



2040
COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN

COMMUNITY AREA PLANNING WORKBOOK

January 2023



Prepared for Charlotte Planning, Design + Development by MIG, Inc.

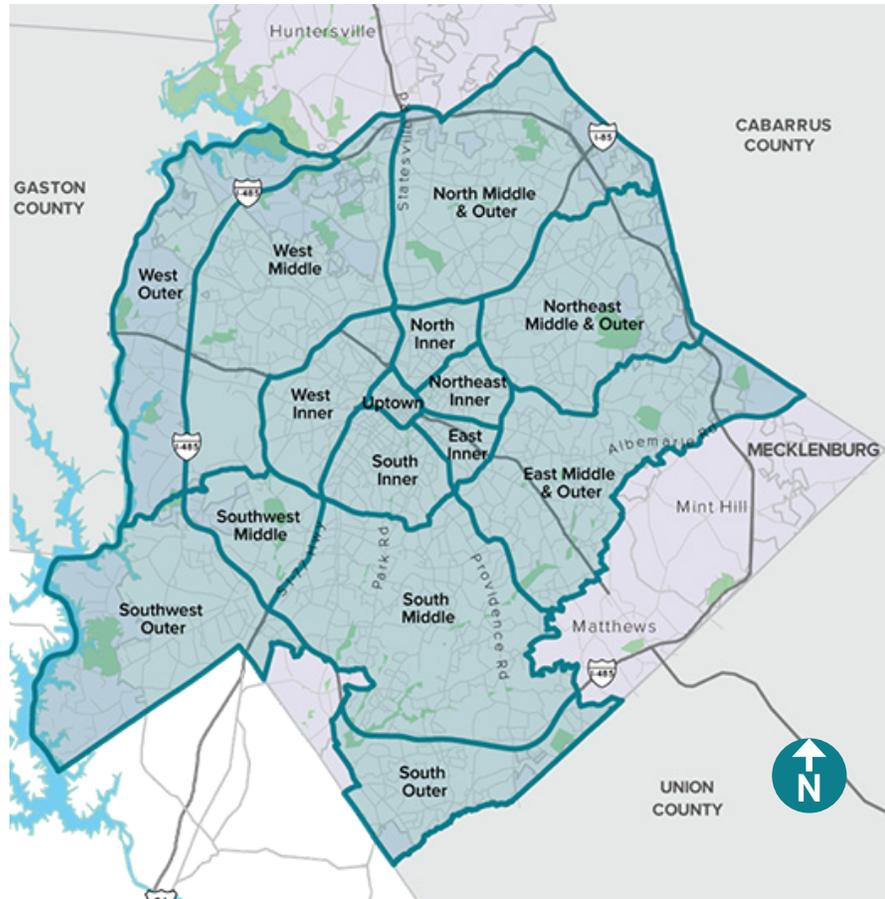
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In June 2021, the Charlotte City Council adopted the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Then in March 2022, Council adopted the plan's companion map, the Charlotte Future 2040 Policy Map. Together, the plan and map set the vision for how Charlotte will grow and change over the next two decades. With these documents adopted, Charlotte is ready to develop more detailed recommendations for growth and development at the neighborhood level. This work will be completed over the next two years (2023-2024) through the Community Area Planning process (CAP).

Through the CAP process, multiple neighborhoods will work together to refine citywide policies and define localized strategies to guide future development. The outcome of this process will be 14 Community Area Plans (CAPs) that compliment the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan and update the 2040 Policy Map.

COMMUNITY AREA PLAN GEOGRAPHIES



COMMUNITY AREA PLAN & WORKBOOK TIMING

The CAP process will begin for all 14 community areas in January 2023 and conclude in December 2024. The 2-year process includes 4 phases of development:

- » Phase 1: Setting the Stage (Jan. – March 2023)
- » Phase 2: Creating Great Places (Feb. – Nov. 2023)
- » Phase 3: Supporting the Vision (Dec. 23' – Nov. 2024)
- » Phase 4: Putting the Plan Into Action (June – Dec. 2024)

Review and adoption of the 14 draft plans will begin in 2025. Community participation is paramount to the CAP process and there will be multiple in-person and virtual opportunities to engage throughout the next two years.

ACTIVITIES & WORKBOOK OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

The Community Area Planning Workbook includes multiple activities to help neighborhoods identify valuable resources in their community. On the following pages you'll find:

- **ACTIVITY MENU (PAGES 4 – 5)**
The Activity Menu provides a description of each activity, including what you'll need to complete the work and which activity may be a good fit based on your neighborhood's interests. It is designed to provide a succinct but holistic view of all the workbook activities. Once you and/or your neighborhood selects an activity of interest, move ahead to the Detailed Instructions section for more information.
- **DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS (PAGES 6 – 9)**
After selecting an activity (or multiple activities) from the menu, the Detailed Instructions provide a step-by-step guide for completing the work. Each set of instructions include tips for preparation, steps for completing the activity, and packaging up your work.
- **TOOLS, TIPS, AND TRICKS (PAGE 10)**
Be sure to check out the Tools, Tips, and Tricks section before beginning any activity. This section provides helpful suggestions for working in a group, thinking about the activities, and staying safe.
- **FOLLOW-UP (PAGE 11)**
Find detailed instructions for submitting your work to city staff and getting engaged in other CAP opportunities.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED!

The Community Area Planning Workbook is the first opportunity for Charlotte neighborhoods to get involved and shape the outcomes of the Community Area Planning process. The objective of the Workbook is to facilitate conversations among one or several neighborhoods and identify valuable resources in their community. The input collected will help confirm issues and opportunities in each community, refine citywide mapping guidance, and identify needed projects and programs. Neighborhoods may complete one, two or all the workbook activities – read on to learn more. All Community Area Planning Workbook feedback must be submitted to cltfuture2040@charlottenc.gov by December 2023.

WORKBOOK ACTIVITIES:

- » Collect Oral Histories
- » Collect Visual Histories
- » Conduct a Safety Audit
- » Sidewalk Inventory
- » Art & Architecture Inventory
- » Public Spaces Inventory
- » Identify Potential Opportunity Sites

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Any and all community members may complete a Community Area Planning Workbook activity! Some activities may require more time or effort (e.g. safety audits) so neighbors are encouraged to work together. Consider teaming up with one of the following groups who likely have volunteers readily available to assist:

- » Neighborhood associations
- » Parent-teacher associations
- » High school clubs
- » Large employers with community service days
- » Faith-based and community groups
- » Local business organizations

ACTIVITY MENU

The Community Area Planning Workbook includes a variety of activities for all abilities and interests. The Activity Menu includes a description of each activity and summary of the level of effort, abilities, group size, and supplies needed. After selecting an activity, see pages 6 – 8 for detailed instructions.

Activity Description

Activity at a Glance



COLLECT ORAL HISTORIES

Identify one or more neighbors who have lived in the community for over 10 years and interview them about how the community has changed over time.

You Need: To be able to identify and record conversations.

Good Fit If: You enjoy speaking with neighbors and want to learn more about the history of your area.

Level of Effort:



1-2 hours

Supplies Needed:



smart phone or recorder

questions (from City)



OR



individual or group activity



COLLECT VISUAL HISTORIES

Record photos and/or videos that showcase the history of the area OR find and collect historic images through libraries, online research, or your neighbors.

You Need: To be able to capture photos/record videos OR access a library, internet, or local resources.

Good Fit If: You enjoy photography/videography and/or want to learn more about the history of your area.

Level of Effort:



2+ hours

Supplies Needed:



smart phone or camera

Internet access



OR



individual or group activity



CONDUCT A SAFETY AUDIT

Assess the conditions of an area that contribute to safety, including the presence or absence of lighting, street signage, sight lines, pedestrian crossings/signals, and active ground floor uses.

You Need: To be able to walk or bike through outdoor areas and to see and record notes in low light.

Good Fit If: You want to promote safer conditions in your area.

Level of Effort:



2-3 hours

Supplies Needed:



smart phone or camera

checklist (from City)

printed or digital map



Best as a small group activity

Activity Description

Activity at a Glance



SIDEWALK INVENTORY

Document the presence and condition of the sidewalks in your neighborhood. This should include damaged or missing sidewalks, accessibility issues, curb ramps, safety features, barriers, and driveways intersecting the sidewalk.

You Need: To be able to walk or roll through outdoor spaces.

Good Fit If: You use or would like to use sidewalks to get around, you want a complete, accessible, and safe sidewalk network.

Level of Effort:



2-3 hours

Supplies Needed:



smart phone or camera



checklist (from City)



printed or digital map



OR



individual or group activity



ART & ARCHITECTURE INVENTORY

Identify and document outdoor public and private art (murals, sculptures, painted crosswalks, etc.) and/or buildings of architectural interest in your Community Area.

You Need: To be able to walk, drive, or roll through outdoor spaces.

Good Fit If: You have an interest in art, culture, and/or architecture and want to help your neighbors appreciate these assets.

Level of Effort:



1-2 hours

Supplies Needed:



smart phone or camera



note taking device



OR



individual or group activity



PUBLIC SPACES INVENTORY

Identify and photograph the presence and condition of public spaces within your Area, including plazas, parks, and other outdoor community gathering spaces.

You Need: To be able to walk, drive, or roll through outdoor spaces.

Good Fit If: You are interested in or familiar with the public spaces in your area and are comfortable with camera technology.

Level of Effort:



1-2 hours

Supplies Needed:



smart phone or camera



OR



individual or group activity



IDENTIFY POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY SITES

Document vacant or underutilized sites in your area that may potentially become assets in the future.

You Need: To be able to connect and have conversations with neighbors and travel to or research potential sites.

Good Fit If: You are aware of opportunities in your area that can become assets, or want to learn of them from others.

Level of Effort:



1-2 hours

Supplies Needed:



note taking device



printed or digital map



OR



individual or group activity

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS

Activity Details



COLLECT ORAL HISTORIES

There are multiple kinds of history in Charlotte. An especially valuable type of history for your local area is the individual recollections of residents about their experiences here. To gather these, identify one or more people with long histories, e.g., residents of more than twenty years, owners of long-running businesses, or families with roots in the area. The ability to conduct interviews in another language and provide translated notes are also greatly appreciated. Anticipate 1-2 hours per interview, and conduct as many as desired.

Goal(s): To document first person knowledge and history and learn more about the neighborhood.



COLLECT VISUAL HISTORIES

This activity relies on finding materials already produced and gathering them to learn more about your area. Visual histories typically include items from multiple media, like photos and videos taken in your area, plaques and inscriptions on buildings, copies of historic documents, and related memorabilia that tell us more about a place. However, be creative! There are many more elements that can become part of a visual history, and you likely encounter some in your everyday routine. Use your unique perspective here.

Goal(s): To research and gather materials that help illustrate the history of your area.

Suggested Steps

- Prepare:
- Download, print, or request a hard copy of the prompting questions (see appendix)
 - Identify and reach out to potential interviewees
 - Schedule an in-person or virtual interview

- Activity:
- Describe the purpose and goals of the interview
 - Hit record on a phone or tape recorder
 - Ask the City's or your own questions
 - Let the conversation flow, asking for more thoughts or follow-up questions as needed
 - No need to take notes, listen to your interviewee and rely on the recording to review details later

- After:
- Optional: Type up the interview responses
 - Required: Upload the recording and any notes from the interview to: [insert City link here](#)

- Prepare:
- Identify resources like your local library to help
 - Decide how far back you want to go, e.g., a few years, the founding of your neighborhood, or somewhere in between

- Activity:
- Brainstorm important historical events and observances that have shaped your area
 - For every item, analyze if possible: how old is it, where was it taken, and what does it tell us?
 - For items you cannot copy or take with you (plaques, markers, signs), take pictures

- After:
- Type up any analysis, observations, or findings you want to be included
 - Upload photos and findings to [insert link here](#)

Activity Details



CONDUCT A SAFETY AUDIT

Complete the safety survey (see appendix) to catalog perceptions of safety for a portion of your neighborhood. This could be a few blocks, the area around a major intersection, a common destination like a shopping center or school, or a combination of these areas. Observe the following in your survey: number of people in or passing through the space, businesses and residences on the ground floor, lighting, signage, sight lines, and physical obstacles. Rate each as either excellent, good, fair, or poor. Finally, add specific notes in each portion of the safety audit that provide context on what needs improvement. For example, if lighting at a bus stop is poor, document whether that is because streetlights are obscured, missing, or broken. Bring brightly colored or reflective clothing and a flashlight for safety if conducting the audit at night.

Goal: To better understand the safety concerns in your neighborhood.

Suggested Steps

- Prepare:
 - Download, print, or request the safety audit template from the City
 - Gather at least two people, decide who will write down observations and who will take photographs
 - Agree on the starting place and time, and dress for the weather and time of day, evening time is ideal
 - Bring plenty of water and a phone for safety

- Activity:
 - Walk slowly through the area and stop to write and photograph observations as often as needed
 - Answer each question to the best of your ability and record your findings while on site, including taking photos
 - Be sure not to enter or photograph private properties unless invited, observing from the sidewalk is sufficient

- After:
 - Check that notes and photos are labeled with a location
 - Upload photos and findings to [insert link here](#)



SIDEWALK INVENTORY

Choose a specific location in your neighborhood, whether a few blocks, a shopping center, the area around a school or church, or a combination of these. Make note of the physical elements that make getting around without a vehicle easy or difficult. This includes missing or damaged sidewalks, missing or broken pedestrian call buttons at intersections, and issues that prevent accessibility, including physical barriers like utility poles and trees, weeds, or bushes blocking paths. Other crucial elements to note are the presence of driveways, curbs without “cuts,” and street intersections without crosswalks or signage to alert drivers of pedestrian presence.

Goal: To identify barriers to accessibility.

- Prepare:
 - Download, print, or request a map of your area from the City
 - Use the map to plan the route you wish to follow decide whether you are walking, biking, or rolling
 - Consider bringing a stroller or walker if you have one to better understand if areas are accessible

- Activity:
 - Mark on the map where you find the barriers or missing infrastructure
 - Take photos of barriers as you see them
 - If time allows, travel down both sides of a street for a fuller inventory

- After:
 - Type up any analysis, observations, or findings you want to be included
 - Upload photos and findings to [insert link here](#)

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS, CONTINUED

Activity Details

Suggested Steps



ART & ARCHITECTURE INVENTORY

Buildings that have significant or unique features and public art—ranging from murals to sculptures to interactive installations—make places more enjoyable for the people that spend time in them. They also help define a community, with historic buildings and major art pieces used as landmarks and neighborhood identifiers. Wherever these assets exist in Charlotte, this activity allows you to inventory the art and architecture that enhance your neighborhood, and recommend these places be preserved and identified as highlights in the Area Planning process.

Goal(s): To inventory the historic and creative aspects that make your neighborhood unique.

- Prepare: Download, print, or request a map of your area from the City
- Prepare: Use the map to plan the buildings and art you want to document, or just explore the area as you go
- Prepare: Choose your route and mode (walking, biking, driving, rolling, etc.)

- Activity: Find and photograph historic, unique, or otherwise interesting buildings and art in the neighborhood
- Activity: Write brief descriptions of each and mark their location on the map

- After: Type up any analysis, observations, or findings you want to be included
- After: Upload photos and findings to [insert link here](#)



PUBLIC SPACES INVENTORY

This activity focuses on capturing the state of public spaces, including parks, plazas, bus stops, and recreation facilities. Photos of these spaces often communicate much more about their needs than a written description. While this activity may seem similar to the visual history above, your goal is to show spaces in your community as they are today. Conditions of public spaces can also change rapidly with heavy use and exposure to weather so recent photos are key.

Goal(s): Photograph your neighborhood's public spaces as they are today.

- Prepare: Download, print, or request a map of your area from the City
- Prepare: Use the map to plan the public spaces you want to document and choose your route and mode of travel (walking, biking, driving, rolling, etc.)

- Activity: Travel the planned route slowly and deliberately, taking photos as you go
- Activity: Make note of the conditions of the public spaces you visit, as desired

- After: Type up any analysis, observations, or findings you want to be included
- After: Upload photos and findings to [insert link here](#)

Activity Details



IDENTIFY POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY SITES

An opportunity site is a vacant, abandoned, or under-utilized property. Common examples include: a large store that is vacant, a strip mall with several empty storefronts, or vacant lots on the same block. Look for options that not protected like historic sites or parks. Opportunity sites are important because in a mature city like Charlotte, undeveloped land is scarce. This means existing unused properties must be used for new development. Connect with neighbors that have knowledge on these areas, or provide it from your own perspective.

Goal(s): To identify potential sites for new opportunities.

Suggested Steps

- Prepare:
- Download, print, or request a map of your area from the City
 - Brainstorm where there are vacant or under-utilized sites in your area or ask others in your area

-
- Activity:
- Mark on the map where you find opportunity sites
 - Take note of driveways and street access, sidewalk access, neighboring properties, and other highlights or relevant or interesting findings

-
- After:
- Type up any analysis, observations, or findings you want to be included
 - Upload maps and findings to [insert link here](#)

TOOLS, TIPS, AND TRICKS

RELEVANT TO ALL ACTIVITIES:

- Bring your perspective as a member of your community. There is no single “right” answer to any activity. What is valuable is discovering and documenting the everyday experience of those living in Charlotte.
- Go with what is familiar to you. For example, there is more than one way to tackle an activity needing a map: if you regularly use mapping or GPS apps on your phone that will work well for most activities. If you prefer, print a hard copy or ask the City to provide one, and bring that along as you participate in the activity.
- If you do not feel comfortable or are unable to upload your findings to the City link, contact a City representative to learn how to physically hand off your notes and findings. City staff are happy to make accommodations for those with different situations and abilities.
- Ask follow-up questions as needed! City staff are happy to help and want to support your efforts.
- Even if you can only commit a limited amount of time, please jump in! Every person that contributes to the activities will move their neighborhood and the planning process forward in some way, and know that the City appreciates all time and effort you can spare.
- Many activities call for volunteers to physically explore a neighborhood. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes if you will be walking. Perspectives of those in wheelchairs, with strollers, and walkers are extremely valuable as well, you can help us better understand how you experience the built environment and how that experience can be improved.
- Only enter or photograph private property with permission of the owners. All activities in this workbook can be completed by observing from the street or sidewalk if an owner is not present or does not consent.
- Follow up materials for several activities can be found in the appendix of this document, after page 11.



FOLLOW-UP

SHARE YOUR FINDINGS

When you complete your activity make sure you provide your findings to the City via one of the methods below:

- 1 Upload to the City's workbook platform here, insert link
- 2 Set up a drop-off time in-person at one of the City facilities by contacting: Insert Point of Contact Name at Insert Contact Info (email and phone).

Uploads and drop-offs should include any photos, scans, copies, notes, forms, or marked up maps you may have created during the activity or that you would like to be considered during the CAP process.



NEXT STEPS

City staff will inform you when the engagement for your Community Area Plan (CAP) will occur. To stay up to date on the process and see how your Workbook Activities can help inform the Plan, stay tuned to the [Charlotte Future 2040 website](#) and follow the [City's social media accounts](#) (@CLTPlanning on Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor, and Facebook).

When there are community meetings about your CAP, we encourage you to participate and review the City's plans. Any public engagement that occurs as we develop the CAP will be an opportunity for you to re-engage and tell us how we can improve it, based on your experiences carrying out these activities.

SPREAD THE WORD

If you would like to help us spread the word about the upcoming planning process please consider:

- Sharing this workbook with neighbors.
- Sharing completed activities with property and business owners and other neighbors that contributed to their creation.
- Posting your completed activities on social media to highlight what you achieved. Label your posts with the hashtag #tools4cltfuture2040 so other participants can find them.

THANK YOU!

Your participation in this early stage of the Community Area Planning process is greatly appreciated!

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APPENDIX A - ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

PROMPTING QUESTIONS

Tell me a little more about yourself. How long have you lived in Charlotte? In which neighborhood(s)?

Where is your family from? Does your family have ties to other Charlotte neighborhoods?

When did you first move to this neighborhood? What was it like at that time?

Did you attend school in this neighborhood? Tell me a little about your experiences of the local school(s).

What have been your favorite places to spend time in Charlotte while you have lived here?

Are there businesses, houses of worship, and other places you liked that have closed? Are there some you still frequent today?

What do you like about your neighborhood as it is today?

What would you improve or change about your neighborhood?

Are there other memories or facts about your life in Charlotte that you would like to share?

For business owners

When did your business open? Who was the original proprietor if other than you?

How long has it operated here? Has the business been at other locations in Charlotte?

When have you done the most business? Were there specific years or seasons that were highlights?

How is the business doing today? Is it easier or harder to keep it going than in the past?

Are there other memories or thoughts about your business that you would like to share?

APPENDIX B - SAFETY AUDIT

AUDIT TEMPLATE

Describe the location, including streets and intersections:

Date Observed: _____

Start and End Times: _____

Audit Participants:

Observe the residences in the area. Do the ground floors of each appear ...

- In use and occupied
- In use but not currently occupied
- Vacant

Observe the businesses in the area. Do the ground floors of each appear ...

- In use but closed
- In use and open
- Vacant

Do the businesses have operating hours posted? _____

If so, what other times of the day would you expect it to be occupied? _____

Specific notes:

Count the rough number of people occupying or passing through the space ...

- when you arrive: ____
- while you are present: ____
- as you depart: ____

Specific Notes:

Rate each of the following contributors to safety in this area as excellent, good, fair, or poor based on your observations:

- | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|
| • Lighting..... | excellent | good | fair | poor |
| • Signage..... | excellent | good | fair | poor |
| • Sight lines..... | excellent | good | fair | poor |
| • Lack of obstacles.....
(e.g., locked gates,
fences, landscaping) | excellent | good | fair | poor |

For all factors rated fair or poor, what would improve your safety rating?

Are there confined areas where a person could be hidden from view? If so, describe them.

Are there signs of vandalism, e.g., broken windows, graffiti? If so, describe them.

Do the public spaces appear maintained, e.g., street signs intact, area free of trash, walkways swept?

Do the business and residential spaces appear maintained?

Other Notes:

