



PEOPLE

MAKE CITIES

THE CHARLOTTE URBAN DESIGN CENTER

YEAR IN REVIEW

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01 INTRODUCTION

The Urban Design Center is in its 8th year at the City of Charlotte! We had an exciting 2023 focusing on our three core practice areas: our urban design consultancy, our Placemaking Program, and our South End Studio. We have moved forward very important projects this year, including leading planning work for the City of Charlotte’s Corridors of Opportunity Program, establishing a process for the Neighborhood Character Overlay (that went into effect with the adoption of the UDO), and kicking off the Equity Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) project along the future Silver Line corridor. The UDC brought home two American Planning Association North Carolina (APA-NC) awards for our planning and design work in the North Graham/North Tryon corridor and Five Points Plaza in the Historic West End. We have an exciting year ahead full of area planning, pattern books documenting the existing character of our neighborhoods, implementation along our corridors, and refreshing our infrastructure Uptown: stay tuned!

Our Placemaking Program launched its fourth annual grant cycle, awarding over \$160,000 to 14 community recipients and opened our Creative Pool to over 42 local artists to participate in community-driven local art opportunities. This year the UDC won our second Lowe’s Hometown Grant for \$260,000 to create Spring Street Plaza in the Greenville neighborhood. In partnership with the City’s Tree Canopy Preservation Program, we are creating an orchard and community space along the Urban Arboretum Trail. Additionally, in 2023 we are focusing on a complete refresh of the City of Charlotte’s Placemaking Hub. This will be launched next year with the intention of making placemaking achievable, understandable, and easy for all our community partners.

The UDC hosted our third annual Urban Design Awards, or “Urbies”, in partnership with the UNC Charlotte School of Architecture. In 2024, we are focusing on opening the Studio doors to the entire community. We hope to create a place where built environment enthusiasts can gather to advance the highest quality urban design in our city. We will be hosting events monthly, kicking off with Urban Design Movie Night, Coffee and Conversations, and a Built Environment workshop for creatives.

We’re also very excited to welcome our newest urban designer to the team. Madison Dugar joined us in August after graduating from Washington University in St. Louis with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture and a minor in Creative Practice for Social Change. She has been an incredible addition to the UDC, and we’re happy to have her on board!

I am excited for the year ahead. Thank you for your continued support and excitement. We look forward to welcoming you to the Studio in 2024! In the meantime, follow our journey on Instagram @clturbandesign, our “People Make Cities” blog and our “Connections” newsletter.

Sincerely,



Erin Chantry, Manager, Urban Design Center

02 STAFF

WELCOME OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER!

In the fall of 2023, a new team member joined the Urban Design Center. We are excited to have her on board and for you to meet her!

MADISON DUGAR

Madison is an urban designer with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture and a minor in Creative Practice of Social Change from Washington University in St. Louis. She has experience in architectural design, research, and design thinking. She is passionate about creating sustainable, equitable communities with vibrant places that are accessible to all. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, drawing, and exploring different cities.



Erin Chantry
Charlotte Urban Design
Center Program Manager



Kate Cavazza
Associate Urban Designer and Planner



Laura Bandara
Project Manager and Urban Designer



Madison Dugar
Associate Urban Designer and Planner



Will Linville
Project Manager and Urban Designer



Jessica Macks
Event Coordinator



Justin Ritchey
Urban Designer and Planner

03 THE CHARLOTTE URBAN DESIGN CENTER

PURPOSE AND HISTORY:

The Charlotte Planning, Design & Development Department formed the Charlotte Urban Design Center in 2020 to consolidate its urban design consultation, placemaking and community engagement services under one roof.

With its physical space rooted in South End, the urban design team offers community members more access to these services, builds on past successes and continues to excel in design and engagement.

MISSION:

The Charlotte Urban Design Center's mission is to advance the quality of Charlotte's built environment and bring public awareness to the importance of urban design. The center reveals how design influences quality of life and economic resilience and advocates for great public places in a livable city.

04 STUDIO

WORK

URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

The UDC hosted the city's third annual Urban Design Awards, or "Urbies," with our partners at the UNC Charlotte's David R. Ravin School of Architecture in October. The awards program aims to recognize and celebrate quality urban design in Charlotte while encouraging continued community discussion around what makes great places. A diverse, 10-member jury of urban design experts chose award recipients. From treasured public places and life on the street, these awards celebrate all the elements that make Charlotte a great place to live, work, and play. The Urbies showcases how important urban design is to quality of life and how meaningful public places are to the Queen City. The award recipients were:

- Great New Development Near Transit: Lintmen's
- Great Walkable Neighborhood: Dilworth
- Great New Life for an Old Place: Community Matters Cafe
- Great Public Space: Freedom Park
- Great Placemaking: Charlotte Shout
- Great Street: Elizabeth Avenue
- Great Urban Architecture: Latta Arcade and Brevard Court
- Great Suburban Design: Waverly
- Great Student Project: BOplex Park Vision Plan
- Great Urban Design Champion: Mary Newsom
- Great Neighborhood Champion: Ruth Ava Lyons and Paul Sires
- People's Choice Award for Great Urban Design: The Line

A diverse jury of 10 urban design experts chose the best of 12 projects based on nomination submissions made by architects, urban designers, planners, placemakers and the public. Winners were announced at the Urban Design Awards Ceremony held at the South End Studio. Jury members were:

- Erin Chantry, Manager, Urban Design Center, City of Charlotte
- Deb Ryan, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, UNC Charlotte
- Ashley Fahey, American City Business Journals
- Jarrod Jones, DreamKey Partners
- Rachel Russell Krenz, Ram Real Estate
- Bert Lynn, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation
- Ed McKinney, Charlotte Department of Transportation
- Beth Poovey, LandDesign
- David Walters, Professor Emeritus, UNC Charlotte
- Darrel Williams, Founder, Neighboring Concepts





Great New Development Near Transit – Lintmen's



Great Walkable Neighborhood – Dilworth



Great New Life for an Old Place – Community Matters Cafe



Great Public Space – Freedom Park



Great Suburban Design – Waverly



Great Student Project – BOplex Park Vision Plan



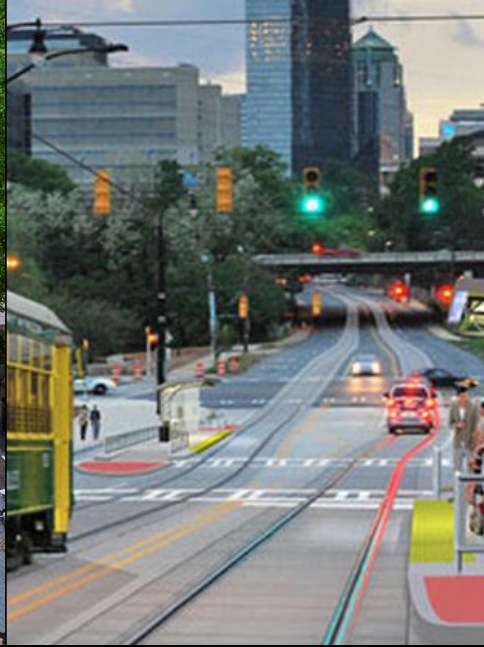
Great Urban Design Champion – Mary Newsom



Great Neighborhood Champion – Ruth Ava Lyons and Paul Sires



Great Placemaking – Charlotte Shout



Great Street – Elizabeth Avenue



Great Urban Architecture – Latta Arcade and Brevard Court



People's Choice Award for Great Urban Design – The Line



Urban Design Awards Ceremony at the South End Studio

2023 AWARD RECIPIENTS

PEOPLE MAKE CITIES

COMMUNICATIONS

Urban Design Center staff have successfully grown the center's digital presence, giving residents even more ways to interact with the Charlotte Urban Design Center. The People Make Cities blog was relaunched and six new unique articles written by Urban Design Center staff were published.

A quarterly newsletter called "Connections" was unveiled where the Urban Design Center team updates the public on work done in our focus areas: urban design consultancy, the Placemaking Program, and the South End Studio. The Urban Design Center Facebook and Instagram accounts continue to be places to share informational and unique urban design content. Since 2002, our Instagram engagement rate has increased 40% while our Facebook engagement rate is up 24%. 600 new followers were added across the two platforms.



Join the newsletter mailing list using the QR code!



@cturbandesign



STUDIO PROGRAMMING

This year, the South End Studio was activated for the first time with regular programming. The Charlotte Urban Design Center hosted 15 unique events with over 500 Charlotte residents coming through studio doors in 2023.

Monthly collaborations with Potions & Pixels brought new creative energy to the Studio with eight Third Thursday Board Game Nights. Local jazz artist Dawn Anthony brightened the plaza with music and fun in the summer. The studio hosted two film screening events and multiple open houses. The Urban Design Center also facilitated placemaking grant workshops and assembled local experts for important affordable housing conversations. The 2023 Urban Design Awards had the highest attendance for any one event with close to 100 design professionals present.

The Charlotte Urban Design Center will proudly continue programming the Studio in 2024 with monthly urban design focused events. Sign up for our “Connections” newsletter to be notified of future Studio programming.

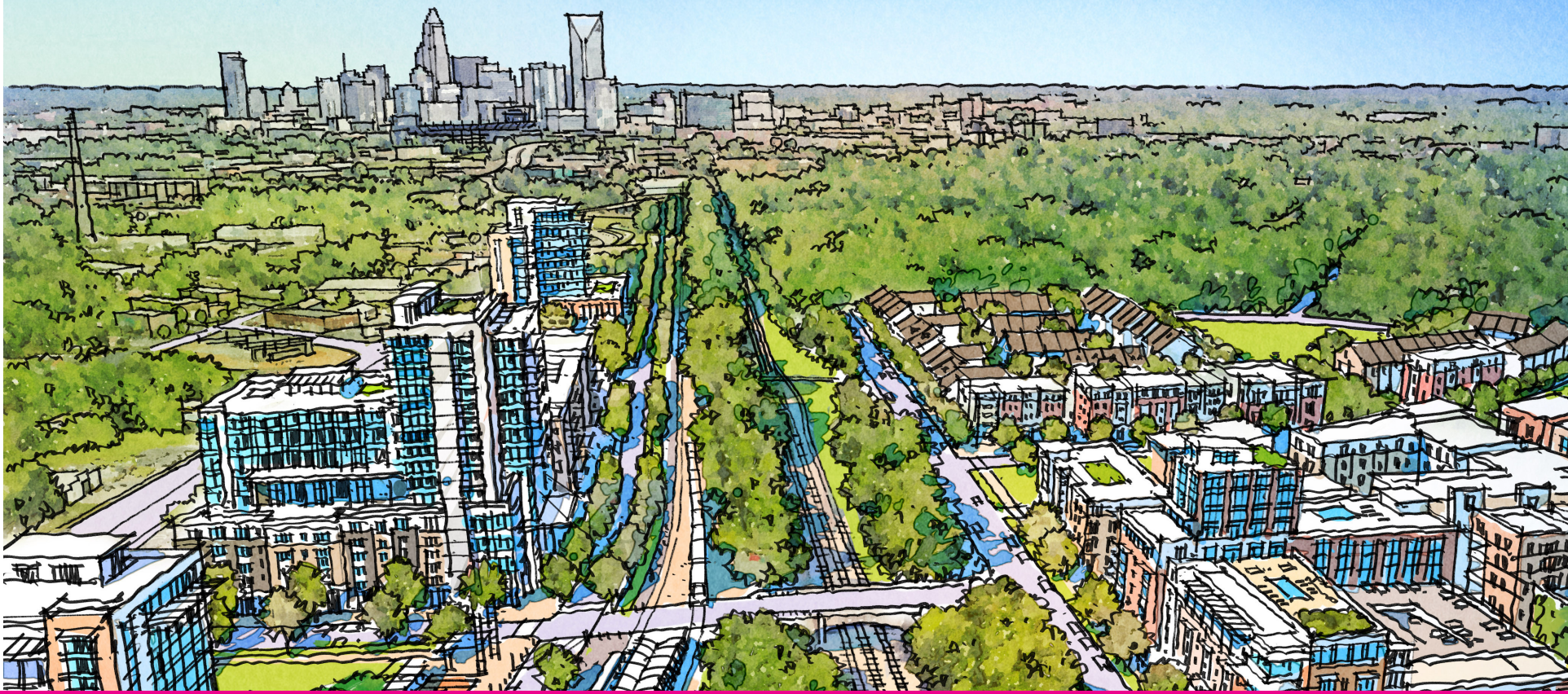


Illustration by Kittleson & Associates

05 CONSULTANCY WORK

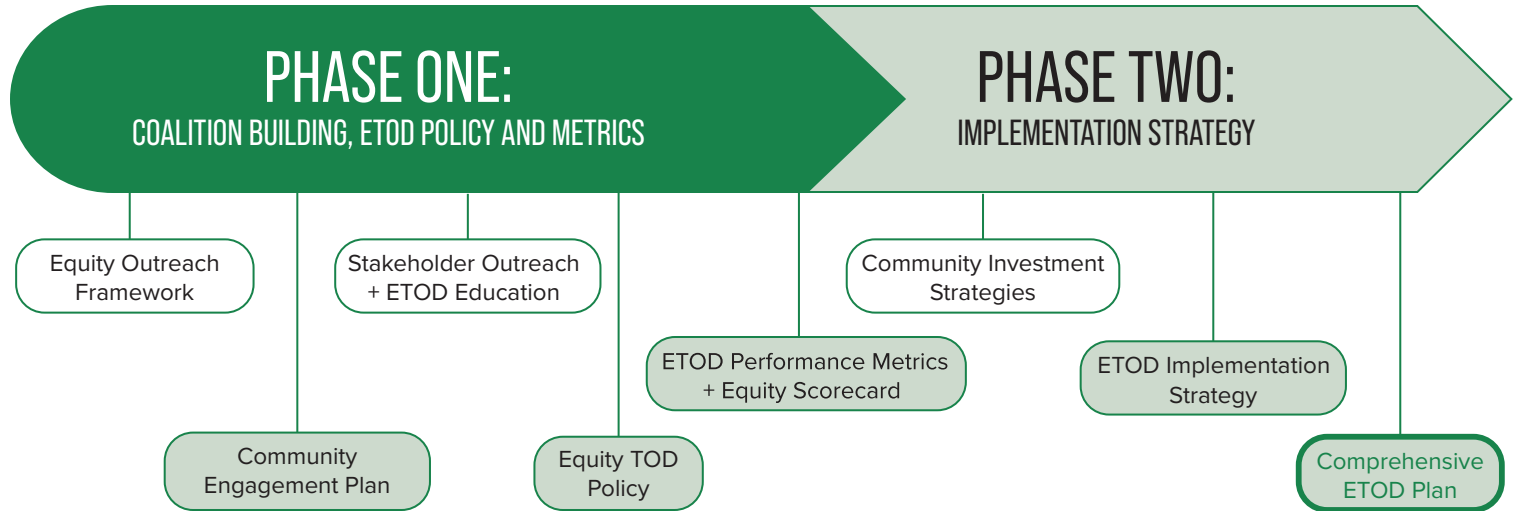
LYNX SILVER LINE EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Urban Design Center staff has led an interdepartmental team to develop a scope of work and strategies for equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD) with communities along the proposed LYNX Silver Line route. The City of Charlotte was awarded a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant to plan for equitable development in areas of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County where residents and small businesses are at risk of displacement because of station area development along the future LYNX Silver Line.



2024

2025



LYNX SILVER LINE ETOD KICK-OFF MEETING

The Lynx Silver Line Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Plan and Implementation Strategy process, in partnership with CATS, kicked-off in early November.

The project brings together an interdisciplinary team of local and national experts – notably the Community Building Initiative and the Center for Neighborhood Technology – to co-create policy and implementation strategies with community members. The goal of ETOD policy and implementation is to embed equity and anti-displacement into the fabric of Silver Line station area planning and development.

The process is expected to unfold over the next two years, with the first phase focused on coalition building to create policy goals and metrics, and the second phase coalescing around implementation strategies and prioritization processes. Look for more information and community events featuring Charlotte’s ETOD team in 2024!



N. GRAHAM / N. TRYON PLAYBOOK

The Urban Design Center took the lead with the City's Corridors of Opportunity playbook process, this time working with community members and stakeholders in and around North Graham Street and North Tryon Street. The Corridors of Opportunity program is a demonstration of the city's commitment to supporting equitable investment and opportunity, holistic neighborhood revitalization, and the ability for long-time residents to stay-in-place.

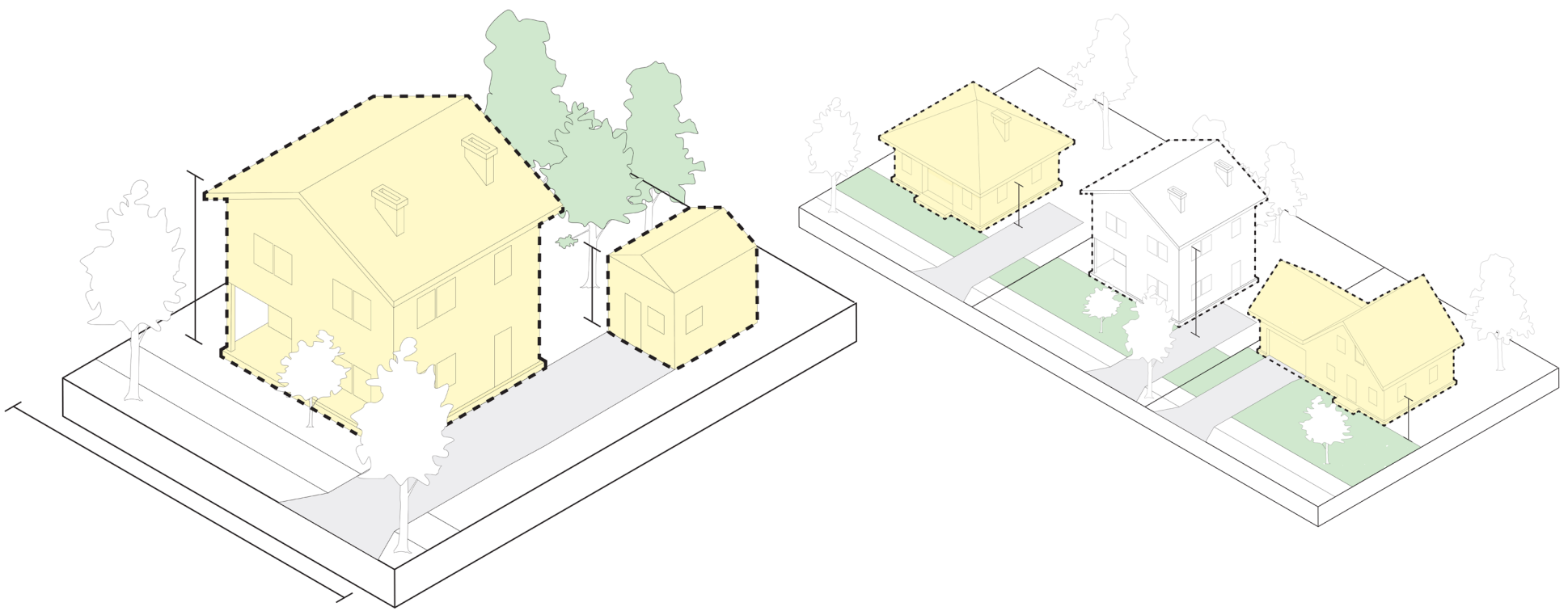
The North Graham St./North Tryon St. Playbook was completed in under six months and was presented to the community in late Winter 2023. The completed playbook represented the collective efforts of interdepartmental teams of City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County staff, community members, and stakeholders. The Urban Design Center staff identified a list of over 250 projects, and prioritized a list of 55 programs and projects. 11 of the 55 were new projects identified through the planning and engagement process and were selected by staff because of the potential to positively impact the community. Highlighting the efforts of all those involved and recognizing the transformational impact of the Corridors of Opportunity program, the North Graham St./North Tryon St. Playbook was selected as a 2023 APA-NC Marvin Collins Award, Honorable Mention recipient, in the Small Plans category.



THE SOUTHPARK LOOP

The SouthPark Loop continues to grow, with two segments completed in 2023, including custom furnishings and wayfinding markers along Carnegie Boulevard. Design Center staff are working with SouthPark Community Partners, the City's newest Municipal Services District, to make the vision for the Loop a reality. Much of the day-to-day work for the Loop implementation involves communicating the requirements for the loop to brokers and developers that are looking to redevelop along the Loop alignment and ensuring improvements are memorialized through the rezoning process.

In early 2024, the Urban Design Center will partner with General Services on advance planning for the Cameron Valley Road segment of the Loop. This segment, when completed, will connect Phillips Place to SouthPark Regional Library. Additionally, the Urban Design Center is working closely with the Arts and Sciences Council and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library to deliver the Loops' first public art installation. Mary Carter Taub, a site-based artist, was selected in Spring 2023 to create a new artwork to be installed at SouthPark Regional Library. A community listening session in was held in Summer 2023 and the artist is currently refining her artwork in preparation for installation. This installation will be a lively addition to the Loop in 2024, and one that will continue SouthPark's evolution into a vibrant urban environment.

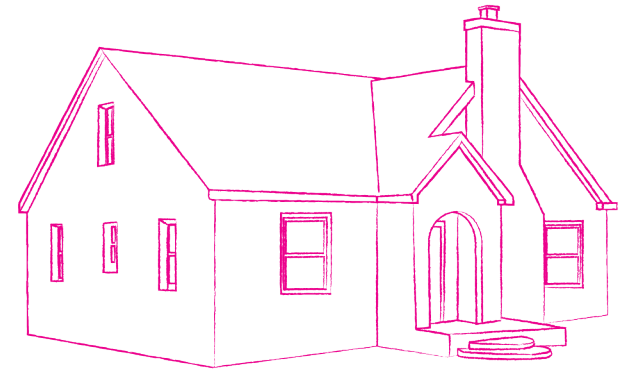
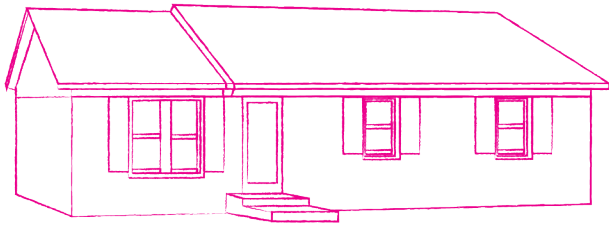


NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER OVERLAYS

The Urban Design Center worked closely with divisional colleagues from the Historic Preservation Commission to manage the deployment of our newest residential overlay tools, the Neighborhood Character Overlay (NCO), Residential Infill Overlay (RIO), and Historic District – Streetside. The Urban Design Center developed diagrams and illustrations to explain both the process and the design regulations available under the overlays, and collaborated with the presubmittal meeting and permitting processes. These overlay tools were added to the newly adopted Unified Development Ordinance and assist in ensuring that compatible residential infill development occurs inside established neighborhoods.

In August, the Design and Preservation division held a public information session for community members to build interest and answer questions about what the overlay districts can and cannot do, and how it might be utilized to compliment neighborhood character. Planning and design colleagues from Raleigh and Chapel Hill participated in a public Q&A to share their insights into the implementation of their own residential overlay projects.

Read more about the UDO's residential overlay districts here: <https://charlotteudo.org/udo-residential-overlay-districts/>



PATTERN BOOKS

This year, The Urban Design Center developed an initial research survey that identifies attributes and characteristics of single-family lots and homes built over 50 years ago within Charlotte neighborhoods identified as being vulnerable to displacement. This research is intended to serve as a guide in the creation of pattern books - a housing tool that offers pre-permitted contextually appropriate detached and multifamily residential housing. Pattern books can be developed for individual neighborhoods and offer a catalogue of building plans that complement the existing architectural style of a neighborhood and are typically provided to potential homebuilders free of charge.

In places like North Carolina, where municipalities are limited in how residential design can be managed, this method of pre-designed residential plans can provide plans for homes that match a neighborhood's architectural character. Charlotte is rapidly growing, and future development could dramatically change neighborhood character and displace residents. In addition to the above, pattern books can be a tool to mitigate displacement of a neighborhood's character and encourage the construction of missing middle housing types. In 2024, The Urban Design Center will coordinate with City and County departments to develop several pattern books and an expedited permitting process for neighborhoods inside Route 4.



Artist Sydney Duarte

06 PLACEMAKING

Placemaking Grant submissions doubled between 2022 and 2023. We awarded \$125,000 in grant funding to 14 new vibrant projects for Charlotte neighborhoods. An additional \$45,000 in funding was provided to projects located in a Corridor of Opportunity, as well as those that achieve carbon reduction goals, provide education on environmentally sustainable practices, address climate change and/or advance the city's Strategic Energy Action Plan. All the projects are expected to be completed by Spring 2024.



14 community placemaking grants were awarded in 2023 for a total of \$170,000



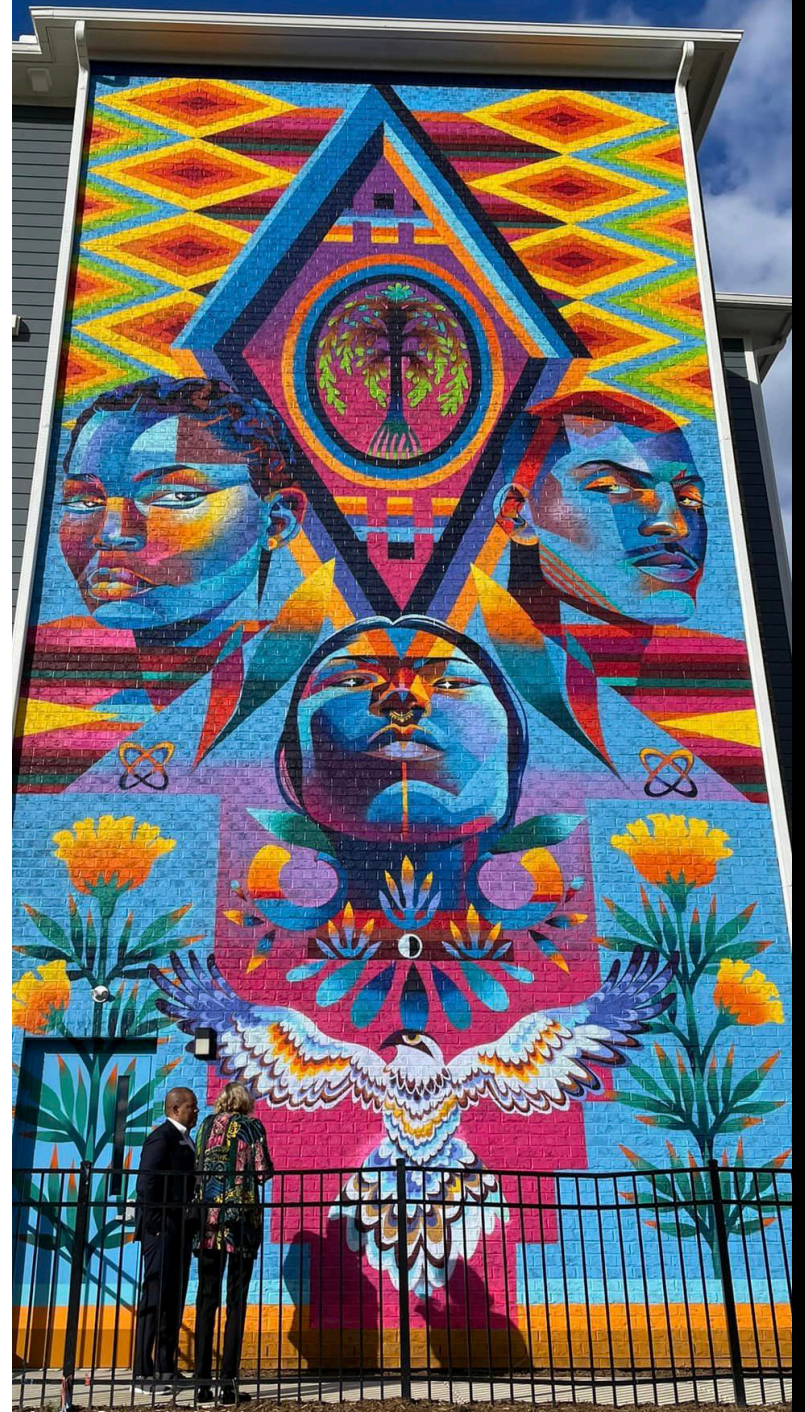
41 local artists were selected for the Creative Pool, providing placemaking and programming opportunities from the City of Charlotte and other arts organizations

PLACEMAKING HUB 2.0

The Charlotte Placemaking Hub is a one-stop-shop for public realm enhancement tools. It aggregates the tools available through the Urban Design Center, CDOT, Housing & Neighborhood Services, and General Services. The Hub directs you to the program where specific processes, procedures and permitting necessary for communities and neighborhoods to enhance their streets and public spaces can be found, such as cabinet wraps, parklets, and paint the pavement. However, the Hub is missing several tools, contains too many individual processes, and is outdated.

To evolve the Placemaking Hub to better assist the community to access the processes for placemaking in their communities, the Urban Design Center is leading an interdepartmental team and consultant to update the current Placemaking Hub. Once complete, this project will update the existing website portal to consolidate existing and new processes into several toolkits. It will also create a Public Realm Guide to help simplify the placemaking process for the community. This will create a seamless process where community members can find all the information needed to apply for a placemaking project while allowing the City of Charlotte to be able to efficiently approve projects.

The Placemaking Hub can be located online through the City of Charlotte's webpage: www.charlottenc.gov/placemakinghub



Artist Georgie Nakima



FEATURED 2023 PLACEMAKING GRANT PROJECTS

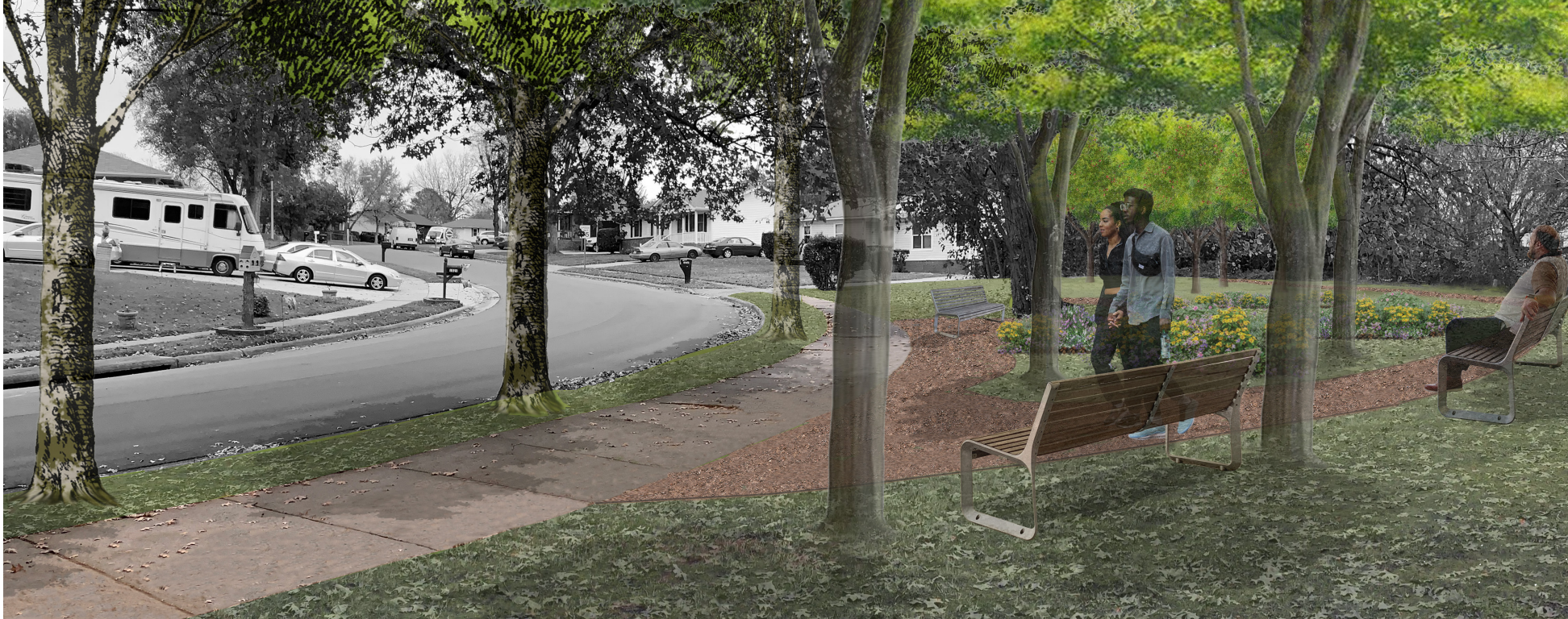
(pictured above) The Uptown Farmer's Market transformed the Uptown-protected bicycle lane on the 300 block of North Davidson Street with a mural featuring colorful fruits and vegetables. Muralist Curtis King designed the images and supervised over 150 volunteers and corporate sponsors during installation. Completed in July 2023, this colorful addition to this segment of protected bike lanes creatively and colorfully creates place inside the right-of-way and has become an instant landmark for this part of Uptown.

(pictured page 18) The Lions Services Inc. installed a mural on their employee patio to honor and celebrate the blind and low-vision community. Duarte Designs led the installation and facilitated opportunities for Lions Services staff members, each with vision impairment, to participate in painting the mural. Completed in October 2023 on N. Tryon St, the Lions Services' mural tells the story of Charlotte's blind and low-vision residents through art.

(pictured page 19) The Mayfield Memorial Community Development Corporation project team at Sugaree Place Apartments installed a new iconic mural on Sugar Creek Road in October 2023. Artist George Nakima designed this impactful piece representing indigenous and African American communities of the past, present, and future of the Hidden Valley neighborhood. The Sugaree Place mural was funded in collaboration with the City's Corridors of Opportunity program.

(pictured right) Ann Lowe and ArtWalks CLT programmed three creative, art-making events at Five Points Plaza. She partnered with creatives who led participants on interactive walking tours of prominent public art around Historic West End Charlotte. The three events took place during the summer of 2023. They allowed participants to gain knowledge about the history of the corridor and experience delight in learning about local artists from their peers.





URBAN ARBORETUM TRAIL & SPRING ST. PLAZA

2023 has been a banner year for the Urban Arboretum Trail, and the Greenville neighborhood! There is new wayfinding signage along the expanded route, a new sidewalk mural, and placemaking in three Greenville neighborhood gathering spaces. In Spring 2023, the UDC won a Lowe's 100 Hometown's grant to build new community gathering spaces along the Trail in Greenville—Spring Street Plaza, Greenville Grove, and the Polk/Hamilton Edible Landscape.

The Urban Design Center canvassed the Greenville neighborhood in July to gather feedback on design strategies, worked with creative Michelle “Bunny” Gregory to deliver a sidewalk mural in September, kicked-off construction on Spring Street Plaza in October, and hosted a Lowe's volunteer “Red Vest Day” on the Polk/Hamilton Edible Landscape on a gorgeous Carolina fall day in November.

In December, at the Carolina Thread Trail 16th Annual Trails Forum, the Urban Design Center shared efforts to foster community and catalyze environmental justice on the Urban Arboretum Trail along with the Tree Canopy Preservation Program team. The partnership with the Tree Canopy Preservation Program in Greenville's community gathering spaces will continue into next year, as native trees, pollinator gardens, and edible landscapes are planted to make places for trees and people.

URBAN ARBORETUM TRAIL WAYFINDING

Co-managed by the Charlotte Urban Design Center and the Tree Canopy Preservation Program, the Urban Arboretum Trail (UAT) is dedicated to increasing, preserving, and enhancing tree canopy in neighborhoods divided by 20th-century urban renewal projects. This trail follows existing pedestrian and bicycle routes between neighborhoods in Charlotte's North End and Historic West End - reconnecting neighborhoods that were separated by interstate construction. Not only does it reconnect those neighborhoods, it offers opportunities to create art and, like Spring Street Plaza, public spaces along the route co-designed with community members.

Work on the included a bike wayfinding signage project which was created to guide trail users with on-street signage and to identify connections along the Urban Arboretum Trail route. With the installation of over 45 signs, you can now easily bike the 5-mile loop and follow the Urban Arboretum Trail from Uptown to Greenville and see the new wayfinding, enhanced public spaces, admire Charlotte's tree canopy, and explore new neighborhoods by following the signage posted along the route.





ALLEGRA WESTBROOKS LIBRARY GREEN SPACE

In the Spring of 2022, the Urban Design Center began community engagement around the design and construction of a new public space at the front lawn of Allegra Westbrook Regional Library. This space was identified by the community during the creation of the Beatties Ford Public Space and Placemaking Playbook in April 2021. Engagement efforts followed and included presentations and a visual preference survey where residents and stakeholders listed ways in which they would like to use the space and prioritized their aesthetic preferences for furnishings, materials, and overall open space design.

The design concept centers around a signature tree, a 15-year old Nuttall oak that provides natural shade, transplanted from the banks for the Catawba River in February 2023. A 1,100 SF deck was designed around the tree, with seating to allow community members and library the opportunity to enjoy the space. A pervious pathway was installed to connect Holly Ave. to the library's front door, while the stormwater basin was replanted with low-maintenance native plants. Finally, two art installations by local artists were provided to further enhance the space – one, a mixed media mural; the other a kinetic sculpture that moves with the wind. Construction began in early Fall 2023 and the space will be open early 2024.



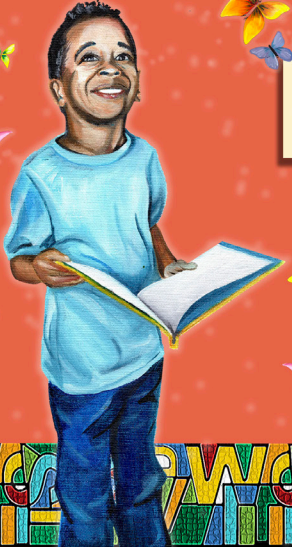


Carr Heights and Nathaniel Carr

Carr Heights was the first housing development on West Boulevard, providing African Americans an affordable way to build a home and a garden outside the bustle of the city. It was named for Nathaniel Carr, who partnered in its creation. Carr was a manager of Selwyn Farm near Marsh Road, one of the largest and most modern farms in the county. This was a remarkable achievement in the early 20th century when African Americans were seldom afforded opportunities to lead large businesses.

Nat and his wife, Lizzie, purchased land along West Boulevard in 1920 and built a home and planted an orchard, vineyard, and garden. Working with white dairyman, W H Stilwell, Carr laid out the new neighborhood in 1924. He had a vision for the community, donating land at the center "to be used only for religious purposes by the Baptist denomination of the colored race." New Shiloh Baptist Church still serves the community at that spot.

Today, the Historic Nathaniel Carr Senior Apartments rise on the ground where Carr's farmhouse stood, the land now owned by the West Side Community Land Trust. These affordable apartments continue the Carr legacy of commitment to the community.



Camp Greene & Black Soldiers



African Americans served in every capacity in the US Army during World War I, despite racial segregation and discrimination in training. More than 21,000 Black men from North Carolina served, the most from any state in the nation. Black Charlotteans were represented far beyond their numbers in the local population. Many from the neighborhood were called, including brothers Ross, Moses, and Adolphus Reid.

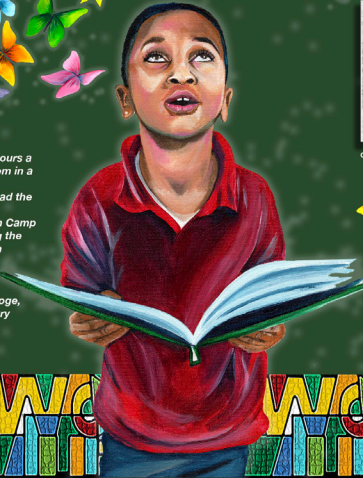
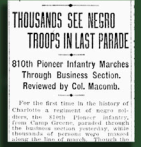
Camp Greene was built in the summer of 1917, and 60,000 men trained there over the next 18 months. Most of the camp was north of Wilkinson Boulevard, but the place where 10,000 cavalry horses and mules were stabled is Westover Hills today. Remount Road took its name from the stables.

Black recruits were shipped to distant camps in the North for training during the first year of the war. They started training here at Camp Greene in the summer of 1918. Black soldiers were a majority in the last months of the war, with as many as 15,000 in camp at one time.

The 810th Pioneer Infantry Regiment underwent rigorous training and received recognition for their skill. The war ended before the 810th was shipped to France. It made history by being the first detachment of Black soldiers to march through Charlotte as part of the victory celebration.

"We were drilling eight hours a day and we soon had them in a state where it was acknowledged that we had the best-appearing regiment that had been in Camp Greene, even including the Regulars of the 4th Division."

- Captain George Desloge, 810th Pioneer Infantry



WEST BOULEVARD HISTORIC MARKERS

Urban Design Center staff have been working closely with community leaders inside the West Boulevard corridor on the implementation of a corridor-wide series of commemorative markers that are meant to honor people, places and moments in time in and around the West Boulevard community.

This placemaking project was identified by the community during the West Boulevard Public Space and Placemaking Master Plan and has been in development for nearly two years. The community selected artist Jamil Steele (Dyair) to develop the imagery for each of the eleven markers, creating unique portraits of children and a lettered mosaic in vivid colors. Installation will begin once approval is obtained from NCDOT and CDOT.

Two of 11 markers designed by the artist Dyair. The artwork will wrap a 9-foot tall monument form.

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