

## II. Vision, Goals Objectives and Policies

---



---

### A. Vision

The streetscape vision for Uptown Charlotte is articulated by the *2010 Vision Plan*; however, it is also shaped by other Uptown area plans prepared since 2000, by new public and private projects already under construction or planned for the near future, and by the views of stakeholders consulted during the development of the Center City Transportation Plan.

While the *2010 Vision Plan* is the benchmark for current planning for Uptown, streetscape guidance has evolved through a series of plans for Charlotte's Uptown, beginning with the *Uptown Streetscape Guidelines* adopted in 1987 and updated in 2001, the *Center City Urban Design Plan* (1990) and, most recently, the *Center City Transportation Plan* (2006). The Vision Plan's basic goal is:

***“ . . . to create a livable and memorable Center City of distinct neighborhoods connected by unique infrastructure.”***

– *Center City 2010 Vision Plan*

This goal is the overarching Uptown vision. More specific goals for these Uptown Streetscape Standards are defined here, followed by objectives for the quality of the components of the pedestrian realm.

### B. Goals

- **Goal 1: Promote development of a comfortable pedestrian environment**

A pleasant and safe pedestrian environment that creates comfortable paths for walking will encourage choice of that mode of travel in the urban setting. Comfort and safety can be provided by arrangement of sidewalk furnishings and landscape elements to provide a buffer between the pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The selection of a consistent set of sidewalk enhancements of a high design quality adds to the comfort of the experience, and, at the same time, contributes to the primary goal of creating a Memorable City. The complete pedestrian environment –

referred to here as the pedestrian *realm* – should be a pleasant, positive experience to encourage Uptown employees and residents to rely on sidewalks whenever possible once they have reached the Center City parking deck or transit station.

The importance of the pedestrian realm and a network of pedestrian streets as the basis for building a successful city center is underscored by urban designers. An attractive system of pedestrian connections will encourage pedestrian movement through the central core and attract “a diverse and concentrated mix of uses and foster economic interaction among these uses.” In the Urban Land Institute’s *Creating a Vibrant City Center* (2004), author Cy Paumier stresses that “a successful central area should have more than one pedestrian-oriented “spine” or major street; needed is a system of pedestrian connectors linking major activity anchors to the spine and to one another.”

■ **Goal 2: Enhance the role of streets through the creation of unique infrastructure**

The *2010 Vision Plan* emphasizes the streets as the primary public infrastructure that can be enhanced to create a Memorable City. The streetscape, contained primarily in the pedestrian realm, should be developed in a consistent manner based on the hierarchy of pedestrian streets with elements that achieve a high quality of design.

■ **Goal 3: Integrate transit services with uptown streetscapes**

Charlotte’s 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan includes five rapid transit service corridors in Uptown Charlotte that converge and then radiate out to the rest of the system. The Uptown improvements will enable these individual corridors to function as an integrated system. These improvements will also provide services for the Uptown area and connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods. These “transit streets” will have numerous stops to deliver riders along well designed streets that serve as pedestrian connectors.

■ **Goal 4: Establish continuity through the pattern of tree plantings, setbacks, sidewalk types and materials.**

■ **Goal 5: Create a sense of place with a high degree of familiarity through color, materials, amenities and activities.**

■ **Goal 6: Recognize the need for materials and design details that are supportive of efficient maintenance.**

## C. Objectives

The objectives of this set of Streetscape Standards are defined by characteristics of the Pedestrian Realm that will result in achievement of the Vision of creating a Memorable Center City as well as related goals that define a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience.

1. Dimensions: Adequate space shall be provided to accommodate pedestrian circulation and streetscape amenities that are commensurate with the functional classification of each street or segments of each street.
2. Elements in Amenity Zone: The amenity zone, located at the back of the curb, shall be the consistent location of streetscape elements that enhance the quality of the pedestrian realm, support traffic operations and provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.
  - a. Landscape Plantings: Planting materials shall be utilized to provide shade and natural variety to the streetscape.
  - b. Utilities: Necessary utilities shall be accommodated in as unobtrusive a manner as feasible given their respective operational characteristics.
  - c. Lighting: Lighting shall be provided to support both pedestrian and vehicular activities and safety.
  - d. Signage and Signalization: Necessary signage and signalization shall be provided to support traffic operations while at the same time being of a design quality consistent with other elements of the streetscape.
  - e. Street Furnishings: High quality street furnishings (benches, trash containers, bicycle racks, etc.) shall be used to support pedestrian activities and to establish a consistent design standard.
  - f. Color: Color shall be uniformly utilized to add to the consistency of the streetscape elements.
3. Surface Treatment: The surfaces of the pedestrian realm shall be paved with materials that provide a stable walking surface, are easy to maintain and add to the consistency of the streetscape.
4. Activities: The design of the streetscape shall be supportive of a wide variety of uses and activities.
  - a. Street Closures: Street closures shall be permitted consistent with operational plans for specific functions. Pedestrian circulation shall be enabled at all times during closures.
  - b. Activities on the Sidewalk: In order to support variety and activity in the pedestrian realm, activities shall be permitted on and/or; adjacent to the sidewalk so long as pedestrian circulation is not obstructed.
  - c. Vehicular Activities Back of Curb: All vehicular activities that cross the pedestrian realm shall be managed so as to not obstruct pedestrian circulation and to maintain pedestrian safety.
  - d. Vehicular Activities at Curb: Wherever permitted by pavement width and traffic operations, the “curb lane” shall be used for vehicular activities which support adjacent land uses and transit operations. Automobile

parking and transit operations shall be the primary uses of the curb lane. Uses may vary throughout the day consistent with permitted uses and operational plans.

- e. Activities at Building Walls: Activities at and near the building side of the pedestrian realm are encouraged where they support pedestrian activity and do not impede pedestrian circulation.
5. Crosswalks: Clearly identified crosswalks shall be provided at all intersections with the utilization of markings and materials that are supportive of the level of pedestrian activity.
6. Intersections: The design of the streetscape at intersections shall be determined by the highest level of Pedestrian Street Classification or by special design.

## D. Policies

City Council adopted the Policies of the Center City Transportation Plan on April 24, 2006. Those policies contain the following specific policies that provide guidance to these Standards:

### Urban Design policies:

- Adopt and apply Street Enhancement Guidelines Map (Subsequently changed to “Standards Map ”)

### Parking policies:

- Implement Vehicular Wayfinding System to efficiently direct motorists to the parking supply available on a real-time basis

### Transit policies:

- Implement the Pedestrian Wayfinding System

### Pedestrian Circulation/Walkability policies:

- Apply the Hierarchy of Pedestrian Streets
- Adopt the Street Enhancement Guideline Map
- Amend UMUD and UR(Uptown) zoning
- Amend Uptown Streetscape Design Guide (sic) to incorporate new Pedestrian Street Design Standards matrix
- Implement the Pedestrian Wayfinding System