

## **Centers, Corridors and Wedges – Citizen Advisory Group Meeting #8 – January 26, 2010**

### **Summary Minutes**

#### **I. Welcome/Process Review**

Laura Harmon (Planning Dept.) opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions followed along with a brief process update. Ms. Harmon noted that the public's next formal opportunity for input would be the Final Public Workshop tentatively scheduled for March. After the public workshop, the document would go to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation (April/May), and to City Council for review and adoption (May/June).

Question: How is the public workshop different from Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) meetings?

Answer: The public workshop is an opportunity for people who are interested, but couldn't commit to the Advisory Group process, to learn about the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* (CCW) and to provide input.

#### **II. "Centers, Corridors and Wedges" Recap**

Ms. Harmon explained that CCW establishes a vision for future growth and development by identifying three geographic types used to categorize land in Charlotte (Activity Center, Growth Corridor, and Wedge) and outlined the desired characteristics of future development in each of these areas.

Ms. Harmon then explained that CCW will be used: as a foundation for development of more detailed policies, plans and regulations; to establish a consistent framework for capital planning; and as a basis for evaluation of Charlotte's success in addressing growth and redevelopment issues. She went on to say in the context of policy hierarchy *Centers, Corridors and Wedges* provides guidance for detailed Area Plans and Area Plans would then be used to provide guidance for rezoning and other development decisions. She emphasized that re-zonings would not be judged by CCW, rather by the Area Plan. She went on to define and characterize Activity Centers, Growth Corridors, and Wedges.

Question: Where are East Boulevard and the Street Car located?

Answer: East Boulevard is a business district located mostly in a Wedge. The streetcar would run through/connect Activity Centers, a Growth Corridor and Wedges.

Question: Did the CCW map change? There seems to be fewer Activity Centers.

Answer: Based on the Citizen Advisory Group input, staff made the map "bubblier" so the boundaries of specific Activity Centers or Growth Corridors would not be so tied to specific parcels. However, we have not taken off any of the Activity Centers.

Comment: It looks like you are mapping what is already there instead of a vision.

Response: It is a little bit of both. For example, for Activity Centers we have identified areas that already have a concentration of economic activity. The Corridors were defined by the transportation infrastructure – each having at least three high capacity transportation facilities. But, we are also looking at what is envisioned for the future in the City's adopted future land use plan and this is reflected on the maps. CCW is not set in stone, however, and will evolve over time. We will probably have additional Corridors and Centers that are identified through the area planning process.

Question: Are you still saying this is reflective?

Answer: It's also a desired arrangement of uses. It is a little of both.

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**III. Document Review**

Ms. Harmon reviewed all changes made to the document since the beginning of the CAG process and then facilitated discussion on some key questions regarding some of those changes. She offered to show the revised CCW document with Track Changes if requested. A summary of the changes are as follows:

***Changes Based on Advisory Group Feedback – Introduction***

- Highlighted that “Centers, Corridors and Wedges” provides a vision for future growth and development in Charlotte
  - Document is not a plan but instead relies on more specific plans and policies
- Clarified the intent of the document:
  - Foundation for more detailed plans, policies and regulations
  - Consistent framework for capital planning
  - Basis for evaluating success in addressing growth issues
- Removed discussion of Charlotte’s Growth Strategy and focused document on “Centers, Corridors and Wedges”
- Replaced existing maps in document with more general “bubble” maps
- Revised goal statement to be more forward thinking and include the concept of sustainability
- Revised wording of Guiding Principles and provided explanatory text for each
- Revised description of Growth Corridors
- Introduced a fourth Corridor subarea – Established Neighborhoods

***Changes Based on Advisory Group Feedback – General***

- Developed Executive Summary
- Developed a glossary for document
- Removed numbers from body of document and placed in glossary

***Changes Based on Advisory Group Feedback: Centers***

- Updated CCW to clarify similarities and differences between “centers” in GDP
- Revised text to indicate that mixed use and multi-use represent the desired character of Mixed Use Centers and Center City, not the prevalent building type
- Revised text to strengthen the concept that the Center City is the heart of the City and Region
- Revised text for Mixed Use Centers to make types of office (national/regional) more similar to Center City
- Clarified park recommendations for Centers

***Changes Based on Advisory Group Feedback: Corridors***

- Redefined Corridors to reflect positive characteristics
- Revised Corridor pictures to be less vehicle focused (will be done for final draft)
- Further refined Corridor text to indicate that Corridors link land uses together, instead of dividing
- Added fourth subarea, Established Neighborhoods, to Corridors
- Provided additional information on transitions between established neighborhood and adjacent high intensity uses

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- Revised document to indicate Corridor Station Areas function as “Centers” around a rapid transit station
- Revised document to indicate Corridors can have areas with character of Mixed Use Centers and smaller centers may be located in Wedges and Corridors

***Changes Based on Advisory Group Feedback: Wedges***

- Revised text to indicate Mixed Use/Retail districts should be designed to allow access by car, and encourage easy pedestrian circulation upon arrival.

***Changes Based on Advisory Group Feedback: All Area Types***

- Addressed areas with unique or historic qualities in design section of each area type
- Revised document to refer to “Mixed Use Activity Centers” in Centers, Corridors and Wedges, where appropriate
- Clarified that amount, type and intensity of development is determine by applicable area plan

***Comments Requiring Further Explanation (See group discussion below)***

- Develop summary of framework that highlights major common elements and differences between Centers, Corridors and Wedges
- Work with Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities to resolve concern raised about limiting utility extensions and land use and environmental impacts of resulting well and septic
- Provide an overview of how area plans are developed
- Add language that won’t preclude the provision of affordable housing

***Group Discussion***

The following is the discussion on the “Comments requiring further explanation”:

- A matrix was developed that highlighted the common elements between the Centers, Corridors and Wedges however staff felt it did not work very well, therefore the text version was included in the draft instead. Staff offered to include the matrix version in the appendix if group thought it was needed.
- Staff provided an overview/handout about the area planning process at the last CAG meeting and offered to provide something else for the document if needed.
- Staff added language to the “Changing Conditions” section that “Affordable housing has become a more significant concern and a growing challenge in our community”
- CMU is normally more reactive to where and when new development occurs, with *Centers, Corridors and Wedges* they can be more proactive and be able to anticipate where growth is slated to occur and thus focus some of their efforts in those areas.

Ms. Harmon posed the following questions to the group for discussion:

- Does the updated introduction more clearly explain the intent and use of *Centers, Corridors and Wedges*?
- Are any of the changes made to the Introduction inconsistent with CAG feedback?
- Are any of the changes made to the document inconsistent with CAG feedback?

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- Are there additional issues that the CAG believes should be addressed before finalizing the draft document?

Question: On page 15, why did we remove major hotels under land use for Center City?

Answer: Including it was inconsistent with the way other uses were identified. It was too specific.

Question: I still think transition is subjective. Have we defined it?

Answer: Yes, it is specifically defined in the Glossary.

Question: Should we add a statement on how the document will be used, that this is just what it is today but that other Centers and Corridors will be added?

Answer: The vision will evolve and grow over time. We are trying to simplify our explanation about how we grow and develop. It's analogous to a Reader's Digest version. As we evolve, so will the concept. We will evolve it through the area planning process. Think of it as a "generalized concept." It is intended to represent the base line characteristics of our community.

Question: Who shepherds the CCW vision in the area plan?

Answer: We have been using this for a long time. It is our starting point. The community input is to refine it. Essentially it is staff and our elected officials who ensure that we implement this policy and if we communicate it properly to the citizens, then it will be them too.

Question: What is the difference between mixed and multi-use?

Answer: These terms are defined in the glossary. Ms. Harmon directed staff to add references to glossary in the document.

Question: How far out is this vision good for?

Answer: It was originally endorsed in the mid 1990s – about 15 years ago. Typically, we revisit this type of policy framework within 10-15 years.

Comment: In the conclusion paragraph 4, the statement "overarching policy basis" appears twice. I recommend taking out the first one and keeping the second.

Question: Could we add "Potential Centers" as a subcategory?

Answer: Ms. Harmon agreed to reflect in the conclusion that the area planning process will identify potential Centers. Intensity thresholds are also determined in the area plan.

Planning Director Debra Campbell expressed her sincere appreciation for the group's time and effort and said we really tried to be responsive to all CAG member comments. Staff was really trying to develop this concept in less technical terms.

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Question: Will the CCW document go before a Council Committee?

Answer: Yes

Question: Will there be any more changes?

Answer: Yes

**IV. Next Steps**

Ms. Harmon agreed to keep the group informed on the remainder of the process, including:

- Public Workshop – March
- Planning Commission Review and Recommendation – April/May
- City Council Adoption – May/June

**V. Adjourn**