

Charlotte  
Mecklenburg  
Planning  
Commission

November 20, 2017

Mayor Jennifer Roberts and Charlotte City Council Members  
600 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202

Deborah Ryan, Chair  
John Fryday, Vice Chair

**Subject:**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission 2018 Work Plan and Report on the Charlotte Place Types and Unified Development Ordinance

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Dear Mayor and City Council:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission is pleased to share with you our Work Plan for 2018 and a report on the Charlotte Place Types and Unified Development Ordinance.

Resulting from our annual retreat in September, our 2018 Work Plan identifies the focus of the Planning Commission's activity in the coming year. This Work Plan is aligned to support the city's on-going planning and development activity as well as advancing the Charlotte Place Type and Unified Development Ordinance efforts.

Following your recent Council briefing on October 23, 2017, our report on the Charlotte Place Types and Unified Development Ordinance summarizes the Planning Commission's position on the status of these important efforts. We strongly support the mission and purpose of this work and want to convey the need for a renewed sense of urgency and clarity of direction.

The Planning Commission looks forward to on-going communication with City Council during this exciting and important time in the growth and development of Charlotte.

Sincerely,



Deborah Ryan, RLA  
Chair, Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission

Cc:

Marcus Jones, City Manager, City of Charlotte  
Debra Campbell, Assistant City Manager, City of Charlotte

# Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission 2018 Work Plan

Approved November 6, 2017

	Priority	Focus & Input	Outcome(s)
Full Planning Commission	<b>Updated Vision</b> “Our Charlotte - The shared story of our aspirational future”	Work Session Topic Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charlotte’s History &amp; Growth</li> <li>Walkability &amp; Streets</li> <li>15-minute Livable Communities (activity centers &amp; Place Types)</li> <li>Game Changers (e.g. autonomous vehicles, aging in place)</li> <li>Affordability &amp; Planning Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informing the work on an updated aspirational vision (part of the Place Type Policy Document)</li> <li>Informing the work of the committees</li> </ul>
	<b>Communication</b> With City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing and sharing updates on Commission work with City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place Type &amp; UDO Report</li> <li>Work Plan Report</li> <li>Annual Report</li> </ul>
Planning Committee	<b>Place Types &amp; Unified Development Ordinance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Vision (part of Place Type Policy Document)</li> <li>Place Type Policy Document (Place Type development &amp; link to zoning)</li> <li>Civic Engagement</li> <li>Unified Development Ordinance (priorities: TOD, Neighborhood Conservation Districts, Affordable Housing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation on: Updated vision &amp; Place Type Policy Document (draft)</li> <li>Informing the civic engagement process</li> <li>Staff updates on UDO schedule, work and ordinance development</li> </ul>
	<b>South End Vision Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation on: South End Vision Plan</li> </ul>
Zoning Committee	<b>Education</b> Issues & policies impacting rezoning decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better educated Zoning Committee and Community about growth issues, policies, and processes impacting rezoning decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with staff to incorporate education/discussion sessions before Committee meetings</li> </ul>
	<b>Rezoning Review</b> More time to review and discuss petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More time for Committee to review and discuss rezoning cases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with staff to identify ways to provide more time in the rezoning review for the Committee</li> </ul>

# Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission Report to Charlotte City Council

## Charlotte Place Type and Unified Development Ordinance

### November 15, 2017

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The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission strongly supports the development of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and the Charlotte Place Types Policy (CPTP) and encourages the City Council to do the same. This Planning Commission report details our experience with the UDO development and the Planning Commission's perspective, priorities, on-going work, and to voice some concerns about the project.

#### **Why UDO and Place Types Now?**

The reasons for embarking on the UDO go far beyond simply coordinating and updating existing regulations and assembling them into a single ordinance. While that is important, the Planning Commission also views the project as critical to address public concerns that new development in our fast-growing city is not always meeting community expectations. The UDO and Place Types offers the city an opportunity to define its future and address coming concerns and opportunities before they arrive.

#### **Priorities**

The Planning Commission is currently working with city planning staff on the following priorities, each with identified milestones:

##### Vision

The UDO and accompanying Place Types can transform Charlotte if it includes an aspirational vision that is built on today's better understanding of cities as sustainable, equitable, safe, attractive, and healthy. We see the UDO as a necessary step to achieve the intended result in the successful adoption and implementation of the Place Types.

The city's dispersed and outdated area plans and land use policies make 'a vision' hard to ascertain. The Planning Commission has encouraged planning staff to develop this aspirational component as the preface to the UDO, and our work plan for the year reflects our commitment to contributing to that effort.

This vision should articulate "Our Charlotte" as a "shared story" of our future city. This process is the opportunity to refresh our current policies such as the city's Growth Framework (Centers – Corridors – Wedges) while incorporating new aspirations such as the Ten Traits of a Winning City introduced by the City Manager, the Council's Community Letter, The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force Report, the Planning Commission's adopted "Livable Cities Principles", and additional community input.

##### Next Steps:

- Incorporate into the UDO and Place Types process the development and adoption of a clearly stated vision and purpose. (*Timeframe: Draft vision to be developed by the end of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2018, then tested with the community as part of the larger civic engagement strategy and incorporated into the Charlotte Place Type Policy Document*)

##### Building Civic Engagement

A strong and robust civic engagement strategy is instrumental to gaining valuable input, and in building community consensus and support for adoption of the UDO and Place Types. While initial engagement efforts have suggested a high degree of interest from the community, the public input process has not been as robust as the Commission would like. We have heard very little about what the public is saying, perhaps in large part because they have been given so little information from staff to comment upon. As we have done for well over a year now, we urge planning staff to strengthen the civic engagement effort and give it a greater sense of purpose and urgency.

##### Next Steps:

- The Planning Commission will work closely with staff and the consultant to help them establish and communicate a detailed civic engagement plan that states the purpose of citizen input, identifies a range of ways for engagement and describes how that input will influence the process. As part of this strategy, staff needs to develop better utilization of the project website ([www.charlotteUDO.org](http://www.charlotteUDO.org)) to include an invitation

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strategy that drives citizens to it as an open tool for input and engagement. *(Timeframe: Engagement Plan to be finalized by the end of 2017 with implementation in 2018)*

#### Schedule and Implementation

The UDO and Place Types are intended to address many long-standing problems within Charlotte's existing land use policies and zoning ordinance. While recognizing that comprehensive projects such as these take time, the Planning Commission remains concerned with the slow pace of progress as growth and development in one of the country's fastest growing cities is continuing without the Place Type/ UDO standards we very much need. Therefore, we agree with staff's proposal to use this process to take advantage and address interim opportunities to build a better city today while growing valuable support throughout the process.

#### Next Steps:

- Adopt sooner rather than later interim ordinance measures intended to address known issues. One specific example is adopting an update to the city's Transit Oriented Development zoning district based in large part on the recommendations the Planning Commission has developed (TOD Priorities). Charlotte's transit areas are where we have high expectations for quality development and are experiencing substantial new investment today, so they are a perfect place to start. *(Timeframe: Draft of TOD ordinance to be complete by end of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2018 with adoption process to follow)*
- We recommend planning staff to create a schedule with specific dates for critical milestones for both interim measures (e.g. TOD) and longer term implementation, the aspirational preamble to the UDO, the civic engagement plan, and to report on a monthly basis progress towards specific implementation to assist the city manager in assuring the project stays on track. *(Timeframe: Implementation schedule to be finalized by end of 2017)*

#### Testing the UDO Implementation Framework

Planning Commission is very concerned with what the UDO and Place Types will look like as final documents. It is unclear to us what the documentation will look like, how it will be written, and how area plans and current zoning classification will fit in. Over the past year, we have repeatedly asked for a DRAFT example of how the UDO and Place Types will work together as an illustrated vision with regulatory text. Our desire is not to micro-manage the project but rather gain a better understanding of how the new ordinance will read. We believe if staff shares parts of the project with us and the larger public while it is still under development, it will alleviate many concerns and provide valuable feedback to staff, the commission and council.

#### Next steps:

- The Planning Commission urges planning staff to share with us "an example" of the UDO and Place Types. We envision an example that shows a Place Type and how that vision is documented in sample ordinance language for key components, and how it is shown on the city's land use map. *(Timeframe: First draft of an example to be finalized by 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2018 with presentation available for Council and select public in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2018.)*

***The Place Types/ UDO process and implementation has many benefits for our city, and we enthusiastically support moving forward with its completion and implementation in the most timely possible manner, with immediate evidence of its incremental development without further delay.***