

For many years the number of people lacking fixed, regular, adequate housing has been on the rise in Charlotte and throughout the United States. As of May 2022 the number of documented unhoused individuals in Mecklenburg County was 3380, a 50% increase since June 2020 near the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. These numbers include not only chronically homeless individuals but also families displaced to motels, shelters, and the street through eviction, gentrification, and domestic abuse. Over 20% are children under 18 and 25% are adults over 55.\*

This semester we will be working with local non-profit [Hope Vibes](#) on the design of their prototype [HopeStead](#) community in Charlotte. This project will include site design, modular building designs, materials investigations, and engagement with currently unhoused potential residents and other organizations serving this community. We may also be involved in creating marketing and fundraising materials as well as generating preliminary budgets. The overall project goal is to begin construction in 10-12 months depending on funding availability.



[3D printed small homes](#) by New Story, Icon, Fuseproject.



[Accessory Dwelling Unit](#) by The BLOCK Project.

Because unhoused people come from a variety of backgrounds, live in multiple community types, and have a range of housing, employment, and service needs the HopeStead prototype will include housing units of various types and sizes as well as shared facilities. We will investigate a basic module that can be expanded and configured in different ways to be adaptable without adding cost. The prototype will be a kit-of-parts that can be applied in different locations throughout the U.S. and can also contribute to broader conversations on affordable housing.

All aspects of HopeStead will be anchored by a “four-legged stool” that includes the “three-legged stool” of traditional sustainability (Environment + Equity + Economics) with the addition of Engagement. We will apply this concept at multiple scales including full-scale details to test the constructability of different material concepts facilitating prefabrication, self-build, and modifiability. Potential additional partners include [Haven Design Build](#), [Alquist 3D](#), [Boxman Studios](#), and [Axhoj Enterprises](#).

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\* Statistics from and additional information available at the [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing & Homelessness Dashboard](https://mecklenburghousingdata.org/), <https://mecklenburghousingdata.org/>