

Urban Street Design Guidelines

City of Charlotte

The Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) are used for planning and designing Charlotte's streets and for providing viable transportation choices for all Charlotteans. The USDG are creating "complete" streets--streets that provide capacity, safety, and mobility for motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, and enhance the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

The USDG include 1) policy statements adopted by Charlotte's City Council (in 2007), 2) innovative technical methodologies, 3) design and tradeoff recommendations for different street types and cross-sections, and 4) a planning and design process for applying the USDG to transportation projects.

One of the most important tools within the USDG is the "Six-Step" process that describes how to plan and design street, intersection, and sidewalk projects. The Six-Step process was devised to ensure that a broad array of perspectives would be included in design decisions, with the public's opinions sought at strategic milestones. Engineers, planners, and urban designers now work together to create more context-sensitive streets that integrate land use and transportation goals. The Six-Step process also ensures that design decisions and tradeoffs are made and understood in a transparent way, which is why various organizations and agencies have expressed interest in this process.

Since 2005, the City has been applying the USDG planning and design process to capital projects. To date, the following projects have been built, based on the USDG:

- 8 new thoroughfares,
- 10 streetscape projects,
- 9 road conversions,
- 11 rebuilt intersections, and
- 15 sidewalk projects.

These projects reflect Charlotte's new approach of designing and building streets that improve safety and neighborhood livability, promote transportation choices, and create long-lasting value.



We can't keep widening our roads, so we have to broaden our thinking.



The USDG are also being incorporated into Charlotte's plans. The award-winning South Corridor Station Area Plans were among the first area plans to include USDG street classifications, street intervals, and street cross-sections, based on planned land uses. Thus far, the USDG have been included in 12 area plans.

The USDG philosophy and methodology continue to enable planners and engineers, as well as other stakeholders, to match street designs to the surrounding (existing and planned) land uses, thereby "right-sizing" the street network, and creating "complete" streets to improve the mobility, safety, and comfort of pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists.

