Livability Tools in Implementing Transit:
Pulling out all the stops to build community

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All photos are from the City of Charlotte, unless otherwise noted
Charlotte/Mecklenburg Region

- Part of a seven county region of 1.5 million people
- Largest City with a population of 730,000
- Expected to add 330,000 people by 2030
- Population density went from 7 persons per acre to 3.6 persons per acre in last 50 years
Centers, Corridors, and Wedges Vision Plan

- Long-term growth management strategy
- 5 primary transportation and development corridors
- Transform unfocused growth to compact development along corridors
Regional Long Range Transportation Plan to implement Centers and Corridors Vision

- Phased development of transit projects along Corridors

- Galvanized community around common vision for growth supported by thoughtful transportation investment
Dedicated Transit Tax

- Voter referendum on \(\frac{1}{2}\) cent sales tax for transit
- Promoted by Chamber and paired with $100 million Road Bond
- Sales tax approved (58% to 42%)
- Reaffirmed in 2007 referendum (70% to 30%)

Source: The Charlotte Observer
Proactive Planning

Advanced 5 transit corridors and more than 60 station area plans simultaneously

South Corridor (LYNX Blue Line) opened in 2007
• 80% of projected 2025 ridership met in the first year of operation
• More than $400 million development realized prior to transit groundbreaking
• Projected development of $1.46B along light rail through 2013 (generating $18M in annual property taxes)

Blue line extension awaiting FTA ROD
“We set out to build community, not just to build a transit system.”

Laura Harmon
Assistant Director,
Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Department
Station Area Planning Principles

Mobility

Land Use

Community Design
Mobility

Enhance the existing transportation network to promote good walking, bicycling, and driving connections to transit

Source: Dan Burden
“We cannot afford to widen our roads so we have to broaden our thinking.”
Land Use

Concentrate a mix of complementary, well integrated land uses within walking distance of the transit station

Source: Planthekeystone.com
Plans that communicate the vision
Transit-Supportive Overlay Zoning: Prior to ROD

Transit Oriented Development Zoning: Once transit is committed
- Residentially Oriented (TOD-R)
- Employment Oriented (TOD-E)
- Mixed-use Oriented (TOD-M)

Sample Characteristics:
- Min. 20 DUA (1/4 mile) to 15 DUA (1/2 mile)
- Min. FAR 0.75 (1/4 mile) and 0.50 (1/2 mile)
- Max. Parking: 1.6 spaces/DU
  - 1 space/300 sq. ft. (office)
  - 1 space/250 sq. ft. (retail)
Community Design

Use urban design to enhance the community identity of the station area and to make it an attractive, safe, and walkable place.
Source: Phil Laurien, ECFRPC
### Summary of Recommendations for Northeast Corridor Light Rail System Design Treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>High Intensity Urban Core</th>
<th>Industrial Communities</th>
<th>Historic Urban Communities</th>
<th>First Ring Suburban Communities</th>
<th>New Suburban Communities/Greenfields</th>
<th>University City Core</th>
<th>New Suburban Communities/Greenfields</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track</strong></td>
<td>Adherence to Upstate Rail Ordinance</td>
<td>Ballasted track with landscape buffer</td>
<td>Minimal aesthetic treatment of pocket track</td>
<td>Along NCRER</td>
<td>Ballasted track</td>
<td>Ballasted track with landscape buffer or architectural fencing</td>
<td>Over City Boulevard and Harris Boulevard</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bridge</strong></td>
<td>Over rail spur: complementary visual treatment historic AHS-Rail</td>
<td>Over Sugar Creek Road: complementary to city street</td>
<td>Over Sugar Creek Road: aesthetically sensitive treatment for bridge and embankment, use piers and retaining walls rather than fill embankments</td>
<td>Consider pedestrian connection from I-485 to NCRER</td>
<td>Do not preclude new pedestrian crossings as corridor develops</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections</strong></td>
<td>Provide pedestrian walkway along LRT alignment per the Upstate Rail Ordinance</td>
<td>Ensure pedestrian connection to Greenway</td>
<td>Consider pedestrian connection to Greenway</td>
<td>Do not preempt new pedestrian crossings as corridor develops</td>
<td>Aesthetically sensitive visual treatments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Retaining Walls/Embankments</strong></td>
<td>Retain existing embankment feature (instead of retaining walls) along Bremo Road</td>
<td>Aesthetically sensitive visual treatments</td>
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<td><strong>System Components</strong></td>
<td>Match South Corridor's established standards for stations</td>
<td>Aesthetically sensitive visual treatment around stations</td>
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<td><strong>Catenary System</strong></td>
<td>Minimum visual treatments</td>
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<td><strong>Utilities</strong></td>
<td>Aesthetically sensitive and complementary to historic mill community and arts district</td>
<td>Aesthetically sensitive visual treatment</td>
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<td><strong>Landscaping</strong></td>
<td>Maintain existing vegetation and trees on corridor</td>
<td>Preserve and enhance existing vegetation</td>
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<td><strong>Fencing</strong></td>
<td>Complement existing industrial character</td>
<td>Aesthetically sensitive visual treatment</td>
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- **High Intensity Urban Core**: 8th Street, 16th Street, 27th Street, 30th Street, Sugar Creek 1, Eastway, Tom Hunter, Rocky River, City Blvd, Harris, UNCG, 1-485 N Tryon 1, 1-485 N Tryon 2, New Suburban Communities/Greenfields.
Retaining walls

**Standard Design**
- Unpainted concrete with accent panels (See Photo 2 for design intent) and/or vertical landscaping

**Tier 1**
- Decorative concrete finish (e.g., formliner) to complement district.

**Tier 2**
- Decorative concrete finish (e.g., formliner) to complement community character, with landscape where space allows (See Photo 3 for design intent); consider incorporation of public art into the design (See Photo 1 for design intent).
Building Infrastructure to support Community (and Transit)

$50 million bond funding

- 14 miles Sidewalks
- 1.5 miles Multi-use Trail
- 10 miles Bicycle Lanes
- 8 miles Street Widening
- 7 Streetscape Projects
- 27 Intersection Improvements
New Bern Station

- Relocation of planned transit station
- Commitment of City to build new street, park
- Zoning that allows for TOD-level densities
3030 South TOD - TOD occurred before Transit
Charlotte 29/49 Weave: The Need
Today

- At-grade intersection built
- Network pieces built
- $25 million savings
- Better Potential for Transit (and TOD) Success
Building a Transit System vs. Building a Community
One City Concept

CATS

Planning

Neighborhood Services

CDOT

"COMMUNITY BUILDING"

Eng.& Prop Mgmt.
Charlotte’s Five Focus Areas/Score Card

“Charlotte will be the premier city in the country for integrating land use and transportation choices.”
Strategic Operating Plan

- Score card is reflected in each department’s annual operating plan
- Tracked by annual performance measures
- Translated to individual staff work plans
Livability in Transportation Guidebook
Planning Approaches that Promote Livability

City of Charlotte Transit Planning:
http://www.charmeck.org/city/charlotte/cats/planning/Pages/default.aspx

Livability in Transportation Guidebook:
Thank you!