



**Urban Land
Institute**

Advisory Services Program

Credit: Friends of Queens Park

Queens Park Achieving a Vision for Charlotte's North End

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

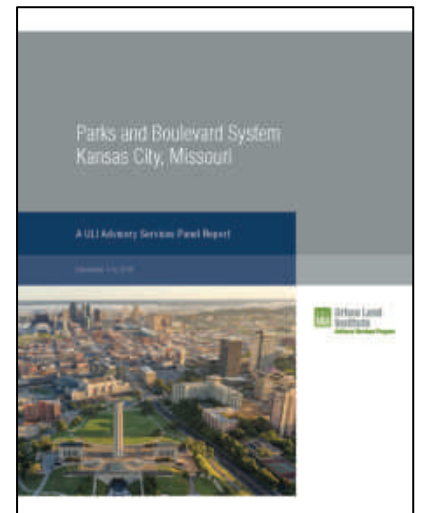
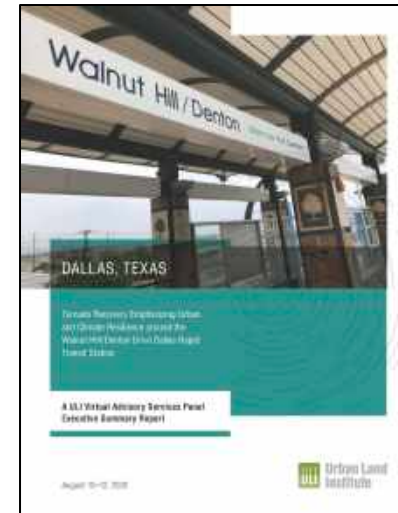
ULI VIRTUAL ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL

OCTOBER 4 – 6, 2021

About the Urban Land Institute

ULI Mission: Shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide

- A multi-disciplinary membership organization with more than 45,000 members in private enterprise and public service
- What the Urban Land Institute does:
 - Conducts Research
 - Provides a forum for sharing of **best practices**
 - Writes, edits, and publishes **books** and **magazines**
 - Organizes and conducts **meetings**
 - Directs outreach programs
 - Conducts **Advisory Service Panels**



ADVISORY SERVICES PANELS

Since 1947, ULI's Advisory Services Panel program has helped more than 700 communities find independent, strategic, and practical solutions for the most challenging land use issues.

Our program is now virtual!

Thank you to our sponsors!



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ULI Panelists and Staff

Queens Park, Charlotte, NC – October 2021

Selected for their subject matter expertise to provide **objective, volunteer** recommendations



Carlton Brown
(Panel Co-Chair)
Direct Investment
Brooklyn, NY



Lauryn Douglas
Sound Transit
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David Zaidain
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Director, Advisory Services

Kelsey Steffen
Director, Advisory Services

What We Heard

From more than 30 interviews

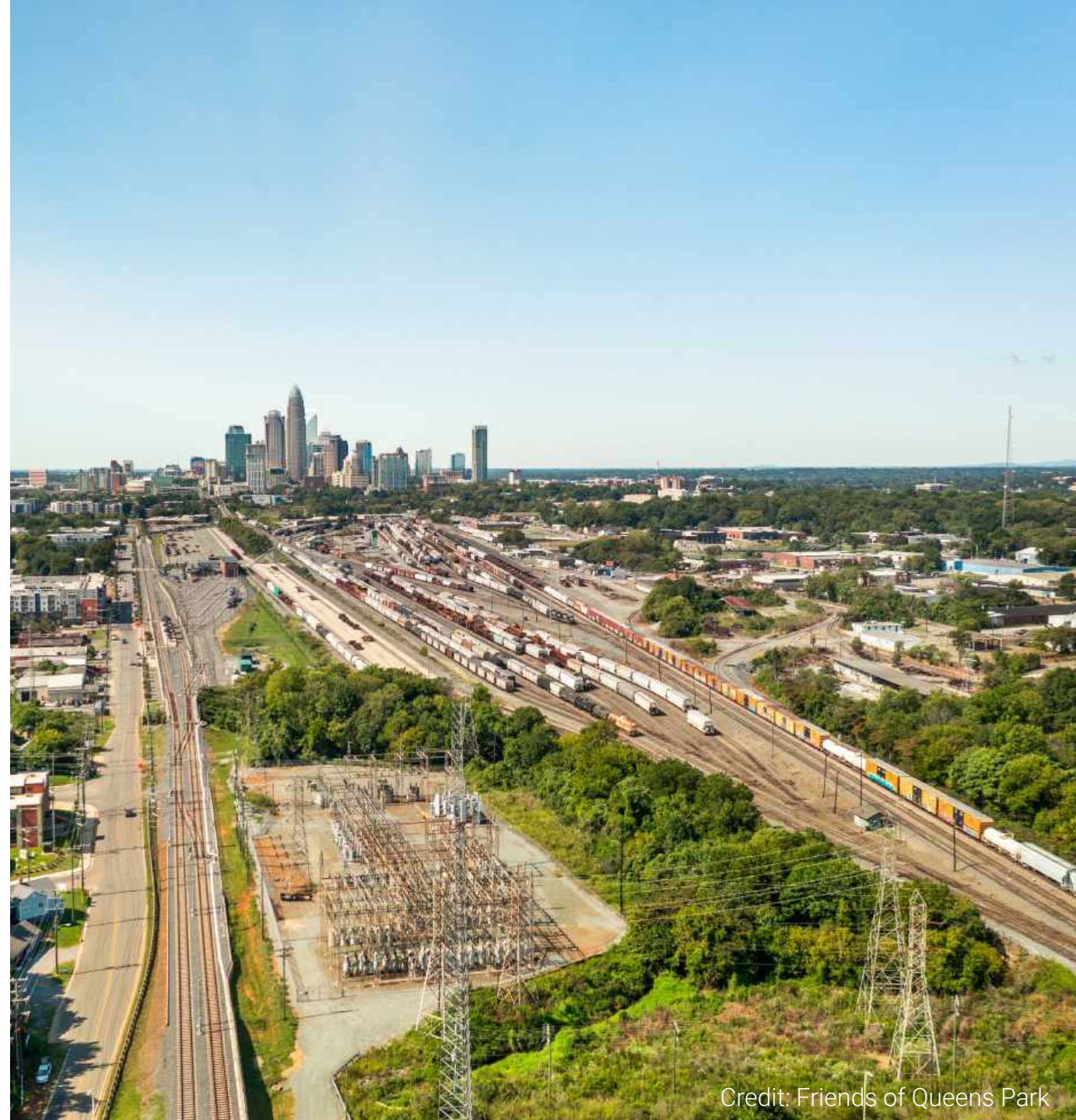
- It's a good idea, but...
- It's not just about the park
- Mobility and access, affordability, resilience, and sustainability
- Approach so far is not hitting home where it matters
- CATS is not moving
- Norfolk Southern (NS) can be negotiated with, but it will be a long haul
- The North End can learn from the South End's experience
- Unnecessarily adversarial
- The Charlotte way – PPPs

The Panel's Assignment

- **Goal #1: Gain formal adoption by the city/county for the Queens Park vision and find an alternative site to relocate the proposed expansion of the CATS maintenance facility.**
 - CATS expansion alternatives
 - Intersection of Queens Park with the 2040 vision plan
- **Goal #2: Collaborate with Norfolk Southern to acquire and relocate the existing railyard through a mutually beneficial partnership.**
 - Incentives for stakeholders and potential partnerships
 - How to make a proposal
 - Precedents for railyard relocations
- **Goal #3: Build support for incremental growth in park space in the North End.**
 - Partnering to build a Starter Park
 - Other incremental greenspace opportunities

Presentation Overview

- Invite you to adopt a new perspective
- Partnerships and Leadership
- Place
- Timing
- Funding & Finance
- Takeaways
- Q&A



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Partnerships and Leadership

Partnerships and Leadership

Develop a Collective Vision for All

- Credit to Friends of Queens Park (FOQP) for investing significant time and energy to craft a vision for Queens Park
- Recognize that a **collaborative and inclusive process** to create a holistic plan for North End now needs to begin
- Adjust perspective and strengthen existing relationships with key project stakeholders
- Build a new consortium of partners (task force) to initiate planning efforts



Partnerships and Leadership

Leverage Prior Planning Efforts

- Vision plan for North End can leverage and advance current community planning objectives



Equitable
Authentic
Integrated
Resilient



Commit to Equity
Evolve and Grow
Tell More Stories
Move Beyond Boundaries



Thriving
Inclusive
Memorable
Resilient
Sustainable
Loved

Partnerships and Leadership

Convene Partners in Leadup to North End Plan

- Acknowledge each partners' unique role/mission/goals for shared success
 - City – overall city planning, airport, transit
 - County – countywide services, parks
 - Center City Partners – corporate, non-profit and public leaders focusing on greater uptown
 - Norfolk Southern – majority landowners, part of extensive railroad network
 - North Carolina Railroad, Amtrak, CATS – need rail access, service delivery
 - FOQP – landowners, developers, residents in North End
 - CEO Group – advances key city initiatives
- Empower Communities as Co-Creators
 - Share decision-making with underserved communities



Credit: Charlotte Future 2040 Plan

Partnerships and Leadership

Create New Partnership Structure For North End Vision Plan



Task Force Composition

Partnerships and Leadership

Meaningful Public/Private Partnerships

- Partnerships created during plan development can evolve into successful PPPs for North End plan implementation



Credit: Friends of Queens Park

ULI's Ten Principles for Successful Public/Private Partnerships

1. Prepare properly for public/private partnerships
2. Create a shared vision
3. Understand your partners and key players
4. Be clear on the risks and rewards for all parties
5. Establish a clear and rational decision-making process
6. Make sure all parties do their homework
7. Secure consistent and coordinated leadership
8. Communicate early and often
9. Negotiate a fair deal structure
10. Build trust as a core value

Place

ZOOMING OUT

What kind of place is the North End going to be?

Open Space Within the North End

Examining Location and Scale

- A viable study that examines the future of the North End depends upon the projected:
 - Population growth
 - Job growth
- Essential open space task force representative
 - Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department
- Progressive urban design thinking
 - Integration of the rail facilities that will need to remain, not only for the benefit of their operations but also as part of the larger fabric of amenities in the city



Little Sugar Creek Greenway

Credit: LandDesign

Place

Fitting within the City and County's Goals for city-building

- There must be consensus in the public and private sectors as to what the North End and open space needs to be
- Define who open space in the North End can serve (neighborhoods, city, or both)
- Define what park(s) can contribute to the North End community, establish realistic goals
- Present Queens Park (parks) as a critical piece of a much larger puzzle of infrastructure regarding connectivity, mobility, housing, etc.



Romare Bearden Park

Credit: LandDesign

Place

Lessons Learned from South End Boom

- The North End is changing because of Lynx Blue Line and zoning changes
 - Density
 - Neighborhood character
- Address the shortfalls of the South End development with intentionality to not repeat them in the North End
 - Open space
 - Affordability
 - Equity
- Importance of Equitable Planning
 - Encourage mobility
 - Health and wellness
 - Addressing disinvestment



Little Sugar Creek Greenway

Credit: LandDesign

Place

Smaller / Faster (Activations & Interventions)

- Pave the way for bigger vision
- Build trust, build buzz
- **Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (Project for Public Spaces)**
How can this vision take advantage of development already contributing to the community? (Optimist Hall)
 - Demonstration project
- Build upon already-existing energy, access, etc.
- Fail small / pop up projects / renderings in “real-time”
- Early action items should focus on the parts that work
- Double down on what works



Eastern Market Metro Plaza, Washington, D.C.

Credit: 123 Andres

Place

Site Stewardship Redefined

- Flip the script on maintenance, it should be as important as the design
- Early on define the ownership structure at design phase
 - Maintenance requirements / costs
 - Funding sources (e.g., Fairmount Park Conservancy in Philadelphia)
- Create model programs for maintenance training
 - Green City Works in Philadelphia



Welcome to Green City Works

Green City Works is a University City District (UCD) subsidiary that provides high quality design-build-maintenance landscaping services while transforming the way the industry trains, advances and supports its workforce. Not only do clients receive superior, competitively priced landscaping services, but they also benefit from contracting with a homegrown social enterprise run by UCD, a 20 plus year partnership of world-renowned anchor institutions, business leaders and residents that is devoted to improving the community.

From universities and health systems to REITs and commercial developments, Green City Works already maintains over 50 sites around Philadelphia, including some of University City's largest institutions and businesses. Green City Works guarantees high quality, reliable, competitive landscaping services while creating local economic opportunity.

Green City Works website

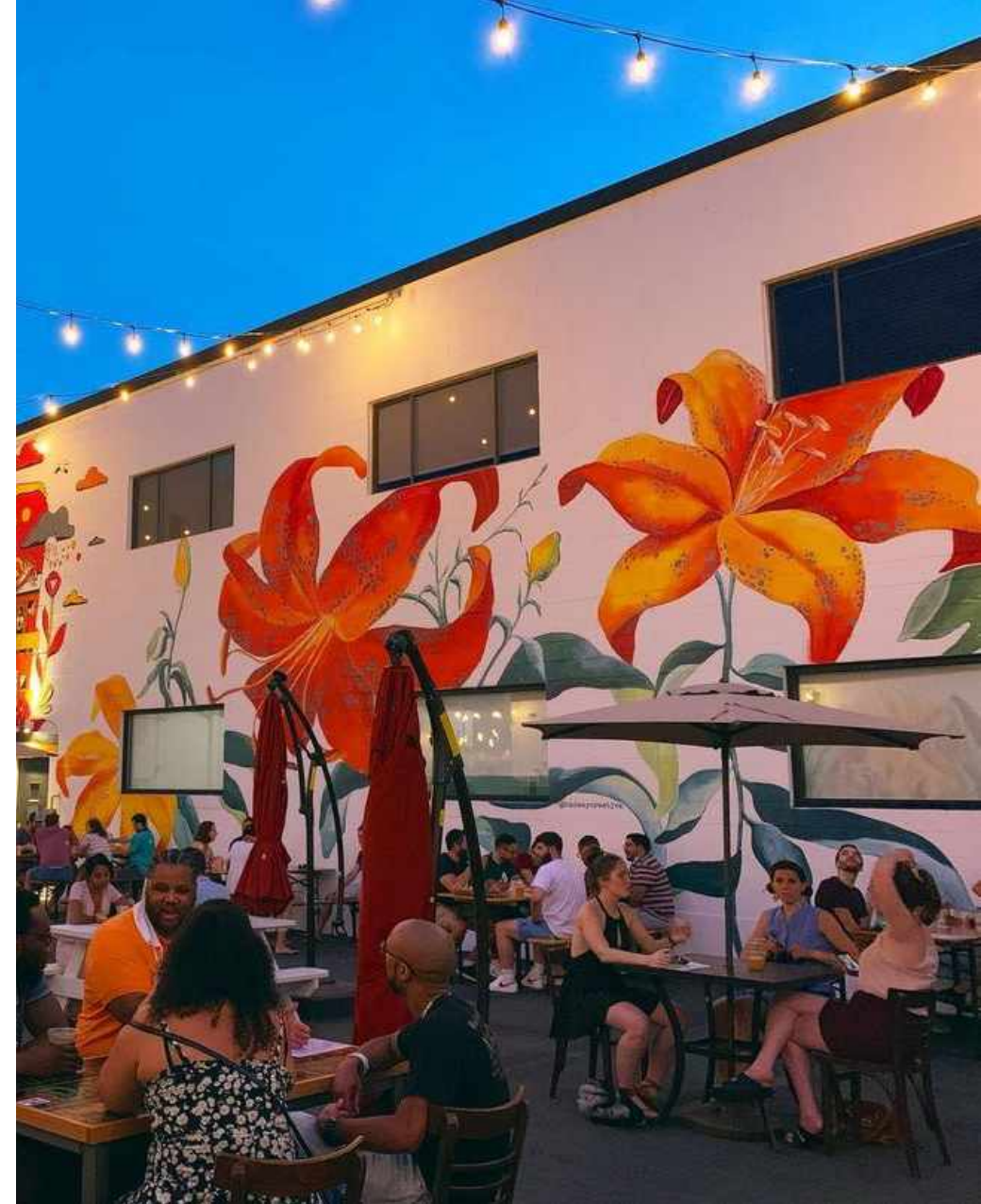
Credit: University City District

Timing

Phasing

Iterative Decision-Making Timeframe

- Timeframes will overlap
- **Short-Term: Year 1**
 - Relaunch approach to Queens Park; Leadership priority
- **Intermediate-Term: Years 2-10: Plan**
 - Develop shared vision and plan that includes North End Park; Defining place and purpose
 - Intervention efforts
 - Define what works in the area – public process, North End study
 - Switchyard
- **Long-Term: Years 5-25+: Implementation**



Aeronaut Brewing pop-up beer garden

Credit: The Boston Calendar

Short-Term: Year 1: Relaunch Approach to Queens Park

Redefining Opportunity

- Adjust perspective and zoom out
- Acknowledge the work and role of stakeholders to get to this point
- Redefine and expand the partners

- **Engage**
 - City and County Executive Office
 - Private sector champion(s) at the CEO level
 - CATS
 - Engage with Norfolk Southern

- Deconstruct the defined context and reconstruct with full knowledge of the boundaries, limitations, and requirements of CATS, Norfolk Southern, the City of Charlotte, and Mecklenburg County
- Define and execute short-term wins

Intermediate-Term: Years 2-10: Define-Study-Design-Implement

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Develop Shared Vision for North End: Place, Park and Purpose

- Build on lessons from South End
- Define location & scale of interventions
- **Define connection to Charlotte's priorities**
 - Affordable housing
 - Mobility
 - Equity and sustainability
- Define North Graham and North Tryon Opportunity Corridor impacts
- Recognize and plan for CATS long-term operations
- Recognize and plan for Norfolk Southern and other freight operations
- Define maintenance and programming of parks
- Design park(s)
- Implementation of short-term projects
- Environmental documentation and remediation



Romare Bearden Park

Credit: LandDesign

Intermediate-Term Planning Tasks

- Planning Studies
 - North End Planning Study
 - Establish a vision and priorities informed by collaborative, inclusive community and stakeholder process
 - Norfolk Southern/Regional Freight Study
 - Determine future of the yard and capacity needs for NS and the regional freight network

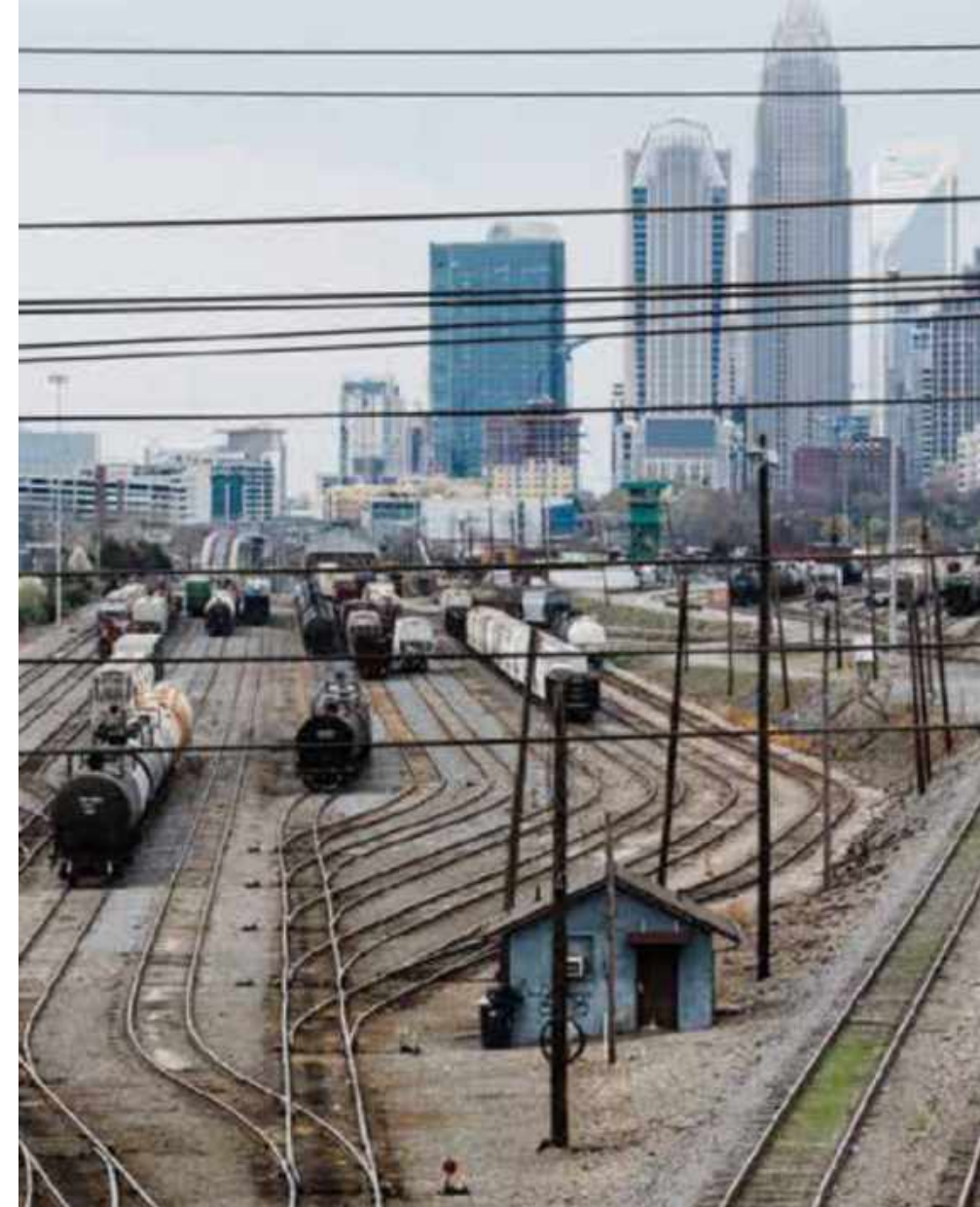


Credit: ULI

Long-Term: Years 5-25+: Implementation

Finance: Build, Operate & Maintain

- Structure Public Private Partnerships
 - Public finance
 - Private finance
 - Philanthropy
- Phased construction
 - Build-out of vision
 - Relocation of freight facilities
 - Implement environmental remediation



Railyards

Credit: Friends of Queens Park

Finance

Funding and Financial Opportunities

Funding Opportunities for Near Term Planning Process

- Future funding opportunities are unlocked with a full vision and plan that has been developed through a broad and inclusive public planning process
- Federal:
 - Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Pilot Program Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning Grant:**
 - Joint partnership/grant applicant: City (Planning, Economic Development, CATS) & County
 - Potential grant activities/outcomes:
 - Develop a comprehensive corridor plan and vision to re-purpose the existing NS Rail yard
 - Identify strategies for equitable TOD around the existing stations
 - Identify new, multimodal connections to increase access to transit, particularly for communities on the west side of the park.
 - Economic Development Agency grants**
 - Potential grant to study NS and economic development opportunities

Funding and Financial Opportunities

Funding Opportunities for Near-Term Planning Process

- City of Charlotte Funding
 - Direct appropriate
 - Transportation Mobility Network (Future Bond Measure)
 - City of Charlotte Placemaking Grant
- Public Private Partnership
 - Partnership between City or County and local stakeholders



Funding and Financial Opportunities

Long Term Implementation: Building the Toolbox

■ Federal Funding*

- Federal Railroad Administration – RIFF and TIFIA programs for financing of freight railroad reconfiguration.
- Federal designation with local match – would require state representation sponsorship
- FHWA grants could be a potential for the connecting streets
- EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grants (for site remediation)
- Potential for designation in current federal infrastructure bill

■ State/Local Funding & Financing

- NC Department of Environmental Quality Brownfields Program (for site remediation)
- City of Charlotte TIFF
- City of Charlotte Placemaking Grants (for first activation project)
- City of Charlotte Opportunity Zone
- Mecklenburg County TIFF

* Will require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

Funding and Financial Opportunities

Long Term Implementation

- Additional funding considerations
 - Creation of Foundation to administer funds and apply for grants
 - Finance future revenue streams from programming/retail

Partnership Example:



Takeaways

Key Takeaways

■ Partnerships

- Collaborative enterprise, “the Charlotte way” – zoom out
- Task force: City, County, private sector (rail partners; private sector champion), community advocates
- Ultimate vision for the North End will be informed by this iterative community collaboration
- You can’t do this alone

■ Place

- Open space is critical; this is not about the park, this is about the North End. The end result may or may not be the 200+ acre park
- Main rail lines will likely remain (CATS, Norfolk Southern)
- Work with Norfolk Southern towards moving the switchyard with no negative financial impact to railroad

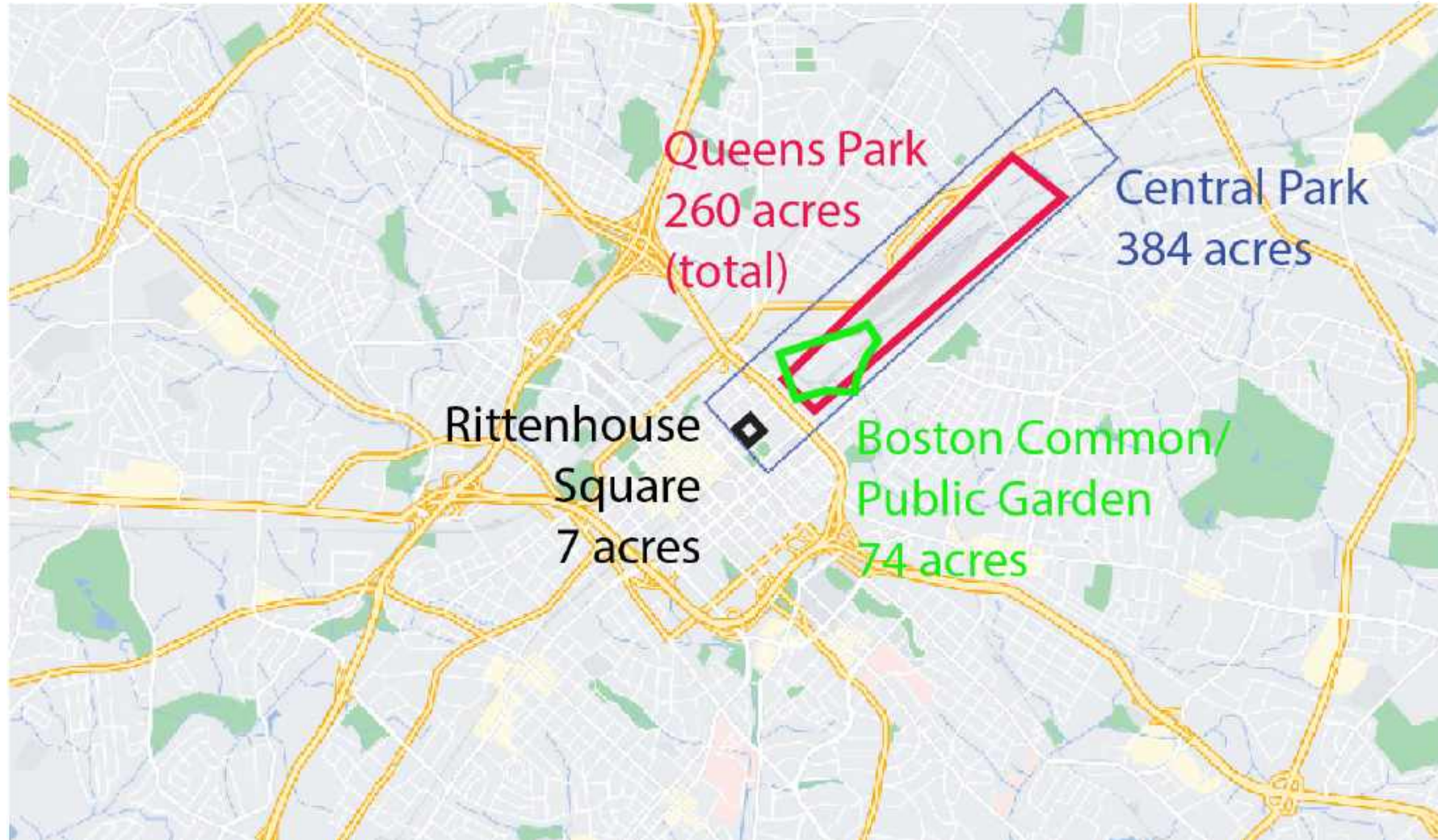
■ Timing

- Achieving the final vision will be a long-haul effort. There are many things that can and should be done along the way.
- Immediate objectives that can be achieved
- Short-term and long-term planning and implementation objectives that can be met

■ Funding and Finance

- Both public and private sources of financing to be used in conjunction to achieve the vision for the North End and accomplish multiple goals

Adjusting Perspective



Q&A

Thank you!

<https://americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services/>