



Charlotte City Council  
**Transportation & Planning Committee**  
Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

---

- I. **Subject:** **Walkability Scan Project Update**  
Action: For information only
- II. **Subject:** **Customer Friendly Permitting Process**  
Action: For information only
- III. **Subject:** **Auto-Oriented Uses Schedule**  
Action: For information only
- IV. **Subject:** **Review Committee Referral/Project Updates**  
Action: For information only
- V. **Subject:** **Future Meeting Topics**

---

## COMMITTEE INFORMATION

---

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

Time: 3:30 pm – 4:29 pm

---

## ATTACHMENTS

---

Handouts  
Agenda package

---

## DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

---

Committee Chair Lyles called the meeting to order at 3:30 and asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves.

I. **Walkability Scan Project Update**

Lyles: We have four items for information today, and I believe staff is presenting these so that we can talk about where we are, to see if there are questions about where we're going as we tackle these. Most of these are either in our Focus Area Plan or were referred to us by Council.

---

# Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

Page 2 of 9

---

We'll start with the Walkability Scan Update, and ask Ms. Young and Ms. Newsome to begin. Do we have any comments before we start?

Campbell: The only thing I would say on this item is this is probably not going to be that familiar. Mr. Howard might remember this as one of the items that was in the 2014 Focus Area Plan. We wanted to bring you up to date on the status of our work.

Young: Our presentation will include describing the documents to be scanned; we'll discuss walkability and why it matters, briefly describe the process with some examples, and talk about the next steps.

Ms. Young started the presentation with slide 3 (see attached Walkability Scan Overview presentation.)

Howard: How does this line up with the national group that does the walkability scores?

Young: There are a variety of "walkability" definitions, and we felt it important to be clear about what we reference. The walk score is just one of the characteristics of walkability.

Howard: a couple of years ago we scored well on just one if I remember right.

Young: The walk score is addressed in the first two characteristics of walkability. We talked about the definition, but there are characteristics as well. It gets complicated when you mix in the characteristics, and one of the complications is the walk score versus walkability. Walk score talks about the proximity of land uses to each other, but that doesn't necessarily make it walkable.

Howard: I want to make sure we can benchmark ourselves and get something if we're going to go after this.

Lyles: I think that in the realty world there is an app available for mobile phones. Does our definition match what people see on an app, and how do we compare?

Young: Walk score versus walkability?

Lyles: I'm talking about the customer's view, which is how they pull up the information that needs to be aligned with what we're doing.

Tracy: I think Katrina is going to get to this, but walk score is a very specific measure and we'll talk more about what goes into that, but we are certainly tracking our walk score.

Howard: Some education on this for us and others will be important.

Pleasant: Walk scores are development patterns of adjacency of residents to businesses. It's a good measure and it's a measure that's effective in comparing various parts within a city.

Ms. Young continued the presentation with slide 5, What Creates "Walkability?"

---

# Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

Page 3 of 9

---

Ms. Newsome took over at slide 8, In Turn, Walkability Creates/Supports Great Places.

Howard: Kenny is in the industry, so he may know how companies are dealing with making sure people can see their signage? Are retailers okay with it and are we accommodating them?

Smith: If you look at Cowfish at Sharon and Morrison, that foliage blocks their signage. I think that issue will affect who will want to rent those spaces since you have almost no visibility from the street.

Howard: Have you thought about that?

Young: We haven't but we will. We have only been focused on the walkability part and not the secondary impacts where if you have trees too close together they might prevent signage from being seen.

Howard: Maybe some way finding signage could be considered?

Smith: Are they losing buildable ground to do this?

Young: No.

Smith: Okay.

Pleasant: I think your point, Mr. Howard, in some cases like on the lower right picture (see slide 17 in the attached presentation), we should be considering the trees in the planting strip, or parking in lieu of the planting strip with hardscape around it. Those are nuances we should be looking at as we understand the details and fine tuning of a more walkable environment.

Howard: Pretty streets and vacant building is not the goal either.

Pleasant: Correct. This is where you've got to strike that right balance.

Lyles: And sometimes inconsistency is okay. I think what we're hearing is one size doesn't fit all. We need to encourage what works for that situation; safety and activity because without activity what's the point?

Campbell: That's right. We want to create standards that can be applied to a broad geographical area. We have evolved into an urban area, and urban is different depending on where you are. As we go through our policy scan and analysis, we do have to understand that there will be nuanced differences that we're going to have to consider while keeping some level of flexibility.

Howard: If the market is not concerned, then maybe we should leave it alone.

Smith: I think that's an astute observation.

---

# Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

Page 4 of 9

---

Campbell: I think the issue of type and appropriateness of signage is evolving, and I don't think our zoning ordinance has kept up. We're going to have to make some changes.

Phipps: Will you be prepared to share a cost estimate to achieve the walkability goals that we have?

Campbell: Probably not. We will have certain recommendations and findings, but will take more time to be able to make specific recommendations.

Young: We will come back with very broad recommendations, such as things that we know don't work and that we probably want to change, but we may not have gotten down to the level of detail where we can do an analysis to determine cost.

Campbell: As we create specific recommendations, I think we can look at what those might cost to implement.

Phipps: Where the State might improve their roads, can we ask them to let us supplement their plans with our visions and goals for walkability?

Campbell: Most of the time it's not an issue of money, but an issue of their policy.

Pleasant: It's important to remember that most streets that get built are built with new development by the private sector. NCDOT has recently adopted the Complete Streets standards, so they are involved as well.

Lyles: I would hope the State would begin to look at things they are building inside our communities.

Ms. Newsome concluded the presentation with slide 19 (see attached slides).

Smith: It seems like the walk score is a different benchmark than the actual walkability. Is that correct?

Tracy: Yes. Walk score looks at very specific characteristics and comes up with a way to measure it. So, if you have these types and amounts of land uses in close proximity to each other you score higher. What that doesn't get to is all those other things like is it a comfortable walk, is there a sidewalk, or is the sidewalk next to traffic? It's the blend of those components that create real walkability. There are degrees of walkability. Some areas would be much more urban in their walkability, and even people in the suburbs want to be able to walk. Provision of sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities is important, but in the most urban environments it's an entire combination of elements besides just land use and proximity.

Howard: If we're going to do it, I want us to take those criteria into consideration. It would be a shame to have a policy about walkability, but not change our walk score because we didn't take those things into consideration. One last question: I guess we passed our Complete Streets guidelines. Is the State bound by the same rules or do they have their own criteria?

---

# Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

Page 5 of 9

---

Tracy: In general, they have manuals they follow. In 2009, the Board of Transportation adopted a Complete Streets policy, and said part of what we need to do is develop new guidelines to help get away from all the centric highway design. Their guidelines are similar to what we have in our guidelines at this point. Their next steps are to update their manuals and regulations. We tend to have more flexibility from them than we have in the past, but there is still work on that front.

Lyles: Thank you very much. Let's move right into our next agenda item, the customer friendly permitting process.

## **II. Customer Friendly Permitting Process**

Wall: I wanted to briefly update the Committee about where we stand with our review and our work with the development review process. There are several items we've talked about. The first one is the independent review of our permitting process and our development review process. We are working collaboratively with Mecklenburg County, so we'll hire one consultant who will review the City process and the County process, and then they'll talk about how the processes interact. We want to create a seamless process for the customer. We received four proposals in response to our request, and we're down to two. We are negotiating a scope and contract with those two firms. They are two excellent firms that have done similar work for similar sized localities across the United States. Per the direction from this Committee, we'll include in that work that the consultants will interview the City Council members to hear their thoughts and concerns about our development review process. We anticipate having the contract phase and this part of the work complete by fall of 2014. The next phase of the work is to do focus groups, and we're working with the County on that. We have hired Customer Services Solutions to handle the focus group work.

Smith: How are we going to identify the folks to participate in the focus group?

Wall: We'll use a random sampling and let Customer Services Solutions contact the random list of customers from that group. We'll do a group of owners and developers, and separately a list of homeowners. The County has elected to have a group of customers from the towns, and we have constituent groups such as the Real Estate and Building Industry Coalition, the National Association of Ordnance Contractors, the Home Builder's Association, and we'll reach out to ask them to send participants with the idea that we're going to get a broad range of representatives.

Smith: The randomness is a great way to do it. Thank you.

Wall: Our intent is to solicit as much input and feedback as we can about actual customer experiences as well as to highlight opportunities for improvement in the system.

The third part that I want to update the Committee on is the bi-annual customer service survey that is underway. Customer Service Solutions is also doing that survey. Both consultants we've talked to about doing the independent review have acknowledged the work we're doing with the focus groups and with the surveys, and are encouraging us about being able to use the data that comes from that work to inform the study that they're doing on their independent review. We are

---

# Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

Page 6 of 9

---

working collaboratively with the County. We both acknowledge that we could both finesse and improve our systems, and we just wanted to inform you today about the work we're doing.

Lyles: You gave us three major areas, the independent review, the focus groups and customer survey; can you give a description of the scope of the service for the independent review? I didn't get a context for that.

Wall: The consultant will come in and help identify through interviews with staff and information they get through the focus groups and the survey, how our system works, what is working well, what is not, and what are areas for improvement. They will have opportunities to talk about people, places and systems that support the development review process.

Lyles: Okay, thank you.

Smith: I just want to say thank you. This is long overdue, and I think ya'll seem to be off to a great start.

Howard: This has to do with the action Council took last week about ethics. Did we add that to the scope of the two contractors?

Wall: We are negotiating that scope. I actually pulled the statement that you have, Mr. Howard, from that meeting and I think between staff time, staff consideration and the work of the consultant that it's something we could add to the scope for the consultant to do as part of this work.

Howard: Please let us know in case we need to go in another direction. Part of this conversation has always been around functional consolidation too. Is it clear to the consultants that they'll be looking for opportunities to recommend functional consolidation?

Wall: We have not specifically talked about consolidation. What we have indicated is that we want to understand what works well and doesn't work well in both the City and County systems, and where the touch points or pain points would be. It will be up to the consultant to bring back those recommendations.

Lyles: Early on in this process I asked if functional consolidation was one of the objectives of scope and I was told that it was not, and neither the Council nor Commission had agreed to look at functional consolidation as a part of this work.

Howard: There are times when people are directed a certain way and they don't consider thinking out of the box.

Lyles: I think perhaps the idea of functional consolidation might look like a consideration for political consolidation. I think I'm hearing that if the consultant says we need to do something because it would be better for the customer and for the system they should do that, but would then have to come back to both bodies.

---

# Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

Page 7 of 9

---

Howard: I want to be sure that I'm quoted on the record that I asked that question.

Smith: I would assume a natural byproduct of this entire process is that our people will have a strong understanding and we'll be able to review that work where we see opportunities. Maybe we can push the envelope as needed.

Phipps: Does that mean the cost of the consultant will be split 50/50 with the County, or will the expense be prorated?

Wall: We asked the consultant to provide a scope for the City and the County separately. Pricing will be commensurate with the work for each.

Phipps: When they evaluate, will they be looking for efficiencies in the old process? Could that be a buzzword as opposed to functional consolidation?

Wall: We will share with the consultants the concerns of this Committee about the idea of identifying opportunities to improve the system.

Howard: You mentioned the County's input would be about how the towns will fit in. Is that the extent of their involvement? When you don't say it will be 50/50 and there will be some considerations, I'm trying to figure out how you divide the considerations?

Wall: There are two different issues. The independent review will be of the City's development review process and the County's development review process. Mecklenburg County has agreed to do a separate focus group to the people in the towns.

Howard: Why not a 50/50 cost split?

Wall: It would be a 50/50 split on the focus group part. The consultant is doing the independent review, not the focus group

Lyles: So there will be three contracts?

Wall: Correct.

Lyles: The first contract on the independent review is divided City/County.

Wall: Per scope.

Lyles: For example, what we're asking for on the checks and balances might up ours a little bit?

Howard: I want to make sure we push the County on the checks and balances aspect.

Lyles: I understand the focus groups will be an even split, right?

Wall: Correct, except that the County is paying separately for the towns focus group.

---

# Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

Page 8 of 9

---

Lyles: Okay, then the customer service survey is a standard cost that's included in both.

Wall: Correct.

Lyles: Any other questions? Thank you Ms. Wall. Let's move on to item III, Auto Oriented Uses Schedule.

### **III. Auto Oriented Uses Schedule**

Harmon: At your last meeting we discussed a referral concerning auto oriented uses, which we defined as those uses that require one to have a vehicle to patronize a business. We are back with an updated schedule from what we presented to you last time. The only information that has changed is that we are starting in September instead of May, and everything moves back four months accordingly.

Phipps: Why are we moving it back four months?

Harmon: Dealing with staff resource issues and making sure that once we're into it we can move quickly.

Phipps: Okay.

Lyles: If there are no other questions we'll move on. The last thing on our agenda is the review of our committee referrals and project updates.

### **IV. Review Committee Referrals/Project Updates**

Campbell: I thought it would be important for us not to just continue to meet every month and not have an opportunity to celebrate what you all accomplish as a result of meeting. We listed a couple of items that you all have taken action on, and these are things that are by no means insignificant or small. In particular, the noise walls and the action that came from this Committee to create a letter that went to property owners to encourage them about the consequences of not voting. As you know the noise walls on I-77 at Fourth Ward will not be constructed. We still have additional work and we will be meeting with the neighborhood and the NCDOT to work on outstanding issues. I think this is reason to celebrate.

Campbell: John, would you say a few words about the TIGER Grant in terms of meeting the deadline for the application?

Muth: Both of the applications talked about with this Committee were submitted to the USDOT by the April 28 deadline. I'm not sure when we'll hear back from them, but it will likely be August or September.

Campbell: The 2040 MTP was approved by the CRTPO. You talked a lot about the Rezoning Notification Expansion and it was decided there is no significant action to be taken at this time.

---

# Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 12, 2014

Page 9 of 9

---

We will put that on your June 9 Council Business Meeting Agenda for full Council consideration. The FAPs have been developed and Council adopted those plans, and the permitting process was officially adopted into your FAP. I wanted you to look at these meetings as not just getting updates and receiving information but literally accomplishing a lot.

Howard: How are the CRTPO meetings going?

Pleasant: It appears to be working smoothly. Iredell folks are fully participating. The Thoroughfare Plan alignment got some discussion at the last meeting.

Howard: I just wanted to make sure it was going okay after a year of fighting for two votes.

Lyles: The first meeting had 50 people and I wondered how 50 people could accomplish anything. The issues are typically around alignment and choices. The biggest thing that has kept it steady is that we are all dealing with something new from the State in the Strategic Transportation Formula and process. Aside from the Monroe Road bypass and Prosperity and our rezoning, there haven't been issues of significance that have been controversial. Staff had had the yeoman part of the work because they had to provide all that data to the State.

Lyles: Our next meeting is May 22. Ms. Campbell, do you know what's on our agenda?

Campbell: I don't currently. We wanted to make sure that you all have subject matter you are interested in hearing about.

Howard: It has been a while since this Body heard anything about the transit system. That should be one of those things that stays in the rotation.

Lyles: I think it would be great if we get a report from the Transit Funding Working Group as well.

Campbell: We'll add those two things to the agenda.

Lyles: I want to begin to think about the summer schedule. Unless there is some objection, I think we should take July and August off if we can. If something comes up during the break we'll add a meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:29.



  
**CHARLOTTE.**  
WALKABILITY SCAN  
Overview

Transportation and Planning Committee  
May 12, 2014



Today's Overview

Provide update on Walkability Scan project

- Scanned documents
- Discuss walkability and why it matters
- Briefly describe the process
- Describe next steps

2

 FY2014 Strategic Focus Area Plan				
Focus Area Initiative	Measure	FY2012 Actual	FY2013 Mid-Year Status	FY2014 Target
Promote transportation choices, land use objectives, and transportation investments that improve safety, promote sustainability and livability	Improve Charlotte's walkability and bicycle-friendliness	NA (New)	NA (New)	Increase Charlotte's walk score relative to peer cities.
		NA (New)	NA (New)	Increase Charlotte's walk score in mixed-use activity centers and transit station areas.
		NA (New)	NA (New)	Complete a scan of City policies and practices impacting walkability and recommend needed improvements by June 2014.
		NA (New)	NA (New)	Implement 15 or more pedestrian safety and/or crossing projects by June 2014.
		18.8 sidewalk 11.1 bikeways	13.4 sidewalk 2.5 bikeways	Implement 10 miles of new sidewalk and 10 miles of new bikeways annually.



## What is "Walkability"?

The extent to which the built environment includes easily accessible destinations and allows people to safely and comfortably walk.






4



## What Creates "Walkability"?

- A variety of destinations/land uses (things to walk to!)
- Minimal walking distance (real or perceived)
- Space to walk – wide, unobstructed sidewalks



## What Creates "Walkability"?

- Separation from traffic – wide planting strips, parked cars, bike lanes, e.g.
- Safe and convenient crossings
- Clear/obvious access - doors, entrances, driveways, on-site sidewalks





## What Creates "Walkability"?

- Visual interest/activity
- Screening from elements (street trees, arcades, e.g.)
- Security



## In Turn, Walkability Creates/ Supports Great Places



 The "Market" Wants Livable, Walkable Communities



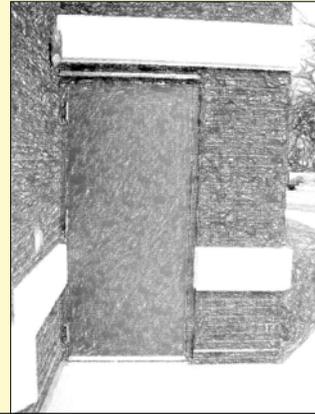
 Towards a More Walkable Charlotte





## Two-Pronged Approach

- Conduct comprehensive document scan
- Evaluate specific examples “on the ground” that demonstrate challenges to walkability



## Deliverables

- Report documenting scan results
- Presentation illustrating key recommendations for improving walkability



 **Townhomes on the Same Street:**



Sidewalk next to traffic



Sidewalk buffered from traffic by planting strip and trees

This slide compares two sidewalk designs for townhomes. The top image shows a sidewalk directly adjacent to a road with traffic, with a red arrow pointing to it from the text 'Sidewalk next to traffic'. The bottom image shows a sidewalk separated from the road by a grassy strip with trees, with a green arrow pointing to it from the text 'Sidewalk buffered from traffic by planting strip and trees'.

 **Apartments on Similar Streets:**



Sidewalk next to traffic



Sidewalk buffered from traffic

This slide compares two sidewalk designs for apartments. The top image shows a sidewalk directly adjacent to a road with traffic, with a red arrow pointing to it from the text 'Sidewalk next to traffic'. The bottom image shows a sidewalk separated from the road by a grassy area, with a green arrow pointing to it from the text 'Sidewalk buffered from traffic'.

 **Charlotte.**

### Retail on Adjacent Blocks:

Sidewalk next to traffic

Blank walls and no clear entrance at street



The left photograph shows a wide sidewalk directly adjacent to a road. A red arrow points from the text 'Sidewalk next to traffic' to the sidewalk. The right photograph shows a building facade with a blank wall and no clear entrance at the street. A red arrow points from the text 'Blank walls and no clear entrance at street' to the wall. The building has a sign for 'PIZZA FUSION' and a slogan 'SAVING THE EARTH'.

 **Charlotte.**

### Retail on Adjacent Blocks:

Sidewalk buffered from traffic

Clear entrances at street



The left photograph shows a sidewalk buffered from traffic by a grassy area. A green arrow points from the text 'Sidewalk buffered from traffic' to the grassy area. The right photograph shows a building facade with clear entrances at the street. A green arrow points from the text 'Clear entrances at street' to the entrance. The building has a sign for 'PIZZA FUSION' and a slogan 'SAVING THE EARTH'.

 **Charlotte.**

### Retail on Same Block:

Multiple storefronts along sidewalk create visual interest and imply access



 **Charlotte.**

### Retail on Same Block:

Pedestrians enter from street

Pedestrians may not enter from street



 **Next Steps**

May June

Identify documents/development examples    Conduct scan/identify issues    Categorize issues    Findings and recommendations

19

 **Questions?**

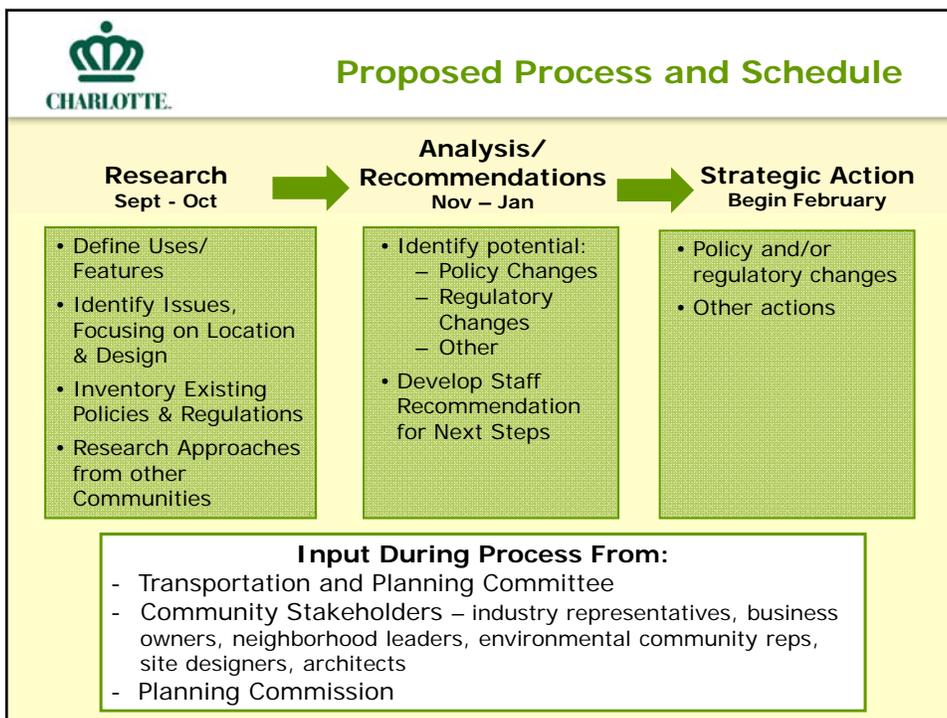


20




## Auto-Oriented Uses: Updated Project Schedule

Transportation and Planning Committee  
May 12, 2014



**Transportation & Planning Committee**  
**Monday, May 12, 2014**  
**3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**  
**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center**  
**Room 280**

**Committee Members:** Vi Lyles, Chair  
David Howard, Vice Chair  
Patsy Kinsey  
Greg Phipps  
Kenny Smith

**Staff Resource:** Debra Campbell, Planning Director and City Manager's Office

---

**AGENDA**

- I. Walkability Scan Project Update – 30 minutes**  
*Staff Resources: Katrina Young, Planning & Tracy Newsome, Transportation*  
Staff will provide a brief overview of the effort underway to complete a scan of City policies and practices impacting walkability. This item is included in the FY2014 Transportation Focus Area Plan.  
*Action: For information only.*
  
- II. Customer Friendly Permitting Process – 5 minutes**  
*Staff Resource: Ann Wall, City Manager's Office*  
Staff will provide an update on the ongoing efforts to identify and make improvements to the permitting and inspection process, including ongoing collaboration with Mecklenburg County.  
*Action: For information only.*
  
- III. Auto Oriented Uses Schedule – 5 minutes**  
*Staff Resource: Laura Harmon, Planning*  
Staff will provide an updated schedule.  
*Action: For information only.*
  
- IV. Review Committee Referrals/Project Updates – 15 minutes**  
*Staff Resource: Debra Campbell, Planning*  
Staff will provide brief updates on the TIGER VI, Noise Walls, 2014 MTP, Rezoning Notification Expansion, and Focus Area Plans.  
*Action: For information only*
  
- V. Future Meeting Topics – 5 minutes**  
*Staff Resource: Debra Campbell, Planning*  
Staff will review and discuss future agenda topics.

**Next Scheduled Meeting:** May 22, 2014 at 12:00 p.m.