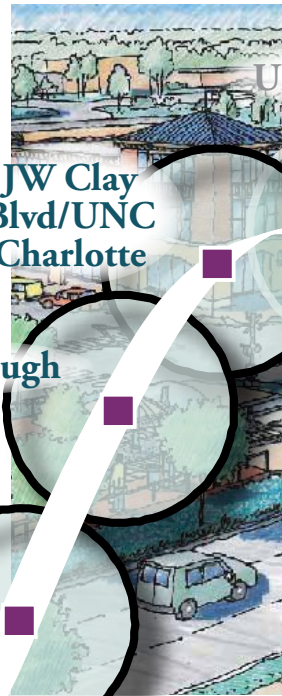


Volume 1: Introduction



McCullough

University
City Blvd

JW Clay
Blvd/UNC
Charlotte

UNC Charlotte Main



UCAP/BLE

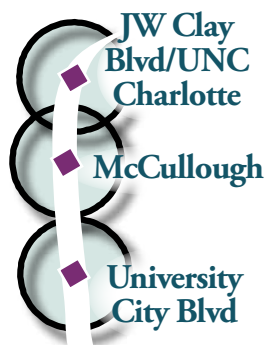
Plan Context

Purpose

This document establishes a vision and provides policy direction to guide future growth and development for three of the eleven Blue Line Extension (BLE) Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations – University City Boulevard, McCullough, and JW Clay Blvd./UNC Charlotte – and other areas adjacent to the University of North Carolina Charlotte main campus and Interstate 85. The first seven stations are addressed in the *Center City 2020 Plan* – 9th Street Station – and the *BLE Transit Station Area Plans* (2013) – Parkwood, 25th Street, 36th Street, Sugar Creek, Old Concord, and Tom Hunter. The station on the UNC Charlotte main campus is addressed by the *UNC Charlotte Campus Master Plan* (2010).

Introduction

The Northeast light rail corridor will be a major driving force of change in the University City area. The vision and direction provided in this document is consistent with the *Centers, Corridors, and Wedges Growth Framework* (updated 2010). Once adopted, this plan will:

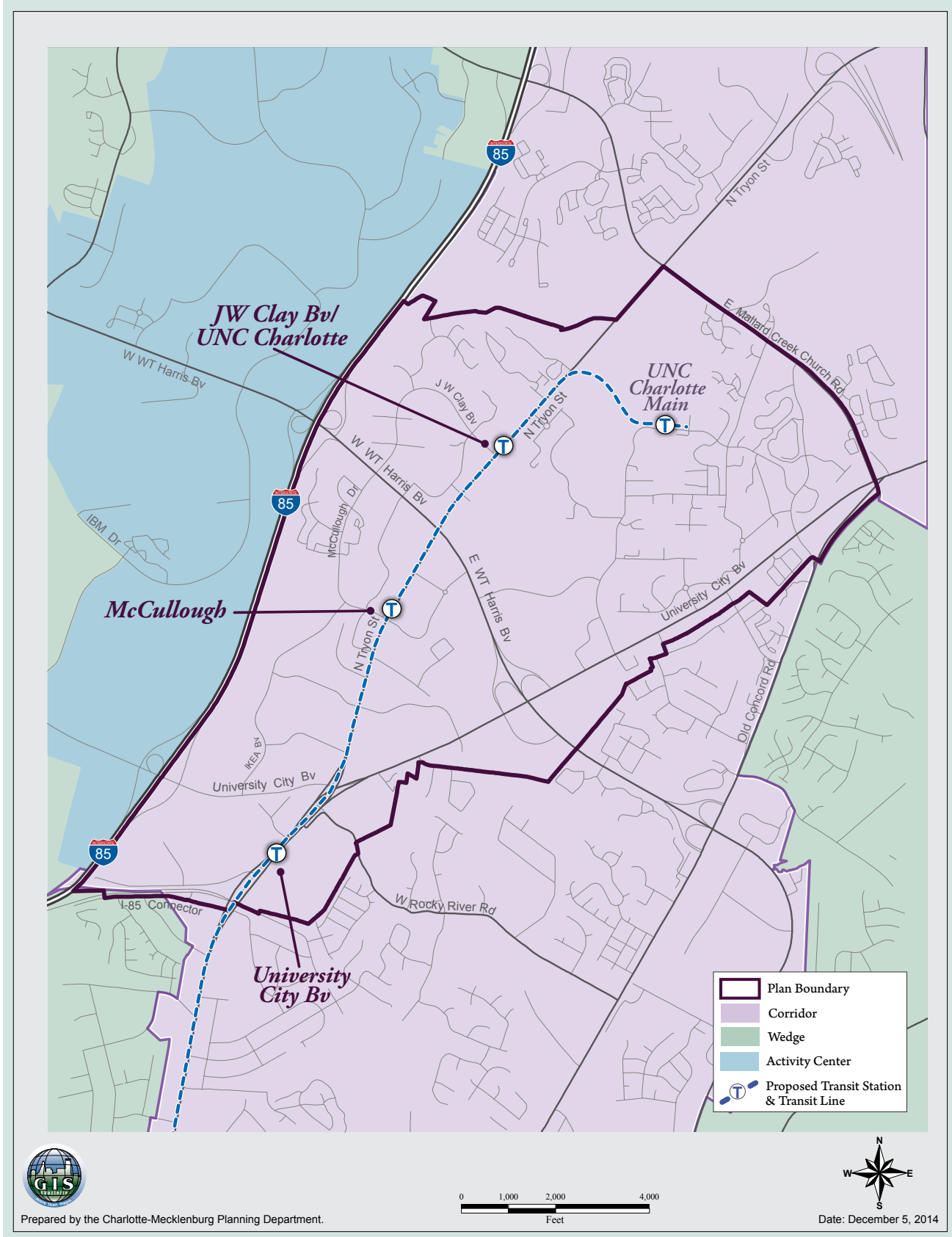


- Define the growth and development vision for the areas surrounding the University City Blvd., McCullough, and JW Clay Blvd./UNC Charlotte LRT stations and areas adjacent to the UNC Charlotte main campus and interchange areas near I-85;
- Refine the boundaries for any portion of an Activity Center, Growth Corridor, and/or Wedge included in the plan area;
- Address key land use, transportation, community design, and development concerns identified through the planning process;
- Provide guidance for future land use design character, and infrastructure decisions;
- Function as the official Streetscape Plan.

Plan Boundaries

For contextual purposes, the boundaries cover an area larger than the (LRT) Transit Station Areas, defined as properties recommended for transit supportive development and generally located within $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walk distance of the University City Blvd., McCullough, and JW Clay Blvd./UNC Charlotte stations. These areas will be most influenced by – and have the ability to influence – the success of the LRT line. While the Transit Station Areas are the primary focus, this plan's major influencing factors including the UNC Charlotte main campus and the areas in close proximity to Interstate-85 interchanges.

Map 1: Plan Area Boundaries





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Introduction

Between 1980 and 2010, Charlotte grew from the 47th to the 17th most populous city in the United States.

Background

University City is in the heart of Northeast Charlotte. Its commercial core, which is the focus of this plan, is generally located north of the North U.S. 29 Bypass Highway, east of I-85, south of Mallard Creek Church Road and west of University City Boulevard. In 2003, Charlotte City Council designated this commercial core as a Municipal Services District (MSD). An MSD allows for the taxation of property owners within the district's boundaries as a means of generating revenue to support enhanced services exclusively for the area.

The University of North Carolina Charlotte was first established as the Charlotte Center in 1946, offering evening classes on Charlotte's Central High School campus. In 1961, the school was moved to the area its main campus currently occupies in University City, and became the fourth school in North Carolina's state university system in 1965. Total enrollment as of October 2014 is 27,320 students and employment includes over 3,500 faculty and staff positions. UNC Charlotte is, and will continue to be, a major presence and influence in University City.

A new presence in University City is the future light rail line and four transit stations – University City Blvd., McCullough, JW Clay Blvd./UNC Charlotte and UNC Charlotte main campus. University City lies along the I-85 corridor and includes several major Charlotte area thoroughfares including University City Blvd., W.T. Harris Blvd., Mallard Creek Church Rd., and N. Tryon St. Much of the existing development patterns are designed to accommodate the automobile. For example:

- Large surface parking lots with little pedestrian connectivity,
- Auto-oriented uses such as gas stations and drive-through restaurants, and
- Strip commercial development along major roads

The BLE will provide new alternatives for moving around University City and likely influence future development patterns, especially around the transit stations. The recent adoption of the *Blue Line Extension Transit Station Area Plans* (2013) is a key step in promoting continued growth and development in a way that helps achieve our overall community vision, consistent with the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* (updated 2010). This plan recommends changes to the development pattern around stations along the LYNX Blue Line Extension.

Growth Framework

Since the 1980s, Charlotte has been one of the nation's fastest growing urban areas in the country. Between 1980 and 2010, Charlotte grew from the 47th to the 17th most populous city in the United States. By 2035, it is projected that Charlotte will gain another 300,000 residents and 320,000 jobs. Charlotte's future will be defined by its ability to effectively accommodate this anticipated population and employment growth.

The City of Charlotte has adopted citywide plans and policies that are intended to guide future growth and development patterns. The policies in documents such as *Centers, Corridors, and Wedges* (2010) and *General Development Policies* (2003 and 2007) are supplemented by the policies in this University City Area Plan that are specific to this area. More information about citywide plans and policies can be found in *Volume 4, Adopted Plans and Policies*, page X.

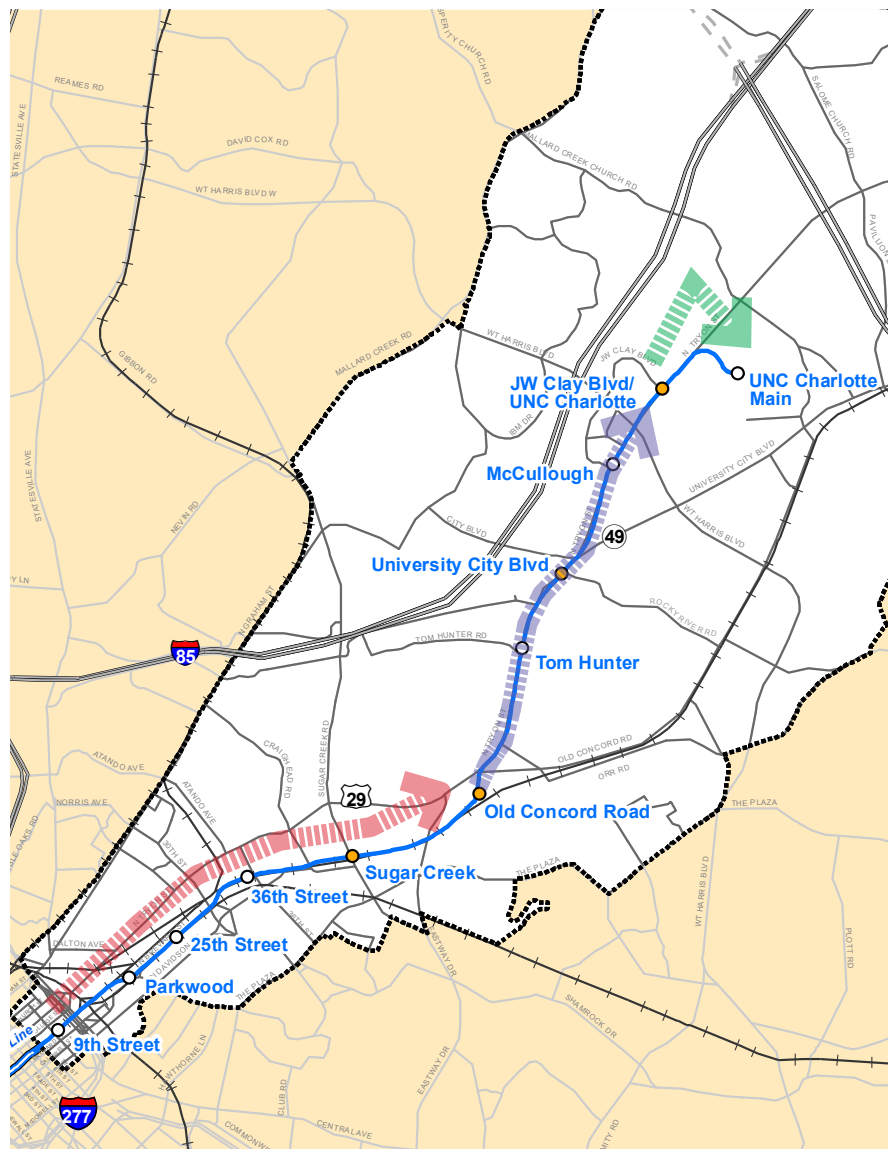


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The Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line

The existing LYNX Blue Line is the Charlotte region's first light rail service and is a part of the City's 2030 Transit System Plan. It is 9.6 miles long and operates from I-485 at South Boulevard to Uptown Charlotte. With 15 stations including seven park and ride locations, the LYNX Blue Line provides a congestion free commute with a consistent travel time. The extension of the LRT line will operate along a 9.4 mile route connecting Center City, University City, and UNC Charlotte. The alignment generally parallels existing Norfolk Southern/North Carolina Railroad lines to the median of US 29/N. Tryon St., as shown below.

Introduction



- From Uptown through the Old Concord Road area, the light rail will operate within the NS/NCRR right of way.



- From the Old Concord Road area to JW Clay Blvd./UNC Charlotte, the light rail will operate in the median of US 29/ North Tryon Street.



- From JW Clay Blvd./UNC Charlotte area to Charlotte main campus, the light rail will operate on new alignment onto the UNC Charlotte campus.



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Introduction

There was great community interest and involvement throughout the development of the plan.

Plan Development and Adoption Process

The *University City Area Plan/LYNX Blue Line Extension Transit Station Area Plans Update*, prepared by a City of Charlotte interdepartmental team led by the Planning Department, is based on input from area residents, property owners and developers, as well as University City Partners, consultant studies, and technical analysis. This effort included several public meetings, as well as many one-on-one meetings and other communication with property owners, developers, neighborhood leaders and other interested stakeholders.

The final draft plans is presented to and reviewed by the general public. The Planning Committee of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission considers the plans and forward their recommendation to the Charlotte City Council for final review and consideration for adoption.



Input is collected via electronic options, meetings, phone calls, and other means. The December 2013 kickoff workshop participants, shown above, shared their understanding of issues to help clarify the vision and goals.

Plan Organization

The document is organized into chapters that,

- Provide an overview of the plan area and identify opportunities and constraints to achieving the community's objectives for the plan area, especially in the transit station areas;
- Propose a vision for the future of the plan and make recommendations to move towards that vision; and
- Identify actions to be taken to implement the recommendations.

Volume 1: Introduction familiarizes the reader with pertinent information. The plan area analysis, vision and recommendations are part of *Volume 2: Concept Plan*. Volumes 1 and 2 of the document are adopted by City Council and becomes City policy. The action items to implement the recommendations can be found in *Volume 3: Implementation Plan*. Volume 3 is not adopted by City Council; rather it is used to guide staff efforts to implement the Concept Plan. Previously adopted plans and policies which are used to guide city and area-wide growth patterns are summarized in *Volume 4: Adopted Plans and Policies*. An overview of existing conditions is found in *Volume 5: Appendix (existing conditions)*.

University City Area Plan/LYNX Blue Line Extension Transit Station Area Plans Update

Plan Structure

Volume 1: Introduction

The Introduction states the purpose of this plan and provides background information.

Volume 1: Introduction contains the plan boundary, general background information about the area, and a brief description of the adoption process.

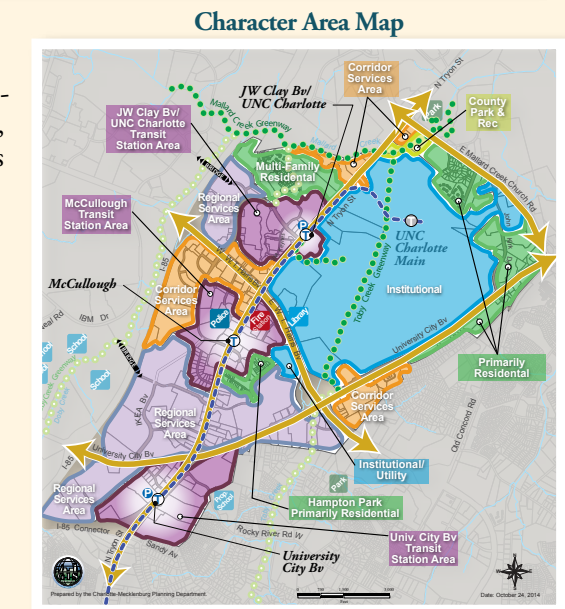
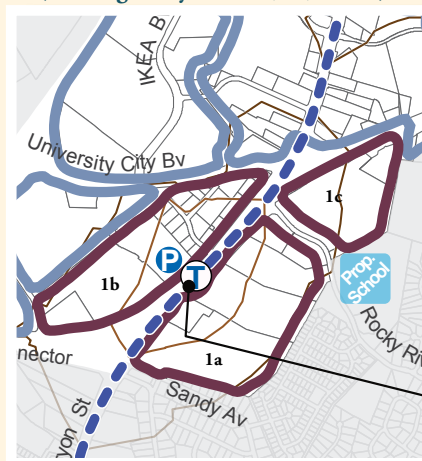
Volume 2: Concept Plan

The Concept Plan will be adopted by Charlotte City Council and become City policy.

The *Volume 1: Concept Plan* is adopted by City Council as a policy guide for future decision making. It contains the plan purpose, vision statement, goals and policies. A series of four maps follows this section:

The **Character Area Map** (Map 2, page 15) illustrates eleven Character Areas, identified by similar existing development, land uses, and mobility elements. The Concept Map is intended to be a general indication of desired development patterns and major transportation networks. Each Character Area has a unique vision statement that guides specific policies for future development and supports the overall goals of the University City Area Plan.

Policy Area Map
(Showing Policy Areas 1a, ab, and 1c)

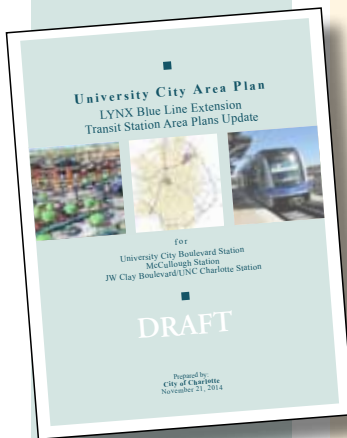


The **Policy Area Map** (Map 3, page 16) shows the breakdown of the Character Areas into twenty-three (23) Policy Areas, identified by existing and potential development patterns, natural features, and transportation connectivity. (A close up of Policy Areas 1a, 1b, and 1c are shown at left. See page 21.) Each Policy Area has several unique Community Development Policies related to Land Use, Community Design, Mobility, and Open Space. These are used to guide decision making related to future development and establish a clear vision for the community.



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Concept Plan
Plan Structure



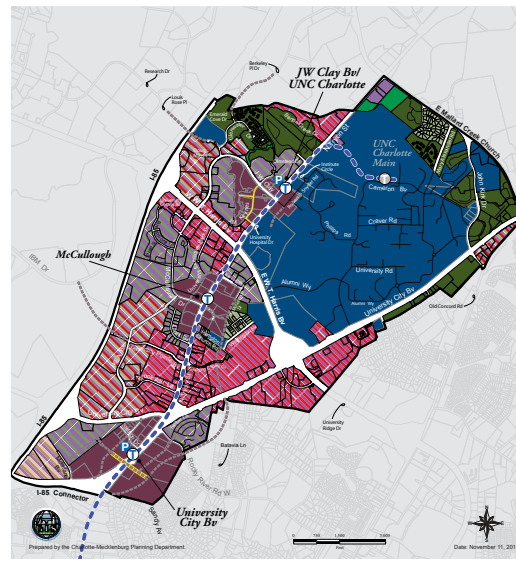


UCAP/BLE

Concept Plan Plan Structure

Specific policies and recommendations to achieve the form and desired character of each station area are detailed in the Community Development section.

Recommended Future Land Use Map

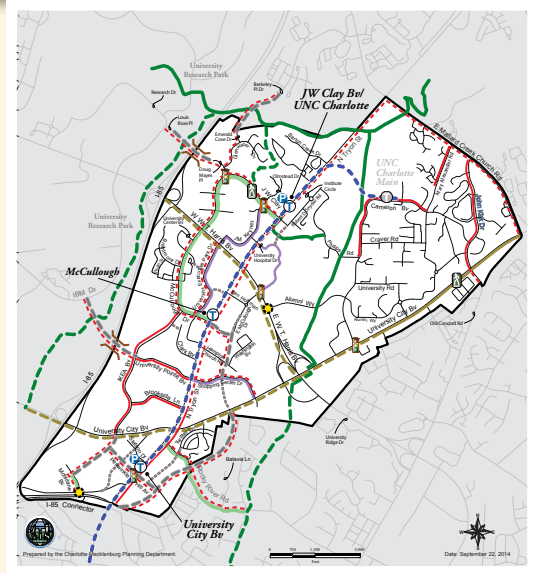


The **Recommended Future Land Use Map** (Map 4, page 17) will become the official adopted land use map for this area (once adopted by City Council). The adopted land use is supplemented by specific Community Development Policies contained within the following sections for each Policy Area.

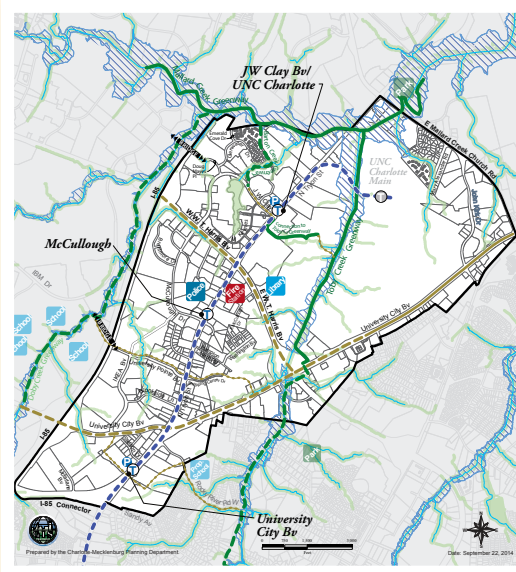
The **Future Transportation Network Map** (Map 5, page 18) identifies critical street, sidewalk, bike lanes, pathways and other connections to improve the overall transportation network within the plan area.

These improvements are additionally described within the Community Development Policies under the corresponding Policy Area and in the Transportation section, beginning on page 84.

Future Transportation Network Map



Public Facilities and Environmental Features Map



The **Public Facilities and Environmental Features Map** (Map 6, page 19) identifies stream buffers, floodplains, greenways, and overland connectors that make up an environmental network in the area. Specific policies relating to these features are included under the corresponding Community Development Policies for each area and in the Natural Environment section, beginning on page 103.



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Concept Plan Plan Structure



*The core areas occur
at each station in the
plan boundary;*

- University City Bv
- McCullough;
- JW Clay Bv/
UNC Charlotte

Cores

The “core” of the each transit station area is identified as being generally within 1/4 mile walk distance of the transit station. This 1/4 mile walk distance assumes an expanded street network through future development, subject to the subdivision ordinance and recommendations established in this plan. These are key areas for compact, pedestrian-oriented, intense future development to support an around-the-clock district at these nodes. The core is identified with a blue shaded area on the Future Transportation Network map in applicable policy areas (beginning on page 22).

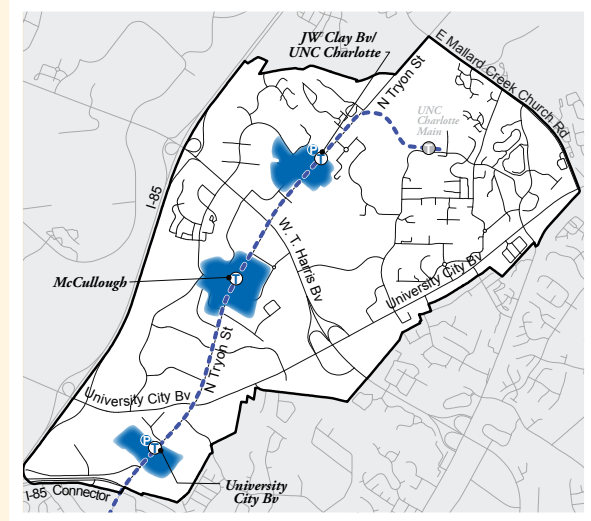
Community Development Policies

Each of the 23 policy area pages begin with a series of three maps:

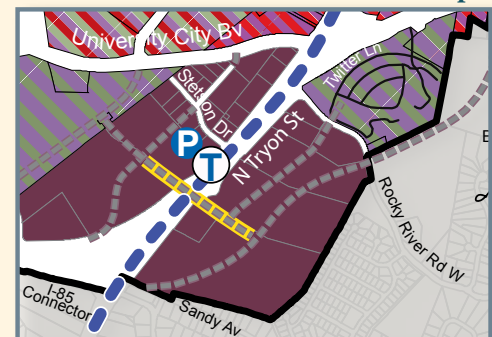
- Recommended Future Land Use Map
- Future Transportation Network Map (Core will be shown on this map if applicable.)
- Public Facilities and Environmental Features Map

These small vignette maps show the same information as found on the larger maps on pages 17, 18, and 19. However, the vignettes focus on the individual policy area and highlight features that relate to the policies listed in the accompanying policy table. Community Development Policies begin on page 20.

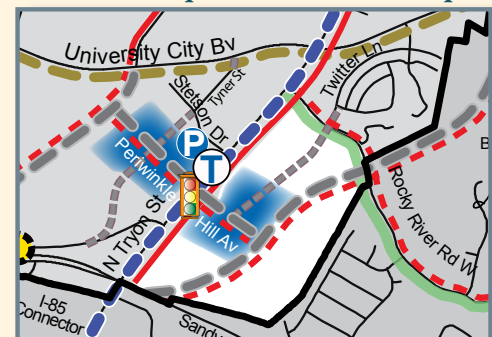
Cores Map



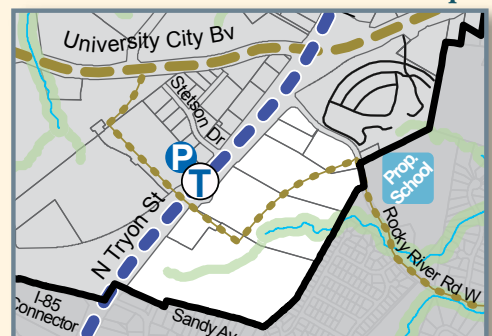
Recommended Future Land Use Map



Future Transportation Network Map



Public Facilities & Envir. Features Map





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Concept Plan Plan Structure

Document sections:

- **Volume 1 :**
Introduction
- **Volume 2 :**
Concept Plan
- **Volume 3 :**
Implementation Guide
- **Volume 4 :**
Adopted Plans and Policies
- **Volume 5 :**
Appendix

Transportation Policies, page 84, address future transportation improvements.

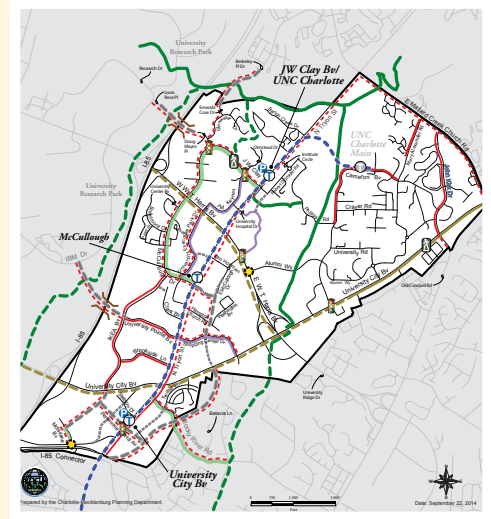
Street cross-sections follow. See page 89. For clarity (in order to show additional detail), the plan boundary area is divided into two areas - South Area (south of W.T. Harris and North Area (north of W.T. Harris).

Additional area-wide policies are included for:

Infrastructure and Public Facilities Policies, page 101.

Natural Environment Policies, page 103.

Future Transportation Network Map



Volume 3: Implementation Guide

The Implementation Guide is primarily used by staff to ensure public and private development achieves the defined vision.

Volume 3: Implementation is primarily a staff document that outlines specific steps that can be taken by various public and private bodies so that the desired future envisioned in this plan may be realized. This section of the document is not adopted and is periodically updated by staff. Additional information related to future development along N. Tryon St. is also included in this section.

Volume 4: Adopted Plans and Policies

Adopted Plans and Policies are intended to guide city and area-wide future growth and development patterns.

Volume 4: Adopted Plans and Policies are intended to guide future growth and development patterns. *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* (updated 2010) and *General Development Policies* (2003 and 2007) are supplemented by the policies in this University City Area Plan that are specific to this area. More information about citywide plans and policies can be found in Volume 4, page 121.

Volume 5: Appendix

The Appendix contains supporting background information.

Information in **Volume 5: Appendix** is gathered throughout the planning process and contains existing conditions, market analysis data, and planned projects or improvements in the area. It is used to inform the process and develop recommendations.



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Concept Plan Glossary

Glossary of frequently used terms

These definitions are intended to provide clarification for some terms that are frequently used throughout this document and to provide context to the University City Area Plan.

Amenity Zone – A hardscaped extension of the sidewalk to the back-of-curb that is typically used instead of, in addition to, or alternating with, a planting strip. The purpose of these areas is to enhance the pedestrian experience by providing additional buffers between traffic and the sidewalk, and to create visual interest.

Civic/Institutional – Civic and institutional uses are considered to include cultural, educational, medical, governmental, religious, athletic, and other similar types of uses that are generally open to the public. Large scale churches and day cares (as defined by the zoning ordinance) should typically be located on thoroughfares and provide a physical transition to existing neighborhoods by way of building height and landscaping. Large scale residential institutional uses are most appropriate in transit station areas and/or on a major thoroughfare, and should adhere to any multi-family community design guidelines for that Policy Area. Jails, prisons, and landfills are not typically appropriate within this plan area.

Community Development Policies – For the purposes of this plan, these include the specific policies for each Policy Area related to Land Use, Community Design, Mobility, and Open Space. They are supplemental to city- or area-wide policies. Community Development Policies can be found on pages 20 to 83 of this document.

Core Transit Station Area – The “core” of the each transit station area is identified as being generally within ¼ mile walk distance of the transit station. This ¼ mile walk distance assumes an expanded street network through future development, subject to the subdivision ordinance and recommendations established in this plan. These are key areas for compact, pedestrian-oriented, intense future development to support an around-the-clock district at these nodes. The core is identified with a blue shaded area on the Transportation Network map in applicable policy areas (beginning on page 22).

Cross Charlotte Trail – This proposed project is a 26-mile pedestrian and bicycle trail from Pineville to the UNC Charlotte area, connecting existing segments of Mecklenburg County greenways with additional trails to be built by both Mecklenburg County and City of Charlotte.

Dwelling Units Per Acre (DUA) – Indicates the minimum or maximum number of dwelling units permitted on each acre of land. These refer to both single-family and multi-family units.

Greenway – A greenway is a vegetated natural buffer that improves water quality, reduce the impacts of flooding, and provide wildlife habitat. They provide recreation, transportation, fitness, and economic benefits.



UCAP/BLE

Concept Plan Glossary

Hotels/Motels – Hotels and motels are generally considered as retail uses that provide temporary housing for rent. This plan identifies where they are most appropriate in the Land Use and Development policies of this plan. They may also be considered in retail areas when not specifically referenced.

Mid-block Crossing – A Midblock crossing is a location between intersections where a marked crosswalk has been provided.

Multi-use Path – A bi-directional, hard-surfaced path physically separated from motor vehicle traffic intended for use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Multi-use Trail – This type of facility typically falls within a greenway corridor and provides a clearly marked trail. In the case of University City, primary users are anticipated to be pedestrians and bicyclists. Some areas of the trail may be paved where others may remain more natural.

Overland Connector – A pedestrian and bicycle facility that provides connections between existing and future Mecklenburg County greenways via sidewalks and/or multi-use paths to create a network.

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon – A pedestrian hybrid beacon is used to warn and control traffic at a mid-block marked crossing in order to assist pedestrians in crossing the street.

Promenade – This type of facility is generally defined as a paved walk, typically along a waterfront. In this plan, the promenade refers to the clearly defined pedestrian pathway, currently existing generally from JM Keynes Dr. to the northeast side of the lake in University Place development, connecting to the boardwalk.

Transit Oriented Development – Transit oriented development focuses on creating compact neighborhoods with housing, jobs, shopping, community services, and recreational opportunities within easy walking distance (i.e. within ½ mile) of a transit station. The intent is to create well designed, very livable communities where people can get from home to such places as the office, grocery store, day care center, restaurant, dry cleaner, library or park without using a car. Transit oriented development policies provide direction for developing and redeveloping property around rapid transit stations in a way that makes it convenient for many people to use transit. Such policies focus on land uses, mobility, and community design.

UNC Charlotte Campus Master Plan (2010) – The UNC Charlotte main campus is one of the largest presences in the University City Area in terms of land area and population. As a North Carolina state institution, land development activities are governed by the campus rather than local zoning ordinances. Therefore, this area plan does not address land use, mobility, or design for the campus. The University City Area Plan seeks to provide continuity and compatibility between the campus and surrounding areas. The Campus Master Plan addresses future building sites, open space networks, parking locations, and improvements to pedestrian, vehicular, and service circulation. The UNC Charlotte Campus Master Plan is available online.

<http://masterplan.uncc.edu/>