

Business District Organization Strategic Support Update

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

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Business District Organization Strategic Support Update

Council Priority Alignment

- ▶ Workforce and Business Development & Corridors of Opportunity

Purpose

- ▶ Committee will receive an update on current and planned efforts to support Business District Organizations in the Corridors of Opportunity and beyond

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Start-Scale-Sustain (S3) initiative is building capacity and strengthening business district organizations in five commercial districts
- ▶ S3 participants are completing the final year of the two-year pilot program
- ▶ Staff is building a framework for ongoing support for active business districts in Corridors and other potential neighborhood business districts

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Council Referral



A referral to the Economic Development and Workforce Development Committee to explore opportunities to grow small businesses in commercial corridors and activity centers by supporting local Business District Organizations to further grow and sustain their programs and offerings.

3

Quality of Life Referral

How can the city partner with Mecklenburg County to ensure measures are in place to mitigate small business displacement pressure where infrastructure investments are being made?

(Common Strategies for Small Business Support)

- ▶ **Expand Access to Capital**
- ▶ **Stabilize Commercial Space**
- ▶ **Offer Technical Assistance**
- ▶ **Elevate Visibility & Voice**
- ▶ **Strengthen Ecosystem Connections**



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Business District Organization Strategic Support Update

Previous Council Communication

- ▶ June 5, 2025: JED Committee presentation
- ▶ January 6, 2025: JED Committee presentation
- ▶ November 2023: Council Approved ARPA funding for Corridors investments in Opportunity Hubs and Commercial District Organization

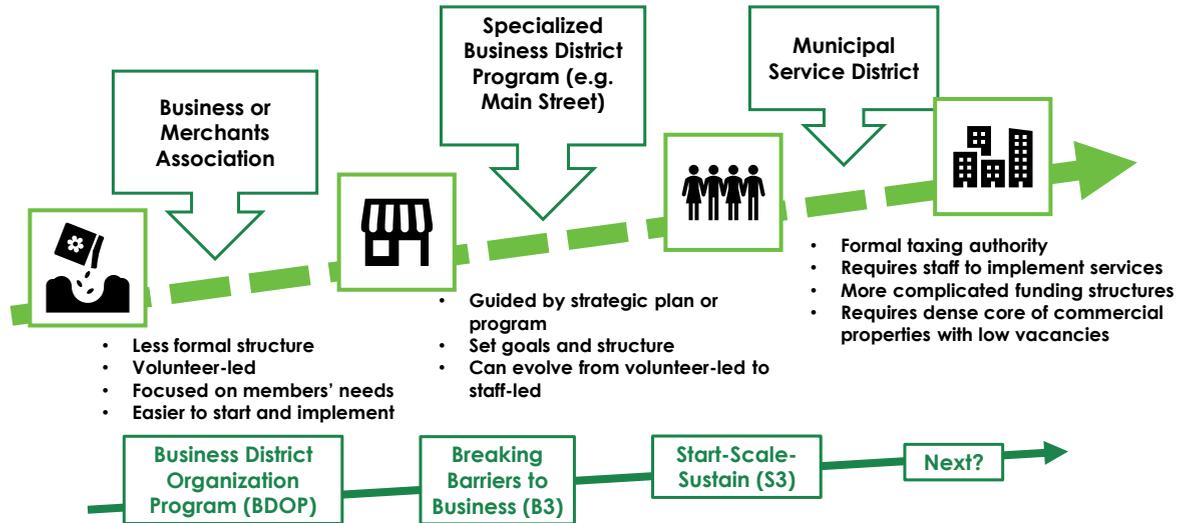
Future Council Action

- ▶ Updates as needed

THRIVING BUSINESS DISTRICTS SUPPORT CITY GOALS

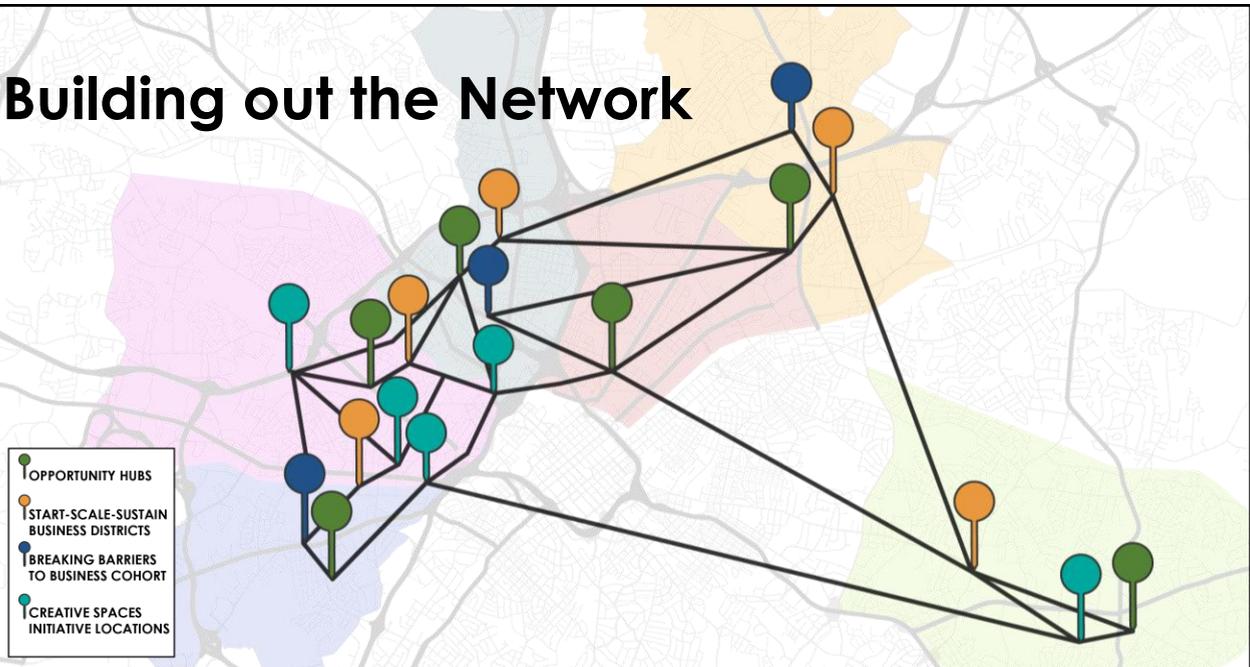
- ▶ **10-Minute Neighborhoods:** meet daily needs within a short walk or bike ride
- ▶ **Diverse and Resilient Economic Opportunity:** micro-enterprises and brick-and-mortar shops with lower-cost commercial space to allow residents to build equity and wealth in their neighborhoods
- ▶ **Retain Culture and Identity:** Business districts tell the community's story. third places create vibrant districts. Businesses provide eyes on the street and support local schools

Supporting Charlotte's Business Districts



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Building out the Network



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Building out the Network:

Support capacity building of Business District Organizations (BDOs) in the Corridors of Opportunity at various stages of development

Start Scale Sustain (S3)

Create a flexible program that provides funding and tailored technical assistance to address their various needs in a progressive approach

S3 Program Goals

► Start

- Establish a collective vision for your business district

► Scale

- Growing the impact on businesses and stakeholders

► Sustain

- Create a vibrant, healthy, and active place to do business

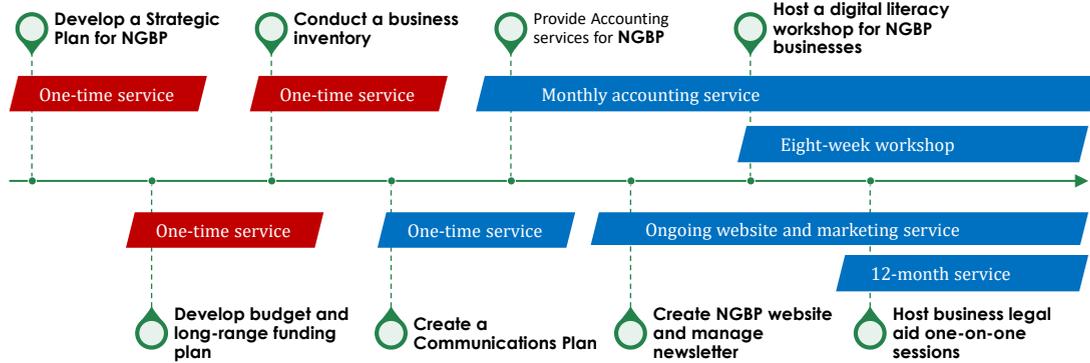
Customized needs assessment and work plan ensures S3 meets organizations where they are

1. Strategic Work *	
a. Organizational Development and Growth	
b. Goal Development	
c. Strategic Plan	
d. Annual work plan and budget	
2. Inventory *	
a. Business Area Study	
i. Boundary Development	
ii. Existing Spaces	
iii. Existing Businesses	
3. Communications	
a. Communication Plan	
b. Website	
c. Marketing	
4. Business Development	
a. Navigating business permitting and licensing	
b. Compliance	
c. Digital literacy training/ E-Commerce	
d. Commercial space development and real estate	
f. Financial/Accounting services	
g. Business needs assessment	
h. Mentorship	
j. Organization Legal Aid	
k. Additional Workshops	
5. Others	
a. Up to 10% of overall funding Must align with intentions of the S3 Grant	
6. Programming (See Grant Guidelines for the Tiers)	
a. Recruitment Event	
b. Partnerships Events	
*Required Activity	

Current options in S3 work plans

How Might it Look Like?

XYZ Business Partners



SUCCESS IN THE FIRST YEAR

	CharlotteEast	Historic West End Partners*	Sugar Creek Business Association*	West/Wilkinson Merchant Association*	QC Family Tree
New Initiatives	Shop Local Initiatives	West End Wednesdays	Business Resource HUB	Business Builders Conference	Here for Good Business Cooperative
Business Canvassed	656	108	120-150	70	-
Businesses Surveyed	150	74	50	-	-
Businesses Inventoried	400-450	75	Business Directory is in development		
Meetings & Workshops	4	19	12-15	18	15
Digital Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42 local and 6 national media placements 575.1K Facebook users 1.3 million Instagram users 500K+ social media views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51 local media hits biweekly newsletter with 68% open rate 3.4K views per month on Instagram 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-8 media mentions 35-50% email open rates 20 social posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched new website + branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated website and social media

*B3 cohort participants receive additional support from Main Street America

Breaking Barriers to Business Cohort (B3)

▶ Three-year cohort funded by Truist Foundation

- Strategic leadership by **Main Street America** and **Living Cities**
- Three corridors + City participating together

▶ Joint work plan with corridors focuses on:

- Corridor safety
- Organization development
- Zoning and commercial development
- Communications
- Implementation through 2026

Beatties Ford/ Rozzelles Ferry

- Historic West End Partners

West Sugar Creek

- Sugar Creek Business Association

West/Wilkinson

- West/Wilkinson Merchants Association



Main Street Approach



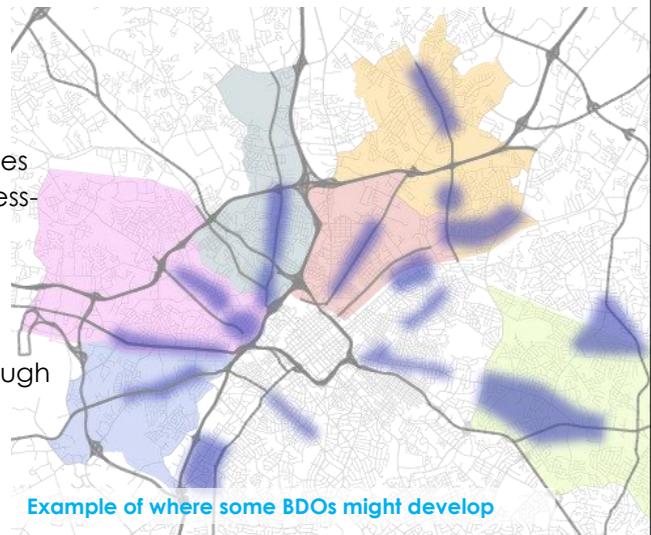
City Coordinating Program

Purpose

- Provide a unified framework for strengthening neighborhood business districts
- Align local district efforts with City priorities
- Build long-term capacity for small business-led revitalization

Goals

- Support vibrant, walkable, and economically resilient corridors
- Reduce barriers for small businesses through coordination and technical support
- Create consistency and accountability across neighborhood business districts Citywide



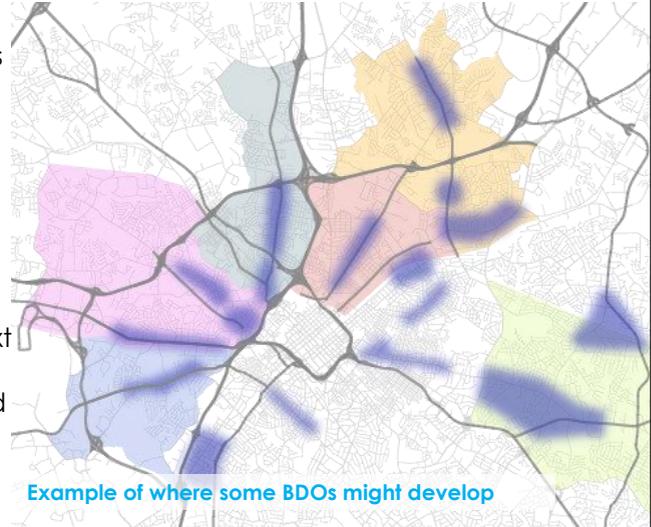
The Main Street Framework

Why Main Street?

- Focuses on existing commercial corridors
- Balances physical improvements with business and organizational capacity
- Emphasizes incremental, place-based change

Adapted to Charlotte

- Mixed use, walkable centers
- Flexibility on Four-Points based on context and neighborhood culture
- Emphasize displacement prevention and access to capital
- Alignment with public investment in mobility



FROM S3 TO CHARLOTTE MAIN STREET

• What S3 Established

- Early-stage district organization and momentum
- Initial programming and relationship building
- Pilot projects and proof of concept

• What Main Street Adds

- Long-term structure and sustainability
- Clear performance measures and accountability
- Deeper integration with City systems and funding



Economic Impact



► Orlando Main Streets

- 12 districts
- \$2.16 billion Reinvested in Improvements
- 2,028 Net New Businesses
- 13,771 Jobs Created
- 164,966 Volunteer Hours Donated



► Washington, D.C.

- 29 districts
- \$358 million Reinvested in Improvements
- 600+ Net New Businesses
- 7,600+ Jobs Created



► National Main Street for 2024

- \$7.65 billion Reinvested in Improvements
- 6,324 Net New Businesses
- 33,835 Jobs Created
- 1.9 million Volunteer Hours Donated



City District Orlando

Launching Soon

► Timeline

- 36-month outlook with no program gaps
- Aligning with mobility, anti-displacement and small business

► Funding

- Use existing COO and CAP funding to launch
- Future need: ongoing commitment to participating business districts

► Partners

- Main Street America
- North Carolina Main Streets
- City of Charlotte
- **Opportunity for additional community and capital partners**

Next 6 months

- MOU with National Main Street and NC Main Street
- Create program brand and identity
- Establish first cohort of Business District Organizations and begin technical assistance

FY 2027-2028

- Four-Point Approach training
- Advanced workshops for established cohort
- Establish City Coordinating Program

FY 2028-2029

- District designation process for participating BDOs
- Membership structure and value proposition established
- Peer partnerships expand program reach and services