



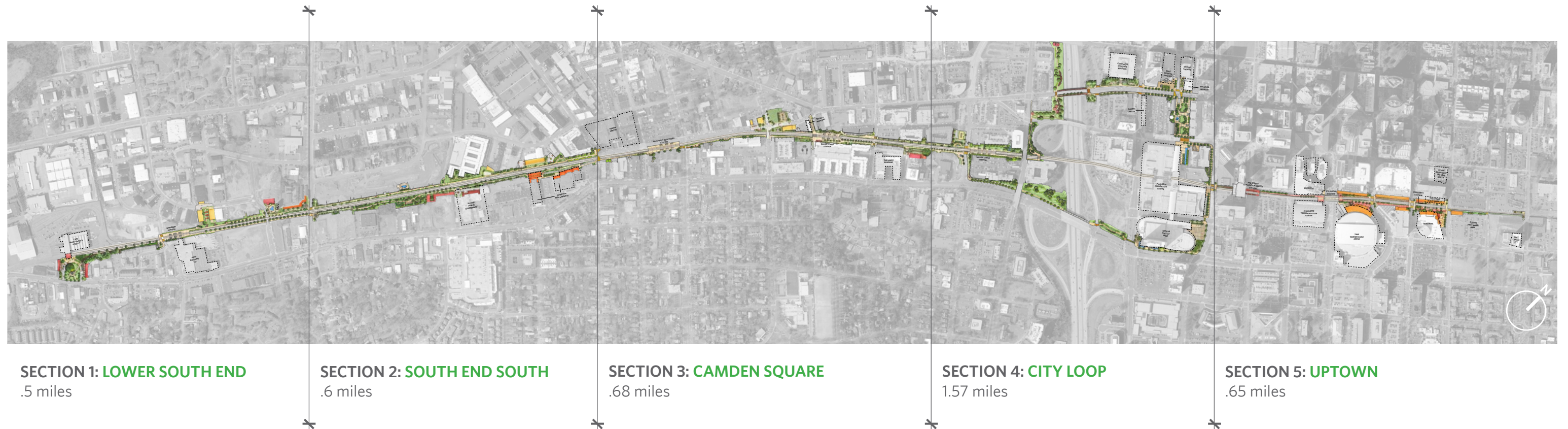
# RAIL TRAIL VISION

October 2013





# RAIL TRAIL VISION



## What is the Rail Trail?

Charlotte's Rail Trail will be a vibrant public park that winds through the heart of downtown. The 4 mile trail will connect neighborhoods from Sedgefield, Southside Park, Brookhill, Dilworth, Wilmore, South End and Uptown. But it will belong to everyone in the Queen City.

The Rail Trail will become the place to discover cafés and bars, explore galleries, see artists at work, stumble upon an impromptu concert, stroll with your family, or relax on a bench and watch the city come alive around you.

The walkway alongside the LYNX Blue Line already exists. With the help of passionate supporters, the existing trail will be transformed into a network of gardens, public art, unique spaces and activities, and an endless string of places to sit, eat and play. The hardest part of building a park—acquiring the land—is done. Now we have an opportunity to turn it into something extraordinary.



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### **Why is the Rail Trail a good thing for Charlotte?**

The Rail Trail will:

- Create a unique recreational asset for the seven neighborhoods along the trail and all of Charlotte's citizens.
- Be a destination where visitors can experience Charlotte's culture and character.
- Support innovative small businesses in along the way and give shoppers an easier way to access the galleries, shops and restaurants.
- Strengthen the identity of Charlotte as city of creativity and cultural experiences.

### **How long is the Rail Trail? Where will it go?**

The vision for the Rail Trail stretches 4 miles, from the proposed Terminus Park just south of New Bern Station, through the heart of South End along the light rail line, and across I-277 into Uptown, where it will connect to museums, performing arts spaces, the 7th Street Public Market, and the new First Ward Park.

### **Who is involved?**

The idea of developing the Rail Trail into a linear park is part of the 2020 Center City Vision Plan adopted by City Council in 2011. In late 2012, Charlotte Center City Partners commissioned the Trail Design Collaborative to develop a vision for the Rail Trail.

The planning, design and construction of the trail will be a joint effort between Charlotte Center City Partners, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, and the property owners, business stakeholders and residents who live and work along the trail. The designs for the Rail Trail will be built on input from everyone in the communities along the trail.

### **Why do we have a vision for the Rail Trail? What does that mean? What's next?**

The images and ideas in this vision are concepts; not specific plans. The next steps will include developing a more detailed plan for the trail, seeking sponsors, and working with adjacent property owners to design and enhance specific places on the trail. Building out and expanding upon the Rail Trail will not happen overnight. It will evolve one space at a time. The first steps are to share this vision and develop a master Framework Plan for the length of the trail. This Framework Plan will be completed in 2014.

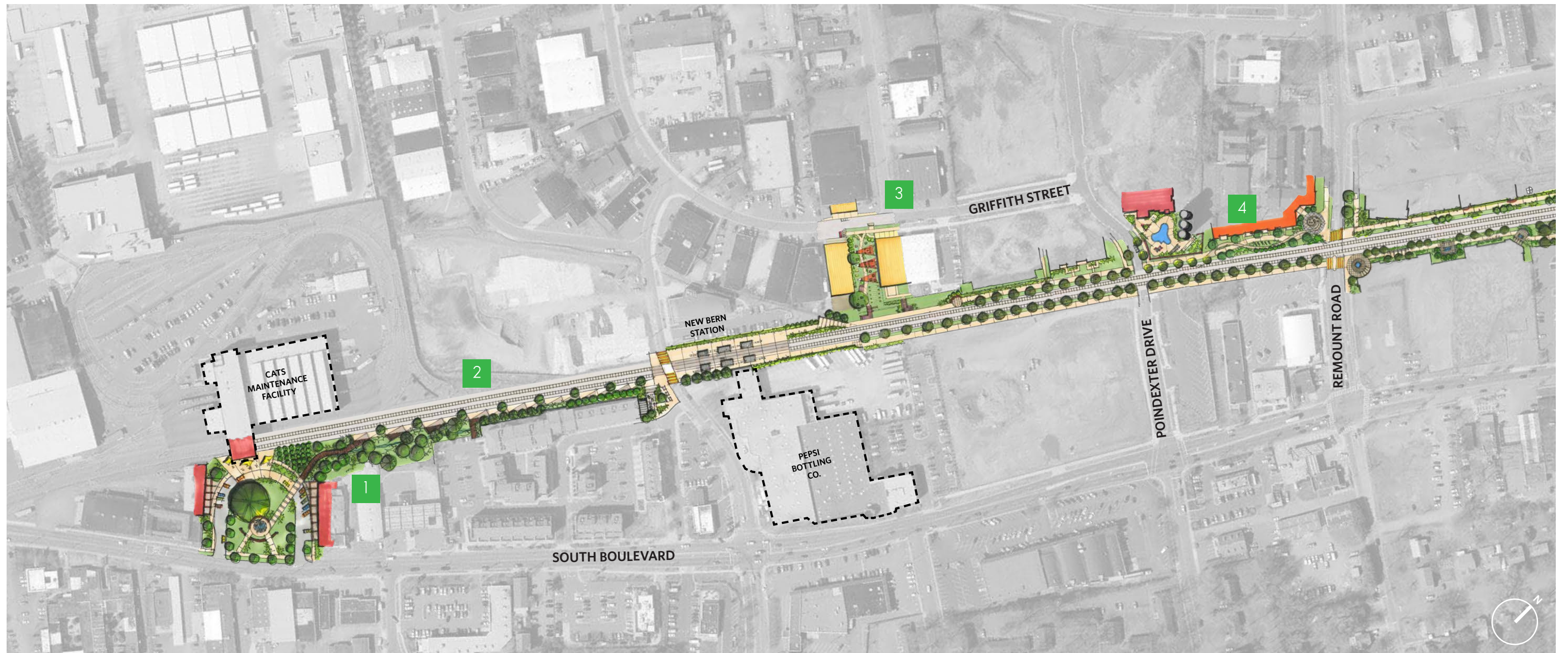
### **To learn more visit...**

[www.charlotterailtrail.com](http://www.charlotterailtrail.com).





# SECTION 1 LOWER SOUTH END



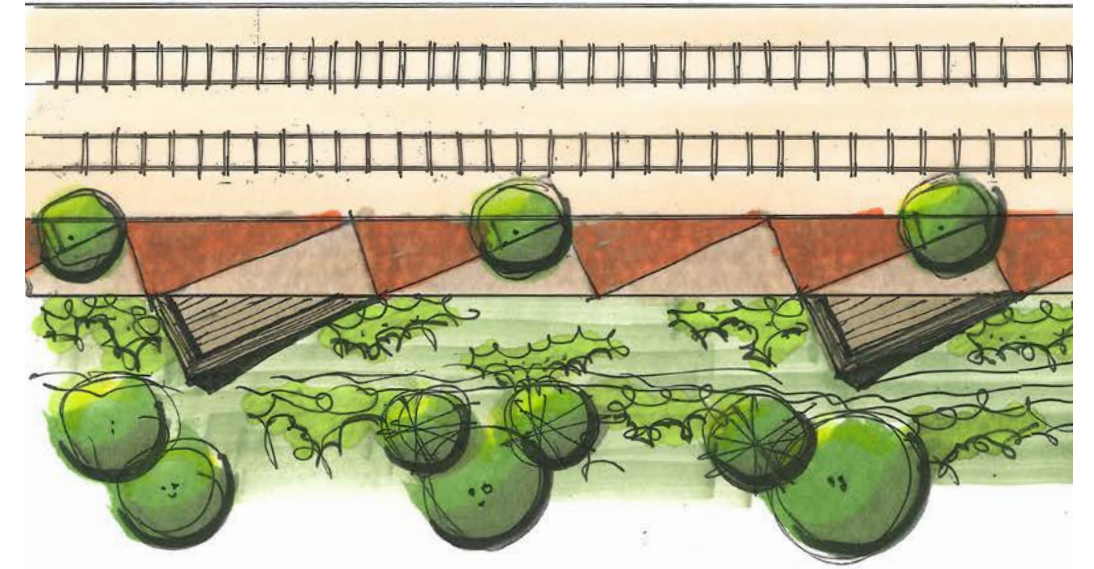
# LOWER SOUTH END



**1 BOARDWALK**  
Enhance the current asphalt conditions and create interventions into existing drainage swale.

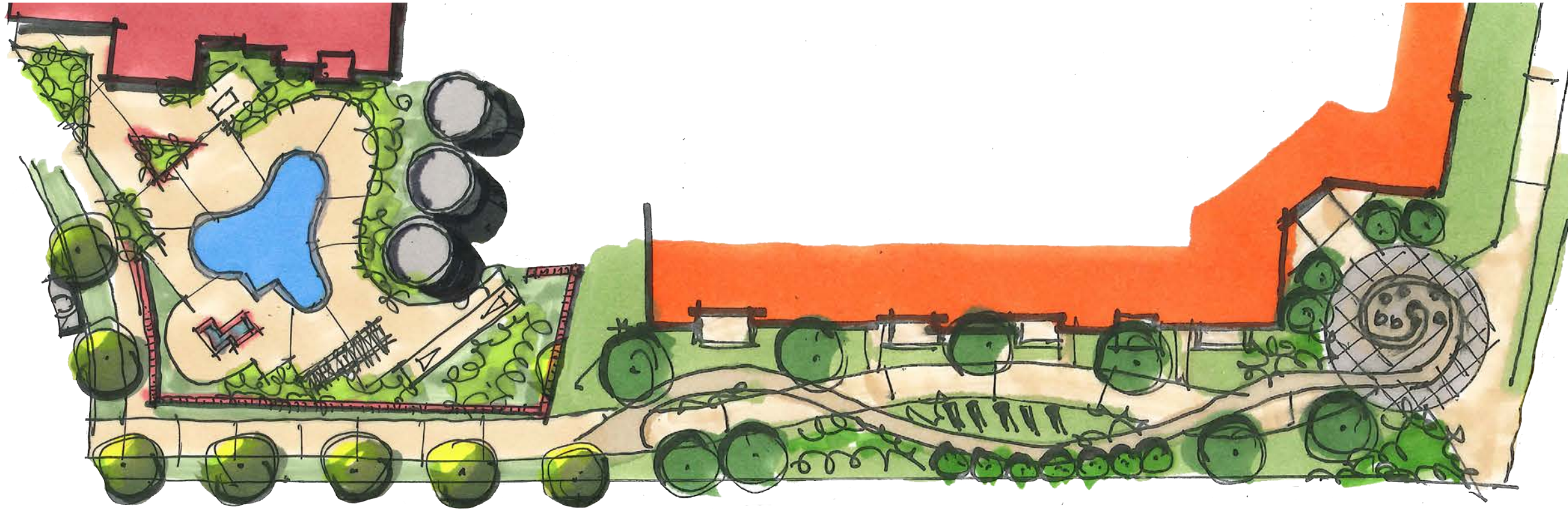


**2 TRAIL ENHANCEMENTS**  
Add trail enhancements such as benches, patios, new paving and landscaping.



**3 BEER GARDEN**  
Enhance connections from the trail to neighborhood businesses and encourage development of unique spaces. For example, space near Triple C Brewing Company could become a European-style beer garden.





3

**SILOS PARK**

Utilize existing public right-of-way to create pocket parks along the trail. Program spaces with unexpected finds such as permanent ping pong tables and giant see saws.

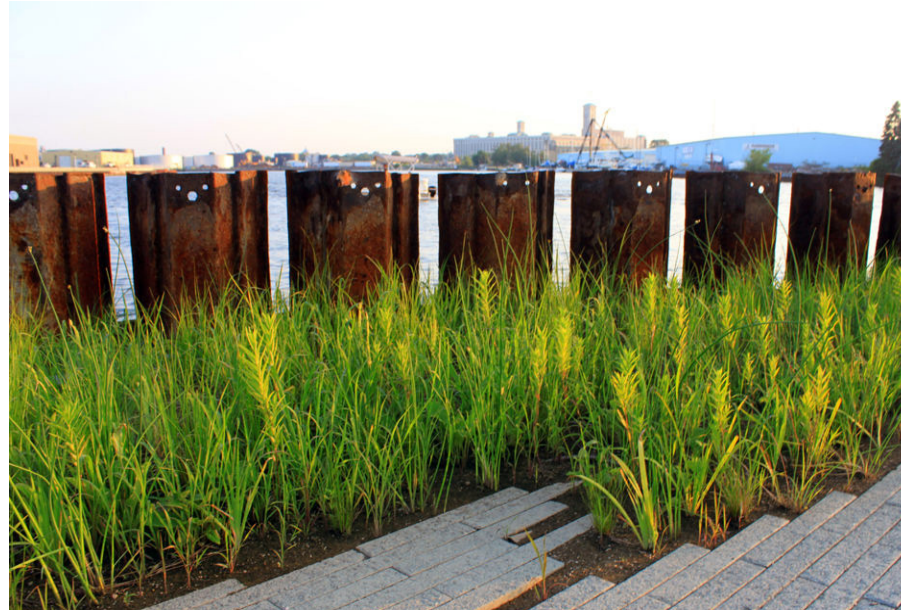


# SECTION 2

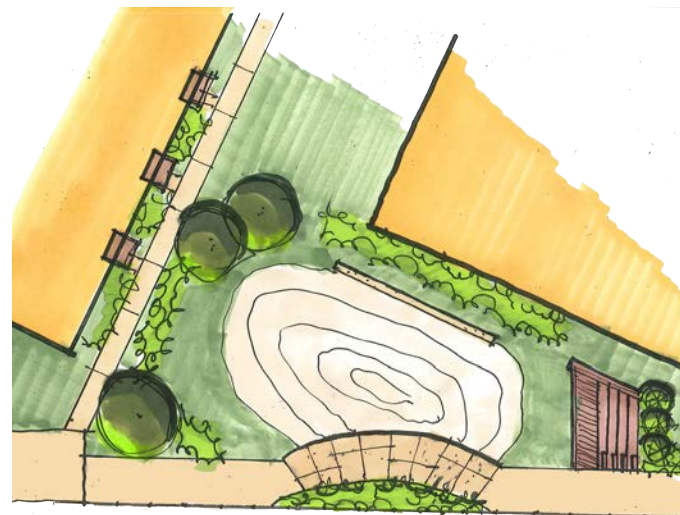
## SOUTH END SOUTH



# SOUTH END SOUTH



- 1 MAKE IT INTERESTING**  
Add landscaping or public art to make the walk more engaging.



- 2 UNDEVELOPED SPACES**  
The back of this building could become an interim skateboard park utilizing the existing grade. Meanwhile, develop guidelines to influence the future of currently undeveloped spaces along the trail.



**3 GOOD EXAMPLES**  
Abundant landscaping, adequate building setbacks, embellished connections, and fencing disguised by landscaping.



**4 TROLLEY STOP PARK**  
Unused rail bed from the South End trolley line could be re-purposed for movable benches while vendors could use the abandoned Tremont trolley stop as a sheltered kiosk. The park would create an animated connection between the trail and Atherton Mill & Market.





# SECTION 3 CAMDEN SQUARE



# CAMDEN SQUARE



## 1 SCREENING

Where parking and service areas meet the trail, create unique architectural solutions to screen from pedestrians and add greenery.



## 2 CONNECT TO BUSINESSES

Create formal linkages to surrounding businesses, restaurants and bars.



## 3 SEASONAL RETAIL

Activate sections of the trail with spaces for vending and impromptu flea markets. For example, celebrate the trail intersection at East/West Boulevard with permanent kiosks.



**4 COOP PLAZA**

The grassy area between the east side of Camden Road and the west side of the track could be designed as a plaza with outdoor dining amenities—perfect for patrons of Price’s Chicken Coop or the occasional food truck.

**5 CAMDEN SQUARE**

Enhance the neighborhood center at the intersection of Park Avenue and Camden Road by creating a public square, with outdoor dining and open plaza, surrounded by many of South End’s signature institutions.



**6 DUKE SUBSTATION**

Explore creative lighting of the Duke Energy sub-station to embrace its position along the trail.



**7 CONNECT TO NEIGHBORHOODS**

Create a pronounced entrance from the end of Arlington Street with a pocket park and amphitheater in existing green space.



# SECTION 4 CITY LOOP



# CITY LOOP



## 1 POCKET PARKS

Open spaces such as the lawn in front of a CATS transformer could be re-purposed as pocket parks with unique, active uses such as porch swings. These spaces would spill out from the trail and attract pedestrians and cyclists from nearby streets.

## 2 CARSON STATION SCULPTURE PARK

Create a sculpture park to further enhance the green space next to Carson Street Station.



## 3 CITY LINK PARK

This L-shaped strip of public right-of-way could be re-purposed as a green link, connecting the trail as it emerges at College and Morehead Streets to Uptown via the recently enhanced Tryon Street bridge.



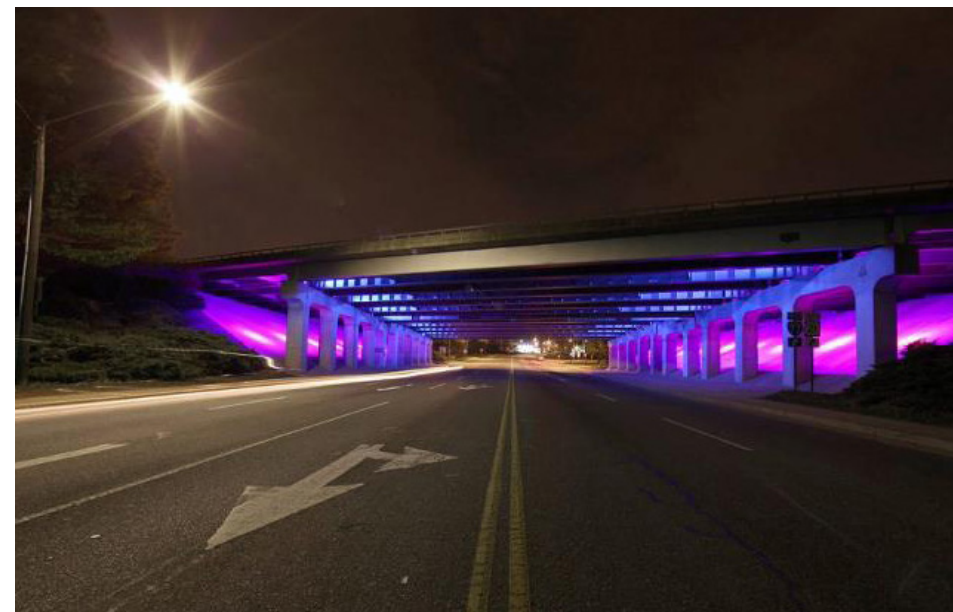
**4 OBSERVER PLAZA**  
Provide civic space by creating a new plaza in front of the Charlotte Observer building to house the relocated “front page” exhibit.



**5 PUBLIC PLACES**  
The City Loop portion of the trail could connect existing plazas, parks and cultural institutions.



**6 CREATIVE CROSSINGS**  
Crosswalks like the one between The Green and the Convention Center should be reinforced graphically with bold painted designs.



**7 INFRASTRUCTURE AS ART**  
Under the Morehead Street bridges are unique opportunity to create artistic experiences, potentially using color, light and sound.





# SECTION 5 UPTOWN



# UPTOWN



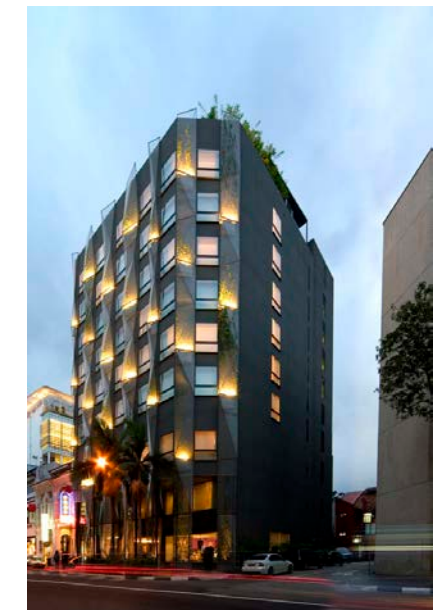
## 1 BEHIND THE HILTON

The asphalt pathway behind the Hilton Hotel linking this section of the Rail Trail to the City Loop should be redesigned with more dynamic paving and robust landscaping.



## 2 BEHIND EPICENTRE

The rail corridor side of the entertainment complex should be enhanced to announce activities going on inside the EpiCentre. This part of the trail could be more dynamic through the introduction of interactive digital screens or signage.



## 3 NEW HOTEL SITE

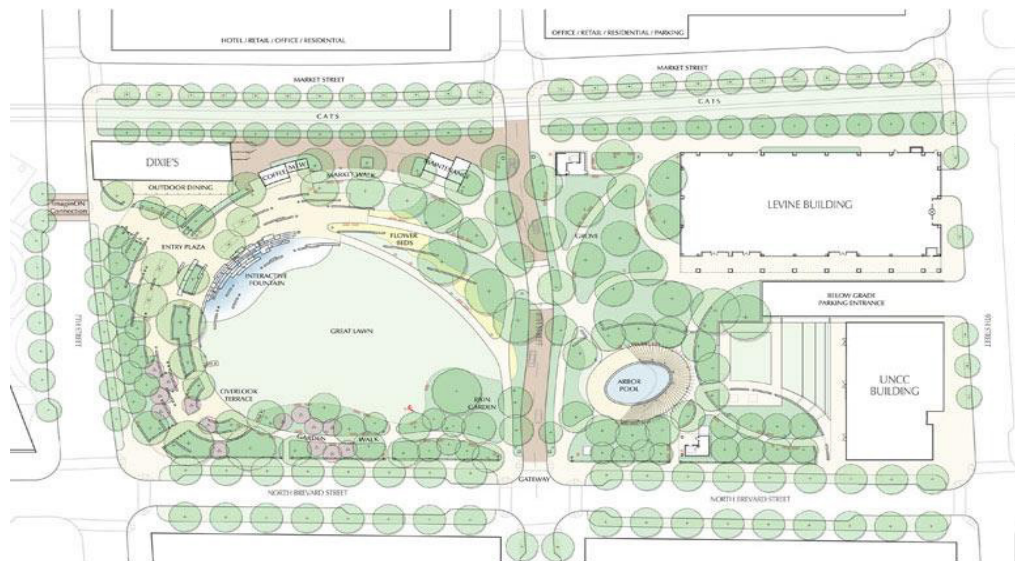
This corner site is currently slated to be developed as a new hotel. Care should be taken in the planning and design of the new facility to open and link to the track side of the building to create a well designed addition.

# UPTOWN



## 4 GOOD EXAMPLES

The block of the trail between 6th and 7th Streets is outstanding. 7th Street Public Market activates the paved trail on the west side. ImaginOn on the east side has a well-designed landscaped edge leading to a wonderfully engaging public art installation on the 7th Street corner.



## 5 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The trail should be an integral design feature of the new First Ward Park, providing a dynamic terminus to the northern end of the Rail Trail.



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