



DRAFT Albemarle Road Corridor

 CITY of CHARLOTTE

2022 | **Playbook**



Albemarle Road Corridor Playbook

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The primary goal is to establish a shared vision for Albemarle Road as a vibrant corridor into the city with a focus on improving public safety, enhancing the overall appearance of the corridor, jump-starting economic development initiatives, and coordinating multi-modal transportation options.

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Acknowledgments

Project Management Team

Comprised of staff from the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, the Project Management Team was co-led by the Economic Development and Planning, Design, & Development Departments.

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- Kim Barnes, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Alyssa Brown, Economic Development
- Keith Bryant, Charlotte Department of Transportation
- Emily Cantrell, Economic Development
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- Maria Floren, Planning, Design, & Development
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- Jennifer Frost, Charlotte Water
- Monica Holmes, Planning, Design, & Development
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- Denada Jackson, Charlotte Communication & Marketing
- Bruce Jones, Charlotte Area Transit System
- Ashley Landis, Charlotte Department of Transportation
- Chris Lange, Charlotte Area Transit System
- Bert Lynn, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation
- Anthony Mendez, Charlotte Department of Transportation
- Beverlee Sanders, Charlotte Communication & Marketing
- Cherie Smith, Economic Development
- Tom Sorrentino, Charlotte Department of Transportation
- Emily Yaffe, Housing & Neighborhood Services

Creative Engagement

The Creative Engagement Specialists (CES) developed and led creative engagement for the entirety of the project, facilitated the steering committee, activated the corridor through implementation of placemaking projects, and managed the Corridor Artists in Residence program.

- Tim Miner, Charlotte is Creative
- Melissa Dorsch, Charlotte is Creative
- Matt Olin, Charlotte is Creative
- Porter Metzler, Charlotte is Creative
- Christine Lockett, Charlotte is Creative

Real Estate Market Study

- Jessica Rossi, Kimley-Horn
- Laura Ornstein, Kimley-Horn

Small Business Study

- Michelle Ferguson, Raftelis
- Jillian Childress, Raftelis
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- Pat Martin, The Lee Institute
- A.M. Tupponce, The Lee Institute

Language Services

- Solange Werner, Into Languages
- Sandy Jarrin, Into Languages

Steering Committee

- Gris Bailey, Latin American Chamber of Commerce
- Nimish Bhatt, Universal Institute for Successful

Aging of Carolinas

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- Denise Coleman, Norsan Media
- Mariama Holman, resident
- Mimi Davis, ECCON
- Rodney McGill, Save Our Children Movement, Inc.
- Carolyn Millen, Eastway Sheffield Park neighborhood
- Vernetta Mitchell, FENCO
- Jessica Moreno, Action NC
- Scott Sayles, Stonington HOA
- Mike Sullivan, Charlotte EAST
- Jason Tuttle, Nova Capital Partners

Artists in Residence

Albemarle Road is the first Corridor of Opportunity to pilot the Corridor Artists in Residence program. The Project employed artists with expertise in multilingual engagement, youth engagement, and experience incorporating culture and art into programming. The artists who participated are collaborative, community-minded, and understand the diversity of the Albemarle corridor and importance of inclusive engagement.

- Cynthia Allison, Illustrator, Coloring Sheets
- Nico Amortegui, Artist, Community Reflection
- Kenn Compton, Illustrator, Coloring Pages
- Myloan Dinh, Artist, Community Reflection
- Mike Daikubara, Artist, Workshop Leader
- DeNeer Davis, Painter, Albemarle Road Treasures Medallions
- Sharon Dowell, Artist, Community Reflection
- Irisol Gonzalez, Artist, Community Meeting Sketch Artist, Community Reflection
- Julio Gonzalez, Artist, Placemaking Installations
- Megan Gonzalez, Artist, Community Meeting Sketch Artist

- Tom Hanchett, Historian, Albemarle Road Treasures
- Regina Hartung, Painter, Albemarle Road Treasures Medallions
- Hannah Hasan, Spoken Word Artist, Community Reflection
- Von Hunter, Musician, Community Meeting performer
- Pam Imhoff, Painter, Albemarle Road Treasures Medallions
- Cristina Isshiki, Illustrator, Albemarle Treasures Logo
- LP7, Musician, Community Meeting Performer
- Ernesto Moreno, Photographer, Workshop Leader
- Kiana Muii, Illustrator, Coloring Pages
- Rosalia Torres-Weiner, Artist, Workshop Leader
- Maria Elena Valdez, Musician, Community Event Performer
- Jay Ward, Poet
- Kriska Wood, Photographer, Workshop Leader

Community Meeting Partners

- Charlotte Community Tool Bank
- Central United Methodist Church
- Compare Foods
- Four Seasons Shopping Plaza
- Charlotte East Office Park
- Las Delicias Restaurante

Playbook Partners

- José Alvarez, Prospera
- Manolo Betancur, Manolo's Bakery
- Astrid Chirinos, YMCA Charlotte
- Ben Pinegar, YMCA Charlotte
- Tim Sittema, Crosland SE
- Omar Jorge, Compare Foods



“

**Home is not
the playbook.
Home is all of you
calling the play.”**



A Poem By Jay Ward

“Home is where the heart is.” “Home is wherever you are.” Or maybe you’ve heard this one: “home is a place you grow up wanting to leave and grow old wanting to get back to.”

What does home mean to you? We can all probably agree that home is not always defined by the building you live in. Home could be the smell of beef patties, or the smell of a mother’s perfume. Home could be a child’s laugh drifting down the hallway on a Saturday morning. Home might be a tradition that follows you no matter where you live, something you wear or dance or pray. In a place where more than 50 languages are spoken, home is a common language. For the Albemarle Road corridor, home is a celebration of diversity. Not so much a melting pot as a pepper pot, or a gumbo, or a pho, or some other combination of things that exist together but never lose the original flavor that reminds us that home can also be a combination of many homes.

Yes, we’ve seen projects that ultimately erased or displaced diversity; we didn’t see it coming, and those decisions were made entirely by someone else. The difference here is not only can you see the playbook, you actually call the play!

More transit routes with safer connections; you call the play! Better jobs and career opportunities, diversity in housing affordability; you call the play! Parks, greenspaces, cultural trails, local art—this is more than a corridor of opportunity, this is designing a home together, building it together, and living in it together, not by dissolving our cultures into one homogenous assimilation, but instead by celebrating all the foods, all the art, and all the cultures that support our one common language: home.

Home is Las Delicias, Island Grocery & Grill, Myanmar Market.
Home is The Nappy Chef, Mily & Lalo, Nile, Rohan.
Home is Blue Wave Car Wash.
Home is everything you still want to be holding onto 15 years from now.

Home is not the playbook.
Home is all of you calling the play.

Strong and vibrant business corridors are the cornerstones of healthy neighborhoods.



Introduction

The primary goal is to establish a shared vision for Albemarle Road as a vibrant corridor into the city.

For over twenty years, the City of Charlotte has invested in corridors because of the critical role each plays in supplying basic needs and opportunities for their communities. As stated in the 2007 Business Corridor Revitalization Strategic Plan, “The City will take a leadership role in developing and implementing public and private collaborative strategies and investments that aim to:

- Attract investment to grow jobs, business, and services.
- Expand the tax base in the business corridors; and
- Support the revitalization of the corridors into mixed use areas promoting the adjacent neighborhoods as safe, viable, and sustainable.”

In 2020, City Council allocated \$24.5m to a new program called Corridors of Opportunity. This new program directs public and private investment in six priority corridors, of which Albemarle Road is one. The Playbook falls under the Corridors of Opportunity program and will serve as the strategic action plan for investment.

The Playbook serves as a first step in providing an inventory of existing conditions, opportunities for investment, and physical change in the area. In addition, it facilitates extensive public participation opportunities that will lead to partnerships for implementation of recommended actions. It seeks to provide strategies to invest in the current residents of the corridor as well as new residents - identifying that individual economic mobility is the bedrock of the plan, otherwise there is no distinction from the anticipated change due to market forces alone.

The primary goal is to establish a shared vision for Albemarle Road as a vibrant corridor into the city with a focus on improving public safety, enhancing the overall appearance of the corridor, jump-starting economic development initiatives, and coordinating multi-modal transportation options. The Playbook guides the evaluation of current land use classifications, provides an opportunity to test placetypes for future mapping, and develops a conceptual streetscape improvement plan.

As part of the City’s continued efforts to focus on creating strong and vibrant business corridors, the project team developed baseline information, conducted market assessments of corridor segments, and provided short-, near-, and long-term strategies for improving the targeted geographies.



Process



Project Understanding

For the project's success, the planning participants started by setting a common understanding of the goals for the Playbook:

- The process is designed to engage the public: residents, merchants, and property owners.
- The project focuses primarily on public intervention: what the City can do to intervene on private property. Public intervention is typically limited to capital investment, redevelopment of city-owned land, zoning, and incentives such as façade rehabilitation funds, and tax credits.
- The project also focuses on the public and semi-public realm: public property and the public right-of-way (streets, sidewalks, and setbacks).
- The project identifies strategies to address socio-economic conditions that relate to upward mobility, aging in place, access to healthy food, and workforce development.
- The project includes recommendations that can realistically be carried forward.
- Capital improvement funds are limited and highly competitive. The City Council allocates capital improvement funds annually. The result of the plan should generate projects to be considered for future public bond referendums and reprioritization efforts for current Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) allocated projects.

Project Scoping

Transportation

Much of this information was collected from CDOT, the recent Central-Albemarle-Shamrock (CASH) CNIP program, and CATS' Envision My Ride initiative, which included the 2020 Bus Priority Study.

Economic and Market Scan

A snapshot of recent and current market conditions was prepared by economic development consultants Kimley-Horn. These include an analysis of property valuations, a review of recent transaction data, and summaries of recent development activity.

Inventory and Analysis

The Inventory and Analysis phase provided factual and analytical basis for the remainder of the planning effort. It is informed by the scoping process but can be assumed to cover the major physical systems comprising the corridor. Sources for the inventory were existing maps, plans and studies; historical and cultural organizations; and interviews with officials at NCDOT; CATS, Mecklenburg County property records. An inventory of existing land uses was prepared, and the condition of properties inventoried and photographed.

Engagement

The Playbook kicked off with two virtual meetings in June 2021. City staff provided an overview of the Corridors of Opportunity program, project process and goals, project team, engagement timeline and inventory conducted to-date.

Ultimately, the project team hosted multiple public engagements, both in-person and virtual, throughout the playbook process. Creative engagement activities helped broaden stakeholder outreach. Language services were provided at all engagements, through

hired interpreters and bilingual staff.

Two community surveys also gathered input on issues, opportunities and identified the corridor's assets.

Issues and Opportunities

Staff prepared a summary report of background information on the study area. The report includes a summary of the issues and opportunities.

Recommendations for Investment

Playbook recommendations address key issues and opportunities and to guide future investment. Some recommendations also guide future placetypes for the study area, part of the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO process), including land use mix, proposed building form, streetscape and public realm design, partnership and infill opportunities. Recommendations are organized by five key themes of corridor investment:

- Housing and neighborhood services
- Community safety
- Infrastructure and transportation
- Urban design
- Workforce and business development

These key themes align with the City's organization structure and goals and will ensure that project implementation is consistent, organized and efficient.

Project Scoping



Economic Development Strategy, Tools and Recommendations

Economic development consultants Kimley-Horn prepared a real estate market assessment to collect baseline demographic and economic information, a market analysis of specific geographic segments of the corridor and recommended near- and long-term strategies and tools for improved economic development.

Key objectives from the City were to consider the unique advantages of the corridor study area through a SWOT analysis, evaluate redevelopment opportunities and to identify the study area's competitive market position.

Companion economic development studies were conducted simultaneously including a Small Business study led by consultants Raftelis and a labor market study led by consultants EY.

Economic development recommendations were also influenced by a recent citywide Industrial Land Use and Market Study, conducted by Cushman Wakefield.

Implementation Options

With the development of the land use, transportation and public realm options, a suite of implementation tools was created to ensure that the proposed regulations and

public investments are feasible.

The Playbook - Recommendations and Report

The final phase of the project is a detailed report summarizing all the work and findings from the prior phases. The Playbook contains the detailed recommendations and will be presented to the City Council for endorsement.

The Council may refer the report to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation. As the report is not a formal policy plan, a public hearing is not anticipated.

Project Timeline



Project Timeline

The project timeline lasted approximately 10 months, from initiation to delivery of a draft Playbook to the City's Corridors of Opportunity program leadership and City Council. The aggressive timeline was implemented to correspond with key time windows for Capital Improvement Planning, corridor-based developments currently underway and to align with the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan and UDO projects.



ERNESTO MORENO PHOTOGRAPHY, 2021



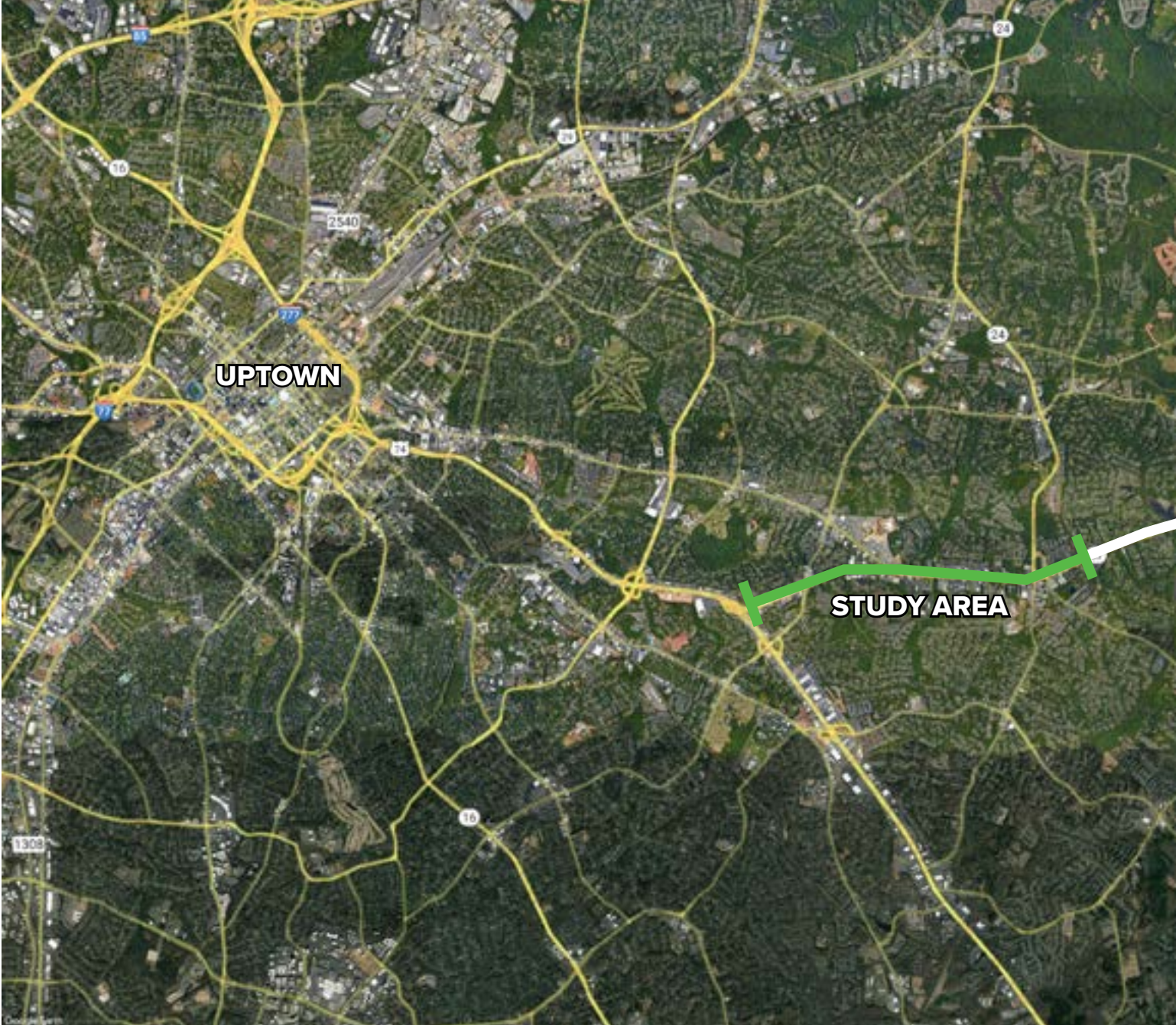


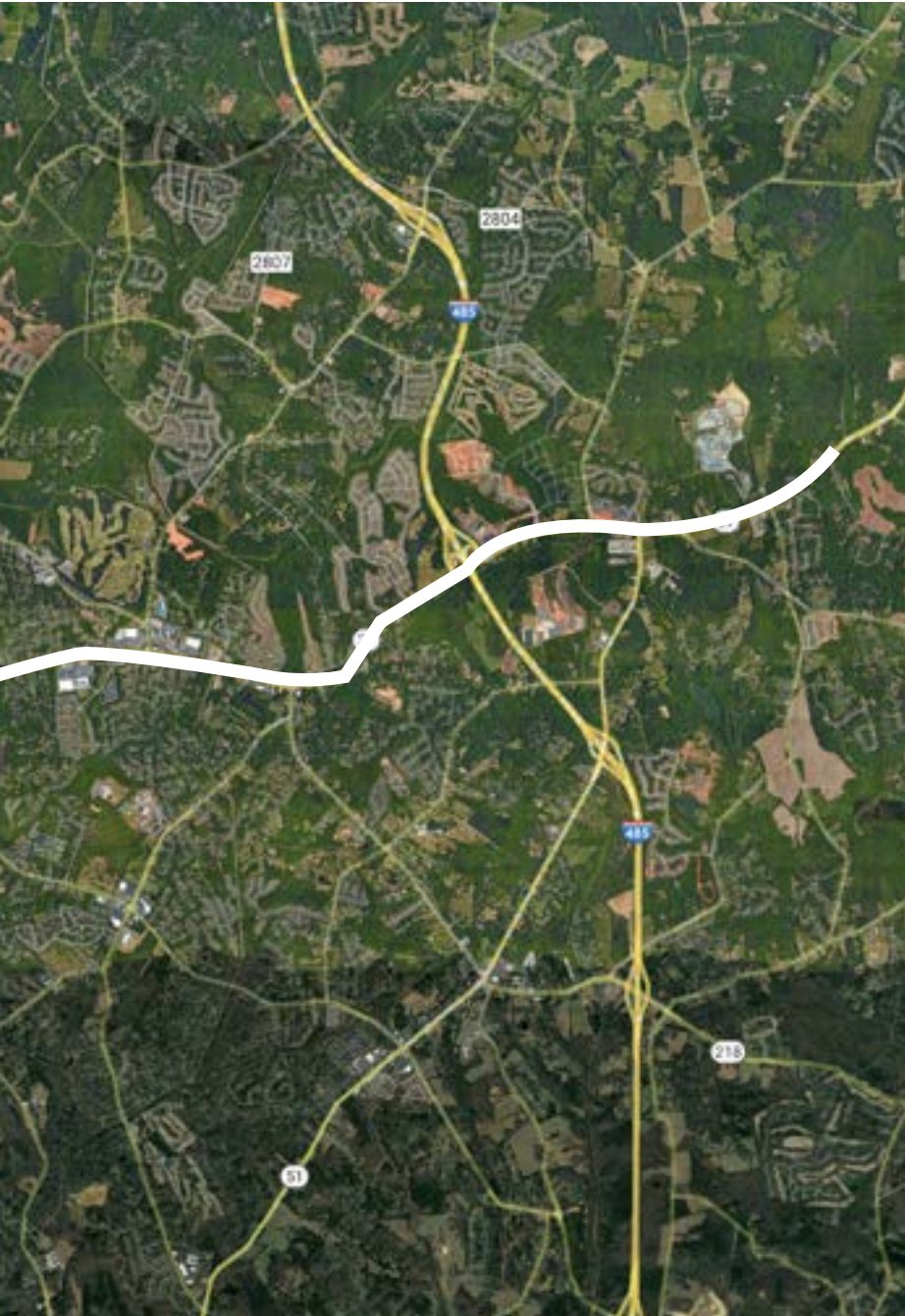
Project Context

Albemarle Road is one of Charlotte's primary eastern corridors and serves as the commercial center for established neighborhoods to its north and south. Its future is very much tied to the planned redevelopment of the former Eastland Mall, the expansion of CATS light rail service with the newly adopted LYNX Silver Line alignment, and the continued growth of East Charlotte. In addition to economic development, the corridor offers opportunities for housing redevelopment and preservation, streetscape and infrastructure improvements, and multi-modal transit improvements.

The core of this corridor study area generally includes frontage properties within 150-300 feet on either side of Albemarle Road between Independence Boulevard to the east and Lake Forest Road to the west. Key agencies like the NC DMV, ICE Clerk of Court, Mecklenburg County DHS, the developers of the Eastland Redevelopment and others, have major interests within the study area as do numerous residents, business and property owners.

The project will focus on the urban core of the corridor (with emphasis on the Sharon Amity, Central/Redmann, Farm Pond and W.T. Harris intersections).





Albemarle Road Corridor

Located in East Charlotte, Albemarle Road/27 extends from Independence Boulevard to the county line. Classified as a state maintained major thoroughfare, Albemarle Road's speed limit is 45 MPH.

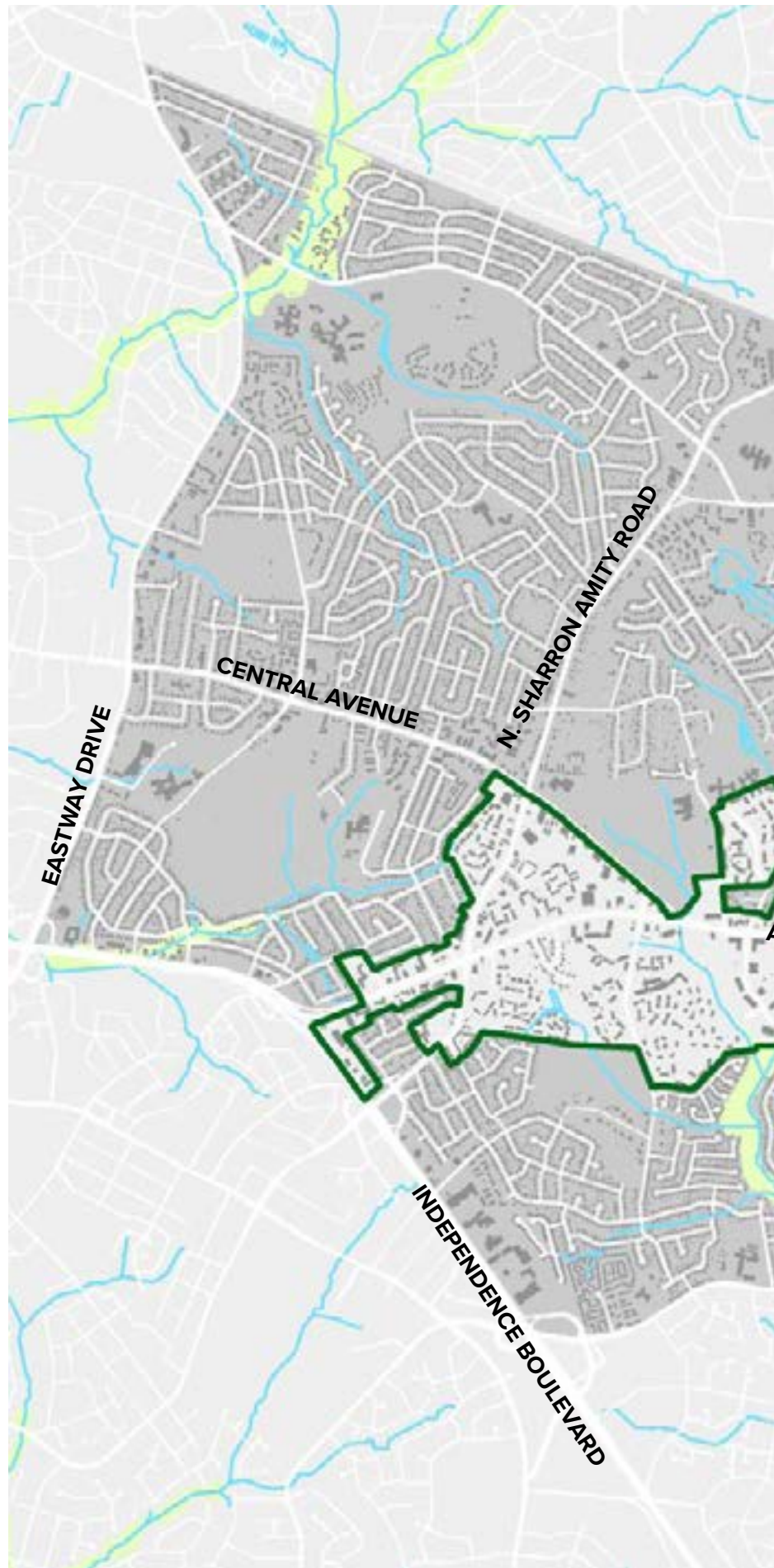
For the purpose of the Playbook, the study focuses on the most urban conditions along the corridor from Independence Boulevard to Lake Forest Road.

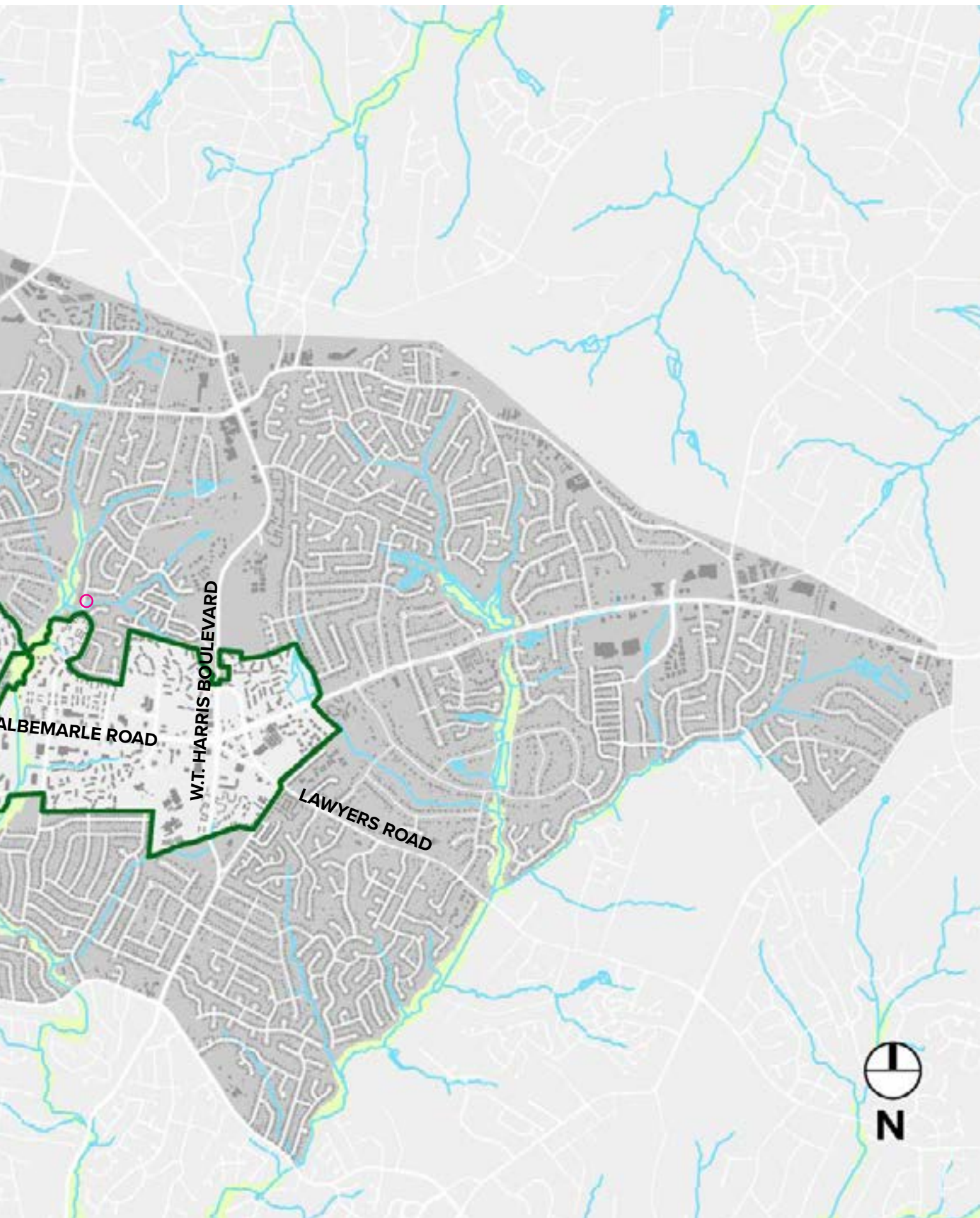
Project Area of Influence

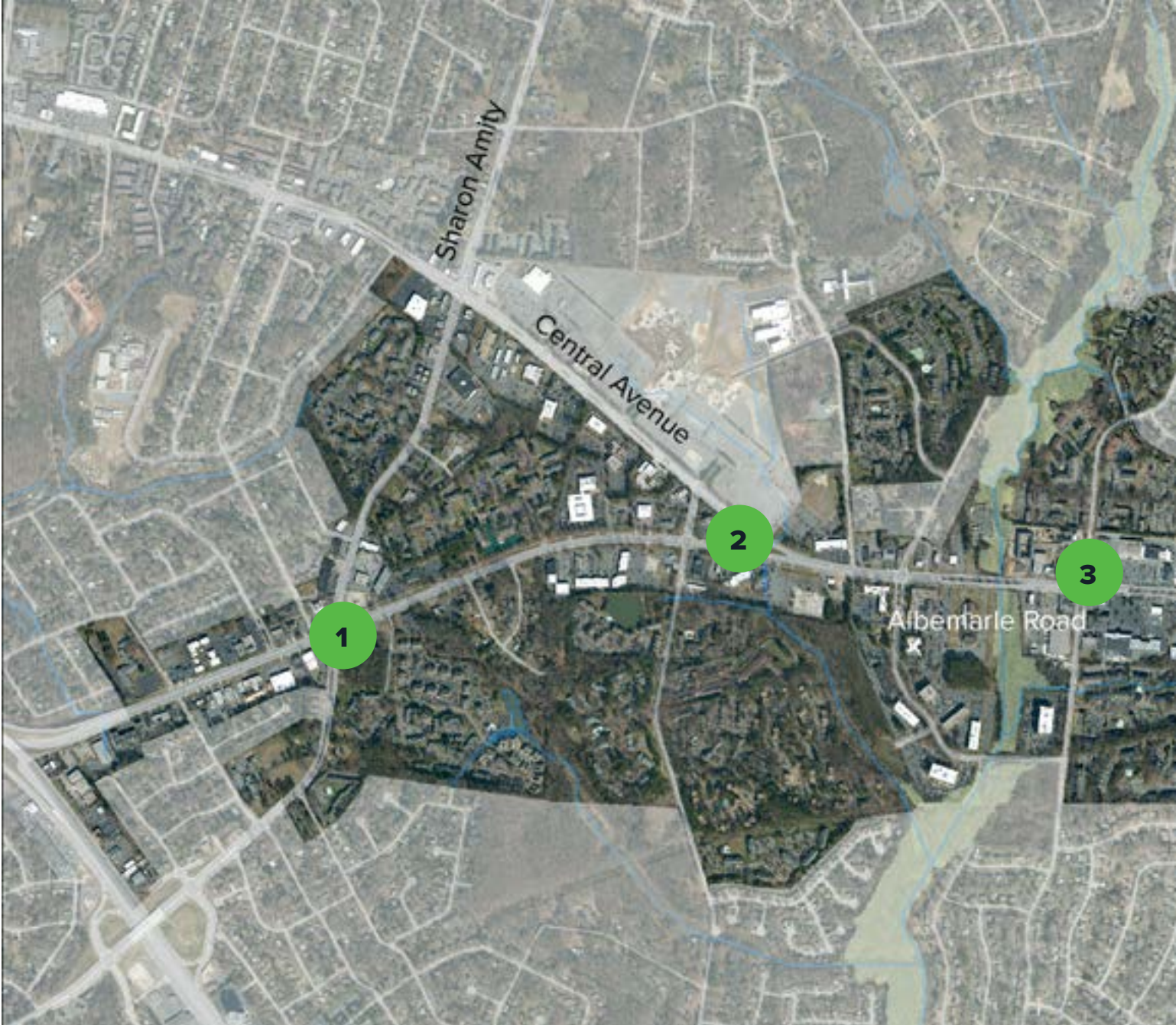
For the purpose of the project, a greater area than just the area located within the project boundary was identified as the Project Area of Influence. The Project Area of Influence, depicted in the gray area on the map, bounded to the north by the freight rail, east to Eastway Drive, south to Independence Boulevard and Idlewild Road, and west to McAlpine Creek - and includes the business areas and neighborhoods.

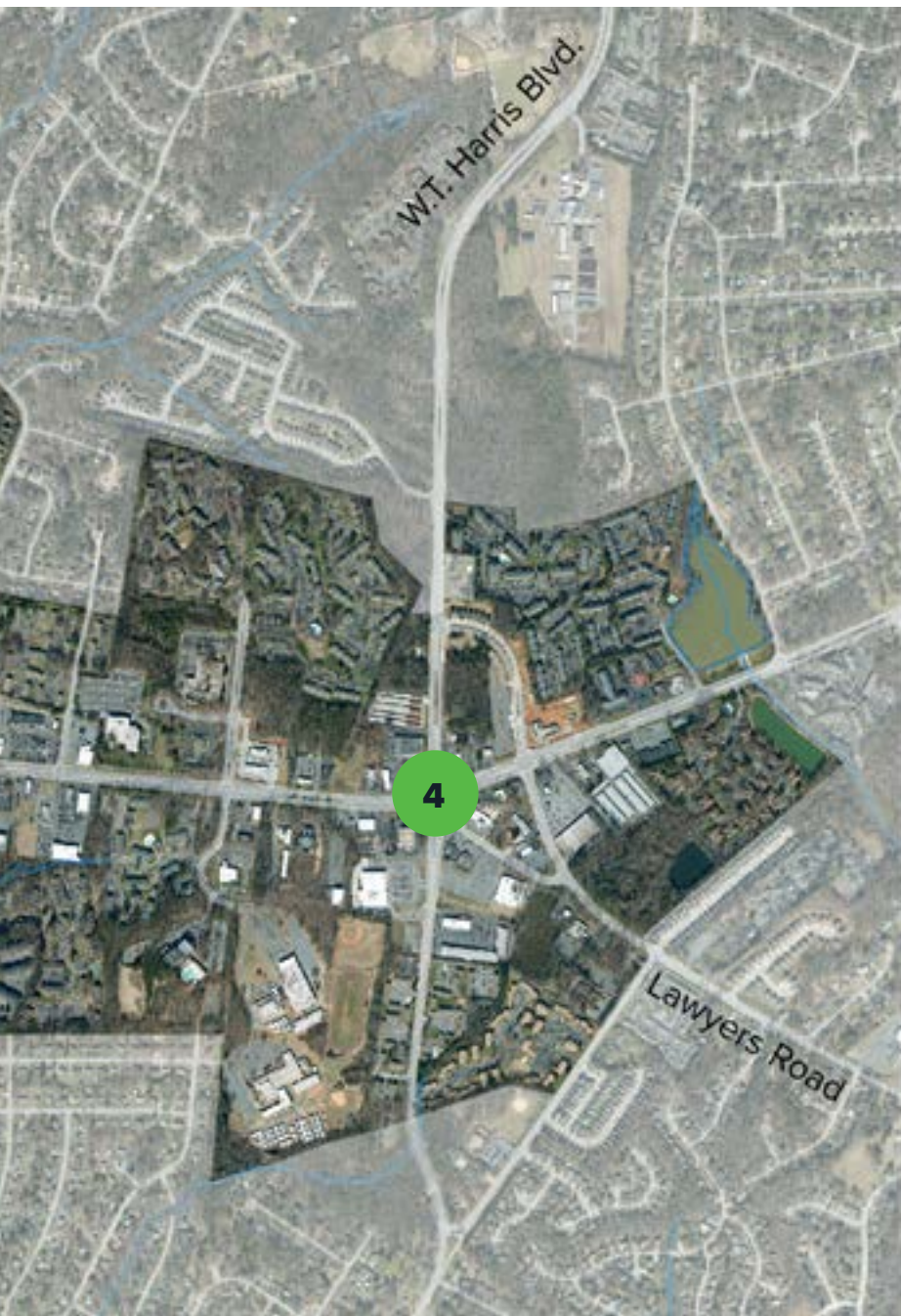
The Project Area of Influence is relevant to this project because it is comprised of many of the neighborhoods and areas which are served by Albemarle Road. Analysis of this area will inform plans and decisions that will influence future growth in the corridor.

The Project Study Area is outlined in green and extends from Independence Boulevard to Lake Forest Road.









Project Study Area

The Project Study Area, includes all parcels fronting Albemarle Road from Independence Boulevard to the west and Lake Forest Road to the east. The Project Study Area is the focus for the Playbook recommendations. The area is largely comprised of commercial, multifamily, office, and institutional uses. The former Eastland Mall site is not included in the Project Study Area because that property has previously undergone a public engagement and planning process, and has plans underway.

The project will focus on the following key intersections:

1. Sharron Amity
2. Central Avenue & Reddman Road
3. Farm Pond Lane
4. W.T. Harris Boulevard

Sharon Amity Road

The Sharon Amity intersection is the first major intersection of the corridor, east of Independence Boulevard. The intersection is anchored by auto-centric commercial and retail uses. The northeast corner of the intersection is undeveloped.

This intersection is within three quarters mile (15-20 minute walk) of the proposed Lynx Silver Line light rail alignment.



Central Avenue/Reddman Road

The Central Avenue/Reddman Road intersection functions as a slip lane from Albemarle to Central. This configuration leaves a large triangle remnant property.

These intersections are directly adjacent to the Eastland Redevelopment project to the north. The Reddman intersection at Albemarle Road is anchored by a large commercial center, auto-oriented commercial and office.





Farm Pond Lane

The Farm Pond Lane intersection is anchored to the north and south by strip shopping centers and operates as the commercial retail center for the corridor.

This intersection has a high concentration of multifamily surrounding the strip shopping centers.



W.T. Harris Boulevard

The W.T. Harris Boulevard and Lawyers Road intersections are anchored by small scale commercial development which includes Walmart Neighborhood Market and other strip retail.

There is a CATS Park and Ride facility at the Lawyers Road intersection.



ERNESTO MORENO PHOTOGRAPHY, 2021

What we do know about the corridor?

Inventory

Inventory mapping serves as the factual foundation for the planning effort. During this phase, existing conditions were inventoried and assessed. This provides a basis for informed recommendations for the corridor that align opportunity with existing conditions and market potential.

Home Cost



Average Home Sales Price: \$171,284

Rent



Average Rental Cost: \$864

Household Income



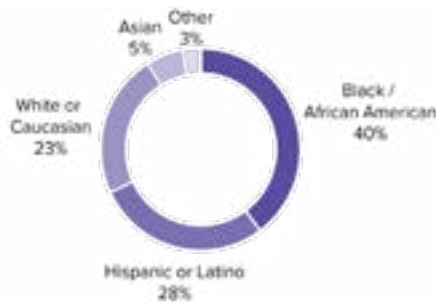
Median Household Income: \$39,205

Unemployment

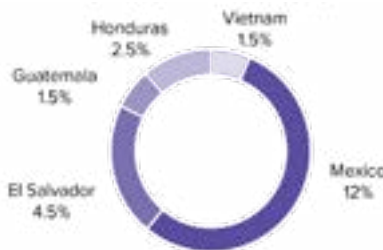


91% Employment Rate

Demographics



Foreign Born



Life Expectancy



Average Life Expectancy: 69

Median Age

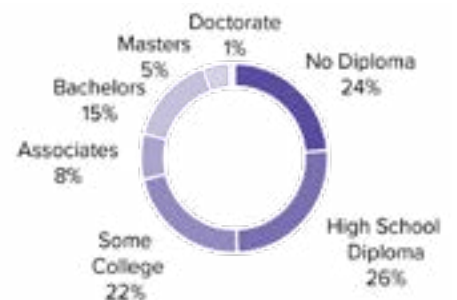
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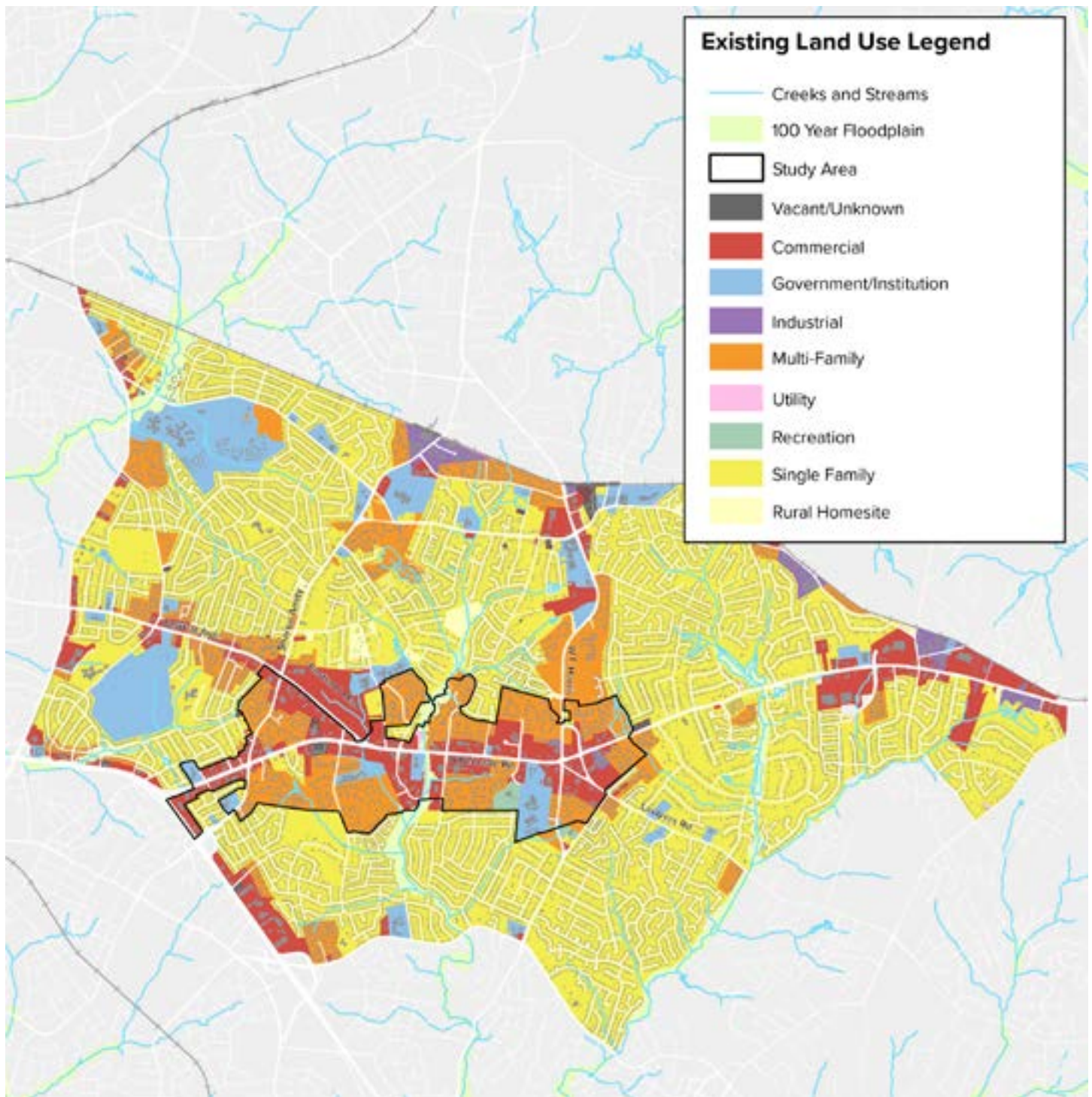
High School Graduation



84% High School Graduation Rate

Education Level

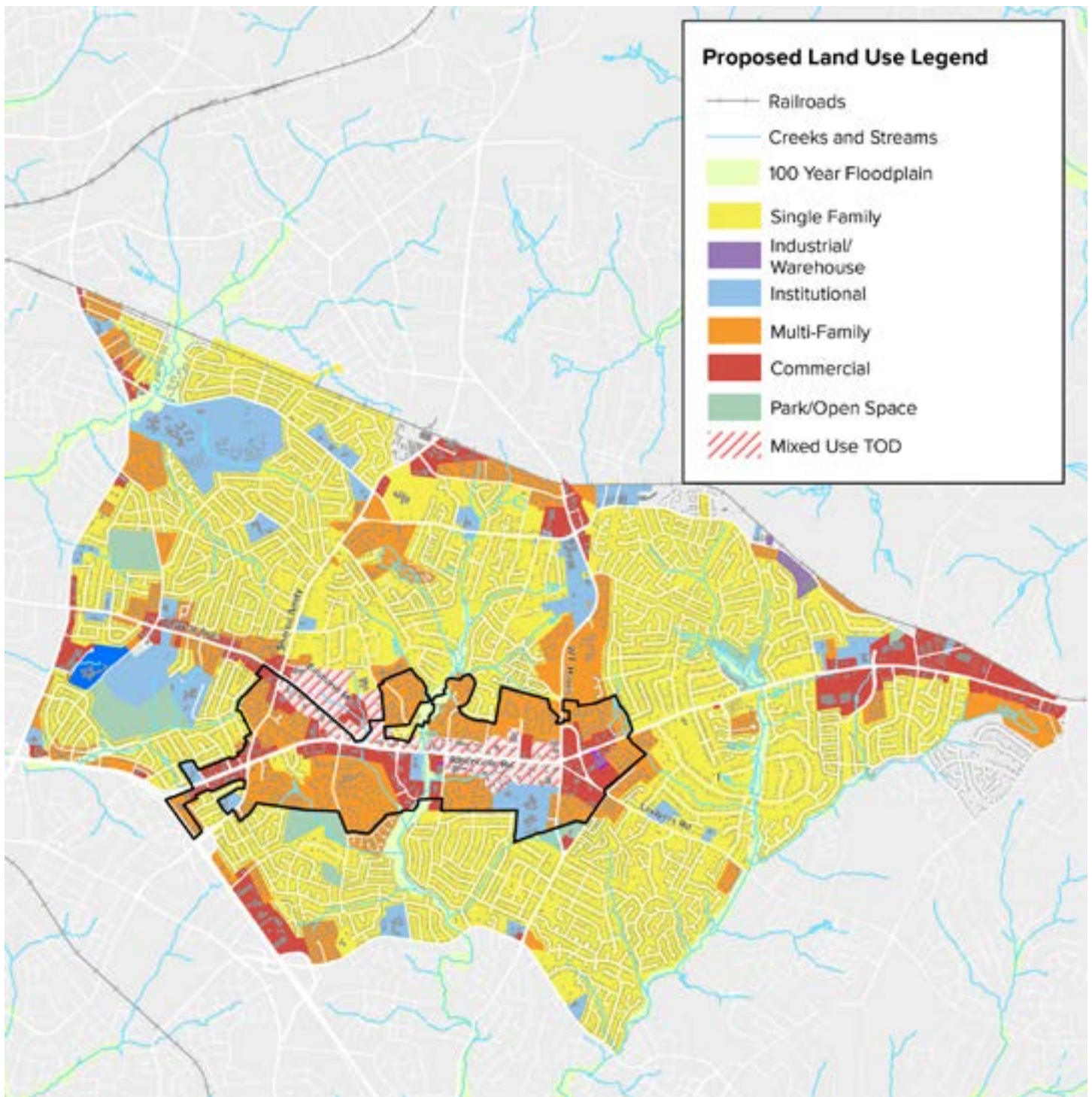




Existing Land Use

Within the Study Area, the existing land use is mostly commercial and multi-family with government/institution. Within the Area of Influence, the main land use is single family with other land uses such as commercial, multi-family, industrial and government/institutional lining major roads.

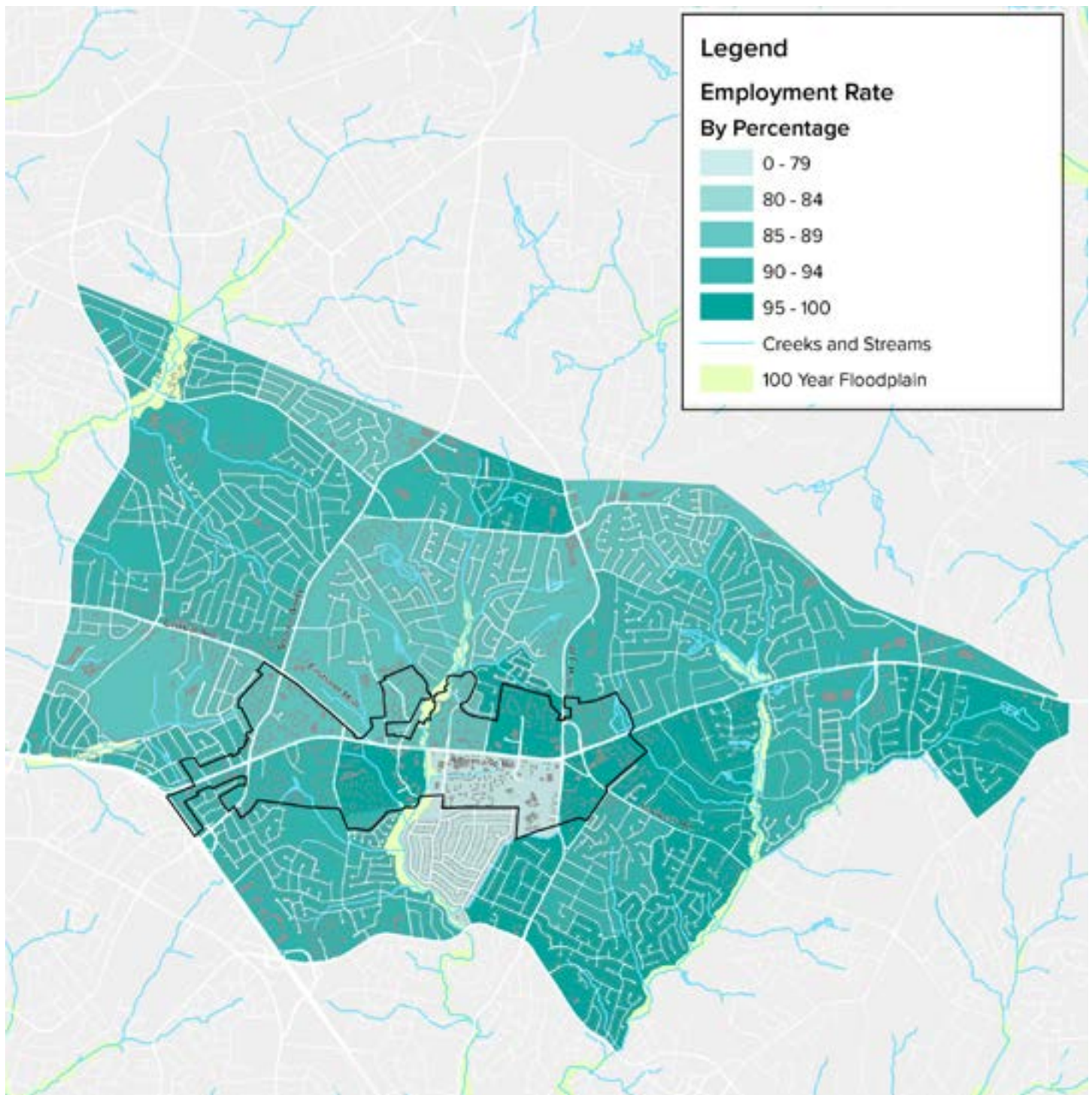
Due to the existing land uses, the corridor has developed as a car-focused place with little thought for pedestrians and cyclists. The land uses along the corridor are in single groupings rather than a mix of land uses that would create a more exciting, walkable place.



Future Land Use

The future land use for the Study Area and Area of Influence were set by the adopted [Eastland Area Plan](#) and [Independence Blvd. Area Plan](#). Within the Study Area much of the multi-family and commercial land uses do not change, key changes in future land uses will happen where commercial changes to Mixed Use Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Mixed Use TOD will allow for a mix of land uses (commercial, multi-family, etc.) in a walkable, pedestrian-friendly development that includes transit. The future land use for the Area of Influence mostly remains the same.

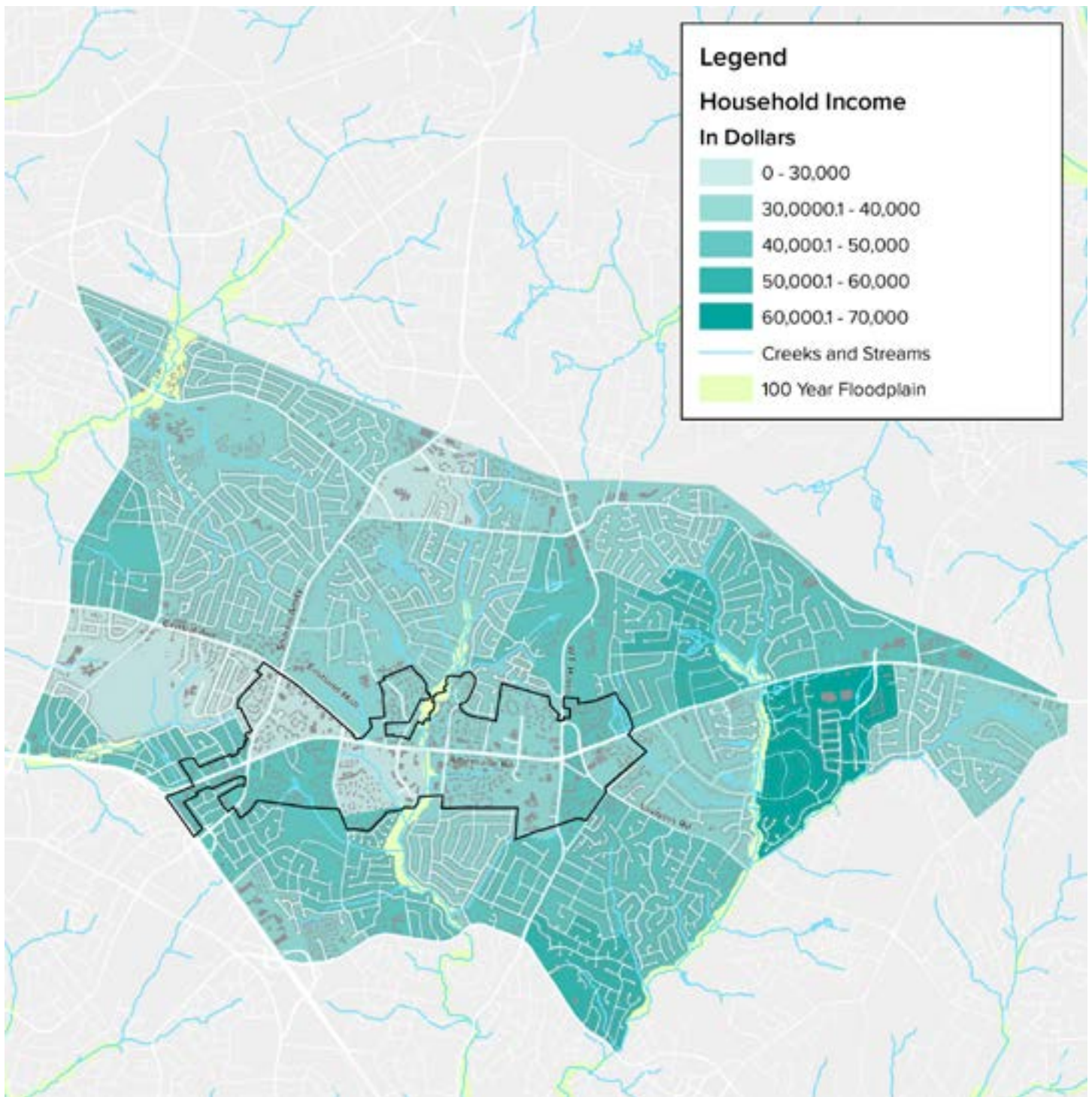
The future land use change from a single land use to a mix of land uses will ensure that future developments are walkable, pedestrian-friendly environments with access to transit.



Employment

The average employment rate within the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence is 92% which is consistent with the city-wide average of 92%. While a high percentage of employment, the combined Study Area and Area of Influence have a relatively low number of jobs, averaging 1.6 jobs per acre when the city of Charlotte's average is 3 per acre. Nearly 70% of people within the corridor are traveling over 20 minutes for employment, while city-wide 58% are traveling 20 minutes or more. Of those driving to work, 75% are driving alone which is 17% more than the city-wide average.

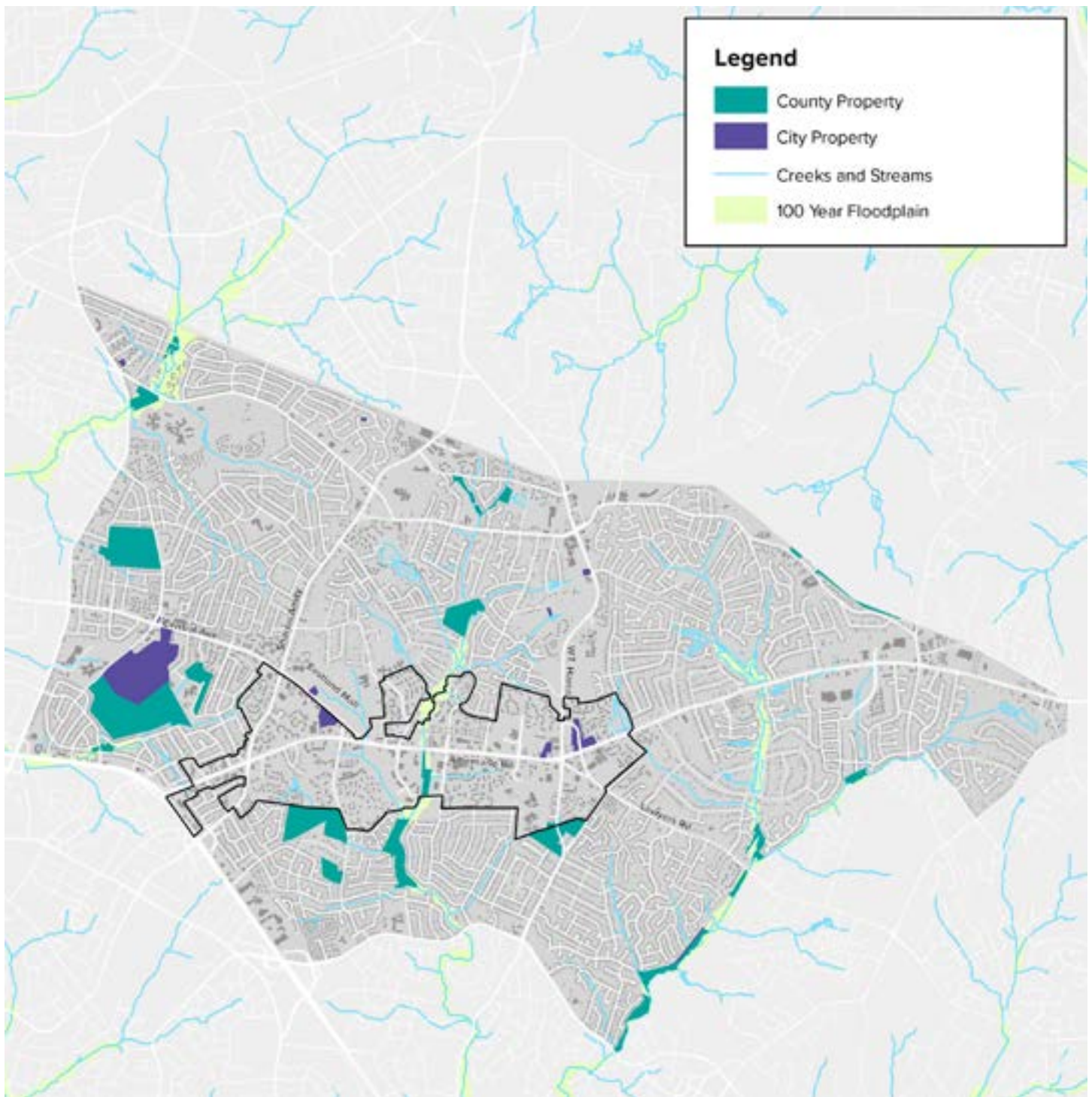
While the employment rate is high within the corridor, many are traveling alone and farther to reach jobs than the average Charlottean.



Household Income

The average household income for the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence is \$39,760. Across the city of Charlotte, the average household income is \$64,340.

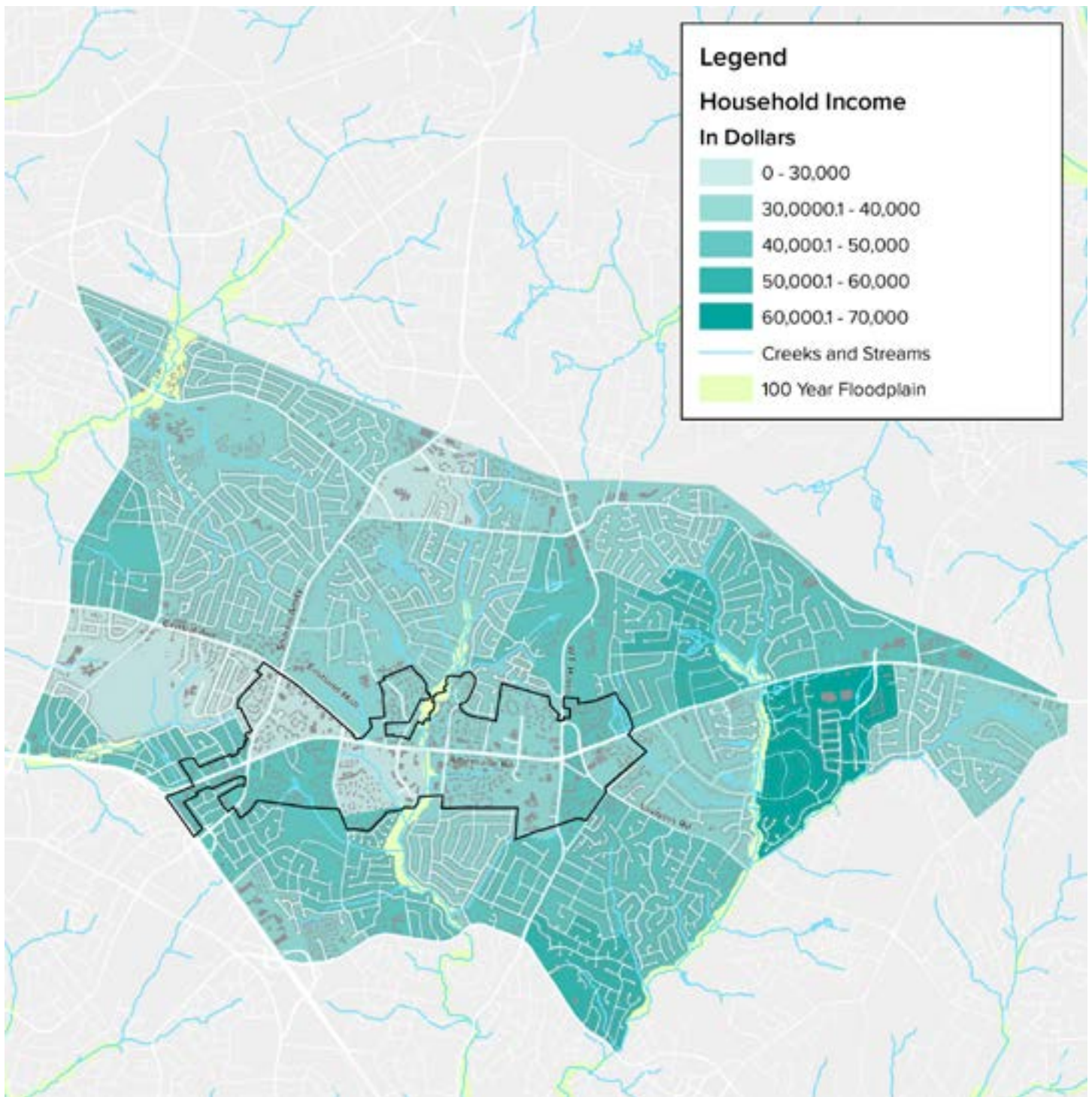
Corridor household incomes are 62% less than the city-wide household income.



Publicly Owned Land

Within the Study Area, there are 7 parcels owned by the City of Charlotte. Of those properties, is the Charlotte Fire Station 42, a vacant office building, vacant parcels and leftover land/right-of-way (ROW) from a street project. Within the Area of Influence, there are multiple properties owned by the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

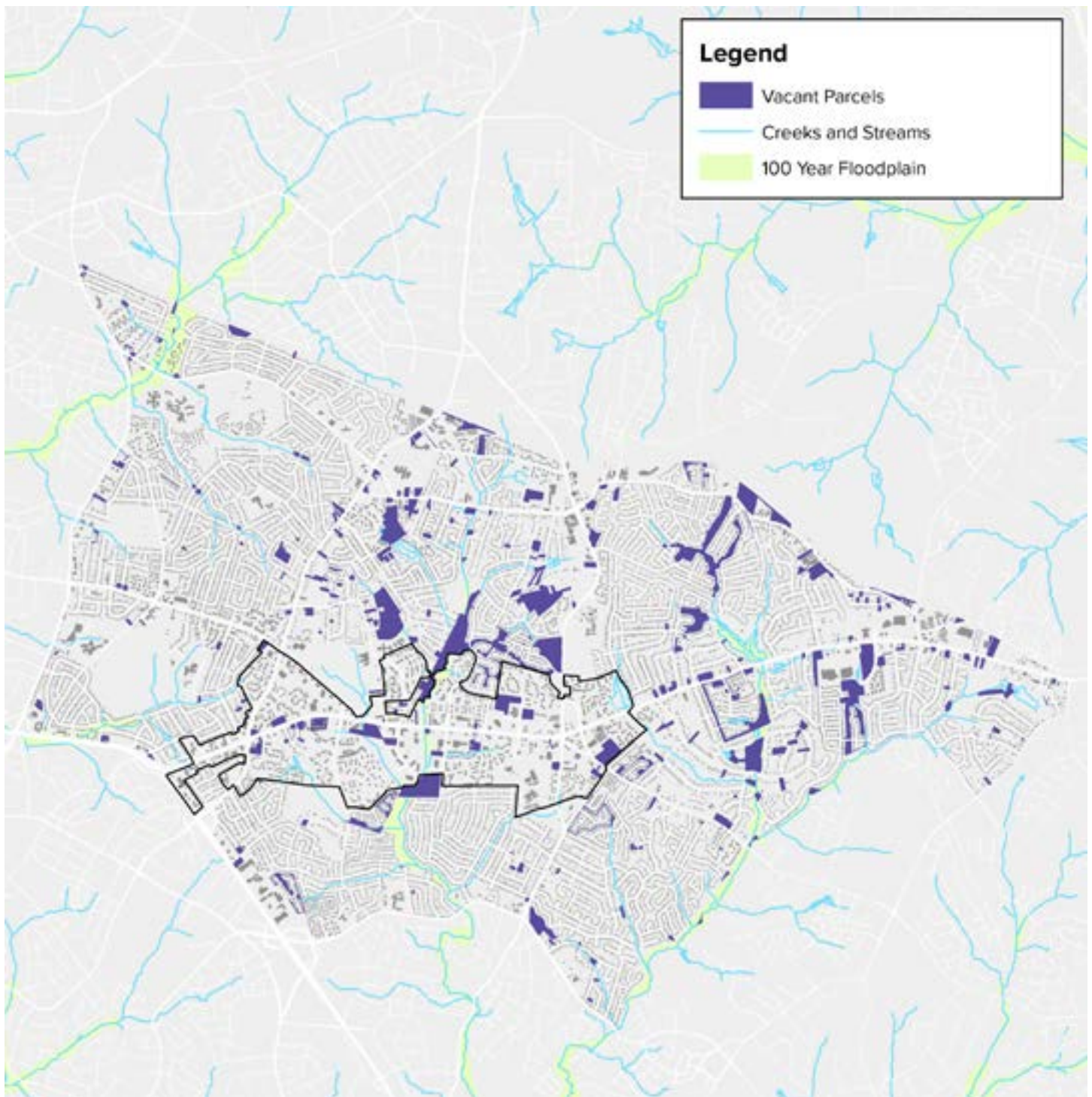
Through the Playbook process, recommendations for the future uses of vacant, publicly owned properties will be based on input from the community, corridor market study, and future land use designation.



Household Income

The City of Charlotte is known for its tree canopy that covers nearly 48% of the city in shade. Over 51% of the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence are shaded by the tree canopy with most of the trees on private properties.

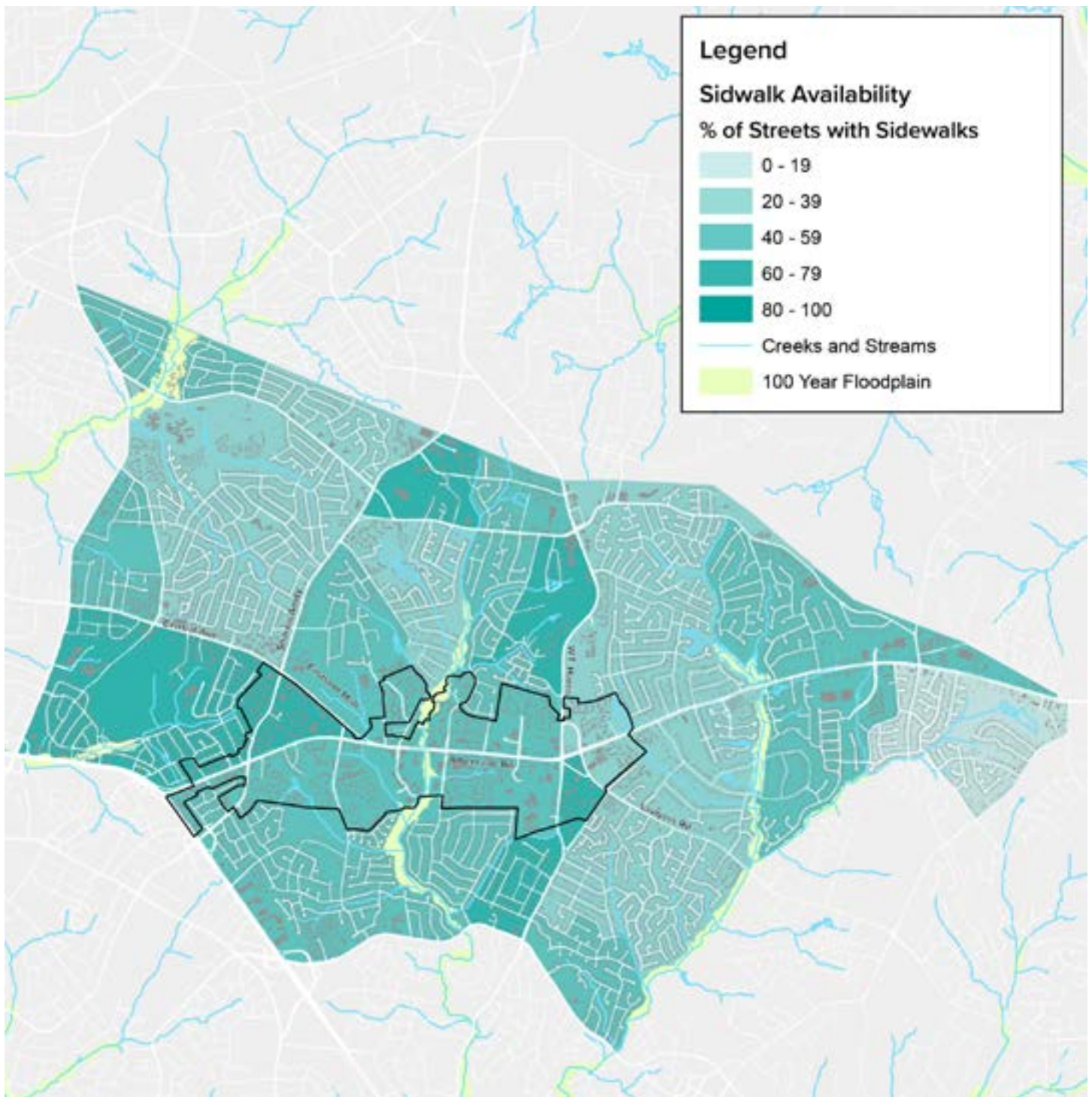
Charlotte's tree canopy is important because it improves property values, makes air and water quality better, lessens the effects of pollutants, provides shade, provides wildlife habitat, beautifies and is good for physical and mental health.



Vacant Land

Charlotte is a quickly growing city, with 12% of vacant land remaining. The Study Area is comprised of 1,155 acres with 60 remaining undeveloped. The Area of Influence has 575 vacant acres of its 9,876 total sum.

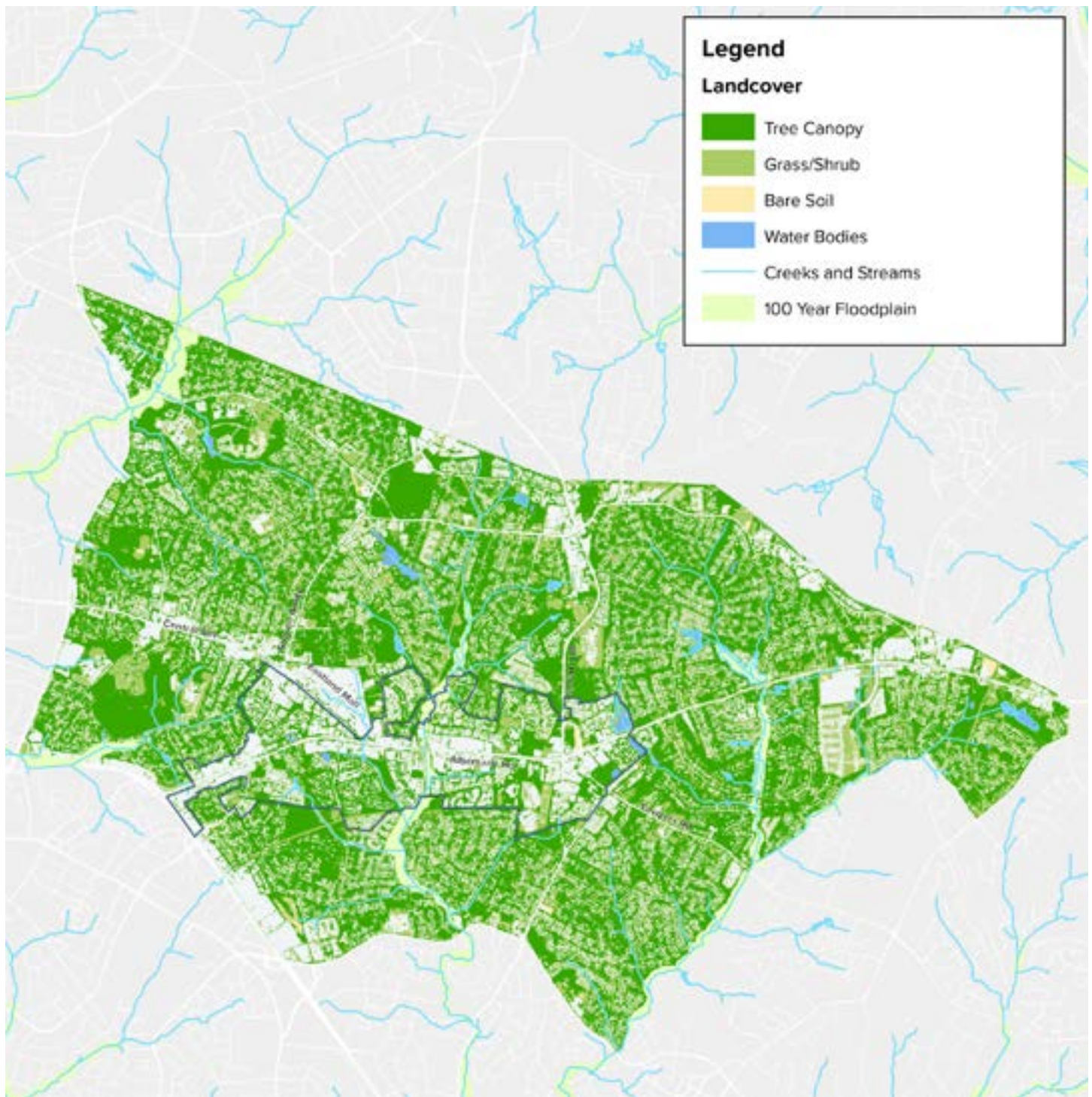
The corridor Study Area has few large, vacant properties remaining for infill development, as much of the vacant land is undevelopable because it is within the floodplain.



Sidewalks

Within the corridor Study Area, a high to medium percentage of streets have sidewalks. The Area of Influence has a medium to low percentage of streets with sidewalks which is linked to the main land use of single family. The percent of streets with sidewalks city-wide is 44%, which is the same as the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence.

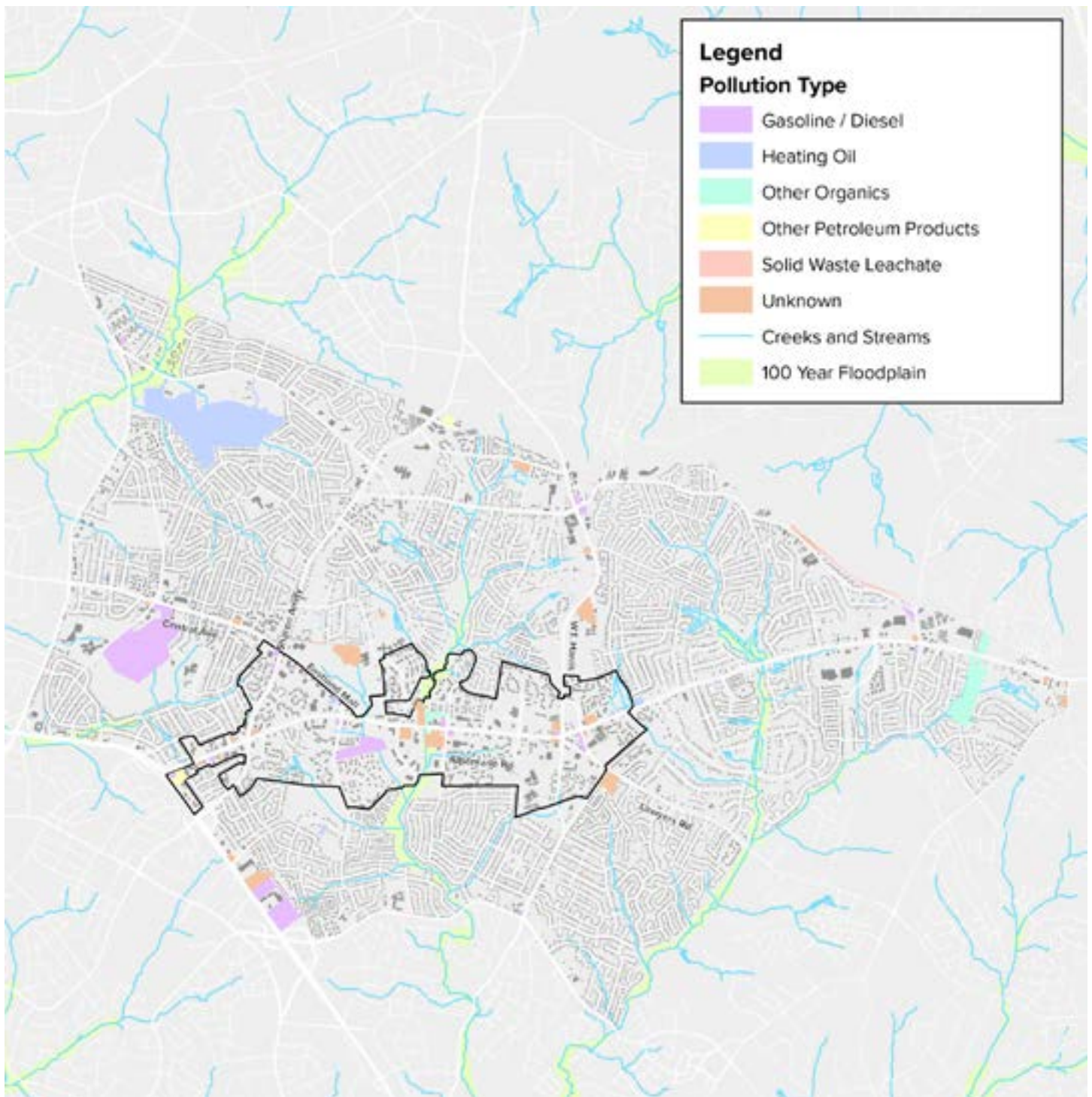
Sidewalks provide many benefits including safety, mobility and healthier communities.



Biodiversity and Ecosystems

The corridor is located within the McAlpine Creek Watershed. The almost 60-square mile watershed starts north of Albemarle Road and stretches across much of south and southwest Charlotte. The watershed has many tributaries, including Campbell Creek within this corridor which flows to the Catawba River. Within the corridor area are 56 miles of creeks and streams flowing through 558 acres of floodplain. Of these streams, 27% have been cared for through the County's Adopt-a-Stream program. Water quality within the watershed is considered impaired due to fecal coliform bacteria, lack of fish and aquatic insect diversity, and mercury in fish tissue.

With the tree canopy covering over 4,700 acres and nearly 60 miles of creeks and streams, protecting and improving biodiversity are vital to long term health of the local and regional ecosystem



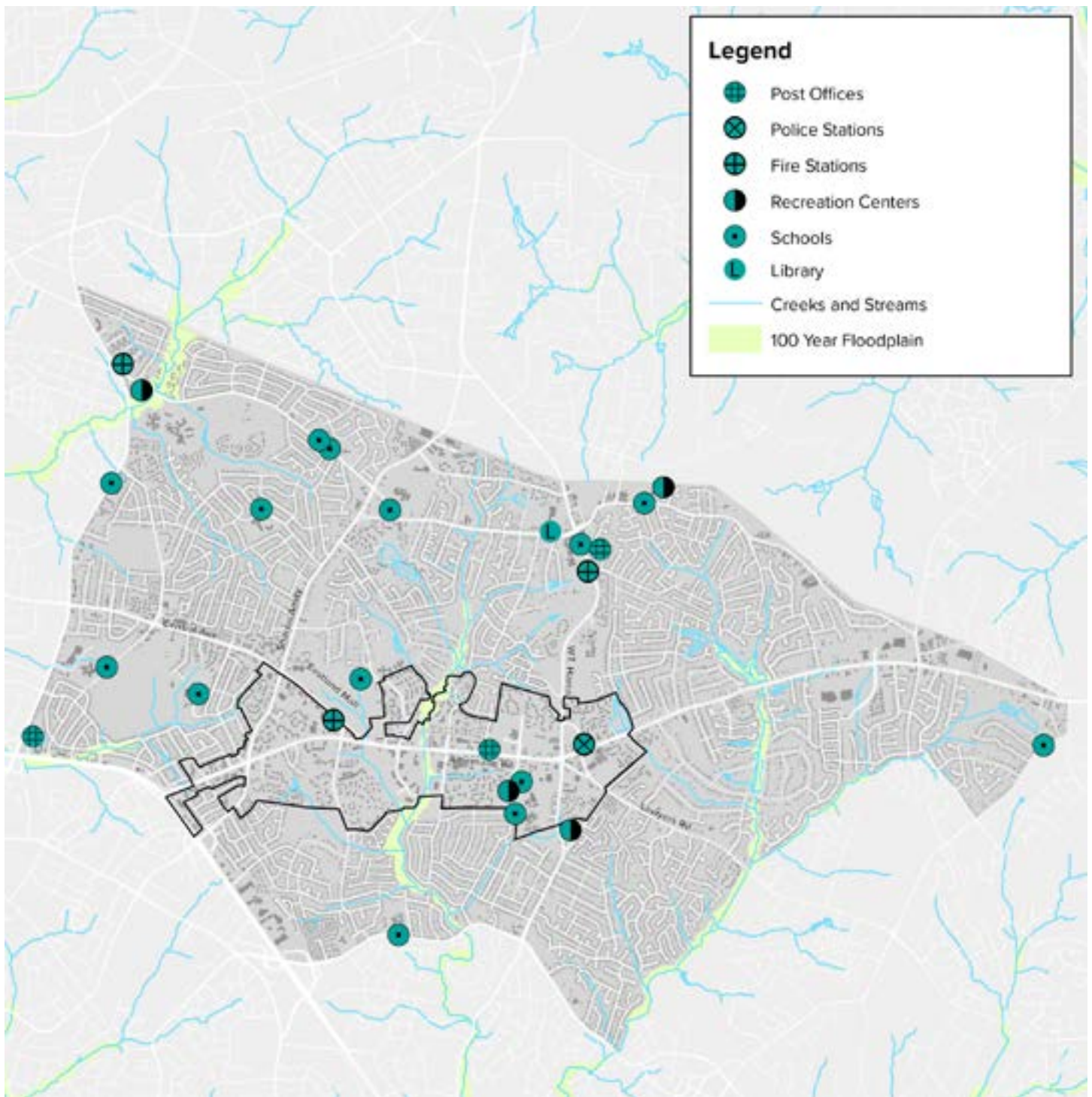
Pollutions and Environmental Risks

Of its 9,876 acres, 713 acres in the corridor Area of Influence are considered polluted. Types of pollution that are accounted for are:

- Gasoline / diesel (133 acres or 19%)
- Heating oil (144 acres or 20%)
- Other organics (37 acres or 5%)
- Other petroleum products (6 acres or 0.8%)
- Solid waste leachate (309 acres or 43%)
- Undetermined (82 acres or 12%)

Pollution comes from the following point sources:

- Gas stations
- Automotive repair
- Aircraft parts service station
- Towing service
- Automobile rental service
- Land clearing and inert debris landfill
- Closed C&D waste landfill



Civic Institutions

Civic Institutions such as schools, libraries, recreation centers, post offices, fire and police stations are publicly funded community amenities that support the health, safety, education, well-being, and quality of life of the communities they serve. Within the corridor Study Area and the Area of Influence, there is a distributed mix of civic institutions serving the community.

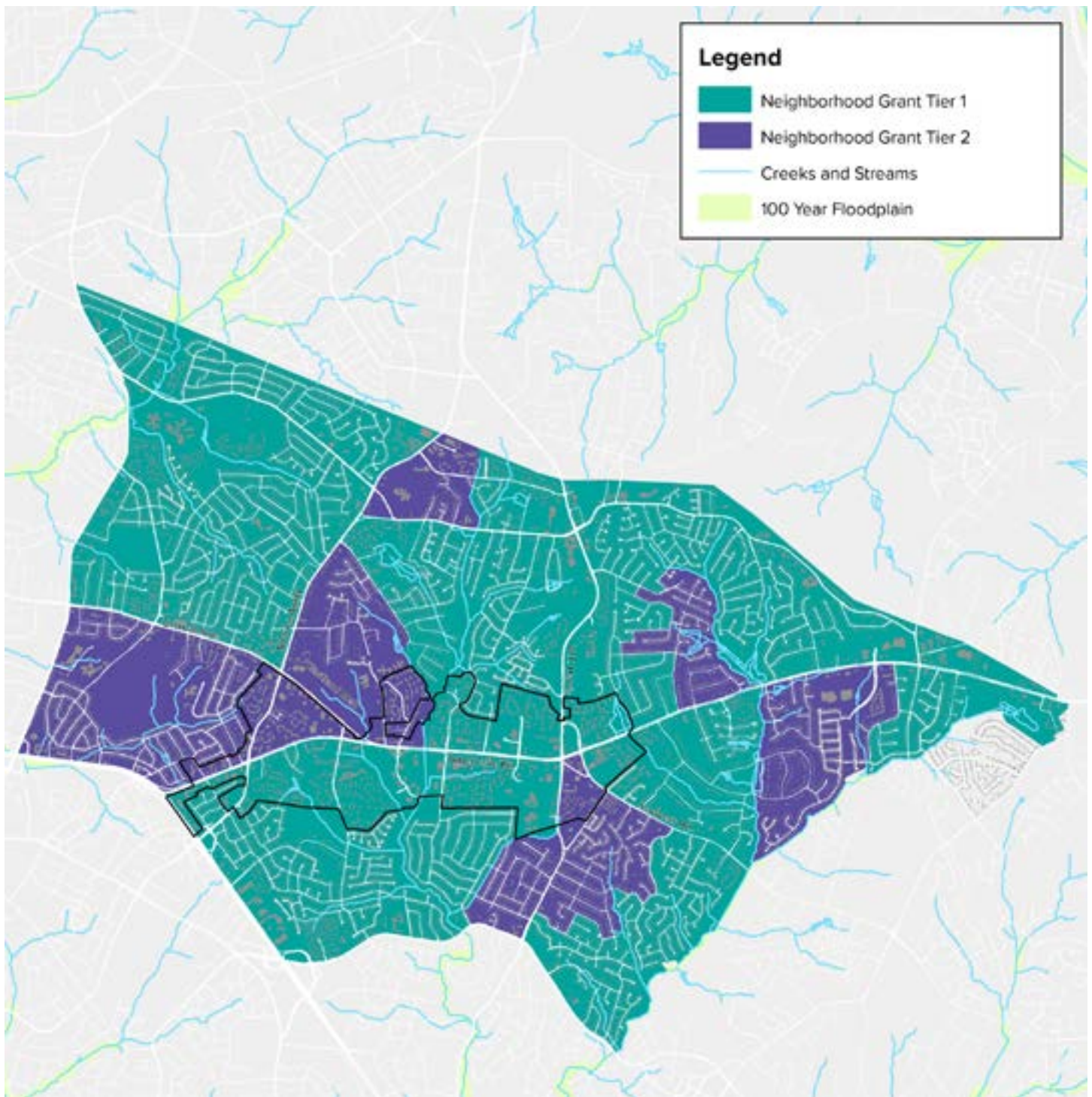
Civic institutions have the potential to become important community partners providing input, support, and resources for corridor initiatives.



Street Maintenance Responsibility

The City of Charlotte and State of North Carolina share street maintenance responsibility throughout the city. Within the Albemarle Area of Influence, most of the streets are under the responsibility of the City of Charlotte. Lawyer's Road, Albemarle Road, W.T. Harris and Eastway are the only streets under the responsibility of the State.

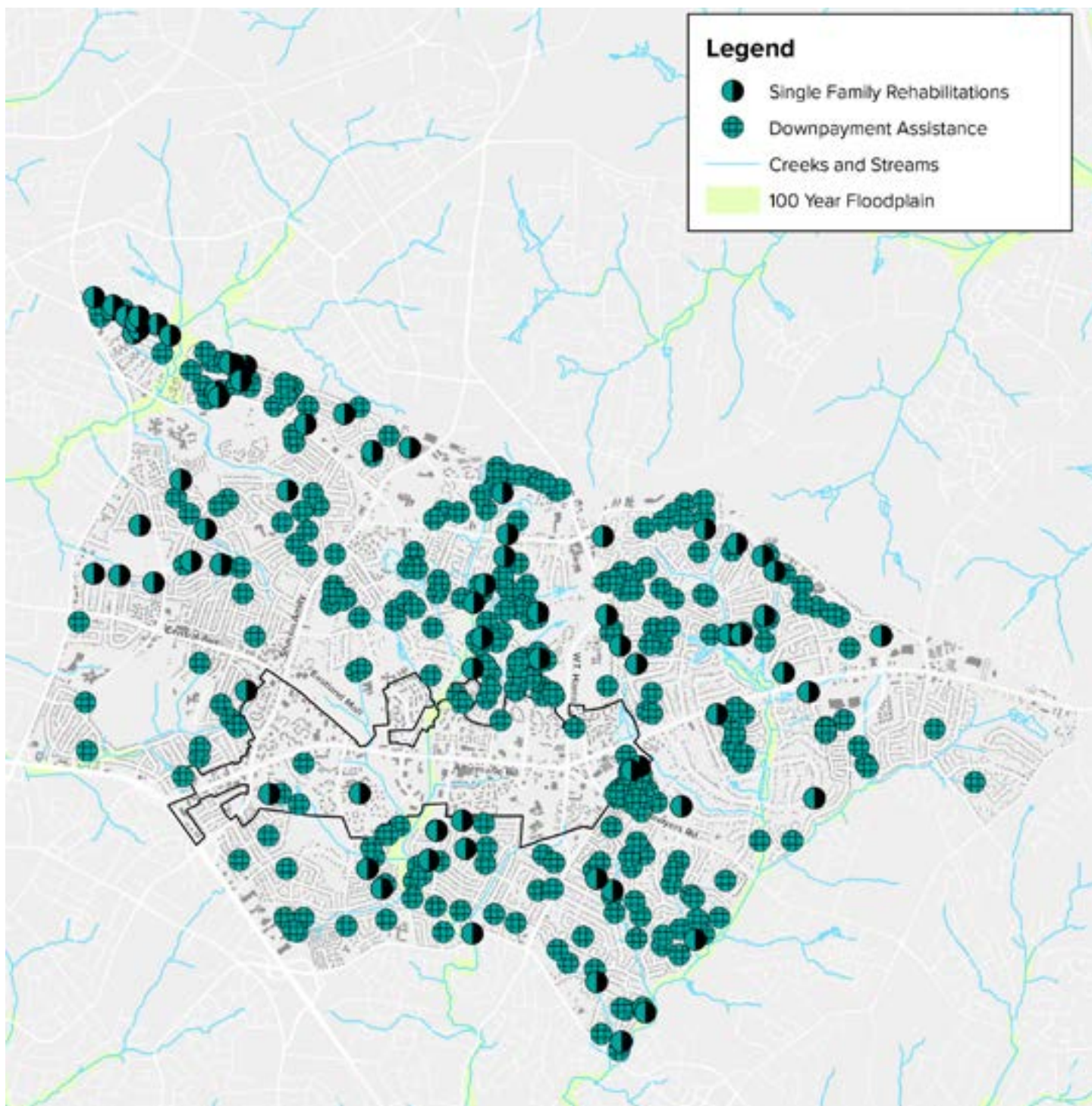
Shared responsibility means that some projects might require going through a process of approval with the State of North Carolina, if the projects are located on streets under their maintenance responsibility.



Neighborhood Matching Grants

Through the city of Charlotte's Housing and Neighborhood Services Department, the city provides [grant funding](#) to neighborhood and community organizations for projects benefiting the community. The corridor Study Area and Area of Influence are eligible for matching grants in Tier 1 for maximum funding amount of \$25,000 and Tier 2 for maximum funding about of \$10,000.

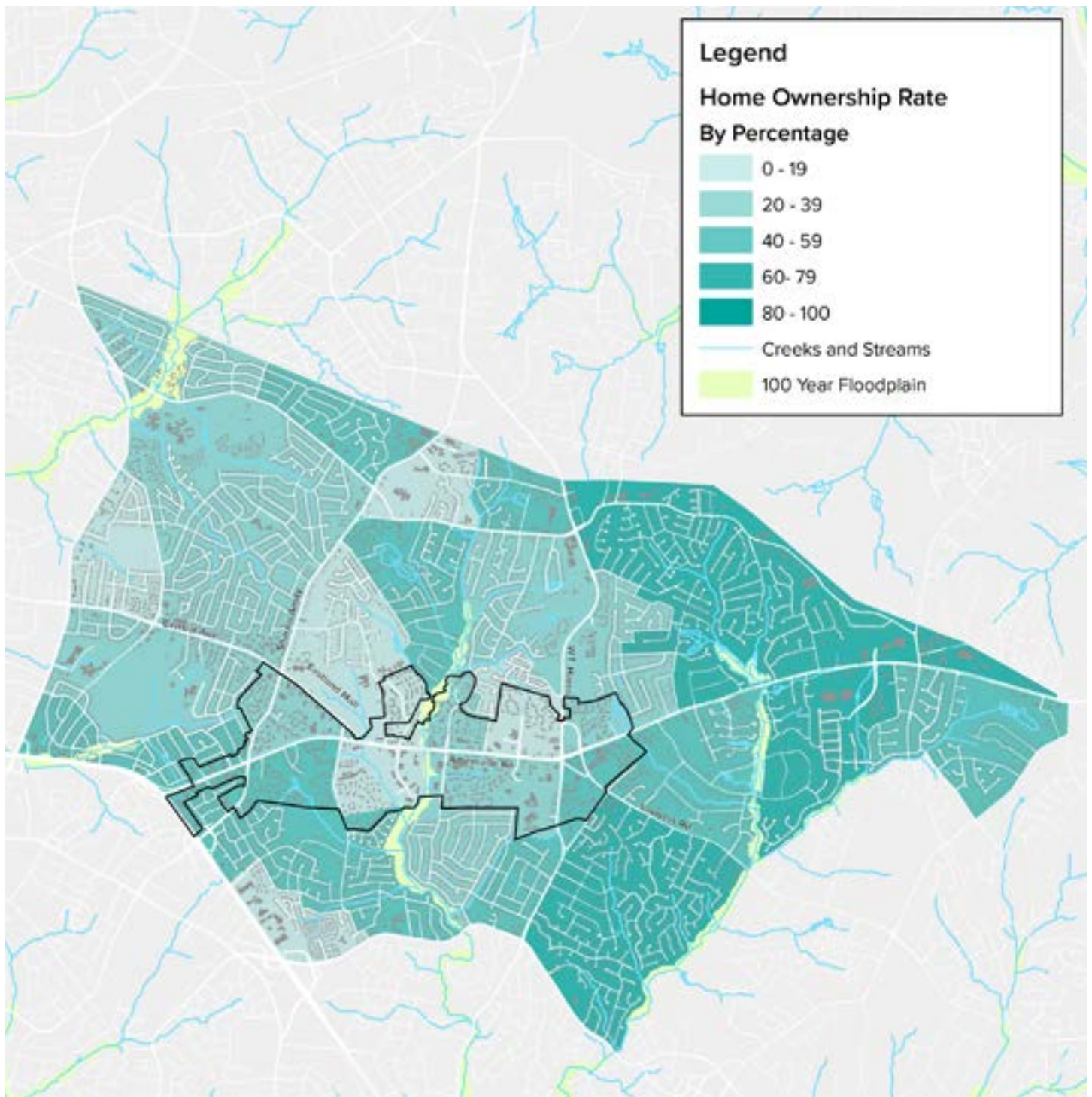
Matching grants afford organizations the opportunity to prioritize and fund community-based projects through matches of volunteer hours and community donations. The Neighborhood Matching Grant program has helped organizations build, maintain, and fund community projects all over Charlotte.



Housing Assistance

Through the city of Charlotte Housing and Neighborhood Services Department [down payment assistance](#) and [housing rehabilitation](#) programs, residents are able to receive assistance with purchasing a home and with affording costly maintenance and updates. The average age of a single-family home in the corridor is 41 years, while city-wide the average age is 36 years.

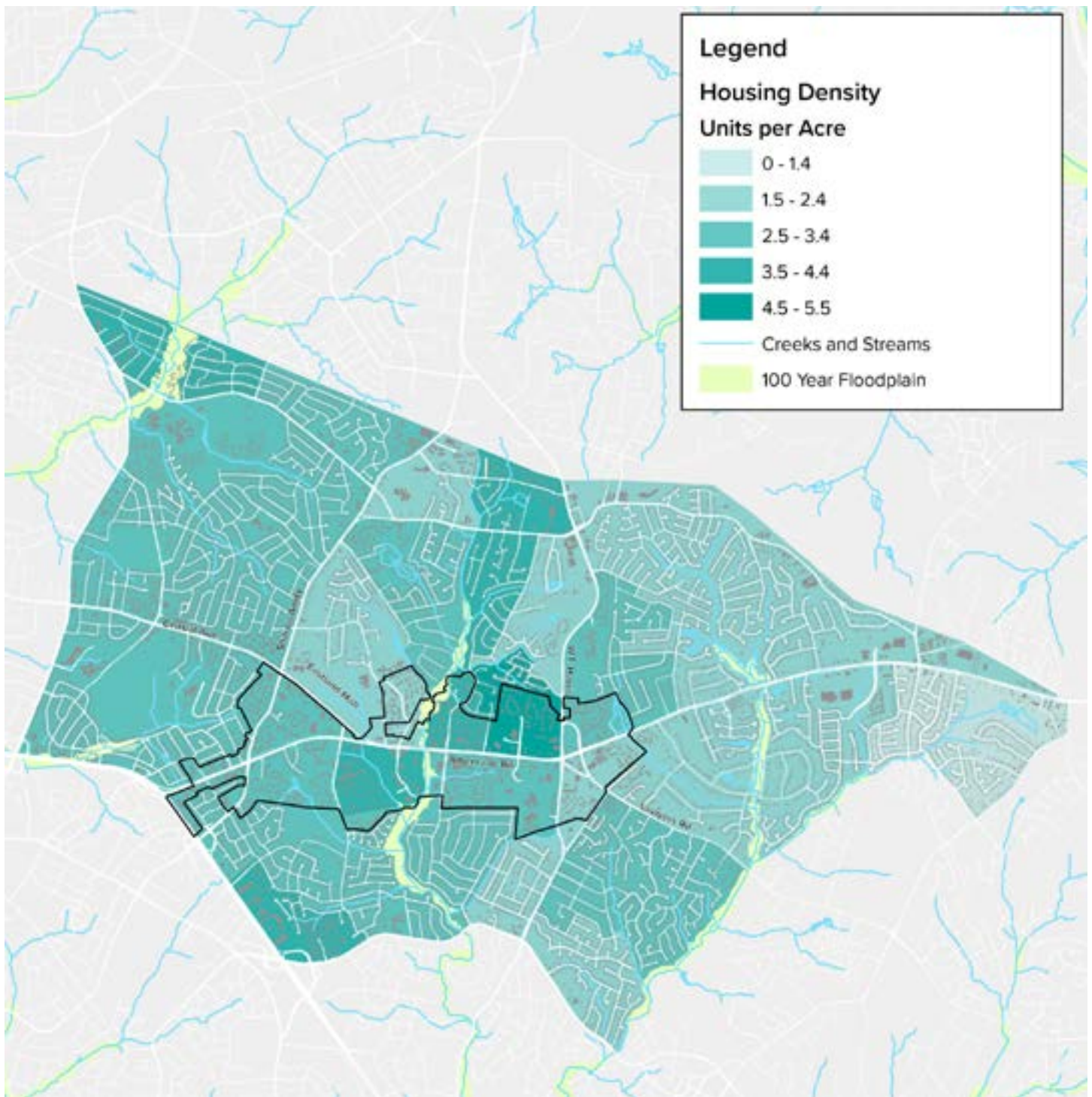
As property values rise throughout Charlotte and existing housing stock ages within the corridor, housing assistance programs help new families join established neighborhoods and help existing families afford to stay in their homes – keeping neighborhoods healthy and thriving.



Home Ownership

Within the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence, the home ownership rate is 42%. The city-wide home ownership rate is 53%, 11% higher than the corridor. Within the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence, 55% of the housing units are single-family and of those, 26% of the units are rentals. The corridor has 92% occupancy rate compared to the city-wide occupancy rate of 91%.

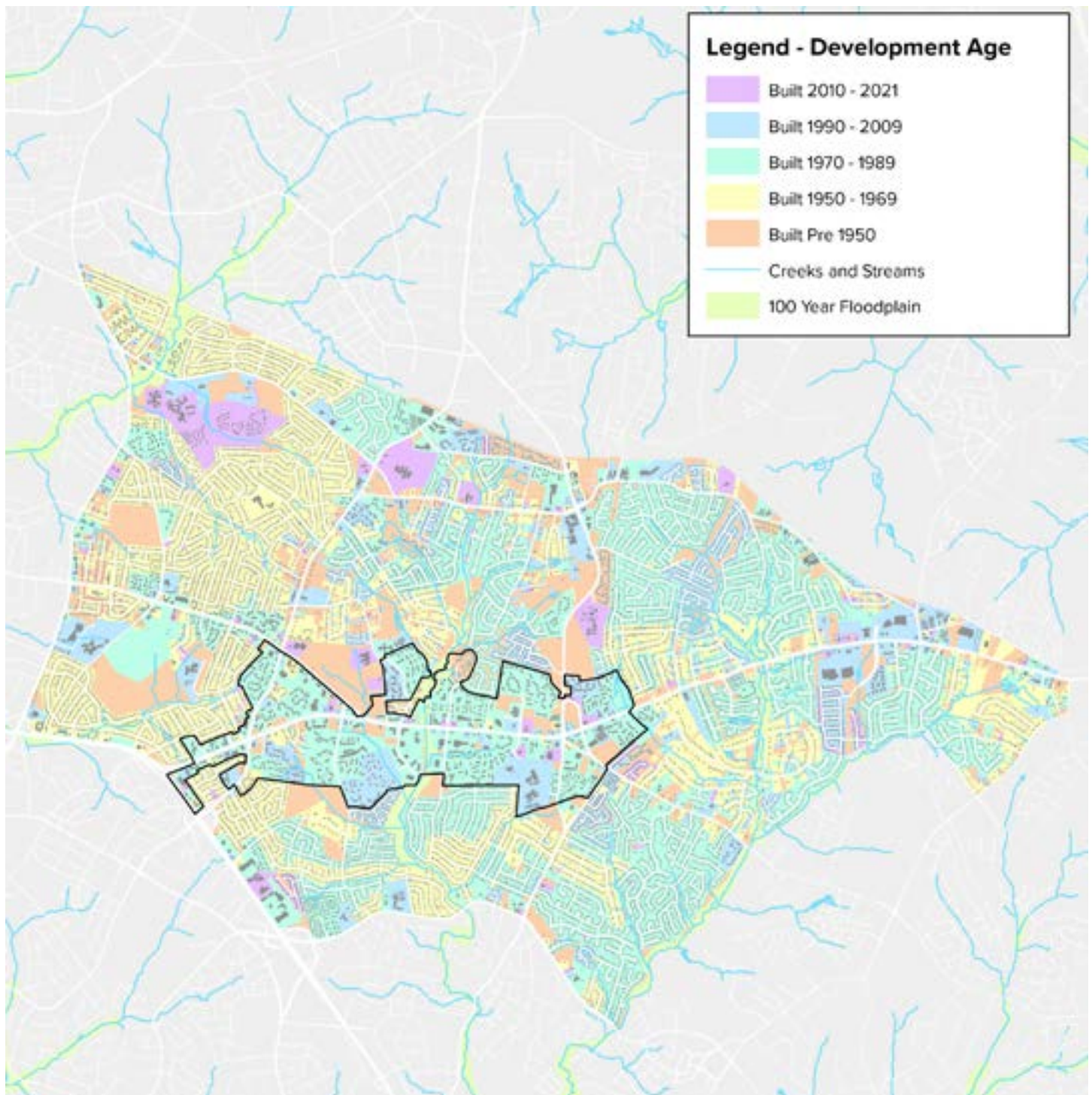
The corridor has a diverse mix of housing choices with a mix of single-family and multi-family housing units, with options for homeownership and rentals.



Housing Density

Land use affects how housing density or how many housing units can be built per acre. Within the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence, the average housing units per acre is 3, as compared to the city-wide average of 2. Much of the housing density is on Albemarle Road where the multi-family land use occurs.

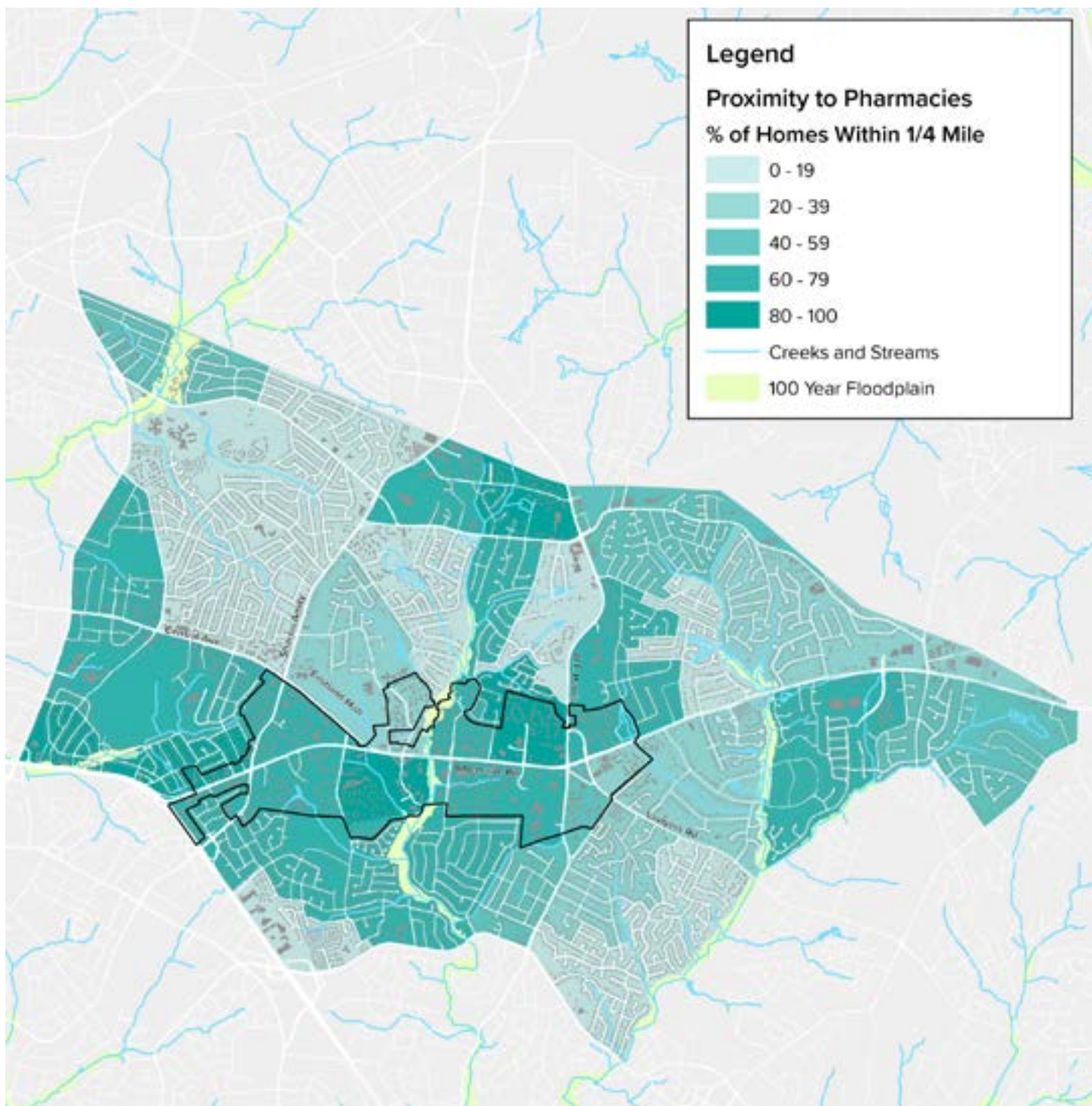
Housing density has a relationship with amenities and walkability. Areas with denser housing typically have amenities like transit, goods, and services within closer proximity than areas with less dense housing



Building Age and Development Patterns

The average age of building in the Area of Influence is 44 years. The breakdown of this development is as follows:

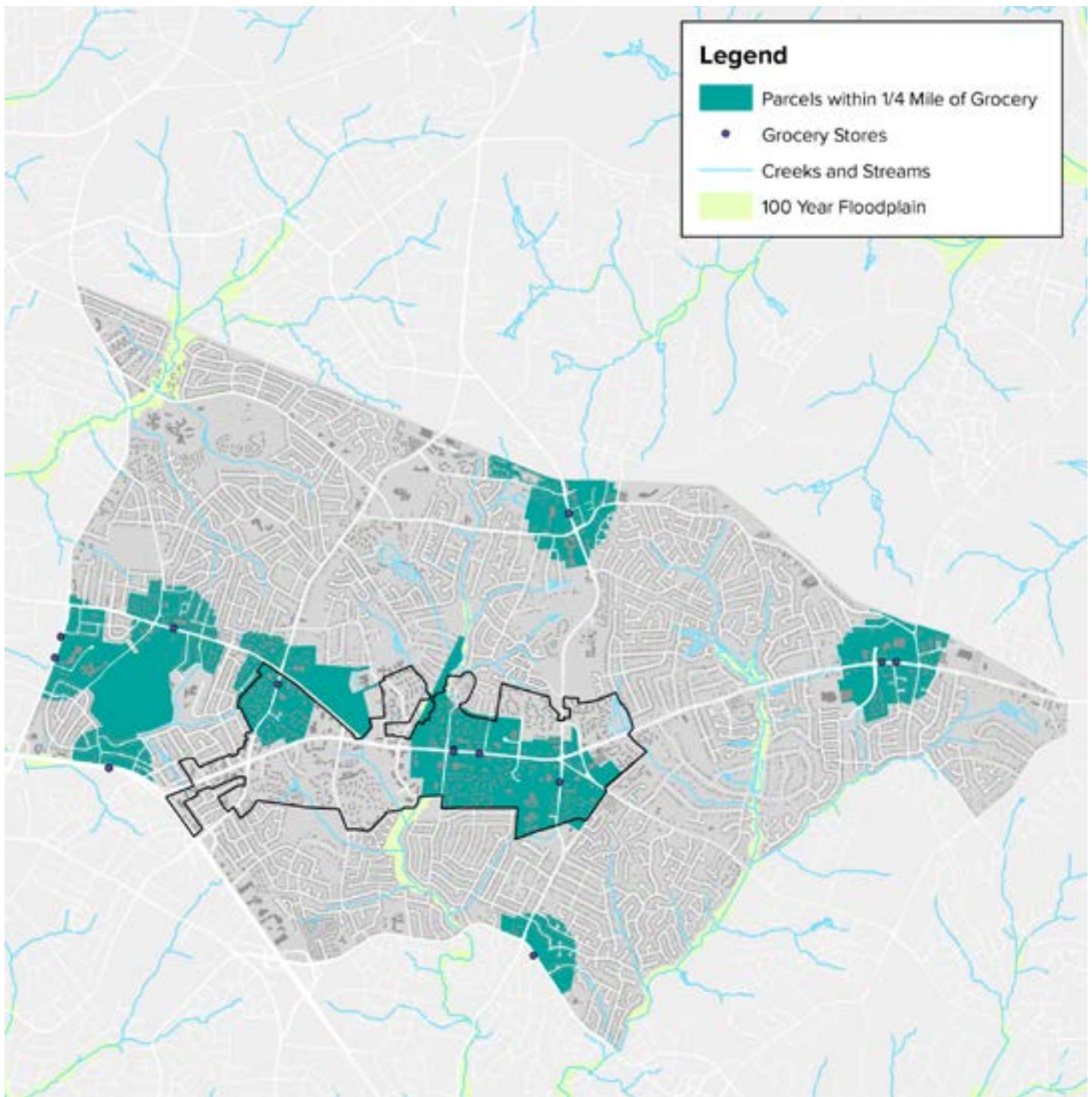
- 5.8% of parcels developed prior to 1950
- 31.8% of parcels developed in the 50's and 60's
- 46.1% of parcels developed in the 70's and 80's
- 13.6% of parcels developed in the 90's and 2000's
- 2.7% of parcels developed in the 2010's



Proximity to a Pharmacy

Within the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence, an average of 47% housing units are within a ½ mile or a 10-minute walk of a pharmacy as compared to 31% city-wide.

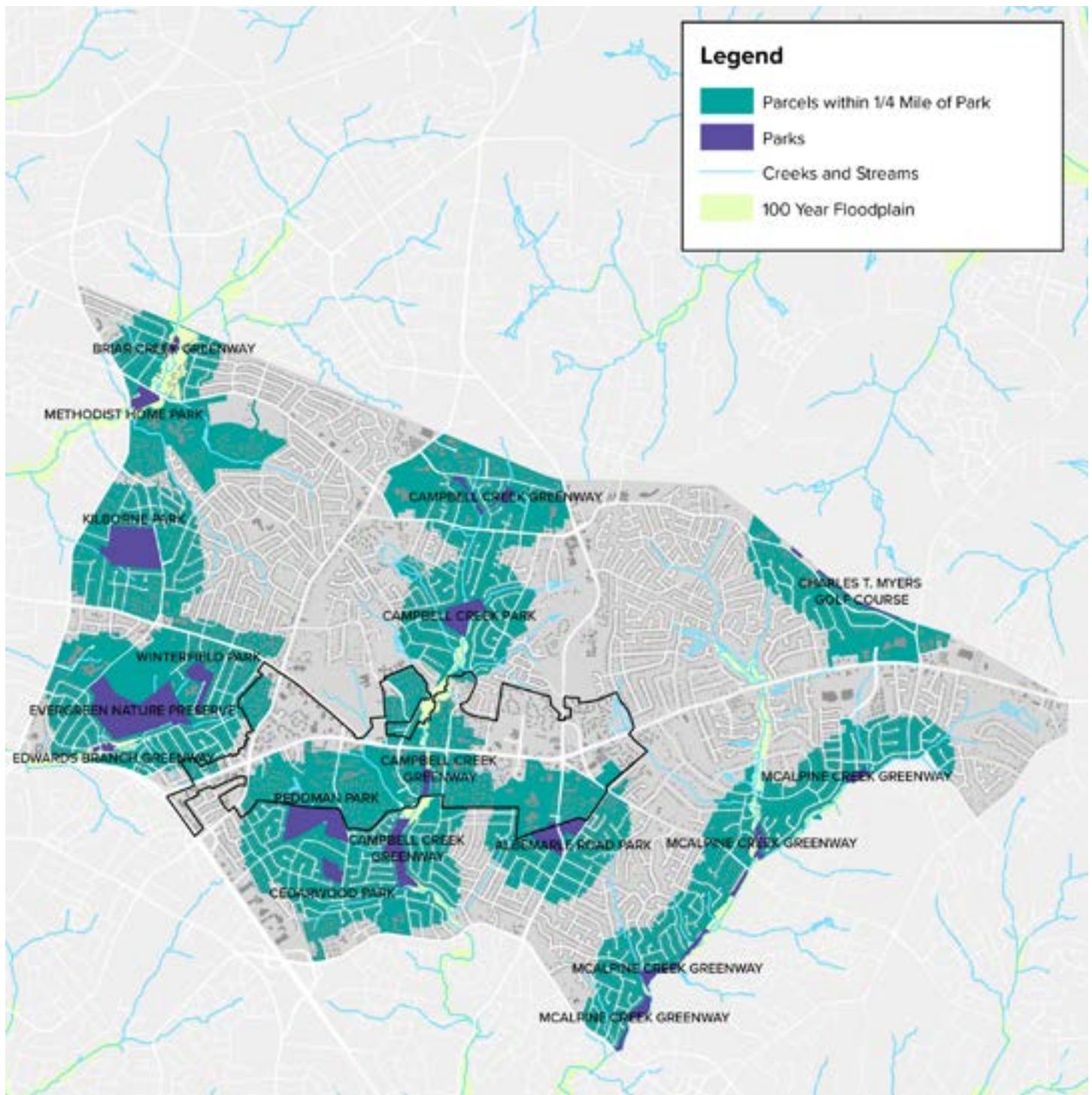
Within communities, pharmacies not only provide access to essential medications and medical supplies, they also offer services such as health screenings, vaccinations, and access to daily necessities and retail goods. In many communities, pharmacies fill gaps in areas with limited access to chain grocery stores.



Proximity to a Grocery Store

Within the corridor Study Area and Area of Influence, an average of 34% housing units are within a ½ mile or a 10-minute walk of a pharmacy as compared to 28% city-wide.

The corridor has two chain grocery stores, Compare Foods on Sharron Amity Rd. and Walmart Neighborhood Market on W.T. Harris Blvd. Additionally, the corridor has a variety of smaller grocers that cater to international cuisines. Some parts of the Study Area and Area of Influence are considered food deserts because of limited levels of access to retail outlets selling healthy and affordable foods.



Proximity to Outdoor Recreation

There is extensive evidence showing the health benefits of spending time outside. Exercise and recreation have positive impact on both our physical and mental wellbeing. In the Area of Influence, 65% of households in the Albemarle Corridor are within ½ a mile of outdoor recreation.

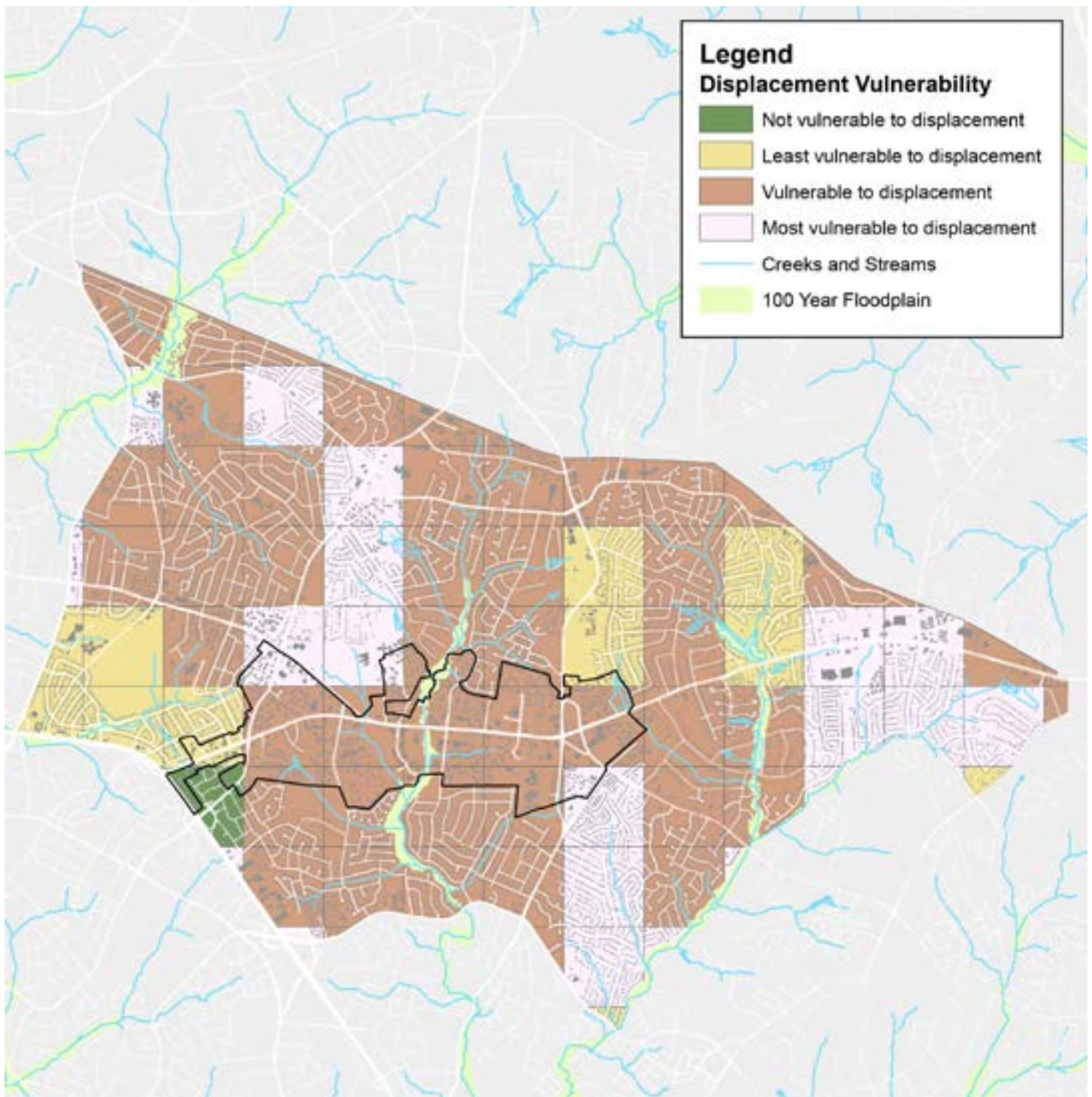
Based on the Trust for Public Land's [ParkScore Index](#), Charlotte ranks 91st out of 100 US Cities. The Index shows that 41% of Charlotteans live within a 10-minute walk to a public park, while the national average is 55%. Charlotte's access to parks is evenly dispersed across race, age, and income.



Proximity to Public Transit

The Area of Influence is well served by existing public transportation routes, with service expected to improve even further in coming years with the completion of Phase III of the LYNX Gold Line. Currently, 93% of households are within ½ a mile of a bus stop. This compares to 67% of the rest of the county. There are 102 boardings per bus stop, and 22,223 weekly boardings.

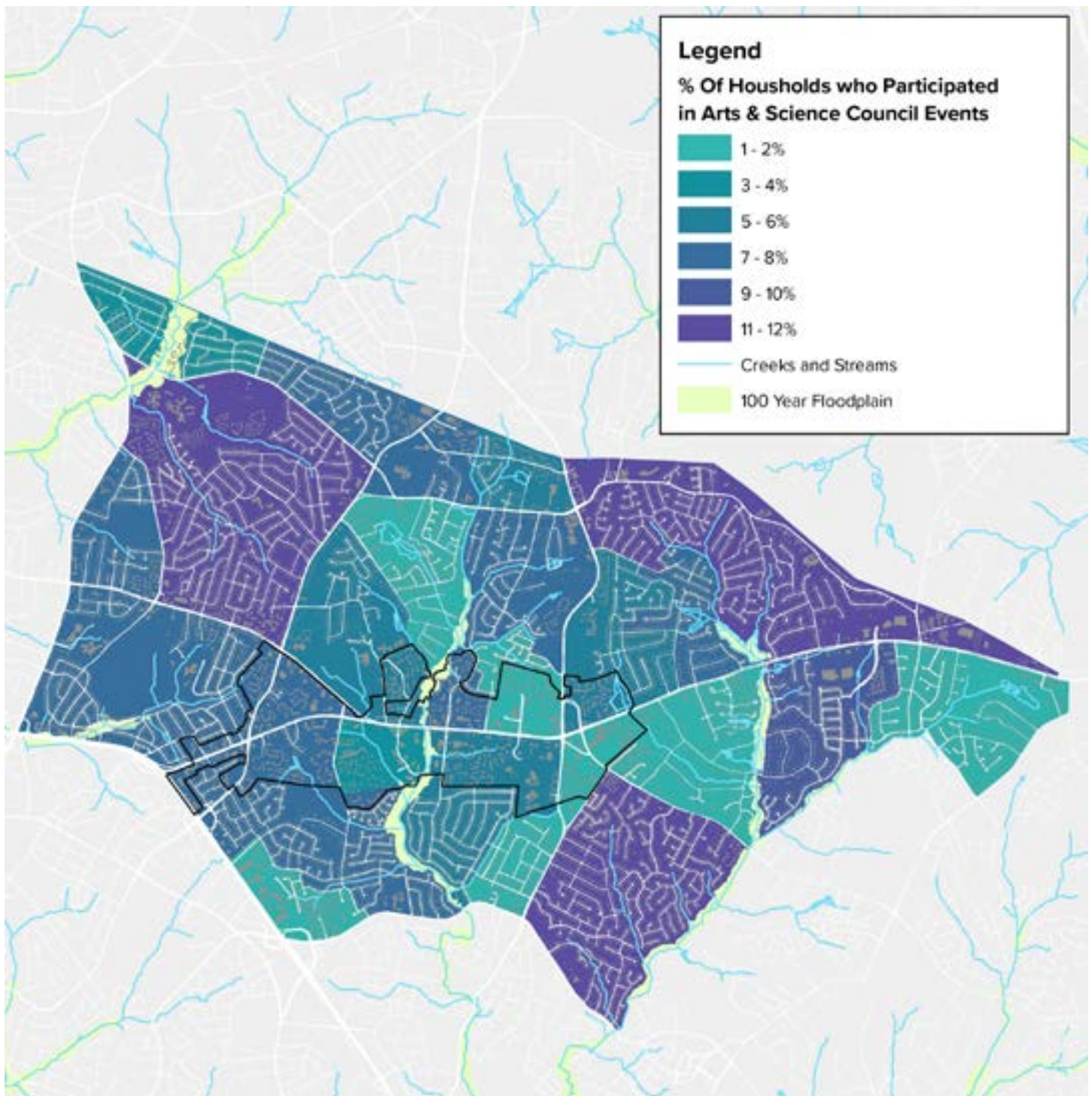
Residents in neighborhoods with convenient access to transit have more opportunities to use the bus or train as an alternative to vehicle travel. Individual benefits of having easily accessible and reliable public transportation includes less cost associated with owning and operating a private vehicle and potential health benefits of increased physical activity. Community benefits include improved air quality and reduced congestion on the roadways.



Displacement Vulnerability

As Charlotte continues to grow, many communities are feeling pressure from gentrification and displacement. The equity mapping analysis indicates that 55.05% of the land area in the Area of Influence is most vulnerable to displacement, 17.97% of the area is not vulnerable and 26.96% is less vulnerable.

The measures contributing to vulnerability to displacement are often good indicators, along with low or no car ownership, of transit propensity as well. Transit propensity is a concept that measures the likelihood of using public transit. Four measures have been documented as major contributors to vulnerability to displacement and are used to identify the areas with the most vulnerable populations across Charlotte: Poverty rate, educational attainment, race, and age.



Arts and Culture Participation

Arts, culture and creative expression are critical to a thriving community, contributing to education, economic development, and participation in civic life. The arts can help build community by fostering relationships, helping communities to understand and celebrate their heritage, and providing a civic space to discuss and solve difficult problems. Arts participation may be impacted by many factors including affordability, location and accessibility of venues and programs, cultural/language barriers, and availability of community outreach programs.

5% of the households in the Area of Influence participate in Arts and Science Council-sponsored arts and cultural activities.



During the first public engagement session for the Playbook development, stakeholders met with the project team to provide feedback on the initial findings.

**Albemarle Road is one of
Charlotte's **most diverse**
corridors in the city.**



Engagement

With over 50 languages spoken and over 60 countries represented from around the world, Albemarle Road is one of Charlotte's most diverse corridors in the city. From the onset of the project, the project team knew that engagement with stakeholders would need an approach specifically tailored to the corridor.

The City brought on a team of Creative Engagement Specialists (CES) to help shape the engagement strategy for the corridor. Working with Charlotte Is Creative, the City crafted a strategy that was multilingual, youth and family focused, and incorporated aspects of the corridor's culture into inclusive programming through art and performance.

The engagement strategy and Playbook development was guided by a steering committee of 20+ stakeholders who represent the diverse residents, businesses, and organizations of the corridor. Over the course of 6 months, the City held nearly 50 unique opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the project as well as online through social media, the project's website, and features on news outlets. At each of the in-person and online engagements, language assistance was provided by Into Languages and all materials produced for the project were provided in English and Spanish.



A Unique Approach

Over the course of 6 months, the Albemarle Playbook project team has held nearly 50 unique opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the project as well as online through social media, the project's website, and features on news outlets.

Throughout this process the over 25 local creatives will have contributed to the development of the Playbook through the creation of content, unique experiences, and ideas.

This approach to engagement new and unique to Albemarle Road. Working closely with creatives to tailor a unique experience to engage with stakeholders helped the project team build trust, navigate cultural and language barriers, and build relationships throughout the process.





All community engagements provided language assistance.



**The Albemarle Playbook project team held nearly
50 unique opportunities for stakeholders to engage.**



**4 Virtual
Community
Meetings**



**3 Community
Pop-Ups**



**2 Community
Surveys with
200+ Participants**



**2 Neighborhood
Meetings**



**3 Artist Led
Tours**



**1 Business
Survey**



**5 Steering
Committee
Meetings**



**16 Small
Business
Features**



**11 Stakeholder
Interviews**



Pop Up Meeting at Compare Foods

The first pop-up was held at the Compare Foods on N. Sharon Amity. Language assistance was provided by Into Languages interpreters who aided the project team with engaging stakeholders and receiving input. For the first in-person community meeting it was important for the project team to meet people where they were in family-friendly environment



Pop Up Meeting at Four Seasons Shopping Plaza

At the November 1st pop-up at Four Seasons Shopping Plaza, the project team partnered with artist Rosalia Torres-Weiner and musician Maria Elena-Valdez. The event was festive with a singing performance by Maria and a custom offerenda or alter by Rosalia. Community members were invited to come and learn about the project all while enjoying a family-friendly event that coincided with the Dia de la Muerte or Day of the Dead holiday.



Artist Led Tours

Over the course of the Playbook development, the project team worked with three artists to lead tours on the corridor. The aim was to connect people to the corridor by examining culture, food, and place through the eyes of artists. Ernesto Moreno and Kriska Woods led photography tours, and Mike Dikabura led a sketching tour – each with a unique focus on what it is to live and work along the Albemarle corridor. Using art to overcome language barriers and celebrate what is unique and special about the corridor.



Family Friendly

At all in-person community meetings, the project team was sure to include activities for the youngest of stakeholders. From bubble machines to face painting, creative activities were available so families could attend and participate in defining the shared vision for Albemarle Road. Custom coloring sheets of East Charlotte landmarks were developed for the process by illustrators Kiana Muui, Kenn Compton, and Cynthia Allison.

Virtually Creative

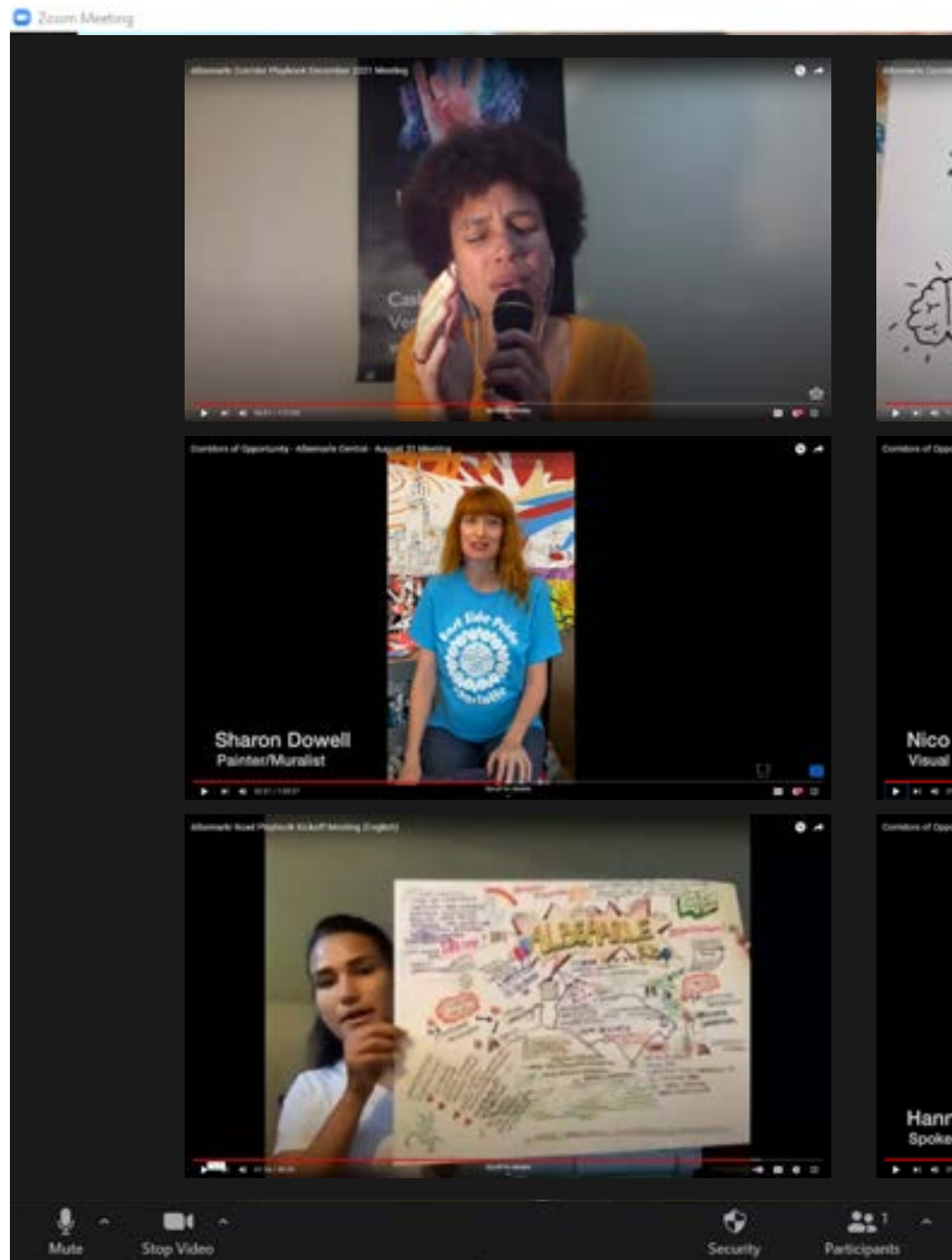
March of 2020 the entire world changed, as businesses, schools, and everything in between turned to virtual spaces to gather. The Playbook process was no different, but after 18 months into a global pandemic people were beginning to feel what was termed “Zoom fatigue”.

As vital as engagement and stakeholder input is to the process, the project team turned to Charlotte is Creative to assist in piloting the City of Charlotte’s first Artists in Residency program to engage with stakeholders in new ways.

For virtual meetings, local artists, performers, and creatives were hired to perform and develop unique compositions for the Albemarle Playbook process.

Creatives included:

- LP7, Musician
- Megan Gonzalez, Artist
- Von Hunter, Musician
- Sharon Dowell, Artist
- Nico Amortegui, Artist
- Myloan Dinh, Artist
- Irisol Gonzalez, Artist
- Hannah Hasan, Spoken Word Artist
- Jay Ward, Poet (not pictured)





ERNEST MORENO PHOTOGRAPHY, 2021

Economic Development Strategy for Albemarle Road

Economic Development Strategy

Real Estate Market

Labor Market

Small Business Ecosystem

The Albemarle Road Corridor Playbook process relies on a baseline of demographic, economic, and real estate market data to inform thinking about strengths and weaknesses of the corridor from an economic vitality perspective. Through baseline information regarding real estate, community economic development, local labor market and small business trends, the project team can understand the dynamics of the local Albemarle corridor market today.

City staff developed the economic development strategy for Albemarle Road to be responsive and layered to better align with existing programs and organizational structure. The approach includes analysis of the local labor market, small business and entrepreneurship ecosystem, the real estate market and a general economic and workforce development scan. Some of these analyses were conducted for geographies beyond just the playbook study area.

The findings and recommendations of each of these unique studies, particularly findings related to the Albemarle Road corridor, were incorporated into the overall playbook findings and strategic recommendations. This layered and holistic approach accounts for the relationship between jobs, real estate, transportation and housing.

Market Study Process



The real estate market study, conducted by Kimley-Horn, focused on the Albemarle corridor study area and identified main industries and trends, defined trade areas for retail, hospitality, office and multi-family residential and identified future real estate opportunities.

The study made short-, mid- and long-term recommendations for public investment to encourage or catalyze new investment.



Market Study Process


The market study process started with an understanding of the external influences and regional positioning, coupled with the baseline demographic, employment, and commercial and residential real estate trends. Public and stakeholder engagement confirmed what the data showed and provided a better understanding of the perspective of residents, business owners, and employees in the corridor.

All of the data and engagement were incorporated into demand forecasts that highlight the key development opportunities for Albemarle Road. Ultimately, the market study created an actionable roadmap that addresses Albemarle Road’s specific needs and goals while playing to its strengths.

Process Overview

External Influences, regional positioning, existing supply conditions, engagement and feedback, demand forecasts, and SWOT identification help inform development opportunities. Opportunities include future demand metrics: residential units, retail square feet, office square feet, hotel keys and industrial square feet.

From those opportunities, an implementation and action plan is developed and a market-based strategy is created.



The Trade Area includes surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers.

Defining a Trade Area

The trade area shows real estate trends that influence the Albemarle Road corridor. It includes surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers. Real estate demand forecasts for the trade area identify key market opportunities.

Demographic Characteristics

In the Area of Influence, population tends to be younger and more diverse than the Charlotte MSA. Over the past decade, population has grown at a slower rate when compared with the whole region. Homeownership is less prevalent with a little under half of all households being owner-occupied. Approximately 40% of all households have children and there tends to be more people living in each household when compared with the region. Almost 10% of households have no access to a vehicle, compared with only 5% across the entire MSA.

Population Trends and Forecasts

Over the past decade, the number of residents in the AOI grew by nearly 3,000 people or 11%. It is expected to grow another 50% over the next 25 years, reaching more than 44,000 people in the AOI. Population is expected to grow at a faster rate than the Charlotte region. Over the next 10 years, a little over 6,000 people are expected to be added to the area.

Economic Characteristics

Based on existing inventory, the market study identified a little over 1,000 businesses within the AOI. The industry with the most jobs is retail trade, largely driven by the high number of commercial and retail centers on the corridor. Residents in the area largely work in the service sector, including retail and food and beverage industries, or in industries that require manual labor, such as construction, manufacturing, or maintenance. These jobs tend to require less formal education and pay lower wages, resulting in lower household incomes when compared with the entire region.

Demographic Characteristics

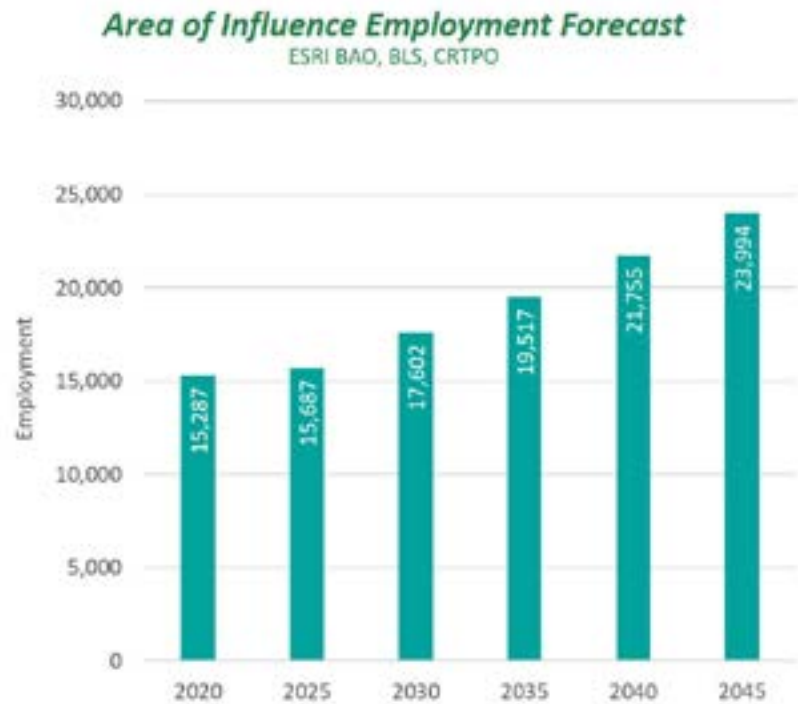


Economic Characteristics



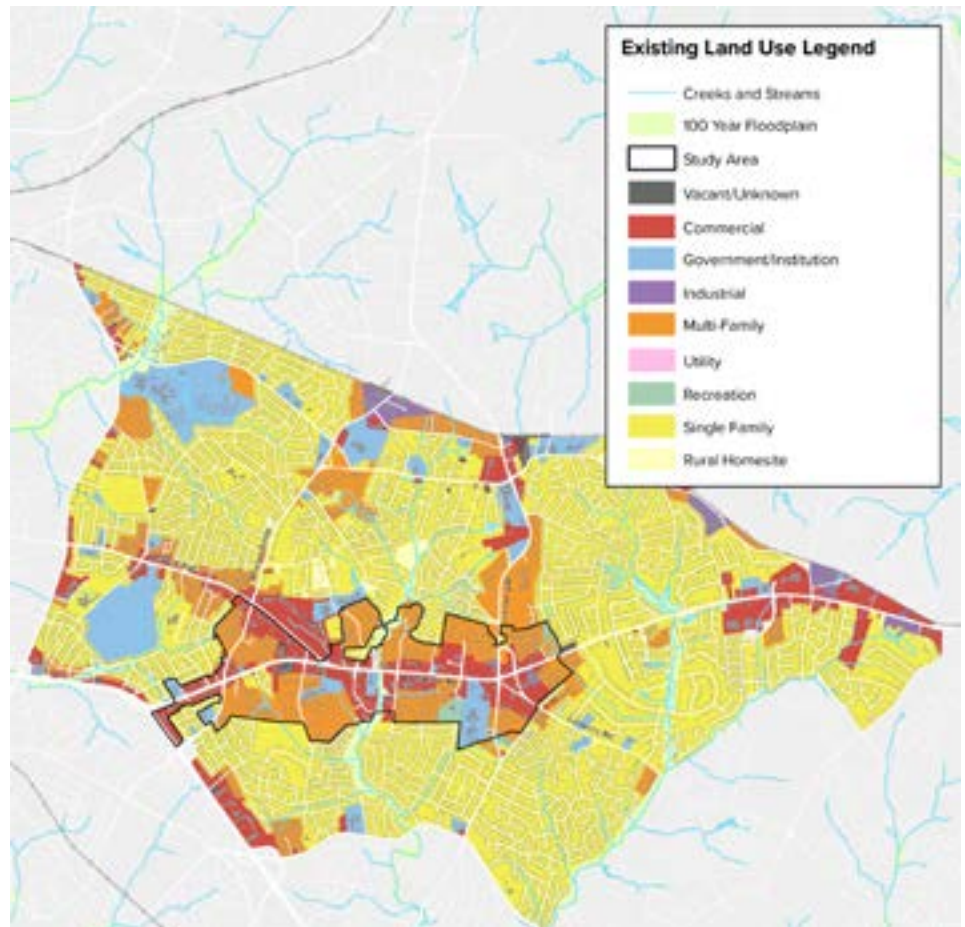
Employment Forecasts

Jobs in Retail, Administrative, and Administrative positions have grown the most the Area of Influence in the last five years. Looking forward, jobs in the Area of Influence are expected to grow nearly 60% between 2020 and 2045, and about 2,300 jobs over the next 10 years. Increases are expected in highway-oriented retail services, office workers, and warehouse/flex space jobs.



Land Use

Approximately 75% of all acreage in the Area of Influence is residential. Single-family residential is the dominant use. Albemarle Road is primarily a retail corridor with commercial space as the largest non-residential use.



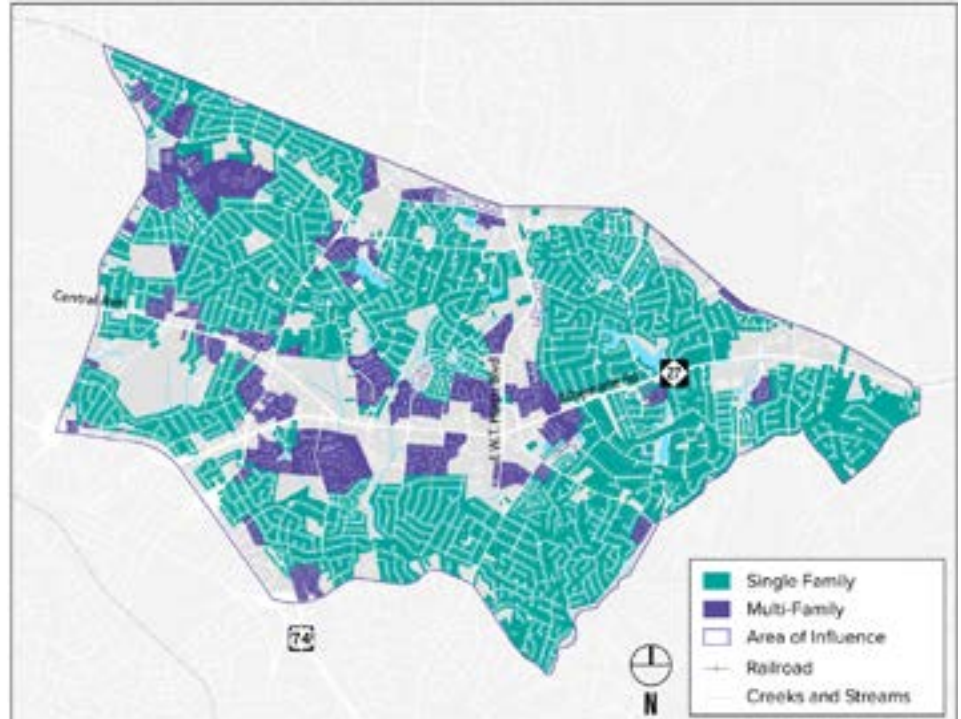
Housing

Despite new construction, single-family permitting activity in the Trade Area has not returned to pre-2008 Recession levels while multifamily activity is closer to the previous pace. Single-family permits are most popular followed closely by duplexes.

Single-family residences are distributed throughout the Area of Influence and multifamily properties are primarily located along Albemarle Rd, Central Ave, & Eastway Dr. Average home sale price increased 56% since 2010. Multifamily vacancy and rents are below the Charlotte market average.

Comparison of Housing Unit Breakdown

US Census 2015-2019 ACS Data



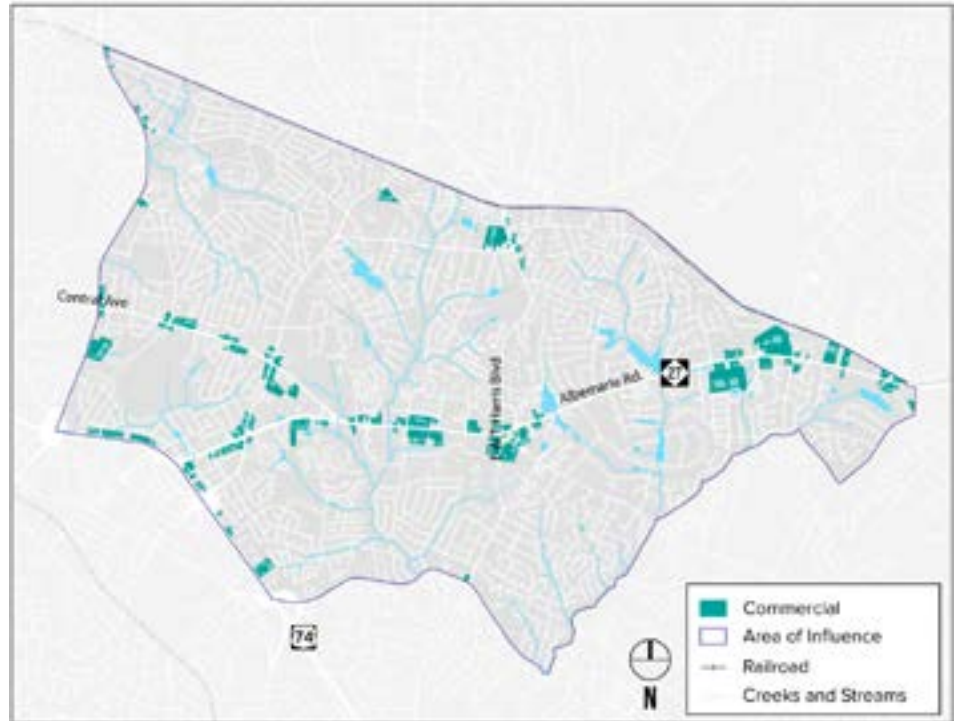
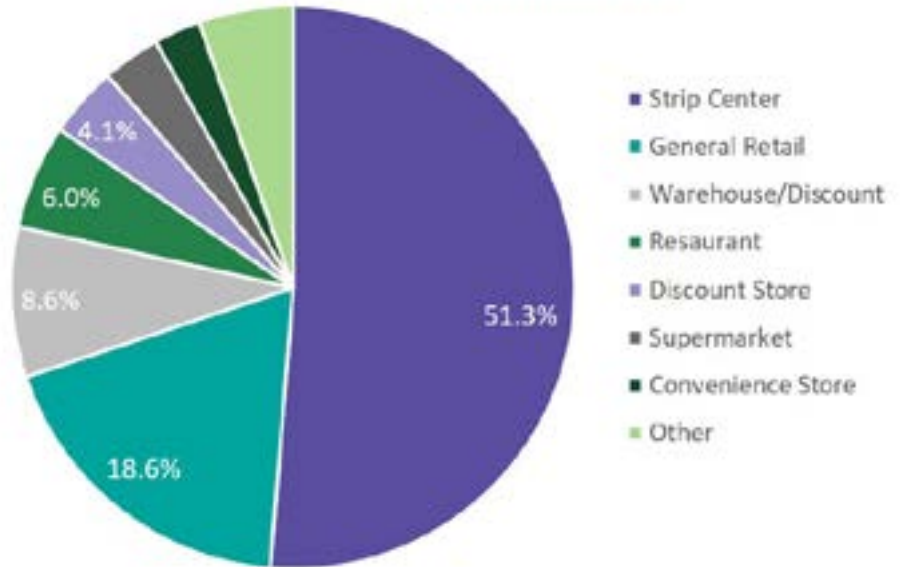
Retail

Retail rents in the Trade Area are lower than market-wide averages and vacancy is similar. The area has an older inventory that may not be as attractive to modern tenants, but it could be a more affordable option for unique and local retailers, non-traditional leases, and tenants priced out of other neighborhoods.

The Area of Influence has more than 3.2 million square feet of retail space, primarily concentrated on Albemarle Rd, Central Ave & US 74/Independence Blvd. The corridor hosts a diverse range of destinations offering foods from around the world. The most active decade for development was the 2000s & 1980s. Recent construction in the Area of Influence is limited to convenience stores and fast-food restaurants

Share of Retail Inventory by Type

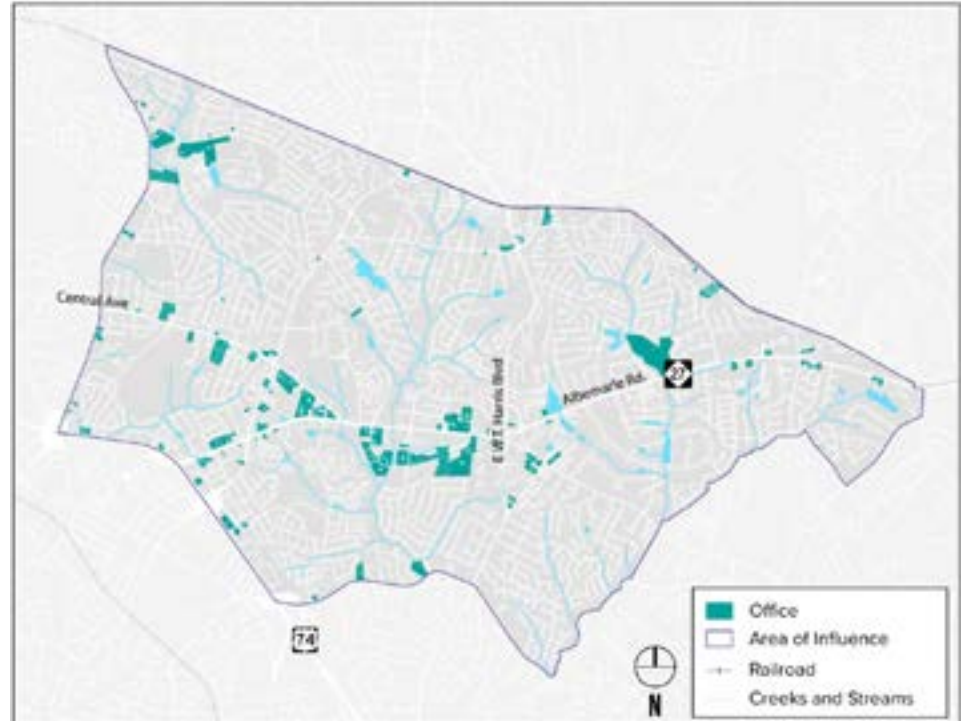
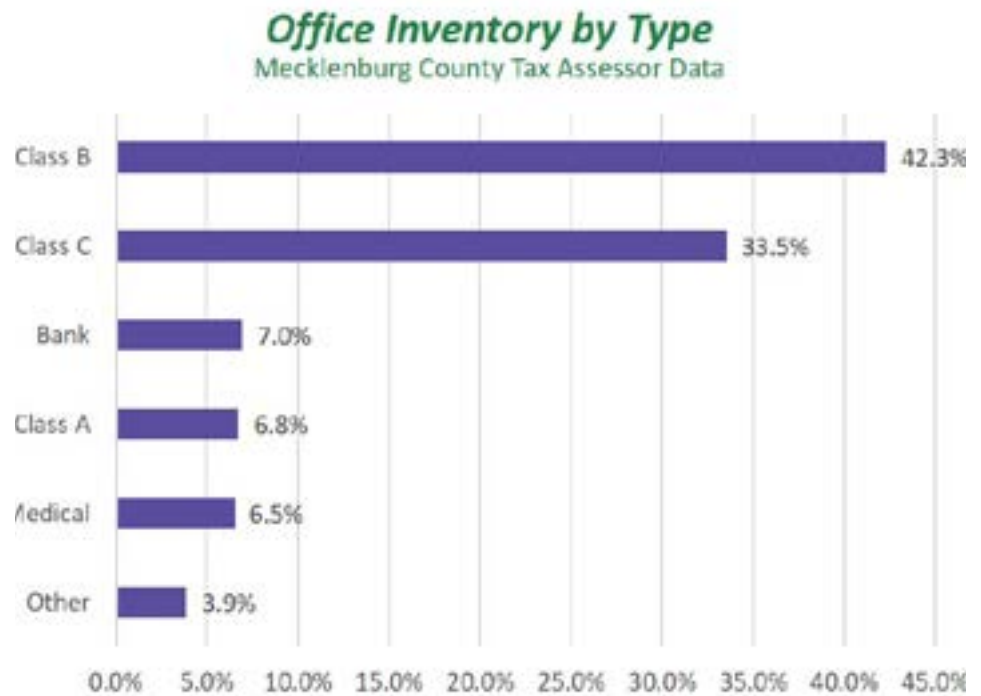
Mecklenburg County Tax Assessor Data



Office

The Trade Area has higher-than-average vacancy rates and lower rents. While the future of office space remains uncertain, there is potential for non-profit and government uses to grow their presence in the area.

There is more than 1.84 million square feet categorized as office space in the Area of Influence. The most active decade for office development was the 1980s. Recent office space construction in the Area of Influence is limited to smaller office buildings, such as medical, veterinarian, bank branches, and daycare uses. There have been no multi-tenant office properties completed in the Trade Area since 2007.





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Area of Influence Demand Forecast

Ten-Year Area of Influence Real Estate Demand (2020-2030)



HOUSING



RETAIL



OFFICE



WAREHOUSE/FLEX



HOTEL

Forecasted
Demand

1,500 – 2,000
Units

125,000 – 175,000
Square Feet

100,000 – 125,000
Square Feet

50,000 – 75,000
Square Feet

100 – 200
Rooms

Demand
Timeframe

Short-Term/
Immediate

Mid-Term

Long-Term

Mid-Term

Long-Term



Housing

Products: Detached & Attached SF
Market-Rate MF
Senior Living
Income Targeted

Demand Timeframe

Short-Term

Market Considerations

- Population growth is expected to gain momentum on the east side
- Represents immediate development opportunity
- Increase ownership housing options
- Protect naturally-occurring affordable housing in stabilized neighborhoods
- Senior living options support aging in place



Neighborhood-Serving Retail

Product: Personal services
Food/Dining destination
Local entrepreneurs

Demand Timeframe

Mid-term

Market Considerations

- Retail in a state of flux
- Value add opportunities for existing centers
- Attract retailers being priced out of other Charlotte submarkets
- Capitalize on momentum established through unique, local food establishments
- Obsolete centers represent opportunities for redevelopment and/or intensification



Office

Product: Professional office
Service office
Medical office

Demand Timeframe

Long-term

Market Considerations

- Sector experiencing continued recovery from pandemic
- Elevated vacancy; stabilize before investment
- Momentum could be established through government and not-for-profit anchors
- Smaller medical offices and urgent care clinics



Warehouse/Flex

Product: Warehouses
Flex space
Maker space

Demand Timeframe

Mid-term

Market Considerations

- Small footprint buildings for service-based companies seeking access to customers
- Locations should have easy access to major interstates (US 74/I-485)
- Increasing land prices could be a limiting factor in identifying new locations for development



Hotel

Product: Limited service

Demand Timeframe

Long-term

Market Considerations

- Limited of highway access/visibility limits demand
- Eastland will generate primarily local trips

Key Recommendations



Strategy #1: Enhance Safety and Attractiveness of the Public Realm

Opportunity Statement: Improving the safety and attractiveness of the public realm will demonstrate City investment and focus along the corridor and help to bolster private sector confidence.

Key Tools: Improve streetscape and sidewalk connectivity and buffers, collaborate with NCDOT on safety enhancements, enhance transit facilities and last mile connectivity, support public art installations, increase connectivity of City-maintained street network surrounding Albemarle Road

Implementation timing: Short- to mid-term (1-5 years)



Strategy #2: Support Rehabilitation and Reimagining of Under-Utilized Properties

Opportunity Statement: Investment in under-utilized properties along the Albemarle Road corridor can play an important role in neighborhood stabilization; creating momentum to improve existing real estate inventory will likely require access to incentives, grant access, and economic development tools.

Key Tools: Communicate existing economic development tools available, ensure zoning regulations encourage desired development, purchase catalytic sites and help with assemblage of parcels, incentivize public-private partnerships

Implementation timing: Mid-term (3-5 years)



Strategy #3: Leverage Corridor's Unique Assets and Publicly Owned Properties

Opportunity Statement: The Albemarle Road corridor has a unique identity which can be leveraged to position the area as a destination, by increasing visitors, improving sales, and creating a brand.

Key Tools: Support redevelopment of Eastland Mall site, promote multicultural offerings of corridor, create business owner's associations, market publicly owned properties for redevelopment, support branding efforts to communicate corridor identity, develop gateway monuments to contribute to placemaking

Implementation timing: Short-term (1-3 years)



Strategy #4: Support Growth in Employment Opportunities

Opportunity Statement: Already an important employment enter, the Albemarle Road corridor will benefit from connecting residents to nearby jobs and services.

Key Tools: Help customers connect to services offered by non-profit office tenants, acquire under-performing office properties for redevelopment, support the expansion of existing and attraction of new employers; support reinvestment of office buildings that can be part of a live-work-play environment.

Implementation timing: Short- to mid-term (1-5 years)



Strategy #5: Protect Naturally-Occurring Affordable Housing Stock

Opportunity Statement: The Albemarle Road corridor hosts a wide variety of housing that is accessible to various income levels; protecting an inventory of naturally-occurring affordable housing stock will promote neighborhood stability and discourage displacement.

Key Tools: Create NOAH inventory, support land acquisition and trusts, provide public subsidy, draft community benefits agreements.

Implementation timing: Short-term (1-3 years)



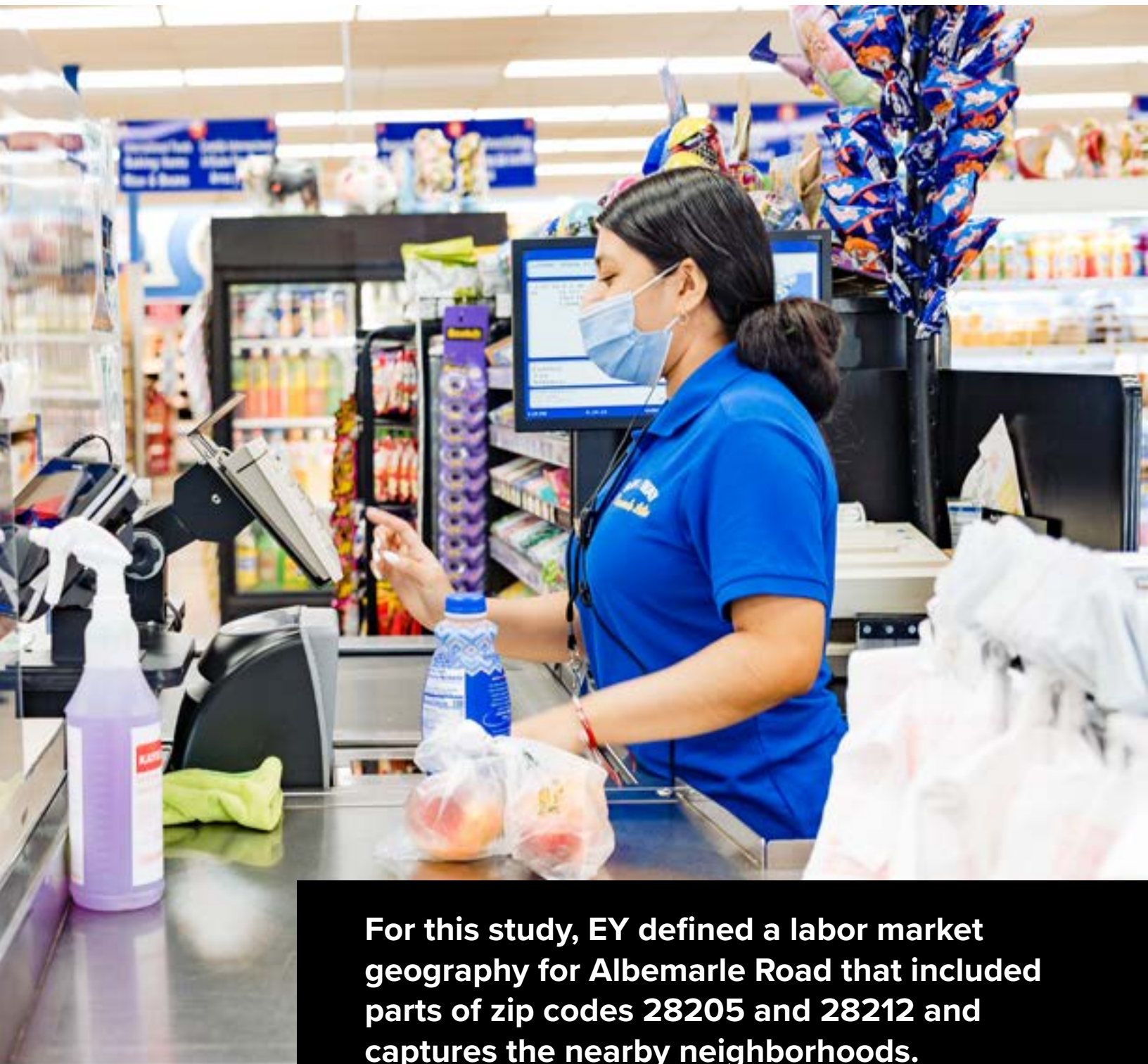
Strategy #6: Improve Paths to Homeownership

Opportunity Statement: The Albemarle Road corridor has higher than average levels of renter-households; providing opportunities for increased levels of homeownership will benefit overall neighborhood stability.

Key Tools: Partner with neighborhood organizations to communicate existing programs and assistance for homebuyers and homeowners, including financial assistance to overcome hurdles to homeownership, offer housing education and counseling for residents, create a housing trust fund for down payment and closing cost assistance.

Implementation timing: Short-term (1-5 years)

Labor Market Study



For this study, EY defined a labor market geography for Albemarle Road that included parts of zip codes 28205 and 28212 and captures the nearby neighborhoods.

The talent and labor market study conducted by EY explores the demographic composition, educational attainment dynamics, labor characteristics and potential barriers to opportunity present in four zip code-based geographies in Charlotte. The scope included the entire Corridors of Opportunity Geography, not just Albemarle Road.

The study evaluated the corridor through two lenses: workforce and target industries. The study included a quantitative analysis of the corridor from an employment perspective and identified barriers that current residents face when accessing quality jobs. The study recommendations are in strategic alignment with the City's larger employment and workforce programs.

Workforce analysis

As of 2019, Retail and Entertainment are the largest industry clusters for employment in the greater 28205/28212 zip code area. The corridor is home to numerous strong and advancing industry clusters, some of which tend to have higher wages, such as Finance and Professional Services. Corridor residents are more likely to be employed in lower wage occupations such as Construction, Building Cleaning & Maintenance, and Material Moving as compared to their counterparts in the City of Charlotte.

Target Industry analysis

The target industry analysis evaluated industry clusters in the Corridors and city at-large. The analysis identified whether an industry is growing, has a presence in the Corridors, or matches the skills in the Corridor workforce. Throughout the process, potential targets were assessed through another filter: whether the industry could make the Corridors of Opportunity

more economically diverse, resilient, and sustainable. The analysis suggests Albemarle corridor is a strong candidate for technology and administrative support services (e.g. software/IT, call centers/administrative support) and logistics and distribution (warehousing and fulfillment). These industries match the corridor's assets, have long-term growth potential, and can provide upward career opportunities for Corridor residents who have diverse skills but commute out for jobs.

Key recommendations

The study concludes with two key recommendations for Albemarle:

Opportunity Employers: Target opportunity employers to local and expand in the corridors.

- Create and Opportunity Employers program.
- Proactively attract target industry businesses into the Corridors of Opportunity.
- Engage with employers already located in the corridors to hire more corridor residents.

Support Residents: Assist corridor residents with overcoming barriers to employment and accessing career and economic opportunities.

- Launch an Opportunity Workforce initiative
- Expand capacity of existing high-performance Nonprofits that serve Opportunity workers
- Expand entrepreneurship opportunities for aspiring business owners
- Improve transportation solutions for corridor residents employed by Opportunity Employers
- Support programs that help corridor residents overcome barriers to education, employment, and career advancement

An executive summary of this study can be found in the appendix of this playbook.



Small Business Ecosystem Assessment

Over the past decade, Charlotte has benefited from an active economy in part due to a strong employment growth rate. With an employment rate more than double the national rate, strong population growth, and increasing wages, the city continues to evolve quickly. Within Charlotte, however, economic opportunity has not been shared equitably among all entrepreneurs and small business owners.

In 2021, the City's Economic Development Department began an assessment of the small business ecosystem in two of the City's six designated Corridors of Opportunity: Albemarle Road/Central Avenue and Sugar Creek Road/I-85. The purpose of this assessment is to understand the needs of the small business community in these corridors and develop actionable recommendations for support that can be provided by the City. This study had a larger scope.

Albemarle Road/Central Avenue Corridor

As of 2019, Retail and Entertainment are the largest. The study, while broader in scope, included findings and recommendations that are specific to the small business conditions on the Albemarle Road corridor. The small business ecosystem in the Albemarle corridor includes more than 250 entrepreneurs and small business owners spanning over fifty types of businesses, services, and resources for the community. Industry sectors include:

- Finance, insurance, and real estate
- Retail trade
- Services
- Wholesale trade

To learn the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and challenges of existing small businesses in the Albemarle corridor, the City's consultants, Raftelis and The Lee Institute, conducted a robust, grass-roots outreach and engagement process that included numerous individual interviews and focus groups with business owners, area connectors/influencers, and other stakeholders throughout the Albemarle corridor. An online survey was administered in six languages - Spanish, Burmese, Nepali, French, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Over the course of the engagement process, several common themes emerged from the feedback received. These themes include:

- Information and resources: Seek opportunities to connect businesses to the tools, resources, and organizations to help them start, grow, and sustain
- Communication and engagement: Creatively engage with the business community in ways that meet their specific cultural needs/goals
- Marketing and branding: Connect business owners with resources and training to effectively promote their small businesses

- Public safety: Implement strategies to support an environment where business owners and patrons feel safe doing business
- Business solutions: Connect businesses to relevant tools, training, and solutions that address the challenges and/or barriers they are currently facing

Increasing economic opportunity for businesses in the Albemarle corridor will require a multi-faceted approach involving multiple stakeholders. It will involve leveraging the skills of existing local and regional resources while also leveraging investment to create additional business development opportunities. There is an opportunity to meet small business owners where they are, provide them with services that have a transformational impact on their businesses, and foster a vibrant and resilient corridor in the City.

The consulting team is concluding the community outreach in January 2022, and detailed recommendations, based on the business input, will be incorporated into the Albemarle Playbook Implementation Table. The recommendations will provide opportunities to advance community vitality through new projects, programs or initiatives.

An executive summary of this study can be found in the appendix of this playbook.

Industrial Market and Land Use Study



The analysis informs stakeholders and the community on modern industrial operations.

Cushman & Wakefield conducted an industrial land use and jobs analysis for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County in 2021.

The analysis also informs stakeholders and the community on modern industrial operations, many of which are highly technical manufacturing operations or material moving driven by the rapid consumer adoption of e-commerce shopping and the highly synchronized activities to move goods to consumers' front doors.

Industrial users generally include manufacturers, transportation companies, warehousing, and some wholesale businesses. These users typically lease or own large facilities suitable for production or material moving operations. Some industrial facilities also include a customer-facing or business administration front office.

In general, demand in the industrial market is strong nationwide. Vacancy rates are low and are expected to remain low. The high demand has also led to a tight labor market with companies struggling to fill positions. The rapid growth in e-commerce and logistics has driven the strong demand for warehouse space. Industrial developers cannot keep up with the demand for industrial space and speculative development has increased nationwide and in Charlotte.

In Charlotte, the industrial market is growing quickly and mirrors the national trends. In 2020, Charlotte had record absorption and is on track to match or surpass that in 2021. As a result, rental rates are rising and vacancy remains low. Warehouse users make up most of the market activity but smaller tenants are increasing as well.

The overall study organizes recommendations in three main categories: site selection and infrastructure needs; positioning for growth; industrial opportunity by geography.

Albemarle Road

Old retail corridors like Albemarle Rd with high vacancy could be candidates for industrial redevelopment, with a focus on wholesale and other customer-facing users. Consumer-focused occupiers serving the local population want to be as close to the market as possible and will prioritize in-market buildings or build-to-suit.

Distribution and other large industrial development could locate on the corridor but closer to the I-485 interchange, not the study area. The I-485 interchange area represents one of the few areas remaining within Mecklenburg County that can accommodate site selection needs of larger warehouse and distribution users.

An executive summary of this study can be found in the appendix of this playbook.

**Stakeholder engagement,
marking findings, and existing
conditions inform the issues
and opportunities.**



Issues & Opportunities

Through stakeholder engagement, initial market findings, and existing conditions of the corridor and study area (15.4 square miles), the key issues and opportunities were identified. These were associated with Albemarle Road's strategic location between the former Eastland Mall redevelopment site and the rapidly growing and diversifying neighborhoods of East Charlotte. Four key themes emerged:

Business & Job Diversity

Corridor Aesthetics & Redevelopment

Families, Youth, and Seniors

Connectivity Options & Access



Business & Job Diversity

Initial assessment of the existing businesses and jobs offered in the corridor revealed a diversity in small, locally owned service and retail businesses, however the corridor is limited in employment opportunities that scale in worker income and skillset. The corridor also has few anchor institutions likely due to the historic commercial nature of the corridor and the lack of large-scale office development over the last few decades. Anchor institutions can provide more job diversity and career opportunities for work and also typically provide services like healthcare or education. Opportunity for diversifying businesses and jobs in the corridor by:

- Bringing family-supporting-wage jobs to the corridor and providing pathways to career opportunities.
- Linking office space to expanding employers and the local labor market.
- Preserving and supporting the corridor's business diversity and variety.



Aesthetics & Redevelopment

When asked how the corridor could improve, the corridor appearance was a common response. From the aging facades of commercial buildings and strip shopping centers, to the debris and trash that litters the road, sidewalks, and parking lots along the corridor, the growing consensus is that Albemarle Road would greatly benefit from beautification and investment. Opportunities for investing in corridor aesthetics and targeted redevelopment include:

- Targeting existing strip shopping centers as centers to grow small businesses while adding a mix of uses such as office and residential to support existing and future commercial activity.
- Aligning future development and redevelopment with a more urban form that promotes a mix of uses in a comfortable walkable environment.
- Improving the beautification and aesthetics of the corridor through coordinated efforts to mitigate trash, improve aesthetics, and protect existing tree canopy coverage.



Families, Youth, and Seniors

Home to the Mecklenburg County Albemarle Recreation Center and the Simmons YMCA, as well as nonprofit and faith-based organizations, the Albemarle Corridor has many services catering to families, youth, and seniors. However, through stakeholder engagement a consistent theme arose for the need for more targeted activities and programing, as well as community spaces to support these services. Opportunities for connecting activities, programing and resources include:

- Identifying gaps in activity and recreation for families, youth, and seniors.
- Connecting to and creating spaces and places for community interaction and entertainment.
- Integrating community spaces and programing in existing and future housing developments that support a range of housing options for all.



Connectivity Options & Access

Even with sidewalks existing along much of the corridor and signalized intersections at 8 of the major intersections (N. Sharon Amity, Reddman, Central, Executive Center, Farm Pond, Winterhaven, Regal Oaks, and W.T. Harris), Albemarle Road is a challenging and sometimes hostile environment to traverse for pedestrians, cyclists, and often for motorists as well. Averaging a traffic volume of 37,000 per day and classified as a 45 MPH major thoroughfare, Albemarle is State maintained road that is designed to move traffic efficiently through the area and has limited multi-modal options. Opportunities to improve connectivity and access throughout the corridor include:

- Improving transit connectivity and access through improved routes and rider amenities.
- Identifying and improving connections to key destinations with multi-modal options.
- Investing in all ages and abilities infrastructure that improves the accessibility of the corridor.





ERNEST MORENO PHOTOGRAPHY, 2021

Recommendations for Albemarle Road

Key Themes of Corridor Investment

Housing & Neighborhood Services

Community Safety

Infrastructure & Transportation

Urban Design

Workforce & Business Development

Recommendations for the Corridors of Opportunity are organized by five key categories for investments in corridors: Housing & Neighborhood Services, Community Safety, Transportation & Infrastructure, Urban Design, and Workforce & Business Development. These categories align with the City of Charlotte's organizational structure and goals.

For the Albemarle Road Playbook process, all identified strengths, weaknesses, issues, and opportunities were categorized this way. From those recommendations, key themes emerged unique to the Albemarle Road corridor.

Throughout the Playbook development process, the project team engaged with stakeholders to receive input. As the key themes emerged and recommendations were solidified, stakeholders provided input through a survey on prioritization of recommendations based on timing, funding, and community impact. This input will shape how the Playbook will be implemented.

Prioritization Survey Summary:

- Over 130 people took the recommendations and priorities survey that was offered in English and Spanish, and online and in paper format.
- The survey was open for a 5-week period.
- The survey gathered stakeholder input and their priorities for the over 160+ recommendations and project ideas already gathered from earlier engagement.

Housing & Neighborhood Services



The goal for the Albemarle Road corridor is to develop recommendations that address housing options, affordability, community identity and livability.

A.1 Community Initiatives

Identify and support community-based resources and programs:

- A.1.1** Create an official City of Charlotte Welcome Center for immigrants and refugees.
- A.1.2** Develop a community notice board that serves multiple language groups. Could partner with businesses and public spaces.
- A.1.3** Establish a community space to serve as an international center for programming, art, culture, and history celebrations.
- A.1.4** Utilize publicly owned facilities and Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation (MCPR) spaces to host resident-led programming.
- A.1.5** Expand the Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG) program to allow for communities that are not currently eligible (non-HOA or HUD properties).
- A.1.6** Develop a process and program for language access as a component of cross-cultural engagement strategies to build partnerships with people who represent different language communities.

A.2 Housing

Develop a range of housing options and types to ensure a diversity of affordability:

- A.2.1** Develop a Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) Strategy for Corridors of Opportunity to preserve, maintain, and best utilize existing housing stock.

A.2.2 Utilize tax credits to support existing rental property owners with preservation of units; provide funds for upfits and improvements; energy efficiency.

A.2.3 Identify and plan for future of NOAH multi-family properties at risk of redevelopment, specifically those located in areas of high potential for investment (Eastland adjacent, large acreage properties).

A.2.4 Target housing affordability by increasing range of housing types and affordability. Investigate opportunities to acquire NOAH properties geographically focused in the Corridors of Opportunity. Explore deed restriction options with partner agencies.

A.2.5 Target housing diversity by working with potential developers to build new and infill housing that addresses a range of housing types and affordability.

A.2.6 Improve apartment amenities by targeting apartment communities with limited or lacking amenities for tenants to include spaces for playgrounds, open space, and community areas. Expand NMG program to support this initiative.

A.2.7 Housing Assistance Program - Coordinate through Staying in Place program to assist families with rising rent and cost of living so they may stay in place.

A.2.8 Partner with the non-profit sector to develop strategy to fund and implement ADUs (accessory dwelling units) in targeted geographies for new and existing development.

A.2.9 Providing information about renters' rights at apartment complexes, proposed Resource/Welcome center, and proposed Community Board.

A.3 Youth initiatives

Develop programs and resources for youth and families.

A.3.1 Coordinate with MCPR and nonprofits to promote sport activities throughout the corridor, targeting apartment communities with large CMS student enrollments.

A.3.2 Partner with YMCA Partnerships for Families to expand Youth and Teen Services within the corridor.

A.3.3 Support Our Bridge to expand offerings in this area.

A.3.4 Work with soccer academy at Eastland to involve and support youth from the corridor in program offerings.

A.3.5 Support Project 658 to expand soccer offerings to youth within the corridor.

A.3.6 Support the promotion of the ASC Culture Blocks within the corridor.

A.3.7 Identify and secure space for artists to develop programming for youth with interests in the arts.

A.3.8 Increase youth activities and programming during out-of-school times through the Meck Rec and Roll (MCPR program) at nearby parks, Albemarle Road Recreation Center and/or apartment communities with high youth populations.

A.3.9 Increase youth and senior programming at MCPR facilities that target various language communities.

A.3.10 Coordinate with MCPR and nonprofits to promote entertainment activities throughout the corridor, targeting apartment communities with large CMS student enrollment.

Ranking

When considering housing choices, stakeholders were asked what challenges they or their neighbors may face in having access to safe, healthy, and stable housing in neighborhoods?

Maintenance ranked highest.

Community Safety

The goal for the corridor is to create a sense of security for all who live, work, and play along Albemarle Road.



ERNESTO MORENO PHOTOGRAPHY, 2021

B.1 Enforcement & Engagement

Through enforcement and engagement, improve the safety and well-being for all who call Albemarle Road home:

B.1.1 Work with CMPD to enforce and address panhandling at intersections.

B.1.2 Study panhandling behavior and work with community partners and business organizations to develop a strategy for abatement.

B.1.3 Expand and support CMPD engagement programs such as Cops & Barbers, Hoops with Cops, etc. Support officers with language assistance services.

B.2 Social Services

Targeted and coordinated approach for addressing the needs of all residents:

B.2.1 Coordinate government and nonprofit programs and services with targeting promotion.

B.2.2 Target social service providers to relocate to corridor and utilize vacant office space.

B.2.3 Utilize a community notice board of services and providers located on the corridor.

B.2.4 Work with area providers to target homeless camps and provide resources to help stabilize unhoused residents with support programs, housing, and job resources

B.3 Youth initiatives

Support local organizations and law enforcement led preventative and restorative programs for youth and families.

B.3.1 Support youth services providers that target prevention and safety (YMCA, Project 658, etc.).

B.3.2 Support of existing prevention services to support youth in schools.

Ranking

Stakeholders were asked to rank which activities or programs are important and missing in the area.

Youth activities and resources ranked highest.

CASE STUDY

Project 658

Located in Charlotte, Project 658 is a Christian ministry providing services for at-risk families in Charlotte, moving them toward sustainability; with a key focus on the international and refugee communities.

Relief

Project 658 has several ministry projects aimed at providing relief and stability for families:

- Feeding Project – providing 20,000 free meals each year to families
- Smith Family Wellness Center offering free medical and mental health services

- Fulfilling furniture needs through organizational partnerships

Reform

Caring for the needs of the next generation through seeking social reform and systemic change for the future. Project 658 intentionally invests in the next generation to break the cycle of poverty.

- Childcare (including early childhood development and Pre-K curriculum) provided for children of ministry program students
- Character-based sports programs (Street Soccer 658) and a soccer court in the community for youth and adults to play

Development

Addressing needs of the next ten years by empowering others towards self sustainability.

Project 658 has projects that are aimed at purposefully empowering others toward self-sustainability.

- English as a Second Language (ESL) classes
- Culinary Arts School
- Make Welcome sewing classes

Service

Project 658 aims to create a culture of service and opportunities for the body of Christ to serve our neighbors practically with the love of Christ. We believe in serving through time, talent and treasure.

- Daily, weekly and monthly volunteer opportunities to serve through our ministry projects
- Family partnership with families in the community to provide mentoring and friendship
- Apartment community partnerships and outreaches



IMAGE SOURCE: WWW.PROJECT658.COM

Infrastructure & Transportation



C.1 Bike & Pedestrian Improvements

Prioritize projects that improve safety and connectivity.

C.1.1 Identify opportunities to improve access into and out of neighborhoods for pedestrians and cyclists.

C.1.2 Identify pedestrian improvements for crossing of Albemarle for residents of Sailboat Bay Apartments.

Implement planned safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the corridor (See Appendix II).

C.2 Transit Improvements

Improve the bus transit experience, route frequency, and rider amenities.

C.2.1 Create a local bus route along Albemarle Road with enhanced design.

The goal for the Albemarle Road corridor is to implement projects that address multiple transportation modes, public transit, the built environment, and the connectivity between them.

C.2.2 Maintain Eastland Transit Center presence in Central/ Albemarle area.

C.2.3 Explore ability to provide free, public Wi-Fi at mobility hubs.

C.2.4 Explore feasibility of on-demand mobility hub zones.

C.2.5 Explore bus stop locations and relocate to align with crosswalks and safe access points to destinations.

C.2.6 Explore feasibility of reduced-fare or fare-free access for residents or employees.

C.2.7 Continue service frequency on local routes (Route 9) and expand 10-minute frequency to weekends.

C.2.8 Connect corridor and Transit Center to nearest future Silver Line station (Sharon Amity).

C.2.9 Tie in transit improvements to Albemarle Cultural Trail and Coordinate with Art-in-Transit program.

C.3 Public Investment & Safety

Prioritize infrastructure investment in historically under-invested neighborhoods.

C.3.1 Upgrading existing streetlights to LED.

C.3.2 Install new streetlights on Albemarle Rd (Wilgrove Mint Hill Church Rd to I-485).

C.4 Traffic Safety

Prioritize and invest in road and intersection projects that improve the connectivity, safety, and function of Albemarle Road for all users.

Implement planned traffic safety projects throughout the corridor (See Appendix II).

C.5 Maintenance & Aesthetics

Improve the appearance of the corridor through code enforcement, maintenance, and beautification efforts.

C.5.1 Address litter control and beautification for Albemarle, a state-owned road, through the establishment a Keep Charlotte Beautiful approach for Albemarle to focus on routine litter maintenance. Case Study: Chicago Gateway Green Expressway Gardens Program

C.5.2 Partner with code enforcement to educate business and property owner on

responsibilities and resources for maintenance and beautification of properties.

C.5.3 Coordinate with code enforcement to address noncompliant signage in ROW, on street poles, trees, etc.

C.5.4 Work with code enforcement and property owners to address illegal dumping. Specifically, Executive Center Dr. and Farm Pond Lane parcel.

C.5.5 Work with code enforcement to identify properties and businesses that are out of compliance with the sign ordinance and building code.

C.5.6 Identify through the UDO and zoning districts where the appropriate locations for gaming businesses to be located.

C.5.7 Identify and cite properties on the corridor that are overgrown, unoccupied, and unmaintained on a routine schedule.

Ranking

Considering transportation options, stakeholders were asked what would inspire them to walk, bike, or ride transit along Albemarle Road if all options were made safer?

Connected greenways and multi-use paths ranked highest.

CASE STUDY

Chicago Gateway Green

Chicago Gateway Green's Expressway Partnership Program is comprised of more than 100 gardens that cover almost 150 acres on all major Chicago expressways.



Their Mission

Chicago Gateway Green is a non-profit, public-private partnership dedicated to the greening and beautification of Chicago's expressways, gateways and neighborhoods through landscape enhancement, litter and graffiti removal and the installation of public art.

The Expressway Partnership Program

The Expressway Partnership Program turns unmanicured expressway embankments into ribbons of green parkways weaving through the city of Chicago.

More than 100 gardens comprise the Program, covering almost 150 acres of roadside landscapes on all major expressways leading into and out of the city. Each garden is carefully planned using native shrubs, trees, and perennials that require fewer resources and are well adapted to the harsh roadside growing conditions.

Chicago Gateway Green work closely with professional landscape crews to provide plant care, weed control, mowing, and litter removal from April through October to ensure the gardens always look their best.

Their Partners

Socially responsible businesses and community organizations partner with the nonprofit organization to sponsor expressway gardens. In doing so, partners showcase their pride for Chicago, support a high profile greening initiative, and provide beautiful views to hundreds of thousands of motorists daily.

Chicago Gateway Green's exclusive agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation creates a unique marketing opportunity, and partnerships are 100% tax-deductible.



Urban Design

The goal for the corridor is to improve and enhance the physical design of the public realm as it relates to buildings, streets, and the public spaces in between.



ERNESTO MORENO PHOTOGRAPHY, 2021

D.1 Development & Redevelopment

Ensure future development and redevelopment support a mix of uses in a walkable environment:

D.1.1 Ensure Future Place Type Policy Mapping focuses on creating dense walkable nodes along the entire corridor.

D.1.2 Re-envision Charlotte East office park as a multi-use neighborhood activity center. Work with property owners to identify opportunities for infill and retrofitting underutilized buildings and parking for other uses to attract a variety of tenants.

D.1.3 Target investment in underutilized parcels to support future place types. Ex. 5800 Albemarle (former Upton's Department Store)

D.1.4 Support ongoing investments and reuse of the former Eastland Mall site.

D.1.5 Target properties surrounding the Eastland Redevelopment project to plan infill/redevelopment that enhances that area as a dense, walkable node to support Future Place Types Policy.

D.1.6 Focus investments at Sharon Amity & Albemarle to develop a dense, walkable node.

D.1.7 Develop master plan for future investment at Central and Albemarle node to include public space and gateway for the Albemarle corridor.

D.1.8 Target mixed use development at intersection nodes, adjacent to existing multifamily, and on underutilized parcels.

D.1.9 Re-envision aging centers for redevelopment with mixed-use development that supports Future Place Types Policy.

D.1.10 Reinvest/rehab existing buildings to support a range of business types through the Business Matching Grant Program.

Urban Design Continued



D.1.11 With redevelopment and new development, prioritize human scale with smaller block lengths, wide sidewalks, street trees, and public space incorporated within the development.

D.1.12 Prioritize connections to Campbell Creek Greenway from proposed development and redevelopment.

D.1.13 Work with property owners to identify opportunities for infill and retrofitting underutilized spaces and parking for other uses to attract a variety of tenants and improve function and aesthetics of property.

D.2 Placemaking

Celebrate the character and diverse cultures of the corridor through branding, public art, and wayfinding.

D.2.1 Develop a brand and wayfinding system for the corridor that celebrates the unique history, cultures, and character of the area.

D.2.2 Identify opportunities and locations for public art along the corridor to include temporary, semi-permanent, and permanent installations.

D.2.3 Identify and map key historical and culture sites within/ adjacent to the corridor for the Albemarle Rd. Cultural Trail.

D.2.4 Work with property owners to identify opportunities for infill and retrofitting underutilized spaces and parking for other uses to attract a variety of tenants and improve function and aesthetics of property. Ex. Compare Foods mural by Irisol González (pictured).

D.3 Public Space

Ensure the development and integration of new public spaces to include parks, plazas, trails, and greenways.

D.3.1 Develop a public space master plan for the corridor to identify locations for green space/ preserves, parks, plazas, and privately-owned public spaces (POPS).

D.3.2 Identify Central and Albemarle ROW as a gateway opportunity with branding and wayfinding.

D.3.3 Work with property owners of large parking lots to redevelop underutilized spaces for public space, multi-use paths, and ROW improvements.

D.3.4 Prioritize funding and implementation of the planned Eastland Park and layer with programming.

D.3.5 Prioritize funding and implementation of Campbell Creek Greenway extension south to Idlewild Road and connect into McAlpine Creek Greenway and Campbell Creek Park.

D.3.6 Identify location and fund new skate park location for the community who utilized and built the skate park at the former Eastland Mall site.

D.3.7 Identify locations for skate spots: linear skating facilities that fit into other spaces.

D.3.8 Prioritize investment and implementation of new 40-ac Reddman Road Park.

D.3.9 Renovate existing Albemarle Road Park with shelters, loop trail, and outdoor fitness area.

D.3.10 Renovate existing Albemarle Road Recreation Center facility and expand programming.

D.3.11 Renovate existing Campbell Creek Neighborhood Park.

D.3.12 Ensure bike/pedestrian connections to and through existing apartment developments to key destinations and public spaces.

D.3.13 Ensure bike/pedestrian connections from the future Reddman Road Park to the Coventry Woods Community.

D.3.14 Prioritize connections to greenway from existing apartments, businesses, schools, and organizations such as churches, the YMCA, and others.

D.3.15 Pilot a Privately-owned Public Spaces (POPS) for the corridor. Work with businesses that have underutilized spaces and/or parking that could be utilized to accommodate outdoor dining, community programming, and other public uses.

D.4 Tree Canopy

Protect and enhance the existing tree canopy and invest in tree plantings throughout the corridor.

D.4.1 Target residential neighborhoods with quality tree canopies for preservation through education and resources.

D.4.2 Target key parcels and locations with existing canopy or opportunity for reforestation for the Tree Canopy Preservation Program for conservation easements.

D.4.3 Develop a parking lot tree planting program for small businesses to improve their parking lots through upfits and tree plantings through the Business Matching Grant Program and TreesCharlotte.

D.4.4 Develop a streetscape master plan for Albemarle Road corridor to include planting strips and potential public spaces.

Ranking

Considering ideas of making a sense of place through art, programming, and design of public spaces in commercial nodes along Albemarle Road, stakeholders were asked to rank which aspects are most important.

Creating flexible public spaces ranked the highest.

Workforce & Business Development



E.1 Business Diversity

Ensure a balanced mix of goods and services along the corridor.

E.1.1 Implement the Albemarle Road Treasures – a small business identification recognition program. Utilize artist created medallions to identify businesses in the program, as well as an online map.

E.1.2 Target growth industries including professional services, health care and small scale industrial to create higher-wage opportunities.

E.1.3 Encourage small and local businesses to form a merchant's association to advocate for retail and business needs; explore the opportunity to create an organization based on food and beverage industry businesses.

E.1.4 Partner with major employers, local business development organizations, and private donors to create an entrepreneurial accelerator program and/or small business resource center.

Activities that connect residents to jobs, businesses to resources and customers, and improve the viability of the corridor as a great place to do business.

E.1.5 Build or incentivize private developers to build small commercial spaces for lease, i.e., micro-shops of 400-1200 square feet and shared common spaces to create lower-cost opportunities for local retail and service businesses.

E.1.6 Target strip centers with high occupancy with resources for reinvestment for rehab and renewal of aging buildings, signage, parking lots, and landscaping.

E.1.7 Work with international grocer to develop international food hall and market to support local, immigrant food retailers and restaurants, and match with business support services for participating vendors.

E.2 Business Resources

Support businesses with resources that support growth and success.

E.2.1 Create a targeted marketing campaign for local business resource and training programs such as Amp UP, NXT CLT, Scale Up CLT and Innovate Charlotte to increase utilization and participation of existing corridor businesses. National League of Cities (NLC), CoC servicing Hispanic business owners to target Albemarle Rd. (Prospera, LACCA)

E.2.2 Pilot a program for NLC pilot to be located at their offices.

Support relocation through interior upfit. Support a program to provide business services.

E.2.3 Work with business owners impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to negotiate flexible commercial lease terms based on tenant profit, to preserve small businesses and prevent vacant storefronts.

E.2.4 Connect local community development funders and financial partners to local businesses and entrepreneurs who need capital for building improvements, business capital and operations expansion (LISC, SelfHelp, and private funding).

E.2.5 Improve access to capital for micro-entrepreneurs through lending circles and money pools.

E.2.6 Partner with businesses to support local artists through installations and galleries within businesses to increase artist exposure and improve business aesthetics.

E.2.7 Leverage stable and growing anchor institutions to support small businesses growth by:

- Hiring local residents,
- Purchasing goods and materials from local vendors,

- Providing talent development and training,
- Incubating new businesses,
- Advising and providing technical assistance, and
- Leveraging real estate to support local retail, affordable housing, and other community priorities.

E.3 Cost of Living

Support programs that address the rising costs of living for households on the corridor.

E.3.1 Identify family-supporting wage and high demand professions and align career technical education and workforce development programs and curricula to grow the local talent pipeline.

E.4 Employment & Job Growth

Support programs that address the rising costs for businesses. Support life-long learning and upward mobility with resources and programs for businesses and families. Support businesses expanding into the corridor or hiring of residents.

Workforce & Business Development Continued



ERNESTO MORENO PHOTOGRAPHY, 2021

E.4.1 Provide tools, that could include incentives, for employers who hire from the Albemarle corridor labor market and employers who expand or open new business space in the corridor study area.

E.4.2 Align Albemarle corridor talent market with future employment pathways and programs developed through the strategic employment framework Hire Charlotte.

E.4.3 Advance opportunities to better connect workforce and talent development programs with East Charlotte labor market. Explore creating additional workforce development and training programs within the corridor.

E.4.4 Identify opportunities for MWSBE utilization among contractors on large redevelopment sites.

E.4.5 Explore the feasibility of converting some commercial spaces to small-scale, flex or warehouse space for businesses in manufacturing/logistics.

E.4.6 Identify family-supporting wage and high demand professions and align career technical education and workforce development programs and curricula to grow the local talent pipeline. Case study: YouthForce NOLA

E.5 Maintenance & Aesthetics

Provide resources for maintenance and investment in businesses along the corridor.

E.5.1 Prioritize shopping centers, strip centers and retail plazas in need of building improvements

and rehab for business matching grant funds to update façades, modernize interiors and security enhancements.

E.5.2 Identify shopping centers that are obsolete and target for redevelopment into mixed-use centers with jobs, neighborhood retail & services.

Ranking

Stakeholders were asked to prioritize activities that would have the biggest impact on expanding economic mobility on the corridor.

Creating locating higher-wage jobs and providing career-focused educational programs for youth ranked the highest.

CASE STUDY

YouthForce NOLA

YouthForce NOLA is an education, business, and civic collaborative that prepares New Orleans public school students for successful pursuit of high-wage, high-demand career pathways and facilitates systems change to ensure equitable outcomes.

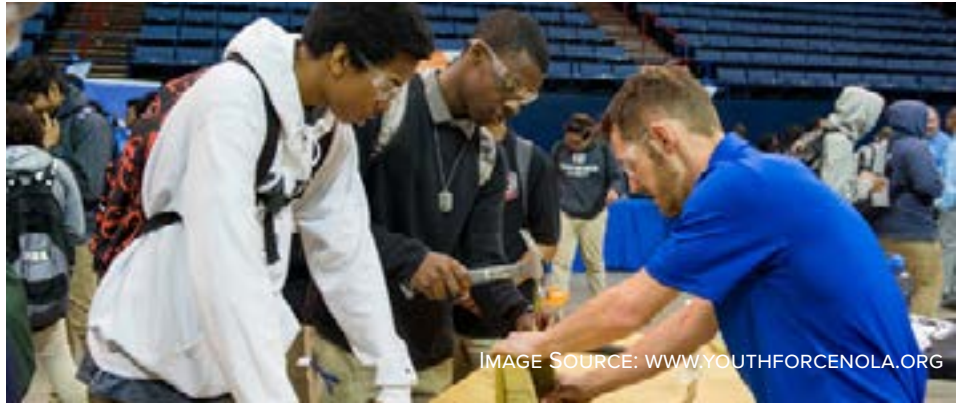


IMAGE SOURCE: WWW.YOUTHFORCENOLA.ORG

Vision

New Orleans public school graduates to thrive economically as a result of being the most sought-after talent for hiring and advancement in our region's high-wage, fast-growing industries.

Mission

To ensure that every New Orleans high school graduate is skilled, connected and confident, and on the path to succeed in the 21st century economy.

Objectives

- Bring together economic, educational and civic leaders to build a network of programs and policies that benefit our city's public school students.
- Build a system of education-to-prosperity pathway to help facilitate real-world skills growth in schools that will ensure economic success for our young people.

The Program

YouthForce partners with employers in high-wage industries to expose students to different career pathways and take their first step into the workforce.

They focus on three pillars that come together to form what is called Career Pathway Programs of Study (CPPS): an integrated student experience both inside and outside the classroom where they receive career exposure, skills building, and work experience.



Work Experience

Meaningful, work-based opportunities to apply and learn skills in the real-world, as well as build professional networks.



Technical Skills

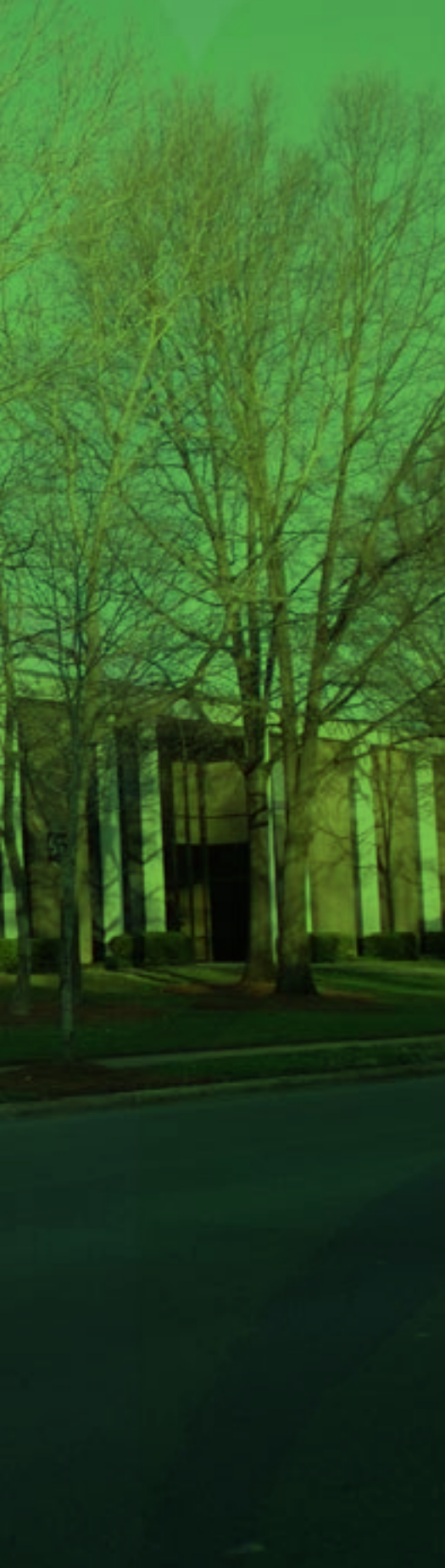
Opportunities to earn credentials - certificates that demonstrate our young people have developed the skills that employers want.



Soft Skills

Skills that ensure success in any work or life context, with a focus on collaboration, communication, planning for success, social awareness, personal mindset, and problem solving.





Implementation

The Playbook's robust set of recommendations are all linked to specific comments and data collected throughout the engagement process. To prioritize initial action and investment, the Playbook puts forward six big ideas that organize and layer multiple recommendations.

These six ideas are built on the assets that exist on Albemarle today and help strengthen the corridor's identity, market feasibility and livability.

Playbook in Action

Prioritize recommendations based on community stakeholder feedback:

- Use playbook study findings to inform needs and opportunities
- Identify eager and active partners on corridor

Identify funding opportunities based on project goal, needs and resources:

- Promote and share playbook findings and recommendations to community partners and supporters who may have funding opportunities available
- Develop frameworks for projects and programs so they are ready when funding opportunities arise

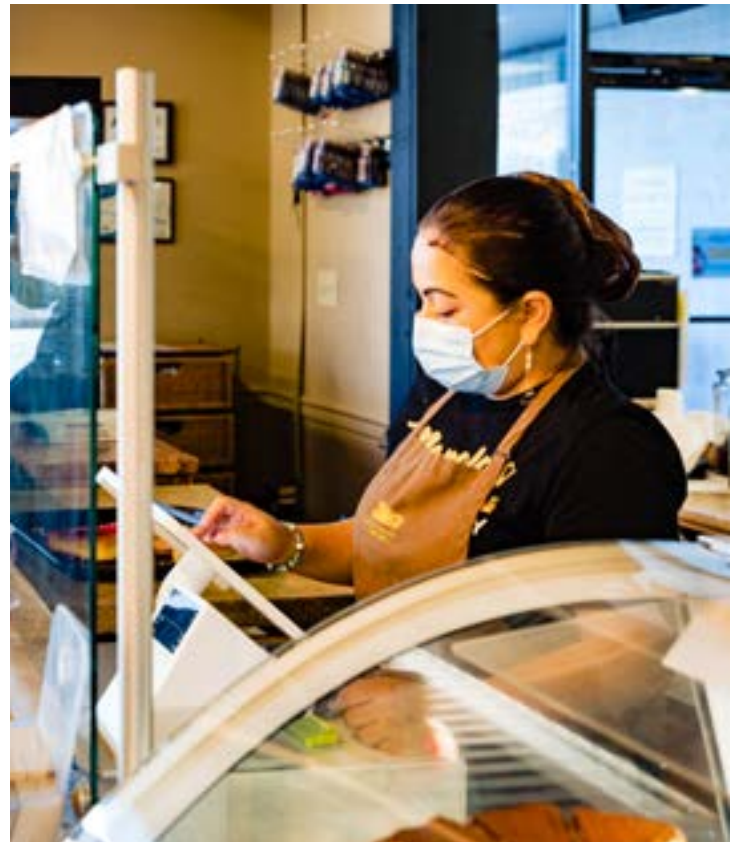
Implement projects with partners and stakeholders:

- Ongoing stakeholder engagement with partners, residents and business community



Live/Work Albemarle

- Link job placement programs to the corridor's current talent market - Opportunity Employers Program pilot corridor
- Create a NOAH strategy to preserve affordable housing stock
- Prioritize homeownership assistance for OEP participants
- Small business support organization office expansion
- Transit access and mobility hub



International Food Hall

- Business incubator for food retail/restaurants from East Charlotte
- Host a small business program cohort for potential tenants with an ethnic food business as sponsor
- Find an experienced operator and underwrite rent and operational costs
- Co-program cultural hub for community events and programs





Albemarle Cultural Trail

- Pedestrian and bike connections, intersection and crosswalk improvements
- Prioritize completion of planned overland connections and bike routes
- Sidewalks, walking paths, greenways and trails can be linked to create safe east-west pathways
- Public Art and Public Space Master Plans to identify opportunities for incorporating art, culture and micro-commerce into infrastructure
- Cohesive wayfinding to key destinations
- Tree Canopy Preservation Program expansion



Retail Center Rehab

- Support thriving strip centers as clusters of vibrant, small and local business destinations
- Shopping Center Upfit and Safety grant for upgrades and beautification
- Re-imagine obsolete or underutilized strip centers into other uses
- Industrial flex space
- creative office
- Food Hall concept
- Incubator and coworking spaces for small businesses





Local Business/Local Art

- Expand public art and corridor beautification opportunities
- Create matchmaking program between commercial property owners in need of upfits and public artists/designers to co-create building improvement plan
- Provide training on façade and building improvements, code enforcement, placemaking and beautification



Community Connectors

- Language access protocol for city engagement
- Recruit and train facilitators based on language needs in an area
- Create communications material for facilitators to share
- Co-program Food Hall with cultural event center and community-led programming



