



Childhood Home of

*Nina Simone*

Initial Opportunities Assessment

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**“I’ll tell you  
what freedom  
means to me.  
No fear.”  
—Nina Simone**

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# Executive Summary

Through creative deal making, the Nina Simone project seeks to cultivate opportunities for partnerships that can sustain the rich legacy and physical fabric of Nina Simone and her childhood home.

In order to achieve these goals, a financial network of outside funding streams, public funding, and private investment must be formed and properly managed.

Business opportunities to translate the legacy of Nina Simone into a financially sustainable vision include a foundation-centric artist residency program, a community-based art facility, and continued use as a residence.

### Preservation Paradigm

The successful execution of a sustainable business model for the Nina Simone Childhood Home has the potential to become a prototype for similar historic sites across the country. Scattered throughout the country lie designs defined by the beauty in simplicity rather than grandeur.

The stories that lie dormant in their walls tell the American story through an often overlooked lens, inspiring a new generation of activists to advocate for America's diverse historic places.

“It’s an  
artist’s  
duty to  
reflect  
the times  
in which  
we live.”





I knew then that I would dedicate myself to the struggle for black justice, freedom and equality under the law for as long as it took, until all our battles were won.

# Nina Simone's Legacy

Gifted. Revolutionary. Unapologetic. Nina Simone introduced to the world a sense of depth and darkness through her music that could only be rivaled by the richness of her soul and the toughness of her skin.

Born Eunice Kathleen Waymon to Kate and John Divine Waymon in Tryon, North Carolina in 1933, she was thrust into a racially-divided society defined by survival and Jim Crow. Her earliest memories revolve around the spiritual hymns that filled her deeply religious childhood home, subsequently leading to her affinity for playing the piano at the tender age of three or four. Labeled a child prodigy by the Tryon community, she cultivated her technique and discipline through the instruction of local piano instructor, Muriel Massinovitch, who encouraged her to achieve her dream of becoming the first black classical pianist.

With the financial assistance of the locally sponsored Eunice Waymon Fund, she completed her studies at the private and well-regarded Allen High School for Girls. After graduating as the class valedictorian, she enrolled in a summer program at Julliard with her eyes set on eventually attending the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. The Curtis Institute's ensuing rejection of her audition in the fall of 1950 proved to be a defining moment in her life in which the inequities of racism unabashedly reared its ugly head.

Eager to enroll in the Curtis Institute despite the setback, playing music became a matter of necessity to pay rent and ongoing music lessons. It was not until the summer of 1954 at Atlantic City's Midtown Bar and Grille - amongst the enticing mixture of cigar smoke, stale beer, and a corner piano - the legend of Nina Simone was born.

Simone's seamless blend of jazz, blues, folk, and classical influences in her music garnered her a growing audience. As her popularity grew, Simone began to surround herself with cultural figureheads of the black diaspora, including Langston Hughes, Lorraine Hansberry, and James Baldwin, reflecting a personal shift towards social engagement and cultural pride.

The influence of her activist peers was exemplified in her anthem, *To Be Young Gifted and Black*, an ode to the life and memory of playwright Lorraine Hansberry. Simone's dedication to the movement coincided with the fateful bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham in 1963, resulting in the death of four young African-American girls. As her political pedagogy grew, Simone increasingly straddled the lines of explosiveness and honesty with songs such as *Mississippi Goddamn* and *Backlash Blues*, proving to be an unsettling mixture for prospective promoters and music business executives. Trapped between the lures of commercial success and an artistic obligation to reflect the reality of black America, Simone continued down the path of social activism, with her music career suffering as a result.

Weary of the lack of social progress made stateside, Simone left her career and marriage in 1974 and moved to Liberia. Although the shores of Africa offered a temporary reprieve from her mounting responsibilities, she begrudgingly moved on to Switzerland and Paris to generate performance income. Music, once again, became a matter of necessity. The latter portion of Simone's career was marked by volatility, teetering between the lows of performing at a Parisian café for \$300 a night and a career resurgence sparked by the Chanel '55 ad campaign that featured the 30-year-old recording, *My Baby Just Cares for Me*.

Despite her hot-blooded nature, Simone's impact on the music industry is indisputable with fifteen Grammy nominations and an honorary diploma from the Curtis Institute that was dedicated only two days before her death in 2003. The Nina Simone legacy is rooted in raw musical genius, however, it would be a disservice to her voice to define her simply as a performer. She took on the burden of providing a voice for her community without question, and her words continue to mold entire generations that fight for freedom without fear.

# Artists as Stewards

The art world and 30 East Livingston collided once again after four prominent African-American artists banded together to form Daydream Therapy, LLC and purchased the at-risk property for \$95,000 in March of 2017. The decision was interpreted as a gesture of art and politics, a balancing act Nina Simone performed throughout her career.



**ADAM PENDLETON**  
The Conceptualist

Adam Pendleton (Richmond, Virginia, b. 1984) is a conceptual artist known for his multi-disciplinary practice, which moves fluidly between painting, publishing, photographic collage, video and performance. His work centers on an engagement with language, in both the figurative and literal senses, and the re-contextualization of history through appropriated imagery to establish alternative interpretations of the present and, as the artist has explained, “a future dynamic where new historical narratives and meanings can exist.”



**ELLEN GALLAGHER**  
Collagist | Filmmaker

Ellen Gallagher (Rhode Island, b.1965) brings together non-representational formal concerns and charged figuration in paintings, drawings, collages, and films that reveal themselves slowly, first as intricate abstractions, then later as unnerving stories.



**RASHID JOHNSON**  
Sculptor | Painter

Rashid Johnson (American, b.1977) is a sculptor and photographer who works in a wide range of everyday materials. Often identified with the post-black art movement, Johnson’s work engages questions of personal, racial, and cultural identity, producing a unique synthesis of historical and material references that are grounded in African American and art history.



**JULIE MEHRETU**  
Abstract Painter

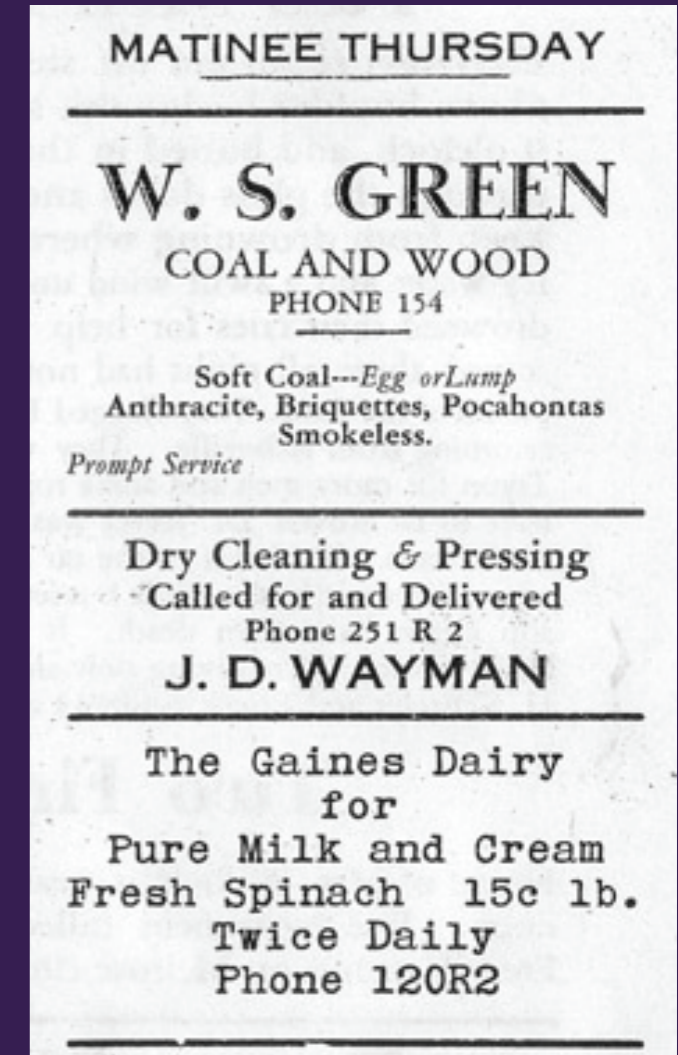
Julie Mehretu’s (Ethiopia, b.1970) paintings and drawings refer to elements of mapping and architecture, achieving a complexity that resembles turbulent atmospheres and dense social networks. Her works engage the history of nonobjective art—from Constructivism to Futurism—posing contemporary questions about the relationship between utopian impulses and abstraction.

# House History

The Waymon family moved to the Tryon, North Carolina residence in 1929 while pursuing John Waymon’s entrepreneurial dreams. Over the course of the next few years, he would open a barbershop, dry cleaning, and a delivery business in order to support his family. On February 21, 1933, Kate Divine gave birth to Nina Simone in their humble home. By 1935, the Waymon family was unable to escape the harsh realities of the Great Depression and were forced to move to a smaller house.

## ORIGINAL PLOT

30 East Livingston falls on Lot No. 7 in B.L. Ballenger’s subdivision of the town of Tryon, the map of which, made by W.E. Strong in February 1912, is of record in the office of the Register of Deeds for Polk County. The original lot was sold to Will Littlejohn and Bertha Littlejohn on September 18, 1918 for \$775.00.



An ad placed for John Waymon’s Dry Cleaning business in the March 7, 1929 edition of the Tryon Daily Bulletin

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH						
1. PLACE OF BIRTH County <u>Polk</u> Registration District No. <u>75-252-7</u> Certificate No. <u>13</u>		Township <u>Tryon</u> or Village _____		City <u>Tryon N.C.</u> (No. <u>At Home</u> St.; _____ Ward)		(If birth occurred in hospital or institution, give its name instead of street and number)
2. FULL NAME OF CHILD <u>Eunice Kathleen Wayman</u> (If child is not yet named, make supplemental report, as directed)						
3. Sex of child <u>Female</u> To be answered only in event of plural births.		4. Twin, triplet, or other _____		6. Parents married? <u>Yes</u>		7. Date of birth <u>Feb 21 1933</u> (Name of Month) (Day) (Year)
5. Number, in order of birth _____			8. FATHER Full name <u>Johnnie D. Wayman</u>		14. MOTHER Full maiden name <u>Kate Wayman</u>	
9. Residence (Usual place of abode) If nonresident, give place and State <u>Residence</u>			15. Residence (Usual place of abode) If nonresident, give place and State <u>Residence</u>			

Nina Simone’s birth certificate referencing her home birth.

# House & Site Conditions

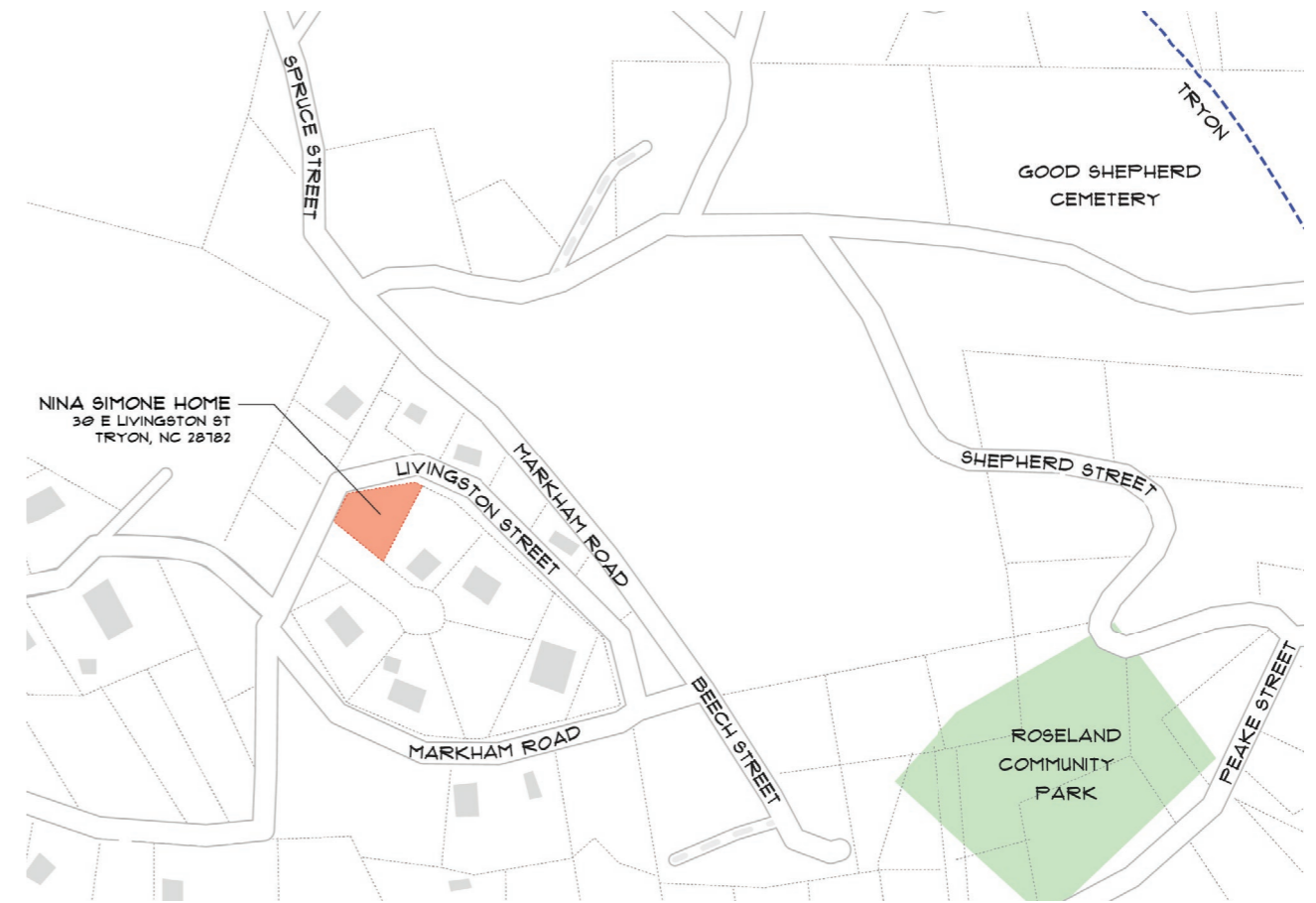
The Nina Simone Childhood Home is nestled in the Thermal Belt region of western North Carolina. The predominantly rural setting consists of rolling vineyards and mountain vistas, interspersed with a scattering of residential plots and equestrian complexes. The one-story, three-bay-wide house, accessed by a paved road on E. Livingston St, faces northwest. It sits on a 0.21 acre parcel with a grassed landscape, and a few trees to the east and north of the house.

The three-bedroom, one-bathroom house, which measures approximately 552 square feet, is of braced frame construction with pine weatherboard siding, a pressed tin roof, brick piers and concrete foundations. The northwest (front) façade features a 12ft by 6ft recessed porch with a single door, two 4-over-1 hung sash windows, and louvered fenestration for the attic space. Six wooden steps lead up to the raised porch. The northeast façade has two evenly spaced 4-over-1 hung sash windows in addition to the side of the recessed entry porch. The southeast (back) façade features 2 entry doors, one leading from the living room on the right and the other from the kitchen on the left. A 4-over-1 hung sash window is to the left of the kitchen door. The southwest façade has two symmetrical 4-over-1 hung sash windows.



“My feeling when I learned that this house existed was just an incredible urgency to make sure it didn’t go away.”

- Rashid Johnson



Parcel map showing the residential fabric surrounding the residence.

## Current Conditions

The home has not been fully occupied as a residence for over twenty years. The residence has fallen into a state of disrepair after the previous owner was unable to fully finance restoration efforts for the house. The development of a Historic Structure Report of the building is suggested to properly document the existing condition of the property, and to assist with prioritizing resources for the future repair of the property.

## Past Restoration Efforts

Kevin McIntyre acquired the property in 2005 with the intention of restoring it the period of significance when the Waymons occupied the home. McIntyre began foreclosure proceedings in October 2016 after running out of funds to finish the project.

Throughout the duration of his ownership, McIntyre facilitated the replacement of the 1970s masonite siding with salvaged pine siding from

the demolition site of nearby Lynn Baptist Church. New brick piers with concrete foundations replaced the uneven concrete foundation the house perched on since the 1940s. The front porch was reframed and custom windows were installed to match the original fenestration dimensions. The back porch and bathroom addition was removed to restore the original dimensions of the house.

## Zoning for the Home

According to property records the parcel is included in the following zoning category:

### R-4 (Single Family Residential Use)

**Permitted Uses:** accessory dwellings, bed & breakfast Inns, home occupation, single-family detached dwellings, two-family dwellings on individual lot, agricultural uses

**Prohibited Uses:** live/work units, art centers, libraries, and auditoriums, hotels, motels, inns, and similar facilities

# Tryon, North Carolina

## The Friendliest Town in the South

### TOWN HISTORY

Tryon developed into a “railroad town” in the mid 1800s, catering to passengers traveling between South Carolina and North Carolina. Surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Town of Tryon’s moderate temperatures and rolling landscape has captivated the hearts of residents and visitors alike for over 150 years.

As of the Census’ 2016 Population Estimates survey, there were nearly 1700 residents and 1000 housing units. The racial makeup of the town was 77.5% White, 16.5% African American, 0.1% Native American, 0.4% Asian, and 5.5% from two or more races.

### COMMITMENT TOWARDS PRESERVATION

The creation of the Tryon Historic Commission cements the town’s commitment for the protection, enhancement and continuous use of local historic places, districts, sites, and landscapes.

### TOURISM

Tryon’s acclaim for its wine and table grapes date back to the early 1900s and several family-owned vineyards. Although the Prohibition era derailed the wine economy, recent vineyards have once again sprouted in the community and become a growing economic attraction.

### NORTH CAROLINA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Tryon’s enrollment in the North Carolina Small Town Main Street Program provides the opportunity for historic downtown development assistance including organizational development, market analysis, business assistance, and promotion.

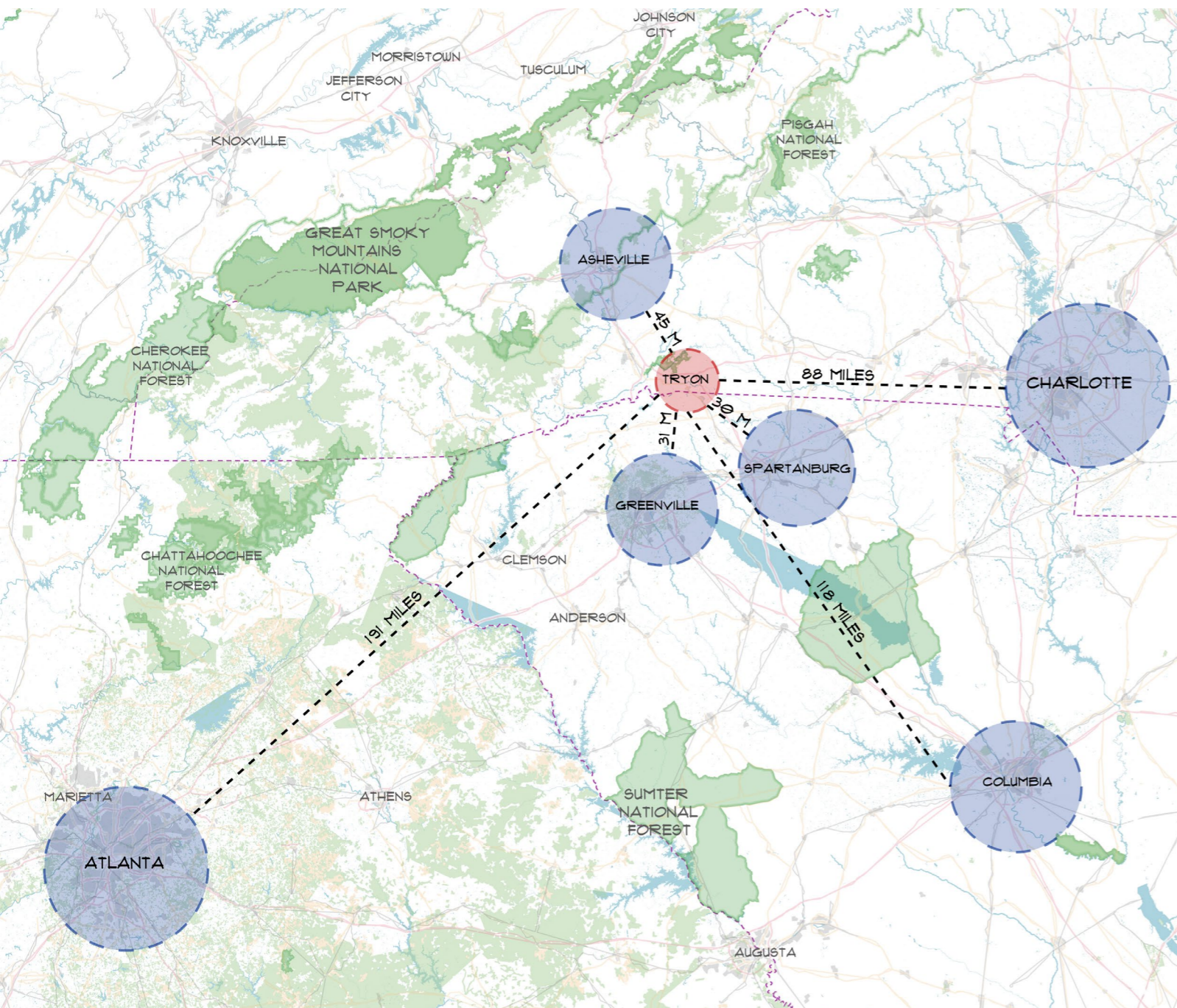


Above: 30 East Livingston is featured in the background of this photo circa 1940

Below: Main Street, Tryon North Carolina in the 1930s



# Accessibility



Although Tryon is a small rural community, it is within driving distance of several major urban centers in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.



# MARKET ANALYSIS

## PROPERTY PROFILE

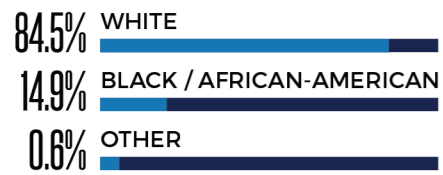
TAX PARCEL	SIZE		ASSESSED VALUE			HISTORIC REHAB @ \$72-181 / SQ FT
	SQ FT.	ACRES	LAND	BUILDING	TOTAL	
T4-C3	552	0.21	\$6,300	\$4,393	\$10,693	\$40K - \$100K

## POPULATION

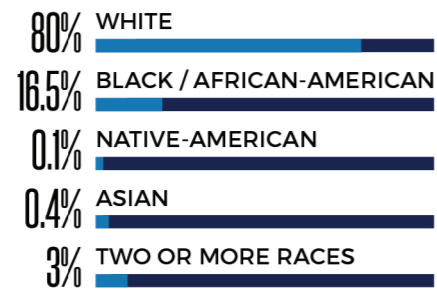
1930	TRYON 2,673	POLK COUNTY 10,216	N. CAROLINA 3,179,276
2000	TRYON 1,760	POLK COUNTY 18,321	N. CAROLINA 8,049,310
2010	TRYON 1,646	POLK COUNTY 20,510	N. CAROLINA 9,535,483
2016	TRYON 1,621	POLK COUNTY 20,334	N. CAROLINA 10,146,788

## RACE

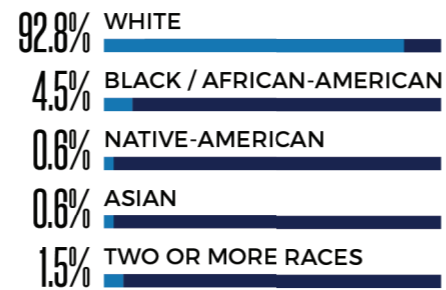
### 1930 - POLK COUNTY



### 2010 - POLK COUNTY



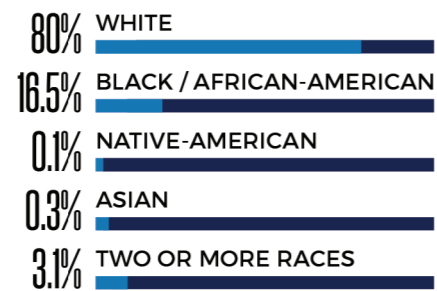
### 2016 ESTIMATES - POLK COUNTY



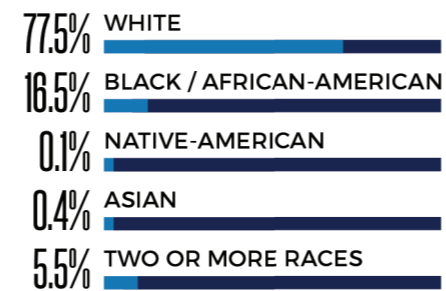
### 1930 - TRYON



### 2010 - TRYON



### 2016 ESTIMATES - TRYON



**\$45,672**

2015 POLK COUNTY EST. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$743**

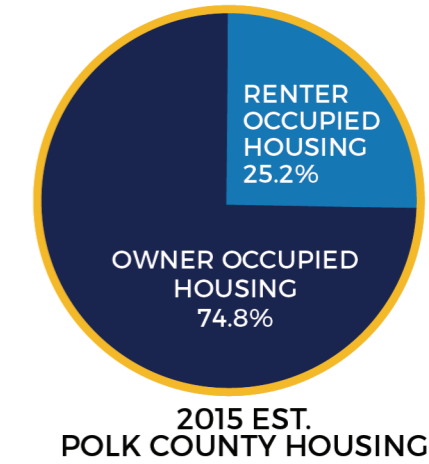
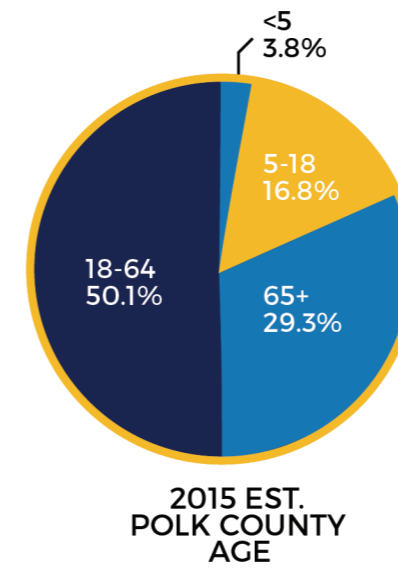
2015 POLK COUNTY EST. MEDIAN GROSS RENT

**13.9%**

2015 POLK COUNTY EST. POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

**9.5%**

2015 POLK COUNTY EST. VACANT HOUSING



## 2000

**985**

TRYON TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

**11.8%**

TRYON VACANT HOUSING

## 2010

**1,066**

TRYON TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

**23.2%**

TRYON VACANT HOUSING

## 2017 TRYON HOUSING MARKET

**\$236K**

MEDIAN LISTING PRICE

**\$98**

PRICE PER SQ FT

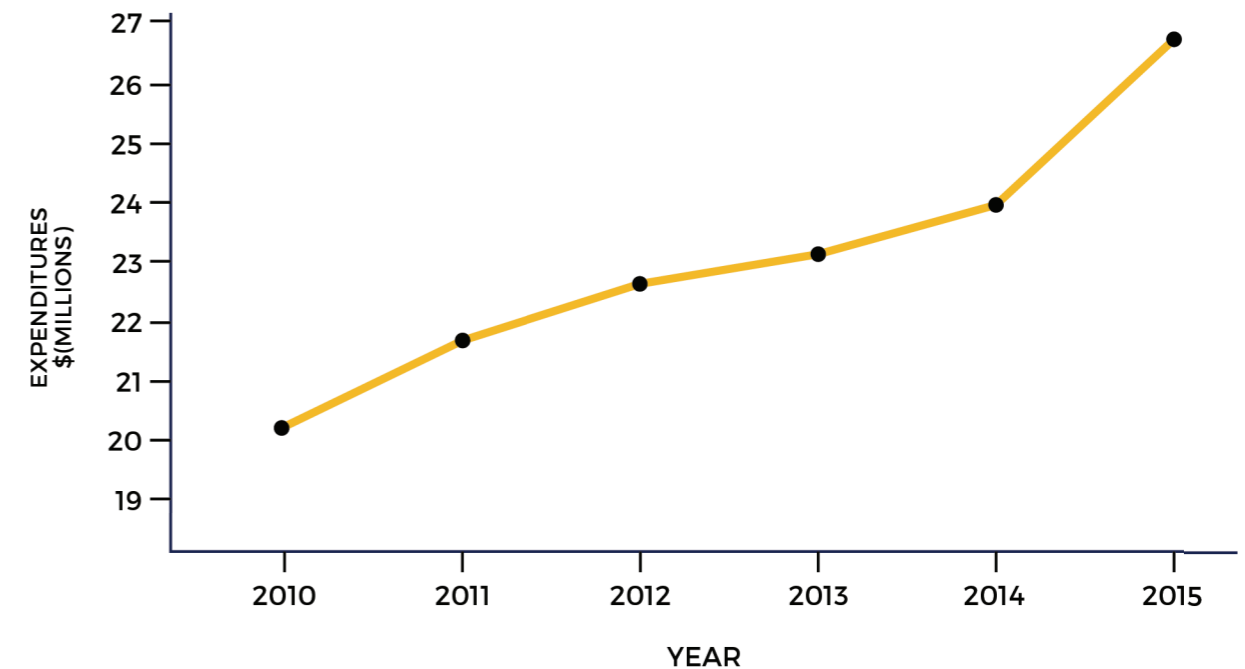
**\$194K**

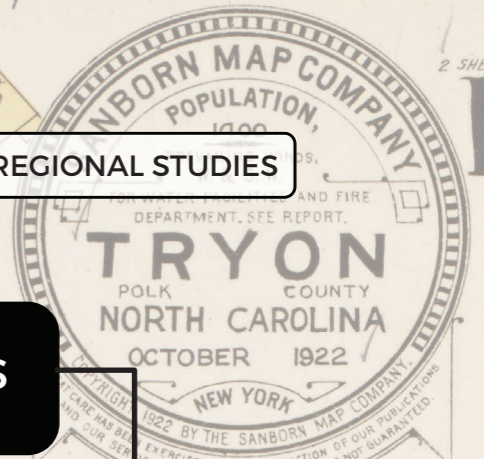
MEDIAN CLOSING PRICE

**\$1,200**

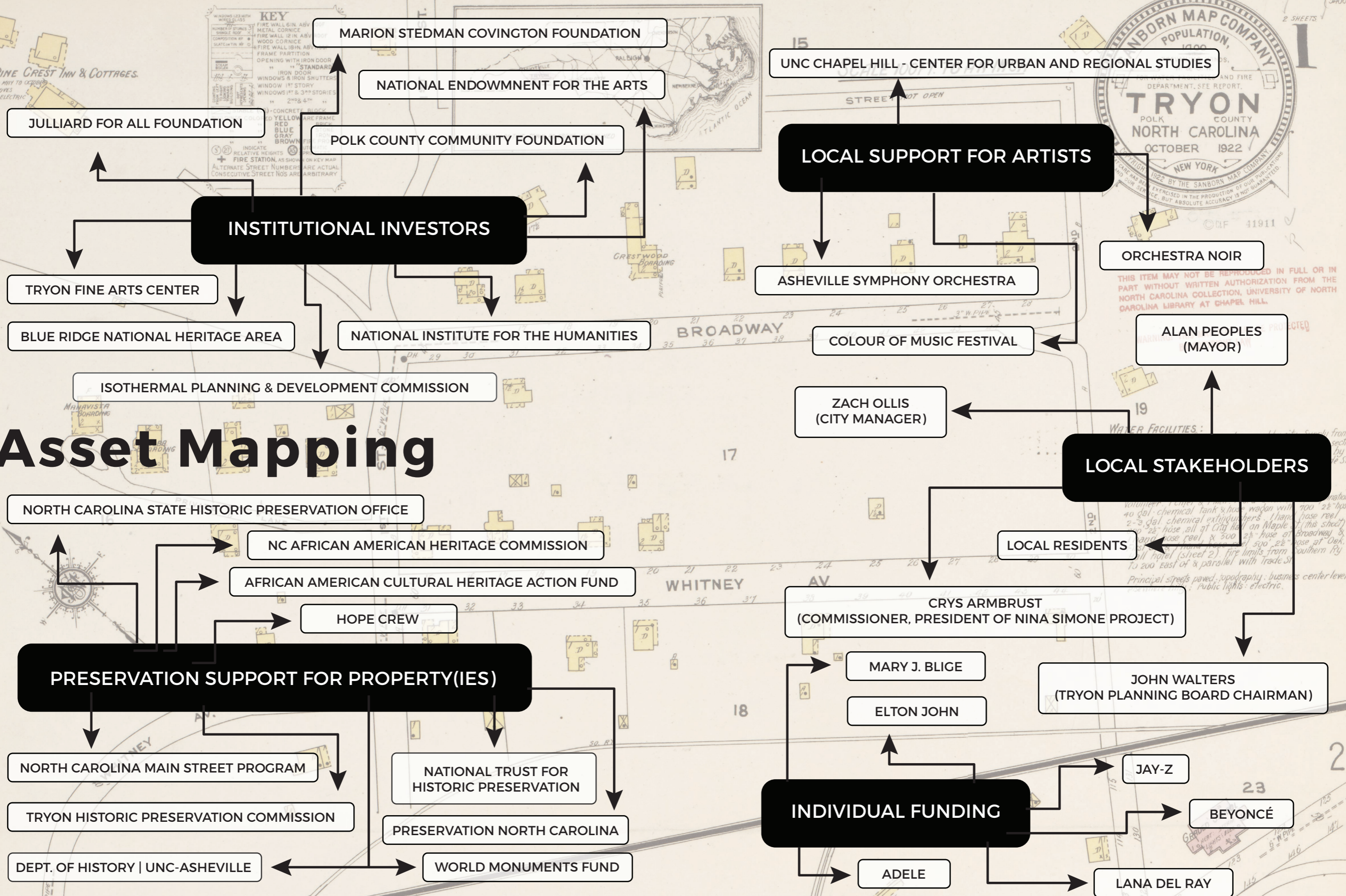
MEDIAN RENTAL PRICE

## POLK COUNTY VISITOR SPENDING





# Asset Mapping



# Recommended Uses

## HOME SWEET HOME

Continued occupation of the residence would prevent deterioration of the historic fabric and will facilitate options for future use. The first option is simply to ensure occupation of the house. This could be as a long-term residential rental, rented on a short-term basis such as an Airbnb vacation rental, or sold for private residential use with an exterior easement.

## ART. CREATIVITY. COMMUNITY.

Two further ways of utilizing, and occupying, the property could be through an artist residence for a specified period of time. This will allow the artist the flexibility to engage with the homestead and possibly the community. In addition to the opportunity to create new art, creative reuse can attract more visibility and financial support for preserving the site. The flexible scheduling should facilitate multiple uses and revenue opportunities.

It may be beneficial to establish a long-term relationship with an organization, such as Julliard School of Music or the Curtis Institute of Music, to provide artists with

institutional support. This program could be open to individuals involved in all formats of the arts, music, and literature. Both of the following options would allow time for secluded creativity.

The first option is strictly an artist residence, where the resident may occupy the entire space as an opportunity to create without distraction.

Beyond allowing the artist ample space and time for secluded creativity, the “community engagement” artist residence would facilitate social impact at the local level. This may be through engaging activities such as artist talks, youth art programs, demonstrations, and community workshops where the artist and participants create collaboratively.

These activities can produce goodwill from the Tryon residents and regional partners, and can affect social impacts that are associated with art in the community. In either case, the products of the artist’s efforts could be sold to contribute to the operations or create an endowment necessary for expanding the program.



## Branching Out

As fiscal constraints allow and opportunities in Tryon materialize, it may be beneficial to upscale the project into nearby properties to allow a residence community or, in the case of the “community engagement residence,” into an historic Main Street property for a multiple use space.

# Program Sustainability

The artist residency thoroughly compliments the Artists' intentions and Nina Simone's legacy. However, a sound business model, strategic partnerships, co-stewardship agreements, preservation-based plan, creative programming, and fundraising is necessary to facilitate a sustainable project.

## EASEMENT & ENDOWMENT

The perpetual protection of the site through the use of a preservation easement should be explored. In addition, an endowment is necessary to fund any of the recommended use options. The principal amount of the endowment depends on the nature of the project, and will disperse up to 5% annually to cover ongoing operations and maintenance.



OPTION	NECESSARY ENDOWMENT	EXPENSES
BASIC SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPERTY	\$300K	MONITOR EASEMENT BY HOLDER AND REGULAR MAINTENANCE
ARTIST RESIDENCE + PROGRAM COORDINATOR	\$1 MILLION	FUNDRAISE, HIRE STAFF PERSONNEL, AND IMPLEMENT PROGRAMMING
ARTIST RESIDENCE + STIPEND	\$2 MILLION	PROVIDE A \$100K PER YEAR DISPERSEMENT FOR OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

# Next Steps

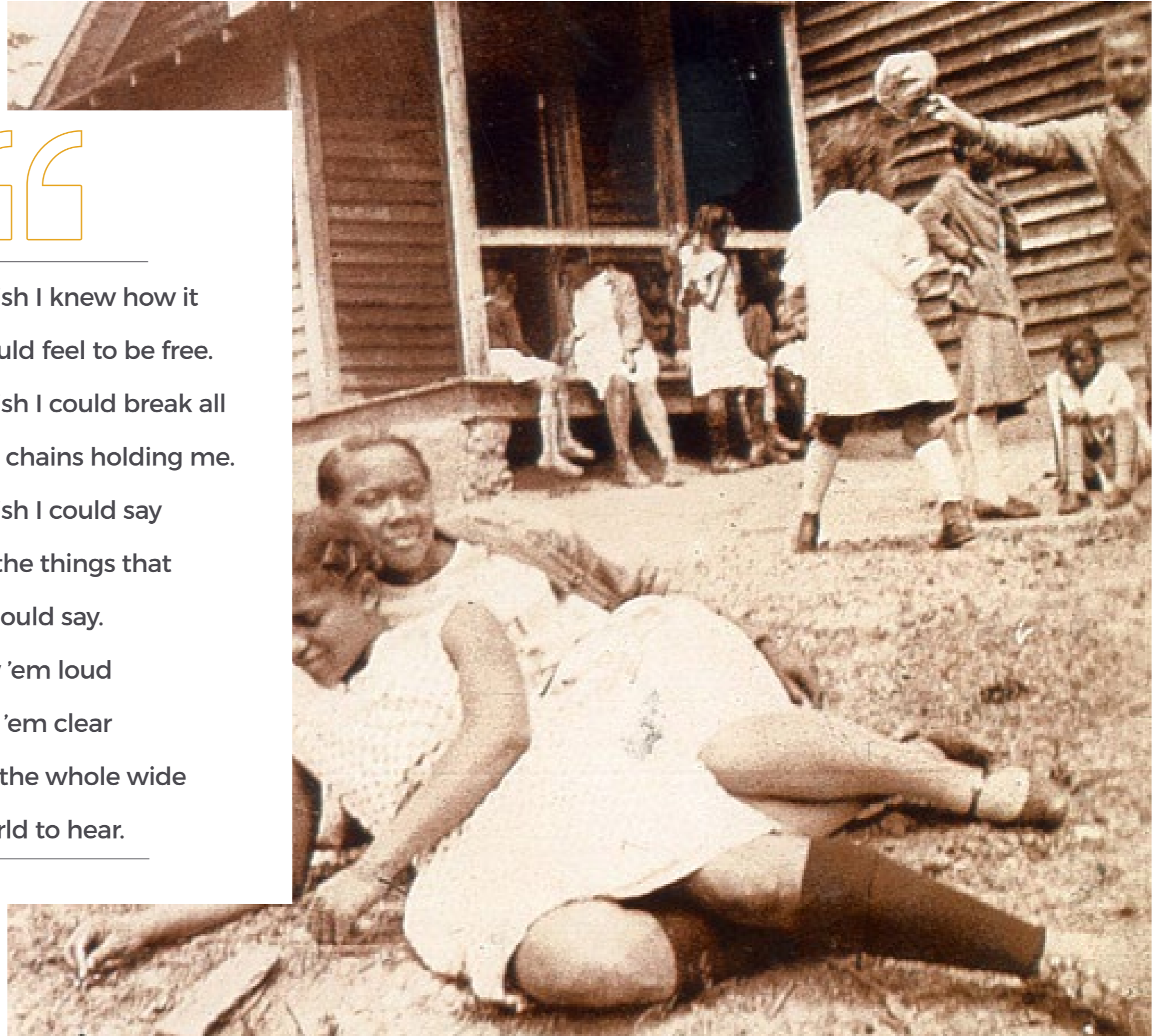
Nina Simone's voice and legacy continues to influence the delicate fabric of our daily lives. Preservation of the physical remnants of her personal history will not only honor her legacy, but also the legacy of the artists that were handed her torch.

## CREATE A PRESERVATION PLAN

- Detailed cost estimates
- Necessary preservation treatments
- Historic structure report with cost estimates
- Develop a community-centered plan for re-use
- Formally approach stakeholders
- Develop a business plan
- Explore protection through easement

“

I wish I knew how it would feel to be free.  
I wish I could break all the chains holding me.  
I wish I could say all the things that I should say.  
Say 'em loud  
say 'em clear  
for the whole wide world to hear.



Nina Simone pictured sitting down in the background (right) circa 1940

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