

August 14, 2026

Thank you for signing up to learn more about this project. This newsletter will serve as a resource for project details, relevant stories, and ways to stay engaged. Check out the information below and stay tuned for more.

SEAP+ IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

Ways to be sustainable during back-to-school season

It's time to get those kids ready to start the 2026-2027 school year. Interested in how to bring sustainability into that process? We have you covered! See below for some ideas.

School supplies

- Choose notebooks made from recycled paper or opt for refillable notebooks/binders.
- Buy pens and markers that are refillable instead of disposable.
- Do a quick “supply audit” at home before shopping — most people already have plenty of leftover supplies.

Backpacks and lunch gear

- Repair before replacing. A zipper fix or patch can extend a backpack's life by years. A great resource is the [Repair Café at Innovation Barn](#).
- Pick durable, long-lasting lunchboxes and water bottles (steel or BPA-free reusable plastic).
- Use reusable snack bags or washable containers instead of disposable plastic baggies. Or choose compostable bags and make sure to drop them off at a composting site.

Clothing

- Try secondhand or thrift stores — kids grow fast and gently used clothes are often like new.
- Organize clothing swaps with friends, neighbors or school groups.
- Choose durable basics from brands with sustainability commitments.

Meals and snacks

- Pack lunches with whole foods and minimal packaging.
- Buy items in bulk and portion them into reusable containers.
- Choose local produce when possible. It reduces transportation footprint and supports the community.

Transportation

- Take the bus!

Please note that if you plan to use the bus for your kiddos at CMS, you need to fill out the [Intent to Ride form](#).

- Walk, bike or carpool to school when possible.
- If driving is necessary, combine trips to reduce fuel use.
- Additionally, consider turning off your vehicle if you're waiting in a carpool line. Our kids are breathing in all that exhaust!

Tech and electronics

- Choose refurbished laptops/calculators when possible.
- Recycle old devices responsibly through manufacturer or city recycling programs.
- Use energy-efficient LED desk lamps and power strips to reduce electricity use.

General habits

- Encourage students to bring a reusable water bottle daily.
- Print only when necessary. Digital notes can cut paper use.
- Label items (water bottles, jackets, lunchboxes) so they're less likely to be lost and replaced.



Fresh Air Rides: Log Trips, Win Prizes

Make small changes to daily habits and have the chance to win a variety of prizes! Mecklenburg County has teamed up with local partners, including Charlotte Area Transit System, for the [Fresh Air Rides Challenge](#). It's all about improving the air we breathe every day.

The challenge kicked off Aug. 3, but it runs through Aug. 30 and you still have time to participate. Sign up and log at least one Fresh Air Ride, and you'll be eligible for the grand prizes

below:

- Electric scooter and helmet
- Two White Water Center day passes
- Arctic cooler

Participate each week for a chance to win one of the weekly prizes. The more days you take a fresh air ride, the more chances you have to win.

Fresh Air Rides are:

- Carpooling
- Riding transit (bus, train, streetcar)
- Riding a bike/e-bike
- Riding a scooter/e-scooter
- Walking
- Teleworking
- Driving an electric vehicle

- Packing a lunch (instead of driving to lunch)

Learn more about [the challenge](#) online.



Green Crown Program

The [Green Crown Program](#) recognizes Charlotte restaurants, breweries, caterers, coffee shops and hospitality businesses that are taking meaningful steps to reduce waste, conserve resources and support a more sustainable local economy. Your business could be recognized for practices you already have in place! You don't need to be perfect — Green Crown is designed to recognize current sustainability efforts while also supporting businesses that are continuing to grow and improve their practices.

The program is free to join, and applications are now open. If you just want to learn more, [fill out the interest form](#) and a member of the team will get in touch.

RELATED EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Aug. 22, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Great Southeastern Pollinator Census at Veterans Park, Reid Park, and Tuckaseegee Arboretum & Gardens

Help Keep Charlotte Beautiful and other organizations involved with Charlotte's Bee City Committee document more pollinators than any other city in the south! We'll have three public gardens to visit. Participants at those sites will receive a token, and you can turn in two or more tokens to Birdsong Brewing after the event for a free beverage or Bee City Charlotte sticker! Have a pollinator-friendly plant near you? Feel free to take your own count at home. It only takes 15 minutes to complete! [Learn more and register.](#)

Aug. 27, 10:30 a.m. to noon, Invasive Plant Removal with Storm Water Services at 12078 Memory Lane Huntersville, NC 28078

Invasive plant removal involves training volunteers on how to identify non-native and invasive plants in the area and removing those plants so that native species have a better chance of growing along the stream buffer. [Learn more and register.](#)

Aug. 29, 10 a.m. to noon, EJ Day Community Clean Up with Sol Nation at Allegra 2412 Beatties Ford Road Charlotte, NC 28216

Join SOL Nation to clean the neighborhood and map opportunities for future tree planting, demonstrating our commitment to building healthier, more resilient communities through their Sovereignty in Practice pillar.

In 2021, the City of Charlotte officially recognized EJ Day with a proclamation from Mayor Vi Lyles. Since then, SOL Nation has continued to honor the day by bringing the community together for meaningful action. [Sign up to volunteer.](#)

Sept. 17, 9 a.m., SOL Summit 2026: Don't Keep That Same Energy at the Harvey B. Gantt Center For African-American Arts + Culture

Rooted in SOL Nation's commitment to community sovereignty, SOL Summit creates space to strengthen relationships, share knowledge, and develop practical strategies that lead to healthier neighborhoods, stronger local economies, climate resilience, and greater community ownership.

[Learn more and register.](#)



SEAP+ IN THE COMMUNITY



Helping Charlotte's Trees Beat the Heat

As Charlotte continues to experience extreme summer heat and ongoing drought conditions, city arborists are encouraging residents to help protect young trees through proper care. Simple practices such as slowly watering trees with a five-gallon bucket, applying a thin layer of mulch around the base, and avoiding "volcano mulching," piling mulch against the trunk, can help trees stay healthy and resilient. Healthy trees play a critical role in cooling neighborhoods, improving air quality, and reducing the urban heat island effect, making proper tree care an important part of Charlotte's climate resilience efforts.

[Learn more.](#)



New Car Share and E-Bike Program Expands Transportation Options

The City of Charlotte's Corridors of Opportunity program and the Office of Sustainability and Resilience, in partnership with DreamKey Partners and Trips for Kids, are launching a new car share and e-bike program at McNeel Apartments. The initiative is designed to improve mobility by providing residents with affordable transportation options that help bridge the "first-mile/last-mile" gap to jobs, schools, healthcare and public transit. By expanding access to shared vehicles and e-bikes, the program supports cleaner transportation, reduces transportation barriers and advances the city's goals for sustainability, equity and connected communities.

[Learn more.](#)

If you're reading this and you have something to share, hit reply and share it with us!

~~~

Your engagement means a lot to us, and we're committed to bringing you the latest information and resources. Thank you for working with us to help Charlotte strive to lead as a global city by continuously improving, protecting, and preserving the environment, its community, and its economy while ensuring equity and resilience — for today and future generations. To unsubscribe from this newsletter, please use the link provided below.

[Unsubscribe](#) | [My Subscriptions](#)

[View this email in a browser](#) | [!\[\]\(d263118e0bfd47dc6bc704167d936b83\_img.jpg\) Translate](#)