



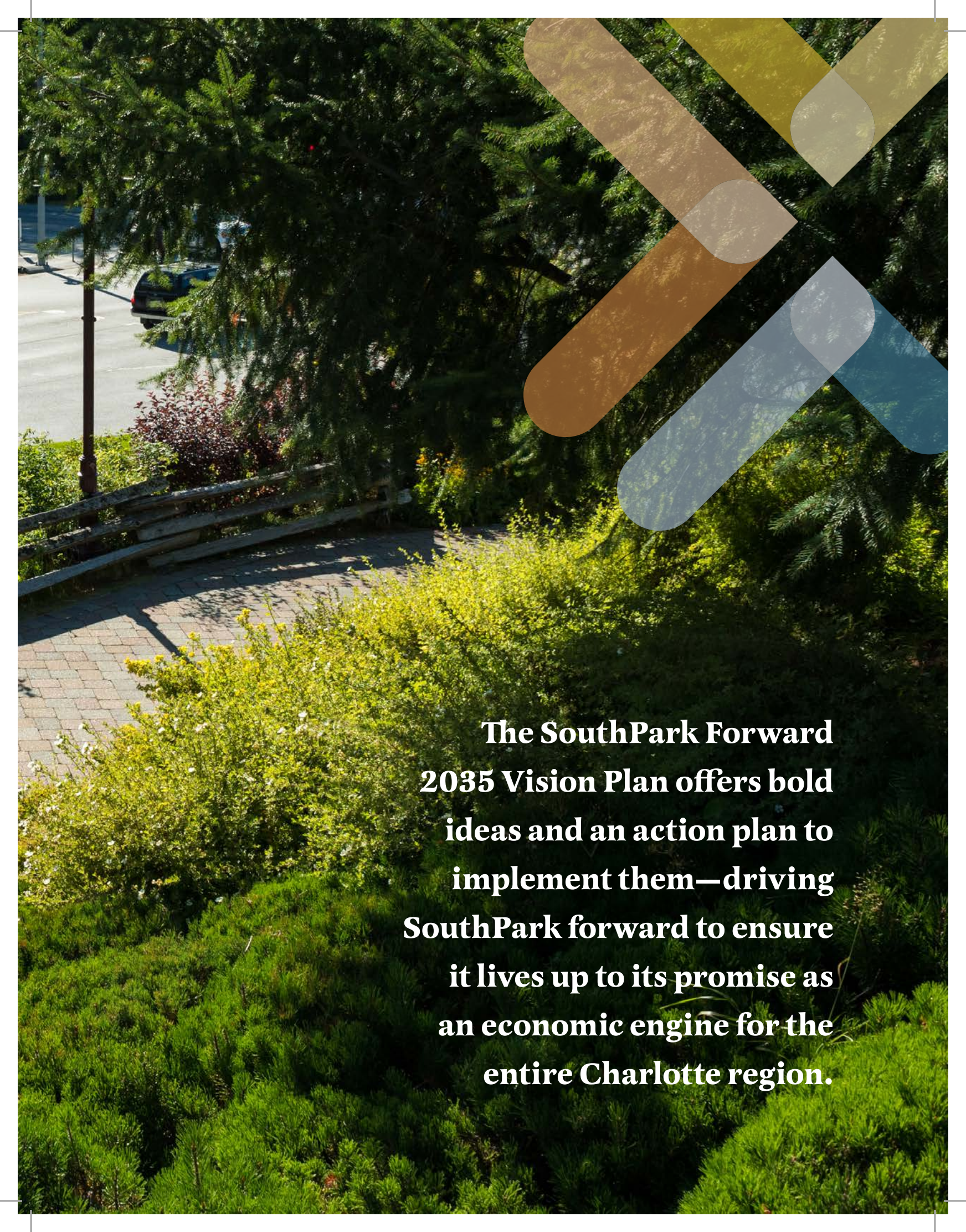
# SOUTHPARK FORWARD

## 2035 Vision Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Charlotte, NC  
Published April 2024





**The SouthPark Forward  
2035 Vision Plan offers bold  
ideas and an action plan to  
implement them—driving  
SouthPark forward to ensure  
it lives up to its promise as  
an economic engine for the  
entire Charlotte region.**

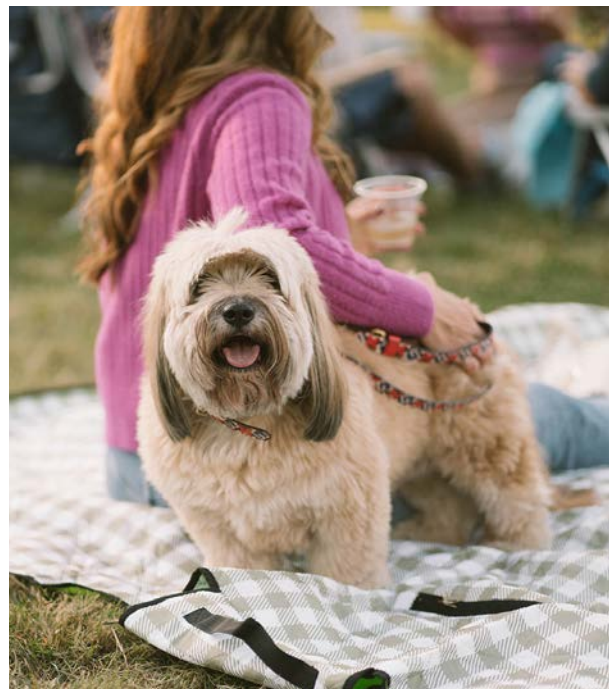
# THE PURPOSE

## What it is

The **SouthPark Forward 2035 Vision Plan** is a tool for a more walkable and energetic SouthPark, a blueprint to inspire and shape future investment in SouthPark's commercial core. Anchored in the community's values and aspirations, the plan lays out big ideas that business, government, and public-private partnerships can execute by 2035. SouthPark Community Partners will use this plan to spark conversations about shared progress and to lead projects and programs that take SouthPark into the future.

## Why it is needed

SouthPark has a 50-year legacy of success thanks to visionary leadership and strategic investment. Today, SouthPark's commercial core is evolving from a suburban collection of shopping centers to a more urban, walkable, mixed-use district that serves a variety of stakeholders. To remain competitive, our community must be intentional about SouthPark's next chapter, leveraging public and private investment to advance a comprehensive vision.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These community values are the foundation of the SouthPark Forward 2035 Vision Plan. They serve as a guide to ensure the recommendations in this plan meet our highest aspirations for SouthPark.



### WELCOMING

A lush, inviting, and safe community for all.



### ACCESSIBLE

A regional destination with inclusive public places.



### EXPERIENTIAL

Dynamic programming that surprises and delights.

# THE VISION

**In 2035, SouthPark is a walkable, energetic community where people connect and businesses thrive.**

SouthPark is evolving from a collection of distinct centers to a cohesive mixed-use destination – home to extraordinary neighborhoods, the region’s best shopping, and a vibrant employment hub.

**A clean, safe, and consistent pedestrian network paired with innovative mobility strategies will better connect people and places. Existing and future open space will spur new recreational and entertainment offerings that will further curate a connected SouthPark experience.**

These enhancements will become the foundation for placemaking opportunities that will expand amenity offerings for workers, residents, and visitors, making SouthPark more inviting, inclusive, and accessible for all.



## CONNECTED

Physical, functional, and emotional connections bring people together.



## BELOVED

A premier destination to create cherished memories.

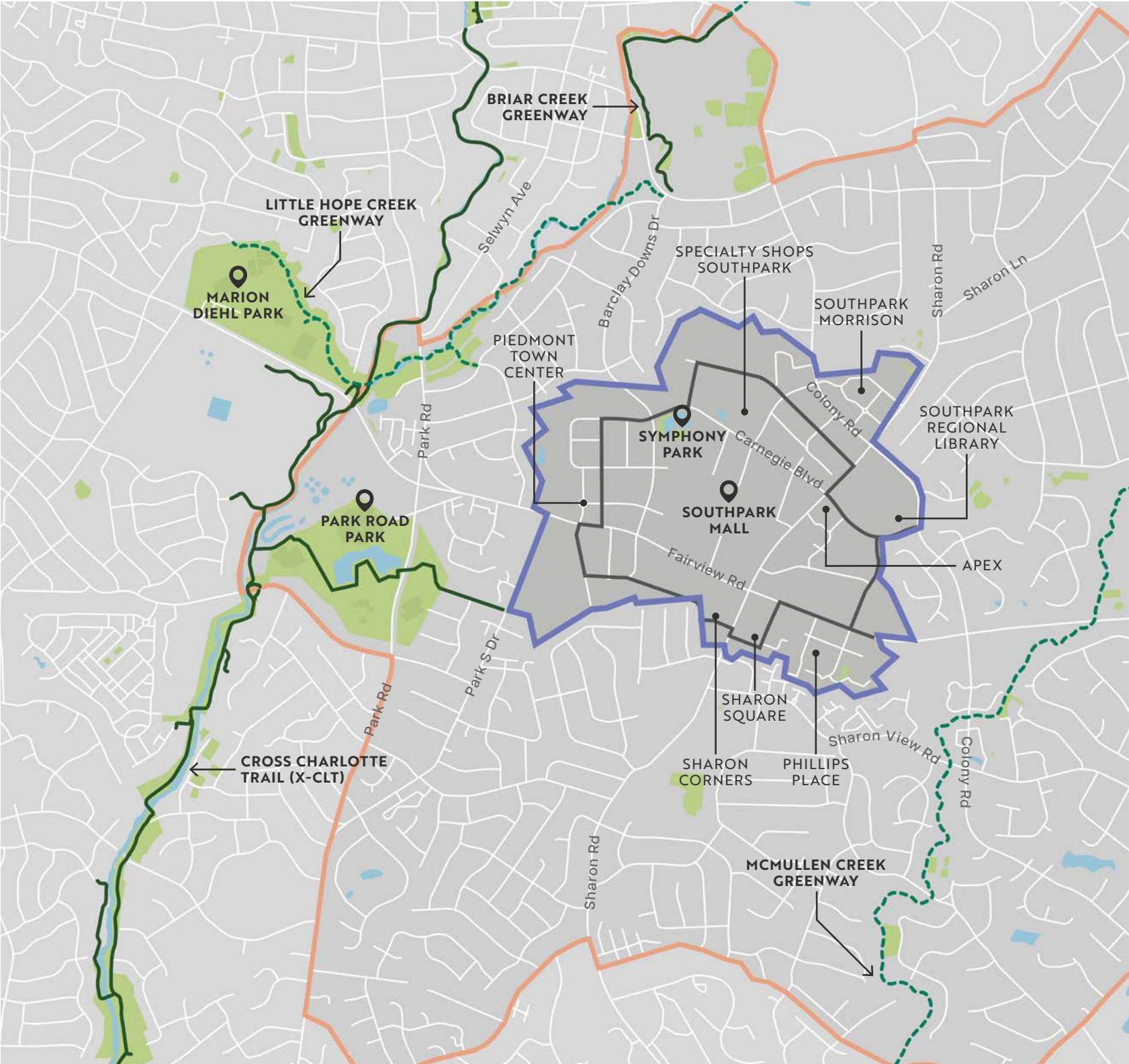


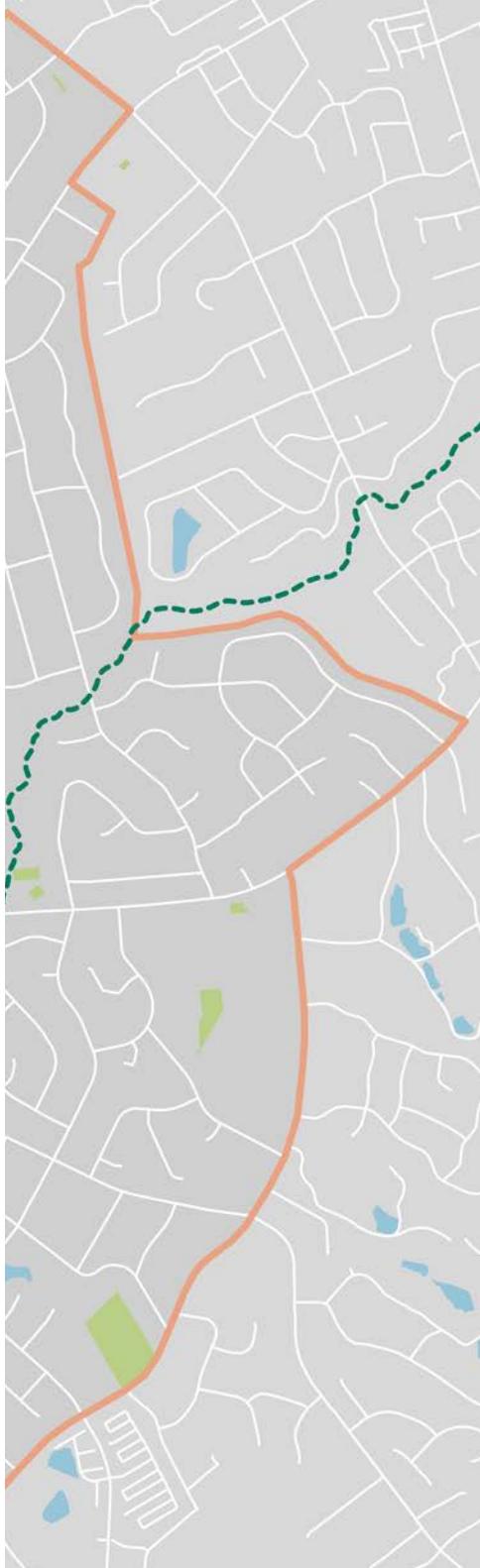
## ENDURING

A business environment that nurtures sustained jobs and opportunities.



# STUDY AREA





## The focus

The SouthPark Forward 2035 Vision Plan focuses on the SouthPark Municipal Service District (MSD-6) as defined by the purple boundary on this map. The MSD comprises one square mile and is home to approximately 1,000 businesses employing 32,000 people. In 2023, there were 18 million non-work visits to the MSD. More than 6,200 people live within the MSD, and there are roughly 100,000 people who live within a three-mile radius.

This plan builds off the vision for the SouthPark Loop, a three-mile urban trail, envisioned by the community in partnership with the City of Charlotte, that is designed to connect SouthPark’s experiences.






## How we got here

The recommendations in this plan were developed following a review of prior SouthPark studies, robust technical analysis, and several months of public engagement, which included more than 500 touch points with the community. A complete summary of these insights is available in the full Vision Plan report.

### Key themes that emerged from this work include a desire for:

- Enhanced walkability
- Active, high-quality public space
- A park-once environment
- A clean, safe, and beautiful destination

### MAP LEGEND

-  **CNIP BOUNDARY:**  
City of Charlotte 2018 Comprehensive Neighborhood Improvement Program (CNIP) SouthPark area
-  **MSD BOUNDARY:**  
SouthPark Municipal Service District (MSD) service area
-  **EXISTING GREENWAY**
-  **FUTURE GREENWAY**
-  **SOUTHPARK LOOP**



# ANALYSIS

## A mixed use future

The upcoming decade presents transformative redevelopment opportunities on sites throughout SouthPark. As these locations evolve, the SouthPark 2035 Vision Plan recommends a transition from single-use sites that serve one purpose to dynamic, mixed-use properties where a variety of functions complement one another. Future development in SouthPark's commercial core should prioritize active ground floors, public space, walkability, and high-quality design.



Phipps Plaza in Atlanta, GA | Photo courtesy of Phipps Plaza





North Hills in Raleigh, NC | Photo courtesy of visitnorthhills.com

## ■ The future of retail

SouthPark has built a reputation as one of the East Coast's premier shopping destinations, and today boasts a retail vacancy rate of less than one percent. However, the retail sector faces continued headwinds from changing consumer behavior and expectations. With online shopping offering convenience and choice, brick-and-mortar retail centers must create a sense of place, offering experiences customers cannot find elsewhere. Future-proofing the SouthPark district requires continual evolution in retail concepts, a focus on placemaking and programming, and a recognition that the cohesive experience within SouthPark will drive continued loyalty to the district as a whole—which is essential to the success of individual stores and centers.



SouthPark Mall in Charlotte, NC | Photo courtesy of SouthPark Mall



## KEY FRAMEWORK

The recommendations in this plan are organized into three key framework areas: Places, Connections, and Mobility. These thematic areas represent the greatest opportunities to affect transformational change in SouthPark—and they reflect the top priorities articulated by the community throughout the planning process.



PLACES



MOBILITY



# 1 PLACES

Creating space for the community to gather, play, learn, and venture.

Places to Gather

Places to Play + Learn

Places to Venture

# 2 CONNECTIONS

Improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

SouthPark Loop

Greenway to Greenway

X-CLT SouthPark Circuit

Permeating SouthPark Mall

Living Ends

Connections In + Out

# 3 MOBILITY

Expanding transportation options to become a more accessible and inclusive place.

Phase 1: Park Once Place

Phase 2: Regional Multimodal Destination



CONNECTIONS

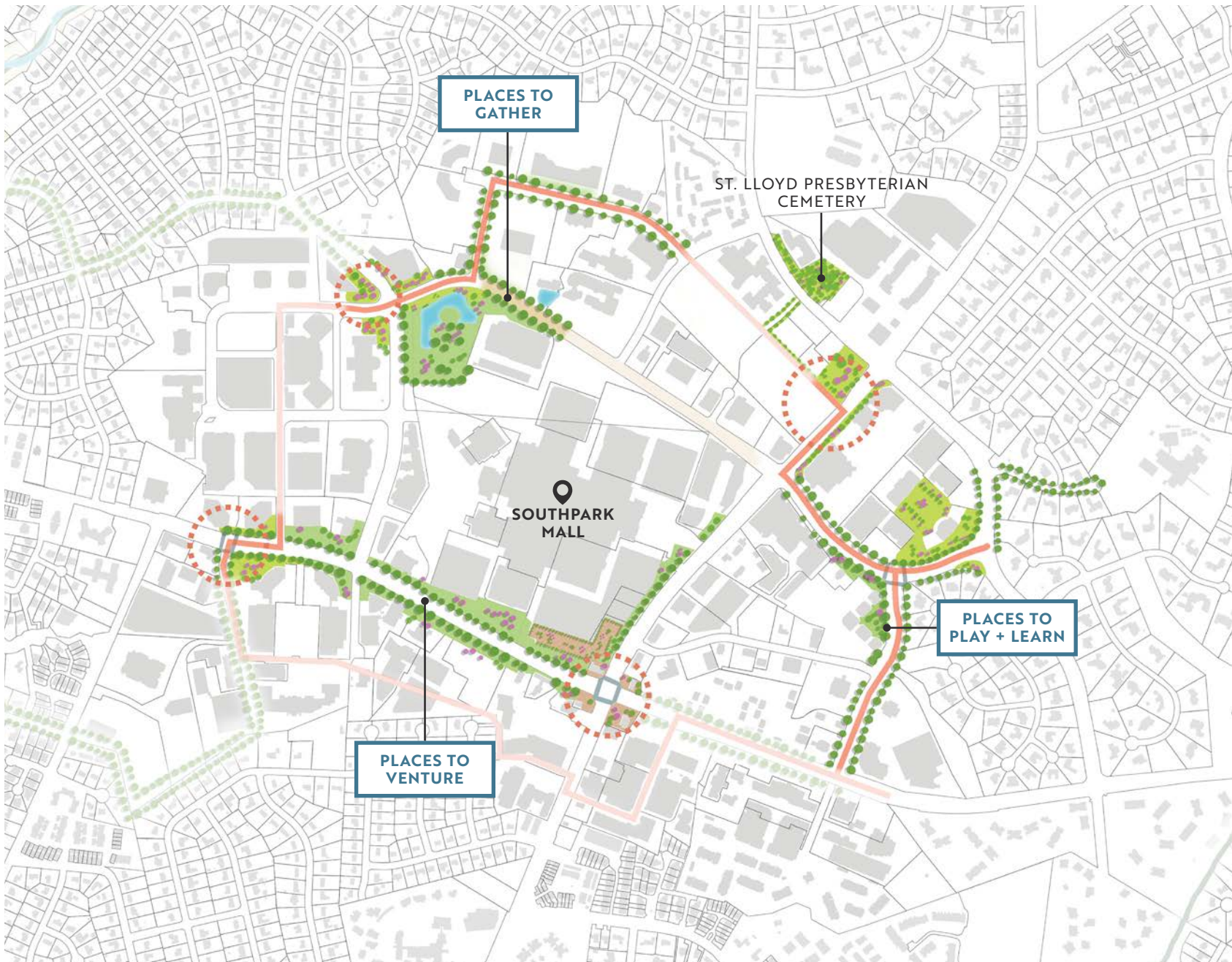


# Places OVERVIEW

Map Legend:

— SouthPark Loop

■ Gateway





## CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH PUBLIC SPACE

Public space is the heart of a community. It's where we celebrate, relax, and make memories with loved ones. Public space facilitates stronger bonds among people, strengthening the community one relationship at a time, and access to an open space network of parks and trails ranks among the top amenities both residents and business owners desire. This plan identifies opportunities to expand the open space network throughout SouthPark, creating a variety of spaces to gather, recreate, and explore.

### Places to Gather

Whether through road races, charity events, or community concerts, Symphony Park is where the community comes together in SouthPark. Envisioning this part of the district as a hub for major events creates an opportunity to nurture the soul of the neighborhood.

### Places to Play + Learn

Anchored around the popular SouthPark Regional Library, this pocket of SouthPark speaks to families who seek opportunities to spend time creating memorable experiences together.

### Places to Venture

A linear park along Fairview Road and adjacent to SouthPark Mall creates moments of surprise and delight, re-purposing under-utilized space and creating unique opportunities for placemaking.





C



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### A. Gather: Carnegie Boulevard

Building on this area's potential as a community gathering place, an enhanced streetscape along Carnegie Boulevard creates new opportunities for festivals open to everyone.

### B. Gather: Symphony Park

Symphony Park is the premier destination on the Loop and home to beloved community events. The park's current design, however, does not maximize the site's utility for regular programming and is only episodically used. A future public-private partnership to renovate the park would create a space oriented for daily use. These conceptual renderings of a reimagined Symphony Park include a direct connection to the Loop, more flexible water features, and landscape architecture that invites a variety of uses. Additional work is required to finalize a formal design approach, which would involve a coalition of partners from the public and private sectors.

### C. Play + Learn: Cameron Valley Parkway

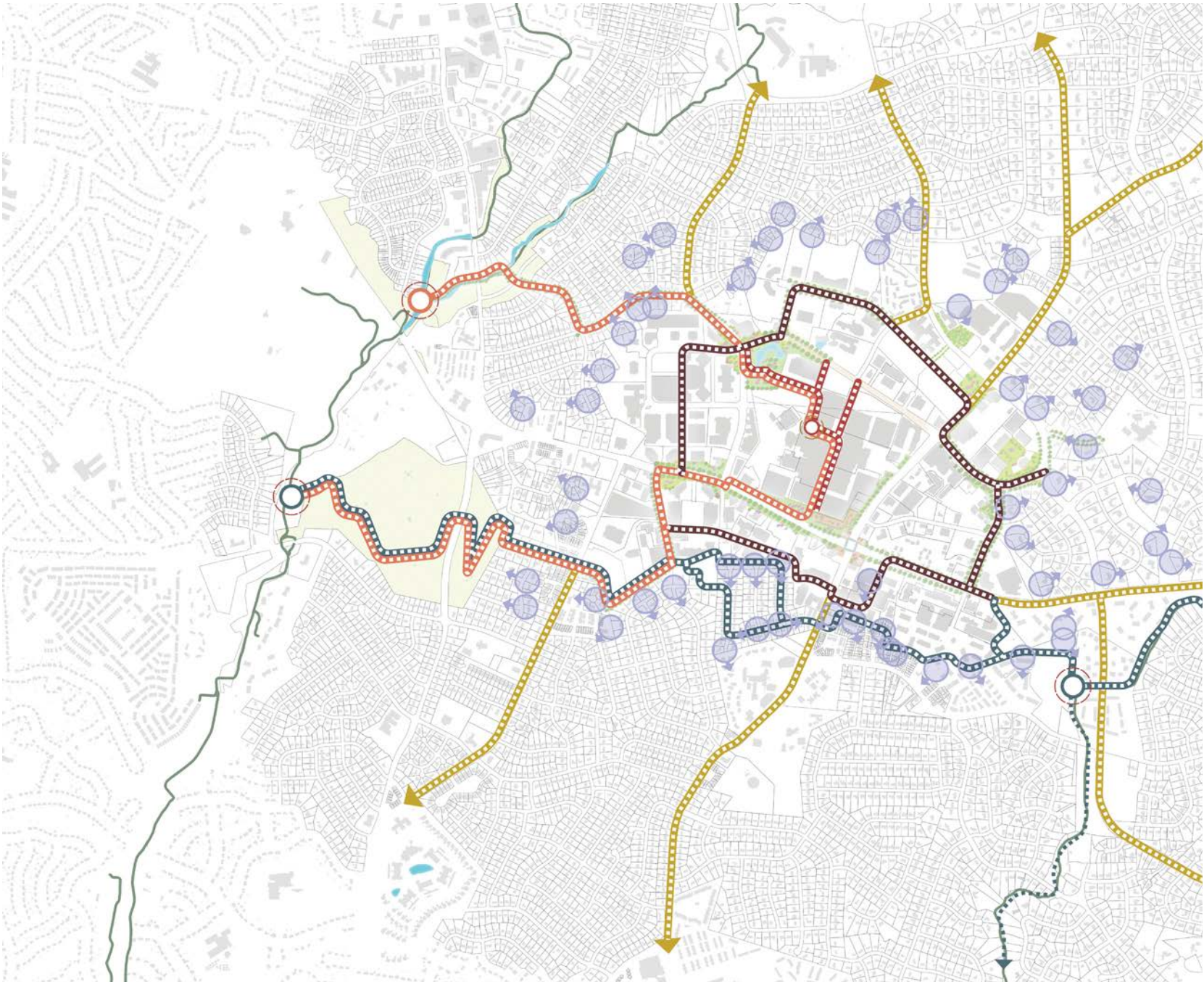
SouthPark is one of Charlotte's most desirable neighborhoods for families, and the existing amenities around the SouthPark Regional Library offer a strong foundation from which to build. Landscaping, furniture, and public art can enhance and activate a half-acre of underutilized green space adjacent to the Loop on Cameron Valley Parkway.

### D. Venture: Fairview Road

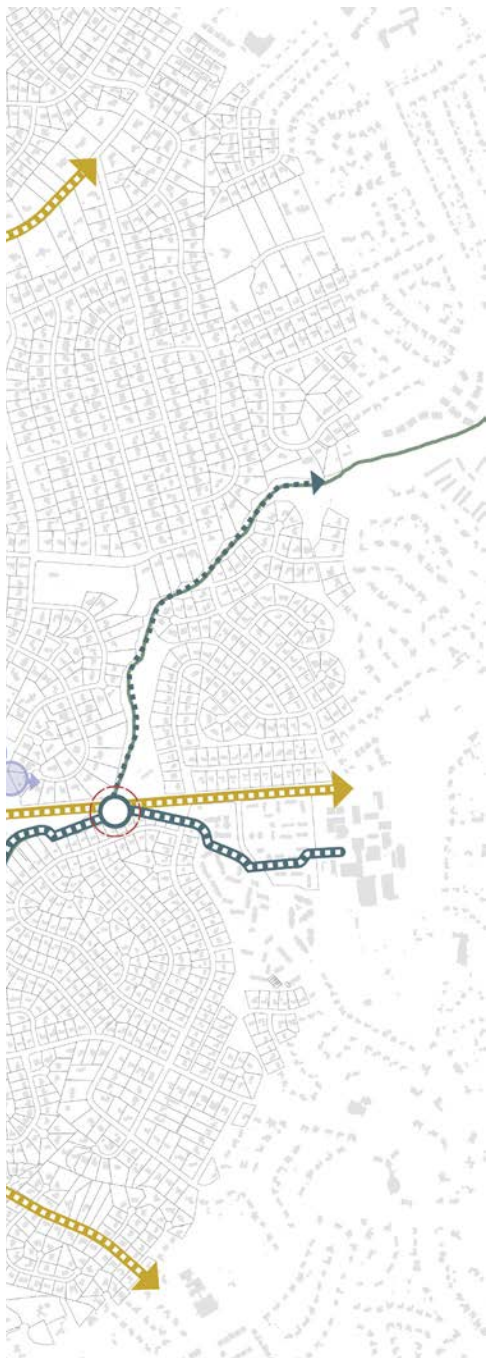
To enhance walkability—and to soften the challenging built environment at SouthPark's main intersection of Sharon and Fairview roads—people on the street are essential. A linear park abutting SouthPark Mall, including opportunities for creative placemaking, can spark new activity along this busy thoroughfare.



# Connections OVERVIEW







## EVOLVING SOUTHPARK'S TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The 1970s development of SouthPark, with its expanded roads and vast shopping mall parking, cemented a car-first precedent for the district that continued for decades. Today, SouthPark is known as a place to drive to and around. Evolving this experience by building better connectivity options will make active mobility not just possible but preferred. To realize this transformation, this plan proposes six strategic initiatives:



### SOUTHPARK LOOP

Connect SouthPark's destinations through an urban trail.



### GREENWAY TO GREENWAY

Unite the Cross Charlotte Trail (X-CLT) to McMullen Creek Greenway via the Backlot Trail.



### X-CLT TO SOUTHPARK CIRCUIT

Establish SouthPark as a trail oriented destination on the Cross Charlotte Trail (X-CLT).



### PERMEATING SOUTHPARK MALL

Break up the SouthPark superblock.



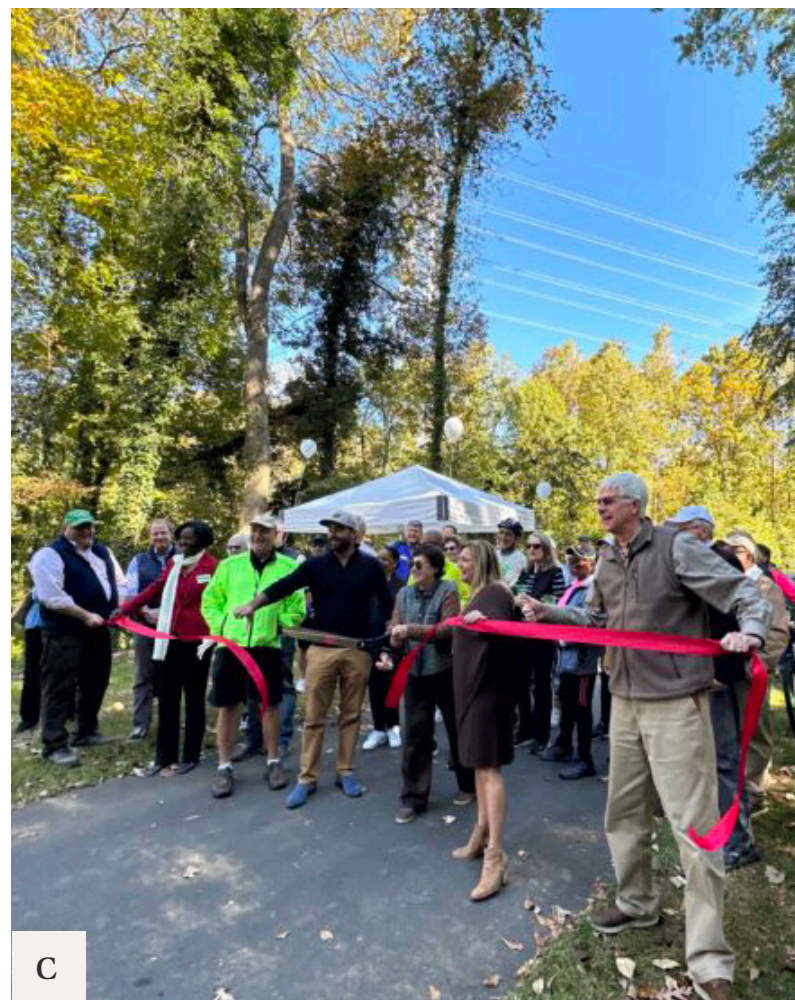
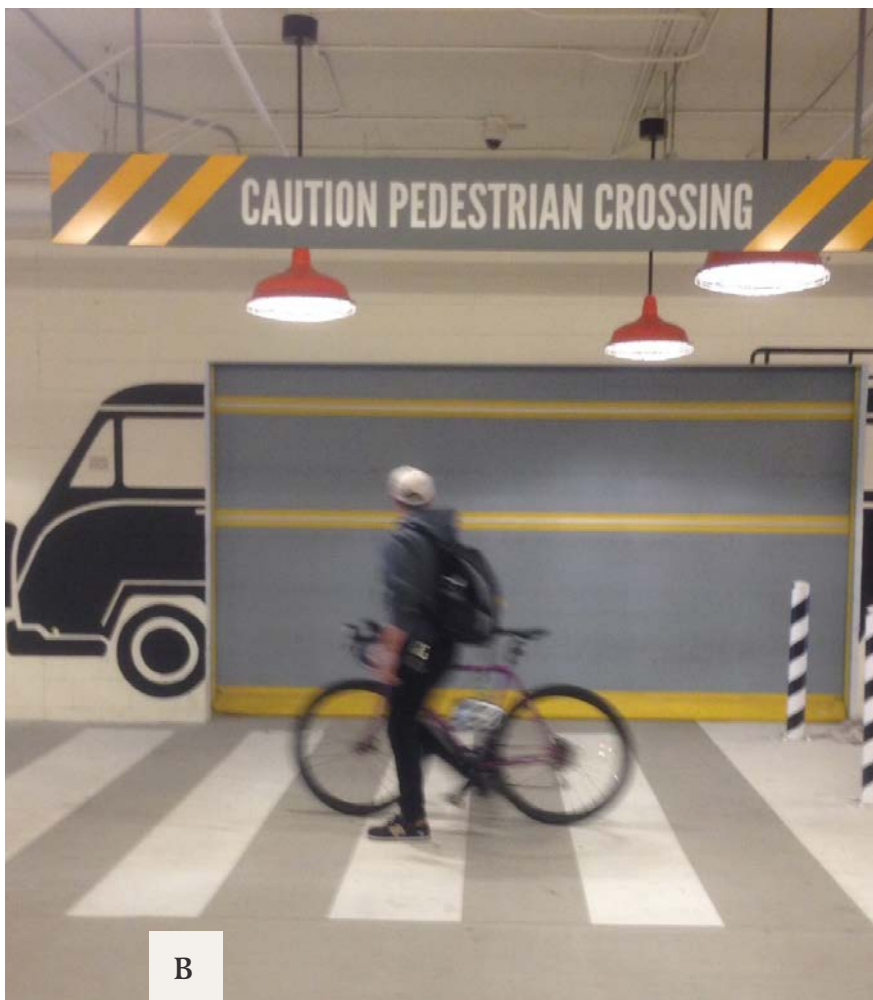
### LIVING ENDS

Open up dead ends between SouthPark's neighborhoods and mixed-use core.



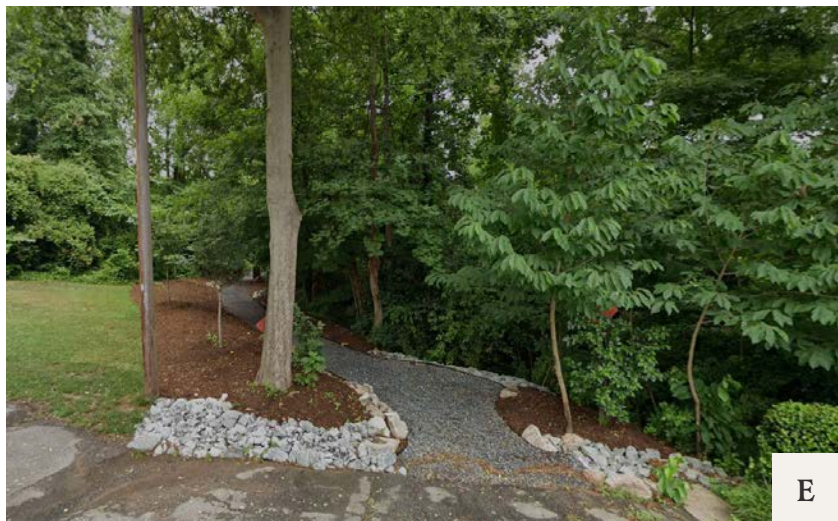
### CONNECTIONS IN + OUT

Welcome all modes through complete street retrofits.





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F

### A. The Loop

Complete construction of the SouthPark Loop, focusing first on one contiguous mile that stretches from Cameron Valley Parkway to Symphony Park. SouthPark Community Partners will drive progress through wayfinding, public art, furniture, and creative placemaking.

### B. Permeating SouthPark Mall

Create a multi-use trail through the mall's underground parking structure to facilitate easier connections between Carnegie Boulevard and Fairview Road.

### C. Greenway to Greenway

Complete the Backlot Trail, a priority for the SouthPark Association of Neighborhoods, to improve connectivity between the Cross Charlotte Trail and future McMullen Creek Greenway.

### D. X-CLT to SouthPark Circuit

Use wayfinding signage and public art to entice greenway users to make the 10-minute bicycle connection to SouthPark from the Cross Charlotte Trail.

### E. Living Ends

Connect adjacent neighborhoods to the commercial core through "living ends" via multi-use paths from dead end streets.

### F. Complete Streets

Transform key roadways in SouthPark to complete streets that accommodate cars, active mobility, and transit.



## Mobility OVERVIEW

### CREATE A MOBILITY INNOVATION DISTRICT

As SouthPark evolves into a walkable, denser, mixed-use, and compact place, it has the opportunity to empower new ways of moving around. This plan recommends establishing Charlotte's first-ever Mobility Innovation District in SouthPark to create new options for attractive, safe, comfortable, and easy transportation to and within the neighborhood. A Mobility Innovation District pairs physical changes, such as safer streets and mobility hubs, with programs and incentives that promote ways to get to and around SouthPark in addition to driving. Innovations tested in SouthPark can scale to the rest of Charlotte and beyond.

Becoming a Mobility Innovation District requires changes that will take time, although some can and should be initiated in the near term. Some changes are local, and largely in control of SouthPark stakeholders. Others extend beyond the district and require collaboration with external partners that implies a longer timeline.

**The necessary changes fall in two distinct phases: SouthPark will first become a park once place, and then will more gradually evolve into a regional multimodal destination.**



## PHASE 1

### **PARK ONCE PLACE**

SouthPark will provide easy and joyful ways for people to get around and within SouthPark without driving between destinations.

- Changes within the SouthPark MSD
- Shorter-term actions to create change
- Changes require less coordination with others
- First/last mile transit connections

## PHASE 2

### **REGIONAL MULTIMODAL DESTINATION**

People traveling to SouthPark choose to ride convenient transit, bike safely and confidently, and otherwise arrive without always driving themselves.

- Changes between SouthPark and surrounding area
- Longer-term or more complex actions
- Requires actions by others
- Regional transit connections

**The creation of a Mobility Innovation District should focus on three key elements of transformative change:**

### **Physical Improvements**

Transforming the district's mobility infrastructure from one that has emphasized ample free parking at each destination to one that favors multimodal access and circulation.

### **Programs + Policies**

Ensuring that these align with and help advance the physical transformation of the district's mobility infrastructure and amenities.

### **Management + Operations**

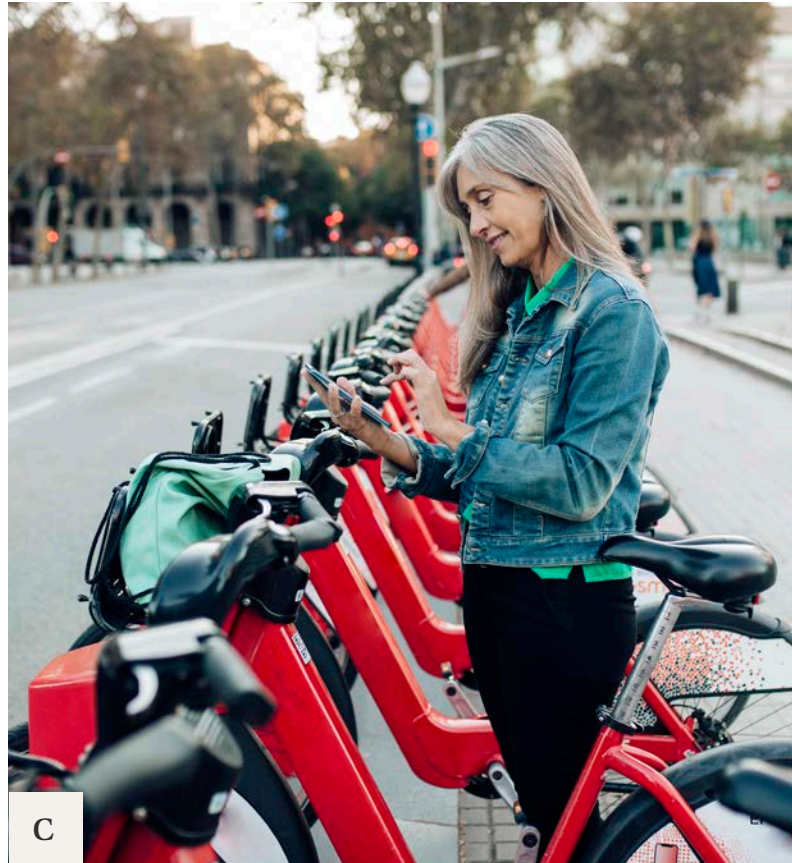
Supporting the above elements by leveraging, promoting, and maintaining through coordinated and strategic management and operations at the district level.



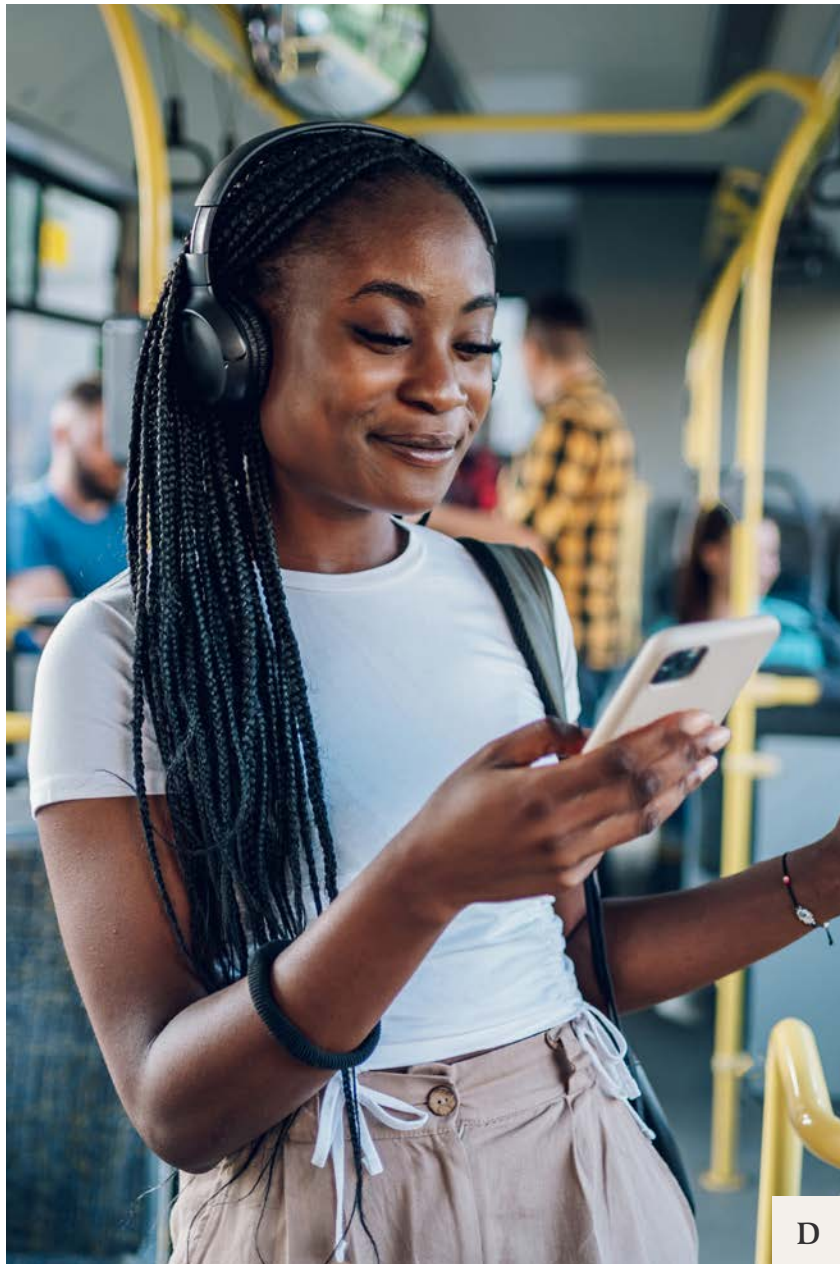
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### **A. Implement Mobility Hubs**

Combine points of access to the local transportation network to offer safe, comfortable, convenient, and accessible spaces to seamlessly transfer across different travel modes.

### **B. Launch a Neighborhood Shuttle**

A free, high-frequency circulator or on-demand microtransit service offers an additional option for connecting destinations and reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips.

### **C. Create a Neighborhood Bikeshare Program**

A traditional bikeshare program, in which riders check out a bike at one location and drop off at another, or an e-bike library offering daily, weekly, or monthly rentals, would add additional transportation options for SouthPark stakeholders.

### **D. Use Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies**

TDM provides a suite of tools—such as programs, infrastructure, and subsidies—to support and encourage multimodal transportation choices.

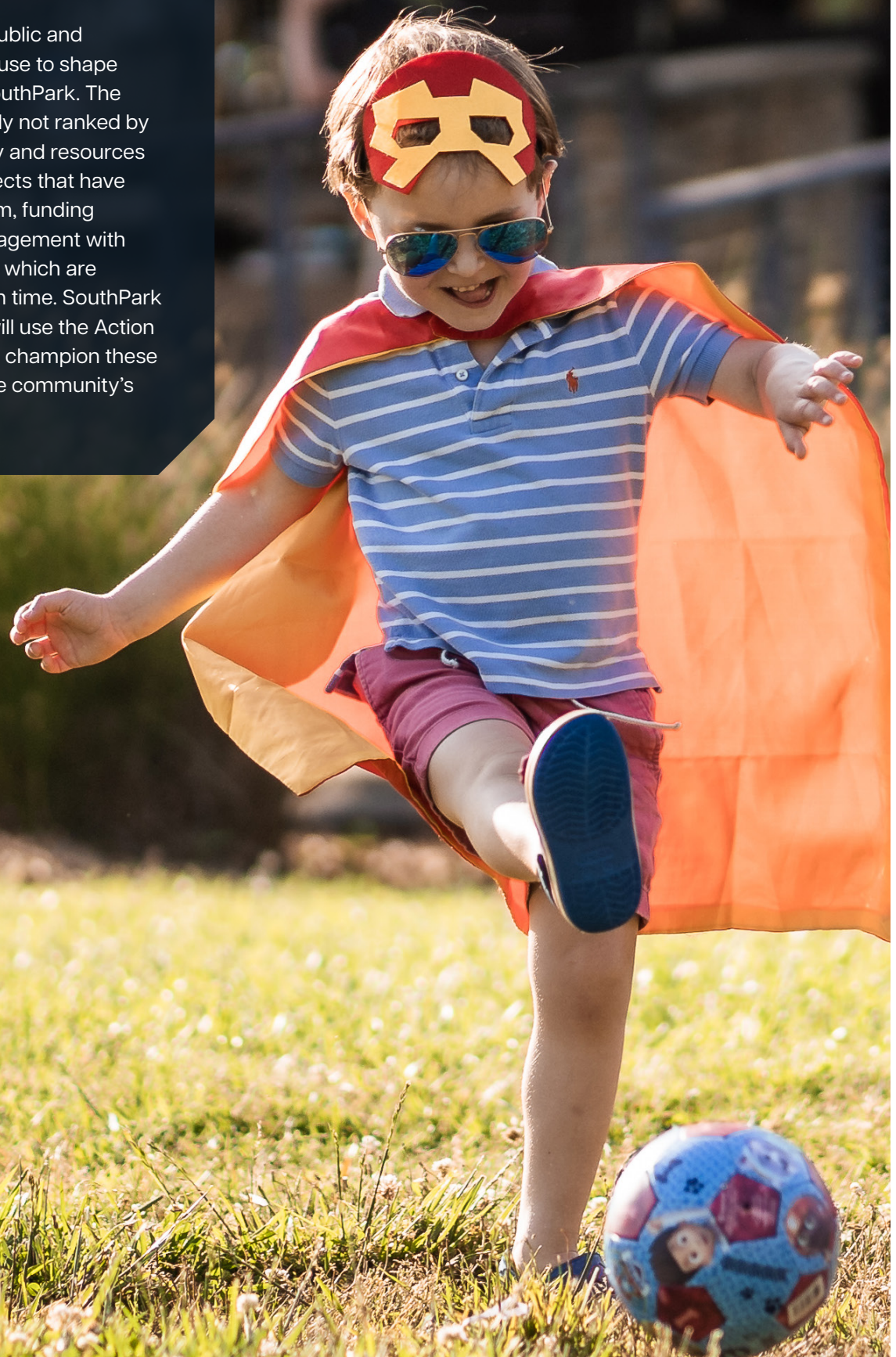
### **E. Establish Shared Parking Districts**

Leverage underutilized parking areas for multiple uses through agreements between property owners.



## SouthPark Forward ACTION PLAN

This plan is a tool the public and private sectors should use to shape future investment in SouthPark. The projects are intentionally not ranked by priority. Instead, energy and resources should flow to the projects that have the greatest momentum, funding opportunities, and engagement with key collaborators, all of which are expected to evolve with time. SouthPark Community Partners will use the Action Plan in the full report to champion these projects and ensure the community's vision is fulfilled.





# FULL PROJECT LIST

## PLACES

- 01 Upgrade Symphony Park
- 02 Complete Carnegie Boulevard Festival Street
- 03 Activate Rexford Road Streetscape (including the Loop)
- 04 Activate Rexford Road Tree Canopy and Pocket Park
- 05 Install Barclay Downs and Carnegie Blvd Gateway
- 06 Link Rexford Road to Carnegie Blvd via Specialty Shops
- 07 Build the Cameron Valley Pocket Park
- 08 Activate Colony Future Development Areas
- 09 Activate Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library Area
- 10 Launch Charlotte-Mecklenburg LibraryBook Walk
- 11 Install Colony Gateway
- 12 Improve St. Lloyd Cemetery Pocket Park
- 13 Activate Fairview Streetscape Zones
- 14 Develop Fairview Jewel Box
- 15 Install Fairview Gateway
- 16 Study SouthPark's Emergency Preparedness and Resource Needs
- 17 Create SouthPark Development Guidelines to Shape Future Redevelopment
- 18 Install Streetscape Beautification in Medians
- 19 Add Streetscape Beautification or Public Art to Enhance Major Intersections
- 20 Install District-wide WIFI Service
- 21 Install Emergency Callboxes along the SouthPark Loop
- 22 Utilize Congress Street for Temporary Festival/Event Closures
- 23 Develop a SouthPark Performing Arts Venue
- 24 Install High Quality Public Art throughout the SouthPark District
- 25 Realign CMPD Boundaries so SouthPark is in one Patrol Division
- 26 Identify New and Existing Spaces to Incubate Small Retail Businesses
- 27 Implement Temporary Placemaking and Programming to Activate Underutilized Spaces

## CONNECTIONS

- 28 Complete Construction of the SouthPark Loop
- 29 Construct the Backlot Trail
- 30 Build the SouthPark Mall Parking Deck Trail
- 31 Install Briar Creek Greenway to Symphony Park Wayfinding
- 32 Install X-CLT to SouthPark Gateways: North and South
- 33 Complete Barclay Downs Bikeway Improvements
- 34 Complete Colony Road Sidewalk Improvements
- 35 Complete Sharon Road Bikeway and Crossing Improvements
- 36 Complete Sharon Lane Bikeway Improvements
- 37 Complete Fairview Road Shared Use Paths
- 38 Complete Colony Road Bikeway Improvements
- 39 Complete Sharon Road Bikeway and Sidewalk Improvements
- 40 Complete Park South Drive Bikeway and Sidewalk Improvements
- 41 Build Living Ends (each)
- 42 Study Additional Infrastructure Improvements at Major SouthPark Intersections
- 43 Create New Streets through Redevelopment to Enhance Street Network (each)

## MOBILITY

- 44 Install Interim Multimodal Wayfinding
- 45 Install Mobility Hub Component: Transportation Information Kiosk (each)
- 46 Install Mobility Hub Component: EV Charging Stations (each)
- 47 Install Mobility Hub Component: Micromobility Charging Stations (each)
- 48 Install Mobility Hub Component: Short-term Bike and Micromobility Parking (Bike Racks) (each)
- 49 Install Mobility Hub Component: Bike Repair Station (each)
- 50 Study Feasibility of Neighborhood Bikeshare Program
- 51 Install Mobility Hub Component: Transit Stop Amenities (Shelter, Bench, Trash can, Public Art) (per hub)
- 52 Install Mobility Hub Component: Pick-up/Drop-off Zone + Amenities (Shelter, Bench, Trash can, Public Art) (per hub)
- 53 Implement Public Transportation Incentives
- 54 Study Feasibility of Shared Parking Districts
- 55 Study Feasibility of Neighborhood Shuttle
- 56 Implement Neighborhood Shuttle
- 57 Implement Neighborhood Bikeshare Program and Station Siting
- 58 Implement E-Bike Library
- 59 Install District-wide Digital Information and Wayfinding Kiosks
- 60 Implement Carshare Program and Dedicated Parking Spaces
- 61 Install Mobility Hub Component: Long-term Secure Bike Parking (Lockers)(each)
- 62 Install Mobility Hub Component: Package Pick-up Center
- 63 Install Mobility Hub Component: Transportation Information Kiosk (Enhanced)
- 64 Implement and Manage Shared Parking Districts

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The SouthPark Forward 2035 Vision Plan is the result of more than a year of work by SouthPark Community Partners, LandDesign, and Nelson\Nygaard. It stands on the foundation of years of planning, investment, and leadership by SouthPark stakeholders who are steadfast in their commitment to this thriving community.

The project team wishes to express its gratitude to the hundreds of people who participated in the planning process through interviews, focus groups, community meetings, and online surveys. We extend particular thanks to the SouthPark Community Partners Board of Directors, SouthPark Association of Neighborhoods, City of Charlotte, and Mecklenburg County for their partnership in the development of this plan.

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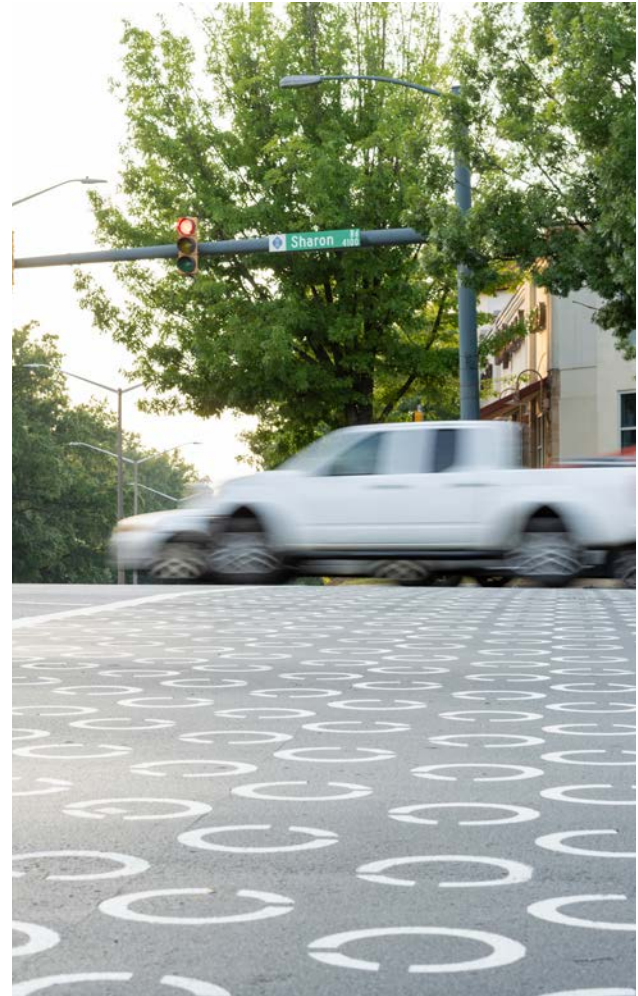
### NELSON\NYGAARD

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To read the full SouthPark Forward 2035 Vision Plan and learn how you can partner to bring it to life, visit [southparkforward.com](https://southparkforward.com)







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