



# MECKLENBURG COUNTY

## Land Use and Environmental Services Agency

### -AIR QUALITY-

September 26, 2019

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

Advance Program  
c/o Laura Bunte  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, C304-01  
[advance@epa.gov](mailto:advance@epa.gov)

RE: Ozone Advance Path Forward for the Charlotte Region – Progress Report

Dear Ms. Bunte:

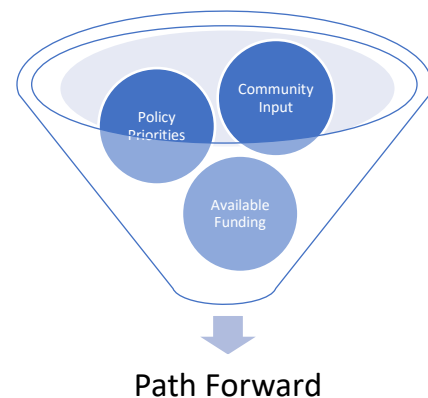
At the end of 2018, Charlotte region continued to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone with a design value of 70 parts per billion (ppb). While the region narrowly met the 70 ppb health standard, creating breathing room continues to be important. Over the last 12 months Mecklenburg County Air Quality (MCAQ) has made significant strides in creating the Breathing Room program that will demonstrate our commitment to improve air quality in the region and be a model for future programs across North Carolina.



#### Stakeholder Input Process Completed in Early 2019

MCAQ gathered input from almost 500 community stakeholders ranging from high school youth and college students, to elected officials and city planners, to business leaders and manufacturing workers. In group sessions and an online survey, MCAQ staff led the “Now, Next, Future” activity to determine which of 15 model strategies the community wanted prioritized for “Now” (action in the next 1-2 years), “Next” (action in 2-3 years), or “Future” (action in 4+ years).

#### Community Input, Policy Priorities, and Available Funding Combine to Create the Path Forward

MCAQ used the input gathered during stakeholder sessions and results from the online survey, along with policy priorities and available funding sources to create the Path Forward timeline. Of the 15 model strategies, 10 were prioritized for action in the next 5 years, as shown below. The remaining model strategies may be added to the Path Forward as time and resources allow. Existing MCAQ programs that have brought the region into attainment with health standards will continue alongside the Path Forward.



NOW (FY20-FY21)	NEXT (FY22)	Future (FY23+)
Transit Expansion Advocacy (1)	Complete Streets (2)	Energy Audit Program (8)
School Bus Electrification (3) 	Community Solar (4)	Zoning: EV Charging
Greenway Expansion Advocacy (5)	PACE (7)	Infrastructure (13)
Airport Shuttle Electrification (6) 		
Ground-support		
Equipment Electrification (10) 		

 = Funding Opportunity Announced

### Local Policy Board Unanimously Approves Path Forward and Timeline

The Path Forward was first endorsed by the Air Quality Commission (AQC) with a unanimous vote on July 22, 2019. Following their endorsement, MCAQ staff and members of the AQC presented Breathing Room to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners Environmental Stewardship Subcommittee on September 10, 2019. The subcommittee unanimously voted to recommend the full Board of County Commissioners approve that Breathing Room Path Forward. On September 17, 2019, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Breathing Room Path Forward.

### Path Forward Website is a Community Resource, Tool for Implementation

Rather than producing a static document, MCAQ has opted to present the Charlotte region's Path Forward as a website: [airquality.mecknc.gov/BreathingRoom](http://airquality.mecknc.gov/BreathingRoom). Using a website for our Path Forward creates community resources for policy makers and the public, and it allows Breathing Room to be a dynamic program that is responsive to the needs of our community.

The Path Forward was updated with the implementation timeline and MCAQ has started developing implementation plans for each "Now" strategy. These plans will be added to the Path Forward as they are completed. The Path Forward also identifies ways for policy makers and community members to stay engaged with Breathing Room and help move the region down the Path Forward.

Lastly, MCAQ will serve as a resource to our Breathing Room partner, the N.C. Division of Air Quality, as they develop Advanced programs in other parts of North Carolina.

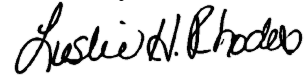
If you have any questions about Breathing Room or the Path Forward, please contact Megan Green of my staff at 980-314-3368 or [Megan.Green@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov](mailto:Megan.Green@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov). Thank you for your support as we continue developing new ways to improve air quality in the Charlotte region and across North Carolina.

Advance Program  
c/o Laura Bunte  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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September 26, 2019

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leslie H. Rhodes".

Leslie Rhodes  
Director

C: Megan Green, MCAQ  
Robin Barrows, NCDAQ  
Jonathan Navarro, NCDAQ  
Kelly Sheckler, USEPA