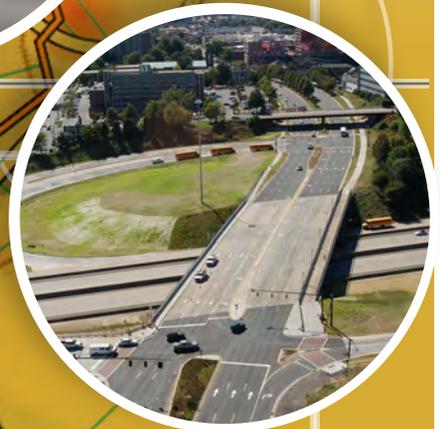
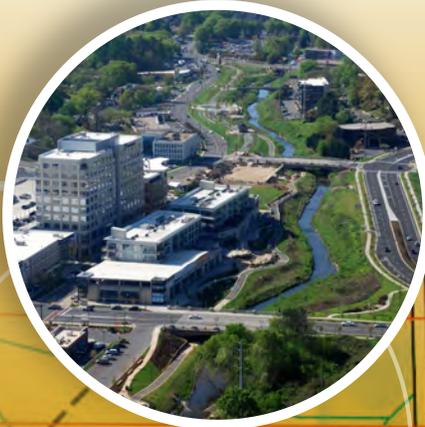


# The City of Charlotte TRANSPORTATION Action Plan 2012 Annual Report



CHARLOTTE.



In May of 2006, the Charlotte City Council adopted the Transportation Action Plan (TAP) — the City’s first comprehensive, multi-modal, long-range transportation plan. This plan was updated and affirmed by City Council in August of 2011. The TAP describes the City’s policies, projects and programs that will be necessary over the next 25 years to accommodate projected growth and reduce existing transportation deficiencies.

The TAP Update called for a 25-year investment of \$2.6 billion in 2011 dollars to build and maintain a network of local thoroughfares, streets, connectivity projects, traffic signal systems, pedestrian pathways and bicycle facilities.

The demands on the City’s transportation system continue to grow. Increases in the various types of transportation capacity defined in the TAP, in conjunction with increases in freeway and expressway capacities, and expanded bus and rapid transit services, will be necessary as Charlotte— one of the nation’s largest cities—is expected to grow to over one million in population by 2035.

I am pleased to present the 2012 Annual Report for the Transportation Action Plan. This report describes the achievements and the challenges that occurred in 2012, our seventh year of implementing the goals, strategies and projects recommended in the TAP. I believe an annual report is important not just to highlight our successes, but also to identify possible changes in strategies or investments that we should consider in the upcoming years.

Council and staff have been implementing the TAP’s policies and programs since its adoption. In the years ahead, City Council will continue to make difficult decisions about transportation priorities, revenues and growth management so that Charlotte can continue to be one of the most livable and economically attractive large cities in the nation.

Ron Carlee,  
City Manager

*July 2013*

## Transportation Action Plan 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

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The Transportation Action Plan (TAP) describes the goals, objectives and policies that are necessary to make Charlotte one of the premier cities in the nation for providing land use and transportation choices. A full copy of the Transportation Action Plan is available at <http://cdot.charmeck.org>.

To achieve the City's goals, the TAP recommends a variety of transportation investments. The cost of these investments is estimated at \$2.6 billion for construction and maintenance during the next 25 years. This level of investment—together with concurrent investments in State-maintained freeways and expressways and rapid transit lines—will be necessary to accommodate the City's ongoing growth, while protecting the high quality of life in Charlotte.

**Each year's Annual Report describes the progress and challenges in implementing the TAP.** These annual reviews enable City Council and staff to identify obstacles that must be overcome and determine changes in the resources or actions necessary to achieve the City's transportation-related goals.

### Among the highlights in 2012:

- **The City continued to implement transportation projects in excess of \$160 million** for roadway, signalization, connectivity, traffic calming, bicycle and sidewalk facilities funded by the 2006, 2008, and 2010 Transportation Bond measures.
  - **A federal full-funding grant agreement with USDOT was signed** in October 2012 for the LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE).
  - **Implementation of the Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG)** continued in Capital Improvement Plan projects, area plans, and through development ordinances.
  - **Charlotte DOT continued to work with NCDOT** in the implementation of their statewide complete streets policy, adopted in 2009.
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## ACHIEVEMENTS

- **City Council adopted the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework** in 2010, providing an overarching growth framework for the city.
- **The TAP Update**, adopted in 2011, supports the City's growth framework by identifying transportation policies and infrastructure investments appropriate for Centers, Corridors and Wedges.
- The **LYNX Blue Line** has been in operation for five years, since November 2007. Ridership continues to exceed forecasts, with weekday ridership averaging almost 15,000 boardings. Development in the corridor that can be reasonably attributed to the presence of light rail currently totals \$1.45 billion.
- **City Council adopted Area Plans for:**
  - University Research Park
  - Elizabeth
  - Independence Boulevard
  - Midtown-Morehead-Cherry
  - Steele Creek
  - Catawba
  - Center City 2020
  - North Tryon

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES



*Development approvals are now tracked to ensure the City meets land use targets.*

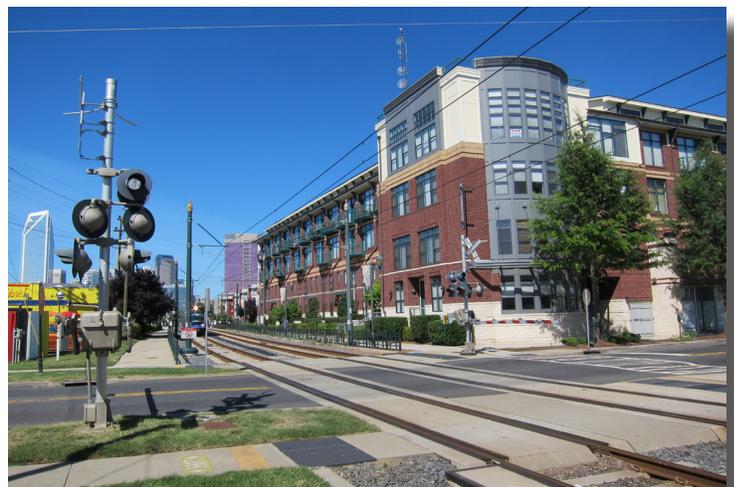
- A consultant is performing a general assessment of the **City's Zoning Ordinance** and will identify ordinance options for future consideration.
- **Plans are underway for these areas:**
  - Park-Woodlawn
  - Prosperity Hucks
  - Blue Line Extension Station Areas

- The LYNX Blue Line Extension will provide light rail service from Uptown to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has approved the project for final design and right-of-way acquisition.

## ISSUES & CHALLENGES

- **Adopted land use targets help monitor implementation** of the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth management framework. Policies 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 state that the City will ensure at least 40% of new households, 70% of new multi-family units, 75% of new office development and 75% of new employment will be located within centers and corridors.
- In FY12, The City **met the office, employment and multi-family targets** for centers and corridors (Table A).
- **The City's integrated transportation and land use strategy seeks to create more walkable neighborhoods and create "car-light" lifestyle options.** A car-light lifestyle can be measured by a community's level of walkability. Walkability can be measured by tools like Walk Score® which measures the walkability of a neighborhood based on the proximity of different land use categories. While Charlotte has some areas with high walk scores, it has many other areas with poor walk scores.

| Table A<br>Percentage of Development Locating Within Centers and Corridors | TARGET | FY 2012 |
|--|--------|---------|
| <b>TAP Policy 1.1.2</b>  |        |         |
| Total New Households   | 40%    | 62.5%   |
| New Multi-Family Households  | 70%    | 86.0%   |
| <b>TAP Policy 1.1.3</b>  |        |         |
| Total New Office Development   | 75%    | 98.4%   |
| New Employment   | 75%    | 94.2%   |



*The City is seeking to create more "car-light" housing options like in South End.*

Prioritize, design, construct and maintain **convenient and efficient transportation facilities** to improve safety and neighborhood livability, foster economic development, promote transportation choices and meet land use objectives.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

■ During FY2012 CDOT **designed and/or implemented:**

- 17.5 miles of street projects
- 6 intersection projects
- 24.5 miles of sidewalk projects
- 12 miles of bicycle projects
- Replacement of 225 obsolete traffic signal controllers
- Re-timing of 254 traffic signals

■ Ongoing implementation of the TAP and Urban Street Design Guidelines demonstrates Charlotte's **commitment to creating a multi-modal transportation network** with benefits for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, employers or business owners, and neighborhood residents.

■ For the first time, Charlotte was designated as a **bronze-level Walk Friendly Community** and was redesignated as a **bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community**.

■ **CATS utilized ARRA funding to renovate and expand the North Davidson Bus Maintenance Facility.** The expansion allowed CATS to consolidate Special Transportation Services (STS) with a portion of the fixed-route fleet into this campus to provide for shared resources and operational savings.



*Above: North Davidson Bus Maintenance Campus. Photo © JoAnn Sieburg-Baker*

*Left: Clanton Road was converted from a four-lane undivided street to two lanes with bicycle lanes and a center turn lane.*

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- In order to create more “complete streets,” **the City is continuing to apply the Urban Street Design Guidelines** on all City-sponsored transportation projects and through its development ordinances.
- With the remaining funds from the 2008-2010 bond cycles, **CDOT expects to plan, design and/or construct the following in FY13:**
  - 10 miles of sidewalk projects
  - 10 miles of bicycle projects
  - Re-time 300 traffic signals per year
- **A citywide walkability strategy is being developed** to ensure that the City continues to improve the pedestrian travel network.
- **The City and County have implemented over 160 miles** of bicycle lanes, trails and signed routes in Charlotte.
- **The City is utilizing an FTA urban circulator grant to fund the 1.5 mile Streetcar Starter Project** between Time Warner Cable Arena and Presbyterian Hospital along Trade St and Elizabeth Ave. The project will use existing streetcar rail on Elizabeth Avenue as well as replica trolleys.
- **CATS constructed a new park and ride lot on Lawyers Rd** at Albemarle Rd, with 230 parking spaces available for commuters.
- **The surface parking lot at the I-485 LYNX Station is being expanded by 162 spaces** to increase the parking supply to over 1,300 spaces.

*Figure 2 (back cover) shows the road and intersection projects advanced since the TAP was adopted.*

## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- While **Charlotte has made great strides in creating better streets for all users**, there were twelve pedestrian fatalities and one bicyclist fatality in FY 2012.



*Charlotte has many streets in need of sidewalks, such as this section of Nations Ford Road.*

*Collaborate with local and regional partners on land use, transportation and air quality to enhance environmental quality and promote long-term regional sustainability.*

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- The City supports regional transportation, air quality and sustainability objectives through participation in the **Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO)**. In 2012, City staff worked with MUMPO staff to begin the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- The City assisted Charlotte Center City Partners with the **implementation of a 20-station “B-Cycle” bike share system**, launched in the Summer of 2012.
- **The Blue Line Extension received full funding grant agreements** from the USDOT and the State of North Carolina. The agreements guarantee the federal government’s participation for up to 50% of the total cost and State funding for 25% of the total cost.
- The City worked with NCDOT to **re-design the South Tryon Street bridge** over I-277 to provide better pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between Uptown and South End.

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- The City and NCDOT are working to **identify projects that will ultimately form a network of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) or Express Toll lanes** along I-77, I-485 South, and US-74 East.
- Construction of the **Charlotte Gateway Station**, a multi-modal transportation center in Uptown that will provide access and connectivity to travelers from across the region, is a collaborative effort between the City and the State of North Carolina. NCDOT issued a Request for Qualifications for a mas-

ter developer and selected a preferred partner in November of 2012.



*Charlotte’s B-Cycle bike share system includes 200 bicycles.*

■ The **North Corridor Commuter Rail Project** (the Red Line) would be a new commuter rail service along the existing Norfolk-Southern O-Line between Charlotte and Mooresville — a distance of 25 miles. NCDOT’s consultants prepared a draft Business/Finance Plan including a refined funding strategy. A railroad infrastructure and operations study is now underway to identify any construc-

tion of tracks and siding along this corridor of the Norfolk-Southern Railroad.

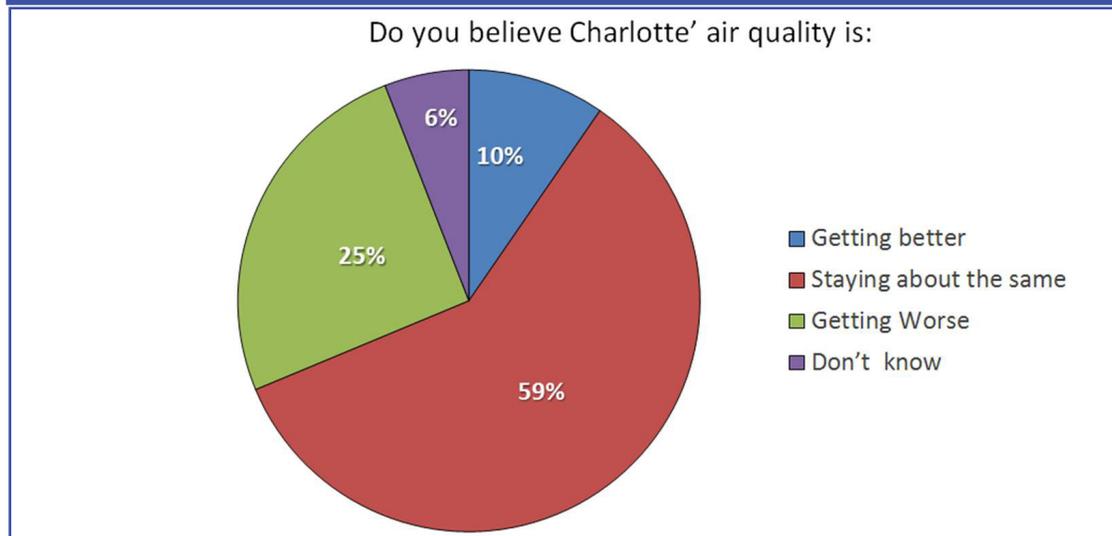
■ **The City is coordinating with the NCDOT Rail Division on 20 railroad projects** in order to modernize track infrastructure and to help implement the Southeast High Speed passenger rail service.

## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

■ **The successful integration of NCDOT’s Complete Streets Policy into ongoing practice** will be important to ensure that NCDOT’s project designs reflect urban transportation goals in Charlotte and other cities in North Carolina.

■ **The Centralina Council of Governments**, which includes Charlotte as a member, **received a Regional Planning Grant Award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** to develop a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. The goal of this three-year effort will be to create a Regional Development Framework.

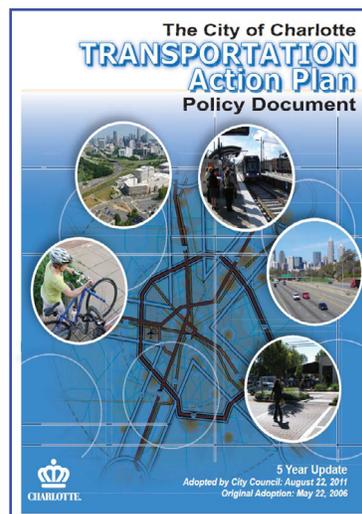
### Do you believe Charlotte’s air quality is:



*Mecklenburg County is part of an eight-county ozone attainment area. Air quality has been improving in the region, even though the 2012 survey reveals that this issue is not well understood.*

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Through the update of the TAP in 2011, the City re-emphasized its **comprehensive set of transportation-related strategies**.
- The City's **transportation priorities** are updated annually in the 5-year Capital Investment Program and 10-year Capital Needs Assessment.
- CDOT sponsors a **bi-annual survey** to assess the community's opinions on transportation issues and concerns.
- The TAP Policy Document and Technical Document can be found online at <http://www.cdof.charmeck.org>.



## CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- The City is **tracking land development permits** monthly and annually to monitor the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth targets. That information is available to elected officials, staff and citizens to determine how well the City is meeting specific land use targets.
- The City is participating in the Centralina Council of Governments' **"CONNECT Our Future"** regional planning vision.
- The City is working with the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) to develop its first **Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)**, required by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.



## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Successfully integrating land use and transportation decisions over time requires **implementing the City's long-term vision through continued communication** with residents and stakeholders, as well as monthly or quarterly reports to the City Council.
- Similar to many private companies, **the City is facing financial constraints and funding challenges** while simultaneously experiencing an increasing demand for public services, including transportation. Implementing the City's growth framework is increasingly important in order to provide adequate public services.



*Continued growth in the Charlotte region will create increases in travel on the region's roadways. Continued implementation and funding of the TAP will help Charlotte address the City's transportation challenges.*

*Seek financial resources, external grants and funding partnerships necessary to implement transportation programs and services.*

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- When City Council updated the TAP in 2011, they acknowledged that the TAP recommended spending \$2.6 billion to build, operate and maintain **locally funded transportation projects** through 2035.
- **The City received a \$25 million urban circulator grant from the FTA** to fund the 1.5 mile, \$37 million Streetcar Starter Project along Trade Street and Elizabeth Avenue.
- **CATS received an \$18 million competitive grant from the FTA** to fund the \$22.5 million LYNX Blue Line Capacity Expansion Project (BLCE). The BLCE Project will lengthen the platforms of three existing stations to accommodate three-car trains and upgrade the power supply for extra trains.
- **CATS received nearly \$28 million in existing and future federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds** for various transit investments. They include new light rail services, new park-and-ride lots, technology enhancements, hybrid buses, and bus/van pool vehicle purchases.
- The City worked closely with NCDOT to secure funding **to help advance the widening of I-485 to the south as well as the completion of I-485 to the north.**

*The Fred D. Alexander Boulevard project provides a new circumferential road in north-west Charlotte.*



## CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- The TAP assumes that **Charlotte will fund approximately \$100 million a year in transportation improvements.** This level of funding will require a combination of transportation revenue sources as identified by the Committee of 21.
- **Preliminary project planning is underway** to facilitate implementation of a new CIP package beginning in 2014.

■ In 2008, The Committee of 21 recommended an **additional vehicle registration fee** to be used for roadway maintenance and an **additional half-cent sales tax** to be used for construction of state and local roadways

in Mecklenburg County. The Committee also recommended charging tolls on freeways and applying a **Vehicle Miles of Travel Fee**. New local-option revenues have not yet been advanced at the state level.

| <b>TRANSPORTATION REVENUE SOURCES RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE OF 21</b> |                        |                                      |                              |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Funding Source</b>  | <b>Annual Revenues</b> | <b>Requires Legislative Approval</b> | <b>To Be Used For</b>        |
| Vehicle Registration Fee   | \$18 million           | State                                | Maintenance                  |
| Half-Cent Sales Tax  | \$81 million           | State                                | Construction                 |
| Toll Interstates   | TBD                    | State & Federal                      | Construction and Maintenance |
| Vehicle Miles of Travel Fee  | TBD                    | State & Federal                      | Construction and Maintenance |
| <b>OTHER REVENUE SOURCES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE OF 21</b>           |                        |                                      |                              |
| Payroll Tax  | \$150 million          | State                                | Construction and Maintenance |
| 5% Gas Tax   | \$94 million           | State                                | Construction and Maintenance |
| Road Impact Fees   | \$84 million           | State                                | Construction                 |
| Land Transfer Fee  | \$51 million           | State                                | Construction and Maintenance |

*Source:* Derived from <http://www.charmeck.org/Committeeof21/home.html>

## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- **Federal and state gas taxes continue to diminish as viable transportation funding sources** due to more fuel-efficient vehicles.
- **NCDOT continues to experience funding shortfalls, causing some state road projects to be delayed even further.** NCDOT's inability to advance projects, especially regional highway projects, will impact Charlotte's ability to accommodate its growth.
- **MUMPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan is severely underfunded,** resulting in a very limited list of projects to be built in the next 25 years.
- **The ability of CATS to implement the 2030 Corridor System Plan is being impacted in the short and long term** by the reduction of sales tax revenues due to the local and national recession.

## CONCLUSION

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The TAP Annual Report provides an opportunity each year for Charlotte's residents, elected officials and staff to reflect on our transportation achievements, discuss our transportation challenges and identify better or new ways to meet our transportation goals.

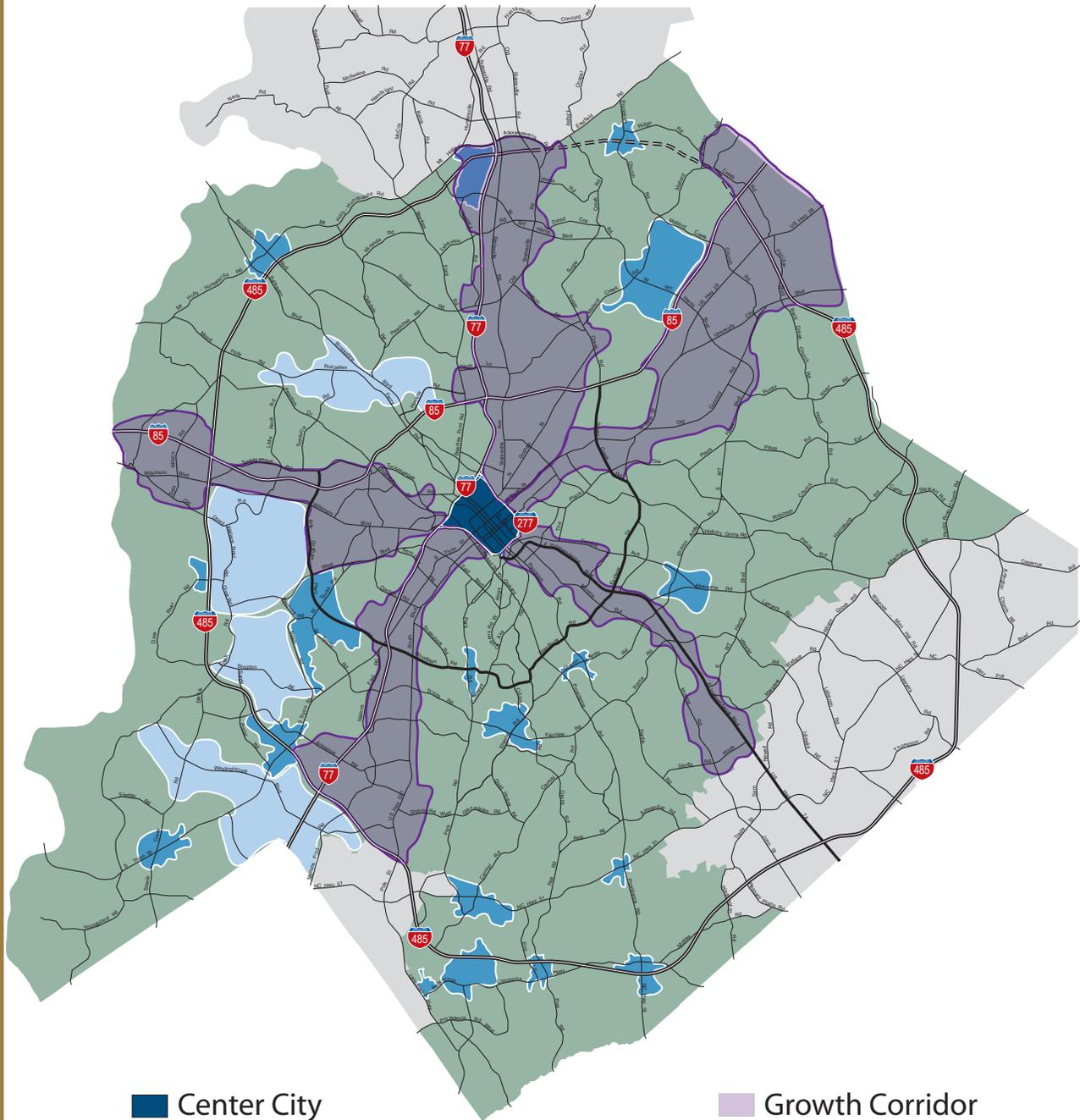
Charlotte's City Council took a crucial first step in addressing the City's transportation challenges by adopting the 25-year Transportation Action Plan in 2006. City Council then re-affirmed its intent to resolve and overcome ongoing challenges with the adoption of the TAP Update in 2011. The TAP calls for a series of policies, projects and programs that are necessary to accommodate ongoing growth, while protecting our quality of life.

This report summarizes the achievements, current activities and challenges the City is now facing as Council and staff continue to implement the TAP. There have been many achievements since 2006 but there also are significant challenges to meeting the City's transportation goals. Charlotte is fortunate to be experiencing continued employment and population growth, yet this growth also will ensure that Charlotte's transportation challenges will not fade away.

### **Looking ahead, three challenges are facing the City Council:**

- 1.** Ensuring that Charlotte grows in a manner consistent with the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth framework.
  - 2.** Identifying and selecting permanent and reliable funding sources for transportation.
  - 3.** Coordinating capital investments with private development opportunities in a way that promotes long-term fiscal health for the City.
-

# Centers, Corridors, and Wedges



- Center City
- Mixed Use Activity Center
- Industrial Activity Center
- Growth Corridor
- Wedge
- Other Jurisdiction



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department.

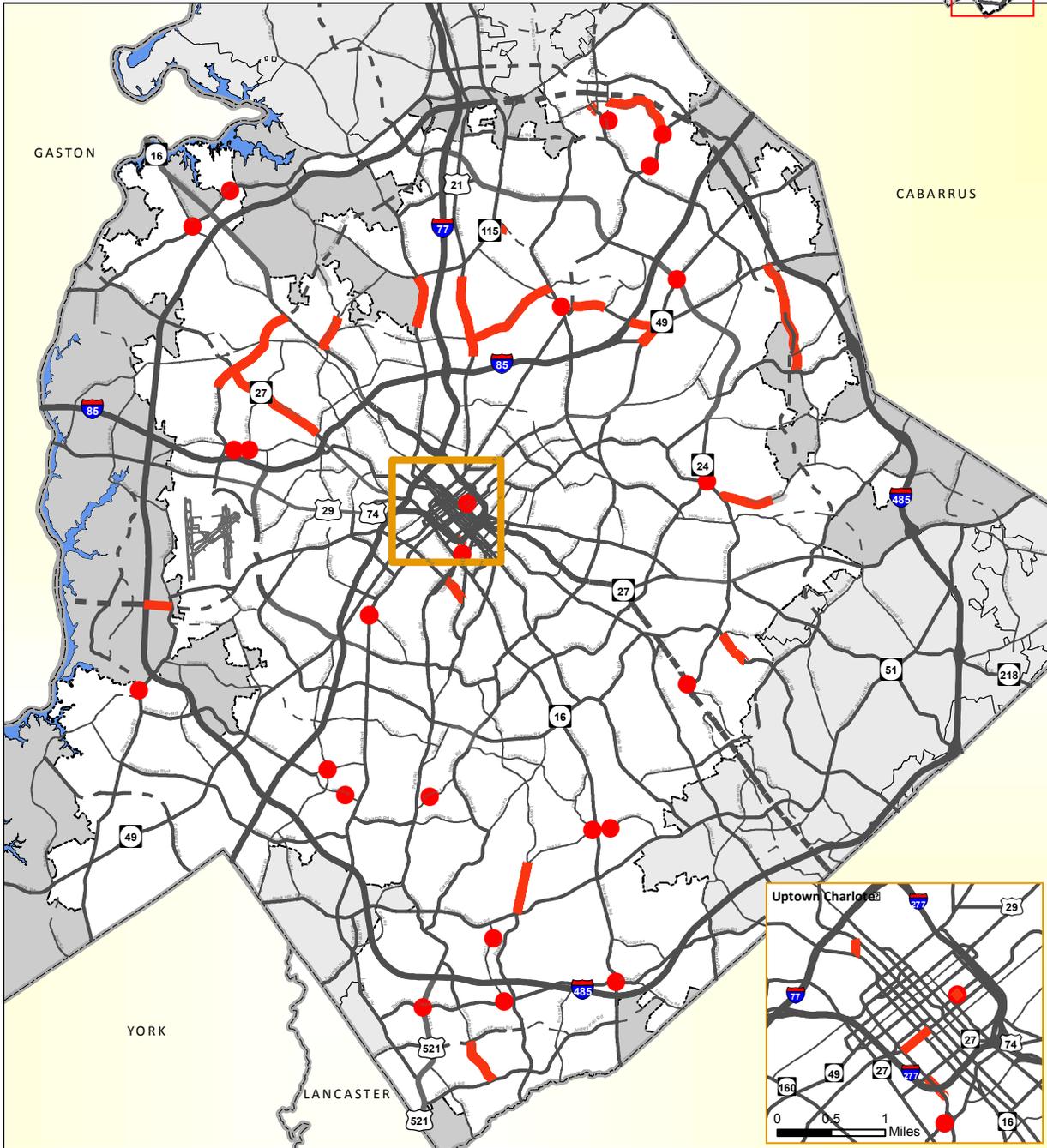
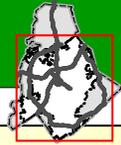


Date: July 30, 2009

**The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Map** (adopted as part of the Transportation Action Plan) helps provide the framework for land use and transportation investment decisions in Charlotte.

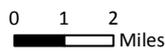


Figure 2 - Transportation Projects Programmed or Implemented By the City Since TAP Adoption



**Programmed or Implemented Projects**

- Intersection
- Roadway



Charlotte Department of Transportation  
Planning & Design - GIS  
December 7, 2012



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