



**Northlake Area Plan
Summary Notes**

**January 16-18, 2007
Workshop
Northlake Mall**

Overview: A three-day public workshop was held at Northlake Mall to develop the foundation for the Northlake Area Plan. A series of small-group meetings were conducted during the workshop for the public to learn about the area's existing conditions and to provide input on a variety of topics affecting the study area.

City/County Staff: Kathy Cornett, Alysia Davis, Melony McCullough, Tricia Rudisill, Garett Johnson, Laura Harmon, Jonathan Wells, Tom Drake, Claire Lyte-Graham, Marci Sigmon, John Howard, Bob Cook, Linda Keich, Crissy Huffstickler, Penny Cothran, Alice Jackson, Sonda Kennedy, and Solomon Fortune (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department); Jim Kimbler (Charlotte Department of Transportation); Meghan Makoid and Brian Nadolny (Charlotte Area Transit System); Joyce Figueroa and Jason Pauling (Mecklenburg County Department of Parks and Recreation); Brent Wilkinson (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools); Bart Massey (Charlotte Fire Department); and David Caldwell, Sean Garner, and Robert Billings (Land Use and Environmental Services Agency).

NC Department of Transportation Staff: Aldie Whitmore

Consultants: Stan Harvey, Alyssa Durden, John Skach, and Matt Cherry (Urban Collage, Inc.); Frank Warren and Kevin Hall (Warren & Associates, Inc.).

Planning Commissioners: Nina Lipton and Warren Cooksey.

DAY 1 –JANUARY 16, 2007

1. Welcome and Northlake Workshop Overview (9:00 am – 9:30 am)

Tricia Rudisill, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department Staff, provided the welcome and introduction, went over housekeeping items, and explained the purpose of the three-day workshop. She also reviewed the January workshop schedule.

2. Land Use and Zoning Overview (9:30 am – 11:00 am)

Tricia Rudisill, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department Staff, provided the welcome and introduction. Kathy Cornett, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department Staff, provided an overview of land use terminology and explained the difference between future adopted land use and existing land use. She also explained zoning in the context of area planning. Tricia Rudisill followed with a discussion about Centers, Corridors, and Wedges – the City of Charlotte's growth framework policies.

Tricia Rudisill also presented a review of the issues and opportunities affecting the area. Issues and opportunities were identified via comment sheets, public input at the kickoff meeting, and emails/phone calls the Planning Department has received about the area. Additionally, she reviewed the results of the Northlake Compass, a two-part visual opinion and short answer survey.

Ms. Rudisill also presented the **DRAFT** Northlake Area Plan Vision Statement. This was developed in conjunction with the Advisory Group after reviewing the issues and opportunities identified by the public. The DRAFT vision statement reads:

Northlake is a unique “edge city” location that shall be a livable, diverse, and sustainable community. It will seek to accommodate the needs of those in all stages of life while balancing pressure for new development with preservation of the historical, rural, and natural aspects of the community. This vision will be achieved through:

- A land use pattern that offers a balanced mixture of uses with high quality urban design
- Development of multi-modal transportation choices
- Planned and enhanced public services
- Integration of quality cultural amenities and economic and housing opportunities
- Preservation of the historic aspects of the community
- Environmental preservation
- Development of multiple open space and recreational opportunities

The meeting was concluded with a question and answer session.

3. Public Facilities Session (11:00 am – 12:00 pm)

Melony McCullough, Planning Department Staff, provided the welcome and introductions. She then provided a brief overview of the area’s existing conditions as related to public facilities, and introduced interdepartmental team members. Team members included Bart Massey from the Charlotte Fire Department and Brent Wilkinson from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

Bart Massey explained the department’s future plans to include a fire station in the planning area. While a location has not been selected, CFD is examining a potential location in the Beatties Ford/Reames Road area.

Brent Wilkinson discussed CMS’ plans to locate an elementary school in the area; a location has not been determined but they are exploring opportunities within a 1-mile search radius along Reames Road.

Ms. McCullough then introduced the suggested goals and recommendations for public facilities within the Northlake Area Plan. These were developed by staff after reviewing comments from the public. Meeting participants divided into small groups and held small-group discussions for approximately 20 minutes. Participants were encouraged to review and refine these goals and recommendations. After having the opportunity to review, participants were asked to elect a spokesperson from each table to report their suggestions / modifications back to the group. Reports were made to the entire group. Comments mentioned by the group included: water service issues in Braemar and lack of

sewer service along Old Statesville Road (9000 block). Staff and team members further answered questions specific to public facilities.

5. Parks and Recreation Session (1:00 pm – 2:00 pm)

Melony McCullough, Planning Department Staff, provided the welcome and introductions. She then provided a brief overview of the area's existing conditions as related to parks and recreation opportunities, and introduced interdepartmental team members. Team members included Joyce Figueroa and Jason Pauling from Mecklenburg County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Joyce Figueroa and Jason Pauling addressed questions about future parks and greenways in the area. Ms. Figueroa also discussed the future Hucks Road District Park and provided an explanation of the different type of park categories. Hucks Road District Park is in the 10-year CNA (Capital Needs Assessment). Mr. Pauling also discussed that the future Long Creek Greenway is the 10-year CNA (Capital Needs Assessment). In 2009, there will be a bond referendum for voters to vote on bond funds that can help to fund the development of the greenway and the future Hucks Road District Park. If the bond referendum passes, then the master planning process will be conducted for the future Hucks Road District Park.

Melony McCullough introduced the suggested goals and recommendations for parks and recreation within the Northlake Area Plan. These were developed by staff after reviewing comments from the public. Meeting participants divided into small groups and held small-group discussions for approximately 20 minutes. Participants were encouraged to review and refine these goals and recommendations. After having the opportunity to review, participants were asked to elect a spokesperson from each table to report their suggestions / modifications back to the group. Reports were made to the entire group. Staff and team members answered questions specific to parks and recreation.

6. Environmental Session (2:00 pm – 3:00 pm)

Tricia Rudisill, Planning Department Staff, provided the welcome and introductions. She then provided a brief overview of the area's existing conditions as related to environmental conditions, and introduced interdepartmental team members. Team members included David Caldwell (Water Quality), Sean Garner (Air Quality), and Robert Billings (Stormwater) from LUESA.

Ms. Rudisill and LUESA representatives gave a brief overview of the area's environmental existing conditions. It was noted that Charlotte will be adopting the Post Construction Control Ordinance in the future, which will require any new development to have BMP's (Best Management Practices) to treat stormwater pollutants. It was also noted that Northlake is in a Watershed Protection Area; therefore, water quality BMPs are already in effect.

Questions also arose about air quality and how this is monitored for the study area. Mr. Garner gave an explanation of the ambient monitoring systems in place for Mecklenburg

County. He noted that ozone and particulate matter are the two biggest issues here. The closest monitoring station is at the Speedway and future growth in the Northlake area can be accommodated in this location.

Ms. Rudisill then introduced the suggested Northlake environmental goals and recommendations. These were developed by staff after reviewing comments from the public. Meeting participants divided into small groups and held small-group discussions for approximately 20 minutes. Participants were encouraged to review and refine these goals and recommendations. After having the opportunity to review, participants were asked to elect a spokesperson from each table to report their suggestions / modifications back to the group. Reports were made to the entire group. Staff and team members answered questions specific to parks and recreation.

7. Transportation Session (3:00 pm – 5:00 pm)

Jim Kimbler (Charlotte Department of Transportation), Bob Cook (Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization), and Meghan Makoid (Charlotte Area Transit System) welcomed participants to the transportation discussion. Mr. Aldie Whitmore (NCDOT) was also present. Mr. Kimbler began the session with a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the area's existing conditions. He discussed the staff's preliminary assessment of the Northlake area regarding congestion, connectivity, pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, transportation options, and mixture of land uses. Mr. Bob Cook then discussed selected Northlake-area 2030 Long Range Transportation Projects. Mr. Kimbler concluded the presentation with a discussion of how friendly/accessible the Northlake area is to bicycle riders and pedestrians.

Ms. Makoid (CATS) then gave an overview of the area's existing bus service and proposed recommendations from CATS' viewpoint as related to the Northlake area.

Following the presentation, participants were then broken into small groups to work on connectivity and transit exercises. Participants sat around tables with maps of the study area. They were asked to identify (by drawing on maps) areas that needed more vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connections, as well as areas needing future transit service.

8. Advisory Group Meeting (5:00 pm – 6:00 pm)

An informal meeting was held the first night of the workshop. Ms. McCullough, Planning Department Staff, met with members and led them around the workshop area to visit different stations that had been set up around the room. Stations included: vision statement, land use, transportation, Eastfield Transit Area, public facilities, environmental, parks and recreation, and design. At each station, existing conditions maps were placed, as well as draft goals and recommendations exercise summaries resulting from the day's parks and recreation, public facilities, and environmental sessions. Ms. McCullough gave a recap of the information provided at each station. Members were asked to make comments on the maps or note pages posted on the walls that needed further discussion.

9. Opening Presentation and Workshop Open House (6:00 pm – 7:30 pm)

Ms. Tricia Rudisill, Planning Department Staff, welcomed participants and introduced staff and Planning Commissioners present. She then conducted a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed the following:

- Workshop Purpose
- What Is an Area Plan?
- Opportunities and Issues Identified by Public To Date
- Vision Statement
- Eastfield Station Area Plan

Upon the conclusion of the presentation, participants were given approximately 30-45 minutes to walk around the workshop room to visit each of the stations and ask questions of staff manning the stations. Stations included: vision statement, land use, transportation, Eastfield Transit Area, public facilities, environmental, parks and recreation, and design.

After participants were given the opportunity to visit the stations, they were then brought back together to review the workshop week's schedule. An explanation of the Wednesday and Thursday sessions was provided and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions.

DAY 2 –JANUARY 17, 2007

1. Northlake Market Overview (9:00 am – 10:00 am)

Tricia Rudisill, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department Staff, provided the welcome and introduced Frank Warren and Kevin Hall, representatives from Warren & Associates, Inc. They are a Charlotte-based market and real estate advisory services firm. Warren & Associates has been retained to conduct a market analysis of the Northlake area.

Mr. Warren conducted a presentation on market trends including:

- Population trends
- For sale and re-sale residential closings
- Apartment trends and development
- Retail development – under construction or proposed
- Office and warehouse vacancy trends

Mr. Warren noted that with regards to the future warehouse market, we can expect a transition to occur. It is anticipated that it will be increasingly difficult to find affordable land in this corridor (Northlake Industrial / Employment Corridor) as market prices are escalating for industrial properties. As a result, the market may shift to other uses within this corridor.

2. Pipeline Development Session (10:00 am – 12:00 pm)

The pipeline development session was led by Kathy Cornett and Melony McCullough, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department Staff. It was an informal opportunity for property owners, developers, and/or their representatives to come in and ask questions about their property as related to the planning process. Property owners and staff sat around tables and examined maps, particularly aerial photographs to guide discussions. Where applicable, these parties also shared information about desired or future development/redevelopment plans they had for their property.

3. Land Use Session (1:00 pm – 3:00 pm)

Tricia Rudisill, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department Staff, welcomed participants. Ms. Rudisill reviewed a map with the group that displayed sub-areas within the planning boundary that were suggested by staff to guide the land use discussion. The following is a summary of comments made by the public and staff regarding the sub-areas:

Area I – Wedge Area – Existing Residential Area to west of I-77

#1 A: Intersection of Vance/Harris Blvd and Mt. Holly-Huntersville (Wedge Area)

- Unity Baptist Church looking to redevelop property. In discussion with an upscale, anchor tenant.
- 2 neighborhood centers are planned for Betties Ford and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Roads – just outside of study area
- Need for more government services at Vance and I-1485
- Harris Boulevard will be widened to four lanes in the future.
- Is there potential for a mixture of uses or higher density residential in this location?
- Vance will be extended to four lanes up to NC 73. This is envisioned to be a travel corridor while Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road is anticipated to be an historic corridor
- Potential for higher intensity residential at I-485 (Forest Acres)
- How would development at corner of Vance/Mt. Holly affect Huntersville? Huntersville is in critical watershed area. Currently rural zoning. Huntersville will be needing to respond to development pressures at these intersections

#1 B: Landfill along Lakeview Road (Wedge)

- Potential for future park space
- Currently used as an inert debris landfill for tree stumps, etc.
- Concerns about redevelopment for residential in future due to gases that could be emitted from ground

Area 2: Center Area – Around Northlake Mall and Statesville Road Corridor

#2 A: Alexanderana at Northlake Centre Parkway (Center)

- Vacant property along Alexanderana but likely to develop after I-485 opens
- Potential park use – Parks & Recreation shared on Monday they were looking to locate several parks throughout the planning area. Several potential sites included the areas north of I-485 along Alexanderana Road
- Potential for higher intensity residential (multi-family instead of single-family)
- Potential for mixed-use and/or neighborhood serving retail uses (if combined with mixed use)

#2 B: Vacant Property just Slightly North and West of Northlake Mall (bound by I-485 to north)

- If office were integrated – peak times for office users would be different than retail (mall). Helps to balance traffic
- If residential integrated – focus this closer to greenway with a buffer from more intensive uses
- Concerns about height of development
- More residential vs. office?
- Should retail be limited vertically?
- If office and residential are integrated (mixed), the two should be well-designed

#2 C: Statesville Road Corridor

- Incorporate the Statesville Road Corridor into this area, allowing the “Center” area to span across I-77
- Can additional retail be incorporated in this corridor, particularly north of Smith Corners?
- Potentially integrate office, retail along corridor.
- Potential for residential integration – very long-term (i.e. at Harris Corners / infill-development such as like SouthPark mall)
- If multi-family integrated, it should be along the greenway with a mixture of retail and residential
- Suggestions for Residential, office, and retail north of Harris Blvd

Area 3: Corridor Area - Employment/Industrial Corridor

#3A – North of I-485 (Twin Lakes Business Park and Property to East)

- Proposed Bryton TOD (Transit Oriented Development) in Huntersville will be adjacent to the study area across from Alexanderana Road and Twin Lakes Business Park
 - Rail line proposed to be realigned
 - 2,000 multi-family units
 - 300 single-family units
 - 1 million square feet retail
 - 1 million square feet office
- Vacant Property exists to east of Twin Lakes along Alexanderana, north of I-485

- Is this area appropriate for a mixture of uses such as residential, office, and retail acknowledging the Bryton TOD on the other side?
- Should it remain an area for office/employment

Area 4: Croft Area

- Historic properties exist – School House, Davis Home, and General Store
- Abuts Davis Lake subdivision – just outside of study area
- Can government services be integrated here?
- Is there potential for higher density residential and/or retail?
- Use this area as a transition away from Eastfield Transit Station
- Is there a potential for an active adult community in this location?
- How would this area be affected by rail service? CATS will operate along the rail line from 5:00 am until 9:00 pm once commuter rail service becomes operational. Freight may utilize it during the evening.

4. Eastfield Station Area Plan (1:00-3:00 pm & 4:00 – 6:00 pm)

Mr. Jonathan Wells, Planning Department Staff welcomed participants and provided a brief overview of the Eastfield Station Area. Following is a summary of discussions:

- Hucks Rd (Metromont) extended across I-77 would help heavy traffic and would improve feeder bus access to / from mall
- Eastfield Road (around Alexandriana Site) currently experiences suspicious behavior (gathering) during certain hours of the day/night
- Easy commuter access to Park & Ride from Eastfield
 - Should access be provided to Park & Ride from I-485? Issue of relative merits of having immediate Park & Ride access to an interstate exit, as opposed to surrounding the station with TOD opportunities. Would then providing excellent, convenient, and safe access between the exit and the Park & Ride facility without compromising the quality of the TOD
- Challenges of access to Park & Ride along with transit development. Make sure that the roadway network is in place to serve Park & Ride facility before the train starts rolling – a timing issue
- Is /can Gandy help with Hucks Rd enhancements? What role do/can/should developers play in making these roadway enhancements?
- Will there be connectivity between adjoining Spring Park subdivision and the Gandy TOD? Concern that Spring Park is built out with cul-de-sacs and has limited access
- Will bicycle lanes be built with new roads, such as Hucks? With TOD planned – schools, bike, and pedestrian facilities should be considered carefully
- How much do northern towns have to contribute toward line? CATS has to develop financing plan to the MTC in July 2007.
- What percentage in the North Corridor will terminate their trip in downtown Charlotte? CATS noted that 12% of residents residing in North Corridor have a commute that terminates Uptown. Models vary speed and frequency of the train

- running, but in general the expectation would be that the North Corridor would capture 25% of riders (Portland is experiencing about 30% capture rate on comparable line).
- Idea to build auto service facility to service your car while you ride the train, very near Park & Ride. Daycares? Joint Facilities? New development doesn't have to always be a Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts.
- Property owners should be engaged in future conversations – this will be done in February charrette

5. Advisory Group Session (3:00 – 4:00 pm)

Tricia Rudisill welcomed the group and provided a recap of the day's activities, including the market trends presentation by Warren & Associates. She then introduced Mr. Tom Drake, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department Staff, who gave the group an overview of the proposed Eastfield Transit Station and summarized the discussion from the 1:00-3:00 pm session:

- No funding
- Station area = area within a 10 minute walk
- Gandy Communities has started development
 - Primarily single-family detached residential
 - Integrating mixture of use around transit stop
- Eastfield Road being realigned
- Park & Ride- Potential parking deck lined by retail or residential
- Concerns about road network and can it support it
- Timeframe for completion = unknown because of funding
- Bryton TOD in Huntersville will be a good indicator because of future bond funding and capacity to do bond funding at Eastfield

Ms. Rudisill then followed with a recap of the land use discussion which occurred at 1:00 pm. For additional information about this recap, please see *Day 2, Land Use Session*.

DAY 3 –JANUARY 18, 2007

1. Land Use Session (10:30 am – 12:00 pm)

Alysia Davis, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning staff, welcomed participants. Ms. Davis and Tricia Rudisill, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning staff, then provided a recap of the land use discussion from the Tuesday session. *For a summary of the discussion, please see Day 2, Land Use Session.*

Ms. Rudisill then continued the discussion about land uses within the existing industrial corridor, between Statesville Road and Old Statesville Road. Comments about the corridor included:

- Continuing business park/office uses in the Twin Lakes Business Park vicinity

- How will Hucks Road Extension/Metromont affect land uses through Metromont business park? Does this area want to remain industrial or will it transition into other uses such as office/business park?
- Are there opportunities to integrate a “Live-Work” environment longer-term along the Hucks Road Extension/Metromont alignment? If so, this would be as the area redevelops – more organic in nature (loft type residences)
 - Concerns subsequently arose about live-work as Hucks Road Extension is classified as a major thoroughfare and existing uses around it today are industrial in nature.
 - Concerns about noise and traffic
- Concentrate industrial uses closer to Harris Boulevard
- Desires to have a connection (i.e. Hucks Road Extension/Metromont) from this area across I-77 over to the “Center” area. If this occurs, then traffic impacts should be considered in the context of land uses

Following the discussion about the industrial corridor, participants discussed desired uses along Harris Boulevard to the west of Perimeter Woods and to the east of Braemar. Properties in this location are currently vacant, with substantial portions in the floodplain. Discussions involved:

- Opportunities for higher density residential (i.e. townhomes) with access to the greenway
- Opportunities for office (i.e. hotel) development.
 - Concerns about office (hotel) due to character of land and lack of desires to have a multi-story building(s) that could impact character of adjacent neighborhood

2. Transportation Session (1:00 pm – 3:00 pm)

Jim Kimbler, Charlotte Department of Transportation, provided the welcome and introductions. He and Meghan Makoid, Charlotte Area Transportation System, summarized the results of the exercises conducted at the Monday, January 16th transportation session.

Mr. Kimbler along with Planning Department Staff introduced the suggested Northlake transportation goals and recommendations. These were developed by staff after reviewing comments from the public. Participants were encouraged to review and refine these goals and recommendations. The group made no suggestions to modify the suggested goals and recommendations. Staff and team members concluded the session by answering transportation-specific questions.

3. Closing Presentation (6:00 pm – 7:30 pm)

Tricia Rudisill, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department Staff, welcomed participants and introduced staff and Ms. Nina Lipton, Planning Commissioner who was active throughout the workshop week. Ms. Rudisill then gave a presentation recapping the following:

- What is an area plan?
- Northlake Area Plan boundaries
- Where we are in the process
- Workshop activities
- Context of change – the area is changing
- Northlake future transportation investment
- Market trends
- Development opportunities
- Vision statement and Northlake Compass confirmation

Ms. Rudisill then introduced Stan Harvey. Mr. Harvey is a Principal with Urban Collage, Inc., an urban design firm from Atlanta. Ms. Rudisill noted that the Planning Department has retained the services of Urban Collage to assist with the planning process. Mr. Harvey then continued with the presentation discussing the following:

- Northlake “Character Areas”
- Neighborhood Preservation Areas
 - Long Creek Greenway
 - Potential park / school site
 - Harris neighborhood mixed-use
 - Croft neighborhood mixed-use
- Employment Center
 - Industrial district
 - Live/work district
 - Business district
- Transit Station Area
 - Eastfield Transit Station Area
 - Hambright Station Area
- Regional Mixed-Use Center
 - Pedestrian district
- Areas of Transition

Mr. Harvey then turned the presentation back over to Ms. Rudisill whom wrapped it up by discussing next steps in the process which included a discussion of the February Design Charrette scheduled for February 5-8, 2007 at the Northlake Mall.

The following is a brief summary of questions posed at the end of the presentation:

- What does “pedestrian-oriented or pedestrian-friendly” mean?
- Who initiated the planning process? Was it the City?
- The Hambright station is considered to be in close proximity to the study area. Why was there no mention of the Harris station, which is to be located below Harris Boulevard? Will staff examine land uses adjacent to the transit station?