

CHARLOTTE FUTURE

2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

OUR CITY. OUR PLAN. OUR FUTURE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Dear Charlotte Residents and Other Readers,

Charlotte has been one of the fastest-growing cities in the country in recent years. This growth has established Charlotte as a vibrant and desirable city; however, this **rapid development has also contributed to many challenges and the events of the last year have magnified many underlying issues** that have faced the community for decades.

Most U.S. cities have a Comprehensive Plan to establish a desired vision for the future and a strategic policy framework. Charlotte has not had a Comprehensive Plan to guide growth and development community-wide since 1975. **The Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan is our shared, comprehensive vision to guide the Queen City's growth over the next 20 years.**

“Charlotte is America’s Queen City, opening her arms to a diverse and inclusive community of residents, businesses, and visitors alike; a safe family-oriented city where people work together to help everyone thrive.”

The Comprehensive Plan is **a living document that provides a policy framework that will guide our city’s decision-making and investment in both the near- and long-term.** With this in mind, not all of the Plan’s recommendations can or should be implemented immediately. The Comprehensive Plan’s goals and objectives, as well as many of the policy recommendations, are intended to be implemented later in the 20-year plan horizon. In addition, several important recommendations and tools cannot be implemented without changes in State of North Carolina statutes. **These recommendations are identified as long-term and requiring further conversations and coordination with formal and informal entities outside the City organization within the Plan document.**

The planning process has been guided by a focus on equitable growth and by the residents of Charlotte coming together to prioritize what is most important to us. As a community-driven Plan, it seeks to **address the inequities of the past, and unite the city around a shared set of goals for our future.** With that said, the goals, objectives and supporting policies are intended to be achieved citywide and not on every single lot. A mature community like Charlotte that is facing additional growth pressures typically holds values important that can be interpreted as competing interests or even in conflict with one another. **Not every property, project or development will be able to achieve all of the Plan goals and objectives, but as a whole the community has expressed a desire that the collective public and private investments made over the next 20 years strive to achieve as many aspirations as possible and make Charlotte an even better city.**

The Plan lays out an Equitable Growth Framework that builds upon the community's input regarding long standing disparities and inequities. For many existing policies and resulting practices, equity and the impact on our more vulnerable neighborhoods and residents has been an afterthought. **The Comprehensive Plan is crafted through a lens of equity and with a commitment to thinking of our most vulnerable populations first** with a vision of helping our city **become a place where all residents can thrive, regardless of race, income, age, ability or where they live.**

The main body of the Comprehensive Plan, available at cltfuture2040plan.com, is organized into **three documents.**

- **1: The Plan Policy** is considered the main body of the Plan and has been adopted by City Council.
- **2: The Implementation Strategy** includes the initial Implementation Strategy to accompany the Comprehensive Plan. It provides strategies and tools recommended for plan implementation.
- **3: The Manuals and Metrics** provide more detail and background on the Equitable Growth Framework's metrics and methodology, as well as more detailed guidance for the aspirational aspects of the ten Place Types.

What's Next? City staff have begun to engage the community in mapping the land use policies within the Plan. This Policy Map will be adopted by Council to provide guidance on land use and public investment decisions and the zoning districts within the new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The Plan Policy was adopted on June 21st, 2021 and it is anticipated that the Implementation Strategy, as well as the Manuals and Metrics will be adopted in February/March of 2022 along with the Policy Map.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require continued engagement and conversation with the community. **Tools to facilitate a participatory process, implement Plan policies, and mitigate potential negative impacts of growth pressures and strategies are highlighted throughout the Plan.** In several instances, existing tools can be leveraged in better ways, but many tools will require evaluation and customization for Charlotte. The Implementation Strategy also includes the path to future plan amendments to help ensure the Comprehensive Plan remains current with Charlotte's needs.

We'd like to **thank the people of Charlotte for contributing to a healthy discourse about the future of our great City.** Varying opinions often lead to division, but our community worked to find meaningful compromise to unite around a single vision.



Vi Alexander Lyles
Mayor



Marcus D. Jones
City Manager



INTRODUCTION

Charlotte has been one of the fastest growing cities in the country, with an average annual growth rate of over 1.7% during the past 10 years. Many factors have attracted residents and businesses to the region, including diverse employment opportunities, a relatively low cost-of-living, and a unique character and charm. This growth has established Charlotte as a vibrant and desirable city; however, rapid development has also contributed to many challenges. If we are to continue to grow sustainably it will need be intentionally and strategically.

Most U.S. cities have a Comprehensive Plan to establish a desired vision for the future and a strategic policy framework. Charlotte has not had a Comprehensive Plan since 1975. The Charlotte Future 2040 Plan is our shared vision to guide the Queen City's growth over the next 20 years. This Plan addresses topics that affect how we will shape and experience the built environment of our city for decades to come. It reflects and advances our community values around topics like equity, transportation, quality of life, economic development, jobs, affordable housing, health, safety, and sustainability.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the overarching direction and vision for growth throughout Charlotte through 2040. The location and quality of growth will be determined in more detail through other planning efforts. Updates to the Unified Development Ordinance, Strategic Action Plans, Community Area Plans, the policy map, a future jobs development plan, and county-wide plans are all critical in turning the community's vision into a reality. Implementing the Plan will require public and private development, capital improvement projects, and a variety of funding and financing tools.

PLAN PROCESS

In order to create a Comprehensive Plan that is successful and meaningful, the values and aspirations of the community must be central to the process. This understanding has been at the heart of the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

The development of the Charlotte Future 2040 Plan has been a nearly 3-year process, including eight additional months for review and adoption. This process included significant analysis, community outreach, education, and coordination across departments, organizations, and entities.

To ensure that the Plan represents an equitable future for all Charlotteans, the public engagement process was robust, innovative, and inclusive. The planning team engaged many perspectives through a variety of tools so that all Charlotteans could be included at the table. The outreach focused on accessibility and we **heard input from groups representing all segments of Charlotte's population**, including those we don't hear from often enough – people of color, youth, non-English speaking residents, and those with lower incomes.



TOTAL
INTERACTIONS

500,000+



VOICES

6,500+



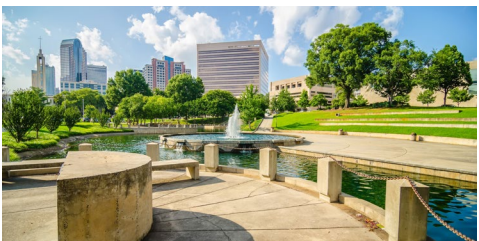
KEY
STAKEHOLDERS

477



METHODS OF
ENGAGEMENT

40+



EQUITABLE GROWTH FRAMEWORK

Change is an inevitable part of cities. Charlotte over the last decade has experienced an unprecedented period of growth. While the influx of new residents gets the most headlines, the number of people choosing to stay or return to Charlotte also contributes to Charlotte's growth.

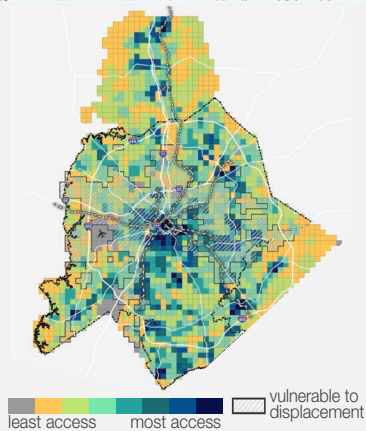
The Equitable Growth Framework is intended to provide more transparency and accountability as we plan, design, and implement public and private investments. It is a framework to help ensure that the costs and benefits of growth and change in Charlotte are distributed more equitably.

A methodology for measuring access, environmental justice, and equity has been developed to help identify areas where residents and businesses may not have access to daily needs, choices for housing, a

diversity of employment, or safe and healthy environments. Each of four Equity Metrics comprises a series of relevant indicators within neighborhoods and is compared to data that helps us understand where populations that are vulnerable to displacement are concentrated and where neighborhood character is threatened by new development.

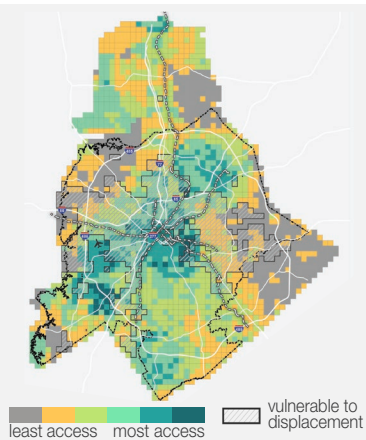
The four Equity Metrics described in greater detail include:

- Access to Essential Amenities, Goods and Services
- Access to Housing Opportunities
- Access to Employment Opportunities
- Environmental Justice



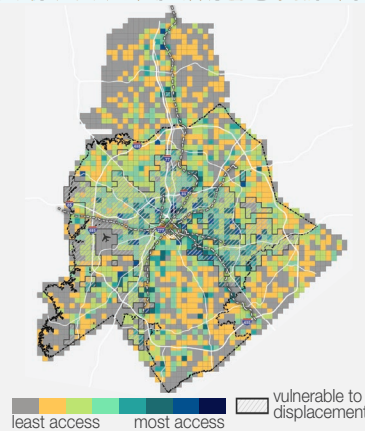
ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL AMENITIES, GOODS, AND SERVICES

The community expressed a strong desire for more complete neighborhoods across the entire city. Measuring access to essential amenities, goods and services can help identify areas where residents and businesses may not have access to what they need.



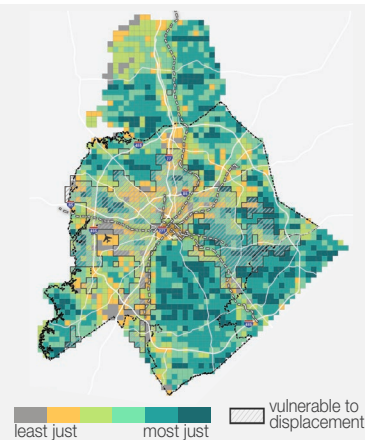
ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Access to Employment Opportunity identifies areas with a lack of job options for residents. Employment Opportunity is defined as the ability for residents to live proximate to jobs that are attainable for a variety of people and provide a family sustaining wage.



ACCESS TO HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Access to Housing Opportunity identifies areas where the housing stock does not provide opportunities for all to live. Housing Opportunity is defined as the ability for residents of all incomes, household compositions, and life stages to access housing options that meet their needs.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice seeks to minimize and equalize effects of environmental hazards. It often arises from geographic inequities (more than their share of environmental hazards and nuisance impacts) or procedural inequities (obstacles to participating in decision-making).

COMMUNITY VISION AND VALUES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are the values that establish a framework for decision-making throughout the life of the 2040 Plan. These principles were conceived through robust and meaningful conversations with over 6,500 voices from the community. The four guiding principles that emerged form the basis for the Plan vision and goals and ensure that the recommendations are in-line with how we as a community want to grow and change in the coming years.

VISION ELEMENTS

Continuing from the community's values that established the guiding principles, five vision elements were created to help inform the coming goals. These vision elements describe how Charlotteans picture their city in the future. This vision also reflects the lens through which goals and objectives were created and analyzed.





GOALS

The Comprehensive Plan goals reflect the voice of our community. They make critical connections between community values, guiding principles and vision elements; articulate key elements of the growth strategy and establish the foundation for complete communities and complete places; and provide the structure for the Plan's Policy Framework. The following pages provide more detail for each Plan Goal.



**1. 10-MINUTE
NEIGHBORHOODS**



**2. NEIGHBORHOOD
DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION**



**3. HOUSING
ACCESS
FOR ALL**



**4. TRANSIT- AND TRAIL-
ORIENTED
DEVELOPMENT**



**5. SAFE AND
EQUITABLE MOBILITY**



**6. HEALTHY, SAFE, AND
ACTIVE COMMUNITIES**



**7. INTEGRATED NATURAL
AND BUILT
ENVIRONMENTS**



**8. DIVERSE AND
RESILIENT ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**



**9. RETAIN OUR
IDENTITY
AND CHARM**



**10. FISCALLY
RESPONSIBLE**



GOAL 1: 10-MINUTE NEIGHBORHOODS

All Charlotte households should have access to essential amenities, goods, and services within a comfortable, tree-shaded 10-minute walk, bike, or transit trip by 2040. Not all neighborhoods are expected to include every essential amenity, good, or service, but every resident should have access within a ½ mile walk or a 2-mile bike or transit trip.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Develop a robust network of food co-operatives (co-ops), community gardens, and neighborhood-based food sharing networks.
- Create a culture of developer-community collaboration through Community Benefit Agreements.



GOAL 2: NEIGHBORHOOD DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Charlotte will strive for all neighborhoods to have a diversity of housing options by increasing the presence of middle density housing (e.g. duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and other small lot housing types) and ensuring land use regulations allow for flexibility in creation of housing within neighborhoods.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Allow more housing types in traditional single-family zoning districts to encourage housing diversity everywhere in our community.





GOAL 3: 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.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Lead the charge to pass enabling legislation for mandatory inclusionary zoning and implement throughout the community.
- Create a robust program of restorative justice targeting homeownership, creation and growth of small business, and equity building for the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community, including strategic application of existing tools (e.g. low interest loans, small business assistance, etc.) and development of new tools (e.g. community land trusts, land banks, commercial lease assistance, etc.).

GOAL 4: TRANSIT- AND TRAIL-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (2T-OD)

Charlotte will promote moderate to high-intensity, compact, mixed-use urban development along high-performance transit lines and near separated shared-use paths or trails.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Prioritize equitable TOD (E-TOD) along high-performance transit and trail corridors.



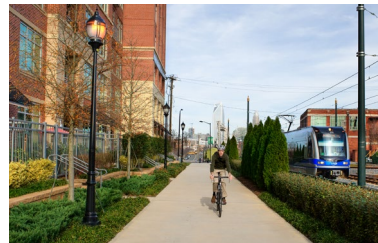


GOAL 5: SAFE AND EQUITABLE MOBILITY

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.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Set an aggressive mode shift goal that determines how the City 1) prioritizes investment in different modes of transportation, 2) allocates limited right-of-way space among different modes of transportation, 3) manages growth and travel demand, 4) sets new policies, and 5) supports equity and affordable transportation choices in all areas of the City.



GOAL 6: 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.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Institute a program for local grassroots shared management or adoption of and programming of public open space, and encourage development of organizations throughout the City to create additional opportunities to engage in active living and help develop healthy neighborhoods.





GOAL 7: INTEGRATED NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

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.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Implement the Strategic Energy Action Plan by implementing Resilient Innovation District (RID) programs throughout the City that are responsive to different Place Types and contexts and promote net zero development and carbon neutrality.



GOAL 8: DIVERSE AND RESILIENT 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.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Develop Regional Activity Centers, especially in East and West Charlotte (see Implementation Strategy) with a mix of jobs, housing, schools and daycare services.
- Create a Citywide Strategic Jobs Plan for the City of Charlotte to ensure a coordinated strategy for increasing employment opportunity throughout the community.





GOAL 9: RETAIN OUR IDENTITY AND CHARM

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.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Protect Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts (NOCs), especially in underserved neighborhoods, established neighborhood serving commercial areas, and ETODs.
- Become a leader in neighborhood-influenced placemaking, public space, public art and other cultural installations.



GOAL 10: FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

Charlotte will align capital investments with the adopted growth strategy and ensure the benefits of public and private sector investments benefit all residents equitably and limit the public costs of accommodating growth.

BIG POLICY IDEAS

- Leverage private investments and direct at least half of public infrastructure spending over next 20 years to the most vulnerable neighborhoods and businesses, especially those within the Vulnerability to Displacement Overlay.



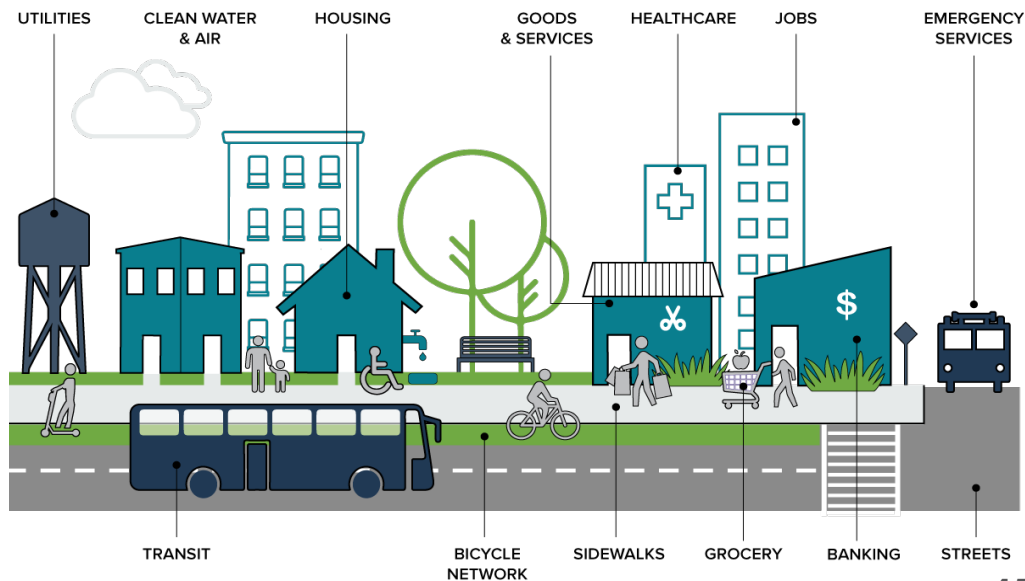
COMPLETE COMMUNITIES AND PLACES


During the engagement process, the community expressed the need for access to everyday essentials and amenities such as parks, shops, restaurants, trails, and community centers near where they lived. Neighborhoods that provide people with safe and convenient choices for a variety of goods and services, jobs, and housing options are considered equitable and Complete Communities.

Most planning documents provide direction for future growth through a land use map, which informs parcel-based zoning but does not give guidance on the aspects of place like building form, streets, and open space. To achieve the goal of Complete Communities, the Charlotte

Future 2040 Plan uses Place Types, which think about a place more holistically and at a larger scale, incorporating guidance for land use,

transportation, layout, and design. A Place Typology defines a set of Places that are unique and authentic to the community and its needs.





The 10 Place Types are organized into the categories of neighborhoods where we live, employment areas where we work, and centers where we shop, dine, and play.



NEIGHBORHOOD 1:

Lower density housing areas, where most residents live, primarily in single-family or small multi-family homes or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).



NEIGHBORHOOD 2:

Higher density housing areas that provide a variety of housing types such as townhomes and apartments alongside neighborhood-serving shops and services.



PARKS & PRESERVES:

Protect public parks and open space while providing rest, recreation, and gathering places.



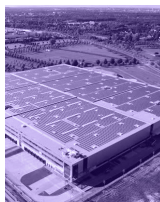
COMMERCIAL:

Primarily car-oriented places for retail, services, hospitality, and dining, often along major streets or near interstates.



CAMPUS:

A relatively cohesive group of buildings and public spaces that all serve one institution such as a university, hospital, or office park.



MANUFACTURING & LOGISTICS:

Areas that provide a range of job types, services, and wage levels in sectors such as production, manufacturing, research, and distribution.



INNOVATION MIXED-USE:

Vibrant areas of mixed-use and employment, typically in older areas, that capitalize on Charlotte's history and industry with uses such as light manufacturing, office, research, retail, and dining.



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER:

Small mixed-use areas, typically in neighborhoods, that provide access to goods, services, dining, and residential for nearby residents.



COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER:

Mid-sized mixed-use areas, typically along transit corridors or major roadways, that provide access to goods, services, dining, entertainment, and residential for nearby and regional residents.



REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER:

Large, high-density mixed-use areas, typically along transit corridors or major roadways, that provide access to goods, services, dining, offices, entertainment, and residential for regional residents and visitors.

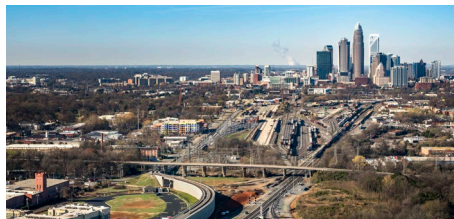


IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation Strategy for the Comprehensive Plan highlights and details a variety of critical actions and procedures that will be necessary to realize the community's vision. While the Plan articulates a vision for the next 20 years, the Implementation Strategy is intended to be monitored and updated more frequently. It outlines the relationship to other system-wide and subgeography plans, to the Unified Development Ordinance and mapping of zoning districts, and to ensuring that public and private investments are contributing to accomplishing the community's goals. The following strategies are described in detail in the Implementation Strategy document:

- Short-Term Actions
- Planning Approach
- Community Area Mapping and Planning
- Unified Development Ordinance
- Anti-Displacement Tools and Strategies
- Fiscal Considerations, Funding, and Financing Tools
- CIP Preparation, Prioritization and Scoring
- Organizational Capacity and Coordination
- Amending the Plan
- Tracking Progress







With support from:

