



Draft Plan Summary

Prosperity Hucks area plan

Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Planning Department



Draft Document
August 8, 2013

Plan Highlights

Purpose of the Plan

The Prosperity Hucks Area Plan establishes a community-supported vision and provides detailed policy direction to shape the character and pattern of development for this growing area of Charlotte. This vision builds upon Charlotte's Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework by defining the unique character of the Prosperity Hucks area within the context of the City's overall growth framework. This Draft Plan Summary document provides an overview of the plan along with detailed policy recommendations.

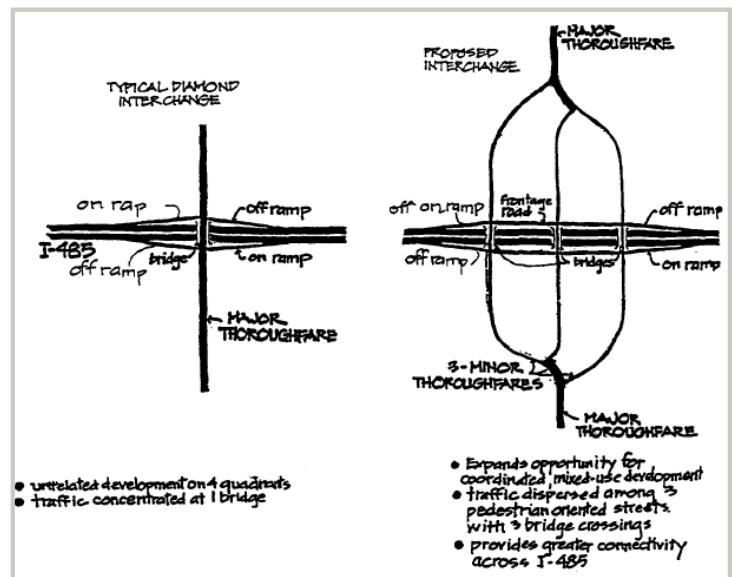
This is a special time for the Prosperity Hucks area. The completion of the I-485 interchange and its supporting transportation infrastructure will dramatically reposition this area within the region. This public investment in infrastructure will bring with it new opportunities for private investment and development. This is not however a typical interchange. This unique interchange concept establishes a network of connections which distributes access in order to create a series of smaller-scaled streets and blocks, and establish a walkable, pedestrian-scaled pattern for new development to follow.

Building on a Unique Vision

This plan has been many years in the making. It builds upon the Prosperity Church Road Villages Plan from 1999, which set forth the unique concept for the Prosperity Church Road/I-485 interchange. It establishes a framework for a walkable, urban, mixed use center that supports and is connected to the surrounding neighborhoods. This development pattern is made possible by a unique street network specifically designed to facilitate walkable urban form. To achieve this, the interchange is designed with three bridge crossings of I-485 within 1/4 mile of each other, to disperse the traffic onto three pedestrian-oriented minor thoroughfares. From there, traffic is to be dispersed further on a network of collector and local streets. The result is a network of appropriately scaled streets that are pedestrian friendly and support a wide range of street-oriented uses and development.

The Time is Now

The construction of the I-485 interchange is nearing completion (2015) and further investment in the extension of Prosperity Church Road is underway. This new infrastructure and resulting access will make this area an attractive location for new development. While some development of the center has occurred, much of the area remains undeveloped and dramatic change is anticipated. This plan establishes the vision and intended character of this area in a time of unique change. It serves to guide public and private investment in the center, while protecting and enhancing the surrounding neighborhoods, in order shape a special place in the Charlotte region.



Illustrations from the 1999 Prosperity Church Road Villages Plan, showing the concept for the three bridges crossing the interstate.



Active street-level uses and pedestrian-scaled streetscapes create a vibrant urban environment.



Walkable streets that encourage a range of travel modes and pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development.



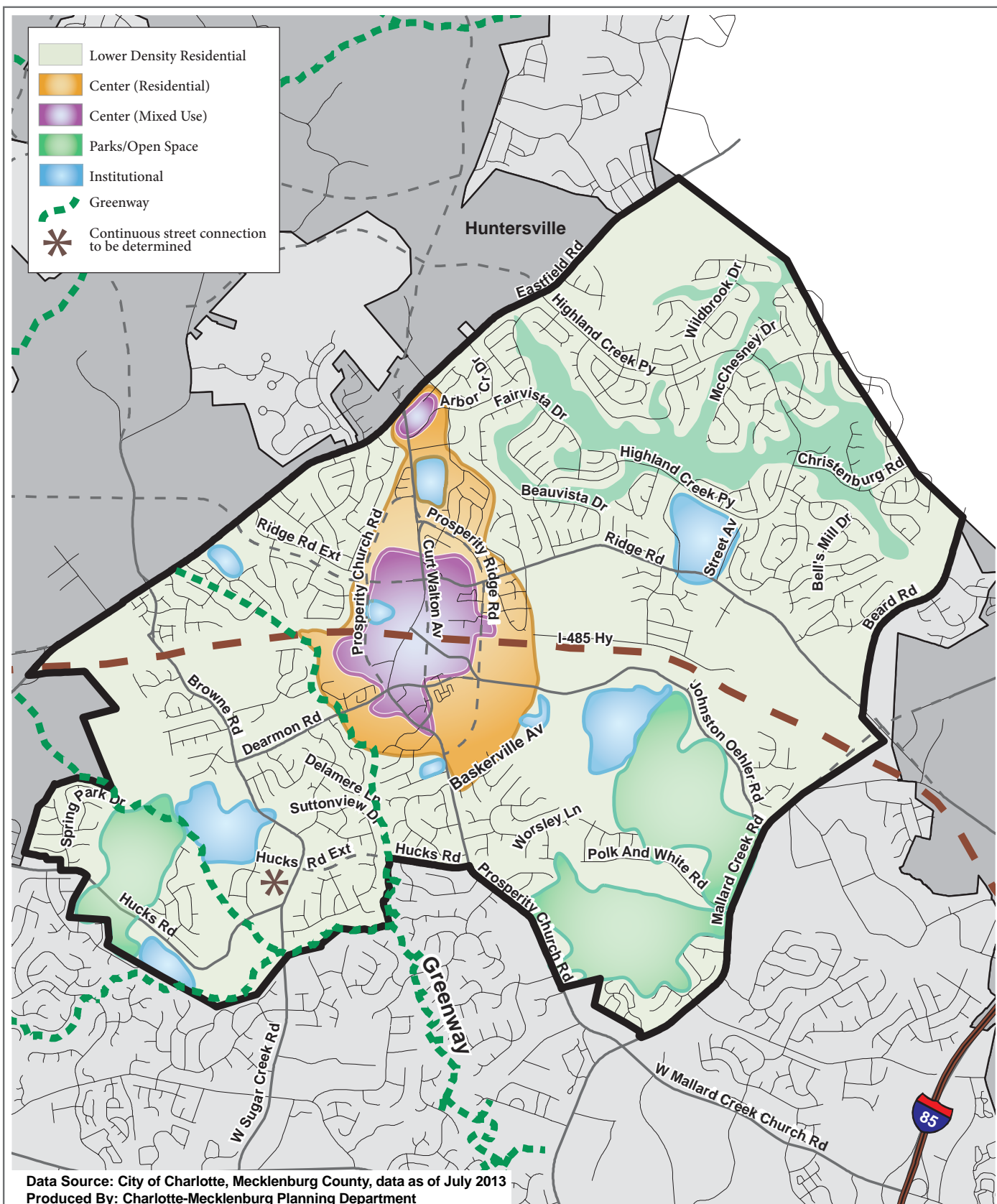
The vision for Prosperity Hucks is centered on a walkable urban village that supports the surrounding neighborhoods.



Parks and public spaces enhance quality of life and provide places for public gatherings and festivals.



A range of housing options within the village center provide walkable lifestyle choices.



Concept

Prosperity Hucks Area Plan



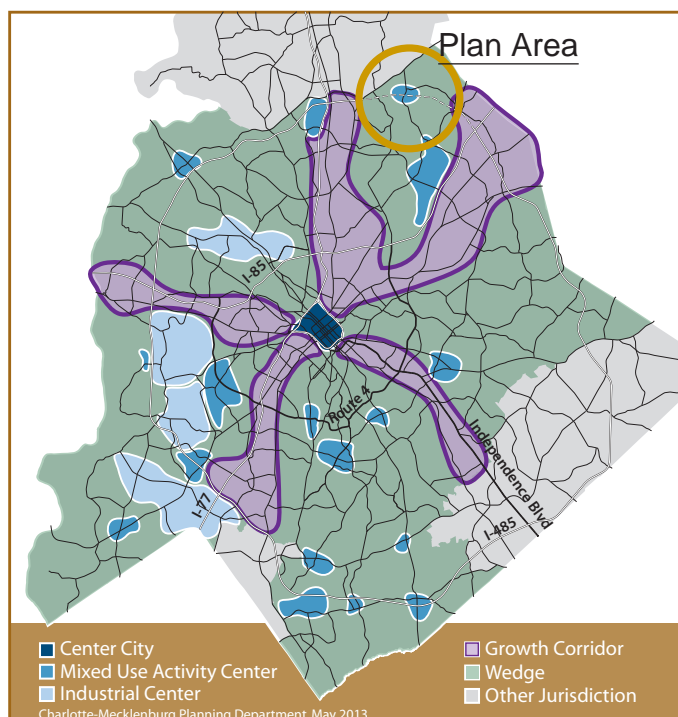
Vision

The preferred future for the plan area is highlighted in the following vision statement, based on the input from the community:

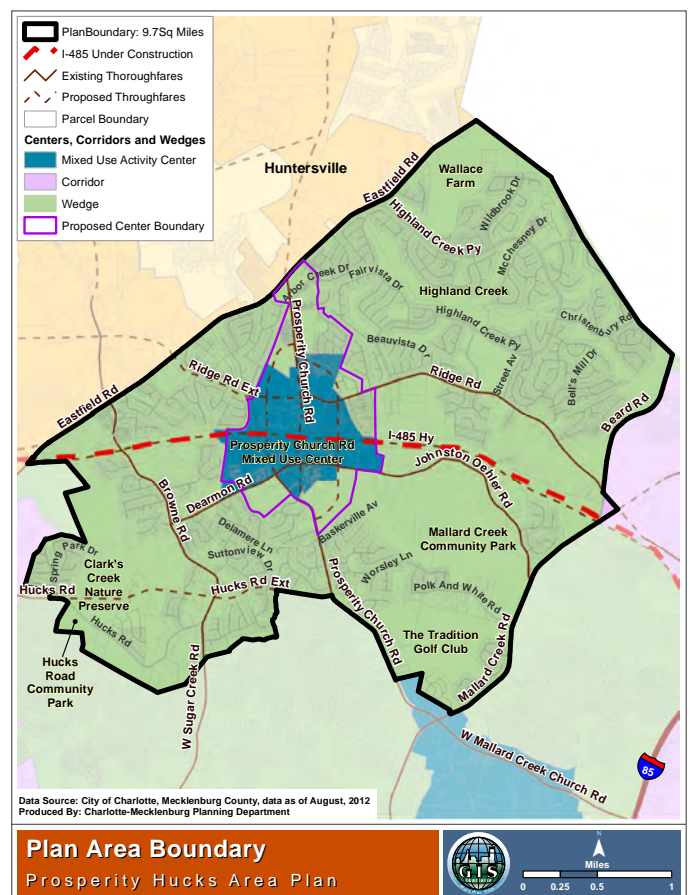
The vision for the Prosperity Hucks area is to create a unique and sustainable community that is a great place to live, work, and play. The blend of neighborhoods; along with an emerging Mixed Use Activity Center; plus an array of civic and institutional facilities will provide for a thriving community.

The vision incorporates the following elements:

- **Village Center** will be a neighborhood serving Mixed Use Activity Center complementing and enhancing the surrounding neighborhoods; with a rich variety of retail, office, entertainment and multi-family residential uses in a well-designed and appropriately scaled form.
- **Neighborhoods** are the backbone to the stability of the area and will be essential in preserving the distinctive character of the community. Continuing development in and around the neighborhoods will take into account its impact on the quality of life of area residents and protect the tree canopy.
- **Transportation** infrastructure will be developed to connect neighborhoods, Village Center and other destinations within and beyond the plan area; it should safely accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists.
- **Open Space** will be well integrated into the community, preserving elements of the natural landscape, becoming part of a meaningful, connected open space network of greenways, parks, and bike paths.



The Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework is the City's overall vision for future development. The plan area is a Center, surrounded by a Wedge.



This plan proposes an expansion of the Village Center to recognize areas with interchange and thoroughfare accessibility and the opportunities already in evidence.

Village Center

The evolution of the Village Center is a primary focus of this area plan. Prosperity Village should be a mixed-use center with a network of small block pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets connected to a robust system of parks, open spaces, and greenways. The village should contain a variety of building types and uses (residential, retail, office, and institutional), which may stand alone or be mixed, either horizontally or vertically, within a development.

The following is a summary of the key land use elements of the Village Center, and are shown on Map 5.

- **Village Center Mixed Use:** The central parts of the Activity Center, surrounding the three I-485 bridge crossings, is proposed for mixed use buildings at the street edge with parking behind. A dense network of local streets is critical to the village function.

- **Village Center Residential:** Moderate density residential surrounding the mixed use will support the village concept.
- **Village Transitional Residential:** At the outside edge of the village, townhouses and small lot single family homes will provide the transition to wedge neighborhoods beyond. These are similar to several areas already built.
- **Institutional areas:** Several existing institutional uses are within the Village Center. In general, other institutional uses are appropriate here as well.
- **Greenway extension:** Clarks Creek Greenway is planned along the edge of the Village Center; create a overland connector to connect to the Village Center, and encourage additional extensions to connect into the Village Center and neighborhoods.

What It Might Look Like

Examples of some of the preferred uses for the mixed-use center and examples of appropriate building typologies.



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Presentation slide from public meetings showing examples of urban design elements for the Village Center.

Neighborhoods

The intent of the land use policies for neighborhoods within the Wedge is to preserve their character and integrity, while improving connectivity and access to green spaces and neighborhood serving land uses. These policies are shown on Map 6.

In addition to preserving neighborhood character, the Wedge land use policies will contribute to protection of the environment in areas where it is most vulnerable, mainly around creeks and streams.

- **Neighborhood Residential:** Low density residential is the predominant use in the wedge, and should continue to be so, with small clusters of slightly higher density at strategic locations as elements of a larger development. Neighborhood serving institutional uses also are acceptable.
- **Wallace Farm:** When this agricultural use is redeveloped, it should be consistent with the above wedge residential policies; because of its size, it could be well suited to larger institutional uses as well.
- **School Development:** Area schools are overcrowded, and two new ones are planned; more will be needed. Planning for sites close to neighborhoods and/or in the Village Center needs to move forward.



The single family home market will continue to be a focus within the Wedge neighborhoods of the plan area.

Transportation

The street network will have a direct impact on the community's quality of life. The area streets should support and complement the activities of the Village Center, as well as the livability of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Prosperity Hucks area is experiencing rapid development along with a significant investment of public funds into the transportation system. With the completion of I-485 and the supporting street network there will be additional pressure to improve access to the Village Center and the I-485 interchanges. Maps 7 and 8 show proposed policies for new streets and enhancements to existing streets for improved pedestrian friendliness.

Relevant to the entire plan area:

- Install sidewalks and bicycle facilities or trails along thoroughfares. Reduce gaps in the existing sidewalk system.
- Expand transit service with several proposed routes involving the Blue Line Extension and I-485.

Within the Prosperity Village Center:

- Continue work on the thoroughfare network to support local and regional needs.
- Create new local streets in the Village Center to support local connectivity, largely through the land development process.

Within the Neighborhoods:

- Extend and widen key thoroughfares to keep pace with growth and provide access to Village Center and other destinations.
- Realign Hucks Road Extension to avoid Clark's Creek Nature Preserve.
- Upgrade Farm-to-Market Roads to accommodate growth, safety, and bike/ped needs.

Street Design

The plan recommends future cross sections for principal streets, and identifies streetscape standards based on the ultimate curbline location. Based on the City's *Urban Street Design Guidelines*, these cross sections will be met through capital projects or through new development in the plan area.

Open Space

Parks, greenways, and open spaces are valuable assets to a community. The plan area has a number of existing and proposed resources to build upon. In addition, the integrity of environmentally sensitive areas must be protected for future generations. Key open space policies within the plan include:

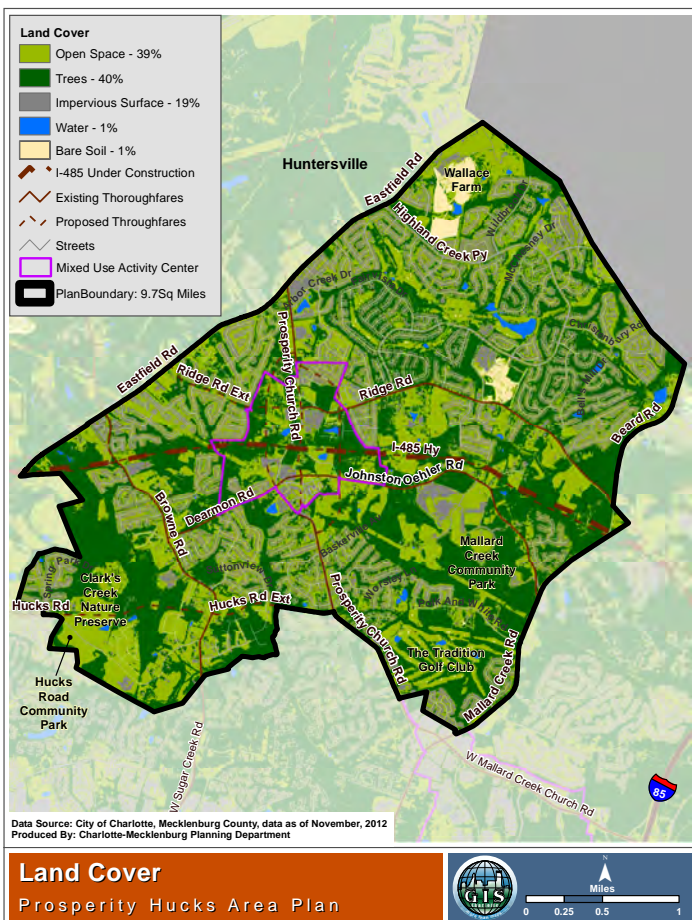
- **Leverage Parks and Greenways:** Make connections that serve as focal points in the area; seek public/private opportunities to create civic plazas and squares within the Village Center.
- **Tree Canopy:** Encourage actions to help ensure the long-term sustainability of the tree canopy, and minimize impacts to the existing tree canopy. Work toward achieving a tree canopy goal in keeping with the City's overall policies: 55% in the Wedge Neighborhoods and 25% in the Village Center.

- **Clarks Creek Nature Preserve:** The mature forest and open fields should be preserved for wildlife. A previously planned extension of Hucks Road through the property will not be built, and alternative routes to achieve a continuous street connection will be investigated.
- **Natural Heritage Site:** Property at Ridge and Beard Roads owned by NCDOT is listed as a Natural Heritage Site due to wetlands and rare natural plant and animal life. The efforts underway to transfer ownership to the Catawba Lands Conservancy for preservation should be finalized.

Implementation Guide

The Implementation Guide identifies strategies to implement the policies of the Concept Plan. It outlines a number of improvement projects, many of which likely will be implemented by the private sector as development occurs. Because the Implementation Guide is not adopted by elected officials, it is not a commitment to funding or implementation of the projects. Some of the key strategies are:

- Use land use and community design policies to guide and evaluate development proposals.
- Continue construction and upgrading of thoroughfares in support of the Village Center.
- Seek street connections as development occurs to establish and improve connectivity within the area.
- Develop a revised alignment for Hucks Road that does not impact Clarks Creek Nature Preserve.
- Upgrade farm to market roads to accommodate traffic as well as pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Complete a network of interconnected open space through the park and greenway system.
- Work to implement the City's tree canopy goals by working with local groups and private property owners to plant trees.



Policy Details

Land Use

Village Center Land Use Policies

L1. Village Center Mixed Use: The central portion of the Prosperity Activity Center is recommended for a mix of uses, which include residential, office, and retail, as well as public and private institutional uses. These are depicted by the “striped” patterns on the land use maps. Ridge Road and DeArmon Road/ Johnston-Oehler Road are envisioned as the central Main Streets for the Village Center, with a particularly strong focus on walkable retail and mixed uses.

While small parcels less than 5 acres might include one or more of the recommended uses, it is expected that parcels larger than 5 acres will include a mix of two or more uses. Buildings should be built out to the public and private street edges in accordance with streetscape setbacks as set forth in the Transportation section of this plan, with parking placed behind the buildings. Multi-story buildings and structured parking are encouraged. Increased residential densities in these areas are appropriate, guided by height, setback, parking, and other regulations. Inclusion of a network of local streets through these blocks is critical to making the village function. Block spacing should be 500 feet or less.

L2. Village Center Moderate Density

Residential: Several blocks within the Village Center have approved conditional plans for residential development at densities up to 22 du/a (dwellings per acre). The proximity of these areas to the intended concentration of retail and mixed use destinations supports the Village Center concept; inclusion of a network of local streets through these blocks is critical to making the village function.

L3. Village Transitional Residential: The blocks generally around the outside edge of the Village Center are recommended for residential development up to 8 du/a. Townhouses, small lot single family, and other housing forms in this density range are appropriate in these blocks. They are intended to serve as a good transition from the denser mixed use to the surrounding lower density wedge neighborhoods beyond. A number of these blocks, particularly in the northeast quadrant of the Village Center, already have been built out, setting an appropriate example for how this should work. Critical to these areas is inclusion of interconnecting local streets, and building designs with alley-fed garages and parking that preserve a quality streetscape.

L4. Shopping Center Redevelopment: The Village Center includes three existing shopping centers and other existing miscellaneous retail properties. Some of these exhibit good design features: attractive facade treatments; multi-story live-work units; retail buildings built out to the street edges with parking behind the buildings; and/or enhanced landscaping. It is expected that these existing shopping centers will remain for the indefinite future. Nonetheless, they do not represent the expectation for future development, nor do they represent the expectation in the event of site redevelopment. Future development of these sites and the adjoining blocks is for Village Center Mixed Use development as described in policy L1.

L5. Forest Park Mobile Home Community: This community and its associated convenience store have been in place since the 1960's, providing one of the most affordable housing alternatives in the area. It is expected to remain for some time to come. In the future, if redeveloped, the site should be Village Center Residential, at a density up to 22 du as described in policy L2 preceding, due to its proximity to expected mixed use development. If appropriately coordinated with the land use and local street network with the parcels to the south, some mixed use retail, office, or institutional uses, as well as higher density residential, might be appropriate on this site as well, subject to site-specific compatibility with adjoining uses.

L6. Mixed Use west of Prosperity Church

Road: A mixed use development is approved for a large parcel west of the new Prosperity Church Road and south of I-485. As approved, it includes a step-down to residential uses and a greenway along its western edge as a transition to the wedge neighborhood. It is expected that any changes to the plan would incorporate a similar residential transition along the western edge.

L7. DeArmon Road at new Prosperity Church

Road: With the expected completion of the new Prosperity Church Road, parcels at the southwest intersection with DeArmon Road, adjoining the Shads Landing retirement facility and pond, will take on a new prominence. Intensive surrounding uses make this location appropriate for mixed use development as described in policy L1, subject to site-specific compatibility with adjoining uses and street connectivity.

L8. Prosperity Ridge area south of Johnston

Oehler Road: This area has an approved conditional plan for small lot residential development. For the portion of the site inside (north and west of) the future Prosperity Ridge Road, an increased density of up to 22 du would be appropriate due to its proximity to expected mixed use development.

L9. Eastfield Road at Prosperity Church

Road: This intersection is surrounded by the Eastfield Village Center and an approved development in Huntersville called Huntersville Market, establishing a node of low-scale mixed use. The remaining southwest quadrant is appropriate for similar uses generally as described in policy L1, subject to site-specific buffering and compatibility with the adjoining single family neighborhood.

L10. Institutional areas:

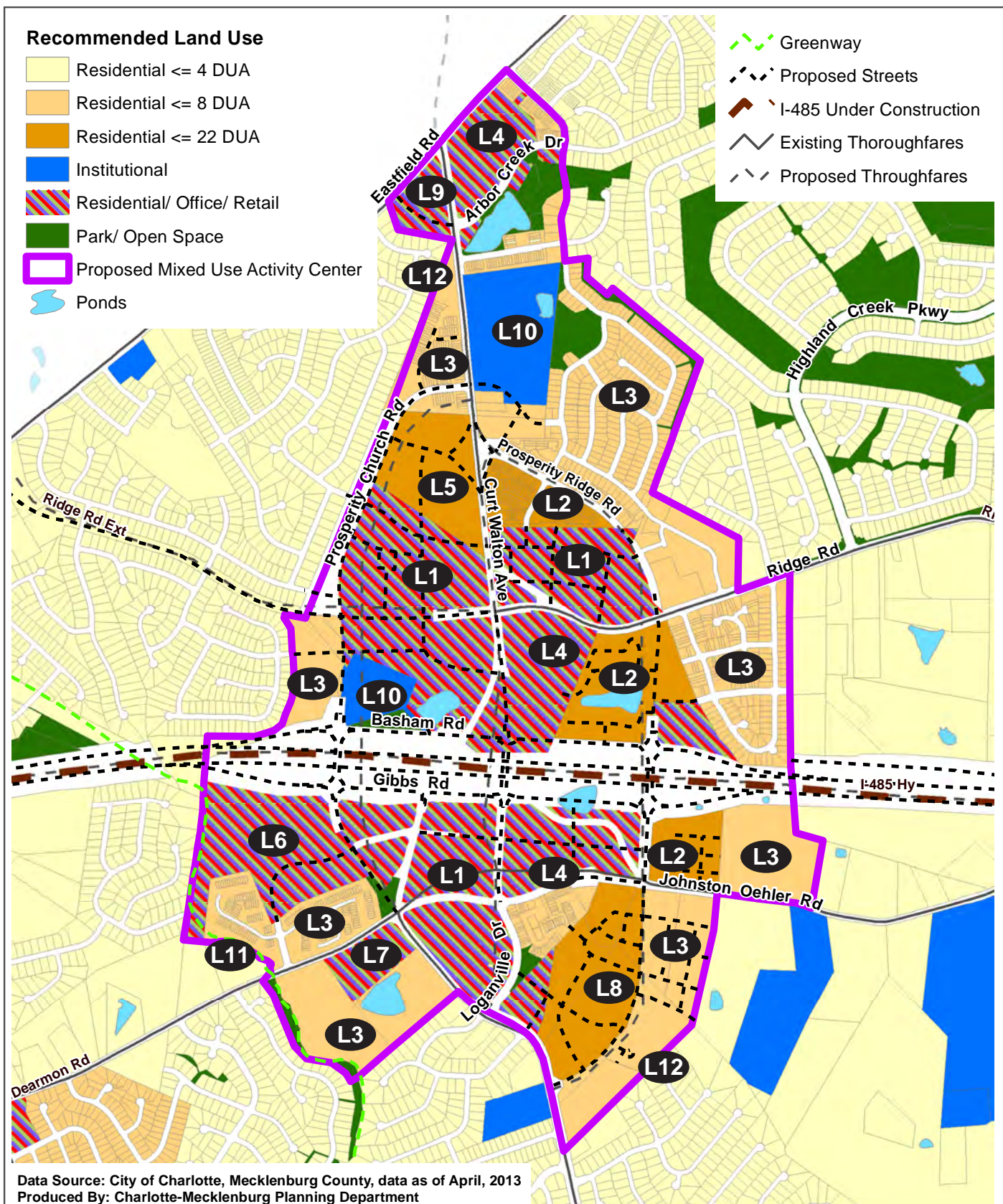
Prosperity Presbyterian Church and Crossway Church are located on large prominent parcels within the Village Center. These centers of activity serve the community well, and are appropriate uses at these locations. Additional institutional uses, including schools, religious facilities, assisted living, and the like, also would serve the community. In general, other such institutional uses would be appropriate throughout the Prosperity Village Center, subject to site-specific compatibility with adjoining uses and street connectivity.

L11. Greenway extension:

The 2008 Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Master Plan indicates that Clarks Creek Greenway is intended to traverse the plan area to link pedestrians and cyclists to Mallard Creek Greenway to the southeast and to the future "Mooresville to Charlotte Trail" to the west. Future development within the Prosperity Hucks Area should be carefully planned to serve and to be served by the future park and recreation facilities. Further extensions to make connections from the greenway into the heart of the Activity Center are encouraged.

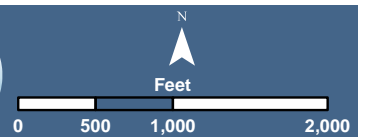
L12. Adjust Mixed-Use Activity Center

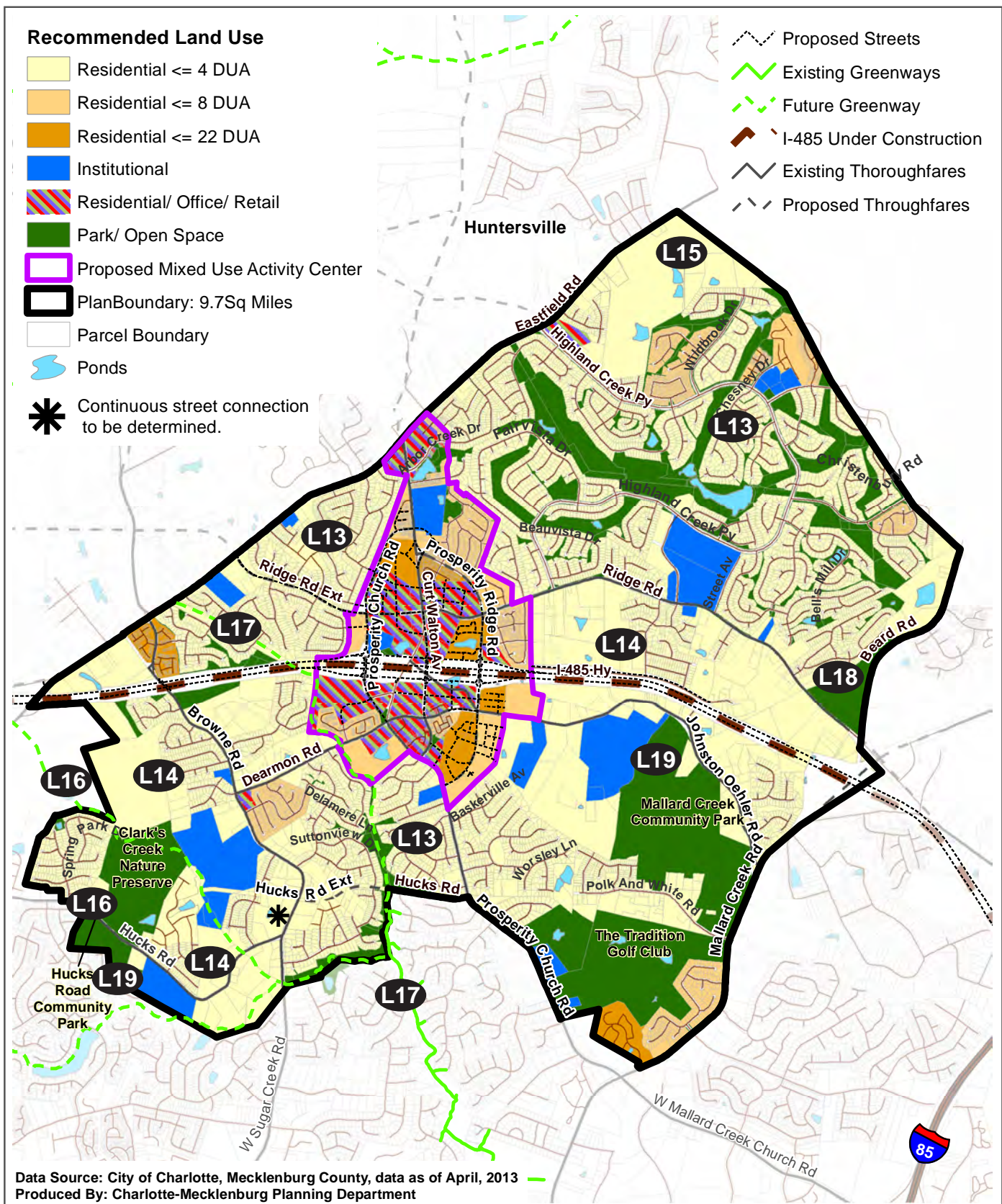
Boundary. Adjust the boundary of the Prosperity Village Center to extend up to Eastfield Road and to encompass the mixed use and medium density residential properties within and immediately surrounding the Village's defining thoroughfares: realigned Prosperity Church Road and Prosperity Ridge Road as shown on Map 5.



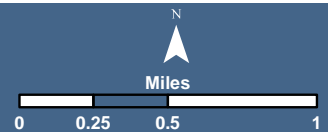
Village Center Recommended Land Use

Prosperity Hucks Area Plan





Wedge Recommended Land Use Prosperity Hucks Area Plan



Wedge Neighborhoods Land Use Policies

L13. Wedge Residential: Low density residential development, up to four dwelling units per acre (dua), should remain the predominant land use in the Wedge neighborhood areas. In addition to single family homes, the current developments have a sprinkling of slightly higher density residential and neighborhood serving institutional uses at strategic locations.

L14. Vacant Wedge Land: Throughout the Prosperity Hucks Wedge there remain a few undeveloped areas, generally in the form of large lot residential or small farms that remain from times past. Most of these are expected to be developed in the coming years. For these locations, just as for the existing developed area, residential development at up to 4 dua is appropriate.

Small clusters of slightly higher density residential are appropriate at strategic locations as elements of a larger development, such as a small grouping of duplexes or townhouses along the edge of an open space. Neighborhood serving institutional uses also are acceptable subject to site-specific compatibility with adjoining uses and street connectivity.

L15. Wallace Farm: Wallace Farm is a sizeable tract of land on Eastfield Road right at the Cabarrus County line, in long-standing agricultural use. In the future when this tract is redeveloped, the same wedge land uses discussed in policies L13 and L14 are appropriate. Because of the tract size, it could be well-suited to larger neighborhood serving institutional uses as well.

L16. Clarks Creek Nature Preserve: This 98-acre nature preserve consists of open fields and mature hardwood forest cover. A tributary of Clarks Creek runs through the property. The preserve is an excellent place for wildlife. Every effort needs to be made to minimize the ecological impacts on this valuable natural resource. In particular, a previously planned relocation of Hucks Road will not be built through the Nature Preserve property. Alternative routes to achieve a continuous

street connection from Old Statesville Road to Prosperity Church Road will be investigated.

L17. Greenway Extension: The Clarks Creek and Clarks Creek Tributary Greenways and the Carolina Thread Trail will traverse the plan area to link pedestrians and cyclists to Mallard Creek Greenway to the southeast and to the future “Mooresville to Charlotte Trail” to the west. Future development within the Prosperity Hucks Area should be carefully planned to serve and to be served by the future park and recreation facilities.

L18. Ridge Road Natural Heritage Site: Property at the corner of Ridge and Beard Roads is listed by the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as a Natural Heritage Site due to the presence of wetlands and rare natural plant and animal life. Named the Ridge Road Hardpan Forest, it is currently owned by the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to provide mitigation for I-485 construction projects. Over time, there have been discussions of management and ownership transfer to the Catawba Lands Conservancy. These discussions need to be finalized to provide for long term preservation of this site in its natural state.

L19. School Development: Public schools in the Prosperity Hucks area are overcrowded. The CMS Facilities Master Plan identifies an increasing need for all school levels. There are two proposed schools in the plan area: an elementary on Johnston-Oehler Road, and a middle on Hucks Road. Construction of these two facilities needs to move forward expeditiously. In addition, continuing development will necessitate even more school construction. CMS needs to continue site evaluation and acquisition for further school facilities in close proximity to neighborhoods within the plan area.

Transportation

General Plan Area Transportation Policies

(applicable to streets in the entire plan area)

T1. Install sidewalks on thoroughfares: The Prosperity Hucks area has limited sidewalks along most of the existing thoroughfare system. As development occurs, new sidewalks may be required to be constructed along existing thoroughfares, following adopted streetscape standards. Additionally, the City will continue to explore opportunities for installation of sidewalk through existing capital programs.

T2. Reduce gaps in the sidewalk system within existing residential areas: Most of the neighborhoods within the Prosperity Hucks area have a robust sidewalk network, and in most cases, sidewalks within new development are required through ordinance. However, some neighborhoods do not have sidewalks because they were built prior to standards requiring sidewalks. The City's policy typically requires public support through a petition-based process for non-thoroughfare streets.

T3. Construct appropriate bicycle facilities on thoroughfares: As infrastructure development occurs, new bicycle facilities should be included along any thoroughfare with a new or relocated curb line. For example, all streets classified as an Avenue or Boulevard should, at a minimum include bicycle lanes or other separated bicycle facilities as appropriate.

T4. Expand transit service to the area: As the Prosperity Hucks plan area develops and intensifies, CATS will consider expanded service. The current bus service (Route 22) from the Village Center is planned to be re-routed to the adjoining Northeast Corridor with the opening of the Blue Line Extension. New Express service also is planned via the new I-485 to a new park and ride, such as a church parking lot. Three new routes currently planned include:

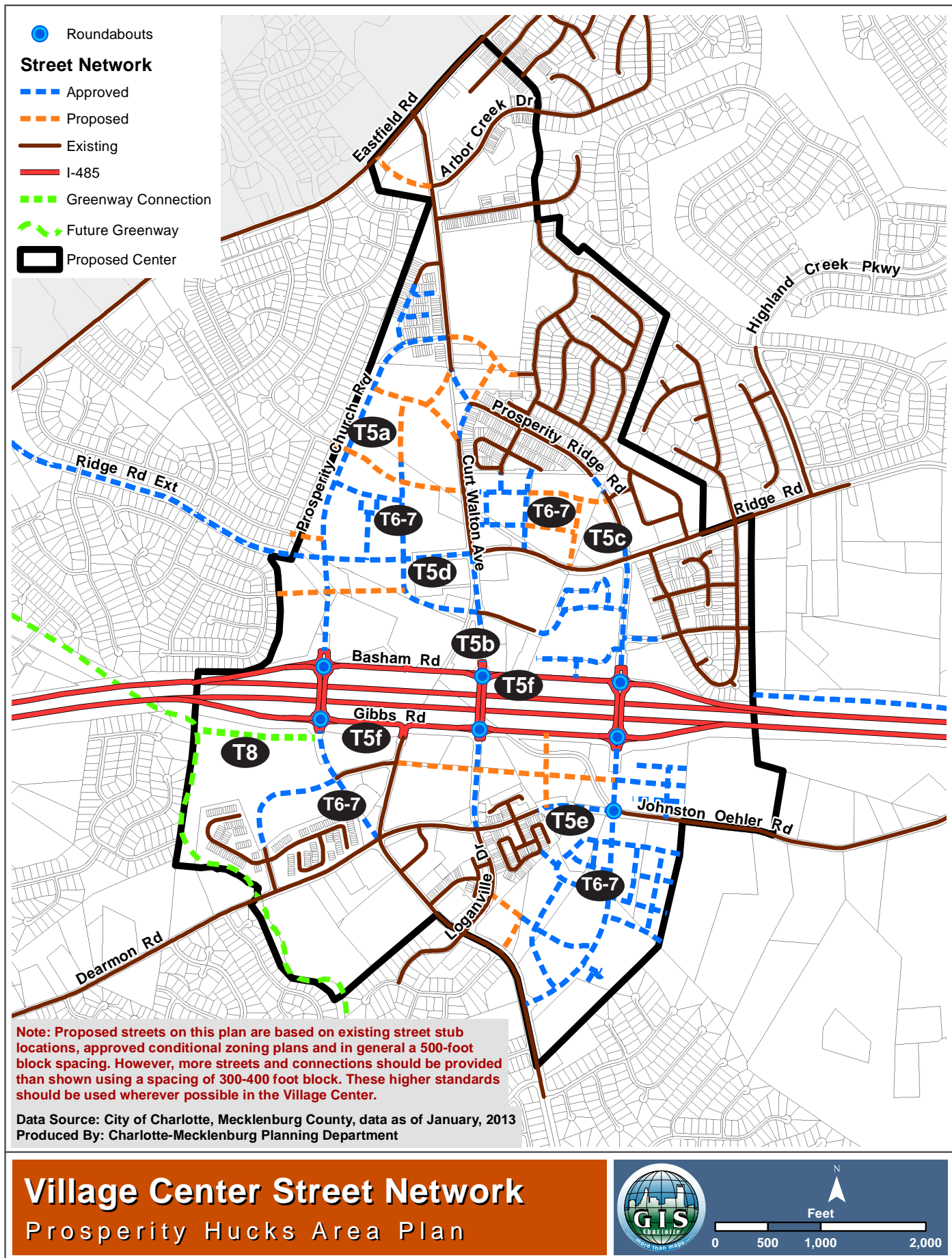
- Route 53X: Highland Creek Express
- Route 110: Concord Mills
- Route 125: Mallard Creek

Village Center Transportation Policies

T5. Continue to implement a network of thoroughfares to support active transportation in the Village Center: The City, NCDOT, and private developers will continue to implement the thoroughfare network to support the village center and the I-485 interchange. The thoroughfares will meet the intent of the Urban Street Design Guidelines and land-use objectives. The following streets will be modified or nearing completion when I-485 opens in 2015.

- a. Prosperity Church Road (western route)
- b. Curt Walton Avenue (central route)
- c. Prosperity Ridge Road (eastern route) (north of Johnston-Oehler Road only)
- d. Ridge Road (between Curt Walton Avenue and the new Prosperity Church Road alignment)
- e. Johnston-Oehler Road (within the Village Center)
- f. Gibbs Road and Basham Road (I-485 frontage roads)

T6. Create new local streets in the Village Center: Additional connections will provide a more robust system of local streets which, in turn, offer more route choices and shorter trips for all modes of transportation. Smaller blocks also support denser, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes through development within the Village Center. New local streets will typically be created through the land development process, although short segments of streets should be constructed as part of adjacent City capital projects when appropriate. Possible alignments for local streets are identified on Map 7. To support the development, circulation, and walkability of the Village Center, block spacing in the Village Center should be 500 feet or less.



T7. Facilitate cross-access and parallel connections within the Village Center:

Short-distance trips originating within the Village Center should have alternate routes other than the thoroughfares. New development should incorporate multiple access points with secondary driveways located on side streets, cross access driveways, and parallel street connections. Additionally, these elements should apply to local streets in order to achieve a greater level of pedestrian comfort and safety throughout the Village Center.

T8. Create an overland connector on DeArmon Road to connect the Village Center to Clark's Creek Greenway for active transportation modes:

In order to better facilitate access for pedestrians and bicyclists between Clark's Creek Greenway and the Village Center, a multi-use path should be considered along DeArmon Road between the greenway and the future Prosperity Church Road alignment.

Wedge Neighborhood Transportation Policies

T9. Extend and widen key thoroughfares: The following major thoroughfare projects are recommended to keep pace with area growth and compliment accessibility to the Village Center:

- a. Widen Eastfield Road (from 2 lanes to 4 lanes) from Independence Hill Road to the Cabarrus County line;
- b. Widen Mallard Creek Road (from 2 lanes to 4 lanes) from Prosperity Church Road to Breezewood Drive;
- c. Extend Ridge Road (2 lanes) from Prosperity Church Road to Eastfield Road;
- d. Extend Hucks Road (2 lanes) from Prosperity Church Road to Browne Road.

T10. Realign the Hucks Road Extension between Browne Road and Spring Park Drive to avoid the Clark's Creek Nature Preserve: The currently adopted alignment in the MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan for the Hucks Road Extension between Browne Road and Spring Park Drive would impact the Clark's Creek Nature Preserve if constructed. The City will work with the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization and NCDOT to develop and adopt an alternative alignment that does not impact the nature preserve.

T11. Upgrade Farm-to-Market Roads to accommodate traffic, improve safety and provide transportation choices: As shown on Map 8, farm-to-market upgrades include:

- a. Browne Road
- b. Johnston-Oehler Road (in the wedge)
- c. DeArmon Road

T12. Complete greenways in the Prosperity Hucks area: Planning of the greenway trail system should be coordinated with the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department and other partners.



The public has been heavily involved in planning for I-485 as well as for this area plan process.

T13. Encourage bikeway and pedestrian connections to primary greenways and trails: Greenways and trails serve both recreation and transportation functions. Tributaries and streams leading to Clark's Creek provide contiguous open spaces, create focal points for development and make key connections to the greenway system. These areas should be considered for dedication during the land development process.

T14. The City should consider constructing a second street bridge over I-485 between Johnston-Oehler Road and Ridge Road: I-485 serves as a barrier to north-south connectivity and movement in the area. It restricts access between neighborhoods, schools, and civic buildings along Ridge Road and the neighborhoods, schools, and parks along Johnston-Oehler Road. As part of the Johnston-Oehler Road farm-to-market project, a bridge will be constructed across I-485 near the main entrance of Mallard Creek High School. This bridge will facilitate north-south movement in the area for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, allowing for traffic to cross I-485 without traversing the Prosperity Church Road or Mallard Creek Road interchanges.

Building a second bridge that crosses I-485 east of the bridge currently under construction will further lessen the barrier effect that I-485 creates. In addition to creating increasing connectivity and providing additional route options, it will aid in routing pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic away from the Prosperity Church Road and Mallard Creek Road interchanges. While there is no defined alignment for the eastern bridge, the City should undertake a planning process to establish a suitable alignment.



Existing DeArmon Road has no sidewalks, no bike lanes, and no curb or gutter.



Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as seen here, help to reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve air quality.