

THE OAKHURST LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN

Adopted by the Charlotte City Council on May 28, 1996

THE OAKHURST LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN

Getting to Know Oakhurst

Oakhurst is a predominantly post World War II residential area located approximately four miles southeast of Uptown Charlotte. For the purposes of this plan, the boundaries of the study area include the following: East Independence Boulevard (Highway 74) on the north, North Sharon Amity Road on the east, the Seaboard Airline Railroad tracks south of Monroe Road on the south and Wendover Road/Eastway Drive (Highway 4) on the west (see Map 1).

The study area contains a solidly developed commercial strip along East Independence Boulevard including the Coliseum Shopping Center and the Amity Gardens Shopping Center. The Monroe Road corridor contains a mixture of industrial, commercial, office and institutional uses along with a few residential structures. The study area also contains three churches, one publicly-owned school (Oakhurst Elementary School - 13.2 acres) and four day care facilities. The largest industrial use is the eight acre Woonsocket Spinning Company.

The Oakhurst area generally has well maintained, clean streets, good storm drainage, sidewalks on the major streets and curbs and gutters provided on more than 40 percent of the streets. Several of the streets are stubbed to reduce cut-through traffic within the neighborhood. Because of the commercial and office uses along Monroe Road and Independence Boulevard, the area's topography and numerous large trees, many people probably are unaware of the nice, secluded neighborhoods "tucked away" between the heavily traveled corridors surrounding the study area.

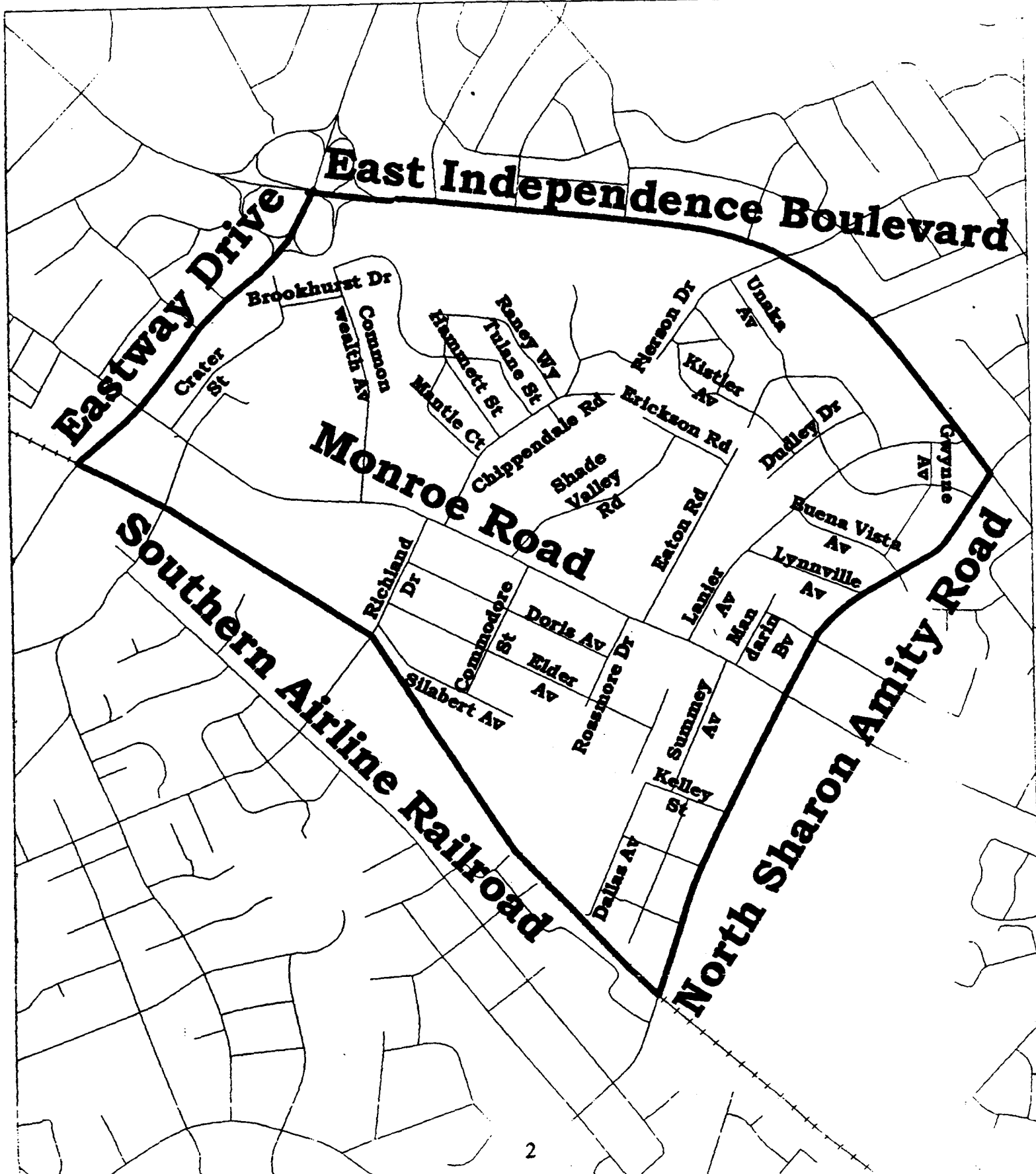
Oakhurst is centrally located, with the residents in the study area having good accessibility in all directions. They can travel northwest on Monroe Road or East Independence Boulevard to the uptown area or in the opposite direction toward Highway 51. North Sharon Amity Road provides the residents with easy access to Eastland Mall and a "relatively straight shot" to Southpark Mall. The residents can travel north on Highway 4 to I-85 (via Sugar Creek Road) and southwest on Highway 4 to I-77, the Charlotte Coliseum and the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport.

Several restaurants and shopping opportunities exist in the immediate vicinity along Monroe Road, North Sharon Amity Road, East Independence Boulevard, Wendover Road/Eastway Drive and Central Avenue. In addition, the residents need only to travel a few blocks along Monroe Road to enjoy events and activities at Ovens Auditorium, Independence Arena and the Merchandise Mart.

According to the 1990 Census, the study area contains 1,319 housing units of which over 47% (626 units) are multi-family. Most of the occupied housing units (1,270) are rental (61%) with only 39% of the units being owner-occupied. There are approximately 75 acres of vacant land in the study area with over 50% of the vacant land (38.35 acres) contained in the Oakhurst Business Park (located north of and contiguous to the Seaboard Airline Railroad tracks).

OAKHURST NEIGHBORHOOD

MAP 1



According to the 1990 Census, the socioeconomic profile of the study area is as follows:

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE FOR OAKHURST			
	NO.	PCT.	CITY PCT.
POPULATION			
Total Population	2,464		
Black Population	156	6%	32%
Children Under 18	363	15%	24%
Elderly, 65 & Over	285	12%	10%
HOUSEHOLDS			
Total Households	1,270		
One-Person Head	528	42%	28%
Married With Children	156	12%	47%
Female Head with Children	54	4%	9%
EDUCATION			
Adults, 25 and Over	1,755		
High School Graduates	1,363	78%	81%
College Graduates	339	19%	28%
OCCUPATIONS			
Adults in Labor Force	1,597	75%	73%
White-Collar Jobs	995	65%	65%
Blue-Collar Jobs	543	35%	35%
Unemployed	59	4%	4%
INCOME			
Total Households	1,253		
\$0 - \$14,999 (1989)	292	23%	20%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	327	26%	18%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	315	25%	17%
\$35,000 or more	319	25%	45%
Families Below Poverty	50	8%	8%
HH on Public Assistance	34	3%	11%
Female HH Below Poverty	17	38%	27%

Importance of Preserving the Neighborhood

As Charlotte continues to grow, middle income neighborhoods closer into the center city will be important to preserve. Such neighborhoods provide good, affordable housing; are

accessible to many services, including public transit; and contribute to a sense of “urban” character in Charlotte. They provide an option to suburban development further out in the community. Allowing these older neighborhoods to decline over time will affect not only the neighborhood itself, but the larger community as well. If the middle class abandons these closer-in neighborhoods for neighborhoods in the suburbs, the center city will be weakened tremendously. When people leave, services follow, and finally, jobs relocate.

Maintaining a strong center city is essential for continued economic growth and sustained livability. Too many examples of the effects of inner-city decline elsewhere in this country point to the problems Charlotte would face if blight and abandonment occur.

Oakhurst is a prime example of an urban neighborhood in Charlotte that needs to be preserved and supported. While the neighborhood has many good qualities such as its housing stock, tree-lined streets, and accessibility, it also has some potential problems that threaten its future. Many of the typical urban neighborhood problems such as real and perceived crime, housing and property code violations, and cut-through traffic are being addressed by the neighborhood organization and may need further attention in the future. However, one of the greatest problems that threatens the neighborhood is its zoning pattern.

Existing Zoning that Threatens Oakhurst

A large portion of the Oakhurst study area is zoned for high density multi-family development. Several large concentrations of apartment developments exist, in fact over 47% of the housing stock in the neighborhood is apartments. However, much of the area zoned for high density housing is occupied by single family homes. These single family areas are of concern for the future. Because of the existing zoning, some homes have been torn down in the past to make way for small apartment complexes that have been wedged on small sites. This type of development in the interior of a neighborhood compromises the integrity of the neighborhood character. While multi-family and single family housing can be compatible neighbors, the issue in Oakhurst revolves around balance. With nearly half of the study area developed with apartments, it will be important to maintain viable single family areas. If the single family areas continue to be incrementally redeveloped with apartments, the chances for preserving the Oakhurst neighborhood as we know it today will diminish rapidly. Home ownership is critical to neighborhood stability.

Plan Focus and Recommendations

The focus of this plan is on maintaining a balance of single family and higher density housing in the Oakhurst study area by preserving as much of the existing housing stock that reasonably makes sense. Specifically, the plan distinguishes the boundaries between single family, medium density, and higher density housing and identifies zone changes that are needed to create these boundaries. (With the plan as public policy, the Planning staff would prepare the zoning cases and follow the official rezoning process to implement the rezonings. Public hearings would be held for property owner input.)

The recommendations for the plan are broken into subareas as follows:

Residential Area North and East of Oakhurst Elementary School (Area 1: See Map 2).

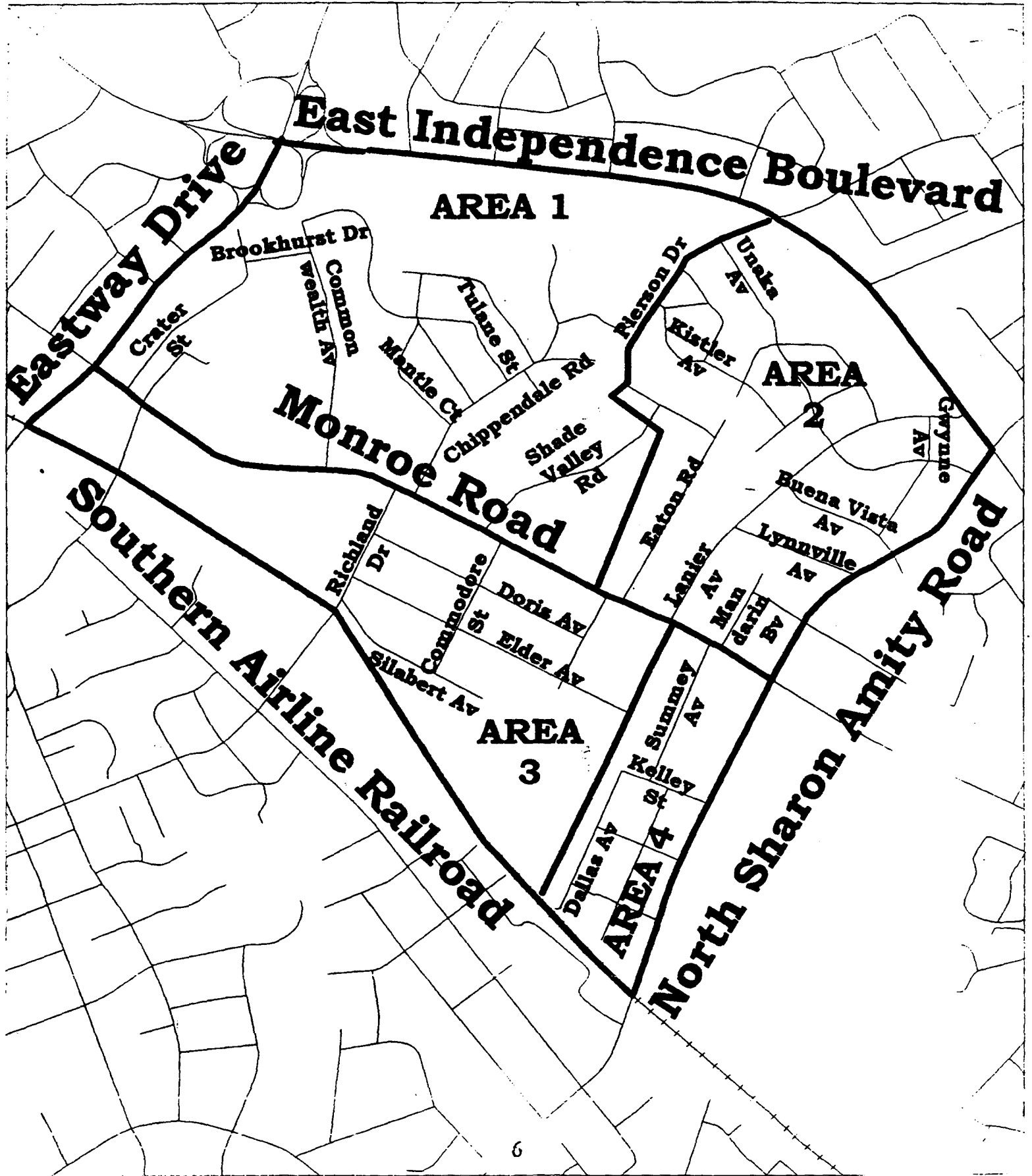
Area 1 is bounded by Eastway Drive on the west, Independence Boulevard on the north, the northern portion of Pierson Drive and the eastern boundary of the Lake Hill Apartments on the east and Monroe Road on the south. This area contains the newly formed Oakhurst Acres Neighborhood (Commonwealth Avenue to Chippendale Road).

Although Area 1 contains a mixture of land uses (single family houses, duplexes, apartments, churches, offices, businesses, a significant industrial use, a public school and several vacant lots), it is primarily a residential area zoned R-17MF (17 dwelling units per acre) and contains approximately 235 single family houses (approximately 36% of all the dwelling units in Area 1), 36 duplex units and 386 apartments. The table below details the numerous multi-family developments in Area 1:

EXISTING APARTMENTS IN AREA 1				
<u>Apartment Development</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Units/Acre</u>
Briarcliff	1964	84	5.07	16.5
Community Housing Development	1963	20	1.66	12.0
Brittany Woods	1986	85	5.25	16.0
Lake Hill	1966	25	1.36	18.0
Lake Hill	1966	26	1.62	16.0
Lake Hill	1967	62	4.18	14.8
Lake Hill	1967	50	3.57	14.0
Lake Hill	1968	<u>20</u>	2.10	9.5
		372		
Small Multi-Family Developments				
Quadraplex		4		
Quadraplex		4		
Triplex		3		
Triplex		<u>3</u>		
		14		
Total Multi-Family Units in Area 1 = 386				

OAKHURST NEIGHBORHOOD

MAP 2



Recommended Rezoning for Area 1:

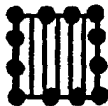
In order to preserve almost all of the existing single family housing and to reduce the potential future density of the area, this plan recommends the following rezonings as depicted on Map 3:

- a. The area located northwest, north and northeast of the Oakhurst Elementary School should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-5.
- b. The property located on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Lane (behind the property fronting on Monroe Road) should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-5. (Planning staff recommends that the property be rezoned from R-17MF to R-8, which would allow lower density attached housing.)
- c. The property which fronts on Mantle Court and is located north of and contiguous to Oakhurst Elementary School should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-5. (Planning staff recommends that the property be rezoned from R-17MF to R-8, which would allow lower density attached housing.)
- d. The lots fronting on Commonwealth Avenue (across the street from Oakhurst Elementary School) and located south of the Briarcliff Apartments should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-6. (Planning staff recognizes there may be pressure to develop multi-family units on these lots; however, this is a vulnerable edge for the single family area. Therefore, the Planning staff recommends that these lots be rezoned from R-17MF to R-8MF. Development at this lower density will create a good transition from the more dense multi-family development.)
- e. The vacant property located north of and contiguous to the Woonsocket Spinning Company is presently zoned I-2 and R-17MF. This plan does not recommend that this seven acre vacant tract of land, owned by the Woonsocket Spinning Company, be rezoned at this time. However, the plan would strongly support a residential future land use for this property, providing the residential density would be less than presently allowed under the R-17MF zoning. This is a good location for infill housing.

OAKHURST NEIGHBORHOOD Area 1 Rezonings



**Rezone from R-17MF to R-5
(Planning Staff agrees with
Rezoning Recommendation)**



**Rezone from R-17MF to R-5
(Planning Staff recommends
Rezoning to R-8)**



**Rezone from R-17MF to R-6
(Planning Staff recommends
Rezoning to R-8MF)**

The Amity Gardens Area (Area 2: See Map 2)

Area 2 is bounded by the northern portion of Pierson Drive and the eastern boundary of the Lake Hill Apartments on the west, Independence Boulevard on the north, North Sharon Amity Road on the east, and Monroe Road on the south. The Amity Gardens Neighborhood comprises most of Area 2.

Although Area 2 contains several land uses (single family houses, duplexes, apartments, church, offices, daycare, businesses and several vacant lots), it is primarily a well maintained single family residential area zoned R-4. However, the plan does address an R-17MF zoned section in the vicinity of North Sharon Amity Road. In order to preserve almost all of the existing single family housing stock and to reduce the potential future density of the area, the plan recommends the following rezonings as depicted on Map 4:

Recommended Rezonings for Area 2

- a. The single family lot fronting on the eastern side of Lanier Avenue and located north of and contiguous to the lots fronting on Lynnville Avenue should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-4.
- b. The single family lots fronting on the western side of Mandarin Boulevard and the designated lots (as shown on Map 4) fronting on both sides of Lynnville Avenue should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-6.
(Planning staff recommends that these lots be rezoned from R-17MF to R-8, which would allow slightly higher density than the existing housing but a density much more compatible with the neighborhood than the high density housing allowed under R-17MF.)
- c. The lots located north of Lantana Avenue between Mandarin Boulevard and the back of the lots fronting on North Sharon Amity Road and the lots located south of Lantana Avenue between Mandarin Boulevard and the back of the lots fronting on North Sharon Amity Road should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-6.
(Planning staff recommends that these lots be rezoned from R-17MF to R-8MF. Because of the proximity of North Sharon Amity, the R-8MF zoning would be appropriate. This would be a good residential edge for the single family area.)
- d. The two lots located south of Lantana Avenue and which front on North Sharon Amity Road, and the five lots between Lynnville Avenue and Lantana Avenue which have frontage on North Sharon Amity Road should be rezoned from R-17MF to O-2, and CDOT should look at closing Lantana Avenue at the rear property lines of these lots fronting on North Sharon Amity Road.
(Planning staff recommends that the two lots south of Lantana Avenue which front on North Sharon Amity Road, and the three lots north of Lantana Avenue which have frontage on North Sharon Amity Road be rezoned from R-17MF to R-8MF, which would lower the existing zoning classification while

also protecting the residential character of the corridor. Planning staff also recommends that the two lots south of Lynnville Avenue which front on North Sharon Amity Road retain their existing R-17MF zoning to reflect existing land use (adjacent to multi-family development) and to protect the residential character of the corridor.)

OAKHURST NEIGHBORHOOD

Area 2 Rezoning



Rezone from R-17MF to R-4
(Planning Staff agrees with
Rezoning Recommendation)



Rezone from R-17MF to O-2
(Planning Staff recommends
keeping R-17MF Zoning)



Rezone from R-17MF to R-6
(Planning Staff recommends
Rezoning to R-6)



Rezone from R-17MF to O-2
(Planning Staff recommends
Rezoning to R-6MF)



Rezone from R-17MF to R-6
(Planning Staff recommends
Rezoning to R-6MF)

South of Monroe Road, Wendover Road to Elder Avenue (Area 3: See Map 2)

Area 3 is bounded by Wendover Road on the west, Monroe Road on the north, the apartments which are located at the end of Elder Avenue and the back of the lots which front on Dallas Avenue on the east and the Seaboard Airline Railroad tracks on the south. The residential neighborhood (which includes Richland Drive, Doris Avenue, Elder Avenue, Commodore Street and Ross Moore Drive) is zoned R-4 and contains well maintained single family houses. The plan does not recommend any rezonings for this area.

Area 3 also contains the Oakhurst Business Park on Silabert Avenue. The park includes a vacant tract of land (zoned I-1) which adjoins the railroad tracks. The plan does not recommend that this 38+ acre vacant tract of land be rezoned at this time. However, the plan would strongly support a residential future for this property, providing the residential density would correspond to the R-8 zoning classification. This is an ideal infill site for housing, particularly if the railway adjacent to the property becomes a future transit line.

South Of Monroe Road, West of North Sharon Amity Road (Area 4: See Map 2)

Area 4 is bounded by the apartments which are located at the end of Elder Avenue and the back of the lots which front on Dallas Avenue on the west, Monroe Road on the north, North Sharon Amity Road on the east and the Seaboard Airline Railroad tracks on the south. Although there are offices and businesses along Monroe Road and a business use, an industrial use and an office use just south of Monroe Road along North Sharon Amity Road, the remainder of the area is zoned R-17MF and is comprised entirely of residential land uses (single family houses, duplexes, apartments, a daycare center and a few vacant lots).

In order to preserve some of the existing single family housing stock and to reduce the potential future residential density of the area, the plan recommends the following rezonings as depicted on Map 5:

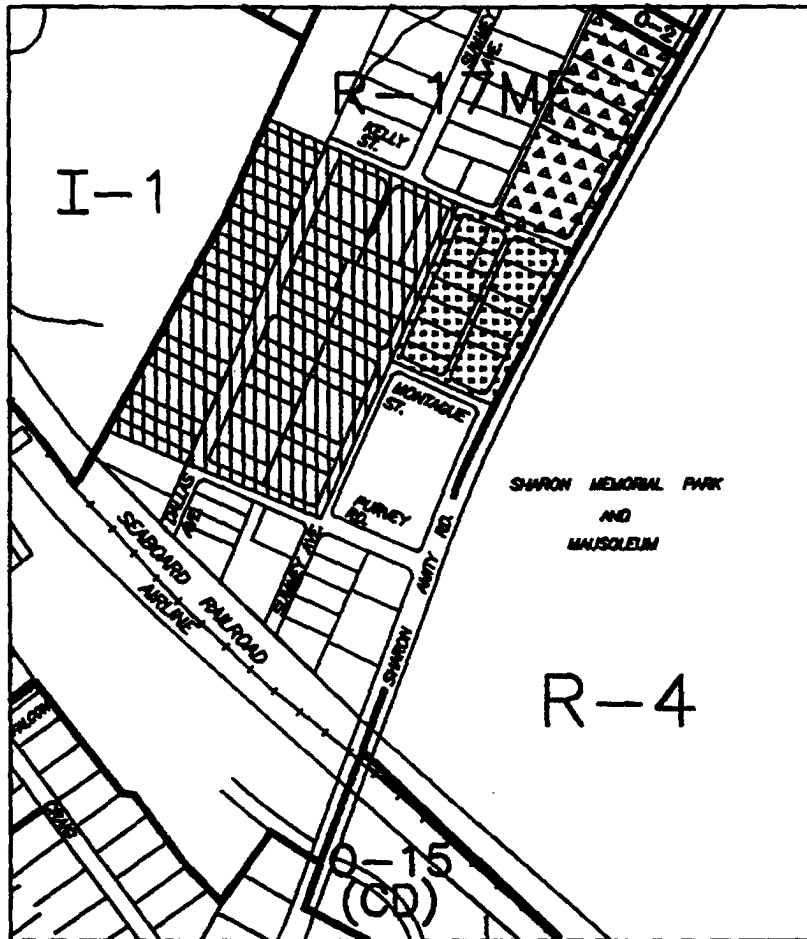
Recommended Rezonings for Area 4

- a. The lots located on both sides of Dallas Avenue from Kelly Street to Purvey Road and the lots fronting on the western side of Summey Avenue from Kelly Street to Purvey Road should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-5.
- b. The area bounded by Kelly Street on the north, North Sharon Amity Road on the east, Montague Street on the south and Summey Avenue on the west should be rezoned from R-17MF to R-8MF.
- c. The area bounded by an office use on the north, North Sharon Amity Road on the east, an alley on the west and Kelly Street on the south should be rezoned from R-17MF to O-2 to allow for office use.
(The Planning staff supports multi-family zoning along North Sharon Amity Road in this study area. It should be noted that while Independence Boulevard and Monroe Road contain businesses and offices, North Sharon Amity Road, with the exception of land uses around major intersections, maintains a

residential character. Therefore, the Planning staff recommends that these lots fronting on North Sharon Amity Road (between the office use and Kelly Street) retain their existing R-17MF zoning to protect the residential character of the corridor.

OAKHURST NEIGHBORHOOD

Area 4 Rezoning



Rezone from R-17MF to R-5
(Planning Staff agrees with
Rezoning Recommendation)



Rezone from R-17MF to R-8MF
(Planning Staff agrees with
Rezoning Recommendation)



Rezone from R-17MF to C-2
(Planning Staff recommends
Keeping R-17MF Zoning)

Frontage Property Along Monroe Road

The properties that front on Monroe Road are zoned and developed with commercial and office development. These types of uses are envisioned to continue in the future, with no additional expansion of retail development in areas zoned for office use. No rezonings are recommended for the corridor.

Conclusion

The Oakhurst neighborhood has charm, good accessibility to Uptown Charlotte and provides good housing stock at reasonable prices. It has been a desirable place to live for many years; however, to maintain this stability and prevent future degradation, it will be necessary to implement the recommended rezonings in this plan.

