



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 UI Charlotte, which

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

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

00:01:00 --> 00:01:04: UI 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

00:01:28 --> 00:01:31: experts

00:01:31 --> 00:01:34: and then local community leaders to share insights of on

00:01:34 --> 00:01:35: the ground work that's underway to help build Asheville back

00:01:35 --> 00:01:38: better.

00:01:38 --> 00:01:42: One of Uli's strengths, if you aren't already aware of

00:01:42 --> 00:01:43: this, is that the sharing of knowledge across the network

00:01:43 --> 00:01:47: is is wonderful.

00:01:47 --> 00:01:51: In August, Uli's Advisory Services team well brought together

00:01:51 --> 00:01:55: member

00:01:55 --> 00:01:56: experts to work directly with the Asheville community in

00:01:57 --> 00:01:59: response

00:01:59 --> 00:02:01: to the challenges that were created by Hurricane Helene in

00:02:01 --> 00:02:01: 2024.

00:02:01 --> 00:02:04: Before I begin and kind of going into the weeds,

00:02:04 --> 00:02:07: I do want to make sure to call out the

00:02:07 --> 00:02:10: sponsors.

00:02:11 --> 00:02:14: If you don't mind putting up a sponsor slide, Jonathan,

00:02:14 --> 00:02:18: we are so fortunate to have a great group of

00:02:18 --> 00:02:19: sponsors through ULI Charlotte that make programs like this

00:02:19 --> 00:02:22: happen.

00:02:22 --> 00:02:22: If you get the opportunity to meet anyone with these

00:02:23 --> 00:02:28: groups, please thank them and for their sponsorship and

00:02:28 --> 00:02:30: supporting

00:02:30 --> 00:02:34: ULI Charlotte.

00:02:34 --> 00:02:37: It's what helps to advance our mission here in this

00:02:37 --> 00:02:38: region.

00:02:39 --> 00:02:42: So about today, this Advisory Services team started at the

00:02:42 --> 00:02:44: request of the City of Asheville.

00:02:44 --> 00:02:45: You and I convened this the Advisory Services Panel to

00:02:46 --> 00:02:50: support the city as it recovered from the devastating impacts

00:02:50 --> 00:02:55: of the hurricane.

00:02:55 --> 00:03:00: The Advisory Services program pairs some of the brightest

00:03:00 --> 00:03:03: minds

00:03:03 --> 00:03:04: in real estate and land use with the toughest challenges

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: facing our cities.

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: And by combining this cross disciplinary leaders for

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: immersive on

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: site panels, the program delivered holistic and practical

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: recommendations that

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: help communities navigate complex recovery, resilience and

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: development issues.

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: This panel has been something that our communities have

00:03:04 --> 00:03:04: been

00:03:04 --> 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

00:03:07 --> 00:03:08: conversation.

00:03:09 --> 00:03:11: To share more about the work.

00:03:11 --> 00:03:15: We have two members of the Advisory Services panel team.

00:03:16 --> 00:03:17: So first is Jim Hyde.

00:03:18 --> 00:03:22: It's a nationally recognized urban strategist, developer and author whose

00:03:22 --> 00:03:25: work focuses on resilient human centered community development.

00:03:26 --> 00:03:28: And then we're also joined by John and we made

00:03:28 --> 00:03:31: a joke about his name, Macomer, and he said not

00:03:31 --> 00:03:32: to say cucumber.

00:03:32 --> 00:03:33: And that's all I can hear.

00:03:33 --> 00:03:34: He was so right.

00:03:34 --> 00:03:37: He cannot hear cucumber when you read his name.

00:03:38 --> 00:03:41: But he is a a senior lecturer at Harvard Business

00:03:41 --> 00:03:44: School where his work centers on infrastructure, finance and 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

00:04:37 --> 00:04:39: talk about this project.

00:04:39 --> 00:04:42: This was, I think, the 17th panel I've done.

00:04:42 --> 00:04:44: If people in the audience have never done one of

00:04:44 --> 00:04:46: these, but you would like to, I'd encourage you to

00:04:46 --> 00:04:47: reach out to Uli.

00:04:47 --> 00:04:49: It's one of the best things you get to do

00:04:49 --> 00:04:53: professionally, work with great people, go to interesting places and

00:04:53 --> 00:04:56: deal with tough issues that deal with the built environment.

00:04:57 --> 00:04:58: 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

00:08:24 --> 00:08:27: a lot of people, we see the site.

00:08:27 --> 00:08:30: 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

00:09:05 --> 00:09:08: region

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

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

00:09:58 --> 00:10:01: But I think it left the panel as we started

00:10:01 --> 00:10:04: to formulate our our recommendations with a little bit of

00:10:04 --> 00:10:06: a a question that we were able to pose as,

00:10:06 --> 00:10:09: as the launching point for what John's going to talk

00:10:09 --> 00:10:12: about, which was how do you deal with an event

00:10:12 --> 00:10:13: like that?

00:10:13 --> 00:10:16: You know, does it was so traumatic and people talked
00:10:16 --> 00:10:19: about the the trauma and the the pain and just
00:10:19 --> 00:10:23: challenges that they lived through 52 days without any
00:10:23 --> 00:10:23: running
00:10:23 --> 00:10:23: water.
00:10:25 --> 00:10:27: Do you look back on Helene and say that that,
00:10:27 --> 00:10:29: you know, was this awful moment in time that, you
00:10:29 --> 00:10:31: know, we never want to visit again?
00:10:31 --> 00:10:33: Or John, go to the next slide, Jonathan.
00:10:34 --> 00:10:37: Or do you look at it as a milestone and
00:10:37 --> 00:10:42: an inflection point where it really galvanizes the community,
00:10:42 --> 00:10:47: the
00:10:42 --> 00:10:47: policy makers, the development community to think
00:10:47 --> 00:10:50: differently about the
00:10:47 --> 00:10:50: future and how do you build back to create a
00:10:50 --> 00:10:53: legacy based on renewal and and resilience?
00:10:54 --> 00:10:56: And so with that, you know turn it over to
00:10:56 --> 00:10:58: John kind of talk you through some of our high
00:10:58 --> 00:11:00: level and what we thought were some of the most
00:11:00 --> 00:11:01: profound recommendations.
00:11:05 --> 00:11:06: Thank you very much, Chairman.
00:11:06 --> 00:11:07: Thank you all for being here today.
00:11:08 --> 00:11:11: On the next slide, you can see a picture of
00:11:11 --> 00:11:11: water.
00:11:12 --> 00:11:13: Now can you turn to that, please, Jonathan?
00:11:15 --> 00:11:18: And I'm going to talk about water as critical infrastructure,
00:11:18 --> 00:11:20: and I'll also talk about real estate because that's what
00:11:20 --> 00:11:21: I teach at Harvard.
00:11:22 --> 00:11:23: On the next slide, please.
00:11:24 --> 00:11:28: These are image or a graphic of how the water
00:11:28 --> 00:11:32: system comes together in Asheville, which is a lot like
00:11:32 --> 00:11:35: many towns in the central US.
00:11:35 --> 00:11:38: And I've been on ULI panels before on the coast.
00:11:38 --> 00:11:40: I've looked at flood in Miami and Norfolk.
00:11:40 --> 00:11:42: I've looked at wildfire in Sonoma with ULI.
00:11:42 --> 00:11:45: I hadn't looked in the internal mountain cities.
00:11:45 --> 00:11:47: And what happened in Asheville.
00:11:47 --> 00:11:49: If you think about how the water comes in, this
00:11:49 --> 00:11:52: horrible disaster was partly triggered by the water, the
00:11:52 --> 00:11:55: amount
00:11:52 --> 00:11:55: of moisture in Helen, but also the moisture was trapped
00:11:55 --> 00:11:58: by the two tallest mountains on the East Coast, Mount
00:11:58 --> 00:11:59: Mitchell, Mount Pisgah.

00:11:59 --> 00:12:02: So that it was coming down the slopes of those

00:12:02 --> 00:12:06: mountains where there's a pristine forest which has filtered the

00:12:06 --> 00:12:08: water and held the water for generations.

00:12:08 --> 00:12:10: And that's why the water Nashville is so clear.

00:12:11 --> 00:12:14: But if you get that much saturation on the ground

00:12:14 --> 00:12:16: gets soft and you get that much wind, trees slow

00:12:17 --> 00:12:19: down and 30 to 40% of the standing wood in

00:12:19 --> 00:12:22: the National Forest above Asheville blue down.

00:12:22 --> 00:12:23: So this means two things.

00:12:23 --> 00:12:26: One, in the short term that the water no longer

00:12:26 --> 00:12:28: hangs on the branches and the needles and the earth.

00:12:29 --> 00:12:33: It runs down in rivulets and little gollies become raging

00:12:33 --> 00:12:33: creeks.

00:12:33 --> 00:12:38: Raging creeks become deep corrosive rivers, and the main

00:12:38 --> 00:12:42: river

00:12:42 --> 00:12:44: rolling down from the dam eroded down about 20 feet.

00:12:44 --> 00:12:47: The bank can tell you about cut through the main

00:12:47 --> 00:12:50: water pipes, cut the water supply from Asheville.

00:12:50 --> 00:12:54: The river, the water and the lake got silty.

00:12:54 --> 00:12:56: And going forward, there's concern about wildfire up in the

00:12:56 --> 00:12:57: woods among these now downed trees.

00:12:57 --> 00:13:00: That's the start of the system.

00:13:00 --> 00:13:03: As you come farther down, the water can't be distributed

00:13:03 --> 00:13:05: to the town because it's silty and gross and because

00:13:05 --> 00:13:09: the pipes are broken within the town.

00:13:09 --> 00:13:13: Like most communities in America, particularly in the

00:13:13 --> 00:13:13: mountain SE,

00:13:13 --> 00:13:16: the drainage isn't necessarily adequate to handle this amount

00:13:16 --> 00:13:18: of

00:13:18 --> 00:13:20: rain.

00:13:20 --> 00:13:23: So there's erosion in the towns, and then the septic

00:13:23 --> 00:13:24: system also gets messed up.

00:13:24 --> 00:13:27: So This is why the town was without town water

00:13:27 --> 00:13:28: for almost two months, which Ben can talk about in

00:13:28 --> 00:13:30: more detail.

00:13:30 --> 00:13:32: One needs to think about water as one system, as

00:13:32 --> 00:13:36: one water from how do we get the water to

00:13:36 --> 00:13:39: how do we store the water to how do we

00:13:39 --> 00:13:43: move the water to how we drink the water.

00:13:43 --> 00:13:46: As Asheville thinks about rebuilding, they have to think about

00:13:46 --> 00:13:49: all these aspects of it, not just the piece, the

00:13:49 --> 00:13:52: 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
00:15:17 --> 00:15:21: over decades and think about Amosa, Tabla, Raza or a
00:15:21 --> 00:15:23: clean slate for urban planning.
00:15:24 --> 00:15:26: And also to think about, are we just going to
00:15:26 --> 00:15:28: put the stuff in the same locations and get flooded
00:15:28 --> 00:15:30: again or we think of some way to restrict it?
00:15:30 --> 00:15:33: Or should we think about how the usage should apply
00:15:33 --> 00:15:33: going forward?
00:15:34 --> 00:15:35: Next slide, please.
00:15:37 --> 00:15:39: So there were three big takeaways for us.
00:15:39 --> 00:15:42: Here's the picture again of the River Arts District in
00:15:42 --> 00:15:44: the French Broad in September of 2024.
00:15:44 --> 00:15:46: One is to the River Arts District, which is so
00:15:46 --> 00:15:48: much of the character of Asheville.
00:15:49 --> 00:15:52: We're so devastated that perhaps it shouldn't go back in
00:15:52 --> 00:15:54: the same place to be a subject to the same
00:15:55 --> 00:15:55: flood.
00:15:55 --> 00:15:58: Partly the artists were there, it seems historically, because
the
00:15:58 --> 00:16:00: buildings were cheap.
00:16:00 --> 00:16:01: The buildings were cheap because they've been flooded
before.
00:16:02 --> 00:16:04: So these these might have been some robust brick buildings
00:16:04 --> 00:16:07: from 100 years ago, but the industries are long gone.
00:16:08 --> 00:16:10: The second piece is that rather than think about individual
00:16:10 --> 00:16:13: lots parcel by parcel for what somebody might get from
00:16:13 --> 00:16:16: their insurance, or somebody might rebuild, or somebody
might get
00:16:16 --> 00:16:18: from FEMA or somebody might get from the state, why
00:16:18 --> 00:16:21: not think about aggregating all that money and all that
00:16:21 --> 00:16:24: planning into something that makes sense going forward?
00:16:24 --> 00:16:28: The third is that the funds from FEMA are limited.
00:16:28 --> 00:16:30: The amount that's announced was limited.
00:16:30 --> 00:16:32: The amount that's actually been received is even further
limited.
00:16:33 --> 00:16:35: So how do you think those used to use those
00:16:35 --> 00:16:38: funds strategically and not just spray them all over
everywhere
00:16:38 --> 00:16:40: to to adapt to today's squeaky wheel?
00:16:41 --> 00:16:41: Next slide please.
00:16:44 --> 00:16:47: The 4K areas in our study, if you're familiar with
00:16:47 --> 00:16:49: Asheville, are the ones who are most affected by the
00:16:49 --> 00:16:50: actual flood.

00:16:50 --> 00:16:53: Downtown Asheville is on high ground and that wasn't an
00:16:53 --> 00:16:55: issue except you don't have water for months and people
00:16:56 --> 00:16:57: aren't coming to visit.
00:16:57 --> 00:16:59: So it's a a collateral issue.
00:17:00 --> 00:17:03: Our feeling was that in the river Arts District, even
00:17:04 --> 00:17:07: 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
00:18:18 --> 00:18:21: can flood from time to time and without super expensive
00:18:21 --> 00:18:23: sports facilities where if you get 4 feet of mud
00:18:23 --> 00:18:25: on them, it really damages them.
00:18:26 --> 00:18:27: Next slide, please.
00:18:29 --> 00:18:31: Once I certainly does not fit all.
00:18:31 --> 00:18:35: There is no single recommendation for Asheville or actually
00:18:35 --> 00:18:39: any
00:18:35 --> 00:18:39: of the adaptation projects I've worked on, whether it's in
00:18:39 --> 00:18:42: Miami or in Norfolk or in Sonoma around wildfire.
00:18:43 --> 00:18:46: 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

00:18:50 --> 00:18:51: often.

00:18:51 --> 00:18:53: 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

00:19:00 --> 00:19:01: and so forth.

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

00:19:15 --> 00:19:17: that,

00:19:17 --> 00:19:20: or ways to have early warning systems.

00:19:21 --> 00:19:24: One of the problems in Asheville was that there wasn't

00:19:24 --> 00:19:26: really warning of this flood, so people didn't really have

00:19:26 --> 00:19:27: a chance to get assets out of the River Arts

00:19:27 --> 00:19:30: District.

00:19:30 --> 00:19:33: Some did, and there were some anecdotal stories about

00:19:33 --> 00:19:35: people

00:19:35 --> 00:19:37: closely watching the weather, who moved inventory and

00:19:37 --> 00:19:39: movement equipment.

00:19:39 --> 00:19:41: But there wasn't very good early warning.

00:19:41 --> 00:19:43: And I'm sure that that's something.

00:19:43 --> 00:19:45: I don't think that's what Ben's going to talk about,

00:19:45 --> 00:19:47: but that's certainly what the city is working on going

00:19:47 --> 00:19:49: forward.

00:19:49 --> 00:19:51: And that'll be one of the major areas in thinking

00:19:51 --> 00:19:53: about adaptation in the future.

00:19:53 --> 00:19:55: And not to have a really another grim example, but

00:19:55 --> 00:19:57: on the Galveston River in Texas, if they had an

00:19:57 --> 00:19:59: early warning system, they could have evacuated that camp.

00:19:59 --> 00:20:01: They never would raise that camp 20 feet, but you

00:20:01 --> 00:20:03: could evacuate.

00:20:03 --> 00:20:05: So there's early warning that can be coupled with building

00:20:05 --> 00:20:07: firmly and there's also an ability to bounce back quickly.

00:20:07 --> 00:20:09: So I've already spoken to some people who are going

00:20:09 --> 00:20:11: back to River Arts District, but they're going back with.

00:20:11 --> 00:20:13: Lightweight equipment, not with major inventory with the

00:20:13 --> 00:20:15: 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

00:20:23 --> 00:20:24: risk area.

00:20:24 --> 00:20:27: 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

00:20:29 --> 00:20:29: 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 RAD

00:22:55 --> 00:22:58: 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
00:23:26 --> 00:23:29: river that you buy, knowing that it's not going to
00:23:29 --> 00:23:32: it's probably going to flood again and many times and
00:23:32 --> 00:23:34: but how do you use that as an asset as
00:23:34 --> 00:23:35: opposed to a liability?
00:23:36 --> 00:23:38: 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
00:23:52 --> 00:23:54: of on the map, at least by recognition.
00:23:54 --> 00:23:57: And that really was a, you know, a significant gesture
00:23:57 --> 00:23:59: of open space and parks.
00:23:59 --> 00:24:02: You've got the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which
I
00:24:02 --> 00:24:04: think I just read the other day is the busiest
00:24:04 --> 00:24:06: National Park in the country, would not have ever known
00:24:06 --> 00:24:06: that.
00:24:07 --> 00:24:09: And so it's like, how do you use this now
00:24:09 --> 00:24:12: surplus of open space that in some ways could be
00:24:12 --> 00:24:15: looked at as just leftover acquisitions or a thought more
00:24:15 --> 00:24:19: aspirationally could be the beginning of that legacy, that
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

00:25:17 --> 00:25:20: 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

00:25:23 --> 00:25:24: forest.

00:25:24 --> 00:25:27: John talked about the loss of tree cover and the

00:25:27 --> 00:25:30: impact that's going to have on the hillsides, but also

00:25:30 --> 00:25:33: the benefits of having this again, closer to an urban

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

00:26:32 --> 00:26:34: be, you know, used for other things.

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

00:26:37 --> 00:26:40: 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 --> 00:28:58: And then Rachel will give some updates on our progress toward rebuilding.

00:28:58 --> 00:29:01: I want to say one thing to start off.

00:29:01 --> 00:29:02: I looked at the roster list, A lot of actual people on here, so they'll keep Rachel and I honest on this.

00:29:02 --> 00:29:04: But I also saw people on the call that are from other communities that have experienced disasters.

00:29:04 --> 00:29:07: And so you will understand when I say that rebuilding after a disaster, this magnitude is very, very long and complicated.

00:29:07 --> 00:29:10: So a rebuild is measured in years.

00:29:10 --> 00:29:10: We're not even a year and a half past this.

00:29:10 --> 00:29:13: So if you ride into Asheville, you're going to see a lot of things gone, but you're not going to see a lot of physical things built back yet because it is a very expensive and complex process to rebuild that will be measured in years.

00:29:13 --> 00:29:16: So John, you did a great job.

00:29:16 --> 00:29:19: We got two rivers that kind of converge.

00:29:19 --> 00:29:23: There's a confluence of those rivers really close to the center of Asheville.

00:29:23 --> 00:29:24: So we do have a flooding problem.

00:29:24 --> 00:29:26: We've dealt with that for many years, not to the extent of Helene though.

00:29:26 --> 00:29:29: Next slide.

00:29:29 --> 00:29:32: The other thing is, you know, we have overtime, our rivers are princely commercial in nature.

00:29:32 --> 00:29:34: We don't, you know, you hear about these coastal areas that have a lot of residential flooding.

00:29:34 --> 00:29:38: We had a lot of commercial, non residential flooding.

00:29:38 --> 00:29:41: Actually, we, we have, you know, commercialized riverfronts that have slowly converted, you know, to places where artists can thrive.

00:29:41 --> 00:29:43: And there's, you know, shopping villages.

00:29:43 --> 00:29:45: We've got a lot of uses in our floodplain next slide.

00:29:45 --> 00:29:48: But we still have some residual industrial type uses as 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

00:31:40 --> 00:31:43: already

00:31:43 --> 00:31:45: stressed in some some respects because of some of our

00:31:45 --> 00:31:48: economic challenges we have in Asheville.

00:31:48 --> 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

00:32:22 --> 00:32:22: 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

00:32:56 --> 00:32:59: perspectives, but

00:32:59 --> 00:33:03: they got an earful from this community.

00:33:03 --> 00:33:03: So undoubtedly you had some, you know, some challenges

00:33:03 --> 00:33:03: 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

00:33:10 --> 00:33:12: John

00:33:12 --> 00:33:14: and Jim covered this to some extent, but I, I

00:33:14 --> 00:33:15: just kind of summarized it in a way that makes

00:33:15 --> 00:33:18: sense.

00:33:18 --> 00:33:21: When you look at those recommendations, you would

00:33:21 --> 00:33:22: probably see

00:33:22 --> 00:33:26: those honestly in a lot of kind of you allow

00:33:26 --> 00:33:27: based reports.

00:33:27 --> 00:33:30: But what I love about these is they're very specific

00:33:30 --> 00:33:34: to Asheville situation.

00:33:34 --> 00:33:37: So they are all really dialed in to some, you

00:33:37 --> 00:33:41: know, that they're intended to help us, you know, decide

00:33:41 --> 00:33:44: how to move forward and respond to this storm.

00:33:44 --> 00:33:48: John and Jim, I will tell you like, for example,

00:33:48 --> 00:33:49: the idea of the RAD 2 point O not really

00:33:49 --> 00:33:50: well received, but that's OK because we want to, we

00:33:50 --> 00:33:50: want to make people talk.

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

00:33:51 --> 00:33:54: John and Jim, we have entire City Council campaigns that
00:33:54 --> 00:33:55: are based on that recommendation.
00:33:56 --> 00:33:58: So you've really got a lot of discussion.
00:33:58 --> 00:34:01: You prompted a lot in Nashville, and that's a, that's
00:34:01 --> 00:34:01: a true story.
00:34:03 --> 00:34:06: 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
00:34:12 --> 00:34:14: have
00:34:15 --> 00:34:15: and do that in a way that doesn't price these
00:34:16 --> 00:34:18: artists out?
00:34:18 --> 00:34:18: So again, it just forced, you know, a lot of
00:34:19 --> 00:34:21: work really.
00:34:21 --> 00:34:22: I think it challenges us to think about things a
00:34:23 --> 00:34:25: little bit differently.
00:34:25 --> 00:34:26: Another example I want to pull from this is the
00:34:26 --> 00:34:30: economic impact.
00:34:30 --> 00:34:31: This just devastated our artists, our local businesses, the
00:34:32 --> 00:34:34: heart
00:34:35 --> 00:34:35: of our economy.
00:34:35 --> 00:34:38: You know, I think a lot of what was recommended
00:34:38 --> 00:34:40: makes sense.
00:34:41 --> 00:34:43: That's an area, for example, we've prioritized and Rachel's
00:34:43 --> 00:34:45: going
00:34:45 --> 00:34:47: to talk about our disaster recovery funds.
00:34:47 --> 00:34:47: And, you know, again, we want to do all these
00:34:47 --> 00:34:49: things or parts of all these things, but we can't
00:34:49 --> 00:34:53: do them all at once because we just don't have
00:34:53 --> 00:34:56: the bandwidth.
00:34:56 --> 00:34:56: So some of this rust is just prioritizing.
00:34:57 --> 00:35:00: So things like parks, the local economy, Rachel's going to
00:35:00 --> 00:35:03: talk about how we're really trying to move those efforts
00:35:03 --> 00:35:06: forward.
00:35:07 --> 00:35:11: One thing, John, that you covered that I'm a big
00:35:11 --> 00:35:14: fan of is this one water concept, the idea of
00:35:14 --> 00:35:16: managing our potable water and you know, storm water
00:35:16 --> 00:35:18: impacts.
00:35:19 --> 00:35:21: We actually ended up including that concept in a combined
00:35:21 --> 00:35:23: Buncombe County recovery plan.
00:35:23 --> 00:35:26: So the county did a recovery plan that really pulls
00:35:26 --> 00:35:29: in all the different municipalities.
00:35:29 --> 00:35:32: So that's like an example of something we really want
00:35:32 --> 00:35:35: 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.

00:36:58 --> 00:36:58: and the bond money.

00:36:58 --> 00:37:00: Make that go as far as we can make it
00:37:00 --> 00:37:00: go.
00:37:02 --> 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
00:37:34 --> 00:37:35: priorities.
00:37:35 --> 00:37:37: 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. So it does serve a really key purpose in our community here.

Next slide.

What we also heard long clear is that growth and sustainability are not mutually exclusive. So maybe a unifying factor from from hearing some of these recommendations that there was strong support by different stakeholder groups to mitigate flooding impacts to kind of be involved in resiliency efforts both locally and regionally. And hearing from those same stakeholders that there was strong support to invest in these corridors, even as we're making investments in other districts in both physical economic and community resilience efforts.

We're hearing a need that businesses, developers, community members need guidance. They need information and resources in order to make those direct investments for resilient development. And we also are hearing that these stakeholders are already developing projects and strategies to support kind of that next generation of artists, musicians, creatives and businesses in these districts.

So it's been really exciting to see how, you know, city staff and and local government have taken all of this information and are trying to incorporate that as has the community. And so I'm really looking forward to kind of seeing that come to fruition.

Next slide.

So how are we turning these opportunities, these resources, this kind of information and next steps into action? We have secured partners, we call them sub recipients to issue 15 and a half, \$1,000,000 for direct small business support. And so in the next several months we'll be finalizing 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
00:46:48 --> 00:46:52: city did it really remarkable job of organizing the information
00:46:52 --> 00:46:55: for us, welcoming us in and bringing in these these
00:46:55 --> 00:46:58: 10 or 12 people from elsewhere, largely led by Ben
00:46:58 --> 00:47:01: and Rachel to say here's what's going on, here's some
00:47:01 --> 00:47:02: data, here's information.
00:47:02 --> 00:47:06: 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
00:49:44 --> 00:49:46: see the link in the chat there.
00:49:46 --> 00:49:47: So if you want to go back and look at
00:49:47 --> 00:49:49: them yourself, but if you had a question related to
00:49:49 --> 00:49:51: one of those, we can go back right now.
00:49:51 --> 00:49:59: One slide, if there's a question, are there any other
00:49:59 --> 00:50:04: participant questions out there as well?
00:50:06 --> 00:50:09: Rachel I I see one in the chat from Scott
00:50:09 --> 00:50:10: Burrows.
00:50:10 --> 00:50:12: I don't, I don't know how if if you typically
00:50:12 --> 00:50:14: read that out or if we just answer it or
00:50:14 --> 00:50:15: I don't know the.
00:50:15 --> 00:50:16: Yeah.
00:50:16 --> 00:50:17: 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

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
00:52:23 --> 00:52:23: space.
00:52:23 --> 00:52:26: So 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

00:54:13 --> 00:54:16: retain those employees a little bit better?

00:54:17 --> 00:54:21: And, and I think applying that across the board is

00:54:21 --> 00:54:24: really exciting to me because we have such a long

00:54:24 --> 00:54:28: history of a tourism economy here that really want to

00:54:28 --> 00:54:32: make sure that we're weaving that into looking ahead.

00:54:33 --> 00:54:37: A, a, a challenge has been trying to tease out

00:54:37 --> 00:54:42: what what's a direct relationship to, to Helene and the

00:54:42 --> 00:54:48: impacts of Helene versus, you know, what's kind of tied

00:54:48 --> 00:54:51: into the broader economic trends.

00:54:51 --> 00:54:54: So that's been a little bit of a challenge, but

00:54:54 --> 00:54:57: we're certainly, I think going to see a lot of

00:54:57 --> 00:54:58: rebuilding.

00:54:58 --> 00:55:01: We have the business inclusion office is in my division

00:55:01 --> 00:55:05: and that's the work that really supports that contracting.

00:55:05 --> 00:55:10: So really looking at how can we support businesses looking

00:55:10 --> 00:55:14: to participate in that rebuilding work and how can they

00:55:14 --> 00:55:15: perhaps grow and scale.

00:55:15 --> 00:55:20: So we've seen some of that growth in those sectors.

00:55:20 --> 00:55:25: We've seen growth in creative manufacturing sectors as well.

00:55:25 --> 00:55:31: East Fork Pottery announced an expansion, smallish

00:55:31 --> 00:55:34: expansion in December

00:55:34 --> 00:55:40: and they're looking for more growth as well.

00:55:40 --> 00:55:43: So the the recovery has definitely been uneven for different

00:55:43 --> 00:55:46: sectors and different business types.

00:55:46 --> 00:55:51: So hoping to kind of support folks in a tailored

00:55:51 --> 00:55:51: approach with our partners at the Economic Development

00:55:51 --> 00:55:51: Coalition as

00:55:51 --> 00:55:51: well.

00:55:53 --> 00:55:53: Thank you.

00:55:53 --> 00:55:55: We have our last question that's in the chat.

00:55:55 --> 00:55:57: It looks like John may be responding to it by

00:55:57 --> 00:56:01: typing, but has there been any consideration given to the

00:56:01 --> 00:56:04: loss of tax base if the city does accept properties

00:56:04 --> 00:56:05: and potential buyouts?

00:56:08 --> 00:56:09: Good question, Peter.

00:56:10 --> 00:56:16: Yes, there has been, no, that's a real, that's a

00:56:16 --> 00:56:18: real concern.

00:56:18 --> 00:56:21: I think, you know, I think from staff's view as

00:56:21 --> 00:56:24: we as we reviewed that policy, when we we made

00:56:24 --> 00:56:28: sure that was a consideration that our City Council had,

00:56:28 --> 00:56:31: 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

00:56:36 --> 00:56:37: ahead and accept the buyouts.

00:56:38 --> 00:56:41: And Rachel, you know what I have that doesn't mean

00:56:41 --> 00:56:44: that we haven't thought about the tax base implication, which

00:56:44 --> 00:56:46: I think creates more pressure to try to to make

00:56:46 --> 00:56:48: that up or to try to find that tax base

00:56:48 --> 00:56:50: somewhere else in some other manner.

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

00:58:35 --> 00:58:39: open spaces, for that park system to make them very

00:58:39 --> 00:58:44: valuable assets, even though they've sort of been taken off

00:58:44 --> 00:58:45: the books.

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.uli.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.

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