



chapter 4:
focus areas



chapter 4: focus areas

Implementing the Transformative Strategies and moving the vision toward reality will be achieved in part through the physical development and enhancement of specific “Focus Areas” in Center City. Strategic, well-designed projects in key locations will dramatically transform these places and, in turn, catalyze further investment in surrounding areas.

Six major Focus Areas are identified in this section. They were selected based on criteria ranging from their capacity to stimulate short-term development to their ability to foster long-term partnering opportunities that will benefit a range of public and private entities.

Focus Area strategies each consider land uses, infrastructure, adjacent development patterns and programmatic contexts. They also outline important connections and linkages, key development and improvement opportunities, and specific catalyst projects. Importantly, while concentrating on areas with assets to further leverage, they span several different geographies of Center City to ensure a broad distribution of resources, capital and energy.

Criteria for Selection

Several criteria were used to evaluate the potential for each Focus Area, as well as to analyze and prioritize project opportunities within each. In summary, the Focus Areas must:

- **Have the potential for short-term development/implementation.** To generate and maintain as much momentum as possible, Focus Areas and the projects they support should be evaluated on their ability to be realized within a short time frame. This concept of determining “quick wins” will help provide a series of projects that can be more readily implemented.
- **Create synergy with public improvements.** Sites and projects should build on and coordinate with public improvements either on-site or immediately adjacent. Investments in the public realm and open spaces are especially synergistic in their ability to support a new catalyst project, and vice-versa.
- **Support many Transformative Strategies.** Focus Areas should be carefully analyzed and chosen based on their ability to implement and effectuate as many of the Transformative Strategies as possible.
- **Provide key connections to adjacent areas.** To support creating linkages within and between Center City neighborhoods, Focus Areas and catalyst projects should be evaluated on their ability to fill in a critical gap or make a foray into an otherwise

underdeveloped portion of Center City that physically separates neighborhoods.

- **Capitalize on recent/planned investments.** Similar to supporting public improvements, Focus Areas should capitalize and build on the energy created by existing recent or successful development projects or destinations. For example, a catalyst project in a Focus Area may build on the success of a nearby residential development, and could add the critical mass necessary for retail to be successful.
- **Demonstrate a “win” for both the public and private sectors.** Focus Areas should foster projects and improvements that are financially feasible and aim to provide positive returns for investors, be they public or private, to ensure successful long-term investments.

Utilizing these criteria, six Focus Areas are identified to spur strategic, catalytic development opportunities. The 2020 Vision Plan Focus Areas are:

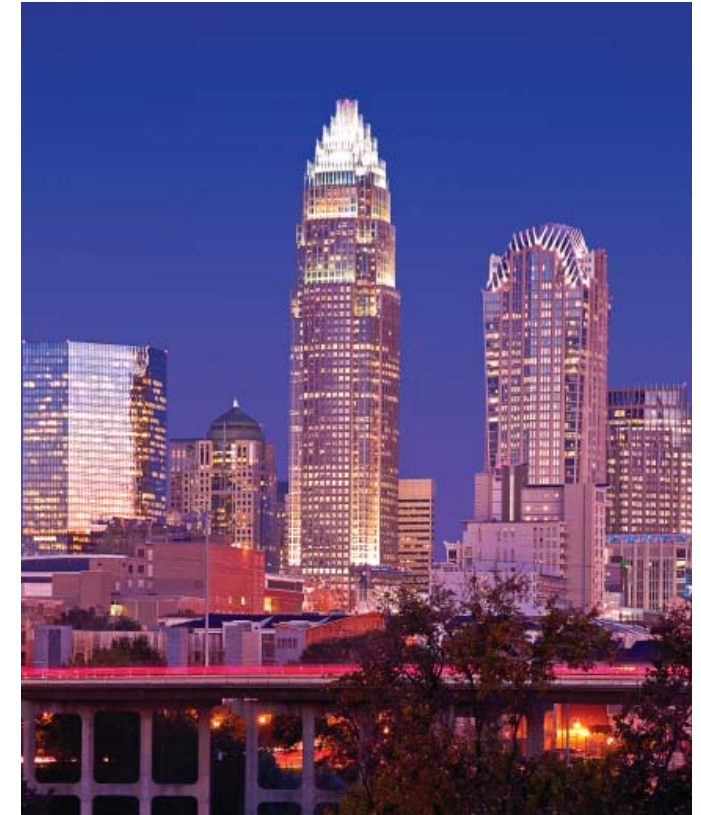
- Stonewall/I-277.
- Ballpark Neighborhood.
- North Tryon.
- Charlotte Transportation Center.
- West Trade Corridor.
- South End.

Overarching Design Principles

Each Focus Area's unique location, character, assets and opportunities will shape its particular development trajectory and physical transformation over time.

However, there are several shared design principles that should be applied to all Focus Areas to help achieve the 2020 Vision. These principles relate to the guidelines outlined in the Placemaking and Urban Design Transformative Strategy and include:

- Iconic Architecture.** Build iconic architecture that enlivens the urban fabric, celebrates Charlotte as a 21st century city, identifies and “brands” the Focus Area, adds to the overall identity of Center City, and complements the broader context of surrounding neighborhoods.
- Gateways to Center City.** Establish gateways—including artwork, signage and other sculptural elements—at the transition points between Focus Areas and existing development to distinguish Center City's identity within greater Charlotte.
- Density.** Ensure that the overall density of Focus Area development is high to create the population and urban form that can support neighborhood services and activate surrounding streets and commercial areas. New development should “step down” to respect existing neighborhood character, meet the scale of adjacent residential areas, and maximize access to sunlight and views.
- Flexible Ground-Floor Space.** Build flexible ground-floor spaces to allow active retail, restaurant and entertainment uses to move into Center City over time and as market demand grows.
- Active Ground-Floor Uses.** Encourage active work and living spaces on ground floors not designed for retail, restaurants and entertainment uses. Do not permit construction of large building frontages filled with office or residential lobby space uses.
- Streetscape Improvements.** Prioritize streetscape improvements along the edges of redevelopment Focus Area catalyst project sites and streets linking major destinations to existing and future transit stops. Consider establishing minimum setbacks and optional recess distances from curbs to primary building façades to create environments supportive of pedestrians.
- Parking Design.** Encourage integration of parking into new development, wrapped parking structures with active ground-floor uses, and shared parking solutions, especially in higher-density areas. Any surface parking lots should be highly landscaped and located between or behind buildings to prevent fragmentation of the urban fabric. Entrances to parking structures or lots should not be located along pedestrian-oriented streets.



New, bold, iconic architecture will help identify and brand not only each Focus Area but all of Center City.












Each Focus Area must help to improve and connect the pedestrian streetscape environment.



focus areas

The six areas span a range of geographies in Center City and are linked by the larger framework of transit, pedestrian, bicycle and roadway connections. Each Focus Area section on the following pages includes an overview of the location, vision and overall approach to the area; a summary of opportunities and challenges; a diagram that illustrates key physical relationships and opportunities; highlights of specific development and improvement opportunities; and a description of catalyst projects that will anchor the area and help stimulate investment.

-  Focus Area
-  Transit Station
-  Local Transit Connection
-  Regional Transit Connection
-  Ward Loop Connection
-  Boulevard Connection
-  Green Street Connection
-  New Street Connection
-  Freeway/Ramp



stonewall/I-277

Situated along recently reclaimed land at a prominent gateway to Uptown, the Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area bridges the gap between the core of Uptown and South End. This Focus Area holds great potential to take advantage of its many attractions and flourish as a walkable destination and employment center.

While some development is already underway, in coming years the Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area will see dramatic change in the form of new and expanded hospitality destinations, a new Amateur Sports Cluster, a new mixed-use neighborhood, a freeway cap, and other linkages that further connect Uptown with South End. The area will feature a range of urban uses including offices, hospitality, housing, recreation venues, education facilities, parks and shops. Office workers, conference attendees, visitors, students, athletes, families and more will activate the streets and make Stonewall/I-277 an exciting corridor and principal entry into Uptown.

With a foundation of significant redevelopment energy already in place along South Tryon Street and in South End, the strategy focuses on the area generally bounded by Stonewall, Brevard and 3rd streets on the north, Little Sugar Creek Greenway on the east, I-277 and Morehead Street on the south, and Tryon and Church streets on the west. Several projects that contribute to economic development include the Charlotte Convention Center expansion, NASCAR Hall of Fame, Westin Hotel and the Levine Center for the Arts. The Focus Area approach builds upon existing assets and future plans—including nearby hospitality-oriented facilities, the burgeoning

South End, land uses and design guidelines of the Second Ward Village Plan, the Brevard Street Plan, and future development opportunities along Stonewall—to further establish and enhance direction for the area.

Opportunities and Challenges

In the Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area, there are **opportunities** to:

- Implement the overland greenway trail connector along Stonewall Street from Little Sugar Creek to the Tryon Street bridge and ultimately to the Irwin Creek Greenway.
- Leverage the existing hospitality cluster anchored by the Convention Center and NASCAR Hall of Fame to attract new business, visitors and residents.
- Expand the City's Convention Center business.
- Implement plans for Brevard Street to create a stroll district and entertainment destination that will increase demand for hotels, restaurants and other hospitality services as the neighborhood grows.
- Identify strategic investments proximal to existing recreation venues that will enrich the user experience and attract a wider range of visitors.
- Stimulate redevelopment of Second Ward by utilizing publicly-controlled properties south of Stonewall Street and along I-277. Sufficient land is available for short- and mid-term development without construction of a freeway cap.
- Implement the Second Ward Neighborhood Master Plan to jumpstart many of these opportunities.

Potential **challenges** in the Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area include:

- I-277 is a barrier between Uptown, South End and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Few neighborhood amenities currently exist to attract residents to Second Ward; restaurants, entertainment and retail will be slow in coming to the area without adequate local market demand.
- Many existing buildings feature service entrances, loading docks, inactive spaces and secondary entrances that discourage pedestrian activity.
- Most of the developable land that has and will be created from freeway ramp reconfiguration will still be bounded by I-277 and one or more major roadways.

















The Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area includes publicly-owned parcels adjacent to the freeway interchange.



stonewall/i-277 illustrative concept

The concept illustrates key recommendations related to connections, development opportunities and catalyst projects, which are highlighted on the following pages.

-  Focus Area Boundary
-  Connection/Linkage
-  Development Opportunity
-  Catalyst Project
-  New Development
-  Local Transit Connection
-  Ward Loop Connection
-  Boulevard Loop Connection
-  Green Street Connection
-  New Street Connection
-  Plaza/Promenade
-  Transit Station
-  Freeway/Ramp
-  Rail



KEY MAP

0 50 150 300 feet



stonewall/i-277 recommendations

Recommendations

The full build out of Stonewall/I-277 will take many years to complete. There are several key recommendations that will help ensure the area's success as a prominent gateway and major mixed-use and hospitality-oriented destination. These include creating strong **connections and linkages**, capturing key **development opportunities**, and developing a specific **catalyst project**.

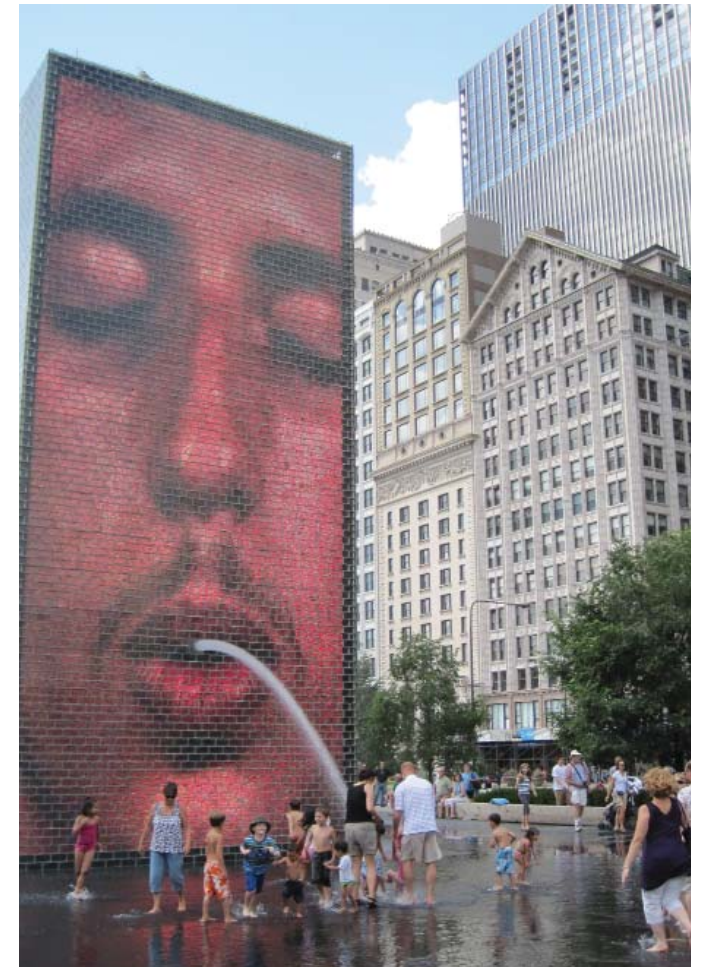
CONNECTIONS AND LINKAGES

Redevelopment of the Stonewall/I-277 area provides an opportunity to restore the street grid and improve connections between several parts of Center City.

Specific recommendations include:

- a Construct a Cap over the I-277 Freeway.** A cap over the loop should be constructed in phases and eventually stretch between Church Street and the LYNX Blue Line light rail. This strategy—introduced in the 2010 Vision Plan and built upon here—would help break down the barrier of the loop, create taxable property, and encourage infill development in Uptown and South End. The cap should include a large civic space framed by new private development. This space could also support additional civic and cultural spaces near Tryon Street and should create a gateway to Center City and Uptown. Iconic architecture, public art and the infrastructure itself should highlight the importance of Uptown and this vibrant mixed-use area.

- b Redesign Stonewall Street to Become the Southern Section of the Boulevard Loop.** Stonewall Street would be a main connection between Second and Third wards. It should be a lush, beautiful roadway for autos as well as recreational walking, strolling and cycling, similar to Queens Road in Myers Park. McDowell Street should be developed as the eastern section of the Boulevard Loop to connect uses along Stonewall to the Second Ward/Brooklyn Village, Government Center and First Ward while providing convenient access to Trade Street and Midtown (see Integrated Transportation Network section in Chapter 3: Transformative Strategies for more detail).
- c Create a Wide Pedestrian Promenade along Stonewall Street.** As outlined in the Second Ward Neighborhood Master Plan, the street should transition from a primarily auto-oriented street to a vehicular and pedestrian connector. Streetscape improvements within the greenway trail overland connector, including a wide pedestrian sidewalk along Stonewall Street's south edge, should enhance walkability and facilitate interaction with adjacent buildings.



The cap park over the I-277 freeway should be bold and exciting with public art, kiosks and programming, such as Millennium Park in Chicago, Illinois.

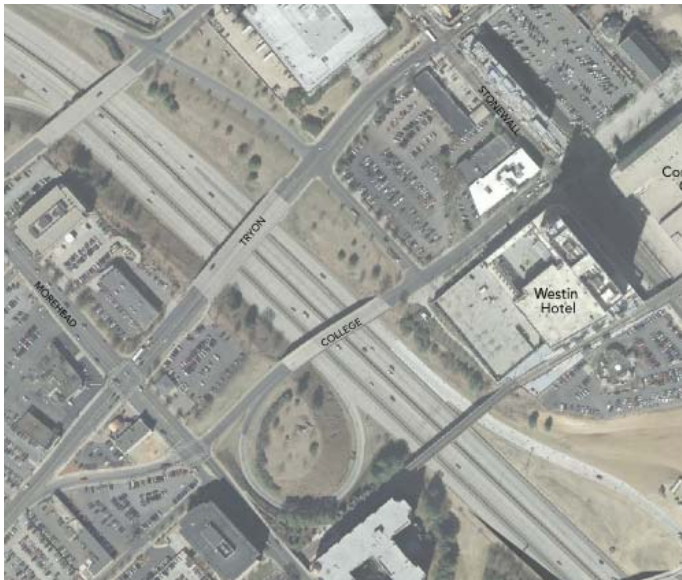
stonewall/I-277 recommendations



The Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area should link closely with the Second Ward Neighborhood Master Plan, which proposes stronger connectivity through reintroduction of portions of the street grid.

- d Support the Ward Loop.** Unique materials, landscaping and stormwater management should be integrated on MLK to link the Second Ward Village, Levine Center for the Arts and Romare Bearden Park (see Integrated Transportation Network section in Chapter 3: Transformative Strategies for more detail).
- e Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections.** Strong bicycle and pedestrian connections should be made throughout the Focus Area, with links to public transit, the Little Sugar Creek Greenway and Pearl Street Park. The rail trail along the LYNX Blue Line light rail should be extended across I-277 as part of the freeway cap and developed as a distinctive linear park with public art and amenities. Planned upgrades to the South Tryon Street Bridge over I-277 will include removal of one lane of traffic, new bike lanes, wider sidewalks and improved lighting. The urban feel and character of Tryon Street should be extended south from Stonewall Street to Morehead Street.
- f Restore the Street Grid.** As described in the Second Ward Neighborhood Master Plan, the area's street grid should be reintroduced through new roads and development to create shorter, more walkable blocks.

stonewall/I-277 recommendations



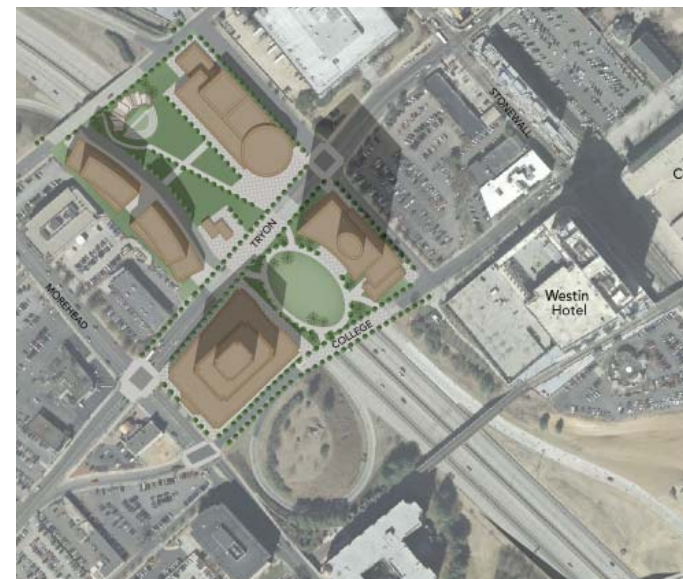
Existing I-277 freeway.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area will have an eclectic yet cohesive mix of uses. New land made available for redevelopment through the reconfiguration of several freeway ramps has converted public land into a tax revenue-generating asset. The freeway cap should extend the mix of offices and cultural destinations along Tryon Street while providing a large civic park space and stronger links between Uptown and South End. Stonewall Street should be home to convention facilities, hotels, offices, amateur sports and recreation facilities, as well as an educational campus shared by the Metro School and a future Second Ward High School, when needed. The Second Ward/Brooklyn Village mixed-use neighborhood should include a range of housing options, shops and services.

Specific recommendations include:

- 1 Bridge the Freeway with Phased Development.** Development of the freeway cap should be phased to ensure that the final circulation patterns and open space, parks and recreational framework support private development needs and provide good connectivity. Targeted uses should include cultural facilities, mixed-use office towers, a large civic park and expansion of Convention Center facilities. A civic space could include elements such as a band shell or amphitheater. Buildings should have attractive façades on the south side of Stonewall Street as well as on the rear side facing the freeway loop. Development on the south side of Stonewall should help fund creation of a wide landscaped pedestrian promenade.



A phased approach to capping the freeway—beginning with a deck between Tryon and College streets and eventually extending north to Church Street and south to the rail line—could be employed to link to South End while reducing initial development costs.

stonewall/I-277 recommendations



The Charlotte Convention Center should be expanded in ways that augment the facilities while creating attractive, walkable ground-floor environments.



New hospitality uses could include boutique hotels to support area destinations and development of the Amateur Sports Cluster.

2 Expand and Enhance the Charlotte Convention Center. Ground-floor façades of the Convention Center should be retrofitted to create more active and inviting streetscapes. Retail, restaurant and meeting spaces on primary street edges should be encouraged. Depending upon development opportunities at the freeway cap, the Convention Center could be expanded south of Stonewall Street and/or east of Caldwell Street. The sidewalk along the College Street side of the facility should be enhanced with a warmer paving pattern, landscaping, and upgraded lighting to make it more inviting for conference attendees and to complement The Green. Similar treatment should occur between the 3rd Street LYNX Blue Line light rail station and the MLK entrance to the Convention Center. All improvements should respect the needs of the facility to maintain access and visibility for its many events.

3 Create New Residential Opportunities. Mixed-use residential development should be developed north of MLK between First Baptist Church and McDowell Street as part of the Second Ward/Brooklyn Village plan. Residential development along MLK south of Second Ward Park should step down to maximize solar access at the park. Additional high-density mixed-use development should be concentrated around the freeway cap park and along the south edge of Stonewall Street.

4 Create New Retail Opportunities. Areas adjacent to the new Second Ward Park and along Stonewall Street should become attractive, marketable areas for new retail and dining activities.

5 Cultivate the Amateur Sports Cluster. A new or renovated Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center should be a key anchor of this economic development strategy. Additional new facilities should be located at Pearl Street Park and Baxter Street Park, as well as other locations throughout Center City. Connections to the Grady Cole Center and American Legion Memorial Stadium should be enhanced for all transportation modes. Opportunities for shared recreation space with a future Second Ward High School, when needed, and in the Second Ward/Brooklyn Village development should also be explored (see Network of Parks, Open Space and Recreation section in Chapter 3: Transformative Strategies for more detail).

6 Develop New Educational Facilities. The potential should be explored for the Metro School and future new Second Ward High School, when new schools are needed, to share recreational facilities and parking. The high school should be developed at a relatively high density as part of a new academic and recreation campus. Opportunities should also be explored for adding office and retail uses to help strengthen the links between the schools and the business community.

7 Expand the Number of Hospitality Destinations. Target lodging, restaurants and other hospitality destinations to locate along Stonewall Street to support the Convention Center, NASCAR Hall of Fame and Amateur Sports Cluster.

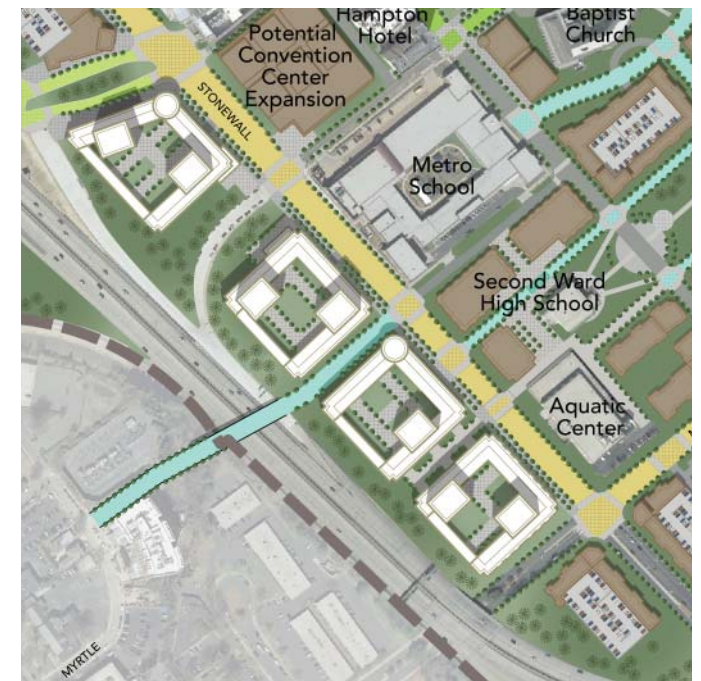
stonewall/I-277 recommendations

CATALYST PROJECT

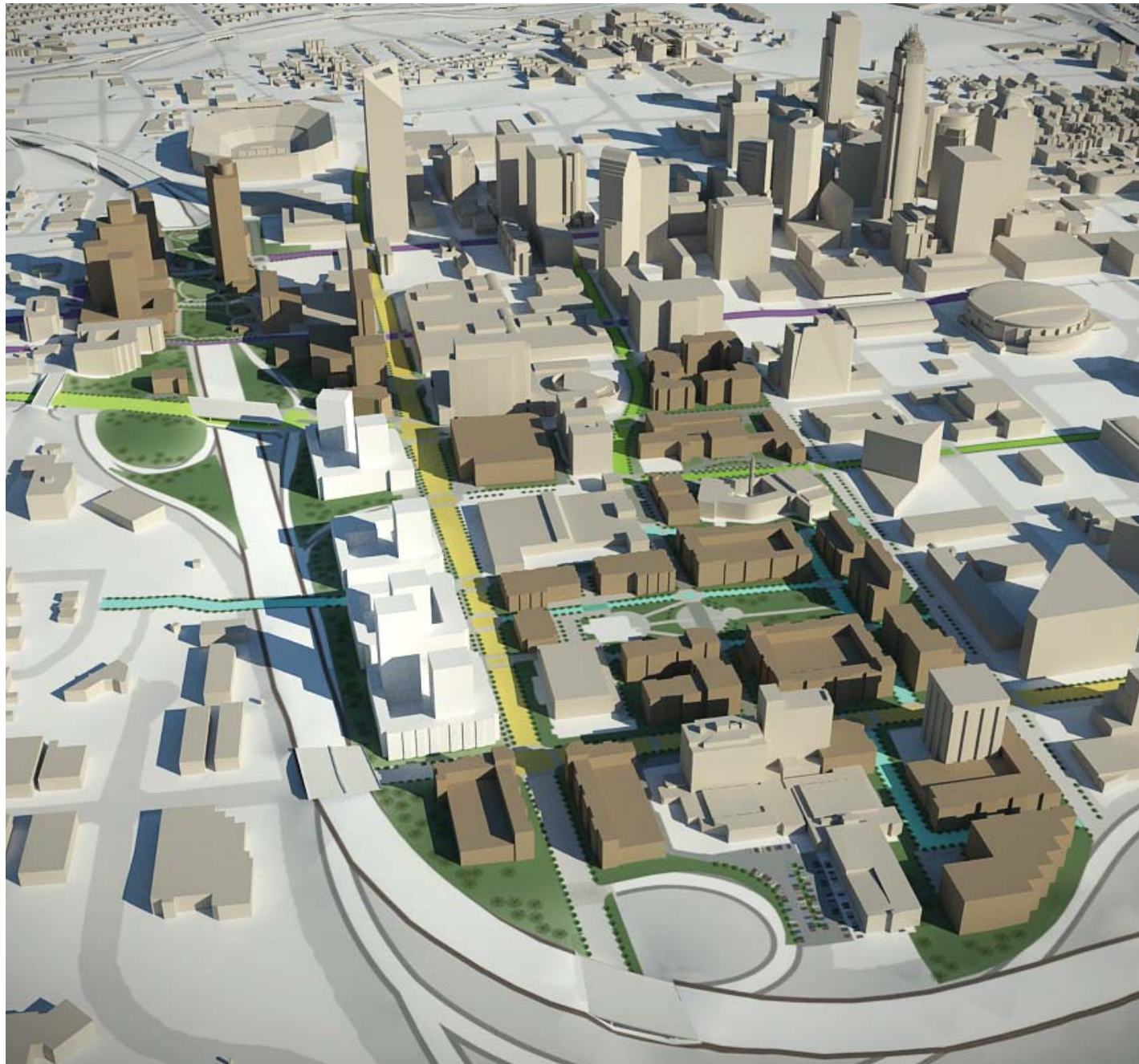
Redevelopment of the Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area will entail a combination of strategic public improvements and private investments over several years. Streetscape enhancements along Stonewall Street and MLK will help to set the stage for revitalization. However, development of **the public land south of Stonewall** will have the most significant impact on defining the area's character and catalyzing development on adjacent properties. Property with the greatest development potential extends from the LYNX Blue Line light rail to beyond McDowell Street between Stonewall and I-277. Market studies can help identify the optimal mix, size and variety of uses. Redevelopment of this site can bring benefits such as an increased tax base, jobs and economic diversity and spark public sector interest in further investment.

Several key elements and design considerations are important to ensure the appropriate development of the site:

- Recommended uses for the public land south of Stonewall Street include hotels, offices, residential, educational facilities and/or recreational facilities with retail and restaurants along the ground floor.
- Lodging should be concentrated on the western end of the development to serve existing visitor destinations.
- Education and recreational facilities should be located adjacent to one another to maximize synergy and potential for shared facilities.
- Service access and parking solutions should be shared between buildings.
- Buildings should be set back from Stonewall Street and oriented to the street to create an attractive pedestrian promenade.
- Service functions for buildings on the south side of Stonewall Street should be accommodated on the east, west or south sides of buildings whenever feasible via service roads that can double as pedestrian pathways.
- The south façade of buildings should be designed to provide a dramatic and aesthetically pleasing edge to Uptown as viewed from the freeway loop and neighborhoods. Iconic architecture should contribute to a prominent Uptown gateway.
- Buildings along Stonewall Street taller than five stories should step back at this height to ensure a pedestrian-friendly scale and allow for sunlight and view access.
- Buildings with setbacks should create opportunities for rooftop restaurants, gardens, balconies and galleries.



stonewall/I-277 recommendations



The Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area is centered around development parcels adjacent to the freeway, which should be developed with a mix of high-intensity uses that create a wide pedestrian promenade and frame the corridor across from several major facilities.



A generous pedestrian promenade, with setbacks large enough to accommodate landscaping, lighting, art and sculptural features, should be developed along the south edge of Stonewall Street as part of the overland greenway trail connector.

ballpark neighborhood

The Ballpark Neighborhood Focus Area in Third Ward will be a place like no other in Charlotte. This vibrant neighborhood will bring together a new AAA baseball park with nearby existing sports facilities; new sport-related retail shops, restaurants and bars; fun and active park spaces; and a transit station that is on par with the finest facilities in the country.

Historically, baseball stadiums were integrated into the urban fabric and were the centerpiece of walkable neighborhoods. However, ballparks developed over the last 50 years were usually built on the edge of cities to ensure an abundant supply of parking and inexpensive land. Recent demographic and economic trends have heralded a return of these busy, affordable, family-friendly facilities to the urban core.

Building on the anticipated construction of Knights Stadium, Romare Bearden Park and the Charlotte Gateway Station—and capitalizing on synergies with Bank of America Stadium—the Ballpark Neighborhood strategy focuses on creating a round-the-clock, activity-oriented place. The area will include high-density residential units for people who want to live near the energy of the ballpark. It will be a new employment center with mixed-use office and commercial development located around the stadiums and the future multi-modal transit station.

The Ballpark Neighborhood Focus Area is generally bounded by Trade Street on the north, the railroad on the west, Church Street on the east, and Stonewall

Street on the south. It builds upon design principles established in the Third Ward Neighborhood Village Plan and establishes further direction for key public improvements and public and private development in the area.

Opportunities and Challenges

In the Ballpark Neighborhood, there are **opportunities** to:

- Support and build upon the plan for a new minor league ballpark near the center of Third Ward.
- Utilize the abundance of surface parking lots and vacant land around the future Knights Stadium site—much of which is under public control—to influence the development, form and character of the neighborhood.
- Realign and redesign key streets to improve connectivity to and within Third Ward.
- Capitalize on plans for the streetcar on Trade Street, as well as regional rail and bus transit, all intersecting at a new Gateway Station to bring in activity, economic development and new projects.

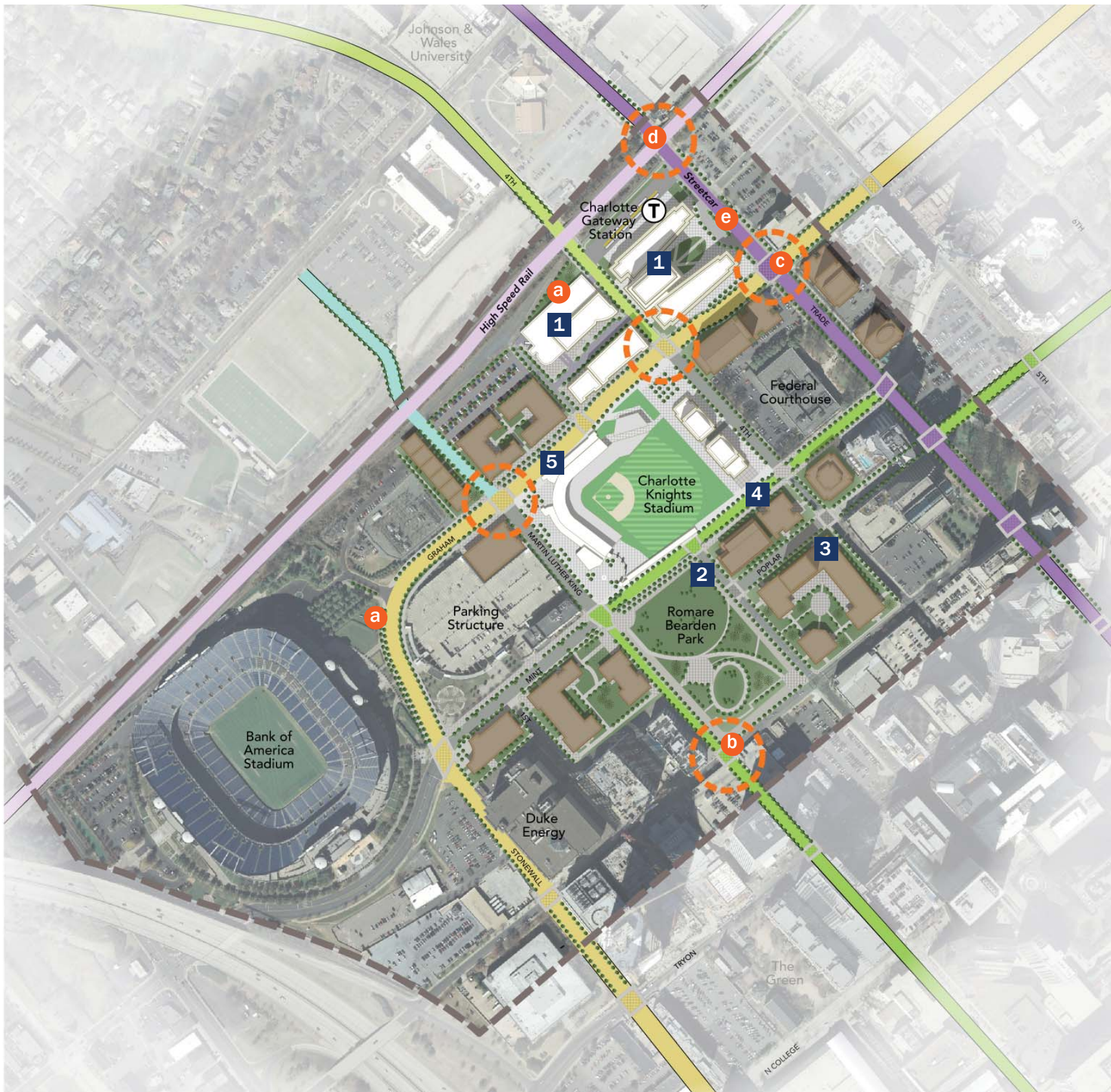
Potential **challenges** in the Ballpark Neighborhood include:

- The railroad is a major barrier separating the west and east portions of Third Ward; 4th and Trade streets provide the only connections across the railroad within the area.

- The barrier effect of the railroad tracks is further compounded by Graham Street, which is a state highway and is largely oriented toward auto through-traffic.
- Bank of America Stadium attracts large crowds to the area, but only for a handful of games and events each year.
- There is currently insufficient market demand for restaurants, entertainment and retail in the district.



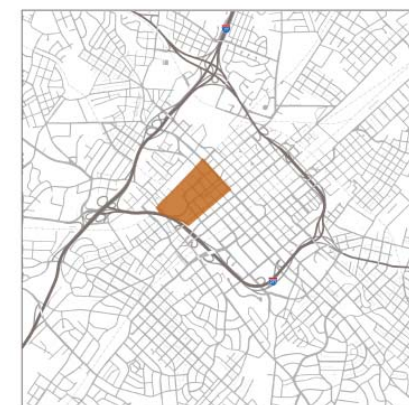
The Ballpark Neighborhood Focus Area includes vacant land and several parking lots in the heart of Third Ward.



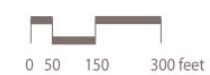
ballpark neighborhood illustrative concept

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- Local Transit Connection
- Ward Loop Connection
- Boulevard Loop Connection
- Green Street Connection
- New Street Connection
- Gateway
- Plaza/Promenade
- Transit Facility
- Freeway/Ramp
- Rail



KEY MAP



ballpark neighborhood recommendations

Recommendations

Creating a Ballpark Neighborhood in Third Ward will be an incremental process, beginning with the development of Romare Bearden Park and the new stadium, and then over time incorporating new private projects and the Gateway Station. There are several key recommendations that will help ensure the Focus Area's success. These include creating strong **connections and linkages**, capturing key **development opportunities**, and developing a specific **catalyst project**.

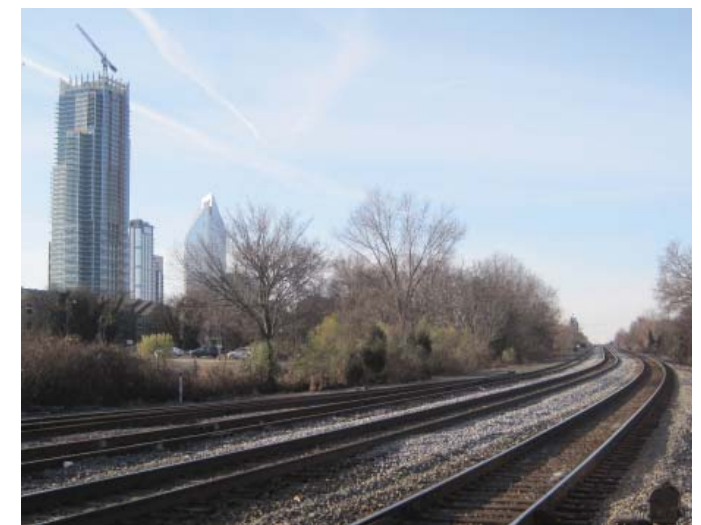
CONNECTIONS AND LINKAGES

Providing strong physical linkages between and to the Ballpark Neighborhood Focus Area's major facilities will be critical to optimizing the economic benefits of these significant investments. Cosmopolitan, clearly-defined streetscapes should draw in tourists and conventioners from Tryon Street, the Convention Center and hotels to experience the park and stadium areas. Ground-floor spaces should have active uses such as shops, cafés, restaurants and bars.

Specific recommendations include:

- a Integrate the Boulevard Loop.** Graham and Stonewall streets should be redesigned to become the western and southern sections of the Boulevard Loop in Uptown (see Integrated Transportation Network section in Chapter 3: Transformative Strategies for more detail). These streets would be the main link between the football and baseball stadiums and Gateway Station.
- b Support the Ward Loop.** Green street and recreation concepts for landscaping and stormwater management should be integrated along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK) and Mint and Poplar streets to link Romare Bearden Park and the Ballpark Neighborhood to Trade and Tryon streets, neighboring destination districts, and other Uptown parks.
- c Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections.** Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should be created at the Trade Street streetcar station and to the Charlotte Gateway Station along MLK and 3rd, 4th, Graham, Mint, Poplar and Church streets.

- d Overcome the Barrier of the Railroad Tracks.** The railroad tracks are a barrier to West Trade Street and the larger West End area. As a prominent east-west link through the area, MLK is an important potential connection to the Third Ward neighborhood west of the railroad tracks. This street should be extended as recommended in the Center City Transportation Plan, linking the neighborhood directly to the center of the ballpark district.
- e Leverage Transit Links.** Develop the streetcar and a signature pedestrian environment along Trade Street with a highly-designed streetscape, plazas and ground-floor activation. These improvements should be prioritized and focused in the Focus Area at the Gateway Station and the intersection of Poplar and Trade streets.

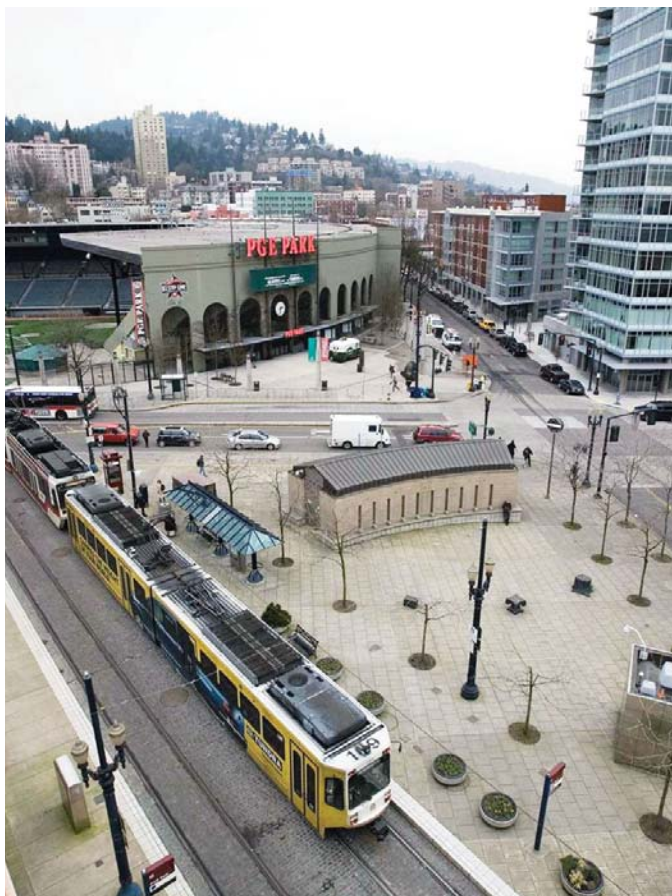


The railroad tracks extending from Fourth Ward south through the Ballpark Neighborhood are a major barrier that must be overcome with strong east-west connections.

ballpark neighborhood recommendations

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to smaller-scale retail shops, restaurants, cafés and bars in the neighborhood, Knights Stadium’s southeast plaza and other ballpark entry points should include sports-related attractions (e.g. the team store, a hall of fame) that will activate the space year-round. Condos, apartments and offices located above the shops and restaurants will be important economic



With the ballpark as a catalyst, the neighborhood could thrive as a destination for residents and tourists, like PGE Park in Portland, Oregon.

catalysts that benefit from proximity to Romare Bearden Park and the ballpark. As part of the future major employment center, office development that extends the current concentration from Tryon Street along Trade Street will be important to establishing a strong daytime population.

Specific recommendations include:

- 1 Create a New Employment Center.** Mixed-use office development should be concentrated near Trade Street and the Gateway Station to take full advantage of existing office concentrations and future transit opportunities. Parcels located adjacent to and across from Gateway Station should be developed as office. The rear parking lot of the Federal Courthouse, to be redeveloped by Queens University, could potentially be redeveloped as an office building surrounding a parking deck.
- 2 Cultivate a Unique Neighborhood Character.** To ensure that the area’s character is authentic to Charlotte, the focus of future development should revolve around supporting the neighborhood as a place to live and work. For example, new shops, services and restaurants should cater to residents and workers, so that the retail theme isn’t solely sports- and visitor-related. Tourists and fans would also enjoy this organic neighborhood character.

- 3 Develop New Residential Opportunities.** Mixed-use residential projects should be developed along Graham, Mint and 4th streets; MLK; and around Romare Bearden Park. These developments would make use of the sector’s high-density potential. Appropriate building height recommendations for new development adjacent to the Knights Stadium should be established to maintain access to sunlight and views of the Uptown core.
- 4 Support New Retail Opportunities.** Flexible ground-floor spaces adjacent to Romare Bearden Park and Knights Stadium should be built in a way that allows for shops, restaurants and entertainment venues to move into the neighborhood over time and as market demand grows. These uses could “spill” out onto the streets around Romare Bearden Park and contribute to a lively, well-utilized park environment.
- 5 Ensure an Attractive Ballpark Façade Design.** The elevations of the new ballpark should be designed to add architectural interest to the neighborhood. Necessary ballpark service areas should have a positive aesthetic impact on the streetscape so that pedestrians feel comfortable walking around all sides of the stadium, especially along Graham and Mint streets. The Mint Street stadium façade will significantly shape the user experience in Romare Bearden Park.

ballpark neighborhood recommendations

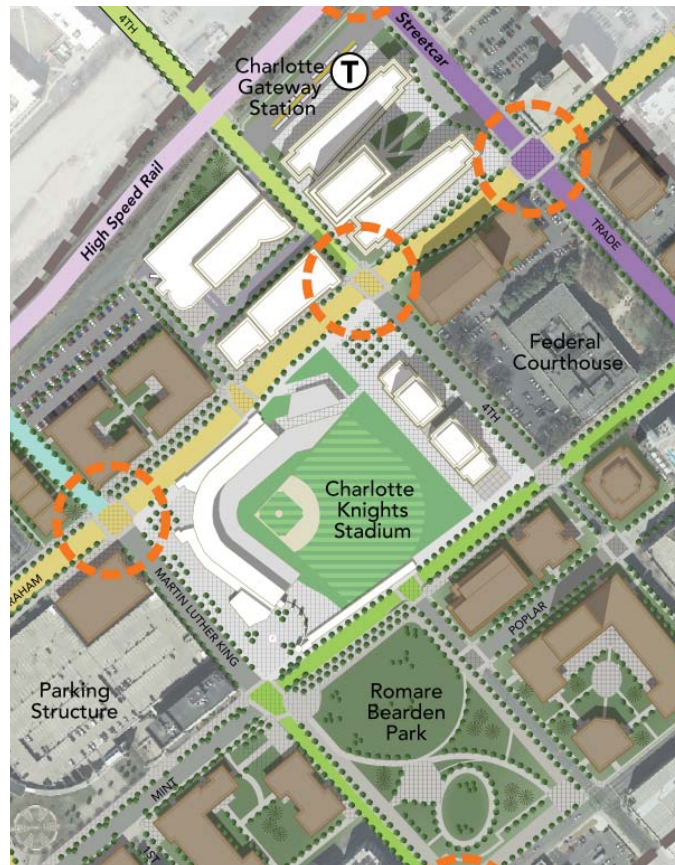
CATALYST PROJECTS

Construction of Romare Bearden Park and streetscape improvements will set the stage for revitalization in the Ballpark Neighborhood Focus Area, but two key development projects—Knights Stadium and the Charlotte Gateway Station—will be key to catalyzing additional development and achieving the vision for the area.

The new **Knights Stadium** is planned for approximately eight acres bounded by Graham, Mint and 4th streets and MLK. Several key elements and design considerations are important to leveraging this large investment at the heart of the neighborhood:

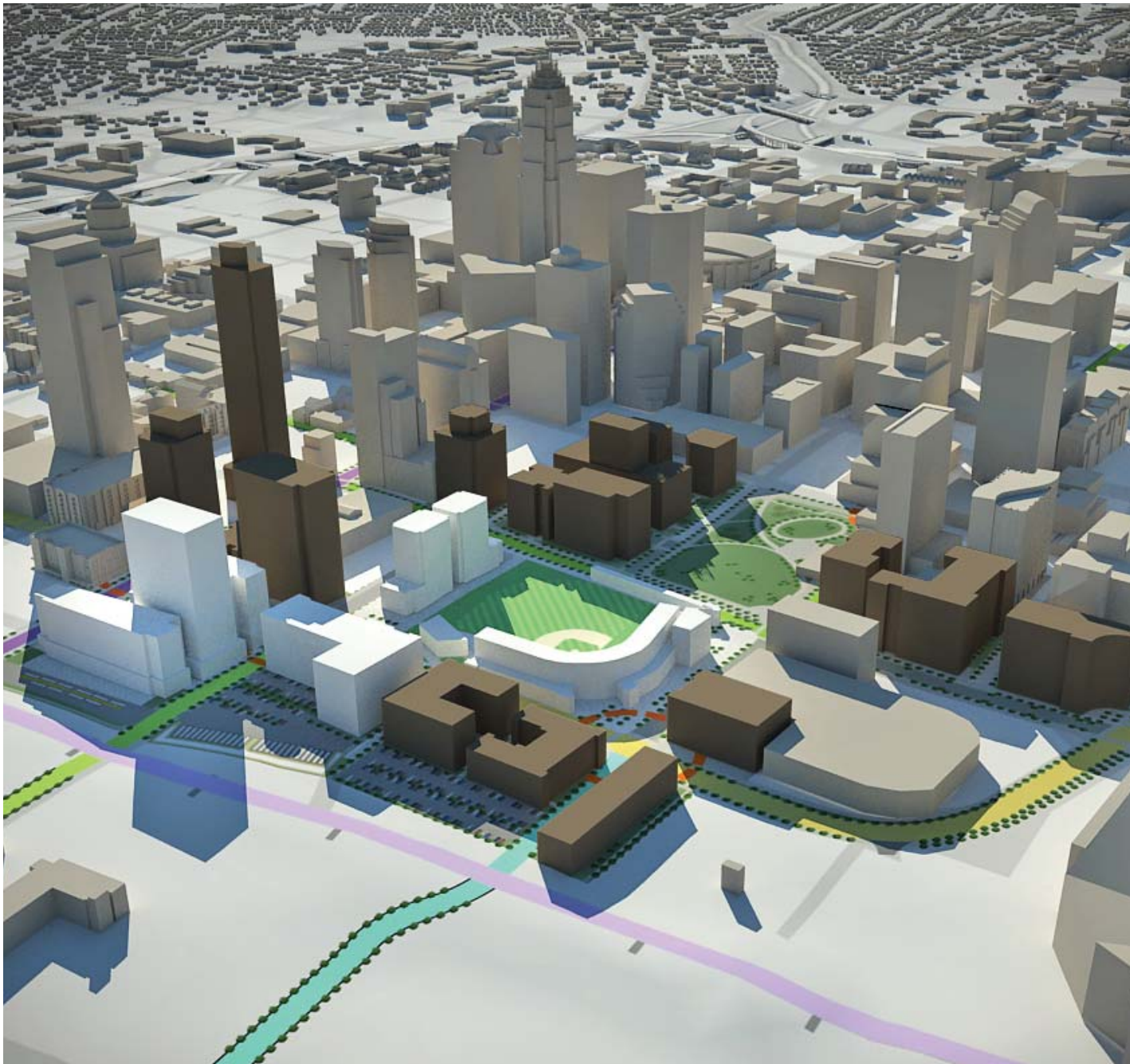
- The stadium should be programmed with baseball games as well as a variety of other events to activate the area on non-game days throughout the year.

- The stadium development should include a variety of retail and restaurant spaces that can be open to the public on non-event days.
- The stadium should have multiple public entrances, with major entries oriented to the following intersections: Graham Street/MLK, Graham/4th streets and Mint Street/MLK.



Restaurant and bar activity around the stadium should occur both on game days and throughout the year.

ballpark neighborhood recommendations



- Stadium services related to loading and operations should be integrated into a new alley between Knights Stadium and new development along 4th Street to accommodate these functions and maximize active uses and visual permeability on the MLK and Graham, Mint and 4th streets frontages.
- The adjacency of Knights Stadium and Romare Bearden Park creates a unique opportunity to build a visually stunning right field wall that celebrates the interface of the two spaces along Mint Street.
- The 4th Street edge should be developed with commercial and/or residential uses as part of the Knights Stadium development. The intersections of Graham/4th streets and Mint Street/MLK should include plaza space, iconic architecture and public art to maximize visibility from the surroundings.
- Ground-floor spaces should be designed to be flexible and accommodate changing uses over time; market demand for retail and restaurants would grow gradually as redevelopment on adjacent properties occurs and the ground-floor edges of the stadium should be designed to maximize this potential over the long-term.

Ballpark Neighborhood Focus Area development should link together the sports facilities and Romare Bearden Park; connect west to the rest of Third Ward and north and east to the Tryon Street Uptown core; leverage the Charlotte Gateway Station; and fill in gaps with mixed-use residential and retail to create a true neighborhood experience.

ballpark neighborhood recommendations

The **Charlotte Gateway Station** multi-modal station will be a regional transportation hub with service from Greyhound bus, city buses, Amtrak train, streetcar and high speed rail (see Integrated Transportation Network section in Chapter 3: Transformative Strategies for more detail). Several key elements and design considerations are important when developing the Gateway Station.

- Retail and restaurant uses should be incorporated into both interior and exterior spaces on the ground floor.
- Transit-related and other office uses should be included in the development program on upper floors to maximize on-site intensity and anchor an expanded employment concentration.
- A streetcar line should link along Trade Street directly to the Charlotte Transportation Center.
- With a variety of transit uses converging in one location, the station should be designed to feel like one integrated facility.
- Major entries should be oriented to Trade and Graham streets with special attention paid to the physical and aesthetic connections to the streetcar stops along Trade.
- Strong pedestrian connections should be prioritized along Graham and 4th streets to Knights Stadium and Romare Bearden Park.
- Architecture should be iconic and distinguish the station as the transportation hub for the region.
- Streetscape design and building setbacks should promote the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Non-essential uses such as train storage and bus maintenance/cleaning facilities should be located off-site in outlying areas to maximize opportunities for private development adjacent to the station.
- Transit facilities should be oriented along the railroad tracks where feasible to minimize the visual impacts and physical constraints to adjacent development.
- Parking should be integrated into an overall strategy for the Focus Area, with shared underground and/or structured parking developed whenever feasible.
- Taxi and passenger drop-off/pick-up areas should be consolidated to create clear circulation patterns for all transportation modes.
- Underpasses should be activated with artwork, lighting, and uses that enliven the environment and reduce the “tunnel” effect.
- Undertake urban design plan to ensure neighborhood circulation and connections and other urban systems are integrated into overall station design.



The Charlotte Gateway Station should have dramatic architecture befitting of a modern transit hub.

north tryon

The North Tryon Focus Area is poised to experience dramatic change in the coming years. Originally identified in the 2010 Vision Plan and strategically located along the northern part of Center City’s premier business corridor, this area has a large amount of redevelopment potential, both within Uptown and along its connection northward to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The North Tryon Focus Area will be a dense mixed-use neighborhood with strong linkages that connect Uptown with North End’s newest employment centers. The area will feature a range of urban uses and spaces, including offices, high-tech laboratories, retail, housing, cultural venues, education facilities, parks and retail shops. With this range of uses will come a diverse mix of



The North Tryon Focus Area abuts I-277 just north of the Uptown office core.

people—including researchers, office workers, students, artists and families—that will activate the streets and spaces and make North Tryon one of Center City’s most dynamic areas.

Building upon the energy of the dense development and pedestrian-friendly streetscape of Tryon Street, the North Tryon strategy focuses on the area generally bounded by Church Street on the north, 9th Street on the west, Brevard Street on the south, and 12th Street on the east. The strategy leverages existing assets and future plans—including UNC Charlotte’s new building, the mixed-use First Ward Village, and future development opportunities at the Hal Marshall site and in North End—while establishing further direction to “stitch together” the elements of this key area.

Opportunities and Challenges

The North Tryon Focus Area provides **opportunities** to:

- Better integrate Center City’s neighborhoods and wards with North End, increase the area’s role in Charlotte’s economic future, and support the overall Applied Innovation Corridor strategy.
- Leverage the planned northern extension of the LYNX Blue Line light rail to facilitate restoration of North End’s street grid and greatly improve access and connectivity through the area.
- Implement plans for the First Ward Village project, which is planned to bring a mix of housing types, retail and offices, as well as the First Ward Park.

- Leverage the public asset of the future First Ward Park and new public market to spawn additional private development beyond First Ward Village.
- Develop the County-owned Hal Marshall site with mixed-use development that strategically anchors the area, provides strong links between existing and new projects, and increases connectivity through a new bike- and pedestrian-friendly street segment of 10th Street between Tryon and Brevard streets.
- Build upon and link to the existing North Tryon Area Plan, which calls for a mix of office, industrial, warehouse and distribution uses beginning at the Brookshire Freeway and extending north.

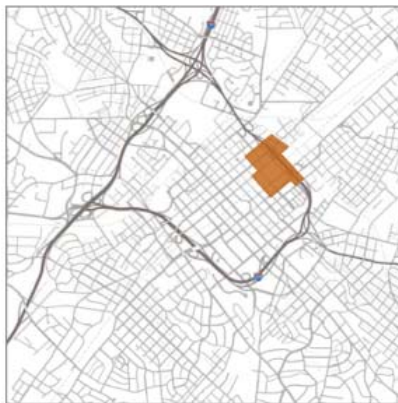
Potential **challenges** in the North Tryon Focus Area include:

- The Brookshire Freeway is a significant barrier to growth, development and connectivity. Physically overcoming this obstacle will be key to revitalization and re-establishment of connectivity between historically fragmented neighborhoods. There is also a significant amount of land within the loop where growth and development can still take place.
- The relocation of many County operations from the Hal Marshall site to outside of Uptown increases the need for one or more anchor tenants to help attract other investors to the area.
- Limited overall market demand for residential and commercial development may require a long development horizon for the area, especially for property north of the Brookshire Freeway.

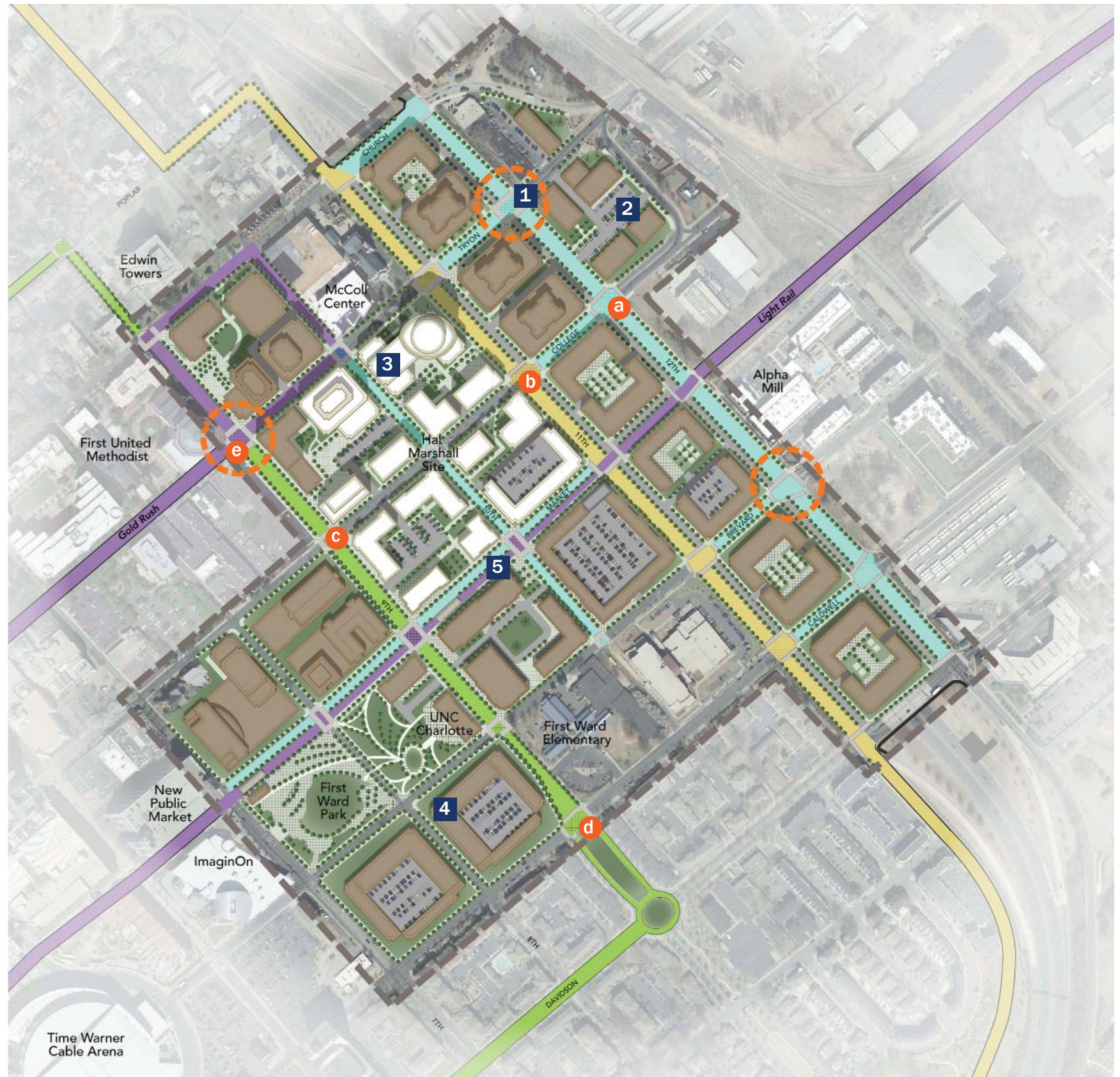
north tryon illustrative concept

The concept illustrates key recommendations related to connections, development opportunities and catalyst projects, which are highlighted on the following pages.

-  Focus Area Boundary
-  Connection/Linkage
-  Development Opportunity
-  Catalyst Project
-  New Development
-  Local Transit Connection
-  Boulevard Connection
-  Ward Loop Connection
-  New Street Connection
-  Gateway
-  Plaza/Promenade
-  Freeway/Ramp
-  Rail



KEY MAP
 0 50 150 300 feet



north tryon recommendations

Recommendations

The optimal design and build out of the North Tryon Focus Area will evolve over time. There are several key recommendations that, if incorporated as part of the final design and implementation, would help ensure North Tryon's success as a dynamic center of employment, education and Center City living. These include creating strong **connections and linkages**, capturing key **development opportunities**, and developing a specific **catalyst project**.



Reconfiguration of the Brookshire Freeway, 11th and 12th streets, and/or the freeway ramps would open up substantial development opportunities.

CONNECTIONS AND LINKAGES

Redevelopment of the North Tryon Focus Area provides an opportunity to restore the street grid and improve connections between several areas of Center City.

Specific recommendations include:

- a Reconfigure the Brookshire Freeway.** Explore opportunities to reconfigure the Brookshire Freeway between Poplar and Caldwell streets. Ideally, the Brookshire Freeway should be enhanced to improve connectivity and densify land uses. Changes should attempt to eliminate the real and perceived barrier between North End and the northern portion of Uptown. Less-extensive improvements for the short-term should be identified as part of the I-77/I-277 freeway loop study to insure the complexity and scale of reconfiguring the freeway do not become a roadblock to redevelopment.
- b Link the Boulevard Loop.** As part of the Brookshire Freeway reconfiguration, 11th and 12th streets should be redesigned to become the northern section of the Boulevard Loop in Uptown (see Integrated Transportation Network section in Chapter 3: Transformative Strategies for more detail).
- c Support the Ward Loop.** Unique materials, landscaping and stormwater management should be integrated on 9th Street to link First Ward Park and Fourth Ward Park to adjacent neighborhoods, Tryon Street and other Uptown parks.
- d Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections.** Strong bicycle and pedestrian connections with safe and inviting pedestrian crossings should be provided throughout the North Tryon area, with an emphasis on links to and from public transit. Plans should be implemented to construct 10th Street from Brevard Street to Tryon Street and improve its quality to Caldwell Street.
- e Enhance Transit Connections.** The LYNX Blue Line light rail should be extended north within the existing rail corridor between College and Brevard streets and a new street along the light rail extension should be constructed to help activate the 9th Street station and surrounding area. Attractive shuttle stops should be provided for the Gold Rush trolley.

north tryon recommendations

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

With much of the North Tryon Focus Area currently characterized by vacant or underutilized land or surface parking lots, development opportunities abound. The blocks along the light rail extension should be home to a mix of educational facilities, housing, retail and smaller office development. Beginning at 9th Street and heading north, North Tryon Street would transition from high-density offices to arts, cultural and educational facilities to light industrial, distribution and offices associated with the Applied Innovation Corridor. Ground floors along Tryon Street should include restaurants and shops to support Center City workers and visitors. First Ward Village should include shops, a new public market, and other services catering to students, residents and workers.

Specific recommendations include:

1 Extend the Tryon Streetscape to Brookshire Freeway. The concentration of dense offices and residential towers along Tryon Street should be expanded upon with new high-density employment and/or housing near the intersections of North Tryon Street with 9th and 10th streets. Site-appropriate gateway elements —artwork, signage or other sculptural elements—should be built between the Brookshire Freeway and the Boulevard Loop.

2 Bolster the Applied Innovation Corridor.

A strong physical link of development should connect the existing Uptown employment hub concentrated along Tryon Street and support development of the Applied Innovation Corridor. This would entail augmenting the existing light industrial, manufacturing and distribution uses with a mix of new light industrial flex space, research, offices and live-work spaces north of I-277. New buildings should be designed with ornamentation, architectural character and engaging façades fronting the street.

3 Establish New Learning Opportunities. Additional educational and lifelong learning uses should be recruited to the North Tryon Focus Area to capitalize on access to the LYNX Blue Line light rail and proximity to UNC Charlotte Uptown, Spirit Square, the Levine Museum of the New South, Discovery Place, ImaginOn and the McColl Center for Visual Art.

4 Create New Residential Opportunities. Medium- to high-density mixed-use housing should be developed east of College Street to serve nearby employees, students, faculty, staff and artists. Higher-density development along Tryon Street should step down when transitioning to existing residential neighborhoods in First and Fourth wards.

5 Boost Retail and Restaurants. The public market planned for the Seventh Street Station retail space will anchor a new market district. Ground-floor retail and restaurants should be targeted along the new Market Street along the LYNX Blue Line light rail extension. First Ward Park, the new public market and the UNC Charlotte building should attract expanded destination retail, restaurant and entertainment uses over time. A portion of retail should cater to employees, residents and students working, living and studying in the area every day.



New development in the North Tryon Focus Area should be medium- to high-density to extend the energy of Tryon Street.

north tryon recommendations



CATALYST PROJECT

While a combination of public improvements and private investments is required to transform North Tryon, development of the **Hal Marshall site** would likely have the most significant impact on defining the area's character and catalyzing development on adjacent properties. Site redevelopment should create a distinct identity for the North Tryon area and further ignite private investment in the district.

The Hal Marshall site is generally bounded by 9th, 11th and North Tryon streets and the planned LYNX Blue Line light rail extension (see North Tryon Illustrative Concept for more detail). The property is under public ownership and provides a significant amount of land available for redevelopment. The 2020 Vision Plan recommendations for the site build upon the 2010 Vision Plan.

Several key elements and design considerations are important to ensure the appropriate development of the site:

- Targeted uses should include offices, housing, research and development, and educational and/or cultural uses.
- Development along Tryon Street should attain a high level of design and iconic architecture and should be used to establish a gateway to Uptown and the Applied Innovation Corridor.

- Retail and restaurants should be developed along the ground floors fronting all streets and public rights-of-way.
- High-density office development should be concentrated on the western half of the development to capitalize on the Tryon Street address, extend the Uptown employment hub north toward North End, and provide an anchor for the Applied Innovation Corridor.
- Housing, educational and cultural uses should be concentrated on the eastern portion of the development site with high densities to activate the public realm and support area retail.
- Service functions should not be located along Tryon, 9th and 11th streets or the LYNX Blue Line light rail. The extension of 10th Street from Tryon to Brevard Street provides the opportunity to create a centered street connection that can serve the entire development site.
- Any necessary access drives should integrate pedestrian pathways, and parking solutions should be shared between buildings.
- Structured parking should serve the site's development and be integrated below grade or located on upper stories of buildings, with other active uses on the ground floor. Parking structures could also be wrapped with residential, office and institutional buildings.

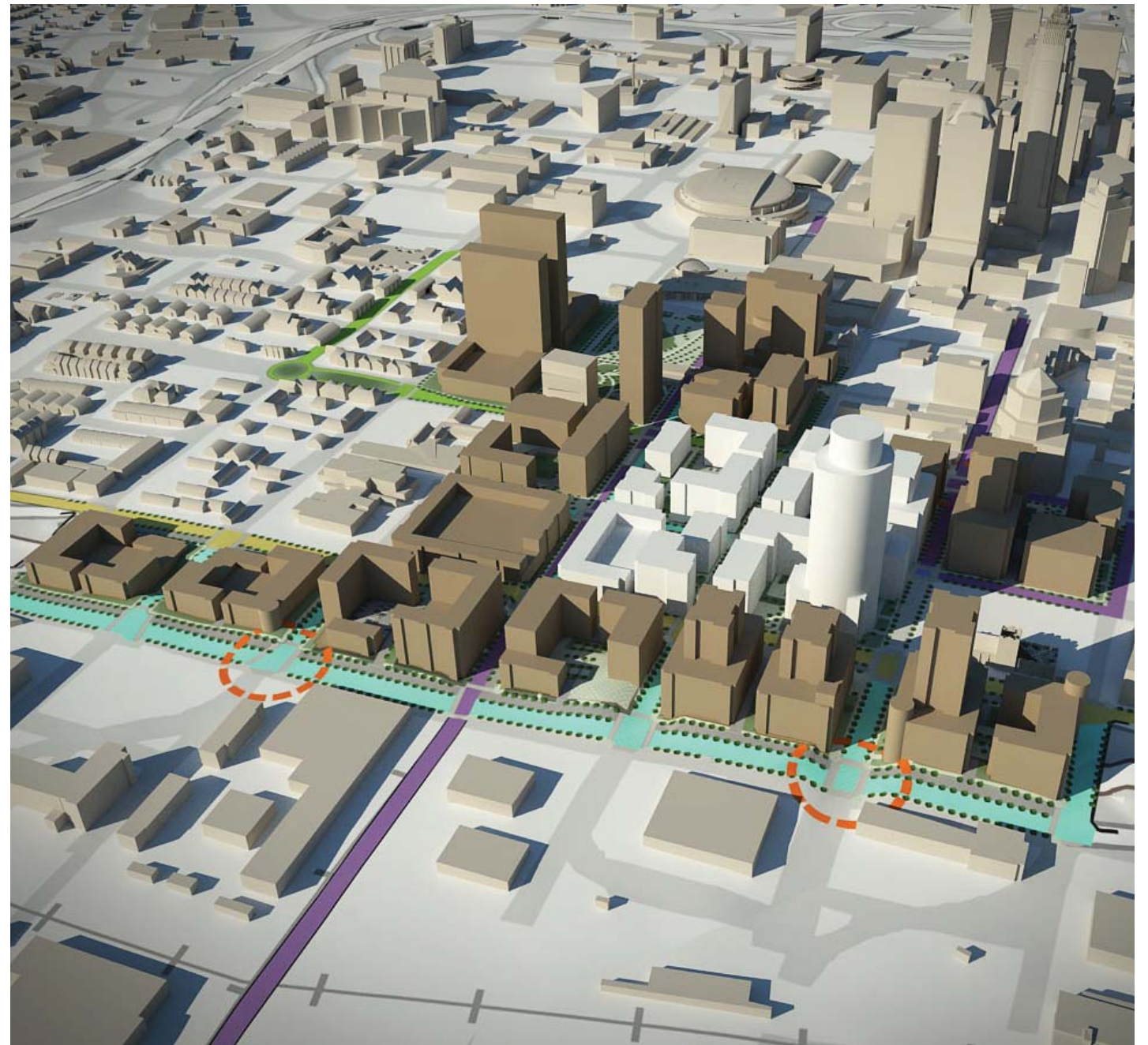
north tryon recommendations



The Hal Marshall site should incorporate nicely-articulated buildings and active ground-floor uses.



The Hal Marshall site should include plazas and open spaces that provide respites from urban activity.



Looking south toward the Uptown core, the Hal Marshall site and greater Focus Area should extend the development intensity of Tryon Street; transition in density toward the First and Fourth wards; and capitalize on new development land opened up by future tunneling of the freeway.

charlotte transportation center

The world's great cities have bustling transit stations through which trains, buses, taxis, pedestrians and bicycles all come together in an urban center. Along with the Gateway Station, a re-envisioned, state-of-the-art Charlotte Transportation Center (CTC) can provide this opportunity for Center City.

Located in the heart of Uptown, the transportation center and several adjacent blocks have significant potential to transform the current station and surrounding area. Anchored by the CTC on its intersection with Trade Street, Brevard Street will be a lively mixed-use "stroll district" with dramatic architecture and large destination facilities coupled with housing, offices, entertainment, plazas and shops



The Charlotte Transportation Center Focus Area includes Time Warner Cable Arena and the Brevard Street corridor.

along an intimate street setting. Building upon the CTC's untapped development potential, the area's numerous transit connections and its close proximity to Charlotte's most popular destinations, this Focus Area will become a nexus of people working, commuting and playing in Center City.

The Charlotte Transportation Center Focus Area is generally bounded by Trade Street on the north, 3rd Street on the south, the LYNX Blue Line light rail on the west, and Caldwell Street on the east. The strategy for this Focus Area builds upon several nearby assets including Time Warner Cable Arena, EpiCentre, Charlotte Convention Center and NASCAR Hall of Fame. It also considers existing and future projects and plans—such as the redevelopment potential associated with the CTC, recent rehabilitation of several historic properties, and improvements outlined by the Brevard Street Land Use and Urban Design Plan—while establishing further direction to strengthen the region's transit hub.

Opportunities and Challenges

In the Charlotte Transportation Center Focus Area, there are **opportunities** to:

- Improve connections between modes such as the LYNX Blue Line light rail, existing bus lines, planned streetcar line and bicycle-pedestrian network.
- Upgrade the bus terminal, which is currently near or at capacity to accommodate bus operations.

- Seize upon trends of increased transit ridership.
- Capitalize on adjacencies to high-traffic destinations, such as Time Warner Cable Arena, NASCAR Hall of Fame and Charlotte Convention Center.
- Implement the Brevard Street Plan, which includes zoning requirements favorable to redevelopment.
- Work with the small number of land owners around the CTC terminal to amass parcels for a large anchor project.
- Catalyze significant transit-oriented development.

Potential **challenges** in the Charlotte Transportation Center Focus Area include:

- Adequate public funding for redevelopment may be lacking given the current economic and political climate.
- Private development partners may be difficult to attract, and there may be a lack of financial and development wherewithal to put together such a complex redevelopment plan for a new CTC.