

MIDTOWN MOREHEAD CHERRY AREA PLAN
Proposed Revisions to September 12, 2011 Draft Document
Comparative Text, as of January 5, 2012

| | Recommendation and Location | Nature of Change | Original | Revision (new or changed material underlined) |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| 1 | Executive Summary Page vi, Transportation Policies, third bullet | Provide more generalized language regarding future street connectivity | Make new local street connections when redevelopment permits: Berkeley Avenue and Cherry Street; ensure that a connection at Main Street is included in the Grove at Cherry project. | Make new local street connections <u>and pedestrian friendly access</u> when redevelopment permits <u>in accordance with applicable City policies, with sensitivity to the community, resident input, and appropriate traffic calming mechanisms.</u> |
| 2 | Page 14, Item L3 | Provision for future street connectivity along Kings Drive | Kings Drive frontage: The east side of Kings Drive now faces directly onto the greenway or onto the edge of the Metropolitan. It is developed with strip centers, retail sites, and some office uses. As opportunities for redevelopment arise, this area should move toward mixed use pedestrian friendly development, with buildings along the street edge. This might include retail uses along the first floor, with office or residential uses above, or single uses on individual parcels. | Kings Drive frontage: The east side of Kings Drive now faces directly onto the greenway or onto the edge of the Metropolitan. It is developed with strip centers, retail sites, and some office uses. As opportunities for redevelopment arise, this area should move toward mixed use pedestrian friendly development, with buildings along the street edge. This might include retail uses along the first floor, with office or residential uses above, or single uses on individual parcels. <u>As redevelopment occurs, connectivity to the existing street network should be undertaken in accordance with applicable City policies, with sensitivity to the community, resident input, and appropriate traffic calming mechanisms.</u> |
| 3 | Page 15, Item L6 | Note that this parcel is an element of the Cherry neighborhood. | Charlottetowne Avenue at Fox Street: A small triangular block fronting Charlottetown Avenue is zoned residential, but contains small nonconforming uses. The location is appropriate for mixed uses including residential and/or office. | Charlottetowne Avenue at Fox Street: A small triangular block fronting Charlottetown Avenue is zoned residential, but contains small nonconforming uses. <u>It is considered an element of the Cherry neighborhood.</u> The location is appropriate for mixed uses including residential and/or office. |

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| 4 | Page 16, Cherry Area | Add more detailed listing of intentions for the Cherry plan recommendations | <i>(New text. Insert after the Cherry Land Use Goal.)</i> | <p><u>The following intentions are embodied within the specific policies that follow:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Maintain, preserve, and enhance the area's predominant historic residential character, parks and open spaces.</u> • <u>Encourage well-conceived infill development, important to the ongoing vitality of the area, balanced with neighborhood preservation. There should be broad community participation in planning and development decisions that affect the fabric of the Cherry neighborhood.</u> • <u>Preserve the stability of Cherry neighborhood, as noted in the 2010 Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life Study.</u> • <u>Given that Cherry's tree-cover is considered to be one of the area's most striking attributes and ranks among the finest in Charlotte, design new development and redevelopment to minimize adverse impacts to the tree canopy.</u> • <u>Discourage tearing down of historic or architecturally significant structures, and encourage their reuse.</u> • <u>Cherry is ranked as one of Charlotte's most walkable neighborhoods. Although pedestrian facilities are plentiful, provide for improved pedestrian safety, mobility, and walkability.</u> |
| 5 | Page 17, Item L12 | Grove at Cherry development: Main Street connection | Main Street development: A development project called Grove at Cherry was approved in 2008 for townhome development at a density of about 9.5 units per acre. The development included abandonment of a section of Main Street and dedication of a replacement connection. This plan recognizes the validity of that development proposal. However, a connection of Main Street southward to another street as a part of the development is necessary in some form, including the possibility of leaving Main Street as it is. If this development does not move forward, any new proposal for this site should be for single-family residential use compatible with the neighborhood character at up to 8 dwellings per acre. | Main Street development: A development project called Grove at Cherry was approved in 2008 for townhome development at a density of about 9.5 units per acre. The development included abandonment of a section of Main Street and dedication of a replacement connection. This plan recognizes the validity of that development <u>approval. However, the street abandonment has expired.</u> A connection of Main Street southward to another street as a part of the development is necessary in some form, including the possibility of leaving Main Street as it is. If this development does not move forward, any new proposal for this site should be for single-family residential use compatible with the neighborhood character at up to 8 dwellings per acre. |
| 6 | Page 17, Map 4B | Revisions to Cherry Recommended Future Land Use Map | <i>(Revise Map 4B)</i> | <i>(Revise map to show new item L30 at Morgan School Building and Myers Tabernacle AME Zion Church)</i> |
| 7 | Page 18, Item L16 | Correct Mt. Zion Church date | ...The adjoining Old Mount Zion Lutheran Church building, dating to 1932... | ...The adjoining Old Mount Zion Lutheran Church building, dating to <u>1896</u> ... |

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| 8 | Page 19, New item L30 (to be renumbered in final document) | Morgan School Bldg. and Myers Tabernacle AME Zion Church protection | <i>(New item.)</i> | <u>Cherry Institutional Core:</u> The Morgan School Building, Cherry Neighborhood Park and Myers Tabernacle AME Zion Church are at the center of the neighborhood, considered major elements of Cherry's identity. The school building was built in 1925, and is recognized as a local historic landmark. It currently is operated as a Charter school. It should remain in use as a school facility in the future. Cherry Neighborhood Park (formerly Morgan Park) is located near the center of the neighborhood and was created by the Myers family at least by the mid 1920's. It is renowned to be the first city park in an African-American neighborhood in Charlotte, and is thought to have been the first intended primarily to serve a working-class area. Given its historical significance, it should be maintained, preserved, and enhanced along with the other neighborhood open spaces. The church was built in 1902, and may be eligible for local historic landmark status. Steps should be undertaken to pursue historic designation. |
| 9 | Page 29, Item T1 | Kings Drive pedestrian crossing location reference | Kings Drive Improvements: The newly completed Little Sugar Creek Greenway has become a "gateway" to Uptown and surrounding areas. Running along the greenway, Kings Drive has the potential to evolve into a walk-friendly commercial area and community meeting place. The street is envisioned as a tree-lined avenue with wide sidewalks, where people can comfortably walk, relax at a sidewalk café, or stroll between neighborhood businesses. The relatively new pedestrian refuge island at Baldwin Avenue helps pedestrians cross Kings Drive without having to walk to signalized intersections. Additional pedestrian crossings should be considered at the intersections of Kings Drive with Torrence Street, Cherry Street Extension, and Luther Street. | Kings Drive Improvements: The newly completed Little Sugar Creek Greenway has become a "gateway" to Uptown and surrounding areas. Running along the greenway, Kings Drive has the potential to evolve into a walk-friendly commercial area and community meeting place. The street is envisioned as a tree-lined avenue with wide sidewalks, where people can comfortably walk, relax at a sidewalk café, or stroll between neighborhood businesses. The relatively new pedestrian refuge island at Baldwin Avenue helps pedestrians cross Kings Drive without having to walk to signalized intersections. Additional pedestrian crossings should be considered at the intersections of Kings Drive with <u>South Torrence Street, Luther Street, and other possible future intersections. As redevelopment occurs, connectivity to the existing street network should be undertaken in accordance with applicable City policies, with sensitivity to the community, resident input, and appropriate traffic calming mechanisms.</u> |

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| 10 | Page 29, Item T3 | Clarify conditions concerning Cherry Street Extension | Cherry Street Extension: This street connection should be considered only upon a complete redevelopment along Kings Drive. The connection will support pedestrian and vehicular connectivity for neighborhood residents, as well as visitors to the greenway and Kings Drive businesses. Similar to the existing network and design of Baldwin Avenue and Torrence Street, the extension of Cherry Street has the potential to balance localized travel choices. It is recommended as a local side street with built-in traffic calming, and only as an element of site redevelopment that transforms Kings Drive into a pedestrian-friendly environment. | Cherry Street Extension: This street connection should be considered only upon a complete redevelopment along Kings Drive. The connection will support pedestrian and vehicular connectivity for neighborhood residents, as well as visitors to the greenway and Kings Drive businesses. Similar to the existing network and design of Baldwin Avenue and <u>South</u> Torrence Street, the extension of Cherry Street has the potential to balance localized travel choices. It is recommended as a local side street with built-in traffic calming, and only as an element of site redevelopment that transforms Kings Drive into a pedestrian-friendly environment. <u>It should be undertaken with sensitivity to the community, resident input, and appropriate traffic calming mechanisms.</u> |
| 11 | Page 30, Item T4 | Clarify conditions concerning Cecil Street abandonment | Cecil Street Abandonment: This one-block street creates a relatively small block along Kings Drive. Abandonment of Cecil Street should be considered, if part of a redevelopment proposal that supports transformation of Kings Drive into a pedestrian-friendly commercial district. This abandonment may also help offset the wider streetscape envisioned along Kings Drive. | Cecil Street Abandonment: This one-block street creates a relatively small block along Kings Drive. Abandonment of Cecil Street should be considered, if part of a redevelopment proposal that supports transformation of Kings Drive into a pedestrian-friendly commercial district. This abandonment may also help offset the wider streetscape envisioned along Kings Drive. <u>This abandonment should be considered only upon a substantial redevelopment along Kings Drive, and with sensitivity to the community and with resident input.</u> |
| 12 | Page 30, Item T5 | Clarify conditions concerning Charlottetowne Avenue Conversion | Charlottetowne Avenue Conversion: West of Kings Drive, Charlottetowne Avenue has been greatly transformed via the recent Metropolitan development. Conversion of the section of Charlottetowne Avenue east of Kings Drive is recommended to expand this transformation and support an emerging commercial district. Possible conversion strategies include removal of the concrete median and reduction in travel lanes. Such conversion could potentially result in on-street parking for businesses, crossing islands for pedestrians, pavement markings for bicyclists, and/or additional or extended turn lanes for motorists. | Charlottetowne Avenue Conversion: West of Kings Drive, Charlottetowne Avenue has been greatly transformed via the recent Metropolitan development. Conversion of the section of Charlottetowne Avenue east of Kings Drive is recommended to expand this transformation and support an emerging commercial district. Possible conversion strategies include removal of the concrete median and reduction in travel lanes. Such conversion could potentially result in on-street parking for businesses, crossing islands for pedestrians, pavement markings for bicyclists, and/or additional or extended turn lanes for motorists. <u>It should be undertaken with sensitivity to the community, resident input, and appropriate traffic calming mechanisms.</u> |

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| 13 | Page 30, Item T8 | Clarify conditions concerning Main Street connectivity | Main Street Connectivity: Currently, Main Street connects with Baxter Street near its intersection with Eli Street. Rezoned in 2008, the Grove at Cherry development (see L12) includes an approved site plan that relocates this connection to Luther Street. In the event this particular development does not move forward, some form of connectivity for Main Street south or east from Avant Street still should be provided. Connectivity may be satisfied by retaining existing Main Street. | Main Street Connectivity: Currently, Main Street connects with Baxter Street near its intersection with Eli Street. Rezoned in 2008, the Grove at Cherry development (see L12) includes an approved site plan that relocates this connection to Luther Street. <u>However, the needed street abandonment has expired.</u> In the event this particular development does not move forward, some form of connectivity for Main Street south or east from Avant Street still should be provided. Connectivity may be satisfied by retaining existing Main Street. |
| 14 | Page 31, Map 6 | Revisions to Transportation Projects map per these revisions. | <i>(Revise Map 6)</i> | <i>(Revise map: Add new item T16 East Third Street, T17 Cherry Sidewalk System, and T18 Transit Coverage).</i> |
| 15 | Page 33, New item T16 (to be renumbered in final document) | Third Street Pedestrian accommodation | <i>(New item)</i> | East Third Street: <u>This important radial thoroughfare carries significant commuter traffic. This traffic can act as a barrier to pedestrians, as well as a challenge to area development. Identified as a future Pedestrian Zone, the edges of this major street should ultimately evolve into a more pedestrian-oriented district. In support of this new vision, the City should examine any opportunities that enhance pedestrian activity across and along East Third Street in the vicinity of South Torrence Street and Baldwin Avenue, while also seeking to calm thoroughfare traffic.</u> |
| 16 | Page 33, New item T17 (to be renumbered in final document) | Gaps in Cherry sidewalk system | <i>(New item)</i> | Cherry sidewalk system: <u>There are a few gaps in the sidewalk system within Cherry, including some that would provide access for senior and handicapped residents to the shopping in Midtown and recreational activities along the greenway. Actions should be undertaken to fill strategic sidewalk gaps by prioritizing and implementing continuous and direct routes that link residential areas to parks, schools, and shopping.</u> |
| 17 | Page 33, New item T18 (to be renumbered in final document) | Add assurances for continued bus service | <i>(New item)</i> | Transit Coverage: <u>Currently 100% of Cherry residents are within walking distance of a CATS bus route. CATS should make a conscious effort to maintain the level of coverage in future routing decisions.</u> |

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| 18 | Pages 35-41, Street Cross-Sections, changes to ROW dimensions | Clarify and correct some ROW dimensions based on input from regulatory staff | S1 Kings Drive: 90' Future ROW (includes potential ped refuge) S2 Kings Drive: 101' Future ROW; 10' Turn Lane OR 12' Median S3 East Third and East Fourth Street: 93' Future ROW S4 Charlottetowne Avenue: 97' Future ROW S5 East Morehead Street: 101' Future ROW S7 Kenilworth Avenue: 103' Future ROW | S1 Kings Drive: <u>81'</u> -90' Future ROW (includes potential ped refuge) S2 Kings Drive: <u>89'</u> -101' Future ROW; <u>Where existing,</u> 10' Turn lane OR 12' Median S3 East Third and East Fourth Street: <u>81'</u> Future ROW S4 Charlottetowne Avenue: 85' Future ROW S5 East Morehead Street: <u>81'</u> Future ROW S7 Kenilworth Avenue: <u>91'</u> Future ROW |
| 19 | Implementation Guide, Page 52, item L11, additional item (Information, not to be adopted) | Add strategies to encourage preservation of affordable housing opportunities | (Additional line item for this number) | Work with housing agencies such as House Charlotte, City Housing Trust Fund, and Charlotte Housing Authority to promote and retain opportunities for affordable owner-occupied housing in Cherry. (Type: Housing; Lead: Neigh. & Busin. Serv.; Time Frame: as devel. occurs) |
| 20 | Existing Conditions, New Text Section to insert after Page 62 (Information, not to be adopted) | Provide Historic Overview | (New item) | (New Historic overview element to be included, text provided separately.) |
| 21 | Existing Conditions, Page 63, various (Information, not to be adopted) | Clarification of various details in Existing Conditions | Cherry: ...Cherry contains a neighborhood park, a historic school building, and two churches... Residential: ...The area also has some multi-family construction and pre-fabricated duplex homes scattered in the vicinity of Cherry and Luther Streets. The neighborhood has a good tree canopy, and a few streets have sidewalks. Most homes are within walking distance of transit and other civic amenities. Office: The only office presence in the neighborhood is in the historic church on Baxter Street which has been retrofitted and is being reused as an office. Civic: The core of the Cherry neighborhood houses civic uses such as churches, park/playground and a historic school. These roughly encompass the area between Cherry, Main, Baxter and Avant Streets. | Cherry: ...Cherry contains a neighborhood park, a historic school building, and <u>three</u> churches... Residential: ...The area also has some multi-family construction and <u>Charlotte Housing Authority</u> prefabricated duplex homes scattered in the vicinity of Cherry, Luther, <u>and Baxter</u> Streets. The neighborhood has a good tree canopy, and <u>most of the</u> streets have sidewalks. <u>All of the</u> homes are within walking distance of transit and other civic amenities. Office: <u>The historic church on Baxter Street has been retrofitted and is being reused as an office. In addition, there are several retrofitted homes and new construction offices along the neighborhood edge at Lillington Street and Charlottetowne Avenue.</u> Civic: The core of the Cherry neighborhood houses civic uses such as churches, park/playground and a historic school. These roughly encompass the area between Cherry, <u>Luther</u> , Baxter and Avant Streets. |

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| 22 | Existing Conditions, Page 69, Cherry Neigh. Park (Information, not to be adopted) | Note history of Cherry Neighborhood Park | Cherry Neighborhood Park is 2 acres at Baxter Street and Baldwin Avenue in the center of the Cherry neighborhood. It has a basketball court, multipurpose field, baseball field, and playground. | Cherry Neighborhood Park is 2 acres at Baxter Street, Baldwin Avenue, <u>South Torrence Street, and Luther Street</u> in the center of the Cherry neighborhood. <u>Cherry neighborhood founders John Springs Myers and Mary Morgan Rawlinson Myers established the park, originally named Morgan Park for a family member. In 1927 when the City Parks and Recreation Commission was established, it was one of five City parks that it administered, and the first city park in an African American neighborhood. It has a basketball court, multipurpose field, baseball field, and playground. It is surrounded by Morgan Schoool, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, a 1920's community store, and single-family homes/duplexes. In 2006, the Board of County Commissioners voted to rename the park Cherry Neighborhood Park in response to the neighborhood's request to more accurately reflect its location. Today the park continues to be heavily used as a gathering place for events such as family reunions, community sporting activities, and school recess/physical education. A plaque has been placed in the park to honor its founders for their vision and commitment to the residents of the Cherry Neighborhood.</u> |
| 23 | Existing Conditions, Page 70, Housing Authority Properties (Information, not to be adopted) | Note history of Cherry Neighborhood Park | Tall Oaks is located in Cherry at Cherry Street and Luther Avenue and on scattered surrounding parcels. It houses family and elderly residents in townhome style units built in the 1980's. There are 80 dwellings on 7.4 acres. | Tall Oaks is located in Cherry at Cherry Street and Luther Avenue and on scattered surrounding parcels <u>in the neighborhood</u> . It houses family and elderly residents in townhome style and duplex units built in the 1980's. There are 80 dwellings on 7.4 acres. |

In addition, minor typographical corrections that do not impact the intent of the plan will be made in the final published plan.

All numbered items will be renumbered in a coherent and consecutive sequence reflecting additions and deletions.

Change all references to Torrence Street to South Torrence Street.

Historical Background

Cherry Beginnings: Cherry is one of Charlotte's most historic neighborhoods, first platted as a residential community in 1891 by John and Mary Myers. The neighborhood was developed from the Myers family's thousand-acre cotton farm which was located just outside Charlotte's city limits. For several decades, the neighborhood functioned as a village distinct from Charlotte following the pattern of such African American settlements as Biddleville and Greenville. Cherry is among the oldest surviving African American residential areas in Charlotte.

Cherry is unique in that it was the first neighborhood in Charlotte built especially to provide homeownership opportunities for laborers and working class blacks. Contrary to local stories, Cherry was not built as a servants' community for adjoining Myers

Park. Rather, Cherry was platted at least 20 years before Myers Park. The first homes in the neighborhood were built on Cherry, Main, and Luther Streets. By 1925, a total of 305 families lived in Cherry. It is estimated that as many as 65% were homeowners.

Cherry Neighborhood Center: Morgan Park and Morgan School were built in the mid 1920's on Baxter Street. In addition to a park and a school, the neighborhood also had several churches and small neighborhood stores, still in existence. These amenities made Cherry's development unique from other African American neighborhoods. The park and the tree-lined streets were often noted as the most striking attributes of the neighborhood. The trees were so prominent that the name of the neighborhood and street are said to have been inspired by the cherry trees that grew on the hillsides.



1935 map of Charlotte showing a portion of the plan area. All images in this section are courtesy of the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room - Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.



The library at Morgan School about 1925.



Early view of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church. Luther Street took its name from the Church.



Early view of a duplex in Cherry.



Early view of houses on Baldwin Avenue in Cherry.



Early view of Myers Tabernacle AME Zion Church, built by residents on land donated by John and Mary Myers.



Early view of the Cherry retail buildings, Baxter at Baldwin.

City growth: As time passed, Cherry was surrounded by other development and was incorporated into the City of Charlotte. Myers Park was developed by the Myers family immediately to the south beginning in 1911. Its curving tree-lined streets, laid out by noted landscape architect John Nolen, became one of Charlotte's most prestigious neighborhoods. Immediately to the north-east of Cherry there was developed a small subdivision called Craighead Park, along what is now Torrence Street and Baldwin and Ranlo (originally Craighead) Avenues. This neighborhood was absorbed into Cherry in the 1950's when ethnic settlement patterns shifted.

Morehead Area Beginnings: Beginning about 1891, Edward Dilworth Latta had created Dilworth, a new residential and streetcar suburb centered on South and East Boulevards. In 1911, he began work on an extension of Dilworth. He hired Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., an eminent Boston landscape architect and city planner, for the project. For the curvilinear streets around Dilworth Road, Latta closely followed the Olmsted plan. East Morehead Street, near the eastern edge of the new development, was extended southward to Queens Road in Myers Park in a somewhat more direct route than Olmsted had proposed, though incorporating residential development with generous landscaping. Connections eastward into the older city were carefully limited. Over time the East Morehead area gradually came to be used primarily for offices. The Greenwood Cliff/Harding Place vicinity was rezoned for office use in 1965.

New Cross-town Arteries: In the late 1940's, Kings Drive and Independence Boulevard (more recently renamed Charlotte-towne Avenue) were constructed through the plan area. Kings Drive came along the western border of Cherry, following the path of Little Sugar Creek and connecting to East Morehead Street. Independence Boulevard was a major cross-town traffic artery extending from Southeast Charlotte, cutting through Cherry's northern edge, connecting via Stonewall Street and South Boulevard and onward to Wilkinson Boulevard.

Midtown Development: Charlottetowne Mall (later known as Midtown Square) was built at the intersection of Kings and Independence about 1958. It was built in part by channelizing and covering over Little Sugar Creek. As one of the first enclosed shopping malls in the South, it became a major attraction. The mall then attracted a strip of smaller commercial businesses along Kings Drive. The thoroughfares that surrounded Cherry carried increasing traffic from suburban neighborhoods into Uptown. Cherry, no longer an isolated village on the fringe of Uptown, was thrust into the midst of an urbanizing Midtown area.

Changes in Cherry: Changes also were occurring inside Cherry that destabilized the neighborhood. Many of the owner-occupied homes were being sold to investors. Once purchased, these homes were converted to rental properties. What had begun as a strong community of homeowners was evolving into a neighborhood of renters.

By the late 1960's, housing and other physical conditions in the neighborhood had deteriorated. **However**, conditions were not considered so bad as to warrant demolition, so Cherry escaped the fate of Brooklyn and other African American neighborhoods through Urban Renewal. **Responding in part to the neighborhood's physical conditions and other related concerns, an active residents' organization known as the Cherry Community Development Association began in the late 1960's.** In the mid 1970's, Cherry was designated as a Community Development Neighborhood Target Area, making it eligible to receive Federal funds for certain physical improvements. In 1976, a public improvements plan was approved by Council, outlining short term strategies for housing code enforcement and physical improvements.

To participate more fully in the City's efforts to upgrade the neighborhood, **residents** formed a nonprofit community development corporation **in 1977** – the Cherry Community Organization (CCO). A modified plan was adopted by Council in 1979, whereby

the City would lend funds to the CCO for a comprehensive housing and neighborhood improvement program. The CCO acquired properties from absentee landlords, owning and managing many of the units. **This model was heralded by some as one of the most innovative community projects in the country.** In addition, **in 1985** the Charlotte Housing Authority constructed the Tall Oaks townhome style apartment development, **which included a unique scattered-site approach.**

Freeway Loop: The Belk Freeway (southern and western leg of I-277) was constructed around the perimeter of Uptown Charlotte, opening in two phases— 1982 and 1988. It was constructed in part on land previously part of the Brooklyn neighborhood cleared through Urban Renewal. The freeway continued the isolation of Dilworth from Uptown except for connections at South Boulevard and McDowell Street. It did relieve Independence Boulevard in the Cherry/Midtown area (since renamed Charlottetowne Avenue) of its cross-town arterial function, allowing it to serve as a minor thoroughfare.



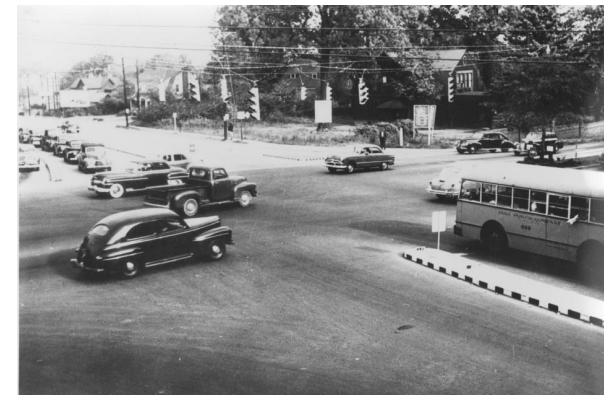
Independence Boulevard prior to construction of the Belk Freeway. (Champion Map Corporation, 1979)



Trolley entrance gate to Myers Park at Fourth and Queens, about 1912.



1941 view from Dilworth Road with Addison Apartments on East Morehead Street and Uptown beyond.



Intersection of East Morehead Street and Independence Boulevard about 1950.



Independence Boulevard near the Thompson Orphanage, about 1955.



1960's sign in the Brooklyn neighborhood announcing its demolition, a fate not carried out in Cherry.



Midtown Square mall prior to its demolition and replacement with the Metropolitan.

Further development in Cherry: Around 2000, Banc of America Community Development Corporation, in partnership with Cherry residents, led a program called the Cherry Affordable Housing Initiative, which built and sold new homes in the neighborhood. The program focused on affordable housing, primarily for longtime Cherry residents. These were mostly along Luther and Baxter Streets.

About 2005, the CCO sold property along Main Street to Stonehunt Development for a development of townhouses, with a senior citizen apartment facility at the center of the neighborhood. The Cherry Gardens apartment facility was completed and occupied. The townhomes remain unbuilt, and some street abandonment permits have expired as of 2011.

Metropolitan Development: By 2000, Midtown Square Mall had declined in occupancy, and Pappas Properties began planning a site redevelopment. The ambitious mixed use project incorporated residential condominiums, offices, restaurants, and retail including big box retail built along a pedestrian-friendly "Main Street" named Metropolitan Avenue. The project included a restoration of the long-buried Little Sugar Creek in collaboration with Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation. The Metropolitan opened in phases beginning in 2006, and has quickly become a center of activity for the surrounding area.

Little Sugar Creek Greenway: Ideas of Little Sugar Creek Greenway becoming an urban amenity began in the 1980's when local leaders were introduced to San Antonio's River Walk. Visions of gondolas navigat-

ing the creek as far as Freedom Park were reported in the news as was the new idea of greenways along Charlotte's Creeks.

Liz Hair, the first woman to be elected to and to chair the Board of County Commissioners was a supporter of parks and greenways. Her influence helped to start a movement. Liz Hair Nature Walk, a section of Little Sugar Creek Greenway adjacent to Carolina Healthcare System's main hospital just south of the plan area, has been named in her honor.

In 2004, a master plan for a greenway running the course of Little Sugar Creek from Cordelia Park (Optimist Park area) to the South Carolina state line was approved by the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners. A bond referendum that included funding for the urban sections was approved that year. The greenway from 7th Street to Morehead Street was designed over the next three years, and construction began late in 2008. Progressive sections went into construction in the following years. A celebration for completing the 1.2 mile linear park, stream restoration and greenway trail is scheduled for April 2012.

Little Sugar Creek Greenway is now the green spine that connects the various destinations along the Midtown, Morehead and Cherry areas. The stream restoration that accompanied the greenway development is critical to this new urban corridor. Approximately a decade ago, this creek was one of the most polluted creeks in the state. Today both the quantity and the variety of aquatic species are on the increase, a sign of gradual improvement in water quality.