



Charlotte City Council  
Transportation Planning Environment Committee  
Summary Minutes  
June 22, 2020

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**COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS**

Growth and Infrastructure  
Tree Canopy Action Plan  
Center City 2040 Vision Plan

**COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

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**Committee Members Present:** Julie Eiselt (Chair), Larken Egleston (Vice Chair), Ed Driggs, Matt Newton, Braxton Winston,

**Staff Resources:** Taiwo Jaiyeoba, City Manager's Office

**Meeting Duration:** 10:33 am – 12:02 pm

**ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Growth and Infrastructure
2. Tree Canopy Action Plan
3. Center City 2040 Vision Plan

**DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS**

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**Growth and Infrastructure**

Ed McKinney gave an overview of the Growth and Infrastructure Investment presentation to update the activity, the schedule and discuss next steps. Growth and Infrastructure investment goes back to Council discussion around a number of rezoning cases tasking the Planning and Transportation Departments to look at new actions on traffic congestion and the impact it has in areas of high growth around our corridors and activity centers.

The specific areas of focus are: Transportation Impact, Mitigation and Demand Management; Transit Priority Corridor Investment and Targeted Capacity Investment Areas.

Plans currently underway that address growth, development and mobility are; Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan; Unified Development Ordinance; Connect Beyond a Regional Mobility Initiative; Strategic Mobility Plan and Envision My Ride Bus Priority Study.

Understanding the challenge; Charlotte is the center of the region; and is an importer of jobs. The regional pressure of that on the transportation system is real and that responsibility bares the need to provide for and manage our transportation system regionally. Over half of our employment base commutes from outside of Mecklenburg County and our transportation corridors are influenced by and serve an important regional economic role in addition to our local land use vision.

Charlotte has a unique pattern, we are growing on a spoke cross section, the naturally limited network of corridors and multiple activity centers results in commute patterns that are equally in-town, a north/south direction; and cross-town - east/west direction. The sparseness of that puts a pressure on the transportation network where those corridors cross. This is a unique situation for Charlotte. Focusing on connectivity and intersections in question is part of the solution. That unique pattern; north/south, east/west; is a challenge moving forward.

The growth and infrastructure areas of focus propose a set of actions to manage land use and development impact focused on these areas; transportation impact, mitigation and demand management; transit priority corridor investment and targeted capacity investment areas.

Transportation impact, mitigation and demand management goal is to update traffic impact polices and ordinances to better capture mitigation, promote trip reduction and expand demand management strategies.

The transit priority corridor investment goal is to identify and implement bus priority and microtransit projects to increase transit service and options in appropriate corridors. Examples like, bus priority projects; dedicated bus only lanes and bus queue jumpers at intersections. Also, microtransit service for first and last mile transit access connecting transit stations to employment destinations.

The Targeted capacity investment areas goal is to identify and implement small build, short-term capacity projects in identified areas of growth and congestion. Those focus areas are, University City, South Charlotte and Steel Creek. Work is being done now to screen and focus on projects that will have some real impact and use the \$14 million in the budget that was designated for congestion mitigation and traffic flow.

#### Next Steps;

- Strategic mobility plan; draft ordinances and guidelines; develop and test alternatives – later this fall.
- Transit priority corridor investment; identify and cost pilot projects
- Targeted capacity investment areas; working quickly to target those projects to get them built as quickly as possible

#### **Tree Canopy Action Plan**

Alyson Craig gave overview of the Tree Canopy Action Plan and how it relates to the Comprehensive Plan and the UDO. Past work on the Tree Canopy Action Plan,

2017 Council adopted the Urban Forest Master Plan that laid out key principles for preserving and protecting Charlottes Tree Canopy.

2018 Council review the potential Canopy Plan and explored ways to refine canopy goals and determined the tree policies should be examined as part of the Charlotte 2040 plan.

2019 As part of the Unified Development Ordinance the City updated the Tree Ordinance standards for urban sites in the dialogue on this update confirmed a need for a tree ordinance text amendment.

The tree canopy if important to a great deal of things important to Charlotte. It's important to a healthy and sustainable community, open space, transportation choices, health safety and equity.

The Tree Canopy Plan will be guided by the vision and values of the Charlotte Future 2040 plan. The Tree Canopy Plan will inform tree policy and promotion within several initiatives at the forefront of the city's effort to plan for the future.

Key deliverables of the plan are; an analysis and inventory of Charlotte's tree canopy; community driven tree canopy policy recommendations for Charlotte Future 2040 Plan; ordinance concepts for the UDO and a final report summarizing recommendations.

Goals of the plan:

- honest dialogue on trees in our community,
- build a consensus,
- act on urban forestry master plan

It will have data driven and informed best practices, adjust codes and policies to align with community priorities and lay out a clear point of contact for questions and concerns.

Perspectives and view points will come from neighborhoods and advocates; stake holder groups and public meetings; from the Development Community as well as other city departments.

The project time line; the project start-up began with gathering information ordinance analysis and peer city review, examining existing conditions and later moving into stakeholder and public engagement.

Early in June two meetings were held with the stakeholder groups and will continue to be held every two weeks. The first public meeting will be held in July. Future meetings will be held periodically to provide updates and gather input from the public.

Group discussions will discuss canopy data, tree policies and ordinance concepts. Kicking off Charlotte's tree ordinance academy will introduce Charlotte's tree ordinance to a new audience about Charlotte's Tree Canopy and how we will get there. The stakeholder group is made up of an equal balance of stakeholders with development experience and stake holders with environmental /conservation experience. The stakeholder meetings will be held every two weeks via Zoom and recorded.

Tree Canopy Action Plan Consultant Partners are a key part of the plan; Urban Canopy Works, UCW has led urban forest master plan projects across the country including Charlotte's 2017 Urban Forest Master Plan. For this project they will be leading the public engagement and policy and final report recommendations.

Center for Watershed Protections; are a non-profit organization conducting applied research and translating science into practical guidance for policymakers. They have developed calculators and research that places the right tree in the right location to accomplish the specific water quality, shade, aesthetic and other functions desired by our residents. For this project they will lead data analysis of trees and waterways and also review of ordinances and formulation of ordinance concepts.

The Tree Canopy Action Plan is designed to be a companion plan diving a little deeper than the Comprehensive Plan can go, and the UDO is the tool where a lot of this is implemented. Doing this right now is critical to make sure we are complimenting what is happening in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and we are advising tree policies as related to the Comprehensive plan.

### **Center City 2040 Vision Plan**

Michael Smith, Charlotte Center City Partners and Christopher Beynon, Consultant from MIG, gave an overview of Center City Partners 2040 Vision Plan process. The guiding principles of the plan are to be bold and courageous, to build an even greater city, and make it a people first plan where we need to build out our

transit and streets in favor of pedestrians, bicycles and other mobility choices. We will learn from our history and remedy past actions that divided our people and our neighborhoods. Sustainability is paramount, Charlotte must be resilient and Center City is for everyone.

The plan study area includes uptown and a two-mile ring from Trade and Tryon. The engagement approach guiding principles build broad ownership of the plan, reach new people, build capacity and social capital.

Four (4) Community engagement events have been hosted where 777 ideas were collected. Some of the ideas included; improved public transportation, more family appropriate activities, affordable housing options and more retail variety among many other ideas. More details can be found on the plan website called; [allin2040.com](http://allin2040.com)

The plan steering committee consist of 30 people from across the Charlotte community, Co-chaired by Clay Armbrister, JCSU President and Jennifer Appleby, President of Wray Ward.

The plan process had intended to last 18 months. With the health and economic crisis brought on by COVID-19 as well as the recent racial injustices, the plan will take a step back to reflect and take a look at [how the what impacts of](#) this new reality will have on the plan. Over the next several weeks, more summer engagement activities have been planned to review plan content, have conversations that relate to social injustices, the pandemic and how actionable recommendations can be made to this plan to address these challenges.

Christopher Beynon, Consultant from MIG introduced the vision frame work elements. Framework goals for center city are; [easy accessible](#) mobility; complete affordable neighborhoods; healthy, safe communities; inclusive economy and growth; parks, open spaces and natural areas; resilient urban environments; education, care and enrichment for all and lastly distinct identity and destinations.

The emerging strategies come together in emerging focus areas to reflect our vision and values in the coming years; Cedar yards area, Silver & Blue line crossing; Tryon Street in Uptown, medical school opportunity, East Trade/Government District, North End, Brevard Street, West Trade Corridor and South End Gateway. These emerging focus areas work together to leverage both public or private investment to direct investment into areas of underinvestment.

Objectives of the plan are to catalyze new development opportunities and affordable housing in Uptown, to bridge 277 to the north; leverage light rail investment for public amenities and create a new transit hub, and signature public spaces to bring the community together. Unlocking the potential of North End; the West Trade Corridor, to better leverage the Gold Line investment to connect West End neighborhoods; South End Gateway; seamlessly connect Uptown and the South End; Medical School Opportunity, to create a complete neighborhood around a new medical school that drives research, innovation, heals people and fosters healthy lifestyles; Brevard Street, connecting Uptown destinations with a vibrant active street; the East Trade/Government District to create a vibrant, mixed use neighborhood around the Government District.

Next steps in this process; in late summer community feedback from online workshop; steering committee meeting #4, survey via website, social media and low-tech outreach. In the fall; refined recommendations and community feedback; online workshop #2; review draft plan. Early Winter; final plan adoption.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.