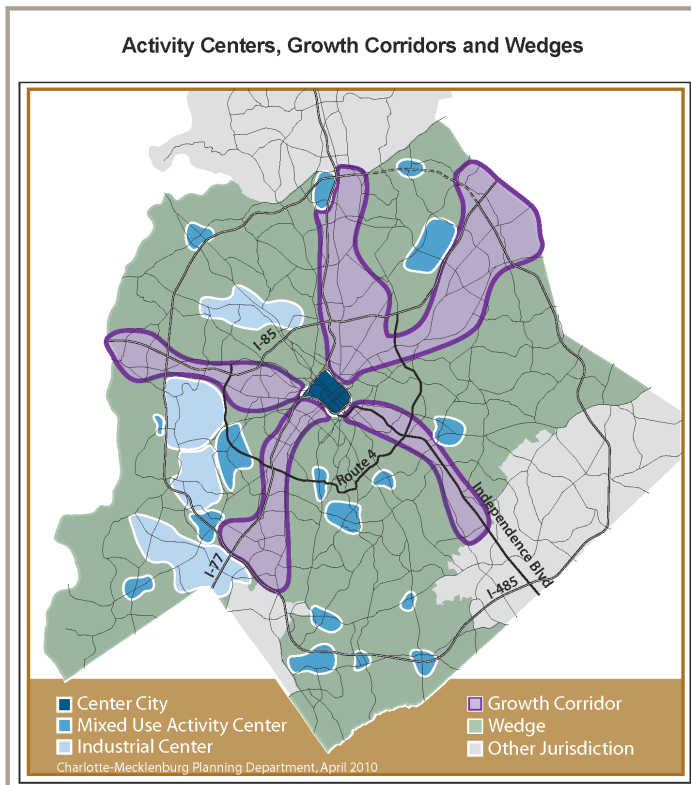


Charlotte's Vision

Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework (adopted first in 1994 and revised in 2010) establishes the vision for future growth and development for Charlotte. The framework identifies three geographic types used to categorize land in Charlotte's "sphere of influence" - Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges; and outlines the desired characteristics of each geographic area.



Activity Centers are focal points of economic activity typically with concentrations of compact development. The expectation for Activity Centers in the future is for:

- Further infill development, redevelopment of underutilized sites, and intensification in Center City;
- Greater emphasis on a mix of commercial and civic uses and inclusion of moderate to high

- density housing;
- Multi-modal transportation system and interconnected network of streets;
- Priority areas for enhancements to support infrastructure, particularly the transportation network.

Growth Corridors are characterized by the diversity of places they encompass - from historic neighborhoods, to vibrant mixed-use areas, to significant employment and shopping districts - and by the accessibility and connectivity they provide for these places. The expectation for Growth Corridors in the future is for:

- Greater emphasis on office, residential, and mixed use development, especially around transit stations;
- Continuation of industrial and warehouse/distribution uses, particularly in locations with high levels of motor vehicle accessibility;
- Multi-modal transportation system with a dense network of interconnected streets;
- Priority areas for enhancements to support infrastructure, particularly the transportation network.

Wedges are the large areas between Growth Corridors where residential neighborhoods have developed and continue to grow. Wedges consist mainly of low density housing, as well as a limited amount of moderate density housing and supporting facilities. 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 infrastructure capacity to support higher densities;
- Neighborhood-scale commercial and civic uses located to serve immediate area;
- Multi-modal transportation system and more street connections to provide residents better access.

While the growth framework provides an overall vision for future growth, specific direction for

land use decision-making will continue to be provided by policy documents such as the General Development Policies and area plans.

Public Sector Players

The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework was developed through the community planning process which was facilitated by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department and then reviewed and adopted by appointed and elected officials.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department was established in 1954 and is divided into three divisions:

1. Long Range Planning Services: develops plans and policies that help enhance livability, strengthen economic competitiveness, provide transportation options, and ensure the orderly growth of our community.
2. Strategic Planning Services: implements Charlotte's community vision by providing urban design guidance, design services, community outreach, and strategic planning for developing and redeveloping areas.
3. Development Services: provides regulatory services designed to help achieve the community vision. These include managing the rezoning, subdivision and historic district processes; updating the Zoning Ordinance; administering the variance and appeals processes; and making ordinance interpretations.

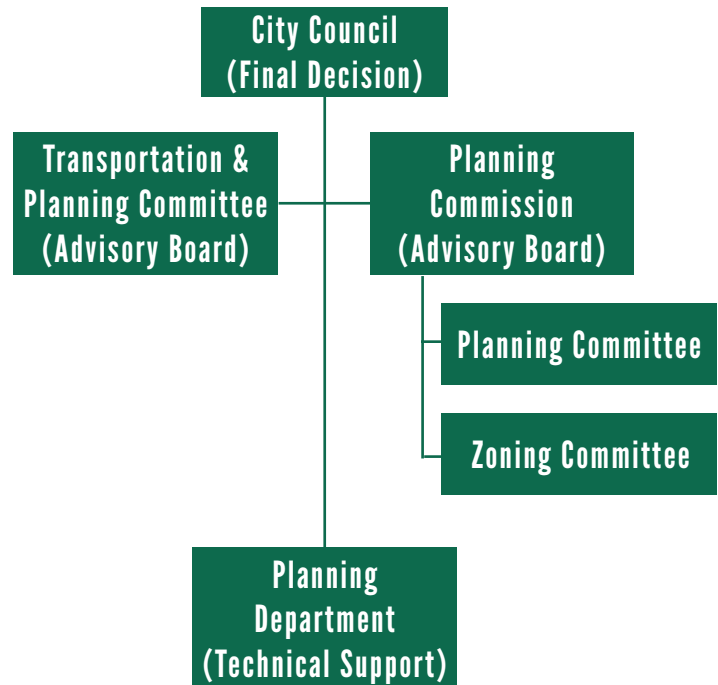
The Planning Commission is an advisory body composed of 14 appointed members. The Commission is responsible for reviewing and providing recommendations for planning policies such as area plans and regulatory processes such as rezonings. The Commission is divided into two Committees:

- **Zoning Committee**: makes recommendations concerning rezonings, amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, and subdivision variances and appeals.
- **Planning Committee**: makes recommendations concerning land use, urban design,

transportation and other policies relevant to the planning process; also reviews and recommends action on capital projects and acquisitions of property (Mandatory Referrals).

The Transportation & Planning Committee is another advisory body that reviews and provides recommendations for planning policies and land development regulations. The Committee is composed of 5 City Council members who are appointed by the Mayor of Charlotte.

City Council is responsible for approving all proposed policies, such as area plans, and land development regulations, like rezonings or amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.



Community Planning Process

The community planning process is the framework by which community stakeholders can discuss and define a vision for the future of their community. It is an iterative process which generally includes the following steps:

1. **Identify Stakeholders**: Stakeholders may include a range of community members such as residents, small business owners, industry professionals, and large institutions. Stake-

holders typically have different priorities and aspirations, and the planning process is designed to reflect and balance each of them.

Tools to implement the policy recommendations may include future capital improvements and rezonings.

2. Define Assets, Opportunities, and Vision: Identifying the assets and opportunities help stakeholders better understand where they want to go in the future. Assets, such as historic landmarks or public parks, are conditions that a community wants to protect in the future. Opportunities, such as vacant lots or poor infrastructure, are conditions that a community wants to enhance or improve in the future. The vision is a consensus of a community's priorities and aspirations for the future. A vision helps guide all policy recommendations.

As a stakeholder in your community, it is important to participate in the steps highlighted in green. Without your participation, your priorities, ideas for the future and preferred alternatives will not be known and may not be represented in the final plan. Community input is essential to a successful planning process and truly impacts the final plan recommendations. To be informed about future planning processes in your area sign up on the Neighborhood Organization Contact List at: <http://charlottenc.gov/NBS/CE/CommunityInfo/Pages/Neighborhood-Organization-Contact-List.aspx>

3. Information & Analysis: Planning staff studies a range data such as existing land use patterns, traffic patterns and accidents, population projections, and environmental sensitivities in order identify any additional assets or opportunities worth consideration before developing policy recommendations. This analysis is typically shared with stakeholders early in the planning process.

Importance of Plans

Community plans are important because:

4. Develop Alternatives: Guided by the community's vision, staff develops a range of alternatives (or solutions) that are designed to protect the assets and improve the opportunities, but also respond to the constraints of the existing conditions.

- Plans provide continuity across time and gives successive public bodies a common framework for addressing issues like land use and transportation.

5. Select Alternatives: Staff shares the alternatives with community stakeholders and facilitates a conversation about the trade-offs of each option. Stakeholders come to a consensus about which alternative is best for their community.

- They provide balance and protection for everyone's rights; plans strike a balance among the many competing demands on land by creating development patterns that are orderly and rational, and provide the greatest benefits for individuals and the community as a whole.

6. Adoption & Implementation: Both the Planning Commission and Transportation & Planning Committee review the proposed area plan policies and provide comments and/or recommendations. The revised plan is then reviewed and approved by the City Council.

- Plans provide a means for protecting our public investments.
- Plans allow communities to direct development in a way that protects valued resources. Planning can identify environmental features like wetlands, agricultural lands, woods and steep slopes and suggest strategies for preserving those resources from destruction or degradation by inappropriate development.
- Through public dialogue among stakeholders the planning process is able to develop a collective vision for the future.

Plan Recommendations

Community plans can incorporate a range of policy recommendations including:

- 1. Land Use:** Plans can identify where certain land uses, such as residential or commercial, are appropriate. These land use recommendations are reflected in the Future Land Use Map (available here: vc.charmeck.org). Plans can also identify what densities, or units per acre, are appropriate. Plans, however, can not identify where specific tenants, like Starbucks or Target, are appropriate.
- 2. Transportation:** Plans can identify where new street connections, bicycle lanes, or pedestrian improvements are appropriate. They can also define a future street cross-section for various roads.
- 3. Urban Design:** Plans can provide design guidelines for elements such as height and orientation. Plans, however, can not provide guidelines for architectural styles such as Colonial verse Bungalow
- 4. Open Space:** Plans can recommend the preservation of environmentally sensitive features such as wetlands and steep slopes. Plans typically identify parks or greenways that Mecklenburg County has committed to through their own planning process.

Expectations for Community Plans

Identify and provide policies to address development opportunities and issues	<i>But not...</i>	Create regulations and laws
Possibly recommend zoning changes in appropriate locations	<i>But not...</i>	Rezone property
Identify public and private investments needed to achieve vision	<i>But not...</i>	Provide funding and implementation means overnight
Guide more appropriate development	<i>But not...</i>	Halt development

Below: The generalized land use scale orders uses from least impactful to most impactful. Typically, the best practice is to locate uses with similar impact adjacent to one another. However, certain design elements such as stepped-back building height or vegetated buffers can be used to mitigate the impact of a more intense land use adjacent to a less intense land use.

