

INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD

Area Plan



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MARVIN COLLINS
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HONORABLE MENTION
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Executive Summary

Purpose

This document establishes a vision for the Independence Boulevard Plan Area and provides policies to guide future growth, development, and reinvestment consistent with the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework*. This plan will update existing plans for the area, including the *East District Plan (1990)*; refine the boundaries for any portion of an Activity Center, Growth Corridor, and/or Wedge included in the Plan Area; serve as the official streetscape plan for the area; and include station area plans for six future rapid transit stations.

Plan Boundary

The Independence Boulevard Plan Area consists of approximately 5,856 acres, located roughly between Briar Creek to the northwest and Sardis Road to the southeast (**See Map 1**). The Plan Area includes a large part of the Southeast Growth Corridor, as well as six proposed transit station areas identified in the *2030 Transit Corridor System Plan*.

Key Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities

- Strong neighborhoods which are stable and diverse
- Location and access with proximity to Uptown, major highways, and other destinations
- Environmental features like parks and greenways
- Market that has a long-term positive trend for the Charlotte area

Constraints

- Independence Boulevard roadway design presents a challenge to redevelopment along the corridor, especially for retail uses
- Disinvestment in the form of vacant and outdated retail properties
- Market, in the short-term, is relatively limited by a low level of demand for retail and office

Vision Statement

The Vision Statement emerged out of the feedback received from stakeholder interviews, the first public meeting and Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) meetings. A draft of the Vision Statement was presented at the second CAG workshop, where participants were invited to share their thoughts on the vision.

Vision Statement

The Independence Boulevard Plan Area will be a healthy, safe, and attractive area where a wide diversity of businesses can thrive, where a network of greenways connect important ecological places, and where everyone has multiple transportation options. Most of all, it will continue to be a place with strong neighborhoods, where residents and visitors enjoy a high quality of life with ample employment, shopping and recreational opportunities.

Goals

To achieve the future envisioned for the Plan Area, the following goals have been identified. The goals build upon adopted plans and policies.

Land Use

To provide a range of housing, retail, employment, and recreation opportunities while strengthening existing neighborhoods; to encourage the creation of dynamic, compact activity nodes; and to provide a framework for the successful revitalization of properties along Independence Boulevard.

Community Design

To ensure that development/redevelopment is compatible with adjacent uses, while supporting the community's vision of vibrant, pedestrian-friendly nodes surrounded by stable neighborhoods.

Transportation

To increase the viability of all modes of travel—while also reducing reliance on Independence Boulevard for local trips—through creating better street connectivity, providing a safer and more comfortable

walking/bicycling environment, and positioning future transit stations for successful ridership levels and supportive land uses.

Infrastructure and Public Facilities

To encourage redevelopment in the areas that have adequate infrastructure and public facilities already in place, while ensuring that investment in new or improved infrastructure occurs in a thoughtful, strategic manner that leverages other opportunities and investments.

Natural Environment

To enhance important ecological and recreational spaces through expansion of the parks and greenways system, reclamation of “lost” assets such as buried streams, and creation of a comprehensive stormwater management strategy, while also encouraging land use and transportation activities that positively impact land, air, and water quality.



With new pedestrian-related improvements, Monroe Road is envisioned to become a focus of new development.

Key Policies

The major policy recommendations in this plan are summarized as follows: *(Note that this listing does not include all of the policies contained in the plan document)*

Land Use

- Wedge areas and Established Neighborhoods within the Growth Corridor are recommended to remain predominantly lower density residential.
- Density and intensity along Independence Boulevard should be focused around transit station areas, especially those that are designated as regional nodes since they have the most connections to the surrounding community.
- Some areas along Independence Boulevard outside transit station areas are appropriate for remaining as highway-oriented retail uses since these uses provide important services to the area but require less accessibility and pedestrian orientation.
- Monroe Road should feature nodes of activity, where mixed-uses are preferred, while the

areas in between nodes are a mix of retail and office uses.

- Employment areas should continue to be important community-wide locations.

Community Design

- Most development types, especially those in key node areas, should be designed to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Neighborhoods should be protected from adjacent higher density development through proper design transitions.

Transportation

- Independence Boulevard should be developed within a 250' envelope east of WT Harris Boulevard and a 280' envelope east of WT Harris to the Plan Area boundary.
- Key connections should be established through new development to facilitate redevelopment. Many of these connections should offer parallel access to properties along Independence Boulevard.
- Design of new streets should be consistent with proposed surrounding land uses.



New bike lanes and a median would improve the pedestrian conditions along Monroe Road in more intense node locations.

Infrastructure and Public Facilities/Services

- Regional stormwater facilities should be constructed, especially in redeveloping areas subject to Post-Construction Controls Ordinance, to facilitate both redevelopment and improved water quality.
- Civic infrastructure, like libraries and community centers, should be targeted to node locations.

Natural Environment

- Stream “daylighting,” which means to bring back to the surface, should be a priority activity, especially in redevelopment areas.
- The greenway system should be expanded through both new creek corridor-based connections and overland connections between creeks.

Key Implementation Strategies

Implementation of this plan will be accomplished through a number of key strategies discussed in the Implementation section of the plan document. Highlights of these strategies include:

- Exploring the purchase of parcels along Independence Boulevard with safety-related access issues.
- Reconfiguring the Eastway interchange to allow parallel road connections to Independence.
- Exploring locations for regional stormwater facilities in the western portion of the Plan Area.
- Designing and constructing key connections such as the Shade Valley to Pierson connector street.
- Extending the greenway network along Edwards’ Branch as redevelopment occurs.
- Working with the Metropolitan Transit Commission to explore implementation strategies to clarify and advance rapid transit in the Southeast Growth Corridor.



Stream daylighting along Edwards’ Branch adjacent to Independence Boulevard can be a functional stormwater improvement as well as an address for new development.

INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD

Area Plan



Part One: Concept Plan

Plan Context

Purpose

This document establishes a vision for the Independence Boulevard Plan Area and provides policies to guide future growth, development and reinvestment consistent with the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework*. Once adopted, this plan will:

- update existing plans for the area, including the *East District Plan* (1990);
- refine the boundaries for any portion of an Activity Center, Growth Corridor and/or Wedge included in the Plan Area;
- function as the official streetscape plan for the area;
- provide station area plans for six future transit stations;
- address key land use, transportation, urban design and other development issues identified through the planning process; and
- provide guidance for future land use and infrastructure decisions;

As a Growth Corridor, Independence Boulevard continues to undergo transformation from a major arterial to a limited access expressway with plans for bus rapid transit or light rail transit. Continuing to invest in multi-modal transportation infrastructure is a key component of this plan. The rapid transit recommendations and the highway parameters included in the *2030 Corridor System Plan* for the Southeast Corridor help define the framework for this plan.

Plan Boundaries

The Independence Boulevard Plan Area consists of approximately 5,856 acres, bounded by Briar Creek to the northwest and the City limits to the southeast (**See Map 1**). The Plan Area includes a large part of the Southeast Growth Corridor, as well as six proposed transit station areas identified in the *2030 Transit Corridor System Plan*. The plan boundaries include properties or neighborhoods that are accessed from Independence Boulevard, as well as those that are primarily oriented towards the roadway. The Plan Area also includes properties along Monroe Road, which is an important parallel facility to Independence Boulevard, and thus will have an integral role to play in terms of potential land use and transportation solutions. Central Avenue is another important parallel facility, but was the subject of a previous land use/transportation study.

The Plan Area includes two major entertainment venues (Bojangles Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium) and several major shopping centers, including the Coliseum Center, Amity Gardens, Independence Shopping Center, Independence Square, and the Galleria. Several large automobile dealerships are also located along the corridor.

The area includes all or parts of ten Neighborhood Statistical Areas (NSAs) as defined by the City: Briar Creek-Woodland, Coliseum Drive, Echo Hills, Oakhurst, Marshbrooke, East Forest, Idlewild South, Idlewild Farms, North Sharon Amity/Reddman Road,

and Eastway/Sheffield Park. Two significant streams run through the area (Edwards Branch and McAlpine Creek), as well as a number of tributaries.

Organization of this Document

This document is organized into three parts. Part I, the Concept Plan, includes the Purpose, Vision Statement, Goals, and Policies. Only Part I will become adopted City policy. Part II, the Implementation Guide, contains action steps identified to carry out plan policies, and will be used primarily to guide staff work. Part III, the Appendix (available under separate cover), provides technical information such as the existing conditions report, trends and forecasts, and other supporting data used to develop the plan.



Typical character of strip commercial and industrial along Monroe Road includes large areas for surface parking.



Typical character of suburban arterial section of Independence Boulevard in the southeastern portion of the Plan Area includes development set back from the road.

Planning Process

The Independence Boulevard Area Plan was initiated at the direction of Charlotte City Council, in response to recommendations in the *Independence Boulevard Land Use and Infrastructure Study* (April 2007). Development of the Independence Boulevard Area Plan occurred over a period of 24 months and included the following public involvement opportunities:

- A wide variety of stakeholders, including business owners, neighborhood groups, City and County staff, and others were interviewed in mid-May 2008.
- Two public kick-off meetings were held on June 24, 2008. Due to high demand, a third kick-off meeting was held on July 14, 2008. In total, over 500 people attended one of these sessions.
- A Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) was created to provide an opportunity for the public to offer regular, detailed feedback throughout the planning process. Approximately 150 people signed up to be a part of the CAG.

The CAG met six times, on July 17, 2008, August 7, 2008, October 14, 2008, April 2, 2009, April 30, 2009, and March 3, 2010 to assist in developing plan recommendations.

A second public meeting was held on October 28, 2008 to discuss the proposed character areas that formed the basis of the plan. Approximately 200 people were in attendance. A final community meeting was held on May 6, 2010 with approximately 65 people in attendance. Additionally, the public was invited to follow the plan development process via the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department website.

The Planning Committee of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission hears citizen comments on the draft plan and makes a recommendation to the Charlotte City Council. The City Council also hears citizen comments and makes the final decision concerning adoption of the plan.

Policy Framework

The following key documents provided guidance and direction for this plan:

Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework is the overarching growth policy for Charlotte. An update of this policy document is currently underway that revises the original Centers and Corridors concept by establishing a vision for future growth and development for Charlotte. It does this by: 1) identifying three geographic types used to categorize land in



Participants discuss community issues and opportunities at a public meeting.



Participants review community-outlined values at a public meeting.

Charlotte's "sphere of influence" - Activity Centers, Growth Corridors and Wedges; and 2) outlining the desired characteristics of each of these geographies.

This policy intends to help guide growth into areas that can best support it, and away from areas that cannot. Thus, much of Charlotte's future moderate to higher intensity development is targeted within five major Growth Corridors and in designated Activity Centers. This will help maximize existing infrastructure and services. Low to moderate density residential and services supporting neighborhoods is targeted for the areas between the corridors, referred to as Wedges.

Activity Centers should be focal points of economic activity, typically with concentrations of compact development. Many existing Activity Centers have the capacity for significant new growth in conjunction with enhancements to the supporting infrastructure.

Growth Corridors are five elongated areas that stretch from Center City to the edge of Charlotte. They are characterized by the diversity of places they encompass – from historic neighborhoods, to vibrant mixed-use areas, to significant employment and shopping districts – and by the accessibility and connectivity they provide for these places. Many areas within the Growth Corridors, particularly the transit station areas, are appropriate locations for significant new growth.

Wedges are the large areas between Growth Corridors, where residential neighborhoods have developed and continue to grow. The Wedges consist mainly of low density housing, as well as a limited amount of moderate density housing and supporting facilities and services.

 CENTERS • CORRIDORS • WEDGES
Growth Framework

Adopted by Charlotte City Council
August 23, 2010



As shown on Map 1, Plan Boundaries, the Plan Area lies within the Southeast Growth Corridor, but also contains part of the Eastland Activity Center as well as some areas within Wedges. Six transit stations are also included in the Plan Area. The Growth

Corridor area is identified as having the potential to accommodate significant growth in the future and the plan lays out policies and strategies to help realize this potential. Additionally, through the area planning process, the boundaries of the Growth Corridor were reviewed and adjusted to better reflect existing and future conditions.

General Development Policies are adopted policies on various topics relevant to development and redevelopment in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. In particular, they address residential location and design, retail-oriented mixed/multi-use centers and transit supportive development. Additionally, the *General Development Policies* provide guidance to minimize negative envi-

ronmental impacts of land development and to more closely link land use and development decisions to the availability of infrastructure needed to support it.

The *General Development Policies* were used in this plan process as the basis for developing the more refined policies unique to the Plan Area.



Adopted land use plans include six geographic districts which make up the City of Charlotte's planning jurisdiction: the Northeast, East, South, Southwest, Northwest and Central districts. Each of these areas have a district plan that addresses a wide range of physical

development issues and provides parcel-specific land use recommendations for all properties within that district plan. This plan will update the *East District Plan*.



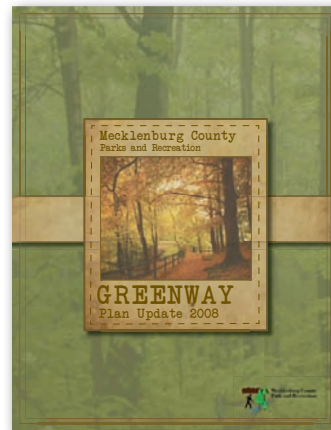
2030 Transit Corridor System Plan, approved in November 2006 by the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC), sets the course for rapid transit in Mecklenburg County. The Commission selected Bus Rapid Transit as the transit mode for the Southeast Transit

Corridor, which extends 13.5 miles from Charlotte's Center City to I-485 in Matthews, and encompasses the Independence Boulevard Plan Area. However, the Commission also delayed implementation for a minimum of five years to allow a reconsideration of light rail transit for this corridor. Sixteen stations were identified along the Southeast Corridor, seven with park and ride facilities. Six of these stations are located

within the Plan Area.

2035 Long Range Transportation Plan defines the policies, programs and projects to be implemented over the next twenty years, providing transportation choices in Mecklenburg and western Union County. Several Long Range Transportation Projects have been identified within the Plan Area and were considered when developing this plan.

Transportation Action Plan defines short and long-term policies for accommodating motor vehicles, transit riders, bicyclists and pedestrians together with an implementation "blueprint" for improvements. The *Transportation Action Plan's* comprehensive "toolbox" of transportation programs will help implement the recommendations made in this plan.



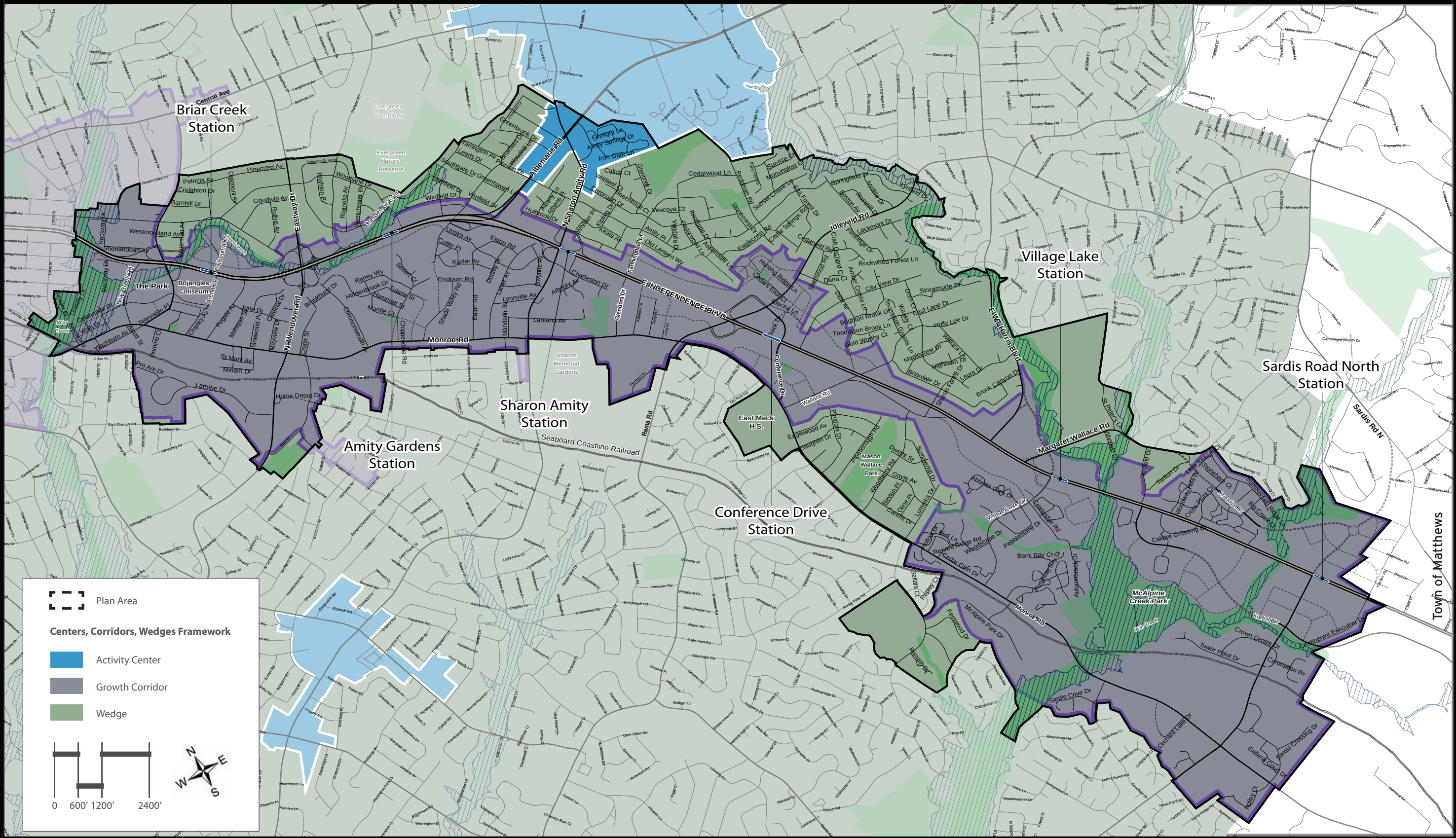
Urban Street Design Guidelines offer a comprehensive approach to designing new and modified streets within the City. They are also a key component of the *Transportation Action Plan*, and were used in developing this plan

to assist with street classifications and cross-sections that will guide the design and redesign of streets. The *Urban Street Design Guidelines* also address integrating land use and transportation to create synergy between the streets and the land uses adjacent to them.

Greenway Master Plan update identifies an expanded greenway network and greenway trail system throughout Mecklenburg County. As land is acquired and set aside over time, the greenway system should also improve water quality by reclaiming natural floodplains, protect wildlife habitats and open space, and provide recreational and educational opportunities for residents.

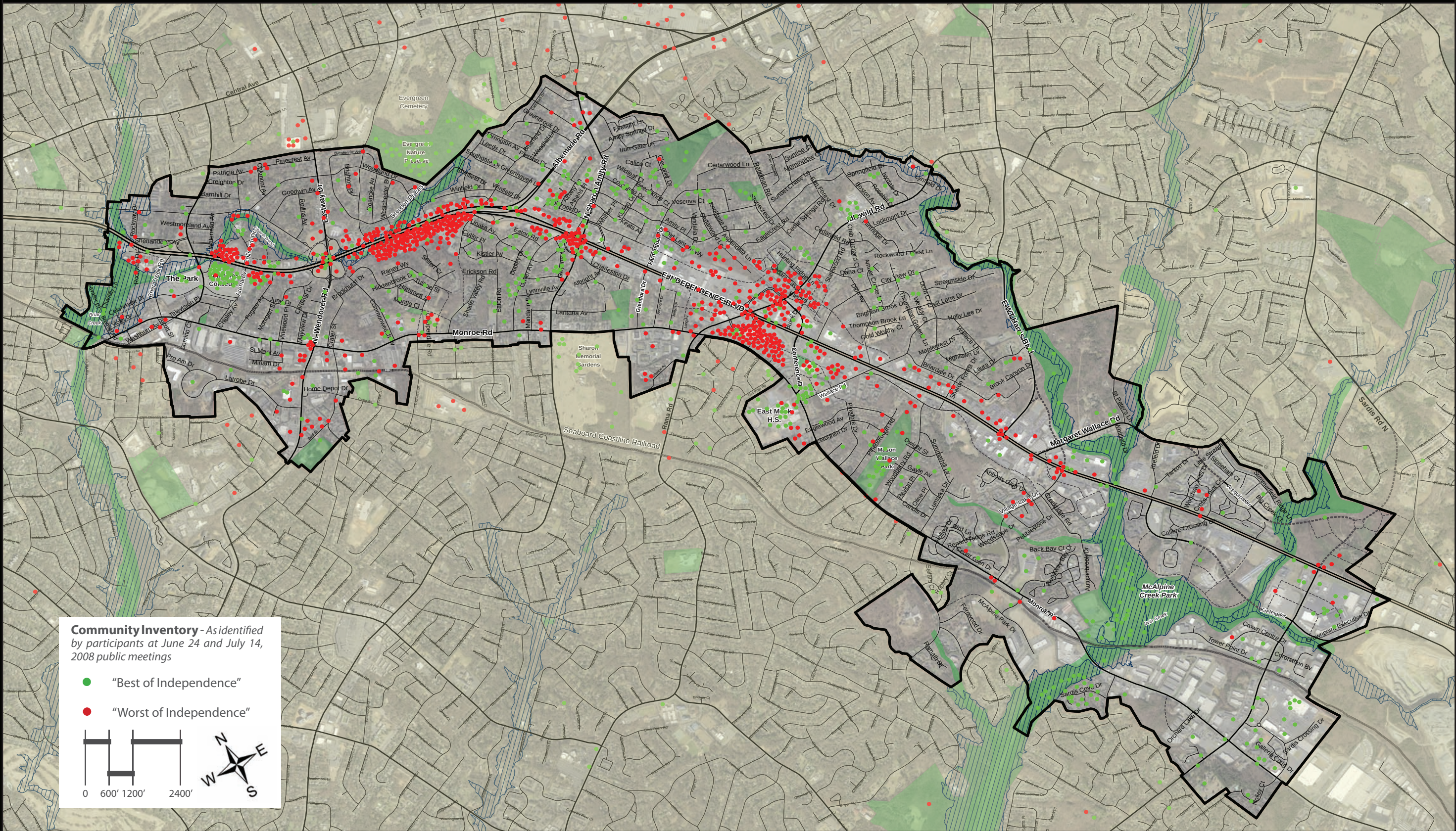
Independence Boulevard Plan Area Boundary

Map 1



Independence Boulevard Opportunities and Constraints

Map 2



Key Opportunities and Constraints

A review of existing conditions, including input from the public during the plan development process, reveals opportunities to build upon and constraints to overcome for the community. These opportunities and constraints were discussed at the public meetings, and formed the basis for the vision statement, goals, and recommended policies.

An inventory of opportunities and constraints was assessed at the initial public workshop. Three values were cited rather consistently by the participants:

- The location of the area, especially in terms of the proximity to Uptown and easy access to the regional highway system;
- The quality of the neighborhoods and their neighbors; and
- Environmental characteristics of the area, including trees, parks, greenways, and other natural features.

Participants were asked to place green dots on the three places they liked the most in the area, and red dots on the three places they liked the least.

As shown on **Map 2**, most of the areas the participants labeled as the “Best of Independence” spots were in the neighborhoods: individual homes, parks, churches, etc. Bojangles Coliseum and some of the shopping centers along Sardis Road North also received some positive marks. In general, the green dots were widely scattered throughout the Study Area.

In contrast, the red dots, or “Worst of Independence” markings, were largely concentrated in a few areas. The Silver Glen Apartments (formerly Castlewood Apartments) on Monroe Road and the largely-vacant retail centers along Independence between Briar Creek and Albemarle were covered in red by the participants. Other areas receiving a “Worst of” designation included some of the other out-dated apartment complexes and, though it sits outside the Plan Area, the Eastland Mall.

Opportunities

- **Strong neighborhoods:** The most important attribute of the Plan Area lies in its stable and diverse neighborhoods.
- **Location and access:** The area’s proximity to Uptown, major highways, and other destinations is a very valuable component of the Plan Area. Additionally, the planned inclusion of rapid transit along the corridor will increase the opportunities for access and mobility.
- **Environmental features:** The Plan Area includes a number of existing parks and greenways that are important to area residents.
- **Market (long-term):** The long-term market for the Charlotte area is positive, as the region is a preferred destination for young professionals. The Independence Boulevard Plan Area also has long-term potential for more retail and residential development, especially as obsolescent facilities are phased out.

Constraints

- **Independence Boulevard:** The hybrid freeway-arterial design of Independence Boulevard presents a major challenge to redevelopment along the corridor, especially for retail uses.
- **Disinvestment:** The vacant and outdated commercial properties along the in-town portion of Independence Boulevard have influenced perceptions of the corridor among potential residents and businesses. Additionally, changing retail preferences will make the “strip” form of development that characterizes much of the Plan Area increasingly less desirable.
- **Market (short-term):** The short-term market for the corridor is relatively limited, due to broader economic conditions as well as limited demand for retail and office space in the Plan Area. (See **Part III, Appendix**)

Vision Statement

The future for the Plan Area was developed with input and participation from the community and is best expressed in a comprehensive vision statement. This statement describes the kind of place the community envisions for the future; it generates common goals, hopes and aspirations; it offers the possibility for fundamental change and gives the community something to move toward.

The Vision Statement emerged out of the feedback received from the stakeholder interviews, the first public meeting, and the first Citizens' Advisory Group (CAG) workshop.

Vision Statement

The Independence Boulevard Plan Area will be a healthy, safe, and attractive area where a wide diversity of businesses can thrive, where a network of greenways connect important ecological places, and where everyone has multiple transportation options. Most of all, it will continue to be a place with strong neighborhoods, where residents and visitors enjoy a high quality of life with ample employment, shopping and recreational opportunities.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the project emerged from the information and ideas gathered at the stakeholder interviews and public workshops, and guided the development of the concept plan.

Principle One: Strengthen and Build Neighborhoods

As the foundation of the Plan Area, existing residential neighborhoods should be strengthened and new neighborhoods created in appropriate places.

Principle Two: Create Nodes

Nodes are areas of more intense uses that help focus infrastructure investments in appropriate places; allow for a more vibrant and interesting level of activity to occur; and emphasize pedestrian-orientation. The creation of new or enhanced nodes is especially important for the future transit station areas.

Principle Three: Reclaim and Showcase Natural Systems

The natural environment is one of the most cherished assets of the Plan Area, and opportunities to protect and enhance the area's greenways, parks, and natural areas should be pursued.

Principle Four: Orient Development Towards Monroe and Central

Monroe and Central—the two main parallel facilities to Independence—should serve a more complete role as neighborhood-oriented places for shopping, amenities, employment, and municipal and educational uses.

Principle Five: Leverage Opportunities

Public investments in the Plan Area must be able to leverage additional private investments to have a far-reaching impact.

Principle Six: Provide Choices

Transportation choices (such as transit, bicycling, and walking), as well as land use choices in appropriate areas should be enhanced, by integrating a wider range of housing, shopping, employment, and recreational opportunities into the community.

Principle Seven: Balance Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Needs

The Plan Area provides for a mixture of neighborhood, community, and regional needs that must be understood and balanced.

Principle Eight: Define U.S. 74

The ultimate future cross-section for U.S. 74 must be determined and addressed accordingly to give developers and land-owners the certainty they need to make redevelopment investments.

Principle Nine: Implement the Plan

The plan must be realistic from economic and physical perspectives.

Goals

To achieve the future envisioned for the Plan Area, the following goals have been identified. The goals build upon adopted plans and policies.

- **Land Use**

To provide a range of housing, retail, employment, and recreation opportunities while strengthening existing neighborhoods; to encourage the creation of dynamic, compact activity nodes; and to provide a framework for the successful revitalization of properties along Independence Boulevard.

- **Community Design**

To ensure that development/redevelopment is compatible with adjacent uses, while supporting the community's vision of vibrant, pedestrian-friendly nodes surrounded by stable neighborhoods.

- **Transportation**

To increase the viability of all modes of travel—while also reducing reliance on Independence Boulevard for local trips—through creating better street connectivity, providing a safer and more comfortable walking/bicycling environment, and positioning future transit stations for successful ridership levels and supportive land uses.

- **Infrastructure and Public Facilities**

To encourage redevelopment in the areas that have adequate infrastructure and public facilities already in place, while ensuring that investment in new or improved infrastructure occurs in a thoughtful, strategic manner that leverages other opportunities and investments.

- **Natural Environment**

To enhance important ecological and recreational spaces through expansion of the parks and greenways system, reclamation of “lost” assets such as buried streams, and creation of a comprehensive stormwater management strategy, while also encouraging land use and transportation activities that positively impact land, air, and water quality.

Overall Plan Concept

Taking the vision and goals into consideration, the concept map illustrates the recommended development pattern for the Plan Area. It is intended to be general in nature and to guide the specific policies outlined in later portions of this plan.

The concept for the Independence Boulevard Area Plan is to concentrate development intensity at nodes, which are the focus of neighborhoods linked together by green connections which are typically greenways, parks, and trails. Regional Nodes are located at the most highly-connected locations in the Plan Area, where Independence Boulevard is crossed by major regional access streets with future rapid transit stations. These occur at the Briar Creek, Conference Drive, and Sardis Road North Stations. Smaller, local-serving Neighborhood Nodes occur along Monroe Road south of Independence and Albemarle Road on the north side of Independence Boulevard.

This repositioned development pattern will help to revitalize the area by creating a more connected, walkable, and green community. Natural features - creeks, greenways, and parks, are able to be used as amenities to spur additional high-quality residential development. By re-orienting development away from Independence Boulevard and toward new side street connections, a more walkable development pattern can be created and maintained over time, creating nodes of commercial activity with elements of higher-intensity, transit-supportive residential, office, and limited commercial areas to link the neighborhood nodes. All of these changes will serve to help maintain and enhance the existing neighborhoods.

Overview of Character Areas

There are seven distinct types of character areas within the Plan Area that help to illustrate the plan concept. Identification of these character areas provided guidance in developing future land use and infrastructure policies for the Plan Area

Green Connections

Places where open space connections are preferred for environmental preservation and/or pedestrian connection. Their application may vary widely, from stormwater facilities, to parks and greenways, to merely widened sidewalks.

Neighborhood General

Residential areas make up the bulk of the Independence Boulevard corridor.

Neighborhood Core

Comprised of moderate office and/or residential area with some neighborhood-scale commercial services.

Neighborhood Node

Include mixed-use buildings or mixed-use blocks of apartments, townhomes, ground-floor retail and office uses which primarily serve the surrounding area with a high level of internal and external connectivity.

Employment District

Characterized by larger industrial and office uses such as manufacturing facilities, warehouses and flex space. These businesses need immediate access to rail and/or highways and are a major contributor to the job base of the community. Some supporting retail or office uses may accompany the industrial use.

Independence Business District

Located directly along Independence Boulevard and are predominantly automobile-oriented commercial uses such as auto dealerships, gas stations and similar facilities. This district provides opportunities for commercial uses that are not appropriate for the mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly nodes, but provide important services and/or jobs for the community.

Transit Node

Characterized by an intense mix of residential and commercial uses oriented around a transit station and/or regional road corridors. The transit node maintains its pedestrian scale with connected streets and walkable block sizes even when building footprints are larger.

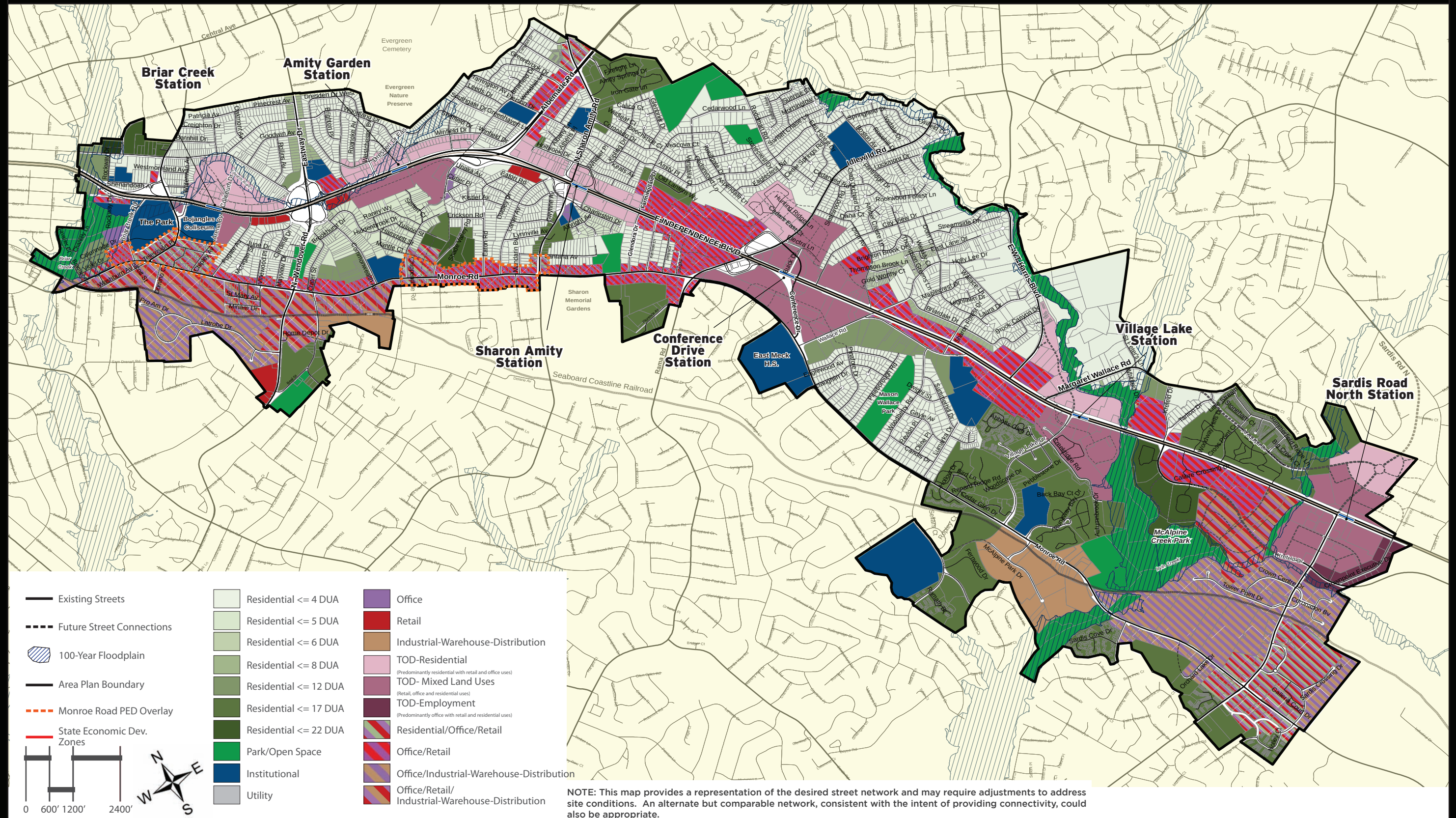
Independence Boulevard Overall Concept Plan

Map 3



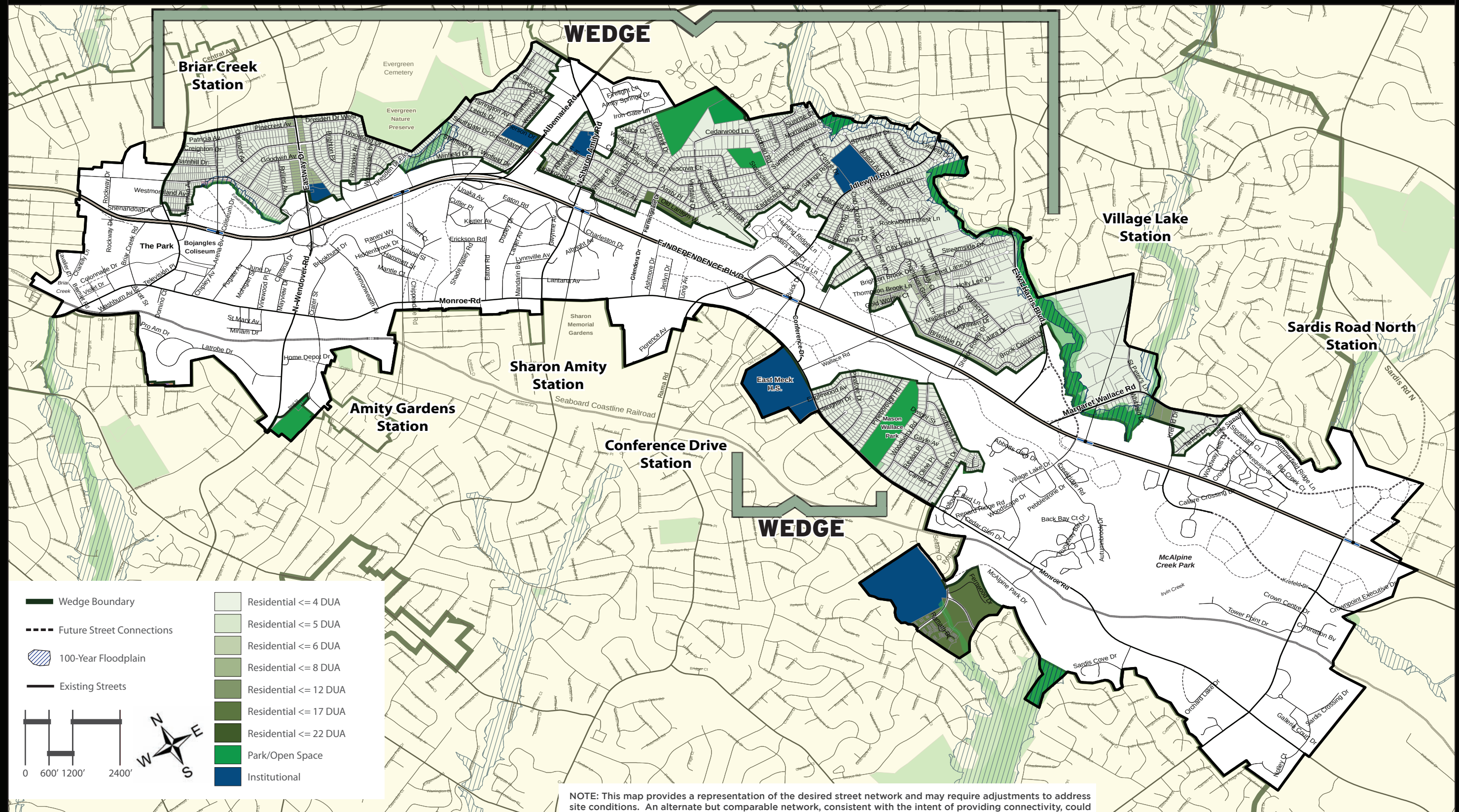
Independence Boulevard Recommended Future Land Use

Map 4



Independence Boulevard Recommended Future Land Use - Wedge Areas

Map 5



Map 6



Land Use Policies

The land use policies in this chapter outline the future land use designations for all parcels within the Plan Area (See Map 4). In developing these policies for the Independence Boulevard Plan Area, the Centers, Corridors, and Wedges Growth Framework served as guidance to enhance the relationship between land use and transportation. As a result, land use policies for the Plan Area are divided into three distinct geographies—Activity Center, Growth Corridor, Wedge. Certain locations of the study area have been targeted for more specific land use guidance and have been assigned sub-areas icons illustrated on Maps 5 and 6 with more detailed discussion throughout the text. Each sub-area icon also corresponds to an implementation strategy described in the Implementation Guide.

Land Use Goal

To provide a range of housing, retail, employment, and recreation opportunities while strengthening existing neighborhoods; to encourage the creation of dynamic, compact activity nodes; and to provide a framework for the successful revitalization of properties along Independence Boulevard.

Wedge Areas

Wedges are the large areas between Growth Corridors primarily composed of low-density residential neighborhoods. The Wedges provide a range of housing choices as well as supporting facilities and services. Much of the northern and southern portions of the Plan Area are within a Wedge. These areas are currently developed with and zoned primarily for residential development. These areas should remain

predominantly lower density residential, with limited moderate density housing in strategic locations as shown on Map 5. The plan changes the single-family and multi-family land use categories used in much of the East District Plan to the new land use designations that identify residential uses with an assigned density.

Activity Center

Activity Centers are focal points of economic activity typically planned for concentrations of compact development. They are appropriate locations for significant new growth along with enhancements to the supporting infrastructure. A small portion of the Plan Area lies within an identified Activity Center (Map 6). The corner of Albemarle Road and North Sharon Amity Road falls within the Mixed Use Activity Center that is currently anchored by the Eastland Mall.

LU-1 The portion of the Activity Center lying within the Independence Boulevard Plan Area, should support the high-intensity, mixed-use future development that is targeted for the broader Eastland Mall Activity Center. This area should be characterized by a high degree of pedestrian-orientation, with small blocks, sidewalks, and other urban design measures to create a friendly and comfortable walking and/or bicycling environment.

Vertically integrated mixed-use development is preferred in this location to complement the future redevelopment of the Eastland Mall Activity Center. This area currently has business, office and residential land uses with little or no interconnectivity. Over time, the area should develop with vertically integrated mixture

of uses with ground floor retail with office and/or residential above. Two or any combination of these uses is appropriate.

However, if vertical integration of uses is not feasible, the area should develop with a horizontally integrated mixed of office, retail and/or residential up to 17 DUA that should be interconnected so that buildings function collectively with common pedestrian connections and open space.

Growth Corridor

Most of the Plan Area is located within the Southeast Growth Corridor as defined by the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework*. The corridor is oriented around Independence Boulevard (U.S. 74), a major thoroughfare that is in the process of being converted to a hybrid freeway/arterial. The corridor predominately consists of retail uses along Independence, with limited office development and regional entertainment venues. Further from Independence Boulevard, the corridor includes various residential densities and some industrial uses. Policies for the Plan Area within the Growth Corridor are organized in four (4) Growth Corridor subareas:

1. Establish Neighborhoods
2. General Corridor Areas
3. Interchange Areas
4. Transit Station Areas

Established Neighborhood Areas

Portions of the Growth Corridor include existing residential neighborhoods between Monroe Road, and Central Avenue, north and south of Independence Boulevard. These areas are very similar in character to Wedge areas.

These Established Neighborhoods Areas should remain predominately low density residential with limited moderate density residential as shown on **Map 6**. The character and integrity of these established neighborhoods should be preserved, while increasing their access to green spaces and commercial services through improvements to pedestrian and bicycling facilities, particularly as development occurs.

General Corridor Area

General Corridor areas are those places within the Growth Corridor boundary that are outside the other types of subareas (Transit Station Areas, Interchange Areas, and Established Neighborhood Areas). Typically the General Corridor is appropriate for a range of moderate intensity uses and has a range of transportation facilities and modes, with specific facilities varying according to location.

LU-2 Commonwealth Avenue at Briar Creek - Much of this area is located in the 100-year floodplain for Briar Creek with a mixture of retail, office and residential land uses. Upon redevelopment, less intense residential land uses up to 12 DUA is considered appropriate. A portion of the site (determined at the time of site plan review) should be dedicated to greenway/park and open space to improve environmental conditions along the creek and to serve as an amenity to the site.

LU-3 Independence Boulevard at Rockaway Drive Existing office, retail and institutional land uses may remain, but not intensify in this area. However, as ramp modifications from Independence Boulevard create safety issues for Rockaway Drive, the long-term vision for these parcels should be park and/or civic/institutional uses accessed from Briar Creek Road.

LU-4 and **LU-8** Monroe Road Nodes - A pedestrian-oriented development district should be created along these sections of Monroe Road. In these areas, Monroe Road is envisioned as a tree-lined avenue with a mixture of neighborhood-oriented development supporting a vibrant pedestrian environment. People should feel comfortable moving along and across Monroe Road by foot, bicycle, on transit, or by private automobile. A Pedestrian Overlay Zoning District is proposed for these areas to help implement the land use and transportation recommendations (See Implementation Guide for specific strategy).

These areas are envisioned to have a higher level of mixed-use development intensity and be heavily pedestrian-oriented. Block sizes should be small, sidewalks should exist on both sides of streets, traffic calming techniques should be use where feasible, and

other urban design guidelines should be implemented to create a friendly and comfortable walking and biking environment.

In Addition to this overall policy for the Monroe Road pedestrian district (LU-4 and LU-8), the following area-specific land use policies, along with the streetscape improvements – including desired setbacks, sidewalks, street trees, medians and pedestrian crossings which are detailed in the transportation section of this document - will be necessary to achieve the preferred pedestrian orientation of the corridor.

LU-4 Briar Creek, Television Place, Chipley Avenue, Monroe Road - Vertically integrated residential, office, and/ or retail development is preferred in this location to complement the future transit-oriented development at the Briar Creek Transit Station Area and to create a mixed-use node along Monroe Road. Two or any combination of these uses is appropriate.

However, if vertical integration of uses is not feasible, the area should develop with a horizontally integrated mix of office, retail and/or residential up to 22 DUA that is interconnected so that buildings function collectively with common pedestrian connections and open space.

Drive-through service windows are only allowed for office uses and must be located to the rear of the building, and are limited to no more than four drive-through stations, including lanes servicing Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's).

Due to the close interrelationship between this area and the low density single family portion of the neighborhood, building heights, scale, setbacks, property access, and buffers to the existing homes will be important considerations. Guidance is provided in the Community Design section of this document .

LU-8 Richland Drive/Chippendale Road to Shade Valley Road - Vertically integrated residential, office, and/ or retail development is preferred in this location to create a neighborhood node at Monroe, Richland and Chippendale Roads. Two or any combination of these uses is appropriate.

However, if vertical integration of uses is not feasible, the area should develop with a horizontally integrated mix of office, retail and/or residential up to 22 DUA that is interconnected so that buildings function collectively with common pedestrian connections and open space.

Drive-through service windows are only allowed for office uses and must be located to the rear of the building, and are limited to no more than four (4) drive-through stations, including lanes servicing Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's).

Due to the close interrelationship between this area and the low density single family portion of the adjacent neighborhood, building heights, scale, setbacks, property access, and buffers to the existing homes are important considerations. Guidance is provided in the Community Design section of this document .

LU-5 Monroe Road from Bramlet Road to Rama Road between Pedestrian-Oriented Nodes - The areas between the nodes along Monroe Road should primarily be places of moderate intensity non-residential uses to support the nodes. Adaptive reuse of existing residential structures is strongly encourages. For the nodes along Monroe Road to be successful as places of concentrated retail activity, it is necessary to limit the amount of retail development that can occur in the areas between them.

In these areas, retail development is preferred on the ground floor of vertically-integrated mixed-use buildings and may also include moderate-density residential above that is designed to be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. As these areas begin to redevelop consistent with this land use vision, the pedestrian realm of Monroe Road should be improved through streetscape elements.

Areas between Shade Valley Road to Sharon Amity Road should continue its current land use pattern of office and small retail development. As new development takes place, it should have a small footprint consistent with the house-form development currently in place. Shared driveways and alleys within developments should be encouraged to minimize driveways to help create a more comfortable, safe, and accessible pedestrian network along Monroe Road.

LU-6 **Parcels along the south side of Independence Boulevard between Eastway Drive and the Amity Gardens Station Area - These areas should transition to park/open space uses.** New transportation connections and urban design standards will help to reintegrate them with the neighborhoods behind them in a compatible manner. Though positioned with Independence Boulevard frontage, this area is not appropriate for high-intensity mixed-use development, nor is it likely to survive as linear commercial properties, given the changing access and visibility that conversion of Independence Boulevard has brought to the area.

A limited amount of retail is allowed. However, retail development should be located outside of the floodway of Edwards' Branch Creek. The remaining portions of this area should be incorporated into a park and greenway buffer along Independence Boulevard. The future network connection of a new frontage road between a modified Eastway Drive interchange and Pierson Drive should be accommodated within the south side of the parcel.

LU-7 **South side of Monroe Road from Bramlet Road to Richland Drive - The existing industrial land uses are envisioned to remain in this area transitioning to a mixture of office retail and industrial as the area becomes more pedestrian friendly.** Any new retail should be located with frontage on Monroe Road, transitioning to industrial uses along the railroad.

As Monroe Road develops with more neighborhood serving land uses and becomes a more pedestrian-friendly environment, residential may be appropriate to include in the mixture of retail and/or office. Residential densities up to 17 DUA may be appropriate as a single use in multi-use developments. In vertically integrated mixed-use developments, retail should be limited to the ground floor along Monroe Road. Two or any combination of retail, office and/or residential uses is appropriate.

However, if vertical integration of uses is not feasible, the area should develop with a horizontally integrated mixed of office, retail and/or residential that is inter-

connected so that buildings function collectively with common pedestrian connections and open space.

LU-9 **Parcels along the south side of Independence Boulevard between Pierson Drive ramps and the new Sharon Amity interchange - New transportation connections and urban design standards will help to reintegrate with the neighborhoods behind them in a compatible manner.** Existing uses in this area may remain. However, as interchange modifications at Sharon Amity Road create safety issues for driveways on these parcels between the Pierson Drive ramps and the Sharon Amity Road ramps, the long-term vision for these parcels is residential accessed from Lanier Avenue. Residential up to 8 DUA with townhome type development will be considered appropriate at this location.

LU-10 **Parcels along Independence Boulevard between Farmingdale and Idlewild Roads are appropriate for remaining as highway-oriented commercial uses since the current uses require less accessibility.** However, as these areas evolve to include more mixed-uses, alternate access and orientation away from Independence Boulevard will be needed.

Businesses within these areas may continue to operate in their current state. However, to expand (either in acreage or intensity), or to change to a new use that will increase the number of vehicle trips, an alternate form of access, such as a frontage road or new road connections along the rear of the property will be needed. Adjacent property owners in the area are encouraged to jointly plan for alternative access. Potential new connections are outlined in the Transportation section of this document.

If alternate access is provided, vertically integrated retail, office, and/or residential development is preferred in this location. Two or any combination of these uses is appropriate. However, if vertical integration of uses is not feasible, the area should develop with a horizontally integrated mix of office, retail and/or residential up to 17 DUA that is interconnected so that buildings function collectively with common pedestrian connections and open space. Due to the close interrelationship between this area

and the low density single family portion of the neighborhood, building heights, scale, setbacks, property access, and buffers to the existing homes will be important considerations. Guidance is provided in the Community Design section of this document.

LU-11 South side of Independence Boulevard between Glendora Drive and Jerilyn Drive - Existing retail/office uses may remain. However, due to parcel depths, increased development intensity is not recommended. Residential land uses are appropriate and should be integrated with the neighborhood and orient away from Independence Boulevard toward the surrounding neighborhood.

Ashmore Drive and Jerilyn Drive should be disconnected from Independence Boulevard and connected to each other with a new street. Development of parcels in this sub-area should be oriented such that it does not preclude the extension of the proposed new street to the Long Avenue connection on the south and Glendora Drive on the north.

LU-12 Monroe Road, Long Avenue, Rama Road area Vertically integrated mixed-use development is preferred in this location to complement the future transit-oriented development at the Conference Drive Transit Station Area and to serve as a transition to a mixed-use node along Monroe Road. As the area changes from the existing single-tenant retail, office and residential land uses, it should develop with vertically integrated mixture of uses with ground floor retail with office and/or residential up.

However, if vertical integration of uses is not feasible, the area should develop with a horizontally integrated mix of office, retail and/or residential up to 12 DUA that is interconnected so that buildings function collectively with common pedestrian connections and open space. Building heights should not exceed 60 feet.

Future street network includes a new street connecting Idlewild Road at the outbound US 74 ramp to Long Avenue. Long Avenue should be extended to connect to Independence Boulevard.

LU-13 Parcels along Independence Boulevard between Wallace Road and Sharon Forest Road are appropriate for remaining as highway-oriented commercial uses since the current uses require less accessibility.

Businesses within these areas may continue to operate in their current state. However, to expand (either in acreage or intensity), or to change to a new use that will increase the number of vehicle trips, an alternate form of access, such as a frontage road or new road connections along the rear of the property will be needed. Adjacent property owners in the area are encouraged to jointly plan for alternative access. Potential new connections are outlined in the Transportation section of this document.

If alternate access is provided, vertically integrated retail and office is development preferred in this location. If vertical integration of uses is not feasible, the area should develop with a horizontally integrated mix of office and/or retail and that is interconnected so that buildings function collectively with common pedestrian connections and open space.

Due to the close interrelationship between this area and the low density single family portion of the adjacent neighborhood, building heights, scale, setbacks, property access, and buffers to the existing homes will be important considerations. Guidance is provided in the Community Design section of this document.

LU-14 Parcels between Independence Boulevard and Krefeld Drive- Retail, office and/or residential are appropriate in mixed or multi-use developments.

As the area changes from the existing single-tenant retail, office and residential land uses, it should develop with vertically integrated mixture of uses with ground floor retail with office and/or residential above.

However, if vertical integration of uses is not feasible, the area should develop with a horizontally integrated mix of office, retail and/or residential up to 17 DUA that is interconnected so that buildings function collectively with common pedestrian connections and open space. Building heights should not exceed

60 feet. Residential uses should transition to lower densities approaching the surrounding low density neighborhood.

Any development proposals that would increase the number of vehicular trips generated by the property must provide alternate site access via Krefeld Drive rather than Independence Boulevard.

Interchange Areas

Interchange areas are sub-areas of Growth Corridors within approximately 1/2- mile of full direction expressway interchanges. The design of the future transit facility in the center of Independence Boulevard leads to stations at these interchange areas. Land use recommendations for these areas are provided in the Transit Station Area plans on the following pages.

Transit Station Areas

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) 2030 *Transit Corridor System Plan* includes a Southeast Corridor (the Silver Line) that runs along Independence Boulevard with six proposed stations in the Plan Area: Briar Creek, Amity Gardens, Sharon Amity, Conference Drive, Village Lake, and Sardis Road North. (See Map 7)

The surrounding built form should always be an informing factor in design responses for transit stations and should respect their place in the community fabric rather than disregarding the context and becoming an object in the landscape and not adding to the character of a neighborhood. As different contexts demand different design responses, they also demand different planning and development strategies. Because the Silver Line transit station facilities will be located within a freeway, station area development will be reliant on access and connections from supporting network streets to flourish. The development character of each station area will vary based on its surrounding connections to a greater extent than in other rapid transit station areas in Charlotte. In addition to the recommended future land use policies for each transit station area, the implementation guide provides land development guidance on achieving the transit-oriented development vision.

There are six different stations along the Silver Line, each with slightly different characteristics. These stations have been categorized into three types and are described below:

- Neighborhood Stations are primarily walk and bike up stations that serve a 1 mile radius with the support of bus connections. They may include small park-and-ride facilities. They are also designed to fit within the existing community fabric.
- Community Stations serve multiple destinations within a 3 mile radius with heavy reliance on bus connections and park-and-ride facilities. They are often located in areas that are not initially transit oriented, but will transform into transit oriented areas over time.
- Regional Stations are located at the end of the line or near regional roadways, serving an area of 5 miles or greater with the assistance of bus connections and park-and-ride facilities. Even though they are frequently located in greenfield environments, their access creates a relatively strong potential for transit oriented development.

Southeast Transit Station Areas



The Southeast Transit Corridor is not likely to be completed within the next 20 years and much can change during that time, including transit technology. However, these areas are recognized as key development nodes even absent an operational rapid transit line. As such, the mix of uses and community design characteristics inherent in transit-oriented development are appropriate for these locations. The transition to this mix and intensity of uses, as well as the focus on transit supportive design is expected to occur gradually.

Until rapid transit plans become more solidified (i.e., mode determined, station locations refined, funding identified), development proposals should facilitate this transition, but not be expected to meet the Transit Station Area Principles (p. 42). Rather, development proposals in this “interim” timeframe should rely on the guidance provided in the Community Design Policies section of this document. In particular, development will likely need to make greater accommodation for vehicular accessibility than is typical in a transit station area.

The land use recommendations for transit station areas may be translated as follows during this “interim” timeframe while rapid transit plans are being refined/defined:

TOD-M – Mixed Use (office, retail and/or residential)

TOD-R – Predominantly residential, but some non-residential also appropriate

TOD-E – Predominantly employment (office, industrial) with some residential and or retail also appropriate.

The ULI –Fellowship Panel recently conducted a study that recommended reducing the number of transit stations along Independence Boulevard between Briar Creek and Sardis Road North. The Metropolitan Transit Commission has begun considering those recommendations. In the event that the Metropolitan Transit Commission decides to revise the 2030 Corridor System Plan to reduce the number of transit stations within the plan area, the future land use policies for the stations that

are eliminated should include a mixture of retail, office and residential land uses with community design characteristics inherent in transit station area principles which are appropriate for these locations even without rapid transit in place.

TSA-1 Continue to support multi-modal transportation infrastructure investments for the Southeast Growth Corridor. The rapid transit plans identified and recommended within the plan area help define the framework for future investments.

TSA-2 The recommended future land uses can be achieved in a variety of zoning districts if the development is designed to focus on the pedestrian and the proposal is consistent with the land use, community design, transportation and other policy guidance specified within the document. Zoning districts other than Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) are appropriate to implement the land use vision. Additionally, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zoning should only be applied if requested by the property owner. The recommended future land uses can be achieved

A - Briar Creek Station Area Plan

Briar Creek is will be a neighborhood walk up station with a kiss-n-ride and limited or shared parking serving entertainment destinations of Ovens Auditorium, Bojangles Arena and The Park which are all significant regional destinations. The existing civic architecture, entertainment destinations, topography and greenway contribute to a tremendous place-making opportunity.

Transit Station/Regional Nodes are located at the most highly-connected locations in the Plan Area, where Independence Boulevard is crossed by major regional access streets with future rapid transit stations. These occur at Briar Creek, Conference Drive and Sardis Road North Transit Station Areas.

Transit Station/Regional Nodes should be characterized by a mix of residential and commercial uses re-oriented away from Independence Boulevard towards a regional road corridor (i.e., Briar Creek, Conference, Sardis Road North) or internal street. The transit/regional node maintains its pedestrian scale with connected streets and walkable block sizes even when building footprints are larger. These nodes may also include mixed-use buildings or mixed-use blocks of apartments, townhomes, ground-floor retail and office uses which primarily serve the surrounding area with a high level of internal and external connectivity.

Opportunities

- Parking lots of The Park and Bojangles Coliseum are opportunities for infill mixed-use development.
- Potential for greenway connections to Briar and Edwards Branch Creeks.
- Good accessibility for redevelopment of the parcels on the south side of US 74.
- Large land holdings on south side of Independence Boulevard.
- Stable residential neighborhoods surrounding the proposed transit station.

Issues

- Poor pedestrian environment along Briar Creek Road bridge.
- Floodway is a potential issue for redevelopment of some parcels.
- US 74 creates barrier to connectivity of north-south neighborhood and redevelopment opportunities.
- Street slopes to the southeast hinder connectivity.

Policies

A-1 Portions of the station area north of Independence Boulevard should primarily redevelop as moderate-density transit-oriented residential (TOD-R), with limited commercial uses that are incidental to the station. The parcels that currently line Independence Boulevard are too shallow and too narrow to be viable as typical strip commercial uses. Thus, this plan envisions those parcels and the properties behind them (including the Charlotte Housing Authority site) being redeveloped as part of a cohesive and integrated plan. In addition, a greenway along Edwards' Branch Creek should be developed to provide a natural amenity to new development and to provide more recreation opportunities for neighborhoods in this part of the corridor. Edwards' Branch also has the potential to be used as part of a comprehensive, regional stormwater system.

A-2 Improve transit oriented development potential by reconfiguring the Eastway interchange to include a local street connection to Waterman Avenue which will become the orientation for new station-related development. Also on the north side, Coliseum Drive should be connected from Waterman Avenue to Commonwealth Avenue, incorporating access to the TV station. These two new connections will provide the access necessary for these properties to successfully redevelop in a transit-oriented manner.

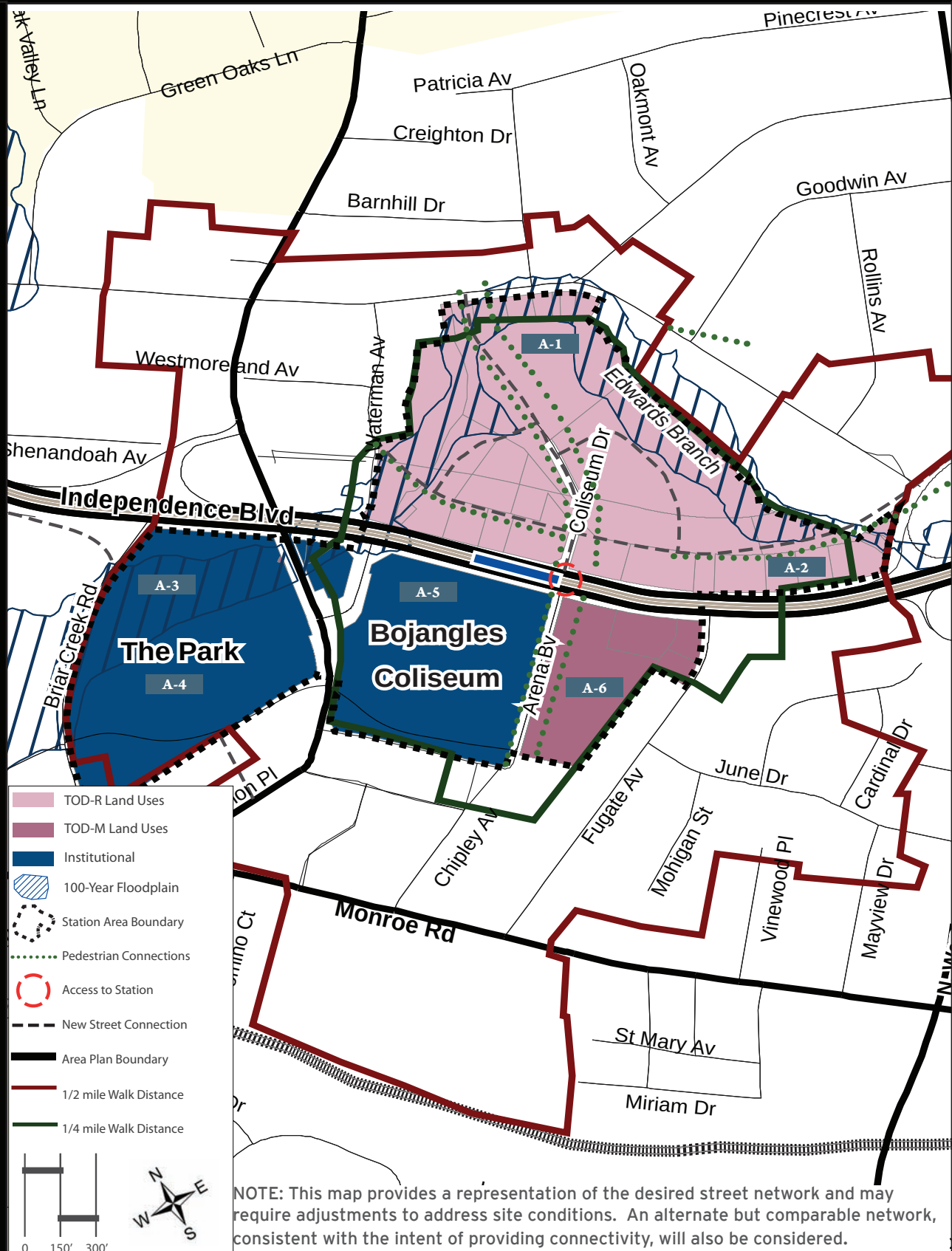
A-3 Provide a greenway connection between Briar Creek and the proposed Edwards' Branch trail using either the Briar Creek Road overpass or the pedestrian bridge that will connect to the transit station.

A-4 and **A-5** Institutional uses at The Park and Bojangles Coliseum, should remain, but may incorporate transit-oriented mixed used (TOD-M) over time. Parking areas at the coliseum can be broken down into blocks with shared structured parking to accommodate potential transit-oriented development.

A-6 The portion of the station area south of Independence Boulevard should focus on transit oriented mixed-use (TOD-M) to the east of Arena Boulevard. These uses will provide an appropriate transition to the existing residential and future pedestrian oriented development to the east. Additionally, the parking demands of these uses, especially office, will complement the parking demands of the entertainment venues, which facilitate an effective shared parking arrangement and can lower the overall area devoted to parking.

A - Briar Creek Transit Station Area/Regional Node Recommended Future Land Use

Map 8



B - Amity Gardens Station Area Plan

Amity Gardens station will be a neighborhood walk up station with a planned kiss-n-ride facility on the north side of Independence Boulevard to best serve the existing lower density residential neighborhood. Future development opportunities should primarily be transit oriented residential (TOD-R) uses with some neighborhood serving retail uses.

South of Independence Boulevard, the Amity Gardens station area is appropriate for transit-oriented mixed use (TOD-M) to incorporate more office and retail intensity in the transit station area. The land uses and transportation network in this area need to be revised for these properties to be successful in the future. Transit Station/Neighborhood Nodes are limited to access directly along Independence Boulevard and with very little regional connectivity. These occur at Amity Garden, Sharon Amity and Village Lake Transit Station Areas.

Transit Station/Neighborhood Nodes are characterized by predominantly automobile-oriented commercial uses, but are also appropriate for a smaller, local serving uses which should re-orient away from Independence Boulevard and toward a new side street connection. The appropriate uses include a mixture of moderate intensity residential such as apartments or townhomes, and small scale retail and office with a high level of internal and external connectivity. When building footprints are larger, the transit/neighborhood node should maintain its pedestrian scale with connected streets and walkable block sizes.

Opportunities

- Redevelopment opportunity south of Independence Boulevard at the vacant commercial properties, primarily at the Coliseum Center and Amity Gardens shopping centers.
- With some additional strategic street connections, the station area could be better served and more accessible from the adjoining neighborhoods.

Issues

- Poor access and connectivity to properties on south side partly due to steep topography.
- Shallow parcel depths complicate redevelopment.
- Close neighborhood edge - sensitive to redevelopment densities and uses.
- Floodway may limit some redevelopment intensities.
- Potential issue with neighborhood cut through traffic to station/retail.

Policies

B-1 Moderate-density transit-oriented residential (TOD-R) uses that have full access from streets other than Independence Boulevard should be the focus of this area. Due to the significantly reduced access and visibility brought by the reconfigured Independence Boulevard, typical strip commercial uses are not likely to be viable in this area.

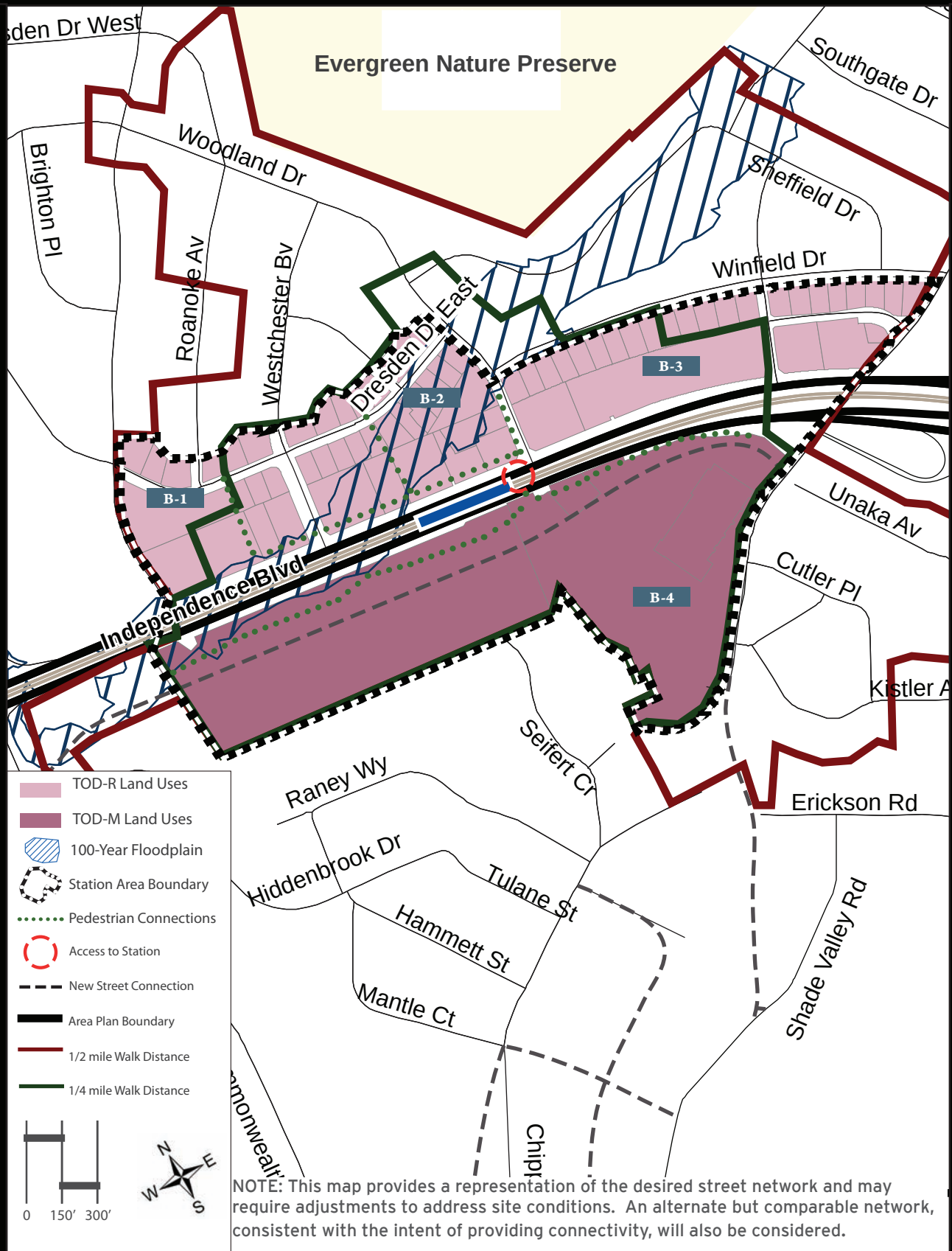
B-2 Edwards Branch to the south of Dresden Drive could potentially be “daylighted,” or brought back to the surface. The daylighted stream could contribute to the regional stormwater network, address potential flooding concerns, and add significant recreational and aesthetic value to the station area. New “greened areas” should be adjacent to Independence Boulevard could provide for neighborhood stormwater retrofits, buffers from Independence traffic noise, and greenway connections.

B-3 On the north side of the station area, new transit-oriented residential (TOD-R) development should orient away from Independence and integrate with the existing neighborhoods. These new homes can be accessed via Dresden Drive. Across from Amity Gardens, these new residential properties can be accessed from a frontage road that connects Woodland Drive to Wilshire Place.

B-4 Large-format retail uses are appropriate for the former Amity Gardens shopping center. New retail should be designed in a way that will allow it to easily transition into transit-oriented mixed use (TOD-M) over time. A new street connection from a reconfigured Eastway interchange to Pierson Drive is needed to ensure that the Coliseum Center parcel can redevelop into a viable use without forcing a reliance on access to Independence Boulevard.

*B - Amity Gardens Transit Station Area/Neighborhood Node
Recommended Future Land Use*

Map 9



C - Sharon Amity Station Area Plan

Sharon Amity station is a community station with park-n-ride facilities, cross town feeder bus transfer and walk-up. This station is recommended to serve large numbers of potential commuters via Albemarle Road and Sharon Amity Road, and US 74, as well as the concentrations of residential in close proximity.

Sharon Amity stations is appropriate for transit-oriented residential (TOD-R) due to numerous small and shallow parcels and proximity to existing low-density single family neighborhoods. Development opportunities in the Sharon Amity station area are limited in comparison to other stations on the Silver Line. The station is located in an area with established neighborhoods to the north and south. The area with potential for transit-oriented development occupies a relatively small strip of land on either side of Independence Boulevard. Transit Station/Neighborhood Nodes are limited to access directly along Independence Boulevard and with very little regional connectivity. These occur at Amity Garden, Sharon Amity and Village Lake Transit Station Areas. Pedestrian access to the station will be via Sharon Amity Road. A park-and-ride lot is planned for the northeast quadrant of the programmed interchange. No new street connections to the existing neighborhoods are envisioned, although pedestrian connections are strongly encouraged.

Transit Station/Neighborhood Nodes are characterized by predominantly automobile-oriented commercial uses, but are also appropriate for a smaller, local serving uses which should re-orient away from Independence Boulevard and toward a new side street connection. The appropriate uses include a mixture of moderate intensity residential such as apartments or townhomes, and small scale retail and office with a high level of internal and external connectivity. When building footprints are larger, the transit/neighborhood node should maintain its pedestrian scale with connected streets and walkable block sizes.

Opportunities

- Redevelopment opportunities to include vertically integrated office, retail and residential.
- Improved movement with interchange.

Issues

- Poor accessibility and shallow parcel depth may be barrier to redevelopment.
- Close neighborhood edge sensitive to redevelopment densities and uses.

- Future highway project will reduce accessibility to commercial properties.

Policies

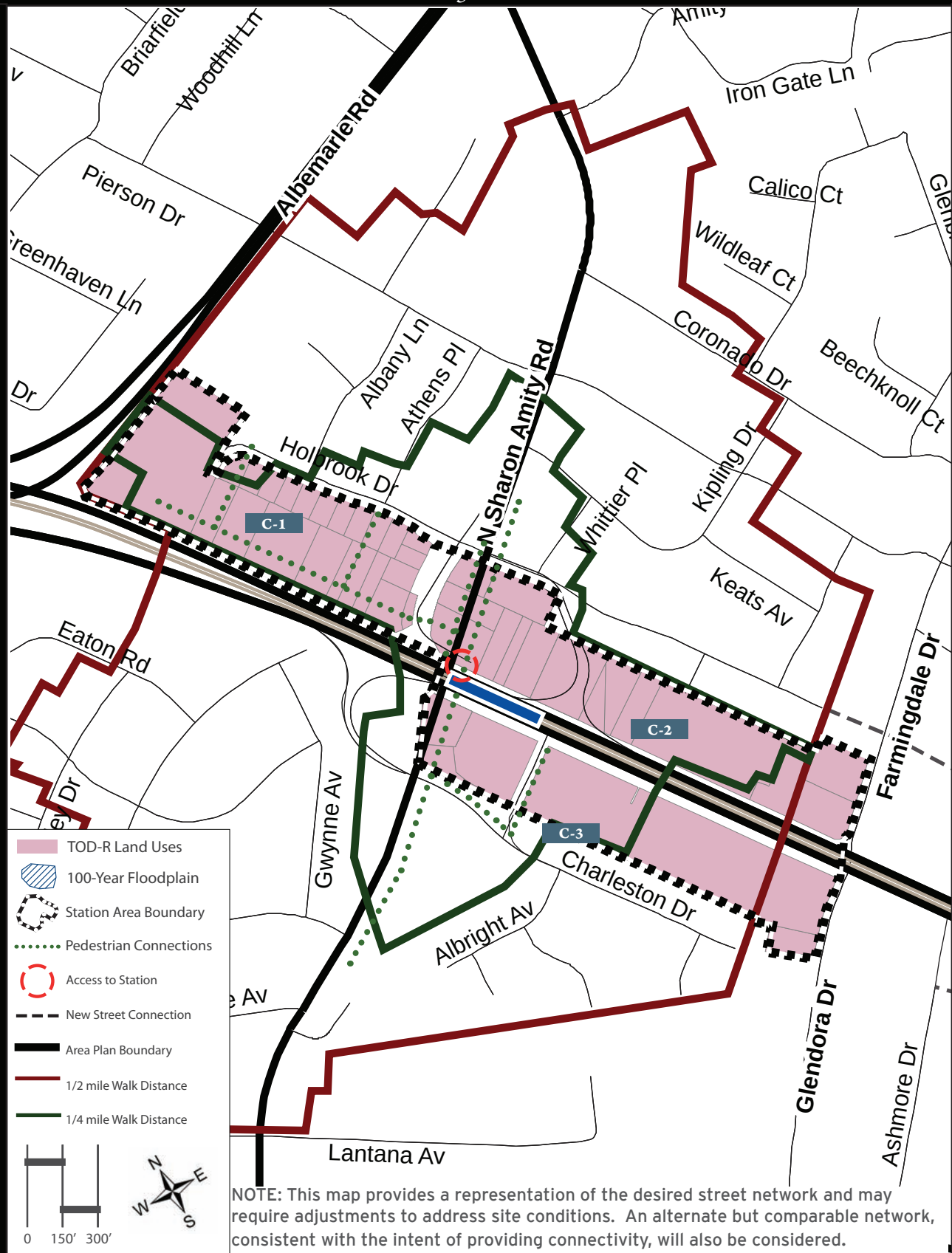
C-1 The strip of properties between Holbrook Drive and Independence Boulevard west of Sharon Amity Drive will be immediately adjacent to the Sharon Amity station. These parcels are appropriate for higher-density transit-oriented residential (TOD-R) that will be accessed via Holbrook Drive. Design of this development must incorporate a scale and massing that reflects a transition between higher densities along Independence Boulevard and single-family residences across Holbrook Drive.

C-2 Parcels east of the transit station are appropriate for higher-density transit-oriented residential (TOD-R). Access to development parcels is compromised by future ramps to Sharon Amity; therefore, pedestrian accommodations will be limited to Holbrook Drive. Holbrook Drive should be extended to Farmingdale Drive to mitigate the loss of connectivity resulting from future Sharon Amity interchange.

C-3 South of Independence is appropriate for transit-oriented residential (TOD-R) uses. These development opportunities should focus on creating parallel access to Independence, providing street and pedestrian connections to Sharon Amity Drive and the transit station.

A traffic calming measure, such as a roundabout should be considered to improve accessibility to the proposed TOD and to maintain safe speeds along Charleston Drive.

C - Sharon Amity Transit Station Area/Neighborhood Node **Map 10** *Recommended Future Land Use*



D - Conference Drive Station Area Plan

The Conference Drive station area is a community station with park-n-ride facilities, cross town feeder bus transfer and walk-up station access. This station will serve large numbers of potential commuters via Idlewild and Monroe Roads and Independence Boulevard. In addition to the proposed Idlewild Road interchange, an extension of Conference Drive to Idlewild Road is envisioned to enhance north-south connectivity.

Like Briar Creek and Sardis, this station will likely have greater development potential and intensity than other transit station areas. The area's development potential reflects the fact that this location has a number of large parcels, is relatively well-connected to surrounding communities and roadways, and has the other public infrastructure necessary to support a high level of transit-oriented development.

Transit Station/Regional Nodes are located at the most highly-connected locations in the Plan Area, where Independence Boulevard is crossed by major regional access streets with future rapid transit stations. These occur at Briar Creek, Conference Drive and Sardis Road North Transit Station Areas.

Transit Station/Regional Nodes should be characterized by a mix of residential and commercial uses re-oriented away from Independence Boulevard towards a regional road corridor (i.e., Briar Creek, Conference, Sardis Road North) or internal street. The transit/regional node maintains its pedestrian scale with connected streets and walkable block sizes even when building footprints are larger. These nodes may also include mixed-use buildings or mixed-use blocks of apartments, townhomes, ground-floor retail and office uses which primarily serve the surrounding area with a high level of internal and external connectivity.

Opportunities

- Good parcel depths and sizes remain after interchange improvements.
- Conference Drive overpass improves intersection at Idlewild Road and Monroe Road.
- High school and library are good anchors for transit supportive development.
- Upon redevelopment of the large existing multi-family development, connectivity will be improved to neighborhoods to the south.

Issues

- Poor connectivity to south neighborhoods due to

impenetrable Silver Glen Apartments.

- Challenge for comfortable pedestrian environment on Idlewild bridge and interchange.
- Interchange further barrier to effective east-west pedestrian movement along Independence Boulevard.
- Poor east-west parcel network on north side.

Policies

D-1 The existing multi-family development west of Idlewild Road is appropriate for moderate-to-high density transit-oriented residential (TOD-R). New developments should be designed to be more compatible with surrounding uses, to include modern amenities and site design, and to have a walkable, interconnected block structure similar to that illustrated on Map 11.

D-2 On the north side of Independence transit-oriented mixed use (TOD-M) is appropriate with improved streetscapes and pedestrian environments along Idlewild Road leading to Conference to facilitate safer and more comfortable access to the station.

D-3 On the south side of Independence, the transit-oriented mixed-use (TOD-M) intensity should be oriented between Conference and Wallace, with residential uses located immediately on Wallace as a transition to the apartments to the east. The existing library should be integrated into the fabric of any redevelopment. Residential uses should be the focus to the west of Conference.

Conference Drive should act as one of the pedestrian-friendly access streets of the station area. A new street, parallel to Independence, should be built in the area that is roughly between the Silver Glen Apartments and Independence Shopping Center. This street can connect to Wallace Road, which would set up the potential for future connection to Pinafore Drive through the existing Wallace Road Apartments. Upon redevelopment, the apartments will need to dedicate right-of-way to accommodate interchange ramp modifications to improve accessibility along Conference Drive.

Map 11



E - Village Lake Station Area Plan

The Village Lake transit station area is a community station with park-n-ride facilities, cross town feeder bus transfer, and walk-up station pedestrian access via Village Lake Drive. This station is recommended to serve the higher density residential to the south on Village Lake Drive, as well as future redevelopment opportunities on Independence Boulevard.

The Village Lake transit station is appropriate for a moderate intensity transit-oriented mixed use (TOD-M) development. However, the station's close proximity to the Conference and Sardis stations, both of which have characteristics that will permit a higher level of intensity, somewhat lessen the development potential of this area. In addition, this station is in immediate proximity to the car dealerships with little connectivity to the established residential neighborhoods. However, the topographic features and the proposed greenway provide for a tremendous 'place-making' opportunity. Transit Station/Neighborhood Nodes are limited to access directly along Independence Boulevard and with very little regional connectivity. These occur at Amity Garden, Sharon Amity and Village Lake Transit Station Areas.

Transit Station/Neighborhood Nodes are characterized by predominantly automobile-oriented commercial uses, but are also appropriate for a smaller, local serving uses which should re-orient away from Independence Boulevard and toward a new side street connection. The appropriate uses include a mixture of moderate intensity residential such as apartments or townhomes, and small scale retail and office with a high level of internal and external connectivity. When building footprints are larger, the transit/neighborhood node should maintain its pedestrian scale with connected streets and walkable block sizes.

Opportunities

- Good place-making potential with topography and greenway/creek environment.
- Stable existing residential neighborhoods surrounding opportunity areas.
- Good accessibility to redevelopment parcels.
- WT Harris Boulevard and Village Lake Drive alignment brings focus to station areas.

Issues

- Traffic demand may make pedestrian environment difficult at WT Harris Boulevard and Margaret Wallace Road.
- Creeks limit vehicular connectivity.

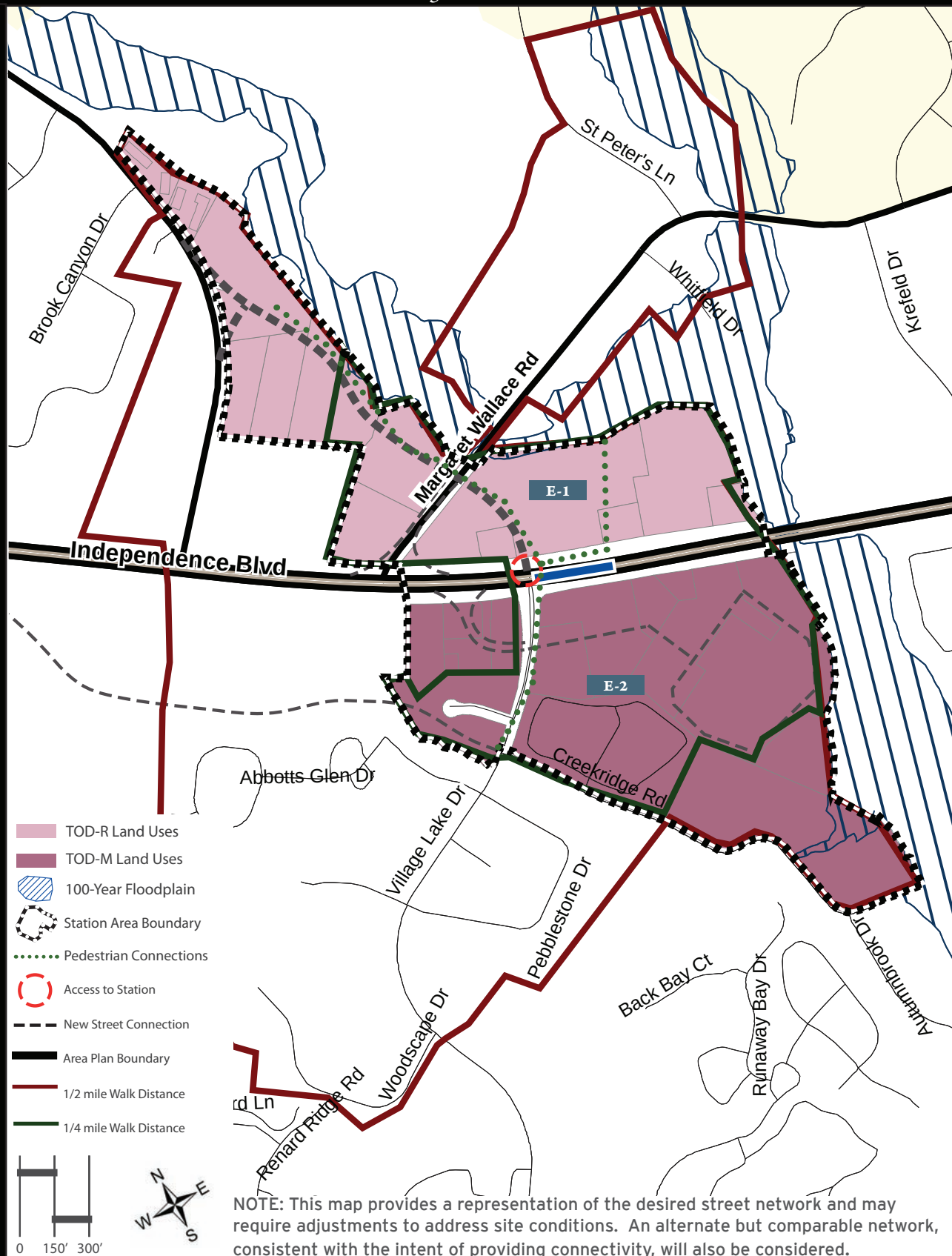
Policies

E-1 The transit-oriented development in the northern portion of the station area should be predominantly transit oriented residential (TOD-R) and integrated with the Campbell Creek greenway. W.T. Harris Boulevard should realign to connect to Village Lake Drive to provide greater connectivity in the area, thus lessening reliance on Independence Boulevard. Margaret Wallace Road should be utilized as part of the new interchange.

E-2 The southern portion of the transit station area is appropriate for transit-oriented mixed use (TOD-M). Redevelopment of the existing shopping center in the southeast quadrant should have street-front orientation that helps build a stronger pedestrian connection between the Village Lake station and the existing office park. As the southwest quadrant of this station area redevelops, a parallel street to Independence should be built between Village Lake Drive and WT Harris Boulevard (roughly at Creekridge Road). New development should be oriented towards this new street rather than Independence Boulevard.

E - Village Lake Transit Station Area/Neighborhood Node Recommended Future Land Use

Map 12



F -Sardis Road North Station Area Plan Policies

Sardis Road North is a regional station with a significant park-n-ride facility, feeder bus transfer and walk-up station access via Sardis Road North. This station is recommended to best serve mid and long term development opportunities on both sides of Independence Boulevard and represents a potentially well-placed regional attraction.

This portion of the Plan Area is currently the least developed, with large undeveloped parcels to the north of Independence. Potential new development will facilitate significant new connections at Arequipa Drive and the extension of Sardis Road North to Sam Newell Road.

Transit Station/Regional Nodes are located at the most highly-connected locations in the Plan Area, where Independence Boulevard is crossed by major regional access streets with future rapid transit stations. These occur at Briar Creek, Conference Drive and Sardis Road North Transit Station Areas.

Transit Station/Regional Nodes should be characterized by a mix of residential and commercial uses re-oriented away from Independence Boulevard towards a regional road corridor (i.e., Briar Creek, Conference, Sardis Road North) or internal street. The transit/regional node maintains its pedestrian scale with connected streets and walkable block sizes even when building footprints are larger. These nodes may also include mixed-use buildings or mixed-use blocks of apartments, townhomes, ground-floor retail and office uses which primarily serve the surrounding area with a high level of internal and external connectivity.

Opportunities

- Arequipa Drive alignment will improve accessibility to large parcels north of Independence Boulevard.
- Potential for 'place-making' with natural features near Irvin Creek.
- Good parcel sizes for future integrated development.
- Potential to integrate interchange into existing street fabric.
- City of Charlotte and Town of Matthews to work together on new coordinated development layout for the area, and any street connections within the Matthew's jurisdiction.

Issues

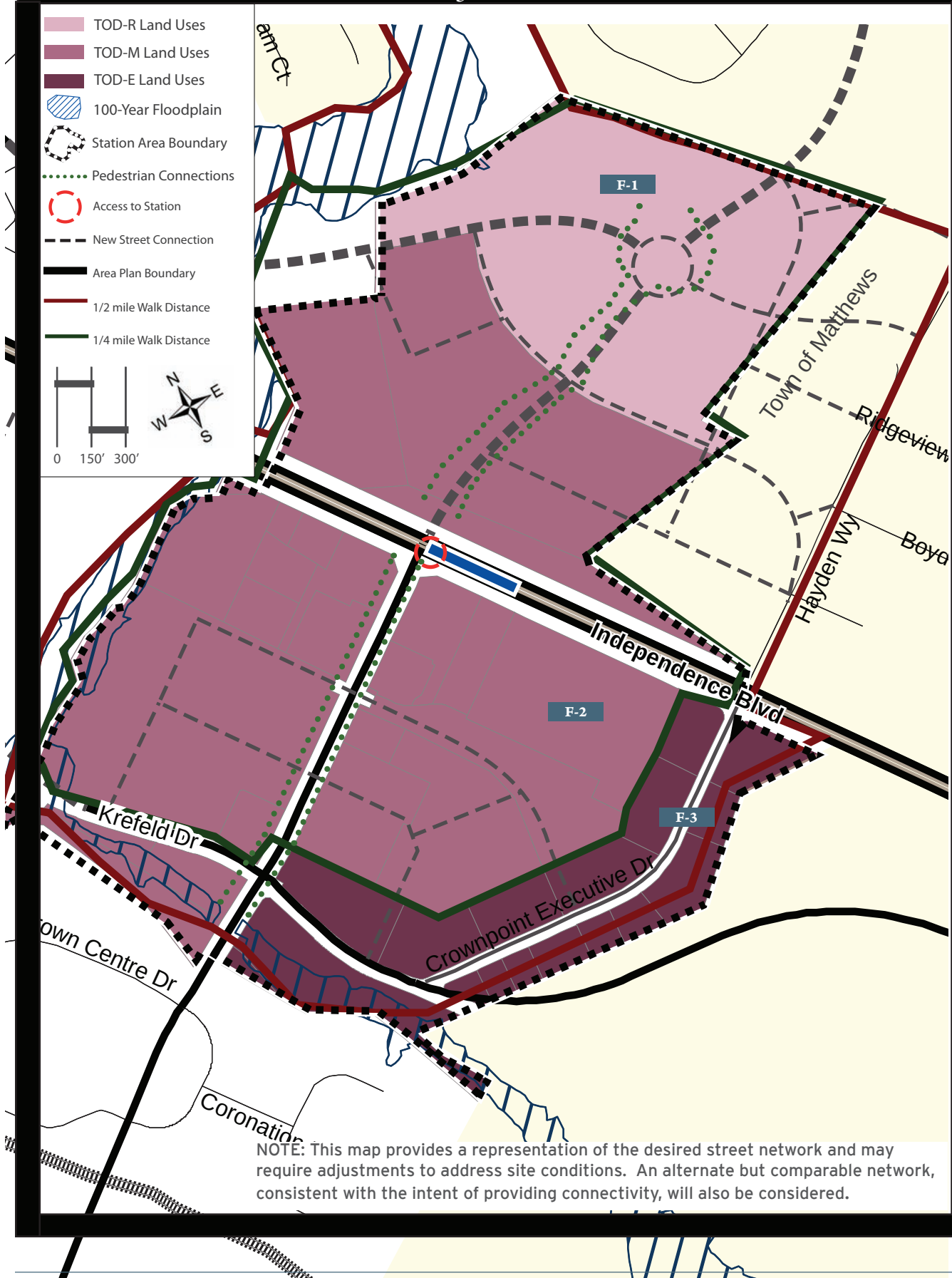
- Creeks provides some additional challenges to providing connectivity.

F-1 The north side of Independence should be primarily residential in character, with retail and office uses focused near the transit station. The intensity of uses should be stepped down approaching the existing residential neighborhoods to the east. The most efficient redevelopment on the north side would require coordination with the Town of Matthews.

F-2 The majority of the transit station area is appropriate for transit-oriented mixed use (TOD-M). Large vacant parcels north of Independence provide an opportunity to create a transit village. South of Independence, redevelopment of the existing shopping centers should focus on shorter block lengths and street-front orientation that helps build a stronger pedestrian connection between the Village Lake station and the existing office park.

F-3 On the south side of Independence, transit-oriented office and/or industrial uses with an employment concentration (TOD-E) are appropriate on the east side of station area, adjacent to the Town of Matthews border along Crownpoint Executive Drive .

F - Sardis Road North Transit Station Area/Regional Node **Map 13** *Recommended Future Land Use*



Community Design Policies

Community design policies help ensure that new development complements the existing or desired character of the Plan Area. While design policies alone do not dictate land use or zoning, they are used to strengthen how various land uses fit together, especially in mixed use or multi-use settings. These policies consider not only the built environment in conjunction with the natural environment, but also consider how people move through those spaces as pedestrians, bicyclists or automobile drivers.

Adopted by City Council, the *General Development Policies* (GDP) provide guidance for the location, intensity and form of future development and redevelopment throughout the community. Many of the residential and mixed/multi-use center policies for the Plan Area are based upon these adopted GDP policies. Plan policies that appear in plain text are based upon those previously adopted GDP policies. Additional, plan-specific policies are shown in bold font. Plan-specific policies augment the GDP design guidelines.

Community Design Goal

To ensure that development and redevelopment is compatible with adjacent uses, while supporting the community's vision of vibrant, pedestrian-friendly nodes surrounded by stable neighborhoods.

Residential Design Policies

Applicability:

SF - Single Family detached

AM - Single Family attached and Multi-Family

The following design policies are based on adopted General Development Policies (GDP) in 2003. **Bold text** indicates additional policies specific to the Independence Boulevard Area Plan.

		SF	AM	
Building Architecture and Site Design Close attention to building design enhances the community. Design policies do not result in conformity of design, but provide direction for both new and infill development.	Preserve historically or architecturally significant structures.	■	■	
	Avoid blank walls along pedestrian circulation areas.	■	■	
	Orient building towards street (unless a thoroughfare) or common open space and provide pedestrian access to the street.	■	■	
	Blend scale and setbacks of buildings with existing structures.	■	■	
	Provide a variety of housing types (floor plans, exterior treatments and materials, massing, and roof forms.)	■		
	Orient buildings toward greenways and other natural areas when feasible.	■	■	

		SF	AM	
<i>Building Architecture and Site Design (continued)</i>	Provide variation in elevations of horizontal and vertical planes.	■	■	
	Distinguish ground-level design from upper stories through changes in material or volume.		■	
	Incorporate human scale details such as covered porches, balconies, overhangs, doors, protruding bays, façade offsets, dormers, and windows to visually define the streetscape.	■	■	
	Design porches to have a minimum of 6' deep and at least half the width of the façade (excluding garages.)	■		
	Design residential garages to reduce visual impact from the street.	■	■	

Natural Environment

These policies provide direction to accommodate growth and change while protecting the natural environment, including the quality of our air, water and land.

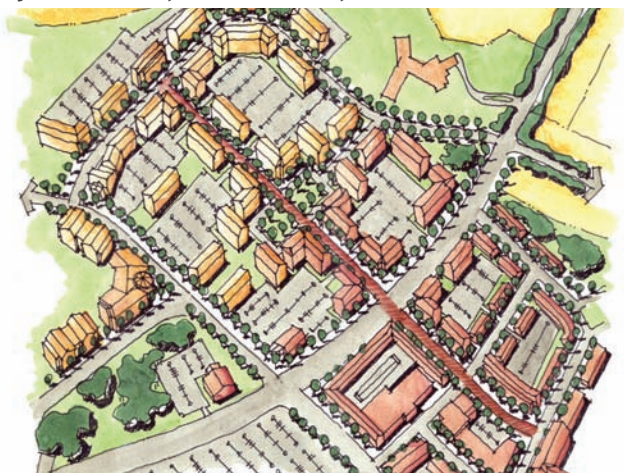
	SF	AM	
Incorporate functional, unique, natural, and/or historical elements into the open space.	■	■	
Preserve steep slopes along streams or adjacent to significant natural landscape features.	■	■	
Preserve at least 10% of the site as "tree save area" consistent with residential tree ordinance.	■	■	
Design open space to create a network of green spaces.	■	■	
Use low maintenance native vegetation as much as possible.	■	■	
Design with the existing natural terrain.	■	■	
Preserve prominent stands of existing trees, wherever possible.	■	■	
Create a gradual transition between the open space and the built environment where development adjoins natural areas or other open spaces.	■	■	
Incorporate existing trees into public open spaces.	■	■	

Figure 1 - Example of greenways as an amenity to multi-family development



		SF	AM	
Pedestrian and Vehicular Networks Providing a safe, accessible and comfortable network of streets, sidewalks and pathways for all modes of transportation is an important step in establishing a livable community. These policies provide guidance for achieving mobility and connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile drivers.	Provide bicycle parking in appropriate common areas (for example, playground, swimming pools).	■	■	
	Provide pedestrian/bicycle connections to parks, greenways, bikeways and trails.	■	■	
	Provide direct pedestrian and bicycle connections between all abutting or adjacent developments and transit stops/stations.	■	■	
	Design streets with pedestrian safety and comfort in mind.	■	■	
	Encourage shared alleys and other forms of access.	■	■	
	Design street system to calm traffic.	■	■	
	Align collectors at thoroughfare intersections to promote safe crossings for pedestrians, cyclists, and automobile drivers.	■	■	
	Provide on-street parking to reduce the size of surface parking lots.		■	
	Provide multiple vehicular entry points.	■	■	
	Design an internal street system with spine road; including: Parallel parking, street trees, and sidewalks. Driveways or secondary streets should connect parking lots and primary streets.		■	

Figure 2 - Example of internal spine road



Non-Residential Design Policies

Applicability:

RM - Retail-oriented Mixed or Multi-Use Development

RO - Retail and/or office

MU - Mixed Use

IN - Industrial

The following policies are based on adopted General Development Policies (GDP) in 2003. **Bold text** indicates additional recommendations specific to the Independence Boulevard Area Plan.

		RM	RO	MU	IN	
Building Architecture and Site Design	Design buildings with transparent openings, ornamentation, and architectural character.	■	■	■		
Architecture and landscape design define streets and public spaces as areas of shared use. Streets lined by buildings and trees rather than vast expanses of parking lots provide a visually rich and physically safe environment.	Establish entrances with pedestrian interest.	■	■	■		
	Orient buildings towards street and provide pedestrian access.	■	■	■		
	Arrange buildings in an orderly block pattern.	■	■	■		
	Discourage tearing down historic or architecturally significant structures.	■	■	■	■	
	Design buildings with human scale and visual interest in mind.	■	■	■		
	Orient buildings along Independence Boulevard toward side streets or internal street network.	■	■	■		
	Provide a landscaped buffer along the Independence Boulevard frontage of new development.	■	■	■	■	
	Minimize impacts of drive-thru development.	■	■	■	■	

		RM	RO	MU	IN	
Building Architecture and Site Design <i>(continued)</i>	Design for pedestrian safety.	■	■	■	■	
	Locate dumpsters and service areas away from residential areas.	■	■	■	■	
	Provide public frontage, such as a street or park, along greenways, and orient buildings toward greenways and other natural areas when feasible.	■	■	■		
	Distinguish ground-level design from upper stories through changes in material or volume.	■	■	■		

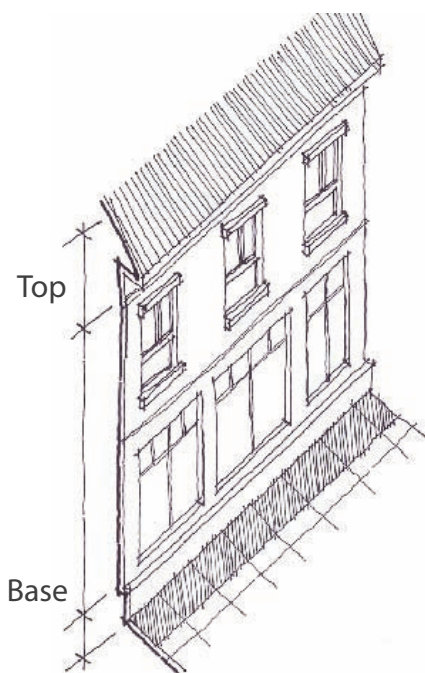
		RM	RO	MU	IN	
Natural Environment	Avoid piping creeks and minimize channelization.	■	■	■	■	
	Site development should respect the natural environment.					
	Preserve steep slopes along streambeds or adjacent to significant natural landscape features.	■	■	■	■	
	Provide a meaningful amount of usable and accessible common open space and integrate the tree canopy into it.	■	■	■	■	
	Consider pervious pavement for overflow parking.	■	■	■	■	
	Provide stream restoration and/or stormwater management as a buffer treatment along Independence Boulevard frontage.	■	■	■	■	
	Integrate proposed greenway corridors into new development.	■	■	■	■	

Figure 3 - Example of active street frontage sidewalk and planting strips with trees



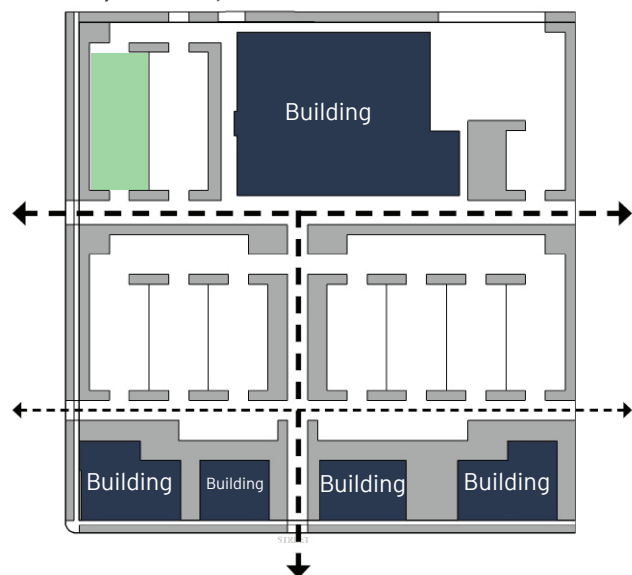
		RM	RO	MU	IN
Pedestrian and Vehicular Networks Circulation in and through the site should be comfortable, safe, secure and efficient for pedestrians, bicyclists and automobile drivers.	Create an interconnected sidewalk system.	■	■	■	■
	Design short block lengths with an organized street pattern.	■	■	■	
	Provide pedestrian/bicycle connections to nearby parks, greenways, bikeways and trails.	■	■	■	■
	Design streets with pedestrian safety and comfort in mind.	■	■	■	■
	Provide ample sidewalk width to accommodate pedestrian circulation, congregation, outdoor dining, and amenities such as street furnishings, trash receptacles, art work and trees.	■	■	■	
	Establish clear "way-finding" signage for pedestrians and automobile drivers.	■	■	■	■

Figure 4 - Facade Articulation Example



		RM	RO	MU	IN
Pedestrian and Vehicular Networks (continued)	Provide safe pedestrian circulation throughout the development, including through parking lots and decks.	■	■	■	■
	Provide bicycle parking and storage areas.	■	■	■	■
	Provide safe and secure transit waiting facilities.	■	■	■	■
	Establish a central vehicular access into the site from the more auto-oriented street and provide secondary access options from the minor streets	■	■	■	■
	Design parking lots on a street/block pattern to facilitate redevelopment and minimize large surface lots	■	■	■	■
	Minimize large surface parking lots with smaller pods and extensive landscaping.	■	■	■	

Figure 5 - Parking Lot Design with central vehicular access and secondary access option on minor street



		RM	RO	MU	IN
<i>Pedestrian and Vehicular Networks (continued)</i>	Encourage commercial or residential uses in parking decks fronting pedestrian circulation areas.	■	■	■	
	Design access from surrounding neighborhood so that the appearance is residential in character.	■	■	■	■
	Provide structured parking where feasible to conserve land and minimize surface parking.	■	■	■	
	Integrate landscaping with seating along facades when possible and, when practical, work to integrate the existing tree canopy into the site design.	■	■	■	■

		RM	RO	MU	IN
<i>Pedestrian and Vehicular Networks (continued)</i>	Encourage shared driveways and alleys within the development.	■	■	■	■
	Provide buffer between roadway and pedestrian facilities along Independence Boulevard.	■	■	■	■

Figure 6 - Mixed-Use development with shared driveways and parking.



Transit Station Area Principles - Figure 7

(This figure summarizes the policies of the Transit Station Area Principles. The original wording for the policies can be found in the first chapter of the *General Development Policies*.)

Community Design

- Orient buildings to front on public streets or open spaces.
- Minimize setbacks and locate parking to the rear.
- Provide windows and doors at street level and minimize walking distance to entrances.
- Screen unsightly elements, such as dumpsters, loading docks, service entrances and outdoor storage from the transitway.
- Include active uses on the ground floor of parking structures.
- Include elements such as street trees, pedestrian scale lighting and benches in streetscape design to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Place utilities underground, wherever possible.
- Establish public open spaces that act as development catalysts and serve as focal points around transit stations.
- Design open spaced to be centers of activity that include items such as benches, fountains, and public art.



Land Use

- Encourage higher density uses (15-20 du/0.5-0.75 FAR) closest to the transit station and transition to lower densities adjacent to existing single family neighborhoods.
- Encourage a mixture of residential, office, service-oriented retail and civic uses, either through mixed or multi-use development.
- Disallow automobile-dependent uses, such as automobile sales lots, car washes and drive-through windows.
- Consider special traffic generators--such as cultural, educational, entertainment or recreational uses--to locate in station areas.
- Preserve existing stable neighborhoods.
- Encourage a mixture of housing types, including workforce/affordable housing.



Mobility

- Create a multi-modal environment that emphasizes pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles.
- Provide an extensive pedestrian system throughout the station area to minimize walking distances, connect to neighborhoods, accommodate large groups of people, and eliminate sidewalk gaps.
- Design the pedestrian system to be accessible, safe and attractive, by using planting strips, street trees, on-street parking and bicycle lanes.
- Develop an interconnected street network with maximum block lengths of 400'; provide mid-block crossings if blocks are larger.
- Establish parking maximums, rather than minimums.
- Minimize surface parking and encourage shared parking facilities.



Transportation Policies

Independence Boulevard (US 74) is the major east-west road within the Plan Area, and part of a larger route that traverses the entire state of North Carolina. This road has served an important regional transportation function since it was built in 1926. Today, the road serves two sometimes-conflicting functions within the Plan Area:

- It is a major commuter route, moving thousands of people from the eastern Charlotte neighborhoods and suburbs into Uptown; and
- It provides access to a number of shopping and employment destinations for the residents who live along the corridor.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is transforming Independence Boulevard into a hybrid-freeway arterial with grade-separated intersections and right-turn-only access to adjacent parcels. The portion of the road from Center City to Albemarle Road has already undergone this transformation; future projects will complete the reconfiguration from Albemarle Road to I-485 in the Town of Matthews. As a hybrid freeway-arterial road, the new Independence Boulevard will primarily serve regional, longer-distance trips in the future. Thus, one of the goals of the Independence Boulevard Area Plan is to develop a

Transportation Goal

To increase the viability of all modes of travel—while also reducing reliance on Independence Boulevard for local trips—through creating better street connectivity, providing a safer and more comfortable walking/ bicycling environment, and positioning future transit stations for successful ridership levels and supportive land uses.

comprehensive transportation network that addresses the more localized travel needs and improves the livability of local streets. Such a network will make it easier for people to walk, bicycle, take transit, or drive to their destinations, while giving them multiple route options to do so. It will also allow a block structure to emerge in appropriate areas, which will support the type of active, mixed-use nodes envisioned in the Land Use and Community Design chapters of this document.

The general locations of the transportation improvements **T-1** through **T-12** are shown on **Map 14 and 15** with specific locations and cross-referenced in the Implementation section using the item numbers. **T-13** through **T-26** Other transportation recommendations are more general and apply throughout the study area and do not appear on the map. This map illustrates the desired street network and may require adjustments to address site conditions upon development. An alternative but comparable network consistent with the intent of providing connectivity could also be appropriate.

Policies

T-1 The Independence Boulevard interchange at Briar Creek Road should be reconfigured. The interchange should be reconfigured on the south side of Independence Boulevard to provide safer and more efficient access to the Chantilly Montessori Elementary School and the neighborhoods surrounding Bojangles Coliseum. This reconfiguration will also make it easier and safer for drivers heading out of Uptown to merge onto southbound Briar Creek Road.

T-2 Bicycle lanes should be developed along Monroe Road as part of its preferred cross-section from Briar Creek to Sharon Amity Road.

T-3 The Eastway Drive interchange with Independence Boulevard should be reconfigured to allow greater integration with the local street network. The northwest loop of the cloverleaf should be modified to allow a new street connection from Eastway Drive to Waterman Avenue. This new street would play an important role in the redevelopment of the shallow parcels along this portion of Independence Boulevard by giving them improved access and a way to re-orient away from Independence Boulevard. Additionally, the southeast loop could be modified to allow a new street connection from Eastway Drive to Pierson Drive, through the Coliseum Center parcel. This connection would significantly aid the redevelopment of the parcels on this portion of Independence Boulevard by giving them safer and more efficient access opportunities.

T-4 Shade Valley Road should be connected to Pierson Drive with a traffic-calmed street with indirect connections to the surrounding neighborhoods. A new street should be built to connect Shade Valley Road with Pierson Drive. This street will provide an additional needed connection from Independence Boulevard to Monroe Road, and will allow for the redevelopment of the Amity Gardens station area by providing an access point that is not reliant upon Independence Boulevard.

T-5 Chippendale Road and Richland Drive should be aligned into a single intersection at Monroe Road. This project will improve traffic flow and safety on Monroe Road, and will enhance the potential for the parcel on the northeast corner of the intersection to develop into an active neighborhood node.

T-6 Long Avenue should be extended north to Independence Boulevard. This connection will allow the parcels within the triangle bounded by Long Avenue, Independence Boulevard, and Idlewild Road to redevelop within a tight block structure. Any new businesses or residences within this area would thus not be reliant on Independence Boulevard for access to their properties.

T-7 WT Harris Boulevard should be realigned to connect with Village Lake Drive at a new Independence Boulevard interchange as identified during the 2030 Transit System Planning process. This extension will provide greater connectivity in this future transit station area, thus lessening reliance on Independence Boulevard.

T-8 Arequipa Drive should be extended to Sardis Road North (currently included on long-range transportation plan). This connection will provide an alternate route to Independence Boulevard for local trips on the north side, and will begin to provide the framework for an efficient block structure on the large undeveloped parcels in this area.

T-9 Krefeld Drive should be extended across Irvin Creek and connected to the Krefeld Drive stem at Sardis Road North (currently included on long-range transportation plan). This new road would provide the backbone for a new block structure on these largely undeveloped parcels.

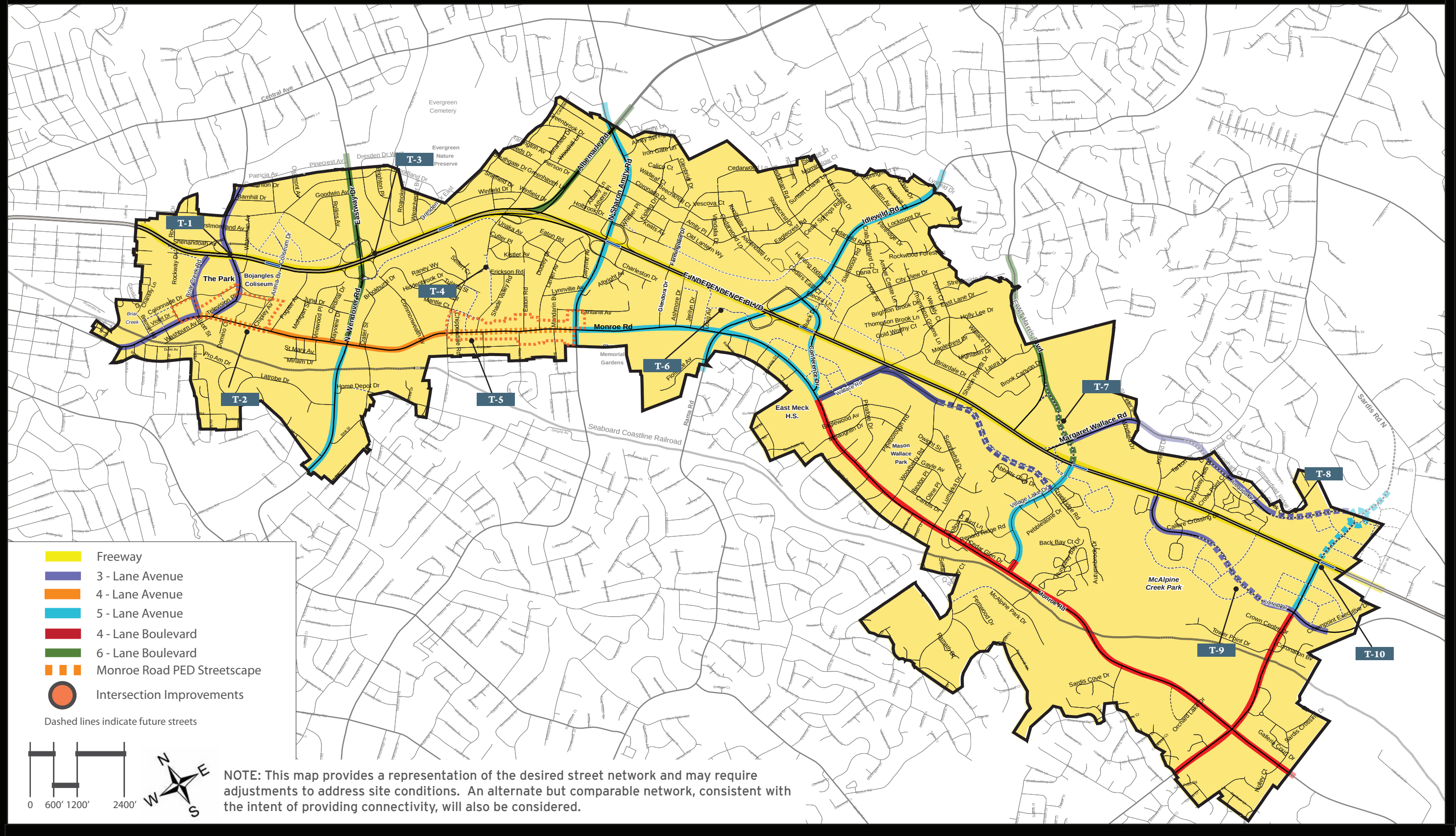
T-10 The future Sardis Road North interchange with Independence Boulevard should have a limited footprint that connects with the local street network and accommodates the increased pedestrian traffic anticipated with the future transit station.

T-11 The greenway network should be expanded, with particular emphasis placed on the Briar Creek and Campbell Creek greenways.

T-12 An overland connector should be developed between the Campbell Creek Greenway and the Briar Creek Greenway. The alignment, shown on Map 15, can follow existing streets, roughly paralleling Independence Boulevard, and providing access from multiple neighborhoods in the north sector of the Plan Area to the greenway network.

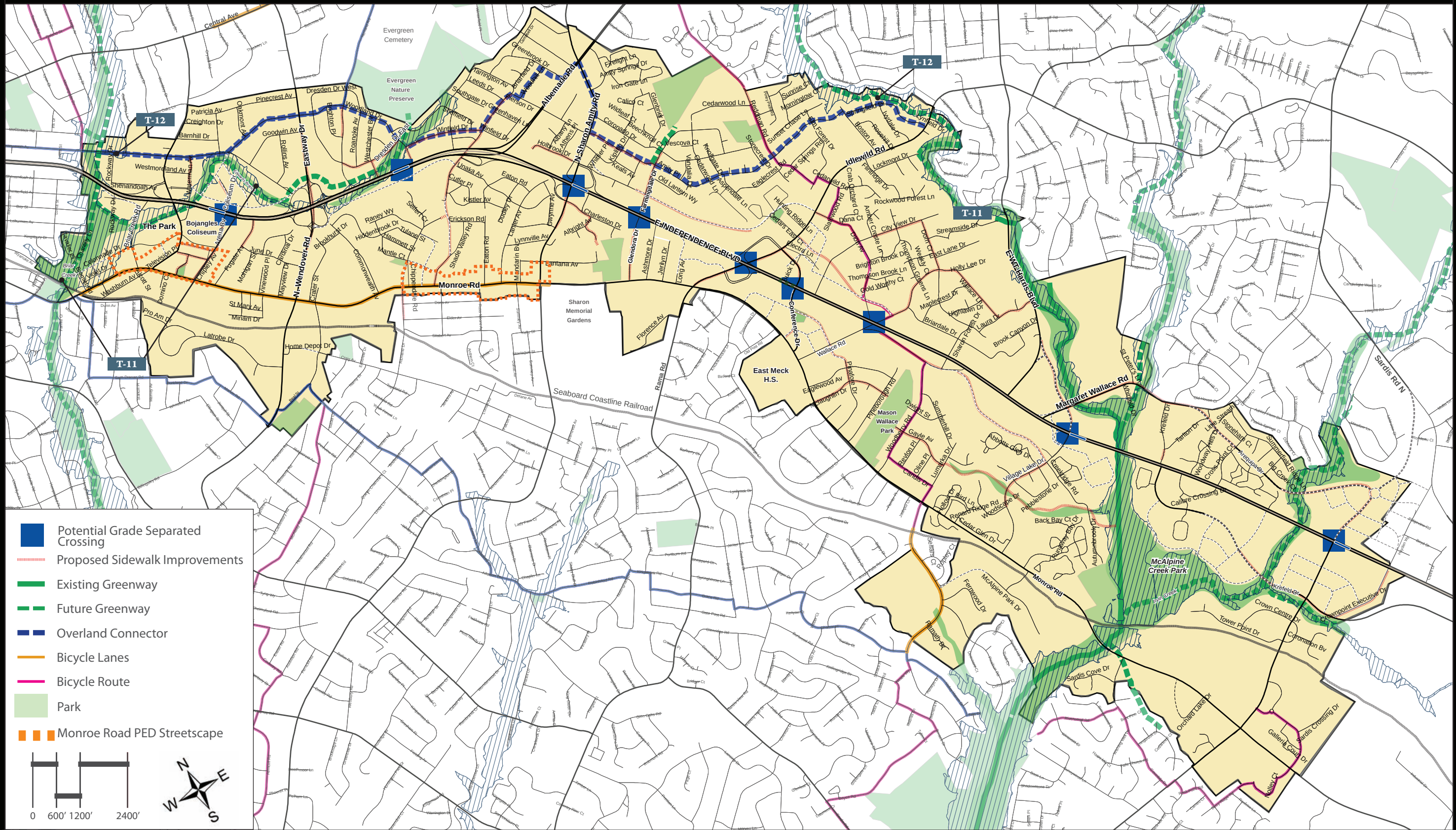
Independence Boulevard - Future Transportation Network

Map 14



Independence Boulevard - Future Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

Map 15



General Transportation Policies

(Not illustrated on Map 14 and 15)

T-13 Street network additions should be pursued with new development. The majority of the proposed additions to the local street network will occur during the private redevelopment of parcels throughout the Independence Boulevard Plan Area. However, the City should explore possible mechanisms for funding and developing segments of the local street network in places where new private development is unlikely to occur, or where it might not occur without public investment.

T-14 Street network should support proposed land uses by providing the following block structure:

- 400 feet preferred or typical (600 feet maximum) for Transit Station Areas;
- 500 feet preferred or typical (650 feet maximum) for Centers or non-residential uses within Wedges and Corridors;
- 600 feet preferred or typical (650 feet maximum) for residential equal to or greater than 5 dwelling units per acre within Wedges or residential uses of any density within Corridors;
- 600 feet preferred or typical (800 feet maximum) for residential less than 5 dwelling units per acre within Wedges; and
- 600 feet preferred or typical (1,000 feet maximum) for industrial uses within Corridors.

T-15 Consistency of the station area network concepts should be maintained through the advancement of engineering of the Silver Line BRT/LRT.

As opportunities for new street connections occur throughout the process of engineering the stations, each should be evaluated against the principles of this plan and the potential improvement to the supporting street network of each station area.

T-16 Streets within the Plan Area should include sidewalks on both sides and curb ramps on corners at intersections. Sidewalks are currently limited on many existing streets in the Plan Area. **Map 14**

identifies specific locations where sidewalks need to be improved. Many of the sidewalks will be provided as development occurs. The City will also work to provide sidewalk improvements elsewhere. Monroe Road should receive priority sidewalk improvements consistent with the plan's vision of creating a pedestrian-oriented environment. In addition, when transit stations are built, all areas within at least 1/4 mile walking distance of the station should be accessible to the station via sidewalks, including Village Lake Drive and Sardis Road North.

T-17 Special design details should be implemented to ensure pedestrian safety at major intersections.

Ensuring that pedestrians can safely cross major thoroughfares is essential for adapting the existing automobile-oriented environment that exists today into a much more urban, pedestrian-oriented place. As the spine of the six transit stations planned for the Plan Area, Independence Boulevard will have a number of key locations where pedestrians will need to cross the roadway to gain access to the station. Typically, these connections will take place from overpasses built as part of the transit/highway project. Some design elements may include wider and continuous walkway systems that connect to transit stops, landscaped buffers to separate pedestrians from moving traffic on bridges with vehicular crossings, street lighting and pedestrian scale lighting, and safe crossings at marked intersections.

T-18 Sidewalk projects that link proposed transit stations to surrounding residential neighborhoods should be a priority. Pedestrian linkages between those areas and the existing residential population will allow additional travel options for a wide variety of trip types.

T-19 Crosswalks should be provided at all the existing and future signalized intersections. These locations should include such enhancements as:

- hi-visibility crosswalk markings;
- countdown pedestrian lights;
- no turn on red restrictions;
- pedestrian refuge islands; and
- pedestrian zone signage.

Improvements along Monroe Road have been outlined on **Map 14**. For other intersections, as necessitated by redevelopment, the specific treatment appropriate at each intersection should be determined at the time of development review.

T-20 Refuge islands should be considered, particularly near station location crossings where signalized crossings are lacking. Refuge islands provide one of the safest ways for pedestrians to cross streets with higher traffic volumes and are frequently constructed between signalized intersections.

T-21 Pedestrian zone signage in targeted locations is recommended, in the rights-of-way of major thoroughfares where high levels of pedestrian travel are anticipated, to alert motorists that pedestrians are present and that caution in driving is needed.

T-22 As a means for improving pedestrian safety, speed limits should be set as low as possible for a given design condition under the *USDG*. The maximum speed limit should be 35 mph along Monroe Road, Briar Creek Road, Sharon Amity Road, Rama Road, Idlewild Road, Village Lake Road, and Sardis Road North, 45 mph along Harris Boulevard and Albemarle Road, and 25 mph for all other streets in the area.

T-23 Bulb outs should be constructed, where feasible, on Avenues or local streets where blocks are longer than 600 feet to provide pedestrian crossings and reduce vehicular speeds.

T-24 Pedestrian-scale lighting should be provided to illuminate pedestrian areas around future transit stations and pedestrian districts. Such lighting is shorter than typical streetlights and, in addition to lighting pedestrian areas, is generally designed as a visual amenity within the streetscape. Priority locations for pedestrian-scale lighting include:

- Monroe Road from Richland Drive to Sharon Amity Road;
- Key streets within 1/4 mile walking distance of each transit station; and
- On the proposed greenway trails along Edwards Branch and Briar Creek.

T-25 Within ten years following the completion of new interchanges, CDOT should study and design additional grade-separated crossings of Independence Boulevard. Future modifications to access along Independence Boulevard will create a potential barrier between neighborhoods and within station areas by limited locations where it will be possible to cross Independence Boulevard. With many of these crossings largely serving as the primary access to an evolving freeway, there will likely be an increasing need for alternative routes to access stations, station-area development and surrounding neighborhoods. Possible locations for new crossings include Farmingdale-Glendora Drives and Wallace Lane. Similar to Hawthorne Lane and Pecan Avenue, these crossings would not have any ramp connections to US 74 but would help connect neighborhoods and development on either side of the evolving freeway.

T-26 Improve intersections to enhance accessibility throughout the plan area. Improved intersections may include a combination of geometric design changes, traffic signals, roundabouts, pedestrian countdown signals, painted or textured crosswalks, ADA curb ramps, and pedestrian refuge islands. As shown on **Map 14**, the following are to be improved, but are not limited to:

- Charleston Drive and Sharon Amity Connector
- Idlewild/US 74 Inbound Ramps and New Reverse Frontage Road
- Monroe Road and Shade Valley Drive (if connecting to Pierson Drive)
- Sharon Amity Road and Pierson Drive
- Idlewild and Dion Avenue

T-27 Encourage expansion of local transit to major nodes of activity. As new nodes result from development, CATS is encouraged to expand service. Additionally, the development community is encouraged to create enhanced stops for expanded transit service, as well as park-and-ride opportunities, within new development projects.

Description of Street Types

Street Type	Description	Example
Freeway	Freeways are designed to move large volumes of motor vehicles efficiently across long distances. Freeways are highways with controlled access and exclusive use by motor vehicles.	Independence Boulevard 
Boulevard	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.	Eastway Drive, Wendover Road (north of Monroe Road), Albemarle Road, WT Harris Boulevard, Village Lake Drive, Sardis Road North (south of Krefeld Drive), and Monroe Road (east of East Mecklenburg High School) 
Avenue	Avenues are the most common (non-local) street providing access from neighborhoods to commercial areas and are 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.	Briar Creek Road, Sharon Amity Road, Rama Road, Idlewild Road, Krefeld Drive, Arequipa Drive, Sardis Road North (north of Krefeld Drive), and Monroe Road (north of East Mecklenburg High School) 
Local Street	Local Streets provide access to residential, industrial, commercial or mixed-used districts. The majority of Charlotte's streets are classified as local streets and are typically built through the land development process.	Woodland Drive, Pierson Drive, Amity Place, City View Drive, Briardale Drive, Commonwealth Avenue, Glendora Drive, Woodberry Road 

Street Cross-Sections

The streetscape cross-sections on the following pages are essential to providing the framework 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 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 adopted, the streetscape standards specified herein will become the official “Streetscape Plan” for the Plan Area, as referenced in the City Zoning Ordinance. 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. The future cross-sections have been determined for streets within the 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:

- Freeway
- Boulevard
- Avenue
- Local Office/Commercial

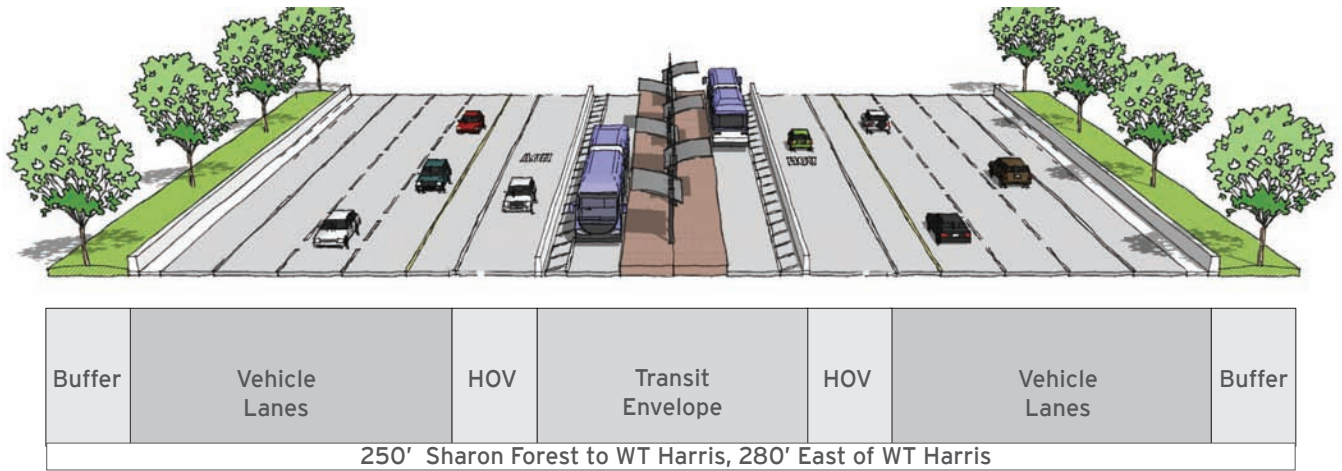
Maps 14 shows the desired location for each of these street types. Consult this map to identify the recommendation for a specific street, and then refer to the matching cross-section at the end of this section.

Freeway

Description: Freeways are specifically designed to move large volumes of motor vehicles efficiently across long distances. Freeways are highways with controlled access and exclusive use by motor vehicles. While Independence Boulevard is currently a hybrid arterial-expressway, this Plan recognizes the long-term vision of the highway fully transitioning into a freeway.

Existing Condition: Independence Boulevard in this section has three lanes in each direction and auxiliary lanes in various locations. Rights-of-way vary between locations along the corridor. *Constrained Section:* NCDOT has already converted Independence Boulevard to an expressway west of Albemarle Road and will soon extend this conversion to Sharon Forest Drive. Given these recent and committed highway improvements, no additional

Figure 8: Freeway Cross-section



right-of-way will be reserved for properties west of Sharon Forest Drive or east of Sharon Forest after NCDOT completes right-of-way acquisition for the next widening project southeast to the Charlotte City limits. However, future transportation projects, such as transit stations and/or managed lanes, may require additional right-of-way acquisition.

Future Section: The adopted right-of-way envelope is 250 feet east of Sharon Forest Drive to WT Harris and 280 feet east of WT Harris to the City limits.

Proposed Regional Transportation Corridor: Recommended width includes allowance for:

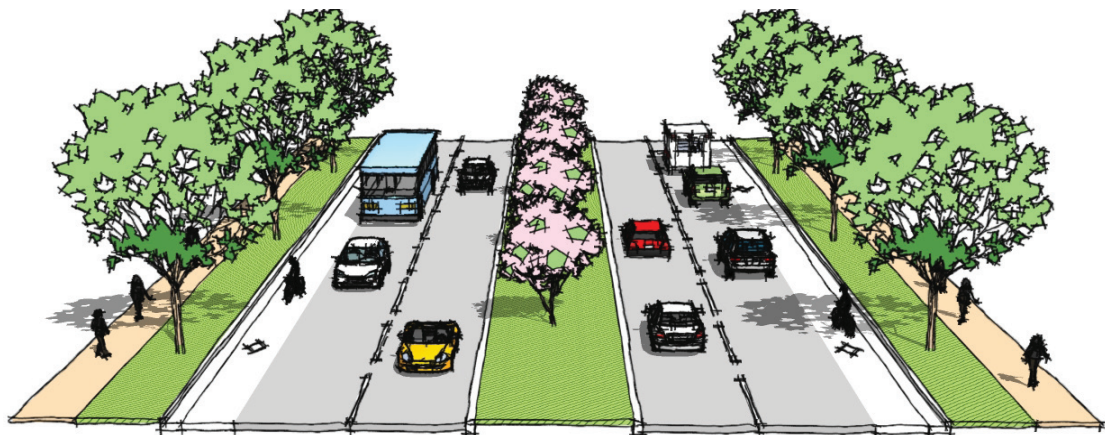
- Three travel lanes in each direction.
- HOV lanes on inside of travel lanes.
- Transit facility (BRT/LRT) in median.
- Additional widening for right turn lanes may be required in some circumstances in accordance with CDOT standards.
- Paved shoulders.

Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance within a landscaped buffer.

Boulevard

Description: Boulevards are intended to move large numbers of vehicles, often as “through traffic,” from

Figure 9 4-lane Boulevard Cross-Section



Sidewalk	Planting Strip	Bike Lane	Vehicle Lanes	Continuous Median/Turn Lane	Vehicle Lanes	Bike Lane	Planting Strip	Sidewalk
6'	8'	*7.5'	22' (33')*	17'	22' (33')*	*7.5'	8'	6'

76' BOC (98')*

NOTE: *Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element
 *Indicates dimension for 6-Lane Boulevard

one part of the city to another, and to other lower level streets in the network.

Four-lane Boulevard Location: Village Lake Drive, Monroe Road (East of Wallace Road), Sardis Road North (outside transit station areas)

Six-lane Boulevard Location: Eastway Drive, Wendover Road (North of Monroe Road), Albemarle Road, WT Harris Boulevard.

Proposed Curb to Curb: Recommended width for a four-lane boulevard is 76 feet from back-of-curb to back-of-curb; for a six-lane boulevard it is 98 feet.

- Two travel lanes (three for a six-lane section) 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 setbacks may vary by the zoning classification. An 8 foot planting strip and 6 foot sidewalk are required behind the curbline. Tree planting with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots is required in the planting strip per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance. The planting strip serves as buffer from traffic to pedestrians on the sidewalk. Because of intense traffic on this type of street, on-street parking is not appropriate.

Avenue

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.

Avenue A - 3-lane Avenue

Location: Briar Creek Road, Arequipa Drive, Krefeld Drive

Proposed Curb to Curb: The recommended width for this street type is 47 feet from back of curb to back of curb without on-street parking and 63 feet with on-street parking.

- One travel lane and bike lane in each direction.
- Continuous median with left turn lanes and pedestrian refuge in appropriate locations.
- Additional widening for turn lanes may be required in some circumstances, such as intersections with other Avenues, in accordance with CDOT standards.

Figure 10 3-Lane Avenue (w/o parking) Cross-Section



Sidewalk	Planting Strip	Bike Lane	Vehicle Lanes	Intermittent Median/Turn Lane	Vehicle Lanes	Bike Lane	Planting Strip	Sidewalk
6'	8'	*7.5'	11'	12'	11'	*7.5'	8'	6'

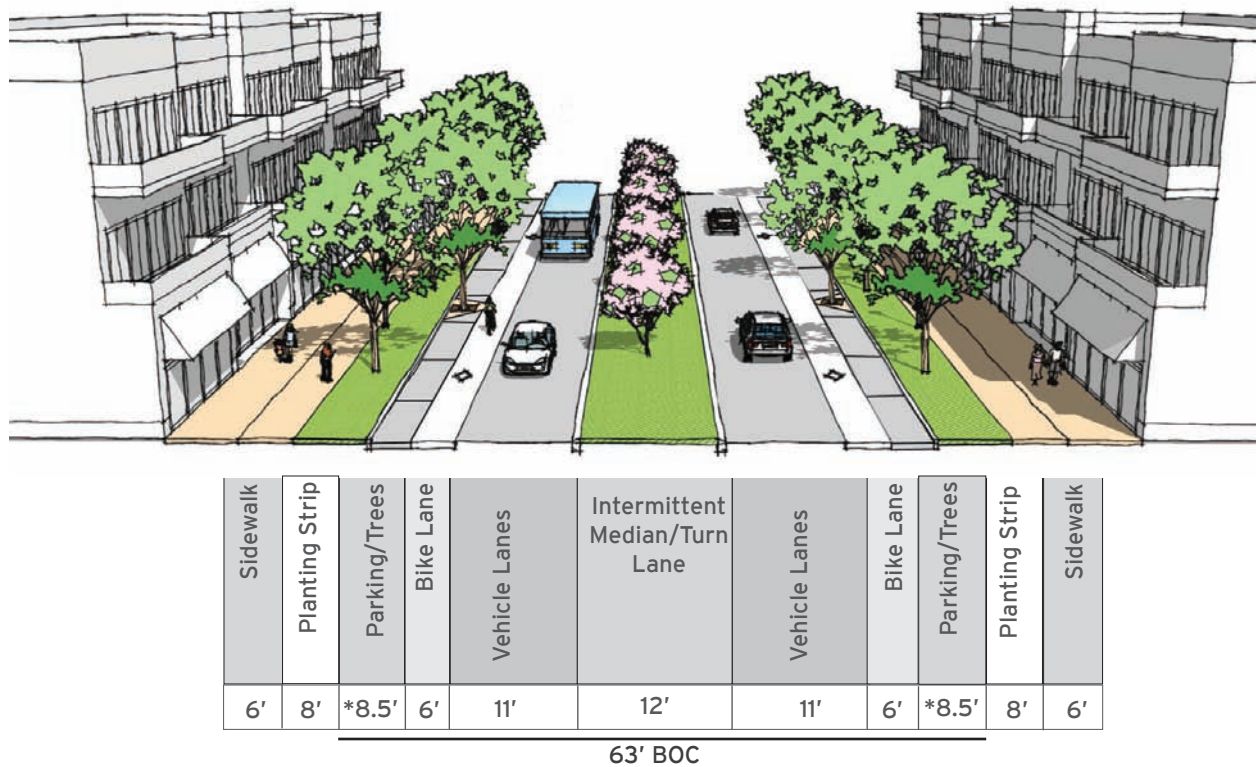
47' BOC

NOTE: *Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element

Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is determined by the zoning classification. An 8 foot planting strip and 6 foot sidewalk is required behind the curbline in accordance with USDG. Tree planting with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots is required in the planting strip per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance. The planting strip serves as buffer from traffic to pedestrians on the sidewalk.

While a planting strip is the standard expectation, on-street parking may be appropriate in select locations. Intermittent planter islands should be utilized to break up parking into bays no more than 100 feet in length. For facilities designated as state highways, such as Monroe Road, current state regulations do not permit on-street parking. If circumstances change such that on-street parking would be allowable, the on-street parking option would be available there.

Figure 11 3-Lane Avenue w/ Parking Cross-Section



NOTE: *Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element

Avenue B - 4-lane Avenue

Location: Monroe Road (from Briar Creek to Sharon Amity)

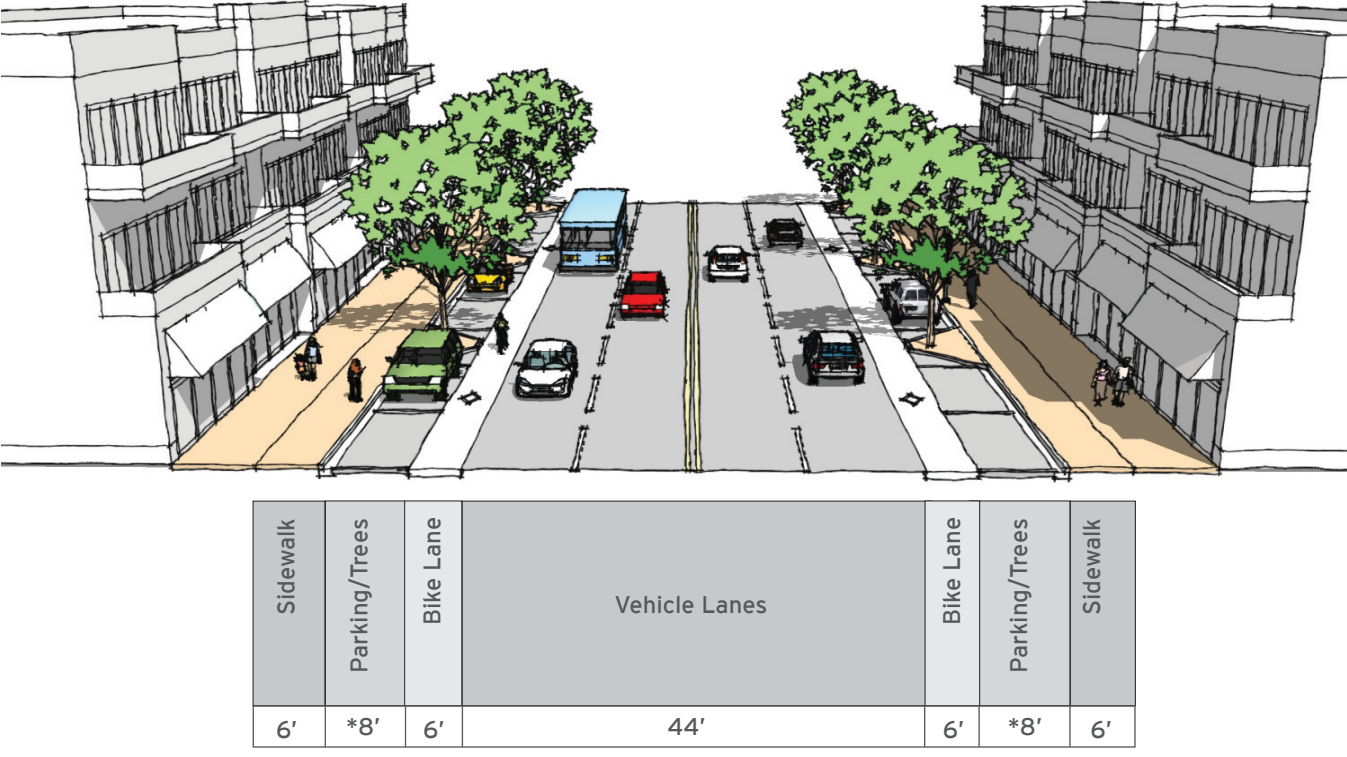
Proposed Curb to Curb: The recommended width for these streets is 57 feet from back of curb to back of curb without on-street parking and 65 feet with on-street parking.

- Two travel lanes and bike lane in each direction.
- Additional widening for turn lanes may be required in some circumstances, such as intersections with other Avenues, in accordance with CDOT standards.

Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is determined by the zoning classification. An 8 foot planting strip and 6 foot sidewalk is required behind the curbline in accordance with USDG. Tree planting with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots is required in the planting strip per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance. The planting strip serves as buffer from traffic to pedestrians on the sidewalk.

For facilities designated as state highways, such as Monroe Road, current state regulations do not permit on-street parking. If circumstances change such that on-street parking would be allowable, the on-street parking option would be available.

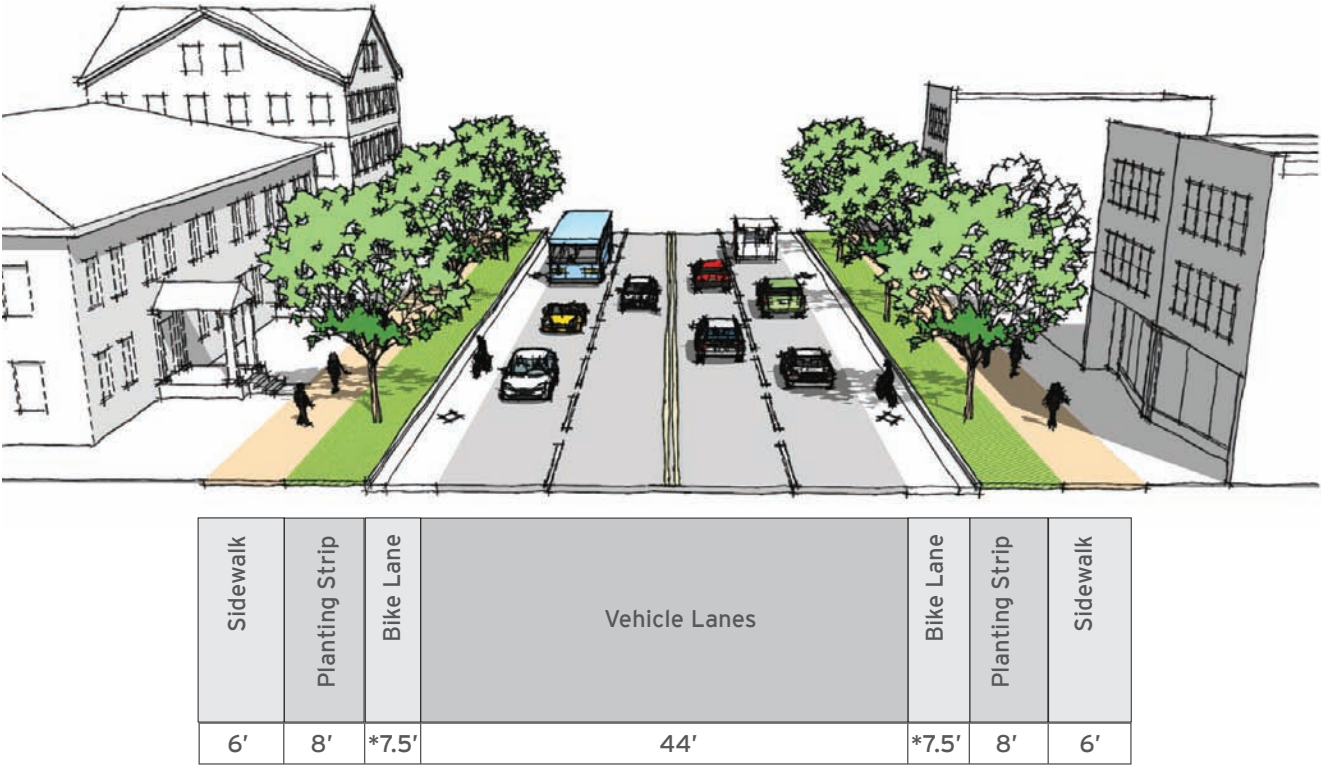
Figure 12 4-lane Avenue (With Parking) Cross-section



73' BOC

NOTE: *Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element

Figure 13 4-lane Avenue Cross-section



57' BOC

NOTE: *Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element

Avenue C - 5-lane Avenue

Location: Wendover Road (South of Monroe Road), Sharon Amity Road, Idlewild Road, Conference Drive, Sardis Road North, Monroe Road (Sharon Amity Road to East Mecklenburg High School)

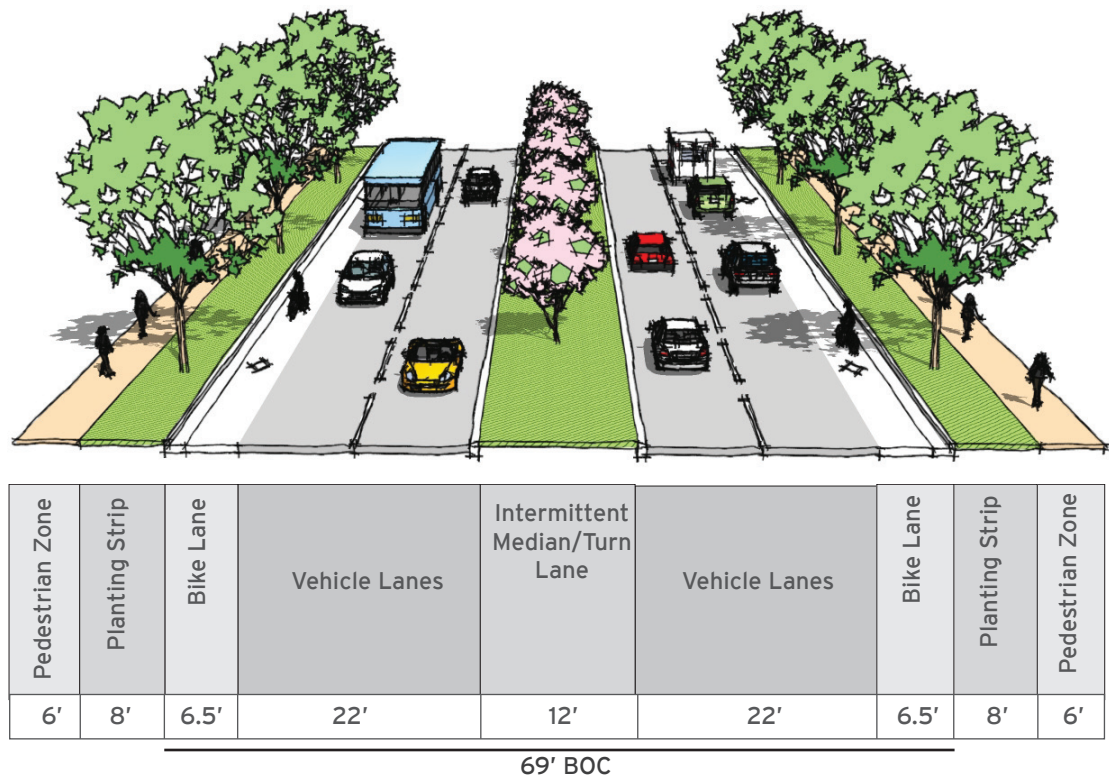
Proposed Curb to Curb: The recommended width for these streets is 69 feet from back of curb to back of curb without on-street parking and 75 feet with on-street parking.

- Two travel lanes and bike lane in each direction.
- Continuous median with left turn lanes and pedestrian refuge in appropriate locations.
- Additional widening for turn lanes may be required in some circumstances, such as intersections with other Avenues, in accordance with CDOT standards.

Behind the Curb: Minimum building setback is determined by the zoning classification. An 8 foot planting strip and 6 foot sidewalk is required behind the curbline in accordance with USDG. Tree planting with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots is required in the planting strip per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance. The planting strip serves as buffer from traffic to pedestrians on the sidewalk.

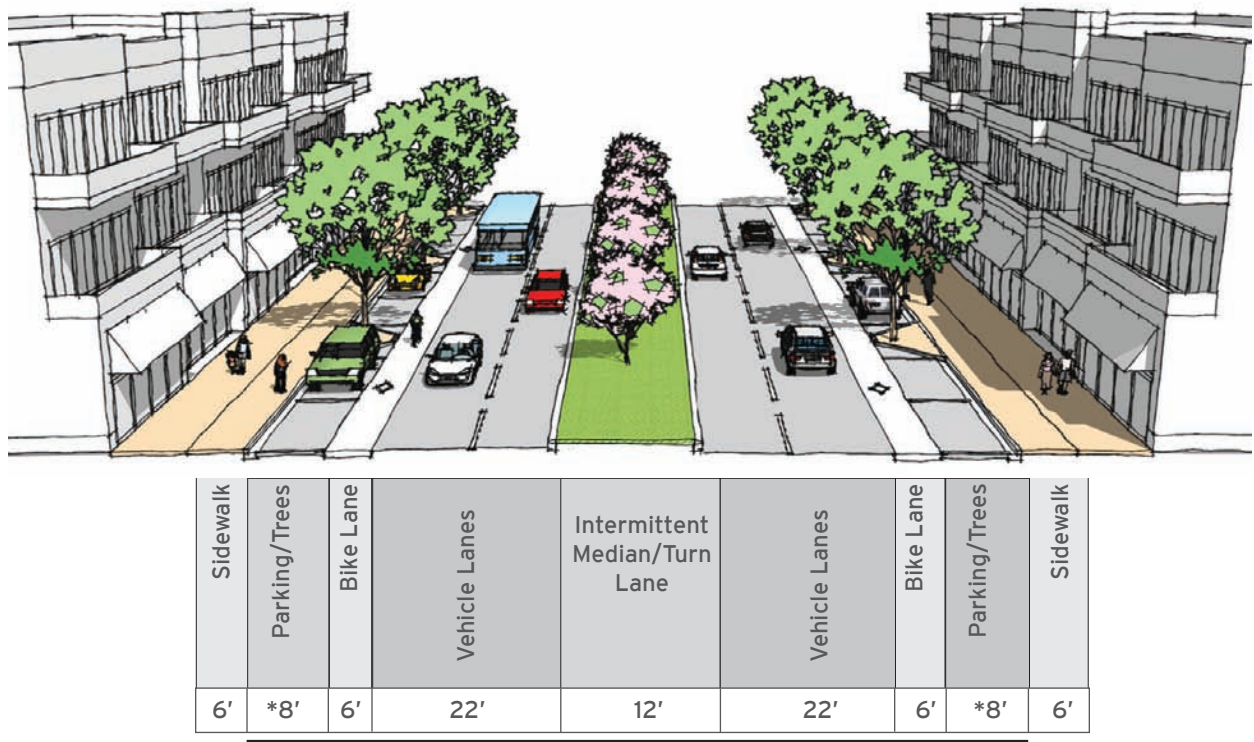
While a planting strip is the standard expectation, on-street parking may be appropriate in select locations. Intermittent planter islands should be utilized to break up parking into bays no more than 100 feet in length. For facilities designated as state highways, such as Monroe Road, current state regulations do not permit on-street parking. If circumstances change such that on-street parking would be allowable, the on-street parking option would be available there.

Figure 14 5-Lane Avenue Cross-Section



NOTE: Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element

Figure 15 5-Lane Avenue w/ Parking Cross-Section



75' BOC

NOTE: *Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element

Local Office / Commercial Street

Description: Local streets provide access to 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.

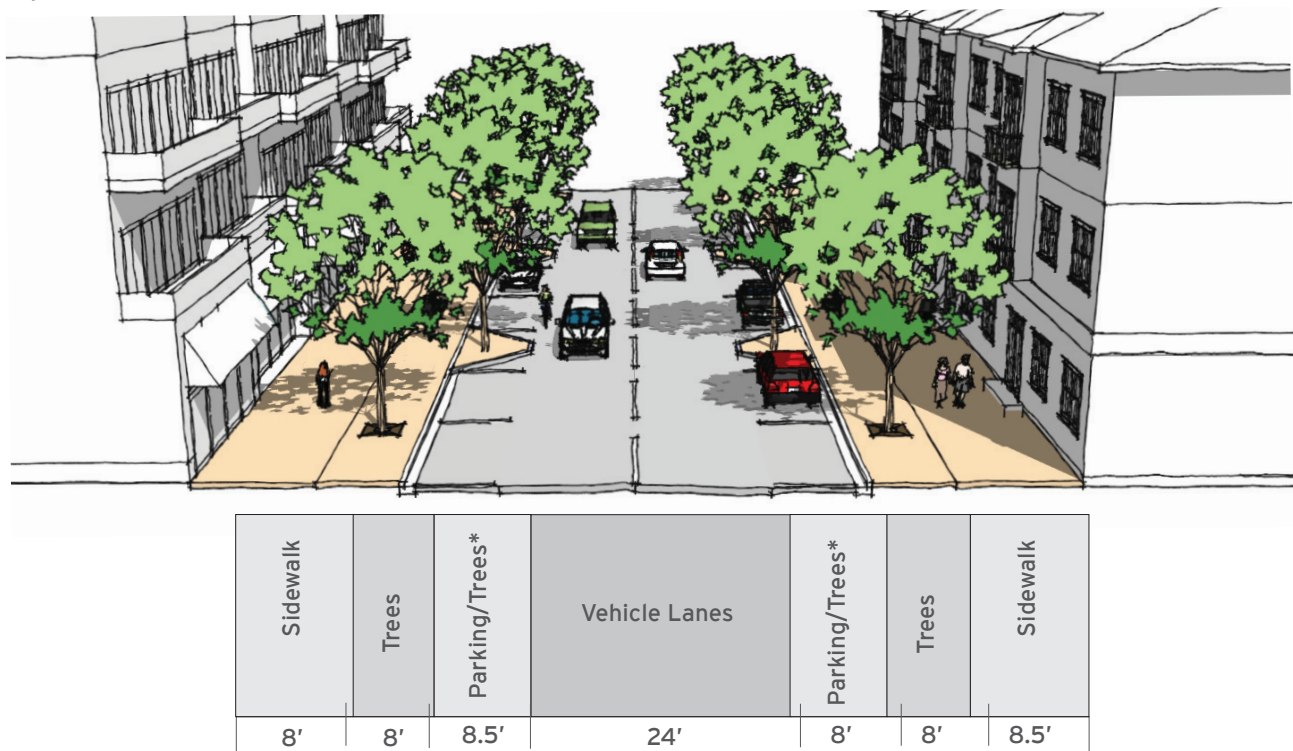
Proposed Curb to Curb: Recommended width is 41 feet from back of curb to back of curb.

- 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 onto thoroughfares may be required in accordance with CDOT standards.

Proposed Behind the Curb: The minimum building setback is determined by zoning classification. A minimum eight foot planting strip and an eight foot sidewalk is required per the Urban Street Design Guidelines. Tree planting is required with spacing,

irrigation, sub-drainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance. 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.

Figure 16 Local Commercial Street Cross-section



*Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element

Monroe Road PED District Cross-Section

Proposed Curb to Curb: The future road width is established as 69 feet, from back of curb to back of curb, within a right-of-way of 101 feet. This allows the following travelway elements:

- Two travel lanes and bike lane in each direction.
- 10 foot median, giving way to turn lanes at intersections.
- Additional widening for turn lanes may be required in some circumstances, such as intersections with other Avenues, in accordance with CDOT standards.

Behind the Curb: The minimum building setback is 16 feet from the back of (unrecessed) recommended curb. Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance. The planting strip serves as a buffer from traffic for pedestrians on the sidewalk. An eight foot wide planting strip with trees is the standard expectation. The 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. The pedestrian 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 pedestrian zone can be used for landscaping, sidewalk dining, or paved merchandising purposes. Encroachments into the pedestrian 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 eight feet. The remaining building setback may be used for landscaping, outdoor dining, extended sidewalk area, or merchandising area at developer discretion.

Future Parking Option: Monroe Road is a state highway, and current state regulations do not permit on-street parking. If circumstances change in the future such that on-street parking would be allowable,

an on-street parking option will become available. The eight foot planting strip could be replaced with recessed parallel parking, with recessed on-street parking available as an option per zoning and CDOT standards, and with intermittent planter islands to break up parking into bays no more than 100 feet in length. In this case, the curb would be located along the edge of the sidewalk. Tree planting in sections with on-street parking still would be required, either in planter islands between parking bays or in planters or tree grates behind the curb. Supplemental planting is also encouraged between the sidewalk and building face, although this may not replace street tree requirements.

Side Streets

Intersecting local streets within the PED District should be designed consistent with the standards for local streets in the remainder of the Plan Area. The recommended width for these streets is 27 feet from back of curb to back of curb to allow one travel lane in each direction shared with bicyclists. On-street parking is allowed 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 onto thoroughfares may be required in accordance with CDOT standards. In these cases, crossing distances should be minimized.

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. Tree planting is required with spacing, irrigation, subdrainage, and adequate soil space for roots per the Charlotte Tree Ordinance. In locations with limited 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. The pedestrian zone is the usual location for the eight foot wide clear sidewalk within 50 feet of Monroe Road. 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.

Figure 17 PED District Monroe Road Cross-section

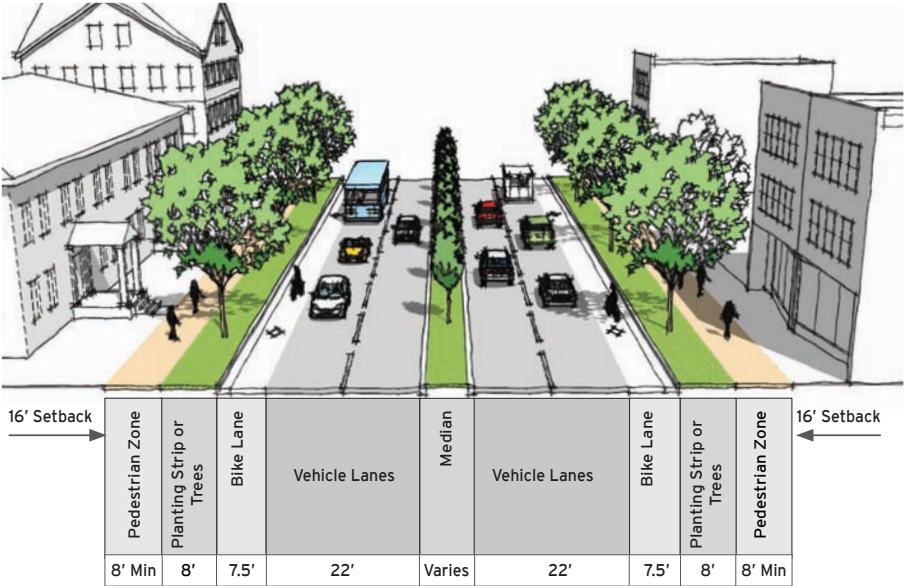


Figure 18 PED District Optional Monroe Road Cross-section

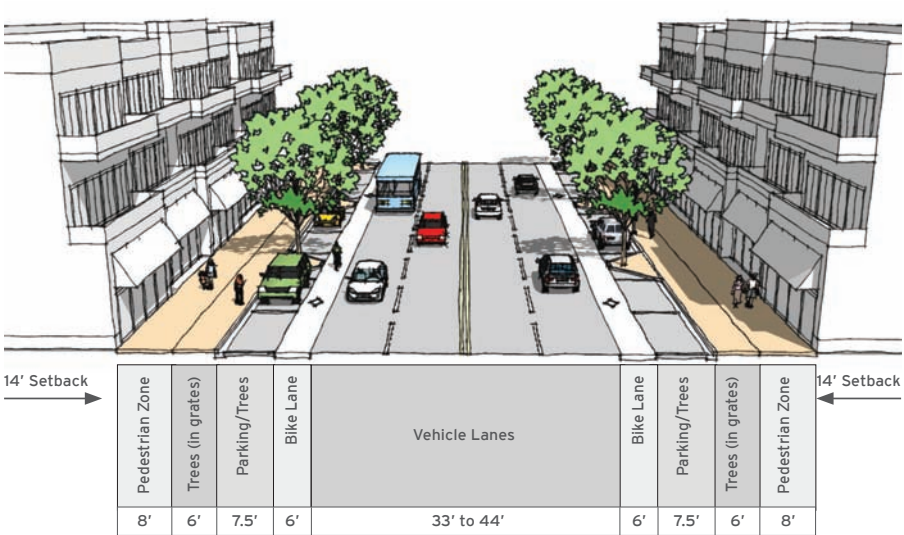
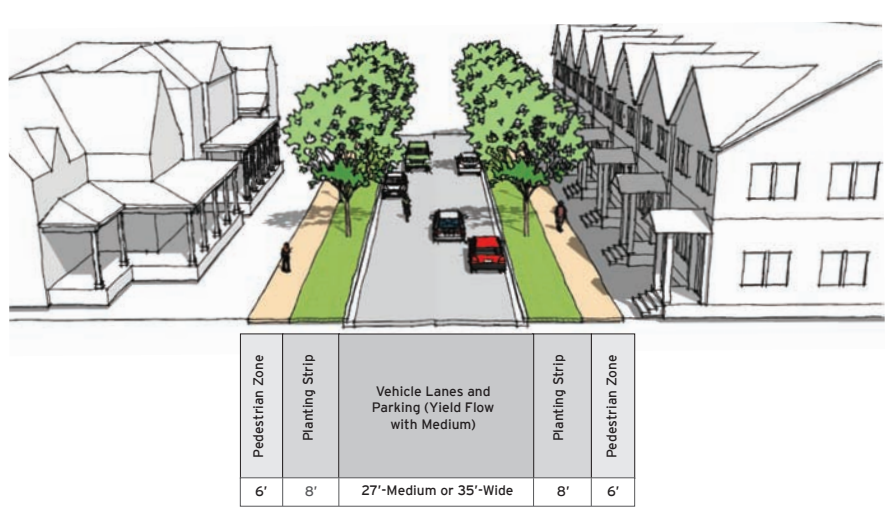


Figure 19 PED District Typical Side Street Cross-section



NOTE: Curb and gutter (2.5') included in dimension of adjacent street element

Infrastructure and Public Facilities Policies

Public facilities and services addressed in this plan include public water and sewer, storm water, police, fire, parks and recreation and schools. Other public facilities, including libraries, medical and social services are not addressed in this land use plan. As Charlotte-Mecklenburg continues to grow and develop, planning for public facilities is essential to maintain the high quality of life for area residents and businesses.

Infrastructure and Public Facilities Goal

To encourage redevelopment in the areas that have adequate infrastructure and public facilities already in place, while ensuring that investment in new or improved infrastructure occurs in a thoughtful, strategic manner that leverages other opportunities and investments.

Policies

IF-1 Development should be focused in areas with existing infrastructure. The Plan Area is fortunate to have a large amount of existing public infrastructure and services. Maintaining and enhancing that infrastructure should be a priority, especially within transit station areas and other areas planned for higher intensity mixed-use development.

IF-2 New or expanded infrastructure should be scaled as needed to serve new development. This Area Plan calls for an intensification of residential, commercial, and industrial uses in strategic locations. While much of this new development will take the

form of compact, mixed use projects—which tend to place lighter burdens on infrastructure—they may require some additional investments in public facilities and services. For example, new residential development could create a need for new schools.

IF-3 New regional stormwater facilities should be constructed to enable redevelopment. The Post-Construction Controls Ordinance (PCCO) regulates stormwater in new developments. The redevelopment of small parcels—such as those found in the western portion of the Plan Area—is sometimes difficult under the PCCO, due to the amount of land needed to accommodate the buildings, parking, and stormwater facilities required. Additionally, while portions of the Plan Area, such as transit station areas, are exempt from the PCCO, the effects of runoff in these areas could be mitigated through effective regional systems that may not otherwise be constructed.

To facilitate redevelopment in these areas, regional stormwater facilities that meet the requirements of the PCCO while serving the stormwater needs of several parcels should be provided. **Map 16**, in the appendix, identifies locations for potential regional stormwater facilities. These locations were selected based on the existing topography and hydrology of the area, as well as on places where existing streams could be “day-lighted” to serve stormwater as well as recreational functions.

The construction of some or all of these regional stormwater facilities should be a high priority for the City; without them, the successful redevelopment of many parcels in the Plan Area may be difficult and or

IF-4 place a heavier burden on the natural environment.

School capacity should be expanded concurrently with new development. Currently, the Plan Area's schools adequately serve the existing population. East Mecklenburg High School, however, is over-capacity, and a reliever facility may need to be built in the future. This facility is included in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board's 10-Year Plan, and is identified as potentially being built near Albemarle Elementary School, which is to the north of the Plan Area.

As new residential development comes on-line, school capacity should be continually evaluated. When new school facilities are needed, the City and School Board should coordinate to locate the schools in areas that are consistent with the planning goals described herein for the Independence Boulevard Plan Area.

IF-5

Sewer, water, and above ground utilities should be repaired and enhanced along Monroe Road. As part of making Monroe Road a stronger focus for new economic activity, with better pedestrian and bicyclist facilities, portions of the road are recommended to be reconstructed. Underground infrastructure improvements in these sections should be timed to occur concurrent with the road reconstruction, to limit disruption to area residents and businesses.

IF-6

New or enhanced civic infrastructure should be targeted to regional and neighborhoods nodes. Civic infrastructure such as libraries and community centers are just as critical to a region's quality of life as water pipes or sewer pumps. Locating these facilities in transit station areas will also maximize their accessibility for the entire Independence Boulevard population.

IF-7 **The area should maintain its strong police service.** The majority of the Plan Area falls within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Independence Division, which covers the area from roughly Albemarle Road to the City boundary. While there are currently no plans for new police stations in the Plan Area, the capacity of the existing stations to adequately service the area should be continually evaluated as certain portions of the area intensify and new development comes on-line. The City should

also continue coordinating with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques throughout the Plan Area.

IF-8 **The area should maintain strong fire protection service.** Fire Station #29 (located at 2121 Margaret Wallace Road) and Fire Station #3 (located at 6512 Monroe Road) serve the Independence Boulevard Plan Area. While there are currently no plans for new fire stations in the Plan Area, the capacity of the existing stations to adequately service the area should be continually evaluated as certain portions of the area intensify and new development comes on-line.

IF-9 **New local-serving parks should be developed both north and south of Independence Boulevard.**

The public outreach process identified a need for additional neighborhood and community park facilities in the Plan Area, both north and south of Independence Boulevard. The City currently owns two undeveloped park properties in the Plan Area that could address this need. The first is located at 5715 Monroe Road, to the south of Independence Boulevard, and is identified as a future neighborhood park by the Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department. The second is off Reddman Road to the north of Independence Boulevard, and is identified as a future community park site. The County should evaluate funding options for developing these two park facilities.

Natural Environment Policies

A good land use plan balances preservation of the area's natural resources with the demand for new development. This is possible with careful planning and adherence to policies and regulations. The specific environmental policies contained in this plan are based on the more general principles and policies in the *General Development Policies*, 2007.

The primary environmental features of the Plan Area are the streams and tributaries, the mature tree canopy in many neighborhoods, and the parks and greenways.

Natural Environment Policies

The following policies, along with existing adopted policies and regulations and the other policies within this area plan, will help to ensure the protection of the Independence Boulevard Plan Area's natural environment.

NE-1 Natural stream courses should be restored where feasible. As the Independence Boulevard area developed, numerous waterways were buried beneath

Natural Environment Goal

To protect and enhance important ecological and recreational spaces through expansion of the parks and greenways system, reclamation of "lost" assets such as buried streams, and creation of a comprehensive stormwater management strategy, while also encouraging land use and transportation activities that positively impact land, air, and water quality.

roads and parking lots, homes and shops. Portions of some of these creeks, especially Edwards' Branch, were covered and/or piped many years ago as part of stormwater routing systems. This covering removed connections to natural floodplains and wetlands that moderate occasional flooding events and can provide natural treatment for stormwater. Additionally, many other streams were channelized but left open to more efficiently route flows of stormwater. Stream daylighting or opening streams that were covered and or recontouring channelized streams could provide a number of benefits, including:

- Creating aesthetic views for adjacent land uses
- Providing effective neighborhood buffers
- Providing locations for new or expanded greenways and other recreation uses
- Potentially lowering the floodplain elevation
- Providing for Charlotte's stream mitigation bank
- Contributing to a regional stormwater system

Map 17, in the appendix, shows the sections of buried streams that could potentially be restored. These are primarily located in places where there is a need and opportunity for aesthetic treatments and buffers (primarily on Independence Boulevard near the Coliseum Shopping Center), as well as where they can contribute to a regional stormwater approach. **Figures 20 and 21** show potential design cross-sections for stream channel restoration and stormwater wetlands. These designs feature riparian stream bank zones to create a naturalized edge to the stormwater facilities.

Figure 20 - Stormwater Wetland Cross-section

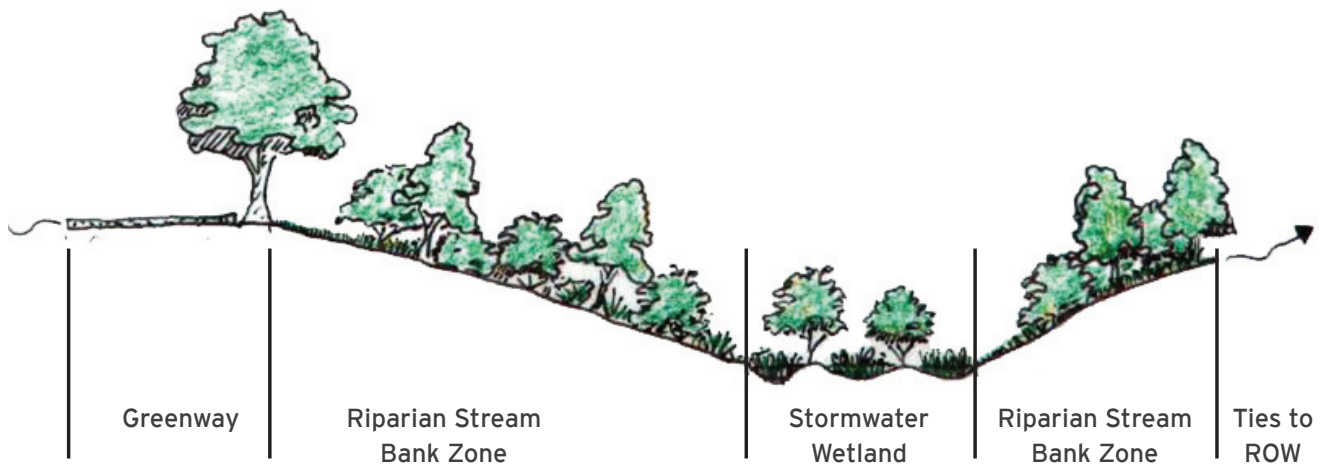
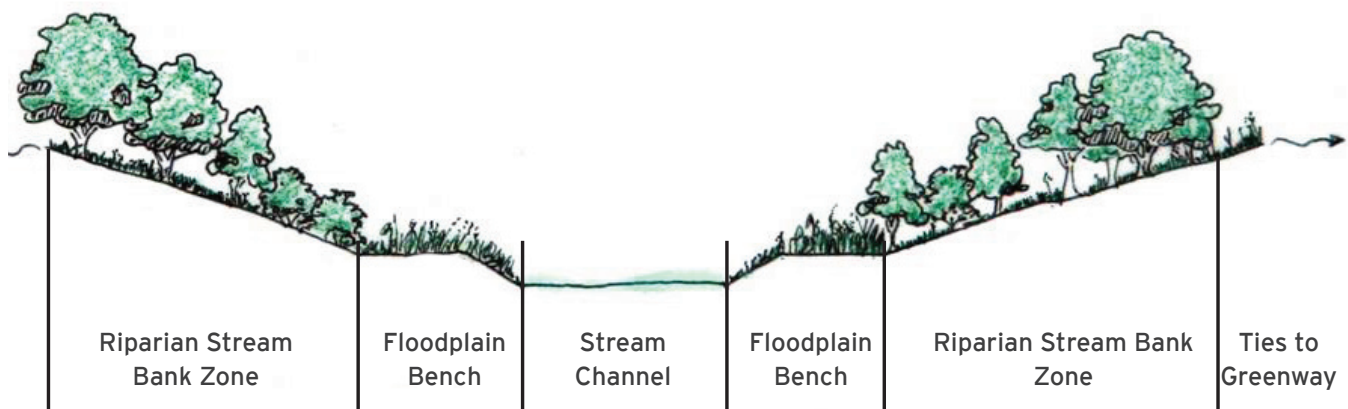


Figure 21 - Stream Channel Restoration Cross-section



NE-2 The greenway network should be expanded throughout the Plan Area. This network provides substantial recreation opportunities, in addition to environmental benefits. Map 17 identifies locations where the system could be expanded in the Independence Boulevard Plan Area. Many of these places are also potential locations of stream restoration and regional stormwater facilities. The expansions are focused on constructing Briar Creek Greenway and a linkage along Edwards' Branch, and linking Campbell Creek Greenway to Briar Creek Greenway via over-land trail connectors.

NE-3 Residential and commercial development and redevelopment in the Plan Area should limit the pressures for urban sprawl in outlying greenfields. Often, the most sustainable approach to urban growth

lies in the redevelopment of existing places. The land use section of this document identifies the locations where redevelopment and intensification of uses is most appropriate and feasible.

NE-4 More transportation choices should be provided in the Independence Boulevard Plan Area. These choices will allow more people to walk, bike, or take transit for their daily needs, thus reducing automobile usage. By mixing and intensifying uses in appropriate locations, implementing urban design guidelines will make streetscapes and buildings more attractive and inviting. Moreover, investing in transit, and alternate modes of transportation will be a more viable transportation option. This will support air quality goals identified in the County's 2008 *State of the Environment* report.

NE-5 Site design techniques that protect the natural environment should be encouraged. Site designs and construction practices should: 1) facilitate the use of alternative modes of transportation; 2) reduce ground level temperatures; 3) minimize impacts to the natural environment; 4) reduce the amount and improve the quality of stormwater run-off; and 5) use water efficiently.

NE-6 Impacts to tree canopy should be minimized. The tree canopy was cited during public workshops as one of the best attributes of the Independence Boulevard Plan Area. Any impacts to this canopy arising from new infrastructure projects or (re) development should be minimized to the greatest extent possible, so the canopy can flourish and remain a healthy and viable part of the Plan Area's environment.

Conclusion

As the City of Charlotte continues to attract new residents and businesses, pressures for development and redevelopment will likely intensify. The ability to successfully accommodate growth, while maintaining a high quality of life, is not likely without planning. To that end, this document sets the stage for managing future growth and development consistent with the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework* and the community's vision for the future.

Upon adoption, the *Independence Boulevard Area Plan* will provide land use guidance to implement the community's vision to:

- concentrate development intensity at nodes, which are the focus of neighborhoods linked together by green connections which are typically greenways, parks, and trails;
- locate Regional Nodes at the most highly-connected locations in the Plan Area, where Independence Boulevard is crossed by major regional access streets with Briar Creek, Conference Drive, and Sardis Road North Stations future rapid transit stations.
- encourage smaller, local-serving Neighborhood Nodes occur along Monroe Road south of Independence and Albemarle Road on the north side of Independence Boulevard.

This repositioned development pattern will help to revitalize the area by creating a more connected, walkable, and green community. Natural features - creeks, greenways, and parks, are able to be used as amenities to spur additional high-quality residential development. By re-orienting development away from



Example of ground floor retail uses with residential units above

Independence Boulevard and toward new side street connections, a more walkable development pattern can be created and maintained over time, creating nodes of commercial activity with elements of higher-intensity, transit-supportive residential, office, and limited commercial areas to link the neighborhood nodes. All of these changes will serve to help maintain and enhance the existing neighborhoods.

INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD

Area Plan



Part Two: Implementation Guide

Public & Private Sector Responsibilities

Achieving the vision articulated in this plan will occur incrementally over time through the combined efforts of local and state government, private property owners, residents, developers and many others. This Implementation Guide is primarily a staff document that outlines specific steps that can be taken by various public and private entities so that the desired future envisioned in this plan may be realized. These strategies are listed in the table below; the lead responsible agency and tentative time frame is also included. The strategies are numbered sequentially and correspond to the policies discussed in Part One: Concept Plan. This allows staff to track progress of the plan's policies over time.

Some strategies are physical such as the construction of a new interchange at Village Lake Drive or the extension of the Briar Creek Greenway. Others will require changes to existing City policies, regulations and/or practices.

These strategies do not imply a public or private sector commitment. The Charlotte City Council will not be asked to adopt this Implementation Guide; however, many of the strategies in this section will require future action by elected officials and will be presented to them for approval as needed on a case-by-case basis.

Finally, since conditions change over time, staff will update this Implementation Guide to reflect changes and progress.

Public Sector Responsibilities

The public sector will provide the policy basis (primarily through this plan), the oversight and some infrastructure improvements for the implementation of the plan. However, major changes to the study area will become evident only as private investment begins to fill in the framework that is laid out in the plan. The proposed land use for the study area reflects the community's vision.

Plan Adoption

The City's Neighborhood and Business Services, Planning and Transportation Departments, in consultation with other City departments, are responsible for preparation of the plan, and for guiding it through the adoption process.

Proposed Corrective Rezoning

The Planning Department is also responsible for initiating and guiding the rezoning process for Corrective Rezonings recommended in this plan. These recommendations are found on **Map 18**.

The Planning Commission will initiate corrective rezonings to implement the land use vision and recommendations adopted as part of the Concept Plan. Staff-initiated rezonings are most often recommended to:

- Align zoning with existing land use to make future land uses compatible with existing development;
- Align zoning with the currently adopted land use plan; and/or
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas.

The rezoning process will occur only after the completion of the plan and will require additional public input.

Overlay Zoning District

The PED overlay district is recommended for a portion of the study area along Monroe Road, as shown on **Map 18**. The Planning Department is responsible for initiating and guiding the PED rezoning process.

The PED overlay district superimposes additional or alternative development and urban design standards on the basic underlying zoning. It overrides the varying setbacks of the underlying zoning districts with one set of requirements, thereby requiring new development to be built in a more unifying manner along the street.

The standards in the Transportation section supplement the requirements of the PED zoning district, as well as TOD, MUDD, UR, NS, and other urban zoning districts that may be established. All of these zoning districts refer to streetscape standards for new development and changes to existing development. Within these urban districts, the standards herein define ultimate curb locations, building setback lines, sidewalk width and locations, and tree planting requirements.

Conditional Plan Rezonings

In portions of the study area, property owners are likely to initiate conditional rezoning plans for major development projects. The Planning Department and other City departments will work actively with applicants to guide these submissions in accordance with the recommendations of this plan and other adopted City policies, and will make recommendations to City Council accordingly.

Public Investments

This plan's transportation recommendations show a new network of streets that will be needed to efficiently serve the study area. This new network will occur with new development. However, improvements to some of the key pieces of the proposed street network will have to be publicly financed.

Local government will likely provide some investment

in streetscape amenities that can be accommodated within the existing right-of-way. Major public investment in the form of constructing new roadway cross-sections is not likely to occur until design details are in place and funding is available, and until interest in private redevelopment for the area has been demonstrated.

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), in consultation with other City departments, is engaged in planning for a transit system in the Southeast Corridor, extending from the Center City to the Town of Matthews. Currently, a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is proposed to run along Independence Boulevard.

Mecklenburg County's Park and Recreation Department is planning, designing, and constructing a greenway system that will include an extensive system of trails through the plan area. Park and Recreation will continue its efforts to extend the trail system in the near term along Briar Creek, Campbell Creek, and McAlpine Creek. Greenway development is expected to be carried out in concert with private sector redevelopment projects.

Private Sector Responsibilities

A large portion of this plan is dependent on investments by the private sector. It is such private sector action that will bring about change in the area consistent with land use recommendations.

Within the PED overlay area, the private sector will also be responsible for development that is consistent with this plan.

Implementation Strategies

	Policy	Action Item	Project Type	Lead Agency	Timeframe
Land Use and Community Design	LU-1	Use land use, community design, and other policies within the document to guide and evaluate development proposals and rezoning requests.	Zoning/Planning	Planning	Ongoing
	—				
	LU-14	Pursue Pedestrian Overlay District (PED) identified along Monroe Road. LU-8 area should be implemented first and then LU-4 as the responds to TOD. Recommended boundaries are subject to change as implementation occurs. The Community Design chapter shall provide guidance for any parcels omitted from the original PED area.	Zoning/Planning	Planning	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	LU-4				
	and LU-8				
		Pursue identified proposed corrective rezonings in Map 18.	Zoning/Planning	Planning	Short Term (0-5 Years)
		Develop and evaluate a process to purchase parcels where existing or proposed Independence Boulevard road improvements that impact parcel viability.	Property Acquisition	Neighborhood & Business Services	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
Transit Station Areas	TSA-1	Coordinate transportation planning efforts with the Metropolitan Transit Commission to clarify and advance transit improvements in the Southeast Growth Corridor.	Planning	CATS, Planning, CDOT	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	TSA-2	Support transit supportive development proposals consistent with the land use, community design, transportation and other policy guidance specified within the document. Zoning Districts other than Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) may be appropriate to implement the land use vision, but should stress pedestrian oriented design.			
	A	Support transit supportive development proposals consistent with the land use, community design, transportation and other policy guidance specified within the document.	Zoning/Planning	Planning	Ongoing
	—				
	F				
Transportation	T-1	Coordinate planning with NCDOT on reconfiguration of Brian Creek road interchange.	Roadway Modification	CDOT	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	T-2	Implement bicycle lanes along Monroe Road from Briar Creek to Sharon Amity Road.	Design	CDOT	As Dvlpmt Occurs
	T-3	Coordinate planning with NCDOT on reconfiguration of Eastway interchange.	Roadway Modification	CDOT	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	T-4	Design and construct Shade Valley to Pierson connector.	New Roadway	CDOT, CATS	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	T-5	Realign Chippendale Road/Richland Drive intersection(s) at Monroe Road	Roadway Modification	CDOT	As Dvlpmt Occurs
	T-6	Extend Long Avenue to Independence Boulevard	Roadway Modification	CDOT	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
	T-7	Coordinate planning with NCDOT on extension of Village Lake Drive to WT Harris Boulevard and new interchange with Independence Boulevard.	New Roadway	CDOT, NCDOT, CATS	Long Term (10-15 Years)

	Policy	Action Item	Project Type	Lead Agency	Timeframe
	T-8	Extend Arequipa Drive to Sam Newell Road.	New Roadway	CDOT	Long Term (10-15 Years)
	T-9	Extend Krefeld Drive across Irvin Creek.	New Roadway	CDOT	Long Term (10-15 Years)
	T-10	Coordinate planning with NCDOT on new interchange at Sardis Road North.	Roadway Modification	CDOT, CATS	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	T-11	Begin planning and parcel acquisition for Briar Creek and Campbell Creek greenway extensions.	Greenway Trail	Parks and Recreation	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
	T-12	Plan overland connector route between Campbell Creek and Briar Creek greenways.	Greenway Trail	Parks and Recreation	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
	T-13 — T-24	Implement the street cross-sections and amenities provided in the Transportation section of this document through capital projects and new developments	Plan Review and Roadway Modification	CDOT	As Dvlpmt Occurs
	T-25	Study viability of bridge across Independence Boulevard at Wallace Lane and Farmingdale/Glendora Drives.	New Roadway	CDOT	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
	T-26	Implement the intersection improvements projects in the identified locations on Map	Roadway Modification	CDOT, Planning	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
	IF-1	Identify an infrastructure funding sources for implementation.	Budgeting	Neighborhood and Business Services, Planning, CATS, CDOT, Others	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
	IF-2	Consider phasing/timing of private development to coordinate with the provision of critical infrastructure improvements.	Plan Review	Planning, CDOT, CMS, CMU, CATS	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	IF-3	Set up regional stormwater treatment strategy in Amity Gardens and Briar Creek transit station areas to facilitate redevelopment and intensification.	Planning, Engineering	Engineering and Stormwater Services	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
	IF-4	Continually evaluate school capacity as new residential development comes on-line.	Planning	Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District; Planning	As Dvlpmt Occurs
	IF-5	Coordinate underground infrastructure improvements to occur concurrently with the reconstruction of Monroe Road.	Roadway Modification and Infrastructure	CDOT; Engineering; CMU	Ongoing
Infrastructure and Public Facilities/ Services	IF-6	As the need arises for new civic infrastructure (such as recreation centers, post offices, etc.) in the plan area, work with applicable agencies and departments to locate these facilities within transit station areas.	Planning	Planning, Economic Development, City Real Estate, CATS	As Dvlpmt Occurs
	IF-7 and IF-8	Continually evaluate the capacity of the police and fire departments to service the Independence Boulevard plan area as uses intensify and new development comes on-line.	Planning	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department; Planning	As Dvlpmt Occurs
	IF-9	Identify funding opportunities for the construction of a neighborhood park at 5715 Monroe Road and a community park on Reddman Road.	Budgeting and Parks Development	Parks and Recreation	Short Term (0-5 Years)

	Policy	Action Item	Project Type	Lead Agency	Timeframe
Natural Environment	NE-1	Initiate conceptual design for stream daylighting of Edwards Branch and buffering along Independence Boulevard.	Design	Engineering	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	NE-2	Begin process of parcel acquisition for flood prone parcels at Edwards Branch along Independence Boulevard.	Property Acquisition	Neighborhood and BuEconomic Development,	Short Term (0-5 Years)
	NE-3	Extend greenway trail along Edwards Branch	Greenway Trail	Parks and Recreation	Medium Term (5-10 Years)
	NE-4	Utilize the land use recommendations provided in the Land Use section of this document to guide and evaluate development proposals (including requests for rezonings)	Zoning	Planning	Ongoing
	NE-6				

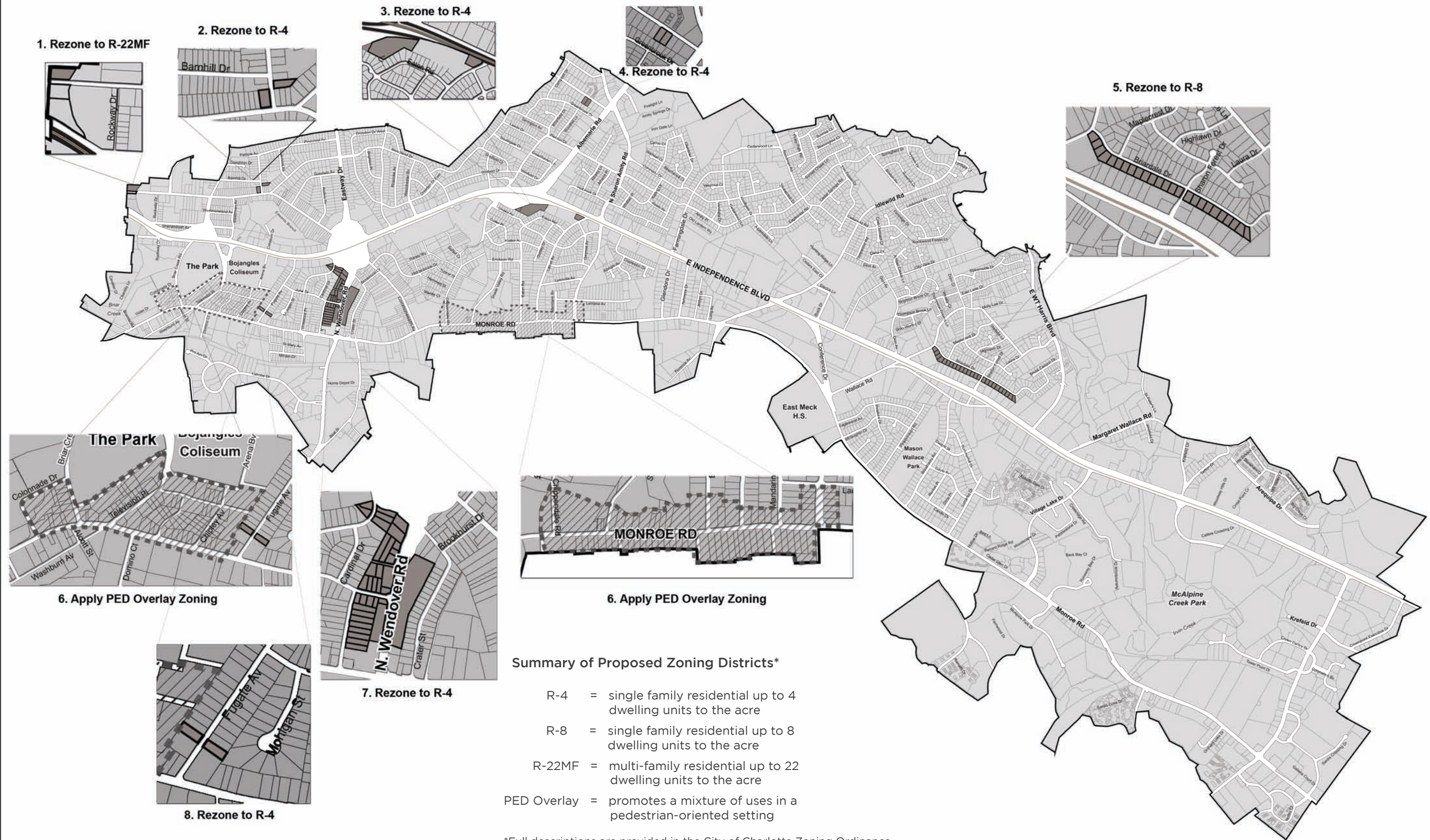
Corrective Rezoning

Map #	Parcel ID	Location	Recommended Zoning Changes	Existing Land Use	Previously Adopted FLU	Recommended Future Land Use	Non-conforming Uses created?
1	12904155	1.0 acre at the NE corner of Morningside and Commonwealth	O-2 to R-22MF	Residential, density at 20 DUA	Greenway	Residential up to 22 DUA	No
2	12908312; 12908224	0.2 acres near the NE corner of Pinecrest and Commonwealth	B-1 to R-4	Residential, single family home	Single-family up to 4DUA	Residential up to 4DUA	No
3	16103636; 16103644; 16103641	4.0 acres along Independence Blvd.	B-2 to R-4	Vacant	Retail	Retail, Residential up to 4 DUA/Park Open Space	No
4	13112319; 13112318	0.5 acres near the SW corner of Driftwood and Albemarle	R-17MF to R-4	Residential, single family home	Multi-family	Residential up to 4DUA	No
5	16511102; 16511103; 16511104; 16511105; 16511106; 16511107; 16511108; 16511109; 16511110; 16511111; 16511112; 16511113; 16511114; 16511115; 16511116; 16514309; 16514310; 16514311; 16514312; 16514313; 16514314; 16514315; 16514316; 16514317	6 acres combined along Briardale Drive	R-17MF to R-8	Residential, duplex/triplex	Single-family up to 4DUA	Residential up to 8DUA	No
6	Various Parcels (Map and Specific Parcels to be inserted)	Monroe Road between Chippendale & Sharon Amity Road; Briar Creek Road & Fugate	Apply PED Overlay to existing zoning districts	Vacant, retail, residential, & office,	Residential, office, retail, & industrial	Retail, office, residential	No

Map #	Parcel ID	Location	Recommended Zoning Changes	Existing Land Use	Previously Adopted FLU	Recommended Future Land Use	Non-conforming Uses created?
7	15906231; 15905105; 15905111; 15905112; 15905113; 15905114; 15905115; 15905116; 15905117; 15905118; 15905119; 15905120; 15905121; 15906302; 15906305; 15906304; 15906310; 15906303; 15906314; 15906315; 15906316; 15906317; 15905332; 15905331; 15906341; 15906352; 15906340; 15906313; 15906318; 15906312; 15906309; 15906306; 15906311	10.1 acres along and abutting Wendover Road, north of Monroe	R-17MF to R-4	Vacant & Residential, single family homes	Single-family up to 4DUA & Multi-family	Residential up to 4DUA & open space	No
8	15905482; 15902613	6 acres combined along Fugate	O-2 to R-4	Residential, single family homes	Single-family up to 4DUA	Residential up to 4 DUA	No

Independence Boulevard - Proposed Corrective Rezoning

Map 16

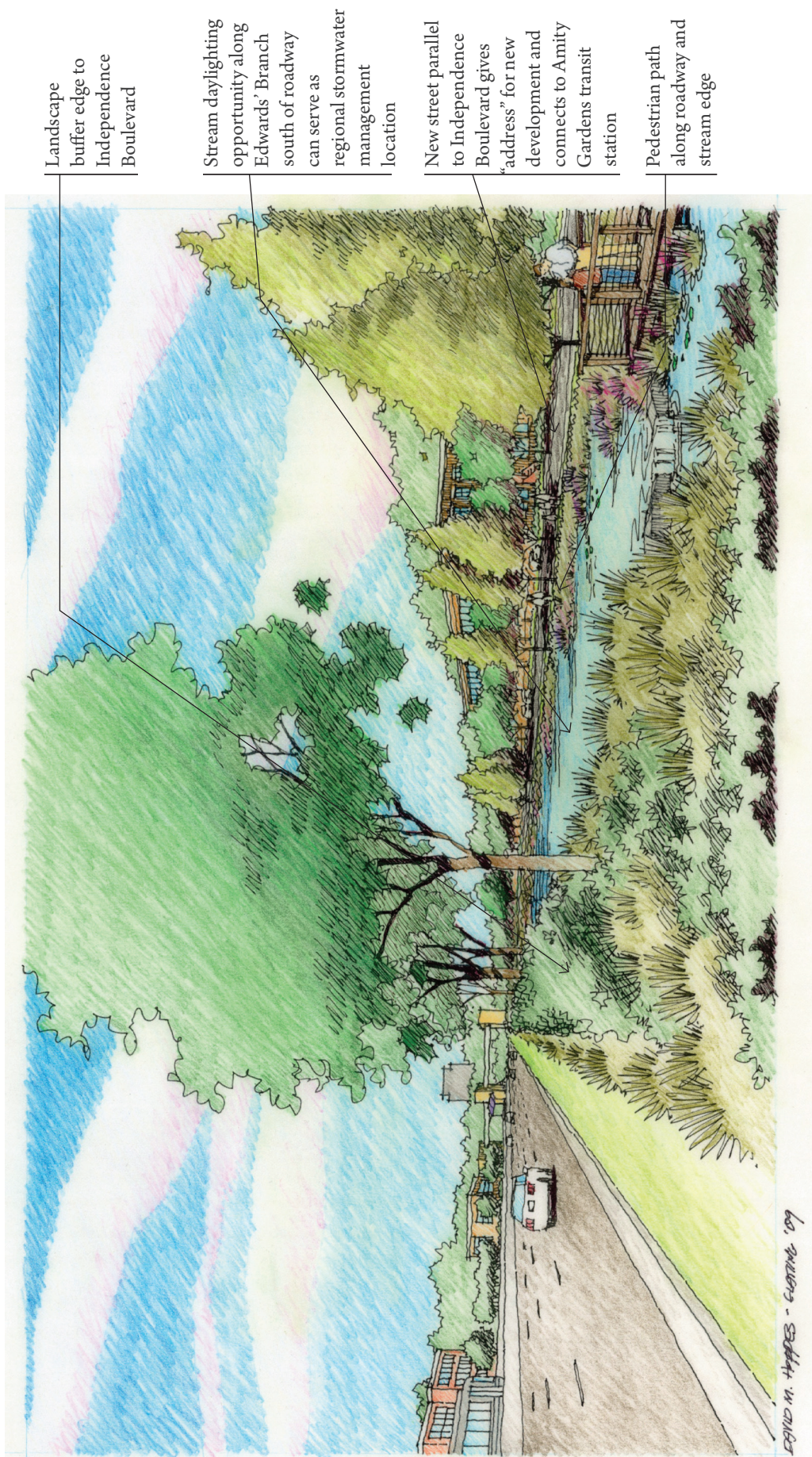


Catalyst Sites

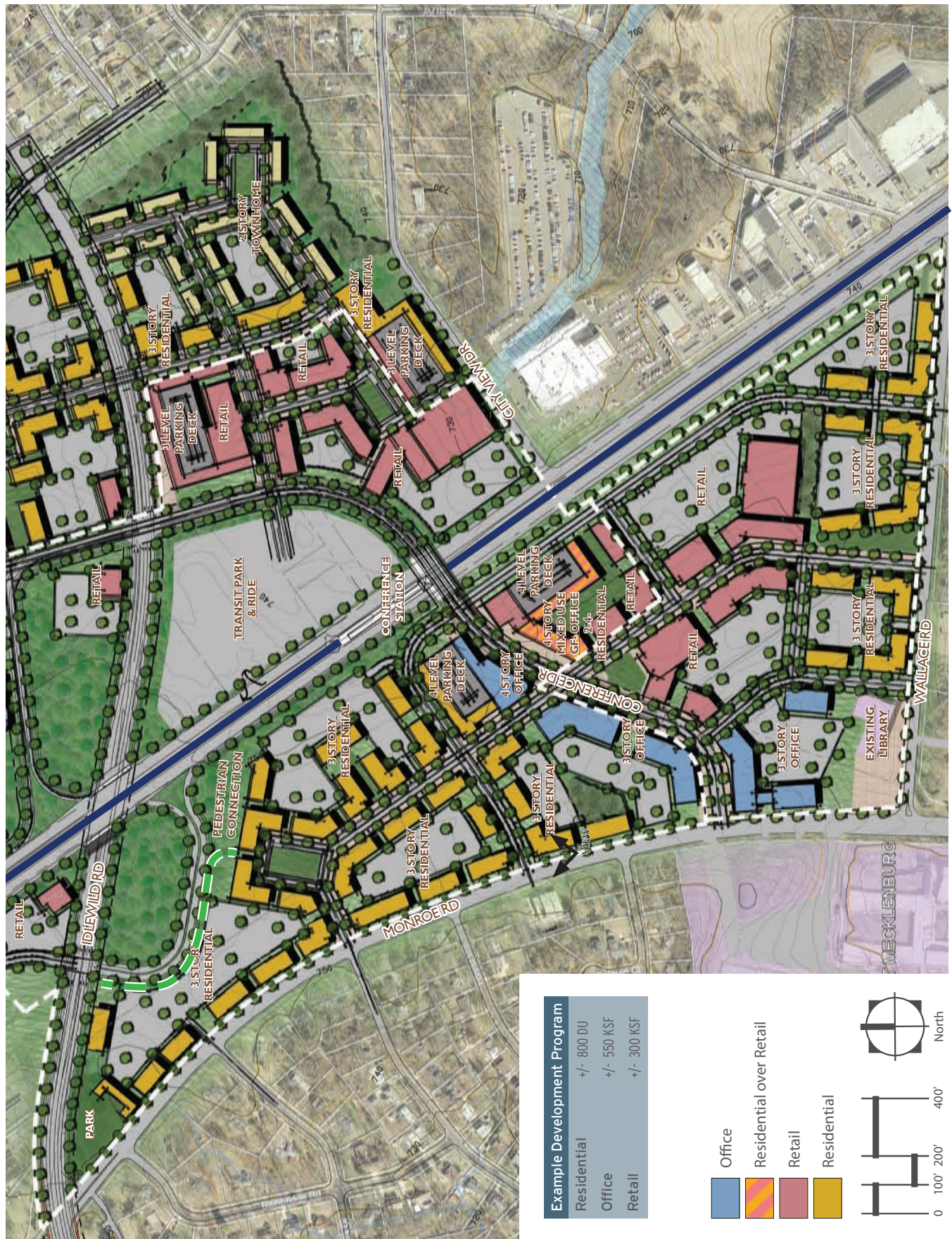
Plans contained in this section are for key sites throughout the corridor and are intended to illustrate development outcomes consistent with the policies of this plan.

Amity Gardens Station Area Concept Plan





Map 25 - Conference Drive Station Area Concept Plan



Typical street edge of three-story mixed use residential above retail or three-story residential transitions between intensity near station and residential neighborhood southeast of Monroe

Multiple new streets connect Monroe to Conference and transit station access

Monroe Road edge with similar treatment as pedscape section





New residential
and/or retail
development built
to edge of sidewalk

Monroe
improvements
include median,
bike lanes, and 8'
sidewalk

Incremental
commercial
redevelopment
on south side of
Monroe



INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD

Area Plan



Part Three: Appendix



CHARLOTTE

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG
PLANNING

Existing Conditions

A thorough review and understanding of existing conditions, physical, economic and social, was critical to identifying the opportunities and constraints facing the Independence Boulevard plan area, and to developing the plan vision, goals and policies. The following discussion highlights those existing conditions, trends and forecasts most relevant for the plan area.

The Independence Boulevard plan area covers a large amount of land, and includes a wide diversity of communities, businesses, and physical conditions. The portion of the area closest to Uptown (roughly from Briar Creek to Albemarle) is the oldest part of the corridor. This area is currently experiencing the most deterioration in commercial properties on Independence, but the neighborhoods are relatively healthy (Echo Hills is the only one of the City's Neighborhood Statistical Areas in this area classified as "transitioning", while the other four are all considered "stable.") Independence Boulevard has been converted to a hybrid freeway-arterial in this area.

The section from Albemarle Road to Wallace Road has healthier commercial properties. However, anecdotal evidence collected by market analysts Robert Charles Lessor and Company (RCLCO) indicates that retail and office tenants are reluctant to extend their leases in this area, as this stretch of Independence Boulevard will be converted to a hybrid freeway-arterial condition over the next several years. Three of the four neighborhoods in this section are classified as "transitioning."

The final section, from Wallace Road to the City boundary, has been developed the most recently. The shopping centers are all considered healthy by RCLCo., with low vacancy rates, and the residential neighborhoods are stable. Several large, undeveloped parcels remain in this section.

Trends

Several trends are currently influencing the economy, market conditions, and physical appearance of the plan area.

Trend 1: Commercial Decline

One of the most visible and alarming trends is the decline of the commercial properties on the section of Independence Boulevard closest to Uptown. These properties are characterized by high vacancy rates and dilapidated buildings and parking fields. This decline has been caused by a number of factors, including:

- **Obsolete Facilities:** The worst performing shopping centers on Independence were all built prior to 1965. Physically, the structures and parking lots are in a state of serious disrepair. For the most part, they do not include the facilities or amenities required by most modern retailers. Additionally, high-quality retail tenants are also turning away from "strip" commercial developments, such as those found on Independence. These businesses—and the people who shop at them—are increasingly attracted to more "nodal" developments, characterized by their



Vacant shopping centers in the plan area.



New street-oriented retail on US 74 (Wilkinson Boulevard).



Barrier creates retail visibility problem in the plan area.



High speeds and turn lanes exemplify the road's "hybrid" nature.

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- **Access and visibility:** Retailers need two fundamental things to survive—good access and high visibility. Along the section of Independence Boulevard that has been converted to a hybrid freeway-arterial, they have neither. Access is limited to right-in/right-out movements; for a driver on the opposite side of the road from a business he wants to visit, he must make a series of maneuvers through several interchanges to arrive at the shop. Visibility is also a problem. The high speeds make it difficult for drivers to notice signage or shop-fronts. The concrete barrier in the middle of Independence greatly restricts visibility of the businesses on the opposite side of the roadway.
- **Regulatory constraints to redevelopment:** Regulatory factors are also contributing to the lack of reinvestment in the commercial properties on Independence Boulevard. The transitional setback, which, at the beginning of this planning process, extended 175 feet from the centerline of Independence, makes it difficult to redevelop smaller parcels. The



Signs of disinvestment in the plan area.



Access management limiting accessibility to businesses.



Aging multi-family units in the plan area.

setback was reduced by City Council action in early 2009 to 125 feet for the corridor west of WT Harris Boulevard and 140 feet east of Harris. (The Phase I Study examined some of these regulatory constraints in greater detail.)

The combination of these three factors, along with changing demographics and markets, has contributed to the blighted and vacant commercial properties along the section of Independence from Briar Creek

to Albemarle. With the planned conversion of the road to a similar hybrid freeway-arterial condition from Albemarle to Conference another stretch of commercial properties may face similar challenges.

Trend 2: Shifts in Residential Preferences

Just as the retail industry is rapidly changing in response to a number of demographic and social forces, so is the residential market. Generation Y, loosely people born between the late 1970s and mid 1980s, are beginning to purchase their first homes, and are exhibiting very different preferences than previous generations. This demographic cohort is choosing smaller, attached units set in mixed-use, walkable environments.

The Baby Boomers are also trending towards smaller units in walkable environments. As this enormous group enters their retirement years, they are showing a preference for living in dynamic places that offer a variety of things to do—and easy ways to get to these activities. Instead of isolated condos in retirement communities, many of them are choosing higher density buildings in urban cores or townhomes in suburban town centers.

While the demand for multi-family properties is expected to continue increasing, the multi-family choices in the plan area could be considered obsolete because they do not offer the amenities, floorplans, or site design that is preferred by these new demographic groups. They are not walkable and have no mixture of land uses. They do not include the latest recreational amenities, and in some cases may not be “wired” for the latest technologies.

The market analysis conducted by Robert Charles Lessor, Co (RCLCO) shows that there is a demand for additional apartments and condominiums in the plan area (see study under separate cover). The infrastructure and land use patterns of the area, as well as its proximity to Uptown, also point to multi-family residential being an important part of the corridor’s revitalization.

Trend 3: Changing Transportation Behavior

With wildly fluctuating transportation costs, more

Americans are embracing alternative methods for moving around their communities, including transit, biking, and walking. The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) saw a 17.4% ridership increase in fiscal year 2008, with over 23 million trips. The new LYNX Blue Line served 2.8 million riders in its first seven months of operation, averaging 14,147 riders per day—a figure 55% higher than the projected 9,100 daily riders.

Infrastructure Inventory

Water and Sewer

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities provides potable water and sanitary sewer service to the plan area. There is currently one existing water tank and one existing booster pump station in the area, and no plans for additional facilities are programmed in the FY2009-2013 CIP or the 10-Year Needs plan.

There are no lift stations or waste water treatment plants in the plan area. Two major capital improvements are programmed for the area, however. Phase II of the Briar Creek Sewer System Improvement Project, which is currently in the design stage, “will enhance system performance, provide increased sewer capacity for present and future needs, and protect the water quality in Briar Creek.” Phase IV of the McAlpine Relief Sewer Improvement Project also runs through the plan area, and will provide increased capacity while protecting the water quality of McAlpine Creek. Phase I of that project is currently underway.

Stormwater

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services currently has several stormwater projects underway or planned in the area, including projects associated with Briar Creek, Edwards Branch, and McAlpine Creek.

Redevelopment of many parcels in the Plan Area would benefit from a regional approach to managing stormwater under the City’s new Post-Construction Controls Ordinance. See Map 25 and the associated text for more details on potential locations for regional stormwater facilities.

Demographics

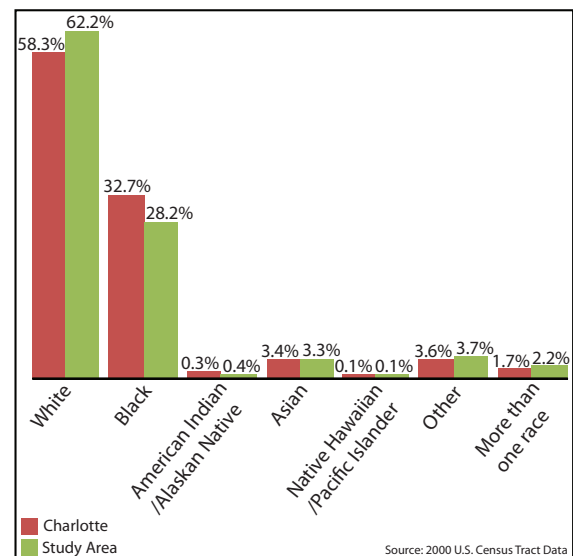
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 77,072 people living within the Independence Boulevard study area. This represents only 14.2% of Charlotte's 540,828 population. The majority of residents in the study area are white- 62.2%, about 28.2% are black with the remaining 10% being American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander and others. The racial composition of the study area very closely resembles that of Charlotte.

A substantial part of the adult population has attained higher education- 41.8% of the population over age 25. Of the total population, 23.5% has attended some college and 21% are high school graduates only. The figures for the study area very closely reflect those of its city. In Charlotte, 42.9% of the adult population has attained higher education, 22.1% have attended some college and 20% are high school graduates.

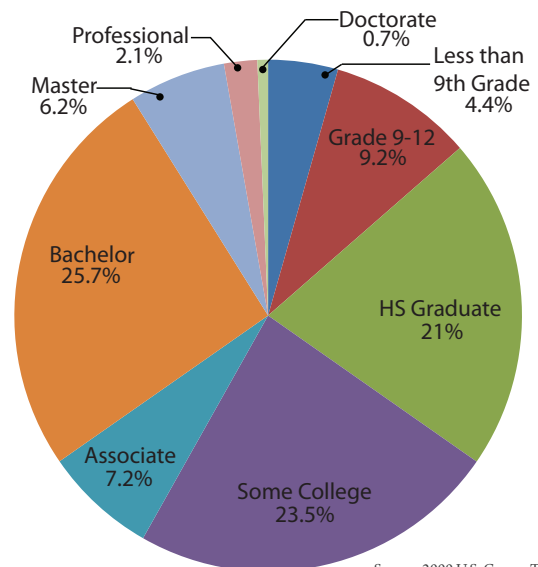
The majority of the population of the study area is employed in the Management/Professional industry. Of the total, 31% are employed in Sales/Office, 13% in the Service industry, 11% in Production/Transportation and 9% in Construction and Maintenance. The city-wide figures are almost the same. The majority of the Charlotte population is employed in the Management/Professional industry, with 29.2% in Sales/Office, 13% in Service, 12% in Production/Transportation and 8% in Construction and Maintenance.

Most people living within the study area or 91.7% commute to their places of work using a private automobile, only 3.4% commute by public transportation, 1.3% walk and 0.1% ride bicycles. The city-wide commute pattern is very similar. 91.2% of the Charlotte population commute to work using a private automobile, only 3.2% use public transportation, 1.5% walk and 0.1% ride bicycles.

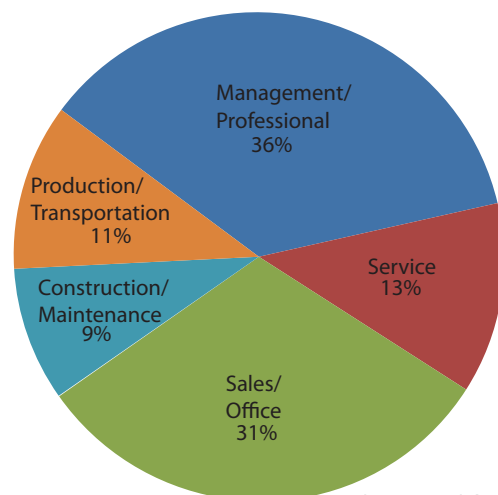
Note: This data is nine years old and changes have taken place that will likely be reflected in the upcoming 2010 census.



Population Characteristics for Independence Boulevard Study Area



Educational Level for Independence Boulevard Study Area



Employment Industry for Independence Boulevard Study Area

Neighborhoods

There are about 40 neighborhoods or Neighborhood Statistical Areas (NSA), within the Independence Boulevard study area. Eight of these neighborhoods have been included in the 2008 Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life Study. These NSAs are Oakhurst, Echo Hills, Chantilly, Sardis Woods, Sardis Forest, Eastway/Sheffield Park, East Forest, and Stonehaven. The Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life Study analyzes the social, physical, crime and economic characteristics of Charlotte neighborhoods. These characteristics are numerically aggregated and then used to further classify these neighborhoods into “stable”, “transitioning” and “challenged”.

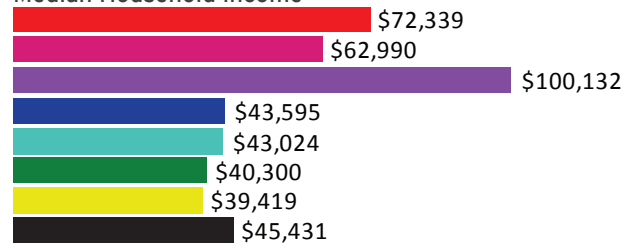
Stable NSAs are those that exhibit minimal problems on the neighborhood level. The quality of life in these neighborhoods is higher than the city-wide average. Transitioning NSAs are those that exhibit neighborhood problems on a moderate scale. The quality of life in these neighborhoods is average compared with that of the city. Such neighborhoods are in transition and may be improving or declining. Challenged NSAs are those which score low to moderate on the quality of life indicators. The quality of life of such neighborhoods is lower than that of the city-wide average. Out of the 8 neighborhoods studied, all are considered stable, with the exception of East Forest, Eastway/Sheffield Park and Echo Hills which are considered to be in transition.

Of these eight NSAs, Stonehaven, Sardis Woods and Sardis Forest consistently score high on indicators such as median “household income”, “average house value” and “percent homeowner”. Some other neighborhoods score as low as 23% for some quality of life indicators such as “percent home ownership”.

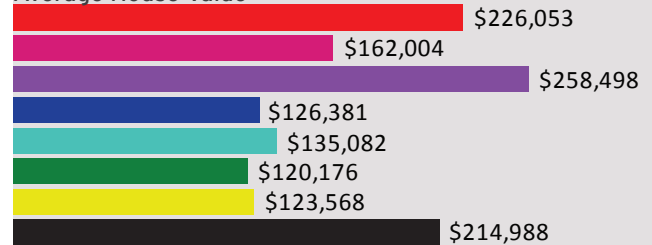
Neighborhood Statistical Area Status

NSA	Status
Stone-Haven	Stable
Sardis Woods	Stable
Sardis Forest	Stable
Oakhurst	Stable
Echo Hills	Transitioning
Eastway/Sheffield Park	Transitioning
East Forest	Transitioning
Chantilly	Stable

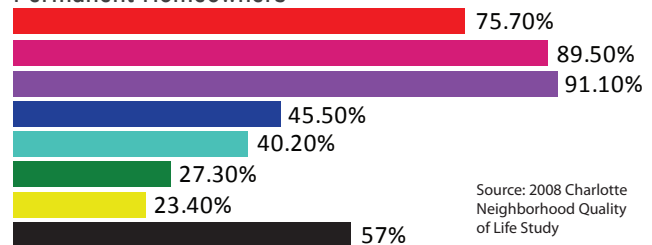
Median Household Income



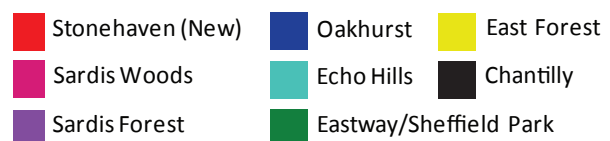
Average House Value



Permanent Homeowners

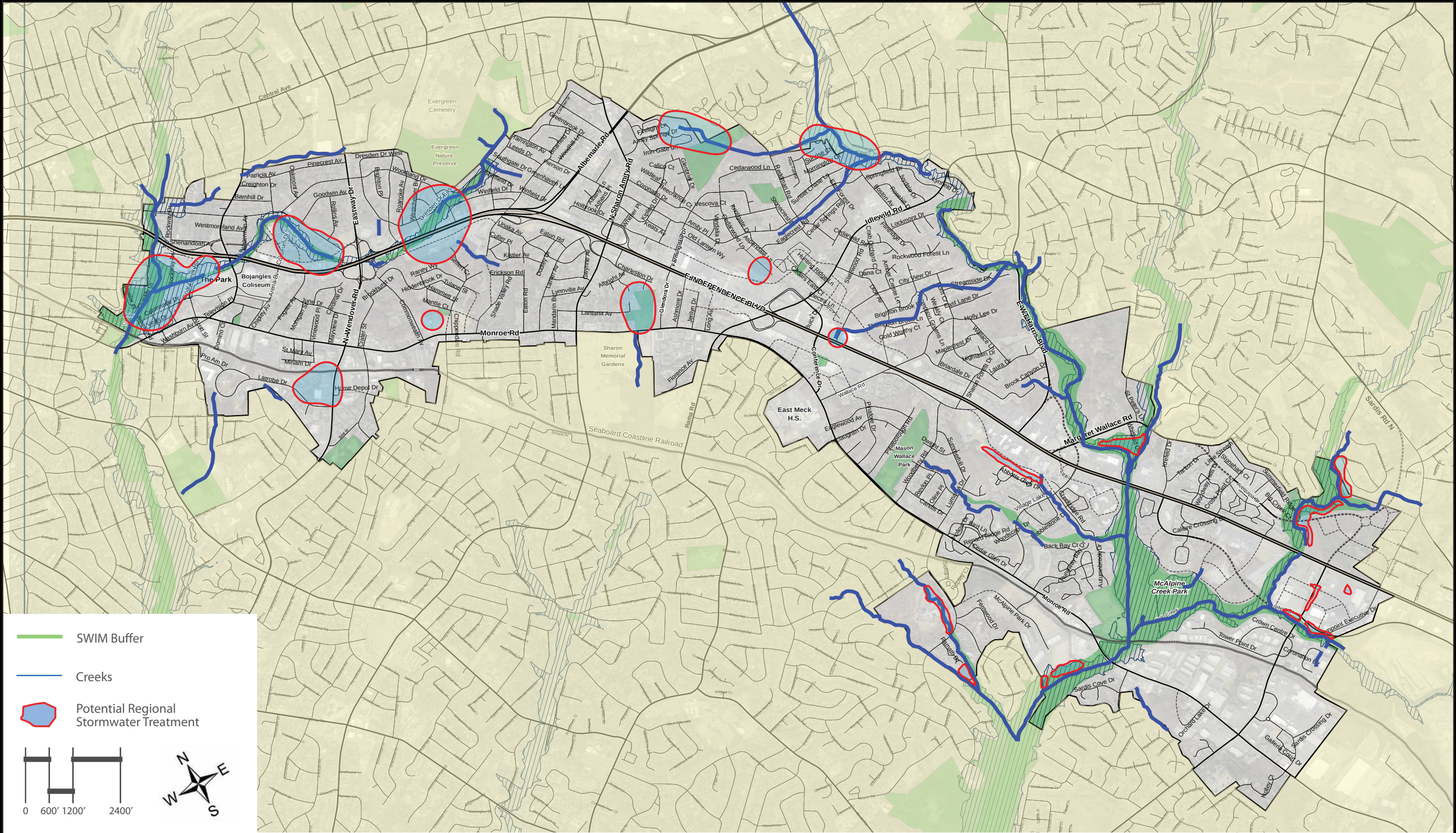


Source: 2008 Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life Study



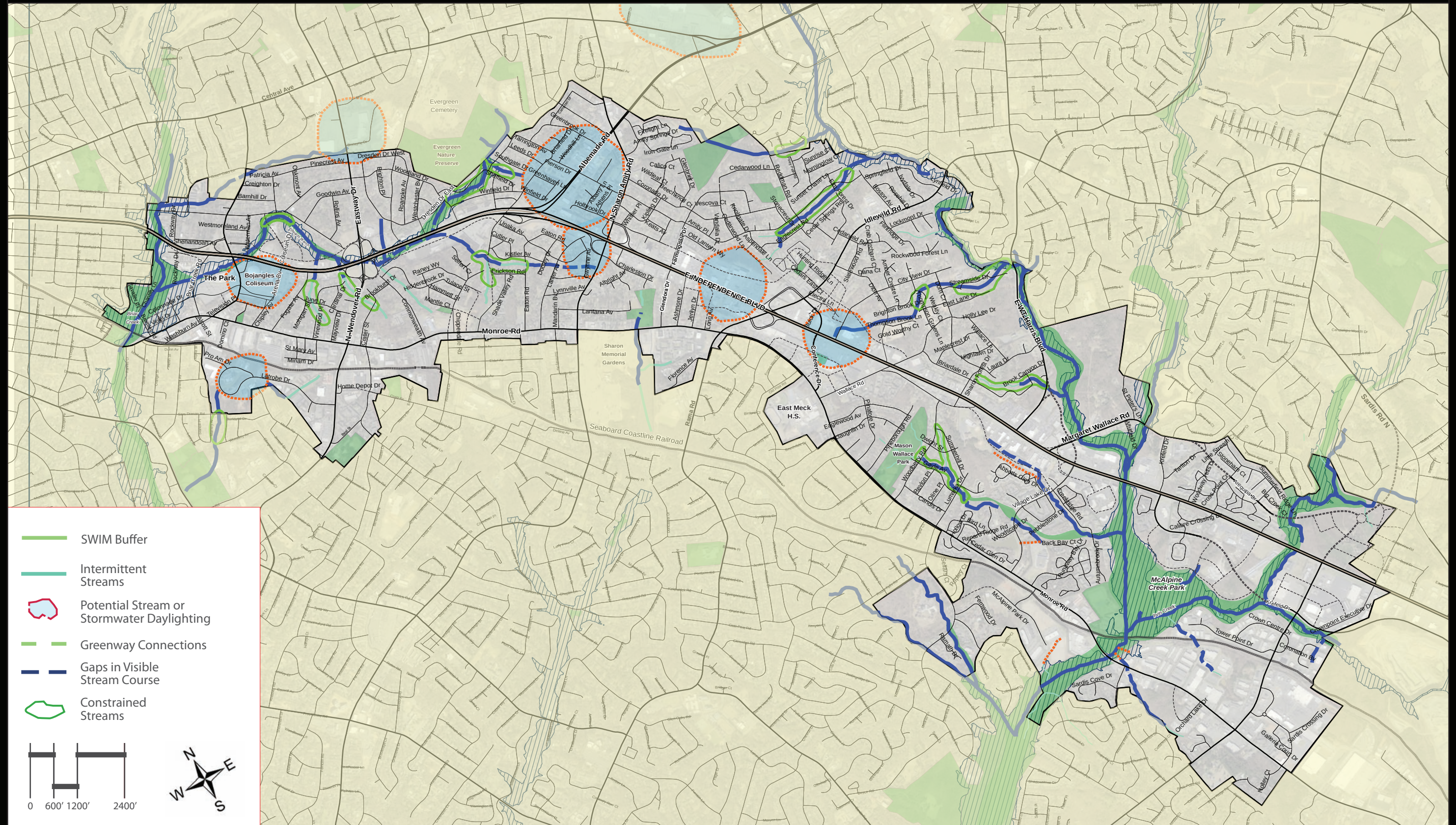
Independence Boulevard - Potential Regional Stormwater Treatment Locations

Map 17



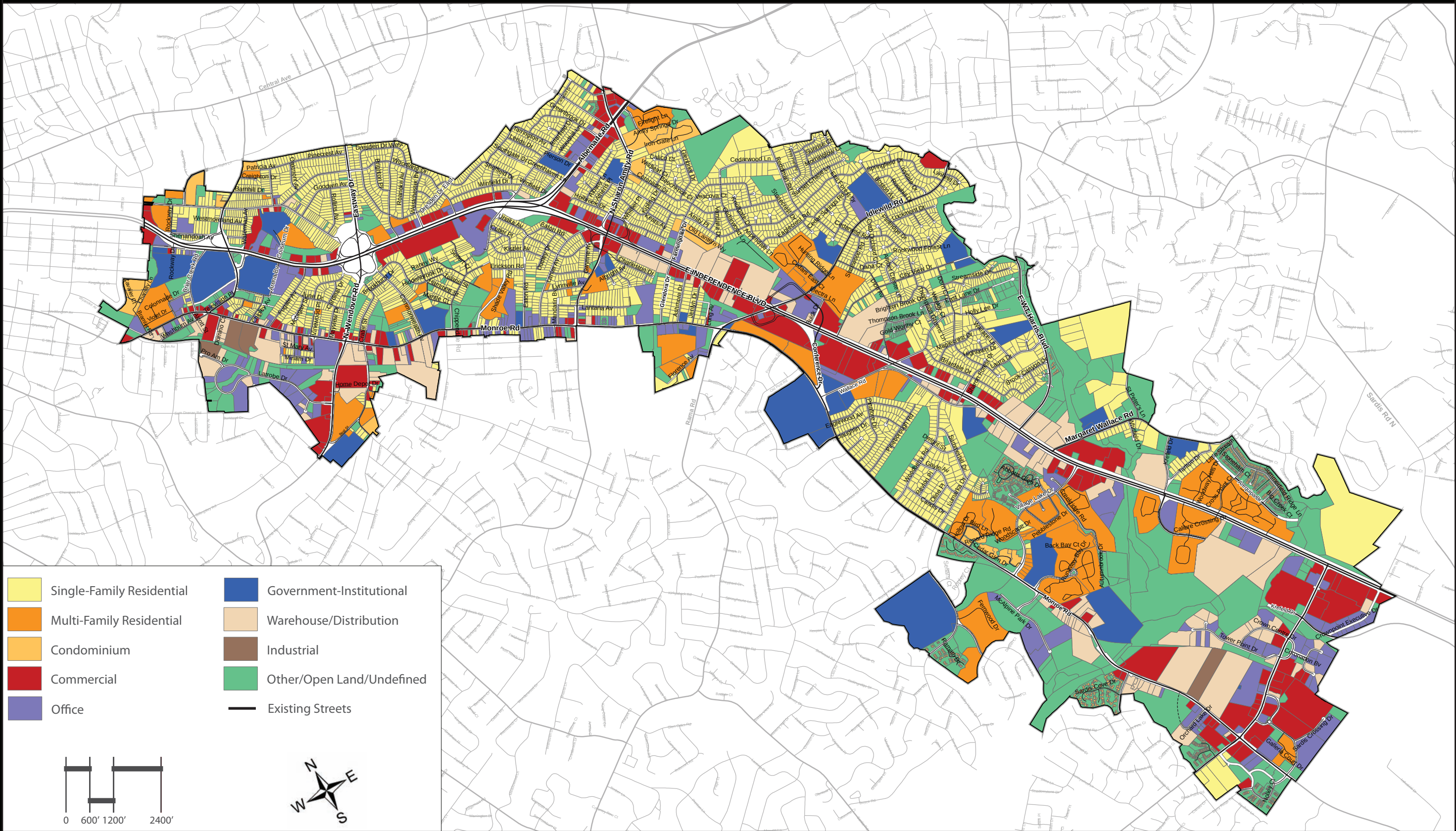
Independence Boulevard - Potential Stream Daylighting Locations

Map 18



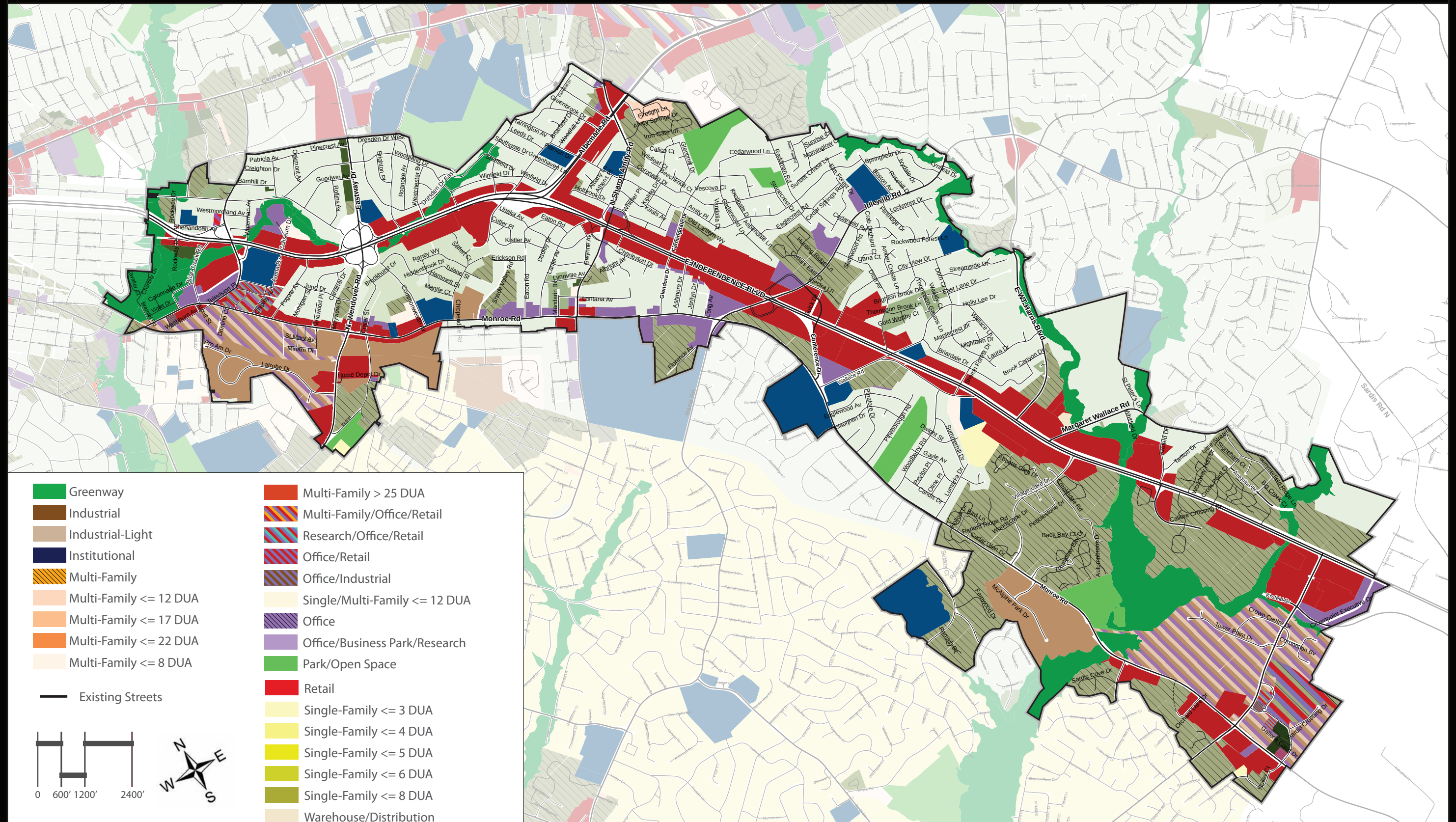
Independence Boulevard - Existing Land Use

Map 19



Independence Boulevard - Adopted Future Land Use

Map 20



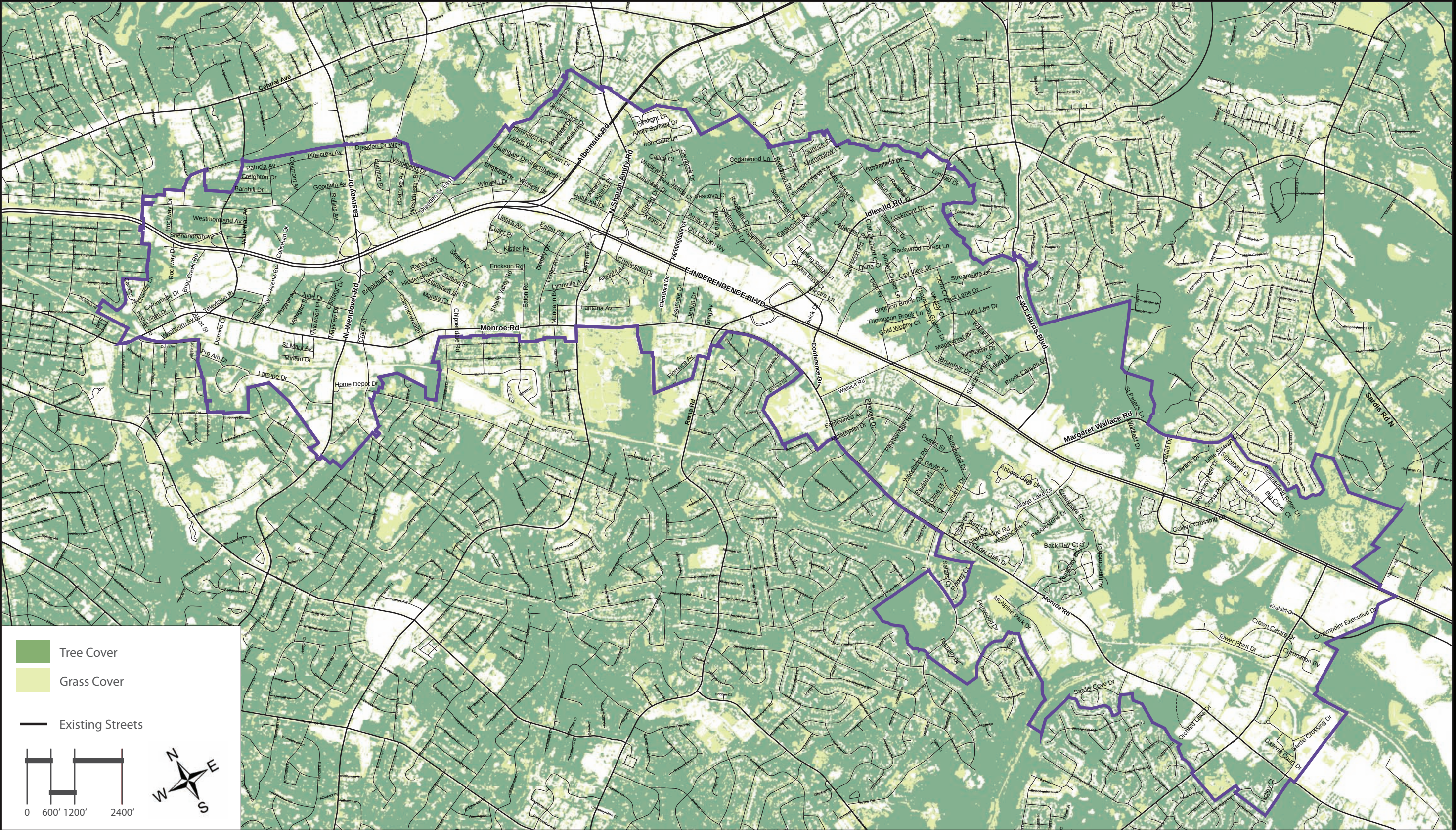
Independence Boulevard - Topography and Drainage

Map 21



Independence Boulevard - Tree Cover

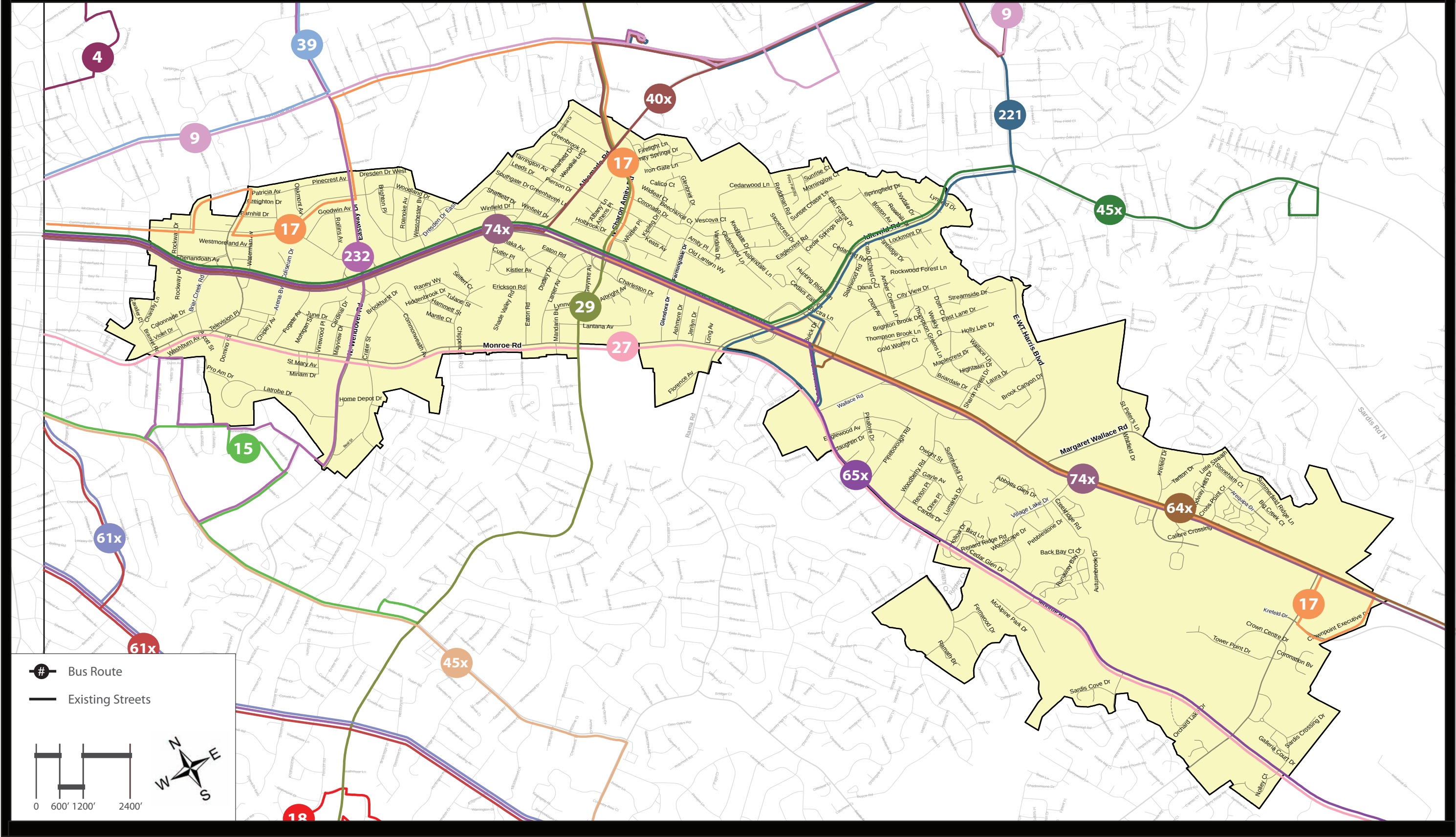
Map 22



Map 23

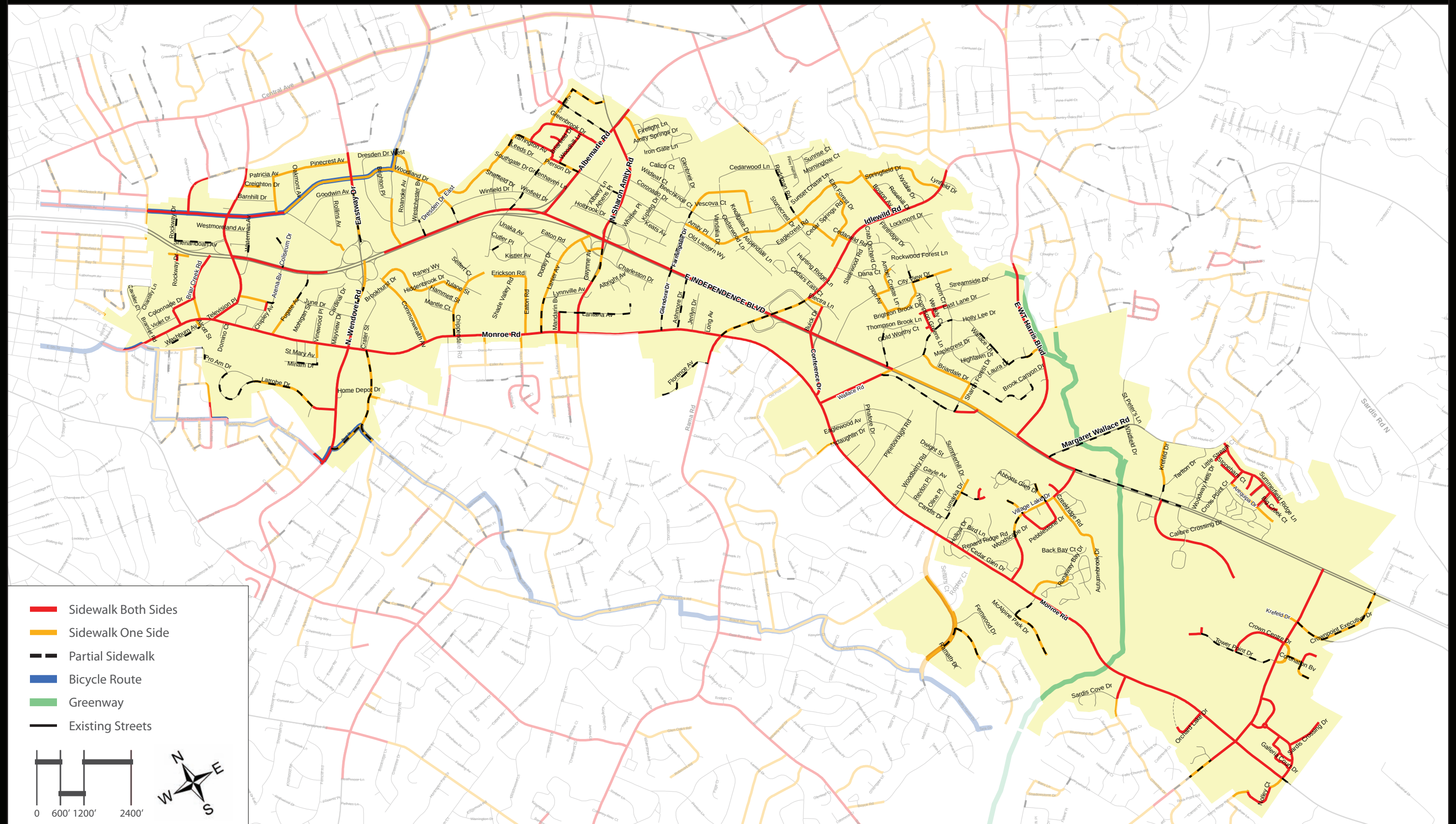


Independence Boulevard - Existing Transit Routes



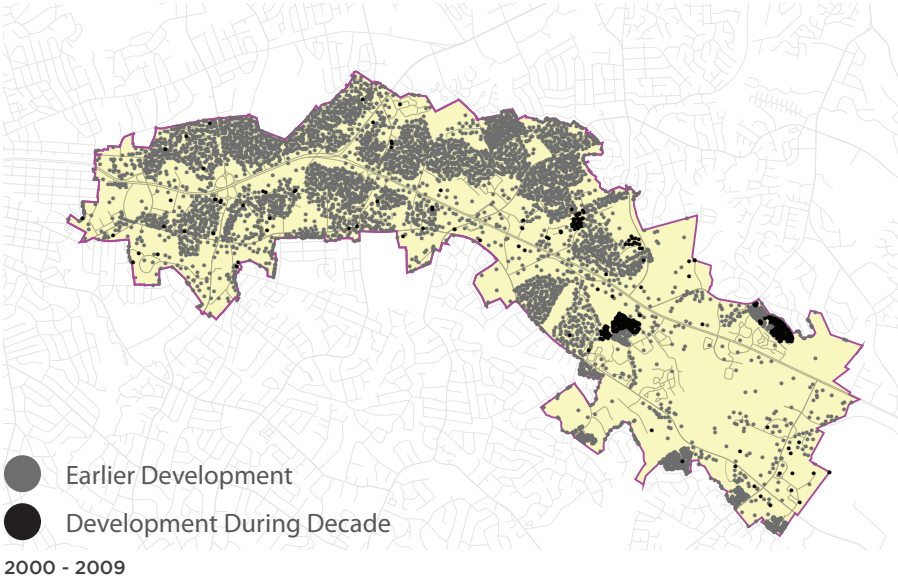
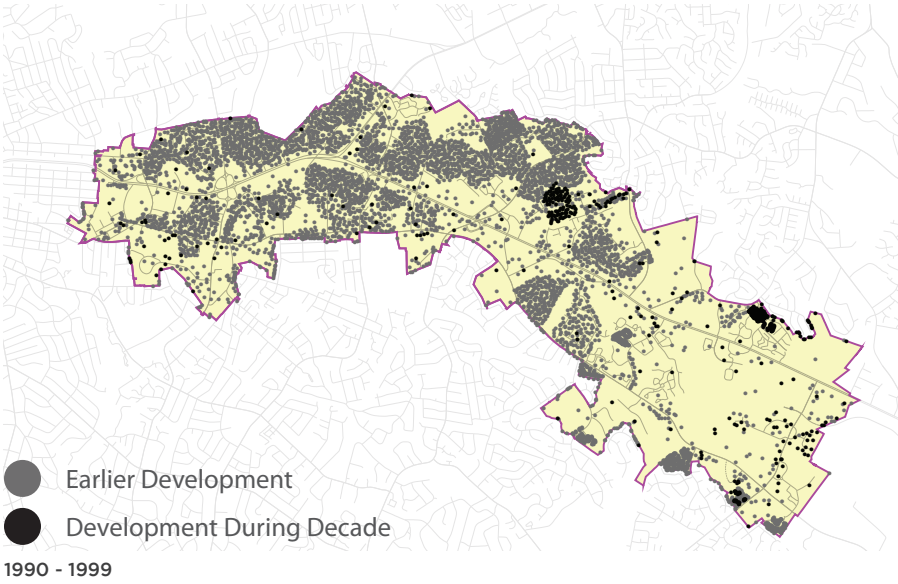
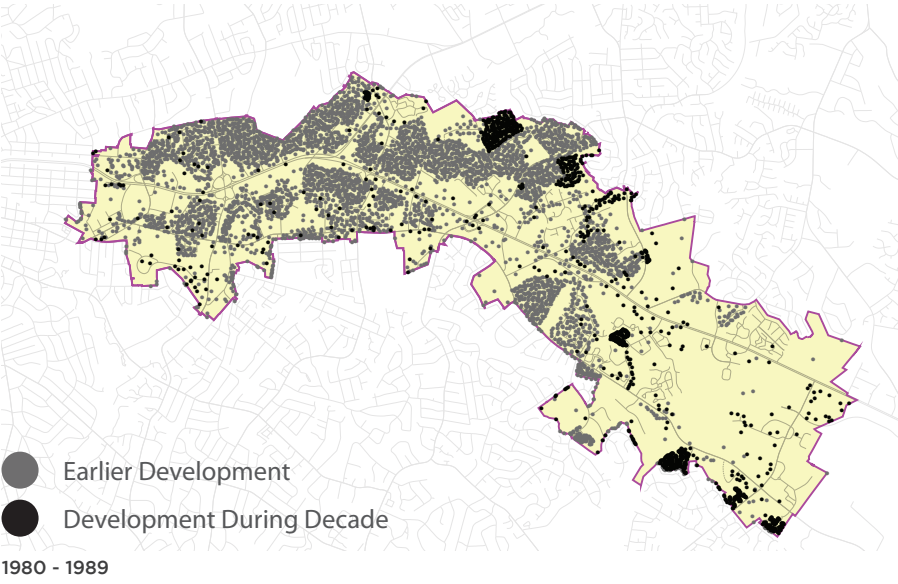
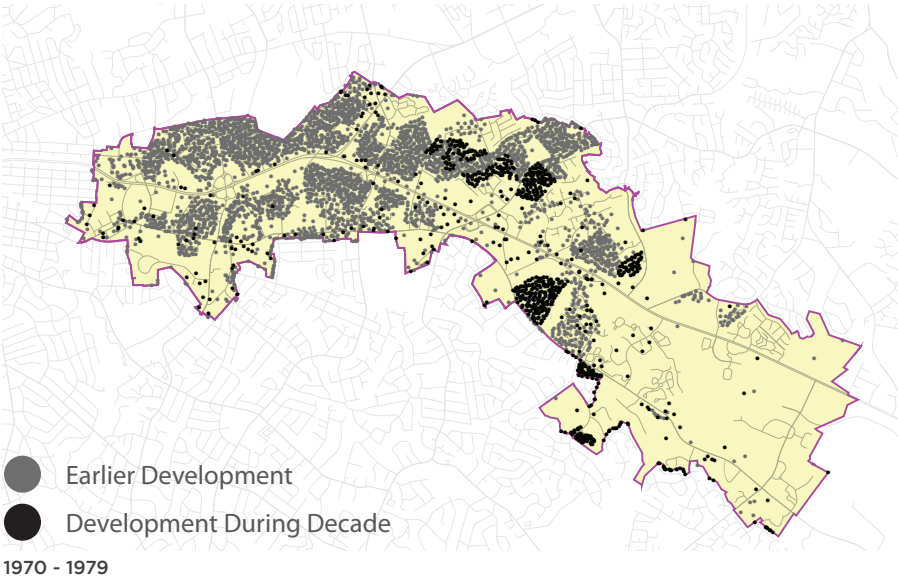
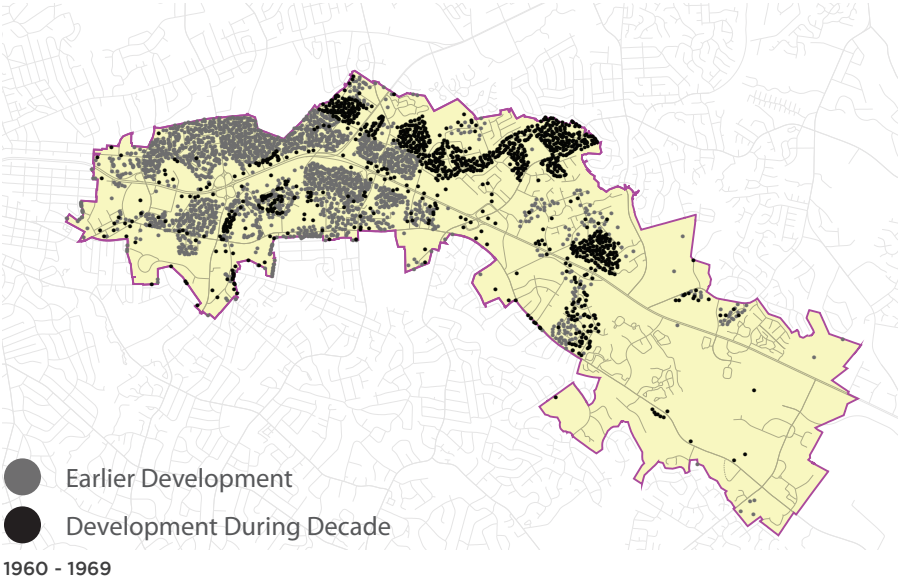
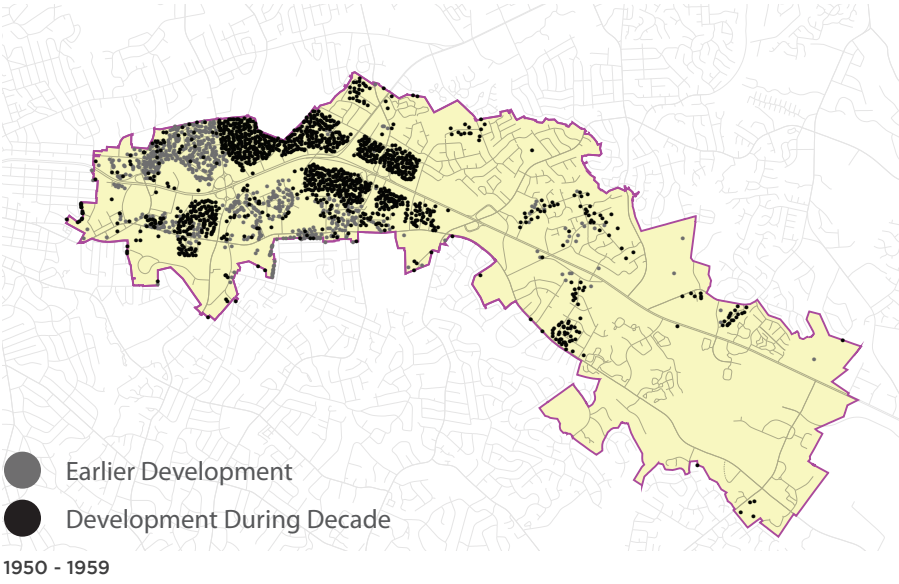
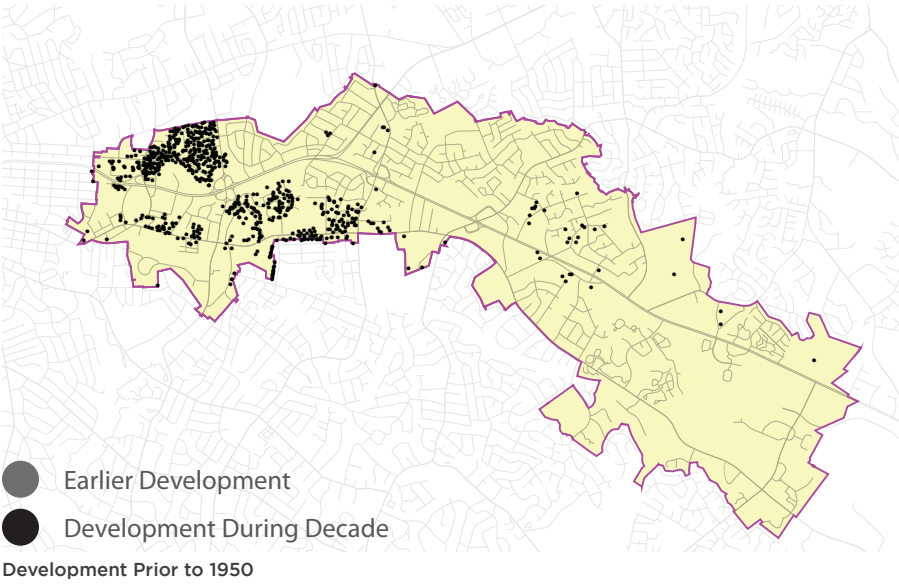
Independence Boulevard - Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

Map 25



Map 26 - Development History

Development of the Plan Area generally occurred from west to east (from the Center City outward), and the bulk of development took place prior to 1980. Development in the past 30 years has largely been in the form of scattered site infill and single-site multi-family projects.



Map 27



