

2024 Impact Report

SUSTAIN CHARLOTTE



Advocating for Smart Land Use + Transportation Choices

As we reflect on another year of progress, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the supporters, partners, and volunteers who have empowered us to achieve incredible milestones. Your dedication and passion for creating a more sustainable and equitable Charlotte have made these successes possible.

Together, we've advocated for transformative investments in parks, transportation, and public spaces; ensured critical funding for safety and accessibility improvements; and raised awareness about the importance of sustainable choices. From amplifying community voices at budget hearings to championing new greenways and bike lanes, every step of this journey was fueled by your unwavering commitment.

This report highlights the outcomes we've accomplished as a community—efforts that are reshaping Charlotte-Mecklenburg for the better. Thank you for believing in our mission and joining us in the pursuit of a more equitable, connected, and healthy community. We couldn't have done it without you.



2024 By the Numbers



5,527 Event attendees



1,350 People who took action for more park and recreation funding



57 Programs and events



800 People who took action for more bike funding



27 Community presentations



\$65M Secured for multi-modal transportation projects citywide



77 Press mentions



61 Thought leadership articles published



\$50M Secured to acquire land for more parks and greenways countywide



213 Ambassadors trained to help advance our mission

Our Values

We are collaborative.

We foster an inclusive environment to build values-based partnerships. Our success comes from uniting diverse perspectives to achieve common goals, ensuring that everyone has a voice and a role in our shared progress.

We are inspiring.

We aim to motivate and inspire others through our passion, creativity, and a fun, supportive environment that encourages innovation and curiosity.

We are bold.

We demonstrate courage by speaking up for what is right, showing resilience in the face of challenges, and remaining steadfast in our commitment to our values and mission.

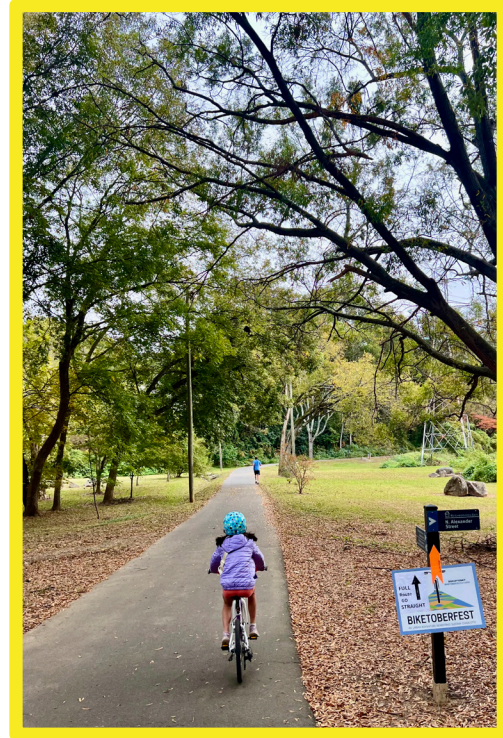
We are solution-focused.

We seek practical, sustainable solutions that address the needs of the Greater Charlotte community and always strive for positive outcomes.

Key Advocacy Efforts and Achievements

Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Investments

Successfully secured increased funding for Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation in both the county's annual operating budget and capital budget. By collecting 1350 signatures on [this petition](#), meeting with county commissioners, helping community members speak at budget hearings, and partnering with other organizations, we helped achieve **\$50 million to acquire land for future parks, greenways, and nature preserves**, an additional **\$3 million for improvements to existing parks and greenways**, and **sufficient funding for 15 new Park and Rec staff positions**. We also successfully secured the inclusion of two critical Irwin Creek Greenway segments, passed over in the previous capital budget, that will improve greenway access, mobility choices, and community connectivity for West Charlotte neighborhoods.



City of Charlotte Transportation Investments

Played a pivotal role in securing **\$65 million** in funding for sidewalks, Strategic Investment Areas, Corridors of Opportunity, and transportation improvements in the city's capital budget. This funding was cut from the budget a week before the final vote. Thanks to the residents who joined us and urged city council members to restore these funds, they were included in the approved budget and those who spoke up were credited for this change. In addition, we helped secure **\$8 million to expand the bike network**, **\$50 million for sidewalks**, and **\$20 million over the next two years for measures that will help reduce fatalities and serious injuries through the City's Vision Zero program**.

One Cent for Mobility

Successfully advocated for Charlotte City Council members to approve the **purchase of railroad tracks** from Norfolk Southern to build the Red Line and support state legislation for a **one-cent county-wide sales tax** to expand and improve bus and rail transit and safer streets for walking and biking. This legislation will be considered by state lawmakers in early 2025 and we will continue our advocacy for it.

"Sustain Charlotte's advocacy helps us expand what we do from a facilities and programmatic standpoint."

- Bert Lynn, Capital Planning Division Director, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation

Compact Development

Successfully advocated for Charlotte City Council to adopt zoning changes to **boost housing supply** and **restore specific standards for walkability and good urban design** by updating the Conservation Residential Development subdivision option of the Unified Development Ordinance.

Public Accessibility

Successfully advocated for changes to a rezoning petition involving the Panthers' new practice facility, ensuring that an existing public path is improved in accordance with the city's plans for this segment of the Uptown bicycle network as part of construction. This will **enhance public access and connectivity for walking and biking**.

Vision Zero

Advocated to maintain Charlotte's commitment to **eliminating traffic fatalities** through the Vision Zero program and opposed funding cuts to pedestrian safety initiatives.



Community Education, Outreach, and Events

Sustain Charlotte Awards

Hosted a sold-out event celebrating the sustainability achievements of more than 70 nominees in eight categories. This event serves as a major annual fundraiser to support and highlight the efforts of individuals, businesses, government agencies, and nonprofits leading the way toward a sustainable community.

10th Annual Biketoberfest

Celebrated a decade of promoting sustainable transportation through our annual Biketoberfest event, inspiring 750 people to explore Charlotte by bike or foot and discover new businesses, parks, and greenways while raising funds to support our work. As a result of the event, 60% of participants said they were more likely to walk or bike for transportation.

“What Sustain Charlotte does for the city of Charlotte is so incredibly important because they help us keep sustainability and the environment top of mind as the city grows.”

- Dante Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem, Charlotte City Council District 1 Representative

Sustain Charlotte Socials

Hosted five educational events featuring expert speakers and advocacy opportunities for attendees. Topics included equity and smart growth, park and recreation advocacy, building our bicycle network, the future of Charlotte's tree canopy, and building a better bus network.

Impact 704 Academy

Hosted a three-part educational series to educate, inspire, and equip attendees to better advocate for responsible growth and transportation choices.

Community Outreach and Education

Gave **27 presentations** and provided information at **44 community events** to educate the public about sustainability. Published **61 articles**, appeared **77 times in media coverage**, and sent **52 educational newsletters** providing opportunities for engagement.

Sustain Charlotte Ambassador Program

Trained **213 community members** to represent Sustain Charlotte's vision and expand our reach through events and activities.

New Website

Launched a new digital platform with improved accessibility and usability for sustainability-related resources, upcoming events, and advocacy initiatives.

#CarFreeCLT Campaign

Ran a series of stories featuring local residents who choose to get around without a car daily to inspire residents to explore transportation options beyond driving.

MythBUSTing Series

Created and published a series debunking common misconceptions about public transit.



“Sustain Charlotte educates, empowers, calls people to action, and includes everyone. That tells me it’s an organization that cares about people.”

- Reverend Janet Garner-Mullins, West Charlotte Community Leader

Partnerships and Collaborations

Voter Guide

Collaborated with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Climate Leaders coalition to research and release a local voter guide to inform Mecklenburg County voters on where the candidates for the county commission stand on a range of issues, including climate action, mobility, and green space.

World Day of Remembrance

Spoke at the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims event hosted by the City of Charlotte, honoring those killed due to traffic violence and highlighting the need to design our streets for safety rather than speed to prevent future deaths and serious injuries.

Around the Crown 10K

Participated in a sustainability panel and recruited volunteers to reduce landfill waste at race-related events as a proud beneficiary of this popular annual race that emphasizes supporting sustainability efforts and highlighting the diversity and history of Charlotte's neighborhoods.

May Days of Biking Challenge

Encouraged community participation in bike-related activities as part of the #BikeCharlotte 2024 event featuring 27 days of cycling events and promotions. We promoted greenways, bike routes and group rides.

Bike Lane Support

Sponsored the People-Powered Bike Lane Sweeper, emphasizing the need for building and maintaining safe bike lanes and supporting access to reliable cycling infrastructure across the city.

Clean Air Games

Organized a challenge event in partnership with Mecklenburg County Air Quality and Charlotte Area Transportation System to encourage vehicle trip-reduction activities like biking and walking.



Additional Climate and Transportation Advocacy

Bicycle Network Campaign

Continued advocacy to expand Charlotte’s bicycle infrastructure, pushing for the completion of 100+ miles of bike lanes by 2040.

Transit Equity Day

Expressed appreciation for bus drivers, encouraged residents to do the same, and highlighted what is needed to create equitable, efficient public transit on Transit Equity Day — a day dedicated to celebrating the legacy of Rosa Parks and advocating for equitable access to public transportation for all people.

Rise and Ride Events

Hosted three experiential CATS bus ride events, attended by elected officials and residents, aimed at educating the public to navigate the Charlotte bus system to increase regular usage.

National Advocacy

Joined national advocacy efforts to ensure transit projects and funding sources align with the Reconnecting Communities initiative, promoting equitable mobility and development.

Day Without Driving

Organized Day Without Driving to encourage elected officials and residents who drive to better understand the needs of people who don’t drive, including one-third of residents in Mecklenburg County.

Solar Energy Support

Successfully advocated for Charlotte City Council to approve a contract for the construction of the South Davidson Solar Project to provide renewable energy to the city. This solar farm will provide the greenhouse gas reduction benefit equivalent to taking about 24,000 cars off the road per year and is expected to begin construction in the fall of 2025.

Climate Week Workshop

Partnered with CleanAIRE NC, Self-Help Credit Union, and Southern Alliance for Clean Energy to present a virtual climate action workshop on how transportation choices, like switching to electric vehicles or using sustainable transport, can significantly reduce carbon footprints.



Recognitions

Charlotte's Best Award

Nominated for the Charlotte Observer's Charlotte's Best Award in the Best Nonprofit category, highlighting the impact of our staff, board members, volunteers, and donors in advancing sustainability across the Charlotte region.

Power 100 Innovator

Executive Director Shannon Binns was named a Power 100 Innovator by the Charlotte Business Journal - a list of 100 leaders who are blazing new trails and bringing new ideas for the region's future.



These accomplishments underscore Sustain Charlotte's commitment to fostering equitable, sustainable growth and improving community mobility options.

Looking Forward

In 2025, we remain committed to advocating for responsible growth, transportation choices, and community-driven solutions to address the equity, environmental, and economic challenges and opportunities that accompany our rapid growth.

"I moved to Charlotte about 14 years ago and absolutely hated it because I had to own a car and had never had to before. Once I looked for options to get around without a car, this is the one organization that wanted to solve the same problems that I have. Sustain Charlotte is advocating for the right things so that we don't have to be dependent on cars."

- Jeet Pawar, Sustain Charlotte Supporter

What We Do Every Day

Driving Policy Change for Sustainable Growth

We have been instrumental in advocating for policies that promote smart growth, sustainable transportation, and environmental conservation in Mecklenburg County. From influencing transit expansion plans to shaping climate action goals, we're helping make the city more resilient to future challenges.

Community-Centered Advocacy

We actively engage Charlotte residents to amplify their voices on sustainability issues. We empower community members to speak up on critical issues like transportation accessibility, green space development, and environmental justice, ensuring that growth benefits everyone.



Supporting Healthy, Clean, Affordable Mobility

We are a leader in promoting healthy, clean, affordable mobility solutions. Through our initiatives, we advocate for enhanced public transit, safer cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, and reduced car dependency. This helps lower emissions, reduce traffic congestion, and improve air quality for all.

Trusted Local Sustainability Partner

We have a proven track record of partnerships with local governments, nonprofits, and businesses to implement meaningful change. We are seen as a go-to organization for collaborative projects that move Charlotte toward a sustainable and more inclusive future.

Educational Outreach and Youth Engagement

We offer educational programs that engage young people and residents in learning about sustainability. Through workshops, seminars, and community events, we're building a culture of sustainability among Charlotte's next generation of leaders.

Grassroots Initiatives with Tangible Results

We don't just talk about sustainability; we achieve real, measurable results. From increasing biking infrastructure to supporting greenway expansions and influencing local transit funding, our work leads to visible, lasting changes that improve daily life for Charlotteans.

Championing Equitable Solutions

We work to ensure that sustainability initiatives are rooted in equity. We advocate for affordable transit, equitable access to green spaces, and neighborhood improvements that benefit underserved communities.

Making a Climate Impact

Our advocacy contributes directly to reducing Charlotte's carbon footprint. By promoting sustainable transit and energy-efficient development, we're lowering greenhouse gas emissions and helping the city meet its climate goals.

Maximizing Donor Dollars

We are committed to transparency and effectiveness. We leverage every dollar to achieve maximum impact, ensuring that donor contributions directly support meaningful projects and advocacy efforts.



“The education I have received from Sustain Charlotte -- through publications and events -- has allowed me to be more vocal with my friends and others to discuss issues that matter to me and should matter to everyone.”

- Nicole Campbell, Sustain Charlotte supporter

