

INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD

Area Plan



**April 2010 Draft
Executive Summary**

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- Disinvestment in the form of vacant and outdated retail properties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

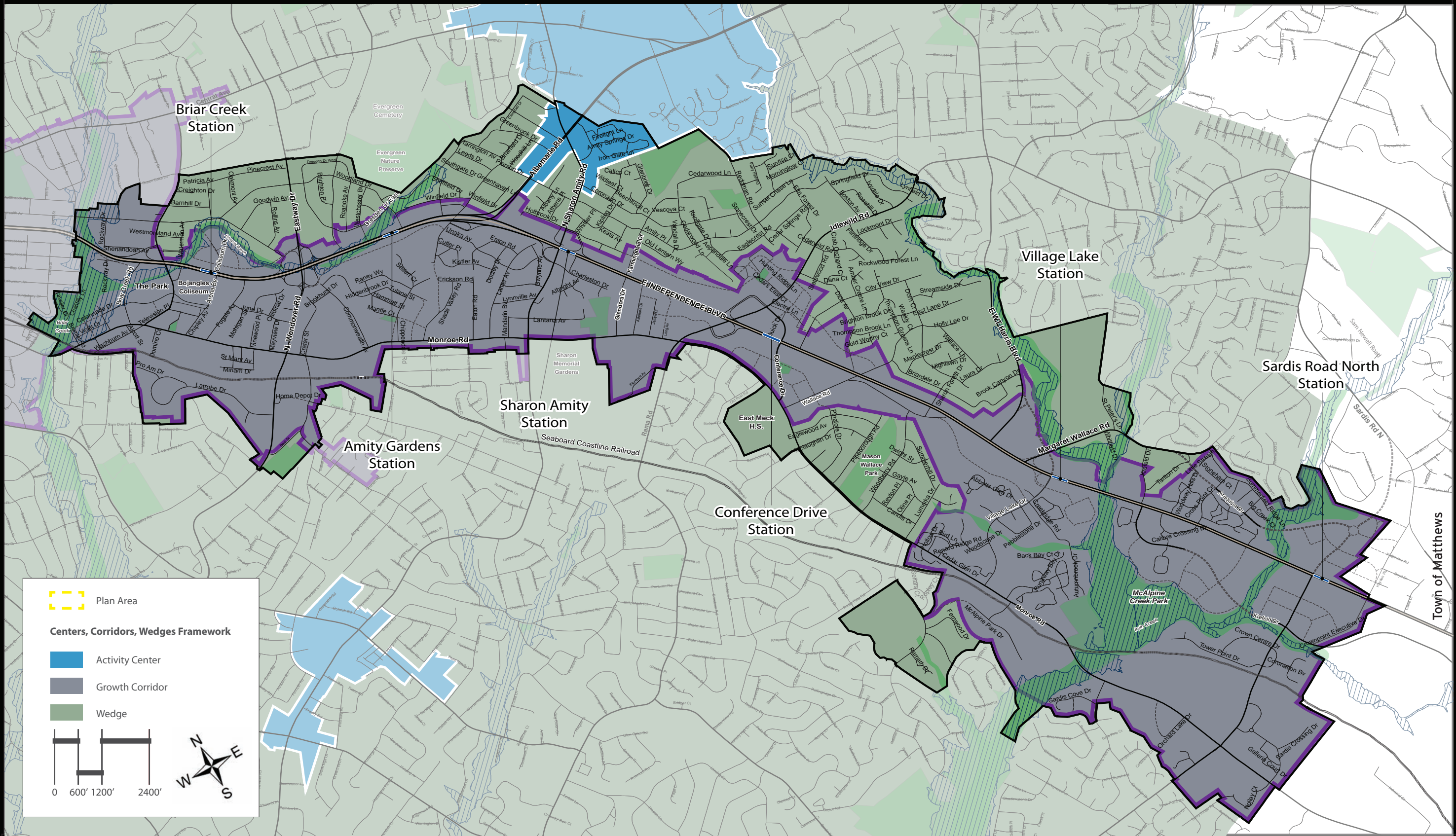
- Independence Boulevard should be developed within a 250' envelope west of WT Harris Boulevard and a 280' envelope east of WT Harris to the Plan Area boundary.
- Key connections should be established through new development to facilitate redevelopment. Many of these connections should offer parallel 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.

Independence Boulevard Plan Area Boundary

Map 1



Independence Boulevard Opportunities and Constraints

Map 2

