Aligning Corridor Growth & Infrastructure Investment

Transportation, Planning & Environment Committee
May, 18, 2020
The continued fast pace and intensity of development along Charlotte’s corridors and in high growth areas has increased City Council’s desire to align on-going land use, zoning and growth decisions with transportation capacity planning and investment.
Council & Committee Charge:

Identify and provide *new actions* the city can take to better manage the transportation impact of development along corridors and in areas of high growth and increasing congestion.

**Specific areas of focus include:**

- Transportation Impact, Mitigation & Demand Management
- Transit Priority Corridor Investment
- Targeted Capacity Investment Areas
Plans currently underway that address growth, development and mobility:

- **Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan**
  anticipated adoption in spring of 2021

- **Unified Development Ordinance**
  anticipated adoption in fall of 2021

- **CONNECT Beyond a Regional Mobility Initiative**
  currently underway

- **Strategic Mobility Plan**
  currently underway

- **Envision My Ride Bus Priority Study**
  will kick off in fall of 2020.
Charlotte is the center of the region...

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.

712,600 Jobs in Mecklenburg County (2017)

Where do they live? 51% Live Outside Mecklenburg County

Growth & Infrastructure: Understanding the Challenge
Charlotte has a unique pattern

Our naturally limited network of corridors and multiple activity centers results in commute patterns that are equally in-town (north/south) and cross-town (east/west), amplifying typical intersection congestion.
Mobility is about moving people (not just cars)

We cannot build our way out of congestion, investing in additional mobility options (transit, bike, walk, etc.) and in land use decisions that bring jobs and housing closer, need to be part of the solution.
Areas of Focus:

Propose a set of actions to manage land use and development impact focused in the following areas:

1. Transportation Impact, Mitigation & Demand Management

2. Transit Priority Corridor Investment

3. Targeted Capacity Investment Areas
Transportation Impact, Mitigation & Demand Management

Goal:
Update traffic impact policies and ordinances to better capture mitigation, promote trip reduction and expand demand management strategies.

Example actions include:
- Modify traffic impact study (TIS) thresholds (currently 2,500 trips per day) to capture additional transportation mitigations.
- Expand mitigation options to include demand management strategies (e.g. transit passes for multifamily development).

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Example:
Providing transit passes in multifamily residential projects
Transit Priority Corridor Investment

Goal:
Identify and implement bus priority and microtransit projects to increase transit service and options in appropriate corridors.

Example actions include:
- Bus priority projects (e.g. dedicated bus only lanes, bus queue jumpers at intersections)
- Microtransit service for first & last mile transit access (e.g. connecting transit stations to employment destinations)
Goal:
Identify and implement small build, short-term capacity projects in identified areas of growth and congestion.

Example actions include:
- Focus in targeted areas; University City, South Charlotte, and Steele Creek
- Potential projects include; intersection capacity/turn lane extensions, new traffic signalization, roadway alignment & access improvements
- $14 million for Congestion Mitigation & Traffic Flow in City Manager’s Proposed Budget
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>December</th>
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<td><strong>Transportation Impact, Mitigation &amp; Travel Demand Management</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Strategic Mobility Plan</strong></td>
<td>Draft ordinances and guidelines</td>
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<td>Develop &amp; test alternatives</td>
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<td><strong>Transit Priority Corridor Investment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Strategic Mobility Plan + Bus Priority Study</strong></td>
<td>Pilot Project(s) Identification</td>
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<td>Identify and cost pilot projects</td>
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<td><strong>Targeted Capacity Investment Areas</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CDOT Project Planning &amp; Design</strong></td>
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City Manager’s Proposed Budget: $14 million for Congestion Mitigation & Traffic Flow
Questions & Discussion
Led by our City Arborist Division, this plan laid out key principles for preserving Charlotte’s tree canopy by focusing community engagement and efforts on a shared set of goals.

Is 50 by 50 attainable? In 2018 City Council explored ways to refine canopy goals and determined that tree policies should be examined as part of the Charlotte 2040 plan.

As a part of the Unified Development Ordinance, the City updated the Tree Ordinance standards for urban sites in 2019. The dialogue on this update confirmed a need for a refreshed policy on trees.
Vision & Goals Framework

Vision Elements

- Inclusive & Diverse: Welcomes and accommodates all people. Addresses risk of displacement from gentrification; housing, goods, and services at diverse price points; and fair environmental policy.
- Livable & Connected: Provides all parts of the city public services and infrastructure, multi-modal transportation and complete neighborhoods with convenient access to goods and services.
- Healthy & Sustainable: Incorporates sustainability and all aspects of resiliency. Addresses access to healthy food, health care facilities and recreation and plans for climate change.
- Prosperous & Innovative: Leverages growth to benefit all residents equitably. Supports employment opportunities, upward mobility, education, job-training, and innovative entrepreneurs.
- Regional: Embraces Charlotte’s role as the center and improves political, social, and economic linkages and other critical regional connections.

Goals

- Transportation Choice & Convenience: Transit, bus, bike, sidewalks, trails and streets provide a robust network that connects all parts of the community to jobs, goods, services, and the region, and is safe and easy to use.
- Safe, Inviting, and Distinctive Places: Charlotte’s public and private investments create safe, attractive places that celebrate the authentic flavor, culture and history that is distinct to each neighborhood.
- Thriving Economic Innovation & Opportunity: The City embraces innovation while supporting businesses of all sizes that provide jobs, income, revenue, and a path to upward mobility.
- Vibrant Arts, Culture, & Education: Charlotteans enjoy, welcome and celebrate quality public education, a variety of artistic expressions, and all cultures.

Healthy & Sustainable

- Healthy and Sustainable: Charlotte is a clean and green city, with flourishing open space and tree canopy, fresh food options, and forward-looking, resilient environmental policy.

Equitable Access to Services & Resources

- Equitable Access to Services & Resources: People in all parts of our community can access services and resources for quality daily living, such as grocery stores, health care, jobs, and recreation.

Affordable & Diverse Housing

- Affordable & Diverse Housing: People of all incomes have a variety of housing choices at diverse price points and have tools to combat the negative impacts of growth and gentrification.

Coordinated Growth & Development

- Coordinated Growth & Development: Growth is guided in an intentional manner that equitably distributes benefits and impacts, is resilient, and aligns with the city’s role as the regional economic hub.
Guided by the vision and values of the Charlotte Future 2040 Plan, the Tree Canopy Action 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

► Analysis and inventory of Charlotte’s tree canopy

► Community-driven tree canopy policy recommendations for Charlotte Future 2040

► Ordinance concepts for the UDO

► Final report summarizing recommendations
Goals of the Initiative

- Lay out clear points of contact for questions/concerns
- Provide a place to give opinions
- Build consensus
- Honest dialogue on trees in our community
- Act on Urban Forest Master Plan
- Data driven and informed by best practices
- Adjust codes and policies to align with community priorities

Goals of the Initiative:
Perspectives & View Points

- **Stakeholder Group**
  - Public meetings
  - Social Media/web based dialogue

- **Public Meetings**
  - *Pop-up booths at events and school events if feasible*

- **Development Community**
  - UDO Interdepartmental Team
    - Monthly project update meetings with core team

- **Other City Departments**

- **NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE? NO PROBLEM!**

**ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

**NEIGHBORHOODS AND ADVOCATES**

**OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS**

**ENGAGEMENT TACTIC**

*Start of each public meeting*
- Filmed and posted online
Project Timeline

Jan

- Project Start Up (plan, schedule, website)
- Examine existing conditions (data analysis memo)

June

- Ordinance Analysis and Peer City Review

Oct

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Public Engagement

Public Meetings

Stakeholder Meetings
Engagement Schedule

► First Stakeholder meeting early June
  ▪ Held every two weeks

► First public meeting in July
  ▪ Will be held periodically to provide updates and gather input from public

► For both groups, meetings will discuss:
  ▪ Canopy data
  ▪ Tree policies
  ▪ Ordinance concepts

► Tree Ordinance Academy
  ▪ Introduce Charlotte’s tree ordinance to a new audience
Stakeholder Approach

► Equal balance of stakeholders with development experience and stakeholders with environmental/conservation experience

► Meetings will be held every 2 weeks

► Sessions held via Zoom and recorded
  ▪ Stakeholders will be able to view presentations and provide feedback at their convenience
Stakeholder Meetings 1 & 2

Key topics presented:
- Where this fits into past tree canopy efforts
- Tree canopy data and change analysis
- Where this fits in Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Key feedback:
- How to engage the public on this topic during COVID-19
- Opportunities for improvement of policies

“I was born, as I always tell people, on the cotton fields of Georgia, surrounded by nothing but trees. They were our air conditioner, trees provided our existence. Then I had the culture shock of my life when we moved to New York and there were no trees. So I do know the benefits of trees...trees improve the quality of life and are critical.”

~ Mattie Marshall, Historic Washington Heights Community Association
Stakeholder Straw Polls

Which forms of engagement will be most effective in reaching underserved communities on this topic (choose top 3)

- Neighborhood Roundtable: 61%
- YouTube Recorded Video Modules: 30%
- Virtual Town Hall: 30%
- Regular Email Updates: 26%
- Project Website: 22%
- Online Survey: 17%
- Tree Ordinance Academy: 4%
- Unsure: 4%

What are your thoughts on adjusting Charlotte’s current 50% by 2050 canopy goal?

- Keep goal as is: 9%
- Revise current goal, keep some elements of 50 by 2050, but also include new focus areas: 39%
- Develop new goal with new focus areas: 26%
- Not sure, need more information: 26%
- Unsure: 0%
Stakeholder Feedback

► What Should the Public Know?
1. Story of Charlotte’s canopy
2. Value of trees and services they provide
3. Existing procedures and processes of City related to trees
4. Many priorities in development and growth efforts
5. About this project – this is setting long-term direction

► Engagement Ideas
1. Virtual Town Hall Meeting
2. Social Media Content – leads back to project website and survey
3. Neighborhood Roundtable Idea – what forms – virtual or drive-in or?
4. YouTube Channel – watch modules and give feedback?
5. Other In Person Component – maybe a self-guided tour
Consultant Partners
Urban Canopy Works brings expertise in urban forest planning, regulations, and policies, as well as national experience and knowledge of municipal urban forest issues and opportunities. The staff at UCW have led urban forest master plan projects across the country, including Charlotte’s 2017 Urban Forest Master Plan. For this project they will be leading:

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

POLICY AND FINAL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS
The Center for Watershed Protection is a non-profit organization that conducts applied research and translates science into practical guidance for policymakers. They have developed calculators and research to not only place the right tree in the right location, but one that places it in the best location to accomplish specific water quality, shade, aesthetic, and other functions desired by our residents.

For this project they will be leading:

**DATA ANALYSIS OF TREES AND WATERWAYS**

**REVIEW OF ORDINANCES AND FORMULATION OF ORDINANCE CONCEPTS**
2040 Comp Plan & UDO Schedules

- **Kick-off**: Oct 2018
- **2040 Comprehensive Plan**:
  - July 2019
  - Jan 2020
- **Draft Plan**: Sept 2020
- **Council Adoption**: April 2021
- **Review & Adoption**: Jan 2021
- **Implementation**: July

**Key Milestones**:
- **TOD Alignment Rezoning**
- **Tree & Sign Amendments**
- **Tree Canopy Action Plan**
- **Strategy Mobility Study**
- **Unified Development Ordinance**
ALL IN 2040
CENTER CITY VISION PLAN
Purpose
A Vision Plan for 2040

- A fresh start for a different city
- Deep, authentic reflection of community priorities
- Extension of previous planning efforts
- Once in a generation opportunity for coordination and alignment
Our Guiding Principles

• Our vision is bold and courageous
• People first!
• Learn from and build upon our history
• Sustainability is paramount
• Center City is for everyone
Community Engagement
Guiding Principles

- Build broad ownership of the plan
- Reach new people
- Build capacity and social capital
- Leverage other planning projects
- Be bold, creative and make participation fun!
- Use simple, clear language and graphics
Engagement Summary

Events Hosted: 4
Engagement Activities: 21
Ideas Collected: 777
Engagement Summary
Engagement Summary

Community Engagement
Events & Feedback
Summary

March 2020

Hala Charlotte

Community Kick-Off

A Vibe Called Fresh
Steering Committee

- 30-person Steering Committee of citizens from across the Charlotte community
- Co-chaired by Clay Armbrister, JCSU President, & Jennifer Appleby, Wray Ward, President
- Executive direction and creative thinking
- Generation of big ideas and a sounding board for draft plan recommendations
Process

Visioning
Summer | Fall 2019

Ideas, Opportunities & Strategies
Winter | Spring 2019

Recommendations
Late Spring 2020

Draft Plan
Summer

Final Plan & Adoption
Fall | Winter
Challenge Preconceptions
Revised Process

Visioning
Summer | Fall 2019

Ideas, Opportunities & Strategies
Winter | Spring 2020

Recommendations
Summer 2020

Draft Plan
Fall 2020

Final Plan & Adoption
Early Winter 2020

Re-engage
Summer Engagement Activities

• Focus Group discussions, including but not limited to:
  - Neighborhood Leaders
  - Transportation and Sustainability Advocates
  - Social Service Providers and Advocates
  - Hospitality and Entertainment Partners
  - Business Owners
  - Artists and Creatives

• Online Workshop #1 – Draft Recommendations
• Surveys via Website and Social Media
• Low-tech Outreach
Draft Framework
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vision elements
### Vision Elements

- Thriving
- Inclusive
- Memorable
- Resilient
- Sustainable
- Loved
## Vision Elements

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## Goals

1. **Easy, Accessible Mobility**
2. **Complete, Affordable Neighborhoods**
3. **Healthy, Safe Communities**
4. **Inclusive Economy and Growth**
5. **Parks, Open Spaces and Natural Areas**
6. **Resilient Urban Environments**
7. **Education, Care and Enrichment for All**
8. **Distinct Identity and Destinations**
1. Easy, Accessible Mobility
2. Complete, Affordable Neighborhoods
3. Healthy, Safe Communities
4. Inclusive Economy and Growth
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**Goals**

**Emerging Strategies**

- Re-design our streets for people
- Promote affordability and prevent displacement
- Enhance access to health services and resources
- Improve pathways to opportunity
- Design active, playful and healthy parks and places
- Reconnect neighborhoods across 277
- Support lifelong learning through education and innovation
- Provide something to discover and experience on every block
Example Draft Recommendations

- Partner with major Center City employers to establish or expand project-based learning opportunities for high school and college students
- Fund employer-led in-house advancement, training and certification opportunities
- Improve cross-sector coordination to support and leverage resources for effective college and career readiness programs
vision elements

goals

1. Easy, Accessible Mobility
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3. Healthy, Safe Communities
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6. Resilient Urban Environments
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emerging strategies

- Re-design our streets for people
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emerging focus areas

- Cedar Yards
- Silver & Blue Line Crossing
- Tryon Street in Uptown
- West Trade Corridor
- Brevard Street
- Medical School Opportunity
- East Trade / Government District
- North End
- South End Gateway
emerging focus areas

Cedar Yards
Silver & Blue Line Crossing
Tryon Street in Uptown
Medical School Opportunity
East Trade / Government District
North End
Brevard Street
West Trade Corridor
South End Gateway
Focus Areas: Criteria

• Support multiple Vision Plan goals and strategies
• Leverage private or public investment
• Advance elements of the 2020 Vision Plan
• Catalyze near-term change and investment
• Improve social and physical connections
• Direct investment to areas of underinvestment
• Have strong stakeholder and public support
CHARLOTTE CENTER CITY 2040 VISION PLAN

Focus Areas

Legend
- Park / Open Space / Cemetery
- Highway
- Railroad
- Light Rail and Streetcar Lines
  - Gold Line - Streetcar
  - Blue Line - Light Rail
  - Silver Line - Proposed Light Rail
- Trails and Greenways
  - Greenways (Existing)
  - Greenways (Proposed)
  - Rail Trail (Existing)
  - Rail Trail (Proposed)

Focus Areas
- A Cedar Yards
- B Medical School Opportunity
- C Silver + Blue Line Crossing
- D East Trade / Government District
- E Tryon Street in Uptown
- F North End Railyard
- G West Trade Corridor
- H South End Gateway
- I Brevard Street
What if we could create an amazing, active, mixed-use hub and signature public space where the Light Rail lines meet...?
Objectives

- Catalyze new development opportunities and add affordable housing in Uptown
- Bridge 277 to the north
- Leverage light rail investment for public amenities
- Create a new transit hub

Potential Design & Program Elements

- Signature public space with multiple destination features (iconic art, performance and recreation)
- Multi-story transit station maximizes access to Silver and Blue Lines
Grade Separation Alternatives

- Freeway Cap
- Subterranean Freeway
- Elevated Freeway
Affordable and Workforce Housing Applications Available for The Beverly

APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE FOR THE BEVERLY, BOSTON’S FIRST 100% AFFORDABLE AND WORKFORCE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN 25 YEARS
Jay Pritzker Pavilion – Chicago, IL
Elevated Freeway and Park – Toronto, Ontario
Cedar Yards

What if this could become Center City’s next great urban neighborhood?
Objectives

• Leverage Silver Line, NFL and MLS investment
• Attract a mix of uses to new urban neighborhoods
• Improve connections to FreeMoreWest, the Gold District and Third Ward

Potential Design & Program Elements

• Stadium oriented for skyline views
• Elevated pedestrian walkway
• Create welcoming urban spaces around the stadium
• Adjacent parking and tailgating
Conceptual Diagram
What if this street could 365 and 24/7 fully embody the energy, diversity and spirit of Charlotte?
Objectives

• Develop a consistent pedestrian-friendly corridor
• Foster a distinct and impressionable identity
• Create a safe, warm and welcoming environment for all

Potential Design & Program Elements

• Ground floor redesign or activation
• Fresh toolkit of streetscape materials and furniture
• Programming opportunities such as creative seating, outdoor curbside dining, music and art, and micro-retail
• Reduced visual clutter
Don’t Close Parks. Open Up Streets.
Give people the public space they need right now.

JAMES HAMBLIN  MAY 10, 2020
BLACK LIVES MATTER
Places to Gather

Places to Roam

Places to Shop

Places to Design

Ground Floors

“Permeable” Ground Floors

Interesting Design

Lighting

Music

Safety

Food

Density

Comfort
How can we unlock the potential of the North End?
West Trade Corridor

How can we better leverage the Gold Line investment to connect and benefit West End neighborhoods?
South End Gateway

What if we could seamlessly connect Uptown and the South End?
Medical School Opportunity

What if we could create a complete neighborhood around a new medical school that drove research and innovation, healed people, and fostered healthy lifestyles?
What if we could connect Uptown destinations with a vibrant, active street?
How can we create a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood around the Government District?
Late Summer: Community Feedback
- Online Workshop #1 – Draft Recommendations
- Steering Committee Meeting #4
- Survey via Website and Social Media
- Low-tech Outreach

Fall: Refined Recommendations and Community Feedback
- Online Workshop #2 – Review Draft Plan

Early Winter: Final Plan Adoption
- City Council Adoption Process