

Catawba Area Plan Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. 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 Catawba 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.

2. When will the plan be completed?

A draft plan document is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2009; it will then be reviewed by the public as well as by elected and appointed officials. It is anticipated that the City Council will adopt the plan during the late spring/early summer 2009.

3. 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.

4. How can citizens become more involved in the area planning process?

In addition to the public meeting held on July 8, 2008, there will be another public meeting tentatively scheduled for the spring of 2009. Citizens will also 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 2009. All meetings are open to the public and meeting notification will be sent to all property owners, area neighborhood organizations, elected/appointed officials as well as other stakeholders in the community.

Interested citizens can become even more involved by volunteering to serve on a citizen advisory group. This voluntary group will work with Staff 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 two meetings per month over a 6-8 month period is requested. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Planning Staff at 704-336-2205. You may also sign up at the July 8 public meeting.

5. 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 “Catawba Area Plan” on the green sidebar. You will find up-to-date information on the plan development process.

6. 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.

7. The letter notifying me of the July 8, 2008 Public Meeting stated that “the area plan could recommend a change in the future use of property within the plan area?” What exactly does this mean?

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

8. What is the difference between the future land use in an area plan and zoning?

There 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.