VISION PLAN 2030

A grass-roots community initiative to envision the future.

January 1, 2010
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Figure 1. Working map of NoDa in 2010. This map is the template for the NoDa Vision Committee and its activities. The map is proportionate to scale and shows the relationship of building footprints to streets and other boundaries.
figure 2. Working map of NoDa in 2030. This map shows collaborative “vision” for the future of NoDa. Highlights show new streets, new parks, mass transit, and solutions for problems such as parking and traffic flow.
In order to build the NoDa Vision Plan 2030, the NoDa Vision Committee created a set of guiding principles to define what ideals are most important to the NoDa Neighborhood. The Guiding Principles are largely ideas established in the 1995 North Charlotte Vision Plan. Those ideas then evolved over the following fifteen years of precedents and policy the HNCNA reached while discussing and reacting to individual development projects in NoDa. Once agreed to, the Guiding Principles allowed Contributors to the vision plan to share a mindset and evenly discuss new ideas that arose.

**Guiding Principles:**

1. NoDa will continue to be a popular neighborhood for development
2. NoDa welcomes LYNX light rail development, and the associated trends in development that this requires.
3. NoDa wants more public plazas and community green-space
4. NoDa wants to maintain and build a pedestrian friendly neighborhood
5. NoDa wants to place a priority on eco-friendly design and development
6. NoDa wants smart parking solutions to support small businesses
7. NoDa wants to preserve and protect historically significant infrastructure, structures and existing single-family neighborhoods
8. NoDa wants to preserve and grow Charlotte’s “Arts District”
9. NoDa wants to promote and expand its stock of independent small businesses.
10. NoDa wants to maintain and build affordable housing options

**Principles in Action - Goals for the NoDa Vision Plan 2030:**

1. Build a “Vision” of better roads, transit, parks, sidewalks and infrastructure in 2030
2. Build a “Vision” of where & how neighbors will live in 2030
3. Build a “Vision” of a vibrant, comfortable and inviting NoDa in 2030
4. Build a “Vision” of how NoDa will fit into the future of Charlotte in 2030.

**QUALIFYING STATEMENT:** In all zones of the neighborhood, all new construction, infrastructure and renovations should consult and strive for the USGBC standards for sustainability.
NoDa Vision has prepared this report under direction from the Historic North Charlotte Neighborhood Association (HNCNA), otherwise known as The NoDa Neighborhood Association. NoDa Vision exists as one of many committees under the HNCNA umbrella. The NoDa Vision Committee is open to anyone who wishes to contribute, and is not limited to association members or residents of NoDa.

NoDa Vision met monthly at a fixed time and location. Community contributions were funneled through these fixed committee meetings. Community involvement was solicited through monthly HNCNA meetings, and through various forms of outreach, such as articles in the NoDa News and neighborhood websites. With a perpetual timeframe, neighbors had an entire year to ask questions, discuss ideas, propose solutions, and educate themselves and their friends on a range of issues within NoDa.

The ultimate goal of NoDa Vision, in regards to the “NoDa Vision Plan 2030,” was to launch a platform for residents, interested parties, and stakeholders (all of which are referred to as “neighbors”) to talk about their concerns and hopes for the future of NoDa. It was important that this process was directed and moderated only by neighbors (rather than outside consulting companies and city planners); for the following reasons:

· Neighbors are able to show a more candid and personal level of contribution, which may not be the case in a more political or academic environment.

· Pragmatism was limited to issues concerning neighborhood values. The beginning and the end of discussion always spanned what was best for the neighbor, rather than compromising goals for a bigger picture. The neighbors concede that not every aspect of this plan will work regionally, but the process of identifying and addressing needs and concerns should not be lost.

· NoDa Vision works on a volunteer basis. Without the concerns of contracts or cost, NoDa Vision was able to craft a grass-roots Vision Plan at no cost to the taxpayer, or the City of Charlotte. Consultants and professionals volunteered their time for guidance and clarification through the way.

· The yearlong process was guided by a committee chair with direction from a board liaison. The committee held open "charette" style meetings, and published meeting minutes to report progress back to the neighbors. The committee crafted all text, graphics and study tools used in the meetings and later in The NoDa Vision Plan 2030. The NoDa Vision Plan is an original document created by the NoDa Vision Committee.

A draft version of the NoDa Vision Plan was presented to the governing HNCNA Board, which was the brought before the voting association. The draft version of the NoDa Vision Plan was then allowed to be reviewed by noncontributing neighbors. A final charette was held to address concerns in the draft - and to publish the final draft of the NoDa Vision Plan. The final draft of the NoDa Vision Plan was brought before the voting association for approval - and finally adopted by the HNCNA Board. Upon adoption, NoDa (as an unified neighborhood) submitted to the NoDa Vision Plan 2030 to the greater governing Charlotte City Council and Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission, and filed the NoDa Vision Plan 2030 for reference with real estate developers, interested parties, stakeholders and neighbors.
One year of charettes, consensus building and community vision for:

- Prior Goals
- Historical Context
- Demographics
- Existing Zoning
- Community Aesthetics
The 1995 North Charlotte Vision Plan was a two year project initiated by the Charlotte City Planning Department. Together with neighborhood stakeholders, the Vision Plan was crafted to address a declining quality of life in North Charlotte.

This Neighborhood Status Report looks back over the specific recommendations and “assignments” set forth in the 1995 North Charlotte Vision Plan, and rates the progress and continuation going forward into the 2030 Vision Plan. Neighborhood consensus was built to rate the status of these recommendations and “assignments.” Many of the same topics and issues will carry over into the 2030 NoDa Vision Plan.

1995: Housing

“A stable neighborhood with a high percentage of home ownership is one of the greatest deterrents to crime in any neighborhood. The focus of the action in the plan will be to increase the amount of home ownership using both public and private resources, as well as providing assistance to current homeowners to help maintain and improve their homes. The provision of sound, well maintained rental units will be emphasized as well to provide housing opportunities in North Charlotte for a diverse population.”

☑️ Form a strong relationship with CMPD
☑️ Provide incentives for homeowners to renovate
☐️ Maintain housing affordability
☐️ Maintain diversity
☐️ Increase homeownership
☐️ Improve quality of housing
☐️ Establish a neighborhood housing resources co-op
☐️ Establish a neighborhood development corporation
☐️ Acquire rental housing for sale
☐️ Assist with homeownership counseling
☐️ Develop a reuse program for Highland Mill #3
☐️ Link the Mills with their villages
☐️ Develop a strategy for marketing the neighborhood
☐️ Build Habitat for Humanity on vacant lots
☐️ Update the neighborhood parks’ amenities
☐️ Design a homebuyers program for police officers
☐️ Offer membership to the Johnston YMCA as incentives for homeownership

☑️ Shows marked improvement or completion of assignment.
☑️ Shows incomplete assignment which is reassigned as part of NoDa Vision 2030 Plan.
☐️ Shows incomplete assignment which is not reassigned as part of NoDa Vision 2030 Plan.

NoDa has recorded the third highest house value appreciation in the City of Charlotte since the 2002 census. Homeownership numbers have remained comparable to 1995 numbers, but the condition of the housing in the neighborhood has taken a huge jump as a result of the home equity. Several newly built apartment and condominiums have provided sound and well-maintained rental units.
1995: Community Appearance

“These actions will focus on the visual quality of the neighborhood as it relates to the condition of individual homes and businesses, as well as publicly maintained parks and streets. The emphasis will be on eliminating unsightly elements such as accumulated trash and junk, and the improvement of poorly maintained homes and businesses. The development of a signage program and landscaped neighborhood entry point is also recommended.”

- Preserve the Historic Mill Villages
- Use the old water tower on 37th Street as a neighborhood marker
- Emphasize North Davidson Central Business District between 34th & 37th Streets as “Main Street”
- Provide Architectural assistance for facade improvements
- Develop a public parking plan along 36th Street
- Rebuild existing sidewalks, curbs and gutters
- Implement a Neighborhood Service zoning district
- Apply the Urban Corridor Overlay District along The Plaza
- Apply an intimate courtyard on the Fat City property
- Install garbage cans at all bus stops
- Develop a network to report litter
- Have community cleanups every six months
- Develop a signage program for the neighborhood
- Emphasize neighborhood entry points

It’s safe to say that the climate of NoDa has changed dramatically since 1995. Whereas the 1995 plan emphasized restoring basic safety and living standards, the 2030 Plan will take the entry much further. NoDa now enjoys a much cleaner, safer and more aesthetically pleasing neighborhood, thanks in part to HNCNA subcommittees such as Greenification and Crime and Safety. Also, due to the shift in desirability and marketability of NoDa, we can concentrate more on beautification, and smarter development, rather than safety and basic aesthetics. This section has received much attention and makes up the bulk of the Vision Plan.
1995: Traffic & Circulation

“Discussions are underway with the Department of Transportation to focus on the following: reduction of truck traffic on North Davidson Street; minimizing the impact of Matheson Avenue and its traffic with the provision of safe pedestrian crossings; reducing the cut through traffic on East 35th Street, and as overall emphasis on making the neighborhood a safer place to walk.”

- Check: Allow on-street parking along N. Davidson St. corridor
- Check: Improve major intersections of 36th St.
- Check: Eliminate cut-through traffic along 35th St.
- Check: Reduce truck traffic on N. Davidson St.
- Check: Install traffic signals at Matheson/Clemson
- Check: Restripe bike lanes on Matheson Ave.
- Check: Install 2 way stops at alternating intersections on 35th St.
- Check: Provide signage for trucks to follow alternate routes

This entry may show the greatest accomplishment. Truck traffic has been completely removed from the interior of NoDa thanks in part to the Matheson Avenue connector. The negative impact of the Matheson Avenue connector is still great in relation to the pedestrian, however. Connectivity to Villa Heights is lacking and speed limits on Charles Avenue have become a problem. 35th Street treatments have curtailed cut-through traffic, making the interior of the neighborhood a safer and more welcoming place for pedestrians. Another treatment for 36th Street reduced it from 4 lanes to 2 lanes with on-street parking and bike lanes. This has proved to be a great development for the pedestrian around the CBD. There is still work to be identified, however.

1995: Community Relations

“Establish better relationships and a better understanding of the diverse cultures in North Charlotte through a diversified, involved Neighborhood Association is a principal recommendation of the plan.”

- Check: Encourage multi-cultural racial growth
- Check: Define North Charlotte as a separate unique area
- Check: Restrict nuisance businesses
- Check: Have an ethnically inclusive neighborhood festival
- Check: Encourage children to participate in decision making processes
- Check: Encourage cooperation between neighborhood schools
- Check: Encourage cooperation between neighbors and Johnston YMCA

It is unclear whether this recommendation has either been achieved, or if the demographic has changed quietly. The HNCNA has worked to be inclusive to all neighbors, and relations within the neighborhood seem to be at a high. Building on this concept, it is now a priority to extend relations beyond NoDa into surrounding parts of the city. This will happen by successfully branding NoDa as a friendly and inclusive neighborhood with a high quality of life.
1995: Commercial Revitalization

“These actions are geared toward improving the economic viability and the physical condition of the North Davidson Street and The Plaza business districts. Renovation and reuse of existing buildings, strengthening efforts already underway along North Davidson/36th Street, and the development of new, neighborhood oriented retail uses along The Plaza, will be the focus. Physical improvements are targeted toward improving the visual quality and increasing the comfort level for the pedestrian.”

- Provide incentives for business to locate here
- Develop a community labor pool
- Enforce building codes
- Renovate or demolish dilapidated buildings
- Promote neighborhood oriented businesses along The Plaza, Matheson and Herrin Ave.
- Develop a “matching grants” program to improve building facades
- Target specific businesses to locate in the neighborhood and assist the process
- Assist businesses in finding low-interest loans
- Market the neighborhood to local banks and investors
- Involve the neighborhood to make the gallery crawls more successful

1995: Neighborhood Safety

“The principal action for the prevention of criminal activities in the neighborhood will be a well organized neighborhood association that works closely with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department to report crimes and continue to apply pressure to criminal elements in the neighborhood.”

- Begin community policing on bicycles
- Develop neighborhood watch programs
- Enhance street lighting
- Focus attention on drug dealers

NoDa has grown into a destination for many of the residents of the City of Charlotte. Friday night gallery crawls are a well known and loved event, and often carry over into Saturday and Sunday nights. Catalysts have come and gone; live music at Fat City has been replaced by music at The Evening Muse and The Neighborhood Theatre. The Mellow Mushroom brought neighbors into NoDa for dinner, in the same way that Cabo Fish Taco and Boudreaux’s does today. Art, nightlife and dining still dominate the intersection at Davidson and 36th street. The Economic Development Committee (part of the HNCNA) meets once a month to spearhead retail needs, and generate interest in the local business. The concerns in this entry have not changed much since 1995, although the players have.

In 2010, the HNCNA has 81 dues paying members and 13 subcommittees; most notably the Crime and Safety Committee meets monthly to organize crime prevention and coordinate with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department.
The North Charlotte neighborhood began development in 1903 on rolling farmland about two miles north of the Charlotte city limits. It was conceived by a group of wealthy textile leaders who envisioned a self-contained industrial district. Highland Park Mill No. 3 was the first mill to be constructed. A housing village for mill workers and their families was built across North Davidson Street from the mill, occupying the area between North Davidson and North McDowell Streets. Designed by noted mill architect Stuart Cramer, the mill housing was of a simple, yet functional design. The typical house consisted of five rooms which included two bedrooms.

Soon after Highland Park No. 3 began construction, the Mecklenburg Mill, north of 36th Street, began construction. The associated mill housing was constructed immediately across North Davidson Street on Mercury Street, 37th Street and Herrin Avenue. These houses were of the D. A. Tompkins design which were originally designed for the Atherton Mill Village in Dilworth.

In 1906 the North Charlotte Realty Company started developing the remaining large tract of land in North Charlotte, east of the Highland Park and Mecklenburg Mill villages, towards The Plaza. This was laid out for suburban house lots and provided larger houses for middle income families. Also planned was a central square between present-day Alexander and Yadkin streets. Two stores, a pair of churches, a hotel and a school were to face onto the square. As built, most of the east-west streets in the grid were omitted, as was the square. The hotel was apparently the only one of the proposed public buildings to be erected, and it stands today at 3020 North Alexander Street.

The business district was located on North Davidson Street linking the two mill villages and becoming the “main street” of North Charlotte. This district provided the basic necessities for the mill workers and their families: a drug store, several grocery stores, a dry goods store, a doctor’s office and The Bank of North Charlotte. The Hand Pharmacy was a popular gathering spot for residents, the ice cream and soda fountain being a particular favorite. The business district of North Charlotte was connected to uptown Charlotte by a trolley line down North Davidson Street. This was for residents who wanted to do business uptown, for few residents owned an automobile. The development of Johnston Mill in 1913 expanded the neighborhood and businesses.

North Charlotte has a rich and diverse housing typology. The types range from the simple mill cottage to big 2-story houses. It was this diversity that would continue to characterize North Charlotte as a potentially exciting neighborhood. There were always the poor and the wealthy and those in the middle, but the most important aspect of North Charlotte was its sense of community. It was a good neighborhood, a good environment to raise a family and do business, and there was an overall feeling of safety. Things weren’t perfect by any means. The neighborhood consisted primarily of mill workers, whose day-to-day existence was a struggle and was tied directly to the prosperity of the mills. From time to time people were out of work and they depended on their extended family and neighbors to help them out. The community spirit made this possible. It was in this fashion that the neighborhood functioned for most of the first half of this century.
The decline of the neighborhood started before the closing of the mills in the sixties and seventies. After the depression, the mills were never quite as strong, and in 1953, when the mills were sold, the relationship between the ownership of the mill and the mill worker housing was severed. The concept of a mill village was gone and the houses were being sold on the open market. The neighborhood became more transient and the sense of community that had held North Charlotte together for the first half of the century was replaced by apathy toward the community among newer residents, and fear and distrust among existing residents.

The construction of the four lane freeway-type facility, Matheson Avenue, in 1969, did irreparable damage to the southern edge of the neighborhood. It demolished homes, disconnected neighborhood streets, and created a physical divider in the neighborhood. The once quiet neighborhood street, formerly known as Wesley Avenue, now carried high volumes of traffic. The beginning of the 1970s found a neighborhood characterized by deteriorating houses and vacant storefronts. The Housing and Community Development Act (HCDA) of 1974 was the first positive step in the revitalization of North Charlotte. The HCDA made available low interest loans and grants for the rehabilitation of deteriorating houses. The small parks that were built in North Charlotte were funded by the HCDA, as were other public improvements.

However, there was still a predominance of low-income residents, and a large number of houses that needed improvement. The business districts on North Davidson and The Plaza had declined until only a few viable businesses remained, and they were struggling. The overall appearance of these commercial areas was one of negligence and disrepair, which added to the negative impression of the neighborhood.

The decade of the 1980s found North Charlotte in an overall condition of deterioration, although there were a number of long term homeowners who still took pride in their neighborhood and hoped for the day it would be revived. The 1980 Census confirmed the fact that this was a neighborhood in need of help, and was in danger of declining even further.

The decade of the 90’s saw some promising signs of rebirth. The North Davidson Street business district took on a new life as many of the buildings were renovated for artists’ studios and galleries. The uniqueness of this emerging artists’ district in a former mill village business district began to attract citywide attention. Friday night gallery crawls offered an alternative to the more upscale galleries of Uptown Charlotte. This became a district unlike any other in Charlotte. A row of galleries and shops that opened directly onto the street gave pedestrians a different kind of experience from the parking lot/interior gallery scene of Uptown.

This was a real place, unaffected by the wrecking balls that had demolished many of Charlotte’s older neighborhoods. Along with the revitalization of this artists’ district, many new families and individuals started moving into the neighborhood and fixing up the old houses. Since its construction in 1950, the Johnston YMCA has been a positive factor in North Charlotte, and continues to provide a wide variety of programs for all ages of the population.

In the early 90’s a proposal was made to renovate the old Johnston Mill to provide low-income housing. The participation of the City and local banks to make available a low-interest loan enabled the developer to implement the proposal and build 100 units for rent. While these apartments have since been evacuated and the fate of this vacant historic property is unknown, it was clear that some positive things were happening in the Historic North Charlotte neighborhood largely because of several private initiatives. The positive steps taken by the private sector, as well as the excitement and interest generated by the Gallery Crawl, gave the North Charlotte Neighborhood Association the impetus to continue to improve at the turn of the century.
Rebirth as NoDa

The first decade of the 21st Century ushered in a wave of real estate speculation and development, not only in Charlotte, but nationwide. The City of Charlotte, and its character neighborhoods such as the one now dubbed “NoDa” (for North Davidson), was head-and-shoulders above the national trends in terms of value appreciation and growth. Indeed, NoDa had ushered in the much-awaited rebirth of North Charlotte.

As NoDa gained reputation as a desirable neighborhood on the real estate maps, home ownership soared and new residents flocked to the historic neighborhood. As was the national trend, home prices inflated to double and triple the appreciated values set by the last census. Home equity had very rarely affected the aesthetic of North Charlotte, but now, new and old homeowners alike were spending money to improve, expand, and often demolish and rebuild the structures of NoDa.

Many unresolved issues still exist within NoDa; some trace back to their development at the beginning of the last century. Many more supplemental and infrastructure mistakes were made in the last 25 years. The reuse of the Historic Highland Mill for residential use by a private developer has proven a model for the future. The reuse of the Johnston and Mecklenburg Mills under ownership of the City of Charlotte has failed and now the Mills await a second rebirth in the private sector. The historic Hand Pharmacy building was preserved and turned into the successful Cabo Fish Taco restaurant that lines up diners into the neighborhood streets daily. Many catalyst endeavors, such as Fat City Deli, which helped to introduce live music back to North Charlotte, have been lost to progress - but not without concession to the fabric which it helped to weave: The HNCNA worked very closely with the developer of Fat City Lofts to protect the integrity and function of the original Fat City. The same can be said for the integrity of the Neighborhood Theatre, which is now a premiere music venue.

The resilience of the neighborhood is stronger than ever, with well-connected and proud homeowners, and community involvement at an all time high. As growth and change continues here, neighbors are committed to remaining linked to the past. The active “Back in the Day” history committee researches and records the unique stories of this neighborhood and its people.

The rebirth of North Charlotte into the tightknit-arts-community of NoDa fills the streets, businesses, and houses with neighbors and patrons. But it is a fragile rebirth, one which is unlike the rebirth of many other neighborhoods across the country.

Now, more than ever, a coherent Vision Plan is needed to weigh in on the historic relevance, aesthetic importance, and overall community need of NoDa.
Area 44: North Charlotte  
Trend 2002-2008  

Quality of Life Index: **Stable**  

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<tr>
<th>Statistic Profile</th>
<th>NSA*</th>
<th>Charlotte</th>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>3,443</td>
<td>686,291</td>
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<td>Youth Population</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>174,650</td>
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<td>Number of Housing Units</td>
<td><strong>1,579</strong></td>
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<td>Area (Acres)</td>
<td>576</td>
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<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$29,231</td>
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<td>Average House Value</td>
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<td>Number of Organizations</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Unemployment Index</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>NSA</th>
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<tr>
<td>% of Persons over Age 64</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
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<td>Average Kindergarten Score</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<td>Dropout Rate</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
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<td>Percent of Children Scoring at or above Grade Level</td>
<td><strong>41.4%</strong></td>
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<td>Percent of Births to Adolescents</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
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<td>Youth Opportunity Index</td>
<td>High</td>
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<td>Violent Crime Rate</td>
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<td>Juvenile Arrest Rate</td>
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<td>Crime Hot Spots</td>
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<td>Aesthetic Appearance Index</td>
<td>0.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent Substandard Housing</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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<td>Percent Homeowners</td>
<td><strong>48.3%</strong></td>
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<td>Projected Infrastructure Improvement Costs</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Persons with Access to Public Transportation</td>
<td><strong>84.5%</strong></td>
<td>55.6%</td>
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<td>Percent of Persons with Access to Basic Retail</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
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<td>Pedestrian Friendliness Index</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>Percent of Persons Receiving Food Stamps</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
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<td>Income Growth</td>
<td><strong>1.1%</strong></td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent Change in House Value</td>
<td><strong>27.8%</strong></td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Neighborhood Statistical Area

The statistics to the left reflect the City of Charlotte’s 2008 Quality of Life Study. It is important to note that the census was of the North Charlotte neighborhood, which includes a larger area than recognized Historic North Charlotte, or the recognized boundaries of NoDa. That being said, these numbers may be misleading, but represent the median statistics to include all area within this Vision Plan.

Relevant statistics within this census: North Charlotte is now classified as a “stable” neighborhood for the first time. The previous census listed the neighborhood as “transitioning,” and before that “threatened.”

The population has increased from 2,456 according to the 2002 census numbers to 3,443 - an increase of +/- 40%.

Income has remained lower than average for the city, despite a spike as high as $34,329 in 2002. Concerns of gentrification are valid in this case, but the nature of the neighborhood may have worked to abate those concerns temporarily. It should remain a top priority for the HNCNA to be mindful of the trends leading toward gentrification.

Another striking statistic in comparison is the number of housing units. Statistics from the previous Vision Plan report under 1,000 units but the 2008 census reports 1,579. It is safe to assume that there has been little change in total numbers within in the Historic Mill Villages and single family lots. Much of this increase has come in the form of condominium developments and repurposing of the historic mills. An increase of population of nearly 58% is still making due with much of the same infrastructure and amenities as before the spike.

In part from the national housing trend of the mid 2000’s, the home prices in North Charlotte have shown robust growth. The 2002 census showed an increased house value from 1995 of 80% to $89,000. The most recent census increases that number by 226% to $201,820. NoDa house prices increase six times the average of all other neighborhoods in Charlotte and is the third most appreciating neighborhood in the city (behind Wilmore and Wesley Heights).

The percent of homeowners is up 5 percentage points from the 2002 census but has remained stable in relation to the 1995 numbers. This suggests that the neighborhood still draws renters as valuable neighbors.

The crime numbers, schooling statistics and other social statistics are higher than average - due in part to this census including challenged neighbors outside the boundaries of recognized NoDa. The youth opportunity index reflects the notion that NoDa caters mostly to young couples and singles, but with thanks to the Johnston YMCA, offers activities for the youth. Land area comparison, however, will reveal an urban neighborhood of 576 acres, of which only 5 acres are dedicated as parks. As the population grows with the neighborhood, so too will the need for a closer look at the youth indexes and school statistics.

NoDa is much better served than average by public transit, and the proposed LYNX light rail will increase that percentage even further. Currently, two full service bus routes service the several stops within the neighborhood.
NoDa is an artistic neighborhood enclave in a sea of outdated and underused industrial land. The historic Central Business District (CBD) remains vibrant with three protected textile mills, and three historic mill villages adjoining. Several other small pockets of single family houses have come to complement the historic mill villages, and are now part of the Distinct Character that defines NoDa. To the east, the transformation of former industrial brownfields into modern, urban, dense condominiums has started the next chapter in the growth of the neighborhood. Strip commercial shopping has buffered the southern edge of the neighborhood on The Plaza, functionally barricading NoDa from its sister neighborhoods. Likewise, the construction of Matheson Ave. into a high speed, heavy industrial thoroughfare has added boundaries to the south - although the neighborhood of Villa Heights just beyond Matheson Ave. has begun to follow the growth patterns of NoDa.
The 1995 North Charlotte Vision Plan addressed many issues that plagued the neighborhood. Most of the vision for North Charlotte of 1995 was to address crime, safety, housing stock, and public infrastructure concerns. Through the work of the 1995 North Charlotte Vision Plan, NoDa’s standard for crime and safety has been dramatically improved. However, without vigilance going forward, the neighborhood could fall into an unsafe state yet again.

Issues such as public infrastructure, safety on public property, and overall upkeep of private neighborhood assets are discussed extensively within the 2030 NoDa Vision Plan. Outside of the built environment, needs for personal crime and safety should be addressed. A beautiful neighborhood cannot be enjoyed unless the neighbors feel safe and comfortable in their environment.

Some of the steps and programs that have been put into place since the 1995 North Charlotte Vision Plan should be carried forward as part of this plan: Promote a pedestrian neighborhood to increase eyes on the street for community policing, Develop “Block Captains” and “Neighborhood Watch” program; enhance street lighting; focus attention on lawbreakers; and form a relationship with the neighborhood police officers.

The zone around The Plaza should be addressed as a public safety concern. Crime statistics reflect the need for vigilance in the blocks surrounding the Food Lion grocery store and nearby businesses. It is important to offer amenities such as auto repair shops and takeout or fast food, but these businesses must address their overflow into the residential neighborhood. The HNCNA must continue to have a relationship with the management and owners of these businesses. A general overhaul of the conditions on The Plaza may also work to spark new pride (see Commercial Revitalization p.65).

The neighborhood may also choose to get involved with neglected or unsafe private lots. Personal property rights certainly prevail, but a vigilant community will need to take an active interest in their neighbors well-being. The City of Charlotte imposes an abandoned building policy when dealing with public safety, and it may be the HNCNA’s policy to uphold the City of Charlotte’s mandate and encourage NoDa’s neighbors to spark dialogue over concern about declining personal property. The HNCNA should act to guide concerned neighbors to the correct government entities.

The HNCNA could make available a list of contractors, architects, or skilled workers that could be used to better declining private property at the wish of the owners or neighbors.

(figure 1) CMPD generates a map of “hot spots” and catalogues reported incidents. This map shows reported incidents over a 6 month period in 2010.
NoDa is a neighborhood that should be as architecturally diverse as its population. The HNCNA should always encourage architectural creativity. With that being said, it is important to understand that architecture and aesthetics have the potential to change the feeling of any neighborhood.

In order to guide development and to make smart decisions for the good of the neighborhood, NoDa Vision will characterize certain zones of the neighborhood according to how they are currently built out. NoDa Vision will then make suggestions in how to maintain, change or expand these zones aesthetically speaking:

1. Historic Highland Mill Building(s)
2. Historic Highland Mill Village and Houses
3. Historic Meck/Johnston Mill Building(s)
4. Historic Meck/Johnston Mill Village and Houses
5. Distinct Character Houses Anexation 1
6. Distinct Character Houses Anexation 2
7. Southeast Area
7a. Southeast Area (redeveloped)
8. 36th Street Corridor & Electric Park Area
9. Ritch Avenue & 36th Street Area
10. The Plaza Business Corridor
11. Abernethy Mill Area
12. NoDa Train Yards Area
13. Matheson and Tryon Pocket
14. Cullman Avenue Area
15. Beyond Craighead Area
16. Sugar Creek Road Area
17. North Tryon Gateway Area
18. Matheson Boundary Area
19. Jordan Place Area
20. NoDa Central Business District
(1) **Historic Highland Mill #3 Building(s)**

**Currently**: Historic (1900’s) brick construction with tall and wide windows and doors (figure 1). The Mill has a dominant focal feature in the tower. Sidewalks are accessible both on the property and on the street; however, a metal fence, and automobile gates act as boundaries, thereby separating public areas.

**Future**: Recommendations: Preserve the Historic Mill Building at all costs. The current repurposing of the building(s) is ideal and should be maintained. Auxiliary properties are already zoned for future development. There are no recommendations for footprint size on these auxiliary properties, but recommendation for walk-out front door access to street/street facing development. Although this property may be within the Historic Highland Mill property, we recommend development on the auxiliary properties to face the street and not the mill. The committee also recommends a new construction height limit below the Mill Tower. Clarified: The Historic Mill Tower should remain the dominant focal point of the property.

(2) **Historic Highland Mill Village and Houses**

**Currently**: Historic houses of the Stuart Cramer design located on small lots (figure 2). Houses are built at a consistent setback from the street, and feature front porches and small back yards. Most original houses are modest in size.

**Future**: Recommendations: Goal is to protect the current scale and massing of this village; this would mean a recommendation against any consolidation of single lots into double lot for development purposes. Recommendation would be for additions to single family homes to leave the original façade mostly undisturbed, and additions be put in the back of the house only. Streets remain pedestrian-oriented, narrow and unfriendly to vehicular passage. It would be prudent to place a historical marker at one more more intersections of N. Davidson St. and the village to denote a historical entrance.
Historic Mecklenburg Mill Village and Houses

Currently: Historic houses of the D. A. Thompkins design located on very small lots (figure 4). Houses are built at a consistent setback from the street, feature front porches and small back yards. Most original houses are no more than four rooms.

Future: Recommendations: Goal is to protect the current scale and massing of this village; this would mean a recommendation against any consolidation of single lots into double lots for development purposes. Recommendation would be for additions to single family homes to leave the original façade mostly undisturbed, and additions be put in the back of the house only. Streets should remain pedestrian oriented, narrow and unfriendly to vehicular passage. It would be prudent to place a historical marker on 37th Street and N. Davidson St. denoting the historical entrance to the village. It is also recommended that the HNCNA take further steps to acquire the water tower at this corner and feature it as a landmark.

Historic Meck/Johnston Mill Building(s)

Currently: Historic (1900's) brick construction with tall and wide windows and doors (figure 1, p. 20). The property is currently closed to the public (pending a redevelopment), and the complex features an interior parking courtyard that limits pedestrian connectivity.

Future: Recommendations: Preserve the Historic Mill Building at all costs. The proposed repurposing of the building(s) is ideal and should be upheld. Auxiliary properties approved rezoning and site plans are ideal and should be upheld. Architectural and aesthetic integrity of the original buildings should continue to guide auxiliary development within this zone. Auxiliary buildings on 36th Street need to address the pedestrian with minimum setbacks, pedestrian scale and massing. Aesthetically, the historical context of this property should dictate architectural design for the auxiliary properties; however, the 36th Street side may choose to address the context of the existing CBD.
(5,6)
Distinct Character Houses (Neighborhood Streets)
Currently: Rehabed and updated single family houses laid out on a tree lined grid system. E. 35th and E. 34th streets have traffic calming features. Styles range from bungalow to updated mill style houses and have come to define the adventurous, creative and family oriented nature of NoDa.
Future: The goal is to maintain a pedestrian scaled, pedestrian friendly zone. There are no recommendations about specific aesthetics, other than the qualifying statement covering the whole of the neighborhood. There are no restrictions about consolidation of lots, nor specific restrictions about building footprint. There is a recommend height limit of <30’ with an emphasis on infill projects to integrate single family attached dwellings such as duplexes (figure 5).

(7)
Southeast Area (East of Herrin to Sugar Creek, and south of Aberdeen & Western Carolina Railroad to The Plaza)
Currently: A mix of small mid-century brick houses and renovated/new construction bungalows. Also interspersed are examples of low income apartments (on Anderson St.). These streets show the extremes of residential housing in NoDa. The modest mid-century brick houses have very small footprints, but very large yards. Bungalows on Oakwood are mostly modest, but some have been overbuilt. Anderson and Spencer Streets have industrial lots and rundown low income apartment courts.
Future: Maintain the aesthetics of these single family houses with no specific recommendations or restrictions. Highly recommend strategic single family attached infill projects to transition between zones 7 and 7a (high density), 10 (commercial), 15 (high density). Action item identified to redevelop the apartment “courts” on Anderson St. into a safer, more friendly complex. Acknowledge the opinion that zone 7 feels somewhat isolated from the neighborhood because of these courts, the industrial parcels, and the lack of thru-street connectivity. A successful vision for zone 7 hinges on aesthetics, beautification and street connectivity (see “Traffic” p. 51).

figure 5. Examples of duplex/single family multi-unit
(7a)

Steel Gardens, Royal Truss & adjoining industrial land
Currently: A newly repurposed/new construction condominium development on a former Brownfield site. An auxiliary industrial lot on Spencer still exists adjoining.
Future: Recommendations: Unanimous support for the Steel Gardens (figure 6) and Royal Truss Development. Recommendation for the adjoining industrial land to be developed in a similarly aesthetic way - high density, multifamily, building heights of <40’. A connection should be made between the proposed density in Zone 15 and another connection should be made with the proposed Rails to Trails Action item (NoDa Greenway) at the A&WC RR tracks running parallel. Per USGBC standards, building footprints should not exceed ½ acreage of site to allow permeable surfaces. Setbacks, sidewalks and pedestrian scale should be in line with Steel Gardens.

(8)

36th Street Corridor & Electric Park Area
Currently: 36th Street is currently a hodgepodge of residential, civic and business uses. The back side of these lots are separated from the back side of the Herrin Ave single family lots by a heavily vegetated dry reservoir (formerly called Electric Park).
Future: NoDa Vision recommends increased mixed-use density (including heights of >40’) should occur at the intersection of N. Davidson St., and also at the intersection of The Plaza. Between these intersections, however, an organic repurposing of unmatched architectural styles is preferred. Committee members likened the feeling to East Boulevard in Dilworth: Repurposed houses and infrastructure for business use, commercial use, medical use, etc. (figure 8). Recommendation for small footprint (to span no more than ½ of the block without a break in the façade) multi-family not to exceed 30’, with an emphasis on single family attached (quads, etc.) as infill. The larger single family houses along 36th Street should find new uses as restaurants, bed and breakfasts and studio spaces. Action item to redevelop the existing strip commercial on 36th near The Plaza to better serve pedestrians (figure 7).
Ritch Avenue & 36th Street Area (north of NCRR)

Currently: Ritch Ave is a maturing neighborhood of single family houses. There are currently two points of ingress/egress as the neighborhood makes a horseshoe shape. 36th Street from NCRR to N. Tryon St. is mostly in the FEMA floodplain. Herrin Brothers Coal and Ice occupies the East side of 36th St. up to Ritch Ave. The West side of 36th St. is home to several single story brick industrial buildings, all of which are located in the floodplain.

Future: NoDa Vision has presented a Density and Traffic study for redevelopment of the Herrin Bros. site (see “Density” p. 36). As part of this study, a mixed-use building should occupy the new (proposed) corner of 36th St. and Cullman/Philemon Ave. This mixed-use building will be supported by the proposed pedestrian pathway to access the proposed LYNX NoDa station. Because the eastside sidewalk on 36th St. is proposed to be the only pedestrian access beneath the NCRR, it is imperative that a proposed mixed-use building occupy the Herrin Bros. 36th St. frontage (figure 9 shows concepts).

NoDa Vision doesn’t recommend any arching aesthetic changes to the Ritch Avenue neighborhood aside from adding a third point of ingress/egress (see “Traffic” p. 51). The land on the westside of 36th St. will remain in the FEMA floodplain. For this reason, NoDa Vision recommends re-use and rehabilitation of the existing buildings. These buildings should continue to provide economical and interesting spaces for artists and entrepreneurs. Every effort should be made to retrofit the streetscape to make these buildings address 36th Street in a pedestrian friendly way, which means upfitting the facades with glass fronts, doors that open onto the 36th St. sidewalk, and signage that is inviting for pedestrians (see figure 9).

The Plaza Business Corridor

Currently: A strip commercial area that is dangerous for pedestrians.

Future: NoDa Vision generally supports the current use of this commercial area as a needed utility. The committee considers The Plaza an automobile buffer to keep high speed auto use on the periphery, and out of the center of NoDa. In consideration, automobile repair shops and grocery stores with automobile parking lots, are best suited for this perimeter. The recommendation is for the corner parcels at the intersection of 36th St. and Plaza to be redeveloped for higher density commercial applications with a height limit of <40’ and a building footprint to mimic the angles of the intersection. It is recommended to make the intersection more pedestrian friendly by eliminating street fronting parking lots on 36th Street. If large parking lots must exist, they should be well concealed from 36th Street (figure 10). The previous vision plan was successful in promoting an initiative for a landscaped entry point at the intersection of 36th and The Plaza. This vision plan will further that initiative in the entry “Gateways” (see p. 61).
Abernethy Mill and Herrin Brothers Area

Currently: Abernethy Mill is abandoned, but seven single family houses still sit on dead-end Philemon Ave. Herrin Brothers is active zoned industrial fronting 36th Street. The zone sits between the Little Sugar Creek and the NCRR ROW.

Future: NoDa Vision supports the current rezoning of Abernethy Mill, and will continue to recommend a similar aesthetic as proposed. As parcels have very little in aesthetic value now, there is nothing to be preserved or built upon. The committee hopes that the development of these parcels will be of high quality materials, with a pedestrian scale and comfortable street presence. Recommendations are made on building footprint, setback, height and plan in the entry “Density” (see p. 36). The committee recommends connected grid streets with on-street parking instead of parking lots, sidewalks that adhere to the guidelines of a Neighborhood Street (see “Streetscape” p. 53), and front porch access to the sidewalks. This site has been included in the a connectivity study (see “Traffic” p. 51), and it is highly recommended that any development within this site conforms to, or facilitates the presented connectivity vision.

Yards at NoDa Area

Currently: NoDa Yards is currently an abandoned truck and container yard on the NCRR (proposed LYNX line). The area sits between the NCRR and A&WC RR (proposed NoDa Greenway) (figure 12).

Future: NoDa Vision strongly recommends buildings of a maximum of 80’ along the NCRR, and stepping down to maximum 60’ at the proposed NoDa Greenway (see figure 3) – the height would help pronounce NoDa’s skyline from Tryon St., and would hug the CBD with dramatic but scaled building setbacks. The Committee does not recommend any specific aesthetic style for this zone, but again ask for quality materials and LEED building standards (figure 13). The provided connectivity and streetscape guidelines (see “Density” p. 34; and “Traffic” p. 51) within this plan should direct the aesthetic of this zone. With careful consideration for straight, narrow street grids, on-street parking, sidewalks, defined traffic and pedestrian zones and sightlines, any development at Yards at NoDa will be welcome.
[COMMUNITY AESTHETIC]

(13)
Matheson and Tryon Pocket
Currently: Wooded, unused industrial land, no road access. Boundaries at Matheson Ave., N. Tryon St. and the NCRR.
Future: NoDa Vision generally supports the current rezoning for this zone, and understands that the topography makes a more intuitive urban use nearly impossible. However, in regards to street and pedestrian infrastructure aesthetic, NoDa Vision requires that the pedestrian not be ignored, despite the topographic restrictions. Concessions should be made to rethink the proposed building layout and orientation, and align to a more true urban grid (see figure 14). Pedestrian scale sidewalks, building setbacks, natural areas and parallel on street parking is just as important in this zone as in any other, despite its disconnection from the rest of the neighborhood. Zone 13’s relationship to the Little Sugar Creek requires attention, not only in stormwater mitigation, but also in aesthetic value. The developers are encouraged to seek sustainable storm water and runoff solutions in this fragile zone.

(14)
Cullman Avenue Area
Currently: A dead-end road with some remaining single story brick industrial buildings in the FEMA floodplain. Some buildings have been removed, while others remain.
Future: It is NoDa Vision’s understanding that new construction will not be possible on the creek side due to the FEMA floodplain. We support Charlotte-Mecklenburg Stormwater Services’s pursuit to acquire existing buildings and land on the creek side of Cullman Ave in order for the land to be used for flood control and recreational activities. The Cullman Ave Task Force is hopeful that through grants and help from City entities Cullman Ave can be transformed into viable community space. Plans include a community garden, children’s playground, amphitheater, outdoor sports area, greenway with walking trail and a dog park. Other suggestions include a mixture of adaptive reuse of warehouses with a mix of demolition to expand the greenway.
(15) **Beyond Anderson Area**  
**Currently**: Four unmarked streets, without curbs, or sidewalks. Some street lighting is in place, as well as infrastructure for Atmore St. which is unbuilt. Single-story brick or cinderblock industrial buildings exist, half of which are occupied. This zone was presumably clearcut of trees before construction, so no mature growth exists, however some trees were replanted and exist now.  
**Future**: These parcels could be developed independently, or piecemeal according to the Density Study within this Vision Plan (“Density” p. 33). NoDa Vision does not recommend protecting any structure within these boundaries, but recommends that any demolished materials be reused in compliance with accepted sustainable practices. A lengthy discussion with examples are provided as part of the density plan: Density “Beyond Anderson” (see page 33).

(16) **Sugar Creek Road Area**  
**Currently**: The west side of Sugar Creek Road is dominated by a concrete plant. The east side is dominated by the dilapidated Asian Corners Mall.  
**Future**: NoDa Vision feels that this boundary of the neighborhood is best suited to be redeveloped as part of the North End Partners masterplan. The hope is that a cohesive vision for the redevelopment of North End Partners will include this zone more so than would be included in this Vision Plan.

(17) **North Tryon Gateway Area**  
**Currently**: A hodgepodge of used car dealerships and industrial buildings along a busy thoroughfare. Very few concessions are made for pedestrians, and this is not a zone where pedestrians would have much interest in visiting.  
**Future**: Again, NoDa Vision feels that this boundary of the neighborhood is best suited to be redeveloped as part of the North End Partners masterplan. The hope is that a cohesive vision for the redevelopment of North Tryon will work toward synergy with the NoDa Vision Plan.
(18)
Matheson Avenue (Boundary Area)
Currently: 40MPH, four lane industrial use connector, with a concrete median impeding connectivity at cross streets.
Future: The function of Matheson Ave. to connect truck traffic to Tryon St. may eventually become less necessary—especially if the intermodal yards are relocated. In the near future, Matheson Ave. from Jordan Pl. to The Plaza should be transformed into a two lane boulevard with a wide tree-lined buffer in the center (see “Traffic” p. 55, figure 18). Going forward, if truck traffic were to be relocated, the boulevard should extend all the way to Tryon St. NoDa Vision recommends a boulevard because the single family houses on Matheson will never flourish without infrastructure aesthetic improvements. Secondly, it is important for the pedestrian to feel welcome on Matheson Ave. and for connectivity to be restored with Villa Heights. Once the streetscape of Matheson Avenue becomes more pedestrian friendly, a single family neighborhood street can grow organically.

(19)
Jordan Place Area
Currently: A wide industrial intersection with two large corner lots, and two developed corners (figure 19).
Future: The Committee recommends construction of a center island to rescale the oversized intersection at Jordan and Davidson St. The center island would be built in a way that would act as a traffic circle with an art installation and focal point (figure 20). The round-a-bout would also allow pedestrians and bicyclists to cross through it, as a pedestrian refuge point. The committee also recommends new building construction to tightly hug the contours of the intersection corners, but preserve the view of Charlotte’s CDB to the South.
Central Business District

Currently: Consisting of both N. Davidson St. and E. 36th St., the CBD is a 50-50 mix of rehabilitated structures from the early 1900’s and mostly thoughtful new construction. N. Davidson St. is the main pedestrian corridor and is framed within a narrow two lane street, on-street parking, multiple widths of sidewalk on both sides of Davidson, and mixed-use structures with limited to no setback. These structures (depending on their age and style) range from a single story, to six stories tall. All structures on Davidson St. are pedestrian oriented and front the sidewalk. E. 36th St. is less coherent in its presentation. Extending from the intersection with N. Davidson Street, retail, restaurant and entertainment uses address dual sidewalks, buffered by more on-street parking and bike lanes. Mostly, E. 36th St. does not have the privilege of being constructed as attached storefront retail-row. Instead, it works to reuse small, freestanding, single story structures. Years of patchwork streetscape plans and aesthetic upfits have set a foundation for a comfortable and inviting CBD, however a coherent and complete streetscape and aesthetic program has never been presented.

Future: Being that Zone 20 is the face of NoDa to visitors outside of the neighborhood, the aesthetic value of the CBD will certainly make or break perception in the future. It is important to maintain the image and style that has come to define NoDa. For this reason, the best way to grow the CBD is to renovate and expand on the existing buildings; and with infill projects. No existing buildings should be removed for new construction; however, new construction should upfit and expand on the existing buildings in the context of their aesthetic feeling within the neighborhood. An old, rundown looking building can become part of a new project and reused which is a more sustainable and economical solution, and works to protect the integrity of the neighborhood. Rundown storefronts can be rehabilitated, brought back up to code and expanded upon as a more cost effective way to incubate small and start-up businesses. When new construction is proposed on suitable lots, the leasable square-footage should also tailor to small and start-up businesses. Individual retail bays should be configurable for smaller or larger uses. Owner/developers should be paired with the the Economic Development Committee to help guide a new business into its new home. The Economic Development Committee should actively supply architectural recommendations, help with community matching facade grants, artist pairing, and pedscape upfit.

The transition should be done organically, by caring and passionate owner/developers with help from the whole neighborhood.

Figure 21. Expand the walkable commercial district out from the intersection from N. Davidson St. and E. 36th St. Streetscape improvements, and small, dense building projects will provide a more substantial commercial experience.
2030 Upgrades
The overall aesthetic vision for NoDa’s CBD should facilitate these specific tasks:

- All overhead powerlines should be buried.
- All overhead traffic signals should be on mast arms.
- All pedestrian lighting should be identical, and be provided by photovoltaic (solar) power (see “figure 22”).
- All utility and exterior lighting should be angled downward to mitigate light pollution.
- Streetscape and pedscape should adhere to the guidelines set forth as a “Pedestrian Heavy Corridor” (see entry: “Streetscape” p. 53).
- Retail and mixed use bays should use only clear glass when glass is at street level. Upfits should introduce glass facades.
- Blade signs no larger than 24” are recommended above or near all retail doorways (see “figure 24”).
- Billboards, affixed facade signage, or freestanding pole signs require approval by the HNCNA.
- The preferred name “NoDa” should be prominent and should take the place of North Charlotte on signage and markers.
- Consensus should be organized for updated street signs, light posts, benches and trash receptacles.
- A “placemaking” initiative should be launched for key landmarks and intersections to include things like signs and kiosks (see “figure 26”).
- A system of historical markers should be introduced (see “figure 25”).
workshops

One year of charettes, concensus building and community vision for:
Density
Parks and Natural Areas
Economic Development
Traffic and Streetscapes
Parking
Placemaking
Housing and Affordability
Art and Creativity
Sustainability
Community
Transit
To grow NoDa in a precise way that acknowledges connectivity, use/purpose and sustainability.

Key to Map Colors:
- **RED**: Inclusive and modest public spaces, sidewalk expansions, plazas, squares and community areas. The careful design of these spaces will facilitate the sharing of these streets between the pedestrian and automobile.
- **PINK**: Single family residential with small building footprints. Styles show semi-attached rowhouses, brownstones, or free standing single structures, all of which have individual front door access to the street.
- **GREEN**: Parks, greenways and natural areas.
- **GRAY**: Automobile use spaces, parking facilities, neighborhood services, banks, grocery stores, gas stations.
- **WHITE**: Roads, Streets, Avenues.
- **ORANGE**: Street front retail or multipurpose commercial bays. Ideally, these spaces should be built to keep lease rates reasonable for small and start-up businesses.
Beyond Craighead is the largest, most contiguous zone of underused or misused land in NoDa. This zone presents the most possibilities for redevelopment because of its size, existing infrastructure, and proximity to the proposed Sugar Creek LYNX light rail station (this entire zone is a TOD district). With that in mind, the vision is for the highest density proposed in this Vision Plan. The Renaissance Condos (to the west) already act to buffer and transition this high-density, from the traditional single family zones of the rest of NoDa.

We also show several new points of connectivity with the extension of Atmore Street to Sugar Creek Rd., and Norwell Place to Essex Street (crossing the proposed NoDa Greenway). These connections will serve to open up this unconnected pocket to much of the rest of NoDa.

As redevelopment occurs, it will be important to use this Vision Plan as a tool, and reference the various entries that tie in with this Density Proposal: (see “Streetscape Plan” p. 57) and (see “Parks” pp. 45 & 47).

The map shows both height and density along Davidson Street, large mixed-use in the center blocks, and row or semi-attached single family housing at the southern edge.
The Yards at NoDa presents an exciting opportunity to add to the rich urban fabric of NoDa. With the right amount of architectural and aesthetic guidance and participation from CDOT, a disconnected and forgotten pocket of former industrial land can integrate into the street grid and style of NoDa.

Using the proposed Traffic and Streetscape Vision (see “Traffic” p. 51, and “Streetscape Plan” p. 53), NoDa Vision envisions Yards at NoDa as long, straight rows of mostly residential streets on a clear grid system. Most notable about this vision would be the long views from N. Davidson Street up 34th Street or 35th Street into Yards at NoDa. At the end of the view would be a striking and inviting row of residential housing. The proper view would help bring pedestrians into the area from N. Davidson Street, and define the traffic zone as finite and restricted.

Resident parking would be facilitated mostly by on-street parallel parking; however, some parking may be built into the utility alley running between the LYNX light rail tracks and the edge of the property (accessible by Mallory Street, and also servicing the Newco Fiber property to the east). Utilities should also be consolidated into this rear alley.
Steel Gardens (or a similar residential environment) is extended across Academy St., into a new segment of Spencer St. Density and style is like Steel Gardens. Old Spencer St. still remains with single family residential.

An extension of Spencer Street - beginning with a realignment at Academy Street and extending through an industrial lot and across the deadends of both Essex Street and Sweetbriar Street - will create many new single family lots and open up connectivity in the eastern corner of NoDa.

The proposed NoDa Greenway (see “Parks” p. 45) would further connect this remote corner of NoDa and make a truly livable and remarkable residential pod.

There is no need for a master plan in this zone, only the recommendation that the former industrial lots on Academy Street and Anderson Street be redeveloped in a similar way as was Steel Gardens, with similar density and aesthetic (see “Streetscape Plan p. 52”).

It is also important to note that Anderson Street and a proposed connection of Essex Street will connect to the north with the density proposal for Craighead (see Density: Beyond Anderson). To that end, there should be a slight transition between the single family lots on Spencer, and the either duplex or semi-detached houses along the proposed NoDa Greenway at Anderson Street. The extension of Essex Street across the proposed NoDa Greenway will link two single family streets.
With some careful visioning, Philemon Avenue can go from a dead-end gravel industrial street, to a four block avenue capable of transitioning a resident through their whole life - via a modest community square. To the east, the resident may first find a home in NoDa in the form of a rental unit in one of the apartments along Craighead Street. Years later, they may purchase their first place just a block away in the townhouses. And in a few more years, they may buy up into the single family houses just on the other side of the community square. They may choose to park their car in the same spot for all those years - the car may never move or need to be replaced: access to LYNX light rail, amenities and necessities is never more than four blocks away (see “Transit” p. 71).

This zone shows a well-rounded vision of density and infrastructure, and a unique sustainable plan in the form of a neighborhood-wide bioswale to limit runoff into Little Sugar Creek.

As always, new parts of NoDa are integrated into the old parts which is evident in the connectivity with Ritch Avenue.
The former Newco Fiber building is a dramatic landmark on 36th Street. Sitting just feet from the proposed LYNX NoDa Station, this striking building should be protected and redeveloped as the new transit gateway into the neighborhood. This will be the first and most visible structure any transit commuter will see in NoDa. There is an opportunity to not only protect this historic and beautiful structure, but to repurpose it for the good of the community.

As a historically significant structure, the original building, especially the facade on 36th Street, should be protected. Several additions were added to the original structure over the years; they may or may not be deemed usable space for redevelopment.

NoDa Vision highly recommends a public/private venture for the redevelopment of this building; as much of the common space, sidewalks and the rear (LYNX facing) loading docks will be necessary for the pedestrian to access the LYNX comfortably. Access to the LYNX NoDa Station will be limited to the sidewalks alongside the 36th Street facade. It is in this case that it is recommended to reconstruct the windows into doorways - creating an open arcade and extending the sidewalk access to a more comfortable width. This arcade will also act to usher commuters and neighbors into the facilities inside the original building.

A pedestrian plaza would fit into the space where the additions had been built onto the original building, and an auxiliary building could be built in the same architectural style to complement the pedestrian at LYNX platform.

As 36th Street is proposed to be depressed below the sidewalk grade, the pedestrian area around the Newco Fiber building becomes more important; but, the historical and aesthetic importance of this building should be accounted for as well.
[For many visitors and residents, the new front door and face of NoDa will be the Newco Fiber building]

A pedestrian waits on the LYNX platform

[The Newco Fiber building must be open and available for the public, as it dominates the area around the LYNX NoDa light rail station]
### Various Perspectives

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#### Character Sketches

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#### Markings

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#### Prepared for:

- NoDa Vision
Transform windows into doorways to connect the sidewalk to the inside of the market and let the sounds of NoDa inside.

The existing structure is beautiful and impressive already. The building suggests that hidden gems are just below the surface.

The second floor briefly housed an art gallery, which is the ideal use for this light and airy room. This is a perfect use for the space.

Current Vision

Transform the Newco Fiber Industrial building into an open marketplace for artists, vendors, and flea markets.

Comparison

Newco Fiber from CBD circa 2009

Newco Fiber 36th St. facade circa 2009

Newco Fiber bottom floor interior circa 2009

Newco Fiber top floor gallery circa 2009

North Market in Columbus, OH

Architectural doorways at Charleston Market

St. Lawrence Market in Toronto circa 2009

Art gallery housed in “new” Newco
The Johnston and Mecklenburg Mill buildings have been an integral yet overlooked, and under appreciated corner stone of NoDa since their construction in the 1913 and 1904, respectively.

Neither the first, nor the last massive industrial style building to define the neighborhood, these two paired developments acted to solidify the trends that would come to define the urban fabric of NoDa. They reinforce the mill and village style development in the north part of the neighborhood, and add new neighbors and opportunities as NoDa grows.

After the industrial life of the mills, the buildings were owned and operated as affordable apartments by private interests before most recently being vacated by the City of Charlotte in disrepair.

Understanding the historic relevance and their role in the neighborhood, the NoDa Neighborhood Association took up the cause to guide the sale and redevelopment of the mills in 2006. The Association solicited input from all neighbors and interested parties and worked to advocate for the best redevelopment plan in agreement with the owner: The City of Charlotte.

Ultimately, the Association chose to work with Minneapolis based Artspace, a nonprofit real estate developer for the arts who would purchase the buildings at a discounted price, rehabilitate them in a way that would allow artists to live and work in affordable studio apartments. The City of Charlotte, however, voted down this option.

The City moved forward with a Request For Proposals which included 11 goals for the property. The City received 4 proposals and selected private developer NoDa Mills LLC; a proposal also supported by the Association. It adequately met the City’s goals for the property, but had fewer concessions toward affordable artist’s space.

But, after two years of delays, the sale of the buildings was abandoned and the developer pulled out of the deal. The delays ranged from environmental issues, to deeding and title issues, to the crash of the housing and condo market.

Today, the City of Charlotte still owns the buildings and is looking to sell them quickly, even at a discount.

The NoDa Vision Plan seeks to uphold the diligent work of the NoDa Neighborhood Association and its consensus building effort for the future of the Johnston and Mecklenburg Mills and seeks an active role in the redevelopment of these prized and historical
The HNCNA has developed the following prioritized list of development goals for the Mills site. It is based on the development goals in the City's 2007 Johnston & Mecklenburg Mills RFP and should be applied to any proposal for future use of the site.

### Primary Goals

- Historic Preservation of the existing buildings. Exceptions can be made for the removal or relocation of the boxing academy to clear title and for the relocation of the Mill House to increase new construction density along N. Davidson St.
- Meet City and NoDa affordable housing goals with an emphasis on artist affordable housing and workspace.
- A management plan for the property that maintains affordability goals long-term.
- Secure a development partner able to secure financing for the project.
- Secure a development partner with proven experience in developing & managing high density residential projects (at least three examples).
- A design that compliments and bolsters the existing artistic and historic character of NoDa.
- Seek proposals from a proven developer with experience in executing quality design.
- A design with connectivity between site, the neighborhood and the future light-rail station.
- A development plan that rehabs the existing buildings quickly, limiting the duration of the site’s ongoing negative impact on the neighborhood.

### Secondary Goals:

- A design that meets City and NoDa vision, development, and policy guidelines.
- A design that meets LEED building standards.
- A design that follows NoDa Parking Policy.
- City’s long-term return on investment, increasing property tax directly on-site and/or indirectly by fostering surrounding development.
- A design that increases density on site, utilizing open land along 36th and N. Davidson St.

### Tertiary Goals

- City’s short-term return on investment.

---

**figure 1.** Adaptive reuse of a historical structure for live/work artist space in Everett, WA - addressing the needs of the urban fabric, as well as addressing the needs of the creative individuals who will occupy this space.

**figure 2.** An Artspace conversion in Raleigh has repurposed a downtown Ford dealership; and now anchors the arts district and involves the residents in the artistic process.
[PARKS: EXISTING USES]

[To assess NoDa’s parks, and provide opportunities for new and inviting community spaces]

Land area comparison will reveal an urban neighborhood of 576 acres of which only 5 acres are dedicated as parks. Consensus and inventory of the three existing NoDa parks reveal:

**Charles Ave. Park**
Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec currently recognizes Charles Avenue Park as:
- 800 Charles Avenue
- Central Park District II
- 1 Acre
- Hopscotch Area
- Park Benches

NoDa Vision recognizes Charles Avenue Park as a dark and unfriendly pocket park on the edge of the neighborhood, very near the heavy industrial, high speed connector of Matheson Avenue. Limited to no dedicated on-street parking is available; however, this is congruent to the use of a neighborhood pocket park.

**Clemson Ave. Park**
Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec currently recognizes Clemson Avenue Park as:
- 3028 Clemson Avenue
- Central Park District II
- 1 Acre
- Full Court Basketball
- Playground Unit(s)
- Park Benches

NoDa Vision recognizes Clemson Avenue Park as a safe, inviting, well lit, pocket park with newer equipment, and average maintenance. Limited on-street parking is available; however, this is congruent to the use of a neighborhood pocket park. Proximity, again, is close to NoDa’s boundary at Matheson Avenue.

**North Charlotte Park**
Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec currently recognizes North Charlotte Park as:
- 901 Herrin Avenue
- Central Park District II
- 3 Acres
- Full Court Basketball
- Playground Unit(s)
- Park Benches
- Multipurpose Field
- Walking Trail
- Picnic Shelter w/ Grill

NoDa Vision recognizes North Charlotte Park as a generally inviting space with some useful amenities. Until 2007, the park was adjacent to uninviting industrial storage land, but with its replacement as Steel Gardens, it has begun to feel safer and get more use. Parking is plentiful along the neighborhood streets, but the multipurpose fields are nebulous and see very little use. This park was cut-off from much of NoDa by the closing of Herrin Avenue at the rail spur. Lighting is an issue at night, especially in the back corners where the swingset is located.
The City of Charlotte has purchased and demolished parcels in the flood plain at Cullman Ave. under a FEMA grant, and has begun the process to convert them into a public park. Charlotte Mecklenburg Stormwater Services, and Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation enlisted the engineering firm of Haden Stanziale to moderate a series of public charettes, and focused a master plan for the available parcels. NoDa neighbors attended several charettes in 2008 and ultimately built a vision according to their wishes. The City of Charlotte has committed to the stream restoration, but the residents must secure grant money for the construction of the park and greenway.

An overflow creek currently feeds Little Sugar Creek runoff water from NoDa. This overflow creek is referred to as “Highland Mill Creek” in that it first surfaces at the Highland Montessori School on McDowell St. and flows along the back side of Charles Ave., under Davidson St., along the back side of Faison Ave., and deposits into Little Sugar Creek just beyond Brevard St. “Highland Mill Creek” is not in the protected 100 year flood plain, and acts as the boundary of many private lots between Charles Ave. and Brevard St. It is in need of attention, and presents an interesting opportunity for public greenspace, natural area, and community connectivity. Its unique geography connects the interior of the Highland Mill Historic Mill Village to the proposed LYNX 29th St. light rail station. This would restore the connectivity of the neighborhood after the construction of the Matheson Ave. heavy industrial connector barricaded NoDa from Optimist Park (location of 29th St. Station).
The Aberdeen & Western Carolina Railroad ROW cuts through the heart of NoDa. Should the ROW be abandoned or rerouted, the corridor should be given over for pedestrian use. This infrequently-used freight line has five unprotected road crossings which presents a safety concern. Further, pedestrians have already taken to using the corridor to access NoDa’s CBD from their residential centers, especially from The Renaissance Condos and Steel Gardens. This ribbon once linked the industrial mills and factories of North Charlotte, but as land use has changed, we must update the land use of this rail line.

As part of the national Rails to Trails program, this corridor would set a precedent for repurposing of a formerly industrial center into a livable, sustainable, and well-connected neighborhood. Pedestrians and bicyclists would use this corridor much like a public transit corridor - with entrances and exits for major intersections starting at Sugar Creek Road and The Plaza, to parks, dense condo developments, historic villages, shopping, dining, two LYNX stations, Johnston YMCA and beyond to connect to the citywide Little Sugar Creek Greenway.
The unique diagonal path of NoDa Greenway (in relation to the street grid) allows direct connection with dozens of NoDa's points of interest.

Pedestrian connections on the NoDa Rails-to-Trails Greenway (proposed)
NoDa neighbors will benefit from “green connectivity.” A resident will be able to walk out their front door into a park, which leads onto a greenway, and connects them to LYNX and the rest of Charlotte.

Above: As we increase density in the neighborhood, it's important not to turn our back on natural spaces for the new residents. These spaces are not only important for livability, but also to encourage the future neighbors to remain friendly and to build community pride with all residents. Above is the proposed density east of Craighead St. with a new 3 +/- acre green area. This park would also provide a community connection to the proposed NoDa Rails-to-Trails greenway.

North Charlotte Park gives Steel Gardens a 3 acre front yard.
Traffic trends in NoDa are characteristic of the city and nation; motorists, when provided with mandated “unimpeded flow” of wide streets, will drive too fast, and deter from a safe and welcoming pedestrian environment.

NoDa has a unique benefit working for it, one that most all other Charlotte neighborhoods does not: no major arterial or through roadways pass through NoDa. The only traffic that NoDa has to combat is local use.

For all the destruction that Matheson Avenue did for the historical street network of NoDa, it has served to move through and heavy industrial traffic along the edge of the neighborhood, rather than through the heart. For this fact, the current performance of Matheson Avenue is important. However, if the intermodal and industrial yards were to be relocated, thereby removing the need for an industrial connector, Matheson Avenue should be rescaled for neighborhood and pedestrian use (see “Streetscape Plan” p. 57).

Four traffic trouble areas have been identified on the map and solutions provided in the entry “Traffic: Hot Spots”. All four areas raise the same concern: pedestrians sharing the neighborhood streets with overzealous or speeding automobiles.

Furthermore, the whole of this Vision Plan, and all proposed developments and projects herein, serve to improve street connectivity, and to build an environment that is welcoming for the pedestrian neighbors of NoDa. This entry takes a closer look at how new development can serve the overall fabric of the neighborhood, and not just serve itself. NoDa Vision feels very strongly that planners and developers have not meshed their priorities closely enough in the past. A new precedent should be set with the use and implementation of a clear and precise Vision Plan.
ISSUE: As cars exit from the slow-moving CBD, they look to “make up for lost time” by speeding through the remainder of Northbound N. Davidson St.

CAUSE: Two issues compound each other: N. Davidson St. jogs to the left in front of The Colony, and, The Colony takes advantage of the jog by building a giant front lawn buffer. At first it would seem that DOT and The Colony were looking out for the safety of the building, and roadway. But ultimately, the road is much more unsafe by giving drivers a long sightline, buffer, and clear roadway in which to speed. It also does not help that the sightline is directly toward the NCRR tracks - a view which does not remind a driver that they are still in a pedestrian neighborhood.

SOLUTION: If needed, straighten N. Davidson Street to address the retail frontage of The Colony. Ultimately, remove the front lawn buffer at The Colony and replace it with on-street parallel parking and/or street trees, changing to a minimum building setback with characteristic urban design guidelines. This will help bring shoppers to the retail bays in The Colony, and change the sightline by adding elements that force more cautious driving.

BEYOND: As part of the LYNX light rail project, the sightline will switch from NCRR freight tracks, to LYNX trains atop of massive retaining wall. This massive retaining wall not only needs to be creative and pleasant for the resident, but also stimulating and productive for safe drivers.

ISSUE: As cars exit from the slow-moving CBD, they look to “make up for lost time” by speeding through the remainder of Southbound N. Davidson St.

CAUSE: Again, sightlines and perceived road conditions allow drivers to feel as if they have exited the pedestrian area and are now free to speed. Once drivers pass Highland Mill and Faison Avenue, the overgrown parcels at (proposed) “Highland Mill Creek Greenway” and the industrial storage lot on N. Davidson Street give them a false perception.

SOLUTION: Ideally, the industrial storage lot would be redeveloped as a dense, street fronting building. This alone would remind drivers that they are not yet free of speed and safety restriction. In the meantime, as called for in this Vision Plan (see “Parks” p. 44), there should be a crossing at the proposed Highland Mill Creek Greenway. Aside from a painted or textured crosswalk, there should be a neckdown and a pedestrian refuge median in the center of the roadway with clear signage directing everyone to the presence of the greenway. Also, once the overgrown area (left of picture above) is cut back at the greenway, the sightline will change to a more pedestrian-oriented area.
Charles Avenue

ISSUE: Cars speeding through a residential street.
CAUSE: Matheson Avenue does not connect directly to N. Davidson Street. So, cars driving from The Plaza and Tryon Street use Charles Avenue as a more direct connector to inbound and outbound N. Davidson St. Also, the fact that N. Myers Street, and N. Alexander Street no longer connect to Charles Avenue breaks up the urban grid (which in itself helps to slow traffic), and leaves the remaining houses oriented at an angle on the former corners at Charles Avenue. These odd angled houses leave the street feeling especially unplanned and without maintenance.
SOLUTION: Limit the convenience for cut-through traffic on Charles Avenue by creating 4-way stops at the three existing intersections: Yadkin, Pinckney, and McDowell. Build future houses with obvious pedestrian presence facing Charles Avenue. Complete and construct sidewalks for the entire length of Charles Avenue (see "Streetscape Plan" p. 56).

E. 36th Street

ISSUE: Striking a balance between needed auto uses, and a mixed-use pedestrian street.
CAUSE: E. 36th Street has existed in many forms and for many uses over its lifetime. The road we know today exists for automobiles, but has been admirably retrofit with on-street parking and bike lanes. Still, 100 years of planning and replanning have left a patchwork of good and bad traffic calming and pedestrian uses.
SOLUTION: Spencer Street currently feeds Steel Gardens via 36th Street, and as it is proposed to extend and become a more viable east/west connector (see "Traffic p. 51") - the intersection of Spencer and E. 36th Street should be reconfigured to serve two purposes: increased traffic load on Spencer, and traffic calming on E. 36th Street. NoDa Vision recommends a roundabout, or unique intersection at Spencer & 36th (see "Gateways" p. 61).
SOLUTION: As this Vision Plan recommends (see “Community Aesthetic” p. 23), 36th Street should maintain its unique character by not conforming to a masterplan or overarching design guidelines. It should be noted that pedestrian uses should always address the street, but without a recommendation for minimal building setbacks, we can not rely on aesthetics to calm traffic.
Building For Future Connectivity

1. Mallory St. extends across the A&WC (proposed NoDa greenway) and into the new development at Yards at NoDa. Once inside the development, Mallory feeds an access alley.
2. The original front doors of Highland Mill now open onto the NoDa Greenway and front the Yards at NoDa development.
3. 33rd St. extends across the A&WC (proposed NoDa greenway) and into the new development at Yards at NoDa. Its visual terminus is created by the wall of buildings on “new st. #2” defining a finite and safer traffic/ped zone.
4. 34th St. is built to extend across N. Davidson St. (through the Johnston YMCA parking lot). Parking is consolidated in a new parking garage. Again, 34th. St. has a visual terminus created by buildings on “new st. #2” defining the traffic zone.
5. 35th St. extends across the A&WC (greenway) and into the new development at Yards at NoDa with the same visual terminus and zone logic as 33/34th.

1. The intersection of Anderson St. and Davidson St. (now without Craighead St.) should take advantage of its odd geometry. The current intersection offers a unique pedestrian corner, with traffic calming sightlines already in place.
2. “New St. #1” is actually an access alley, serving Davidson St. and Northmore St. buildings. A neighborhood with small blocks and service alleys is more comfortable for the resident. Unfortunately, the importance and the history of alleyways in Charlotte has been forgotten.
3. Atmore St. extends from its stub on Sugar Creek Rd. to Norwell Pl. The infrastructure for Atmore already exists, but the road was never built out.
4. Norwell Pl. extends across the former A&WC (now NoDa Greenway) and connects to Essex St. To simplify, Norwell Pl. may need to be renamed Essex St.

1. The “Z” intersection at Spencer St. is realigned at Academy St. At the same time, Academy St. is extended north of Spencer St. to form a standard four-way intersection. A new Academy St. extension and “new st. #1 & 2” now allow development at the former industrial lot between Royal Truss and Anderson St.
2. Spencer St. now extends east of Anderson St. and becomes a usable and functional neighborhood connector road. This former segmented street now connects 12 north/south roads.
3. Essex St. now connects to the extension of Spencer St.
4. Essex St. extends across Spencer St. and further across the A&WC (NoDa Greenway) and connects to Davidson St. via Norwell Pl. (see above). A former cul-de-sac is now part of the street grid, and a catalyst for new residential development.
5. Sweetbriar St. now has a connection to (and terminus for) Spencer St., completing the connectivity of this remote part of NoDa. If all new streets are built to the same specifications, no one street should feel the effect of higher traffic rates. In fact, so many new options will balance the traffic load more equally.
An arching recommendation for future streetscape treatments will be made. A more in-depth study should be performed leading to final and official Streetscape Plan and/or Pedestrian Overlay Plan. However, within this context of the NoDa Vision Plan 2030, only broad recommendations will be made:

- **Pedestrian Heavy Corridor**
  (narrow commercial road with on street parking)
- **Historic Neighborhood Grid**
  (narrow roads with residential pedestrians)
- **Neighborhood Streets**
  (wider streets with residential pedestrians)
- **Heavy Use Auto and Pedestrian Corridor**
  (wide streets with some concessions for pedestrians)
- **Heavy Use Auto Corridor**
  (wide streets with no concessions for pedestrians)

**HNCNA** is adamant that within the neighborhood, a functional streetscape gives priority to the pedestrian. As result, the presence of pedestrians deters the misuse of roads by automobiles, allowing the pedestrian to dictate the use of the roads and asking the automobile to adjust accordingly. NoDa is one of the only truly 100% walkable districts in Charlotte.

Using the Traffic Map (figure 1) as a key, streetscape treatments should be applied as follows (see “At Street Level” p.56):
Historic Neighborhood Grid:

**narrow roads with residential pedestrians**

In order to maintain the historic significance of these streets, neither on-street parking or sidewalks are required. No overall actions are required or recommended other than clear notation of the availability of on-street parking. Intersections should remain narrow with a 90 degree curb radii, holding true to the existing street grid.

**Pedestrian Heavy Corridor:**

**narrow commercial road with on-street parking**

On-street parking should be present and marked with striped parking spaces on the roadway, or defined by a tree bay or a sidewalk extension (see figure 2). Sidewalks should start at back-of-curb and extend a minimum width of 8’ and a maximum 12’ to the building facade (unless the setback is designed as a pedestrian plaza). No automobile use or on-site parking (including driveways or garages) is permitted between the roadway and building facade. Planting strips (grass) are not required or permitted wherever on-street parking exists. An urban business district should feel urban.

In order to maintain the historic significance of these streets, neither on-street parking nor sidewalks are required. No overall actions are required or recommended other than clear notation of the availability of on-street parking. Intersections should remain narrow with 90 degree curb radii, holding true to the existing street grid.

**Neighborhood Streets (future):**

**wider streets with residential pedestrians**

All future Neighborhood Streets should be built to the design standards called “Skinny Streets” (see p. 55). With proper building setbacks and elevations, and infrastructure that follows the guidelines within this plan closely, “skinny streets developments” will add to the fabric of NoDa, rather than clash with it. Two travel lanes and two parking lanes with on-street parking should be the priority. Every new development should begin with the assumption that this is what its infrastructure will be. If conditions do not permit two lanes of on-street parking, one will be acceptable if a 2’ planting strip (grass or mulch) is built to buffer the exposed sidewalk. Sidewalks on both sides of the street are required and should be non-negotiable. Intersections should not exceed 24’ at crosswalks when possible, however current standards for curb radii (emergency vehicle turning radii) in exceptions should be accounted for with concessions such as sidewalk flareouts or neckdowns prior to the intersection.

“Extra-wide planting strips degrade the fabric of this Urban Neighborhood.”

“We play in our neighborhood parks, not between a sidewalk and a street.”

Figure 5. Intimate streets, double sidewalks, on-street parking, tree buffer. Roadway markings would complete this picture.

Figure 6. What not to do - Suburbia infiltrating NoDa: 8’ planting strip “lawn,” 5’ sidewalk and then more “lawn.” All of this fronts 35th Street - which otherwise is one of the most intimate streets in NoDa.
Heavy Use Auto and Pedestrian Corridor:

- **Wide streets with few concessions for pedestrians**

These are the roadways where the pedestrian must make many concessions to the automobile. Future development patterns should guide these corridors to become more pedestrian friendly - the ultimate goal is to transition parts or all of these corridors into either Neighborhood Streets or a Pedestrian Heavy Corridor. Infrastructure can influence development. However, at this time, we must work within the standards and uses of today. It is recommended that any road that is not earmarked to transition into another category should follow the arching guidelines for **Heavy Use Auto and Pedestrian Corridor**: two sidewalks should always exist on these roadways; on-street parking should be available on both sides of the street when permitted (see p. 55, fig. 1), and when not permitted, a planting strip of maximum 4’ should buffer a minimum 4’ sidewalk from the traffic (see p. 55, fig. 2). These are not suburban roads and should not be treated as such. Urban roads assume interaction with traffic and city life and excessively wide planting strips should be left in the suburbs. In cases where on-street parking is not permitted, but the ROW is too wide for a maximum 4’ planting strip, a tree buffer is recommended between the road and sidewalk (see p. 55, fig. 3). In cases where on-street parking is not permitted, and the ROW is wide enough to accommodate more than two lanes of traffic and still exceeds the maximum 6’ tree buffer, a planting strip and center tree median is recommended over additional travel lanes (see p. 55, fig. 4). The median may be as wide as necessary to fill excess ROW. Bike lanes should also take precedence according to the Charlotte Bicycle Master Plan.

Heavy Use Auto Corridor:

- **Wide streets with no concessions for pedestrians**

These are the roadways where pedestrians are very rarely found. These specific corridors (N. Tryon Street, E. Sugar Creek Rd., and Matheson Avenue) serve specific roles to move through traffic along the perimeter of the neighborhood. In so much as they serve their purpose, they also help to keep the interior roads of NoDa low speed and low traffic. N. Tryon Street, and E. Sugar Creek Road should retain their use and classification, and any upgrades and modifications to their streetscape should come as part of a City of Charlotte plan or initiative.
“Skinny Streets” is the name of a movement aimed at reducing the dimensions of streets in municipal standards. Since the 1990’s, many cities have revisited their overly wide street design standards and adopted narrower profiles. Reducing the width of streets provides a number of benefits. Skinny streets reduce: speeding, vehicle crashes, street construction costs, pedestrian crossing distances, impervious surfaces (and therefore stormwater drain capacity), street maintenance and resurfacing costs, and heat re-radiation which contributes to the urban heat island effect.

Many of the existing historic streets in NoDa already conform to this “new” way of thinking. In fact, the older Mill Village Streets (green) are prime examples. Moving forward, it will be important to do two things: maintain the existing skinny streets, and insist that new development build within the same design priorities.

When provided with an array of street ROW’s, these are the preferred cross-sections of widths within NoDa:

**“SKINNY STREETS” DESIGN BY PRIORITY: BLUE & GREEN**

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figure 10. Example “skinny street” design of 34’ ROW with double 5’ on-street parking lanes, and 4’ double back of curb sidewalks

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figure 11. Example “skinny street” design of 32’ ROW with single 5’ on-street parking lane and double sidewalks

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figure 12. Example alternate “skinny street” design of 32’ ROW with single 5’ on-street parking lane and double sidewalks

**HEAVY USE AUTO & PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR DESIGN BY PRIORITY: BLACK AND GRAY**

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figure 13. Example of 38’ ROW with double on-street parking and minimum 4’ sidewalks at back-of-curb position

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<td>travel lane</td>
<td>travel lane</td>
<td>grass</td>
<td>sidewalk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(figure 2) Example of 36’ ROW with no on-street parking, maximum 4’ planter strip and minimum 4’ sidewalks

<table>
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<th>#3</th>
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<th>6’</th>
<th>10’</th>
<th>10’</th>
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<td>travel lane</td>
<td>travel lane</td>
<td>tree buffer</td>
<td>sidewalk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

figure 14. Example of 40’ ROW with no on-street parking, maximum 6’ tree buffer and minimum 4’ sidewalks

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sidewalk</td>
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<td>travel lane</td>
<td>tree island</td>
<td>travel lane</td>
<td>grass</td>
<td>sidewalk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

figure 15. Example of 42’ ROW with no on-street parking, 6’ tree island, maximum 4’ planting strip and minimum 4’ sidewalks
Charles Avenue: Once the vision for traffic mitigation is implemented (see "Traffic" p. 50), Charles Avenue should transition into the classification of Neighborhood Streets, at which time the streetscape plan would be in compliance. The steps leading to this transition should follow the plan set forth in Neighborhood Streets (Future).

36th Street: Many streetscape and pedscape plans have already been implemented on 36th St. between N. Davidson St. and The Plaza. The deletion of two travel lanes in favor of on-street parking and bike lanes was the start. Still, the goal should be to transition these blocks into a Pedestrian Heavy Corridor (see "Traffic p. 50"). This will require reconfiguration of specific things: The current presence of extra-wide planting strips (grass) where on-street parking is located should be rebuilt to conform to the Pedestrian Heavy Corridor guidelines of back-of-curb sidewalks and tree bays. Future development along 36th Street should reconfigure its on-street presence according to these guidelines also. On-street parking should be clearly marked between tree bays or with roadway markings. Every intersection meeting 36th Street should have a neckdown and crosswalk at a safe distance. And finally, anywhere on-street parking is not permitted would fall outside of the arching recommendations for the Pedestrian Heavy Corridor, and thereby not qualify for these guidelines.

3400-3900 blocks of N. Davidson St.: Once the vision for traffic mitigation is implemented (see "Traffic" p. 49), the southern side of the 3400 block of N. Davidson St. will be on its way to transitioning into the classification of a Pedestrian Heavy Corridor, and the remaining southern 3400-3900 blocks require minor corrective action: sidewalks to specified width, planting strips where on-street parking in not permitted and guidance for future development to properly address the street. The northern blocks of 3400-3900 N. Davidson St. are in the NCRR ROW and are slated for use in the LYNX Blue Line project (see "Transit" p. 71).
2600-2800 N. Davidson St.: Once the vision for traffic mitigation is implemented (see “Traffic” p. 49), 2600-2800 N. Davidson St. still needs an upfit to bring it into compliance as a Neighborhood Street. This will require at least rebuilt sidewalks and on-street parking.

The Plaza: The Plaza remains a peripheral thru-artery and generally unfriendly to the pedestrian. Much like Sugar Creek Rd., and N. Tryon St., The Plaza must retain its classification as an auto-centric road, with concessions made for the good of the pedestrian. No on-street parking will be available to buffer the pedestrian from traffic, so wide sidewalks behind 4’ planting strips are necessary. As The Plaza is an artery to many neighborhoods in the city, NoDa Vision can not recommend this road be scaled-down in size or width. But The Plaza must install pedestrian refuges, neckdown intersections and tree buffers at all possible locations (see “Commercial Revitalization” p. 65).

Hudson, 34th., 35th. @ The Plaza: Basic infrastructure improvements have already begun to upgrade the three streets that buffer the Food Lion grocery store on The Plaza. These three streets need only sidewalks and clear markings for on-street parking in order to be reclassified as Neighborhood Streets. The single family residences would appreciate these minor improvements.

Jordan Place: Once all visions for Jordan Circle are implemented (see “Gateways” p. 61, and see “Community Aesthetic” p. 28), this corridor will be completely rebuilt and up to the standards of a Pedestrian Heavy Corridor.

Cullman and Benard Avenue: Once the vision for Cullman Avenue is implemented (see “Parks” p. 38), this new area will be completely rebuilt and up to the standards of a Pedestrian Heavy Corridor.

Matheson Avenue: Matheson Avenue serves a purpose today, but should be built into a two lane boulevard (see “Community Aesthetic” p. 28) and reclassified as a Neighborhood Street.

Philemon Avenue: Philemon Avenue is an unused industrial road today, but should be built into a “skinny street network” (see “Density” p. 36) and reclassified as a Neighborhood Street.

E. Craighead Road: N. E. Craighead Road and the surrounding streets between Anderson St. and E. Sugar Creek Rd. are wide, partially used industrial roads today, but will be built into a new, dense, mixed use, Pedestrian Heavy Corridor and Neighborhood Street. (see “Density” p. 33)

Raleigh Street to E. Sugar Creek Road: Raleigh Street to E. Sugar Creek Road and the surrounding infrastructure are busy industrial and through traffic roads with little to offer the neighborhood pedestrians. As the area surrounding the proposed LYNX Sugar Creek Station is redeveloped, only an upgrade to Heavy Use Auto and Pedestrian Corridor is within sight.
The HNCNA has an adopted parking plan already. The NoDa Vision Plan 2030 will make further recommendations based on the original plan (reference the HNCNA’s published Parking Plan).

NoDa Vision’s Streetscape Plan makes recommendations about parking, most notably calling for clearly marked on-street parking spaces. On-street parking is plentiful in NoDa, however without clearly marked spots (with painted divider lines) many people hesitate. This can be fixed quickly, cheaply and easily.

The next parking solution in NoDa will come in the form of municipal or private parking structures. Several options have been presented within the NoDa Vision 2030 Plan: A parking garage wrapped in mixed-uses on the corner of Davidson Street and Anderson Street (see: “Density” p. 33). A raised parking structure in the FEMA floodplain at the corner of E. 36th Street and Cullman Avenue (see: “Community Aesthetic p. 26”). And a public/private parking structure on the site of the Johnston YMCA surface lot and proposed 34th Street extension (see “Density” p. 34).

With a strategic parking plan in place, NoDa will come in the form of municipal or private parking structures. Several options have been presented within the NoDa Vision 2030 Plan: A parking garage wrapped in mixed-uses on the corner of Davidson Street and Anderson Street (see: “Density” p. 33). A raised parking structure in the FEMA floodplain at the corner of E. 36th Street and Cullman Avenue (see: “Community Aesthetic p. 26”). And a public/private parking structure on the site of the Johnston YMCA surface lot and proposed 34th Street extension (see “Density” p. 34).

A supplementary study should inventory available public parking throughout the entire neighborhood. Then, using the classifications within NoDa Vision’s Streetscape Plan, steps should be taken to identify needs and uses for existing parking.

On-street parking should be available for all new development. This will cut back on the amount of paved surfaces in the neighborhood (helping to mitigate the “heat island effect”), and define and protect pedestrians on the sidewalk.

Parked should not be limited to automobiles either. Bicycle and moped parking should become the norm in new development. As NoDa grows, so too will the solutions for mobility. With proper care for infrastructure, bicycles and mopeds may replace our dependency on cars and parking.
Identifying Gateways

[To build community pride and identity by defining the geography of the neighborhood]

**Matheson Gateway**
(N. Davidson St. passing under the Matheson Avenue bridge)

- Oversized at grade intersection
- Leads to/from Matheson Gateway
- CDOT maintained

**Jordan Place**
(N. Davidson St. intersecting Jordan Place)

**Sugar Creek & LYNX Gateway**
(Southbound E. Sugar Creek Rd. passing under the LYNX/NCRR bridges into NoDa)

- Grade separated crossing of road and rail R.O.W.
- Aesthetic entrance into NODA's CBD
- CDOT maintained road, NCRR maintained bridge

**36th & LYNX NoDa Gateway**
(Southbound E. 36th St. passing under the LYNX/NCRR bridges into NoDa)

- Road bridge
- Widely used entrance/exit to NODA
- CDOT maintained

**Spencer St. Circle**
(E. 36th St. roundabout at the intersection of Spencer St.)

- At grade intersection
- Spencer proposed to see more use
- CDOT maintained

**The Plaza Gateway**
(Intersection of E. 36th St. and The Plaza)

- At grade intersection
- Widely used entrance/exit to NODA
- CDOT maintained
36th at LYNX NoDa Gateway

The proposed bridge crossing of the NCRR/LYNX presents a physical barrier that should be acknowledged and celebrated, rather than overlooked and ignored. The facade of the bridge leading from N. Tryon Street to NoDa’s CBD and heart should be integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood in a thoughtful and artistic way. This may consist of a mural, affixed art on the bridge, engineered design features, and a gallery wall along the sidewalk of 36th Street.

Sugar Creek at LYNX Gateway

Like 36th Street, the proposed bridge crossing of the NCRR/LYNX presents a physical barrier that should be acknowledged and celebrated, rather than overlooked and dealt with. E. Sugar Creek Road will see less pedestrian activity than 36th Street, so the treatment may require less attention - but should not be overlooked. This is a gateway into NoDa for anyone traveling from northern Charlotte and should be celebrated.
Matheson Bridge

Pronounce the entrance to NoDa via eastbound N. Davidson St. at the Matheson Ave. bridge. This is a gateway for traffic coming from Uptown Charlotte.

Jordan “Circle”

Jordan Circle precedes the Matheson Gateway and should receive a treatment that will resize and humanize the intersection.

The Plaza @ 36th

Explore a more dramatic entrance feature at The Plaza and 36th Street to embrace this corner as a vital part of NoDa.

Spencer Circle

Redefine the traffic zone on 36th Street, break up the long and wide runway effect, and create a geographic center to NoDa by building a round-a-bout with a dramatic visual feature and the pedestrian in mind.
[HOUSING / AFFORDABILITY]

[To guide residential growth in a reasonable and humanistic way]

To the casual onlooker, NoDa’s CBD may seem to be the only face of the neighborhood. But upon further inspection, you will find that NoDa is a diverse, pedestrian friendly, modest community. In fact, the signature historic residential infrastructure defines the aesthetic of NoDa in one word: modest. That is not to suggest that large houses with ornate architecture are not welcome. But, you will not find these houses treated as fortresses as in other neighborhoods. The largest house on any given street is likely on the same block as the smallest house. The interaction between their form, and residents, is what makes NoDa unique.

Moving forward, the free interaction between multiple forms of housing should be inventoried and protected. It is this interaction that will protect affordability. There will be no defined boundary for more affluent neighbors from less so. Interaction between income, race and generation will help protect the integrity, affordability and livability of NoDa.

Form based codes may present a picture of any given street to transition smoothly between upper income, single family, multi-family, and rental units (figure 1 - see: “Density” p. 36). In large, multi-family development, it is important to intersperse affordable housing amidst market-rate residential. This means a mixture of rental and owner-occupied units in the same general area.

During the national housing boom, NoDa realized the same truths about residential development as much of the nation: over-building can be the downfall of a modest neighborhood. Time and time again, the HNCNA urged builders to err toward modesty. NoDa Vision will continue to make this recommendation.

NoDa is sorely in need of in-fill duplex, triple, and quad developments. Unlike other neighborhoods that had houses large enough to be divided into multi-family, NoDa’s rehab housing stock is mostly too small. Projects like The Davy have done a commendable job to rehab a modest, compact, in-fill multi-family residential building. In a city such as Charlotte, where the standard is to build large box condominiums - a modest scale on an in-fill lot is not overlooked.

Zoning regulations do not allow for “carriage houses,” or “granny-flats” (secondary residential on a single lot). Variances to these rules exist and have been proven in Myers Park; however, NoDa should step forward in the fight to change these outdated regulations. NoDa should be the pioneering neighborhood in Charlotte to offer affordable secondary residential buildings for artists, students, or modest income individuals who still feel connected to the neighborhood.

Affordability will also go beyond the rate of rent or mortgage payments. The TOD zoning overlay, which will affect all residential areas within walking distance of a LYNX light rail stop, should offer affordable opportunities to live an urban life without suburban costs; however, the cost differential should not be a trade-off to live in a desirable TOD zone. With affordable housing in place, residents can live locally, and commute with less overall assumed cost. TOD zoning regulations should be the priority in NoDa.
Vision

[To guide commercial growth in an economically sustainable way.
To identify needs and solutions]

NoDa's retail landscape is delicate. On one hand, you have pioneering grass-roots start-ups such as Center of the Earth Gallery, and the Neighborhood Theatre, which have paved the way for a livable, affordable, and modest neighborhood. On the other hand, you have a “bigger-is-better” market condition that is incubated by self-inflating real estate prices. And in the center, you will find a middle-class clientele desperately in search of a sincere experience. In fact, the outward manifestation of NoDa is mostly defined by the type of retail experience it is able to provide. Most visitors do not see much more of the neighborhood than the CBD, and therefore will base their opinions on this facade. For this reason, it is most important to closely monitor the living and breathing organism that is NoDa's retail front.

To many visitors, NoDa is only bars, music, galleries, and restaurants. This is an image that has grown over the past twenty years. A resident of the North Charlotte neighborhood in 1930 would have assumed N. Davidson Street would always be lined with a soda shop, a dry goods store or a pharmacy. A resident of the North Charlotte neighborhood in 1970 would have assumed that E. 36th Street would never be anything more than a blighted former industrial corner, with an adult movie theater, prostitutes and drug dealers. And without vision, residents of NoDa in 2010 may not see beyond the bars, music venues, galleries and restaurants. But with a guided vision and an active neighborhood association, NoDa can be anything we wish for it in 2030.

The everyday existence of NoDa retail in 2010 (Tuesday at 2pm or Sunday at 10am), presents a neighborhood clientele that prefers to be local, and does not consume or require an exorbitant amount of goods and services. The preference of NoDa residents seems to be that they wish to have more variety, but would forgo variety rather than drive to another neighborhood for extra services (mainly groceries and every day supplies). Unfortunately for NoDa, other nearby neighborhoods such as Plaza-Midwood are much better served, thus the population of NoDa must sustain the necessary clientele for a grocer or market without much outside help (see “Profiles and Demographics” p. 16). That is, unless a savvy business owner were to offer a unique product or service that has not found traction elsewhere. So, a grocer in NoDa would need to offer products that are not available at the Harris Teeter in Plaza-Midwood, or be able to exist with only NoDa clientele.

There are exciting opportunities for grass-roots growth in NoDa. But, with inflating real estate prices, there are easier opportunities for corporate growth. As a neighborhood, NoDa should not turn its back on corporate growth, but rather should work very closely to guide the business presence in a modest and affordable way. Of course, independent and locally owned retail is preferred: Smelly Cat Coffee house over Starbucks, Revolution Pizza over Pizza Hut. But, most corporate presences are run locally. It is important for NoDa residents, and the HNCNA to articulate the notion that locally owned and staffed businesses will always get our patronage first. If corporations choose to open in NoDa, they must acknowledge their place in our neighborhood, and must first look to hire staff from the neighborhood. This will keep most of the money local, and help sustain our way of life.

Before corporate growth becomes a reality, NoDa should actively seek out ways to fill the niches with local business. This means: mobilize the neighbors to actively solicit an Independent Grocer, before a corporation descends onto the neighborhood. Build a relationship with that grocer as a local and viable part of everyone’s community experience, and support that business at all costs. Use the word “neighborhood” or “community” in the name of the business and reference the theme often as part of the business model. Actively solicit and suggest ideas to NoDa neighbors to open businesses within the neighborhood - and work closely to help advertise and build a following at street-level (rather than blanket advertising campaigns). Identify unused, underused, or abandoned properties within the neighborhood, and hold workshops or forums to generate business ideas (see “Commercial Revitalization” p. 64). Insist that new mixed-use development be built to be configurable (retail bays that may expand or contract according to the needs of the business). Insist that new mixed use development consult the HNCNA before rezoning/permitting/construction to identify the targeted clientele and price point. This will present the governing neighborhood association with the opportunity to direct the potential for retail “gentrification,” and will harness the most potential for local, grass-roots and start-up businesses to afford these new spaces.
The Future of Retail

Most NoDa residents suggest the same needs over and over:
- Grocery or General Store
- Bicycle Shop
- Community Bank or Credit Union
- Hobby or Art Store
- Farmers Market or Flea Market
- International Food Restaurants
- Vegetarian/Vegan Establishment
- ABC or Package Store

Some unique ideas are also presented:

- **Flex office and business center space** with short leases or daily use for small business and unique meetings.
- **Medium office space** to incubate and support afternoon and daily retail activity
- **Police Substation** with walk-up interaction to foster the pedestrian nature of NoDa and increase overall safety.
- **Art or Design College** would thrive in this unique and creative neighborhood.
- **International Corridor** at NoDa 28th would build on a thriving business model
- **Take-Out food windows** at restaurants would offer needed service and utilize public spaces.
- **Unique exhibits other than art** (such as a vintage video game arcade) provide for an expanded cultural experience.
- **Boutique Hotel or Mill House Bed and Breakfast** would certainly be used by out-of-town guests visiting NoDa neighbors who don’t have room in their small houses. Could also be used for out-of-town concert-goers.
- A youth hostel would offer a unique alternative for Charlotte - in Charlotte’s most unique neighborhood.

**Commercial Revitalization: Beyond the Box**

Consider a program that partners the HNCNA with a realtor who may be struggling to fill a vacant storefront. On a high profile night (such as a gallery crawl), the HNCNA could hold a meet-and-greet open house gallery to showcase the underused building and as a temporary autonomous zone. At this gathering, the HNCNA might choose to display artwork, have a musician, hold a neighborhood meeting or event, or even run an instructional workshop. The ultimate goal will be to show the many ways the unused building might find purpose.
The “Lower Plaza,” in the context of NoDa, meaning The Plaza from Matheson Avenue, to Academy Street, is a major city thoroughfare with strip commercial and small freestanding retail development. All vehicular and pedestrian access to retail is via parking lots located between the street and the fronts of the buildings. Parking lots are accessed via curb-breaks fed from The Plaza. All locations have their own dedicated parking lots. Sidewalks are generally back-of-curb and 4’ wide if present. A concrete median divides traffic beginning at 36th Street. Building set-backs are not uniform even within single blocks, and there is no unified facade or aesthetic guideline.

Figure 1 notes sightlines between facades (and corresponding pedestrian zones) including parking lots and streets highlighted GRAY. Protected sidewalks or private areas suitable for pedestrians are highlighted GREEN.

Quantity of buildings is similar. Orientation of buildings makes a safer and more inviting street. There is less need to jump from sidewalk segment to traffic island in this new vision.

Several design elements will work to revitalize the commercial zone on The Plaza. Without a targeted business master plan, it is impossible to make recommendations outside of design and function. Ultimately, the need of The Plaza, in the context of NoDa, is to offer necessary big box retail, auto repair, chain restaurants, and auto-centric businesses. In that The Plaza also serves to move high speed, thru-traffic along the perimeter of NoDa, this will never be a comfortable pedestrian street. But it can still be improved:

- Enforce the streetscape guidelines of Heavy Use Auto and Pedestrian Corridor (see: “Streetscape Plan” p. 54). Depending on available ROW, this plan calls for (without possible on-street parking) a minimum 4’ planting strip to buffer a minimum 4’ sidewalk.
- Implement a building set-back standard, and enforce this standard for the length of The Plaza. Existing buildings will be exempt; however, new construction, and upfits can/should be made to move facades in-line with the standard. Uniform set-backs will help define and frame the street.
- Frontage parking lots should be banned. In their place, buildings will not lose parking, rather lots would move to the rear. Auto repair shops can still operate, but with work zones and garages accessible only from the rear. Rear lots will be accessible by no more than one (1) curb cut per city block - with the secondary point of egress coming from side streets.
- Rear parking lots should be shared between at least two buildings. Side egress points will also be shared, forming a lane or alley at the back of the parking lot.
- Retail should be built in a number of ways, depending on the site. Building entrances or exits will be interchangeable between doors that front the sidewalk, and doors that front the rear parking lot. In cases where buildings are on a corner lot, entrances should face the corner and window displays should face The Plaza.
- Blank, or utility walls (including loading docks) should be concealed from The Plaza and side streets.
- Building footprints should mimic the contour of the street frontage. Corner units should mimic the angle of the intersection or provide a pedestrian landing or small plaza at the street corner.
NoDa sets a new standard for the perception of art in the community. Since the renaissance of North Charlotte into the Arts District of “NoDa,” art and community now define each other. Even as the grass-roots of NoDa’s freshman galleries grow into sophomore establishments, it is important to understand what the role of grass-roots art means to NoDa’s future. In short, a personal connection must exist between people and art. NoDa must always operate on a personal level with artists, gallery owners, neighbors and visitors (figure 1). If the personal connection is lost, NoDa will join the ranks of so many other indistinguishable Arts Districts.

The task will be to build a neighborhood that caters to grass-roots artists, as well as a growing population that is outside of the artist’s resource bracket. This will happen with careful planning (see: “Housing/Affordability” p.62), community outreach, cooperation of neighbors, and a concerted effort to perpetuate the idea that NoDa is now (and will always be) an affordable, diverse, and tolerant neighborhood (see: “Community Relations” p.70).

The NoDaRioty Committee (part of the HNCNA) will continue to maintain a connected and organized artist pool and organize events and programs that will perpetuate NoDa as an artists community. NoDaRioty will also work to monitor the needs and resources of the artists living the neighborhood, including concerns about gentrification, and availability of gallery and work space. NoDaRioty will report the concerns of the artist community and represent them in forums where they may be otherwise deficient (to the HNCNA Board and to City Council).

Regarding subsidized community art (from resources outside of the neighborhood): Subsidized art often tends to play it safe in drawing relevance from history or obvious subject matter. The art then becomes uninspired, predictable, disposable and finally forgettable. NoDa was built on the reputation of being witty and irreverent. It is important that future public art reflect those values; not only to perpetuate the spirit of NoDa, but to maintain the credibility of NoDa. Public art (the all-encompassing term that speaks also to architecture, infrastructure and design) needs to reflect the spirit, nature and aspirations of the community in which it exists (figure 2). For the free spirit of NoDa to flourish, we must encourage art to veer from safe avenues, inspire and be inspired, and take chances like no other neighborhood would dare. To do this, the HNCNA and its committees (NoDa Vision and NoDaRioty explicitly) must take an active role in educating the neighbors and facilitating a public forum for community participation and input.

NoDa School of the Arts works to encourage children and teenagers to visit the NoDa galleries, to become involved in the artist’s process, and to nurture the creativity of the future generation. This will perpetuate the image of NoDa to new generations in the community.

A pilot program should be started to strongly encourage any new development in NoDa to set aside at least 1% of the overall budget for art (figure 3). The HNCNA and its committees should work with all developers to identify the need for art, and then match the developer with a pool of NoDa artists. This program will work to perpetuate the image of NoDa, provide many work opportunities for artists living in the neighborhood or thinking of living in the neighborhood, and allow the neighbors to better shape the image of their NoDa, rather than a developer. This program should be well publicized in the development community as a positive contribution, rather than a mandatory hurdle.

A pilot program should be started (through NoDaRioty) for a Community Art Initiative. This program would actively seek ideas and contributions from the NoDa neighbors for existing infrastructure that needs artistic attention (figure 4). NoDaRioty or the C.A.I. group would organize the suggestions, attain permission for the project to move forward, match up an artist(s) for the project, line up funding sources, and see the project through to completion. NoDaRioty may choose to oversee the projects perpetually, or may organize a dissolvable task force for specific projects.
Creating a sustainable neighborhood should not limit development or burden future residents with relentless restrictions. Sustainability should offer opportunities for smarter growth (which balances the concerns of economy and environment). Above all, it should promote mobility, activity and livability while maintaining neighborhood identity.

The underlying goal is to preserve, nurture and improve the neighborhood. We encourage all future development to incorporate the most rigorous current standards of smart growth and green building. At the time of this writing, we are utilizing many of the concepts outlined for LEED ND Certification. Although NoDa may or may not receive a LEED ND certification, it is important to always grow with the guidelines in mind.

History and Current Status

Of the many HNCNA committees and task forces, Greenification is one of the most active. This committee’s mission is to make NoDa a greener place to live through edible, attractive and environmentally appropriate gardening. The group continues to grow and attract new members because it shares the neighborhood’s values and makes its presence known through a variety of activities:

- Hosting a monthly neighborhood garbage clean-up
- Promoting sustainability by building and selling salad boxes for neighbors to grow their own food
- Encouraging rainfall harvesting and composting
- Providing recycling services not offered by the city
- Identifying areas with sparse vegetation and propagating them with local vegetation through their “Guerilla Gardening” team
- Sponsoring a Green Yard of the Month to recognize neighbors who follow innovative, eco-friendly landscaping practices.

The committee is a vocal supporter of new ideas and projects that share its commitment to protect and nurture the environment. It encourages the re-use of building materials whenever possible and actively supports new projects that follow the current standards of “green building.”

Habitat – Sustainable Landscaping to Create Cohesion

The use of creative landscaping should be used extensively in plazas, pathways, green spaces and street areas. This will improve environmental quality as well as offer safe and attractive locations for communal gathering. Undeveloped spaces between established businesses and homes should be integrated by utilizing concepts described in the Parks entry (see p. 43-47). Cohesion and fluidity will make the neighborhood safer and more pedestrian friendly.

Landscaping should extensively use native non-invasive trees, shrubs and plants and be implemented keeping local wildlife in mind. Fruit-bearing thorny shrubs such as blackberry bushes, for instance, provide food and shelter for area birds. Many diverse local plant species attract bees and butterflies which benefit our backyard gardens. Creating a sustainable ecosystem can be a low maintenance way to provide food production, wildlife safety and erosion control, if done correctly.
[SUSTAINABILITY]

Overview

Water – Protecting Area Streams and Re-Using Resources

Impervious areas should be updated and improved. Water conservation is becoming much more significant and can easily be attained through a variety of measures:

- Impervious areas should be replaced with porous paving materials to mitigate water run-off. Current LEED standards suggest 50% permeable pavements. The city will never take the initiative to enforce these standards, however developers are encouraged to investigate solutions that may place their project in a class ahead of most.
- Biofiltration swales that filter and capture stormwater on site can help control mismanagement.
- Landscaping will help protect invertebrate, diverse land animals and birds. Maintaining existing streams and improving run-off will similarly assist aquatic life currently traumatized by neglect and apathy.

On a large scale, the collected waters could be used by independent businesses/multi-family residences to heat and cool their buildings (thermal loop) or as a community source for potable water. On a small-scale level, the collected water could be used as a water source for a community garden.

By mitigating run-off and erosion we can protect both landscaping projects and create vibrant streams at the same time. Dynamic streams help protect and are essential to stimulate future growth for local aquatic, avian and invertebrate species.

Energy – Efficiency and Cost Savings

NoDa proudly champions itself as a welcoming, eclectic neighborhood for diverse types of people. As a neighborhood, we should carry these traits and be in the forefront to utilize new technology to increase energy efficiency. Using energy more wisely and effectively can save money for local businesses and provide a blueprint for other neighborhoods to follow.

NoDa should also investigate using renewable energy to lessen environmental stress. Photovoltaic technology is a possibility to replace outdated street lighting. It could be implemented as other energy sources in areas where trees cannot grow because of existing structures. It will be important to utilize these sources in tandem, and not at the detriment to, mature tree canopy that is abundant in the neighborhood.

Open parking lots and large areas with little to no landscape are huge sources of thermal energy. These hot zones ("heat island") can be mitigated with careful use of landscaping in and around the structures to absorb wasted energy. Again, landscaping should be used wisely in order to maintain safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Design– Sustainability through Smart Design

Sustainable practices should be employed in new construction. Any architect or builder should be at least familiar with the standards and practices of the US Green Building Council. It is up to NoDa, its neighbors, board, and representatives to insist that new development is in-line with these standards. Not all development will seek a certification, but that should be no excuse to cut corners from a design standpoint. With minimal effort, and minimal neighborhood guidance, every bit of development can acknowledge and address sustainable practices: low impact, recycled, quality, durable building materials; passive heating and cooling; storm water mitigation; just to name a few. It will be the job of the HNCNA, its board and members to address this issue with all prospective developers entering the neighborhood. It should always be made clear that this is the priority and starting point of any development in NoDa. Sustainability also speaks to the way that a neighborhood is planned; everything from proximity to mass transit options and distance to workplace, to the way that connectivity within the street system relates to a resident’s needs. With a clear understanding of the entries set forth in this Vision Plan, sustainability is within reach. Every aspect of this Vision Plan relates to the next, and every aspect works off the principles of the last. A diligent neighborhood will feel the results of this clear vision and prosperity and a higher standard of living will certainly follow.
A look at how a potential community park and garden on Charles Avenue could be established offers a small glance of how all aspects of sustainability can be attained:

- Neighbors could host patches of a community garden patterned after cooperative farms. In exchange for their plots of land, they maintain the grounds and look after its well-being.
- Stormwaters could be collected and cleaned through conveyance channels which also direct water to underground wells. This system would tie into the proposed Highland Mill Creek Greenway project (see p.44).
- Collected water could be used to irrigate the park and community garden or stored for future use.
- Recycled materials, such as colorful glass mulch, can be used as artwork. While safe because its jagged corners are smoothed, it can be focused in areas with low pedestrian travel to create interesting pieces of art.
- Recycled glass can be illuminated from below using solar energy panels to provide inexpensive lighting, safety, and be a conversation piece to attract people to the park.
- In zones where trees cannot be grown, canopies of lighted wire and mesh lights on columns using solar lights could be attractive means to add safety and artwork to an otherwise underused area.

A community park and garden would strengthen neighborhood bonds while providing a low maintenance location where people felt safe to visit and socialize. Conserving water and providing landscape helps support our local ecosystems and could provide an opportunity for the neighbors to grow their own food.

An opportunity at the Highland Mill Montessori School: Zoning and building codes dictate that construction of the Highland Montessori School on N. McDowell St. must offset the building’s footprint with several contiguous unusable lots along Charles Ave. These lots are not needed by the school, but are not developable. These lots are a prime candidate for a community garden project. Not only would such a project achieve many of the sustainability goals, but could teach these goals to the students. The proposed community garden would also anchor the proposed Highland Mill Creek Greenway (see: “Parks” p. 44).

Examples of urban gardens - reclamation of blighted, unused or under-used city lots need not deter community pride; rather facilitate a neighborly environment.
Historic North Charlotte enjoys a citywide reputation as a friendly and eclectic arts-centric community. Indeed, this is a neighborhood that enjoys a distinction well beyond any other in Charlotte. In recent years, the “NoDa” moniker has solidified this unique identity within the neighborhood and throughout the region. Moving forward, it is important to strengthen the ties between the NoDa neighbors, and build the relationship with Charlotte residents alike.

Internally, NoDa has a well-organized and attended neighborhood organization (HNCNA) and several successful committees that keep residents informed and involved in safety, political and social issues. Local businesses are often owned by NoDa residents, and do a commendable job in building community via their establishments. Information flows between neighbors face-to-face, through a printed newsletter and electronically on the neighborhood forums and web site. As residential and business development continues and new neighbors move in, it is imperative that they are informed and included. This may be achieved through diligent communication with area realtors and leasing agents as well as a vibrant welcoming committee and a highly visible community organization. The average membership for The NoDa Neighborhood Association (HNCNA) has increased over the years to 81 voting members.

Externally, NoDa has a strong civic voice. NoDa leaders consistently connect with government officials to express the neighborhood’s stance on issues and policies. Leaders must maintain that connection, stay involved on the community level through initiatives such as the annual Neighborhood Symposium, and devise new ways to become active in government. Scheduled community-centric events, such as bi-weekly gallery crawls, concerts at Neighborhood Theatre, street performances at Salvador Deli, Yoga in NoDa, and the annual Charlotte Literary Festival, bring visitors and publicity to NoDa. Additional events, such as unique parades, festivals and Taste of NoDa-style restaurant/pub crawls, would increase visitor traffic. Likewise, NoDa should have a consistent presence at citywide events, such as the St. Patrick’s Day parade uptown and the Festival in the Park in Dilworth. It is more important, however, to reach out to other neighborhoods on a grass-roots level. NoDa should increase collaborations with nearby neighborhoods for altruistic purposes, such as the Adopt-A-Stream program or home fix-it projects for those in need. Additionally, NoDa could spearhead friendly competitions among Charlotte neighborhoods, such as a battle of the bands, which are purely for fun.

Finally, NoDa must make clear to developers and city officials the actual boundaries of the recognized neighborhood in order to protect the integrity of the name. As development multiplies, leaders must keep a close watch on how various entities are using the term “NoDa.” Structures and organizations which have no (or questionable) presence within the community may not use “NoDa” without the consent of the HNCNA. Conversely, projects that are clearly within the neighborhood and serve it – particularly the proposed LYNX NoDa Station at 36th Street – should carry the name proudly. Action items moving forward should include boundary maps posted on the web site, a comprehensive updated signage program using the NoDa logo along neighborhood borders, and a copyright of the name and logo. Another worthwhile project would be to organize an inventory of the history, present, and future of the neighborhood - displayed on an information kiosk or community bulletin board. This will involve the neighbors with their environment, and help educate visitors about NoDa.
NoDa is well above average in terms of access to public transit. The existing CATS route 3/23 bus stops are noted in the interior of the neighborhood. The periphery of NoDa is served by two other routes: 11/24, and 4 (figure 1).

Proposed Stations for the LYNX light rail will extend coverage into NoDa and are shown as .25 mile radius blue circles, and .5 mile radius brown circles (figure 2). A closer look at this map shows that 100% of NoDa is within 1 walkable mile of some form of public transit. In fact, only Holt St. and Hudson St. are beyond the 1 mile radius of the LYNX light rail; but both are within 2 blocks of a CATS bus stop on The Plaza.

When the LYNX comes online into NoDa, it is safe to assume that the CATS route 3/23 and 11/24 buses will be eliminated or rerouted. In order to continue coverage outside of the 1 mile radius (brown circle), and in tandem with the proposed redevelopement of Matheson Avenue into a Neighborhood Street (see “Community Aesthetic” p. 28), the route 3/23 or another bus route should run on Matheson Ave. to The Plaza.

The red line in Figure 2 shows access to the proposed LYNX stations (noted by the blue X) via three proposed greenways: proposed Little Sugar Creek Greenway (a Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation initiative), proposed Highland Mill Creek Greenway (see “Parks” p. 44), and proposed NoDa Greenway (see “Parks” p. 45). Keeping our neighbors and visitors safe while walking to and from the proposed mass transit stations is key. These greenways will offer a safe and green alternative to mixed traffic. NoDa Vision hopes to implement this plan under the auspices of the NECI (North East Corridor Infrastructure) Project.

NoDa Vision is adamant that the proposed 36th St. LYNX Station be called “NoDa Station” or “NoDa/36th Station.” (see “Community Relations” p. 70)
Beyond Utilitarian Engineering

The standard model for a LYNX platform and canopy does not represent the unique nature of NoDa. In tandem with the redevelopment of Newco Fiber (see “Historic Preservation” p. 37), the platform and canopies at NoDa Station should be unlike any others on the LYNX line. CATS should seek community input on canopy and platform design beyond that of the Art in Transit Program. Engineers should not be left to design the NoDa/36th St. Station.

Engineering needs require the LYNX track to “fly-over” the NCRR tracks around the 3500 block of N. Davidson Street. This is a highly visible spot in a residential part of NoDa. Special care should be given by the engineers to design a delicate and aesthetically palatable fly-over. The preferred method would be a narrow column viaduct integrated with and partially masked by a tree wall and sidewalk treatment. If a viaduct is not possible, and a wall must be built, see below:

In the case that a viaduct is not possible, and a wall must be built to carry the LYNX over the NCRR tracks (as shown to the right at Sharon Rd. West LYNX), this should be qualified for funding with Art In Transit. Beyond Art In Transit’s participation, arrangements should be made by CATS to work with NoDaRioty and the Community Art Initiative (see “Art and Creativity” p. 66) to develop a neighborhood supported mitigation for the utilitarian aspects of this wall.

In regards to the proposed bridge over 36th Street, and including the proposed NCRR and passenger bridges, an artistic design scenario should be implemented in place of the standard, utilitarian infrastructure (see “Gateways” p. 54). CATS should facilitate a project that involves the community (see “Art and Creativity” p. 66), and build the design scenario into the initial engineering of the structure(s). This also applies to the gateway at Sugar Creek.

The proposed grade separation at 36th Street below the rail ROW should not be allowed to be utilitarian either. The retaining walls that flank either side of 36th Street will be a busy pedestrian pathway and should welcome neighbors and visitors into NoDa. A permanent “Gallery Wall” should line the street (even when a sidewalk is not present). This detail will help warm up a potentially cold, concrete corridor - and the lighting for each art installation will be a unique way to light the area.
Moving forward with the Vision:
Cooperation
Community Activity
City Involvement
[RECOMMENDATIONS / ASSIGNMENTS:]

2010: Density

“To grow NoDa in a precise way that acknowledges connectivity, use/purpose and sustainability”

- Encourage moderate to high density to define the intersection of E. 36th St. and The Plaza.
- Encourage highest density redevelopment in the area between Anderson Street and Sugar Creek.
- Encourage the highest building heights to occur along the proposed LYNX (NCRR) at N. Davidson Street.
- Encourage diminishing height from N. Davidson Street to the A&WCC (proposed NoDa Greenway).
- Encourage moderate to high density within the boundaries of the former Yards at NoDa site.
- Encourage the highest building heights to occur along the proposed LYNX (NCRR).
- Encourage diminishing height from the LYNX (NCRR) to N. Davidson Street (not to exceed 5 stories at Davidson).
- Encourage medium (complementary) density to extend North from Steel Gardens toward Anderson Street.
- Encourage complementary height to diminish into single family housing along an extension of Spencer Avenue.
- Encourage new single family housing to line the proposed extension of Spencer, Essex and Sweetbriar Streets.
- Encourage highest density apartments/condos at Craighead Street and (proposed) Philemon Avenue Extension.
- Encourage moderate density rowhouses and flats along (proposed) Philemon Avenue Extension.
- Encourage a comfortable residential pod in the pocket bounded by Matheson, NCRR and N. Tryon St. with a straight and interconnected urban street grid.
- Encourage moderate density single family housing along Philemon Avenue Extension, closest to 36th Street.
- Encourage high density to occur along the LYNX (NCRR) at 36th Street and Philemon Avenue Extension.

2010: Parks

“To assess NoDa’s parks, and provide opportunities for new and inviting community spaces”

- Inventory, report and follow up on all existing park infrastructure needs and conditions to Charlotte Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation Department.
- Consider a neighborhood adoption of one or all NoDa parks to facilitate a stronger involvement from Parks and Recreation.
- Follow through on the designs and funding needed to complete the Cullman Avenue Park.
- Advocate for unusable buildings along Cullman Avenue to become part of the Cullman Avenue Park design area.
- Seek funding and support for the design and implementation of the (proposed) Highland Mill Creek Greenway concept.
- Seek funding and support for the design and implementation of the (proposed) NoDa Greenway concept.
- Seek funding and support for the design and implementation of the (proposed) NoDa Community Park.
2010: Housing and Affordability
“To guide residential growth in a reasonable and humanistic way”

- Advocate for mixed income housing to exist in close proximity to one another without barriers.
- Advocate for a mix of for-rent and for-sale housing to exist in close proximity to one another without barriers.
- Advocate for apartments or condos to diversity their income targets, and enforce a minimum of below market units.
- Advocate for form-based zoning to diversify mixed-uses and include a larger income range.
- Advocate for development to understand the neighborhood demographic, and provide a product that is of modest scale.
- Advocate for a neighborhood variance to allow secondary residences in the form of “carriage houses” or “granny flats.”
- Advocate for affordable and sustainable solutions in retail and daily needs within NoDa.
- Advocate for “Artspace LLC” or similar not-for-profit artist oriented development to take place in NoDa.
- Partner with local colleges to offer students affordable housing within the neighborhood.
- Advocate for affordable art related studio and/or gallery space in new construction.

2010: Sustainability
“To protect natural habitats, and guide development in a smart and eco-friendly way”

- Acknowledge and closely follow the guidelines set forth by the USGBC LEED-ND standards.
- Host a monthly neighborhood garbage cleanup sponsored by NoDa’s Greenification Committee.
- Fill any gaps in utility services provided by the City of Charlotte, including recycling and sustainable options.
- Use native, non-evasive, sustainable landscaping in private and public spaces.
- Advocate for storm-water mitigation and sustainable solutions to future development such as bioswales.
- Update street and utility lights to photovoltaic solar or renewable sources.
- Repurpose old buildings or recycle materials in the case of renovation.
- Use quality building materials that will stand for many years to cut down on waste.
- Infill vacant, unused, or underused lots with community garden projects.
- Encourage rooftop gardens on commercial buildings.
### Recommendations / Assignments:

**2010: Community Aesthetic**

"To acknowledge the importance of minor details in NoDa that make the whole neighborhood unique"

- Protect the historic architecture and infrastructure of the three Historic Mills and their respective Mill Villages.
- Prohibit parcel consolidation and large development within the Mill Villages.
- Protect the pedestrian friendly scale of the Distinct Character Neighborhood.
- Encourage affordable, well scaled UR-3 infill projects in the Distinct Character Neighborhood.
- Encourage affordable, well scaled UR-3 infill projects in the Southeast part of NoDa (Spencer to The Plaza).
- Redevelop the remaining brownfield sites adjoining Steel Gardens in a complementary way.
- Repurpose existing 36th Street buildings to form an organic boulevard of mixed uses.
- Redevelop the strip commercial buildings on 36th Street as walkable and inviting street-front retail.
- Redevelop the apartment courts (NoDa Courts, Twin Oaks) on 36th Street as affordable, street-front urban dwellings.
- Encourage sustainable building practices in the redevelopment process (repurposing and recycling of materials).
- Establish a “build-to line” or common set-back for development on The Plaza.
- Move parking to concealed, rear lots on The Plaza with minimal curb-cuts, and secondary egress by rear alley.
- Repurpose the existing warehouses and industrial buildings along Cullman, or acquire the land for the Cullman Avenue Park.
- Protect existing structures in NoDa’s CBD, and repurpose them, or reuse them in redevelopment projects.
- Encourage affordable, and configurable infill development of open lots in NoDa’s Central Business District (CBD).
- NoDa Vision should actively help with historical significance, architectural guidance and the facade grant program.
- The remaining existing large houses on 36th Street should be repurposed organically as restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts.
- All overhead power and utility lines throughout NoDa’s CBD should be buried.
- All overhead traffic signals on wires should be converted to hang from mast arms.
- All pedestrian streetlighting should be updated, made identical, and powered by sustainable sources.
- Only clear glass should be used in storefronts within the NoDa CBD.
- Develop a system of historical markers within NoDa’s CBD, and update the existing signage program.
- Develop a program to encourage all businesses to hang blade signs to build their sidewalk presence.
- The HNCNA should review existing and future billboard signs, or pole signs.
- Inventory and update lightposts, street signs, and benches and trash receptacles and needed.
[RECOMMENDATIONS / ASSIGNMENTS:]

2010: Traffic
"To acknowledge traffic and street conditions at ground level with a neighborhood perspective"

- Advocate for more thru-street connectivity, including extensions of Philemon, Spencer, Atmore, Norwell & Essex.
- Advocate for a decommissioning of the CSX Intermodal Yards and Matheson Avenue as a heavy industrial connector.
- Advocate for Matheson Avenue to be converted into a single lane, bidirectional, median separated boulevard.
- Maintain truck restrictions within the boundaries of NoDa and its neighborhood streets.
- Advocate for traffic calming development along the two key blocks of N. Davidson Street.
- Advocate for a raised or median crosswalk at the N. Davidson Street intersection of (proposed) Highland Mill Creek Greenway.
- Advocate for the “lawn” at The Colony to be redeveloped to straighten N. Davidson Street, and add on street parking.
- Advocate for redevelopment of the area around 2800 block of N. Davidson Street to calm traffic and define sightlines.
- Construct raised or textured crosswalks as part of the (proposed) Highland Mill Creek Greenway.
- Construct a pedestrian refuge island or similar traffic calming island at the crossing of (proposed) Highland Mill Creek.
- Address the overgrown lot at the corner of N. Davidson Street and the (proposed) Highland Mill Creek Greenway.
- Advocate for four-way stops at all intersections on Charles Avenue.
- Advocate for new construction and renovation of houses on Charles Avenue to properly face the street.
- Extend Spencer Street to handle future capacity and to provide further connectivity to the southeast part of NoDa.
- Construct a traffic circle at the intersection of Spencer Street and E. 36th Street to breakup the “runway” effect.
- Extend E. 33rd, E. 34th, E. 35th Streets into (proposed) “Yards at NoDa,” to provide farther connectivity.
- Extend Philemon Ave./Cullman Ave. to connect from E. 36th Street to Craighead Street to provide future connectivity.
- Extend Ritch Ave. across Little Sugar Creek to meet (proposed) Philemon Ave. extension.
- Extend Atmore St. one more block from Norwell Pl. to E. Sugar Creek Rd.
- Extend Norwell Pl. across (proposed) NoDa Greenway to connect with extended Essex St. and provide connectivity.
- Extend Academy St. north of the (proposed) “X” crossing at Spencer St. extension.
[RECOMMENDATIONS / ASSIGNMENTS:]

2010: Streetscape
“To assess the current pedestrian environment and guide growth in the future pedestrian environment”

☐ Follow the Streetscape guidelines to rebuild Charles Avenue into a Neighborhood Street.
☐ Delete extrawide planting strips on N. Davidson and E. 36th St.’s, and replace with hardscaped amenity zones.
☐ Construct neckdowns and crosswalks at all intersections along E. 36th St.
☐ Construct sidewalks in compliance with the Streetscape guidelines for all blocks on N. Davidson St.
☐ Determine and implement a “build-to” or acceptable setback line for The Plaza.
☐ Advocate for street-fronting parking lots and auto lots to be moved behind the businesses on The Plaza.
☐ Construct sidewalks in compliance with the Streetscape guidelines for Hudson St., E. 34th St., and E. 35th St.
☐ Convert Matheson Ave. into a bi-directional, median protected boulevard in compliance with the Streetscape guidelines.

2010: Commercial Revitalization
“To guide commercial growth in a economically sustainable way. To identify needs and solutions”

☐ A concerted effort should be made to support and involve locally owned businesses as a vital part of NoDa.
☐ Alternatives to chain retail should always be explored before those chains are allowed into NoDa.
☐ Locally owned businesses should use the words “community” or “neighborhood” as part of their business plan.
☐ Identify unused, underused, or abandoned properties and hold workshops to generate business ideas.
☐ Insist the new construction mixed-use retail bays be configurable to expand or contract as needed.
☐ Advocate for a consultation process between new business owners and the HNCNA to identify targeted clientele.
☐ Develop a pilot program that will partner the HNCNA with realtors who are struggling to fill a vacant retail bay.

2010: Transit
“To propagate the use of public transit, as well as identify and mitigate the impact on NoDa”

☐ Advocate for transit service to be within 1/2 mile of every residence in NoDa.
☐ Advocate for an adjustment to be made to include service to (proposed) Matheson Neighborhood Street “Boulevard.”
☐ Pair with the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure (NECI) project to implement upgrades to pedestrian paths to/from stations.
☐ Advocate for basic, utilitarian transit infrastructure to receive unique and memorable designs and treatments.
☐ Advocate for local artists to be awarded permission to “dressup” or do treatments on utilitarian transit infrastructure.
☐ Advocate for community input to NCRR and NCDOT as well as CATS for bridge building projects.
[RECOMMENDATIONS / ASSIGNMENTS:]

2010: Parking
“To assess and forecast the parking needs in NoDa in a sustainable and pedestrian friendly way”

☐ Stripe, or mark with neckdowns or treebays, all on-street parking spaces along N. Davidson, and E. 36th St.
☐ Advocate for municipal or private parking structures to replace surface lots.
☐ Delete streetfronting parking lots.
☐ Advocate for LEED standard, permeable pavements, and/or light colored/reflective pavements.
☐ Perform a parking study as part of a supplementary Streetscape or Ped-Overlay Plan.
☐ Provide adequate and highly visible parking for bicycles, mopeds and other forms of non-auto mobility.
☐ Develop a parking structure on the west corner of E. 36th Street and NCRR (Cullman Avenue).

2010: Art and Creativity
“To keep NoDa connected to its artistic roots, and provide room for growth in the artistic community”

☐ Protect the grass-roots nature of NoDa’s galleries and venues, and encourage neighborhood pride and interaction.
☐ Maintain a connected and involved pool of artists and contributors working for the good of NoDa.
☐ Organize events and activities that will perpetuate the image of NoDa as a welcoming and inclusive artist community.
☐ Maintain a liaison role through NoDaRioty to articulate concerns and needs of artists to the HNCNA.
☐ HNCNA should actively campaign for a public forum of neighbors and artists to the City of Charlotte.
☐ Start a pilot program that will advocate for a percentage of new construction budget to be spent solely on related art.
☐ Start a Community Art Initiative program to solicit suggestions from neighbors for community art projects.

2010: Community Relations
“To connect the residents of NoDa to their neighbors; and guide the image of NoDa to visitors”

☐ Maintain an active and inclusive neighborhood association (HNCNA) and seek to involve more neighbors always.
☐ Maintain the gallery crawl and other neighborhood events as important relations to the region.
☐ Seek more opportunities to represent NoDa outside of the boundaries of the neighborhood.
☐ Protect the name “NoDa,” and monitor its use in development for misuse or misrepresentation.
☐ Inventory, update and devise a new community signage and logo program.
☐ Consider a trademark or brand capture for the “NoDa” moniker.
[RECOMMENDATIONS / ASSIGNMENTS:]

2010: Crime and Safety
“To increase public safety and awareness and build a strong and livable community”

- Promote a pedestrian friendly neighborhood to increase eyes on the street and community policing.
- Promote a “Block Captain” and “Neighborhood Watch” Program.
- Enhance street lighting.
- Focus attention on lawbreakers, and update the community on potential threats to safety.
- Uphold a strong relationship with CMPD and the neighborhood officers.
- Advocate for interpersonal relationships between business owners and neighborhood groups.
- Address and guide community concerns about unsafe or declining private lots within the neighborhood, and facilitate Charlotte’s code enforcement and advocacy involvement when necessary.
- Address the design of The Plaza and how it may effect public safety concerns - while maintaining useful and necessary amenities.

2010: Historic Preservation
“To acknowledge, protect and repurpose historic structures as defining elements of NoDa”

- Preserve the Newco Fiber Building and repurpose the existing buildings as an inviting space with multi-uses including retail, public space and transit.
- Preserve the historic street grid and infrastructure of the three (3) Mills and their respective Mill Villages.
- Preserve the aesthetic value of the existing commercial structures in NoDa’s CBD.
- Preserve the historic Mecklenburg Mill water tower on E. 37th St. and celebrate it as a neighborhood landmark.
- Preserve the Johnston and Mecklenburg Mill Buildings. Retrofitting the original structures for modern should take in account calls for affordability and range of use as well as historic preservation.
- Inventory the historic structures within NoDa, and facilitate a dialogue to protect and celebrate them.
- Participate in programs that would preserve and record the history and life of the neighborhood - use this information to make informed and educated decisions about the future of NoDa.

2010: Gateways
“To build community pride and identity by defining the geography of the neighborhood”

- Construct a memorable gateway at the five points of access into NoDa.
- Implement a signage program to direct visitors to NoDa from a variety of outside roadways (I-277/Uptown).
The development checklist is a tool to be used by potential developers and builders in NoDa. It is a checklist of priorities within the NoDa Vision 2030 Plan. Often, the HNCNA board and members will ask these questions at rezoning petitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you read through the NoDa Vision Plan 2030, and understand the neighbor’s priorities?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you considered going for a LEED certification for your development?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you will not go for a LEED certification, will you still consult the priorities for sustainable development?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand the historical significance of the property in question?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you consulted the HNCNA about your target socio-economic target?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you familiar with the preferred aesthetic of the immediate area surrounding the property in question?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you located the property in question in the Streetscape Plan and understand the future projections for the street?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you need a variance to uphold the future projections, and if so, have you consulted with the HNCNA?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your development correlate to the preferred vision for density in NoDa?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your development contribute or add to the historical street grid?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you located the property in question in relation to the TOD zone(s), and planned parking accordingly?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will your on-site parking requirements be contained behind your development; not to have curb-cuts at street-frontage?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will a portion of your development be made “affordable” or “below market pricing”?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In multi-unit development, will all ground-level units will have individual, sidewalk-accessed entrances?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In multi-unit development, will your development plan for mobility other than automobiles (bicycle parking lots)?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In multi-unit development, will your development offer an inclusive public plaza or meeting space at street-level?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In mixed-use development, will the retail units be reconfigurable for affordable start-up businesses?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you be contributing a fixed percentage of the overall project budget toward locally produced art at the site?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you mitigate your contribution to storm water runoff by providing sustainable and ecofriendly solutions?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you save existing trees, and/or add native, non-evasive trees and plantlife as part of the development?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1995 North Charlotte Vision Plan: A document developed in 1995 by city planning staff and stakeholders to address concerns and guide revitalization of the neighborhood. It was a starting point for the 2030 Vision Plan.

ACWR (Aberdeen & Western Carolina Railroad): A regional freight railroad operating in central North Carolina which interchanges with Norfolk Southern in Charlotte. In NoDa, the line runs directly behind Highland Mill and the Mecklenburg and Johnston Mill buildings and on to East Sugar Creek Road at The Plaza.

Bioswale: A landscaping element designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water. A common application is around parking lots, where substantial automotive pollution is collected by the paving and then flushed by rain. The bioswale, or other type of biofilter, wraps around the parking lot and treats the runoff before releasing it to the watershed or storm sewer.

Boulevard: A street ranging from 2 to 4 lanes that is designed to move large numbers of vehicles from one part of the city to another and to smaller streets. A wide, landscaped median, sidewalks, planting strips with street trees and bike lanes serve pedestrians and cyclists.

Brownfield: A piece of property determined by the Environmental Protection Agency to have a possible or definite presence of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants, making redevelopment or reuse of the land complicated. The EPA offers grants to help identify and clean up Brownfield sites.

CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System): A system of bus routes, light rail, and vanpools run by the City of Charlotte.

CBD (Central Business District): Considered “Downtown NoDa,” it is composed of the businesses housed in the historic and infill buildings on 36th and North Davidson streets.

CDOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation): The city department responsible for street planning and maintenance, traffic signal installation and maintenance, traffic calming devices and other safety projects.

Charette: A collaborative meeting or series of meetings in which stakeholders discuss community planning, design options and/or overall issues.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services: Maintains the storm drainage system, identifies floodplains, restores and preserves natural streams and monitors water quality/pollution in creeks, streams and lakes.

Connectivity: The building of road, bicycle, and pedestrian connections between established streets and neighborhoods in order to improve traffic flow and increase accessibility.

Crime and Safety Committee: Meets monthly to organize crime prevention and coordinate with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department.
EDC (Economic Development Committee): Meets monthly to spearhead retail needs and generate interest in local business.

FEMA floodplain: An area determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be at risk of flooding. Floodplains are used to set flood insurance rates and may be subject to building restrictions.

Gentrification: An influx of rebuilding and renovation by middle-class and wealthy people that often displaces poorer residents in a neighborhood.

Greenification Committee: Meets monthly to devise ways to increase and protect natural habitats and guide development in an environmentally friendly way.

Greenway: A recreational path or trail that abuts natural elements, such as streams, as well as public rights-of-way, such as abandoned rail corridors. They are generally reserved for pedestrian and non-motorized traffic.

Historic North Charlotte: Term used to describe the neighborhood before the NoDa name became popular. It reflects the area’s designation as a National Register Historic District. Also see NoDa.

HNCNA (Historic North Charlotte Neighborhood Association): Also known as the NoDa Neighborhood Association, it exists to preserve the NoDa neighborhood and to foster its local businesses and arts community.

HNCNA Board: The governing body of the Association, the Board is composed of 11 elected Association members who set policy and represent the Association on all matters. The Board is elected by the Association and is subject to the Association’s oversight. Also known as the Board of Directors.

Infill: The use or reuse of land within existing buildings for construction or renovation.

Intermodal yard: A transportation hub in which the transfer of goods between rail and trucking systems takes place.

LEED: A green building certification system which verifies that a building or community incorporates environmentally-friendly strategies, including energy and water efficiency, emissions reduction, indoor environmental quality and minimal impact on natural resources.

Little Sugar Creek Greenway: The greenway, when complete, will feature 15 miles of paths from Cordelia Park to the South Carolina line. The NoDa area portion connects Cordelia Park at North Davidson Street and Parkwood Avenue to Alexander Park in the Belmont neighborhood.

LYNX: Charlotte’s light rail system currently operating a Blue Line from I-485/South Boulevard in south Charlotte to 7th Street Uptown. When built, the 11-mile Blue Line Extension will continue the Blue Line northeastwardly to 9th Street, NoDa, University City, UNC Charlotte and I-485. Proposed stations in NoDa include 27th Street, 36th Street, and East Sugar Creek Road.
Massing: A design concept that takes into account the height and scale of surrounding buildings so that the new project is compatible.

Mill town/mill village: A settlement developed around one or more mills or factories in the early 20th century to provide housing, churches, schools and stores for workers and supervisors. Typical worker mill houses were one story, four room homes.

NCRR (North Carolina Railroad): A 317-mile rail corridor connecting Charlotte to Morehead City. In NoDa, NCRR is north of and runs roughly parallel to North Davidson Street. Its right-of-way will incorporate the LYNX Blue Line extension.

Neckdown: A curb extension at an intersection that decreases the width of the road, making it safer for pedestrians to cross by shortening the distance and drawing attention to them. Neckdowns also slow the speed of turning vehicles.

Neighbor/stakeholder: Residents, interested parties and others who may effect or be affected negatively or positively by neighborhood policy and actions.

NoDa: Also known as the Historic North Charlotte Neighborhood and The Arts District, the neighborhood’s boundaries are Matheson Avenue, North Tryon Street, Sugar Creek Road and The Plaza.

NoDa Vision/NoDa Vision Committee: A group of stakeholders charged with the creation and implementation of this plan.

NoDaRioty: A neighborhood committee that meets monthly to organize events and programs that perpetuate NoDa as an artists’ community and support the needs of artists living and working in the neighborhood.

North Charlotte: Defined by the City of Charlotte’s Neighborhood Quality of Life Study as area 44, bounded by The Plaza, Eastway Drive, the North Carolina Railroad and Matheson/Clemson avenues (see “Profiles and Demographics, p. 16), thus differing from NoDa neighborhood boundaries.

North End Partners Inc: Also known as the North Tryon Area Coalition and the Tryon North Development Corporation, this group advocates for the revitalization of the North Tryon Street corridor.

NECI (Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Project): CATS sponsored design project to integrate rail with a mix of pedestrian and public right of ways. The South Corridor Infrastructure Project saw design and completion of a parallel bike/pedestrian pathway along the LYNX.

Pedestrian scale: Development that balances vehicular and pedestrian needs particularly providing comfortable gathering places and amenities, retail and services within walking distance from homes.

Pocket Park: A small infill park accessible to the general public. In some areas they are called miniparks or vest-pocket parks. Pocket parks are frequently created on a single vacant building lot or on small, irregular or otherwise unusable pieces of land. They also may be created as a component of the public space requirement of large building projects. In highly urbanized areas, particularly downtowns where land is very expensive, pocket parks are the only option for creating new public spaces without large-scale redevelopment.

Rails to Trails: A non-profit dedicated to creating a nationwide network of recreational trails along former railroad lines.
Roundabout: A circular road junction in which drivers travel counterclockwise around an island in the center. It differs from a traffic circle in that a roundabout is smaller, requires a lower speed of travel, and usually requires drivers entering the circle to yield to those already in it.

ROW (Right-of-Way): A strip of land used for the route of a railroad, public road, or utility line.

Setbacks: The minimum distances a building must be placed from its property lines.

Skinny Streets/Road Diet: An adopted name for a movement aimed at reducing the dimensions of streets in municipal standards; thereby providing a number of benefits to speeding, vehicle crashes, street construction costs, pedestrian crossing distances, impervious surfaces, street maintenance and resurfacing costs, and heat re-radiation which contributes to the urban heat island effect.

Stakeholder: See “neighbor.”

Streetscape: The appearance or view of a street, including width, vehicular and pedestrian access, traffic-calming devices and landscaping.

TOD (Transit Oriented Development): A zoning district that promotes compact, high-density development to support transit typically within ½ mile, or a 10-minute walk, from a station. A mix of retail, residential, office and civic uses is centered on pedestrian, bicycle and public transit.

Traffic circle: See “roundabout.”

USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council): A non-profit that promotes energy-saving and cost-efficient building. It developed the LEED designation.

Villa Heights: A neighborhood directly adjacent to NoDa on the Matheson Avenue side that is experiencing a similar revitalization. It is bounded by Matheson, Clemson Avenue, Parkwood Avenue and North Davidson Street.
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