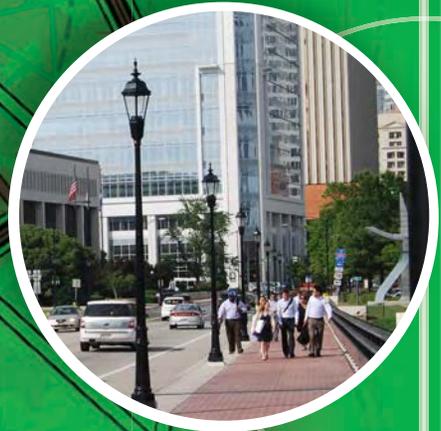
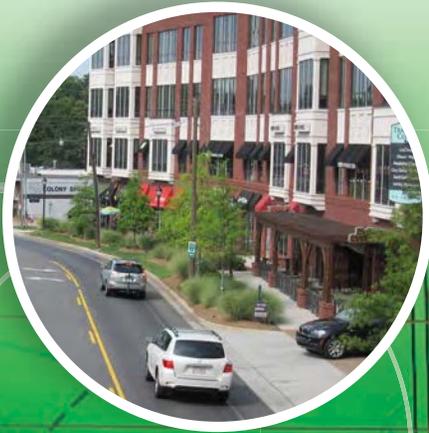


The City of Charlotte

TRANSPORTATION

Action Plan

2013 Annual Report



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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 multi-modal transportation capacity defined in the TAP, in conjunction with increases in freeway and expressway capacities, will be necessary as Charlotte is expected to grow to over one million in population by 2035.

I am pleased to present the 2013 Annual Report for the Transportation Action Plan. This report describes the achievements and the challenges that occurred in 2013, our eighth 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. Most recently, the adoption of a new CIP package in 2013 will advance many objectives of the TAP. 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

February 2014

Transportation Action Plan

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

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 2013:

- **The City continued to implement transportation projects** for thoroughfare widenings, intersection enhancements, traffic calming, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks funded by the 2006, 2008, and 2010 Transportation Bond measures.
- **Groundbreaking for the start of construction of the LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE)** took place in August 2013. Completion and operation is scheduled to occur in 2017.
- **Implementation of the Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG)** continued in Capital Improvement Plan projects, area plans, street maintenance activities and through development ordinances. Some recently-completed project examples include the Nations Ford Road Streetscape, Remount Road Diet, IKEA Boulevard extension, and the adoption of the Park-Woodlawn Area Plan.

A significant action that will impact the implementation of the TAP is:

- The State of North Carolina adopted a new transportation funding formula that eliminates the equity formula in favor of congestion-related highway projects.
-

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.
- In the last year, **City Council adopted Area Plans for:**
 - Park-Woodlawn
 - Blue Line Extension Station Areas
- The **LYNX Blue Line** has been in operation since November 2007. Daily weekday ridership is averaging over 15,000 riders per day, well exceeding original forecasts. Development in the corridor that can be reasonably attributed to the presence of light rail currently totals \$1.45 billion.

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



- A consultant completed a general assessment of the **City's Zoning Ordinance** and identified ordinance options to better support the City's growth framework and area plans.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- **Plans are underway for these areas:**
 - Prosperity Hucks
 - University City Stations
- The Planning Department is currently **conducting an area plan and land use policy assessment**, to be completed by July 2014.
- **A new study of the LYNX Silver Line was initiated in October 2013.** This study will update the alignment and technology/mode to be implemented as the rapid transit service in the Southeast Corridor.
- The **LYNX Blue Line Extension** will provide light rail service from Uptown to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. This project provides another link toward the completion of the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan.

ISSUES & CHALLENGES

- Adopted land use targets help monitor implementation** of the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth 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 FY13, 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 reduce the number of trips that must be made by motor vehicle. 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 Percentage of Development Locating Within Centers and Corridors	TARGET	FY 2013
TAP Policy 1.1.2		
Total New Households	40%	58.2%
New Multi-Family Households	70%	77.7%
TAP Policy 1.1.3		
Total New Office Development	75%	87.0%
New Employment	75%	75.1%



The City is seeking to create more "car-light" housing options like the Metropolitan.

TAP GOAL 2

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

Figure 2 (back cover) shows the road and intersection projects advanced since the TAP was adopted in 2005.

- 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.
- During FY13 CDOT **designed and/or implemented:**
 - 6.6 miles of street projects
 - 1 intersection project
 - 10.5 miles of sidewalk projects
 - 11 miles of bicycle projects
 - Re-timing of 189 traffic signals
- **Ten pedestrian refuge islands and four pedestrian hybrid beacons were scheduled for implementation** throughout the city. Of those, two refuge islands and one pedestrian hybrid beacon were constructed in 2013.
- The City and County have implemented **over 170 miles** of bicycle lanes, trails, and signed routes in Charlotte, of which approximately 130 miles are on-road facilities.
- **CATS was awarded federal funding** to design and construct extensions to the LYNX Blue Line station platforms in order accommodate three-car trains that will be needed to provide capacity for future growth.
- Charlotte is designated as a **bronze-level Walk Friendly Community** and **bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community**.



Left: Remount Road was converted from a four-lane street to two lanes with buffered bicycle lanes. CDOT uses resurfacing projects as potential opportunities to create complete streets.

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 projects in FY14:**
 - 10 miles of sidewalk projects
 - 10 miles of bicycle projects
 - Re-time 285 traffic signals
- **The City now includes improving its Walk Score®** as a goal in the Focus Area Plan.
- Using Urban Circulator Grant funds from the Federal Transit Administration, **the City began construction of the 1.5 mile Streetcar Starter Project** along Trade Street/Elizabeth Avenue from the Time Warner Cable Arena to Novant Health (Presbyterian) Medical Center. Construction is scheduled to finish in 2015.

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.
- **Disparities exist between the quality of the transportation network within and outside Route 4.** The lack of street connectivity limits route choices and the correspondingly wide thoroughfares discourage travel by walking or bicycling.



Charlotte has many streets in need of sidewalks, such as this section of North Tryon Street.

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 **Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO)** which expanded its planning boundary and reached a new Memorandum of Understanding between members.
- City staff worked with CRTPO staff to develop the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- The City assisted Charlotte Center City Partners with the **implementation of a 20-station “B-Cycle” bike share system**, with system expansion planned for 2013-2014.
- **Federal and State funds have been appropriated to the LYNX Blue Line Extension project.** The federal government will fund up to 50% of the total project cost and the State will fund 25%.
- As part of the I-485 project through northeast Charlotte, **the City worked with NCDOT to design a split-diamond interchange** that includes three parallel streets and six roundabouts. The interchange design is intended to help fulfill the vision of the Prosperity Village Plan.

Charlotte’s B-Cycle bike share system has had a successful year with ridership levels above projections and opportunities for future expansion.



CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- The City and NCDOT are working to **design projects that will form a network of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) or Express Toll lanes** along I-77, I-485 South, and US-74 East. Planning and design are ongoing for projects in each corridor. NCDOT is preparing a Traffic and Revenue Study for the US 74 East Corridor that will provide information on general toll rates and alternative comparisons.
- The City is working with the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) to develop its first **Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)**.
- The City and the State of North Carolina continue to explore opportunities for the 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.

- 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. A white paper is being developed that will define the project’s challenges as a result of changes in Norfolk-Southern’s passenger rail policy and anticipated future freight use of the O-line.
- **The City is participating in workshops for CONNECT Our Future**, a regional planning initiative administered by the Centralina Council of Governments. The goal of this three-year effort is to create a Regional Development Framework.
- **The City is coordinating with the NCDOT Rail Division on railroad projects** in order to modernize track infrastructure and to help implement the Southeast High Speed passenger rail service. These projects include the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) Double Track Project, the Sugar Creek Road Rail Bridge in northeast Charlotte, and the Locomotive and Railcar Maintenance Facility near uptown.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

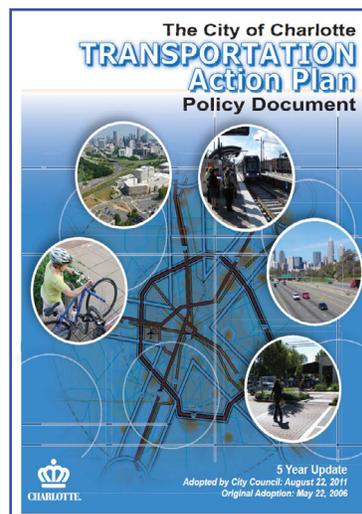
- **North Carolina’s new transportation funding formula** is anticipated to accelerate funding for projects on interstates and primary highways. However, the General Assembly eliminated funding for matching federal transit funds and stand alone bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Therefore, the burden for funding these types of facilities shifts to local governments.
- **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 redesign of West Morehead Street required collaboration with NCDOT.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Through the update of the TAP in 2011, the City re-emphasized its **comprehensive set of transportation-related strategies**.
- CDOT sponsors a **biennial survey** to assess the community's opinions on transportation issues and concerns, last completed in 2012.
- Solid Waste Services **undertook an awareness campaign to encourage citizens to keep sidewalks clear of obstructions** such as rollout waste bins and yard debris.
- The TAP Policy Document and Technical Document can be found online at <http://www.cdof.charmeck.org>.



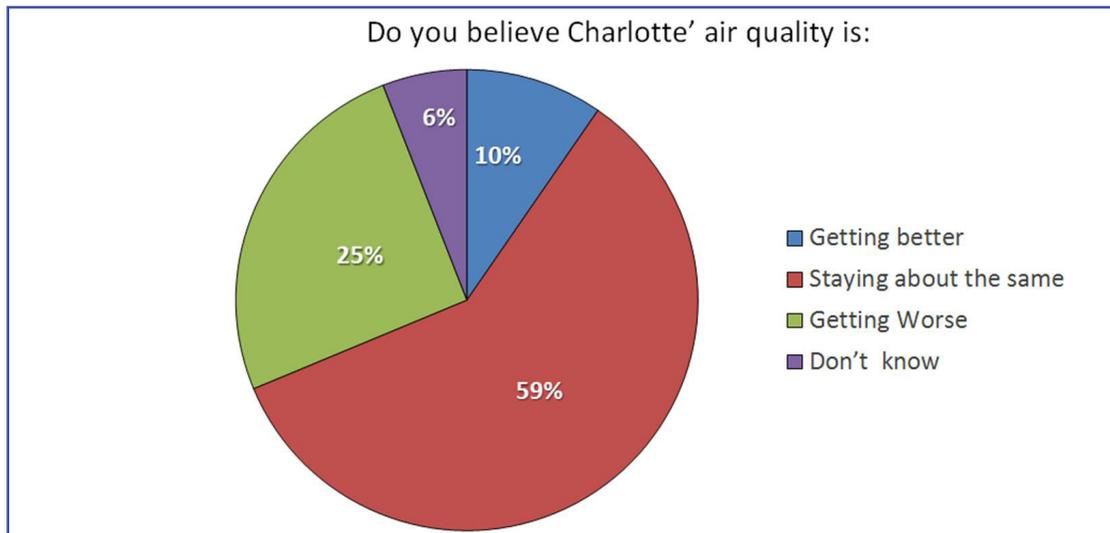
CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- 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 considering new and enhanced methods of community engagement.** The goal is to increase participation by a greater variety of stakeholders in area plans and the Community Investment Plan



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Successfully integrating land use and transportation decisions over time requires **implementing the City's growth framework** including continued communication about the impact of various development scenarios on the City's fiscal health and service demands.
- It is often a challenge to explain the various sources of transportation funding and programs, as well as the infrastructure responsibilities between the federal, state and local levels.



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.

One way in which City staff communicate Charlotte's vision is by hosting tours of completed projects as part of conferences and workshops.



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.
- CDOT has secured over **\$4 million** in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for various projects.

The construction of I-485 in northeast Charlotte will complete the final section between I-85 and NC-115.



- **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 additional transit 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.**

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 similar to these identified by the Committee of 21.
- **Preliminary project planning is underway** to facilitate implementation of a new CIP package beginning in 2014.

■ The Committee of 21, was appointed by the Charlotte Chamber, City of Charlotte, and Mecklenburg County in 2008 to review local transportation needs. The committee 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.

■ Five years have passed since the Committee of 21 prepared their report. The revenue sources recommended in 2008, as well as others not recommended, need to be evaluated after the next authorization of Federal transportation legislation.

TRANSPORTATION REVENUE SOURCES RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE OF 21

Funding Source	Requires Legislative Approval	To Be Used For
Vehicle Registration Fee	State	Maintenance
Half-Cent Sales Tax	State	Construction
Toll Interstates	State & Federal	Construction and Maintenance
Vehicle Miles of Travel Fee	State & Federal	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 a leveling in vehicle-miles travelled and 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.

■ **CRTPO's draft 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan** includes all CDOT-nominated freeway projects, but only half of the recommended thoroughfare projects.

■ **The ability of CATS to implement the 2030 Corridor System Plan has been impacted** by slow growth in sales tax revenue and lesser availability of federal and state transit funding.

CONCLUSION

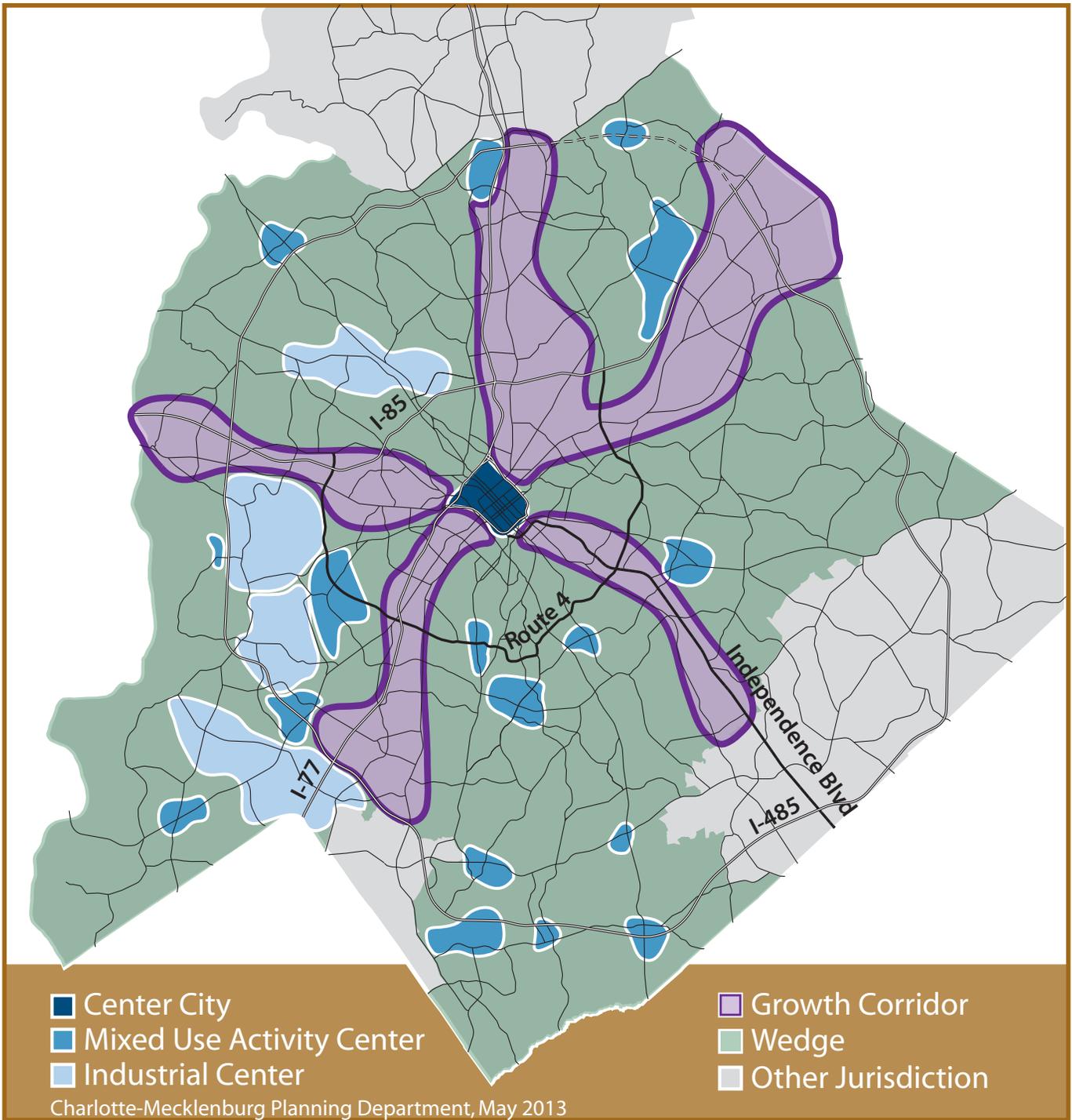
The TAP Annual Report provides an opportunity each year for Charlotte's residents, elected officials and staff to reflect on our transportation achievements, discuss our transportation challenges and identify better or new ways to meet our transportation goals.

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 in 2014. 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:

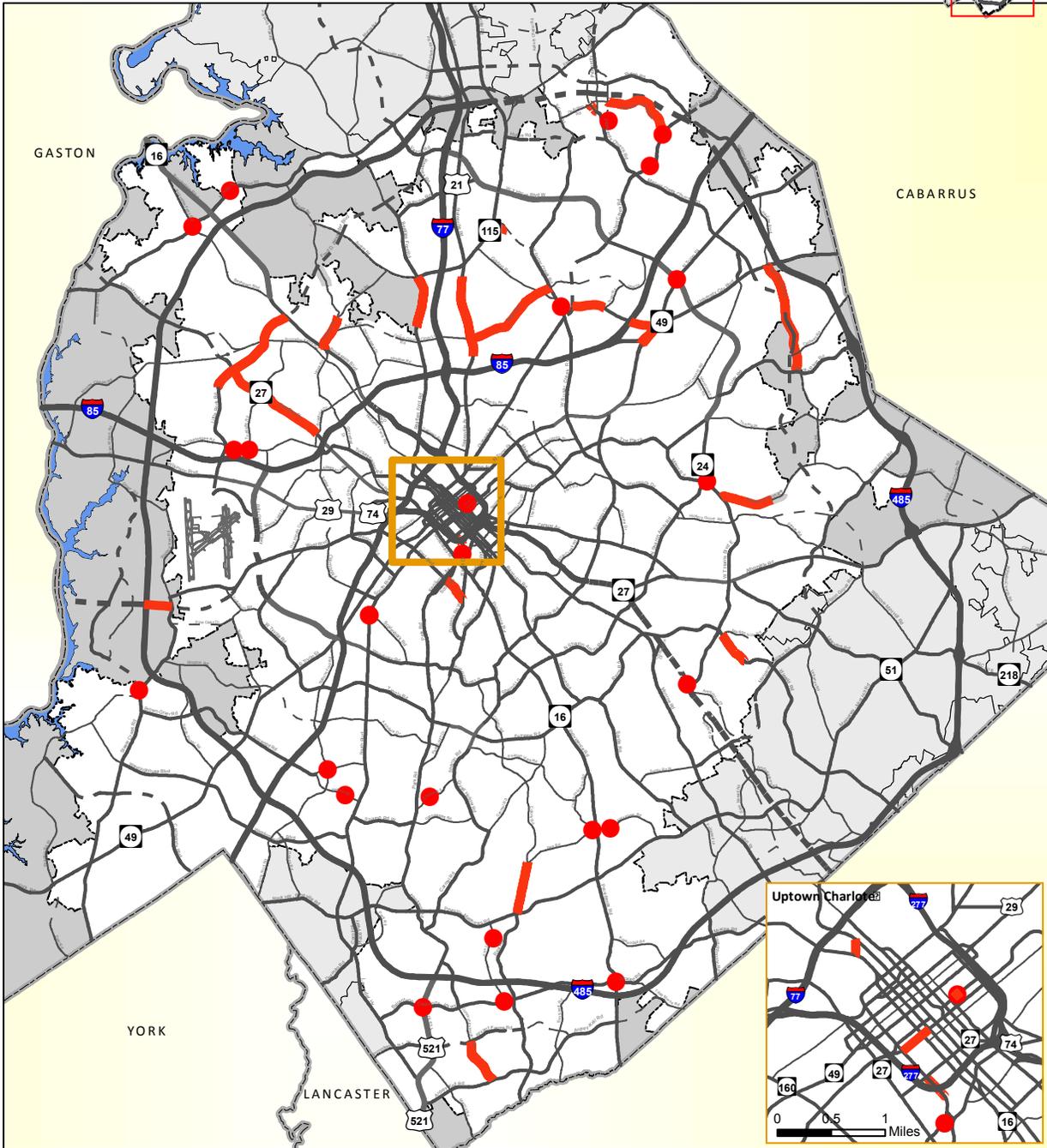
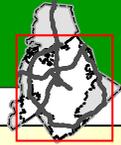
- 1.** Ensuring that Charlotte grows in a manner consistent with the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth framework.
 - 2.** Evaluating and selecting permanent and reliable funding sources for transportation.
 - 3.** Coordinating capital investments with private development opportunities to promote a development pattern that enhances multi-modal accessibility, creates public and private value, and allows the City to deliver efficient public services.
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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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