



Annual Impact Report



2024

YEAR IN REVIEW



Dear Community Partners and Stakeholders,

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with pride and gratitude for the tremendous progress we have made together in University City. Our collective efforts have not only strengthened our community but have also set the stage for a brighter, more prosperous future.

Our focus on **Economic Development** has led to significant achievements in land development, sustainability, and transportation. We have transformed vacant areas into welcoming gateways, initiated key projects like the Lake Area Revisioning and JW Clay Streetscaping, and advanced critical infrastructure improvements. Our dedication to sustainability is evident through our partnerships with local leaders and developers, ensuring that greenspace and environmental consciousness remain at the forefront of our growth.

The **Clean and Safe Program** has made remarkable strides in enhancing the safety and aesthetics of our community. From addressing **265 code violations** and removing over 1,500 illegal yard signs to installing license plate reading cameras, our efforts have fostered a secure and well-maintained environment that attracts residents, visitors, and investors alike.

Our **Small Business Initiative** has been a cornerstone of our economic development strategy, supporting 60 local businesses with direct and in-direct support totaling over \$105,505.57 and providing invaluable marketing support. We have celebrated our educators, honored our law enforcement, and showcased local businesses through innovative partnerships and engaging events. Our collaboration with podcast luminary Elzie D. Flenard, III, and the success of our Small Business Networking Bash highlight our commitment to promoting local enterprise and community spirit.

In the realm of **Marketing, Communications, and Events**, we executed numerous community events, including the Niner Nation Block Party, the UC Lights Fest Winter Celebration, and the Charlotte Kids Fest, which drew over 9,000 participants. Our marketing efforts have reached new heights, with our e-newsletter achieving an impressive 40.4% open rate and significant media coverage for our signature events. These efforts have not only increased our visibility but have also reinforced our role as a vibrant hub for community activities.

As we look ahead, we are excited about the possibilities that lie before us. With your continued support, we can build on these successes and drive further positive change in University City. Together, we are creating a thriving, dynamic community that is a beacon of opportunity and innovation.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our shared vision.

Warm regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K Stanley'.

KEITH STANLEY
PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY CITY PARTNERS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart E. Parks'.

STUART PARKS
CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
UNIVERSITY CITY PARTNERS

Economic Development

In University City, we are dedicated to fostering a vibrant and sustainable community through strategic economic development initiatives. Our efforts encompass improving walkability, mobility, and transportation, advancing land development, and prioritizing sustainability and environmental consciousness. By collaborating with public and private partners, we aim to create a thriving urban environment that supports local businesses, attracts quality tenants, and enhances the quality of life for all residents. Our achievements this year reflect our commitment to these goals and lay the groundwork for a prosperous future in University City.



Community Walkability, Mobility, and Transportation

Our commitment to enhancing walkability and mobility in University City is driven by our public partnerships. We have forged strong relationships with the Charlotte Department of Transportation and North Carolina Department of Transportation to strategically align our goals for the area.

Pedestrian Connections:

Improving pedestrian pathways to ensure safe and convenient access.

Expanded Greenways:

Developing greenway networks to connect communities and promote outdoor activities.

Enhanced Lynx Blue Line Experience:

Enhancing the transit experience along the Lynx Blue Line to boost accessibility and convenience.

Placemaking Along Pedestrian Walkways:

Creating inviting and engaging spaces along walkways to enrich the pedestrian experience.



Greenways



Transit

Land Development Focus

Emerging from the pandemic, University City is setting new real estate goals. Our focus is on leveraging our assets and collaborating with area stakeholders

Collaboration with UNC Charlotte: Partnering with our largest area stakeholder, UNC Charlotte, to drive development initiatives.

Identifying Assets for Value Add Opportunities: Pinpointing assets to enhance their utility and appeal.

Working with Stakeholders to Find Great Tenants: Engaging with University City property owners to bring quality businesses to the area.

Monitoring Development Projects: Analyze and track ongoing and upcoming development projects.

Assimilating New Commercial Stakeholders:
Welcoming our area's newest businesses and making sure they have what they need to succeed.



Sustainability and Environmental Consciousness

As University City continues to grow, we are committed to protecting and promoting the natural environment. Greenspace is a critical component of urban planning, and we strive to implement best practices while envisioning the future of the area.

Partnering with Sustainability Leaders: Building strategies for cleaner, healthier, environmentally friendly

Promoting Trails, Bike Lanes, and Public Transportation: Collaborating with private and public organization to expand University City's walkability and mobility.

Building Greenspace into Projects: Working with developers to incorporate parks, save trees, and provide natural spaces for the community.

Collaborating with UNCC Researchers: Partnering with UNCC researchers to address environmental issues and develop sustainable solutions.

Economic And Land Development



ACHIEVEMENTS

HWY 29/49 Triangle Landscaping Project: Transformed previously vacant NCDOT right-of-way into a gateway to University City.

Lake Area Revisioning Project: Initiated planning for the Lake Area Revisioning project, including strategies for management and a SketchPak for the vision plan.

Unified Development Ordinance Advisory Board: Participated in the advisory board to provide input on the implementation of the new UDO.

MSD Boundary Realignment: Worked with Mecklenburg County to resolve mapping issues affecting properties in the MSD.

University Research Park Design Review Board: Reestablished the board and presented a vision plan for upcoming developments.

Zoning Changes to UDO: Collaborated with stakeholders such as UNCC and Crescent to improve marketability through pivotal zoning changes.

Irrigation and Landscaping Projects: Initiated major irrigation improvement and landscaping projects at key entrances of University City.

University City Development Review Committee: Convened meetings to provide developers with feedback on upcoming projects.

Community Zoning Forum: Held a forum with planning commissioners to inform residents and business owners about involvement in planning processes.

W.T. Harris Blvd Lighting Project: Partnered with CDOT and NCDOT on a major streetlighting project, the largest undertaken by NCDOT.

I-85 Bridge Project: Collaborated with CDOT on the upcoming bridge project.

JW Clay Streetscaping Project: Secured approval for the streetscaping project, with construction starting this year. Scheduled completion in 2028.

Greenway System Strategies: Partnered with Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec and Sustain Charlotte to finalize the proposed Greenway system in University City.

University City Public Library: Broke ground on the new library, slated to open in early 2025.



Clean and Safe Program



Code Enforcement and Landscaping

University City Partners continues to invest resources to change perceptions of our community and ensure residents, employees, and visitors see a well-maintained community that is ripe for investment.

These efforts provide a platform for property owners to take ownership of their own frontages, contributing to the collective goal of moving University City in the right direction.

Flock Safety

University City Partners collaborated with several property owners to enhance community safety by installing **9 license plate reading (LPR) cameras**. These solar-powered units passively image vehicles passing by, with a direct feed offered exclusively to CMPD. Complementing similar units used by NCDOT on state roads, these cameras

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Accomplishments:

- **Reported 265 Code Violations:**
Ensuring compliance with community standards and improving the overall appearance of our area.
- **Addressed 193 Abandoned Shopping Carts:** Removing eyesores and potential hazards from our streets.
- **Removed Over 1,500 Illegal Yard Signs:**
Keeping the right of way clear and visually appealing.
- **Addressed Truck Parking Issues:**
Initiated dialogue with the City of Charlotte leading to the installation of NO PARKING signs by NCDOT at the I-85 / Mallard Creek Church Road interchange.
- **Created a Clean and Safe Video:**
Developed a video to share with stakeholders and the community, highlighting our efforts and successes.
- **Developed an RFP for Maintenance:**
Created a request for proposals to address areas of the MSD not maintained by the City/State. Selected Phoenix Landscaping, a locally owned and operated, as the final contractor. Teams conduct trash collection, mowing, trimming trees and shrubs, and edging and cleaning curb areas several times a week. This initiative supports CDOT and NCDOT in maintaining right of ways and ensures litter is removed from problem areas weekly.
- **Invested Over 300 Hours on the Clean Streets Project:** Demonstrating our commitment through substantial time and effort to enhance the cleanliness and appeal of our community.

strategically triangulate areas to capture nearly every vehicle in the MSD operating between Tryon Street and I-85.

Our Clean and Safe Program reflects our dedication to creating a secure and visually appealing environment in University City. By addressing code enforcement issues, maintaining public spaces, and enhancing security through advanced technology, we are fostering a community that is both welcoming and safe for all who live, work, and visit here.



Small Business Initiative



200
local
businesses



**media
exposure**

University City



Video Podcast

The Small Business Initiative (SBI) has provided financial support and fostered a connected small business community.

Spotlighted local businesses through media engagement and events, enhancing visibility in University City.

Since the program's launch, nearly 200 businesses received marketing, promotions, social media, videography, photography, PR, and website design services.

Businesses were featured in the UCP newsletter, on social media, and on platforms like WCNC and PRIDE magazine.

Provided gift card promotions, partnered with local vendors for t-shirts, signage, and marketing materials to help businesses thrive.

Nine businesses were featured on the University City Podcast, available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and online.

Close to 80% of SBI funding has been deployed, with plans to invest the remaining resources by year-end.

Collected 120 surveys and grew the database by over 17,000 contacts, presenting nearly 9,000 businesses in the Charlotte region.

Of these, 1,200 businesses are in the University City trade area, and over 400 are within the Municipal Service District boundaries.

Outreach efforts involved students from UNC Charlotte and Central Piedmont Community College, keeping connections strong with the local business community.



Our marketing, communications, and events efforts have been instrumental in fostering community engagement and enhancing the visibility of University City. Through strategic partnerships, like our collaboration with local Chick-fil-A restaurants, and the execution of major community events, we have strengthened our connections with residents and local businesses alike. Our consistent and relevant communications, amplified by effective use of analytics and editorial planning, have ensured that our initiatives not only reach but resonate with our audience.

Marketing, Communications, and Events

The success of our e-newsletter, with an open rate nearly double the industry average, underscores our commitment to delivering valuable and engaging content. By designing intuitive landing pages and maintaining a robust editorial calendar, we've streamlined our communication processes, making it easier for everyone involved to stay informed and engaged.

Our efforts in promoting signature events and securing media coverage have not only increased our visibility but also highlighted the vital role of small businesses and community initiatives in University City. The significant rise in media coverage and the substantial Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) and Estimated Views (EV) metrics are a testament to the impactful work being done.

We look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year, continuing to create memorable events and powerful communications that bring our community together and celebrate the vibrant spirit of University City.

EVENTS

Community Events Executed:

- Niner Nation Block Party (UNC Charlotte Homecoming)
 - Inaugural UC Lights Fest Winter Celebration and Juneteenth Art Festival
 - Charlotte Kids Fest with over 9,000 participants
 - Charlotte's New Year's Day 5K with over 400 runners
 - 26 Saturdays of University City Farmers Market
-

Partnership with Chick-fil-A:

- Adopted 44 CMPD University City division officers for National Police Week in collaboration with local Chick-fil-A restaurants.
-

Newsletter Reach:

- **Achieved over 5,000 monthly newsletter subscribers.**
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ANALYTICS

E-Newsletter Performance:

- Managed e-newsletter content, distribution, and analytics, achieving a **40.4% open rate**, significantly above the 21.5% industry average.

Media Coverage and Value:

2024 Fiscal Year Performance:

- Increased our Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) and Estimated Views (EV) by a collective 113.96% compared to the previous year.
- Secured notable media placements for UCP's signature events, highlighted by a feature in Axios' guide for Black Owned Businesses with an AVE of \$9,798 and EV of 26,480.

Vision Plan Coverage:

- Focused PR efforts on components of the Vision Plan, including the \$237K Small Business Grant, UCP's 20th Anniversary, and Development Updates, which resulted in 955,040 EVs and a total AVE of \$353,360.

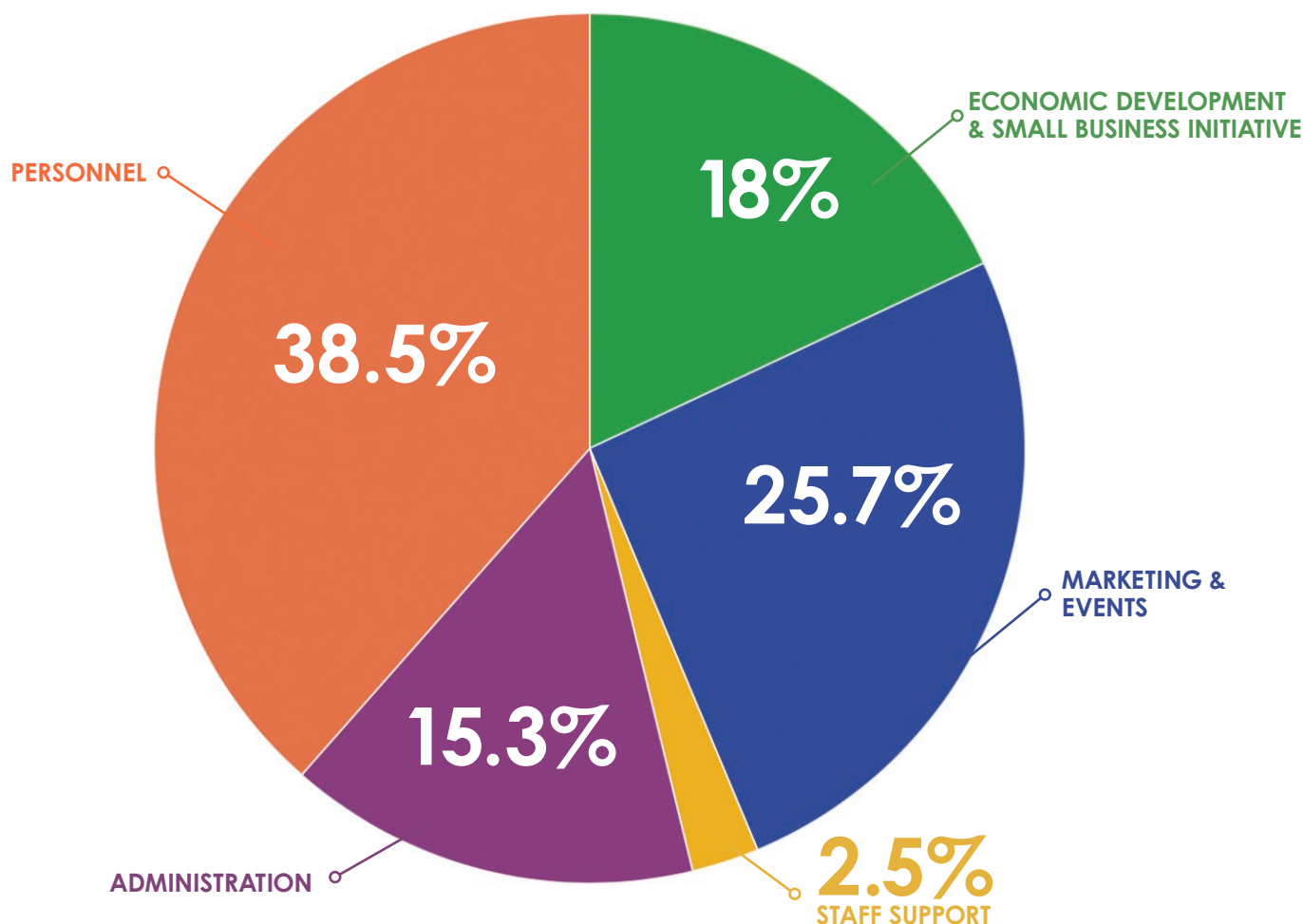
Signature Events Promotion:

- Successfully promoted and gained coverage for events including the Farmer's Market, UCity Lights, NYD5K, CLT Kids Fest, and Juneteenth Art Festival.

Media Coverage Increase:

- Compared to the previous calendar year, we secured 13.48% more pieces of media coverage in the '23 -'24 fiscal year.

Strategies Driving the Vision



We proudly highlight how University City Partners effectively utilizes its annual funding to advance our 10 strategic objectives, each of which plays a crucial role in shaping the University City community. Remarkably, nearly 70% of our budget is dedicated to funding various programs and activities aimed at bolstering the vitality and development of University City.

The achievements of the past year underscore the unwavering dedication of our staff, the resilience of our board, and the wholehearted commitment of our community leaders. As we move forward, University City remains steadfast in its commitment to responsibly manage our resources, seeking opportunities for growth through strategic partnerships and the ongoing economic development of our region.



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The Arden Group



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Treasurer
Atrium Health University



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Planning & Development
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Leslie Johnson
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Alex Romero
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Joyce Tompkins
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Our Team

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