

# Community Meeting Supporting Equitable Development



Asheville, NC  
July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015



Sustainable Communities  
Building Blocks



Since 1996, EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities has been working to protect human health and the environment through smart growth development.

- ✓ Changing the conversation
- ✓ Partnering to change the rules
- ✓ Working with the willing





- **Changing the conversation**
  - Publications, conferences, national awards
- **Partnering to change the rules**
  - HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities
  - Work with FEMA, USDA, NOAA—lots of Federal agencies
- **Working with the willing**
  - Technical Assistance to state and local governments, nonprofits



Big challenges + limited resources + a huge demand for new approaches:  
Quick-hit technical assistance

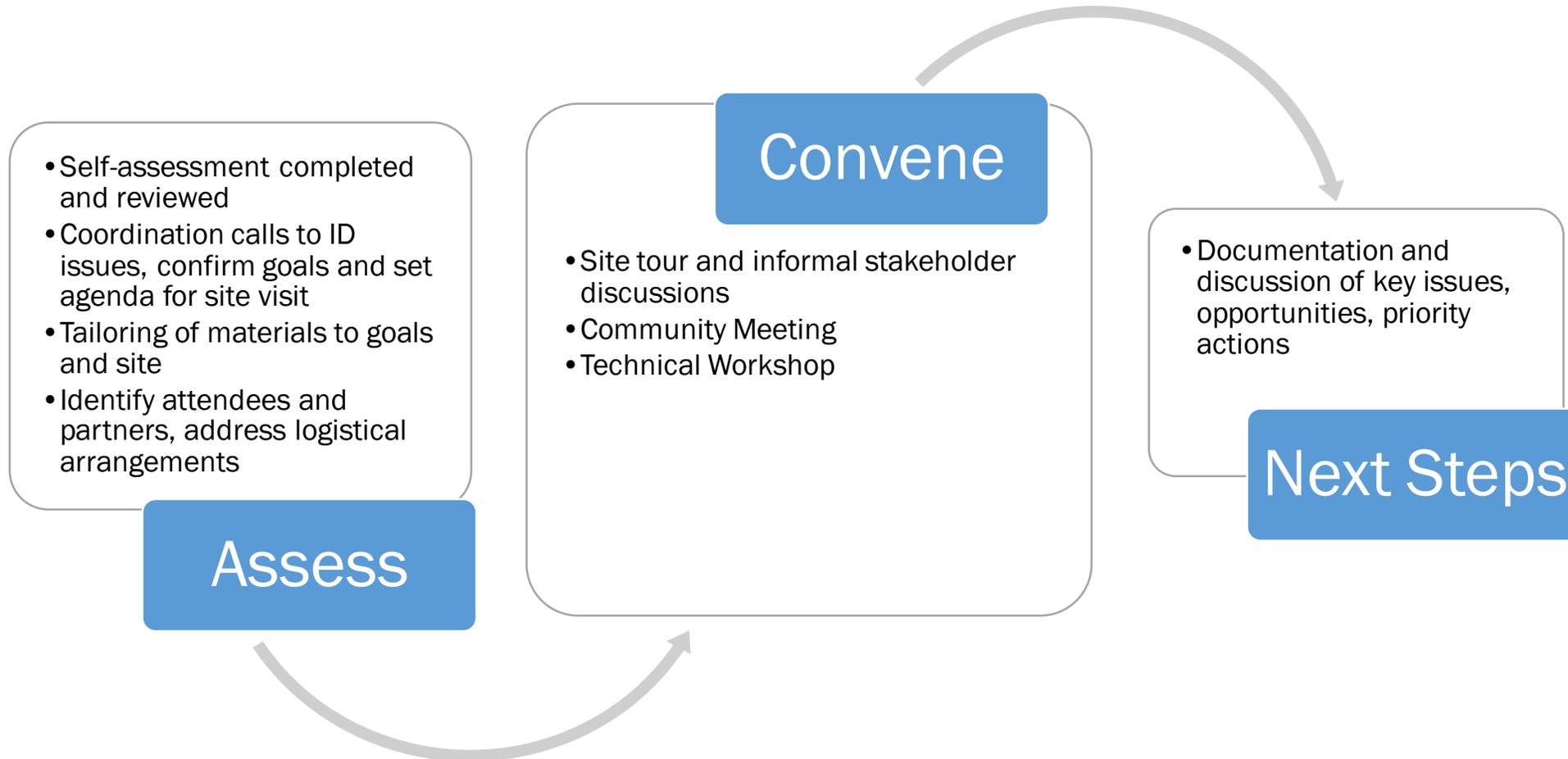


# Smart Growth

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR  
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



# Technical Assistance Includes...



# Asheville - Why Are We Here?

## Key Issues

- Displacement concerns for legacy residents and businesses
- Affordable housing
- Strengthening local businesses and neighborhood amenities
- Supporting the arts community



# What We'll Cover

## This evening:

- What is Equitable Development?
- Local Context and Initial Findings
- Community Goals, Issues and Opportunities
- Next Steps



# What is Equitable Development?



**Equitable Development: Approaches for creating communities and regions where residents of all incomes, races, and ethnicities participate in and benefit from decisions that shape the places where they live.**



*Photo: Fruitvale Village, Unity Council.*



The key is to help communities:

- ✓ **Understand both the challenges and the opportunities** as neighborhoods change, and
- ✓ Identify strategies to **support community goals.**



# Common Drivers of Neighborhood Change

- Demographic
  - Aging populations
  - Decreasing percent of families with children
- Social
  - Changing location preferences towards urban areas
  - Social media and online community building
- Economic
  - Increasing service jobs
  - Trends towards urban reinvestment
  - Supply and demand of desirable real estate



# Benefits of Neighborhood Change

- Improved access to services
  - Grocery stores and neighborhood-serving businesses
  - Banking and financial services
  - Healthcare
- Improved access to economic and employment opportunities
  - Expanded customer base for local businesses
  - More job opportunities for local residents



# Benefits of Neighborhood Change

- Improved recreation and social spaces
  - Art and public spaces that celebrate neighborhood history and culture
  - Improved recreational facilities that support healthy lifestyles
- Growing sense of active community
  - Expansion of community-led organizations
  - Expanded community events
- Improved access to opportunities and amenities
  - More destinations closer by
  - More transportation choices and transit options



# Concerns with Neighborhood Change

- Risk of Displacement
  - Rising rental costs and property taxes
  - High resident turnover
- Loss of “sense of place” or neighborhood identity
  - Loss of places with historic and cultural significance
  - Replacing culturally significant buildings with generic buildings
- Threats to social cohesion
  - Declining attendance at long-standing businesses or places of worship in the neighborhood
  - Introduction of amenities that are not accessible to long-term residents (e.g. boutique stores)
  - Rapid influx of new people

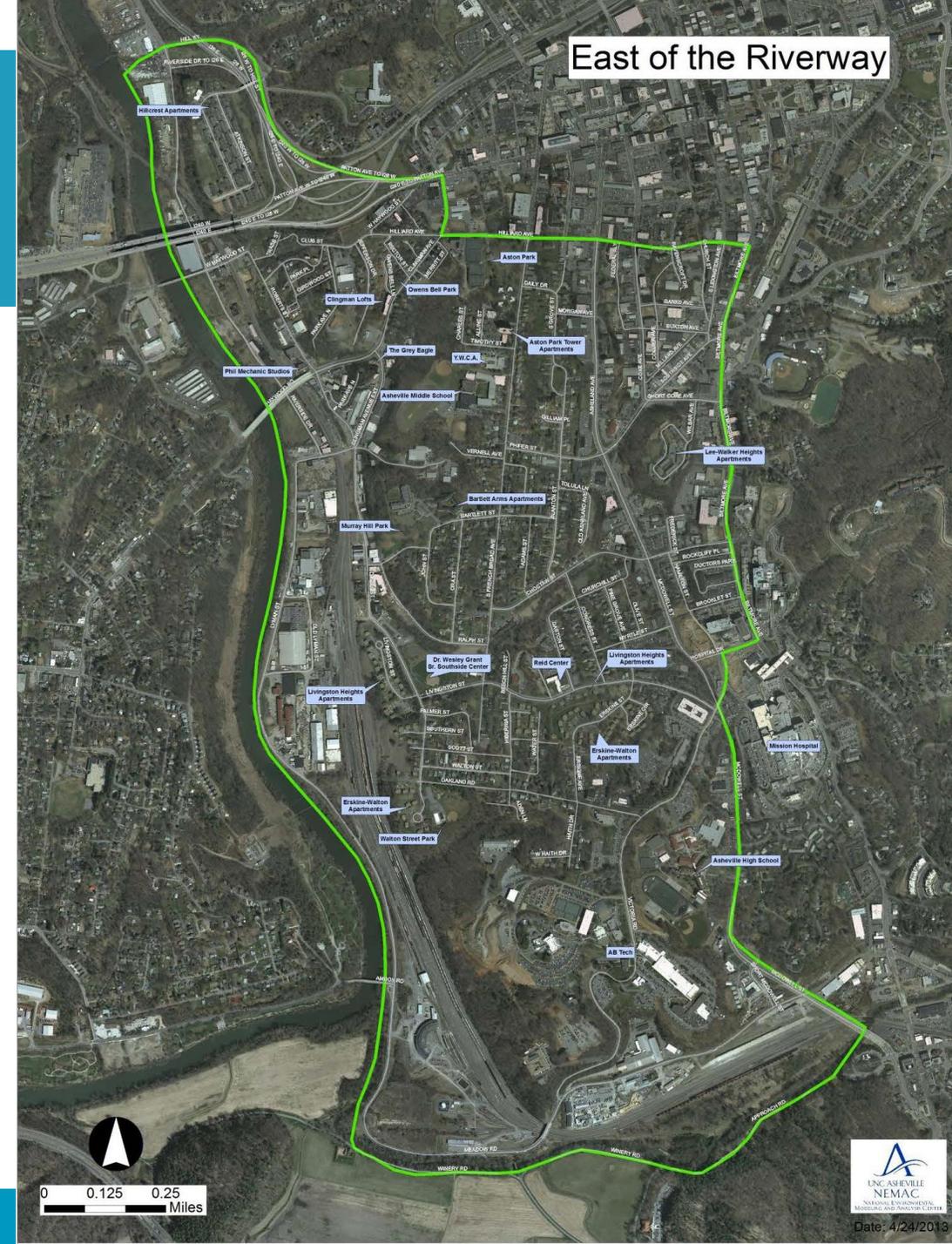


# Local Context & Initial Findings



# Development happening!

- New jobs and new homes
- Street improvements – look, safety and feel for walkers and bicyclists
- Industrial to non-industrial uses
- Activating the riverfront
- New community amenities



# Asheville: What We've Heard

Feedback from  
Self Assessment

- Affordable housing
- Displacement concerns for legacy residents and businesses
- Strengthening local businesses and neighborhood amenities
- Supporting the arts community

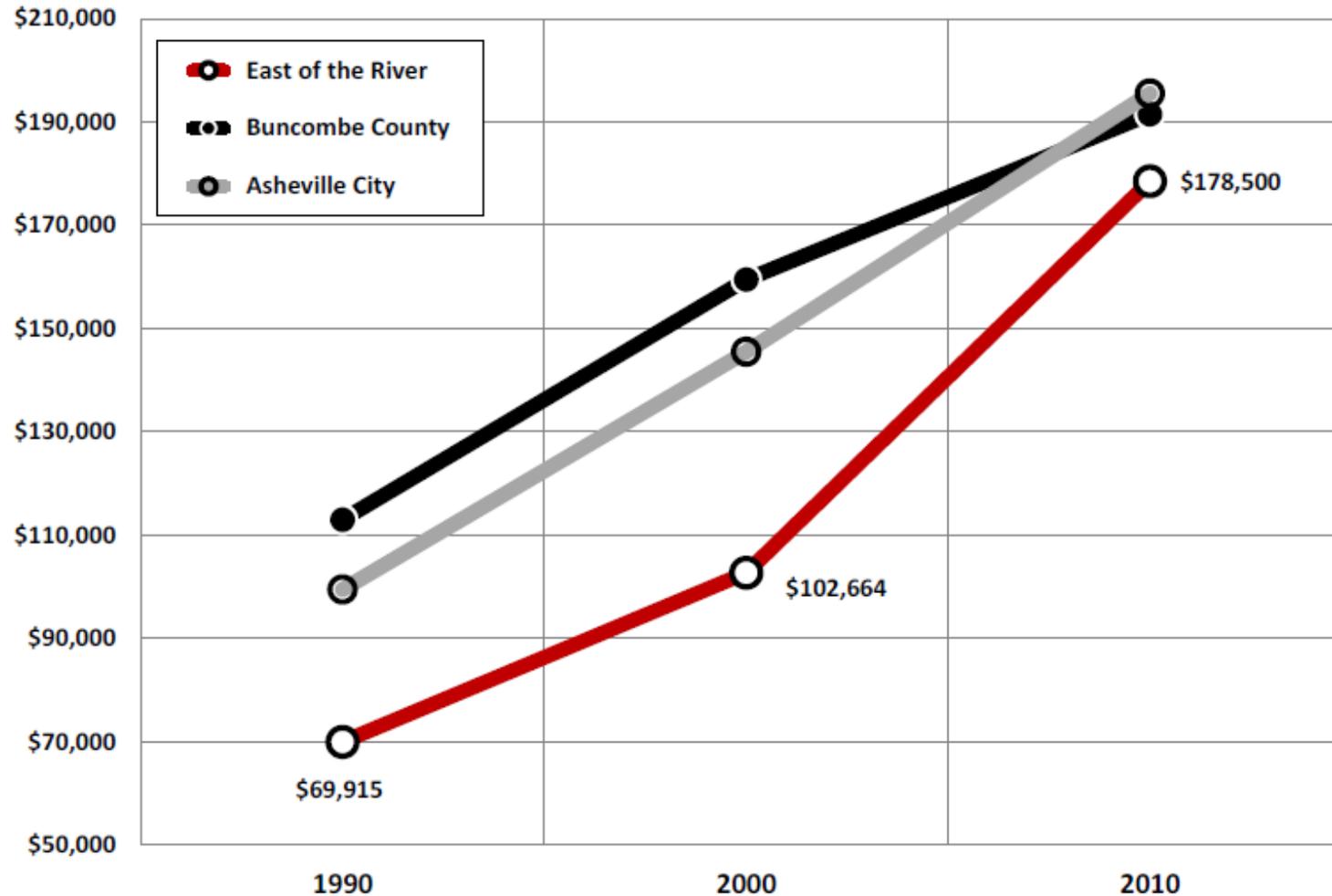


# Asheville: What We've Heard

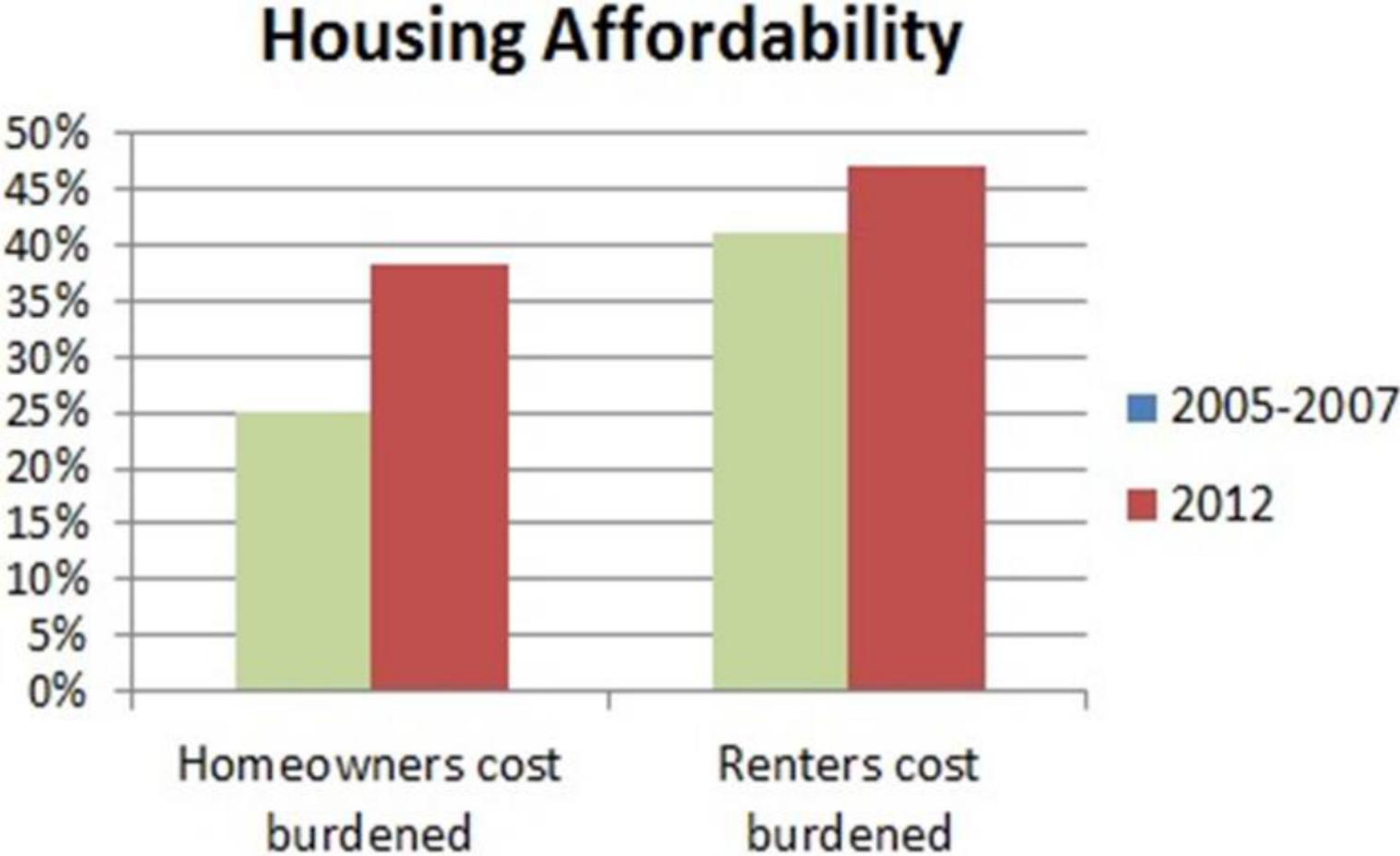
Feedback from  
Self Assessment

- **Housing affordability**
- Increasing property value
  - 60% rental/40% owner occupied
  - 40% of rentals are public housing units
- High land costs and only 9% percent of area available for new development
- Citywide efforts better than NC peers
- Active resident's councils in public housing
- Nonprofit housing developer at the table

# Median Home Value – Owner Occupied



# Increasing Cost Burdened Households



# Asheville: What We've Heard

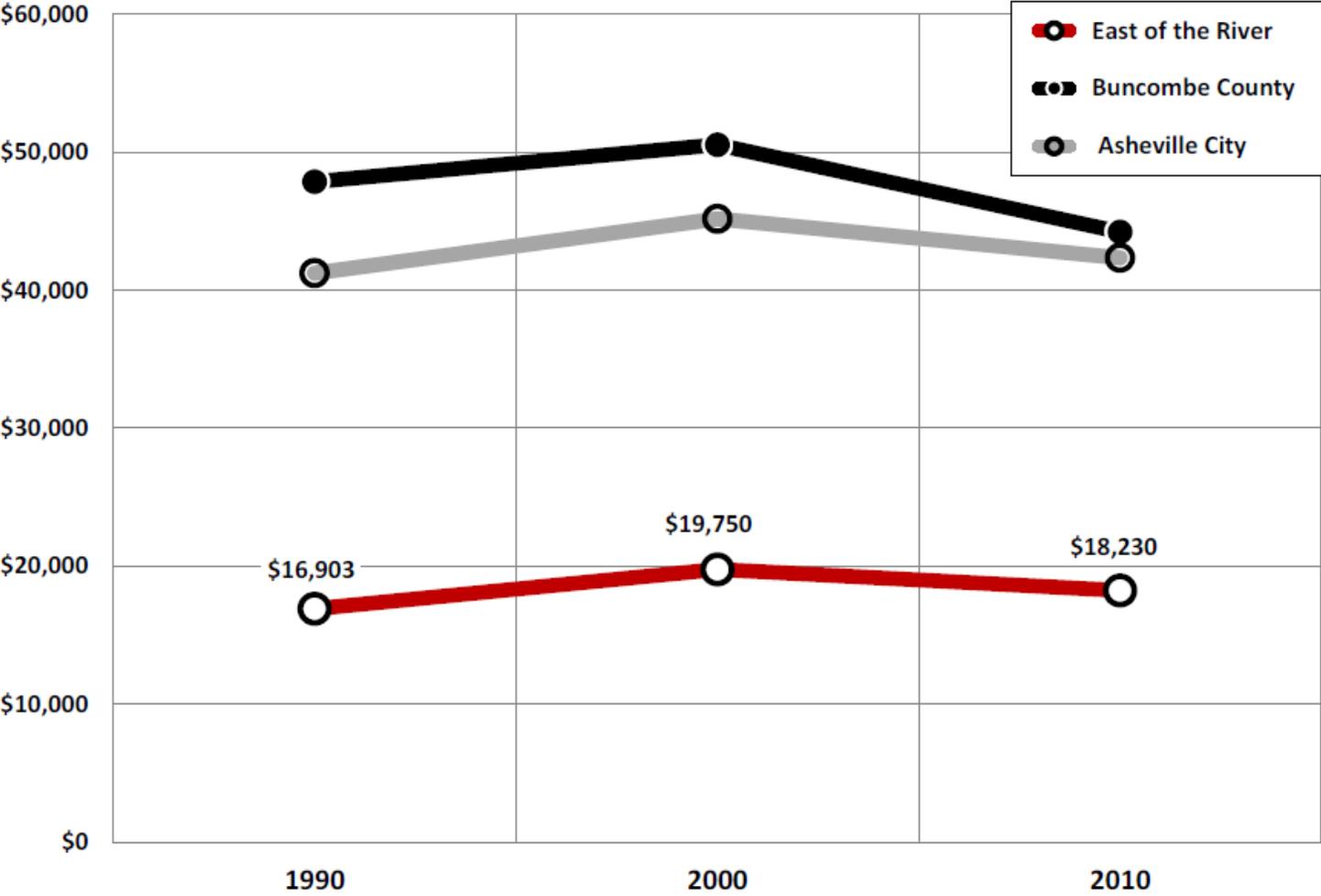
Feedback from  
Self Assessment

## Changing neighborhood

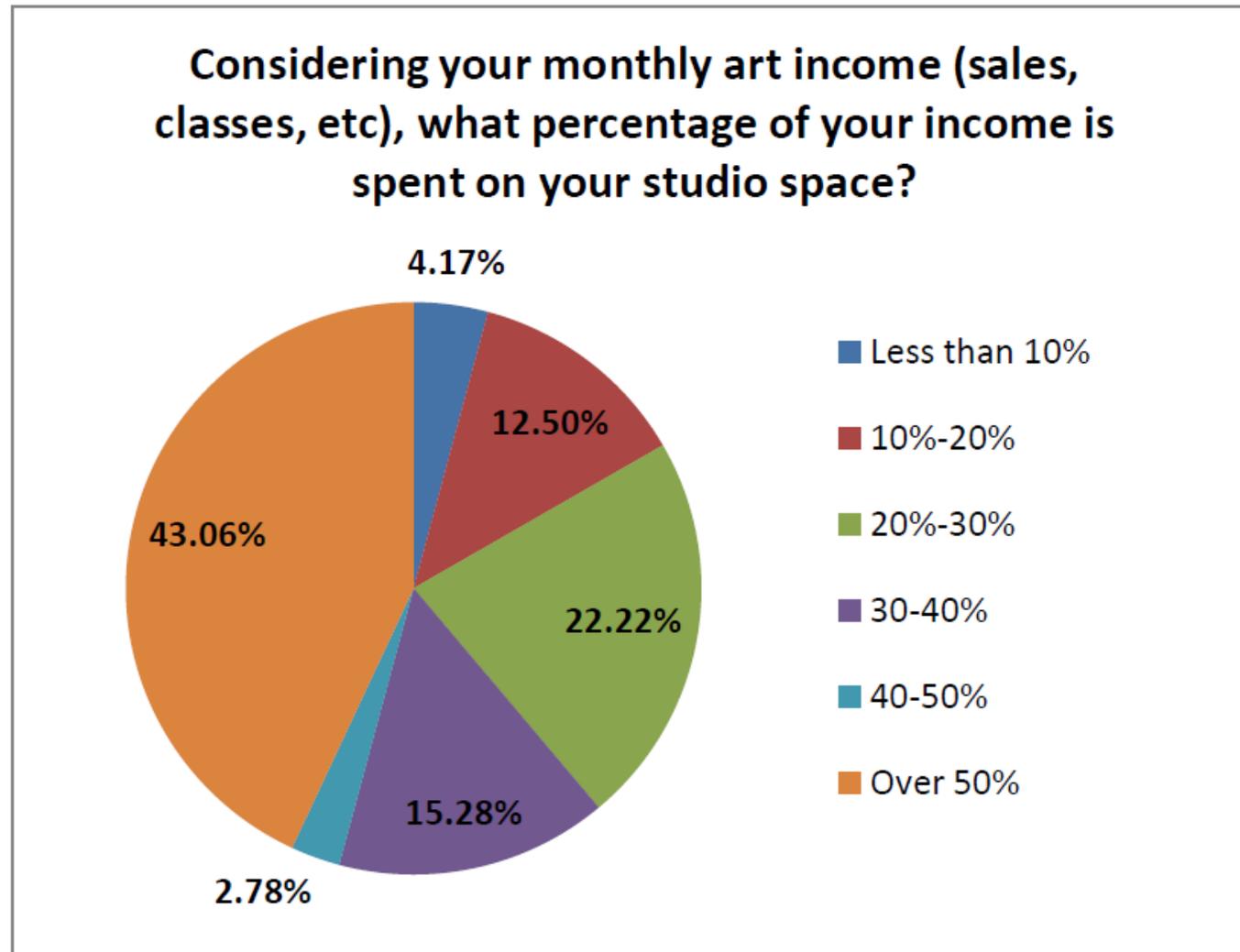
- Changing demographics
  - 76% to 56% African-American 1990 to 2010
- Growing artist's community
- Income gap decreasing between East of the Riverway neighborhood and other areas of City
- Existing public housing changing
- Need for proactive response to changes
- Commitment to collaborative planning



# Change in Median Household Income



# Cost of Doing Business Increasing



# Asheville: What We've Heard

Feedback from  
Self Assessment

- Transportation/Access to Jobs and Training
  - Near larger employers aren't employing locals
  - Multimodal access options limited.
  - Access to other amenities (food, recreational activities, childcare, job training)
- New investments
  - Livingston Street Complete Street
  - New greenways
  - River Arts District Transportation Improvement District (RADTIP)





# What We've Seen

- Opportunities between new jobs and existing residents





# What We've Seen

- Neighborhoods in transition



# What We've Seen

- Neighborhoods in transition



# What We've Seen

- Neighborhoods in transition



# What We've Seen

- Demand for high end housing and retail in culturally significant areas



# What We've Seen

- Demand for high end housing and retail in culturally significant areas



# What We've Seen

- Isolated public housing



# What We've Seen

- Industrial creative space disappearing



# What We've Seen

- Industrial creative space disappearing



# What We've Seen

- Riverfront seeing new activity





# What We've Seen

- Riverfront seeing new activity



What's  
missing?

# Asheville Priority Goals

- Provide housing choices
- Facilitate meaningful community engagement in planning and land use decisions
- Strengthen existing communities
- Preserve and build upon features that make a community distinctive



*On the notecard,  
write down a  
positive  
outcome...in 20  
years, what would  
the headline in be in  
the local  
newspaper?*

Imagine an  
equitable  
development  
future for the  
East of the  
Riverway  
neighborhood...

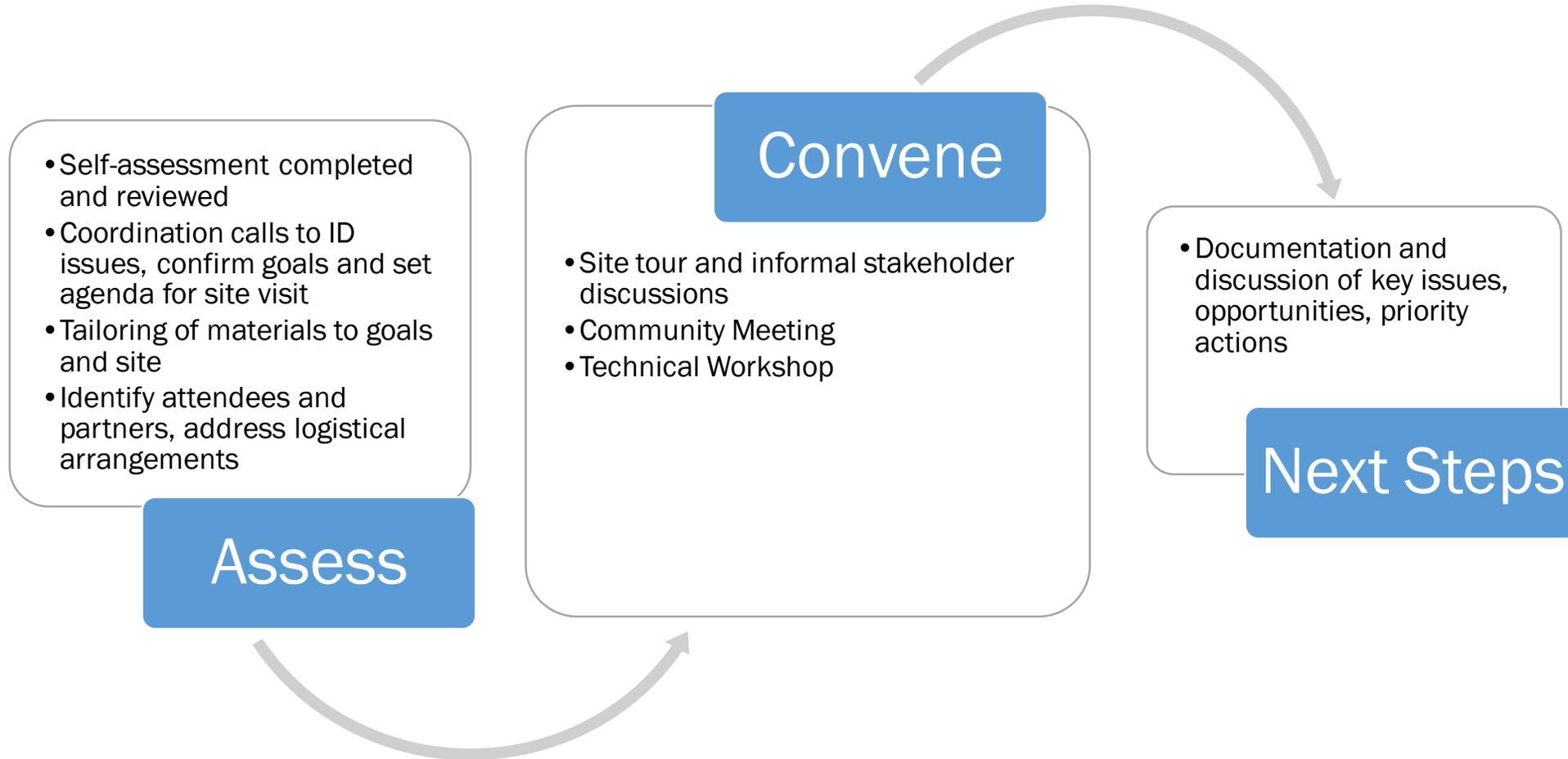


- Provide housing choices
- Facilitate meaningful community engagement in planning and land use decisions
- Strengthen existing communities
- Preserve and build upon features that make a community distinctive

What are the challenges to and opportunities to realizing your goals?



# What's Next?



# Thank You for Joining Us



Asheville, NC

July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## Sustainable Communities Building Blocks

*Visit us on the web at*

[http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/economic\\_success.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/economic_success.htm)