

## Vegetable Garden Diaries and Transit Time Tales



**From** UNC Charlotte Urban Institute <unccurbaninstitute@uncc.edu>  
**To** <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>  
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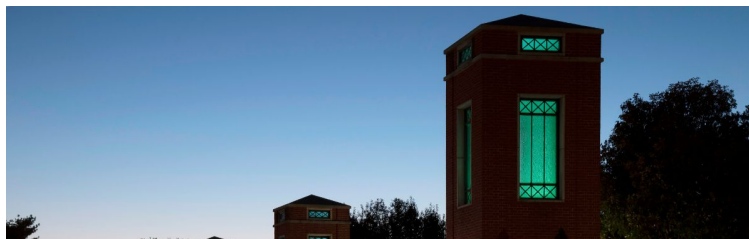


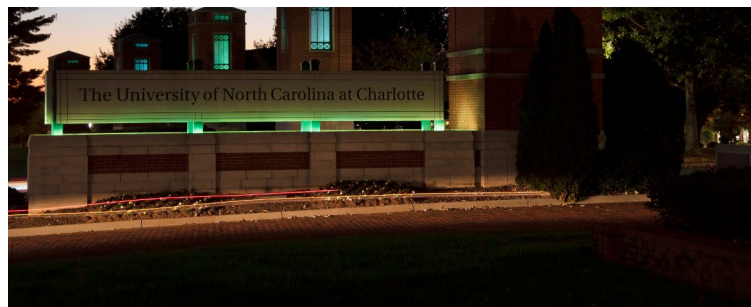
## A Vegetable Garden Diary

*By Ruth Ann Grissom*

In the vegetable garden, every season presents its own set of challenges. In May 2022, I made this pithy entry in my garden journal – too hot, too cold, too dry.

After a spell of record-breaking warmth in late December last year, we got snow and ice on three consecutive weekends in January. My celery and parsley got hammered. The chard was showing signs of life, so I cut it back hard and hoped for the best. In early February, I went ahead and sowed my green peas, sugar snap peas, radishes, arugula, lettuce, cilantro and dill. Gardeners are either delusional, or eternally hopeful. Surely the next crop will be better!





## A New Year ... A New Colleague!

By Lori Thomas

The UNC Charlotte Urban Institute is looking for a new colleague in 2023. We are seeking applications for the Director of Research Translation and Engagement. Our new colleague wish list includes:

- Extensive experience creating content and using research to tell effective stories to a variety of audiences, particularly around issues relevant to the Charlotte region;
- The capacity to develop and maintain an online portfolio of research and stories relevant to the Charlotte region;
- The ability and desire to work alongside researchers to ensure their work can be translated to general audiences;
- A drive to maintain meaningful research and policy relationships in the community.
- Collaborative, curious, and innovative;
- Reflective of our community - The Charlotte region is one of the most diverse regions in the Southeast and we welcome and encourage applicants that reflect that diversity, particularly racial and ethnic diversity.

Our new colleague will be a key part of senior leadership at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. The position was most recently held by [Ely Portillo](#) and [Mary Newsom](#). For more information or to apply, please see the [job posting](#) or contact Lori Thomas at [LoriThomas@uncc.edu](mailto:LoriThomas@uncc.edu).



## Housing Policies and Ice Cream

By Aaron M. Houck

I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream. If you are like me and most other people, you like ice cream—a food that almost perfectly matches our brains' evolved desire for sweet, fatty, calorie-rich foods.

So what policies should we adopt regarding ice cream—should we subsidize it? Should we mandate certain minimum amounts of ice cream be produced? Should we ban other, less popular desserts, like flan? (Flan lovers should direct

their hate mail to me at [aaron.houck@uncc.edu](mailto:aaron.houck@uncc.edu).)

The answer to each of the questions is obviously, uncontroversially "no." We don't need to use policy to prop up ice cream. There's plenty of demand for ice cream absent policy interventions making it less expensive or its alternatives more expensive. To be sure, we all need food, and ice cream is a food that can sate our basic biological need for sustenance. But that just provides a possible rationale for subsidizing food generally, not ice cream specifically or exclusively.



## [Transit Time: Consultant's Report Suggests Changes in Governance, Budgeting and Transparency](#)

*Special Contributor: Ely Portillo, WFAE*

The Charlotte Area Transit System's governance and organizational structure need a major overhaul, according to a consultant hired to review the city's transit agency.

That consultant, Management Partners, found that CATS has unclear goals, departments that compete instead of cooperate, and a lack of transparency about its budget. The agency's overall governance structure, which includes up to 13 positions reporting to the CEO and two separate-but-overlapping boards that oversee different parts of the organization, is also confusing, unwieldy and needs to be changed, the report found.

"Lack of engagement and transparency was cited quite a bit, especially around how CATS formulates or sets its operating budget from year to year," said interim CATS Chief Executive Officer Brent Cagle, speaking at a virtual press conference held Dec. 23, the Friday before Christmas, about the report, which was dated Dec. 12. "We have to create a shared vision and really create a team that is collaborative, that works together, that isn't sort of a rivalry or an adversarial relationship inside of the department ... To the extent that that kind of culture exists, it has to stop."

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