



CENTERS • CORRIDORS • WEDGES

Growth Framework

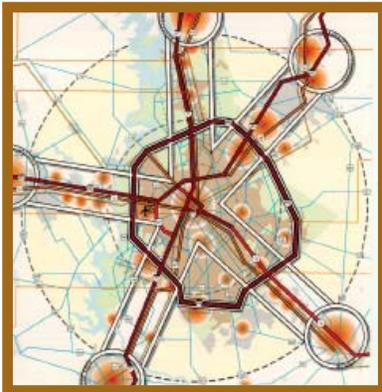
DRAFT
September 26, 2008



Overview

This document focuses on how growth and development should occur in Charlotte now and in the future.

The original “Centers and Corridors” framework was first introduced in 1994 and later endorsed by Charlotte City Council as a tool to guide growth. The intent of that document was to form a stronger link between land use and transportation in order to make the best use of existing facilities and reduce the demand for new infrastructure.



The original growth strategy was built on Charlotte's unique radial and concentric growth pattern.

Recognizing that planning and guiding growth requires a holistic approach, the updated document now includes other aspects of planning and development to support the City's overall growth strategy.

From public facility needs and environmental concerns to providing more definitions and guidance, this updated document—now called Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework—offers recommendations for Wedges, as well.

While the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework will provide considerable development guidance, the intent is that it's general in nature.

How was this update developed?

The Planning Department staff prepared this draft document, with involvement by staff from the Charlotte Department of Transportation, Charlotte Area Transit System, Office of Economic Development, Engineering and Property Management, and Corporate Communications.

Prior to adoption of this update, citizens will have a variety of input opportunities, including an Internet survey, public workshops and public comments to appointed and elected officials.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission will hear public comments, review the document and make a recommendation to City Council. The Charlotte City Council will then hear public comments, discuss the update and make a decision on its adoption.



Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth framework

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September 26, 2008
Draft

INTRODUCTION

Charlotte's comprehensive growth strategy

Charlotte's quality of life in the coming years will be largely dependent upon how the city responds to growth.

The basic premise of Charlotte's growth strategy is to guide growth into areas that can support new development or are in need of redevelopment, and away from areas that cannot support new growth.

The strategy is designed to ensure that development occurs in a way that enhances the commu-

nity, sustaining Charlotte as a livable center of a growing region well into the future.

The Charlotte City Council will be asked to adopt a Development Vision and accompanying Guiding Principles as part of a comprehensive growth strategy to help guide Charlotte's response to growth pressures. Also part of the growth strategy is the **Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework**—the main topic of this document and the purpose for its expanded focus.

Development Vision for Charlotte

Charlotte will be a city with a variety of choices for living, working and leisure, where sustainable growth improves the quality of life.

Guiding Principles

As it continues to develop, Charlotte will strive for:

- Empowered, informed and engaged citizenry
- High quality community design
- Quality and livable neighborhoods with a range of residential opportunities to accommodate a diverse population
- A diverse, growing and sustainable economy
- Revitalization of economically challenged areas
- More places where a variety of activities are accessible
- Expanded transportation choices
- Heightened consideration of environmental benefits and impacts
- A healthy and flourishing tree canopy
- Efficient investment in infrastructure that guides future growth and is able to serve both existing and new development



Growth brings jobs and housing, but can also strain livability and the environment. Mecklenburg has lost open space at the rate of 5 acres per day since 1980, and more than 22% of its tree cover between 1984 and 2001.

Why update Centers, Corridors and Wedges?

The original concept of the mid-1990s provided a way to sustain Charlotte's economic viability and protect the community's livability by encouraging the most growth in the "Centers and Corridors" with existing infrastructure and capacity, leaving lower density development in the large residential "Wedges" between Corridors.

Since its introduction "Centers and Corridors" has provided overarching policy that guides growth in Charlotte. For example, it became the basis for the 1998 comprehensive rapid transit plan; service along the LYNX Blue Line has now begun and transit-oriented zoning has been applied.

The 2006 *Transportation Action Plan's* long range focus on streets and other facilities is also based on the Centers, Corridors and Wedges framework. Area plans have been developed and the *General Development Policies* updated with the vision's principles in mind.

Charlotte's growth* remains strong, but some conditions and circumstances have changed

since "Centers and Corridors" was first presented in 1994. The growth framework needs to be refined to reflect these changes.

■ Redevelopment

The amount of undeveloped land within Charlotte's sphere of influence has decreased significantly over the last few decades. In 2007, only 15% of the land within Charlotte's sphere of influence was vacant.

As a result, redevelopment has become an increasingly common form of development. Numerous new development projects are being built on underutilized land or vacant parcels that were previously bypassed.

■ Demographics

Demographic changes are impacting how development occurs in Charlotte. As Charlotte's Baby Boomers age, many are showing an interest in

**Information about Charlotte's growth is located on the inside back cover.*

more urban lifestyles that offers shorter commutes and less home maintenance. The children of Boomers—the “Generation Xers” (born 1965 to 1980)—often show a preference for urban environments, as well.

A Charlotte-based market study of the potential for more urban environments (in 2004 by Robert Charles Lessor and Company) gauged interest in these living options as between one-third and one-half of the overall housing market.



Center City condos reflect the increasing demand for more urban, compact development.

■ Infrastructure Needs

While market conditions have been changing, the demand for infrastructure to serve both existing and new markets has continued. Aging infrastructure and public facilities continue to require repair and upgrade. At the same time, new development has placed a high demand for new facilities, especially to serve outlying residential development.



Generation X is helping drive the growing demand for more urban housing choices and environments.

The *Transportation Action Plan* estimated that the demand for new locally provided non-transit transportation facilities and maintenance in Charlotte will exceed \$3.57 billion dollars between now and 2030. (When inflated to future dollars and modified to include more extensive farm-to-market road improvements, this amount increases to \$7.3 billion dollars.) The need to promote an overall land use pattern that can be efficiently served by infrastructure and public facilities is critical.

■ Environmental Issues

Increased environmental consciousness is impacting where and how people are choosing to live.

As fuel prices increase, many citizens are searching for ways to reduce fuel consumption, and making different housing and travel choices can be one way to do that.

The update to the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework takes into account the evolving real estate market, changing demographics, the city’s infrastructure needs and growing environmental concerns.

How will Centers, Corridors and Wedges be used?

It will be used much more broadly than originally anticipated. Consequently, it is crucial that it be clear, well-defined and easily understood by the community, in addition to being readily applied when developing public plans and policies.

The locations of each of the three geographies—Centers, Corridors and Wedges—are now given parcel-specific boundaries which were adopted in 2006 as part of the *Transportation Action Plan* and updated through recent area plans. The boundaries will be further refined through subsequent area plans. Each parcel of land within Charlotte is located in a Center, Corridor or Wedge.

The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework will be used in three main ways:

1. It will be the basis for more detailed development of **policies, plans and regulations**; for ex-

ample, the concept would be used as the starting point for preparation of area plans.

2. It will give broad guidance for **infrastructure investment**—for transportation, water and sewer, public facilities—that can be used for capital facilities and service delivery planning. In this way it gives a common, consistent framework for capital planning.
3. It will provide another tool to **evaluate Charlotte's success in addressing growth issues** and maintaining a livable community. Specifically, targets based on the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework will be used to determine if higher intensity development is occurring in Centers and Corridors, consistent with the principles of this Growth Framework.

Defining Centers, Corridors and Wedges

The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework illustrates a generalized land development pattern for the City of 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. These are summarized briefly on page 7, and a general map of locations is on page 8.

The Framework outlines the desired characteristics of each of these geographies in more detail on pages 9-30. These characteristics are designed to be used to provide general guidance relative to

land use, transportation systems, other infrastructure and public facilities, and environmental and site design.

The Framework helps accommodate growth by matching development types and intensities with public infrastructure, particularly transportation facilities. This generally means locating most employment opportunities and higher density housing choices primarily in the Activity Centers and Growth Corridors, while maintaining the lower density residential character of the Wedges.



Summary of Centers, Corridors and Wedges
(page 5)

Map of Centers, Corridors and Wedges
(page 6)

Centers, Corridors and Wedges



Activity Centers (pages 7-14)

Activity Centers are focal points of economic activity, typically planned for 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 Centers**
- **Industrial Centers**



Growth Corridors (pages 15-22)

Growth Corridors are five linear growth areas that extend from Center City to the edge of Charlotte, roughly parallel to Interstates 77 or 85 or to U.S. 74. They are appropriate locations for significant new growth. Within the Growth Corridors, there are three types of sub-areas:

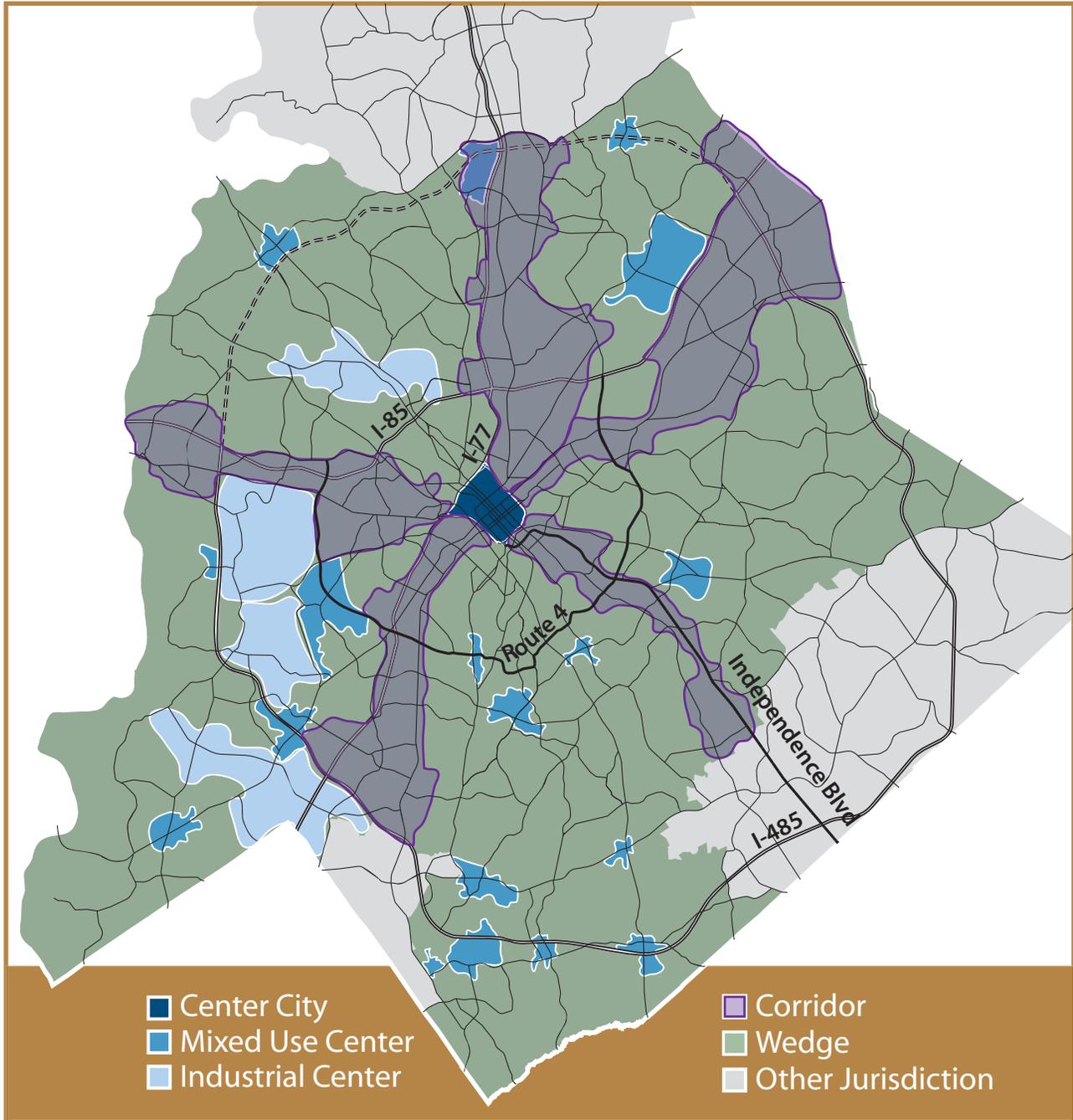
- **General Corridor Areas**
- **Transit Station Areas**
- **Interchange Areas**



Wedges (pages 23-28)

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

Centers, Corridors and Wedges



ACTIVITY CENTERS

Activity Centers are concentrations of economic and/or mixed use development, located throughout the community. There are three types of Centers: Center City, Mixed Use and Industrial, defined primarily by land use and intensity of development. Centers are appropriate locations for significant new growth. Currently, 13% of Charlotte's ultimate land area is located within a Center.



Activity Centers Today

Today, there are twenty-two designated Centers. The character of these Centers varies considerably, from low intensity industrial Centers to compact and high intensity urban Centers. Typical uses in Centers include retail, office, residential, civic and/or industrial.

Center City is the most intensely developed Center type. Although larger and more intense, it is probably the best example of the vision for Mixed Use Centers, in terms of pedestrian activity and mix of uses. Many of the seventeen existing **Mixed Use 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.

Regardless of type, all Activity Centers are appropriate locations for new development and redevelopment. However, **the amount, intensity and type of new development will be determined through the area planning process and will depend on a number of factors, including available vacant or underutilized land and the existing transportation network and capacity.**

Activity Centers in the Future

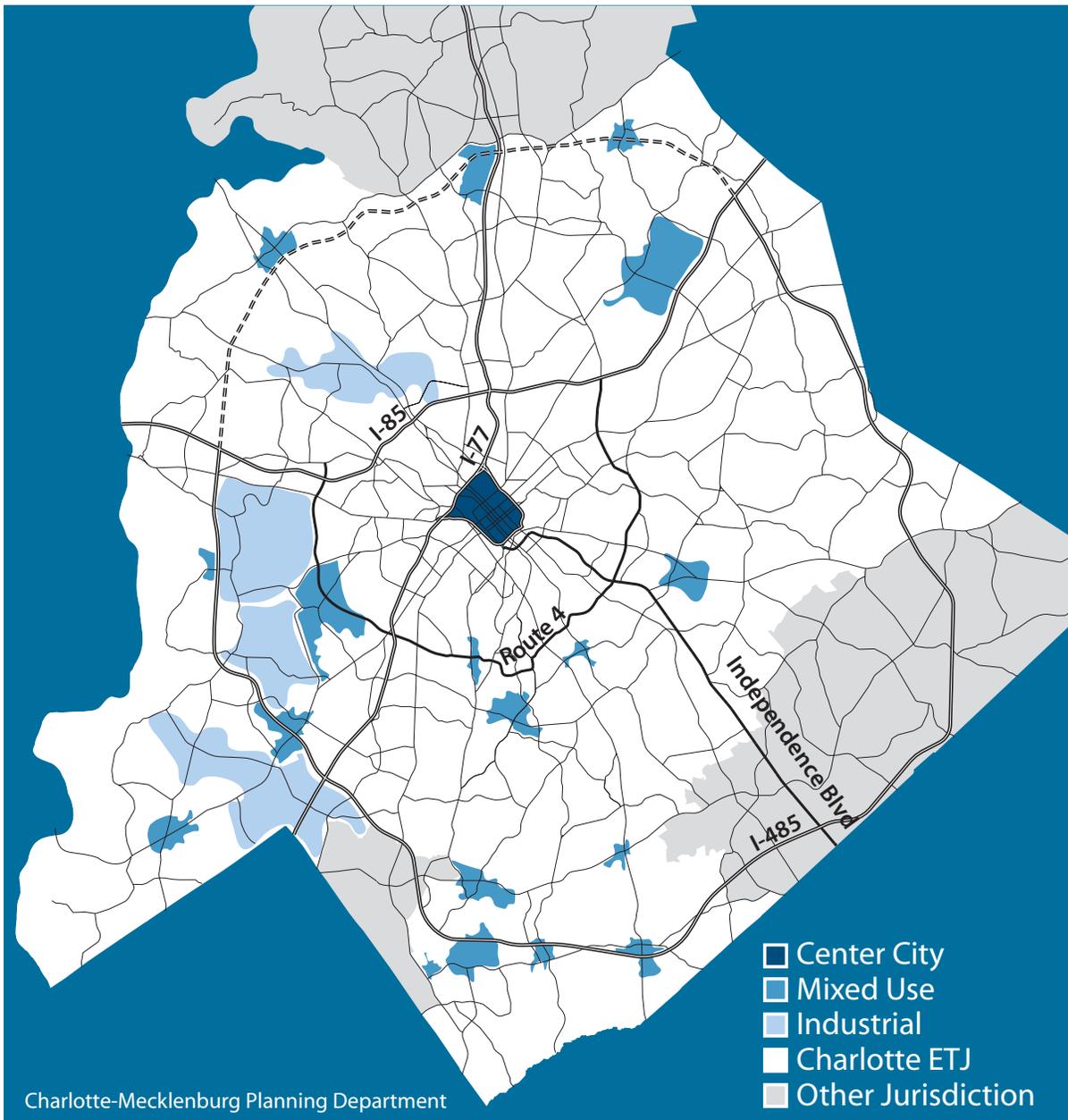
The expectation for Centers in the future is for:

- further infill development and intensification in Center City;
- infill development, as well as redevelopment of underutilized sites in existing Mixed Use Centers;

continued on page 9

Center Types and Locations

By definition, Activity Centers have (or are planned to have) at least 750,000 square feet of non-residential development. This is consistent with the size of a super-regional retail-oriented mixed/multi-use center as defined by the *General Development Policies*, although some Activity Centers include more employment than a typical retail-based super-regional center. There are three types of Activity Centers—described on pages 9 to 14—**Center City, Mixed Use Centers** and **Industrial Centers**.



Centers in the Future *continued from page 7*

- a greater emphasis on a mix of commercial and civic uses and inclusion of moderate and, in some cases, high density housing in Mixed Use Centers;
- concentration of industrial, warehouse and distribution in Industrial Centers;
- a multi-modal transportation system and an interconnected network of streets, especially in Center City and Mixed Use Centers;
- a more urban and pedestrian-oriented form of development;
- pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the Center and connecting to adjacent neighborhoods;
- 70% of new multi-family residential and 75% of new office to be constructed in Centers and in Corridors.

The following matrix (pages 9-14) describes the three Center types and the land use, transportation, infrastructure and design characteristics desired for Centers.

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
Description of Center Types		
<p>Center City should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be the most intensely developed of all 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; and • have the greatest concentration of high density residential development. 	<p>Mixed Use Centers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and office components; • include a cohesive, identifiable pedestrian-oriented core, with the remainder of the Center linked to the core by a pedestrian and street network; and • typically, be surrounded by lower density residential neighborhoods <p><i>Examples: SouthPark, Northlake</i></p>	<p>Industrial Centers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serve as major economic generators, with a strong employment focus; • include primarily warehouse, distribution and industrial uses; and • be less compact and less intensely developed than typical Mixed Use Centers. <p><i>Examples: Airport, Westinghouse</i></p>

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
Land Use		
<p>Appropriate uses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • office, with a concentration of national and/or regional corporate headquarters; • major hotels; • moderate (up to 22 units per acre) to high density housing (over 22 units per acre); • 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. <p>Non-residential development intensity should be very high, with a minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0. (“Floor Area Ratio,” according to the zoning ordinance, is the total floor area of the building or buildings on a lot or parcel divided by the gross area of the lot or parcel.)</p> <p>The primary building types in Center City should be mixed-use and multi-use, with some single use housing development in the residential sections of Uptown.</p>	<p>Appropriate uses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retail designed to serve the surrounding community and, in some cases, regional-serving retail as well; • moderate (up to 22 units per acre) to high density housing (over 22 units per acre), as per area plans or the General Development Policies if not specified in an area plan; • regional and/or neighborhood serving office; and • civic uses such as urban parks, religious institutions and libraries. <p>The area planning process will be used to determine which Mixed Use Centers should have a strong retail emphasis, with limited office, and which should be more office-oriented and include regional-serving or corporate office.</p> <p>Existing development and/or non-residential development intensity should typically be low (up to 0.25 FAR) or moderate (up to 0.50 FAR) intensity, with high intensity development (over 0.50 FAR) sometimes appropriate. The highest intensity development should be located within the core of the Center. Areas outside the pedestrian core should be developed at lesser intensities, especially for sites abutting single family neighborhoods.</p> <p>Mixed-use buildings and multi-use developments should be the prevalent development types in these centers.</p>	<p>Appropriate uses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Based on the types of uses in the Industrial Center, housing may not be appropriate.</p> <p>Development in Industrial Centers should be low-rise (up to 4 stories).</p> <p>The intensity of development in Industrial Centers should be low, with a maximum FAR of 0.25.</p>

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
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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 with typical block lengths of 400 feet;
- **extensive transit service**, including major transfer centers (Charlotte Transportation Center and the planned Charlotte Gateway Station, a regional intermodal terminal); interstate bus and rail service; extensive 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 of the I-277 freeway loop; and
- **bicycle connections** between Center City and the area outside of the I-277 freeway loop;

Access to Center City is expected to be primarily **by private vehicle 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 Centers should be served by a range of transportation modes, including:

- **interstate or major thoroughfare access;**
- **dense and interconnected street network** (with typical block lengths of 500 feet);
- **a well-developed pedestrian system**, especially within the Center core;
- direct **pedestrian and vehicular connections from core to the edge** and surrounding neighborhoods;
- **local bus service** and, where there is adequate demand, **express bus service** to the core of the Center, circulator service throughout the Center and community transit facilities should be provided;
- **bicycle facilities**, within the Center and with connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

Mixed Use 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 Center, with a **balance** of vehicular, transit and walking outside of the core and between the 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 should be designed to accommodate large trucks.

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

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
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Infrastructure and Public Facilities

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

- **parks** (major event parks, small pocket parks and neighborhood parks designed to serve Center City residents);
- **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 the Time Warner Cable Arena and Bank of America Stadium.

Center City should be the **highest priority for water and sewer extensions and upgrades**, 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 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 Center, and overland connectors;
- **schools** (colleges, universities and K-12 schools);
- pre-schools and child care facilities;
- **major libraries;**
- **post offices;** and
- **police sub-stations and fire stations.**

Mixed Use 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. The 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 might be located in Industrial Centers, especially along creeks that run through the Center.

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
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Environment and Site Design

Center City should be highly urban in form, with most development in mid- (5 to 8 stories) to high-rise (over 8 stories) buildings.

Development should be **designed to promote a high level of pedestrian activity**, with ground floor uses facing onto and directly accessible from the 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.

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

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 since land

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Most Mixed Use Centers should be urban and highly pedestrian-oriented, especially at the core of these Centers.

Most development should be low- (up to 4 stories) to mid-rise (5 to 8 stories) buildings, with the greatest intensity at the core of these Centers and lesser intensity and height at the edges, next to residential neighborhoods.

These 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 Center, it should be comfortable and easy for people to circulate on foot.

Parking should be shared by 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.

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

Sites and buildings should be designed to be sustainable. In particular:

- Building and site designs should **facilitate conservation** of water,

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Most development in Industrial Centers should be low-rise (up to 4 stories) **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 additional environmental and site design guidance, see the *General Development Policies* and applicable area plans.

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.
- **New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas, incorporate consideration of natural features**—such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy—into the design of new development whenever possible, and minimize site disturbance, erosion and sedimentation.
- **Landscaping** should use non-invasive plant species and preserve existing vegetation as feasible.

CENTER CITY	MIXED USE CENTERS	INDUSTRIAL CENTERS
Environment and Site Design		
<p><i>(continued from p. 13)</i></p> <p>intensive approaches to environmental mitigation may be difficult to accomplish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas, incorporate consideration of natural features—such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy—into the design of new development whenever possible, and minimize site disturbance, erosion and sedimentation. • Landscaping should use non-invasive plant species and preserve existing vegetation as feasible. 	<p><i>(continued from p. 13)</i></p> <p>energy and other natural resources since land intensive approaches to environmental mitigation may be difficult to accomplish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas, incorporate consideration of natural features—such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy—into the design of new development whenever possible, and minimize site disturbance, erosion and sedimentation. • Development should include extensive landscaping and trees. Landscaping should use non-invasive plant species and preserve existing vegetation as feasible. 	



Pedestrian-oriented site design should be a key characteristic of Mixed-Use Centers.

GROWTH CORRIDORS

Growth Corridors are five linear growth areas that extend from Center City to the edge of Charlotte's jurisdiction. The corridors have 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 and are appropriate locations for significant new growth. 20% of Charlotte's ultimate land area is currently located in Growth Corridors.



Corridors Today

Today, there are five Corridors: the South, Southeast, Northeast, North, and West Corridors. The character of these Corridors is diverse. Some sections (especially close to Center City) are becoming increasingly urban with a mix of residential, office and retail uses. Other areas of Corridors remain predominantly strip commercial. Still others are mainly used for predominantly industrial and warehouse/distribution purposes. As a whole, Corridors are not homogeneous, but include a wide range of uses—office, retail, industrial, residential and civic.

Corridors are defined by their high capacity transportation facilities; as a result, they are appropriate locations for new growth, especially for those uses requiring high levels of both local and regional access. Some portions of Corridors, especially within Route 4, have the desired interconnected street net-

works to support additional development, while others currently lack the needed street network.

Growth Corridors are appropriate locations for new development and redevelopment. **The amount, intensity and type of new development will be determined through the area planning process and will depend on a number of factors, including vacant and underutilized land and the existing transportation network and capacity.**

Corridors in the Future

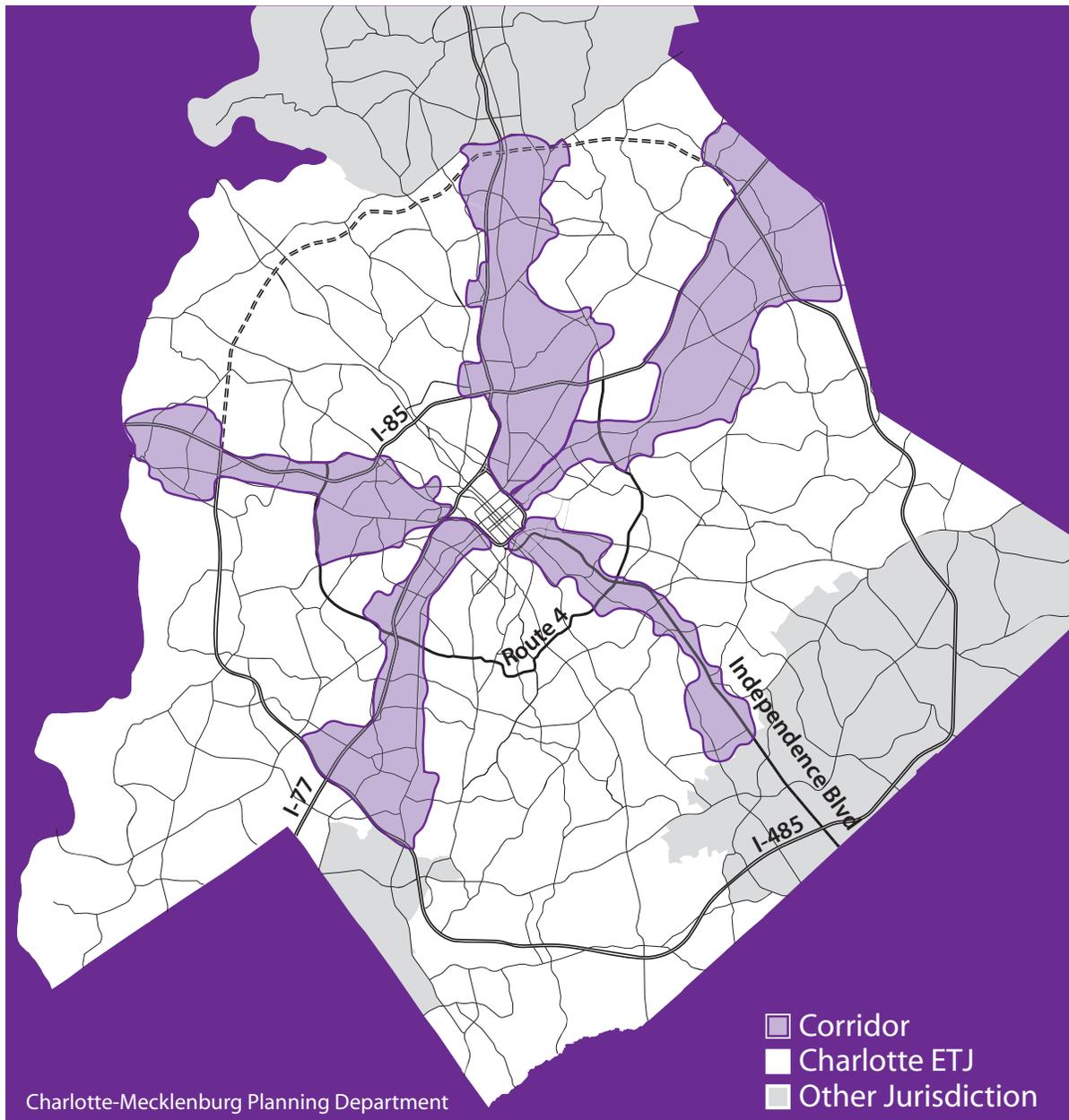
The expectation for Corridors in the future is for:

- a greater emphasis on office, residential and mixed use development, especially around Transit Stations;

continued on page 17

Corridor Types and Locations

The map below shows the location of Corridors. Within Corridors, there are three types of sub-areas: **Transit Station Areas**, **Interchange Areas**, and the largest areas—the balance of each corridor—called **General Corridor Areas**. The three types are described on pages 17 to 22.



Corridors in the Future

continued from page 15

- a continuation of industrial and warehouse/distribution uses, particularly in locations with high 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 the Transit Station Area sub-areas of Corridors;
- a multi-modal transportation system with a dense network of interconnected streets;
- Corridors (in addition to Centers) to be priority areas for enhancements to the supporting infrastructure, particularly the transportation network;
- 70% of new multi-family and 75% of new office to be constructed in Centers and in Corridors, with an emphasis in Corridors on Transit Station Areas.

The following matrix (pages 17-22) describes the three Corridor types and the land use, transportation, infrastructure and design characteristics desired for Corridors.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Description of Growth Corridor Sub-Areas		
<p>These sub-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, as these areas are typically targeted for preservation. The Transit Station Areas should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be pedestrian-oriented villages 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. 	<p>These sub-areas include the property within approximately 1/2 to 1 mile of interstate or expressway interchanges that have access to and from all interchange quadrants. These areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • 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. 	<p>General Corridor Areas are those within the Growth Corridors that are outside the other two types of sub-areas (Transit Station Areas and Interchange Areas). Typically, these General Corridor Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are appropriate for a range of low to moderate intensity uses; • may include some previously developed low-density neighborhoods; and • have a variety of transportation facilities and modes, based on the area's development character.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Land Use		
<p>Appropriate uses include a mix of complementary, transit-supportive uses as per the <i>Transit Station Area Principles</i>. These uses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residential; • office; • neighborhood-serving retail and entertainment; and • civic uses. <p>Transit Station Areas are appropriate for moderate to high density/intensity development.</p> <p>The minimum density of residential uses should be 15 dwelling units per acre (dua) and the minimum intensity of non-residential uses should be a Floor Area Ratio of 0.50.</p> <p>The highest densities/intensities are appropriate closest to the transit station, with lower densities adjacent to existing low density residential areas.</p> <p>Except for Center City, Transit Station Areas should have the highest densities/intensities of development.</p> <p>In Transit Station Areas, uses should be well-integrated, either vertically and/or horizontally.</p>	<p>Appropriate uses include those that need or can benefit from high levels of vehicular accessibility from the interchange. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industrial/warehouse; • regional and community-serving retail, where identified in an area plan; • highway-serving retail (hotels, gas stations, restaurants); • office; and • multi-family residential. <p>Multi-family residential density should be moderate (up to 22 units/acre) and, in some cases, high (over 22 units/acre), typically within Route 4 and/or in conjunction with a mixed-use retail center.</p> <p>Non-residential intensity (Floor Area Ratio) should be low (up to 0.25) to moderate (up to 0.5). Specific intensities for non-residential uses should be determined by area plans.</p> <p>However, not all uses will be appropriate for all Interchange Areas. Desired uses, locations and densities/intensities will be determined by the area planning process.</p> <p>If area plans do not specify residential density, the “Residential Location and Design Assessment Matrix” in the <i>General Development Policies</i> should be used.</p>	<p>Appropriate uses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multi-family residential; • office; • retail, especially uses that serve the surrounding community; • industrial/warehouse; and • civic uses, such as schools, parks and religious institutions. <p>Multi-family residential density should be moderate (up to 22 units/acre) and, in some cases, high (over 22 units/acre), typically within Route 4 and/or in conjunction with a mixed-use retail center.</p> <p>Non-residential intensity (Floor Area Ratio) should be low (up to 0.25) to moderate (up to 0.5). Specific intensities for non-residential uses should be determined by area plans.</p> <p>However, not all uses will be appropriate for all parts of the General Corridor Areas. Desired uses, locations and densities/intensities will be determined by the area planning process.</p> <p>If area plans do not specify residential density, the “Residential Location and Design Assessment Matrix” in the <i>General Development Policies</i> should be used.</p> <p>Established low-density residential neighborhoods are, in most cases, appropriate for preservation.</p>

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Transportation		
<p>In Transit Areas, the transportation system should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a rapid transit line and station; • a dense and interconnected street network with typical blocks of 400 feet in length; • an extensive pedestrian network; and • bicycle facilities, especially to support those traveling to the transit station. <p>Most people will access Transit Station Areas by transit or automobile; however, transportation facilities should be designed to support pedestrian circulation within the station area.</p> <p>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 desired network.</p>	<p>In Interchange Areas, the transportation system should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an interstate or expressway with intersecting thoroughfare(s); • an interconnected street network with block lengths determined by the types of land uses; 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. <p>Access to Interchange Areas should be primarily by motor vehicle.</p> <p>However, the transportation system should also be designed to accommodate pedestrian circulation.</p> <p>There should be a greater emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle circulation at Interchange Areas that also function as Transit Station Areas.</p> <p>Access control should be a critical consideration in Interchange Areas.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>General Corridor Areas should have the following transportation facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a dense and interconnected street network of thoroughfares and local streets with typical block lengths determined by land use context; • a well-developed pedestrian and bicycle system, and • local and feeder bus service, focusing on connecting the parts of the Corridor outside station areas to the rapid transit stations. <p>The primary transportation facilities and mode(s) provided for different areas of the Corridor will vary, based on the existing and planned development context for that specific portion of the Corridor, as well as transportation service demands.</p> <p>Overall, the transportation focus in General Corridor Areas should be on enhancing the local street network by creating a denser and better connected transportation system.</p>

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
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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 connectors,**
- **libraries,**
- **schools,**
- **pre-school 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 infrastructure extensions and upgrades,** 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 the 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 connectors 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.

When public facilities designed to serve area residents cannot be placed in Transit Station Areas, they should be located in **General Corridor Areas.** Such uses include:

- **libraries,**
- **schools,**
- **government service centers,**
- **post offices,** and
- **medical facilities.**

Greenways, especially along creeks running through the area, and overland connectors should be located in General Corridor Areas.

In portions of Corridors developed with industrial/warehouse uses, compatible public facilities—such as **vehicle maintenance or solid waste facilities**—are appropriate.

General Corridor Areas should be **priority locations for new or upgraded infrastructure improvements.**



Transit Station Areas will be priority areas for infrastructure upgrades.

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Environment and Site Design		
<p>Buildings and sites should be designed to be sustainable. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and site design should facilitate conservation of water, energy and other natural resources. This will be especially important since land intensive approaches to environmental mitigation are generally infeasible. • New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas, incorporate consideration of natural features—such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy—into the design of new development whenever possible, and minimize site disturbance and related erosion and sedimentation. • Landscaping should use non-invasive plant species and preserve existing vegetation as feasible. <p>Transit Station Areas should be highly pedestrian-oriented, with buildings located at or near the back of the sidewalk, and sidewalks wide enough to accommodate significant pedestrian activity.</p> <p>Most development should be in low (4 or fewer stories) to mid-rise (5 to 8 stories) 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,</p> <p>– continued next page –</p>	<p>Buildings and sites should be designed to be sustainable. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas, incorporate consideration of natural features—such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy—into the design of new development whenever possible, and minimize site disturbance and related erosion and sedimentation. • High quality landscaping, using non-invasive species and preserving the natural vegetation as much as possible, should be part of new development, as well as installed around interchanges that serve as gateways into the community. <p>Interchange Areas should be designed to accommodate primary access by motor vehicle; however, interchange quadrants will also be designed to allow safe pedestrian circulation in a “park once” environment.</p> <p>Most development should be low to mid-rise in Interchange Areas, with low-scale buildings located adjacent to residential neighborhoods.</p> <p>For additional environmental and site design guidance, see the <i>General Development Policies</i> and applicable area plans.</p>	<p>Buildings and sites should be designed to be sustainable. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development should preserve environmentally sensitive areas, incorporate consideration of natural features—such as wetlands, creeks and the natural tree canopy—into the design of new development whenever possible, and minimize site disturbance and related erosion and sedimentation. • Landscaping should use non-invasive plant species and preserve existing vegetation as feasible. <p>Design characteristics will vary, depending on the land use and transportation context. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an <i>industrial-based employment area</i> within a Corridor should be designed primarily to accommodate vehicular circulation; and • an <i>urban mixed-use section</i> of a Corridor should have a strong emphasis on pedestrian-oriented design features, such as buildings sited with parking located in the rear. <p>In General Corridor Areas, development should be typically low- (up to 4 stories) and in some cases mid-rise (up to 8 stories), with low-scale development next to residential neighborhoods.</p> <p>– continued next page –</p>

TRANSIT STATION AREAS	INTERCHANGE AREAS	GENERAL CORRIDOR AREAS
Environment and Site Design		
<p><i>(continued from p. 21)</i></p> <p>high-rise (9 or more stories) may be appropriate.</p> <p>Parking should be shared by a number of uses and, ideally, should be located in parking structures.</p> <p>Streetscapes, public parks and open spaces should be well-designed to create a comfortable and inviting pedestrian environment.</p> <p>For additional environmental and site design guidance, see the <i>General Development Policies</i> and applicable area plans.</p>		<p><i>(continued from p. 21)</i></p> <p>High quality streetscapes should be provided in General Corridor Areas to unify the corridor and soften the urban environment.</p> <p>For additional environmental and site design guidance, see the <i>General Development Policies</i> and applicable area plans.</p>



New development in Corridors should include extensive landscaping, especially in General Corridor and Interchange areas.

WEDGES

Wedges are the large and primarily residential areas located between Growth Corridors, excluding the identified Activity Centers. Wedges currently represent 67% of Charlotte's ultimate land area.



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 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 has a more dense and well-connected street network, and is relatively pedestrian-friendly. Outside Route 4, the transportation system is more auto-oriented, blocks are longer and the street network is not as well-connected.

The amount, intensity and type of new development will be determined through the area planning process and will depend on a number of factors, including vacant and underutilized land and the existing transportation network and capacity.

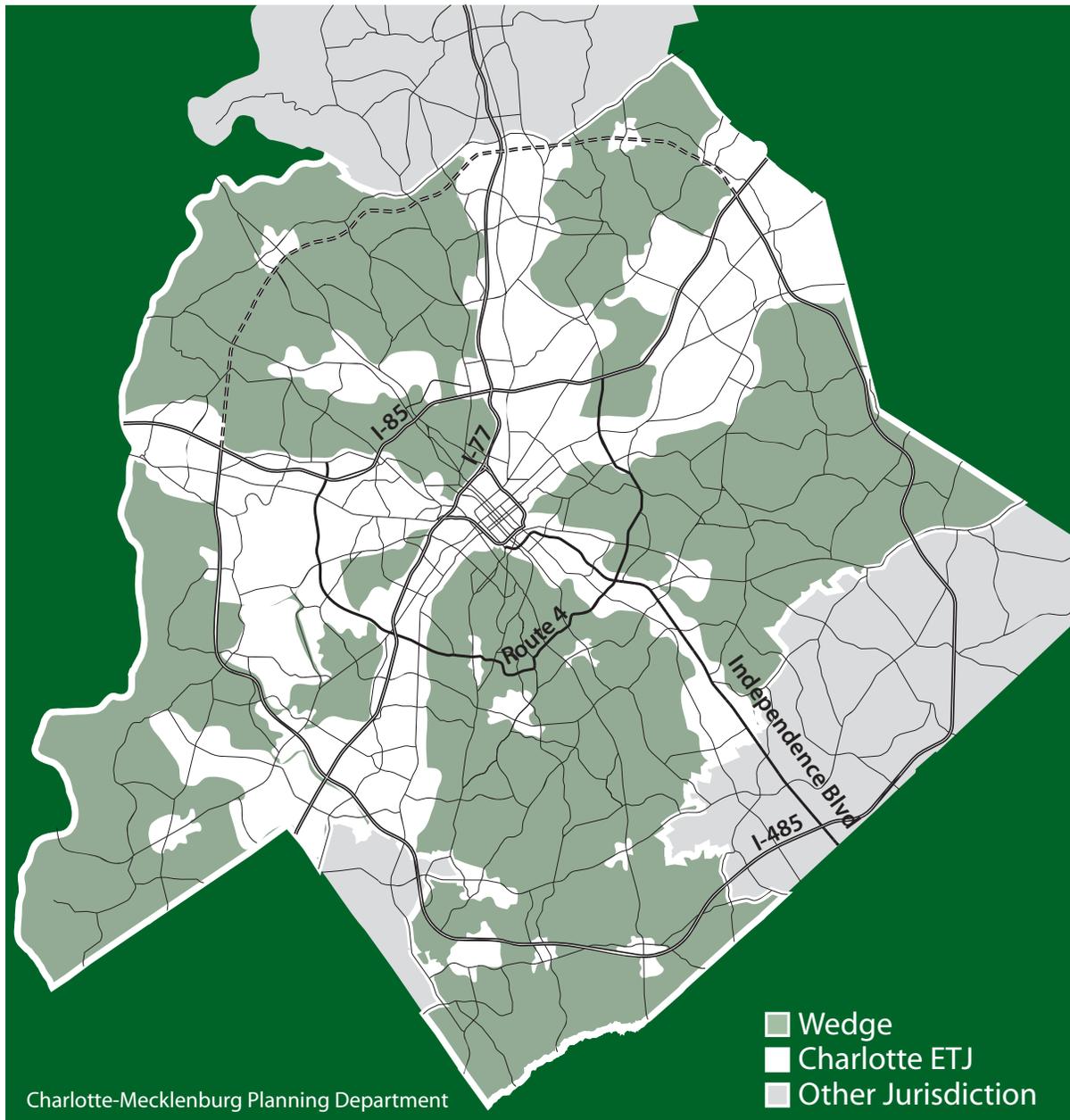
Wedges in the Future

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 moderate 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;
- a transportation system providing residents better access to and from work, shopping, schools and recreation;
- more street connections within Wedges and between Wedges and Centers and Corridors;
- greater emphasis on safe, convenient and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- a greater emphasis on protection of the natural environment.

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 sub-areas or types. Wedges are described in more detail on pages 25-28.



WEDGES

Land Use

In Wedges, appropriate land uses include a diversity of housing types and other uses to **support residential neighborhoods.**

Housing in Wedges includes:

Mainly **low density** housing (up to 4 dwelling units per acre),

- with limited **moderate density** residential (up to 22 du) and,
- in very limited cases, and typically within Route 4 and/or within a mixed-use district, **high density** housing (over 22 du).

Moderate and high density housing should be located **based on adopted area plans** in strategic locations that can support higher densities. If area plans do not specify density, the “Residential Location and Design Assessment Matrix” in the *General Development Policies* should be used.

The highest density residential should be located where extensive existing transportation facilities and infrastructure are found, 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, public facilities should be **located within Mixed Use/Retail Districts** discussed below.

In some cases, civic 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 act as focal points or small scale **town centers that create a sense of place** for surrounding neighborhoods;
- should serve surrounding neighborhoods by providing **neighborhood-serving retail and office** uses;
- may also include **civic uses;** and
- where appropriate, **may include moderate to high density housing.**

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:

- **130,000 square feet or less of retail and/or office development,** consistent with the “Neighborhood Size Centers” in the *General Development Policies* (GDP);
- **in some cases, up to 300,000 square feet** of 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 may exceed 300,000 square feet** of retail and/or office. 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.

The Mixed Use/Retail Districts in Wedges **should complement the larger Activity Centers** discussed on pages 7-14.

Mixed Use/Retail Districts in Wedges **should be low** (up to 0.25 Floor Area Ratio) **to moderate** (up to 0.50 Floor Area Ratio) **intensity.**

WEDGES

Transportation

Wedges should be served by a range of planned transportation **facilities and services to provide residents with transportation choices.**

These facilities and services should include:

- **an interconnected network** of thoroughfares and local streets, with typical block lengths of 600 feet, per the *Urban Street Design Guidelines*;
- **an extensive pedestrian system which includes sidewalks, walking trails 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;
- **a 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.

WEDGES

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, including elementary, junior/middle and high schools;
- **parks** of various sizes and purposes:
 - the inclusion of **smaller parks and open spaces** in mixed use districts is desirable;
 - **neighborhood parks** should be located within residential areas in the Wedges;
 - **larger parks**, such as district parks, should also be located in Wedges (they should be easily accessible from major thoroughfares);
 - **privately-constructed** open space and neighborhood-based recreational facilities should complement public park facilities;
 - private and non-profit **land conservation** easements and reserves;

- **greenways**, especially along creeks, and over-land connections; and
- **libraries, post offices and similar public facilities** should be located in the Mixed Use/Retail districts within the 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 the design of new development whenever possible. In addition, site disturbance and related erosion and sedimentation should be minimized.

- **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.** Landscaping should use non-invasive plant species and preserve existing vegetation and open space as feasible.
- **Land-intensive environmental mitigation measures** should be focused in the Wedges instead of Centers and Corridors, whenever possible.

In general, **development should be low scale**, typically four stories or less, 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 a Center or 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 **access by car, but easy pedestrian circulation upon arrival.**

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 to almost one million people in the next 30 years, but is also expected to continue to diversify. How the city responds to growth and changing demographics 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 a growing and changing population. It provides guidance to help achieve this vision by:

- 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;
- recognizing redevelopment as a key part of accommodating future growth, particularly in Centers and Corridors; and
- encouraging a variety of transportation choices.

However, the framework is just one component of a comprehensive strategy designed to guide growth. Charlotte's comprehensive growth strategy relies on many other specific policies, plans and ordinances as illustrated in the chart on the following page.

Consistency between Centers, Corridors and Wedges and the complementary policies, plans and ordinances will be required to ensure that growth occurs in the manner outlined in this document. The effectiveness of the growth strategy will need to be assessed periodically and adjusted if necessary. In addition, the growth strategy and its individual components will need to be reviewed and updated as conditions change.

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 and becomes "a city with a variety of choices for living, working and leisure, where sustainable growth improves the quality of life."

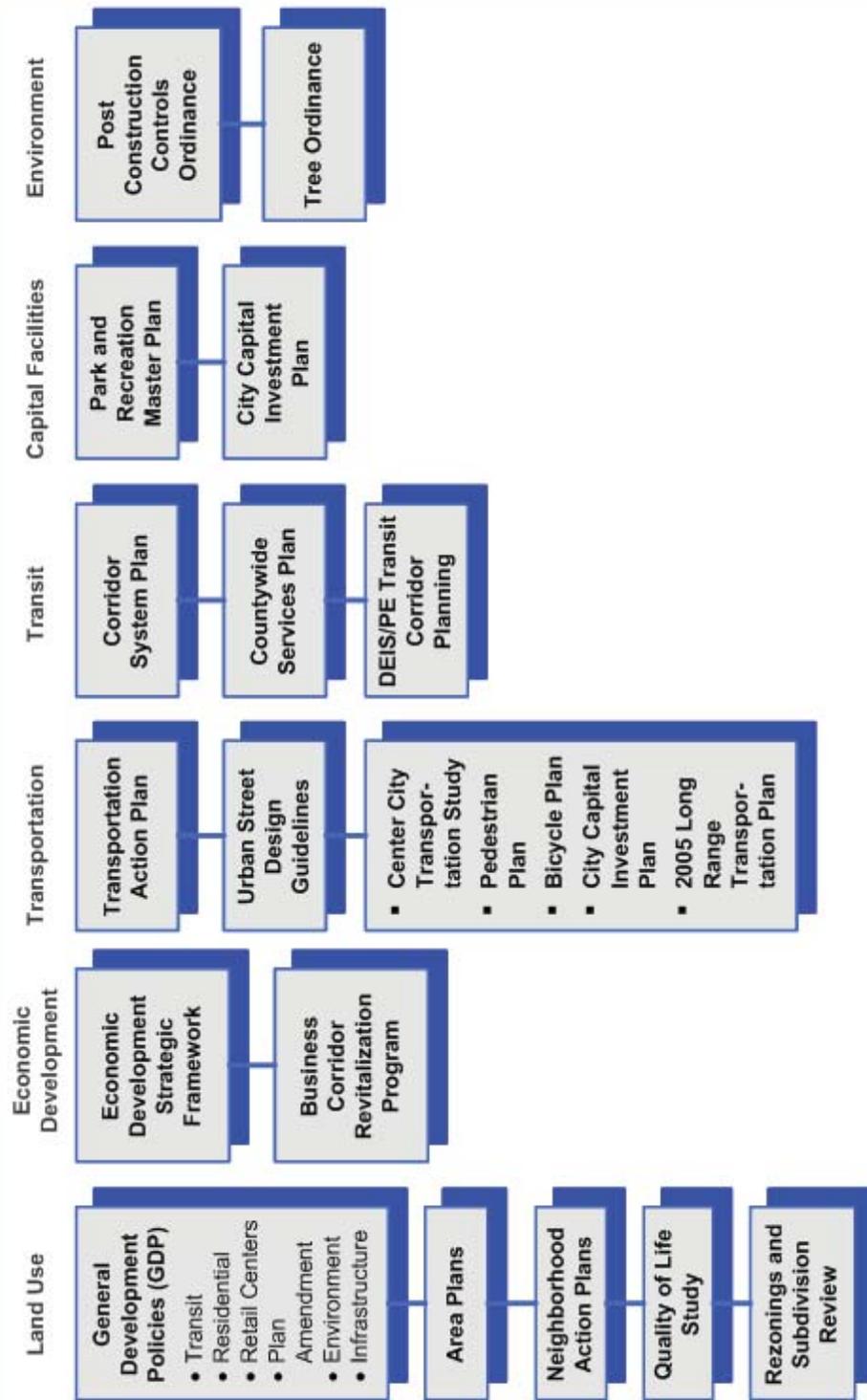
Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework

A chart illustrating the components of Charlotte's comprehensive growth strategy

Charlotte's Development Vision

Charlotte will be a city with a variety of choices for living, working and leisure, where sustainable growth improves the quality of life.

Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework



Growth in Charlotte

Over the last few decades, Charlotte has evolved from a mid-sized city and Southern regional center into the 5th largest urban region in the U.S.—and 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. Yet there is also a growing awareness that uncontrolled growth can impact Charlotte’s livability.

Growth has been a central issue for Charlotte for many years and will continue to be in the future. Charlotte’s population more than doubled between 1980 and 2008, increasing from 315,000 to 697,000 persons.

In the next 25 years Charlotte is expected to add another 287,000 persons as well as 318,000 new jobs. Charlotte is the nation’s 2nd largest banking center and more than half of Fortune 500 firms are represented in the Charlotte region. Charlotte is ranked 1st among industrial hubs in the Southeast, and is the 6th largest wholesale center nationwide.

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. 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 has lost open space at the rate of five acres per day since 1980, and more than 22% of its tree cover between 1984 and 2001.

There is no question about *whether* Charlotte will continue to grow; the key question is *how* to guide that growth. 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 guidance.



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