

south corridor station area plans



Sharon & I-485

Transit Station Area Plan

ADOPTED BY CHARLOTTE CITY COUNCIL

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**NORTH CAROLINA MARVIN COLLINS
OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARD**

SPECIAL THEME CATEGORY
Sustainable Community Planning

Table of Contents

<i>Executive Summary</i>	<i>iii</i>
Volume I: Concept Plan	1
<i>Study Area Context</i>	<i>3</i>
Planning Process	3
Plan Boundaries	3
Opportunities and Constraints	4
Vision	6
Goals	6
<i>Land Use and Community Design</i>	<i>9</i>
Transit Station Area	9
General Corridor Area	11
<i>Transportation and Streetscape</i>	<i>15</i>
Transportation/Street Design Recommendations	15
Streetscape Standards	19
Street Cross-sections	19
Boulevard	20
Avenue - Four-Lane Divided	21
Avenue - Two-Lane Undivided	22
Avenue - Two-Lane Divided	23
Office/Commercial Street - Wide	24
Local Residential Street - Wide	25
<i>Infrastructure and Public Facilities</i>	<i>26</i>
Public Facility/Infrastructure Recommendations	26
Park and Greenway Recommendations	26
<i>Environment</i>	<i>27</i>
Environmental Recommendations	27
Volume 2: Implementation Plan	29
Public Sector Responsibilities	31
Private Sector Responsibilities	31
Corrective Rezoning	31
Implementation Strategies	32

Appendix 35

Existing Conditions 37

Demographics	37
Environment	38
Land Use and Urban Design	39
Transportation	48
Infrastructure /Public Facilities	55

List of Maps

Map 1: Study Area within Corridor Context	2
Map 2: Concept Plan	7
Map 3: Recommended Future Land Use	8
Map 4: Future Transportation Network	17
Map 5: Streetscape Cross Section Key	18
Map 6: Corrective Rezonings	30



Rendering of the I-485/South Boulevard Station, showing Sterling Elementary School and playground on the garage rooftop.

Executive Summary

Purpose

The Sharon Road West and I-485/South Boulevard Transit Stations are the fourteenth and fifteenth stations heading south from Center City along the South Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) line, also known as the LYNX Blue Line.

The *Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan* is the sixth of a series of plans for areas around the stations south of South End. The *Introduction to the South Corridor Station Area Plans* lays the foundation for the station area plans. This plan builds on that document. It analyzes current conditions in the area around the station, detailed in the Appendix.

The Concept Plan makes recommendations to bring the right mix of development to complement the transit investment, and to optimize the land use and infrastructure within the wider surrounding area to support its continued viability. The Concept Plan is the only section of this document to be adopted by City Council.

Study Area

The plan focuses on the area within approximately 1/2 mile of the two transit stations. The actual stations are visible just west of South Boulevard. Sharon Station is accessible by vehicles from Crump Road and by pedestrians via a pedestrian bridge. I-485 Station has vehicular and pedestrian connections to South Boulevard under the light rail line. However, the plan area covers a much larger area, encompassing South Boulevard, Sharon Lakes Road, Sharon Road West, China Grove Church Road and East Westinghouse Boulevard. It is entirely within a Growth Corridor, as envisioned by the City's Centers, Corridors and Wedges growth framework, although it does include the Sterling, Pine Valley, and Sharonbrook neighborhoods.

Opportunities & Constraints

Through examination of existing conditions in the Sharon & I-485 plan area (see Appendix), opportunities to build upon and constraints to overcome were identified. The station locations are highly visible from South Boulevard, and easily accessible by vehicle, but are more difficult for pedestrians. The area around the stations has some underutilized properties in large parcels. The surrounding area has stable neighborhoods and diverse housing stock. The plan area is challenged by the freight rail line that paral-

els the light rail line, its relatively poor pedestrian environment, and the disconnected street network. It is home to a number of large industrial operations and automobile-oriented retail businesses. While not transit-supportive in nature, such uses serve employment and economic functions within the City, and may remain in place for many years to come.

Vision

The desired future for the plan area is highlighted in the following vision statement:

The Sharon and I-485 plan area is home to existing industrial and commercial operations important to the City's employment and economic needs, and continuing operations will be supported. Incrementally over time, the area is expected to transition to become part of the series of vibrant, high density transit villages along the South Corridor. Within its boundaries, there will be two distinct areas:

- **Transit Station Area:** The core of the plan area will transform over time to a pedestrian-oriented district with higher density, transit-supportive uses.
- **General Corridor Area:** The areas generally beyond the 1/2 mile walk distance will include a range of uses appropriate for a Growth Corridor. Existing commercial, industrial, warehouse and distribution, office, and institutional uses will remain. Over time, those uses closest to the transit station may redevelop with higher density, mixed uses typically associated with transit. Existing multi-family areas may remain or redevelop at slightly higher densities. The primarily single-family neighborhoods will be preserved and protected from incompatible uses.

Land Use and Community Design

The plan contains a number of recommendations related to Land Use and Community Design within each of the two areas noted in the vision statement. The recommendations, shown on Map 3, include:

Transit Station Area

- Support continuing use of major industrial operations located in close proximity to the Sharon Station, until such time as the property owners are ready for redevelopment to transit supportive uses.

- Promote a mix of transit supportive land uses in the Transit Station Area, generally within 1/2 mile of the stations; support expansion of CATS Park & Ride capacity, including more intense mixed use development in the future. Allow for existing businesses and industrial operations to remain in place until property owners are ready for redevelopment.
- Provide active, ground floor, non-residential uses such as retail or office, at key locations.
- Create urban parks and plazas near stations.
- Encourage incremental intensification of the Carolina Pavilion Shopping Center with transit-supportive uses.
- Ensure that development adjacent to single family neighborhoods provides good transition.
- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle crossings at key locations; site new development to allow for future bicycle lanes on South Boulevard.
- Install pedestrian lighting in key locations.

Streetscape Cross-Sections

This section recommends future cross sections for streets, and identifies building setbacks and streetscape standards based on the ultimate curbline location. These standards supplement requirements in TOD and other urban zoning districts. Based on the City's *Urban Street Design Guidelines*, they will be met by developers who undertake new development or major renovation in the plan area. Map 5 shows the location for each type. The following street types are recommended for the plan area:

- **Boulevard**
- **Avenue:** 4-lane divided, 2-lane undivided, and 2-lane divided
- **Main Street**
- **Office/Commercial Street-** wide
- **Local Residential Street-** wide

General Corridor Area

- Maintain a mixture of office, commercial, warehouse, and industrial uses in the vicinity of Hebron Street and Westinghouse Boulevard.
- Maintain the predominantly single-family portions of Pine Valley, Sharonbrook, and Sterling neighborhoods.
- Support continued moderate density residential use off of Sharon Road West and Sharon Lakes Road under specific criteria.
- Maintain the moderate density residential character in the portions of the Sterling neighborhood surrounding the Sterling Elementary School, with specific criteria for increased density in some areas closest to the I-485 Station.
- Support moderate density residential use of property on Westinghouse Road west of the Sterling neighborhood under specific criteria.
- Provide for a mix of retail and office land uses along South Boulevard north of the station area, and along part of Westinghouse Boulevard.

Infrastructure and Environment

The core of the plan area includes present and former commercial and industrial development, expected to redevelop over a period of time. Its water and sewer system may require expansion for more intense new uses. In addition, the plan recommendations include:

- Encourage small urban open spaces in Transit Station Area.
- Make street trees a feature of all streets, and reduce impervious surfaces.
- Design new buildings to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality; protect and enhance watersheds.
- Encourage burying of overhead utility lines.

Transportation and Streetscape

Transportation recommendations address proposed new streets and enhancements to existing streets to make them more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. The recommendations, shown on Map 4, include:

- Provide new street connections at key locations; enhance existing street network.
- Widen sidewalk system along area thoroughfares, improve system in Transit Station Area.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan recommends projects to implement the policy recommendations of the Concept Plan. Because the Implementation Plan is not adopted by elected officials, it is a guide, not a commitment. The Implementation Plan recommends a number of sidewalk improvement and street connection projects, as well as corrective rezonings as shown on Map 6.

Volume 1: Concept Plan

1

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan



Study Area Context

The Sharon Road West and I-485/South Boulevard Transit Stations are the fourteenth and fifteenth stations heading south from Center City along the South Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) line, also known as the LYNX Blue Line. They are the last two stations on the line.

This document is the sixth of a series of plans for the station areas extending south from South End. The plan is divided into the Concept Plan, the Implementation Plan, and an Appendix containing a thorough review of existing conditions. The Concept Plan is the only section of the plan adopted by City Council. The Concept Plan:

- Defines the growth and development vision for the area surrounding the Sharon Road West and I-485/South Boulevard LRT stations (hereafter referred to as Sharon & I-485);
- Makes recommendations for land use, transportation, urban design, and other development-related topics;
- Updates the Centers, Corridors and Wedges boundaries for the plan area from those initially outlined in the *Transportation Action Plan*; and
- Serves as the official streetscape plan for the combined station area once the Concept Plan is adopted.

Planning Process

Initial planning for the Sharon & I-485 plan area began in conjunction with planning for the South Corridor LRT line. A community planning and urban design consulting firm and an interdepartmental staff team, led by Planning Department staff, held public meetings to gather initial input from area residents and property owners. The staff team has developed plan recommendations based on citizen input, the area context, and guidance from a number of City Council adopted policies.

Prior to adoption of the plan, staff will hold additional public meetings with area residents and property owners to present the plan recommendations and to receive feedback. The next step of the process will be presentation to the Planning Committee of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission who will hear citizen comments and make a recommendation to the Charlotte City Council. The City Council will also hear citizen comments and make a final decision concerning adoption of the plan.

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

More detailed information on the background, purpose and process for developing this, and other, station area plans can be found in the companion document, *Introduction to the South Corridor Station Area Plans*.

Plan Boundaries

The Sharon & I-485 Transit Stations are located on the South Corridor light rail line running parallel to South Boulevard. A Transit Station Area is defined as the property generally within a ½ mile walk distance of a transit station, about a ten-minute walk. While the Transit Station Area is the primary focus of this plan, for contextual purposes, the boundaries of the *Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan* extend beyond the ½ mile distance, including residential, employment, institutional and industrial areas.

As shown on Map 1, the plan area is bisected by the light rail line and the Norfolk Southern freight rail line. Major roads include South Boulevard, Sharon Lakes Road, Sharon Road West, China Grove Church Road and East Westinghouse Boulevard. The entire plan area except for the flood plain along the east boundary falls in the South Growth Corridor as defined by the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework*. Plan boundaries generally follow existing zoning and block configurations.

The two stations within the plan area function differently. Sharon Station serves as a Community Station as defined in the *Introduction to the South Corridor Station Area Plans*. Typically, Community Stations are not transit oriented, but have the potential to transform into a transit-oriented district over time. They serve multiple destinations within a three-mile radius, with strong reliance on bus connections and park-and-ride facilities. This station has a 190-space lot, connected to South Boulevard by Crump Road.

As the terminus station for the LYNX Blue Line, I-485 Station functions as a Regional Station. Regional Stations generally serve an area of five miles or more, augmented by bus connections and park-and-ride facilities. I-485 Station includes a parking deck with 1,100 spaces accessible from South Boulevard, as well as additional surface overflow lots. Plans are under consideration for additional spaces, as funding becomes available. A bus transfer area is adjacent to the parking deck. A landscaped sidewalk links the Sterling neighborhood to the station platform.



Sharon Road West Station has a bridge crossing the light rail and freight rail lines to South Boulevard.



The I-485/South Boulevard Station sits on a bridge over the street entrance to the park and ride garage.

Opportunities and Constraints

Review of existing conditions reveals a number of opportunities and constraints to transforming the core of the plan area into a transit supportive environment. Success will depend upon effectively dealing with the constraints and capitalizing on the opportunities described below.

For a complete discussion of existing conditions, see the Appendix of this document.

Opportunities

- Station Facilities and Visibility:** Both stations include highly visible and attractive facilities. Sharon Station has a 190-space surface parking lot accessible from Crump Road with good vehicular accessibility. Bus feeder routes serve the station. The pedestrian bridge at the Sharon Station across the Norfolk Southern railroad line provides visibility and access as a catalyst for redevelopment of properties east of South Boulevard. The I-485 station includes a 1,100-space parking deck, with amenities including walkways, benches, and landscaping. Bus feeder routes serve this station also. The top level of the parking deck provides a playground for the Sterling Elementary school.
- Major Interstate Access:** Both stations have the advantage of access to major interstate highways. The terminal station, I-485, offers convenient access to I-485 (less than ½ mile away), making the station attractive to
- Improved Transportation Environment:** As a part of the Light Rail construction project and the South Corridor Infrastructure Program (SCIP), a number of physical and visual improvements to the streetscape were made around both stations, including crosswalks and pedestrian scale lighting. These improvements have made the area somewhat safer and more attractive. As development occurs, additional transportation improvements should be provided.
- Underutilized Assembled Land:** There are a number of large parcels throughout the plan area under single ownership which could be redeveloped in the future for higher density uses. This includes some vacant and underutilized sites, but also includes numerous properties in retail and business use that may redevelop in the longer term.
- Long-term Redevelopment Opportunities:** The 2003 market study by Charles Lesser & Company found that the northern portion of the plan area represents a longer-term development opportunity than stations closer to downtown. Around Sharon Station, near term opportunities are for new “horizontal” local-serving office and multi-family development. In the I-485 Station area, the Carolina Pavilion parking lot presents opportunities for gradual transit-oriented commercial and residential development that might include structured parking.

a broad ridership. From both the Sharon and I-485 stations, East Westinghouse Boulevard provides access to Interstate 77.

- **Housing Diversity:** The plan area has considerable diversity in its housing stock. This includes single-family neighborhoods, townhouses, and multi-family apartments. These neighborhoods offer a base of riders to build upon. Protection and enhancement of these neighborhoods will be a priority in this plan.
- **Institutional Uses:** Schools in the plan area present the opportunity to capture student and faculty ridership. At Sharon Station, students and faculty can walk to the Kennedy Charter Public School; students, faculty, and staff at the CPCC Campus on Hebron Street could use Sharon Station if shuttle service were provided. Sterling Elementary School faculty and staff are potential riders at the I-485 station.
- **Large Industrial Areas:** The vast expanse of the Lance plant, Caraustar facilities and other industrial uses are not typically transit supportive uses. Nonetheless, they provide strong employment and economic base for the City, and are anticipated to remain in place for the indefinite future. However, there is little physical or visual connection between Sharon Station and these employment areas.
- **Hostile Pedestrian Environment:** Much of the streetscape in the study area is uninviting to pedestrians. With intermittent narrow sidewalks, limited planting strips, absent mid-block crossings, few street trees, no on-street parking, multiple curb cuts, and poor lighting, the streets are more oriented to vehicular travelers than to bicyclists or pedestrians.

Constraints

- **Railroad Line:** The Norfolk Southern freight railroad line bisects the plan area and parallels the LYNX light rail line the entire length of the plan area. With the freight line immediately adjacent to South Boulevard on the northern end, there is little opportunity for active use on that street frontage.
- **Disconnected Street Network:** The plan area has a largely disconnected and sparse street network. All long-distance north-south travelers must use South Boulevard. Other than the street grid at Hebron and England Streets and Denmark and Sweden Roads, east-west traffic must funnel through Westinghouse Boulevard, onto South Boulevard, and on to Sharon Road West. Even vehicular trips within the plan area are restricted to these routes. Better connections and an extensive street network leading into and through the station areas will be needed in order to support the high intensity transit oriented development anticipated.
- **Automobile-oriented strip development:** At present, the development character in both station areas is largely automobile oriented, including auto dealerships, fast food restaurants and gas stations along South Boulevard. While such uses represent employment opportunities, they do not generate the higher density transit-oriented development preferred in proximity to transit stations. Carolina Pavilion, as well as many of the other retail uses that line South Boulevard near the I-485 station are relatively new, and have stable occupancy, making redevelopment in the short to medium-term unlikely.
- **Need for Open Space:** Little Sugar Creek Greenway runs along the eastern boundary of the plan area. A park on Westinghouse Boulevard near the I-485 crossing is projected for the west edge of the plan area, but is not funded. Additional open space and landscaping, consistent with an urban environment, is desirable in the station area.
- **Limited Tree Canopy and Landscaping:** Currently, the core of the station area has few trees and minimal landscaping. As the land around the transit stations redevelop, the quality of the built environment, especially in the core of the plan area, could be improved by the addition of trees and landscaping.



Across South Boulevard from the I-485/South Boulevard Station is Carolina Pavilion, a big box shopping center.

Vision

The Sharon and I-485 plan area is home to existing industrial and commercial operations important to the City's employment and economic needs, and continuing operations will be supported. Incrementally over time, the area is expected to transition to become part of the series of vibrant, high density transit villages along the South Corridor. Within its boundaries, there will be two distinct areas:

- **Transit Station Area:** The core of the plan area, defined generally as the ½ mile walk distance from either station, will transform over time to a pedestrian-oriented district with higher density, transit-supportive uses.
- **General Corridor Area:** The areas generally beyond the ½ mile walk distance will include a range of uses appropriate for a Growth Corridor. Existing commercial, industrial, warehouse and distribution, office, and institutional uses will remain. Over time, those uses closest to the transit station may redevelop with higher density, mixed uses typically associated with transit. Existing multi-family areas may remain or redevelop at slightly higher densities. The primarily single-family neighborhoods will be preserved and protected from incompatible uses.

Unlike the other transit station areas, the Sharon & I-485 plan area does not include Wedge Neighborhood Areas. However, neighborhoods within the General Corridor will incorporate protection measures similar to Wedge neighborhoods.

Map 2 illustrates the development concept for the Sharon & I-485 plan area.



The I-485 Station is connected by a bridge to a park and ride lot, topped by a playground serving the adjoining elementary school.

Goals

To achieve this vision, the following goals have been identified for the Sharon & I-485 plan area. The goals draw on adopted, or in-progress, City policies, many of which were discussed in the *Introduction to the South Corridor Transit Station Area Plans*.

1. **Land Use:** Promote higher density uses that would be best served by the high capacity transportation facilities in the Corridor, while protecting the fabric of the existing residential neighborhoods.
2. **Community Design:** Building on the synergy of existing public infrastructure investments, establish a high quality pedestrian-oriented environment with attractive streetscapes. At the same time, respect the character of existing and future residential areas.
3. **Transportation:** Enhance the area's transportation system by providing new street connections and improving the pedestrian and bicycle system.
4. **Infrastructure/ Public Facilities:** Provide the infrastructure and public facilities needed to support development in the Growth Corridor.
5. **Environment:** Improve the quality of the natural environment by providing access to the Little Sugar Creek Greenway, enhancing the tree canopy, improving water quality from stormwater run-off, and creating open space for the station areas.

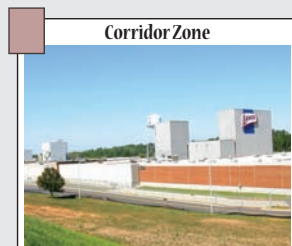
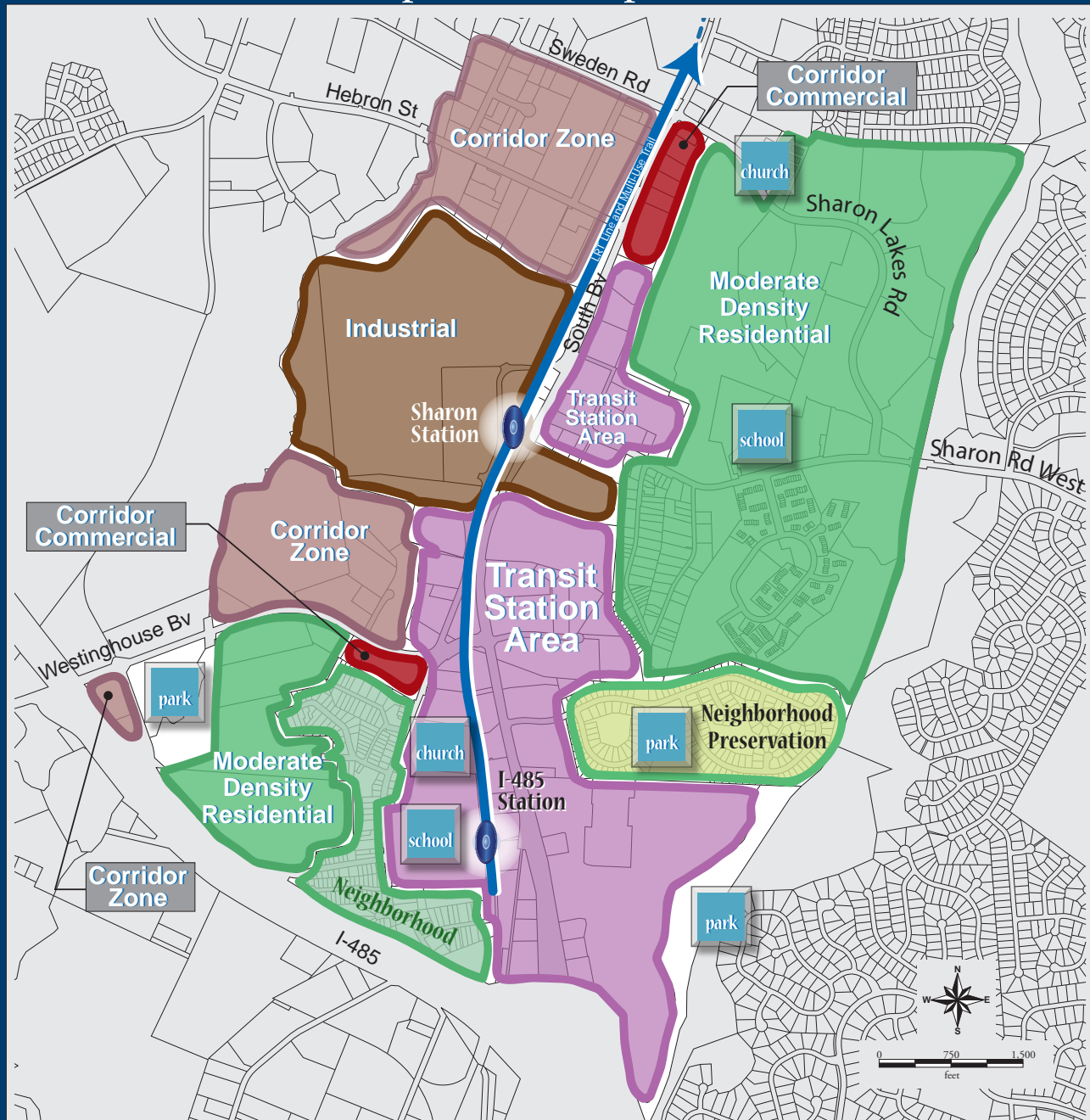
The vision and goals serve as the basis for the recommendations in the chapters that follow.



New residential development directly abutting the LYNX line at New Bern station is a model for future development.

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Map 2: Concept Plan

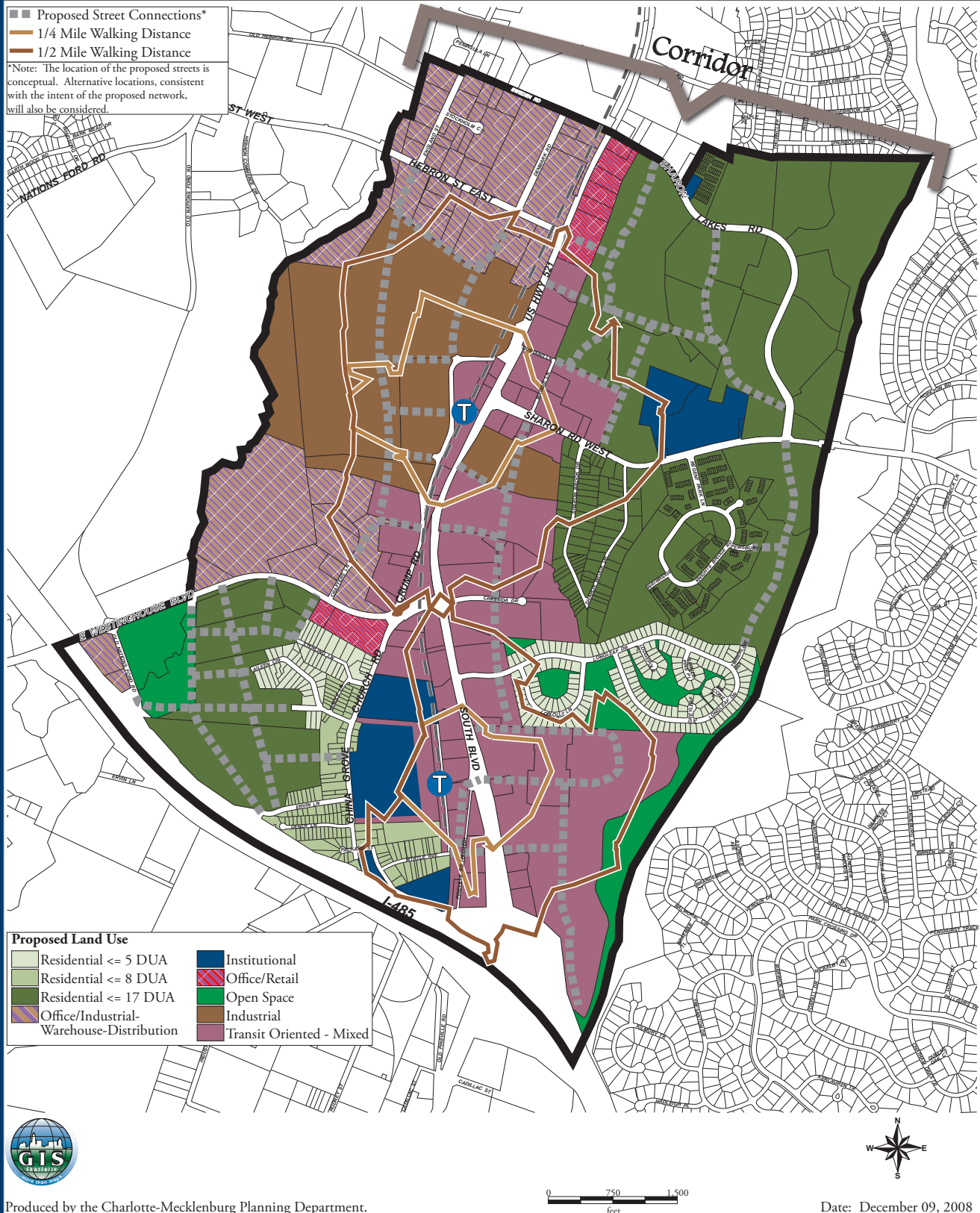


Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department.

Date: December 2008

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Map 3: Recommended Future Land Use



Land Use and Community Design

This chapter sets forth land use and community design recommendations to achieve the vision and goals for the Sharon & I-485 plan area. An overview of the proposed street network is also included.

This chapter divides the study area into two distinct districts:

- **Transit Station Area**, the portion of the South Growth Corridor that surrounds the Sharon and I-485 light rail stations including important existing industrial uses; and
- **General Corridor Area**, which includes general corridor commercial, office/industrial and moderate density residential land uses of the South Growth Corridor.

The land use recommendations are shown on Map 3. The general location for each recommendation is noted on the map extracts within each section, using the item numbers below. The recommendations also are cross referenced using the item numbers in the Implementation Section of this plan.

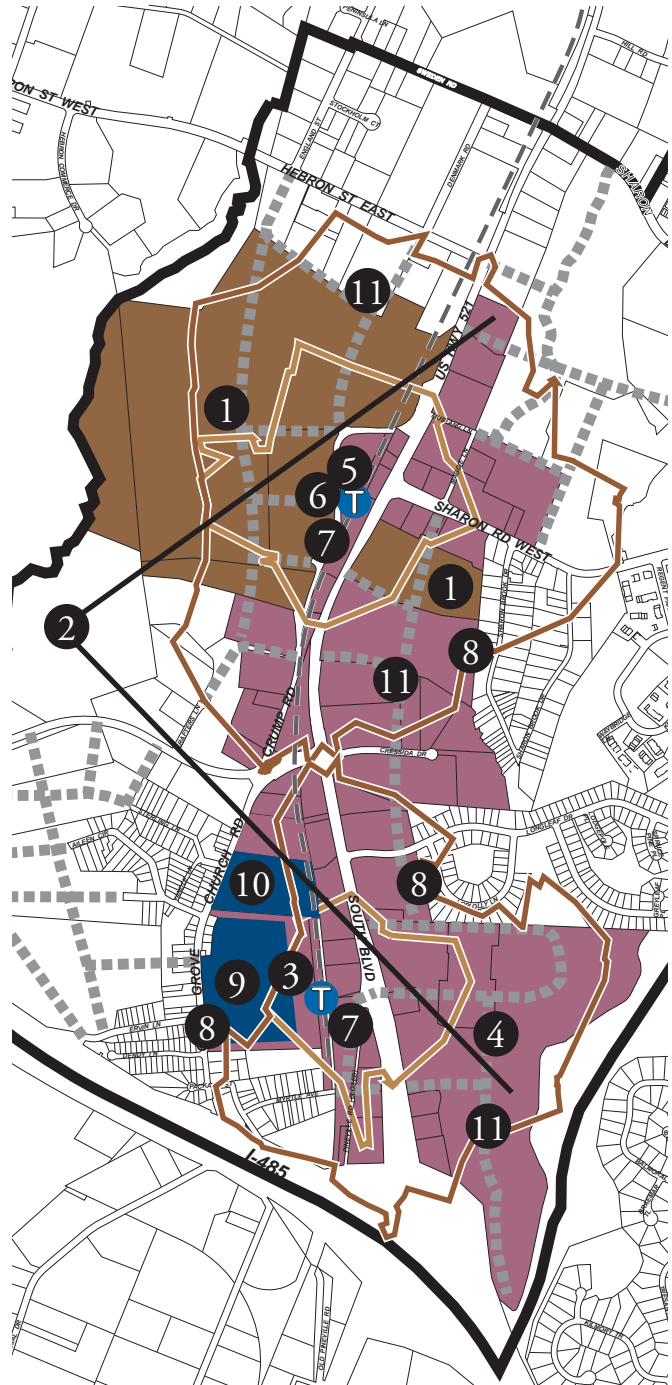
Transit Station Area

The Transit Station area is located along South Boulevard, in the approximate center of the larger plan area. The station area, encompassing both the Sharon and I-485 stations, currently includes a variety of industrial/ distribution, retail, office, institutional and residential uses. The Lance plant, and several other large industrial operations, are a major presence in the area. It is anticipated that these uses will remain in place, and continue to grow, over a number of years. The following recommendations are intended to allow this lower intensity, suburban oriented area to transform, over time, into a higher-intensity urban district.

Land Use and Community Design

1. **Support continuing use of major industrial operations** located adjoining or in close proximity to the Sharon Station. While not transit-oriented in nature, these uses serve other important employment and economic functions within the City. These properties should retain their industrial zoning to allow them to continue as-of-right operations and allow for business expansion, until

such time as the property owners are ready for redevelopment. These properties are within a 1/2 mile walk of the Sharon Station, and as such are suitable for mixed transit-supportive land uses consistent with the Transit Station Area Principles if and when redevelopment occurs.



Map 3.1: Transit Station Area Recommendations

2. **Promote a mix of transit-supportive land uses** (residential, service-oriented retail, civic, office) within the Transit Station Area. This will occur primarily through new development over a period of time. The area desired for future transit-oriented development lies generally within a 1/2 mile walk distance of the transit stations and includes land currently in use as industrial/distribution facilities, commercial development, and strip shopping centers.
 - For new development within the Transit Station Area, ensure that uses, intensity, site and facade design, and transportation elements are consistent with the Transit Station Area Principles outlined in the *Introduction to South Corridor Station Area Plans*.
 - Design new development to support pedestrian activity, with buildings brought close to the sidewalk and parking to the rear.
 - In addition to the properties within the Transit Station Area designated for continuing industrial use, a number of other properties in the Transit Station Area are occupied by ongoing businesses and industrial operations. While not transit-oriented in nature, it is recognized that these uses serve other important employment and economic functions within the City. These properties should retain their commercial or industrial zoning to allow them to continue as-of-right operations and allow for business expansion, until such time as the property owners are ready for redevelopment.
3. **Encourage capacity expansion of the I-485 park-and-ride facility.** The park and ride garage at I-485 Station is generally at capacity by early morning. Over the long term the garage should be expanded. The expansion might be in conjunction with redevelopment of other property, integrating a mix of transit-supportive uses. If so, it should include active ground floor uses that wrap the parking to create an active streetscape. In the short term, additional temporary surface parking spaces in proximity to the station are being considered.
4. **Encourage an intensification of the Carolina Pavilion Shopping Center** with an integrated mix of transit-supportive land uses (residential, retail, civic, and office). Over time and in an incremental manner, this shopping center could be transformed into a vibrant, mixed use development, possibly including a strong residential component. Future growth and development of this site should be consistent with the Transit Station Area Principles outlined in the *Introduction to South Corridor Station Area Plans*.
5. **Encourage redevelopment of the CATS park-and-ride surface parking lot at Sharon Station,** possibly in conjunction with redevelopment of other adjoining property, to integrate a mix of transit-supportive land uses (residential, retail, civic, office, as well as the needed parking.) Development should include active ground floor uses that wrap a parking facility to create an active streetscape. The current surface lot is filled by early morning. Provision of additional park-and-ride spaces is important at this location.
6. **Provide active ground floor non-residential uses,** such as retail or office, in the area immediately surrounding the Sharon Station: along all existing and proposed streets within 500 feet of the transit station. To be most accessible to transit users, design these ground floor uses to include clear glass windows and doors, as well as entrances that front on and connect to the sidewalk.
7. **Provide open space and/or pedestrian amenities** near both transit stations. Open space should be incorporated into any future park-and-ride redevelopment. Public property along South Boulevard at the edge of the Norfolk Southern rail line should be landscaped with low-maintenance native plant materials and should be used for a buffer and green space to the extent possible.



The park-and-ride garage at the I-485 Station is filled to capacity on weekday mornings.

8. **Ensure that development adjacent to the Sterling, Pine Valley, and Sharonbrook neighborhoods** provides a good transition from the low scale neighborhoods to the taller buildings desired in the station area. Ensure that building and site design for development in the vicinity of single family housing in these neighborhoods is of a scale and design that complements the existing housing.
9. **Recognize the Sterling Elementary Public School** as an institutional use within the I-485 Station Area.
10. **Recognize the China Grove AME Zion Church** as an institutional use within the I-485 Transit Station Area.

Supporting Street Network

Key street network recommendations related to proposed land use in this area are noted here. The Transportation and Streetscape section of this plan provides more detail.

11. **Provide new street connections** needed to create typical block lengths of 400 feet (desired), or 600 feet (maximum), as shown on Maps 3 and 4. These connections are the highest priority for the plan area.

The street network shown on existing industrial and commercial developments represents a long-term expectation at the point of property redevelopment, not necessarily applicable to continuing uses in the nearer term.

It should be noted that the street network shown on Map 3 and Map 4 provides a representation of the desired street network for the Sharon & I-485 plan area and may require adjustments to address site conditions. An alternative but comparable network, consistent with the intent of providing connectivity, will also be considered.

General Corridor Area

The remaining portion of the plan area, extending outward from the Transit Station Area, is classified as the General Corridor Area. It is part of the larger South Growth Corridor. The area has interstate access from South and Westinghouse Boulevards, and includes a range of uses designed to take advantage of interstate and other vehicular access. These include automobile-oriented retail development, suburban office/warehouse properties, and institutional/civic uses. There also are a number of multi-family developments along Sharon Lakes Road and Sharon Road West.

Land Use and Community Design

12. **Maintain a mixture of office, commercial, warehouse, and industrial land uses** along Hebron Street East, England Street, Stockholm Court, Sweden Road, Denmark Road, East Westinghouse Boulevard, and Crafters Lane. These areas are currently developed with a mixture of low density office/flex development, other commercial uses, and warehouse/light industrial uses. Development may be single use or include a mixture of uses. New development plans should also be consistent with the applicable design guidelines in the General Development Policies. Properties within a 1/2 mile walking distance of the Sharon Station could be converted to TOD if consolidated for redevelopment.



Industrial and commercial operations such as the Lance plant adjoin the Sharon Station, and are expected to remain for some time to come.

13. **Support continued moderate density residential use on Sharonbrook Drive, and on Regent Park Lane and its connecting streets,** at a density not to exceed 17 dua consistent with existing zoning. This will provide an appropriate transition from the station area to areas of lesser density, and help to preserve the existing mature tree canopy in these areas.

- Sharonbrook Drive: This neighborhood consists of older single-family homes and a variety of small multi-family properties developed over many years. While some of the area is within a ½ mile walk of Sharon Station, increased density would not be in character with the neighborhood.

- Sharon South Neighborhood, on Regent Park Lane and its connecting streets: This area is generally beyond a ½ mile walk from Sharon Station. It consists largely of existing individually owned townhomes with some surrounding multi-family development, designed as a compatible whole.

14. **Maintain the existing Pine Valley single-family neighborhood** north of Carolina Pavilion at a density of up to 5 dwellings per acre (dua), compatible with the existing homes. While the adopted future land use for this neighborhood is single family, it currently has incompatible multi-family zoning. Maintain the existing open space, including neighborhood association and park and recreation facilities, as open space within the neighborhood.



Map 3.2: General Corridor Area Recommendations

15. **Support continued moderate density residential use along Sharon Road West and Sharon Lakes Road** at a density not to exceed 17 dwellings per acre (dua). This area is generally beyond a 1/2 mile walk from Sharon Station and has poor street connectivity. It consists largely of existing multi-family developments. Redevelopment at a density not to exceed 30 dua may be considered if the following criteria are met:
 - Usable park / open space, and connections to the greenway where adjacent, are provided;
 - A significant low to moderate income housing component in accordance with Council-adopted Affordable Housing Policies is included in a mixed income environment;
 - A mixture of housing types is provided;
 - Existing mature trees are preserved, and an appropriate street network is provided in accordance with this plan;
 - The Residential Design Guidelines in the *General Development Policies* are met.
16. **Recognize the Kennedy Charter Public School** as an institutional use within the plan area.
17. **Recognize the Redeemed Christian Church of God** as an institutional use within the plan area.
18. **Recognize the two day care centers at the southern end of the Sterling neighborhood** as institutional uses within the plan area.
19. **Maintain the low density single family portion of the Sterling neighborhood** at a density up to 4 dua, consistent with existing land use and zoning.
20. **Maintain the moderate density residential character in the portions of the Sterling neighborhood** surrounding Sterling Elementary School and I-485 Station. Because of the close interrelationship between these areas and the low density single family portion of the neighborhood, building heights, setbacks, property access, and buffers to the existing homes will be important considerations. Density of up to 8 dua is generally appropriate, subject to further considerations as follows:
 - Dendy Street and Packard Street west of China Grove Church Road have been developed with single family homes, generally at 8 dua. The plan should reflect this density.
 - Property south of Sterling School and along Packard Street and Myrtle Avenue is irregularly developed with single-family homes, and existing density here is appropriate. If all property owners come together to sell the land, and if additional direct vehicular access to South Boulevard can be achieved, the property might be redeveloped at a higher density up to TOD level, subject to appropriate height and buffer standards as related to the continuing single family neighborhood.
 - Existing homes in common ownership generally along the west side of China Grove Church Road have a current density limit of 8 dua. Development up to 17 dua will be considered only if the proposed plan has setbacks, dwelling entrances, building heights, street connections, and parking accommodations that are compatible with the surrounding single family neighborhood.
21. **Support moderate density residential use of the property west of the Sterling neighborhood** at a density not to exceed 17 dwellings per acre (dua). This area is generally beyond a 1/2 mile walk from I-485 Station and has poor street connectivity. Because of its irregular boundaries and potential street interconnections with the Sterling neighborhood, buffers and height relationships to existing homes will be important considerations. Increased density not to exceed 30 dua may be considered if the following criteria are met:
 - Usable park / open space, and connections to the greenway where adjacent, are provided;
 - A significant low to moderate income housing component in accordance with Council-adopted Affordable Housing Policies is included in a mixed income environment;



The Sterling neighborhood, adjoining the I-485 station, has affordable single family homes.



A pedestrian path alongside Sterling Elementary School provides access to the I-485 station from the Sterling neighborhood.



Development is underway for the Little Sugar Creek Greenway along the eastern edge of the plan area.

- A mixture of housing types is provided;
 - Existing mature trees are preserved, and an appropriate street network is provided in accordance with this plan;
 - The Residential Design Guidelines in the *General Development Policies* are met.
22. **Provide an opportunity for a mixture of retail and office land uses for the properties along South Boulevard at the northern end of the plan area, and in the Westinghouse Boulevard vicinity.** This area is beyond the 1/2 mile walk distance from the stations. It is envisioned to accommodate a mixture of pedestrian-oriented uses, similar to transit oriented development, but at a lesser intensity. Development may be single use or include a mixture of uses. New development plans also should be consistent with the applicable design guidelines in the *General Development Policies*. Building heights should not exceed four (4) stories or 40' in height in this area.
23. **Recognize Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation's existing and proposed projects.** The Little Sugar Creek Greenway is planned to extend from Archdale Drive to I-485. A new park in the Pine Valley neighborhood is under development. A park facility on East Westinghouse Boulevard at Old Nations Ford Road, generally along Kings Branch, is planned for the future.
24. **Recognize plans by the Mecklenburg County Library System** to develop a regional/branch library on Sharon Road West along Little Sugar Creek Greenway.

25. **Adjust the official boundary between the South Growth Corridor** and the adjacent Wedge to the east to be consistent with the boundary shown on Map 3. The flood plain on the eastern edge of the plan area and existing development therein will be included in the Growth Corridor.

Supporting Street Network

Key street network recommendations related to proposed land use in this area are noted here. The Transportation and Streetscape section of this plan provides more detail.

26. **Maintain and enhance the existing street network in the General Corridor Area** as shown on Maps 3 and 4. Provide new street connections needed to create typical block lengths of 600 feet desired, or 650 feet maximum.

The proposed new streets shown represent a long-term expectation, to be built at the point of property redevelopment, not necessarily applicable to continuing uses in the nearer term.

It should be noted that the street network shown on Map 3 and Map 4 provides a representation of the desired street network for the Sharon and I-485 plan area and may require adjustments to address site conditions. An alternative but comparable network, consistent with the intent of providing connectivity, will also be considered.

Transportation and Streetscape

Transforming the existing streets into an attractive and functional multi-modal street network is critical to the success of the plan area, especially the area around the LRT stations where transit-oriented development is planned. Providing a well-connected street network is important throughout the study area to facilitate mobility choices and minimize congestion.

In conjunction with the establishment of the LRT line, the City made a number of improvements to the Sharon & I-485 street network through the South Corridor Infrastructure Program (SCIP). This chapter recommends additional transportation improvements for the plan area for new streets, street cross-sections, and streetscape elements.

Transportation/Street Design Recommendations

This section outlines transportation recommendations addressing both proposed new streets and enhancements to existing streets to make them more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. These include both City sponsored capital improvements, as well as improvements that will be required in conjunction with new development and redevelopment.

The general locations of the recommendations are noted on Map 4. It should be noted that this map provides a representation of the desired street network and may require adjustments to address site conditions. An alternative but comparable network consistent with the intent of providing connectivity will also be considered.

The recommendations also are cross referenced using the item numbers in the Implementation section of this plan.

Street Network

27. **Provide new street connections in the Transit Station Area**, as discussed in item 11 in the Land Use Section. Street connections, creating block lengths of 400 to 600 feet, are the highest priority for this Plan, as these are needed to support high density development and to provide additional travel routes. The streets planned as part of transit-oriented development along South Boulevard exemplify this principle.

28. **Provide new street connections in the General Corridor Area**, as discussed in item 26 in the Land Use Section. Street connections, creating block lengths of 600 to 650 feet in the General Corridor Area, are critical to alleviating congestion on South Boulevard, Westinghouse Boulevard, Hebron Street, and Sharon Road West. New connections also support redevelopment and provide a more balanced network of route choices.

29. **Increase connectivity within the Sterling neighborhood** by extending existing street stubs of Sterling Lane, Aileen Circle, and Ervin Lane south of Westinghouse Boulevard and near the I-485 station at the time of any proposed development.

30. **Increase connectivity within the Pine Valley neighborhood** by extending Timberline Road to Sharon Road West, and a new local street between Longleaf Drive and Cressida Drive at the time of proposed redevelopment.

31. **Plan for the extension of Myrtle Avenue to South Boulevard** as a condition for transit-oriented development within the Sterling neighborhood areas south of the I-485 Station. Such new connection may require modification to the existing private drive serving the parking deck to further connect to Carolina Pavilion Drive North, or may require connection to Carolina Pavilion Drive South over, under, or across the rail rights of way of both the LYNX and freight corridors. The final location and manner of these connections will involve agreements between the railroad, the City, CMS, and other parties that control these rights of way.

Sidewalks

32. **Widen sidewalk system along area thoroughfares**. Many of these sidewalks are only five feet wide, inconsistent with the recommended width found in the Streetscape Standards on subsequent pages. Additionally, planting strips which separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic are narrow or completely lacking. This plan recommends widening the sidewalks and adding planting strips along South Boulevard and other thoroughfares within the plan boundaries in conjunction with redevelopment.



South Boulevard at the entrance to the I-485 Station and Parking garage is difficult for pedestrians.



A pedestrian bridge spans the light rail and freight rail lines, providing access to Sharon Station from South Boulevard.

- 33. Improve the sidewalk network in the Transit Station Area.** As the streetscape cross-sections recommend, new development and redevelopment should install sidewalks on all streets. New streets shown in the plan are largely located on blocks closest the stations.

Pedestrian Crossings

- 34. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle crossings.** Area thoroughfares and major collectors can be difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross due to factors such as traffic volume, traffic speed, number of lanes, frequent turning movements, and distance between signalized crosswalks. While SCIP resulted in an enhanced intersection at South Boulevard and Sharon Road West, other intersections still have room for improvement. This plan recommends adding enhanced crossings, as shown on Map 4. In the plan area, these include:

- South Boulevard at Sweden Road and Sharon Lakes Road;
- South Boulevard at Hebron Street;
- South Boulevard at Westinghouse Boulevard and Cressida Drive;
- Westinghouse Boulevard at Crump and China Grove Church Roads; and
- South Boulevard at Carolina Pavilion North.

Enhanced crossings may include a combination of vehicle traffic signals, pedestrian countdown signals, painted or textured cross walks, ADA curb ramps, and pedestrian refuge islands in the median.

Bicycle Accommodations

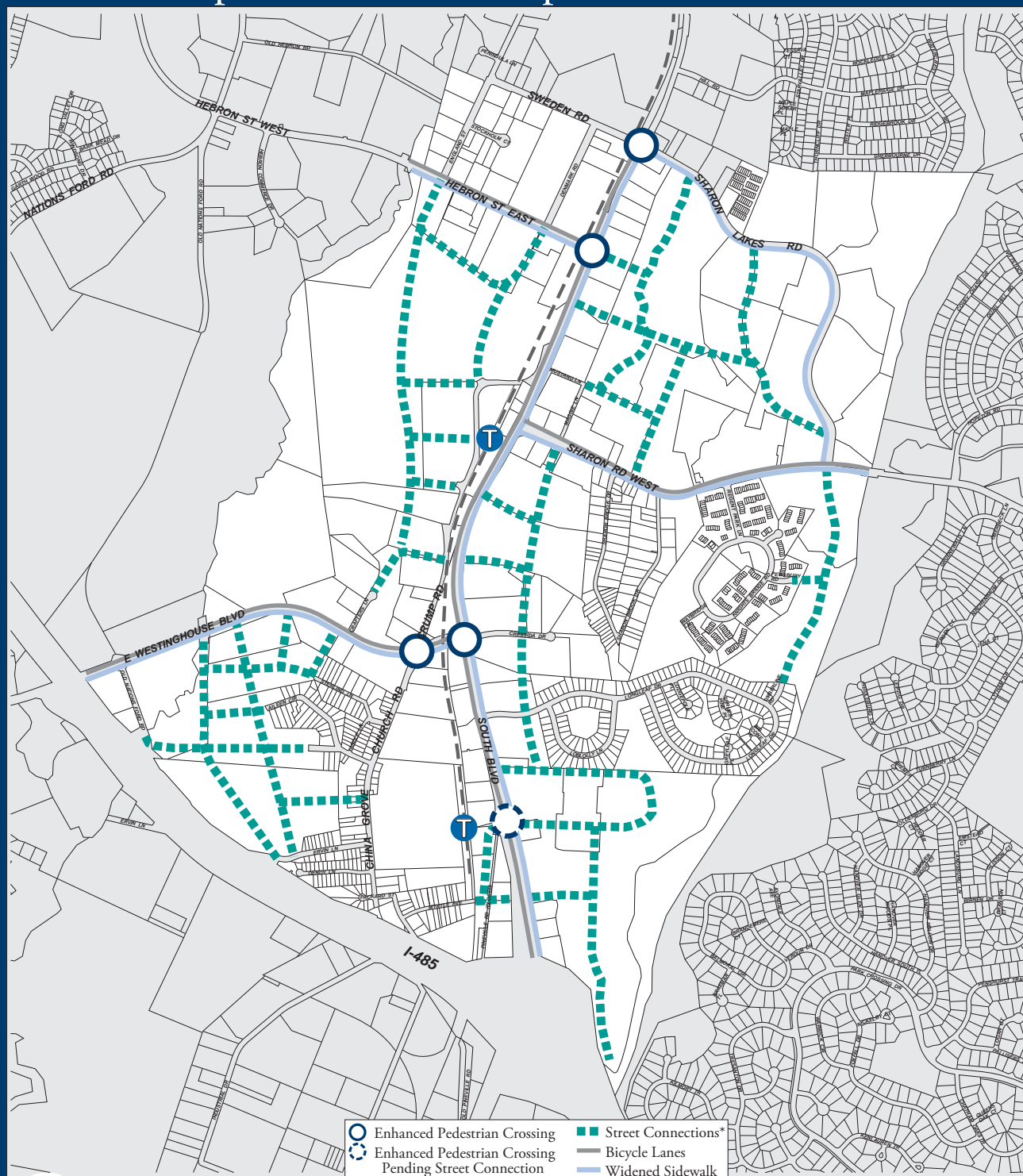
- 35. Site new development to allow future addition of bicycle lanes on thoroughfares.** This plan recommends the long-term installation of bicycle lanes along all thoroughfares as shown on Map 4.

Street Lighting

- 36. Install pedestrian scale lighting in key locations.** Typical streetlights illuminate the roadway, but do not provide significant lighting for the pedestrian area of a street. Pedestrian scale lighting is shorter in height than streetlights and focuses on lighting sidewalk areas. It should be installed in the public right-of-way, with special attention to blocks along and near South Boulevard and in blocks adjacent to the Sharon and I-485 stations.

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Map 4: Future Transportation Network



*Note: The location of the proposed streets is conceptual. Alternative locations, consistent with the intent of the proposed network, will also be considered.



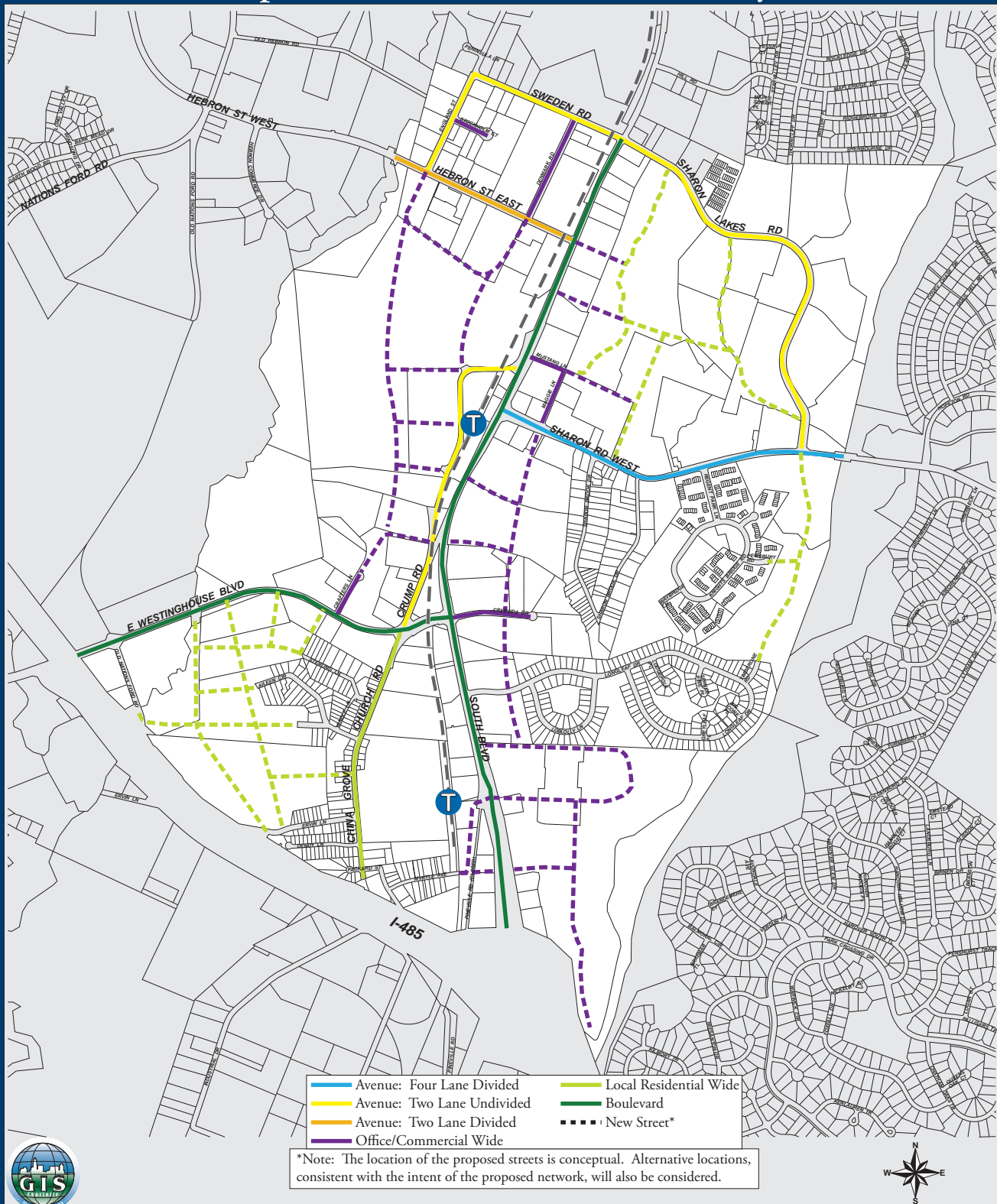
Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department.



Date: November 05, 2008

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Map 5: Street Cross Section Key



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department.

0 750 1,500
feet

Date: November 10, 2008

Streetscape Standards

Streets are more than just pathways to and through a place. Streets are one of the most highly visible types of urban places. As the entrance and exit to a community, streets have the ability to set the tone for the surrounding environment.

The streetscape cross-sections on the following pages are essential to “setting the tone” for the type of setting desired in the plan area. The cross sections have been developed in accordance with the *Urban Street Design Guidelines* (USDG), adopted by City Council in October 2007. The cross-sections set forth:

- Building setback requirements,
- Streetscape, sidewalk, and street tree requirements, and
- Future character of the streets regarding the number of lanes, bicycle, pedestrian and transit accommodations and provisions for on-street parking.

When this plan is approved, the streetscape standards specified herein will become the official “Streetscape Plan” for the study area, as referred to in the zoning standards for a number of the City’s urban zoning districts. As such, all new development on sites zoned TOD, TS, PED, UMUD, MUDD, NS, UR, or other urban zoning districts that may be established must be designed in accordance with these standards. The specifications in the cross-sections are based on typical conditions and may vary based upon further study and in unique circumstances.

Note that these cross-sections are not plans for immediate road improvements, but many are recommended long-term changes. Improvements such as on-street parking, streetscape enhancements, and sidewalk installation typically will be implemented through private redevelopment, although the City may fund minor improvements. New streets also typically will be implemented through private development, while major improvements to existing streets generally will be constructed by the City.

Street Cross-Sections

Based on the City’s *Urban Street Design Guidelines*, the future cross-sections have been determined for streets within the Sharon & I-485 plan area, with the exception of the single family neighborhood areas where little change to existing streets is expected. The following street types are recommended for the plan area:

- **Boulevard**
- **Avenue** - Four-Lane Divided
- **Avenue** - Two-Lane Undivided
- **Avenue** - Two-Lane Divided
- **Office/Commercial Street** - Wide
- **Local Residential Street** - Wide

Map 5 shows the desired location for each of these street types. Consult this map to identify the recommendation for a specific street, then refer to the matching cross-section on the following pages. Streets within neighborhood areas slated for preservation are intended for preservation as well, so new cross sections for these areas are not provided.

Boulevard

Description: Boulevards are intended to move large numbers of vehicles, often as “through traffic,” from one part of the city to another, and to other lower level streets in the network. Thus, the modal priority shifts toward motor vehicles, while still accommodating pedestrians and cyclists as safely and comfortably as possible.

Land Use: The land use will vary; within the plan area the desired uses will be typically medium density mixed use; retail, office, industrial, warehouse, and distribution uses.

Situation: South Boulevard is a major thoroughfare. From Sharon Lakes Road southward to I-485, traffic volumes and speeds increase significantly from the portion of South Boulevard further north. Within this plan area, a four-lane divided Boulevard cross section is recommended.

Existing Condition: South Boulevard in this plan area has two lanes in each direction, widened for left and right turn lanes and merging lanes in various locations. Right of way is typically 100 feet, varying significantly from 60 feet to over 200 feet in some locations.

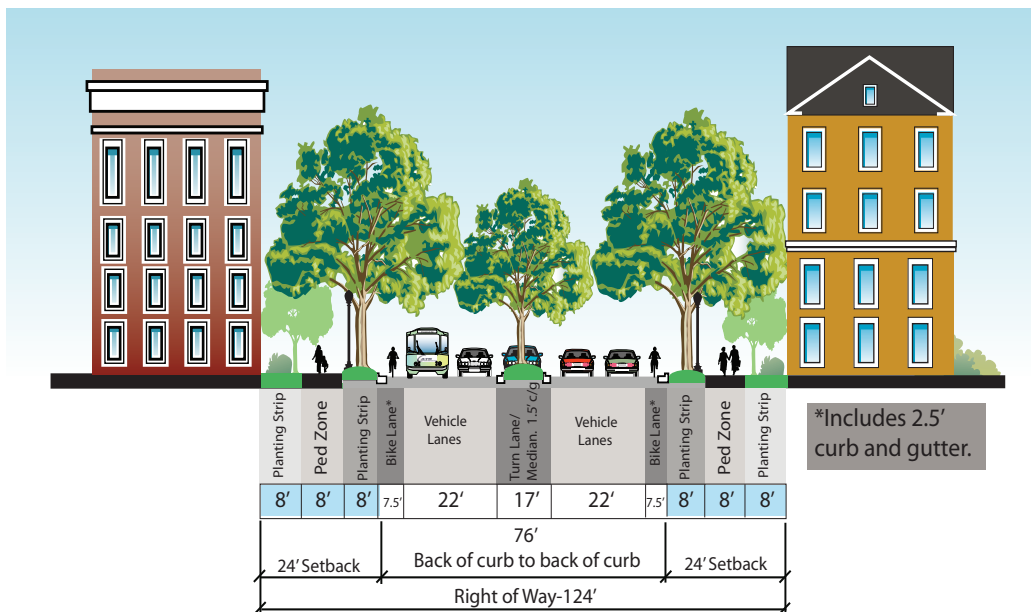
Proposed Curb to Curb: Recommended width is 76 feet from back-of-curb to back-of-curb; right-of-way is 124 feet.

- Two travel lanes and bike lane in each direction.

- Continuous median with left turn lanes and pedestrian refuge.
- Additional widening for turn lanes may be required in some circumstances in accordance with CDOT standards.

Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is 24 feet from back of (unrecessed) recommended curb. Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance.

- Planting strip serves as buffer from traffic to pedestrians on sidewalk. Because of intense traffic on this street, on-street parking is not appropriate.
- Ped zone is the usual location for the clear sidewalk.
- The additional planting strip behind the sidewalk is intended to provide additional landscaping, and a buffer between sidewalk and building uses. It can be used for landscaping, sidewalk dining, or paved merchandising purposes, as appropriate to the land use. Encroachments into this strip for features such as steps and open porches are allowed in accordance with the zoning ordinance, but encroachments at grade may not reduce the clear sidewalk to less than 8 feet.



Avenue - Four-Lane Divided

Description: The Avenue is the most common (non-local) street type in Charlotte, providing access from neighborhoods to commercial areas, between areas of the city, and, in some cases, through neighborhoods. It is designed to provide a balance of service for all modes of transportation, including accessibility for transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists in addition to carrying significant automobile traffic.

Land Use: The land use will vary; within the plan area the desired uses will be typically medium to high density mixed use, residential, office, and retail.

Situation: The major thoroughfares in the plan area are classified primarily as Avenues. The four lane divided type is recommended for Sharon Road West. The proposed cross-section will allow this street to continue to perform an important mobility function for motorists, as well as to support safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Existing Condition: This street typically has two lanes in each direction, widened for left turn lanes near some intersections. Right-of-way varies significantly from 60 feet upward.

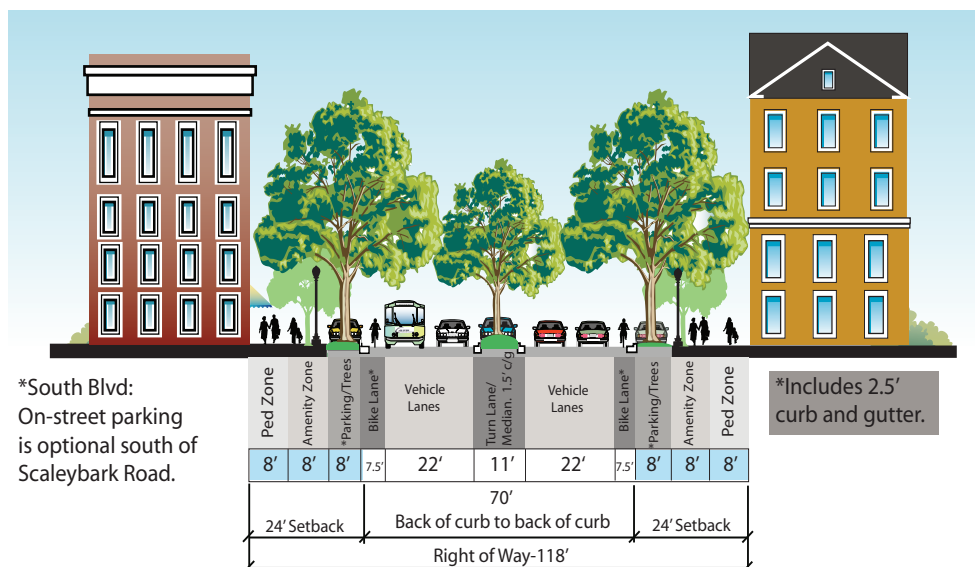
Proposed Curb to Curb: Recommended width is 70 feet from back-of-curb to back-of-curb; right-of-way is 118 feet.

- Two travel lanes and bike lane in each direction.
- Continuous center lane for left turns and pedestrian refuge; to include mid-block landscaped pedestrian refuge islands in some locations.

- Additional widening for turn lanes may be required in some circumstances in accordance with CDOT standards.

Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is 24 feet from back of (unrecessed) recommended curb. Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance.

- Planting strip or recessed on-street parallel parking serves as buffer from traffic to pedestrians on sidewalk. Planting strip with trees is the standard expectation. Recessed on-street parking is an option per zoning and CDOT standards, with intermittent planter islands to break up parking into bays no more than 100 feet in length.
- Amenity zone provides supplemental tree planting location. Trees in the amenity zone should be planted in curbed planters. The amenity zone also provides additional paved area for street furniture, paved access to on-street parking, and merchandising purposes.
- Ped zone is the usual location for the clear sidewalk. Where there is no on-street parking and planting strips are in place, the clear sidewalk can be pushed into the amenity zone location and the ped zone can be used for landscaping, sidewalk dining, or paved merchandising purposes. Encroachments into the ped zone for features such as steps and open porches are allowed in accordance with the zoning ordinance, but encroachments at grade may not reduce the clear sidewalk to less than 8 feet.



Sharon & 9-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Avenue - Two-Lane Undivided

Description: The Avenue is the most common (non-local) street providing access from neighborhoods to commercial areas, between areas of the city, and, in some cases, through neighborhoods. It is designed to provide a balance of service for all modes of transportation, including accessibility for transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists in addition to carrying significant automobile traffic.

Land Use: The land use will vary; within the plan area the desired uses will include medium to high density mixed use and residential, and some office, industrial, warehouse, and distribution uses.

Situation: This Avenue cross section is narrower than the four-lane divided version used for Sharon Road West. It is recommended for England Street, Sweden Road, Sharon Lakes Road, and Crump Road within the Transit Station and General Corridor Areas. The proposed cross-section will allow this street type to continue to perform an important mobility function for motorists, as well as to support safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Existing Condition: These streets have one lane in each direction, generally without turn lanes or landscaped median but with some variation at major intersections. Right-of-way is generally 60 to 80 feet, but varying more and less.

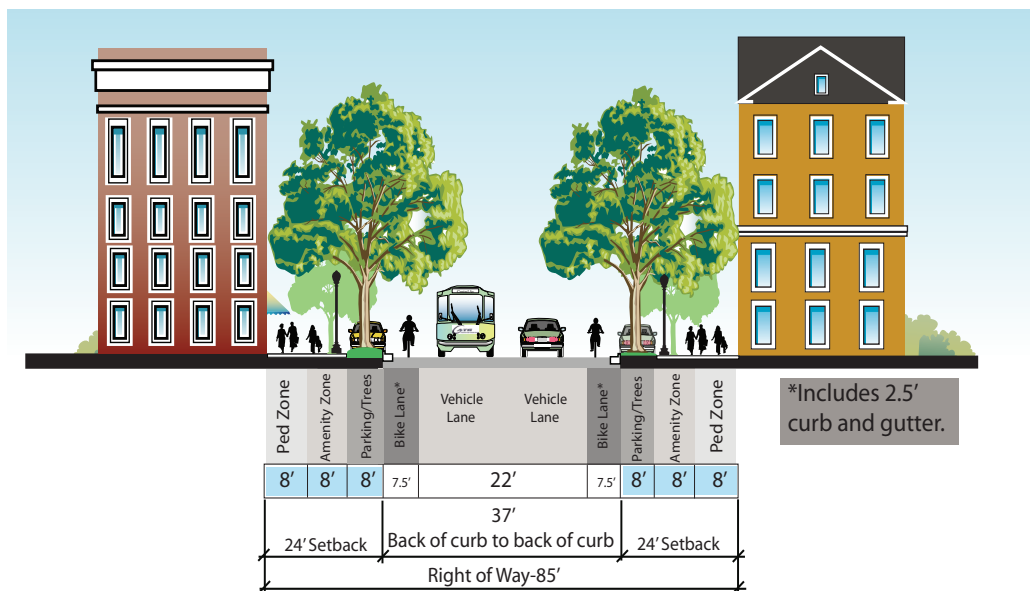
Proposed Curb to Curb: Recommended width is 37 feet from back of curb to back of curb; right-of-way is 85 feet.

- One travel lane and bike lane in each direction.

- Widening for left turn lanes may be required in some circumstances in accordance with CDOT standards.

Proposed Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is 24 feet from back of (unrecessed) recommended curb. Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance.

- Planting strip or recessed on-street parallel parking serve as buffer from traffic to pedestrians on sidewalk. The recessed parking is required in all locations feasible under CDOT standards, with intermittent planter islands to break up parking into bays no more than 100 feet in length. Planting strip with trees is required in all other situations.
- Amenity zone provides supplemental tree planting location. Trees in the amenity zone should be planted in curbed planters. The amenity zone also provides additional paved area for street furniture, paved access to on-street parking, and merchandising purposes.
- Ped Zone is the usual location for the clear sidewalk. Where there is no on-street parking and planting strips are in place, the clear sidewalk can be pushed into the amenity zone location, and the ped zone can be used for landscaping, sidewalk dining, or paved merchandising purposes. Encroachments into the ped zone for features such as steps and open porches are allowed in accordance with the zoning ordinance, but encroachments at grade may not reduce the clear sidewalk to less than 8 feet.



Sharon & 9-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Avenue - Two-Lane Divided

Description: The Avenue is the most common (non-local) street providing access from neighborhoods to commercial areas, between areas of the city, and, in some cases, through neighborhoods. It is designed to provide a balance of service for all modes of transportation, including accessibility for transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists in addition to carrying significant automobile traffic.

Land Use: The land use will vary; within the plan area the desired uses will be typically medium to high density mixed use and office, industrial, warehouse, and distribution uses.

Situation: This Avenue cross section is narrower than the four-lane divided version used on Sharon Road West. It is recommended for Hebron Street East. The proposed cross-section will allow this street type to continue to perform an important mobility function for motorists, as well as to support safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle travel.

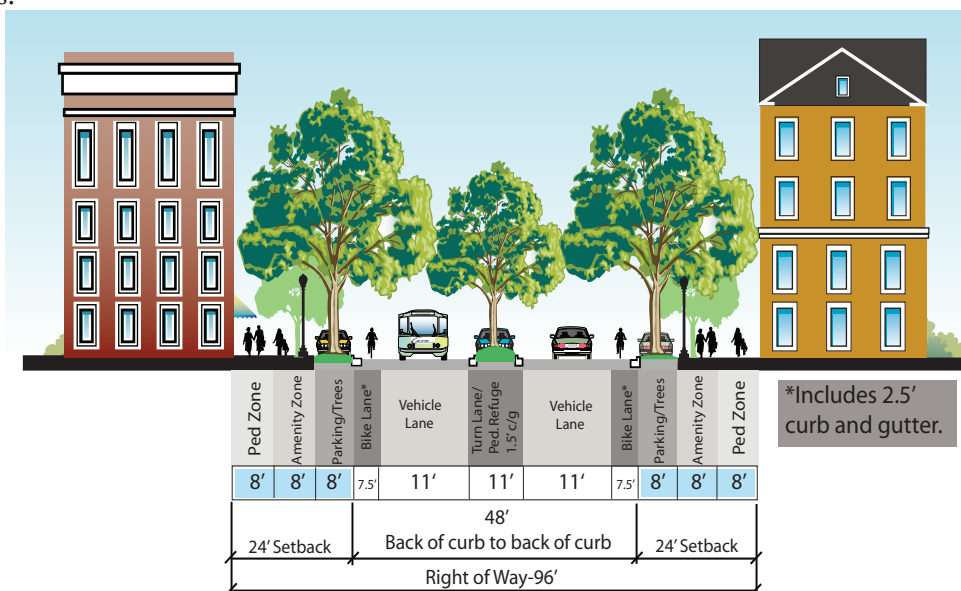
Existing Condition: This street has one lane in each direction, with median and left turn lanes near intersections. Right-of-way is about 80 feet.

Proposed Curb to Curb: Recommended width is 48 feet from back-of-curb to back-of-curb; right-of-way is 96 feet.

- One travel lane and bike lane in each direction.
- Continuous center lane for left turns and pedestrian refuge; to include mid-block landscaped pedestrian refuge islands in some locations.

Proposed Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is 24 feet from back of (unrecessed) recommended curb. Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance.

- Planting strip or recessed on-street parallel parking serve as buffer from traffic to pedestrians on sidewalk. The recessed parking is required in all locations feasible under CDOT standards, with intermittent planter islands to break up parking into bays no more than 100 feet in length. Planting strip with trees is required in all other situations.
- Amenity zone provides supplemental tree planting location. Trees in the amenity zone should be planted in curbed planters. The amenity zone also provides additional paved area for street furniture, paved access to on-street parking, and merchandising purposes.
- Ped Zone is the usual location for the clear sidewalk. Where there is no on-street parking and planting strips are in place, the clear sidewalk can be pushed into the amenity zone location, and the ped zone can be used for landscaping, sidewalk dining, or paved merchandising purposes. Encroachments into the ped zone for features such as steps and open porches are allowed in accordance with the zoning ordinance, but encroachments at grade may not reduce the clear sidewalk to less than 8 feet.



Office / Commercial Street - Wide

Description: Local streets provide access to residential, industrial, commercial, or mixed use development. The majority of Charlotte's streets are classified as local streets and are typically built through the land development process.

Land Use: In the study area, the land use along these streets is typically office, warehouse/industrial, and retail development with an auto orientation. It may include medium density mixed-use development.

Situation: The office/commercial streets are recommended in the portions of the Transit Station Area and General Corridor Area where residential uses are not anticipated. Office/commercial streets are appropriate because they provide basic pedestrian amenities while allowing for reasonable vehicular access and speeds.

Existing Condition: These streets generally have one lane in each direction; some have on-street parking. Right-of-way is typically 50 to 60 feet.

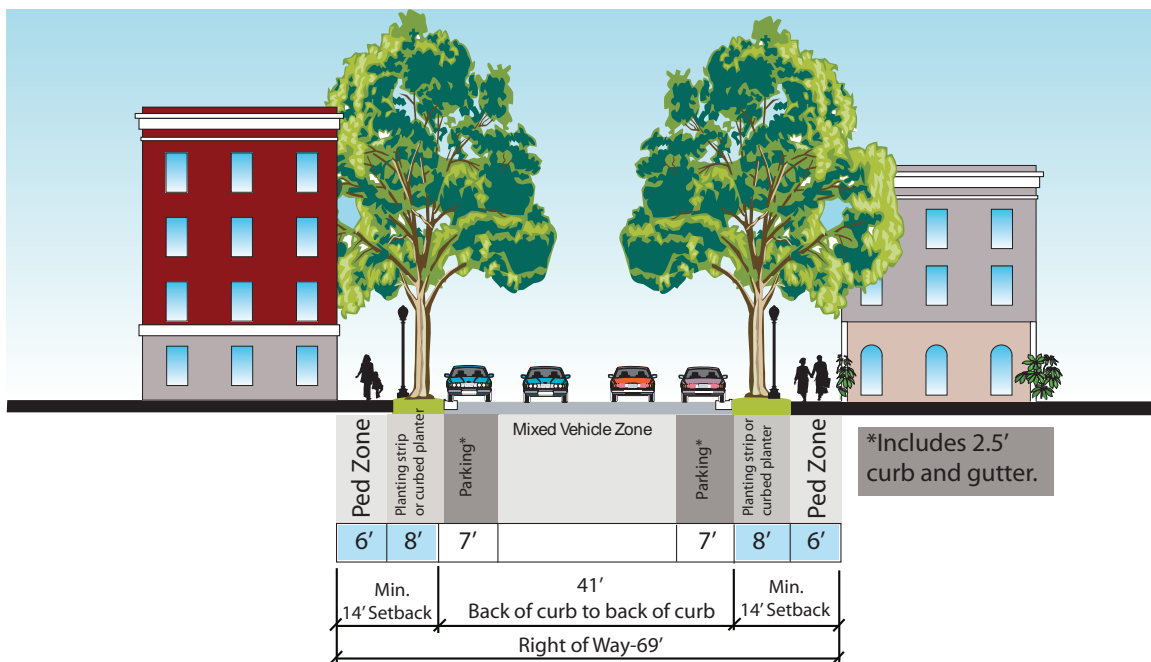
Proposed Curb to Curb: Recommended width is 41 feet from back-of-curb to back-of-curb; right-of-way is 69 feet.

- One travel lane in each direction shared with bicyclists.

- On-street parking on both sides. Curb extensions may be used to narrow street width at intersections and other locations where on-street parking is not appropriate.
- Widening for left-turn lanes may be required in some circumstances in accordance with CDOT standards.

Proposed Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is 14 feet from back of (recessed) recommended curb, or 21 feet from back of any extended curb. Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance.

- Planting strip provides buffer from traffic to pedestrians on the sidewalk, and a landscaping opportunity. In locations with retail frontage or other high density applications, tree planting in curbed planters, with paved amenity zone for street furniture, paved access to on-street parking, and merchandising purposes should be substituted for the planting strip.
- Ped Zone is the usual location for the clear sidewalk. Encroachments into the ped zone for features such as steps and open porches are allowed in accordance with the zoning ordinance, but encroachments at grade may not reduce the clear sidewalk to less than 6 feet.



Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Local Residential Street - Wide

Description: Local streets provide access to residential, industrial, commercial or mixed-use development. The majority of Charlotte's streets are classified as local streets and are typically built through the land development process.

Land Use: The land use is typically medium to high density residential, with some mixed use development.

Situation: Wide local residential streets are recommended in portions of the plan area where residential uses higher in density than single-family are in place or expected. They also are recommended in portions of the transit station area off of the main thoroughfares where a predominance of residential development is expected. The local residential street cross-section is designed for low traffic speeds and a comfortable walking, cycling and living environment.

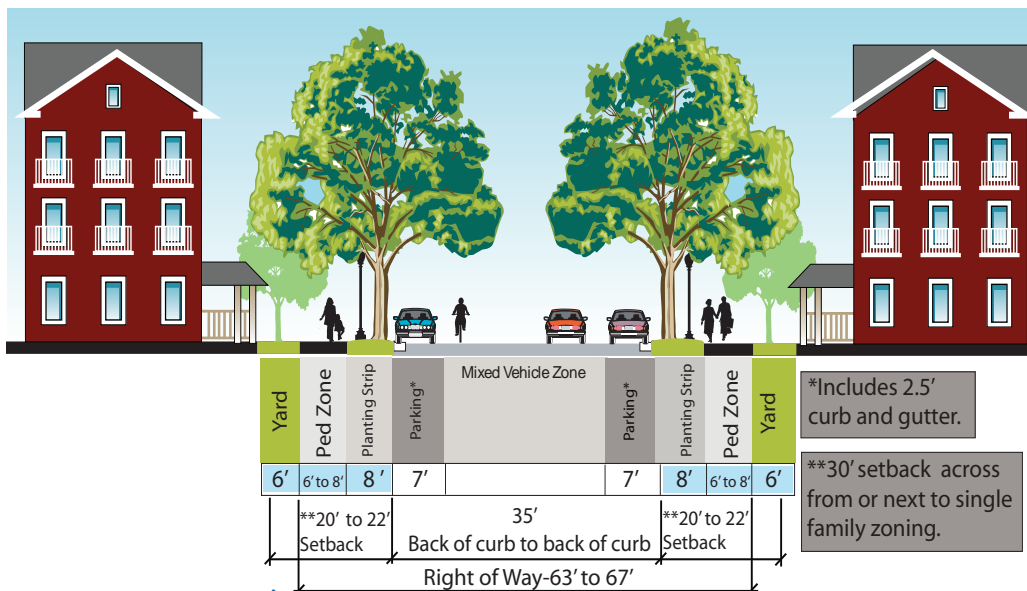
Existing Condition: These streets have one lane in each direction. Some have on-street parking. Right-of-way varies widely, but is typically 50 to 60 feet.

Proposed Curb to Curb: Recommended width is 35 feet from back-of-curb to back-of-curb; right-of-way is 63 to 67 feet, depending on the sidewalk requirement.

- One travel lane in each direction shared with bicyclists.
- On-street parking on both sides. Curb extensions may be used to narrow street width at intersections and other locations where on-street parking is not appropriate.
- Widening for left-turn lanes may be required in some circumstances in accordance with CDOT standards.

Proposed Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is 20 to 22 feet from back of (recessed) recommended curb, or 27 to 29 feet from back of any extended curb, depending on the sidewalk width requirement. Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance.

- Planting strip provides buffer from traffic to pedestrians on the sidewalk, and a landscaping opportunity. In locations with retail frontage or other high density applications, tree planting in curbed planters, with paved amenity zone for street furniture, paved access to on-street parking, and merchandising purposes should be substituted for the planting strip.
- Ped zone is the usual location for the clear sidewalk. For streets located within 1/4 mile walk of the transit station, the minimum sidewalk width is 8 feet. Elsewhere in the plan area the minimum width is 6 feet.
- The yard area is intended to provide additional landscaping and a buffer between sidewalk and residential uses. Encroachments for features such as steps and open porches are allowed in accordance with the zoning ordinance, but encroachments at grade may not reduce the clear sidewalk to less than the required width.
- Parcels located on streets that have existing single-family zoning designations (R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, and R-8) either across the street, or abutting on the same side of the street, shall have a minimum setback of 30 feet.



Sharon & 9-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Infrastructure and Public Facilities

The core of the Sharon & I-485 plan area includes properties that currently are industrial and auto-oriented commercial; however these properties are recommended for eventual higher density redevelopment. Their infrastructure, while sufficient and appropriate for its current uses, may require capacity increases for more intense new uses. The following recommendations are intended to address needs for additional or expanded infrastructure and public facilities.

Public Facility/Infrastructure Recommendations

37. **Conduct an infrastructure study to evaluate the adequacy of infrastructure** (water, sewer, storm drainage) in the station area. The ability of the station area's infrastructure to support high density redevelopment and capacity of the other utility systems is not fully detailed. To ensure that the station area will be able to support the new, higher-density development recommended by this plan, a detailed infrastructure analysis is recommended.

38. **Encourage the burying of utilities.** Overhead utility lines detract from the appearance of the station area, which in turn may impact the economic competitiveness of a project. Overhead lines also may impact development density due to required clearances from the lines. As redevelopment occurs, opportunities to relocate or bury utility lines should be pursued.

Park and Greenway Recommendations

39. **Provide opportunities for expansion and improved access for the Little Sugar Creek Greenway and the Kings Branch Park** in accordance with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation master plans.

40. **Encourage urban open spaces in the Transit Station Area.** New developments in the area should provide usable urban open spaces, either on-site or off-site within the station area. Desirable types of urban open spaces include pocket parks, plazas, and community gardens. The areas in immediate proximity to the two transit stations are high priorities for open space.



Sterling Elementary School adjoins the I-485 station.



The plan area is flanked by Little Sugar Creek and Kings Branch Creek, with greenway and park improvements planned.

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Environment

The Sharon & I-485 plan area includes a substantial area of present and former commercial and industrial development, some of which is expected to be redeveloped in the coming years. The environmental recommendations focus on means to improve air, water and land quality through the redevelopment process.

It should be noted that the establishment of dense transit oriented development within station areas is intended to improve the environment of the region by concentrating growth where it can be supported by transit and other infrastructure, by relieving the pressure for growth on outlying greenfield locations, and by reducing vehicular trips and trip lengths that otherwise would extend to the outer edge of the metropolitan area.

Environmental Recommendations

41. **Make trees a key feature of the entire plan area.**

Residential neighborhoods are characterized by their mature tree canopy. Trees could become a key feature for the entire study area if they are added to streets in the Transit Station and Corridor Areas. In addition to their aesthetic value, trees help to reduce stormwater run-off, slow soil erosion, absorb air pollutants and provide shade. Where street trees currently exist in the station area, they should be maintained and replaced as necessary. In parts of the station area where street trees do not currently exist, they should be planted as part of any new development or redevelopment in accordance with the streetscape cross-sections.

42. **Design site plans for new buildings and renovations in the station area to improve water quality for stormwater run-off.**

Over the last decade, innovative design solutions have been developed to address the water quality of stormwater runoff. These best practices in on-site stormwater management include the use of bioswales or rain gardens, rooftop rain capture, and pervious parking areas. Because of the large amount of impervious surface area and the proximity of nearby creeks, new developments and redevelopments in the station area are encouraged to incorporate design features that improve the quality of stormwater leaving their site, consistent with the Council-adopted Post Construction Controls Ordinance.

43. **Protect or enhance the watersheds when possible.**

The Sharon & I-485 plan area sits on a ridge line between Little Sugar Creek to the east and Kings Branch Creek to the west. Degradation to either creek would be a negative impact to the community. Any development or redevelopment in the area will have a goal to improve the quality of runoff, reduce flooding impacts, and reduce runoff if possible. This will primarily be achieved with the provisions of the Post Construction Controls Ordinance.

44. **Assist property owners with remediation of sites known or perceived to have contaminated soil.**

Soil contamination poses an obvious hazard to the environment; however, it can also serve as an obstacle to development. Since contamination is a potential issue in the transit station area, property owners should be encouraged to participate in the funding programs offered by the City of Charlotte to financially assist with the assessment of contaminated sites.

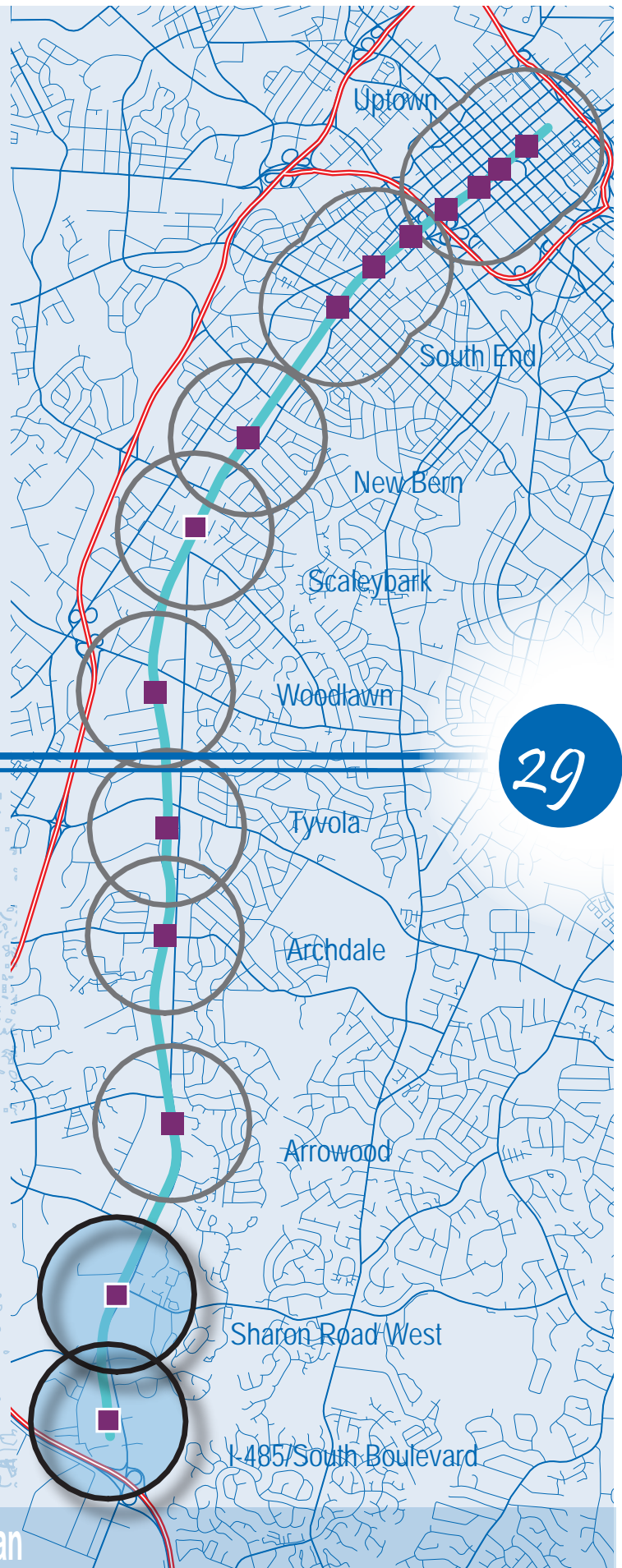


The tree canopy in existing neighborhoods of the plan area is an amenity to be preserved and emulated in new development.

Volume 2:
*Implementation
Plan*

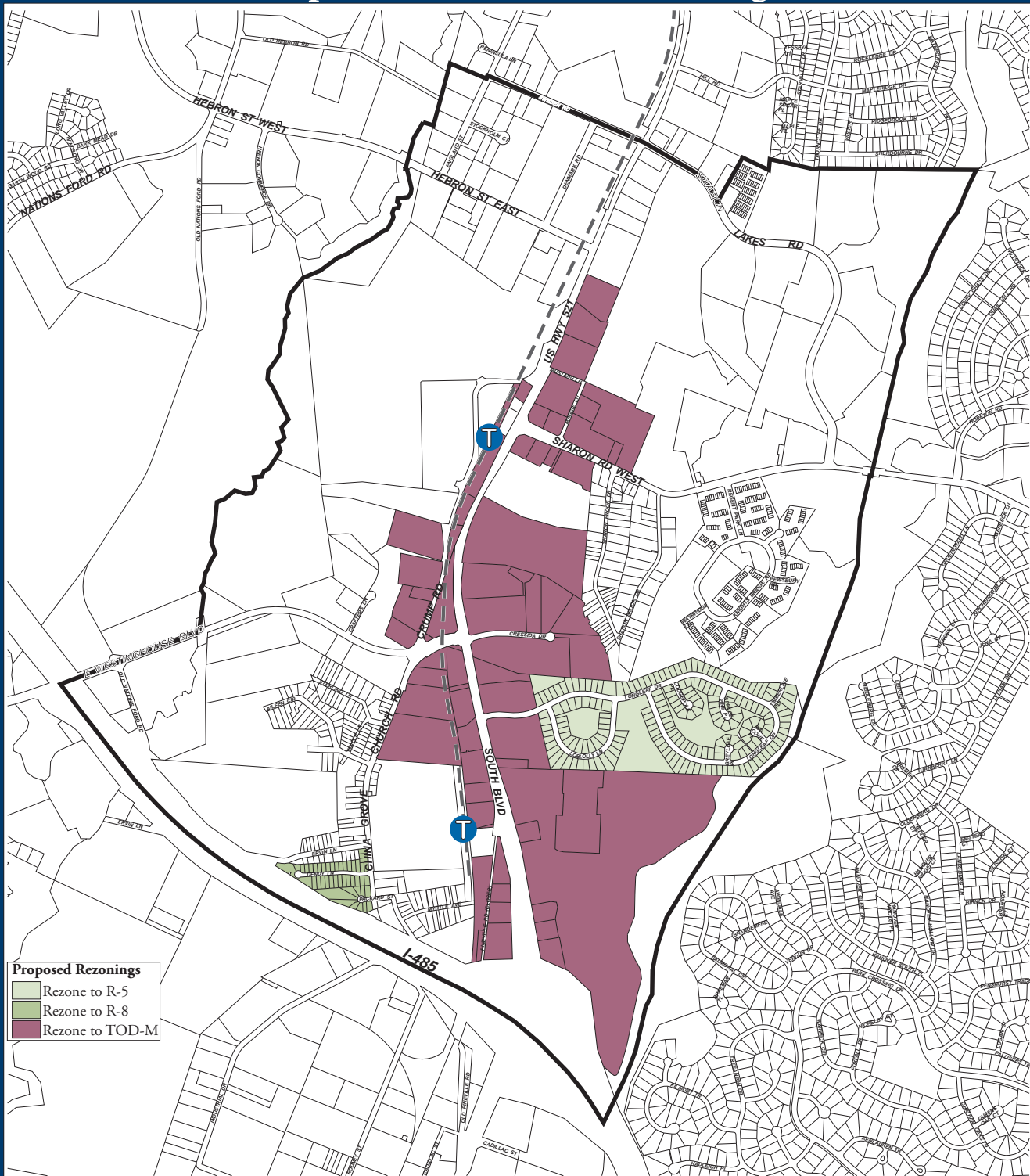
29

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan



Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Map 6: Corrective Rezonings



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department.

0 750 1,500
feet



Date: December 09, 2008

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation Plan

The recommendations of the *Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan* will be implemented in a number of ways. First and foremost, all of the recommendations in the plan, once adopted, are City policy. As such, the recommendations will guide future decision-making in the study area, such as requests for rezoning.

This Implementation Plan outlines the strategies to help implement the land use, community design, transportation, and other development-oriented recommendations contained in the adopted Concept Plan. Implementation strategies are listed on the following pages. The number of each action corresponds to the number for the recommendation in the Concept Plan. The responsible agency and possible time frame also are included.

These implementation strategies will not be approved by elected officials as part of the Concept Plan adoption. The strategies that require City Council approval will be brought forward on a case by case basis after the Concept Plan has been adopted and the public has had an opportunity to give input.

Because this Implementation Plan is not adopted by elected officials, the public sector sponsored items listed on the following pages are ideas for implementation, not a commitment. The projects may be revised over time; as such this Implementation Plan should be updated periodically to reflect changes and progress.

Public Sector Responsibilities

With input from the community, the public sector will provide the policy framework for land development and will be responsible for making a number of infrastructure improvements. In addition, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department, in consultation with other City and County departments, is responsible for initiating and guiding the corrective rezoning process and monitoring and reviewing rezonings proposed for the plan area to ensure that future development meets the required standards and reflects the intent of the adopted policy.

Private Sector Responsibilities

The private sector will be responsible for developing and redeveloping properties within the plan area consistent with the vision, policies, and recommendations included in the Concept Plan. Ensuring that the infrastructure required in conjunction with development is provided will be part of these development responsibilities.

Corrective Rezonings

The Planning Department will initiate corrective rezonings to implement the land use vision and recommendations adopted as part of the Concept Plan. The proposed rezonings are shown on Map 6. The rezoning process will occur after the adoption of the Concept Plan.

The proposed rezonings to TOD-M may be initiated in one or more groups, or may be proposed on a case-by-case basis in order to insure that new streets and other recommendations of this plan are provided by new development.

A number of properties in the Transit Station Area are occupied by major ongoing businesses and industrial operations. While not transit-oriented in nature, it is recognized that these uses serve other important employment and economic functions within the City. These properties should retain their commercial or industrial zoning to allow them to continue as-of-right operations until such time as the property owners are ready for redevelopment.

Implementation Strategies

The number of each action corresponds to the number for the recommendation in the Concept Plan.

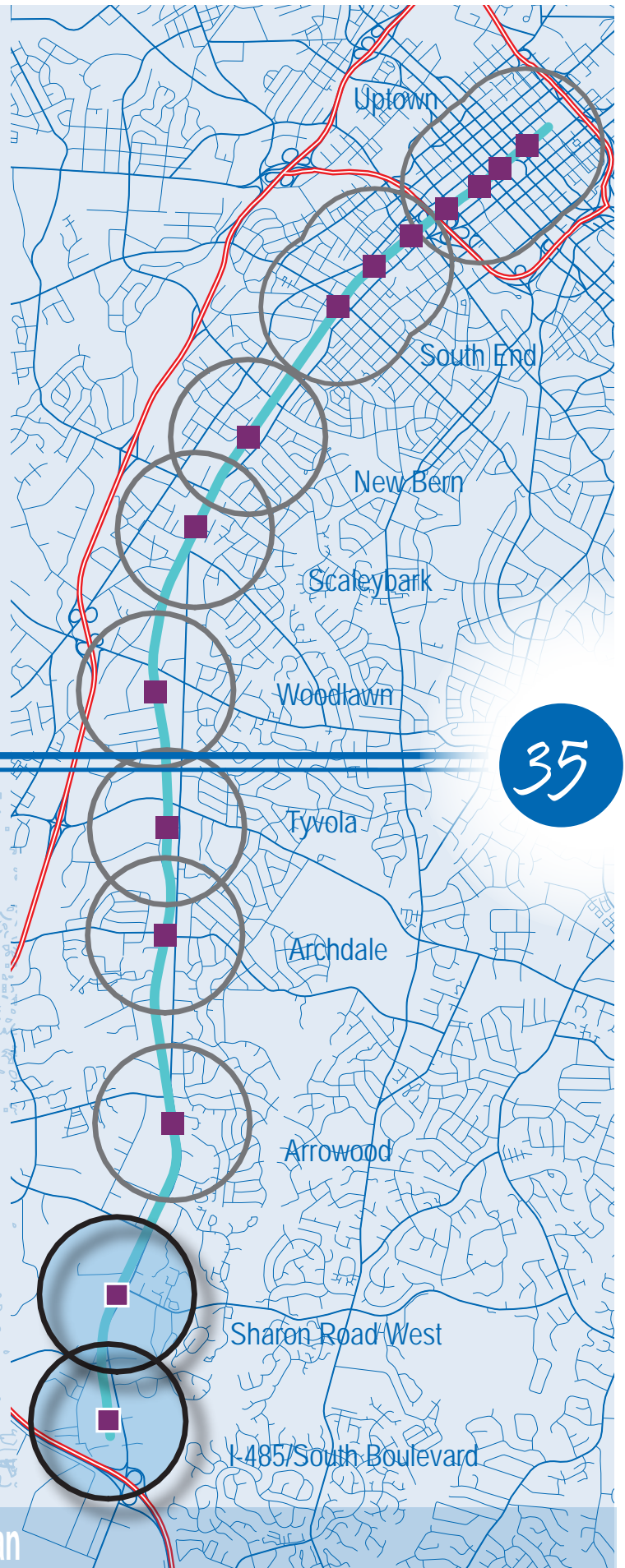
	Action Item	Type	Lead Agency	Priority
	<u>Land Use and Community Design</u>			
1	Support continuing use of major industrial operations located adjoining or in close proximity to the Sharon Station.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
2a	Rezone area recommended for transit oriented development to TOD-M per Map 6.	Zoning	Planning	Short (0-5 yr)
2b	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
3	Encourage capacity expansion of the I-485 park-and-ride facility.	Transit	CATS	Medium (0-5 yr)
4	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
5	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
6	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
7	Create open space or pedestrian amenities at both transit stations.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
8	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
9	Not Applicable	NA	NA	NA
10	Not Applicable	NA	NA	NA
11	New street connections - Provide new street connections needed to create typical block lengths of 400 feet desired, or 600 feet maximum, as shown on Map 4. Specifically, extend streets as noted in the plan.	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs
12	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
13	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
14	Maintain the existing Pine Valley single-family neighborhood through corrective rezoning to R-5.	Zoning	Planning	Short (0-5 yr)

Action Item		Type	Lead Agency	Priority
15	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
16	Not Applicable	NA	NA	NA
17	Not Applicable	NA	NA	NA
18	Not Applicable	NA	NA	NA
19	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
20	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals, and maintain single-family neighborhood along Dendy Street and Packard Street west of China Grove Church Road through corrective rezoning to R-8.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
21	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
22	Use land use recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
23	Recognize Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation's existing and proposed projects.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
24	Recognize Plans by the Mecklenburg County Library System to develop a regional/branch library on Sharon Rd. West along Little Sugar Creek Greenway.	Zoning	Planning	as devel occurs
25	Adjust the official boundary between the South Growth Corridor.	Planning	Planning	Short (0-5 yr)
26	Maintain and enhance the existing street network in the General Corridor Area.	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs
	<u>Transportation / Street Design</u>			
27	see # 11	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs
28	see # 26	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs
29	Increase connectivity within the Sterling neighborhood.	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs
30	Increase connectivity within the Pine Valley neighborhood.	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs

	Action Item	Type	Lead Agency	Priority
31	Plan for the extension of Myrtle Avenue to South Blvd. as a condition for TOD within the Sterling neighborhood areas south of the I-485 Station.	Transp.	CDOT	Long (>10 yrs)
32	Widen sidewalks along thoroughfares.	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs
33	Improve the sidewalk network in the Transit Station Area.	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs
34	Enhance pedestrian and bicycle crossings on major thoroughfares and major collectors.	Transp.	CDOT	Medium (5-10 yr)
35	Site new developments to allow future addition of bicycle lanes on thoroughfares.	Transp.	CDOT	as devel occurs
36	Install pedestrian scale lighting in key locations.	Transp.	CDOT	Medium (5-10 yr)
	<u>Infrastructure and Public Facilities</u>			
37	Conduct and infrastructure study to evaluate the adequacy of infrastructure.	Utilities	E&PM / CMU"	Medium (5-10 yr)
38	Encourage the burying of utilities.	Utilities	Planning	as devel occurs
39	Provide opportunities for expansion and improved access for the Little Sugar Creek and Kings Branch Park.	Park	Park & Rec / CDOT	as devel occurs
40	Encourage urban open spaces in the Transit Station Area.	Park	Planning / Park & Rec	Medium (5-10 yr)
	<u>Environment</u>			
41	Make trees a key feature of the entire plan area.	Zoning/ Tree Ord.	Planning / Park & Rec	Medium (5-10 yr)
42	Design site plans for new buildings and renovations in the station area to improve water quality for stormwater run-off.	Stormwater	E&PM	as devel occurs
43	Protect or enhance the watersheds when possible.	Stormwater	E&PM	as devel occurs
44	Assist property owners with remediation of sites known or perceived to have contaminated soil.	Brownfield	Econ. Dev.	as devel occurs

Appendix:

35



Existing Conditions

This chapter examines existing demographic, environmental, land use, design, transportation, and infrastructure conditions in the Sharon & I-485 plan area. It provides a framework for understanding the opportunities and constraints identified in the Concept Plan.

Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Sharon & I-485 plan area is home to approximately 6,886 residents. The majority of these residents are white (52%) and about thirty-four percent (34%) are black. Hispanic residents comprise twelve percent (12%) of the area's population.

A majority of residents in the plan area (77%) are working age adults, between ages 18 and 64 years. Nineteen percent of the study area residents are below age 18, while only 4% are over the age of 65.

Approximately 47% of residents in the plan area have a household income of less than \$35,000 compared to 36% for households in Charlotte overall.

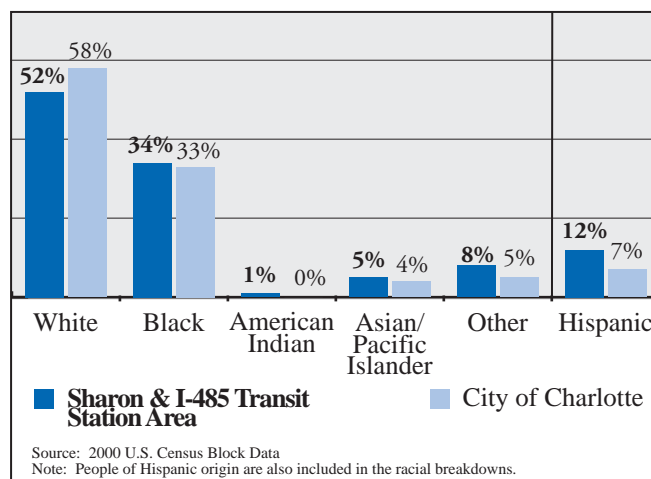
The level of educational attainment for residents in the plan area varies, as seen on the accompanying diagram. The differences in educational levels may contribute to the range of occupations for residents in the plan area, as noted in the accompanying diagram.

Although the occupations are diverse within the area, the mode of transportation to work among residents is very similar. Of the working population, 96% travel to work by car, truck or van; 2% use public transportation and the remaining 2% are split between individuals who walk to work and work at home. The average travel time to work is approximately 21 minutes.

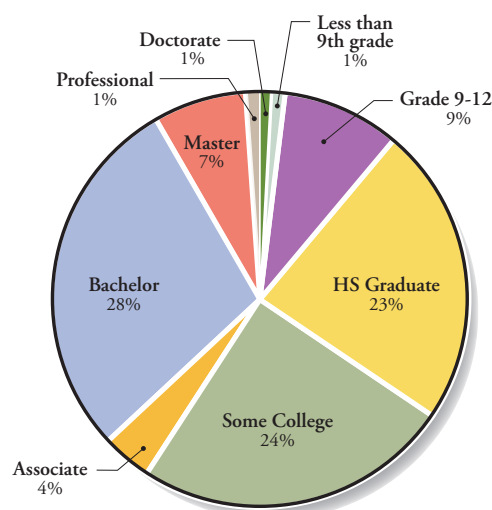
Issues/Opportunities:

As the area continues to grow, the diverse population provides an opportunity for this area to become a unique place for people to live and work.

In addition, the LYNX Blue Line can provide an alternative mode of transportation for some residents within the area.

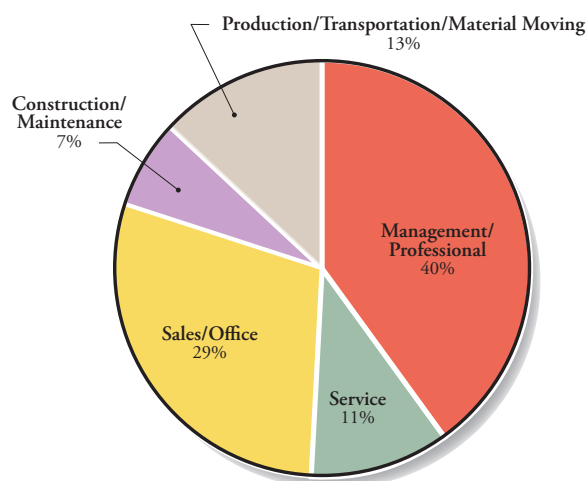


Population Characteristics for Sharon & I-485 Station Area Plan and Charlotte



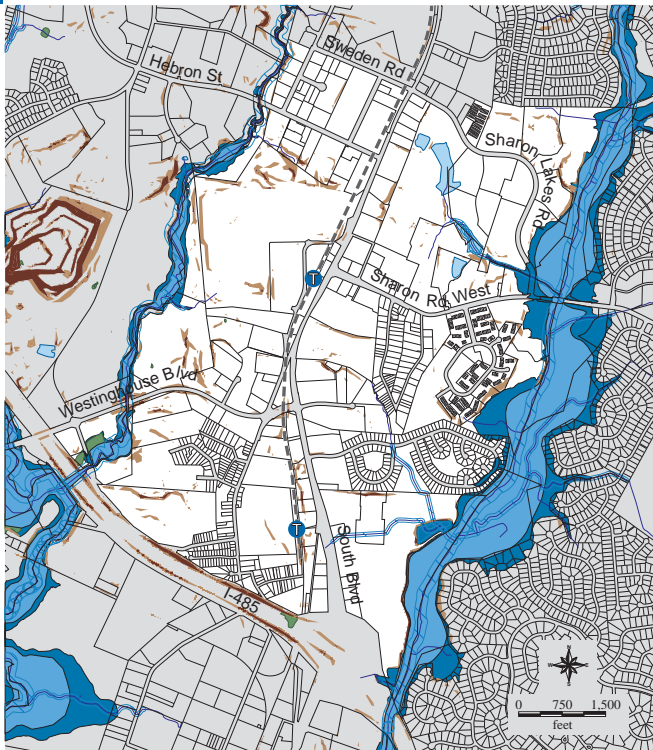
Source: 2000 U.S. Census Block Group Data

Educational Level for Sharon & I-485 Station Area Plan

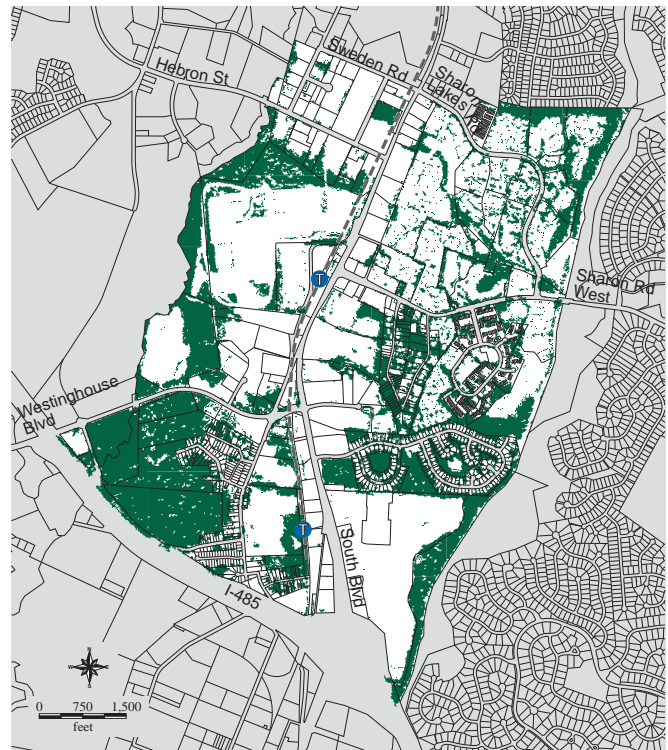


Source: 2000 U.S. Census Block Group Data

Employment Industry for Sharon & I-485 Station Area Plan



- SWIM Buffers
- FEMA 100 Year Floodplain
- Community Floodplain
- Existing Ponds
- Transit Station and Line
- 15 - 25% Slope
- Greater Than 25% Slope
- Wetlands
- Existing Streams



- Tree Canopy (2002 Data)
- Transit Station and Line

Environment

Natural Features

The Sharon Road West and I-485/South Boulevard Station Areas are along the South Corridor. This plan area sits upon a natural north-south ridge and does not have any sensitive features. Kings Branch Creek borders the west side of the plan area and Little Sugar Creek borders the east side of the plan area. There are SWIM buffers and floodplain areas, which should be considered and protected when developing. Topography is relatively gentle with some steeper slopes in the plan area.

Tree Cover

The South Boulevard corridor and the industrial areas, both east and west of the rail line, have minimal tree cover. These areas have scarce landscaping and vast parking areas, which increases the amount of stormwater run-off. The established residential areas have tree lined streets and a mature tree canopy.

Issues/Opportunities:

Currently, the core plan area along South Boulevard is populated with industrial and business type parcels. This area lacks a tree canopy and/or landscaping, which results in a higher amount of stormwater run-off. As this area redevelops, there will be an opportunity to improve the quality of the environment by planting additional trees, landscaping, and creating open spaces.

Land Use and Design

Industrial

Industrial uses in the plan area are primarily west of the rail corridor. The large Lance, Inc. snack facility is immediately adjacent to the Sharon Road West station. Other industrial sites include warehouse and distribution facilities on Sweden, Denmark, and Crump Roads, Stockholm Court, England and Hebron Streets, and on Lance Drive. There is also a large self-storage business located on Crump Road south of the Sharon Road West station.

Most industrial buildings in the station area have been built within the last twenty years, with a few exceptions dating to the 1960's. They are generally well built and utilitarian in design, either of masonry or metal construction. Most appear to be well-maintained.



The Lance snack facility is the largest industrial use in the plan area.

Commercial

Automobile dealerships are the predominant commercial use, with several lining the east side of South Boulevard along its length within the plan area. Another major commercial use is the 83-acre Carolina Pavillion Shopping Center, immediately across South Boulevard from the entrance to the I-485 light rail station. Fast food restaurants are also found in abundance on South Boulevard near the I-485 station. Commercial signage on South Boulevard is generally large and automobile-oriented.



This auto dealership on South Boulevard is typical of the plan area's commercial uses.

Residential

There are several established single and multi-family residential neighborhoods throughout the station area. The multi-family developments are both north and south of Sharon Road West, comprised of two and three story townhouse-style wood frame buildings, at densities of up to 17 dwellings per acre. These multi-family developments are generally well-maintained and landscaped. Most of them are outside the half-mile walking distance of the Sharon Road West station.



The Aspen Peaks development on Sharon Road West is a typical area multi-family development.

The station area's single family neighborhoods are located on Sharonbrook Drive, Longleaf Drive, and Loblolly Lane east of South Boulevard, and off China Grove Church Road to the west of South Boulevard. Most single-family homes are of modest size and typically date to either the 1960's or the 1990's, at 4 to 8 dwellings per acre. These neighborhoods are characterized by mature trees.

Civic

There are two churches in the plan area. Two schools are located within the plan area. The Elon Homes property includes the Kennedy Charter Public School, located on Sharon Road West about one-half mile east of the light rail station. The Sterling Paideia Elementary School (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools) is located on China Grove Church Road and is also adjacent to the I-485 light rail station. There are no post offices, public libraries, fire stations, or police substations within the plan area boundary. There are two large day care facilities within walking distance of the I-485 station. There are no active public recreation uses in the station area.

Issues/Opportunities:

Pedestrian access between these transit stations and nearby commercial and residential areas is better than in some station areas to the north. This is partially attributable to the pedestrian bridge that was constructed across the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks connecting the Sharon Road West station with South Boulevard. Another pedestrian connection was established between the I-485 station and the Sterling neighborhood off China Grove Church Road.

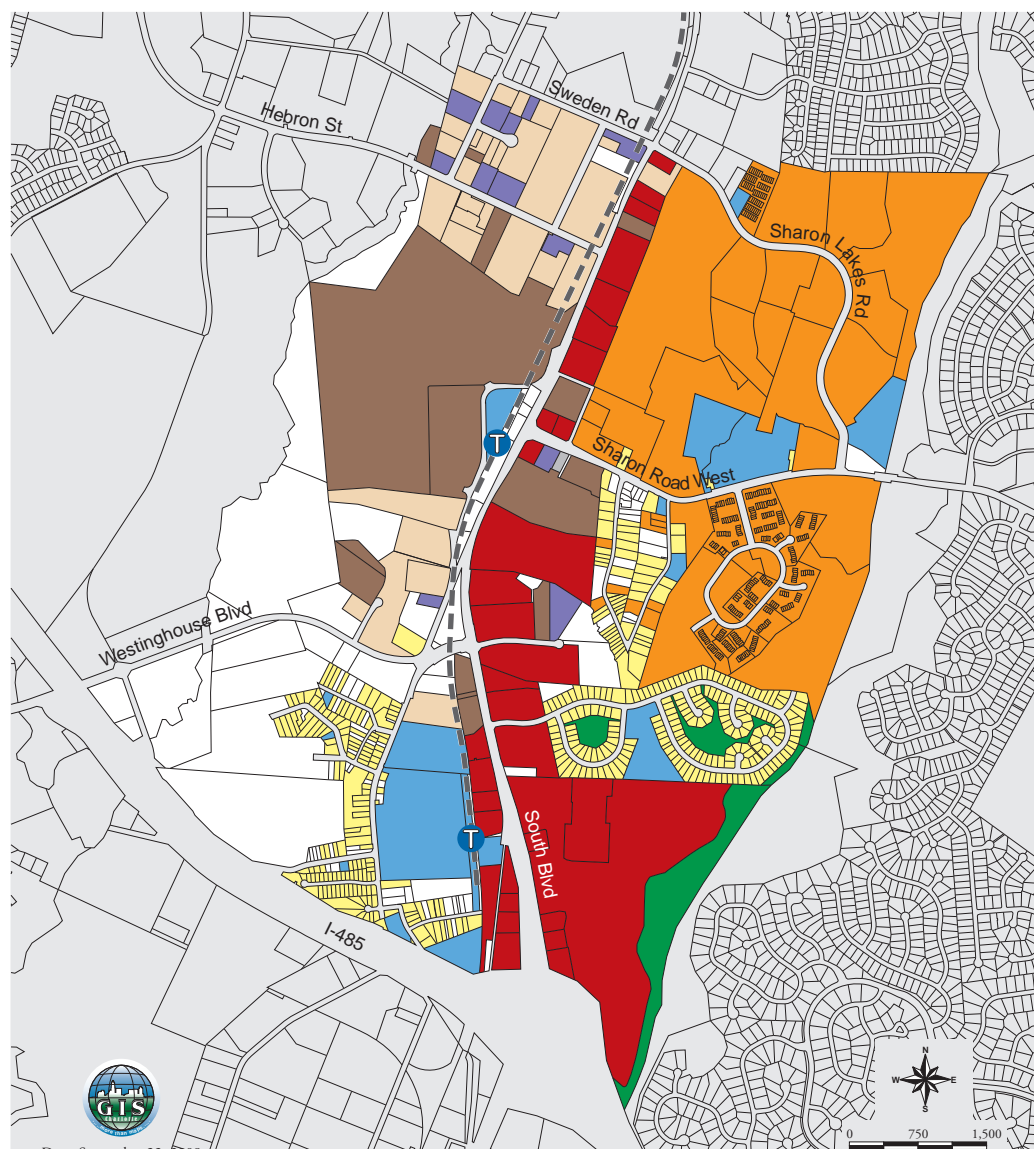


Longleaf Drive and Loblolly Lane.



The Sterling Paideia Elementary School is adjacent to the I-485 light rail station.

Sharon and I-485 Existing Land Use



Issues/Opportunities:

Most uses in the plan have an automobile-oriented design, generally considered incompatible with transit oriented development.

Multi-family housing is a desirable use in a transit station area. Existing multi-family residential properties close to both stations are mostly less dense than optimal.














Industrial/warehouse uses are heavily present close to the Sharon Road West Station. These uses are typically not very transit supportive, unless they have a significant number of employees. However, they represent significant investments and economic benefits to the community.

Existing Land Use	Acreage	% of Total
Single Family - Detached	99.1	8.0
Multi-Family	320.4	26.0
Retail	182.0	14.8
Office	17.6	1.4
Warehouse/Distribution	97.6	7.9
Industrial	160.6	13.0
Institutional	85.7	7.0
Utility	0.5	0.0
Open Space	31.0	2.5
Vacant	238.0	19.3
Total	1,232.5	100.0

Sharon & I-485 Adopted Land Use -

Southwest District Plan (1991) and
South District Plan (1993)

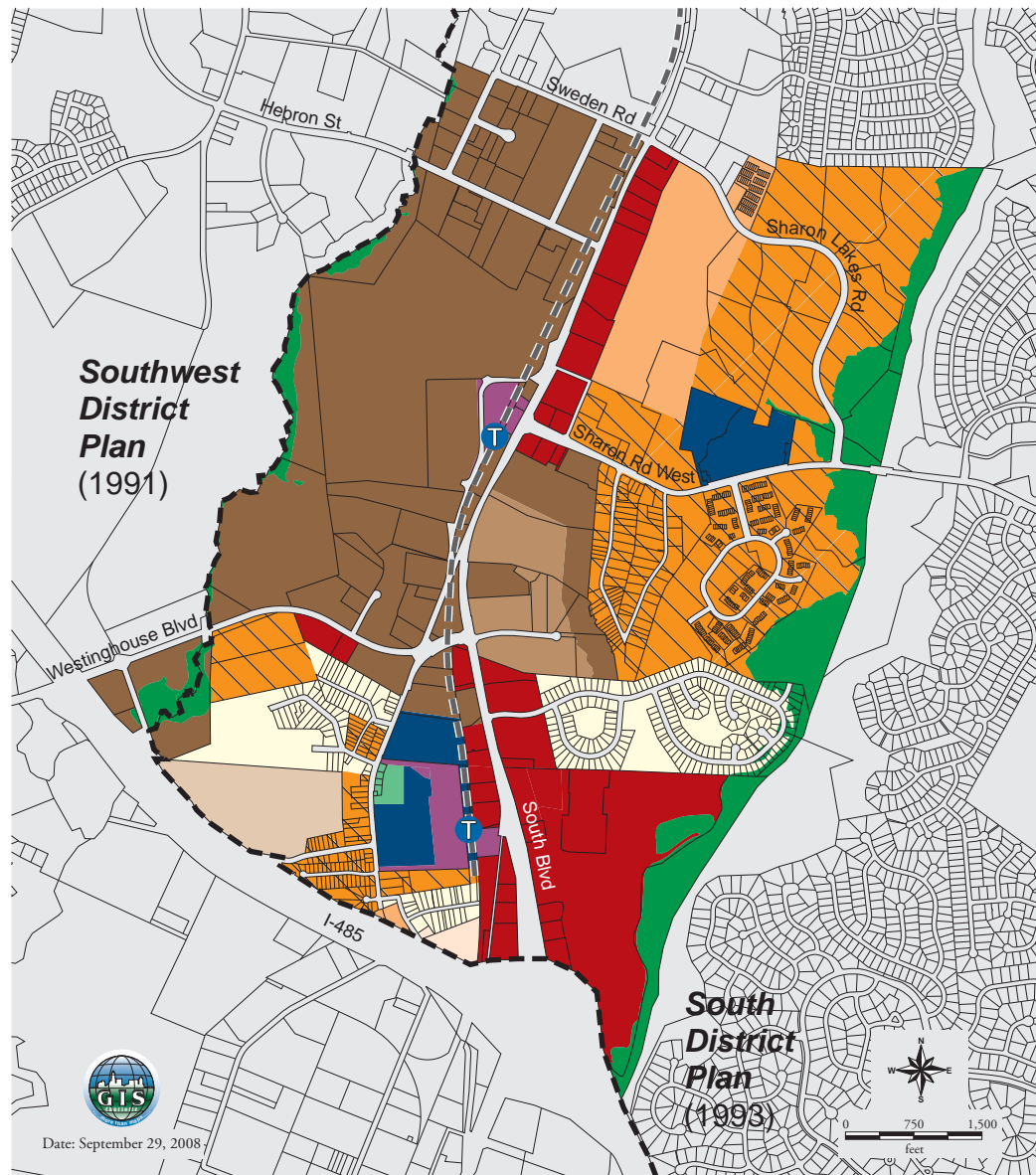
Adopted Land Use

-  Single Family <= 3 DUA
-  Multi-Family
-  Multi-Family <= 8 DUA
-  Multi-Family <= 17 DUA
-  Institutional
-  Retail
-  Warehouse/Distribution
-  Industrial
-  Industrial - Light
-  Park/Open Space
-  Greenway
-  Transit Oriented - Mixed
-  Transit Station and Line

Adopted Future Land Use

Prior to adoption of this plan, the Charlotte City Council adopted South District Plan (1993) that served as the governing land use policy for most of this area. While the district plan recognized the possibility of a future light rail, it did not recommend the higher density uses typically associated with transit-oriented development. The Southwest District Plan (1993) covered a very small portion of the plan area at Westinghouse Boulevard and I-485.

The district plans recommend maintaining the large industrial area along South Boulevard in the Sharon Road West vicinity. The South District Plan recommends preserving existing multi-family residential uses, primarily along Sharon Lakes Road and Sharon Road West. Single family neighborhoods are recommended along Longleaf Drive and along China Grove Church Road. Retail uses are recommended along portions of South Boulevard near the Sharon Road West Station and closer to I-485. Institutional uses, including the Kennedy Charter School, Sterling Elementary and the China Grove AME Zion Church, are also recognized.

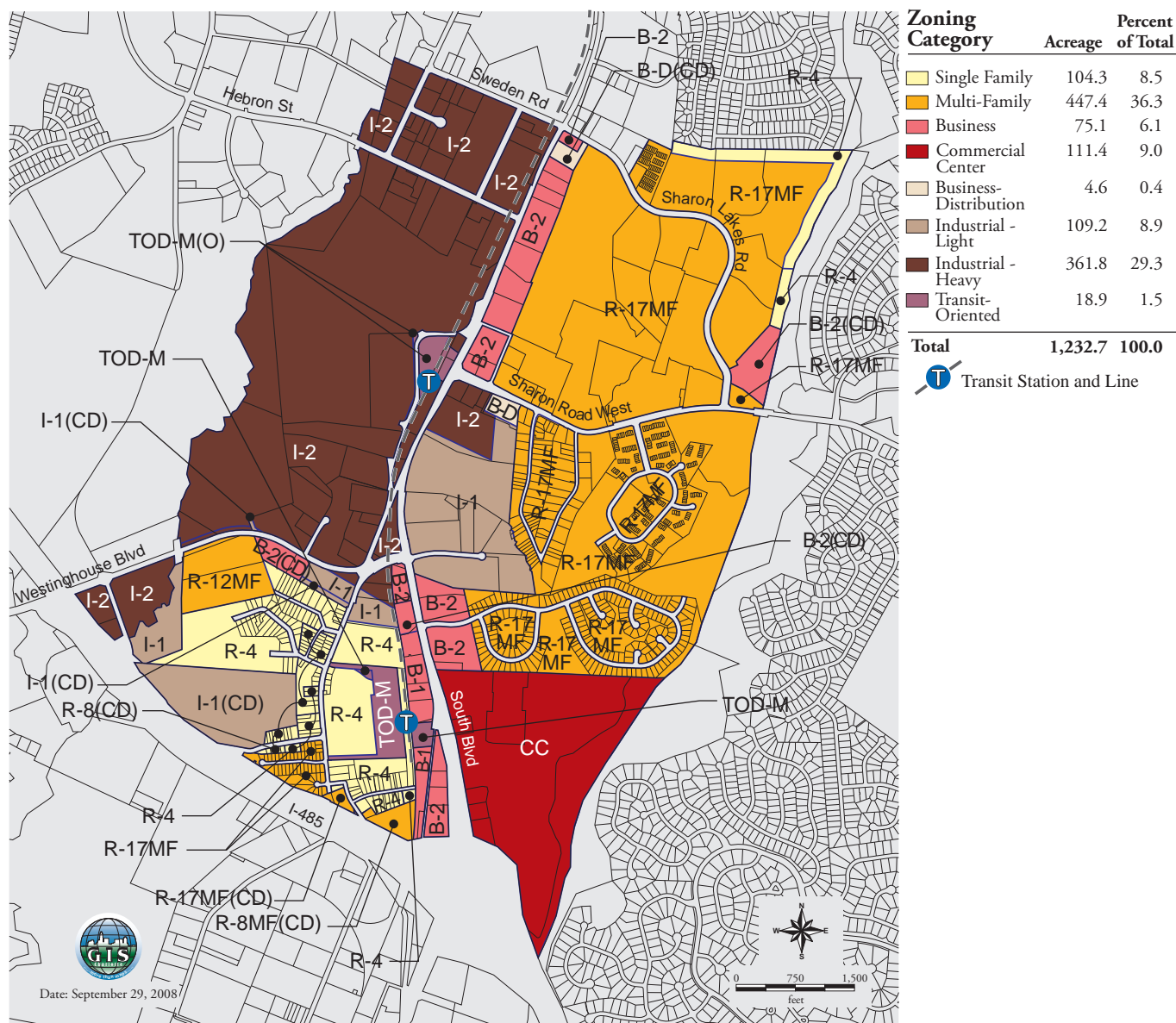


Upon adoption, the *Sharon & I-485 Station Area Plan* becomes the governing land use policy document for properties within the plan boundaries. This plan reinforces some of the recommendations made in previous planning efforts, but also encourages a balanced mix of compact, pedestrian-friendly, transit oriented developments. These changes are discussed in the Land Use Recommendations section of this document.

Issues/Opportunities:

In general, the land use pattern in the plan area is suburban in nature, resulting in primarily automobile-oriented development. This plan provides the opportunity to promote a higher intensity, compact and pedestrian-oriented development that is typically associated with transit oriented development.

Sharon & I-485 Existing Zoning



Existing Zoning

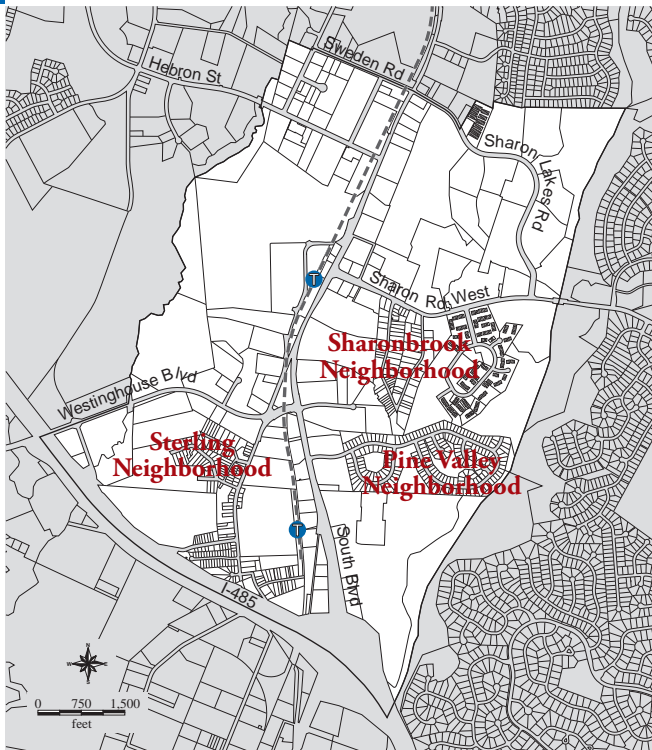
In general, zoning for these station areas reflects existing development patterns, with industrial, business or commercial center zoning along both sides of South Boulevard. Industrially zoned land dominates the west side of South Boulevard near the Sharon Station, and multi-family dominates the east side of that station area. Multi-family zoning is also concentrated along both sides of Sharon Road West. It should be noted that both the existing land use and the adopted future use for the neighborhood along Longleaf Drive is single family detached, not multi-family for which it is zoned. Single family zoning at a density of R-4 is concentrated along China Grove Church Road, along with some multi-family at varying densities. Retail development, primarily Carolina Pavilion, is located across South Boulevard, east of the I-485 station.

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Issues/Opportunities:

Development patterns under existing industrial and business zoning typically will not meet the intensity, use and community design guidelines for transit oriented development.

To protect single family residential areas, the opportunity exists to recognize the single family neighborhood along Longleaf Drive. This will align existing use with the future adopted land use.



Established Neighborhoods

The Sharon & I-485 plan area includes significant portions of three established neighborhood areas: Sterling, Sharonbrook, and Pine Valley. The Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life Study (2008) categorizes all three neighborhoods within a single Sterling Neighborhood Statistical Area. The Sterling area is categorized as “Transitioning,” based on variables such as social well being, crime, physical characteristics and economic vitality.

Issues/Opportunities

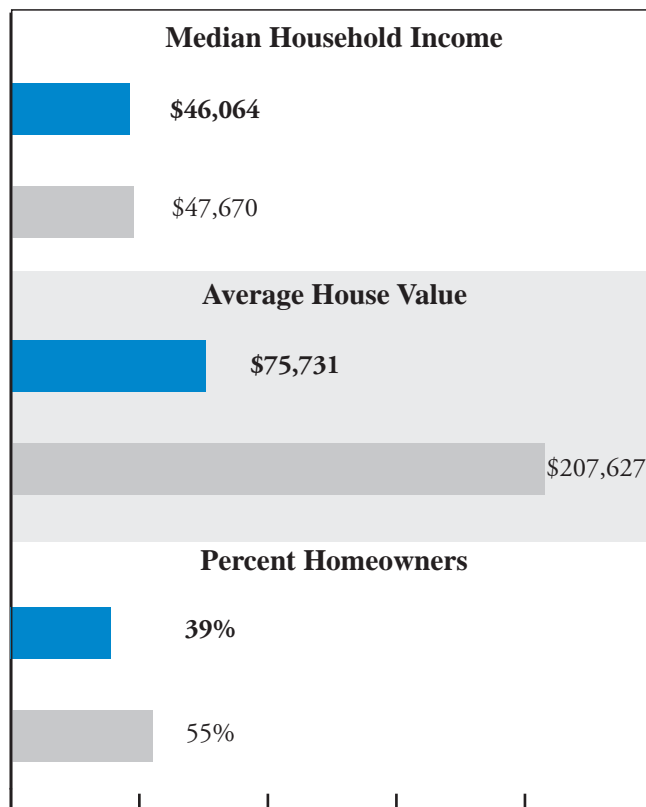
The single family neighborhoods are woven within the larger plan area, rather than abutting the edge as in other plan areas. All three single family neighborhoods can benefit from transit oriented development planned along the rail corridor, but it will be important to protect the neighborhoods from intrusion.

Land Use Accessibility Index

Land use accessibility is often described as the convenience or ease of reaching activities and destinations, particularly schools, shopping, parks and public transit. As seen from the data below, the residents of the plan area have much better access to shopping and transit than residents of Charlotte overall. However, they are less likely to be near a school, park, or greenway than residents of the City overall. For example, 100% of plan area residents are ¼ mile or less from local transit routes, whereas only 57% of City residents overall are so close. Also, 93% of plan area residents are within ¼ mile from a shopping area, whereas only 53% of City residents are that close.

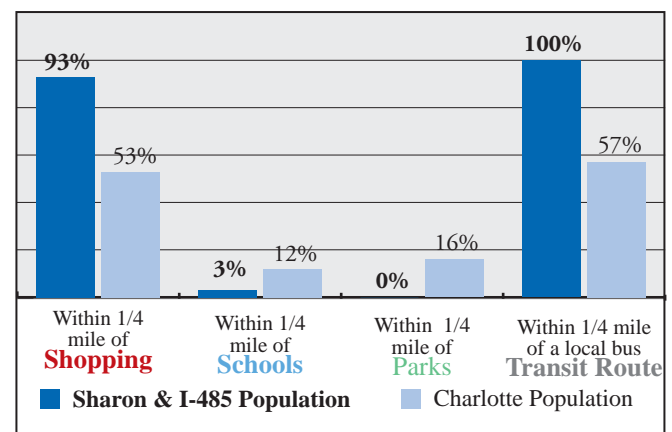
Issues/Opportunities:

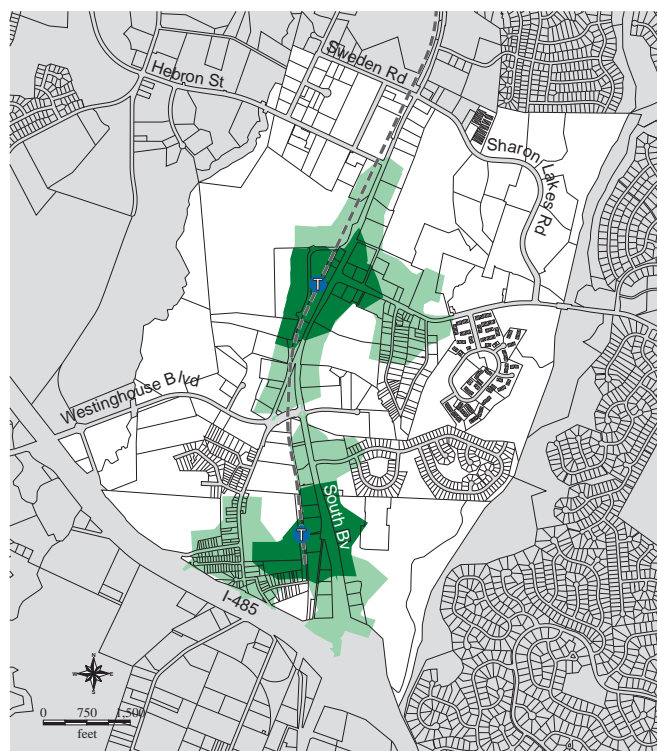
Potential development around the station area will be well served by shopping and transit. Expanded park and greenway facilities would serve to improve the accessibility characteristics of present and future land uses in the plan area.



■ Sterling, Sharonbrook & Pine Valley ■ Charlotte

Source: 2008 Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life Study





1/2 and 1/4 Walk Distance

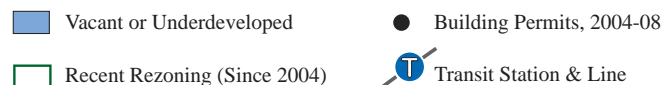
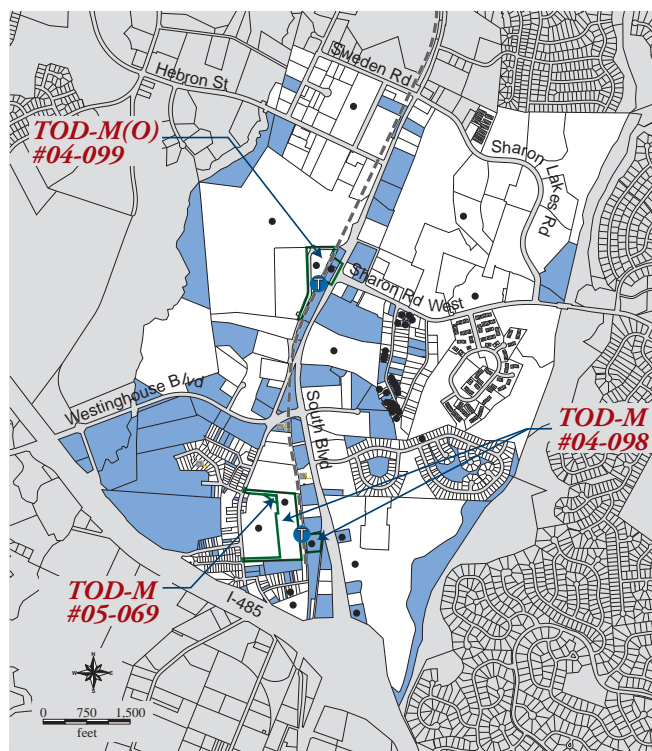
Both station areas include land within the 1/2 mile walk (typically 10 minutes) on the west side of the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. The tracks inhibit access from the stations eastward. The Sharon Station includes a pedestrian bridge leading from the station platform to South Boulevard. From there, the 1/4 and 1/2 mile walk distance extends into industrial/ employment areas. For both the Sharon and I-485 stations, crossing several lanes of traffic along South Boulevard is a barrier to pedestrian activity.

Issues/Opportunities:

There is an opportunity to expand the area within the 1/4 and 1/2 mile walk distance by adding additional street network and pedestrian connections.

The biggest obstacle to extending the street network and pedestrian connections at the both the Sharon and I-485 stations is the existing freight track which runs parallel to the light rail track and blocks access to South Boulevard.

The 1/4 and 1/2 mile walk distance extends into some residential neighborhoods which could encourage commuter use.



Development Activity / Potential Opportunities

Rezoning: Since 2004, there have been 3 rezoning petitions approved in the plan area. Two were TOD-M rezonings filed by CATS for the station park and ride facilities. One TOD-M rezoning was filed by a private developer for a 79-acre multi-family development on Westinghouse Boulevard west of the Sterling neighborhood. This rezoning has not been carried forward or approved to date.

Building Permits: There have been 59 building permits issued in the plan area since 2004, both residential and non-residential. This includes construction permits for several major business and institutional properties, but consists mostly of permits for individual homes.

Vacant and Underutilized Land: The plan area has 344 acres of land that is either vacant or underdeveloped. These are highlighted in the above map. Some of these parcels are developed with older retail and/or industrial buildings, and the opportunity exists for redevelopment at a higher density.

Issues/Opportunities:

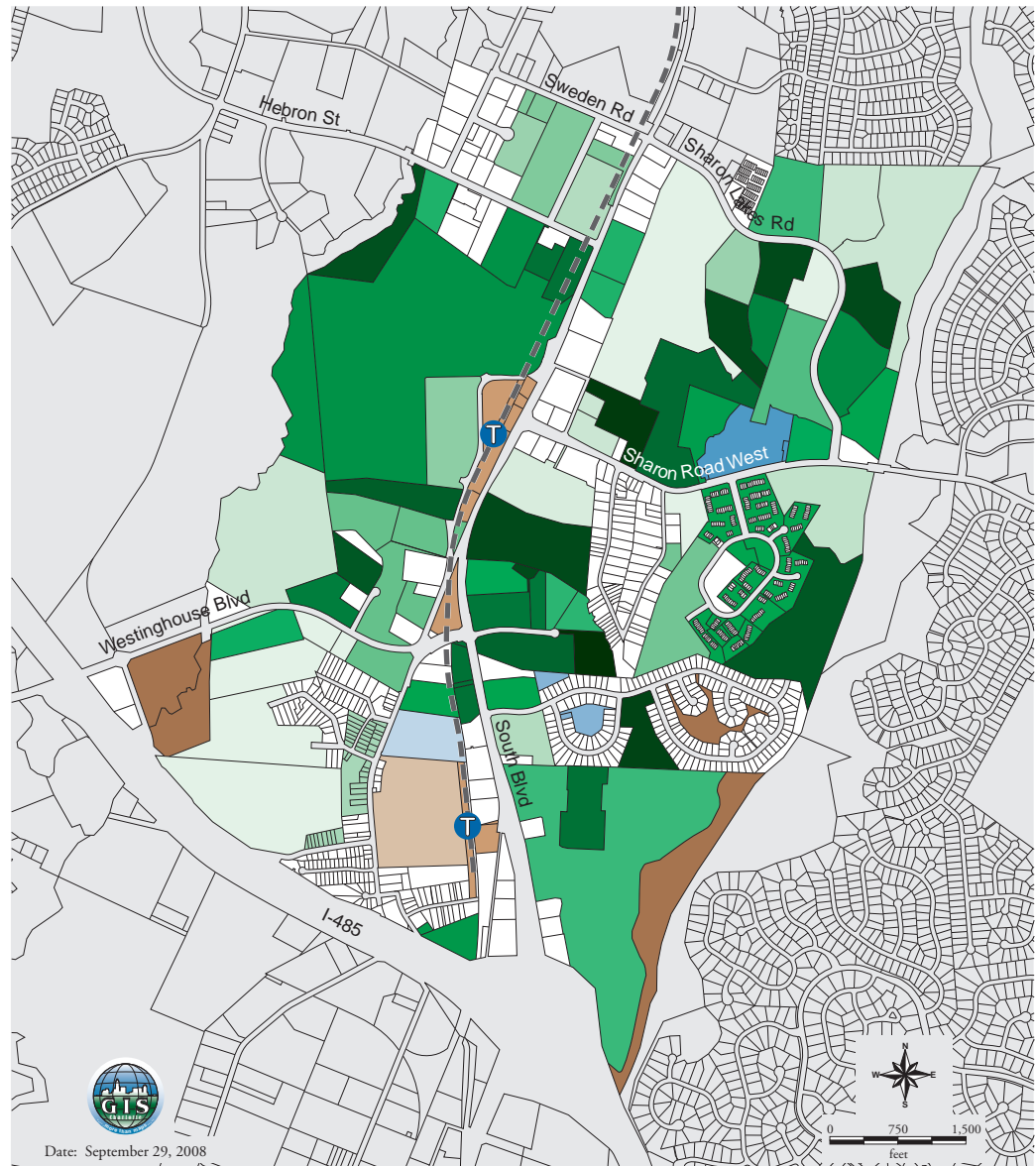
Vacant and underdeveloped land around the station provides an opportunity to improve the mixture of land uses in the plan area. However, the Norfolk Southern Railroad line hampers the transit oriented development potential east of the rail line, and hampers access from South Boulevard to property west of the rail line.

Sharon & I-485 Large Parcel Ownership

Large Parcel Ownership

- Non-Profit
- Public
- Private

T Transit Station and Line



Large Parcel Ownership

While some of the study area consists of small parcels in individual ownership, there are major concentrations in consolidated ownership. The above map shows such larger holdings as indicated by tax records, whether consisting of a single parcel or of a number of smaller adjacent parcels. The larger holdings include some public and non-profit owners with specific purposes, such as Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. However, as indicated on the map, there is a considerable amount of property in larger blocks along the corridor that is privately owned.

Issues/Opportunities:

The large parcels within the study area have the potential of accommodating higher density transit oriented development uses with less assemblage than would be necessary with smaller holdings.

Market Research and Development Projections:

In early 2003, Robert Charles Lessor & Company completed a market study of the future South Corridor light rail station areas entitled *Station Area Allocations for New Office Retail and Multi-family Development along the South LRT Line 2000-2025*. It included analysis of the Sharon Road West Station, but did not directly address the I-485/South Boulevard station.

Sharon Road West:

The study noted that the Sharon station area has the lowest density development of any of the station areas, due in part to poor east-west connections in the area. It described the following factors impacting transit-supportive development in the plan area:

1. Difficulty accessing the station either by car due to poor north – south connectors or by foot with a hostile pedestrian environment characterizing the area.
2. No sense of place or location as scattered low density uses such as automobile dealerships occupy a large portion of land.
3. Large industrial uses around the station have no relationship or connection to the station to facilitate usage.

During the construction of the LYNX Blue Line, a pedestrian bridge was constructed to facilitate pedestrian access from east of South Boulevard as recommended by the market study.

The report suggests a modest amount of locally serving retail and office could be supported in the area with the potential of mid or high rise office feasible only near the end of the study horizon in 2025. This conclusion is based upon the long term likelihood that the industrial uses will remain on the west side of the alignment and that the low density uses like car dealerships will remain as the housing market stabilizes.

At the time of the study in January 2003, the economic downturn of 2008 and higher energy costs had not yet materialized. However, Robert Charles Lessor & Company produced the following projections up to 2025 for new office and residential development in the Sharon station area, assuming a proactive role by local government in promoting station area development and continuation of economic trends over the longer term:

- 70,000 square feet of new office space
- 2,100 new multifamily residential units
- 25,000 square feet of retail.

I-485/South Boulevard:

The Robert Charles Lessor market study did not examine the market potential for the I-485 station. However, an examination of the site reveals differing conditions and opportunities for development within the station area.

- The station area itself is truncated to the south by I-485 which acts as a pedestrian barrier and will limit extension of transit oriented development beyond. The area immediately to the south of the station would require a coordinated acquisition strategy for numerous small properties and significant reconfiguring of the access to and from the park and ride deck.
- The area to the east of the station is occupied by a large automobile oriented retail center with a large parking lot. Given the relatively young age of the retail center, the high and stable occupancy rate, the very high volumes of traffic and its regional serving location, the likelihood of full redevelopment of this site in the next 20-30 years is quite low. A redevelopment of the center for higher density uses likely would be phased with structured parking and strategic relocation of retail anchors.
- The area immediately to the west of the station is defined by an elementary school and single family detached homes, which have been identified for neighborhood preservation. Immediately to the west of the neighborhood is a series of large parcels that could be developed into residential, although these are separated from the station by low density residential.
- The area to the north of the station is defined by institutional and industrial uses with limited growth potential on existing small parcels.

Issues/Opportunities:

Overall, the area is characterized by limited opportunities in the short to medium time horizon, due primarily to existing long term uses that will not make economic sense to remove and replace, and due to challenges around parcel assembly. The area likely will be influenced most by CATS activity related to park and ride expansion and efforts to make those expansions more TOD friendly.

Transportation

The Existing Street Network

The number of route choices available to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists describes the adequacy of an area's street network. A dense, well-connected network offers greater choices of routes and more direct routes to destinations than does a less connected network, and therefore provides greater overall system capacity.

Route choices are measured by the number of lane-miles of streets, number of intersections (nodes), number of blocks (links), and the connectivity index. A lane-mile is one mile of a single roadway lane. The more lane-miles of streets there are, the greater the overall traffic carrying capacity. The connectivity index quantifies how well a roadway network connects destinations and is calculated by dividing the number of roadway links by the number of roadway nodes. A connectivity index of 1.45 or more is desirable for transit station areas.

Sharon Road West and South Blvd./I-485 Stations Area

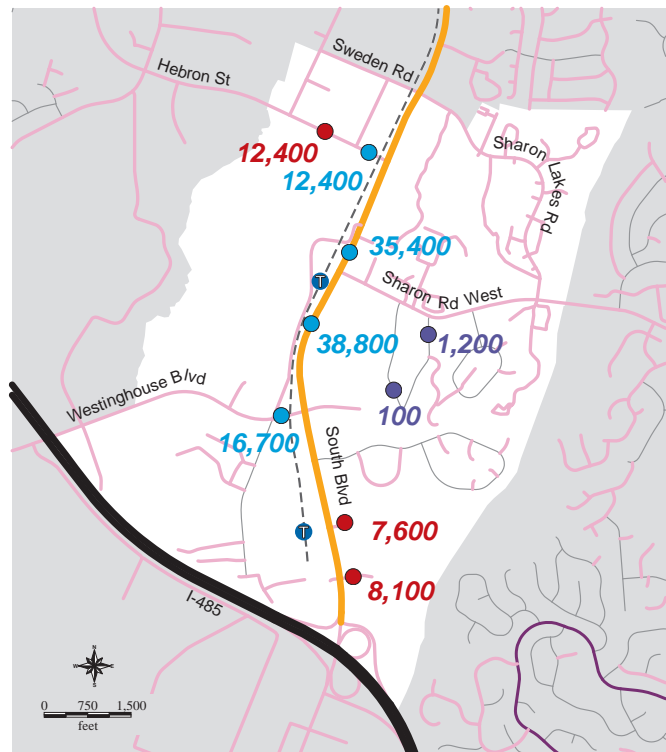
Area size (square miles)	2.18
Miles of streets:	17.1
Lane-mile of streets:	33.3
Connectivity Index:	1.08

Issues/Opportunities:

There is a noticeable lack of street connectivity from the residential areas in the eastern part of the plan area to South Boulevard. As commercial properties redevelop along the east side of this thoroughfare, there will be opportunities to provide a more robust street network that better links people and places.

There are several apartment communities along Sharon Road West and Sharon Lakes Road that have only one entrance. As these redevelop, there will be opportunities to provide more connections between developments and adjoining neighborhoods.

There is also a noticeable lack of street connectivity on either side of China Grove Church Road. As these properties redevelop, a new grid should emerge, enhancing connectivity to the station, as well as facilitating greater route choices within the neighborhood.



Traffic Counts: Average daily volume

Year of Count

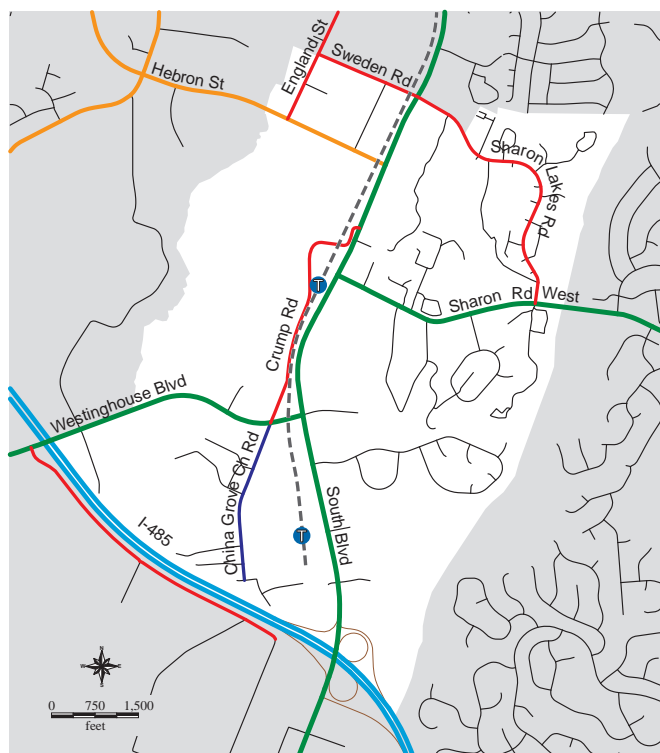
- 2002
- 2004
- 2006

Speed Limits

- 25
- 30
- 35
- 45
- 65



Transit Station and Line



The Thoroughfare Plan

The Mecklenburg-Union Thoroughfare Plan is the adopted major roadway plan for Mecklenburg and Union counties and is used to assure that the most appropriate street system is developed to meet existing and future travel needs. Streets are classified and designed according to their intended functions so that land use and traffic conflicts are minimized. The street classifications applicable to the Sharon & I-485 plan area are as follows:

Thoroughfares: South Boulevard, Westinghouse Boulevard, and Sharon Road West are major thoroughfares. Hebron Street is a minor thoroughfare. As thoroughfares, these streets are designed to accommodate large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds and provide access to major commercial and residential land uses.

Collectors: Sharon Lakes Road, Sweden Road, England Street, and Crump Road are major collectors. China Grove Road is a minor collector street. Collector streets carry traffic between the thoroughfares and local streets at moderate volumes and speeds and providing access to adjacent land uses.

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan

Local Streets: The remaining roadways are local streets that carry low traffic volumes, have slow operating speeds and provide access to individual properties.

Interstate Highway

Interstate 485 encircles Charlotte as an outerbelt. Within Charlotte, I-485 connects Interstates 85 and 77, as well as US 74 (Independence Boulevard), or all five radial expressway corridors connecting Charlotte's central business district with its outer reaches. Within the Sharon & I-485 plan area, I-485 serves as the southern study boundary and has a partial cloverleaf interchange at South Boulevard.



South Boulevard, within the plan area, has wide travel lanes and a median with left turn lanes.

Street Classifications

Streetscape and Typical Sections

South Boulevard looking north towards Longleaf Drive



▲ South Boulevard is generally four travel lanes wide with turn lanes added at its signalized intersections. Sidewalks are generally located only along the east side of the street north of Westinghouse Boulevard; south of Westinghouse Boulevard, there are sidewalks on both sides with some gaps. Sidewalks are sometimes separated from travel lanes by narrow planting strips, lacking street trees. Street lighting is provided on utility poles.

Sharon Road West looking towards South Boulevard



▲ Sharon Road West is four travel lanes wide. Sidewalks are generally located on both sides of the street, but back of curb, lacking any planting strip. Street lighting is provided on utility poles.

Hebron Street looking east towards Denmark Road



▲ Hebron Street is two travel lanes wide. Sidewalks are generally located on one side of the street, separated by a planting strip. Street lighting is provided on utility poles.

Sharon Lakes Road looking east towards El Verano Circle



▲ Sharon Lakes Road is two travel lanes wide with bicycle lanes and dedicated left-turn lanes in places. Sidewalks are located on both sides of the street near South Boulevard, but generally on one side through most of its length. Sidewalks are often separated from travel lanes by planting strips, albeit fairly narrow in places. Street lighting is provided on utility poles.

Crump Road West looking south from the Lance Plant entrance

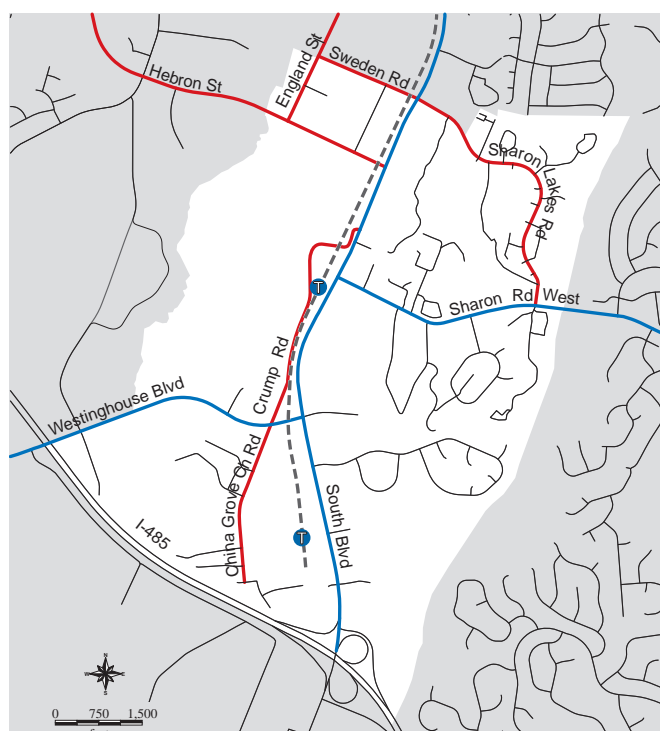


▲ Crump Road is two travel lanes wide, with dedicated left-turn lanes in places. Sidewalks are located only on the west side of the street south of the Sharon Road West station. Sidewalks were not included on the vehicular bridge built over LYNX and the Norfolk Southern freight lines because a separate pedestrian bridge provides access to the station. Street lighting is provided on widely spaced poles.

China Grove Road looking north from the Sterling Elementary entrance



▲ China Grove Road is a collector street with two travel lanes. Back-of-curb sidewalks are generally located on both sides of the street, lacking any separation from the street by a planting strip. Street lighting is provided on utility poles.



— Avenue
— Boulevard
— Not Classified

T Transit Station
and Line

Street Typology: Urban Street Design Guidelines

The Urban Street Design Guidelines recommend how Charlotte's streets should be planned and designed to provide viable transportation choices. The guidelines are intended to ensure the street design process considers the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists, as well as the effects on adjacent land uses. Streets are classified according to land use and transportation contexts and should be designed accordingly. Regardless of their classification, a number of streets in the study area fail to consistently provide the street elements or element dimensions desired.

Streets in the area fall into the following categories:

Boulevards: Within the context of the street design guidelines, South Boulevard, Sharon Road West, and Westinghouse Boulevard are classified as Boulevards. Boulevards are intended to move large numbers of vehicles, often as “through traffic,” from one part of the city to another, and to other lower level streets in the network. Though principally focused on motor vehicles, Boulevards still should accommodate pedestrians and cyclists as safely and comfortably as possible. Common elements should include sidewalks, planting strips with street trees, and bicycle lanes.

Avenues: Sharon Lakes Road, Sweden Road, England Street, Hebron Street, Crump Road and China Grove Church Road function closest to Avenues. Avenues are intended to serve a diverse set of functions in a wide variety of land uses and should be designed to provide a balance of service for all transportation modes. Avenues provide an important mobility function for motorists, but are expected to provide a high level of comfort, safety and convenience to pedestrians and bicyclists. Avenues are generally limited to four or fewer travel lanes (except at major intersections) with block lengths up to 600 feet. Common elements should include sidewalks, planting strips or amenity zones with street trees, and bicycle lanes.

Locals: The majority of roadways are local residential and local commercial streets that provide direct access to residential and commercial properties. These streets are intended to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists by providing sidewalks, planting strips with trees and low speed limits.

Issues/Opportunities:

South Boulevard has important regional mobility needs reinforcing its Boulevard character. While transit-spurred redevelopment may achieve an Avenue vision in station area plans to the north, South Boulevard will continue to function closest to a Boulevard in the Sharon & I-485 plan area. Though active ground-floor uses will naturally gravitate away from a Boulevard, redevelopment should still advance a future cross-section for South Boulevard that increases the safety and comfort of all users, especially pedestrians.

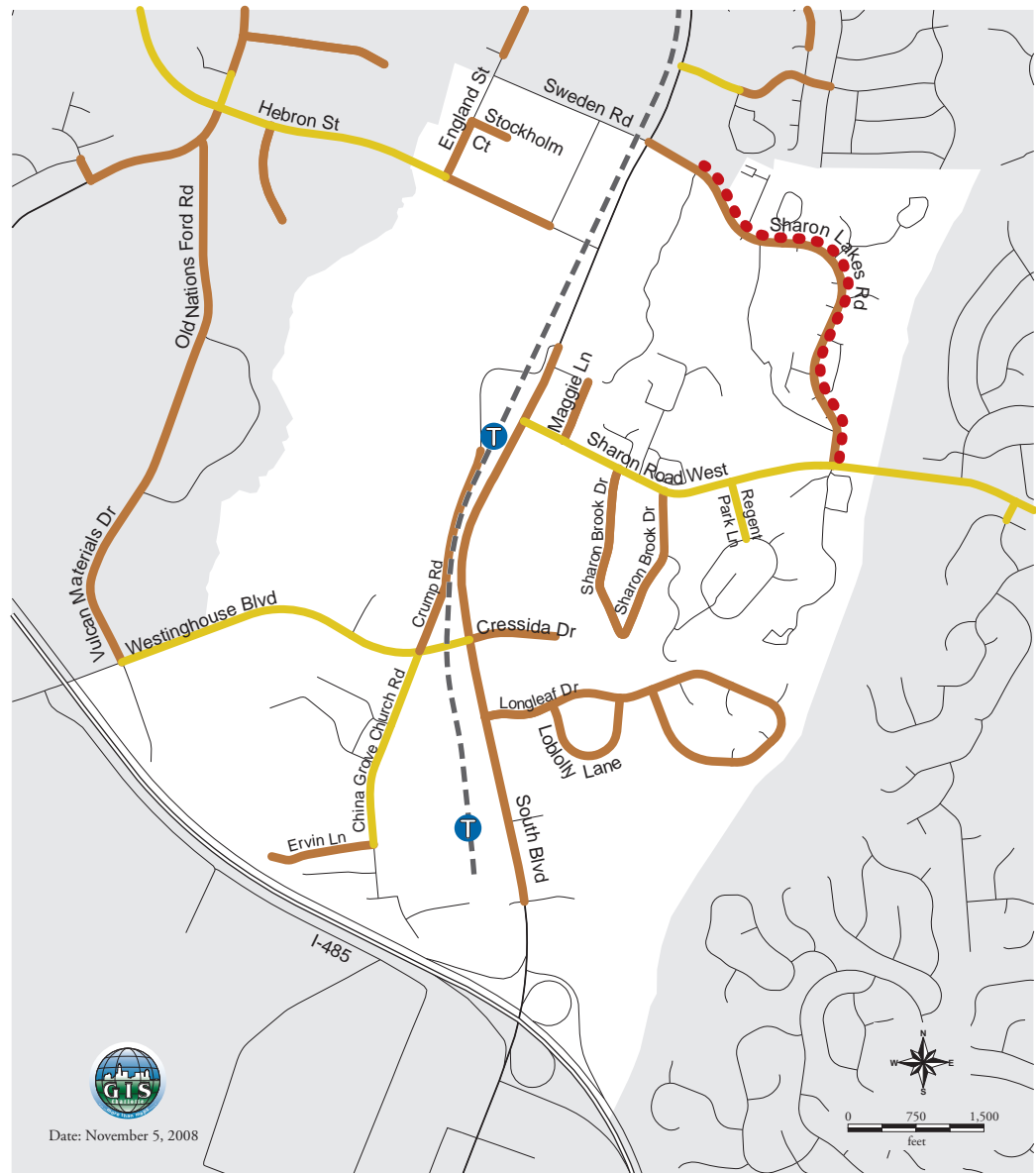
Sharon Road West is classified as a Boulevard, but should function more appropriately as an Avenue, better serving the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motorists.

Regardless of their classification, a number of streets in the plan area fail to consistently provide the street elements or element dimensions desired in an urban environment. While new streets will be built to provide the desired features, deficiencies on existing streets can be addressed when adjacent properties redevelop.

Sharon & I-485 Pedestrian & Bike Facilities

Pedestrian & Bike Facilities

-  Partial Sidewalk
-  Complete Sidewalk
-  Existing Bike Lane
-  Transit Station and Line



Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian System: Of the approximate 17 miles of streets in the Sharon & I-485 plan area, 17% have sidewalks on both sides of the street, 21% have sidewalk on one side and 39% have no sidewalk. These figures include sidewalks recently built by the South Corridor Infrastructure Program (SCIP) along several key local streets that are along or connect to South Boulevard, Sharon Road West, and Sharon Lakes Road. Additionally, the intersections of South Boulevard with Sharon Road West and Carolina Pavilion Drive North now have some pedestrian enhancements.

Bicycle System: As part of SCIP, bicycle lanes were added to Sharon Lakes Road.

Issues/Opportunities:

More streets that connect to South Boulevard and Sharon Road West are needed to provide better pedestrian and bicycle mobility in the plan area. The current large block sizes along these streets discourage these alternative forms of travel, especially pedestrian travel.

Better north-south pedestrian and bicycle routes are needed parallel to South Boulevard, as well as better east-west routes parallel to Sharon Road West. The opportunity to build these routes will come as commercial properties redevelop along South Boulevard, and as apartment properties redevelop along Sharon Road West and Sharon Lakes Road.

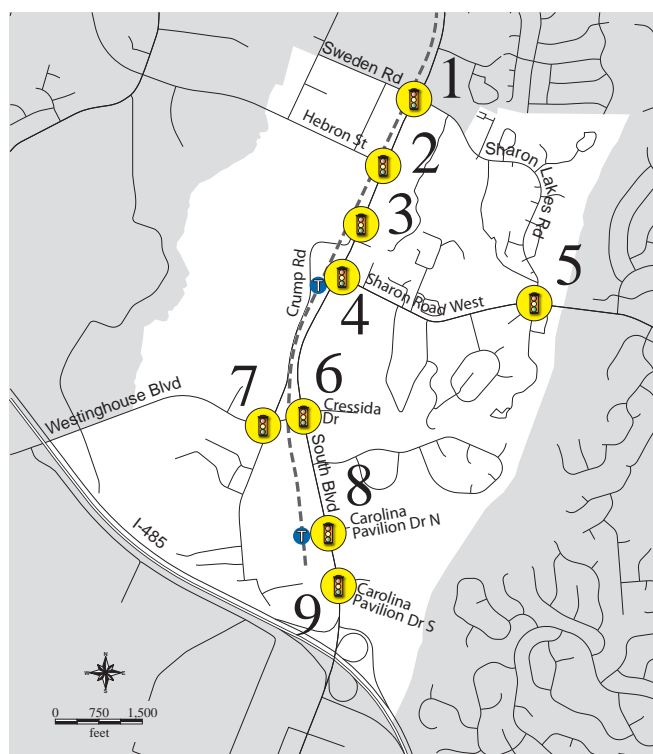
Level Of Service

Level of Service (LOS) measures the quality of service provided by a transportation facility to its users. The City of Charlotte evaluates level of service for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists and uses the results to help balance their competing needs when planning and designing streets. Levels of service range from A through F, with desirable levels of service based on the street typologies of the Urban Street Design Guidelines. Transit station areas are intended to be highly accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists, and therefore should have good pedestrian and bicycle level of service (A to B). Lower levels of service for motorists are acceptable if necessary to achieve the desired pedestrian and bicycle levels of service.

Pedestrian and bicycle level of service is rated according to the level of comfort and safety offered by the design features at signalized intersections, while motor vehicle level of service is based on motorist delays. Motor vehicle quality of service is also measured by the volume to capacity ratio (v/c), which describes an intersection's ability to process traffic within peak time periods. Values greater than .95 suggest an intersection is near its capacity during this time period and that motorists may experience substantial congestion.

Existing traffic conditions in the Sharon & I-485 plan area are generally satisfactory. South Boulevard, Westinghouse Boulevard, and Sharon Road West have adequate capacity. Motorists do not typically experience excessive delays or stops at most intersections. Traffic conditions are expected to worsen, however, as station area land uses intensify and traffic volumes in the South Boulevard corridor continue to grow.

Several pedestrian crossings were recently improved at multiple intersections, thanks to work done by the light rail project and SCIP. Not surprisingly, failing intersections in terms of Pedestrian Level of Service are those that were not recently improved. Pedestrian crossing enhancements are still desirable at these inter-



Existing signalized intersection

Transit Station and Line

sections, with the exception of Crump Road, given the separate dedicated pedestrian bridge serving the Sharon Road West station.

Issues/Opportunities:

While vehicle level of service and travel times are generally good in the Sharon & I-485 area, expected growth and intensified development in the future will likely result in increased congestion on existing streets. Without a more extensive street network, motorists will experience longer delays and travel times as more people are forced to travel on the few through-streets that serve the area, such as South Boulevard, Sharon Road West, Westinghouse Boulevard, Hebron Street, and Sharon Lakes Road. An improved street grid will aid motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists by providing more routes to travel destinations.

LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) for Year 2007

	Signalized Intersection	Pedestrian	Bike	Vehicular			
				Volume to Capacity Ratio AM Peak	Volume to Capacity Ratio PM Peak	Volume to Capacity Ratio AM Peak	Volume to Capacity Ratio PM Peak
1	Sharon Lakes Rd./Sweden Rd. & South Bv.	C	E	.64	D	.81	D
2	Hebron St. & South Bv.	C-	E	.68	B	.91	D
3	Crump Rd. & South Bv.	D	E	.59	A	.67	A
4	Sharon Rd. West & South Bv.	B	E	.71	D	.82	C
5	Sharon Rd. West & Sharon Lakes Rd.	D	E	.69	C	.67	C
6	Cresida Dr./Westinghouse Bv. & South Bv.	E+	E-	.68	D	.67	D
7	Crump Rd. & Westinghouse Bv.	D-	E	.35	B	.35	B
8	South Bv. & I-485 Station/Pavilion (North)	C	E	.51	B	.61	C
9	South Bv. & Pavilion Dwy (South)	E-	E	.71	B	.75	C

LOS Rating Scale

A	Excellent
B	Very Good
C	Good
D	Fair
E	Poor
F	Failure

Public Transportation

Charlotte Area Transit (CATS) offers public transportation service in and through the Sharon & I-485 area with a combination of light rail vehicles and buses.

Light Rail Service: The light rail line runs just west of and parallel to South Boulevard within the Sharon & I-485 plan area. Light rail patrons are able to access the line at either the Sharon Road West or I-485/South Boulevard stations. A 190-space surface lot is sited west of the Sharon Road West station, with access off Crump Road. A 1,100-space parking deck sits immediately west of the I-485/South Boulevard station, with access from South Boulevard opposite Carolina Pavilion Drive North. Light rail service was projected to carry 9,100 passengers per day, but thus far has been averaging over 16,900 as of July 2008. Both park-and-ride facilities are filled to capacity daily by early morning.

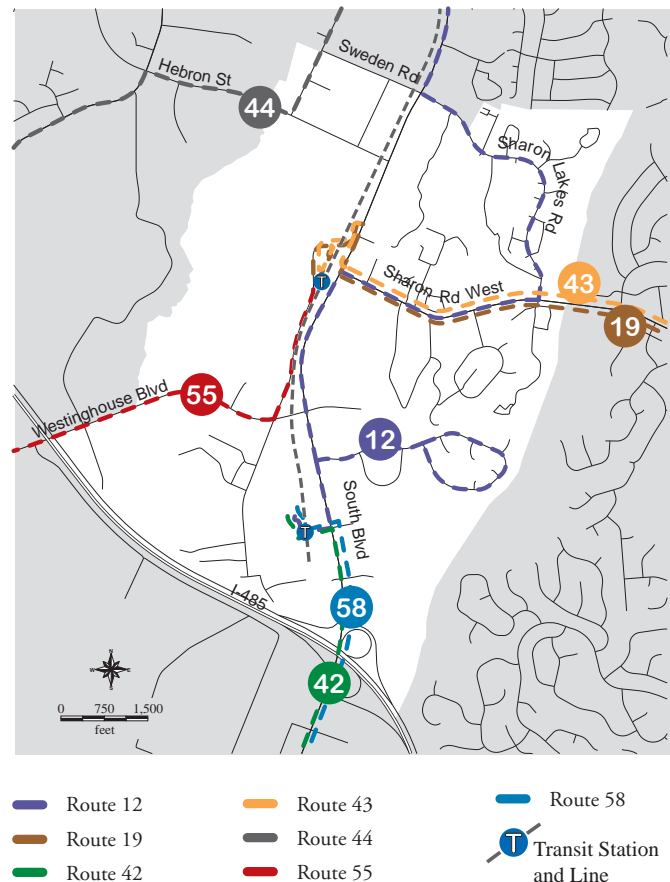
Bus Service: In coordination with the late 2007 opening of light-rail service in the South Corridor, CATS restructured area bus service to improve connections with light-rail stations. Currently, CATS provides bus service in the Sharon & I-485 area with six local bus routes:

- Route 12 mostly follows South Boulevard from Carolina Pavilion to Woodlawn Road.
- Route 19 runs along Sharon Road West and Park Road between the Sharon Road West station and Uptown via South Park.
- Route 42 runs between the I-485 station and Carowinds via Pineville.
- Route 43 runs along Sharon Road West and Johnston Road between the Sharon Road West station and Ballantyne.
- Route 55 runs along Westinghouse Boulevard between Sharon Road West station and Steele Creek.
- Route 58 runs between the I-485 station and Carolina Place Mall via Pineville.

Annual ridership numbers based on Fiscal Year 2007 were 795,595 for Route 12 and 410,773 for Route 19, although these figures are prior to the major bus re-routings implemented with the start of light-rail service. Routes 42, 43, 55, and 58 are completely new routes.

Issues/Opportunities:

Both Sharon Road West and I-485/South Boulevard stations need additional parking. While CATS owns additional land at the latter terminus, conditions at the Sharon Road West station are constrained physically.



Freight Railroad

Norfolk Southern is a major Class I railroad. The Norfolk Southern network extends over 20,000 miles over 22 states, the District of Columbia and Ontario. Within the Sharon & I-485 area, Norfolk Southern owns and operates a mainline freight track along the east side of the LYNX Blue Line, running west of and parallel to South Boulevard. The freight railroad crosses at-grade alongside LYNX at Sweden Road and Hebron Street, but both the parallel-running freight and LYNX lines cross beneath a bridge carrying Westinghouse Boulevard.

Issues/Opportunities:

The location of the freight railroad immediately west of South Boulevard greatly inhibits the creation of additional street connections from South Boulevard, and limits visibility of any redevelopment on the west side of South Boulevard. Conversion of the private connection to the I-485 station to a public street would help parts of the Sterling neighborhood closest to the station to have public street access to South Boulevard.

Infrastructure/Public Facilities

Education

There is one Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) facility in the plan area. Sterling Elementary School is at the I-485 station. The multi-story parking deck used by CATS riders has been built to allow the top to be used by the school as a play field. CMS has identified a need for future middle and high schools within the larger area.

The Kennedy Charter Public School, serving grades 6-12, is located on Sharon Road West about one-half mile east of the light rail station.

Central Piedmont Community College has no facilities within the plan area. However, the Harper campus is located at Hebron and Nations Ford Roads, approximately 1.5 miles from the Sharon Road West station. A classroom and lab expansion is scheduled for completion by January 2010.

Issues/Opportunities

CMS currently has an elementary school within I-485 station area and is targeting more schools nearby. A high school served by light rail could deliver students in an extremely efficient manner.

Parks, Public Libraries, Police, and Fire

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation is developing the Little Sugar Creek Greenway along the eastern border of the plan area. In addition, a parcel on Longleaf Drive is under development for a neighborhood park. An additional Kings Branch park/greenway site on Westinghouse Boulevard at the western edge of the plan area has been acquired for future development.

Public Libraries of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County currently has no facilities in the plan area. A new branch is under discussion for Sharon Road West adjacent to the Little Sugar Creek Greenway, just east of the plan area.

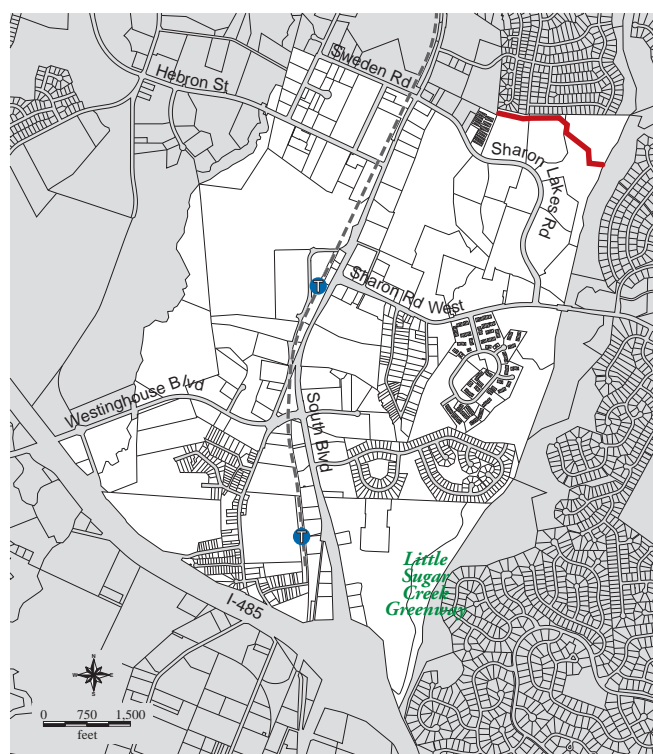
Police have no physical facilities in the station area, but oversee CATS Transit Police, and provide service through the Steele Creek Division.

There are no fire stations located in the plan area, but Fire Station 20 is just to the west at Nations Ford Road and Hebron Street.

Issues/Opportunities:

Service facilities outside the station areas may be adequate to serve the areas. In many cases public services can be provided to densely developed areas with fewer resources.

Sharon & I-485 Transit Station Area Plan



— Utilities - Sanitary Sewer Rehab



Transit Station
and Line

Water and Sewer and Storm Water Management

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department (CMU) has identified water and sewer needs during the original South Corridor study. Based on flow monitoring of the Kings Branch trunk sewer, it was determined that the line had some issues during rain events.

CMU also has identified the need to close the gap in the 12-inch water main along Westinghouse Boulevard between I-485 and Culp Street. If the Lance and/or other nearby sites redevelop at high densities in the future, a larger water main from either Arrowood or Nations Ford would ensure sufficient water service in the station areas.

Issues/Opportunities:

Increased density will allow CMU to serve a larger number of customers per square mile compared to a more suburban setting.

Redevelopment should address the quality of storm water run-off. Future development would have to meet more stringent requirements than existing development.

