



chapter 5:  
implementation





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Center City Charlotte is a dynamic, modern urban environment. With its active community, strong jobs base, attractive neighborhoods, great cultural and sporting attractions, and several colleges and universities, there are many reasons to be optimistic for the future. Under the 2020 Vision Plan, Center City is positioned to move forward with a set of strategies and projects that will make the greater Charlotte region an even better place in which to work, live, play and visit. This chapter highlights specific critical actions that will transform Center City in the coming years. The recommendations for implementation are designed to be easily understood by the public and do not preclude continued community input on the direction of Charlotte’s future development.

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## Organizing For Action

Implementing Center City’s 2020 Vision Plan will require sustained participation and coordination between public and private stakeholders. The 2020 Vision Plan process has activated many stakeholders who are already engaged, committed and ready to move on key action items. The successful outcome of these initial actions will be instrumental in demonstrating early progress toward the overall vision, and will be important to maintaining momentum later in the implementation process. Several immediate action items are outlined to keep stakeholders engaged and solidify their roles as “stewards” of the plan. The following parties are identified as important players

in lead or supporting roles for one or more specific implementation actions:

- City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County;
- Charlotte Center City Partners (CCCP);
- Center City business and property owners;
- Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT);
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS);
- Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS);
- Center City institutions of higher education;
- Arts and Science Council;
- Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority;
- Center City neighborhoods;
- North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT); and
- Private developers and investors.

Periodic review and assessment of the progress toward achievement of goals and implementation actions is needed to ensure that public and private resources are producing desired results for Center City. New opportunities and challenges will undoubtedly arise over the next decade, which will necessitate that specific actions be reviewed, reconsidered and augmented. The implementation plan is intended as a living document that should be updated annually with a report of progress, a snapshot of recent successes, assessment of funding opportunities, and rounds of critical review and reprioritization. A yearly stakeholder’s meeting would be a remarkable tool for this purpose.

## Overarching Priorities

This section highlights several top “Overarching Priorities” selected from the recommendations for each Transformative Strategy and Focus Area. These fourteen high-level recommendations are the most critical investments and improvements that should be undertaken to reinforce the current momentum and generate new development activity, economic investment, and on-the-ground vibrancy. Charlotte’s 2020 Enduring Vision will be attainable through the implementation of these priority recommendations. These critical recommendations are not listed in order of priority; they exist as Overarching Priorities to be achieved when the economic climate improves.

The Overarching Priorities were selected out of the nearly 200 recommendations contained in the Center City 2020 Vision Plan. They represent recommendations that will shape the face of the city for generations to come. Each priority aims to achieve significant economic development opportunities and foster the creation of jobs. The recommendations listed here and throughout the document identify public and private partnerships, build upon current investments and initiatives, and facilitate the continued creation of a viable, livable, memorable and sustainable Center City.

The Overarching Priorities are identified below. Each priority is accompanied by information to guide implementation:

- **Responsibility** will be assigned to an organization to act as lead agency in the pursuit of each recommendation. This agency will be responsible for identifying potential partnerships and coordinating the completion of the Overarching Priority.
- The **associated timelines** indicate when the responsible agency or institution should initiate implementing the recommendations. This timeframe will be managed by the lead party and reflects an understanding of the current economic climate.
- **Quick win potential** is evaluated for each of the Overarching Priorities. These prospective projects will act on existing momentum in the community to begin projects in the short-term.





## priority actions

### PA-1 Baseball Stadium as part of the Ballpark Neighborhood

Constructing the Charlotte Knights baseball stadium in Third Ward will spur private development of entertainment-related retail, shops and services, restaurants and bars, parks, and office integrated with the multimodal transit station. Uptown's destination assets, and thus the tax base, would be expanded. More importantly, this new AAA baseball stadium will provide much needed affordable family fun for Charlotte during tough economic times. The public and private sectors should provide immediate support to build the stadium.

**Lead Responsibility:** Charlotte Knights, Mecklenburg County, City of Charlotte, Center City Partners

**Initiate Effort:** Current, ongoing project

**Quick Win Potential:** Continue discussions with potential public and private development partners; identify and retain two major sponsors with stadium naming rights; begin construction on the new stadium by October 2012.

### PA-2 Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area—Development of City-Owned Property

The sale and development of the public land in the Stonewall/I-277 Focus Area will be a crucial barometer that signals the revving up of Center City's near term development horizon. Building new office and residential complexes along with hospitality assets, educational and recreational facilities, retail and restaurants will, in turn, attract additional investment to the city by adding new jobs and increasing the tax base. New approaches to attracting private development such as a formal solicitation via a Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/P) process or a design/development competition should be attempted to reignite interest.

**Lead Responsibility:** City of Charlotte

**Initiate Effort:** Current, ongoing project

**Quick Win Potential:** Create a list of specific users to help shape potential development programs; convene a developers roundtable to discuss specific opportunities and challenges associated with the project/s; develop an RFQ/P or design/development competition to engage one or more partners in the development process.



## priority actions

### PA-3 West Trade Development Strategy and Implementation

It is critical to establish a West Trade Development Strategy to capitalize on the momentum surrounding the Gateway Village development master plan and the energy generated by multiple academic institutions. This strategy should organize an effort to recruit additional restaurants, food carts, retail and residential projects to West Trade Street. Support for this unique corridor can come from new pedestrian paths, transit opportunities such as expanded Gold Rush service and planned streetcar. A successful strategy will enable additional private sector development and better link Uptown and the Five Points neighborhood center.

**Lead Responsibility:** Johnson C. Smith University, City of Charlotte Economic Development & Planning Departments

**Initiate Effort:** Current, ongoing initiative – 2020

**Quick Win Potential:** Create a program to provide technical assistance to new food cart vendors; explore short-term leasing opportunities for academic institutions in existing retail/office space.

### PA-4 Center City's Public Realm

The stature and impact that a beautiful and well-utilized public realm can have on making a city memorable can be observed as Charlotte's citizens enjoy and celebrate the recently completed Little Sugar Creek greenway, Stonewall/I-277 connector, and redesigned South Tryon Street adjacent to the Levine Center for the Arts. To continue to enhance the quality of life of all its citizens who visit and gather in the Center City, Charlotte should continue to invest in the design and construction of unique projects such as the Ward and Boulevard Loops, the 'rail trail', as well as planned and proposed parks. A strategy should be developed to plan for, fund and complete these city-building projects over the next ten years.

**Lead Responsibility:** City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, Center City Partners

**Initiate Effort:** Complete current, ongoing projects – 2020

**Quick Win Potential:** Begin construction of planned parks; examine potential for low-cost bicycle improvements along the Ward Loop (striping, signage, etc.); select and begin planting unique character trees for the Ward and Boulevard Loops.

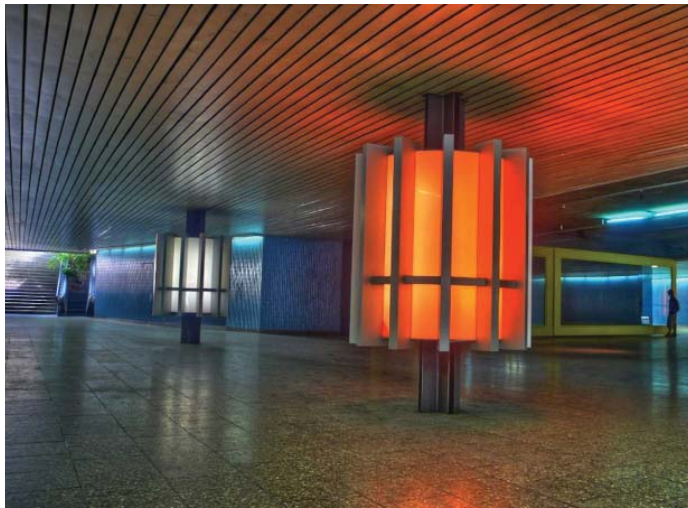


Implementing existing plans for streetcar on West Trade Street will help to link existing destinations and catalyze private development along the corridor.



Well-designed and integrated infrastructure will contribute to a safer, more comfortable and more memorable public realm.

## priority actions



The study of the I-77/I-277 freeway loop should identify a set of coordinated strategies to improve the experience of all users.



The Big Dig created additional opportunities in downtown Boston for greenways, parks and new development.

### PA-5 I-77/I-277 Study

A comprehensive study of existing and potential infrastructure of the I-77/I-277 freeway loop will be required to insure that the highway optimally serves the long term growth and development of the Center City. The study should also include urban design recommendations to address breaking down the barrier of the loop between neighborhoods; and propose architectural and aesthetic design solutions that will result in a memorable driving, walking and cycling experience.

**Lead Responsibility:** NCDOT & CDOT

**Initiate Effort:** 2012

**Quick Win Potential:** Clearly articulate the scope of the I-77/I-277 freeway loop study and continue dialogue with NCDOT to establish project management team, timeline and finding.

### PA-6 Freeway Cap

Building a freeway cap, development and park over I-277 will significantly close the physical and psychological barrier between Uptown, South End, Dilworth and Wilmore. The cap would function as a distinctive gateway and civic gathering space that would spark additional private development. Well-designed open space, park and pathways would also improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between the neighborhoods. The initial planning and studies for this facility would be conducted as part of the comprehensive I-277 Study.

**Lead Responsibility:** NCDOT & CDOT

**Initiate Effort:** 2012

**Quick Win Potential:** Identify the first phase of the freeway cap park and begin engaging key private investment partners; coordinate with overall I-77/I-277 loop study; develop an overall master plan.

## priority actions

### PA-7 South End Plan

Over the past ten years, the Charlotte Trolley and the light rail led the way in spurring millions in South End investment and development. The area has become a magnet for creative businesses. In 2005, the South End Station Area Plan (SESAP) proactively established TOD zoning, development standards and infrastructure recommendations to guide the continued growth of the area. As a result, South End has become a new residential neighborhood with over 3,000 residents. To address the challenges and maximize the opportunities presented by this transformation, a new South End Plan should be produced that includes an engaging community participation program.

**Lead Responsibility:** Center City Partners, South End Advisory Committee, Planning Department

**Initiate Effort:** 2012 – 2013

**Quick Win Potential:** Secure funding to create a new South End Plan; identify a project manager and/or project management team.

### PA-8 City of Bikes

Charlotte has made a significant effort to develop a City of Bikes through the adoption of the City of Charlotte Bicycle Plan. Additional bike infrastructure should be developed in Center City according to the recommendations of the Bicycle Plan to encourage more people to utilize this sustainable transportation option. The creation of a bike-share system should be explored, and dedicated and shared bicycle pathways and end-of-trip facilities should be built to improve safety and comfort. Efforts must be made to secure funding to implement planned infrastructure improvements and continue to refine plans to improve the ability to commute by bike.

**Lead Responsibility:** CDOT; Mecklenburg Park & Recreation; Planning Department, Center City Partners

**Initiate Effort:** 2013 – 2018

**Quick Win Potential:** Develop and issue an RFQ/P for the creation of a bike-share system in Center City; identify and implement shared lane markings and explore the potential for other low-cost striping projects; create a program for bulk purchasing of bicycle racks, lockers and other parking infrastructure; investigate potential for a bike route to connect the Irwin Creek Greenway to the Little Sugar Creek Greenway through Uptown.

### PA-9 North End Development Corporation (NEDC)

Create a non-profit corporation to coordinate resources and partnerships, direct investment, and insure the implementation of key programs and policies necessary to develop the Applied Innovation Corridor and North End. Under the direction of the NEDC, North End can become a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood that will be the home of new technology, light industrial and innovation-based businesses and jobs. North End will be strongly linked to Uptown and defined by its unique residential character and industrial history. A partnership of the UNCC Research Institute, Center City Partners, and the City and County economic development departments will develop a strategy to establish the NEDC.

**Lead Responsibility:** UNCC Research Institute, Center City Partners, City and County Economic Development & Planning Departments

**Initiate Effort:** 2014 – 2016

**Quick Win Potential:** Formalize a North End Development Corporation; establish a vision, mission, goals and objectives for the organization; establish a board with representation from key stakeholders.



## priority actions



The Auraria Campus in Denver, Colorado includes several facilities shared by the three partner institutions.



The Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Vancouver, British Columbia adds to the vibrancy of Granville Island.

### PA-10 Urban Campus

Transforming Center City into a seamless Urban Campus will provide expanded college and post-graduate academic options to help attract and retain an educated young work force as well as provide life-long learning and retraining for more experienced workers. A council or consortium led by CPCC, JCSU, Queens, UNCC and other universities and colleges should be established to develop inter-institutional curricula and programs and to create better physical connections between campuses.

**Lead Responsibility:** Center City educational institutions; Center City Partners

**Initiate Effort:** 2014 – 2020

**Quick Win Potential:** Establish a formal inter-institutional council or consortium; facilitate a discussion between potential partner institutions to identify potential shared facilities.

### PA-11 Art and Design School

A new art and design school recruited to locate in South End will create a more vibrant design and innovation district. The school will complement existing creative firms, galleries and design studios. Students will contribute energy and excitement and demand more shopping and services as they live, study and work in South End.

**Lead Responsibility:** Center City Partners

**Initiate Effort:** 2015 – 2020

**Quick Win Potential:** Initiate a study (potentially as part of the new South End Plan) to determine one or more potential locations for a new art and design school; contact existing schools to formally evaluate interest in relocating or expanding in Charlotte.



## priority actions

### PA-12 Retail Recruitment

Over the past decades, Charlotte has invested millions in building arts, cultural, sports and entertainment venues to make the city a great destination. But, one ingredient—shopping—is still missing. Opening ‘soft’ or consumer goods shops in the ground floor space of Uptown office and residential buildings would round-out and enhance the fun and excitement that visitors and citizens expect to experience. Charlotte could offer the ultimate complementary activity to tourists and increase tax revenue to add to City and County coffers. A comprehensive strategy should be created to recruit local, regional and national retailers to locate in or near destination assets and clusters.

**Lead Responsibility:** Center City Partners; City of Charlotte Economic Development Department

**Initiate Effort:** 2015 – 2020

**Quick Win Potential:** Develop and contact a list of specific retailers targeted for new or expanded locations in Uptown; explore micro-loan and other financial and technical assistance for local entrepreneurs and small businesses interested in locating in Center City.

### PA-13 CTC Redevelopment

In addition to providing efficient multimodal transit service, the Charlotte Transportation Center (CTC) is envisioned to be redeveloped as a high-density, mixed-use complex and employment center including office, housing, entertainment, retail and civic space. Developing the air rights above the station and activating the street level on publicly-owned land would add much needed revenue back on the City’s tax rolls. This project should be developed once the Charlotte Gateway Station project is well underway. But, because negotiating with adjacent private land owners to assemble the site, identifying potential development partners, and solidifying project funding and financing will take many years, necessary planning should begin within this decade.

**Lead Responsibility:** CATS, CDOT, Planning, City Economic Development

**Initiate Effort:** 2016 – 2020

**Quick Win Potential:** Initiate conversations and negotiations with adjacent private land owners to begin land assembly; explore linking development rights at CTC to Gateway Station development; identify potential development partners; seek grant funding.

### PA-14 Second Ward High School

Given its centralized geographic location, building a new high school in Second Ward would greatly expand educational opportunities for students living all over Mecklenburg County. The proximity of the high school to Uptown businesses and private investment could make intern and job placement more accessible to students and provide unique academic options. The architectural massing and design of the high school would be urban and multi-story in scale. The development of the high school would occur in a timeframe as dictated by the increased student population in the system and as indicated in the CMS Capital Facilities Plan.

**Lead Responsibility:** CMS; Mecklenburg County; Center City Partners

**Initiate Effort:** 2016 – 2020

**Quick Win Potential:** Identify and secure development rights for a suitable site in Second Ward.