



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is ULI?

The Urban Land Institute provides leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is an independent global nonprofit supported by members representing the entire spectrum of real estate development and land use disciplines. ULI Midlands is an active part of the ULI SC District Council with a growing membership base that exceeds 500.

### What does ULI Midlands want to do?

Over the past 15 years, regional visioning has emerged as a dynamic and important tool for building regional consensus related to growth issues across the United States. ULI's regional visioning program - **Reality Check** - assists District Councils and their community partners as they plan, build upon, and implement regional exercises and visions. Reality Check will challenge us to determine if we will **Grow by Choice or by Chance in the Midlands**. We believe that the quality of future growth is our choice.

### What is Midlands Reality Check?

- A visioning exercise that allows participants working in diverse groups of 8-10 regional leaders to allocate expected growth using LEGO'S on large scale regional maps and asks the questions – How should we grow? Where should we grow?
- Provides a region-wide awareness of the level of growth that is expected; to recognize the legitimate points of view of different stakeholders; and to lay the foundation for the development of a concrete list of next steps to assure quality growth to meet the region's needs in the future.
- Created by the stakeholders of the region
- This is different from other regional initiatives because:
  - It is focused on land use and urban growth
  - Unprecedented forum for collaboration between business, government, economic development leaders, and community citizens
  - Creates foundational conversations, common vocabulary, and common vision to discuss regional planning and urban growth.
  - Starting point for years of planning and growth for the common good of the Midlands

### Midlands Reality Check is comprised of the following programs.

- **Game Day:** October 22 from 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 P.M, Columbia Convention Center
- **Results Summit:** October 24 from 4:00 - 7:00 P.M, The Zone at Williams Brice Stadium
- **Two-Year Implementation Plan:** Shepherded by ULI Midlands, the process will engage stakeholders from across the region to develop plans specific to the vision and prioritized principles originating out of Game Day and the Results Summit.

### What is Game Day?

- Game Day = Tuesday, October 22 from 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Location = Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center

- 300 leader and citizen participants will be joining us from around the region
- Working in diverse groups of 10 at a table guided by skilled facilitators
- Allocating expected household & job growth using LEGO'S
- A large, regional map will serve as our "Game Board"
- We'll place multi colored Legos representing number of new households and number of new jobs
- Use yarn to represent new transportation infrastructure and green space
- An analytical team from Kimley-Horn working with the CM COG to collect all of the data from each table and aggregate it all into common results

### **What is the Results Summit?**

- This event is open to the public and meant to build excitement and encourage hearing these scientific results
- Join us and hear the results from Game Day, participate in live, audience polling, and celebrate our new, regional vision
- Program begins at 4:00 and reception begins at 5:30
- Location = The Zone at Williams-Brice Stadium

### **What is the Implementation Plan?**

When the exercise is over, Reality Check is far from finished; in fact, it is just beginning. Reality Check provides the momentum to begin the implementation conversation about how to enact change on a regional scale. The implementation strategy is a critical component of any Reality Check; however, just as no two Reality Check exercises are alike, neither are the implementation strategies adopted by District Councils and their partners.

It will include a series of programs, workshops, technical assistance, toolkits, and a communications strategy to address barriers to and opportunities for achieving the vision articulated at the Reality Check exercise. It could also include a series of additional workshops, held on a regional or subregional scale, that lead to the development of a preferred growth scenario. A region should do Reality Check only if it is willing to use the energy and support generated from the event to move forward with implementation. We have this in the Midlands.

### **How was the Midlands Reality Check geographic boundary defined?**

- The Midlands Reality Check Regional Boundary is that area covered in beige on this map
- According to 2010 census data, the population of this region is currently 860,000
- But, within the next 30 years, the region will include 450,000 more people
- Notice this map lacks political borders to emphasize the importance of regionalism
- This boundary was developed based on a few key considerations including:
- Need to cover the Columbia MSA
- The need to include areas of the region where industrial growth was occurring
- Capturing the most common commuter patterns from around the region
- The importance of engaging our entire military cluster from Columbia to Sumter

### **What is the time commitment for Reality Check?**



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Participants joining us for Game Day should plan on a minimum time commitment of seven hours for the following activities:

- Game Day preparation
- Game Day participation
- Results Summit participation
- Engagement with the implementation... you are invited

## Which cities have hosted a ULI Reality Check?

- Los Angeles, CA (2005)
- Washington, DC (2005)
- North Texas (2005 & 2007)
- Baltimore, MD (2006)
- Tampa Bay, FL(2007)
- Charleston, SC (2007)
- Upstate region of South Carolina (2008)
- Seattle, WA (2008)
- Phoenix, AZ (2008)
- Triangle (2009)
- Jacksonville, FL (2009)
- Hampton Roads, VA (2012)
- Richmond, VA (2013)
- Charlotte, NC (2013)
- Columbia, SC (2013)

## Who's in charge of this?

The Midlands Reality Check is a local initiative of:

- Midlands Membership of ULI South Carolina
- Co-chaired by Herbert Ames, Irene Dumas Tyson
- Project Management by EngenuitySC, Meghan Hughes
- Steering Committee of Midlands Reality Check

Scott Adams
Mary Beth Branham
Matt Bogan
Dan Cannon
Frank Cason
Delisa Clark
Amy Clayton
Bryan Hall
Deborah Haskell
Derrick Huggins
Jenny Isgett
Grant Jackson
Gail Jeter
Sam Johnson
Tracy Jones



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Dale Stigamier
Charlie Thompson
David Tuttle

## **Who's paying for this?**

The Midlands Reality Check is funded by generous private sponsors, foundations, governments, and community organizations seeking to unify the Midlands regional vision. Funding for the Reality Check implementation strategy is as important as the funding for the event itself. In fact, the recommendations stemming from the exercise will go nowhere without implementation funding. A complete list of sponsors can be found at [www.midlandsrealitycheck.com](http://www.midlandsrealitycheck.com).

Midlands ULI Reality Check is planning to secure funding to monitor and implement the results.

## **How does Reality Check differ from other planning efforts over the past few years?**

Over the past 20 years, there have been numerous county and municipal plans created from comprehensive plans and master plans to economic development plans and strategic plans.

Reality Check is not about creating a plan. Reality Check is a process for bringing together residents of the Midlands to discuss and reach consensus on a regional vision for how we want to grow and develop (land use) in order to best meet the needs for the projected 450,000 new residents over the next 30 years. Being at the table with 300 people from across the Midlands and discussing the future: how to preserve and continually improve our quality of life, how we can work together, how can we make the Midlands more prosperous and competitive, crafting guiding principles and a shared vision... is unprecedented.

The idea is that through Game Day, the Results Summit and the two year implementation development program, the vision and principles will become a part of each county's and each municipalities and each organization's plan and that the Midlands will prosper because we are working together in innovative ways to design our future for the next generations.

## **What is a successful result?**

- EnvisionUtah - Set the model for Reality Check and has multi-year history of success
- Raleigh-Durham overhauled zoning ordinances after their Game Day Reality Check



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event

- Bringing local leaders back together on a quarterly basis to highlight areas of need (voted on by the public)
- Smart growth speakers with case studies to monitor other region's success stories

**This sounds interesting, how can I get involved?**

- Check out our website: [midlandsrealitycheck.com](http://midlandsrealitycheck.com)
- Apply to be a Citizen Participant
- Volunteer for Game Day and/or Results Summit