

**Urban Street Design Guidelines
Policy Recommendations Summary
(Draft for Review by Council's
Transportation Committee – June 22, 2007)**

**Relationship to Transportation Action Plan
and Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework**

The Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) are a vital supporting component of the **Transportation Action Plan (TAP)**, because the USDG describe how the planning and design of Charlotte's streets and intersections will support livability and economic development objectives and create more travel choices. The USDG include methodologies and recommendations for implementing key aspects of the TAP - increasing the quantity and quality of streets, enhancing the integration of land use and transportation decisions (sometimes on a block-by-block basis), and providing "complete" streets for residents, property owners, and all types of travelers.

The USDG support Charlotte's **Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework** by providing a diverse set of street types and flexible designs to be applied to varying types and intensities of land uses in different areas of Charlotte. The USDG define a process to ensure that appropriate street types and street design elements will be used to support specific land development and transportation objectives. Additionally, the USDG describe the land uses and urban design elements that can best complement each type of street – with the intention that street design and land use/urban design decisions will reinforce each other.

Guiding Principles of the USDG: Achieving a "Complete Street" Network

- 1) Streets are a critical component of public space.
- 2) Streets play a major role in establishing the image and identity of a city.
- 3) Streets provide the critical framework for current and future development.
- 4) Charlotte's streets will be designed to provide mobility and support livability and economic development goals.
- 5) The safety, convenience, and comfort of motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and neighborhood residents will be considered when planning and designing Charlotte's streets.
- 6) Planning and designing streets must be a collaborative process, to ensure that a variety of perspectives are considered.

Policy Recommendations of the USDG

By adopting the document entitled the USDG, the City Council declares that it is the policy of the City of Charlotte to:

- 1) apply the USDG to the planning and design of new and modified streets in Charlotte and its Sphere, including State-maintained surface streets.
- 2) apply the USDG street classifications (Main Streets, Avenues, Boulevards, Parkways, and Local Streets), and related recommendations for cross-sections, speeds, and functional and aesthetic design elements, to the planning and design of streets in Charlotte. The reasons for providing a variety of street classifications are described in Chapter 1 and the specific components of the different types of street segments and intersections are described in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.
- 3) apply the “six-step” process, described in Chapter 3, to create a network of context-based, “complete streets”. The “six-step” process will be used to select the correct street classifications, cross-sections, and design components for non-local street types.
- 4) apply the USDG “six-step” process to plans, programs, and projects that will potentially change the physical features of existing non-local streets or result in the construction of new, non-local streets. Planning processes that will incorporate the results of the “six-step” process for planning and designing streets include area plans, streetscape or pedscape plans, neighborhood improvement plans, development proposal reviews, and preparation of the Capital Investment Plan.
- 5) apply the appropriate USDG street classifications and cross-sections, as described in Chapter 4, to new local and non-local streets built through the land development process.
- 6) implement processes to ensure that the USDG street classifications and designs derived through the “six-step” process result in mutually reinforcing land use and transportation decisions. Implementation will include: amending the TAP Street Classification Map to reflect the specific recommendations defined during area or neighborhood plans, and establishing priorities for adopting new or updating existing land use plans to reflect the most up-to-date land use objectives for streets classified according to the USDG.
- 7) require that the following block lengths be created with new public or private land development projects, to ensure the continued development of a dense, well-connected network of streets and traffic-calmed route choices for all travel modes:

Land Use/Location ^a	Preferred or Typical Block Length for Local Streets	Maximum Block Length for Local Streets
Transit Station Areas	400'	600'
Centers	500'	650'
Corridors	600'	650'
Non-Residential Uses ^b	500'	650'
Residential \geq 5 dua (gross)	600'	650'
Residential $<$ 5 dua (gross)	600'	800'

^a Details (and guidelines for flexible applications) are described in Chapter 4.

^b Excludes industrial sites, parks, schools, cemeteries and other types of land uses or buildings, as described in Chapter 4.

Land Use/Location ^a	Creek Crossing Spacing
Transit Station Areas	650' -1300' spacing
Centers	650' - 1300' spacing
Corridors	650' - 1300' spacing
Non-Residential Uses ^b	650' - 1300' spacing
Residential \geq 5 dua (gross)	650' - 2600' spacing
Residential $<$ 5 dua (gross)	1300' - 2600' spacing

- 8) expand Charlotte's street tree canopy by providing planting strips wide enough for healthy, large-maturing street trees. Details (and guidelines for flexible applications) are described in Chapter 4, but generally:
 - a. on retrofits to existing streets, whether built by the City or by developers, create 8' planting strips, planted with large-maturing trees;
 - b. for newly-constructed streets, whether built by the City or by developers, create 8' planting strips, planted with large-maturing trees, except in the case of new, Medium Local Streets. For this category of streets, developers could choose between 8' planting strips and large-maturing street trees or 6' planting strips and small or medium-maturing trees.

- 9) apply the bicycle, pedestrian, and motorist Level-of-Service (LOS) comparisons (including a 2-hour AM or PM peak period congestion analysis), as described in Chapter 5 and Appendices A and B in the USDG, to the planning and design of signalized intersections, to ensure that the physical designs of intersections reflect their street classifications and surrounding context.

- 10) apply the design recommendations described in Chapter 5 and Appendices A-C of the USDG to all (signalized or unsignalized) intersections, whether constructed or modified by the City or by private developers. The design recommendations will affect the number and width of travel lanes, inclusion of bicycle facilities, treatments for pedestrian crossings, traffic control devices and operation, pavement markings, and curb radii.
- 11) apply the USDG sidewalk recommendations. These are described in detail in Chapter 4, but in general:
 - a. the minimum width of sidewalks in the City will be 5',
 - b. the minimum width of sidewalks along Avenues and Boulevards will be 6',
 - c. a separate pathway outside the right-of-way of Parkways will be a design priority, and
 - d. minimum sidewalk widths of 8'-10' will be created in areas where there likely would be higher pedestrian volumes, due to the existing or planned land uses.
- 12) continue to expand Charlotte's bicycle network by, in general, providing bike lanes on the higher-volume, higher-speed streets and signed bike routes on low-volume, low-speed streets. As described in greater detail in Chapter 4:
 - a. Bike lanes will typically be incorporated into new or existing Avenues and Boulevards.
 - b. Main Streets and Local Streets will not typically include bike lanes.
 - c. Parkways will incorporate bike pathways outside of the Parkway right-of-way or in one or more nearby, connected Local Streets.
 - d. A well-connected Local Street network will include signed bike routes connecting to bike lanes on thoroughfares.
 - e. Design teams will justify why bike lanes would not be included for any street segment where bike lanes would generally be expected.
- 13) incorporate traffic calming components or treatments (as described in CDOT's Traffic Calming Report) into the design of new or retrofitted streets. Require "slow points" on new Local Streets.
- 14) update all necessary and appropriate standards and ordinances to ensure that design components on all new or retrofitted streets meet the USDG recommendations.
- 15) by 2008, prepare supplements to the USDG for "special streets" (including, but not limited to, green streets, culs-de-sac, one-way streets, alleys, and private streets).

16) by 2008, update CDOT's Driveway Regulations and Sight Distance Policy, and revise the City's pavement standards, with structural components linked to the USDG classifications.

17) by 2008, evaluate and define feasible changes to horizontal and vertical curvature requirements, to support traffic calming, reduce the impacts of mass grading, and minimize negative impacts of stream crossings.