

chapter 3:
transformative strategies



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The 2020 Vision Plan recommendations are strategic, broadly supported directions that will together transform the future of Center City. They build upon the Vision Framework as well as the goals and actions of past planning initiatives, including the 2010 Vision Plan; the City of Charlotte's Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework; specific area plans; and other planning and design projects.

The recommendations respond to goals articulated by Envision: Charlotte—the public-private collaboration that is leading Charlotte to become a global model for environmental sustainability. The recommendations are also derived from community outreach, specific design analysis, best practices research and technical studies that were conducted throughout the 2020 Vision Plan process.

Overarching Recommendations

Several integrated, high-level recommendations bind together the plan's specific initiatives and actions. These recommendations—grouped under the key elements of the 2020 vision: Viable, Livable, Memorable and Sustainable—must all work together to achieve the vision for Center City.

VIABLE

Center City must strengthen its position as the economic engine and employment center of the region with a greater diversity of industries and job opportunities. Physical development and redevelopment at strategic locations, as well as strengthening the connections between higher education and business ventures, will be critical.

Overarching recommendations include:

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- Create mixed-use employment centers at the Gateway Station and a redeveloped Charlotte Transportation Center.
- Redevelop the commercial and industrial areas north of Uptown as a 21st century urban industrial park and neighborhood.
- Continue to create a critical mass of urban density by concentrating high-rise office development along Trade and Tryon streets.
- Establish stronger physical and programmatic linkages between Center City's educational institutions, employers and destinations.



LIVABLE

Center City must provide a broad range of housing opportunities. A variety of price points, ownership and rental options, sizes, and styles at optimal locations is needed. The range of housing must complement existing neighborhoods and attract a greater number and diversity of residents to activate the urban core around-the-clock. Overarching recommendations include:

- Preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods with the concentrated development of high-density mixed-use neighborhood centers.
- Encourage high-density housing in Uptown and along major transportation corridors.
- Support and facilitate existing development plans to create mixed-use urban villages in First Ward, Second Ward, South End and the area north of Uptown.
- Promote affordable and workforce housing as a component of all residential projects in Center City, especially those on government-owned land or resulting from public-private partnerships.
- Reduce homelessness and unemployment in Center City and the greater Charlotte region by providing new employment, services and housing opportunities.

To remain livable, **Center City must also have a seamless system of multi-modal transportation choices that serves residents, workers and visitors.**

Such a network is a prerequisite of a great city.

Overarching recommendations include:

- Support and facilitate continued implementation of the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan.
- Manage parking, employ state-of-the-art transportation demand management tools and enhance transportation options to decrease dependence on driving, greatly increase transit use, and make biking and walking viable choices.
- Continue to develop fixed-route transit—light rail, streetcar and high speed rail—as a complement to rubber tire bus and the Gold Rush trolley.
- Improve mobility opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling to and within Center City, with a particular emphasis on enhanced connectivity between Uptown and the surrounding Center City neighborhoods.

MEMORABLE

Center City's physical context must evolve for it to become a truly great urban environment.

Charlotteans must be able to live, work, attend school, dine, sightsee, recreate, socialize and play within the urban core—the premier downtowns of the world all offer this rich mix of activities and experiences.

- Develop integrated, intuitive systems of circulation and recreation, as well as places for shopping and gathering throughout Center City.
- Employ high-quality materials and great design for public and private spaces to ensure that all development contributes to an attractive, walkable and memorable place.





Sustainable approaches to streetscape design, building development and urban mobility are key elements of the 2020 Vision Plan.

- Mitigate the visual and physical barriers associated with the freeway loop, surface parking lots and other infrastructure.
- Concentrate high-density development within Uptown and along major arterials; ensure that building height, scale and massing transition appropriately to existing neighborhoods.

SUSTAINABLE

Center City must achieve environmental and social sustainability to remain attractive, competitive and viable over time.

The area cannot thrive without a long-term view for maintaining and enhancing the environment and people who make up Center City. Overarching recommendations include:

- Reduce energy use in Uptown Charlotte's business community by up to 20% and eliminate 220,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions by 2015.
- Manage stormwater runoff with existing infrastructure and a combination of new green space, streets with integrated stormwater management, and green roofs.

Organization of Recommendations

The 2020 Vision Plan's remaining recommendations are divided into two major sections: **Transformative Strategies and Focus Areas**. Together, these two sets of recommendations highlight the physical and programmatic strategies required to support the overarching recommendations and advance the Vision Framework. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the Transformative Strategies. The Focus Areas appear in Chapter 4: Focus Areas.

TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGIES

Eight strategic directives are identified to elevate Center City's position among the great urban centers and attract new residents, employers and visitors. When implemented, these strategies will ensure the community's vision for Center City is realized. The Transformative Strategies include:

- Placemaking and Urban Design.
- Applied Innovation Corridor.
- Center City Urban Campus.
- Destination Charlotte.
- Neighborhoods of Center City.
- Network of Parks, Open Space and Recreation.
- Dynamic Shopping Experience.
- Integrated Transportation Network.

placemaking and urban design

Envision a distinctively designed Center City, one that is walkable, well-connected and memorable. Great parks, greenway trails and plazas are framed by well-designed buildings and filled with people enjoying a variety of activities. Radiating from the spines of Trade and Tryon streets, the street-level experience is vibrant and comfortable, with bustling ground floors, parks and activities that are inviting to pedestrians and create numerous economic development opportunities. The infrastructure of city blocks, streets and transit seamlessly links together all neighborhoods with easy connections and sensitive transitions. Great placemaking and urban design create a rich Center City environment that is distinctly Charlotte and welcoming to all.

Existing Situation

Great cities are places where buildings are designed to accommodate interesting activities and to create memorable and comfortable spaces. Human-scale components are distinct yet interwoven. Great cities have streets that are more than paths for cars but are also places of pedestrian interest and movement, inviting people to explore what's happening down each block and around every corner. Great cities have a diversity of residents, workers and visitors that energizes the public spaces, providing an ever-changing spectacle that moves with different cadences. Such places narrate our history through the permanence of some structures and the freshness of others, resulting in serendipity and shared experiences.

Center City's physical environment—its streets and sidewalks, parks and plazas, art and amenities, and buildings, façades and skyline—greatly affects community interactions and shapes the daily lives of residents. Indeed, every decision about what, where and how to build—and preserve—the setting of Center City influences everyday behaviors, as well as long-term perceptions of the place.





Fourth Ward in Uptown showcases pedestrian-friendly buildings and spaces that speak to the best urban qualities of Center City.



Infill projects must be developed to “fill in the gaps” and extend the active pedestrian environment.

Uptown Charlotte is a modern, contemporary Center City with few historic buildings surrounded by beautiful neighborhoods with traditional architecture and a lush tree canopy. This juxtaposition is quite unusual among similarly-sized cities. The Uptown portion of Tryon Street, in particular, embodies the best urban qualities of Center City—buildings and spaces are pedestrian-friendly, people and cars invigorate the street, and old structures rub shoulders with recent ones within a breathtaking skyline. The corridor projects a great sense of scale, identity and architecture. The experience of strolling to a restaurant, walking between business meetings or people-watching along the street is a pleasure.

Unfortunately, the great urban character of Tryon does not extend much beyond its main stretch in the heart of Center City. Other Uptown areas have yet to realize their potential. An abundance of surface parking, overhead pedestrian skywalks, empty building edges, blank walls, and vacant parcels drains life and activity from many streets. Sections of roadway that once linked neighborhoods have been broken—particularly by the freeway loop—resulting in a fragmented sense of place and confusion in getting around.

Indeed, the walkable core along Tryon is relatively small, so every move radiating outward has a big impact. Great design of each new building, street and open space in Uptown is critical.

Opportunities and Challenges

There are many valuable assets that can be built upon to further enhance Center City’s placemaking and urban design. Specifically, there are **opportunities** to:

- Utilize the significant amount of underdeveloped land inside the I-77/I-277 freeway loop for new development.
- Develop infill projects to “fill in the gaps” along city blocks and extend the strength and character of Tryon Street to other parts of Uptown to attract pedestrian activity and enhance Center City’s identity.
- Enhance Uptown’s impressive skyline and compact downtown environment with strategic, well-placed, high-quality building projects and viewshed guidelines that maintain visibility of Uptown’s skyline and new corridors.
- Increase environmental sustainability through “green” design, construction and rehabilitation.
- Create great public spaces—streets, parks and plazas—that are activated by and integrated with surrounding buildings and green spaces.
- Improve connectivity between Uptown, the surrounding neighborhoods and the larger Charlotte region by capitalizing on investments in transit, greenway trails and sidewalks.
- Enhance Center City’s urban viewsheds by establishing guidelines that maintain visibility of Uptown’s skyline and new corridors.

- Continue to improve orientation and navigation to and within Center City, using the new pedestrian and vehicle wayfinding system implemented in South End and Uptown as a model.
- Integrate the various urban systems, such as transportation, open space and recreation, so that they work together to achieve multiple objectives.
- Promote and build upon the unique situation of Uptown’s modern, dense and bold downtown environment surrounded by beautiful historic neighborhoods.


Center City faces challenges to achieve the desired vision for placemaking and urban design. Specific **challenges** include:

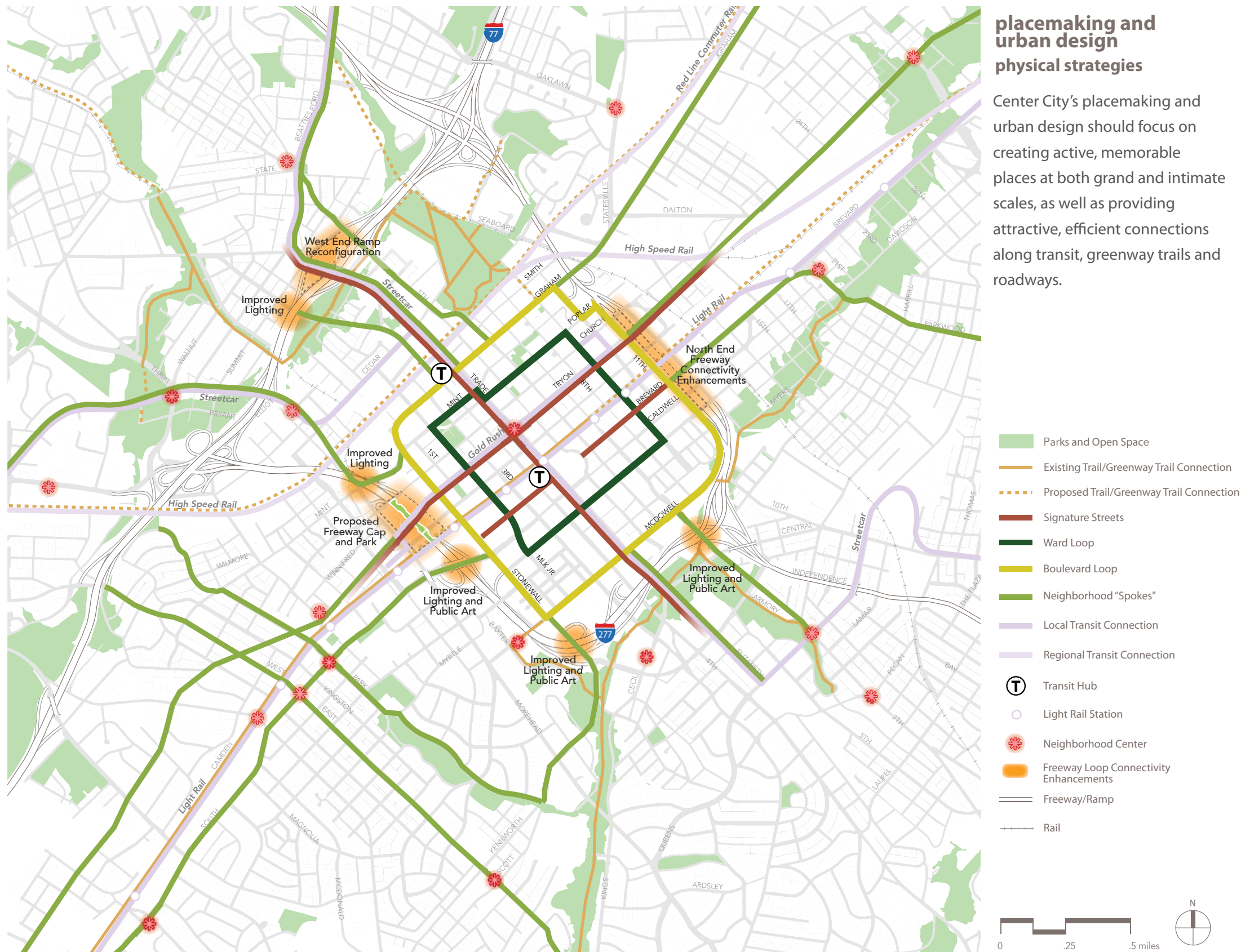
- I-77/I-277 freeway barrier between Uptown and the other Center City neighborhoods.
- Location of existing surface parking lots and underutilized parcels that detract from the pedestrian environment.
- Existing inactive spaces on the ground floor of parking garages and office buildings that create an uninviting pedestrian experience and inhibit retail development opportunities.
- Hidden over-street and underground walkways that block views and drain pedestrian activity from streets.

- Limited private capital and other financial resources to develop existing surface parking lots and vacant and/or underutilized property in the near term.
- Developments that focus commercial uses inward rather than providing easy street access or active ground floors along the sidewalk.
- A general public that is often not engaged in urban design issues.
- An inconsistent and fragmented approach to the architecture and urban design of structures in Center City.

Recommendations

Center City will be transformed into a great urban environment through **attentive design of its public spaces and a thoughtful approach to its development patterns**. The following recommendations and physical strategies are tailored to help guide this evolution. Together, they support the following overall 2020 Vision Plan goals:

<p>GOAL 1 Urban Design and Sustainability</p> 	<p>GOAL 2 Regional Economic Engine</p> 	<p>GOAL 3 Lifelong Learning</p> 	<p>GOAL 4 Premier Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Destination</p> 	<p>GOAL 5 Walkable, Full-Service Neighborhoods</p> 	<p>GOAL 6 Network of Parks, Open Space and Recreation</p> 	<p>GOAL 7 Thriving Retail and Restaurants</p> 	<p>GOAL 8 Integrated Transportation Hub</p> 
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placemaking and urban design recommendations

placemaking and urban design (PUD)	
	PUD-1. Build Projects That Strengthen Charlotte's Identity
	PUD-2. Activate the Urban Environment
	PUD-3. Overcome the Barrier of the Loop
	PUD-4. Develop Infrastructure That Serves Multiple Purposes
	PUD-5. Promote Access to Center City and Create People-Friendly, Interesting and Active Places
	PUD-6. Encourage Sustainable Design and Development

PUD-1. Build Projects That Strengthen Charlotte's Identity

Center City's urban experience will be enriched by targeted development opportunities that have the potential to spark long-term economic growth and physical redevelopment throughout Charlotte's core (see Chapter 4: Focus Areas for more detail). Building design should advance the city's unique, iconic and modern architecture while integrating into the surrounding urban fabric. With strong consideration and investment given toward the contextual design of buildings—including the streetscape improvements, park and plaza upgrades, new transit and bike facilities, pedestrian lighting, and more—new projects can help link together neighborhoods and foster greater pedestrian activity.

PUD-1a. Build a distinctive gateway and civic gathering space at the freeway cap park.

As a dynamic new focal point in Charlotte, the proposed freeway cap park would become the city's ceremonial community gathering place, hosting seasonal festivals, concerts and celebrations while providing a meaningful connection between neighborhoods that are currently divided by the freeway loop. Nearby employment and civic uses should be linked by a high-quality pedestrian environment. Investment in the park and adjoining streetscape will, in turn, spark additional private development along its borders and along adjacent streets. The freeway cap park will be an exciting destination—with world-class open space design framed by dramatic building architecture—that attracts people from around the region and country.

PUD-1b. Redevelop the Charlotte Transportation Center as an iconic entry portal into the city. A new Charlotte Transportation Center in the location of the existing facility provides an opportunity to create a mixed-use, multi-modal entry portal into Charlotte that is visually striking and helps activate adjacent public space and development (see Charlotte Transportation Center section in Chapter 4: Focus Areas for more detail).

PUD-1c. Enhance the image of Charlotte as the "City of Trees." Many Center City neighborhoods are characterized by a well-established urban tree canopy. Continued funding for maintenance is critical to keeping these trees healthy and to improve urban air quality. Future investments in Uptown's parks and public rights-of-way should include sufficient funding for tree planting and programs to ensure ongoing maintenance.



The creation of signature projects, such as the Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago's Millennium Park, will help to strengthen the identity of Center City and greater Charlotte.

placemaking and urban design recommendations

PUD-2. Activate the Urban Environment

The urban environment includes the places, destinations and amenities that combine to form the Center City experience. Streets, sidewalks, plazas, open spaces and structures are all building blocks of the urban environment. Activating these spaces in meaningful and interesting ways will make Center City a better place to live, work, play and visit. An activated public realm—complete with outdoor dining, artful window displays, pedestrian-scaled lighting, captivating built form and quality, comfortable street furniture—will encourage people to linger and explore their downtown.



Outdoor dining, active retail and an attractive streetscape are all important to make Center City more pedestrian-friendly.

PUD-2a. Provide opportunities for outdoor dining, public art, street furnishings, information booths, vendors and landscaping. Wide sidewalks should provide ample room for street trees and other landscaping, transit shelters, benches, public art, drinking fountains and more, while also allowing businesses like cafés and retail boutiques to “spill out” into the public realm. Investing in streetscape is a good way to quickly improve the quality and livability of public areas. Food kiosks and other vendors are important to drawing people to these beautified spaces.



Public art should be encouraged throughout the area to create interest and activate the urban environment.

PUD-2b. Continue to encourage visible and active uses at the ground floor of buildings.

Attractive and interesting retail shops, restaurants and other uses should line the ground floors of buildings to energize the streets, particularly at key intersections and corners. This works best by blurring the line between public and private realms with transparent and accessible ground floors. Blank walls or empty, cavernous indoor areas at the ground level detract from street life. Existing standards should be bolstered with restrictions to disallow passive lobbies and circulation along ground-floor edges. Design standards for upper-story façades should be explored for corridors within transit-oriented development, destination districts and shopping areas to add another dimension to the liveliness and interest at the street level.

PUD-2c. Ensure that buildings are designed to promote a well-scaled, pedestrian-friendly environment and to harmoniously integrate with their surroundings. Attention to building form and design is a significant way to transform Center City in enduring and profound ways. A building’s volume, massing and articulation should be designed in a way that is inviting to passers-by and makes pedestrians feel comfortable walking along the street. Buildings should also be designed to relate to and complement nearby structures, while allowing for bold and creative architecture. This would help establish a sense of continuity and coherence, particularly for pedestrians at the ground level, despite different styles or periods of construction.

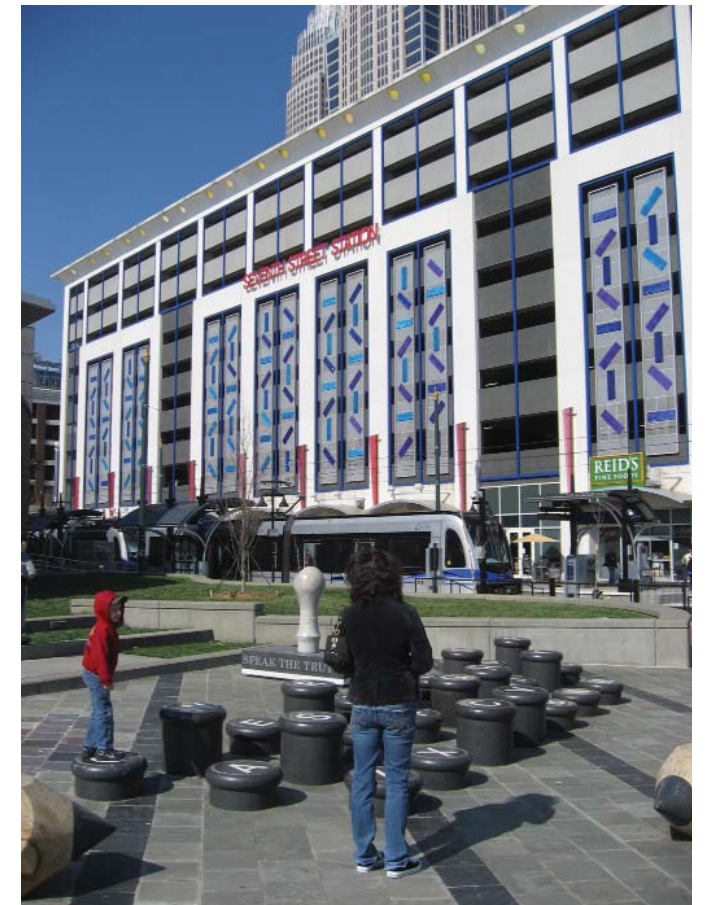
placemaking and urban design recommendations

PUD-2d. Prioritize streetscape improvements and promote development along Signature Streets, the Ward Loop and the Boulevard Loop.

Limited financial resources and market demand to locate retail in ground floor spaces make it infeasible to enhance every street in Center City to the same level. However, the impact of investments can be maximized by focusing improvements in targeted areas. First, the Signature Streets of Uptown where new retail development is envisioned to occur (Tryon, Trade and Brevard streets) should be the primary focus of streetscape improvements. These streets link streetcar and light rail corridors, employment centers, entertainment venues, and several key future development opportunities. Improvements should also be prioritized along a Ward Loop—a ring of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets connecting the four wards, the ward parks and multi-modal transit corridors (Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) and Davidson, 7th and Poplar/ Mint streets)—and the proposed Boulevard Loop—a ring of roadways providing easy internal circulation around the edge of Uptown (Stonewall, McDowell, 11th/12th and Graham streets)—to strengthen the role and identity of these important streets (see Integrated Transportation Network section in this chapter for more detail).

PUD-2e. Stimulate the redevelopment of surface parking, parking structures and underutilized areas. Parking lots create gaps within the urban fabric and discourage pedestrians from exploring what is on the next block or just around the corner. Surface parking should be required to provide attractive landscaping to mitigate visual impacts. Prior to redevelopment, surface parking lots should be activated with interim retail uses—such as food trucks and retail kiosks—along their edges. Special taxes and/or incentives should be explored to promote change.

PUD-2f. Activate the edges of new and existing parking structures. Parking structures often lack active uses on the ground floor and interrupt the pedestrian experience with entrances and exits where cars zoom in and out. Opportunities should be identified to retrofit current structures to consolidate vehicular entries, provide more attractive façades and add ground-floor commercial spaces. Existing requirements for the design of parking structures should be enforced. New requirements for parking structures should also be explored, including minimum ground-floor commercial space and setbacks that allow for future development along the sidewalk edge.



Parking structures should be retrofitted when possible to incorporate elements such as public art and ground-floor retail, similar to those at the 7th Street Station parking deck.

placemaking and urban design recommendations

PUD-3. Overcome the Barrier of the Loop

Although it serves an important traffic-carrying function, the freeway loop is a barrier that discourages walking and biking in Center City; causes a major disconnect between Uptown and the surrounding neighborhoods; and inhibits development potential and, therefore, tax revenues.



Several key underpasses and overpasses, illustrated above, should be analyzed as part of a study focused on overcoming the barrier of the freeway loop.

PUD-3a. Conduct a study of all existing and potential crossings of the I-77/I-277 freeway loop. A comprehensive study should examine all existing and potential underpasses, overpasses and ramps and recommend ways to erase barriers along and across the loop. It should further analyze the proposed freeway cap park and make recommendations for improving the overall aesthetics of the loop to provide memorable driving, biking and pedestrian experiences. The study should include input and ideas from the 2020 Vision Plan, Center City residents, and other key stakeholders.

PUD-3b. Reconfigure the interchanges of I-77 at Trade and 5th streets to reduce the footprint and impact of the freeway ramps. By reconstructing the approaches and balancing the need for convenient freeway access with the goal of creating better walkability, West End could be better connected to Uptown and the rest of Center City. The reconfiguration would also create several large development opportunity sites (see West Trade Corridor section in Chapter 4: Focus Areas for more detail).

PUD-3c. Utilize “workhorse streets” and the freeway loop to make Center City more pedestrian-friendly and livable by reducing traffic volumes on surface streets. Although Center City’s workhorse streets—streets that support high volumes of vehicles (4th, 5th, Church and College streets)—and the I-77 and I-277 freeways generate many negative impacts, they can also contribute to creating a more walkable urban core. Efforts should be continued to direct drivers to convenient parking destinations via these roadways. Encouraging motorists to the workhorse streets and freeways instead of other surface streets would minimize overall vehicle volumes on Uptown’s secondary roads and in the surrounding neighborhoods. A “park once” strategy should be promoted whereby people park their cars and then walk, bicycle or take transit within the Center City core.

placemaking and urban design recommendations

PUD-3d. Link Uptown and North End to catalyze development opportunities and maximize potential tax revenues. The Brookshire Freeway on the north side of the I-277 loop presents a range of challenges and opportunities. In addition to carving a large swath through the north side of Center City, the freeway's impacts are amplified by railroads and the limited use of 11th and 12th streets. Serving as a combination of frontage roads and freeway ramps, these one-way streets effectively triple the footprint of the Brookshire Freeway. Possible interventions could include tunneling or bridging the Brookshire Freeway; adding new and strategic development areas north of 11th Street and south of 12th Street; eliminating one or more ramps; and removing portions of the freeway (see North Tryon section in Chapter 4: Focus Areas for more detail). Such substantial changes to the transportation infrastructure would be difficult and would require careful scrutiny, but the rewards would be massive. Establishing a continuous connection between Uptown and North End would significantly boost the area's development potential and propel Center City beyond its current physical and economic boundaries.

PUD-3e. Improve connections above and below freeway to enhance comfort and safety. A perceived lack of safety is a major barrier for people considering walking or biking across the loop. Lighting and overall visibility should be improved at all locations, but especially at underpasses. Enhancing the streetscape environment with art, lighting and landscaping—or even small retail kiosks—would help to create a more consistent pedestrian experience and better link Uptown to the surrounding commercial and residential cores. A comprehensive and coordinated design treatment, rather than piecemeal interventions, should be developed for the loop's overpasses and underpasses. A more contiguous building edge adjacent to—even crossing the freeway at cap locations—would decrease the perceived crossing distance. New development could also help soften the visual impacts of the loop, effectively “hiding” the freeway behind well-designed buildings.



Freeway underpasses can incorporate recreation uses, such as this skate park in Portland, Oregon, to create a sense of activity and “eyes on the street.”



Bold lighting can be used to transform underpasses into better places to walk and bike.

placemaking and urban design recommendations

PUD-4. Develop Infrastructure That Serves Multiple Purposes

Infrastructure should be designed to serve multiple, overlapping purposes whenever possible. Urban infrastructure investments—including Center City’s streets, above-ground utilities and bridges—must be well-designed, highly functional, sustainable and achieve many objectives. The infrastructure of a memorable Center City must be beautiful and compelling. This approach will help justify expenditures and ensure that public investments benefit all Charlotteans.

PUD-4a. Integrate the design of Center City’s streets, transit, public art and utilities for layered functionality that serves multiple purposes.

Streets comprise approximately 25% of a downtown environment. As such, they represent a tremendous

opportunity to increase the amount of a city’s park, recreation and open space. Design moves such as street-side plazas, generous midblock crossings, and “pocket parks” can combine to increase the utility of streets. Innovations in modern street design also make it possible to manage and treat urban stormwater using attractive bioswales, stormwater planters and rain gardens. Future street improvements in Center City should aim to achieve more than efficiently moving automobiles; they must also support and incentivize pedestrian and bicycle use, filter contaminants from urban runoff, and contribute to Charlotte’s open space and recreational amenities.

PUD-4b. Ensure that all infrastructure investments are designed and implemented to enhance the aesthetic quality of Uptown and Center City Charlotte. All Center City infrastructure should be re-examined for ways that it can contribute to the urban form. For instance, a freeway cap should do more than just fill a gap in the urban fabric; it should also serve as a dynamic eye-catching gateway feature that encourages community gathering and new private development. Transit stations should do more than provide access to light rail or streetcar; they should be iconic anchors of employment concentrations and attractive features of mixed-use neighborhoods.



The High Line in New York City is a repurposed rail line infrastructure that now serves multiple functions for the community, including mobility, recreation, gathering and urban gardening.

placemaking and urban design recommendations

PUD-5. Promote Access to Center City and Create People-Friendly, Interesting and Active Places

Center City must be safe and inviting for residents and visitors of all ages, incomes and ability levels. Infrastructure systems and amenities should provide great mobility and navigation for people using a variety of transportation modes.

PUD-5a. Create a network of great bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout Uptown that connect to the surrounding neighborhoods. While the neighborhoods provide many opportunities for children and families, Uptown has not experienced significant growth in the number of families with children. Center City Charlotte—with its parks, schools, greenway trails and arts, culture and entertainment destinations—is well positioned to remain one of the most family-friendly urban centers in the country. A robust network of great bicycle and pedestrian facilities should connect Uptown, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the Irwin and Little Sugar Creek Greenways. Bicycle boulevards, shared and dedicated bike lanes, and cycletracks provide options for cyclists of nearly all ability and comfort levels. Suitable locations for these facilities should be explored.

PUD-5b. Develop a variety of interactive wayfinding elements to make navigating Center City more intuitive and legible. Traditional wayfinding signage is useful when people know where they want to go and are already in the general

vicinity of their destination. However, with all of the attractions and destinations in Center City, many visitors, employees and even residents are not aware of all that the area has to offer. Interactive wayfinding systems should supplement traditional signage to help people maximize their experience in Center City. Interactive touch-screen displays could provide the ability to search, get personalized recommendations and determine the best route to get people to where they want to go. While initial capital investment costs can be significant, updating digital displays is much more cost-effective than changing traditional signage.



Creating a great bicycle and pedestrian network is critical to promoting better access to Center City.



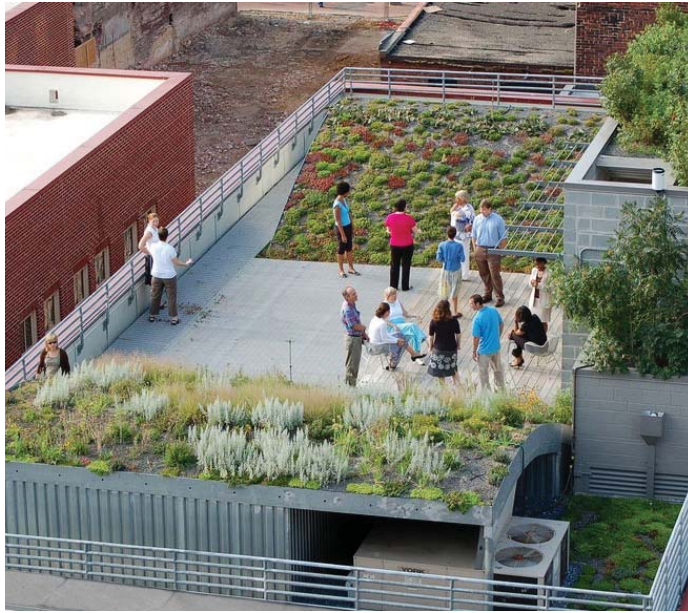
The existing signage and wayfinding system should be augmented with interactive technology and real-time information to promote access to Center City.

placemaking and urban design recommendations

PUD-6. Encourage Sustainable Design and Development

Green design and development practices can have a big impact on not only the overall environmental footprint of Center City but also its placemaking. Programs should include incentives for both public and private projects. Public projects can provide leadership by defining green standards and setting goals to adopt sustainable construction, design and maintenance practices.

PUD-6a. Public buildings should be developed to high sustainable development standards. All new development and major renovation projects for public facilities should adhere to Charlotte's Policy for Sustainable City Facilities. Designing to optimize the key priorities of preserving land and trees, conserving clean water resources,



Green roofs and other sustainable building methods can help reduce Center City's environmental impacts.

reducing energy use and carbon footprint, and maximizing transportation alternatives would help to demonstrate the benefits of sustainable development to employees and private investors. With the many County and federal facilities located in Uptown and the surrounding neighborhoods, a similar policy could greatly reduce Center City's ecological impact.

PUD-6b. Continue the efforts of Envision: Charlotte to promote sustainability through public-private collaboration. Envision: Charlotte is a collaborative partnership among major employers, building owners and managers along with municipal and technology leaders. Its purpose is to create the



On-site stormwater management at surface parking lots and along streets will reduce runoff while beautifying the environment.

most environmentally sustainable urban core in the nation by connecting numerous environmental programs and initiatives. It includes digital smart grid infrastructure as well as energy data and monitoring that will help achieve a reduction of energy use in Uptown by 20% in five years.

PUD-6c. Institute policies and programs that encourage sustainable design and construction for private projects, including on-site stormwater management. Incentives should be explored for green building and site development, including green roofs, solar technology, rainwater capture, gray water reuse, bioswales and more. Tools may include design assistance, financial incentives and low interest loans.

PUD-6d. Enhance Charlotte's "City of Trees" identity by developing high-quality landscaped areas and a dense Uptown tree canopy. Center City's neighborhoods enjoy a leafy canopy, but the tree coverage within Uptown's dense development is sparse. More planted medians in Uptown can add shade to exposed streets and boulevards. Developers should contribute to applicable local improvement districts to ensure that the design of Center City's streets supports the "City of Trees." In addition, many streets trees in the surrounding Center City neighborhoods are reaching their maturity. Replacement of the existing canopy is critical to adding to the quality of life and should be an ongoing effort.

applied innovation corridor

By 2020, City Center is the hub of an “Applied Innovation Corridor” beginning in South End, extending through Uptown and “North End,” and linking onward to the UNC Charlotte (UNCC) campus. While banking and hospitality institutions continue to serve as the economic backbone, new technologies, industrial sectors and emerging markets bring greater prosperity and investment to Center City. The Applied Innovation Corridor provides the jobs, housing and support services needed to strengthen Center City’s position as the regional economic hub and incubator of the 21st century economy. The corridor has strong links with the region’s universities and colleges via partnerships and collaboration on research, technology development and job training. The entire area benefits from easy freight movement, light rail and commuter rail stations, quick connections to Uptown’s major transportation centers, and new pedestrian and bicycle linkages. In the central part of the corridor, North End redevelopment and neighborhood rehabilitation initiatives build upon the area’s unique residential character and industrial history. The result is a distinctly walkable, mixed-use “urban industrial park” with distinctive neighborhoods. This area fosters an atmosphere of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship; provides unparalleled connectivity for moving goods and people; and creates an exciting urban living and working experience linking the North End to NoDa, Belmont and the larger Applied Innovation Corridor.

Existing Situation

Great cities require strong, resilient economies. Already the second most important center for commercial banking and finance in the United States, Charlotte also has vital industry clusters in energy production and infrastructure, biosciences, informatics (financial, security and health administration), and health care. Center City’s existing concentration of human capital is a critical asset that supports these sectors. As the region’s most vibrant urban area, Center City is uniquely positioned to further capitalize on these strengths and attract firms and individuals seeking urban amenities—such as transit, retail, nightlife, sports facilities, cultural venues and more—that are not available in many other cities. The commercial and industrial cores of Center City—from South End, through Uptown and north to the UNCC campus—have the potential to become an Applied Innovation Corridor.





The Applied Innovation Corridor stretches from South End to UNC Charlotte with major development and partnership opportunities in North End.

Currently, the majority of the region’s high-technology companies, biotechnology firms and research institutions are located outside of Center City. The UNCC Research Institute and its affiliates (including the Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC), the Bioinformatics Center and the Ben Craig Center) have existing facilities and new state-of-the-art sites under development on or near the main UNCC campus. Evidence from defined “innovation zones” across the United States and internationally suggests that concentrated, strategically targeted investment in physical and social infrastructure can yield many long-term benefits. These investments focus on linking existing economic strengths to education and innovation, which in turn fosters new business formation and job creation. Smaller start-ups and individual firms exist throughout Center City today, but in general they are not grouped into areas of critical mass or identifiable industry clusters.

With existing freight infrastructure, extension of the LYNX Blue Line light rail north to UNCC, and future commuter and high speed rail service, the Applied Innovation Corridor holds untapped potential to create renewed economic momentum for Center City. In particular, the core of North End—comprised of the area from the freeway loop northward to the industrial district along Tryon Street, and from Davidson Street to Statesville Road—is a critical link in the corridor. Though it currently lacks a strong identity and is relatively disconnected from the Uptown core, North End is strategically located, has a mix of industrial uses, and contains large amounts of vacant or underutilized land.

Opportunities and Challenges

There are several opportunities for the Applied Innovation Corridor related to physical, social and economic development. Specifically, there are **opportunities** to:

- Leverage the well-established commercial banking and finance sectors and growing industry clusters in energy production and infrastructure, biosciences, informatics, and health care.
- Build upon the precedent for successful redevelopment and branding in South End and apply to other parts of the Applied Innovation Corridor.
- Link to research and development activities at the main UNCC campus with the planned light rail connection.
- Capitalize on the presence of academic programming and students at the new UNCC Uptown facility, which is in close proximity to existing Uptown firms.
- Use the existing arts, culture, nightlife and other quality of life amenities located in Uptown and the surrounding neighborhoods to attract companies and employees.
- Benefit from the availability of underutilized industrial land and space in North End.
- Take advantage of current investor and developer interest in North End property.
- Leverage potential development to benefit city through increased tax revenues.

Center City faces several challenges to creating a strong Applied Innovation Corridor. Specific **challenges** include:









- Strong and increasingly competitive innovation economies in other areas of the metro region and North Carolina that overlap with the key industry sectors in Center City.
- Distance between Center City and the main UNCC campus.
- The physical barrier of the Brookshire Freeway between Uptown, South End and North End.
- The physical barrier of the rail yards and intermodal yard, which disconnects North End neighborhoods from each other as well as from planned light rail service, impedes development, and limits potential tax revenue generation in the area.
- Incomplete networks for pedestrian and bicyclists throughout the corridor, and a lack of sufficient east-west connections for all users, especially north of Uptown.
- A lack of coordination and leadership focused on establishing the Applied Innovation Corridor and enhancing, redeveloping and recruiting new economic activity to North End in particular.



Rail yards in North End disconnect neighborhoods from each other, impeding development and limiting potential tax revenue generation.

Recommendations

The Applied Innovation Corridor builds upon several of Center City’s greatest assets, including Uptown’s existing businesses and employees, South End’s recent redevelopment initiatives, and the area’s several higher education institutions. The following recommendations and physical strategies leverage these strengths and will help **shape, promote and catalyze economic development in the corridor, particularly in North End**. Collectively, the recommendations support the following overall 2020 Vision Plan goals:

<p>GOAL 1 Urban Design and Sustainability</p> 	<p>GOAL 2 Regional Economic Engine</p> 	<p>GOAL 3 Lifelong Learning</p> 	<p>GOAL 4 Premier Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Destination</p> 	<p>GOAL 5 Walkable, Full-Service Neighborhoods</p> 	<p>GOAL 6 Interconnected Natural and Recreational Amenities</p> 	<p>GOAL 7 Thriving Retail and Restaurants</p> 	<p>GOAL 8 Multi-Dimensional Transportation System</p> 
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applied innovation corridor - north end physical strategies

North End is a key anchor of the Applied Innovation Corridor (see map on page 42), linking together South End and Uptown with UNC Charlotte along a future light rail connection. Mixed-use employment and commercial should be focused along major streets and at transit stations, providing neighborhood services while preserving existing residential areas (see recommendation AIC-5).

- Mixed-Use Employment/Commercial Area
- Residential Neighborhood
- High-Intensity Mixed-Use Employment/Commercial Corridor
- Transit Connection
- Light Rail Station
- Possible Commuter Rail Station
- Key Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection
- Gateway
- 1/4 Mile Radius from Light Rail Station
- 1/4 Mile Radius from Possible Commuter Rail Station
- Freeway/Ramp
- Rail



applied innovation corridor recommendations

applied innovation corridor (AIC)
AIC-1. Attract Start-Ups and Expanding Firms in Innovative Industries
AIC-2. Foster the Transfer of Research from Academic Institutions to Industry
AIC-3. Utilize Charlotte's Advanced Business Management Resources
AIC-4. Improve Interregional Connectivity to Promote Research, Development and Innovation
AIC-5. Create and Implement a North End Development Strategy

AIC-1. Attract Start-Ups and Expanding Firms in Innovative Industries

A primary focus of the Applied Innovation Corridor should be on growing and retaining small- and medium-sized businesses in key sectors, including bioscience/health care and nutrition, clean energy production, finance, film and video, informatics, and industrial design/architecture. Appropriate spaces, access to capital and co-location opportunities with like industries are all important factors to success.

AIC-1a. Focus on start-ups, spin-outs and rapidly expanding firms. For all of these target sectors, the primary focus of the corridor should be on growing and retaining the types of small- and medium-sized companies that will generate both enhanced creativity and job growth. In particular, Center City should be poised to accommodate the needs of fast-growing young companies in Charlotte, rather than focusing on attracting mature large corporations from elsewhere. These small start-ups with growth potential are the seeds of a home-grown strategy key to innovative economies.

AIC-1b. Develop a full-scale medical school in conjunction with a teaching hospital. A gap in Charlotte's medical and health sciences infrastructure is the absence of a comprehensively developed medical school with a full complement of specialties, expert physicians, nurses, researchers, medical technicians and student residents, associated with a teaching hospital. Center City is uniquely poised to attract such a program, which could be located in the Applied Innovation Corridor to leverage the strengths of the existing medical, health administration and medical institutions (including Carolina Health Systems, Presbyterian Hospital and Queens College). The University of North Carolina System has established a modest medical school branch campus in Charlotte, but the program should be expanded or supplemented by a larger effort that will attract research dollars and additional medical facilities to the area. An expanded or new teaching hospital should be developed in conjunction with a medical school and be located in close proximity to existing medical facilities. The site should also provide easy access for those travelling by foot, bike and transit.

applied innovation corridor recommendations

AIC-2. Foster the Transfer of Research from Academic Institutions to Industry



The High Tech Business Park in Sofia, Bulgaria is an example of partnership that supports technology transfer and collaboration between academic institutions and industry.

Establishment of a “Charlotte Technology Innovation Partnership” (CTIP)—either as a functional program within Center City Partners, an extension of the UNCC Research Institute, or an entirely new organization linking all area university research and development activities with Charlotte’s emerging innovation economy—will be important to the success of the Applied Innovation Corridor. According to a recent study from the Kaufman Foundation, the major barriers to success in the innovation economy include “difficulty accessing financing, excessive regulation and excessive taxation” (Source: *High Growth Firms and the Future of the American Economy*, Kaufman Foundation, 2010). This CTIP should help coordinate resources, direct investment, and ensure the implementation of key programs and policies that will help the corridor succeed.

AIC-2a. Create a vehicle for coordinating the funding and support of technology transfer and commercialization activities. Beyond supporting basic research at the university level, the CTIP should coordinate the funding and support of technological commercialization activities. This can be done, for example, through supporting the efforts of local entrepreneurs to channel federal Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer grants (the largest source of early funding for tech transfer and commercialization activities). The CTIP should also assess the barriers to small business formation and provide recommendations for short-term actions to remove those barriers.

AIC-2b. Position the CTIP to play the key role of coordinating efforts to bring together public and private sector entities to spur technology transfer and commercialization funding and implementation efforts. The group should provide the institutional framework for convening a wide circle of area business leaders, academics and researchers to share knowledge and build the types of social networks and human capital that are critical to the success of innovation economies.

AIC-2c. Coordinate public and private investment priorities and resource allocation to ensure that major players are working in harmony. Building on local public sector programs, the CTIP should link workforce training and educational programs with the practical needs of area businesses in the key industries that comprise the innovation economy. The group should also track technology commercialization at UNCC and in key private sector entities in Center City, as well as support the leveraging of funds for these efforts. It should create an industrial land supply index to ensure that investment is approached deliberately, so that the area’s long-term growth includes a healthy mix of office, industrial, retail, civic and residential land uses.

applied innovation corridor recommendations

AIC-3. Utilize Charlotte's Advanced Business Management Resources

Center City should fertilize and grow entrepreneurs and young start-up companies. The Ben Craig Center at UNCC and the Institute of Entrepreneurship at CPCC already provide important resources for business incubation. These efforts should be bolstered to continue linking entrepreneurs across multiple fields to professional and economic growth opportunities.

AIC-3a. Promote the existing efforts of the Institute of Entrepreneurship and the Ben Craig Center to potential start-ups, new businesses and companies interested in innovation and expansion. In conjunction with the Charlotte Technology Innovation Partnership (CTIP), the Institute of Entrepreneurship and the Ben Craig Center are uniquely poised to link professors and students at Center City's higher education institutions with academic researchers in engineering, sciences and other fields as they seek to develop and market new technologies and services. The Institute of Entrepreneurship and the Ben Craig Center should also continue to provide entrepreneurial research and business support through education, training, counseling services, and provision of office and production space.

AIC-3b. Maximize benefits of the Institute of Entrepreneurship and Ben Craig Center for students, faculty and the business community. Students attending educational institutions within the Applied Innovation Corridor should be exposed to the day-to-day opportunities and challenges facing Center City businesses. Students, academicians and researchers would benefit from the entrepreneurial perspective and expertise of individuals trained to understand the world through the lens of commerce rather than pure science or theory. For example, MBA students would benefit from exposure to the day-to-day management problems of young high-technology businesses. Culinary students would be more competitive for future jobs with real-world experience in one of Center City's innovative new restaurants. Establishment of the CTIP and continuation of efforts by the Institute of Entrepreneurship and the Ben Craig Center would also serve as key drivers of new job growth and economic vitality, as technologies are brought to market and new business ventures form and expand.



The Institute of Entrepreneurship and the Ben Craig Center link professors and students with Charlotte's business leadership to foster creation of new businesses and technologies.



Johnson & Wales University already has many programs that tie together learning with real-world jobs and entrepreneurship.

applied innovation corridor recommendations

AIC-4. Improve Interregional Connectivity to Promote Research, Development and Innovation



Center City should seize upon the opportunity to develop a major high speed rail stop at the future Gateway Station.



The proximity of Charlotte Douglas International Airport should be leveraged to bolster the Applied Innovation Corridor.

The Applied Innovation Corridor will benefit from improved connectivity to greater Charlotte and to other regions, especially those promoting research, development and innovation. Developments in computing, cell phones and other communications tools have reduced the importance of the physical workplace in many fields. However, physical connections to and between places of employment are increasingly important as people collaborate across greater distances.

AIC-4a. Continue working with partners to develop high speed rail with a major stop at the Gateway Station. High speed rail has the potential to move people and goods at top speeds of 110 mph and average speeds of approximately 85 mph. Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Tennessee have joined together with the business communities in each state to form a Southeast High Speed Rail Coalition to plan, develop and implement high speed rail in the Southeast. Passenger service on the line is slated to begin between Washington, D.C. and Charlotte sometime between 2018 and 2022. Center City's Gateway Station will be a major destination along the corridor. The station and adjacent land between the railroad and Graham Street should be developed with connectivity to North End and South End in mind.

AIC-4b. Improve intermodal cargo connectivity within the Applied Innovation Corridor and throughout the region. Improvements to the freeway loop and redevelopment in North End must ensure that the existing level of freight access to railroads and freeways is not compromised. In addition, transfer of parcel and freight from air to truck to rail should be improved to strengthen Charlotte's role as a regional distribution hub. Improved intermodal cargo connectivity in the North End and at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport would help support growth of the overall corridor.

AIC-4c. Expand the light rail system with an extension of the LYNX Blue Line light rail, a new commuter line and connections to the airport. The new light rail line will link Center City with UNCC and other key economic nodes. Students, researchers and entrepreneurs associated with Center City's urban campus and its affiliate tech-transfer and business incubation programs would be attracted to new employment centers near transit stations in North End. The new commuter line will provide another direct transit link between Uptown and the rest of the corridor. Stronger transit connections would also make Center City friendlier for business travelers.

applied innovation corridor recommendations

AIC-5. Create and Implement a North End Development Strategy

As a central anchor of the Applied Innovation Corridor, North End will be the focal point of a new urban mixed-use neighborhood—one with a unique combination of employment and residential development that provides the middle class jobs of the 21st century. It will be a place where people can easily walk, bike or take transit between home, work, services and entertainment. Existing industrial and residential uses will be integrated with new businesses, workforce housing and neighborhood centers that together revitalize the area. The transformation envisioned for North End will require a specific, strategic set of implementation actions—advanced by the CTIP—to ensure it becomes a reality (see Applied Innovation Corridor—North End Physical Strategies).

AIC-5a. Connect North End to Uptown and the surrounding areas to fully leverage nearby assets. Despite its close proximity to Uptown and adjacent neighborhood centers, access to and from North End is challenging. Improvements must be made to the Brookshire Freeway and 11th and 12th streets to remove the physical barriers that divide North End from Uptown. New development should also help to bridge the gap between the two areas. East-west connectivity should be addressed by improving existing connections and exploring the opportunity for a new connection across the rail yards and intermodal yards.

AIC-5b. Leverage transit-oriented development (TOD) to foster a unique set of employment opportunities. TOD typically promotes a mix of residential and commercial uses designed to maximize access to public transit and encourage transit ridership. A TOD is usually anchored by a major transit stop and is surrounded by relatively high-density development, compact blocks and walkable streets. The City's existing transit-oriented employment zoning district, which accommodates high-intensity office uses, office support services or residential uses in a pedestrian-oriented setting, should be applied around North End transit stations.

AIC-5c. Create a true jobs-housing balance. North End was originally developed as a series of mills with employee housing nearby. The strong history of combining production, distribution and residential uses in one area should provide the inspiration for the area's revitalization. Neighborhoods such as Greenville, Lockwood and Optimist Park already provide the foundation. New workforce housing should be developed to offer more housing choices and provide additional residents and workers to support neighborhood centers. New development should respect and enhance existing neighborhoods' character and heritage.



Rail transit stations in North End must be leveraged to the fullest extent with mixed-use transit-oriented development, like this example in Pasadena, California.

applied innovation corridor recommendations



Neighborhood-serving uses such as an urban grocery store should be developed in North End to serve area residents.



The corridor must attract the creative and technology workers of the 21st century, who desire urban amenities and gathering spaces.

AIC - 5d Work with the railroad to optimize freight operations while increasing redevelopment potential of rail yards. The rail yards occupy a large area within the North End that could provide significant redevelopment opportunities. Efforts should be undertaken to consolidate rail operations in the North End rail yards to maintain optimal rail functions while making land available for new development projects.

AIC-5e. Ensure a variety of neighborhood amenities to support residents and employees. North End currently lacks mature and walkable neighborhood centers that are attractive to those seeking to live in Center City (see Neighborhoods of Center City section in this chapter for more detail). New amenities will be essential to successful North End revitalization. The physical environment and available amenities, such as coffee shops, cafés, bars and other social gathering spots, as well as retail shops and recreational spaces, should support workers' individual needs and encourage personal connections outside of the employment environment.

AIC-5f. Improve the bicycle and pedestrian environment. Improvements to walkability and bikeability in North End should be achieved by working with private developers to ensure good paths around and through new development. The needs of the pedestrian and the cyclist should be balanced with maintaining the ability to load and unload trucks and trains. Higher-intensity employers, such as offices and laboratories, should be located closest to transit stations. Warehouses and larger manufacturing operations should be located at least a half mile from stations.

AIC-5g. Build the innovation infrastructure necessary to attract desired employers. Public infrastructure in North End should include information technology, flexible production facilities, and access to cutting edge equipment and tools. Small groups of academics and/or private investors would require a high-tech infrastructure with low overhead. Innovation would also require shared spaces that provide the ability to scale up and down quickly.

center city urban campus

In 2020, Center City will be an Urban Campus, with the universities and colleges supplying the intellectual capital and ambiance to inspire academic excellence, leadership and innovation. The presence of a broad array of students, faculty and staff is a tremendous asset. As the foundation of a vibrant, economically viable Center City—which competes globally for the best and the brightest—the higher education institutions work together with one voice and one purpose. Young people stay in Charlotte, raise families and add to a growing, dynamic population, partially due to the numerous lifelong learning opportunities. The Urban Campus truly transforms Center City and enriches the lives of all Charlotteans.

Existing Situation

The Charlotte region boasts a well-educated workforce with one of the largest public school systems in the nation. The region is complemented by 38 higher education institutions with a total enrollment of approximately 88,000 students. Of those, seven are located in Center City Charlotte. Independently, these institutions offer a wealth of curricula (see Center City Colleges and Universities on following page).

The area's higher education institutions also contribute to the physical context of Center City. The new UNC Charlotte (UNCC) facility located within the new First Ward Park will house the school's business, architecture and design programs. Central Piedmont Community College's (CPCC) new culinary building opened in 2009 to accommodate its technology, hotel and restaurant management programs. Johnson & Wales University is creating plans for a new student center. Finally, Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) has opened a new Visual and Performing Arts facility. Center City's educational institutions provide a strong foundation for the future growth and development of Center City.





Opportunities and Challenges

There are numerous assets and opportunities upon which to shape Center City’s future as an Urban Campus. Specifically, there are **opportunities** to:

- Develop programmatic and physical linkages between academic institutions and the business community.
- Capitalize on the recent trend of expansion by major institutions.
- Leverage the location of several educational facilities that are situated along current and planned transit corridors.
- Capitalize on the range and diversity of program offerings at the various institutions.

- Take advantage of the presence of students and facilities in Center City.

Center City faces several challenges to achieving the desired vision. Specific **challenges** include:

- A lack of physical adjacency between institutions.
- Inadequate transportation options between institutions.
- A lack of student-oriented venues.
- Relatively low number of high school students who choose to continue on with higher education in Charlotte.
- Growing need to ensure that the Center City workforce is well-educated and can help Charlotte compete with other metro areas.

CENTER CITY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES		
School	Student Enrollment	Key Academic Focus
Central Piedmont Community College	19,300	Workforce Development; Engineering, Energy and Computer Science
Charlotte School of Law	500	Law
Johnson & Wales University	2,500	Culinary Arts, Hospitality and Business
Johnson C. Smith University	1,500	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and Service Learning
King’s College	650	Business, Design and Technology, and Health Care
Queens University Charlotte Center	2,100	Communications, Journalism, Health Care and Nursing
UNC Charlotte (Uptown)	1,000	Business Administration, Urban Design, Health Administration and Accountancy
Wake Forest University Charlotte Center	180	Business, Executive Education and Continuing Education
TOTAL	27,730	











Central Piedmont Community College has nearly 20,000 students enrolled in a variety of disciplines.

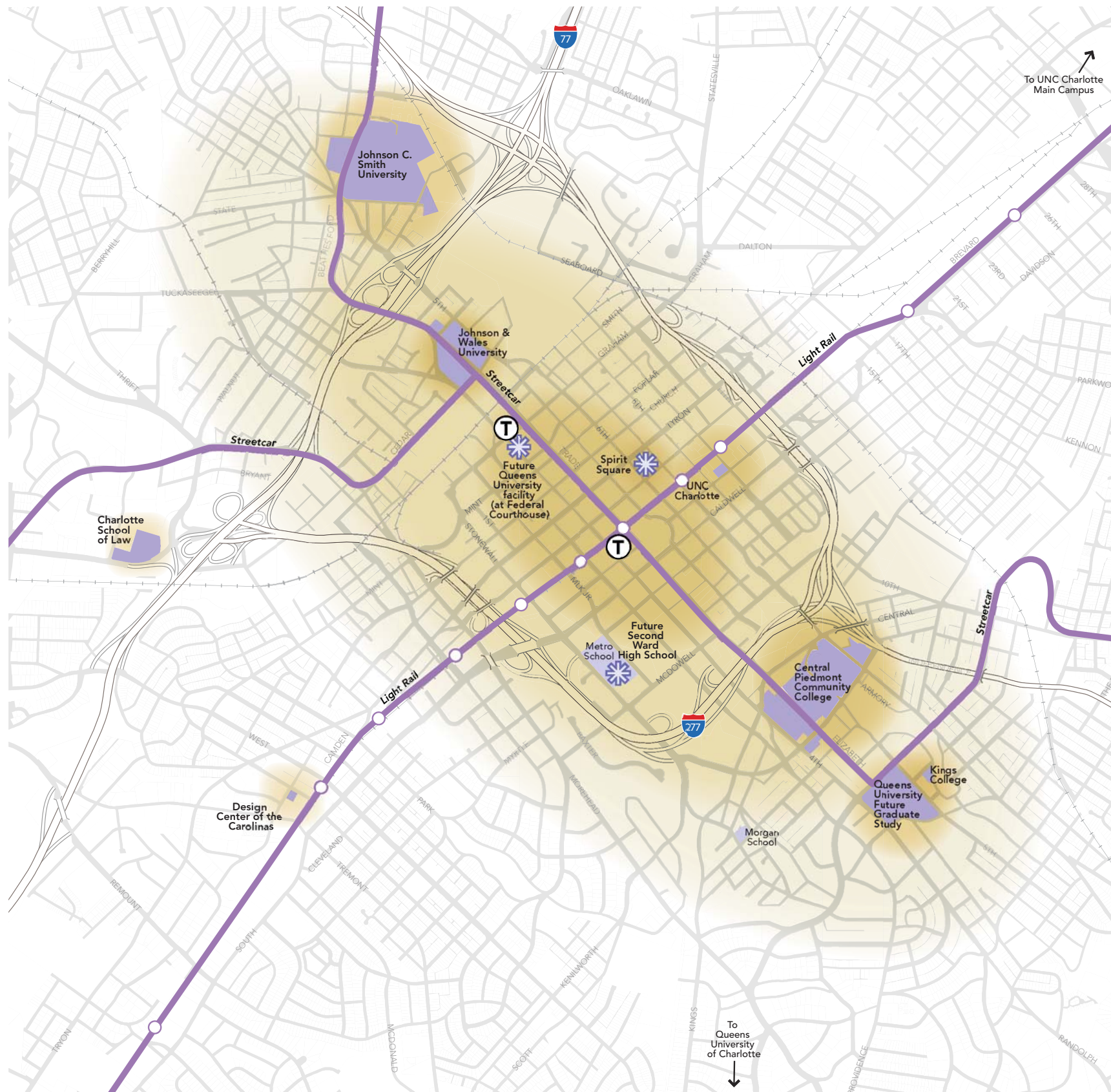


Johnson C. Smith University anchors the Five Points neighborhood center and historic West End.

Recommendations

Central Charlotte is an “urban laboratory” setting like no other in the region. It is **a place where academics, creativity, entrepreneurship, collaboration and innovation can permeate** throughout the economic, physical and social environments. The following recommendations and physical strategies outline steps that should be taken by both the public and private sectors to transform Center City into a true Urban Campus. Together, the recommendations support the following overall 2020 Vision Plan goals:

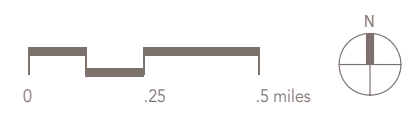
<p>GOAL 1 Urban Design and Sustainability</p> 	<p>GOAL 2 Regional Economic Engine</p> 	<p>GOAL 3 Lifelong Learning</p> 	<p>GOAL 4 Premier Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Destination</p> 	<p>GOAL 5 Walkable, Full-Service Neighborhoods</p> 	<p>GOAL 6 Interconnected Natural and Recreational Amenities</p> 	<p>GOAL 7 Thriving Retail and Restaurants</p> 	<p>GOAL 8 Multi-Dimensional Transportation System</p> 
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center city urban campus physical strategies

To cultivate a true urban campus, educational institutions should be linked by direct, efficient transit connections as well as bikeable and walkable streets. Complementary uses and partner programs should be concentrated around campuses and throughout the core of Center City.

- High School/K-12
- College/University
- Primary Areas of High Concentration
- Secondary Areas of Concentration
- Future Educational Institution
- Transit Connection
- T Transit Hub
- Light Rail Station
- Freeway/Ramp
- Rail



center city urban campus recommendations

center city urban campus (UC)	
UC-1. Establish Shared Programs and Partnerships	
UC-2. Strengthen the Physical Relationship between Institutions	
UC-3. Establish New Educational Opportunities	
UC-4. Create Opportunities for Lifelong Learning	

UC-1. Establish Shared Programs and Partnerships

The most vibrant city centers and metropolitan areas enjoy strong collaborations between pre K-12 schools, post-secondary schools and industry. The number and types of partnerships are nearly limitless. While a number of strategic partnerships exist today, there are several additional opportunities that directly build upon existing assets.

UC-1a. Create a Center City Education Consortium comprised of the seven institutions of higher education. The Consortium would foster collaboration, partnering and idea sharing among the faculty and staff of the institutions. It would also promote collaboration and interaction among the various campus student organizations. The Consortium could include other potential partners such as secondary schools and public agencies. Classes, curricula and cooperatives should be developed and shared among the member institutions. In addition, joint marketing and branding efforts—at the local, regional and national levels—could be developed to highlight the collective power of these schools and promote Center City as a dynamic place of lifelong learning.

UC-1b. Connect the Consortium to the business community through the establishment of a Center City Business Cooperative. The Cooperative should facilitate internship and assistantship programs that place students into workplace settings. It should help with job placement for recent graduates, so that students remain in Center City as they embark upon their careers. The Cooperative could also link academic programs with facility space in private businesses to leverage resources and foster programmatic partnerships.

center city urban campus recommendations

UC-2. Strengthen the Physical Relationship between Institutions



Transit infrastructure should be integrated into campus facilities, like this example from Portland, Oregon.



Shared facilities between institutions, such as this student union in Belfast, Northern Ireland, should be explored.

In a truly integrated Urban Campus, the number of adjacencies, the physical connections between assets and the potential for collaboration multiply exponentially. Therefore, the geographic location of learning institutions and physical links between them become critical components of the educational experience. In the most successful city centers, schools are clustered in a fashion that allows for strategic collaboration with other institutions and members of business and industry.

UC-2a. Develop shared facilities that provide places for interaction and leveraging of resources. The nexus of Center City student life could include shared student organizations, event and meeting spaces, restaurants, bookstore, information center, and other student services. The Spirit Square redevelopment site between Tryon, College, 6th and 7th streets in First Ward provides an ideal location for a facility such as a shared student union. Other common facilities could include student housing, library space, classrooms and laboratories, and recreation facilities at various locations. Shared facilities should be a targeted use in new mixed-use development to help offset the high cost of land in Uptown.

UC-2b. Link institutions of higher education with a range of mobility options. All existing and future campus facilities should be connected by multiple modes of transportation. Institutions should locate as close as possible to transit stations, including light rail and streetcar, and work with the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) to develop discounted or free pass programs for students, faculty and staff. Transit should provide frequent service, easy transfers and scheduling that aligns with campus needs. Bike and car share programs should be jointly developed by the institutions, fostered by the Center City Education Consortium. Center City's streets and greenways should provide safe, easy and efficient routes for pedestrians and bicyclists between institutions, as well as links to transit stations.

UC-2c. Develop a mix of housing options that can serve students attending higher education institutions in Center City. New student housing should be developed near one or more educational institutions and along existing and planned transit routes. Shared student housing facilities would help to encourage interaction between students and can help the schools provide better housing options collectively than they may be able to individually. Student housing in Center City would add to the growing population in the urban core and help support additional retail, restaurants and services.

center city urban campus recommendations

UC-3. Establish New Educational Opportunities

While Center City enjoys a large number of educational assets, there are opportunities to bolster economic development and educational offerings in Charlotte with several targeted additions. New schools should complement current programs, build upon existing assets and support growing industry clusters.

UC-3a. Identify and attract an art and design school to Center City. The City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte Center City Partners, and the Arts and Science Council should partner to recruit an existing art and design school pursuing expansion opportunities. Stakeholders should market the many amenities Center City has to offer, including existing arts and design assets, the built and natural environments, and planned connectivity. The school should be located near existing arts facilities and/or design businesses, if possible.

UC-3b. Explore future opportunities for a new public high school in Uptown. As outlined in the Second Ward Neighborhood Master Plan, a new high school should capitalize on proximity to the Uptown business district and adjacency to the Metro School. A new high school could be a magnet school, with specialized courses and curricula that would attract students from around Center City and emphasize topics such as business and finance, arts, design, energy, and sustainability. The high school could also offer dual/concurrent enrollment through which students could simultaneously obtain credits at Center City's colleges and universities.

UC-3c. Establish a medical school in Center City. As the largest U.S. city without a medical school, Charlotte should attract a full medical school program to Center City. Programs in health and wellness at existing Charlotte institutions will also benefit from the students, faculty and facilities associated with a major medical school (see Applied Innovation Corridor section in this chapter for more detail).



An art and design school that may be considering expansion opportunities, such as the Rhode Island School of Design, should be a major priority to attract to Center City.

center city urban campus recommendations

UC-4. Create Opportunities for Lifelong Learning

Existing residents value the many formal and informal educational opportunities in Center City available to non-traditional students. Support for and enhancement of lifelong learning can help attract new residents and employers to the area.

UC-4a. Develop Spirit Square as a facility that offers learning opportunities for all Charlotteans with a variety of learning-oriented facilities and programs. In addition to housing a shared student union, Spirit Square could be a mixed-use, multi-institutional development that incorporates a redeveloped Main Library and Performing Arts Center. Spirit Square should contain a collection of learning-oriented facilities that attract people of all ages. Programming should take advantage of the unique collection of people and resources to create

new opportunities for teaching, learning and sharing in intellectual endeavors.

UC-4b. Develop and support adult education facilities and programs in Center City. Secondary and post-secondary schools should contribute to offerings in Center City that include Adult Basic Education, Professional Technical Education and continuing education opportunities. The most successful adult education programs bring educational opportunities to potential students. The strong adult education programs offered by CPCC, UNCC, Queens University and JCSU should be expanded into the Center City neighborhoods to further facilitate lifelong learning and workforce development.



Spirit Square, centrally located in Uptown, is an ideal location for new multi-institutional development that would support the Urban Campus strategy.



Adult education opportunities—including full programs, classes, lecture series and more—will boost Center City as a place of lifelong learning.

destination charlotte

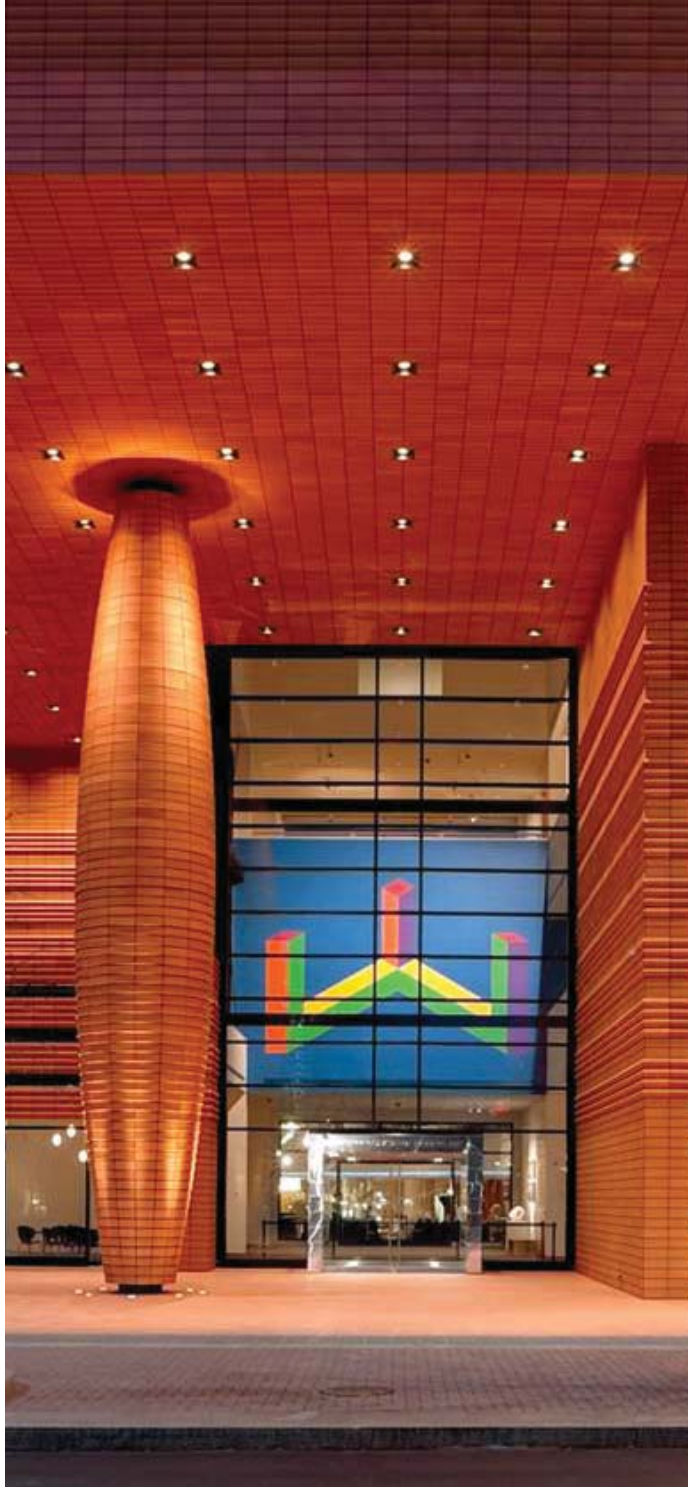
In 2020, Center City is a premier destination for arts, culture, sports and entertainment. The city’s core offers countless reasons to come to Charlotte to work, socialize, recreate, linger and soak up the urban ambiance. Center City exudes a warm, gracious hospitality to both visitors and locals, who choose from a seemingly endless combination of events, sightseeing, dining, shopping and lodging. All of Center City benefits—economically, socially and culturally—from a well-connected network of public and private arts, culture, sports and entertainment destinations. From art museums, sports venues and conference facilities to lively nightlife, music festivals and seasonal events, Charlotte offers a special visitor experience for all.

Existing Situation

Today Center City is a major regional destination that attracts residents, businesses and visitors from around the country and world. People are drawn to its many arts and cultural offerings, sporting events, history, shopping, dining, entertainment, and nightlife. Taking in a Broadway show, eating at the hip new place, cheering for the team, strolling along Tryon Street—every day there is a new experience to be had in Center City.

Major arts and cultural destinations include the Levine Center for the Arts, North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, McColl Center for Visual Art and North Carolina Dance Theatre. The Children’s Theatre, Discovery Place Museum and ImaginOn offer art and science education for children and families, while the Levine Museum of the New South provides new perspectives into the area’s historic past. A proposed City Market, located at the LYNX Blue Line 7th Street Station, will provide fresh food to residents, employees and visitors—and will become a “must see” when visiting Charlotte.





The Arts and Sciences Council has played a major role in helping public art to flourish in Center City, supporting many programs, organizations, venues and individual artists. Public art adorns busy street corners and plazas as well as transportation stops and green spaces, creating an urban environment that is distinctly Charlotte.

Complementing the abundance of arts, cultural and entertainment options, Center City is home to many of the region's one-of-a-kind sports facilities and programs. More than a million spectators come to Uptown annually to watch the NFL's Carolina Panthers, NBA's Charlotte Bobcats and Charlotte Checkers minor league hockey team. Collegiate events, such as the CIAA basketball tournament, ACC football championship and Belk football Bowl attract spectators from around the country. Amateur sports are also well represented, both in Center City and elsewhere in the region. Mecklenburg County is home to the U.S. National Whitewater Center, a unique facility that boasts the largest man-made whitewater course in the world. This facility is complemented by a multitude of outdoor and indoor activities that take place in Center City. Uptown has the Aquatic Center, the site of the USA Ultra Swim and seniors swim program, as well as multiple road cycling and running races. These events not only bring visitors to the facilities but also provide direct economic benefits to Center City through increased spending at hotels, restaurants, shops and other venues.

Opportunities and Challenges

While there are many building blocks already in place, Center City can be further improved and enhanced to become an even greater "Destination Charlotte" in the coming years. Specifically, there are **opportunities** to:




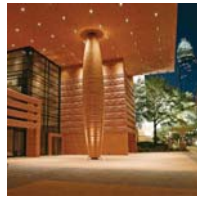




- Leverage the abundance and variety of arts, cultural, entertainment and sports facilities and programs.
- Build upon the newly expanded Charlotte Convention Center to increase the number of conferences and hotel stays in Center City.
- Increase the visibility of the area's professional sports teams, including the Panthers and Bobcats, so that they become attractions on a national scale.
- Promote and market the one-of-a-kind NASCAR Hall of Fame.
- Highlight Center City's rich history and cultural past.
- Embrace and enhance Center City's neighborhoods, complete with distinct architectural features, gathering places and programming, so that they become draws unto themselves.
- Increase the presence of public art, adding to the identity of Center City.
- Continue to employ and enhance the recently created "Charlotte's Got A Lot" branding and marketing campaign.
- Connect and support established organizations, such as the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority and the Charlotte Regional Sports Commission, whose missions are to promote and program the Center City and the region.

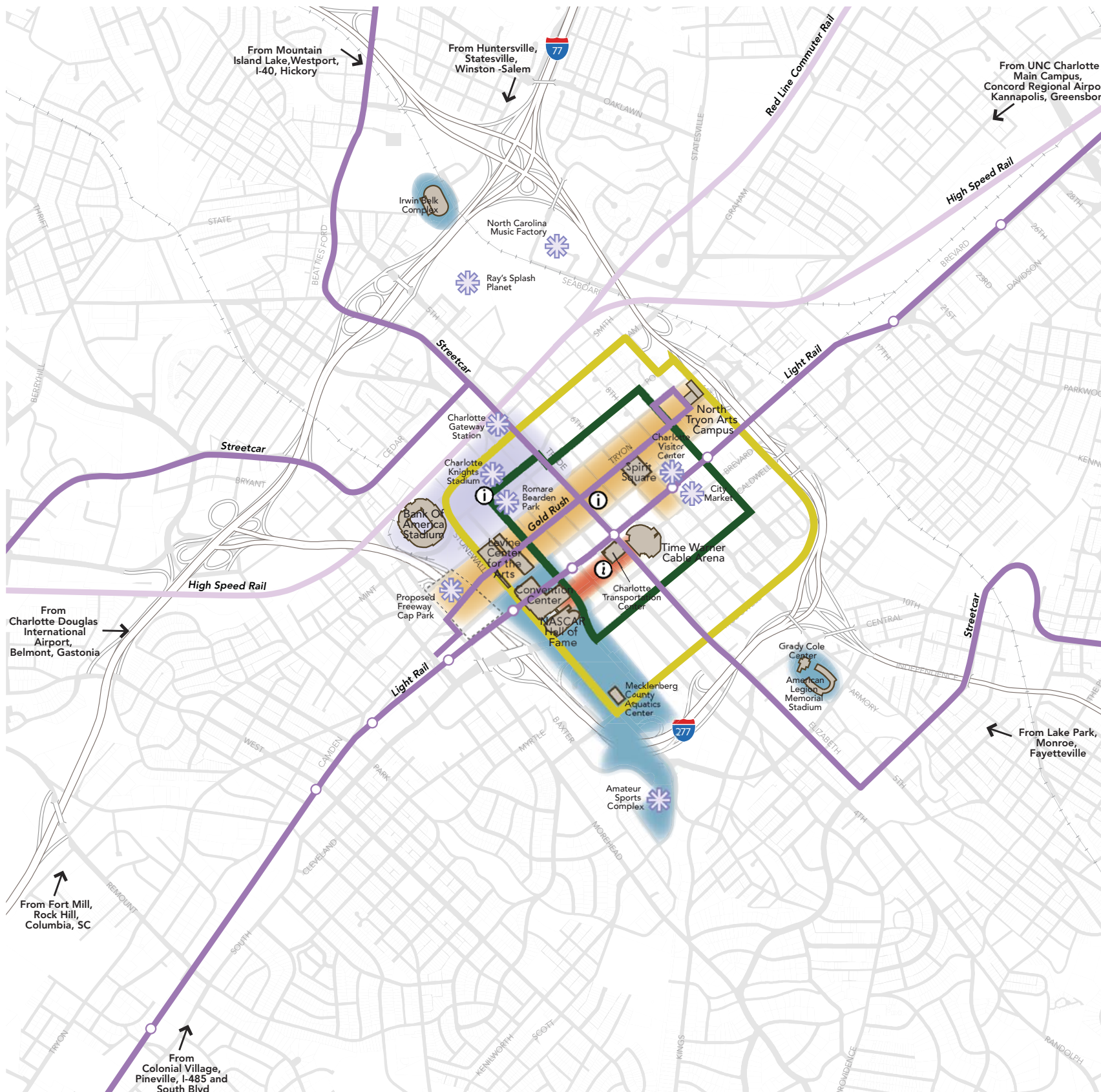
Despite these assets and opportunities, there are several challenges that must be overcome if Center City is to achieve its potential as a significant and noteworthy destination. Specific **challenges** include:

- Lack of comfortable pedestrian and transit connections between Center City’s major facilities and venues.
- Lack of street-level retail to complement the visitor experience.
- A Visitors Center that is currently neither large nor comprehensive enough to support increased visitor travel to Charlotte.
- Insufficient or unidentified funding mechanisms for development of new arts, cultural, and entertainment venues and programs.
- Lack of “internationally friendly” events and resources that celebrate and attract Charlotte’s significant population of residents from other countries.
- Lack of an iconic structure, skyline feature or landmark design to help create brand recognition.
- Weak or nonexistent neighborhood events and programming in some neighborhoods, while strong in others.
- Lack of a nationally- and internationally-recognized identity for Center City as a destination.

Recommendations

An array of destinations and activities helps to fuel a strong tourism industry for Uptown and Center City. The many exciting programs, events and venues also make the area **more livable for Center City residents and draw people from around the metro region**. The following recommendations and physical strategies will ensure the area’s continued vitality and prosperity. Collectively, they support the following overall 2020 Vision Plan goals:

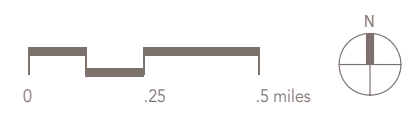
<p>GOAL 1 Urban Design and Sustainability</p> 	<p>GOAL 2 Regional Economic Engine</p> 	<p>GOAL 3 Lifelong Learning</p> 	<p>GOAL 4 Premier Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Destination</p> 	<p>GOAL 5 Walkable, Full-Service Neighborhoods</p> 	<p>GOAL 6 Interconnected Natural and Recreational Amenities</p> 	<p>GOAL 7 Thriving Retail and Restaurants</p> 	<p>GOAL 8 Multi-Dimensional Transportation System</p> 
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destination charlotte physical strategies

Destination districts must be cultivated to leverage and connect Center City's many arts, cultural and entertainment facilities. Transit and roadway linkages should provide quick, easy access to Charlotte's premier venues.

- Anchor Destination
- Destination District**
 - Ballpark Neighborhood
 - Tryon Street Cultural Mile
 - Brevard Street Shopping and Entertainment
 - Amateur Sports Cluster
 - Ward Loop
 - Boulevard Loop
 - Regional Transit Connection
 - Local Transit Connection
 - Light Rail Station
 - Information Center or Kiosk
 - Freeway/Ramp
 - Rail



destination charlotte recommendations

destination charlotte (DC)
DC-1. Link Existing and New Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Venues
DC-2. Develop an “Amateur Sports Cluster”
DC-3. Further Establish Charlotte as a Premier Destination
DC-4. Create New, Centrally-Located Information Facilities
DC-5. Enhance Charlotte’s Identity with Programs and Venues That Celebrate Multi-Cultural Charlotte

DC-1. Link Existing and New Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Venues

Center City is already a major regional destination for arts, culture, sports and entertainment. However, much of this success has been driven by the attraction of individual venues, not the links and relationships between them. Center City will benefit from strategically connecting facilities via a well-designed public realm with interesting ground-floor retail, direct transit links, and innovative approaches to marketing and promotion. A combination of signage, architecture, streetscape design, placemaking and marketing materials can provide a cohesive and recognizable experience.

DC-1a. Jump start development along Brevard Street to connect major destinations. Brevard Street provides a critical connection between the Charlotte Convention Center, NASCAR Hall of Fame and Time Warner Cable Arena. The corridor is planned as a pedestrian-friendly “Signature Street” with active ground floors, wide sidewalks with attractive landscaping and a mix of other supporting uses. Mid- to high-density mixed-use development is recommended, including a new Charlotte Transportation Center anchoring a landmark skyscraper. Easily accessible by light rail, streetcar, bus and bike—and with a flexible, intimately-scaled design that would allow the roadway to be closed off to autos during festivals and events—Brevard would be active, interesting and exciting.

DC-1b. Create exciting streetscape environments around the proposed minor league ballpark. The proposed minor league ballpark between Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK) and 4th, Graham and Mint streets would add another great sports venue to Center City. The area’s streets must be pedestrian-friendly and provide strong links to Bank of America Stadium, the future Gateway Station and other destinations in Third Ward. The combination of the baseball and football stadiums and Romare Bearden Park would draw visitors of all ages and walks of life to this revitalized area of Uptown. Mint and Graham, in particular, should be animated with outdoor dining, places for people to recreate and relax, food kiosks and retail vendors, and a range of programmed activities (see Ballpark Neighborhood section in Chapter 4: Focus Areas for more detail).

destination charlotte recommendations

DC-1c. Connect the destination venues along MLK with targeted upgrades to sidewalks and streets. MLK is uniquely located, connecting the future ballpark, Bank of America Stadium, Romare Bearden Park, Levine Center for the Arts, Charlotte Convention Center, NASCAR Hall of Fame and the Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center. The streetscape environment along MLK should be enhanced to provide better pedestrian connections and amenities along this important destination corridor. Improvements should include wider sidewalks and distinct paving materials, trees, landscaping, signage, and furnishings that together distinguish this important link and build upon the recommended Ward Loop improvements (see Integrated Transportation Network section in this chapter for more detail).



Romare Bearden Park will be an important open space in Third Ward that should be connected to other destinations via streetscape enhancements.

DC-1d. Strengthen a pedestrian and transit connection linking the North Carolina Music Factory to the rest of Uptown. The North Carolina Music Factory provides Center City residents and visitors with an assortment of entertainment and dining venues combined with office, rehearsal and future residential units. As a true mixed-use environment, the facility offers a unique experience in the region but suffers from a lack of clear and safe pedestrian and bicycle access from the core of Uptown. A potential bicycle and pedestrian connection includes Tryon/9th streets to Pinewood Cemetery to Seaboard Street and should be further explored for feasibility. A second connection should be created from the future Gateway Station north along the planned commuter line to 9th, akin to the redevelopment of the High Line in New York. Elements such as designated pathways, lighting, art, sculpture and interpretive signage that reflect Charlotte’s social and cultural heritage could be included along the route. Overall access to the area could also be improved through strengthening transit links, such as an extension of the Gold Rush trolley service.

DC-1e. Enhance, brand and market the diverse arts, cultural and entertainment facilities and programs located in Center City. Tryon Street is already stitched together with a great pedestrian-friendly streetscape and the Gold Rush rubber tire trolley. A number of plazas, hotels and restaurants

line the street and help to connect the various museums, concert halls and performance spaces. A branding and marketing initiative should be conducted to further strengthen and tie together this area of Tryon with the rest of Center City. Smaller venues, such as studios, galleries and experimental theaters as well as shopping, could further solidify Center City as the core of arts and culture in the larger region.

DC-1f. Maximize the opportunity to attract conventions and events with an expanded Charlotte Convention Center and redesigned College Street frontage. The Charlotte Convention Center could increase its appeal and competitive advantage by hosting events and conferences that cater to previously untapped audiences. Development of a linked conference hotel facility should be a high priority. Expanding Center City lodging options to include a wider variety of price points and family-friendly hotels would also help the Convention Center serve a wider base of customers. Given current and future market demand, the facility would be well-served by an approximately 1,000-room hotel. In addition, redesign of the Convention Center’s College Street frontage to include retail uses and other consumer-oriented services would provide convenience for convention attendees and help address the inactive spaces along the facility’s long blank walls.

destination charlotte recommendations

DC-2. Develop an “Amateur Sports Cluster”

Center City has an opportunity to create a group of related facilities oriented toward amateur sports competitions that will draw regional and national visitors. With the existing Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center, Grady Cole Center, Pearl Street Park and Memorial Stadium serving as anchors—as well as great regional connectivity via freeways and rail—an Amateur Sports Cluster has the potential to make significant contributions to economic development and regional tourism. A cluster, generally situated along Stonewall Street, can build on the activity and proximity of the new NASCAR Hall of Fame, Charlotte Convention Center, and numerous hotels and other destination venues. This cluster can provide recreational facilities for a future new Second Ward High School, residents of the planned Brooklyn Village mixed-use redevelopment project and the larger Charlotte community. A specific feasibility study should be undertaken to assess the economic development potential of building new amateur sports facilities in this area.

DC-2a. Secure additional funding for organizations that will develop, manage and promote an Amateur Sports Cluster. An Amateur Sports Cluster could thrive with capable direction and should have dedicated organizational entities to guide and oversee feasibility studies, development, management and promotion. Current entities such as the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, Charlotte Sports Commission and Mecklenburg County would help promote Center City as a

destination with a unique grouping of sports facilities, hotels and supporting destinations. Identifying and securing additional funding for these organizations will be critical.

DC-2b. Expand the Mecklenburg County Aquatic Facility in its current location and explore co-location opportunities with a future new Second Ward High School. Renovation or new construction should result in a natatorium capable of hosting national and international swimming events, similar to the Georgia Tech Aquatics Center identified by a working group member. Improvements should include improved seating, additional shared parking opportunities, and better pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the rest of Uptown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Plans should also explore the potential for shared facilities with the future new Second Ward High School and ensure adequate programming capacity for community use.

DC-2c. Develop additional indoor and outdoor sports venues. An Amateur Sports Cluster should be bolstered with a collection of new facilities within Center City, including outdoor basketball facilities, multi-use turf fields and indoor training facilities. Opportunities to develop facilities in Pearl Street Park and Baxter Street Park should be explored. These parks benefit from close proximity to the Aquatic Center and from greenway trail connections to the Grady Cole Center, Memorial Stadium, and a variety of hotels and other destinations.



A variety of sports and activities should comprise the Amateur Sports Cluster to attract teams and visitors from throughout the region, state and country.

destination charlotte recommendations

DC-3. Further Establish Charlotte as a Premier Destination

To reinforce the identity of Center City’s established destination clusters, additional venues and events should be developed to fill missing programming gaps. These facilities and activities should supplement Center City’s current offerings and, as a result, attract new visitors to Center City.

DC-3a. Develop an iconic, uniquely Charlotte structure or landmark to attract visitors to Center City and increase brand recognition nationally and internationally. The great cities of the world have an easily recognizable structure—a building, bridge, gateway or other prominent architectural

feature—that is synonymous with that place. Center City could position itself as a destination nationally and internationally with the development of such a structure. The structure or landmark could be explored on the proposed cap park. An international design competition should be conducted to identify its type, size and location.

DC-3b. Locate new venues adjacent to existing and proposed facilities to capitalize on synergies. The proposed minor league ballpark in Third Ward, combined with its close proximity to Bank of America Stadium, should encourage and incentivize

the development of bars and restaurants to provide services and amenities for up to 10,000 new fans attending minor league baseball and events. The City Market, currently under construction, should be accessible and convenient for all of Center City and the Charlotte area.

DC-3c. Explore the development of an electric car race and other special events in Center City. “Signature” events should be developed and hosted in appropriate locations in Center City. These events should be unique to Charlotte and put Center City “on the map.” Such events could link to Charlotte’s history and heritage while remaining current and integrating new trends and developments. Potential events might include an electric car NASCAR event, international food festival, music festival, military reenactments and more.



Bilbao, Spain, has attracted global attention and visitation as a result of its iconic Guggenheim Museum.



Signature events, such as this solar car rally in Geneva, Switzerland, should be explored to highlight Charlotte as a destination and leader in sustainability.

destination charlotte recommendations

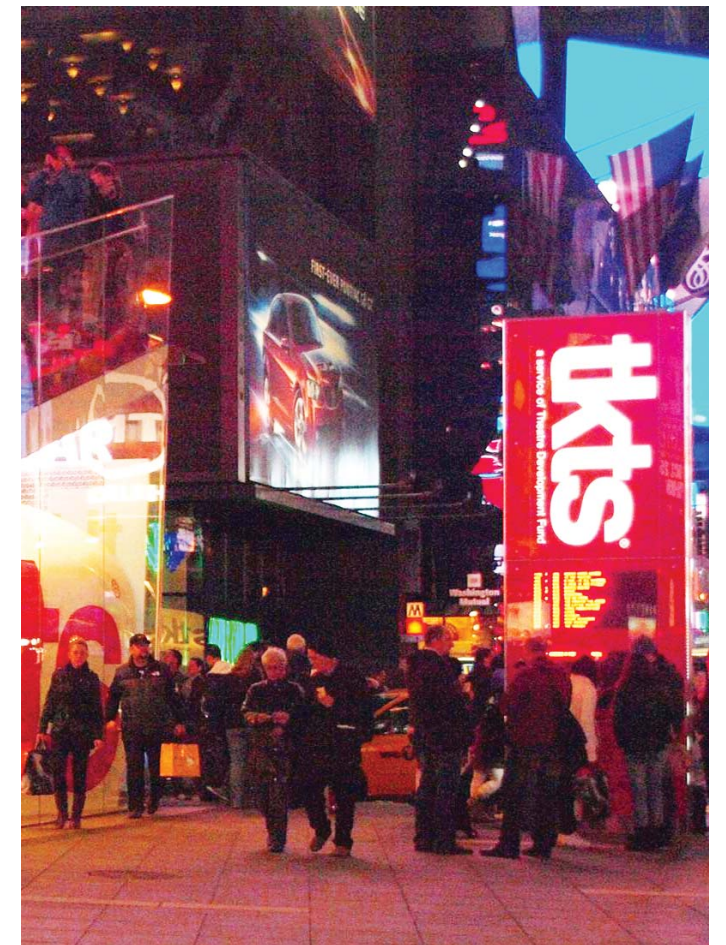
DC-4. Create New, Centrally-Located Information Facilities

For those new to town or visiting for the first time in years, a visit to the tourist information office is helpful for finding out basic information on top destinations. Center City's Visitors Center should be a destination itself with educational displays and interactive programming.

DC-4a. Develop a new, expanded Visitors Center. A new Visitors Center could provide an improved portal for tourists with additional information on the history and heritage of Center City and the larger Charlotte-Mecklenburg region. Interpretive elements, exhibits and programming could significantly enhance the visitor experience. The new Visitors Center should be located along transit near a cluster of Center City's most visited destinations. A potential site is near the 7th Street LYNX Blue Line light rail station, adjacent to the future developments of First Ward Park and the City Market and near the Levine Museum of the New South, ImaginOn, Discovery Place and the Time Warner Cable Arena.

DC-4b. Apply cutting-edge technology to existing information kiosks and other high-traffic areas. New, cutting-edge technology should be integrated with the already well-designed streetside kiosks along Tryon Street and at prominent locations such as Independence Square. These kiosks could provide information for visitors exploring Center City and its historic destination neighborhoods. They should provide on-demand information for events, transit options, nearby restaurants, shopping districts and more. A digital destination directory and other wayfinding tools should be explored as part of the kiosk design. The kiosk system should also be expanded to other major thoroughfares throughout Uptown and the Center City neighborhoods, especially in close proximity to destination venues and event sites.

DC-4c. Create an Uptown ticket booth to simplify the process of purchasing performance or event tickets. The opportunity to help attract and serve visitors with a centrally-located Uptown ticket booth should be explored. As suggested by a working group member, the booth would serve as a one-stop-shop for tickets to theater performances, concerts, special museum exhibits, ballgames and more. Tickets could be provided the day of events to help boost attendance and provide an affordable option for potential patrons.



An exciting, centrally-located Uptown ticket booth similar to Times Square's in New York City should be created to serve as a one-stop-shop to purchase tickets to events and performances.

destination charlotte recommendations

DC-5. Enhance Charlotte's Identity with Programs and Venues That Celebrate Multi-Cultural Charlotte

Charlotte's solid economic foundation, reputation for livability and strong downtown are attractive to employees, students and visitors from around the world. Center City should promote an international orientation that embraces a diverse population, welcomes overseas tourists, and provides the necessary support services for these groups.

DC-5a. Develop a diverse slate of programs and events that promote a multi-cultural Charlotte.

International festivals are one way to communicate Center City's diversity to residents and visitors. The combination of food, art, music, dance and traditions

of both local Charlotteans and people from around the world—from Oktoberfest events and Cinco de Mayo parties to food festivals and more—should be embraced, celebrated and promoted.

DC-5b. Enhance efforts to further develop Center City's music and entertainment scene.

Center City is already a nightlife destination for many residents and visitors, but opportunities exist to further diversify the current offerings. Center City should provide comfortable, intimate venues for people of all ages and income levels, offering activities such as live music, dancing, karaoke, children's plays, live theater and comedy. Existing music and entertainment offerings should also be enhanced by programs that support outdoor music festivals, band and singing competitions, and weekly concert series featuring local, national and international artists.

DC-5c. Establish a diversity of new dining, music and hospitality establishments in Center City and greater Charlotte.

Center City has an opportunity to build upon the strong nucleus of quality restaurants and become a true culinary destination. The Johnson & Wales University and Central Piedmont Community College culinary and hospitality programs have been a tremendous boost to the quantity and quality of dining options in recent years. There is also an opportunity to expand upon existing music offerings in Uptown. Recognizing the value of great in-town dining and music options, residents and visitors should continue to support new concepts and creative approaches that reflect the diverse nature of Center City. Specifically, efforts should be made to cultivate and recruit ethnically diverse food establishments to Center City. Doing so would raise the awareness of the multi-cultural Charlotte population and make Center City more internationally friendly. In addition, building from the success of the North Carolina Music Factory, the music scene should be further cultivated to provide more options for residents and visitors—especially along Brevard Street—to catalyze other development and capitalize on attendees at the Convention Center.



Food festivals, restaurants and streetside vendors should all celebrate and enhance a multi-cultural Charlotte.