



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – Full Version

Area Plan Development

- **Why is the City developing a land use plan for this area?**

The purpose of this planning initiative is to establish an overall vision for the Steele Creek community and to develop land use and transportation policies. The plan will ultimately guide property owners, developers and elected officials in making land use and development decisions. Further, it will be used as a tool to evaluate rezoning applications and development plans, and with other City-wide initiatives, to coordinate and prioritize infrastructure service provisions and funding allocations.

- **When will the plan be completed?**

A draft plan document is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2010; it will then be reviewed by the public as well as by elected and appointed officials.

- **The meeting notice stated “...the area plan could recommend a change in the future use of property within the plan area?” What exactly does that mean?**

The City has an “Adopted Future Land Use” map that shows a specific future land use recommendation for every parcel of land within the City’s jurisdiction. This map provides guidance for future development. Once the Steele Creek Area Plan is adopted, it will update this map. In so doing, the future land use recommendations for some parcels may change. However, be assured that whether or not the plan recommends a change, *it will not affect how your property is currently used*. It will only provide guidance for future development.

Area Plan Implementation

- **How will plan policies be implemented?**

An Area Plan is divided into two separate sections: a Concept Plan and an Implementation Guide. The Concept Plan sets forth plan policies while the Implementation Guide identifies specific actions that will assist in implementing the plan policies. The City Council will be asked to adopt Part I, the Concept Plan. They will not adopt the Implementation Guide.

The Implementation Guide identifies specific improvements set forth in the Plan. Each project is assigned a general priority and time-frame. Staff will use this Guide to identify potential funding sources for these projects. Keep in mind that area plans are long-term in nature and are often realized over time with commitments from both the public and private sectors. In many cases, City Council will need to approve funding for specific projects. Some projects may be funded quickly and others may not be funded for years.

Citizen Involvement

- **How can citizens become more involved in the area planning process?**

In addition to the public meetings held this summer and completing the online survey, Citizens will have the opportunity to provide comments to the Planning Committee of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission and City Council during the review and adoption process. These meetings will take place during the winter/spring 2010.

Interested citizens can become even more involved by volunteering to serve on an advisory group. This voluntary group will work with Planning staff and other City and County officials over the next 6-8 months to develop plan policies. While participation in the group is open to the public and no special expertise is required, a commitment to attend approximately one to two meetings per month over a 6 month period is requested. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Crissy Huffstickler at 704-336-4697. The Citizen Advisory Group Meetings will begin sometime this summer.

- **If I cannot attend the public meeting, how can I stay informed about the plan and plan process?**

Simply go to www.charlotteplanning.org; click on “Steele Creek Area Plan” on the green sidebar. You will find up-to-date information on the plan development process.

Plan Adoption

- **Who makes the final decision on the plan?**

The Charlotte City Council makes the final decision on the plan. City Council considers the recommendations of several bodies, including the Planning Committee of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission and City Council Committee. They also consider citizen comments, as well as comments from other boards and agencies, including the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board.

Land Use and Zoning

- **What is the difference between the future land use in an area plan and zoning?**

This is an important distinction to keep in mind. Area plans are policy documents. They address land use issues and recommend how land should be used in the future. The future land uses adopted as part of an area plan are policy, not regulatory. Zoning designations, on the other hand, determine how parcels of land may be legally developed. When property owners want to develop or use their property in ways that do not conform to their current zoning regulation, they must apply for a change in their zoning classification, also referred to as a rezoning.

Annexation

- **Will the Steele Creek area planning process mean the unincorporated area within the plan boundary is annexed?**

No. Annexation is pursued through a separate process. A portion of the study area was annexed into the City of Charlotte on June 30, 2007. Additional portions were approved for annexation in November 2008, which will become effective on June 30, 2009. The remainder of the study area is within the City of Charlotte's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and may be annexed at some point in the future. In addition to other requirements set forth in the State statutes, generally, an area qualifies for annexation if there is a population of at least 2.3 persons per acre (for details contact Planning staff at 704-336-2205).

Park and Recreation

- **What park projects are in the works?**

Most immediately, the County is completing an expansion at Thomas McAllister Winget Park; a baseball field and restroom will open this fall. Once 2008 park bonds are sold, additional amenities will be built at Thomas McAllister Winget Park, including additional baseball fields and a trail system. Park amenities will also be constructed along with Palisades Elementary School, to be located across York Road from McDowell Nature Preserve.

- **Will we ever get more greenways in the Southwest?**

The economic turndown has affected many capital projects, but the good news is, when 2008 bonds can be sold, a one mile section of greenway connecting the existing greenway at River Gate to Smith Road can be funded. Funds will not be available for a few years yet, but Walker Branch Greenway has been approved by the citizens of the County for this one-mile extension. This project will connect significant residential areas to shopping and Steele Creek Athletic Association ball fields.

Schools

- **What is the short term plans for school improvements in the Steele Creek area?**

River Gate Elementary School located near the intersection of Hamilton Road and Smith Road is scheduled to open in the fall of 2009. Additionally, Palisades Elementary School, which is located on South Tryon Street and will be jointly used with a planned neighborhood park, has been designed and was approved for bond funding in 2007. However, economic conditions have delayed its construction until at least 2010. Longer term plans include a new middle and high school to serve this area.

Utilities

- **What is being done to improve water and sewer services to the area?**

The Southwest Water Transmission Main is being constructed from the water treatment plant on Brookshire Boulevard, southwest past the airport, and along Steele Creek Road to NC 49 to improve system capacity and allow extension of water service further into the southwest area. The anticipated completion date for this project is summer of 2010.

Sanitary Sewer service is available to 2/3 of the study area. The Steele Creek basin and adjacent basins shown in the study area are served by the Steel Creek pump station. The pump stations in the study area pump sewer from lower elevations to the Steele Creek pump station. Based on a recent design, the entire pump station will be replaced at Steele Creek. This replacement is designed to handle current and future flows from the study area.

Transportation

- **What major transportation improvements are currently being done in the area?**

Realignment of the intersection of Steele Creek Road (NC 160) and Shopton Road West, and relocation of a portion of Dixie River Road is currently underway and nearing completion. The objectives for this project include reconfiguring the skewed alignment of the intersection, improving safety of existing road and intersection, installation of traffic signal to improve traffic flow, and providing connection to the Berewick subdivision. For more information on this project or any other transportation related questions, please contact Charlotte Department of Transportation at (704) 336-4119.

- **What are the long term transportation plans for the area?**

Long term plans include widening of Highway 160. This is currently unfunded, but is included in the Long Range Transportation Plan for the 2030 horizon year. Plans also include Carowinds Boulevard Extension which will use parts of existing Winget and Sam Neely roads. This connection will happen as development occurs in the future. It is not included in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. For more information contact Robert Cook at (704) 336-2205.