

## Table of Contents

<b>Well-Managed Government</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Corridors of Opportunity</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SAFE Charlotte</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Mobility</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Community Area Planning</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Strategic Energy Action Plan (SEAP)</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Arts and Culture</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>HIRE Charlotte</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Small and Minority Business Development</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Digital Divide</b>	<b>32</b>

The Council adopted Well-Managed Government priority remains a foundational focus to review service options, plan to address long-term needs, develop plans designed for maintaining capital affordability, and manage within resources. This priority includes an on-going focus on community engagement, ensuring equity, and the safeguarding the environment in all services the city provides.

The 2024 budget includes a revenue neutral rate of 26.04¢, endorsing a fifth straight year without a tax increase. Charlotte has the lowest city tax rate out of the 15 largest cities in North Carolina.

## **Building a Solid Foundation for Services**

The city continues to build on a foundation of sound resource management as demonstrated by:

- Achieving year-over-year AAA bond ratings
- Maintaining General Fund reserve levels
- Maintaining capital affordability in off-bond year with steady state
- Remaining Employee focused for FY 2024:
  - Increasing minimum pay for all full-time general employees to \$46,200 by January; equivalent of \$22/hour for 40 hour/week employees
  - Providing the greater of \$3,600 or 6% salary increase for all General Hourly Employees (greater of \$1,800 or 3% increases in both July and January)
  - Providing a 4% salary pool for salaried employees
  - Programming pay plan parity for the public safety pay plans of Police and Fire
  - Providing at least an 8% increase for all Police Officers and Sergeants
  - Increasing starting and top pay for Police Officers 10.5% by January
  - Providing a 5.5% to 8% salary increase for Public Safety Pay Plan Firefighters
  - Implementing \$1 per hour on-call pay for officers, sergeants, and hourly employees within CMPD

## **Promoting Equity Across City Services**

To formalize the city's focus on equity and inclusion, Council adopted the Equity in Governance Framework in FY 2023. For FY 2024, there will remain a focus on promoting equity across all services and strengthening connections and engagement with all segments of Charlotte's diverse community. The FY 2024 budget includes funding for an additional position to serve as program manager to support equity work citywide in advancing the equity in government framework, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) action planning, and reviewing city services through an equity lens.

## **Implementing the Structure to Advance Council's Priorities**

Reviewing and optimizing the structure of city services has been fundamental to the city's ability to navigate uncertainty, maintain services to the community, and advance Council's priorities. This foundational work began nearly six years ago and is an on-going effort to streamline services, enhance service provision, and ensure financial sustainability that includes:

- Re-organizing Communications and Marketing, Innovation and Technology, and Human Resources.
- Integrating the Corridors of Opportunity Team and developing the Quality-of-Life Concerns team
- Creating the city's Advanced Planning Program and the Steady State Affordability outlook
- Developing the Department of General Services and consolidating Charlotte Water and Stormwater
- Elevating Charlotte Business INclusion (CBI) to promote and streamline the focus of inclusiveness in city contracting opportunities.
- Adding a Special Assistant within the City Manager's Office to focus on advancing Workforce Development opportunities and advancing upward mobility
- Advancing sustainability initiatives to include Charlotte's first zero-carbon fire station, expanding the city's electric fleet and charging infrastructure, and funding for tree canopy preservation.

## Investing in Employees

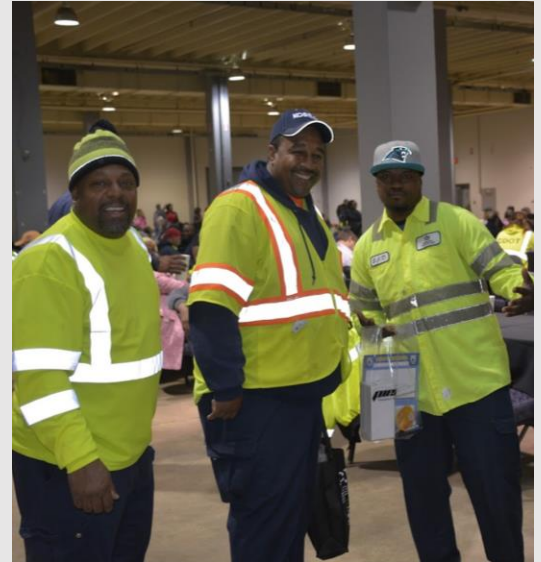
During the 2023 budget development, the city along with many other industries experienced a significant increase in vacancies for hourly positions. This was largely due to increased resignations in service maintenance and skilled craft positions.

The city has made investing in employees a continued priority. Many investments have been made including providing hourly employee with a significant percent increase in compensation over the last two years. The investments in employees have resulted in positive retention trends in retention for most employee categories. With the support of Council actions in FY 2023, the city saw a reduction in vacancy rates for General Hourly and General Salary employees. The FY 2024 budget focused on supporting sworn officers to reduce vacancy rates, increase retention and improve recruitment efforts.

## Building on the Momentum with Employees

The city has maintained a focus to proactively meet the needs of employees. Several strategies have been put into place that are showing results including:

- Removing barriers to upward mobility
  - 160+ employees have taken advantage of prepayment at CPCC
  - Launched ACE Hub to centralize resources and provide proactive support
- Provide customized support for employees
  - 130 employees have worked with city's Career Coach
- Proactively sharing services and meeting employees where they are
  - Launched Career Blitz, Spring 2023
- Increasing 1 on 1 support
  - Expanding career coaching through partnership with CPCC
  - Additional dedicated internal Workforce Development position in Human Resources
- Adding 29 Apprentice roles
- 100 apprentices and Career and Training Academy graduates still employed with the city
- Nearly 20 certified apprenticeships citywide



## Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Tune Up

In 2022, the 20-year anniversary of the creation of the HTF, staff initiated a “HTF Tune-Up” to identify process improvements and updated approaches to help ensure that the \$50m of HTF funds authorized by voters in November 2022 are deployed 1) efficiently (i.e., leveraging partnerships and other funding sources in a challenging market environment) and 2) in alignment with Council’s priorities.

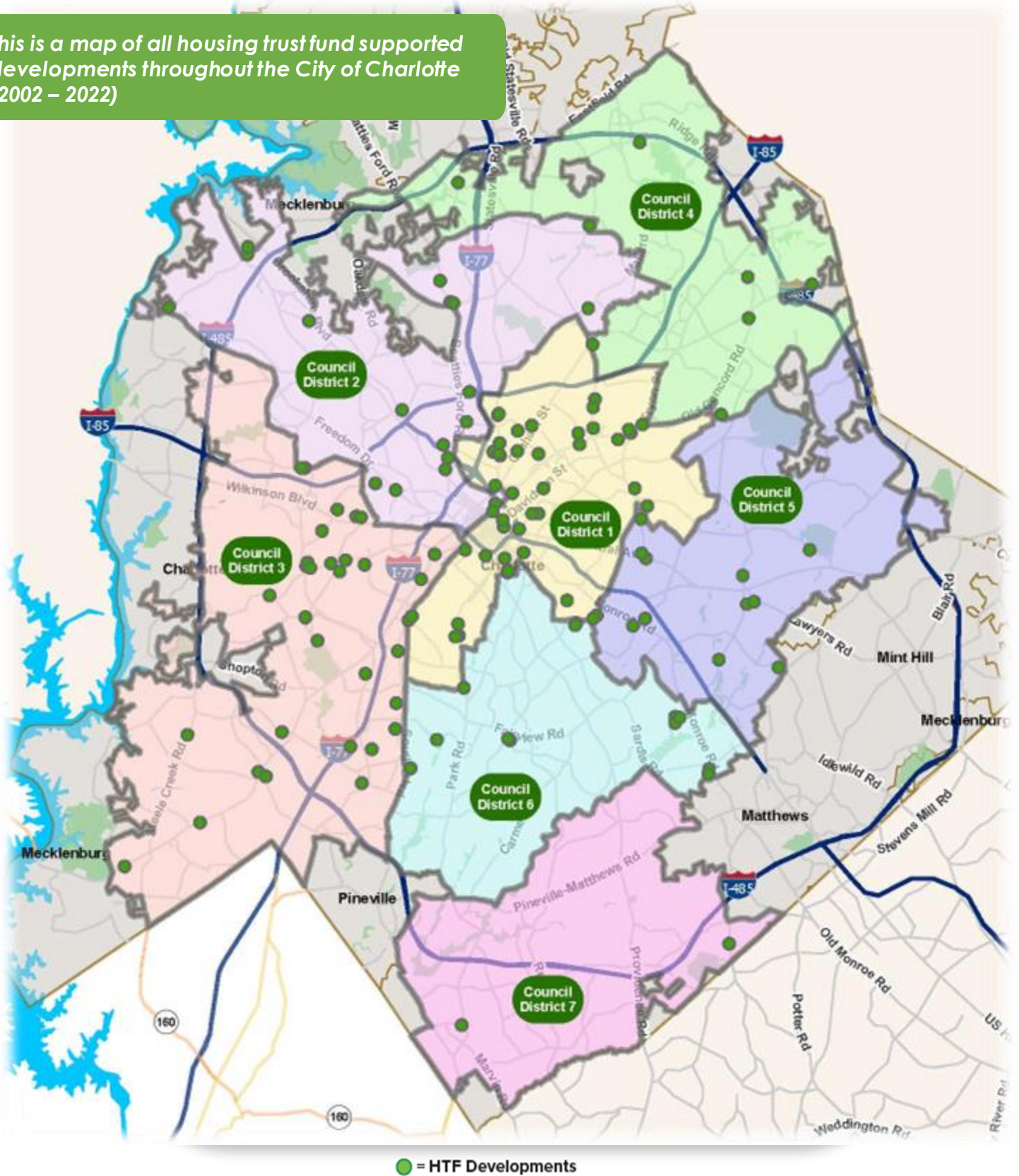
Staff has kept the Housing, Safety and Community Committee informed of the status of the HTF Tune-Up, with the final briefing on this topic in April 2023. As shared with the Committee, staff incorporated certain Tune-Up enhancements into the Winter 2023 HTF RFP concluded in April, and the Summer 2023 HTF RFP currently underway. Below is a summary of key enhancements reflected in the Winter 2023 HTF RFP, culminating in Council’s April 2023 approval of eight affordable housing projects supporting over 600 affordable units, and the Summer 2023 HTF RFP that will result in funding recommendations for Council consideration in September:

- 1 Council’s Source of Income Protection Policy (approved in 2022) applicable to all HTF awards (i.e., requiring fair treatment for households with rental subsidies),
- 2 At least 10 percent of the units targeted to 30 percent AMI households must be rented to voucher holders,
- 3 HTF awards reflect firm funding commitment expiration dates (to avoid having HTF funds unutilized for unreasonably long periods),
- 4 Additional evaluation criteria established for new construction multi-family developments, to underscore the City of Charlotte’s emphasis on supporting projects that deliver cost-effective, long-term affordability, and where possible to layer federal funding – such as CDBG – as another source of gap financing to complement the locally funded HTF.

The HTF Tune-Up also called for the creation of new funding pathway opportunities for naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) and land acquisition (for affordable housing development) in strategic locations. The City of Charlotte posted a NOAH RFP on May 19, 2023. The RFP will remain open throughout the year (due to the opportunistic nature of NOAH), unlike the traditional biannual HTF RFP that has a fixed response deadline. Staff funding recommendations related to the NOAH RFP will be presented to Council as opportunities with strong value propositions emerge. Staff expects to post a land acquisition RFP in the fourth quarter of calendar year 2023.



This is a map of all housing trust fund supported developments throughout the City of Charlotte (2002 – 2022)



## Housing and Jobs Summit

Key themes in support of the production and preservation of affordable housing emerged through Council feedback at the Summit as well as numerous housing-related discussions at Committee and Council meetings during the past year. Housing-specific areas of Council interest that staff plan to explore during 2023 and beyond include (note that areas of interest below are not listed in priority order):



### **Cost of regulation**

During the housing-related break-out exercise at the Summit, there was considerable focus on the cost of regulation (imposed by all levels of government) and what actions the City of Charlotte could consider to reduce regulatory burdens that increase the cost of affordable housing projects.

### **Economic mobility for residents in city-supported housing**

While this is not a pure housing strategy, many Council members and housing partners reinforced the value of layering traditional housing investments with economic mobility investments (e.g., supports related to jobs, childcare, transportation)

### **Increase landlord acceptance of rental subsidies/vouchers**

Last year, City Council adopted source of income protections for city-supported housing developments. There are additional opportunities to reduce barriers to landlord acceptance of voucher holders in non-city-supported housing, an area of focus consistent with the recommendations of the Council-appointed Source of Income Ad Hoc Advisory Committee that completed its charge in 2022, and this emphasis dovetails with near-term priorities reflected in the implementation plan for the A Home for All initiative spearheaded by Mecklenburg County.

### **Educate communities on tools to mitigate the impact of growth in corporate buyers/landlords**

While the city lacks the authority to prevent corporate buyers from purchasing and renting homes, mandatory HOAs in North Carolina can (with the appropriate restrictive covenants in place) take actions to deter corporate buyers. The City of Charlotte held an education workshop in early 2023, to help neighborhoods understand the tools they can establish or activate to address such concerns, and the Housing and Neighborhood Services Department recently launched a pilot grant program to support eligible HOAs seeking legal services to amend governing documents to deter corporate buyers. Emerging recommendations from the NEST Commission – such as the expansion of the Acquire, Rehab and Resell program – may also be responsive to the City’s desire to preserve access to affordable homeownership in neighborhoods vulnerable to displacement.

### **Identify affordable housing incentives that do not require upfront capital investments by the city**

While the HTF continues to be a valuable tool to advance the production and preservation of affordable housing, there are other incentives and funding sources that can be explored as we seek to scale our affordable housing work. For example, a tax increment grant model, implemented in collaboration with Mecklenburg County, could be structured to achieve affordable units in market-rate locations throughout Charlotte, with an annual subsidy payment made as a percentage of future incremental property tax revenue created by the new housing development.



## Housing and Jobs Summit, Cont.

### **Advance innovative public-private sector funding models such as “Teamforce Housing”**

Under a “Teamforce Housing” model, mixed-use affordable housing units are developed in partnership with a large employer. The large employer would provide gap funding to create affordability in the development, and eligible employees could then access a portion of the affordable units. Atrium Health recently piloted a such a program, in partnership with Ascent Housing, and this type of model directly connects the city’s housing and jobs priorities.

### **Advance homeownership opportunities for low and moderate-income residents**

Opportunities exist to expand City of Charlotte programming such as House Charlotte (down payment and other financial assistance) and the Acquire, Rehab and Resell program (designed to provide affordable for-sale housing with long-term affordability requirements). In response to home cost and mortgage rate increases, in early 2023 Housing and Neighborhood Services successfully piloted an enhanced down payment assistance program - "House Charlotte Plus" - in Corridors of Opportunity areas of influence, providing up to an additional \$50,000 of down payment assistance above what is currently available (up to \$30,000) in the standard program.

### **Leverage strategic land acquisition and city-owned land for affordable housing**

The use of city-owned land for the development of affordable housing is a national best practice to expand the creation of affordable housing. Opportunities exist to advance a strategy that identifies and preserves strategic locations for affordable housing development. This approach could combine the use of city-owned land and acquisition of key sites such as TOD-zoned sites.



## Anti-Displacement

### NEST Commission

The Charlotte Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization Commission (NEST) was established in 2022 for a three-year period and is charged with reviewing and recommending specific anti-displacement strategies and tools for protecting residents of moderate to high vulnerability of displacement. NEST has organized its members around three workstreams:

- Understanding the Impacts of the UDO – e.g., density [duplex and triplex] implications
- Lay of the Land – e.g., land acquisition
- Program Improvements and Policy Gaps – e.g., property tax assistance

The NEST Commission will share an initial batch of recommendations with the Housing, Safety and Community Committee in September 2023, following on the anti-displacement strategy discussed below.

### Anti-Displacement Strategy

City staff worked with the NEST Commission, community stakeholders, and consultant support to develop an anti-displacement strategy that was shared with the Housing, Safety and Community Committee in June 2023. The strategy aligns with City Council priorities and initiatives, builds from the current Housing Charlotte Framework, and is inclusive of recommendations from the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Silver Line Transit-Oriented Development Study, and the NEST Commission. Next steps for the anti-displacement strategy include standing up an online resource hub for residents and engaging with neighborhoods to tailor anti-displacement tools to their unique context and need



### Staying In Place

The Housing, Safety, and Community Committee, and City Council, received multiple updates during the past year regarding the efforts to advance the Staying In Place pilot program launched in 2021. Staying In Place is a collaborative approach to provide opportunities to residents who want to stay in their neighborhoods to do so, while preserving housing affordability for future generations. While Staying In Place was launched as a pilot program in three neighborhoods – Hidden Valley, Washington Heights, and Winterfield – in the future, Staying In Place is not meant to be a program that moves from neighborhood to neighborhood, but rather it should become the way the city provides holistic services (i.e., everything from housing rehab, to large tree removal, to energy efficiency, to access to supportive services, etc.).



## A Home for All

“A Home For All: Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s Strategy to End and Prevent Homelessness” was spearheaded by Mecklenburg County and Charlotte Center City Partners in 2021 as a comprehensive effort to address housing instability and homelessness, with broad representation from the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

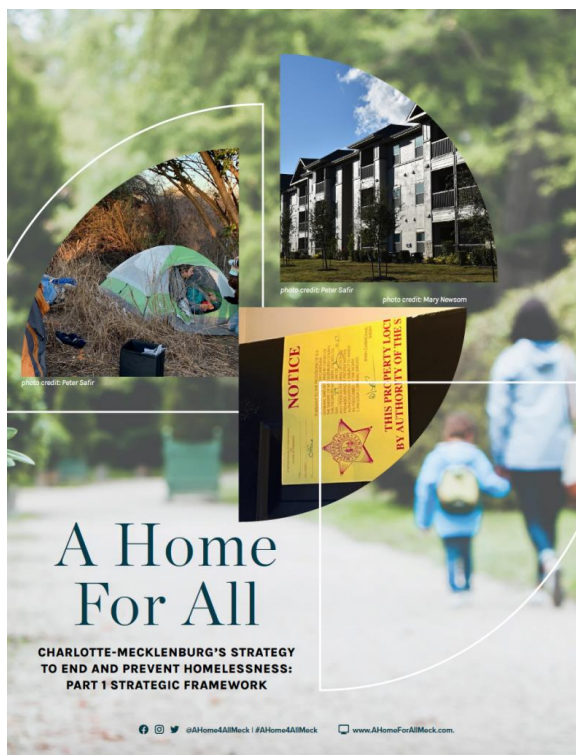
The long-term aspirational goal of the initiative is to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring, and that everyone has access to affordable housing and the resources to sustain it.

Mecklenburg County selected the United Way of Central Carolinas to serve as the lead agency responsible for producing and enacting an Implementation Plan to advance this initiative. Working teams were assembled to determine prioritized and actionable initiatives that will be included in the final Implementation Plan. The plan will also include a fundraising strategy to support the execution of these initiatives.

The Housing, Safety and Community Committee and City Council has been kept apprised of the status of the Implementation Plan work, with the most recent update in May 2023. At the appropriate time, any city-related policy and/or funding recommendations expected in the Implementation Plan will be brought forward for Council awareness and consideration.

The Implementation Plan was released in the summer of 2023, with near-term priority areas including:

1. Systems navigation – for those who are homeless or housing insecure – to enhance the model necessary to successfully navigate to housing stability.
2. Critical home repair – building on the City of Charlotte’s existing programming – to enable low/moderate income homeowners to make necessary home repairs.
3. Eviction prevention, through enhanced access to legal advocacy and emergency rental relief.
4. Landlord recruitment and retention, to increase the available pool of landlords willing to provide units to voucher holders.



## Summary of Available Housing Funding as of August 16, 2023

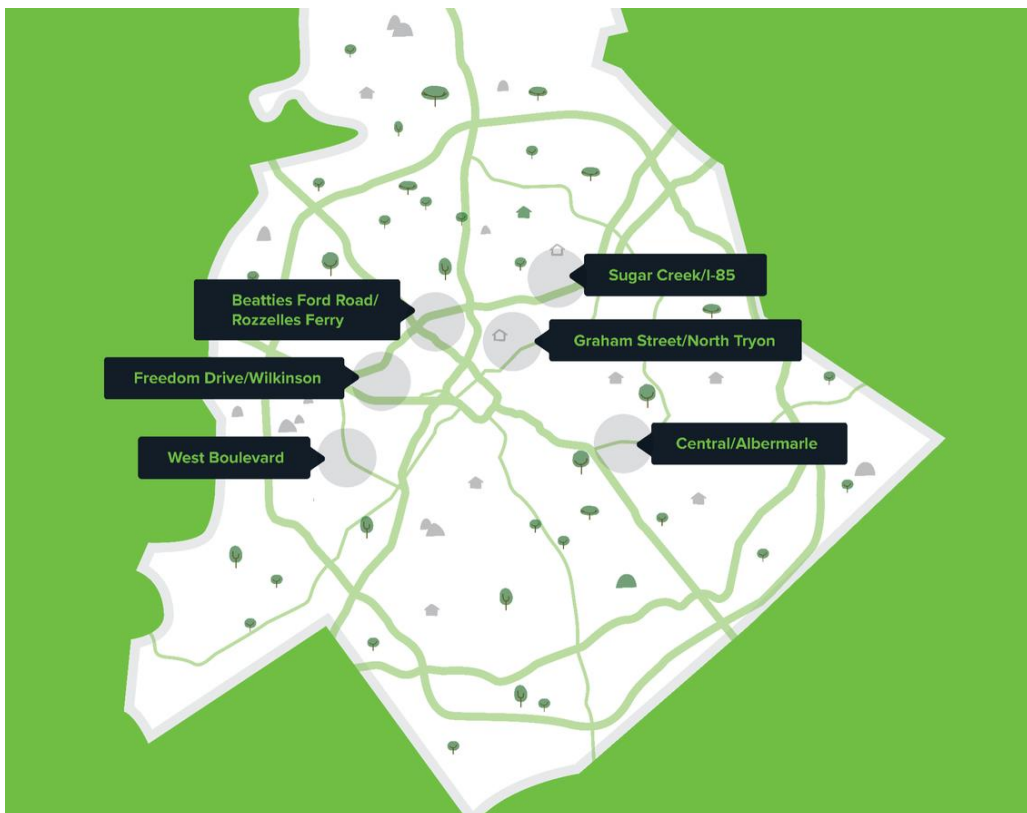
Source	Current Balance	Notes
Housing Trust Fund	\$22m	Current balance is net of HTF funds awarded to six projects on April 24, 2023, and the Charlotte Woods NOAH project
American Rescue Plan	\$6.4m	Current balance is <u>net</u> of the following pending item: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$6.5m associated with the Housing Support Grant program to be discussed with City Council on August 28, 2023</li> </ul>
PAY-As-You-Go (PAYGO)	\$4.5m	Reserved for anti-displacement efforts (with emphasis on Corridors of Opportunity).
Emergency Assistance (federal stimulus)	\$4.0m	Funds reserved primarily to address sudden, large-scale displacement events.
HOME-ARP (federal stimulus)	\$1.0m	Funds must be used in support of residents that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$37.9m</b>	

**Note:** In addition to the funds referenced above, the city also receives yearly federal allocations (i.e., CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA) that are used to fund a wide range of city housing programming such as down payment assistance, rehabilitation, and homeless services.

## Framework

The City of Charlotte's Corridors of Opportunity (Corridors) program has coordinated over \$70m in investments to create safe, prosperous communities in six key corridors within Charlotte to build legacies for future generations. The six corridors are West Boulevard; Beatties Ford/Rozzelles Ferry; Sugar Creek/I-85; Graham Street/North Tryon; Central/Albermarle; and Freedom Drive/Wilkinson.

The Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative is working towards an equitable city through social justice, racial equity, economic opportunity, and upward mobility. The Corridors program is one of four identified work streams with which to achieve this vision. The three other areas are: bridging the digital divide, transforming Johnson C. Smith University, and an employer commitment to advance more black and brown leaders. This partnership enables the city to continue to leverage private sector funds and commitments to support the Corridors of Opportunity.



## Vision

**Community-**  
Strengthening connections amongst residents and businesses to catalyze growth.

**Legacy-**  
Ensuring success for generations to come, short term and long term.

**Prosperity-**  
Providing each corridor with resources and services that sets the corridor and its residents up for success.

## Why These Six Corridors?

The City of Charlotte has one of the most prosperous economies in the nation, but there are areas in Charlotte that struggle with high levels of poverty and unemployment. The Corridors of Opportunity include six areas of historic underinvestment. Communities of color represent nearly 80 percent of residents in the six Corridors of Opportunity. Corridor residents also tend to be younger than the city as a whole. Youth/young adult unemployment is high in the corridors (e.g., 1 in 3 residents aged 16-24 in Beatties Ford corridors are unemployed.)



The corridors work has accelerated in 2023 to further focus on the strategic goals of the program as outlined in the Charlotte Future 2040 Plan. The goals of the corridors, along with the programs, partnerships, and projects, are organized within six of the 10 Goals in the 2040 Plan:

- Connecting the Natural and Built Environment; Diverse and Resilient Economic Opportunity; Housing Access for All; Retain Culture and Identity; Safe, Active, and Healthy Communities; and Safe and Equitable Mobility

To support the city’s work, a Corridors implementation team with 60+ members from nine city and three county departments efficiently works with Corridors communities to identify and implement impactful projects. This exciting time for Corridors reiterates the importance of cross-collaboration internally and externally.

## 2023 Corridor Highlights

- Further strengthened partnerships with local non-profits and private entities to boost impact. Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Knight Foundation, United Way, Fifth Third Bank, Foundation for the Carolinas, Wells Fargo, Lowe’s and more meet regularly to form the Neighborhood Investment Advisory Committee (NIAC) to influence and coordinate efforts.
- Completed the North Tryon/North Graham Playbook, began implementation in Albemarle and Sugar Creek, continued implementation in West Boulevard and Beatties Ford Road
- Awarded \$12m RAISE Grant for Sugar Creek Mobility Corridor
  - The project includes three mobility hubs, EV charging stations, new multi-use path and sidewalk, improved intersections and pedestrian crossings along 3.5-miles of West Sugar Creek Road
- Awarded the Breaking Barriers to Business Grant by the Truist Foundation
  - Implemented in West Boulevard, Sugar Creek and Beatties Ford Road
  - Grant focuses on building community-based business organizations
- Selected for the Thriving Communities Program, a federal technical assistance program
  - Implemented in all corridors
- Awarded over \$3m in matching funds to complete major mobility infrastructure gap projects in the Sugar Creek and Albemarle Corridors
- Launched quarterly street clean ups in Sugar Creek, Tuckaseegee/Freedom, and Albemarle Corridors in partnership with Keep Charlotte Beautiful.
- Achieved a key goal in the Sugar Creek Playbook with purchase and conversion of Economy Inn hotel at I-85 interchange. Redevelopment of the site is underway that aims to build new for-sale affordable townhomes.

## Looking Ahead

In the FY 2024 Adopted Budget, the Corridors Program received \$5m to continue the implementation work through community driven programs, partnerships and projects. The team will begin engagement on the Freedom/Wilkinson Playbook in August and look to complete the playbook by the end of calendar year 2023.



In October 2020, Charlotte City Council unanimously voted to approve the six recommendations identified in the SAFE Charlotte report. Since that time, the city has taken an “All In Approach” to reimagine policing while working collaboratively with our community partners to address safety in our neighborhoods. The Charlotte community understands that a safer Charlotte goes beyond changes to public safety and policing. It means investing with partners to identify and address systemic challenges to ensure a community of equity and opportunity.

## SAFE Charlotte Recommendations



- Provide \$1m from the city’s current budget to help Charlotte-based non-profits address violence in the community.
- Work with an external partner to develop a comprehensive recommendation to convert low-risk sworn duties to non-uniform units.
- Work with an external partner to provide an independent analysis to include areas such as police-civilian contact and police calls and responses.
- Expand the Community Policing Crisis Response Team (CPCRT) and develop a non-sworn officer responder model for mental health and homeless calls.
- Engage a university or independent organization to evaluate selected youth programs on an annual basis.
- Enhance recruitment efforts and develop a program to provide additional residency incentives to officers living in priority areas, including a down payment incentive.

## Supporting Reimagining Policing - Our Progress

- Launched the civilian response: the Community Assistance: Engage, Respond, Support (CARES) Team where mental health clinicians respond to low-risk calls for service in the Central Division; the team expanded to Metro Division in June 2023
- Doubled the number of co-responder teams from six to 12. These teams pair a clinician with an officer to respond to higher-risk mental health calls
- Improved internal police processes to identify officers who exhibit disproportionality in their interactions with the community
- Enhanced data collection for youth programs in preparation for an external evaluation for program efficacy
- Strengthened reporting for Internal Affairs and Use of Force and increasing publicly available data
- Added four civilian positions at the Training Academy, and have filled three positions
  - One Training Specialist
  - Two Division Training Specialist
  - One Law Enforcement Training Specialist

## Addressing Violence with our Community



- Invested \$3m over three years to partner with community organizations to address violence
- Partnered with Mecklenburg County to launch Alternatives to Violence, Charlotte’s local version of a violence interrupter program leveraging the internationally known “Cure Violence” methodology
- Beatties Ford Road was the first site identified for this program
  - A Year 1 review conducted by UNC Charlotte identified a statistically significant reduction in homicides with a firearm for the Beatties Ford Road area compared to similar neighborhoods
- Leveraging an additional \$2m through a congressional appropriation made by Representative Alma Adams to expand Alternatives to Violence to the Nations Ford/Arrowood and West Boulevard/Remount Road areas.
  - Youth Advocate Programs will continue implementing ATV along Beatties Ford, and was selected as the implementing agency for West Boulevard/Remount Road.
  - Urban League has been selected as the implementing agency for Nations Ford/Arrowood
- Launched a hospital-based intervention program with Atrium Health to provide case management and wrap around services to individual who come into the emergency room as victims of violence
  - FY 2024 Adopted budget includes \$250,000 to be matched with \$250,000 from Atrium to continue this program
  - Charlotte is one of the only cities in the country to have both hospital and community-based violence intervention programs





**Creating a mobility network isn't just about transportation and transit. It's about upward mobility and equity. It's about health and sustainability. It's about safety. It's about the economy and jobs.**

## Charlotte's Strategic Mobility Plan

In June 2022, Charlotte City Council adopted the Charlotte **Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP)**. The mobility vision is ambitious - to offer everyone in the city safe and equitable mobility choices. The fulfillment of this vision will shape the future of how people move in Charlotte and can only be fulfilled through partnership with mobility stakeholders in the community. The commitments are as follows:

- Continuing the city's **commitment of Vision Zero** to be a community that ensures and prioritizes the safety of all who share Charlotte's streets.
- Establishing a **50-50 mode share aspiration** to be a community that balances mobility choices and transitions away from car dependency.
- **Expanding transit throughout the city** to be a community that makes rail and bus trips faster, more reliable, and a natural part of how the community travels.
- Preparing for the future of mobility to be a community on the **leading edge of the on-going technological transformation** of urban mobility.

## Regional Mobility

### Innovative, bold, and regional.

In February 2020, Centralina Regional Council, CATS and the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) launched the region's first coordinated bistate transit system planning process. The project area includes 12 counties in a geographic area covering over 5,000 square miles, a population of roughly 2.5 million people and 17 separate transit agencies.

The plan aims to:

- Improve mobility and access
- Create new transportation efficiencies
- Identify ways to connect more communities regionally
- Lead future collaboration and problem-solving

At the core of CONNECT Beyond's recommendations is the implementation of Charlotte's Strategic Mobility Plan which will allow the region to build a successful mobility network from the inside out.

### MORE THAN A TRANSIT SYSTEM

The Network includes:

**Rapid Transit Corridors:** High-capacity corridors and technology including light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit and streetcar

**Bus Priority System:** High-frequency network highlighted by 15-minute service or better on more than 20 key routes, enhanced reliability and mobility hubs

**Micro-Transit:** An on-demand, flexible approach to providing first and last mile connections

**Greenway System:** An integrated system to connect neighborhoods and services

**Bicycle Network:** An expansive cross-county network for bicycles, scooters and emerging technology for commuting

**Pedestrian Walkability:** Creating a safe pedestrian environment with convenient access to daily needs and mobility options

**Roadway Network:** A designed network to provide safe multimodal options to manage areas of congestion



**CONNECT  
Beyond**  
A Regional Mobility Initiative

## The Charlotte State of Mobility (2022)

### Balancing Tradeoffs

- Successfully balancing tradeoffs to support greater transportation equity will be a defining challenge for Charlotte and the region. As Charlotte grows, needs increase, and available roadway space becomes more constrained. As a result, the tradeoffs necessary to support transportation equity interests are becoming more and more challenging.
- Priorities like Vision Zero, minimizing traffic congestion, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, supporting efficient commute times, and managing growth are often in competition, and they require thoughtful tradeoff decisions.
- One commonality amongst these competing interests is that they point toward a need for an aggressive and overarching mode shift target to create meaningful change. Mode shift means decreasing the percentage of Charlotteans who drive in cars alone and increasing the percentage who uses other forms of transportation (transit, walking, biking, carpooling, micro mobility/shared mobility, and teleworking). Through the adopted Strategic Mobility Plan, the city set an aspirational target of 50-50, with half trips made by other means than single occupancy vehicle.
- Creating a more sustainable distribution of travel supports transportation equity and affordability. It reduces reliance on driving, which supports goals around climate, congestion, and growth management, and safety.

### Mobility for the Future

- In just the past decade, Charlotte's transportation system has been disrupted by a variety of factors including regional population growth, ride-share services, bike share and e-scooter programs, extreme weather events, cyber-attacks, and the COVID-19 pandemic. A more balanced transportation approach – one that supports a variety of different modes of transportation by investing more heavily in the transportation choices – is the best way to position Charlotte's citywide transportation network to respond to shifting travel patterns and prepare for future disruptions. As technology, initiatives, and motivations change within Charlotte, the nation, and the world, emerging trends present opportunities, such as shared mobility, micro-mobility, and micro transit.

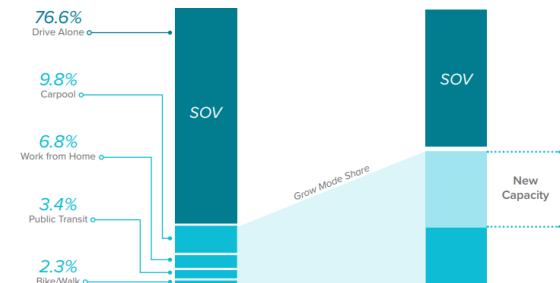
### Access to Mobility and Affordability

- About 21,600 Charlotte households do not have a car at home. In a city like Charlotte, which has been designed and developed for vehicular travel, it is very difficult to move through the city without a vehicle. This is especially true for those within vulnerable communities who are less likely to be able to afford a vehicle. The highest concentrations of low wage households are primarily within the Arc. Almost 21,600 households in Charlotte don't have a vehicle at home, and the vast majority of these households are within the Arc.

### Driving our Region's Economic Engine

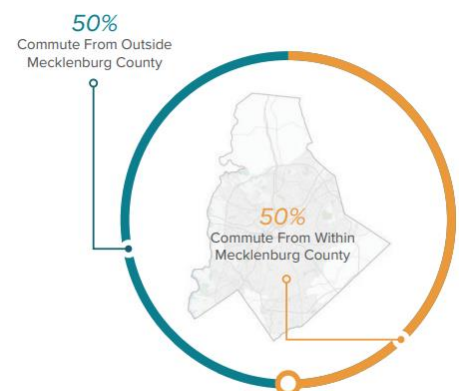
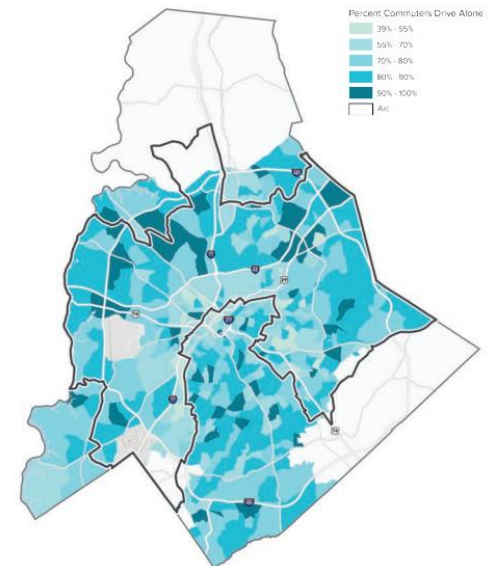
- Charlotte is the economic engine of a region of over 2.6M people (U.S. Census. Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia MSA. 2019 est.). As the center of the region, how the city invests in its mobility network has significant effects beyond Charlotte's borders. Roughly half of Charlotte's employment base commutes from homes outside of Mecklenburg County.

### TRAVEL PATTERNS AND MODE



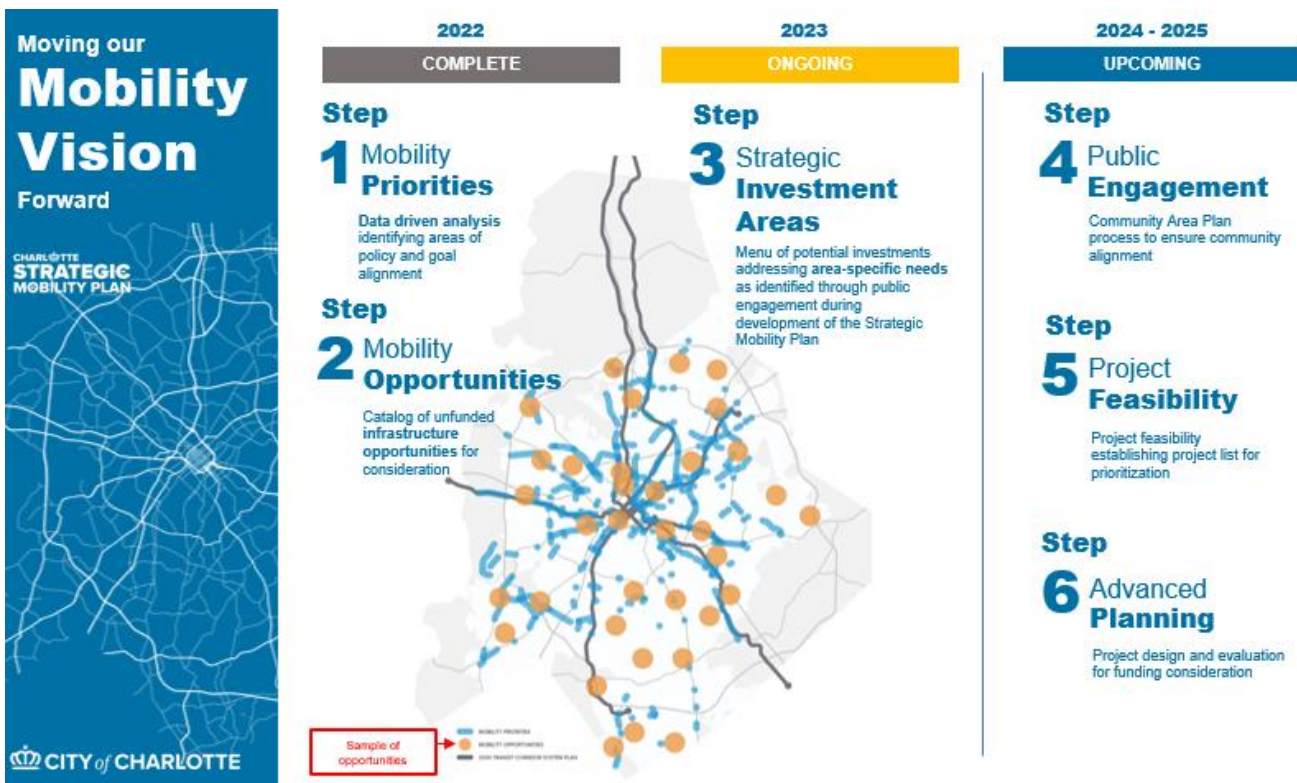
### Single-Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) Distribution

In general, the farther you live from Uptown, the more likely you are to drive alone to work. This is especially true on the northern side of the city, within the Arc. Higher SOV percentages are also seen closer to Uptown in areas outside of the Arc, particularly those areas south of Uptown. The area immediately surrounding Uptown (but within the Arc) is representative of people who are least likely to use SOV travel for their daily commute. Many of these areas also correlate to areas where there are higher percentages of households without access to a vehicle.



## Blueprint for Charlotte Mobility (2023)

- The **Blueprint for Charlotte Mobility Investment** is a summary of more than 2,000 **Identified Mobility Opportunities** across the city and is **the first time we have developed a citywide comprehensive list of mobility opportunities for all modes**.
- This blueprint demonstrates the scale of opportunities and potential investment across the city in road, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure necessary to support our strategy for a connected mobility network.
- The next steps are to determine the feasibility of the mobility opportunities and to identify **Strategic Investment Areas**. These areas are a coordinated package of mobility investments that are big and small and, short and long-term potential projects. Through the **Community Area Planning (CAP)** process, Charlotte will re-engage the community to get input on these **Strategic Investment Areas** to ensure community priorities are aligned with future mobility investments.
- The final step is to move a list of prioritized projects into our **Advanced Planning** program for detailed design work and cost estimates.





## Overview

The *Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan* was adopted by Council in June 2021. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that provides a policy framework that will guide the city's decision-making and investment in both the near and long term. The planning process was guided by a focus on equitable growth and by the residents of Charlotte, staff and leaders of the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and regional partners to prioritize what is most important to the Charlotte community.

The next step in implementing the Comprehensive Plan is to develop Community Area Plans which will provide more detailed strategies for creating great places, transportation, infrastructure, community facilities, and amenities. The approach for this work, recommended within the Comprehensive Plan, establishes an achievable method to create current community area plans for the entire community, facilitate conversations between neighborhoods, and allow major barriers that often serve as neighborhood boundaries to be addressed in the planning process. The goal is to complete Community Area Plans for all 14 geographies within approximately 2-3 years (including Council Adoption).

### Process

Community Area Planning began in January 2023. The goal is to complete a draft plan for each geography within two years and in five (5) phases:

#### Phase 1: Setting the Stage

Identify a community's priorities for action by evaluating the area's Equity Metrics which are essential to ensuring each community plays a role in creating an equitable city for all. Equity Metrics are defined by the Comprehensive Plan's Equitable Growth Framework (EGF) as an area's access to housing, job opportunities, essential goods, services, and environmental impacts.

#### Phase 2: Create Great Places

Ensure future development supports a community's priorities by matching the new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) zoning designations with recommendations for future growth as defined by Place Types (per the Charlotte Future 2040 Policy Map).

#### Phase 3: Support the Vision

Recommend projects and programs to support a community's priorities. Potential projects may include needed infrastructure improvements as well as potential public/private partnerships. Program recommendations will identify the need for supporting city and county services.

#### Phase 4: Plan for Action

Develop an implementation strategy to address a community's priorities. The implementation strategy will outline specific short- and long-term steps that can be taken by public and private entities so the desired future in the plan may be realized.

#### Phase 5: Review & Adoption

Begin public review and comment phase with elected/appointed officials. The community will have an opportunity to share their feedback on the 14 Community Area Plan before Council adoption.

## Expected Outcomes

The expected outcome of this effort will be 14 Community Area Plans which provide guidance for future development and needed investments. These plans will be used to inform decisions about capital investments, development requests, and public-private partnerships as well as by others involved in shaping the built environment.

## Community Engagement

The engagement strategy for this effort will build upon the goals and standards established during the development of the *Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan* which connected with over 500,000 stakeholders. Community Area Planning engagement will be **Equitable** and **Inclusive**:

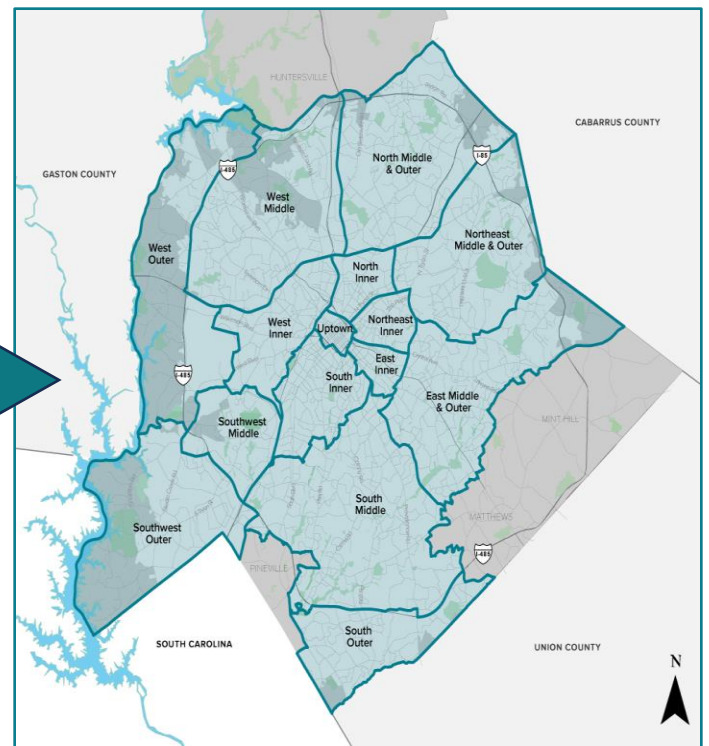
- **Equitable** engagement recognizes that underserved populations need different opportunities to provide feedback in a community process, including different engagement tactics and times.
- **Inclusive** engagement recognizes that everyone’s voice is important, and a variety of engagement tactics are required to reach and involve as many stakeholders as possible.

Please visit [www.cltfuture2040.com](http://www.cltfuture2040.com) to learn more about the various in-person and online engagement opportunities for Community Area Planning.

**2040 Comprehensive Plan**  
Citywide Guidance  
Adopted June 2021



**2040 Community Area Plans**  
Community Specific Guidance



The City of Charlotte's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) simplifies, consolidates, and updates the regulations that guide Charlotte's development into a single document. It serves an important part in implementing the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan policies and builds from other city policies, including the Strategic Mobility Plan, the Charlotte Streets Map, the Strategic Energy Action Plan, and the Tree Canopy Action Plan. The UDO aims to make development standards easier to understand through the increased use of common language and graphics. The UDO was adopted on August 22, 2022 by the Charlotte City Council and became effective on June 1, 2023.

## UDO Text Amendments

Planning staff proposed text amendments to the UDO prior to the effective date. On May 15, City Council adopted a "clean-up" text amendment to the UDO to add clarity and make minor corrections. The need for this text amendment was anticipated and discussed with Council during the UDO adoption process. Council also adopted a text amendment for Land Clearing and Inert Debris (LCID) landfills. This text amendment limited the locations of and strengthened the requirements for these landfills.

Staff has continued to monitor the roll-out of the UDO and identify potential future amendments to ensure that the UDO regulations implement the vision set by the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Since the UDO went into effect, two additional text amendments have been filed. The first one was approved on August 21 by City Council. It clarifies that existing single family and duplex dwelling are allowed in the Office Flex Campus (OFC) and the General Commercial (CG) districts. The second text amendment, which will be scheduled for public hearing in the fall, will allow multi-family development in Commercial (CG and CR) districts.

As additional policy-based text amendments are developed and recommended by staff, the UDO Advisory Committee will provide feedback on these text amendments. Staff is currently considering changes to the uses in the Campus zoning districts and a new general office district. In addition, staff is also reviewing the standards for large projects of duplexes and triplexes, as requested by Council. All proposed text amendments will include an opportunity for public comment and will follow the standard text amendment process with a public hearing and Zoning Committee recommendation, and then consideration by City Council.

## Zoning Map Changes

### Zoning Translation (Occurred on June 1, 2023 Effective Date)

Per the adopted UDO, all existing conventional zoning districts automatically translated to the corresponding UDO zoning districts on the effective date of June 1, 2023. All properties that were translated to the new UDO districts are now required to adhere to the newly adopted UDO regulations. Conditional zoning districts did not translate to a UDO zoning district and remain as a conditional approval.

### Alignment Rezoning (Occurs from 2023 to 2026)

The UDO establishes new zoning districts based on the Place Types per the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The alignment rezoning process will evaluate post-translated zoning designations for consistency with Place Types designations. Additional zoning changes may be recommended where the translated zoning districts do not currently align with or meet the intent of the 2040 Policy Map. Through this process staff will assess if there are areas that need refinement, an essential step to ensuring the zoning regulations implement the policy (2040 Policy Map).

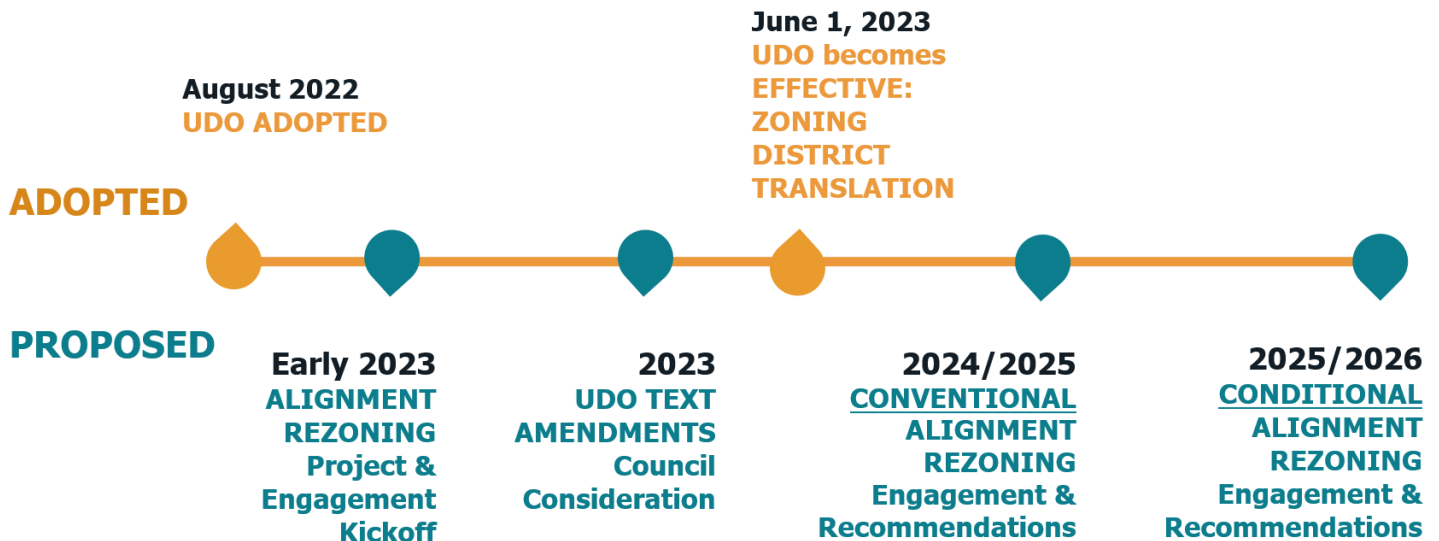


The ultimate goal of the Alignment Rezoning project is to put development standards into place to achieve the vision of the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan and associated 2040 Policy Map. This additional process is needed to specifically review and match zoning districts to the place types in the Council-adopted 2040 Policy Map.

Aligning zoning districts to the 2040 Policy Map:

- Removes outdated regulatory limitations and
- Provides regulations to meet the vision established in 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Community Area Planning (CAP) and Alignment Rezoning (ARZ) are companion efforts and play an important role in providing for growth and change in Charlotte. These two efforts will work together to match zoning regulations with the community’s recommendations for future development. While these efforts both play an important role in providing for the growth in Charlotte, they are two separate processes with different project scopes and expected outcomes.



Engagement is vital to the success of both the CAP and ARZ processes. There will be coordinated opportunities for the community to provide input which will ultimately revise the Policy Map and Official Zoning Map. During 2023, the alignment rezoning project will work in conjunction with the Community Area Planning efforts to educate and inform the community on UDO zoning districts and the Alignment Rezoning project.

Staff will be engaging the community and making alignment rezoning recommendations for conventional zoning in 2024 and 2025. Additionally, staff will follow a similar process to review conditional zoning districts during 2025 and 2026. Review of conditional zoning will be more detailed and complex because there are site specific, Council-approved conditions.

## Background



In 2018 City Council unanimously adopted the Strategic Energy Action Plan (SEAP). With continued investments in the Strategic Energy Action Plan and policy and program implementation, the city is making progress towards the goals to strive to have city fleet and facilities fueled by 100 percent zero-carbon sources by 2030, and to become a low-carbon city by 2050. The following are updates and highlights of investments and actions guided by the SEAP that create a healthier, more equitable, sustainable Charlotte.

### Vehicle Electrification

- The city currently has a total of **245 electric vehicle charging ports installed, 102 available to the public**. These investments support the City's fleet in the transition to more electric vehicles, enabled through the sustainable and resilient fleet policy.
  - The city currently **has a total of 107 electric vehicles**.
- In 2022, CATS began development of its comprehensive **Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Plan** to guide their journey to a zero-emission CATS fleet.
- With the adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance, in August 2022, the city adopted its first ever **electric vehicle charging requirement**, which supports EV charging or the capability to install EV charging at parking lots and parking structures for multi-dwelling residential and mixed-use developments. This supports the market transition to electric vehicles, which lowers our citywide emissions.

### Energy Generation

- There is currently 1,199 kW of operational solar photovoltaic (PV) at 13 city facilities. There is another 735 kW under construction at 10 city facilities and an additional 492 kW under design at six city facilities. Once all the systems are completed, **the city will have a total of 2,426 kW of solar PV in operation**.
- Council approved a land lease at Charlotte Water's McDowell Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant for the installation of 1.2 MW solar facility. The Lessee, Hep Petra, will sell the energy to Energy United, the facility's electric utility, and Charlotte Water will purchase the renewable energy certificates (RECs).

### Green Workforce Development

- To date, **121 training participants have successfully graduated** the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Workforce (RENEW) Training Program. This partnership with the Urban League of Central Carolina and Goodwill provides participants with paid training in the HVAC and electrical trades with a focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy. Participants graduate with relevant industry certifications and receive job placement assistance.

## Background

### Buildings/Energy Reduction

- While the city continues to lead by example, through publicly benchmarking energy use in its buildings and using the data to drive investments, city staff worked with community stakeholders to launch a voluntary building energy performance benchmarking program called **Power Down the Crown**. The program has a goal of reducing the energy use of the Power Down the Crown portfolio by at least 10 percent by 2030. The City is joined by partners to date who are demonstrating their leadership in building energy efficiency:
  - Central Piedmont Community College
  - Grubb Properties
  - IKEA Charlotte
  - Novant Health
  - Trane Technologies
  - United Universalist Community of Charlotte
  - Coca Cola Consolidated
  - Honeywell
  - Kimco Realty
  - Nucor
  - UNC Charlotte
- The city has partnered with Duke Energy to provide deep energy efficiency retrofits and home rehabilitation work to low-income, high-energy use households in Charlotte. Duke Energy plans to spend up to \$4m to retrofit up to 500 households and the city has allocated up to \$1m for home rehabilitation work that is needed to enable the deep energy retrofits. This work will help address the higher energy burden most experienced by low-income, Black, Hispanic, and Native American households.

### Mode Shift

- Adoption of the Strategic Mobility Plan is tied directly to the Strategic Energy Action Plan and will have a significant impact on carbon reduction by shifting modes of travel away from predominantly single occupancy vehicles. The plan's aspirational goal is for **one half of all trips citywide to be made by a means other than a single-occupancy vehicle**.





## Awards, Recognition, and Grants

- Received the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Cleantech award from the Research Triangle Cleantech Cluster
  - Partnership with Duke Energy and UNC Charlotte
  - Project: PoleVolt charging initiative in Corridors, first station at the Ritz at Washington Heights
- Selected as one of 10 cities to participate in the Affordable Mobility Platform (AMP) through the Department of Energy
  - Partnership with Centralina Regional Council and Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
  - Program supports EV access in underserved communities
  - Charlotte will launch at five affordable housing sites
- Received an **A-** from through the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), a global non-profit that runs global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage environmental impacts
  - Highest grade received to date
- In August 2022, Charlotte Douglas International Airport joined the **Airport Carbon Accreditation Program at level I** to independently assess and verify the airport's efforts to manage and reduce their CO2 emissions.
- **Awarded a VW Mitigation grant** from NCDEQ to purchase a new all-electric Class 8 semi-truck for use by the Charlotte Department of Transportation.
  - The new truck will replace an existing Class 8 truck.
  - This is the first non-transit Class 8 heavy duty vehicle the city would replace with an electric version.
  - The truck to be replaced is located at Northpointe location which is in a designated corridor of opportunity in the city to help provide cleaner air for the residents there.
- CATS was awarded a \$30m grant from the Federal Transit Administration to replace 31 diesel buses with low or no emission buses, battery electric bus infrastructure, along with training and facility improvements to manage an electric fleet.

## Looking Ahead in FY 2024

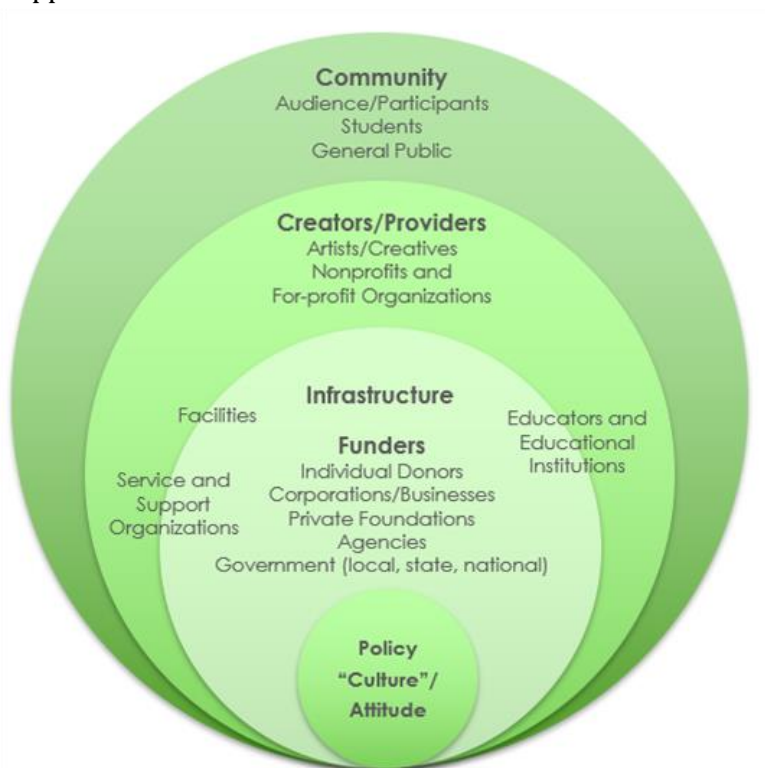
- FY 2024 Budget includes:
  - First all-electric, zero-energy police station, Northwest Station
  - First all-electric refuse truck in Solid Waste
  - Expanded charging infrastructure
  - Enhanced energy monitoring software



## Overview

Arts and culture are central to providing a vibrant quality of life for all people and play an important role in economic development by attracting businesses, new residents, and visitors to a city.

To ensure the local arts and culture ecosystem has a healthy future, the City of Charlotte is working with the private and philanthropic sectors, artists, and arts and culture organizations to develop policies and strategies that stabilize the arts and cultural sector, incentivize growth opportunities for artists and arts and culture organizations, grow the industry ecosystem (see diagram below), and respond to community needs and opportunities.



Charlotte-Mecklenburg's creative ecosystem includes many types of stakeholders who perform various functions and (inter-)act in various ways. These can be visualized as layers of concentric circles, each of which are related to and support the adjacent layers. At the foundation of the ecosystem is a culture of support that values arts and culture, generating policy, funding, entities and activities that foster thriving arts and culture and its impacts. As a result, those impacts nurture such a culture or attitude that feeds right back into this system.

In January 2021, Mayor Vi Lyles created the Charlotte City Council's ad hoc Arts and Culture Committee to develop a policy for arts and culture as an economic development strategy for Charlotte. The committee was charged with identifying a new investment strategy to support Charlotte's creative community. Since March 2021, the city and its partners have:

- Committed \$6m per year in city funds (\$18m total), matched by private sector dollars (\$20m total)
- Used these funds to establish the three-year Infusion Fund in FY 2022, a public-private partnership with private donors and the Foundation For The Carolinas to stabilize the arts and culture sector and support a broad range of artists and organizations through innovative means
- Hired an Arts and Culture Officer to oversee its arts and culture work
- Established an 18-member Arts and Culture Advisory Board to work with the Arts and Culture Officer to:
  - Distribute Infusion Fund dollars through FY 2024
  - Develop a ten-year comprehensive arts and culture plan

## Infusion Fund Highlights as of August 2023 (Q1, Year Three)

- Awarded roughly \$33.6m in grants to organizations and artists for operating expenses, programs, and projects
  - Includes \$8.5m in FY 2024 to the 37 annually funded organizations
- Launched the Opportunity Fund, an innovative and accessible funding mechanism to consider and fund timely projects on a rolling basis; \$1.6m has been provided to organizations including:
  - Provided \$600K to 31 organizations through three rounds of responsive grants in two months
  - Awarded another \$720K to 34 organizations in June 2023
- Nearing completion of a comprehensive arts and culture plan, facilitated by a leading cultural planning firm (Lord Cultural Resources), grounded in deep research and community engagement, and developed by taskforces comprising over 70 community leaders

## Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan

In late February 2023, the Arts and Culture Steering Group, comprising the Arts and Culture Advisory Board and over 20 additional community members, approved the final State of Culture Report for publication and community feedback on eight Emerging Insights in the report. Public feedback was received through a virtual public meeting and an online survey and has been integrated by the steering group into eight priorities for the Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan. The Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan being developed by the steering group and additional community members in taskforces. These taskforces have developed draft strategies and implementation plans that include recommendations on how to support a diverse, robust, and sustainable future for arts and culture in Charlotte. This community plan will be available to guide the Charlotte community as policies and activities are developed toward a more coordinated and elevated arts vision for the city, and public and private entities.

## Next Steps

A Draft Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan has been assembled and will be refined in late August and early September with public feedback on the draft strategies, and feedback from elected officials, and key public sector staff. The steering group and planning team are aiming for a completed, revised plan in Fall 2023.



## Top Priorities Identified at the Housing and Job Summit



HIRE Charlotte, the strategic employment framework for Charlotte-Mecklenburg, was a key area of focus at the City of Charlotte's Housing and Jobs Summit. On day one, community partners participated in a panel on HIRE Charlotte that explored collaboration and greater connection across the employment ecosystem. When City Council gathered on day two, there was consensus regarding priorities coming out of HIRE Charlotte implementation recommendations.

### The top priorities identified include:

- Partner with employers to create training programs for the jobs of tomorrow to enable existing workers to move into new roles and scale up.
- Provide access to upskilling opportunities and technical certifications specific to Charlotte's target industries.

### HIRE achievement in the last year:

- In spring 2022, experts, community stakeholders, and residents convened to shape top workforce development priorities establishing a steering committee and adopting a strategic framework for HIRE Charlotte.
- In the summer of 2022, a nimble offshoot of the group called the HIRE Coalition formed to implement the strategic framework. The Coalition members represent the workforce development ecosystem and respectfully chair 6 workstream committees.
- In January 2023, the Truist Foundation in partnership with The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) announced a multimillion-dollar grant to create career pathways in the Financial Services industry targeting women and BIPOC populations. Charlotte was selected as 1 of 5 nationwide locations to benefit from the program.
- HIRE Charlotte adopted Financial Services as its pilot target industry. Partnering with CAEL and Goodwill to offer experiential Financial Services Training using BankWork\$ industry leading curriculum. The first cohort will begin in fall 2023.
- In April 2024, HIRE Day launched with the first full committee meeting of more than 30 volunteer members from Central Piedmont Community College, Goodwill, Charlotte Works, Mecklenburg County, and The Charlotte Executive Leadership Council.

## Goals

### Understand and Serve Employer Needs

- Employers' most pressing needs are heard, understood, and addressed in real-time

### Create clear job seeker pathways with more unified support from all

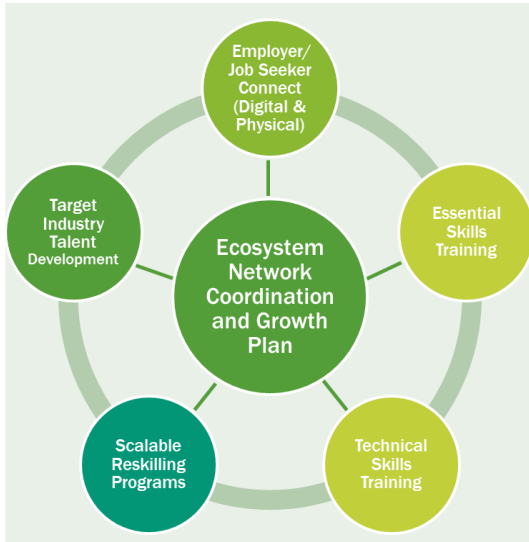
- Job seekers are provided clear career pathways with resources and supports
- Consistent and timely assessment and credentialing for job readiness with a focus on soft skills
- Equitable support with wrap-around services for those most in need

### Make the workforce ecosystem a seamless, results-oriented network

- Integrated plans connecting workforce development, mobility, housing, and redevelopment
- Alignment of future business recruitment and the workforce pipeline

## Implementation Priorities (Now – April 2024)

The following highlight HIRE Charlotte’s implementation priorities and recommendations for ARPA funding from the second tranche.



### Technical/Hard Skills: Industry Cluster-Specific Training & Development | \$4.6m

Develop a targeted industry and occupation cluster training and development program that includes a specific plan for each industry to deliver candidates with the core hard skills needed. Identified targeted industries include finance, technology, business, management and administration, transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, and health sciences. Apprenticeships will also play a role in this area. Partners will be determined via RFP process. Sub-committee – Lightcast, CPCC, Johnson C. Smith University, Queens University, UNCC, Workforce Providers Council, Year Up, and Goodwill.

### Essential/Soft Skills | \$1m

Provide universal training of soft skills with consistent programming informed by employer needs. Identify current gaps or duplications in essential skills training and create training pathways at different levels and establish unified and consistent credentialing.

### Scalable Re/Upskilling Upward Mobility Programs | \$2m

Create a training program for the jobs of tomorrow by identifying skills needed for those jobs. Focus on the skills needed and equipping existing workers with lower wages with re/upskilling opportunities allowing them to move into new roles, scale up and increase salaries that deliver upward mobility. Partners will be determined via RFP process. Sub-committee – CPCC, Johnson C. Smith University, Queens University, UNCC, Workforce Providers Council (WPC), Year Up, Goodwill, CharlotteWorks.

### HIRE Charlotte Employer/Job Seeker Connect & Hubs | \$1.5m

Develop community-facing website for employers, job seekers and workforce/educational organizations and feature job openings, career pathways, and access to training and development resources. Pop-up locations and community hubs will serve as complementary physical locations to meet job seekers where they are and provide face-to-face support for jobs ranging from large corporations to small businesses. Partners will be determined via RFP process. Sub-committee – CharlotteWorks, Charlotte Executive Leadership Council (CELC), Lightcast, PAIRIN, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), and the Workforce Providers Council (WPC).

### RENEW | \$500K

The Renewable Energy & Efficiency Workforce Training Program (RENEW) has successfully completed its 7th cohort placing almost 100 job seekers in clean energy careers. RENEW’s success will contribute to its training expansion into new clean energy careers this fall. Potential training opportunities exist in building automation and electrical.

## Next Steps

- Technical Skills: Commission Talent Alignment study to explore critical technical skills across target industries
- Scalable Re/Upskilling Upward Mobility: Identify organizations providing targeted training.
- HIRE Charlotte Employer/Job Seeker Connect and Hubs: Working on partnering with existing resources to identify and operate hub locations in Corridors of Opportunity by April 2024.
- Essential/Soft Skills: Finalize essential skills curriculum and begin a pilot

## Background

The city's support for small and minority business can be split into two areas, that support and complement each other, but are housed in different areas in the city. The city's Charlotte Business Inclusion Office (CBI) is a standalone office working to increase Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprises (MWSBE) to city contracting opportunities. The city's Economic Development Department leads much of the external work managing, supporting, and developing programs to support the larger small business ecosystem. CBI and Economic Development work together to facilitate and connect businesses to appropriate resources to help the sustain, grow, and enhance their business in Charlotte.

## Charlotte Business Inclusion

CBI focuses on maximizing expenditures with its certified MWSBE firms, while providing capacity building supports to facilitate job creation and sustainable business in Charlotte. Through partnerships, collaboration, and implementation of best practice programs, CBI strives to be the nation's leading business inclusion program.

### Key Initiatives and Progress to Date:

- Support the Charlotte Business Inclusion Advisory Committee in its implementation of the programs including the city sanctioned Mentor Protégé Program
- Annual Reporting of CBI Metrics
- Disparity Study Administration
- Crowns of Enterprise and MedWeek Recognition Events

### FY24 Budget Allocations and Next Steps:

•**Construction Bonding Program:** In July 2023, CBI launched this program aimed at facilitating bonding for CBI firms. It will enhance their ability to receive bonding or increase existing bonding, empowering them to grow as prime contractors.

•**Capital Access Program.** CBI is partnering with the CLT Alliance Foundation and Scale Link to launch a capital access program that supports the financial needs of the city's certified MWSBE. ARPA funding is being leveraged with private sector funds from Truist, Ally, Bank of America, and Atrium to support this fund.

•**Outreach/Engagement/Training:** In line with the disparity study recommendations, CBI will expand its efforts in outreach, engagement, and training to provide greater support to the vendor community. This work is supplemented by a \$15,000 NLC grant award for additional fiscal support.

•**Economic Impact Study:** The study will provide detailed data on the direct and indirect impacts of the City's investment in the CBI program, including job creation, tax benefits, and impacts on the broader marketplace.

•**Implementation of Revised Policy and Procedures Manual:** To lead the city-wide effort in implementing measures outlined in CBI's revised policy and procedures manual.





## Economic Development

The Economic Development Department's Business Innovation Team is committed serving and uplifting Charlotte's Small Business Community by connecting business owners to resources, implementing initiatives that support entrepreneurs in every stage of business, and by fostering collaboration and relationship building between small business leaders and stakeholders.

### Key Initiatives

#### **Small Business Ecosystem Leadership: Small Business Resource Provider Roundtable**

Over a decade ago, Economic Development made the decision to take the lead on bringing together government and academic organizations, non-profits, and Chambers that serve small businesses in our community to form the Small Business Resource Provider Roundtable. Since taking the leadership role in convening and connecting the ecosystem, the Economic Development Department has grown the Small Business Resource Provider Roundtable from 14 Resource Partners organizations to over 30.

#### **Small Business Support and Referrals**

Over a recent three-month period, the Economic Development Department engaged over 250 small businesses of which approximately 75 percent are ethnic minority owned. These engagements are opportunities to meet and discuss specific business needs. Often the result of such events are to connect and/or refer to resources, either with the city or external.

#### **Small Business Month**

Every year the City of Charlotte celebrates the small business community for an entire month during May's Small Business Month by hosting a Small Business Month Kickoff Event, running the #31DaysofBiz Campaign, and celebrating Charlotte Innovation Week. These are all ways to connect, celebrate, and enhance Charlotte's small business ecosystem.

#### **AMP Up Charlotte**

Since its inception in 2018, the AMP Up Charlotte program has empowered cohorts of ethnic minority small business owners to create more jobs and expand their operations. The program has graduated 85 ethnic minority owned small businesses that created or retained 108 jobs in 2022 and 88 percent of new hires are from the local community. In 2022, Economic Development staff expanded the frequency of AMP Up Charlotte by adding an additional cohort to keep up with the programs demand.



## Economic Development MWSBE Pipeline Support

The Economic Development Department is very intentional about financially supporting a pipeline of MWSBE accelerators and capacity-building. For startup and early-stage companies (stage before they qualify for AMP Up), the department provides support to Boost Pad and ASPIRE Community Capital. For later stage (stage after AMP Up) when the companies are ready to scale with the goal of growing to a \$1m plus in revenue, Economic Development partners with the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance in the Scale Up CLT Initiative by sponsoring scholarships for ethnic minority and women founders to the EO (Entrepreneurs Organization) Accelerator as well as provides operational funds to NXT CLT that supports ethnic minority founders. In FY 2022, collectively these programs reached 170 underrepresented founders.

## 1 Million Black Businesses

On April 4, 2023, the City of Charlotte announced its partnership with Operation Hope’s 1 Million Black Businesses initiative. The goal of this initiative is to start, grow, and scale 1 million black-owned businesses nationwide by 2030 through access to mentoring, financial literacy classes, business counseling, and more. Charlotte has committed to connected 1,000 businesses to this initiative.

## Equity in Innovation Driven Entrepreneurship

In April 2023, City Council approved \$750,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds for the DEI- focused early-stage accelerator pilot. The pilot will be an early-stage startup accelerator with a focus on local, diverse founders.

## Small Business Ecosystem Assessment

In April 2023, City Council approved \$800,000 in ARPA funds for a Small Business Ecosystem Assessment to help increase equitable opportunities and address challenges and gaps in resources for our City’s small, minority, and women-owned small businesses. The findings will help the City develop targeted strategies, programs, and resources to empower and strengthen the local entrepreneurial community.






## Albemarle Road Financial Business Academy

In 2023, the City of Charlotte partnered with Prospera to launch the Financial Business Academy. Through this initiative, Prospera is offering financial literacy training in Spanish to Hispanic-owned business. The first upcoming cohort will target the Albemarle Road corridor businesses.

## FY24 Budget Allocations

### MWSBE Training and Capacity Building

- \$500,000 in MWSBE budget supports the AMP Up Charlotte Program operations, NXT|CLT annual program support, annual Scale Up CLT Support, and additional MWSBE pipeline support.

 The Boost Pad	 ASPIRE Community Capital	 AMP Up Charlotte	 NXT CLT	 Scale Up CLT
<p><b>Incubator Program Components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured Curriculum</li> <li>Guidance from Experts &amp; Mentors</li> <li>Access to Startup Currency</li> <li>A Marketplace for services</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.theboostpad.org">www.theboostpad.org</a></p>	<p><b>Access to Capital</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Micro-loans up to \$25,000 for small business owners</li> </ul> <p><b>Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Business Academy</li> <li>Business Accelerator Services</li> <li>Business Readiness Program</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.aspirecommunitycapital.org">www.aspirecommunitycapital.org</a></p>	<p><b>Program Components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interise Assessment &amp; Streetwise MBA Curriculum</li> <li>3-Year Growth Plan</li> <li>Targeting training &amp; coaching</li> <li>Access to large anchor institutions</li> </ul> <p><b>Eligibility Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethnic minority</li> <li>51% ownership</li> <li>\$175,000 in revenues</li> <li>One additional employee</li> <li>In business 2+ years</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://Citgov.me/ampclt">Citgov.me/ampclt</a></p>	<p><b>Program Components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Assessment</li> <li>Monthly training/coaching</li> <li>Quarterly networking</li> <li>\$15,000 in capital</li> </ul> <p><b>Eligibility Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethnic minority</li> <li>51% ownership</li> <li>\$250,000 revenues</li> <li>One additional employee</li> <li>In business 3+ years</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.nxtclt.org">www.nxtclt.org</a></p>	<p><b>Program Components</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partial Scholarship for Entrepreneurs Organization (EO) Accelerator</li> <li>Charlotte Regional Business Alliance Ally benefits</li> </ul> <p><b>Eligibility Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>51% ethnic minority and/or women-owned</li> <li>Revenue between \$250,000-\$999,999</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://ScaleUpCLT.com">ScaleUpCLT.com</a></p>

## Background

In 2019, before the pandemic, almost 67,000 Charlotte households were without dedicated highspeed internet at home and nearly 51,500 households were without a laptop, desktop, or tablet device. Over the next two years both necessity and collaborative efforts across the community reduced those numbers up to 25 percent. By 2025, the city aims to reduce the remaining divide by another third. It also seeks to close the divide of quality-of-life benefits from this connectivity.

## Smart Charlotte Program

Smart Charlotte is the city’s program delivering digital equity and civic innovation efforts. It was created in response to the community’s need for both digital inclusion and to develop more resident-centered tech and data solutions. In 2021, the Knight Foundation granted the city \$245,000 for a 2-year fellowship to build out this area of practice. The bulk of this program’s work to date has been to:

1. Complete an initial 2-year pilot around public Wi-Fi
2. Take the learnings to develop a more robust strategy
3. Implement an expanded the Access Charlotte service to advance digital equity.

The program has also tested out civic innovation by seeking opportunities for co-creation of solutions with those who are often left out of the decision-making process, specifically:

1. Hosted two summer camps introducing youth from the North and West Ends to augmented reality and mobile application and game design
2. Funded the Our Stories CLT app which teaches local history through a mystery solving game
3. Modeled a process that engages residents in designing tech solutions
4. Initiated a process for more transparency around public-facing technology
5. Hosted a focus group workshop series to shape future engagement opportunities around public-facing technology





## Access Charlotte Service

On April 4, 2022, Council approved \$10m ARPA funds for continuing Digital Inclusion efforts. As a result, up to 7,900 households will have free broadband internet before the end of the 2024 calendar year. Events are scheduled to both drive participation and learn about other connectivity needs. This service will last for two years through June 20, 2025 giving the city and its partners time to connect residents with additional resources such as computers, tech support, digital literacy training, and a foundation for workforce development opportunities.

## Project: Smart Cities Strategic Framework

This summer and fall, the city is piloting Digital Trust for Places and Routines, a standardized method of improving transparency around public-facing technologies and creating opportunities for feedback. This work is complimented by the learnings from a focus group workshop series. This workshop was created in partnership with the Center for Digital Equity and explored smart city technologies and how to improve engagement around them. The goal is to improve communication, build accountability and trust, and create a pathway for broader partnerships for resident-centered technology and data solutions. In the process the city seeks to build new relationships with residents and build capacity for their participation in Innovation Labs joining participants from the city, other government entities, private sector companies, nonprofits, and academia to shape transformative solutions leveraging data and technology.

## Looking Ahead

In the FY24 adopted budget, the Smart Charlotte program grew with two new positions to support these efforts. Council is scheduled to receive an update on September 11<sup>th</sup> for Digital Inclusion Phase 3 using ARPA funds which covers:

- The Learn to Earn program around devices and digital literacy,
- The “Universal Platform” which aims to streamline applications and status feedback, and
- The Smart Charlotte approach to support innovative technologies including recommended infrastructure investments and partnerships.