

Rail Trail



A Place for **Experimentation** 





### **Charlotte** North Carolina



## The Queen City

2016 population: **842,000** 

Land area: 308 square miles



Charlotte is North Carolina's largest city. It's also one of the fastest growing large cities in America, adding about 44 new Charlotteans every day. By the way, that's what we call ourselves, Charlotteans.



# CITIES WHERE MILLENNIALS ARE MOVING

City Net M	igration	-2	
CHARLOTTE, NC	10,707		- 6
SEATTLE, WA	9,886		
OAKLAND, CA	7,494	30	
NORFOLK, VA	7,198	-	100
FARGO, ND	5,990	-0	-0
SPRING VALLEY, NV	5,347	10	
SAN FRANCISCO, CA	4,833		
FORT COLLINS, CO	4,315		
DENVER, CO	4,221		BB), rad
ST. PAUL, MN	4,144		

Net migration data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau and reflects the number of people between the ages of 20 and 34 who moved to the city in 2015 minus the number who moved out of the city.

Charlotte is a **destination** city for millennials, drawn by an abundance of well-paying jobs in finance and tech.

Here's a fun fact. In 2015, more Millennials ages 20-34 migrated to Charlotte than anywhere else, beating out places like Seattle, San Francisco, and even Denver.

## SOUTH END

Once a bustling industrial area, today it's a **dynamic urban neighborhood** with a mix of rehabbed historic structures and new **transit-oriented development**.



A lot of these new residents are locating to South End, a neighborhood once filled with textile mills and warehouses and bisected by a freight line. Today the freight line is a light rail track and the mills and warehouses have either been replaced with new buildings or repurposed for new uses.

**South End** is among the **hottest neighborhoods in America** for new apartment construction, with more than **10,000 new units** completed or under construction since 2005.





South End is adjacent to downtown Charlotte, which we call Uptown. It's about 2 miles long and a half mile wide, centered around the LYNX Blue Line light rail corridor. The Charlotte Area Transit System, or CATS, began operating light rail service in 2007. This resulted in an explosion of new transit-oriented development, much of it multi-family residential. In the past 10 years, more than 10,000 new housing units have been completed or are now under construction.

## There are more than 2,600 new apartments coming to South End.

BY ELY PORTILLO

JULY 25, 2017 7:00 AM

elyportillo@charlotteobserver.com

### **Not Done Yet**











Don't be fooled into thinking South End's apartment boom is over: It's going strong, with thousands of new units planned or underway by developers eager to cash in on an area that's still growing fast.

There are more than 2,600 apartments either under construction now or starting in the next few months in South End. To put that another way, these are just the projects that are definitely happening - we're not even counting those that are in the "maybe" category.















In the last few years, beyond the thousands of new residential units, creative office space, distinctive retail shops, restaurants, bars, and breweries have sprung up to meet the needs of South End residents.

Kelley B moved to Charlotte last July. After careful research, she chose to live in South End.

"I liked the walkability, for sure. The vibe is young and creative. There's a lot more artwork in this area than there is in other neighborhoods."

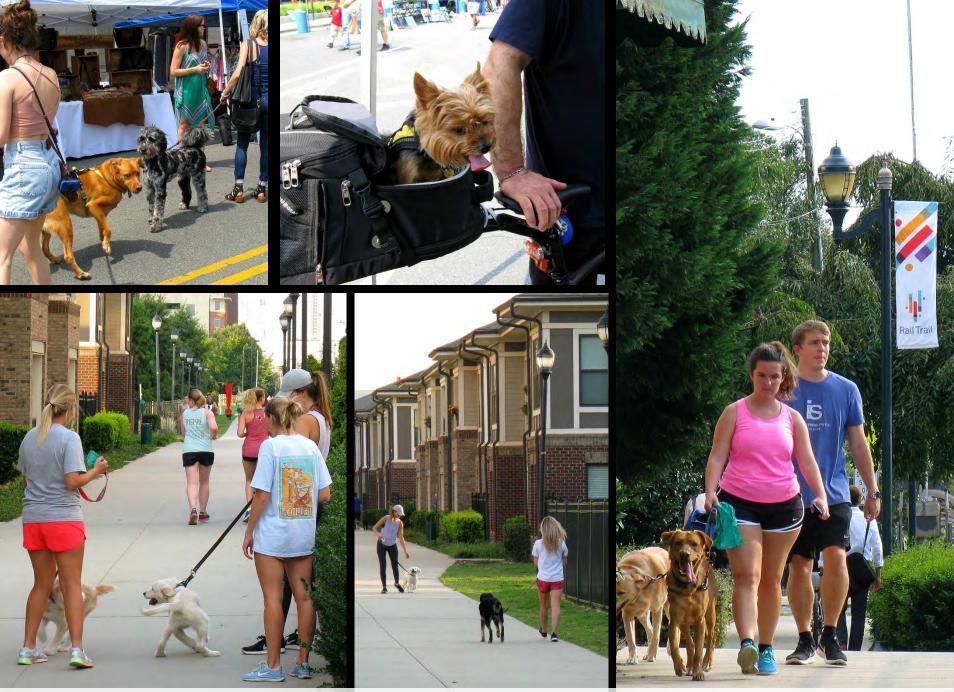
Kelley works in South End at a software company.

**Charlotte Stories** Instagram April 12, 2017





But they're also empty nesters, retirees, and families with children.



And while there <u>are</u> children in South End, they're clearly outnumbered by kids of the canine variety...



Regardless of their age or whether their kids are people or dogs, South End residents are drawn by the neighborhood's prime location near Uptown, by its light rail service, and by its energy, funky vibe, and creative atmosphere.



"...Charlotte's brewery scene has become the new public space for everyone from church groups to business meetings to toddler birthday parties..."

-Charlotte Agenda August 2017

Just as no discussion of the Rail Trail would be complete without a discussion of South End, no discussion of South End would be complete without talking about breweries. Here's a typical Food Truck Friday at Sycamore Brewing, located alongside the Rail Trail, featuring a few of the many food trucks doing business in South End.



This blog post supposes that breweries are the new public park. Since public parks are scarce in South End, this may be true for many people. And yes, I myself have seen a toddler's birthday party at a brewery. I try not to judge.





Saturday, October 7 BBST Ballpark, 12-3PM

MORE INFO ×

Charlotte pärent

THINGS TO DO

**CALENDAR** 

**READERS FAVORITES** 

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**HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT** 

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LIFESTYLE

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TRAVEL

CONTESTS

CAMPS

SPECIAL NEEDS

BABY

FOOD + FUN

PARENTING

FAMILY

Charlotte / Blogs / Best Bets CLT / 5 Baby-Friendly Breweries in Charlotte

### 5 Baby-Friendly Breweries in Charlotte

Little ones are welcome at these family-friendly breweries in Charlotte.

#### BY MICHELE HUGGINS

Published: March 9, 2016 12:05 AM

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If you are a parent who enjoys socializing and craft beer and outdoor spaces, Charlotte's brewery scene is enticing. And many of Charlotte's newest brewing companies are family-friendly. These are five I believe to be sunny, fun spaces for parents and kids. Many of these places host yoga nights and occasional live music, too. (Of course, always choose your designated driver and be responsible).

SEE ALSO: A note on whom and what are welcome at Charlotte's breweries

#### 1. The Olde Mecklenburg Brewery

I went here with my family of four, including my baby, on a Saturday afternoon to celebrate a friend's birthday. The outdoor area is large with rows of picnic tables. There is plenty of space for children to run in a side yard, and there are multiple cornhole set-ups. Inside has a full-menu with



Charlotte Parent magazine March 9, 2016

Charlotte breweries are even rated on how kid-friendly or dog-friendly they are.



#### PARENTING

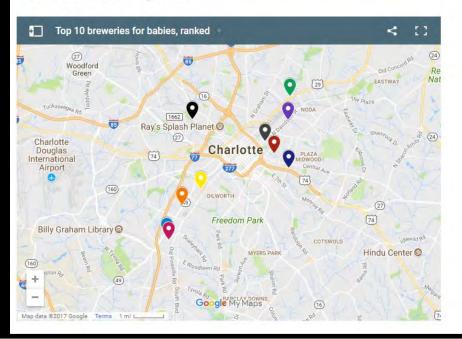
#### Top 10 breweries for babies, ranked



By **Ted Williams** | *June 14, 2017* Views: 10,615

Have a baby and still thirsty for local beer and community? We've evaluated the top 10 baby-friendly breweries in Charlotte.

There's no doubt, breweries are the new public spaces in our city. Babies and toddlers are all over the Charlotte brewery scene.



**Charlotte Agenda** website and blog June 14, 2017





Maker of Southern Tier, Victory beer is opening a new taproom, brewery in

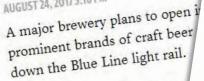
South End



BY ELY PORTILLO

elyportillo@charlotteobserver.com

AUGUST 24, 2017 3:16 PM



Artisanal Brewing Ventures, feet at the Bowers Fiber fact Scaleybark light rail station by developer White Point

ABV will open a taproom the company will move

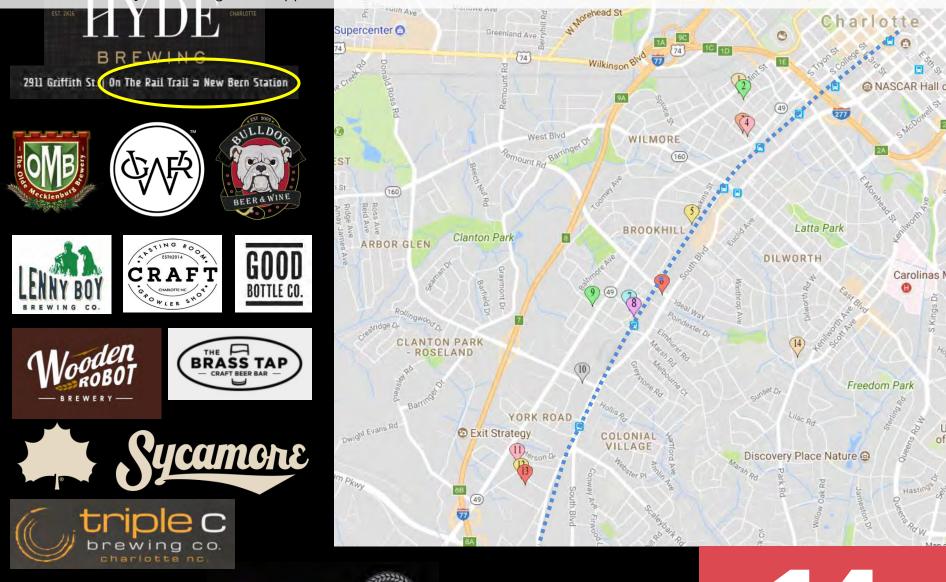
Charlotte Agenda website and blog September 1, 2017

Charlotte Observer newspaper August 24, 20<u>17</u>





There are currently 14 breweries, taprooms, cideries, and distilleries in South End near the Rail Trail, plus the two on the previous slide. Notice how Hyde Brewing in the upper left advertises its location: on the Rail Trail at the New Bern Station.









AND COUNTING



The City and its partners, such as Historic South End, the organization that administers the neighborhood's business improvement district, use breweries and taprooms for meetings, charrettes, and other public engagement opportunities.



4 out of 5 people think that's a good idea. It certainly helps assure good attendance.



Here's a recent public meeting to roll out a draft of the new South End Vision Plan being developed by Historic South End and the Charlotte Planning Department.



It looks like the King of Spades has refilled his growler too many times.



If he had been holding his card right side up, you would see that "Continue Expansion of the Rail Trail" is a key recommendation of the new vision plan. Remember the Rail Trail? Now that I've given you somewhat of a feel for what South End is about, let's get back to the Rail Trail.



It was built as a component of the light rail system, and originally had a very utilitarian purpose, namely to provide pedestrian and emergency access to transit station platforms. Here's an original unimproved section of the Rail Trail, which is very simple: asphalt, chain link, basic lighting. No landscaping or other amenities. What you're looking at on the right side is the CATS light rail vehicle maintenance facility, which is where the Rail Trail currently ends.



Some sections of the Rail Trail still look like this. Asphalt surface, chain link fence, etc. That's mainly because the adjacent properties haven't redeveloped in a way that would require them to upgrade the trail.



But some other sections of the trail now look more like this. A wide concrete path with landscaping, a custom-designed safety fence, and decorative pedestrian scale lighting.



A typical August Tuesday evening on the Rail Trail.



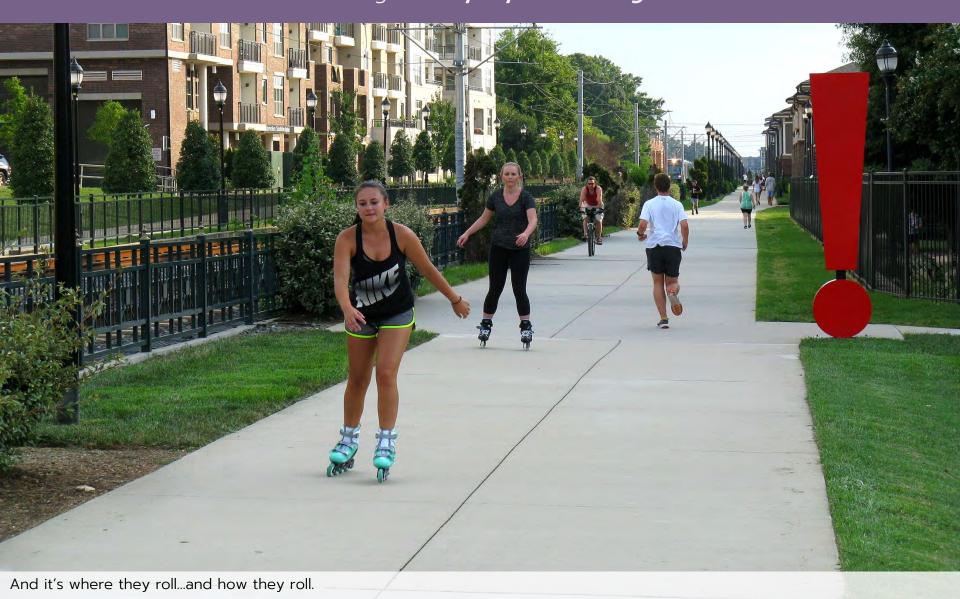


Where they ride home from work...



Where they exercise themselves and their dogs...

One South End resident says: "You bring your dog. You walk, you roller blade."
And it's a lot more fun because you are people watching the whole time."



Another resident says: "The Rail Trail is basically the **center of the neighborhood**. Everyone talks to each other on the Rail Trail. Everyone meets on the Rail Trail. Essentially **everyone connects** by the Rail Trail."



In fact, the Rail Trail has become the center of the South End neighborhood.



Since the Blue Line began operating in late 2007, the **Rail Trail** has been added onto, studied, enhanced, formalized, codified, de-formalized, imagined, envisioned, and **transformed**.



# RAIL TRAIL VISION



The Rail Trail will be a **vibrant public park** that winds through the heart of the city, where the unexpected can be found around every bend.



David Furman, FAIA



Richard Petersheim, RLA



Terry Shook, FAIA

In 2012, three local architects and designers developed a vision for the Rail Trail: a linear public park "where the unexpected can be found around every bend".



Their Vision Plan formed the basis of the 2015 Rail Trail Framework Plan, which set out a very specific program for achieving the vision.



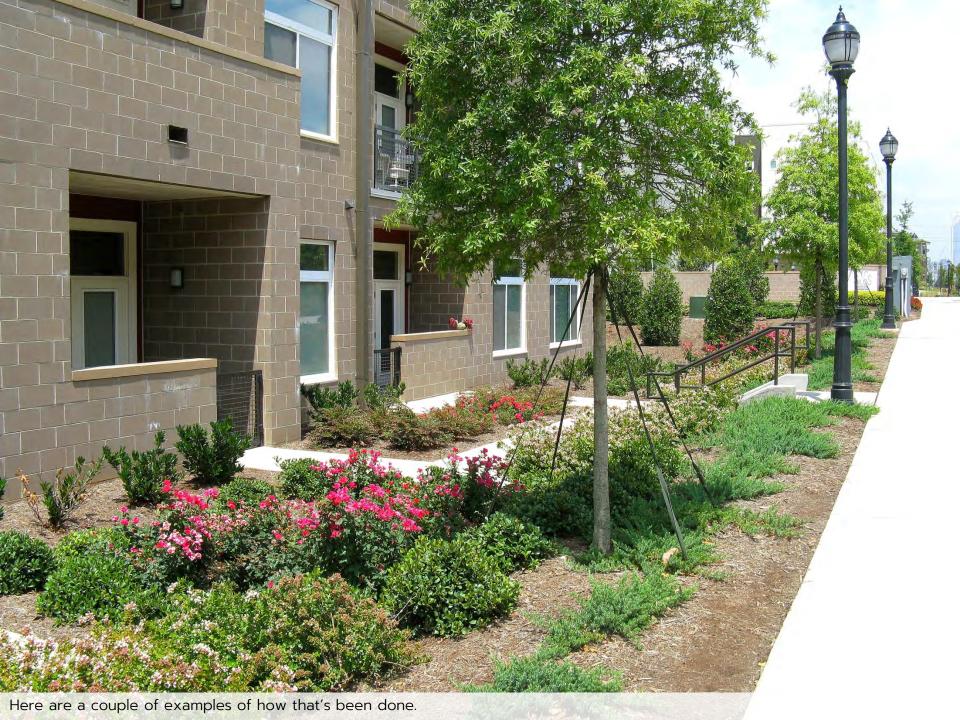
The evolution of the Rail Trail has followed this vision.



The trail has grown in increments, section by section, mostly paid for and built through private development immediately adjacent to the light rail alignment.



The City of Charlotte's station area plans and zoning regulations call for treating the Rail Trail as a public street or sidewalk, with the goal of activating and animating the trail for pedestrian interest and safety by fronting it with active uses, such as residential units that face or connect to it.







Office and commercial uses, especially restaurants, bars, and breweries, are encouraged to open onto the trail. Here's a dining and entertainment complex of several bars and restaurants, all of which have outdoor patios and doorways facing the trail.



The only frontage this popular restaurant, Futobuta, has is the Rail Trail. It doesn't front onto any public street at all.



This is Futobuta's outdoor patio, with the Rail Trail and the station platform to the left. The restaurant is on the ground floor of an apartment building, with residential balconies facing the trail.



Switching gears - The Rail Trail Vision Plan recommended re-purposing unused land, or "found spaces", to enliven the trail. Here's an example of the kind of space they were talking about, a kind of no-man's land, where some folks who work in a nearby office building are enjoying their lunch hour outdoors.



Another of these "found spaces" is this area, in front of a traction power substation near the Carson Boulevard platform.



One of the Rail Trail "vision-eers" is architect David Furman, a true friend and champion of South End and the Rail Trail. David was growing impatient with the slow progress being made by public agencies in implementing the vision, so he took matters into his own hands. He took the concept sketch he had done for the Vision Plan and...



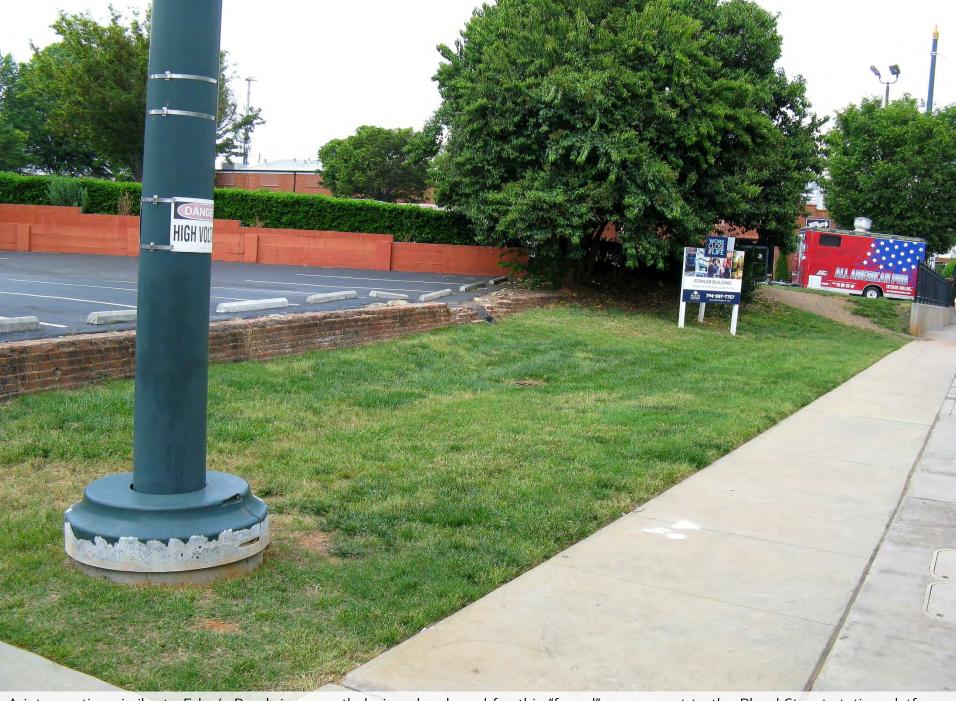
...turned it into reality. David calls this Edna's porch, because it reminds him of his grandma Edna's porch swing not too far from this spot.



David's firm, Centro Cityworks, designed, built, and paid for Edna's porch. It's now a popular hangout by the side of the Rail Trail.



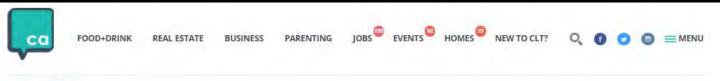
Here's David at Edna's Porch speaking to a group of graduate students from Clemson University's urban design program.



A intervention similar to Edna's Porch is currently being developed for this "found" space next to the Bland Street station platform.



...and again, David Furman is behind it. Here's his concept sketch for the area. This project recently received final approval from the City and is now being permitted for construction.



**OUR CITY** 

## A neighborhood living room is coming to South End



## **Varian Shrum:**

"I decided to try this kind of Tactical Urbanism in my own neighborhood of South End, which needs more public space. The term "Neighborhood Living Room" seemed to capture the vibe I wanted to create: a comfortable place where people could gather and connect "

Here's something a little different than Edna's Porch and the Bland Street station plaza. This is an example of tactical urbanism called a Neighborhood Living Room, the brainchild of South End resident Varian Shrum. She received a grant from the Knight Cities K880 Emerging City Champions program to fund this project.

"I want to create a cool hang-out spot that makes people stop and think about the built environment and how we're using the space all around us."

-Varian Shrum



For four days in October of 2015, a parking lot next to the Rail Trail was transformed into a neighborhood living room. Varian hoped that, after this demonstration ended, she could use her project to help the City develop a permitting process to allow for similar placemaking initiatives.



The City has also been engaged in some <u>publicly-funded</u> Rail Trail improvements and enhancements. Here's a new connection from the Rail Trail to an adjacent neighborhood street. This project was recently completed, minus a public art component, which hasn't been installed yet.



Elsewhere, the Charlotte Department of Transportation, or CDOT, has been busy painting new colorful crosswalks where the Rail Trail crosses South End streets.



CDOT also installed this counter on the right that tracks how many pedestrians and cyclists pass this point on the Rail Trail, and displays those numbers for both the day and the year to date.





CATS has initiated an Adopt-a-Trail program to help with simple maintenance and litter pick-up.



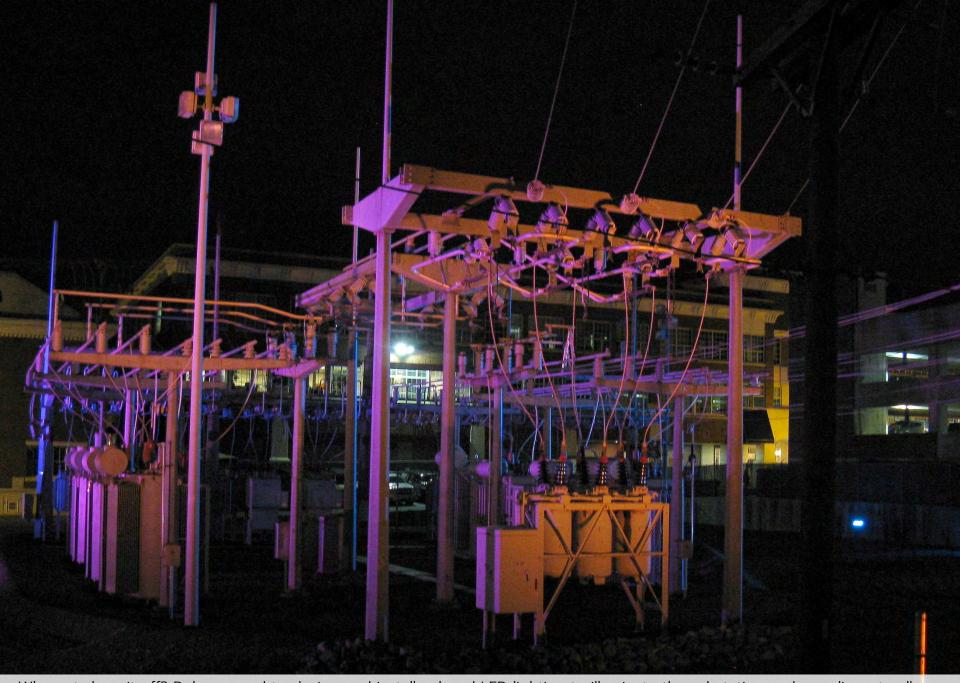
The Framework Plan recommended livening dead spaces along the Rail Trail with art. An Artplace America grant paid two artists to create "magic carpet murals" on three unimproved asphalt sections of the trail. In true Tom Sawyer fashion, they recruited volunteers to help paint their designs on the pavement.



Here's another magic carpet on a section of Rail Trail near the New Bern station.



Another idea that came out of the Rail Trail Vision Plan involved the local electric company, Duke Energy. Instead of trying to hide or screen this substation along the trail...



...Why not show it off? Duke agreed to design and install colored LED lighting to illuminate the substation and an adjacent cell tower.



Here's something cool. Parking garages are not typically permitted to front onto the Rail Trail, but it was the least objectionable alternative in the redevelopment of this infill site. So we allowed it but required the developer do something with the trail-facing wall to provide visual interest. An employee of one of the firms located in the new development created these panels, which are attached to the walls of the parking structure.



The panels depict "The Sting", a Charlotte-centric original comic strip, which tells a bizarre story that begins with prohibition, includes a scandal involving stolen basketballs, and ends (naturally) in a South End brewery.



that's been converted to condos, which you can see on the right.



Instead of leaving it green, CATS hired an artist to wrap the substation in vinyl to resemble the mill building.



A Play Anywhere grant from Kaboom enabled the creation of something called the "Rail Trail Symphony" in this small space next to the B Cycle rack at the New Bern station. It's basically some outdoor musical instruments that can be played any time by passers-by.



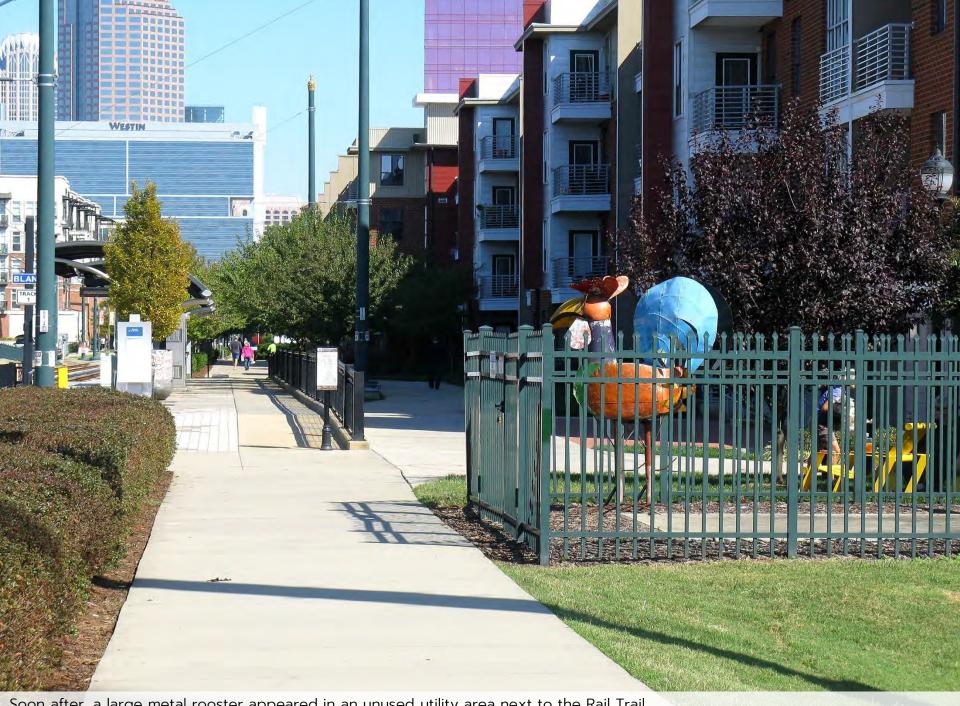
The Rail Trail Symphony has since become a popular place for impromptu concerts by kids of all ages.



Pretty much every activity or project on the Rail Trail I've talked about so far this morning has gone through whatever the necessary proper channels were. Procedures were followed, plans were reviewed, and permits obtained when necessary. But three or four years ago something else started happening. Weird stuff started to appear on the Trail. It began with a few yellow metal Adirondack chairs, two here, three there. One day they weren't there, the next day they were. Who did this? What does it mean? Is it a cause for concern? These things are on City property. What should be done about this?, we wondered.



Could we possibly just look the other way? After all, the chairs didn't appear to be doing any harm. In fact, they seemed to make people happy.



Soon after, a large metal rooster appeared in an unused utility area next to the Rail Trail.



After a while he was joined by another rooster. Then some colored eggs appeared around Easter. What was going on here? Surely the City couldn't just turn a blind eye to this fowl play.



Then this large chalkboard appeared that asked people what they wanted to do before they die. It even came with a boxful of chalk.





Followed by other things...A blue and green hexagonal ping pong table with balls and paddles...





How about a bike repair station and a home-made Twister game.



Yarn bombing. Trees covered in yarn.





guerilla placemaking: things that just pop up along the trail without any permissions being asked nor any credit taken.

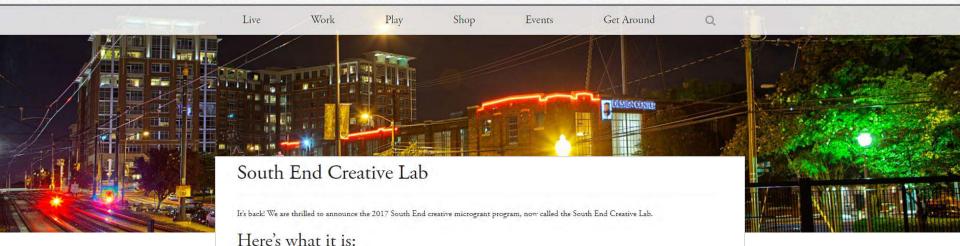
One day they're not there and the next day they are. This has become a commonplace occurrence, and these pop-up placemaking elements are simply absorbed into the Rail Trail environment. And we're pretty much OK with that.

This bench was a **temporary installation** funded through a **placemaking micro-grant program** administered by Historic South End. It helped enliven an otherwise dead space along the Rail Trail.



In fact, we're so OK with it that we've set aside some money for tactical urbanism and guerilla placemaking. Here's a bench called Runner's Respite, funded last year through a placemaking microgrant program.





#### Tieres what it is.

You know all those times when you have thought, "This place would just be better if someone would \_\_\_\_\_\_..." Well, we want to help you be that someone. Tell us what you want to make better. We'll give you \$50 – \$1,000 to make it happen.

### Why are we doing this?

- 1. Life happens on the street. We want to help you bring the creativity and serendipity that happens within four walls in South End out onto the streets and sidewalks where everyone can see it.
- 2. We want to help you live your dreams. Sometimes a few dollars and a team of people standing behind you to cheer you on is all you need to take matters into your own hands and make something awesome. We believe that this program will build community and local leadership with people like you.
- 3. Creativity thrives in South End. We hear all the time about neat start-ups, art collaborations and new ideas taking root in South End. Let's show off all the neat things that can happen here.

#### So, you'll just give me money?

Almost. There are a few requirements.

- 1. Creative Lab projects must be designed for and implemented in Historic South End. If you aren't sure exactly where the boundaries are, see this map.
- 2. Creative Lab projects must enhance the public realm, meaning that they are outside or visible from the street or sidewalk. They can be in the street or sidewalk (we'll help you through the red tape on that one), on private property, on the side of a building, in the sky... just as long as anyone can see or interact with it. Creative Lab projects should be accessible all (or most) of the time, and be welcoming to all.
- 3. Eligible projects can be temporary or semi-permanent. (Nothing lasts forever). Previous winners of our microgrants have done things like create public seating on the Rail Trail, offer free pop-up classes for dog owners, create interactive art experiences like the coloring-book wall on Camden and collaborative collage, and add art and color and poetry in unexpected places. We are looking to fund things like static improvements (a little library, a garden, a bench, art) and interactive programming (yoga, dog training, dance, performance art, games).
- 4. Funds can help pay for materials but generally cannot pay for your time. Sometimes there are exceptions.

## South End Creative Lab It's back! We are thrilled to announce the 2017 South End creative microgrant program, now called the South End Creative Lab. You know all those times when you have thought, "This place would just be better if someone would \_\_\_\_\_..." Well, we want to help you be that someone. Tell us what you want to make better. We'll give you \$50 - \$1,000 to make it happen. Be sure to read more about why we're doing this, what kinds of things we're looking for, and a few rules. http://historicsouthend.com/south-end-creative-lab-microgrants/ \* Required Email address \* Your email Your Name (First and Last) \* Your answer Your Phone Number \* Your answer Project Title \* Your answer What do you want to do? \* Your answer Why? How will this make South End better? \* Your answer How long will it last? \* Your answer

1.0	ur answer
Н	ow much will it cost to make it happen? *
We tell mi	want to help you make cool things come to life, but our funds are limited. So be specific in ing us what you need and what you think each element will cost. Even if we can't fund all of it, w pht be able to help you find the resources you need in other ways. If you need to include more ail, please email us an attachment: <a href="mgude@charlottecentercity.org">mgude@charlottecentercity.org</a> .
Yo	ur answer
W	orkshop Dates *
Wi	nners are invited to a special workshop where you can meet our partners and past winners, and help getting started. Could you join us on either of these dates below? Dinner, drinks & rriment (ok and a little work on your idea.)
	Tuesday, July 11th, 6:00 - 8:00 pm
	Thursday, July 13th, 6:00 - 8:00 pm
	Other:
0	ther Comments
W	at else do we need to know? You can tell us about other collaborators, your inspiration, or thing else.
Yo	uranswer
L	ast Step: Email Images *
Ar wi	image is worth a lot of words. Send us an email (to Megan at <a href="mailto:mgude@charlottecentercity.org">mgude@charlottecentercity.org</a> ) that least 2 images that describe what you want to do. They can be photos of what inspired you, ages of the supplies you'll need, a photo of the place you want to transform, or a sketch of what u want to do. Help us see your vision!
	] Done!
A	pplications are due by midnight on June 8, 2017
	Send me a copy of my responses.

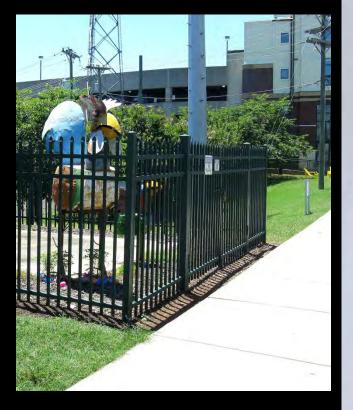
The online application process is easy. There's even a workshop to help grant winners get started with their projects.

## FAQ: Am I allowed to do a project on the Rail Trail?

"LYNX Blue Line platforms are off limits for safety reasons, but CATS has a Task Order process to allow for temporary installations on the Rail Trail. There are a few extra steps to gain permission. We can help."



We've even streamlined the approval process for placemaking on the Rail Trail. As long as you stay off the tracks and station platforms, your project should be OK.



2017 Creative Labs Microgrant Program Winner

Carmella J

1 Move metal animals outside of fence -(Start Collection in open green area) 4 panels (x 3 sides) that visually "continue" landscape

This year's micro-grant winners were recently announced. Here's one of the winning submissions for a project that will soon be implemented along the Rail Trail. Remember the roosters? Carmella's project will move the roosters from their pen onto the lawn next door as the start of an animal collection, then adds art panels to the fence.



2017 Creative Labs Microgrant Program Winner

**Laurie S** 





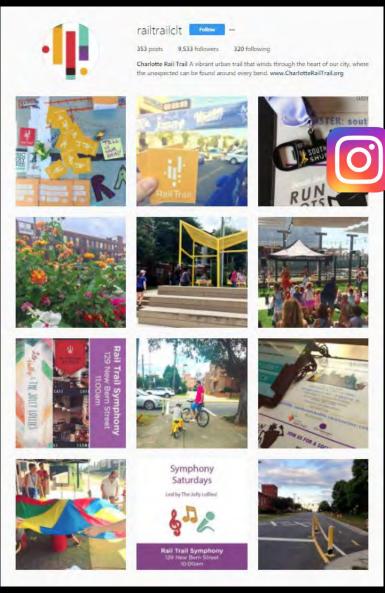
And remember the Rail Trail Symphony? Now there's something right new next to it...



...it's a brewery, of course.



Complete with a dog bowl.





railtrailclt

@RailTrailCLT

## Rail Trail Social Media

# THANK YOU

