to adapt to today's squeaky wheel?

**00:15:58 --> 00:16:00:** Next slide please.

**00:16:00 --> 00:16:01:** The 4K areas in our study, if you're familiar with Asheville, are the ones who are most affected by the actual flood.

**00:16:50 --> 00:16:53:** Downtown Asheville is on high ground and that wasn't an issue except you don't have water for months and people aren't coming to visit.

**00:16:53 --> 00:16:55:** So it's a a collateral issue.

**00:16:56 --> 00:16:57:** Our feeling was that in the river Arts District, even though this is not a popular recommendation in the city,

**00:17:07 --> 00:17:10:** that the Arts District really shouldn't go back there.

**00:17:10 --> 00:17:12:** It's too valuable to have this kind of trauma again

**00:17:12 --> 00:17:15:** to destroy people's lives, work again to destroy all these

**00:17:15 --> 00:17:16:** other pieces again.

**00:17:16 --> 00:17:20:** And it'd be better to go to another semi industrial

**00:17:20 --> 00:17:23:** area this more more robust.

**00:17:24 --> 00:17:26:** I'll come back to that in a moment.

**00:17:26 --> 00:17:28:** The second is the Swannanoa Corridor, which is the the

**00:17:28 --> 00:17:31:** river that comes down from on Blackville and this most

**00:17:31 --> 00:17:34:** of the time looks like a little drainage dish, except

**00:17:34 --> 00:17:37:** when it doesn't, when it becomes hundreds yards wide and

**00:17:37 --> 00:17:38:** and dozens of feet deep.

**00:17:40 --> 00:17:43:** Here there are already buildings that are some are built

**00:17:43 --> 00:17:45:** on stilts, some are built on berms, some are built

**00:17:45 --> 00:17:47:** to to accept the flood and go back.

**00:17:48 --> 00:17:50:** This is doesn't add up really at all.

**00:17:50 --> 00:17:52:** It makes more sense to put the buildings together, elevate

**00:17:52 --> 00:17:55:** them, and then have a floodplain area as well.

**00:17:56 --> 00:17:59:** Biltmore Villages, as many of you know, is by the

**00:17:59 --> 00:18:00:** entry to the Biltmore Estate.

**00:18:00 --> 00:18:03:** This is flooded again, it will flood in the future.

**00:18:03 --> 00:18:06:** These are valuable properties where it looks like the property

**00:18:06 --> 00:18:08:** owners can make their own decisions around what to do

**00:18:08 --> 00:18:11:** going forward around elevation or some other reinforcement.

**00:18:12 --> 00:18:15:** And the French Broad Recreation area, which is the 4th,

**00:18:15 --> 00:18:18:** should remain a recreation area with safer, flexible design

**00:18:18 --> 00:18:21:** that

**00:18:21 --> 00:18:23:** can flood from time to time and without super expensive

**00:18:23 --> 00:18:25:** sports facilities where if you get 4 feet of mud

**00:18:26 --> 00:18:27:** on them, it really damages them.

**00:18:29 --> 00:18:31:** Next slide, please.

**00:18:31 --> 00:18:35:** Once I certainly does not fit all.

**00:18:35 --> 00:18:39:** There is no single recommendation for Asheville or actually

**00:18:39 --> 00:18:42:** any

**00:18:43 --> 00:18:46:** of the adaptation projects I've worked on, whether it's in

Miami or in Norfolk or in Sonoma around wildfire.

There's the commodity of risk, like how much is the

**00:18:46 --> 00:18:48:** area actually exposed?

**00:18:48 --> 00:18:50:** If you're down in the 20 year floodplain, it's pretty often.

**00:18:50 --> 00:18:51:** If you're in a 500 year floodplain, the one in

**00:18:53 --> 00:18:56:** 500 chance, not so often, but it might happen.

**00:18:56 --> 00:18:57:** It might be devastating.

**00:18:57 --> 00:19:00:** These are all different based on the geography, the weather and so forth.

**00:19:00 --> 00:19:01:**

**00:19:01 --> 00:19:05:** The second is how ready is the asset to withstand

**00:19:05 --> 00:19:05:** the risk?

**00:19:06 --> 00:19:09:** You can't make everything 30 feet high made of solid

**00:19:09 --> 00:19:09:** concrete.

**00:19:09 --> 00:19:12:** It'd be ugly and really expensive, but there are ways

**00:19:12 --> 00:19:15:** to think about Berm's flood walls, deployables, things like that,

**00:19:15 --> 00:19:17:** or ways to have early warning systems.

**00:19:17 --> 00:19:20:** One of the problems in Asheville was that there wasn't

**00:19:21 --> 00:19:24:** really warning of this flood, so people didn't really have

**00:19:24 --> 00:19:26:** a chance to get assets out of the River Arts

**00:19:26 --> 00:19:27:** District.

**00:19:27 --> 00:19:30:** Some did, and there were some anecdotal stories about people

**00:19:30 --> 00:19:33:** closely watching the weather, who moved inventory and movement equipment.

**00:19:33 --> 00:19:35:** But there wasn't very good early warning.

**00:19:36 --> 00:19:37:** And I'm sure that that's something.

**00:19:37 --> 00:19:39:** I don't think that's what Ben's going to talk about,

**00:19:39 --> 00:19:41:** but that's certainly what the city is working on going forward.

**00:19:41 --> 00:19:45:** And that'll be one of the major areas in thinking

**00:19:45 --> 00:19:47:** about adaptation in the future.

**00:19:47 --> 00:19:50:** And not to have a really another grim example, but

**00:19:50 --> 00:19:53:** on the Galveston River in Texas, if they had an

**00:19:53 --> 00:19:56:** early warning system, they could have evacuated that camp.

**00:19:56 --> 00:19:58:** They never would raise that camp 20 feet, but you

**00:19:58 --> 00:19:59:** could evacuate.

**00:19:59 --> 00:20:02:** So there's early warning that can be coupled with building

**00:20:02 --> 00:20:06:** firmly and there's also an ability to bounce back quickly.

**00:20:06 --> 00:20:08:** So I've already spoken to some people who are going

**00:20:08 --> 00:20:11:** back to River Arts District, but they're going back with.

**00:20:11 --> 00:20:15:** Lightweight equipment, not with major inventory with the ability to

**00:20:15 --> 00:20:17:** say, well, if this gets washed up the river to

**00:20:17 --> 00:20:19:** Tennessee, we can replace it really quickly.

**00:20:19 --> 00:20:23:** It's essentially low cost, low value assets in a high risk area.

**00:20:23 --> 00:20:24:** Rather than put everything down there and the finalist resources,

**00:20:27 --> 00:20:29:** you can think about the risk and think about the readiness.

**00:20:29 --> 00:20:30:** There's not infinite money.

**00:20:30 --> 00:20:33:** So therefore you have to think about how much can

**00:20:33 --> 00:20:34:** I spend to redo this or do I have to

**00:20:34 --> 00:20:35:** move someplace else?

**00:20:36 --> 00:20:39:** And the answers indicate mother Ultra passing and talk about

**00:20:39 --> 00:20:40:** it later.

**00:20:40 --> 00:20:41:** Next slide, please.

**00:20:44 --> 00:20:46:** I mentioned this earlier about doing the buyouts right.

**00:20:47 --> 00:20:50:** It's really tempting to look at buyouts in a partial

**00:20:50 --> 00:20:51:** by partial basis.

**00:20:51 --> 00:20:54:** And if you think about residential property, people have really

**00:20:54 --> 00:20:57:** different motivations and incentives and maybe it's worth the value

**00:20:57 --> 00:20:58:** to lend, maybe it's not.

**00:20:58 --> 00:21:00:** Maybe I want to build back, maybe I've said no

**00:21:00 --> 00:21:02:** more and I'm going to move to Arizona.

**00:21:02 --> 00:21:04:** So when they get flooded out again, but you could

**00:21:04 --> 00:21:07:** wind up with sort of a, a gap tooth look

**00:21:07 --> 00:21:10:** or a black and white piano key look that doesn't

**00:21:10 --> 00:21:13:** really add any value if to the overall if everybody

**00:21:13 --> 00:21:14:** does their own piece.

**00:21:14 --> 00:21:17:** So why wouldn't it make sense for the city and

**00:21:17 --> 00:21:21:** the county to try and steer how these buyouts work?

**00:21:21 --> 00:21:24:** Maybe by supplementing some people to take a buyout, maybe

**00:21:24 --> 00:21:27:** by supplementing others not to take a buyout to assemble

**00:21:27 --> 00:21:29:** partials that made sense to defend together in the way

**00:21:29 --> 00:21:31:** that you would have done.

**00:21:31 --> 00:21:33:** If you're starting from a blank slate, it's it's a

**00:21:33 --> 00:21:34:** disaster.

**00:21:34 --> 00:21:36:** It's also an opportunity to build back in that sense

**00:21:36 --> 00:21:39:** so the the BIOS could be steered towards conservation and

**00:21:39 --> 00:21:40:** public benefit.

**00:21:40 --> 00:21:42:** There's lots of ways to think about doing this.

**00:21:43 --> 00:21:44:** Next slide please.

**00:21:47 --> 00:21:51:** With the reverse specifically, we were talking about largely relocating

**00:21:51 --> 00:21:55:** this, using the revitalization, revitalization of funds to go someplace

**00:21:55 --> 00:21:58:** else rather than to rebuild the stuff that was destroyed

**00:21:58 --> 00:22:02:** before to establish public programming to support community driven activities,

**00:22:02 --> 00:22:05:** to retain the creative energy bit in a safer location.

**00:22:06 --> 00:22:09:** I don't think we actually got Histon our recommendation here,

**00:22:09 --> 00:22:10:** but this is how real estate people think.

**00:22:10 --> 00:22:13:** Let's go ahead and do this naturally, if been your

**00:22:13 --> 00:22:15:** studio there for 20 years doesn't feel like the right

**00:22:15 --> 00:22:16:** thing.

**00:22:16 --> 00:22:19:** We're trying to think about what makes sense for the

**00:22:19 --> 00:22:21:** community as a whole going forward and proposing at the

**00:22:21 --> 00:22:23:** River Arts District be relocated.

**00:22:24 --> 00:22:25:** Next slide, please.

**00:22:27 --> 00:22:29:** And this is back to you, Jim.

**00:22:29 --> 00:22:31:** I've talked about water is infrastructure.

**00:22:31 --> 00:22:33:** I've talked about some of the real estate urban planning

**00:22:33 --> 00:22:35:** pieces and we'll pass it back to you on the

**00:22:35 --> 00:22:35:** parks.

**00:22:36 --> 00:22:36:** Yeah.

**00:22:36 --> 00:22:39:** And John and I wanted to something on that relocation of

**00:22:39 --> 00:22:39:** RAD was.

**00:22:39 --> 00:22:42:** Yeah, I think the the panel felt strong that it's

**00:22:42 --> 00:22:45:** to be very intentional about that relocation so you don't

**00:22:45 --> 00:22:49:** end up with this diaspora of artists throughout the community

**00:22:49 --> 00:22:52:** that you were able to maintain that kind of center

**00:22:52 --> 00:22:55:** of gravity, critical mass, self supporting ecosystem that the

**00:22:55 --> 00:22:58:** RAD actually provided for that creative community.

**00:22:58 --> 00:23:00:** So it can't be, well, we'll find a way for

**00:23:00 --> 00:23:02:** you to find some other spots around town.

**00:23:02 --> 00:23:04:** It's got to know, it's really got to be a

**00:23:04 --> 00:23:07:** central hub that's identified so you can maintain the ethos

**00:23:08 --> 00:23:10:** and the energy that RAD brought, but ideally out of

**00:23:10 --> 00:23:11:** harm's way.

**00:23:13 --> 00:23:15:** So to wrap up the other big idea, and it

**00:23:15 --> 00:23:17:** really feeds into what John had just talked about was,

**00:23:17 --> 00:23:20:** I think a little more aspirational and uplifting after all

**00:23:20 --> 00:23:23:** of the technical stuff that we had to deal with

**00:23:23 --> 00:23:24:** was this idea of.

**00:23:24 --> 00:23:26:** So what do you do with these land along the river that you buy, knowing that it's not going to it's probably going to flood again and many times and

**00:23:29 --> 00:23:32:** but how do you use that as an asset as

**00:23:32 --> 00:23:34:** opposed to a liability?

**00:23:34 --> 00:23:35:** And there was this look back by the panel in

**00:23:38 --> 00:23:42:** this kind of legacy of green space in the important

**00:23:42 --> 00:23:45:** role that Parks has played in the history of Asheville

**00:23:45 --> 00:23:49:** and Western North Carolina, You know, starting with the Biltmore

**00:23:49 --> 00:23:49:** estate.

**00:23:49 --> 00:23:52:** I mean, a lot of the reasons Asheville was kind of on the map, at least by recognition.

**00:23:52 --> 00:23:54:** And that really was a, you know, a significant gesture

**00:23:54 --> 00:23:57:** of open space and parks.

**00:23:57 --> 00:23:59:** You've got the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which

**00:23:59 --> 00:24:02:** I think I just read the other day is the busiest

**00:24:02 --> 00:24:04:** National Park in the country, would not have ever known

**00:24:04 --> 00:24:06:** that.

**00:24:06 --> 00:24:06:** And so it's like, how do you use this now

**00:24:07 --> 00:24:09:** surplus of open space that in some ways could be

**00:24:09 --> 00:24:12:** looked at as just leftover acquisitions or a thought more

**00:24:12 --> 00:24:15:** aspirationally could be the beginning of that legacy, that

**00:24:15 --> 00:24:19:** positive

**00:24:19 --> 00:24:22:** legacy that I talked about in the opening slides.

**00:24:22 --> 00:24:22:** Next slide.

**00:24:23 --> 00:24:23:** Nothing.

**00:24:25 --> 00:24:28:** So the concept was this idea of a legacy of

**00:24:28 --> 00:24:31:** legacy parks at the river districts and with the same

**00:24:31 --> 00:24:35:** kind of boldness and intention and collective thinking that has

**00:24:35 --> 00:24:39:** gone into the National Park, has gone into the Biltmore

**00:24:39 --> 00:24:42:** or was the genesis of the Biltmore is applied to

**00:24:42 --> 00:24:46:** these lands as they're acquired along the riverfront to do

**00:24:46 --> 00:24:47:** multiple things.

**00:24:47 --> 00:24:48:** You go to the next slide.

**00:24:51 --> 00:24:54:** So first of all, John talked about 1 water.

**00:24:54 --> 00:24:56:** So part of that is a strategy to minimize these

**00:24:57 --> 00:25:00:** extreme events or the impact of those extreme events in

**00:25:00 --> 00:25:02:** the floodplain in the watershed areas.

**00:25:03 --> 00:25:06:** But also, how do you use ecosystem services to make

**00:25:06 --> 00:25:09:** sure you maintain the cleanliness of that water as it's

**00:25:09 --> 00:25:13:** coming off of the urban areas and entering into that

**00:25:13 --> 00:25:13:** corridor?

**00:25:14 --> 00:25:17:** The second thing is bringing biodiversity back into the more urban core areas through the thoughtful planning and design of

**00:25:20 --> 00:25:23:** those parks and then the re establishment of an urban forest.

**00:25:24 --> 00:25:27:** John talked about the loss of tree cover and the impact that's going to have on the hillsides, but also

**00:25:27 --> 00:25:30:** the benefits of having this again, closer to an urban

**00:25:30 --> 00:25:33:** core where the residents live.

**00:25:33 --> 00:25:34:** core where the residents live.

**00:25:35 --> 00:25:35:** Go to the next slide.

**00:25:39 --> 00:25:41:** So we talked about a lot of examples and one

**00:25:41 --> 00:25:44:** of the things that we landed on that it was

**00:25:44 --> 00:25:47:** a particularly compelling analog was Bend OR which if you're

**00:25:48 --> 00:25:51:** familiar, Bend OR was almost a bankrupt city in 1985.

**00:25:52 --> 00:25:56:** The timber industry had closed down and it was through

**00:25:56 --> 00:26:00:** a very intentional effort to aggregate and be thoughtful about

**00:26:00 --> 00:26:03:** the way they treated the river as a recreational asset,

**00:26:03 --> 00:26:07:** as an ecosystem services asset, really who gave the city

**00:26:07 --> 00:26:09:** a new identity, a new life.

**00:26:09 --> 00:26:11:** It provided recreation not only for tourists, but for a

**00:26:12 --> 00:26:14:** very high quality of life for the residents who live

**00:26:14 --> 00:26:14:** there.

**00:26:15 --> 00:26:18:** And that has brought in a whole nother level of

**00:26:18 --> 00:26:21:** economy and people who are, as they have more work,

**00:26:21 --> 00:26:24:** mobility to choose where they want to live, coming to

**00:26:24 --> 00:26:28:** places that offer this extreme opportunity for various forms of

**00:26:28 --> 00:26:29:** recreation.

**00:26:29 --> 00:26:32:** So they've very thoughtfully taken the riverbank edge that

**00:26:32 --> 00:26:34:** can't be, you know, used for other things.

**00:26:34 --> 00:26:37:** They've got an ampathy, they've got a whitewater park, they've

**00:26:37 --> 00:26:40:** just got great trail systems, open space, active recreation.

**00:26:40 --> 00:26:45:** So all the things that we envisioned could happen in

**00:26:45 --> 00:26:49:** Asheville as a positive output from, you know, this kind

**00:26:49 --> 00:26:53:** of extreme and and rather sad event, this whole idea

**00:26:53 --> 00:26:57:** of building back better and using this as a as

**00:26:57 --> 00:27:02:** a catapult to do something more significant for the city

**00:27:02 --> 00:27:03:** than simply repair.

**00:27:04 --> 00:27:08:** With that, I think we are done with the overview

**00:27:08 --> 00:27:08:** piece.

**00:27:10 --> 00:27:14:** So yeah, make sure if you're, if you have some

**00:27:14 --> 00:27:17:** questions, please use the Q&A function.

**00:27:17 --> 00:27:19:** And I think somebody's going to be moderating that.

**00:27:19 --> 00:27:25:** So do we have any questions coming in moderator?

**00:27:26 --> 00:27:29:** Jim, I think somebody else might be moderating, but I

**00:27:29 --> 00:27:31:** did see one pop up that says is the city

**00:27:31 --> 00:27:34:** of Asheville allowing property owners and the floodplain to rebuild

**00:27:34 --> 00:27:36:** commercial and residential uses?

**00:27:37 --> 00:27:39:** Is the city grants and building permits?

**00:27:39 --> 00:27:40:** I think we had two more speakers, right?

**00:27:40 --> 00:27:43:** We had Ben and yeah, so I'm sorry, should we

**00:27:43 --> 00:27:47:** jump to them first and that because that's great segue

**00:27:47 --> 00:27:48:** what the?

**00:27:48 --> 00:27:48:** City's doing.

**00:27:48 --> 00:27:51:** We can be processing that question on the City side

**00:27:51 --> 00:27:54:** and continue to drop your questions in the chat there.

**00:27:55 --> 00:27:55:** Yeah.

**00:27:56 --> 00:27:59:** Hey, everybody, I can answer that question.

**00:27:59 --> 00:28:00:** The answer is yes.

**00:28:00 --> 00:28:02:** We are allowing people to rebuild and I'll tell you

**00:28:02 --> 00:28:04:** why as we go through this presentation.

**00:28:05 --> 00:28:09:** Ben Woody, Assistant City Manager, City of Asheville, thank you

**00:28:09 --> 00:28:10:** again for having us here today.

**00:28:10 --> 00:28:13:** And I want to thank Uli and the panel members

**00:28:13 --> 00:28:15:** for all the work that they did.

**00:28:16 --> 00:28:17:** Go ahead and go to the next slide.

**00:28:17 --> 00:28:19:** I'm going to, I'm going to move through the slides

**00:28:19 --> 00:28:20:** pretty quickly.

**00:28:20 --> 00:28:21:** I've got some images.

**00:28:21 --> 00:28:24:** I'm going to give some background, Jim and John did

**00:28:24 --> 00:28:26:** a great job with that.

**00:28:26 --> 00:28:28:** So I'll add just a little bit to that.

**00:28:28 --> 00:28:32:** I'm going to talk about the city's implementation frameworks.

**00:28:32 --> 00:28:34:** We got a lot of good recommendations from you all

**00:28:34 --> 00:28:37:** IA lot of those who want to move forward with.

**00:28:37 --> 00:28:40:** I think there are some recommendations that we're going to

**00:28:40 --> 00:28:42:** struggle to move forward with, but that's OK.

**00:28:42 --> 00:28:44:** We ask you a lot of kind of come in

**00:28:44 --> 00:28:47:** and give us their outside view of what would be

**00:28:47 --> 00:28:48:** ideal in terms of recovery.

**00:28:49 --> 00:28:52:** Then Rachel's going to jump on my colleague and she's

**00:28:52 --> 00:28:55:** going to talk a little bit about our community, which

**00:28:55 --> 00:28:58:** is very engaged as John mentioned and Jim did as well.

**00:28:58 --> 00:29:01:** And then Rachel will give some updates on our progress

**00:29:01 --> 00:29:02:** toward rebuilding.

**00:29:02 --> 00:29:04:** I want to say one thing to start off.

**00:29:05 --> 00:29:07:** I looked at the roster list, A lot of actual

**00:29:07 --> 00:29:10:** people on here, so they'll keep Rachel and I honest

**00:29:10 --> 00:29:10:** on this.

**00:29:10 --> 00:29:13:** But I also saw people on the call that are

**00:29:13 --> 00:29:16:** from other communities that have experienced disasters.

**00:29:16 --> 00:29:19:** And so you will understand when I say that rebuilding

**00:29:20 --> 00:29:23:** after a disaster, this magnitude is very, very long and

**00:29:23 --> 00:29:24:** complicated.

**00:29:24 --> 00:29:26:** So a rebuild is measured in years.

**00:29:27 --> 00:29:29:** We're not even a year and a half past this.

**00:29:29 --> 00:29:32:** So if you ride into Asheville, you're going to see

**00:29:32 --> 00:29:34:** a lot of things gone, but you're not going to

**00:29:34 --> 00:29:38:** see a lot of physical things built back yet because

**00:29:38 --> 00:29:41:** it is a very expensive and complex process to rebuild

**00:29:41 --> 00:29:43:** that will be measured in years.

**00:29:43 --> 00:29:45:** So John, you did a great job.

**00:29:45 --> 00:29:48:** We got two rivers that kind of converge.

**00:29:48 --> 00:29:51:** There's a confluence of those rivers really close to the

**00:29:51 --> 00:29:52:** center of Asheville.

**00:29:52 --> 00:29:54:** So we do have a flooding problem.

**00:29:54 --> 00:29:57:** We've dealt with that for many years, not to the

**00:29:57 --> 00:29:58:** extent of Helene though.

**00:29:58 --> 00:29:59:** Next slide.

**00:30:00 --> 00:30:03:** The other thing is, you know, we have overtime, our

**00:30:03 --> 00:30:05:** rivers are princely commercial in nature.

**00:30:06 --> 00:30:08:** We don't, you know, you hear about these coastal areas

**00:30:08 --> 00:30:09:** that have a lot of residential flooding.

**00:30:09 --> 00:30:12:** We had a lot of commercial, non residential flooding.

**00:30:12 --> 00:30:16:** Actually, we, we have, you know, commercialized riverfronts

**00:30:16 --> 00:30:19:** that have slowly converted, you know, to places where artists can thrive.

**00:30:19 --> 00:30:21:** And there's, you know, shopping villages.

**00:30:21 --> 00:30:24:** We've got a lot of uses in our floodplain next

**00:30:24 --> 00:30:24:** slide.

**00:30:26 --> 00:30:29:** But we still have some residual industrial type uses as

**00:30:30 --> 00:30:33:** some of the old historic, you know, uses you would

**00:30:33 --> 00:30:36:** see along a river are still there.

**00:30:36 --> 00:30:38:** And that creates a lot of incompatibility.

**00:30:38 --> 00:30:40:** That's how you have giant tanks that float down the

**00:30:41 --> 00:30:43:** river that hit buildings that have an artist in them.

**00:30:43 --> 00:30:47:** So there's definitely some issues our architects on the call

**00:30:47 --> 00:30:49:** will appreciate when I say this.

**00:30:49 --> 00:30:52:** We have way too many zoning districts in our city

**00:30:52 --> 00:30:54:** and they're way too complicated.

**00:30:55 --> 00:30:56:** Next slide.

**00:30:57 --> 00:30:59:** But what we do like about about our rivers and

**00:30:59 --> 00:31:01:** Jim, you did a good job of highlighting this.

**00:31:01 --> 00:31:05:** We love our parks and that's our velodrome.

**00:31:05 --> 00:31:08:** For those that don't recognize it, that's what our velodrome

**00:31:08 --> 00:31:10:** looked like at some point during this event.

**00:31:11 --> 00:31:13:** And one of the recommendations from you a lot that

**00:31:13 --> 00:31:16:** I'm most excited about and I think you're going to

**00:31:16 --> 00:31:18:** see a lot of forward momentum on is the idea

**00:31:18 --> 00:31:21:** of building those parks back better and more resilient and

**00:31:21 --> 00:31:24:** making sure they connect with the community.

**00:31:24 --> 00:31:24:** Next slide.

**00:31:27 --> 00:31:30:** But one of the things that we also talked about

**00:31:30 --> 00:31:32:** a little bit, John, you got into this is, you

**00:31:32 --> 00:31:36:** know, we also, we've got a really interesting kind of

**00:31:36 --> 00:31:40:** artist community along our riverfront that was really probably already

**00:31:40 --> 00:31:43:** stressed in some some respects because of some of our

**00:31:43 --> 00:31:45:** economic challenges we have in Asheville.

**00:31:45 --> 00:31:48:** But they were really hit hard.

**00:31:48 --> 00:31:48:** Our artist community.

**00:31:48 --> 00:31:52:** They were right in the crosshairs of this storm, really

**00:31:52 --> 00:31:54:** significantly impacted that.

**00:31:54 --> 00:31:56:** If Eddie Dewey had been here, he has one of

**00:31:56 --> 00:31:59:** the one of the coolest places in the river arts

**00:31:59 --> 00:32:01:** in terms of where you can go and see kind

**00:32:01 --> 00:32:03:** of, you know, art from our local artists.

**00:32:03 --> 00:32:05:** And that's his property on the lower right.

**00:32:06 --> 00:32:08:** Probably doesn't mean a lot to you if you know

**00:32:08 --> 00:32:08:** it Asheville.

**00:32:08 --> 00:32:10:** But what you can see if you don't know Asheville,

**00:32:10 --> 00:32:12:** but what you can see is the water is literally

**00:32:12 --> 00:32:13:** up to the roof lines.

**00:32:13 --> 00:32:17:** So it just devastated that particular part of our artist

**00:32:17 --> 00:32:18:** community.

**00:32:18 --> 00:32:19:** Next slide.

**00:32:19 --> 00:32:22:** And that's when we asked you a lot to come in.

**00:32:22 --> 00:32:26:** We said, hey, we need some outside perspective maybe to

**00:32:26 --> 00:32:28:** help level us and kind of level set with our

**00:32:28 --> 00:32:29:** community.

**00:32:29 --> 00:32:30:** They did that.

**00:32:30 --> 00:32:31:** Next slide.

**00:32:34 --> 00:32:35:** We like to engage.

**00:32:36 --> 00:32:39:** We really, really like to engage in Asheville.

**00:32:40 --> 00:32:42:** I think we, I get, I, I haven't went to

**00:32:42 --> 00:32:43:** other events.

**00:32:43 --> 00:32:45:** I would, I'll trust him and John, we had a

**00:32:45 --> 00:32:47:** lot of people that engage a lot of people, hundreds

**00:32:47 --> 00:32:49:** of people that participated in this.

**00:32:50 --> 00:32:53:** So, you know, the ULR panel got a chance to

**00:32:53 --> 00:32:56:** look at things, you know, from their professional perspectives, but

**00:32:56 --> 00:32:59:** they got an earful from this community.

**00:32:59 --> 00:33:03:** So undoubtedly you had some, you know, some challenges ahead

**00:33:03 --> 00:33:03:** of you.

**00:33:04 --> 00:33:06:** And if we go to the next slide, what that

**00:33:06 --> 00:33:10:** resulted in is really a framework of recommendations and John

**00:33:10 --> 00:33:12:** and Jim covered this to some extent, but I, I

**00:33:12 --> 00:33:14:** just kind of summarized it in a way that makes

**00:33:14 --> 00:33:15:** sense.

**00:33:15 --> 00:33:18:** When you look at those recommendations, you would probably see

**00:33:18 --> 00:33:21:** those honestly in a lot of kind of you allow

**00:33:21 --> 00:33:22:** based reports.

**00:33:22 --> 00:33:26:** But what I love about these is they're very specific

**00:33:26 --> 00:33:27:** to Asheville situation.

**00:33:27 --> 00:33:30:** So they are all really dialed in to some, you

**00:33:30 --> 00:33:34:** know, that they're intended to help us, you know, decide

**00:33:34 --> 00:33:37:** how to move forward and respond to this storm.

**00:33:38 --> 00:33:41:** John and Jim, I will tell you like, for example,

**00:33:41 --> 00:33:44:** the idea of the RAD 2 point O not really

**00:33:44 --> 00:33:48:** well received, but that's OK because we want to, we

**00:33:48 --> 00:33:49:** want to make people talk.

**00:33:49 --> 00:33:50:** We want to create dialogue.

**00:33:51 --> 00:33:54:** John and Jim, we have entire City Council campaigns that are based on that recommendation.

**00:33:54 --> 00:33:55:** So you've really got a lot of discussion.

**00:33:56 --> 00:33:58:** You prompted a lot in Nashville, and that's a, that's a true story.

**00:33:58 --> 00:34:01:** But the spirit of that recommendation was great.

**00:34:06 --> 00:34:08:** And that is like, how do we maintain this kind

**00:34:08 --> 00:34:12:** of eclectic, interesting and unique artist community that we have

**00:34:12 --> 00:34:14:** and do that in a way that doesn't price these

**00:34:15 --> 00:34:15:** artists out?

**00:34:16 --> 00:34:18:** So again, it just forced, you know, a lot of

**00:34:18 --> 00:34:18:** work really.

**00:34:19 --> 00:34:21:** I think it challenges us to think about things a

**00:34:21 --> 00:34:22:** little bit differently.

**00:34:23 --> 00:34:25:** Another example I want to pull from this is the

**00:34:25 --> 00:34:26:** economic impact.

**00:34:26 --> 00:34:30:** This just devastated our artists, our local businesses, the heart

**00:34:30 --> 00:34:31:** of our economy.

**00:34:32 --> 00:34:34:** You know, I think a lot of what was recommended

**00:34:35 --> 00:34:35:** makes sense.

**00:34:35 --> 00:34:38:** That's an area, for example, we've prioritized and Rachel's going

**00:34:38 --> 00:34:40:** to talk about our disaster recovery funds.

**00:34:41 --> 00:34:43:** And, you know, again, we want to do all these

**00:34:43 --> 00:34:45:** things or parts of all these things, but we can't

**00:34:45 --> 00:34:47:** do them all at once because we just don't have

**00:34:47 --> 00:34:47:** the bandwidth.

**00:34:47 --> 00:34:49:** So some of this rust is just prioritizing.

**00:34:49 --> 00:34:53:** So things like parks, the local economy, Rachel's going to

**00:34:53 --> 00:34:56:** talk about how we're really trying to move those efforts

**00:34:56 --> 00:34:56:** forward.

**00:34:57 --> 00:35:00:** One thing, John, that you covered that I'm a big

**00:35:00 --> 00:35:03:** fan of is this one water concept, the idea of

**00:35:03 --> 00:35:06:** managing our potable water and you know, storm water impacts.

**00:35:07 --> 00:35:11:** We actually ended up including that concept in a combined

**00:35:11 --> 00:35:14:** Buncombe County recovery plan.

**00:35:14 --> 00:35:16:** So the county did a recovery plan that really pulls

**00:35:16 --> 00:35:18:** in all the different municipalities.

**00:35:19 --> 00:35:21:** So that's like an example of something we really want

**00:35:21 --> 00:35:23:** to address because we want to have a reliable water

**00:35:23 --> 00:35:24:** system.

**00:35:24 --> 00:35:26:** We want to reliably manage our floodplains.

**00:35:26 --> 00:35:29:** But I would say that's an example of probably more

**00:35:29 --> 00:35:31:** of a medium term project for us.

**00:35:31 --> 00:35:33:** So one of the things if we go to the

**00:35:33 --> 00:35:35:** next slide, one of the things that we had to

**00:35:35 --> 00:35:38:** do with these recommendations is figure out what what are

**00:35:38 --> 00:35:39:** we going to do with these now?

**00:35:39 --> 00:35:41:** How are we going to implement those.

**00:35:41 --> 00:35:44:** And what I loved about Uli and this is hard

**00:35:44 --> 00:35:48:** for us and Asheville is you challenged us to be

**00:35:48 --> 00:35:49:** bold, to take action.

**00:35:49 --> 00:35:52:** We like to overthink things and talk about things and,

**00:35:53 --> 00:35:55:** you know, analyze them to the NTH degree.

**00:35:55 --> 00:35:57:** But so we're trying to do that.

**00:35:57 --> 00:35:59:** You know, one of our challenges in Asheville and our

**00:35:59 --> 00:36:01:** locals will know this is we have, we're a really

**00:36:01 --> 00:36:02:** lean city.

**00:36:02 --> 00:36:04:** We don't have a lot of resources.

**00:36:04 --> 00:36:08:** You know, we've got an influx of federal money, but

**00:36:08 --> 00:36:11:** even even the ability to spend 220, five, \$25 million

**00:36:11 --> 00:36:12:** of Dr.

**00:36:12 --> 00:36:13:** money is hard for us.

**00:36:14 --> 00:36:16:** You know, we have to have staff and contractors.

**00:36:17 --> 00:36:20:** One, one thing I thought was amazing is we actually

**00:36:20 --> 00:36:23:** had a general obligation bond ballot initiative on our, on

**00:36:23 --> 00:36:25:** our ballot scheduled for November of 2024.

**00:36:26 --> 00:36:29:** It's like 6 weeks after this storm, we asked the

**00:36:29 --> 00:36:32:** voters to approve \$80 million in bonds and they actually

**00:36:32 --> 00:36:35:** did, which kind of terrifies me in a way because

**00:36:35 --> 00:36:38:** that's 80 more \$1,000,000 we have to spend in six

**00:36:38 --> 00:36:38:** years.

**00:36:39 --> 00:36:41:** But again, it, it just kind of shows, I think

**00:36:41 --> 00:36:44:** Asheville's commitment to, you know, investing in this

**00:36:44 --> 00:36:45:** community and

**00:36:46 --> 00:36:48:** trying to move forward.

**00:36:48 --> 00:36:51:** One of the things we're trying to do with this

**00:36:51 --> 00:36:52:** money we have now is leverage that with other resources.

**00:36:53 --> 00:36:55:** We're looking for quick wins.

**00:36:55 --> 00:36:57:** We're looking for partners to make that.

**00:36:57 --> 00:36:58:** It ends up being 300 million with the Dr.

and the bond money.

**00:36:58 --> 00:37:00:** Make that go as far as we can make it go.

**00:37:00 --> 00:37:04:** The way we do that internally, the nuts and bolts

**00:37:04 --> 00:37:07:** of city government and what we did with the ULR

**00:37:07 --> 00:37:10:** recommendations is we actually look for ways to take what

**00:37:10 --> 00:37:13:** the panel recommended and how can we weave that into

**00:37:13 --> 00:37:16:** existing projects and efforts already underway.

**00:37:16 --> 00:37:19:** So from our view, if we've already got staff that

**00:37:19 --> 00:37:21:** are working on these things and a lot of them

**00:37:21 --> 00:37:23:** we did, how do we get that, that project manager

**00:37:24 --> 00:37:26:** to incorporate some of those ideas and concepts from you,

**00:37:26 --> 00:37:27:** Allah?

**00:37:27 --> 00:37:30:** Because what we know about our existing projects is they

**00:37:30 --> 00:37:34:** align with council's priorities, they align with our council's recovery priorities.

**00:37:34 --> 00:37:35:** So it's kind of like a balancing act.

**00:37:37 --> 00:37:39:** And if you'll go to the next slide, and I

**00:37:40 --> 00:37:42:** think this is my last slide, I'm trying to move

**00:37:42 --> 00:37:43:** through this.

**00:37:43 --> 00:37:45:** I couldn't do this without showing a spreadsheet.

**00:37:46 --> 00:37:47:** You don't need to read the spreadsheet.

**00:37:47 --> 00:37:49:** But the idea for us is, and I'm going to

**00:37:50 --> 00:37:52:** set up Rachel is we got a work plan.

**00:37:52 --> 00:37:56:** We've prioritize the things that we need to do because

**00:37:56 --> 00:38:00:** again, I think recovery is a six or seven-year process

**00:38:00 --> 00:38:05:** and we are trying to leverage our limited resources with

**00:38:05 --> 00:38:06:** existing partners.

**00:38:06 --> 00:38:08:** And you know, we have a lot of nonprofits.

**00:38:08 --> 00:38:10:** There's just a lot of ways to try to leverage

**00:38:10 --> 00:38:13:** that other funding sources and we're trying to build that

**00:38:13 --> 00:38:16:** into our operational work plan and find ways to move

**00:38:16 --> 00:38:18:** forward and work with the community.

**00:38:18 --> 00:38:21:** So Jimmy, John, hopefully we can come back three or

**00:38:21 --> 00:38:23:** four years from now, take a look at this and

**00:38:23 --> 00:38:26:** we can tell you what we worked into our implementation

**00:38:26 --> 00:38:28:** efforts and, and what we did.

**00:38:28 --> 00:38:30:** And but again, a lot of thanks you allow for

**00:38:30 --> 00:38:33:** your insight and if any, if anything else, you know,

**00:38:33 --> 00:38:37:** creating some provocative and really interesting conversations in the community.

**00:38:37 --> 00:38:40:** And Rachel, with that, I'm going to turn it over

**00:38:40 --> 00:38:42:** to you to talk about kind of community feedback and  
**00:38:42 --> 00:38:45:** kind of your success with some of the things we've  
**00:38:45 --> 00:38:46:** already gotten off the ground.  
**00:38:47 --> 00:38:48:** Great.  
**00:38:48 --> 00:38:49:** Thanks so much, Ben.  
**00:38:49 --> 00:38:50:** Hi there.  
**00:38:50 --> 00:38:51:** My name is Rachel Taylor.  
**00:38:51 --> 00:38:56:** I am the city's Economic Development Division Manager and  
worked  
**00:38:56 --> 00:39:00:** with a number of other staff members and was able  
**00:39:00 --> 00:39:02:** to participate in this ULI panel.  
**00:39:02 --> 00:39:04:** So it was really exciting.  
**00:39:05 --> 00:39:09:** And like Ben mentioned, I, I'm really excited about the  
**00:39:09 --> 00:39:13:** amount of community feedback and, and really data and  
information  
**00:39:13 --> 00:39:17:** we have at this point to be able to incorporate  
**00:39:17 --> 00:39:20:** into current and future planning opportunities.  
**00:39:21 --> 00:39:24:** So I'm going to talk about some of that feedback  
**00:39:24 --> 00:39:27:** that we've gotten and then how we're kind of weaving  
**00:39:27 --> 00:39:29:** that into our projects.  
**00:39:29 --> 00:39:31:** So I've summarized some themes.  
**00:39:32 --> 00:39:35:** If if you're local to Asheville, you'll know that there's  
**00:39:36 --> 00:39:37:** way more to cover here.  
**00:39:37 --> 00:39:41:** But we heard loud and clear, our community really wants  
**00:39:41 --> 00:39:45:** us to be responsive, to be able to deploy these  
**00:39:45 --> 00:39:50:** resources quickly and help our community members recover,  
especially for  
**00:39:50 --> 00:39:53:** that economic rebuilding and recovery.  
**00:39:54 --> 00:39:57:** They really want us to be resilient and to help  
**00:39:57 --> 00:40:01:** invest those resources to strengthen that resilience through a  
diversified  
**00:40:01 --> 00:40:03:** and sustainable economic base.  
**00:40:04 --> 00:40:07:** But to do this in an efficient and effective way  
**00:40:07 --> 00:40:10:** and, and really focus on addressing the needs of those  
**00:40:10 --> 00:40:16:** critically impacted sectors, those physically impacted  
corridors and the businesses  
**00:40:16 --> 00:40:19:** that have maybe more limited access to resources.  
**00:40:20 --> 00:40:22:** And then to do all of this while being strategic.  
**00:40:22 --> 00:40:25:** So ensuring that, you know, we're meeting those near term  
**00:40:25 --> 00:40:29:** needs while also thinking ahead and making sure that we're  
**00:40:29 --> 00:40:32:** deploying these resources to have a lasting impact on our  
**00:40:32 --> 00:40:36:** economy, on our workforce and maintaining that sense of  
identity

**00:40:36 --> 00:40:38:** in place that's so important to us.

**00:40:38 --> 00:40:41:** So we're going to continue to use this feedback, the

**00:40:42 --> 00:40:46:** data that we've gotten, recommendations from opportunities like the ULI

**00:40:46 --> 00:40:50:** panel, updated plans to inform all of our investments and

**00:40:50 --> 00:40:52:** resources moving forward.

**00:40:52 --> 00:40:52:** Next slide.

**00:40:57 --> 00:40:59:** So we heard loud and clear that there is strong

**00:40:59 --> 00:41:03:** support to build back in these corridors and we're hearing

**00:41:03 --> 00:41:07:** this from stakeholders from across sectors and differing interest groups.

**00:41:08 --> 00:41:11:** One of the key pieces that's so important is that

**00:41:12 --> 00:41:14:** sense of community and cultural identity.

**00:41:14 --> 00:41:17:** So these districts, we all talked about it a little

**00:41:17 --> 00:41:21:** bit in this presentation, but they hold significant cultural and

**00:41:21 --> 00:41:23:** historical value for the community.

**00:41:24 --> 00:41:27:** And then the the community as a whole has made

**00:41:27 --> 00:41:32:** significant public and private investments to successfully support activation along

**00:41:32 --> 00:41:34:** these riverfront districts.

**00:41:34 --> 00:41:37:** And each of the districts developed sort of this unique

**00:41:37 --> 00:41:38:** identity.

**00:41:38 --> 00:41:42:** So as you'll know, each has breweries and restaurants, but

**00:41:42 --> 00:41:46:** the River Arts District really has that artistic flavor.

**00:41:46 --> 00:41:50:** The outdoor recreation component has become really important in in

**00:41:50 --> 00:41:51:** the last decade.

**00:41:52 --> 00:41:56:** Biltmore Village has that historic focus, the arts and crafts,

**00:41:56 --> 00:42:01:** retail businesses and along the Swannanoa River really it developed

**00:42:01 --> 00:42:06:** an identity for vintage furniture, shopping for HomeGoods and along

**00:42:06 --> 00:42:11:** with breweries, restaurants and other commercial businesses.

**00:42:11 --> 00:42:14:** So that identity was, was and is really important to

**00:42:14 --> 00:42:15:** our community.

**00:42:16 --> 00:42:21:** And like Ben mentioned, these districts are really important commercial

**00:42:21 --> 00:42:23:** and economic hubs.

**00:42:23 --> 00:42:28:** We're very geographically constrained and these riverfront corridors provide much

**00:42:28 --> 00:42:32:** needed commercial and mixed-use real estate at a more competitive

**00:42:32 --> 00:42:37:** price point for many developers, businesses, even

community groups, there's nonprofits sprinkled in throughout all of these districts.

**00:42:41 --> 00:42:45:** So it does serve a really key purpose in our community here.

**00:42:45 --> 00:42:47:** Next slide.

**00:42:52 --> 00:42:55:** What we also heard long clear is that growth and sustainability are not mutually exclusive.

**00:42:55 --> 00:42:57:** So maybe a unifying factor from hearing some of these recommendations that there was strong support by different stakeholder

**00:43:02 --> 00:43:09:** groups to mitigate flooding impacts to kind of be involved in resiliency efforts both locally and regionally.

**00:43:09 --> 00:43:14:** And hearing from those same stakeholders that there was strong

**00:43:14 --> 00:43:19:** support to invest in these corridors, even as we're making

**00:43:19 --> 00:43:23:** investments in other districts in both physical economic and community

**00:43:23 --> 00:43:27:** resilience efforts.

**00:43:27 --> 00:43:32:** We're hearing a need that businesses, developers, community members need

**00:43:32 --> 00:43:33:** guidance.

**00:43:35 --> 00:43:39:** They need information and resources in order to make those

**00:43:40 --> 00:43:44:** direct investments for resilient development.

**00:43:44 --> 00:43:47:** And we also are hearing that these stakeholders are already

**00:43:48 --> 00:43:51:** developing projects and strategies to support kind of that

**00:43:52 --> 00:43:55:** next

**00:43:55 --> 00:44:00:** generation of artists, musicians, creatives and businesses in these districts.

**00:44:00 --> 00:44:03:** So it's been really exciting to see how, you know,

**00:44:03 --> 00:44:06:** city staff and local government have taken all of

**00:44:06 --> 00:44:10:** this information and are trying to incorporate that as has

**00:44:10 --> 00:44:11:** the community.

**00:44:11 --> 00:44:14:** And so I'm really looking forward to kind of seeing

**00:44:14 --> 00:44:15:** that come to fruition.

**00:44:16 --> 00:44:16:** Next slide.

**00:44:20 --> 00:44:25:** So how are we turning these opportunities, these resources, this

**00:44:25 --> 00:44:28:** kind of information and next steps into action?

**00:44:29 --> 00:44:33:** We have secured partners, we call them sub recipients to

**00:44:33 --> 00:44:36:** issue 15 and a half, \$1,000,000 for direct small business

**00:44:36 --> 00:44:37:** support.

**00:44:38 --> 00:44:41:** And so in the next several months we'll be finalizing

**00:44:41 --> 00:44:45:** that and hope to have grant opportunities for small businesses

**00:44:45 --> 00:44:48:** out the door in spring or early summer.

**00:44:48 --> 00:44:53:** We've also launched our, it's called community development block grant,

**00:44:53 --> 00:44:58:** disaster recovery funds, CDBGTR, single family and multi family programs.

**00:44:59 --> 00:45:01:** We created a development liaison position.

**00:45:02 --> 00:45:06:** We're also continuing to support small businesses to participate in

**00:45:06 --> 00:45:07:** recovery contracting opportunities.

**00:45:08 --> 00:45:11:** This is work that we've done in steady state times

**00:45:11 --> 00:45:15:** and we've been doubling down on those efforts to involve

**00:45:15 --> 00:45:21:** local businesses in not only city contracting opportunities, but through

**00:45:21 --> 00:45:23:** organizations like NCDOT as well.

**00:45:24 --> 00:45:30:** We're also working to support stakeholders through partnerships, information sharing

**00:45:30 --> 00:45:34:** and increase coordination as we all work to kind of

**00:45:34 --> 00:45:38:** move quickly and diligently on all of these complex and

**00:45:38 --> 00:45:39:** fast moving pieces.

**00:45:40 --> 00:45:43:** So what we're looking ahead to is fall of 2026,

**00:45:43 --> 00:45:48:** we'll launch our CDBGTR flooded commercial corridors program.

**00:45:49 --> 00:45:52:** We're still kind of building out the pieces of that

**00:45:52 --> 00:45:54:** as we work to, you know, launch and wrap up

**00:45:54 --> 00:45:56:** our small business program.

**00:45:57 --> 00:46:00:** Like Ben said, we're we're very lean, but I'm really

**00:46:00 --> 00:46:03:** excited to share that we finally have a fully hired,

**00:46:03 --> 00:46:04:** fully filled Dr.

**00:46:04 --> 00:46:06:** team on board.

**00:46:06 --> 00:46:07:** So that was a key piece of that.

**00:46:07 --> 00:46:13:** We had basically no staff members until about August and

**00:46:13 --> 00:46:14:** we had one.

**00:46:14 --> 00:46:17:** So now we're a full team of five, I think.

**00:46:18 --> 00:46:20:** And so later this year we'll also launch our Dr.

**00:46:20 --> 00:46:24:** workforce development program as well as some of those more

**00:46:24 --> 00:46:29:** direct individual support services through housing and economic service programs.

**00:46:30 --> 00:46:33:** And I think that's our last slide.

**00:46:33 --> 00:46:33:** Next slide.

**00:46:35 --> 00:46:36:** All right, So I'll pause there and we can take

**00:46:36 --> 00:46:37:** any questions.

**00:46:37 --> 00:46:37:** Thank you.

**00:46:44 --> 00:46:45:** This is John.

**00:46:45 --> 00:46:48:** I would comment while we're waiting for questions that the city did it really remarkable job of organizing the information for us, welcoming us in and bringing in these these

**00:46:52 --> 00:46:55:** 10 or 12 people from elsewhere, largely led by Ben

**00:46:55 --> 00:46:58:** and Rachel to say here's what's going on, here's some

**00:46:58 --> 00:47:01:** data, here's information.

**00:47:01 --> 00:47:02:** So that we started over there really with with a

**00:47:06 --> 00:47:07:** lot of momentum.

**00:47:08 --> 00:47:10:** And then as many of you know, having been on

**00:47:10 --> 00:47:13:** ULI Advisor services panels, the second day is a about

**00:47:13 --> 00:47:17:** 100 different interviews where the panel breaks up seriously and

**00:47:17 --> 00:47:20:** the small groups and people come and go and we

**00:47:20 --> 00:47:21:** hear from them.

**00:47:21 --> 00:47:24:** It's remarkable, a confluence of what you will ask processes,

**00:47:24 --> 00:47:27:** but also what what Ben was able to put together

**00:47:27 --> 00:47:28:** with his team.

**00:47:32 --> 00:47:34:** I was, I was going to comment, Rachel, I was

**00:47:34 --> 00:47:38:** really glad to see the development liaison position was actually

**00:47:38 --> 00:47:39:** put, put in place.

**00:47:39 --> 00:47:41:** That's great because that was a something that we see

**00:47:41 --> 00:47:43:** a lot and it's great that you're able to do

**00:47:43 --> 00:47:43:** that.

**00:47:43 --> 00:47:45:** But I think one of the things that we'd heard

**00:47:45 --> 00:47:47:** when we were there, and I think this is applicable

**00:47:47 --> 00:47:49:** to a lot of places that are going through any

**00:47:49 --> 00:47:50:** kind of changes.

**00:47:51 --> 00:47:55:** For those smaller developers who are the entrepreneurs that are

**00:47:55 --> 00:47:59:** really part of the kind of incremental improvements, having somebody

**00:47:59 --> 00:48:02:** at the city that they can go talk to that

**00:48:02 --> 00:48:05:** speaks their language can help them navigate the labyrinth of

**00:48:06 --> 00:48:10:** policies and programs and departments is is is increasingly critical

**00:48:10 --> 00:48:12:** in the places that are succeeding or not.

**00:48:12 --> 00:48:14:** So congratulations on getting that done so quickly.

**00:48:15 --> 00:48:17:** Jim, I would add for our and I answered a

**00:48:17 --> 00:48:20:** couple of questions in the chat which again just try

**00:48:20 --> 00:48:21:** to make sure we have enough time.

**00:48:21 --> 00:48:24:** But I only got a couple of local folks and

**00:48:24 --> 00:48:26:** one of the questions was about that and just for  
**00:48:27 --> 00:48:30:** our local people, the development lays on, I thought one  
**00:48:30 --> 00:48:33:** of the things that the panel recommended that was really  
**00:48:33 --> 00:48:37:** interesting is that position actually reports to the city  
manager's  
**00:48:37 --> 00:48:37:** office.

**00:48:37 --> 00:48:41:** Yeah, it is an existing city employee, Clay Mitchell, who  
**00:48:42 --> 00:48:45:** most of you is a great city employee very much.

**00:48:45 --> 00:48:48:** But the good thing is he rather than reporting to

**00:48:48 --> 00:48:51:** one of the development departments, he works from the  
CMO,

**00:48:51 --> 00:48:53:** which I think gives him a little bit of you

**00:48:53 --> 00:48:56:** ability to kind of navigate from through some of the

**00:48:56 --> 00:48:58:** different departments that requirements.

**00:48:58 --> 00:49:01:** So again, we just got that off the ground, but

**00:49:01 --> 00:49:05:** I'm really excited to see if that's not an opportunity

**00:49:05 --> 00:49:07:** to help get things unstuck sometimes.

**00:49:07 --> 00:49:10:** I know that's important for our development community and  
businesses.

**00:49:16 --> 00:49:19:** If you haven't picked up on it for the participants

**00:49:19 --> 00:49:23:** there, the chats and questions have been answered along  
the

**00:49:23 --> 00:49:25:** way by Ben in the Q&A.

**00:49:25 --> 00:49:27:** If you want to read any of those, if you

**00:49:27 --> 00:49:30:** would like any of them to be followed up on,

**00:49:30 --> 00:49:31:** please post another question.

**00:49:32 --> 00:49:34:** We can continue talking through that.

**00:49:34 --> 00:49:37:** But I think Jonathan Lugo's got the slides.

**00:49:37 --> 00:49:40:** Somebody had asked if you could back up the the

**00:49:40 --> 00:49:44:** slides will be shared out with everybody, so you can  
see the link in the chat there.

**00:49:44 --> 00:49:46:** So if you want to go back and look at

**00:49:46 --> 00:49:47:** them yourself, but if you had a question related to

**00:49:47 --> 00:49:49:** one of those, we can go back right now.

**00:49:49 --> 00:49:51:** One slide, if there's a question, are there any other

**00:49:51 --> 00:49:59:** participant questions out there as well?

**00:49:59 --> 00:50:04:** Rachel I I see one in the chat from Scott

**00:50:06 --> 00:50:09:** Burrows.

**00:50:09 --> 00:50:10:** I don't, I don't know how if if you typically

**00:50:10 --> 00:50:12:** read that out or if we just answer it or

**00:50:12 --> 00:50:14:** I don't know the.

**00:50:14 --> 00:50:15:** Yeah.

**00:50:15 --> 00:50:16:** Well, I'll read it for you and you guys can

**00:50:17 --> 00:50:18:** answer.

**00:50:18 --> 00:50:21:** So you all I recommended doing a grouping of buyouts

**00:50:21 --> 00:50:24:** A parcel so that we avoid missing teeth, quote UN

**00:50:24 --> 00:50:24:** quote.

**00:50:25 --> 00:50:28:** Are there any areas where property owners have been receptive

**00:50:28 --> 00:50:28:** to this idea?

**00:50:28 --> 00:50:31:** And is there a realistic opportunity for us to expand

**00:50:31 --> 00:50:33:** the amount of green space along the river in the

**00:50:33 --> 00:50:34:** floodplain?

**00:50:36 --> 00:50:39:** I'll take a stab at that and then hop on

**00:50:39 --> 00:50:41:** if I've mischaracterized anything.

**00:50:42 --> 00:50:46:** So we did have the opportunity to participate along with

**00:50:46 --> 00:50:51:** the county and other municipalities and the hazard mitigation grant

**00:50:51 --> 00:50:53:** program for acquisitions.

**00:50:54 --> 00:50:58:** That is a very long process if we're all getting

**00:50:58 --> 00:51:04:** a crash course in federal funding streams, but that typically

**00:51:04 --> 00:51:06:** takes several years.

**00:51:06 --> 00:51:08:** So the application window for that has closed.

**00:51:09 --> 00:51:12:** We did get a number of at least kind of

**00:51:12 --> 00:51:15:** call it the tentative CUE inquiries.

**00:51:16 --> 00:51:19:** A lot of those from what I understand are, are

**00:51:19 --> 00:51:24:** more commercial than residential, but that really reflects the the

**00:51:24 --> 00:51:27:** type of impacts that we saw here in Asheville.

**00:51:27 --> 00:51:31:** And, and like we've been looking at reflects kind of

**00:51:31 --> 00:51:34:** the composition of those riverfront corridors.

**00:51:35 --> 00:51:38:** I think what we're looking ahead towards is who's going

**00:51:38 --> 00:51:42:** to choose to to stay in that program and ultimately

**00:51:42 --> 00:51:44:** go forward with through the buyout.

**00:51:44 --> 00:51:47:** So that's kind of what we're looking at right now

**00:51:47 --> 00:51:52:** as we align with some of our riverfront rebuilding projects

**00:51:52 --> 00:51:55:** and and our flooded commercial corridors program.

**00:51:57 --> 00:51:59:** Rachel, I would just add the key thing is the

**00:51:59 --> 00:52:01:** one is the buyouts voluntary so property owners can choose

**00:52:01 --> 00:52:03:** whether or not they want to participate.

**00:52:04 --> 00:52:06:** The next thing is, yeah, as our and our City

**00:52:06 --> 00:52:09:** Council has indicated that they will accept all parcels.

**00:52:09 --> 00:52:12:** So we're not saying no to any buyout parcels.

**00:52:12 --> 00:52:15:** So you know that that's where we landed.

**00:52:15 --> 00:52:18:** And then I think the the third part of that

**00:52:18 --> 00:52:20:** question is if we do the buyout program, if we

**00:52:20 --> 00:52:23:** do receive that land, it must be used as green space.

**00:52:23 --> 00:52:23:** So it it is deed restricted and it does not

**00:52:26 --> 00:52:29:** have any opportunity for development.

**00:52:29 --> 00:52:32:** So obviously when those parcels of land or join our

**00:52:32 --> 00:52:34:** existing park system, that's amazing.

**00:52:35 --> 00:52:37:** Or if they can provide some sort of environmental benefit,

**00:52:37 --> 00:52:38:** that's amazing too.

**00:52:38 --> 00:52:41:** And there may be opportunities, you know, where the city

**00:52:42 --> 00:52:44:** can steward that land is is part of a park

**00:52:44 --> 00:52:47:** system or maybe there are non profits in town that

**00:52:47 --> 00:52:50:** might want to do other types of thing with those

**00:52:50 --> 00:52:53:** parcels that have an environmental impact.

**00:52:53 --> 00:52:55:** But you know, generally you're not going to see redevelopment

**00:52:55 --> 00:52:55:** on those parcels.

**00:52:55 --> 00:52:58:** And just in the missing teeth, once we kind of

**00:52:58 --> 00:53:00:** see where all that how it shapes up.

**00:53:00 --> 00:53:03:** I mean, there may be a time when the city

**00:53:03 --> 00:53:05:** wants to go in and do some strategic acquisition to

**00:53:05 --> 00:53:07:** fill in gaps depending on what's left.

**00:53:11 --> 00:53:13:** It doesn't look like we have any other questions, but

**00:53:13 --> 00:53:14:** so I get to jump in with a question I

**00:53:15 --> 00:53:15:** wanted to ask.

**00:53:15 --> 00:53:16:** I haven't been able to check.

**00:53:17 --> 00:53:20:** Rachel, I was curious to hear from you if you

**00:53:20 --> 00:53:24:** think pretty healing, if this has generated any economic, new

**00:53:24 --> 00:53:28:** economic drivers or I know the, you know, economy of

**00:53:28 --> 00:53:32:** Asheville, what you guys were working through before this disaster.

**00:53:32 --> 00:53:36:** And I'm curious if there's any Silver Linings, you know,

**00:53:36 --> 00:53:39:** for example, in New Orleans, there's a whole new economy

**00:53:39 --> 00:53:41:** that showed up after Katrina.

**00:53:41 --> 00:53:43:** Does any of that happen and has that been part

**00:53:43 --> 00:53:43:** of your work?

**00:53:45 --> 00:53:49:** Yes, I think, I think some Silver Linings from a

**00:53:49 --> 00:53:54:** sort of more subjective standpoint is that we're looking at

**00:53:54 --> 00:53:59:** what is resilience mean and what is diversification means specific

**00:53:59 --> 00:54:00:** to each sector.

**00:54:01 --> 00:54:07:** So how can leisure and hospitality and tourism dependent businesses

**00:54:07 --> 00:54:08:** be more resilient?

**00:54:09 --> 00:54:13:** How can they recover smarter and, and be able to retain those employees a little bit better?

**00:54:13 --> 00:54:16:** And, and I think applying that across the board is

**00:54:17 --> 00:54:21:** really exciting to me because we have such a long

**00:54:21 --> 00:54:24:** history of a tourism economy here that really want to

**00:54:24 --> 00:54:28:** make sure that we're weaving that into looking ahead.

**00:54:28 --> 00:54:32:** A, a, a challenge has been trying to tease out

**00:54:32 --> 00:54:37:** what what's a direct relationship to, to Helene and the

**00:54:37 --> 00:54:42:** impacts of Helene versus, you know, what's kind of tied

**00:54:42 --> 00:54:48:** into the broader economic trends.

**00:54:48 --> 00:54:51:** So that's been a little bit of a challenge, but

**00:54:51 --> 00:54:54:** we're certainly, I think going to see a lot of

**00:54:54 --> 00:54:57:** rebuilding.

**00:54:57 --> 00:54:58:** We have the business inclusion office is in my division

**00:54:58 --> 00:55:01:** and that's the work that really supports that contracting.

**00:55:01 --> 00:55:05:** So really looking at how can we support businesses looking

**00:55:05 --> 00:55:10:** to participate in that rebuilding work and how can they

**00:55:10 --> 00:55:14:** perhaps grow and scale.

**00:55:14 --> 00:55:15:** So we've seen some of that growth in those sectors.

**00:55:15 --> 00:55:20:** We've seen growth in creative manufacturing sectors as well.

**00:55:20 --> 00:55:25:** East Fork Pottery announced an expansion, smallish

**00:55:25 --> 00:55:31:** expansion in December

**00:55:31 --> 00:55:34:** and they're looking for more growth as well.

**00:55:34 --> 00:55:40:** So the the recovery has definitely been uneven for different

**00:55:40 --> 00:55:43:** sectors and different business types.

**00:55:43 --> 00:55:46:** So hoping to kind of support folks in a tailored

**00:55:46 --> 00:55:51:** approach with our partners at the Economic Development

**00:55:51 --> 00:55:51:** Coalition as

**00:55:53 --> 00:55:53:** well.

**00:55:53 --> 00:55:55:** Thank you.

**00:55:55 --> 00:55:57:** We have our last question that's in the chat.

**00:55:57 --> 00:56:01:** It looks like John may be responding to it by

**00:56:01 --> 00:56:04:** typing, but has there been any consideration given to the

**00:56:04 --> 00:56:05:** loss of tax base if the city does accept properties

**00:56:08 --> 00:56:09:** and potential buyouts?

**00:56:10 --> 00:56:16:** Good question, Peter.

**00:56:16 --> 00:56:18:** Yes, there has been, no, that's a real, that's a

**00:56:18 --> 00:56:21:** real concern.

**00:56:21 --> 00:56:24:** I think, you know, I think from staff's view as

**00:56:24 --> 00:56:28:** we as we reviewed that policy, when we we made

**00:56:28 --> 00:56:31:** sure that was a consideration that our City Council had,

we wanted them to understand there is a tax base

**00:56:31 --> 00:56:32:** implication.

**00:56:34 --> 00:56:36:** You know, I think we've made the decision to go ahead and accept the buyouts.

**00:56:36 --> 00:56:37:**

**00:56:38 --> 00:56:41:** And Rachel, you know what I have that doesn't mean that we haven't thought about the tax base implication, which

**00:56:41 --> 00:56:44:** I think creates more pressure to try to to make

**00:56:44 --> 00:56:46:** that up or to try to find that tax base

**00:56:46 --> 00:56:48:** somewhere else in some other manner.

**00:56:48 --> 00:56:50:**

**00:56:50 --> 00:56:54:** And that that's real, Rachel, maybe, maybe we'll leverage some

**00:56:54 --> 00:56:54:** Dr.

**00:56:54 --> 00:56:55:** funds to help offset that.

**00:56:56 --> 00:57:00:** Well, and, and I think, you know, two things that

**00:57:00 --> 00:57:05:** that I think about for specific to those buyouts, especially

**00:57:05 --> 00:57:11:** buyouts fraud through the HMGP program because there's such strict

**00:57:11 --> 00:57:15:** development guidelines on those properties is 1.

**00:57:15 --> 00:57:19:** We, we'll have to just wait and see which property

**00:57:19 --> 00:57:22:** owners decide to stay in that program.

**00:57:22 --> 00:57:24:** So like Ben said, it's a voluntary program.

**00:57:25 --> 00:57:26:** People applied.

**00:57:26 --> 00:57:32:** Not everyone that applies will one get approved by FEMA

**00:57:32 --> 00:57:32:** 2.

**00:57:32 --> 00:57:36:** Not everyone who applies will decide when it's time to

**00:57:36 --> 00:57:39:** to sign on the dotted line that that is their

**00:57:39 --> 00:57:40:** preferred option.

**00:57:40 --> 00:57:43:** They may, you know, withdraw from the program and sell

**00:57:43 --> 00:57:46:** that property or do something else with that property.

**00:57:46 --> 00:57:50:** So we still have to kind of understand where folks

**00:57:50 --> 00:57:54:** are at once we get a little further down the

**00:57:54 --> 00:57:56:** line for properties that remain.

**00:57:56 --> 00:58:01:** That's where kind of maybe to the earlier question about

**00:58:01 --> 00:58:05:** how can they, how can we minimize the, the missing

**00:58:05 --> 00:58:06:** teeth?

**00:58:06 --> 00:58:09:** I'm trying to combine piano keys and missing teeth at

**00:58:09 --> 00:58:10:** the same time.

**00:58:13 --> 00:58:15:** So, so how can we combine that?

**00:58:15 --> 00:58:18:** And I think that's where our strengths as a, as

**00:58:18 --> 00:58:21:** a recreation economy and our strong park system can really

**00:58:21 --> 00:58:22:** come into play.

**00:58:22 --> 00:58:25:** So in a prior life, I was a outdoor rec

**00:58:25 --> 00:58:30:** guide and then got into economic development through that outdoor

**00:58:30 --> 00:58:31:** economy lens.

**00:58:31 --> 00:58:35:** And so I think that's a great opportunity for those open spaces, for that park system to make them very

**00:58:35 --> 00:58:39:** valuable assets, even though they've sort of been taken off the books.

**00:58:39 --> 00:58:44:**

**00:58:44 --> 00:58:45:**

**00:58:49 --> 00:58:52:** And I'd, I'd suggest that that's maybe a, a, a,

**00:58:52 --> 00:58:56:** a semi temporal condition because creating those parks is going

**00:58:56 --> 00:59:00:** to create additional tax base adjoining those lands over time.

**00:59:00 --> 00:59:02:** So it's not that it's a permanent loss of tax

**00:59:02 --> 00:59:03:** dollars.

**00:59:03 --> 00:59:06:** It's a temporal gap between what's currently now on the

**00:59:06 --> 00:59:09:** books, what's taken off the books.

**00:59:09 --> 00:59:12:** But as a value of those properties adjoining that incredible

**00:59:12 --> 00:59:15:** green space happens, they'll you know, you would, you would

**00:59:15 --> 00:59:18:** claw that back in more probably over time.

**00:59:18 --> 00:59:18:** So.

**00:59:20 --> 00:59:21:** That's a great point.

**00:59:22 --> 00:59:24:** Well, we are now over our time.

**00:59:24 --> 00:59:27:** So thank you guys for all the presenters, Ben and

**00:59:27 --> 00:59:30:** Rachel, I don't know how you guys are standing.

**00:59:30 --> 00:59:33:** This is so much work that you guys are going

**00:59:33 --> 00:59:35:** through emotionally and time wise and all of the the

**00:59:35 --> 00:59:36:** above.

**00:59:36 --> 00:59:39:** Thank you for making time to join this discussion and

**00:59:39 --> 00:59:42:** Jim and John for your participation in this as well

**00:59:42 --> 00:59:43:** as the panel.

**00:59:44 --> 00:59:45:** We greatly appreciate it.

**00:59:46 --> 00:59:50:** In the chat are links to the recommendations and this

**00:59:50 --> 00:59:53:** presentation, and it'll also be emailed out.

**00:59:53 --> 00:59:56:** And there's also a link in the chat for a

**00:59:56 --> 00:59:59:** podcast that you, like Charlotte, did on this topic.

**00:59:59 --> 01:00:03:** We launched a podcast a year ago and the very

**01:00:03 --> 01:00:05:** first one was this topic.

**01:00:05 --> 01:00:07:** And so if you want to hear more about this

**01:00:07 --> 01:00:10:** topic, but from a year ago's perspective, it might be

**01:00:10 --> 01:00:12:** a fascinating thing to go listen to after this panel.

**01:00:14 --> 01:00:17:** This webinar was recorded as well, so that will be

**01:00:17 --> 01:00:19:** live at knowledge.ulic.org.

**01:00:19 --> 01:00:22:** We appreciate your participation and hope to see you at

**01:00:22 --> 01:00:24:** future ULI Charlotte events.

**01:00:24 --> 01:00:25:** Thank you all so much.  
**01:00:27 --> 01:00:28:** Thank you.  
**01:00:28 --> 01:00:28:** Bye.  
**01:00:28 --> 01:00:28:** Bye.  
**01:00:29 --> 01:00:30:** Thank you.

---

*This video transcript has been machine-generated, so it may not be accurate. It is for personal use only. Reproduction or use without written permission is prohibited. If you have a correction or for permission inquiries, please contact [\[email protected\]](mailto:[email protected]).*