



Project Introduction



A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity

Despite rapid growth of the Hispanic/Latino population of Mecklenburg County, this fast-growing area lacks a centralized expression of this multi-cultural identity. **That will soon change.**

Spark Centro (EIN: 85-4310103) is newly-branded 501c3 organization that is purchasing property in the Albemarle Corridor and renovating a building to serve as a headquarters for Latino economic development.

Features of **Spark Centro** include:

- Hub for entrepreneurship and small business incubation
- Retail/commerce entry-point as showcase of local small businesses
- Event space for large-scale convening including networking events & job fairs
- Workforce development laboratories for pilot and demonstration projects

Spark Centro aims to be a destination for programs from both resident nonprofits and partners throughout the community.

Spark Centro will leverage trust with residents to build a robust pipeline of participants for programs housed at the Center.



Location: 8805 E. WT Harris Blvd
Charlotte, NC 28227

Site Size: 8.882 acres

Facility: 40,000+ sq. ft.
Adaptive Reuse +
Building Expansion
Additional Outparcels

Goal: **\$20 million to cover:**
- Site Purchase
- Construction
- Professional Services
- Operating Reserve

From 2010-2019 the Hispanic/Latino population of Charlotte grew

36%

TWICE AS FAST

as the overall population (15.4%)

Charlotte is the

FASTEST GROWING

Hispanic/Latino market in the country

**NC is now called the
"Newcomer Gateway State"**



Charlotte has more than

8,000

Hispanic/Latino-owned businesses

Mecklenburg County is Diversifying

Growing Hispanic/Latino Community an Opportunity

Spark Centro represents an opportunity to make significant headway on a number of trendlines impacting business in our region:



Overcoming the Looming Workforce Shortage

Recruiting new and underemployed talent is a business imperative for companies in the Charlotte region. Spark Centro will be a destination for local workforce development.



Diversifying Supply Chains Locally

Entrepreneurship builds generational wealth, and Spark Centro will serve as an incubator and accelerator for diverse businesses aiming to achieve the American dream.



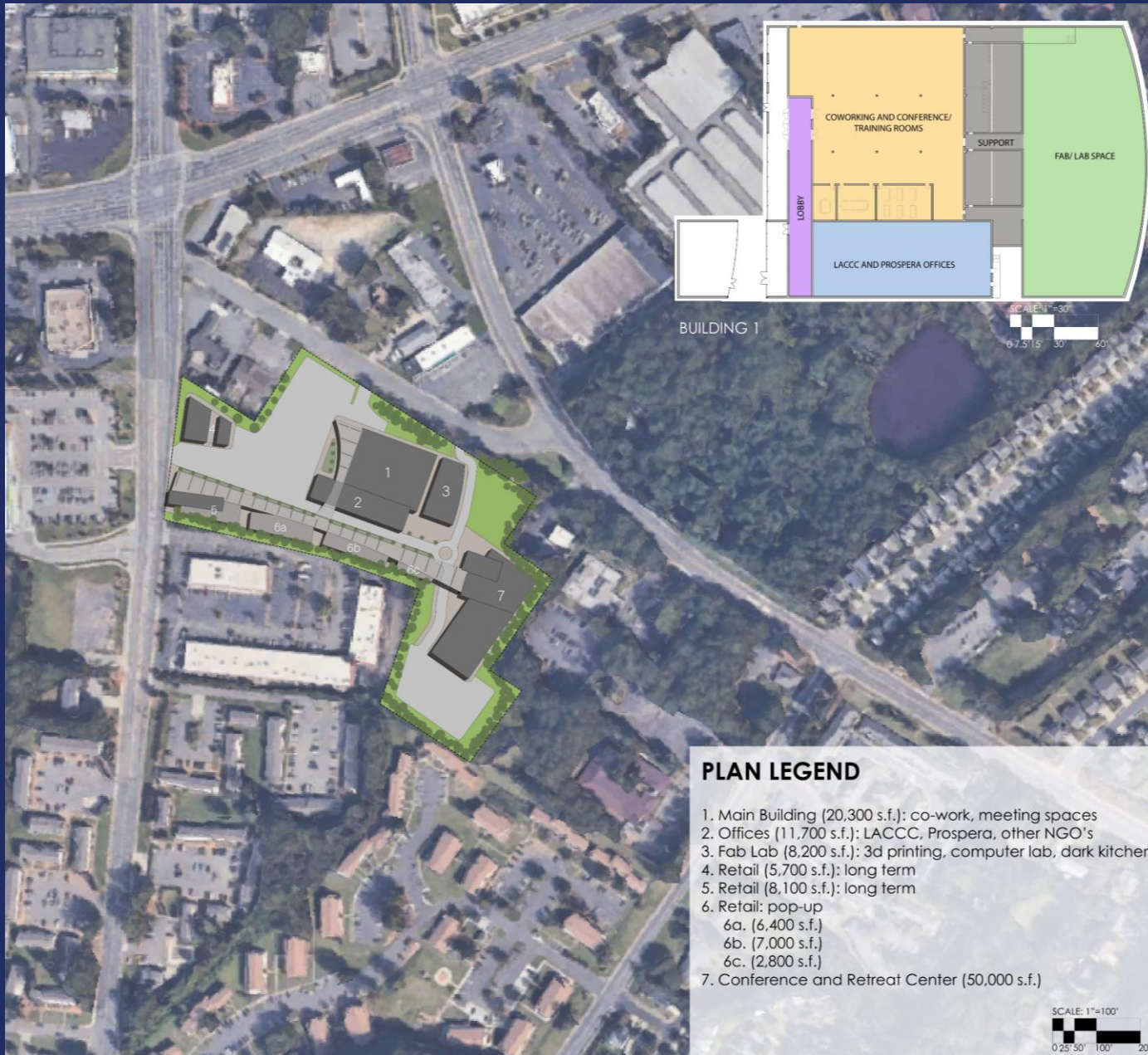
Attracting Companies from Latin America

Spark Centro will be a beacon to Latin American companies seeking a robust, culturally-aligned workforce and a welcoming business-focused community.



Building an Activation Hub for Hispanic/Latino Employee Resource Groups

Celebrating diversity, equity and inclusion is a central goal for Spark Centro. The site will be a destination for local employee groups to be activated and engaged.



Spark Centro has recently closed on **8805 E. WT Harris Blvd**, purchasing a nearly 9-acre site with tremendous potential for growth and expansion in the years to come. The primary building (above) is well-positioned to serve as the headquarters for Spark Centro. In total, the new Spark Centro facility will be 40,000+ sq. ft.

In addition, the J-shaped lot includes ample acreage for the future development to include retail and a potential conference and retreat center.

This project includes plans for the development of two outparcels on the property – one as a restaurant and the other as pop-up retail – with the goal of making this site a destination for residents and employees from across Mecklenburg County.



Project Introduction



Campaign Goal: \$20 million

Constructing Hispanic/Latino Economic Opportunity



The Spark Centro capital campaign has a goal of \$20 million to cover the costs of purchasing the property, upfitting the 40,000+ sq. ft. facility and launching it as an institution. Additional expenses include the development of an endowment and operating reserve to support the new facility and related professional services expenses. The project team for Spark Centro includes:

- F&D/Integra – Latino-managed architecture firm in Charlotte
- Marand Builders – Latino-owned builder based in Charlotte
- Next Stage – Project & Campaign Counsel based in Charlotte

Estimated Expenses

Property Purchase	\$ 5,000,000
Construction – Office Space & Adaptive Reuse	\$ 7,070,700
Construction – Outparcels	\$ 2,800,000
Site Amenities	\$ 1,000,000
Architectural Design & Field Studies	\$ 1,029,300
Operating Reserve	\$ 1,500,000
Transition Costs	\$ 850,000
Campaign & Engagement	\$ 500,000
Upfit	\$ 250,000
TOTAL:	\$20,000,000

Inside Spark Centro

Entrepreneurship Hub

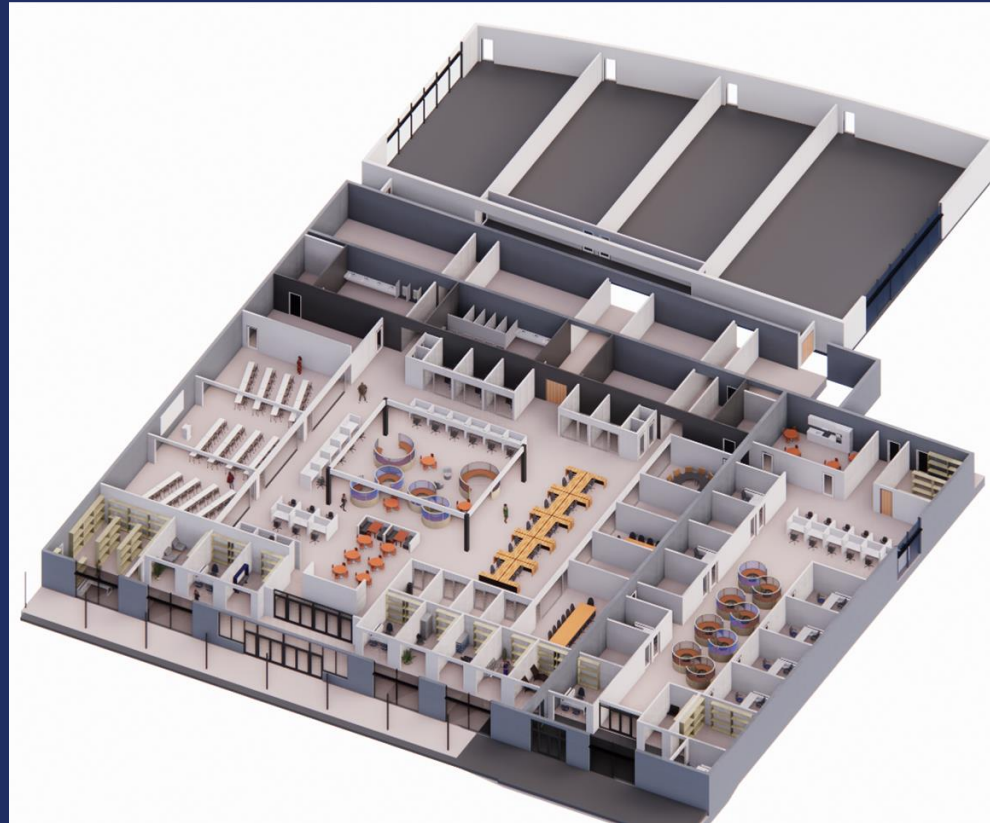
Spark Centro will be the go-to destination of Hispanic/Latino entrepreneurs seeking a supportive ecosystem. Organizational partners will power programming including coaching and workshops.

Spark Centro Convening Hall

A large space for engagement and recruitment is a missing ingredient for local employers. This convening hall will be a destination for job fairs and employee training.

Shop La Plaza Pop-Up Marketplace

An extension of the popular online marketplace for small business start-ups, this pop-up space will host a rotating spotlight on local entrepreneurship with nearby seating, creating a social destination



Center for Healthcare Workforce

This space will highlight the social determinants of health and will feature health care workforce programming in partnership with local employers.

Center for STEM Workforce Development

Spark Centro will be focused on 'what's next' for the business community, partnering to make tech engagement a key feature.

Skilled Trades Connection Center

With a local need for workforce in the trades, Spark Centro will partner with employers to grow the pipeline and highlight career paths.

Center for Generational Wealth Building

Two-gen engagement is the focus of the 'cradle-to-career' focus on family wealth-building.



Center for Generational Wealth Building

Helping Latino Families Achieve the American Dream

Building generational wealth for Latino families in the Charlotte region involves a combination of financial strategies, education and community engagement. At Spark Centro, embarking on and staying on this journey will be the primary focus of the **Center for Generational Wealth Building**, a dedicated space for programming focused on:

- Personal Finance Education
- Homeownership & Real Estate
- Entrepreneurship
- Education & Skill Development
- Financial Planning & Investing
- Insurance & Estate Planning



The Center will be activated with programming presented by resident nonprofits (e.g. Latin American Chamber of Commerce, Prospera) as well as partner institutions throughout the community. Spark Centro aims to be a priority destination for these service providers, motivated to bring their programming to the facility to tap in to the pipeline of constituents the facility recruits.

Spark Centro is working to be a **trusted site** in the Albemarle Corridor, with outreach conducted to area neighborhoods to ensure there is a strong feeling of ownership and belonging – critical as this is a population that is typically less trusting of systems.



Skilled Trades Connection Center

Bridging the Gap & Changing Lives

According to a number of workforce studies, the skilled trades industry is proving to be one of the hardest hit by worker scarcity. The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting shifts led to a skilled labor shortage that companies are still struggling to address.

In the Charlotte region, this is a particular challenge. An aging workforce, with many skilled trade professionals nearing retirement age, is making it difficult to keep up with demand as more people move to the region.

The potential of unemployed and underemployed Latinos is not only filling this gap, but bringing bilingual capability into an industry where communication with diverse clients is essential.

Spark Centro's **Skilled Trades Connection Center** is focused on bridging the gap between companies with workforce needs and Latino applicants eager to engage. As a trusted site, Spark Centro will create new inroads to building connection and ultimately economic mobility.

Through partner and sponsor-led workshops, training, equipment demonstration and career fairs, Spark Centro will activate its new Skilled Trades Connection Center and support a new talent pipeline for Charlotte-area industries.



Center for STEM Workforce Development

Upskilling Workers for the Jobs of Tomorrow... Today.

There is a recognized gap in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) workforce in the United States. The demand for skilled professionals in these fields is high, and there is concern about an insufficient number of qualified individuals to fill available positions.

Several factors contribute to this STEM workforce gap, including disparities in the quality of education for marginalized populations and a general lack of diversity and inclusion in these fields. With a fast-moving and ever-changing technology landscape, increased resources are needed to assure the human resources needed to keep pace with global competition.

Spark Centro's **Center of STEM Workforce Development** is focused on bridging the gap between companies with workforce needs and diverse learners and applicants eager to engage. As a trusted site, Spark Centro will create new inroads to building connection and ultimately economic mobility.

Through partner and sponsor-led workshops, training, equipment demonstration and career fairs, Spark Centro will activate its new Center of STEM Workforce Development and support a new talent pipeline for Charlotte-area industries.

Albemarle Corridor Outreach

Engaging Residents & Business Owners

Critical to the value proposition of Spark Centro is its role as a “trusted site” for residents and business owners in the Albemarle Corridor. It is essential that when Spark Centro opens its doors, people located in the area feel a sense of buy-in and ownership. Engagement with individuals in the corridor is also a requirement of public funding from Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte.

Throughout 2024 and 2025, community engagement efforts will seek to build a database of individuals and community assets, and work with organizations and businesses in the corridor to source feedback and establish trust. Key activities include:

- Neighborhood Canvassing – Boots on the ground engagement will establish visibility and an demonstrate authentic approach.
- Gatekeeper Engagement – Key organizations and businesses in the corridor will be opportunities to increase awareness and recruit participation in events and activities.
- Survey Deployment – An electronic and paper survey will be deployed to secure insights and invite further learning.
- Town Halls and Charettes – Events will allow for sharing information and securing feedback on facility design.

Ten Adjacent Neighborhoods

Priority outreach will be conducted to residents and businesses in 10 nearby neighborhoods (called micro-geographies) including:

- Easthaven
- Four Seasons
- Hickory Ridge
- Idlewild Farms
- Lake Forest
- Marlwood Acres



Data suggests this is an area ripe for economic mobility services:

Race/Ethnicity: 39% Black, 32% Latino, 16% White, 9% Asian, 4% Other
Education Level: 78.7% High School Diploma, 19% Bachelor's Degree
HS Graduation Level: 80.4% compared to 86.6% for the County
Household Income: \$43,588 compared to \$73,124 for the County
Employment: 94.8% compared to 95.2% for the County
Home Ownership: 40.4% compared to 56.4% for the County
Public Health Insurance: 28.2% compared to 14.8% for the County

Importantly, the employment rate coupled with household income suggests residents in this area are under-employed and skills training would help prepare them for higher-paying jobs.

Request for In-Kind Material Donations

It will take many committed people and institutions to make Spark Centro a reality. That includes material suppliers who see the win-win-win potential of a workforce development and entrepreneurship hub as an engine that can power the regional builder community. In-kind material donors will be prominently recognized at the facility.



Spark Centro is working with F&D/Integra, a Charlotte-based Latino-owned architecture firm, to develop the design for Spark Centro. The ambitious, mixed-use project consist of multiple building and outdoor amenities.

While no quantities can be determined at this time, the planned materials include:

Construction Materials

- Brick – various colors
- Stone veneer
- TPO roofing membrane
- Acoustical Ceiling Tile – various sizes and qualities
- Flooring – Carpet tile, vinyl tile (VCT & VCP), ceramic & quarry tile, terrazzo
- Storefront aluminum & glass systems
- Windows – full glass, louvers
- Doors – wood, steel, storefront

Fixed Furnishings

- Plumbing equipment – sinks, toilets, lavatories, drinking fountains, etc.
- Commercial kitchen equipment
- Solar PV panels & related equipment
- Interior LED lighting – high-bay, linear, downlights, troffers and sconces
- Furniture
- Modular office systems for workspaces, meeting/training rooms
- Lounge and bar seating

Mechanical and Electrical Equipment

- Exhaust fans
- Sheet metal ductwork
- Electrical panels, low voltage and line voltage wires, switches
- Wifi & networking equipment

Outdoor

- Concrete pavers
- Outdoor furniture – benches, racks
- Outdoor lighting (pole & building)
- Landscaping- trees, shrubs, ground