

Reimagining 77 South

A Vision for Repairing and Reconnecting Charlotte

Request for Visionaries (RFV)

Issued March 13, 2026

Great cities are built on bold visions.

Charlotte now has a rare opportunity to rethink one of the most consequential pieces of infrastructure in our city.

With the proposed I-77 South toll lane project temporarily paused, we have a brief window to ask a bigger question:

What could this corridor become if it were designed for people, neighborhoods, and the future of our city?

Just as importantly, what would it look like to repair past harm caused by the construction of I-77 in the 1960s — when highways were often built through established neighborhoods, dividing communities and limiting opportunity?

Sustain Charlotte invites architects, planners, designers, artists, students, and residents to submit visionary concepts that reimagine the I-77 corridor through Charlotte's urban core.

Instead of widening a highway, what if we:

- Repaired and reconnected neighborhoods long divided by infrastructure
- Created parks, greenways, and civic spaces above capped freeway sections
- Built safe walking and biking connections
- Improved air quality and public health
- Reduced noise and environmental harm
- Improved access to Irwin Creek



Create beautiful places that bring people together.

Cities across the world — including [Dallas](#), [Seattle](#), [Denver](#), and [Phoenix](#) — have transformed urban freeways through caps, tunnels, and other innovative approaches that reconnect communities and create vibrant public spaces.

Charlotte can do the same.

We are seeking **visual concepts** that help the public and decision-makers envision what is possible.

Who Should Participate

We welcome submissions from:

- Architects
- Urban planners
- Landscape architects
- Designers and artists
- Students
- Community members
- Anyone with a bold vision for Charlotte's future

Professional experience is **not required**.

Professional designers, amateurs, and students of all ages are encouraged to participate.

Teachers, after-school programs, youth clubs, and student organizations are warmly invited to submit class or group ideas.

This is not a competition. There will be no winners and losers.

Only a sense of wonder and a desire to help shape our city's future are needed.

What to Submit

Submissions should visually illustrate a vision for the corridor. Formats may include:

- Renderings or illustrations
- Concept diagrams
- Digital art
- Short video visualizations
- Mixed media presentations

Submissions can be as targeted or as broad as needed to communicate the design idea.

Participants may choose to focus on a single neighborhood, interchange, or creek corridor, or they may explore solutions along the entire I-77 corridor through Charlotte.

Designs may explore ideas such as freeway caps, tunnels, parks, greenways, mobility improvements, 1-2 story buildings, or new community spaces.

Participants are also encouraged to consider how their ideas could **efficiently move the most people rather than vehicles**, reduce congestion, and improve mobility for everyone traveling through the corridor.

The goal is not engineering precision — it is imagination.

Exhibition Guidelines

Selected submissions will be showcased publicly on April 13 at a free public event called [*How the Cities We Build Shape How We Live*](#), at The Dubois Center at UNC Charlotte Center City.

Each participant will have approximately:

- **3–4 feet of display space**
- An easel or tabletop



Visionaries must bring:

- Their printed (or hand-drawn) design with a firm backing for display on an easel
- or**
- A digital display (laptops and iPads welcome) for digital drawings and videos.
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Timeline

March 13

Request For Visionaries (RFV) officially released

April 6

Submission deadline

April 13

Public exhibition and showcase

Design Inspiration

Participants are encouraged to consider how their concept could improve:

- neighborhood connectivity
- public health
- air quality
- noise reduction
- walkability and bike access
- green space and urban nature
- social gathering spaces
- climate resilience
- repairing past harm and reconnecting communities divided by highway construction
- moving people efficiently and reducing congestion



Imagine what the corridor could **look like, feel like, and sound like** if it were designed for people instead of traffic.

Submission Details

To submit your vision, please complete the online submission form linked below.

<https://forms.gle/ddJbSSqpCk9nBXCh6>

Submissions should include a brief description of your idea and an image, sketch, or other visual representation of your concept. Submissions may be hand-drawn, digitally created, or presented as diagrams, renderings, or short videos.

Participants may submit individually or as a group.

We welcome submissions from professional designers, students, classrooms, community groups, and anyone with a creative idea for the future of the I-77 corridor.

Selected submissions will be displayed publicly at the **Reimagining 77 exhibit on April 13, 2026**, at the [How the Cities We Build Shape How We Live](#) event at The Dubois Center at UNC Charlotte Center City, hosted by [The Charlotte Center](#) in partnership with Sustain Charlotte.

To help us plan the exhibit, participants will also be asked to indicate how they plan to display their work (e.g., printed board, digital display).

Submission deadline:

April 6, 2026 at 11:59 PM

Questions may be directed to:

operations@sustaincharlotte.org

A Final Thought

Daniel Burnham, one of the founders of modern urban planning, famously said:

SUSTAIN
CHARLOTTE



"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood, and probably themselves will not be realized."

This challenge invites Charlotte's visionaries to do exactly that.
