



Placemaking: Community Art Project at Open Streets 704



On September 15, 2019, over 100 volunteers gathered with one goal in mind...paint that pavement! Led by artist Darion Fleming, better known as Da Flemingo, Centralina's Planning Department and community volunteers begin to transform an ordinary street into a stunning mural in front of Greater Galilee Baptist Church in the Wilmore Neighborhood of Charlotte, located at the corner of South Mint St. and West Park Ave. Armed with paint brushes and pure determination, the group tackled the 200 square foot street mural in just under three hours during the eighth biannual Open Streets 704 (OS704), held on September 15, 2019.

During these events, Open Streets temporarily close streets to automobile traffic so that



people may use them for walking, bicycling, dancing, playing and meeting their neighbors. Held in over 100 cities in North America, Open Streets has proven to be successful at achieving goals related to recreation, public health, active transportation (walking and biking) and community building. Each OS704 is a result of a combined effort of the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Partners for Parks and many additional partners and sponsors. It continues to be the largest event in Charlotte focused on community health and civic engagement.

This event set a record for annual attendance with 52,000 people participating in 2019. Over 80 organizations hosted activities along the 4-mile route, offering a multicultural,

multigenerational and multilingual experience for participants. OS704 has proved to be a valuable public engagement and education tool for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, with 13 city/county departments represented during the event, many of whom collected valuable input on policies and programs that will help guide the community.

CCOG staff served on the steering committee for this public demonstration project, which was funded by a grant from the Aetna Foundation, and fulfilled the critical role of coordinating with surrounding property owners, the artist, volunteers and the City of Charlotte.



“What I like most about this project is it shows how an otherwise boring space can be completely transformed into something beautiful and engaging to those who live in the Wilmore Neighborhood or attend Greater Galilee Baptist Church. With a little bit of paint, a lot of people and support from the neighborhood, church and the Open Streets 704 steering committee, we were able to

bring Darion’s vision to life and that is pretty amazing!” said Centralina’s Healthy Community Design Specialist, Katherine Hebert Godwin.

Plans are already underway for the ninth OS704, scheduled to take place April 19, 2020.



Centralina Council of Governments
9815 David Taylor Drive, Charlotte, North Carolina 28262
Phone: 704-372-2416 Fax: 704-347-4710, www.centralina.org

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities.