



CITY OF CHARLOTTE PLACEMAKING GRANT GUIDE

Transforming Charlotte's Infrastructure into Vibrant and Active
Community Spaces

Planning, Design, and Development
Urban Design Center
January 2023





CITY OF CHARLOTTE PLACEMAKING PROGRAM

The City of Charlotte’s Placemaking Program launched in 2018 with the mission of using urban design and placemaking to transform underutilized public spaces into vibrant places for people. The Urban Design Center in the City of Charlotte’s Planning, Design, and Development department is leading the effort with their own projects while creating opportunities for neighborhoods to use placemaking to promote community collaboration and accomplish public space goals.

Charlotte’s Placemaking Project Grant Program provides project funding and technical support to residents to create and enhance community vibrancy, safety, and creative identity through:

- Activation of leftover and/or underutilized spaces
- Streetscape improvements
- Art and beautification efforts
- Creation of community gathering spaces

Select project how-to guides can be found at www.charlottenc.gov/placemakinghub

“Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community.”

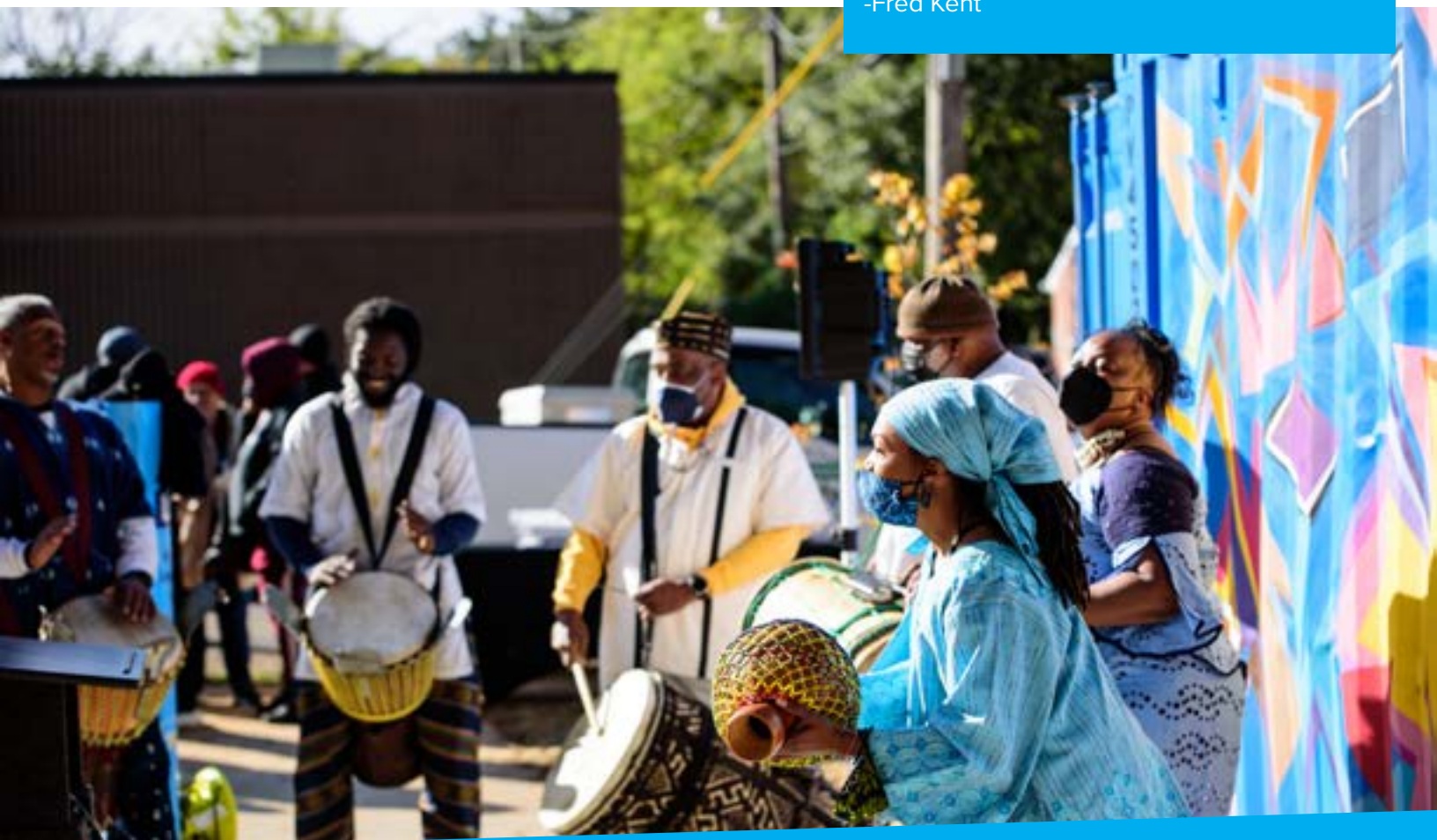
-Project for Public Spaces

CITY OF CHARLOTTE PLACEMAKING PROJECT GRANT OBJECTIVES

- 1.** Provide opportunities for neighborhoods, individuals, and businesses to define the character and identity of their communities.
- 2.** Provide opportunities for residents and business owners to better leverage public and private land for community use in Charlotte.
- 3.** Provide opportunities for local artists to work with communities and enhance the city's public realm.
- 4.** Activate our public spaces and infrastructure to create safer, more vibrant, and unique character to Charlotte's neighborhoods.

“Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to contribute to making the place where they already live great.”

-Fred Kent





WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

Placemaking is a word for prioritizing the experience people have as they move around public places.

Spaces should be vibrant and active, serving the needs, wants, and hopes of the communities where they live. The Charlotte Urban Design Center sees placemaking as a collaborative process to better connect community members to the spaces and people around them.

Project for Public Spaces

QUICK TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Here are some quick definitions for terms used in this document and the Placemaking Project grant application.

Public Realm and Public Space

Publicly-owned spaces that anyone can enter for free including streets, sidewalks, parking spaces, right-of-ways, alleys, plazas, greenways, odd-shaped “leftover” land, floodplains, buffers, etc.

Streetscape

Linear landscapes that you can see on a street including the actual road, the fronts of buildings, sidewalks, benches, trees, medians, and plantings that combine to form a sense of place.

Community Character

The elements, buildings, plants, and people that define a place and combine to give it a “personality.”

Built Environment

The constructed elements that create the places where we live, learn, work, and play from buildings to curbs and roadways, and everything in-between. The quality of the built environment can influence health, safety, and economic opportunity within a community.

Right-of-Way

Transportation easements that encompasses all the land that sits between private property. Typically this includes a roadway and sidewalks, but sometimes can extend several yards past the sidewalk.

HOW CAN PLACEMAKING IMPACT THE COMMUNITY?

Small projects can have a big social impact, like making fresh food more accessible with community gardens, improving comfort with bus stop benches, or preserving culture through celebrating community stories. What broader opportunities or issues do you see in your daily life where placemaking can help?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There is a lot of community-based work being done in Charlotte that innovative placemaking can support. Here are some examples to bolster your potential placemaking project. You are not required to add or quote these resources in your grant application, but you can take inspiration and look to them for demographic data, social context, potential partners, and reporting mechanisms.

[Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer](#)

The Explorer features community variables that reflect the places people live and work.

[City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services](#)

Find information and contact lists for your established neighborhood organization.

[Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization](#)

Read how transportation impacts are measured as indicators of environmental justice.

[Charlotte Department of Transportation's Vision Zero Program](#)

Consult the High Injury Network and see how CDOT emphasizes safe transportation systems.

[Age Friendly Mecklenburg County](#)

A research-based collective planning initiative and action plan aimed at improving the quality of life for older adults.

[Mecklenburg County Community Health Assessment](#)

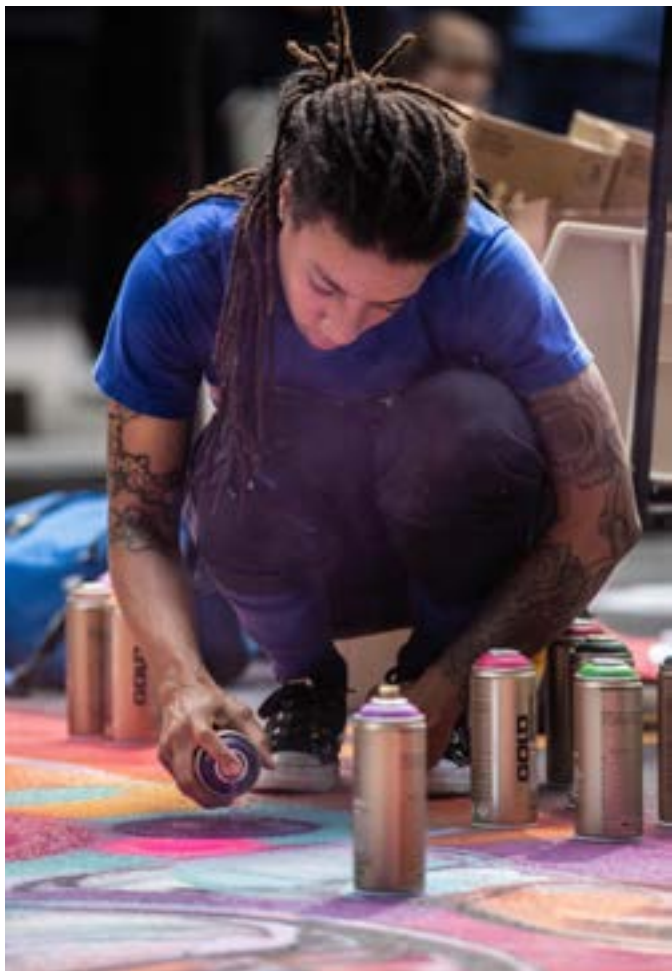
A review of community health indicators and top identified community priorities.

[Mecklenburg County Land Use & Environmental Services Agency](#)

Find information on regional health-based air quality standards and regional pollution reduction efforts.



PLACEMAKING PROJECT GRANT



Do you have a specific project idea to address an issue or opportunity in your neighborhood? Are you ready to design and implement a project with the help of your project team and city staff? If yes, check out the Placemaking project types on pages 8 and 9. Your grant will include:

- Design assistance
- Help choosing materials
- Coordination with other City departments
- Help obtaining necessary approvals or permitting
- Communication and support for community meetings
- Measuring community impact

**TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE: \$125,000
AWARD GRANTS BETWEEN \$1,000 AND \$25,000**

Additional funding may be available for projects that achieve carbon reduction goals, provide education on environmentally sustainable practices, address climate change or are aligned with the City of Charlotte Strategic Energy Action Plan

You do not need to reach out to other City departments during the application process. However, it is important to understand that your project will eventually require collaboration and potentially approval from other City Departments such as: Charlotte Department of Transportation, General Services, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, Housing & Neighborhood Services, etc. We will help coordinate with them later in the program if you are selected.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Neighborhood and homeowners associations
- Community organizations
- Businesses or merchant organizations
- Individuals with written support from the community or private property owners as appropriate
- Applicant groups must be significantly composed of people who live within the City of Charlotte limits

2023 PLACEMAKING GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

If you need assistance please reach out to City staff. We will be happy to provide assistance completing the application. Email Kate Cavazza at kate.cavazza@charlottenc.gov with questions or concerns.

1. FORMING A PROJECT TEAM

If you are interested in completing a placemaking project in your neighborhood or at your business, the first step is finding people who share the same interest and want to work with you to help your vision become a reality. The Project Team should be:

- 3-6 members
- Diverse and represent different perspectives and interests
- Composed of members who are committed to seeing the project through implementation

*If you have an idea for a project and no team, we can connect you with your neighborhood organization.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please tell us about your project and how you will:

- Address a community issue or opportunity.
- Complete your project by the end of 2023 by including a timeline
- Describe what success looks through desired community change.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Using the project timeline on page 11, please describe your strategy for engaging your neighborhood (or adjacent businesses) to participate in community meetings and your outreach efforts.

4. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Your application should include a letter of support from your neighborhood association (or equivalent organization). Letters of support may not be from the members of the Project Team.

*Please note, street murals will also require the support of property owners directly adjacent to the mural.

5. SITE PHOTOS

Include multiple photos of your project location from different angles to show the current conditions of the site. This will help us understand and evaluate the project proposal.

6. PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN/DESIGN

Please include a conceptual design and/or aerial plan of your grant idea. This is a visual representation and can be hand drawn or created on a computer. Graphic ability is not important! These drawings will help us understand your idea. The image shall include dimensions, labels, and names of the streets as appropriate. Include precedent images where appropriate to explain different elements of your idea (i.e. a similar project elsewhere that may have inspired your idea).

7. COST

Applications should include an estimated amount of funding from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Applicants are not required to submit a detailed budget. Please see page 13 to get a better understanding of how much your project might cost.

8. MAINTENANCE & PROGRAMMING COMMITMENT

Please include the Project Team's plans for maintaining and programming their project (if necessary). Some projects like murals or signal cabinet wraps are meant to be temporary and can be removed after a period of time. Projects like pop-up plazas and parks that are being used for gatherings will require a maintenance and programming strategy. At any point, if the project falls into disrepair or becomes dangerous, it can be removed by the City of Charlotte. Please note, some activities in a pop-up plaza or park may require applicant or non-profit organization to hold liability insurance.

PLACEMAKING GRANT PROJECT TYPES

Below are the types of placemaking projects that will be considered for a funding. All locations must be approved by the City of Charlotte.



WALL MURALS



STREET MURALS



PAINTED TRAFFIC CIRCLES



PAINTED CROSSWALKS



STREET FURNITURE



SIGNAL CABINET WRAPS



BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS

Designs must meet CATS artwork guidelines



POP-UP PLAZA/ PARK



COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE

2 year timeline requiring one year of training and capacity building if needed



STREET PARKLETS



BIKE PARKING



PLAYSCAPES



SWINGS



SIDEWALK DINING

For businesses located in Business Corridor Revitalization Geography



PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

For previously completed City of Charlotte Placemaking Projects



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Projects that absorb and filter storm water where it falls, remove air pollutants, or reduce energy use.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

An engagement process and plan to help your neighborhood implement placemaking projects over time

Thinking about something different? We love new ideas. Other projects will be considered.

All projects must be approved by the City of Charlotte.

MATERIALS & COSTS

Below are estimates for materials and project elements. It is always best to estimate more than less.

Signal Cabinet Wrap	\$2,500 (including materials, installation & general artist fee)
Painted Wall Mural	\$30 sq/ft (including materials, installation & general artist fee)
Painted Street Mural	\$15 - 30 sq/ft (including materials, installation & general artist fee)
Vinyl Wrap Wall Mural	\$32 sq/ft (including materials, installation & general artist fee)
Parklet	\$8,000-\$20,000
Painted Crosswalk	\$3,000 (including materials & general artist fee)
Permanent Street Furniture	\$1,500-\$2,500 each
Temporary Street Furniture	\$20-\$1000 each
Community Garden Plot	\$200
Plaza Hardscape	\$75 sq/ft
Swing	\$7,000 - 10,000
Playscapes	\$15,000 - 30,000
Traffic Control	\$200-\$1,000 (varies depending on location and size)
One-Day Programming (for previously completed City of Charlotte placemaking projects)	\$1,500-\$10,000

EXPENDITURES

ELIGIBLE:

- Project materials and contracted labor costs
- Programming tied to activation of public space(s)
- Refreshments when incorporated into a community building project (may not exceed 5% of total budget)

INELIGIBLE:

- Salaries
- Alcoholic beverages
- Costs incurred as part of the application process
- Expenditures before contract signing
- Personal use items or efforts solely benefiting one specific person
- Political/public policy campaigns (non-partisan voter registration is permitted)
- Grants cannot discriminate on race, color, creed, origin, sex, age, and/or disability

2023 PLACEMAKING GRANT PROJECT TIMELINE

APPLICATION

1. APPLICATION OPENS

Application will be posted at www.charlottenc.gov/placemaking

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2023

2. INTERESTED APPLICANT Q&A MEETINGS

City staff will host two events to answer questions for applicants about placemaking projects and the application process. Attendance at one of these events is recommended but not required. You can always reach out to Kate Cavazza at kate.cavazza@charlottenc.gov with questions.

FEBRUARY 2, 2023 @ 6:00pm

In-person at 1507 Camden Rd.

FEBRUARY 9, 2023 @ 6:00pm

Virtual

3. APPLICATION DUE

Please submit your application digitally. Instructions are included on the application.

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023 @ 5pm

4. PROJECT SELECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

After March 4th, the City will review all applications based on the scoring system on page 12.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2023

PROGRAM

1. KICK-OFF MEETING

Project Teams will attend a kick-off meeting to think through their projects in depth with City staff.

APRIL-MAY 2023

2. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

One public meeting is required for all projects. More may be necessary depending on the size/type of project. These can be virtual or in-person, dependent on your comfort level.

MAY-SEPTEMBER 2023

Concept Brainstorming + Public Meeting

Project Teams will develop their ideas internally and provide a more detailed design to share with the community. Teams will gather feedback to include in their final design. City Staff are available to support Project Teams with this process.

Presentation of Final Design at City of Charlotte Open House

After Project Teams have incorporated all feedback, they will present their final design idea to the public with other placemaking grant winners.

4. CONSTRUCTION/ INSTALLATION

After a final design has been agreed upon, the Project Teams will start implementing with assistance from City staff. Construction and installation should be completed by the end of the year.

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023

SCORING CRITERIA

Each application will be evaluated based on the following criteria. If your project is not approved by the City of Charlotte, you will be notified on April 7th.

SCORING CRITERIA	MAX POINTS
Operations and Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project is realistic and total costs are under \$25,000 Project budget represents eligible expenditures within the Placemaking program 	4
Project Design and Visibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project is ready to be implemented Project can be completed by the end of 2023 Project is visible and accessible to the public 	4
Project Impact and Need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed activities are in response to a recognized problem or opportunity in the community Project provides a measurable and lasting social benefit Project will enhance the public realm 	4
Participation and Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application includes a clear plan for community outreach for required public meeting(s) Project planning shows evidence of community support and buy-in from adjacent property owners 	4
Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal is distinctive from existing approaches 	4
Located on a Corridor of Opportunity (bonus point)	1
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	21



READY TO APPLY?

Looking for more resources? Check out the following:



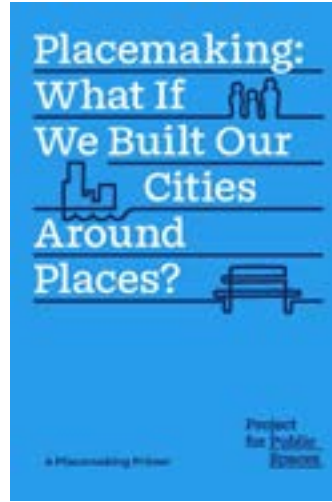
[The Guide for Parks & Creative Placemaking](#)

The Trust for Public Land & City Parks Alliance



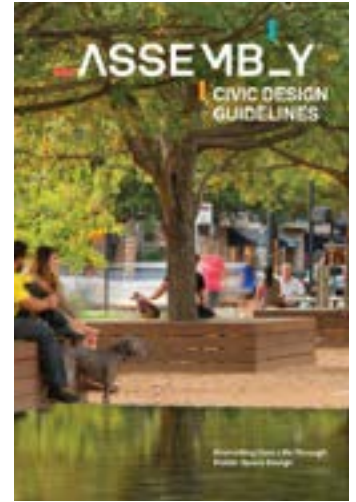
[How to do Creative Placemaking](#)

National Endowment for the Arts



[Placemaking: What If We Built Our Cities Around Places?](#)

Project for Public Spaces



[Assembly Civic Design Guidelines](#)

Center for Active Design



START YOUR APPLICATION TODAY!

www.charlottenc.gov/placemaking

If you have any additional questions about the City of Charlotte’s Placemaking Grant Program or the program application, please contact:

Kate Cavazza
Associate Urban Designer
kate.cavazza@charlottenc.gov



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