



TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES

SILVER LINE VISION AND GOALS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface 3

Background 3

Foundational Efforts 6-7

Defining Transit Oriented Communities 8

Why Here? Why Now? 9

1 Silver Line TOC Vision and Goals 10

2 Alignment with Local Initiatives 11

3 Ingredients for Success 12

Building Effective Partnerships 13

Community Collaboration 13

Learning from Others 13

Measuring Progress 13

4 TOC Framework 14

TOC Policy Framework 14

Implementation Strategy & Pilot Projects 14

5 Next Steps 15

PREFACE

Over the past two decades of operating light rail transit, CATS and the City of Charlotte have learned multiple lessons not only about transit operations, but also about the needs of communities surrounding transit. The Blue Line has witnessed nearly \$ 10 billion in economic development since its opening. The tremendous economic success brought market pressure on existing housing and commercial spaces, pricing out many of Charlotte's existing residents and small businesses.

The Silver Line is a proposed light rail project that would span 29 miles and 30 stations to connect communities from Belmont to Indian Trail and Stallings, passing through Charlotte and Matthews. The Silver Line will connect people with major regional destinations like the Charlotte Douglas International Airport and Uptown Charlotte and include more than 50 miles of greenways, trails, and bike paths. The combination of rapid transit service and multimodal infrastructure creates the opportunity for a better-connected Metro area. This significant investment in our regional transit system has the potential to increase access to opportunity, recreation and infill significant gaps in our expanding transportation system.

As learned through the Blue Line, major transit investments can also bring challenges, including the risk of long-time residents and businesses being priced out from the communities the Silver Line aims to serve, which is why the Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy is essential to proactively identify strategies that preserve affordability and ensure development benefits all members of our community. The study area for this plan encompasses the Silver Line station areas within the current CATS service area, which includes Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, and the Town of Matthews.



Background

When the Blue Line was planned in the late nineties and early 2000s, there was minimal emphasis on the creation of affordable housing and a lack of anti-displacement planning. CATS and the City of Charlotte have since learned of the need to work with partners to build in affordability in the very first phases of planning and continue it through implementation and beyond.

Station areas are largely influenced by comprehensive plans, small area plans, the economy, and local market conditions. The Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy is an intentional effort to expand the positive influence of the Silver Line beyond just moving people by guiding investments in our neighborhoods, our safety, our culture, and our economy.

Stewardship of this investment requires a clear vision and guidance designed to maximize the potential for positive outcomes. To accomplish this, the Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy will identify methods to protect the integrity of local neighborhoods, preserve the character and identity of existing communities, support housing affordability and small business access, align new developments with identified community needs, and provide clear guidance to promote local connectivity and compatibility with the culture and identity of neighborhoods. The Silver Line TOC Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy will prioritize under-represented neighborhoods and groups to make the most of the public and private investments occurring in and around future Silver Line transit stations.

Accomplishing these goals will require a coordinated strategy that includes a combination of new policies, partnerships, and investments with the potential to create meaningful and lasting outcomes. The process of identifying an effective TOC Strategy will be guided by community voices, local priorities, research, and peer community analysis. This policy framework will be organized around:

Section 1: TOC Vision and Goals

Section 2: Alignment with City Initiatives

Section 3: Ingredients for Success

Section 4: Framework

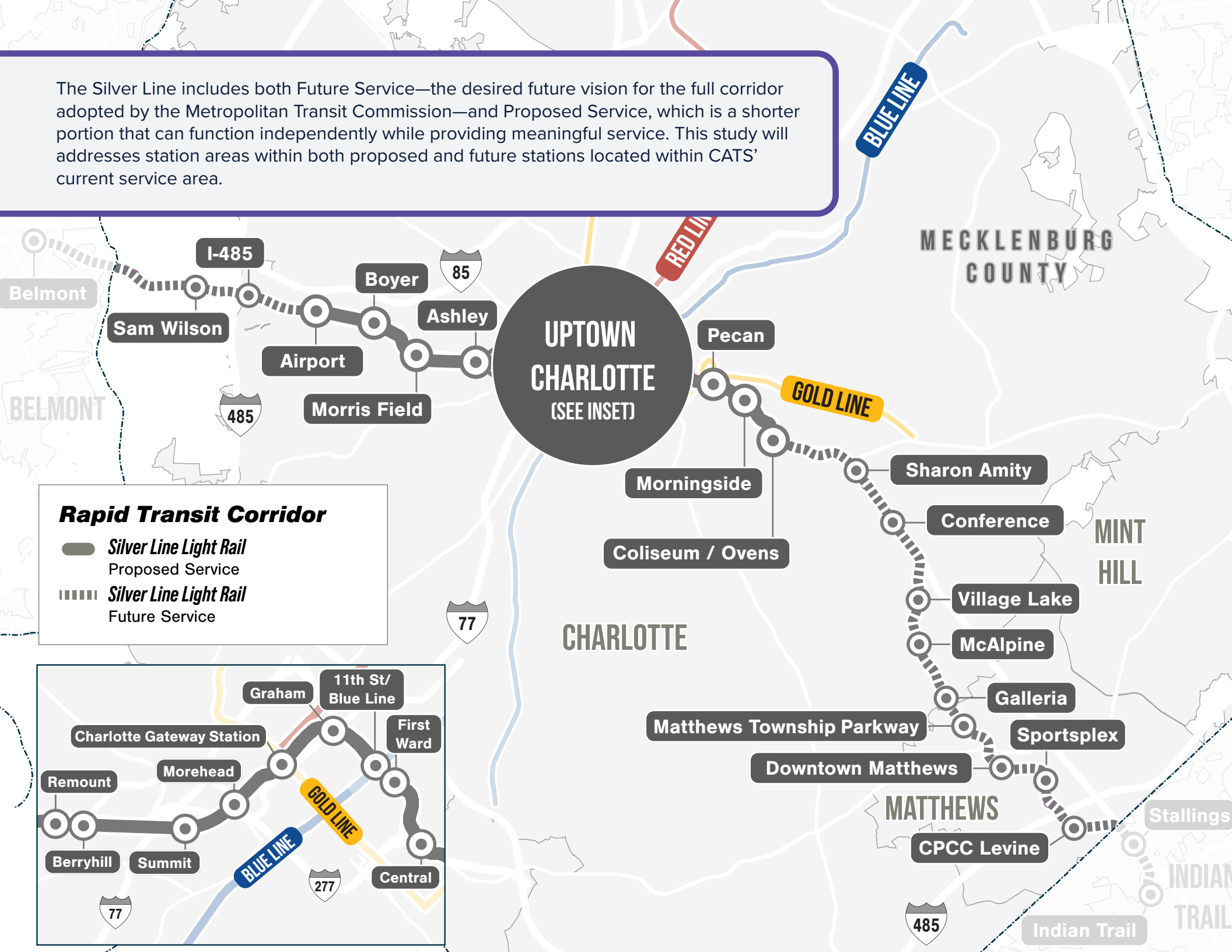
Section 5: Next Steps

WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This document serves as an introduction to Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) by establishing a shared foundation for understanding what TOCs are, why they matter for the Silver Line corridor, and what we aim to accomplish together.

This document also defines the Silver Line TOC Vision and Goals, which will heavily inform Section 1 of policy framework.

The Silver Line includes both Future Service—the desired future vision for the full corridor adopted by the Metropolitan Transit Commission—and Proposed Service, which is a shorter portion that can function independently while providing meaningful service. This study will addresses station areas within both proposed and future stations located within CATS' current service area.



Foundational Efforts

Municipalities along the Silver Line have undertaken a range of studies and initiatives that lay a strong foundation for the Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy. Each of these efforts shares a common goal: to foster development around transit that is fair, inclusive, and representative of the communities it serves. The TOC Policy Framework builds on this momentum, serving as the next step in translating these shared principles into actionable policies that guide thoughtful, community-centered growth.



LYNX Silver Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study

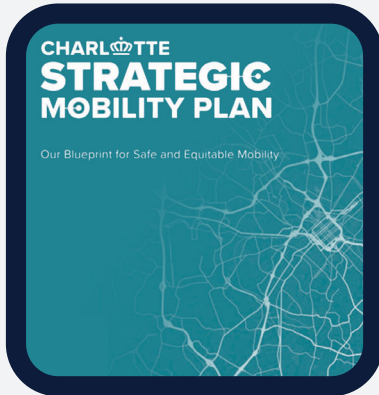
The Silver Line TOD Study establishes a vision for transit-oriented development around station areas, focusing on mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods that are well-connected to transit. It provides station-specific recommendations and a typologies manual to guide land use, design, and access planning. Core principles include improving multimodal connectivity, fostering community identity, and promoting economic opportunity and housing affordability. Developed through extensive public engagement, the plan proactively aligns growth with transit investment to promote fair, resilient development.



Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan

The Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan outlines a long-term vision to create a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient city. It focuses on shaping growth through intentional land use, housing, and community development strategies that reflect residents' values and to provide all Charlotteans access to opportunity and a high quality of life. Goal 1: 10-Minute Neighborhoods and Goal 4: Transit and Trail Oriented Development directly influence transit-oriented communities by supporting compact, mixed-use development, multimodal connectivity, and access to amenities, goods, and services within a short transit ride.

Foundational Efforts



Charlotte Strategic Mobility Plan

The Charlotte Strategic Mobility Plan is a citywide plan developed by the Charlotte Department of Transportation that further advances the “Safe and Equitable Mobility” goal of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The plan lays out an ambitious vision to offer everyone in our city safe and equitable mobility choices and includes policies and strategies that prioritize investment in multimodal transportation. The plan also recognizes that our mobility vision requires investment in transit corridors and station areas to create a useful and equitable transit system for everyone in Charlotte.



CATS 2055 Transit System Plan

CATS 2055 Transit System Plan outlines a long-term vision for expanding and enhancing the region’s transit network, including Better Bus, microtransit, light rail, commuter rail, and streetcar service. The plan aims to improve regional connectivity, increase access to opportunity, and support sustainable, transit-oriented growth across the Charlotte metropolitan area.



Envision Matthews Comprehensive Plan

The Envision Matthews Comprehensive Plan establishes a long-term vision to guide growth, conservation, and investment decisions in the Town of Matthews. Built around 12 vision statements, the plan prioritizes maintaining the Town’s small-town character while planning for multimodal transportation, diverse housing, a vibrant downtown, parks and open spaces. The plan introduces a Growth Conservation Framework to guide decision-making on preservation, enhancements, and transformation. The plan is further supported by infrastructure strategies, town-wide concepts, and a Downtown Master Plan to balance the Town’s future development pressures with community character and quality of life.

Defining Transit-Oriented Communities

A TOC is more than just development near transit—it is a deliberate approach to building walkable, mixed-use, and connected neighborhoods where all people, regardless of income, race, age, gender, ability, or background—can thrive and that prioritizes community members in the decision-making process through inclusive and transparent engagement.

By centering growth around high-capacity transit, TOCs create vibrant hubs of activity that support access to jobs, affordable housing, education, amenities, and essential services. They also reduce reliance on car travel in support of a more sustainable region. TOCs also seek to preserve the cultural identity of neighborhoods, support the stability of long-standing residents and small businesses, and share the benefits of transit investments fairly among community members. By placing community needs and aspirations at the center of transit-related investments, TOCs transform infrastructure into shared opportunity. Effective TOC strategies address:



Collaborative Planning

- Partner with local voices in decision-making from the start—especially those at risk of **displacement** and most impacted by past disinvestment.
- Elevate community vision, culture, and priorities in shaping station area development.



Housing Affordability and Stability

- Expand access to affordable housing near transit across income levels.
- Support the stability of existing residents and promote long-term housing security.



Economic Mobility and Local Opportunity

- Connect residents to quality jobs, small business support, and inclusive economic growth.
- Develop strategies for existing and new local businesses to thrive near transit.



Multimodal Access and Walkable Design

- Prioritize walking, biking, and transit access that safely connects people to destinations.
- Create complete communities with essential services within walking distance.



Cultural Preservation and Environmental Resilience

- Honor community history, character, and identity in new development.
- Promote sustainable design, climate resilience, and access to green space.

WHAT IS DISPLACEMENT?

Displacement happens when rising housing costs, property taxes, or other expenses force long-time residents and businesses to leave their neighborhood. This often occurs when new development and investment—like the Silver Line—make an area more desirable, increasing prices beyond what existing community members can afford.

Note: This refers to broader neighborhood affordability changes, not properties directly acquired for transit construction.

Why Here? Why Now?

The Charlotte metro area is one of the fastest-growing regions in the country—welcoming more than 150 new residents every day and rapidly expanding its urban footprint. This remarkable growth brings both opportunity and challenge: how to accommodate new development while ensuring that longtime residents, small businesses, and historically underserved communities are not left behind.

With major transit projects, like the Silver Line on the horizon, now is the time to act. The Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy will help guide this growth with a focus on fairness, sustainability, and community needs. Transit-Oriented Communities create lively, welcoming neighborhoods where everyone can access affordable housing, reliable mobility choices, good jobs, and a high quality of life—all connected by transit.

Regional planning departments and CATS have a chance to lead by creating transit station areas that are places of opportunity. By combining transit infrastructure with thoughtful policies, the region can build a future that shares the benefits of growth with everyone. TOC is the way forward—turning connected places into shared opportunity for our communities.



Matthews, NC

Silver Line TOC Vision

Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities prepare for a future where every neighborhood along the Silver Line benefits from transit-related investment—uplifting communities through the preservation of their stories, the celebration of cultural vibrancy, and the creation of equitable pathways to opportunity.

Silver Line TOC Goals



Increase access to affordable housing, quality healthcare, essential amenities, recreational spaces, and meaningful job opportunities.



Address the risk that transit stations areas will become unaffordable and displace longtime residents through targeted support programs, meaningful community involvement, and intentional support and resources for local initiatives.



Improve economic and social mobility through access to transportation.



Promote environmental sustainability and improve public health.



Design small business resiliency strategies that uplift the local and longstanding small business community.



Create accountability in the decision-making process that allows diverse voices to participate.



Preserve and expand culturally significant structures that define the character and identity of the community.



Identify partnerships that will help deliver innovative approaches to Transit-Oriented Communities.

There are policies and programs already in place that support the core goals of Transit-Oriented Communities. Aligning these local initiatives with TOC strategies helps deliver consistent, equitable, and coordinated outcomes around future Silver Line stations. The themes below reflect where local efforts align with TOC goals:

Housing Stability and Choice

Efforts to expand affordable housing, support homeownership, and reduce displacement contribute to more stable and inclusive station areas. These tools help residents to benefit from new transit investments.

Funding Opportunities

Local initiatives prioritize investment in communities that have historically faced underinvestment. Aligning these efforts with TOC planning makes decisions more inclusive and helps resources reach those most impacted.

Safe and Connected Streets

Street design and safety initiatives improve access to transit through walkable, bikeable, and multimodal infrastructure. Aligning street and infrastructure improvements with TOC goals creates safer, more comfortable travel for people walking, biking, rolling, or utilizing shared mobility.

Economic Opportunity

Small business support programs help local entrepreneurs thrive amid increased market pressure and competition for existing commercial space. Aligning these efforts with TOC goals and station areas supports economic mobility, reinvests dollars in the community, and helps prevent commercial displacement.

Context-Sensitive Land Use

Coordinated land use decisions encourage compact, mixed-use, and context-sensitive development near transit. Aligning these decisions with TOC goals enables new growth to support community identity and sustainability.

Public Land Strategy

Publicly-owned land near transit provides opportunities to shape development outcomes. Aligning land use strategies with TOC implementation helps deliver equitable development and support innovative public-private partnerships.

Culture Preservation and Placemaking

Local initiatives celebrate and preserve the diverse cultural histories that shape identity. Deploying these efforts in station areas will protect neighborhood identity while strengthening connections between people, history, and place.

Workforce Development

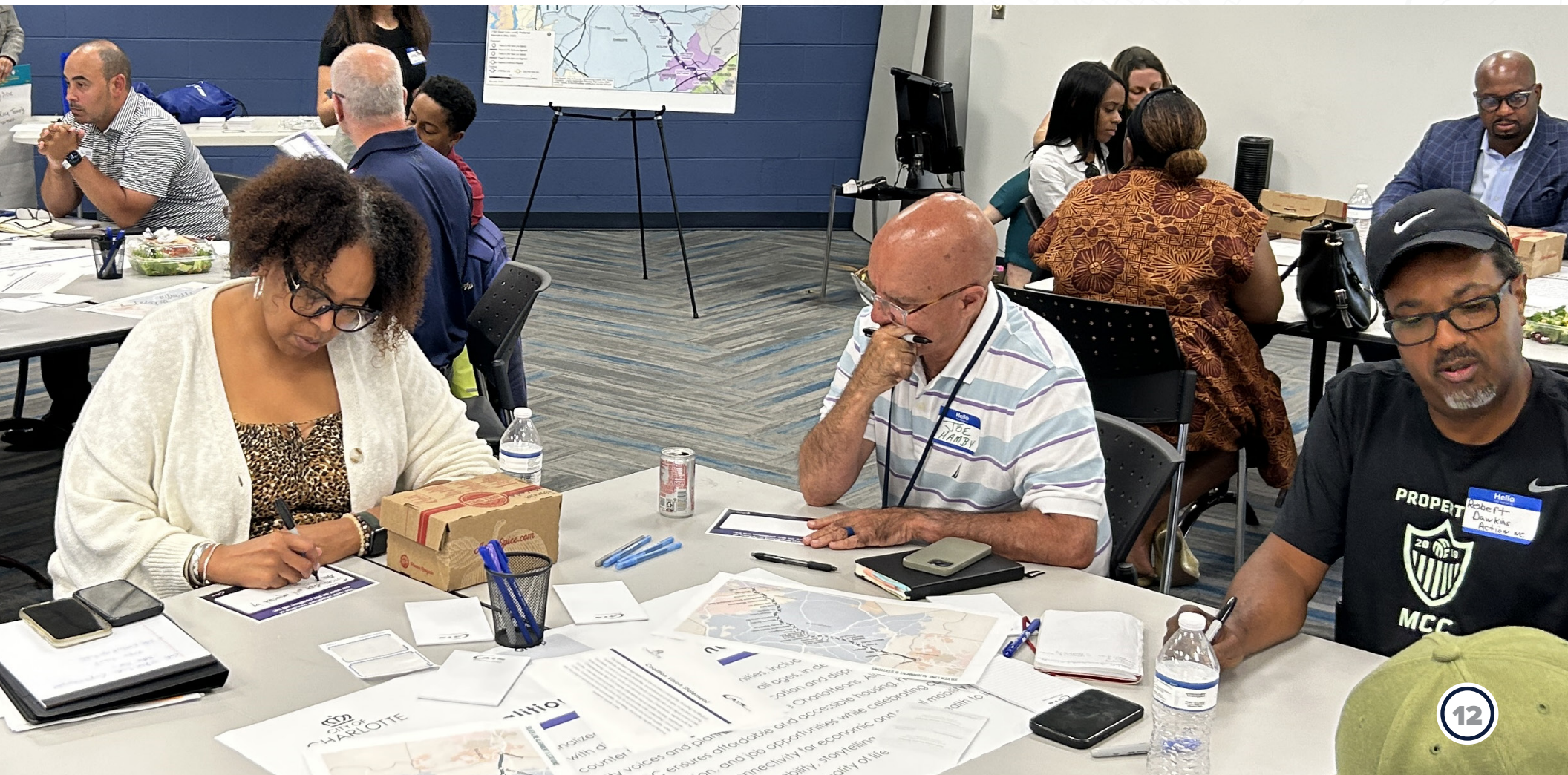
Workforce training and job placement services connect residents to employment opportunities. Aligning these programs with TOC goals and station areas builds economic mobility and allows communities to share in the prosperity generated by new transit investments.

3

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

The City of Charlotte and CATS are collaborating with the community to develop comprehensive policy and implementation strategy for the Silver Line that establishes a framework for creating places that center community needs so existing residents and businesses can remain and prosper while also welcoming newcomers. The effective implementation of TOCs depends on several factors:

- Building Effective Partnerships
- Learning from Others
- Community Collaboration
- Measuring Progress



COMMUNITY BASED ENGAGEMENT



Building Effective Partnerships

Strong multi-sector partnerships are crucial for the success of Transit-Oriented Communities in Charlotte. CATS is committed to foster collaboration among public agencies, private developers, nonprofits, and academic institutions to align infrastructure, encourage sustainable development, and promote fairness. These partnerships have the capacity to amplify shared resources and expertise to create solutions that meet the needs of the region's diverse and growing population.



Community Collaboration

Community engagement is essential for shaping Transit-Oriented Communities that reflect local needs and aspirations. Neighborhood leaders serve as vital links between planners and residents, partnering to actively participate in decision-making, fostering trust, and ensuring TOC strategies honor Charlotte's diverse voices.



Learning from Others

Drawing on lessons from peer cities like Austin, Chicago, and Los Angeles, CATS' TOC strategy incorporates national best practices, local project experience, and innovative policies. The approach integrates walkable, mixed-use development, innovative zoning, asset mapping, and funding mechanisms such as value capture and public-private partnerships. By studying successful models and refining strategies based on previous local projects like the Blue Line, this TOC strategy aims to create sustainable, vibrant communities while addressing displacement.



Measuring Progress

To foster accountability and inclusivity, the Silver Line TOC will use clear metrics such as targeted public engagement, accessible data dashboards, process evaluations, project updates, and community-led feedback loops. These measures are designed to align with local planning goals, allowing residents and stakeholders to validate progress and adapt strategies as priorities evolve.

Grounded in local values and priorities, the Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy translates community vision into actionable policies and programs that preserve vibrant, inclusive, and resilient neighborhoods. This effort has two main outcomes:

TOC Policy Framework

The Transit-Oriented Communities Policy Framework will serve as a comprehensive guide for decision-making on land use and infrastructure improvements throughout the development of the Silver Line station area communities. It will be grounded in core principles such as accessibility, community preservation, sustainability, and community values, all of which reflect the overarching vision and goals of the project. The framework will provide clear guidance to mitigate displacement, promote affordable housing, enhance mobility options, and support economic inclusion. It will also establish evaluation metrics to monitor progress and create accountability over time.

Additionally, it defines the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders—including city and town departments, CATS, developers, community partners, long time residents, including youth and seniors, and small businesses to lead coordinated and transparent implementation. By aligning all efforts under a shared vision with measurable outcomes, the Silver Line TOC Policy Framework is a touchstone that helps transit-oriented communities deliver lasting, community-centered benefits.

Implementation Strategy

Turning policy into action requires a clear and phased implementation strategy that guides development and investment over time while remaining responsive to evolving community needs and changing market conditions. This strategy includes both short- and long-term actions that will help shape growth around the Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities. It identifies a range of funding and financing mechanisms—such as public-private partnerships, grants, land banking, and other tools available to municipalities in North Carolina—to support equitable development.

The successful execution will depend on a strategy that also emphasizes capacity-building efforts, empowering city and town staff, community organizations, and residents to actively participate in and navigate the TOC process. The implementation strategy will strive to be adaptive and allow for flexibility and course corrections as market conditions shift and community priorities evolve.

PILOT PROJECTS

As part of the implementation strategy, pilot project types and criteria will be developed to bring Transit-Oriented Communities policies to life. These initiatives, shaped through ongoing community engagement, will provide targeted support for community-driven ideas and address the priorities of local residents and small businesses.

5

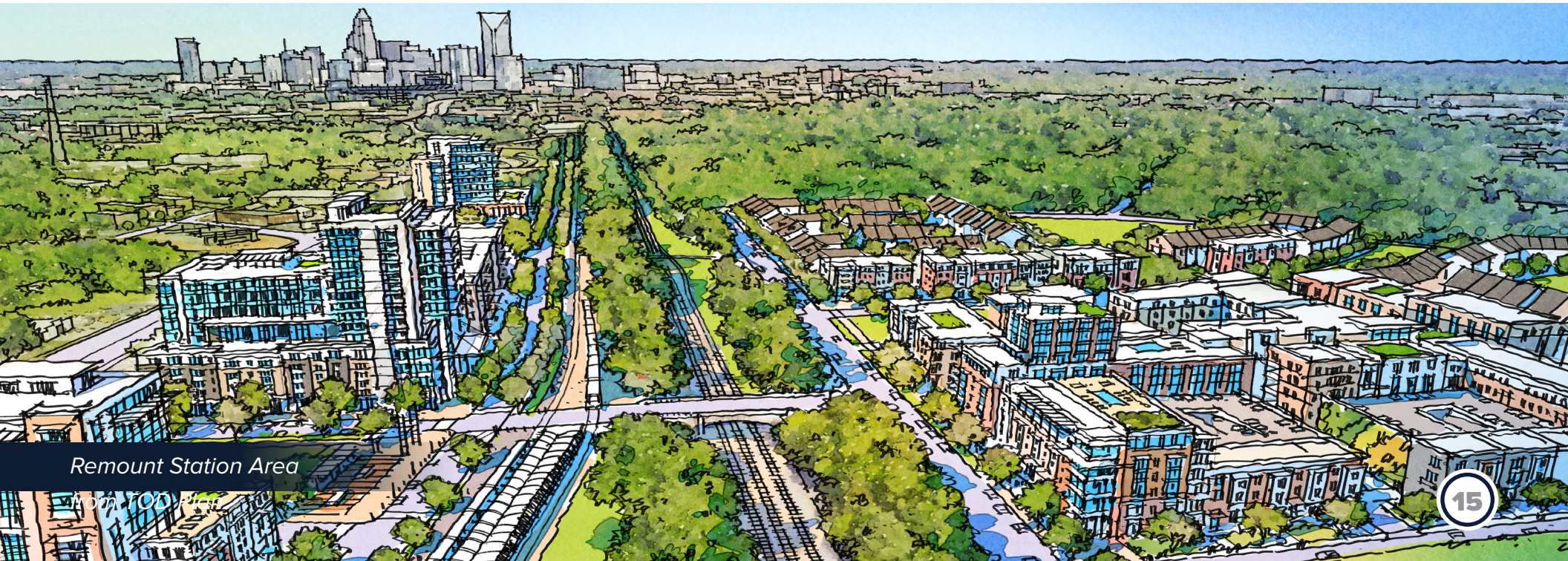
NEXT STEPS

The Silver Line TOC Vision and Goals document serves as a foundational guide for shaping the policies, programs, and implementation strategies that will drive equitable development in Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities. It embodies a shared commitment to building TOCs that are inclusive, connected, and resilient.

As the study progresses, the vision and goals will continue to inform decision-making—working to align every aspect, from zoning and land-use policy to infrastructure investment and community building, with the long-term goals of equity, sustainability, and opportunity.

By anchoring future actions in this collective vision developed by the community, CATS, the City of Charlotte, and partner jurisdictions are laying the groundwork for station areas with enhanced mobility options, that also improve quality of life, stimulate economic vitality, and strengthen the social fabric of the communities on the Silver Line.

The next phase of developing the Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy will adopt a grassroots approach, engaging directly with community-based organizations and community members to gain a deeper understanding of local issues that affect the communities along the Silver Line—affordable housing, business displacement, and preservation of cultural assets. This effort will be complemented by continued collaboration with the Silver Line Transit-Oriented Communities Coalition, which will help translate community insights into actionable policies and implementation strategies.



Remount Station Area

from TOD Plan