

OPEN SPACE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



WHAT IS OPEN SPACE?

Open space is an integral component of Place Types and is essential for the advancement of the Comprehensive Plan goals and creating a more equitable Charlotte. Open space can include private open space, public open space, greenways, green infrastructure, and preservation areas.

HOW IS OPEN SPACE MEASURED?

While Open Space is essential in all Place Types, the Community Area Plans (CAPs) include an assessment of existing open spaces and access in recommended mixed use geographies:



Innovation Mixed Use



Community Activity Centers



Neighborhood Centers



Regional Activity Centers

The CAP Open Space assessment reviewed how well the mixed use geographies align with Charlotte's aspirations for accessible open spaces by looking at three key elements, shown in the table to the right.

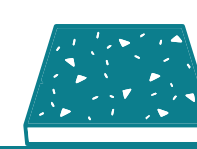
Mixed use geographies received one of the following scores: **Aligned**, **Somewhat Aligned**, or **Not Aligned**. Those with "Not Aligned" or "Somewhat Aligned" scores should be prioritized for new investment and efforts related to access and quality of open spaces.

OPEN SPACE ASPIRATIONAL ELEMENTS				
Charlotte's Open Space aspirations aim to advance quality open spaces through three key elements:				
Mixed-Use Geographies:	Access	Diversity		Tree Canopy
		Parks & Greenways	Public Plazas & Courtyards	
Neighborhood Center (NC)	Public open space should be accessible within a 10-minute walk (roughly half a mile) from any point within a mixed-use place. Public open space may include parks, greenways, recreation facilities, plazas, courtyards, or preservation areas.	<p>Mixed-Use places should include a moderate diversity of passive and active open spaces. Passive and active open spaces may include small parks, natural open spaces, greenways, recreation facilities, plazas, patios, and courtyards that may include landscaping.</p> <p>These places should also have a highly amenitized public realm, which is defined as the public space between buildings and the street. A high quality amenitized public realm may include wide sidewalks, seating, plantings, shade, and lighting.</p> <p>Community & Regional Activity Centers should also include open spaces that are developed with trails, amenities, facilities, art, or other investments that add to the space's natural benefits.</p>		In Mixed-Use places, trees are primarily provided by street trees, along pedestrian paths, and onsite.
Community Activity Center (CAC)				Tree canopy coverage is 25% - 35%
Regional Activity Center (RAC)				Tree canopy coverage is 20% - 30%
Innovation Mixed Use (IMU)				Tree canopy coverage is 15% - 25%
				Tree canopy coverage is 35% - 40%



Tree Canopy

Trees provide shade, help cool surrounding air, and reduce air pollution. A deficient tree canopy increases a community's exposure to heat and air pollution.



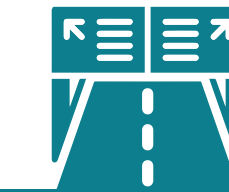
Impervious Surface

Hard surfaces that do not allow water to soak into the ground, such as asphalt and concrete, increase rates of flooding, pollute rainwater runoff, and increase urban heat.



Proximity to Heavy Industrial

The processing and manufacturing of products from extracted or raw materials or the storage/distribution of hazardous materials can expose a community within proximity to air, water, or noise pollutants.



Proximity to Transportation Infrastructure

Road surfaces (see impervious surface) and vehicle emissions can expose a community within proximity to air and noise pollutants.



Floodplains

Flood-prone areas can expose a community to flood risks which are occurring more frequently due to climate change.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

Charlotte's vision to be a more equitable city for all requires mitigation of environmental impacts across the city, especially in areas where populations are vulnerable to displacement. Environmental Justice (EJ) seeks to minimize effects of environmental impacts or hazards that arise from geographic or procedural inequities.

HOW IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEASURED?

The measures included within the Environmental Justice assessment focus on aspects of the built environment. The impact of these measures on Environmental Justice are outlined to the right.

See Community Area Plans for an assessment of EJ for each CAP geography