



**Charlotte,
NORTH CAROLINA**

AN ASSESSMENT OF PAST AND PRESENT URBAN TREE CANOPY

In Charlotte, the urban forest isn't just about scenic views and shaded spaces; it actively contributes to the environment and economy while fostering a tight-knit community spirit among residents and visitors. This metropolitan area boasts an established urban forest with over 94,161 acres of canopy within the current city boundary. Charlotte's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) area adds approximately 39,791 to the City's area and serves multiple purposes for the municipality such as authority to enforce zoning and development ordinances. This study found that this extension of the City was heavily forested and had 63% of its land area covered with tree urban tree canopy (UTC) in 2022. Without the ETJ the City has a canopy cover of 47%; however, after averaging the canopy with the ETJ the combined canopy cover increases to 50%

The City's parkland and canopied greenways are a testament to Charlotte's commitment to its essential urban forest. Through strategic planning efforts, educational outreach programs, and continued community collaboration with organizations like TreesCharlotte, Charlotte can use the data from this assessment to help plan the creation of new urban green spaces and reach its goal of 50% canopy cover by 2050.

This assessment examined the distribution of canopy both past (2018) and present (2022) across Charlotte's current city boundary, its ETJ, city council districts, and other geographic scales. The results, based on the most recently available source aerial imagery from the USDA's National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) collected in June of 2022, will help Charlotte revise existing, and develop new strategies to protect and expand its tree canopy resource.

-0.5%
Canopy Change (2018-2022)

47%
2022 Tree Canopy Cover

29%
Impervious Surfaces

18%
Plantable Space

CITYWIDE CANOPY DISTRIBUTION



91% Overhanging
Pervious Surfaces

9% Overhanging
Impervious Surfaces



HOW DOES CHARLOTTE'S CANOPY COMPARE TO MECKLENBURG COUNTY?



52% UTC Canopy
20% Plantable Space
+0.1% Canopy Gain



2018



2022

Figure 1. Tree canopy losses from 2018 to 2022 due to residential development between the intersection of Grier Rd and E W.T. Harris Blvd.