“The infrastructure is good because the rail is already in place...There’s an eclectic mix here that’s interesting; there’s a creative indigenous population that’s very interesting. Make this the go-to place in Charlotte.”

—Michael Oden, Creative Housing Associates

“My first impression was that there’s a great beginning of something here, a great historic area. We build projects all over the country and there are things here in South End that we would try to recreate in new projects that we could never match...it’s got great bones.”

—Anthony Greenberg, The JBG Companies

OVERVIEW
Over the past decade, South End has grown into one of Charlotte’s most dynamic places, transitioning from a predominately commercial and industrial area into a creative design district and a vibrant urban residential neighborhood. Its proximity to Uptown, the airport, major highways, and access to the light rail line provides convenience and momentum for continued growth. In the past year alone, there has been an explosion of plans to build new apartment complexes, with over 7 projects either planned or under construction.

Since 2005, the neighborhood’s land use, zoning, station area, streetscape, and public infrastructure investment have been aptly guided by the South End Transit Station Area Plan. But, given South End’s rapid development, neighborhood leaders decided to seek the input and real-world expertise of national and local experts as well as government professionals to help guide neighborhood growth and development over the next 5 to 10 years.

Through workshops with neighborhood stakeholders and experts in December 2011 and January 2012 respectively, participants developed strategies to help build a better South End that addressed:

• **PLAY**: Create a more exciting and fun destination for hospitality, entertainment, and shopping.

• **LIVE**: Provide residents and workers with more neighborhood amenities and services.

• **RECREATE**: How and where to enhance the natural environment and provide for parks and recreational facilities.

• **WORK**: Position the neighborhood to recruit new and support existing businesses.

The recommendations from both workshops are summarized on the inside pages.

GOOD TO GREAT

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Thursday 9:00-5:00

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STATISTICS
• 3,320 residents
• 58% increase in housing units since 2007
• 3.4 million square feet of new residential floor area
• 53% of all dwelling units built in Center City since 2007
• 750+ retail and commercial businesses
• 328 design and creativity-oriented businesses
• 2.5 million square feet of retail
• 49% growth in dining and entertainment establishments since 2007
• Over 9,000 employees
• 4.8 million Lynx Blue Line passengers annually
• 3 billion of private investment
1. Develop Camden Road area as the natural neighborhood center.

With 1,643 new units built over the past 5 years, South End's population has dramatically increased from nearly 1,500 to 3,320, changing the area into a full-fledged neighborhood. New residents and workers are demanding for necessary services, places to shop, dine, socialize, and just hang out. South End needs an identifiable “heart place” or “town square.”

- Plan “Camden Square” as neighborhood center
- Channel infrastructure investment to “Camden Square”
- Focus on “Camden Square” in retail strategy

2. Nurture authentic neighborhood retail.

South End’s small-scale historic and contemporary buildings provide perfect spaces to grow quaint, funky, and unexpected shops, galleries, restaurants, and cafes. With 432 (132 retail/300 commercial) creative, home-grown shops and retail.

- Develop retail strategy
- Devise parking strategies
- Investigate “seeded” retail anchor

3. Plan and develop a public realm of parks, open space, and recreation facilities.

As an up-and-coming residential neighborhood, the need for proportionate parks, gathering spaces, trees and vegetation is increasingly evident. A parks and recreational network should proportionate parks, gathering spaces, trees and vegetation is increasingly evident. A parks and recreational network should be thoughtfully integrated within the existing public realm and transit system.

- Produce South End park & recreation plan
- Focus on rail trail improvements
- Acquire new park land

4. Improve neighborhood connectivity.

South End is in the heart of Center City and is connected by light rail and major thoroughfares to the rest of Charlotte. Yet, these major arteries are dangerous for South End residents and visitors, especially pedestrians and cyclists. Heavy traffic volume and high speeding vehicles on the I-277 loop, South Tryon Street, and South Boulevard in particular are barriers to growth and urban connectivity. To improve connectivity:

- Devise & implement South Boulevard traffic calming
- Implement South Tryon Street road diet & extend Central Business District streetscape
- Identify & improve neighborhood connections with complete streets & pedestrian & bicycle paths

5. Raise the development bar.

South End’s combination of old and new buildings gives it a unique and memorable character. Unfortunately, some recent development has fallen short of contributing to the collective vision for South End. Instead of developments composed of a vibrant mixture of uses in architecturally diverse buildings, the recent norm has been single use rental residential projects of a predictable size, scale, and design. It is important to prevent dilution of the quality that has brought South End so far. To continue building toward the vision of South End as a neighborhood rich in urban texture and vitality, higher urban design, architectural, and land use standards should be considered.

- Identify urban design issues & opportunities such as:
  - Ground floor building design
  - Parking deck location
  - Building massing, scale & use
  - Respect street grid

- Update & create design guidelines

6. Keep South End accessible to those who make it great.

South End is a diverse neighborhood with a variety of businesses and housing options. With increased demand threats to push out some of the very people who make South End a desirable place to live and work. As developers continue to add new housing, retail, and office spaces, they must be conscientious stewards of the neighborhood by offering affordable and workforce housing and economical places to do business in addition to market-rate options. With a wide range of housing and retail spaces, South End will continue to be a neighborhood that is eclectic and accessible to people from all walks of life.

- Encourage or require affordable & workforce housing
- Seek programs to support small businesses

*Note: The service areas shown in the above initiatives are not actual places in South End. They represent not what currently exists, but represent examples of urbanism we want to have.