

Acknowledgements

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Eastside Strategy Plan

Volume I: Concept Plan

Preface	3
Introduction	5
Taking a Closer Look at the Eastside.....	8
Rapid Transit Plans.....	8
Transportation Projects.....	10
Current Streetscape Projects.....	10
Focus of the Eastside Strategy Plan	13
Vision and Key Planning Goals.....	13
Applying Vision/Goals to Corridors.....	14
The Corridors--Overview and Recommendation	
Albemarle Road Corridor.....	15
Central Avenue Corridor.....	23
Eastway Drive Corridor.....	29
Harris Boulevard East Corridor.....	35
Harrisburg Road Corridor.....	41
Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor.....	47
Idlewild Road Corridor.....	53
Lawyers Road Corridor.....	59
Monroe Road Corridor.....	63
Plaza Road/Plaza Road Extension Corridor.....	69
Sharon Amity Road North Corridor.....	75
Design Guidelines	81
Retail Centers	87
Conclusion	89
List of Maps/Figures	
Map 1: Study Area.....	6
Map 2: Transit Corridors.....	9
Map 3: Transportation Projects.....	11
Recommendations and Concept Maps	
Maps 4a & 4b: Albemarle Road Corridor	
Map 5: Central Avenue Corridor	
Map 6: Eastway Drive Corridor	
Map 7: Harris Boulevard East Corridor	
Map 8: Harrisburg Road Corridor	
Map 9: Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor	
Map 10: Idlewild Road Corridor	

Map 11: Lawyers Road Corridor
 Maps 12a & 12b: Monroe Road Corridor
 Maps 13a & 13b: Plaza Road/Plaza Road Ext. Corridor
 Map 14: Sharon Amity Road North Corridor

List of Tables

Albemarle Road Corridor	
Table 1: Exiting Land Use.....	15
Table 2: Existing Zoning.....	16
Table 3: Traffic Volumes.....	17
Central Avenue Corridor	
Table 4: Exiting Land Use.....	23
Table 5: Existing Zoning.....	24
Eastway Drive Corridor	
Table 6: Exiting Land Use.....	29
Table 7: Existing Zoning.....	30
Table 8: Traffic Volumes.....	30
Harris Boulevard East Corridor	
Table 9: Exiting Land Use.....	35
Table 10: Existing Zoning.....	36
Table 11: Traffic Volumes.....	37
Harrisburg Road Corridor	
Table 12: Exiting Land Use.....	41
Table 13: Existing Zoning.....	42
Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor	
Table 14: Exiting Land Use.....	47
Table 15: Existing Zoning.....	48
Table 16: Traffic Volumes.....	49
Idlewild Road Corridor	
Table 17: Exiting Land Use.....	53
Table 18: Existing Zoning.....	54
Table 19: Traffic Volumes.....	54
Lawyers Road Corridor	
Table 20: Exiting Land Use.....	59
Table 21: Existing Zoning.....	60
Monroe Road Corridor	
Table 22: Exiting Land Use.....	64
Table 23: Existing Zoning.....	64
Plaza Road/Plaza Road Extension Corridor	
Table 24: Exiting Land Use.....	69
Table 25: Existing Zoning.....	70
Table 26: Traffic Volumes.....	71
Sharon Amity Road North Corridor	
Table 27: Exiting Land Use.....	75
Table 28: Existing Zoning.....	76
Table 29: Traffic Volumes.....	76

Preface

The *Eastside Strategy Plan* was developed in response to growing concerns about land use and zoning changes occurring along major roadway corridors on Charlotte's Eastside. A 23-member study group of residents, business and property owners, developers and other stakeholders was convened to work with staff to help develop the plan. This group met over a seven-month period from March 1998 to October 1998. In addition, a public meeting was held early on in the process for staff and study group members to hear issues, concerns and ideas from the public at large. A public workshop was held in October 1998 to present and get feedback on the proposed recommendations. Because the plan review process was interrupted, a second series of study group meetings began in April 2001, followed by additional public meetings in July and September of 2001.

The *Eastside Strategy Plan* is divided into two parts:

- Volume I, the *Concept Plan*, identifies the key land use, transportation and streetscape issues for the Eastside, a vision and goals for the future relating to the physical characteristics of the area, and overarching objectives and “big picture” recommendations for the corridor. The Charlotte City Council adopts it as public policy.
- Volume II, a separate *Implementation Plan*, contains suggested strategies for achieving the goals, objectives and recommendations outlined in the *Concept Plan*. This document is informational and is not an adopted document.

The *Eastside Strategy Plan* will be used to help City and County staff, the governing bodies, community-based organizations and others set priorities for the Eastside. It will be used as a guide for making policy and investment decisions. The plan builds on previous planning, in particular the *East District Plan* adopted by elected officials in 1990, by addressing identified gaps and updating key information. Where differences exist between the two plans, the *Eastside Strategy Plan* will take precedence. In addition, because of overlaps in district plan boundaries--i.e. Eastway Drive divides the Central and East District, Monroe Road separates the East District from the South District and The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension separates the Northeast and East Districts--the *Eastside Strategy Plan* recommendations will also supercede recommendations in the plans adopted for the surrounding districts.

In addition to superceding recommendations made in previous district plans, this *Eastside Strategy Plan* also supercedes the current (1990) *General Development Polices* (GDP) in regards to appropriate locations for increasing the density of residential development. This *Eastside Plan* recognizes that the GDP are currently being revised, with a particular focus on revising the locational criteria used to evaluate proposals for increasing residential densities. Therefore, *Eastside Strategy Plan* recommendations for residential land use along the 11 corridors specify the appropriate density for the particular location. Once the GDP have been revised, it may be appropriate to apply the new locational criteria when evaluating residential development proposals along the 11 Eastside corridors.

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Introduction

During the 1970s and 80s, Charlotte's Eastside was one of the hottest growth areas in Mecklenburg County, particularly for residential and retail development. New housing and shopping areas have continued to develop, but with more and more of the area's vacant land consumed and other areas of the county igniting with growth, the Eastside's development "boom" has tapered off in recent years. New development on the Eastside is generally occurring on vacant or underdeveloped infill properties scattered throughout the area or in the rapidly developing unincorporated areas of the county. Significant tracts of vacant land and development potential remain in Matthews' and Mint Hill's jurisdictions; however, because the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have no control in these areas, the Eastside Strategy Plan boundaries do not include the towns' jurisdictions.

The Eastside is a unique part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's landscape. "Diverse" is a term often used to describe the Eastside---an area which covers nearly 44 square miles, generally extending from Eastway Drive to the west, The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension to the north, Monroe Road to the south and the Charlotte City limits to the east. (See **Map 1**.) The area has many old and new neighborhoods with a wide range of housing types and prices, numerous shopping areas that cater to both local and regional markets, several employment concentrations and a host of parks, churches and schools---some well established and others brand new. Its population, estimated at approximately 134,000 people in 1999, is also notably diverse, as the Eastside is truly one of the most racially and culturally integrated sectors of the community. Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and others live side-by-side in many Eastside neighborhoods, and a growing number of businesses oriented to the international community are opening throughout the area.

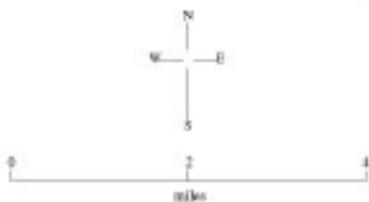
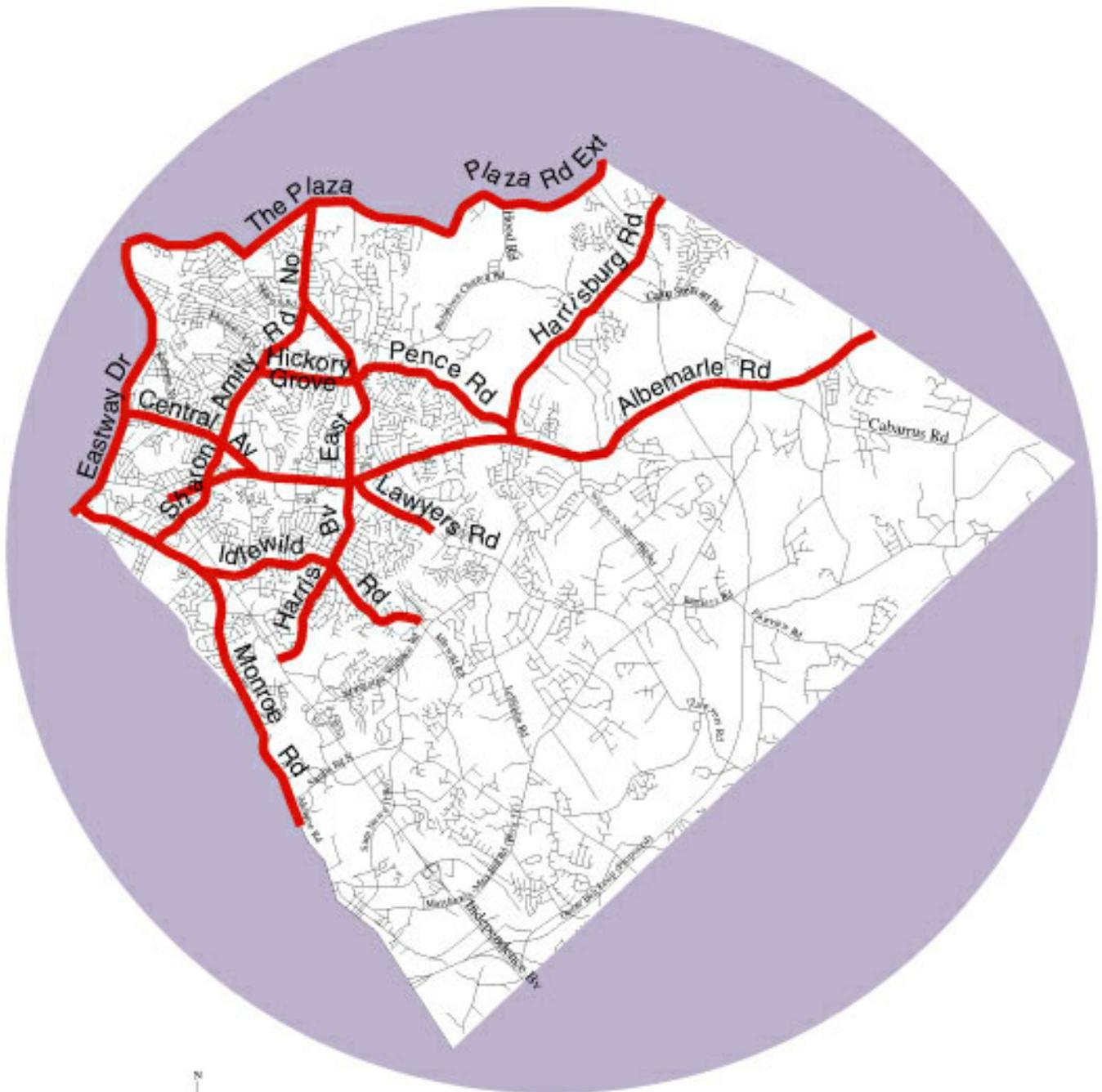
While the Eastside has many attractive and affordable neighborhoods and other attributes that long-time and new residents value, the area also has a number of planning challenges that need to be recognized and addressed, including:

- **A Large Amount of Apartment and Strip Development:** Through the years, a large, and perhaps disproportionate share of Charlotte's strip commercial and apartment development has been developed on the Eastside. Area residents have voiced strong opposition to more high density housing and strip development being built.
- **Aging Commercial Areas:** Evidence of decline or disinvestment can be found in a number of retail locations throughout the Eastside. An increasing number of businesses in older shopping areas have either closed or moved to newer centers



Design and development of multi-family housing is a key concern.

Eastside Plan Study Area



 Corridors Studied in the Eastside Strategy Plan



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Retail disinvestment is occurring along Eastside Corridors.

further out in the suburbs, leaving behind vacant stores and buildings. For example, in the last few years, an Uptons department store on Albemarle Road and a Hanifords grocery store on Central Avenue have closed. Large, empty buildings remain. Second and third tiered businesses---e.g. used car dealers or ethnic grocery stores---have moved into some vacant retail spaces, indicating that a shift in market conditions is occurring. Even Eastland Mall, Charlotte's first suburban mall, has shown signs of decline that has area residents and business owners concerned about the future of the mall and the area that surrounds it. These aging

commercial areas, many with large, poorly landscaped parking lots, tend to overpower the image of the Eastside, despite the fact that the area has many stable neighborhoods and successful businesses.

- **Limited Employment Opportunities:** A few office and industrial concentrations exist on the Eastside, but compared to other parts of the community, the area does not have a significant employment base. Most Eastside residents commute outside the area to work. This represents an imbalance in the land development pattern of the area, contributes to traffic congestion and encourages significant cut-through traffic during rush hour.
- **Automobile-Oriented Transportation System:** Like other parts of Charlotte, the Eastside is predominantly an auto-oriented environment. While sidewalks exist along many of the areas' corridors, there are a number of roads that are not safe for pedestrians or bicyclists. Crossing at major intersections such as those along Independence Boulevard, Albemarle Road, Harris Boulevard or Central Avenue is particularly dangerous. (In addition, it is a challenge for people without their own transportation to get to destinations within and outside of the Eastside.) A fairly good public transportation system provides service along the major corridors and to the Uptown area, but lateral movement to Eastside locations is somewhat lacking.



Walking along Eastside Corridors is not a pleasant experience.

- **Community Appearance:** When much of the growth on the Eastside occurred, there were few design standards in place to ensure that landscaping, screening and other visual amenities were provided. Consequently, a number of the corridors have older, unattractive commercial strips. Through redevelopment, some areas have improved over time, but this is generally not the case. Little landscaping exists in the public right-of-way on the Eastside corridors as well, although landscaping has been provided at a number of intersections that have been widened through the years.

Taking a Closer Look at the Eastside----Corridor By Corridor

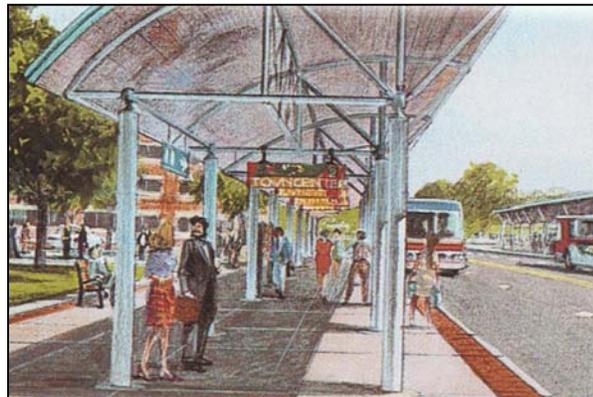
At the request of the Charlotte East Partners, City Council directed the Planning Commission to initiate a study for the Eastside to address the aforementioned issues and respond to the growing concerns about the future of the Eastside. Detailed planning for the area had not taken place since 1990 when elected officials adopted the *East District Plan* which covers a wide range of land use, infrastructure and livability issues. Rather than updating the entire district plan, this *Eastside Strategy Plan* concentrates on key land use, zoning, transportation and streetscape issues relating to the Eastside's major corridors. This focus on the corridors draws attention to the Eastside's most pressing development and redevelopment issues. Eleven corridors are included as part of the *Eastside Strategy Plan*. These corridors are:

1. Albermarle Road
2. Central Avenue
3. Eastway Drive
4. Harris Boulevard East
5. Harrisburg Road
6. Hickory Grove/Pence Road
7. Idlewild Road
8. Lawyers Road
9. Monroe Road
10. Plaza Road/Plaza Road Extension
11. Sharon Amity Road North

Rapid Transit Plans

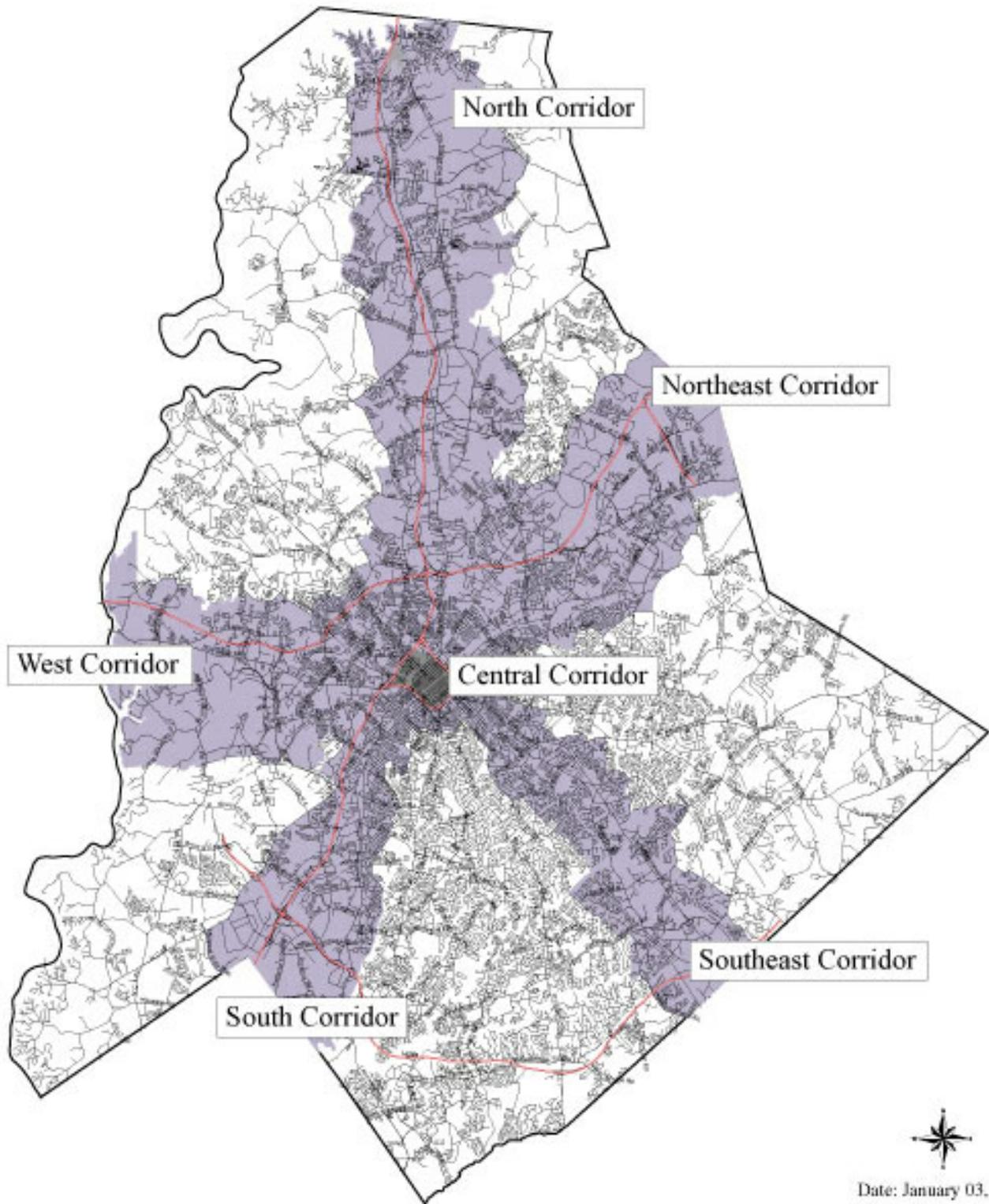
While recognized as the Eastside's primary corridor, Independence Boulevard was not included in the Strategy Plan because it was addressed in the *2025 Integrated Transit and Land Use Plan* completed in 1998 and is currently being studied in greater detail as part of the Southeast Corridor Major Investment Study (MIS) for rapid transit. It is anticipated that land use recommendations will be developed for the Independence Boulevard corridor during the MIS process and/or a subsequent phase of the transit planning process.

In addition to the Southeast Transit Corridor, four other corridors are currently under study for future rapid transit. All five of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's rapid transit corridors are illustrated on **Map 2**. Land use recommendations may be made for many areas within these transit corridors during the transit planning process. Areas along Central Avenue, Monroe Road, Sharon Amity Road and Eastway Drive, in particular, are likely to be considered for land use changes during the transit planning process. Therefore, this *Eastside Strategy Plan* does not make recommendations for land use changes for any area that falls within one of the five transit corridors.

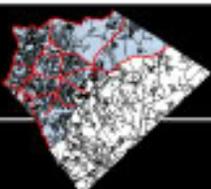


Rapid transit plans are underway that could effect land use recommendations for some Eastside corridors.

Mecklenburg County Transit Corridors



Date: January 03, 2001
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miles



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001

Transportation Projects

Planned transportation improvements for each of the eleven corridors are discussed within the specific “Existing Conditions” section of this document for that particular corridor. **Map 3**, illustrates all the transportation projects currently planned for the entire eastside study area.

Current Streetscape Projects

Based on the information provided during the development of the *Eastside Strategy Plan*, along with some preliminary plan recommendations; the Charlotte City Council approved funding to begin streetscape projects on several Eastside corridors. The following list provides key information on each of these current Eastside streetscape projects (as of February 8, 2001).

Albemarle Road

- *Project Description:* Construction of new sidewalks with planting strips and street trees on both sides of Albemarle Road from Sharon Amity Road North to Harris Boulevard East.
- *Estimated Project Cost:* \$3.1 million

Central Avenue

- *Project Description:* Construction of new sidewalk with planting strips to include street trees and decorative pedestrian lights on both sides of Central Avenue from Morningside Drive to Sharon Amity Road. The addition of bike lanes and a center turn lane or median on Central Avenue from Eastway Drive to Sharon Amity Road also will be included.
- *Estimated Project Cost:* \$11 million

Eastland Mall

- *Project Description:* A study of the Eastland Mall area is currently underway and will recommend specific projects to be implemented, including such elements as landscaping, decorative lighting and pavement markers.
- *Estimated Project Cost:* \$500,000 (For projects to be identified in the study.)

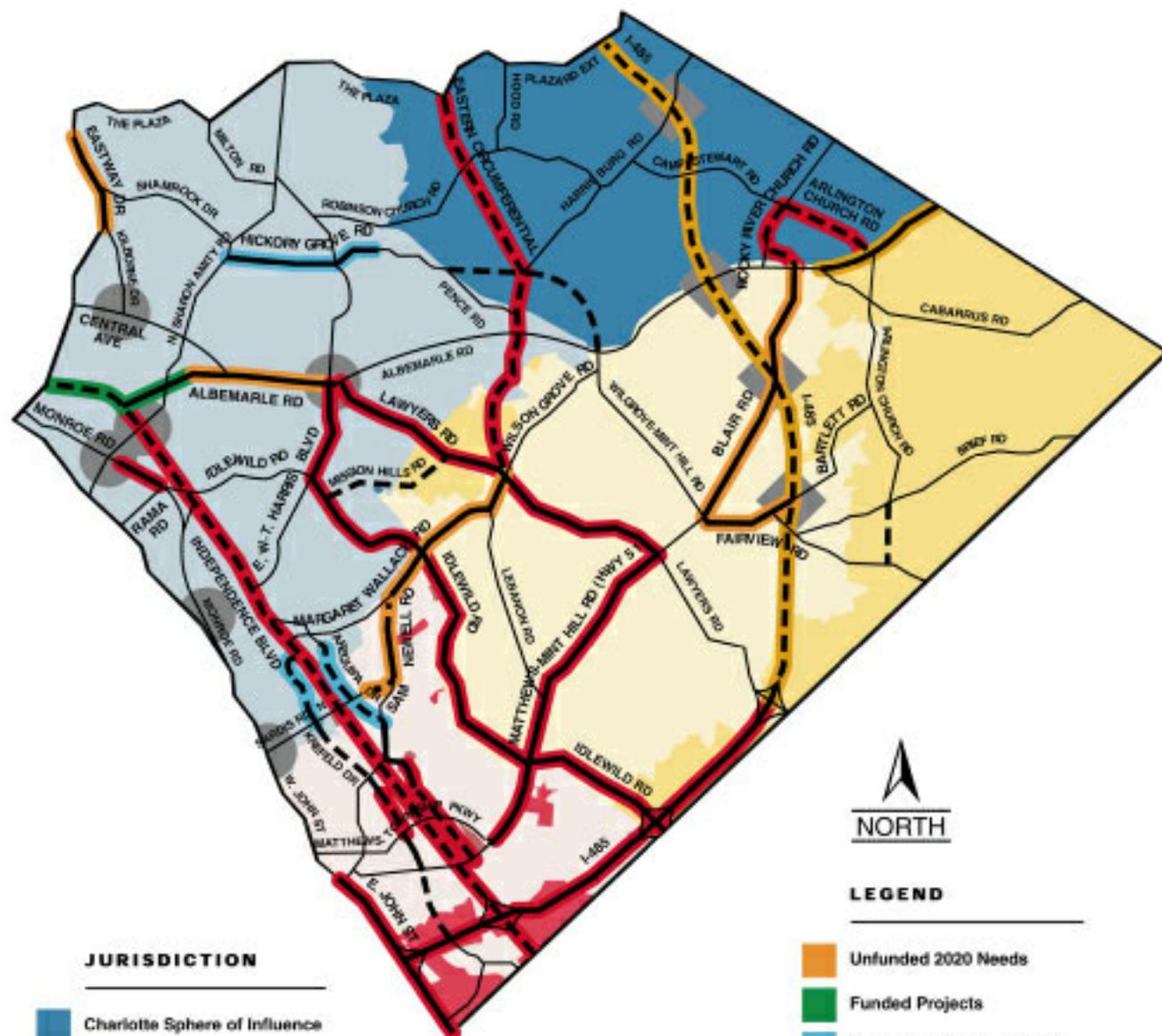
Norland Road

- *Project Description:* Improvements include adding sidewalk with planting strips between Central Avenue and Eastway Middle School.
- *Estimated Project Cost:* \$200,000

Hickory Grove Road

- *Project Description:* Addition of pedestrian signal, pedestrian refuge islands, reduced curb radii, signage and striping at the Harris Boulevard East intersection. This project is part of a larger transportation project, currently in the design phase, to widen Hickory Grove Road to four lanes with bike lanes, curb and gutter and sidewalks with planting strips from Shamrock Drive to Highland Avenue.
- *Estimated Project Cost:* \$50,000

Transportation Projects



JURISDICTION

- Charlotte Sphere of Influence
- Charlotte City Limits
- Matthews Sphere of Influence
- Matthews Town Limits
- Mint Hill Sphere of Influence
- Mint Hill Town Limits

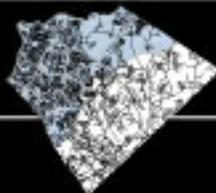


LEGEND

- Unfunded 2020 Needs
- Funded Projects
- Funded Planning & Design
- Financially Constrained
- Under Construction
- Funded Intersection Projects
- Planned I-485 Interchanges
- Proposed Road

Date: December 2000

Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation



Pence Road

- *Project Description:* Improvements include road widening to a three-lane section, curb and gutter, sidewalk with planting strip, bike lanes and street trees on the north side from Hickory Grove Elementary School to Bandy Drive and on the south side from Montezuma Trail to Harrisburg Road. The Sidewalk Program will fund sidewalk improvements on the south side from Holly Hill Road to Harrisburg Road.
- *Estimated Project Cost:* \$1.9 million

Plaza Road

- *Project Description:* Improvements include bike lanes, curb and gutter, sidewalks with planting strips, and trees on both sides of The Plaza from Harris Boulevard East to Northridge Middle School and on the south side to Plott Road. A bike lane will be added on the north side to Plott Road.
- *Estimated Project Cost:* \$2 million

The Focus of the Eastside Strategy Plan

Vision and Key Planning Goals

At the core of this strategy plan is the following vision of what area residents, business owners and others see ahead for the Eastside in the 21st Century. This vision takes into account the area as it exists today, and imagines how, with some key improvements, it can be significantly enhanced in the future. Maintaining and reinforcing the Eastside as an important, viable and attractive part of the community is critical to Charlotte's long term economic health and vitality.

21st Century Vision for the Eastside

The Eastside is a place where people

- *have a wide variety of desirable and affordable housing options available to them*
- *are able to live in close proximity to where they work and shop*
- *can safely and easily walk, bicycle, drive or ride transit to get to destinations throughout the area*
- *find excellent public schools and a host of educational opportunities*
- *appreciate the area's safe and beautifully landscaped streets*

Building on this vision, the *Eastside Strategy Plan* focuses on accomplishing the following goals:

- ***Integrity and Stability of Established Neighborhoods:*** Protect and enhance the Eastside's many established neighborhoods and its invaluable housing stock.
- ***Revitalization:*** Encourage the revitalization of large, older commercial and mixed use areas that have begun to experience decline and, in so doing, create attractive and unique "people places" that give identity and character to the Eastside.
- ***Balanced Land Use Pattern:*** Where infill and new development opportunities exist, create a more balanced land use pattern that provides a healthy mix of single family, low density mixed housing and multi-family housing options; a variety of shopping and employment opportunities; and open space and services that meet the community's needs.
- ***Connectivity/Mobility:*** Ensure that the infrastructure is in place---roads, sidewalks, bikeways, public transit---to allow people to move about safely and with ease.
- ***Community Appearance:*** Improve and maintain the appearance of the Eastside's corridors and its gateways, making the Eastside a much more attractive environment.

Applying the Vision and Goals to Each Corridor

Each of the 11 corridors studied in the *Eastside Strategy Plan* has been assessed to identify ways in which the overall vision and goals for the Eastside can be applied. The following objectives formed the checklist used to evaluate the corridors and to develop recommendations.

Land Use

- Validity of District Plan Land Use Recommendations:** Ensure that the future land use recommendations proposed in the *East District Plan* are still valid considering the current land use, zoning or other factors that may have changed since the plan was originally approved. Any changes will amend the adopted *East District Plan (1990)*, *Northeast District Plan (1996)*, *South District Plan (1993)*, or the *Central District Plan (1993)*.
- Residential Densities:** Specify the appropriate density when recommending a future residential land use. Recognizing that the current (1990) *General Development Policies (GDP)* are being updated with a focus on revising the locational criteria used to evaluate proposals for increasing residential densities, recommendations for residential land uses along the 11 Eastside corridors specify the appropriate density for the location when it differs from that shown on the *East District Plan* map. Once the GDP have been revised, it may be appropriate to apply the new locational criteria when evaluating residential development proposals along the 11 Eastside corridors.
- Opportunities For Mixed Residential:** Encourage development of a broader mixture of housing types, particularly mixed use housing consisting of duplexes, triplexes and/or townhouses, in areas where pressure for higher density multi-family housing or non-residential development is likely to occur. Encouraging this scale of development is a way to create a greater variety of housing types on the Eastside while preserving the edges of established single family neighborhoods.
- Limiting New Commercial Development:** Concentrate new commercial development at key intersections, and limit expansion of commercial areas along corridors to reduce the potential of further strip development.
- Expanded Employment Base:** Encourage additional employment uses to develop in appropriate areas along the corridors to expand the Eastside's overall employment base.

Revitalization/Redevelopment

- Areas in Distress:** Identify areas in need of revitalization and/or redevelopment.

Mobility/Connectivity

- Improvements Needed:** Identify key improvements needed for a safe and efficient transportation system, including transit, roads, sidewalks and bikeways.

Streetscape Appearance

- Opportunities For Enhancement:** Identify opportunities to improve and maintain the streetscape image along all the corridors.

THE ALBEMARLE ROAD CORRIDOR



Reinvestment along the corridor, especially near Eastland Mall is critical to the vitality of this corridor



Design of the interchange with Harris Blvd. and development of the area around it will provide significant opportunities for reinvestment.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

The Albemarle Road Corridor extends approximately 10.5 miles from Independence Boulevard eastward to the county line. Major cross streets include Sharon Amity Road, Central Avenue, Harris Boulevard, Lawyers Road, Harrisburg Road and NC 51. Interstate 485, currently under construction, will have an interchange at Albemarle Road.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 34,649 Households: 20,648
 (Includes O & D Zones: 51, 56, 71, 73-77, 282, 283, 285, 287 and 441)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 1 and 2 show a breakdown of the existing land use and zoning within the corridor.

Table 1: Existing Land Use For the Albemarle Road Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	2,030	58%
Multi-Family	351	10%
Rural Residential	1	-
Commercial	463	13%
Institutional	195	6%
Office	90	2.5%
Warehouse/Distribution	90	2.5%
Industrial/Manufacturing	22	1%
Vacant	169	5%
Utility	57	2%
TOTAL	3,468	100%

Table 2: Existing Zoning For the Albemarle Road Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	2,128	56%
Multi-Family	512	14%
Mobile Home	92	2%
Commercial	883	23%
Office	198	5%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	5	less than 1%
Institutional	0	0
Unknown	0	0
TOTAL	3,818	100%

Notes for Tables 1 and 2: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

As reflected in Tables 1 and 2, approximately 70% of the corridor is currently developed with and zoned for single family or multi-family housing. Almost a quarter of the remaining land is zoned for commercial use, with only 13% actually developed as such. Restaurants, banks, other businesses and strip shopping centers, along with concentrations of apartments, line the corridor from Independence Boulevard to just past Lawyers Road where single family development predominates. Retail development begins again approaching the intersection of Harrisburg Road where a mixture of older retail shops and new, larger retail sites exists, including a large Walmart store. More commercial development has been built or is planned further east along the corridor near the intersection of N.C. 51 and Albemarle Road. A Home Depot has been built on an old grocery store site, and zoning for a shopping center has been approved directly across from the intersection of NC 51 and Albemarle Road.

Office development comprises only 2.5% of the total developed land along the corridor. Koger Center East, near Farm Pond Lane and Executive Drive, is the largest office concentration along the corridor as well as on the Eastside. Approximately 525,000 square feet of leaseable office space exists in this center, making it one of the largest office parks in Charlotte (outside the Uptown.). Other office development is concentrated in and around the East Park Executive Park near Regal Oaks Drive.

Industrial development and/or zoning is limited along the entire corridor, comprising less than 1% of the total acreage. This includes a rock quarry near the county line and a mini-warehouse north of the intersection of Harrisburg Road and Albemarle, in addition to a few minor tracts east of the Harrisburg Road intersection.

In 1999, only 169 acres of land---or 5% of the corridor's total land area---remained vacant. The majority of this vacant land is east of Harrisburg Rd. With the exception of a few commercial and multi-family zoned sites, the land is zoned for single family development. (It should be noted, however, that there may be large tracts of land that are developed with a single family home that could be subdivided and developed more intensely under current zoning.)

In addition to the vacant properties along this section of the corridor, two key tracts currently occupied by Wilgrove Airport and Vulcan Quarry create opportunities for redevelopment in

the future. The construction of the I-485 interchange between Harrisburg Road and NC 51 provides yet another development opportunity.

Transportation

Roads

Albemarle Road is one of the most heavily traveled thoroughfares on the Eastside, particularly between Central Avenue and Harris Boulevard. Based on traffic counts provided by the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT), the following traffic volumes were identified for the various segments of the corridor.

Table 3: Traffic Volumes For Albemarle Road

Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation

Segment of Corridor	1997/98 Traffic Volume
Independence Blvd. to N. Sharon Amity Road	42,000
Sharon Amity Rd. N. to Central Avenue	40,400
Central Avenue to Harris Blvd. East	52,900
Harris Blvd. East to Pence Road	25,000
Pence Road to City Limits	23,000

To help alleviate traffic congestion on the corridor, the following projects have been funded and/or identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan*. (See **Map 3**.)

- Construction of an interchange at the Albemarle Road/Harris Boulevard intersection
- Construction of I-485 and its interchange with Albemarle Road
- Widening of Albemarle Road from Pierson Drive to Reddman Road to provide a third eastbound lane
- Widening of Albemarle Road from NC 51 (Blair Road) to the Cabarrus County Line
- Construction of an interchange with US 74
- Improving the six lanes of Albemarle Road from Central Avenue to Harris Boulevard

In addition to the roadway projects identified above, a planned circumferential roadway will traverse the Eastside and affect many of the 11 corridors. This roadway, currently referred to as the Eastern Circumferential, is planned to extend from Independence Boulevard to Plaza Road Extension within the study area and is shown as a dashed line on Map 3. (Note that the roadway extends north of the study area to Mallard Creek Church Road.)

Public Transportation

The Albemarle Road Express #40X serves both Albemarle Road and also the Albemarle/Lawyers Road corridor. Route #40X is served by Park-&-Ride, P-39 and P-29 located at the far eastern ends of the corridors. The Sharon Amity Express #66 bisects the Albemarle Road corridor, providing one of only a few cross-town routes.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Albemarle Rd Express #40X	7,222
Central Avenue #9 & # 9W	98,331
Sharon Amity Express #66X (cross corridor)	3,102

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Sidewalks exist along both sides of Albemarle Road from Independence Boulevard to the Harrisburg Road intersection. However, gaps in the sidewalk exist east of Harris Boulevard. The remaining portions of the corridor do not have sidewalks, and there are no accommodations for bicyclists. Currently, sidewalk improvements are planned for Pierson Drive.

Streetscape Appearance

Very little, if any, landscaping or other streetscape amenities exist in the public right-of-way for the corridor. Because much of the existing retail and other business development was built prior to current landscaping requirements, little landscaping exists on private property as well. Consequently, barren or minimally landscaped parking lots dominate the view from the street for the extensive, older nonresidential areas that front the corridor. *(For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of this Concept Plan document.)*

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ **Land Use**

The land use recommendations provided below, and illustrated on **Maps 4a and 4b**, are proposed to update and amend the *East District Plan* (1990).

Mixed Residential Development Opportunities

The Albemarle Road Corridor already has a considerable amount of multi-family development. The corridor needs a greater mix of housing types, including duplexes, triplexes and/or townhouses (up to 8 units per acre) and additional single family development. Higher density housing should be limited to currently zoned tracts.

Areas that have been identified for mixed residential development are as follows:

- A. Tract West of Eastern Circumferential (north side of Albemarle Road):** A vacant tract exists between Norwood Nursery and Cornerstone Baptist Church on the north side of the corridor. This tract should be considered for the eventual expansion of the church; however, if the church does not expand, the tract should be considered for mixed residential development (up to 8 dwelling units per acre) subject to approval of a site plan that addresses connectivity, buffering, open space and other design standards that

would complement the adjacent neighborhood. Expansion of commercial zoning should not be permitted on this site. *(The East District Plan recommends single family development at this location)*

- B. Redevelopment of Wilgrove Airport:** Support mixed residential development (up to 8 dwelling units per acre) on the Wilgrove Airport site (west of Cedarbrook Drive) and parcels to the west of the airport if an appropriate site plan showing such design characteristics as buffering, open space and connectivity is provided. The Wilgrove-Mint Hill Extension is a minor thoroughfare proposed near the property to the west of the airport. Mixed housing will provide a good transition between the existing mobile home park and the single family area to the east of the airport. *(The East District Plan recommends single family development at this location.)*

Employment Opportunities

- C. Business/Light Industrial Park in Northeast Quadrant of Albemarle Road/Harrisburg Road Intersection Area:** Support development of a planned business/light industrial park in the industrial zoned area located between Parkton Road and the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks north of Goodwill Industries. A mini-warehouse and a few other businesses exist in this area; however, several vacant tracts remain. *(The East District Plan recommends industrial for this location.)*
- D. Employment Development at I-485 Interchange Area:** A land use workshop will be held with the landowners, developers and area stakeholders (including Charlotte East Community Partners, East Area Council, neighborhoods along the corridors and within CWAC, elected officials, etc.) to determine the most appropriate future land use mix for both the northeast and northwest quadrants of this interchange. *(The East District Plan recommends single family and multi-family development on the northern quadrants of the interchange.)*
- E. Redevelopment of Quarry Site and Abutting Property:** Support the redevelopment of the Vulcan Properties Quarry and abutting property located on the north side of the corridor near Arlington Church Road as a light industrial/business park. *(The East District Plan recommends industrial and single family residential for this site.)*

Churches as Institutional Land Uses

- F. Existing Church West of Eastern Circumferential:** Recognize existing church facility as an institutional land use on the future land use map. *(The East District Plan shows single family on this site.)*
- G. Existing Church at Parkton Road and Norfolk Southern Railroad:** Recognize existing church facility as an institutional land use on the future land use map. *(The East District Plan shows industrial on this site.)*
- H. Howell Center near Cabarrus County Line:** Recognize existing Howell Center as institutional to reflect current land use. *(The East District Plan shows single family on this site.)*

■ Revitalization/Redevelopment Opportunities

Redevelopment and revitalization generally refer to the process of restoring economic and social vitality to an area that has declined. Redevelopment typically refers to the physical or built aspects of this restoration, and is more closely tied to land use. Revitalization is a somewhat more comprehensive term in that it may refer to more than just physical improvements. In some cases, redevelopment and revitalization may involve removing existing structures and rebuilding. In other instances, redevelopment and revitalization may incorporate existing structures into the new development.

While areas further out on the Albemarle Road Corridor are continuing to develop with retail and new residential development, the older, section of the corridor has begun to show signs of decline. **In particular, further study is needed for the area of Albemarle Road near Central Avenue.** Several large buildings stand vacant near this intersection -- the former Uptons department store and Hanifords grocery. An older shopping center once anchored by Food Lion has also been vacant for years near the Albemarle Road/Harris Boulevard intersection area. The challenge will be to bring new life back to these dormant sites and prevent additional business loss on the corridor as has been the case for other aging commercial corridors in the city. With the considerable number of people living in the area, the market should remain strong enough to support business retention and growth in the future, but intervention may be needed.

There is also a need for further study of the area that will be impacted when the interchange is constructed at Albemarle Road and Harris Boulevard East. **It is recommended that a small area plan be prepared for the area around this interchange.** The construction and realignment of roads and properties will provide the opportunity to assemble land in the area and create a more attractive, better integrated, pedestrian-oriented business environment. The plan should identify design criteria and land use recommendations for properties affected by the roadway improvement project.

■ Mobility/Connectivity

- **Traffic Congestion:** Pursue efforts to alleviate traffic congestion along heavily traveled sections of the corridor during peak commuting times including transportation improvements already planned and/or underway as previously described and identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan*. Efforts should also focus on transportation demand and transportation systems management (i.e., strategies aimed at reducing the number of vehicle trips, shortening trip lengths, changing the timing of trips out of peak hours, improving the flow of traffic through engineering improvements); connectivity; and provision of greater transit opportunities.
- **Eastern Circumferential:** Increase connectivity between corridors by completing construction of the Eastern Circumferential.
- **Safety of Pedestrians and Bicyclists:** Improve conditions for pedestrians along the entire length of Albemarle Road, particularly at key intersections where pedestrian traffic may be higher. In particular, construct missing segments of sidewalk east of Harris Boulevard and add sidewalks from Harrisburg Road to the Cabarrus County line. The

provision of sidewalks outside of the Charlotte City Limits should occur as this area is annexed, development occurs or road improvements take place.

Implement the recommendations of the *Bicycle Transportation Plan* to provide improvements for bicyclists as part of all new road construction and improvements to existing roadways.

- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes. In particular, consider improving circumferential service.

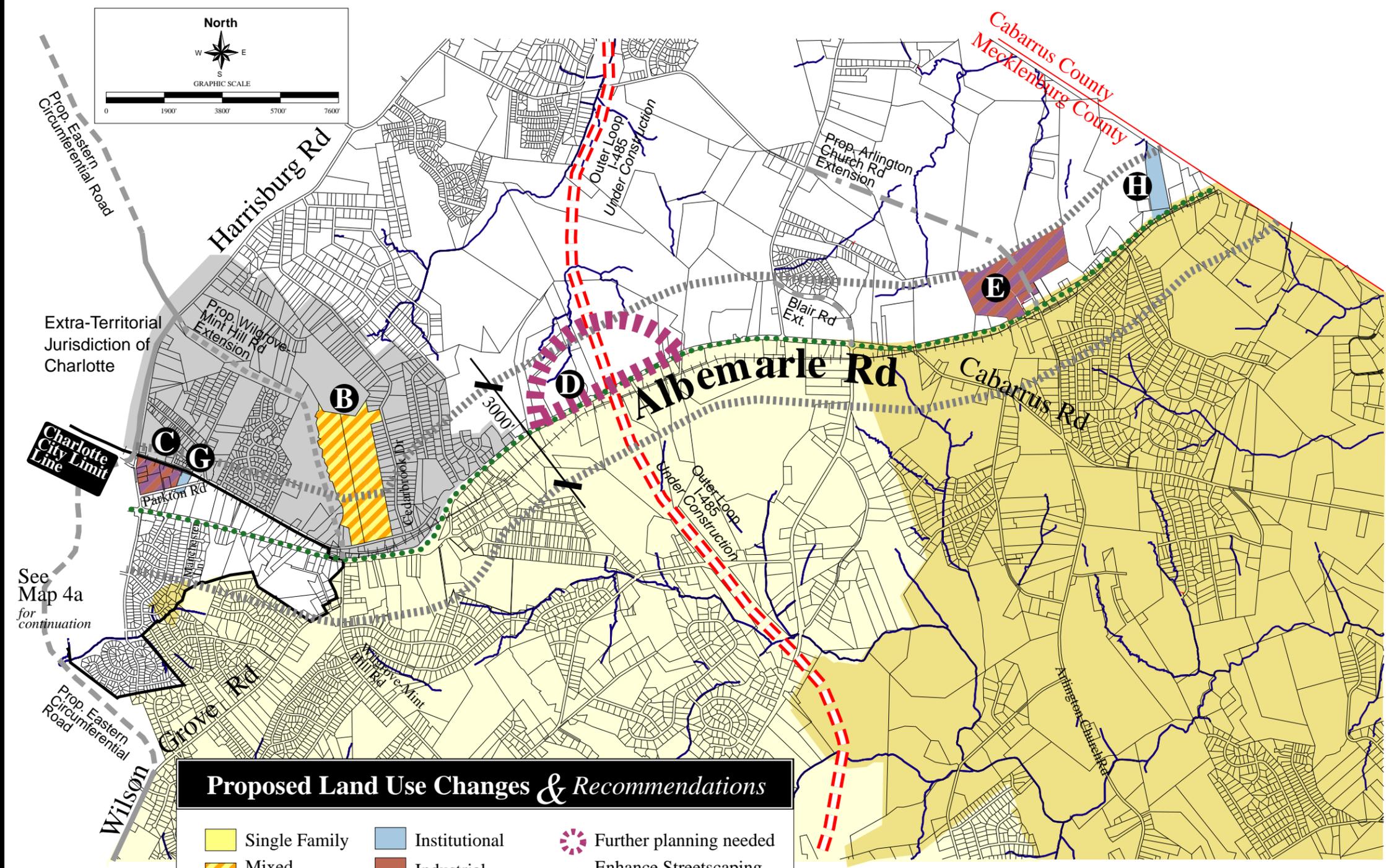
■ Streetscape Appearance

Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping in planting strips along the street edges where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the streetscape appearance.
- **Lighting:** Consider providing decorative lighting as appropriate in key areas along the corridor (i.e., Eastland Mall area).
- **Utilities:** Encourage relocation of utility poles along the corridor to improve the streetscape appearance.

(For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of this Concept Plan document.)

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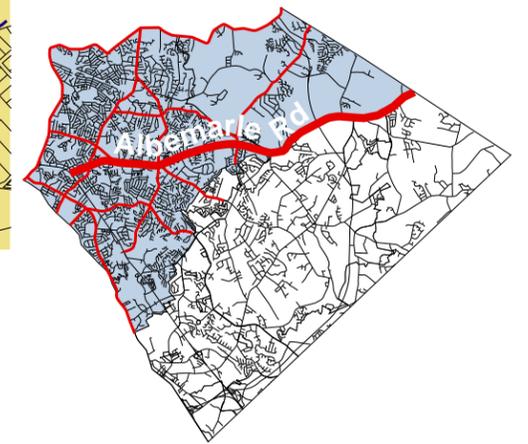


Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use <small>Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional</small>	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		

- B** Change from single family to mixed residential at a density of up to 8 units per acre.
- C** Change from industrial to office/light industrial/business park.
- D** Land Use Charette to be completed.
- E** Change from industrial and single family to light industrial business park.
- G** Change from industrial to institutional.
- H** Change future land use of Howell Center from single family to institutional.

Note: See Map 4a for additional recommendations for Albemarle Road.



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Albemarle Road Concept and Recommendations

THE CENTRAL AVENUE CORRIDOR



Identifying appropriate residential densities and providing design guidelines for development along the corridor are key recommendations.



Revitalization of the Eastland Mall area will be fundamental to the success of the Eastside Strategy Plan implementation.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

A two miles stretch of Central Avenue extending from Eastway Drive to Albemarle Road is included within the Central Avenue Corridor boundaries delineated for the *Eastside Strategy Plan*. Kilborne Drive and Sharon Amity Road are major cross roads along the corridor.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 14,256 Households: 6,629

(Includes O&D Zones: 49, 50, 51, 56, and 57)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 4 and 5 provide a breakdown of the corridor by existing land use and zoning.

Table 4: Existing Land Use For the Central Avenue Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	247	32%
Multi-Family	174	22%
Rural Residential	0	-
Commercial	199	25%
Institutional	43	6%
Office	67	8%
Warehouse/Distribution	25	3%
Industrial/Manufacturing	0	-
Vacant	29	4%
Utility	0	-
TOTAL	784	100%

Table 5: Existing Zoning For the Central Avenue Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	355	40%
Multi-Family	221	25%
Mobile Home	0	-
Commercial	244	27%
Office	73	8%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	0	0
Institutional	0	0
Unknown	0	0
TOTAL	893	100%

Notes for Tables 4 and 5: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

Single family housing comprises approximately 32% of the total land area, multi-family housing comprises 22% and commercial development comprises 25%.

A mixture of single family and multi-family housing and several churches have been built along the corridor between Eastway Drive and Sharon Amity Road North. Considerable retail development also exists in the corridor near the intersections of Eastway Drive, Norland Drive, Rosehaven Drive and east and west of the intersection of Sharon Amity Road North to Albemarle Road, where Eastland Mall is located. Several of the older, small shopping areas along the corridor now have restaurants and other businesses that cater to the area's growing international population. While Eastland Mall continues to thrive, it does not have the regional draw it did several years ago. The retail market has been changing along with the demographics of the area. Several office buildings also exist on the corridor, primarily east of the Sharon Amity intersection across from Eastland Mall.

Transportation

Roads

Based on CDOT estimates, approximately 30,000 vehicles traveled on Central Avenue on weekdays in 1998. The only major road improvement planned and funded for the corridor (east of Eastway Drive) is improvement to the Central Avenue and Kilborne Drive/Norland Road intersection. **(See Map 3.)** However, the current streetscape project also includes the addition of a center turn lane or median on Central Avenue from Eastway Drive to Sharon Amity Road.

Public Transportation

The Central Avenue #9W is one of the most successful transit routes in the City of Charlotte. The route serves an average of 98,331 passengers per month. Center City, Eastland Mall, and the Koger Business Park are primary destinations for many who use the public transportation system along Central Avenue.

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) currently provides frequent service to Eastland Mall. In addition, the 2025 Integrated Transit/Land-Use Plan identified Eastland Mall as a

potential transit hub, because it provides neighborhood-based service to area jobs, shopping and cross-town connections.

A county-wide study is currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvements. In addition, CATS is planning to use the Central Avenue Corridor as a demonstration area for new bus shelter and signage designs.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Central Avenue #9 and #9W	98,331
UNCC/Uptown #39	28,662
Albemarle Road Express #40X	7,222

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Although sidewalks exist along most of the corridor, a continuous sidewalk does not exist on the frontage of Eastland Mall where considerable foot traffic occurs. The Mall does not have sidewalks that connect the store entrances to the thoroughfares. Pedestrians must cut through the parking lots and walk on the edge of the entrance driveways to get to the road. There are no accommodations for bicyclists on the corridor. The *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan*, adopted in 1999, recommends that bike lanes be provided on Norland Road and Kilborne Drive. That plan also recommends that bicycle facilities be added to all existing thoroughfares as they are widened or improved and to any new thoroughfares that are constructed.

Currently, sidewalk improvements will be made along the following streets as part of the Merry Oaks Neighborhood Improvement Project: Masonic Drive, Long Fellow Street, Graybark Avenue, Draper Avenue, Merry Oaks Road, and Flywood Drive.

Streetscape Appearance

The public right-of-way along Central Avenue generally lacks landscaping and other streetscape amenities. The majority of the businesses and shopping centers also lack landscaping, contributing to a negative streetscape image in the commercial areas. While Eastland Mall has landscaping along its periphery, it has acres of unlandscaped parking surrounding the building. (*For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of this Concept Plan document.*)

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The land use recommendations provided below, and illustrated on **Map 5**, are proposed to update and amend the *East District Plan* (1990).

Mixed Residential Development Between Eastway Drive and Sharon Amity Road North

Numerous apartment communities have developed along Central Avenue. The current zoning would allow additional high density development to occur through redevelopment of

single family areas. To ensure that redevelopment opportunities still exist, but that neighborhood edges are protected by creating housing at a more appropriate and compatible density and scale, the following is recommended:

- **Mixed Residential:** Encourage mixed residential development (up to 8 dwelling units per acre) in the following locations: *(The East District Plan recommends a single family future for all these lots.)*
 - A. Properties developed with single family homes and several churches that front Central Avenue between Eastway Drive and Sheridan Drive (north and south sides of the corridor).
 - B. Single family properties along Norland Road that are adjacent to the existing business and office development.
 - C. The area along Darbrook Drive where vacant land and low density multi-family already exist.
 - D. The residential area along Rosehaven Drive and Driftwood Drive on the south side of the corridor which currently is developed with a mix of single family and low density multi-family housing.
 - E. Single family properties east and west of the intersection of Central Avenue and Landsdale Drive on the north side of the corridor.

Consistency of Current Land Use

Several properties located throughout the corridor were designated in the *East District Plan* for single family housing; however, these properties are already developed with other uses, or it is highly unlikely that single family housing would ever develop on these lots. Consequently, the *East District Plan* should be amended as follows.

- F. Designate institutional use for the vacant property on the south side of the corridor immediately to the east of Memorial United Methodist Church (Sheridan Drive) to allow expansion of the church. *(The East District Plan calls for single family at this location.)*
- G. Designate the entrance to Evergreen Cemetery on the south side of the corridor as an institutional use. *(The East District Plan calls for single family at this location.)*
- H. Change the designation of the narrow, single family lots on the south side of the corridor between North Sharon Amity Road and Rosehaven Drive that are wedged between commercial and office development to an office future. *(The East District Plan calls for single family at this location.)*
- I. Show the area around Eastport Road and Lookout Lane on the north side of the corridor which is currently developed with low density multi-family housing as appropriate for multi-family development at a density of up to 22 units per acre. *(The East District Plan calls for single family at this location.)*
- J. Recognize the current business use of the three properties on the west side of Norland Drive on the south side of the corridor. *(The East District Plan calls for single family at this location.)*
- K. Designate the property zoned R-22MF between Norland Road and Progress Lane on the south side of the corridor for multi-family housing at a density of up to 22 units per acre. *(The East District Plan calls for single family at this location.)*

- L. Designate the five parcels in the southwest quadrant of Central Avenue and Progress Lane for mixed residential development at a density of up to 8 units per acre. (*The East District Plan calls for single family at this location.*)

■ Revitalization/Redevelopment Opportunity

Redevelopment and revitalization generally refer to the process of restoring economic and social vitality to an area that has declined. Redevelopment typically refers to the physical or built aspects of this restoration, and is more closely tied to land use. Revitalization is a somewhat more comprehensive term in that it may refer to more than just physical improvements. In some cases, redevelopment and revitalization may involve removing existing structures and rebuilding. In other instances, redevelopment and revitalization may incorporate existing structures into the new development.

Eastland Mall Area---A Revitalized “Town Center”

While the Eastside has numerous suburban shopping centers, it lacks any type of community focal point. Eastland Mall and the surrounding area provides an opportunity for redevelopment leading to the creation of an attractive pedestrian-oriented “town center” environment. Development of such a center could breathe new life into this Eastside area that is beginning to age and show signs of decline. A study should be prepared to assess existing conditions, redevelopment strategies and opportunities for recreating the mall and the surrounding area as a town center for the Eastside. Redevelopment/revitalization efforts should consider the following.

- **Market Conditions and Trends**
- **Public Sector Improvements Needed in the Area**
- **Compact, Urban-scale Development:** Identify and promote opportunities to create more compact, dense and coordinated mixed use development on the Mall’s massive parking areas and surrounding properties.
- **Connectivity:** Improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility within the Eastland Mall area, focusing on safety, convenience and amenities that enhance the experience of those moving about in the area. In addition, provide better access to and from this area via public transportation.
- **Streetscape Appearance:** Improve the streetscape appearance of the mall and surrounding area through landscaping, architectural enhancements, public art and other visual enhancements.

■ Mobility/Connectivity

Several transportation-related issues were identified during the planning process, including traffic speed, the number of accidents caused by vehicles turning into the apartment complexes and side streets along the corridor, congestion at peak hours and the challenge of riding a bicycle or walking in the area. The following are recommended for Central Avenue:

- **Traffic Flow and Safety:** Improve traffic flow and safety along the entire length of Central Avenue. Consider adding a median on Central Avenue. Also, look at the feasibility of implementing transportation demand and transportation systems management (i.e., strategies aimed at reducing the number of vehicle trips, shortening trip lengths, changing the timing of trips out of peak hours, improving the flow of traffic through engineering improvements); improving connectivity; and enhancing transit service.

In addition, complete the intersection improvement planned for Central Avenue and Kilborne Drive/Norland Road.

- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes. In particular, consider improving circumferential service.
- **Cut-Through Traffic Along Norland Road:** Reduce cut-through traffic along Norland Road.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic:** Accommodate bicyclists where possible, especially by implementing recommendations in the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* adopted in 1999, including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where feasible.

Ensure that any redevelopment of Eastland Mall include pedestrian connections from the streets into the mall (i.e., pedestrians should not have to walk in the parking area). Also, ensure that all future road improvements pay particular attention to pedestrian concerns including the addition of pedestrian activated traffic signals, enhanced crosswalks, and pedestrian refuge islands/medians.

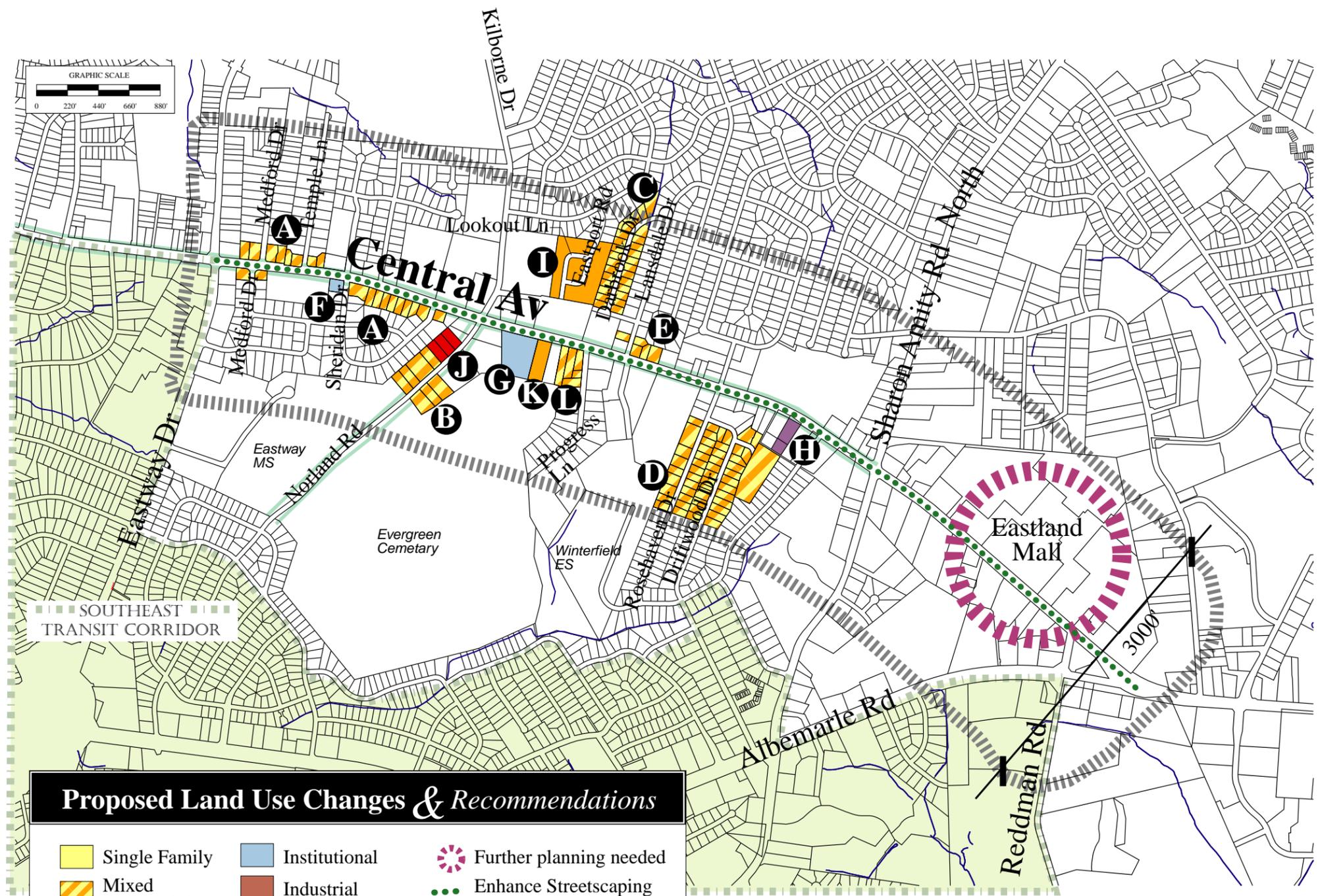
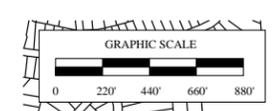
A bicycle and pedestrian connection should also be pursued to link the commercial area at Central Avenue and Eastway Drive to the Evergreen Nature Preserve.

■ Streetscape Appearance

Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping where feasible in planting strips along the street edges, in medians, and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the streetscape appearance.
- **Lighting:** Consider adding decorative light fixtures at key locations such as in the Eastland Mall area.

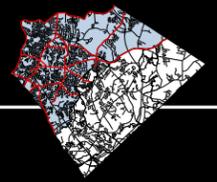
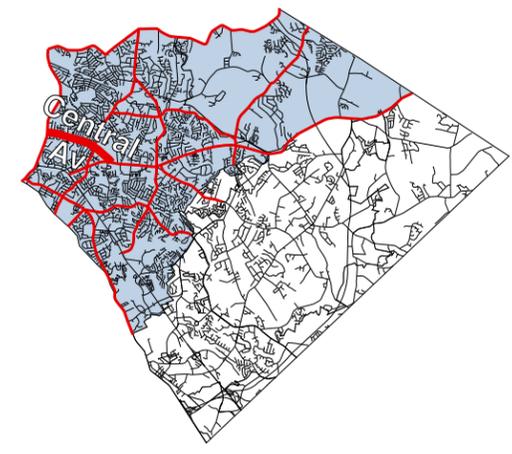
(For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of this Concept Plan document.)



Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		

- A** Change from commercial and single family to mixed residential at a density of up to 8 units per acre.
- B** Change from single family to mixed residential at a density of up to 8 units per acre.
- C** Change from single family to mixed residential at a density of up to 8 units per acre.
- D** Change from single family to mixed residential at a density of up to eight units per acre.
- E** Change from single family to mixed residential at a density of up to 8 units per acre.
- F** Change from single family to institutional.
- G** Change future land use of lots at entrance to Evergreen Cemetary from single family to institutional.
- H** Change from single family to office.
- I** Change from single family to multi-family.
- J** Change from single family to commercial.
- K** Change from single family to multi-family.
- L** Change from single family to mixed residential at a density of up to eight units per acre.



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Central Avenue Concept and Recommendations

THE EASTWAY DRIVE CORRIDOR



Infrastructure improvements and additional problem solving initiatives are needed to stabilize the Finchley/Purser Neighborhood.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

Eastway Drive is the western boundary of the *Eastside Strategy Plan* study area. It extends 4.1 miles from Monroe Road to The Plaza. Major cross roads include Independence Boulevard, Central Avenue and Shamrock Drive.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 24,521 Households: 10,912

(Includes O & D Zones: 34, 35, 38, 48, 49, 52, 53, and 57-61)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 6 and 7 show a breakdown of existing land use and zoning within the corridor.

Table 6: Existing Land Use For the Eastway Drive Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	712	52%
Multi-Family	177	13%
Rural Residential	0	-
Commercial	166	12%
Institutional	150	11%
Office	47	3%
Warehouse/Distribution	94	7%
Industrial/Manufacturing	12	1%
Vacant	13	1%
Utility	0	-
TOTAL	1,371	100%

Table 7: Existing Zoning For the Eastway Drive Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	804	50%
Multi-Family	358	22%
Mobile Home	0	-
Commercial	222	14%
Office	67	4%
Mixed Use	27	2%
Industrial	102	6%
Institutional	25	2%
Unknown	0	0
TOTAL	1,605	100%

Notes for Tables 6 and 7: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

Single family neighborhoods and apartment communities line the corridor. As indicated on Tables 6 and 7, approximately 65% of the total land area along the corridor is developed with residential uses, and 72% is zoned for residential development.

Transportation

Roads

The following table indicates traffic volumes for the various segments of Eastway Drive. The section from Central Avenue to Kilborne Drive experienced the highest traffic volumes in 1998, with approximately 51,000 cars a day traveling the corridor in this area.

Table 8: Traffic Volumes For Eastway Drive

Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation

Segment of Corridor	1998 Traffic Volume
Monroe Road to Independence Blvd.	37,350
Independence Blvd. to Central Avenue	40,200
Central Avenue to Kilborne Drive	50,700
Kilborne Drive to Shamrock Drive	34,000
Shamrock Drive to W. Sugar Creek Road	21,400
West Sugar Creek Rd. to The Plaza Road	21,400

The *2020 Transportation Plan* identified the need to add a northbound lane on Eastway Drive from the US 74 ramp to Biscayne Drive. This is to be completed as part of the US 74 project to begin in August, 2001. (See Map 3.) Additionally, the need to widen Eastway Drive to six lanes from Kilborne Drive to Sugar Creek Road was identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan* but funding has not yet been identified.

Public Transportation

The northern portion of Eastway Drive is served by the UNCC #39 route. The southern section, from Monroe Road to Albemarle Road lacks direct service. Many routes bisect and overlap small segments of the Eastway Drive corridor. A county-wide study is currently in

progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvements.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Central/Eastway/UNCC #39	28,662
Central Avenue #9	98,331 (short segment, one mile)
Commonwealth Ave. #17	30,748 (cross corridor)
Shamrock #23	27,103 (cross corridor)
Plaza Road #3	26,043 (cross corridor)

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Sidewalks exist on both sides of the street along the entire length of the corridor, but bicyclists are not accommodated. The *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Plan, 1999*, recommended that Woodland Avenue, which crosses Eastway Drive, be a signed bikeway connecting to future bike lanes on Commonwealth Avenue and Kilborne Drive.

Currently, sidewalk improvements are planned for Eastway Drive near Curtiswood Drive, just south of North Tyron Street.

Streetscape Appearance

The streetscape along Eastway Drive is nondescript. Very little, if any, landscaping exists in the public right-of-way along Eastway Drive, and the older commercial areas are devoid of landscaping or other amenities.

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The land use recommendations provided below, and illustrated on **Map 6**, are proposed to update and amend the *East District Plan* (1990) and the *Central District Plan* (1993).

- A. Mixed Residential Opportunities:** Change the future land use designation for the area on the west and east sides of the corridor extending from near Arnold Drive to near Kilborne Drive to mixed residential (up to 8 dwelling units per acre) to create a more compatible transition between the neighborhoods and adjacent land uses and to more appropriately reflect the current use. (*The Central and East District Plans recommend single family for this area.*)

- B. Institutional Adjacent to Merry Oaks Elementary School:** The strip of residential properties located between Merry Oaks Elementary School on the west side of the corridor north of Central Avenue should be designated as institutional to allow expansion of the school property. (*The Central District Plan recommends single family for these lots.*)

Consistency with Current Land Use and Zoning

Several properties located throughout the corridor were designated in the *East* or *Central District Plans* for single family or other lower intensity land use than currently developed and/or zoned. As a result of further analysis, the current and future land use of the following properties should be recognized and the district plans amended:

- C. A tract currently developed with multi-family housing located between Arnold Drive and Kilborne Drive on the east side of the corridor should be designated as multi-family at a density of up to 22 units per acre to reflect its current land use. (*The East District Plan identifies this as a single family tract.*)
- D. Lots located in the southeast quadrant of Shamrock Drive and Eastway Drive should be shown to reflect the current zoning of commercial, office and multi-family at a density of up to 17 units per acre. (*The East District Plan identifies this area as a park.*)
- E. The tract on the northwest corner of the intersection of Shamrock Drive and Eastway Drive should be designated as commercial to reflect the current use. Neighborhood service type businesses should be encouraged at this location. (*The Central District Plan recommends a multi-family future for this lot.*)

■ Revitalization Opportunity

Redevelopment and revitalization generally refer to the process of restoring economic and social vitality to an area that has declined. Redevelopment typically refers to the physical or built aspects of this restoration, and is more closely tied to land use. Revitalization is a somewhat more comprehensive term in that it may refer to more than just physical improvements. In some cases, redevelopment and revitalization may involve removing existing structures and rebuilding. In other instances, redevelopment and revitalization may incorporate existing structures into the new development.

The single family neighborhood in the Finchley Drive/Purser Drive area has been struggling in recent years. The area contains a mix of low density housing with duplexes and single family homes. The housing stock is beginning to show visible signs of deterioration and the overall appearance of the neighborhood is unkempt. Adequate infrastructure (i.e., sidewalks, curbs, gutters) is also lacking.

The Finchley Drive/Purser Drive neighborhood should be considered as a neighborhood improvement area to upgrade infrastructure and problem solve to address other physical problems such as maintenance of housing stock, overgrown and unkempt lots, zoning violations, and other problems contributing to the decline of this area.

■ Mobility/Connectivity

- **Traffic Congestion:** Complete the addition of a northbound lane on Eastway Drive from the US 74 ramp to Biscayne Drive. Also, support the widening of Eastway Drive to six lanes from Independence Boulevard to Sugar Creek Road. However, the long-term need for this project should be re-assessed before any funding is identified.

- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes.
- **Cut-Through Traffic:** Reduce cut-through traffic on Woodland Avenue. Consider the utility of adding speed humps or implementing other traffic calming measures on Woodland Avenue.
- **Bikeways:** Implement recommendations in the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* for this area including adding wide outside lanes on Eastway Drive from Sugar Creek Road to Kilborne Drive. Support the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.

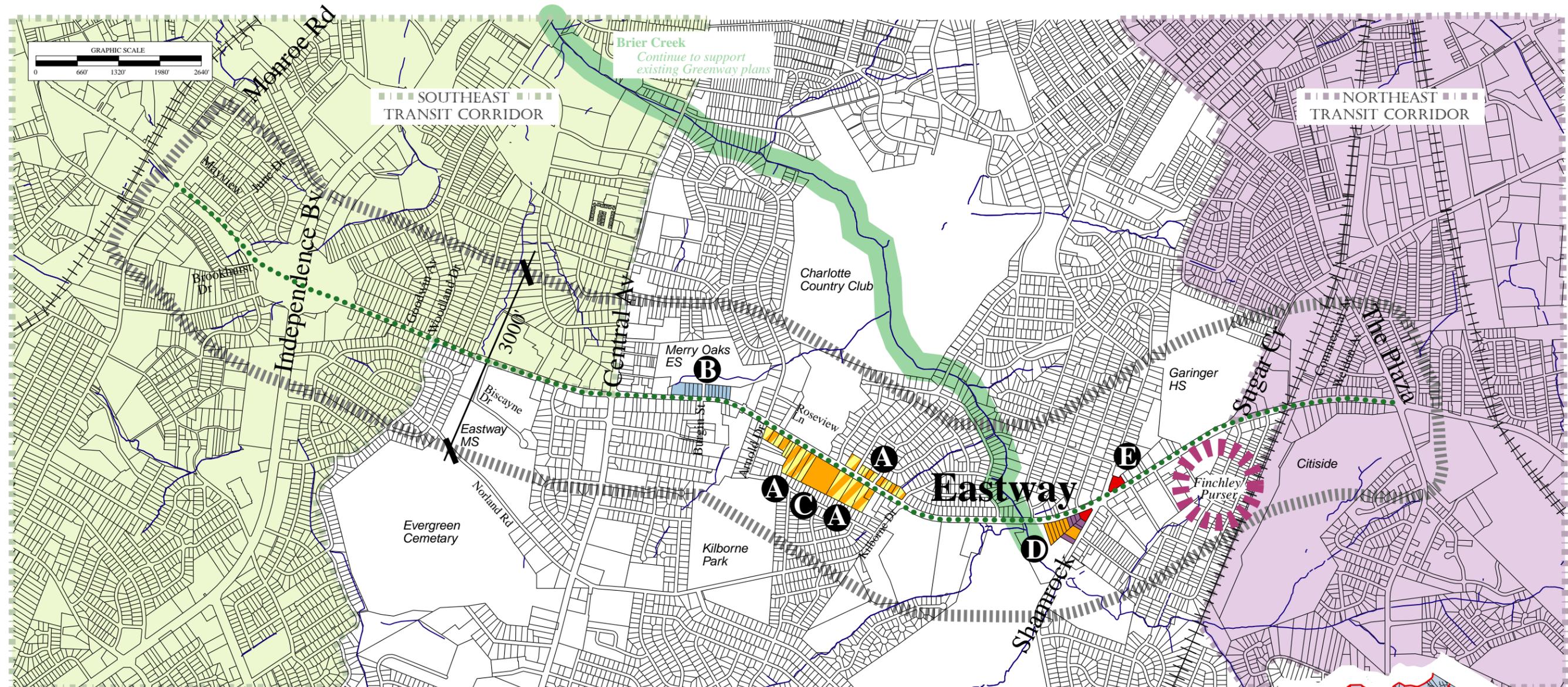
A bicycle and pedestrian connection should also be pursued to link the commercial area at Central Avenue and Eastway Drive to the Evergreen Nature Preserve.

■ Streetscape Appearance

Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping in planting strips along the street edges and in medians where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the streetscape image.

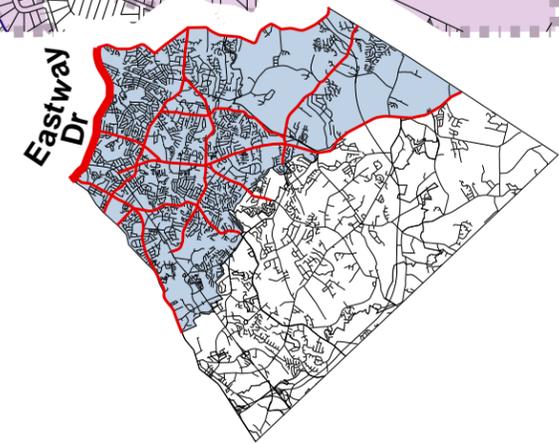
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- A** Change from single family to mixed residential at a density of up to eight units per acre.
- B** Change from single family to institutional.
- C** Change from single family to multi-family.
- D** Change from park to commercial, office, and multi-family.
- E** Change from multi-family to commercial.

Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Eastway Drive
Concept and
Recommendations

THE HARRIS BOULEVARD EAST CORRIDOR



Crossing Harris Blvd. must be made safer for pedestrians.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

The southern leg of Harris Boulevard East begins on the Eastside at Independence Boulevard. The thoroughfare eventually terminates at I-77 in the northeast area. For planning purposes, the section of Harris Boulevard between Independence Boulevard and The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension is included within the *Eastside Strategy Plan* boundaries. This length of the corridor covers a distance of 7 miles. Major cross streets along the corridor include Idlewild Road, Albemarle Road, Hickory Grove/Pence Road, Milton Road and Sharon Amity Road.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 34,912 Households: 13,562

(Includes O & D Zones: 44-46, 68, 69, 73, 74, 441 and 442)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 9 and 10 show a breakdown of the existing land use and zoning within the corridor.

Table 9: Existing Land Use For the Harris Boulevard East Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	1,434	61%
Multi-Family	302	13%
Rural Residential	0	-
Commercial	205	9%
Institutional	172	7%
Office	34	1%
Warehouse/Distribution	89	4%
Industrial/Manufacturing	30	1%
Vacant	81	3%
Utility	6	less than 1%
TOTAL	2,353	100%

Table 10: Existing Zoning For the Harris Boulevard East Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	1,646	61%
Multi-Family	608	22%
Mobile Home	0	-
Commercial	297	11%
Office	61	2%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	73	3%
Institutional	20	1%
Unknown	0	0%
TOTAL	2,705	100%

Notes for Tables 9 and 10: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

Residential development is the predominant use along the Harris Boulevard East Corridor. As indicated on Tables 9 and 10 approximately 70% of the corridor is developed with either single family or multi-family housing, and 83% is zoned for such uses. This corridor has a significant amount of multi-family housing already developed, particularly between Albemarle Road and Hickory Grove Road and around the Sharon Amity Road North intersection. Based on the existing zoning, there is still capacity to develop a considerable amount of new multi-family units in the future.

Commercial development has generally been limited to the areas around the major intersections. Multi-tenant shopping centers with grocery stores have been built at the intersections of Idlewild Road, Hickory Grove Road, Sharon Amity Road North and The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension. Office and/or industrial uses are limited along the corridor. Several businesses, including a mini-warehouse, have been built north of Hickory Grove Road in the vicinity of the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. A portion of the industrial area around the Sharon Amity Road North/Milton Road intersection is also included within the corridor boundaries.

Several churches have been built along the corridor, most notably Hickory Grove Baptist which consumes numerous acres on the east side of the corridor. A new, regional post office near The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension intersection has also been built recently.

Transportation

Roads

As shown on Table 11, Harris Boulevard is one of the most heavily traveled corridors in the Eastside, particularly between Idlewild Road and Robinson Church Road where 1998 traffic counts ranged from 40,800 to nearly 44,000 vehicles on an average weekday.

Table 11: Traffic Volumes For Harris Boulevard East

Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation

Segment of Corridor	1998 Traffic Volume
Independence Blvd. to Idlewild Road.	24,800
Idlewild Road to Hickory Grove Road	40,800
Hickory Grove Road to Robinson Church Road	42,100
Robinson Church Road to Milton Road	43,900
Milton Road to N. Sharon Amity Road	36,200
N. Sharon Amity Rd. to The Plaza/Plaza Rd. Extension	51,900

A major roadway improvement project at the intersection of Albemarle Road and Harris Boulevard, one of the most congested and hazardous intersections in Charlotte, is planned to begin in 2005. (See Map 3.) Plans are to construct an interchange at this location to improve traffic flow on these two major thoroughfares. In addition, the need for a median improvement on Harris Boulevard from Albemarle Road to Idlewild Road was identified, but not funded in the 2020 Transportation Plan.

Public Transportation

The section of Harris Boulevard East within the study area is only partially served by public transportation. Shamrock #23 serves Harris Boulevard East from Milton Road to Pence Road. Another short segment from Albemarle to Idlewild is served by the Central Avenue #9 and the Albemarle Express #40X. Harris Boulevard East is one of the heaviest traveled corridors on the Eastside, providing cross-town connectivity from the northern University area employment centers, to large pockets of suburban residential areas Southeast Charlotte. As such, it provides a key opportunity to enhance public transportation on the Eastside. A county-wide study is currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvements.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Shamrock #23	27,103
Central Ave. #9	98,331
Albemarle Express #40X	7,222
Idlewild Express #51X	2,791 (crosses corridor)

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Because Harris Boulevard is a relatively new thoroughfare, sidewalks were built on both sides of the road along the entire length of the corridor within the Eastside Strategy plan area. However, bicycle facilities have not been provided.

Streetscape Appearance

Little, if any, landscaping exists in the public right-of-way along Harris Boulevard even though medians have been built along portions of the thoroughfare. However, landscaping is currently (February, 2001) being installed from Albemarle Road to The Plaza.

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The land use recommendations provided below, and illustrated on **Map 7**, are proposed to update and amend the *East District Plan* (1990).

Residential Densities and Housing Types Within the Corridor

Several single family zoned tracts of land are located adjacent to existing apartment communities and/or non-residential uses between Albemarle and Hickory Grove Roads. It is unlikely that new single family development will occur on these parcels because of their position on the corridor and relationship to adjacent development. Consequently, pressure to rezone these tracts to multi-family housing is very likely. Because of the amount of high density multi-family that already exists in this area, a mixed residential option would be more appropriate on these properties to create a better balance of housing types and densities in the area. Specific recommendations are as follows:

- A. Mixed Residential at Idlewild Intersection:** Support the development of mixed housing (up to 8 units per acres) on the northeast quadrant of the Idlewild/Harris Boulevard intersection subject to submittal of a good site plan. (*The East District Plan recommends multi-family for this tract.*)
- B. Mixed Residential Near Hickory Grove Baptist Church:** Support development of mixed residential (up to 8 units per acre) on the tracts located in the triangular-shaped area between Delta Crossing Apartments and Hickory Grove Baptist Church on the west side of the corridor. (*The East District Plan recommends single family for the future of this area.*)

Existing Institutional Uses Along the Corridor

Several churches have been built and/or expanded along the corridor since the *East District Plan* was adopted in 1990. In some locations, a residential future is designated for these church sites on the *East District Plan* future land use map. Because of the current land use, residential development is unlikely ever to occur on these sites. Therefore, it is recommended that the future land use designation on the following properties be changed to institutional to recognize the existing uses.

- C. Hickory Grove Baptist Church:** Parcels located on the Hickory Grove Baptist Church “campus” on the southwest quadrant of the Harris/Hickory Grove intersection (*The East District Plan recommends a single family future for these tracts.*)
- D. Hickory Grove Presbyterian:** The tract of land on which Hickory Grove Presbyterian Church is located across from East Town Market near the Milton Road/Sharon Amity/Harris Blvd. intersection. (*The East District Plan recommends a multi-family future for these tracts.*)

Mixture of Uses at Plaza/Plaza Road Extension Area

Central Piedmont Community College is building a large branch campus just north of the intersection of The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension on the east side of the corridor. The school will be a major draw to the area and can be a catalyst for development around the campus. Considering this potential, the following is recommended:

- E.** Change the future land use to a mixture of housing (up to 12 units per acre), office, institutional and limited commercial and encourage better integration of future development and redevelopment to create a more pedestrian-friendly, cohesive, mixed-use environment. (*The East District Plan recommends a multi-family future for these tracts.*)

Central Piedmont Community College has plans to build a large branch campus just north of the intersection on the east side of the corridor. Several older commercial uses exist on the east side of the corridor at the intersection that have redevelopment potential. A post office was recently built south of the intersection providing yet another public destination along the corridor. Several vacant tracts remain adjacent to the post office that could be developed with a mixture of complementary uses, including mixed residential. Area residents have also advocated for construction of a new regional library in the area to replace the smaller branch at the Hickory Grove intersection. Locating community resources such as a library in this area could reinforce the location as a central community “place”. Through streetscape improvements, including landscaping, lighting and pedestrian connections, the intersection area could be tied together visually and physically and linked to the college campus.

■ Mobility/Connectivity

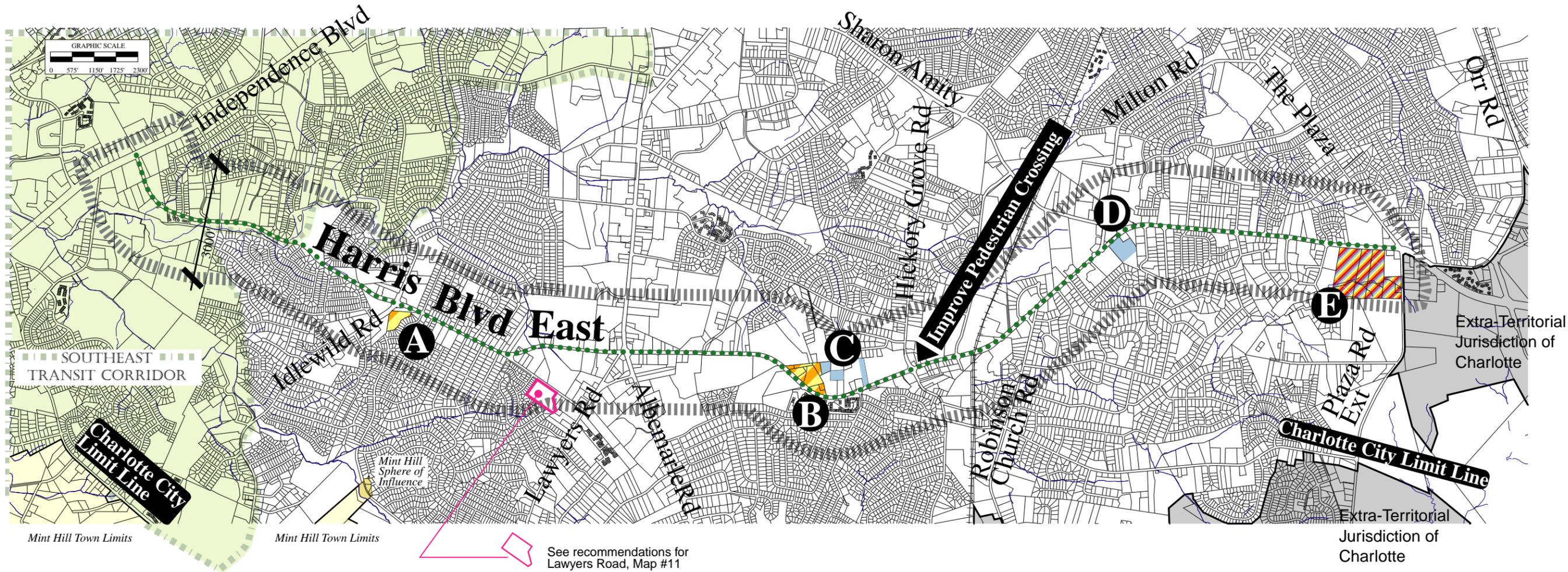
- **Traffic Flow:** Implement plans to construct an interchange at Harris Boulevard and Albemarle Road. Additionally, construct a median on Harris Boulevard from Albemarle Road to Idlewild Road.
- **Safety of Pedestrians:** Improve conditions for pedestrians along the corridor, particularly at the intersection of Hickory Grove Road.
- **Pedestrian Intersection Improvements:** Improving pedestrian safety at the intersection of The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension will be key in linking the various land uses in this area. (See further explanation in land use recommendation “E” above.)
- **Bikeways:** Implement the recommendations in the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* for this area, including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.
- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes.

■ Streetscape Appearance

Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements

will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping in planting strips along the street edges where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the streetscape image.

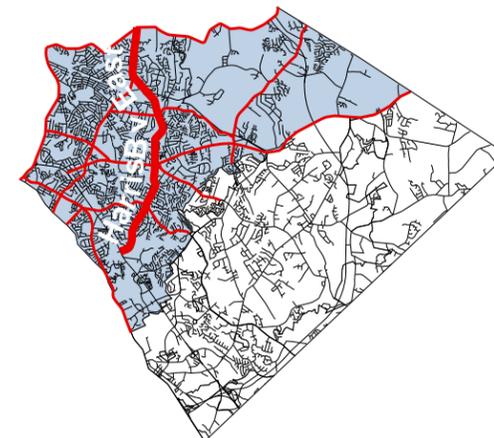


Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		

- A** Change from multi-family to mixed residential at a density of up to eight dwelling units per acre.
- B** Change from single family to mixed residential at a density of up to eight dwelling units per acre.
- C** Change from single family to institutional.

- D** Change from multi-family to institutional.
- E** Change from single family to mixed use development with housing at a density of up to twelve units per acre, office, institutional, and limited commercial. Encourage better integration of future development/redevelopment.



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Harris Boulevard East Concept and Recommendations

THE HARRISBURG ROAD CORRIDOR



The residential character of the corridor should be maintained.



The golf course complements the predominantly residential uses along this corridor.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

The Harrisburg Road Corridor extends from Albemarle Road northeast to the county line. The total distance of the corridor within the *Eastside Strategy Plan* study area is 4.2 miles. Major cross streets along the corridor include Pence Road and Robinson Church Road. Interstate 485 will also have an interchange at Harrisburg Road in the near future.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 5,391 Households: 2,012

(Includes O & D Zones: 75 and 280-284)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 12 and 13 show a breakdown of existing land use and zoning for the corridor.

Table 12: Existing Land Use For the Harrisburg Road Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	1,122	77%
Multi-Family	11	1%
Rural Residential	1	less than 1%
Commercial	80	5%
Institutional	179	12%
Office	2	less than 1%
Warehouse/Distribution	26	2%
Industrial/Manufacturing	7	less than 1%
Vacant	26	2%
Utility	11	1%
TOTAL	1,465	100%

Table 13: Existing Zoning For the Harrisburg Road Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	1,383	88%
Multi-Family	6	less than 1%
Mobile Home	0	-
Commercial	175	11%
Office	13	less than 1%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	0	7%
Institutional	0	0
Unknown	0	0%
TOTAL	1,577	100%

Notes for Tables 12 and 13: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

For the most part, the Harrisburg Road Corridor is comprised of low density single family housing---approximately 77% of the total land area. Many of the lots and houses are “rural” in character; however in recent years new subdivisions have been fast changing the “face” of the corridor. The J. H. Gunn neighborhood, a predominantly African American community located to the north of the J. H. Gunn Elementary School, is one of the oldest neighborhoods on the Eastside. This neighborhood consists of small houses on small lots, atypical of the new larger lot developments being built further north along the corridor.

Commercial development and zoning is limited on Harrisburg Road. It only exists around the intersection of Albemarle Road, on the southwest quadrant of the future I-485 interchange where the Cambridge Commons Shopping Center has recently been built, and on a few small lots where local businesses are currently operating. Other non-residential development includes the Charles T. Myers Golf Course, built on a portion of the Harrisburg Road Landfill, and a veterinarian office, mini-warehouse and a few wholesale and light industrial businesses located just north of the intersection of Albemarle Road on the east side of the corridor. Several churches are also located along the corridor. Compared to the other Eastside corridors, Harrisburg Road has considerable development potential on vacant land or rural lots that could be subdivided.

Transportation

Roads

Of all the Eastside corridors, Harrisburg Road has the lowest traffic volume. In 1998, CDOT estimated that approximately 8,800 cars traveled the two-lane road on an average weekday. This will likely change when the I-485 Interchange is constructed just south of Reedy Creek Road. The need to widen Harrisburg Road to four lanes from the Eastern Circumferential to I-485 has been identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan* but funding is not available.

A planned circumferential roadway will traverse the Eastside and affect many of the 11 corridors. (See **Map 3.**) This roadway, currently referred to as the Eastern Circumferential, is

planned to extend from Independence Boulevard to Plaza Road Extension within the study area. (Note that roadway extends north of the study area to Mallard Creek Church Road.) Harrisburg Road is planned to be realigned at its intersection with this planned circumferential roadway.

Public Transportation

Route #40X, the Albemarle Express, traverses Harrisburg Road for less than a ¼ mile from Albemarle Road to Pence Road where the route terminates. A park and ride lot (P 39) is located near the juncture of Harrisburg Road and Albemarle Road. A county-wide study is currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvements.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Albemarle Express #40X	7,222

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Sidewalks and accommodations for bicyclists do not exist along Harrisburg Road.

Streetscape Appearance

No streetscape amenities have been provided along the corridor; however, because of the somewhat rural character that remains, the corridor provides an attractive drive north of the Charles T. Myers golf course.

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The land use recommendations provided below, and illustrated on **Map 8**, are proposed to update and amend the *East District Plan* (1990).

Preservation of Single Family Character Along the Corridor

The *East District Plan* identified several tracts of land either for multi-family or commercial development along the corridor. Upon further analysis and discussion during the *Eastside Strategy Plan* process, redevelopment of single family tracts for uses other than single family was considered inappropriate for the corridor. In addition, pressure to expand areas already zoned for non-residential use will inevitably increase when I-485 is built. To maintain a residential character, additional non-residential development should not be encouraged.

Therefore, the *East District Plan* should be amended to reflect a single family future on the following properties:

- A. The area north of Misenhower Road extending to the Duke Power right-of-way on the east side of the corridor. (*The East District Plan recommends a multi-family future for these tracts.*)

- B. Tracts immediately south and north of the intersection of Camp Stewart Road on the east side of the corridor, excluding the parcel on which the small convenience store parcel is located. (*The East District Plan recommends a multi-family future for the southern property and commercial for the northern property.*)
- C. **Restriction of Additional Non-residential Development:** Limit non-residential development to properties already zoned for office or commercial on the southwest quadrant of the Harrisburg Road/I-485 interchange south of Reedy Creek Road. (*This is consistent with the I-485 Analysis as well as the adopted East District Plan.*)

■ Revitalization

Redevelopment and revitalization generally refer to the process of restoring economic and social vitality to an area that has declined. Redevelopment typically refers to the physical or built aspects of this restoration, and is more closely tied to land use. Revitalization is a somewhat more comprehensive term in that it may refer to more than just physical improvements. In some cases, redevelopment and revitalization may involve removing existing structures and rebuilding. In other instances, redevelopment and revitalization may incorporate existing structures into the new development.

The J. H. Gunn Community: The J. H. Gunn community is an older area that has survived through the years, despite increasing development pressure in the corridor. It is characterized by low and moderate-income housing, vacant properties, and lack of adequate infrastructure (i.e., sidewalk, curb and gutter). Non-residential uses, including industrial development, surround the neighborhood. Mecklenburg County has identified this neighborhood as a community development target area. The *Eastside Strategy Plan* recommends that the neighborhood be preserved and stabilized and that a problem solving initiative be undertaken to identify and address key neighborhood issues.

The Orchard Park Community: A problem solving initiative has recently been completed for the Orchard Park community as part of the Neighborhood Improvement Program (N.I.P.). Recommendations from that problem solving initiative should be implemented to help stabilize this neighborhood.

■ Mobility/Connectivity

- **Accommodate Increased Traffic Flow:** Accommodate anticipated increases in traffic when the I-485 interchanges are built in this area and development increases, by widening Harrisburg Road to four lanes as identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan*.
- **Eastern Circumferential:** Increase connectivity between Eastside corridors by completing construction of the Eastern Circumferential.
- **Safety of Pedestrians and Bicyclists:** Improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists along the corridor. In particular, construct sidewalks along Harrisburg Road. The provision of sidewalks outside of the Charlotte City Limits should occur as this area is annexed, development occurs or road improvements take place. Accommodations for bicycling should be implemented as recommended in the *Bicycle Transportation Plan*,

1999, including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.

- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes.

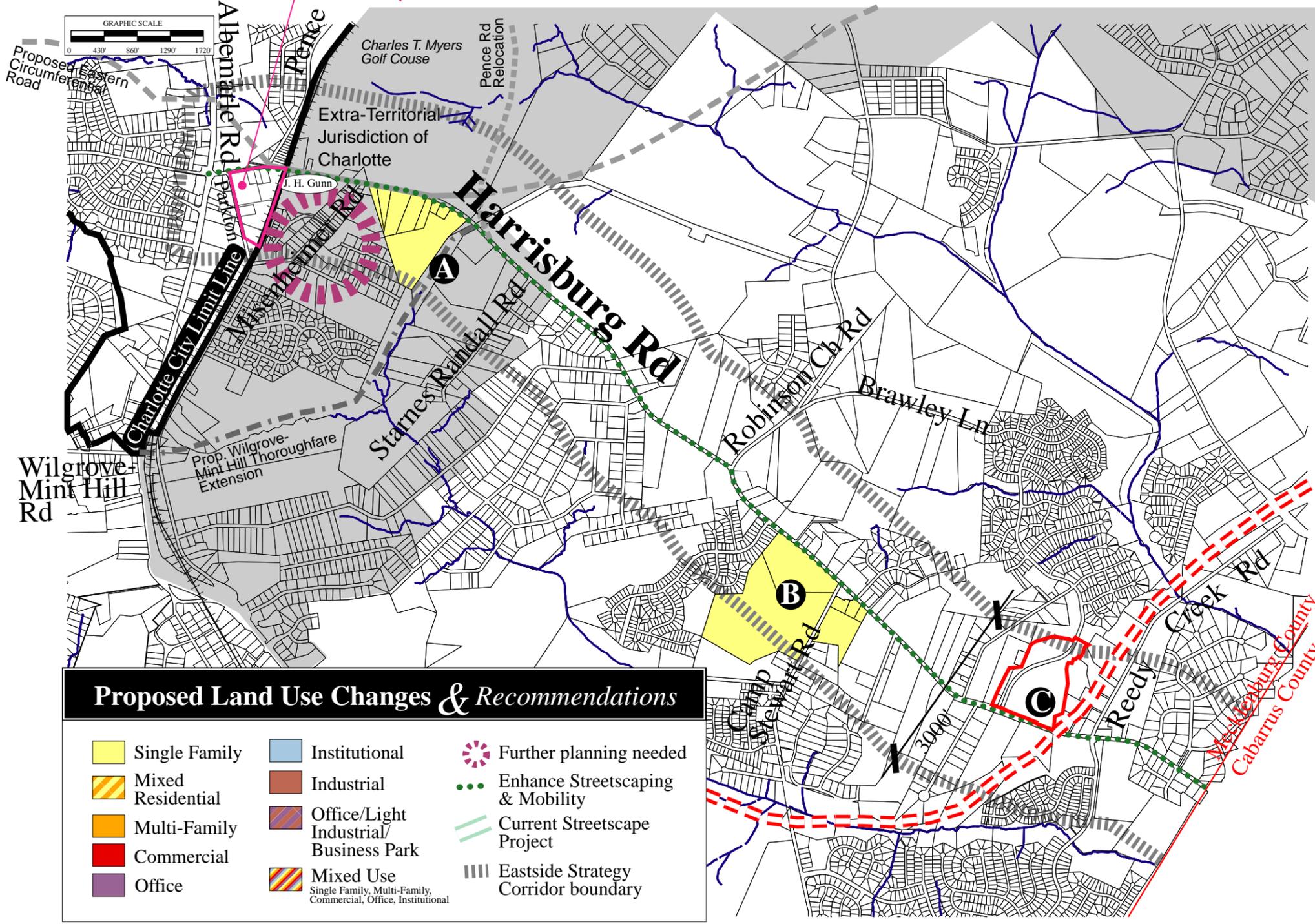
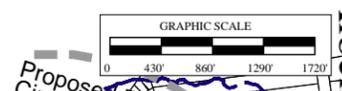
■ Streetscape Appearance

Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** As the corridor becomes more and more developed, it will be important to provide and maintain landscaping in planting strips along the street edges where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor.

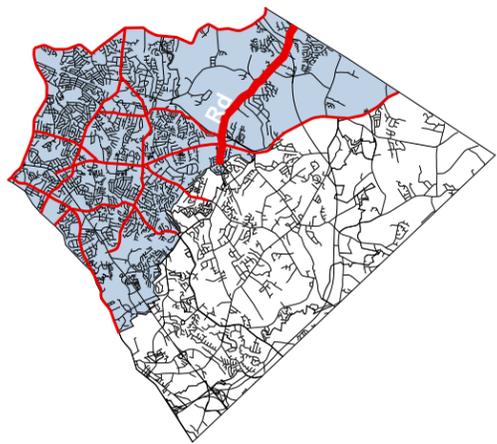
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See recommendations for Albemarle Road, Map #4b



- A** Change from multi-family to single family residential.
- B** Change from multi-family and commercial to single family residential.
- C** No expansion of the non-residential land uses, beyond that currently zoned for non-residential uses (as outlined).

Outer Loop I-485 Under Construction



Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Harrisburg Road Concept and Recommendations

THE HICKORY GROVE/PENCE ROAD CORRIDOR



Streetscape improvements including sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and plantings are needed along the corridor, particularly as it becomes more developed.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

The Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor is an east-west thoroughfare extending from Sharon Amity Road North to Harrisburg Road. Harris Boulevard East bisects the corridor. West of Harris Boulevard, the thoroughfare is named Hickory Grove Road and east of Harris, Pence Road begins. In total, the corridor is 3.9 miles in length.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 17,212 Households: 7,123

(Includes O & D Zones: 54, 55, and 73-75)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 14 and 15 provide a breakdown of existing land use and zoning along the corridor.

Table 14: Existing Land Use For the Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	900	59%
Multi-Family	109	7%
Rural Residential	1	less than 1%
Commercial	108	7%
Institutional	239	16%
Office	8	1%
Warehouse/Distribution	92	6%
Industrial/Manufacturing	33	2%
Vacant	36	2%
Utility	1	less than 1%
TOTAL	1,529	100%

Table 15: Existing Zoning For the Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	1,292	76%
Multi-Family	160	9%
Mobile Home	0	-
Commercial	83	5%
Office	4	less than 1%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	132	8%
Institutional	40	2%
Unknown	0	0%
TOTAL	1,711	100%

Notes for Tables 14 and 15: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

The majority of the land between Sharon Amity Road North and Harris Boulevard East has developed with single family homes. However, apartments and condominiums have been built near the intersection of Sharon Amity Road North and Hickory Grove Road, and a shopping center built in the mid-1980s exists on the northwest corner of Hickory Grove and Harris Boulevard East. Hickory Grove Baptist Church, one of the largest churches in the state, is located on the southwest corner of the same intersection. Scattered vacant tracts of land exist along this section of the corridor.

Single family housing dominates east of the Harris Boulevard East intersection. Small retail businesses---a gas station and drug store---have been built in the eastern quadrants of the Harris Boulevard intersection. Further east along Pence Road, beginning at the intersection of Holly Hill Road, a mixture of apartments, small retail establishments and industrial uses exist.

Transportation

Roads

As shown on Table 16, average weekday traffic volumes ranged from 9,300 to 19,000 along the Hickory Grove/Pence Road corridor. Funding has been approved to widen Hickory Grove Road to four lanes from Shamrock Drive to Highland Avenue. **(See Map 3.)** No other road projects have been identified for the corridor. However, a planned circumferential roadway will traverse the Eastside and affect many of the 11 corridors. This roadway, currently referred to as the Eastern Circumferential, is planned to extend from Independence Boulevard to Plaza Road Extension within the study area. (Note that the roadway extends north of the study area to Mallard Creek Church Road.) In addition, the Thoroughfare Plan indicates that a new road will be constructed north of Pence Road to intersect with the Eastern Circumferential and Harrisburg Road. Pence Road will also be realigned with Albemarle Road.

Table 16: Traffic Volumes For Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor

Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation

Segment of Corridor	1997/98 Traffic Volume
N. Sharon Amity Rd. to Shamrock Drive	9,300
Shamrock Drive to W. T. Harris Blvd.	18,400
W.T. Harris Blvd. to Harrisburg Road	19,000

Public Transportation

Shamrock route #23 serves Hickory Grove Road. Most of Pence Road is not served by public transportation, with the exception of a small section near Harrisburg Road which is served by the Albemarle Road route #40X.

A county-wide study is currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvements.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Shamrock #23	27,103
Albemarle Exp. #40X	7,222

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Sidewalks are generally lacking along most of the corridor, with the exception of areas where new subdivisions have recently been built, mostly east of Harris Boulevard. Pedestrians and bicyclists are vulnerable along the corridor. The intersection of Hickory Grove Road and Harris Boulevard is especially challenging for those on foot or bicycles. The *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* recommends that bike lanes be established along the corridor from Shamrock Drive to Harrisburg Road. Sidewalk improvements are currently planned along Pence Road.

Streetscape Appearance

Little, if any, landscaping exists in the public right-of-way along the corridor. The industrial area on the eastern end of Pence Road is particularly devoid of any landscaping and does not create an attractive entrance to the corridor from the east.

(For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of this Concept Plan document.)

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The land use recommendations provided below, and illustrated on **Map 9**, are proposed to update and amend the *East District Plan* (1990).

Mixed Residential East of Harris Boulevard

Several vacant, multi-family zoned tracts exist behind the commercial strip in the northeast quadrant of the Harris Boulevard/Pence Road intersection. This land provides an opportunity for development of mixed use residential development that is compatible with surrounding single family neighborhoods. Therefore, the *East District Plan* should be amended as follows:

- A. Mixed Residential:** Change the future land use designation for the vacant tracts behind the commercial strip on the northeast quadrant of the Harris Boulevard/Pence Road intersection to mixed housing (up to 8 units per acre.) (*The East District Plan recommends a single family and multi-family future for these tracts.*)

Institutional Uses

In some locations, a residential future is designated for church sites on the *East District Plan* future land use map. Because of the current land use, residential development is unlikely ever to occur on these sites. The *East District Plan* should be amended to show an institutional use on the following properties to recognize the existing and surrounding land uses:

- B.** Tracts on the east side of Market Street on the north side of the corridor, occupied, in part, by Hickory Grove Methodist Church should be shown as institutional. (*The East District Plan recommends a single family future for these tracts.*)

Industrial Uses

- C.** Tracts on the south side of Pence Road immediately east of the Holly Grove Condominiums (Holly Hill Road) should be designated for industrial use. (*The East District Plan recommends a single family future for these tracts.*)

■ Mobility/Connectivity

- **Traffic Flow:** Widen Hickory Grove/Pence Road to four lanes from Shamrock Drive to Highland Avenue as identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan*.

In addition, include the construction of the new roadway north of Pence Road (as identified on the Thoroughfare Plan Map) as a needed roadway project in the update of the *2020 Transportation Plan*.

- **Eastern Circumferential:** Increase connectivity between corridors by completing construction of the Eastern Circumferential.

- **Pedestrian Safety:** Provide for the safe movement of pedestrians at the intersection of Harris Boulevard East and Hickory Grove/Pence Road. In particular, construct sidewalks along the length of the corridor.
- **Bicyclists Safety:** Accommodate bicyclists along the Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor especially by implementing the recommendations provided in the *Bicycle Transportation Plan, 1999*, including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.
- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes.

■ Streetscape Appearance

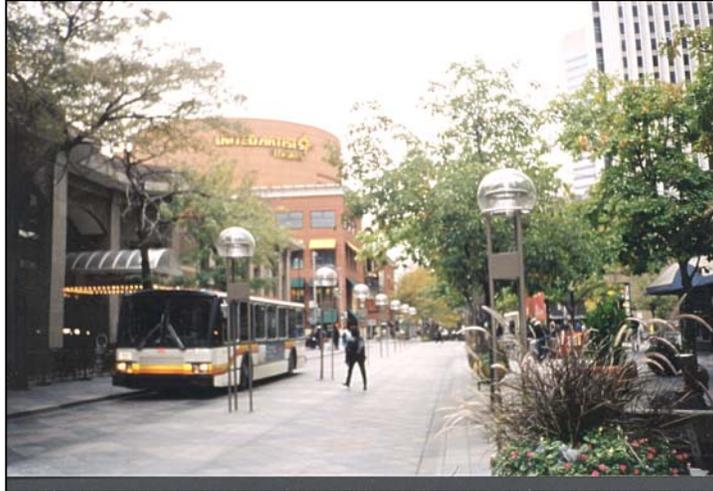
Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping in planting strips along the street edges where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the streetscape image.

(For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of this Concept Plan document.)

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THE IDLEWILD ROAD CORRIDOR



Land use recommendations for this corridor will be provided in conjunction with the Southeast Transit Corridor project.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

The Idlewild Road Corridor begins at the intersection of Monroe Road and extends eastward approximately 4.3 miles to the City limits at the Margaret Wallace Road intersection. Harris Boulevard and Independence Boulevard are the major thoroughfares that cross the corridor.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 25,615 Households: 9,706
 (Includes O & D zones: 63, 64, 68-70, 299, 300, 441, and 442)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 17 and 18 provide a breakdown of existing land use and zoning for the corridor.

Table 17: Existing Land Use For the Idlewild Road Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	826	66%
Multi-Family	117	9%
Rural Residential	0	-
Commercial	86	7%
Institutional	78	6%
Office	72	6%
Warehouse/Distribution	17	1%
Industrial/Manufacturing	0	-
Vacant	55	5%
Utility	1	less than 1%
TOTAL	1,252	100%

Table 18: Existing Zoning For the Idlewild Road Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	1,072	77%
Multi-Family	129	9%
Mobile Home	27	2%
Commercial	127	9%
Office	42	3%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	0	0
Institutional	0	0
Unknown	0	0
TOTAL	1,397	100%

Notes for Tables 17 and 18: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

The majority of the Idlewild Road corridor is developed residentially—approximately 66% of the total land area as shown in Table 17. Most of the multi-family development has occurred closer to Independence Boulevard as have several well-maintained office parks located on the north side of the corridor east and west of Independence. Retail development generally has been limited to the southeast, northwest and southwest quadrants of the Harris Boulevard intersection and at the Margaret Wallace Road intersection. Idlewild and Piney Grove Elementary Schools are within the corridor boundaries, and a number of churches have been built along the corridor. A few vacant, residentially zoned parcels of land exist east of the Harris Boulevard intersection. An excellent development opportunity exists in the southwest quadrant of Idlewild and Margaret Wallace Roads.

Transportation

Roads

According to CDOT statistics, traffic volumes in 1998 ranged from 27,500 to 30,500 vehicles on an average weekday. Table 19 shows a breakdown of the different sections of the corridor.

Table 19: Traffic Volumes For Idlewild Road

Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation

Segment of Corridor	1998 Traffic Volume
Monroe Road to Independence Blvd.	27,500
Independence Blvd. to Harris Blvd. E.	28,900
Harris Blvd. E. to Margaret Wallace Rd.	30,500

Idlewild Road is a four-lane road to just east of Piney Grove Road where it narrows into two lanes. A road project has been funded to widen Idlewild to four lanes from Piney Grove Road to Margaret Wallace Road. Widening of the rest of the thoroughfare from Margaret Wallace Road to the Union County Line has been identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan*, however, the project has not been funded. (See Map 3.)

In addition to the roadway projects identified above, a planned circumferential roadway will traverse the Eastside and affect many of the 11 corridors. This roadway, currently referred to as the Eastern Circumferential, is planned to extend from Independence Boulevard to Plaza Road Extension within the study area. (Note that the roadway extends north of the study area to Mallard Creek Church Road.) A minor thoroughfare, Mission Hills Road, is also shown on the Thoroughfare Plan and would connect Idlewild and Lawyers Roads.

Public Transportation

The Idlewild Express #51X serves the Idlewild Road corridor carrying, on average, 2,800 passengers each month. Two Park-&-Ride facilities are located on the #51X route, P-22 and P-4. Although Idlewild Road extends into the Town of Mint Hill, bus service currently terminates at Wiseman Drive, west of Margaret Wallace Road. A county-wide study is currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvements.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Idlewild Express #51X	2,791

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Sidewalks have been built on both sides of the corridor from Independence Boulevard to just past the intersection of Harris Boulevard East. A few stretches of sidewalk have been built further out along the corridor as part of the development process. The lack of sidewalks further out makes it difficult and unsafe for pedestrians to walk along the busy road. There are no accommodations for bicyclists directly on the corridor; however, the Cambell Creek Greenway which is just south of the corridor provides a recreational bike/pedestrian path that connects with the McAlpine Greenway near Independence Boulevard. The *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* recommends that a wide/widened outside lane be added along Idlewild Road to accommodate bicycle travel. The plan also recommends that facilities be added to all new roads and road improvement projects to accommodate bicyclists.

Streetscape Appearance

Because Idlewild Road is primarily a residential corridor, it has a relatively attractive streetscape. As part of recent intersection improvements, landscaping has been provided at Monroe Road and Harris Boulevard East. New shopping areas are fairly well landscaped. The only area that is in obvious need of improvement is the commercial area near the intersection of Margaret Wallace Road.

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The Idlewild Road corridor is illustrated on **Map 10**. As previously described, Idlewild is primarily a single family residential corridor. Over the last decade, rezoning requests have been filed for the vacant tract on the southwest corner of Idlewild and Margaret Wallace Road as well as on the northeast corner of Idlewild and Harris Boulevard. City Council denied a request for a mixed-use center, including office, retail and multi-family housing for the property on the corner of Idlewild Road and Margaret Wallace Road. They also denied requests for both commercial and multi-family developments on the parcel at Harris Boulevard (**See also Harris Boulevard East Corridor Recommendations.**) No doubt, pressure to rezone these tracts will continue over time.

Because the majority of the Idlewild Road corridor lies within the Southeast Rapid Transit Corridor, no land use recommendations are being proposed in this *Eastside Strategy Plan*. Instead, any necessary land use changes will be proposed either as part of the current Southeast Corridor Major Investment Study (MIS), or will be recommended after its completion.

■ Mobility/Connectivity

- **Traffic Congestion:** Support the widening of Idlewild Road to four lanes as identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan*.
- **Proposed Roads:** Include the completion of construction of Mission Hills Road (a minor thoroughfare identified on the Thoroughfare Plan Map) as a needed roadway project in the update of the *2020 Transportation Plan*. In addition, complete construction of the Eastern Circumferential.
- **Greenway Expansion:** Actively promote expansion of both the Campbell Creek and McAlpine Creek greenways and encourage area citizens to be involved in the greenway development planning process. Campbell Creek crosses the Idlewild Road Corridor west of Harris Boulevard. McAlpine Creek crosses further out, about a quarter of a mile west of the Margaret Wallace intersection. Portions of both creeks have been developed as greenways south of the study area. The Campbell Creek Greenway currently ends at Harris Boulevard. The *Mecklenburg County Greenway Plan* recommends continued development of greenways along both creeks. This more fully developed greenway system will provide tremendous connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists and will truly be a desirable amenity for residents living in the corridor.

Just as important as developing and expanding the greenway system will be ensuring that greenways are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all greenway development plans.

- **Safety of Pedestrians and Bicyclists:** Improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially east of Piney Grove Road. In particular, construct sidewalks along the corridor.

Provision of sidewalks outside of the Charlotte City Limits should occur as this area is annexed, development occurs or road improvements take place.

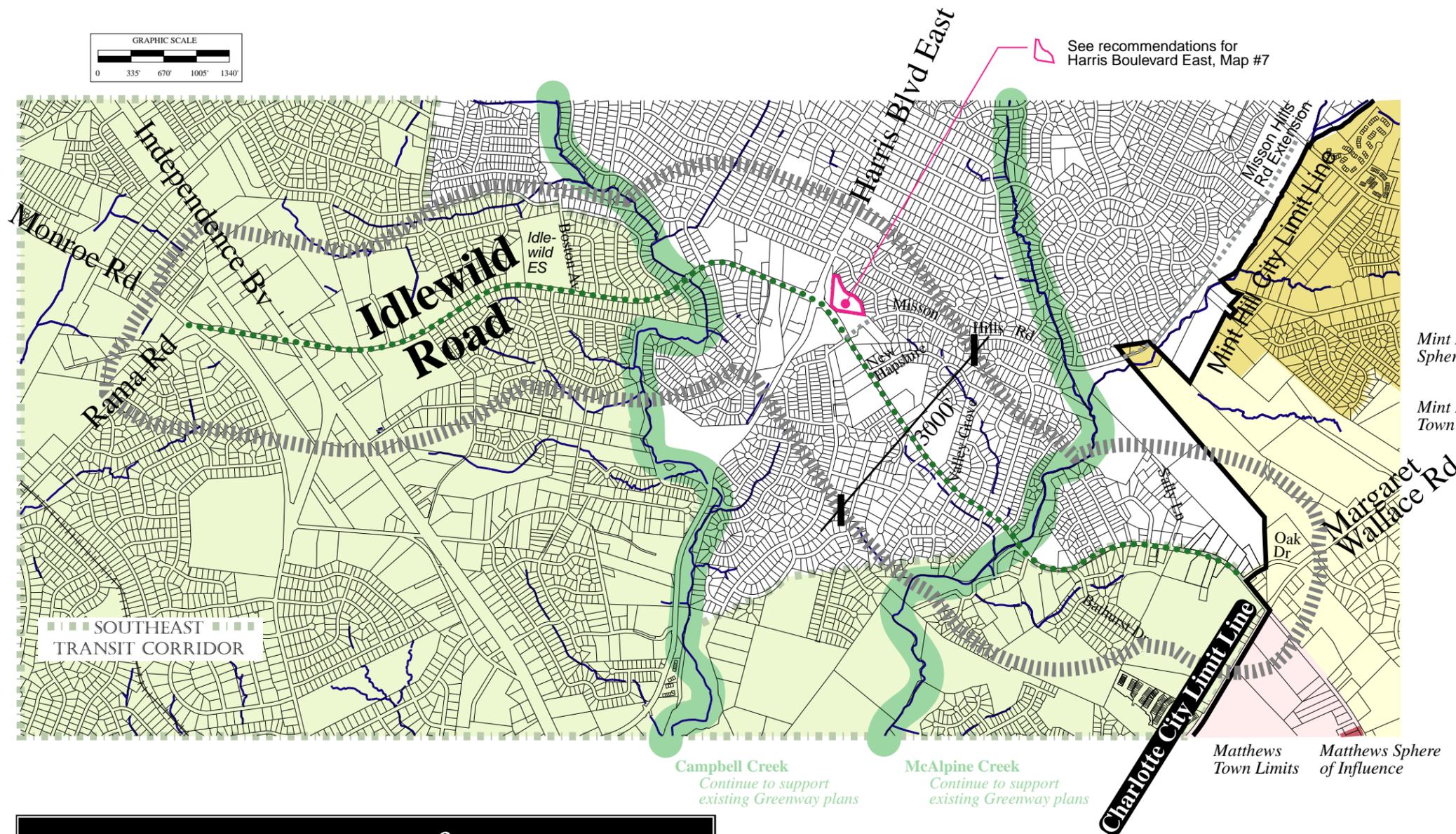
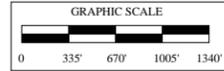
Improvements to facilitate bicycling should be provided as recommended in the *Bicycle Transportation Plan, 1999*, including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.

- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes.

■ Streetscape Appearance

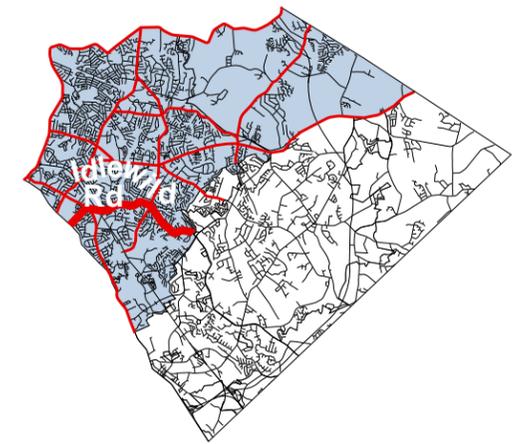
Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping in planting strips along the street edges where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor, particularly at the intersection of Margaret Wallace Road to enhance the streetscape image.



Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Idlewild Road
Concept and
Recommendations

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THE LAWYERS ROAD CORRIDOR



The predominantly residential character of the corridor should be maintained.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

The Lawyers Road Corridor is the shortest corridor included in the *Eastside Strategy Plan*. It is only 1.3 miles in length, extending from Albemarle Road to Charlotte’s city limits (northwest of Margaret Wallace Road). Idlewild Road North is the only major thoroughfare that intersects the road along the way.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 12,361 Households: 4,937
 (Includes O & D Zones: 76, 441 and 442)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 20 and 21 provide a summary of existing land use and zoning along the corridor.

Table 20: Existing Land Use For the Lawyers Road Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	320	55%
Multi-Family	107	18%
Rural Residential	0	-
Commercial	70	12%
Institutional	20	3%
Office	19	3%
Warehouse/Distribution	14	2%
Industrial/Manufacturing	0	-
Vacant	38	7%
Utility	less than 1	less than 1%
TOTAL	588	100%

Table 21: Existing Zoning For the Lawyers Road Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	399	61%
Multi-Family	146	22%
Mobile Home	0	0
Commercial	74	11%
Office	29	5%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	5	1%
Institutional	0	0
Unknown	0	0
TOTAL	653	100%

Notes for Tables 20 and 21: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

As indicated on Table 20, nearly 75% of the Lawyers Road Corridor is developed with residential uses. Older, small shopping centers exist at the northern end of the corridor near the Albemarle Road intersection, and a few offices exist on the south side of the thoroughfare near the intersection of Lawyers Road and Idlewild Road North. Most of the multi-family housing also exists in this area. A number of vacant tracts remain, particularly around the intersection of Idlewild Road North. The majority of this land is either zoned for office or multi-family housing.

Transportation

Roads

Approximately 22,200 vehicles travel Lawyers Road on an average weekday, as estimated by CDOT in 1998. A portion of the thoroughfare, extending from Idlewild Road North to Rolling Oak Lane, has recently been widened. Continued widening of Lawyers Road to NC 51 (Matthews-Mint Hill Road) is identified on the *2020 Transportation Plan*, however, funding has not been allocated for this project. (See Map 3) Improvement of the intersection of Lawyers Road and Albemarle Road will be included in the major intersection improvement at Harris Boulevard East and Albemarle Road.

In addition to the roadway projects identified above, a planned circumferential roadway will traverse the Eastside and affect many of the 11 corridors. This roadway, currently referred to as the Eastern Circumferential, is planned to extend from Independence Boulevard to Plaza Road Extension within the study area. (Note that the roadway extends north of the study area to Mallard Creek Church.) A minor thoroughfare, Mission Hills Road, is also shown on the Thoroughfare Plan and would connect Idlewild and Lawyers Roads.

Public Transportation

The Albemarle Road Express #40X serves approximately 7,200 passengers a month along the corridor. A park and ride lot exists at the corner of Idlewild Road North and Lawyers

Road. This express bus also makes stops along Albemarle Road, and it terminates at NC 51, to the southeast of the study area. A county-wide study is currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvements.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Albemarle Express #40X	7,200

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Only a short length of Lawyers Road has sidewalks on both sides of the street--from Albemarle Road to just beyond Chestnut Lake Drive. The rest of the corridor either has no sidewalks or sidewalks on one side of the street where development has occurred. It is not a good, safe environment for pedestrians. There are no accommodations for bicyclists; however, the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* recommends that wide/widened outside lanes be provided to facilitate bicycles and automobiles “sharing the road.”

Streetscape Appearance

The streetscape along Lawyers Road is typical of many Eastside suburban residential corridors. There are no trees in the public right-of-way.

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The Lawyers Road Corridor is illustrated on **Map 11**. This *Eastside Strategy Plan* continues to support the land use future established in the *East District Plan*. That plan recommends a primarily residential future for this area. Land use along the corridor near the Idlewild Road intersection, however, may be re-evaluated as the interchange design plans are finalized. (See also recommendation for the Harris Boulevard East Corridor).

- A. Mixed Residential:** Change the future land use designation for the vacant tract on Idlewild Road North, just south of the Lawyers Road intersection to mixed residential at a density of up to 8 units per acre. (*The East District Plan recommends multi-family at this location.*)

■ Mobility/Connectivity

- **Traffic Flow:** Improve traffic flow along the corridor by widening Lawyers Road and improving the intersection of Lawyers Road and Albemarle Road as identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan*. (A turn lane has recently been added on Lawyers Road from Albemarle Road to Chestnut Lake Drive.)
- **Proposed Roads:** Include the completion of construction of Mission Hills Road (a minor thoroughfare identified on the Thoroughfare Plan Map) as a needed roadway project in

the update of the *2020 Transportation Plan*.

In addition, complete construction of the Eastern Circumferential.

- **Safety of Pedestrians and Bicyclists:** Improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially east of the intersection of Chestnut Lake Drive. In particular, provide sidewalks along the corridor from Chestnut Lake Drive. Provision of sidewalks outside of the Charlotte City Limits should occur as this area is annexed, development occurs or road improvements take place.

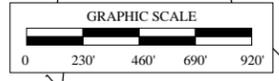
Implement improvements for bicyclists as recommended in the *Bicycle Transportation Plan, 1999*, including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.

- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes.

■ Streetscape Appearance

Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide landscaping in planting strips along the street edges where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the streetscape image.



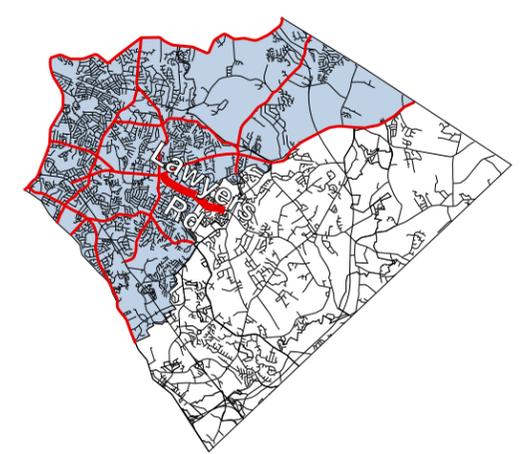
A Change from multi-family to mixed residential at a density of up to eight units per acre.

Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use <small>Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional</small>	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		

McAlpine Creek
Continue to support existing Greenway plans

Mint Hill Town Limits



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Lawyers Road
Proposed Recommendations

THE MONROE ROAD CORRIDOR



Land use recommendations for this corridor will be provided in conjunction with the Southeast Transit Corridor project.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

The portion of Monroe Road included within the *Eastside Strategy Plan* boundary extends 5.7 miles from Eastway Drive to the Charlotte city limits, just east of the Sardis Road North intersection. The boundaries of the Oakhurst Small Area Plan (Adopted by City Council in 1996), which extend from Eastway Drive to Sharon Amity Road, overlap with the *Eastside Strategy Plan* boundaries. Major cross streets along the corridor include Sharon Amity Road, Idlewild/Rama Road, Village Lake Drive and Sardis Road North.

Monroe Road is a major thoroughfare traversing the Southeast Rapid Transit Corridor. Although the *2025 Integrated Transit and Land Use Plan* recommended that future rapid transit follow the Independence Boulevard alignment to Krefeld Drive, current studies are analyzing various alignment options that could significantly impact land use recommendations for the Monroe Road Corridor. Therefore, no land use changes are recommended in this *Eastside Strategy Plan*. Instead, any necessary land use changes will be proposed either as part of the current Major Investment Study, or after its completion.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 19,720 Households: 8,435

(Includes O & D Zones: 61-67, 78, 312 and 313)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 22 and 23 provide information on existing land use and zoning along the corridor.

Table 22: Existing Land Use For the Monroe Road Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	674	34%
Multi-Family	335	17%
Rural Residential	0	0
Commercial	240	12%
Institutional	121	6%
Office	193	10%
Warehouse/Distribution	205	10%
Industrial/Manufacturing	143	7%
Vacant	73	4%
Utility	7	less than 1%
TOTAL	1,991	100%

Table 23: Existing Zoning For the Monroe Road Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	891	40%
Multi-Family	455	21%
Mobile Home	0	-
Commercial	208	9%
Office	124	6%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	494	22%
Institutional	0	0
Unknown	32	1%
TOTAL	2,204	100%

Notes for Tables 22 and 23: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

The Monroe Road Corridor contains a diverse mix of land uses, and the character of the corridor changes from key intersection to key intersection. As indicated in Table 22, residential development is the dominant use along the corridor. Approximately 51% of the corridor is developed residentially. While residential development fronts on or backs up to much of the corridor, the largest concentration of housing is between Idlewild/Rama Road and the McAlpine Greenway. Considerable multi-family housing has been built around the Idlewild Road intersection and around the Monroe Road intersection with Village Lake Drive.

Older strip commercial development exists on the north and south sides of the corridor in the Oakhurst area between Eastway Drive and Sharon Amity Road. Larger scale and more suburban retail centers have been built further east on the corridor between McAlpine Creek and the eastern edge of the corridor boundary, around the intersection of Sardis Road North.

Employment uses can be found in a number of locations along the corridor. Approximately 27% of the total land area is currently devoted to employment uses (excluding retail employment). Offices exist in converted homes and new small-scale office buildings along Monroe Road in the Oakhurst area west of Sharon Amity Road. The largest concentration of employment, however, is located in the section of the corridor extending from near Village Lake Drive to Sardis Road North where a mixture of industrial uses, small-scale offices and business parks exist. The Greylyn Business Park is the largest single development in the area. Most of the vacant land on the corridor is in areas zoned for industrial use on the south side of the corridor from the Village Lake Drive intersection toward Sardis Road North. In total, approximately 73 acres are vacant along the corridor.

Major landmarks along Monroe Road include the Sharon Memorial Gardens, the East Mecklenburg Regional Library and East Mecklenburg High School. In addition, Mason Wallace Park and the McAlpine Greenway are two popular public parks that have direct access off the corridor.

Transportation

Roads

CDOT'S most recent traffic counts (1997) indicate that approximately 30,000 vehicles traverse Monroe Road on an average weekday. Several road improvement projects have been identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan* to improve traffic flow in the corridor, including the following: **(See Map 3.)**

- A major intersection improvement at Monroe Road and Sharon Amity Road.
- The addition of left turn lanes on Monroe Road at Ashmore Drive (both directions).
- The addition of a median on Monroe Road between Sharon Amity and Rama Roads.
- The construction of eastbound and westbound through lanes on Sardis Road North at Monroe Road.
- The addition of a left turn lane on Village Lake Drive at Monroe Road, along with a right turn lane on Monroe Road for westbound traffic.

Public Transportation

The Monroe Road corridor is primarily served by the #27 bus route that carries approximately 34,800 passengers each month. In addition, the McAlway #28 route utilizes Monroe Road briefly to cross Brier Creek, north of Grier Heights. The Matthews Express #65X utilizes Monroe Road, from the Town of Matthews until it turns at Conference Drive and proceeds to Charlotte Center City via Independence Boulevard.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Monroe Road #27	34,783
Matthews Express #65X	1,239
McAlway Road #28	37,771

Sidewalks and Bikeways

For the most part, sidewalks exist on both sides of Monroe Road. However, a stretch of the corridor from Sharon Amity Road to Conference Drive only has sidewalk on one side of the street. Extensive sidewalk improvements are planned in the Oakhurst Neighborhood as part of the current neighborhood improvement project.

The McAlpine Greenway east of Village Lake Drive provides an excellent recreational opportunity for walkers and bicyclists. No on-street provisions for bicyclists are provided along the corridor where a number of key destinations exist (i.e. library, parks, schools). The *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* recommends that wide/widened outside bicycle lanes be provided along Monroe Road as well as on many of the roadways connecting to the corridor.

Streetscape Appearance

Very little, if any, landscaping exists in the public right-of-way along Monroe Road, and the older commercial area west of Sharon Amity Road is particularly lacking in streetscape amenities. An attractively landscaped median at Idlewild/Rama Road is an exception.

Recommendations for the Corridor

■ **Land Use**

No land use changes are recommended in this *Eastside Strategy Plan*. Instead, any necessary land use changes will be proposed either as part of the current Major Investment Study, or after its completion. The Monroe Road corridor is illustrated on **Maps 12a and 12b**.

■ **Streetscape Appearance**

Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Streetscape Image West of Sharon Amity Road:** Significantly improve the visual image of the corridor between the CSX Railroad overpass (in the Central District) to Sharon Amity Road. The area east and west of the Eastway Drive intersection along Monroe Road consists of an assortment of retail, office and industrial uses. Well maintained neighborhoods exist on both sides of the corridor behind the strip of non-residential properties. Visually this length of the corridor is unattractive with its numerous curb cuts, unlandscaped parking lots and proliferation of signs. (*This recommendation is consistent with the Oakhurst Land Use and Zoning Plan, adopted by City Council in 1996.*)
- **McAlpine Creek Greenway/Park Entrance Area:** Improve the appearance in and around the entrance to the McAlpine Greenway Park to create a visual focal point along the corridor and to increase the park's visibility. This is a unique and popular recreational facility frequented by many residents from the Eastside and elsewhere. While the greenway has many access points, the major entrance is off Monroe Road.

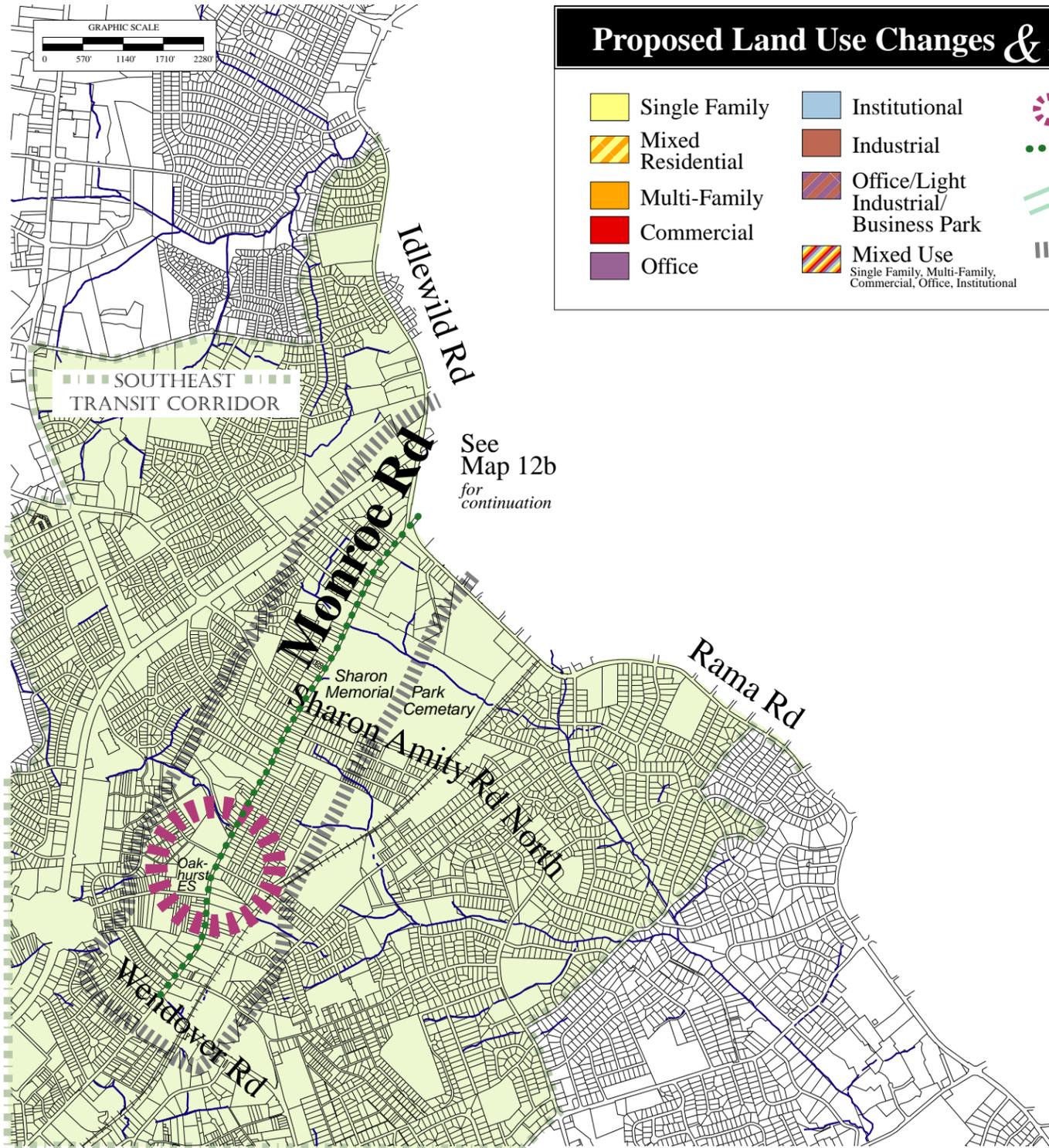
The area surrounding the park's entrance is not particularly inviting, and the park entrance is not highly visible. This could be a major focal point along the corridor.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping in planting strips along the street edges where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the streetscape image.
- **Lighting:** Consider providing decorative lighting as appropriate in key areas along the corridor.

■ **Mobility/Connectivity**

- **Traffic Congestion:** Support improvements identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan* to alleviate traffic congestion along the corridor.
- **Safety of Pedestrians and Bicyclists:** Accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists along the Monroe Road Corridor, particularly connecting people to the schools, greenways, parks and library along the corridor. Implement the recommendations from the *Bicycle Transportation Plan* (1999), including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.
- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit routes.

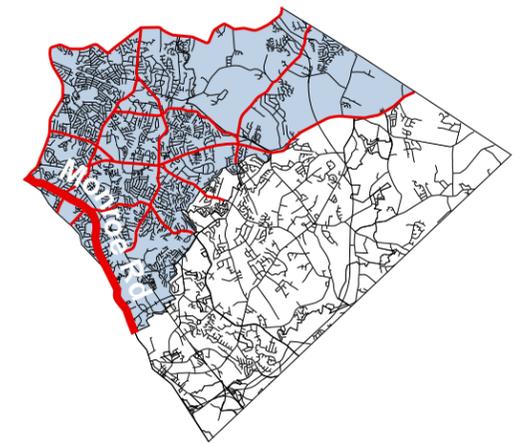
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Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use <small>Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional</small>	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		

Note: See Map 12b for additional recommendations for Monroe Road.



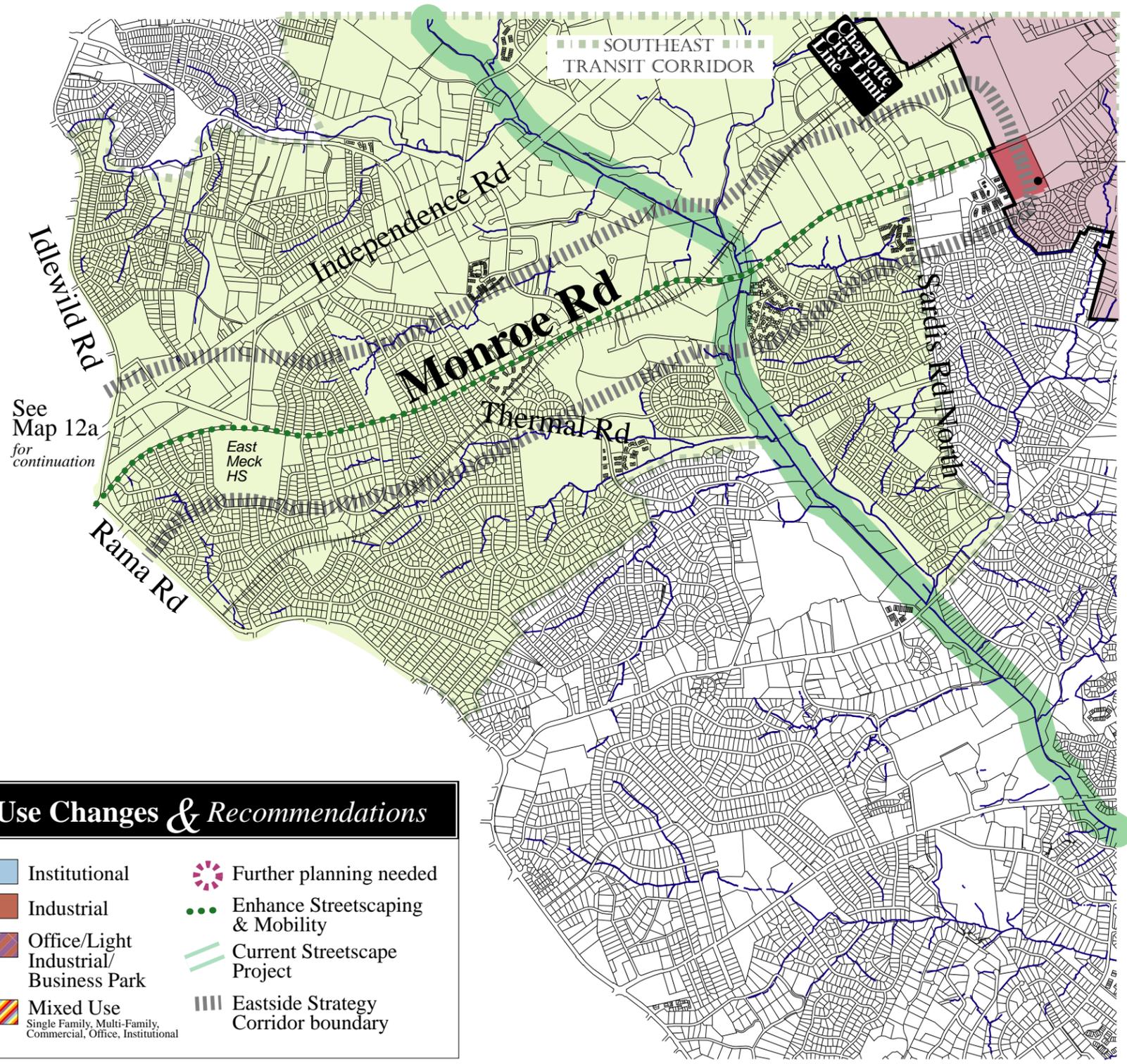
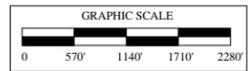
Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Monroe Road
Concept and
Recommendations

Map
12a

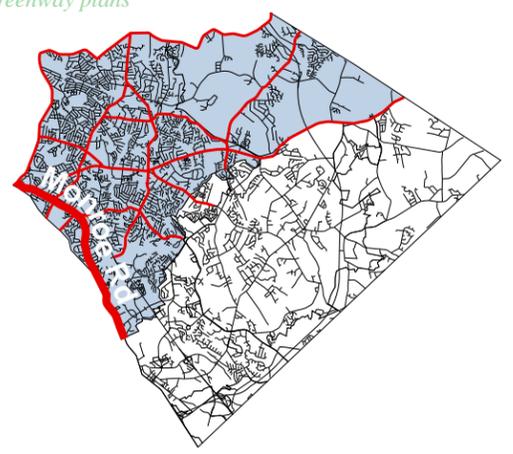


Matthews Town Limits
Matthews Sphere of Influence

See Map 12a for continuation

Note: See Map 12a for additional recommendations for Monroe Road.

McAlpine Creek
Continue to support existing Greenway plans



Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Monroe Road Concept and Recommendations

Map 12b

THE PLAZA/PLAZA ROAD EXTENSION CORRIDOR



Redevelopment of abandoned/underutilized retail centers is critical to the health of this corridor.

Overview of the Corridor

Corridor Boundaries

The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension Corridor is one of the longest corridors on the Eastside. It extends 7.6 miles from Eastway Drive to the west to the county line to the east. The Plaza Road terminates at the intersection of Milton Road where the Plaza Road Extension begins. Thoroughfares intersecting the corridor include Milton Road, Harris Boulevard, Hood Road and the proposed Eastern Circumferential. Interstate 485 is also under construction in this area and will cross the Plaza Road Extension.

1999 Estimated Population and Households In and Around The Corridor

Population: 18,832 Households: 6,767

(Includes O & D Zones: 42-45, 48, 273-275, 278 and 279)

Current Land Use and Zoning

Tables 24 and 25 provide a breakdown of the existing land use and zoning along the corridor.

Table 24: Existing Land Use For The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension Corridor

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Office, 1999

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	2,041	79%
Multi-Family	86	3%
Rural Residential	0	-
Commercial	76	3%
Institutional	220	9%
Office	4	less than 1%
Warehouse/Distribution	89	3%
Industrial/Manufacturing	1	less than 1%
Vacant	58*	2%*
Utility	1	less than 1%
TOTAL	2,576	100%

Table 25: Existing Zoning For The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	2,451	86%
Multi-Family	194	7%
Mobile Home	21	1%
Commercial	124	4%
Office	28	1%
Mixed Use	30	1%
Industrial	9	less than 1%
Institutional	0	0%
Unknown	0	0%
TOTAL	2,857	100%

Notes for Tables 24 and 25: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

*Windshield surveys indicate that this number is considerably low.

As reflected in tables 24 and 25, the majority of the corridor is developed with and zoned for single family housing. Hampshire Hills and Shannon Park, two large, well maintained neighborhoods exist between Eastway Drive and Milton Road. In addition, an old shopping center stands on the northeast corner of Eastway Drive and The Plaza. This center has a number of vacancies and has been in a state of decline for years, generating ongoing concern from area residents. Immediately east of the shopping center, a duplex development has been built, and directly across the street, a new town house development is being built on the former Eastwood Golf Course.

Further east along the corridor, The Plaza/Milton Road intersection area has gone through a transition over the last several decades. This once thriving commercial area began to decline in the 1980s when several anchor tenants relocated to new centers further out. While several new businesses occupied some of the vacant retail space, the area has never fully returned to its former vitality, despite continued efforts by residents to promote the area for redevelopment. A publicly subsidized housing development was also built near the intersection in the late 1980s.

The area between Barrington Drive and Harris Boulevard is primarily developed with single family homes; however, near the intersection of Harris Boulevard and the Plaza Road Extension, an apartment complex has recently been built along with retail businesses---a gas station and drug store on the western corners and the older Plaza Park Center and convenience store on the eastern corners.

The character of the corridor changes considerably east of the commercially developed intersection at Harris Boulevard. Much of the land has a rural character with a number of homes on large lots, several older farms and a mobile home park. Opportunities for developing new housing exist on many of these lots and/or the numerous vacant tracts along the corridor. Reedy Creek Nature Preserve comprises much of the land on the north side of the road. In addition, zoning for a small neighborhood shopping center has been approved for the James Road/Plaza Road Extension intersection, but the property remains undeveloped. Further east at the Hood Road/Plaza Road Extension intersection, zoning for a

neighborhood shopping center was approved in the mid-1990s. This site also remains vacant.

■ Transportation

Roads

As shown on Table 26, average weekday traffic volumes recorded in 1998 were highest between Milton Road and Eastway Drive. From Milton Drive to the city limits, volumes drop off considerably. No road improvements have been identified for the corridor. However, a planned circumferential roadway will traverse the Eastside and affect many of the 11 corridors. (**See Map 3**) This roadway, currently referred to as the Eastern Circumferential, is planned to extend from Independence Boulevard to Plaza Road Extension within the study area. (Note that the roadway extends north of the study area to Mallard Creek Church Road.) In addition, the Thoroughfare Plan indicates the need to realign Plaza Road Extension at the Eastern Circumferential.

Table 26: Traffic Volumes For The Plaza/Plaza Road Extension

Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation

Segment of Corridor	1998 Traffic Volume
Eastway Drive to Covecreek Drive	18,500
Covecreek Drive to Milton Road	19,100
Milton Road to Barrington Drive	1,200
Barrington Drive to Plott Road	7,500

Public Transportation

The Plaza Road #3 bus route provides service to The Plaza in the study area. The route includes a Park-&-Ride at the Plaza United Methodist Church, 5600 The Plaza. The route's maximum extent reaches to Quite Cove Court, which is located approximately ¼ mile west of Harris Boulevard. Plaza Road Extension is not served by any public transportation at this time, however, a county-wide study is currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvement.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
Plaza Road #3	26,043
Country Club #4	33,487

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Sidewalks exist on both sides of the road between Eastway Drive and Milton Road, and either on both sides or one side between Milton Road and Harris Boulevard. No sidewalks exist east of Harris Boulevard. However, sidewalks will be constructed from Harris Boulevard to Northridge Middle School as part of the Plaza Road Streetscape Project. There are no accommodations for

bicyclists along the corridor, but the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* recommends that Milton Road, Barrington Drive and Tipperary Place become signed connections as part of the overall bikeways system being developed.

■ Streetscape Appearance

Little, if any, landscaping exists in the public right-of-way along the corridor. The lack of landscaping is most noticeable at the commercial intersections.

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The land use recommendations provided below, and illustrated on **Maps 13a and 13b**, are proposed to update and amend the *East District Plan* (1990) and the *Northeast District Plan* (1996).

- A. Church/School Sites:** Update the district plans to show an institutional use for the existing churches and schools on the corridor at the following locations:
- Tract on south side of corridor just east of **Karenstone Drive**. (*The East District Plan recommends a single family future.*)
 - Tract on the south side of the corridor just east of Windrift Road and **west of Hood Road**. (*The East District Plan recommends a single family future.*)
 - Tract on the north side of the corridor just **east of Hood Road**. (*The Northeast District Plan recommends a single family future.*)
 - Tract on the north side of the corridor just east of **Reedy Creek School Road**. (*The Northeast District Plan recommends a single family future.*)
 - Tract on the north side of the corridor just west of the **I-485 Outer Loop**. (*The Northeast District Plan recommends a single family future.*)
- B. Commercial Centers:** The *East District Plan* should show a neighborhood (retail) center in the southwest quadrant of the Hood Road/Plaza Road intersection consistent with current zoning, and remove the proposed center at the intersection of the future Eastern Circumferential and Plaza Road Extension. (*This is consistent with changes made in the Northeast District Plan and the I-485 Interchange Analysis.*)
- C. Single Family at Hood Road:** Amend the *East District Plan* to reflect a single family future for the southeast quadrant of Hood Road and Plaza Road Extension. Commercial development should be contained in the neighborhood retail center proposed as the future land use for the southwest quadrant. (*The Northeast District Plan recommends commercial at this location.*)

■ Revitalization/Redevelopment

Redevelopment and revitalization generally refer to the process of restoring economic and social vitality to an area that has declined. Redevelopment typically refers to the physical or built aspects of this restoration, and is more closely tied to land use. Revitalization is a somewhat more comprehensive term in that it may refer to more than just physical improvements. In some cases, redevelopment and revitalization may involve removing existing structures and rebuilding. In other instances, redevelopment and revitalization may incorporate existing structures into the new development.

Eastway Drive/The Plaza Intersection Area: Encourage redevelopment of the Eastway Plaza Shopping Center in the northeast quadrant of the Eastway/Plaza Road intersection as a new, well landscaped mixed use development consisting of offices and new commercial space. (*The Northeast District Plan recommends a commercial future for the entire tract. Note that this area is within the Northeast Transit Corridor and the implementation of this recommendation is contingent upon the outcome of the major investment study.*)

Shannon Park/Hampshire Hills Area: Encourage redevelopment of the Milton Road/Plaza Road intersection area as a well-integrated, compact, pedestrian oriented “town center” that consists of a mixture of office and retail uses. As part of the redevelopment efforts, streetscape improvements should be provided including landscaping, crosswalks, pedestrian scale lighting and decorative signage that marks the area as a unique “place”.

■ Mobility/Connectivity

- **Eastern Circumferential:** Increase connectivity between corridors by completing construction of the Eastern Circumferential.
- **Traffic Flow:** Realign Plaza Road Extension at the Eastern Circumferential.
- **Greenway:** Encourage expansion of the Reedy Creek Greenway south of Reedy Creek Nature Preserve to provide connectivity between the park and neighborhoods south of it.
- **Safety of Pedestrians and Bicyclists:** Improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists along the corridor. In particular, construct sidewalks along the corridor east of Harris Boulevard to the Cabarrus County line. Provision of sidewalks outside of the Charlotte City Limits should occur as this area is annexed, development occurs or road improvements take place. If Plaza Road Extension is realigned at the Eastern Circumferential, sidewalks should be included as part of the roadway project.

Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department should consider the feasibility of developing a bicycle and pedestrian access point(s) to Reedy Creek Nature Preserve from Plaza Road. The current streetscape project on Plaza Road includes sidewalks and bicycle lanes from Hunters Crossing to Plott Road. Once these plans are implemented, Plaza Road will provide a much safer and more pleasant entrance to the nature preserve for bicyclists and pedestrians than Rocky River Road (current nature preserve entrance). Any plans for such a connection must address the fact that per the *Nature Preserve Master Plan*, bicycling is not permitted on nature trails within the preserve. Thus, it may only be feasible to provide a pedestrian connection. If a bikeway connection is feasible,

it should not be designed to encourage bicycle use of the trail system, rather it should be designed to facilitate non-motorized access to the nature preserve.

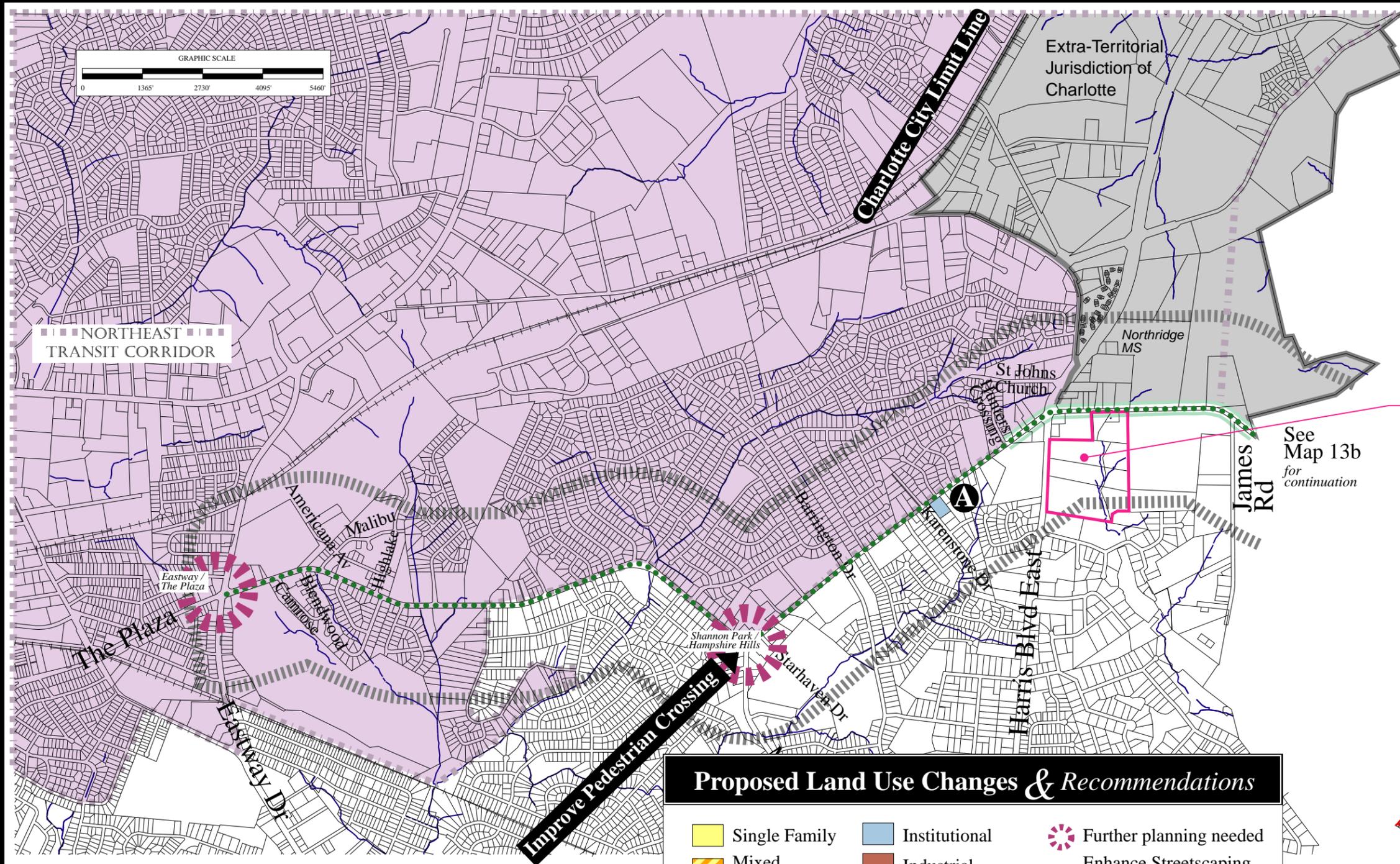
- Implement improvements for bicyclists as recommended in the *Bicycle Transportation Plan, 1999*, including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.
- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit corridors.

■ Streetscape Appearance

Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping in planting strips along the street edges where feasible and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the corridor image.

(For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of this Concept Plan document.)



A Change from single family to institutional.

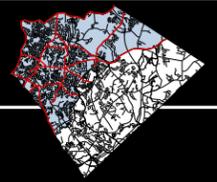
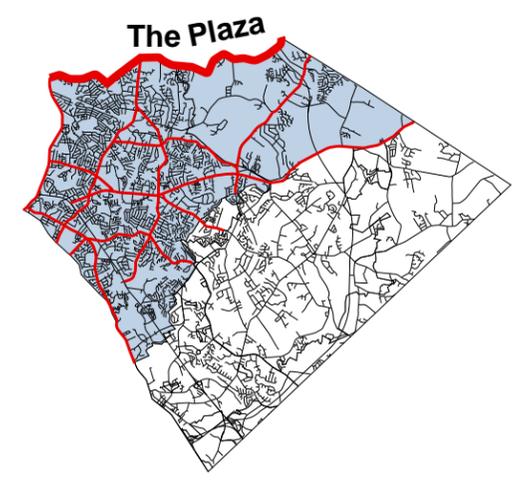
See recommendations for Harris Boulevard East, Map #7

See Map 13b for continuation

Note: See Map 13b for additional recommendations for The Plaza.

Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Single Family | Institutional | Further planning needed |
| Mixed Residential | Industrial | Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility |
| Multi-Family | Office/Light Industrial/Business Park | Current Streetscape Project |
| Commercial | Mixed Use
Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional | Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary |
| Office | | |



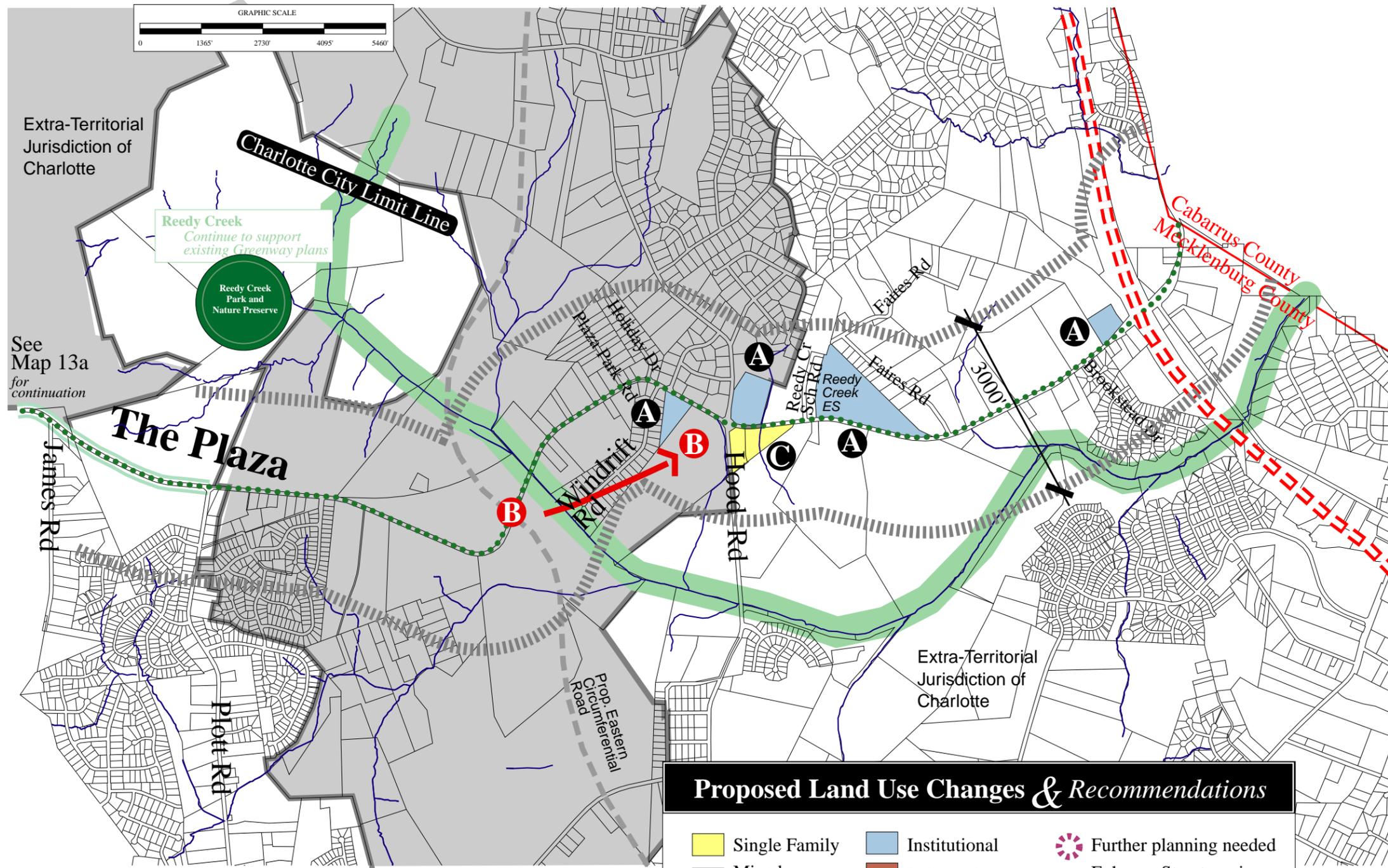
Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



The Plaza
Concept &
Recommendations

Map
13a

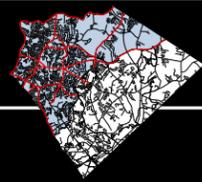
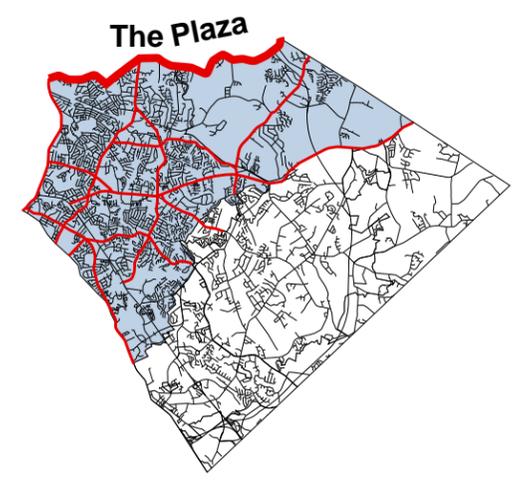


- A** Change from single family to institutional.
- B** Relocate designation for future neighborhood (Retail) Center from Eastern Circumferential Road to southwest quadrant of The Plaza and Hood Roads.
- C** Change from commercial to single family residential.

Note: See Map 13a for additional recommendations for The Plaza.

Proposed Land Use Changes & Recommendations

Single Family	Institutional	Further planning needed
Mixed Residential	Industrial	Enhance Streetscaping & Mobility
Multi-Family	Office/Light Industrial/Business Park	Current Streetscape Project
Commercial	Mixed Use Single Family, Multi-Family, Commercial, Office, Institutional	Eastside Strategy Corridor boundary
Office		



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



The Plaza
Concept & Recommendations

Map
13b

Table 28: Existing Zoning For the Sharon Amity Road North Corridor

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1999

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	854	51%
Multi-Family	396	24%
Mobile Home	0	-
Commercial	211	13%
Office	78	5%
Mixed Use	0	0
Industrial	122	7%
Institutional	0	0
Unknown	0	0%
TOTAL	1,661	100%

Notes for Tables 27 and 28: Numbers are rounded off; streets and rights-of-way are included in zoning acreage, but not in land use acreage; land within town jurisdictions is included in land use figures, but not always in zoning figures; unknown indicates the land is not within Mecklenburg County's jurisdiction.

The Sharon Amity Road North Corridor is primarily residential in character. As indicated in Table 27, approximately 64% of the total land area is developed with single family or multi-family housing. Commercial development, which comprises only 10% of the corridor's total acreage is generally located at key intersections. Commercial development can be found at the thoroughfare's intersection with Independence Boulevard, Albemarle Road, Central Avenue (where Eastland Mall is located), Kimberly Glenn Drive and Milton Road/Harris Boulevard. Eastland Mall and East Towne Market, located at the Milton Road intersection are the largest retail concentrations along the corridor. Very little office development has occurred along the corridor. The largest employment concentration is on the northern end of the corridor north of Kimberly Glenn Drive extending to Milton Road. This area is comprised of a mixture of industrial uses. Approximately 89 acres are vacant along the corridor, primarily north of Shamrock Drive.

Transportation

Roads

Annual average weekday traffic volumes for Sharon Amity Road North indicate that in 1998, traffic counts ranged from around 28,000 to 45,000 vehicles per day. The following shows a breakdown of traffic volumes for the different sections of the corridor.

Table 29: Traffic Volumes For Sharon Amity Road North

Source: Charlotte Department of Transportation

Segment of Corridor	1998 Traffic Volume
Albemarle Road to Central Avenue	37,800
Central Avenue to Shamrock Drive.	44,500
Shamrock Drive to W.T. Harris Blvd.	27,900

The only road improvements planned for the corridor are a major improvement to the intersection of Sharon Amity and Monroe Road and the construction of an interchange with Independence Boulevard as part of the US 74 widening project. (See Map 3.)

Public Transportation

The UNCC/South Park bus route #29, traverses Sharon Amity Road on its cross-town route between the UNCC and SouthPark Mall. The Central Avenue route # 9W also covers a small portion of Sharon Amity from Sudbury Road to Central Avenue. There are three Park-and-Ride locations along the UNCC route #29. A county-wide study is currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvements.

<u>Bus Route</u>	<u>1999 Average Monthly Ridership</u>
UNCC/South Park #29	6,389
Central Avenue # 9W	98,331

Sidewalks and Bikeways

Sidewalks exist on both sides of the thoroughfare, except on the south end of the corridor where Sharon Memorial Gardens is located. Despite the sidewalks, however, it is difficult for pedestrians to cross at busy intersections such as Independence Boulevard, Central Avenue or Milton Road. There are no accommodations for bicyclists.

Streetscape Appearance

Because residential development dominates along Sharon Amity Road North, the corridor is fairly attractive. The commercial and industrial areas, however, lack landscaping and other streetscape amenities.

Strategy Plan Recommendations

■ Land Use

The land use recommendations provided below, and illustrated on **Map 14**, are proposed to update and amend the *East District Plan* (1990).

Multi-Family Residential

Indicate a multi-family future on the proposed land use map for the following areas:

- A. Hickory Grove Road/Shamrock Drive Intersection Area:** Maintain the recommendation from the *East District Plan* that calls for multi-family residential development on the east side of the corridor in the triangular area formed by the intersection of Hickory Grove Road, Shamrock Drive and Sharon Amity Road North. The area is already zoned for multi-family (R-17MF) and several lots have developed with multi-family housing. A number of lots remain vacant in this area. Multi-family development at a density of up to 17 units per acre is recommended. (*The East District Plan recommends a multi-family future for this triangular area.*)

- B. North of Eastland Mall:** The tract immediately north of Eastland Mall on the east side of the corridor is currently developed with multi-family and should be shown as multi-family at a density of up to 12 units per acre on the future land use map. *(The East District Plan recommends single family for this area.)*
- C. Near Verndale Road:** The property on the east side of the corridor across from Abbeydale Drive, just west of Verndale Road is currently developed with multi-family and should be shown as multi-family at a density of up to 12 units per acre on the future land use map. *(The East District Plan recommends single family for this area.)*
- D. At Hickory Grove Road:** The property on the west side of the corridor across from the intersection of Hickory Grove Road and adjacent to the First United Pentecostal Church should be shown as multi-family at a density of up to 17 units per acre. *(The East District Plan recommends single family for this area.)*

Industrial Development in Milton Road Area

The industrial area located north of Kimberly Glen Drive and south of Milton Road is generally developed with light industrial and/or business park uses. Several vacant tracts remain in this area. Heavy industrial development is not compatible with the overall residential development character of the surrounding area. Therefore, the following is recommended to encourage more compatible light industry or business uses:

- E.** Change the proposed land use designation for the industrial area south of Milton Road and north of Kimberly Glen Drive to light industrial/business park. *(The East District Plan recommends industrial use for this area.)*

■ **Revitalization/Redevelopment Opportunity**

“Town Center” Environment in the Eastland Mall Area

See recommendations identified for the Central Avenue Corridor.

■ **Mobility/Connectivity**

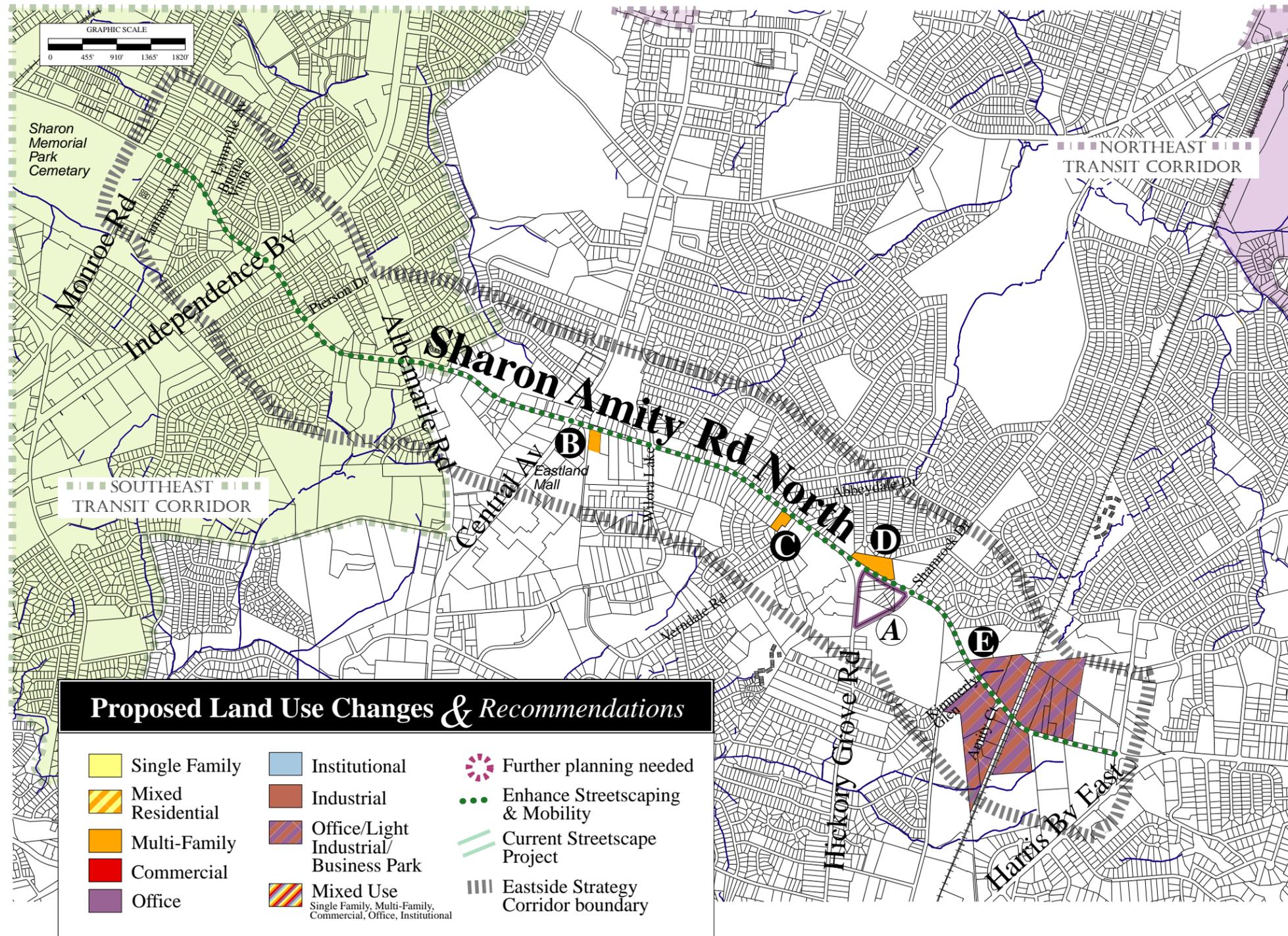
- **Traffic Flow:** Complete the intersection projects at Monroe Road and at US 74 as identified in the *2020 Transportation Plan*.
- **Safety of Pedestrians and Bicyclists:** Improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially in the Eastland Mall area. In particular, implement the recommendations provided in the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan* adopted by City Council in 1999; including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so. Also, provide enhanced crosswalks at key intersections; and fill in the existing sidewalk gap near Sharon Memorial Gardens.
- **Transit:** Improve transit service along the corridor and link to planned rapid transit corridors.

■ Streetscape Appearance

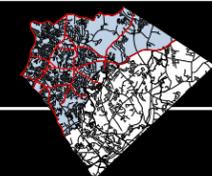
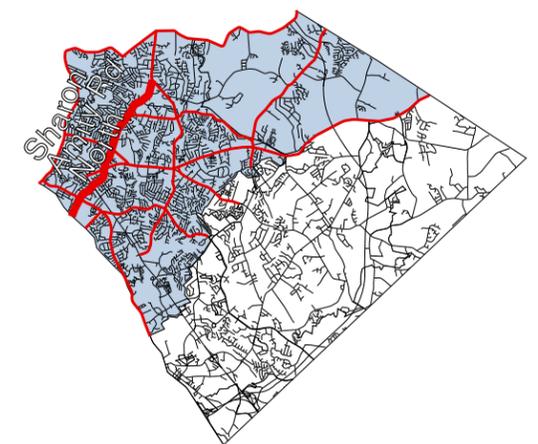
Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

- **Landscaping:** Provide and maintain landscaping where feasible in planting strips along the street edges, in medians, and at key intersections along the corridor to enhance the streetscape image.

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- A** Keep as multi-family (at a density of up to 17 units per acre.)
Study Group recommended office.
- B** Change from single family to multi-family.
- C** Change from single family to multi-family.
- D** Change from single family to multi-family.
- E** Change from industrial to light industrial/business park.



Eastside Strategy Plan

Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, February 2001



Sharon Amity Road North
Concept and
Recommendations

Design Guidelines

Although the Eastside is very diverse, there are some common design problems throughout that threaten the area's vitality. Strip centers with large parking lots, cul-de-sac subdivisions with only a few entrances, and insufficient sidewalks are some of the factors that have contributed to the "pedestrian unfriendly" environment prevalent on the Eastside. The design of new development and redevelopment along the 11 Eastside corridors is, therefore, a critical concern in ensuring long-term viability. Careful attention should be given to vehicular access, open space, pedestrian access, and other aspects of urban form. The following guidelines should be applied to development within the study area. Compliance with the guidelines will occur primarily through the rezoning process, with Planning Commission staff working with rezoning petitioners to develop plans consistent with the guidelines. For properties that do not require a rezoning, compliance with the guidelines, while strongly encouraged, is voluntary. Compliance with the guidelines regarding intersections/pedestrian crossings and streetscape improvements should also occur during any road improvement or road construction projects.

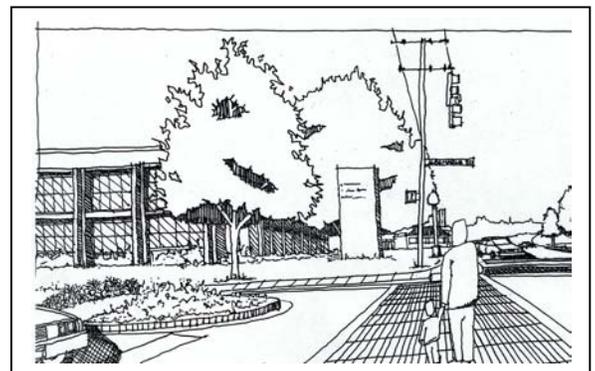
■ Intersections and Pedestrian Crossings

Within the 11 Eastside corridors most major intersections are in need of improvements to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety. Pedestrians and cyclists should be afforded a higher level of attention. Beyond the intersections, future roadway improvements and new street networks should facilitate bicycle and pedestrian circulation as well as promote vehicular connectivity to existing roadways.

- **Crosswalks:** At a minimum, all signalized crosswalks should be clearly identified with standard pavement markings. Whenever possible crosswalks should be constructed using a material other than asphalt, or at a minimum, dyed asphalt. All crosswalks should be of adequate width (no less than 6 feet). At key intersections, the intent is to create a texture change in the pavement to alert drivers they are in a pedestrian zone, while at the same time enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the area and creating a sense of place.



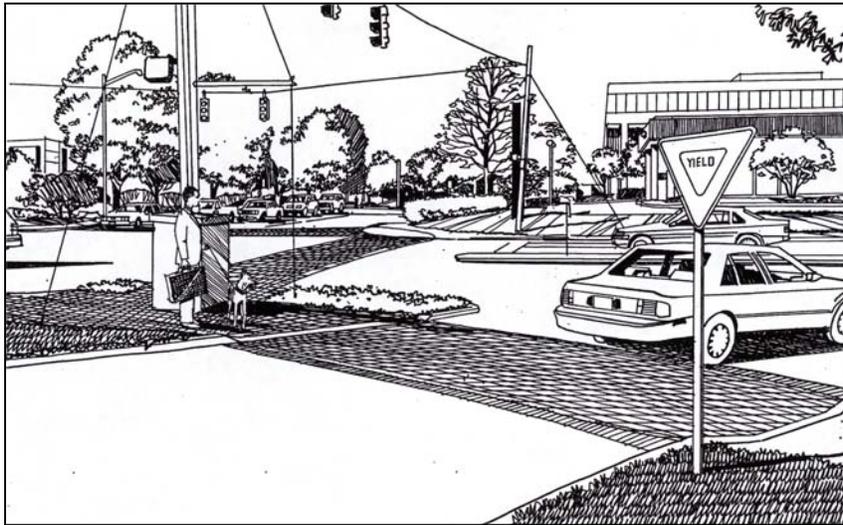
An example of a typical Eastside intersection without pedestrian improvements.



An "Enhanced" pedestrian crossing would be safer and more attractive.

- **Pedestrian Signals:** All major intersections within the 11 corridors of the Eastside that have traffic signals should provide pedestrian activated crossing signals.

- **Lighting:** Each of the 11 corridors should have adequate automobile and pedestrian lighting around the intersections and along the roadways. Lighting should clearly illuminate both the vehicular and pedestrian rights-of-way.
- **Refuge Islands:** It is important to provide pedestrian refuge areas when crossing multi-lane roadways becomes difficult. These refuge islands should be incorporated into intersections where pedestrians have to cross six or more lanes of traffic. Refuge islands may also be needed when there are fewer than six lanes of traffic and should be considered in the design of all multi-lane roadways. These islands should be visually enhancing and handicapped accessible.



Pedestrian “refuge” areas should be provided at key locations on multi-lane roads.

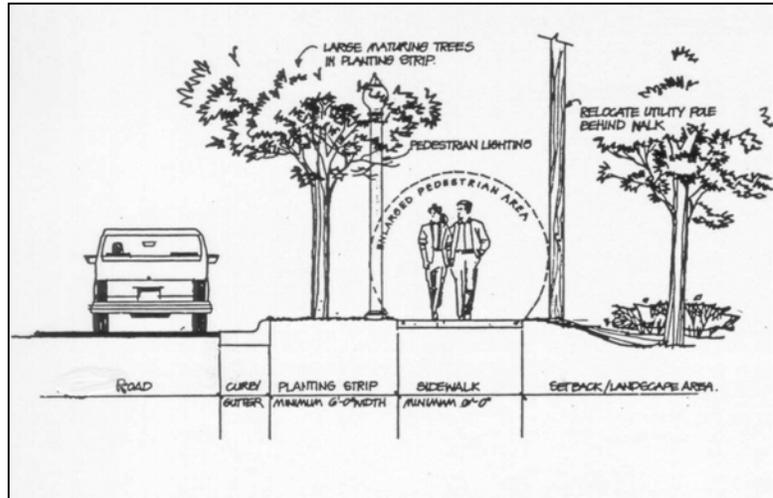
- **Neighborhood Character:** Preserving the character of the existing neighborhoods should be of paramount concern in the design of intersection improvements. Roadway cross sections should be compatible with the overall scale and character of the adjacent community. Intersection designs should address pedestrian safety and convenience. In many cases, this will mean keeping road widening(s) to a minimum, particularly in the more urban areas of the Eastside.

■ Streetscape Improvements

Numerous areas within the Eastside are in need of major streetscape improvements. The 11 main corridors should take priority over other Eastside roadways receiving improvements. However, each corridor is unique and requires different levels of streetscape improvements. All of the 11 corridors should incorporate or improve upon the following areas: planting strip, street trees, lighting and sidewalks/pathways.

- **Planting Strips:** Planting strips should line the 11 major corridors. In order to establish a pedestrian zone separate from the street, the planting strips should be a minimum of six feet wherever feasible. However the corridors should be investigated individually; some roadways may accommodate eight foot planting strips, while right-of-way constraints may

limit the size of planting strips in other corridors to less than six feet. Even in constrained situations, however, it is important to create a “buffer zone” between the sidewalk and roadway if at all possible. Planting strips create a softer edge along the streets and allow for street trees between the roadway and the pedestrian. Street and pedestrian lighting should also be installed in the planting strips.



The recommended cross section provides room for a planting strip and ample sidewalk. Bike lanes should also be provided.

- **Street Trees:** Since the characteristics of each corridor are different, a street tree plan should be developed for the 11 corridors in conjunction with any plans for roadway improvements. Wherever feasible, some type of street trees should be planted along the corridors. The trees will work to further separate the pedestrian from vehicular traffic and create a more inviting pedestrian environment and streetscape appearance.
- **Lighting:** Pedestrian scale lighting should be provided along these corridors and other specified areas to illuminate sidewalks and ensure pedestrian safety. Lighting for pedestrians should be at a lower level (around 12 feet) than standard street lighting. Pedestrian lighting will increase safety and the perception of safety. In some cases the pedestrian lighting can be decorative, particularly at key locations, to further enhance the area.
- **Sidewalks and Pathways:** All sidewalks should be at least five feet wide in order to accommodate all types of sidewalk users. Besides insuring that the 11 corridors have adequate sidewalks along both sides of the street, any other roadways that have insufficient sidewalks should take top priority for improvements. The sidewalks and pathways should create a network throughout various areas of the Eastside to connect residential, commercial, and retail facilities. Particular attention should be given to creating a strong connection from Eastland Mall into surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Street Amenities:** New development should incorporate street amenities to further promote pedestrian activity along the streets. All new buildings should incorporate some unique feature at street level. These features could include artwork, fountains, benches, and landscaping.

■ Site Characteristics

The Eastside will continue to develop and redevelop; therefore careful attention should be given to the design standards for changes in the area. Additional strip malls with large parking lots, and entrances that do not address the street, will not likely bring vitality back to the Eastside. All

new development and redevelopment should reflect a balance and sensitivity to pedestrian and vehicular traffic while fully integrating existing historic structures and natural features.

- **Building Orientation:** In almost all cases non-residential buildings and urban residential buildings should be placed along the street with their front doors facing the street and sidewalk. Buildings should be designed to create interesting interactive environments at the street level. Windows and other architectural elements (i.e., awnings, cornices, porches) should have a large influence in the design of buildings at the street level. Provision of such additional elements will work to create a more inviting and animated pedestrian environment.
- **Building Height:** Appropriate building heights should be determined in relation to the surrounding environment. Buildings located adjacent to a single family neighborhood should not generally exceed forty feet (typically 3-4 stories). While the heights of buildings further from single-family neighborhoods may be higher, they should be in concert with the scale of existing development and/or the vision of the small area plan or other adopted policy for the area.
- **Buffers:** Heavy screening should be provided for residential areas adjacent to Interstate 485. In areas where connectivity is important, buffers should not create obstacles between developments. Buffers can help to create a separation, when necessary, between different land uses, but they should not create obstacles that hinder connectivity between these uses.
- **Signage:** Signage can have a significant impact on the perception of a corridor. Signs should compliment the visual integrity and architecture of a building. Tall pole mounted signs and billboards should be avoided. There should be an emphasis on corridor signage. Gateway signs, district center, and informational signs should be integrated to further define the area and create a sense of arrival and place.
- **Parking:** Parking lots should be placed away from the street. Pedestrians should not have to navigate through large parking lots to reach a building entrance. In order to avoid large expanses of parking, lots should be broken down into smaller pods that are surrounded by landscaping. Also, wherever possible, parking lots should be shared between buildings. Joint use of lots not only reduces the amount of parking, but also promotes pedestrian connectivity between buildings.
- **Facade Improvement:** Businesses located along Eastside corridors should enhance the overall corridor appearance. Buildings in need of painting, repair or architectural enhancements detract from the image that the *Eastside Strategy Plan* is trying to foster/enhance along the 11 corridors. Business owners along the corridors should be encouraged to improve their building facades and be provided support to do so. Façade improvement should be in harmony with the architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood and should enhance the creation of a sense of place or community.

■ Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces should become an integral part of the Eastside. Open space can include greenway linkages, large gathering spaces, or smaller spaces that create a connection between different land uses.

- All new development should incorporate a certain amount of open space that is accessible to and from the street. Open spaces could include quality hard and soft landscaping including tree plantings, squares, courtyards and village greens. The spaces can also use buildings to define edges and to provide a sense of enclosure.



- Greenways should be developed to link public facilities and other points of interest throughout the community. In particular, emphasis should be given to supporting the continued development of the Campbell Creek, McAlpine Creek, and Reedy Creek Greenways.
- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department should consider the feasibility of developing a bicycle and pedestrian entrance/access point to Reedy Creek Nature Preserve from Plaza Road. The current streetscape project on Plaza Road includes sidewalks and bicycle lanes from Hunters Crossing to Plott Road. Once these plans are implemented, Plaza Road will provide a much safer and pleasant park entrance for bicyclists and pedestrians than Rocky River Road (current entrance to the nature preserve). Any plans for such an entrance must address the fact that per the *Nature Preserve Master Plan*, bicycling is not permitted on nature trails within the preserve. Thus, it may only be feasible to provide a pedestrian connection. If a bikeway connection is feasible, it should not be designed to encourage bicycle use of the trail system, rather it should be designed to facilitate non-motorized access to the nature preserve.
- The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County are currently discussing the development of a park on part of the Evergreen Cemetery site. Evergreen is a City-owned public cemetery on Central Avenue, just east of Norland Road. The design and development of a park at this location would not only help to meet the need for additional recreational facilities on the Eastside, but would also provide an opportunity to enhance the image of a major Eastside Corridor.
- As the Evergreen Cemetery is developed as a park/nature preserve, a bicycle and pedestrian connection should also be pursued to link it to the commercial area at Central Avenue and Eastway Drive.



- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools should consider the need for, and feasibility of, developing a joint use park and recreation facility adjacent to Clear Creek Elementary School on Albemarle Road. If such a park is developed, design considerations will be particularly important in integrating the facility into the surrounding community. Further, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department should continue to pursue the acquisition of property in this vicinity for a new district park.

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Retail Centers

■ Types and Sizes of Retail Centers

The revised *Northeast District Plan*, adopted in 1996 changed the policies of the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County relating to the sizes of retail centers. Adjustments are needed, therefore, for the Eastside’s centers to reflect the policy changes. The new center sizes are described briefly below. For more detailed guidance on appropriate uses, types of locations and design considerations for retail centers, please consult the *Northeast District Plan*, 1996.

- **Convenience Center:** No more than 20,000 square feet of retail.
- **Neighborhood Center:** Up to 100,000 square feet of retail. Up to 1/3 of this 100,000 square feet could be developed as office. (Replaces the “neighborhood convenience” designation.)
- **Community Center:** More than 100,000, but less than 300,000 square feet. Up to 1/3 of the total square feet could be developed with office uses. (Is a hybrid of the old “neighborhood center” and “community center” designations.)
- **Regional/Power Center:** More than 300,000 square feet, up to 750,000 square feet. If neighborhood services such as a grocery store are included, an additional 100,000 square feet may be permitted. Up to 1/3 of the total square feet could be developed with office uses. (Replaces the community center designation.)



Existing neighborhood center



Existing community center

The recommended maximum square footages of the various center types have increased slightly to accommodate changes in the retail market. This does not imply that existing centers built in conformance with the old square footage maximums can be increased in size. **The increases in center sizes apply to new centers only.**

Also, in cases where a center develops at a size smaller than the recommended maximum square footage for that center type, the difference in square footage between the maximum and the size of the center proposed should generally not be transferred to smaller, single tracts of land adjacent to or across from the center.



Existing regional center

■ Location of Plaza Road Retail Center

In addition to the changes in center sizes, it is recommended that the location of a future retail center shown on the *East District Plan* at Plaza Road and the Eastern Circumferential be relocated to Plaza Road and Hood Road. (See Concept and Recommendations Map for The Plaza Road Corridor-Map 13b.)

■ Revitalization/Redevelopment Opportunity

Recognizing that the redevelopment of abandoned/underutilized commercial areas is a critical component to the long-term economic and social vitality of the Eastside, the Planning Committee of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission will actively participate in the development of specific strategies to address this issue as part of the Eastland Mall Area Study. Further the Committee will take the lead on implementing the planning related recommendations from that study to ensure that this issue is addressed.

In addition to its involvement in the development of specific strategies as part of the Eastland Mall Area Study, the Committee will also consider recommendations from the City's "Big Box" Review Team.

Conclusion

The Eastside is confronted with a number of planning challenges that make it a somewhat vulnerable part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, yet opportunities abound for the area's future.

This strategy plan has attempted to address the major issues confronting the major corridors that traverse the Eastside, build on the area's many strengths, and successfully guide the area into the 21st century. The plan will require considerable coordination between governing bodies and agencies, developers, employers, and residents. It is based on the premise that with a modest investment of time and resources, and renewed enthusiasm and attention to detail, the Eastside will regain its position as a thriving, attractive part of the community. To be effectively implemented the plan must be considered as a "package deal." The various components of the plan – land use, transportation/mobility, and streetscape appearance – are all interrelated and must be carried out in an integrated fashion.

Eastside Strategy Plan

Shaping the future of Charlotte's Eastside

Volume II: Implementation Plan

Eastside Strategy Plan

Volume II: Implementation Plan

Introduction	2
Implementation Strategies	2
Land Use.....	2
Review of Conditional Plans	
Proposed Rezonings	
Revitalization/Redevelopment.....	12
Problem Solving Area	
Revitalization/Redevelopment Opportunities	
Mobility/Connectivity.....	13
Roadway Improvements	
Sidewalks/Pedestrian Safety	
Accommodating Bicyclists	
Public Transportation	
Streetscape Appearance and Urban Design.....	22
Streetscape Improvements	
Site Characteristics	
Parks and Open Space	

Introduction

This document outlines the steps that should be taken to implement the *Eastside Strategy Plan*. This plan will not be adopted by the elected officials; however, many of the actions identified will require future elected official approval and will be brought before elected officials for approval on a case-by-case basis.

The *Eastside Strategy Plan* focuses on land use, transportation/mobility and streetscape issues for 11 key corridors that traverse the Eastside. Because many of the same implementation strategies apply to each corridor, the implementation strategies included in this document are grouped by the following categories:

- I. Land Use
- II. Redevelopment/Revitalization
- III. Mobility/Connectivity
- IV. Streetscape Improvements

Implementation Strategies

I. Land Use

■ Review of Conditional Plans

Ensure that rezoning cases on the Eastside are included as part of the 3-year Conditional District (CD) Plan Review process.

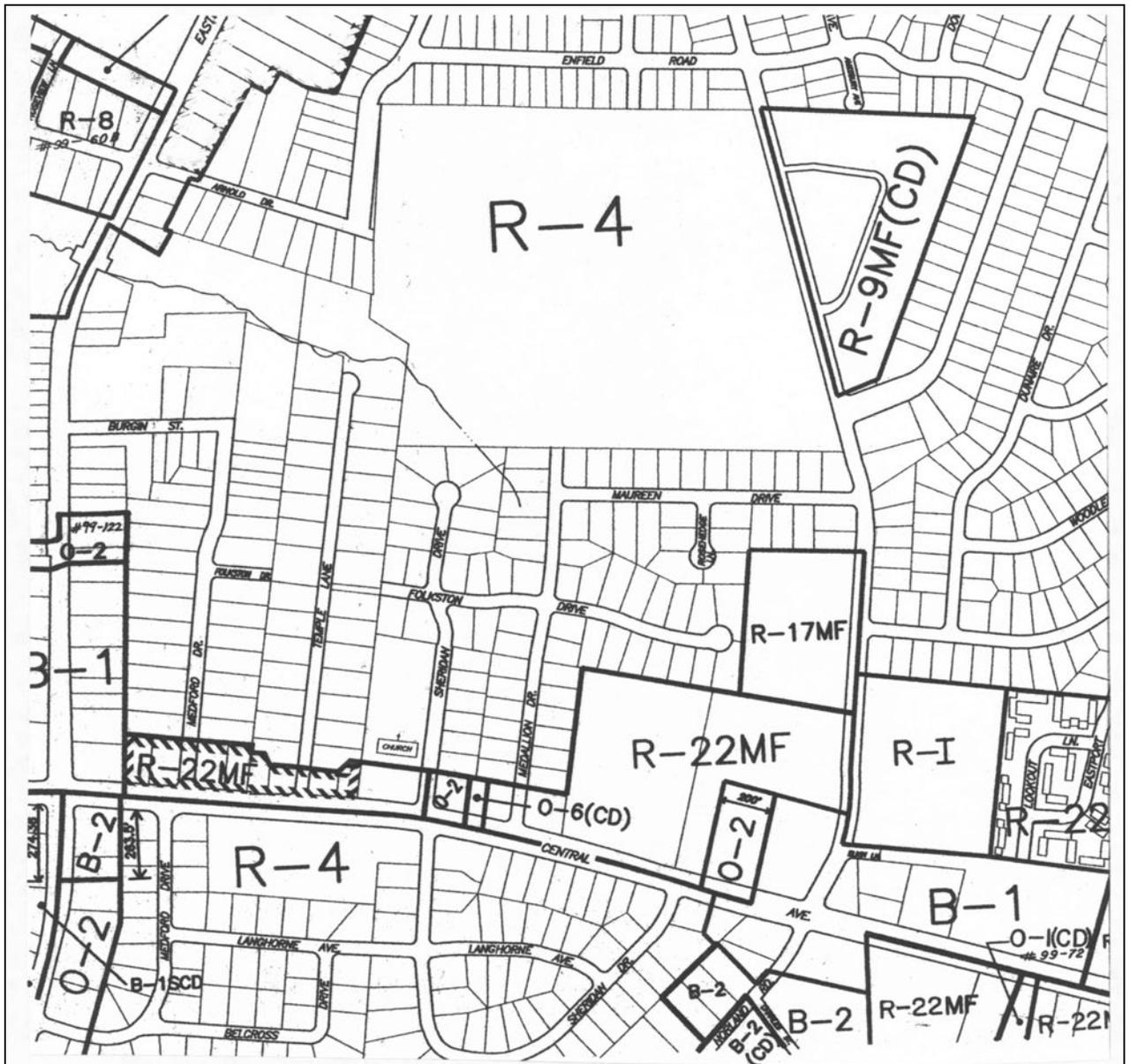
■ Proposed Rezoning

Most of the future land use recommendations identified in the *Eastside Strategy Concept Plan* will be implemented through the development process. However, a number of publicly initiated rezoning should be pursued to implement some of the land use policies and recommendations outlined in the plan. These recommended rezonings are indicated on the maps on the pages that follow:

Proposed Rezoning For Central Avenue Corridor

Rezone the strip of frontage properties located between Eastway Drive and Sheridan Drive on the north side of the corridor from **R-22MF** to **R-8**. The properties are currently developed with single-family homes and one office.

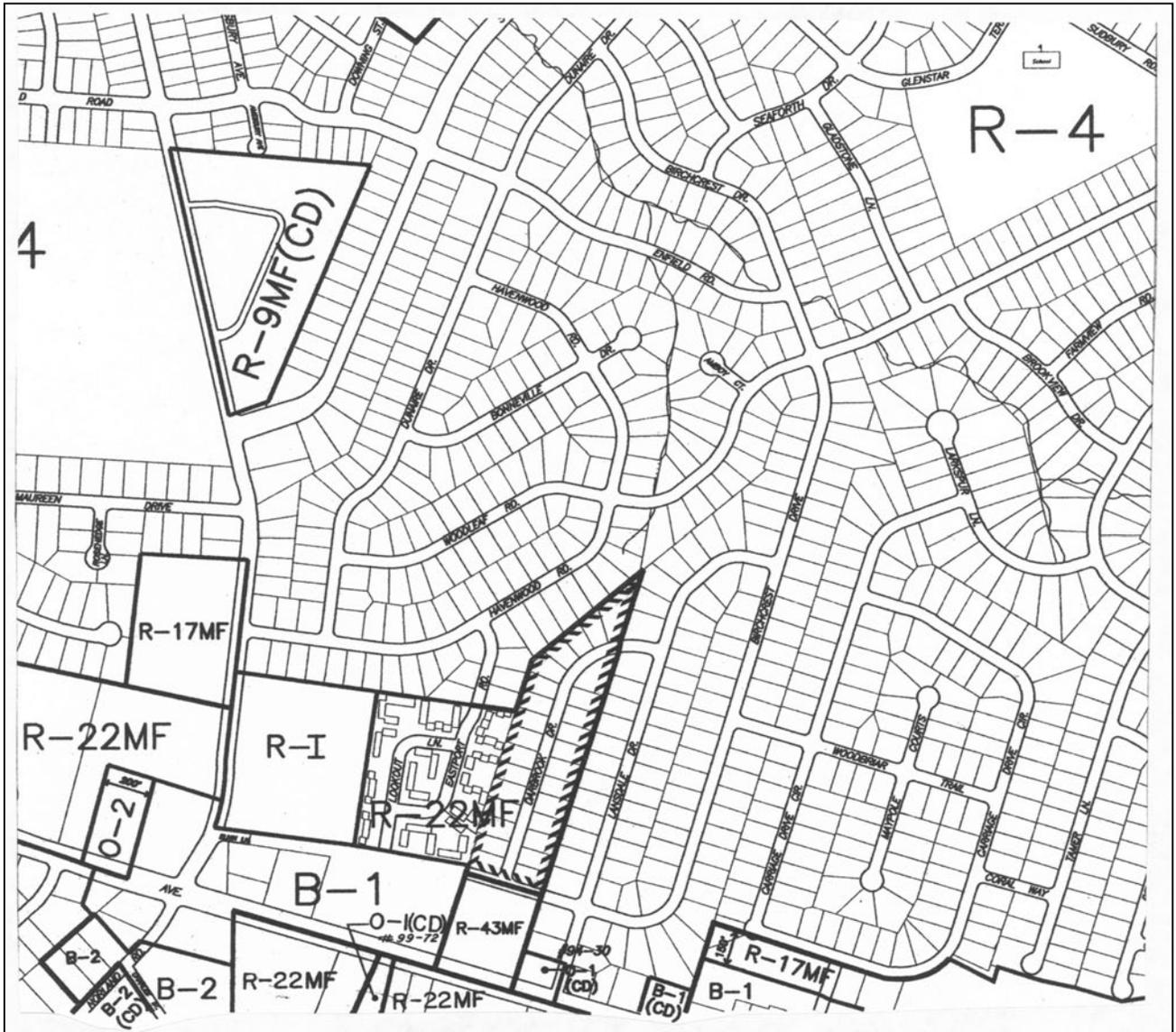
(This corresponds to A on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



Proposed Rezoning For Central Avenue Corridor

Rezoning properties fronting on Darbrook Drive, north of Darby Acres Shopping Center on the north side of the corridor from **R-22MF to R-8** to reflect the current land use.

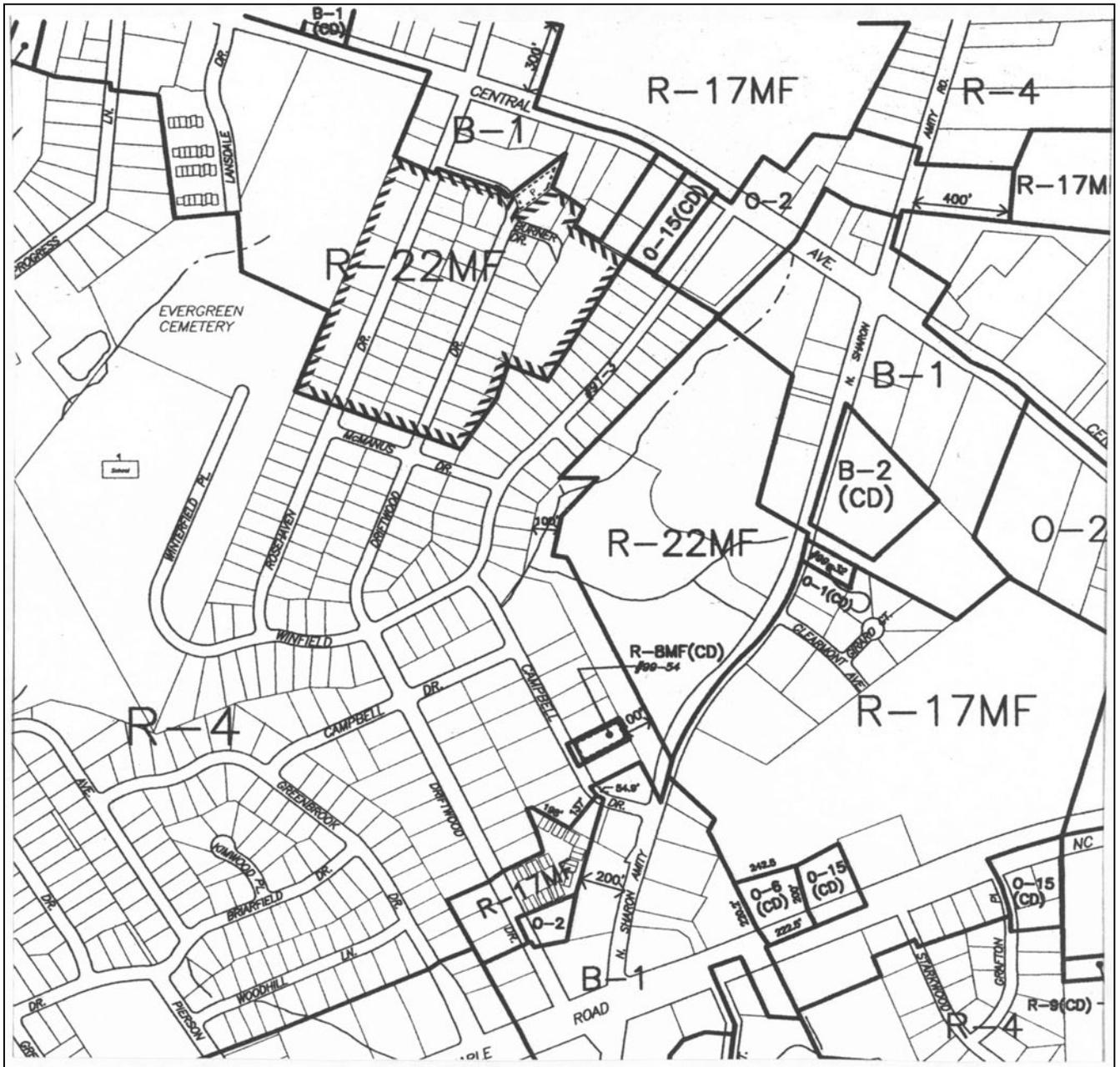
(This corresponds to C on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



Proposed Rezoning For Central Avenue Corridor

Rezone properties in the Rosehaven Drive area on the south side of the corridor from **R-22MF** to **R-8**. A mixture of single-family homes and duplexes currently exist in this area.

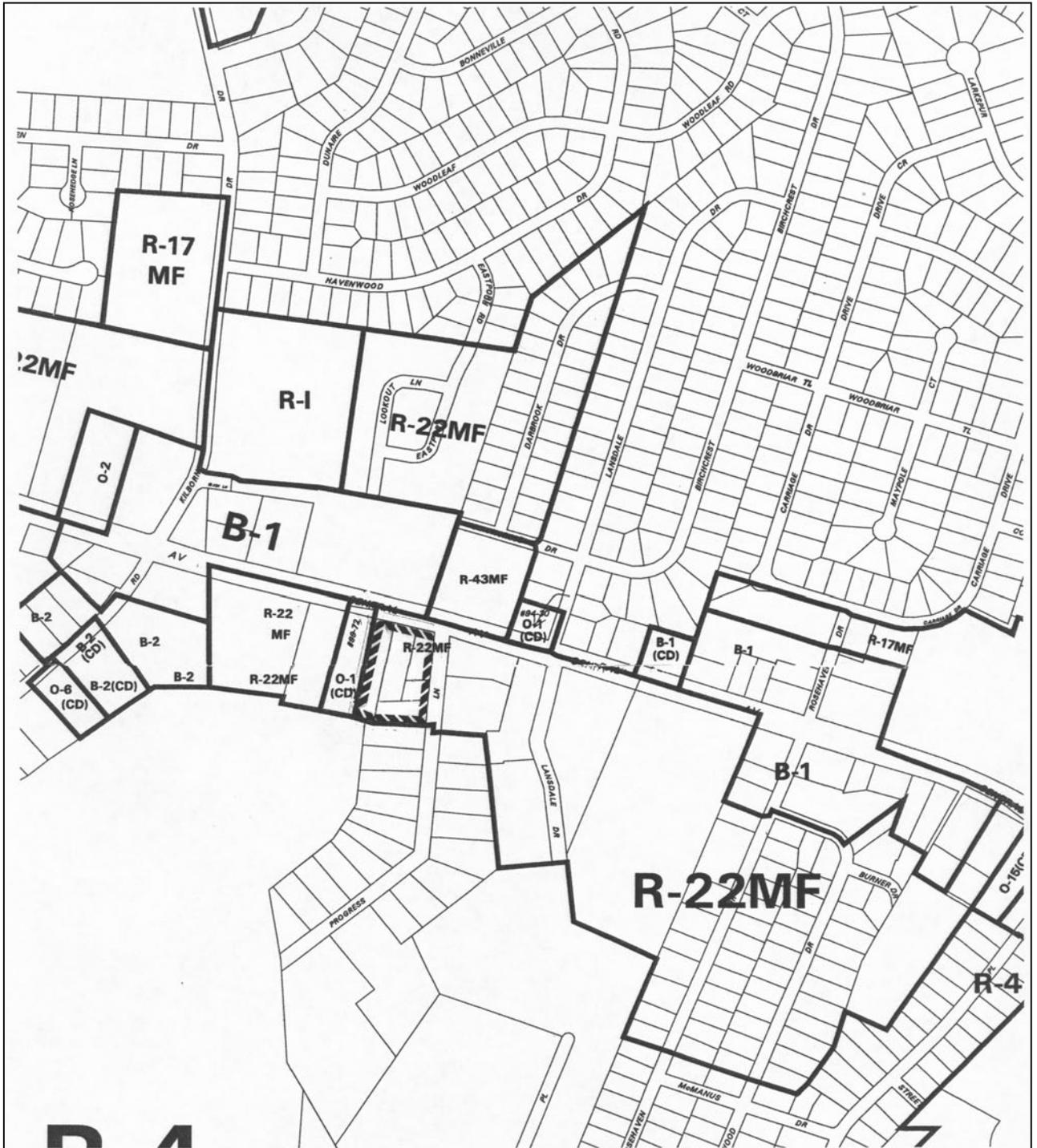
(This corresponds to D on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



Proposed Rezoning For Central Avenue Corridor

Rezone the five parcels shown in the southwest quadrant of Central Avenue and Progress Lane from **R-22MF** to **R-8**. The properties are currently vacant or developed with single-family homes.

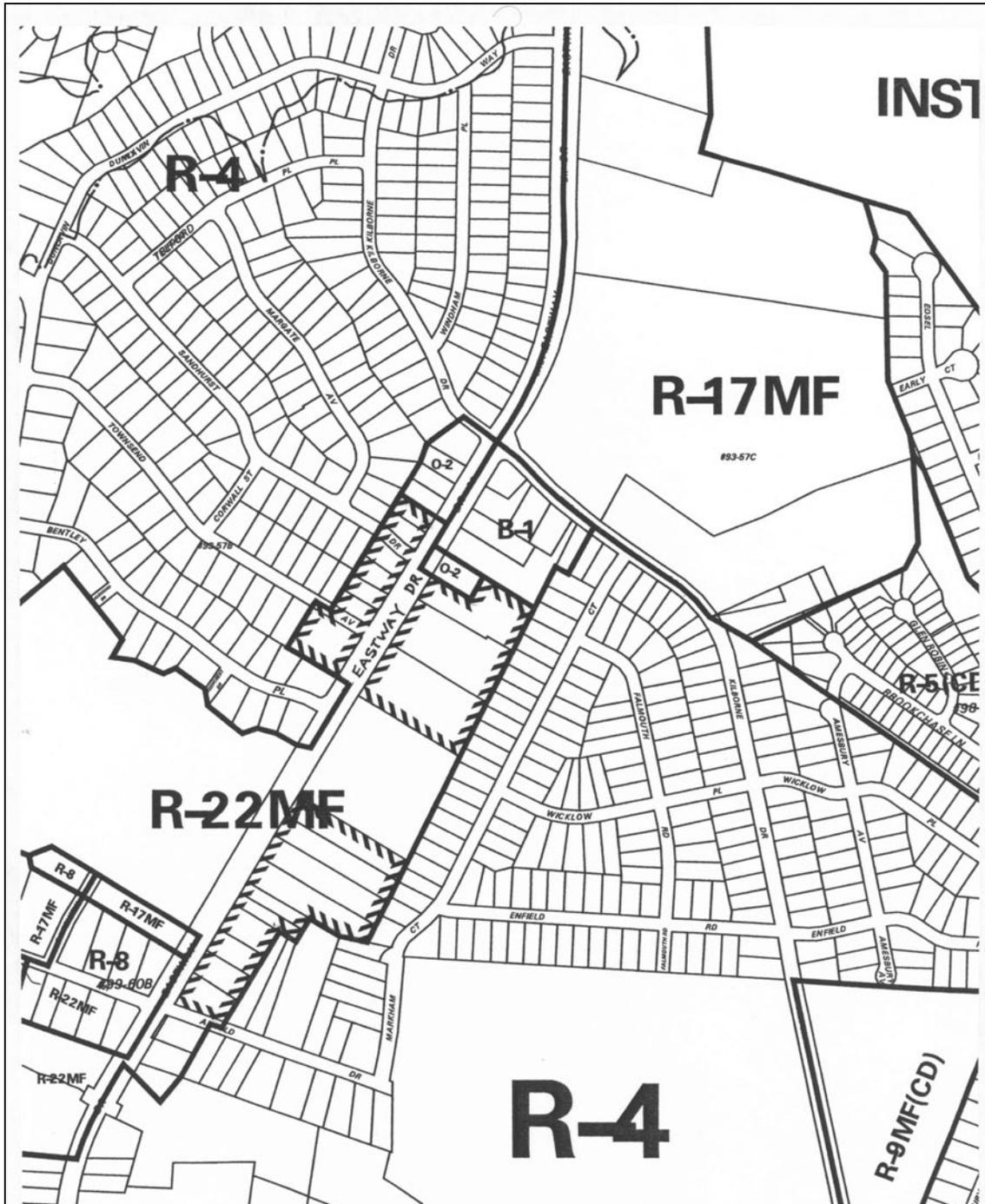
(This corresponds to L on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



Proposed Rezoning For Eastway Drive Corridor

Rezone the properties fronting on Eastway Drive north of Arnold Drive from **R-22MF** to **R-8**. The properties are developed with either single-family homes or duplexes and form an important edge to the adjacent single-family neighborhoods. The lower density development will provide a good transition to established single-family neighborhoods.

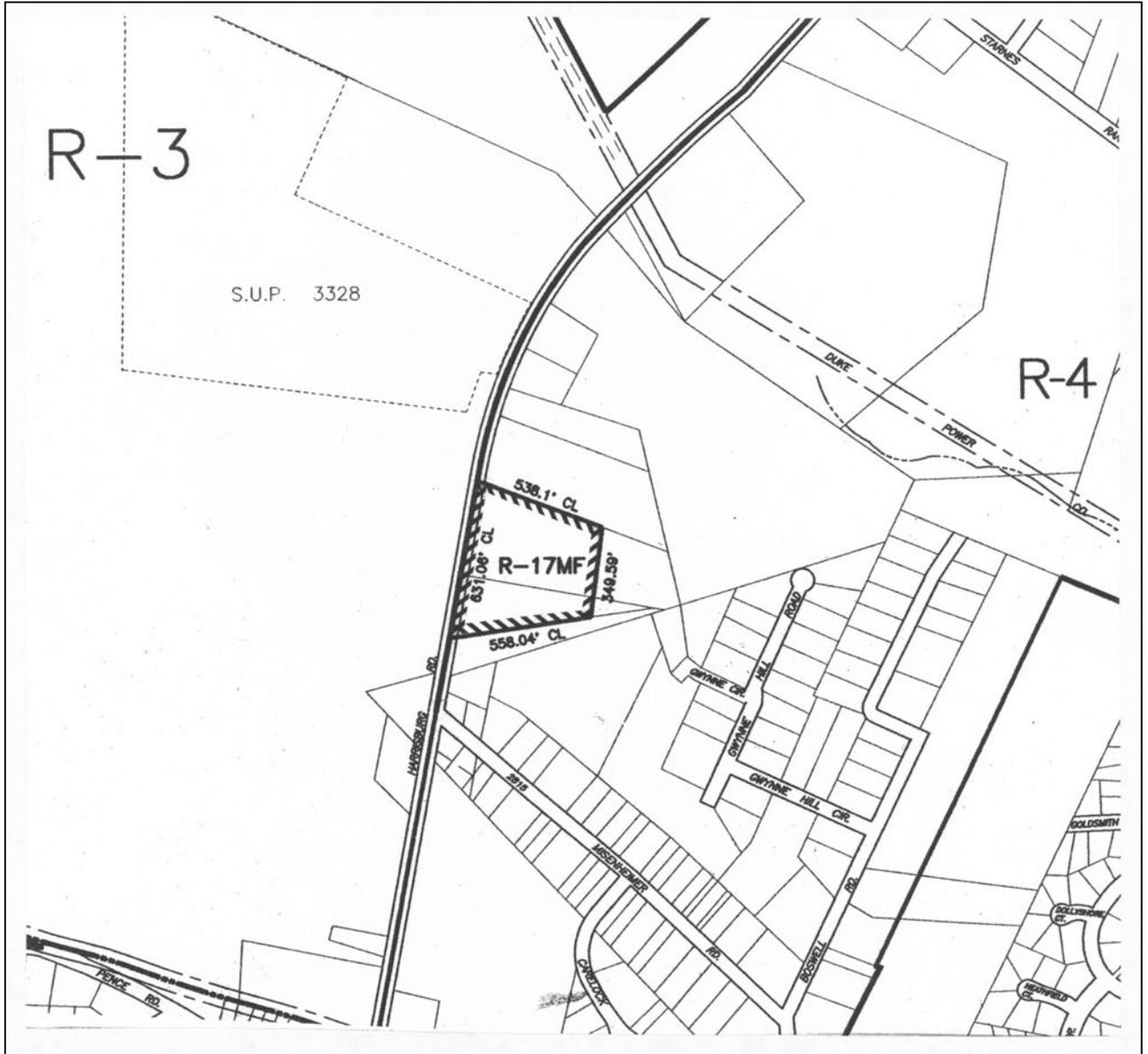
(This corresponds to A on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



Proposed Rezoning For Harrisburg Road Corridor

Rezone two properties north of Misenheimer Road on the east side of the corridor from **R-17MF** to **R-4**. This will support continued development of single family housing in this area as recommended in the *Concept Plan*. One lot is vacant and the other has a single family home on it.

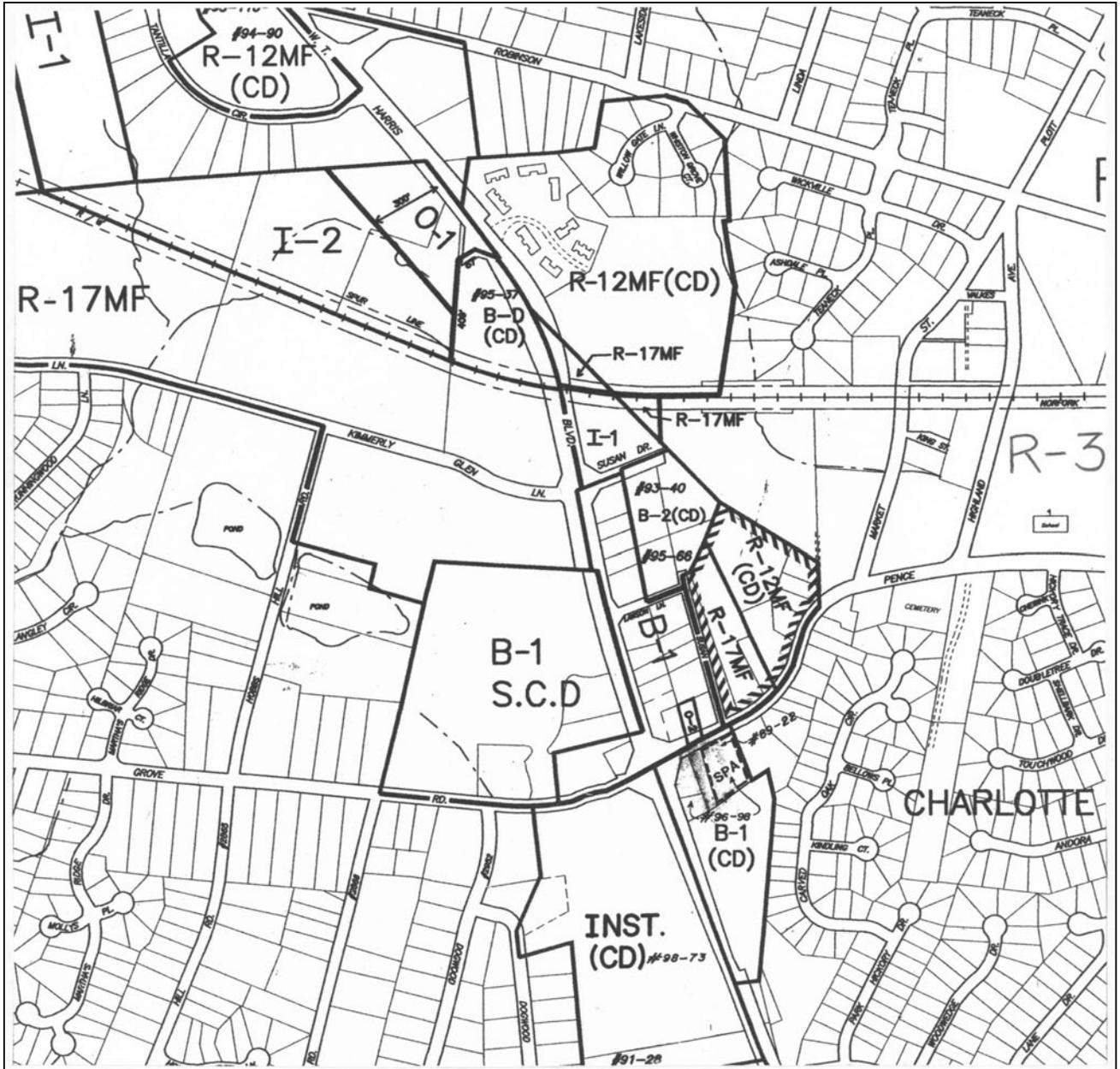
(This corresponds to A on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



Proposed Rezoning For Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor

Rezone properties located on the north side of the corridor between Harris Boulevard and Market Street from **R-12MF (CD)** and **R-17MF** to **R-8** to provide a mix of housing types in the area that are compatible with adjacent single family neighborhoods.

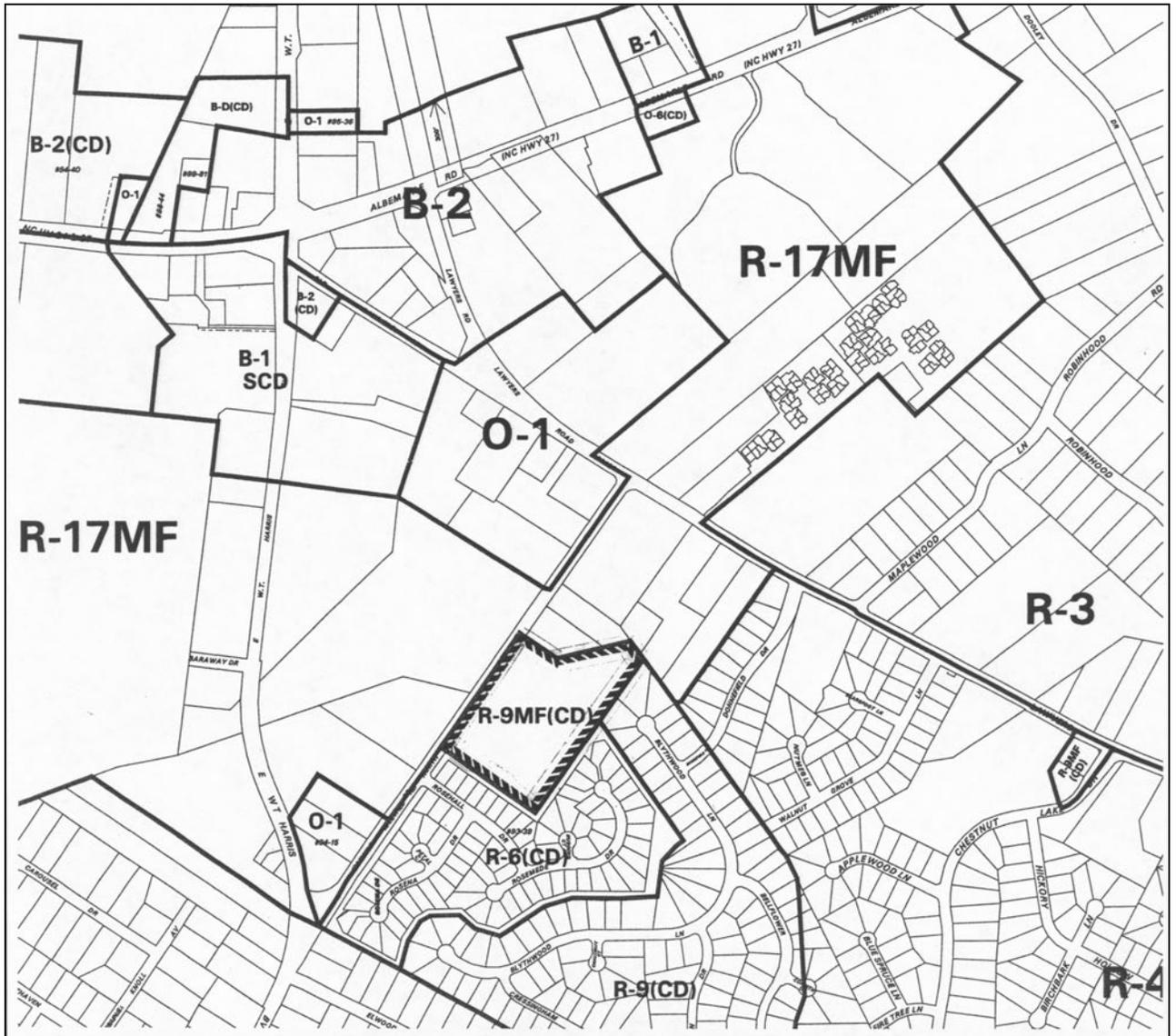
(This corresponds to A on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



Proposed Rezoning For Lawyers Road Corridor

Rezone the parcel on Idlewild Road North, just south of the intersection with Lawyers Road from **R-9MF (CD)** to **R-8**. This property is currently vacant.

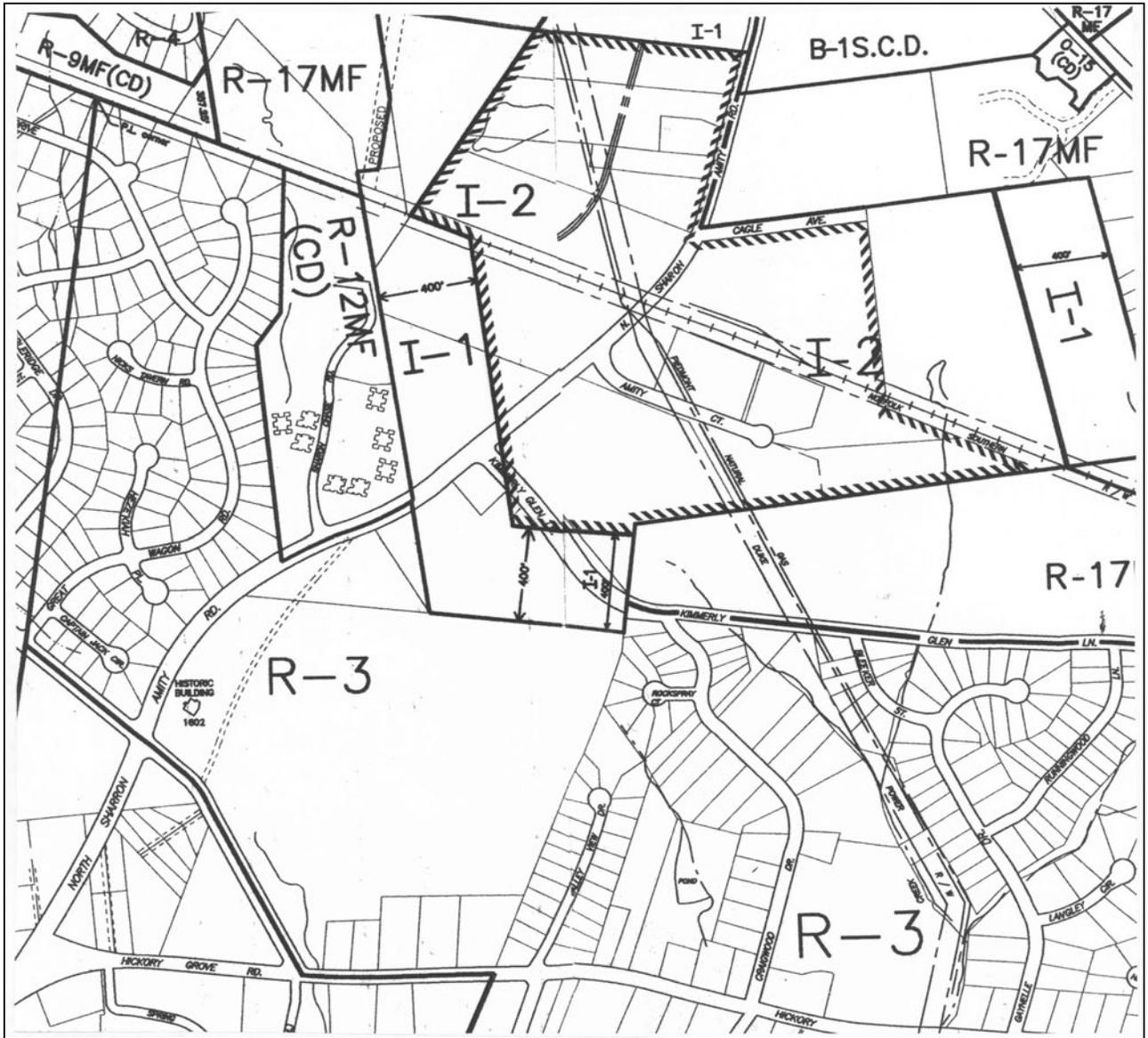
(This corresponds to A on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



Proposed Rezoning For Sharon Amity Road Corridor

Rezone the area around Milton Road identified from I-2 to I-1 for light industrial uses.

(This corresponds to E on the Concept and Recommendations Map.)



II. Revitalization/Redevelopment

■ Problem Solving Areas

The *Eastside Strategy Concept Plan* identifies several residential areas located throughout the Eastside that are considered threatened because of physical and/or social changes that are occurring. The issues and challenges associated with these areas go beyond the scope of the *Eastside Strategy Plan* and will require that staff work with area residents and property owners to identify and discuss specific issues and develop specific strategies to address problems that may exist. Therefore, to improve the quality of life and revitalize these areas, the implementation strategy is to initiate a Problem Solving planning process for each of the areas. The areas for which Problem Solving efforts should be pursued are as follows:

- > Finchley/Purser Neighborhood (*Eastway Drive Corridor*)
- > Orchard Park (*Harrisburg Road Corridor*) The problem solving is complete, need to implement the recommendations
- > J. H. Gunn Community (*Harrisburg Road Corridor*)

■ Revitalization/Redevelopment Opportunities

The *Eastside Strategy Plan* identifies the need to revitalize several aging commercial areas on the Eastside that have the potential for redevelopment/revitalization. The areas include:

- > The Eastland Mall Area (*Central Avenue Corridor*)
- > Eastway Drive/The Plaza (*Plaza/Plaza Road Extension Corridor*)
- > The Shannon Park/Hampshire Hills Area (*Plaza/Plaza Road Extension Corridor*)

Eastland Mall Area: The plan envisions this area becoming a well-designed and attractive pedestrian-oriented center of activity that relates well to adjacent neighborhoods. Further study of this area will be needed to identify specific issues and opportunities and to define a plan of action. Therefore, the *Eastside Strategy Plan* recommends that the Planning Commission initiate an urban design and land use planning project for the Eastland Mall area to guide redevelopment and/or revitalization in the future. The project should create a land use and urban design vision that addresses the mixture of land uses, the scale and compactness of development, relationships and connections to surrounding neighborhoods, vehicular circulation and enhancements for pedestrians, and streetscape and other visual improvements. The project should also identify potential redevelopment, marketing and funding strategies to implement the visions and plans for the area. Residents and property and business owners should be involved in the planning process.

Eastway Drive/The Plaza: The plan encourages redevelopment of the Eastway Plaza Shopping Center on the northeast quadrant of the Eastway/Plaza Road intersection as a new, well-landscaped mixed-use development consisting of offices and new commercial space. As part of the redevelopment efforts, streetscape improvements should be provided including landscaping, crosswalks, pedestrian scale lighting and decorative signage that marks the area as a unique “place”. (*Note that this area is within the Northeast Transit Corridor and the implementation of this recommendation is contingent upon the outcome of the major investment study.*)

Shannon Park/Hampshire Hills Area: The plan encourages redevelopment of the Milton Road/Plaza Road intersection area as a compact, pedestrian oriented “town center” that consists of a mixture of office and retail uses. As part of the redevelopment efforts, streetscape improvements should be provided including landscaping, crosswalks, pedestrian scale lighting and decorative signage that marks the area as a unique “place”.

Small Area Plan for Albemarle Road and Harris Boulevard East Future Interchange Area: The *Eastside Strategy Plan* also identifies the need for further study of the area that will be impacted when the interchange is constructed at Albemarle Road and Harris Boulevard East. It is recommended that a small area plan be prepared for the area included within this interchange. The construction and realignment of roads and properties will provide the opportunity to assemble land in the area and create a more attractive, pedestrian-oriented business environment. The plan should identify design criteria and land use recommendations for properties affected by the roadway improvement project.

Abandoned Commercial Areas: Recognizing that the redevelopment of abandoned/underutilized commercial areas is a critical component to the long-term economic and social vitality of the Eastside, the Planning Committee of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission will actively participate in the development of specific strategies to address this issue as part of the Eastland Mall Area Study. Further the Committee will take the lead on implementing the planning related recommendations from that study to ensure that this issue is addressed.

In addition to its involvement in the development of specific strategies as part of the Eastland Mall Area Study, the Committee will also consider recommendations from the City’s “Big Box” Review Team.

III. Mobility/Connectivity (Refer to Map 3 in the Concept Plan)

■ **Roadway Improvements** (*For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of the Concept Plan document.*)

A number of roadway projects have already been funded or identified in the 2020 Transportation Plan. Listed under each corridor heading within this section are the *Eastside Strategy Plan* recommendations relating to these projects and other projects that should be studied or pursued.

In addition to the roadway projects identified for each specific corridor, a planned circumferential roadway will traverse the Eastside and affect many of the 11 corridors. This roadway, currently referred to as the Eastern Circumferential, is planned to extend from Independence Boulevard to Plaza Road Extension within the study area. This portion of the roadway is not currently funded and it is recommended that we seek funding to construct this roadway. (Note that this roadway extends north of the study area to Mallard Creek Church Road and the only part currently funded is between NC 49 and Mallard Creek Church Road.)

In constructing new roads or improving existing roadways and intersections, preserving the character of the existing neighborhood should be of paramount concern. Roadway cross sections should be compatible with the scale and character of the adjacent community. Intersection designs should address pedestrian safety and convenience.

Albemarle Road Corridor

- **Widen Albemarle Road:** Add an outbound lane to Albemarle Road from Pierson Drive to Reddman Road. Widen Albemarle Road from NC 51 (Blair Road) to the Cabarrus County line. (Funded 2020 project).
- **Construct I-485 Interchange:** Construct I-485 and its interchange with Albemarle Road.
- **Construct Harris Boulevard East Interchange:** Construct an interchange at Albemarle Road and Harris Boulevard East. (Partially funded.)
- **Consider Feasibility of Implementing Transportation Demand and/or Transportation Systems Management Strategies:** In particular, study the possibility of creating reversible traffic lanes for peak traffic hours along the heavily traveled portions of Albemarle Road.
- **Improve Lanes:** Improve the six lanes from Central Avenue to Harris Boulevard East.
- **Construct an interchange with US 74.**

Central Avenue Corridor

- **Add Turn Lanes:** Add a center turn lane with a median, where feasible, along Central Avenue between Eastway Drive and North Sharon Amity Road to accommodate motorists turning into apartment communities and commercial developments along this stretch of the corridor. (*City Council approved funds for this project in 1999 as part of the current \$16.55 million Eastside Capital Improvement program.*)
- **Improve Central/Kilborne/Norland Intersection:** Intersection improvement is funded to begin in March 2001.
- **Improve Briar Creek Road Intersection:** Intersection improvements completed.
- **Study Reversible Lanes:** Study the possibility of creating reversible lanes along Central Avenue during peak traffic hours.
- **Reduce Traffic Speed:** Consider reducing the maximum traffic speed along Central Avenue.

Eastway Drive Corridor

- **Widen Eastway Drive:** An additional northbound lane will be constructed from the US 74 ramp to Biscayne Drive. Construction is scheduled to begin in April 2001. The section from Kilborne Drive to Sugar Creek Road is in the *2020 Transportation Plan* but is not currently funded. Although local transportation planners currently believe the corridor needs to be widened to accommodate the increasing traffic volumes, the long-term need for this project should be re-assessed before any funding is identified.
- **Reduce Cut-Through Traffic:** Reduce cut-through traffic on Woodland Drive with the use of speed humps, stop signs or other means.

Harris Boulevard East Corridor

- **Harris Boulevard Widening:**

Study Group Recommendation - Do not widen Harris Boulevard Road East Between Robinson Church Road and Milton Road:

Staff Recommendation – This project is not currently in the *2020 Transportation Plan*. Staff should take the study group recommendation under consideration in preparation of any updated transportation plans (i.e., *2025 Transportation Plan*).

- **Construct Harris Boulevard East Interchange:** Construct an interchange at Albemarle Road and Harris Boulevard East.
- **Construct a Median:** Add a median on Harris Boulevard East from Albemarle Road to Idlewild Road as shown in the *2020 Transportation Plan*.

Harrisburg Road Corridor

- **Widening From Eastern Circumferential to I-485 Interchange:** Widen Harrisburg Road to four lanes from the future Eastern Circumferential Road to the future I-485 interchange.

Hickory Grove/Pence Road Corridor

- **Widening From Shamrock Drive to Highland Ave:** Widen Hickory Grove/Pence Road to four lanes from Shamrock Drive to Highland Avenue.
- **Traffic Speed:** Consider reducing the speed limit along Hickory Grove Road.
- **New Extension of Pence Road:** Construct a new extension/relocation of Pence Road to align with Harrisburg Road.

Idlewild Road Corridor

- **Widening from Piney Grove Road to Margaret Wallace Road:** Widen Idlewild Road to four lanes east of Piney Grove Road to Margaret Wallace Road.
- **Widening from Margaret Wallace to Union County Line:** Widen Idlewild Road to four lanes from Margaret Wallace Road to the Union County line.
- **Minor thoroughfare connecting Idlewild and Lawyers Road:** Complete the construction of Mission Hills Road, a minor thoroughfare, connecting Idlewild and Lawyers Roads.

Lawyers Road Corridor

- **Widening From Albemarle Road to NC 51:** Widen Lawyers Road to four lanes from Albemarle Road to NC 51. (Note: A widening project from North Idlewild Road to Rolling Oak Lane has been completed.)

- **Improve the intersection of Lawyers Road and Albemarle Road:** Improvements to the intersection of Lawyers Road and Albemarle Road will be included in the major intersection improvement of Harris Boulevard East and Albemarle Road.
- **Increase Connectivity:** Complete the construction of Mission Hills Road, a minor thoroughfare, connecting Idlewild and Lawyers Road.

Monroe Road Corridor

- **Intersection Improvements:** Complete the following intersection improvements along the corridor:
 - > The intersection of Monroe and Ashmore where left turn lanes will be added on Monroe in both directions.
 - > The Monroe/Sardis Road North intersection where eastbound and westbound through lanes will be constructed on Sardis Road North.
 - > The Village Lake Drive intersection where a left turn lane on Village Lake Drive will be constructed along with a right turn lane on Monroe for westbound traffic.
 - > The intersection of Monroe Road and Sharon Amity Road where a dual left turn lane will be added as well as a right turn lane on southbound Sharon Amity and right turn lanes will be added on Monroe Road.
- **Median:** Add a median on Monroe Road between Sharon Amity and Rama Road as per the *2020 Transportation Plan*.
- **Reversible Lanes:** Study the possibility of establishing reversible lanes along portions of Monroe Road during peak traffic hours.

Plaza/Plaza Road Extension Corridor

- > **Realign Plaza Road Extension:** Realign Plaza Road Extension at the Eastern Circumferential.

Sharon Amity Road North Corridor

- > **Intersection Improvements:** Complete the following intersection improvements along the corridor:
 - > Sharon Amity Road and Monroe Road: A dual left and a right turn lane will be added on southbound Sharon Amity Road. (Right turn lanes will also be added on Monroe Road.)
 - > Sharon Amity Road and Independence Boulevard: An interchange will be constructed as part of the US 74 widening project.

- **Sidewalks/Pedestrian Safety** *(For a status report of sidewalk/pedestrian improvements in current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of the Concept Plan document.)*

The *Eastside Strategy Plan* concept document recommends that the necessary infrastructure be in place to allow people to walk safely and with ease in the corridors. As part of promoting pedestrian safety, the concept plan states that sidewalks should be provided on both sides of all

11 corridors included within the study area. This can be accomplished through road improvements, new construction and independent sidewalk projects.

In addition to sidewalks, all major intersections along the corridors should, at a minimum, have a striped crosswalk and pedestrian crossing signals. Enhanced improvements at intersections such as texture changes in the crosswalks, pedestrian activated signals and refuge islands/medians should be added to the intersections listed below with the intention of creating a safer, more distinctive pedestrian zone.

Preserving the character of the existing neighborhood should be of paramount concern in the design of intersection improvements. Roadway cross sections should be compatible with the overall scale and character of the adjacent community. Intersection designs should address pedestrian safety and convenience. In many cases, this will mean keeping road widening(s) to a minimum, particularly in the more urban areas of the Eastside.

The following projects should be pursued in order to implement the goals of completing the sidewalk system and improving overall safety for pedestrians:

Albemarle Road

Sidewalk Construction

- > Fill in the gaps sidewalk along Albemarle Road east of Lawyers Road to Harrisburg Road.
- > Construct sidewalk improvements along Pierson Drive.
- > Construct new sidewalks with planting strips and street trees on both sides of Albemarle Road from Sharon Amity to Harris Boulevard.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Current Priority

- > Albemarle/Central/Sharon Amity intersections in the vicinity of Eastland Mall
- > Albemarle Road/Regal Oaks Drive and Harris Boulevard East (as part of the Albemarle Road Harris Boulevard East interchange project)

Future Priority

- > Albemarle Road and Harrisburg Road
- > Albemarle Road and I-485 area

Central Avenue

Sidewalk Construction

- > Fill in the sidewalk gaps on Central Avenue on Eastland Mall frontage.
- > Construct new sidewalk with planting strips to include street trees on both sides of Central Avenue from Brier Creek to Sharon Amity Road.
- > Construct sidewalks on Norland Avenue between Central Avenue and Eastway Middle School. (complete)
- > Make sidewalk improvements along the following streets as part of the Merry Oaks neighborhood improvement project – Masonic Drive, Long Fellow Street, Graybark Avenue, Draper Avenue, Merry Oaks Road and Flynnwood Drive.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Current Priority

- > Central Avenue and Eastway Drive
- > Central Avenue and Kilborne Drive

- > Central Avenue and Sharon Amity Road
Future Priority
- > Central Avenue and Rosehaven Drive

Eastway Drive

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas:

Current Priority

- > Eastway Drive and Central Avenue
- > Eastway Drive and Plaza Road
- > Eastway Drive and Shamrock Road

Future Priority

- > Eastway Drive and Sugar Creek Road
- > Eastway Drive and Kilborne Avenue
- > Eastway Drive and Monroe Road (contingent on transit corridor study)

Harris Boulevard East

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Current Priority

- > Harris Boulevard East and Hickory Grove/Pence Road
- > Harris Boulevard East, Albemarle Road and Regal Oaks Drive
- > Harris Boulevard East and Milton Road
- > Harris Boulevard East and The Plaza

Future Priority

- > Harris Boulevard East and Idlewild Road
- > Harris Boulevard and Robinson Church Road

Harrisburg Road

Sidewalk Construction

- > Construct sidewalks on Harrisburg Road from the Eastern Circumferential to I-485 interchange.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Future Priority

- > Harrisburg Road and Albemarle Road

Hickory Grove/Pence Road

Sidewalk Construction

- > Construct sidewalks with planting strip along both sides Hickory Grove Road from Shamrock Drive to Harrisburg Road.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Current Priority

- > Hickory Grove Road and Harris Boulevard East

Idlewild Road

Sidewalk Construction

- > Construct sidewalk with planting strips from just east of Piney Grove Road to Margaret Wallace Road as part of road widening project.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Future Priority

- > Idlewild Road and Harris Boulevard
- > Idlewild Road and Independence Boulevard (contingent on transit corridor study)
- > Idlewild Road and Monroe Road (contingent on transit corridor study)

Lawyers Road

Sidewalk Construction

- > Construct sidewalk from North Idlewild Road to Margaret Wallace Road.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Future Priority

- > Lawyers Road and Wilson Grove Road
- > Lawyers Road and Idlewild Road

Monroe Road

Sidewalk Construction

- > Fill in sidewalk gaps from Sharon Amity to Idlewild Road.
- > Construct sidewalk improvements on the following roads that link into Monroe Road and are part of the Oakhurst Neighborhood Improvement project: Summey Avenue, Elder Avenue, Ross Moore Avenue, Commodore Street, Chippendale Road and Eaton Road.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Future Priority

- > Monroe Road and Eastway Drive (part of streetscape project)
- > Monroe Road and Sharon Amity Road (part of streetscape project)
- > Monroe Road and Idlewild Road
- > Monroe Road and Conference Drive
- > Monroe Road and Village Lake Drive
- > Monroe Road and Sardis Road

(Note: All the above projects are contingent on the Major Investment Study currently underway for the Southeast Transit Corridor.)

Plaza/Plaza Road Extension

Sidewalk Construction

- > Construct sidewalks from Harris Boulevard East to Plott Road as part of the Plaza Road streetscape project.
- > Construct sidewalks from Plott Road to the Cabarrus County line (outside of Charlotte City Limits).
- > When Plaza Road Extension is realigned at the Eastern Circumferential, sidewalks should be constructed as part of the road project.
- > Fill in the sidewalk gaps on Plaza Road extension between Milton Road and Harris Boulevard East.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Current Priority

- > The Plaza and Milton Road
- > The Plaza and Eastway Drive
- > The Plaza and Harris Boulevard East

Future Priority

- > The Plaza and the proposed new pedestrian entrance to Reedy Creek Nature Preserve

Sharon Amity

Sidewalk Construction

- > Construct sidewalks filling in the gap near Sharon Memorial Gardens.
- > Construct sidewalk improvements on the following roads that connect to Sharon Amity in the Oakhurst Neighborhood: Unaka Avenue and Lynnville Avenue.

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Areas

Future Priority

- > Sharon Amity and Independence Boulevard (contingent transit corridor study)
- > Sharon Amity and Monroe Road (part of streetscape project)

■ **Accommodating Bicyclists**

The *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bicycle Transportation Plan*, adopted by elected officials in 1999, recommends that a number of bike lanes, signed connections and wide/widened outside lanes be established on the Eastside as part of the overall system for accommodating bicyclists throughout the city and county. Improving connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists is a key goal of the *Eastside Strategy Plan*, therefore, the *Eastside Strategy Plan* supports the implementation of the *Bicycle Transportation Plan*, including supporting the addition of bicycle facilities on all future road projects where it is feasible to do so.

Priority implementation strategies for the Eastside include:

Bike Lanes. Provide bike lanes (painted and signed) along the following Eastside Streets:

- > Norland Road from Central Avenue to Woodland Road (Central Avenue and Eastway Drive Corridors)
- > Kilborne Drive from Central Avenue to Eastway Drive (Central Avenue and Eastway Drive Corridors)
- > Commonwealth Avenue from Woodland Road to Pecan Avenue (Central Avenue Corridor)
- > Hickory Grove/Pence Road – from Shamrock Drive to Harrisburg Road.
- > Plaza Road from Harris Boulevard East to Plott Road

Signed Connections. Install signs along the following streets designating these streets as official on-street connections for the overall bikeway system:

- > Woodland Drive from Norland Road to Commonwealth Avenue (Eastway Drive Corridor)
- > Milton Road from Belle Plaine Avenue to Tipperary Place (Plaza Road and Sharon Amity Road North Corridors)
- > Tipperary Place from Milton Road to Shamrock Drive (Plaza Road Corridor)
- > Barrington Drive from Covecreek Drive to Belle Plaine Avenue (Plaza Road Corridor)

Wide/Widened Outside Lanes. As roads are widened or improved, provide a wide/widened outside lane (14/13 feet) to better accommodate bicyclists and drivers sharing the roadway.

Particular attention should be given to the streets listed below:

- > Eastway Drive from Sugar Creek Road to Kilborne Drive
- > Harrisburg Road from Albemarle Road to I-485
- > Monroe Road from Thermal Road to Matthews Township Parkway
- > Idlewild Road from Harris Boulevard East to the County line
- > Lawyers Road from Albemarle Road to Mathews-Mint Hill Road (In addition, paved shoulders are recommended south of NC 51.)
- > Shamrock Drive from Hickory Grove Road to Eastway Drive (Sharon Amity Road North Corridor)

Greenway Expansion. Continue to support the greenway trail improvements/expansions that have been identified in the Mecklenburg County Greenway Master Plan and actively involve area citizens in the greenway development process. Greenways provide tremendous connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians and should be expanded throughout the Eastside. Greenways can serve as extensions of the roadway network, offering realistic and viable connections between origins and destinations such as work, schools, libraries, parks, shopping areas and tourist attractions. Just as important as developing and expanding the greenway system will be ensuring that greenways are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all greenway development plans.

The greenways on the Eastside include:

- > Campbell Creek Greenway (Idlewild Corridor)
- > McAlpine Creek Greenway (Idlewild Corridor)
- > Reedy Creek Greenway (Plaza/Plaza Road Extension Corridor)
- > Briar Creek Greenway (Eastway Drive Corridor)

In addition to supporting the planned greenway improvements, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department should consider the feasibility of developing a bikeway to link the road system within the Reedy Creek Nature Preserve to the planned bike lanes on Plaza Road to more safely accommodate non-motorized access to the preserve. Any plans for such a connection must address the fact that per the *Nature Preserve Master Plan*, bicycling is not permitted on nature trails within the preserve. Thus, the bikeway connection should not be designed to encourage bicycle use of the trail system, rather it should be designed to facilitate non-motorized access to the nature preserve.

A bicycle and pedestrian connection should also be pursued to link the commercial area at Central Avenue and Eastway Drive to the Evergreen Nature Preserve.

■ Public Transportation

- > Complete the county-wide study currently in progress to examine transit needs and opportunities and recommend specific transit service improvement.
- > Ensure that the Eastside corridors are linked to future rapid transit services.
- > Consider the expansion of circumferential (cross-town) service.
- > Explore the options of expanding the EZ Ride Transportation system to Eastside neighborhoods.
- > Continue to support plans to develop a transit hub at Eastland Mall.

IV. Streetscape Appearance and Urban Design

■ **Streetscape Improvements** *(For a status report of current Eastside streetscaping projects, please see the introduction of the Concept Plan document.)*

As roads are improved or new roads are constructed, landscaping and other streetscape improvements should be provided as per the design guidelines included in the concept plan document. Where feasible, construct planting strips/medians and provide landscaping in them along all 11 corridors within the Eastside study area. Landscaping, lighting and other streetscape improvements will significantly enhance the appearance of the Eastside corridors. However, just as important as providing the improvements will be ensuring that they are diligently maintained. Therefore, maintenance plans should be incorporated into all streetscaping improvements.

The following corridors are priorities in terms of constructing planting strips/medians where feasible and/or providing landscaping where planting strips/medians already exist.

- > Albemarle Road (Sharon Amity Road N. to Harris Blvd., current project)
 - > Central Avenue (Brier Creek to Sharon Amity Road N, current project)
 - > Plaza Road (Hunters Crossing to Plott Road, current project)
 - > Pence Road (Highland Avenue to Harrisburg Road, current project)
 - > Eastway Drive
 - > Sharon Amity Road North
 - > Harris Boulevard East
-
- **Key Intersections:** Provide landscaping and pedestrian safety improvements at key intersections as detailed in the Sidewalks/Pedestrian Safety section of this document.

 - **Monroe Road:** Complete a streetscape plan for Monroe Road from the CSX Railroad overpass, near the Grier Heights neighborhood, to Sharon Amity Road. The plan should be coordinated with any future rapid transit plans for the Monroe Road corridor.

 - **McAlpine Creek Greenway/Park Entrance Area:** Improve the appearance in and around the entrance to the McAlpine Greenway Park to create a visual focal point along the corridor and to increase the park's visibility. This is a unique and popular recreational facility frequented by many residents from the Eastside and elsewhere. While the greenway has access from many points along the way, the major entrance is off Monroe Road. The area surrounding the park's entrance is not particularly inviting, and the park entrance is not highly visible. This could be a major focal point along the corridor. (This should be coordinated with any future rapid transit plans for the Monroe Road corridor.)

 - **Albemarle Road:** Relocate utility poles along Albemarle Road. *(City Council approved funds for this project in 1999 as part of the \$16.55 million Eastside Capital Improvement program.)*

■ Site Characteristics

- Design guidelines addressing building orientation, building heights, buffers, signage, and parking are provided in the concept document. In most cases, these guidelines provide direction for the design of new development beyond what is currently provided in existing ordinances (i.e., zoning and subdivision). While the guidelines are, therefore, not mandatory, compliance with them is strongly encouraged in order to fulfill the vision laid out in the *Eastside Strategy Plan*.
- Support the continuation/expansion of the Façade Grant Program to help improve the value and appearance of area businesses.
- Upgrade the appearance of existing businesses by providing Equity Loans outside of the CWAC area.

■ Parks and Open Space

- Parks and open spaces should become an integral part of the Eastside. Open space can include greenway linkages, or large gathering spaces, or smaller spaces that create a connection between different land uses. All new development should be encouraged to incorporate open space into the overall site plan as described in the concept document. Compliance with open space guidelines will occur primarily through the rezoning and subdivision processes.
- In addition to private developments, public parks and greenway plans should be implemented to link public facilities throughout the community. In particular, emphasis should be given to supporting the continued development of the Campbell Creek, McAlpine Creek, and Reedy Creek Greenways.
- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department should consider the feasibility of developing a bicycle and pedestrian access point(s) to Reedy Creek Nature Preserve from Plaza Road. The current streetscape project on Plaza Road includes sidewalks and bicycle lanes from Hunters Crossing to Plott Road. Once these plans are implemented, Plaza Road will provide a much safer and pleasant entrance to the nature preserve for bicyclists and pedestrians than Rocky River Road (current nature preserve entrance). Any plans for such a connection must address the fact that per the *Nature Preserve Master Plan*, bicycling is not permitted on nature trails within the preserve. Thus, it may only be feasible to provide a pedestrian connection. If a bikeway connection is feasible, it should not be designed to encourage bicycle use of the trail system, rather it should be designed to facilitate non-motorized access to the nature preserve.
- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department should develop a park on the Evergreen Cemetery site. Evergreen is a City-owned public cemetery on Central Avenue, just east of Norland Road. The design and development of a park at this location would not only help to meet the need for additional recreational facilities on the Eastside, but would also provide an opportunity to enhance the image of a major Eastside Corridor. In addition, a bicycle and pedestrian connection should also be pursued to link the park to the commercial area at Central Avenue and Eastway Drive.

- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools should consider the need for, and feasibility of, developing a joint use park and recreation facility adjacent to Clear Creek Elementary School on Albemarle Road. Further, the Parks and Recreation Department should continue to pursue property acquisition in this area for development of a district park.

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