

Centers, Corridors and Wedges – Citizen Advisory Group Meeting #7 – March 31, 2009

Summary Minutes

I. Welcome and Introductions

Laura Harmon (Planning Dept.) opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting followed by introductions.

II. Presentation/ Advisory Group Discussion

Laura Harmon provided process update and reported on the status of staff work in response to advisory group comments to date. Staff also led a discussion on the “Transition” definition to be included in the glossary as well as answering any question Advisory Group members had on the area plan process chart.

Process Update

Staff provided an update on the Advisory Group Process and noted the addition of a 8th meeting to wrap-up the group’s work and to address any outstanding issues. Staff indicated that the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) would have a few months off while staff worked to update the document. All information was promised to members in advance of the last meeting.

Feedback from Meetings 1-6

Staff provided a status report on work that has taken place as a result of the comments received by the Advisory Group as of 3-31-09.

General

- Re-establish web survey – *complete, including neighborhood leader e-mail blast*
- At end of Advisory Group Process, determine additional input needed – *future*
- Develop a glossary for document – *underway*
- Advisory Group to provide suggested language for Vision – *for discussion tonight*
- Revise wording of Guiding Principles and provide explanatory text for each Principle – *for discussion tonight*
- Develop Executive Summary of document to be placed in front of document – *underway*
- Replace existing maps in document with more general “bubble” maps – *underway*
- Remove references to specific “numbers”, i.e. density, square feet so forth, from body of document and place in glossary – *underway*
- Provide an overview of how area plans are developed – *underway*
- Add language that won’t preclude the provision of affordable housing - *underway*

Activity Centers

- Update Centers, Corridors & Wedges (CCW) and General Development Policies (GDP) to address similarities and differences between “centers” in each document – *underway for CCW, future work for GDP’s*
- Revise text to indicate that mixed use and multi-use represent the desired character of Mixed Use Centers in Center City, not the prevalent building type – *underway*
- Revise text to strengthen the concept that the Center City is the heart of the City and Region – *underway*
- Revise text for Mixed Use Centers to include language similar to what is found under *Land Use types* for Center City that states it’s an appropriate location for office, with a concentration of national and/or regional corporate headquarters. - *underway*
- Clarify park recommendations for Centers - *underway*

Growth Corridors

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- Redefine Corridors to reflect positive characteristics – *complete, except for minor revisions*
- Revise Corridor pictures to be less transportation focused – *underway*
- Further refine Corridor text to indicate that Corridors link land uses together, instead of dividing them – *underway*
- Add fourth subarea of Established Neighborhoods, under Corridors in addition to the existing subareas of Transit Station Areas, Interchange Areas and General Corridor Areas – *complete, except for minor revisions*
- Provide additional information on transitions between established neighborhood and adjacent high intensity uses – *draft definition complete, for presentation tonight*
- Revise document to indicate Transit Station Areas in Corridors function as “Centers” around a rapid transit station - *complete*
- Revise document to indicate that at certain locations Corridors and Wedges can have areas with Mixed-Use Center characteristics – *Corridors complete; Wedges underway*

Wedges

- Work with Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities to resolve apparent conflict between limiting utility extensions and land use and environmental impacts of resulting well and septic – *underway*
- Revise text on page 28 as follows: “Mixed Use/Retail districts should be designed to allow access by car, and encourage easy pedestrian circulation upon arrival.” – *complete*

All Areas (Centers, Corridors and Wedges)

- Address areas with unique or historic qualities in design section of each area type - *underway*
- Revise document to refer to mixed use and multi-use in Centers, Corridors and Wedges, where appropriate – *underway*
- Develop summary of framework that highlights major common elements and differences between Centers, Corridors and Wedges - *underway*

Review Transition Definition for Glossary

Staff provided hard copies to group members and provided an overview of the definition for Transition. The definition focused on the tools available to ensure appropriate and effective transition between different uses. These include the following:

- Buffer (width)
- Screening (vertical)
- Site and building design
- Height Plane
- Land use (can be used as a transition)
- Open Space (an amenity that can also be used as a transition)

Staff explained that the tool(s) used would depend on the two types of developments involved. Linda Keich (Planning Dept.) will send this out digitally and staff invited the group to take a close look at the language. Comments were due back by the end of the next week.

Answer Questions on Area Plan Process Chart

1. Who is the community defined as?
 - *Everybody within the plan boundaries and neighborhood organizations. It is also an open process for anyone to participate.*
2. What about those who have an interest, but don't live, work or go to church, etc in the area?
 - *Still open to them.*

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3. Who facilitates this process?

- *Typically Planning, but we do have an interdepartmental team. Some plans are led by Economic Development or a consultant. However, if it's going to be a plan adopted by Council, then Planning really needs to be involved, even if they are not facilitating the process.*

III. Break-Out Group Discussions

The Citizen Advisory Group did not split into two groups to discuss the vision statement and guiding principles. Due to the turnout, the group was kept together and asked to identify which of the two proposed vision statements (listed below) they liked best and to indicate the parts they liked in both. They were also asked to review the guiding principles (listed below) and to identify the ones that were good as is, not sure about, or needed more changes. Peter Zeiler (Economic Development) acted as the facilitator for this discussion.

Vision Alternatives

- A. Charlotte is a vibrant, diverse, unique, world class cosmopolitan city with sound fiscal management, providing its citizens with educational, cultural, entertainment, recreational and economic opportunities.
- B. Charlotte will continue to be one of the most livable and prosperous cities in the country, where sustainable growth will provide a range of choices for living, working, leisure and travel.

Guiding Principles

As it continues to develop, Charlotte will strive for:

- 1. High quality, context sensitive community design: New development should be designed to complement the desired character of the area. In established areas, new development should reflect and build upon the existing character.
- 2. A range of residential opportunities to accommodate a diverse population in quality and livable neighborhoods: Charlotte's population includes a diverse range of people with different housing needs and preferences. Differences in income, age, physical abilities, lifestyle preferences and other population characteristics should be recognized and quality housing choices should be available within the Charlotte community to meet the needs of these various groups of people.
- 3. Heightened consideration of environmental benefits and impacts: Recognizing that environmental stewardship is fundamentally important to Charlotte's quality of life and essential to maintaining a vibrant economy. Consideration of environmental factors should continue to be an important part of the process when making decisions related to future growth and development.
- 4. More walkable places with a variety of activities: Much of Charlotte's future growth should be accommodated by creating, or building upon places that have a mixture of compatible land uses within close proximity and that are well connected to each other. This will not only help create more vibrant and interesting places but will also reduce the dependence on the automobile.
- 5. A healthy and flourishing tree canopy: The City's tree canopy is an integral part of Charlotte's identity. It also contributes to the City's environmental quality, livability and economic viability. Because trees are a renewable resource, the City should seek not only to maintain as much of the existing canopy as is feasible, but also to re-plant when trees are removed, and plan ahead for replacement as trees are lost due to age or other factors.
- 6. A diverse, growing and sustainable economy: To ensure that Charlotte remains a prosperous and livable City, economic development activities should focus not only on quality job growth, but also

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on tax base expansion and increased personal income. In particular, the City should work to grow its job and employment base, capitalizing on existing strengths while broadening its economy to include emerging industries and other economic development opportunities.

7. Inclusive revitalization of economically challenged business and residential areas: All areas and neighborhoods should share in Charlotte's economic prosperity. Therefore, the City should strive to bring redevelopment to challenged areas, particularly by investing in public- private partnerships and targeted projects.
8. Better transportation networks for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and transit users: As Charlotte continues to grow outward and upward, it is increasingly important that there be more and better ways for people to get around. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to create more route options for people who are walking, cycling, driving, or riding transit. Creating a network of "complete" streets will allow people to feel comfortable and safe, whichever mode they use.
9. Efficient and coordinated public and private investment in infrastructure that keeps pace with existing and future development: In many areas of Charlotte, infrastructure, such as streets, parks, and fire stations, has not kept pace with rapid growth. Going forward, it will be necessary to have the public and private sectors cooperate to efficiently fund and build the new and retrofitted infrastructure critical to adequately sustain a high quality of life throughout Charlotte. Additionally, maintenance and reinvestment in existing infrastructure should play a key role in meeting future needs.

The vision statement discussion indicated that more people were in favor of Option A because it seemed more attainable. There was some discussion regarding the use of "is" versus "will be" in the vision statement. No consensus was reached, but the group did want the statement to be more forward thinking. Furthermore, the group felt that the concept of sustainability (but not necessarily the term "sustainability") which was included in Option B should be also included in Option A since it makes no mention of sustainability in terms of environment or economy.

The discussion of guiding principles is summarized as follows:

GP #1 – OK, but wondered who's "desired character" is the statement referring to and suggested adding "as set forth in the area plan."

GP #2 – OK, but suggested removing "A range of" and beginning with "Residential Opportunities..."

GP #3 – Need to change because the group had a problem with the word "heightened." They thought it implied that environmental controls would be increased, making it harder on developers to build.

GP #4 – OK

GP #5 – OK

GP #6 – Some members felt the language needed to change because the words "growing" and "sustainable" do not belong in the same sentence. The comment was made that sustainable means continuity. Another comment was made to add the term renewable or something to that effect to the statement. GP #7 – OK, but were unsure of what was meant by "Inclusive revitalization." Staff explained it was meant to ensure the inclusion of those who already live there when an area is revitalized. Some members thought the use of "inclusive" for this purpose actually worked against all communities having equal opportunity. Staff agreed to revise the statement possibly by removing the word "inclusive."

GP #8 – Staff agreed to change the first word of the statement from "Better" to "Enhance." Also, there is a misspelled word in the statement later on and should be changed from "butter" to "better."

Members suggested deleted "outward and upward". Some members had a problem with what the term "complete streets" means. Staff reminded the group that "complete streets" was a term used in

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the Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) and its definition would be included in the CC&W glossary. Some questioned whether to add the word connectivity to the language. The group thought it was important to include reference to the need for connectivity between the “spokes”, especially in terms of connecting the various modes of transportation (particularly transit).

GP #9 – Some members were worried that this would offer some level of precedence for an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), particularly the reference to “public and private investments” There was also concern that this address other types of infrastructure beyond those listed. The group agreed that maintenance was an important concept and should be kept in the statement..

IV. Break-out Group – Report Back

There was no need to report back since the advisory group did not split into breakout groups.

Next Steps

Staff reminded the group that the next Advisory Group meeting will be announced at a later date and will occur sometime mid-summer.

V. Adjourn