Mayor Anthony Foxx	Mayor Pro Tem Susan Burgess
Michael D. Barnes	David L. Howard
Patrick D. Cannon	Patsy Kinsey
Nancy Carter	James Mitchell, Jr.
Warren Cooksey	Edwin Peacock III
Andy Dulin	Warren Turner

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Monday, May 3, 2010

Room 267

5:00 p.m.	**Dinner**
5:15 p.m.	**Housing & Neighborhood Development: Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Ten-Year Implementation Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness**
5:30 p.m.	**Human Services Strategic Process**
6:00 p.m.	**Environment: Urban Ecosystem Analysis**
6:30 p.m.	**Restructuring Government: City Sponsored Utilities Customer Service Evaluation**
7:00 p.m.	**Transportation: 2009 Transportation Action Plan Annual Report**
7:30 p.m.	**Citizens' Forum** **Room 267**

COUNCIL WORKSHOP
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TOPIC: Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Ten-Year Implementation Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness

COUNCIL FOCUS AREA: Housing & Neighborhood Development

RESOURCES: Patrick T. Mumford

KEY POINTS:

- On November 12, 2007, City Council approved the Ten-Year Implementation Plan (Plan), including the leadership structure to ensure coordination, oversight and accountability for plan execution. The Plan is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is a requirement for receiving federal funds.

- The Plan goals are:
  1. **Housing** – Get homeless families and individuals into appropriate and safe permanent housing as soon as possible;
  2. **Outreach and Engagement** – Link chronic homeless to housing, treatment and services through intensive outreach and engagement; and
  3. **Prevention** – Promote housing stability for those families and individuals most at risk of becoming homeless.

- A Way Home was designated as the manager and coordinator of the ongoing development and implementation of the Plan.

- Due to a change in leadership structure at A Way Home, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the Foundation for the Carolinas contracted with the Lee Institute to research the implementation of other Ten-Year Plans. Their research yielded findings in the following categories:
  1. Current Environment
  2. Community Perceptions
  3. Structures in Comparable Communities
  4. Observations from the Review of the Plan
  5. Leadership Recommendations
  6. Impact of Recommendations on Current Organizations

- Neighborhood & Business Services staff will provide detail on the Lee Institute's research findings and present a new Ten-Year Implementation Plan Leadership Structure.

COUNCIL DECISION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:

None at this time. Future Board appointments will be required.

ATTACHMENTS:

A Review of the Leadership/Accountability Structure for *More Than Shelter! Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Ten-Year Implementation Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness.*

More Than Shelter! Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Ten-Year Implementation Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness.

A Review of the Leadership/Accountability Structure

for

More than Shelter!
Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Ten-Year Implementation Plan
to End and Prevent Homelessness
One Person / One Family at a Time

Prepared by The Lee Institute
for
Foundation For The Carolinas
in Partnership with
the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County

THE LEE INSTITUTE
Collaborating for strong communities.

Table of Contents

1) **Introduction**

Developed in 2006, the "Ten-Year Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness" (TYP) provides ten-year strategies and immediate actions Charlotte-Mecklenburg can and must take to begin shifting the community responses to homelessness. The plan focuses on three primary implementation goals:

Housing – Get homeless families and individuals into appropriate and safe permanent housing as soon as possible
Outreach and Engagement – Link chronic homelessness to housing, treatment and services through intensive outreach and engagement
Prevention – Promote housing stability for those families and individuals most at risk of becoming homeless

The County Commission received as information the "Ten-Year Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness" on April 17, 2007 and asked County staff and A Way Home (the designated homelessness umbrella organization) to take the next steps as outlined in the report. The County appointed a staff coordinator in the Manager's Office for the TYP. A series of follow-up meetings were held to discuss and consider various recommendations in the TYP. The recommendations addressing political will, leadership and a dedicated funding source issues were not considered appropriate for staff review. The current emphasis is on information sharing, encouraging and supporting Homeless Services Network member agencies initiatives which are aligned with the TYP.

On November 17, 2007, the City Council unanimously approved the TYP. The City Neighborhood & Business Services Department is responsible for administration of the TYP. The City also contracts with A Way Home to serve as advocate, facilitator and monitor of the plan's recommendations and to serve to build capacity for coordination between homeless service providers.

In 2008, Foundation For The Carolinas conducted a community scan to identify existing and emerging issues in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Using research from the scan and findings from community leaders meetings, the Foundation concluded Charlotte's housing crisis would be examined as a potential civic leadership focus. The Foundation has taken efforts to further define the homelessness and affordable housing issue for the community, and this work in collaboration with the City and County is one of those efforts. The Foundation serves as a neutral convener in the presentation of this report and as a representative of civic leadership in the goal to eliminate homelessness and provide affordable housing in Charlotte Mecklenburg.

2) **Background**

In October 2009, The Lee Institute was asked by Foundation For The Carolinas, City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to research Ten-Year Plans for homelessness from communities around the country. The overall goal was to analyze both structure and effectiveness in comparison to Charlotte's current approach. Specifically, The Lee Institute was asked to provide the following information:

- Models of leadership and accountability structures from other cities with demographics and political structures similar to Charlotte in regard to the implementation of TYPs

- Descriptions of leadership accountabilities and measurement outcomes in those communities
- An assessment of what may be effective in Charlotte, including the concept of the Continuum of Care Board

After reviewing various models and leadership structures, The Lee Institute developed a final report that included the following recommendations for Charlotte's approach to the existing Ten-Year Plan originally developed in 2006 (http://www.awayhome.org/MoreThanShelterFinal.pdf):

- Build on the current strengths in Charlotte
- Understand the need for government leadership moving forward
- Involve additional government leaders in a meaningful way
- Consolidate the various coalitions that currently exist under one entity
- Bring in partners that currently need to be engaged
- Establish an easy-to-understand leadership structure that has "teeth"
- Dedicate paid staff to this effort
- Understand the power of strong relationships and trust
- Design a clear communication structure for stakeholders, including the general public
- Rework the existing TYP to address the populations within the housing continuum from prevention to permanent housing and define accountabilities for each of these areas

The overall conclusion of this initial report stated: "*Without a stronger governance structure that involves government and community leaders and creates a truly collaborative, unified approach to the challenge, Charlotte will continue to struggle with successfully addressing the need to prevent and end homelessness. As noted in our recommendations, this is the perfect time to move forward with a refined governance structure. A strong foundation is already in place, the leadership is in place and community commitment is clear.*"

3) **Goals of the Review of the Leadership/Accountability Structure of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Ten-Year Plan**

Building on this initial set of recommendations, The Lee Institute was asked to complete a concept paper for the City Neighborhood & Business Services Department, Mecklenburg County and Foundation For The Carolinas. This concept paper outlines a recommendation for a leadership structure to implement Charlotte's TYP. This report addresses the following areas:

- Community perceptions about the implementation and leadership structure of Charlotte's existing TYP
- Research of best practices from comparable cities
- Observations from a review of Charlotte's existing TYP
- Organization implications resulting from the recommendation

This study does not address the quality or assess the strength of the strategies in the TYP. These content questions are best left to those who "live and breathe" housing and homelessness issues in our community. The study does not evaluate

the programs currently offered by the many housing service providers. Our research has clearly shown that, as a community, a large number of active and committed community leaders and volunteers dedicated to addressing housing and homelessness issues are present. The focus of this report is *process*; in other words, what the best structure is to accomplish the outcomes desired as a community.

4) The Current Environment

Events of the past 18 months have created a climate for change in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community. These events include:

- A summit on housing issues, convened by Foundation For The Carolinas in January 2009 with more than 250 citizens in attendance. Small groups generated ideas, suggestions and thoughts on the actions needed to positively impact homelessness, coordinate strategy, eliminate barriers to collaboration and define existing community assets. The report from the summit can be found at http://www.fftc.org/Page.aspx?pid=1322.
- In early 2009, Charlotte received federal stimulus funding for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing to be designed and implemented by a collaboration of the City, County and homeless service providers.
- The City Neighborhood & Business Services Director, Patrick Mumford, began a review of the department's strategic business plan including the existing TYP.
- Mayor Anthony Foxx in his first speech as mayor said, "Now is a time for action. There is no reason in the world that a child in this community ought to wake up without a roof over their head. We can fix that problem. So in 2009 and going into 2010, I want us to take up that ten-year plan to end homelessness, and I want us to do something about it."
- The broad economic downturn has shifted housing to the forefront of public debate.
- Mayor Anthony Foxx held a homeless summit on January 15, 2010, to express his commitment to the issue and receive input into how the community should proceed.

Events of the past 18 months have created a climate for change in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community.

Taken in combination, these actions create a climate for change. Leadership in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is now asking how to define roles and accountabilities for government and the citizens of this community in the existing TYP.

5) Community Perceptions of the Existing Ten-Year Plan

To evaluate current perceptions of the TYP, The Lee Institute conducted interviews and surveys of leaders throughout the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community, reviewed the data from the October 2009 report and conducted additional research on Continuum of Care boards.

Individuals interviewed were asked the following questions:

- Describe how you see the current implementation of the existing Ten-Year Plan.
- Describe how you would organize the implementation of the existing Ten-Year Plan, including roles and responsibilities.
- What are the strengths of the current plan implementation?
- How would you strengthen the current plan implementation?

Six key themes emerged across the responses.

i. **Admiration of organization efforts**

Throughout the interviews, leaders mentioned admiration and respect for individual efforts across Charlotte-Mecklenburg by government agencies, nonprofits and the faith community.

- "Many service providers are working hard to implement elements of the plan…."
- "I think there's a lot of good stuff being done at the provider level, but I don't think it's being done intentionally with the plan in mind."

ii. **Satisfaction in having a written plan**

Overall, participants expressed appreciation in having a written document founded in research. But most felt the current plan was a "working document" or "first step" to address the homelessness/housing situation in Charlotte. Comments about plan implementation indicated a lack of community/provider ownership of the plan (see Admiration of organization efforts).

- "… the Ten-Year Plan is a good working document…"
- "We actually have a plan in writing based on a number of years of info gathering & data."

iii. **Need for strong leadership**

Those interviewed expressed the need for more leadership in a variety of arenas with some focusing on government leadership. A key leadership theme, however, was the need for a "champion" - an individual to aggressively shepherd this effort in the community. The champion concept outlined in the TYP calls for three champions; one champion each to lead action teams in the areas of housing, outreach/engagement and prevention. Examples were given to illustrate how the champion model has worked in other communities.

- "The plan has not had leadership/ownership … plan needs single leadership…."
- "Need a traffic cop."

iv. Need for coordination and role clarification

There is a strong perception that there is not coordination across the continuum of care in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Respondents specifically addressed the confusion about the roles of A Way Home and the Homeless Services Network in the continuum of care network. Many suggested the need for a neutral entity to coordinate work with a focus on plan implementation and with the ability to set priorities to fulfill the needs in the housing continuum.

According to a majority of responses, social service organizations respond to needs as they arise in the community, but there is not a strategic focus of providing services as defined in the existing TYP.

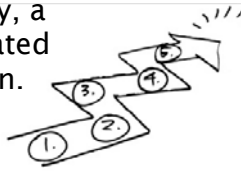
- "To date the plan's implementation is piecemeal."
- "I believe that piece [the focus] - purely coordination, not a face, advocate, or fundraiser – is a component we have lacked."

v. Need for more accountability

Participants shared a need for more accountability to the existing TYP.

- "Where it can be, it's coincidentally being linked to the plan to say it's done."
- "[any community agency] that has decided to take on a particular activity has done so because it's a part of their mission…."

vi. Need for additional funding



Many participants expressed a desire for more funding, specifically, a dedicated funding source. The existing TYP recommends a dedicated funding source to sustain the efforts needed to implement the plan. Many of the respondents noted the Miami one percent food and beverage tax dedicated to housing programs as an example of sustainable funding.

- "Most would agree that that there is a critical need to include development of dedicated funding to help resource the current and any future component to the TYP."

6) <u>Structures in Comparable Communities</u>

In October 2009, The Lee Institute conducted research to review how cities comparable to Charlotte-Mecklenburg implemented their Ten-Year Plans. The following cities were included in the research:

- Austin, TX
- Fort Worth, TX
- Las Vegas, NV
- San Jose, CA
- Greensboro, NC
- Raleigh, NC
- Winston-Salem, NC

These cities are comparable to Charlotte-Mecklenburg in City/County government, Council and Commission structure and administrative organization. These communities also have a similar percentage of families and individuals below the poverty level. North Carolina cities assigned to the same regional HUD office were also included as benchmark cities.

City	Who Leads the Plan	Where Structure Is Housed
Austin	ECHO - Ending Chronic Homelessness	City of Austin (ECHO is exploring a separate 501(c) (3)
Fort Worth	Mayor's Advisory Commission on Homelessness	City government
Greensboro	Partners Ending Homelessness	Family Service of the Piedmont (nonprofit agency)
Las Vegas	Coalition board composed of all elected officials. A Committee on Homelessness oversees the plan.	Local government
Raleigh	Partnership to End Homelessness (made up of United Way, City, County and coalition members)	Staff works from home, but Continuum of Care is the 501(c)3 for efforts
San Jose, CA	"Blue Ribbon Commission" oversees implementation of Ten-Year Plan	San Jose City Neighborhood Services staff implements the plan; United Way houses coalition staff
Winston-Salem	Ten-Year Plan Commission (appointed by City and County) and housed in United Way office	Council employed position housed at the United Way

The research showed that most cities implement their TYP through a structure that is funded by local government, has a government-appointed board of community leaders, and is commonly housed within local government or the United Way. Most cities have full-time staff (usually funded through local government) dedicated to coordinating implementation efforts and staffing the leadership board. A few communities, such as Greensboro, merged the local homeless service provider coalition with the leadership board to reduce overlaps and improve efficiencies.

In addition, most cities regularly report on progress of strategies identified in the plan. Most communities have informal reports that are distributed to the community or posted on their website. A few respondents spoke to the strength of communicating progress as a means of keeping the community engaged with the work.

7) **Observations from the Review of the Ten-Year Plan**

The following observations present potential challenges to leadership in the implementation of the existing TYP.

Housing Strategy Model

The implementation strategy for the existing TYP acknowledges there is no "magic bullet" for ending homelessness. The implementation strategy recommended "a comprehensive and deliberate reorientation of our delivery system" defined as a shift in focus from the traditional Agency/Shelter-Based Model to a Rapid Re-Housing Model. Interviews conducted for this review with housing providers indicated two primary issues with the proposed transition.

The implementation strategy… acknowledges there is no "magic bullet" for ending homelessness.

- First, in order to move to a rapid re-housing plan, there must be an adequate number of shelters as well as type of shelters including sufficient safe haven locations. For example, the TYP recommends a shelter with less restrictive entry requirements.
- Second, the rapid re-housing plan calls for an assessment of people experiencing homelessness, immediate short-term housing solutions and the ability to move individuals and families into permanent housing with appropriate supportive services.
- In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, permanent affordable housing generally is provided by the Charlotte Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and private sector builders of affordable housing. The number of available affordable housing units has increased with federal and state tax credits, City housing bonds and federal incentives. However, the number of available affordable units has not met the need identified in the existing TYP or the current increased demand.

Two primary causes for the lack of affordable housing construction are insufficient funding and the lack of a comprehensive county-wide locational policy.

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Supportive Services

The TYP describes supportive and service-enriched housing as the array of services needed by individuals and families as they move from homelessness to permanent housing. There are three specific recommendations for the supportive services:

- Providing an experienced case manager who utilizes an individualized strengths-based approach to coordinating services and supports to help residents of service-enriched housing reach their goals for self-directed living
- Simplifying access to mainstream services such as public assistance programs, employment training and placement, health care and mental health and substance abuse treatment such as through a single point of entry and a single integrated plan
- Incorporating housing assistance centers and rapid re-housing strategies into the overall homeless support system

The issue of supportive services is so very complex, requiring integration with government programs - the eligibility requirements, program accessibility, and coordination of services – all isolated and difficult to integrate for any number of reasons.

However, there are existing housing programs with supportive services: the Charlotte Housing Authority Moving Forward program, Workforce Initiative Supporting Housing (WISH), Project Hope and Family Promise. The Charlotte Housing Authority will begin the Moving Forward program with service to 300 Boulevard Homes residents; in contrast, Family Promises serves four families at a time. There are current discussions by the community on the need for coordination of services by government and nonprofit agencies (whether funded or not by government). The discussions range from a common assessment tool to a Mecklenburg County social security card for eligibility and program services.

The City and County must get a sharper focus on supportive services delivery if change is going to occur.

The supportive services model should be scaled to include all resources available in accessible locations – mental health, employment and training, substance abuse treatment and safety from domestic violence. Supportive services should be consistently provided and applied. The County and the City must work in collaboration and with concurrence on the priorities for investment in supportive services and define what success means and looks like.

The City and County must get a sharper focus on supportive services delivery if change is going to occur.

Annual Planning and Priority Setting

The existing TYP outlines a cycle for annual planning and priority setting process. The process design is:

- Monitor progress reports on an interim and annual basis
- Recommend changes in the TYP
- Set priorities for actions
- Obtain buy-in

The process as recommended was to be implemented by A Way Home as the lead agency for coordination and management of the operational aspects of the plan. The TYP recommended a staffing level of three for A Way Home and specific accountabilities for the agency. The City and County each contribute $30,000 annually to A Way Home.

The ongoing support and buy-in of this board will be <u>essential</u> for successful implementation of the plan.

The reality is, A Way Home was not adequately staffed to accomplish these tasks and had little community confidence to lead the TYP as recommended. As a result, the annual planning and priority-setting has been more a report than a dynamic and evaluative process. The annual report must include an assessment, action steps and whatever tools necessary to drive attainment of the goals outlined in the TYP.

The ongoing support and buy-in of this board will be essential for the successful implementation of the plan.

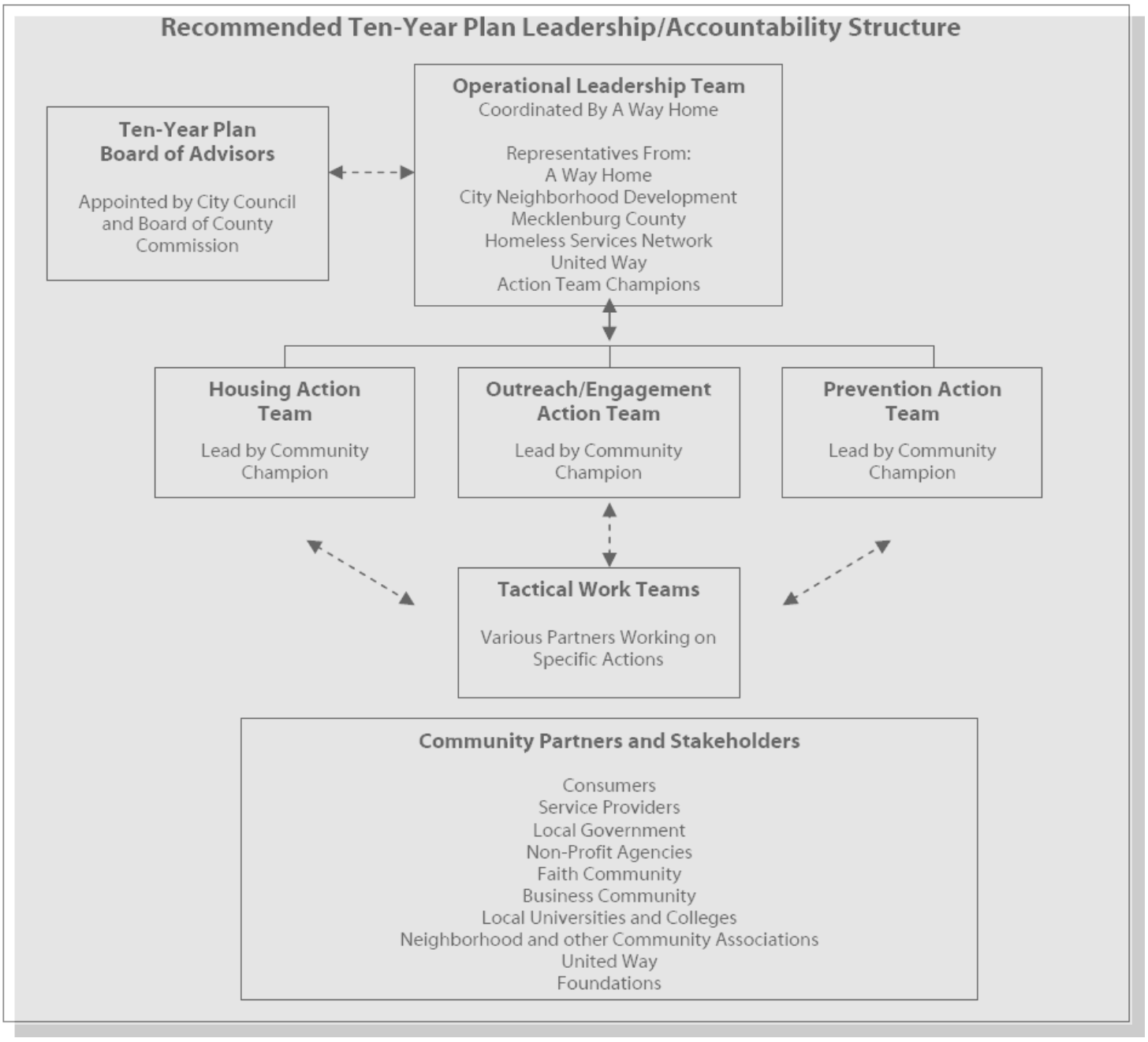
A Dedicated Funding Source to Sustain Efforts
The existing TYP recommends the exploration of a dedicated source of revenue to create affordable housing opportunities by a Funder's Collaborative with public and private sector participation. The TYP recommendation is similar in process to other government studies of funding for an identified priority such as transit or visitor and convention services. The TYP also called for "a clear sense of the costs" for implementing the plan. The existing TYP included the 2006 costs associated with not taking action – shelters, incarceration, substance abuse treatment, hospital care. These costs should be updated to reflect current government funding.

Leadership Structure
The final observation is about the TYP's recommended leadership structure. This observation coupled with community feedback and comparable city research leads to the recommendation in the next section.

The TYP outlines the following responsibilities for a leadership group:

- Advise on annual implementation priorities
- Identify and facilitate opportunities to support the plan's resource development, partnership building, advocacy and building community and political will
- Develop and adopt joint resolutions of support and development of a memorandum of understanding with roles and commitments for plan execution
- Designate champions and action teams for key strategies
- Monitor and address overall implementation with representatives of government staff, A Way Home, Homeless Services Network and other key implementing partners

The existing TYP recommends the following leadership structure:



Graphic from More Than Shelter! Report

Since the adoption of the TYP, several other factors have influenced the role and responsibility of a leadership group:

- The growing need for resources
- The need for priority-setting across the continuum of affordable housing needs
- The growing awareness of other successful plans being implemented
- The current best practices in social services

In the past, other successful community initiatives have required the engagement of all segments of the community, clear accountabilities and role definition, an appropriate size to facilitate communication and effective use of resources, an organizational model to attract talented and committed individuals to serve and a written charge and scope and reporting requirements. Finally, these programs have financial plans and/or parameters in place.

The TYP structure as recommended is too cumbersome to meet these standards. The leadership of the community homelessness plan should mirror the community organizations with proven success in implementing major initiatives with multiple partnerships in the nonprofit and government sectors. Further, the structure should have in place prevalent business practices common in the private, nonprofit and government sectors that distinguishes Charlotte-Mecklenburg's civic commitment.

8) Leadership Recommendation

The Lee Institute compared the perceptions from the interviews and surveys and the data regarding leadership structures with the actual content and structure of the existing TYP. This "informal gap analysis" resulted in the recommended leadership structure. The interviews and surveys conducted for this review only reinforced the set of recommendations from The Lee Institute report. Therefore, the focus of this report is on the actual leadership structure that is needed in order to move the existing TYP forward.

From the review of the practices of comparable cities and discussions with local leaders, it is clear that successful implementation of the existing TYP requires a leadership structure clearly designed for Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The leadership will require committed ownership by both the City and County government. Additionally, the leadership must be representative of the community. This recommendation asks the Foundation For The Carolinas to continue its neutral convener role to assist in the development and maintenance of the leadership entity. Finally, there must be adequate resources for the leadership structure.

Create a Community-Based Board

A community-based Leadership Board is recommended to own the Ten-Year Plan's implementation, assessment and resources. The ultimate goal of this Board is to lead the efforts to end homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

The Board's responsibilities include:

- Plan implementation
  - Program coordination and implementation
  - Priority setting for housing programs and development
  - Advocacy and championing policies, practices and services to reduce the number of homeless individuals and families in Charlotte-Mecklenburg
  - Development of public policy recommendations that impact homelessness
- Annual plan evaluation and assessment

- Annual action plans based upon research of the most recent trends and best practices
- Partnership development and alignment of services with the community and service providers
- Operating and capital fund allocation
  - McKinney Funds
  - CDBG
  - HOME Funds
  - Housing development funds (i.e., Housing Bonds and Innovative Housing)
- Resource development
  - Community capital campaign approval and calendaring
  - Analysis of government funding and allocation for TYP results

It is recommended that the Board consist of 12 members, with three permanently designated members – the Director of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services Department, the Director of Mecklenburg County Community Support Services and the CEO of the Charlotte Housing Authority.

In addition, the following guidelines are recommended for Board appointments:

- Appointments should represent both expertise and commitment to the TYP and the diversity within the community. Additionally, appointees should be authentic and influential to the elimination of homelessness in Charlotte.
- Persons appointed should have the trust of the community to take bold actions necessary to meet the goal to eliminate the causes of homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Appointments should avoid potential conflicts of interest, given the Board responsibility for resource allocation and development
- Terms of service should be three years, with rotating terms to provide continuity for the Board. A limit of no more than two terms should be placed on appointees.
- The chair should serve at least three years; the chair appointed initially should serve a three-year term to establish the Board's business plan, the relationships with key implementation partners and plan review. The appointment of the Chair will rotate with appointment by the City, followed by the County and then Foundation For The Carolinas.

Designate Adequate Staffing

The Board will need adequate staffing to manage the work plan and should take the opportunity to review comparison cities for staff functions and allocations. As with most efforts, leadership by the Executive Director is key. Research supports the following characteristics for an Executive Director reporting to the recommended Board:

- A visionary leader with demonstrated experience working with diverse constituencies to affect real change
- The ability to manage, recruit, train and retain a talented staff
- The ability to work with, maintain and develop relationships with local homeless service providers as well as local and state government agencies,

and develop relationships in the community through fundraising and community outreach
- Strong fund development skills, including grant writing and individual and business donor solicitation
- Knowledge of national, state and local governmental public policy and funding opportunities related to reducing and ending homelessness
- Entrepreneurial skills, the ability to develop successful and innovative strategies
- Must be flexible and have the ability to see both the big picture and implement the details of the Ten-Year Plan

In the comparable communities, staff functions include information management and research; policy and planning; advocacy and communication; development and finance and administration.

Designate Sustainable Funding
It is recommended the City and County commit to funding the organization. Costs of funding the organization should not exceed the costs currently incurred by the City and County in the management and coordination of the current homelessness programs.

Partner with Service Providers
The Board will have to determine how to integrate the existing service providers within the new structure, particularly the Homeless Services Network, which currently acts as grant writer and project coordinator for over 42 member organizations.

The Board will have to determine how to integrate the existing service providers…, particularly the Homeless Services Network,… project coordinator for over 42 member organizations.

9) Impact of Recommended Structure on Current Organizations

County and City Government
The County is the lead in community support and social services. The County departments serving the homeless population include the Department of Social Services, Area Mental Health, Health Department and Community Support Services.

The Community Support Services (CSS) Department is funded through HUD and the County. CSS is assigned responsibility for the Ten-Year Plan, including coordination and case management. Five people staff CSS, co-located at homeless partner agencies (Urban Ministry, Crisis Assistance, Men's Shelter, A Child's Place, and the Salvation Army).

The Health Department has limited involvement with the homeless population, primarily through chronic disease diagnosis and treatment (especially HIV/AIDS).

Area Mental Health is very involved with the homeless due to the pervasiveness of mental illness and substance abuse/addiction issues within the population.

Department Social Services has some contact with the homeless population – offering financial assistance and helping with housing issues for eligible people.

The City has taken the lead role in gap financing for affordable housing developments, with $67 million in funding since 2002. The City provides funding to several housing agencies and Community Development Corporations in support of increasing the supply of affordable housing. The City has also supported the Charlotte Housing Authority's Hope VI projects.

The simplistic premise that the City will provide for the physical development of affordable housing and the County will provide social services does not work to address the complex issues of homelessness.

The Housing Trust Fund Advisory Board recommends the allocation of City housing bonds and is administratively supported by the Neighborhood & Business Services Department. This recommendation collapses the function of the Housing Trust Fund into the new entity. The Housing Trust Fund should participate in the transition to the new leadership entity.

In 2008, organizations working in affordable housing began to use the Continuum of Care. Homelessness, the prevention of homelessness and support for those needing transitional housing has not seen the progress that has been achieved in the development of affordable housing for those at 30% of median income.

The simplistic premise that the City will provide for the physical development of affordable housing and the County will provide social services does not work to address the complex issues of homelessness.

A Way Home

A Way Home, a 501(c) (3) organization, was created in 2002 to serve as an advocate and facilitator of strategic planning and partnership building to implement the existing TYP. A Way Home's vision is "Charlotte-Mecklenburg is a community that values and supports an improved quality of life for all its citizens." The organization has led a number of advocacy and collaboration efforts in coordination with housing service providers.

Currently, A Way Home (AWH) has seven Board members. For six years, the organization had one full-time staff person, Chris Wolf, who served as Executive Director and as one of the most visible community advocates for the existing TYP. The TYP recommended a staff of three for AWH to reach the level and scope of services outlined in the plan. The City and County have annual contracts with A Way Home to review and monitor the existing TYP.

The recommendation for a Leadership Board is duplicative of A Way Home's vision and current role. The current AWH Board should be included in the implementation and transition to the new Leadership Board. There will need to be an implementation strategy to address this issue.

Homeless Services Network
The Homeless Services Network (HSN) was established by United Way in 1992. HSN is a membership network of government staff, homeless service professionals, faith partners and individual working to serve homeless individuals and families. The HSN member agencies align their activities to the TYP, provide expertise for the plan's implementation and assist with the annual evaluation of the plan. The HSN endorses the existing TYP, and the member agencies are the core for delivery of homeless services.

Charlotte Housing Authority
Because the Charlotte Housing Authority (the Authority) is a quasi-government agency with a City-appointed board and with annual resources exceeding $85 million annually, careful consideration must be given to its vision for leadership.

United Way
Several agencies serving the homeless population are United Way agencies. Donors may also elect to contribute to Charlotte-Mecklenburg homeless serving agencies through the United Way. While not a primary provider of funding or services, the United Way has provided support through operational funding of nonprofit services.

Faith Community
There is agreement the faith community has stepped up to build a safety net for the homeless, beginning over 20 years ago with Crisis Assistance and Urban Ministry and continuing with more recent efforts with programs like Workforce Initiative Supporting Housing (WISH) and City Dive who focus on at-risk individuals, families and communities. Many houses of worship support homeless service providers with funding, board service, volunteers and the passion of their commitment to faith-based tenets. Coordination and collaboration of efforts occur through the Jeremiah Churches, Urban Ministries, Mecklenburg Ministries, Family Promise and other strategic alliances.

10) Next Steps

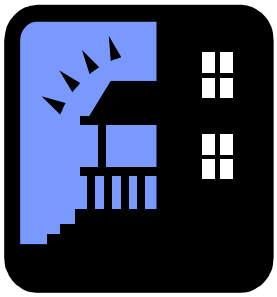
Moving forward on these recommendations without paying attention to the underlying attitudes, values, loyalties and alliances that exist in our community around homelessness and housing issues will result in limited success. This challenge, as the Mayor recently stated, will only be met if we understand that this problem is an adaptive one. An adaptive challenge is one that involves technical solutions (i.e., a new leadership and accountability structure) combined with a change in people's priorities, beliefs, habits and loyalties.

Success… will depend on the leaders of this effort moving forward on the recommendations contained in this report while also providing structured and well-designed and inclusive opportunities to build relationships, trust and a shared vision.

Facing an adaptive challenge is hard work. This effort, to be successful, will need to identify the best from our past efforts and then adapt these to the future. There are tough choices, trade-offs and uncertainty ahead; however, the foundation is in place to make sure we take care of our own in the Charlotte Mecklenburg community. Energy and enthusiasm

for moving forward exists everywhere: in the one-on-one conversations, the small meetings and the large town halls. Success, though, will depend on the leaders of this effort moving forward on the recommendations contained in this report while also providing structured and well-designed and inclusive opportunities to build relationships, trust and a shared vision.

This report is submitted for consideration by the City, County and Foundation For The Carolinas. If approved, a transition plan should be developed for the City and County 2010-11 fiscal year budgets.



MORE THAN SHELTER!

Charlotte-Mecklenburg's
Ten-Year Implementation Plan to
End and Prevent Homelessness---One Person /One Family at a Time

October 2006

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Preface: About This Implementation Plan

Charlotte-Mecklenburg began its formal search for answers on how to deal with our growing homelessness crisis in 2000 with the release of "***In the Shadows****, An Assessment of Homelessness in Mecklenburg County*." This assessment provided a statistical baseline for the then current state of homelessness and a starting point for dealing with the crisis. Soon after the assessment was published, community leaders convened a broad-based, 23-member task force to develop a vision and strategic plan to address the issues and challenges outlined in the report. After ten months of task force meetings and input from over 100 people serving on issue-focused subcommittees, "***Out of the Shadows,*** *A Plan to Reduce the Prevalence, Duration and Impact of Homelessness in Mecklenburg County*," was completed in the summer of 2002.

Since 2002, a number of significant actions have been taken. Some of these include:

- Creating A Way Home--the Mecklenburg Council on Homelessness to serve as an advocate and facilitator of strategic planning and partnership building;
- Finding the long-needed site and building for a permanent winter shelter for men;
- Opening Charlotte's McCreesh Place, Charlotte's first SRO for disabled men;
- Opening Samaritan House, a medical respite facility for homeless people;
- Establishing a mental health court;
- Developing and implementing a rental deposit program at Crisis Assistance Ministry; and
- Creating a mobile health crisis team.

Despite these and other efforts, our homeless numbers continue to rise as our overall population grows. Service providers have attempted to manage the growing demand for service, but this growth has outstripped their current capacities. Consequently, we need to become more aggressive with our implementation of *Out of the Shadows* and focus on longer-term solutions for ending homelessness; this will require new tactics along with much broader community buy-in, support and resources.

More Than Shelter!-- A Ten-Year Implementation Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness, One Person/ One Family at a Time—sets us on the path for more aggressive action. It represents a movement to the third phase in our community's body of work to address the growing homelessness crisis in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, building on the broad vision and direction created by the task force in *Out of the Shadows*. The implementation plan not only responds to our local need for more specific and immediate action, it also responds to the federal mandate for communities to develop ten-year plans to end homelessness, particularly chronic homelessness, as part of a unified national movement and as a requirement to continue receiving certain housing and homeless-related federal funds.

Developing the Plan: The Beginning of an Annual Process

More Than Shelter! is a dynamic, living plan that will evolve and build each year through an **annual community planning and priority setting process**. In effect, our ten-year implementation plan will become a series of ten short-term, tactical plans driven by the Out of the Shadows vision and based on the following guiding principles:

Guiding Principles for Annual Planning Process

1. ***SET TARGETS!*** Identify **specific, measurable outcomes** that link to the goals and objectives promoted in Out of the Shadows.
2. ***GET TACTICAL, GET MOVING!*** Identify **a select number of tangible, actions** each year to begin implementing immediately and around which momentum will build and be sustained within the community.
3. ***ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS!*** Designate individuals, organizations, groups and/or other entities to be held accountable for results and for reporting on them.
4. ***KEEP THE PROCESS ALIVE!*** Monitor, evaluate and celebrate progress throughout the year.
5. ***CONTINUE TO SEEK BUY-IN AND SUPPORT!*** Create and promote **opportunities to educate, engage and enlist** the support of political, faith, business, education and other community leaders, service providers, consumers and others in the campaign to end homelessness.

The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County engaged A Way Home to facilitate the planning process. Planning Consultant Carol Morris, who worked on Living in the Shadows and Out of the Shadows, was hired to work with A Way Home to research best practices from other communities and to help develop the plan. As part of the implementation planning process, three committees were convened to identify priority actions for three priority focus areas: 1) housing; 2) outreach/engagement; and 3) prevention. Representation on these committees was diverse, with over 50 people participating. A joint meeting of all three committees was held for final input and blending of overlapping strategies. In addition, several meetings were held to solicit input from service providers and others not participating on the subcommittees. The results of agency surveys and focus groups with consumers were also incorporated.

This first year plan of action for FY07-08 lays the foundation for the implementation priority setting process. It gets us moving. As envisioned, the annual planning and priority setting will occur through a continuous cycle consisting of the four main components below:

1. **Monitor and report on progress from the previous year:** A Way Home will coordinate with those accountable for implementation and provide community leaders, other stakeholders and the media with interim reports and an end-of-the-year status report.

2. **Gather and evaluate new information and changes that should be factored into planning and priority setting.** A Way Home will work closely with the Homeless Services Network and others to gather information throughout the year. As a result of this new data, and with good justification, the ten year plan and its targets may be modified as needed to keep it relevant and realistic.

3. **Create a priority action plan for the coming year that links to the overall ten-year plan and the goals of *Out of the Shadows*.** These actions may be a continuation from the previous year and/or new ones to undertake. A Way Home will coordinate this priority setting process, which will include facilitating discussions and gathering input and opinions from service and housing providers, consumers and others.

4. **Obtain buy-in and support from the Ten-Year Implementation Plan Board of Advisors.** This high-level advisory board will consist of an influential group of Charlotte-Mecklenburg citizens and leaders appointed by the Mayor and Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners. It will: 1) provide strategic advice on implementing the short-term priority actions identified for the coming year; and 2) identify ways in which the Board can help lift up and support the implementation of the actions identified in the plan through resource development, partnership building, advocacy and expansion of the political will needed to effectively address our homelessness crisis.

The ongoing support and buy-in of this board of leaders will be essential for successful implementation of the plan!

MORE THAN SHELTER! Executive Summary

We Need to Shift Our Community's Response to Homelessness---Now!

As Charlotte-Mecklenburg's population grows each year and our relative supply of affordable housing decreases, we continue to see the number of homeless families and individuals swell in our community. Over 5,000 people are homeless in Mecklenburg County on any given night as are tens of thousands annually. We are currently spending millions of dollars to address our growing and tragic homelessness crisis, but at best, are only able to manage the problem with little capacity to address root causes.

While many effective programs are in place to support homeless individuals and families, they, collectively, have not been sufficient in the face of the growing problem to effectively reduce or end homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. **The evidence is compelling that the scope of our crisis has become too large and the causes too complex to continue working from an institutionalized, agency-driven system that relies heavily on emergency shelters and crisis management**.

MORE THAN SHELTER! represents a movement to the third phase of our community's body of work to address the growing homelessness crisis in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. It builds on Living in the Shadows, An Assessment of Homelessness completed in 2000 and Out of the Shadows, a broad strategic plan developed by a community task force in 2002 with input from well over 125 participants. MORE THAN SHELTER! includes ten-year implementation strategies driven by the Out of the Shadows vision and goals as well as a discreet number of specific and immediate priority actions to take in FY07-08.

A Way Home was engaged by the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to facilitate the process for developing this implementation plan. Planni ng Consultant Carol Morris worked with A Way Home and three diverse stakeholder committees charged with identifying priorities for action. Additional input was provided by service providers within the Homeless Services Network, consumers and others.

The plan and priorities for action will be updated annually through an inclusive priority setting process.

If we truly want to see significant reductions in our homeless population, we need to begin shifting away from the traditional shelter-based model that often results in people shuffling from shelter to shelter and program to program, to a housing-based model that focuses on getting homeless individuals and families off the streets, out of shelters and into appropriate and safe permanent housing that is linked to services. **Supportive and service-enriched housing,** which provide varying levels of on and off-site services and support, must be developed as part of this shift. Supportive housing lends itself to chronically homeless men and women who may need a higher level of ongoing services and support, while service-enriched housing is best suited for families and individuals who are transitionally or episodically homeless as a result of economic setbacks or other non-disabling conditions. Services and support for those in service-enriched housing will eventually taper off as residents stabilize and build their capacity to live independent of support.

Communities where this housing-based model has been embraced are seeing positive outcomes with formerly homeless families and individuals staying housed and not returning to the streets and shelters. And according to evidence-based research being conducted across the country, **shifting to this "rapid housing/re-housing" model is cost-effective due to reduced reliance on shelters and less dependence on publicly funded systems such as emergency medical care, judicial and correctional institutions, chemical dependency treatment and foster care.** Bottom line, this housing-based approach is working and making a noticeable difference in other communities.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg's shift to a housing-based model will be a gradual process and will require new sources of funding to create affordable housing options. Until sufficient housing is available to support this new model, parallel systems must operate. People who are homeless are at immediate, personal risk and have a basic right to safe shelter and survival support. But as more housing options come on-line over time, many of the homeless support agencies and services will need to "re-tool" their service delivery protocols and processes to better align with the housing-based model.

Making the Big Shift…What We Must Do

More Than Shelter! provides ten-year strategies and immediate actions Charlotte-Mecklenburg can and must take to begin shifting our community response to homelessness. The focus is on three main implementation goals:

***MORE THAN SHELTER!* IMPLEMENTATION GOALS**

GOAL 1: HOUSING: Get homeless families and individuals into appropriate and safe permanent housing as soon as possible;

GOAL 2: OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT: Link chronic homeless to housing, treatment and services though intensive outreach and engagement; and

GOAL 3: PREVENTION: Promote housing stability for those families and individuals most at-risk of becoming homeless.

Get Homeless Families and Individuals into Appropriate and Safe Permanent Housing

The first and most critical step toward getting families and individuals appropriately housed is to expand our supply and access to affordable housing, in particular supportive and service-enriched housing. **This implementation plan calls for creating 2,500 supportive and service-enriched housing units over the next ten years**---500 supportive units for chronically homeless men and women and 2,000 service-enriched units for families and individuals Creating new units doesn't necessarily mean building new units. We have an estimated 7,000 vacant rental units existing in our community, most of which are not affordable for low income households. A portion of our housing need could be met through rental subsidies and rehabilitation of some of these surplus units. A Way Home, in partnership with others and based on national models, has developed a model for creating 200 service-enriched units within our existing housing stock, reflecting a cost of between $30,000 and $35,000 per unit. As part of this model, service agencies have identified ways in which they could coordinate existing resources to provide services to residents living in the units.

The immediate action is to pilot this model for 200 service-enriched units for families in FY07-08 and to continue looking for opportunities to replicate it in future years. Developing a similar model for supportive housing is also recommended as an immediate action to take in FY07-08, with the intention of creating 50 units in FY09. If we can position the community to create an average of 250 units of supportive and service-enriched housing each year, we will reach our ten-year goal. Other strategies we will pursue to advance the goal of getting people into appropriate and safe permanent housing as soon as possible include:

- **Developing new sources of short and long-term housing subsidies** to enable people to move into and retain housing;
- E**xpanding community-based case management services** that embody a coordinated "wrap-around" service approach that helps residents of service-enriched housing reach their goals for self-directed living;
- **Developing systems integration strategies** to ensure that mainstream services such as public assistance programs, employment training and placement, health care and mental health and substance abuse treatment are streamlined to provide access to residents living in supportive or service-enriched housing; and
- **Incorporating housing assistance centers and rapid re-housing strategies and processes into the overall homeless support system** to quickly assess housing and services needs of those experiencing homelessness and provide links to permanent housing.

Link Chronically Homeless to Housing and Services through Outreach and Engagement

Approximately 15% of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's homeless population is considered chronically homeless. The challenges and obstacles facing this population can be significant. They are more likely to suffer chronic physical health conditions and/or mental illness and substance abuse addiction, as well as use public services (e.g. hospital emergency rooms, mental health facilities, jails) significantly more frequently than other homeless individuals. They also experience significantly higher rates of violence and victimization.

Because of these challenges, it is more difficult to engage the chronically homeless and link them to housing and services. But, the economic case can easily be made for helping chronically homeless men, women and families leave the streets, stop cycling in and out of shelters and get into appropriate permanent housing when considering the disproportionate costs often associated with this population--- reliance on shelters, emergency medical care, judicial and correctional services, chemical dependency treatment, foster care services and other publicly funded programs.

To get people who are chronically homeless into appropriate, safe housing, we must step up our outreach and engagement efforts. Outreach and engagement are critical for building trust and opening doors to help those living on the street or cycling in and out of emergency shelters. The Urban Ministry Center is doing an exemplary job of reaching out to homeless men and women who come to their facility on North Tryon Street. Service providers and volunteers working at the Men's Winter Shelter also attempt to reach out to and connect with men who live on the streets but come to the shelter during the winter months. The only street outreach, however, is done by two social workers from the ACCESS program who attempt to connect with dually diagnosed (mental illness and addiction) men and women living on the streets. Homeless Support Services social workers also reach out to people living on the streets, camps and other outdoor locations; however their street outreach is limited.

To step up outreach and engagement in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, **this implementation plan calls for creating additional low-demand shelter options for chronically homeless men and women as a means of engaging people and ultimately linking them to housing, treatment and services**. (Low demand implies that as long as a person meets minimal requirements such as being non-violent, he or she can seek shelter, no questions asked.) Creating safe, supportive environments that may draw in the more challenged chronic homeless population will increase opportunities for outreach and engagement. This philosophy has successfully guided the work of the Urban Ministry Center, which is only open during the day. What's currently missing is the low-demand shelter to provide a safe place for people to sleep at night.

Specifically, the plan recommends creating **200 year-around, low demand shelter beds for men and 50 low demand beds for women**. It also calls for establishing **two to three small safe havens** for chronically homeless men and women living on the streets who are suffering from severe and persistent mental illness. Most communities of our size have such safe harbors for mentally ill people who are potentially endangered by living on the street.

Other strategies for reaching out to engaging people who are chronically homeless include:

- **Streamlining and improving access to SSI (Supplemental Security Income and Disability Insurance) and Medicaid benefits**, which can be a lengthy and difficult process, particularly for people with no address, mental illness and other barriers. In many cases, these benefits could be the life-line for chronically homeless individuals with significant disabilities;
- **Developing non-traditional approaches** to connecting chronically homeless to mental health, substance abuse and health services; and
- **Expanding jail diversion strategies** for chronic offenders charged with public inebriation to reduce the strain and costs on the criminal justice system and to link offenders to intervention services.

The plan identifies a number of immediate and initial steps for moving this outreach and engagement agenda along in FY07-08.

Prevention: Promote Housing Stability for Those Most At-Risk of Homelessness

Our strategy to rapidly move homeless people into permanent housing will not work unless we are simultaneously doing all we can to prevent new families or individuals from becoming homeless. Otherwise**,** it will be like bailing water out of a boat and not fixing the leaks.

Multiple, linked factors can lead to a person or family becoming homeless, which makes prevention more challenging and housing stability more precarious. Losing a job, dealing with an illness, having a car break down or getting behind with payday loans might be the final blow that pushes an already vulnerable family or individual out the door. Divorce, domestic violence and other family issues may also catapult someone into homelessness as might personal issues with substance abuse, mental illness and/or poor decision making. Increasingly, homelessness has become a symptom of poverty and the growing gap between income and the cost of living. And then there are the men and women who are being released into homelessness from institutions such as jails, mental health and treatment facilities, hospitals and foster care.

While the underlying issues of poverty and disadvantage certainly need to be addressed, **we need to be strategic and target our limited prevention resources on those families and individuals at greatest risk of becoming homeless** including:

- Teens aging out of foster care;
- Families seeking financial and other assistance at Crisis Assistance Ministry on more than one occasion;
- Families who lose their housing as a result of evictions, code violations, or other public action;
- Victims of domestic violence; and
- People being discharged from prison, jail, hospitals, mental health facilities and other institutions.

The ten-year prevention strategies outlined in this implementation plan include:

- **Expanding the role of Crisis Assistance Ministry as a "one-stop" support center for families and individuals susceptible to becoming homeless.** An expanded center would provide a broader range of services than currently is offered at Crisis such as on-site and/or linked eviction and foreclosure related legal assistance, in-depth financial/credit education and counseling, benefits eligibility counseling and application, and housing case management and referral services. This is the place where thousands of vulnerable families and individuals come each year to stave off eviction and utility cut-offs. For good or bad, the agency has a "captive market", and therefore, is a logical place for service expansion.

- **Expanding the capacity of mainstream service agencies to screen and assess their clients for risk factors for becoming homeless** through development of a web-based screening and assessment tool.

- **Developing and concentrating community-based prevention strategies and education in neighborhoods** where high numbers of homeless people have come from and/or most of the requests for emergency financial assistance and/or evictions emanate.

- **Stopping the discharge of people into homelessness from institutional settings,** including jails/prisons, mental health and substance abuse treatment and detoxification programs and foster care, by developing discharge planning policies and plans based "zero tolerance" for discharging people into homelessness. This includes expanding housing options, particularly for youth aging out of foster care.

- **Providing additional emergency beds and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence** so they receive the specialized support they need to help prevent further abuse and longer-term homelessness. (A large number of women and children fleeing domestic violence (DV) seek shelter at the Salvation Army because the Shelter for Battered Women only has 29 beds and regularly turns women away. The Salvation Army is not equipped to provide DV-related support.)

A number of immediate actions to begin exploring/implementing these strategies are proposed for FY07-08.

What's Essential for Successful Plan Implementation?

☑ Establish a Dedicated Funding Source to Sustain Efforts

Lessons learned from communities underscore the importance of establishing a dedicated source of funding to sustain efforts to create affordable and appropriate housing opportunities for homeless men, women and children. Establishing a dedicated source of funding to help end homelessness and provide workforce housing should be a top implementation priority for Charlotte-Mecklenburg. We should explore options and take action to establish such a fund within the next year or two. Based on the success of other communities, key options to consider should include a real estate/land transfer tax, a non-profit affordable housing foundation or endowment and/or affordable housing bonds. A Ten-Year Plan Funders' Collaborative should be established to focus on resource development and identifying common funding priorities.

☑ Create a Leadership/Accountability Structure

Creating the necessary leadership/accountability structure is essential to ensure coordination, oversight and accountability for execution of this plan at both policy (strategic) and operational (tactical) levels. Without such a structure, we will have limited success. The proposed structure would include:

1. **Establishing a high-level Ten-Year Plan Board of Advisors** appointed by City Council and the Mecklenburg Board of County Commission to provide advice on annual implementation priorities and to identify and help facilitate opportunities to help lift up and support the plan through resource development, partnership building, advocacy and the building of community/political will.
2. **Officially designating A Way Home as the manager and coordinator of the ongoing development and implementation of the ten-year plan.** A Way Home is the logical entity for this role in that the Out of the Shadows Task Force called for the creation of this organization in large part, to focus on system-wide strategic planning and coordination of plan implementation. The Task Force recommended that the organization should, at a minimum, have a three-member staff. However, since the start-up of A Way Home in 2003, the organization has been operating with only a Board of Directors and an Executive Director. Without additional resources, A Way Home cannot take on full accountability for managing and coordinating the plan's implementation.
3. **Developing/adopting a joint resolution among key entities and stakeholders** throughout the community to support implementation of the ten-year plan, and developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining roles and commitments for involvement in its execution. This should also include establishing partnerships with local colleges and universities to support the work.
4. **Designating a community champion for each of the three goal areas**---housing, outreach/engagement and prevention---to lead Action Teams consisting of community representatives and stakeholders that would provide leadership and support for implementation activities related to their respective goals.
5. **Bringing the champions of the three oversight teams together quarterly** with the Director and Chairperson of A Way Home, the Chairperson of the Homeless Service Network, the City of Charlotte Neighborhood Development Director, a representative from the County Manager's Office and other key players to serve as the **Ten-Year Plan Operational Leadership Team**.

☑ Focus on Data Collection and Measurable Results

Success with the implementation of this plan will require that we focus on achieving specific and measurable results. To this end, we must:

1. **Collect comprehensive, system-wide data** and organize it into an analytical framework that will allow us to track changes over time and make informed decisions about future action; and

2. **Develop specific, measurable outcomes** aligned with the implementation goals and strategies and then monitor and evaluate them on an annual basis.

☑ Continue to Build Political and Community Will for Action

Ending homelessness is humane, makes economic sense and is achievable. To successfully implement this plan, we must build the political and community will to devote the necessary human, financial and political resources to solving the crisis. If we continue to ignore the call for action, our crisis will only worsen, more lives will be ruined and the costs and embarrassment to the community will multiply. To build this will, we must continually educate the public and our leaders about the desperate situation thousands of homeless men, women and children find themselves in every year and about the strides we are making to move toward long-term, cost effective solutions. **We can and will succeed!**

INTRODUCTION: WE NEED TO SHIFT OUR COMMUNITY RESPONSE--**NOW!**

As Charlotte-Mecklenburg's population grows each year and our relative supply of affordable housing decreases, we continue to see the numbers of homeless families and individuals swell in our community. Over 5,000 people are homeless in Mecklenburg County on any given night as are tens of thousands annually. The scope of the problem has become too large and the causes too complex to continue working from an institutionalized, agency-driven system that relies heavily on emergency shelters and crisis management.

The evidence supporting a shift in the way we are responding to this growing and tragic crisis is compelling. While many effective programs are in place to support homeless individuals and families, they, collectively, have not been sufficient in the face of the growing problem to effectively reduce or end homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Currently, we can only attempt to manage the problem, with little capacity to address root causes.

We must turn our attention to more **cost-effective**, **permanent solutions** that focus on getting chronically homeless and other homeless individuals and families into housing faster and helping them stay housed by providing resources to help deal with root issues. Unless we begin to create this shift now, the problem will become much more challenging and expensive to deal with as time goes on. No one in our community should suffer through the reality of homelessness, a reality most of us cannot begin to imagine.

In 2002 the Out of the Shadows Task Force underscored four key reasons why addressing our homelessness crisis more aggressively is important to the community. These reasons remain true today:

- The state of homelessness and how the community responds to it reflect who we are as a community and what we value most. Community values factor into business and personal decisions about being part of the Charlotte community.
- Investing in efforts to help people get into permanent housing or to prevent a person from becoming homeless is cost-effective in the long-run.
- The future health and productivity of children experiencing homelessness are at stake. Investing in efforts to address the needs of homeless families with children is an investment in the community's future.
- Homelessness can happen to anyone. Ensuring that support exists to help our own family members, friends or even ourselves in a time of crisis is important, even if we don't think it could ever happen to us.

Our Worsening Crisis

- Our shelters exceed their capacities almost every night, regularly turn people away and have little capacity for addressing root causes. **Between 2003 and 2005, the Uptown Shelter saw a 28% increase in usage and the Salvation Army saw a 14% increase,** with a total of 3,758 residents in 2005 between the two shelters.
- The length of time people experience homelessness and are staying in emergency shelters is increasing, creating **more system-wide backlogs** than ever before.
- **An increasing number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness are among the "working poor"** who do not earn enough to afford and keep their own housing. Forty to 76% of adults living in emergency shelters in 2005 were employed:

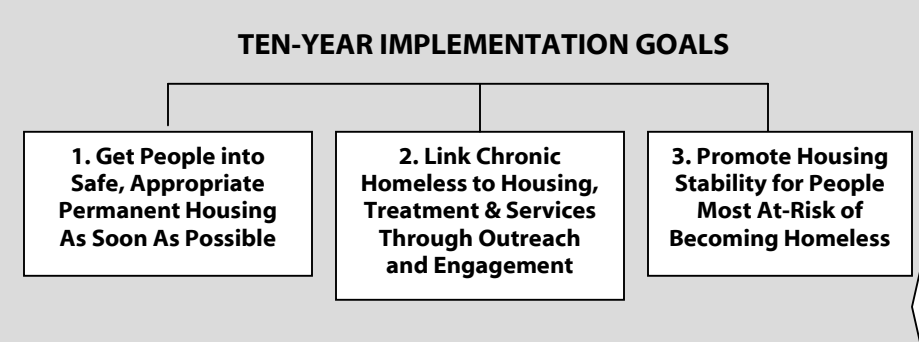
Salvation Army Center of Hope	58 %
Uptown Shelter	58 %
Charlotte Emergency Housing	94 %
Shelter for Battered Women	40-50 %

- **More than 1,800 homeless children currently attend our public schools**---enough children to fill four elementary schools or one large high school. The number of kids living in shelters or transitional programs in 2005 were:

Salvation Army Center of Hope	1,198 kids
Charlotte Emergency Housing	107
Hope Haven	11
Shelter for Battered Women	202

- A record-breaking number of families and individuals in crisis are seeking emergency financial assistance and/or other support to keep them from losing the roof over their heads. **In 2005, Crisis Assistance Ministry saw a 30 year high in requests for assistance.** (50,400 individuals /15,000 families served in 2005)
- **A deficit of 11,272 affordable units** existed for extremely low income households in Mecklenburg County in 2004; the deficit is projected to grow to 17,000 by 2010.
- Eviction rates are increasing each year in Mecklenburg County. **In 2000, 30,501eviction notices were filed compared to 37,120 in 2005, an 18% increase.**
- Long waits for public and Section 8 housing remain in Mecklenburg County. As of September 2006, **2,500 families remain on the waiting list for public housing and 206 families for Section 8 housing**. The list has been closed for several years.
- Domestic violence, one of the leading causes of homelessness among women, is on the rise in Mecklenburg County. **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police saw a 26% increase in DV-related 911 calls between 2001 and 2005.**
- Health care costs continue to rise, along with the number of people without health insurance. **Acute and/or chronic health issues are a leading cause of homelessness.**
- **Fifty to 60 children age out of foster care each year in Mecklenburg County**. Studies show that ¼ of young adults will be homeless for at least one night within two to three years of leaving foster care.

More Than Shelter! provides immediate steps we can take to begin creating long-term solutions aimed at ending homelessness---one person/one family at a time. It provides both ten-year strategies and specific one-year (FY07-08) priority actions that will be updated annually. The focus of the plan is on: 1) Getting people into appropriate housing as soon as possible; 2) Linking chronic homeless men and women to housing, treatment and services though intensive outreach and engagement; and 3) Promoting housing stability for those families and individuals most at-risk of becoming homeless.



As we press ahead each year in taking action on these implementation goals and setting priorities, the planning assumptions listed below will continue to guide our work.

Key Assumptions for Planning

1. **We can eliminate homelessness**. If we are strategic in our efforts and focus on the symptom that is a lack of housing, no one needs to be homeless beyond the few days of transition and intervention.
2. **All homeless people and their circumstances are not the same**, although the lack of housing is the same. With active and diverse housing options we can develop accompanying intervention strategies based on the fact that no single solution exists.
3. **We must acknowledge and address both the societal and personal dimensions of homelessness** in order to deal with the issue effectively.
4. **Success is difficult to measure when dealing with homelessness**. One person's success might mean coming inside at night or taking medications for mental illness. For another, it might mean moving into a new apartment and getting a job.
5. **Resources to address all of our community's social challenges are finite**. Therefore, in addressing homelessness, we must be selective in how and where we invest resources, look critically at how we are currently managing our existing resources and continually seek alternative funding. It is essential that we create a **dedicated source of funding** to create new affordable housing opportunities.
6. **Our success in implementing this plan will be dependent upon unprecedented collaboration and unified support** from elected officials, the faith community, public and non-profit service providers, philanthropic organizations and the public at-large. Stakeholders will need to move beyond their parochial concerns and recognize that collective action toward a unified approach is essential.

Key Goals From Out of the Shadows

- *Create a stronger safety net to prevent any more families and individuals from losing their housing and ending up on the streets or in shelters.*
- *Accelerate the movement of people from homelessness to stability in permanent housing.*
- *Provide more long-term solutions for chronically homeless individuals and families that will keep them safe and help them achieve their highest level of self-directed living.*
- *Break the generational cycle of homelessness so that children who have experienced living in homeless families will see options for*

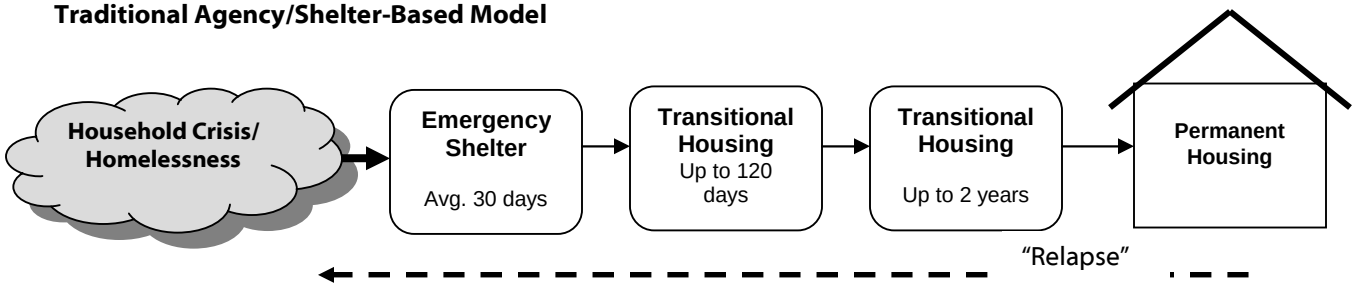
TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

GOAL I: Get Homeless Families and Individuals into Safe, Appropriate Permanent Housing As Soon As Possible

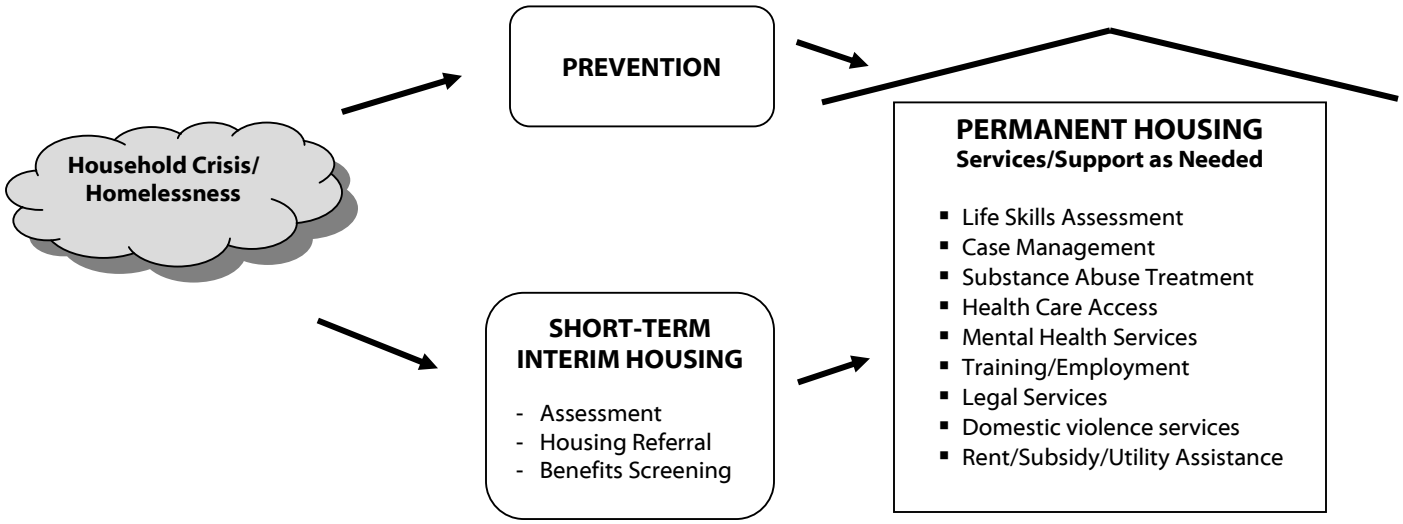
There is no "magic bullet" for ending homelessness. However, the experience and success of other cities tell us that a comprehensive and deliberate re-orientation of our delivery system is needed to shift the focus away from the traditional shelter-based model to a rapid housing/re-housing model that centers on quickly moving people from the streets and shelters into appropriate and stable long-term housing.

The traditional shelter-based model often results in people shuffling from shelter to shelter and agency to agency and then, in many cases, ending up back on the street or cycling in and out of homelessness. The rapid re-housing model is designed to prevent this from happening by getting people into permanent housing first and then, based upon the resident's needs and desires, providing support services that promote stable living and greater self-sufficiency, either on-site or linked to services off-site.

Traditional Agency/Shelter-Based Model



Rapid Housing/Re-Housing Model



In addition to conventional affordable rental housing, **"supportive" and "service-enriched" housing** must be developed to implement the rapid re-housing concept. These two housing models are closely related and often loosely defined, with supportive housing programs generally offering a wider array of services on-site, and service-enriched housing programs depending more on linkages to outside programs. Supportive housing lends itself to the chronic and/or disabled homeless population that requires a higher level of services and support. Service enriched housing is typically best suited for individuals or families that are transitionally or episodically homeless as a result of economic setbacks or other non-disabling reasons, or individuals and families who are at great risk of losing their housing.

Typical Types of Supportive and Service-Enriched Housing

- Single-site residences with on-site services for individuals and families with special needs;
- Single-site residences with on-site or off-site services for a mixed tenancy with varied levels of service needs;
- Scattered-site apartments with visiting services; and
- Affordable housing developments with strong linkages to community-based services and referral programs available for tenants.

Subgroups Within the Homeless Population

- **Transitional Homeless** – Individuals or families who experience a single episode of homelessness that is relatively short and often occurs in times of economic hardship, temporary loss of housing and/or as a result of domestic violence. Those in this category are more likely to respond to services and support and secure some type of housing fairly quickly.
- **Episodic Homeless** – Individuals or families who move in and out shelters on a fairly regular basis. They may spend time in and out of treatment facilities or jail as part of their cycles of homelessness. The level of support needed to help these individuals or families stabilize in housing will likely be greater than for the transitional homeless, but with the appropriate support, they can succeed in housing of their own.
- **Chronic Homeless** – Individuals or families who have been homeless for a year or more or have a pattern of extended periods of being homeless over a number of years. Chronic homeless persons are more likely to have serious mental illness, often along with substance addiction, unstable employment histories and histories of hospitalization or incarceration. Greater levels of support will be needed to help these individuals or families stabilize in housing.

Source: Dennis Culhane, University of Pennsylvania

With these models, there is a separation of tenancy from services. Typically an "assertive community treatment" approach to services is taken, which involves a multi-disciplinary team with expertise in areas such as health care, mental health or addiction issues providing comprehensive services. This team is responsible for helping link residents to resources, thus the housing is "linked" to the services in an integrated and coordinated manner. The goal is to assist those who can help themselves take as much personal responsibility for their self-sufficiency as possible. For those who need on-going support to address severe and chronic disabilities, service delivery partners would focus on helping them achieve their highest level of self-directed living.

Critical to the success of the rapid housing/re-housing model, the recipient must be engaged to participate in the process without the threat of losing his or her housing for noncompliance. Like any tenant, the housing is dependent upon compliance with the terms of the lease agreement and is separate from the services contract. Residents sign contracts that delineate enforceable expectations as a condition of tenancy. Contracts include adherence to house rules, good neighbor policies, commitment to personal recovery, employment and accompanying education, counseling, training and other community supports that assist individuals' move to self-sufficiency. (In some cases there is a link to the rental subsidy involved and certain aspects of the individual's services action contract, but still a separation from the lease itself.) The linkage between compliance to case management priorities and maintenance of housing will eventually be broken.

Communities Showing Results With Housing-Based Delivery Models

A number of communities are reporting significant reductions in homelessness among families as a result of launching major initiatives to rework their homeless assistance programs to get families into permanent housing faster. Examples of reductions in family homelessness include:

Columbus	**53%** reduction between 1997 and 2004
Minneapolis	**43%** reduction between 2000 and 2004
San Francisco	**28%** reduction between 2002 and 2005
New York	**19%** reduction between 2003 and 2006
Westchester County NY	**57%** reduction between 2002 and 2004

Cost Savings of a Housing-Based Model

Evidence-based research being conducted across the country shows that shifting to a housing-based model is cost-effective in the long-run due to reduced reliance on shelters and dependence on other publicly-funded systems, such as emergency medical care, judicial and correctional services, chemical dependency treatment and foster care services.

Such comprehensive research needs to be done for Charlotte; however, absent the research, it is clear the potential costs can be considerable when looking at costs often associated with people who are homeless.

Average Costs in Mecklenburg County

Housing a person / family in a shelter:
Uptown Shelter: $16.50/night--$115.50/week--$462/month
Salvation Army: $20/night--$140/week--$560 a month

Charlotte Emergency Housing:
$38/night for a family--$264/week-- $1,148/month

Housing a person in the County Jail:
$107/night--$749/week--$2,996/month

Housing a person in the County Detox Center:
$118.42/night--$828.92/week (non-hospital detox)

Hospital Stay: $2,165/night---$15,155 week (Note: This is the average cost for all patients at Carolinas Medical Center, which provides the majority of indigent care in Mecklenburg County. The cost of indigent care in Mecklenburg County rose to $135 million in 2006.)

A recent study conducted by the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Department provides data on the cost of chronic offenders in the county jail, including 33 homeless individuals. The study sample included 81 chronic offenders (arrested at least five times in the last year). The average number of arrests for the 33 chronic homeless offenders was 11.1 (compared to 9.1 for others), and the average length of stay in jail was 86.6 days (compared to 75.2 for others.) This translates into an annual cost to the County of $9,266.20 per offender or a total of nearly $306,000 annually. Petty larceny, trespassing, drug and alcohol and public disturbance charges were the most common for this group. Most are not hard-core criminals.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, as has been the experience in other communities, it is less expensive to provide housing for homeless individuals in supportive or service-enriched housing than it would be to have them cycling in and out of the jails, shelters and emergency rooms. When we add the cost of people in the housing-crisis mode using other public services such as the emergency room, the detox center and mental health emergency services, the cost savings opportunities multiply.
For example, the average monthly housing cost for families seeking financial assistance at Crisis Assistance Ministry is $685 plus an estimated $150 cost for utilities. Compared to those in

RESEARCH ON COST SAVINGS

Cutting Costs in the Long-Run: The New York City Housing First Cost Study

This 1999 empirical study quantified the extent and costs of service use by homeless persons with mental illness. Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania analyzed the service utilization costs across eight agencies of over 4,500 individuals for two years while they were homeless, and for two years after they were placed in supportive housing (both scattered site units linked to services and more intensive community health residences with on-site services. They compared this group with matched controls---homeless persons with severe mental illness who were not housed.

Before being placed in supportive housing, homeless individuals used an average of $40,450 per year of publicly-supported services, especially in the health care system. After placement, high cost service usage dropped significantly. Placement was associated with a reduction in service use of $16,281 per housing unit per year. Annual unit costs for placement are estimated at $17,277 for a net cost of $995 per unit per year over the first two years. As a result, the net cost of permanent supportive housing was calculated to be $1,908 ($995 for scattered site housing) per unit per year for the first two years.

Researchers note that their findings represent a conservative estimate on the impact on costs, as they did not track all public services used by homeless individuals, including law enforcement and court costs.

Public Service Reductions Associated with Placement of Homeless Persons with Severe Mental Illness in Supportive Housing, 2002

Cost Savings in Portland

Portland has found cost saving with its Community Engagement Program, a permanent supportive housing program for chronically homeless individuals. Prior to entering the supportive housing program, the 35 individuals utilized an average of $42,000 in public costs per year. After entering the housing, those individuals each used less than $26,000, including the cost of housing. This is approximate savings of $528,000.

Savings for Homeless Using Medicaid

According to a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, homeless people spent an average of four days longer per hospital visit than did comparable non-homeless people – at a cost of $2,424 per hospitalization. A recent Corporation for Supportive Housing study in Connecticut compared Medicaid costs for residents for six-month periods prior to and after their move into permanent supportive housing. Costs for mental health and substance abuse treatments decreased by $760 per service user while costs for in-patient and nursing home services decreased by $10,900.

the jail study or those living for longer periods in shelters, full subsidy on rental apartments is a positive community business outcome. When we consider that a majority of those experiencing homelessness are working and can pay some portion of their own rent, the numbers become more compelling. If we extend the argument, one of the most cost effective strategies is to keep people from becoming homeless in the first place through more aggressive eviction prevention measures, temporary rental subsidy or in the best case, developing truly affordable, safe, decent housing options with available services.

The Cost of Homelessness

The cost of homelessness is a cumulative measurement of the detriment to the general community, the burden on business, the price of incarceration and burden on the penal system, the increased cost of indigent health care, the diminished health and well being of homeless people, the expense of our current shelter system measured against outcomes. We must then add the loss of a sense of our humanity when any human being lives in intolerable circumstances. We can certainly afford to do better.

Converting to a Rapid Housing/Re-Housing Model

Shifting to a housing-based model will not happen overnight. It will need to be a gradual process, as new sources of affordable housing will be required to make it work. Until sufficient housing is available to support this new model, parallel systems---the old and the new--- must operate simultaneously. We must recognize that people who are homeless are at immediate, personal risk and have a basic right to safe shelter and survival support. Therefore, we cannot shut down current operations. But as more housing options come on line over time, many of the homeless support agencies and services will need to "re-tool" their service delivery protocols and processes to better align with the housing-based model.

For example, emergency shelters will need to be available for just that – emergency shelter, not as a long-term shelter option, which is far-too-often the case because people have no where else to go. And agencies operating transitional housing programs will need to explore ways of converting their transitional housing units to permanent units and/or focus on external service delivery. However, we must also recognize that some who are homeless, for example victims of domestic violence or those participating in residential substance abuse treatment or aftercare programs, may continue benefiting from a transitional housing program before they move into permanent housing to ensure they get the specialized support they need.

Communities that have been trailblazers in converting to a housing-based model have developed tactical plans for making the big shift. For example, as part of the implementation plan for Chicago's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, a Conversion Task Group was formed to develop a framework to facilitate the gradual transformation of their current homeless delivery system into one that is focused on ending homelessness. Chicago's "blueprint" for conversion includes:

- Assumptions and guiding principles for conversion;
- Projections on the types of programs and units the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) will need when the system is converted;
- Guidance and strategies focused on how the system will need to change over time in order to achieve the long-term system model; and
- A monitoring framework to track system changes over time.

For a successful transition to a housing-based delivery model, Charlotte-Mecklenburg will need to develop a similar tactical guide and identify projected costs associated with such a conversion.

Costs and Funding Sources for Creating Supportive and Service-Enriched Housing

An estimated 7,000 vacant rental units exist in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, most of which are not affordable to our lowest income residents. This surplus of units is a tremendous resource for helping us create housing options for homeless and at-risk families and individuals. Because of this surplus, we may not need to build as many new units to address our housing need. Instead, a good portion of our housing need could be met through rental subsidies and rehabilitation of existing units. (See appendix for proposed model for acquiring existing apartments to convert to service-enriched housing units.)

An estimated $75-$90 million would be needed to acquire and fully refurbish 2,500 units and provide the necessary reserve funds and incentive payments to encourage private landlords to make the units available. This amount would also include embedded subsidies for service-enriched housing. Estimated annual subsidy costs for supportive housing for disabled people with little or no income would be approximately $8,000 per unit

Possible sources of such funding might include a blend of the following:

- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development McKinney-Vento funds for homeless programs
- Federal HOME and Community Development Block Grant funds
- US Department of Veterans Affairs funds
- Federal Home Loan Bank funds
- City of Charlotte Housing Trust Fund dollars
- North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and the State's Housing Trust Fund
- Investments from foundations, the United Way, faith-based groups and others
- Funds from the North Carolina Housing Trust fund that could be generated by enactment of a 1% land transfer/real estate tax to be enacted by the General Assembly
- Establishment of a Real Estate/Land Transfer Tax
- Creation of an endowment to provide sustaining funds for housing and/or subsidies
- Affordable housing bonds

Depending upon the scope of services provided, certain additional costs would be incurred by the agencies providing the services. Additional funds will be needed for those agencies' budgets, the amount of which would depend on the scope of services provided. Sources of such service funding could include a variety of existing governmental programs including Shelter Plus Care, Housing for People with AIDS, Community Development Block Grants, the Medicaid and Medicaid Waiver programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and state and local general funds.

Plan of Action for Shifting to a Rapid Housing/Re-Housing Model

TEN-YEAR STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Create 2,500 affordable rental units linked to services including **500 supportive units** for chronically homeless and disabled individuals and families and **2,000 service-enriched units** for individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless primarily due to economic challenges and/or lesser disabling conditions.

Strategy 2: Develop new sources of short-term and longer-term rental subsidies to enable individuals and families to move into and retain housing.

Strategy 3: Expand community-based case management services that embody a coordinated, wrap-around service approach that helps residents of supportive or service-enriched housing reach their goals for self-directed living.

Strategy 4: Develop systems integration strategies to ensure that mainstream services such as public assistance (TANF, Medicaid, Social Security, and Food Stamps), employment training and placement, health care, and mental health and substance abuse treatment are streamlined to provide access to residents living in supportive and service-enriched housing.

Strategy 5: Incorporate housing assistance centers and rapid re-housing strategies into the overall homeless support system, which will help link those experiencing homelessness to both housing and the associated services they require on an individual assessment-driven, case management, contractual basis.

Strategy 6: Develop and implement a transition or conversion framework for gradually shifting resources currently being devoted to the shelter system to the new housing-based model.

GETTING STARTED….
IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS: FY07-08

1. **Pilot a replicable model for service-enriched housing** that results in the creation of **200 units for homeless and at-risk working families** that: a) includes a plan for providing rental subsidies; b) integrates wrap-around, mainstream services for residents; and c) is based on leasing, purchasing and/or rehabbing existing rental units. *(Note: Such a model has already been developed by A Way Home in collaboration with others. (See appendix for model summary.)*

   Key Implementation Partners: A Way Home, Housing First for Families Advisory Board, Neighborhood Development
   Target: May 2008

2. **Develop, and prepare to pilot in FY08-09, a replicable model for safe, decent supportive housing** that results in the creation of **50 units for chronic homeless individuals.**

   Key Implementation Partners: Urban Ministry Center, ACCESS, A Way Home, Neighborhood Development, St. Peter's Homes/McCreesh Place
   Target: July 2008

3. **Research and evaluate transition/conversion plans and approaches (policies, resource diversion strategies, collaboration building, etc.) being implemented in other cities** that are already transitioning to a housing-based model and begin developing Charlotte-Mecklenburg's conversion plan.

   Key Implementation Partners: A Way Home, Mecklenburg County, HSN Continuum of Care Committee, local universities/colleges
   Target: July 2008

GOAL 2: Link Chronically Homeless to Housing, Treatment and Services Through Intense Outreach and Engagement

The challenges and obstacles facing those who are chronically homeless can be significant. Chronically homeless individuals are more visible and more likely to live on the streets, experiencing longer and more frequent spells of homelessness. They are more likely to: 1) suffer chronic physical health conditions such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, diabetes and hypertension, at a much higher rate than housed individuals. Treatment is difficult without a stable living environment; 2) suffer from mental illness and substance abuse, which may keep them from meeting the requirements of traditional shelters and services; 3) utilize public services (e.g. hospital emergency rooms, mental health facilities, jails) significantly more frequently than other homeless individuals; and experience significantly higher rates of violence and victimization.

Approximately 15% of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's homeless population is considered chronically homeless. While this percentage is low in comparison to the overall homeless population, it is high when considering the health care and social services costs often associated with those living on the street or repeatedly cycling in and out of shelters. National studies have shown that these costs can be disproportionately high. For example, the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, a leading service group for the homeless in Boston, recently tracked the medical expenses of a hundred and nineteen chronically homeless people. In the course of five years, thirty-three people died and seven more were sent to nursing homes, and the group still accounted for 18,834 emergency-room visits—at a minimum cost of a thousand dollars a visit.

The University of California, San Diego Medical Center followed fifteen chronically homeless inebriates and found that over eighteen months those fifteen people were treated at the hospital's emergency room four hundred and seventeen times, and ran up bills that averaged a hundred thousand dollars each. One person came to the emergency room eighty-seven times.

Following in the steps of other communities, **Charlotte-Mecklenburg's gradual shift to a housing-based model will include helping chronically homeless individuals move into permanent supportive or service-enriched units.** However, getting people to that point may be challenging, hence the need for more aggressive outreach and engagement, the first steps in connecting long-term homeless individuals with the services and support they may need to stabilize. Outreach and engagement help establish rapport between service providers and those living on the street or cycling in and out of emergency shelters, which is critical to building trust and opening the door to help.

Current Outreach/Engagement Activities in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Street outreach to the chronic homeless population is limited in Mecklenburg County. Intensive outreach is provided through the County's **ACCESS Program**, which focuses on reaching out to and providing treatment for dually diagnosed individuals---those suffering from both severe and persistent mental illness and a substance abuse disorder. Two outreach workers from the ACCESS program go into the streets, camps and other places where the chronic homeless typically live in an attempt to meet and engage them, and ultimately, encourage them to come to ACCESS for treatment that may help them stabilize.

Homeless Support Services, operated through the County Health Department, has four social workers stationed at various agencies who meet with homeless individuals to do intake and assessment and refer them to services. Most of their work takes place in the agencies where they work; however, occasionally they will go to the streets or camps to engage people.

The **Urban Ministry Center** on North Tryon Street is another effective point of engagement for men and women who experience homelessness, particularly the chronic homeless. Its on-site soup kitchen, laundry facility, mail service and other basic need services and support attract hundreds of people every week. In addition, an RN is on-site at designated times for services, triage and transportation to CW Williams Clinic. People must come to the center for assistance. No traditional street outreach is done through the center.

Creating any significant connection with this fragile population often takes a long time and can be arduous. Many chronically homeless people have experienced our society's failures in unbearable proportions. Even before new supportive housing opportunities come on line, making connections with long-term homeless individuals and families to help link them to available services and keep them safe is important. Living on the streets, particularly for those with severe disabilities, is not safe and can exacerbate mental health or physical health problems.

Outreach and engagement is not just about going out to the streets and talking with people. It is also about expanding opportunities that attract people who are chronically homeless and that draw them into safe, supportive environments where connections are more likely to be made. The Urban Ministry Center does this exceptionally well by providing a place where those who may be living on the streets or cycling in and out of shelters may come to get their basic survival needs met---food, showers, laundry, mail, health services etc. In 2005 the Center served nearly 76,000 meals in its soup kitchen. Through the soup kitchen and other activities offered through the Center, volunteers and professional counselors-- including a Homeless Support Services social worker stationed at the center-- have opportunities to connect and build relationships with the homeless "neighbors", many of whom are chronically homeless.

The Emergency Winter Shelter, which opened at its new permanent location on Statesville Road in 2004, is another place where chronically homeless men often go during the winter months. The shelter can house up to 200 men. In addition to providing shelter and an evening meal, volunteers and service providers are available to talk with those staying there and connect them to services and support if desired. Outreach Ministries, which operates a meal program, is another place where people living on the streets or cycling in and out of shelters can connect.

Some of the challenges that may stand in the way of engaging chronically homeless people and/or having them link to services include:

- **Not having a safe, indoor place to sleep when they are challenged to meet the requirements of the existing emergency shelters.** We lack year-around, low-demand shelter beds for homeless men and women, including those with severe mental illness and/or substance abuse addictions. Low-demand implies that as long as a person meets minimal requirements such as being non-violent, he or she can seek shelter, no questions asked. (The Men's Winter Shelter is a low-demand shelter, but is only open during the winter months.)
- **The challenges associated with obtaining benefits** such as SSI (Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance) and Medicaid. Seeking such benefits is a long, drawn out process that is challenging for anyone, but even more so for those living on the streets or cycling in and out of shelters. In many instances, these benefits could be the life-line for chronically homeless individuals with significant disabilities.
- **The difficulty in accessing mainstream health and mental health services** that may help people deal with the underlying health and mental challenges that may be perpetuating and/or causing their homelessness and inability to stabilize. If we are truly interested in reducing our chronic homeless population, improving access to needed services in distributed and unconventional ways will be essential.
- **Having criminal records that stand in the way of obtaining jobs or housing**.

Plan of Action to Intensify Outreach and Engagement of Chronic Homeless

TEN-YEAR OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Provide chronically homeless men and women with more safe, low demand shelter options as a means of engaging them and linking them to housing, treatment and services. This would include:

- **200 year-around beds for men and 50 beds for women** who are challenged to meet the requirements of traditional emergency shelters
- **Two to three small safe havens** that provide short-term, safe accommodations linked to mental health services for homeless individuals with severe and persistent mental illness who are living on the streets.

Strategy 2: Streamline and improve access to SSI and Medicaid to help chronic and episodic homeless individuals and families more readily access eligible benefits.

Strategy 3: Develop non-traditional approaches to connecting chronically homeless individuals with mental health, substance abuse and health services and distribute geographically as a means of increasing access to much needed services that may help them stabilize.

Strategy 4: Create supportive housing options that are available to chronically homeless, disabled men and women, including those with criminal records. (See Housing Strategy for creating 500 supportive housing units for chronic homeless.)

Strategy 5: Expand efforts to divert unhoused people arrested for public inebriation and nuisance violations from the criminal justice system to reduce the strain on the system and to link offenders to intervention services.

GETTING STARTED….IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS: FY07-08

1. Take steps to permanently open the Emergency Winter Shelter on a year-around basis and/or identify other options for low-demand shelter beds for men and women.

   Key Implementation Partners: Emergency Winter Shelter Board, Uptown Shelter, Salvation Army, A Way Home, Homeless Support Services, Neighborhood Development
   Target: February 2008

2. Develop a model and funding strategy for establishing a small safe haven in Charlotte that can accommodate homeless individuals suffering from mental illness.

   Key Implementation Partners: Area Mental Health, ACCESS, Uptown Shelter, Salvation Army, A Way Home, St. Peter's Homes/McCreesh Place, Neighborhood Development
   Target: February 2008

3. Convene a task team of representatives from local and state agencies to: 1) evaluate the processes and requirements for obtaining SSI and Medicaid benefits; 2) recommend and advocate for changes and actions that should be pursued to streamline the processes and/or provide temporary relief such as presumptive disability for those who can meet eligibility requirements; and 3) develop implementation strategies, timeframes and accountabilities. Local and state legislators, as well as our local representatives in Congress, should be called upon to support and advocate for changes.

   Key Implementation Partners: ACCESS, Homeless Support Services, DSS, County Office of Community Support Services
   Target: March 2008

4. Create and test the effectiveness of a demonstration initiative through which multiple agencies collaborate and commit, through a memoranda of understanding (MOU), to annually provide a high level of concentrated services and support for 15 chronic homeless individuals, with the stipulation that the 15 individuals will not return to the streets, but instead, will move into stable housing.

   Key Implementation Partners: Area Mental Health, Mental Health Association, ACCESS, Health Department, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, United Way, Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Dept., DSS, CW Williams
   Target: August 2008

5. Research and evaluate jail diversion programs for chronic offenders (inebriation, public nuisance) established in other communities to identify possible local application.

   Key Implementation Partners: Sheriff's Department, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police, NC District Court, Area Mental Health, local universities and colleges
   Target: February 2008

Goal 3: Prevention: Promote Housing Stability for Families and Individuals Most At-Risk of Becoming Homeless

Preventing a family or individual from becoming homeless in the first place is strategically the most powerful front-line of defense for ending homelessness. The increasing number of families and individuals experiencing homelessness in our community reveals the weaknesses of our safety net for those at-risk of losing their housing. Our safety net is not strong enough to keep people from ending up on the streets, living in shelters or weekly motels or temporarily doubling or tripling up with family members or friends. We must become more aggressive with our prevention efforts to strengthen this important net and catch more people before they fall through.

A myriad of interlinked factors can lead to a person or family becoming homeless, which makes prevention more challenging. Losing a job, dealing with an illness, having a car break down or getting behind with payday loans might be the final blow that pushes an already vulnerable family or individual out the door. Divorce, domestic violence and other family issues may also catapult someone into homelessness as might personal issues with substance abuse, mental illness and/or poor decision making.

2005 Living Income Standard (LIS) for Mecklenburg County

Monthly Expenses	Adult, Infant and Preschooler	Two Adults, Infant and Preschooler
Housing	$695	$917
Food	$359	$617
Child Care	$1,084	$1,084
Transportation	$319	$490
Miscellaneous	$327	$475
Taxes	$507	
INCOME		
Monthly LIS	$3,640	$4,405
Annual LIS	$43,680	$52,860
Federal Poverty Threshold (FPL)	$14,680	$21,959
Annual LIS>FPL	$28,865	$30,901
LIS as % of FPL	2.95%	2.4%
WAGES		
LIS Wage Per Parent	$21 hr	$12 hr

Source: NC Justice Ctr.

Increasingly, homelessness has become a symptom of poverty and the growing gap between income and the cost of living. Due to high housing costs, people are paying a disproportionate share of their income on housing. **Twenty-eight percent (28%) of renter households in Mecklenburg County pay more than 30% of their income on rent, and 16% are paying 50% or more**. As shown on the Living Income Standard chart above, a single mother with an infant and a preschooler would need to earn $21 an hour to meet a bare-bones budget. To meet their monthly expenses, a two-parent family with an infant and preschooler would need a combined wage of $24 per hour. Considering the fact that many people earn little more than the minimum wage in our large service-based economy, it is not difficult to understand why people fail to keep up with their monthly expenses and end up homeless. (The minimum wage in North Carolina is currently $6.25 an hour.)

Common Prevention Resources

Strategies aimed at promoting housing stability for vulnerable populations typically focus on:

- **Cash assistance** through emergency rental and utility assistance to avert eviction or loss of utilities, monthly subsidies, rent deposit support and short-term payments for people with disabilities while waiting for SSI;
- Access to **Individual Development Accounts** (IDAs) through the Department of Social Services to save for home down payment and financial education;
- **Legal assistance and mediation services** to help renters faced with eviction and homeowners faced with foreclosure preserve their tenancy;
- **Housing retention education and counseling**, including financial literacy training and credit counseling;
- **Housing case management**; and
- Income growth and stabilization through **enhanced employment and benefits**.

Improving discharge planning from institutions such as jails and prisons, hospitals, mental health treatment facilities or foster care is also a major strategy for preventing homelessness. People released from institutions often end up living on the streets or in emergency shelters, a major challenge in Mecklenburg County.

The prevention resources currently available in Charlotte-Mecklenburg are effective. However, they are inadequate to deal with the growing number of families and individuals living paycheck to paycheck. **We must do more if we want to stop the flow of people falling into homelessness. If we don't, it will be like bailing water out of a boat and not fixing the leaks.**

Ideally, it makes sense to take on the more universal issues of poverty to prevent homelessness ---lack of education, lack of access to opportunities, poor nutrition and health, living wages etc. However, this global agenda is much too large to tackle. While the underlying issues of poverty and disadvantage certainly need to be addressed, **we need to target our limited prevention resources on those families and individuals at greatest risk of becoming homeless** and easiest to find and reach out to because of their ties to existing programs, agencies or institutions. While several subgroups might fit these criteria, we will target:

- Teens aging out of foster care;
- Families seeking financial and other assistance at Crisis Assistance Ministry on more than one occasion;
- Families who lose their housing as a result of evictions, code violations, or other public action;
- Victims of domestic violence; and
- People being discharged from prison, jail, hospitals, mental health facilities and other institutions.

We also need to take a more comprehensive view with our prevention efforts by creating stronger linkages and partnerships between those agencies and organizations focusing specifically on homelessness prevention and mainstream resources including mental health, alcohol and substance abuse services, healthcare, social services and neighborhood services. In the long-run, stepping up our efforts to prevent homelessness will prove to be a cost effective solution.

Key Prevention Resources in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, **Crisis Assistance Ministry** is the primary resource for families and individuals who are in imminent danger of losing their housing. In 2005, the agency served over 50,000 individuals, including nearly 15,000 families. The average gross monthly income of those families served was $887, with 85% of income spent on rent, utilities and food. In 2005, the agency provided approximately $6 million in emergency assistance to prevent eviction or loss of utilities, in addition to clothing and furniture. It also piloted a new rental deposit program.

The **Department of Social Services (DSS)** is also a major player with prevention through its benefits programs—food stamps, Work First, Cash Assistance, and Medicaid--- as well as asset building through IDAs. Without this support many low income families would not be able to afford their rent. In 2005, DSS had a record high number of food stamp and Medicaid clients.

Legal Aid of North Carolina and Legal Services of the Southern Piedmont provides legal assistance for low income residents dealing with landlord-tenant eviction. The case loads of these agencies are far greater than they handle. In addition, the **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee** (CRC) mediation services to help resolve conflicts between landlords and renters who have been evicted from their homes.

In addition to managing public and Section 8 housing, the **Charlotte Housing Authority** (CHA) provides counseling/support to help families become economically independent and able to retain housing on their own as they transition from public housing.

Charlotte-Housing Partnership (CMPH) provides homeownership counseling for recipients of CMPH loans to help them avoid foreclosures.

The **City of Charlotte Neighborhood Development** provides a number of housing resources for low income residents, including low interest loans.

Community Link provides housing case management and counseling for low income residents associated with various housing programs.

Energy Committed to Offenders (ECO) provides employment counseling and other services to recently released inmates from prison and jails. This is a population at great risk of becoming homeless.

The **Mecklenburg County Veterans Office** works with veterans to help them obtain benefits and other support. Ten to 15% of homeless are veterans.

United Family Services provides financial literacy education as well as credit counseling. The agency also serves victims of domestic violence along with the **Mecklenburg County Women's Commission**.

Goodwill Industries, JobLink Centers, Urban League, Vocational Rehab, Charlotte Area Fund and others provide employment training and placement.

Plan of Action to Promote Housing Stability with At-Risk Populations

TEN-YEAR PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Expand the role of Crisis Assistance Ministry as a "one-stop" center/clearinghouse for individuals and families at-risk of becoming homeless. This would include such additions as on-site and/or linked eviction and foreclosure related legal assistance, more in-depth financial/credit education and counseling, benefits eligibility counseling and application and housing case management and referral services. Establishing a 24-hour prevention and referral Hotline coordinated with 2-1-1 should also be explored as part of this expansion, as well as opportunities to expand mobile assessment and support capabilities.

Strategy 2: Expand the capacity of mainstream service agencies to screen and assess their clients for risk factors of becoming homeless through the development of a web-based screening and assessment tool.

Strategy 3: Develop and concentrate community-based prevention strategies and education in neighborhoods where high numbers of homeless people have come from and/or most requests for emergency financial assistance and/or evictions emanate. Such neighborhoods or housing developments can be identified by tracking the former addresses of homeless people and addresses of those who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Eviction prevention, financial literacy and other services and support to stave off homelessness could then be targeted to residents in these areas.

Strategy 4: Develop and implement "zero tolerance" discharge planning policies, protocols, plans, housing support and housing options for individuals leaving institutional settings including jails/prisons, mental health and substance abuse treatment and detoxification programs and foster care.

Strategy 5: Provide additional emergency beds and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence so they get the specialized support needed to prevent further abuse as well as longer-term homelessness. (A large number of women and children staying at the Salvation Army's Women Shelter are fleeing domestic violence, but the shelter is not equipped to provide DV-related support. The Shelter for Battered Women has only 29 beds and regularly turns women away.)

GETTING STARTED….IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS: FY07-08

1. **Convene a multi-agency task team** to develop a model and phased implementation plan for expanding and centralizing services and linkages for clients at Crisis Assistance Ministry.

   Key Implementation Partners: Crisis Assistance Ministry, United Way, United Family Services, DSS, Neighborhood Development, Legal Aid, Legal Services, Community Link
   Target: March 2008

2. **Collect address data** to identify neighborhoods where high concentrations of homeless people and evictions come from, and develop a demonstration initiative to target eviction and other prevention resources in one area.

   Key Implementation Partners: Neighborhood Development, Crisis Assistance Ministry, United Family Services, CRC, local universities/colleges
   Target: June 2008

3. **Establish discharge planning processes and protocols** within the Mecklenburg County Jail to reduce the number of inmates being released to the streets and shelters and to reduce the rate of recidivism.

   Key Implementation Partners: ECO, Sheriff's Department, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police
   Target: July 2008

4. **Develop and implement a faith-based, scattered site housing model** for youth (ages 18–23 years old) who are aging/have aged out of foster care.

   Key Implementation Partners: DSS, Neighborhood Development, Mecklenburg Ministries
   Target: March 2008

5. **Conduct a feasibility study** for providing additional emergency and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence, and develop a plan of action to begin creating additional accommodations.

   Key Implementation Partners: United Family Services, Mecklenburg County Manager's Office
   Target: March 2007

WHAT'S ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESSFUL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION?

☑ Establish a Dedicated Funding Source to Sustain Efforts

Lessons learned from other communities underscore the importance of establishing a dedicated source of funding to create affordable and appropriate housing opportunities for homeless men, women and children, as well as working families who are most at-risk of becoming homeless. This should be a top implementation priority. We should explore options and take action to establish such a fund within the next year or two. Based on the success of other communities, key funding options to consider should include a real estate/land transfer tax, a non-profit affordable housing foundation or endowment and/or affordable housing bonds.

In conjunction with the research and deliberation on a dedicated funding source, we need to get a clear sense of the costs for implementing this plan and what our funding priorities should be. The following are immediate actions we will take to focus on funding issues.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO TAKE IN FY07-08

- **Implementation Costs**: Where possible, estimate the cost of the corresponding strategies/actions identified in this plan and develop a budget to implement and sustain these actions.

  Key Partners: A Way Home, Neighborhood Development, Mecklenburg County Manager's Office
  Target Date: July 2007

- **Funders' Collaborative:** Establish a Funder's Collaborative consisting of public and private funders whose purpose will be to: 1) identify opportunities for expanding existing resources and creating new resources for funding implementation of the plan, including development of a dedicated funding source, and 2) focus on establishing common funding priorities to provide a unified front for implementing the plan's goals.

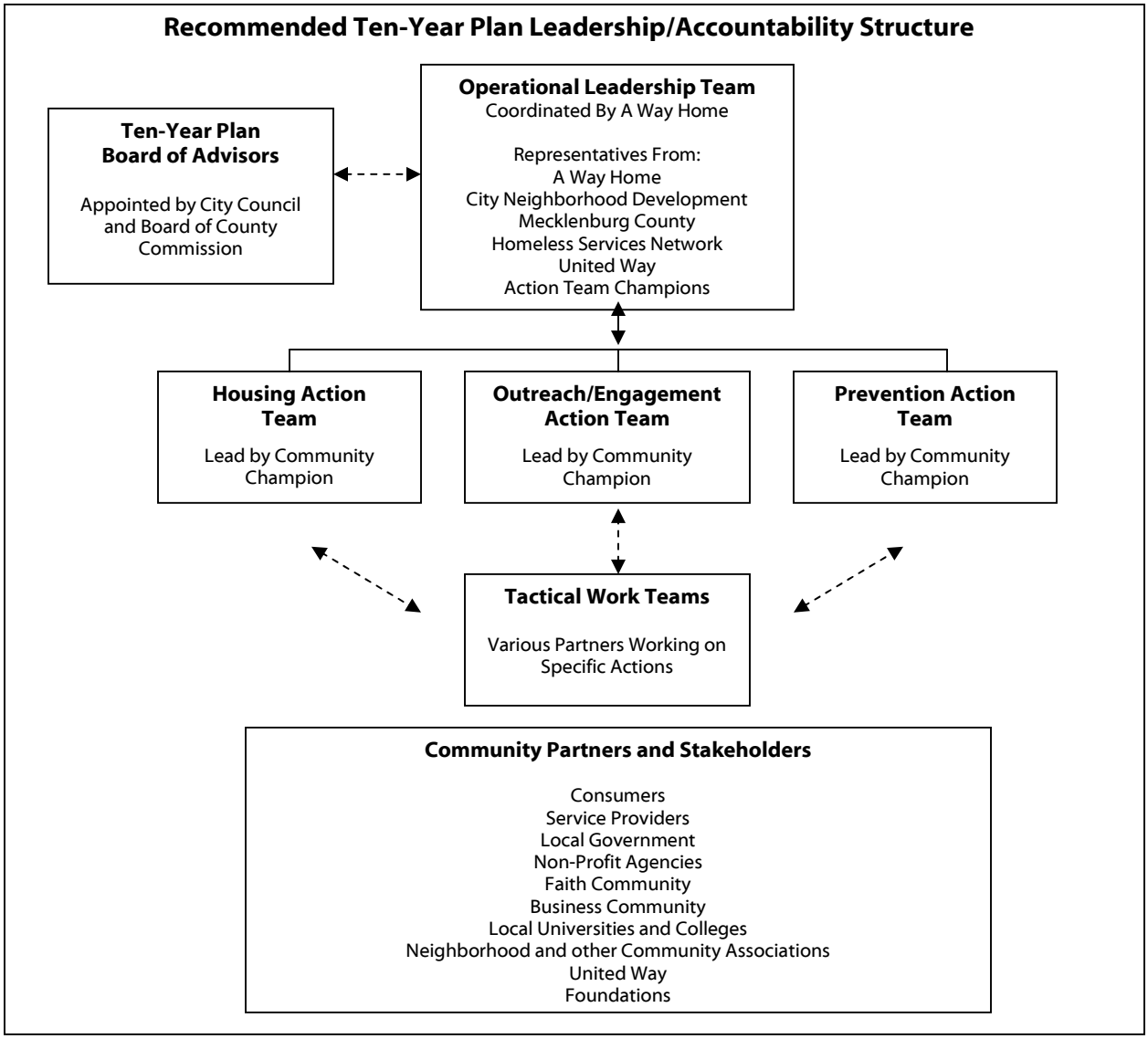
  Key Partners: United Way, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Foundation for the Carolinas, Corporations
  Target Date: Convene in February 2007, recommendation on dedicated funding source October 2007

☑ Create an Implementation Leadership/Accountability Structure

To successfully implement this ten-year plan to end and prevent homelessness, we must establish the necessary leadership/accountability structure to ensure oversight and accountability for the plan's execution. Creating a high-level, Ten-Year Plan Board of Advisors to serve in a leadership capacity and provide guidance and support for implementing the plan is essential. We will also need an accountability structure at the operational level to: focus on the coordination of implementation and ongoing planning and system enhancement activities; monitor and report on progress; undertake the necessary research and other due diligence for continued planning; and build the necessary partnerships to sustain our effort.

The task force that developed Out of the Shadows identified as its top implementation priority, the creation of an entity to focus on all of the operational tasks above, as well as on advocacy and building community awareness around issues of homelessness. **A Way Home—The Mecklenburg Council on Homelessness** was subsequently created and is the logical lead entity for coordinating and managing the operational aspects of the plan's implementation. However, the Task Force's original plan was that the organization would initially have two staff members in addition to the executive director to carry out its purpose. Since its start-up in September 2003, A Way Home has been functioning with only a board of directors and an executive director. Due to its limited resources, the organization is currently not positioned to take on full accountability for the plan's implementation without additional staff to support the director. The Homeless Services Network can provide input and support, but it's a network of already overworked services providers who come together voluntarily to coordinate at the service level. It does not have the resources to devote to bigger picture planning and coordination. Bottom-line, **unless we have someone or some entity held accountable for overall implementation of this plan and resources to support evaluation, our success will be limited.**

The proposed implementation leadership/accountability structure is illustrated below followed by steps that should be taken to put this accountability structure in place.



Steps to Take by September 2007:

1. **Establish and convene the high-level Ten-Year Plan Board of Advisors** to provide advice on annual implementation priorities and to identify and help facilitate opportunities to help lift up and support the plan through resource development, partnership building, advocacy and the building of political and community will to effectively address our homelessness crisis. The Board of Advisors would meet up to four times a year.

2. **Officially designate A Way Home as the manager and coordinator for the ongoing development and implementation of the ten-year plan,** and fund additional staff resources and/or contracts to make it feasible for the organization to carry out this task. A Way Home would be responsible for convening groups, developing tools to monitor and provide status reports on implementation progress/outcomes, working with and supporting action leadership teams, overseeing research efforts, coordinating and facilitating the annual ten-year plan priority setting process and coordinating public relations/communication on the plan. The organization would also be a partner on many of the tactical teams focused on specific priority actions.

3. **Develop and adopt a joint resolution among key entities and stakeholders** throughout the community to support implementation of our ten-year plan and develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining roles and commitments for involvement in the execution of the plan.

4. **Designate a community champion for each of the three goal areas**---housing, outreach/engagement and prevention---to lead an Action Team consisting of community representatives and stakeholders. These three teams would provide leadership and support for implementation activities related to their respective goals. They would meet bi-monthly (or as needed) to: 1) monitor progress on implementation activities in their goal areas; 2) support the tactical teams working on specific actions and helping them deal with challenges and obstacles that may be hindering their work; 3) advocate for resources and other support to advance the plan's goals; and 4) help identify priority actions for the annual plan update and priority setting process.

5. **Bring the champions of the three oversight teams together quarterly** with the Director and Chairperson of A Way Home, the Chairperson of the Homeless Service Network, the City of Charlotte Neighborhood Development Director, a representative from the County Manager's Office and other key players to serve as the **Ten-Year Plan Leadership Team**. This team would meet quarterly to monitor and address overall implementation and planning activities at both the policy and operational levels.

☑ Focus on Data Collection and Measurable Results

Success with the implementation of this plan will also require that we focus on achieving specific and measurable results. To this end, we must:

1. **Collect comprehensive, system-wide data** and organize it into an analytical framework that will allow us to track changes over time and make informed decisions about future action;

2. **Develop specific, measurable outcomes** aligned with the implementation goals and strategies and then monitor and evaluate them on an annual basis;

Immediate actions we will take in FY07-08 toward accomplishing the above are as follows:

IMMEDIATE ACTION TO TAKE IN FY07-08

- **Data Collection/Outcomes Plan:** Develop a specific plan to capture system-wide data and trends that will help track progress on specific indicators associated with the implementation plan.

  Key Partners: Homeless Services Network Data Management Resource Committee, Bell Data Systems, local university and/or college
  Target Date: September 2007

☑ Continue to Build Political and Community Will

The goal of ending and preventing homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg will not become a reality unless we have the political and community will to devote the necessary human, financial and political resources to the solving the crisis. Ending homelessness is humane, makes economic sense and is achievable. The short-term, "Band-Aid" approach to homelessness has failed to turn the rising tide.

When Out of the Shadows was completed in 2002, the community and political will we had hoped for did not come to full fruition. We did not put the structure in place to mobilize and dedicate resources to solving the growing crisis as that plan called for. This implementation plan has taken Out of the Shadows to the next level by providing specific and tangible actions we can begin taking now to end and prevent

homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. If we continue to ignore the call to action, our crisis will only worsen, more lives will be ruined and the costs and embarrassment to the community will multiply.

By educating the public and making people aware of the desperate situation thousands of men, women and children find themselves in every year we can build the political and community will for action. Tracking, building on and reporting our successes can ignite a greater sense of hope and confidence that we can, indeed, succeed at helping people who are homeless move into housing and stay housed and preventing more and more people from falling through the cracks. No doubt, each of us can find a way to contribute our time, money or thoughtful ideas as we attempt to move in this bold, new direction. **We can and will succeed!**

Specific actions we will take in FY08 to increase awareness and educate people about homelessness are as follows:

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND EDUCATION…IMMEDIATE ACTIONS IN FY07-08

- **CMS Curriculum Pilot:** Partner with Fannie Mae and Topics Education to pilot a curriculum in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools that will help bring awareness of the links between poverty and homelessness to students. As part of this initiative, an on-line curriculum that teachers can download will be placed on the A Way Home website.

  Key Partners: A Way Home, Fannie Mae, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, A Childs Place
  Target Date: November 2007

- **Affordable Housing Awareness Campaign:** Develop a plan for a community-wide awareness campaign on the need for more affordable housing in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and hold an affordable housing symposium to "kick off" the campaign. Creating a dedicated funding source for affordable housing and re-consideration of inclusionary zoning as a tool for creating more affordable housing should be discussed as part of the housing symposium.

  Key Partners: Neighborhood Development, A Way Home, Homeless Services Network Steering Committee, Charlotte Housing Partnership, Charlotte Housing Authority, Foundation for the Carolinas, Social Venture Partners and others
  Target Date: February 2007

- **Poverty Simulation:** Promote, as part of homeless awareness activities, participation in the United Way's Poverty Simulation model to increase understanding of the challenges working families have in staying housed.

  Key Partners: United Way, A Way Home, Homeless Services Network Steering Committee
  Target Date: Ongoing

- **Community Cost Impact Study:** Secure the funding to prepare a cost impact study to determine the community costs associated with homelessness as a baseline of information to help make the business case for ending homelessness.

  Key Partners: A Way Home, local university and/or colleges
  Target Date: January 2008

Appendix

- Acknowledgements
- Glossary
- Summary of Ten-Year Implementation Strategies and FY07-08 Actions
- Actions to Consider for Future Priority Setting
- Service-Enriched Housing Model for Working Families in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

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Glossary

Affordable Housing: Such housing is generally defined by HUD as affordable when the occupants are paying no more than 30% of their adjusted gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT): This model of treatment includes a team treatment approach designed to provide comprehensive, community-based psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation and support to persons with serious and persistent mental illness such as schizophrenia.

Case Management: Case managers coordinate all the care a client receives from all providers in the community. Typically, case management services are provided by agencies separate from the housing providers.

Emergency Shelter: Any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of homeless persons.

Harm Reduction Strategies: Harm reduction strategies reduce the negative consequences associated with drug use, including safer use, managed use, and non-punitive abstinence. These strategies meet drug users "where they're at," addressing conditions and motivations of drug use along with the use itself. Harm reduction acknowledges an individual's ability to take responsibility for their own behavior.

Housing First: The goal of "housing first" is to immediately house people who are homeless. Housing comes first no matter what is going on in one's life, and the housing is flexible and independent so that people get housed easily and stay housed. Housing first can be contrasted with a continuum of housing "readiness," which typically subordinates access to permanent housing to other requirements.

Jail Diversion: Jail diversion leads individuals with mental illness or substance use problems away from criminal incarceration. Diversion services may either prevent incarceration or cut it short.

Low-Demand Shelter. Shelter provided in a low-demand environment emphasizes ease of entry and access to services with minimal requirements. The focus is on providing a safe place for people to sleep and creating opportunities to connect with “residents” and link them to services.

Mainstream Services. Refers to the government funded safety net including such programs and services as Workforce Investment Programs, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, State Administered General Assistance, Medicaid, Social Security, Veterans Services, Mental health and public health services and other large government programs.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): An agreement between interested parties establishing their respective rights and responsibilities regarding a project and serving as a basis for a future formal contract.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Long-term community-based housing with support services that enables people with special needs to live as independently as possible in a permanent setting. The supportive services may be provided by the organization managing the housing or provided by other public or private service agencies.

Rental Assistance: Cash subsidy for housing costs provided as either project-based rental assistance or tenant-based rental assistance.

Safe Haven: A form of supportive housing serving individuals to reach homeless with severe mental illness or other debilitating conditions who are on the streets and unwilling or unable to participate in support services.

Section 8 Rental Subsidy: A federal rent subsidy program that provides monthly rental assistance to low-income individuals residing in privately owned units. The rents must be within HUD limits, and the units must meet HUD standards.

Service-Enriched Housing: Service-enriched housing includes single apartments rented on a permanent basis to formerly homeless individuals and families. Transitional or longer-term services that aim to link residents of this housing with community-based services are “tied” to the apartment.

Single Room Occupancy (SRO): Housing units that are an affordable housing option for very low income and homeless individuals. These are typically single room units with a bed and may include a small refrigerator and microwave. Shared bathrooms, kitchen and other rooms are common in SROs.

Transitional Housing: Designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons and families and has the purpose of facilitating the movement of individuals and families to independent living within a time period that is set by the project owner before occupancy.

Wrap-around services. A wrap-around service model coordinates all caregiver services, often through a team case management or shared service plan system, bringing mainstream and non-profit providers together for case conferencing and problem solving.

TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
SUMMARY OF TEN-YEAR STRATEGIES AND 2007-2008 ACTIONS

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS	TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	2007-2008 PRIORITY ACTIONS (New/Updated Priority Actions Will Be Identified Annually)	KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS for ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
GOAL 1: Get Homeless Families and Individuals into Safe, Appropriate Housing As Soon As Possible	1: Create 2,500 affordable rental units linked to services including 500 supportive housing units and 2,000 service enriched units.	**ACTION:** Pilot model for service enriched housing that results in the creation of 200 units for homeless "working poor" families.	A Way Home, Housing First for Families Advisory Board, Neighborhood Development	5/08
		ACTION: Develop and implement a model for 50 supportive units for chronic homeless and prepare to pilot in FY09.	Urban Ministry Center, ACCESS, A Way Home, Neighborhood Development Area Mental Health	6/08
	2. Develop new sources of rent subsidies.			
	3. Expand community-based case management services using "wrap-around" approach.			
	4. Develop systems integration strategies to ensure access to mainstream resources.			
	5. Incorporate housing assistance centers and rapid re-housing strategies into the overall homeless support system.			
	6. Development and begin implement system-wide transition or conversion framework for shifting to housing-based model.	**ACTION:** Research and evaluate transition-conversion plans and approaches from other communities already using the housing-based model.	A Way Home, Mecklenburg County, HSN Continuum of Care Committee, local universities and/or colleges	6/08

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS	TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	2007-2008 PRIORITY ACTIONS (New/Updated Priority Actions Will Be Identified Annually)	KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS for ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
Goal 2. Link Chronic Homeless to Housing, Treatment and Services Through Intense Outreach and Engagement **Outreach and Engagement (continued)**	1. Provide chronically homeless men and women with more safe, low demand shelter options as a means of engaging them and linking them to housing, services and support. This should include: - 200 year-around, low demand shelter beds for homeless men and 50 beds for women - two to three safe small havens for people living on the streets and suffering from mental illness.	**ACTION:** Explore opening the Men's Winter Shelter on a year-around basis and/or identify other options for low demand shelter **ACTION:** Develop a model and funding strategy for establishing a small safe haven.	Emergency Shelter Board, Uptown Men's Shelter, Salvation Army, A Way Home, Homeless Support Services, Neighborhood Development Area Mental Health, ACCESS, Uptown Shelter, Salvation Army, A Way Home, St. Peter's Homes, Neighborhood Development	2/08 2/08
	2. Streamline and improve access to SSI and Medicaid benefits.	**ACTION:** Convene a task team to evaluate, recommend and advocate for changes to SSI and Medicaid benefit processes.	ACCESS, Homeless Support Services, DSS, County Manager's Office, State agencies	3/08
	3. Develop non-traditional approaches to connecting chronically homeless individuals with mental health, substance abuse and health services.	**ACTION:** Create and test a demonstration initiative to annually provide 15 chronically homeless individuals with a high level of concentrated services aimed at keeping them off the streets and placed in housing.	Area Mental Health, ACCESS, Health Department, Police Department, Veterans Office, DSS, Homeless Support Services, CW Williams	8/08
	4. Create supportive housing options.	**ACTION:** See housing action for creating 50 supportive housing units.		
	5. Expand efforts to divert unhoused people chronically arrested for public inebriation and nuisance violations from the criminal justice system.	**ACTION:** Research and evaluate jail diversion programs for offenders (inebriation/nuisance) established in other communities to identify possible local application.	Sheriff's Department, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police, ECO, local universities and/or colleges	2/08

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS	TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	2007-2008 PRIORITY ACTIONS (New/Updated Priority Actions Will Be Identified Annually)	KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS for ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
Goal 3. Prevention: Promote Housing Stability for Families and Individuals Most At-Risk of Becoming Homeless	1: Expand the role of Crisis Assistance Ministry to become more of a "one-stop" center or clearinghouse for individuals and families at-risk of becoming homeless through the addition of eviction legal counseling, benefits counseling and application and other activities.	**ACTION:** Convene multi-agency task team to develop a model and phased implementation plan for expanding prevention services at Crisis.	Crisis Assistance Ministry, United Way, United Family Services, DSS, Neighborhood Development, Legal Aid, Legal Services, Community Link	3/08
	2. Expand the capacity of mainstream service agencies to screen and assess their clients for risk factors of becoming homeless through a web-based tool.			
	3. Develop and concentrate community-based prevention strategies and education in neighborhoods where high numbers of homeless people have come from and/or most requests for financial assistance and/or evictions emanate.	**ACTION:** Collect address data to identify neighborhoods where high concentrations of homeless people and evictions come from and develop a demonstration initiative to target eviction and other prevention resources in one area.	Neighborhood Development, Crisis Assistance Ministry, United Family Services, Community Relations Committee, local universities and/or colleges	6/08
	4. Develop discharge planning policies, protocols and plans along with housing support and options.	**ACTION:** Establish discharge planning processes and protocols for the Mecklenburg County Jail.	Sheriff's Department, ECO, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police	7/08
		ACTION: Develop and implement a faith-based scattered site housing model for youth aging out of foster care.	DSS, Neighborhood Development	3/08

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS	TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	2007-2008 PRIORITY ACTIONS (New/Updated Priority Actions Will Be Identified Annually)	KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS for ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
	5. Provide additional emergency beds and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence so victims get the specialized support they need to prevent further abuse and to prevent long-term homelessness.	**ACTION:** Conduct a feasibility study for providing additional emergency and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence.	United Family Services, Mecklenburg County Manager's Office	3/07
Implementation Support and Sustainability	1. Establish a dedicated source of funding and identify other strategies for funding plan implementation.	**ACTION:** Investigate options for and make recommendations on a dedicated funding source such as a real estate/land transfer tax, an affordable housing endowment and/or affordable housing bonds.	Neighborhood Development, Mecklenburg County Manager's Office, A Way Home, Ten-Year Plan Funders' Collaborative	3/08
		ACTION: Where possible, estimate the cost of the corresponding strategies/actions identified in this plan and develop a budget to implement and sustain these actions.	A Way Home, Neighborhood Development, Mecklenburg County Manager's Office	1/08
		ACTION: Funders' Collaborative: Establish a Funder's Collaborative of public and private funders whose purpose will be to: 1) identify opportunities for expanding existing resources and creating new resources for funding implementation of the plan and 2) focus on establishing common funding priorities to provide a unified front for implementing the plan's goals.	United Way, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Foundation for the Carolinas, Major Corporations	9/08 convene
	2. Establish an implementation leadership-accountability structure.	**ACTION:** Get buy-in, provide support for and put structure in place	City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, A Way Home, Homeless Services Network	9/07

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS	TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	2007-2008 PRIORITY ACTIONS (New/Updated Priority Actions Will Be Identified Annually)	KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS for ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
	3. Focus on data collection and measurable results.	**ACTION: Data Collection and Outcomes Plan:** Develop a specific plan to capture system-wide data and trends that will help track progress on specific indicators associated with the implementation plan.	Homeless Services Network Data Management Resource Committee, Bell Data Systems, local university and/or college	9/07
	4. Continue to build political and community will to support the plan implementation.	**ACTION: CMS Curriculum Pilot:** Partner with Fannie Mae and Topics Education to pilot a curriculum in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools that will help bring awareness of the links between poverty and homelessness to students.	A Way Home, Fannie Mae, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, A Childs Place	11/07
		ACTION: Affordable Housing Awareness Campaign: Develop a plan for a community-wide awareness campaign on the need for more affordable housing in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and hold an affordable housing symposium.	Neighborhood Development, A Way Home, HSN Steering Committee, Charlotte Housing Partnership, Char Housing Authority, Foundation for the Carolinas, Social Venture Partners,others	2/07
		ACTION: Poverty Simulation: Promote, as part of homeless awareness activities, participation in the United Way's Poverty Simulation model to increase understanding of the challenges working families have in staying housed.	United Way, A Way Home, Homeless Services Network Steering Committee	Ongoing
		ACTION: Community Cost Impact Study: Secure the funding to prepare a cost impact study to determine the community costs associated with homelessness as a baseline of information to help make business case.	A Way Home, Local Universities or Colleges	1/08

Actions to Consider for Future Priority Setting

The following ideas/actions were identified either by the committees that helped set priorities for the Ten-Year Plan and FY07-08 actions or are best practices or initiatives from other communities. As priority actions are identified for FY08-09, some of these ideas/actions may be appropriate to explore.

Housing

- Initiate a public campaign to increase landlord participation in the Housing Authority's Section 8 program and provide systematic support.
- Plan for and develop an SRO (single room occupancy) for single women.
- Create a rapid re-housing coordinator position to provide individualized assistance to homeless individuals and families that can help them locate and secure housing. The work would include such tasks as assessing people's housing barrier assessments; doing criminal, credit and housing checks for potential renters; and referrals to financial literacy education and housing sources. (Hennepin County, Minnesota)
- Explore a "master leasing" concept, which would allow for the City or other entity to lease entire buildings to bring units on line quickly, rely on private investment for renovation costs and negotiate improvements to common areas. (San Francisco)
- Expand Crisis Assistance Ministry's Rental Deposit Program for use by people ready to leave shelters or transitional housing.
- Develop a housing support center that coordinates housing and housing-related services from various agencies. Through such an entity, housing vouchers, TANF dollars and other mainstream and homeless program funds could be channeled. (Philadelphia)

Outreach and Engagement

- Develop a unified and coordinated intake and assessment tool.
- Establish a mobile outreach team; such teams in Miami hire formerly homeless individuals as community outreach specialists to participate on the teams, along with social workers, law enforcement personnel and volunteers affiliated with religious organizations
- Consider initiating Project Connect in Charlotte, an initiative being implemented in other communities to reach out to and engage homeless people, especially chronically homeless individuals living on the streets, through major, highly publicized outreach events. It centers around having bi-monthly events that centers on holding a one-day "mass mobilization" events at a large accessible location where homeless adults have the opportunity to connect with an array of resources and services---legal services, medical care, benefits counseling, housing assistance, etc. Trained volunteers assist. (San Francisco and other cities)
- Use Business Improvement District Funds in the Center City to hire an outreach worker to reach out to homeless panhandlers in the Uptown area and help link them to services. (Downtown Cincinnati, Inc.)
- Provide mobile health services to people living on the streets and in the shelters. In Boston, a team of multidisciplinary health care professionals visit shelters, scattered housing sites and motels.
- Provide outreach to people living in weekly motels. A mobile resource team in Fairfax Virginia uses volunteers from area churches to deliver hot meals and social workers provide case management and assist with life skills education. In Reno Nevada, police officers visit and check on the welfare of children living in motels and provide families access to resources.

Prevention

- Create a City-owned and operated transitional housing complex for individuals and families displaced from their housing by government action or disasters.
- Establish a Home Protection Pilot Program (revolving loan) for homeowners facing foreclosure.
- Expand the scope of the Physician's Outreach Program to include families at the brink of becoming homeless.
- Offer pre and post-natal home healthcare for mothers, using volunteer mothers as resources.
- Establish satellite prevention centers in neighborhoods with high concentrations of homeless households residing there just prior to becoming homeless. (Philadelphia)
- Develop a bridge fund to provide temporary financial assistance (interest-free loans and grants) with budget counseling for families experiencing unforeseen emergencies such as job loss, illness or death in the family. (New York)
- Develop an elderly eviction program for elderly renters facing eviction. (Ann Arbor)
- Campaign to encourage more local attorneys to provide pro bono legal support for preventing eviction. A team approach could be used to achieve 100% representation in a particular court room for a designated period of time. (Chicago)
- Have corrections counselors in the jail work with inmates to apply for benefits prior to their release date and set up phone interviews with the Social Security Administration staff well in advance of release. (Portland)
- Consider establishing a 27/7 hotline to provide information, referrals and crisis intervention services to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Other

- Increase use of individual development accounts (IDAs) to help homeless individuals and families save money for housing.
- Expand RN basic services and access to primary care to those in shelters

Service-Enriched Workforce Housing Model

Summary of Concept

Charlotte–Mecklenburg has a serious and growing shortage of affordable housing units for the working poor. The affordable housing gap identified in the Consolidated Plan for those below 24% AMI sent to HUD in June 2005 was over 11,000 and projected to grow to over 17,000 by 2010. The Housing Trust Fund presented its 10 Year Strategic Plan Draft to Charlotte City Council and estimated that this growing crisis would cost the City roughly $75,000,000 per annum to address 50% of that gap.

In parallel, one of the greatest concerns among key providers servicing the growing homeless population is the lack of affordable housing. That condition puts more and more at risk and prevents those trying to come out of homelessness from moving on, even with stable employment. We are seeing shelter stays lengthening, the numbers of working homeless growing and those needing financial assistance to maintain their housing exploding.

This is not just a Charlotte problem, it is a national one as the middle and lower economic classes are left further behind. The NC Housing Coalition stated that: North Carolina's most critical housing need is improving rental housing opportunities for households earning less than 30% of median income.

Concurrently the apartment market in Charlotte is experiencing heavy vacancies in the Class C properties (recent estimates of over 7,000) as a result of overbuilding in a period of low interest rates. With tenants who were able moving to home ownership or upgrading the C Market was abandoned and several of those properties are selling at historically low rates. At the lower economic scale, wages have not kept pace with the increasing cost leaving many still without options.

This proposal focuses on serving the "working poor" in our community. The waitress at the local restaurant, the salesclerk, the nurses aide, the day laborer on a construction site and many of the other hourly wage earners making less than needed to meet the rental levels for decent housing. Clearly a family living on a minimum wage job or many hourly wages can't cover basic needs alone.

A Way Home proposes to acquire and rehab one of the financially distressed multifamily properties in the Charlotte area in partnership with several key service agencies. Key strategic outcomes we will target:

- Protecting the investment in one of Charlotte's fragile but revitalizing corridors by removing a deteriorating property and creating a sense of community for the neighborhood.
- Providing a demonstration pilot for an initiative to provide 2,000 units of safe, decent and affordable housing for our community's working poor.
- Bringing a broad stakeholder group together to build awareness of the crisis and energizing them to create a significant part of the solution.
- Leveraging available funding through both market leverage and private capital.
- Creating a source of pride and relief for those that have struggled to maintain safe, decent housing.
- Taking advantage of a market opportunity to imbed a housing subsidy in the project to support working families for years to come.

Description and Scope of the Proposed Pilot

- An affordable complex targeting those earning 30% (with marketing directed at full market tenants) of the median income or less ($350 rents or less). We intend to market these units to as broad an economic spectrum as possible and will look at all avenues to create diversity.
- Non profit ownership – A Way Home would act as initial purchaser with the intention to review the ownership structure as the pilot moves to a broader implementation,
    - Allows capital to come in with tax benefits
    - Allows for a reduction in operating expenses through real estate tax relief, job training and volunteer maintenance opportunities.
    - Provides a social services friendly environment with separation of the tenancy issues
- Training and support for a tenants advisory board to give the tenants a voice in the complex and to create a sense of pride and ownership

- 25% of the units linked to partner agencies with case management
    - Youth aging out of foster care
    - Family units
    - The working population ready to move on from a shelter stay
    - Elderly
- Link to services
    - Job Training - To assist tenants and to decrease operating costs we intend to work with local job training agencies to develop job skills programs linked to apartment and grounds maintenance
- An anchor and demonstration model for family self sufficiency in Charlotte – Mecklenburg
- Variations on this model are operating successfully in other communities. As part of our operational due diligence we intend to borrow from these other communities in relation to programming, tenancy requirements and operational guidelines.

Proposed Pilot Cost

- Charlotte' soft market for Class C apartments would allow us to deliver the proposed pilot for the cost of acquisition and full rehab, which would be less than $35,000 per unit today – ($7,000,000 for a full 200 unit pilot).
- Case management on the pilot would be funded through an expansion of individual partners operating budgets. The pilot would incur the cost of a full time services coordinator as part of its operating budget.
- All direct operating expenses, including maintenance reserve, would be covered from the rental income generated. With the severe shortage in quality low cost housing versus the demand, we anticipate operating at nearly full occupancy with a waiting list.

Proposed Pilot Partners

- ARA USA – transaction structuring expertise – financial support – due diligence coordination
- A Way Home – project management / nonprofit
- Housing First for Families Advisory Team – tenancy / case management issues
- Crisis Assistance Ministry – down payment / utility / rental assistance / furnishings
- HELP – faith partnerships – develop political / neighborhood will to support the project
- Jeremiah – faith partnerships – political will – financial support
- Lutheran Family Services – case management
- Charlotte Emergency Housing – case management
- Uptown Men's Shelter – case management
- Community Link – Case management / homeownership Training expertise

- Charlotte Apartment Association – management assistance
- United Family Services – financial counseling
- Community Health Services – Health training / advice
- Mecklenburg County Health Department –sliding scale for health services
- CW Williams—sliding scale for health services, Homeless Health Initiative
- Med-Link---pro-bono/free clinics
- Legal Aid – legal services
- YMCA – targeted activities for residents with an emphasis on youth and seniors

Proposed Pilot - Funding Sources

- City of Charlotte Housing Trust Fund
- Private Donors
- Houses of Faith
- North Carolina Housing Finance Association (NCHFA)
- Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB)
- Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Local Foundations
- Local Banks

COUNCIL WORKSHOP
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TOPIC: Human Services Strategic Process

RESOURCE: County Commissioner Dan Murrey

KEY POINTS:

- Over the past several months, a number of County Commissioners have met with constituents, other elected bodies, funders, and providers in the Human Services sector. These meetings have been in response to a sense that human services could be delivered in a more efficient, productive, and cohesive way if the tools were in place to coordinate the activities of the many nonprofit and government organizations involved.

- On February 16, 2010, the Board of County Commissioners voted to direct County staff to explore next steps for the Human Services Strategic Process, including: 1) to pursue dividing nonprofit funding responsibilities by sector among the County, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the City of Charlotte so that agencies will have only one local government funding source and 2) to develop a request for proposals for a data warehouse pilot project.

- The BOCC agreed that the first steps would include having discussions with members of the City Council and School Board and their respective staffs. Commissioner Dan Murrey has requested this time to share his presentation with the City Council.

COUNCIL DECISION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:

None. This presentation is for informational purposes only.

ATTACHMENT:

Human Services Strategic Process Board Action Item February 16, 2010

Mecklenburg Board of Commissioners
Action Item
February 16, 2010

Subject: **Human Services Strategic Process**

ACTION: **Discuss potential next steps for a "Human Services Strategic Process."**

Board Contact: **Commissioner Dan Murrey**

Presentation: **Yes X No**

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION: Over the past several months, a number of County Commissioners have met with constituents, other elected bodies, funders, and providers in the Human Service sector. In addition, the Foundation for the Carolinas (FFTC) has generously shared the results of the evaluation of local non-profits they commissioned by the Bridgespan Consulting group. These meetings have been in response to a sense within the community and the sector that human services could be delivered in a more efficient, productive, and cohesive way if the tools were in place to coordinate the activities of the many nonprofit and government organizations involved. This report seeks to summarize some of the information collected in these meetings and to offer some potential next steps. The overarching goal of this process would be to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the human services sector and to enhance the independence of the clients it serves.

Several common themes evolved in these meetings:

1. Significant efficiencies and service improvement could result from **data sharing** among providers, particularly the qualifying financial and demographic data of clients
2. **Sharing of back-office functions** could lead to decreased overhead and better coordination between providers
3. Agencies receiving funding should be subject to **evaluation** and funders could benefit from sharing evaluation tools and results
4. Research of **best practices** should be undertaken and implemented by funded organizations
5. Members of each human service sector should create **communication strategies** to better coordinate their efforts
6. Any process that connects human service organizations should be open to all providers including representation from smaller **grassroots organizations** in addition to the larger consolidated provider representatives

In order to capitalize on these opportunities, three specific action steps should be considered:

1. Create a **funder's collaborative** which would agree upon strategic objectives, funding criteria, and performance evaluation tools and ultimately would share

performance data. The collaborative would include the largest funders of human services in the County including County and City government, the Board of Education and private nonprofit foundations. In addition, a small number of representatives from provider groups could contribute valuable feedback to the funders as they create their funding criteria and performance measures. A key element of the funding process would have to include additional support to create, collect and report on those measures. Some consideration should also be given to creating infrastructure to assist providers in responding positively to their performance results. Funding agencies would maintain independent authority to deploy their funds as they see fit, of course, but developing a consensus on goals, format and measurement tools should lead to more strategic deployment overall. By convening the largest funding bodies in this sector, it by no means excludes the possibility of continued funding by smaller organizations (faith-based organizations, civic clubs, neighborhood associations, etc) outside this process. As a first step the Board of County Commissioners could attempt to coordinate with the Foundation for the Carolinas and the Board of Education in the budget cycle to begin this process in the elected bodies.

2. Create a **data warehouse**, potentially housed in DSS or in the Institute for Social Capital at UNCC, through which human service organizations could share client demographic and financial eligibility information. Ultimately a single unified intake form would be created and used by all participating organizations. Once a client had registered with any of those organizations, their information would be available to all, reducing the travel and time required for clients to apply for the array of programs for which they are eligible. Furthermore, upon application to one program clients could be advised as to which other programs they qualify for, expediting their access to those resources and potentially linking those organizations that care for the same individual(s). With broad participation, a newly enrolled client could be given a "Mecklenburg County Social Security Card" that would identify all of the participating programs for which he or she qualifies. Ultimately such collaboration would lead to a greater continuum of services for clients. In addition to client information, the data warehouse could be the repository for the measurements and evaluations created by the providers for the funding agencies. This would provide a platform for sector-based research that generates process and outcome improvement.

   The Dean of UNCC Department of Computer Informatics has agreed to develop a grant proposal for a pilot project engaging 3-5 agencies in order to prove the concept. Care would be taken in the choice of agencies, ideally including at least one public agency, one large nonprofit and one grassroots organization. Once the viability of the project has been validated, it could be expanded to include all service providers who desire to participate, thus offering them an opportunity to reduce their administrative demands, devote more resources to care giving, and better serve clients by linking them with other providers.

3. Coordinate a **provider's collaborative** to convene all interested providers within each of five core sectors (Health & Mental Health, Housing, Child & Family services, Financial Stability, and Social Capital). Using the Bridgespan database

commissioned by the FFTC, nonprofit members of each sector have been identified. Each would be invited to participate in the sector or sectors most relevant to their mission. Leaders within each sector would be chosen to lead a process of strategic planning, development of communication strategies, consideration of information sharing or back-office consolidation, review of best practices, and consideration of performance measurement standards. This would also better equip such agencies to respond to the new criteria and measurement requirements of the funding organizations. Involvement across the full spectrum of providers would be actively solicited, including not just large service providers but also grassroots organizations representing the full diversity of providers. Ideally such a process would be facilitated by an outside agent. The role of such an agent would be to: 1) perform an assessment of current agency performance and gaps in services, 2) facilitate a discussion about goals and vision among service providers, 3) provide meaningful data to direct decision-making by the participating providers, 4) drive the change process, and 5) develop local leadership to perpetuate the change process. One option for the collaborative to consider would be to choose a small geographic area on which to focus as a proof of concept. This neighborhood would be the focus of intensive collaboration among all agencies providing services, much like the initial days of the Harlem Children's Zone project. Once proven successful, this collaboration could be expanded to other neighborhoods.

In order to maintain support for these initiatives and regular communication to elected bodies, representatives from the County, City, and Board of Education should meet regularly with the leadership of each of these groups and report back to their respective groups.

If the BOCC agrees with this course of action, the first steps would include having discussions with members of the City Council and School Board and their respective staffs. If there is general consensus to proceed along these lines, then we would convene the funder's collaborative to begin the process. If the funder's collaborative sees value in the process, then one of the first initiatives would be to solicit funding for the consultancy to lead the provider's collaborative effort. Grant funding should be explored through all available channels. Given the community-wide collaborative nature of this project, we should have an array of public and private grant opportunities to draw from, especially if it can be supplemented with local funds. At the same time, grant funding for the data warehouse project may be even more readily available, as it falls in line with a number of the stimulus funding programs.

Of note, although the objective originally was to create a Strategic Plan for the Human Services sector, it has become clear that any such plan would only be relevant for today and become progressively irrelevant over time as situations evolved. Whatever is created must be relevant today and tomorrow, while providing tools that the funders and providers value. Instead of a document, what has evolved is a process of change that would be continually revisited and revised to respond to current conditions of the day through communication mechanisms built into the solutions. Goals agreed to by funders and providers lead to measures evaluating performance, which leads to desired outcomes. This has the potential to be a much more lasting and self-sustaining human services sector with enhanced accountability to satisfy taxpayers and donors alike.

PROCUREMENT BACKGROUND:

POLICY IMPACT:

FISCAL IMPACT:

	Current Fiscal Year Impact	% Funding	Next Fiscal Year Impact	% Funding	New Positions FT PT
Federal					
State					
Other					
County					
Capital Project					
TOTAL					

MUST BE COMPLETED IF FUNDING IS INVOLVED

ATTACHMENT(S): None

COUNCIL WORKSHOP
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TOPIC: Urban Ecosystem Analysis

COUNCIL FOCUS AREA: Environment

RESOURCES: Rick Roti, American Forests Project Consultant
Tom Johnson, E&PM / Senior Urban Forester

KEY POINTS:

- In accordance with the Environment Focus Area Plan initiative, American Forests, a nonprofit citizen conservation organization, has completed an Urban Ecosystem Analysis (UEA) for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

- The contract cost with American Forests was $150,000. A generous contribution from the Women's Impact Fund of $80,000, City funding of $50,000, along with donations from the Blumenthal Foundation and in kind support from American Forests made this study possible.

- Using satellite imagery and high resolution imagery provided by Mecklenburg County, American Forests has quantified the community's land cover by type (trees, open space, urban area, and water) and provided information about the ecosystem services and associated financial benefits.

- The results show Mecklenburg County just within the recommended tree canopy percentage of 50%; however, our community continues on a downward trend of a net loss of tree canopy.

- American Forests recommendations in the UEA include:
    1. Use the data results and the CITYgreen software to calculate the ecosystem services provided by existing tree programs
    2. Plan and establish tree canopy goals
    3. Use the data results to identify critical areas for reforestation
    4. Use the findings to increase awareness of the relationship between trees and environmental quality and to engage citizens in environmental improvement efforts like tree planting

- The FY11 Environment Focus Area Plan has a measure to maintain a significant and healthy tree canopy with a target to adopt an overall tree canopy goal for Charlotte and measure the effectiveness of the newly revised tree ordinance meeting the goal.

COUNCIL DECISION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:

No future action is required; however, this information is related and beneficial to the proposed revisions to the tree ordinance. Staff is scheduled to present proposed revisions to the tree ordinance to the Environment Committee May 24, 2010. Upon approval, the Committee's recommendations will be presented to the Council at a dinner briefing. Council will be asked to set a public hearing and then later asked to take final action on the revisions.

ATTACHMENT:

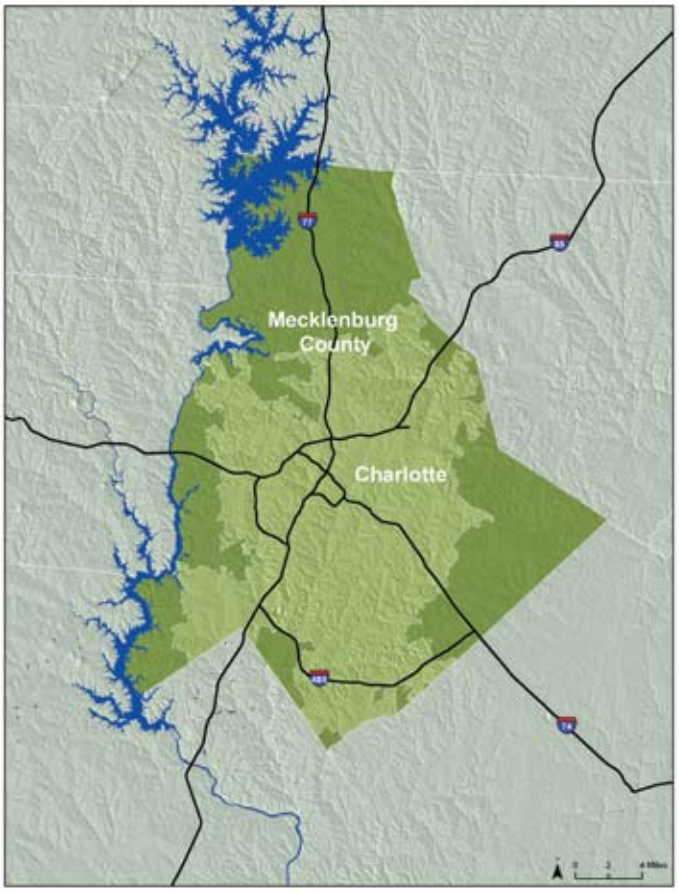
Urban Ecosystem Analysis
Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte, North Carolina
Calculating the Value of Nature
April 2010

April 2010

Urban Ecosystem Analysis Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte, North Carolina

Calculating the Value of Nature

Report Contents



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Introduction and Project Overview

Trees are important indicators of the health of a community's urban ecosystem. When trees are large and healthy, the ecological systems that support them are also healthy. Healthy trees provide valuable environmental benefits through the biological functions of their roots and leaves. These can be measured in terms of ecosystem services including reducing stormwater runoff, increasing carbon storage, and improving air and water quality. The greater the tree cover and the less the impervious surface in a community, the more ecosystem services are produced.

American Forests assesses the health and benefits of urban ecosystems through a process called Urban Ecosystem Analysis (UEA). This Urban Ecosystem Analysis of Charlotte Mecklenburg updates American Forests' earlier local, regional, and multi-state work including an UEA of Mecklenburg County in 2003, the Carolina Piedmont Green Initiative - an analysis of the 15 county region surrounding Charlotte in 2005, and an UEA of the Mountain Island Lake Watershed in 2007.[1]

With an understanding of these prior American Forests' projects and recognizing that the continued conversion of natural areas into urban areas contributes to increased management costs to preserve quality of life for its residents, the City of Charlotte commissioned American Forests to conduct this new UEA of Charlotte Mecklenburg to document current land-cover change trends and to provide detailed data for decision making going forward. The project was made possible through a generous grant from our major contributor, The Women's Impact Fund, through the use of digital imagery provided by Mecklenburg County, and through additional funding from the City of Charlotte and the Blumenthal Foundation.

This new UEA used satellite imagery, GIS technology and American Forests' CITYgreen software, to analyze land cover of Mecklenburg County, including Charlotte and the towns of Davidson, Cornelius, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, and Pineville at two scales, spanning two time periods. The first analysis, a trend analysis, utilized moderate-resolution 30-meter Landsat imagery acquired in 1985 and 2008 to quantify land cover changes that occurred during this 23 year time period. The second analysis, a much more detailed high resolution analysis, used National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) data from 2008 one meter pixel resolution digital imagery to determine current land cover for Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, the McDowell Creek and Goose Creek Subwatersheds, and the County's stream buffer network in its entirety. In addition, 2002 high resolution data from the previous UEA was used to compare tree canopy changes with 2008 high resolution data.

The project's objectives are threefold: 1) To provide detailed information regarding land cover trends and their ecological implications relevant to both Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte; 2) to replace Charlotte Mecklenburg's aging 2002 high resolution land cover data with 2008 high resolution land cover data, so local staff, as project partners can analyze how to best preserve tree canopy, target tree planting and reforestation efforts and to enhance riparian vegetation corridors, all of which are vital to protecting the area's environmental assets; and 3) to provide tools to enable local decision makers to more effectively plan for and manage growth in Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte and surrounding towns. These tools, if used in accordance with recommendations in this report, will help the community improve air and water quality and minimize degradation of the area's tree canopy, stream network and remaining open space.

Unfortunately, this UEA confirms that Charlotte Mecklenburg has continued its trend of losing tree canopy and open space while its urban area has continued to expand. However, the good news is that the tools used to complete this analysis also offer feasible solutions. Charlotte Mecklenburg can use the tools and new data provided as part of this project to change this trend and maintain a healthy, sustainable tree canopy and maximize its ecosystem services benefits. With this goal in mind American Forests recommends that the community: 1) Integrate these new land cover data into its planning processes so that impacts from future growth and development can be anticipated and managed to preserve canopy wherever possible; 2) Use the integrated data to conduct additional and more detailed analysis of the community's natural assets using CITYgreen® software with consideration of the community's land use plans, zoning categories, transportation plans, etc.; 3) Guided by this additional analysis, establish tree canopy goals that can be attained within various zoning categories and key watershed areas as it continues to develop; and 4) Preserve and plant trees throughout Charlotte Mecklenburg on a continuing basis to obtain and sustain a suitable and level of tree canopy.

Major Findings Summary

An analysis of Landsat data, used to identify landcover change trends found:

- Between 1985 and 2008, Mecklenburg County, lost 33% of its tree canopy and 3% of its open space, while gaining 60% of urban area (Table 1). These changes resulted in the loss of the tree canopy's ability to naturally manage 252 million cubic feet of stormwater, valued at $504 million using a local engineering cost of $2 per cubic foot.[2]

The County's green infrastructure[3] also lost the ability to remove approximately 3.8 million lbs. of air pollutants annually, valued at $8.8 million per year, 192 million lbs. of carbon stored in trees' wood and 1.5 million lbs. of annual carbon sequestration—the rate at which carbon is stored.

- Between 1985 and 2008, the City of Charlotte lost 49% of its tree canopy and 5% of its open space while gaining 39% of urban area (Table 1).

An analysis of recent high resolution data[4] providing a snapshot in time and quantifying what a workhorse Charlotte Mecklenburg's current green infrastructure is to the community, found:

- As of 2008, Mecklenburg County had a 50% tree canopy cover, which provided 1.4 billion cubic feet of stormwater detention services, valued at $2.8 billion, removed 14.9 million lbs. of air pollutants at a value of $40 million per year, stored 7.5 million tons of carbon in trees' wood and sequestered 59,000 tons of carbon annually (Table 4).
- As of 2008, the City of Charlotte had a 46% tree canopy that provided 662 million cubic feet of stormwater detention services, valued at $1.3 billion, removed 7.2 million lbs. of air pollutants at a value of $19.2 million per year, stored 3.7 million tons of carbon in trees' wood and sequestered 28,000 tons of carbon annually (Table 4).
- Of Charlotte Mecklenburg's 32,000 acres of stream buffers (vegetation adjacent to streams that filters out water pollutants before they can enter streams), 22,627 acres (71%) is tree canopy. This buffer network removes 1.9 million lbs. of air pollutants annually, valued at $5.1 million, manages 177 million cubic feet of stormwater, valued at $354 million, stores 974,000 tons of carbon, and sequesters 7,600 tons of carbon per year (Table 4).
- Certain land areas within Charlotte Mecklenburg, like the McDowell Creek Subwatershed, are vital to protecting the area's drinking water. Yet even at the Subwatershed's current 51% tree canopy, the Environmental Protection Agency has documented McDowell Creek as an impaired stream and unfit for swimming. In these critical areas, losing additional tree canopy to urban development only exacerbates the water pollutants entering the Creek and increases the costs of providing drinking water to the community. For example, a 5% change from tree canopy to urban landcover in McDowell Creek Subwatershed would decrease the watershed's ability to naturally manage 4.9 million cubic feet of stormwater, valued at $9.8 million.
- Charlotte Mecklenburg's tree cover has declined for the last 23 years and new policies and practices will need to emerge to reverse this trend. Based upon this latest data, tree canopy in Mecklenburg County has reached the point where further decline will cause the County to fall below levels recommended by American Forests. Charlotte Mecklenburg is now at a crossroads that will set the course for environmental quality for decades to come. The data and tools provided with this UEA offer decision support tools to help Charlotte Mecklenburg communities maintain the recommended levels of tree canopy as they continue to grow. These tools will also allow local leaders and staff to calculate the positive contributions of not only halting decline, but enhancing green infrastructure. For example by increasing tree canopy from its current 50% to 55%, Mecklenburg County's ecosystem benefits would provide an additional 1.5 million lbs. of air pollutant removal annually, valued at $4 million, decrease 232 million cubic feet of stormwater runoff, valued at $464 million, increase carbon storage 772,000 tons and increase carbon sequestration 6,000 tons per year (Table 6).

The UEA process involves a technical analysis of a community's land cover data taken from satellite imagery and aerial photography, computer technology called Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and the application of scientific and engineering models developed by experts to quantify environmental benefits. In short, the UEA calculates the benefits the studied community derives from ecosystem services provided by its natural assets.

Upon completion of an UEA the community receives data that accurately depict and quantify the community's land cover by type (trees, open space, urban area, and water) and detailed information about the ecosystem services and associated financial benefits. American Forests also provides CITYgreen® software to the community's planners and managers which enable them to integrate data about the natural assets into growth and development planning and management endeavors. This in turn enables the community to design and adopt effective measures to protect and preserve the community's trees and other natural assets.

American Forests has conducted UEAs within 40 different urban areas across the country and documented a disturbing trend–urban areas are losing trees at an alarming rate while urban land cover like roads and buildings, has been increasing rapidly. This trend is harming local environmental assets and quality of life in significant ways and is also costing communities billions of dollars because ecosystem services are lost when trees are removed.

Land Cover Change Trends: Landsat 1985-2008

Using moderate resolution satellite data from Landsat imagery acquired in1985 and 2008, American Forests measured changes in four distinct land cover types: tree canopy, urban, open space, and water within Mecklenburg County. This moderate resolution data identifies land cover change trends between these years. The analysis quantified the impacts these changes had on stormwater management, air and water quality, and carbon sequestration and storage.

It is important to note that Landsat data is valuable for identifying general trends and comparing landcover from one period of time to another in large areas but these data are not used to determine where trees, open space and urban area are located due to its coarse scale. In contrast, the high resolution dataset discussed later in this report provides an accurate spatial location of landcover and is the appropriate resolution to use to determine land cover existing in smaller parcels. High resolution data are used for planning and management functions involved in achieving tree canopy and open space goals, etc. Because of the difference in resolution, Landsat data and high resolution data cannot be compared to one another.

Landcover change trends from this study continue to document tree canopy decline noted in the earlier UEAs. Between 1985 and 2008, Mecklenburg County lost 33% tree canopy and 3% open space while gaining 60% urban area. In the same time period, the City of Charlotte lost 49% tree canopy and 5% open space while gaining 39% urban area (Figure 1). Table 1 shows landcover percent change trends, both historic and projected trends to 2015, assuming that landcover continues to change at the current rates.

Figure 1. Mecklenburg County Tree Loss 1985-2008

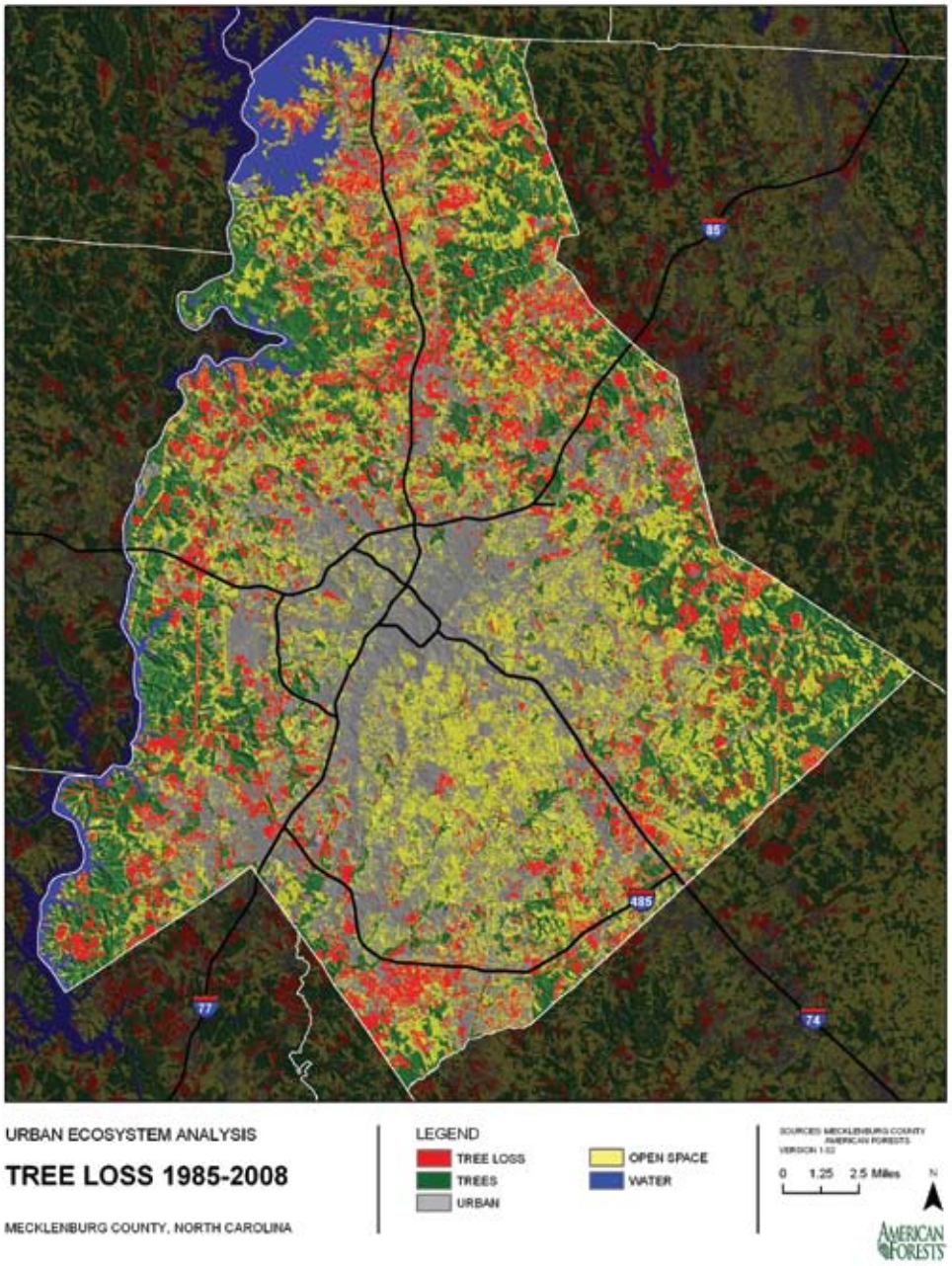


Table 1. Landsat Land Cover Percent Change Trends[5]

Landcover	1985-2008		Projected 2008-2015*	
	Charlotte	Mecklenburg Co.	Charlotte	Mecklenburg Co.
Open Space	-5%	-3%	-3%	-5%
Trees	-49%	-33%	-1%	-3%
Urban	39%	60%	4%	9%

There are ecological consequences when there is a loss of pervious land cover, such as tree canopy, open space and other vegetated areas, which defines an area's green infrastructure. There are also ecosystem impacts with an increase in urban areas. The 23-year trend data for Mecklenburg County shows that the loss of green infrastructure adversely affected the County's natural environment's ability to provide ecosystem services for air, water, and carbon (Table 2).

Mecklenburg County lost the ability to naturally manage 252 million cubic feet of stormwater, valued at $504 million. The City of Charlotte provided local engineered unit cost of $2 per cubic foot to calculate the value of mitigating this additional stormwater. Mecklenburg County's land cover also lost $8.8 in annual air pollution removal benefits, 192 million pounds of carbon storage and 1.5 million pounds of carbon sequestration annually.

Tree roots absorb water pollutants for which nine measures are available: Biological Oxygen Demand, Cadmium, Chromium, Chemical Oxygen Demand, Lead, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Suspended Solids, and Zinc. In Mecklenburg County the amount of these contaminants entering streams and lakes worsened in the past 23 years. This chronological analysis provides valuable public policy information regarding the continual loss trends in tree canopy cover and associated ecosystem impacts.

For this UEA, American Forests used the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) 2001 National Land Cover Data (NLCD) as the baseline to update land cover change.[6] The USGS data, considered the gold-standard for land cover change analysis, was classified from 30-meter Landsat data acquired in 2001. American Forests utilized this dataset as the basis to compare land cover change from 1985 to 2008.

Table 2. Mecklenburg County Change in Ecosystem Services Landsat Data 1985-2008

Tree Canopy Change	Loss of Air Pollution Removal	Loss in Removal Value	Loss in Stormwater Value	Loss in Stormwater Value @ $2/cu ft.	Loss of Carbon Stored	Carbon Sequestered
%	lbs./yr	dollar value	cu. ft.	dollar value	tons	tons
-33.0%	**-3,779,778**	**-$8,771,658**	**251,789,395**	**$503,578,789**	**-192,066,507**	**-1,495,289**

High Resolution Analysis 2008 and Ecosystem Benefits

To update the County's aging 2002 land cover data set, American Forests classified Mecklenburg County-provided 2008 NAIP data taken from high resolution imagery. This dataset provides a current snapshot of Charlotte Mecklenburg's landcover at a scale suitable to be further analyzed by the local community. Using these data, small areas of landcover within Charlotte Mecklenburg such as subwatersheds, zoning categories, and stream buffers can be accurately measured and related ecosystem services quantified. This dataset also provides Charlotte Mecklenburg with the most recently available planning and management tools.

American Forests classified these high resolution data into five land cover categories: trees, open space, urban area, bare soil, and water. American Forests then used CITYgreen software to conduct UEAs of Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, the McDowell Creek Subwatershed, the Mecklenburg County portion of the Goose Creek Subwatershed, and the County's stream network and buffer zone in its entirety. As described in the Implementation Recommendations section on page 14, American Forests recommends that Charlotte Mecklenburg use this updated digital data set to identify areas for reforestation projects and engage the other community partners in reforesting these areas to improve stream health and water quality.

Figure 2. 2008 Mecklenburg County Landcover

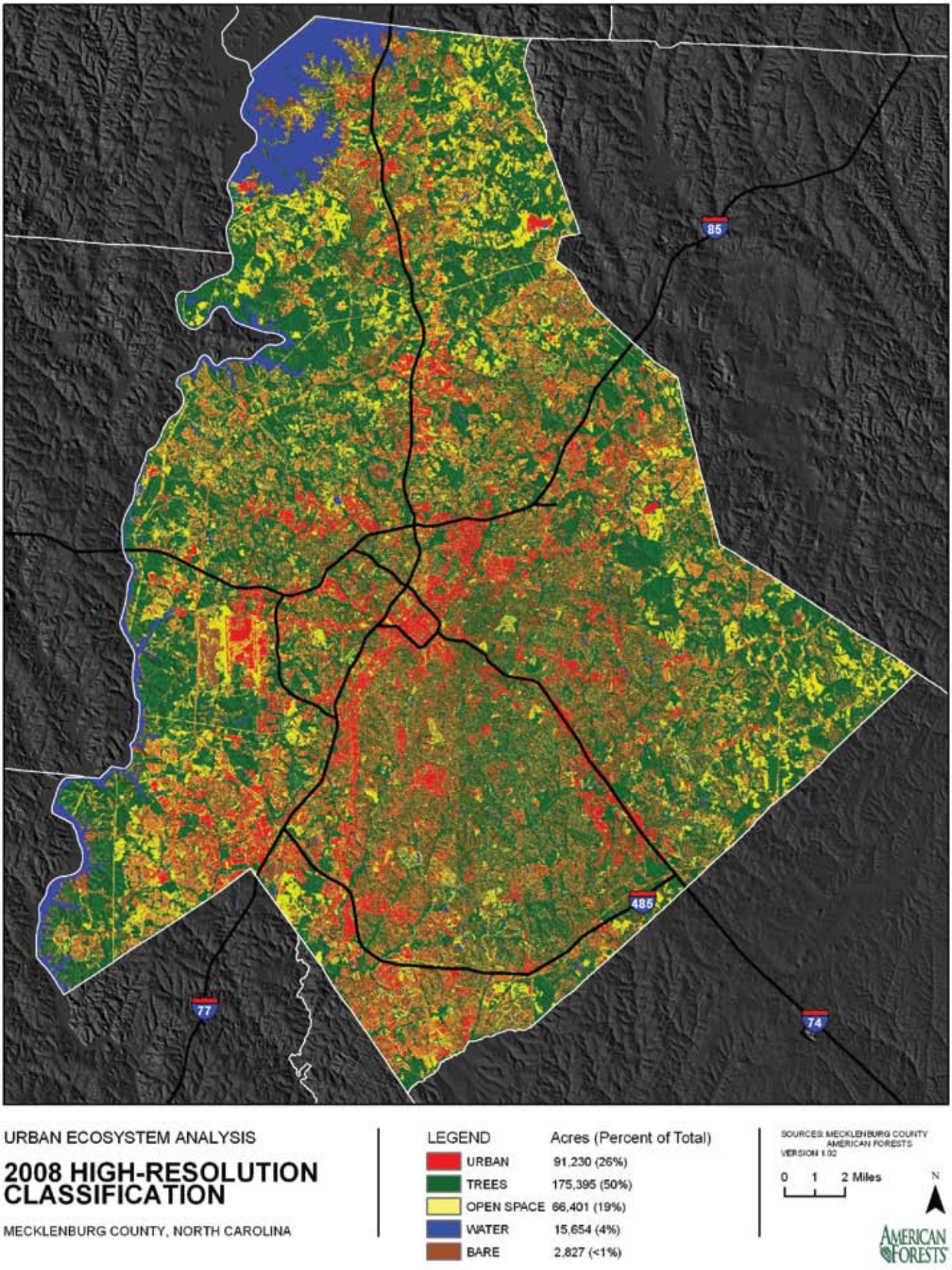
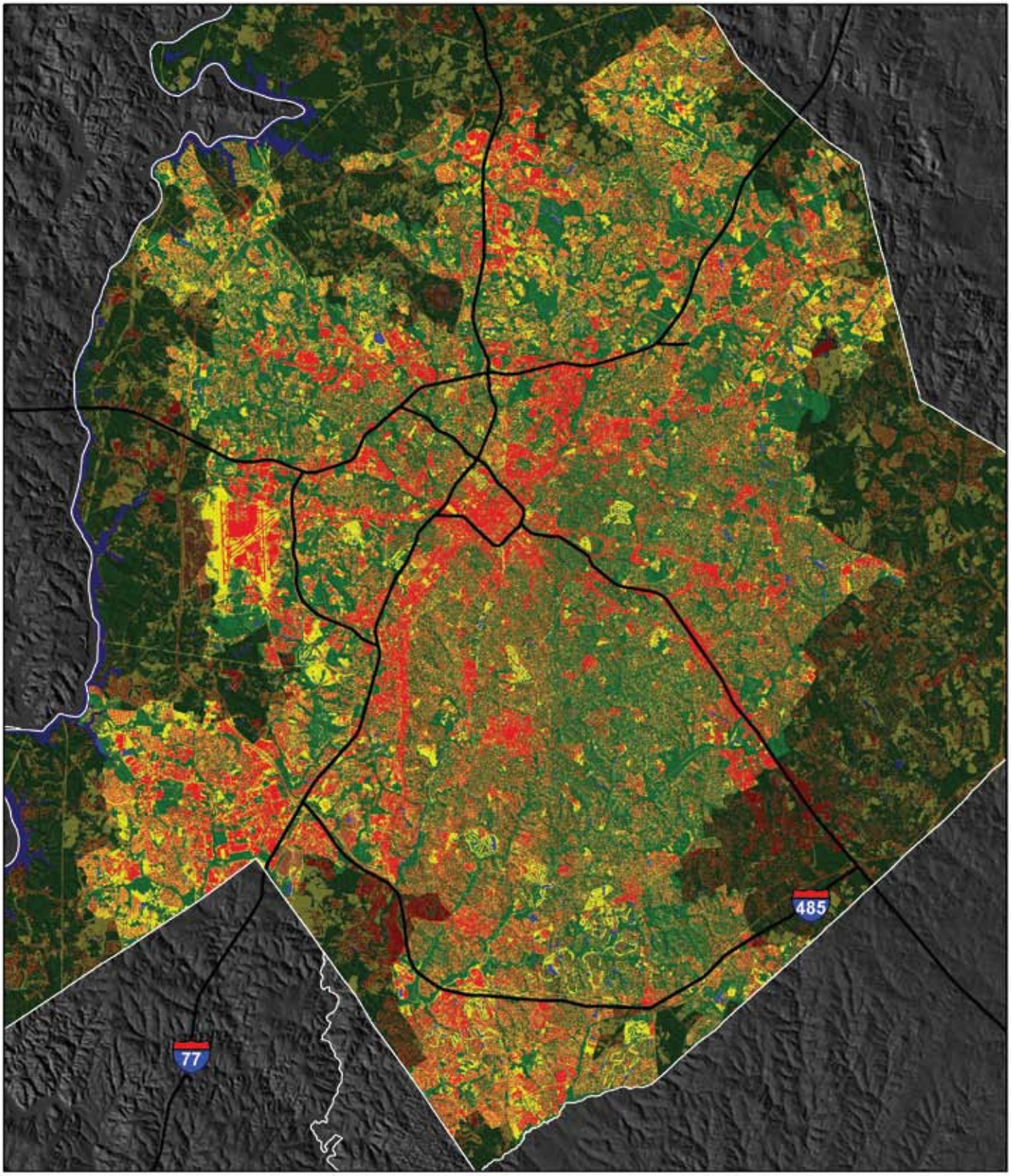


Figure 3. 2008 Charlotte Landcover



URBAN ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

2008 HIGH-RESOLUTION CLASSIFICATION

CITY OF CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

LEGEND	Acres (Percent of Total)
URBAN	48,866 (27%)
TREES	84,943 (46%)
OPEN SPACE	47,625 (26%)
WATER	1,051 (<1%)
BARE	1,078 (<1%)

SOURCES: MECKLENBURG COUNTY
AMERICAN FORESTS
VERSION 1.02

0 1 2 Miles

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AMERICAN FORESTS

2002 and 2008 High Resolution Comparison

To determine landcover change trends during the most recent six year period, American Forests compared the 2002 high resolution data used in the previous UEA with 2008 high resolution data from this project after making appropriate data scaling and boundary adjustments. Since Charlotte gained land area due to boundary changes by 2008, this analysis used the 2008 boundary area in order to make an accurate comparison. The six year period shows that tree canopy continued to decline in both the City and County. Charlotte lost 3,231 acres of trees, a 2% decline and Mecklenburg County lost 9,475 acres of trees, a 3% decline over this six year period (Figure 4). If no action is taken to reverse this trend, and the rate of landcover change continues, projections to 2015 show that Mecklenburg County will lose an additional 20,500 acres of tree canopy and Charlotte will lose an additional 7,000 acres of tree canopy.

Figure 4. Actual and Projected Tree Canopy Decline in Charlotte Mecklenburg

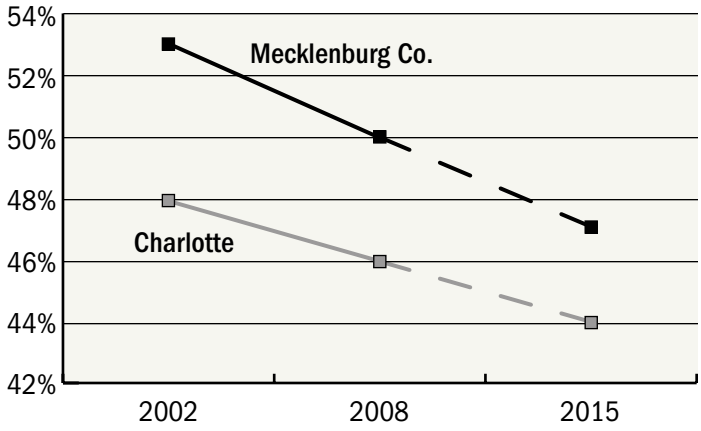


Table 3. Landcover, Tree Canopy and Population Comparison (4 meter pixel resolution)*

	2002**			2008**		
	Total Acres*	**Canopy Acres***	**Population*****	**Total Acres**	**Canopy Acres**	**Population*****
Mecklenburg County	348,962	184,528 (53%)	746,427	349,162	175,053 (50%)	902,803
Charlotte	183,575	88,184 (48%)	579,684	183,575	84,953 (46%)	695,995

**The acreage reported in Tables 3 and 4 will be different due to data scaling adjustments made in order to compare 2002 and 2008 data.*
*** Since Charlotte's land boundaries changed during this time, the 2008 land boundary was used in both analyses to make an accurate comparison of canopy change. Even though the same boundary was used in both analyses, the acreage reported is slightly different due to data scaling adjustments when changing from a 1 meter to a 4 meter pixel resolution.*
****Population source: Charlotte Chamber: http://www.charlottechamber.com/index.php?submenu=population_estimates&src=gendocs&ref=PopulationEstimates2008&category=Demo_ecoProfile*

Stormwater Benefits

Trees reduce the volume of stormwater runoff by capturing some rain on their leaves and branches, which then evaporates back into the atmosphere. Other water is absorbed by the tree roots or infiltrates into the soil rather than running off the land. As a result less runoff must be managed by manmade infrastructure. In 2008, Mecklenburg County had a 50% tree canopy, which managed 1.4 billion cubic feet of stormwater, valued at $2.8 billion using a $2 per cubic foot value based on local costs (see Analysis Formulas, pg. 8). In 2008, Charlotte's 46% tree canopy provided 6.6 million cubic feet of stormwater management, valued at $1.3 billion.

Table 4. 2008 Tree Canopy and Ecosystem Services from High-Resolution Data (1 meter pixel resolution)

	Area	**2008 Tree Canopy**	**2008 Tree Canopy**	**Air Pollution Removal**	**Air Pollution Removal Value**	**Carbon Stored**	**Carbon Sequestered**	**Stormwater Value***	**Stormwater Value @ $2 per cu. ft**
	acres	acres	percent	lbs./ yr	dollar value	tons	tons	cu. ft.	dollar value
Mecklenburg Co.	351,507	175,395	50%	14,853,127	$39,639,770	7,547,502	58,759	1,376,836,456	$2,753,672,911
Charlotte	183,570	84,943	46%	7,193,286	$19,197,318	3,655,213	28,457	661,848,956	$1,323,697,911
McDowell Cr. Wsd	18,628	9,427	51%	798,325	$2,130,555	405,663	3,158	70,323,500	$140,647,000
Goose Cr. Wsd**	7,161	4,380	61%	370,948	$989,979	188,494	1,467	38,711,659	$77,423,318
Stream Buffer Network	31,952	22,627	71%	1,916,118	$5,113,703	973,661	7,580	177,236,524	$354,473,048

*"*Stormwater analysis uses a 2yr, 24 hour storm event. The value of managing stormwater is based on current local construction costs of $2.00 per cubic foot (city of Charlotte).*
***Only the Mecklenburg County portion of the Goose Creek Watershed is included in this study.*

Water Quality Benefits

Trees provide very valuable water quality ecosystem services. Tree roots absorb water pollutants for which ten measures are available: Biological Oxygen Demand, Cadmium, Chromium, Chemical Oxygen Demand, Lead, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Suspended Solids, and Zinc. For Mecklenburg County, water pollution, as measured in percent change in pollutant loading, would worsen, from 21% for Zinc to 132% for Chemical Oxygen Demand if the existing trees were removed from the land. For the City of Charlotte, water pollution, as measured in percent change in pollutant loading, would worsen, from 19% for Zinc to 108% for Chemical Oxygen Demand if the existing trees were removed from the land.

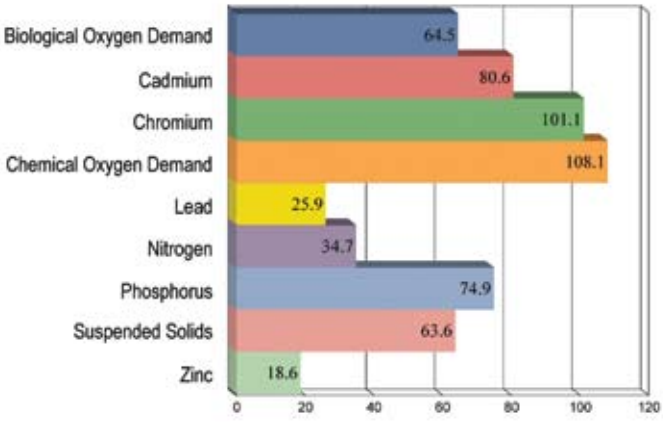
Air Quality Benefits

Air quality is of particular concern in the Charlotte Mecklenburg region because the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated Mecklenburg County and surrounding counties as a non-attainment area for ozone and carbon monoxide. "Sunlight and hot weather can cause ground- level ozone to form in harmful concentrations in the air. As a result, it is known as a summertime air pollutant. For this reason, the months of April through October often are referred to as the "ozone season" in this area."[7]

The air quality ecosystem services provided by trees are a big plus for the Charlotte Mecklenburg region. Tree canopy cools the air by evaporating water and by direct shading of buildings and pavement. This lowers the ambient temperature in cities (known as urban heat islands), reducing ground level ozone production and related smog conditions. While trees also emit hydrocarbons that contribute to smog ozone, research shows that because of trees cooling effects, they provide a net benefit in reducing air pollution.[8]

The ecological value of air quality ecosystem services is based on the UFORE model developed by the U.S. Forest Service. The dollar value is calculated based on externality costs to society (such as public health-related respiratory costs) due to the additional air pollution. Externality values are established by State Public Service Commissions. Mecklenburg County's urban forest removes 14.9 million lbs. of air pollutants annually, valued at almost $40 million per year. Charlotte's urban forest removes 7.2 million lbs. of air pollutants annually, valued at almost 19.2 million per year (Table 5).

City of Charlotte Water Pollutants As Measured In Percent Change in Contaminant Loading



Mecklenburg County Water Pollutants As Measured In Percent Change in Contaminant Loading

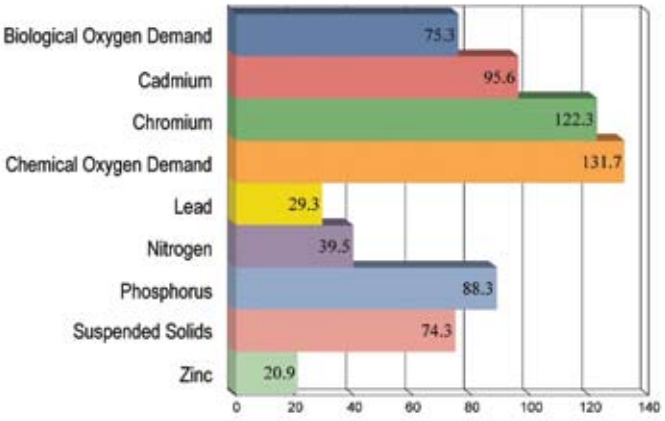


Table 5. Urban Forest Air Pollutant Removal Benefits

Air Pollutant	Mecklenburg Co.		Charlotte	
	Lbs. Removed per yr.	$ Value per yr.	Lbs. Removed per yr.	$ Value per yr.
Carbon Monoxide	625,395	$306,928	302,895	$148,653
Nitrogen Dioxide	1,094,441	$22,647,903	530,067	$1,872,752
Ozone	6,410,297	$3,866,715	3,104,675	$10,968,976
Particulate Matter	4,690,461	$11,064,084	2,271,714	$5,358,627
Sulfur Dioxide	2,032,533	$1,754,140	984,409	$849,576
Totals	**14,853,127**	**$39,639,770**	**7,193,760**	**$19,198,584**

Carbon Storage and Sequestration Benefits

Trees have a direct impact on the carbon footprint—the amount of atmospheric carbon a community produces that contributes to global warming. Trees provide a carbon sink by storing and sequestering atmospheric carbon in their wood. Both the total storage and the rate at which carbon is stored (known as sequestration) can be measured. Charlotte's tree canopy stores 3.7 million tons of carbon and sequesters 28,000 tons of carbon annually. Planting new trees and maintaining existing trees provide opportunities for the public and private sector to reduce their community's carbon footprint.

Modeling Ecosystem Benefits of Increased Tree Canopy

As mentioned earlier, Charlotte Mecklenburg continues to lose tree canopy cover and open space. Fortunately, Mecklenburg County is already using the data from American Forests' previous UEA and is poised to use the data set produced by this UEA for land use planning (see Implementation Recommendations, pg. 14) and to implement watershed management practices as described for McDowell Creek below. To illustrate how Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and the local towns might go about reversing the trend of canopy loss and leverage the benefits that tree canopy provides, American Forests modeled an increase in Mecklenburg County's tree canopy from its current 50% to 55% and calculated the additional ecosystem service benefits this resource would provide in helping the community achieve its water and air quality goals.

If the County increased its canopy cover by 5% overall, the ecosystem services would provide an additional $4 million in annual air pollutant removal value, an additional 771,000 tons of stored carbon and an annual 6,000 tons of sequestered carbon, as well as 232 million cubic feet of additional managed stormwater, valued at $464 million. Table 6 details these increased benefits. Of course the region would also realize other benefits in the form of increased property value, increased tax revenue, reduced energy consumption, etc., not detailed in this report. Charlotte Mecklenburg planners can use the data set delivered with this project to establish overall tree canopy goals and also to stratify goals by land use. Staff can look for opportunities within public and private land to increase tree canopy cover which will improve overall environmental benefits. Tree planting and ongoing care engages all sectors of the community, where everyone has the opportunity and responsibility to contribute.

Table 6. Modeled Ecosystem Benefits from Increasing Mecklenburg County's Tree Cover

	2008 Tree Canopy	Modeled Tree Canopy	Additional Air Pollution Removal	Additional Air Pollution Removal Value	Additional Carbon Stored	Additional Carbon Sequestered	Additional Stormwater Mgmt Reduced	Additional Stormwater Value @ $2 per cu. ft*
	percent	percent	lbs./ yr	dollar value	tons	tons	cu. ft.	dollar value
Mecklenburg Co.	50%	55%	1,518,710	$4,053,109	771,721	6,008	-231,982,887	-$463,965,775

**Stormwater analysis uses a 2yr, 24 hour storm event. The value of managing stormwater is based on current local construction costs of $2.00 per cubic foot (source of unit cost: City of Charlotte).*

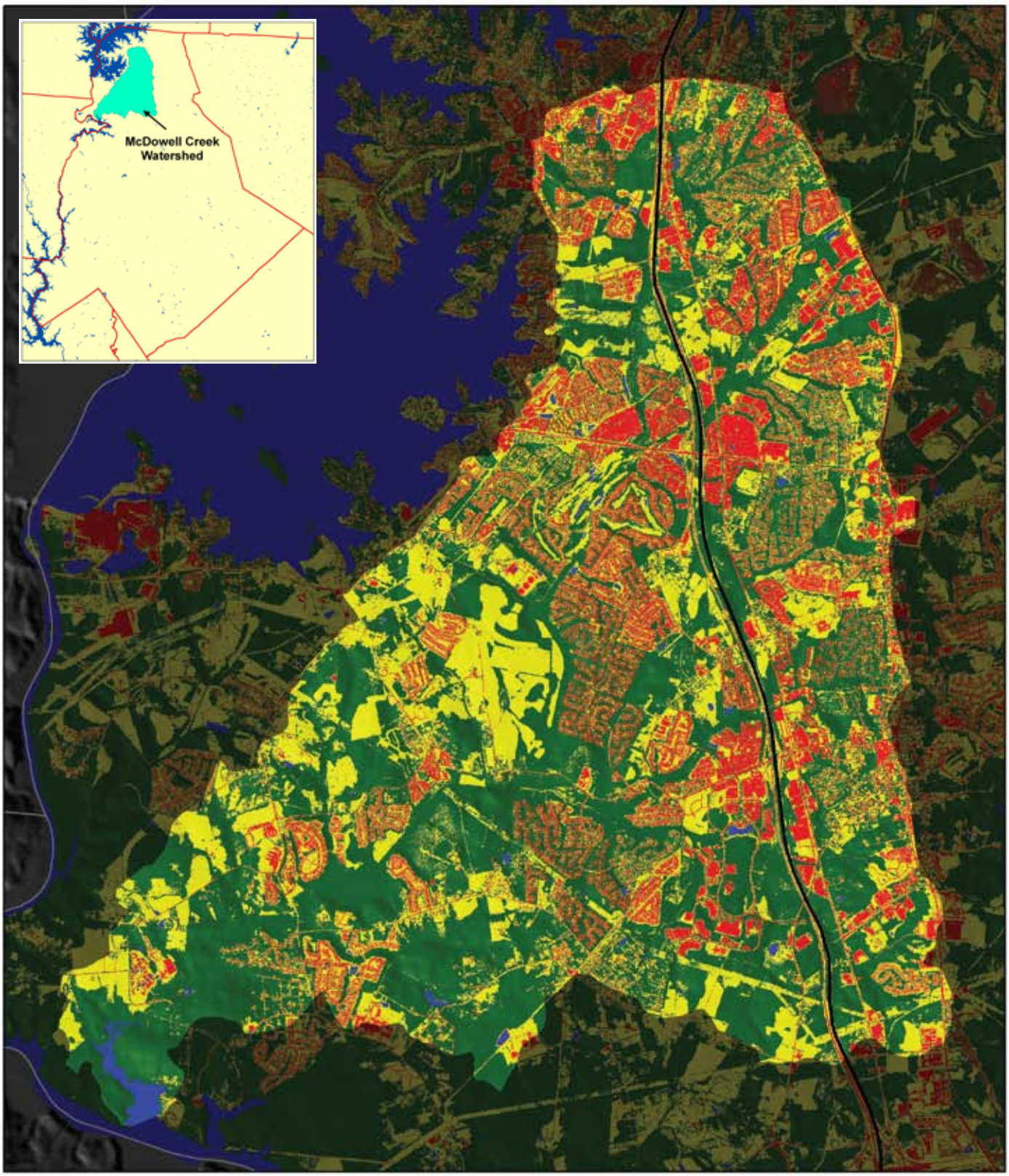
A community's pervious land cover serves as its *green infrastructure*; its protection and enhancement provides direct benefits to the taxpayer and improved environmental quality including slowing stormwater runoff, improving water and air quality, protecting soil from erosion, and storing atmospheric carbon. Green infrastructure includes vegetation and their complex interactions with soil, air and water systems. As defined in this project, green infrastructure includes tree canopy, open space, and water. American Forests used CITYgreen software to analyze the environmental and dollar value of each benefit. For more details and formulas used in each assessment visit: http://www.americanforests.org/resources/urbanforests/naturevalue.php

Protecting Watershed Scale Tree Canopy for Water Quality

McDowell Creek Subwatershed

In its most comprehensive analysis of the region, American Forests' Urban Ecosystem Center[9] and Michael Gallis and Associates[10] completed a study in 2007 of the Piedmont Crescent region,[11] an area covering seven states including North Carolina, to evaluate the natural system, the human network and their interactions. The findings showed that the ecosystem in the region, once designated as globally outstanding because of its lush flora and fauna,[12] is in a state of decline even greater than suspected. Growth and development across the region has resulted in natural land fragmentation, resource depletion, pollution, erosion, and species extinction.

Figure 5. 2008 McDowell Creek Watershed Landcover



The magnitude and relevance of these findings are best illustrated at the watershed scale—where the importance of protecting urban forests for water quality touches everyone. In Mecklenburg County, this is best illustrated with two case studies—McDowell Creek and Goose Creek. The McDowell Creek subwatershed is 19,200 acres in area and has thousands of existing homes with many more planned. Water flows from McDowell Creek into Mountain Island Lake that provides eighty percent of the drinking water for 700,000 people who live in Charlotte Mecklenburg. This area's rapid development has severely threatened the community's water quality; McDowell Creek is already documented as an impaired stream under EPA regulations and is unhealthy for swimming. The main cause of this impairment is increased pollution from sediment and erosion as a result of development. McDowell Creek subwatershed, with its current 9,427 acres (51%) tree canopy, provides 70 million cubic feet in non-structural stormwater runoff management, valued at $141 million (Table 4).

The ecological impacts of losing tree canopy cover in this critical area will increase stormwater runoff and exacerbate the water pollutants flowing into Mountain Island Lake which can in turn increase the costs of providing drinking water. For example, a 5% change from tree canopy to urban landcover in the McDowell Creek Sub-watershed will decrease the ability to naturally manage 4.9 million cubic feet of stormwater, valued at $9.8 million in stormwater management alone. The damage to water quality for the city and county drinking water is a cost too high to measure. Increasing the tree cover in critical places, like planting trees to buffer the stream is a high priority task. The green data layer provided as part of this project will allow the local officials to identify the critical places and organize a replanting strategy.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services and the North Carolina Division of Water Quality have long recognized the need to protect the area's drinking water supply. In response to this need, water supply watershed protection ordinances were implemented in the McDowell Creek Watershed in 1992. The ordinances only apply to the portions of McDowell Creek designated as Water Supply (WS) waters which are approximately located in the downstream third of the watershed. Subsequent to adoption of the watershed protection ordinance, the S.W.I.M. Buffer ordinance was implemented in 1999 that required undisturbed stream buffers throughout the McDowell Creek Watershed. Additionally, in 2003 Huntersville adopted a land development ordinance that required new development to implement low-impact development practices as well as dedicate a percentage of development area as open space. Implementation of these requirements has helped to hold the line on further degradation in the watershed; however it did not address pre-existing sources of pollution.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Stormwater Services staff developed the McDowell Creek Watershed Management Plan (2005) that sets water quality goals and presents a detailed plan of action to achieve them. The County, as a partner in this UEA project, will be able to use the new data set and software tools provided as part of this UEA to update its 2002 stream network data set, and to: 1) Identify areas for reforestation projects over the next three years; and 2) Engage with other community partners in reforesting these areas to improve stream health and water quality. Overall, the data will provide a baseline for future assessments, monitoring how effective the Watershed Management Plan has been, how effective Charlotte Mecklenburg stream buffer ordinances have been over the last six years, and what adjustments need to be made to protect and enhance tree canopy at the subwatershed scale like McDowell Creek.

Goose Creek Subwatershed

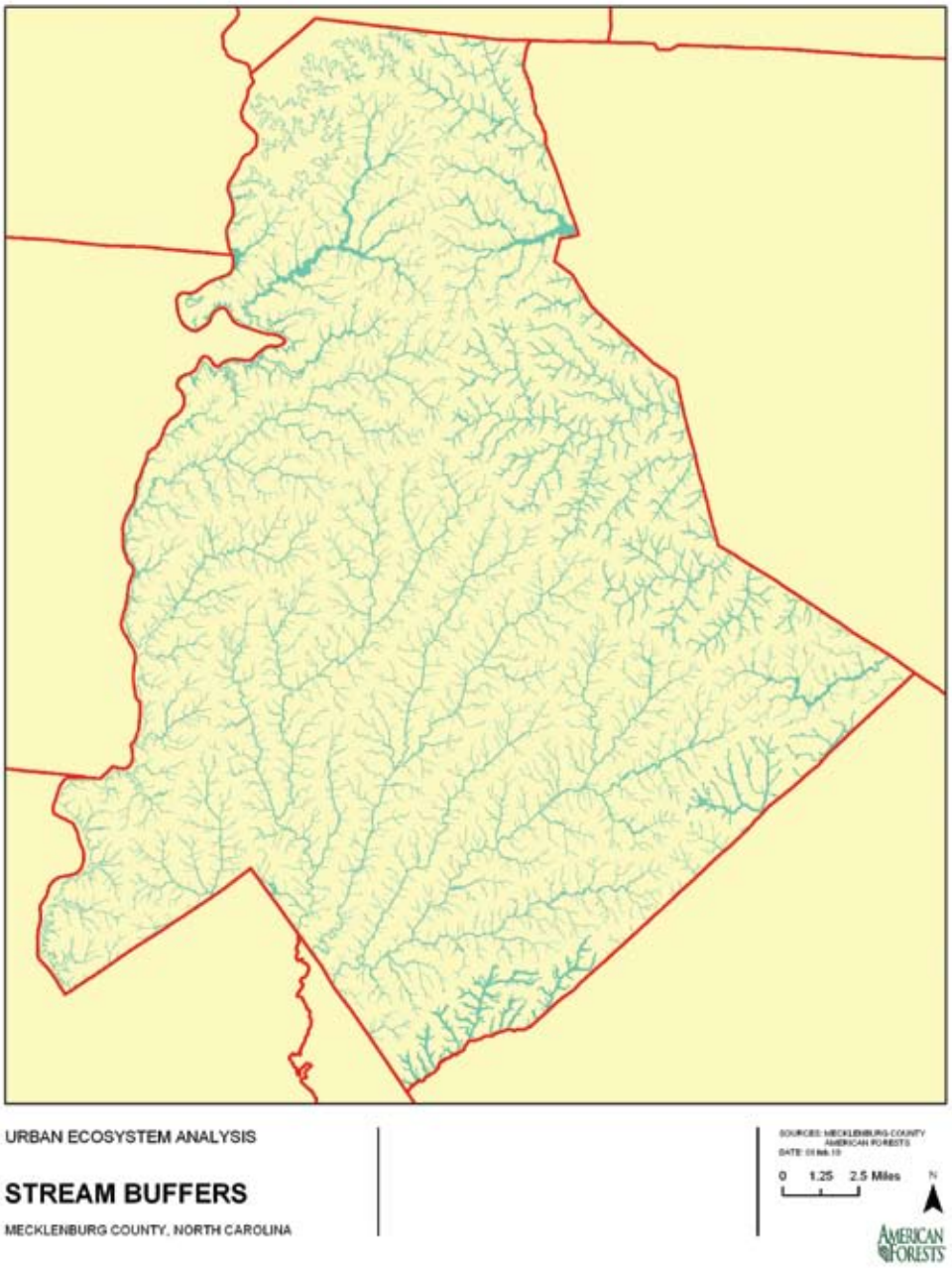
The Mecklenburg County portion of the Goose Creek Subwatershed is comprised of 7,161 acres of land of which 61% is currently tree canopy. In 2008, tree canopy provided 39 million cubic feet in stormwater management services, valued at $77 million (Table 4). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated Goose Creek as habitat for a federally-endangered species of fresh water mussel called the Carolina Heelsplitter. The Heelsplitter is an indicator species, known for its sensitivity to water pollution. Mussels need cool, clean, well-oxygenated water, typically found in stable creeks with stable banks to survive.

Goose Creek is currently listed as an impaired stream under criteria established by the Clean Water Act; the main cause of impairment is non-point source pollutants. Mecklenburg County and the Towns of Mint Hill, Stallings and Indian Trail, in accordance with State and Federal laws, have implemented the Goose Creek Water Quality Recovery Program to improve water quality conditions in Goose Creek in an effort to protect the Carolina Heelsplitter. Planting and maintaining existing vegetation in buffer areas that line creek banks is the best way to stabilize them.[13]

Stream Buffers

Mecklenburg County has 32,000 acres of stream buffers.[14] With 22,600 acres (71%) of tree canopy, this extensive network currently provides 177 million cubic feet of stormwater management, valued at $354 million (Table 4). The County has measured the pollutant removal benefits that riparian buffers naturally achieve by diffusing stormwater runoff–specifically removing 30% Nitrogen, 30% Phosphorus, and 85% of Suspended Solids (Diffuse Flow Requirement 15A NCAC 2B.0233(5)). Additional land cover analyses of watersheds throughout Charlotte Mecklenburg, like those completed here for Goose Creek and McDowell Creek can support local efforts to protect the entire stream network. Reforestation can reduce stormwater runoff into the streams, reduce pollutant loading now occurring in the streams, improve air quality and provide habitat for wildlife. County and citizen tree planting partnerships can significantly reduce the cost of reforestation and enhance this valuable resource that contributes to water quality without costly constructed infrastructure (see Implementation Recommendations pg. 14).

Figure 6. Mecklenburg County's Network of Forested Stream Buffers



Species diversity is an indicator of ecological health. The Piedmont Crescent region of the Southeast United States is recognized as *globally outstanding* by the World Wildlife Fund in *Terrestrial Ecosystems of North America*, (Island Press, 1999). As described in this report, the protection of the Carolina Heelsplitter in Goose Creek begs a broader question, why does species diversity matter? Humans thrive at the top of the food chain because a diverse set of species exists below them. What may seem to be an obscure species in a stream or woodland plays an important role in the conversion of energy and nutrients within the natural system so that people have the air, water and nutrients they need to thrive.

Implementation Recommendations

The digital data set included in this project is packaged into GIS interactive data layers compatible with existing GIS data so that Charlotte Mecklenburg staff and local leaders can use it to make well-informed planning decisions. American Forests recommends the following actions to better integrate green infrastructure into local decision making.

Use the green data layer and CITYgreen software to calculate the ecosystem services provided by existing tree programs

- Share the green data layer provided with this project among County and City departments concerned with ecosystem services.
- Test the impacts of changing tree canopy, impervious surfaces, and other land covers under different development scenarios. Using the high resolution data, analyses can be conducted on a neighborhood, subwatershed, or citywide scale.

Plan and establish tree canopy goals

American Forests recommends that Mecklenburg County adopt an overall 50%-55% tree canopy goal. This revised goal from the previous UEA responds to the continuing Countywide tree canopy decline trend, especially in critical watershed areas. Increasing canopy to the higher end of this range in key areas will have the most beneficial impact. Since the County is currently at the bottom of this recommended goal, this requires developing no net loss of canopy strategies for future development. This can be accomplished if Charlotte Mecklenburg will:

- Integrate these new land cover data into Charlotte Mecklenburg's planning processes so that impacts from future growth and development can be anticipated and managed to preserve canopy wherever possible. Where this is not possible, establish a tree replacement fee to plant trees elsewhere in the County.
- Conduct additional and more detailed analysis of the community's natural assets using CITYgreen software with consideration with the community's land use plans, zoning categories, transportation plans, etc.
- Use this additional analysis to guide the community in establishing tree canopy goals that can be attained within various zoning categories and key watershed areas as it continues to develop.
- Budget adequately to both maintain existing canopy and to plant trees throughout Charlotte Mecklenburg on a continuing basis until a suitable and sustainable level of tree canopy is achieved.

Use green data layer data to identify critical areas for reforestation

- Conduct additional UEAs to focus reforestation efforts on critical areas such as riparian stream buffers within McDowell Creek Subwatershed and the Goose Creek Subwatershed.

Use the findings from the Urban Ecosystem Analysis to increase awareness of the relationship between trees and environmental quality and to engage citizens in environmental improvement efforts like tree planting.

- Communicate the findings to media.
- Incorporate findings from the UEA into active citizen programs:
  - The Creek ReLeaf ® Program is a collaborative effort of the Charlotte Public Tree Fund, Charlotte Mecklenburg Stormwater Services, the Center for Sustainability at Central Piedmont Community College, and the Sierra Club Central Piedmont Group. Dedicated volunteers and financial supporters plant trees in riparian areas (floodplain and stream buffers) of Mecklenburg County. Visit: http://www.charlottetreefund.org/?page_id=20
  - Big Sweep is an award–winning grassroots nonprofit organization whose mission is a litter–free environment. They conduct year-round education to prevent litter and coordinate the annual North Carolina Big Sweep, to clean up statewide land and waterways. Visit: http://www.ncbigsweep.org/
  - Trees for Change is a collaborative program of the Charlotte Public Tree Fund and the Charlotte Tree Advisory Commission that educates local school children on the value of trees and then engages the students in a tree planting program either at their school or elsewhere in the community. Visit: http://www.charlottetreefund.org/?page_id=22
- Incorporate CITYgreen schools program into public schools to increase awareness of environmental issues, by teaching practical applications of GIS, math, science and geography. Curriculum is available through American Forests' Urban Ecosystem Center.

About the Urban Ecosystem Analysis

American Forests Urban Ecosystem Analysis is based on the assessment of "ecological structures"—unique combinations of landuse and land cover patterns. Each combination performs ecological functions differently and is therefore assigned a different value. For example, a site with greater tree canopy provides more stormwater reduction benefits than one with less tree canopy and more impervious surface.

Data Used

Landsat (30 meter pixel resolution) Imagery: To keep current with rapidly changing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, American Forests calibrated land cover change for this UEA report based on the US Geological Survey (USGS) 2001 National Land cover Dataset (NLCD). The USGS's NLCD data set is now the standard for Landsat-derived land cover change analysis and was used to classify the imagery of Mecklenburg County for 1985 and 2008. This enabled very accurate comparison trends of the landcover data for these years to determine changes that occurred. Imagery from 1985 and 2008 also aligned almost perfectly, further increasing the accuracy of landcover change calculations. This approach also enables comparisons of this data to data collected in the future more reliable.

Unfortunately, the NLCD was not available when American Forests completed the previous UEA and this is but the first reason comparisons between the Landsat data from two UEAs should not be made. Second, the previous UEA reported landcover change for trees, open space and impervious surfaces (buildings, roads, and parking lots primarily). Since then, the Multi Resolution Land (MLRC) consortium redefined urban land cover and this broader category, as used in the new UEA, now includes not only impervious cover but adds landcover such as compacted gravel. Third, the time periods differ–1984 to 2001 in the earlier UEA and 1985 and 2008 in the current. Fourth, changes to both boundaries and acreage for Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have occurred since the previous UEA was completed. During this time period, Mecklenburg County lost 2,352 acres and Charlotte gained 28,336 acres of land.

To summarize, the Landsat data and landcover change trends from the previous UEA report are accurate and were based upon the best technology available at that time, they cannot however be reliably compared to the calculations based upon Landsat data in this new UEA for the reasons described.

NAIP High Resolution (1 meter pixel resolution) Imagery: For the high resolution imagery, Mecklenburg County acquired National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) 1-meter pixel resolution, 4-band, multi-spectral satellite imagery in 2008. American Forests conducted a knowledge-based classification of this imagery to divide the land cover into five land cover categories: trees, open space, urban, bare soil, and water. The high resolution data was resampled to 4 meter, a size suitable for running ArcGIS to conduct these analyses. The classified data set provided with this project is at 1-meter. Although USGS redefined urban landcover as mentioned above, comparisons of the high resolution data from 2002 and 2008 for tree canopy are still valuable and instructive to indicate trends.

Analysis Formulas

Urban Ecosystem Analyses were conducted using American Forests' CITYgreen software®. CITYgreen for ArcGIS calculates the value of green infrastructure. Data inputs include rainfall, soil types and remotely sensed imagery. These data are used to populate scientific and engineering formulas so calculations of ecosystem services can be performed.

TR-55 for Stormwater Runoff: The CITYgreen stormwater analysis estimates the amount of stormwater that runs off a land area during a major storm. The stormwater runoff calculations incorporate volume of runoff formulas from the Urban Hydrology of Small Watersheds model (TR-55) developed by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly known as the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Don Woodward, P.E., a hydrologic engineer with NRCS, customized the formulas to determine the benefits of trees and other urban vegetation with respect to stormwater management.

The City of Charlotte staff provided a local average $2 per cubic foot dollar value for the CITYgreen stormwater calculations based on North Carolina State University study for wet ponds (2003) http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/stormwater/PublicationFiles/BMPCost&Benefit2003.pdf. This value was used in all the stormwater analyses. However, it is important to note that American Forests' Urban Ecosystem Center has worked with the retired national hydrologist of the National Soil Conservation Service and dozens of metropolitan areas around the country to determine the value per cubic foot and in many cases this value is significantly higher, in the range of $6 per cubic foot. It is therefore important that each community determine its own values to accurately calculate the stormwater benefits it would realize from its tree canopy.

L-THIA for Water Quality: Using values from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Purdue University's Long-Term Hydrological Impact Assessment (L-THIA) spreadsheet water quality model, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) developed the CITYgreen water quality model. This model estimates the change in the concentration of the pollutants in runoff during a typical storm event given the change in the land cover from existing trees to a no tree condition. This model estimates the event mean concentrations of nitrogen, phosphorus, suspended solids, zinc, lead, cadmium, chromium, chemical oxygen demand (COD), and biological oxygen demand (BOD). Pollutant values are shown as a percentage of change.

UFORE Model for Air Pollution: CITYgreen® uses formulas from a model developed by David Nowak, PhD, of the USDA Forest Service. The model estimates how many pounds of ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and carbon monoxide and particulate matter less than 10 microns are absorbed and filtered by tree canopies. The urban forest effects (UFORE) model is based on data collected in 55 U.S. cities. Dollar values for air pollutants are based on averaging the externality costs set by the State Public Service Commission in each state. Externality costs are the indirect costs to society, such as rising health care expenditures as a result of air pollutants' detrimental effects on human health. The UFORE model also estimates the carbon storage capacity and the annual amount of carbon sequestered by the tree canopy in a given area.

Acknowledgements for this Study
We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following in conducting this study:

Donors:
Women's Impact Fund
City of Charlotte
Mecklenburg County
Blumenthal Foundation

Special thanks to:
Curt Walton, Charlotte City Manager
City of Charlotte Urban Forestry Staff, especially Tom Johnson
Mecklenburg County Stormwater Staff, David Kroening, Water Quality Manager
Mecklenburg County Mapping and Andy Goretti, Division Manager
Rick Roti, Project Consultant

For More Information
AMERICAN FORESTS, founded in 1875, is the oldest national nonprofit citizen conservation organization. Its three centers—Global ReLeaf, Urban Ecosystem Center, and Forest Policy Center—mobilize people to improve the environment by planting and caring for trees.

AMERICAN FORESTS' CITYgreen software provides individuals, organizations, and agencies with a powerful tool to evaluate development and restoration strategies and impacts on urban ecosystems. AMERICAN FORESTS offers regional training, teacher workshops and technical support for CITYgreen and is a certified ESRI developer and reseller of ArcGIS products.

AMERICAN FORESTS, P.O. Box 2000, Washington D.C. 20013
Phone: 202/737-1944; Fax: 202/737-2457
Web: www.americanforests.org

Footnotes

1 UEA reports are available for download at: http://www.americanforests.org/resources/urbanforests/analysis.php

2 Source of unit cost: City of Charlotte

3 Green infrastructure is defined by pervious land cover, such as tree canopy, open space and other vegetated areas.

4 High resolution data (1meter pixel resolution) is used for day to day management decisions of smaller land areas such as subwatersheds, zoning categories, and stream buffers.

5 Based on a straight line projection of the two most recent data points (2001and 2008) assuming that all landcover trends continue.

6 Due to an update of land cover classification methodologies set by the Multi Resolution Land (MLRC) consortium and adopted as the national standard, land cover changes from previous Urban Ecosystem Analyses can not be compared with this one (see Data Used pg 15 for more information.)

7 2008 State of the Environment Report, Mecklenburg County, pg. 20 http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/LUESA/SOER+2008.htm)

8 Urban smog control: A new role for trees? http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1200/is_n1_v138/ai_9177813/pg_2/?tag=content;col1

9 American Forests' Urban Ecosystem Center is staffed with experts in ecological systems, image analysis, and Geographic Information System technology.

10 Michael Gallis and Associates is nationally recognized for its expertise on the Human Network and is located in the Charlotte region.

11 The Piedmont Crescent Report is available from American Forests upon request 202-737-1944

12 The Piedmont Crescent region of the Southeast United States is recognized as globally outstanding by the World Wildlife Fund in Terrestrial Ecosystems of North America, (Island Press, 1999).

13 http://stormwater.charmeck.org; select "Pollution Prevention"

14 Buffer width varies from 0-200 ft dependent on several criteria. First, buffer widths were determined from various ordinances (Watershed Protection Ordinance, SWIM Buffers and Post Construction Buffers); the most stringent was applied. Second, each of the ordinances have different applicability requirements (such as impervious triggers) and timeframe during which the ordinance was in place (e.g. SWIM was overtaken by Post Construction 2 years ago). Lastly, the starting point on the stream of the Post Construction Buffers is established in the field.

COUNCIL WORKSHOP
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TOPIC: City Sponsored Utilities Customer Service Evaluation

COUNCIL FOCUS AREA: Restructuring Government

RESOURCES: Kim Eagle, Budget and Evaluation
Barry Gullet, Utilities

KEY POINTS:

- In January, 2010 the City Manager initiated a comprehensive evaluation of Utilities Customer Service operations.
- A team of City staff and industry consultants are working together to manage the evaluation project. Each component is a project in itself, and the pieces are progressing on varying schedules.
- Staff will present an overview of the project and identify the main areas of work in progress.
- A review of the upcoming Meter Reading Equipment Audit, one of the primary components of the evaluation project, will also be provided.
- The comprehensive results of the evaluation project will be reported to the City Manager in August, 2010.

COUNCIL DECISION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:

None. This presentation is for informational purposes only.

ATTACHMENTS:

List of Project Component Descriptions
Meter Reading Equipment Audit Questions/Answers for Residents
Meter Reading Equipment Audit Sample Door Hanger and Contractor Guide

City Sponsored Utilities Customer Service Evaluation

Project Components

1. **Benchmarking –** A survey of 30 public and private utilities regarding policies and customer service practices related to payment delinquencies, payment arrangements, account holder requirements and bill adjustments.

2. **Business Process Improvements –** A review of processes primarily focusing on meter-reading, pre-billing quality control, establishing performance targets for measuring billing accuracy, post-billing high bill investigations, bill adjustments, etc. Benchmarking project findings are integrated with this effort.

3. **Interim Business Process Review –** Thirty-nine (39) customer contact processes transitioned from Utilities to CharMeck 311 in early 2010. Fifteen (15) customer contact processes are currently performed by Utilities staff. A business case will recommend where and how these remaining functions are best performed and the appropriate level of resources required to do this work.

4. **Cornelius Citizen Task Force Recommendations/Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Advisory Committee Review –** The Mayor of Cornelius appointed a 13 member citizen task force to report on recommendations associated with utility bill concerns. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Advisory Committee has completed a review of the recommendations and a response to the recommendations is expected to be delivered to City Council in mid-May. The task force recommendations are among specific areas to be addressed in the various components of the evaluation project.

5. **Meter Reading Equipment Audit –** An independent third party audit of 9,000 residential meter assemblies to ensure correct operation of meter-reading equipment. The audit will conclude in July 2010 and findings will lead to the implementation of an on-going audit program to ensure continuous monitoring of data and system operation. A replacement and upgrade plan for meter equipment will also be established based on the audit findings and analysis of best available technology.

6. **Meter Routes/Billing Cycle Adjustment –**A project to complete a comprehensive adjustment of billing cycles and routes to better balance the number of customer accounts in each of the 19 billing cycles processed each month is being developed. The project will geographically re-align meter reading and service routes.

7. **Utilities Customer Service Operations Enhancements –** An effort to enhance the training, business process streamlining, performance measurement and related efforts to address service level performance and customer satisfaction.

8. **Project Communication –** Keeping citizens informed of the progress and impact of the customer service restructuring efforts. Each component is a project in itself, and the pieces are progressing on varying schedules with individualized communication plans. The City is committed to proactive communications and being responsive to residents and the media.

9. **Billing System Audit –** A City Internal Audit review of internal controls related to billing processes. Auditors are examining high bill issues raised by citizens, along with classification and investigation of high bills by Utilities staff.

Questions?

Information about the Water Equipment Audit

CHARLOTTE.

These questions and answers were developed to describe the water meter reading equipment audit currently being conducted by the City of Charlotte. The purpose of the audit is to better identify and address any issues impacting Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities customer bills.

If you have additional questions we encourage you to contact us at 311 or 704-336-7600 or visit www.cmutilities.com.

Q. Why is the City conducting an audit?

A. The audit is in response to customer concerns regarding water meter equipment. The City Manager requested the audit as part of an overall Customer Service Improvement Program that includes nine initiatives. For information about the Customer Service Improvement Program please visit www.cmutilities.com.

Q. What will the audit include?

A. The audit will verify that the mechanical meter and electronic data transmitter (also called ERT) are working properly.

Diagram of mechanical meter and ERT that is being tested. Depending on your meter, you will have a gray or black ERT.

The audit will also…

- check for damaged wire or other damaged equipment;
- ensure mechanical dials and electronic transmitter readings match.

If the meter is covered or cannot be located, an audit will not be conducted.

Q. How will the auditors test meter equipment?
A. Auditors will perform a “water flow test” which means they will monitor the meter while running water from an outside spigot or faucet. This test enables auditors to verify that the mechanical meter and ERT are operating accurately.

To receive a true reading, auditors will run between 10 to 15 gallons of water, which would total less than 25 cents for water and sewer charges on your monthly water bill.

If there is no outside spigot or faucet at your home, auditors will perform an electronic test of the cable and circuit to verify that equipment is operating accurately.

Q. What type of information will customers receive if audited?
A. Auditors will leave a door hanger explaining the results. If you have additional questions about the activities that occurred, you may call 311 or 704-336-7600 or visit www.cmutilities.com.

Q. Who is conducting the audit?
A. The City will hire a contractor to conduct an independent field audit of water meter reading equipment. Auditors will wear official identification badges issued by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities.

Q. Will the audit team need to enter my home?
A. No. Members of the audit team will not enter your home for any reason.

Q. When will the audit take place?
A. The audit will begin mid-May and conclude in July 2010.

Q. How many customers will receive an audit and why?
A. The audit will review 9,000 residential customer meters within all towns and municipalities in Mecklenburg County. Selected sites will represent a cross-section of all usage levels.

Q. Will I be notified ahead of time about the audit?
A. The audit will be publically announced and promoted before it starts, but customers at selected sites will not be notified ahead of time. No action is required by the customer at any point in the process.

Q. Will I be charged for the audit?
A. No. The City and the equipment manufacturer will be responsible for all costs associated with the audit and will provide any needed repairs of meter equipment at no charge to residents.

Q. Will the City continue to conduct audits in the future?
A. Yes. The findings from this audit will lead to an on-going audit program to ensure accurate data collection, billing accuracy and system operation.

Q. What will happen if my meter equipment is not functioning properly?
A. If any issues are identified with the equipment, a utilities crew will be dispatched to make repairs as soon as possible.

Q. Will the City do anything else about water bill accuracy?
A. Yes. The findings from this audit will lead to an on-going audit program to ensure improved data collection and system operation. In addition, an overall Customer Service Improvement Program has been implemented. More information is available at our web site, www.cmutilities.com.

Q. Can I request a water meter audit?
A. At this time, additional audits cannot be requested. The 9,000 meters represent a wide cross-section of accounts and the number is sufficient to help the City establish an accurate baseline. However, if you want more information about the audit, please visit our web site at www.cmutilities.com.

Thank you for your interest in the water meter reading equipment audit. We look forward to sharing the results of the audit as part of a comprehensive program by the City of Charlotte to improve customer service.

Water Meter Equipment Audit

The City of Charlotte is conducting an independent field audit of water meter reading equipment as part of a comprehensive program to *improve customer service*. Today auditors visited your property to verify your mechanical meter and electronic data transmitter (also called ERT) are working properly.

Your water meter looks like the unit shown below, and is connected to either a black or gray ERT (both are shown in the diagram).
The results of our audit today showed:

- ☐ **Equipment functioning properly**
- ☐ **Damaged wire or other damaged equipment**
- ☐ **Mechanical dial and electronic data transmitter readings don't match**
- ☐ **Meter covered or cannot be located (no audit conducted)**

If any issues were identified with the equipment a utilities crew will be dispatched to make repairs as soon as possible.

For information about the activities that occurred with the equipment audit go to www.cmutilities.com or dial 311 or 704-336-7600.

CHARLOTTE.

CONTRACTOR GUIDE

Charlotte/Mecklenburg Utilities Department

METER READING AUDIT

Dear Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Customer:

The City of Charlotte is conducting an independent field audit of water meter reading equipment as part of a comprehensive program to *improve customer service*. All auditing staff will have temporary identification tags and will not enter customers' homes for any reason. The auditors will verify that your meter and data transponder (called the ERT – electronic data transmitter) are working properly, and that the readings are accurate.

As part of today's field audit, the auditor is required to perform several actions.

1. We will take two photos of your meter reading equipment. One photo is taken of the meter reading equipment when it is located to demonstrate current physical appearance and condition of the equipment prior to any test being performed. An additional photo is taken upon completion of the audit.
2. We will flow water from an outside water spigot or faucet to perform a water flow test. This test enables the auditor to verify that the meter and ERT are operating accurately. If no water service access is available outside your home, an electronic test of the cable and circuit can be performed to verify that equipment is operating accurately.
3. We will provide an explanation of the audit results along with CMU contact numbers on a door hanger for your convenience today before we leave.

If you desire additional information, please contact Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities by calling 311 or 704-336-7600. Information may also be found on our website at www.cmutilities.com. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this process. CMU values all of our customers and we are happy to respond to your inquiries.

COUNCIL WORKSHOP
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TOPIC: 2009 Transportation Action Plan Annual Report

COUNCIL FOCUS AREA: Transportation

RESOURCES: Danny Pleasant, CDOT

KEY POINTS:

- City Council adopted the Transportation Action Plan (TAP) in May, 2006.
- Each year staff develops the TAP Annual Report which documents the City's achievements, current activities and challenges in implementing the policies and projects adopted by City Council in the TAP.
- The TAP Annual Report is important in that it enables the City to highlight successes but to also identify possible changes in strategies or investments that could be considered in upcoming years.
- Staff made a presentation on this topic to the Transportation Committee on February 8.

COUNCIL DECISION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:

None. This presentation is for informational purposes only.

ATTACHMENTS:

2009 TAP Annual Report

The City of Charlotte

TRANSPORTATION Action Plan

2009 Annual Report

CHARLOTTE

CHARLOTTE.

In May of 2006, the Charlotte City Council adopted the Transportation Action Plan (TAP) — the City's first comprehensive, multi-modal, long-range transportation plan. The TAP describes the City's policies, projects and programs that will be necessary over the next 25 years to accommodate projected growth and reduce existing transportation deficiencies.

When adopted, the TAP called for a 25-year investment of $3.57 billion in 2006 dollars to build and maintain a network of local thoroughfares, streets, connectivity projects, traffic signal systems, pedestrian pathways and bicycle facilities. When costs were inflated about a year ago and adjusted to include all the farm-to-market road projects in the Charlotte sphere of influence, the total 25-year cost of the TAP was estimated to be $7.26 billion.

Increases in the various types of transportation capacity defined in the TAP, in conjunction with increases in freeway and expressway capacities, and expanded bus and rapid transit services, will be necessary as Charlotte—one of the nation's largest cities—continues to grow during the next 25 years.

I am pleased to present the 2009 Annual Report for the Transportation Action Plan. This report describes the achievements and the challenges that occurred in 2009, our fourth year of implementing the goals, strategies and projects recommended in the TAP. I believe an annual report is important not just to highlight our successes, but also to identify possible changes in strategies or investments that we should consider in the upcoming years.

Council and staff have been implementing the TAP's policies and programs since its adoption. In the years ahead, City Council will continue to make difficult decisions about transportation priorities, revenues and growth management so that Charlotte can continue to be one of the most livable and economically attractive large cities in the nation.

Curt Walton,
City Manager

January 2010

Transportation Action Plan

2009 Annual Report

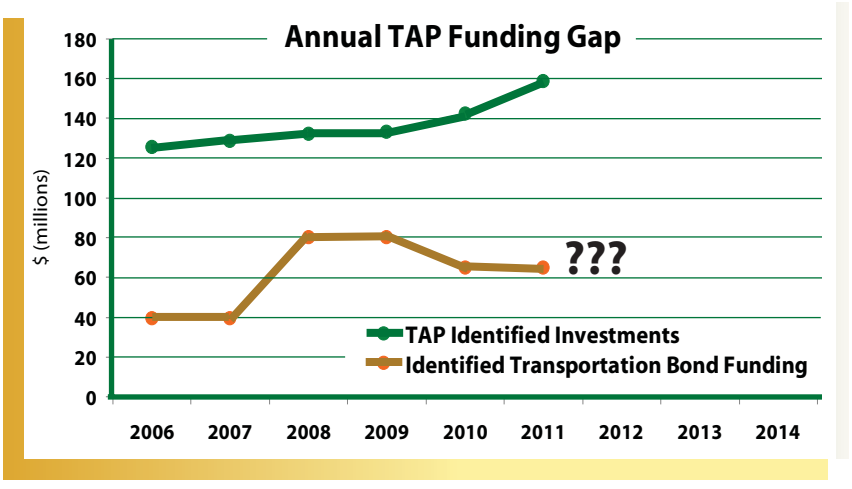
The Transportation Action Plan (TAP) describes the goals, objectives and policies that are necessary to make Charlotte one of the premier cities in the nation for providing land use and transportation choices. A full copy of the Transportation Action Plan is available at *http://cdot.charmeck.org*.

To achieve the City's goals, the TAP recommends a variety of investments in transportation, estimated in 2008 to require the expenditure of $7.26 billion for construction and maintenance during the next 25 years. This level of investment—together with concurrent investments in State-maintained freeways and expressways and rapid transit lines—will be necessary to accommodate the City's ongoing growth, while protecting the high quality of life in Charlotte.

Each year's Annual Report describes the progress and challenges in implementing the TAP. These annual reviews enable City Council and staff to identify obstacles that must be overcome and determine changes in the resources or actions necessary to achieve the City's transportation-related goals.

Among the highlights in 2009:

- **The City continued to implement transportation projects in excess of $160 million** for roadway, signalization, connectivity, traffic calming, bicycle and sidewalk facilities funded by the 2006 and 2008 Transportation Bond measures.
- **The Committee of 21 made recommendations** to City Council regarding state and local transportation funding and new revenue sources. While Charlotte has increased transportation funding since the TAP was adopted, a funding gap remains and funding beyond the 2010 Bond is uncertain.



- **Implementation of the Urban Street Design Guidelines** (USDG) continued in Capital Improvement Plan projects, area plans, and conditional rezonings.
- **The NC Board of Transportation adopted a Complete Streets policy,** in effect committing NCDOT to developing expectations for the design of streets similar to those described in the USDG.

TAP GOAL **1**

Continue implementation of the
Centers, Corridors and Wedges Strategy.

Achievements

- **City Council adopted the TAP** in May 2006. The TAP underscores the importance of the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth management strategy as a way to guide growth toward places where appropriate levels of transportation infrastructure, multimodal capacity and connectivity can be provided.
- **The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Map was adopted** as part of the TAP. This map (Figure 1 in the *TAP Policy Document*) will enable the City to monitor whether we are meeting the Centers, Corridors and Wedges land use targets. *(That map is on the inside back cover of this report.)*
- In compliance with TAP Policies 1.1.2 – 1.1.4, **the City monitors** the amount of residential and non-residential development occurring in Centers, Corridors and Wedges.
- City Council adopted **South Corridor Station Area Plans** for:
  - Arrowood Station Area
  - Sharon Road West Station Area
  - I-485 Station Area
- The **LYNX Blue Line** light rail has been in operation for two years, since November 2007. Ridership continues to exceed pre-service forecasts, with weekday ridership averaging almost 15,000 boardings.

Current Activities

Development approvals are now tracked to ensure the City meets land use targets.

- **Monthly rezoning review reports** indicate whether each rezoning request is located in a Center, Corridor or Wedge.
- The City's Traffic Impact Study Guidelines are being converted to ***Transportation* Impact Study Guidelines** to reflect multi-modal transportation factors and support the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework.
- **Plans are underway for these areas:**
  - Independence Boulevard
  - Center City 2020
  - Catawba
  - Elizabeth
  - Steele Creek
  - University Research Park

Issues and Challenges

- The Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth framework has been discussed in Charlotte for over a decade. The TAP affirmed the value of this framework and prompted the Planning Department to begin **the transition of Centers, Corridors and Wedges from concept to implementation.** This transition will result in the need to revise some plans and policies to bring them into alignment with the refined Centers, Corridors and Wedges framework.
- **Adopted land use targets help monitor implementation** of the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth management framework. Policies 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 state that the City will ensure at least 40% of new households, 70% of new multi-family units, 75% of new office development and 75% of new employment will be located within the centers and corridors.
- In FY 08, The City **met the office, employment and multi-family targets** (Table A below).

TABLE A
Percentage of Development Locating Within Centers and Corridors

	TARGET	FY 2008
TAP Policy 1.1.2		
Total New Households	40%	55.8%
New Multi-Family Households	70%	71.9%
TAP Policy 1.1.3		
Total New Office Development	75%	97.6%
New Employment	75%	91.4%

- **The City's integrated transportation and land use strategy encourages a greater percentage of households be located within ¼ mile of schools, parks, shopping and transit service.** Meeting this target can reduce vehicle miles of travel by shortening vehicle trips and by making it possible for people to walk, ride bicycles or take transit to more destinations. However, the latest analysis (Table B) shows trends in the wrong direction for two of the four categories when compared to the 2004 baseline. In order to reverse these trends, the City will need to more actively implement the Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework through future plans and rezoning reviews.

TABLE B
Percentage of City Population Living Within 1/4 Mile of Amenities and Services

Year	Shopping	Schools	Parks	Transit*
2004	45.6%	13.0%	16.9%	63.5%
2006	51.4%	11.8%	16.1%	61.2%
2007	52.5%	13.0%	15.7%	54.0%
2008	52.8%	12.2%	15.7%	57.0%
2009	52.7%	13.0%	15.7%	56.2%

* Local Transit Route

TAP GOAL 2

Prioritize, design, construct and maintain **convenient and efficient transportation facilities** *to improve safety and neighborhood livability, foster economic development, promote transportation choices and meet land use objectives.*

Achievements

- During FY 2009 CDOT **designed and/or implemented:**
  - 9.7 miles of street projects
  - 5 intersection projects
  - 17.8 miles of sidewalk projects
  - 18 miles of bicycle projects
  - replacement of 78 obsolete traffic signal controllers
  - re-timing of 254 traffic signals

The intersection of Rozzelles Ferry and West Trade Street was retrofitted to improve safety for all travelers by removing a high-speed turn lane, providing dedicated turn lanes in all directions, and installing sidewalks, crosswalks, landscaped median islands, and bike lanes

- By adopting and proceeding to implement the TAP and Urban Street Design Guidelines, the City Council demonstrated its **commitment to creating a multimodal transportation system** with benefits for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, employers or business owners, and neighborhood residents.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency selected Charlotte's **Urban Street Design Guidelines** for a **National Award for Smart Growth Achievement.**
- **CATS began operation of the Sprinter Airport service.** The Sprinter is an "Enhanced/Premium" bus route that provides increased service and amenities in distinctly-branded buses and stops.

The Sprinter line provides enhanced bus service between Center City and Charlotte-Douglas International Airport.

Current Activities

- In order to create more "complete streets," the City is continuing to apply the **Urban Street Design Guidelines** on all City-sponsored transportation projects and through conditional rezonings.
- During the 2008-2010 bond cycles, CDOT expects to **plan, design and/or construct** the following:
  - 12 miles of street projects
  - 11 intersection projects
  - 39.8 miles of sidewalk projects
  - 10 miles of bicycle projects per year
  - replace 75 obsolete traffic signal controllers per year
  - re-time 200 traffic signals per year
- **A citywide Pedestrian Plan is being developed** and will be presented for City Council's consideration in 2010.
- The City and County have implemented **over 100 miles of bicycle lanes, trails and signed routes in Charlotte.**
- **Four more light rail vehicles** are scheduled for delivery in early 2010.
- **A new 87-space parking lot adjacent to the I-485 LYNX Station** opened in April, 2009 to help alleviate overcrowding in the existing 1,120-space deck at the station. CATS also purchased land adjacent to the new lot for future expansion.
- The **Huntersville Gateway Park and Ride Lot's expansion** is scheduled to be completed by Spring, 2010.
- Other increases in commuter parking supply is under consideration at **Mallard Creek Road** (expansion of the current lot) and the **Albemarle Road/Lawyers Road intersection** (construction of a new lot).

Figure 2 (back cover) shows the road and intersection projects advanced since the TAP was adopted.

Issues and Challenges

- **The TAP relies heavily on the implementation of the Urban Street Design Guidelines.** The USDG provide more route choices, connectivity and better streets for all users. Implementing the USDG through most private sector development depends on changing the subdivision and zoning ordinances. City staff are working on ordinance changes to be reviewed by the public and City Council in 2010.

New Calvine Street, a local street built in accordance with USDG, was made possible through the adjacent redevelopment.

TAP GOAL 3

Collaborate with local and regional partners *on land use, transportation and air quality to enhance environmental quality and promote long-term regional sustainability.*

Achievements

- The City actively fosters regional transportation, air quality and sustainability objectives through **participation in and technical support for the Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO).** In 2009, City staff worked with MUMPO staff to develop the *2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan*.
- City, State and regional planning organizations identified a network of freeways recommended for **High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), High Occupancy Toll (HOT) or other types of managed lanes.**
- Funding to advance the design and preliminary engineering of the **Streetcar project** was approved by City Council in September, 2009. The Streetcar project, as currently defined, would extend from Rosa Parks Transit Center on Beatties Ford Road through Center City and along Central Avenue to the Eastland Mall Transit Center.
- CATS staff working on the **LYNX Blue Line Extension** submitted an updated Federal New Starts Report that gained an improved "medium" rating for cost effectiveness.

Current Activities

- Staff from NCDOT and CDOT are analyzing **managed lane opportunities** on:
  - I-77 North (Uptown to Lake Norman)
  - I-77 South (Uptown to SC State Line)
  - US 74 East (Uptown to I-485).

  Cost, design, revenue and usage forecasts are underway for potential implementation options.
- **CDOT and CATS are partnering with businesses** in the SouthPark and University areas to define enhancements for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- CDOT worked with NCDOT to modify the design for the **Mallard Creek Road Extension** to better meet Charlotte's design expectations.
- NCDOT awarded a **Safe Routes to School** infrastructure grant of $235,000 to CDOT to install pedestrian travel enhancements near Sedgefield Elementary School.

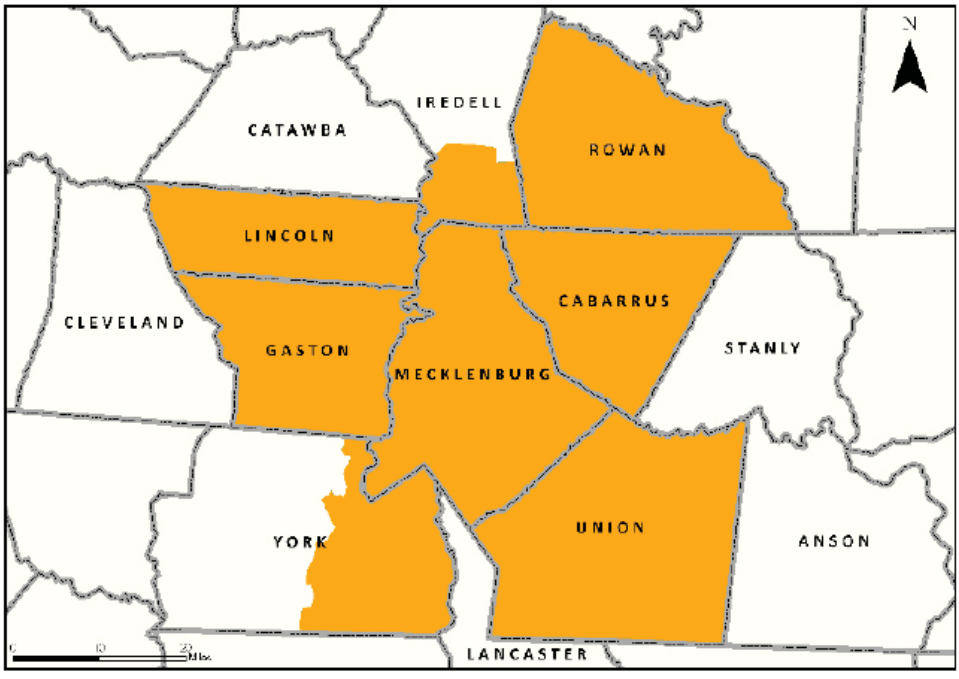
The Safe Route to Schools program will provide more opportunities for children to walk or bike to school.

- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the **LYNX Blue Line Extension (Northeast Corridor)** is scheduled to be finished by July, 2010.
- Preliminary engineering and design elements—such as track, crossings and bridges—has advanced to nearly 90% for the **Red Line (North Corridor).**

Issues and Challenges

- While the City's transportation projects are designed to meet the City's transportation and land use objectives, NCDOT's project designs have often not reflected Charlotte's urban vision and multi-modal requirements. However, in 2009, the **North Carolina Board of Transportation passed a Complete Streets policy** and NCDOT started the process to change their designs for projects in urban areas.
- For the first time in over twenty years of measurements, ozone monitors in the Metrolina non-attainment area recorded **zero excedances** of the 8-hour ozone standard during all of 2009.

Metrolina 8-Hour Ozone Non-Attainment Area



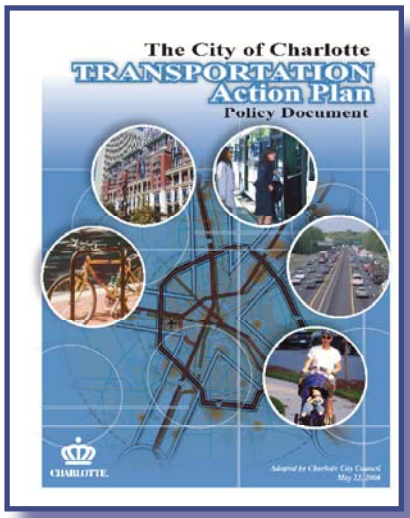
Mecklenburg County is part of an eight-county ozone non-attainment area. Despite a much "cleaner" ozone season in 2009, air quality continues to be a very important issue in our region.

TAP GOAL 4

Communicate *land use and transportation objectives and services* **to key stakeholders**.

Achievements

- Through the adoption of the TAP in 2006, the City clearly defined its **comprehensive set of transportation-related strategies.**
- The City's **transportation priorities** are updated annually in the 5-year Capital Investment Program and 10-year Capital Needs Assessment.
- CDOT sponsors an **annual survey** to assess the community's opinions on transportation issues and concerns.
- In an effort to better communicate the City's land use and transportation objectives, the City developed a Growth Strategy Communication Plan in 2008.
- The TAP Policy Document and Technical Document can be found **on the internet** at *http://cdot.charmeck.org*.



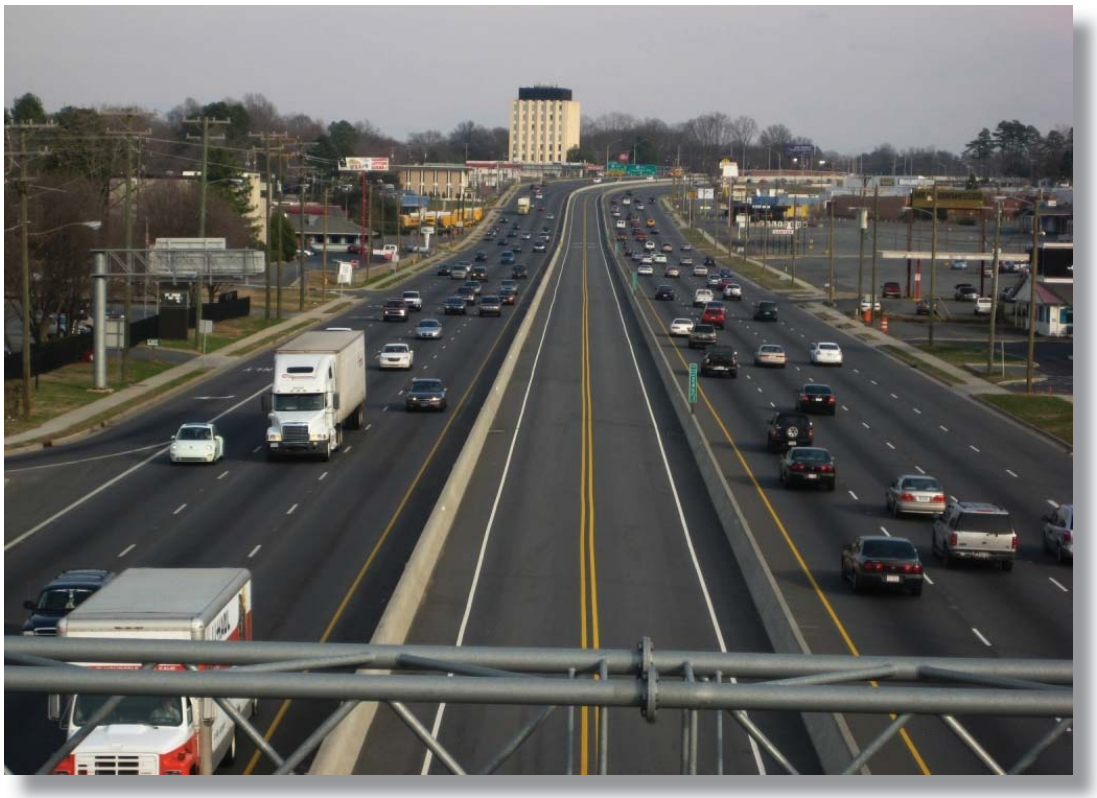
Current Activities

- The City is **tracking land development permits** monthly and annually to monitor the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth management targets. That information is available to elected officials, staff and citizens to determine how well the City is fulfilling the growth management vision by meeting specific land use targets.

- The stakeholder review process for the **Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework** is nearing completion. Adoption is anticipated in early 2010.
- The City is re-launching the ***www.charlottefuture.com*** website to convey information to citizens regarding the City's growth and transportation strategies.
- The City will produce a video, similar to the focus area videos, that will present a **comprehensive overview of the City's Growth Strategy,** including an explanation of Charlotte's integrated land use and transportation strategies.

Issues and Challenges

- Successfully integrating land use and transportation decisions over time requires a **long-term vision and continued communication** with residents and stakeholders, or monthly or quarterly reports to the City Council and Planning Commission.
- Communicating the vision clearly and concisely can be difficult, however, and may require that the City develop **new tools** (such as a video and a speakers bureau) to enable citizens to better understand our land use and transportation challenges.



Continued growth in the Charlotte region will create increases in travel on the region's roadways. Continued implementation and funding of the TAP will help Charlotte address the City's transportation challenges.

TAP GOAL **5**

Seek financial resources, *external grants and funding partnerships necessary to implement transportation programs and services.*

Achievements

- When City Council adopted the TAP in 2006, they acknowledged that the TAP recommended spending $3.57 billion ($7.26 billion when adjusted for inflation) to build, operate and maintain **locally-funded transportation projects** through 2030.
- CATS received over $23 million from USDOT under the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009** for renovation and expansion of the North Davidson Street Bus Garage and the acquisition of additional hybrid buses.
- City Council **increased funding for street maintenance by $4.3 million in 2006 to shorten the resurfacing cycle** to allow CDOT to pave and rehabilitate additional roads. Initially, asphalt price increases limited the benefit, but now, in the FY09-10 paving season, prices have been at their lowest levels in three years, and this has resulted in resurfacing more miles. Applying the additional funding provided by City Council and the Powell Fund balance, CDOT is limiting the pavement condition's decline and reducing the overall paving schedule to the desired 12-14 year resurfacing cycle.
- In November of 2006 and 2008, Charlotte residents passed **bond measures** that included a total of almost $240 million for roadway, signalization, connectivity, bicycle and sidewalk projects.

The Shopton Road West re-alignment will address congestion and improve safety in the Steele Creek area.

Current Activities

- In 2008, the **Committee of 21** was appointed by Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte and Charlotte Chamber, and tasked with identifying long-term funding options for building and maintaining road projects in Mecklenburg County.
- After convening in May, 2008, the Committee of 21 reviewed a wide array of transportation funding and governance options (see chart on next page), and made **recommendations** to the City and County in the Spring of 2009.

- The Committee of 21 recommended an **additional vehicle registration fee** to be used for roadway maintenance and an **additional half-cent sales tax** to be used for construction of state and local roadways in Mecklenburg County. The Committee also recommended charging **tolls on freeways** and applying a **Vehicle Miles of Travel fee.**

Transportation Revenue Sources Recommended by The Committee of 21			
Funding Source	**Annual Revenues**	**Requires Legislative Approval**	**Used For**
Vehicle Registration Fee	$18 Million	State	Maintenance
Half-Cent Sales Tax*	$81 Million	State	Construction
Toll Interstates	TBD	State and Federal	Construction and Maintenance
Vehicle Miles of Travel Fee	TBD	State and Federal	Construction and Maintenance
Other Revenue Sources Considered by The Committee of 21			
Payroll Tax	$150 Million	State	Construction and Maintenance
5% Gas Tax	$94 Million	State	Construction and Maintenance
Road Impact Fees	$84 Million	State	Construction
Land Transfer Fee	$51 Million	State	Construction and Maintenance

* In response to budget shortfalls, the State increased the sales tax by 1% in September, 2009, with an expiration date of July, 2011. Additional sales tax increases for transportation are unlikely until after this expiration.

Source: derived from *http://www.charmeck.org/Committeeof21/home.html*

Issues and Challenges

- **Federal and state gas tax collections continue to diminish as a viable transportation funding source** due to more fuel-efficient vehicles and decreases in vehicle miles of travel.
- **Without a dedicated transportation funding source, at levels consistent with the TAP,** Charlotte will struggle to keep pace with continued growth in population, employment and travel.
- **NCDOT continues to experience funding shortfalls, causing most state road projects to be delayed further.** NCDOT's inability to advance projects not in the limelight is impacting Charlotte's ability to accommodate its growth.
- **MUMPO's *2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan* is severely underfunded,** resulting in a very limited list of projects to be built in the next 25 years.
- **The ability of CATS to implement the 2030 Corridor System Plan is being impacted in the short and long term by the reduction in sales tax revenues** due to the local and national recession.

Conclusion

The TAP Annual Report provides an opportunity each year for Charlotte's residents, elected officials and staff to reflect on our transportation achievements, discuss our transportation challenges and identify better or new ways to meet our transportation goals.

Charlotte's City Council took a crucial first step in addressing the City's transportation challenges by adopting the 25-year Transportation Action Plan in 2006. The TAP calls for a series of policies, projects and programs that are necessary to accommodate ongoing growth, while protecting our quality of life.

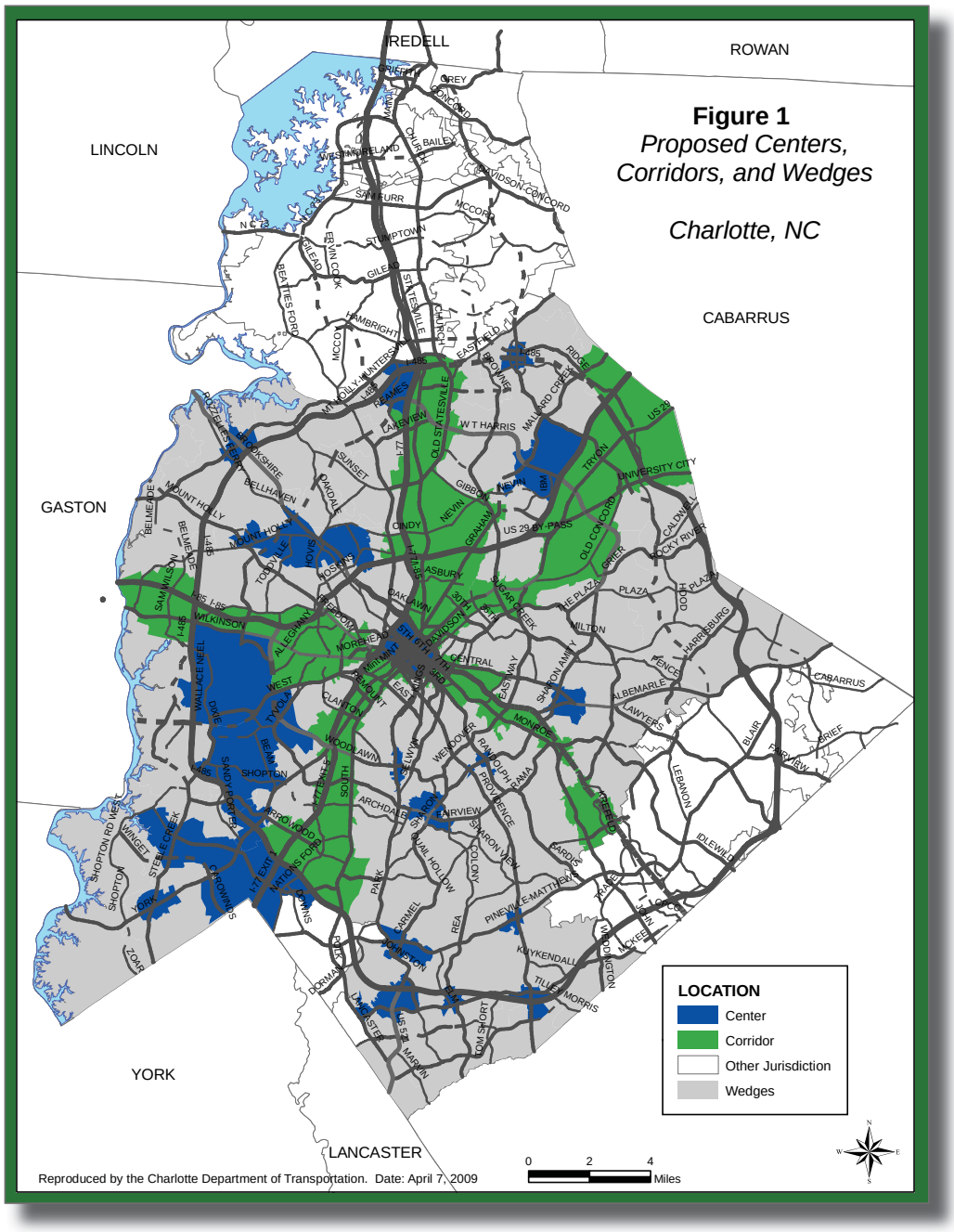
This report summarizes the achievements, current activities and challenges the City is now facing as Council and staff continue to implement the TAP. There have been many achievements since 2006 and a large variety of work is programmed for the year ahead, but there are also significant challenges to meeting our transportation goals.

Charlotte's TAP and the City's commitment to quality transportation designs and to integrate land use and transportation strategies received national and statewide recognition this year through the following awards:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency "National Award for Smart Growth Achievement" for the Urban Street Design Guidelines;
- North Carolina American Planning Association "Marvin Collins Award" for the South Corridor Station Area Plans;
- Conference of Minority Transportation Officials "Inter-Modal Innovation Award" for initiatives linking transportation services and quality of life; and
- NC Public Transportation Association "Safest Transit System in North Carolina."

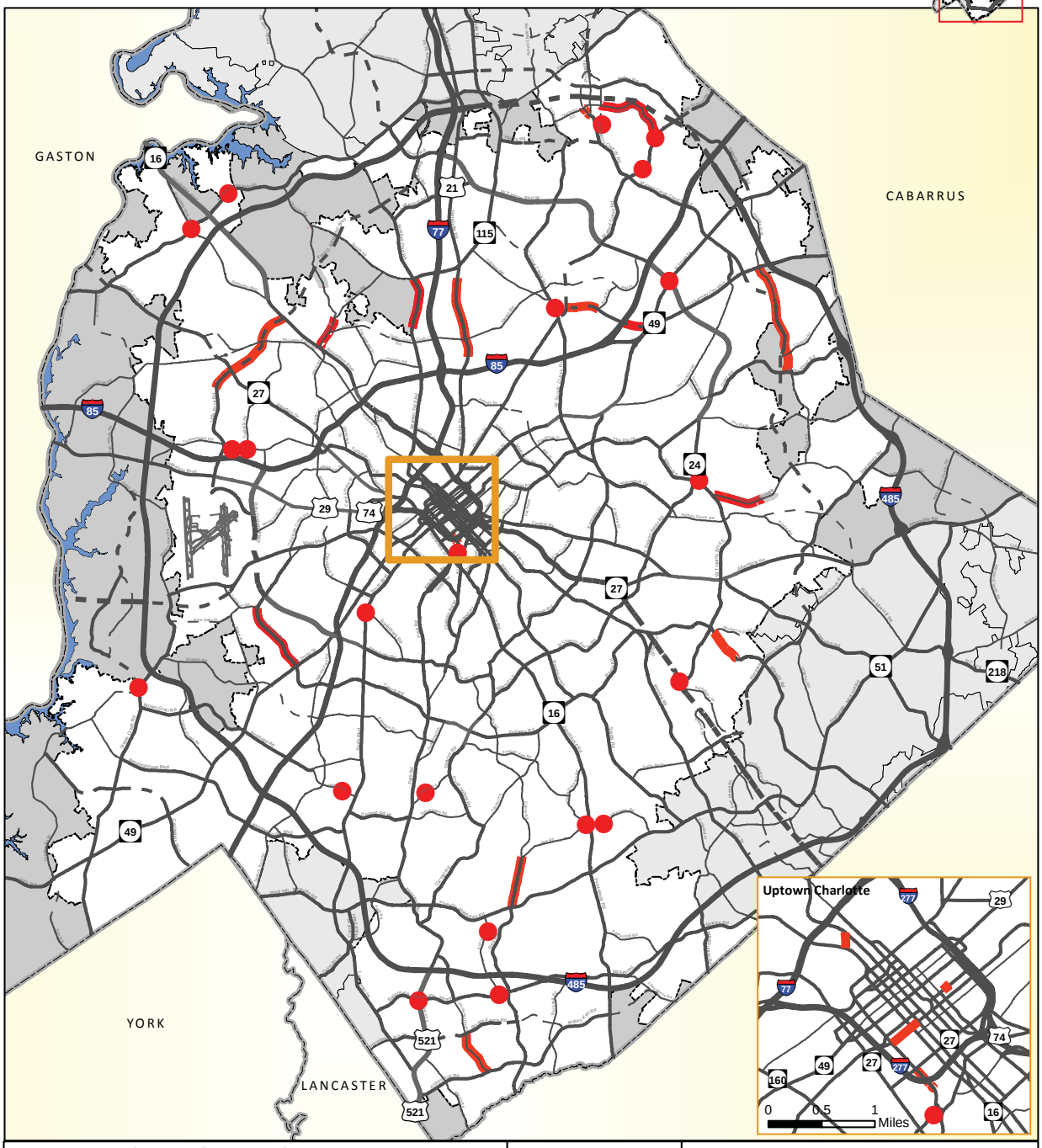
Looking ahead to 2010, there are three key challenges facing the City Council:

1. The first, ongoing challenge will be to ensure that Charlotte grows in a manner consistent with the Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth management framework.
2. The second challenge continues to be the need to update city codes and ordinances to successfully implement the TAP and the Urban Street Design Guidelines.
3. Third, and more long-term, will be to select permanent and reliable funding sources for transportation.



The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Map *(adopted as part of the Transportation Action Plan) helps provide the framework for land use and transportation investment decisons in Charlotte.*

Figure 2 - Transportation Projects Programmed or Implemented By the City Since TAP Adoption



CHARLOTTE TRANSPORTATION

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