



CHARLESTON 2050

Area plan

July 2025

Prepared by Happy Cities for the City of Las Vegas



Acknowledgments

City Council

Shelley Berkley, Mayor
Brian Knudsen, Mayor Pro Tem (Ward 1)
Victoria Seaman (Ward 2)
Olivia Díaz (Ward 3)
Francis Allen-Palenske (Ward 4)
Shondra Summers-Armstrong (Ward 5)
Nancy E. Brune (Ward 6)

Planning Commission

Commissioner Jeff Rogan, Chair
Commissioner Sam Cherry, Vice Chair
Commissioner Trinity Haven Schlottman
Commissioner Anthony Williams
Commissioner Donald Walsh
Commissioner Serena Kasama
Commissioner Jennifer Taylor

Long Range Planning Staff

Marco N. Velotta, AICP, Project Manager
Mark House
Michael Howe, AICP
Ian Rynex, AICP

Ward 1 Staff

Councilman Brian Knudsen
Dave Neldberg
Maria Jose Trevino Espinosa

City Staff

Seth T. Floyd, Community Development Director
Fred Solis, AICP, Planning Manager
Joey Paskey, Director of Public Works
Arcelia Barajas, Director of Neighborhood Services
Maggie Plaster, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs
Jace Radke, City Communications Department
Karen Castro, City Communications Department

Citizens Advisory Committee and Public Input

Thank you to the residents who participated in the development of this plan and provided input through surveys, community pop-up events, focus group sessions, and more.

Consultants

Happy Cities

Happy Cities is an urban planning, design, and engagement consulting firm. We work with cities, developers, housing providers, and organizations around the world, applying the science of wellbeing to design buildings, streets, and urban spaces that contribute to happier, healthier, more inclusive communities.



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Executive summary

The Charleston Area Plan provides guidance on how the community will grow over the next 25 years.

The Charleston Area Plan is a component of the City of Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan.

Charleston is a central, 5,149-acre area home to over 75,000 residents, directly west of Downtown Las Vegas. The area extends approximately from US 95 in the north to Sahara Ave. in the south, and from Buffalo Dr. in the west to Rancho Dr. on the eastern edge.

This plan reflects input from three rounds of community engagement, background analysis, and visioning with City staff.

For a detailed breakdown of community input, please see the engagement summary reports at:

lasvegasnevada.gov/Charleston

Process



The Charleston Area Plan contributes to an equitable, resilient, healthy, livable, and innovative future for Las Vegas.

This plan is organized into four main areas of action:

Streets and transportation (chapter 3)

Create safe, comfortable, vibrant streets in Charleston that support active transportation and allow people to meet daily needs by any mode they choose.

Housing and development (chapter 5)

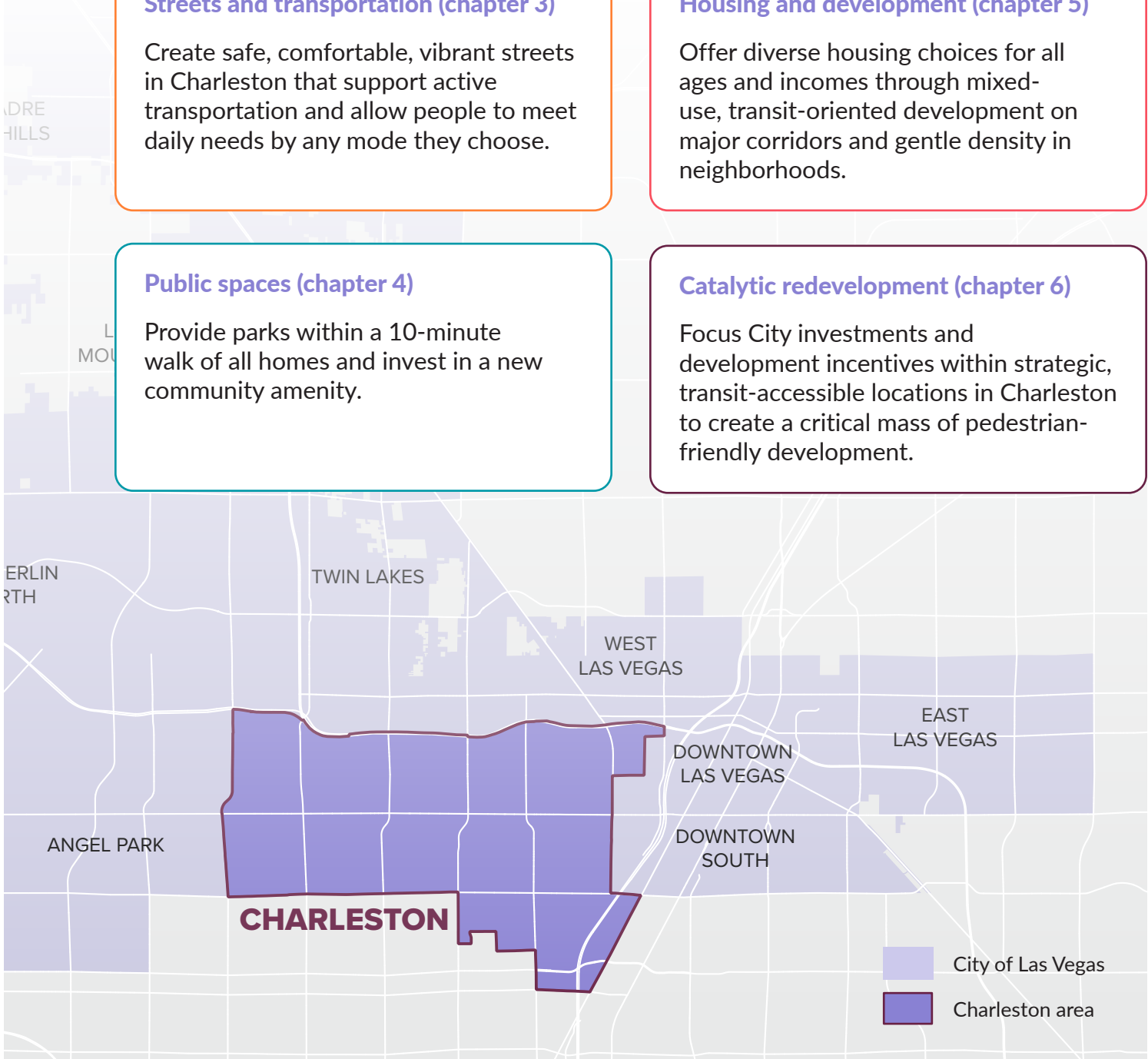
Offer diverse housing choices for all ages and incomes through mixed-use, transit-oriented development on major corridors and gentle density in neighborhoods.

Public spaces (chapter 4)

Provide parks within a 10-minute walk of all homes and invest in a new community amenity.

Catalytic redevelopment (chapter 6)

Focus City investments and development incentives within strategic, transit-accessible locations in Charleston to create a critical mass of pedestrian-friendly development.



3.1. TRANSIT

Charleston will have safe, convenient, comfortable, reliable transit that supports high-quality, pedestrian-friendly development.

- 3.1.1. Work with RTC to invest in high-quality transit
- 3.1.2. Work with RTC to provide comfortable transit stops

3.2. CORRIDORS

Major corridors will be vibrant commercial streets that facilitate efficient travel for commuters and all transportation modes.

- 3.2.1. Update corridor standards
- 3.2.2. Slow traffic by design
- 3.2.3. Improve sidewalk accessibility, safety, and comfort
- 3.2.4. Create safe crossings for pedestrians
- 3.2.5. Create mid-block crossings
- 3.2.6. Establish priority criteria for corridor safety investments

3.3. LOCAL STREETS

Local streets will be safe and comfortable places for people to walk, roll, bike, and spend time outside.

- 3.3.1. Slow traffic by design
- 3.3.2. Create safer crossings
- 3.3.3. Improve sidewalk accessibility, safety, and comfort
- 3.3.4. Create a core pedestrian network of safe, direct routes
- 3.3.5. Establish priority criteria for street safety investments
- 3.3.6. Create new pedestrian connections

3.4. BIKES, SCOOTERS, AND SKATEBOARDS

Residents will be able to bike, scooter, or skateboard safely and comfortably to any destination in Charleston. Active transportation will be a leading mode of travel for people of all ages.

- 3.4.1. Create a safe bike network for all ages and abilities
- 3.4.2. Create safe intersections on all bike routes
- 3.4.3. Protect bike lanes with physical separation

3.5. ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Las Vegas will reduce costs by incorporating changes into other upcoming roadwork. The City will also enable residents to make change with small-scale, low-cost projects.

- 3.5.1. Incorporate street design improvements in roadwork
- 3.5.2. Establish tactical urbanism guidelines
- 3.5.3. Establish a City-led tactical urbanism process
- 3.5.4. Establish a community-led tactical urbanism process

What we heard: Street design priorities

In the first public survey, the top three street design priorities selected by local residents were:

- “Feeling safe when you walk outside” (selected by 65%)
- “More street trees and shade” (50%)
- “Making streets safe for children and the elderly” (35%)

Less than 4% of respondents selected “allowing cars to drive fast” or “allowing lots of cars on the road.” Only 2% said they do not want to walk more.



■ Conceptual rendering of safe paths for walking, rolling, and biking.

4.1. PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

All residents will live within a 10-minute walk of parks and public spaces that meet their needs for socializing, exercise, and play.

- 4.1.1. Design vibrant and safe parks and public spaces
- 4.1.2. Create parks and public spaces through development
- 4.1.3. Acquire land for a new park in Charleston
- 4.1.4. Create pocket parks
- 4.1.5. Seek to expand the Las Vegas tree planting program

4.2. CIVIC AMENITIES

Charleston residents will enjoy access to indoor amenities that meet their needs for culture, entertainment, exercise, and social connection.

- 4.2.1. Build a new civic amenity
- 4.2.2. Design people-friendly buildings

What we heard: Public space priorities

Local residents selected the following items as their top priorities for new public amenities:

- Trees (57%)
- Arts and cultural spaces (41%)
- Parks and playgrounds (38%)
- Community recreation centers (37%)

When asked about the proposed vision and design goals for parks and public space in Charleston, 89% of survey respondents expressed support.

- Conceptual rendering of a park with shade, new trees, pathways, seating, and interactive features.



5.1. DEVELOPMENT ON MAJOR CORRIDORS

Transit investments will attract beautiful developments that create vibrant, people-friendly commercial corridors and reduce the traffic impact of new developments.

- 5.1.1. Focus new development on major corridors
- 5.1.2. Implement design guidelines for pedestrian-friendly development along major corridors
- 5.1.3. Support affordable housing on major corridors

5.2. HOMES WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS

Charleston will offer diverse housing options that meet the needs of residents at all stages of life, while preserving the character of existing neighborhoods.

- 5.2.1. Allow missing middle housing within neighborhoods
- 5.2.2. Simplify Charleston zoning codes for low-density areas
- 5.2.3. Bring services and destinations closer to people's homes
- 5.2.4. Enhance heritage through design guidelines
- 5.2.5. Allow medium-density growth on secondary corridors and in select areas within neighborhoods

What we heard: Housing priorities

During engagement, residents shared the following top needs and priorities for housing in Charleston:

- A greater range of housing choices, including more affordable homes, starter homes for younger people, and age-friendly homes
- A greater variety of housing choices at different price points
- More supportive housing that can provide extra services for people transitioning out of homelessness

5.3. AFFORDABLE HOMES

Charleston will provide more affordable housing options and protect low-income households from displacement.

- 5.3.1. Provide incentives for affordable housing
- 5.3.2. Protect affordable housing stock
- 5.3.3. Explore creating a community land trust
- 5.3.4. Consider a land-value capture tax

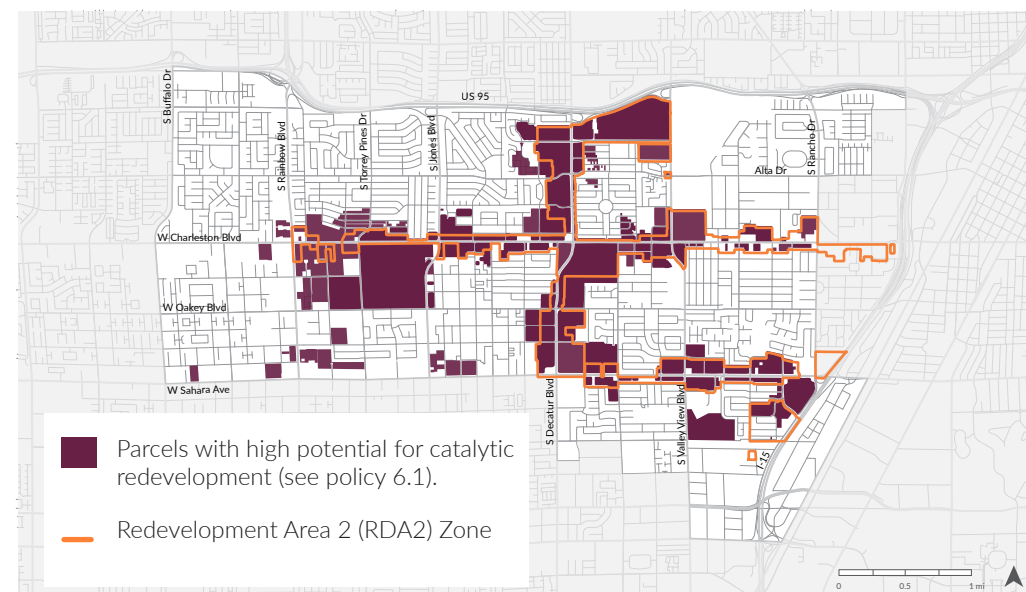
■ Conceptual rendering of gentle density within local neighborhoods.



Focus City investments and development incentives within strategic, transit-accessible locations in Charleston to create a critical mass of pedestrian-friendly development.

The Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan proposes to create “catalytic mixed-use hubs,” which aim to create a critical mass of pedestrian-friendly development to encourage more similar development over time. This chapter outlines a vision and program to create catalytic redevelopment areas, aiming to attract people-oriented development to strategic places.

- 6.1. Create a catalytic redevelopment program
- 6.2. Designate catalytic redevelopment areas
- 6.3. Establish design guidelines for catalytic redevelopment
- 6.4. Establish incentives for catalytic redevelopment
- 6.5. Invest in catalytic redevelopment areas



■ Map indicating the areas with the greatest potential for catalytic redevelopment projects. The highest-scoring areas are located along Charleston Boulevard, Decatur Boulevard, Sahara Boulevard, and Meadows Mall.

- Conceptual rendering of a redevelopment area along a major corridor.



1

Introduction

1. Introduction

This plan aims to create safe streets, more homes, and beautiful, vibrant gathering places for Charleston. It builds on the goals and policy direction of the Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan.

The Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan was adopted by City Council in June 2021. The 2050 Master Plan identifies 16 areas of the city, including Charleston, and provides high-level guidance for future growth and development of Las Vegas. The Master Plan is built around five guiding principles—to create an equitable, resilient, healthy, livable, and innovative city.



EQUITABLE

An **equitable** Las Vegas provides opportunity for all, with access to education, health care, resources, and jobs no matter where in the City one lives, all while acknowledging that each neighborhood has its own distinctive character and clean environment.



RESILIENT

A **resilient** and sustainable Las Vegas deliberately prepares the City against acute shocks and chronic stresses like health crises, drought, extreme heat, or flash flooding.



HEALTHY

A **healthy** Las Vegas improves physical and mental health outcomes, improves safety, sustains families, and encourages healthy choices for all residents.



LIVABLE

A **livable** Las Vegas emphasizes quality of life in a distinctive way that is unique to the city and meets emerging market trends and demands.



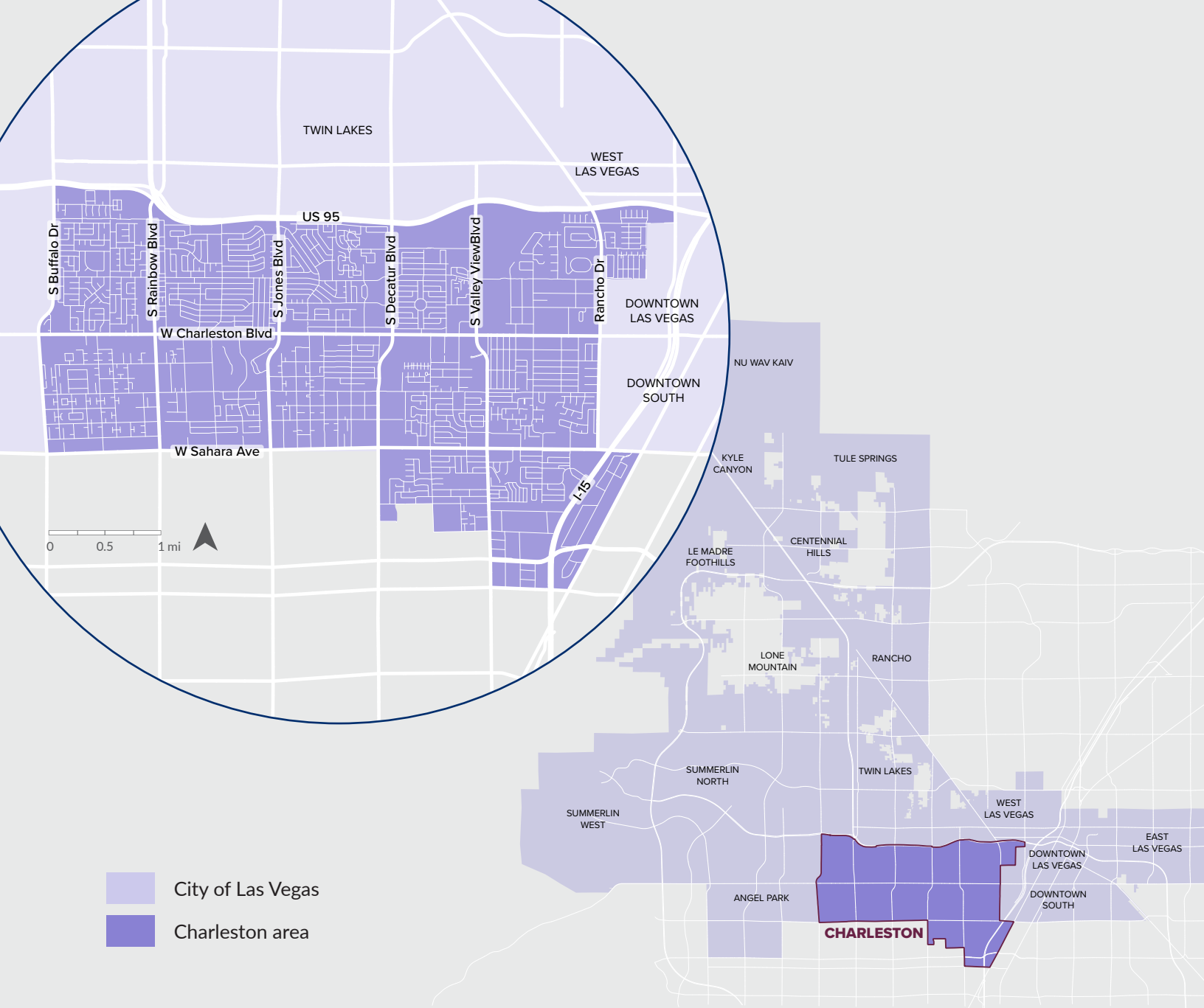
INNOVATIVE

An **innovative** Las Vegas meets new demands of residents while continuing to attract the boldest and brightest by pioneering smart city technologies that drive new markets and diversify the economy.

The Charleston area

Charleston is a central, 5,149-acre area directly west of Downtown Las Vegas. The area extends approximately from US 95 in the north to Sahara Ave. in the south, and from Buffalo Dr. in the west to Rancho Dr. on the eastern edge.

Charleston’s diverse population, important destinations, and transit infrastructure offer significant potential to cement a healthy, livable community with a strong sense of pride and belonging. However, the area faces several challenges, including housing affordability, wide and dangerous roads, and a lack of public spaces to gather in.



Background: Las Vegas 2050

The Charleston Area Plan is a component of the City of Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan. The 2050 Master Plan includes an action and outcome that the City will work with community members to develop a special area plan for each area of Las Vegas. This area plan for Charleston builds on existing City goals and provides more specific guidance on how to implement the strategies identified in the Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan, including:

-  **Transportation:** Improve aging infrastructure and make complete streets improvements, including transit investments along major corridors.
-  **Land use and development:** Strengthen historic neighborhood character while building new homes, particularly along major corridors, where new housing can support transit and local shops.
-  **Services and facilities:** Explore the potential to build additional City facilities in the southern area.
-  **Parks and open space:** Create more public spaces and parks throughout Charleston.
-  **Workforce and education:** Strengthen access to schools, quality education, and employment opportunities.

RELATED PLANS

- City of Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan
- Imagine Las Vegas Parks System Plan
- Vision Zero Action Plan
- Mobility Master Plan
- On Board Future Mobility Plan
- Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan
- Regional Transportation Plan for Southern Nevada
- Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities

Process

The City of Las Vegas developed this plan through three rounds of engagement with the community, including local residents and key interest holders. In addition, the project team conducted an internal visioning session with City staff and completed background research and analysis.

For a detailed breakdown of community input, please see the engagement summary reports at:

lasvegasnevada.gov/Charleston

2024

BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

Analysis of census and geographic data

CITY VISIONING SESSION

Workshop with City staff to understand goals and priorities for the area plan

ENGAGEMENT ROUND 1: JUNE-JULY 2024

Heard community goals and priorities for the future of Charleston:

- 105 focus group participants
- 130 pop-up engagement participants
- 246 survey responses

DRAFT CHARLESTON 2050 VISION

ENGAGEMENT ROUND 2: NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2024

Heard public feedback on the draft vision and design goals:

- 33 focus group participants
- 130 pop-up engagement participants
- 202 survey responses

DRAFT CHARLESTON AREA PLAN

ENGAGEMENT ROUND 3: MAY 2025

Heard public feedback on the draft area plan:

- 14 focus group participants
- 38 survey responses

FINAL CHARLESTON AREA PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION

The City of Las Vegas will work to implement the policies in this plan over the next 25 years.

2025

2025-2050

Charleston 2050 vision

This plan is organized into four main areas of action:



Streets and transportation (chapter 3)

Create safe, comfortable, vibrant streets in Charleston that support active transportation and allow people to meet daily needs by any mode they choose.



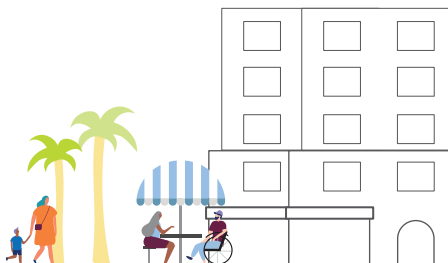
Public spaces (chapter 4)

Provide parks within a 10-minute walk of all homes and invest in a new community amenity.



Housing and development (chapter 5)

Offer diverse housing choices for all ages and income levels, through mixed-use, transit-oriented development on major corridors and gentle density in neighborhoods.



Redevelopment (chapter 6)

Focus City investments and development incentives within strategic, transit-accessible locations in Charleston to create a critical mass of pedestrian-friendly development.



2

Community context

2. Community context

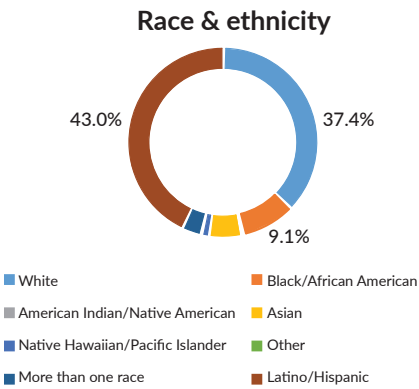
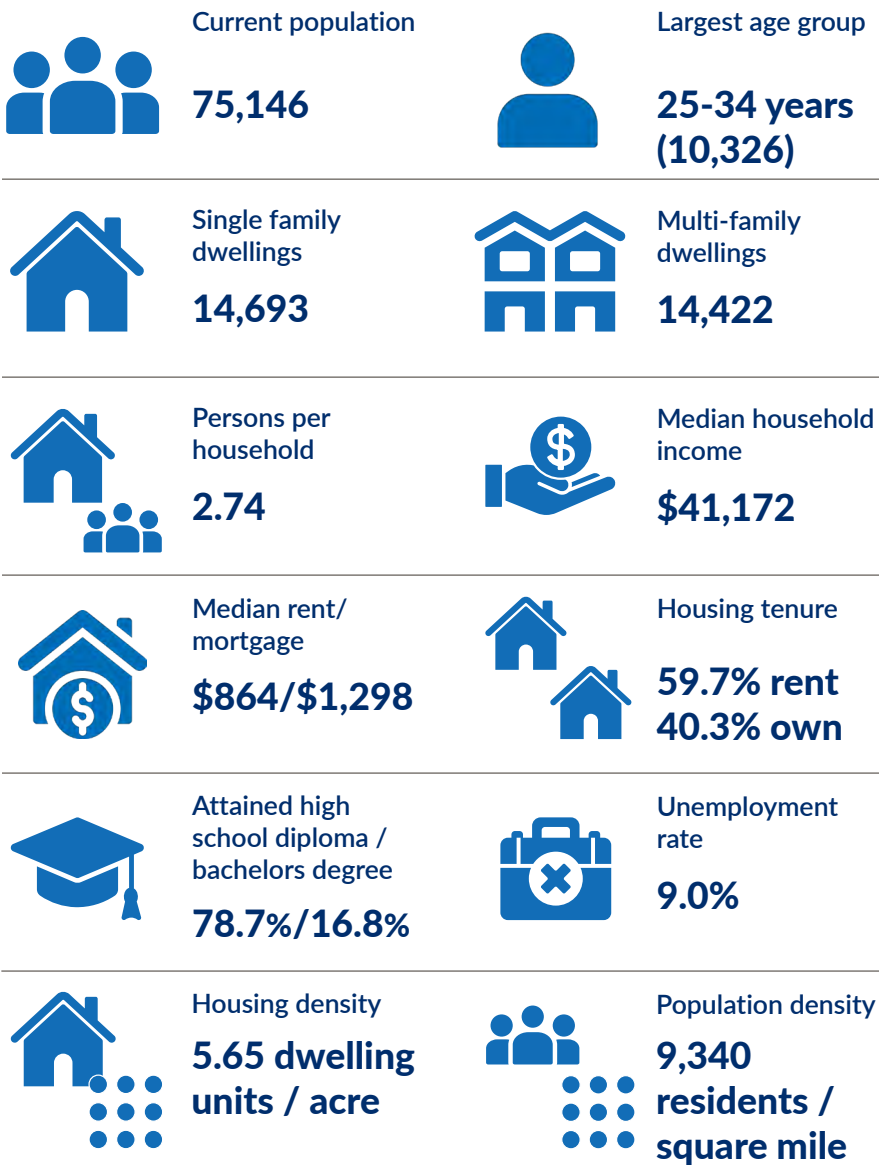
Charleston has broad strengths, including its central location, transit connections, major destinations, and diverse residents.

Charleston is home to long-time residents and newcomers alike, including people of all ages and backgrounds. Due to the area's central location, it is well connected to transit and major destinations across Las Vegas, with two high-frequency bus routes that connect downtown.

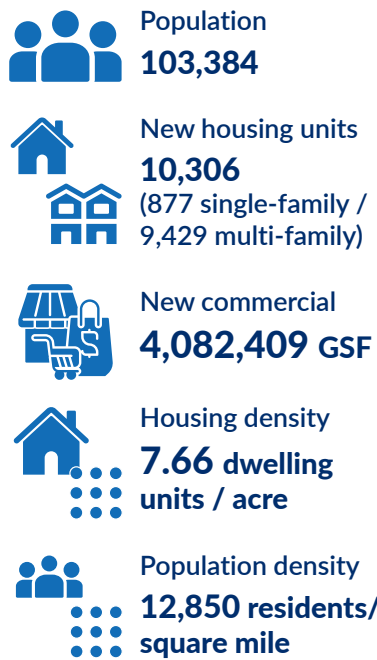
Off of major roads, local neighborhoods are primarily residential areas that include schools and parks. In contrast, the area's major corridors offer a wide range of shops, restaurants, and businesses. Important destinations include the College of Southern Nevada campus and the nearby Las Vegas Medical District.

Charleston at a glance

Demographics



2050 PROJECTIONS



Neighborhoods

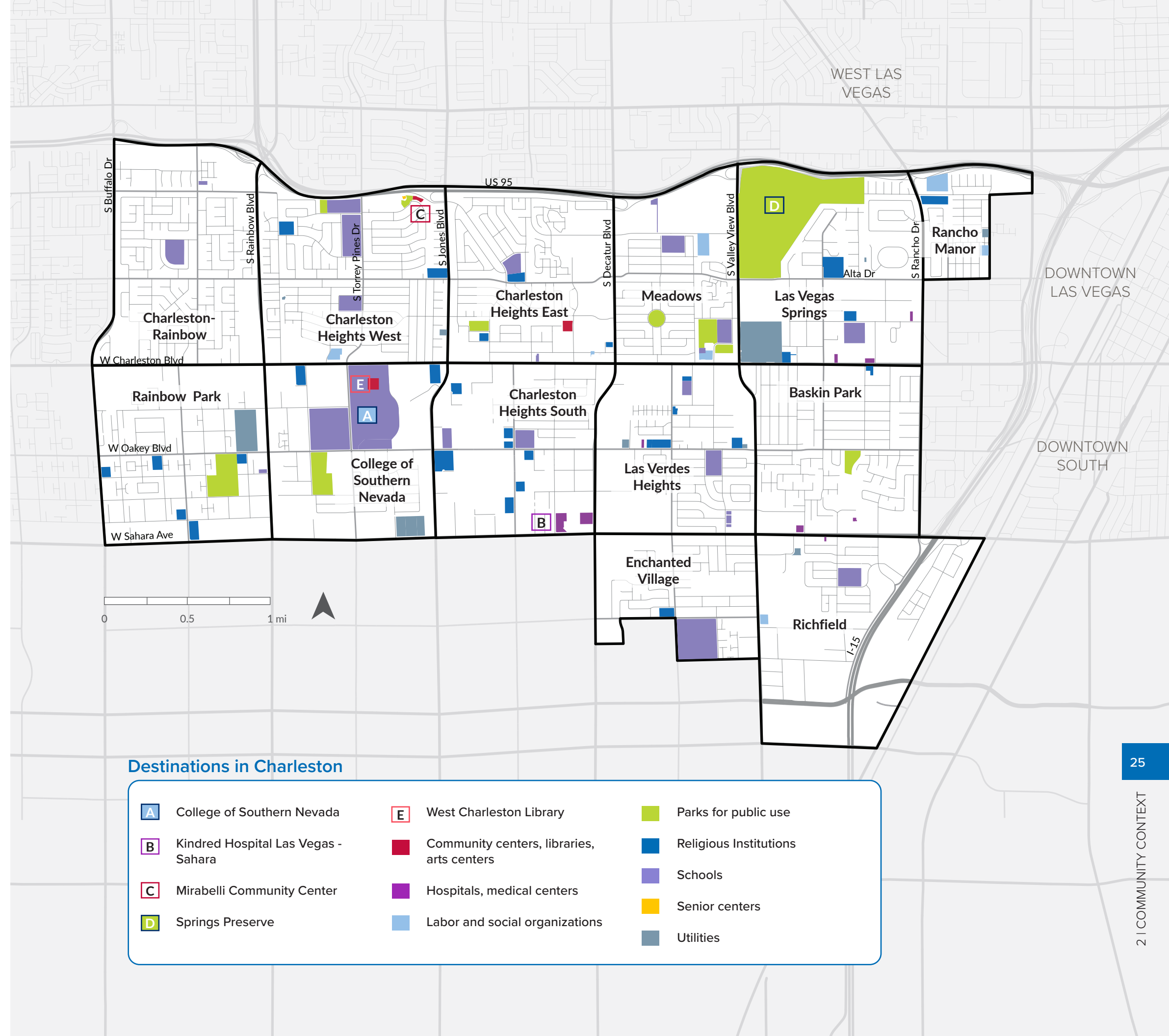
Charleston is comprised of 13 distinct neighborhoods:

- Charleston-Rainbow
- Charleston Heights West
- Charleston Heights East
- Meadows
- Las Vegas Springs
- Rancho Manor
- Rainbow Park
- College of Southern Nevada
- Charleston Heights South
- Las Verdes Heights
- Baskin Park
- Enchanted Village
- Richfield

Neighborhoods are primarily residential areas located between major corridors. Each neighborhood contributes to Charleston's identity, shaped by local residents, character, destinations, and amenities.

Each neighborhood has distinct strengths, opportunities, and challenges. For example, some neighborhoods in Charleston lack parks and green spaces, while others have better access to rapid transit and schools.

The Charleston Area Plan considers the distinct context of each neighborhood to foster vibrant and resilient communities that align with the long-term vision for Las Vegas.



Destinations in Charleston

A College of Southern Nevada	E West Charleston Library	■ Parks for public use
B Kindred Hospital Las Vegas - Sahara	■ Community centers, libraries, arts centers	■ Religious Institutions
C Mirabelli Community Center	■ Hospitals, medical centers	■ Schools
D Springs Preserve	■ Labor and social organizations	■ Senior centers
	■ Utilities	



- West Charleston Library. (Happy Cities)
- Springs Preserve. (MotelGeorge / Wikimedia Commons)
- Rainbow Park. (Happy Cities)



- Shaded playground at Mirabelli Park. (Happy Cities)
- Mirabelli Community Center. (Happy Cities)
- CSN Charleston Campus. (time anchor / Wikimedia Commons)



- Para-transit stop in Charleston. (Happy Cities)

Neighborhood profiles

Neighborhood	Pop.	Area (mi²)	Median household income	% of rent-burdened renters	% of renter-occupied units	% of vacant housing units
Charleston Rainbow	8,878	1.29	\$63,352	33.7%	34.6%	12.3%
Rainbow Park	2,758	1.07	\$103,506	30.8%	37.7%	6.5%
Charleston Heights West	10,210	1.02	\$59,770	40.9%	45.2%	5.9%
College of Southern Nevada	4,747	1.05	\$58,824	55.8%	87.8%	9.2%
Charleston Heights East	8,140	1.01	\$36,544	58.4%	63.8%	5.0%
Charleston Heights South	4,283	1.00	\$59,862	63.8%	53.0%	3.2%
Meadows	3,903	0.79	\$68,601	55.3%	21.6%	8.1%
Las Verdes Heights	6,500	0.95	\$50,692	69.5%	58.5%	10.5%
Enchanted Village	9,131	0.64	\$34,222	49.9%	76.3%	7.5%
Las Vegas Springs	1,361	1.25	\$117,895	0.0%	1.9%	16.7%
Baskin Park	4,835	1.00	\$50,845	39.6%	35.1%	5.1%
Richfield	4,494	1.30	\$36,018	48.4%	79.9%	12.9%
Rancho Manor	2,235	0.32	\$53,477	35.1%	58.2%	3.9%

Neighborhood	% of residents under 17	% of residents over 65	% of adults with a disability	% of working adults below poverty line	% of households with no vehicle
Charleston Rainbow	16.6%	13.1%	18.3%	--	5.3%
Rainbow Park	16.0%	25.6%	17.2%	15.4%	6.8%
Charleston Heights West	22.4%	11.9%	14.7%	16.1%	6.4%
College of Southern Nevada	15.7%	14.0%	20.7%	17.3%	17.6%
Charleston Heights East	21.2%	21.9%	21.5%	20.4%	21.6%
Charleston Heights South	18.3%	18.2%	14.3%	10.4%	6.4%
Meadows	24.8%	16.6%	15.5%	10.0%	7.2%
Las Verdes Heights	22.4%	21.1%	30.9%	14.4%	15.5%
Enchanted Village	33.6%	6.9%	8.6%	23.0%	18.0%
Las Vegas Springs	18.3%	25.4%	17.2%	11.5%	0.0%
Baskin Park	13.6%	21.9%	10.3%	9.8%	5.3%
Richfield	22.4%	22.1%	27.1%	24.3%	27.57 %
Rancho Manor	14.4%	10.4%	16.6%	24.8%	2.1%

Source: US Census data, 2021.

3

Streets and transportation

3. Streets and transportation

Create safe, comfortable, vibrant streets in Charleston that support active transportation and allow people to meet daily needs by any mode they choose.

The Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan sets a goal to ensure that all residents can safely walk or roll to access jobs, amenities, education, services, and transit. Safe, comfortable, connected routes for walking, rolling, and biking—along with rapid and efficient transit connections—can help maximize access to local destinations and increase rates of active transportation in Charleston.



Context

This chapter organizes street design recommendations into two high-level categories — corridors and local streets. Corridors include both major and secondary corridors. The street categories are defined in the text box to the right, and indicated on the map below.

Note: In the Nevada DOT Functional Classification Maps, Charleston's major corridors are classified as "principal arterials" or "minor arterials," secondary corridors are "minor collectors," and local streets are "local roads."

Street categories

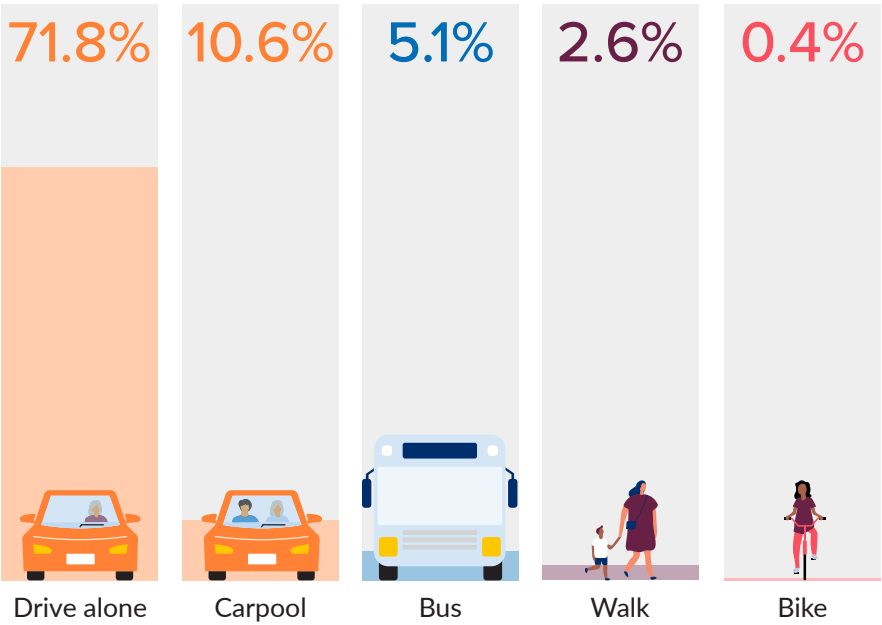
Corridors (section 3.2) are direct travel routes across Charleston. They include two types:

- **Major corridors** are wide, high-volume roads along which most commercial areas are located (e.g. Charleston Blvd., Decatur Blvd., Sahara Ave.).
- **Secondary corridors** are less wide than major corridors but have higher traffic volumes than local streets (e.g. Alta Dr., Torrey Pines Dr.). Many schools, parks, and other civic facilities are located along secondary corridors, alongside homes.

Local streets (section 3.3) are smaller, slower, primarily residential streets.

Only eight percent of Charleston residents walk, bike, or take transit to work.

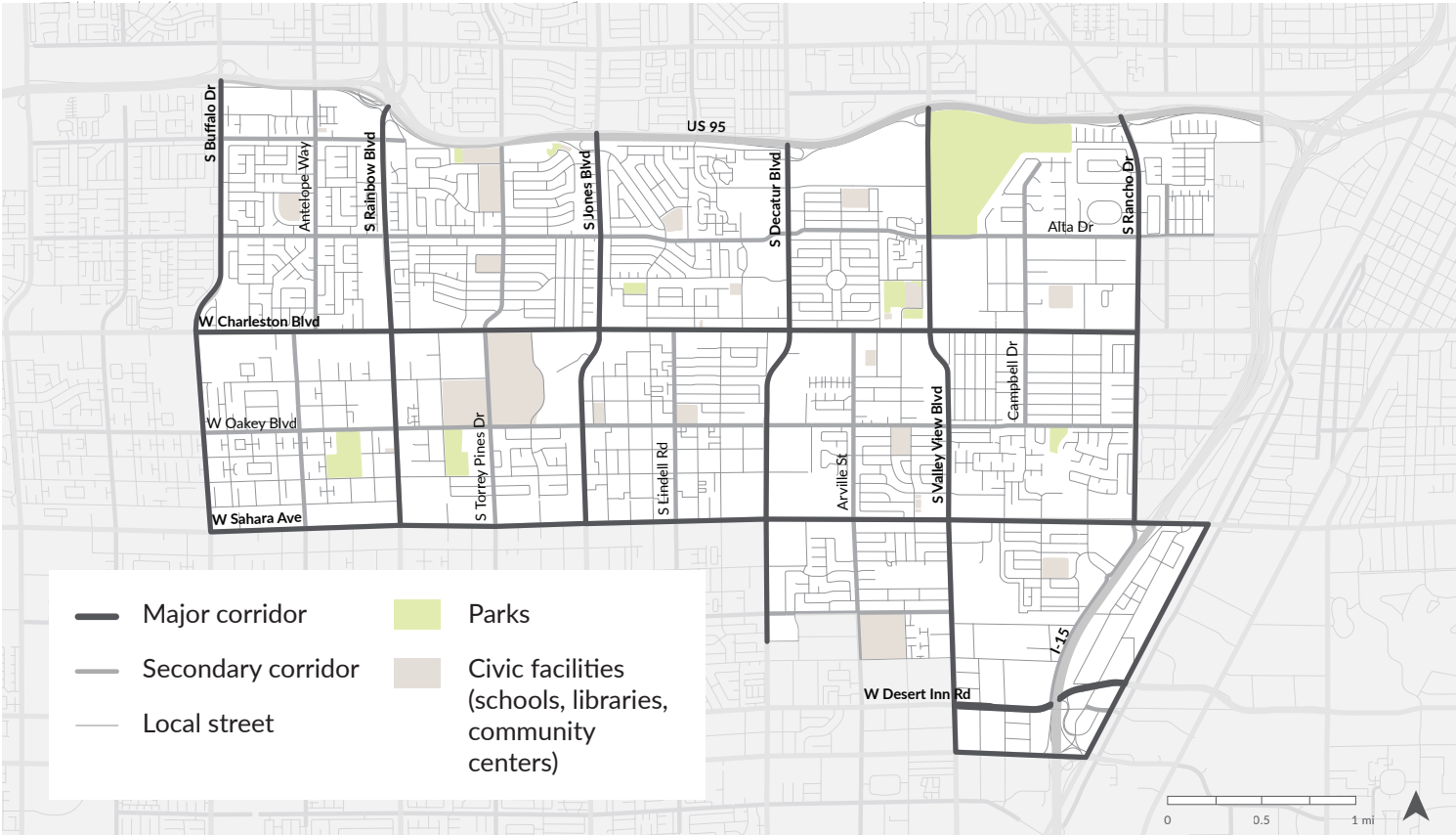
As of 2021 census data, the majority of Charleston residents commute alone in a car; however, nearly one fifth of households (17.5%) in Charleston do not have a car. The alternatives to driving — walking, biking, and transit — are generally not safe or efficient, impacting independence and quality of life.



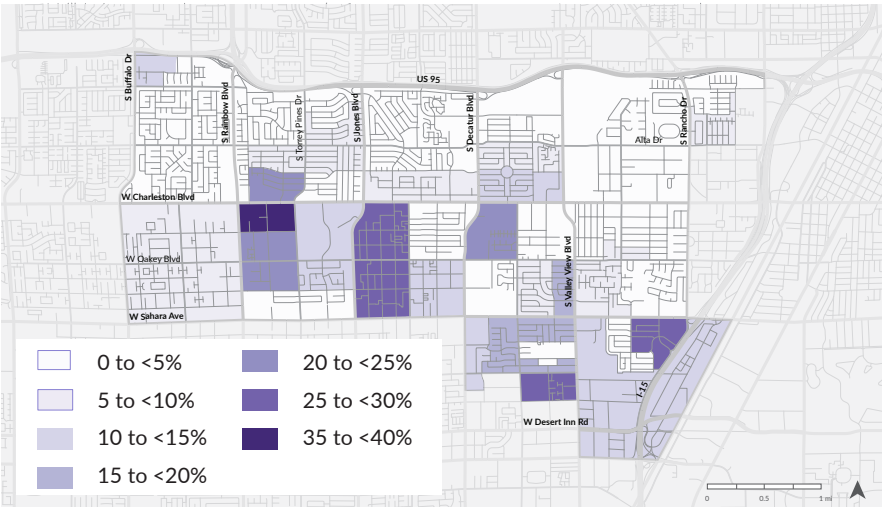
Active transportation rates vary across Charleston.

Several neighborhoods south of Charleston Blvd. have higher rates of walking, biking, and taking transit to work. The City can increase active transportation rates and encourage more street life by making investments in safer streets and providing more destinations within walking distance.

1 in 5 Nearly one in five households in Charleston (17.5%) do not have a car.



Map of Charleston street network and classification.



Map showing percentage of residents in each census tract that commute to work using active transportation (including transit, biking, or walking), as of 2021 census data.

Many streets are unsafe.

Streets in Charleston are designed primarily for cars and many feel unsafe for walking, using a wheelchair, or biking. Most roads have multiple, wide vehicle lanes, which encourages speeding.

Nearly all of Charleston's major corridors are part of Las Vegas's "high injury network" on which 77% of the city's traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries occur, despite comprising just 11% of the road network. The Vision Zero Action Plan identifies several Charleston neighborhoods as "communities of concern," where residents may be more vulnerable to dangerous roads due to a higher proportion of minority groups, persons with disabilities, seniors, and low-income residents who rely on biking, walking, or transit.

What we heard: Street design priorities

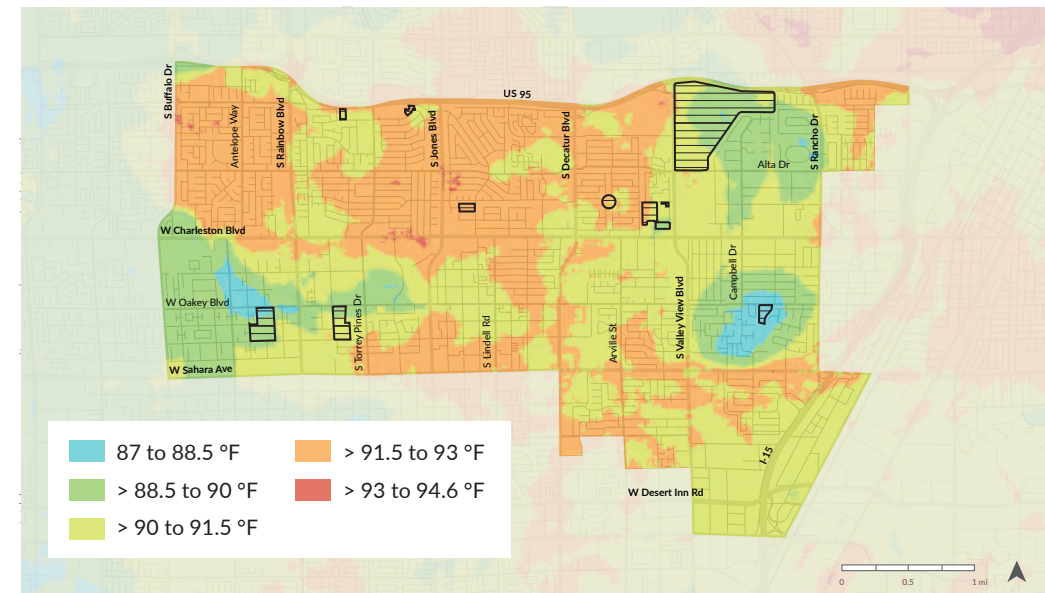
In the first public survey, the top three street design priorities selected by local residents were:

- "Feeling safe when you walk outside" (selected by 65%)
- "More street trees and shade" (50%)
- "Making streets safe for children and the elderly" (35%)

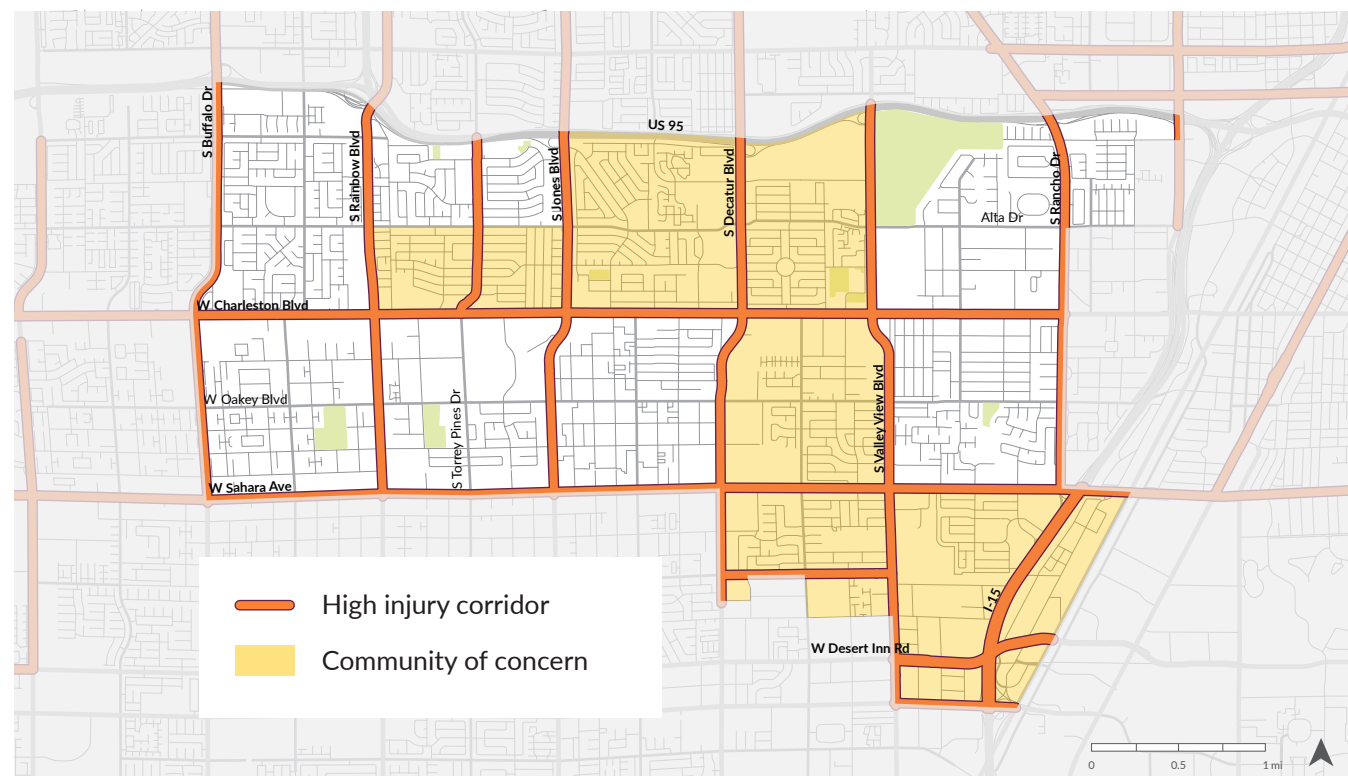
Less than 4% selected "allowing cars to drive fast" or "allowing lots of cars on the road." Only 2% said they do not want to walk more.

High temperatures pose challenges.

Few streets in Charleston have enough shade, which makes it difficult to walk or bike outside during hot weather. According to The Southern Nevada Heat Mapping Project, some areas of Charleston are over eight degrees hotter than others. More parks, trees, and shade can help lower temperatures on Charleston streets.



Map of temperatures recorded in the afternoon of Aug. 13, 2022 as part of the Southern Nevada Heat Mapping Project. Temperatures in areas surrounding parks are generally lower than areas without green space.



Map of high injury corridors and areas in Charleston, as identified in the RTC Vision Zero Plan.



Many streets in Charleston feel unsafe for people walking, biking, and rolling, due to little to no shade and a lack of physical separation between vulnerable road users and fast-moving vehicle traffic.

3.1. Transit

Charleston will have safe, convenient, comfortable, reliable transit that supports high-quality, pedestrian-friendly development.

GOALS FOR CHARLESTON

Comfortable stops: Transit stops will provide shade and seating throughout Charleston, and will meet basic needs for human comfort.

Transit priority: On key corridors, Charleston will prioritize high-capacity transit, such as light rail or bus-only lanes. Transit signal priority may also be considered.

Transit-oriented development: High-quality transit will attract compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented development within short walking distance of stops.

First- and last-mile connectivity: Provide safe sidewalks and bike infrastructure to enable people to reach transit stops safely.

79%

of survey respondents supported this vision and corresponding goals.

Key challenges and opportunities

Charleston is served by two high-frequency bus routes.

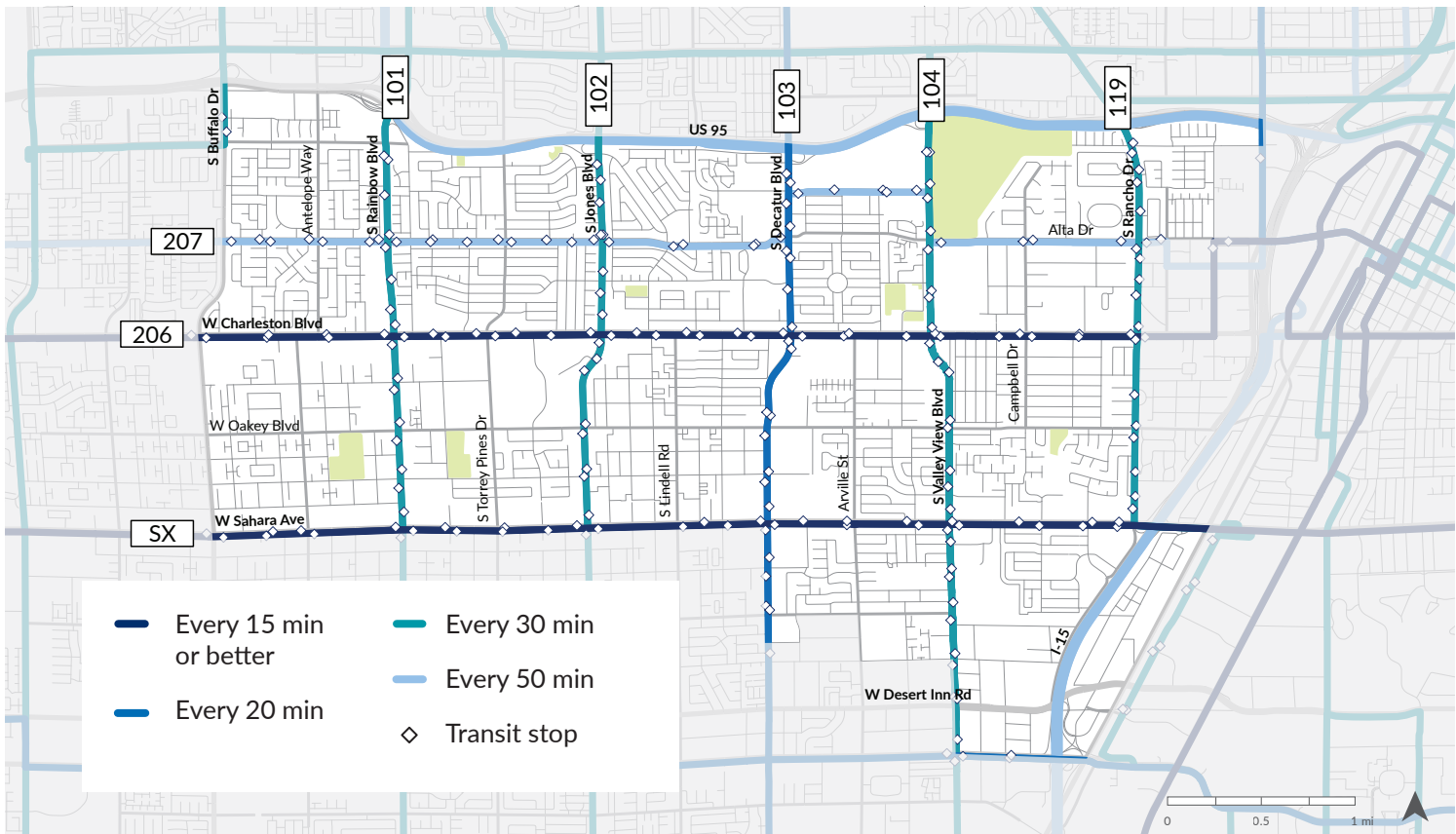
Buses arrive every 15 minutes or better on route 206 on Charleston Blvd. and on the SX Sahara Express route. Most other buses arrive every 30 minutes or better. Las Vegas can invest in efficient, frequent bus service to create a strong foundation for healthy, people-friendly development along major corridors.

RTC recommends high-capacity transit routes on Charleston Blvd., Sahara Ave., and Decatur Blvd.

The On Board Mobility Plan recommends

creating multiple high-capacity transit routes in Charleston, such as light rail, bus rapid transit, or other bus lanes separated from vehicle traffic. The plan identifies Charleston Blvd. as second-highest priority for transit investment in Las Vegas because it has:

- The second-highest estimated future ridership for Bus Rapid Transit, at 18,100 boardings per day
- The second-highest projected population for 2040 within three quarters of a mile, at 175,000 people
- The highest total assessed value of properties within three quarters of a mile, at \$12.7 billion



Map of transit routes and frequencies in Charleston.

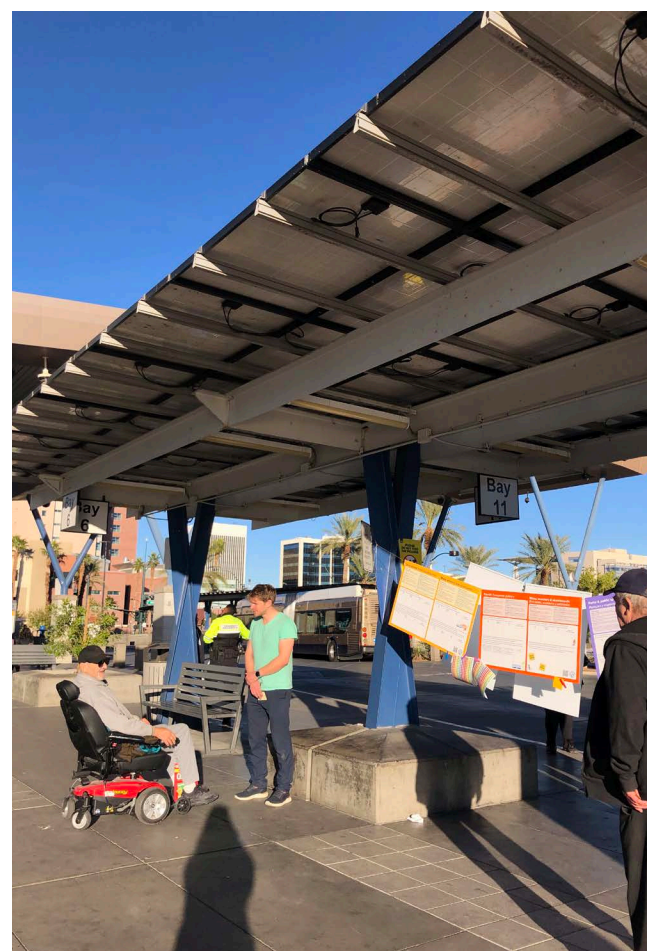
3.1.1. Work with RTC to invest in high-quality transit

Well-designed, high-capacity transit will attract more riders and create a foundation for compact, people-friendly development.

- A** Collaborate with RTC to ensure high-capacity transit maximizes its impact on increasing ridership and attracting development by offering a seamless, reliable, efficient experience.
- B** Fully separate transit from vehicle traffic to reduce delays.
- C** Assess the feasibility of building a tram or light rail to have a greater impact on ridership and development.
- D** Integrate new transit stations with high-capacity transit projects (see policy 3.1.2 for design guidance).

Alignment with local plans

- *On Board Plan*, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 1-12 to 1-13

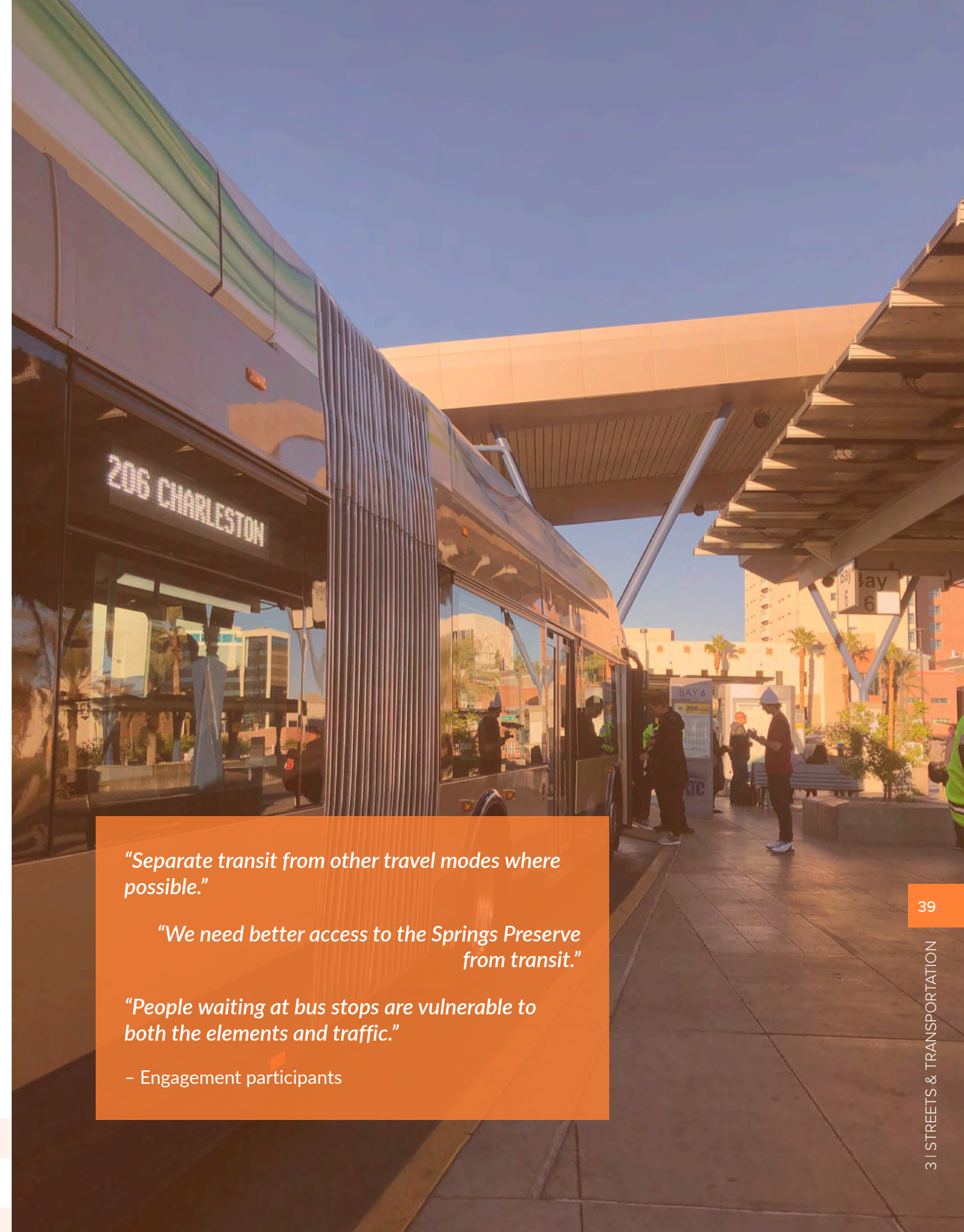
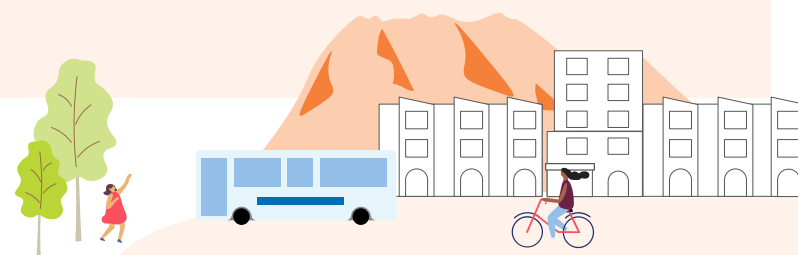


Pop-up engagement event about the Charleston Area Plan at the Bonneville Transit Center, Las Vegas. (Happy Cities)

What we heard: Transit

During engagement, residents expressed desires for:

- Shade and comfort at transit stops, including physical protection along high-speed roads
- High-quality transit to remove “stigma” and increase use, including by offering a premium riding experience and separating bus lanes from traffic
- Train or light rail



“Separate transit from other travel modes where possible.”

“We need better access to the Springs Preserve from transit.”

“People waiting at bus stops are vulnerable to both the elements and traffic.”

– Engagement participants

3.1.2. Work with RTC to provide comfortable transit stops

- A

On high-capacity transit routes, design transit stations to include the following features:

- Abundant seating and shade
 - Architectural design elements that make the stations memorable
 - Art and landscaping
 - Live digital information on the next transit arrival
 - A platform flush with transit entrances to improve accessibility and ensure people can board transit smoothly
- B

Provide shade and seating at all transit stops throughout Charleston, including the following features at a minimum:

- Trees, shade sails, and/or bus shelters
 - Seating
 - Protection from high-speed traffic (if relevant), such as with concrete garden boxes, concrete bollards, or on-street parking
 - A water fountain or bottle refill station (at busy stops)



Bus stop with seating, maps, shelter, and art in the Arts District, Las Vegas. (Happy Cities)



Bus stop platform flush with sidewalk in downtown LA. (Happy Cities)

- C

Prioritize transit stop upgrades following the criteria under Table 3.1.2C (p. 41).
- D

Consider sites for potential new transit stations following the criteria under Table 3.1.2D (p. 41).

Table 3.1.2C. Investment criteria for transit stop upgrades (in order of priority)

High-frequency routes	1. Transfer points between high-frequency transit routes (meaning those with frequencies of 15 minutes or better) and other transit routes
	2. Other stops on high-frequency transit routes
High boarding numbers	3. Stops with the highest boarding numbers
Investment alignment	4. Transit stops on streets that are receiving pedestrian or traffic-calming improvements

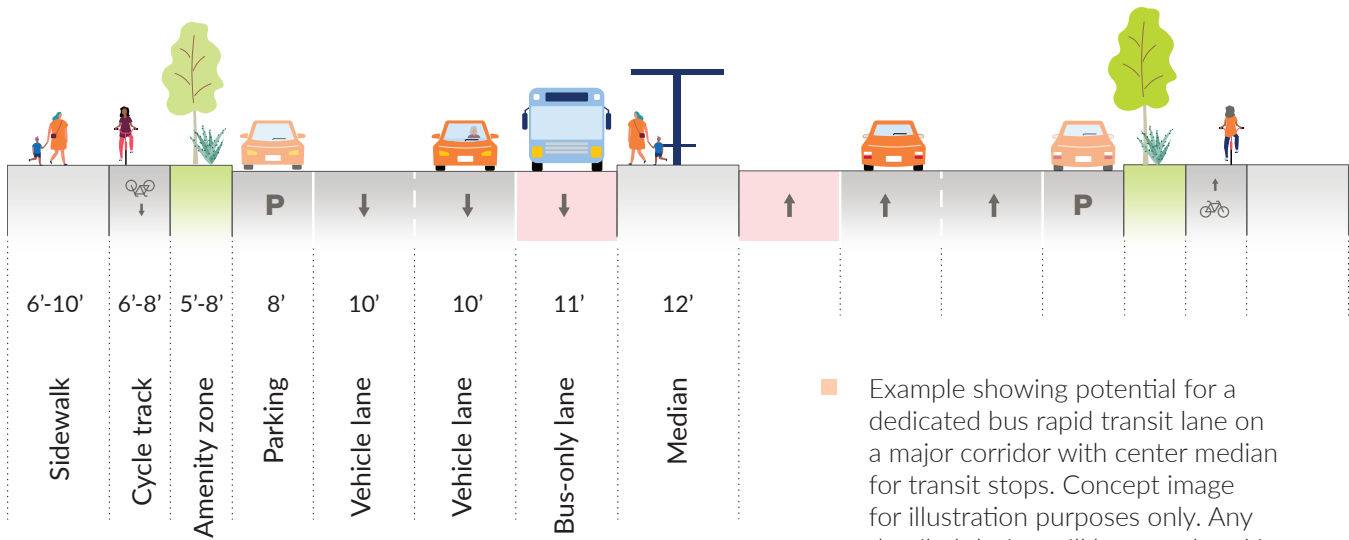
Table 3.1.2D. Investment criteria for new transit stations (in order of priority)

Catalytic redevelopment	1. Areas inside or within a quarter mile of catalytic redevelopment areas on high-capacity transit routes (see chapter 6)
High-capacity transit	2. Other areas on high-capacity transit routes

Note: Generally, stations should be built concurrently with a high-capacity transit project. These criteria are intended for cases where that does not occur.

Corridor example with dedicated bus lane

Typical street width: 100 ft



Example showing potential for a dedicated bus rapid transit lane on a major corridor with center median for transit stops. Concept image for illustration purposes only. Any detailed design will be completed in collaboration with RTC.

3.2.1. Update corridor standards

The Las Vegas Complete Streets Downtown Thoroughfare Standards provide a number of useful street design standards to help guide updates for the Charleston area, illustrated on the following page.

- A** Start a process, in coordination with the Charleston High Capacity Transit Alternatives Analysis, to create or refine Las Vegas street design standards, modeled on the boulevard and avenue classifications from the Downtown Thoroughfare Standards.

3.2.2. Slow traffic by design

Reducing speed limits will substantially reduce traffic noise and make streets safer.

- A** Reduce the speed limit and target speed for Charleston's major and secondary corridors to between 30 to 35 mph.
- B** Reduce vehicle lane widths to 10' (or 11' for bus lanes) to encourage slower speeds. Explore additional methods to enforce or encourage slower speeds as needed.
- C** Explore timing traffic lights to enable smooth vehicle flow and help offset the travel time impacts of slower speed limits.

Alignment with local plans

- Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities, RTC of Southern Nevada, policies 3-10, 4-7
- Vision Zero Action Plan, City of Las Vegas, policies 3.1.2, 3.1.3
- Unified Development Ordinance 19.04.300 Downtown Thoroughfare Standards

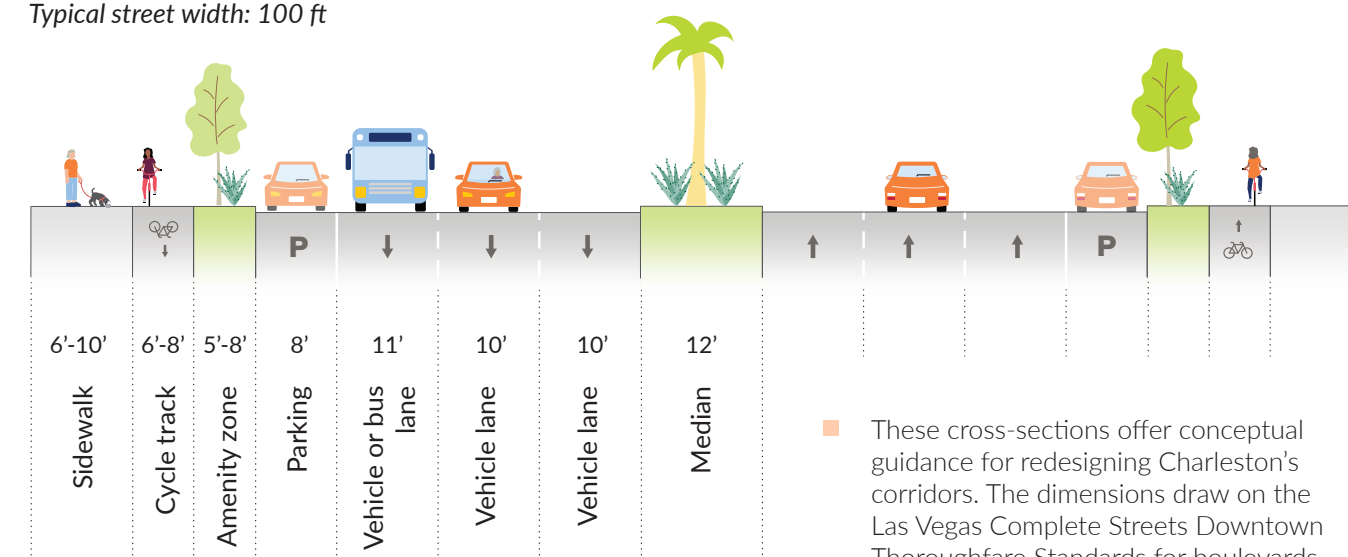
Alignment with national guidelines

- National Association of Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines state that no urban arterial should be designed for speeds above 35 mph.



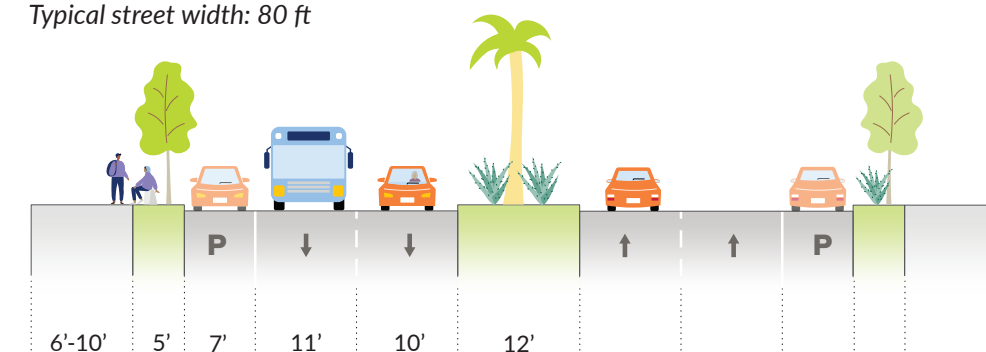
Major corridor example

Typical street width: 100 ft

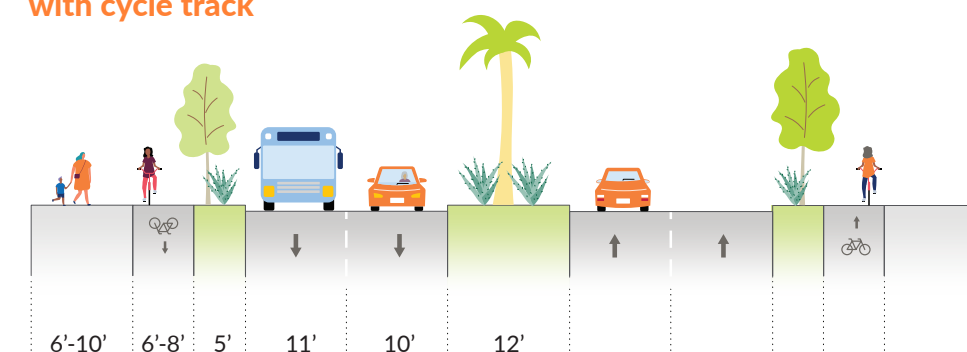


Secondary corridor example

Typical street width: 80 ft



Secondary corridor example with cycle track



Policies: Corridors

Below: Conceptual rendering of a potential redesign for a major corridor in Charleston, following the policies outlined in section 3.2.

Major corridor today



Major corridor redesign concept



Policies: Corridors

Below: Conceptual rendering of a potential redesign for a secondary corridor in Charleston, following the policies outlined in section 3.2.

Secondary corridor today



Secondary corridor redesign concept



3.2.3. Improve sidewalk accessibility, safety, and comfort

Pedestrian-friendly areas on corridors require wide sidewalks and physical separation from vehicle traffic. Street furniture, shade, and other amenities can further improve comfort.

- A Wide sidewalks:** Ensure all sidewalks are at least 10' wide on major corridors.
- B Amenity zone:** Build a 5' to 8' amenity zone buffer between sidewalks and traffic on major and secondary corridors and fill it with features that protect pedestrians from traffic, such as trees, benches, and pony walls.
- C Off-street pedestrian zones:** When space is available, encourage developers to create pedestrian pathways or public spaces that are physically separated from major corridors by buildings.
- D On-street parking:** Once traffic speeds are below 35 mph, consider adding on-street parking to corridors to encourage slow vehicle speeds and buffer pedestrians from traffic.
- E Shade and trees:** Provide shade using drought-tolerant, climate-adaptive trees and other structures.
- F Seating and amenities:** Provide public seating and shade at bus stops and along important pedestrian routes.
- G Water fountains:** Provide drinking water fountains or water refill stations at key destinations, including bus stops and public spaces.



Wide sidewalks lined with retail and separated from traffic with a tree buffer and street parking in the Arts District, Las Vegas. (Happy Cities)



Off-street pedestrian zone at Pacific Pointe Apartments, San Francisco. (Bruce Damonte / David Baker Architects)



3.2.4. Create safe crossings for pedestrians across all corridors

The RTC's Regional Walkability Plan provides a list of best practice design interventions to improve pedestrian safety at intersections. The following policies draw from this list.

- A** Work with RTC to update the Uniform Standard Drawings to enable the safe pedestrian design options outlined in the Regional Walkability Plan's Improvement Toolbox, with emphasis on the following:
 - Pedestrian islands with curbs that physically separate pedestrians from traffic
 - Smaller turning radii to slow cars at intersections
- The Regional Walkability Plan recommends a turning radius of 5', noting that "on-street parking and bike lanes create a larger effective turning radius and can therefore allow a smaller curb radius."*
- Removal of slip lanes
 - Leading pedestrian intervals of 3 to 10 seconds
 - Interventions to make crosswalks more visible, such as painting them with bright colors and artwork

Alignment with local plans

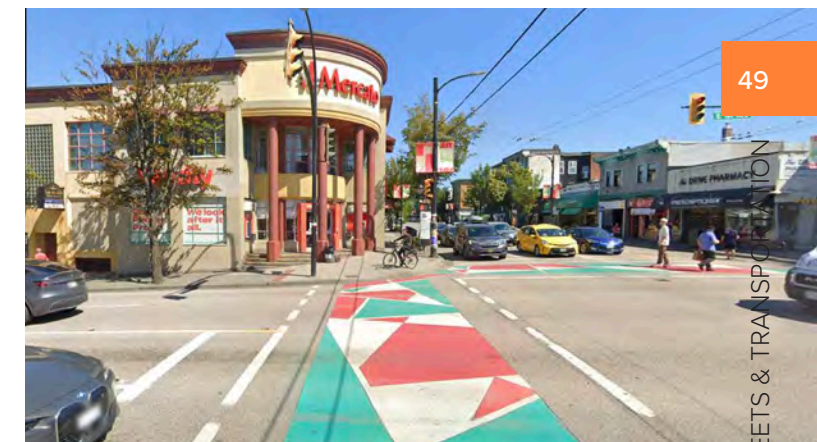
- Vision Zero Action Plan, City of Las Vegas, policies 2.1.4.1, 2.2.1.1
- Regional Walkability Plan, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 230-244
- Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 203



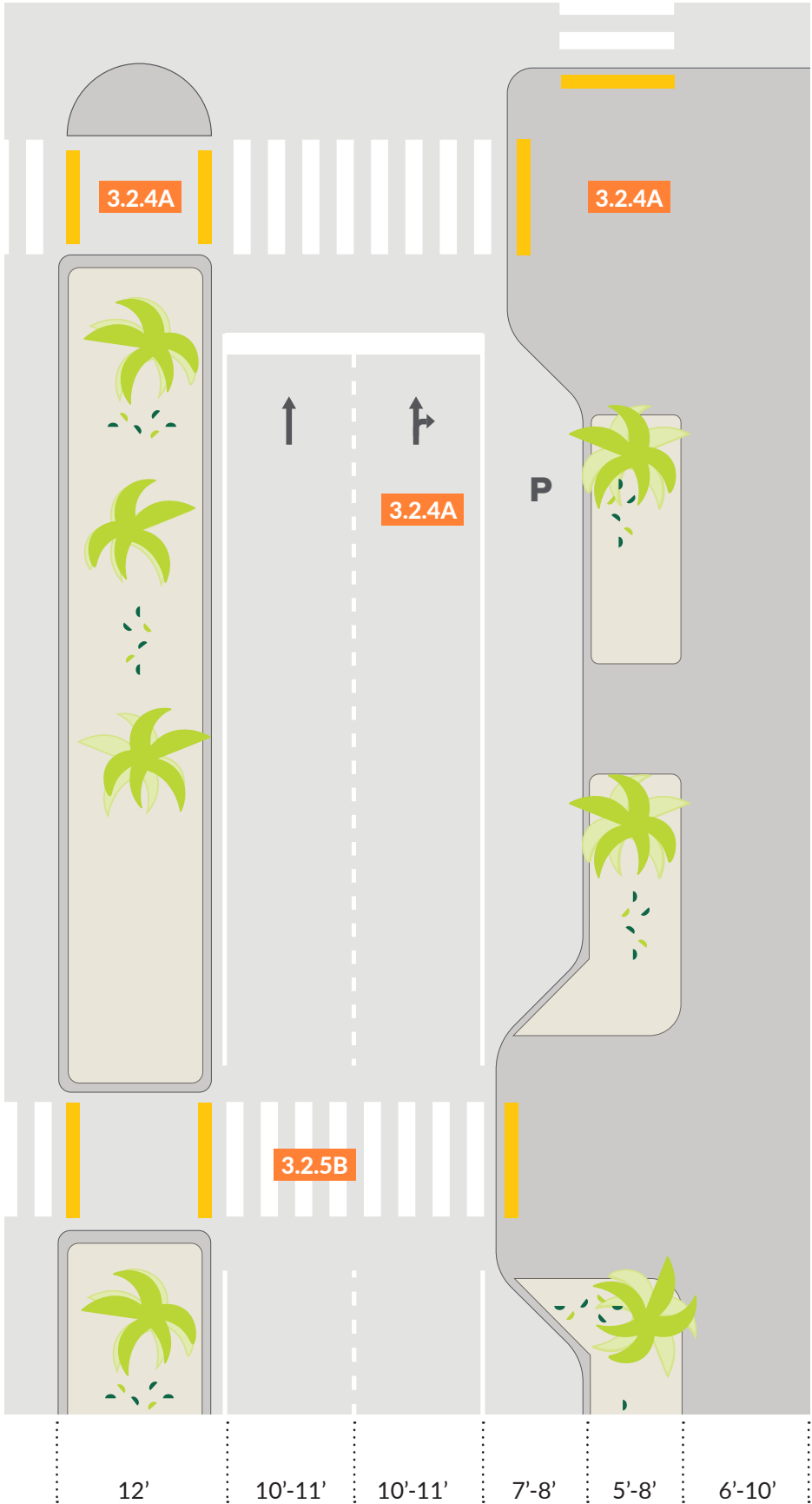
Pedestrian island on a large street crossing. (New York City Department of Transportation / Flickr)



Pedestrian crosswalk with curb cut, tactile indicators, and pedestrian signal on Main St., Las Vegas. (Happy Cities)



Painted crosswalks. (Google Streetview)



■ Pedestrian crossing concept for major intersection, illustrating policy 3.2.4.

■ Mid-block pedestrian crossing concept, illustrating policy 3.2.5.

3.2.5. Create mid-block crossings

The Regional Walkability Plan recommends mid-block crossings every 600 feet, consistent with NACTO guidelines. There are places in Charleston where there are no marked crosswalks for pedestrians for over 1,900 feet.

In some cases, this problem can be addressed by adding crosswalks at existing intersections. In others, it may be necessary to build mid-block crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, using flashing lights to ensure safety.

Policy 3.2.5. Implement infrastructure to enable pedestrians to cross corridors every 600 ft.

- A** Aim to provide a marked crosswalk at all intersections. Whenever possible, create new crossings at existing intersections that lack marked, safe crosswalks.
- B** Establish mid-block crossings in cases where no intersections exist.
- C** If Las Vegas builds transit in the center lanes of its corridors — as is being explored for Charleston Blvd. — explore opportunities to create mid-block crossings integrated with transit stations.

Alignment with local plans

- Regional Walkability Plan, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 236



■ Mid-block crossing with protected pedestrian islands in Montreal. (Happy Cities)



■ The Tucson Sun Link has accessible mid-block crossings to transit stops in the center lane. (Michael Barera / Flickr)

3.2.6. Establish priority criteria for corridor safety investments

A Use the criteria in Table 3.2.6A as a guide to prioritize the policies for major corridors outlined throughout section 3.2.

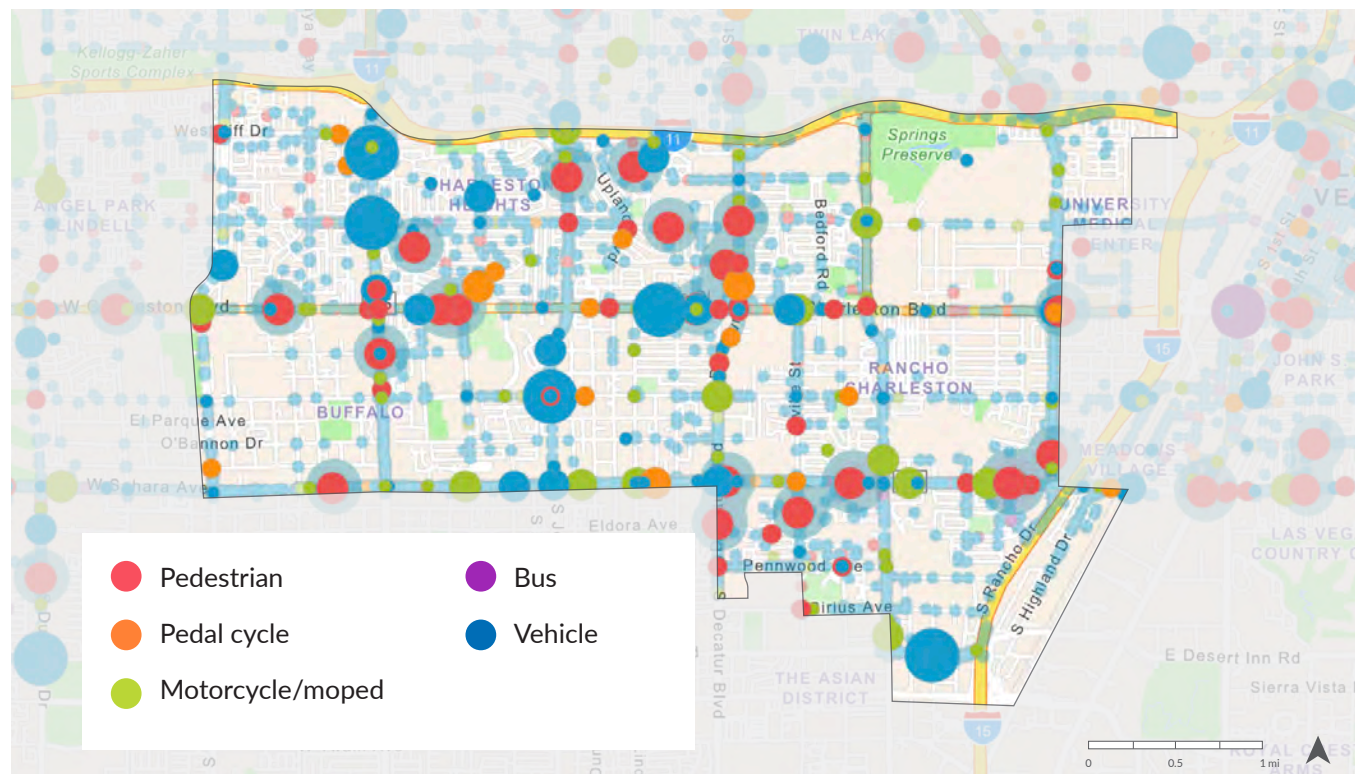
The criteria apply to all polices under section 3.2 (corridors). The criteria are listed in order of priority. Greater weight should be given to projects that score high in multiple criteria.

Alignment with local plans

The *Regional Walkability Plan* lists Sahara Ave. and Decatur Blvd. in the highest-priority category for walkability improvements, based on the potential to cut traffic deaths and to reduce reliance on cars. It lists Charleston Blvd., Rainbow Blvd., South Jones Blvd., and South Valley View Blvd. in the second-highest priority category for improvements.

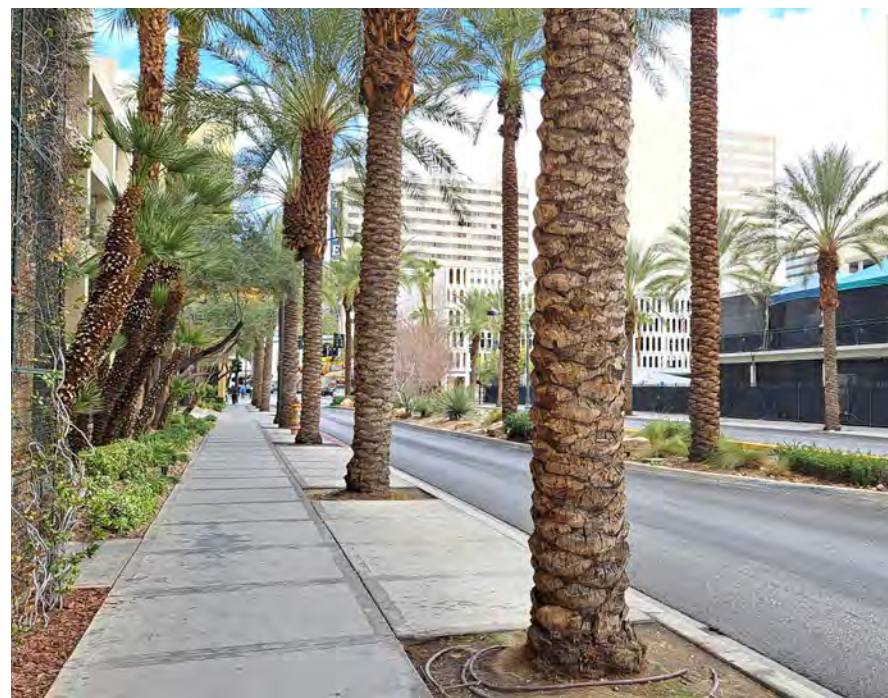
Table 3.2.6A. Investment criteria for corridor improvements (in order of priority)

Immediate risk	1. Streets and intersections with especially high rates of pedestrian or cyclist injury and death
Catalytic redevelopment	2. Streets inside catalytic redevelopment areas (see chapter 6) 3. Streets within a quarter mile of catalytic redevelopment areas
Transit stations	4. Streets within a quarter mile of high-capacity transit stations
Minimum grid	5. Streets on the core pedestrian network or bike network (see policies 3.3.4 and 3.4.1)
Other evidence of risk	6. Streets where residents report high rates of near misses, or where they report being too afraid to walk or bike 7. Streets in Communities of Concern, as identified in the Vision Zero Action Plan



Map of crashes resulting in fatalities and serious injuries in Charleston from 2015 to 2019. Larger circles indicate a greater number of serious injuries and fatalities.

Source: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ead113dbe309465db43602381d0b298>



Palm trees as a buffer between the sidewalk and roadway in Downtown Las Vegas. (Happy Cities)

3.3. Local streets

Local streets will be safe and comfortable places for people to walk, roll, bike, and spend time outside.

GOALS FOR CHARLESTON

Safe and comfortable: Prioritize the safety and comfort of people walking and biking over car traffic.

Convenient: Enable car trips to local destinations.

Resident-focused: Discourage cut-through commuter traffic.

Slow and steady: Reduce traffic speeds while maintaining consistent flows and access.

Connected to transit: Enable efficient transit access.

Beautiful: Create an attractive environment for residents that supports local pride and identity.

84%

of survey respondents supported this vision and corresponding goals.

Key challenges and opportunities

Street design improvements can improve pedestrian safety and comfort.

Most local streets are wide, which encourages speeding and makes walking feel less safe. Local streets lack shade and other amenities, such as seating and plants. Narrower lanes, traffic calming, safe intersections, and other design changes will improve walkability and accessibility.

New street connections can help support walking and rolling to local destinations.

Local streets provide access to secondary and major corridors, and some connect to schools, parks, and religious institutions. However, many large blocks make it difficult to walk directly to destinations.



Many local streets in Charleston have wide roads and narrow sidewalks, with little shade and few destinations in walking distance. (Happy Cities)

13%

Only 13% of survey respondents agreed that local streets are “very safe and comfortable.”

73%

of survey respondents supported adding traffic calming on local streets.

3.3.1. Slow traffic by design

Traffic calming features and slow street design are critical to reduce speeding and rates of injury and death. Street design should ensure that vehicles do not exceed the posted speed.

A Set a target speed between 20 and 25 mph for local streets, based on the community's desire for safety and comfort. Do not set the speed limit based on the 85th percentile of current traffic speeds.

B Design car lanes to be no wider than 10' (or 11' for bus routes).

On yield streets, lanes should be narrower, with speeds less than 20 mph. The RTC Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities define yield streets as "typically residential two-way streets with parking on one or both sides. When the street is parked on both sides, the remaining space between parked vehicles (12' minimum) is adequate for one vehicle to pass through and which allows emergency access."

C Encourage on-street parking to help slow traffic and to create a buffer for pedestrians.

If a majority of parking spots are not occupied, this can make traffic lanes feel wide, which encourages speeding. In these cases, consider eliminating parking lanes, replace them with public space (see section 3.5 and policy 4.1.4), and narrow travel lanes as much as possible, while maintaining a minimum through route for fire trucks.

D Use traffic-calming measures — such as curb extensions, speed bumps, chicanes, and traffic circles — to slow cars down and discourage through-traffic.

What we heard: Local streets

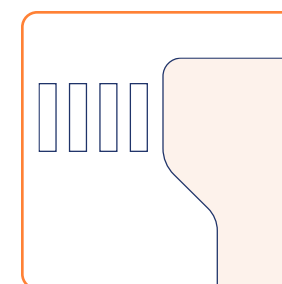
Local residents expressed concerns that local streets are used for cut-through traffic, especially during rush hour. In focus groups, participants expressed support for discouraging vehicle traffic by slowing speeds on local streets with speed bumps and other traffic calming tools.

Alignment with local plans

- Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 3-8, 4-19
- Vision Zero Action Plan, City of Las Vegas
- Regional Walkability Plan, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 4-8

Alignment with national guidelines

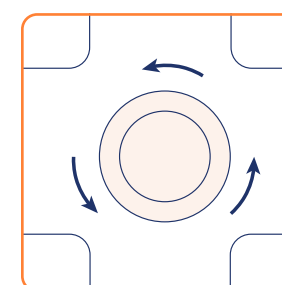
- The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommends using "target speeds" in walkable urban areas, meaning that designers establish a target and then design the street to discourage people from driving any faster.
- The National Association of Transportation Officials (NACTO) recommends setting a target speed of 25 mph or less for local streets.



Curb extension



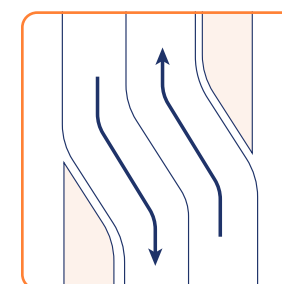
■ Curb extension with seating in North Vancouver, BC. (Dylan Passmore / Flickr)



Traffic circle



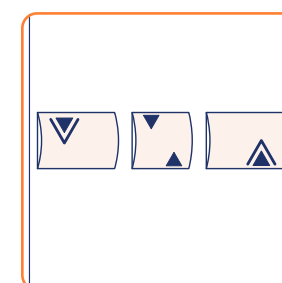
■ Traffic circle in Tucson, AZ. (Brad Lancaster / Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Foresters)



Chicane



■ Chicane in Tucson, AZ. (Brad Lancaster / Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Foresters)



Speed humps



■ Speed humps on Del Rey Ave., Charleston. (Google Streetview)

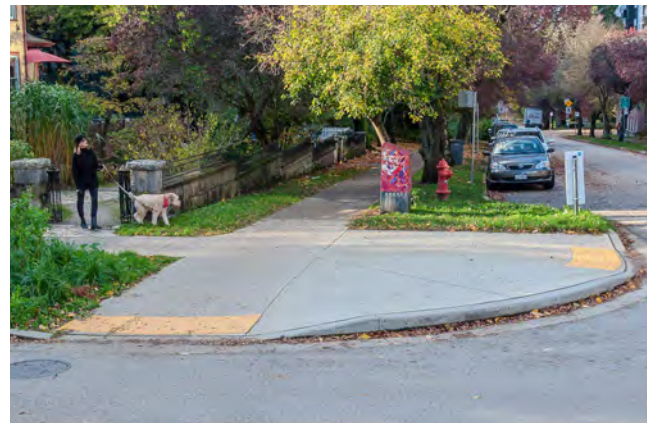
3.3.2. Create safer crossings

Intersection design should prioritize pedestrian comfort, safety, and accessibility over traffic level of service.

- A** Provide safe, accessible crosswalks at all intersections that have through traffic.
- B** Limit traffic lanes to one in each direction on local streets to reduce the distance for pedestrian and bike crossings.
- C** Do not add turning lanes at intersections, as these widen the street at the locations where pedestrians and cyclists need to cross.
- D** Where possible, use curb extensions to slow traffic and shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians.
- E** Incorporate accessibility best practices into standard intersection designs, including:
 - Tactile warning strips and sidewalk ramps (curb cuts) that line up with and lead directly onto crosswalks
 - Audio cues for crossing at intersections with traffic lights
 - Adequate street lighting at night



■ Curb cut and tactile indicator leading into crosswalk on a local street in Sacramento. (Dylan Passmore / Flickr)



■ Curb cuts and tactile indicators should be placed at every crossing point. (Dylan Passmore / Flickr)

Alignment with national guidelines

"In [residential streets], the overriding consideration is to foster a community environment where the convenience of the motorist is secondary."

-AASHTO *Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, Section 5-13.

"It would be great to have more lighting in our neighborhood, more trees, walking paths."

"We need sidewalks and also speed bumps to slow traffic driving throughout the neighborhood."

- Engagement participants

3.3.3. Improve sidewalk accessibility, safety, and comfort

- A** Ensure all sidewalks provide a clear, accessible path (5' to 8' wide) that is not obstructed by utility poles or other infrastructure.
- B** Design sidewalks with an amenity zone to place utility poles and create a buffer between cars and pedestrians. Fill this zone with benches, trees, and other amenities.
- C** Identify sidewalks that do not have sidewalk ramps (curb cuts) and add them throughout Charleston.
- D** Identify sidewalks blocked by phone poles or utility boxes and move these items, or build a full-width sidewalk around them.
- E** Assign responsibility to all Las Vegas departments to ensure that utilities — such as electrical boxes or light poles — do not obstruct sidewalks.
- F** Provide shade using drought-tolerant, climate-adaptive trees and other structures.
- G** Provide public seating along sidewalks on important pedestrian routes and near local destinations, such as parks.



■ Trees to provide shade and drought-tolerant landscaping on a residential Las Vegas street. (Happy Cities)



Alignment with local plans

- *Regional Walkability Plan*, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 232
- *Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities*, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 4-8



■ Water fountain outside Mirabelli Community Center. (Happy Cities)

■ Sidewalk with trees and a planted buffer between pedestrians and the roadway. (Happy Cities)



■ Conceptual illustration of a local street sidewalk, showing clear path of travel and an amenity zone between the sidewalk and the road, including trees, benches, and utilities.

3.3.4. Create a core pedestrian network of safe, direct walking routes that connect all neighborhoods and destinations

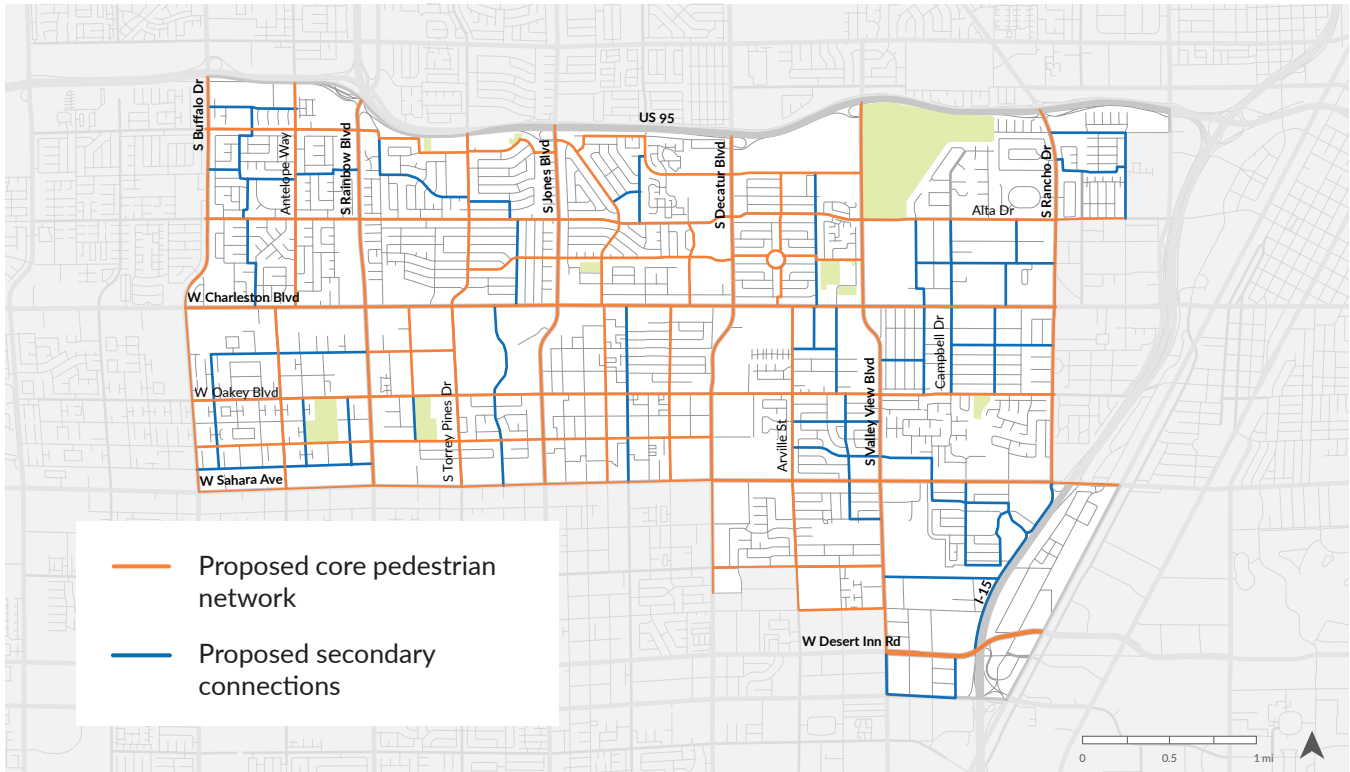
Few people walk to destinations unless there are direct, safe routes.

- A** Prioritize investments in improving street safety along this core network.
- B** Prioritize safe pedestrian connections (including for walking and using a wheelchair or mobility device) to and from schools, universities, parks, transit, civic facilities, and commercial areas.
- C** Consider opportunities to create new pedestrian connections to enhance the core network (see policy 3.3.6).



Alignment with local plans

- Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities, RTC of Southern Nevada, policy 2-4
- Vision Zero Action Plan, City of Las Vegas, policies 2.3.1, 2.3.3



Map of proposed core pedestrian network. The proposed core network aims to connect within and across neighborhoods to reach important destinations, including schools, parks, commercial areas, and transit.

3.3.5. Establish priority criteria for local street safety investments

- A** Use the criteria in Table 3.3.5A to prioritize improvements for local streets.

The criteria apply to all polices under section 3.3 (local streets). The criteria are listed in order of priority. Greater weight should be given to projects that score high in multiple criteria.

Community initiative

If residents are willing to organize to request a street redesign, it suggests that:

- Residents are more likely to use the improvements.
- They are more likely to work with the City to make the improvement a success.
- There may be a problem or need that locals see, but that otherwise would not show up in official data.

Table 3.3.5A. Investment criteria for local street improvements

Immediate risk	1. Streets and intersections with especially high rates of pedestrian or cyclist injury and death
Catalytic redevelopment	2. Streets that are within a quarter mile of catalytic redevelopment areas, and that provide a path to the redevelopment area (see chapter 6)
Minimum grid	3. Streets on the core pedestrian network or bike network (see policies 3.3.4 and 3.4.1)
Community initiative	4. Streets where residents have organized to petition the City to make safety improvements
Other evidence of risk	5. Streets where residents report high rates of near misses, or where they report being too afraid to walk or bike
	6. Streets in Communities of Concern, as identified in the Vision Zero Plan (see p. 34)

Policies: Local streets

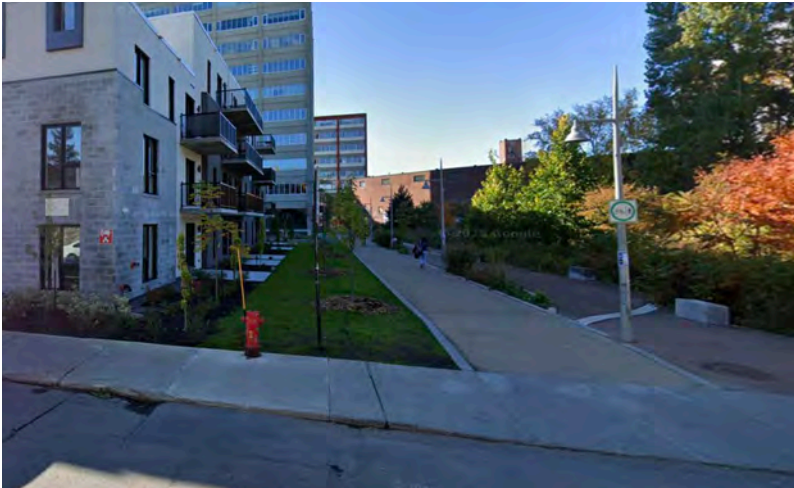
3.3.6. Create new pedestrian connections

Charleston has many long blocks, which pose barriers to walkability. The area needs new pedestrian connections to reduce walking distances, such as new multi-use paths, pedestrian cut-throughs, or streets to reduce walking distances.

- A** Explore opportunities to create new connections through large blocks, such as by acquiring land or easements to create paths for pedestrians along property edges and between buildings.
- B** Prioritize connectivity investments and new connections on street blocks that meet the criteria in Table 3.3.6B.
- C** Require new developments (section 5.1) and redevelopment projects (chapter 6) to create pedestrian paths or new street connections through large blocks.



A redevelopment of the Belmar Mall in Lakewood, CO created a new, walkable street grid network. (Happy Cities)



Pedestrian and bike path to connect between two streets beside a new low-rise development in Montreal, QC. (Google Streetview)



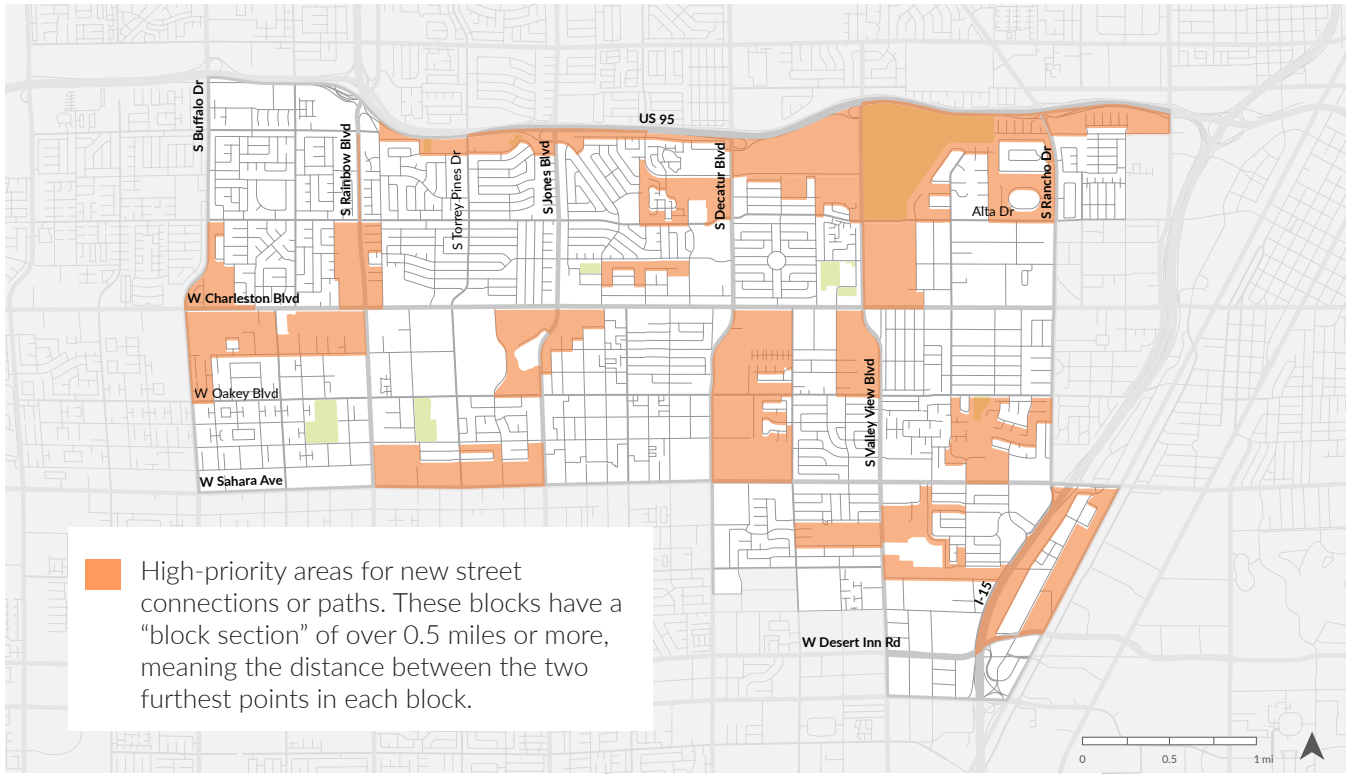
Pedestrian cut-through beside a residential driveway. (Happy Cities)



Policies: Local streets

Table 3.3.6B. Investment criteria for new street connections (in order of priority)

Barriers	Blocks with a “block section” of more than a quarter mile, meaning the distance between the two farthest points of the block (see map below)
Destinations	Areas that provide connections to the following places, in order of priority: 1. Catalytic redevelopment areas (see chapter 6) 2. High-capacity transit stations 3. Schools 4. Other amenities, including public spaces, recreation centers, and libraries 5. Commercial areas 6. Institutions, such as universities, colleges, and hospitals



Map of high-priority areas for new street connections.

3.4. Bikes, scooters, and skateboards

Residents will be able to bike, scooter, or skateboard safely and comfortably to any destination in Charleston. Active transportation will be a leading mode of travel for people of all ages, including children and older adults.

GOALS FOR CHARLESTON

Protected bike lanes: Create fully protected bike lanes that separate cyclists from traffic with a physical barrier or parking.

Connected bike network: Create a network of safe bike routes that connect all neighborhoods in Charleston.

Transit connections: Design the bike network to connect homes, schools, and civic facilities with the transit network.

Bike share program: Support the expansion of the RTC Bike Share program with adequate infrastructure.

75%

of survey respondents supported this vision and corresponding goals.

Key challenges and opportunities

Painted bike lanes are unsafe.

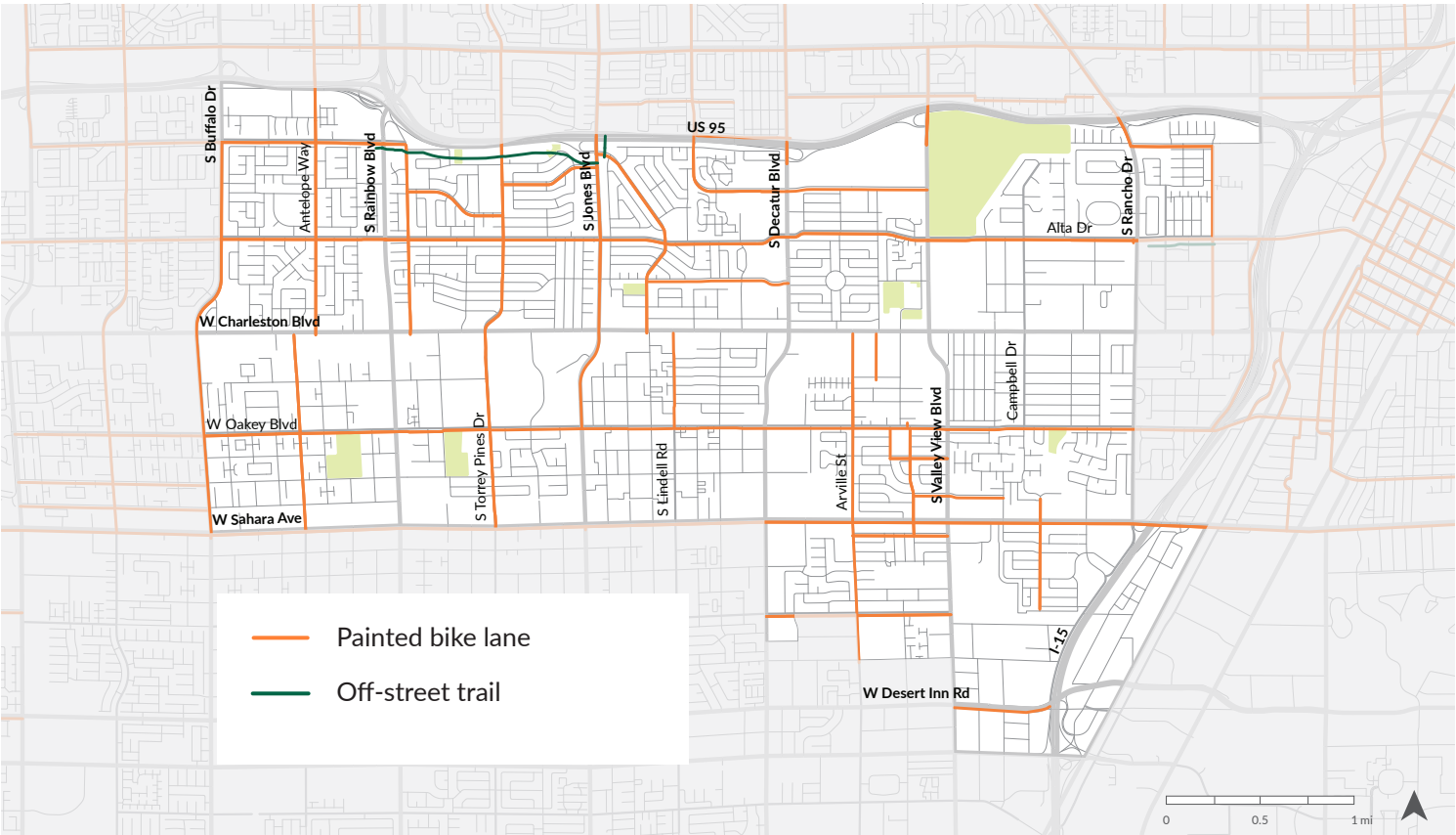
Nearly all bike routes in Charleston are narrow, painted lanes, with no protection from fast-moving traffic. A lack of protected infrastructure prevents people from being able to safely bike to local destinations.

15%

Only 15% of survey respondents reported feeling safe while biking.

Charleston's corridors offer an efficient grid network.

Existing bike lanes in Charleston are primarily located along major and secondary corridors. The City can create an efficient network of safe bike infrastructure that connects all neighborhoods by building better protections for existing bike routes, and adding new protected lanes on key corridors. In doing so, the City will enable biking to become a safe, affordable, and efficient mode of transportation for residents to meet daily needs and access local destinations.



Map of current, dedicated bike infrastructure in Charleston.

3.4.1. Create a safe bike network for all ages and abilities

- A** Plan a grid network of safe, protected bike infrastructure for all ages and abilities, ensuring that it:
 - Connects all Charleston neighborhoods and commercial areas
 - Has no unsafe gaps in the network
- B** Ensure all bike routes have safe crossings at all intersections, following policy 3.4.2.
- C** Provide protected bike lanes (also known as cycle tracks) on major and secondary corridors, following policy 3.4.3.

Local streets in Charleston do not all connect directly with each other, meaning the City cannot rely on local streets alone to create a bicycle grid.
- D** Prioritize filling gaps to connect existing safe bike routes together.
- E** Explore opportunities to provide safe bike routes on local streets — especially in areas with schools, parks, or other key destinations — using traffic calming to slow vehicle speeds and signage to indicate bike routes.
- F** Identify safe bike routes with all-ages-and-abilities infrastructure on a bike map and update the map regularly. On major and secondary corridors (arterials and collectors), only classify protected lanes or cycle tracks as designated bike facilities.

3.4.2. Create safe intersections on all bike routes

- A** Use curb extensions and islands to reduce crossing distances.
- B** Place stop lines for bike lanes ahead of the stop lines for vehicles, so that bikes are more visible to drivers.
- C** Install bike and pedestrian traffic crossing signals and start bike and pedestrian signals 3-10 seconds ahead of green lights for vehicles (leading intervals).
- D** Add protected turning areas to allow cyclists to pause and make a two-stage left turn, while remaining on the right-hand side of the road.
- E** Remove — and avoid adding — turning lanes for cars at intersections on important bike routes to reduce the number of lanes that cyclists must cross.

Alignment with local plans

- *Regional Walkability Plan*, RTC of Southern Nevada, p. 234
- *Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan*, RTC of Southern Nevada
- *Vision Zero Action Plan*, City of Las Vegas, policy 2.2.2
- *Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities*, RTC of Southern Nevada



Protected intersection for bikes and pedestrians in Vancouver, allowing bikes to complete a two-stage turn within a curb-protected area. (Dylan Passmore / Flickr)

3.4.3. Protect all bike lanes with physical separation from traffic

Fully protected bike lanes (also known as cycle tracks) improve safety and attract riders of all ages and abilities. Interventions that do not offer physical protection – such as sharrows – are found to increase bicyclist injuries.

- A Upgrade existing painted lanes on the bike network into protected cycle tracks, particularly on major and secondary corridors:
- On corridors with speed limits above 25 mph, create cycle tracks that are protected with physical barriers (such as concrete dividers or planter boxes) or with curb separation (such as a bike lane that is flush with the sidewalk).
 - On corridors with speed limits at 25 mph or less, provide protected bike lanes with, at minimum, bollards and a painted buffer of at least 18" between the bike lane and on-street vehicle parking or traffic.

Bollards are less expensive than concrete barriers. However, they should only be implemented on streets with slower traffic and, ideally, where there are also parked cars to protect bike users from traffic. Prioritize fully protected cycle tracks (with curb separation or physical barriers) wherever possible.

- B Ensure that cycle tracks are wide enough for two people to safely pass each other. NACTO identifies a minimum 6' width for unidirectional bike lanes, recommending an 8' width for greater comfort and safety for all ages and abilities.
- C If a street has on-street parking, position the cycle track between parked cars and the sidewalk, so that the parked cars protect cyclists from faster-moving traffic. Provide a painted buffer of at least 18" to avoid car doors hitting cyclists.
- D Do not use sharrows as replacements for other protected bike infrastructure. Sharrows should only be used for wayfinding or to help highlight crossings at intersections.

Alignment with local plans

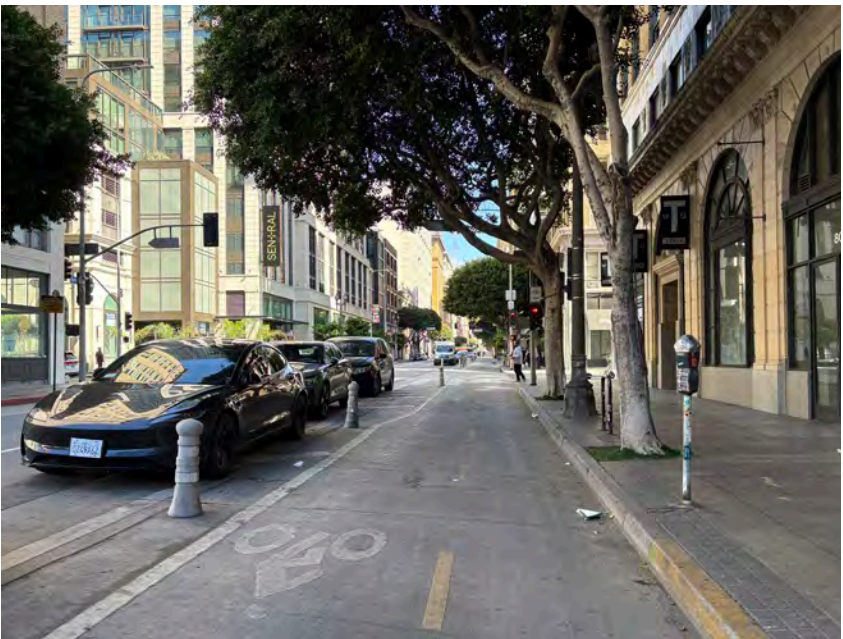
- Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, RTC of Southern Nevada
- Vision Zero Action Plan, City of Las Vegas, policy 2.2.2
- Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities, RTC of Southern Nevada



Protected cycle track examples

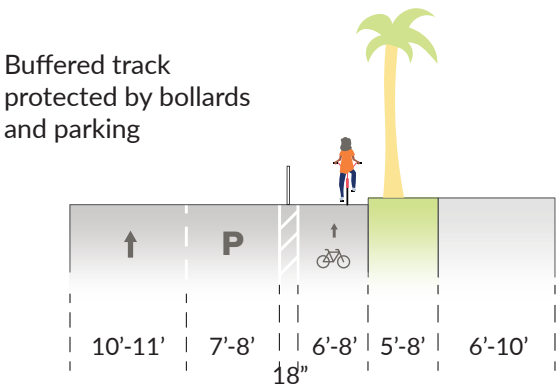
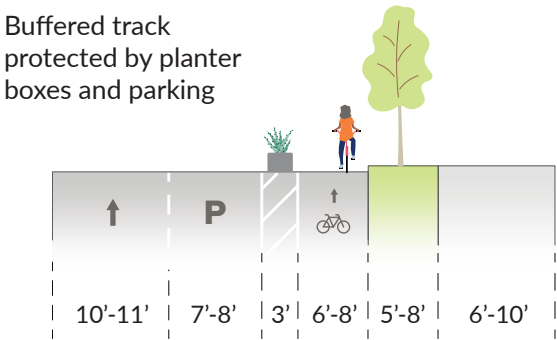
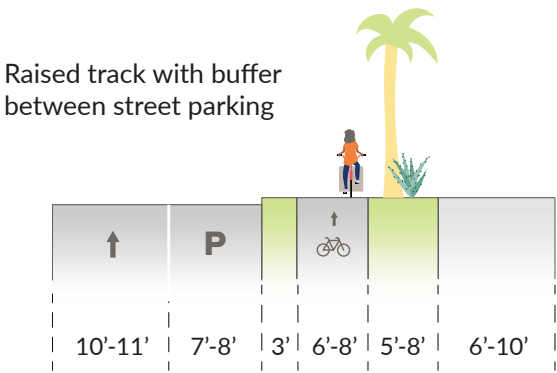
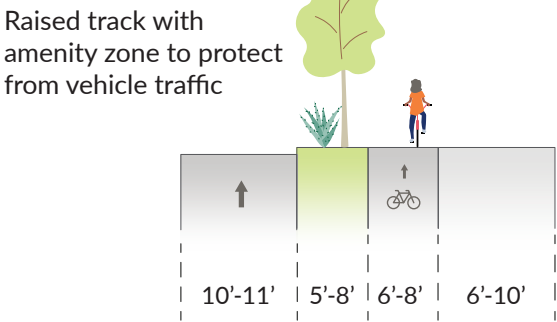


■ Raised cycle track in Waterloo, with bollards and parking offering physical protection from the road, and an amenity zone in between the sidewalk and bikeway. (Jason Thorne / Flickr)



■ Protected cycle track on a one-way street in LA with a bicycle traffic signal. Trees offer shade, while a buffer area with bollards next to street parking offers physical protection from cars. (Happy Cities)

Dimensions



3.5. Additional implementation tools

Las Vegas will reduce costs by incorporating changes into other upcoming roadwork. The City will also enable residents to make change with small-scale, low-cost projects.

Opportunity projects

3.5.1. Incorporate street design improvements in roadwork projects

- A

Prepare a set of typical street cross-sections and design specifications for pedestrian- and bike-focused local streets, secondary corridors, and major corridors. Design specifications should align with all policies outlined in this plan.
- B

Coordinate with relevant agencies to establish a schedule of upcoming roadwork.
- C

Identify projects that match the criteria list in Table 3.5.1 below, and ensure the road will be rebuilt to the new specifications.

Table 3.5.1. Investment criteria for opportunity projects

Prioritize redesign	Major and secondary corridors: Any section of street that is on: - A planned or existing high-capacity transit route (including Sahara Ave. and Charleston Blvd.) - The high-injury road network Local streets: Any street on the minimum grid or connecting to a catalytic redevelopment area (within a quarter mile) (see chapter 6)
Implement redesign if feasible	All local streets

Policies: Additional implementation tools

Tactical urbanism

Tactical urbanism uses low-cost, temporary interventions to improve the safety, comfort, and livability of streets. For example, garden boxes and wooden platforms can be highly effective at slowing traffic.

A central goal of tactical urbanism is to involve local residents in shaping new designs to create streets that meet their needs. These low-cost interventions have a number of benefits:

- Scale:** It is more feasible to make streets safe and provide transit stop improvements throughout Charleston if the City of Las Vegas leverages low-cost interventions.
- Experimentation:** Temporary interventions allow the City to test the impacts of a new design on safety, traffic speeds, and other goals.
- Community initiative:** Tactical urbanism can invite the local community to decide what safety improvements they need and participate in implementing them. It can also encourage residents to take the initiative to make changes in the short term, rather than having to wait for major capital projects.

Tactical urbanism projects can come in two forms:

- City-led projects**, in which the City selects high-priority sites and implements low-cost solutions directly (see policy 3.5.3).
- Community-led projects**, in which local residents decide high-priority sites, and may lead both design and implementation, in partnership wit the City (see policy 3.5.4).



- San Marcos, TX worked with residents to re-envision downtown using tactical urbanism solutions, such as planter boxes, to transform under-used road space into pocket parks. (Congress for New Urbanism & City of San Marcos / Flickr)
- Painted murals and bollards aim to slow cars and improve street safety in Washington DC. (BeyondDC / Flickr)

3.5.2. Establish tactical urbanism guidelines

- A** Write guidelines to clarify what kinds of interventions are appropriate, the limitations on what kinds of changes can be made, and the process for proposing a project.

For cases where community members wish to participate in implementing projects — such as by painting the street — the guidelines should also lay out the kinds of safety equipment and procedures necessary.



Community-initiated, city-led tactical urbanism project to paint curb bump-outs and improve street safety with colorful, community-designed murals in New Westminster. (Jared Korb / Happy Cities)

3.5.3. Establish a City-led tactical urbanism process

Typical street design processes often require multiple rounds of design, consultation, and analysis, because they generate expensive, long-term infrastructure. In contrast, tactical urbanism produces low-cost, temporary interventions, which cost less to remove, adjust, or replace. These projects can adopt a faster decision-making process because it is not expensive to change or remove interventions. The proposed process aims to maximize speed and experimentation.

- A Create a dedicated fund:** Las Vegas can improve more streets faster if the City dedicates part of its road and transit funds to supporting tactical urbanism projects.
- B Identify high-priority projects:** Use the priorities listed in Table 3.5.1.
- C Consult residents:** Invite local residents to offer ideas and suggestions for designs. Focus on low-cost materials and temporary interventions.
- D Implement the intervention:** If the project involves street painting or other, similar, safe projects, invite local residents to volunteer to participate in implementation.

3.5.4. Establish a community-led tactical urbanism process

If a community feels strongly about the need for improvements to a specific local street, and is willing to contribute the necessary work to design and implement those changes, Las Vegas should aim to support these efforts. Community-led efforts can build stronger social ties and strengthen local capacity.

- A Create a dedicated fund:** This can be the same fund as for City-led projects.
- B Enable community initiation:** Las Vegas should establish a process for residents to apply for a permit for a set of tactical interventions for specific streets. If there are more requests than available funds, use the criteria in Table 3.5.1 to select projects. Alternatively, projects should be approved if communities secure independent funding sources or the necessary raw materials.
- C Enable community-led design:** Community members should be encouraged to create their own designs that meet the requirements outlined in the guidelines (see policy 3.5.2).
- D Identify a lead organization:** If community members wish to participate in implementing the project, it is important to identify a registered organization, such as a non-profit or charity, to lead the effort and take responsibility for following safety requirements.



4

Public spaces

4. Public spaces

Provide parks within a 10-minute walk of all homes and invest in a new community amenity.

Charleston has limited public spaces, both indoors and outdoors. The Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan sets a long-term target to create 494 acres of parkland in Charleston, much more than the 160 acres that currently exist.

This chapter identifies strategies to increase the number of parks and civic facilities in Charleston, providing public spaces for people to gather, play, and stay cool during warm weather.



4.1. Parks and public spaces

All residents will live within a 10-minute walk of parks and public spaces that meet their needs for socializing, exercise, and play.

GOALS FOR CHARLESTON

Close to home: Reduce the average distance between all homes and public spaces to a 10-minute walk (half a mile).

Shaded: Provide abundant shade at parks with shade sails, trees, and other tools.

Cool: Provide drinking water fountains, water play features at parks, and other amenities to cool down.

Interesting: Offer a wide variety of reasons to visit public spaces to promote vibrancy, safety, and social connection.

Safe: Design parks to promote security by ensuring lots of people are in or near the space throughout the day, and providing adequate lighting at night.

89%

of survey respondents supported this vision and corresponding goals.

What we heard

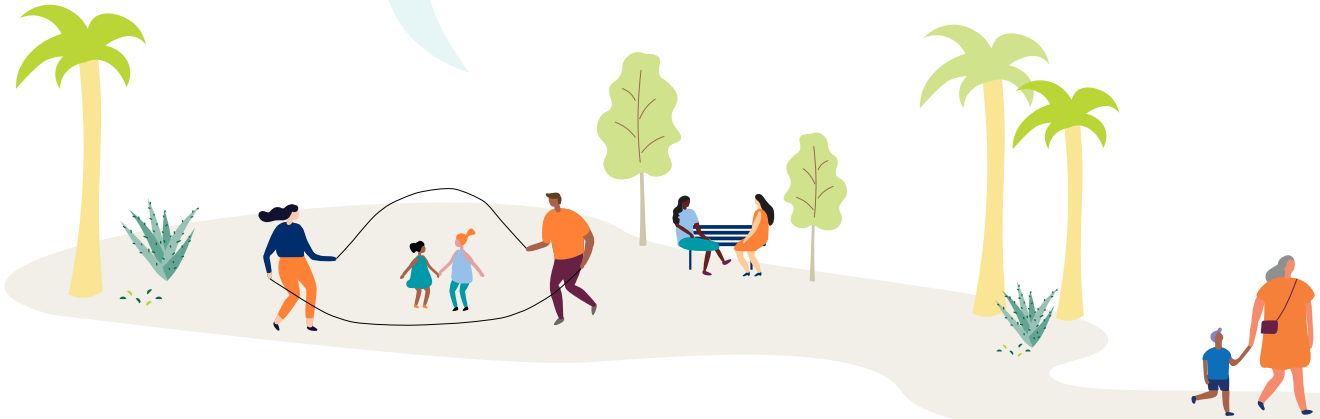
Across all engagement activities, participants expressed a need for more parks, trees, and shade in Charleston. Many also shared desires for a new indoor civic amenity that residents can spend time in, particularly on hot days.

41% of survey respondents expressed the need for more arts and cultural spaces in their neighborhood.

37% of survey respondents expressed the need for more community recreation centers in their neighborhood.

38% of survey respondents expressed the need for more parks and playgrounds in their neighborhood.

57% of survey respondents expressed the need for more trees in their neighborhood.



Key challenges and opportunities

Only 27% of residential lots in Charleston are within a five-minute walk of a park.

Another 69% are within a 10-minute walk of a park (approximately half a mile). The actual time it takes to walk to these parks is likely longer, given that many streets do not offer direct walking routes.

There are only 10 public parks in Charleston for over 75,000 residents.

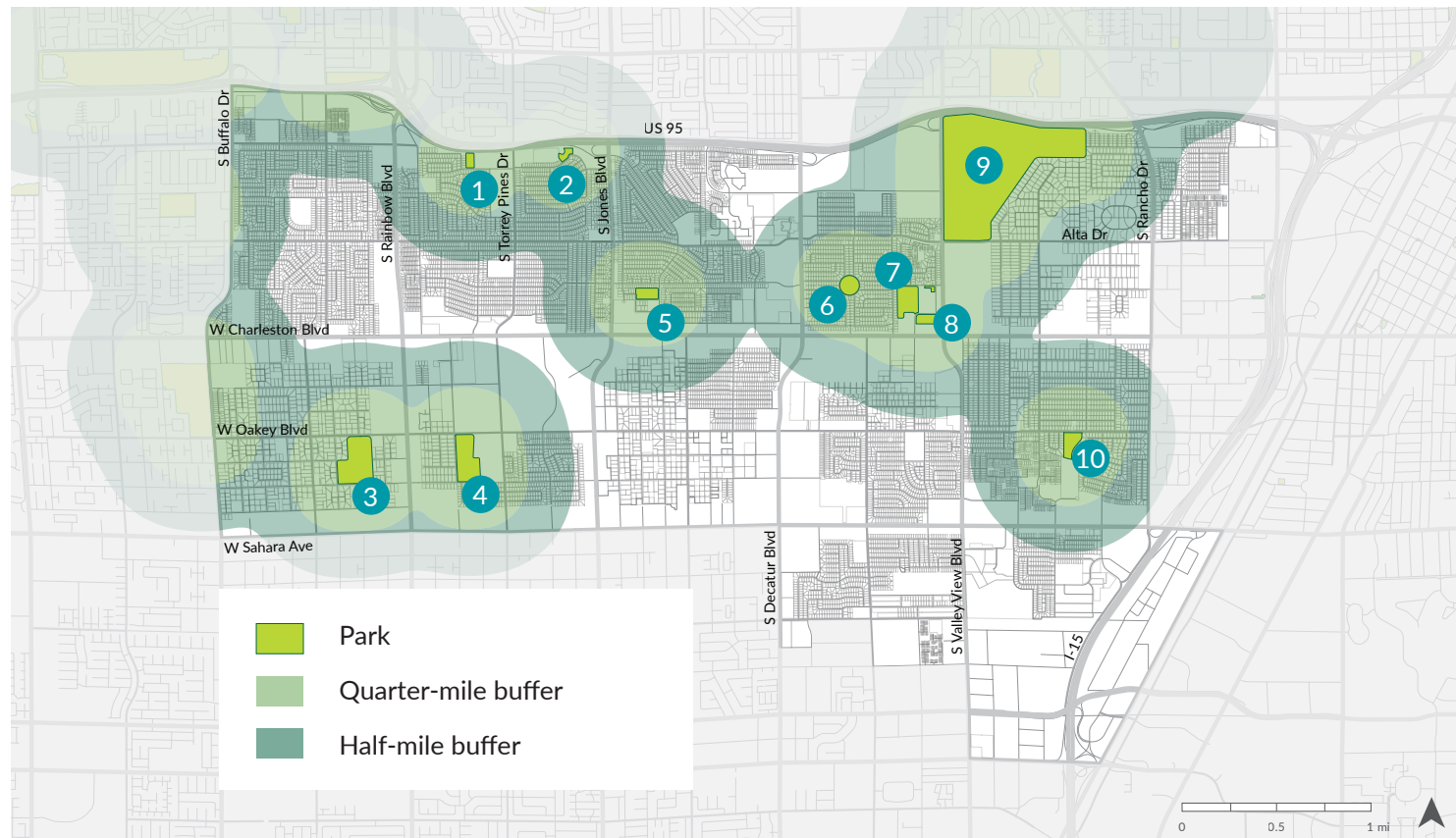
The areas without parks are some of the lowest-income neighborhoods in Charleston (see chapter 2 for a breakdown of neighborhoods).

Charleston can benefit from a new, large park.

The Imagine Las Vegas Parks Plan recommends building an additional major park or open space within the Charleston planning area (action 1.4). Las Vegas should monitor opportunities to acquire land to create park space in under-served areas.

Green spaces help cool city streets.

Parks and trees have an important cooling effect. The [Southern Nevada Heat Mapping Project](#) suggests that areas of Charleston with parks are as much as six degrees cooler than areas without parks.



Map of parks in Charleston, with a quarter-mile and half-mile buffer.

Charleston is home 10 public parks:



Charleston Neighborhood Preservation Park



Mirabelli Park



Rainbow Family Park



Firefighters Memorial Park



Gary Dexter Park



Essex/West Charleston Lions Park



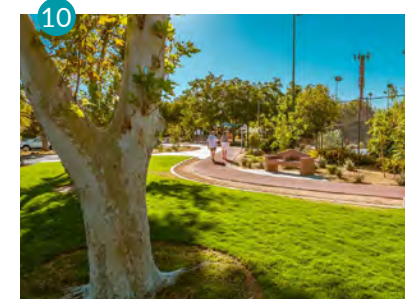
Cragin-Hinson Park



Rotary Park



Springs Preserve (Kenraiz Krzysztof Ziarnak / Wikimedia Commons)



Bob Baskin Park

Unless otherwise noted, photos are from the City of Las Vegas.

Policies: Parks and public spaces

4.1.1. Design vibrant and safe parks and public spaces

Parks should offer a wide variety of activities to attract many people and contribute to a safer, more inviting public realm. A variety of design solutions can help increase the vibrancy and safety of parks.

- A Things to do:** Offer 5 or more activities to do in the space, such as seating, playgrounds, water play features, and more.
- B Street access:** Ensure that public spaces have at least one side with frontage and access onto a public street.
- C Passive surveillance:** Create visual connections with primary pedestrian pathways and abutting homes and businesses to increase safety.
- D Enclosure:** Surround public spaces with vibrant, active edges.

Active edges refer to buildings that bring human life to the street, using features such as doors, porches, patios, storefronts, large windows, gardens, or yards.

- E Social seating:** Locate benches or other seating within 4' to 12' of each other to enable social interaction.

Angle seating slightly away from each other so that people sitting are not looking directly at each other. Whenever possible, offer movable chairs so that people can adjust seating to meet their needs.

- F Shade:** Provide shade using drought-tolerant trees, awnings, umbrellas, and/or shade sails, ensuring that these provide cover for seating and other activities.
- G Greenery:** Include a mix of drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, and other greenery to create visual interest, provide shade, and reduce the heat of the space.
- H Color:** Create a clear visual identity for parks (e.g. using color, art, and imagery) to help with wayfinding and establish a strong sense of place.
- I Accessibility:** Provide wide, smooth pathways and amenities such as accessible furniture and play equipment.
- J Maintenance:** Complete regular maintenance to ensure safety and cleanliness.



Water fountain and garbage can at Mirabelli Park. (Happy Cities)

Policies: Parks and public spaces

Park today

- Below: Conceptual rendering of a potential redesign for a park in Charleston, illustrating various policies under section 4.1.



Park redesign concept



4.1.2. Create parks and public spaces through development

The 2023 *Imagine Las Vegas Parks plan* calls for requiring “public open spaces like parks and plazas [...] within development approvals.” In Charleston, new development along major corridors (section 5.1) provides opportunities for creating new green space.

- A** Update zoning codes and subdivision bylaws to require large, new developments to provide public plazas or green spaces with shade, plants, and trees.
- B** Make necessary adjustments to design guidelines to enable courtyard public spaces inside developments.



■ Concept for a public mews space as part of a new, six-story, mixed-used development in Port Moody, BC. (Placemaker Communities)

4.1.3. Acquire land for a new park in Charleston

- A** Plan a large new park in an area underserved by parks in Charleston (see p. 80).
- B** Monitor opportunities to secure land, such as when utilities or other levels of government deem land to be surplus.
- C** Explore establishing a park acquisition fund and potential strategies to finance it, such as an area tax or a land value capture tax (see policy 5.3.4).
- D** Explore the potential to exchange City-owned land for properties in strategic areas for a potential park.



■ The desert landscaping of Springs Preserve provides shade and helps reduce the urban heat island effect in Charleston. (MotelGeorge / Wikimedia Commons)

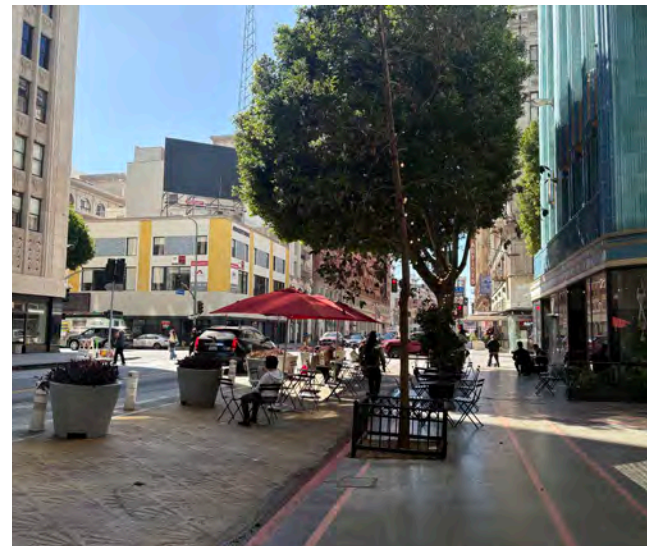


■ Conceptual illustration of a courtyard public space between two buildings, including seating, shade sails, trees, plants, and different activities to do in the space.

4.1.4. Create pocket parks

Frequent, small parks will help increase access to green space across Charleston at a relatively low cost. A small “pocket park” (a quarter acre or less) can fit a playground or offer a place to sit and gather with friends.

- A** Explore opportunities to convert under-used or vacant land into small pocket parks, including through:
 - **Government-owned land:** Identify underused segments.
 - **Vacant land:** Acquire vacant land or lots with empty homes.
 - **Under-used road space:** As streets are redesigned, particularly when reducing lane widths (see sections 3.2 and 3.3), fill under-used right of way (ROW) with small pocket parks.
- B** Aim to provide a pocket park or plaza within a five-minute walk (quarter mile) of every home.
- C** Update Complete Streets Standards Policy 19.04.390 to encourage and enable parklets on residential streets.
- D** Design pocket parks to include trees, shade, furniture, and potentially games, activities, or play equipment.



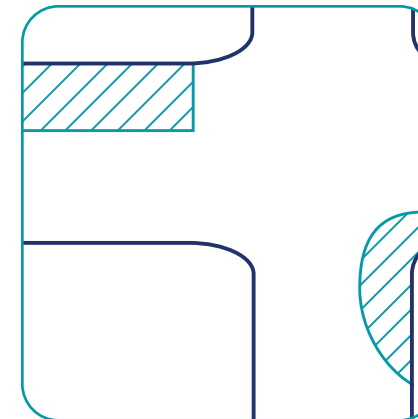
Los Angeles has transformed underused lanes and road space into pocket parks and plazas downtown. (Happy Cities)



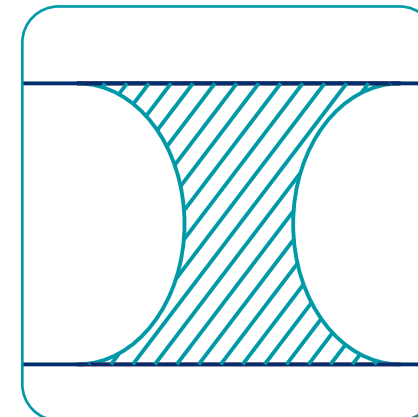
Derbyshire Street Pocket Park. (Julian Walker / Flickr)

Alignment with local plans

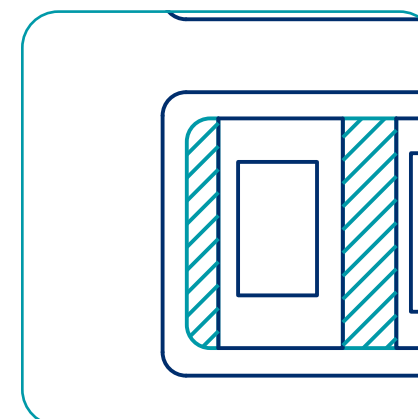
- *Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan* Infill Park Strategies, City of Las Vegas, section III.D
- *Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities*, RTC of Southern Nevada, section 19.04.390



Pocket park example:
Underused road space



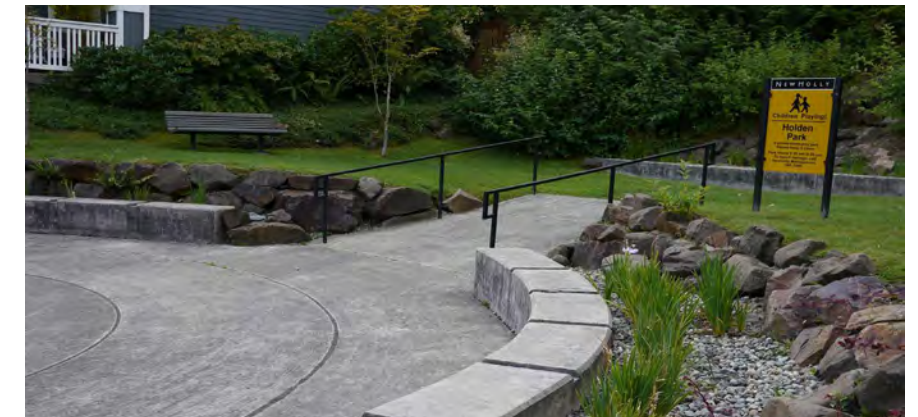
Pocket park example:
Underused space between dead ends



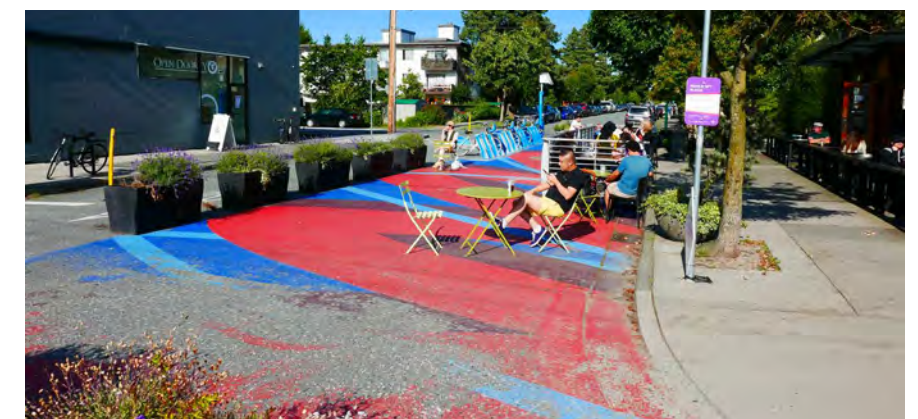
Pocket park example:
Underused lot space



The Corbett Porch Patio project in Tucson uses unused street space to create spaces for people. (Living Streets Alliance)



Street dead ends and closures creates space for small pocket parks. (Rob Ketcherside / Flickr)



Plaza at Main St. and 14th Ave. in Vancouver acts as a pocket park with seating, murals, tree cover, and a bike share dock next to a café. (Vancouver Public Space Network / Flickr)

4.1.5. Seek funding to expand the Las Vegas tree planting program

Trees can help reduce street temperatures. The U.S. EPA¹ finds that trees can reduce the urban heat island effect by between 2°F and 9°F.

- A** Set a target to reduce urban heat island effect in Charleston by 5°F by 2050, and achieve it by planting more trees on corridors, local streets, and in parks and public spaces.
- B** As streets are modified (see sections 3.2 and 3.3), plant new trees as part of this process.
- C** Prioritize planting new trees on streets on the core pedestrian network (policy 3.3.4) and bike network (policy 3.4.1).
- D** Identify general areas that require priority for increased tree cover, including:
 - Areas with low tree coverage relative to the rest of Charleston
 - Areas with high urban heat temperatures
 - Areas with high concentrations of low-income households
 - Areas with high concentrations of older adults (65+) and people with disabilities
 - Areas with high concentrations of people who do not own or use a car

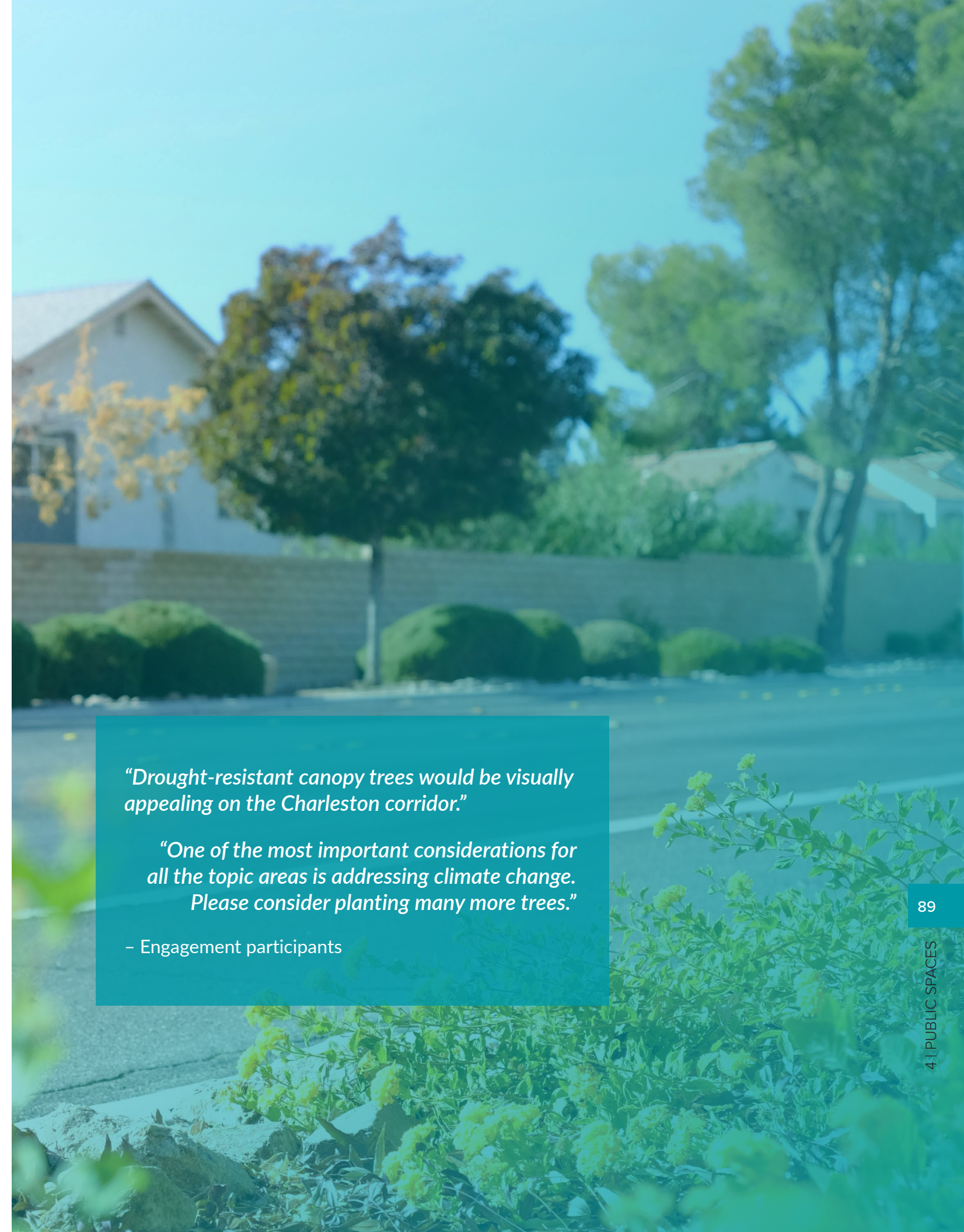


■ Leafy trees provide shade on wide sidewalks in the Arts District, Las Vegas. (Happy Cities)

Alignment with local plans

- The City of Las Vegas has a yearly tree planting program with a goal of planting 60,000 trees by 2050.

1. US EPA. (2017). Using Trees and Vegetation to Reduce Heat Islands. https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/heat-islands/using-trees-and-vegetation-reduce-heat-islands_.html



“Drought-resistant canopy trees would be visually appealing on the Charleston corridor.”

“One of the most important considerations for all the topic areas is addressing climate change. Please consider planting many more trees.”

– Engagement participants

4.2 Civic amenities

Charleston residents will enjoy access to indoor amenities that meet their needs for culture, entertainment, exercise, and social connection.

GOALS FOR CHARLESTON

Cooling relief: Provide cool, indoor public spaces where residents can spend time on hot days and/or during extreme heat events.

Places to exercise: Provide destinations for indoor sports, recreation, and physical activity.

Places to gather: Provide gathering spaces for social events and performance spaces for the arts.

Strategically located: Position any civic amenity in a place where it can help attract development.

People-friendly design: Design the exterior of any civic building to create a high-quality public realm that is as comfortable and inviting as the interior.

88%

of survey respondents supported this vision and corresponding goals.

Context

There are only three City-owned civic facilities in Charleston.

The Mirabelli Community Center, the Charleston Heights Arts Center, and the West Charleston Library are the only publicly owned community facilities in Charleston.

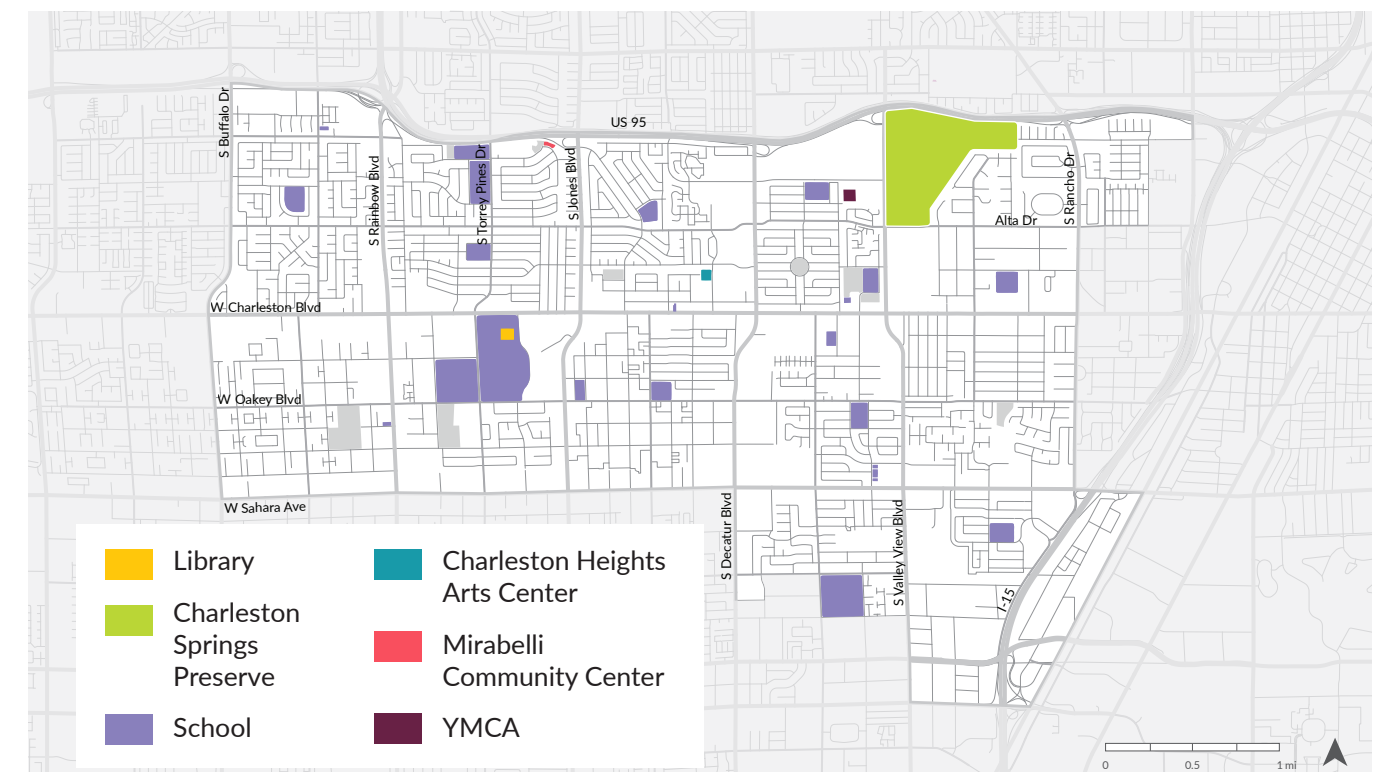
Community amenities boost a sense of belonging, support health, and offer places to gather.

Civic amenities offer opportunities for social interaction, building a stronger sense of community. Charleston needs more indoor places where community members can gather and spend time in, particularly during extreme heat.

What we heard

Community members shared desires for more family-friendly indoor places to visit on hot days, such as a multi-use recreation center for all ages or an arts facility. This facility should be free to use, without needing to sign up for an event or program to spend time there. Ideas for features in a new community facility included:

- An indoor fitness track
- An indoor park and playground
- Ball courts, such as for pickle ball
- Food vendors
- Activities for young people of various ages, including toddlers, kids, and teenagers



Map of major amenities and civic facilities, including schools, in Charleston.

“I like that Charleston is central and has many amenities close by: gyms, parks, community centers, library, CSN campus, stores, Springs Preserve.”

“There need to be ways to meet people besides going to a restaurant. The kids need an outlet too like a recreation center.”

– Engagement participants

Policies: Civic amenities

4.2.1. Build a new civic amenity

- A** At minimum, plan to build one new publicly accessible civic amenity building in Charleston, such as a community center.
- B** Locate the new amenity within a catalytic redevelopment area (see chapter 6) to maximize its value.
- C** Consider including an indoor park or playground as part of this project, with interior green space and places for people to gather, play, and relax.
- D** Ensure that the building provides space that people can visit and spend time without needing to book in advance or sign up for programming.
- E** Explore potential sources of external funding, and/or implement an area improvement tax (see policy 5.3.4).



A shaded bench, covered entryway, and playground outside Mirabelli Community Center help activate the public realm. (Happy Cities)

4.2.2. Design people-friendly buildings

- A** Follow best practices for people-friendly design (policy 5.1.2) to create a more vibrant public realm, and establish more detailed urban design guidelines for Charleston as needed.
- B** Position the building strategically to visually frame streets and public spaces, and to block the view of disamenities, such as parking and vacant land.
- C** Orient building entrances onto nearby streets and public spaces to support street life, and provide shade at entrances.
- D** Use memorable, distinct architecture to help create a visual identity for the area and to reinforce local pride and community attachment.



5

Housing and development

5. Housing and development

Offer diverse housing choices for all ages and incomes through mixed-use, transit-oriented development on major corridors and gentle density in neighborhoods.

This chapter offers guidance for development in two distinct areas: along major corridors (such as Charleston and Decatur boulevards) and within neighborhoods (including local streets and secondary corridors). In both areas, the plan aims to encourage attractive, high-quality housing that matches the aspirations of residents for the character and opportunities in their communities.



Context

Charleston is projected to add over 25,000 residents by 2050.

The Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan sets a target of over 10,000 new homes for Charleston. This is about a 38% increase in population and a 35% increase in total number of homes.

Underdeveloped and vacant lots offer opportunities for new homes.

There are underdeveloped or vacant lots in the Charleston area, which detract from the vibrancy and safety of streets. These lots present opportunities to address the community’s housing needs. The Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan sets a goal to “transform underutilized properties into vibrant, walkable, mixed-use places.”

Mixed land uses support walkable, vibrant neighborhoods.

Very few areas of Charleston mix residential with commercial or office land uses. In general, commercial and office areas are concentrated along major corridors, while the neighborhoods between corridors are almost exclusively residential. These separated land uses make it difficult for residents to walk or roll to meet daily needs, such as going to a grocery store.

Charleston residents need more housing choices.

Single detached homes are the most common residential form in Charleston. There are limited housing options for those who do not need or cannot afford an entire detached house, such as young people, older adults, and lower-income residents. The lack of affordable housing choices also hurts employers, who may struggle to fill job postings or attract workers to the area.

What we heard

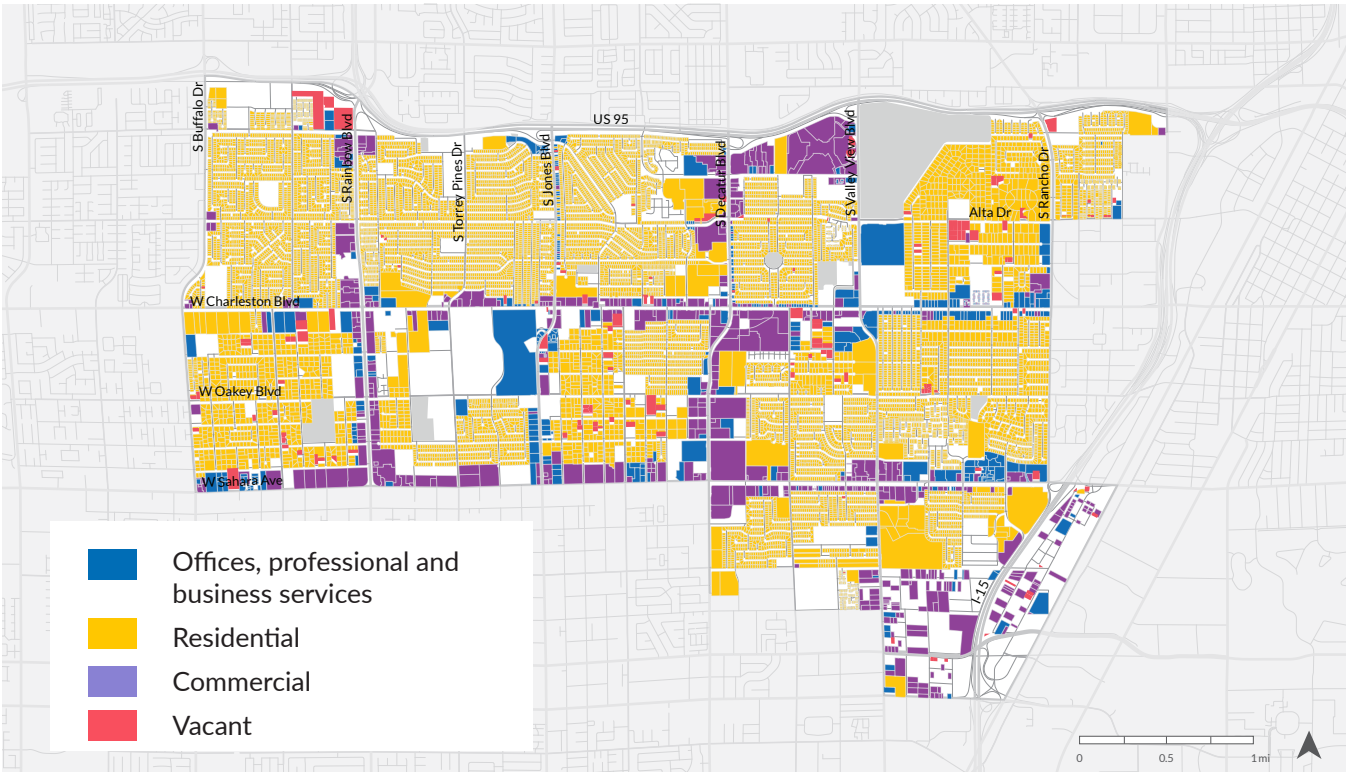
During engagement, many residents expressed a need for a greater range of housing choices, including more affordable homes. Common concerns included:

- Need for a greater variety of housing choices at different price points
- Lack of starter homes for young people
- High housing costs (whether to rent or own)
- Lack of accessible homes or care homes for older adults and seniors
- Need for more supportive housing that can provide extra services for people transitioning out of homelessness

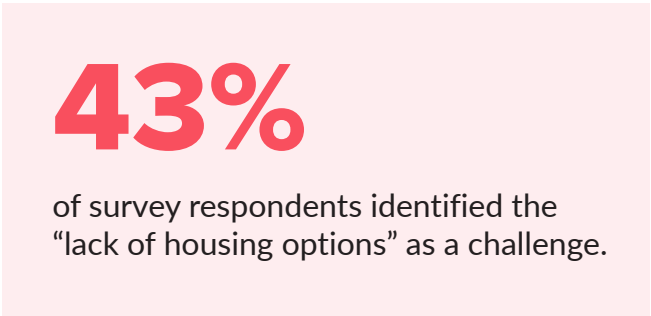
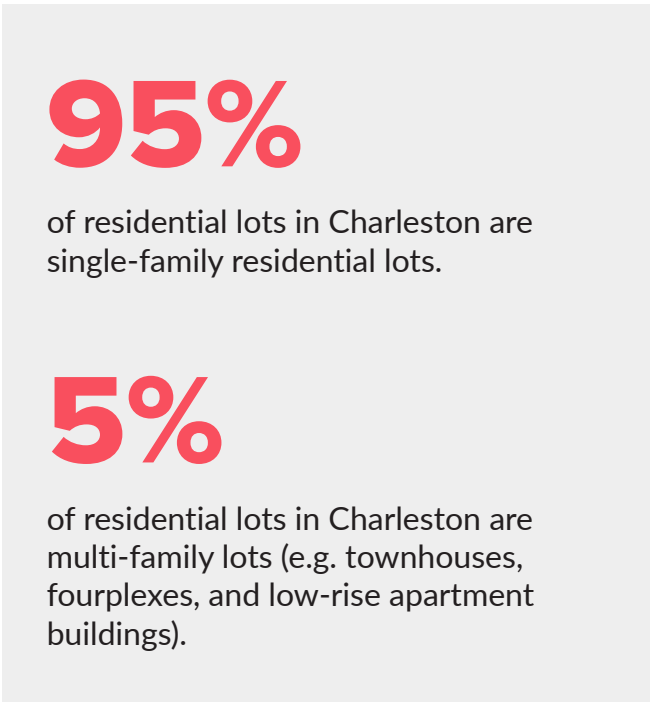
Residents expressed distinct preferences for housing growth and development in local neighborhoods versus along major corridors:

- **Within local neighborhoods:** Allow gradual change through more low-density housing choices, while avoiding high-density development.
- **Along major corridors:** Encourage high-quality, higher-density development to meet housing needs, support businesses, and encourage transit ridership.

The policies in chapter 5 are designed to reflect these aspirations.



Map of vacant lots and current residential, commercial, and office land uses in Charleston. The white areas include public spaces and schools.



5.1. Development on major corridors

Transit investments will attract beautiful developments that create vibrant, people-friendly commercial corridors and reduce the traffic impact of new developments.

GOALS FOR CHARLESTON

Enclosure: Define the edge of the street with a consistent line of buildings.

Inviting building edges: Create street life and vibrancy by adding businesses, doors, windows, and other assets facing onto the sidewalk.

Reduce empty space: Minimize blank walls, parking lots, and dead space along the sidewalk.

Transit-oriented development: Attract high-quality, compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented development that will help the region meet its housing needs and boost local business.

75%

of survey respondents supported this vision and corresponding goals.

Key opportunities

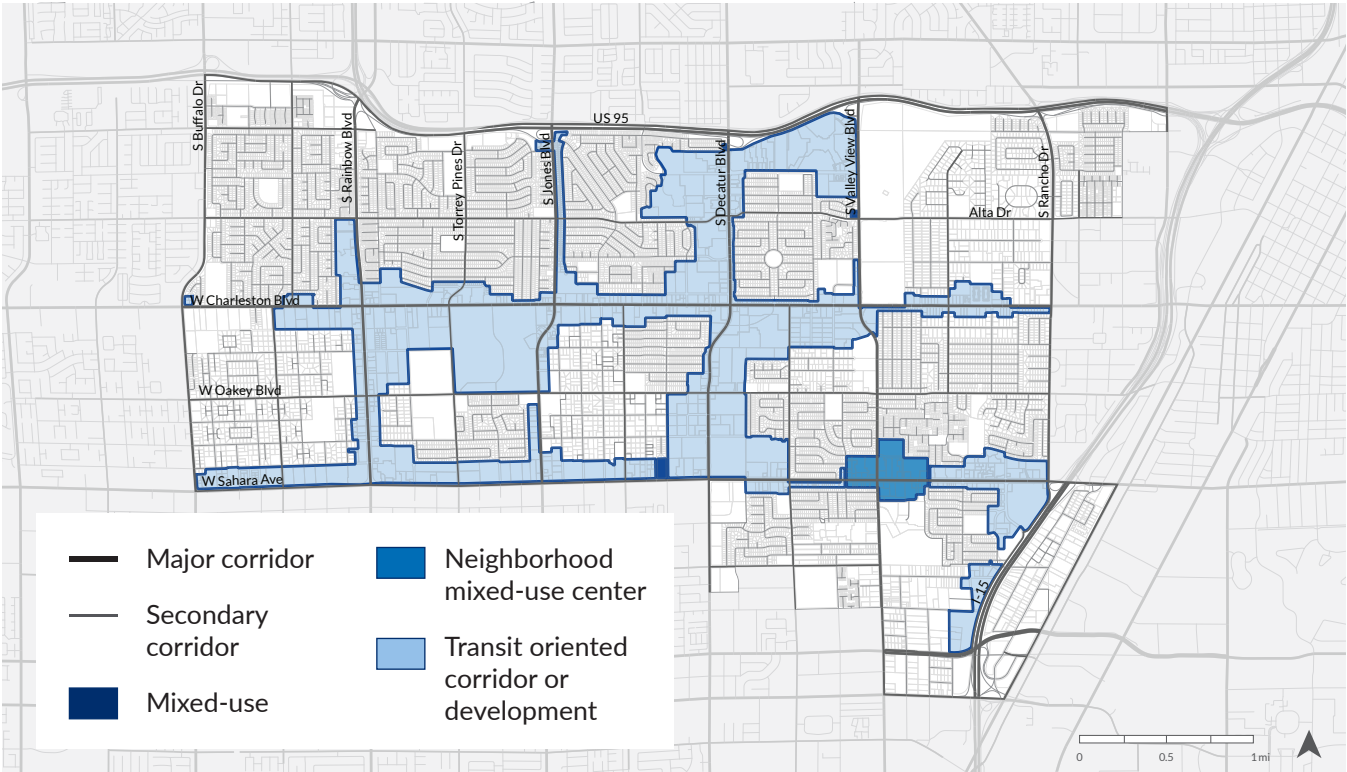
The Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan identifies areas for mixed-use, transit-oriented development along major corridors in Charleston.

Transit-oriented development will provide more homes while maximizing the impact of new transit investments, including RTC’s proposal to add high-capacity transit along Charleston Blvd.

What is transit-oriented development (TOD)?

Transit-oriented development involves building mid- or high-rise buildings near transit, where people can live, work, and shop in one place. With homes, offices, and stores close to public transport, more people can walk, bike, or take transit instead of driving, reducing traffic and costs. Key components include:

- Sufficient density to support transit and jobs
- Buildings that face onto the sidewalk with ground-floor shops and services
- Parking hidden underground or behind buildings
- Attractive, people-friendly architecture that helps create desirable, lively streets



Map of mixed-use and transit-oriented development areas identified in the Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan.

5.1.1. Focus new development on major corridors

See section 3.2 for more guidance on street design for major corridors.

A Identify a Transit Oriented Development Overlay District Zone for the Charleston area, in compliance with the TOD and mixed-use zones identified in the Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan (p. 2-13). In these areas, the zoning code shall:

- Permit a variety of mid-rise housing typologies, including apartment buildings, courtyard apartment buildings, and other compact development types.
 - Enable up to 8 stories and encourage the redevelopment of existing strip malls and under-used lots into housing and pedestrian-friendly commercial areas.
- Require a publicly accessible, outdoor green space, plaza, or courtyard (see policy 4.1.2).
 - Permit mixed uses, including commercial, residential, office, parks, and institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and universities.
 - Encourage ground-floor retail.
 - Disallow car-intensive uses, including car dealerships, drive-throughs, and gas stations.
 - Reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements and allow for flexibility to meet parking demand based on market conditions.



■ Oakland Transit Village, an example of transit-oriented development. (Eric Fredericks / Flickr)

"More mid-rise housing along Charleston. More density, coffee shops mixed use."

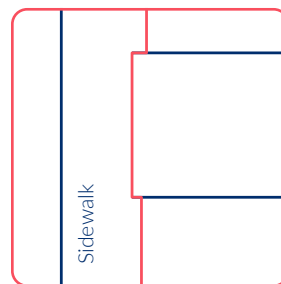
"I agree that medium-density housing should be on major corridors provided they are slow and safe, pedestrian-friendly streets."

– Engagement participants

Rental apartments in a transit-oriented development in Tempe, AZ. (Steven Vance/ Flickr)

5.1.2. Implement design guidelines for pedestrian-friendly development along corridors

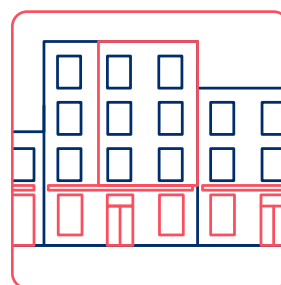
- A Enclosure:** Ensure that new buildings define the edge of streets and public spaces with a consistent street wall. Avoid adding parking lots, vacant lots, or unused spaces with no clear purpose.
- B Visual complexity:** Ensure that buildings provide visual variety at multiple scales, similar to that found in nature. Avoid blank or flat walls with no three-dimensional features or openings (e.g. windows, doors, balconies).
- C Greenery:** Ensure that building frontages include trees and plants. Trees should be appropriate to the climate and provide shade.



A. Enclosure



■ 200 Second Street, Oakland, CA. (David Baker Architects)

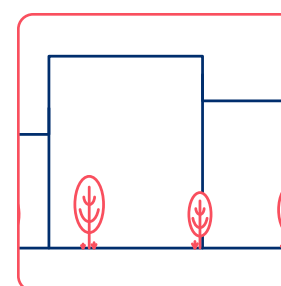


B. Visual complexity



■ 8th & Howard/SOMA Studios San Francisco, CA. (Brian Rose / David Baker Architects)

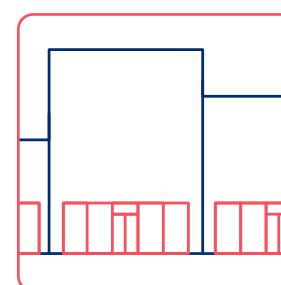
- D Vibrancy:** Ensure that buildings direct doors onto the sidewalk, with regular windows, public seating, and patios or porches along the street edge to help activate the public realm. Encourage street-level retail.
- E Physical comfort:** Use buildings to provide protection from the heat, by casting a shadow on the sidewalk for as much of the day as possible. Awnings, shade sales, and trees should be added to provide additional comfort.
- F Parking mitigation:** Place parking away from the street's line of sight and in the rear end of parcels, such as in parking structures or underground (if feasible).



C. Greenery



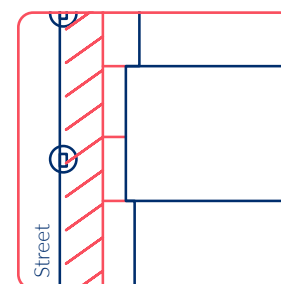
■ Historic Fifth Street, Las Vegas, NV. (Ron Mader / Flickr)



D. Vibrancy



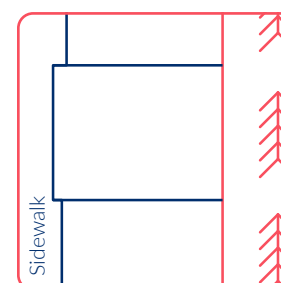
■ Belmar Mall redevelopment, Denver, CO. (Happy Cities)



E. Physical comfort



■ Mason on Mariposa, San Francisco, CA. (Craig Cozart / David Baker Architects)



F. Parking mitigation



■ 26th and Clarksville Apartments, Nashville, TN. (David Baker Architects)

"We support affordable housing. Las Vegas should take advantage of the area's vacant lots and build on them."

– Engagement participant

Affordable housing for families and older adults. (Province of BC / Flickr)

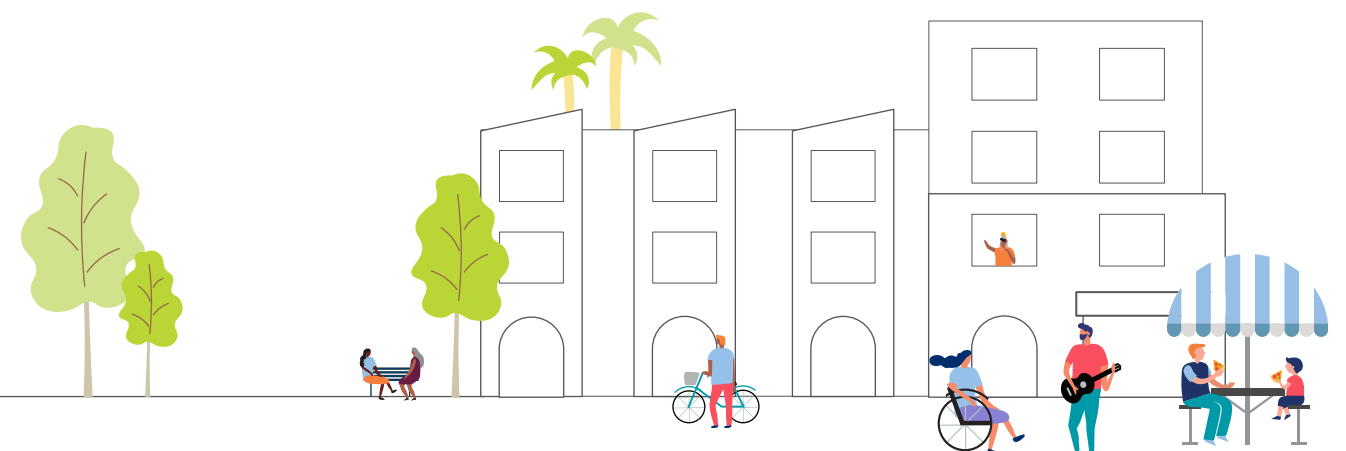
Policies: Development on major corridors

5.1.3. Support the construction of affordable housing on major corridors

- A** Support efforts by non-profit organizations to build affordable housing projects on major corridors and near transit.
- B** Seek to expedite permit applications for affordable housing projects.
- C** Allow extra density or height on lots owned by non-profit organizations, provided that at least 30% of proposed units will be designated for affordable housing.

60%

of survey respondents supported investment in affordable housing on major corridors.



5.2. Homes within neighborhoods

Charleston will offer diverse housing choices that meet the needs of residents at all stages of life, while preserving the character of existing neighborhoods.

GOALS FOR CHARLESTON

Affordable: Increase the supply and range of affordable housing options for renters and buyers.

Diverse and age-friendly: Provide a range of accessible housing types that meet the needs of people of all ages, lifestyles, incomes, and household sizes.

Compatible: Encourage new housing that integrates well with neighborhood character.

Climate-friendly: Promote energy-efficient, sustainable, and climate-appropriate housing designs.

Anti-displacement: Ensure that current low-income residents and businesses can benefit from Charleston’s growth through policies that support them to stay in the community.

89%

of survey respondents supported this vision and corresponding goals.

Below: Conceptual rendering of potential missing middle housing on a current empty lot in Charleston, illustrating various policies under section 5.2.

Empty lot today



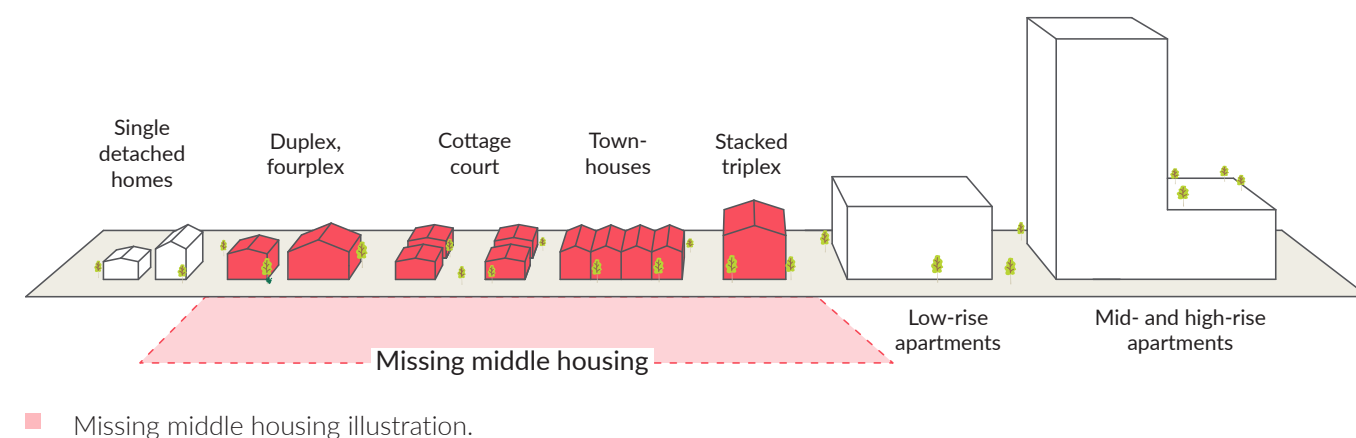
Homes within neighborhoods concept



5.2.1. Allow missing middle housing within neighborhoods

Missing middle housing gradually adds modest, low-rise homes that offer more attainable choices for residents while maintaining neighborhood character.

- A** Create new missing middle zoning that permits a variety of missing middle housing forms in addition to single detached homes, including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, and cottage court homes.
- B** Apply this missing middle zone along local streets within neighborhoods and areas off of major corridors.
- C** Set maximum building heights to maintain a low-rise neighborhood typology.
- D** Allow for up to four units per lot, or less where servicing capacity is limited.
- E** Implement flexible parking requirements for new missing middle developments, allowing residents to park either on site or on the street, without adding unnecessary costs or complexity to site layouts.
- F** Implement maximum parking area requirements in front yards to reduce the visual impact of parking within new buildings on the street.
- G** Reduce driveway curb cuts on individual lots to allow more space for on-street parking and tree coverage.
- H** Require new missing middle developments to add trees and landscaping to improve shade and comfort on the street.
- I** Permit compatible, small-scale commercial uses in zoning for all residential areas in Charleston (see policy 5.2.3)



5.2.2. Simplify Charleston zoning codes for low-density residential areas

Twelve types of low-density zoning currently apply to the Charleston area. This complexity adds to development costs and makes it more challenging to build missing middle housing.

- A** Consolidate and simplify residential zoning codes that have similar purposes to streamline the development process and enable small-scale, incremental growth within neighborhoods.
- B** Seek to achieve policy goals with the simplest regulations possible, and eliminate all regulations that do not serve an explicit goal.
- C** Focus zoning regulations on the physical form of buildings to create attractive, comfortable streets. Seek to eliminate regulations that do not directly impact the quality of the public realm.
- D** Permit compatible, small-scale commercial uses in zoning for all residential areas in Charleston (see policy 5.2.3)



Single detached homes in Charleston. (Happy Cities)



Policies: Homes within neighborhoods

5.2.3. Bring services and destinations closer to people's homes

Small neighborhood shops and corner stores make it easier for people to walk to meet daily needs, supporting a healthier, more active lifestyle. They create local gathering spaces and jobs, strengthening community ties while maintaining quiet, family-friendly neighborhoods.

- A** Allow small-scale neighborhood commercial uses on every corner lot.
- B** Create a standard definition in the Zoning Code for neighborhood commercial uses. Compatible uses should have an explicit goal to serve local residents.

Examples of compatible uses: corner stores, coffee shops, bookstores.

Examples of incompatible uses: department stores, casinos, adult stores, cannabis stores, fast food drive-throughs.

- C** Provide regulations to ensure compatibility, such as maximum square footage and design guidelines.
- D** Consider allowing neighborhood commercial uses within primary residences to enable people to start small businesses from their garages or front yards. Consider character guidelines to ensure that the commercial use is of minimal impact, such as maximum square footage and requiring that the business is operated by the primary resident of the property.
- E** Allow home-office uses to encourage entrepreneurship opportunities for residents.

5.2.4. Enhance heritage through design guidelines

Las Vegas is exploring the potential to create heritage districts in the Charleston area, such as in Charleston Heights. These heritage districts should reflect history and sense of place, while enabling construction of new homes to meet the area's pressing housing needs.

- A** Encourage historic architectural features in new buildings to align with Charleston's visual design and character.
- B** Avoid regulations that would discourage housing development.



Clark County Museum. (Visit Las Vegas)



A corner cafe in a residential area. (Mah Milk Bar)

Policies: Homes within neighborhoods

5.2.5. Allow medium-density growth on secondary corridors and in select areas within neighborhoods

Some neighborhoods in Charleston have pockets of low-rise apartment buildings that provide essential housing options for residents. Low-rise apartments can help Charleston meet pressing housing needs while keeping heights below three stories to match neighborhood scale.

- A** Permit low-rise apartments (maximum of 3 stories) and missing middle housing (see policy 5.2.1) in the following areas:
 - On secondary corridors.
 - In areas where there is housing need and a concentration of neighborhood services (e.g. near to transit, schools, universities and other key destinations).

- B** Consider R-3 Medium Density Residential zoning for these areas.
- C** For areas within a quarter mile of major corridors or Transit Oriented Development zones (see policy 5.1.1), implement zoning to support commercial uses through low-rise compact housing.
- D** Establish design guidelines to ensure that buildings contribute positively to the street and mitigate impact on neighborhoods (see policy 5.1.3 for example design principles).
- E** Consider enabling low-rise apartment buildings in transition areas near Transit Oriented Development zones or catalytic redevelopment areas (see chapter 6).



Low-rise, three-story apartments in Charleston, Las Vegas. (Happy Cities)

5.3. Affordable homes

Charleston will provide more affordable housing options and protect low-income households from displacement.

GOALS FOR CHARLESTON

Affordable: Increase the supply and range of affordable housing options for renters and buyers.

Anti-displacement: Implement policies to support low-income residents and local businesses to stay in the community, ensuring that everyone benefits from Charleston’s growth.

Dignified: Encourage high-quality homes that support health, connection, and inclusion for all.

Well-connected: Locate affordable housing and shelters in areas close to jobs, transit, and services.

60%

of survey respondents supported investment in affordable housing on major corridors.

23%

indicated that the cost of buying a home is a challenge for them.

94%

reported they feel strongly attached to their neighborhood and want to live there for a long time.

Key challenges and opportunities

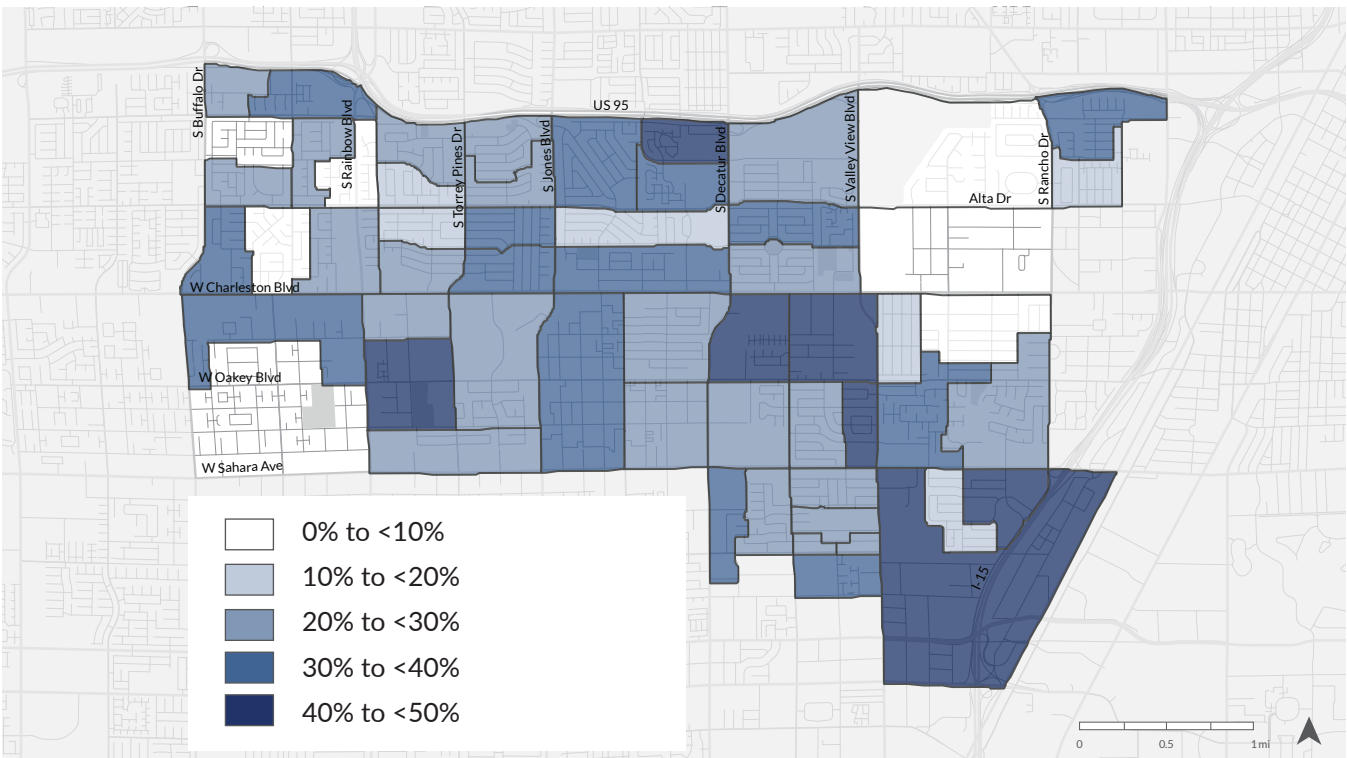
Affordable homes help mitigate risks of displacement.

As communities grow, low-income residents are at risk of displacement due to redevelopment and rising housing costs. Some neighborhoods in Charleston have higher concentrations of low-income households, such as Richfield, Las Verdes Heights and Charleston Heights East. Additional groups that may need more housing choices include:

- Homeowners looking to downsize
- Older adults on fixed or low incomes
- Veterans and people with disabilities
- Young people who struggle to find suitable places to rent

Supportive housing and services can help reduce homelessness in Charleston.

Nevada has [announced](#) the Campus for Hope project, a proposed \$200-million facility designed to address homelessness by providing shelter, support services, and resources to help individuals transition to stable housing. This will be located at the Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services Center at the corner of Jones and Charleston boulevards. This project aligns with the goals of this plan and will help address homelessness in Charleston and Las Vegas more broadly.



Map of average combined rates of poverty, adult disability, and rent burden in Charleston by census tract, as of 2021 census data.

5.3.1. Provide incentives for affordable housing

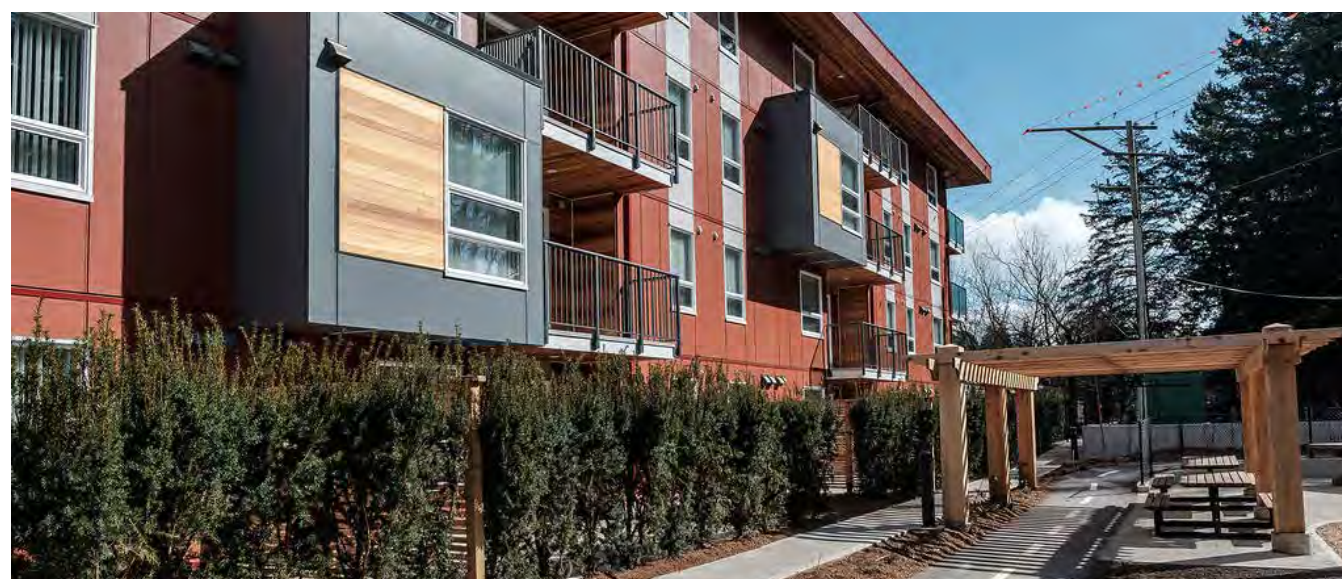
Affordable housing policies should not make it harder or more expensive to build new homes. This plan aims to encourage both private and non-profit developers to build affordable housing while ensuring that projects are financially viable.

- A** Allow 10% to 20% more density for non-profit-owned developments to support financial viability of affordable housing.
- B** Focus affordable housing investments and non-market developments near transit, jobs, and services.

5.3.2. Protect affordable housing stock

- A** Implement an affordable rental replacement policy in Charleston that requires developers to replace any affordable rental units they demolish with new affordable units, including a mix of moderate-income, low-income, and very low-income affordable housing, as defined by NRS 278.01904, NRS 278.01906, and NRS 278.01902.
- B** Grant density allowances for one extra market unit for each affordable unit a developer is required to replace, and ensure the rental replacement policy is cost-neutral for developers.

For example, if a developer is permitted to build 50 units on a site but is required to replace 5 affordable units, they should be allowed to build an additional 5 market-rate units, bringing the total to 60 units. This enables developers to financially support the replacement of affordable housing while maintaining the overall project's viability.



■ Affordable housing for families and older adults. (Province of BC / Flickr)

5.3.3. Explore creating a community land trust (CLT)

- A** Set up a CLT with a mandate to preserve and increase affordable housing stock in Charleston.
- B** Offer developers the option to pay cash-in-lieu to the CLT instead of replacing existing affordable rental units (see policy 5.3.2).

5.3.4. Consider a land-value capture tax

- A** Set up the land-value capture tax to ensure that a portion of any future increases in property values is reinvested in the local community.
- B** Enable this land-value capture tax to fund affordable rental acquisitions for the CLT.
- C** Enable this tax to fund local improvement projects such as street beautification, park improvements and others.

What is a land-value capture tax?

Public investments, such as new transit infrastructure or civic facilities, tend to increase the value of surrounding land, benefiting landowners through increases in rental prices and property values. A land-value capture tax helps cities collect some of this increased value in return for public investments, ensuring that this financial gain benefits the wider community. This money can then be used to fund more public improvement projects or affordable homes.

What is a community land trust?

A community land trust (CLT) is a non-profit organization that owns real estate and uses it to benefit the community. Often, CLTs acquire and hold rental buildings to protect them from rental price increases. In other cases, they sell unit leases to residents, and allow them to appreciate at a set rate, so that residents can build equity. By keeping assets under trust ownership, the CLT can absorb increases in property values and ensure they benefit low-income residents. In Charleston, a CLT could offer a solution to rising rental prices by protecting affordable homes, keeping rental costs stable, and providing more families with access to affordable homes as the area grows.

- The [Colorado Community Land Trust](#) (CCLT) partners with communities to create permanently affordable homeownership opportunities for low to moderate-income households.
- The [Proud Ground CLT](#) in Portland focuses on creating and preserving affordable homeownership opportunities, ensuring that homes remain affordable for future generations.
- The [Oakland Community Land Trust](#) (OakCLT) preserves affordable housing by acquiring and rehabilitating properties, ensuring long-term affordability for low- and moderate-income residents, and preventing displacement.

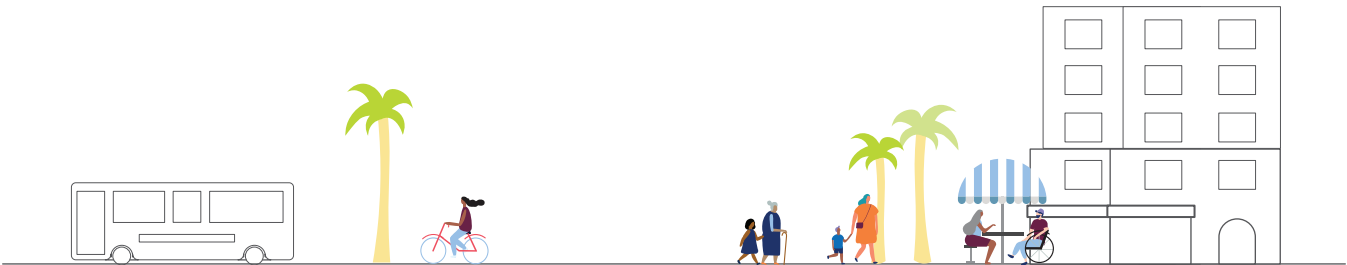


6. Catalytic redevelopment

Focus City investments and development incentives within strategic, transit-accessible locations in Charleston to create a critical mass of pedestrian-friendly development.

The Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan proposes to create “catalytic mixed-use hubs,” which aim to create a critical mass of pedestrian-friendly development to encourage more similar development over time. This chapter outlines a vision and criteria for “catalytic redevelopment areas” — and an accompanying catalytic redevelopment program — that aim to attract people-oriented development to strategic places.

6 Catalytic redevelopment



Key challenges and opportunities

Vibrant, pedestrian-friendly areas will create a strong sense of place along main streets in Charleston.

Major corridors and commercial areas in Charleston lack comfortable public spaces to spend time in, and often feel unsafe for pedestrians. Strategic redevelopment of key sites in Charleston can transform corridors into places that people love to spend time in — vibrant, mixed-use streets full of homes, shops, services, public spaces, and other destinations.

Pedestrian-friendly development is difficult to encourage without effective policy and incentives.

In recent years, few developers have taken advantage of the mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly zoning in Charleston and other low-density areas. It is challenging to attract pedestrian-friendly development to a car-dependent areas such as Charleston for two key reasons:

- Few people currently walk in the area, which makes it difficult for ground-floor retail to succeed.
- The value of commercial and residential units are generally low in car-dependent areas, in part because they are often lined with low-value strip malls and big-box stores. This makes it difficult for a developer to cover the cost of an attractive, mixed-use building, and especially the cost of underground or structured parking.

A catalytic redevelopment program can provide the spark for new investment.

This chapter outlines a roadmap for Las Vegas to create a catalytic redevelopment program that can attract a critical mass of pedestrian-friendly development to specific opportunity areas.

Concentrated investment in transit, street design, and key destinations can catalyze pedestrian-friendly development.

The City of Las Vegas will encourage compact, pedestrian-friendly development in strategic locations through strategies such as:

- Investments in major public projects, including high-capacity transit, safer streets, placemaking, and a new civic amenity — such as a recreation center or community center.
- Incentives to encourage at least one developer to build a large-scale, pedestrian-friendly project, with the goal of attracting more developers to build similar projects nearby.
- Establish a deadline for developers to apply to build projects under the Catalytic Redevelopment program, to encourage developers to invest as soon as possible.

This section details how these strategies will work together to create attractive, vibrant hubs of community activity along Charleston's major corridors.

- Below: Conceptual rendering of a redevelopment area along a major corridor in Charleston. Detailed design for redevelopment will be determined on a project-by-project basis, following direction from the Charleston Area Plan.

Major corridor today



Major corridor redesign concept



6.1. Create a catalytic redevelopment program

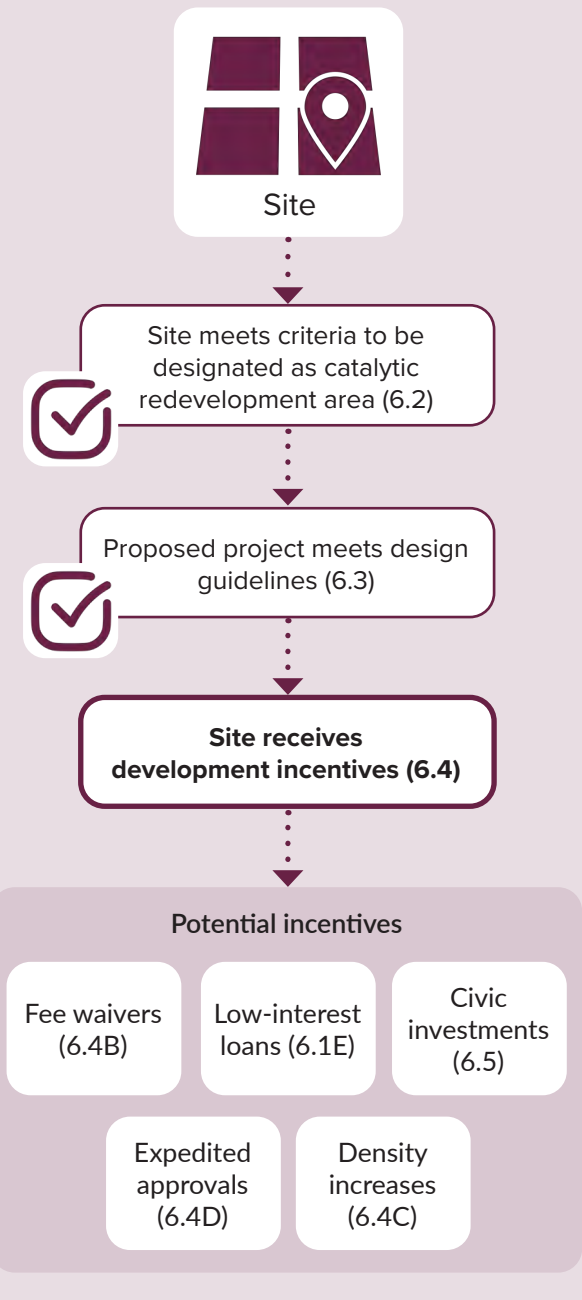
- A** Invite developers to apply to build projects under a catalytic redevelopment program. They must meet the criteria in policies 6.2 and 6.3 to qualify for the incentives in policies 6.4 and 6.5.
- B** Establish a three-year time limit for applications to this program to encourage timely investment.
- C** Establish construction start and completion time limits to ensure successful applicants move to implementation.
- D** Prioritize catalytic redevelopment projects on Charleston Blvd. to align with RTC’s proposed investments in high-capacity transit.
- E** Explore creating a low-interest development loan program.

Lower interest rates increase financial viability of rental projects and ensure that innovative developments can secure financing. This program can partially or fully pay for itself through interest payments.

Salt Lake City redevelopment loan program

Salt Lake City’s Redevelopment Agency offers loans for developments in Redevelopment Project Areas. It offers interest rates set at 3% above United States Treasury rate, and which can be lowered further if the project meets public benefit criteria. The agency has funded 31 development projects through the program since 2018. It generally acts as a gap financier, meaning it funds portions of projects if developers struggle to find financing elsewhere. The program has been revenue positive for the agency.

Vision for a catalytic redevelopment area program



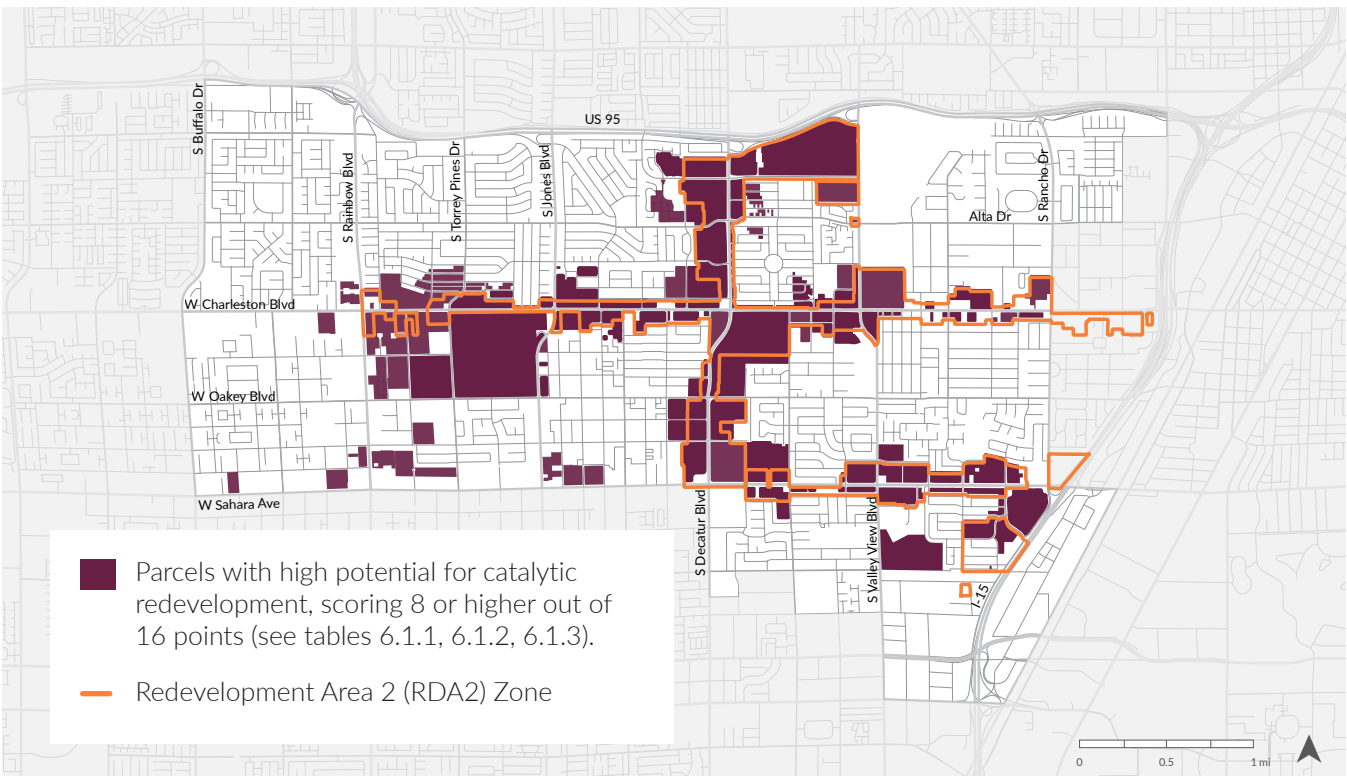
Note: The intention of the catalytic redevelopment program is to offer enhanced incentives for qualifying projects. Other incentives from the Redevelopment Agency may be available for projects that do not qualify, but that are located within the RDA2 zone.

6.2. Designate catalytic redevelopment areas

This plan identifies three categories of criteria for selecting catalytic redevelopment areas (see p. 122-123 for detailed criteria):

- 1. Areas with low barriers to change (Table 6.1.1):** The first set of criteria prioritize the viability of acquiring and redeveloping land.
- 2. Areas with potential to support transit-oriented, people-friendly development (Table 6.1.2):** Existing assets can help attract investment, increase the value of developments, and encourage street life.
- 3. Walkable, connected areas (Table 6.1.3):** If an area is already somewhat walkable, it is easier to attract street life, which is essential to help ground-level retail succeed.

- A** Assess eligibility for catalytic redevelopment areas by scoring potential sites on all three categories of criteria (see tables 6.1.1, 6.1.2, and 6.1.3).
- B** Designate sites that score 8 or higher (adding up scores from all three tables) as eligible for the catalytic redevelopment program and associated incentives (see policy 6.1).
- C** For eligible catalytic redevelopment area projects, the City may also include other land within a quarter mile in the catalytic redevelopment area if it is well suited investment, such as vacant land, old buildings, or public land.



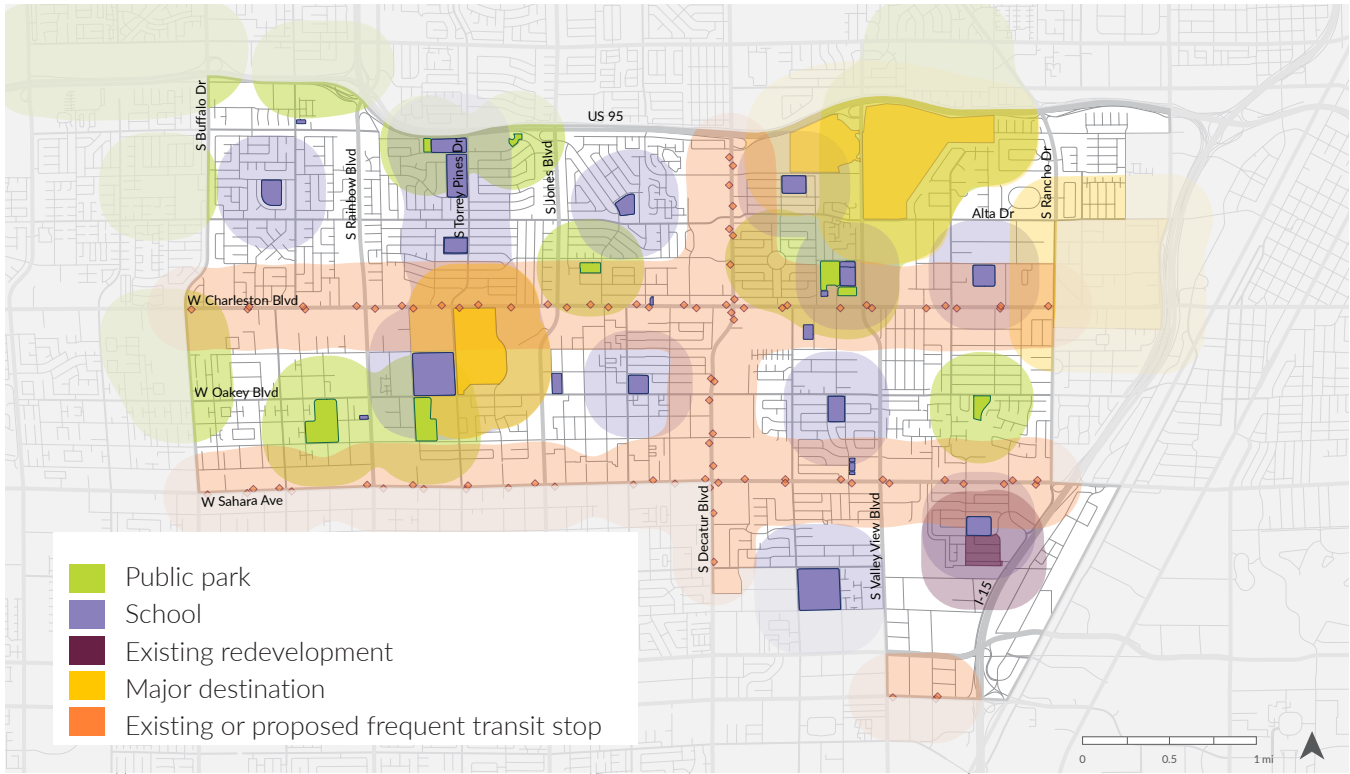
Map indicating the areas with the greatest potential for catalytic redevelopment projects. The highest-scoring areas are located along Charleston Blvd., Decatur Blvd., Sahara Blvd., and Meadows Mall.

Table 6.1.1. Scoring criteria for catalytic redevelopment areas, category 1

Criteria	Description	Weight
Average building age	Pre-1990s buildings	1 point
Property values	< \$250,000 per acre	1 point
Vacant property	As recorded in the property registry	1 point
Large properties	80,000+ sq. ft.	1 point
Mixed-use or TOD zoning	Parcels within these zones	2 points
Redevelopment Area 2	Parcels within this designation	2 points

Table 6.1.2. Scoring criteria for catalytic redevelopment areas, category 2

Criteria	Description	Weight
Transit	Within ¼ mile of existing or proposed frequent, high-capacity transit	1 point
Schools	Within ¼ mile of elementary, middle, and high schools	1 point
Major destinations	Within ¼ mile of a university, mall, or major redevelopment area (e.g. the Medical District)	1 point
Parks	Within ¼ mile of parks	1 point



Map of existing assets in Charleston and a quarter mile coverage zone for each.

Table 6.1.3. Scoring criteria for catalytic redevelopment areas, category 3

Criteria	Description	Weight
Active transportation mode share	10% or more of people walk, bike, or take transit work, by census tract	1 point
Popular transit stops	Stops with 3,000+ daily boardings within 1,000 ft	1 point
Walk score	70 points or higher out of 100, meaning “ Very Walkable ”	1 point
Connectivity	A block section length of less than 0.25 miles (meaning the distance between the two farthest points of a block)	1 point

6.3. Establish design guidelines for catalytic redevelopment projects

- A** Establish design guidelines for catalytic redevelopment area projects, following the criteria in Table 6.2.
- B** Only offer incentives (policy 6.4) to projects that adhere to the design guidelines and criteria.

Table 6.2. Design criteria for catalytic redevelopment projects

Criteria	Description	Explanation
Critical mass	The project site is at least 6 acres in size.	A project must reach a certain scale before it can create sufficient street life to support ground-floor retail. A large project can also create sufficient destinations and vibrancy to raise nearby land values, which is critical for attracting more, similar development.
	The project will include at least 35 housing units per acre.	
	The project will include ground-floor retail along all primary pedestrian routes.	
Design	The project’s design matches the design guidelines identified in policy 5.1.2.	A project will better support street life and higher land values if it creates a desirable, attractive streetscape where people feel comfortable walking.
Visual oasis	The project will include a pedestrian-oriented street down its center, with buildings on all sides that visually shield the street from nearby arterials and parking lots.	Such an oasis is essential to create a truly excellent experience for pedestrians, which will help increase street life, improve land values, and demonstrate that it is possible to create a walkable environment in Charleston.

6.4. Establish incentives for catalytic redevelopment projects

The incentive package should include at least one of each of following types of incentives.

- A** Priority access to the proposed municipal redevelopment loan program (see policy 6.1E).
- B** Fee waivers, deferred fee payments, and/or other financial incentives.
The simplest form of incentive is for government to reduce or defer taxes and fees. During engagement, developers expressed that the most valuable incentives are those that reduce yearly costs (rather than up-front costs). However, some government departments depend on these fees and taxes for their programs. It may be necessary to find separate funds to replace that lost revenue, or other solutions.
- C** Density increases, parking requirement reductions, or other allowances to increase development revenues or reduce development costs.
Government can increase the potential profitability of a project by allowing more floor area or by reducing costly requirements, such as parking minimums.
- D** Expedited approvals, or a commitment to approve the project within a given timeline.
If developers are confident a project will be approved within a given timeline, it reduces the project’s risk.
- E** A commitment from Las Vegas to make public investments in and around the catalytic redevelopment area (see policy 6.5).

6.5. Invest in catalytic redevelopment areas and surrounding land

Focused investments will help proposed redevelopment projects succeed and attract further development nearby. These investments should be concentrated within a quarter-mile radius of catalytic redevelopment areas and rapid transit to attract more visitors and foot traffic.

- A** Prioritize investments in high-capacity transit and safer, more pedestrian-friendly streets within and around catalytic redevelopment areas, following the policies in chapter 3.
- B** Invest in placemaking in and around redevelopment areas — such as benches, art, garden boxes, shade, and other low-cost amenities — to help generate street life (see chapters 3 and 4).
- C** Identify any public assets that government is planning to build — such as a community center, school, or library — and locate it within the catalytic redevelopment area (see section 4.2).
- D** Once development begins, continue to invest in safety improvements and placemaking on nearby streets to help attract more nearby development.
- E** Establish a Tax Increment Area (NRS 278C) where a certain proportion of future taxes will be devoted to paying for up-front investments.

Many of the incentives available to Las Vegas are limited to the RDA2 zone. The Redevelopment Agency focuses on revitalizing areas in economic decline. However, it can also be valuable to incentivize development for areas not in economic decline, such as properties near transit stations. Establishing Tax Increment Areas outside RDA2 is one strategy to do so.



 Happy Cities