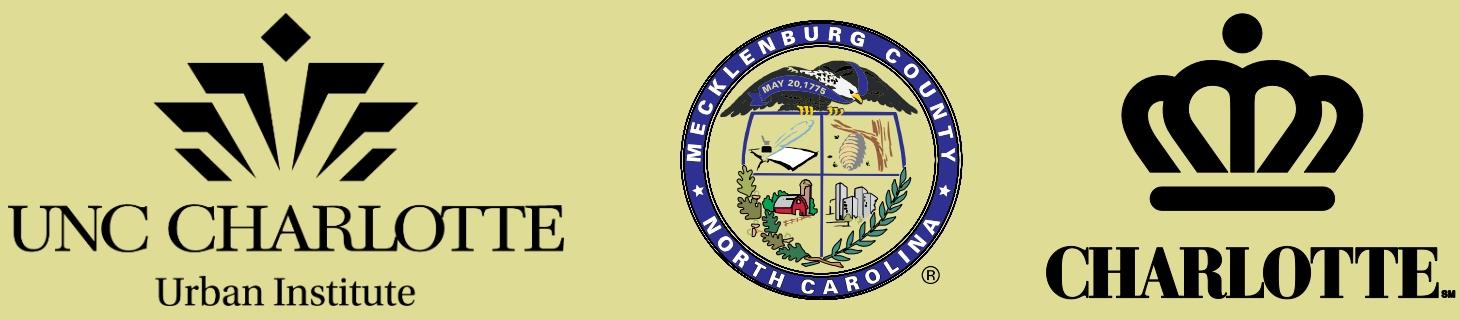


Using Neighborhood Data to Measure and Impact Economic Opportunity: Lessons from Charlotte, North Carolina



Laura Simmons, MA¹; John Chesser, MA²; Owen Furuseth, PhD¹; Rebecca Hefner, MPA³; and Kathryn Zager, MA¹
¹University of North Carolina at Charlotte, ²Mecklenburg County, ³City of Charlotte

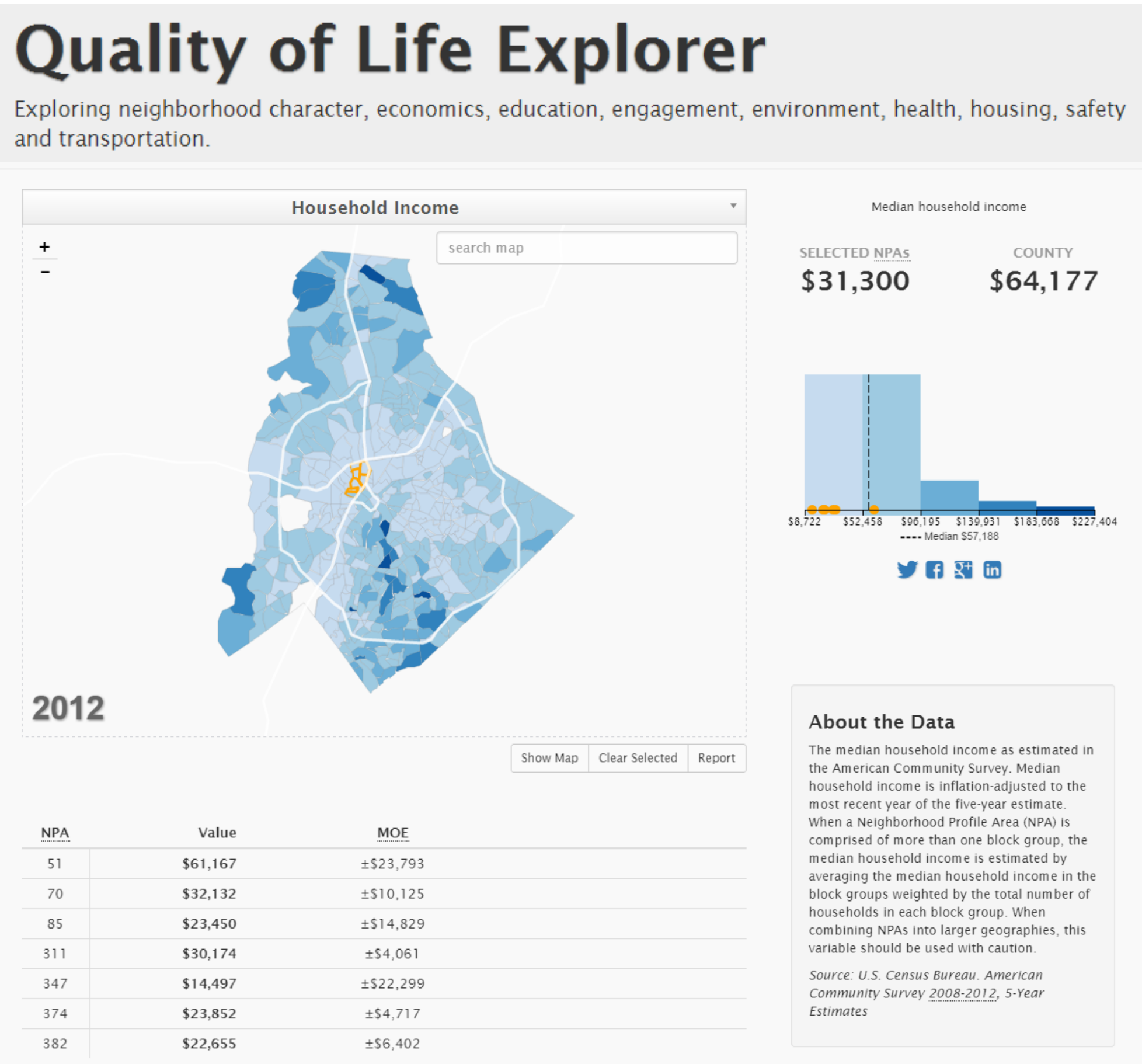
Neighborhood affects opportunity

Recent research points to a number of community-level factors that may contribute to or hinder economic mobility for individuals living in predominantly low-income neighborhoods, such as segregation and diversity, social capital, and sprawl. Additionally, rigorous program evaluation offers research-based strategies to address neighborhood-level conditions and positively impact economic mobility.

Yet the gap between research, public policy and community practice remains wide. This is due, in part, to a lack of granular data about neighborhoods and their residents, as well as a lack of local capacity to understand and use this data. Even when such data systems exist, a lack of support and sense of ownership from public officials and administrators can serve as a barrier to effectively using neighborhood-level data to inform policy and investment.

This poster focuses on the use of neighborhood-level data in Charlotte, North Carolina to examine equity and economic opportunity within the City's inner-ring historic neighborhoods and highlights how our community uses these insights to spur change.

Local data are a key resource



<http://maps.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/goldashboard/>

- Ongoing collaboration of the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- Over 80 variables describing neighborhood conditions in eight dimensions of quality of life, using mostly locally-derived administrative data
- All data available to the public through an interactive website

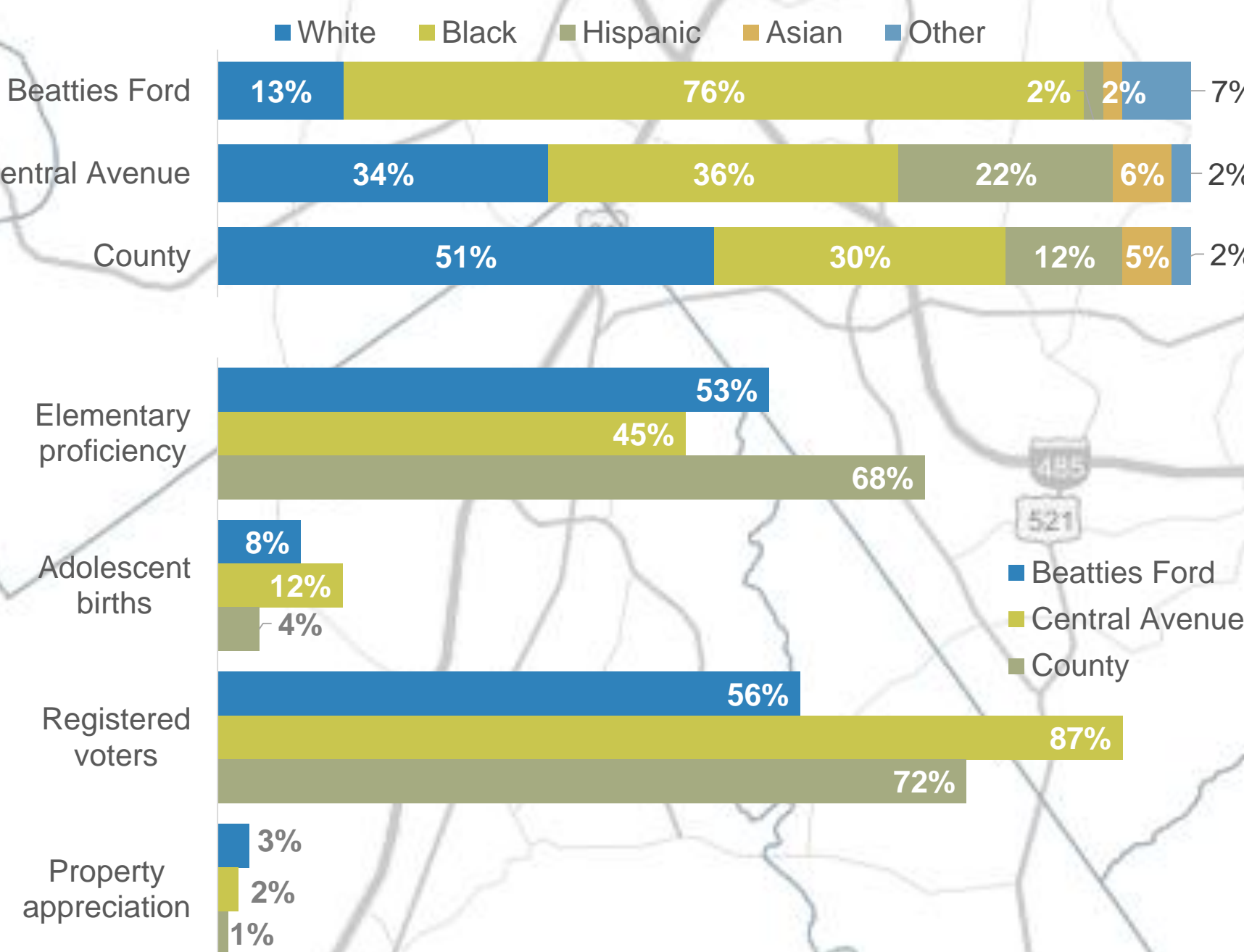
Two neighborhoods appear similar on the surface

A recent analysis by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute compares two groups of inner-ring, historic neighborhoods- one on the Westside of Charlotte (Beatties Ford Corridor) and one on the Eastside of Charlotte (Central Avenue Corridor). As the photos below illustrate, these two areas appear similar on the surface in terms of age and housing stock.

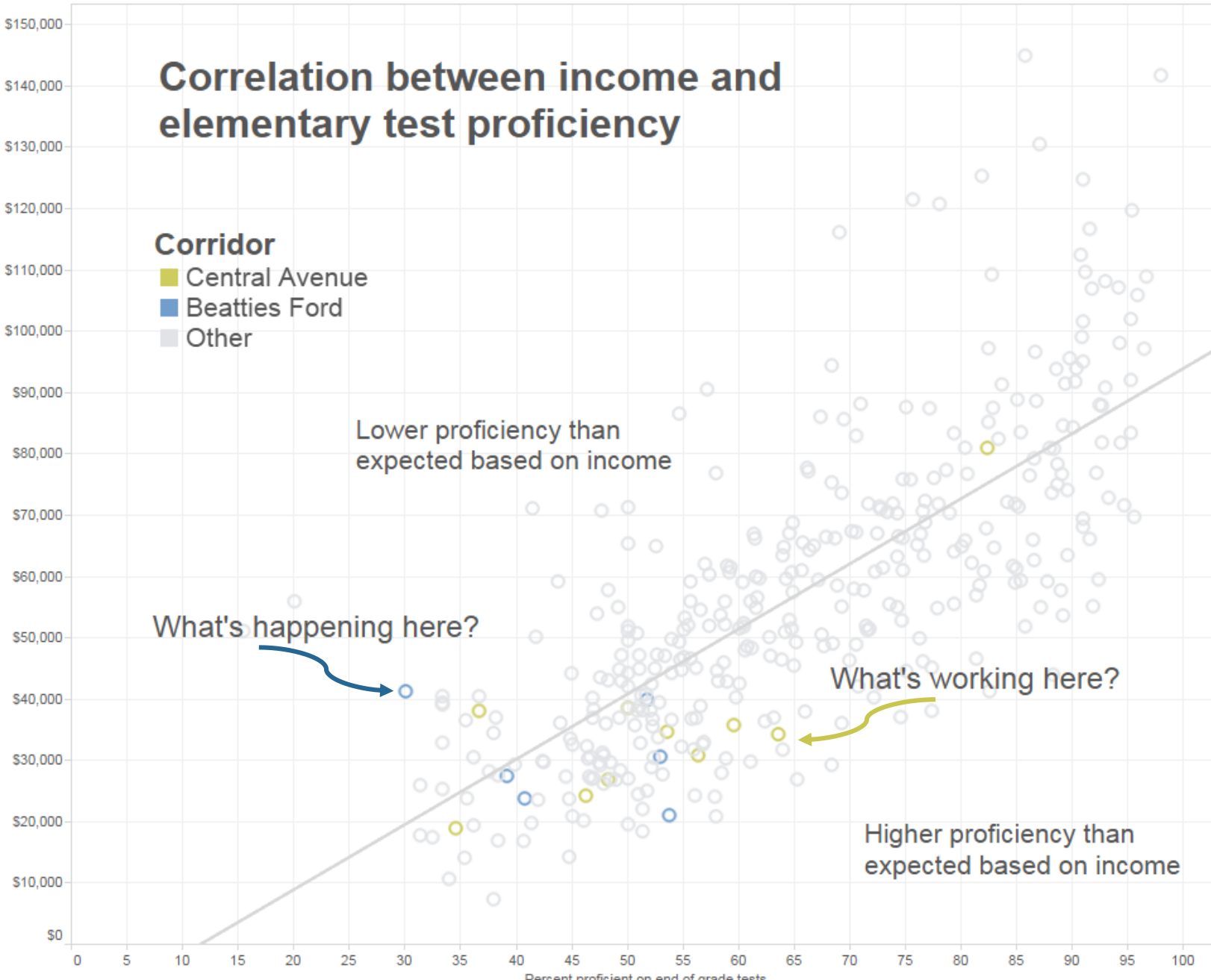


Data reveal differences between and within

Analysis of neighborhood data for the two areas reveals significant differences around demographics, education and health outcomes, citizen engagement, and property appreciation.



Scatter plots of the data also show the range of neighborhood values within each area and can point to what's working and where there are greater problems.



Using insights to spur change

This analysis suggests the need for targeted approaches and revitalization strategies that are aligned with specific neighborhood conditions. The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, along with local nonprofits and philanthropic organizations, are using this type of neighborhood-level analysis to raise awareness and inform investment and policy decisions that promote economic opportunity within these neighborhoods and across the community.

Raising awareness

Community Building Initiative

- Nonprofit dedicated to inclusion and equity in Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Uses Quality of Life data to examine economic mobility within Charlotte's inner-ring historic neighborhoods
- Engages the community around issues of equity and economic mobility by highlighting this data in a community bus tour of these neighborhoods



Making strategic investments

Comprehensive Neighborhood Investment Program

- City program that takes a complete approach to place-making
- Makes strategic investments in multi-neighborhood areas that address a broad array of community needs, in order to foster vibrant, diverse, and economically strong communities
- Beatties Ford and Central Avenue corridors are two of five areas of focus. Each area will develop strategic approaches, based on their unique set of opportunities and current conditions, as understood through the data analysis and community engagement sessions.

Charlotte Immigrant Integration Task Force

- Charged to propose policies and actions to maximize immigrants' economic and civic contributions to the community
- Will use Quality of Life data to focus public economic investments in "International Corridors" and language and citizenship training



Driving a community response

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Task Force on Economic Opportunity



- Charged to craft a strategy and actionable recommendations to build and sustain an equitable, inclusive community of opportunity for all residents of Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Will use localized data within national economic mobility framework to support cross-sector, collective impact strategy paired with robust collaborative civic engagement