



Freedom Wilkinson Corridor

 CITY of CHARLOTTE

2024 | **Playbook**



Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor Playbook

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The primary intent of this Playbook is to establish a shared, cohesive vision for the Freedom/Wilkinson corridor that is project, program, and partnership-based. The projects prioritized in this document were developed with thoughtful input from the community and provide clear direction for making informed, near-and long-term funding decisions that align with the corridor’s vision for the future.

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Acknowledgments

Project Management Team

The Project Management Team was led by the City of Charlotte’s Planning, Design & Development Department with support from the Corridors of Opportunity team.

- Will Linville, Project Manager, Urban Design Center
- Justin Ritchey, Urban Design Center
- Madison Dugar, Urban Design Center
- Erin Gillespie, Economic Development
- Aisha Abdus-Sabur, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Walta Blackmon, Economic Development
- Beverlee Sanders, Communication and Marketing
- Faith Ellerbe
- Gardine Wilson
- Hannah Beavers
- Ivy Cuttino
- Jeet Pawar
- Josiah House
- Kaley Fry
- Kathy Cuttino
- Kevin Leonard
- Khrystal McGrant
- Kieth Anderson
- Kwasi Amponsa
- LaTonya Steele
- Leondra Garrett
- Liz Alls
- Mark Talbot
- Mashin McIntosh
- Michelle Jennings-Anderson
- Pete Patel
- Renee Cox
- Risa Murray
- Roshan Bhula
- Sam Groom
- Shawn Moore
- Stephanie Logan
- Tiffany Chery
- Traci Jones
- Wanda Long
- Frank Byers
- Gweendolyn Johnson
- Henry Roela
- Jamar Davis
- Jonny Burnett
- Kai Spence
- Kathleen Bambrick Meier
- Khrystal McGmon
- Kieondra Jackson
- Kim Givens
- La Verne Partlow
- Leonard Johnson
- Linda Brooks
- Lynn Cuddy
- Mary Ellen McKay
- Melvin Lynch
- Paul Scarborough
- Perneice Mendez
- Reggie Crowder
- Renoate Moore
- Roger Green
- Ruffin Scarborough
- Sharon Blocker
- Sherry Waters
- Stephanie Stenglein
- Toni Martin
- Valerie Adams
- William McNeely

Project Consultants

- Wily, stakeholder engagement and facilitation
- QC Family Tree, creative engagement and consulting

Corridor Community Stakeholders

- A. Lee
- Alan Barnes
- Andrea VanBeek
- Angela Berry
- Anthony Grillo
- Brandon Brown
- Carlos Zepada
- Chris DeBerry
- Cynthia Harrison
- Daniel Yeboh
- Dave Campbell
- David Berry
- Donna Fair
- Dumar Hemingway
- Edwardo A. Stanly
- Alaa Bou Ghanem
- Alisa Moore
- Angela Ambroise
- Angela James
- Beverly Davis
- Bunny Gregory
- Charles Jones
- Christopher Capel
- Cynthia Littlejohn
- Dankaj Patel
- David B. Huffman
- Dawn Anthony
- Donnell Gardner
- Ebone Lockett
- Evelyn Minter

Corridors of Opportunity Implementation Team

The Implementation Team was composed of staff from various departments from the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. The Implementation Team was divided up into six workstream themes.

Diverse and Resilient Economic Opportunity

- Alexis Gordon, Economic Development
- Toluwalase Ibikunle, Planning, Design & Development
- Arta Osmanaj, Economic Development
- Christi Floyd, Economic Development
- Jackie Horton, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Lorena S Gomez, Mecklenburg County Business Diversity & Inclusion
- Jamar Davis, Innovation & Technology

Housing Access for All

- Star Webb-Allen, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Diane Adams, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Hanna Kirlin, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Jackie Tynan, Innovation & Technology
- Julia Martin, City Manager’s Office
- Nan Petersen, Planning, Design & Development
- Warren Wooten, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Millicent Powell, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Charlenea Duncan, Housing & Neighborhood Services

Retain Culture and Identity

- Erin Chantry, Urban Design Center
- Jackie Clare, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Kristi Harpst, Planning, Design & Development
- Laura Bandara, Urban Design Center
- Charlotte Lamb, City Manager’s Office
- Priya Sircar, City Manager’s Office
- Philip Freeman, Housing & Neighborhood Services

Integrated Natural and Built Environment

- Andrew Ausel, Planning, Design & Development
- Tara Moore, Planning, Design & Development
- Bert Lynn, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation
- Erin Oliverio, General Services
- Jordan Miller, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water
- Katie Daughtry, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation
- Laurie Reid, General Services
- Robyn Byers, General Services

Safe and Equitable Mobility

- Samantha Miller, General Services
- Anthony Tagliaferri, Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Brian Horton, Charlotte Area Transit System
- Bruce Jones, Charlotte Area Transit System
- Drew Ritter, CDOT
- Gwen Cook, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation
- Katie Lloyd, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation
- Julian Burton, CDOT
- Irene Ivie, Mecklenburg County Public Health
- Corey Watt, CDOT
- Jamila Freelain, Housing & Neighborhood Services

Healthy, Safe, and Active Communities

- Tammatha Clodfelter, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD)
- Andrew Bowen, Innovation & Technology
- Pernell Brown, Innovation & Technology
- Capt. Stephen Iveybele, CMPD
- Capt. Stephen Flatt, CMPD
- Darneka Waters, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation
- Jamila Freelain, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Randy Harris, Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Robert Nesbit, Mecklenburg County Public Health
- Tracie Campbell, Mecklenburg County Public Health
- Karen Pelletier, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services
- Quaneke Falls, Mecklenburg County Violence Prevention

A Corridor Introduction from QC Family Tree

QC Family Tree is a neighborhood-based community organization rooted in the Enderly Park neighborhood of the Freedom/Wilkinson corridor. QCFT has led cultural organizing, engagement and community building for over 18 years. Building off their expertise and longtime presence in the corridor, QCFT led creative engagement efforts throughout the playbook process. QCFT designed and hosted creative activities at each public meeting to encourage thoughtful and expressive feedback on playbook concepts. Co-director Helms Jarrell kicked off the Corridor's final playbook engagement meeting on December 7 with the following spoken-word experience:

“Take a moment to settle in. Find a comfortable position for yourself where you can be alert but relaxed. Take a few breaths together. Bring your attention to the soles of your feet, feel them as they rest on the ground. Feel the work they are doing and their connection to the ground.

Imagine it is a warm day and that you are standing or sitting outside. Imagine that the walls of this building are gone; that there is no Berry Hill or Camp Green. Instead, all around you are giant oak trees, maples, and poplars stretching over you. They are a hundred feet tall and have trunks so large that you can't wrap your arms around them. The trees are dropping their last fall leaves.

There are paths through the trees used for travel and hunting. There is corn and squash growing on the banks of streams and rivers planted by the yeh is-WAH h'reh, or “people of the river” who would later be called the Catawba who have been in this area for around 200 generations. It has only been in the past 15 or so generations that Europeans have been here.

The land in this area didn't lend itself to planting indigo and sugar, like in the coastal plains of North Carolina. Europeans still brought enslaved people who cleared the forests and leveled land for development and other agriculture. As the land was transformed into grids of ownership, the smallpox pandemic began to attack the Catawba peoples.

After the Revolutionary war, the land held by the Catawba was cut back to one square quarter of a mile in the unratified Treaty at Nations Ford, which is less than the Enderly Park neighborhood where I live. Meanwhile, many enslaved people used the war to escape and disrupt the slavery economy. Many also joined the British army who promised emancipation.

A rural community was sparked with the establishment of a US Military base, Camp Greene in 1917. Houses and farms followed the short-lived base and the community was mostly white, blue-collar and middle class with home purchases supported by federal subsidies from the GI Bill and the federal housing authority loan programs.

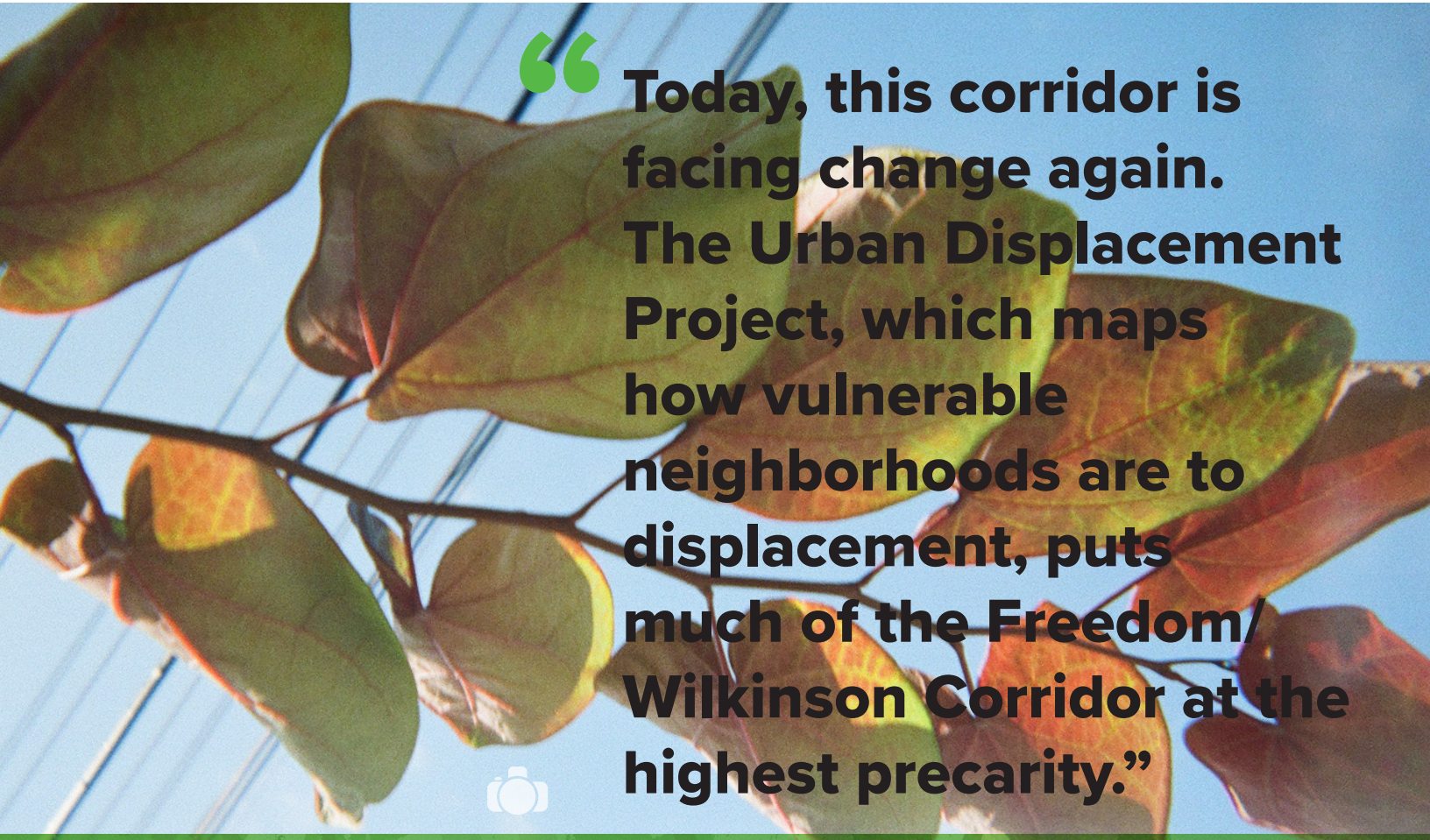
In 1959, the federal government terminated the tribal status of all native nations. In just over a decade, the Catawba began organizing to reinstate their federal status. In 1993, they won status and a land claim just over the border in South Carolina, with pockets of land in this area as well. The Catawba continue to retain land and rebuild in the region.

In the 1960s, big plans were made to transform downtown Charlotte through a federal program called urban renewal, which would allow white suburban residents easier access to city centers while tearing down Black neighborhoods which were deemed slums. The Brooklyn neighborhood was

home to about 9,000 African American residents. One person remembered how residents were so upset about the plans, always out on the streets speaking against it. Brooklyn was cut up by putting in 277 and 77. Displaced residents need new places to live, so white realtors started practicing something called blockbusting on the west side of Charlotte. They would call white homeowners and try to get them to sell their homes because they said Black people were moving in. They'd then either flip the homes and sell them above market-rate or use them as over-priced rentals. By the 1980s, Enderly Park was predominantly African American.

Today, this corridor is facing change again. The Urban Displacement project, which maps how vulnerable neighborhoods are to displacement puts much of the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor at the highest precarity. As Charlotte grows and people look for low land value with a mostly renter community, this area becomes more and more attractive. Despite this, key anchors hold their place by being active in neighborhood organizations, planting prized fruit trees, gathering at multiple places of worship and providing community care through multi-generational centers of culture and community.

Now, I invite you to bring your attention back to your feet and how all of this history flows through the ground where you are. From the oak trees to the maps of homeownership rates and everything in between. Now, shift your attention to how you made your way here. What histories and experiences shape how you came to be sitting in this room today. **Out of the infinite threads that created the conditions for you to be here today, what are the ones that are most important?”**



“Today, this corridor is facing change again. The Urban Displacement Project, which maps how vulnerable neighborhoods are to displacement, puts much of the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor at the highest precarity.”



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Corridors Framework

Corridors Themes

Project Process


Overview

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 \$24.5 million to a new program called Corridors of Opportunity. This new program directs public and private investment in six priority corridors, of which Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor is one. The playbook falls under the Corridors of Opportunity program and will serve as the strategic action plan for investment. This 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 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.

The primary goal is to establish a shared vision for Freedom Drive and Wilkinson Boulevard as a vibrant corridor in 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.

As you’re reading through the document, you will notice photos with a . Those images were taken by youth and families within the QC Family Tree program with disposable cameras and have been included throughout the document.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

The primary goal is to establish a shared vision for Freedom Drive and Wilkinson Boulevard as a vibrant corridor in the city with a focus on improving public safety, enhancing the overall character of the corridor, jump starting economic development initiatives and coordinating multi-modal transportation options.

Throughout the document, you’ll see images of the corridor taken by residents as part of our engagement process. Look for the camera icon  to identify these photos.



Corridor Framework

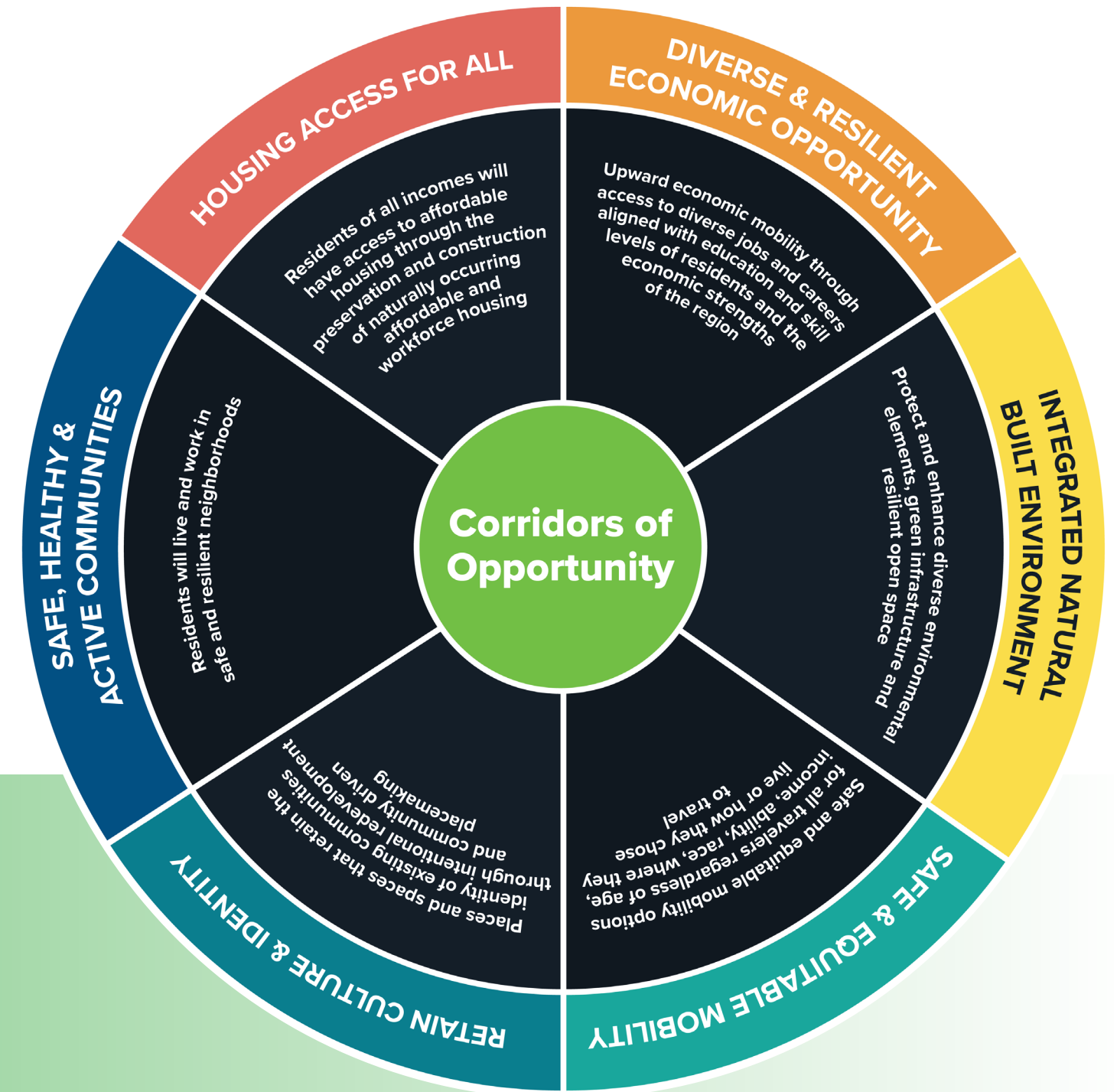
The Corridors of Opportunity program utilizes six themes as a framework to identify projects, programs and partnerships, guide community investment, and assist with prioritization and implementation.

Corridors Themes

The Corridors of Opportunity program focuses on six of the ten goals from the Charlotte Future 2040 Plan that best align with the program's framework. These six themes converge with the city's long-range goals and will ensure that project implementation is consistent, organized and efficient. The six themes are:

- Housing Access for All
- Economic Opportunity
- Healthy, Safe, and Active Communities
- Integrated and Built Environment
- Safe and Equitable Mobility
- Retain Culture and Identity

Corridor Framework Diagram



Corridor Themes

Housing Access for All

Charlotte will ensure opportunities for residents of all incomes to access affordable housing through the preservation of naturally occurring affordable and workforce housing and increasing the number of affordable and workforce housing units through new construction.



Integrated and Built Environment

Charlotte will protect and enhance its surface water quality, tree canopy, and natural areas with a variety of trees, plantings, green infrastructure, green building practices and open space at different scales throughout the entire community as a component of sustainable city infrastructure that addresses the threat of climate change.



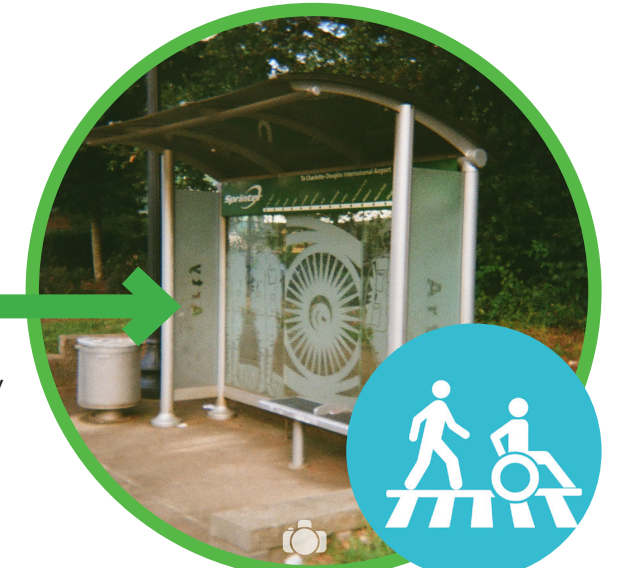
Economic Opportunity

Charlotteans will have opportunity for upward economic mobility through access to a diverse mix of jobs and careers that align with education and skill levels of residents and the economic strengths of the region.



Safe and Equitable Mobility

Charlotte will provide safe and equitable mobility options for all travelers regardless of age, income, ability, race, where they live, or how they choose to travel. An integrated system of transit and tree-shaded bikeways, sidewalks, shared-use paths and streets will support a sustainable, connected, prosperous, and innovative network that connects all Charlotteans to each other, jobs, housing, amenities, goods, services and the region.



Healthy, Safe, and Active Communities

All Charlotteans will live and work in safe and resilient neighborhoods that enable healthy and active lifestyles by reducing exposure to harmful environmental contaminants, expanding and improving the quality of tree canopy cover, encouraging investment in walking, cycling, and recreation facilities and providing access to healthy food options and health care services.

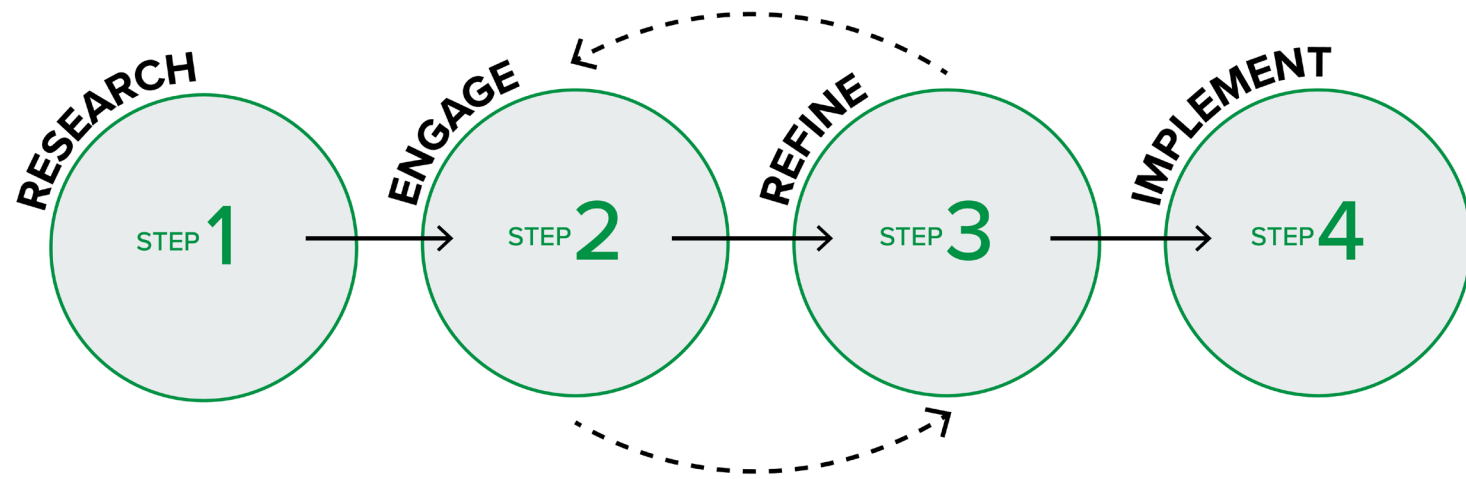


Retain Culture and Identity

Charlotte will retain the identity of existing neighborhoods by intentionally directing redevelopment, limiting displacement and cultivating community-driven placemaking that elevates the importance, quality and design of places.



Project Process



Step 1 - Research

As a kickoff exercise, city staff completed the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor of Opportunity Projects Planned & Funded Summary, which served as a project book of all previous and active city investment into the corridor. The project book identified active and completed capital projects along with adopted policy and programs for the corridor area and provides a snapshot of existing conditions of the corridor.

Following the report, a comprehensive list of all future unfunded projects, programs and partnerships was created which identified over 200 unique projects. The list was compiled by cataloging every project/program idea from adopted plans, studies and existing programs and projects. The list was organized by corridor theme and compiled

with assistance from various city departments.

Socioeconomic analysis and mapping of existing assets were also conducted in conjunction with the project list to identify historical investments in the corridor.

Steps 2 & 3 - Engage and Refine

An inclusive engagement process began with a kickoff meeting. Throughout the process, the community was invited to comment and review the existing city-identified projects. The engagement process involved stakeholder/community workshops and interviews, various community activities such as Open Streets, a Photovoice and a survey. The engagement process enabled the project team to

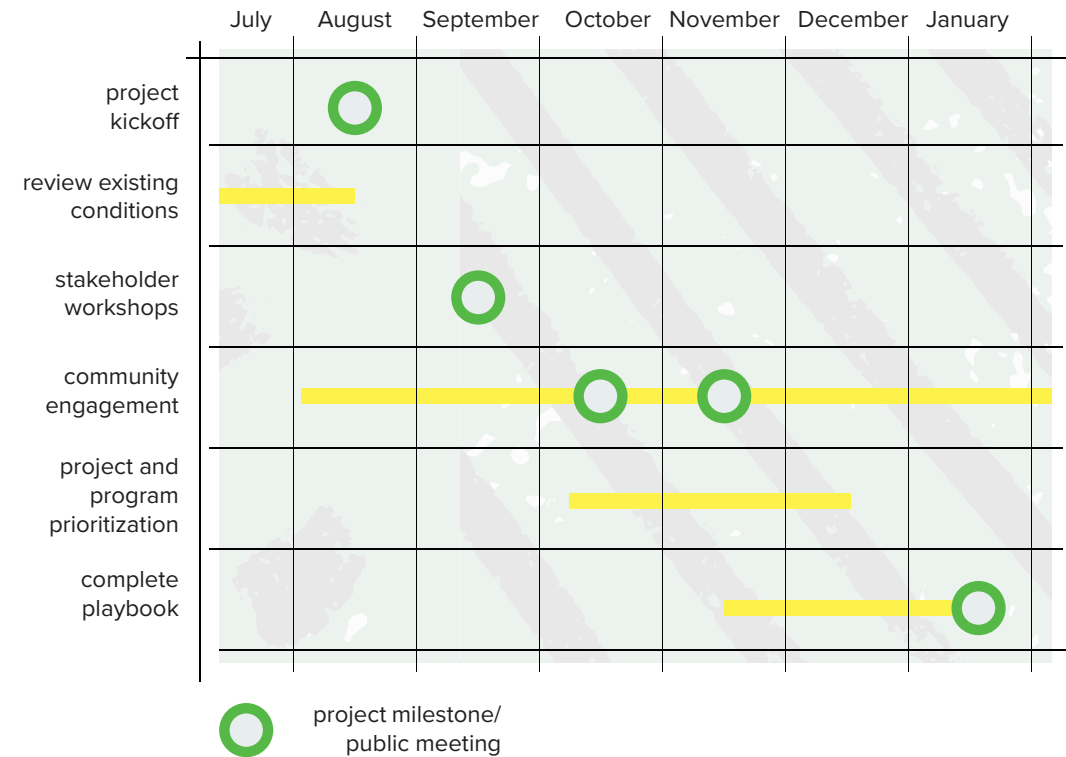
listen and learn from stakeholder workshops, identify 34 community identified projects and draft a community vision.

Community engagement also provided an opportunity to validate and refine project themes, the corridor's vision and the prioritization of projects.

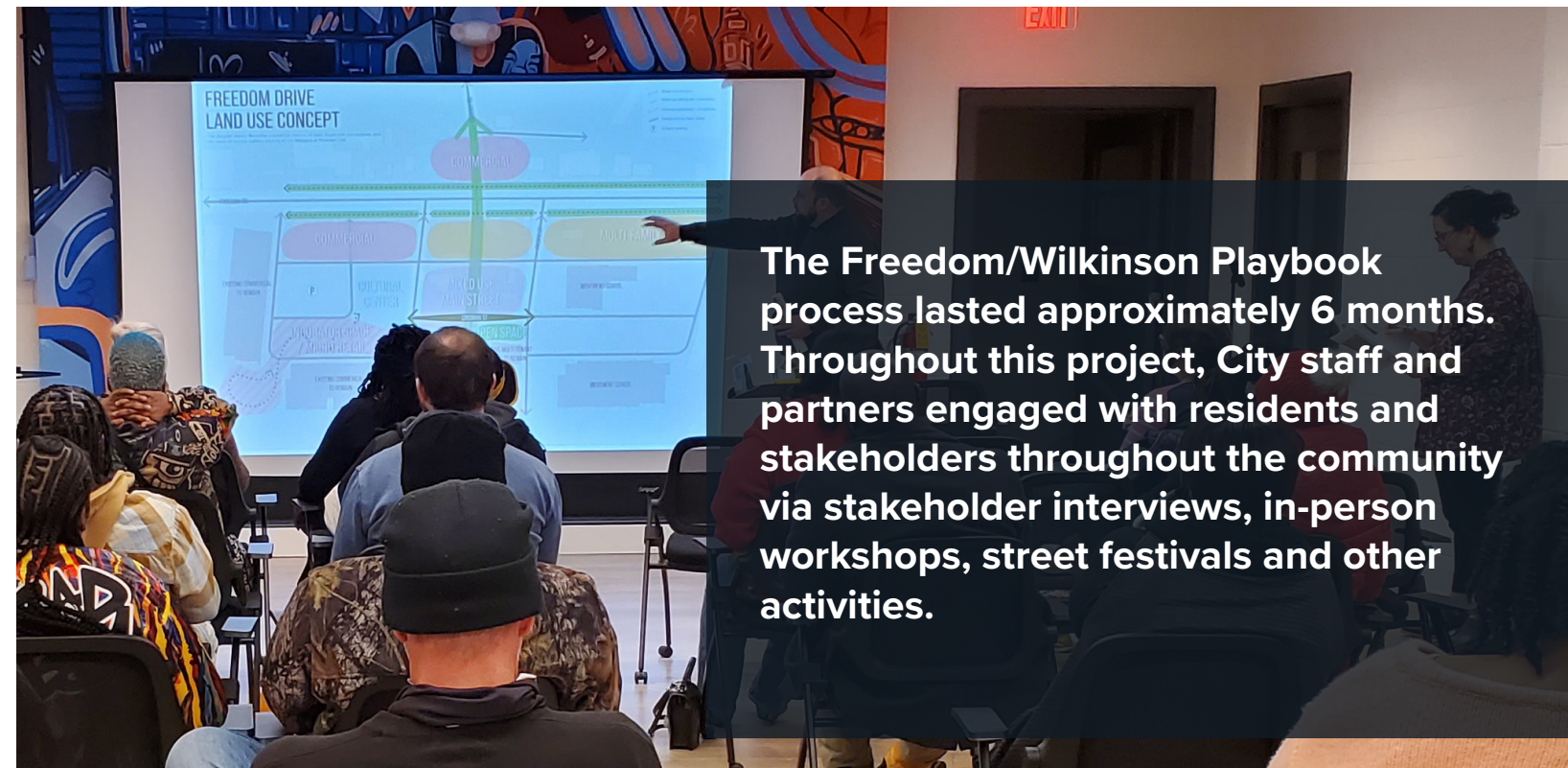
Step 4 - Implement

The final phase of the project, and the final section of the playbook compiles a prioritized list of detailed project and program recommendations. The playbook will then be used to guide the future investment for the corridor from the project list presented in this document.

Project Timeline



The project timeline lasted approximately six months, from initiation to delivery of a final draft of the playbook. The aggressive timeline was implemented to correspond with key deadlines for Capital Improvement Planning, corridor-based developments currently underway and to align with the Charlotte Future 2040 Community Area Plans and the Policy Map Place Type updates.



The Freedom/Wilkinson Playbook process lasted approximately 6 months. Throughout this project, City staff and partners engaged with residents and stakeholders throughout the community via stakeholder interviews, in-person workshops, street festivals and other activities.

SECTION 2

AREA CONTEXT

Overview

Area of Influence

Historic Investments

Demographics

Quick Facts

Overview

The Freedom/Wilkinson corridor area of influence is located within West Charlotte just west of I-77 and Uptown, in-between the West Boulevard corridor (to the south) and the Beatties Ford Road/Rozzelles Ferry Road corridor (to the northeast) with I-485 to the west of the boundary. It is one of the largest area of influences among the six Corridors of Opportunity and includes many neighborhoods and manufacturing/industrial districts. It is also home to many small, locally owned businesses. I-85 runs through the middle of the area of influence, serving the distribution and supply chain industries. Wilkinson Boulevard is also adjacent to the Charlotte Douglas International Airport, which serves as a major employment hub for the community.

These communities are also full of history and cultural landmarks unique to Charlotte. Between Wilkinson Boulevard and Tuckaseegee Road is Camp Greene, the former World War I military base from 1917 to 1919, which housed over 65,000 soldiers, and provided major economic growth for the city. Neighborhoods such as Enderly Park and Ashley Park were built around Camp Greene and served as communities for the middle and working class. Wesley Heights, in-between Enderly Park and Uptown, was developed as a streetcar suburb and was the first historic district in west Charlotte. The corridor also includes former mill-towns such as the Hoskins neighborhood, named after the Hoskins Mill.

The Freedom/Wilkinson corridor functions as a primary transportation gateway between the interstates, Charlotte Douglas International Airport and Uptown Charlotte. Its future is very much tied to potential development of the LYNX Silver Line along Wilkinson Boulevard as well as the completed and ongoing developments within the corridor. The expansion of the LYNX Gold Line, new greenway investments and the growth of west Charlotte continues to support investment and is beginning to result in the redevelopment of areas along West Morehead Street, Tuckaseegee Road and Thrift Road, known as FreeMoreWest and Lower Tuck.

A DIVERSE CORRIDOR

The Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor is full of history and cultural landmarks that cement the area's significance to both residents and the city at large.

The corridor encompasses over 8,000 acres and contains over 30,000 residents.



SECTION 2

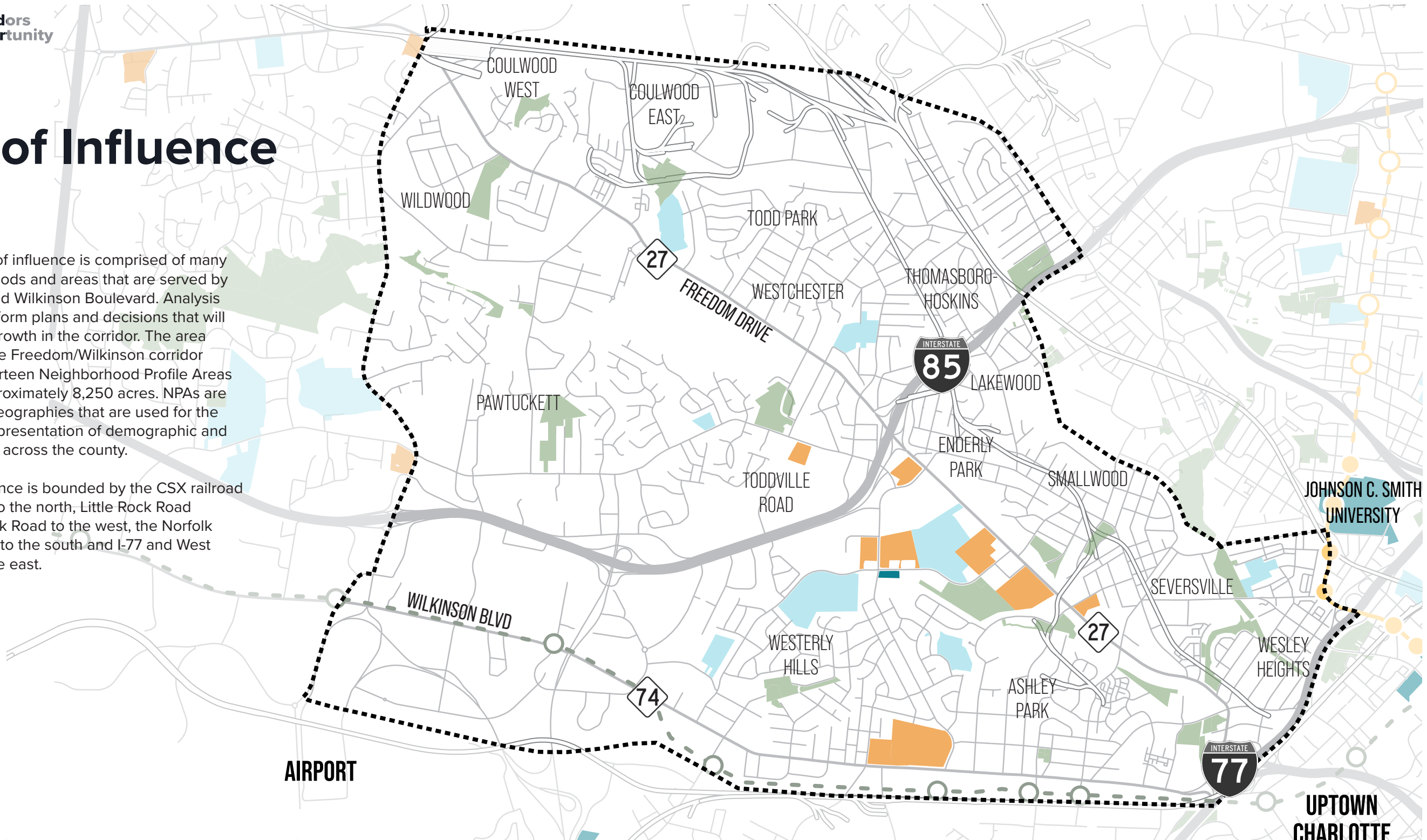
Area of Influence

Overview

The project area of influence is comprised of many of the neighborhoods and areas that are served by Freedom Drive and Wilkinson Boulevard. Analysis of this area will inform plans and decisions that will influence future growth in the corridor. The area of influence for the Freedom/Wilkinson corridor encompasses fourteen Neighborhood Profile Areas (NPAs) and is approximately 8,250 acres. NPAs are census-derived geographies that are used for the organization and presentation of demographic and quality of life data across the county.

The area of influence is bounded by the CSX railroad and State Street to the north, Little Rock Road and Old Little Rock Road to the west, the Norfolk Southern railroad to the south and I-77 and West Trade Street to the east.

Area Context



- Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor
- Streets
- Railroad
- Colleges
- Schools
- Parks
- Shopping Centers
- LYNX Silver Line (Future)
- Gold Line (Future)
- Gold Line (In Service)

Historic Investments

Reviewing past and ongoing planning efforts helps staff confirm priorities with community members and identifies projects and programs that were previously recommended, but not implemented.

Selected Previous Planning Efforts

Prior to the completion of the playbook and engagement process, city staff completed the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor of Opportunity Projects Planned Funded Report that serves as a project book of all previous and active city investments into the corridor. Over the decades many planning efforts have occurred inside the corridor, and many are ongoing today. Previous plans include:

Charlotte Future 2040 Plan (2022)

- First city-wide planning effort in decades.
- The goals of the 2040 Plan inform the themes of the corridor.
- Future Place Type Map is a classification of land that guides future development by place type.

LYNX Silver Line Planning (Ongoing)

- A 29-mile, 29 station light rail project that includes stations along Wilkinson Boulevard.
- Station Area Planning provides initial blueprint for how areas along Wilkinson Boulevard might grow from future investment.
- Equity Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Policy Plan will build on previous planning efforts to create a community-driven road map to develop equitable city policies for future transit-oriented development.

Small Area Plans

- For the past 40 years, numerous small areas plans were conducted for various neighborhoods and corridors within the area of influence, including Freedom Drive, Thomasboro-Hoskins and Wesley Heights.

Community Investments

Along with previous planning efforts, nearly \$130 million dollars of public dollars has been invested since 2017. These public investments were tracked according to workstream and are further described below.

Housing Access for All

Focusing on housing opportunities for residents inside the city's corridors ensures residents of all income levels have access to affordable housing. The city provided financial investments to affordable housing communities in the area and through its House Charlotte and Safe Loan programs. These two programs offer down payment assistance and rehab loans, respectively. From 2015-2022, over \$1.8 million in House Charlotte Loans and \$1.6 million in Safe Home Loans were awarded inside the corridor's area of influence.

Diverse and Resilient Economic Opportunity

Projects, programs and partnerships related to diverse and resilient economic opportunity include the city's Business Matching Grant program. This program provides funding for security upgrades, interior upfits and façade grants to eligible

businesses. Over \$1.5 million of City funds will be invested inside the Freedom/Wilkinson corridor through the Business Matching Grant Program, resulting in just over \$34 million in accompanying private investment.

Healthy, Safe and Active Communities

City investments for healthy, safe and active communities include youth training as part of the Mayor's Youth Employment program, Neighborhood Board Retreats and Keep Charlotte Beautiful. Keep Charlotte Beautiful works closely with neighborhood organizations and other stakeholders to provide opportunities for residents to get involved in litter prevention. Since 2018, nearly 20,000 pounds of trash was removed from streets and streams inside the corridor.

Integrated Natural and Built Environment

Projects, programs and partnerships that align with an integrated natural and built environment ensure that the city's diverse environmental elements, green infrastructure and open space are protected and enhanced. This includes programs like the Affordability Mobility Program (AMP) which is investing \$10 million in clean transportation alternatives in affordable housing areas.

Safe and Equitable Mobility

Safe and equitable mobility options for all persons regardless of age, income, ability and mode choice is a crucial component in connecting residents to jobs, housing and to each other. The planned and funded projects within the safe and equitable mobility workstream identify sidewalk gaps and other infrastructure needs to improve safety for all users as well as transit investments. Previous, current and planned transit and transportation improvements in the corridor currently total nearly \$35 million.

Retain Culture and Identity

Projects, programs and partnerships centered around retaining culture and identity are meant to limit cultural displacement in communities and cultivate community-driven placemaking. Since 2017, the city's Neighborhood Matching Grant program has provided over \$150,000 to improve and beautify the corridor's residential neighborhoods.

<placemaking stats here>



Demographics

Demographic data, including age, income, housing, economic indicators and other information provide a quantitative understanding of trends inside the corridor and its area of influence.

Although demographic data is not expressly utilized to inform decisions on the most impactful projects, programs and partnerships - that is developed through direct interaction with stakeholders - it can support community feedback and guiding principles of the playbook's implementation.

Population Density

Population density is an indicator that can point to assess relationships with the natural and built environment, understand human health, and infrastructure needs.

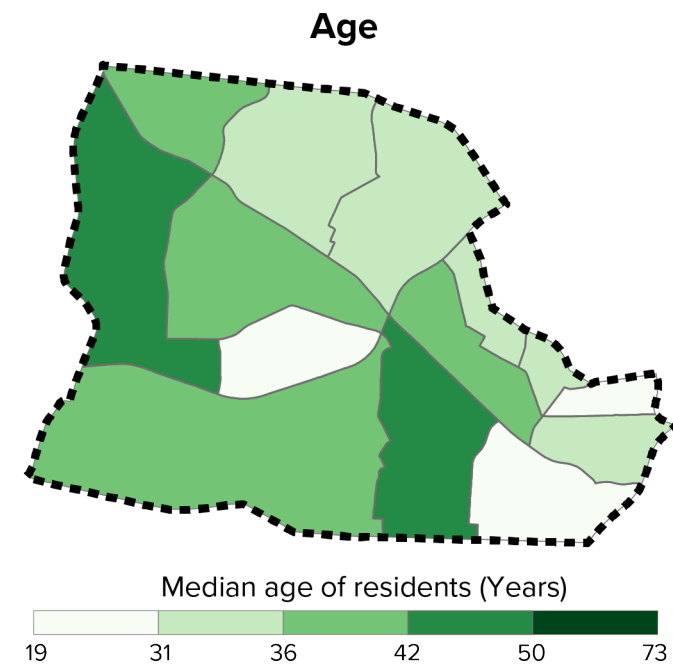
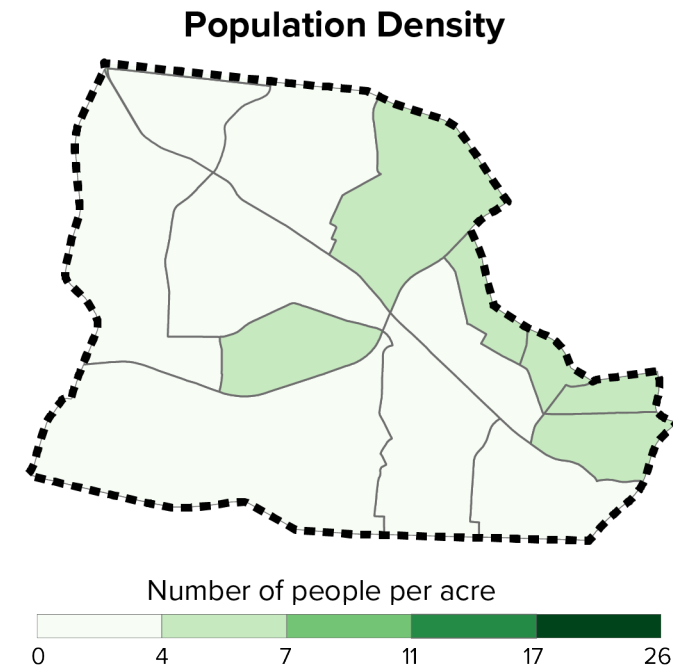
The corridor's area of influence is 4 people per acre, 33 percent above Mecklenberg County (3 people/acre).

Age

Age is important to consider because it can measure and identify population-level disparities and inequities related to an individual or collective population's age. This may be issues related to mobility or inequities as it relates to access to healthcare.

The median age for corridor residents is 34 years old, three years younger than the median age for the county (37).

*Data represented using Neighborhood Profile Area (NPA) boundaries.



Home Ownership

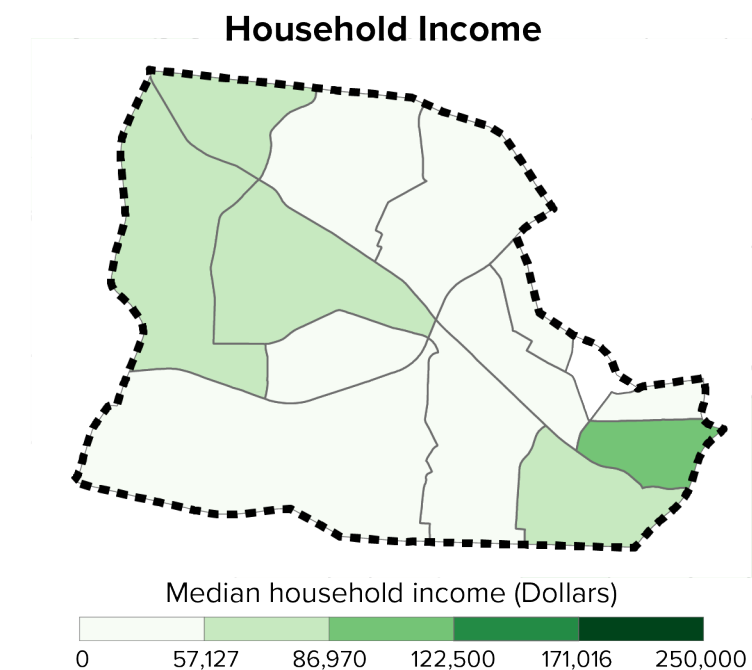
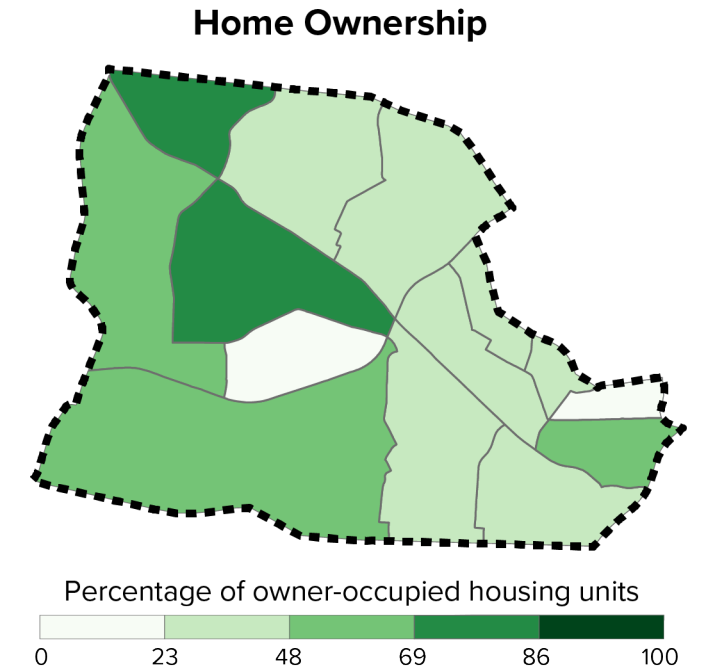
Home ownership can determine whether adequate housing is available and affordable for residents and can direct funding to appropriate housing assistance programs.

As of 2021, the corridor's area of influence has an average home ownership rate of 44%, lower than the county as a whole (56%).

Household Income

Household income (HHI) provides a glimpse into the standard of living for households inside the study area and can indicate potential geographic inequities as it relates to job, food, and access to transportation.

The median HHI for the study area is \$54,590 - nearly 33 percent lower than the county (\$73,124).



Education

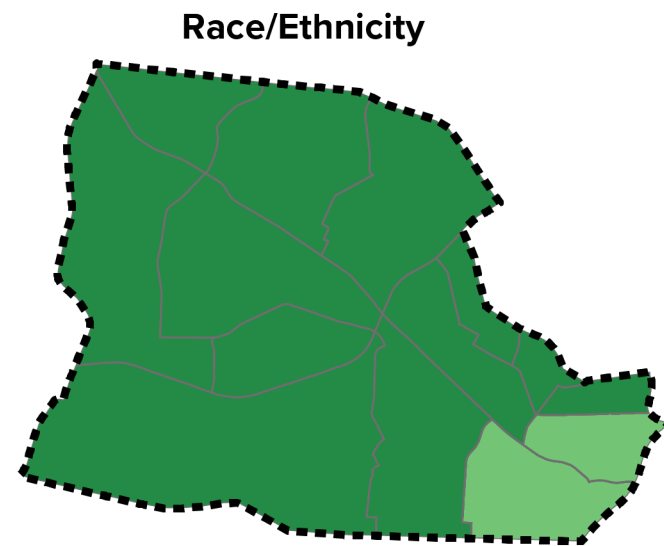
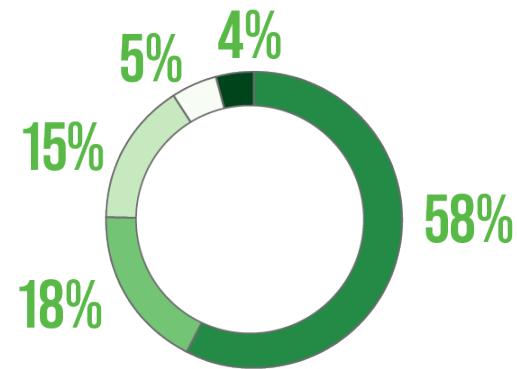
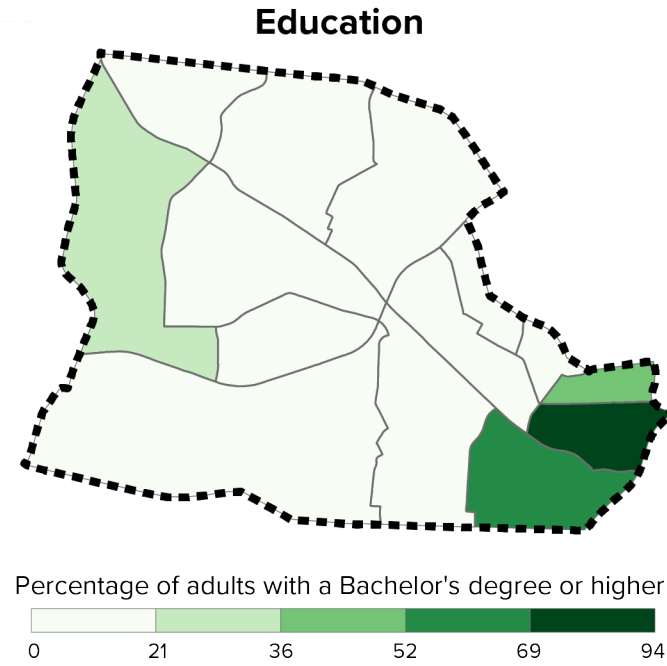
Education can indicate the potential for upward mobility in a geographic area. A highly educated population can spur innovation and contributes to productivity and economic growth.

The percentage of the corridor's population over 25 with a bachelor's degree is 21%, compared to 47% for the county.

Race/Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity data can confirm the cultural diversity of an area and help better understand the corridor's needs as it relates to language assistance, healthcare and other needs.

The corridor is majority Black/African-American (58%). That proportion is nearly double the county (29%).



Majority of population identifies as this race/ethnicity alone

- All Other Races
- Black or African American
- White or Caucasian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian



Quick Facts

The following maps and infographs detail key facts, figures and observations viewed through the Corridors' six workstreams. The data presented graphically illustrate the corridor's strengths while identifying metrics that, if improved, may increase quality of life.

Housing Access for All

Over a third of all land within the Area of Influence is dedicated to residential land uses. The majority of residential land use is composed of detached single-family housing (55 percent of all residential units).

Low home ownership rates paired with an aging housing stock illustrate a need for investments in homeownership and affordable housing throughout the corridor.

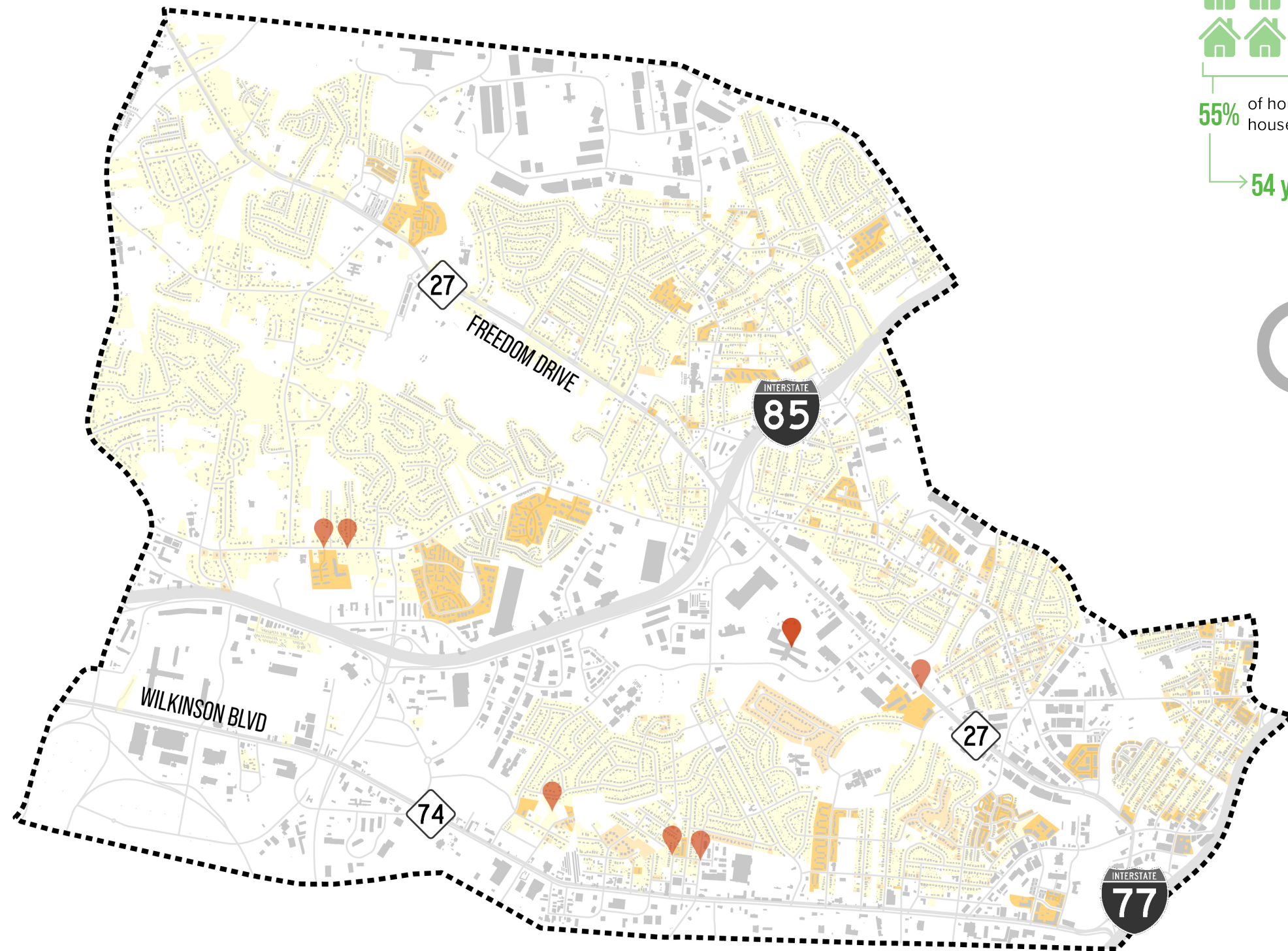


55% of housing units are single-family houses, 2023 (County: 53%)

54 years is the average age of single-family housing units, 2023 (County: 34 years)

6% of housing units have development-based rental assistance, 2023 (County: 2.6%)

\$1,035 is the median gross rent of renter-occupied housing units, 2021 (County: \$1,276)

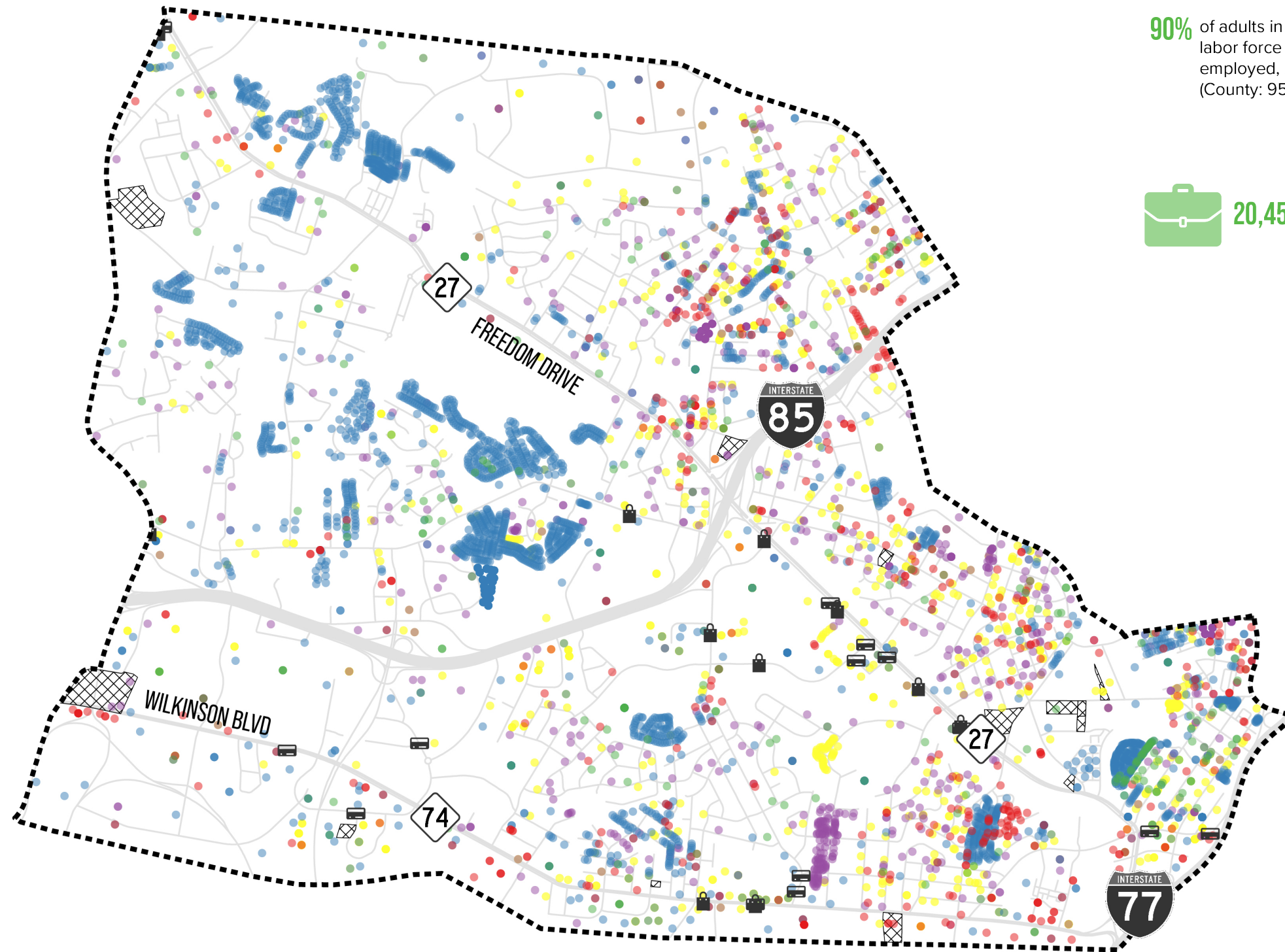


- Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor
- SFR
- Building Footprints
- Housing Trust Fund Investments
- TH/Condos
- Multi-Family
- Streets

Diverse and Resilient Economic Opportunity

The corridor has an employment rate of 90 percent, five percentage points less than the county (95%).

New construction is generally located nearer to Uptown around the Lower Tuck and FreeMoreWest area but are also found in residential pockets northwest of Interstate 85. In general, an aging building stock has seen frequent, additions, upfits and redevelopments - especially in older industrial areas closer to Uptown. The high volume of permits, alongside recent rezoning requests, illustrates increasing demand of real estate in the area.



90% of adults in the labor force are employed, 2021 (County: 95%)



20,458 jobs in the corridor, (County: 700,467 jobs)



or

2.5 jobs per acre, 2019 (County: 2.1 jobs/acre)



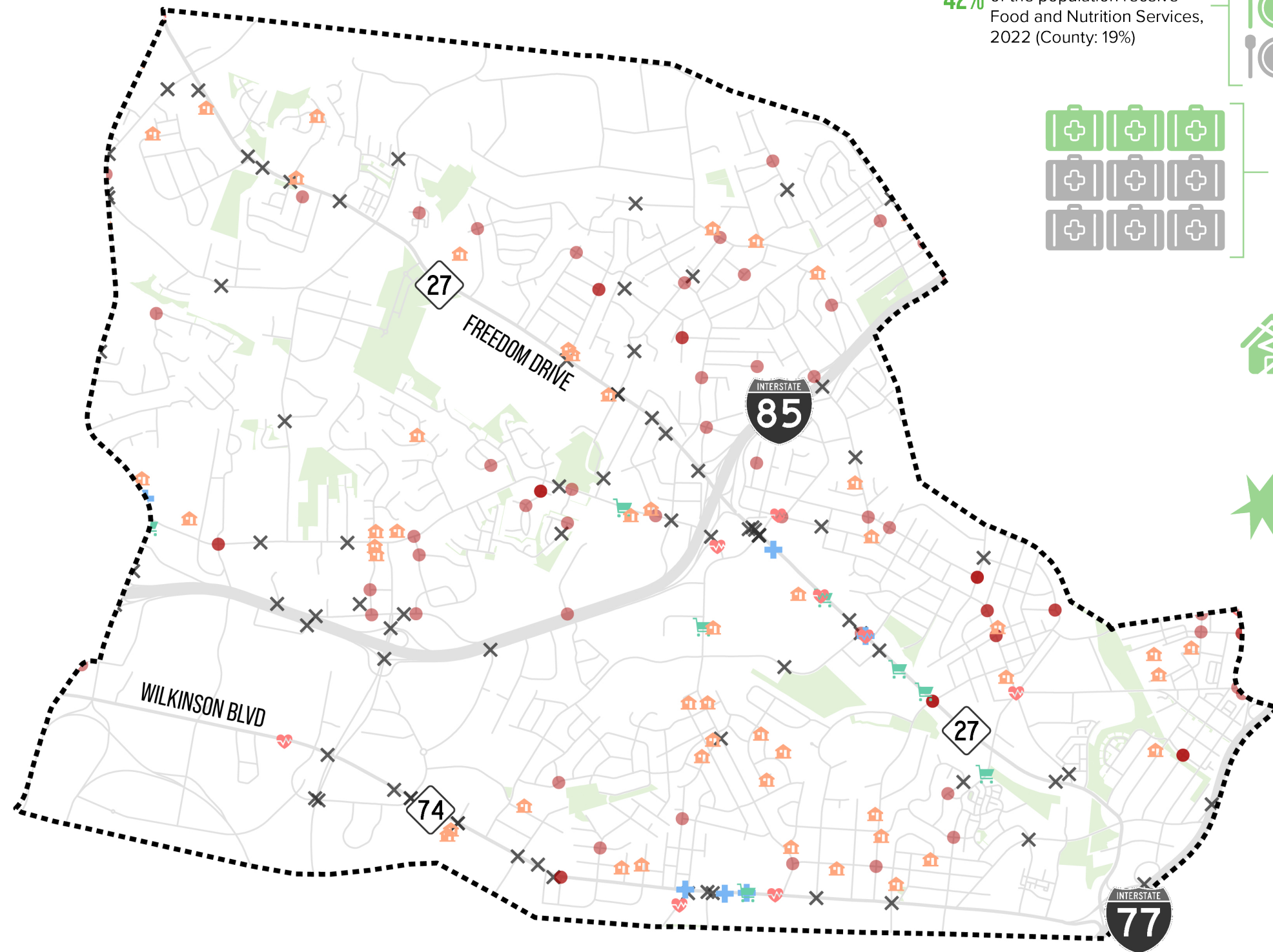
- Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor
- Building Permits, 2016-Present: Addition
- Rezonings, 2016-Present
- Existing Shopping Centers
- Building Permits, 2016-Present: Repair/Replace
- Streets
- Financial Institutions
- Building Permits, 2016-Present: Demolish
- Building Permits, 2016-Present: Upfit
- Building Permits, 2016-Present: New Construction

Healthy, Safe, and Active Communities

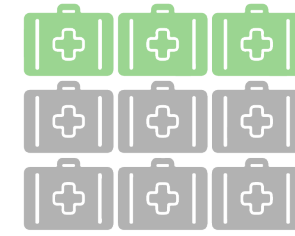
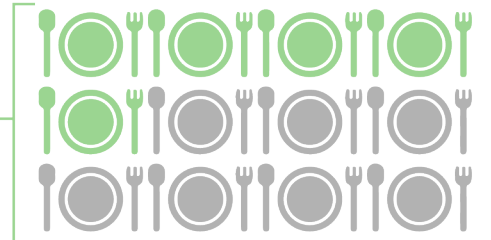
Many of the corridor's streets are identified as being a part of the high injury network. As a result, there are a large number of fatal traffic accidents within the area over the last eight years. Many of those deaths have occurred along the Freedom/Wilkinson corridors and interstates.

The Area of Influence also sees a higher volume of crime, with 13 violent crimes per 1,000 residents (over double the county average).

The corridor has a higher percentage of residents receiving nutrition and health benefits. This disparity has resulted in recent investments to increase residents' access to healthcare.



42% of the population receive Food and Nutrition Services, 2022 (County: 19%)



33% of the population receive Medicaid or NC Health Choice, 2022 (County: 15%)

58 property crimes per 1,000 residents, 2022 or 1,711 property crimes total (County: rate of 33 or 30,101 crimes)

13 violent crimes per 1,000 residents, 2022 or 409 violent crimes total (County: rate of 5.4 or 4,951 crimes)

- Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor
- Medical Facilities
- Homicides, 2016-Present
- Open Space/Recreation
- Grocery Stores
- Fatal/Serious Crashes, 2016-Present
- Streets
- Pharmacies
- Day Care

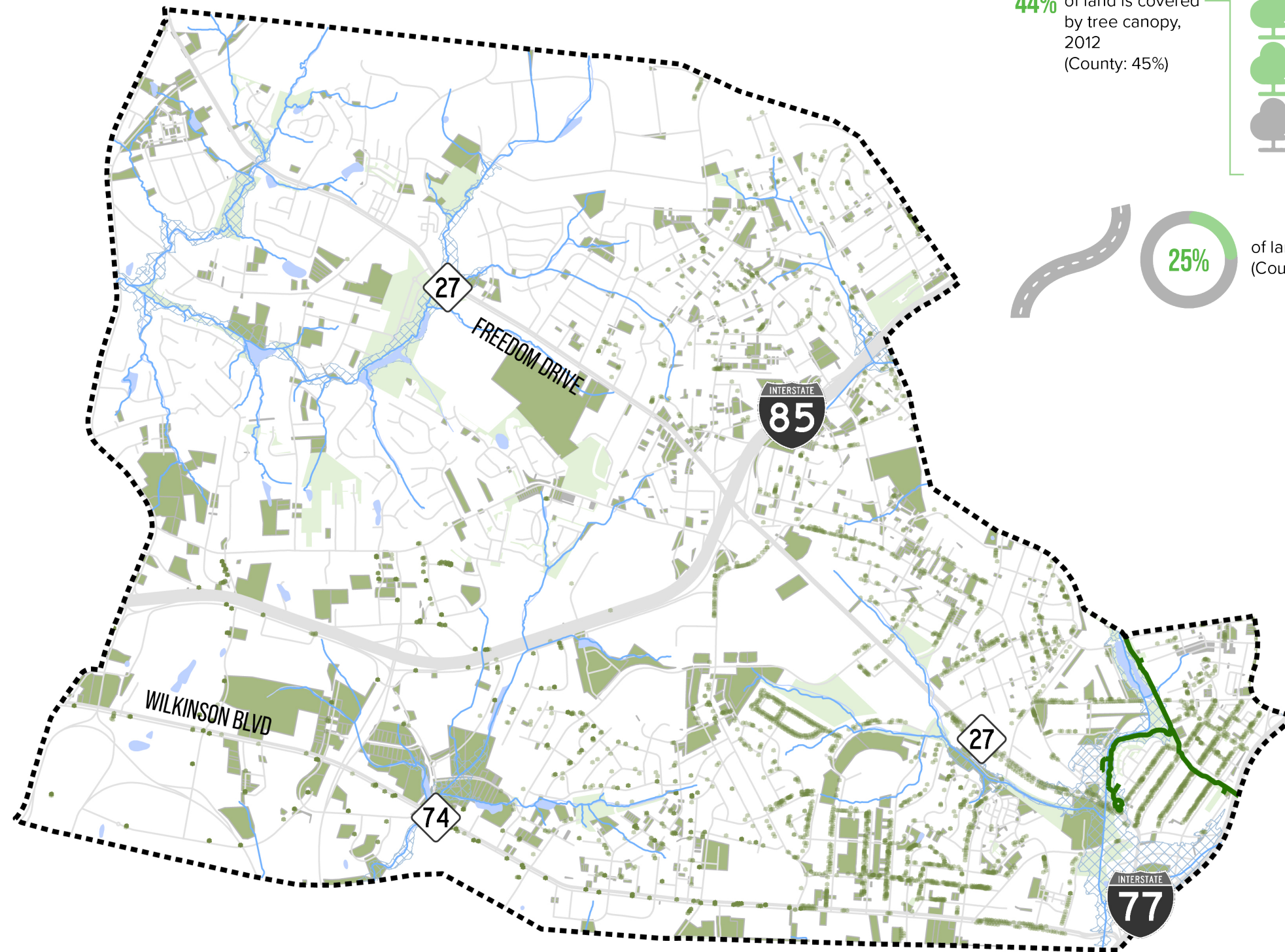


Integrated and Built Environment

The corridor's Area of Influence contains numerous Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation facilities and hundreds of acres of vacant land.

The area has three major creeks - Paw Creek, Stewart Creek and Taggart Creek. The creeks and their corresponding floodplains provide habit for animals of all sizes and accommodate multiple greenway connections - with many more planned.

The area has a comparable tree canopy to Mecklenburg County as a whole (44 percent) and a larger percentage of impervious surface, largely attributed to the area's large industrial land use presence.



44% of land is covered by tree canopy, 2012
(County: 45%)



25%

of land surface is impervious, 2023
(County: 16%)



- Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor
- Greenways
- Wetlands
- Open Space/Recreation
- Public Street Trees
- Creeks/Streams
- Floodplain
- Vacant
- Streets

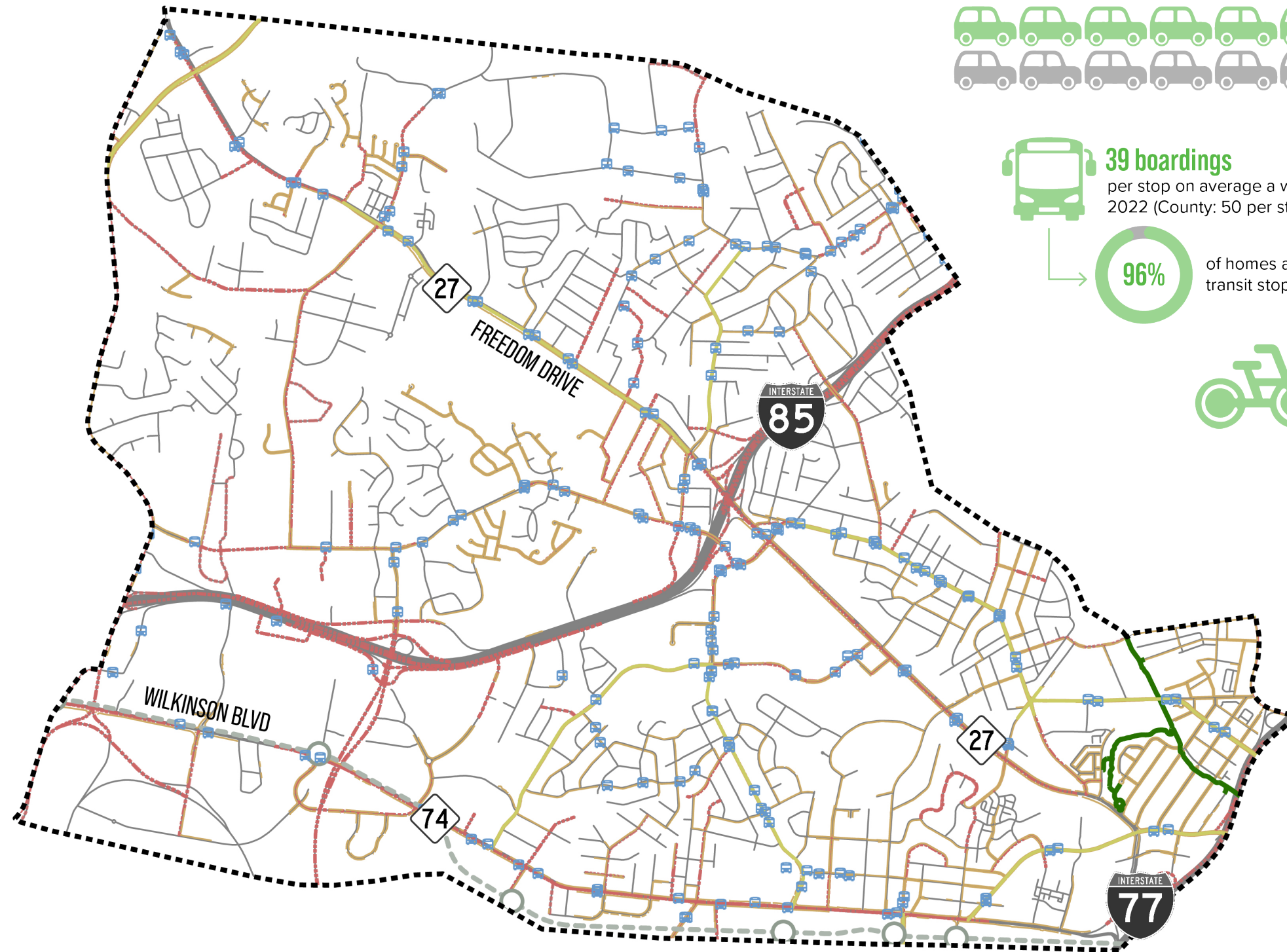


Safe and Equitable Mobility

The Area of Influence has numerous transit routes including bus and future light rail routes (LYNX Silver Line). However, the lack of sidewalks, street connectivity make accessing transit a real challenge. Despite that fact, 96 percent of the Area of Influence has access to transit (within a half-mile walk).

Nearly 50 percent of individuals living inside the Area of Influence have a daily “long commute” - meaning a commute lasting longer than 20 minutes.

Opportunities exist to invest in better connected streets, sidewalks and and improving access to transit options through mobility hubs

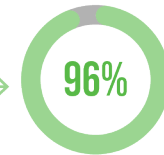


44% of auto commuter travel 20 minutes or more to work, 2021 (County: 59%)



39 boardings

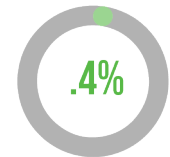
per stop on average a week or 7,433 weekly boardings, 2022 (County: 50 per stop for 154,458 weekly boardings)



96% of homes are within a 1/2 mile of a transit stop, 2022 (County: 68%)



1.8 Bicycle Friendliness Index, 2023 (County: 1.6)



.4% of paved streets have sidewalks, 2015 (County: .4%)



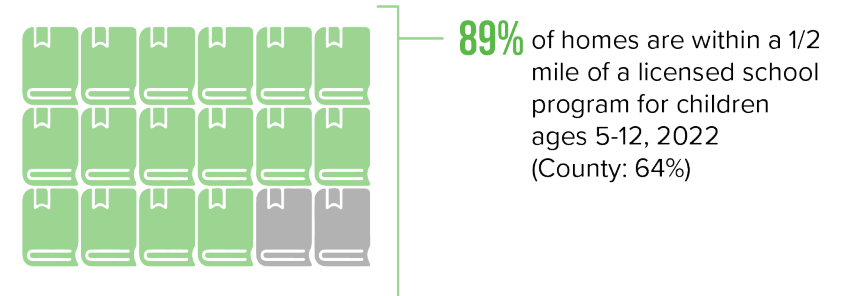
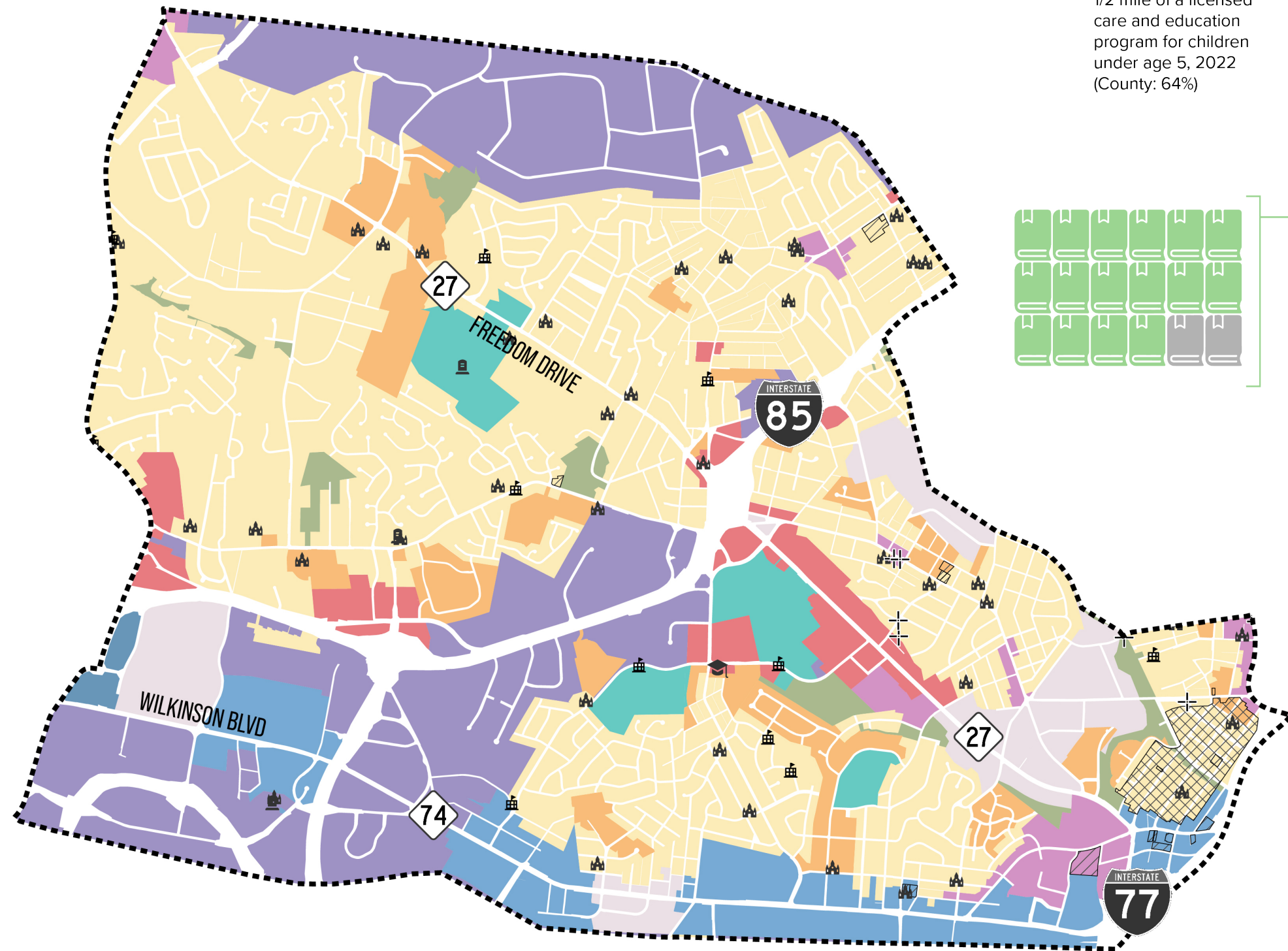
- Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor
- Sidewalks
- Streets
- Bus Stops
- Bike Lanes
- LYNX Silver Line (Future)
- Greenways
- High Injury Network



Retain Culture and Identity

The Area of Influence contains five historic properties and numerous residential and industrial areas that qualify for historic district designation at either the local or national level. Charlotte's newest local historic district (McCrorey Heights) contains approximately 160 ranch-style residents. The community was home to numerous Black leaders and civil rights activists.

This rich mixture of uses and buildings of varying age creates an opportunity for investments in adaptive reuse and building rehabilitation to preserve the corridor's built environment.



Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor

Placemaking Projects

Schools

Colleges

Libraries

Places of Worship

Historic Cemeteries

Local Historic Properties

Historic Districts

Place Types

Neighborhood 1

Neighborhood 2

Parks & Preserves

Commercial

Campus

Manufacturing & Logistics

Innovation Mixed-Use

Neighborhood Center

Community Activity Center

Regional Activity Center



SECTION 3

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Overview

- Creative Engagement
- Photovoice
- Stakeholder Workshops
- Community Survey

Overview

From kickoff to completion, finding ways to creatively engage the corridor’s community members has been a priority for the project team and necessary to ensure the playbook is grounded in community needs, wants and desires.

The project team engaged with two local companies. QC Family Tree has an established network of creatives to use throughout the process and, most importantly, a familiarity with the neighborhoods and community leaders inside the corridor. They assisted with engagement throughout the process and collected and summarized stakeholder feedback at events like Corridors Connect, a one-day neighborhood street festival. Wily, was included to rapidly synthesize input from short stakeholder sessions meant to identify and prioritize both new and existing projects, programs and partnerships most impactful to the corridor.

During the planning process, **over 4,500 touchpoints** were identified during a four month engagement timeline. These include email blasts, meeting attendees, survey responses and other communication techniques.

Engagement Timeline



CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Creative engagement, when designed deliberately, collaboratively and with specific populations in mind, can help increase and diversify who participate in planning processes.

The engagement strategy for this playbook was meant to increase stakeholder involvement and enhance the understanding of the corridor’s values.



Creative Engagement

As with many large cities, there are typically a handful of planning processes occurring at the same time – often in the same areas. To avoid engagement processes from becoming stale, it’s important to create and promote community discourse in novel ways. Generating memorable experiences that are responsive to people and place can oftentimes offer more meaningful and genuine avenues for involvement and increase the overall participation rate.

To accomplish this, the project team sought to provide spaces and opportunities to share, through creative expression, thoughts or feelings about a corridor issue. In partnership with QC Family Tree, a local community organization with ties to local creatives and deep roots with neighborhoods inside the corridor, the project team was able to provide multiple meaningful experiences during public meetings and events. Residents were asked to sketch out ideas for their community on paper, pin special places inside the corridor on maps, participate in a carnival-themed questionnaire at Corridors Connect and take part in a thoughtful icebreaker and a vision statement exercise at the closing meeting.



photo credits: Jon Strayhorn



Photovoice

Photovoice is a creative engagement method that gathers participant-taken photographs and translates them into actionable knowledge. It is meant to allow residents and stakeholders to document and reflect on community assets and concerns. The images can often communicate more than words, expressing community wants, needs and desires.

During the Playbook Kickoff, over 20 disposable cameras were distributed to community members. **From those cameras, nearly 150 photographs were developed, revealing informal glimpses into the corridor while also illustrating places, from industrial land to parks and open space, with meaning and importance to the corridor.**

Residents took photographs of historic landmarks, the beauty of the natural environments and even provided glimpses into their everyday lives. A number of the photographs taken were printed and framed and presented to the community at the December 7 public meeting.

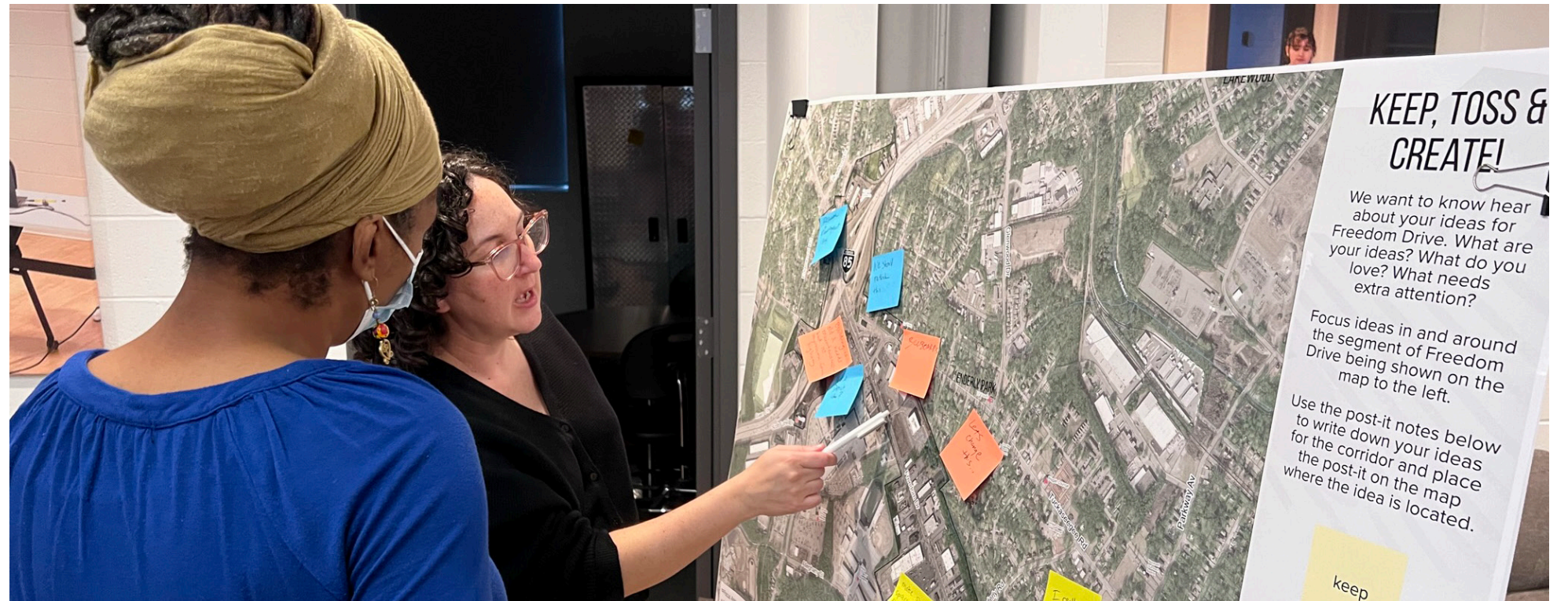


Stakeholder Workshops

Six stakeholder workshops (five online, one in-person) were held after the kickoff meeting to better understand resident, and stakeholder needs inside the corridor. Attendees were able to review and prioritize projects, programs and partnerships and develop big ideas for central locations inside the corridor. **Over 75 individuals participated in the workshop events.**



photo credit: Jon Strayhorn



KEEP, TOSS & CREATE!

We want to know hear about your ideas for Freedom Drive. What are your ideas? What do you love? What needs extra attention?

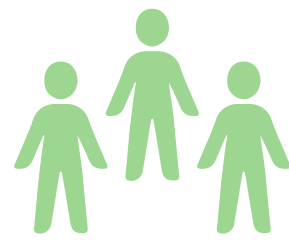
Focus ideas in and around the segment of Freedom Drive being shown on the map to the left.

Use the post-it notes below to write down your ideas for the corridor and place the post-it on the map where the idea is located.

keep

Community Survey

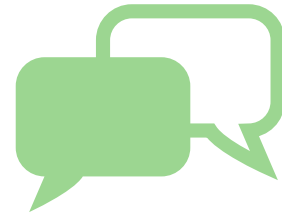
The project team distributed an online survey to confirm the community's priorities from workshops and public meetings. **Over 80 participants responded**, weighing in on a range of topics from items that preserve affordable housing to providing feedback on big ideas such as neighborhood main streets and community centers.



85
PARTICIPANTS



1,572
RESPONSES



67
COMMENTS



“Let’s make (the) Freedom Corridor a beautiful placemaking destination. Give us an identity for an area that has been left behind for a long time. Put the investment in this area to give our community pride to know that the City of Charlotte cares about this side of town.”

-survey response from Corridor resident





KEEP, TOSS CREATE!

We want to know how about your ideas for Freedom Drive. What do you love? What needs extra attention?

Focus ideas in and around the segment of Freedom Drive being shown on map to the left.

Use the post-it notes to write down your ideas for the corridor and pin the post-it on the map where the idea is located.



keep

Use the yellow post-it notes to identify areas that you love and want to remain in the corridor.



toss

Use the red post-it notes to identify areas that need some extra attention.



create

Use the blue post-it notes to identify new ideas for special places inside the corridor.



BIG IDEAS FOR GREAT PLACES

The project team was able to take the information and ideas gleaned from engagement exercises and synthesize them into three big ideas for the corridors.

Most importantly, these ideas aren't necessarily for specific locations inside the corridor, but are to be used as templates for multiple places as the corridor continues to evolve.

SECTION 4

THREE BIG IDEAS

Overview

- Incremental Development
- Mixed-Use Community Centers
- Neighborhood Main Streets

Overview

As mentioned in the engagement session, the planning process was purposefully designed to hear from the community. We wanted to know what they loved about the corridor, what issues exist, and hear from as many voices as possible.

During the kickoff event, the project team and creative consultants asked residents to pin their favorite places inside the corridor on a map, while stations asked attendees their vision for their community in the next decade.

In compiling those answers, the project team developed three big ideas for the community to help support their needs and desires for the corridor:

- Incremental development
- Mixed-use community centers
- Neighborhood main streets

Incremental development as a development technique has been around for decades and focuses on a slow-growth approach that allows spaces for community to be implemented sooner rather than later.

For two afternoons in October, design staff and others from the city's Planning Department, County Park and Recreation, and Department of Transportation gathered to sketch ideas of the corridor and developed two concepts - one for mixed-use community centers and the other for neighborhood main streets.

Before sketching out ideas, attendees were educated on the "Designer's Critical Alphabet" which are cards that provide cultural prompts for designers to consider when working in marginalized communities. The prompts allow designers to create work that serves the most people

Read more about the Designer's Critical Alphabet here: <https://criticalalphabet.com/>

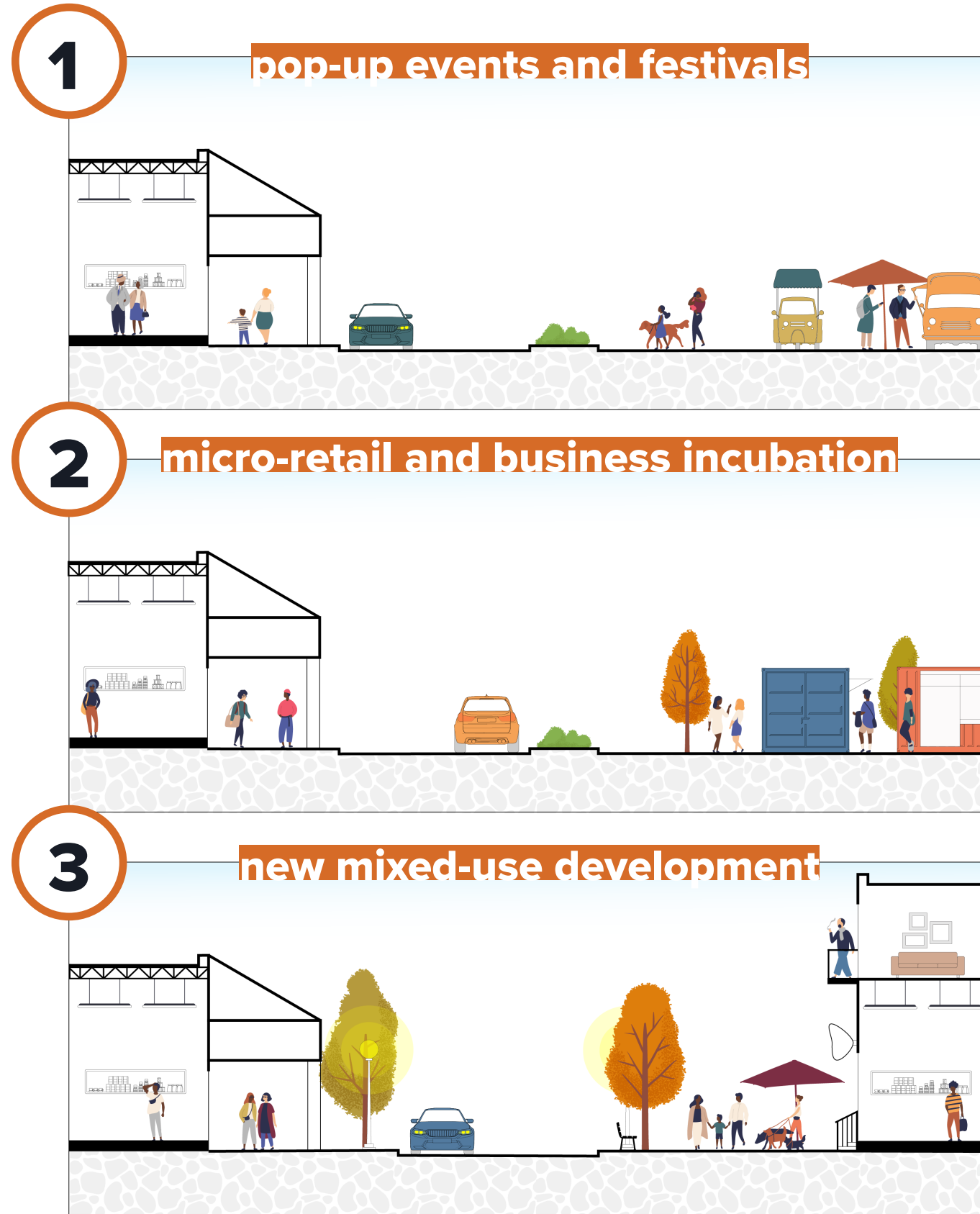
Incremental Development

What We Heard

During the playbook’s kickoff meeting in August, stakeholders and community members noted needs such as small retail opportunities, a community center and more housing options.

The Response

Incremental development is a way to address challenges of complete redevelopment by first focusing on activating underutilized spaces with temporary structures. This approach acknowledges the importance and long-term development potential of places inside the corridor while incubating small, local businesses in the near term. Incremental placemaking can activate underutilized parking lots and, eventually, transition them into a permanent place for the community.



Step 1 Explained

The first step typically includes programming parking lots with weekly or monthly pop-up events for residents. Those may include booths for local artisans and vendors, food truck rodeos, or outdoor concerts and arts celebrations. Most importantly, the events that occur during this step are curated by and specifically for the surrounding communities in the corridor.

Step 2 Explained

This step involves making the temporary nature of monthly events more permanent. This could include the creation of small business incubator spaces inside adaptively reused shipping containers in underused areas of existing parking lots. The second step is important because it further cements the area’s sense of place and provides small, permanent retail spaces for local business owners.

Step 3 Explained

The last step in incremental development typically involves the reallocation of underutilized land and parking lots into permanent well-designed buildings. This step is important because it memorializes the continued efforts of the community to create a vibrant place for residents to enjoy. Over time, building by building, it transitions to a place where residents can live, work and create.

Mixed-Use Community Centers

What We Heard

At engagement events and stakeholder workshops, the need for walkable retail near established neighborhoods was a consistent response. Currently, the neighborhoods inside the corridor are served by single-use auto-dominated shopping centers that pose challenges to residents without access to motorized transportation. Residents want to see underutilized parking lots activated, places for local business incubation, better connectivity between neighborhoods and a richer mixture of uses that include places to live, work and create.

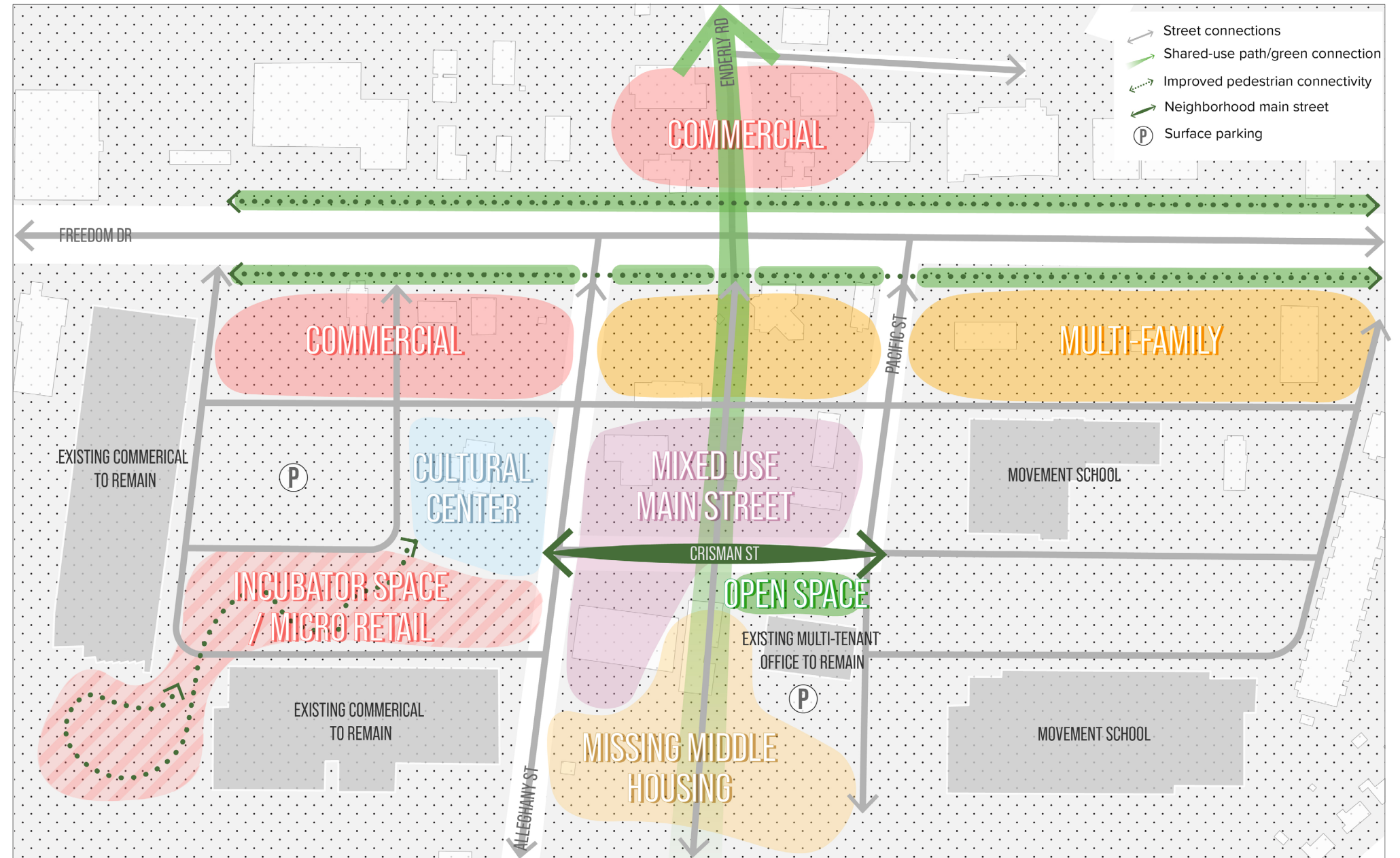
The Response

The project team held a two-day design charrette to examine how an existing community shopping center (the Shops at Freedom) could transform into a mixed-use center while keeping as much of the existing retail footprint as possible. This shopping center was selected due to its central location inside the corridor and its proximity to Ashley Park and Enderly Park and new missing middle housing. **While this location was selected for this exercise, its important to note that the concept presented here can function as a template for multiple sites inside the corridor.**

The land use concept presented explores how excess parking and car-centric uses might be transformed into a walkable community center for residents in the Freedom/Wilkinson corridor. Excess parking lots and car-centric retail uses were replaced to provide community amenities noted during engagement activities.

Highlights from this concept include:

- A cultural arts center
- A micro-retail village to support local artisans and businesses
- A mixture of for-rent and for-sale housing
- Improved connections between Enderly Park and Ashley Park/Camp Greene
- Improved pedestrian amenities along Freedom Drive
- A mixed-use main street



From Parking Lots to Places for People

The bubble concept on the previous spread is illustrated here in a color-coded massing model. Many buildings remain, but much of the parking lots and auto-oriented uses could be reclaimed into programmed open space, retail and additional housing options.



 Existing Buildings	 Microretail
 Missing Middle Housing	 Traditional Retail
 Multi-family Housing	 Mixed-use Main Street
 Arts & Culture Center	

Reimagining Shopping Centers

This graphic illustrates the ways in which an older shopping center can be improved - parking lots are transformed into places for people, drive aisles are widened to function as true streets with pedestrian crossings and street trees and open space is activated with micro-retail for local businesses. Art is present to reflect the character and honor the culture of the community.

Cultural Arts Center

The addition of a cultural arts center would provide the communities of the Freedom/Wilkinson corridor a permanent place for artistic expression and celebration of culture.

Shipping Containers

Micro-retail can take many forms. In this illustration, vacant parking lots are reimagined with permanent shipping containers to provide small and affordable space to local business owners.

Facade Upfits

Facade upfits are typically low-cost improvements that can be made to existing retail centers to enhance sense of place and attract tenants. Grant funds are typically available to offset the costs associated with upfits.

Placemaking

Reclaiming underutilized space for people increases opportunities for artful expression. Crosswalks can be painted by local artists that reflect the community's identity.



Neighborhood Main Streets

What We Heard

Residents inside the corridor were keenly interested in developing ways to enhance areas inside neighborhoods that are functioning as main streets. These sites are generally older and have neighborhood services such as small grocers, gas stations and smaller commercial businesses. Some existing homes function as commercial uses.

The Response

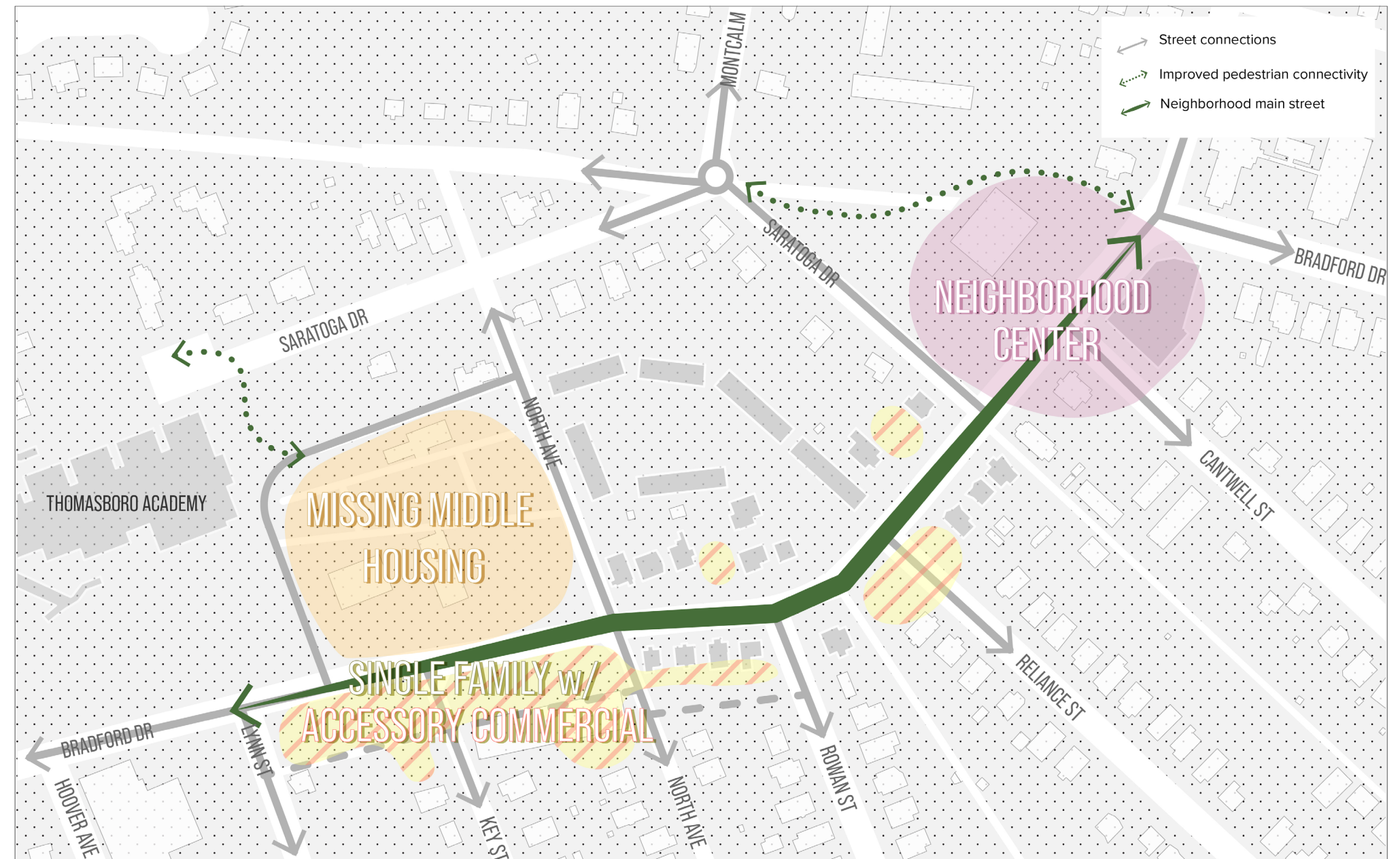
During the same two-day charrette, the project team also explored how an existing neighborhood street might transition to a context-sensitive main street typology with enhanced design, walkability, neighborhood services and missing middle housing (townhomes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) opportunities. Due to the the unique nature of a portion of Bradford Drive in the Thomasboro neighborhood, this area was explored. Currently, this section of Bradford Drive contains a unique mixture of uses along with established single-family homes and underutilized land that could support a contextually appropriate mixture of uses.

Similar to the concept at the Shops at Freedom, the concept presented along Bradford can function as a template for multiple streets and neighborhoods inside the corridor.

The land use concept presented explores how excess parking and car-centric uses might be transformed into a walkable community center for residents in the Freedom/Wilkinson corridor. Excess parking lots and auto-centric retail uses were replaced to provide community amenities noted during engagement activities.

Highlights from this concept include:

- The addition of missing middle housing units
- The construction of alleyways to support the addition of ADUs, which are typically small residential structures on single family lots that can increase homeownership affordability for both the primary homeowner and the tenant
- Infill housing constructed to match the existing pattern of Bradford Road
- Improved connections between Enderly Park and Ashley Park
- Improved pedestrian amenities along Freedom Drive
- A mixed-use main street



Neighborhood Main Streets

This graphic is located at the intersection of Bradford Drive and Willard Street, looking southeast toward Uptown. Thomasboro Grocery is in the foreground. This illustration envisions an elevated neighborhood center for the Thomasboro community in an area that is already seeing multiple commercial uses. Newer buildings are imagined to be closer to the street to enhance pedestrian comfortability while the proposed buildings could contain missing middle housing.

Retaining Culture

Retaining existing structures like the Thomasboro Grocery that have been a part of the neighborhood's fabric for decades will ensure that culture and community are celebrated.

Mixed-Use Buildings

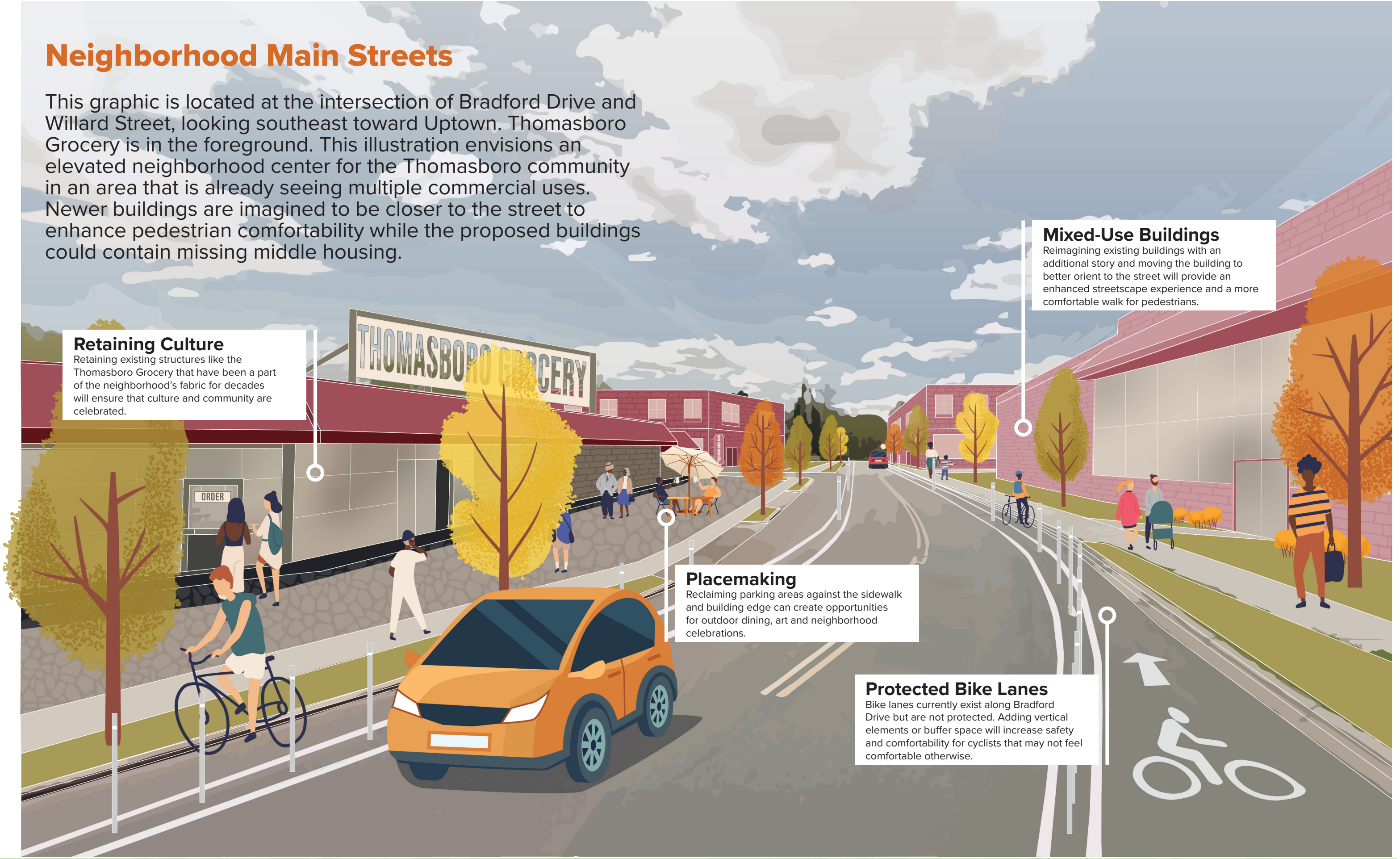
Reimagining existing buildings with an additional story and moving the building to better orient to the street will provide an enhanced streetscape experience and a more comfortable walk for pedestrians.

Placemaking

Reclaiming parking areas against the sidewalk and building edge can create opportunities for outdoor dining, art and neighborhood celebrations.

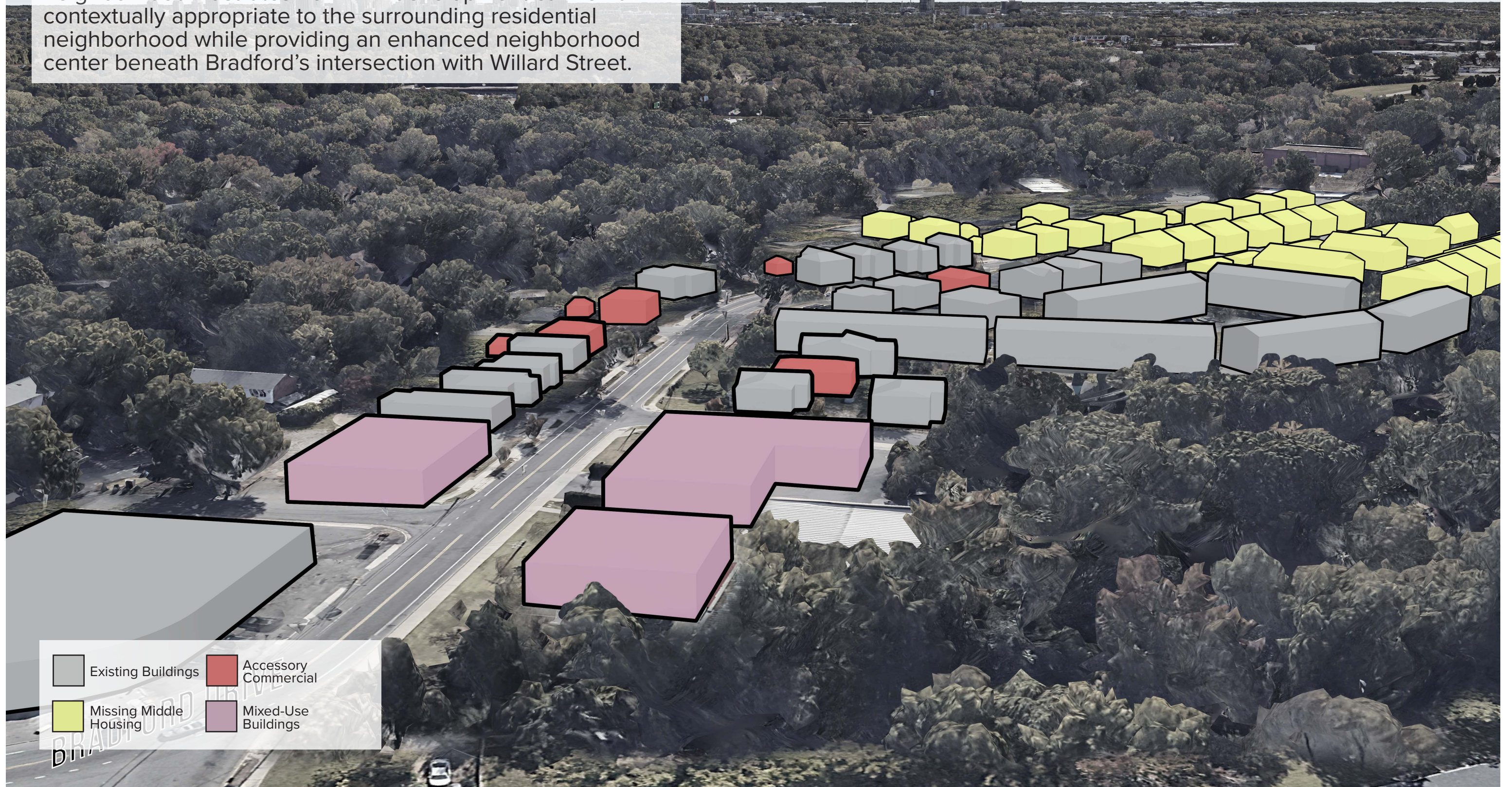
Protected Bike Lanes





Bike lanes currently exist along Bradford Drive but are not protected. Adding vertical elements or buffer space will increase safety and comfortability for cyclists that may not feel comfortable otherwise.



Contextually Appropriate Infill

This massing model along Bradford Drive in the Thomasboro neighborhood illustrates how infill development can remain contextually appropriate to the surrounding residential neighborhood while providing an enhanced neighborhood center beneath Bradford's intersection with Willard Street.



 Existing Buildings	 Accessory Commercial
 Missing Middle Housing	 Mixed-Use Buildings

SECTION 5

VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement describes the desired future of a city, neighborhood or community.

Overview

The creation of a vision statement memorializes community input through the engagement process and synthesizes it into a concise statement that supports the playbook's big ideas and prioritizes projects, programs and partnerships. The intent of the vision statement is to ensure that community members and city staff use the vision as guiding language to inform future decision making.

A SHARED VISION FOR CORRIDOR RESIDENTS

At the December 7 meeting, project staff presented a draft vision statement for the community to review that was reflective of key themes presented throughout the engagement process. A listening session was held on how the vision statement might change to better acknowledge the needs of those that have lived in this corridor for generations.

The project team listened to that feedback, and the vision statement presented on the following page is the response.

The Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor is a dynamic, sustainable and accessible network of neighborhoods where everyone can live, work and create. It is a place that fosters vibrant, inclusive and intergenerational communities where residents celebrate their culture and identities. The collective of communities in Freedom/Wilkinson nurtures healing, connections and creativity among its residents and each other.



SECTION 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Project Themes

Top Projects

Overview

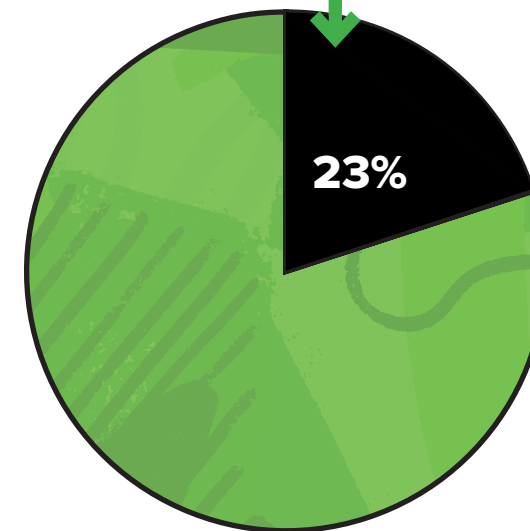
The following projects, programs, and partnerships were prioritized from a list of nearly 240 that included previously city-identified projects and new community-identified projects. It was developed with thoughtful input from the community and further refined by the Corridors of Opportunity implementation team. The list of projects, programs and partnerships provide a direction for the future investments in the corridor and will inform decision makers as they continue to manage change inside the corridor. The following 55 projects presented in the list corresponds to Freedom/Wilkinson's five guiding themes.

COMMUNITY-CENTERED PROJECTS

The project's engagement process was able to identify numerous impactful new projects for the corridor's neighborhoods.

23 percent of all top projects listed in this section came directly from the community.

New projects identified by community members



Of the prioritized list of projects, programs and partnerships, 23 percent (13 of 55 total) of all top projects are new - identified by the community during the engagement process

TOTAL PROJECTS



Project Themes

The Freedom/Wilkinson corridor’s project themes, similar to the Corridors of Opportunity program’s theme framework, represent five related project topics and are reflective of converging project ideas during the engagement process. The community responded with 111 ideas for improving the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor, Those ideas informed the top 5 project themes and include:

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Neighborhood Services
- Redevelopment
- Arts and Culture
- Green Spaces

Infrastructure Improvements

Improvements to the built environment through infrastructure investments, specifically existing amenities and gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network, such as sidewalks, shared use pathways, street lighting, and bus stop shelters. The community identified a need for increased connectivity and safety improvements at intersections for pedestrians. Improved access from the majority of the corridor to the proposed LYNX Silver Line light rail stations was also a frequent topic of discussion.



Neighborhood Services

Throughout the engagement process the community prioritized programs and projects that would increase neighborhood access to businesses and community services. Project ideas included healthier grocery stores and food options, accessible healthcare and recreational facilities and more commercial businesses.



Redevelopment

Leverage existing housing stock and vacant warehouses and storefronts to foster redevelopment projects within the corridor. The community identified reusing existing buildings, as well as redeveloping vacant or underutilized sites to promote new development in the corridor. Those projects and programs prioritize increased homeownership, affordable housing opportunities and programs that support staying in place initiatives as the corridor continues to see new development.



Arts and Culture

The community identified various opportunities to enhance arts and culture in the corridor that would preserve the rich history and provide community gathering spaces. Ideas include a theater, art venues, outdoor amphitheater, and projects and programs that retain neighborhood history and character.



Green Spaces

Enhancements and investments to the existing park and greenway system in the corridor, while reclaiming brownfields and underutilized land for green spaces to support community gathering. The community projects and programs highlighted the importance of repurposing existing greens spaces, brownfields and enhancing existing parks with new facilities.



Housing Access for All

Projects Overview

The Freedom/Wilkinson corridor is uniquely positioned to provide needed housing through investment and redevelopment. The project list that follows acknowledges the potential of those sites by focusing on increasing funding as well as availability of existing homeownership programs well as placing an emphasis on programs that ensure longtime residents are able to stay in place.

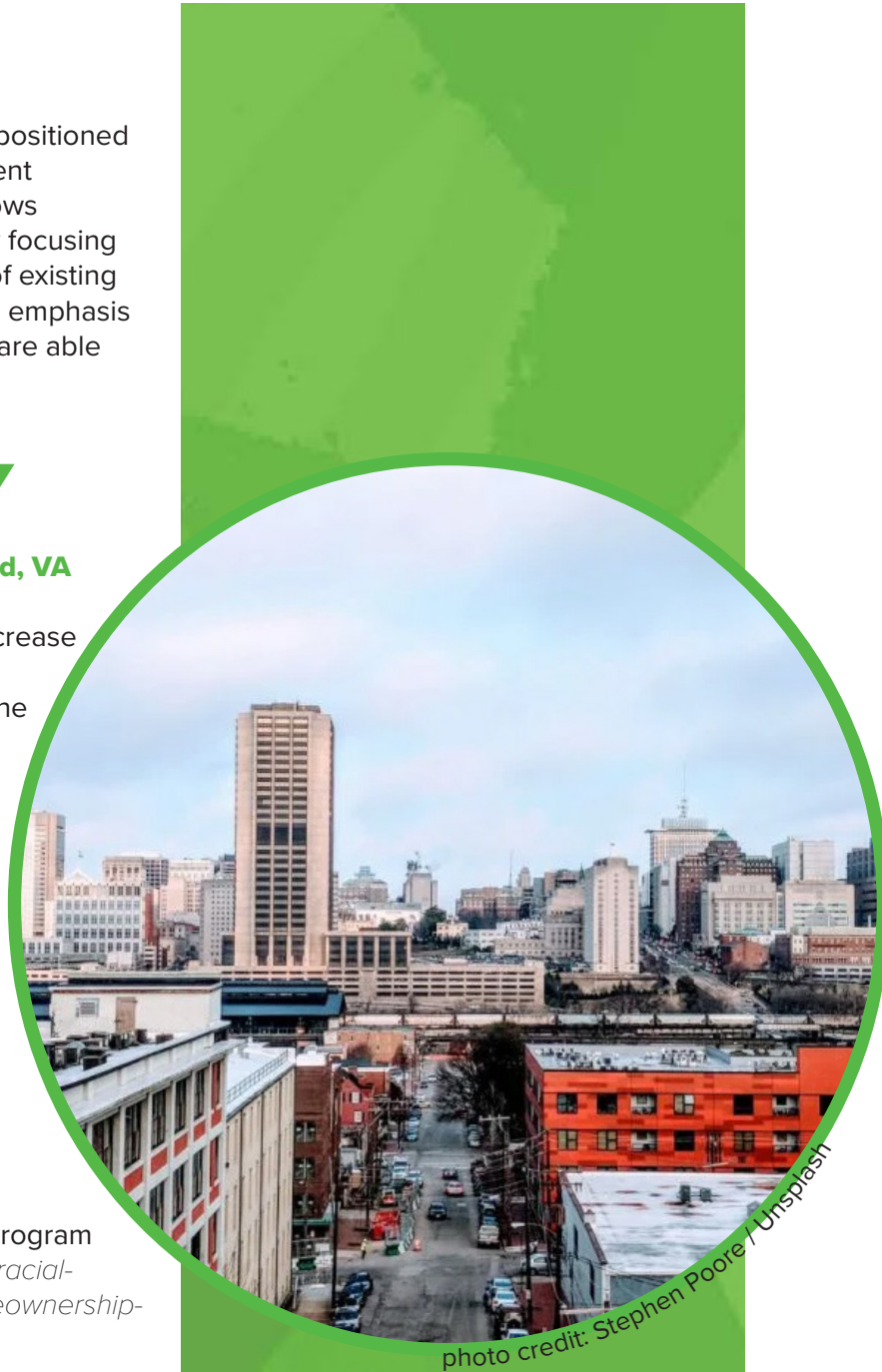
CASE STUDY

Black Homeownership Program - Richmond, VA

A pilot program in Richmond, VA seeks to increase African-American homeownership through down payment assistance and counseling. The program is administered by the Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation and funded by a grant from the Amandla Fund for Economic and Racial Justice.

The pilot program will provide assistance to 10 African-American first-time homebuyers through down payment assistance grants and pre and post-purchase counseling. If the program is successful, the program will be expanded to continue to close the racial homeownership gap in Richmond.

Read more about the homeownership pilot program here: <https://nextCity.org/urbanist-news/black-racial-justice-fund-in-richmond-launches-black-homeownership-program>



Top Projects

* denotes projects, programs, and partnerships identified during public engagement process
identifies projects prioritized by multiple work streams

Project/Program/Partnership	Description
Partnership with the West Side Land Trust*	Partner with West Side Land Trust to preserve and develop housing for low-income neighbors.
Increase corridor-specific funding and availability of down-payment assistance programs*	Invest more in assistance programs to offer down payment assistance for up to 110% AMI. Increasing the availability of homeownership down payment assistance programs, grows the attainability of homeownership to individuals of varying income levels.
Support and expand home repair programs to promote aging/staying in place*	Provide home repair to senior citizens already living in the corridor.
Advocate for affordable housing through increased Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and Choice Housing Opportunity Investment Fund (CHOIF) funding	Continued advocacy for Housing Trust Fund and Choice Housing Opportunity Investment Fund dollars ensures that financing options exist for homebuilders to offset the cost of providing additional affordable units.
Advocate for the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing	Preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) inside the corridor may be accomplished through the increased funding of existing housing programs.
Focus affordable multifamily housing efforts in areas likely to be served by the LYNX Silver Line	Target the Voluntary Mixed-Income Housing Development Program, a density bonus program, in future TOD areas of Phase 2 of the LYNX Silver Line. The program is intended to leverage designated affordable housing units from private multifamily development.
Increase homeownership in the corridor by increasing availability and funding of homeownership assistance programs	Homeownership continues to be an important component of intergenerational wealth and housing cost stability. The city supports homeownership through deferred loans to help qualified buyers with down payment, closing costs, and interest rate buydowns.
Promote housing education programs related to purchasing and upkeep of homes	Education programs that educate the community on homeownership for current and prospective homeowners such as financial empowerment, pre-homeownership counseling and foreclosure prevention.
Promote and increase funding for grants that support the City's tree canopy#	Build awareness through increased education and outreach (ex. Tree Care Matching Grants) and increase funding sources. Encourage tree planting events with partnering organizations. Set aside resources for communities within the corridor.

Diverse & Resilient Economic Opportunity

Project List Overview

The following projects related to economic opportunity have been curated to ensure equitable access to existing programs that support the corridor's economy while championing new programs, such as job placement, to those that experience barriers to employment.

CASE STUDY

DeSoto Market Place - DeSoto, TX

The Grow DeSoto Market Place is a 26,000-square-foot urban marketplace located in DeSoto, TX. Repurposed from an ACE Hardware as its anchor tenant for many years, the facility now houses a variety of restaurants, retail spaces, and offices for small business owners.

As a public-private partnership, in collaboration with the City of DeSoto and Options Real Estate, the Market Place is designed to help small business owners start and grow successful ventures, while providing the community a diverse retail experience.

This public-private partnership is the first of its kind and uniquely caters to start ups in the Best Southwest Region of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan area.

Read more about DeSoto Market Place here: <https://www.growdesoto.org/about>



Top Projects

* denotes projects, programs, and partnerships identified during public engagement process
identifies projects prioritized by multiple work streams

Project/Program/Partnership	Description
Create an Opportunity Ready Sites program for the corridor	Site readiness programs identify sites that are primed for commercial/industrial investment based on a set of objective criteria.
Create an equitable development program	Consider curricula to train and certify minority development professionals to engage in the corridor. Express the city's preference for public/private partnerships within corridors to include equitable development partners and other minority development professionals.
Launch an Opportunity Workforce Initiative and Corridor Action Team	Encourage partners to create Corridor Action Teams (A-Teams), leveraging the existing workforce collectives such as the Charlotte Workforce Providers Council, representatives from leading education, training and nonprofit organization and serving as a liaison and advocate for aspiring workers and those seeking to change careers to link up with potential employers.
Partnership with existing workforce development partners and programs	A coordinated effort with employers and partners like Charlotte Works, Goodwill, HIRE, Do Greater, Mayor's Youth Employment Program (MYEP) and others to help link residents to job opportunities and trainings. This could include a Jobs Connector website, MYEP internships, etc.
Empower public-private partnerships in the corridor	Expand the city's tools for encouraging public-private partnerships and better leverage deployment of existing tools.
Expand capacity of existing high-performance nonprofits that serve opportunity workers	Identify high-performing leading practices in Charlotte for investment and support. Invest in select nonprofits to enhance their operational capaCity, integrate their programs and services into the corridors, or both. Leverage financial service companies to provide financial literacy on improving credit scores, saving and investing.
Proactively attract target industry businesses into Freedom/Wilkinson	Target key industries and several specific niche industry sectors for the Freedom/Wilkinson corridors including technology/administrative support services, health care, and logistics/distribution. Collaborate with employers across the City to consider a corridor location for future expansions. Engage in direct outreach to existing target industry businesses.
Create a Farmer's Market in the corridor*	Create a corridor Farmer's Market that creates opportunity for local producers, business owners and artisans. Use Rosa Parks Farmers Market as a precedent.

Top Projects

* denotes projects, programs, and partnerships identified during public engagement process
identifies projects prioritized by multiple work streams

Project/Program/ Partnership	Description
Partner with existing landowners to transform outdated buildings into job and community centers*	Identify possible partnership opportunities for redevelopment in this corridor to enhance commercial and industrial development. This could include reimagining blighted strip malls and empty warehouses. Support renovation and modernization of existing industrial buildings to attract consumer-focused commercial and light industrial tenants.
Increase awareness and funding of the Business Matching Grant Program (BMGP) program inside the corridor#	Build awareness through increased education and outreach for the Business Matching Grant Program and set aside funding for projects located inside the corridor.
Expand Smart City initiatives and public internet availability	Continue to advocate for digital connectivity and inclusion in the corridors through the Access Charlotte program. Increase education about and navigation of internet access programs and opportunities. Provide assistance and information on navigating these programs and benefits.



Healthy, Safe, & Active Communities

Project List Overview

The project list that aids in the creation of healthy, safe, and active communities achieves the community's vision of intentional and equitable development and community building. The prioritized list increase access to fresh food, increase corridor-wide security via added investments in street lighting and seeks to preserve the corridors unique buildings and cultural assets.

CASE STUDY

Brownfields Educational Program - Greenville, SC

Since 2000, the City of Greenville has received approximately \$1.8 million from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) brownfield grants. These grants have advocated for a healthy environment and have been leveraged into more than \$60 million in economic development and created more than 176 jobs.

In 2014, Greenville SC received \$400,000 to fund assessments and outreach for a three-year period. This included an educational outreach program by Community Quest to provide public awareness to brownfields. The city's brownfields program includes a Community Connections monthly newsletter for updates, high school outreach, and educational materials by Community Quest.

Read more about the brownfields educational program here: <https://www.greenvillesc.gov/266/Brownfields>



photo credit: Upstate Business Journal

Top Projects

* denotes projects, programs, and partnerships identified during public engagement process
identifies projects prioritized by multiple work streams

Project/Program/Partnership	Description
Utilize under-programmed and un-activated public property for community events*	Provide connections with corridor business owners and communities through the annual and monthly programming and activation of under-utilized public property in the corridor (ex. Open Streets).
Provide funding to corridor neighborhood grassroots organizations for projects and initiatives*	Increase funding support and access to capital to grassroots organizations. Partner with grassroots organizations inside the corridor to increase awareness of existing programs.
Provide affordable corridor-wide transportation choices through mobility hubs#	Construct mobility hubs to offer affordable transportation choices through micro-transit options at designated areas to provide first/last mile connections to points of interest.
Increase awareness and funding for the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program	Build awareness through increased education and outreach to neighborhood-based organizations for the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program and set aside funding for projects located inside the corridor. Projects can include art, safety, signage, community gardens to grow fruits and vegetables, festivals and more.
Invest in programs that support job and college readiness in youth and adults*	Invest in youth programs that focus on job and college readiness.
Strengthen neighborhood organizations through the creation of a joint community coalition	Maintain and strengthen neighborhood organizations by encouraging the development of a joint organization that includes representation from all neighborhood organizations to maximize impact of resources. Utilize this organization for additional capaCity building and programming.
Partner to fund improvements at existing local parks*	Continue to invest in existing local parks such as recent improvements to Enderly Park.
Create new parks and recreation centers inside the corridor*	Invest in new parks and recreation centers in corridor neighborhoods, such as the reconstructed Wallace Pruitt Recreation Center, expansion of Bryant Park, and future park locations on Mecklenburg County owned Parkland Reserves.
Support environmental education and programming of brownfield sites inside the corridor*#	Education and community programming along reclaiming brownfields. Look at opportunities to identify brownfields and reclaim them for community and green space.
Support existing programs that assist neighborhood organizations through training opportunities	Partner and support neighborhood organizations through existing community training programs such as Civic Leadership Academy and neighborhood board retreats.

Integrated Natural & Built Environment

Project List Overview

Projects that support an integrated natural and built environment were prioritized through engagement efforts and integrate the natural environment into new and existing development. Continued investment in existing projects such as greenways, and focusing on community education efforts will guarantee the continued beautification, health, and wellness of Freedom/Wilkinson communities.

CASE STUDY

Downtown Greenway - Greensboro, NC

The Downtown Greenway is a four-mile walking and biking trail that loops around downtown Greensboro. The loop connects surrounding communities around downtown with a multi-use path and encourages public health and fitness through different programmed activities such as races and fitness classes sponsored by the YMCA.

The project includes a road diet along Murrow Boulevard that previously divided East Greensboro and Downtown, reconnecting these neighborhoods for pedestrians and cyclists. The greenway also has numerous public spaces, parks and public art installations. Three out of four sections are fully completed and activated, with the Western Branch currently under construction.

Read more about the Greensboro Downtown Greenway here: <http://https://downtowngreenway.org/why/>



Top Projects

* denotes projects, programs, and partnerships identified during public engagement process
identifies projects prioritized by multiple work streams

Project/Program/Partnership	Description
Promote and increase funding for grants that support the City's tree canopy#	Build awareness through increased education and outreach (ex. Tree Care Matching Grants) and increase funding sources. Encourage tree planting events with partnering organizations. Set aside resources for communities within the corridor.
Construct an aquatic facility and provide associated programming inside the corridor*	Support the planned investments by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Tuckaseegee Park and Recreation Center.
Continue to fund greenway improvements within the corridor	Greenway improvements that should be funded and constructed in the corridor include the Greenway from Alleghany Street to Freedom Drive to West Boulevard. These improvements should be paired with site improvements to better activate existing green spaces that are proximal to green connections.
Use the Urban Arboretum Trail (UAT), part of the Tree Canopy Preservation Program (TCPP), as an investment model for expanding neighborhood connections, and tree canopy, in the corridor	Continued investment in reconnecting neighborhoods divided by urban renewal and highway projects through preservation and enhancement of tree canopy and public open space along existing pedestrian infrastructure.
Promote and increase funding for neighborhood beautification programs	Increases in funding for Tree Care Matching Grants and Keep Charlotte Beautiful Beautification Grant should be paired with neighborhood capacity building, program education, and increasing awareness of free programs like NC State's Cooperative Extension Master Gardener program.
Improve existing public spaces and local parks inside the corridor through capital improvements and community-based programming*	Invest in existing parks and open space through infrastructure projects and community-led programming. Consider repurposing underutilized areas with community amenities.
Continued capital investment in stormwater and increased support for environmental education and programming inside the corridor*#	Continue capital investments to maintain existing infrastructure, reduce flooding, and improve surface water quality. Continued and increased support for environmental education for surface water quality and community programming along reclaiming brownfields. Look at opportunities to identify brownfields and reclaim them for community and green space.

Safe & Equitable Mobility

Project List Overview

The Freedom/Wilkinson corridor is bisected by two state-maintained roadways. From their starting points along adjacent interstates, they all converge into uptown near the eastern corner of the corridor's Area of Influence. The project list improves multi-modal options along roadways that have been designed to accommodate the automobile and fills gaps in existing infrastructure to improve safety and connectivity.

CASE STUDY

Lake 2 Lake Rayobello Art and Traffic Calming - Baltimore, MD

The Lake 2 Lake Rayobello pavement art installation is a low-cost traffic calming project that enhances pedestrian safety through the provision of artistic bump outs, crosswalks, and sidewalks by using paint to slow traffic and enhance visibility and access. The pavement art installation was partially funded by Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) Community-Led Placemaking Program. The artwork serves as a temporary traffic calming installation before permanent infrastructure is installed.

The grant funded community engagement events, mobile bike shop pop-ups, group bike rides and artist fees. Later project phases will include an installation of mural artwork on concrete jersey barriers along the shared use path.

Read more about Lake 2 Lake Rayobello here:
<https://grahamprojects.com/projects/lake2lake-rayobello/>



photo credit: Graham Projects

Top Projects

* denotes projects, programs, and partnerships identified during public engagement process
identifies projects prioritized by multiple work streams

Project/Program/ Partnership	Description
Fill sidewalk gap by installing sidewalk on Freedom Drive from Teddington Drive to 5811 Freedom Drive	The construction of a sidewalk in this location fills in an existing infrastructure gap and will create a safer place for corridor residents to walk.
Construct sidewalk on Morris Field Drive from Golf Acres Drive to Wilkinson Boulevard	The construction of a sidewalk in this location fills in an existing infrastructure gap and will create an additional pedestrian connection to Wilkinson Boulevard.
Construct street retrofit on Ashley Road from Alleghany Street to Freedom Drive	The retrofit will include the construction of bike lanes. This project implements the bike priority network on Ashley Road and creates additional bike connections in the corridor.
Improve bicycle facilities on Tuckaseegee Road from Freedom Drive to Ashley Road	Upgrading existing lanes to buffered bike lanes implements the bike priority network on Tuckaseegee Road and complements other bicycle facility projects in the corridor.
Install pedestrian crossing with improved bus stop facilities at the intersection of Freedom Drive and Cheshire Avenue	Installation of crosswalk with new bus stop facilities to improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians at this intersection and bus stop.
Install traffic signal at Boyer Street, Mulberry Church Road, and Wilkinson Boulevard	Installation of traffic signal and pedestrian crossing at this intersection on Wilkinson Boulevard to improve safety and connectivity.
Install streetlights along Boyer Street from Wilkinson Boulevard to Mulberry Church Road	Installation of street lights will better illuminate new and existing infrastructure and poorly lit areas inside the corridor.
Construct sidewalk on southeast side of Camp Greene Street from Amber Drive to Marlowe Avenue	The construction of a sidewalk in this location fills in an existing infrastructure gap and will create a safer place for corridor residents to walk along Camp Greene Street.
Upgrade existing pedestrian signals at the intersection of Tuckaseegee Road and Glenwood Drive	Installation of audible pedestrian signals at this intersection improves pedestrian safety and compliments existing sidewalk network.

Top Projects

* denotes projects, programs, and partnerships identified during public engagement process
identifies projects prioritized by multiple work streams

Project/Program/ Partnership	Description
Construct a mobility hub near the intersection of Freedom Drive and Tuckaseegee Road#	Mobility hubs offer micro-transit options at designated areas to provide first/last mile connections to points of interest. This location serves the Pawtucket-Coulwood Micro-transit Zone and communities including Freedom Drive, Tuckaseegee Road, Little Rock Road, and Toddville Road.
Install buffered bikes lanes on Thrift Road from Rushing Creek Lane to Tuckaseegee Road with wayfinding signage connecting bike lanes to Stewart Creek Greenway	The construction of buffered bike lanes on Thrift Road to connect bicyclists from Stewart Creek Greenway to Tuckaseegee Road.
Construct a pedestrian crossing with placemaking elements at Bradford Drive and Willard Street	Construct a crosswalk at this intersection with opportunity for multi-way stop, mini roundabout, and/or paint the pavement project.



Retain Culture & Identity

Project List Overview

The Freedom/Wilkinson corridor is one of Charlotte's most diverse corridors in the city. Development pressures due to private investment and proximity to Uptown pose a threat of both physical and cultural displacement. The accompanying project list can support the corridor's diversity, preserve its identity and realize the community's vision established through this process.

CASE STUDY

Piazza Pod Park - Philadelphia, PA

The Piazza Pod Park, in the Philadelphia neighborhood of Northern Liberties, is a pop-up park made from recycled shipping containers on a previously underutilized parking lot.

The containers have been repurposed as spaces for recreation, shopping and dining with a focus on serving the community. The park also includes art installations and various activated areas that support neighborhood interaction and impromptu celebrations..

Read about how the Piazza Pod Park has activated a parking lot here: <https://medium.com/inhabitat-unbound/this-philadelphia-pop-up-park-was-made-using-recycled-shipping-containers-617635af98d0>



photo credit: Medium.com

Top Projects

* denotes projects, programs, and partnerships identified during public engagement process
identifies projects prioritized by multiple work streams

Project/Program/Partnership	Description
Develop a pilot Community Artists Program that supports and develops artistic talent inside the corridor	Create a Community Artists program (pilot in Corridors of Opportunity, then replicate in all other areas) in which artists from those neighborhoods are supported to create community-reflective work, engage with their community, and mentor younger generations of emerging creatives.
Promote neighborhood identity through design of existing and planned transit stops#	Work with Arts in Transit to identify existing bus stops, mobility hubs to enhance. Coordinate with Bus Priority Study.
Develop a comprehensive gateway plan for Thomasboro and Hoskins neighborhoods.	Create gateways and a sense of place that include neighborhood identification signage, pedestrian scaled lighting and crosswalks with planting strips at major community intersections in Thomasboro and Hoskins.
Enhance sense of place and community through the construction of corridor-wide open space*	Identify leftover right of way/publicly owned land for a community public space while also supporting local businesses in the corridor.
Provide funding for corridor businesses to engage with artists for murals and art that support the corridor's history	Set aside funds (additional to the Placemaking Grant) to assist business owners (funding, engagement, connections with corridor artists) to install murals on their businesses that celebrate the culture of the corridor.
Promote and increase funding for programs that fund community events*	Work with community non-profits to host pop-up events in vacant areas along the corridor to support incremental development and economic development opportunities.
Preserve historic landmarks in the corridor by promoting public/private partnerships	Utilize local historic district designations in the corridor, 50 percent tax abatement for listed properties. A number of properties within the corridor have been identified as prospective local historic landmarks that are potentially eligible for be designated.
Support neighborhood culture through the creation of pattern books	Utilize pattern books to expedite permitting for context-sensitive residential structures and identify location for pilot program. Pattern books provide pre-permitted home plans with architectural designs that compliment a neighborhood's existing context.
Increase awareness and funding of the Business Matching Grant (BMG) program inside the corridor#	Build awareness through increased education and outreach for the Business Matching Grant Program and set aside funding for projects located inside the corridor.

SECTION 7

NEXT STEPS

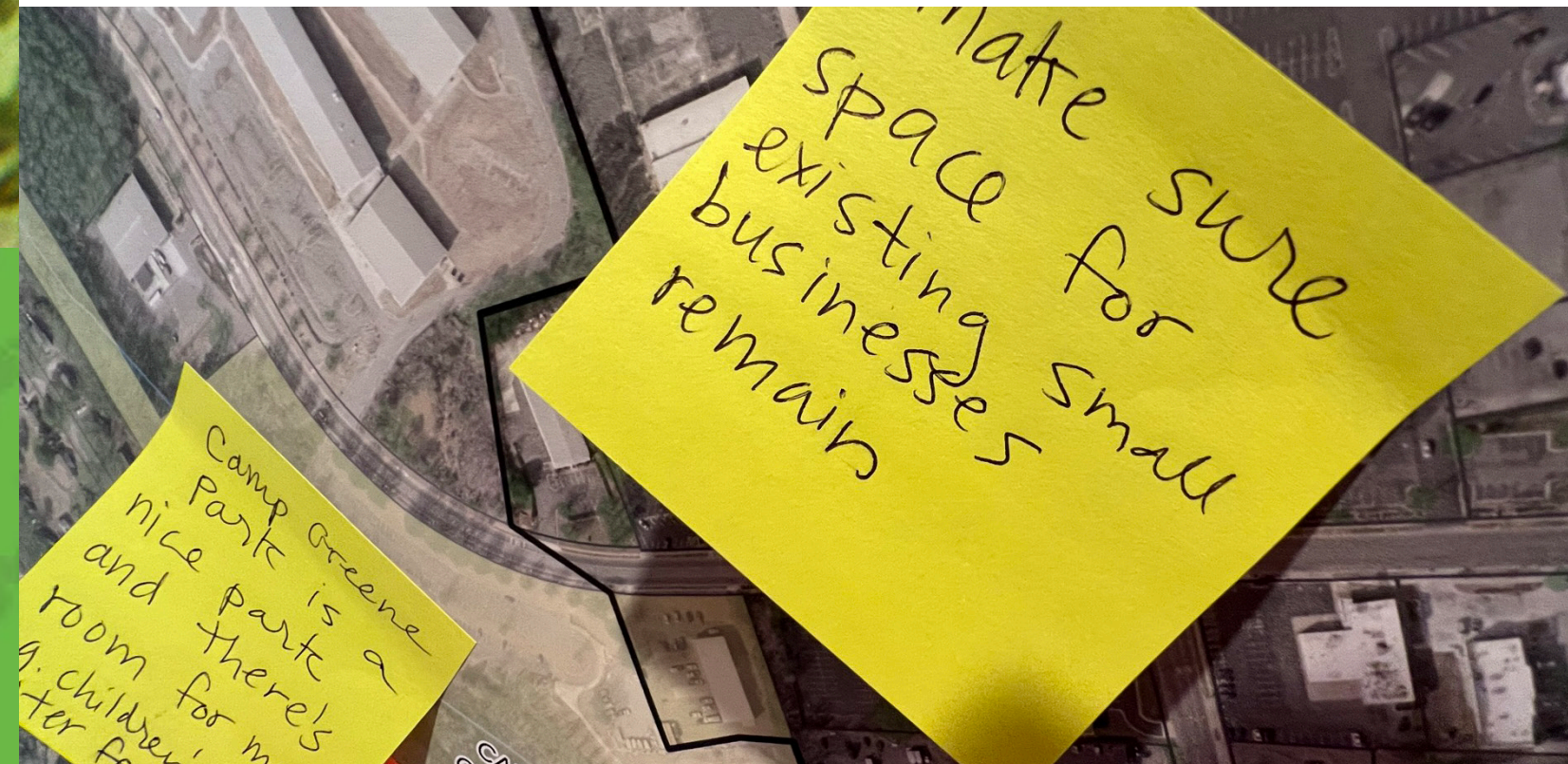
The playbook serves as a first step in implementing city and community identified projects, programs, and partnerships. The Corridor Roadmap, focuses in on short-term implementation and will further prioritize the top projects.

Through an interactive and inclusive community engagement process, the Playbook has identified existing conditions and previously planned projects, programs, and partnerships within the area of influence. A comprehensive list of project recommendations were identified by the city and community. The community input and their big ideas resulted in five project themes that, when paired with the vision statement, convey the community's desired outcome. The playbook and the project list will now serve as a foundation for implementation - guiding investment from both the public and private sectors.

Next steps for the corridor include creating the Corridor Roadmap; seeking funding opportunities; and implementing project, programs and partnerships identified in the playbook. These next steps will put city dollars to work for Freedom/Wilkinson residents.

CORRIDOR ROADMAP

The Corridor Roadmap will further prioritize the projects, programs and partnerships listed here, and will start to identify projects that are funded immediately.



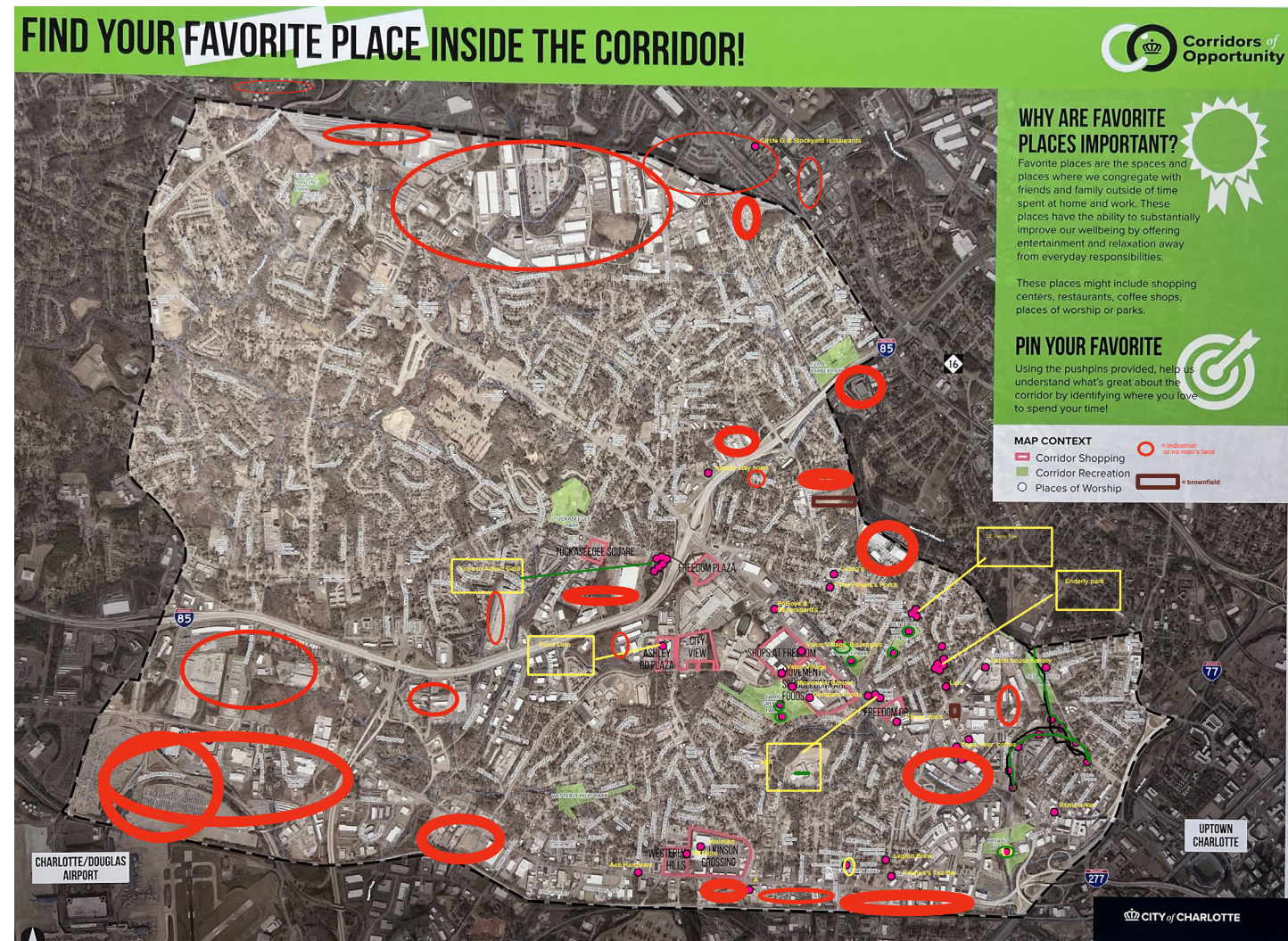
Appendix

Community Ideas, Comments and Identified Projects and Programs

Throughout the community engagement process city staff and the engagement consultants gathered and documented all community input. The appendix contains every community idea, project, and program identified during the community engagement process.

Kick-Off Engagement - August 24, 2023

Below is all the needs/wants/desires that the community identified during the kick-off engagement meeting.



Theme	Needs/Wants/Desires
Arts and Culture	Music, theater, art venues
Arts and Culture	A cultural home- one of a kind immersive art, artistic, theater, art hall
Arts and Culture	Outdoor amphitheater for community concerts
Arts and Culture	Marian Wright Edelman House at QC Family Tree is good for community gathering
Arts and Culture	Hidden Gem: Scorpio
Arts and Culture	Hidden Gem: Pawtucket and Paw Creek have a community and infrastructure that is strong, but not always thought of as a part of the equation.
Arts and Culture	Favorite: Scorpio's
Arts and Culture	Favorite: Scorpio- oldest gay club in NC
Arts and Culture	Favorite: Art in 5 points (not in corridor)
Arts and Culture	Retaining neighborhood history/identity
Education	Centers to teach recycling an about Global warming education for children and adults
Education	Library- we do not have one in our corridor
Education	Hidden Gem: Bishop Spaugh (CMS) seems like a place of unrealized potential
Education	Hidden Gem: Phillip O Berry & Harding
Equitable Development	Harder to rehab than to demo and start ground up (disruption of community character)
Equitable Development	Barriers to scaling for emerging developers
Food Security	Farmer's market like Rosa Parks
Food Security	Trader Joe's or Grocery stores that have better nutrition
Funding Support	Lack of funding to support operating expenses
Funding Support	Development of organizational structure to support financial stability
Funding Support	Opportunities for partnerships with City/County to best serve residents
Funding Support	Access to capital
Funding Support	Need for safety, security, and façade improvements to businesses
Green Space	More green spaces, pocket parks, edible gardens
Green Space	More Trees
Green Space	Land under power lines is great potential for community gathering
Green Space	Can we reclaim brownfields for the purpose of community gathering and parks?
Green Space	Please note how many industrial areas and brownfields there are in this corridor. It seems like the FW Corridor has more than other places

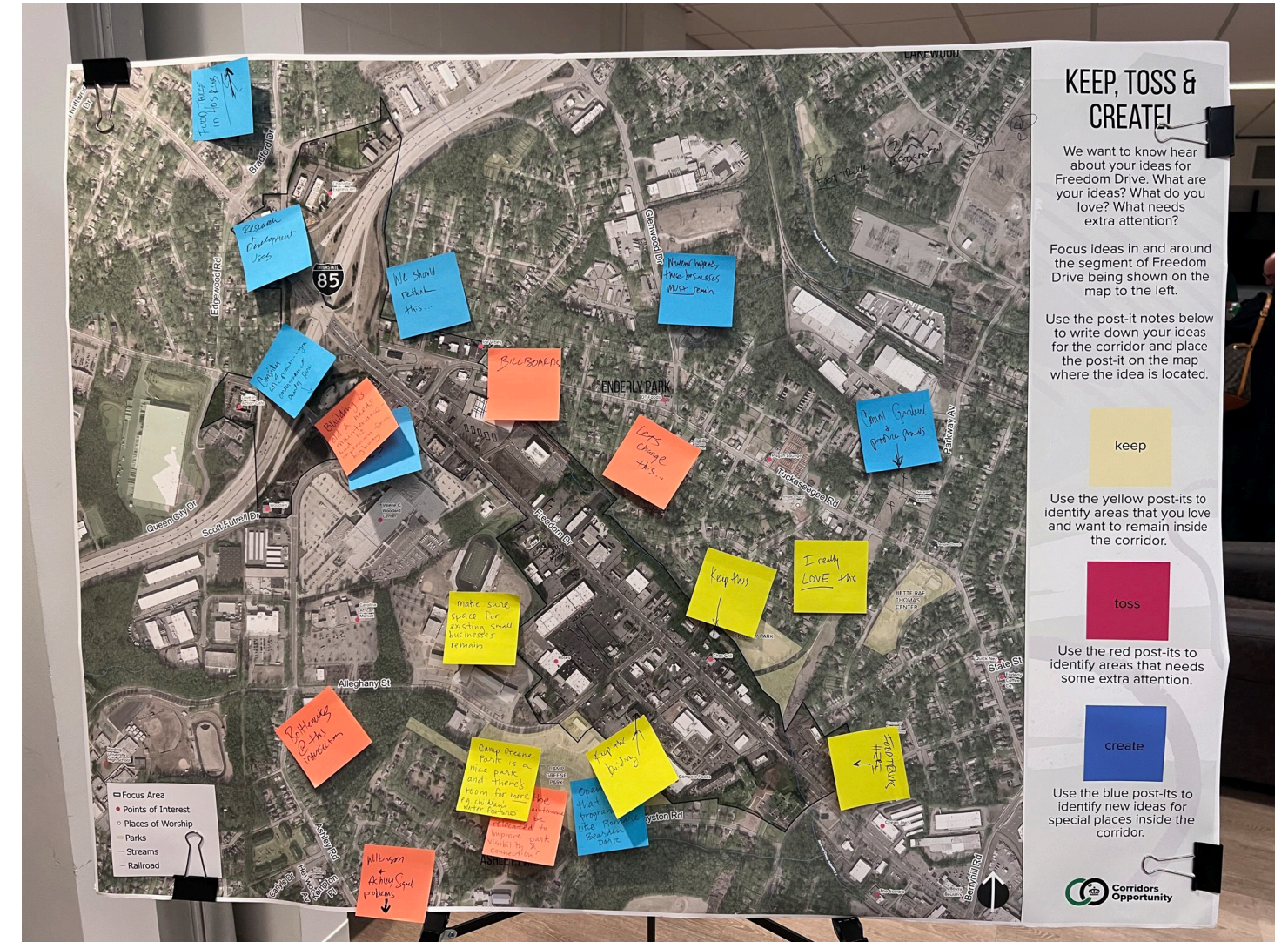
Theme	Needs/Wants/Desires
Green Space	Hidden Gem: There is a Crepe Myrtle tree at the corner of Vanizer and Tuckaseegee that is magical
Green Space	Favorite: Parks
Green Space	Favorite: The greenway
Housing Needs	Shortage in space to build affordable housing
Housing Needs	Being priced out of housing/displacement
Housing Needs	Lack of incentive for existing homeowners
Infrastructure Improvements	Running red lights on Freedom Drive is too frequent and very dangerous
Infrastructure Improvements	Enderly Park needs a bathroom
Infrastructure Improvements	Transit (CATS) stops should be equipped for rest, community engagement, and education.
Infrastructure Improvements	When CATS changed the bus routes a few years ago, they moved the bus out of the interior of the neighborhood and located the route to the perimeter. This makes for longer walks to the bus stop. They removed bus stops with shelters and benches and did not build new ones at the new stops.
Infrastructure Improvements	Why do our streets not have sidewalks or proper lighting?
Infrastructure Improvements	The intersection at Idaho and the Brookshire is very necessary and extremely dangerous.
Infrastructure Improvements	More opportunities for community connectivity
Infrastructure Improvements	Sidewalk gaps along Tuckaseegee
Neighborhood Services	A sit down restaurant like Longhorn or Outback
Neighborhood Services	Develop old Lowe's Building on Freedom Drive
Neighborhood Services	Need more commercial businesses (restaurants, bookstores, clothing)
Neighborhood Services	Book stores
Neighborhood Services	Hidden Gem: Locally owned restaurants
Neighborhood Services	Favorite: Dairy Queen
Neighborhood Services	Favorite: Value Village
Neighborhood Services	Favorite: Walmart, Value Village, Aldi
Neighborhood Services	Favorite: Love in Action café
Neighborhood Services	More sit-down restaurants within the corridor
Organizational Support	Recruiting members to participate in organized neighborhood groups
Organizational Support	Finding funding for neighborhood improvement projects
Organizational Support	Business district development
Recreation	Rejuvenation for the human body: massage, education, Rest importance

Theme	Needs/Wants/Desires
Recreation	Rollerskating rinks
Recreation	More places to dance and socialize without alcohol with uplifting music with love and upliftment
Recreation	Recreation Centers- though the BRTC has not been very welcoming in the past several years. The pedestrian door is locked, the rules are very strict, it is hard to collaborate with the staff, space is only provided at a cost- even if for the benefit of the community
Recreation	Spraygrounds- we do not have one in our corridor
Recreation	Pool- we do not have one in our corridor
Recreation	Sports park- bmx, mountain biking, skate park, soccer, baseball.
Recreation	Favorite: Bette Rae Thomas Center Senior programming
Recreation	Favorite:Hornets Nest Park and QC Family Tree
Recreation	Favorite: Tuckaseegee Rec Center
Recreation	Favorite: The LJ- local name for basketball center at Camp Green park
Recreation	Barriers to access rec. centers/after school programs for youth
Redevelopment	Tear down strip mall on Hovis Rd.
Redevelopment	Empty Warehouses or storefronts- turn into indoor market/bazaar/meeting place
Redevelopment	Opportunity centers in vacant buildings
Redevelopment	Let the community buy back the vacant housing- boarded up, abandoned houses
Redevelopment	Long turnarounds when applying for building/demo permits
Safe Communities	Crime and safety concerns

Stakeholder Workshop Notes

Below is a list of needs, wants, and desires that came out of the Keep/Toss/Create activity from one of the stakeholder workshops.

Keep/Toss/Create	Theme	Needs/Wants/Desires
Keep	Green Space	Camp Greene Park is a nice park and there's room for more, e.g. children's water features
Create	Green Space	Open space that is programmed like Romare Bearden Park
Create	Green Space	Community Gardens and produce stands
Toss	Infrastructure Improvements	Can the park maintenance facility be relocated to improve park visibility and connection?
Toss	Infrastructure Improvements	Bottlenecks at Alleghany/Ashley Rd Intersection
Toss	Infrastructure Improvements	Wilkinson and Ashley signal problems
Keep	Neighborhood Services	Make sure space for existing small businesses remain
Create	Neighborhood Services	Food trucks in Hoskins
Keep	Neighborhood Services	Keep this building (multi-use space, 2801 Crisman St, near movement school)
Keep	Neighborhood Services	Whatever happens, these businesses (on Glenwood Dr) must remain
Keep	Neighborhood Services	Food Trucks along Freedom Dr near Camp Greene intersection
Create	Neighborhood Services	Medical District Idea? (existing Concentra Urgent Care)
Create	Organizational Support	Research and Development uses (area near highway)
Toss	Redevelopment	Billboards
Toss	Redevelopment	Building (Concentra Urgent Care) is old and needs maintenance-- bad first impression from highway
Keep	Redevelopment	Keep this building (1525 Enderly Rd)
Create	Redevelopment	Consider an epicenter type entertainment center here off highway

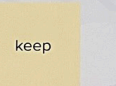


KEEP, TOSS & CREATE!

We want to know hear about your ideas for Freedom Drive. What are your ideas? What do you love? What needs extra attention?

Focus ideas in and around the segment of Freedom Drive being shown on the map to the left.

Use the post-it notes below to write down your ideas for the corridor and place the post-it on the map where the idea is located.



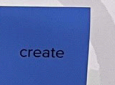
keep

Use the yellow post-its to identify areas that you love and want to remain inside the corridor.



toss

Use the red post-its to identify areas that needs some extra attention.



create

Use the blue post-its to identify new ideas for special places inside the corridor.



Additional Stakeholder Workshop Notes

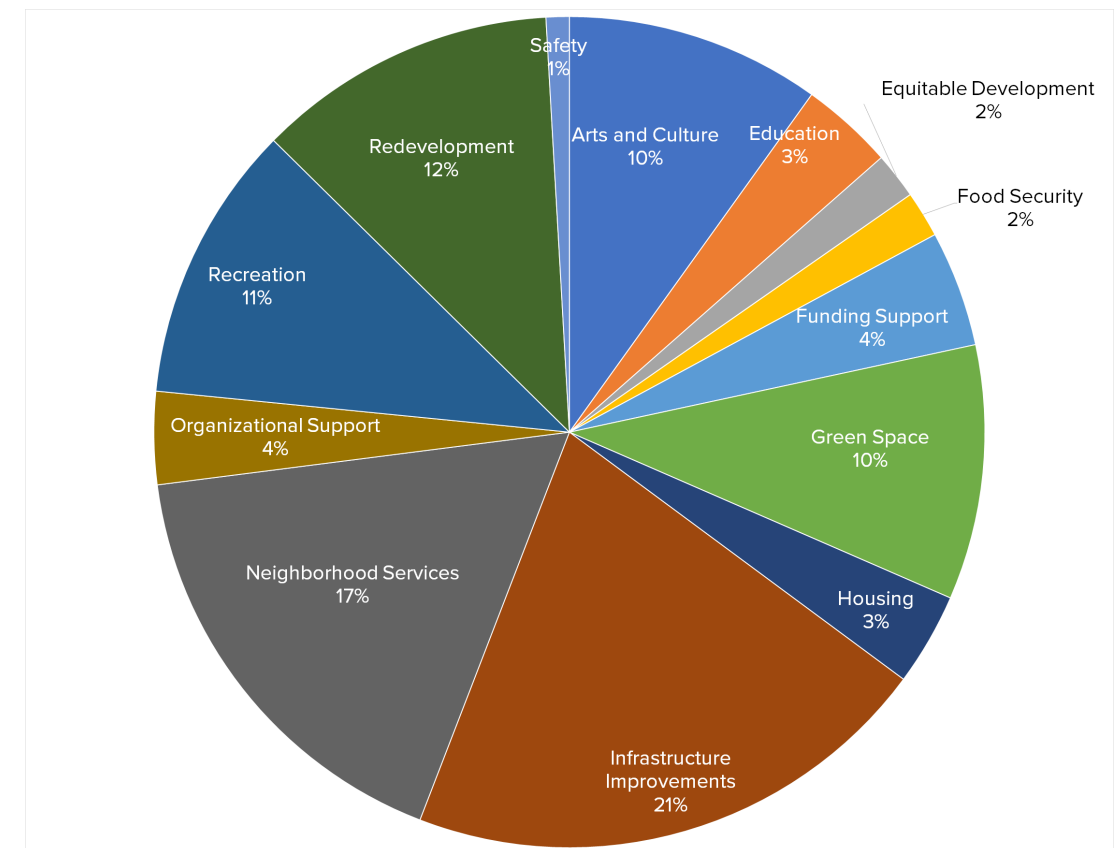
Theme	Needs/Wants/Desires
Redevelopment	Expand types of uses (including residential) in the Freedom Corridor
Redevelopment	Some buildings need face lifts
Housing Needs	Consider residential uses
Infrastructure Improvements	Microtransit/bus line in corridor
Infrastructure Improvements	Pedestrian trail
Infrastructure Improvements	Improve street conditions
Infrastructure Improvements	Street lights/updates landscaping
Infrastructure Improvements	Consider pedestrians bikers scooter-ers, and differently-abled
Infrastructure Improvements	More walkability and safer for bikers
Infrastructure Improvements	Connections for people in wheelchairs
Infrastructure Improvements	Consider better connectivity across freedom
Infrastructure Improvements	Improved lighting
Infrastructure Improvements	Landscaping has been lacking in the freedom corridor
Infrastructure Improvements	Accessibility for wheelchair users
Infrastructure Improvements	Figure out a safe way to cross freedom drive to connect neighborhoods
Neighborhood Services	Thomasboro hoskins community center
Neighborhood Services	Improve on businesses that are already located in this corridor
Neighborhood Services	Create vibrant look and feel with added restaurants and services
Neighborhood Services	A nice sit down restaurant
Arts and Culture	Activate parking lots with community events (music, food trucks, gatherings, etc.)

Top Project Themes

Using the identified needs, wants and desires from the community from the stakeholder workshops and the kick-off meeting the percentages of the project themes were calculated:

- **10% (11)** - Arts and Culture
- **4% (4)** - Education
- **2% (2)** - Equitable Development
- **2% (2)** - Food Security
- **5% (5)** - Funding Support
- **10% (11)** - Green Space
- **4% (4)** - Housing
- **21% (23)** - Infrastructure Improvements
- **17% (19)** - Neighborhood Services
- **4% (4)** - Organizational Support
- **11% (12)** - Recreation
- **12% (13)** - Redevelopment
- **1% (1)** - Safety

Total 111 ideas / comments
Following the results



Corridors Connect

Community Engagement Feedback October 22, 2023

QC Family Tree offered games and activities for the Corridor Connect participants to engage with the Freedom/Wilkinson Playbook information. Here are the findings.

Participants were asked:

If you could pick just one of the following for the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor, which one would you pick?

- **50%** of votes - music, art, theater venue (indoors)
- **50%** of votes - outdoor amphitheater

Which do you think is most needed in the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor?

- **60%** of votes - Sprayground
- **40%** of votes - Sports Park

Which do you think would help the most people in the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor?

- **40%** of votes - Library
- **60%** of votes - Greenspaces, Pocket Parks, Edible Gardens

Which do you think is a better use of city/county time, money, and effort?

- **30%** of votes - A farmer's market in the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor
- (Beautification, Safety, Gateways for the Corridor)
- **30%** of votes - Incentivizing an additional main brand grocery store to open in the corridor
- **40%** of votes - Incentivizing locally owned restaurants to open in the F-W corridor

If the City wants to help F-W residents, it will (choose 2)

- **50%** of votes - Create more affordable housing in our area
- **0** votes - Enhance bus stops
- **0** votes - Reuse empty warehouses for public good
- **50%** of votes - Make the area more walkable

If you could choose what kind of additional retail to add to the F-W corridor, what would it be?

- Natural foods store (3 votes)
- Habitat store
- Party supply store
- Pet store
- Food
- Grocery store
- Target
- Cultural store
- Toy store

Question: Who do you most want to see benefit from the F-W corridor improvements?
answers:

- **40%** of votes - Families with Children
- **18%** of votes - Low Income Residents
- **15%** of votes - Children
- **9%** of votes - Everybody
- **7.5%** of votes - Long time residents
- **4.5%** of votes - Elders
- **3%** of votes - BIPOC
- **3%** of votes - LGBTQIA+
- **1.5%** of votes - people with disabilities
- **0** votes - New residents
- **0** votes - Caregivers

Tell us the name of a specific person or organization that you think is positively impacting the F-W corridor.

Non Profit Organization in F-W

- Do Greater
- QC Family Tree
- Parks and Rec

Neighborhood Association in F-W

- Camp Green Neighborhood Association
- Hoskins Community
- Dowd Park

A F-W Resident

- Beverly Davis
- Katie Harris
- Cynthia Harrison- Health and Renewal, H.E.R.

A F-W Church

- Camp Green Church is always feeding people
- Greater Fellowship Baptist Church
- Center City Church

A F-W Business

- Line Dancing at the Rec Center
- Open Streets

A Teacher, Principle, or School in F-W

- Ms. Brown and Ms. Minill at AP
- Young Black Leaders Association at School
- Blythe Elementary
- School Sports

Online Survey

Survey Results

Following the stakeholder engagement sessions, an online survey was conducted to help get community feedback to prioritize projects/programs/and partnerships within the corridor. Below are the results from the survey:

- 233 Views
- 84 Participants
- 1,567 Responses
- 67 comments
- 21 Subscribers

Listed below are programs that provide access to **safe and affordable housing** within the corridor. Please select the options that are most important to you. (80 respondents)

- **66% (53)** - Provide housing rehab support (e.g. programs that help people make repairs to their homes/businesses)
- **56% (45)** - Increase access to homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income home buyers
- **53% (42)** - Build new or preserve existing affordable housing
- **49% (39)** - Anti-Displacement Initiatives targeting low- and moderate-income residents in high-risk neighborhoods
- **40% (32)** - Create a community toolkit of resources and conduct engagement with property owners in high risk neighborhoods to increase the impacts of anti-displacement programs.

Listed below are programs/projects/partnerships that provide **economic opportunities** within the corridor. Please select the options that are most important to you. (75 respondents)

- **56% (42)** - Attracting Business and Employment to the Corridor
- **53% (40)** - Support for Locally-owned Businesses
- **51% (38)** - Site Redevelopment & Building Rehab (Mixed-Use and Business)
- **44% (33)** - Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship Training
- **41% (31)** - Incremental, infill development at neighborhood commercial corridors to create a small-scale “main street” area
- **33% (25)** - Access to Wi-Fi, Broadband & Digital Devices
- **29% (22)** - Fostering Public-Private & Non-Profit Partnerships

Listed below are programs/projects/partnerships that provide **safe and equitable transportation** within the corridor. Please select the options that are most important to you. (72 respondents)

- **75% (54)** - Streetscape Improvements (Beautification, Safety, Gateways for the Corridor)
- **74% (53)** - Pedestrian Improvements (Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Lighting)
- **51% (37)** - Bus Improvements (Shelters, Stops, Frequency of Service)
- **49% (35)** - Mobility hub at key intersections including Freedom/Alleghany/Tuckaseegee
- **43% (31)** - Expand Greenways and Multi-Use Paths
- **39% (28)** - Rail Improvements (LYNX Silver Line)
- **33% (24)** - Improve Connections among Streets and Neighborhoods
- **24% (17)** - Micro Transit for the Corridor (Shuttle, Last Mile, etc)
- **21% (15)** - Expand Bike Lanes

Listed below are programs and projects that invest in the **environment** within the corridor. Please select the options that are most important to you. (74 respondents)

- **72% (53)** - Beautification & Tree Canopy Preservation
- **62% (46)** - Expand and Enhance Parks & Greenway Trails
- **62% (46)** - Sustainability (Ex: Smart Street Lights, Solar Power)
- **57% (42)** - Storm water Improvement
- **14% (10)** - Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Listed below are programs that retain the corridor’s **culture and identity**. Please select the options that are most important to you. (71 respondents)

- **73% (52)** - Cultural Preservation of Neighborhoods through Programs that Preserve and Protect Homeowners, Entrepreneurs, and Local Businesses
- **66% (47)** - Cultural centers (such as a library) that provide community programming for residents of all ages).
- **65% (46)** - Placemaking (e.g., create a sense of place or destination for the Freedom/Wilkinson area with art, lighting, historical markers, wayfinding)
- **56% (40)** - Programs to Support Neighborhood Groups and Organizations
- **49% (35)** - Historic Preservation of Landmarks, Buildings, and Homes

In general, are you supportive of the idea of providing a centralized commercial “node” for residents, improved connections and the integration of missing middle housing (duplexes and accessory dwelling units) as a strategy for neighborhood development in your community? (69 respondents)

- **83%** - Yes
- **13%** - No
- **4%** - Other

If you responded “no” to the previous question, what changes would recommend to the concept? Please explain in the space below

- Integration of missing middle housing - single family homeownership NOT duplexes and accessory dwelling units.
- I’m not saying no it looks amazing I’m just always scared let it means displacing people because I’m one of those people I can’t afford to live in a community that’s having all this beautiful work done it’s not for me. In other words I would absolutely love it but I’m not truly sure it would be accessible to people like me (poor people)
- Current centralized commercial nodes in the Freedom/Wilkinson/West Blvd corridors are littered with drugs and crime. These areas are not safe and inviting for residents. What will be done to ensure these new nodes are safe and inviting for all?
- Will this displace the residence already in these neighborhoods??

In general, are you supportive of allowing a mixture of uses (residential, commercial, etc.) along Freedom Drive that may lead to the creation of a neighborhood center that provides retail opportunities for small, local business and housing opportunities in a walkable environment? (69 respondents)

- **93%** - Yes
- **7%** - No

If you responded “no” to the previous question, what changes would recommend to the concept? Please explain in the space below.

- Mixture of uses - residential, commercial will drive up property taxes creating more displaced families in the Freedom/Wilkinson communities

Survey Results - Continued

What other ideas should be considered to benefit the growth and development of the Freedom corridor area?

- Land trust that are driven and govern by the local residence.
- The community holding the City accountable for filthy streets, the City holding business is accountable for filthy parking lots and businesses, affordable housing that does not have a 3-year waiting list
- More family oriented spaces, such as the ones in the Beatties Ford corridor. Also an updated recreation center for Tuckaseegee Rd.
- I think the ideas are great I just don't believe that they include the existing community I believe if all this happens that the people living there will become displaced! It's truly hard to believe otherwise. Why can't we have all these things in our community without it OUR communities to be unaffordable! I already see many complexes and homes being built in this area and none of them are affordable but they are certainly taking the place of dwellings that are occupied. Which means all these pretty things coming into the neighborhood are most likely not for us, which means we can no longer afford to stay here! That's what all this feels like!
- Bring "like" businesses that are on the South side of Charlotte. The west side deserves options. Healthier food options, urgent care facilities, etc.
- Hold more in person open forums and mail fliers out to people's homes. I'm not sure everyone who would be interested in these conversations know they're happening. I know I had to go out of my way to find out this was happening. Maybe I'm just disconnected, I don't know.
- Someone think-tanked a little too hard here I'm so sorry because what does "Create a community toolkit of resources and conduct engagement with property owners in high risk neighborhoods to increase the impacts of anti-displacement programs" even mean lol it's just a bunch of buzzwords with no real meaning
- Healthy Food Markets, multi use, center to host, events, etc. Popular shopping stores.
- It would be nice to see name brand restaurants, clothing stores, home improvement stores and department stores like it was back in the 1980's. However, I do realize that crime has a lot to do with many companies not coming to this area.
- There needs to be a real plan to combat crime in this corridor. There are so many areas that feel unsafe at any time of day.
- My main concern is displacement of residence in the area .. with all of the improvements.. How will this affect affordability in the area?
- A better variety of restaurants. That means fewer fast food spots.
- More nice restaurants.
- Who are the people who benefit?
- Although your survey suggests this, Programs that support homeowners & businesses do not automatically preserve culture. If an area has been 75% rentals and commerce- owned by people who do not live or work in the neighborhood, the culture of the people who live here is held by a group of people who will not benefit from these programs and also who will be displaced from the improvements. Cultural Preservation will happen when aims to repair the extraction and exploitation and employed.
- Grocery stores, integration of old and new businesses, no more fast food haha.
- Grocery stores for residents in this area. Cleanup of the parking location of the Dollar Tree; Better usage of the Community Resource Center at 3205 Freedom Drive #1000-to assist customers in the area.
- Improve walkability. Attract businesses such as bakery, butcher, seafood monger, grocery store.
- It would be great to have some funds dedicated to the Freedom Corridor that created jobs, brought affordable housing, and retail options to the area.
- Lets make Freedom Corridor a beautiful placemaking destination. Give us an identity for an area that has been left behind for a long time. Put the investment in this area to give our community

pride to know that the City of Charlotte care about this side of town.

- Enforcement of current laws and codes....trash, speeding, running red lights, poorly kept property, etc.
- A road diet or other ways to slow traffic down. A beautification of the corridor with litter pick-up. Attracting new restaurants (not fast food), grocery stores, unique retail mix.
- Anything and everything that builds community. There are so many pockets of new and old development that are separate from each other, there needs to be better integration.
- I think there should be more grocery stores, department stores, activities to showcase the West side talent. With the growing community of other nationality, thing to cater to all.
- We would like to have other grocery stores other than Food Lion and Aldi's. Also, we like other restaurants other than fast food to come to other area. Please do something with the old Freedom Mall. Also, business should be responsible for their parking lot cleanups. We don't need anymore smoke shops along the Tuckaseegee and Freedom Corridor. It would be nice if we could build another YMCA out this way possibly further down Tuckaseegee near Tuckaseegee and Little Rock or somewhere along those lines
- More variety of restaurants to eat at.
- Access to public school facilities for out of school time programming

What are the three biggest issues facing the Freedom corridor area?

- Current family displacement, gentrification, unaffordable homeownership
- Facilities for family functions, more parks and recreation locations.
- Underdevelopment, insanitary streets and business parking lots, substandard housing.
- Crime, better businesses (food, healthcare).
- 1. Walkability. Walking infrastructure is severely neglected and even completely absent in some areas. Like others have mentioned, there needs to be improved walkability for the existing residents. This means better sidewalks, paths, speeding

- deterrents like narrow roads, speed bumps, radar displays, etc. NOT more cops. 2. Displacement. The new mixed use developments will be right in the middle of and be close to everything, good for them, but the impact will lessen the further you live. This means investing in the current neighborhoods as much if not more than new developments and some form of rent control to make sure our current neighbors are not displaced.
- 3. Crime. I'm no expert but I'd imagine most of the crimes that happen in this area are out of necessity or lack of fulfillment in ones life. When these issues are addressed then maybe we'll see a reduction in crime that doesn't come at the cost of displacement. This means community-based initiatives to foster involvement from local residents, free healthcare and higher minimum wages.
- The absence of a system/program that supports & collaborates with business owners when expanding and renovating of their current -older business in order to help assist business owners with transitioning into the new and innovative businesses. Training/workshop/101 coaching and resources.
- Crime, lack of employment, transportation issues.
- Crime, littering, affordable housing.
- Affordability to live in the area and in the City of Charlotte in general.
- Crime, plus running red lights, speeding, motorcyclists not wearing helmets speeding through traffic. Trash & litter everywhere and some property poorly kept up.
- Affordability to the current residents and will they get displaced because of the new development.. I am all for change but will feel bad if the changes don't include all.
- Development of Freedom Dr with good upscale restaurants. We're pretty good now on Tuckaseegee north of I85, but possible crime encroachment from other areas. Library for our area.
- It's important to plan for residents' needs, but having something that will bring others into the businesses is important for sustainability. If there's a way to attract unique businesses, promote them, and make the areas around them look safe/

Survey Results - Continued

- welcoming...that would be very helpful.
- Running red lights, lack of grocery options/ walkable options, and I don't particularly feel safe going to get gas or something after 9pm.
- Lack of businesses such as restaurants, grocery stores and affordable and safe housing.
- Walkability/mass transit, litter, affordable housing.
- We have been left out of moving forward for so long, the area feels down. Putting enough capital to make these improvements work. Not working with the community to solve problems.
- Speeding, running stop signs, and red lights. Trash and poorly kept property. Low income doesn't mean no responsibility to pick up trash and keep your property clean.
- Crime, litter, walkability.
- How to promote pedestrian safety and transit through the corridor. The corridor is for the car and people with cars. What can be done to make the car a second-class citizen and promote other modes of transportation safer alternatives. It is not safe to ride a bike or walk around in this area. Lighting strategies at night, protected bike lanes, clearly defined and continued sidewalks all need to be considered for the equity of those who live there. Not just those passing through from the City to the airport or 85.
- Speed bumps through out the neighborhood. I have a brick wall that has been ran into because of speeding.
- Funding for minorities to expand their businesses. Litter and old infrastructure's that need uplifting.
- Affordability

Survey Demographics

Age: (71 respondents)

- 30% - 40 to 49
- 27% - 60 to 69
- 20% - 50 to 59
- 13% - 30 to 39
- 7% - 70 or over
- 4% - 20 to 29
- 0% - 19 or under

Do you live in the corridor? If so, for how long? (69 respondents)

- 36% - Over 10 years
- 28% - Do not reside in the corridor
- 20% - 5 to 10 years
- 13% - 2 to 5 years
- 3% - Other

Do you work in the corridor? If so, for how long? (65 respondents)

- 55% - Do not work within the corridor
- 20% - 2 to 5 years
- 9% - 1 to 2 years
- 8% - 5 to 10 years
- 8% - Over 10 years
- 0% - Less than one year

If you live and/or work within corridor, what selection below best represents you? (60 respondents)

- 58% (35) - Resident (homeowner)
- 18% (11) - Employee
- 13% (8) - Business Owner
- 12% (7) - Self-Employed
- 8% (5) - Resident (renter)
- 8% (5) - Other

Final Community Engagement Meeting

Vision Statement Feedback

On December 7, 2023, three representatives of QC Family Tree facilitated community engagement alongside the city employees who presented a report on the Freedom/Wilkinson Playbook design process.

As people entered, they were offered the opportunity to contribute to a playlist that represents the corridor. These songs were played throughout the gathering and departure times of the event. Helms Jarrell led the participants in reflection, honoring the native land and history of the corridor. Dawn Anthony facilitated an introduction activity. Will Linville and Erin Gillespie led a 25-minute presentation on playbook progress. Michael Maxwell facilitated a feedback session on the vision statement.

The following questions were asked regarding the vision statement:

Considering that the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor is..

- Proud of its healing and natural spaces, such as Pauline's, Medical, gardens, trees
- Emphasizes neighborhood collaboration and relationships...
- Known for multi-cultural arts centers such as Do Greater, QCFT, Scorpio...

What could we add to this statement to make it ours (Freedom/Wilkinson's)?

- Big paper on the wall with "accessibility" "flourishing" "Inclusive" and ask people to write on post its what these words mean to them. Stick the post its onto these papers.
- What do these words mean for the F-W corridor? -Point back to the posters.
- Now that we've added these things, how do you feel about the vision statement? Thumbs up, middle, down.

Participants provided very helpful feedback, summarized below:

- Residents of the Freedom/Wilkinson Corridor are looking for Quality of Life improvements for the community. They are concerned with improvements that are targeted toward the current demographic of residents.
- Freedom/Wilkinson (F-W) residents need more time to build trust with City design folks. They want to know how many F-W people were a part of the playbook design. They are interested in making sure that the grassroots folks have a voice. They sense that more F-W residents and small business owners need to be a part of the process.
- F-W community members are concerned about equitable opportunities and services that are holistic and provide support for all abilities, including services that are catered to service industry workers who do not ordinarily work 9-5 jobs. They are concerned with quality of life services being provided that cater to the needs of those with different abilities, those who work 2nd and 3rd shift jobs, families with varying childcare needs, and low income residents.

Concerning Access:

- Physical ability to get to spaces is important, especially for pedestrians and folks who take public transport. Designing less for cars and more for people is important to F-W residents.
- Design the playbook so that the result is an increase in access to home and business ownership, owned by folks who currently rent in the F-W corridor.
- Meet the diverse and particular needs of individuals who are currently in the F-W corridor. Use what you know about the demographic and social sciences regarding our community to develop the plan.
- Extend the times of social services and childcare services to meet the needs of the area.

