

# Washington Heights Neighborhood Plan

Volume 2:  
Implementation Plan

February 25<sup>th</sup> 2002



## Introduction

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This document outlines the steps that should be taken to implement the *Washington Heights Neighborhood Plan*. The City Council will not adopt the *Implementation Plan*, however, many of the actions identified will require future Council approval and will be brought before them for approval on a case-by-case basis.

Implementing the vision and goals of the *Washington Heights Neighborhood Plan* will require ongoing collaboration between various City and County departments, property owners and residents and other organizations.

### Implementation Strategies

The *Washington Heights Neighborhood Plan* focuses on nine key issue areas:

- Land use and urban design
- Infrastructure
- Employment and Economic Development
- Community safety
- Human services
- Community organizing
- Community appearance
- Parks, recreation and open space
- Education

For each of the above, the *Concept Plan* identified general planning goals and recommendations. Now, in this *Implementation Plan*, these goals and recommendations are highlighted and strategies to implement them are identified.

**(Note:** The implementing agencies responsible for each implementation strategy are noted in brackets).

## 1. Land Use and Urban Design

### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

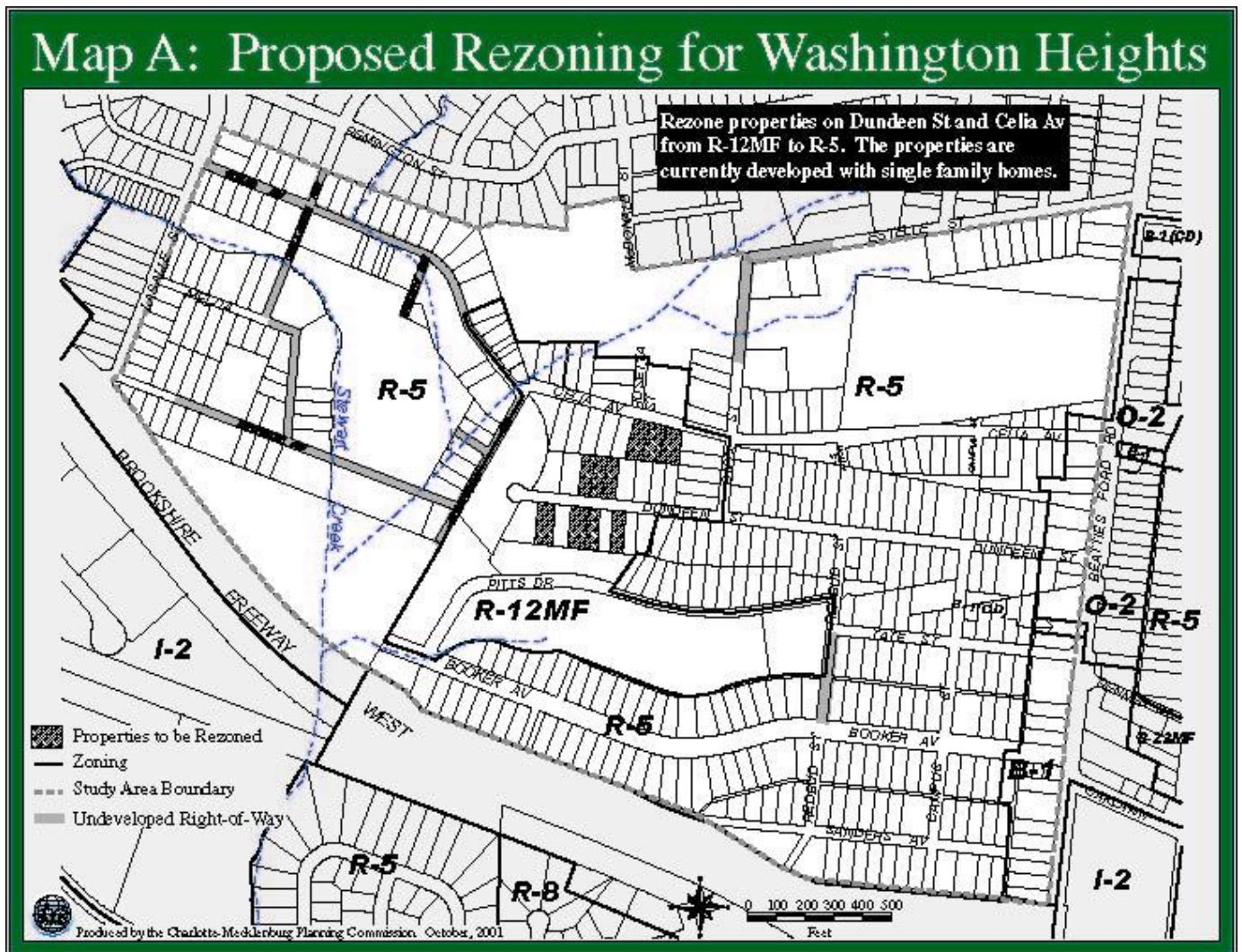
- Rehabilitate, update and preserve existing housing stock.
- Strengthen and preserve the historic residential character of Washington Heights and encourage infill development that is consistent with and sensitive to the existing character of the neighborhood.
- Promote home ownership.
- Encourage redevelopment opportunities along the Beatties Ford Road corridor.

### Implementation Strategies

- a) The following rezonings should be initiated for parcels currently redeveloped with single-family units along the western sections of Dundeen Street and Celia Avenue from R-12MF to R-5 (**See Map A**). This will more accurately reflect the existing development and limit additional multi-family development in this area thereby encouraging owner occupancy as opposed to rental. The tax parcels identified are as follows: 069-062-31, 069-062-33, 069-062-34, 069-062-36, 069-062-41, 069-062-42, 069-062-43, 069-062-53, 069-062-54, 069-062-55. (**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission**)
- b) The expansion of non-residential development should be limited to the Beatties Ford Road Corridor. If the use of existing residential structures along Beatties Ford Road changes from residential to office or commercial, the new tenant should be encouraged to utilize and maintain the character of the original residential structure. (**Neighborhood Organization**)
- c) Continue to support and publicize programs that create and encourage homeownership. This should include programs and incentives to attract a variety of income groups to the neighborhood. (**Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department and the Neighborhood Organization**)
- d) Various groups should work together to ensure that students and residents are able to access and utilize area schools and parks to their greatest potential. (**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation, Joint Use Task Force, Neighborhood Organization**)
- e) Investigate the opportunity to link L.C. Coleman Park with Stewart Creek Greenway. (**Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation**)
- f) Preserve sensitive open space and discourage new development in the floodplain. (**Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission and City Engineering**)



- g) New infill housing should adhere to the “Infill Design Guidelines” established in the Concept Plan. **(Neighborhood Organization and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission)**
- h) Undertake a concentrated housing code enforcement program in the study area to address the overall condition of the housing stock. **(Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department Housing Services Division)**
- i) Educate residents and property owners on programs and resources available to assist with home repairs. **(Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department Housing Services Division).**



## 2. Infrastructure

### A. Transportation/Mobility

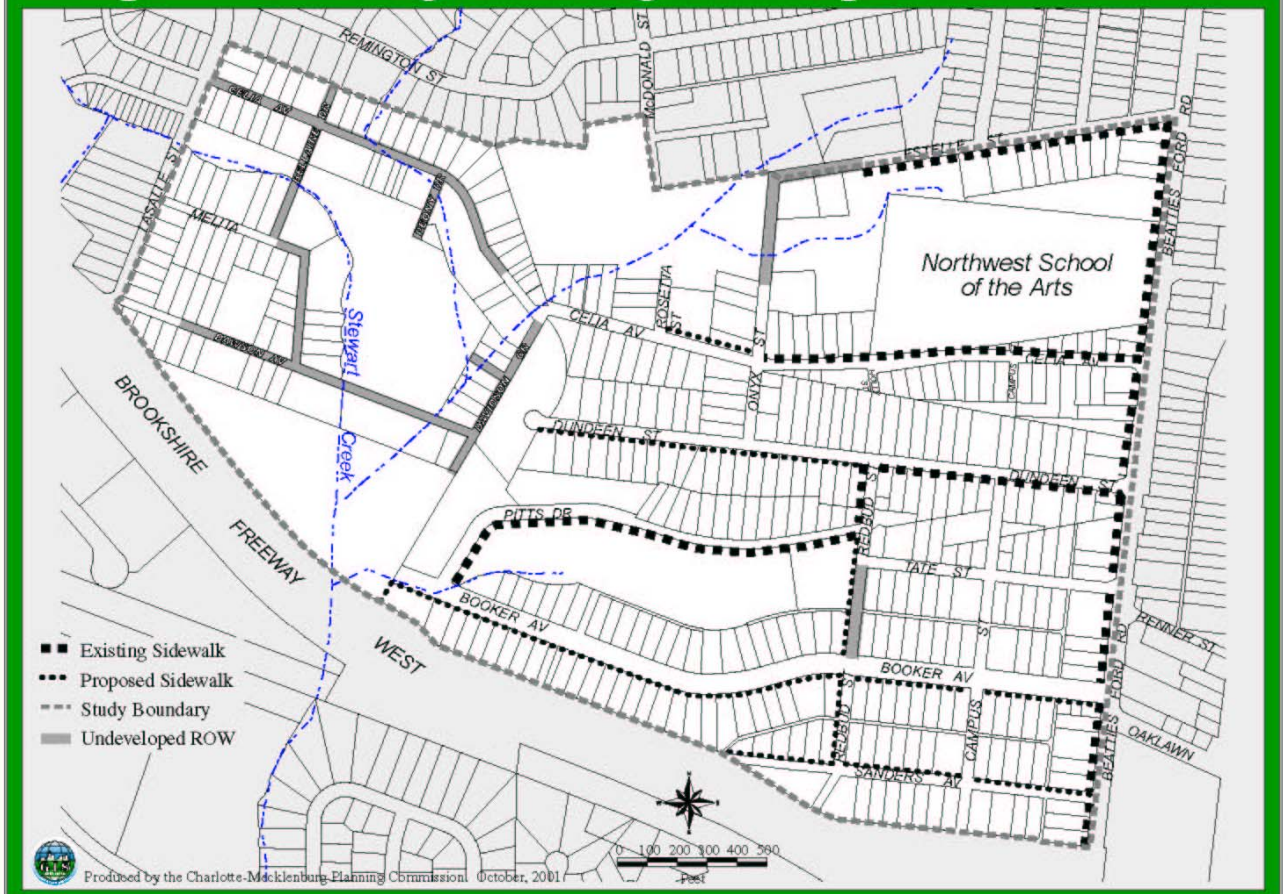
#### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

- Improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation and safety in the neighborhood.
- Identify infrastructure needs and improvements.
- Improve traffic flow and improve the pedestrian realm on Beatties Ford Road.
- Ensure that current and future transit needs of this community are taken into consideration.

#### Implementation Strategies

- a) Ensure that a sidewalk network is provided throughout the study area and into adjacent areas to link the study area with the Beatties Ford Road Corridor, L.C. Coleman Park and the Northwest School of the Arts. **Map B** indicates where sidewalks are needed. (City of Charlotte Engineering and Transportation Departments and the Neighborhood Organization)

### Map B: Washington Heights Proposed Sidewalk



- Dundeen Street from Redbud Street to Dundeen Courts Apartments.
  - Sanders Avenue from Beatties Ford Road to its western end.
  - Tate Street from Beatties Ford Road to Redbud Street.
  - Celia Avenue from Onyx Street to its western end.
  - Beatties Ford Road already has sidewalk, but once the road is widened, ensure that new sidewalk and planting strip are installed along the entire length of the newly expanded roadway.
- b) Work to improve connectivity in the neighborhood and links to other neighborhoods by constructing roadways and or pedestrian/bicycle links(**Charlotte Department of Transportation and Charlotte Engineering Department in consultation with Neighborhood Organization**). In particular:
- Construct Redbud Street between Booker Avenue and Tate Street.
  - Investigate constructing a road from Celia Avenue to Estelle Street as part of the effort to ease school related congestion, as well as determining if such a road would help in creating a link between the park and the school. Such a road should be designed to allow for automobile traffic to circulate efficiently, yet the primary focus of this road should be the pedestrian.
  - Investigate building a network of pedestrian/bicycle routes that link the school with the park and Stewart Creek Greenway. Implement the Pedestrian Overlay District for the Beatties Ford Road Corridor to encourage a pedestrian friendly realm along the corridor. This should be a priority work program item for the Planning Commission and added to the FY 2001/2 work schedule. Development of the PED plan should involve considerable public involvement, including continued input and direction from the *Washington Heights Neighborhood Plan* Study Group. (**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission**)
- c) Ensure that all signalized intersections have well marked pedestrian crosswalks. (**Charlotte Department of Transportation**)
- d) A comprehensive landscaping/street tree planting plan for the Beatties Ford Road corridor and the internal neighborhood streets should be developed. This should be done in consultation with the neighborhood stakeholders. Ensure that the intersection of Booker Avenue and Beatties Ford Road is designed as a focal point and “the entrance into the neighborhood”. (**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, Charlotte Department of Engineering and the Neighborhood Organization**)
- e) Determine whether there is a need to install a traffic signal at Beatties Ford Road and Celia Avenue. (**Charlotte Department of Transportation**)
- f) Ensure that future transit service best meets the needs of area residents, employers and employees. The following issues should be addressed:

- An analysis of current ridership figures and patterns along this section of Beatties Ford Road should be undertaken in order to determine the optimal location and number of bus stops/shelters. **(Charlotte Area Transit System, Charlotte Department of Transportation, Charlotte Department of Engineering, Neighborhood Organization)**
- The Beatties Ford Road Corridor has been identified as a location for a transit hub. To ensure that this facility takes the needs of the Washington Heights neighborhood into account, a representative from the neighborhood and from the Northwest School of the Arts should be included on the study group established to investigate this proposal. **(Charlotte Area Transit System, Northwest School of the Arts, Neighborhood Organization)**
- Consider developing a custom shelter that utilizes architectural elements and materials or some other unique community element, which helps identify this area as one that is unique. **(Neighborhood Organization and Charlotte Area Transit System)**

**B. Storm Water**

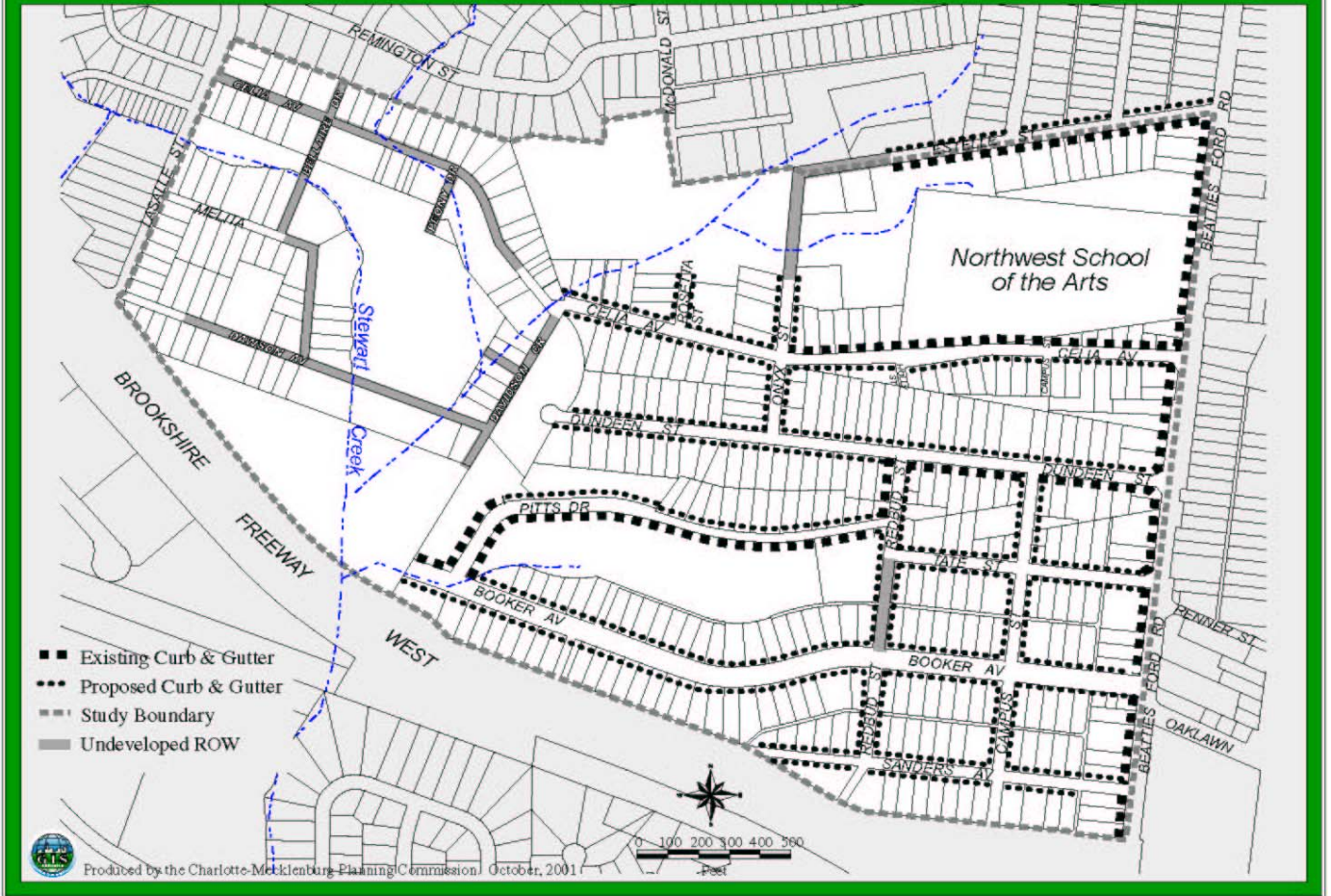
<p><b>Goal and Recommendation Highlights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce flooding and storm water drainage problems</li> </ul>
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**Implementation Strategies**

- a) Provide curb and gutter throughout the study area and into adjacent areas to enhance storm water management and minimize the threat of flooding **(See Map C)**. Curb and gutter should also be provided along any newly constructed road sections in the neighborhood such as Redbud Street. In particular install curb and gutter at the following locations **(Charlotte Department of Engineering)**:
- Both sides of Sanders Avenue along its entire length.
  - Both sides of Booker Avenue along its entire length.
  - Both sides of Tate street along its entire length.
  - Both sides of Dundeen street where it currently does not exist.
  - Both sides of Celia Avenue where it currently does not exist.
  - Both sides of Estelle Street where it currently does not exist.
  - Both sides of Campus Street along its entire length.
  - Both sides of Redbud Street where it currently does not exist.
  - Both sides of Pitts Drive where it currently does not exist.
  - Both sides of Onyx Street along its entire length.
  - Both sides of Rosetta Street.



# Map C: Washington Heights Proposed Curb & Gutter





### 3. Employment and Economic Development

#### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

- Improve linkages between the neighborhood and employment opportunities
- Sustain neighborhood supportive businesses and increase opportunities for economic growth

#### Implementation Strategies

- a) Determine how to best service the neighborhood, so that the residents have efficient access to jobs and other neighborhood services such as shopping centers. The transit schedules should take into account that many of the residents in the neighborhood work shift hours, which means they require off peak service. **(Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department, Charlotte Area Transit and Neighborhood Organization)**
- b) Provide information and support to residents on existing programs and centers, such as the JobLink Center at 500 West Trade Street, that have been established to help job seekers find and retain quality jobs. **(Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department Employment Services Division)**
- c) Encourage the formation and/or strengthen the merchants' organization in the neighborhood. **(Neighborhood Organization)**
- d) Encourage the development/redevelopment of the realigned intersection at Booker Avenue and Beatties Ford Road to be attractive, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood scale mixed-use development at this intersection. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department Business Services Division, Northwest Corridor CDC, Merchants Organization and Neighborhood Organization)**
- e) Improve the appearance of existing retail/commercial development by encouraging property owners to take advantage of façade improvement grants, infrastructure improvement grants and other such programs. **(Neighborhood Development Department Business Services Division, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, Northwest Corridor CDC, Merchants Organization and Neighborhood Organization)**

#### 4. Community Safety

##### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

- Improve safety in the neighborhood for area residents and business owners.
- Maintain and strengthen the relationship between police, area businesses and residents.
- Encourage citizen involvement, especially youth, in safety programs and to interact with police on an informal basis.
- Improve lighting in the neighborhood.

##### Implementation Strategies

- a) Maintain and strengthen traditional community-based policing efforts. The personal relationships that develop among community police officers, businesses and neighborhood groups are an important crime prevention tool. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and Neighborhood Organization)**
- b) Publicize information regarding reductions in crime in the neighborhood. Publicize these reductions through the media, business and community newsletters. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and Neighborhood Organization)**
- c) Consider developing a program similar to San Diego's "Safe Streets Now." This program trains and empowers residents and business owners on nuisance abatement techniques. With this program, citizens learn to identify and document activity at properties causing nuisances, and bring civil charges against a property owner for non-compliance. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and Neighborhood Organization)**
- d) Encourage police, landlords and property managers to share police arrest records on a regular basis. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and Neighborhood Organization)**
- e) Reduce crime by concentrating on the special needs of youth by initiating a comprehensive public education program to do the following **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, Neighborhood Organization and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools)**:
  - Increase parents' awareness of children's needs.
  - Indicate what services are available.
  - Teach parenting skills.

## 5. Human Services

### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

- The Department of Social Services should increase awareness of existing programs and services available to the community, specifically the youth and elderly.

### Implementation Strategies

- a) Survey the residents of the study area, to determine the human services needs of the community. **(Neighborhood Organization and Department of Social Services)**
- b) Develop and distribute a directory of programs and services that addresses the human services needs identified in the above survey. **(Social Services Agencies and Neighborhood Organization)**
- c) Encourage potential leaders in the study area to attend leadership development training classes through the City of Charlotte's Neighborhood Development Department and other relevant programs. **(Neighborhood Organization, Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department and Department of Social Services)**
- d) Develop relationships with private companies and public agencies through partnerships and mentoring programs. **(Neighborhood Organization and Neighborhood Development Department)**
- e) Target youth in the area for various summer job programs. **(Charlotte Neighborhood Development Employment Services Division and the Neighborhood Organization)**



## 6. Community Organizing

### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

- Strengthen and maintain an active neighborhood organization.

### Implementation Strategies

- a) Increase the organizing and capacity-building skills of neighborhood leaders by providing support and education on problem solving techniques, accessing information and other government services. **(Neighborhood Organization and Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department)**
- b) Encourage the Neighborhood Organization to develop a priority work program to begin implementing the recommendations noted in the Concept Plan. **(Neighborhood Organization and Charlotte Neighborhood Development Division)**

## 7. Community Appearance

### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

- Improve the overall appearance of the neighborhood.
- Investigate donating alleys to adjacent property owners for personal residential use and maintenance.
- Provide streetscape improvements along Beatties Ford Road and interior streets.
- Increase enforcement of litter, zoning and abandoned vehicle ordinances.
- Encourage residents and business owners to pursue matching grant funds for neighborhood beautification projects.

### Implementation Strategies

- a) Encourage an adopt-a-street program for all major and minor thoroughfares. **(Neighborhood Organization, Community Improvement and Charlotte Department of Transportation)**
- b) Initiate streetscape/landscaping projects on key thoroughfares. Also consider ways to reduce visual clutter by removing and/or consolidating overhead utility wires and billboards. **(Charlotte Department of Transportation, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, Charlotte City Engineering and the Neighborhood Organization)**
- c) Develop an educational program that reaches businesses, and especially apartment complexes, about appropriate ways to containerize garbage and about the rules for roll-out garbage and bulky item pick-up. **(Community Improvement a Division of Charlotte Solid Waste Services and Neighborhood Organization)**

## 8. Parks, Recreation and Open Space

### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

- Improve access and encourage the use of parks and recreational facilities for all residents, young and old.
- Develop the greenway along Stewart Creek.
- Improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access to L.C. Coleman Park.
- Encourage Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools to explore joint-use opportunities.

### Implementation Strategies

- a) Consider revising the master plan for L.C. Coleman Park in consultation with the neighborhood and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. During this process the recommendations made in the *Concept Plan* should be taken into consideration. This would be a good opportunity to take advantage of joint-use opportunities and the needs of the neighborhood as expressed in the *Concept Plan*. **(Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department, Neighborhood Organization and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools)**
- b) Once the revised master plan has been developed, consider accelerating the construction of capital improvements proposed for the L.C. Coleman Park. **(Neighborhood Organization and Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department)**
- c) Encourage collaboration to develop and coordinate a comprehensive outreach initiative focusing on the needs of the neighborhood youth, teens and seniors. The initiative should consider traditional and non-traditional recreational, cultural and educational programs and activities. **(Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department, the YMCA, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, neighborhood coalitions, churches and other organizations)**



## 9. Education

### Goals and Recommendation Highlights

- Encourage students to stay in school.
- Encourage students to participate in college preparation classes to better prepare them for higher education and/or programs that would better prepare them for employment.
- Upgrade existing schools in and around the Washington Heights neighborhood to ensure equity in education and facilities and utilize these as key resources in the community.
- Encourage parental and citizen involvement in the education system.

### Implementation Strategies

- a) Ensure that the physical appearance and maintenance of schools in and near the neighborhood are of the highest standard. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Neighborhood Organization)**
- b) Accelerate the efforts to upgrade and improve the schools in and around the neighborhood. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Neighborhood Organization)**
- c) Work with area businesses to create more apprenticeship and other work based training opportunities for students. **(Northwest Corridor CDC, Neighborhood Organization, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Neighborhood Merchants Association)**
- d) Investigate ways to change the current system that will allow students who are expelled to stay in school, rather than being turned away from the system altogether. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Neighborhood Organization)**
- e) Investigate ways to make school buildings and grounds more accessible and available to residents and the community organization, free of charge, for public meetings and other community events. **(Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, Charlotte Neighborhood Development Department and Neighborhood Organization)**
- f) Stress to the school board members and county commission members to keep in mind that inner city schools experience a different set of issues/problems than do suburban schools. **(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Neighborhood Organization)**



**CHARLOTTE.**

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PLANNING COMMISSION**