



# CITY OF CHARLESTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

May 18, 2023 – 3:00 PM

Conference Call: 1-929-205-6099  
Access Code: 759694505

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- Invocation

- a. **Public Participation**

**Any person who speaks at a Community Development meeting shall conduct himself or herself in a manner appropriate to the decorum of the meeting and is asked to observe Section 2-28 (a) of the Code of the City of Charleston, Rules of Decorum. Violation of the Rules of Decorum may result in losing the opportunity to speak before the Committee and/or removal from the meeting.**

Citizens may participate virtually by telephone or leave comments for the Committee by completing the form at <http://innovate.charleston-sc.gov/comments/>. If requesting to speak by telephone, please provide your name and telephone number. **Requests to speak at the meeting and comments must be received by 12:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 17th.**

- b. **Approval of Minutes**

1. April 24, 2023

- c. **Old Business**

- d. **New Business**

1. Proposal for the African American Renaissance District of Charleston within the Union Pier Redevelopment Master Plan-Presentation by Bernie Mazyck, President & CEO, South Carolina Association for Community Economic Development (SCACED)

2. Boards and Commissions Appointment and Reappointment Submission and Recommendation Process-Presentation by Planning, Preservation, and Sustainability staff
3. Video of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing-Presentation by Otha Meadows, CEO, Charleston Area Urban League

e. **Miscellaneous Business**

f. **Adjournment**

JENNIFER B. COOK  
CLERK OF COUNCIL

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, people who need alternative formats, ASL (American Sign Language) Interpretation or other accommodation please contact Janet Schumacher at (843) 577-1389 or email to [schumacherj@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:schumacherj@charleston-sc.gov) three business days prior to the meeting.

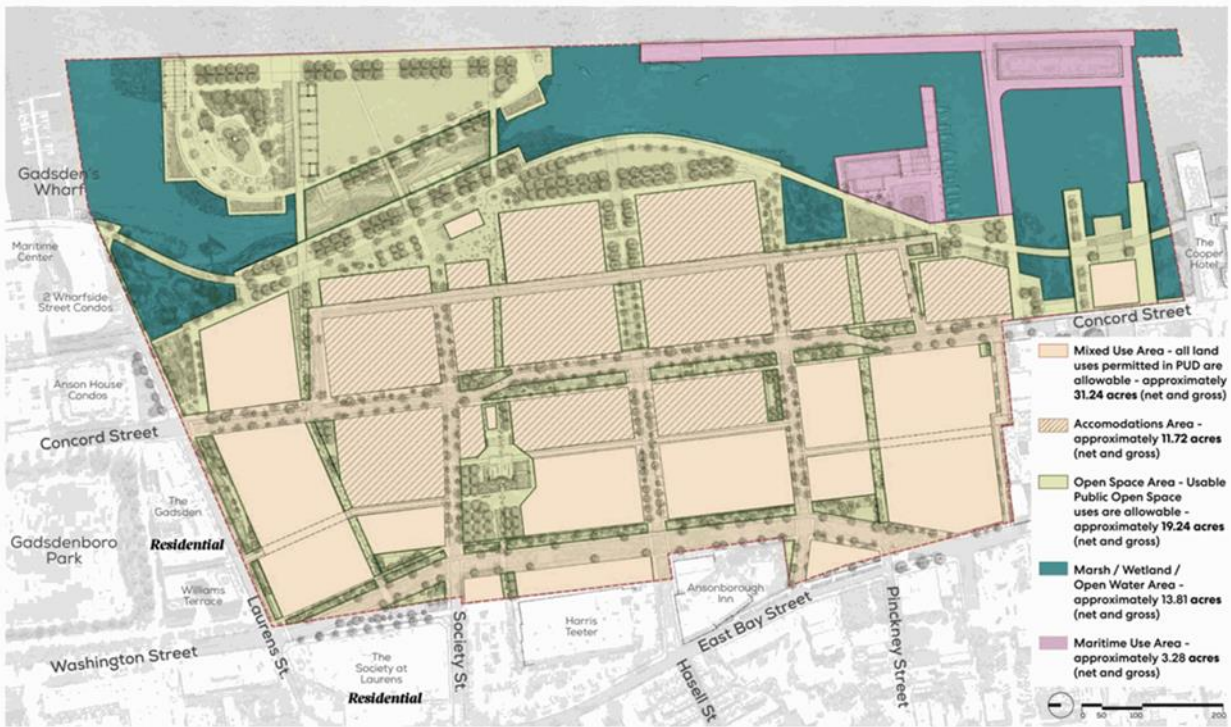


## A Case for The Renaissance District for Black Entrepreneurs in the Redevelopment Plans of Union Pier of Downtown Charleston

### **Overview**

With the thriving downtown economy of Charleston and the once in a generation opportunity of the redevelopment of the Union Pier, we propose and encourage Charleston to embrace and uplift the richness of the African American and Gullah culture indigenous to Charleston, by establishing a African American Renaissance District (The Renaissance District). We envision the Renaissance District to be a place where exceptional music, art, food, retail shops, events, and commerce all framed in the rich African American experience of Charleston, while honoring the resilience of the past, and celebrating the present and future generations of entrepreneurs. We also envision the Renaissance District to provide economic development opportunities to the City by locating businesses who bring commercial, retail and food products, crafts, clothing, music, performing arts, and other Gullah cultural offerings to the peninsula of Charleston that customers and visitors to Charleston and to the International African American Museum (IAAM) would seek out to purchase and support. The Union Pier Development's proximity to the International African American Museum (IAAM) is the perfect venue for celebrating the historic contributions of African Americans to the economic prosperity of Charleston, while providing a present-day opportunity to grow African American entrepreneurship on the Charleston Peninsula. The Renaissance District would extend the historical education of the IAAM into a real-time contemporary encounter with the authentic Gullah culture, through food, dance, art, music, drama, crafts, and storytelling that only Charleston can present. This will also allow these visitors to take a little bit of the Gullah culture (for most of them, their culture), back home with them.

The proposed Renaissance District within the Union Pier Redevelopment Plan would be a linear commercial area located in close proximity to the IAAM on Concord Street. The Renaissance District would comprise of a minimum 60,000 square feet of retail space within the 300,000 square feet of space designated for retail development within the Union Pier Redevelopment Master Plan. The Renaissance District could also include property owned by the City of Charleston adjacent to the Calhoun Street Garage on the corner of Calhoun and Concord Street. The Renaissance District retail space could serve as a hub for African American shops, restaurants, boutiques, gift shops, entertainment and music venues (Jazz), and artistic displays reserved to showcase the indigenous African American and Gullah Culture unique to Charleston. As with other significant attractions in Charleston, the Renaissance District will require intentionality and support. The Union Pier Redevelopment Plan provides a once in a generation opportunity to create a destination for African American commerce and prosperity. In addition to the master plan, City of Charleston-own property on the corner of Calhoun and Concord Street could help accelerate the develop and launch of space for businesses in the Renaissance District.



**A.4 Detailed Land Use Plan**  
January 30, 2023

**Master Plan for  
Union Pier**

**Perkins&Will**

### **Capitalizing on a Successful Model**

The Renaissance District will be modeled after the highly acclaimed 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine Historic District in Kansas City, MO. The 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine Historic District is the home of the Negro League Baseball Museum and the American Jazz Museum. These historic landmarks serve as the anchor institutions to the 18<sup>th</sup> & Vine African American Historic District. 18<sup>th</sup> & Vine historically served as the epicenter of African American life in Kansas City. Around this intersection, commercial, and entertainment activity blended with residential life, creating a completely self-sufficient community within the greater Kansas City area. Today, in addition to the Negro League Baseball Museum and the American Jazz Museum, 18<sup>th</sup> & Vine is the home of 6 cultural and entertainment attractions, 4 bars and restaurants, 3 ethnic services businesses, and one apartment building. The Kansas City Council has committed \$27 million to a multi-phase improvement plan for the 18<sup>th</sup> & Vine Historic District. Kansas City boasts 24.5 million visitors per year, and one of the main destinations is the 18<sup>th</sup> & Vine Historic District. With the addition of the IAAM to the City of Charleston's attractions, The Renaissance District could leverage the visitors to the IAAM and provide additional attraction to the City of Charleston.

### **Opportunity to Create a Unique Attraction for Charleston**

On June 27, 2023, the City of Charleston will open one of the most significant contributions to history and culture in the nation since the opening of the National Museum for African American Culture in Washington, DC. The International African American Museum (IAAM) will explore

cultures and knowledge systems retained and adapted by Africans in the Americas, and the diverse journeys and achievements of these individuals and their descendants in South Carolina, the United States, and throughout the African Diaspora. The IAAM, which sits at the site of Gadsden’s Wharf – one of the nation’s most prolific former slave trading ports – includes nine core exhibition galleries and a special exhibition gallery, as well as a “floating” gallery that weaves contemporary art throughout the museum. IAAM is also located 3 blocks east of the historic Ansonborough neighborhood, a once thriving African American community on the peninsula of Charleston. [https://www.postandcourier.com/news/last-black-homeowners-leave-charlestons-ansonborough-neighborhood/article\\_c90f72ba-09de-11ed-87ee-7b57db8b5de0.html#:~:text=By%20signing%20the%20closing%20papers,that%20once%20was%20predominantly%20Black](https://www.postandcourier.com/news/last-black-homeowners-leave-charlestons-ansonborough-neighborhood/article_c90f72ba-09de-11ed-87ee-7b57db8b5de0.html#:~:text=By%20signing%20the%20closing%20papers,that%20once%20was%20predominantly%20Black). The museum will open with more than 700 artifacts dating from 17th century to contemporary objects, alongside 1000 image and media collection pieces – all of which help connect the African American journey to its roots and connections to African and African Diaspora communities and cultures. The museum also houses the Center for Family History, a world-class genealogy and ancestry resource center, which began hosting genealogy classes and workshops in 2020.

As one leaves the IAAM building, what better way for visitors to Charleston and to the IAAM than to continue their African American and Gullah education, than to encounter in real time the food, the crafts, the dance, the art and the songs of the African American and Gullah culture that they just learned about in the IAAM than through the Renaissance District. The Renaissance District is designed to be a place where exceptional music, art, food, retail shops, events, and commerce all framed in the rich African American experience of Charleston, honoring the resilience of the past, and celebrating the present and future generations of entrepreneurs. A coalition of supporting organizations propose a section of the Union Pier Redevelopment Plan include an area for the African American Renaissance District, modelled after similar attractions in Kansas City, MO (18th & Vine <https://www.18vinekc.com/>) and Atlanta, GA (Sweet Auburn Avenue <https://www.exploregeorgia.org/things-to-do/article/how-to-spend-a-day-in-atlantas-sweet-auburn-historic-district> and New Black Wallstreet <https://www.newblackwallstreetmarket.com/>)

### **A Case for African American Businesses**

The Brookings Institute confirmed the concept of a stronger African American business sector will grow the overall economy. In a December 31, 2020, a report titled, “To expand the economy, invest in Black businesses,” authors Andre M. Perry and Carl Romer was published and gives compelling data to show the positive impact on our economy if Black-owned Businesses reached parity with non-Black Businesses. For example, there are 124,004 Black businesses in the US, accounting for 2.2% of employer businesses. **If Black businesses accounted for 14.2% employer firms (equivalent to the Black population in the US), there would be 806,218 more Black businesses.**

Additionally, Black businesses bring in average revenues of \$1,031,021, compared to \$6,485,334 for non-Black businesses. **If Black businesses increased their average revenue to the level of non-Black businesses, it would increase total revenue in Black businesses by \$676,356,621,618.**

One final data point from this report states that Black businesses create an average of 10 jobs per firm, compared to 23 for non-Black businesses. **If the average employees per Black business increased to 23, it would create approximately 1.6 million jobs (1,583,268).**

These are impressive data points that speak to the potential impact to the US economy if there were intentional efforts underway in the US to increase the number and success of Black businesses. Fortunately, one such effort is underway in South Carolina. The SC Association for Community Economic Development (SCACED), in partnership with US Small Business Administration (SBA) and 8 nonprofit development organizations and financial institutions have launched the Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP). The program is designed to reduce barriers that underrepresented and underserved entrepreneurs often face in accessing the programs they need to recover, grow, or start their businesses.

CNPP utilizes a “hub and spoke” model to help small businesses, with a focus on those owned by veterans, women, and socially and economically disadvantaged individuals - including in rural and urban communities. *Since the program began in 2022, 320 minority entrepreneurs have been served state-wide with over 1,970 counseling hours, 102 training hours, resulting in minority and women entrepreneurs accessing over \$18 million in capital.* A key approach to addressing the success of minority-owned businesses is developing a strong entrepreneurship ecosystem in communities of color.

### **SCACED as Ecosystem Builder**

According to the Kauffman Foundation, “the essence of an entrepreneurial ecosystem is it is made up of people and a culture of trust and collaboration that allows entrepreneurs to interact successfully without barriers. SCACED in partnership with the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce and a host of local resource partners have formed the Lowcountry Minority Business Partnership. The vision of LMBP is to create an equitable entrepreneurial eco-system in the Lowcountry. LMBP aims to connect, empower, and inspire a network of minority entrepreneurs, with an intentional focus on supporting new and existing businesses in the Lowcountry throughout all stages of their lifecycle. The over-arching goal of LMBP is to grow a thriving minority (Black) business sector in the Lowcountry of South Carolina, with an emphasis on the City of Charleston.

### **Present Ecosystem Serving Entrepreneurs of Color in the Lowcountry**

- City of Charleston Office of Minority Business Enterprise
- Charleston Metro Chamber Minority Business Accelerator Program
- SCACED Community Navigator Pilot Program
  - o CLIMB Fund
  - o SC Community Loan Fund
  - o Increasing Hope
- SC Community Capital Alliance
- Lowcountry Local First
- Strategic Thinking Group
- HiMark Capital
- Coastal Community Foundation

**NOTES:** HiMark Capital is committing \$500,000 in loan capital to support African American entrepreneurs who will decide to locate in the proposed Renaissance District.

As of the date of this proposal, another \$500,000 in loan capital may be provided to support African American entrepreneurs in the Lowcountry by a private corporation.