



Corridors of Opportunity

# Year in Review

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## 2023, A year of leveraging partnerships and connecting the dots

As we look back on the achievements of the Corridors of Opportunity Program in 2023, I am pleased to share that we have made incredible strides in shaping the future of our city.

Throughout the year, the corridors team brought implementation and strategic planning to all six corridors. The focus on community engagement and long-term partnerships has been instrumental in leveraging private and federal funds to rewrite the narratives of these historically underinvested areas of our city.

An exceptional achievement in 2023 was the attainment of more than \$20 million in federal funding, which is a substantial step toward our \$100 million objective for corridor projects. Initiatives such as the Sugar Creek Mobility Corridor and the Thriving Communities Program underscore our commitment to creating vibrant, sustainable spaces.

Additionally, strategic investment in the Sugar Creek Corridor's Economy Inn spurred private development, leading to the redevelopment of three additional hotels for supportive and workforce housing. This progress aligned seamlessly with the goals designated in the Sugar Creek Corridor Playbook.

Building on the momentum of 2023, we are excited to share our plans for 2024. Completing the North Tryon/North Graham and Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor Playbooks marks a crucial milestone. In the coming year, our focus will intensify on implementing corridor-specific strategies for public safety, infrastructure and mobility, workforce development, housing and community identity.

Continued collaboration with businesses, nonprofits and the community, coupled with our commitment to transparent communication, will ensure the Corridors of Opportunity Program remains a catalyst for positive change. We invite you to join us on this journey as we grow and empower our communities together.

Sincerely,

**Marcus D. Jones**  
City Manager

### Corridors of Opportunity Directors Team

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# Six Corridors of Opportunity

Beatties Ford

Freedom/Wilkinson

W. Boulevard



**Sugar Creek**

**N. Graham/N. Tryon**

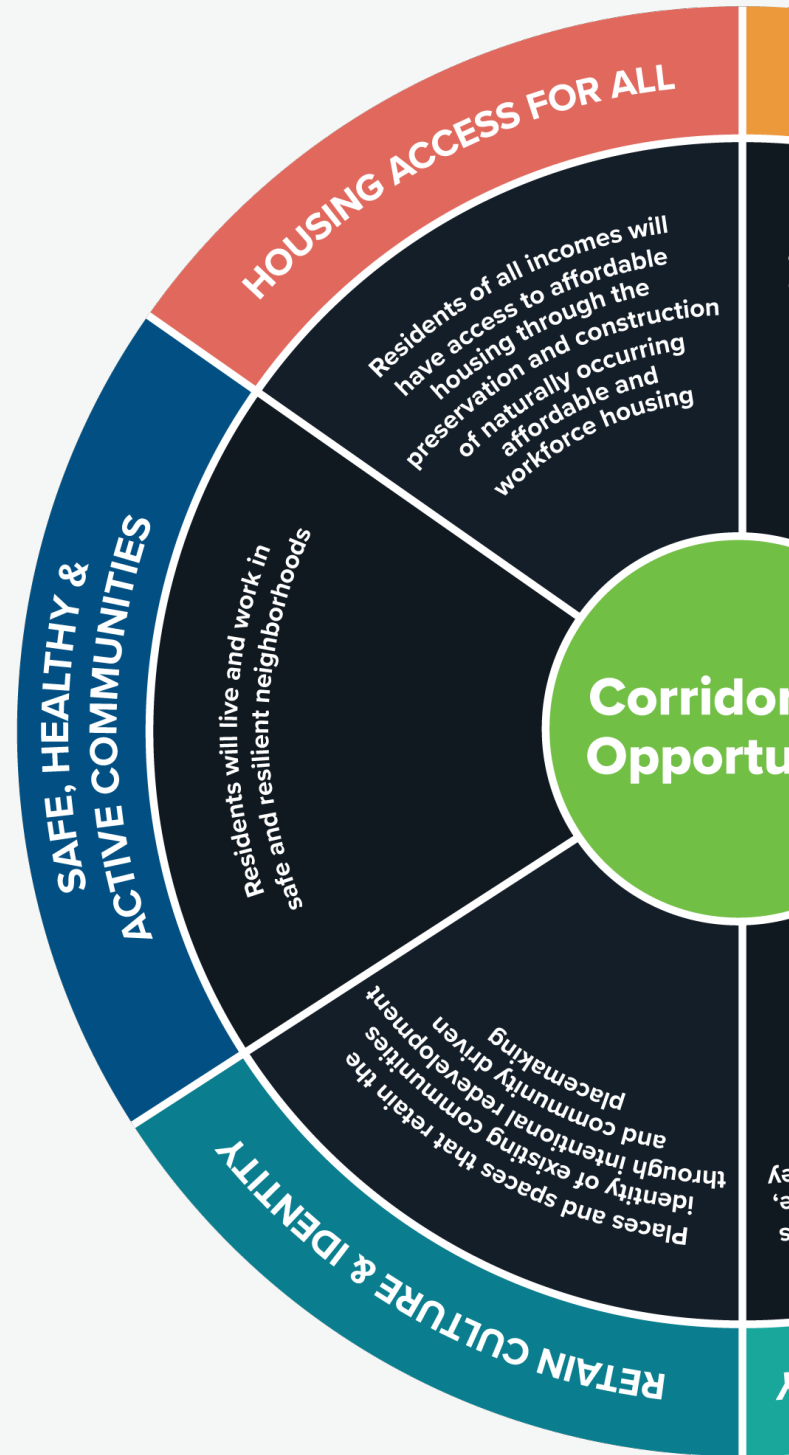
**Central/Albemarle**

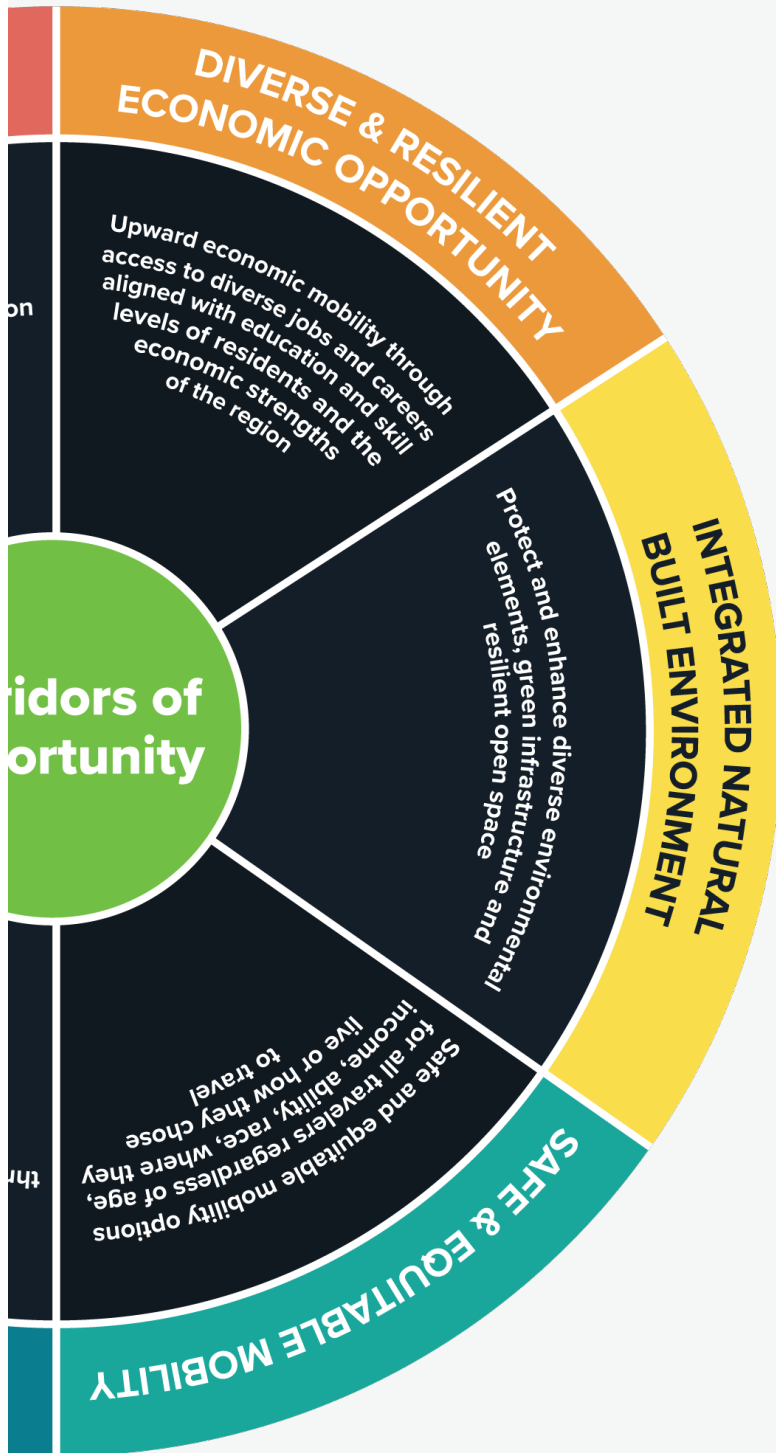
# The Corridors Framework

The City of Charlotte's Corridors of Opportunity (Corridors) Program is a coordinated \$72+ million investment to foster thriving communities for residents and businesses, build lasting legacies, and grow communities equitably.

Since the program's inception, the city has adopted the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Mobility Plan, which further identify how the city should grow holistically, supporting long-time residents and creating opportunity.

In 2023, the Corridors team focused on scaling up programs from one corridor to several of them in order to accomplish the implementation goals of the Charlotte 2040 Plan. The program built long-lasting partnerships through community engagement and uplifted corridors stories through communications.





**The program is connected to the Mayor’s Racial Equity Initiative (MREI), a public-private partnership that is working toward an equitable city that achieves racial equity, social justice, economic opportunity and upward mobility.**

The initiative strives to provide solution-driven, measurable strategies that produce equitable access, opportunities, treatment and outcomes for Charlotte’s communities of color.

In 2023, MREI contributed to the purchase of the former Economy Inn hotel in the Sugar Creek corridor. This contribution helped reduce the number of hotel rooms in the corridor and created a pathway to build new affordable housing townhomes on the site.

MREI also contributed to establishing the Charlotte Community Capital fund, a capital access fund for small businesses. The fund will provide access to capital, offer support for business and job growth, and bridge the gap to other resources. The fund will be administered by a CDFI and is supported by the City of Charlotte, Bank of America, Truist, Ally and Atrium.

# Partnerships Continue to Grow

The Corridors of Opportunity Program is successful because of the city’s intentional partnerships and coordination.

In its second year, the Neighborhood Investment Advisory Committee (NIAC), a collaboration of nonprofit and corporate partnerships, persistently cultivated engagement between its members in multifaceted initiatives within the Corridors. Through

strategic partnerships and a concerted effort, NIAC and Corridors of Opportunity are extending their influence and impact.

Organizations such as Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Knight Foundation, United Way, YMCA, Foundation for the Carolinas, Wells Fargo, Lowe’s, Charlotte Symphony, Road to Hire and more are aligning strategic programming and funding to multiply impact in the Corridors.

The below represents a sampling of key partnership dollars:



United Way of Greater Charlotte continued to lead impactful corridor initiatives through its United Neighborhoods program, which has built a robust network of 57 grassroots organizations across all six corridors. These organizations work alongside residents and Community Quarterbacks to achieve the vision for their communities. In 2023, United Way distributed \$3.86 million to organizations providing services and programs in corridors. United Way also sponsored eight AmeriCorps members to provide additional support for five corridor organizations.



Wells Fargo Championship sponsored the city’s E-Bike Pilot Program targeting the North Graham/North Tryon corridor. DreamKey Partners stepped up as a program partner and will work with the city to launch the program in 2024.



Lowe’s sponsored three initiatives including the signature Corridors Connect events, Corridor Cleanups and the Opportunity Hubs.



In collaboration with Corridors of Opportunity, Inlivan began reimagining the future redevelopment of the former Dillehay Courts public housing site. Located in the North Graham/North Tryon corridor, this site has the potential to provide hundreds of new affordable housing units, a mix of uses and jobs, and holistic neighborhood revitalization through this innovative and inclusive process.



Wells Fargo continued its signature Open for Business initiative, which has awarded \$10.7 million through two rounds of Beyond Open grant awards. Nearly half of the total amount, \$4.8 million, was awarded to 116 small businesses located in the Corridors of Opportunity. The program, led by Foundation For The Carolinas, supports job retention, growth, and economic development, with a focus on historically underserved communities and areas of low economic mobility.



Knight Foundation continued to support corridor initiatives that aligned with its strategic focus areas: Historic West End and Digital Equity.



LISC Charlotte provided small business support and leveraged investments for community and economic development. In 2024, LISC will kick off a new Developers Training program for MWSBE professionals seeking to advance in the real estate development industry. LISC will also open and operate one of the six Opportunity Hubs.





**The city's investments in corridors are being leveraged by community partners to multiple their impact:**

Trips for Kids Charlotte, The Umbrella Center, Heal Charlotte and Freedom Fighting Missionaries and more have announced relocations or expansions in Corridors! Read here how one organization saw the value of relocating into the Corridors of Opportunity Program:

**The Sugar Creek Business Association (SCBA) was formed in 2023 with a group of local business owners and advocates.** As part of its formation, the organization was invited to participate in the Breaking Barriers to Business (B3) cohort, funded by Truist Foundation. This unique opportunity provides three years of technical support for entrepreneurs in corridors from two national nonprofits: Living Cities and National Main Street Center. Through the B3 opportunity and the SCBA's dedicated focus to building out support for small businesses in the corridor, the SCBA won the Hartford Small Business Accelerator Grant. This \$100,000 award will support a year-long business and retail incubator program at 5105 Reagan Drive. The incubator program is led by Aliza Diggs-Bailey, owner of D3 Concepts, a retail and online store located in the building. This incubator is a partnership with the building owners, Durr Capital Group, and leverages the owner's own investments into building renovation and interior upfit. Durr received a Business Matching Grant award as well.

## Corridors of Opportunity

**2 + 2 = 5**

# Corridors Programs Means Exponential Investment

In 2023, Corridors of Opportunity secured over \$20 million of federal funding in 2023 and laid the foundation to reach a corridors-wide goal of \$100 million.

## Sugar Creek Mobility Corridor

(RAISE grant) **\$25 Million**

The City of Charlotte received a \$12 million federal award from the RAISE program to build out the Sugar Creek Mobility Corridor. This multi-faceted transportation project will add a multi-use path, more efficient transit service, mobility hubs, safer intersection crossings and improve pedestrian safety in the Sugar Creek Corridor. Also included in the project are upgraded smart lighting, EV charging at mobility hubs, and new technology that provides enhanced safety features and satisfies key priorities of the Sugar Creek playbook.

## Business Opportunity Hubs

**\$4.4 Million**

Corridors of Opportunity developed a new program to expand access to small business and workforce support within all six corridors through Opportunity Hubs. The six physical hubs, one per corridor, will open in 2024 and operating partners will provide workforce development, entrepreneurial support and a home base for Hire CLT resources. The funding for the program will last for three years as the partners form a cohort to strengthen opportunity across the corridors.

## Tree Canopy Care and Maintenance Program

**\$1.1 Million**

Charlotte's Urban Forestry and Landscape Management teams received federal funding for a corridors-focused tree canopy care program. This new program will plant new trees, prune existing trees and remove hazardous trees to enhance the overall canopy health on private property and within city rights-of-way within all six corridors.

## ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act)

**\$16.1 Million**

As a part of the American Rescue Plan, several projects in corridor geographies that have a clear mission to improve the quality of lives in the greater Charlotte community were funded in 2023. Investments included Housing Support Grants, the Community Resilience Fund, Opportunity Hubs, Business Support Organizations, and the execution of Three Sisters Market in the West Boulevard Corridor, which all provide services. ARPA funding also includes partnerships with Hire Charlotte and the creative community.

# Building Capacity within Communities

The Corridors team worked with community partners to launch critical technical assistance partnerships in 2023.

## Breaking Barriers to Business

Funded by the Truist Foundation, the program provides support and funding for business organizations in Sugar Creek, West Boulevard and Beatties Ford Road. The lessons learned and knowledge gained is providing a road map for the organizations' growth.

## Thriving Communities Program

A program by the federal government that helps to leverage and access funding by building partnerships with community-based organizations. Locally, United Way and LISC are partnered with the City of Charlotte team.

## Looking Forward

In 2024, Corridors of Opportunity will expand the SafeBiz Security Camera Program, open doors at the six Opportunity Hubs and continue implementation in all six corridors. Projects under development include:

- **LISC Emerging Developers Program** that will provide a learning curriculum for MWSBE real estate developers.
- **Youth Ambassadors partnership** with the Mayor's Youth Employment Program and Teach for America to expand programming and opportunities for older youth in corridors.
- **Charlotte Symphony mobile stage project** that will host 10 live performances in the corridors.
- **A creative entrepreneurial space** that will support affordable workspace for artists and creative businesses.
- **The Duke Energy Pilot Program** that will support home rehab efforts that address energy burden and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

# Collaborative Corridor Achievements

In 2023, Corridors of Opportunity realized the beneficial effects of layered and leveraged support and services. Collaborative efforts with like-minded programs have magnified their impact for residents and businesses:



## **Small Business Support including Business Matching Grants and Business Security Grants:**

The grants provide matching funds to property owners to improve their property. In 2023, \$629,100 was awarded to projects located in corridors. This award amount represents \$2.7 million in private leverage investment.

## **Access Charlotte:**

More than half of the 5,000 households eligible for internet service provided by the City of Charlotte live within the Corridors of Opportunity area of influence. Through emails, letters, flyers, door hangers and 13 events, over 1,500 households in five of the six corridors have enrolled in this service. This includes an investment of \$1.7 million dollars.



**Strategic Energy Action Plan (SEAP):**

Continued coordination with the Sustainability team led to the PoleVault Pilot on Beatties Ford Road and continues with the launch of the E-Bike Pilot Program and pursuit of several federal grants that will lead to long-term resiliency in corridors communities.

**Alternatives to Violence:**

The Alternatives to Violence Program continued expansion in 2023, adding the West Boulevard corridor to the program. Now in two corridors, the program is seeing results by building relationships with those in the community.

**Housing Support Grants**

Funded through ARPA in 2023, the recent awardees of the Housing Support Grants will convert a hotel in the Sugar Creek Corridor into a Supportive Housing model. The grant will provide wraparound services for over 100 families over the course of the year.

## Corridors of Opportunity

# Corridors Connect

In October 2023, the Corridors team hosted a series of Corridors Connect events with routes in the Wilkinson/Freedom and West Boulevard corridors.



With community partnerships, these events achieved remarkable outreach success, with over 2,000 in attendance. The city's outreach efforts yielded over 1 million impressions across social media platforms. City and county cross-departmental collaboration shined with over 100 staff participating to connect the community to information and resources.

Lowe's sponsored three Corridors of Opportunity programs to enhance connectivity and aesthetics in six corridors. This included

supporting Corridors Connect events in October 2023 through community activations. Thanks to a focus on corridor-based businesses, over \$30,000 was invested into local communities. Across all six events, 33 Community Activation Grants were awarded to neighborhood-based and local nonprofit organizations to help activate the routes. This resulted in a diverse itinerary of activities including mobile museums, youth programming, community resource tables, bouquet giveaways and so much more!

3

Sundays in October

6

Corridors

33

Community Activation Grants

**Corridors Connect's success is not just measured in numbers but also in its palpable connection with the community, making it a shining example of impactful engagement.**

These six events celebrated corridor neighborhoods, connected residents and promoted a day of car-free streets!

## Corridors of Opportunity

### Corridor-by-Corridor Updates

# Beatties Ford

Connecting prior infrastructure successes by investing in home grown businesses and equitable development



## Key Projects in 2023

- Transportation infrastructure investments of \$6.63 million for intersection redesign, signals, and pedestrian and bike facilities.
- \$193,000 in Business Matching Grants awards.
- Placemaking installations at Allegra Westbrooks Regional Library open space and Beatties Ford/La Salle.
- Main Street America's technical assistance program with HWEP.
- Access Charlotte with Digital Navigation and the Learn2Earn Pilot with 171 households covered and a two-year investment of \$102,600.

## Looking Ahead to 2024

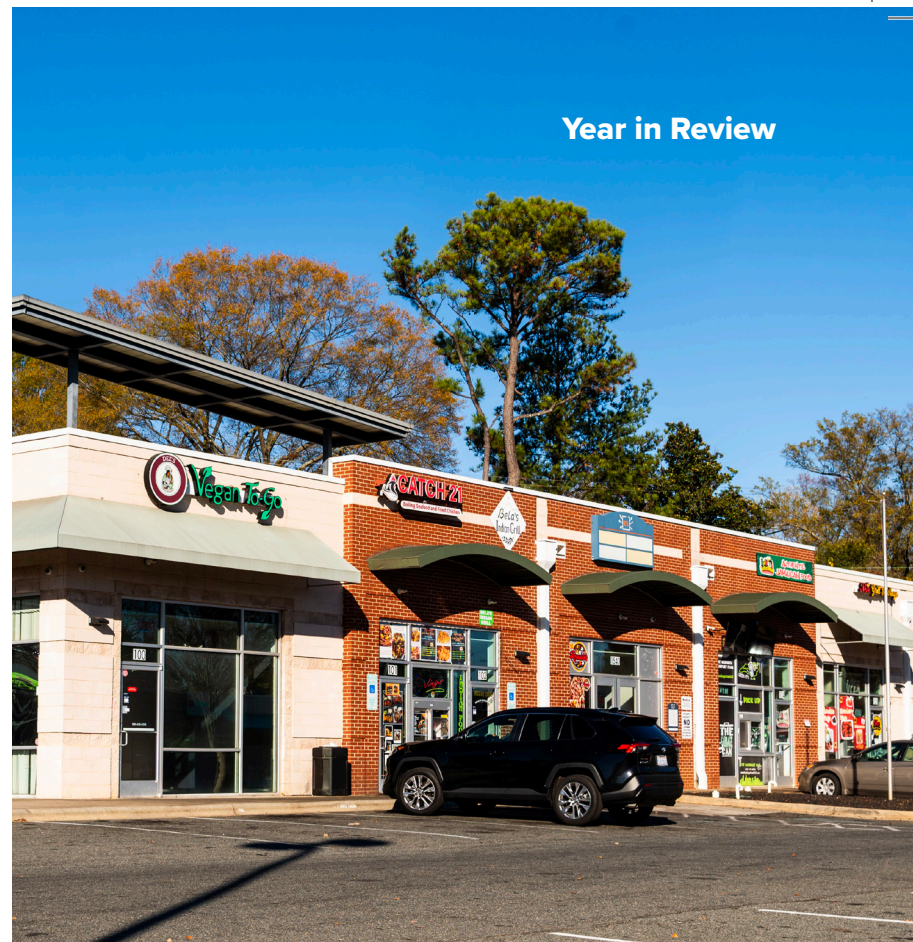
Corridors will focus on capacity building, economic development, community empowerment and fostering small business growth through key partnerships.



## Corridor-by-Corridor Updates

# West Boulevard

Working with capacity builders to foster nodes of investment



## Key Projects in 2023

- Placemaking and historic wayfinding:
  - West Boulevard/I-77 underpass mural.
  - West Boulevard historical markers.
- \$4.65 million in infrastructure project investments in pedestrian safety.
- Support for the West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition and Three Sisters Market
- West Boulevard Merchants Association thrives as a B3 cohort.
- Three Sisters Market was rezoned and funded by City of Charlotte.
- Access Charlotte with Digital Navigation and the Learn2Earn Pilot with 1,036 households covered and a two-year investment

of \$615,600.

- 2023 brought a Congress for the New Urbanism Legacy Project to the corridor.
- Support for the West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition and Three Sisters Market.
- Congress for the New Urbanism Legacy Project created.

## Looking Ahead to 2024

We will collaboratively explore expansion opportunities, secure additional capital, develop sustainable structures, and extend corridor influence. Additionally, we anticipate new businesses at the former city property on the corner of West Boulevard and Remount.

## Corridors of Opportunity

### Corridor-by-Corridor Updates

# Central/ Albemarle

Creating economic opportunity for existing residents and businesses through improved access



## Key Projects in 2023

- Infrastructure investments of \$5.24 million in pedestrian and bicycle safety projects to include signals and transit mobility hubs.
- The playbook-prioritized Cultural Trail Plan design underway.
- Prospera's Small Business Partner Grant:
  - brought financial classes to Albemarle Road.
  - benefited Hispanic-owned businesses.
  - engaged 48 owners and provided tailored consultations.
- Access Charlotte with 926 eligible households and a two-year

investment of \$555,600.

- The city awarded \$63,800 in Business Matching Grants.

## Looking Ahead to 2024

LACCC will launch the Albemarle Business Opportunity Hub with a \$1.5 million Corridors grant. A language access program will kick off to ensure inclusivity. The city will advance infrastructure projects, enhancing equitable mobility.

## Corridors of Opportunity

### Corridor-by-Corridor Updates

# Sugar Creek

Stabilizing the intersection to create opportunity for the residents

Year in Review



## Key Projects in 2023

- Safe Biz CLT expanded with \$100,000+ for cameras/fiber installations.
- Corridors-funded targeted cleanup and roadside lawn maintenance.
- Sugar Creek Business Association formed.
- 10 canopy care projects conducted.
- Strategic acquisition and private partnerships reduced hotel rooms by approximately 450.
- \$7.7 million invested in LED lighting and pedestrian signals for enhanced safety.

## Looking Ahead to 2024

Corridors will launch the \$24+ million Sugar Creek Mobility Corridor, support the redevelopment of the former Economy Inn into for-sale affordable housing, and fund the \$302,000 grant for SBTC's expanded women's construction training.

## Corridors of Opportunity

### Corridor-by-Corridor Updates

# North Graham/ North Tryon

Retaining the history and assets of the neighborhoods while building an employment hub



## Key Projects in 2023

- The playbook was completed.
- The city awarded \$115,000 in Business Matching Grants.
- Two façade and interior renovation projects completed.
- Access Charlotte's programs reached 349+ households with 70% enrollment, hosted six events, and had a \$209,400 investment.
- A \$490,000 E-Bike Pilot Program funded by the city and Wells Fargo.
- \$100,000 investment for the Atando Avenue street conversion to further design the project.

## Looking Ahead to 2024

A \$730,000 Corridors grant will boost the Hispanic Contractors of the Carolina's (HCAC) Job Readiness Program. Our collaboration with Inlivan to reimagine the former Dillehay Court public housing site will create a neighborhood plan that envisions new housing, jobs, public realm and other improvements. The E-Bike Pilot Program will expand with DreamKey Partners.

## Corridors of Opportunity

### Corridor-by-Corridor Updates

# Freedom/ Wilkinson

Intentional community-driven planning, fostering inclusivity and sustainable development



## Key Projects in 2023

- Community engagement and project prioritization.
- 1 Million Black Businesses launched at Do Greater Charlotte.
  - It is a national program that aims to address challenges faced by Black business owners.
  - The kickoff event drew over 100 participants including businesses and resource partners.
- Business Matching Grants awards totaled \$330,000 in fiscal year 2023.
- Access Charlotte served households with 81% enrollment, hosted two events, and was backed by a \$171,600 investment over two years.

## Looking Ahead to 2024

The playbook, shaped by community input, will steer the Corridors program in creating an initial investment package to address vital community-driven priorities.

# Community Voices



## Freedom/Wilkinson

“I’m excited to see what is to come in our corridor! I appreciate all the opportunities to provide input in the planning process. staff have been very engaged in our community and our neighbors really enjoyed the Corridors Connect event this past fall.”

### Stephanie Stenglein

*Camp Greene Neighborhood Association President*



## N. Graham/N. Tryon

“We are excited about the growth that is taking place in the North Graham Street, and Beatties Ford area. North Druid Hills is in the middle of the activities taking place in the Corridors. We shop in those areas; thus, we benefit from all the enhancements in the area. Also, the partnership we have established with We Care.”

### Dr. Willie Tabor

*North Druid Hills Community Association President*



## West Boulevard

“The support from corridor team has been very valuable to the WBNC as we continue to buildbridges in the west Blvd corridor it’s a great partnership.”

### Brenda Campbell

*Vice President of West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition*

Inclusive

Everyone (all)

Holistic  
diversity  
equitable opportunities

**FREEDOM/WILKINSON**  
CORRIDOR OF OPPORTUNITY

**CORRIDORS OF OPPORTUNITY**  
PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

The Corridors of Opportunity program utilizes six themes as a framework to identify projects, programs and partnerships, secure community investment and build with organizations and implementation.

The six themes are adopted from the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Read more about the Corridors of Opportunity program here: 



**Corridors of Opportunity**

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**FREEDOM/WILKINSON**  
CORRIDOR OF OPPORTUNITY

**PLAYBOOK TIME**

The Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor of Opportunity will take approximately 18 months to complete. Through this process, City staff and partners will work with residents, businesses, and organizations throughout the corridor through stakeholder meetings, in-person work sessions, and other activities.

This meeting is an opportunity for staff to present themes and priorities and for community members to provide input and engage in the process.

# Telling the Corridors Stories

## Summary of the 2023 Communication Strategy

The 2023 communication strategy involved a multifaceted approach to engaging with the media and disseminating key messages effectively. The strategy aimed to maximize visibility, generate positive media coverage and effectively convey key messages to target audiences through various media channels.

## In the media headlines

By leveraging press conferences, press releases, proactive media pitching, and a well-crafted pitch, we enhanced the Corridors of Opportunity's reputation, reach, and impact within the media landscape.





# By the Numbers

In earned media, the Corridors team broadened their reach with huge numbers in 2023.

**2,049,083**

Total TV Audience

**100,771,415**

Total Radio Audience

**\$448,542**

Total TV Publicity

**390,058,222**

Total Online + Print Audience

**\$4,470,776**

Total Online + Print Publicity



**WFAE, the local NPR affiliate, did an “In Focus: Corridors of Opportunity” series** that lasted the entire year. The special highlighted each corridor and pulled out key themes and storylines, highlighting programs, people and partnerships within the Corridors of Opportunity Program.

Corridors of Opportunity



# Meet the Team!

The City of Charlotte Corridors of Opportunity Team is hard at work to deliver projects, programs and partnerships that create systemic change in Charlotte. Each team member brings a unique perspective and expertise that combine to create magic!



# Stay Connected!

Keep up with Corridors of Opportunity projects and updates in the new year



Corridors *of*  
Opportunity