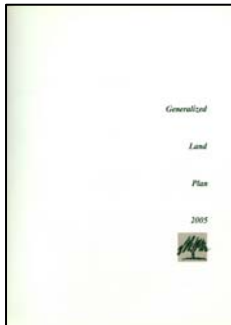


# Background Information about District Plans

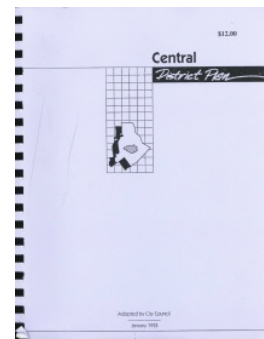
Prepared by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission Staff, October 2006

## Historical Context



With the adoption of the *2005 Generalized Land Use Plan* in 1985, Charlotte-Mecklenburg was organized into seven districts – the North, Northeast, Northwest, South, Southwest, East and Central – to facilitate the preparation of detailed land use and physical development plans. These plans, referred to as district plans, were originally developed for each of the seven planning districts between 1986 and 1992.

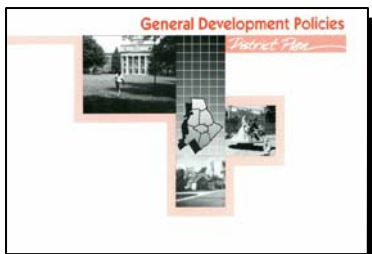
The purpose of each district plan was to refine the broad policies and recommendations of the *2005 Generalized Land Use Plan*, particularly by providing parcel-specific land use recommendations. The district plans were intended to depict a build-out land use future, one which may not evolve for twenty, fifty, or even a hundred years. The district plans were not zoning plans and did not regulate or control the way land was used or developed. The plans were intended to provide policy direction to elected officials in making land use and development decisions.



When the district plans were developed, the detailed adopted future land use maps were produced as wall-size, hand drawn illustrations. At that time, the Planning Commission did not have access to Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. Smaller, generalized representations of these hand-drawn maps were provided in the document text for reference.

## How District Plans Are Used

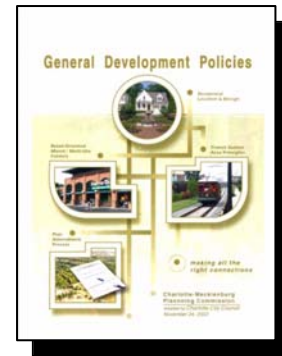
Collectively, the district plans provide the adopted future land use for all the area within the City of Charlotte's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).<sup>\*</sup> The adopted future land use provides guidance to citizens, staff and elected officials in planning for future development and redevelopment. In particular, the adopted future land use is used as a key component of evaluating rezoning proposals and other development proposals that come before City Council.



While the district plans provide parcel-specific land uses, they do not typically indicate all the areas appropriate for higher density residential development, nor do they always provide detailed guidance in terms of the appropriate

amount (i.e., square footage) of non-residential development, or the design of development in general. The City relies heavily on the *General Development Policies*, originally adopted in 1990 and updated in 2003, to provide guidance in terms of residential density and design.

(\*Note: All of the North District Plan area is now within the Town of Huntersville's ETJ and is no longer used by the Planning Commission.)



## How District Plans Are Updated

Recognizing that planning is a dynamic process that necessitates flexibility and adapting to change, particularly in high-growth areas like Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the City has several processes in place that serve to continually update the future land use adopted in the district plans. Specifically, the district plans are updated through the area planning, rezoning and plan amendment processes.

- **Area Planning:** Area plans are generally developed for smaller geographic areas than that of a district plan. Because of their narrower focus, they are able to provide more detailed recommendations, particularly in relation to density and design. Area plans have various titles, such as Strategic Plan, Pedscape Plan, Revitalization Plan, Neighborhood Plan, etc. Since the adoption of the district plans, approximately 35 area plans have been completed. Once adopted, area plans amend the respective district plan for the area contained within their boundary.
- **Rezoning:** It is the City of Charlotte's policy that once a rezoning is approved that is not consistent with the adopted land use plan, that rezoning updates the adopted land use (typically referred to as the district plan).



- **Plan Amendments:** The City of Charlotte has a formal process that can be used to amend adopted land use plans. Once City Council approves a plan amendment, it amends the adopted land use (typically referred to as the district plan).

As noted previously, the original district plans were wall-size, hand drawn illustrations. During 2004 the Planning Commission completed the conversion of these plans to a digital format. This has allowed staff to regularly update the plan maps as area plans, rezonings and plan amendments have been approved.