

# SUGAR CREEK & I-85 INTERCHANGE



## SPRINT REPORT

“

Connection to neighborhood resources of housing, food, education, health and workforce is extremely important but that is only half of the equation... the other half is this: it's empowerment. It is removing the oppression that leads to the stress that causes the disease. And the way you do that is by citizen-led engagement. This is social connectivity. These two things are equally important.”

- Dr. Mark DeHaven, UNC-C June 25, 2020

# SUGAR CREEK & I-85 INTERCHANGE DESIGN SPRINT REPORT

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

This three-month stakeholder engagement was intended to be a starting point to arrive at a scope of work that outlines both meaningful near-term action and broadly supported long-term direction. This is just the start of the work along the corridor and will lead into longer, deeper engagement of residents and stakeholders. This is outlined in the [next steps](#) at the end of the document.

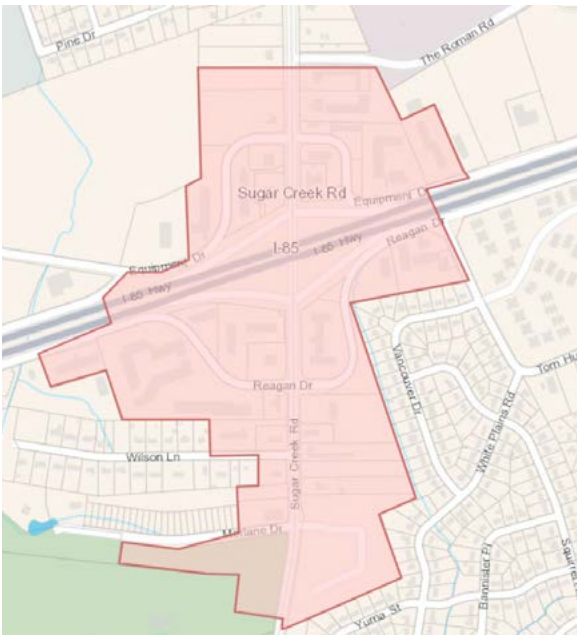
This [design sprint](#) revealed the current conditions that contribute to an unsafe area targeted for crime. This set the direction for projects to improve the safety of the area sustainably and holistically. The proposed projects used a [public health approach](#) looking at systemic, social, behavioral, and physical construct of the interchange study area. Proposed projects outline [near-, medium-, and long-term wins](#) for the area.

This document is organized to [provide direction for the area and proposed projects](#) at the beginning with more details from the process and inputs following. References and copies of relevant documents are provided in the appendix.

## DESIGN SPRINT PARTICIPANT TEAM:

[Sharjeel “Shawn” Ahmad](#), Owner of the Baymont Hotel  
[Brandon Brezeale](#), Charlotte Department of Transportation  
[John Butler](#), Crosland Development (Evoke Living)  
[Gary Crump](#), Men of Destiny  
[Dr. Mark DeHaven](#), UNC-Charlotte & UCity Family Zone  
[Charlenea Duncan](#), Housing & Neighborhood Services  
[Officer J. Ellis](#), Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department  
[Officer D. Gallant](#), Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department  
[Erin Gillespie](#), Economic Development  
[Darlene Heater](#), University City Partners  
[Tobe Holmes](#), University City Partners  
[Greg Jackson](#), Heal Charlotte  
[Travis Johnson](#), Planning Design & Development  
[Brent Jones](#), StoneBridge Church Community & UCity Family Zone  
[Eboné Lockett](#), Harvesting Humanity LLC  
[Julia Martin](#), City Manager’s Office (*Sprint Deputy Project Manger*)  
[Grant Meacci](#), Planning Design & Development  
[James Phillips](#), 7-Eleven  
[Federico Rios](#), Office of Equity, Mobility & Immigrant Integration  
[Charles Robinson](#), The Hub & Bread of Life Church  
[Rachel Stark](#), Planning Design & Development (*Sprint Project Manger*)  
[Det. S. Steward](#), Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department  
[John Wall](#), Hidden Valley CDC  
[Tom Warshauer](#), Housing & Neighborhood Services  
[Dr. Raynard Washington](#), Mecklenbug County Public Health  
[Darneka Waters](#), Mecklenburg County Park & Rec  
[Lacey Williams](#), Office of Equity, Mobility & Immigrant Integration  
[Odell Witherspoon](#), Hidden Valley CDC & Optimist Club

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



SUGAR CREEK & I-85 INTERCHANGE STUDY AREA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<a href="#">05</a>
01. PROJECT PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES & PROPOSALS	<a href="#">06</a>
02. CRIME TRENDS & RECENT EFFORTS	<a href="#">17</a>
03. PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH & DESIGN SPRINT	<a href="#">22</a>
04. DESIGN SPRINT PARTICIPANT INPUT SUMMARY	<a href="#">25</a>
LIST OF APPENDICES & REFERENCES	<a href="#">35</a>

**“How might we make the Sugar Creek & I-85 Interchange area safe for those who live, work, and visit the area? What are short-term, medium-term, and long-term wins for this corridor? What is the root problem we are trying to address as a first step? What relationships are needed to achieve desired results?”**

- Design Sprint Challenge, June 16, 2020

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO ADDRESS CRIME

- **The Sugar Creek & I-85 interchange area** is one of four identified priority areas to [address crime](#) in Charlotte. CMPD and local community organizations have put in [significant work](#) over the past four years which has yielded positive impacts to reduce crime, but [on-going issues](#) such as the externalities of crime sources, the physical and social systems at play, and context that foster it taking place in this location remain to be addressed to make a greater impact.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS IMPACTING SAFETY

- **Area Lacking Committed Reinvestment:** [Page 27](#)
- **Oversupply of Hotels:** [Page 28](#)
- **Auto- and Passerby-orientation is Insufficient for Residential Context:** [Page 28](#)
- **Hotels & Businesses as Housing & Daily Food:** [Page 28](#)
- **Properties & Streetscape are Targeted for Crime:** [Page 28](#)

## PROPOSED PROJECTS & MAJOR PARTNERS' ROLES

- **City of Charlotte:** 1) Refine [Business Matching Grants](#) to support needed investment and partnerships with property owners. 2) Continue CMPD meetings with businesses, but evolve into more of a coalition with bringing in other partners and funding resources to shape the future of area. 3) [Stabilize crime-centered and delinquent properties](#). 4) [Work with NCDOT on improvements](#) within and adjacent to State right-of-way. 5) Improve street lighting and add safe street crossings. 6) [Create corridor playbook](#) with market understanding of sustainable number of hotel units, feasible redevelopment strategy, and ped/bike improvements. 7) [Pilot an emergency responder service](#) for behavioral, mental, and addiction health needs. 8) [Support zoning, permitting processes, provide infrastructure improvements and gap financing for developers](#) working to achieve envisioned development for holistic healthcare campus, grocery store, jobs, and housing. 9) [Evaluate City's real estate needs](#) that achieve community goals.
- **Mecklenburg County:** 1) [Evaluate social service goals](#) and how it relates to Community Resource Center development and how they can be mutually supportive. 2) Coordinate with City and other partners on [links between short term housing needs and long term stable housing](#). 3) Provide [a pedestrian and bike accessible entrance to the park](#) on the north side coordinating with new crosswalk at Merlane Drive. 4) [Evaluate County's real estate needs](#) that achieve community goals.
- **Interchange Business & Property Owners:** 1) Improve maintenance schedule for litter clean up and landscaping and potentially form an improvement district for coordinated maintenance of area. 2) [Co-lead coalition](#) with Community-Based and Neighborhood Organizations.
- **Community-Based & Neighborhood Organizations:** 1) Establish [wraparound service co-op](#) and partner with local churches and other organizations with physical space to model "one stop" healthcare campus, collect data, and grow to be part of redevelopment. 2) [Co-lead inclusive coalition](#) with businesses & property owners partners to engage government and advocate for and achieve community goals starting with projects outlined here.

# SECTION 01 PROJECT PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES & PROPOSALS

## Principles for Sustainable Safety at Sugar Creek & I-85

While all the projects highlighted in this section are recommended to maximize success, the Design Sprint team recognizes that budgets, staff and community member resources, and timing play a role into what will move forward. Some projects may be modified or merged, and new projects maybe proposed that further the goals outlined in this report. However, there are several key factors to avoid critical failure.

Principle 1. Near-term, meaningful improvements must start taking place.

This area has not had critical investment from the public or private sector for over 30 years. Dialogs about change have been taking place for over 4 years without needed outcomes. “Meaningful” projects have started to be defined in this process, and further engagement will likely uncover more.

Principle 2. Improved and/or stable housing that maintains or strengthens access to family members’ jobs must be provided to extended stay residents during the effort to stabilize crime-centered and delinquent properties.

Displacement increases the stress of those already experiencing higher levels of sustained stress. This can feed future crime and community instability. Providing one important “known” to residents can help make the necessary change to the area sustainable.

Principle 3. New, expanded partnerships must be nurtured between community-based organizations, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, property owners and managers, and residents.

Limited resources need coordinated and collaborative efforts to be efficient and effective. Continuing to work together around projects bring a range of expertise, skills, and roles while also inviting new members will strengthen the advocacy and committed work needed in this area for the long term.

# Project Objectives & Direction

To address the current conditions that impact safety at the Sugar Creek and I-85 interchange, five project objectives were developed to guide projects that would meaningfully reduce crime through near- and long-term, physical improvements and programmatic solutions.

Objective 1. Build partnerships and alliance through collaboration on projects and open communication to establish shared responsibility and accountability for achieving goals.



Objective 2. Reduce the number of hotels/hotel units through redevelopment OR bring a new destination that would increase the marketability of the hotels enough to match supply while also avoiding displacement from gentrification in surrounding communities.



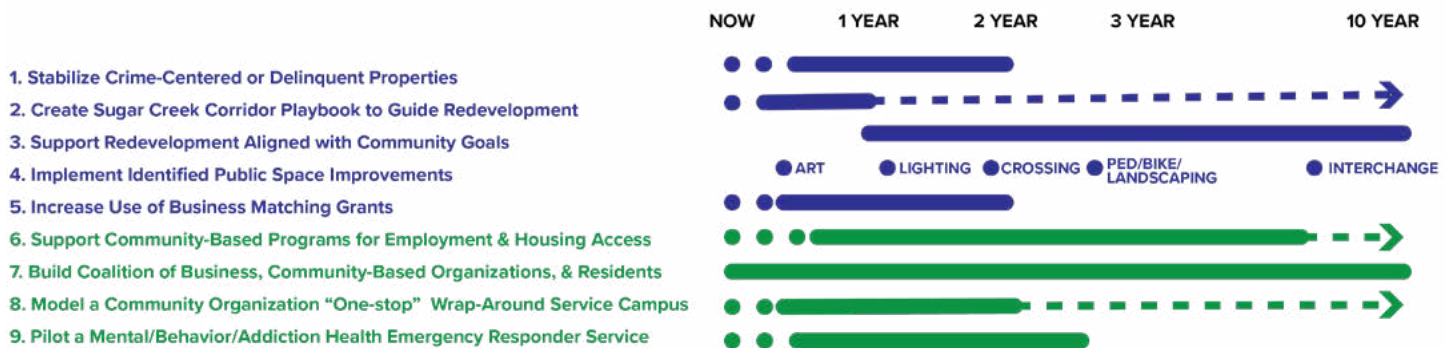
Objective 3. Strengthen sense of community identity, that this interchange area serves families with housing, jobs, daily goods and services, and arts/culture, and shows committed care through maintenance and updates.



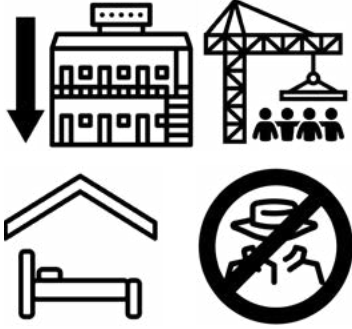
Objective 4. Reduce the dependency on cheap, poor-condition hotels to serve housing needs.



Objective 5. Address physical aspects such as quick/multiple getaway routes, anonymity of hotels, unmonitored parking lots, visibility of drugs/humans for sale/hire, and neglect that make this area a target for crime.



## Project Objectives Met



# 1. Stabilize Crime-Centered or Delinquent Properties.

Stabilize hotels and other business properties and work to reduce the number of hotels and hotel units. There are known properties that have on-going issues with crime and code enforcement. This is at least in part due to the oversupply and low-occupancy rates which make funding improvements, upkeep, and enforcing good behavior on properties a low priority. The impact is concentrated poverty. Reducing the number of hotels will help the hotels that remain be more viable and profitable which in turn will help address neglect and targeted crime. Extended stay residents at hotels will need improved, stable housing that continues or improves access to their places of employment.

Time Frame: 1-10 years. Estimated Budget Range: Over \$1 Million (likely \$10-15M)

## Step 1. Create a Redevelopment & Deposition Strategy (12 months)

The City should identify properties of recurring crime and concern to neighborhood. Assess properties of concern, code enforcement, determine feasibility of acquisition and disposition. Identify potential redevelopment tools, cost estimates, and funding sources needed to control properties and redevelop.

Step 2. Deploy Redevelopment & Deposition Strategy and support first property acquisitions. (12 months) Repeat this step as often as needed for each property to stabilize the area following the Strategy developed in Step 1.

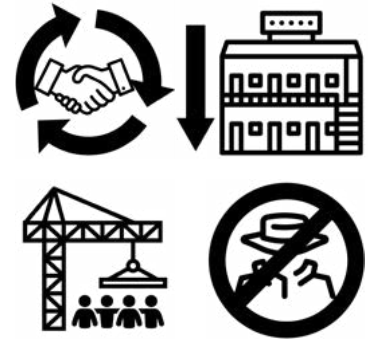
The City should identify future use/tenant possibilities by recruiting proposals from organizations who want to operate here and develop a budget. Recruit developer and establish agreements with organizations. Work on housing pipeline access to help extended stay residents move out of properties to be redeveloped. Redevelop property with developers and community partners.

**Success Metrics:** Number of properties brought into compliance. Number of properties redeveloped. Number of families in hotels who move into stable housing.

### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **City Manager's Office** – Lead
- **City Attorney** – Legal Process
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD)** – Law Enforcement
- **Housing & Neighborhood Services (HNS)** – Code Enforcement
- **Mecklenburg County** – LUESA, Criminal Justice Services
- **Economic Development (ED)** – Redevelopment Strategy & Development Contracts
- **Planning & Development Department (PDD)**– Coordinate strategy with Corridors Playbook Outlining Development that meets community goals & permitting/zoning support
- **Businesses & Property Owners** – Cooperation & opportunity to shape future of the area



*Project Objectives Met*

## 2. Create Sugar Creek Corridor Playbook to Guide Redevelopment.

Create a Sugar Creek Corridor Playbook to guide redevelopment efforts that achieves community goals while promoting collaboration. This will build from the design sprint work to more deeply explore assets and community goals of the area by extending the study area to include other commercial nodes: Derita and North Tryon and surrounding neighborhoods. While there is a common understanding that the interchange area cannot sustain the number of hotels and some of the properties should be redeveloped, there is not much guidance on what is more sustainable which is needed to move the work forward. The playbook will examine the market capacity for redevelopment, outline desired development patterns, and set benchmarks for projects to achieve community goals.

Time Frame: Less than 1 year. Estimated Budget: \$70,000

### Step 1. Develop a Corridor Playbook (6-8 months)

The City should commission a study of current market conditions to identify appropriate mix of hotel, office, and industrial uses around the study area as well as near by destination opportunities. The playbook will guide future development plans, identify and prioritize public and private realm improvements, develop cost estimate, refine timing on projects, and be inclusive of the physical and social environment. The process will leverage existing, and new, relationships to be collaborative and representative of the community's vision and goals.

### Step 2. Implement Corridor Playbook and use to guide investment (ongoing)

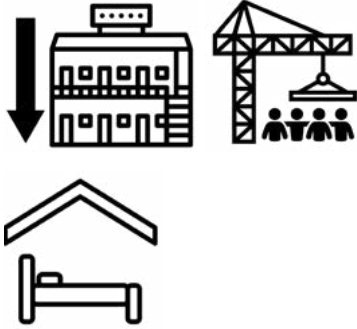
Identify and secure funding. Implement projects as funding becomes available. Continue to use and update Playbook as priorities and context change over time.

**Success Metrics:** Qualitative survey of hotel/business owners and others in the area for before and after. Number of implemented projects and goals met. Length of time Playbook is continued to be used and updated by the community.

#### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **Planning & Development Department (PDD)**– Plan community-oriented redevelopment
- **Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT)** - Plan and implement right of way improvements, coordinate with NCDOT
- **Economic Development (ED)** – Market analysis of hotels and redevelopment potential that aligns with community goals
- **Housing & Neighborhood Services (HNS)** – Facilitating community conversations, coordinating housing component
- **Mecklenburg County** – Park and Rec, Public Health, and Community Support Services
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)**– Participate in the playbook development on what will help connect students to community
- **Community-Based & Neighborhood Organizations & Residents** – Include apartment and hotel residents, Derita and North Tryon resident representatives, as well as adjacent neighborhoods and service providers in the area
- **Businesses & Property Owners** – Participate in shaping the future of the area

### Project Objectives Met



#### \* Related Effort Underway:

Heal Charlotte is in the process of raising funds to redevelop a hotel in the study area into a transitional housing and mixed use campus that includes community cafe, co-working spaces, offices for wrap around service providers, and pocket park play space for residents.

#### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **Economic Development** – Lead strategy
- **Planning, Design & Development** – Incorporate Place Type mapping and policy and support rezoning and permitting work
- **City Manager's Office** – Support sustained investment to promote public-private partnerships
- **Mecklenburg County** – Support permitting process and more
- **Developers** – Create plan that advances the community goals outlined in the Playbook and acquire property, work with other partners and implement

## 3. Support Redevelopment Aligned with Community Goals.\*

Facilitate public-private partnerships in the Sugar Creek and I-85 interchange area to achieve goals to reduce hotels and hotel units, and redevelop properties into alternative uses that serve the community such as offices, grocery stores, sit-down restaurants, performance/culture venues, healthcare, childcare, job training, housing, and jobs paying living wages. Tools for these partnerships include: supportive permitting, rezoning, easements and encroachment agreements, streetscape and other infrastructure improvements, and gap financing. This area has not had redevelopment of these properties on their own into other uses and there are limited trends that would otherwise attract redevelopment at this location. This method of redevelopment supports community goals and may help reduce displacement from gentrification.

Time Frame: 10 years. Estimated Budget Range: Over \$1 Million

Step 1 Use the Corridor Playbook (Project 2) process to identify physical and programmatic community goals (6-12 months)

The City should identify property and adjacent upgrades/changes to properties that would be required by the City and County to implement (i.e. zoning, tree, storm water, bike/pedestrian facilities, etc.). Identify community development benefits for the area that also go beyond use such as community space, supporting community-based organizations, supporting Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) businesses, housing, and jobs.

Step 2. Implement & Fund (1-10 years)

The City should use methods that have been successful in the past to establish committed funding over the next 10 years to support the Public-Private partnership redevelopment projects.

Success Metrics: Number of properties redeveloped into community-supportive uses.

*Project Objectives Met*

## 4. Implement Identified Public Space Improvements.

The Corridor Playbook (Project 2) work of starting with an interdepartmental survey and walking tour will develop a shared understanding of needed public space improvements. This project is about initiating implementation of some projects while the Corridor Playbook planning process continues. Known needed interventions in the area can move forward in a collaborative manner without the Corridor Playbook being completed. These projects include lighting improvements, new or improved pedestrian street crossings and pedestrian/bike access, co-created public art and branding. This timeliness will build stronger relationships between different agencies while achieving goals.

Time Frame: 12-24 months. Estimated Budget Range: Between \$100,000 and \$1 Million

### Step 1. Identifying Public Space Improvement Priorities (3 months)

The City should convene the proposed coalition (Project 7) which builds from the Design Sprint team and other agencies in the area in addition to various City & County staff to take a walking tour to inform the streetscape and redevelopment potential for the Corridor Playbook (Project 2) will also be an opportunity to inventory common goals around public space improvements that could be completed in the near term. These identified goals and locations could be reviewed for fits within existing programs for funding and implementation and then brought to the community for review and prioritization and next steps for co-implementation.

### Step 2. Implementation of Prioritized Near-Term Public Space Improvements (6-24 months)

CDOT will lead many of the improvements working with NCDOT and Duke Energy, but there will likely be other improvements that due to their location are led by the property owners of the area and the coalition of Project 7.

**Success Metrics:** Number of community prioritized public space improvement projects implemented. Number of community participants who stay involved with implementing projects.

#### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT)** - Plan and implement right of way improvements, coordinate with NCDOT
- **City of Charlotte General Services Department** - Engineer and manage implementation of larger projects in right of way including budgeting, scheduling, and contracting
- **Housing & Neighborhood Services (HNS)** – Community engagement coordination
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD)** – Law enforcement perspective
- **Mecklenburg County** – Park & Rec
- **Economic Development (ED)** – Business Improvement Matching Grant opportunities
- **Planning & Development Department (PDD)**– Coordinate Placemaking improvements
- **Community-Based & Neighborhood Organizations & Residents** – Participate in shaping the future of the area
- **Businesses & Property Owners** – Participate in shaping the future of the area

## Project Objectives Met



\* Related Effort Underway:  
CMPD and I&T Data & Analytics are working on a pilot project to bring in high quality security cameras that are connected to the real time data center to streamline process of reviewing crime in action and having documentation for arrests going to court.

### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **Economic Development (ED)** – Redevelopment Strategy & Development Contracts
- **Businesses & Property Owners** – Cooperation & opportunity to shape future of the area
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD)** – Law Enforcement, Security Camera Recommendations
- **Planning Design & Development, Urban Forestry** – Tree canopy preservation and recommendations to improve site visibility
- **Community-Based & Neighborhood Organizations & Residents** – Participate in helping guide new security camera pilot program

## 5. Increase Use of Business Matching Grants.\*

Enhance security of the area by drawing more businesses to participate in the Business Matching Grant Program through collaborative effort. The lack of both public and private reinvestment and better management has led to neglect which crime targets. Collaboration and shared accountability of keeping the area safe and maintained are needed to transform this area and sustain reinvestment. This work along with Project 6 “Public Space Implementation” can activate a coalition between the various community groups.

Time Frame: 12-24 months. Estimated Budget Range: Less than \$165,000

### Step 1. Pilot a new, one-time security grant (12 months)

The City should support and encourage involvement from property owners to improve partnerships and security through cameras, lighting, and landscaping. This work would also be structured to support local businesses and certified MWSBE vendors to complete security updates quickly to achieve improved safety and appearance and would the grant would pay vendors directly for 50% of the cost. Marketing, promotional campaign and building relationships with property and business owners will be used to build participation in the grant. Properties would be surveyed by verified vendor along with CMPD to create a menu of security enhancements with up front cost estimates.

### Step 2. Continued implementation and monitoring (12-24 months)

The City should continue to build participation in the grant program and monitor results over the pilot period with a report sharing impact and lessons learned.

**Success Metrics:** Number of business and property owners participating in the program. Higher number of accurate arrests. Reduced criminal activity in the area.

### Project Objectives Met



## 6. Support Community-Based Programs for Employment & Housing Access.\*

Connect extended stay hotel residents with improved, stable, and permanent housing and reliable, living wage jobs. This requires an organized effort to help residents receive effective training, find jobs, and be supported by housing programs and find housing. The hotels are currently used to fill a gap in housing with low barriers to entry, a roof and four walls but has little in the way of a kitchen, accessible healthy food, nearby concentration of jobs, and childcare. The hotels and interchange were not designed to support concentrated affordable housing and has limited employment opportunities currently. The impact is concentrated poverty and limited pathways for upward mobility for those who stay in the hotels. Instability of housing and employment is one of the stressors that can lead to crime. Connecting extended stay residents to housing and jobs will give families and individuals a way to get out of poverty and the context of crime. Provide this support not only to families and adults, but also youth.

Time Frame: 2-10 years. Estimated Budget Range: \$100,000-\$1 Million

### Step 1. Build out partnerships & connect assets (24 months)

The City should outline barriers to housing and employment for hotel residents. Catalogue services and housing resources located in the area. Coordinate with representatives of these services, employers, colleges, and job placement and housing organizations for events in the community. These events would provide an efficient opportunity to connect residents to resources and encourage long term relationships with and among support services that can guide residents to more stable housing and/or employment situations. Improve data quality to measure impact and outcomes. This can be linked to the work of Proposed Project 8 “Model a “one-stop” Wraparound Service campus).

**Success Metrics:** Reduced time people have to live in the hotels. Longer time in stable housing. Increased number of extended stay residents participating in upward mobility services. Increase of participants with full time, living wage jobs.

#### \* Related Effort Underway:

The County is working on providing housing to growing homeless population. Housing and Neighborhood Services are providing connections. Affordable housing developers and service providers such as Heal Charlotte, CMS McKinney Vento case workers, and Charlotte Family Housing are working to make connections to housing and employment for families.

#### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **Housing & Neighborhood Services (HNS)** – Housing resource connections for extended stay hotel residents
- **Economic Development (ED)** – Employment resource connections for extended stay hotel residents
- **Mecklenburg County** – Department of Social Services, Community Support Services to connect to local community-based programs
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)** – Connect McKinney Vento families to resources
- **Community-Based Organizations** – Employment and housing access service providers to serve extended stay residents in hotels

## Project Objectives Met



### \* Related Effort Underway:

UCity Family Zone, Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association, the Reagan Drive Initiative, and CMPD Business Meetings are all working to bring in a mix of organizations. Their members do not necessarily overlap and each has a special interest that brings them together to accomplish important work. The proposed coalition would bring together all the different groups to co-advocate for each others' work that improves the West Sugar Creek corridor.

### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **Community-Based & Neighborhood Organizations** – Co-lead
- **Businesses & Property Owners** – Co-lead
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD)** – Support & continue to provide information and build relationships
- **Housing & Neighborhood Services (HNS)** – Support & continue to provide information and build relationships between City & coalition
- **Mecklenburg County** – to support and continue to provide information and build relationships between City & coalition
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)** – to support, connect families, and provide information

## 7. Build Coalition of Business, Community Organizations, & Residents.\*

Strengthen relationships between businesses, property owners, community-based organizations, and residents through collaborative work around informing the corridor playbook (Project 2), implementing quick wins such as business matching grants (Project 5), coordinated maintenance and litter pick up, and art on signal box wraps (Project 4). There are many different interests represented in this area which can bring focused investments, but it can also bring division and exclusion and it can be a challenge to implement ideas. The design sprint brought a cross-section of experiences and perspective to address safety holistically; that work and collaboration can continue through a coalition galvanized around active projects and grow to take on more by advocating, achieving community goals together through shared responsibility and accountability.

Time Frame: 10 years. Estimated Budget Range: Less than \$100,000

### Step 1. Form an Inclusive Coalition around Projects (12 months)

Reach out to potential participants, build from existing collaborations such as the Reagan Drive Initiative, UCity Family Zone, CMPD Business Meetings, and Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association to coalesce on a wider range of projects to advance safety sustainability in the corridor. Take up active projects like business matching grant improvements, lighting, placemaking, and similar projects while also working on the Corridor Playbook in collaboration with the City. Apply for Spring 2021 Business District Opportunity Partnership and/or Neighborhood Matching grants to implement some of the projects

### Step 2. Continue Coalition (2-10 years)

Continue to achieve community goals collaboratively and inclusively.

**Success Metrics:** Number of participants attending and committing over time. Number and quality of projects facilitated by the group. Formal status such as a 501C3.

## 8. Pilot a Community Non-Profit “One-Stop” Wraparound Services Co-Op.\*

Build from past and existing efforts and involve more partners to model a wraparound services “one-stop” co-op (i.e. childcare, healthy food, school support, job training, housing resources, medical, social/mental healthcare, etc.). This project is intended to bring these services together in one location ahead of a campus development to grow, learn, and provide data to support the campus build out, potentially informing a larger health campus that is desired in the redevelopment of the area. This project could be joined with Project 6 “Employment and Housing Pipeline”. There are many local service providers scattered throughout the area and may go under-noticed though they provide a key link to providing balance to the area. Inconvenience and barriers may keep individuals from accessing available resources. Co-location of services could provide improved visibility, use, effectiveness, and impact of programs.

Time Frame: 5 years. Estimated Budget Range: Under \$100,000

### Step 1. Pilot a “One Stop” Service Mix (24 months)

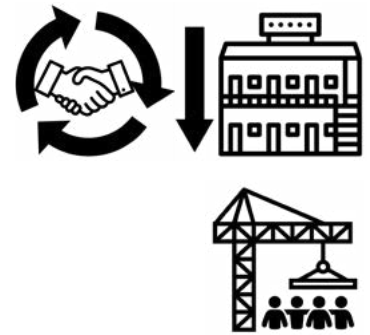
Survey hotel residents and survey providers to identify service needs, convene organizations for preliminary discussion on approach identify near term locations (space needs and availability) to be present in the area and build partnerships (modeling long term solution). Craft and coordinate a community schedule for hosting current co-op (model for what will exist in new space) and program existing available spaces, start outlining proposals redeveloped spaces. Run model co-op, monitor/measure impact, testing ideas with neighborhood. Estimate proforma based on potential tenant (rent, upfit, debt service, operations, etc), access funding models that promote best outcomes and long-term ownership of quality space. Collect data on the model and impact on clients.

### Step 2. Build a Physical Location at Interchange (2-5 years)

Initiate work to developing a full campus in the interchange, Project 3 (Redevelopment Capital Costs) can help offset costs if development. Identify funding for redevelopment, partnership buy in, raise funds, etc. Recruit developer and establish community benefits agreements. Acquire and redevelop property. Place tenants based on earlier work of this project.

**Success Metrics:** Number of services co-located. Number of existing local community based organizations participating overtime. Number of people who visit the co-op on a monthly basis. Number of individuals able to graduate from services.

### Project Objectives Met



#### \* Related Efforts Underway:

Heal Charlotte has brought together several community-based organizations to form the Reagan Drive Initiative to support and strengthen sense of community for apartment residents. Heal Charlotte is leading a capital campaign to create a transitional housing campus that would also provide a single location for some wrap around services. The Hub at the Bread of Life Church on Tom Hunter Road provides a space to work with the community. Mayfield Memorial CDC will have space co-located with affordable housing development planned for the next year and can also provide wraparound service but the church cannot be used until after the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided.

#### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **Community-Based Service Providers** – Lead formation of co-op of that would model the physical one stop location of wraparound services
- **Mecklenburg County** – Health & Human Services advice and connections to resources that compliment the wraparound services
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)** - Connect students and families to these local resources
- **Neighborhood Associations** - Connect residents to these local resources
- **Hotel Mangers & Owners** – Connect extended stay residents to these local resources

## Project Objectives Met



### \* Related Effort Underway:

On October 5th, the City Council approved a citywide program for lower violence risk 911 calls being diverted to clinicians or social workers with medical training, the pilot responder service here is not intended to replace, be in conflict with, or be an alternative to this effort.

### PRIMARY PARTNERS & ROLES:

- **City Manager's Office**– Lead
- **Emergency Operation Center/911**– Participate in evaluation for response model
- **Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD)** – Participate in evaluation for response model, help educate community
- **Fire Department**– Participate in evaluation for response model, help educate community
- **City Communications** – Lead awareness campaign and help educate community
- **Mecklenburg County** – Participate in response modeling and connect with service providers
- **Community-Based Organizations** – Bring in organizations connected to or leading in providing mental health support

## 9. Pilot a Mental/Behavior/Addiction Health Emergency Responder Service.\*

Pilot a mental/behavioral/addiction health emergency responder service. As of October 5th, City Council approved a citywide program for lower risk for violence 911 calls to be go to clinicians or social workers with medical training. The interchange is host of illicit and harmful activities such as crime, prostitution, drug use, and human trafficking. At the core of these issues are decisions made by individuals, and while a context can change, individuals may not change with it. Arrests and sentences alone do not change behavior in the long term; changing the context alone does not stop crime overall; solutions are needed to that get to the heart of the issue in the near term. To make long lasting changes in the lives of those who see the interchange as an area for underground activity, a holistic approach is needed that combines enforcement with social services. Pairing health providers with first responders will provide an opportunity for people to make meaningful change in their lives.

Time Frame: 2 years Estimated Budget Range: Between \$100,000 and \$1 Million

### Step 1. Initiate Pilot Program (6 months)

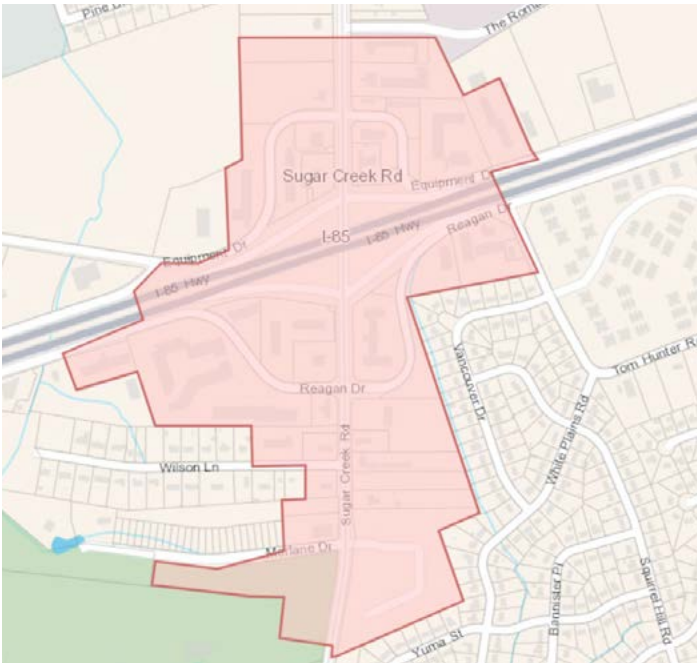
Determine response logic model (fire, CMPD, 211, 311), prototype several response models based on type of call and responder and test feasibility/ implementation with responder party and mental health expert. Recruit a first responders team, map 911/211/311 to mental health expert resource. Determine best source of mental health experts, identify capable partners. Evaluate availability, collaboration and modification to pilot program plan, finalize costs, budget. Secure City/County funding for two-year pilot program. Create awareness campaign and educate community.

### Step 2. Track Program Impact & Report Outcomes (24 months)

Partner with facility/County for on-going case management. Monitor/measure success. Evaluate for long-term solutions and propose recommendations.



## SECTION 02 CRIME TRENDS & RECENT EFFORTS



SUGAR CREEK & I-85 INTERCHANGE STUDY AREA

### Study Area Rationale

While there are surrounding and overlapping reinvestment efforts centered around neighborhoods such as Hidden Valley as part of their CDC work, the Reagan Drive apartments as part of the Reagan Drive Initiative, Derita, and University area as part of the UCity Family Zone, the study area for this design sprint was focused on the primarily commercial properties immediately surrounding the Sugar Creek and I-85 interchange. This area is not covered fully by any one reinvestment effort though it impacts all. This area

has a concentration of three state-owned roads plus the highway which impacts speed, treatment, and maintenance. It also has 13 aging hotels, five fast food restaurants, six convenience stores, two office and retail complexes in a strip mall format, and one new truck rest stop development which is auto and highway oriented while surrounded by residential neighborhoods with a few more neighborhood oriented uses including a park, a new affordable housing development, a Family Dollar store, and two sit down restaurants. This area is targeted for criminal activity, and while reinvestment is needed in a larger geography, this point serves as a gateway that needed focused attention and collaboration.

### Study Area Crime Types & Patterns

**Homicide** - murder is often targeted and linked to drugs, gang activity, and domestic violence. In the study area in 2017 there were two murders, 2019 three murders, and as of October 2020 one murder and one active overdose death investigation. In the past overdose deaths were not emphasized in the homicide stats; however, with the new North Carolina General Statute 14-18.4 Death By Distribution of Certain Controlled Substances going into effect December 2019, we now have a new avenue of prosecution to pursue related to these types of cases.

**Prostitution** - generally linked to drug dependency and human trafficking. Highways, truck traffic, proximity to concentrated poverty, and hotels that allow for anonymity are physical factors that support this crime. Prostitution is also connected to strong arm robberies, armed robberies, and larcenies targeting customers aka “johns”.

**Drugs** - illegal substance possession and sales often links to many other crimes such as larceny, burglaries, robberies, theft, prostitution, aggravated assaults, and even homicide. Physical features of this area that contribute to drugs are the proximity to interstates which can traffic drugs throughout the region, coupled with a variety of parking

lots and other less monitored areas, and a concentration of poverty in the area makes the study area prime for drugs.

**Aggravated assaults** - these are generally linked to drugs, prostitution, gang activity, and domestic violence. Physical factors such as tight living quarters in hotels coupled with contextual stress and lived trauma can make this area host to this type of crime. The number of incidents over the last several years include 36 cases in 2017, 35 cases in 2018, 25 cases in 2019, and as of October 2020, 32 cases this year, up 28% from 2019 end of year totals.

Larceny (from store, vehicle, person), commercial burglaries, robberies (common law, armed), and auto theft are also common in the study area and can be linked to concentrated poverty, drug sales and use, gangs, and having multiple quick routes to escape (Interstates & Service Roads as well as local roads).

## Major Legal Cases

### 2012-2018 INJUNCTION & OWNER PROBATION

5115 Reagan Drive (Hotel) went under injunction for nuisance in 2012, in 2017 the owner was placed in probation and required to attend monthly meetings, attend rental property training, and comply with injunction. Probation was completed in December 2018 and the property was sold in January 2019.

### 2018 BANK FRAUD WITH FEDERAL SENTENCING

1408 W. Sugar Creek (Hotel) owner sentenced to 4 years in prison and 2-year probation for fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering using this hotel and another on South Tryon. Hotel remains in same ownership and is managed by the owner’s brother at this time.

## CMPD Enforcement

Regular traffic enforcement, VICE operations (prostitution and drugs), federal warrant (gangs), searching for wanted individuals,

regular zone checks, and thorough investigations leading to arrest are tools used to curb crime in the interchange area.

2015-Present: Multiple prostitution sting operations have been utilized to impact the steady levels of prostitution at the interchange. While this tool is generally used to directly affect the prostitutes, it equally impacts the pimps and human trafficking elements in the area. While the “johns” are equally responsible for impacting prostitution, it is more difficult to target the “johns” through controlled operations

March-May 2020: CMPD conducted a narcotics buy campaign in the immediate area identifying 20 plus individuals who directly sold or conspired to sell illegal narcotics to undercover officers. The majority of the identified subjects were later arrested and have since returned to the area to continue negatively impacting the area through continued loitering, drug sales, and violence.

In 2019, a concentrated effort was made targeting the excessive loitering, trespassing, panhandling, drug use, and camping on NCDOT/vacant property in the area. The majority of people were removed from multiple sites and the locations were cleaned up with one building being torn down and no trespassing signs installed. The previous environment was impacting some hotels reviews and some experienced fines as franchises for poor reviews. This continues to be a major challenge in the area and has only been amplified in 2020 due to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19.

Part 1 Offenses				
DATE RANGE	2017	2018	2019	October 2020
HOMICIDE	2	0	3	1
RAPE	5	5	1	4
ROBBERY	47	43	36	20
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	36	35	25	32
-ASSAULT W/ DEADLY WEAPON -	13	19	12	14
GUN				
<b>VC TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>57</b>
COMMERICAL BURGLARY	12	5	15	6
RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY	0	0	0	0
LARCENY	180	157	148	111
-LARCENY FROM AUTOMOBILE	54	39	35	26
-LARCENY - SHOPLIFTING	37	29	52	38
AUTOMOBILE THEFT	19	32	31	25
ARSON	3	1	0	0
<b>PC TOTAL</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>199</b>

SUGAR CREEK & I-85 STUDY AREA CRIME STATS (OCT 1, 2020)

## CMPD Proactive Efforts & Relationship Building

June 2016: CMPD worked with the Hidden Valley community to do a litter and clean up landscape management of overgrowth around Reagan Drive and Sugar Creek to demonstrate the impact of a cleaner area in hopes that businesses and residents would continue efforts. That portion of Reagan Drive is now adopted by Heal Charlotte and hosts regular clean ups.

December 2016: CMPD met with City Council members over this area and with HNS Community engagement staff and economic development staff to review five years of data and efforts to work with property owners, and share concern of the concentration of hotels in this area.

December 2016: Economy Inn took on function as an addiction rehabilitation facility which only lasted for six months. CMPD noted that while the use was allowed, the location was not a good one for a person trying to recover from addiction as drugs and alcohol are readily available.

February 2017: CMPD met with US Attorney Western District of NC about nuisance hotels. One hotel was sold and now functions well. One hotel is the one with owner in prison for fraud. The third hotel was the one that temporarily functioned as an addiction rehabilitation facility.

2016-present: CMPD has built relationships with hotel owners. They host annual meetings and share Calls For Service data for all the properties with everyone and encourage owners to reach out for assistance in reducing the calls for service. A checklist and rules list was developed to outline best practice to avoid crimes taking place on the property which is shared regularly along with a mutual ban list that all the hotels agreed to keep offenders out of the area. While all the hotels signed an agreement to use the Mutual Ban list, the follow through has been difficult with staff turn around. A solution that was not successful was to use Google Docs. In 2019 one of the successful hotel owners was asked to share his learnings on best practices to

achieve safer hotel and get better paying customers. Hotel owners indicate difficulty of maintaining safety not only on the property and for their guests but also their employees as well as their hesitancy to invest in their properties when some of the issues such as loitering and overgrowth at the interchange impact their desired customers and is outside of their control.

October 2018: CMPD established Project 41/40 to focus efforts on changing the culture to reduce violent crime in the area through joint efforts. This project assigned four CMPD officers, dedicated District Attorney coordination, enhanced relationships with the community, and dedicated investigations. Between 2018 and 2019, overall crime has decreased 11%, 23% decrease of violent crime, and 5% decrease of property crime.

**Youth** - Reel Connection (CMPD connects with local youth through a program offered by Bass Po Shops), Reading Buddies (CMPD connects with youth through Hidden Valley Elementary's program), Heal Charlotte (CMPD assists with classes, participates in sports, and supports Reagan Drive litter clean ups), Men of Destiny (CMPD helped start the community garden at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School working with the youth).

**Neighborhoods** - Hidden Valley Community Meetings (pre-COVID 19 lockdowns had been meeting monthly, CMPD shared data and worked to address community concerns, communication is now mostly virtual), Hidden Valley Parade (annual parade in the neighborhood that CMPD helped with and had a table to share information and meet residents), and Reagan Drive Initiative (Heal Charlotte's extended work to include the apartment complexes along Reagan Drive as well as work with local businesses, local community non-profits such as Men of Destiny and Harvesting Humanity LLC, CMPD, and advocating for improvements in the area).

## Community-Based Organizations

The following is just a sample of the work that has been done by community non-profits to curb the violence and crime in the area directly or indirectly. There are many more organizations and many

more projects that we recommend to be pulled into the Sugar Creek Corridor Playbook as part of the asset and analysis.

**Heal Charlotte** - started in Orchard Trace in 2016 to provide a learning center for youth to go after school that was safe and provided a place to do homework as well as attend classes, efforts expanded to also include eviction mitigation, utility relief, financial literacy, family-friendly community events, and mentorship for families. In one year of this work, crime declined by 17% and calls for service were reduced 89%. Heal Charlotte has expanded its work by developing the Reagan Drive Initiative working all along Reagan Drive and bringing in other partners such as other community non-profits and CMPD. Heal Charlotte is currently working on their capital campaign to raise funds to develop a Heal Charlotte Campus that would repurpose and update a hotel property in the interchange area to provide transitional housing that keeps families together, and connect people to housing, employment, healthcare, healthy food access, and community.

**Men of Destiny** - provides training for youth in skilled labor trades that includes soft skills and working with parents. Men of Destiny also works to provide stipends for the youth during the training, provide childcare for adults who need it, and connect their graduates to employers. Stable employment and a living wage are important for an individual's outcomes in life. Men of Destiny has been working with the other organizations listed here as well as others. Recent work with youth and partners include building and maintaining the community gardens at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School and the Hub, as well as being a vital advocate for reinvestment into the Sugar Creek Rec Center. Men of Destiny works to provide youth with both trade skill and soft skills while also providing a stipend during the training to motivate continued participation. They are currently working with Housing & Neighborhood Services to connect to Critical Home Repair program contractors and operating training at a church.

**Harvesting Humanity, LLC** - connects families, schools and community to better serve the area's children. A stable family and social context is important to the long term health and outcomes of a child. Harvesting Humanity looks at the big picture and identifies opportunities for partnerships and funding for programs that promote upward economic mobility. Recent work includes a successful matching grant application for Hidden Valley Elementary School to have Solar PV Systems installed and be named an NC GreenPower Solar School. This program also provides a weather station, real-time data monitoring, a STEM curriculum, and training for teachers to help connect students from an early age to the Green Infrastructure Industry.

**UCity Family Zone** - a place-based initiative (PBI) of more than 100 organizations, empowering the community to increase opportunity and improve the quality of life. The Family Zone supports organizations and leaders in a 17.5 square mile area of 53,000 residents in and around University City in northeast Charlotte. It's primary focus areas are neighborhood development, food security, access to health care, promoting education, and building social capital.

**Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church** - is building mixed income housing and a pocket park on its property in cooperation with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership. The church serves as a community communication nucleus and provides meeting space for various neighborhood organizations. It provides family supportive programs and makes vital contributions to the livability of the community.

**Mayfield Memorial Community Development Corporation (CDC)** – recruits and coordinates wraparound services for residents of the upcoming mixed income housing development. The mission of the CDC is to use social services coupled with stable housing to promote social equity and upward

mobility. It also distributes information throughout Hidden Valley to connect residents with resources.

**Hidden Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC)**

- commissioned an updated community reinvestment plan created by Neighboring Concepts in 2019 which calls for continuing to work with local organization and organize Civic Resources to Strengthen Community Pride and developing strong edges to the community that reinforce the community's unique character and quality of life.

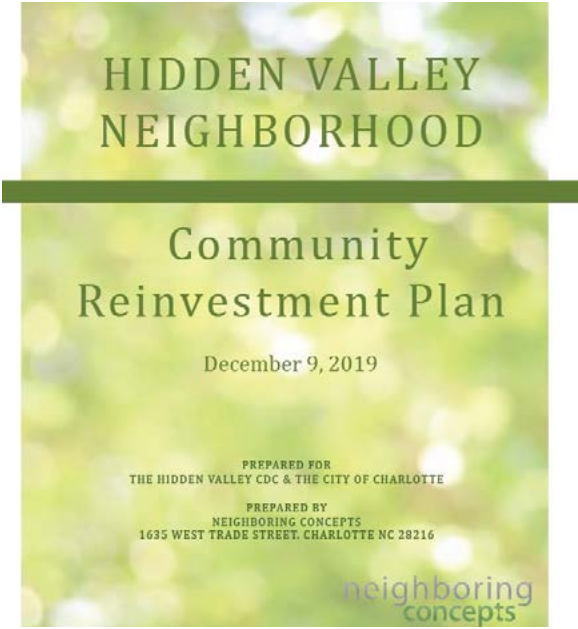
**The Hub** - is being developed to provide a flexible outdoor and indoor space for the community at The Bread of Life Deliverance Church on Tom Hunter Road. The space includes natural play spaces, community garden, kitchen, office, indoor performance and meeting venue to serve the community in a variety of ways.



COMMUNITY GARDEN AT MLK JR MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILT BY MEN OF DESTINY, YOUTH AND PARTNERS



HEAL CHARLOTTE LEADING REAGAN DRIVE CLEANUP



HIDDEN VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

# SECTION 03 PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH & DESIGN SPRINT

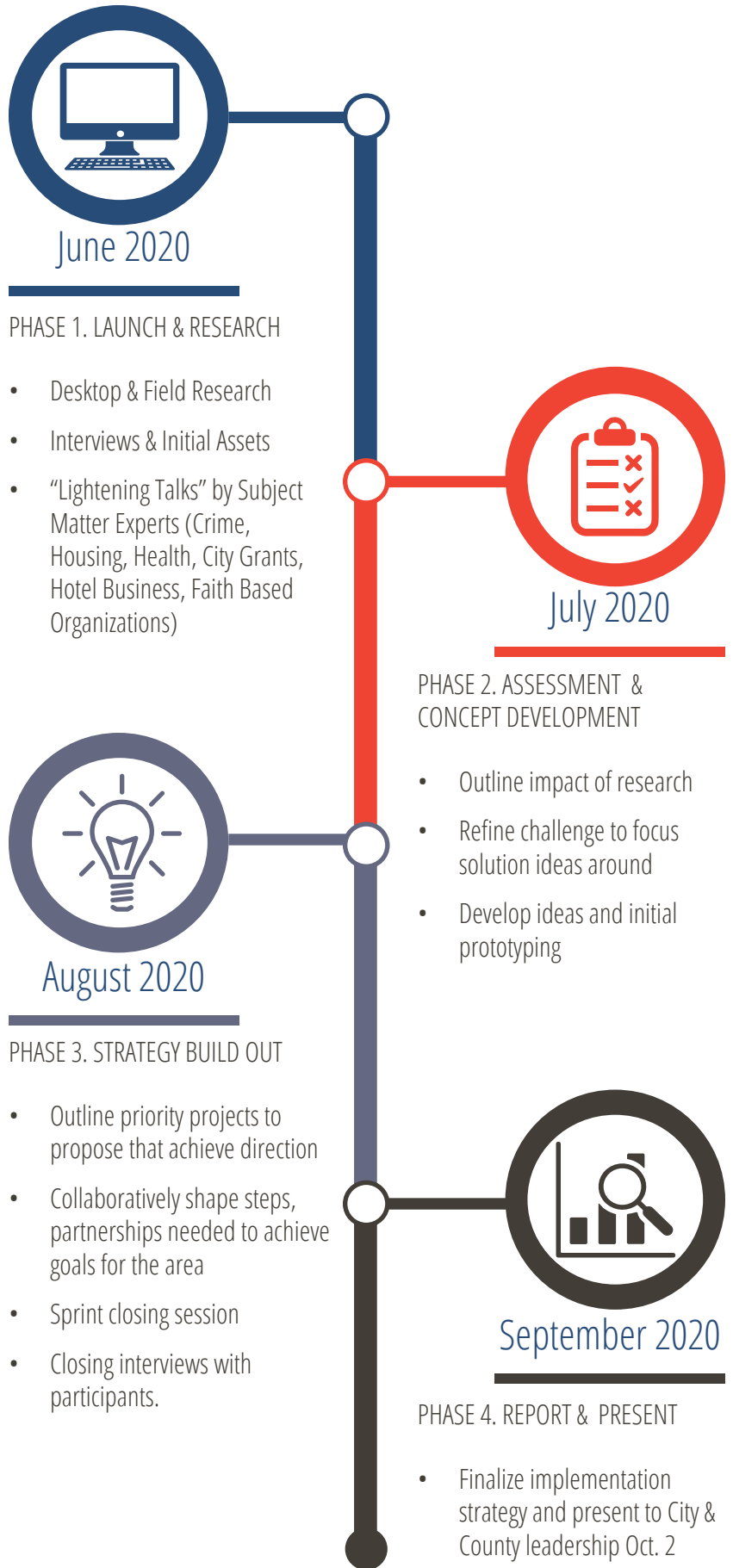
## Purpose

Even with all the efforts over the past four years, and the overall decrease in crime achieved by CMPD and Community Organizations, the work is not complete. Major investment still lags in this area the interchange looks much the same as it has for the past forty years. Crime statistics show that this is still one of the top four locations of violent crime over the past five years. The City and County have identified this area for priority attention and investment.

While many of the concerns are the same as they have been over the past five years, not all key stakeholders agreed on root causes that should be focused on to reduce violent crime in the area. A team was formed to use a public health approach and an engagement tool used to promote individual thought while developing agreements to achieve shared goals, a "Design Sprint".

## Public Health Approach

A public health issue is a problem or symptom of a problem that has a significant impact on health of the community both in terms of life expectancy and quality of life. Violent crime is one of those public



health issues. It is impacted by accessibility and quality of education, childcare, jobs, income, stable housing, convenient transportation, safe parks and open spaces, and convenient, healthy food. These are all considered part of the social determinants of health and form the system and environment that influences people and their choices. Connection to physical resources (housing, food, education, health, employment, healthy environment) and social connectivity (resident-led engagement, user experience solutions, community belonging) are at the core of the public health approach. These two elements established the categories of topics the Design Sprint team reviewed and developed solutions around.

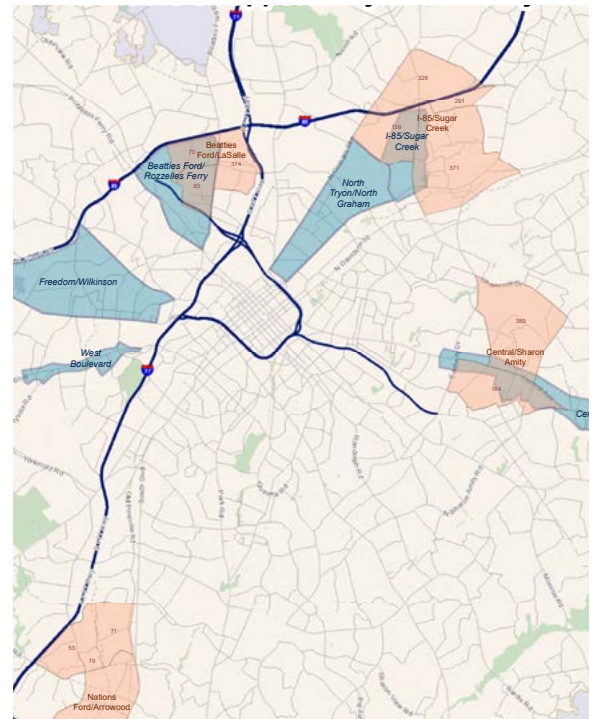
Additionally, a public health approach is a multi-disciplinary, data driven approach that develops thoughtful interventions in partnership with the community. It works to replicate what is working well and prevents what is negatively impacting the community. Interventions from a public health approach are well informed and has buy in from those who need the intervention.

## Design Sprint Engagement

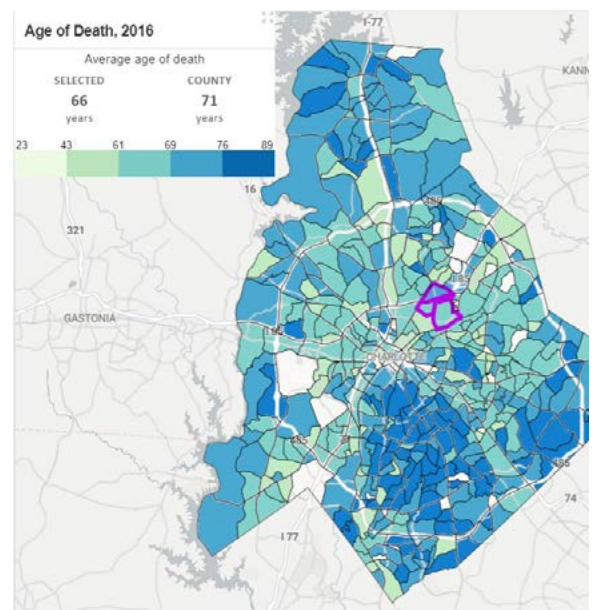
Design Sprints are a stakeholder engagement tool that was developed by Silicon Valley entrepreneurs building from “design thinking” mindsets to create an action oriented, low-risk, collaborative way for people to work together on a problem to arrive at the right-sized solution in a short amount of time. Design thinking is the framework of breaking problem solving up into three steps: 1) discovery, 2) strategy, and 3) validation and is oriented to the end-user using empathy and behavior science. Design sprints bring together teams of people with different perspectives and roles working together and developing a feasible, tested solution in a short time frame. The City has used this tool in multiple projects over the past two years and found it to be a successful approach. The goal was to find agreement on project direction and possible projects for FY21 Corridors of Opportunity to begin making needed investment in the Sugar Creek and I-85 to sustainably reduce crime.

Participants in a design sprint are anyone whose input is required to set a strategic direction for the entire project, have the ability to reject impractical ideas, and ability to drive projects forward and execute the strategy after the sprint. We reached out to include those with:

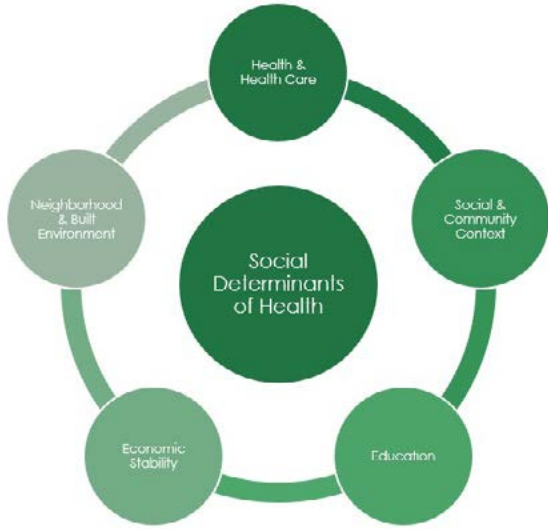
- Indirect Impact on Crime (Housing Providers, Mentor Programs, Family Support, Workforce Development, Code Enforcement, Public Health)



SUGAR CREEK & I-85 IS ONE OF FOUR PRIORITY AREAS



AVERAGE AGE OF DEATH MECKLENBURG COMPARISON



THE SYSTEM THAT PREDICTS HEALTH OUTCOMES

- Direct Impact on Crime (CMPD, Sheriff’s Dept., District Attorney, Criminal Justice We Services, Counseling & Rehabilitation)
- Interchange Property Owners & Businesses (Hotels, Retail, Vacant Properties, Fast Food, Real Estate)
- Community Members (Faith Community, Surrounding Neighborhood Residents, Youth, UCity Family Zone)
- Infrastructure & Development (PDD, ED, HNS, CDOT, Park & Rec, University City Partners, CATS, Apartment Managers)

At the start of the challenge of “How might we make the Sugar Creek and I-85 interchange area safe for those who live, work and visit?” there were a few things we knew we needed to learn in the process. These were questions the Design Sprint Team contemplated in their field research, in forming individual insights, in weighing insights and crafting refined challenge statements, in selecting key challenges to build ideas around, and in walking through the ideas to understand resource needs. The findings for the questions below are answered in the section to follow:



DESIGN SPRINT PROCESS

1. **CURRENT CONDITIONS IMPACTING SAFETY:** How do subject matter experts (on the local area, on specific issues, etc) define sustainable and meaningful change to the area in a way that it prevents crime and people turning to crime?
2. **ROOT PROBLEM & PROJECT DIRECTION:** What root problem are we trying to address as a first step? What is the right direction to proceed as we seek funding and bring together teams to implement projects? What is the right time frame for interventions proposed? What does the vision for the area mean for our collective work? What are actionable solutions that would indicate short-, medium-, and long-term wins for the area? What are both social and physical investments that are needed to compliment each other that address both people and place?
3. **RELATIONSHIPS:** Who are the implementers needed to make projects happen? What are the necessary relationships that need to be built to make the work successful?



## SECTION 04 DESIGN SPRINT PARTICIPANT INPUT SUMMARY

### Defining Safety & Meaningful Change That Prevents Crime

There are two categories of connections that are needed to support individual health and wellbeing: physical connectivity (the context of location and place) and social connectivity (the context of relationships and people). Both are also linked to crime prevention. The Design Sprint Team was comprised of issue-specific and neighborhood-experience subject matter experts. The team was asked to define safety and dig deeper into the “why” behind each answer through the lens of their experience, training, observations, and research. This was the starting point to identify root causes for crime considering both common patterns regardless of location as well as experience in this specific location which has unique dynamics in play.

#### SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

**Vicious Cycle of Crime** - experience of violence, drug use and sales, gun access are correlated with violent crime. Social networks influence exposure to this cycle. This particular location has a concentration of all these elements. Design Sprint Team members discussed breaking the cycle through various methods focused on making sure individuals have tools, resources, connections, and support to make changes to their lives to break the cycle.

**Physical & Mental Health** - personal health impacts choices and decisions. Social context of health of others, healthcare, and self care influence one’s ability to fight diseases and deal with stressors in their life safely. The study area particularly sees a pattern of substance abuse and addiction. Team members shared research, experiences, and their work around supporting physical and mental health through efforts that either work to improve health or provide improved choices for those who are in poor health or provide support for improved decisions.

**Family & Youth Relationships** - early relationships at home are the foundation for how one relates to the rest of life and the world. Cognitive

development is ongoing through a person's mid-20s and their context of family, school, friends, media, and big events impact their biases, how they form relationships, and how they make decisions. As there are many families who have made the hotels their home where there is little privacy and personal space indoors and out, it is expected that family relationships can be extra strained in these environments. Team members discussed how inequitable family contexts impact youth exposure to positive and negative influences and how schools, programs, and community can help even the playing field to make sure all youth have a strong support system to help them learn to make decisions on their own that keep them and others safe.

**Reliable & Sufficient Income** - debt, insufficient finances for housing, transportation, communication, healthcare, nourishment, and investment for the future are a common source of stress. Extended exposure to stress can lead to health problems and an individual going through income instability may feel unsafe. The average income of the area surrounding this location is \$31,993 and 65% of 18-65 year olds are employed based on 2017 Census projections. Design Sprint Team members discussed a range of social interventions that centered around both formal and informal education and connecting individuals and employers.

**Housing Stability** - comfortable and consistent shelter and sense of "home and belonging" is important to wellbeing and sense of safety. As Charlotte faces a growing housing crisis, more individuals face the stress of securing housing that allows them to live in a place that balances their need for access to work, shop, recreate, and connect with community. As all the residents who live in the study area are living in hotels where more than likely they are spending more than 30% of their income on the average \$1500 per month rent of a hotel room which makes them housing-burdened households and places them at risk of housing instability. Social interventions the team shared were focused on addressing the barriers to affordable housing and equipping individuals with tools and resources to overcome barriers and get into stable housing.

**Community Stability** - belonging to a community is important part of being human. When there are changes to a community in which residents are impacted, the exclusion of those residents from the change-making process creates stress and impacts sense of safety. Neighborhoods with a range of resident ages, professions, and income provides community stability for people to "age in place" and build both lasting relationships as well as complimentary community behaviors that support everyone. This area is facing changing demographics of race and income which brings cultural shifts. The team discussed programs, events, and lifestyles that would promote neighborly connections, reduce barriers between residents, and build trust and good reinvestment practices that would provide community stability.

#### PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY

**Public Space** - visibility into spaces to assess danger, clear routes to navigate, agreed upon behaviors for spaces, are all components to what makes a person feel safe in a given location. Additionally, multiple high speed routes and ungoverned landscapes also create a haven for crime. The Design Sprint Team discussed various methods to manage public spaces to deter crime through commitment, behavior change, technology, and design solutions that centered on displaying care and community ownership and pride of place.

**Balanced Land Use & Development Patterns** - neighborhoods are composed of a mix of housing, retail, office, civic, institutional, and open space uses and promote walkable, bikeable routes to nearby destinations. The study area has a mix of uses, but the development pattern is aimed at visitor traffic of the interstate rather than towards a more residential context that makes up most of the surrounding area. Unlike other priority areas to address crime in Charlotte, this area has a concentration of low-cost hotels and is immediately off an interstate making some violence interruption and crime prevention tactics less of a fit here than in other areas as much of the crime is regionally based. This

concentrated low-cost hotels and auto-oriented, passerby/visor centric development pattern is the root problem that all of the Design Sprint Team prioritized for next steps as it fosters all the other physical and social connectivity issues.

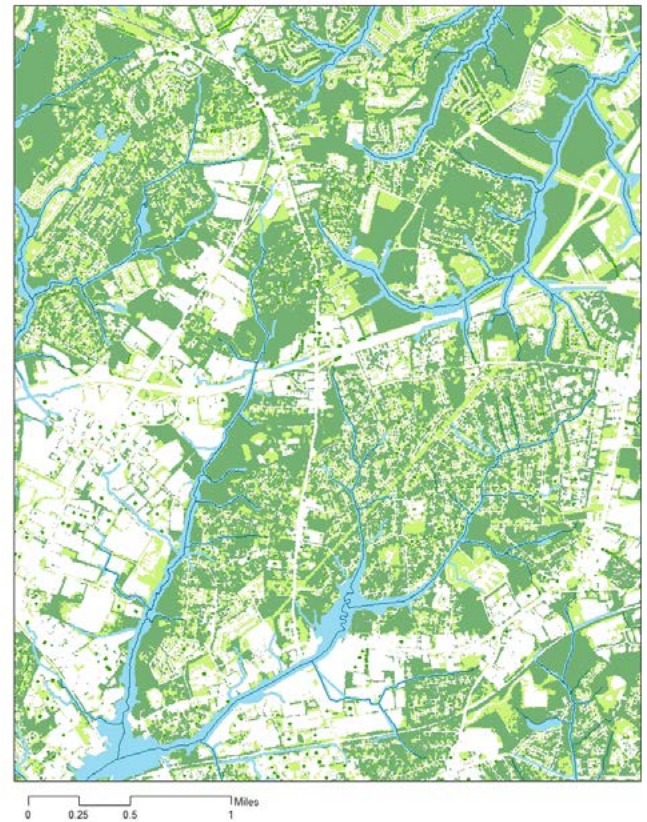
**Accessible Housing** - as outlined in social connectivity, housing is an important foundation for sense of safety as defined by this group, it is also outlined here under physical connectivity as housing is both. Physical interventions around housing include building more affordable housing that better matches the needs of extended stay hotel residents and provide housing in ways that individuals can grow wealth from renting property ownership.

**Accessible Employment & Income Opportunities** - related to social aspects of reliable source of income, physical connection to jobs whether by location proximity or by convenient and affordable transportation, these factor into safety from a holistic point of view. Physical interventions discussed by the Design Sprint Team focused on creating living wage jobs through development patterns in the interchange area and particularly supporting entrepreneurs, small businesses, artists, hiring and supporting businesses owned by Black and Indigenous, People of Color and creating co-working spaces.

## Priority Root Problem, Project Direction & Goals

With the insights formed from observations, the Design Sprint Team identified *the dated interchange's physical context* as the root problem that needed to be addressed as a first step to compliment the work of CMPD and community organizations. This root cause had five current conditions that impacted safety that informed project direction.

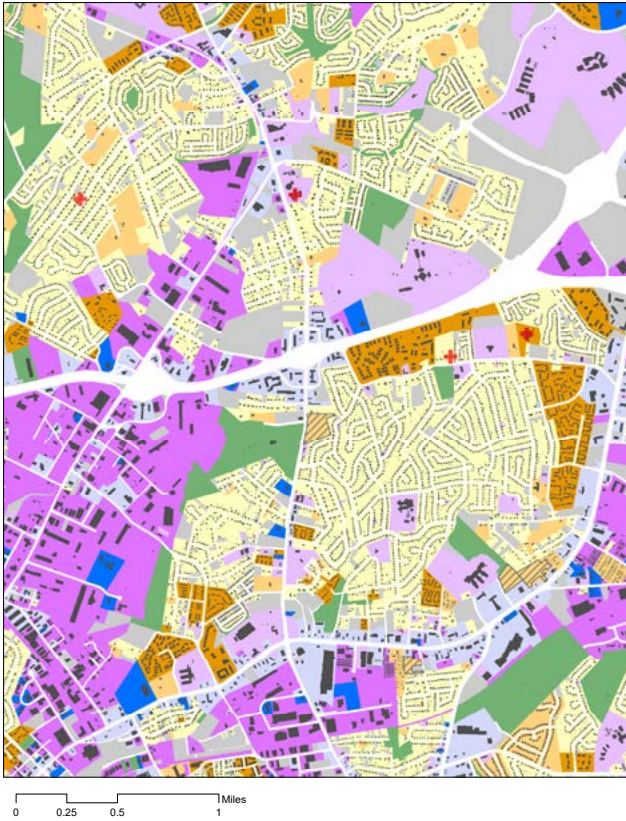
**1. Area Lacking Committed Reinvestment:** The Sugar Creek I-85 interchange has devolved from original uses, and intent with changing context that drew visitor/ traditional hotel guests to newer hotels in



### ENVIRONMENT (2019 DATA)

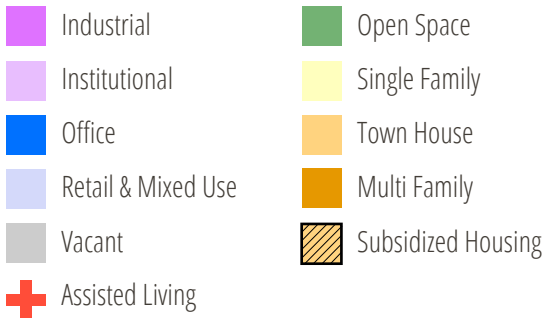
Tree Canopy coverage is low in the actual study area around the interchange but the surrounding neighborhoods fare better. There are two watersheds impacted by the interchange as it falls on a ridge line. Nearby there is very little tree canopy coverage and a large amount of impervious surface where there is industrial development.





**LAND USE (2019 DATA)**

The interchange is commercial but is surrounded mostly by residential land uses with a significant amount of industrial land use nearby along Graham Street. There are some large portions of civic and institutional land use with churches and schools. There is a mix of housing but the single family development is particularly large within Hidden Valley with smaller neighborhoods near by and a significant amount of multi-family development along Reagan Drive and North Tryon.



University City and growing industrial on Graham Street as well as lack of updating investment and overall neglect.

2. **Oversupply of Hotels:** 13 hotels in this location are more than what is needed to serve traditional visitor traffic except when there are major events at the Charlotte Speedway or at UNC Charlotte.
3. **Auto- and Passerby-orientation is Insufficient for Residential Context:** The businesses and infrastructure are auto-oriented and intended for short stays/ passersby with hotels, fast food, and gas station convenience stores that does not adequately serve surrounding residential neighborhoods and apartments.
4. **Hotels & Businesses as Housing & Daily Food:** The hotels, businesses, and streetscape have taken on unintended uses serving a gap in housing and daily food needs for households with barriers to traditional or stable housing and healthy food.
5. **Properties & Streetscape are Targeted for Crime:** The hotels, businesses, and streetscape have taken on unintended uses serving as a targeted spot for crime – including but not limited to human trafficking and drugs (quick/multiple getaway routes, anonymity of hotels, unmonitored parking lots, visibility of wares for sale from street, neglect, etc.).

These five conditions of the root problem informed the project direction as objectives for the challenge to identify short-, medium-, and long-term wins that brought both physical and social improvements to the safety for people who live, work, and visit the Sugar Creek and I-85 interchange.

**Objective 1. Build partnerships and alliance through collaboration on projects and open communication to establish shared responsibility and accountability for achieving goals.**

**Short-term win** (less than 6 months): Design Sprint Team meets every 4-6 weeks and begins to implement the most achievable projects such as art, branding, landscaping, and litter pick up improvements. This group helps kick off the Sugar Creek Corridor Playbook and invites other participants to grow the partnership.

**Medium-term win** (3 years): The Corridor Playbook is complete and all participant groups are using it to advocate for funding,

guide investment, and outline next steps for implementation with the partnership continuing to meet regularly and oversee implementation of the Playbook.

**Long-term win** (10 plus years): The partnership continues and keeps the adaptable Corridor playbook up to date with contextual changes and priority shifts over time but overall the partnership has achieved addressing the priority root problem of safety issues by updating the physical context of the interchange.

**Physical improvement:** The interchange is up to date with its development pattern and fitting to the surrounding community character with walkable and bikeable streets.

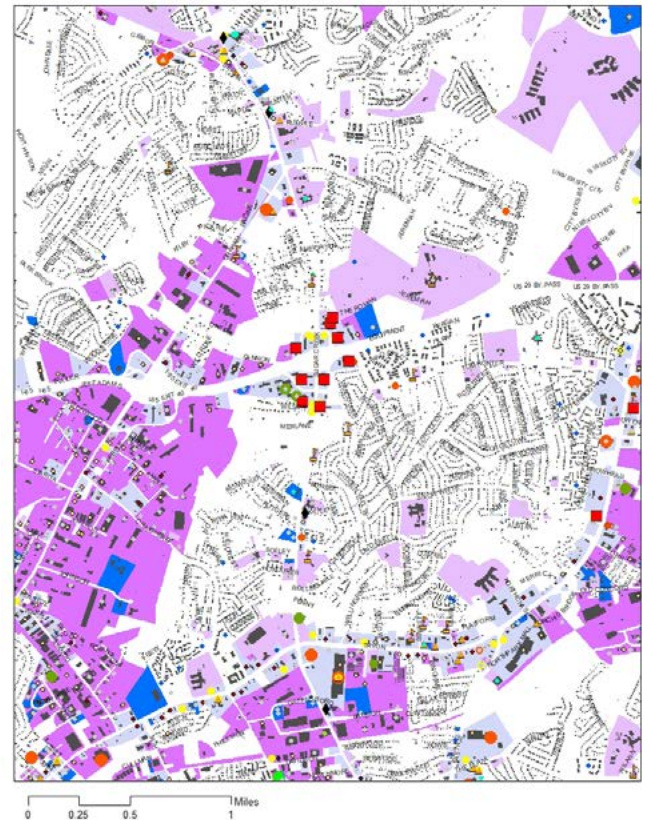
**Social improvement:** The wide range of groups as seen in the Design Sprint but expanded to include many other groups operates as unified group and provide a powerful and singular voice to guide reinvestment in this area to make improvements that benefit all of the community.

**Objective 2. Reduce the number of hotels/hotel units through redevelopment OR bring a new destination that would increase the marketability of the hotels enough to match supply while also avoiding displacement from gentrification in surrounding communities.**

**Short-term win** (1 year): One hotel is no longer operating as a hotel and is either demolished or redeveloped to provides for one of the identified community needs outlined through the Design Sprint or Corridor Playbook.

**Medium-term win** (5 years): Using strategy and community vision set forth in the Corridor Playbook; committed investors and partners are identified, additional properties are redeveloped, development mix begins to align with results of market study.

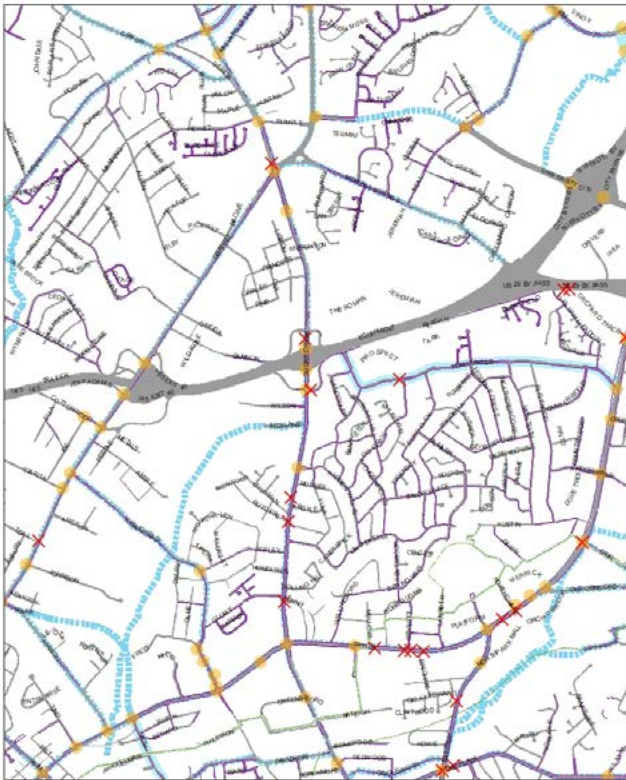
**Long-term win** (10 plus years): The number of hotels and hotel units are in balance with their context and serving their intended



PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT (2019 DATA)

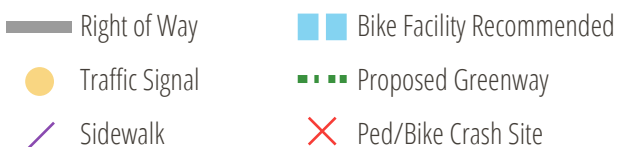
Most of the nearby employment is in warehouse and industry, but there are pockets of commercial and institutional or civic land use that also provide jobs. Many jobs and services are not walkable for residents living in Hidden Valley.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:purple; border:1px solid black;"></span> Industrial Land Use   | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Grocery Store            |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightpurple; border:1px solid black;"></span> Institutional Land Use   | <span style="display:inline-block; width:10px; height:10px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Convenient Store         |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:blue; border:1px solid black;"></span> Office Land Use   | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span> Dining/Restaurant        |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black; clip-path: polygon(50% 0%, 61% 35%, 98% 35%, 68% 57%, 98% 57%, 79% 91%, 50% 70%, 21% 91%, 32% 57%, 2% 57%, 38% 35%, 1% 35%);"></span> Day Care | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:cyan; border:1px solid black;"></span> Medical Facility/ Pharmacy |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; clip-path: polygon(50% 0%, 61% 35%, 98% 35%, 68% 57%, 98% 57%, 79% 91%, 50% 70%, 21% 91%, 32% 57%, 2% 57%, 38% 35%, 1% 35%);"></span> Beauty Salon/ Barber             | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:green; border:1px solid black;"></span> Social Services           |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:black; clip-path: polygon(50% 0%, 61% 35%, 98% 35%, 68% 57%, 98% 57%, 79% 91%, 50% 70%, 21% 91%, 32% 57%, 2% 57%, 38% 35%, 1% 35%);"></span> Laundry                           | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:limegreen; border:1px solid black;"></span> Gym/Fitness Facility  |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span> Hotel  | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span> General Retail           |



#### TRANSPORTATION & PEDESTRIAN & CYCLIST SAFETY (2019)

I-85 and the Equipment and Reagan Drive service roads take up significant amount of the real estate with its wide right of way. Sidewalk is lacking for most of those service roads impacting walkability for especially those who live in apartments off Reagan Drive. There are few traffic signals along Sugar Creek Road between North Tryon and Graham which contributes to a more auto-centric environment but it acts to separate Hidden Valley from Sugaw Creek Park & Rec Center. Most pedestrian and cyclist accidents have taken place on the thoroughfares of the area. The Blue Line light rail is located a mile south of the interchange and the Cross Charlotte Trail is planned for the southern edge of Hidden Valley but bus and bike facilities and service is limited near the interchange.



purpose of visitors to the city and short term stays. Past extended stay hotel guests are housed in stable housing and have access to jobs with livable wages.

**Physical improvement:** There are fewer hotels and hotel units with redevelopment serving the surrounding community as well as travelers passing by on the interstate.

**Social improvement:** The area is no longer one of concentrated poverty and individuals who previously lived in the hotels have access to a stable community, housing, and employment which brings them improved health and wellbeing and the area has less crime.

**Objective 3. Strengthen sense of community identity, that this interchange area serves families with housing, jobs, daily goods and services, and arts/culture, and shows committed care through maintenance and updates.**

**Short-term win** (less than 1 year): Art reflective of the surrounding community and unified branding is visible in the public right of way, as well as refreshed and maintained landscaping.

**Medium-term win** (5 years): Physical improvements to make the area more walkable, bikeable and community-oriented are implemented following the Corridor Playbook on the successful advocacy of the partners continuing to work together to implement improvements along West Sugar Creek Road.

**Long-term win** (10 plus years): The partnership is an active, leading participant shaping the interchange redevelopment by NCDOT, CDOT, and development partners achieves a more community-oriented interchange that is walkable, bikeable and has amenities that serve the surrounding neighborhoods as well as the visitors passing through supporting the businesses of the area.

**Physical improvement:** The interchange better suits the surrounding community and creates a safer, more walkable, bikeable place with retail, offices, and housing at different price points.

**Social improvement:** Community members from the range of

housing type have a space where they can meet, gather, pass each other on foot or bike, and get to know one another while also supporting local entrepreneurs.

#### Objective 4. Reduce the dependency on cheap, poor-condition hotels to serve housing needs.

**Short-term win** (less than 1 year): The number of extended stay hotel guests is reduced, and their length of stay is shortened because they are connected to stable housing and have improved connection to resources such as jobs, training, child care, and open space. Formal transitional housing opens up to take some residents who have been impacted by COVID-19 and other factors influencing housing and employment access.

**Medium-term win** (5 years): These hotels are no longer used for housing as those who were extended stay guests have found more stable housing options across the City. Additionally there is transitional housing supply that better meets the demand of providing shelter during difficult periods of people's lives.

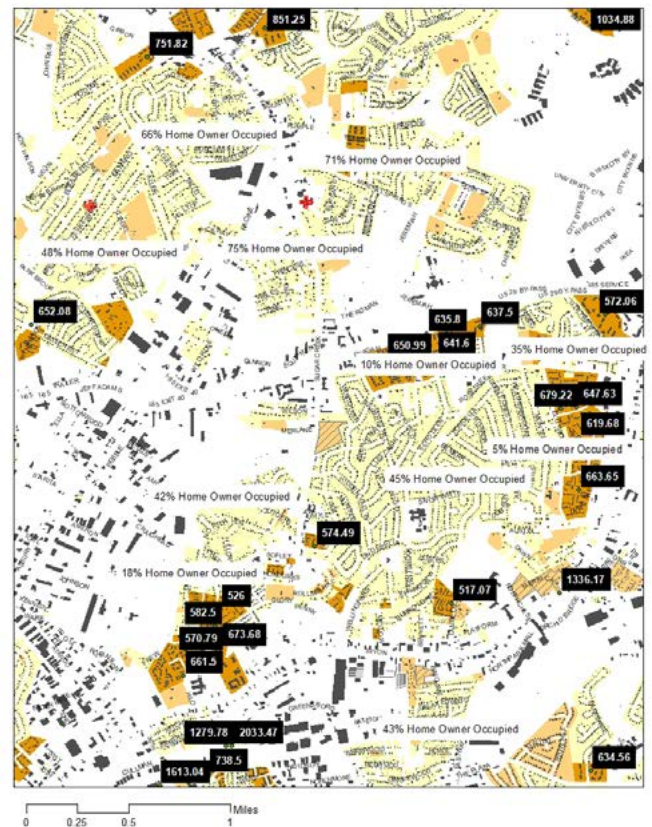
**Long-term win** (10 plus years): This interchange area has housing at a mix of price points as a part of mixed development patterns of the reinvestment in the area aligned with the Corridor Playbook.

**Physical improvement:** There are fewer hotels which provides a better balance to the area.

**Social improvement:** Individuals are living in places that better serve their need with kitchens, separate bedrooms, access to amenities, open space, are more connected to their surrounding community, and are in better health.

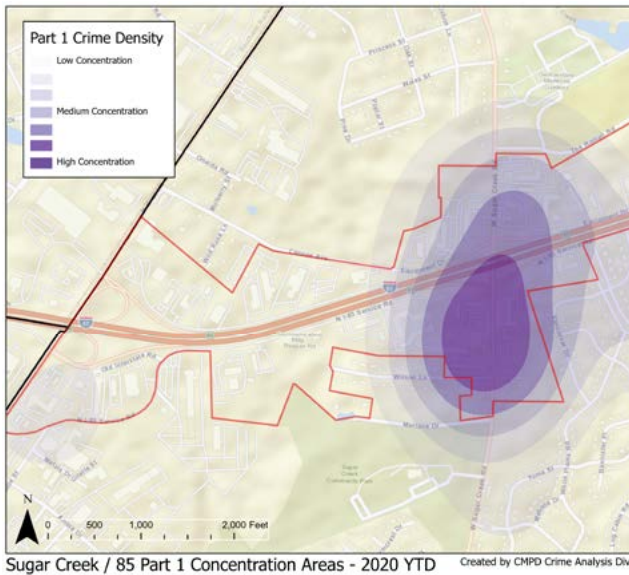
#### Objective 5. Address physical aspects such as quick/multiple getaway routes, anonymity of hotels, unmonitored parking lots, visibility of drugs/humans for sale/hire, and neglect that make this area a target for crime.

**Short-term win** (less than 1 year): Improve frontages along Sugar Creek and Reagan Drive and update cameras to higher quality and



#### HOUSING (2019 DATA)

South of I-85 there are more rental properties than home owner occupied homes. There area also a significant amount of naturally occurring affordable housing among the older apartments and condos in the area. Newer multi-family developments along the Blue Line tend to be market value. Low cost hotels are not in the data on housing though they serve as such, and they tend to cost around \$1500 per month. Rental average for multifamily listed on map along with owner-occupancy rates.



## CRIME DENSITY

Most of the crime occurs south of the interstate, but there are some incidents north at one of the hotels as well. This area is targeted for crime with its quick, multiple getaways, anonymity of hotels, unmonitored parking lots, and overall neglect.

connected to the real time crime center to improve response time and provide evidence to help enforce the law to reduce crime being targeted to this area.

**Medium-term win** (5 years): Reduce dependency on drugs and prostitution of individuals living in this area through broadened case management in the area connecting individuals to wrap around services including mental, behavioral, and addiction health specialists as well as reduced access to substances.

**Long-term win** (10 plus years): Following the advocacy of the partnership to implement the Corridor Playbook including with NCDOT's interchange redevelopment, the area no longer supports multiple quick getaway route to the region, and the redevelopment of the area is community oriented with intended users being part of the deterrent of crime.

**Physical improvement:** Reagan Drive is no longer a cut through for traffic but is converted into a low speed or non-motor vehicle route that is community-oriented as it connects to the apartments and provides important open space and improves air and water quality while also mitigating noise pollution.

**Social improvement:** There is significantly less targeted crime and the community is more cohesive with a central node of retail, office, and housing connecting people who live in both single family and apartments. This level and types of crime are not shifted to a different location but there is a reduction in substance abuse and related crimes as individuals are connected to important resources that improve their health and wellbeing.

These five objectives to direct projects are impacted by several key time frames. One major influence on project time is that North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has the Sugar Creek and I-85 interchange scheduled to be redesigned for improvements in 2027 though delays are likely and construction timing will likely mean visible changes only seen after 2030. This area however has already seen four decades without substantial reinvestment and neglect and crime continue to be a major issue so coordination with NCDOT and consideration of possible interchange redevelopment will be needed while major improvements are made over the coming years.



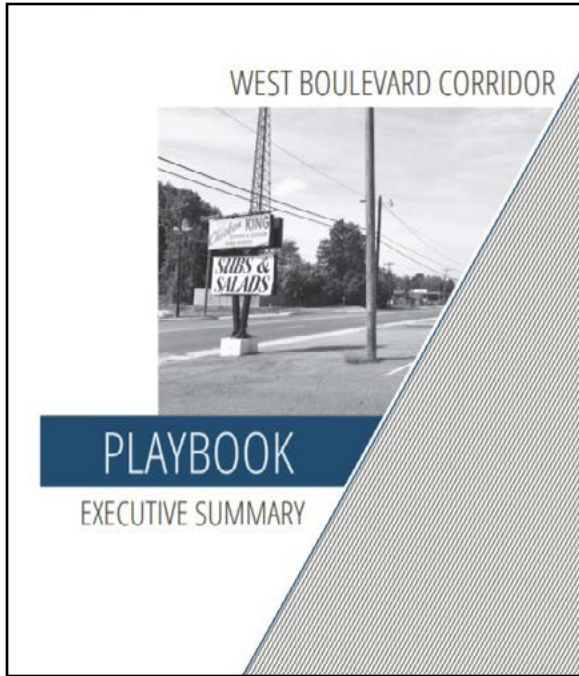
Another time frame consideration is that some of these hotels have reached the end of their lifespan with neglect leading to poor building conditions. Stable housing will need to be found for extended stay guests for whatever the stabilization and disposition strategy is for many of the hotel properties.

During COVID-19 social distancing, quality public space continues to be a rediscovered value. This time also impacts hotel occupancy and income as the low cost hotels are used as shelter for growing population experiencing homelessness. Also over the course of this year, crime has increased in this area, giving a greater sense of urgency to bring change in the near term.

Last but not least, all of the community-based organizations are hard at work especially at this time of increased need of housing, employment, family and social support, as well as mental and physical health support to provide important services to improve safety. Substantial investment is needed soon in this area that moves the area forward in the outlined direction to improve safety and reduce crime.

## Relationships Needed for Implementation

Funding and teams to implement these proposed projects are primarily needed from the City, the County, Community-Based Organizations, Property and Business Owners, but also investors, developers, and philanthropic partners who support the broad vision laid out through the Design Sprint and Corridor Playbook to follow. Other important partners include CMS, Neighborhood Associations, Community-Based Service Providers, and more. During the Design Sprint, most of these groups were represented as participants activity shaping the results of the collective work. All were reached out to ahead of the sprint or at the very beginning, and many have become more involved following the Sprint. However, it is recommended that relationships continue to be built through the collaboration needed to implement the short term win projects as well as in shaping the Sugar Creek Corridor Playbook. Regular meetings every 4-6 weeks are recommended to maintain momentum, collaboration, and accountability in implementation. The results of the Sugar Creek I-85 Design Sprint were shared to key City leadership including the City Manager, Police Chief, Assistant City Manger & Planning Director, Assistant City Manager & Economic Development Manger, Housing & Neighborhood Services Director, Transportation Director and County Leadership including the County Manager, and the Director and Deputy Director of Public Health on October 2nd. On November 9th the results were shared at a City Council Action Review Meeting.



WEST BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PLAYBOOK COVER

Playbook process will be modeled from the original [Corridor Playbook on West Boulevard](#) which can be found on the City of Charlotte website.



EXAMPLE SIGNAL BOX WRAP - PLACEMAKING ART

Implement quick wins like [Placemaking](#) projects.

## Immediate Next Steps

The City should initiate the Sugar Creek I-85 Corridor Playbook, modify the Business Improvement Matching Grant, and implement public space improvements that can be completed in the near term over the next six to nine months.

The Community-Based Organizations including neighborhood associations and partnership groups should begin to meet regularly around implementing the City led projects particularly through the next steps and help find and support partners to implement the project direction while shaping the Corridor Playbook.

It will likely take 1-2 months to get the Playbook process started including outreach to expand the stakeholder group, contracting a market study consultant to understand the right mix of development and uses that could be supported in the area to meet the community needs, and completing mapping of inventory and analysis for the corridor. The kick off public meeting would share the findings of the design sprint, the results of the inventory and analysis, and introduce the playbook process and roles with the public for their feedback and to solicit additional input to refine the work. The Playbook process once started will take approximately six months. In addition to the first kick-off meeting with the public, there is a second public meeting a little over half way through the process to share the results of the market study, review the identified opportunities and constraints, and provide input on the development scenarios to determine a preferred development scenario and strategies to implementation which is the last step of the process. At the end the Playbook process there is a final public meeting to unveil and celebrate the completion of the Corridor Playbook and provides an opportunity to bring in development and community partners to help implement the work.

During this approximate nine month timeline, the goal would be to implement some placemaking and capital projects with the Corridors of Opportunity funding, while also supporting the Business Matching Grants implementation at Sugar Creek and I-85 and working to stabilize key property code issues.