Charlotte City Council

Transportation & Planning Committee

Meeting Summary for May 10, 2010

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

I. **Subject:** **Catawba Area Plan**
Action: Motion to forward to Council for public comment (passed unanimously)

II. **Subject:** **Centers, Corridors & Wedges Growth Framework**
Action: Motion to forward to Council for public comment (passed unanimously)

III. **Subject:** **Urban Street Design Guidelines**
Action: None

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Present: David Howard, Michael Barnes, Warren Cooksey, Patsy Kinsey
Time: 3:35 pm – 5:15 pm

ATTACHMENTS

1. Agenda Package
2. CCW.ppt

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

Vice Chairman Michael Barnes called the meeting to order and said that Chairman David Howard would be arriving shortly. He then asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves. He stated that today they had three items to review. He said the first item is the Catawba Area Plan and he then turned it over to Planning Director Debra Campbell.

I. **Catawba Area Plan**

Ms. Campbell said today they will present the draft Plan and they are asking the Committee to forward this to Council for public comment. She then introduced Alberto Gonzalez.

Mr. Gonzalez began reviewing the "Catawba Area Plan" presentation (copy attached). He said that all Area Plans start by looking at the Centers, Corridors and Wedges framework. The majority of the Catawba Area Plan is in a Wedge and a small part of it is in a growth Corridor. It's located in the northwest corner of the City where the Whitewater Center is. He said they also look at the General Development Policies, as well as the Transportation Action Plan and the Urban Street Design Guidelines. Mr. Gonzalez went on to talk about the process schedule and described the different meetings they had on this Plan.

Mr. Gonzalez read the reasons why they should do a Plan for this area. He pointed out there has been a lot of growth in the area and a lot of rezonings for major projects. The opening of the Whitewater Center brought new attention to the area. There are some older industrial areas, like the Clariant site, and the opening of I-485 is creating some demand for new industrial development. So, there is a need for a Plan.

(Council member David Howard entered the meeting)

["Plan Area Existing Land Use" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez said the white area on the map is vacant land. There is a lot of low density residential, vacant open land, older industrial and some newer developments near the Whitewater Center.

Barnes: Is the brown area currently developed?

Gonzalez: That is the former Clariant site. It's the northern part of the Plan. A section of it is undeveloped, but it is a contaminated site. It's also the proposed ReVenture site. A lot of the vacant land has been spoken for, in terms of approved development before the economy went down.

["Market Trends" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez pointed out the approved development areas on the map. He said that Crosland developed the Whitewater development. They haven't gotten off the ground, but that should improve. The market study that was done projects an additional 1,240 residential units and 1.06 million square feet of non-residential use over the next 30 years.

Howard: Do you have a current zoning map?

Gonzalez: Yes, we can go back one slide (page 9). A lot of it is MX-3 Innovative. Part of it is single-family low density and there are two schools.

Howard: So, anything that is not R-3 or I-1 is probably a rezoning?

Gonzalez: Yes.

Johnson: The Plan document in front of you (link to the Plan is listed on the agenda) has everything listed on page 53 also.

["Environmental Conditions" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez pointed out that the whole Plan area is in the watershed area. It's right along the river. It's either in a critical watershed area or a protected watershed area. He stated that that impacts how much development can go out there.

["Opportunities & Issues" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez said one of the pros about the area is the natural features. However, that does also cause an issue in developing the area. There is a lot of topography out there. Some other pros in the area are the accessibility to I-85 and I-485. There are also some great older established neighborhoods, with nice open space. Some of the issues are the incompatibility between land uses, lack of identity and traffic congestion.

["Plan Goals" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez read through each Plan goal, which consists of land use, community design, preservation of the natural environment and transportation improvements.

Barnes: Will the residential development, that has already been approved, be consistent with staff and what the community thought would happen when they participated in the Area Plan process?

Gonzalez: Yes, it will be consistent. Those rezonings were done before the Plan; however, when we were doing the Plan, we looked at all the rezonings.

Barnes: So, are we making the Plan consistent with the approved rezoning or are we making the approved rezonings consistent with the Plan? If it's the latter, how do we have the authority to do that?

Gonzalez: Every rezoning updates the Plan. This Plan recognizes those rezonings.

Howard: That's why this area jumped out. If I remember this right, this Plan came from so many rezonings happening.

Campbell: There are a couple of things with this. First, this Plan is a little reactionary, in terms of the Plan assessment process. There were a number of rezonings and a major thoroughfare had been completed. So, we went through an analysis to see whether it warrants a planning effort. When the rezonings were occurring, although we didn't have this specific vision or policy adopted, we looked at the General Development Policies and other things in order to craft and shape the recommendations. If there was a rezoning proposed when we were doing the Area Plan, we would look at it and then compare and contrast the

two, even though it had not been adopted.

Barnes: It came to mind because of other opportunities to develop an overall design theme. I like the idea of creating a consistency and uniqueness to an area, but I'm curious about how we would go about encouraging the design theme on a rezoning that took place a few years ago.

Campbell: Actually, the Crosland development, Whitewater, is doing some unique things from an environmental perspective and is theming the area as a conservation, eco-friendly type development. So, I believe there is consistency with the major developers.

["Clariant Industrial Site" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez pointed out the area of the old Clariant site. He stated that part of the site is the proposed site for the regional wastewater treatment facility, which is still in the process of getting licenses and permits.

["Transportation Policies" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez said the Plan has a proposed greenway and the Whitewater project by Crosland has a policy to have more greenway connections when development happens, so it becomes an alternative form of transportation in the area. It also is an environmental feature.

["Community Design Policies" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez said their recommendation is for when development happens to be more cognitive of the site, in terms of topography and creeks. They need to be more environmentally sensitive.

["Natural Environment Policies" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez stated that they heard from a lot of members in the environment group and they were very concerned about the loss of tree canopy and the impact on the environment with development. He said they put in a lot of policies addressing the protection of the environment.

Barnes: What are we doing to ensure the natural environment is protected? What are you doing to encourage tree save and green space?

Gonzalez: One recommendation is to use cluster development when appropriate. If you have an area and you want to protect a larger number of acres, then you would concentrate the development in a smaller portion of the acreage available, keeping the overall density throughout the development site.

Barnes: Have we done anything about allowing the 10% tree save to occur in the back of the

development? Have we done anything to encourage or require more trees be saved internal to sites?

Gonzalez: Throughout the Plan we talk about encouraging the preservation of the tree canopy and providing better access points in terms of greenways and cluster development. However, this is policy and there is only so much we can require.

Johnson: We also speak to incorporating the natural environment into the site when it's developed and to try to include the trees.

Barnes: Is there anything we can do to make sure that happens?

Campbell: I can't say for certain, but we think that the revised Tree Ordinance may respond to some of the issues you raise.

Barnes: I hope so. I raise the issues because we recognize we have problems and we need to be more aggressive and make sure more of these sites have more hardwood trees on them. So, I just ask that you keep that in mind.

Howard: We do require a certain number of trees to be put back.

Barnes: Yes, but they put back Bradford Pear trees and that doesn't do a lot for slowing down storm water.

Howard: I have a question about the Whitewater Parkway picture on this slide. Why is the tree line not consistent all the way down?

Schumacher: It's because of the slope.

Campbell: One of the things I also want to point out is, in part of the rezoning process, we have a section on environmental sensitivity and consistency. We are negotiating through site design, but it is not a requirement today.

Howard: I want to be clear to Councilman Barnes, when you have these big areas where we are talking about industrial, you have to do some clear cutting of trees because there is no way to do a warehouse without doing that.

Barnes: I was referring to tree save for retail and residential.

["Proposed Corrective Rezonings" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez said they have had some corrective rezonings in the large vacant areas and are recommending it to be residential. There is an existing single-family development at R-17 and we are recommending bringing it to R-6.

Howard: The idea that we keep allowing little pockets of residential around industrial is one of my concerns. We need to correct those and rezone. Essentially, you'll only put little houses there because no one is going to buy a big house when it's right near industrial sites. I hope we get a little more aggressive about that.

Barnes: What's currently in the I-1 box?

Gonzalez: There is an old farmhouse and all the other land is vacant.

Cooksey: We need to be prepared when we discuss this going forward on the issue of when we are talking about getting rid of industrial land and having a parallel study that says industrial land is vanishing and has an economic impact on development. I agree industrial here is not the best idea anymore, but we do need to be aware of it as we are moving forward.

Howard: I'm thinking we should do it the other way and get rid of the low pocket residential where it makes sense. It will essentially be more starter homes.

Campbell: Industrial is extremely important to us and you may recall that we did a study and analysis of industrial zoned land and we looked at market feasibility. We are not going to get very many large manufacturing plants. We will get mostly warehouse and distribution. I appreciate your comments and I want to try to emphasize that we are very sensitive to that issue.

["Outstanding Issues" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez read through the concerns from the citizens and property owners. There were certain property owners that wanted non-residential land use recommended in the Wedge, particularly retail near Ryan Stations. Some property owners on the other side of the Whitewater Parkway were hoping for some non-residential uses in that area as well. Some concern was expressed on the progress of the ReVenture Park. Others expressed concerns on the impact of the environment and making those recommendations impacting in the Plan.

Barnes: What were their concerns about burning garbage?

Gonzalez: They don't say it like that, it's renewable energy. It's a process of biomass.

Barnes: I'm sensitive to this issue about the industrial land. Is ReVenture going to occupy the northern part of the area in brown and the southern part would be occupied by the new wastewater treatment facility?

Gonzalez: Yes, but the wastewater facility will be part of the ReVenture Park also.

Barnes: The reason I'm raising the issue is because I'm curious to see if there is excess capacity on the site for other industrial uses? Also, is that in the best interest for the area in light of the negative winds, buffering or the like? If it's just garbage burning and smelling

up the area, the starter homes that Councilmember Howard was talking about will be the only thing there.

Gonzalez: When we were doing this, we looked to see what else could go there. It's a contaminated site and I don't know that you would want anything else there. ReVenture has some offices/flex development. The areas closer to the residential would be light industrial.

Howard: It could smell around the lake area.

Gonzalez: I was curious to see what Crosland would think about it, but they seem to be okay, in terms of development.

Howard: I think we should have the ReVenture people come and talk to us before this goes to Council. That way we can ask them questions about our concerns.

Barnes: Also, we have been presented with the opportunity by CMU to build another wastewater plant where number 4 (referencing the slide) is. So, you have two uses there that some people consider undesirable. It's also right off the river, so that might impact it as well. We need to be careful because we are trying to turn this into a desirable area, but we want to make sure we aren't also sticking them with something that, in ten years, is going to have to be revisited by Council because people in that area can't breathe.

Campbell: We agree. Although we can't specifically describe the ReVenture project, we are confident that we would not have the adverse impacts you have identified. We also have confidence in CMU as well.

Howard: I think we need to hear about both the ReVenture Park and the new wastewater treatment plant at a separate meeting because it is a big part of this Plan. (All Committee members agreed) Also, if we are pushing industrial down towards I-85 near Sam Wilson Road, we should look at that exit. If you miss that ramp, you go all the way to Belmont and then have to turn around and come back. Would you advocate as part of the Area Plan for the state to add an off ramp off of I-85 onto Sam Wilson Road? Right now you have to go all the way up to Morris Chapel Road.

Pleasant: I know right now you have to weave into the area of I-485 to get to the Sam Wilson Road exit.

Horton: Sam Wilson Road does not have access from I-485, but it does from I-85.

Howard: Well just look at it before this comes back.

Pleasant: This would require more investigation through the MUMPO process.

["Plan Adoption" slide]

Mr. Gonzalez read through the proposed schedule and stated that they hope to have Council adopt the Plan by mid-June.

Barnes: I want to be clear about my comments and find some way to incorporate them into the analysis the rest of the Council receives. I want those issues to be taken to the full Council and considered by staff.

Gonzalez: We will.

Council member Barnes made a motion and was seconded by Council member Cooksey to forward the Catawba Area Plan to Council for public comment. *(Motion passed unanimously)*

II. Centers, Corridors and Wedges Update

Chairman Howard said the next item on the agenda is the Centers, Corridors and Wedges (CCW) Update. Ms. Campbell stated that Laura Harmon would quickly run through the presentation since this is not a new concept to the Committee. Ms. Harmon began reviewing the "Centers, Corridors and Wedges Update" presentation (copy attached).

Ms. Harmon reminded the Committee of the process and the schedule. She discussed what's new in the updated CCW. This one has a goal statement and guiding principles, more information on Wedges, redefinition of Activity Centers, more guidance for infrastructure/public facilities, urban design and the natural environment, and an explanation of how to use the concept.

Ms. Harmon read through the goal and then the vision. She stated that the CCW framework is different than an Area Plan because it's not site specific and it provides general guidance. The framework consists of three things: Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges. Ms. Harmon read through each slide discussing the expectations of the Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges.

Howard: How do you make sure the Wedge doesn't become a bunch of Centers?

Campbell: Through the Area Plan process.

Barnes: The second and third bullet points on slide 15 could be contradictory because you have the higher density retirement housing for the later stages in life, but you also have low density single-family housing. So, you can have Rosewood Assisted Living right off of Mallard Creek Road right next to an R-3 development. Can you help me to appreciate whatever consistency exists between those two bullets?

Harmon: We expect most of the housing in these areas to be low density, but we know there are some locations that are appropriate for higher density, particularly along major thoroughfares and within Route 4. We need to look at the transportation network and

infrastructure in those places, and look around and see what the context is. We use the Area Plans or the General Development Policy (GDP) to determine where there's higher density. We've also talked about going back and adjusting the Housing Locational Policy and the GDP and tweaking how much density goes into an area.

Barnes: You need to, because one of the confusing issues that arise from my standpoint, is a developer can propose developments in the Wedges that seem to be more appropriate for a Corridor. Then we wind up in a battle about what CCW means, because your presentation has the expectations you stated in bullet points 2 and 3. If there is some way to help us explain this to the private sector and our communities, it would be helpful to me. One of the things that you guys fall back on is the GDP, but it creates problems for us because there are sparks flying between the GDP, CCW, the Area Plan, community intent and developer intent.

Howard: What you are really talking about is less density in the Corridor. Low density, to me, means something different.

Campbell: Low density is more than 3 units to the acre, from a zoning perspective.

Howard: But when you say "predominately low," that means a resident is going to think you mean that everything should be 3, so why would you support a 6 or 8 out there?

Campbell: Because we are not necessarily utilizing CCW to make parcel specific land use decisions. CCW is a way of thinking about how we organize development and how we have a common vernacular. There will be, and should be, locations within the Wedges where there will be an opportunity to have higher density development. If we exclude higher density development in the Wedges, we don't think we will have the range of housing opportunities that are needed and desired. Through the Area planning process is where we get to the parcel specific recommendations.

Howard: I just think you should use the word "low." You should say lower or less.

Campbell: If "less" or "lower" dense is a recommendation, we can go with that.

Ms. Harmon continued on with the presentation and read through how the CCW will be used. She also showed the Committee 3 different examples. She stated that with the Tyvola/Archdale Station Area Plan, they started out identifying the growth Corridor and the Wedge. They then developed a concept map showing what should generally happen in the Corridor and Wedge areas.

Kinsey: I have some concerns over the Corridor. Tell me again what determines a Corridor and explain how we will be able to protect the existing neighborhoods within those Corridors

Harmon: We defined the Corridor by having at least 3 out of 4 major transportation facilities running parallel to each other. That could be a major thoroughfare, an expressway or interstate, freight rail line, or a rapid transit line. With respect to the established

neighborhoods, we've identified them specifically as a subarea of our growth Corridors and talk, at length, about preservation of those areas and how they should be maintained and enhanced. We think they are critical areas and do not want to give the impression that we thought that change for those areas is appropriate.

Kinsey: Something you said earlier concerned me when you mentioned higher density inside Route 4, because that is inside District 1. I'm concerned about the older neighborhoods that have been there a lot longer than some of the corridors.

Harmon: I think examples of where, inside Route 4, we might be looking for somewhat higher density would probably be in the PED Districts. Those are higher per acre, so you might see some higher density residential along East Boulevard, Beatties Ford Rd, or Central Ave.

Kinsey: I guess another concern I have is developers will see it's in a Corridor, so I need to do all kinds of high density. So, my understanding is, when there is an Area Plan, it takes precedence?

Campbell: Absolutely.

Ms. Harmon continued and said they hope to receive a motion from the Committee today to go to full Council on May 24 for public comment. Their goal is to have Council adopt it on June 28.

Council member Barnes made a motion and was seconded by Council member Kinsey to forward the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Update to full Council for public comment. Council member Cooksey pointed out that the May 24 Council agenda is extremely overloaded and was wondering if we could change the date. Chairman Howard recommended going ahead and moving it forward because we aren't voting on the schedule. *(Motion passed unanimously)*

III. <u>Urban Street Design Guidelines</u>

Chairman Howard said the next item on the agenda is the Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) and asked Danny Pleasant to make any necessary comments. Mr. Pleasant reminded the Committee that Council adopted the USDG in 2007 after a very long process with staff, stakeholders and many others. They use these design principles in CIP projects, Area Plans and conditional rezoning cases. He said that most streets get built through the ordinance process, so it's time to move in that direction. Moving into ordinance language has been pretty stressful and has caused worry about costs, compatibility of other ordinances and how the City will fill the promise of flexibility and predictability of the USDG. He said they have tried to address those along the way and it's taken a lot of staff time and a tremendous amount of work to get to where they are today. He stated that they will be presenting the language over the next few meetings. There will be time to revise, if needed, before adoption. Mr. Schumacher added that the intent for today is an introduction and

refresher and the next Committee meeting will be fully committed to talking, in depth, about the requirements. He then turned it over to Mike Davis.

Mr. Davis began reviewing the "Urban Street Design Guidelines Ordinance Implementation" presentation (copy attached). He said the USDG Policy book is very large and if any Committee members would like to have one he could get them a copy.

["What are the Urban Street Design Guidelines?" slide]

He stated that the USDG policy manual lists 17 policy statements at the beginning of the manual. The intent of the statements was so you could get an expectation of what the manual would be all about. Within that is a 6-step planning and design process, which is a process that staff uses on CIP and Area Plan projects. The idea is to take a lot of different information and define process about how that information is used in collaboration with groups of people to make informed choices about street design. The street options bullet point on this slide is basically saying we want to make sure our street designs are actually based on land use. One size does not fit all. Finally, the USDG policy gets specific about dimensions and how to think about certain trade-off decisions. It gives a sense of priority about what kind of elements are most appropriate in certain conditions.

["Why Do We Need the USDG? slides]

Mr. Davis said there are a number of reasons why they feel we need a USDG policy. When looking at different modes, most of the streets and roads in Charlotte don't have sidewalks, roughly half the City's signalized intersections are considered poor for pedestrians and almost all of those same intersections are considered poor for bicyclists. Also, about a fifth of our thoroughfares are highly congested. He also stated that over the next 25 years, they are expecting a 35% growth in vehicular traffic and with that, they are expecting a doubling of the number of thoroughfare lane miles to be highly congested.

Mr. Davis said this policy is about dealing with the deficiencies we currently have and those that are expected in the future, and address them by trying to provide transportation choices. It's about accommodating growth and better street design.

["Implementation/Experience-to-Date: Area Plans" slide]

Mr. Davis said they have been using USDG in small Area Plans. Area Plans contain recommendations about street design and CDOT has been using principles from the USDG policy to inform some of those design choices. They have also used the 6-step process. There have been 9 completed Area Plans and there are 6 more underway.

["Implementation/Experience-to-Date: CIP" slides]

Mr. Davis stated that the CIP is another place they have been using USDG. The slide lists a variety of projects and programs that have been completed or are underway. He said they

actually began working to apply principles before the USDG was even adopted, as they were identifying what they felt like were best practices. The slide with the pictures are all examples of some of the projects that have been put on the ground.

["Implementation/Experience-to-date: Land Development" slide]

Mr. Davis said they have used the USDG for land development in a limited fashion. It primarily happens through conditional rezonings. It's common for CDOT or Planning to ask petitioners to take specific concepts out of the USDG and incorporate them in their designs.

["Converting USDG Policies into Ordinance" slide]

Mr. Davis said to convert this into an ordinance, they will need to update the Subdivision Ordinance. In order to do that work successfully, they will need to reach into the Zoning Ordinance and the Tree Ordinance to make a few minor corrections, as they relate to changes we want to make here. He said they have some ideas about modifying ordinances so that we can get flexibility and predictability and that will be discussed at the next meeting.

Howard: This is the time when you are probably looking for input on how to ensure this process moves through. I just heard you say we are going to see a lot of "black lines" to different ordinances. It needs to be presented to us in an explainable way.

Pleasant: We will do that. We will set it out in a way you can see what's changed and what hasn't changed. We will make it as understandable as we can.

["Preview of Next Meeting" slide]

Mr. Davis said this slide lays out what we plan to show you at the next meeting on May 27.

Barnes: Explain the reason for the deferrals on the creek crossings and thoroughfare rights-of-way.

Pleasant: A while back we had engaged you in a discussion with Matt Magnasco on Connectivity Policies. We talked about creek crossing and if the City should be involved with them and so on. We felt it was a good discussion, but hasn't evolved quite enough to amend zoning codes. It needs more work from a water quality perspective and a cost perspective. We thought it was better to save it for another year after we proceed with Connectivity. It all has to do with timing.

Howard: What about the thoroughfare rights-of-way?

Davis: Basically, both the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance, today, identify that certain thoroughfares carry prescribed rights-of-way that should be preserved for the purposes of setback. With USDG comes different expectations about the streets and how wide they are. We are also waiting because the NCDOT is looking to get rid of the

Thoroughfare Plan Classification System and replace it with a Comprehensive Transportation Plan. It's meant to be multi-modal in nature and we felt it best to deal with it at a later date.

Howard: When you ask for the wider curb, you have a planting strip and that goes to the sidewalk anyway, right?

Davis: This is referring to cases where the developer is not building the infrastructure, they are reserving the right-of-way for future improvements.

Campbell: Like transitional setback on Independence Blvd.

["Schedule" slide]

Mr. Davis read through the schedule of when they expect to discuss this at the Committee meetings, public meetings and Council meetings.

Howard: The flexibility is something happening with all ordinances coming together and there was some review going on with that. What's the timetable on that? It could throw a monkey wrench in this.

Schumacher: Staff is developing a response paper to follow up from the comments you got that night. I believe that is intended to come in 20 – 30 days.

Howard: Will it come to Council or Committee?

Schumacher: We are not certain yet and are still working that out.

Howard: Okay, thank you and thanks to staff for all your work.

Meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Transportation & Planning Committee

Monday, May 10; 3:30 – 5:00 PM
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
Room 280

Committee Members: David Howard, Chair
Michael Barnes, Vice Chair
Warren Cooksey
Susan Burgess
Patsy Kinsey

Staff Resource: Jim Schumacher

AGENDA

I. Catawba Area Plan – 20 minutes
Staff Resource: Alberto Gonzalez
Staff will present the draft Plan for review by the Committee.
Action: Forward the Plan to Council for public comment.
Attachment: 1. Catawba Area Plan.ppt
Link to Plan:
http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Planning/Area+Planning/Plans/Catawba-Whitewater/home.htm

II. Centers, Corridors & Wedges Growth Framework – 30 minutes
Staff Resource: Laura Harmon
Staff will present the draft recommendations to the Committee.
Action: Consider forwarding the Plan for public comment on May 24, 2010 by the City Council.
Attachment: 2. Draft CCW.doc

III. Urban Street Design Guidelines – 40 minutes
Staff Resource: Mike Davis
Staff will give an overview of the Urban Street Design Guidelines policy, including why we have a policy for street design, how we've used it and our intent to update city ordinances to reflect the policy. Staff will provide a schedule for completion and preview the topics to be covered in the ordinance updates
Attachment: 3. USDG Overview.ppt

Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, May 27 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 280

Distribution:	Mayor & City Council	Curt Walton, City Manager	Leadership Team
	Transportation Cabinet	Alberto Gonzalez	

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CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG PLANNING

Catawba Area Plan

Transportation & Planning Committee

May 10th, 2010

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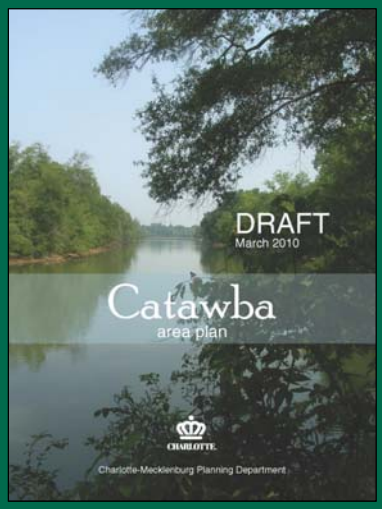
CITY OF CHARLOTTE

Presentation Outline

- Purpose and Overview
- Plan Development Process
- Existing Conditions
- Plan Policies
- Next Steps
- Request Committee to Forward to Council for Public Comment



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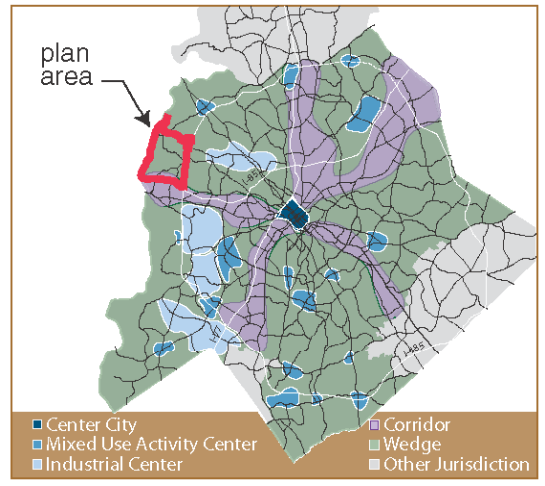
Policy Framework

- Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework
- General Development Policies
- Transportation Action Plan and Urban Street Design Guidelines



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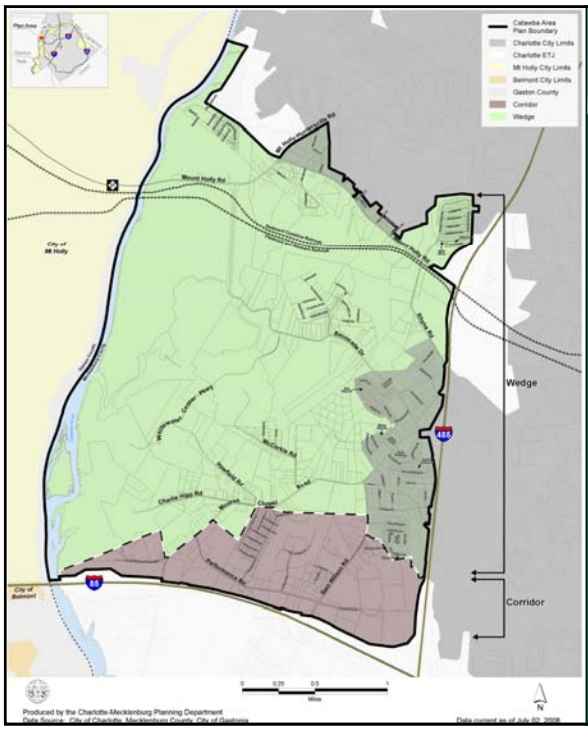

Catawba Area Plan Boundary

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Process Schedule

Data Collection and Analysis

2007-2009

Public Kickoff Meetings July 8, 2008 & August 5, 2008

Advisory Group Meetings (10) September 2008 – September 2009

Information Refinement Spring / Summer 2009

Draft Document March 2010

Final Public Meeting April 13, 2010

Review & Adoption – Spring 2010
- Public Comments with Planning Committee
- **Review by T&P Committee**
- Review and Rec. by Planning Committee
- Public Comments with City Council
- Recommendation by T&P Committee
- Review & Adoption by City Council

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Why Develop a Plan for Catawba?

- Update existing plans to provide more specific guidance for future growth
- Area population growth and development
- Transportation & Infrastructure Improvements
- Provide guidance consistent with City's Growth Vision

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Existing Conditions

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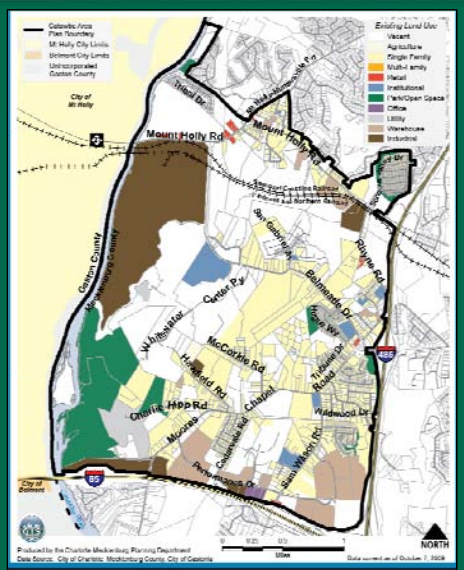
Plan Area Existing Land Use



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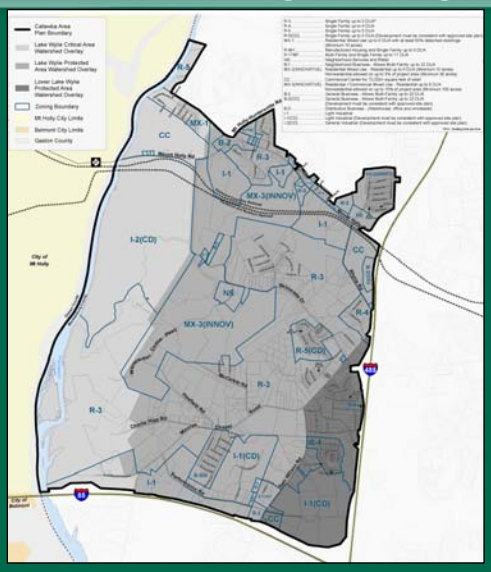
Plan Area Existing Zoning



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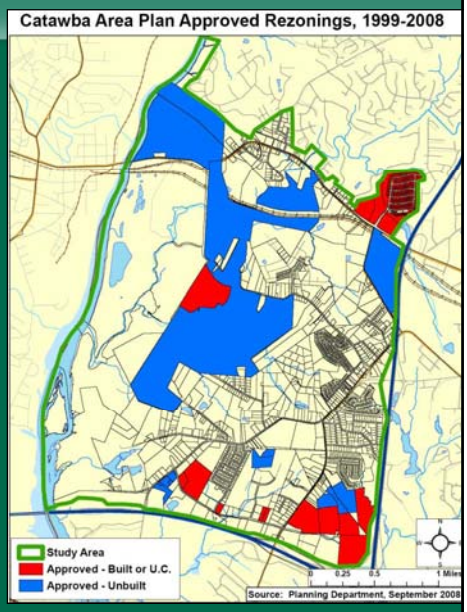
Market Trends

Approved Development
- 3,494 residential units
- 2.24 million sq. ft. non-residential

Additional Demand Projected
(long term up to 2030)

- 1,240 residential units
- 1.06 million sq. ft. non-residential

Source: Market Study by Warren & Associates, Inc.



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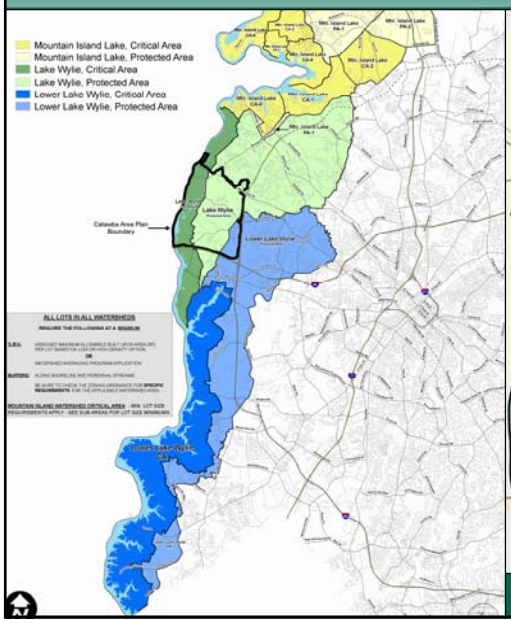
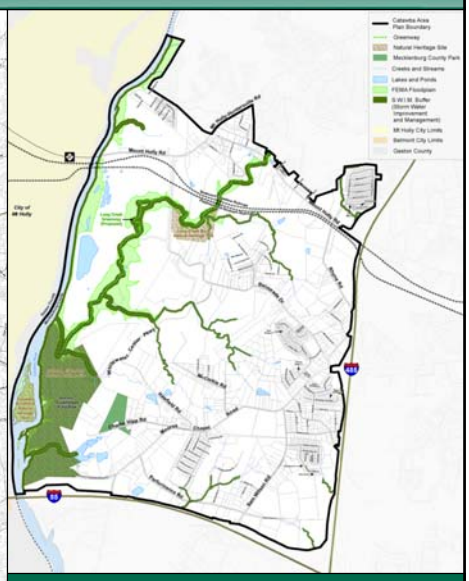
Environmental Conditions





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Plan Policies

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Opportunities & Issues

- **Opportunities**
  - Natural features and environment
  - Residential neighborhoods
  - Develop an overall "design theme"
  - Transportation accessibility I-85 and I-485
- **Issues**
  - Incompatibility between land uses
  - Lack of identity
  - Traffic congestion
  - Impact of public facilities
  - Loss of natural areas
  - Public access to the river.

The *Catawba Area* will have a central focus on the river, environmental stewardship, protection of green space, and maximization of enjoyment of the river. Proper integration of land uses will create a sustainable community known for its:

- Natural resources protected through the use of innovative and environmentally sensitive development practices;
- High quality design that complements the area's natural features;
- Enhanced public facilities and services;
- Mixture of housing types and neighborhood-serving land uses;
- Viable employment centers in appropriate locations; and a
- Safe and well-connected transportation network that provides options for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit users.

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Plan Goals

- **Land Use** – Provide a balanced mix of land uses at appropriate locations.
- **Community Design** – Design new developments that incorporate the area's existing natural features.
- **Natural Environment –** Balance growth and development with the preservation of open space.
- **Transportation –** Strengthen the relationship between land use and transportation by improving connectivity and encouraging mixed-use developments where appropriate.
- **Infrastructure & Public Facilities -** Provide public facilities that serve the area and help sustain future development without endangering the environment.

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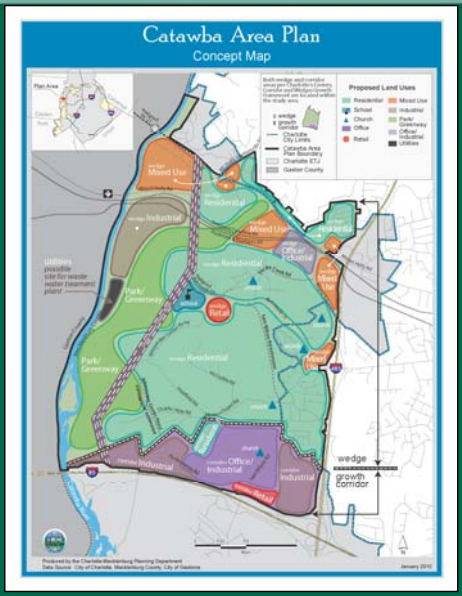
Draft Concept Plan



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Land Use Policies

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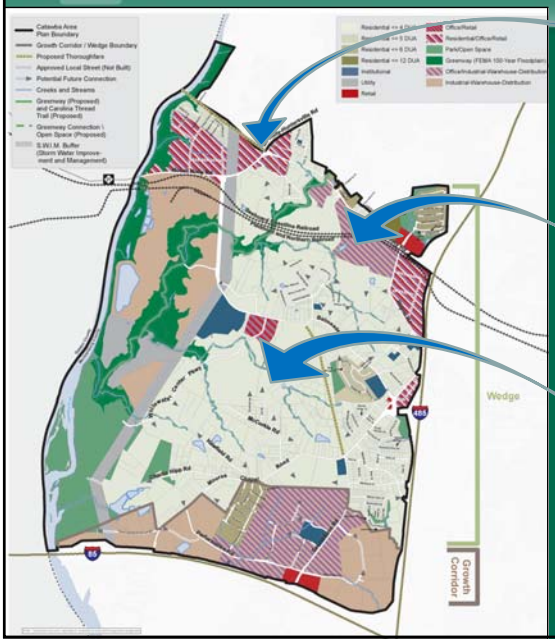

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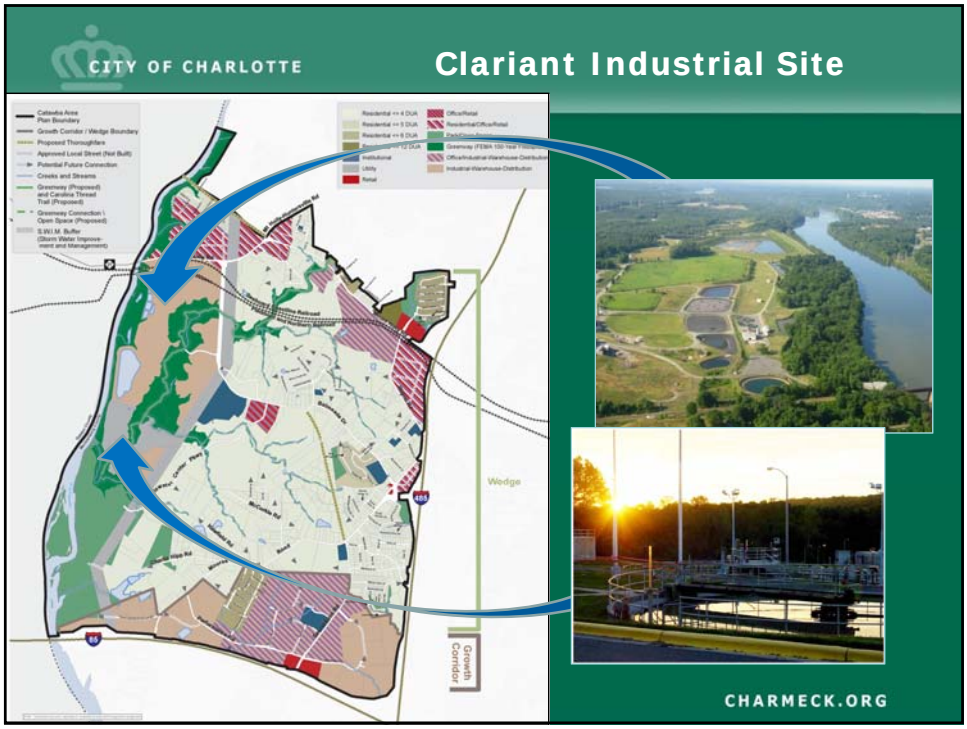
CITY OF CHARLOTTE
Clariant Industrial Site
Wedge
Growth Corridor
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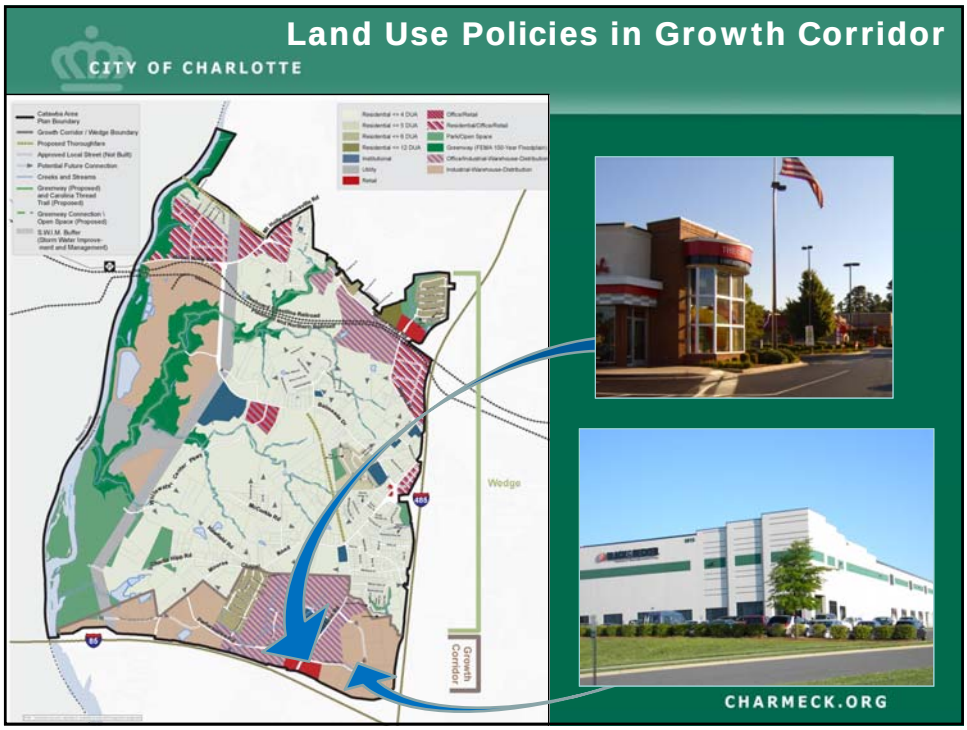
Land Use Policies in Growth Corridor
CITY OF CHARLOTTE
Wedge
Growth Corridor
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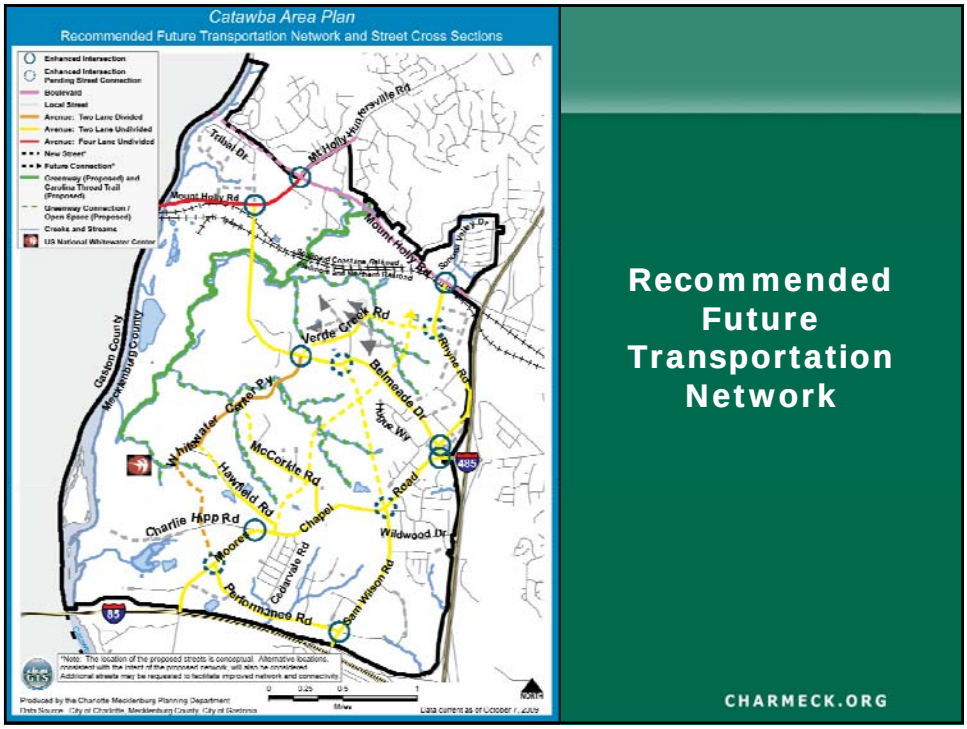
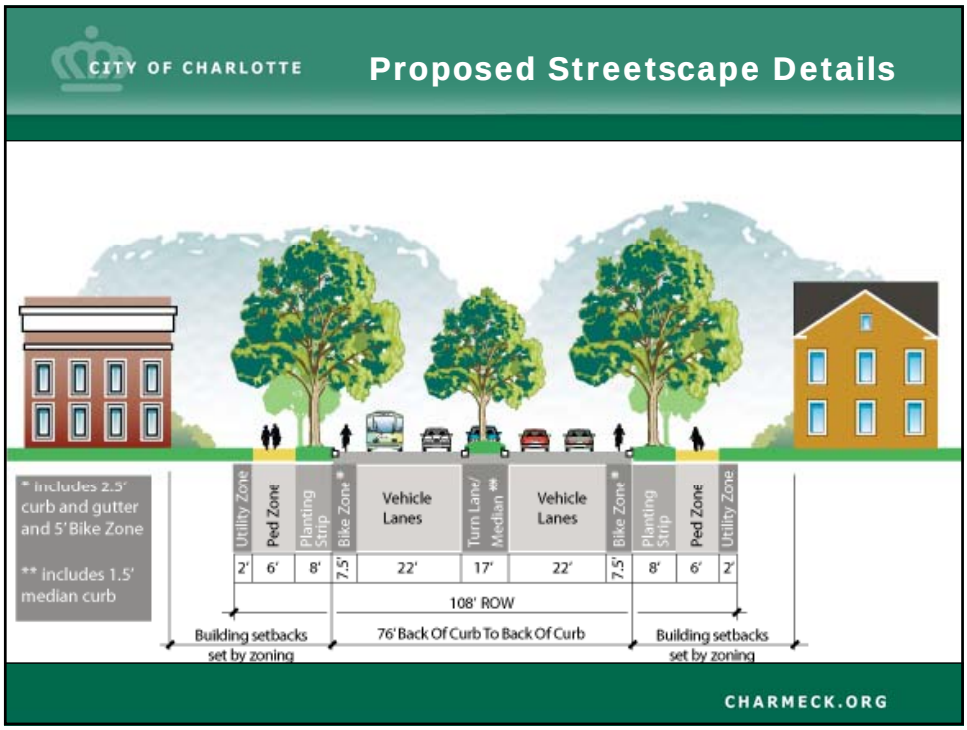

Catawba Area Plan
Recommended Future Transportation Network and Street Cross Sections
Recommended Future Transportation Network
CHARMECK.ORG


CITY OF CHARLOTTE
Proposed Streetscape Details
* includes 2.5' curb and gutter and 5' Bike Zone
** includes 1.5' median curb
Utility Zone
Ped Zone
Planting Strip
Bike Zone *
Vehicle Lanes
Turn Lane/ Median **
Vehicle Lanes
Bike Zone *
Planting Strip
Ped Zone
Utility Zone
2' 6' 8' 7.5' 22' 17' 22' 7.5' 8' 6' 2'
108' ROW
Building setbacks set by zoning
76' Back Of Curb To Back Of Curb
Building setbacks set by zoning
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Transportation Policies

- Encourage mixed – use developments to reduce trips, shorten trip distances, and promote alternative modes of travel.

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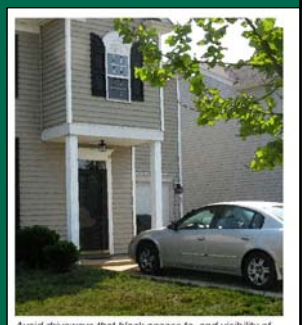
Community Design Policies

- Help ensure that new development complements the existing or desired character of the Community.

13. Building Architecture & Site Design			
Policy Number	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached & Multi-Family	Close attention to building and site design serves to enhance the community. Design policies do not result in conformity of design, but provide direction for both new and infill development.
13a	●	●	Preserve historically or architecturally significant structures.
13b	●	●	Avoid blank walls along pedestrian circulation areas.
13c	●	●	Orient building towards street (unless a thoroughfare) or common open space and provide pedestrian access to the street.
13d	●	●	Blend scale/setbacks of buildings with existing structures.
13e	●	●	**Encourage clustered development where appropriate, such as areas where the preservation of open space and/ or environmentally sensitive areas is particularly important. (see page 23 for detailed illustration)**
13f	●	●	**Provide a variety of housing types (floor plans, exterior treatments and materials, massing, and roof forms).**
13g	●	●	**Avoid driveways that block access to, and visibility of, the front entrance of the structure.**
13h	●		**Porches should be a minimum of 6' deep and at least half the width of the facade (excluding garages.)**
13i	●	●	**Design residential garages to reduce visual impact from the street.**

Orient building towards street (unless a thoroughfare) or common open space and provide pedestrian access to the street.



Avoid driveways that block access to, and visibility of, the front entrance of the structure.

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Public Facilities & Infrastructure Policies

- Ensure that civic infrastructure keeps pace with development.

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Natural Environment Policies

Rain gardens help mitigate the impact of storm water runoff.

Encourage environmentally sensitive development practices that avoid excessive clearing and grading.

- Ensure that the natural environment is protected with increased development.

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Plan Implementation Process

Catawba Area Plan

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Development
- Corrective Rezonings

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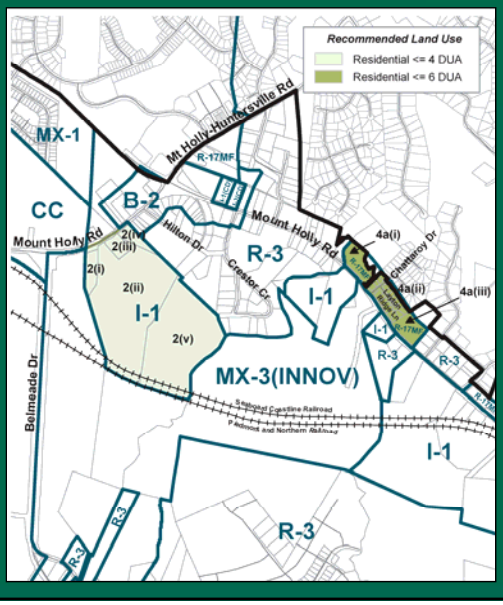
Proposed Corrective Rezonings



- Align zoning with existing development and recommended future land use.

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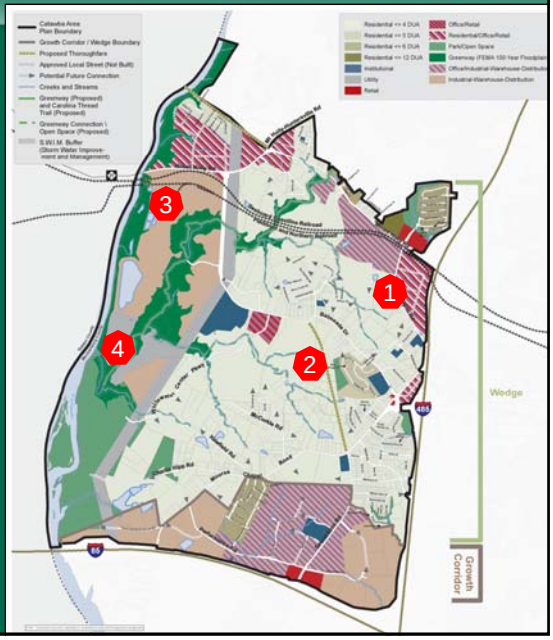
Outstanding Issues

1. Some property owners wanting more non-residential land uses recommended in the Wedge
2. Concern over proposed street connections
3. Progress of proposed Reventure Industrial Park
4. Impact of waste water treatment facility on shore line along Catawba River and Long Creek



CITY OF CHARLOTTE

Plan Adoption

- Final Public Meeting - April 13
- Planning Commission (Planning Committee)
  Review & Public Comment - April 20
  Recommendation - May18
- Transportation & Planning Committee
  Review & Refer to Council - TODAY
- City Council
  Public Comment - May 24 tentative
- Transportation & Planning Committee
  Recommendation - June 14 tentative
- City Council
  Vote on Adoption - June 28 tentative

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Questions?

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CENTERS • CORRIDORS • WEDGES

Growth Framework

DRAFT

May 2010

Acknowledgements

Planning Department staff led the development of this document, with involvement by staff from the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT), Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), Neighborhood and Business Services, Engineering and Property Management (Engineering), and Corporate Communications.

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Centers, Corridors and Wedges

Growth Framework

Draft

May 2010

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At a Glance: Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework

The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework updates the original *Centers and Corridors* concept by establishing a vision for future growth and development for Charlotte. It does this by: 1) identifying three geographic types used to categorize land in Charlotte's "sphere of influence" - Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges; and 2) outlining the desired characteristics of each of these geographic areas.

While the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* provides an overall vision for future growth and development, specific direction for decision making will continue to be provided by policy documents such as area plans and the *Urban Street Design Guidelines*; and by regulations such as zoning and subdivision ordinances.

In particular, the amount, intensity and type of new development will be determined by the applicable area plan. For residential development, the *General Development Policies* should be used to determine appropriate density if the area plan does not specify the density.

As area plans are developed, a number of factors will be used to determine the amount of development that is appropriate for areas within each Activity Center, Growth Corridor or Wedge. These factors include available vacant or underutilized land and the existing and potential transportation network and capacity. Another key factor that will help to determine the appropriateness of future development, particularly in and adjacent to existing neighborhoods, will be the ability to reduce adverse impacts on the existing neighborhood character. This will be an especially important factor in not only the Wedge Areas, but also the Established Neighborhood Areas, a subarea of Growth Corridors.

Below is a summary of the key characteristics of Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges as envisioned in the future. It is intended to be used as a quick reference, with the more detailed information needed for decision making provided within the text of this document.

Goal: Charlotte will continue to be one of the most livable cities in the country, with a vibrant economy, a thriving natural environment, a diverse population and a cosmopolitan outlook. Charlotteans will enjoy a range of choices for housing, transportation, education, entertainment and employment. Safe and attractive neighborhoods will continue to be central to the City's identity and citizen involvement key to its viability.

Activity Centers

Activity Centers are focal points of economic activity typically with concentrations of compact development. The expectation for Activity Centers in the future is for:

- further infill development and intensification in Center City;
- infill development, as well as redevelopment of underutilized sites, in existing Mixed Use Activity Centers;
- greater emphasis on a mix of commercial and civic uses and inclusion of moderate and, in some cases, high density housing in Mixed Use Activity Centers;
- concentration of industrial, warehouse and distribution in Industrial Centers;
- multi-modal transportation system and interconnected network of streets, especially in Center City and Mixed Use Activity Centers;
- more urban and pedestrian-oriented form of development;
- pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the Center and connecting to adjacent neighborhoods; and
- Activity Centers (in addition to Growth Corridors) to be priority areas for enhancements to supporting infrastructure, particularly the transportation network.

Growth Corridors

The City's five Growth Corridors stretch from Center City to the edge of Charlotte. They are characterized by the diversity of places they encompass – from historic neighborhoods, to vibrant mixed-use areas, to significant employment and shopping districts – and by the accessibility and connectivity they provide for these places. The expectation for Growth Corridors in the future is for:

- greater emphasis on office, residential and mixed use development, especially around transit stations;
- continuation of industrial and warehouse/distribution uses, particularly in locations with high levels of motor vehicle accessibility;
- additional development of vacant land and redevelopment of underutilized properties;
- increased intensity and a more pedestrian form of development, with greatest intensity development in Transit Station Areas;
- preservation and enhancement of established single family neighborhoods;
- multi-modal transportation system with a dense network of interconnected streets; and
- Growth Corridors (in addition to Activity Centers) to be priority areas for enhancements to supporting infrastructure, particularly the transportation network.

Wedges

Wedges are the large areas between Growth Corridors where residential neighborhoods have developed and continue to grow. Wedges consist mainly of low density housing, as well as a limited amount of moderate density housing and supporting facilities and services. The expectation for Wedges in the future is for:

- existing neighborhoods to be preserved and enhanced;
- opportunities for "life-long living" with housing for residents at every stage of life;
- new low density housing, as well as limited moderate to high density housing that is well-designed and strategically located in places with infrastructure capacity to support higher densities;
- neighborhood-scale commercial and civic uses located to serve the immediate area;
- multi-modal transportation system to provide residents better access to and from work, shopping, schools and recreation;
- more street connections within Wedges and between Wedges and adjoining Activity Centers and Growth Corridors;
- greater emphasis on safe, convenient and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and
- greater emphasis on protection of land and water resources than will typically occur in more intensely developed areas of Activity Centers and Growth Corridors.

Introduction

Overview

In the early 1990s, the Charlotte City Council recognized that the City's quality of life in the coming years would be largely dependent upon how the City responded to growth and redevelopment. After extensive study and citizen input, the Council endorsed a concept known as *Centers and Corridors* as a tool to guide growth. The intent of that concept was to form a stronger link between land use and transportation to guide growth into areas that could support new development or were in need of redevelopment, and away from areas that could not support growth.

The original *Centers and Corridors* concept has been a valuable tool, providing an overarching policy basis for critical growth-related initiatives such as the development of the *2025 Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan* and the subsequent planning for five rapid transit corridors. However, after 15 years, the *Centers and Corridors* concept is in need of an update to better reflect changing conditions.

What is the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework?

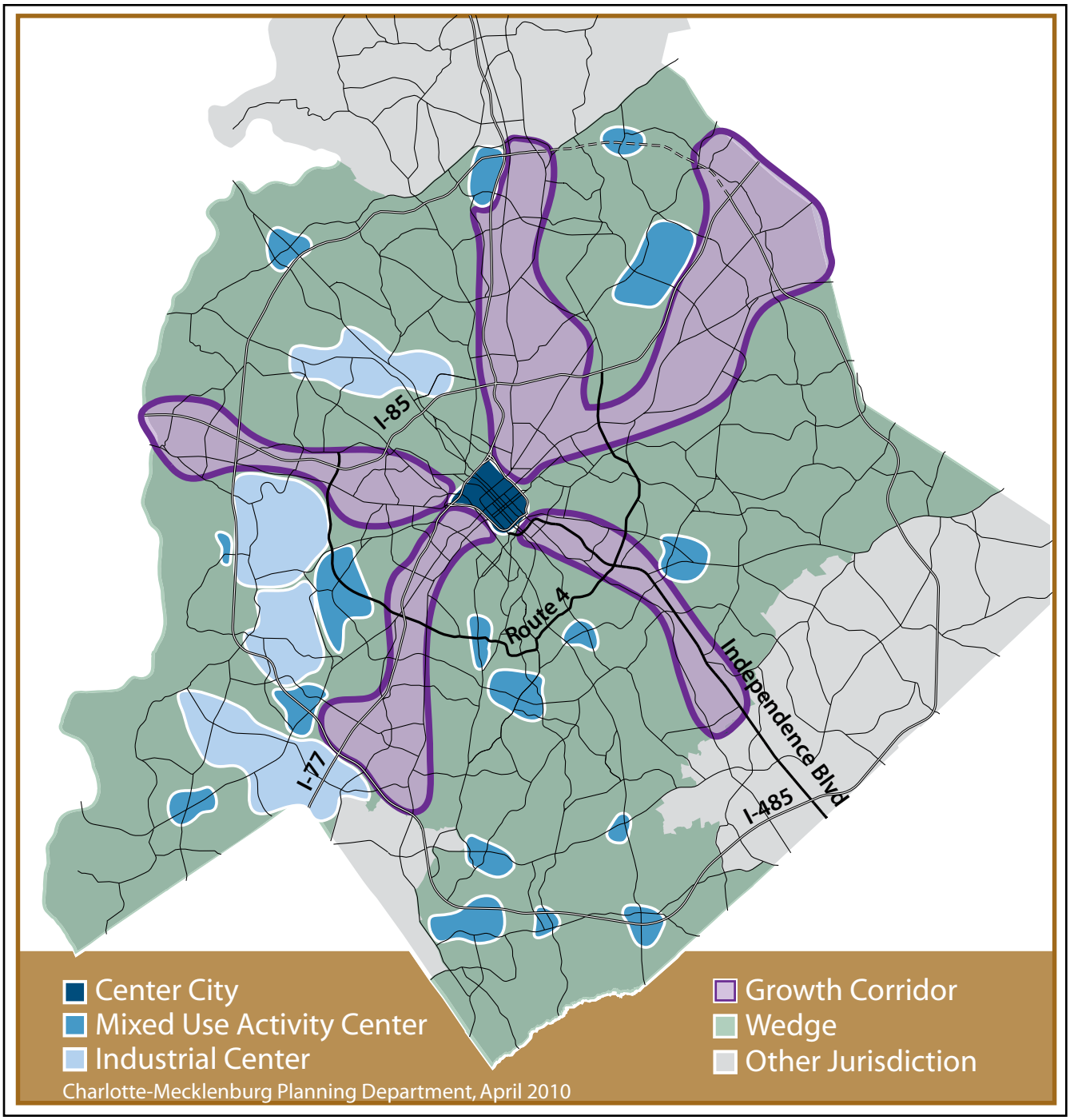
The *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* updates the original *Centers and Corridors* concept by refining the vision for future growth and development for Charlotte. It does this by:

- Identifying three geographic types used to categorize land in Charlotte's "sphere of influence" – **Activity Centers, Growth Corridors** and **Wedges**; and
- Outlining the desired characteristics of each of these geographic areas.

A brief summary of the three geographic types – **Activity Centers, Growth Corridors** and **Wedges** – is provided on the following pages. Also provided is a map illustrating how land within Charlotte's jurisdiction is currently categorized as being within an Activity Center, Growth Corridor or Wedge, based on the concept presented in this document. However, the map is intended to be a "snapshot" in time and will likely evolve as new area plans are adopted. Through each area planning process, the boundaries of the pertinent Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges will be reviewed and adjusted, if necessary, and any newly identified Activity Centers or Growth Corridors will be added to the map.

New Activity Centers and Growth Corridors may be identified in the future through area planning.

Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges



This map is intended to be a "snapshot" in time and will likely evolve as new area plans are adopted. Through each area planning process, the boundaries of the pertinent Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges will be reviewed and adjusted, if necessary, and any newly identified Activity Centers or Growth Corridors will be added. Please contact the Planning Department or visit *www.charlotteplanning.org* for the most current version of this map.

Activity Centers
(pages 8 - 14)

Activity Centers should be focal points of economic activity, typically with concentrations of compact development. Many existing Activity Centers have the capacity for significant new growth in conjunction with enhancements to the supporting infrastructure. There are three types of Activity Centers:

- Center City
- Mixed Use Activity Centers
- Industrial Centers

Growth Corridors
(pages 15 - 22)

Growth Corridors are five elongated areas that stretch from Center City to the edge of Charlotte. They are characterized by the diversity of places they encompass – from historic neighborhoods, to vibrant mixed use areas, to significant employment and shopping districts – and by the accessibility and connectivity they provide for these places. Many areas within Growth Corridors, particularly Transit Station Areas, are appropriate locations for significant new growth. Within Growth Corridors, there are four types of subareas:

- Transit Station Areas
- Interchange Areas
- Established Neighborhood Areas
- General Corridor Areas

Wedges
(pages 23-27)

Wedges are the large areas between Growth Corridors where residential neighborhoods have developed and should continue to grow. Wedges will consist mainly of low density housing, as well as a limited amount of moderate and high density housing and supporting facilities and services.

How Will Centers, Corridors and Wedges Framework Be Used?

The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework provides an overall development vision and is intended to be general in nature. It will be used in three main ways:

- As a foundation for development of more detailed policies, plans and regulations;
- To establish a consistent framework for capital planning; and
- As a basis for evaluating Charlotte's success in addressing growth and redevelopment issues and maintaining a livable community.

An illustration of how the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework will be used is provided in the Conclusion of this document.

Growth Trends

Over the last few decades, Charlotte has evolved from a mid-sized city and Southern regional center into the nation's 19th largest city with a role in the new global economy. Growth has been a key driver of Charlotte's economic vitality. Charlotte's population more than doubled between 1980 and 2010, increasing from 315,000 to 728,000 persons.

Charlotte is expected to continue to grow in the future, although growth will likely moderate in the near term, reflecting the impact of current economic conditions. When looking at the longer term, over the next 25 to 30 years, Charlotte is expected to reach a million in population. The City's workforce is also expected to grow during this time frame, surpassing the 900,000 mark.

Since 1980, Charlotte's growth in population and employment has been accompanied by an increase in land area. Through annexation, the City has increased from 140 square miles in 1980 to 288 square miles in 2008. (In 2009, the City annexed another 11 square miles and over 18,500 people.) Ultimately, Charlotte's land area is projected to be 376 square miles.

While growth brings jobs and housing, it can also strain livability and the environment. Mecklenburg County lost open space at the rate of five acres per day since 1980 and more than 22 percent of its tree cover between 1984 and 2001.

Charlotte is expected to continue to grow; the key question is what type of city do we envision Charlotte to be in the future? How can Charlotte embrace the choices, diversity and expanded opportunities that growth brings while protecting the community's livability that growth can also place at risk? The *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* can provide that vision.

Changing Conditions

Charlotte's growth has been strong, but some conditions and circumstances have changed since *Centers and Corridors* was first presented in 1994. The most significant conditions impacting the *Growth Framework* are summarized below:

- As land for greenfield development has become more limited, redevelopment has become increasingly common. Numerous new development projects are being built on underutilized land or vacant parcels that were previously bypassed.
- Demographic changes continue to impact how development occurs with Baby Boomers and Generation Xers often showing a preference for urban environments.
- The need for infrastructure to support new development continues to grow, and is compounded by the increasing need to repair and upgrade existing facilities.
- Environmental consciousness is increasingly impacting where and how people are choosing to live.
- Affordable housing has become a more significant concern and a growing challenge in our community.

Goal Statement

The overall goal of the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* is set forth in the following statement and explained in further detail through the guiding principles.

Charlotte will continue to be one of the most livable cities in the country, with a vibrant economy, a thriving natural environment, a diverse population and a cosmopolitan outlook. Charlotteans will enjoy a range of choices for housing, transportation, education, entertainment and employment. Safe and attractive neighborhoods will continue to be central to the City's identity and citizen involvement key to its viability.

Guiding Principles

As it continues to develop, Charlotte will strive for:

1 **High-quality, context-sensitive community design:** New development should be designed to complement the desired character of the area, as articulated in an area plan. In established areas, this typically means that new development should reflect and build upon the existing character.

2 **Residential opportunities to accommodate a diverse populaton in quality and livable neighborhoods:** Charlotte's population includes a diverse range of people with different housing needs and preferences. Differences in income, age, physical abilities, lifestyle preferences and other population characteristics should be recognized, and quality housing choices should be available within the Charlotte community to meet the needs of these various groups of people.

3 **Diligent consideration of environmental benefits and impacts:** Environmental stewardship is fundamentally important to Charlotte's quality of life and essential to maintaining a vibrant economy. Consideration of environmental factors should continue to be an important part of the process when making decisions related to future growth and development.

4 **A healthy and flourishing tree canopy:** The City's tree canopy is an integral part of Charlotte's identity. It also contributes to the City's environmental quality, livability and economic viability. Because trees are a renewable resource, the City should seek not only to maintain as much of the existing canopy as is feasible, but also to replant when trees are removed, and plan ahead for replacement as trees are lost due to age or other factors.

5 **More walkable places with a variety of activities:** Much of Charlotte's future growth should be accommodated by creating, or building upon, places that have a mixture of compatible land uses within close proximity and that are well connected to each other. This will not only help create more vibrant and interesting places but will also reduce dependence on the automobile.

6 **A diverse, growing and adaptable economy:** To ensure that Charlotte remains a prosperous and livable City, economic development activities should focus on expanding both the tax base and the employment base, capitalizing on existing strengths while broadening the economy to include emerging industries and other opportunities.

7 **Revitalization of economically challenged business and residential areas:** All areas and neighborhoods should share in Charlotte's economic prosperity. Therefore, the City should strive to bring redevelopment to challenged areas, particularly by investing in public-private partnerships and targeted projects. However, it is also important that redevelopment efforts are inclusive and address the needs of existing residents and businesses that could be negatively impacted by redevelopment.

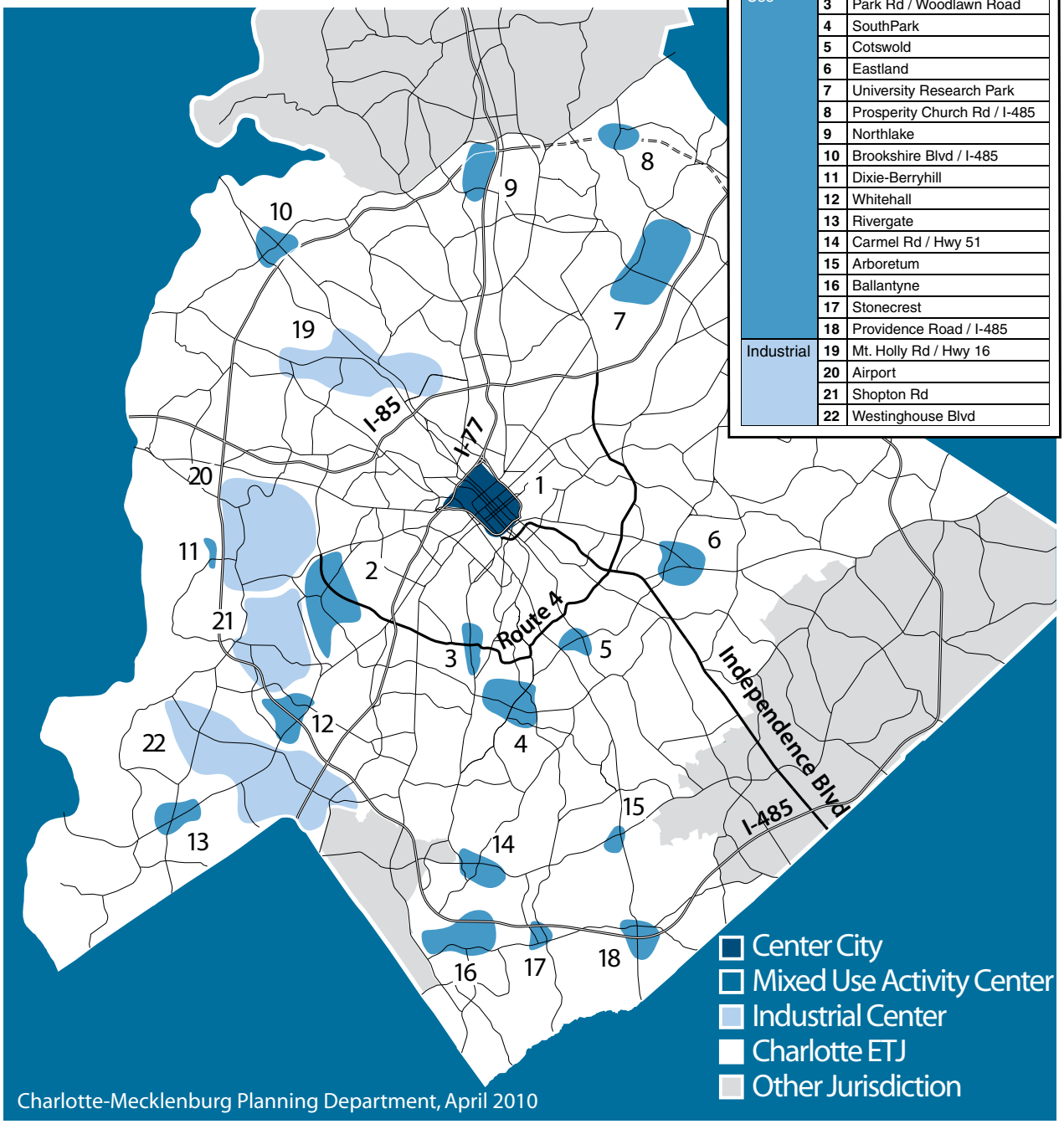
8 **Enhanced transportation networks for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, anad transit users:** As Charlotte continues to grow, it is increasingly important that there be more and enhanced ways for people to get around. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to create more and better connected route options for people who are walking, cycling, driving or riding transit. Connectivity between these modes of travel will also be critical. Creating a network of context-based "complete" streets will allow people to feel comfortable and safe, whichever transportation mode they use.

9 **Efficient and coordinated investment in infrastructure that keeps pace with existing and future development:** Charlotte's infrastructure (e.g., streets, parks, schools, sewer, water, fire stations) has not always kept pace with rapid growth. Going forward, it will be necessary to efficiently fund and build the new and retrofitted infrastructure critical to adequately sustain a high quality of life throughout Charlotte. Additionally, maintenance and reinvestment in existing infrastructure should play a key role in meeting future needs.

Activity Center Types and Locations

By definition, Activity Centers have (or are planned to have) a significant amount of nonresidential development, consistent with the size of a super-regional, retail-oriented mixed/ multi-use center as defined by the *General Development Policies*. However, some Activity Centers include more employment than a typical super-regional, retail-based center. There are three types of Activity Centers—described on pages 9 - 14 — Center City, Mixed Use Activity Centers and Industrial Centers. Definitions of terms included in this section are found in the Glossary.

Activity Centers		
Center City	1	Uptown
Mixed Use	2	Old Coliseum
	3	Park Rd / Woodlawn Road
	4	SouthPark
	5	Cotswold
	6	Eastland
	7	University Research Park
	8	Prosperity Church Rd / I-485
	9	Northlake
	10	Brookshire Blvd / I-485
	11	Dixie-Berryhill
	12	Whitehall
	13	Rivergate
	14	Carmel Rd / Hwy 51
	15	Arboretum
	16	Ballantyne
	17	Stonecrest
	18	Providence Road / I-485
Industrial	19	Mt. Holly Rd / Hwy 16
	20	Airport
	21	Shopton Rd
	22	Westinghouse Blvd



Activity Centers

Activity Centers are concentrations of economic and/or mixed use development located throughout the community. There are three types of Activity Centers: Center City, Mixed Use and Industrial, defined primarily by land use and intensity of development. Most Activity Centers will be appropriate locations for significant new growth and/or redevelopment. Currently, approximately ten percent of the land area that will one day be within Charlotte's city limits is located within an Activity Center.

Activity Centers Today

Today, there are 22 designated Activity Centers. The character of these Activity Centers varies considerably, from low intensity Industrial Centers to compact and high intensity Mixed Use Activity Centers. Typical uses in Activity Centers include retail, office, residential, civic and/or industrial.

Center City is the most intensely developed Activity Center type. Although larger and more intense than other Activity Centers, it is probably the best example of the vision for Mixed Use Activity Centers in terms of pedestrian activity and mix of uses. Many of the 17 existing Mixed Use Activity Centers have developed around a regional mall or large strip commercial center and are automobile oriented, with limited or difficult pedestrian circulation. The character of the four Industrial Centers reflects the name, with most uses being industrial, warehouse or distribution.

Activity Centers in the Future

The expectation for Activity Centers in the future is for:

- further infill development and intensification in Center City;
- infill development, as well as redevelopment of underutilized sites, in existing Mixed Use Activity Centers;
- greater emphasis on a mix of commercial and civic uses and inclusion of moderate and, in some cases, high density housing in Mixed Use Activity Centers;
- concentration of industrial, warehouse and distribution in Industrial Centers;
- multi-modal transportation system and an interconnected network of streets, especially in Center City and Mixed Use Activity Centers;
- more urban and pedestrian-oriented form of development;
- pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the Activity Centers and connecting to adjacent neighborhoods; and
- Activity Centers (in addition to Growth Corridors) to be priority areas for enhancements to the supporting infrastructure, particularly the transportation network.

Most Activity Centers will be appropriate locations for new development and redevelopment. **However, the amount, intensity and type of new development will be determined by the applicable area plan. For residential development, the *General Development Policies* should be used to determine appropriate density if the area plan does not specify the density.**

As area plans are developed, a number of factors will be used to determine the amount of development that is appropriate for each Activity Center. These factors include available vacant or underutilized land and the existing and potential transportation network and capacity.

In addition, the area planning process will provide the opportunity to review and adjust, if necessary, the boundaries of the pertinent Activity Centers and add any newly identified Activity Centers within the plan boundaries.

The following matrix (pages 10 - 14) describes the three Activity Center types and development characteristics desired for each Activity Center.

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
Description of Activity Center Types		
Center City should: • be the most intensely developed of all Activity Centers; • continue to be the region's office and cultural hub; • be the most accessible point for the entire region and be accessible by a range of transportation modes; • be a priority location for new office, retail, cultural and entertainment uses; • have the greatest concentration of high density residential development; and • continue to be the heart of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the region. Center City should "belong" to everyone, regardless of where one lives or works, and should be the symbolic, cultural and recreational center of the region.	*Mixed Use Activity Centers should:* • be focal points of community activity, providing opportunities for "live, work and play" for surrounding neighborhoods, as well as the greater Charlotte area; • include a mix of uses, with retail, housing, office and civic components; • include a cohesive, identifiable pedestrian-oriented core, with the remainder of the Activity Center linked to the core by a pedestrian and street network; and • typically be surrounded by lower density residential neighborhoods. *Examples: SouthPark, Northlake*	*Industrial Centers should:* • serve as major economic generators, with a strong employment focus; • be designed to have high levels of road capacity; • include primarily warehouse, distribution and industrial uses; • be less compact and less intensely developed than typical Mixed Use Activity Centers. *Examples: Airport, Westinghouse*

Mixed Use Activity Centers include a mix of retail, office, residential and civic uses.

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
Land Use		
Appropriate uses in Center City typically will include: • office, with a concentration of national and/or regional corporate headquarters; • moderate to high density housing; • retail/entertainment, typically on the ground floor of office and/or residential structures, designed to serve Center City workers, residents and visitors; • regional-serving civic uses, such as universities, regional libraries, urban parks, religious institutions and sports facilities; and • cultural venues, such as museums and performing arts theaters. Non-residential development intensity should typically be very high. Mixed use and multi-use represent the desired character of Center City development with some single use housing development in the residential sections of Center City.	*Appropriate uses in Mixed Use Activity Centers typically will include:* • retail designed to serve the surrounding community and, in some cases, regional-serving retail as well; • moderate to high density housing; • regional and/or neighborhood serving office, which could sometimes include national and/or regional corporate headquarters; and • civic uses such as urban parks, religious institutions and libraries. The area planning process will be used to determine which Mixed Use Activity Centers should have a strong retail emphasis, with limited office, and which should be more office oriented and include regional-serving or corporate offices. Development intensity should typically be low or moderate, with high intensity development sometimes appropriate. The highest intensity development should be located within the core of the Activity Center. Areas outside the pedestrian core should be developed at lesser intensities, especially for sites abutting single family neighborhoods. Mixed use and multi-use represent the desired character of developments in these Activity Centers.	*Appropriate uses in Industrial Centers typically will include:* • mainly light and heavy industrial, warehouse and/or distribution, with associated office and showroom space; • limited amounts of other uses, such as retail development, that may be located in these areas to serve nearby employees. Based on types of uses in Industrial Centers, housing may also be appropriate. Low-rise and low intensity development represents the desired character of Industrial Centers.

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS

Transportation

Center City should be served by a range of existing and planned transportation modes, including:

- interstate access;
- dense and interconnected street network of thoroughfares and local streets;
- extensive regional transit service, including major transfer centers (Charlotte Transportation Center and the planned Charlotte Gateway Station, a regional intermodal terminal); interstate bus and rail service; and extensive local transit service (local and express bus, streetcar, commuter rail, light rail and bus rapid transit);
- well-developed pedestrian system, including sidewalks and intersections designed to support pedestrian circulation throughout the Center City and to connect Center City to the area outside the I-277 freeway loop; and
- bicycle connections between Center City and the area outside the I-277 freeway loop.

Access to Center City is expected to be primarily by automobiles or transit, with walking and local transit being the primary modes for circulating within the Center City.

The transportation focus for Center City should be on enhancing the existing transportation system to promote walking and transit use.

Mixed Use Activity Centers should be served by a range of existing and planned transportation modes, including:

- interstate or major thoroughfare access;
- dense and interconnected street network;
- well-developed pedestrian system, especially within the Activity Center core;
- direct pedestrian and vehicular connections from the core to the edge of the Activity Center and surrounding neighborhoods;
- local bus service and, where there is adequate demand, express bus service to the core of the Activity Center; circulator service throughout the Activity Center; community transit facilities; and
- bicycle facilities, within the Activity Center and with connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

Mixed Use Activity Centers should be designed to allow easy access by vehicles, and to promote pedestrian accessibility and transit usage.

There should be a strong emphasis on pedestrian circulation within the core of the Activity Center, with a balance of vehicular, transit and walking outside the core and between the Activity Center and surrounding neighborhoods.

The transportation focus should be on enhancing the existing system to promote walking, bicycle and transit access — and on constructing new, interconnected streets to serve a range of transportation modes.

The primary transportation modes for *Industrial Centers* should be motor vehicles, with transit service focused on employment concentrations. However, pedestrian and bicycle facilities should also be provided to connect large concentrations of employees to transit stops and retail uses.

The transportation system for Industrial Centers should be oriented to vehicular access and circulation. These Centers should have good interstate access and their streets should be designed to accommodate large trucks.

The transportation focus for Industrial Centers should be on enhancing the existing street system to serve industrial and warehouse/distribution businesses.

CENTER CITY | MIXED USE CENTERS | INDUSTRIAL CENTERS

Infrastructure and Public Facilities

Center City should include a range of public facilities designed to serve residents, employees and visitors. Desired facilities include:

- parks (a central, large, regional park as envisioned in the Center City 2010 Plan that could host major events, as well as small pocket parks and neighborhood parks designed to serve Center City residents and employees);
- community/recreation centers;
- greenways or overland trail connections from surrounding neighborhoods to Center City;
- schools (colleges/universities, K-12 schools designed to serve unique interests or needs and neighborhood-serving schools);
- the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center;
- public safety and criminal justice facilities;
- the main branch of the library;
- the central post office;
- museums, such as the Mint, Afro-American, New South and NASCAR museums;
- performance venues, such as the Blumenthal Theatre; and
- major sports facilities, such as Time Warner Cable Arena and Bank of America Stadium.

Center City should be the highest priority for water and sewer extensions and upgrades if needed, with an emphasis on providing capacity for high intensity development.

Infrastructure and public facilities should be designed to complement a high intensity urban environment.

Mixed Use Activity Centers should include a range of public facilities designed to serve residents, employees and visitors. Facilities may include:

- urban parks;
- community recreation centers;
- greenways, especially along creeks running to and through the Activity Center, and overland connectors;
- schools (colleges, universities and K-12 schools);
- preschools and child care facilities;
- major libraries;
- post offices; and
- police sub-stations and fire stations.

Mixed Use Activity Centers should be high priority areas for water and sewer extensions and upgrades, with an emphasis on providing capacity for anticipated urban development.

Infrastructure and public facilities should be designed to complement a moderate intensity urban environment.

The public facilities located in *Industrial Centers* should reflect the industrial character of these areas. Charlotte Douglas International Airport is located in one of these Centers. Examples of other public facilities that might be appropriate for Industrial Centers include:

- maintenance facilities;
- solid waste facilities;
- jails/detention centers; and
- police/fire facilities.

Greenways along creeks and overland connectors might be located in Industrial Centers.

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
Environment and Site Design		
Center City should be highly urban in form, with most development in mid- to high-rise buildings. Development should be designed to promote a high level of pedestrian activity, with ground floor uses facing onto and directly accessible from public sidewalks. High quality streetscapes and urban parks/open spaces should be provided to enhance the pedestrian environment and should enhance overall livability. Parking in Center City should be publicly accessible and located in parking structures to minimize the amount of impervious area devoted to parking and to enhance the pedestrian environment. Above ground parking decks should include ground floor uses along the public streets. No new surface parking lots should be constructed, and existing surface lots should be redeveloped over time.	*Mixed Use Activity Centers* should be urban and highly pedestrian-oriented, especially at their core. Most development should be low- to mid-rise buildings, with the greatest intensity at the core of these Activity Centers and lesser intensity and height at the edges, particularly when next to residential neighborhoods. These Activity Centers should be designed to provide a high level of vehicular access that supports transit, while encouraging a "park once" environment. Once in a Mixed Use Activity Center, it should be comfortable and easy for people to circulate on foot. Parking should be shared with a number of uses and, ideally, should not be located in surface lots to minimize the amount of impervious area devoted to parking lots. Streetscapes, public parks and open spaces should be designed to help create a comfortable and safe pedestrian environment and should enhance overall livability.	Most development in *Industrial Centers* should be low-rise and low intensity. The urban design character of Industrial Centers should recognize the industrial nature of these areas while providing an attractive environment. Streetscaping and landscaping should be provided to create an attractive environment for those working in and/or traveling through these Centers.

For each type of Activity Center – Center City, Mixed Use and Industrial – sites and buildings should be designed to be sustainable. In particular:

- Building and site designs should facilitate conservation of water, energy and other natural resources. This will be especially important in Center City and some Mixed Use Activity Centers since land intensive approaches to environmental mitigation may be difficult to accomplish in these areas.
- New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas, incorporate consideration of natural features – such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy – into the site design of new development whenever possible, and minimize site disturbance, erosion and sedimentation.

New development should respect and preserve the City's historic character, integrating existing historic buildings, artifacts and landscapes into the modern urban fabric.

For additional environmental and site design guidance, see the *General Development Policies* and applicable area plans.

Growth Corridors

Growth Corridors are five elongated areas that stretch from Center City to the edge of Charlotte. They are characterized by the diversity of places they encompass – from historic neighborhoods to vibrant mixed use areas to significant employment and shopping districts – and by the accessibility and connectivity they provide for these places. Many areas within the Growth Corridors, particularly the Transit Station Areas, may be appropriate locations for significant new growth. Approximately 20% of the land area that will one day be within Charlotte's city limits is currently located in Growth Corridors.

Growth Corridors Today

Today, there are five Growth Corridors: the South, Southeast, Northeast, North and West Corridors. These Corridors encompass a wide diversity of places, including some with an increasingly urban mixture of residential, office and retail uses, especially in areas near existing or proposed transit stations and/or close to Center City. Some sections of Growth Corridors contain established residential neighborhoods, while other sections contain primarily businesses that provide shopping, employment and entertainment. Four distinct subareas have been identified within Growth Corridors:

- Transit Station Areas
- Interchange Areas
- Established Neighborhood Areas
- General Corridor Areas

These areas typically have a high level of accessibility, especially given that Growth Corridors include at least three high capacity transportation facilities – interstate/expressway, major thoroughfare(s), existing or planned rapid transit and/or a freight rail line – that run parallel to each other. Some portions of Growth Corridors also have an interconnected street network. This accessibility and connectivity contributes to the desirability of Growth Corridor locations for many uses, especially those requiring high levels of local and regional access.

Growth Corridors in the Future

The expectation for Growth Corridors in the future is for:

- greater emphasis on office, residential and mixed use development, especially around transit stations;
- continuation of industrial and warehouse/distribution uses, particularly in locations with high levels of motor vehicle/accessibility;
- additional development of vacant land and redevelopment of underutilized properties;
- increased intensity and a more pedestrian form of development, with greatest intensity development in Transit Station Areas;
- preservation and enhancement of established single family neighborhoods;
- multi-modal transportation system with a dense network of interconnected streets; and
- Growth Corridors (in addition to Activity Centers) to be priority areas for enhancements to the supporting infrastructure, particularly the transportation network.

Growth Corridors will be, in general, appropriate locations for new development and redevelopment, particularly within the Transit Station Areas. **However, the amount, intensity and type of new development will be determined by the applicable area plan. For residential development, the *General Development Policies* should be used to determine appropriate density if the area plan does not specify the density.**

As area plans are developed, a number of factors will be used to determine the amount of development that is appropriate for areas within Corridors. These factors include available vacant or underutilized land and the existing and potential transportation network and capacity. Another key factor that will help to determine the appropriateness of future development, particularly in Established Neighborhood Areas, will be the ability to reduce adverse impacts on the existing neighborhood character.

In addition, the area planning process will provide the opportunity to review and adjust, if necessary, the boundaries of the pertinent Growth Corridors and add any newly identified Growth Corridors within the plan boundaries.

Growth Corridor Subareas and Locations

Within Growth Corridors, there are four types of subareas: Transit Station Areas, Interchange Areas, Established Neighborhood Areas and the largest area – the balance of each corridor – General Corridor Areas. The four types are described on pages 15 - 22. Definitions of terms included in this section are found in the Glossary.

The following matrix (pages 17 - 22) describes the four subareas of Growth Corridors and the development characteristics desired for each.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Description of Growth Corridor Subareas			
Transit Station Areas are located within approximately 1/2 mile walking distance of an existing or planned rapid transit station. However, they generally exclude any established low density neighborhoods within that walking distance. These neighborhoods typically are targeted for preservation and are located within an Established Neighborhood Subarea. Many Transit Station Areas will have the same general characteristics as the Mixed Use type of Activity Center and will become focal points of community activity. The Transit Station Areas should: • be pedestrian-oriented districts designed to include a mixture of complementary moderate to high intensity residential, office, retail/ entertainment and civic uses located within easy walking distance of a rapid transit station; • be designed as gathering places for the surrounding community; and • have a dense, interconnected street network with extensive pedestrian facilities.	*Interchange Areas* include property in Growth Corridors within approximately 1/2 to one mile of interstate or expressway interchanges with access to and from all interchange quadrants. These areas: • are appropriate for development types requiring high levels of vehicular access, such as warehouse and distribution uses and, where identified in an area plan, regional-serving retail; • may also be appropriate for multi-family and office uses; • should be designed to have high levels of road capacity; and • should have a transportation system that emphasizes vehicular travel while also accommodating other modes.	*Established Neighborhoods* are those existing, primarily low density residential, communities that are located within the Growth Corridors. These areas: • are typically comprised of single family housing, but may also include some multi-family, commercial and civic uses, as well as some mixed or multi-use developments; • should be maintained and enhanced; • should be protected with a transition from more intense development that adversely impacts the character of the neighborhood.	*General Corridor Areas* are those areas within the Growth Corridors that are outside the other three types of subareas (Transit Station Areas, Interchange Areas and Established Neighborhood Areas). Typically, these General Corridor Areas: • are appropriate for a range of low to moderate intensity uses, including single use, general services/business type uses; multi-family; industrial/warehouse and civic uses; • may include smaller mixed use centers and areas that, much like the larger Mixed Use Activity Centers, provide a sense of place and services to nearby neighborhoods; and • have a variety of transportation facilities and modes based on the area's development character.

Established Neighborhoods in Growth Corridors should be maintained and enhanced.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Land Use			
Appropriate uses in *Transit Station Areas* include a mix of complementary, transit supportive uses per the *Transit Station Area Principles* of the *General Development Policies*. These uses typically include: • residential; • office; • neighborhood-serving retail and entertainment; and • civic uses. Transit Station Areas are appropriate for moderate to high density/intensity development. The minimum density of residential uses and the minimum intensity of non-residential uses should be consistent with the *Transit Station Area Principles* of the *General Development Policies* or an adopted station area plan. The highest densities/intensities are appropriate closest to the transit station, with lower densities adjacent to existing low density residential areas. Except for Center City, Transit Station Areas should have the highest densities/intensities of development. In Transit Station Areas, uses should be well-integrated, either vertically and/or horizontally.	Appropriate uses in *Interchange Areas* include those that need or can benefit from high levels of vehicular accessibility from the interchange. These typically include: • industrial/warehouse; • regional and community serving retail; • highway-serving retail (hotels, gas stations, restaurants); • office; and • multi-family residential. Multi-family residential density should be moderate and, in some cases, high, typically in conjunction with a mixed use retail center. Non-residential intensity should be low to moderate.	The predominant use in *Established Neighborhood Areas* is, and will continue to be, single family residential. Civic uses, such as parks and schools, may also be appropriate. In some cases, multi-family residential, office and retail, in a pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood business district, may be included in these areas. If appropriate, multi-family residential density should be moderate and, in rare cases, high. If appropriate, new retail and office development will typically be located on non-local streets. Non-residential intensity should be low to moderate.	Appropriate uses in *General Corridor Areas* typically include: • multi-family residential; • office; • retail, especially uses that serve the surrounding community; • industrial/warehouse; and • civic uses, such as schools, parks and religious institutions. Multi-family residential density should be moderate and, in some cases, high, typically in conjunction with a mixed use retail center. Non-residential intensity should be low to moderate.

Transit Station Areas will include a range of complementary uses in a walkable environment.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Transportation			
Transit Station Areas should be served by a range of transportation modes, including: • rapid transit line and station; • local bus service; • dense and interconnected street network; • extensive pedestrian network designed to support circulation throughout the station area and connect to the surrounding area; and • bicycle facilities, especially to support those traveling to the transit station. Most people will access most Transit Station Areas by transit or automobile. Overall, the transportation focus should be on enhancing the existing system to promote walking, bicycling and transit access and circulation, as well as on the creation of new streets needed to create the network necessary to accomplish this.	*Interchange Areas* should be served by a range of transportation modes, including: • interstate or expressway with intersecting thoroughfare(s); • interconnected street network; and • pedestrian facilities to connect uses within Interchange Areas – especially retail, residential and office. Particular attention should be given to connecting those uses on the same side of the interstate or freeway. Access to Interchange Areas will be primarily by motor vehicle. However, the transportation system should also be designed to accommodate pedestrian circulation. There should be a greater emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle circulation for Interchange Areas that also function as Transit Station Areas. Access control should be a critical consideration in Interchange Areas. Overall, the transportation focus should be on improving motor vehicle access and circulation, while still accommodating pedestrians and cyclists. The street network should be enhanced and capacity increased where needed.	*Established Neighborhood Areas* should have a transportation network that provides residents with viable transportation choices including: • interconnected street network to allow residents access by bike, foot or car to civic uses, as well as to nearby shopping and employment areas, transit stops or Transit Station Areas, or adjacent Activity Centers; • where they exist, thoroughfares that are designed for all travelers based on context; • extensive pedestrian network, including sidewalks, greenway connections, walking trails and safe street crossings; • bicycle network, consisting of low-speed, low-volume streets, bike lanes on higher volume streets, greenway connections and other pathways, where appropriate; and • local and, where there is adequate demand, express bus service, typically along thoroughfares adjacent to or traversing established neighborhoods. In most cases, the established local street network should not change, other than when needed to support a major *Continued on next page*	*General Corridor Areas* should be served by a range of transportation modes, including: • dense and interconnected street network of thoroughfares and local streets; • well-developed pedestrian and bicycle system; and • local and feeder bus service, focusing on connecting the parts of the Growth Corridor outside station areas to rapid transit stations. The primary transportation facilities and mode(s) provided for different parts of General Corridor Areas will vary, based on the existing and planned development context for that specific portion of the Growth Corridor, as well as transportation service demands. Overall, the transportation focus should be on creating a denser and better connected transportation system to enhance the local street network.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Transportation			
		land use change in an *Established Neighborhood Area*. Overall, the transportation focus should be to preserve and enhance a well-designed, context-based street network that allows residents to move safely and easily within their neighborhood and to adjacent activity areas.	

Growth Corridors will include multiple major transportation facilities such as rapid transit lines, interstates/ freeways, major thoroughfares and freight rail lines.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Infrastructure and Public Facilities			
Transit Station Areas are appropriate for a range of public facilities designed to serve transit users, station area and surrounding residents, employees and visitors. Desired facilities include: • urban parks/plazas; • community/recreation centers; • greenways and overland trail connections; • libraries, schools, preschool and child care facilities; • government service centers which include multiple public facilities; • post offices; and • medical facilities. Transit Station Areas should be priority areas for water and sewer extensions and upgrades, where needed, with an emphasis on providing capacity for moderate to high intensity transit oriented development.	*Interchange Areas* are appropriate for facilities that require high levels of vehicular access and will serve more citizens than a typical facility. Such uses include: • major active parks and recreation centers; • schools and universities drawing students from throughout Charlotte; • large child care facilities; • government service centers; • post offices; and • medical facilities. Greenways, especially along creeks running through the area, and overland trail connections should be located in Interchange Areas. For Interchange Areas that are developed with industrial/warehouse uses, compatible public facilities – such as vehicle maintenance or storage – are appropriate.	*Established Neighborhood Areas* are appropriate for a variety of public facilities designed primarily to serve residents, but in some cases may also serve other users based on proximity to adjacent areas. Appropriate public facilities could include: • parks; • greenways and overland trail connections; and • schools. Established Neighborhoods with neighborhood business districts might also include in such business districts: • libraries, and • post offices. Other public facilities may be found in nearby locations in other parts of the Growth Corridor.	When public facilities designed to serve area residents cannot be placed in Transit Station Areas, they should be located in *General Corridor Areas* or in business districts in Established Neighborhoods. Such uses could include: • libraries; • schools; • parks and recreation facilities; • government service centers; • post offices; and • medical facilities. Greenways, especially along creeks running through the area, and overland trail connections should be located in General Corridor Areas. In portions of General Corridor Areas developed with industrial/warehouse uses, compatible public facilities – such as vehicle maintenance or solid waste – may be appropriate.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Environment and Site Design			
Transit Station Areas should be highly pedestrian-oriented, with buildings located at or near the back of sidewalks. Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate significant pedestrian activity. Most development should be in low- to mid-rise buildings with the greatest intensity nearest the station, and lesser intensity and height at the edges of the station area, closest to established neighborhoods. In some cases, high-rise buildings may be appropriate. Parking should be shared with a number of uses and, ideally, should be located in parking structures. Streetscapes, public parks and open spaces should be well designed to create a comfortable and inviting pedestrian environment.	*Interchange Areas* should be designed to accommodate primary access by motor vehicle; however, interchange quadrants should also be designed to allow safe pedestrian circulation in a "park once" environment. High-quality landscaping should be part of new development, as well as installed around interchanges that serve as gateways into the community. Most development should be low- to mid-rise in Interchange Areas with low scale buildings located adjacent to residential neighborhoods.	*Established Neighborhood Areas* should be priority areas for preservation of Charlotte's natural tree canopy. Development in Established Neighborhood Areas should include extensive vegetation and trees. In general, development should be low scale. A transition, either through a buffer or screening, should be provided between low density residential development in Established Neighborhood Areas and high density residential or non-residential development. Site design for Established Neighborhood Areas should facilitate pedestrian and bicycle circulation – especially to reach nearby transit facilities, commercial areas and civic uses – by providing good local streets and connections.	Design characteristics in *General Corridor Areas* will vary, depending on the land use and transportation context. For example: • an industrial-based employment area within a General Corridor Area should be designed primarily to accomodate vehicular circulation; and • an urban mixed use section of a General Corridor Area should have a strong emphasis on pedestrian-oriented design features, such as buildings sited with parking located in the rear. In General Corridor Areas, development should be typically low- and in some cases mid-rise, with low scale development next to residential neighborhoods. High quality streetscapes should be provided in General Corridor Areas to unify the corridor and soften the urban environment.

For each of the subareas of Growth Corridors – Transit Station Areas, Interchange Areas, Established Neighborhood Areas and General Corridor Areas – buildings and sites should be designed to be sustainable. In particular:

- Building and site design should facilitate conservation of water, energy and other natural resources. This will be especially important in areas where land-intensive approaches to environmental mitigation are not feasible, particularly Transit Station Areas.
- New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas, incorporate consideration of natural features – such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy – into the site design of new development, whenever possible, and minimize site disturbance and related erosion and sedimentation.

New development should respect and preserve the City's historic character, integrating existing historic buildings, artifacts and landscapes into the modern urban fabric.

For additional environmental and site design guidance, see the *General Development Policies* and applicable area plans.

Wedges

Wedges are the large and primarily residential areas located between Growth Corridors, excluding the identified Activity Centers. Wedges currently represent approximately 70% of the land area that will one day be within Charlotte's city limits.

Wedges Today

Today, Wedges consist generally of single family neighborhoods. Interspersed are areas of mixed use and commercial development; multi-family housing (typically in apartment complexes); and civic uses, such as religious institutions, parks, fire stations and libraries.

The intensity of development is often an issue in Wedges locations, especially where the transportation system is overburdened. The area within Route 4 generally has a more dense and well connected street network, and is relatively pedestrian-friendly. Outside Route 4, the transportation system is typically more auto-oriented, blocks are longer and the street network is not as well connected.

Wedges in the Future

The expectation for Wedges in the future is for:

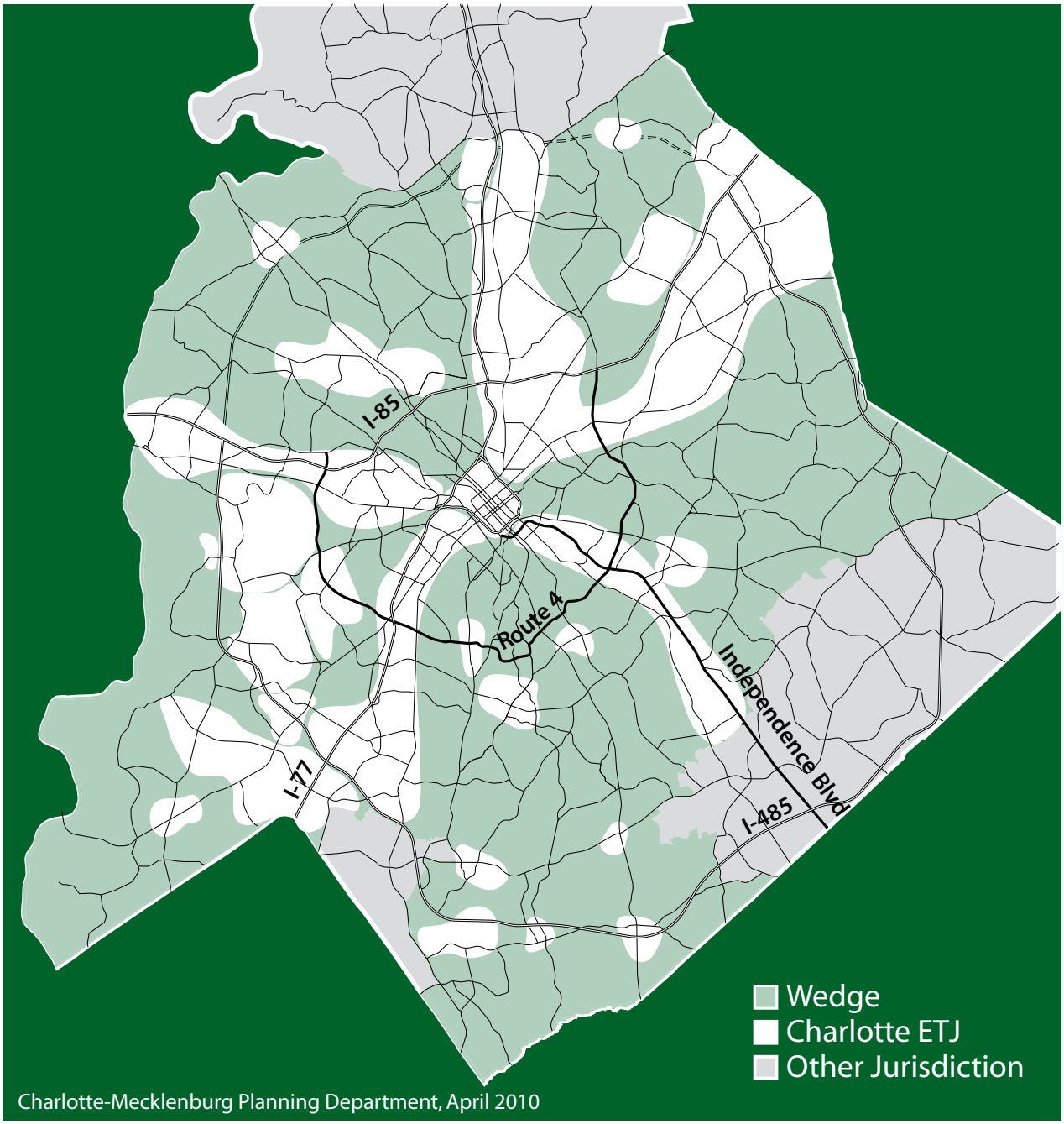
- existing neighborhoods to be preserved and enhanced;
- opportunities for "life-long living" with housing for residents at every stage of life;
- new low density housing, as well as limited modeate to high density housing that is well designed and strategically located in places with the infrastructure capacity to support higher densities;
- neighborhood-scale commercial and civic uses located to serve the immediate area;
- multi-modal transportation system providing residents better access to and from work, shopping, schools and recreation;
- more street connections within Wedges and between Wedges and Activity Centers and Growth Corridors;
- greater emphasis on safe, convenient and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- greater emphasis on protection of land and water resources than will typically occur in the more intensely developed areas of Activity Centers and Growth Corridors.

There are many parts of Wedges that will be appropriate locations for new development and redevelopment. **However, the amount, intensity and type of new development will be determined by the applicable area plan. For residential development, the *General Development Policies* should be used to determine appropriate density if the area plan does not specify the density.**

As area plans are developed, a number of factors will be used to determine the amount of development that is appropriate for properties within Wedges. These factors include available vacant or underutilized land and the existing and potential transportation network and capacity. Another key factor that will help to determine the appropriateness of future development, particularly in and adjacent to existing neighborhoods, will be the ability to reduce adverse impacts on the existing neighborhood character.

Wedge Definition and Locations

Land use, development intensity and design characteristics vary within Wedges. However, all Wedges share the common characteristic of being located outside one of the five Growth Corridors and the various large-scale Activity Centers. Wedges are not divided into subareas or types. Wedges are described in more detail on pages 23-27. Definitions of terms included in this section are defined in the Glossary.



The following matrix (pages 25-27) describes the development characteristics desired for Wedges.

WEDGES

Land Use

In Wedges, appropriate land uses typically include a diversity of housing types and other uses to support residential neighborhoods. In some cases, smaller mixed use centers and areas that, much like the larger Mixed Use Activity Centers, provide a sense of place and services to surrounding neighborhoods may be appropriate.

Housing in Wedges includes:
- mainly low density housing;
- with limited moderate density residential; and
- in very limited cases, and typically within Route 4 (mostly along thoroughfares) and/or within a mixed use district, high density housing.

The highest density residential should be located where extensive existing transportation facilities and infrastructure are found, or can be created, and where residents will have easy access to a range of complementary retail and civic uses.

Civic Uses in Wedges include such facilities as:
- parks;
- greenways;
- places of worship;
- schools;
- libraries;
- fire and police stations; and
- medical facilities.

Where possible, civic uses should be located within Mixed Use/Retail Districts as discussed below. In some cases, these uses will be freestanding or part of a joint-use facility. However, even freestanding and joint-use civic uses should be connected to surrounding residential uses, with pedestrian and bicycle connections being especially important.

Mixed Use/Retail Districts in Wedges should:
- complement the larger Mixed Use Activity Centers discussed on pages 8 -14;
- act as focal points or small scale town centers that create a sense of place for surrounding neighborhoods; and
- serve surrounding neighborhoods by providing neighborhood-serving retail and office uses.

These districts should be compact and nodal in form; however, in some cases they may be more linear, reflecting existing strip commercial development.

They should typically include:
- retail and/or office development consistent with the "Neighborhood Size Centers" in the *General Development Policies (GDP)*;
- in some cases retail and/or office consistent with the "Community Size Centers" in the *GDP*. This square footage of development will typically be related to an existing retail or mixed-use center, an existing business district or a significant redevelopment plan, or will be identified in an area plan; and
- in rare cases, retail and/or office consistent with the "Regional Size Centers" in the *GDP*. This square footage of development will typically be related to an existing retail or mixed-use center, an existing business district or a significant redevelopment plan, or will be identified in an area plan.

In addition to retail and/or office, these Mixed Use/Retail Districts in Wedges may also include:
- civic uses; and
- where appropriate, moderate to high density housing.

Mixed Use/Retail Districts in Wedges should be low to moderate intensity.

WEDGES

Transportation

To both preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods and to ensure that new neighborhoods are sustainable, Wedges should be served by a range of transportation facilities and services which provide residents with transportation choices. These facilities and services should include:

- interconnected network of thoroughfares and local streets;
- extensive pedestrian system that includes sidewalks, greenways, overland trail connections and safe street crossings, especially to connect neighborhoods with civic uses like schools and parks, as well as shopping areas, transit stops and adjacent Activity Centers and Growth Corridors;
- local and express bus service, typically concentrated along thoroughfares to connect adjacent neighborhoods and Mixed Use/Retail Districts within Wedges to Activity Centers and Growth Corridors;
- bicycle network, with marked bike routes, as well as bike lanes on higher volume streets.

Based on existing and planned land use and transportation context, some streets may be more automobile-oriented and others may be more pedestrian friendly. (See the *Urban Street Design Guidelines* for additional information on context sensitive street design.)

In Wedges, the transportation focus should be on completing the street network and improving the capacity of the existing transportation system.

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are important elements of the transportation network in a Wedge.

Infrastructure and Public Facilities

Wedges should include a range of public facilities designed to serve residents.

Public facilities should include:

- schools of all types and sizes;
- parks of various sizes and purposes:
  - smaller parks and open spaces in Mixed Use/ Retail Districts;
  - neighborhood parks within residential areas in the Wedges;
  - larger parks, such as community parks (they should be easily accessible from major thoroughfares);
  - privately-constructed open space and neighborhood-based recreational facilities that complement public park facilities; and
  - private and non-profit land conservation easements and reserves;
- greenways, especially along creeks, and overland trail connections; and
- libraries, post offices and similar public facilities located in the Mixed Use/Retail Districts within Wedges.

In general, greenfield areas in Wedges should be the lowest priority for water and sewer extensions, unless required to serve annexation areas.

New development should have access to municipal water and sewer service and the construction of private water and sewer systems should be discouraged. Water and sewer extensions in Wedge areas should be linked to annexation requirements, area plan recommendations and City Council adopted economic development policy.

Schools in Wedges will serve area children.

WEDGES

Environment and Site Design

Buildings and sites should be designed to be sustainable. New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas and incorporate consideration of natural features—such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy— into site design of new development whenever possible. In addition, site disturbance and related erosion and sedimentation should be minimized.

In particular:

- Improvements to water quality should be a priority in Wedges.
- Wedges should also be a priority area for preservation of Charlotte's natural tree canopy.
- Development in Wedges should include extensive vegetation and trees.
- Land-intensive environmental mitigation measures should be focused in the Wedges instead of Activity Centers and Growth Corridors, whenever possible.

In general, development should be low-scale, with lowest heights next to existing or planned low density residential neighborhoods. A transition, either through a buffer or screening, should be provided between low density residential development and non-residential development located either within the Wedges, or within an Activity Center or Growth Corridor.

New development should be designed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation, and to minimize motor vehicle trips.

Mixed Use/Retail Districts should be designed to allow automobile and pedestrian access, and to encourage easy pedestrian circulation upon arrival.

New development should respect and preserve the City's historic character, integrating existing historic buildings, artifacts and landscapes into the modern urban fabric.

For additional design guidance, see the *General Development Policies* and applicable area plans.

Greenways will provide valuable environmental protection and open space in Wedges.

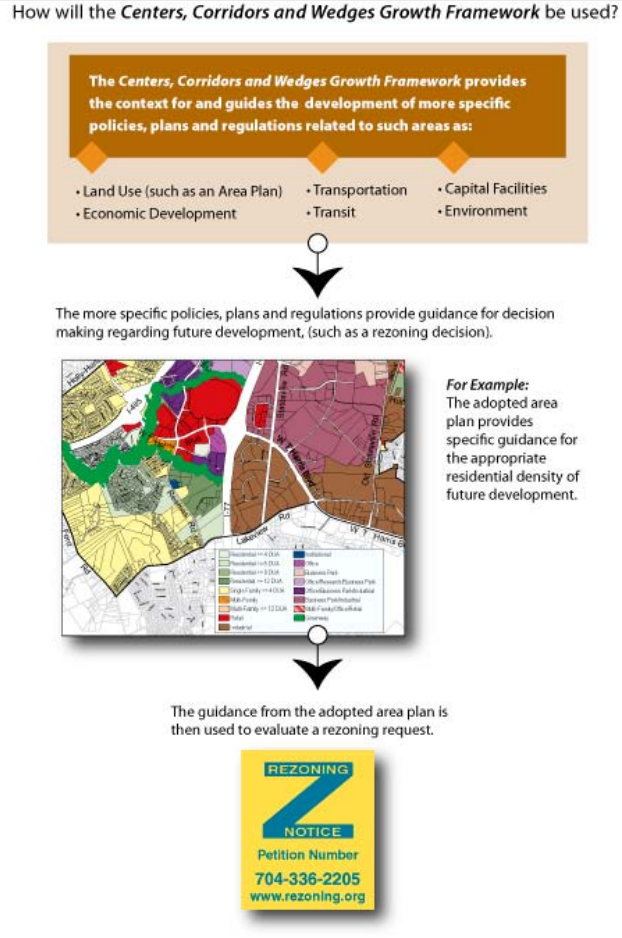
Conclusion

Growth has been, and will continue to be, a central issue for Charlotte. The City's population is not only projected to grow, but is also expected to continue to diversify. How the City responds and accommodates growth, with redevelopment being the highest priority, will determine the type of city that Charlotte will become.

The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework provides a vision for how Charlotte should grow and develop to meet the needs of an expanding and changing population. It provides guidance to help achieve this vision by:

- recognizing redevelopment as a key part of accommodating future growth, particularly in Activity Centers and Growth Corridors;
- supporting a variety of housing choices at appropriate locations;
- providing guidance to better match development types and intensities with infrastructure, particularly transportation facilities;
- emphasizing quality design and the importance of environmental considerations; and
- encouraging a variety of transportation choices.

Centers, Corridors and Wedges will not directly guide specific development proposals, but instead will provide the overarching policy basis for more detailed growth and development-related plans, policies and ordinances. Below is an illustration of how the *Growth Framework* relates to a specific development proposal that requires a rezoning. As shown, it provides the policy framework for the development of and updates to the applicable area plan. Subsequently, the area plan provides the more specific guidance for evaluating a proposed rezoning. For example, the area plan would indicate the appropriate land use, urban design features and unique transportation requirements for the subject property.



Consistency between the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* and the complementary policies, plans and ordinances, such as the parcel-specific area plans, will be necessary to ensure that growth occurs in the manner outlined in this document. An initial step in implementing the *Growth Framework* will be an assessment of existing policies, plans and ordinances to determine their consistency with *Centers, Corridors and Wedges* and whether updates are needed. Both the *General Development Policies* and *Charlotte Zoning Ordinance* are major documents that should be reviewed to determine what updates are needed to support implementation of the *Growth Framework*.

Once implementation of *Centers, Corridors and Wedges* is underway, the effectiveness of the growth framework will need to be assessed periodically. Growth targets, which have been developed to assist with this assessment, are:

- 70% of new multi-family residential and 75% of new office to be constructed in Activity Centers and Growth Corridors.
- 70% of new multi-family and 75% of new office to be constructed in Activity Centers and Growth Corridors, with an emphasis in Growth Corridors on Transit Station Areas.

These growth targets will help determine whether *Centers, Corridors and Wedges* is being effectively implemented. Periodically, the implementation approach may need to be reviewed and adjusted. In addition, the *Growth Framework* should be reviewed and updated as conditions change. For example, through the area planning process, the boundaries of the relevant Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges may be adjusted and new Activity Centers or Growth Corridors may be identified. (The most current map of Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges is available from the Planning Department and at *www.charlotteplanning.org*)

Although there are many complexities associated with guiding Charlotte's growth, the City is well positioned to take advantage of the many benefits that growth can bring. A coordinated and collaborative approach to implementing the concepts presented in this document will be a key step to ensure that Charlotte realizes its vision *"to continue to be one of the most livable cities in the country, with a vibrant economy, a thriving natural environment, a diverse population and a cosmopolitan outlook."*

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing: Generally defined as housing for which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of their gross income for housing costs, including utilities. The City of Charlotte defines affordable housing as any rental housing unit set aside exclusively for households earning 60% or less of the area median income or any ownership housing unit set aside for households earning 80% or less of the area median income. Area Median Income (AMI) is the family income that falls in the middle when compared to all incomes in the metropolitan area. This is based on household size of four.

- **Subsidized Housing:** Typically associated with rental housing. Rental subsidy is a tool used by many Federal and Local affordable housing programs, such as the Section 8 Housing Program. Area Median Income (AMI) is typically the benchmark used to determine eligibility for subsidized housing.
- **Workforce Housing:** Usually associated with for-sale housing. Units are developed and priced for those families whose income is steady and do not make up the poorest of the poor or have special needs. Typically, a developer will set aside a specific number of affordable units available to persons who qualify in return for development incentives or some element of public financing. Qualification is usually determined by some AMI standard.

Area Plan: A policy guide that focuses on a specific geographic area and addresses that area's individual character, its existing facilities and its future needs. Special emphasis is placed on community involvement in public meetings, study groups/stakeholders and individual input in the development of area plans. Area plans focus on the physical development of an area and typically include policies that address land use, transportation, community design, infrastructure, public facilities and the natural environment.

Baby Boomers: General term used to describe people born after World War II between 1945 and 1964.

Block Lengths: The longest dimension of a block, from intersection to intersection. Charlotte's *Urban Street Design Guidelines* recommend block lengths that vary according to street types and surrounding land uses.

Brownfield: Abandoned, idled or underused land where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by the presence or potential presence of environmental contamination.

Business Corridor: Streets the City has targeted for revitalization efforts as identified in the Business Corridor Revitalization Strategic Plan 2007-2010.

Centers as defined in *General Development Policies:* These centers are primarily retail-oriented, although ideally they will also contain a mix of well-integrated office and residential uses. Today, many of these centers would be described as shopping centers. While retail uses will continue to be the primary focus of these centers, they are envisioned to become focal point for the surrounding community, providing retail and other services in a pedestrian-oriented, compact, mixed use setting. There are five types of these centers that are differentiated by their size:

- Convenience Center (up to 70,000 square feet),
- Neighborhood Center (up to 130,000 square feet),
- Community Center (up to 300,000 square feet),
- Regional Center (up to 750,000 square feet), and
- Super-Regional Center (over 750,000 square feet).

Centers as defined by the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* (Activity Centers): These areas have (or are planned to have) at least 750,000 square feet of non-residential development. They are focal points of economic activity. Many existing "Activity" Centers have the capacity for significant new growth coupled with enhancements to the supporting infrastructure. The three types of Activity Centers include Center City (Uptown), Mixed Use Centers (like South Park), and Industrial Centers (like Westinghouse).

- Center City: The region's office and cultural hub, as well as the areas greatest concentration of office development and high density residential development.
- Industrial Center: Include primarily warehouse, distribution and manufacturing facilities that serve as major economic generators for the region. They are less compact and less intensely developed than the other types of Activity Centers.
- Mixed Use Center: Focal points of community activity that include a mix of uses with retail, housing, office and civic components with a cohesive, identifiable pedestrian-oriented core linked to the remainder of the center by an integrated pedestrian and street network.

Connectivity: Providing for a number of alternate routes between developments/neighborhoods for multiple modes of transportation including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit users.

Context Sensitive Design: An approach to designing and building transportation facilities (e.g. streets) that emphasizes that transportation facilities should fit their physical settings and preserve scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.

Complete Street: A street that provides viable transportation options for all its different users: motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and people who live and work along the street while recognizing that that there might be conflicting needs between different users.

Corridors as defined by the *2030 Transit Corridor System Plan* (Transit Corridors): Those areas identified by the *2030 Transit Corridor System Plan* adopted by the Metropolitan Transit Commission that are suitable for rapid transit. They are the South Corridor (running parallel to South Boulevard from Center City to I-485); Northeast Corridor (running generally parallel to North Tryon Street from Center City to UNC-Charlotte to just south of I-485); North Corridor (running relatively parallel to I-77 from Center City to Mount Mourne, just south of Mooresville); Southeast Corridor (running primarily along Independence Boulevard from Center City to CPCC-Levine Campus in Mathews); Center City Corridor (Connecting areas just beyond I-277 with destinations throughout Uptown); and the West Corridor (running relatively parallel to Wilkinson Boulevard from Center City to the Airport).

Corridors as defined by the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* (Growth Corridors): Five growth areas that extend from Center City to the edge of Charlotte, roughly parallel to I-77, I-85 or US-74. Growth Corridors are characterized by the diversity of places they encompass – from historic neighborhoods to vibrant mixed use areas to significant employment and shopping districts – and by the accessibility and connectivity they provide for these places. Many areas within the Growth Corridors, particularly the Transit Station Areas, are appropriate locations for significant new growth. Unlike roadway corridors or business corridors, Growth Corridors are not defined by, or centered on, a single street. Rather they encompass a much wider area and include a variety of high capacity transportation facilities (e.g. major thoroughfares, rapid transit, expressways). Four distinct subareas have been identified within Growth Corridors:

- Transit Station Areas: Located within approximately 1/2-mile walking distance of an existing or planned rapid transit station. These areas should be pedestrian-oriented and typically include a mixture of complimentary moderate to high-intensity residential, office, retail, entertainment, and civic uses.
- Interchange Areas: Property located within approximately 1/2 to 1 mile of interstate or expressway interchanges that have access to and from all interchange quadrants and are appropriate for development types requiring high levels of vehicular access, such as warehouse and distribution uses and regional serving retail.
- Established Neighborhood Areas: Existing, primarily low density, residential communities that are located within the Growth Corridors. They are typically comprised of single family housing, but may also include some multi-family, commercial and civic uses. These areas should be maintained, enhanced and protected from more intense development adjacent to the neighborhood.
- General Corridor Areas: Located outside the other three types of subareas within the Growth Corridors and are appropriate for a range of low to moderate intensity uses that may include smaller mixed use centers and areas with the character and function of Mixed Use Activity Centers.

Density: The number of residential dwelling units per acre of land determined by dividing the number of dwelling units by the total number of acres in the parcel.

- Low Density: Up to 4 dwelling units per acre
- Moderate Density: Up to 22 dwelling units per acre
- High Density: Over 22 dwelling units per acre

Dwelling Unit: A room or combination of rooms designed for year-round habitation, containing a bathroom and kitchen facilities, and designed for or used as a permanent residence.

- Dwelling, attached: Any duplex, triplex, quadraplex or multi-family dwelling developed side by side where land is sold with each dwelling unit.
- Dwelling, detached: A dwelling unit that is developed with open yards on at least three sides, including modular homes, but not including manufactured homes, mobile homes, or recreational or motor vehicles.
- Dwelling, multi-family: More than four dwelling units, including modular homes, placed one on top of another or side by side and sharing common walls or common floors and ceilings

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): The gross floor area of all buildings or structures on a lot divided by the total lot area.

***General Development Policies (GDP)*:** A planning document adopted by Charlotte City Council that provides guidance for future land use and development decisions. The *GDPs* are used as a starting point in developing area plans, in making changes to existing regulations (such as the zoning and subdivision ordinances), and in evaluating development proposals.

Generation X: People born between 1965 and 1980.

Greenway: Vegetated natural buffers that improve water quality, reduce the impacts of flooding, and provide wildlife habitat. Greenway trails provide recreation, transportation, fitness, and economic benefits.

Greenfield: Land that is still in its natural state or used for agriculture or very low intensity uses; rural sites/areas not yet developed.

Height: The vertical distance between the average grade at the base of a structure and the highest part of the structure, but not including skylights, and roof structures for elevators, stairways, tanks, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment, or similar equipment for the operation and maintenance of a building. Height is also characterized by the following building types:

- Low-rise: up to 4 stories
- Mid-rise: 5 to 8 stories
- High-rise: over 8 stories

Infill Development: The development of new housing or other buildings on vacant lots in a built-up area.

Intensity: Floor area ratio for non-residential development, such as commercial, office, and industrial. FAR may also be used when referring to intensity for mixed use developments.

- Low Intensity: up to 0.25 FAR
- Moderate intensity: up to 0.50 FAR
- High intensity: 0.50 FAR or greater

Intown: Area of Charlotte generally within Route 4.

Land Use: The way land is used to provide locations for homes, businesses, institutions, etc. Zoning regulations control land use.

Local Streets: Streets that provide direct access to sites or land uses. There are several types of local streets, based on the predominant land uses found along them as defined in Charlotte's *Urban Street Design Guidelines* (USDG). The different types are Local Residential (Narrow, Medium and Wide), Local Office / Commercial (Narrow and Wide), and Local Industrial. The narrow, medium and wide designation refers to differences in dimensions of the various components of the street, such as vehicle lanes, parking zones and pedestrian zones.

Mixed use Development: One or more buildings that contain more than one type of land use (e.g., retail, office, residential); or, a combination of buildings that contain single uses and buildings that contain more than one type of land use. A key characteristic of mixed use development is that the various uses are well integrated in a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Multi-use Development: Includes at least two of the following uses: office, institutional, civic, residential, retail/service uses in separate but abutting or adjacent buildings, and located on one tract of land, or on multiple adjacent sites. The various uses within a multi-use development are well connected so that the development is pedestrian-oriented, compact, and architecturally integrated.

Node: A hub of activity.

Non-local Streets: Main Streets, Avenues, Boulevards or Parkways as defined in Charlotte's *Urban Street Design Guidelines* (USDG). They are categorized by being destination locations (Main Streets); providing access from neighborhoods to commercial areas, between areas of the city and, in some cases, through neighborhoods (Avenues); moving large numbers of vehicles often as "through traffic" from one part of the city to another (Boulevards); and in some cases are mainly motor vehicle oriented (Parkways).

Parks (public): Any land owned by the public and open for use by the general public for active (including playgrounds, ball fields, etc.) or passive recreational purposes (trails and greenway) or as a refuge for wildlife. Mecklenburg County classifies active parks by the following sizes:

- Neighborhood / School Parks: 2 - 20 acres
- Community Parks: 20 - 100 acres
- Regional Parks: 100+ acres
- Urban Parks: Any urban space used for active or passive purposes. These spaces would include such things as a central plaza and can range in size from 0.8 to 8 acres; are multi-faceted; do not have to be green; and are linked together by greenway or overland connectors for easy
  pedestrian access and to accommodate larger city-wide events.

Pedestrian-oriented: Any development or facility that incorporates the pedestrian as the focal point in its design, scale, and functionality by providing a clear, comfortable, inviting and safe pedestrian environment that easily accesses commercial and residential areas as well as incorporates transit accessibility.

Residential Location and Design Assessment Matrix: A site assessment tool in the *General Development Policies* (*GDP*) used to help determine the appropriateness of a site as a location for higher density residential development (above 4 dwelling units per acre).

The Residential Location and Design Assessment Matrix is not used when a site is located in a Transit Station Area (the *Transit Station Area Principles* would apply instead), nor is it used when a specific density or density guidance is provided in an adopted plan.

Residential Location and Design Assessment Matrix

Assessment Criteria	Density Category > 4 up to 6 dua	> 6 up to 8 dua	> 8 up to 12 dua	> 12 up to 17 dua	Over 17 dua
Meeting with Staff					
Yes = 1; No = 0					
Sewer and Water Availability					
CMUD = 2; Private = 1; No = 0					
Land Use Accessibility					
High = 3; Medium = 2; Low = 1					
Connectivity Analysis					
High = 5; Medium High = 4 Medium = 3; Medium Low = 2; Low = 1					
Road Network Evaluation					
Yes = 1, No = 0					
Design Guidelines					
Yes = 4; NA = 4; No = 0					
Other Opportunities or Constraints (see below)					
Comment (no points)					
Minimum Points Needed	10	11	12	13	14

The matrix is based on a point system that "scores" a site on a number of criteria that have an impact on the appropriateness of the site for higher density development. The criteria include: sewer and water availability, land use accessibility, connectivity, existing road network and design. Other opportunities or constraints (listed in the *GDP*) are also considered.

Route 4: Road network that forms a loop around the center of Charlotte (approximately 4 miles from the Center City) and includes all or portions of Billy Graham Parkway, Woodlawn Road, Runnymeade Lane, Sharon Road, Wendover Road, Eastway Drive, Sugar Creek Road, and Interstate 85.

Station Area Plan (SAP): A land use policy guide for a specific geographic area surrounding a rapid transit station that addresses that area's individual character, its existing facilities and its future needs. These plans focus on the physical development of an area and typically include policies that address land use, transportation, community design, infrastructure, public facilities and the natural environment. Station Area Plans follow the guidelines adopted through the *Transit Station Area Principles* of the *General Development Policies.*

Streetscape: All the elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and that, as a group, define its character. Streetscape is defined in Charlotte's *USDG* as the combination of the physical elements installed within and along the street right-of-way that impact its usability, functionality, appearance and identity. The appropriate combination of streetscape elements will vary according to street classification, right-of-way width, traffic volume, land use context, and multi-modal expectations.

Sustainability: The ability to meet present needs without compromising those of future generations. It relates to the continuity of economic, social, institutional and environmental conditions.

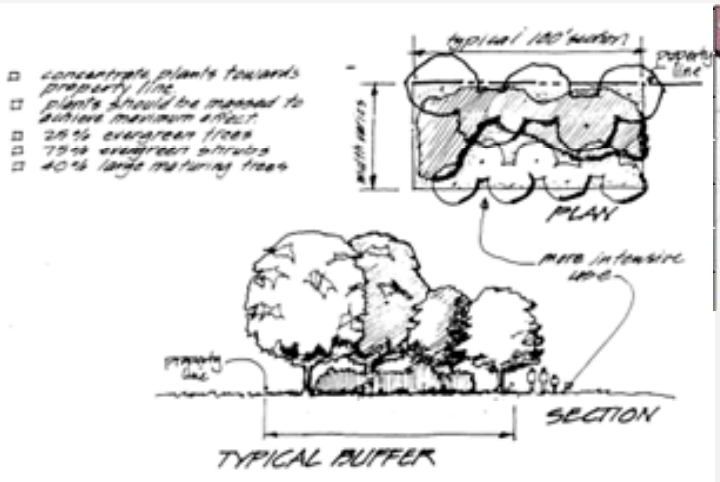
Thoroughfare: Any street designated on the adopted *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Thoroughfare Plan*, or any street which is an extension of a street on the adopted *Thoroughfare Plan*. The Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) identifies four main thoroughfare types in the *Thoroughfare Plan* — Freeway/Expressway, Limited Access Thoroughfare, Commercial Thoroughfare (Major Thoroughfare) and Minor Thoroughfare.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD): Development that focuses on creating compact neighborhoods with housing, jobs, shopping community services and recreational opportunities all within easy walking distance (i.e. within 1/2 mile) of a transit station. A separate TOD zoning district is defined in the *Charlottte Zoning Ordinance*.

Transition: Refers to minimizing potential adverse impacts between land uses that are of different types, intensity and/or scale. Buffers and screens are two of the tools often used to help create such a transition. Site and building design elements, open space, and height restrictions can also help to create a transition between land uses. Sometimes land uses themselves can serve as a transition, providing a more gradual change in use, intensity or scale between different uses. These tools, and others, can be used alone or in combination to create a transition appropriate for a specific situation. The specific details of when and how the different tools are to be used are defined in the *Charlotte Zoning Ordinance* and/or Area Plans.

- **Buffer:** A strip of land with natural or planted vegetation located between a use or structure and a side or rear property line intended to separate and partially obstruct the view of two abutting land uses or properties from one another. A buffer area may include any required screening for the site, and ranges in width depending on the types of land uses on either side. The *Charlotte Zoning Ordinance* dictates the specific requirements for buffers between zoning districts.

- **Screening:** A fence, wall, hedge, landscaping, earth berm, buffer area or any combination of these provided to create a visual and/or physical separation between certain land uses. Screening may be located on the property line or elsewhere on the site. Screening requirements are detailed in the *Charlotte Zoning Ordinance* with specific standards for minimum and maximum wall/fence height; appropriate types of materials for walls, fences, and landscaping materials; and appropriate spacing. Guidance for screening is also addressed in some area plans.



A buffer can provide separation and screening between different uses.

In this example, moderate density residential provides a transition between low density residential and transit oriented development.

- **Site/Building Design Elements:** Site and building design are frequently used to provide a transition between single family housing and more intense development located across a street. The site and building for the more intense use is designed to mimic or complement the characteristics of the facing single family housing. Design elements may include, but are not limited to: multiple building entrances, façade variations, roofline variations, reduced building mass, stoops and porches, and parking located to the side or rear of the structure. Site and building design elements may be addressed in an area plan or through zoning. Additional site/building design approaches used to provide a transition include the following:
  - Height Plane: A height plane, or the gradual increase in height from low-rise development to mid- or high-rise development, is another type of transition. Use of a height plane provides a separation between low-scale buildings and mid- or high-rise buildings.
  - Land Use Transition: Land uses may also be used as a transition. Use of a land use transition would be identified during the area planning process and be adopted as the future land use policy for the area.
  - Open Space Transition: In some cases, urban plazas or open space may provide a transition by providing additional separation between uses. Urban open spaces may be recommended through the area planning process.

***Transportation Action Plan (TAP)*:** Adopted by Charlotte City Council In 2006, the *TAP* includes goals, objectives, policies and the transportation improvements necessary to prepare the City to meet its future transportation needs to better accommodate growth. This policy document relies upon the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges* concept as the land use vision for the City.

Tree Canopy: Generally defined as the layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above.

Urban: A highly developed area that includes, or is an accessory to, a central city or place and contains a variety of uses. These areas typically contain compact development that is pedestrian-oriented with higher densities than would be found in suburban or rural areas.

***Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG)*:** Adopted by Charlotte City Council in 2007, these policies are a key component of the *Transportation Action Plan* and describe how Charlotte's streets will be evaluated, planned for and designed. The *USDG* define a process to ensure that appropriate street types and street design elements will be used to support specific land development and transportation objectives. Additionally, the *USDG* describe the land uses and urban design elements that can best complement each type of street, with the intention that street design and land use/urban design decisions will reinforce each other.

Wedges: Areas between Growth Corridors, and excluding Activity Centers, where residential neighborhoods have developed and continue to grow. Wedges consist mainly of low density housing, as well as a limited amount of moderate density housing and supporting facilities and services.

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CHARLOTTE

Urban Street Design Guidelines Ordinance Implementation

Presentation to the Transportation and Planning Committee of City Council

May 10, 2010

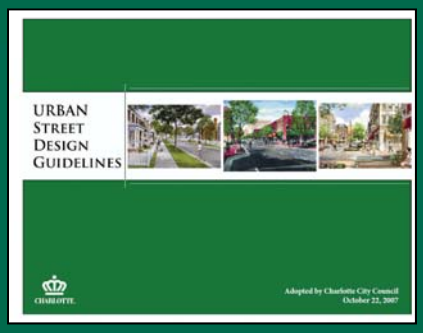
Mike Davis, PE
Department of Transportation

Shannon Frye
Planning Department

CITY OF CHARLOTTE

What Are the Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG)?

- (17) adopted policy statements
- (6-step) planning and design process
- (land-use based) street options
- design guidance and expectations (dimensions, tradeoffs)



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Why Do We Need the USDG?

- ~60% thoroughfares no sidewalks
- ~70% local streets no sidewalks
- ~50% intersections poor pedestrian LOS
- ~95% intersections poor bicycle LOS
- ~20% thoroughfares highly congested

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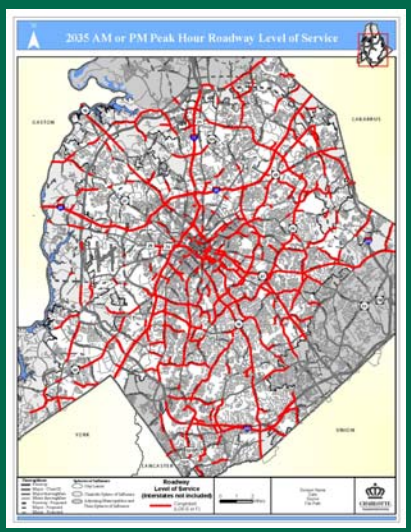
Why Do We Need the USDG?

- ~35% growth in traffic volume by 2035
- ~40% of thoroughfares highly congested in 2035



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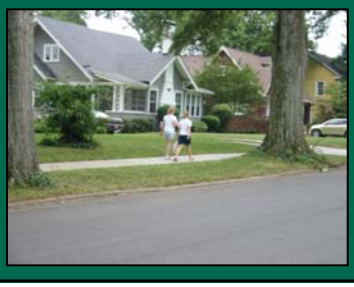
Why Do We Need USDG?

- Provide quality street designs for long-lasting value
- Provide capacity, mobility, safety, and convenience for:
  - Motorists
  - Bicyclists
  - Pedestrians
  - Transit riders
  - Neighborhood residents
  - Property owners
- Accommodate growth and create complete streets



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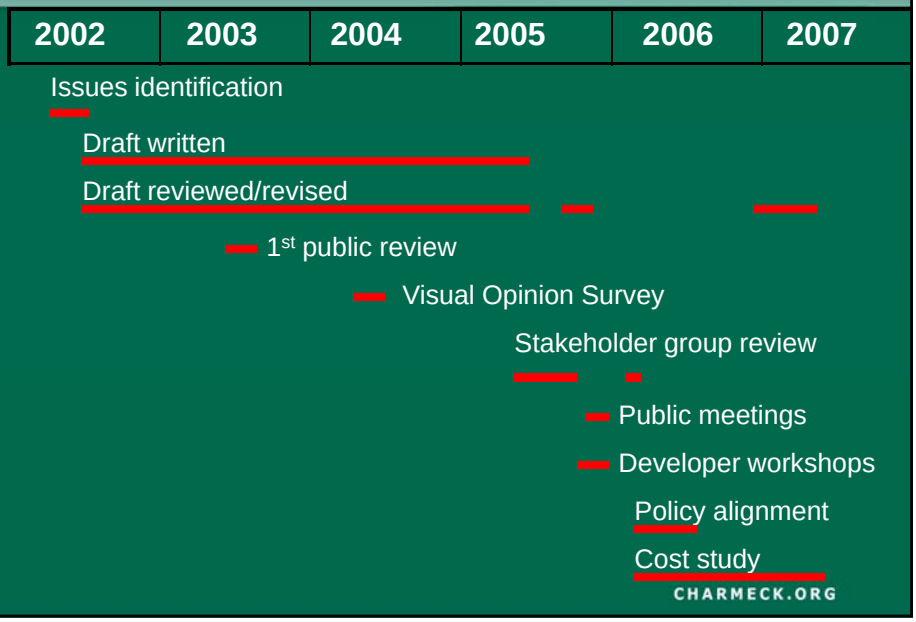
Developing the USDG



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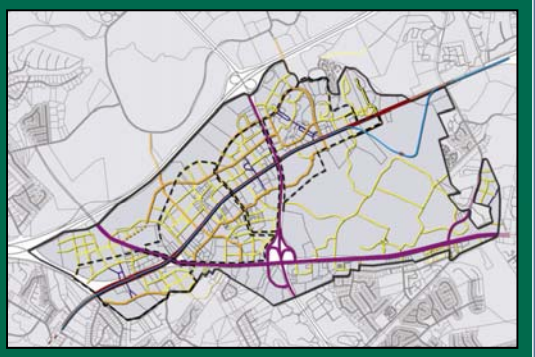
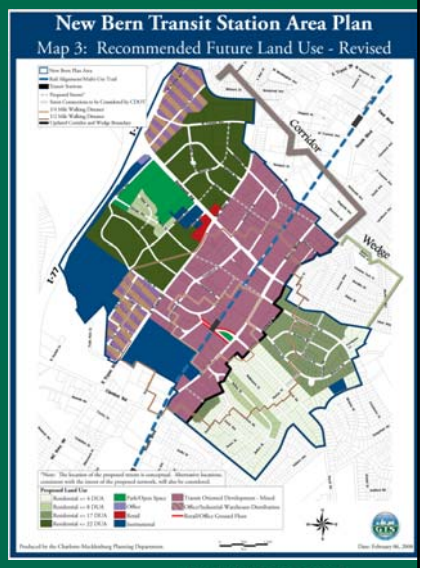
Implementation/ Experience-to-Date: Area Plans

- 9 completed, 6 underway





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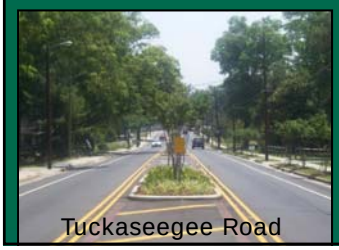
Implementation/ Experience-to-Date: CIP

Completed		Anticipated or Underway
9	Thoroughfares rebuilt/extended	17
19	Streetscapes and road-conversions	8
11	Intersections	8
37	Sidewalks	66


Tuckaseegee Road

Clanton Road

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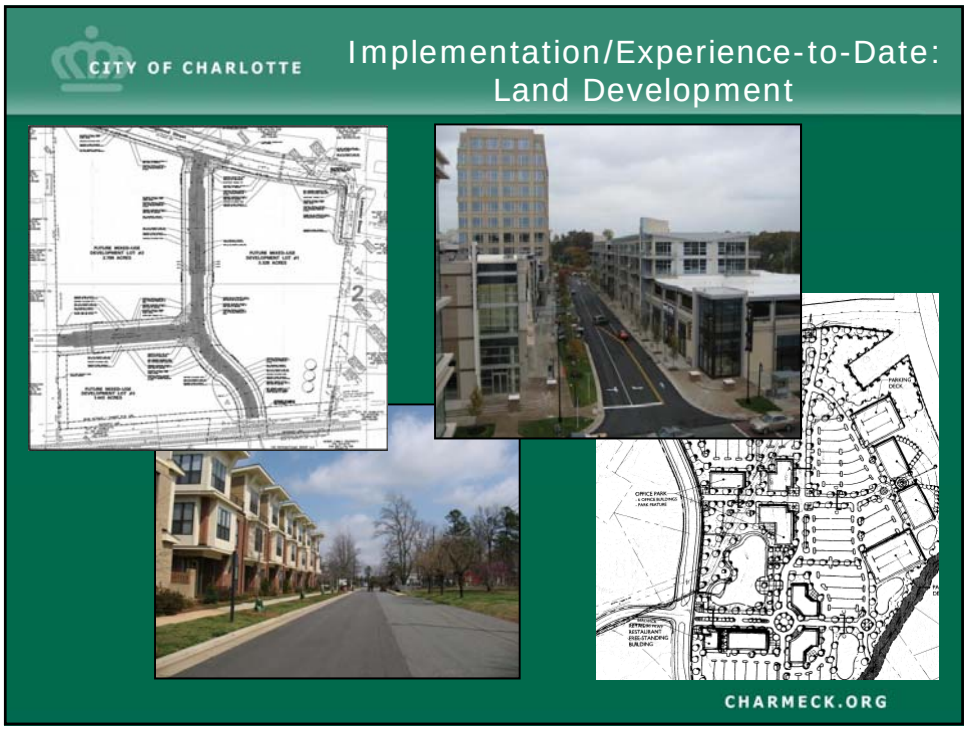
CITY OF CHARLOTTE
CIP Projects, Since 2005
(New and Retrofits)
McVay Street
East Blvd
Rozzelle's Ferry Road
Raintree Lane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Implementation/Experience-to-Date:
Land Development
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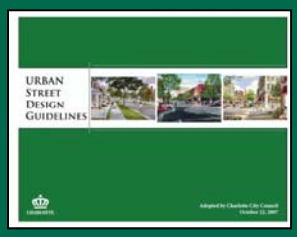
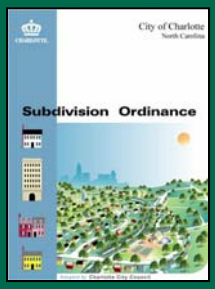
Converting USDG Policies Into Ordinance





- Convert USDG policies into regulations
- Provide both predictability and flexibility
- Apply experiences-to-date to prepare ordinance revisions

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Preview of Next Meeting

Topics Addressed in Proposed Ordinance Changes

- Create a connected local street network
- Match local street types to land uses
- Design standards for local streets
- Process for ensuring flexibility and predictability

Topics to be deferred

- Creek crossings
- Thoroughfare rights-of-way

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Schedule

Activity	Committee Meetings	Public Meetings	Full Council
Introduce draft and present key concepts	27-May	8-Jun	
Present compiled comments received; seek understanding of intent or interest behind comments where needed	22-Jul	15-Jul	
Present staff's proposed disposition of comments received and recommended final ordinance language.	26-Aug	18-Aug	
Council Workshop			7-Sep
Public Hearing			15-Nov
Requested Council Decision			20-Dec

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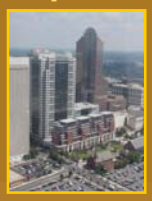
Growth Framework

Centers, Corridors and Wedges Update



Transportation and Planning Committee
May 10, 2010

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Growth Framework

Presentation Outline

1. Update Process
2. Overview of "Updated" Centers, Corridors and Wedges
3. Next Steps

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Growth Framework

Update Process

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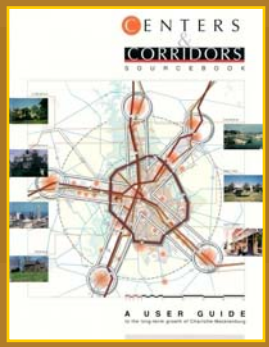
The *Centers and Corridors* concept for addressing growth was developed in the mid 1990's.

As illustrated in The *Centers and Corridors Sourcebook* (1998), it provides a very general growth concept for Charlotte.



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Process and Schedule

Interdepart Staff Team Review Dec. 2008-February 2010

- Public Kick-Off Meetings October 2008
- Citizen Advisory Group Meetings Dec. 2008-March 2009
- Revised Document Text April 2009 – Dec. 2009
- Citizen Advisory Group Meeting January 2010 to Review Document Text Changes
- TAP Committee Update March 25, 2010
- Revised Draft Document April 2010
- Final Public Workshop April 2010
- Planning Commission Review and Recommendation April - June 2010
  Public Comment - May 3, 2010
- TAP Committee Review and Recommendation May - June 2010
  Public Comment- May 24, 2010
- City Council Adoption June 2010

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What is New in the Update?

- A goal statement and set of guiding principles
- Expansion of concept to include Wedges (formerly Quadrants)
- Subareas of Growth Corridors and redefinition of Activity Centers
- More guidance for land use and transportation and addition of infrastructure/public facilities, urban design and the natural environment
- Explanation of how to use the concept
- A glossary of key planning terms

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Overview of Updated "Centers, Corridors and Wedges"

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The Goal

Charlotte will continue to be one of the most livable cities in the country, with a vibrant economy, a thriving natural environment, a diverse population and a cosmopolitan outlook.

Charlotteans will enjoy a range of choices for housing, transportation, education, entertainment and employment. Safe and attractive neighborhoods will continue to be central to the City's identity and citizen involvement key to its viability.

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The Vision

Centers, Corridors and Wedges

Establishes a vision for future growth and development by:

- **Identifying three geographic types used to categorize land in Charlotte – Activity Center, Growth Corridor and Wedge**
- **Outlining desired characteristics of future development in each of these areas**

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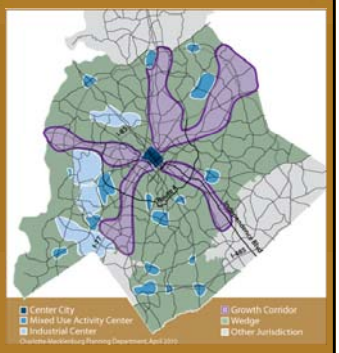
How is Centers, Corridors and Wedges Different from a Plan?

- **Centers, Corridors and Wedges:**
  - **Provides general guidance**
  - **Is not site specific**



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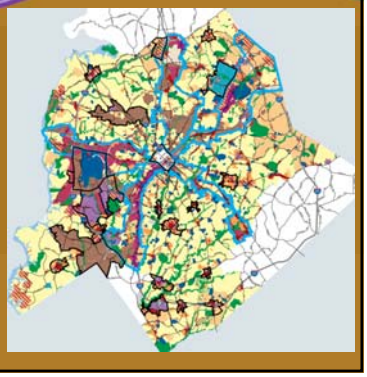
How is Centers, Corridors and Wedges Different from a Plan?

- **Area Plans:**
  - **Provide specific guidance**
  - **Are site specific**
  - **Are used when assessing rezoning requests**



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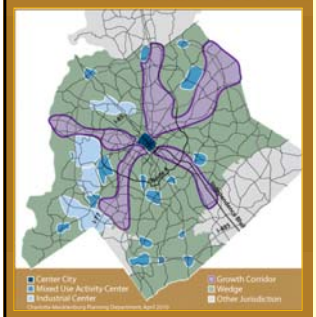
The Framework



Activity Centers: Focal points of economic activity typically planned for concentrations of compact development. Appropriate locations for significant new growth with enhancements to the supporting infrastructure.

Growth Corridors: Five elongated areas that stretch from Center City to the edge of Charlotte. Characterized by the diversity of places they encompass and by the accessibility and connectivity they provide for these places. Many areas within Growth Corridors, particularly the transit station areas, are appropriate locations for significant new growth.

Wedges: Large areas between corridors where residential neighborhoods have developed and continue to grow. Provide a wide range of housing choices, as well as supporting facilities and services.

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Activity Centers

1. Center City
2. Mixed Use Activity Centers
3. Industrial Centers

Expectation is for:

- more urban development form
- infill and redevelopment
- mix of uses
- interconnected network of streets
- pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- enhanced infrastructure
- possible addition of Activity Centers in the future

Activity Centers, about 10% of our land area, will be appropriate locations for new development and redevelopment. However, the amount, intensity and type of new development will be determined through the area planning process.

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Growth Corridors

1. Transit Station Areas
2. Interchange Areas
3. Established Neighborhood Areas
4. General Corridor Areas

Expectation is for:

- office, residential and mixed use, especially around Transit Stations
- industrial and warehouse/ distribution
- redevelopment and infill
- increased intensity and more pedestrian form of development - greatest intensity in Transit Station Areas
- preservation and enhancement of established single family neighborhoods
- dense network of interconnected streets
- enhanced infrastructure
- possible addition of Growth Corridors in the future

Many areas within Growth Corridors, which comprise approximately 20% of our land area, will be appropriate locations for development and redevelopment, with the amount, intensity and type determined through the area planning process.

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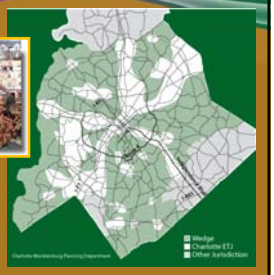
Wedges



Expectation is for:

- Preserving/enhancing existing neighborhoods
- housing for residents at every stage of life
- predominantly low density housing
- limited, strategically located moderate to high density housing
- neighborhood-scale commercial and civic uses
- transportation system providing residents better access to and from work, shopping, schools and recreation
- safe, convenient and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- protection of land and water resources

Many parts of Wedges, which comprise approximately 70% of our land area, will be appropriate locations for new development and redevelopment, with the amount, intensity and type determined through the area planning process and typically at a lower density than Centers or Corridors.

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How Will Centers, Corridors and Wedges Be Used?

- As a foundation for development of more detailed policies, plans and regulations;
- To establish a consistent framework for capital planning; and
- As a basis for evaluation Charlotte's success in addressing growth and redevelopment issues.

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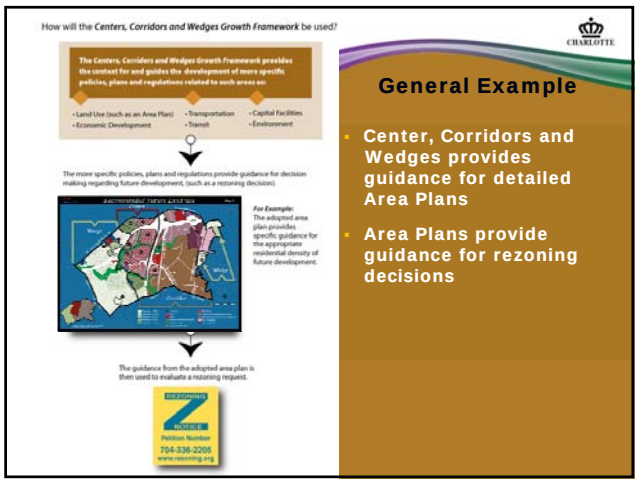
How will the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework be used?
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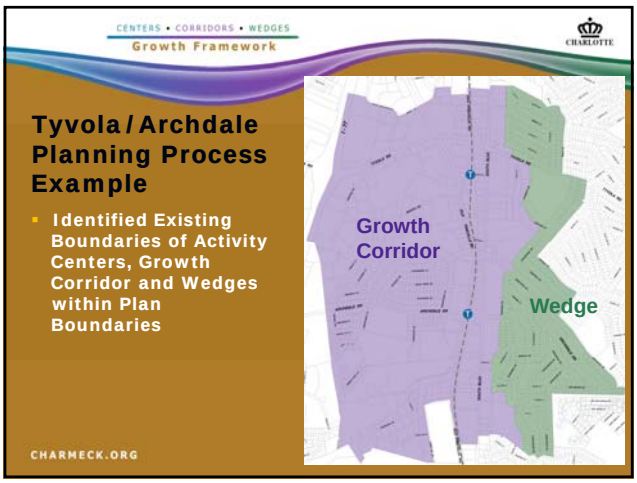
The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework provides the context for and guides the development of more specific policies, plans and regulations related to such areas as:
• Land Use (such as an Area Plan)
• Economic Development
• Transportation
• Transit
• Capital Facilities
• Environment
The more specific policies, plans and regulations provide guidance for decision making regarding future development, (such as a rezoning decision).
For Example:
The adopted area plan provides specific guidance for the appropriate residential density of future development.
The guidance from the adopted area plan is then used to evaluate a rezoning request.
REZONING
NOTICE
Petition Number
704-336-2205
www.rezoning.org
General Example
• Center, Corridors and Wedges provides guidance for detailed Area Plans
• Area Plans provide guidance for rezoning decisions


CENTERS • CORRIDORS • WEDGES
Growth Framework
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Tyvola / Archdale Planning Process Example
• Identified Existing Boundaries of Activity Centers, Growth Corridor and Wedges within Plan Boundaries
Growth Corridor
Wedge
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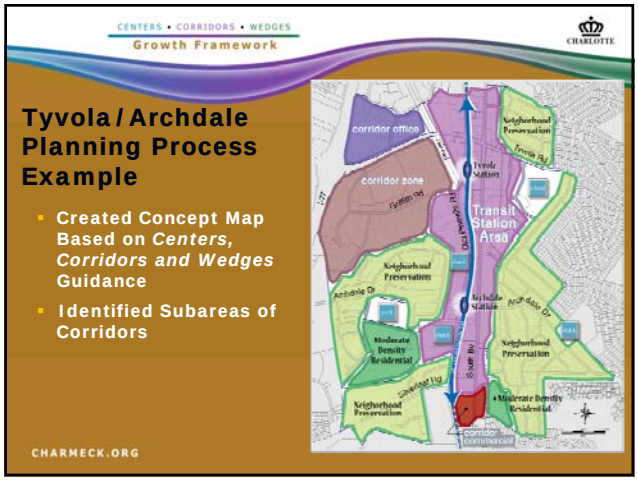
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Growth Framework
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Tyvola / Archdale Planning Process Example
• Created Concept Map Based on *Centers, Corridors and Wedges* Guidance
• Identified Subareas of Corridors
corridor office
corridor zone
Neighborhood Preservation
Tyvola Station
Transit Station Area
Moderate Density Residential
Archdale Station
Archdale Dr
corridor commercial
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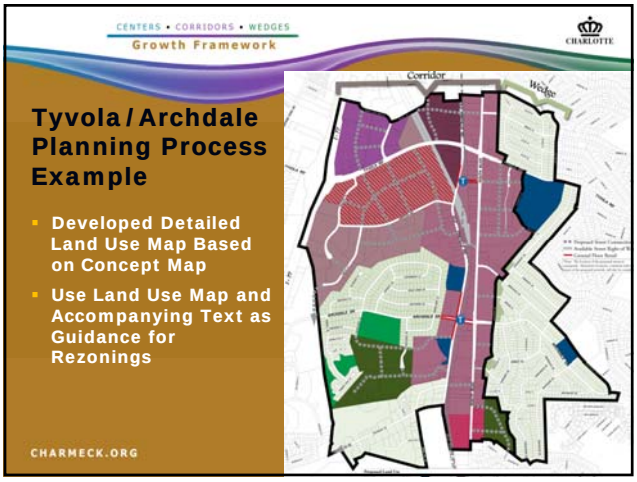
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Growth Framework
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Tyvola / Archdale Planning Process Example
• Developed Detailed Land Use Map Based on Concept Map
• Use Land Use Map and Accompanying Text as Guidance for Rezonings
Corridor
Wedge
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Next Steps

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Next Steps

- *May 10* *Transportation and Planning Committee Overview*
- May 24 Public Comment with City Council
- June 7 Planning Commission Recommendation
- June 14 Transportation and Planning Committee Recommendation
- June 28 **City Council Adoption**

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Thank You

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