

FIRST WARD MASTER PLAN

Volume 1: Concept Plan

Approved by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission July 22, 1996
ADOPTED BY CHARLOTTE CITY COUNCIL JULY 28, 1997

Concept Developed by UDA Architects
and
Plan Compiled by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

Plan Sponsored
by
Charlotte Housing Authority
Charlotte Center City Partners
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission
NationsBank Community Development Corporation

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INTRODUCTION

WHY DEVELOP A PLAN?

In 1994, the US Housing and Urban Development Department announced that a \$41 million revitalization grant would be provided to the Charlotte Housing Authority for revitalization of the Earle Village public housing community. The belief that public housing in First Ward would be dramatically transformed, coupled with the recognition that the public sector owns a significant amount of the vacant and underutilized First Ward property, sparked new interest in the area. The First Ward Master Planning process was initiated with the belief that Charlotte has a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a new Uptown neighborhood. The principles of this plan are consistent with the goals of the HUD grant, and implementation of this plan will complement and enhance the efforts to transform public housing in First Ward.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION

In the fall of 1995, the City of Charlotte/Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, NationsBank Community Development Corporation, Charlotte Center City Partners (formerly Charlotte Uptown Development Corporation), and the Charlotte Housing Authority combined resources to hire UDA Architects, an urban design and planning consulting firm, to develop a conceptual plan for First Ward. UDA also worked with subconsultants Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin

Lopez Rinehart, and Siemon, Larsen & Marsh. *UDA was given the charge of creating a development concept for a new urban neighborhood in Uptown Charlotte. This neighborhood is to be primarily residential and should include an economically diverse group of residents.*

During the planning process, numerous meetings with First Ward interest groups were held. Included in this process was an intensive four-day planning session to which all First Ward property owners and residents, City Council members, Planning Commissioners, and numerous other parties were invited. Based on the results of this public process, UDA developed a development concept for First Ward. This plan has extracted the key land use and urban design elements from the concept provided by UDA, and these elements are being recommended for public adoption. **The conceptual development scenario created by UDA, which has and will continue to evolve, is contained in this document for illustrative purposes only.**

THE ROLE OF THIS PLAN

When adopted, this document will serve as public policy guidance for future development in First Ward. The primary purpose of this plan is to *provide a development framework for First Ward*. This is similar to the approach that a private developer would take when structuring a new development. The

development framework proposed for First Ward has been designed to accomplish the following:

- ***Create a vision*** for First Ward for which there is public consensus. This should be a vision that is widely supported in the Charlotte community and that turns First Ward into a positive aspect of both Uptown and the entire City of Charlotte.
- ***Outline the appropriate land uses and development characteristics*** for different parts of First Ward. This information will serve as the basis for creating or updating regulatory measures, if needed.
- ***Create value*** in an area that currently has little marketability. Successful implementation of this plan will help to enhance the value of First Ward properties by creating a positive image that will attract new investment. As a result, publicly owned First Ward properties will be returned to the tax rolls and will once again generate tax revenue for the City and County.
- ***Provide enough flexibility to allow a range of development scenarios.*** This plan should be able to accommodate the inevitable shifts in the real estate market that will occur as the plan is implemented. At the same time, the plan should provide enough ***certainty and predictability about the area's future*** that potential developers and residents will feel confident enough to invest in the area.

- ***Identify a potential program of public facility improvements*** which could be used to enhance First Ward. These potential improvements include streetscape amenities, park and open spaces, and transportation system improvements. An organized framework of public facilities will provide order to an area that currently appears disorderly.

An accompanying document, **First Ward Master Plan, Volume 2: Implementation Program**, identifies the actions, both public and private, that will have to be undertaken to make the envisioned development of First Ward a reality. ***City Council adoption of the First Ward Concept Plan does not imply approval of implementation strategies such as zoning changes or streetscape improvements.*** Zoning changes implied by this plan will require a full public hearing and review process by the Charlotte City Council. Any publicly constructed capital improvements recommended by this plan will be funded only through the City's capital improvement process. Recommended First Ward capital projects will compete with other proposed capital projects for limited funding.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goals of the First Ward Master Plan are:

- 1) *To create a vibrant new, mixed-income residential neighborhood in Uptown Charlotte; and, as a result,*
- 2) *To increase the value of property in First Ward and the tax base of the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.*

The new First Ward neighborhood should have the following characteristics:

- *The neighborhood should be economically diverse, and should include a mix of housing types and costs.* While the heart of the neighborhood will be predominantly residential, the areas closer to Trade Street and Tryon Street should contain a mixture of uses, including office, retail, institutional, and residential.
- *The neighborhood should reflect its urban context and should incorporate the qualities of Charlotte's best traditional neighborhoods.* Building entrances should be oriented toward the street, with minimal building setbacks. Parking should be on-street or to

the rear of the buildings. Streets should have sidewalks and street trees.

- *The neighborhood should have the amenities that will make it a "good place to live".* These include parks and open spaces, churches, schools, a community center, and neighborhood shopping.
- *The neighborhood should be safe,* both in perception and in reality.
- *The First Ward neighborhood should be viewed as a positive part of Uptown and the City of Charlotte.*

This plan sets the framework for meeting the listed goals by outlining the desired land use and urban design character for First Ward. Key streetscape and open space improvements designed to enhance the development potential in First Ward are also highlighted. The illustrative development scenarios contained in the plan are examples of how this plan might be implemented.

BACKGROUND

THE PLANNING AREA

First Ward is one of the four sectors of Uptown Charlotte and is one of Charlotte's original neighborhoods. For the purposes of this plan, First Ward has been defined as the area in the eastern quadrant of Uptown between I-277, East Trade Street, and North College Street. First Ward is located at the heart of the dynamic and growing Charlotte region.

Today, First Ward is probably most noted as the location of Earle Village, one of the Charlotte Housing Authority's developments. Earle Village was developed as a result of the urban renewal program in the 1960's. This program demolished homes and businesses and consequently displaced many of the African American residents. Some of these residents moved into Earle Village when it was completed. Yet much of the land surrounding Earle Village was cleared and has remained vacant to this day. The City of Charlotte alone owns forty-six acres of land in First Ward.

Until recently, there has been little interest in new development in First Ward. Many believed that market rate development would not occur because of the negative image of the Earle Village community. However, the awarding of a \$41 million HUD grant to transform public housing in First Ward has sparked new interest in the area. The reduction in the number of public housing units, in conjunction with the Housing Authority's commitment to integrate public housing into a model

mixed-income community, will increase the development viability of the vacant and underutilized properties in First Ward.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The future of First Ward depends on effectively dealing with problems and capitalizing on opportunities. This plan focuses on addressing the problems and opportunities described below:

Uptown Location: The location of First Ward is probably its greatest asset. It is within walking distance of 55,000 Uptown jobs, the Transportation Center, and many of Charlotte's major cultural facilities including Spirit Square, the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, Discovery Place, and the Main Branch of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library.

Civic and Cultural Institutions within First Ward: First Ward is home to a number of important civic and cultural facilities including: First Ward Elementary School, the Afro-American Cultural Center, the Museum of the New South, and three churches, Little Rock AME Zion Church, the United House of Prayer for All People, and First United Presbyterian Church.

Publicly Owned Land: There are almost 100 acres of publicly owned land within the First Ward study area, and about half of this land is currently or will soon be available for new

development. This land is a significant resource which is currently not generating tax revenue. (See **First Ward Master Plan, Volume 2: Implementation Program** for an overview of publicly held properties.)

While the City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Housing Authority are the principal land holders, other public entities which own land in First Ward include Mecklenburg County and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. Essential to the long term success of this plan will be the coordination of disposition and development of public land in First Ward.

The Rail Corridor: The existing rail corridor, which is located between Brevard Street and College Street, has been identified as a significant asset for First Ward. The corridor is no longer being used by the railroad and might have potential for other use. Additionally, there are a number of unique older industrial buildings that lend themselves to adaptive reuse.

Transportation System: The street system serving First Ward is both a positive and a negative component of the area. On the positive side, the grid pattern lends itself to the re-establishment of a traditional neighborhood. Further, there is direct roadway access to the entire Charlotte region via I-277, and much of First Ward is within a few blocks of Charlotte's new Transportation Center.

On the other hand, certain aspects of the current traffic patterns and character of streets detract from the goal of creating an urban neighborhood. There are a number of thoroughfares which carry large traffic volumes through the center of First

Ward, especially during peak hours. Additionally, the traditional grid pattern has been compromised by the termination of a number of streets. Many streets lack pedestrian amenities such as street trees, on-street parking, continuous sidewalks, and pedestrian scale lighting.

New Program for First Ward Public Housing: The

transformation of First Ward into a mixed-income neighborhood will be largely dependent upon the successful integration of public housing and market rate housing. Historically, one of the most challenging aspects of First Ward has been the concentration of low income residents and the resulting social problems.

In the past, public housing in First Ward has been located in Earle Village, a "project" of over 400 typical public housing apartment units. However, plans are to transform public housing in First Ward by integrating public housing and market rate housing. There will be a total of 282 townhouse and garden apartment units in an economically integrated new development. Within the development, there will be 132 public housing units, of which 68 will be located in a single building for the elderly. Most of the units in this new rental community will be new construction, with 23 in four remaining Earle Village buildings which will be extensively renovated.

Public housing residents, with the exception of the elderly and disabled, will be required to participate in the Housing Authority's family-self sufficiency program. A child care center and community center are being built to provide supportive services for those participating in this program. This innovative

program will redefine the approach to providing public housing in Charlotte.

Negative Image: First Ward's poor image can largely be attributed to the area's disorderly appearance. There are overhead utility lines, trash lining the streets, broken sidewalks, and people loitering on street corners. The large amount of vacant land and poorly maintained buildings imply that no one wants to be there. Finally, crime impacts First Ward's image. The fear of crime discourages people from venturing into the area.

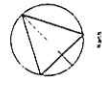
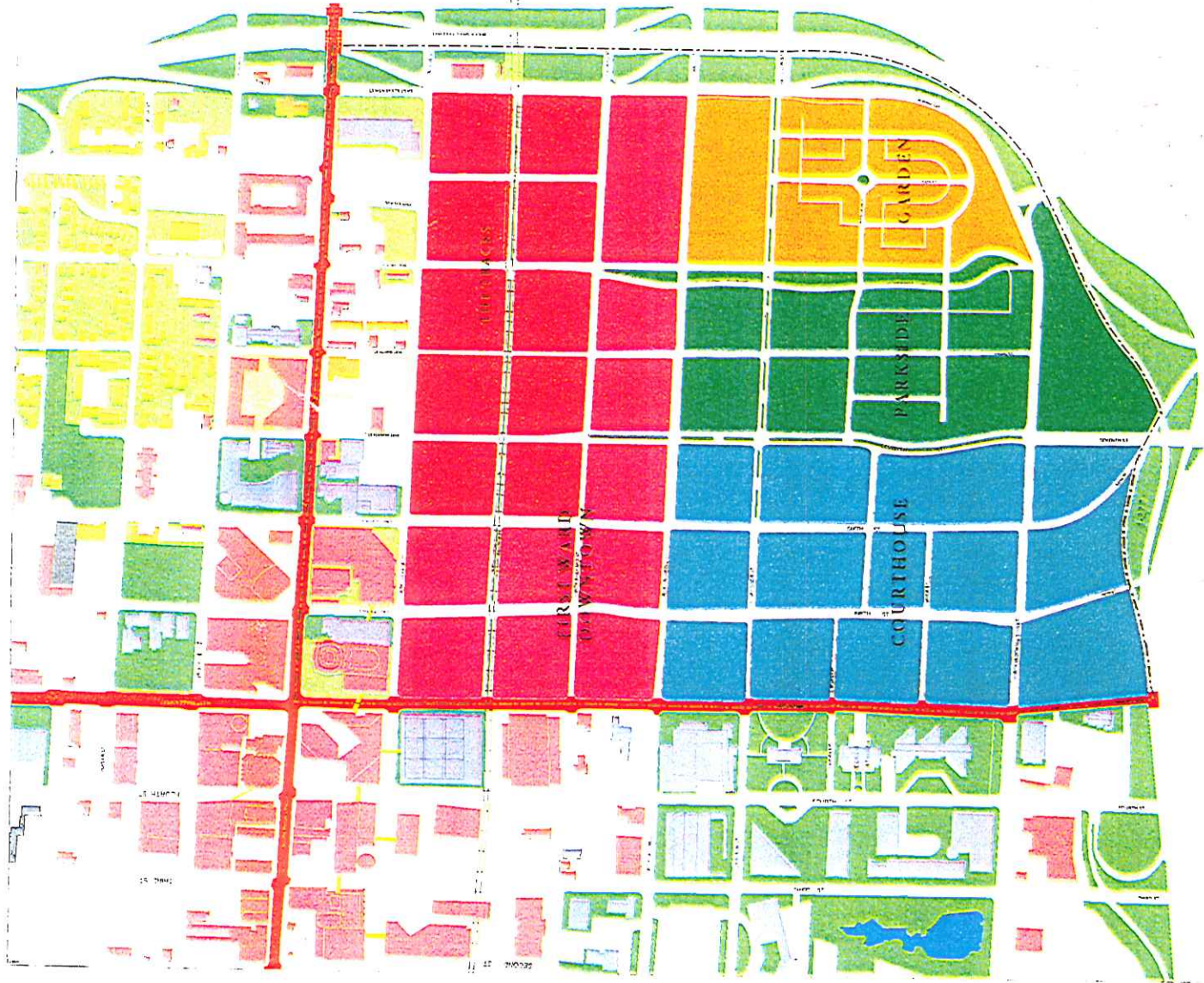
Resurgence of Interest in Intown Housing: Within the last few years, Charlotte has experienced a renewed interest in intown housing. Since the early 1990's, a number of new urban housing projects in Uptown have been announced. Most notable are the Ivey's, Transamerica Square, and 201 North Tryon Street developments located in the North Tryon Street corridor, which is adjacent to First Ward. Additionally, a number of other projects have been initiated in the Center City area just outside of Uptown. The current demand for intown housing provides a unique opportunity for creation of a new neighborhood in Uptown Charlotte.

Charlotte's "Spirit of Cooperation": Finally, and yet perhaps most importantly, the spirit of cooperation found in Charlotte will be an important strength when it is time to implement this plan. As evidenced by the partnership formed to develop the First Ward Master Plan, it will take the effort of both the public and private sectors to see that this plan is carried forward.

FIRST WARD DEVELOPMENT VISION

First Ward has been divided into four distinct districts: the Garden District, the Parkside District, the Courthouse District, and Downtown First Ward. For each of these districts, this plan identifies appropriate land uses, as well as recommended development guidelines. Additionally, the plan outlines a package of public open spaces and streetscape improvements designed to provide organization and to give each district a distinct identity. These amenities will create key "addresses" throughout First Ward.

The plan for each district is found on the following pages. An illustrative development scenario is provided in Appendix A. The illustrative scenario highlights First Ward's development potential if this plan is successfully implemented.



FIRST WARD DISTRICT PLAN

Districts Plan

Prepared by the Planning Department of the City of Chicago, 1990. The City of Chicago is not responsible for the accuracy or completeness of the information contained herein.

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1-277

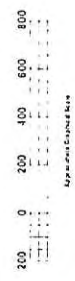
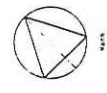
The primary purpose of the plan is to provide a development framework for First Ward. This is similar to the approach that a private developer would take when structuring a new development. One aspect of development framework work is to outline the appropriate land uses.

FIRST WARD DISTRICT PLAN

Recommended Land Use Plan

- Residential
- Office
- Open Space
- Business & Mixed Use
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Surface & Structured Parking

- UDA
- Metrolinks
- Light Rail
- Highway
- Waterway
- Other



GARDEN DISTRICT

Existing Conditions

The Garden District is located in the southeastern corner of First Ward. This district is bounded by I-277, Caldwell Street, and Ninth Street.

Most of the property in this district is owned by either the City of Charlotte or the Charlotte Housing Authority. A considerable amount of the publicly owned land is vacant. Existing structures on developed properties in the district will soon be removed. The existing Earle Village buildings will be demolished and additional land will become available for private development. Clinton Square, which was recently part of a land trade between the City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Housing Authority, will be demolished and new mixed-income housing is scheduled to be constructed by the Housing Authority and NationsBank Community Development Corporation on that site.

Privately owned properties in the district include the site of the former City View apartments. The United House of Prayer owns a church, the Grace Emmanuel apartment complex, and a small commercial center.

The Garden District's location makes it the most sheltered from through traffic, yet the most visible from the heavily traveled I-277 loop. Because of this district's visibility, the type of development that occurs will be key in setting the image of the new First Ward.

Concept

The focus of the Garden District will be a new linear green space designed using Latta Park in Dilworth as a model. This open space will extend from McDowell Street to Brevard Street and will be bounded by Ninth Street and "Parkside Drive", a new street proposed for the area. Surrounding development will primarily consist of *small scale lanes lined with a mixture of single family houses, townhouses, and small apartment buildings*. This area will be the lowest density and least intensely developed of the four First Ward districts. Within the Garden District, there should be an *emphasis on home ownership*. The homes that will be visible from I-277 will establish an image of a safe and stable neighborhood.

The concept for this district also includes a significant amount of new green space. In addition to the linear green space planned along Ninth Street, passive open space is recommended for the southeastern portion of this district between Myers, Ninth, and Eleventh Streets. A new landscaped median on Davidson Street will be added to transform this roadway into one of the "signature streets" for First Ward.

Structural changes to the street system are also recommended. New and relocated streets are proposed. Parkside Drive, the proposed street adjacent to the linear park, the realignment of Ninth

Street near McDowell Street, and a new “J-shaped” street between Ninth/Tenth Streets and Tenth/Eleventh Streets will reconfigure the area so that the vacant land can be more easily developed.

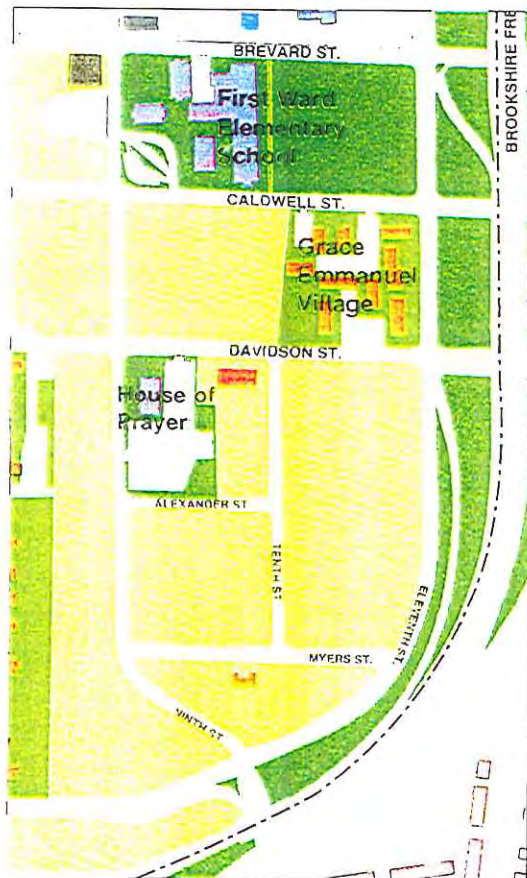
- On-street parking

Development Guidelines

Development in the Garden District should be consistent with the following guidelines:

- Mixture of single family detached, single family attached, and multi-family residential units
- Densities of eight to fourteen units per acre
- Building heights of two or three stories
- Scale of buildings consistent with single family houses
- Consistent front setbacks and side yards
- House entrances facing the street with an emphasis on front porches
- On-site parking located to the rear of buildings and accessed by alleyways
- Pedestrian friendly streetscapes, with sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian scale lighting

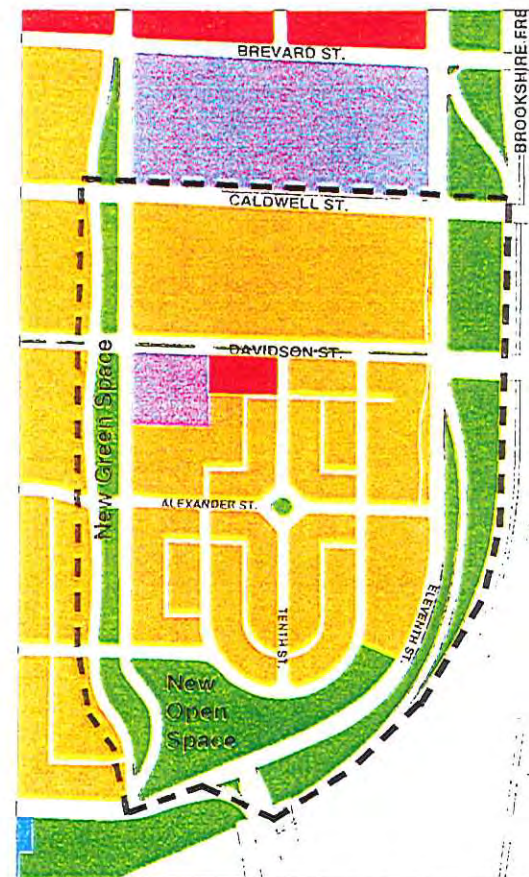
THE GARDEN DISTRICT



Existing Conditions



Potential Development Scenario



Generalized Land Use

Legend

	Residential		Office		Institutional		Industrial		Vacant Land
	Business & Mixed Use		Retail		Open Space		Structured Parking		District Boundaries
									New Street



GARDEN DISTRICT LANE

City of Charlotte

Prepared using Urban Digital Mapping provided by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission.
Scale and color of digital mapping was used for C-220 to the right of the map.

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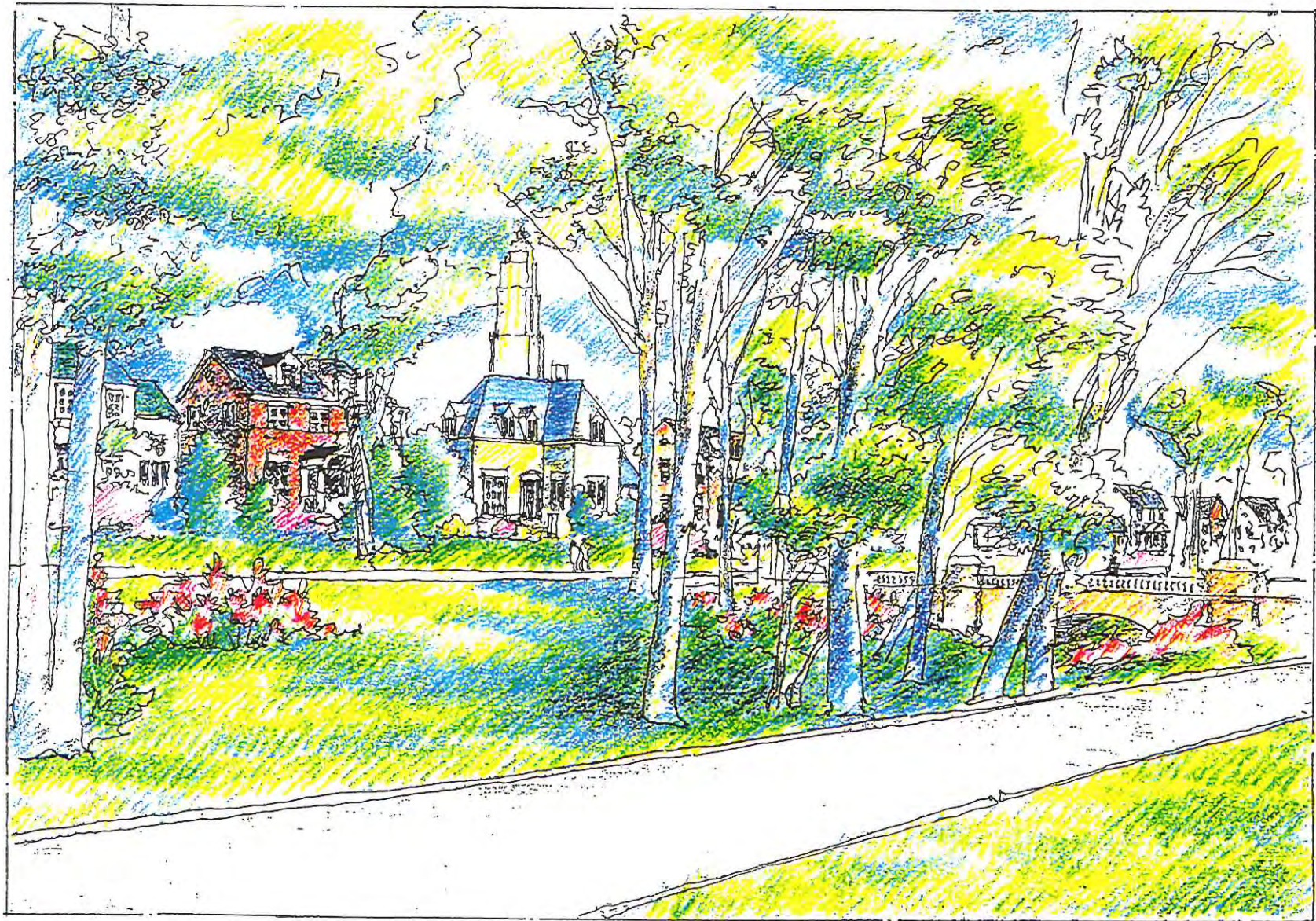
The Garden District will have small scale lanes lined with single family houses, townhouses, and small apartment houses.



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Interior Design



PARKSIDE DRIVE

City of Charlotte

Project: Urban Design and Landscape Architecture for Charlotte's Parkside Drive Planning Commission
Created for use in the City of Charlotte's website by G&P Architects, Inc.

Seen from the Garden District, the new Park reflects the character of traditional Charlotte Parks and neighborhoods and establishes the image for both the Garden and Parkside Districts.



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Urban Design & Planning
Landscape Design

PARKSIDE DISTRICT

Existing Conditions

This district is bounded by I-277, Seventh Street, Caldwell Street, and Ninth Street. Most of the land in this district is owned by either the City of Charlotte or the Charlotte Housing Authority. With the exception of the Afro-American Cultural Center located on Seventh Street, all of the land that the City owns is vacant. Most of the existing Earle Village structures will be cleared and new mixed-income housing will be built. The remaining Earle Village units will be extensively renovated.

In addition to the publicly owned land in this district, there are some properties that are privately owned. Little Rock AME Zion Church is located at Seventh Street and McDowell Street. The northeast side of Eighth Street, between McDowell Street and Alexander Street, is lined with private homes that were moved to this location during urban renewal.

Concept

Development in the Parkside District will be mainly residential, with a *wide range of housing types and densities*.

Overlooking the linear open space along Ninth Street will be single family homes. The area closer to Seventh Street will have a mix of single family detached houses, townhouses, and multi-

family housing. Overall, the Parkside District will be *developed more intensely than the Garden District*.

A gracious landscaped boulevard along Seventh Street will make this street the focal point of the district and of much of First Ward. This street is designed to be lined with cultural and civic uses, such as the Afro-American Cultural Center and Little Rock AME Zion Church, and multi-story residential buildings.

The *potential for residential or non-residential uses exists for the property at Seventh and McDowell Streets*, across McDowell Street from Little Rock AME Zion Church. This site is appropriate for either multi-family at 15 to 25 units per acre, retail development, or office development similar to the existing office development directly across Seventh Street. Design which is consistent with this site's urban location will be important for this property.

Streetscape and open space amenities are also important components of the Parkside District. In addition to the boulevard on Seventh Street, the central median along North Davidson Street which began in the Garden District will continue through Parkside. Passive green space will be retained along the edge of I-277, and should be considered for incorporation into the Little Sugar Creek greenway system.

Development Guidelines

Development in the Parkside District should be consistent with the following guidelines:

- Mixture of single family detached, townhouse, and multi-family buildings
- Densities transitioning from eight units per acre along Ninth Street to twenty-four units per acre along Seventh Street
- Cultural and residential uses along Seventh Street
- Height and scale increasing from lowest level at Garden District boundary to highest level along Seventh Street; maximum height of three stories at boundary of Garden District increasing to a maximum height of six stories along Seventh Street
- Consistent front setbacks and side yards
- Buildings and primary entrances facing the street
- On-site parking located to the rear of buildings
- Consistent streetscape, with sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian scale lighting
- On-street parking

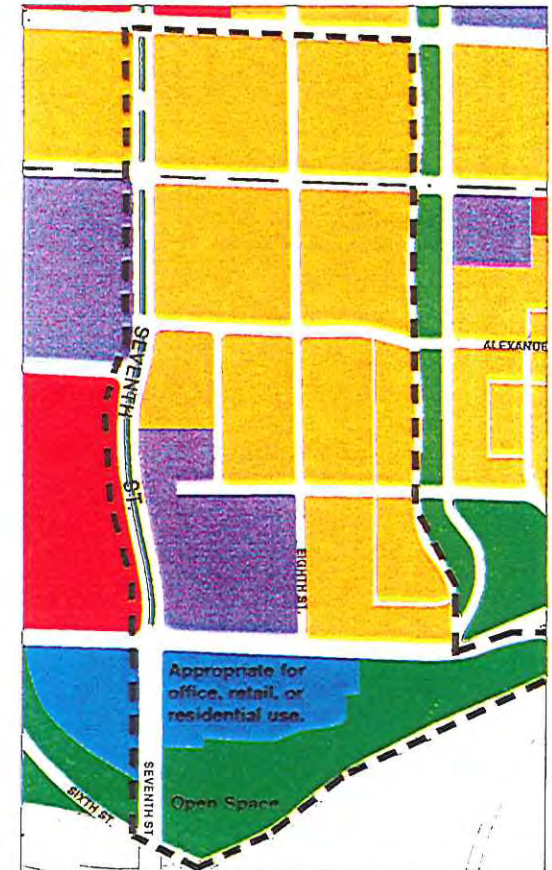
PARKSIDE DISTRICT



Existing Conditions



Potential Development Scenario



Generalized Land Use

Legend

	Residential		Office		Institutional		Industrial		Vacant Land
	Business & Mixed Use		Retail		Open Space		Structured Parking		District Boundaries
									New Street



PARKSIDE AT DAVIDSON STREET

City of Charlotte

Designed using City of Charlotte data provided by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission.
Colors and materials are illustrative and subject to change.

The differences in the way in which a wide range of housing types were financed are made invisible by a consistent architectural residential character.



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COURTHOUSE DISTRICT

Existing Conditions

The Courthouse District is bounded by Seventh Street, I-277, East Trade Street, and North Caldwell Street. This district is located across Trade Street from the Government Center.

Much of the Courthouse District property between Fifth and Seventh Streets is owned by either the Charlotte Housing Authority or the City of Charlotte. While there is some vacant land between North Davidson Street, Sixth Street, Seventh Street, and Myers Street, most of the public property in this area is in use. These uses include the new Law Enforcement Center, a Charlotte Fire Station, the existing First Ward Park, and the site of the Housing Authority's elderly building and future day care and community centers.

Concept

The Courthouse District will contain a *mix of urban uses*. These uses will include residential, office, retail, and institutional.

Along the Seventh Street boulevard, there will be urban residential and institutional uses, such as the First Ward community center and elderly housing building. The existing retail in the small shopping center at Seventh and McDowell Streets is recommended to remain. However, if desired by the owner, redevelopment of the site could be appropriate and should be undertaken in conjunction with development of the

First Ward park land and excess Housing Authority property. An urban mixed-use project, with retail and residential on the Seventh Street frontage and office on the Sixth Street frontage, is recommended if the site is redeveloped. If the existing First Ward park site is developed, the park space should be replaced in other parts of First Ward.

The section of the Courthouse District between Sixth Street and Trade Street is recommended for mixed-use development. This area is expected to be developed mainly with offices. Ground floor retail is encouraged. Multi-story residential development would also be appropriate.

Transportation system enhancements for the Courthouse District include the addition of medians on Seventh Street and a section of North Davidson Street. In addition, an extension of Alexander Street, between Sixth and Seventh Streets, will provide a direct connection between the First Ward residential area and the Government Center.

Development Guidelines

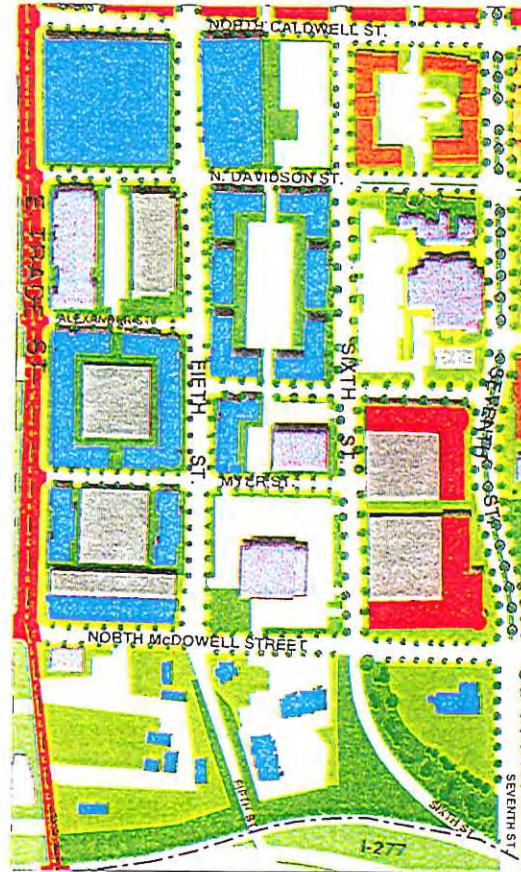
Development in the Courthouse District should be consistent with the following guidelines:

- Mix of uses; primarily residential and institutional fronting on Seventh Street; the remainder of the district to be developed mainly with offices with ground floor retail encouraged
- Heights of three to six stories
- Compatible scale and character of office and residential structures
- All structures of an urban form, with facades parallel to the street and minimal side yards and setbacks
- Buildings oriented to the street with entrances directly connected to the street
- On-site parking located on the interior portion of the site
- Consistent streetscape, with sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian scale lighting
- On-street parking where appropriate

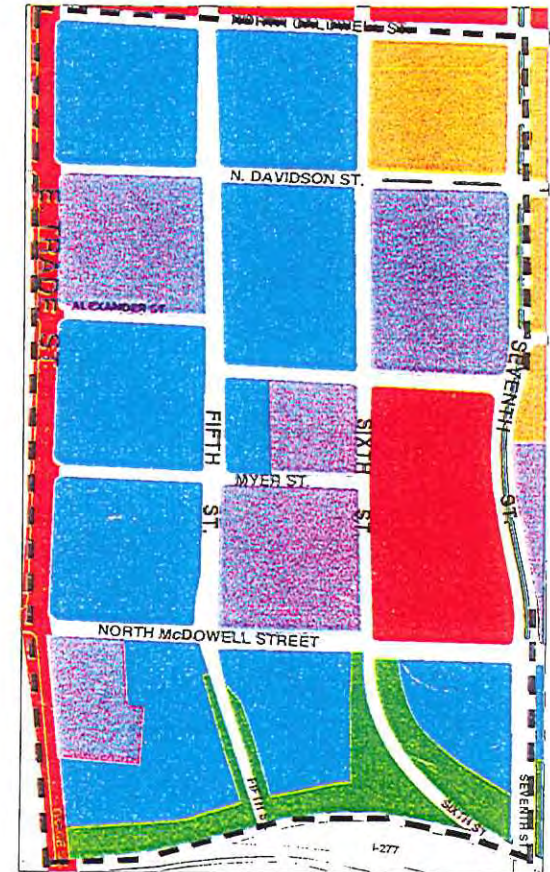
COURTHOUSE DISTRICT



Existing Conditions



Potential Development Scenario

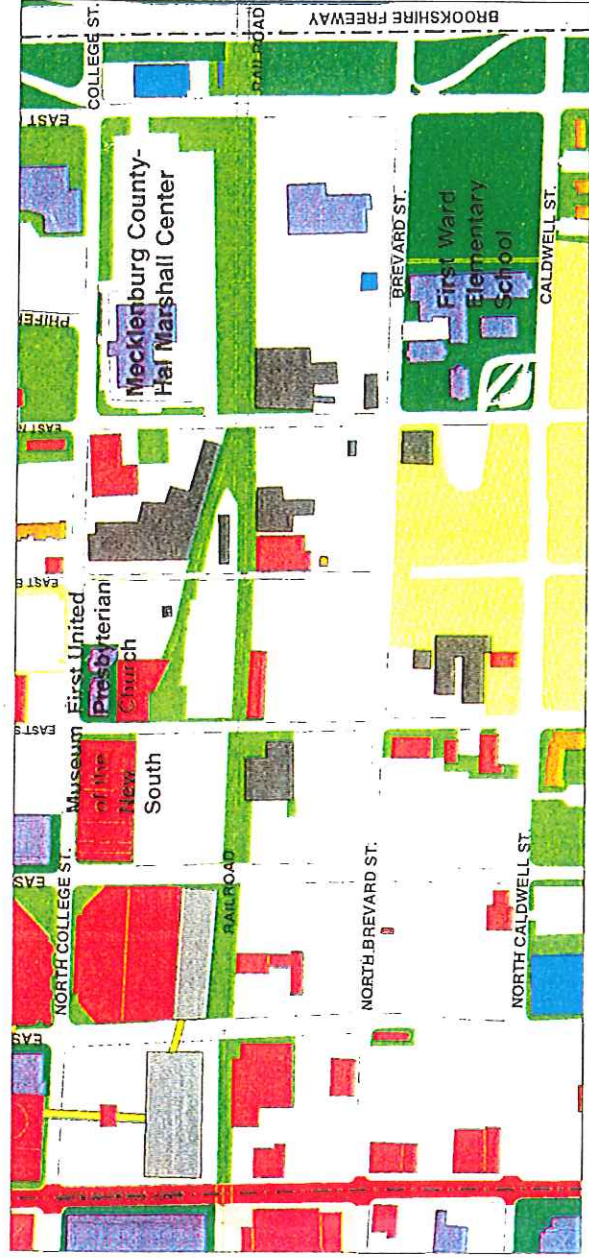


Generalized Land Use

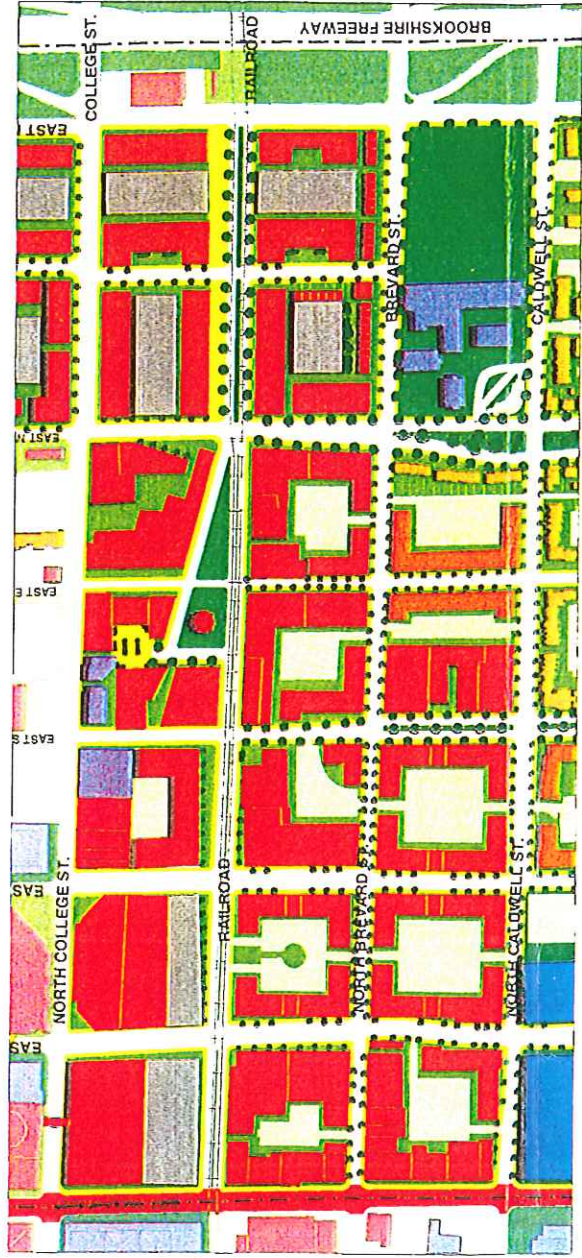
Legend

	Residential		Office		Institutional		Industrial		Vacant Land
	Business & Mixed Use		Retail		Open Space		Structured Parking		District Boundaries
									New Street

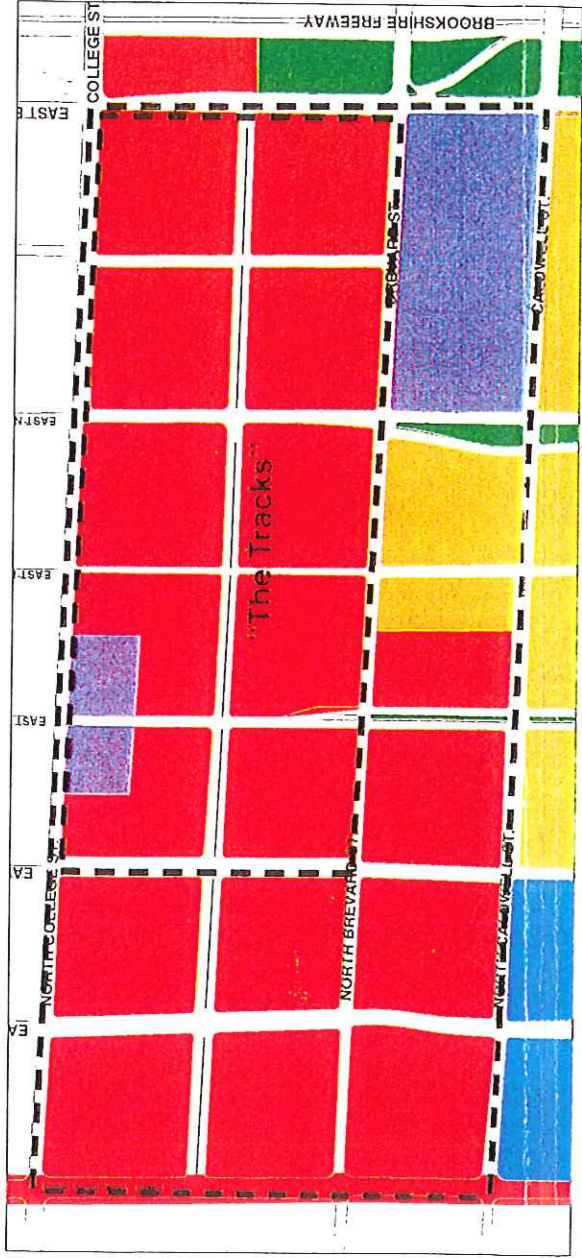
DOWNTOWN FIRST WARD DISTRICT



Existing Conditions



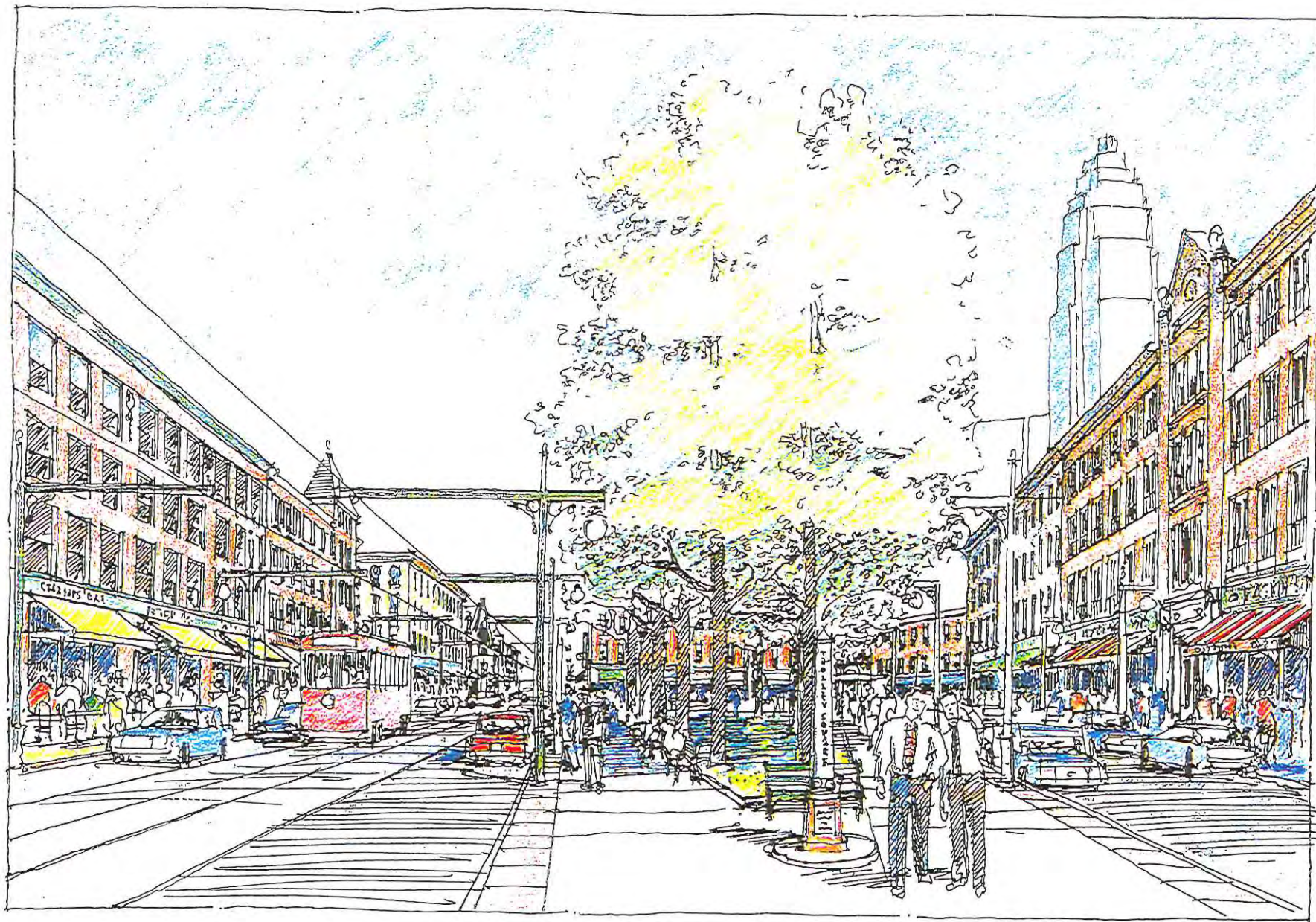
Potential Development Scenario



Generalized Land Use

Legend

	Residential		Office		Institutional		Industrial		Vacant Land
	Business & Mixed Use		Retail		Open Space		Structured Parking		District Boundaries
									New Street



THE TRACKS

City of Charlotte

Prepared using Urban digital base mapping provided by Charlotte-Durham Planning Commission.
Scale and accuracy of mapping was noted by CMAP as its responsibility.

Date: January 1, 2008

A new pedestrian scale street is the address for a mix of entertainment, retail, residential, and business in a mix of old and new buildings. The development of a trolley linking this area with the new Convention Center and the South End would ensure the success of Downtown First Ward.

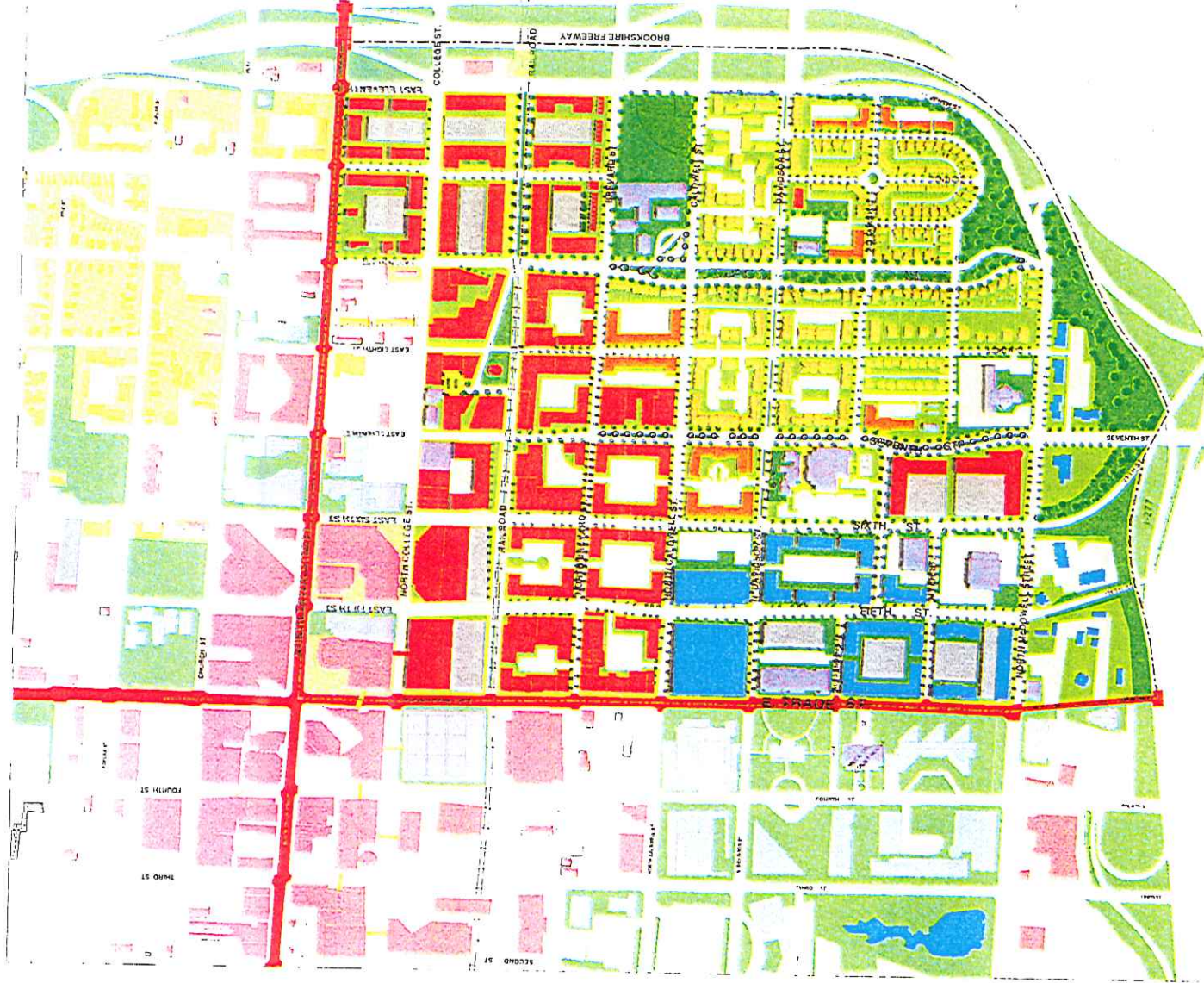


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Architecture
Urban Design and Planning
Interior Design



A primary goal of the plan is to create value in an area that currently has little marketability. Successful implementation of this plan will help to enhance the value of First Ward properties by creating a positive image that will attract new investment.



FIRST WARD DISTRICT PLAN

Potential Development Scenario

The potential development scenario shown on this map is based on the current zoning and the potential for future development. It is not a guarantee of future development.

	Residential		Institutional
	Retail		Office
	Open Space		Industrial
	Business & Mixed Use		Surface & Structured Parking

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NEXT STEPS

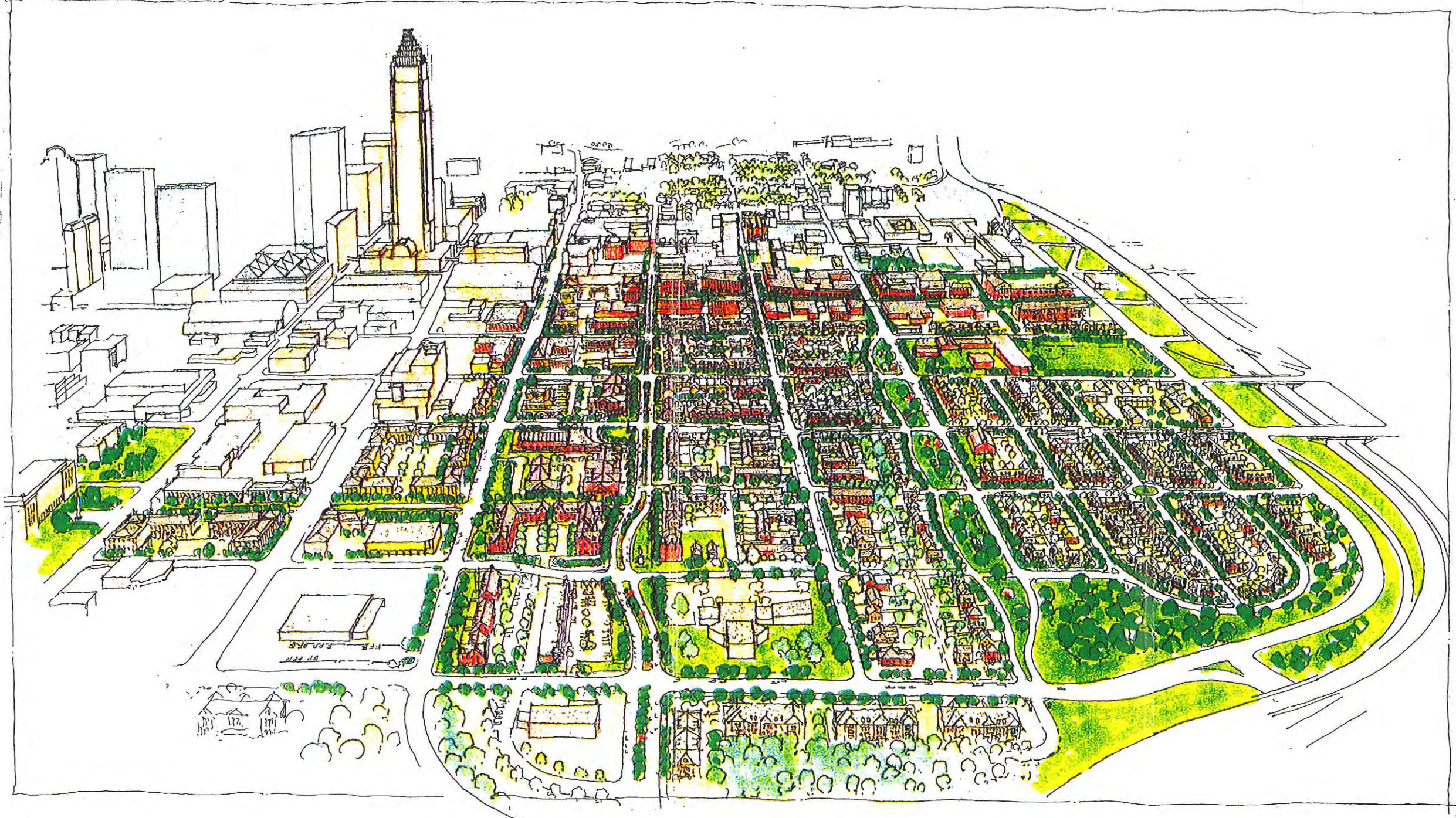
IMPLEMENTATION

After this plan is adopted, coordinated implementation of the plan will be essential. A proposed set of implementation strategies is outlined in an accompanying document, **First Ward Master Plan, Volume 2: Implementation Program**. Each implementation action outlined in the implementation document will be assigned to the appropriate City staff. Staff will determine the steps needed to accomplish each action, including City Council review and approval when needed.

APPENDIX A

ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

The following drawings show one possible development scenario that could result from implementation of this plan.



FIRST WARD ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

City of Charlotte

Prepared using Upton digital base mapping provided by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission.
Scale and accuracy of mapping was noted by C.M.P.C. to be approximate.

Date: May 1996



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Interior Design

FIRST WARD MASTER PLAN

Volume 2: Implementation Program

June 6, 1996 Draft
Updated June 17, 1997

Compiled by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

Plan Sponsored
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NationsBank Community Development Corporation



INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the actions steps that will be necessary to implement the concept outlined in the accompanying document, **First Ward Master Plan, Volume 1: Development Concept**. This implementation document will not be adopted by City Council. However, many of the actions identified will require City Council approval and will be brought to the City Council for approval on a case-by-case basis. Adoption of the **First Ward Concept Plan** does not imply approval of the implementation strategies listed in the following pages of this document.

Zoning changes contained in this document will require a full public hearing and review process by the Charlotte City Council. Any publicly constructed capital improvements recommended by this plan will be funded only through the City's capital improvement process. Recommended First Ward capital projects will compete with other proposed capital projects for funding.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

One of the primary objectives of the investment strategy for First Ward is to increase the development potential of property in the area. This is the approach that was taken in Fourth Ward in the late 1970's and early 1980's when infrastructure improvements were made to leverage new development in that neighborhood. The subsequent revitalization and new construction resulted in a \$120 million property value increase, from \$6 million in 1970 to \$126 million in 1995.

Currently, there is little market for First Ward properties, as evidenced by the large amount of vacant and underutilized land owned by both public and private sector entities. The capital investments identified for First Ward are designed to increase property value, as well as to enhance the area's potential to be transformed into an urban neighborhood. First Ward will not be successful unless there is a renewed demand for property in the area and publicly owned land is sold and put into the hands of private developers.

The accompanying map shows the location of recommended infrastructure improvements. Cost estimates for these improvements are included in Appendix A. There are a number of potential approaches for financing these improvements. If financed through the City's capital improvement process, funds from increased First Ward tax revenues or proceeds from the sale of publicly owned property could be used. Additionally, City

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Council could require that certain improvements be constructed by the purchasers of City-owned property.

First Ward infrastructure improvements fall into the following categories: streetscape improvements, transportation system enhancements, and park and open space projects. Below is a listing of infrastructure investments recommended in the Concept Plan document.

Seventh Street Boulevard Improvement: The transformation of Seventh Street into a boulevard with a wide landscaped median is proposed for the section between McDowell Street and Caldwell Street. Additional streetscaping will be performed in the blocks between I-277 and McDowell Street and between Caldwell and Brevard Streets.

The Seventh Street investment is perhaps the most important public investment proposed for First Ward. Because Seventh Street carries a large number of daily commuters through First Ward, its appearance is extremely important in creating a new image for First Ward. (See Appendix B for proposed cross-section.) The Seventh Street project has been funded by City Council through the FY 1997 Capital Improvements Program.

North Davidson Street Boulevard: A new landscaped median is planned for North Davidson Street. This project will result in a streetscape similar to that planned for Seventh Street. (See Appendix B for proposed cross-section.)

Miscellaneous Streetscape Improvements: The public sector will improve the streetscape along some streets such as Seventh and Davidson Streets. On other streets, improved streetscapes will result from redevelopment. However, gaps in improved streetscapes are likely where existing businesses remain. In these cases, the City might want to make minor streetscape improvements in front of these businesses.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

Rail Corridor Improvements: A new street is recommended for the inactive rail corridor which runs between College and Brevard Streets. This street will also incorporate a trolley line so that this area can be connected by trolley to the Convention Center and South End. A cross-section of the proposed street and trolley line is found in Appendix B. (Note: A concurrent study sponsored by the City of Charlotte Engineering Department is reviewing the future use of the inactive rail corridor between Eleventh Street and Scalebark Road. The results of that study could have implications for the recommended concept for the rail corridor in First Ward.)

"J-Shaped" Street in the Garden District: This new street will be located between Ninth and Eleventh Streets. The proposed

street will help to break down the large city blocks in First Ward and will make them more feasible for single family attached and detached development.

Extension of Alexander Street between Sixth and Seventh Streets: This improvement is recommended to better connect First Ward with the Government Center complex.

Street System Reconnections: There are a number of missing street segments in the street grid system in First Ward. Street segments which should be reconnected include: 1) Myer Street between Eighth and Ninth Streets, 2) Tenth Street between Brevard and College Streets, 3) Alexander Street between Eighth and Ninth Streets and between Tenth and Eleventh Streets, and 4) Eighth Street between Caldwell and Brevard Streets.

PARK AND OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Ninth Street Linear Open Space: A new linear open space is planned adjacent to the section of Ninth Street that is located between McDowell Street and Brevard Street. The creation of this open space will require the construction of a new street parallel to Ninth Street, "Parkside Drive", as well as reconfiguration of the street connection between Ninth Street and Eleventh Street/McDowell Street. (See Appendix B for proposed cross-section.)

Reconfigured Park Land: A reconfigured park system is recommended for First Ward. This will require the elimination of the existing First Ward Park, located on Seventh Street, and

the development of a new park site or sites. The new park land should provide a one-for-one replacement of the existing park space.

LAND DISPOSITION STRATEGY

The City of Charlotte, the Charlotte Housing Authority, Mecklenburg County, and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education own over 80 acres of land in First Ward. Much of this land is vacant or significantly underutilized. (See Appendix C for location and use of publicly owned land.)

Disposition of Publicly Held Land: All publicly held land in First Ward which is not needed for a public use, as decided by the respective owners of each tract of land, should be made available to the private sector for development in accordance with this plan. Ideally, this effort will be coordinated between all public entities which hold property in First Ward. These include the City of Charlotte, the Charlotte Housing Authority, Mecklenburg County, and the Board of Education.

A policy recommendation concerning disposition of City owned land in First Ward will be presented to Council shortly after adoption of the **First Ward Development Concept**. This recommendation will address the decision-making criteria and process for disposition of City property, as well as the use of proceeds from disposition. Similarly, a policy recommendation concerning the exchange, lease, or sale of Housing Authority owned land will be presented to the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners for their approval.

Land Trades: In some instances, the land disposition objectives and approach of public agencies may be different. Consequently, there may be situations for which the trading of land between

these entities is advisable in order to meet the objectives of public agencies, to create larger parcels of land to sell, or to accomplish the intent of this plan. The City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Housing Authority have already exchanged property in First Ward in order to support CHA's plans for development of a mixed-income rental community. The Clinton Square apartments, soon to be demolished, were a part of that land exchange.

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

Overall, the existing transportation system in First Ward is consistent with the vision outlined in the development concept document. However, there are a few recommended enhancements. The reconnection of existing streets and the addition of new streets has been discussed in the Investment Strategies section of this document. Additional transportation system enhancements are outline below.

On-Street Parking: For most streets, the reintroduction of on-street parking is envisioned. Most First Ward streets should allow on-street parking at all times. On-street parking on those thoroughfares which carry heavy peak hour traffic might have to be restricted to non-peak hours and weekends. Nonetheless, on-street parking is encouraged for these streets also.

Alleyways: Development of an alleyway system to access single family attached and detached homes in First Ward is recommended. Alleyways will reduce the number of curb cuts and will allow for the accommodation of more on-street parking. Additionally, alleyways will enhance the appearance of development in First Ward by removing cars and garages from public view. Alleys will be built as a part of private development.

PARK AND OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Park Space Reconfiguration: The development concept for First Ward recommends that the existing First Ward Park be replaced with a reconfigured park system that will be better integrated into the new neighborhood. To implement this recommendation, additional planning will be needed to determine the exact location of new park land. This planning effort should include representatives from the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department, the City of Charlotte, and the Charlotte Housing Authority.

Little Sugar Creek Greenway: During planning for new park space, attention should be given to the development of a Little Sugar Creek Greenway connection through First Ward.

First Ward Elementary School Facilities: There are playing fields at First Ward Elementary School that are inaccessible to the general public, even when school is not in session. A joint-use plan between the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education should be considered for this space.

Landscaping along I-277: Additional landscaping should be provided along I-277. This effort will require coordination between the City of Charlotte and the North Carolina Department of Transportation since the State maintains this highway.

REGULATORY STRATEGY

Zoning Revisions: First Ward zoning has been reviewed to identify inconsistencies between the plan recommendations and existing zoning. Areas where zoning and the recommended land use are inconsistent have been identified. These areas have been identified on the accompanying map.

The following text outlines the zoning changes necessary to ensure that development is consistent with the development concept for First Ward.

- *Area 1: Rezone property at McDowell and Ninth Streets from B-2 to UR-2:* This vacant property in the Garden District is publicly owned. The plan calls for residential development on this site but the property is zoned for retail development.

- *Area 2: Rezone property along McDowell Street from B-1/B-2/O-2 to UR-C:* Along McDowell Street, between Ninth and Trade Streets, there is a mixture of zoning including B-1, B-2, and O-2. These zoning districts encourage a pattern of development that is of a more suburban character than that described in the plan. The identified zoning change to UR-C will promote a more urban form of development while allowing the same types of uses as the existing zoning districts.

- *Area 3: Rezone property between Brevard and Caldwell Streets, UR-2:* The First Ward Elementary School site and the properties across Ninth Street from the school are planned for institutional and residential uses. The recommended UR-2 zoning is consistent with the existing school use and will insure that residential development occurs on the adjacent residentially planned land, almost all of which is publicly owned.

- *Area 4: Develop alternative to existing U-MUD zoning in the section of "Downtown First Ward" between Sixth Street and the Brookshire Freeway:* The First Ward development concept recommends mid-rise, mixed-use development in this area. However, U-MUD has minimal height limitations and may allow some uses which are not compatible with the recommended mixed-use concept. Additionally, the plan calls for ground floor retail along the rail corridor, but this area of First Ward is not covered by U-MUD retail requirements.

Alternatives to the current U-MUD should be considered. Potential alternatives include: 1) a variation of the existing U-MUD zoning, or 2) an overlay district for the existing U-MUD zoning.

Area 5: Develop alternative to existing U-MUD zoning in the section of the "Courthouse District" generally bounded by Trade, Sixth, McDowell, and Caldwell Streets: The First Ward development concept recommends mid-rise development in this area. The plan suggest a range of uses be allowed, with an emphasis on office uses. As with Area 4, alternatives to U-MUD are recommended because of U-MUD zoning's lack of height restrictions and potentially incompatible uses.

Site Design Guidelines: The public sector owns much of the property that will be developed in First Ward. The development of site design guidelines is recommended for publicly-owned land which will be sold to the private sector for new development. These guidelines will be especially important for residentially planned properties in the Garden and Parkside Districts to insure that the character of new development is consistent with the First Ward development concept. These guidelines could be incorporated into deed restrictions and implemented through the disposition process for publicly owned properties.

Uptown Streetscape Guidelines: The Uptown Streetscape Guidelines need to be reviewed to determine if additions or revisions to the Streetscape Guidelines are necessary. Consideration should also be given to exempting this area from some of the Urban Forestry requirements where street trees could substitute for the placement of trees on private property.

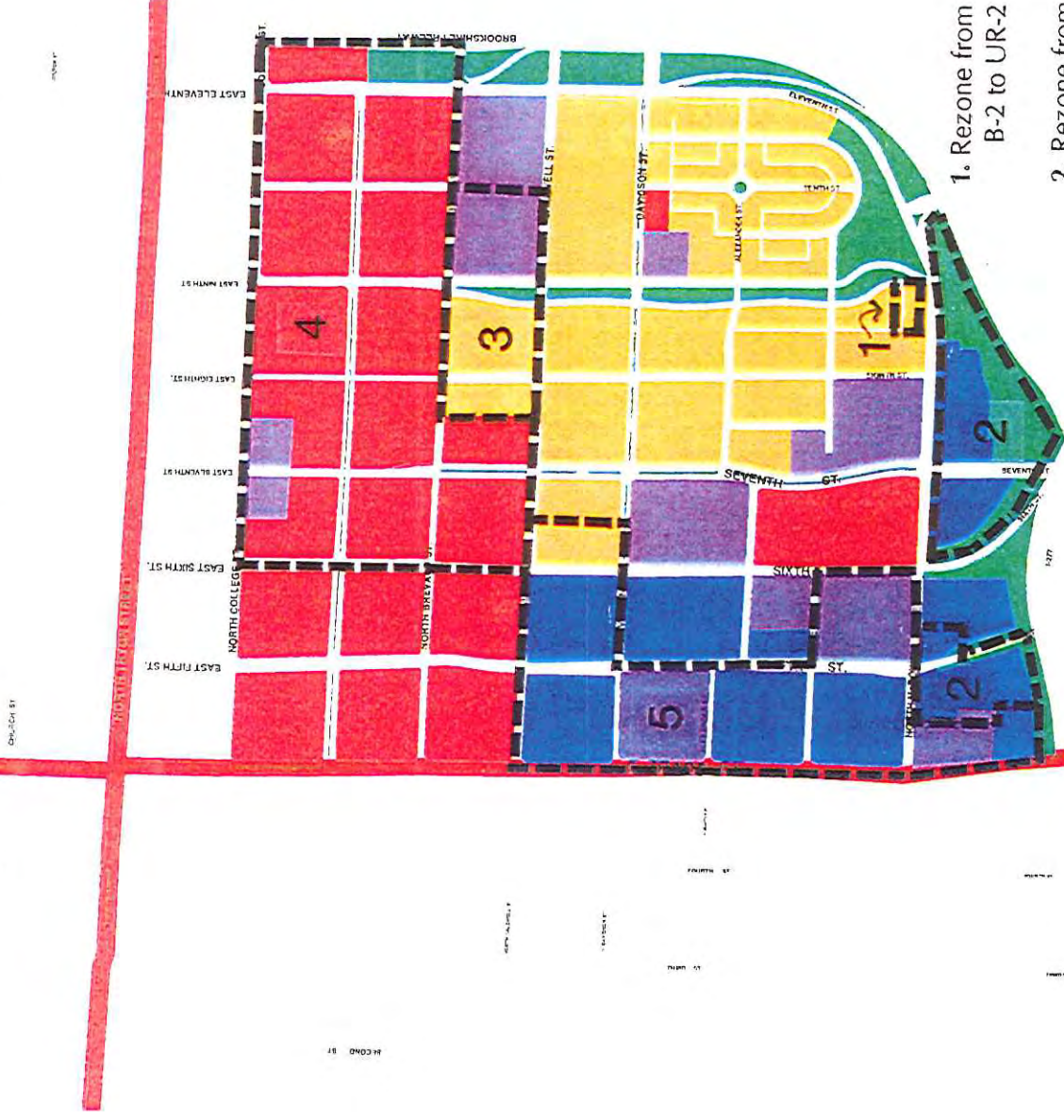
ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

Utility Line Burial: If First Ward is to develop into an urban neighborhood, utility lines will need to be buried for both aesthetic and functional reasons. An underground utility plan addressing where utilities should be placed and who should be responsible for burying them needs to be developed.

Support of Existing Businesses: A strategy should be developed to provide supportive services to First Ward businesses which might be impacted or displaced during implementation of this plan. Efforts should be made to insure that there are opportunities for impacted businesses to remain and thrive within the new First Ward community.

Crime and Safety: Historically, First Ward has been perceived as a high crime area. A coordinated effort, involving the Charlotte Police Department and those developing in the area, should be made to deal with those criminal elements which may remain within First Ward.

Recommended Zoning Changes to Implement Development Concept



1. Rezone from
B-2 to UR-2

2. Rezone from B-1/B-2/O-2
to UR-C

3. Rezone from UMUD to UR-2

4. Develop alternative to
existing UMUD zoning

5. Develop alternative to
existing UMUD zoning

The primary purpose of the plan is to provide a development framework for First Ward. This is similar to the approach that a private developer would take when structuring a new development. One aspect of development framework is to outline the appropriate land uses.

FIRST WARD DISTRICT PLAN

Revised Land Use Plan

Revised Land Use Plan and other information available at the City of Chicago Planning Department, 120 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60602

	Residential		Institutional
	Office		Industrial
	Open Space		Surface & Structured Parking
	Business & Mixed Use		

URVA PLANNING
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www.urva.org

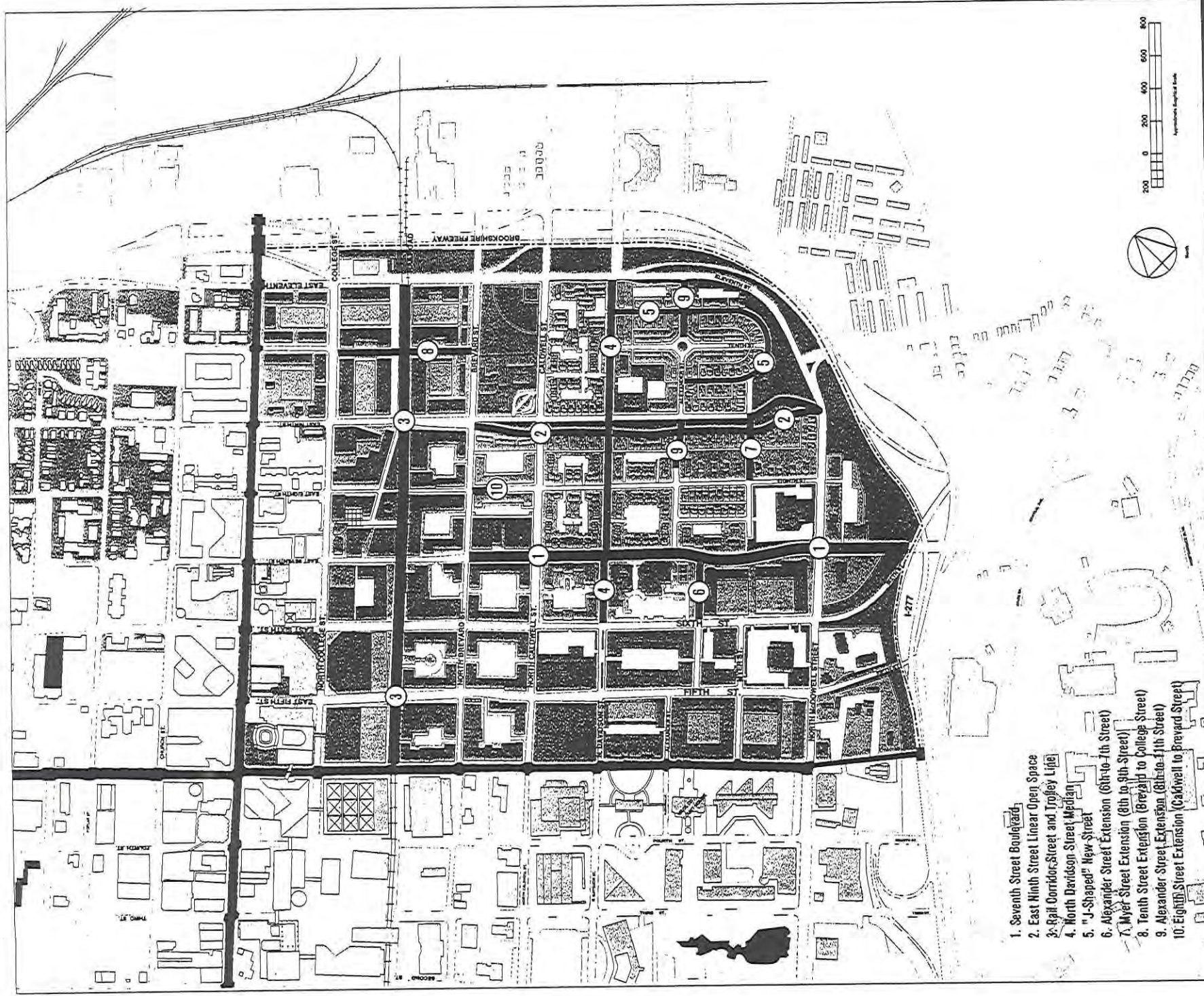
APPENDIX A

INFRASTRUCTURE COST ESTIMATES

The following chart indicates cost estimates for infrastructure investments, the priority level for each project, and the potential for private participation in each infrastructure project.

FIRST WARD INFRASTRUCTURE COST ESTIMATES

PROJECT NAME	COST	POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION	PRIORITY
Seventh Street Boulevard	\$1,500,000	No (Project Already Funded by City)	High
Ninth Street Linear Open Space and Parallel Park	\$2,200,000	Yes (High)	High
North Davidson Street Median	\$1,140,000	No	High
"J-Shaped" Street in Garden District	\$1,050,000	Yes (High)	High
Street and Trolley Line Improvements on Rail Corridor	\$4,500,000	Yes (Moderate)	High
Park Space Reconfiguration	To be determined	No	High
Alexander Street Extension between Sixth and Seventh Streets	\$250,000	Yes (High)	Medium
Myer Street Reconnection between Eighth and Ninth Streets	\$250,000	Yes (High)	Medium
Alexander Street Reconnection between Eighth and Eleventh Streets	\$410,000	Yes (High)	Medium
Eight Street Reconnection between Caldwell and Brevard Streets	\$60,000	Yes (High)	Medium
Tenth Street Extension	\$440,000	Yes (High)	Low
Miscellaneous Streetscape Improvements	\$500,000	No	Low
TOTAL	\$12,300,000		



1. Seventh Street Boulevard
2. East Ninth Street Linear Open Space
3. Rail Corridor Street and Trolley Lane
4. North Davidson Street Median
5. "J-Shaped" New Street
6. Alexander Street Extension (6th to 7th Street)
7. Myer Street Extension (8th to 9th Street)
8. Tenth Street Extension (Brevard to College Street)
9. Alexander Street Extension (8th to 11th Street)
10. Eighth Street Extension (College to Brevard Street)

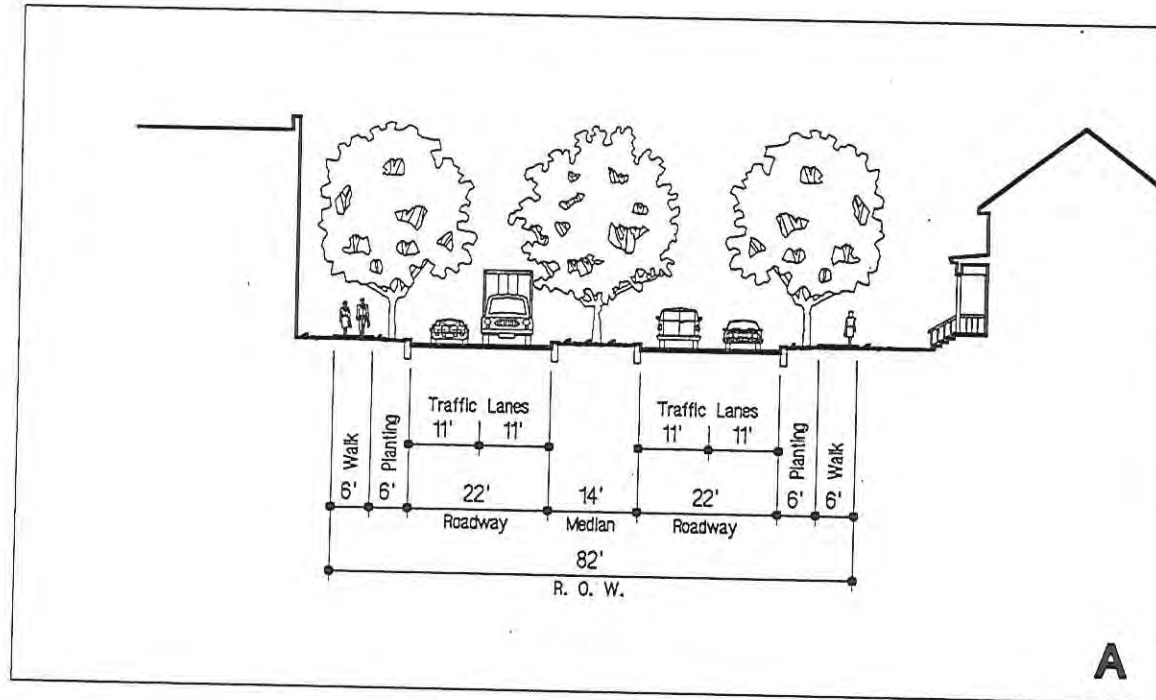
FIRST WARD DISTRICT PLAN

APPENDIX B

STREET NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

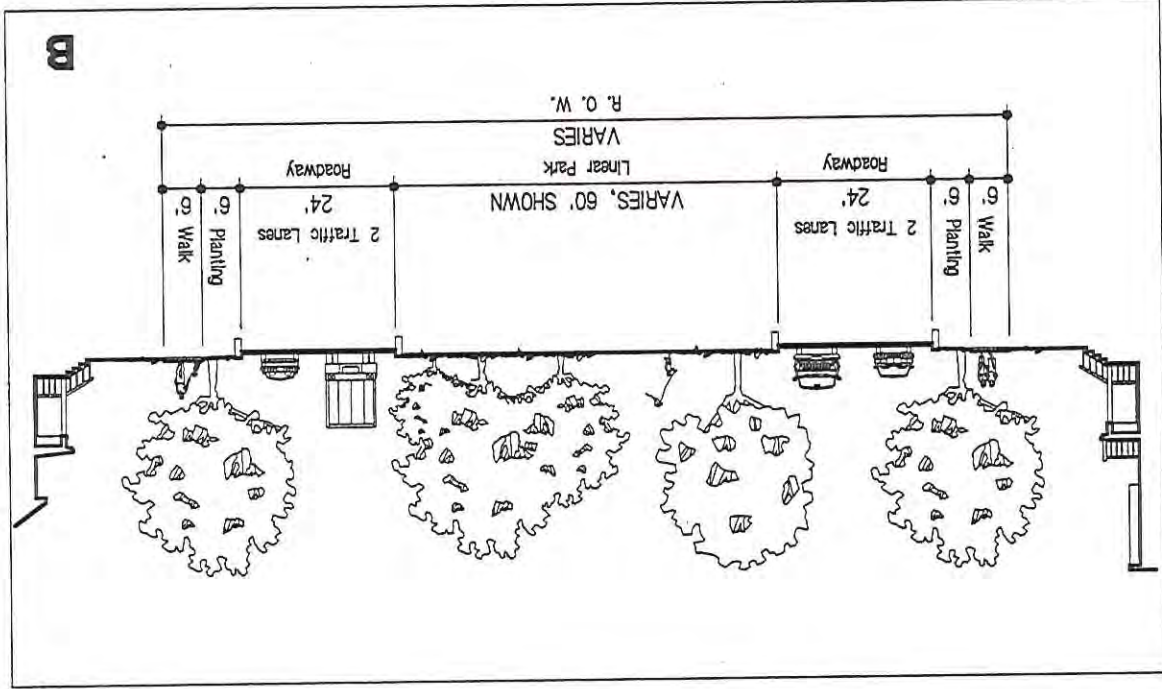
The following pages show street cross-sections that have been proposed for First Ward. The dimensions shown on the drawings are preliminary. The final dimension will be determined in consultation with the Charlotte Department of Transportation and Charlotte Engineering Key Business.

First Ward
City of Charlotte, North Carolina



SEVENTH STREET
Proposed Boulevard Scheme - Peak

First Ward
City of Charlotte, North Carolina



PARKSIDE DRIVE
Proposed Scheme

UDA Standard Streetscapes
Sections

dbstreet-sec/dr.char.final/ly.char16

