

VOLUME 1

SPRING 2019



# URBAN DESIGN

IN THE NEW SOUTH

# Sweet Tea and Humio

In May of 2019, the City of Charlotte Urban Design Center hosted the first ever gathering of Southeastern municipal urban design programs. Urban designers from Atlanta City Studio, Charleston Design Division, Charlotte Urban Design Center, and Raleigh Urban Design Center convened in Charlotte at the Charlotte Powerhouse Studio. Over the course of 36 hours, the group learned about each other's cities and programs, shared best practices, and developed a framework to collaborate and tackle urban design challenges unique to the Southeast.

The first gathering focused on a theme that identified commonalities amongst the cities: Urban Design in the New South. Given a shared geography within the United States, the cities within the group share similar challenges: rapid growth and development, urbanization, gentrification and displacement, affordable housing, and upward mobility.

The first in a series, the group commits to convening twice a year - allowing the opportunity for each city to host once every two years.

**Top from left:** Erin Chantry, Vanessa Lira, Simone Heath, Dorian McDuffie, Grant Meacci, and Monica Holmes.

**Bottom from left:** Kevin Bacon, Sonia Sequeira, Carter Pettibone, Bette Maloy, Rachel Stark, Ed McKinney, Morgan Gundlach, Annie Cary, Lorna Allen, Allen Davis, and Joseph Michael, Jr.





ality





# Summit: Day 1













# Off to Camp

The summit began with a tour of Camp North End, Charlotte's largest and most interesting adaptive reuse project to date. The tour was led by Tommy Mann, Development Director for ATCO. ATCO is a New York based family owned and operated real estate company with an investment focus on retail, office, and mixed-use properties in leading Metropolitan Statistical Areas across the United States.

Camp North End is home to Charlotte's largest assemblage of historic industrial factory buildings. Mann shared the history of the 76-acre site that includes Model T assembly lines to U.S. Army missile production. ATCO is focusing their adaptive reuse strategy to preserve the character of the industrial factories and reinvent the perception of a modern office. Now, the next chapter of the property is unfolding as a hub for tech and cultural innovation.

The group began their tour in the Boiler Yard, the cultural and historic center of Camp North End, anchored by the historic water tower and boiler building original to the Ford assembly plant. The Boiler Yard now serves as the central plaza open to the public with seasonal programming and is adorned with murals created by local artists.

Mann led the group through the 1924 Ford Factory building designed by architect Albert Kahn which served as a state of the art factory and show room to exhibit Henry Ford's new invention: the assembly line. In 1941, the US Army bought the well-located site with its great connections to the railroad and transformed it

into a Quartermaster Depot, which provisioned numerous army facilities throughout the southeastern US. The site was re-branded as the Charlotte Area Munitions Plant (CAMP) in 1956, as its role in national defense evolved into major manufacturing projects like the Nike Hercules Missile and six wheel, all-terrain vehicles called Gama Goats during the Cold War.

The Charlotte Area Missile Plant was disbanded by order of the Secretary of Defense in 1965, and the longtime factories became warehouse and storage for Eckerd Pharmacy. Eckerd was purchased by Rite Aid, who used Camp North End as warehouse space until 2016. In 2017 ATCO acquired and reassembled the site and Camp North End opened to the public for the first time in a century.





The first evening of the summit, Charlotte Powerhouse Studio opened its doors to the community for an evening of informal rapid-fire presentations in the Pecha Kucha style, twenty slides - twenty seconds per slide. Each program shared how urban design is impacting the way their city is designed and how it will influence future growth to an audience of local government, community, and industry leaders. A lively discussion followed the presentations allowing the urban designers to answer questions from the audience of how urban design is impacting growth, the built and natural environment, community character, and quality of life across the region.

# Pecha Kucha • 20x20











# Summit: Day Two

The second day of the summit gave the programs the opportunity to discuss solutions for common challenges regarding programming, operation and budget, and forecasting future trends affecting cities in the Southeast. Each of the programs shared an in-depth presentation of their work, organizational structure, operational and resource challenges, and posed pressing questions to the group for discussion.

The group identified the unique opportunity to approach urban design from a regional perspective and focus on how best to utilize a growing network of urban design programs across the Southeast. Ongoing dialog amongst the group, regular gatherings, and the sharing of research and resources began to shape how the group could support and influence urban design throughout the region.





# PEACHTREE STREET

MIDTOWN ATLANTA

# ATLANTA CITY STUDIO

CASCADE HEIGHTS





## ATLANTA CITY STUDIO

The Atlanta City Studio (the Studio) is a pop-up urban design studio within the City of Atlanta's Department of City Planning. The Studio is a space to invite the public into the process to design Atlanta's best path forward.

The Studio is a pop-up urban design laboratory focused on employing the principles of good urbanism to shape the future of Atlanta's diverse neighborhoods and communities. They act as a facilitator, a forum, and a resource to help create the Atlanta they aspire to become through lectures, book talks, film series, open forums, urban art presentations, and other neighborhood and design programs.

Using the Atlanta City Design as the organizing framework, the Studio explores the following two questions:

- What is Atlanta's DNA?
- How do we design a city for everyone?

The Studio believes that growth in Atlanta can be beneficial but only when done intentionally and in a way that includes everyone. This underscores the need for an inclusive framework for working collaboratively with Atlanta's residents to design their future city. Design is for everyone.

Atlanta prides themselves on their tree canopy and entrepreneurial spirit, but they also recognize that they have sprawl, congestion, and inequality. The Studio working to design Atlanta so it can meet these challenges and live up to our core values of equity, nature, access,

ambition, and progress to create the best version of Atlanta possible. A city for everyone.

Their space is designed to celebrate and build momentum for design excellence in Atlanta. The Studio moves to different locations within the city to learn from, partner with, and educate a new community. Their current location is in Cascade Heights in Southwest Atlanta and they plan to move to their third location July of 2019.

The Studio has been in Cascade Heights for approximately one year. During this time, the Studio embed into and listened to the community, absorbed and analyzed the ideas and concerns of the residents, educated the public and developed innovative tools needed for change, and re-aligned ongoing efforts and deployed tools to serve as catalysts for a better city.

The Studio is led by Kevin Bacon with five full time staff comprised of urban planners, architects, arts enthusiasts, and community builders who love Atlanta and want to make it known for exceptional design.

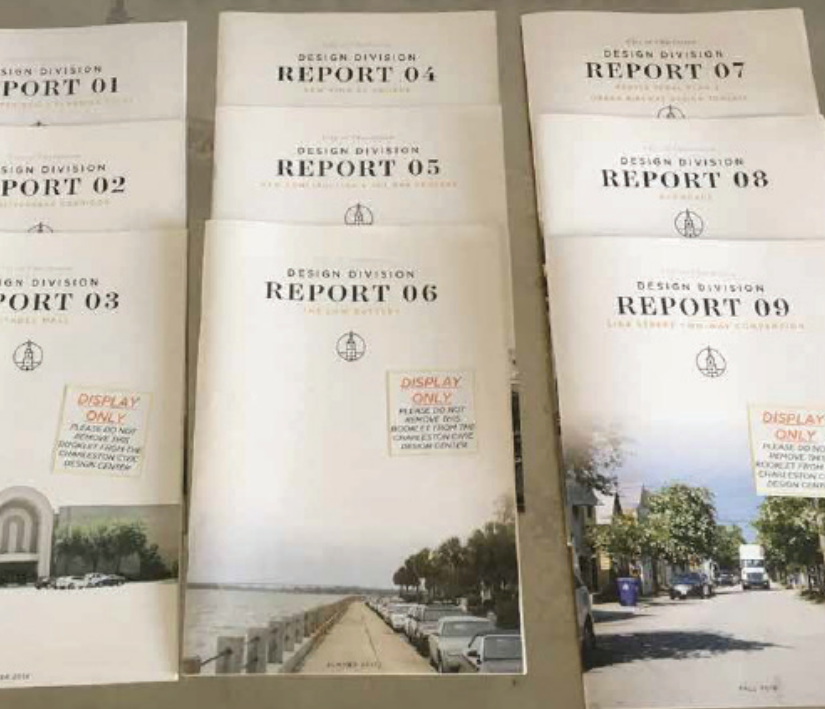






## DESIGN DIVISION

FOR THE COMMON GOOD



## REPORT BOOKLET

DIGITAL AND PRINT FORMATS

## CIVIC DESIGN CENTER

85 CALHOUN STREET





## CHARLESTON DESIGN DIVISION

A division of the City of Charleston Department of Planning, Preservation and Sustainability, the Design Division is the City of Charleston's in-house design studio that works to cultivate design excellence in the community and set expectations for the city's development.

Their Motto, "For the Common Good", reflects their attention to public interest; the welfare and well-being of the general public. They appreciate context and how individual designs can affect the greater whole.

Their broader vision is a Charleston with exceptional city life for all residents. This vision goes beyond aesthetics, and relates directly to economic development, transportation, housing, parks, recreation, and the overall future of Charleston as an equitable, happy and healthy city.

The Design Division works collaboratively in a studio environment that embraces creativity and innovation, while keeping in mind the real and perceived constraints of projects. In addition to regular workshops and other meetings, they employ the National Charrette Institute model to conduct authentic charrettes.

The Design Division is housed in the Charleston Civic Design Center was created in 2001 by former Mayor Joseph P. Riley to elevate the dialogue on urban design for Charleston in its fourth century. This was recommended by the 1999 Downtown Plan.

The Charleston Civic Design Center serves as a public engagement venue, design workshop and charrette studio, community event space, project gallery, and information center for the general public about urban design and planning matters. The building is uniquely positioned to serve as a community design idea hub, using its physical shop front and virtual interfaces to engage stakeholders in the design process.

Currently on the books for the Design Division are projects such as WPAL/Stono Station Park, Northbridge Gateway, People Pedal Plan, and Line Street Two-Way Conversion. Every major project the Design Division leads is documented in a report booklet.

The Design Division is led by Allen Davis with one full time staff urban designer. Through partnership with Clemson University and the College of Charleston, the Design Division employs three interns with focus in production, urban design, and architecture.



**DESIGN DIVISION**

FOR THE COMMON GOOD





## TACTICAL URBANISM

FIVE POINTS BETTER BLOCK

## POWERHOUSE STUDIO

HISTORIC SOUTH END





## CHARLOTTE URBAN DESIGN CENTER

The Charlotte Urban Design Center is a division of the Charlotte Planning, Design, and Development Department that is engaging and shaping Charlotte's urban form, design, and character. The mission of the Urban Design Center is to advance the quality of the built environment, create public awareness, and communicate the importance of urban design in the city of Charlotte. Areas of focus and activity include:

**CLT Powerhouse Studio** - A capacity building program rooted in a physical space that serves as a platform for community engagement, education, research, advocacy, partnerships, and civic innovation designed to shape a dialog on Charlotte's urbanism and urban design.

**Urban Design Consultancy** - Leads and provides urban design review and consultant services to neighborhoods, community groups, organizations, institutions, and city projects/teams to shape the urban form of Charlotte.

**Placemaking and Public Spaces** - Activating and strengthening Charlotte's places and public spaces (existing & new) through partnerships, programming, design, and investment.

**Historic Preservation** - Articulating, protecting and celebrating Charlotte's history through the lens of urban and architectural character.

Through revealing how design influences quality of life and economic resilience, they advocate for great places in a livable

city. Projects, programs, and events led or supported by Charlotte Urban Design Center are found in one of these areas: Investigate, Engage, Design, or Activate.

Charlotte Urban Design Center is led by Grant Meacci with ten full-time staff comprised of advocates for urban environments who specialize in urban planning, architecture, landscape architecture, historic preservation, and community building.







## UNION STATION

WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

## CIVIC CAMPUS

NASH SQUARE





## RALEIGH URBAN DESIGN CENTER

The Raleigh Urban Design Center (UDC) was established in 2003. The UDC is a place for the discussion and testing of design and planning theories, and the impact they have on the urbanization of the city. They engage in thoughtful discussion with the community and collaborate with partners to pursue new and innovative forms of urban intervention.

The UDC provides design consultancy services on projects that impact the quality of the public realm. They plan and influence design at multiple scales in collaboration with internal and external partners.

They apply design thinking and best practices research to develop policies and regulations to guide how development projects are conceived, designed, reviewed, and approved. They also create and support a diverse and thriving public realm.

At the convergence of design and policy, the UDC provides design assistance, civic design and implementation, design policy, and historic preservation services. For the UDC, policy is centered upon promoting good design and conducting research.

The UDC provides design services as in-house design consultants and fill the void between public sector and private sector work.

Current projects include the Avent Ferry Corridor Study, Civic Campus Master Plan, and Raleigh Union Station.

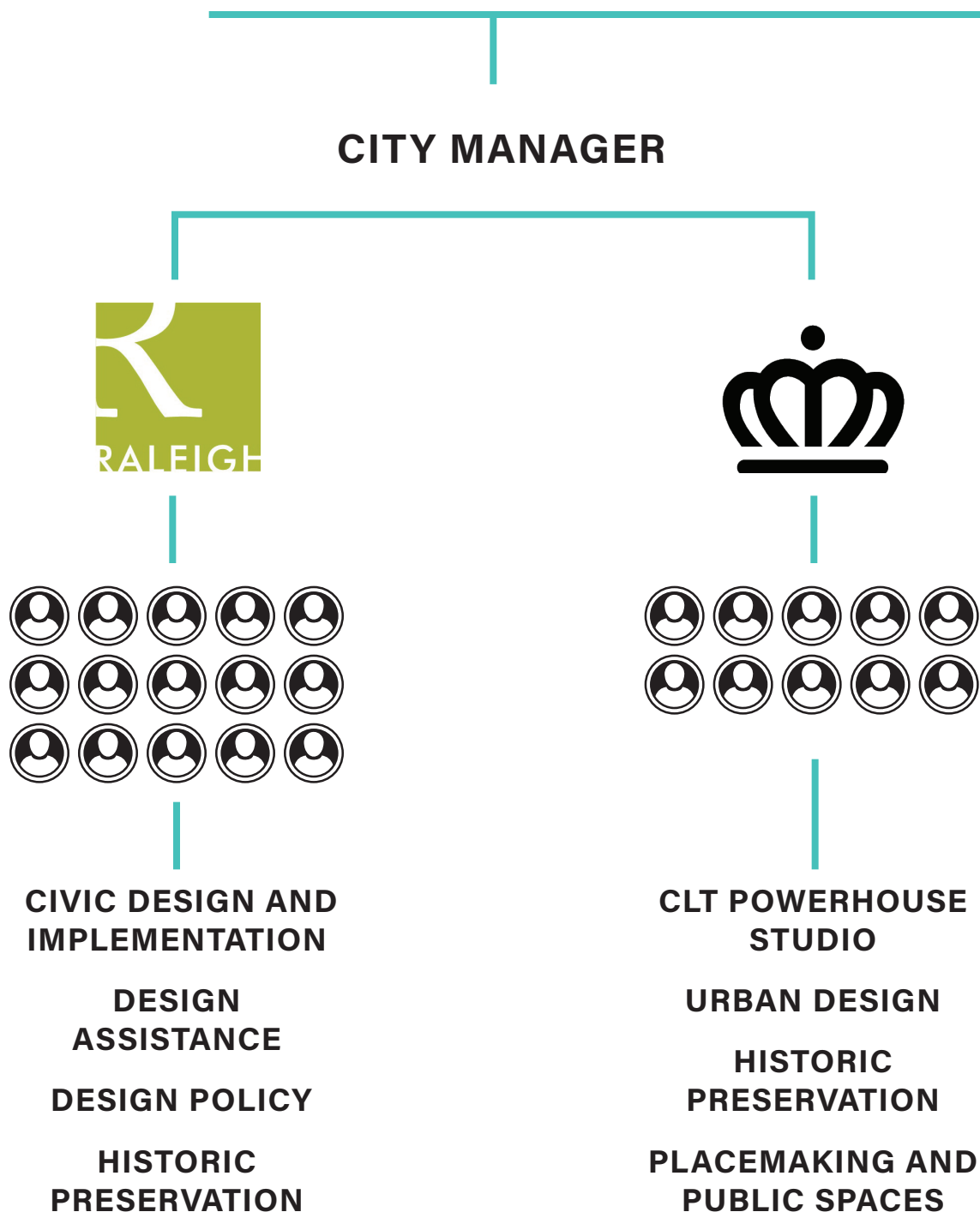
The UDC is led by Joseph Michael, Jr. with a staff of fifteen urban designers and planners who envision and design solutions that create a better-built environment for the City of Raleigh.

By engaging and leading the people of Raleigh in deliberate, targeted design discussions, they work to build consensus around innovative solutions that encourage all people to be active in shaping the physical form of their community.



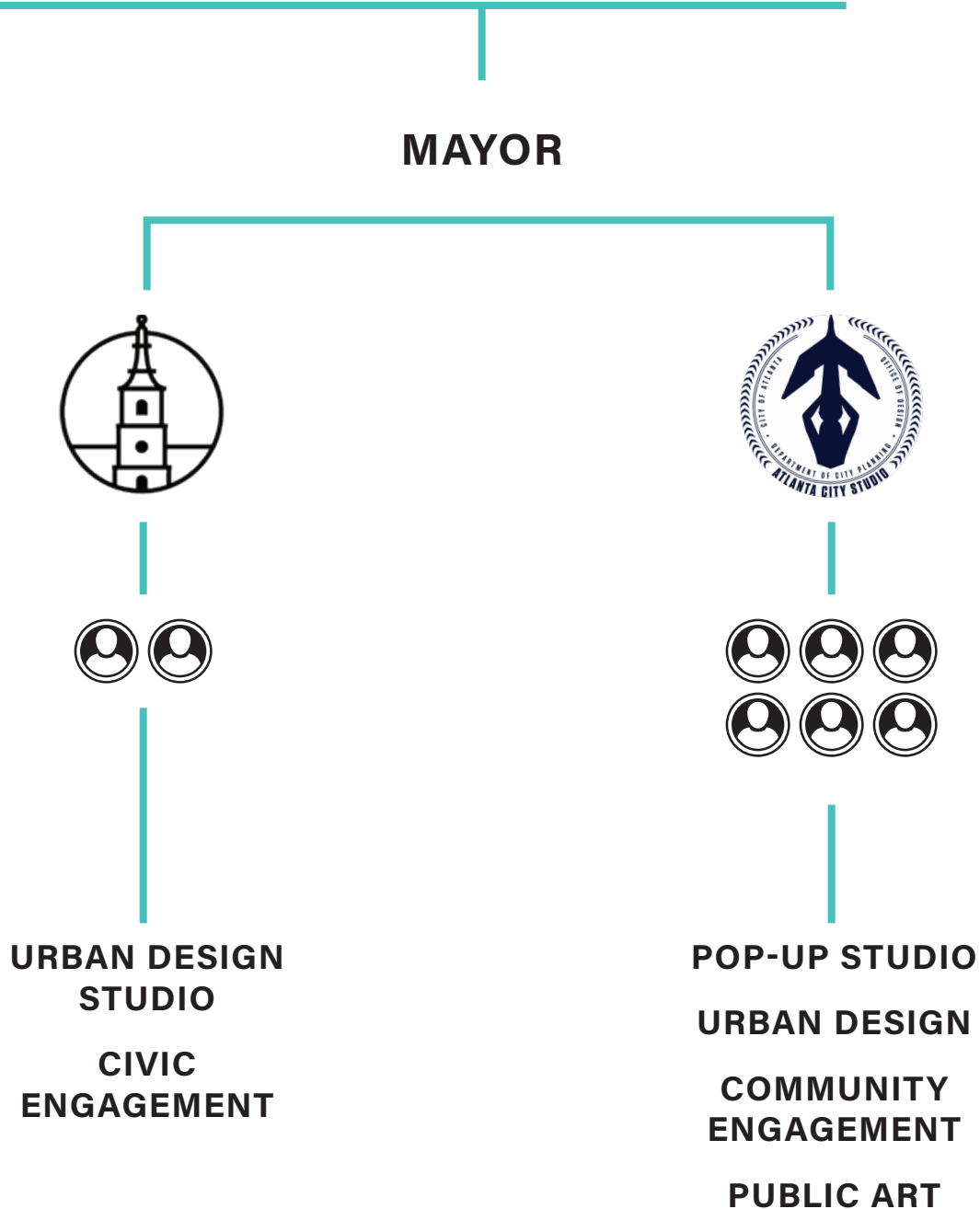


# Studio





# Diagram









# A Regional Approach

Similarly, all of the programs reside within their municipalities' planning departments and serve as an internal consultancy to their respective departments. The programs also serve in a design capacity across their organizations on interdepartmental teams – providing urban design expertise for both projects and the development of policy. Each of the programs rely heavily on outward engagement and uniquely leverage partnerships outside of their organizations – regularly engaging with local academic, nonprofit, and professional organizations to further advance the reach of their work.

Key differences between the programs are how they relate to their respective city's government structure and how they operate within them. Raleigh and Charlotte operate under a council-manager form of government that divides responsibilities between elected officials and an appointed city manager. Atlanta and Charleston operate under a strong mayor-council government, with the mayor acting as the chief administrator and executive officer for the city. The difference in the government structures influence how each of the programs can respond to urban design needs within their communities.

Operating as multi-disciplinary studios, each of the programs provide unique skill sets not often found in government. Design thinking paired with engagement expertise has expanded the role and importance of urban

design within their organizations. Each of the programs shared in the challenge of serving the needs of their organization and community with limited resources. Dedicated to elevating urban design across the region, the programs committed to working together to support each other's initiatives, sparking innovation, and maintaining flexibility to best serve their communities.

A regular gathering is just the beginning for developing a strong network of urban design programs across the region. The Summit serves as the touchstone throughout the year, but on-going communication amongst the programs provides a key opportunity to share ideas and facilitate a broader range of thinking.





Committed to staying engaged, the group will work collaboratively and participate in active discussions. Utilizing Slack, an application based communication tool, the group will stay engaged and conversations will be summarized into a report as part of a series.

Continual communication opens the door to further collaboration and the opportunity for peer review - allowing the group to share work for review, test ideas, and receive input on technical issues. When the need arises, work-share could allow the programs to share staff amongst each other to advance large initiatives and utilize expertise from other cities. This could prove a cost-effective alternative to hiring consultants while providing cross-training for visiting designers.

Supporting the growth of the urban design profession across the region is a key priority for the group. Respectively, each of the programs have been working to foster relationships with local universities through internships, project partnerships, studio critiques, and educational seminars. There is a responsibility to nurture those relations by further engaging, teaching, employing, and connecting students to urban design. Further opportunity lies in connecting recent graduates to employers through a fellowship program that could partner with firms that have a regional presence in each of the cities. The fellowship program could serve as a training ground and pipeline for aspiring talent for the region.

Each of the programs design for many of the same challenges within their communities, each conducting research, preparing case studies, collecting data, and producing reports.







## URBAN DESIGN IN THE NEW SOUTH

Sharing these resources across the network of urban design programs would combine a robust and valuable composition of work.

The next summit is planned for the fall of 2019 in Atlanta and will follow a similar format as the first. Visiting Camp North End in Charlotte, allowed for the visiting programs to tangibly engage with an active project. Similarly, a site visit is planned for the group to experience a transformative project that demonstrates best practices in relation to Atlanta's urban context. Atlanta City Studio will also host a public event for the visiting programs to present to the Atlanta community about their respective cities and showcase urban design projects from across the Southeast.

Prior to convening, Atlanta City Studio will select a theme for the gathering and share a project for the visiting programs to develop concepts remotely. Once in Atlanta, the concepts will be shared and discussed, providing a basis for further dialog around the summit's theme.

Aspiring ideas were formed at the first summit and will continue to be refined. Staying connected, continuing a dialog, and committing to a rotating summit schedule will be the key to the success of building a strong, regional network of urban design centers.



Prepared by the City of Charlotte. 2019.