



Charlotte City Council  
**Transportation & Planning Committee**  
Meeting Summary for November 10, 2014

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## COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

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- I. **Subject:** **Development Review and Permitting Assessment**  
Action: For information only
- II. **Subject:** **Walkability Scan and Charlotte WALKS**  
Action: For information only
- III. **Subject:** **Future Agenda Items**  
Action: For information only

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## COMMITTEE INFORMATION

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Present: Vi Lyles, David Howard, Patsy Kinsey, Greg Phipps, Kenny Smith

Time: 4:01 pm – 4:22 pm

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## ATTACHMENTS

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Agenda package

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## DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

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Committee Chair Lyles called the meeting to order and explained that the meeting is starting later at 4:00 in lieu of 3:30, and that the Walkability Scan and Charlotte WALKS presentation will be deferred until the next meeting. She then asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves.

I. **Development Review and Permitting Assessment**

Lyles: We are going to cover just one item on our agenda, and that is the Development Review and Permitting Assessment. I'm going to turn it over to Ann.

Wall: What I thought I would do is provide an overview of the work we're doing associated with improvements to the development review and permitting process. I'll talk a little bit about the schedule and some information that Council can expect to receive from Gartner Consulting

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(Gartner) toward the end of the week.

- Since early spring, City staff along with staff from the County have been working to identify issues and solutions to improve the development review process that goes from the City to the County and vice versa.
- We've used a variety of means to work on that study and to identify some improvements.
- I want to point out that David Weekly, Laura Harmon, and Nan Peterson are some of the City staff that have spent considerable time working with Gartner to address any issues.
- To date some of the activities that have been accomplished are:
  - The City and County worked with Customer Service Solutions to do surveys of all of our partners and the development review space here in Charlotte. We have information back from those surveys, and we've passed that information on to Gartner.
  - The City and Customer Service Solutions have conducted a series of 23 focus groups in two different phases:
    - The first phase was a broad based approach to customers that participated in the development of a new process.
    - The second phase included customers who participated in the development review process from beginning to end.
- We've reviewed some of those preliminary results, and we've shared those results with Gartner to include as they form recommendations on how it is we can improve the process.
- Gartner is a consultant that the City and County jointly hired to review our process. At this point, Gartner has spent time interviewing staff, talking with the development community, reviewing the survey information and focus group work to form recommendations on improvements.
- They have also begun to work to identify best practices that exist across the country.
- Some of their preliminary findings are that we have a lack of coordinated governance of our system and our process.

Howard: Are they looking at different models from other cities to see if this is common or not?

Wall: Gartner has identified communities that, much like Charlotte and the County, are responsible for different portions of the process. They have also identified communities that handle it differently than we. Does that answer your question, Mr. Howard?

Howard: Yes.

Wall: Other preliminary findings are that we believe there is a misalignment with customer expectations. What we're going to do when and how we're going to get it done. They believe we have complicated process and complicated service requirements.

Smith: Regarding misalignment with customer expectations; it sounds as if we're blaming the customer, that we're not communicating the various steps in the anticipated timelines.

Wall: It is not intended to blame the customer. I think we have to understand what the customer expectations are and make sure that we're delivering those.

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Committee member Kinsey joined the meeting at 4:06.

Smith: That sounds better than misalignment with customer expectations.

Wall: It's a complicated system and a complicated process. The City and County have separate systems.

- Finally, they've identified inconsistencies between plan reviews and inspections.

What Gartner has done is identify the current state, and we expect to have an overview of what that current state is with some information that we can share with the Council at the end of this week or the first part of next week. We sent an email out to ask Council if anyone would like to speak with Gartner. We have a couple of Council members that have spoken with Gartner. If anyone else would like to speak with them, please let me know and we'll set that up.

Lyles: I wonder if it might be appropriate for all of us to try to speak with Gartner.

Smith: What happens if we learn that personnel are not matching up to the need?

Wall: That is an excellent question, and I'll ask Gartner.

Smith: I'm not trying to throw staff under the bus, but I can foresee some situations arising where it's possible we may have a decent procedure, but inconsistencies between plans and inspections might come into play.

Lyles: I think Council member Smith is saying that we may have everything working well, but it may be that our delivery is the issue. That would be important for Gartner to share with the City and County Manager's offices, and for there to be some internal review.

Wall: I've noted that and will follow up with Hall. Again, by the end of this week or early next week, the Council will receive an overview of where we are. In November, Gartner is coming down for another workshop with staff to talk about the current state and how we translate the current state into a work plan. We would anticipate getting a future state assessment done in December. Our hope is to wrap this up by the end of December or January. We do have significant recommendations going forward, and we'll have the opportunity to include those as part of the budget.

Lyles: So, by the end of this week the entire Council will get a mailing?

Wall: I believe it will come via email to the entire Council.

Lyles: Then your next step will be the December work session with the consultants and staff?

Wall: The staff will have a November work session. I think it's scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> or the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Lyles: Please send the report with the schedule in a memo. What is the expectation in terms of

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coming back to the Committee?

Wall: My suggestion would be for the Council to review the current state, and let me know early on if there are concerns. I would suggest that the Committee hold all discussion on this topic until we get a little further down the road in terms of information from Gartner about specific recommendations and a future state analysis. I'll look at the schedule, but it could come back in December or maybe even January.

Howard: Is this just a status update?

Wall: Yes.

Howard: The final report will be in draft form, right?

Wall: We expect that final report in draft form in December or the beginning of January.

Howard: I wouldn't do anything until we get the draft.

Phipps: You mentioned that you looked at cities that had the same process as ours in addition to cities that had a different process. Of those cities that had a different process, did they look at complaints to see how communities handle the responsibility differently?

Wall: The consultant identified communities that have a process similar to ours where the City and the County are jointly responsible for different phases of the development review process. Those communities handle the responsibility in different ways. Some have agreements about who does what, some actually provide full responsibility for part of that process for one entity then they step out. Gartner identified some communities that have had some issue with permitting and have really focused on resolving those issues and being responsive, so they can provide feedback about that as well.

Howard: The other thing that was referred to this group was a look at staff's interaction and Council's interaction with the process. Has the consultant done anything with that part of this?

Ann: You are correct, Mr. Howard. We asked them to look at Council involvement in the development review process, and I'll follow up with them on that.

Howard: That's a big piece of this, and if they would delve into this I would be happy.

Lyles: Great memory. That's an important aspect of this. Any other comments/questions?

Smith: Thanks to staff for the hard work you put into this.

Lyles: Anything else?

Pleasant: I want to make sure they know about Scott Curry. Scott is a newly hired veteran program manager, and he will be bringing to you next time the Charlotte WALKS plan. He came

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to us from the Lawrence Group and won the NC APA Award this year for writing the code for Wilson, NC. He's an urban designer that comes from the University of Michigan. His work is very important creating a more walkable City. We want to use Scott to help prepare you as a Committee and Council so that you can discern whether or not we are creating a more walkable City or not.

Lyles: Scott, welcome.

Curry: Thank you.

The meeting adjourned 4:22



# Charlotte WALKS:

Taking the Next Steps

*CDOT Pedestrian Program | November 10, 2014*



# We are all pedestrians



This slide features the Charlotte logo and the title 'Walkability Scan → Charlotte WALKS' at the top. The left side has a yellow background with the text 'Walkability Scan' in green and a green silhouette of a woman holding a child's hand. The right side has a dark blue background with a list of criteria:

- USEFUL**
  1. Variety of destinations & land uses
  2. Minimal walking distance
  3. Clear & obvious access to buildings
- SAFE**
  4. Separation from traffic
  5. Safe & convenient crossings
  6. Sense of security
- INVITING**
  7. Space to walk
  8. Visual interest & activity
  9. Screening from the elements



  
CHARLOTTE.

- *Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte*



  
CHARLOTTE.

- Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte
- *Charlotte's Ongoing Challenges*





- Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte
- Charlotte's Ongoing Challenge
- *Charlotte WALKS Strategy*





- Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte
- Charlotte's Ongoing Challenge
- Charlotte WALKS Strategy
- *Let's Take a Walk*





- Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte
- Charlotte's Ongoing Challenge
- Charlotte WALKS Strategy
- Let's Take a Walk
- *Preliminary Recommendations*

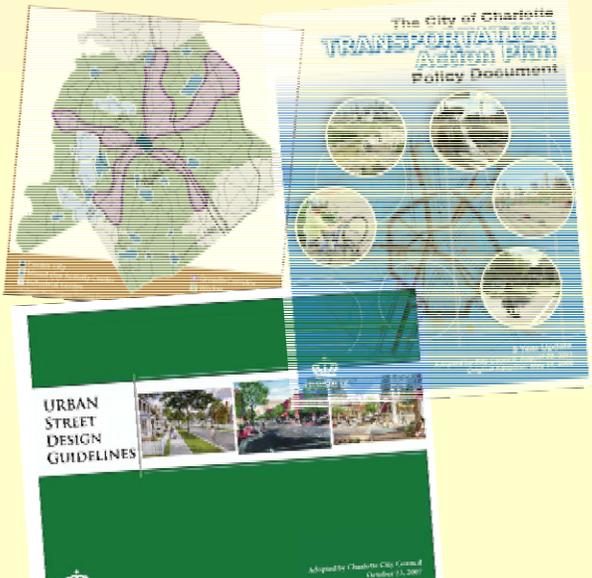


# Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte

 **Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte**

**Complete Streets Policies**

- Centers, Corridors, and Wedges Growth Framework
- Transportation Action Plan
- Urban Street Design Guidelines
- Capital Investments
- Private Sector Improvements



 **Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte**

**Better pedestrian environments through capital projects**



**Before** **After**

 Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte

Better pedestrian environments through private development



Before After

 Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte



*We're supporting more transportation choices than we ever have before.*



## Steps Toward a More Walkable Charlotte



*City capital programs*  
Over 200 miles of new  
sidewalks since 2002



## Charlotte's Ongoing Challenges



## Charlotte's Ongoing Challenges

### What do Charlotteans think about walkability?

*(National Citizen Survey, 2014.)*

- 24% rate the ease of walking as "Poor."
- Peer City Comparison – Charlotte rated lower in
  - Ease of walkability
  - Frequency of walking or biking, instead of driving



## Charlotte's Ongoing Challenges

### Sustainability Report Card

*(Sustain Charlotte, 2014.)*

### Transportation Evaluation

- Local Trend Grade: B



*Charlotte Department of Transportation  
2014 Community Sustainability Award Winner: Transportation*

*We've come a long way,  
but we can still do more.*



## Charlotte's Ongoing Challenges

**Why is Charlotte still such a challenging place for pedestrians?**

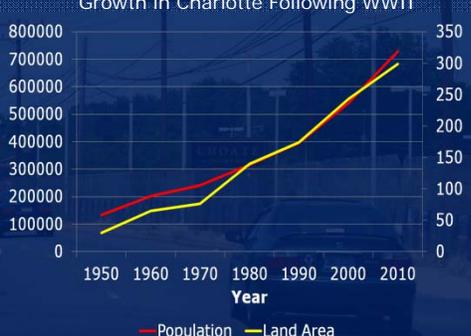
1950 to 2000

TRANSPORTATION POLICY  
*Move as many cars as we can as fast as we can.*

POPULATION  
*More than quadrupled from 134,000 to 570,000*

AREA  
*+213 square miles*

Growth in Charlotte Following WWII



Year	Population	Land Area (sq miles)
1950	134,000	~50
1960	~180,000	~70
1970	~250,000	~100
1980	~350,000	~150
1990	~450,000	~200
2000	~500,000	~250
2010	570,000	300

*We forgot about walkability.*



## Charlotte's Ongoing Challenges

**Our development legacy...**







Andy Singer







## Charlotte's Ongoing Challenges

Our development legacy...

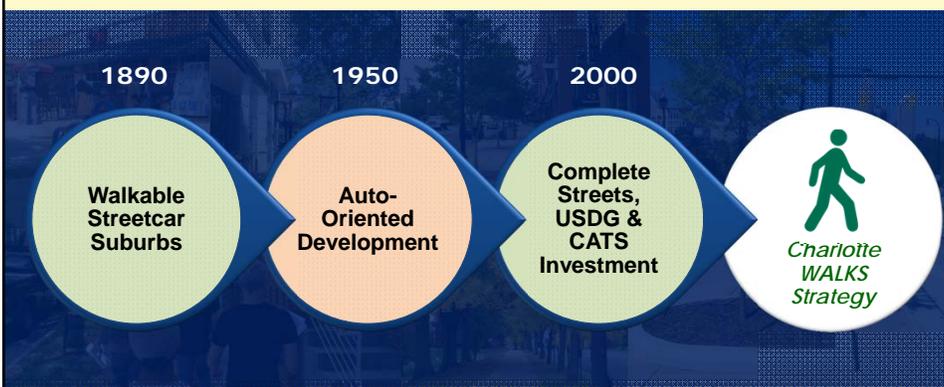


*...wasn't always like that.*



## Charlotte's Ongoing Challenges

Our development legacy...



*...is getting better.*





# Charlotte WALKS Strategy



## Charlotte WALKS Strategy

It's about more than sidewalks... **It's about creating GREAT PLACES**



 **Charlotte WALKS Strategy**

## What is Walkability?



- USEFUL**
  1. Variety of destinations & land uses
  2. Minimal walking distance
  3. Clear & obvious access to buildings
- SAFE**
  4. Separation from traffic
  5. Safe & convenient crossings
  6. Sense of security
- INVITING**
  7. Space to walk
  8. Visual interest & activity
  9. Screening from the elements

 **Charlotte WALKS Strategy**

✓ **USEFUL**  
**SAFE**  
**INVITING**

*Walkability*



**1 out of 3 isn't good enough**



 **Charlotte WALKS Strategy**

**USEFUL**  
✓ **SAFE**  
✓ **INVITING**

*Walkability*



**2 out of 3 isn't good enough**



 **Charlotte WALKS Strategy**

✓ **USEFUL**  
✓ **SAFE**  
✓ **INVITING**

*Walkability*

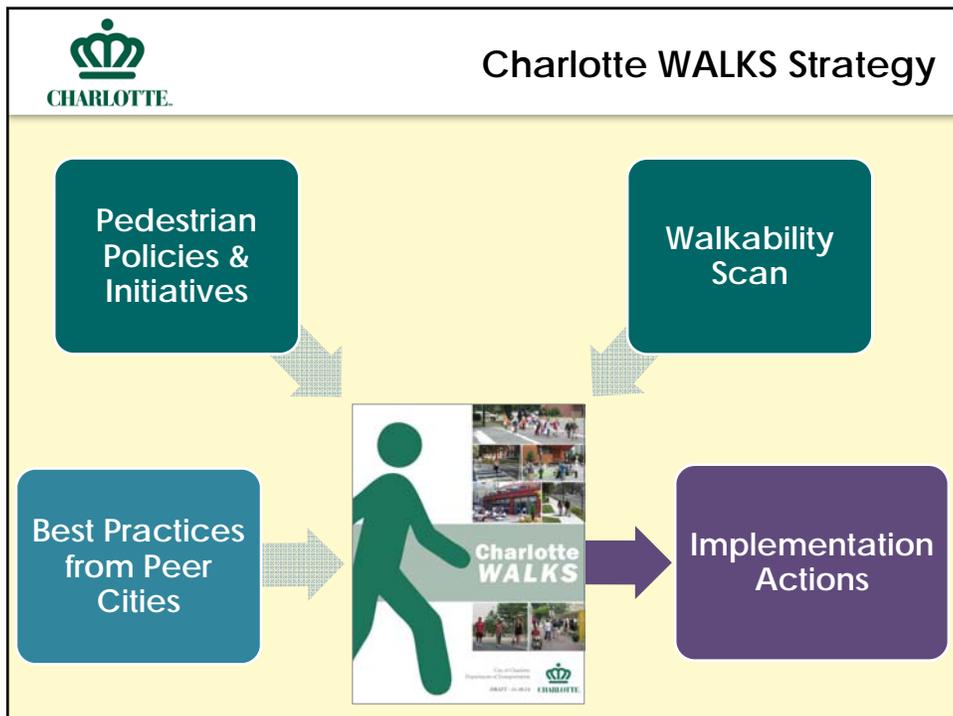




 **Charlotte WALKS Strategy**

- ✓ USEFUL
- ✓ SAFE
- ✓ INVITING

*Walkability*



 CHARLOTTE.

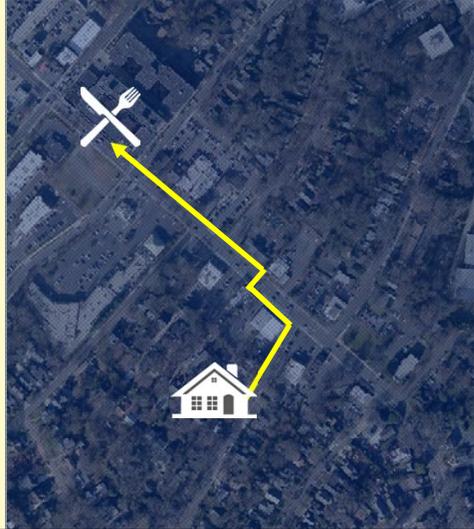


# Let's Take a Walk

 CHARLOTTE.

## Let's Take a Walk

**Walk 1 – Mary** **Walk 2 – Samantha**



 **Let's Take a Walk**

**Walk 1 – Mary** **Walk 2 – Samantha**



 **Let's Take a Walk**

**Walk 1 – Mary** **Walk 2 – Samantha**



 **Let's Take a Walk**

**Walk 1 – Mary** **Walk 2 – Samantha**



 **Preliminary Recommendations**



 **Preliminary Recommendations**

1. Safer and more frequent pedestrian crossings
2. Replace back-of-curb sidewalks along busy streets (public & private sector)
3. Review regulations for sidewalk construction in new development







**Next Step**

- Introduce Charlotte WALKS Strategy at future Council meeting



Questions?

