

Notes from North of the Border

The Challenges and Successes of
Implementing Active Transportation
Projects in Charlotte



South Carolina Bike Walk Trails Summit
June 8, 2023



We have walked in your shoes

as local government
staff!

20+ Years of public sector experience

14 Major visions/plans developed

\$220m+ Combined CIP portfolios

120+ Miles of sidewalk delivered

360+ Ped crossings created

50+ Miles of new bikeways delivered

Topics

- Charlotte Context & Challenges
- Project Examples
- Toolbox for Success



Charlotte Context & Challenges

Developing a Complete Streets Approach



Defining Charlotte's Challenge(s)

- LAND USE
- Growth
- LAND USE
- Car-focused street design
- Lots of safety concerns
- Lots of resident complaints
- Which do we build first?
- How do we pay for it?
- Wow do we maintain it?



Defining Charlotte's Challenge(s)



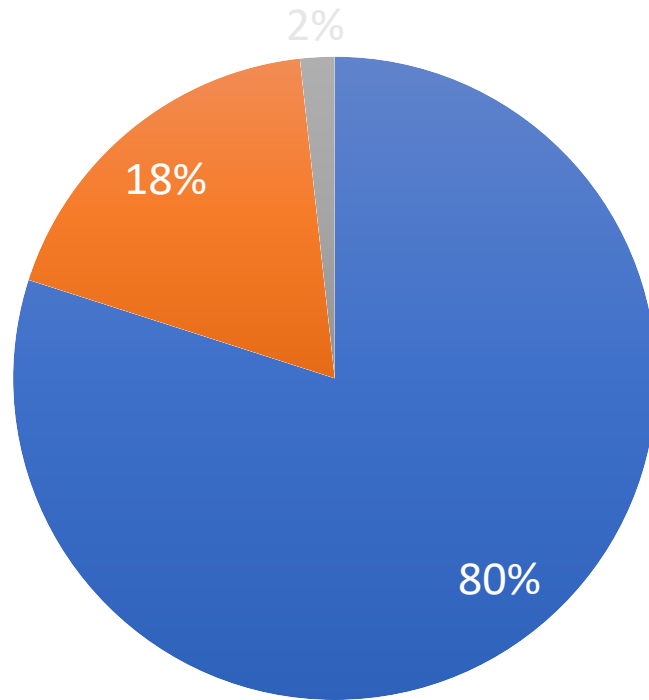
**Our
favorite
streets
had the
answers**



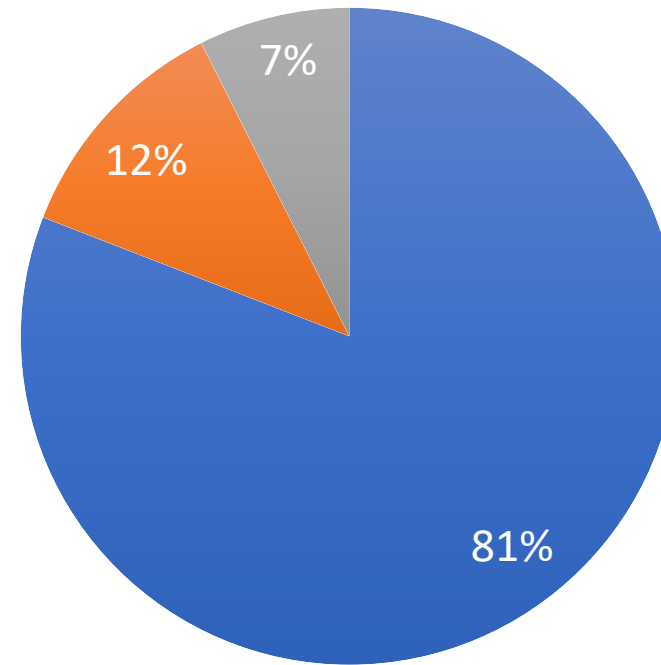
Resident Support:

Do people want complete streets?

Do you believe roads should be designed to accommodate all users?



Do you believe that sidewalks should be provided on thoroughfares?



■ Yes
■ No
■ Don't Know



Evolution of our philosophy

1890



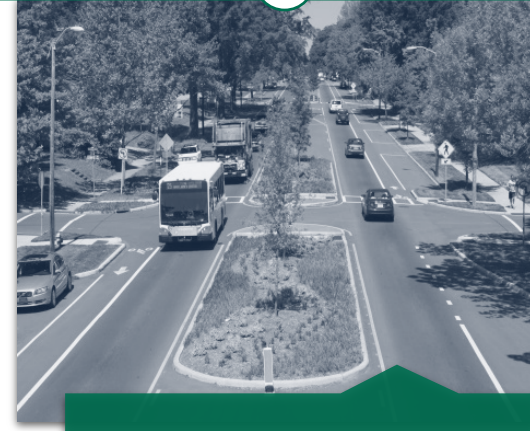
Walkable Streetcar
Suburbs

1950



Auto-Oriented
Development

2000



Complete Streets,
USDG & CATS
Investment

2010



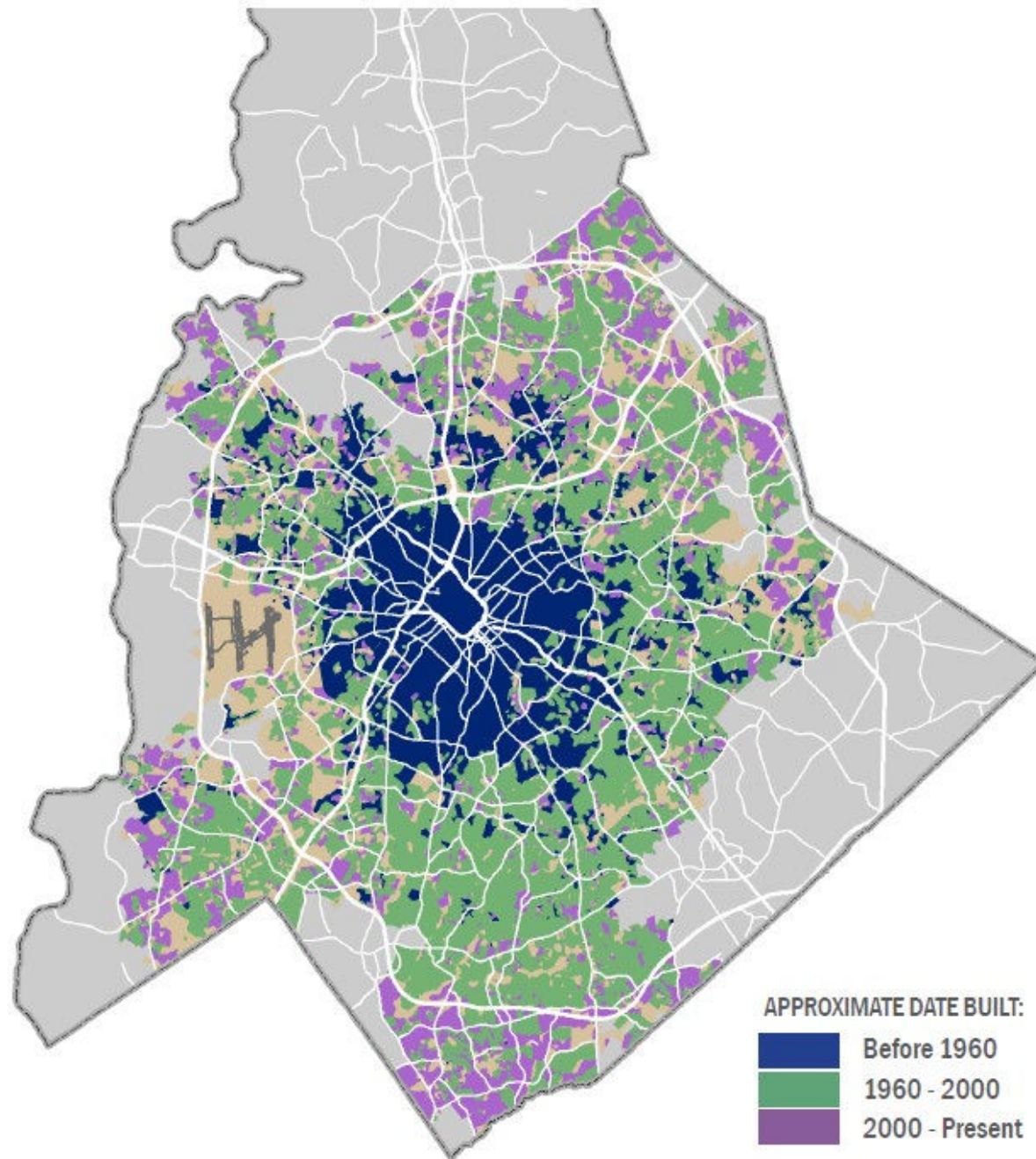
*Transportation Action
Plan*

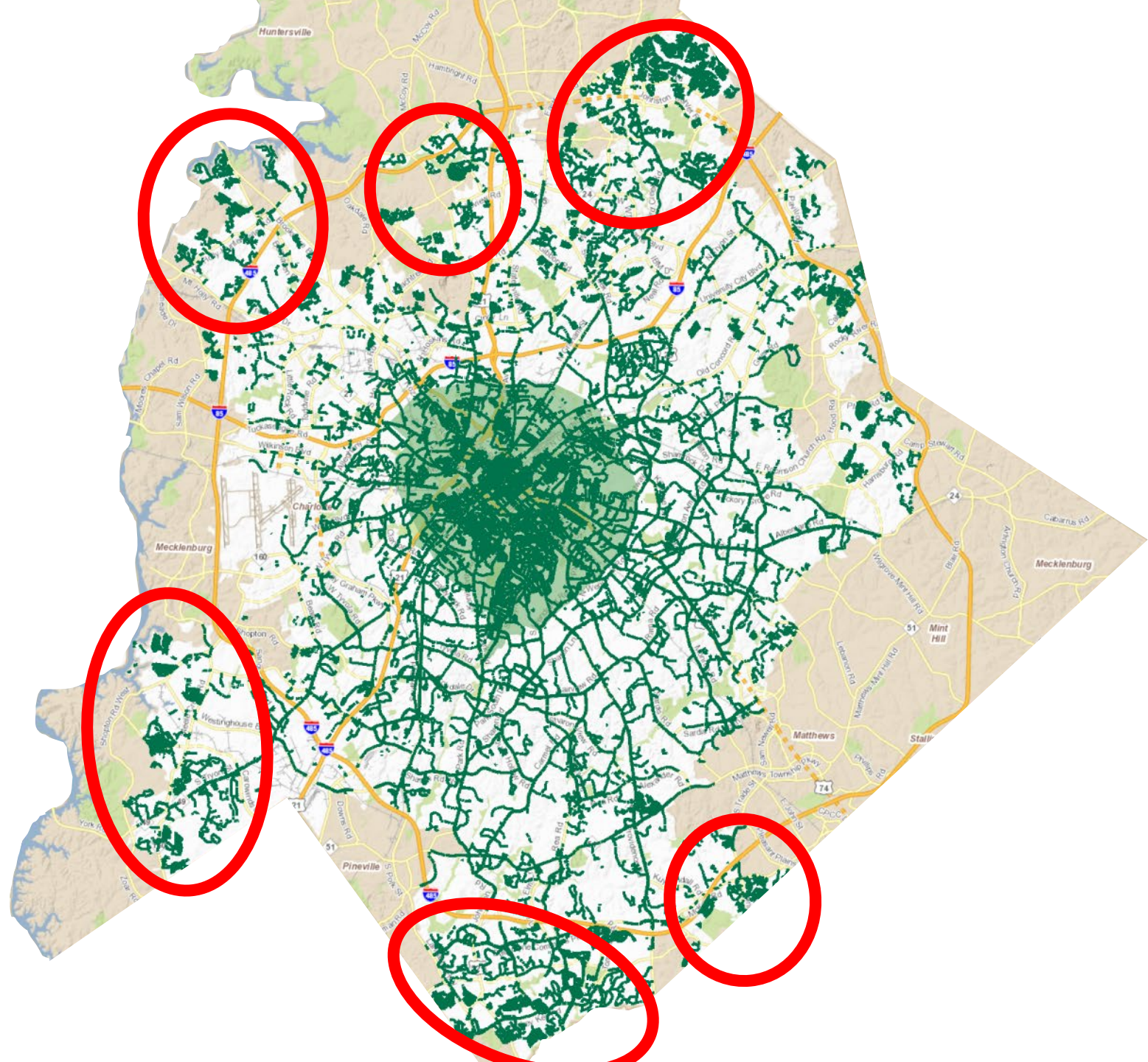
Charlotte WALKS

Charlotte BIKES



Land Developed 1960 - 2000

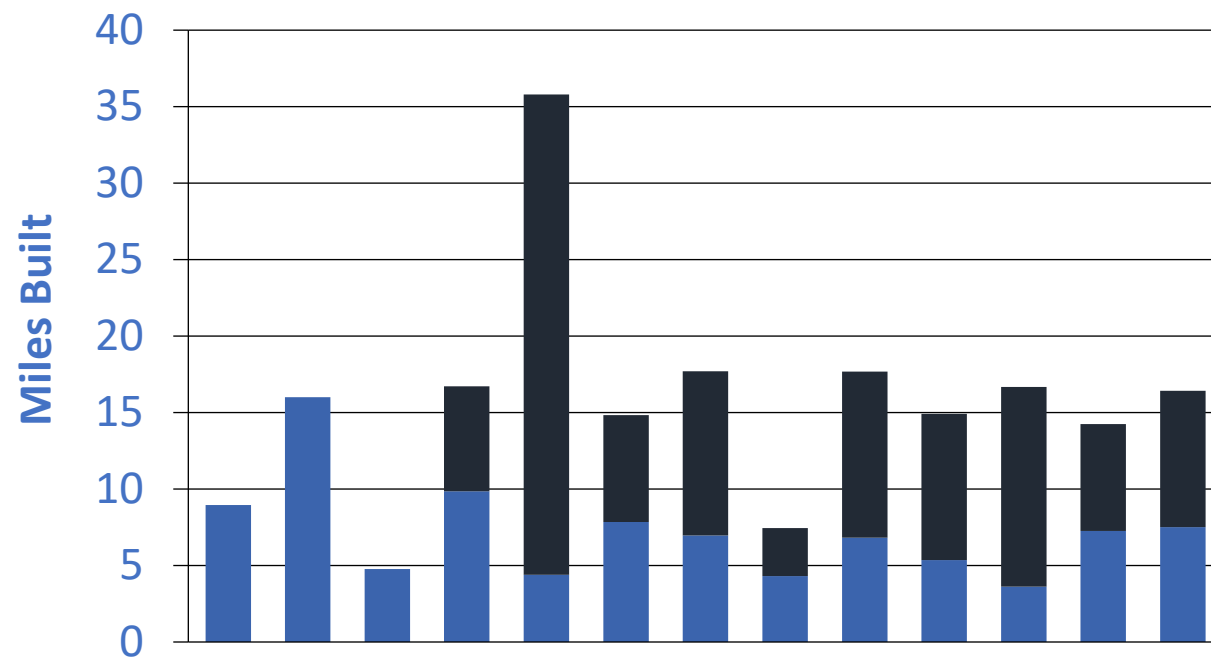




Project Examples

Sidewalk Program

- City Transportation Bonds
 - \$15M every 2 years
- Other Capital Programs
- Federal Grants
 - CMAQ
 - Coordination with MPO
 - Coordination with NCDOT



Park Road Sidewalk Project



Park Road Sidewalk Project



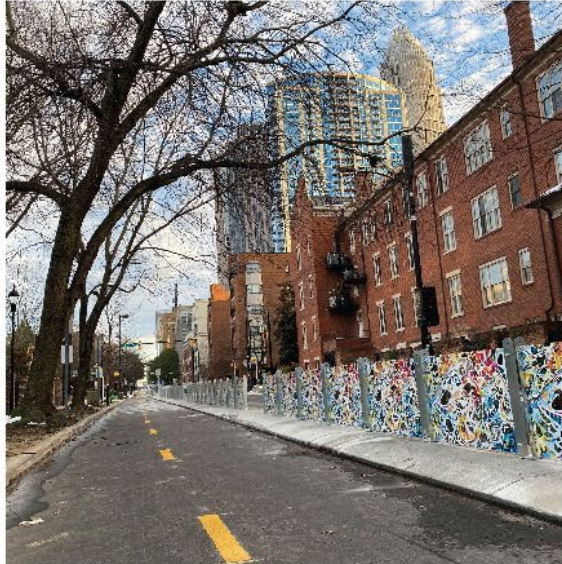
Manning Drive Sidewalk Project



Manning Drive Sidewalk Project



Uptown CycleLink



**~7 MILES of
NEW BIKEWAYS
DESIGNED for
ALL AGES and
ABILITIES**

(AAA bike facilities)

**BUILT for
CHARLOTTEANS**

*Based on 5 years of public
engagement, stakeholder
coordination, and an analysis
of every street and block in
Uptown*



Photo by Grant Baldwin. Photographs courtesy of Sustain Charlotte.



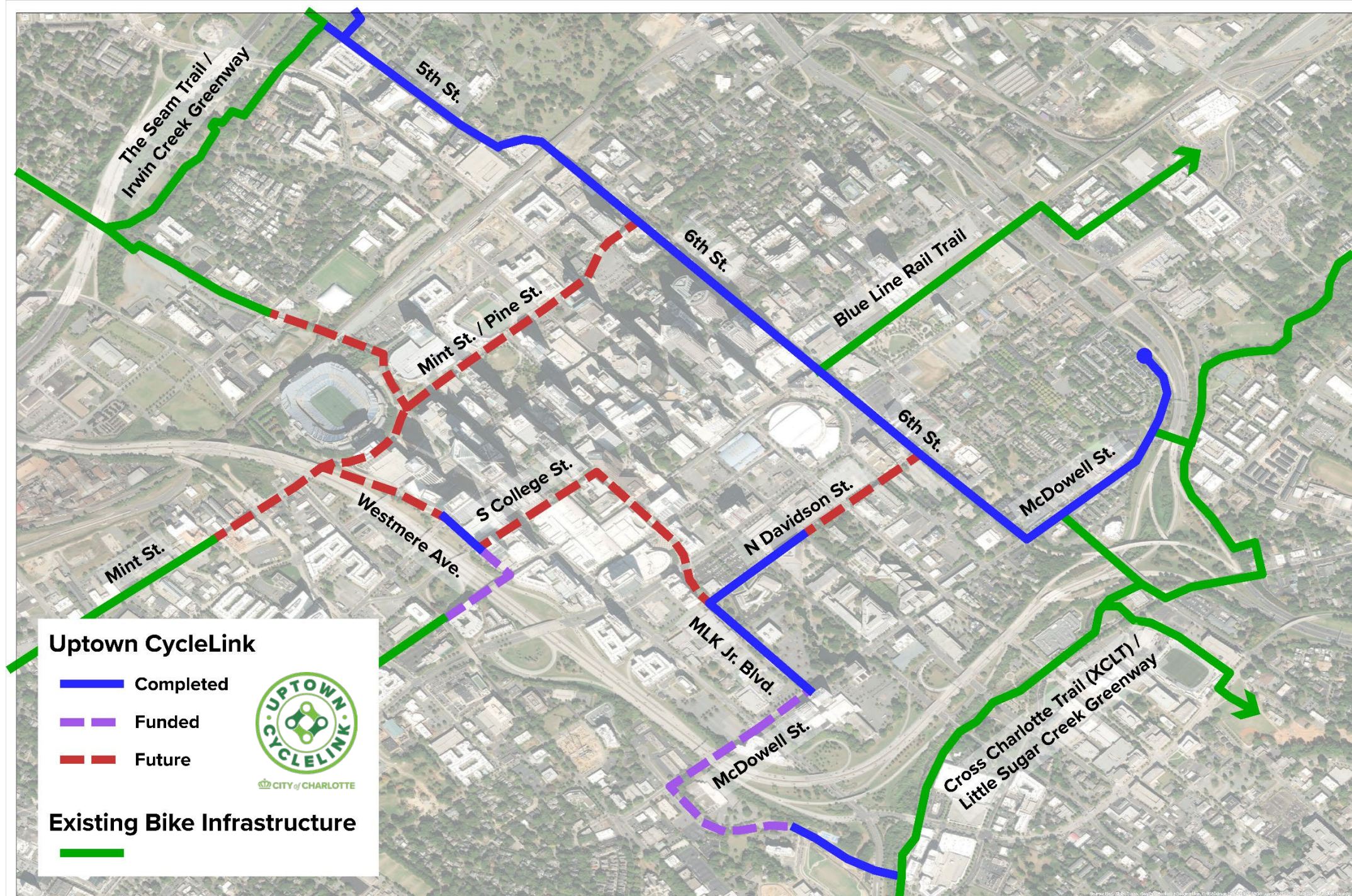
**KEY PART of A
LARGER VISION**

*Connects greenways and
trails across center city*

*Center of an emerging
regional bike network*

**BASED on
LESSONS
from OTHER
LEADING BIKE
CITIES**





Uptown CycleLink



A BROAD *and* DIVERSE PARTNERSHIP

(City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte Center City Partners, Charlotte Area Transit System, Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Charlotte Bicycle Advisory Committee, Mecklenburg County Greenway/Trails Advisory Council, Sustain Charlotte, and more)



#1 PRIORITY *for*
CHARLOTTE'S
BICYCLE
PROGRAM

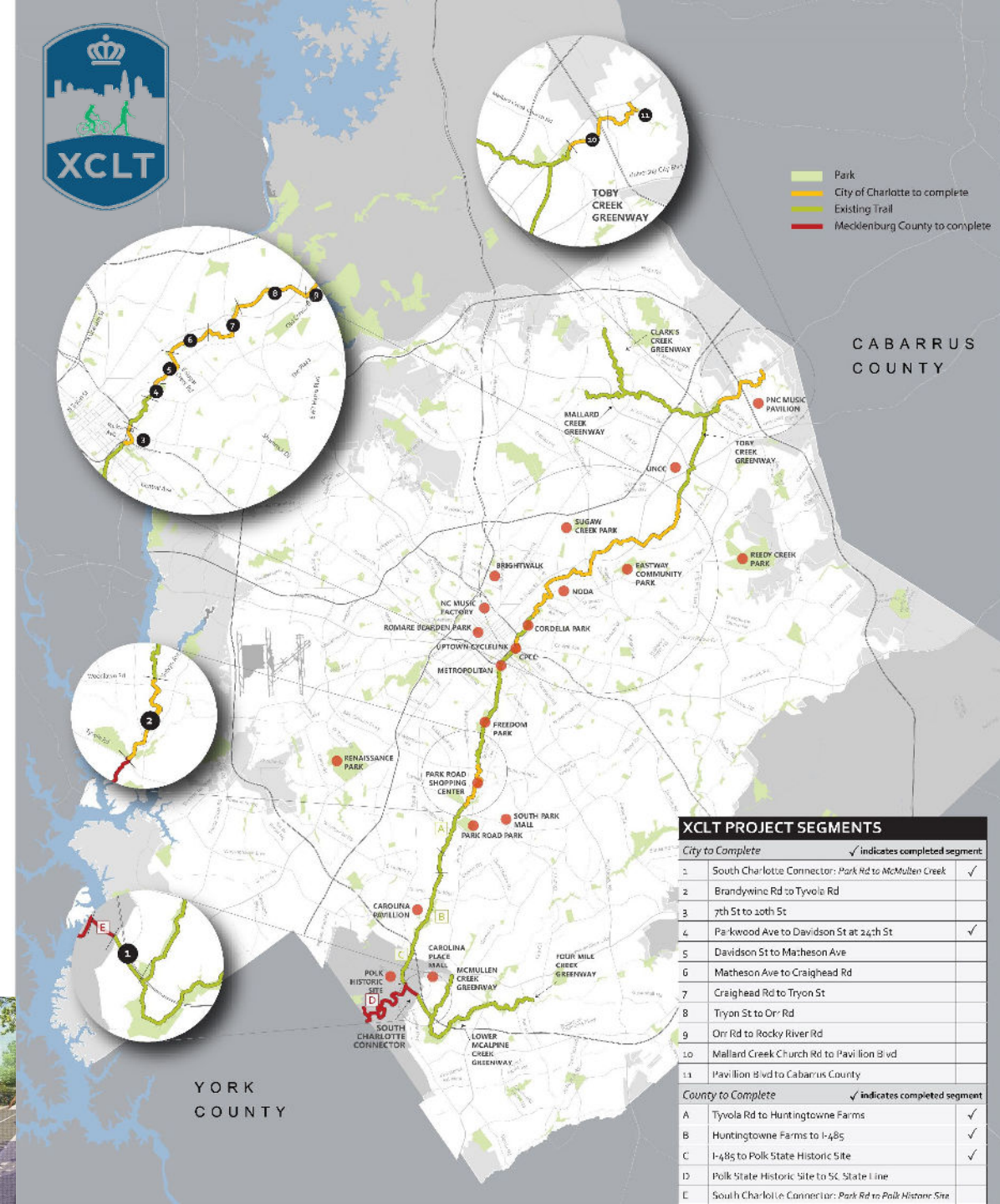


 **CITY of CHARLOTTE**



Cross Charlotte Trail (XCLT)

- **31 miles**
South Carolina to Cabarrus County
- **City & County partnership**
- **Over 140,000 residents & 130,000 jobs within walking distance**
- **Key spine for the Carolina Thread Trail system** (1,600 miles of existing/planned trail, 15 counties, 2 states and 2.9 million people)



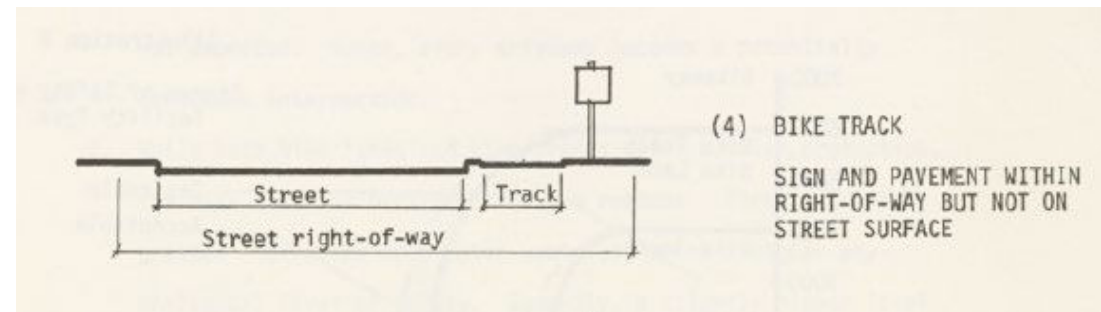
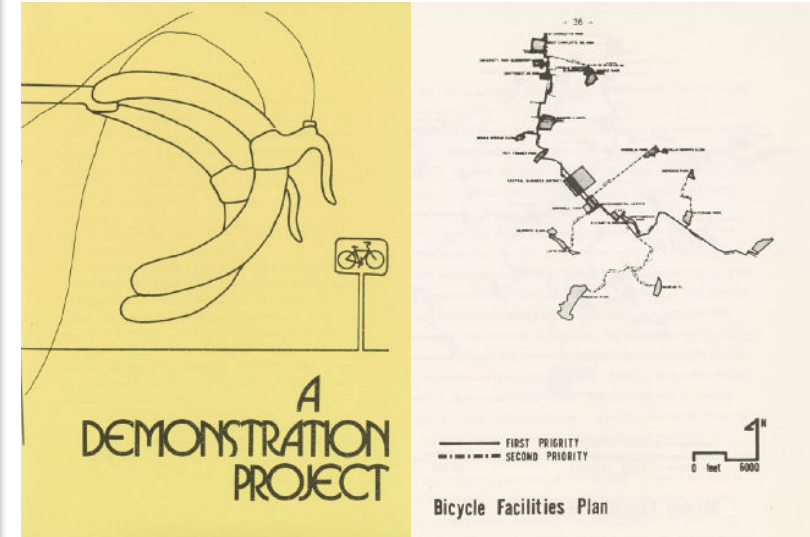
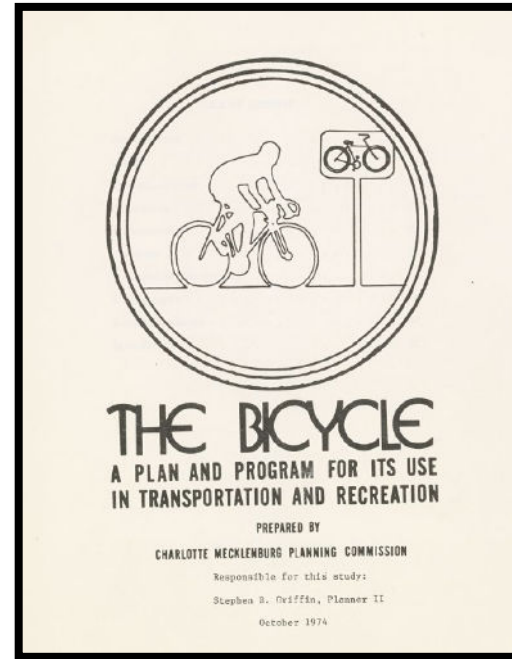
Cross Charlotte Trail (XCLT)

- Master plan completed in 2016
- Implementation ongoing



Tools for Success

Good ideas don't die.



**Good ideas don't die.
They just get more expensive.**



A group of people on bicycles participating in a community event on a city street. In the foreground, a person in a grey shirt and pink shorts is riding a bicycle, holding a blue helmet. To their left, a person in a white shirt and blue jeans is also on a bicycle. In the background, other cyclists and a person with a basket on their bike are visible. The scene is set on a paved street with a grassy area and trees in the background.

34

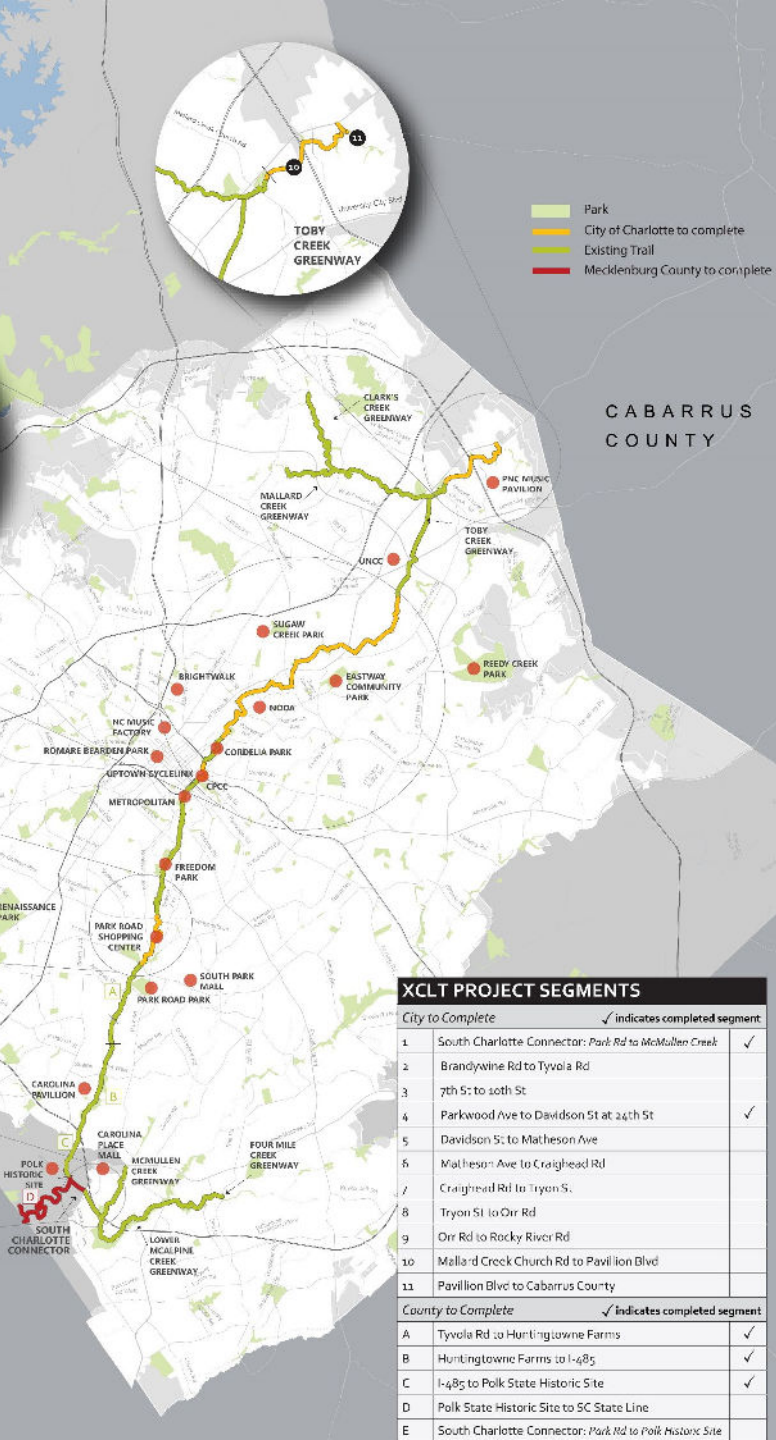
**the number of continuous east-west facilities
for drivers through Uptown Charlotte**

0

**the number of continuous east-west facilities
for bicyclists through Uptown Charlotte**

**Balance a
“values-
driven” and
“data-driven”
approach.**

Avoid publishing cost projections before ~30% design.



Transportation equity & safety > level of service.

250,000+ *the number of Charlotteans who don't drive*



Adopted policy ≠ automatic action.

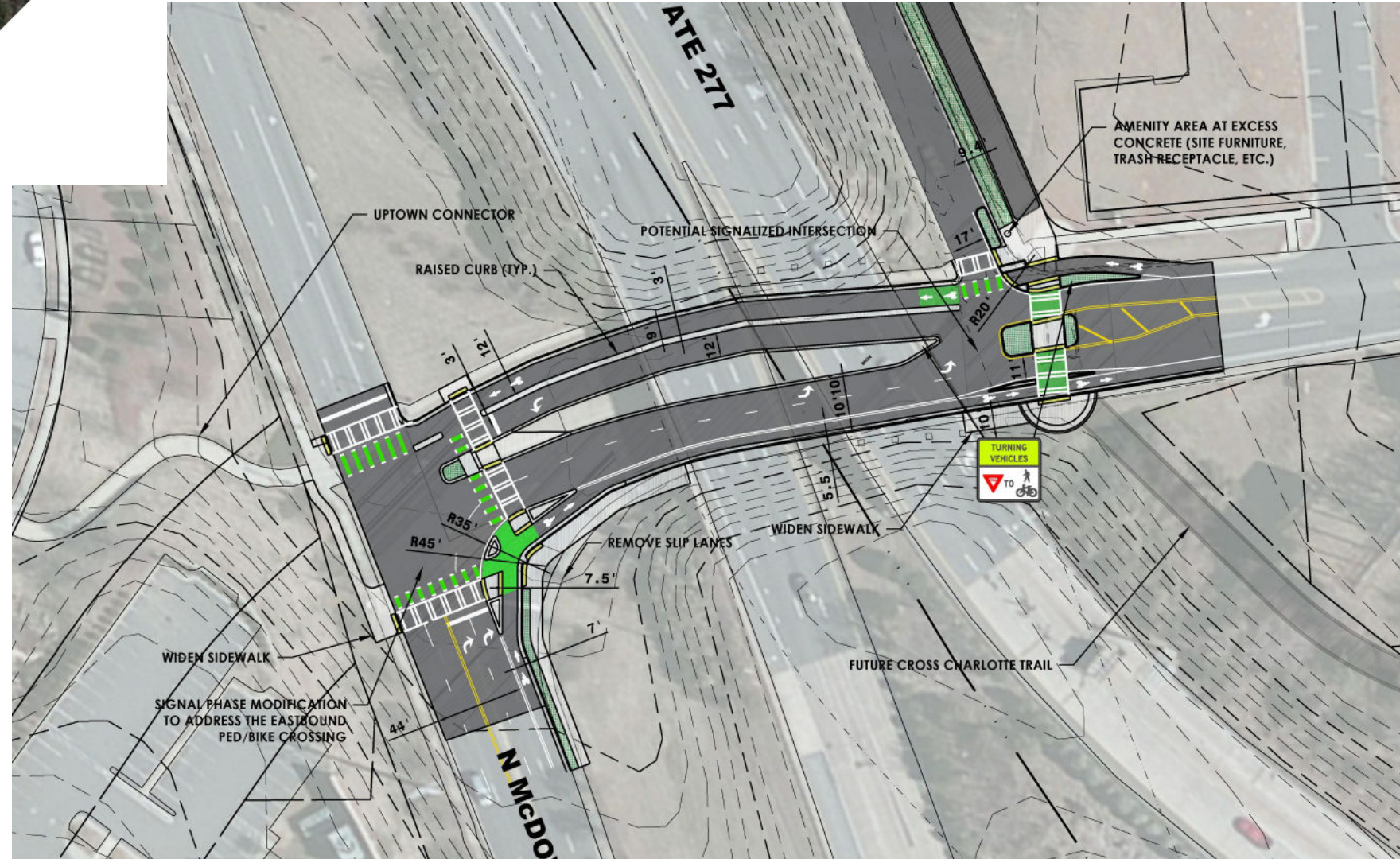


Stay focused.
(Don't give a mouse a cookie.)





Stay focused.
(Don't give a mouse a cookie.)



Accessibility for all Charlotteans

Hi, I'm Sherri the "Professional Pedestrian." I love living in a city where shops, restaurants, museums, music and art are connected by safe sidewalks, trails, light rail, and city buses. As part of the Walkable Urbanism movement in Charlotte, I fully appreciate the sights and sounds of the city and all the wonderful people I encounter on my daily outings.

I am a visually-impaired pedestrian, and I depend on walking and public transit. Many parts of Charlotte are walkable. I'm able to go to medical appointments, participate in volunteer activities, and enjoy music venues, movies and other forms of entertainment. I have easy access to the airport, Amtrak, and bus station via light rail and city buses.

However there are frustrations. Charlotte still has areas with missing or obstructed sidewalks, cars blocking pedestrian crossings, speed limits that are too fast, businesses that are only accessible by car, and distracted drivers who ignore our "Yield to Pedestrians" law.

Help me and other "Professional Pedestrians" move Charlotte forward as a walkable place. Start WALKING more, and contact the city when you encounter areas that need improvement. If we all work together we can transform Charlotte into a truly walkable city.

- Sherri Thompson, Pedestrian Advocate



Mobility for Seniors

At Mayfield Memorial Apartments we take pride in our facilities for the elderly and disabled. The key to independence and quality of life for most of our residents is the ability to walk. Our residents enjoy a variety of activities – from community events and guest speakers, to fishing and conversations around the duck pond.

Seniors take quality of life seriously. Walkability is key for endurance and health – for the heart and for the mind. Access to safe sidewalks and walkways with proper signage is important for our whole community of seniors. The majority of the residents here rely on public transportation to get to the store, to doctor's appointments, or simply to get out and enjoy the scenery.

Jennifer Pearce and Frank Gordon, two of our residents, take daily strolls. Mr. Gordon is visually impaired and walks with a cane. Ms. Pearce often assists him. After doctors recommended walking as part of a healthy daily routine, Ms. Pearce and Mr. Gordon began to extend their walks beyond the Mayfield property. There, they were met with challenges like a lack of sidewalks along Oneida Road. Sidewalks are coming though, through a project led by the Charlotte Pedestrian Program. Sidewalks are vital for our residents and for other seniors in Charlotte.

- Francine Patton,
Mayfield Memorial Apartments



Let the community tell their own story.



Shared experiences are always better than conference rooms.



Spend \$500 before you spend \$500,000.





Make time to build excitement and celebrate successes.



Q&A