

MATTHEWS LAND USE PLAN

A GUIDE FOR GROWTH

2002 - 2012

As recommended by Matthews Planning Board on March 26, 2002

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INTRODUCTION

Past and Present Plans

The Town of Matthews experienced considerable new growth pressures and economic stability since the early 1980's. Land use and zoning issues have often taken the forefront in many public meetings and local political campaigns. Although the pace of new commercial and residential growth has now slowed somewhat, there are no signs of stagnation in the near future.

The Town of Matthews adopted a Land Use Plan in 1986 which stated its principal goal as preserving and protecting as much of the existing single family character and small town qualities as was feasible. In 1991, a new Land Use Plan was written and adopted in 1992. While recognizing the importance of preserving and protecting neighborhoods, the 1991 Land Use Plan also acknowledged the potential for new types of development which could be economically healthy and aesthetically compatible.

Due to the expansion of the roads network, utility infrastructure, and strong regionwide markets for single-family housing and retail/commercial uses, the 1991 Land Use Plan assumed a need for the Town to reassess its land use policies on a fairly regular basis. One element of the 1991 Plan was revised in 1992, and the Planning Board began a thorough update review in 1995. This review procedure was stalled until early 1997 when the Planning Board met jointly with the Town Board to reactivate the project. The Land Use Plan was last updated in November 1997.

Issues Involved in This Updating Process

This Plan updates the 1997 Plan, generally following the same outline as its predecessor documents. Since the 1997 Plan update was adopted, a transit corridor has been identified from uptown Charlotte to the Union County line, generally following Independence Boulevard. County-owned and controlled land near US74 and I-485 has been released from potential use as a landfill, and can now be considered for alternative development. Other actions which have occurred since the 1997 Plan update was approved and which have a significant role in affecting land use are the extension of water and sewer trunk lines, the completion of the portion of I-485 and interchanges within the Town limits, the opening of the new CPCC satellite campus on Campus Ridge Road, and amendments to the Thoroughfare Plan for road improvements within and adjacent to the community.

The Downtown Master Plan was adopted about the same time in 1997 to provide a clear vision for the physical expansion and revitalization of the commercial core and fringe areas. The Town has now entered a public-private partnership for redevelopment of a significant site in the center of the downtown. The Town has continued to annex developed portions of the ETJ, leaving primarily undeveloped or sparsely developed lands for future annexation focus. The opportunity to continue growing in land size is severely curtailed due to the Sphere of Influence boundaries, which do not extend much beyond existing Town limits.

The next chapter gives updated information on population and housing counts, utility extensions, and currently approved road improvement projects. The lack or the availability of roads and utilities networks is a major factor in timing and intensity of development. Although the rush to construct more stores, more restaurants, more personal services, and more homes is not limited to Matthews boundaries but a phenomenon of the Charlotte region as a whole, the planning jurisdiction covered by this document is limited to the Matthews Sphere of Influence. Trends that appear in the region often are visible within the Matthews area, such as a recent upsurge in interest in connecting neighborhoods and providing more bicycle facilities.

Just as the 1991 Plan suggested, and as occurred in 1997, this document should be periodically reviewed and updated to keep the policies and goals current and useful. Depending on the pace of development, a comprehensive review should take place every three to five years. Minor changes can be made at other times, although care should be taken so that “minor” changes do not have conflicting more encompassing effects than intended.

Goals and Objectives

The Plan includes general goals, objectives and recommendations for each land use category and for each corridor or transition area. It also suggests tools for achieving and enforcing land use patterns to reach the identified goals and objectives. There are ten principal goals that run throughout every section of this Land Use Plan:

- 1) Foster orderly growth and development.
- 2) Retain the identity and scale of the Town including its Downtown and neighborhoods while providing for quality growth and expansion of services.
- 3) Encourage sound land use patterns so as to protect the Town’s distinct residential life and aesthetic resources.
- 4) Promote the compatibility of adjoining land uses with less intense uses and/or improved buffer areas used as transitions between non-compatible uses to minimize potential conflicts.
- 5) Recognize that any future development will be built around existing land uses and will be influenced by those land uses or land use designations where development has not yet occurred.
- 6) Encourage infill development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of structures and sites to occur in a manner which is consistent and supportive of the neighborhood and architectural context of the surrounding area.
- 7) Foster a livable and attractive community having a distinct identity.
- 8) Foster a balanced land use pattern which provides opportunities for a mix of commercial, employment, residential, and open space uses.
- 9) Foster a desirable land use pattern which promotes the health, safety, welfare and long term interests of all citizens.
- 10) Create an environment along the transit corridor, once defined, that will promote higher-density residential and mixed use development consistent with minimum scales of urban use as generally needed to support the selected mode of mass transit.

BACKGROUND

Locational Characteristics

The Town of Matthews is located in southeastern Mecklenburg County (Map 1). The City of Charlotte borders Matthews to the west and north. The Town of Mint Hill lies to the east of Matthews and Union County (including the Towns of Stallings and Indian Trail) share the southern boundary. The majority of the properties bordering the Town are residential except along Monroe Road/E. John Street and Independence. Along these major transportation routes are major office, commercial, and industrial developments that, while not in the Town limits, do however have an impact on land uses within Matthews and its Sphere of Influence. Union County has now begun to set their land use policies into effect along Idlewild Road at the County line, by rezoning a substantial tract for commercial development.

Sphere of Influence/Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

As part of an agreement each municipality in Mecklenburg County has with Charlotte, Matthews has a defined area, known as its Sphere of Influence, from which it can annex. Matthews, through the early 1980's, had predominantly relied on voluntary annexations, but by the mid-1980's began utilizing involuntary annexations to incorporate complete phases of developments at a single time. Through this process the Town limits have grown substantially since 1986.

Due to the short distance between Town limits and Sphere limits, the Sphere boundaries match the Town's extraterritorial jurisdiction, or ETJ. For many years the unincorporated properties within the Sphere of Influence were under the planning and zoning jurisdiction of Mecklenburg County, but with the passage of HB747 in 1991, HB867 in 1997, and SB702 in 1999, the Town can now place its own zoning in all of the Sphere/ETJ, and enforce Matthews subdivision regulations on all but one location as well. Because the Town will imminently annex all properties within the Sphere/ETJ, this Land Use Plan includes the entire Sphere/ETJ in all land use policies and planning considerations.

Population Characteristics

In 1950, Matthews was a small, rural town with a population of 589. The population grew slowly during the 1950's and 1960's. However, the population had more than doubled between 1970 and 1980 and stood at 1,648 in 1980. This growth is reflective of the increased suburbanization of American cities and the employment opportunities provided by the location of several major corporations in the town during the 1970's, including Picture Corporation of America (PCA), Rexham Corporation, Stronghaven, Family Dollar and Pic-n-Pay.

By the time of the Special Census conducted in 1986, the population of Matthews had grown to 5,846, an increase of 361% since 1980. This incredible growth rate continued through 1990 with the Census reporting a population of 13,651. The Year 2000 Census gives Matthews a population total of 22,127, for a 62% increase over 1990. In the same decade, Charlotte grew by 37%, and Mecklenburg County as a whole by 36%. Though much of the growth has been due to annexation, a significant portion is also attributable to the increased residential development that is occurring within the Town limits. As Matthews continues to annex areas within its Sphere of Influence, its population will continue to grow, although the resulting size increase is difficult to predict. It is expected that the Town will continue to experience growth as in the past decade, but at a somewhat slower pace.

Housing Characteristics

The number of housing units in Matthews has grown along with the growth in population. From 1980 to 1990, the total number of housing units grew from 602 to 5,374 units. Between 1990 and 2000 they grew to 8,138. Matthews maintained a high occupancy rate with less than ten percent of the housing units reported as vacant in the 1990 Census. In the 1990-2000 decade, the vacancy rate dropped to 3.7%. The number of persons per household for 1990 was 2.84, slightly higher than Mecklenburg County with an average of 2.49 persons per household. In 2000, the average household size in Matthews had minimally decreased to 2.79 persons while it stayed level at 2.49 in Mecklenburg County.

The number of housing units will continue to grow with continued annexations and new residential developments. The style of housing developments may also change in Matthews' future, with attached housing becoming an acceptable alternative. An indication of this growth can be seen in the number of new building permits issued each year for Matthews, and by the number of residential subdivision plats continually coming up for review and approval.

A trend in single family housing growth can be seen in the total numbers of new construction permits, and in the value of those permits over the past few years. The table below shows new single family construction for calendar years 1993 through 2000, and the first three quarters of 2001. The fastest growth spurt for new homes in Matthews in the past decade was in 1996 and 1997, although the number of new home permits was greatest in 2000 with the construction of two new townhouse projects. The average value of new homes appears to have peaked in 1999, and are now coming in at lower values. With the advent of attached housing in Matthews, single family housing opportunities will broaden.

YEAR	NEW SF PERMITS	TOTAL VALUE OF PERMITS	AVERAGE VALUE OF PERMITS
1993	96	\$ 6,507,085	\$ 67,782
1994	143	\$14,478,399	\$101,248
1995	187	\$21,400,622	\$114,442
1996	268	\$33,992,738	\$126,839
1997	207	\$28,728,439	\$138,785
1998	181	\$22,877,110	\$126,393
1999	117	\$18,239,797	\$155,896
2000*	208	\$30,914,272	\$148,626
2001* /3rd qtr	87	\$12,031,215	\$138,290

*Includes attached housing - Avington and Parkside at Matthews townhomes

Until 2000, multi-family housing in Matthews was limited primarily to large apartment complexes. There are now seven rental complexes open in Matthews jurisdiction, the most recently constructed being The Vinings at I-485 and East John Street.

Two manufactured home communities exist in Matthews - Oakhaven, a traditional mobile

home park on Matthews-Mint Hill Road just off Independence Boulevard, and Eastwood Forest, a subdivision between East John Street and Pleasant Plains Road at the Mecklenburg-Union County line.

Plantation Estates is a continuum of care operation for senior citizens, incorporating independent living apartments, assisted living units, and nursing home facilities. Nearby is Carrington Place nursing home with 150 rooms. Other alternative options for seniors, such as “granny flats”, assisted/independent living group homes, or separate units within single family homes of relatives, have been mentioned at times for further exploration, but have not been actively requested or promoted.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Existing Conditions

Area road projects have proven to be a stimulus for development. Whether proposed or under construction, new road connections exert demand for changes in zoning and land use patterns which have a substantial impact on future development in Matthews. Just as the new route of NC51 spawned new commercial sites because it opened up landlocked properties to easy on- and off-access for vehicles, new and more intense development pressure can be expected from landowners and developers along and near road improvements.

The completion of the current NC51 from Sardis Road to Reid Harkey Road in the early 1990's allowed the removal of one traffic signal on Independence Boulevard, while it added two onto Matthews Township Parkway, with at least one more expected for retail-created traffic, and one for high school traffic. The new NC51 designation for awhile took through traffic out of the middle of the downtown area, but delays created by the large volume of vehicles have again become a typical frustration there even though truck traffic has been restricted on N Trade Street.

Prior to the full road opening, the Town adopted a Special Highway Overlay zoning district that stretches on both sides of the new highway for 500 to 1000 feet deep. The two primary purposes of this Overlay are to preserve existing vegetation where practical, and to limit the number of new driveways and streets intersecting with the new road. By reducing the number and increasing the spacing between curb cuts, the road's long-term ability to serve as a traffic mover will be strengthened. The Town and the state have been pressured to allow additional center median breaks in NC51 to allow left-turn movements in and out of new development sites. One such median break was allowed between Paces Commons Apartments and the Matthews Festival shopping center, while another was denied for a proposed private school between Monroe Road/West John Street and Fullwood Lane.

Another vital road project recently completed is the widening of that portion of Monroe Road/West John Street to Trade Street in downtown. The road was widened to five lanes from an existing five-lane cross-section near the Charlotte city limits to NC51. From NC51 to Covenant Church Lane, the road was built with four lanes. A project recently completed is the addition of a left-turn stacking lane for the Post Office on East John Street. Widening of all of East John Street from downtown to the County line and into Union County is on a needs list, but does not currently have funding or a schedule for completion.

The southern leg and the first piece of the eastern leg of I-485, the Outer Loop, completing its route through Matthews was opened in sections in the past four years. The entire loop road will take more than a decade to complete. The interchanges at East John Street, Independence Boulevard, and Idlewild Road are completed, as well as local street realignments due to these interchanges. One other interchange has been proposed at Weddington Road, where the road divides Matthews and Charlotte municipal limits. The proposed interchange here is not favored by the Matthews Board of Commissioners, and is not scheduled for construction until 2006.

Traffic from Union County and the eastern part of Mecklenburg County must access I-485 from existing local streets. Mint Hill area travelers can use two-lane Matthews-Mint Hill Road and two-lane Idlewild Road to get to the Idlewild Road interchange or can travel to an interchange further northeast. On the other side of Independence, Mecklenburg County commuters use two-lane Pleasant Plains Road or Weddington Road to two-lane South Trade Street to two-lane East John Street or they cut through the Eastwood Forest neighborhood with its narrow roads and deep side ditches. Union County commuters currently have the choice to drive two-lane John Street to

the interchange there, or to take Providence Road to the NC16 interchange, or Weddington Road to McKee Road to Providence Road. There are plans to widen Providence, McKee and that portion of Weddington Roads, but timing of each project is subject to change. There are also plans to extend McKee Road from Pleasant Plains to John Street. This would provide another route for Mecklenburg and Union commuters to reach the John Street interchange. A new alignment for US74 in Union County will also have to converge into Independence at or near I-485.

Other road projects that will affect the Matthews area include the extension of the parallel collector roads on each side of Independence Boulevard. These roads provide alternative access to businesses along the Independence corridor now, and will be the only access in the future should Independence become a limited access freeway here. The portions of Independence Pointe Parkway and Northeast Parkway that are in place today have been built by private developers. It is likely that any continuations of these roads will also be built by private entities until such time as the state's road plans for Independence require them to provide all Independence frontage properties with alternate access, and then the state will complete the missing links.

Bus service in Matthews consists of an express bus route along John Street/Monroe Road that takes area commuters to uptown Charlotte and back out mornings and evenings, and a line that picks uptown commuters up from a park and ride lot at Windsor Square and returns them there each evening. An all-day local route was recently extended into Matthews. The Matthews Village Rider offers cross connection between the hospital, downtown, and shopping along US74 all day. It has a set route but can deviate a short distance to provide door-to-door service within a specified geographic vicinity. An experimental day-tripper shuttle service was first tried in Matthews in 1997, providing door-to-door \$1.00 one-way fares. It ended due to lack of use, although the actual need is still present.

Over the years there has been talk about a light rail transit line paralleling the existing railroad line, again just going into the uptown area and back out. A County-wide commuter transit feasibility study was done in 1998, and a formal MIS study is underway. The MIS study for the Southeast Transit corridor is focusing on either bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail to be located along Independence Boulevard, Independence Pointe Parkway, or John/Monroe Road. No transit system has yet been activated that would allow Matthews to Pineville, or Matthews to South Park, or other non-uptown destinations.

In conjunction with road building or improvement projects, with new park land development, and with new residential or commercial development that includes creeks or floodplains, the Town has an opportunity to provide alternative transportation in the form of sidewalks and bikeways. New paths for walkers, bicyclists, roller bladers, etc. can be created alongside roads or through areas not available to cars, connecting one subdivision to another or to a park or a school. The Town has been building sidewalks along major roads for the past several years, and requires sidewalks on both sides of streets in subdivisions. As these individual paths connect one to the next, Matthews residents and office workers will have the option of not using their personal vehicles to go to lunch, visit friends, send the kids to the park or school, or to run errands.

Objectives

- To provide a well-designed, efficient and adequate system of transportation.
- To aggressively pursue the development and construction of new roads and of mass transit alternatives.
- To preserve the integrity of the current NC51 as a major traffic thoroughfare.

- To recognize NC51 as an important indicator of community image and entryway for Matthews.
- To preserve, to the maximum extent possible, the natural appearance and character of the current NC51 corridor area.
- To promote and encourage changes in the downtown area road network so that traffic can flow safely and freely on a regular basis.
- To prevent improper development along the Independence Boulevard collector roads and at I-485 interchanges that would create significant increase in traffic without additional road improvements to accommodate them.
- To develop and encourage the use of alternate transportation modes and greater connectivity between neighborhoods and local destination points.

Recommendations

- Encourage continued development of Independence Boulevard collector roads and adherence to the guidelines for development including requiring the location of parking in the side or rear of properties, locating loading zones and service entrances to the rear of properties, consolidating driveways along the road to limit curb cuts, screening of the parking lots and preserving the existing trees between Independence Boulevard and adjacent developments.
- Limit development along John Street south of downtown to the Union County line to single family residential, except as further defined for the I-485 interchange in the next chapter.
- Limit development at I-485 and Idlewild Road interchange to single-family residential, and in accordance with Mint Hill land development plans. Development at the John Street interchange should follow the recommendations of the next chapter. If an interchange is constructed at Weddington Road, it should be limited to residential, where a generous buffer may serve to visually and audibly separate the uses. An appropriate mix of uses, including office, commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential at the Independence/I-485 interchange is anticipated in the following chapter.
- Maintain the integrity of the existing land use patterns and neighborhoods at and near I-485 interchanges, so that development pressures will not be allowed to create additional traffic generating uses beyond new I-485 commuting traffic volumes.
- Continue to encourage and support the construction and completion of the Independence collector roads, McKee Road extension, Sardis Road North extension, and the eastern leg of the Outer Loop.
- Support a Matthews Park-n-Ride lot in the downtown to be serviced by the express bus now traveling John Street/Monroe Road.
- Develop pedestrian sidewalks, bikeways and similar facilities which encourage alternative transportation choices, and connect existing portions of off-street paths for greater continuity.

- Require bike facilities be constructed as a part of road construction/road improvement projects, to the greatest extent possible.
- Limit the number of curb cuts permitted onto major or minor thoroughfares.
- Prevent strip commercialization from occurring along NC51, Monroe Road/West John Street, and the Independence collector roads.
- Develop a long-range local transportation/transit planning document, and keep it updated as road funding and schedules are revised.
- Continue to monitor discussions about the location of the future Monroe Bypass (US74 in Union County) as it enters Mecklenburg County, and actively resist efforts to bring the Bypass into Matthews at or near Idlewild Road.
- Build sidewalks on both sides of main roads and on streets within the downtown area, especially John Street.

WATER AND SEWER ISSUES

Existing Conditions

Matthews and its Sphere of Influence are split into three drainage basins with a fourth basin bordering the southern limits of the Town (Map 5). The McAlpine Creek and Four Mile Creek basins flow within Mecklenburg County while the Six Mile Creek and Crooked Creek basins drain into Union County. The areas in the McAlpine Creek basin, west of Independence Boulevard, are well serviced by public utilities (Maps 6 and 7). In the past decade, public water and sewer services to the remaining areas in the McAlpine Creek basin have been increased as the Beards Creek and Irwin Creek sewer systems were expanded, and new water line construction along Sam Newell Road, Margaret Wallace Road, Matthews-Mint Hill Road, and Idlewild Road were connected to the existing network.

There was also new construction of sewer and water lines in the Four Mile Creek basin. Water lines have been extended along Weddington and Pleasant Plains Roads. With the successful implementation of succeeding bond issues, the Town of Matthews has been able to provide for main trunk lines of both water and sewer throughout the entire community. This will allow extension of smaller lines into neighborhoods on request, especially when residents can take advantage of the 1,000 foot free extension program run by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department.

Both the County and the Town have active stormwater utility programs in place now. The Town services small drainage situations, while the County maintains those of a multijurisdictional or regional scale. Monthly stormwater fees are assessed on each developed property to pay for the stormwater programs.

Objectives

- To provide high quality water, wastewater, and stormwater systems that meet the needs of a growing population.
- To provide an efficient and acceptable level of public services and facilities to accommodate development, while mitigating the negative impacts of infrastructure construction.

Recommendations

- Continue to promote quality water and sewer service for all residents of Matthews.
- Medium and high density residential, office, commercial, and industrial development should be adequately serviced by public utilities.
- Continue working with CMUD to find ways to extend public water and sewer lines to all areas of town.

RESIDENTIAL

Existing Conditions

Matthews residential pattern is composed primarily of a large number of single-family developments with seven scattered apartment complexes and two townhouse developments now under construction (Map 2). There are also a nursing home, a continuum of care community, a manufactured home park, and a manufactured home subdivision, Eastwood Forest, within the Town limits.

The predominant residential land use is the single-family detached house, located in subdivisions which have primarily been the basis for the Town's rapid growth. Single-family locations are somewhat diversified, ranging from typical subdivisions to rural scattered sites. Located in close proximity to the downtown area are several older, well established neighborhoods including a primarily low-income neighborhood known as Crestdale.

Of the large multi-family developments within the Town limits, Plantation Estates is an exclusive retirement community with varying styles of housing for its residents. The others are upscale apartment communities, with at least 100 units each. Long absent from the residential land use pattern are low to medium density residential alternatives, such as duplexes, zero lot line homes, patio homes, and townhouses. These styles of housing are beginning to be proposed and built as examples become more visible in the Charlotte region and more people express willingness to locate in them.

The majority of the Town is zoned single-family residential consisting of R-20, R-15, R-12, and R-9. The largest residential areas are zoned R-15 and R-12. The R-9 classification, over the past several years, has been applicable only to areas which are already developed and do not meet the requirements of the other residential categories. Townhouse communities are zoned R-VS, Residential Varied Styles, a fairly new designation intended to allow small lot or attached housing where each dwelling is designed on a separate lot. Apartment developments are currently zoned R-12MF and R-15MF. The manufactured home locations are zoned R-MH, and the nursing home is zoned R/I.

Recent zoning actions involving the R-VS district have shown that developers are interested in utilizing the flexibility of this new category. The R-VS was intended to allow higher density housing options in the downtown, but also at appropriate sites throughout the community.

Objectives

- To meet the housing needs of all area residents by providing a maximum range of choice in type, density and location of housing while preventing the adverse impacts to the environment and quality of life.
- To encourage the protection and rehabilitation of viable neighborhoods to ensure their continued existence as a major housing resource.
- To prohibit land uses considered harmful to the health, safety, and welfare of area residents from infringing upon the livability of residential areas while protecting the environment from inappropriate methods of site preparation while new housing is being built.
- To provide adequate amounts of land in varying densities to accommodate a broad range of housing.

Recommendations

- Maintain single-family land use in areas where there are existing single-family neighborhoods to protect and strengthen these neighborhoods with complementary single-family styles of development.
- Maintain existing single-family residential zoning with the following exceptions:
- Consider nonresidential uses of properties currently zoned single-family residential fronting Independence Boulevard, which would be compatible with new road construction and the future limited access status of Independence Boulevard as development proposals are submitted.
- Consider site-by-site rezoning requests in the downtown fringe area of West John Street as further explained in the Downtown section of this Plan.
- Keep neighborhood plans for more fragile neighborhoods current, so that these neighborhoods can be preserved and enhanced.
- Medium to high density single- and multi-family developments should be located in areas fronting or near major or minor thoroughfares and located in areas where services and utilities are available or projected to be within five years.
- Maintain multi-family zoning designations with the following exceptions:
- Rezone properties along Monroe Road which are currently zoned R-15MF to zoning categories appropriate for the existing land uses along this corridor. (See Monroe Road corridor recommendations in next chapter.)
- Consider rezoning for nonresidential or mixed use purposes those properties near the interchange of I-485 and Independence Boulevard as development proposals are submitted. (See Independence and Outer Loop corridor recommendations in next chapter.)
- Locate medium to high density residential development along the transit corridor, once it is defined and station locations are identified. Highest density housing should be within a 1/4 mile walking distance of any transit station for the southeast corridor (not transit stops outside of the southeast corridor or serving transit going other directions than downtown Charlotte.)
- Encourage R-VS development requests on those parcels identified as appropriate elsewhere in this document, and/or where clustering of homes will allow substantial protection of the environment.
- Encourage the options available in the CrC district to be explored by property owners and developers. Consider expanding these flexible and innovative provisions in other zoning districts.

OFFICE

Existing Conditions

The majority of existing office development has generally been located in or adjacent to Downtown Matthews and to the east of Downtown along Matthews-Mint Hill Road. A new concentration is beginning to become apparent along Matthews Township Parkway, as an anticipated result of the opening of Presbyterian Hospital Matthews.

The office locations are comprised of medical offices, small professional offices and banking facilities. Corporate offices of several large companies are located in Matthews (Harris Teeter, PCA, Family Dollar, and Carotek), but are a part of facilities that include warehousing and/or manufacturing, and are therefore discussed later in the industrial use category. Some existing offices are also scattered in commercial sites, such as strip centers on Independence Boulevard and Monroe Road. Undeveloped areas zoned for office development exist 1) in the East Point complex next to the theater, 2) between Windsor Square and Annecy subdivision at Sam Newell Road and Northeast Parkway, 3) in the area between Matthews-Mint Hill Road, the new NC51 and Independence Boulevard behind 84 Lumber, and 4) property controlled by the hospital on Matthews-Mint Hill Road.

Medical clinics are increasing near the hospital. Offices can be developed in business zoning categories, so much of the area around the hospital is potentially available for office development. Office uses provide support services to both the commercial and residential sectors of the community, and they can serve as transition areas or buffers between residential areas and more intensive land uses. It is important that these uses be controlled to ensure that they do not simply become extensions of nearby commercial strip development areas.

The Small Area Plan still in formation intends to provide an overall development concept for 300+ acres bounded in part by I-485, Independence Boulevard, and Matthews-Mint Hill Road. Whatever concept eventually is agreed upon by County and Town Commissioners, it will likely include office parcels along I-485 on County-owned land, and may include additional office sites in the interior. Different sized parcels, with different visibility and access, will dictate the potential users and building size/employee base.

Objectives

- To provide a wide variety of business and employment opportunities and services to meet the needs of all citizens.
- To provide employment opportunities for area residents.
- To locate office development between more-intense and less-intense land uses to create a physical, geographical, and noise separation.

Recommendations

- Avoid linear strip development of offices along thoroughfares in favor of planned office parks or clusters of offices outside of the Downtown area with common access and parking facilities.
- Direct office development to locate along major and/or minor thoroughfares and in the Downtown as provided for in the Downtown Master Plan.

- Consider rezoning petitions that provide for quality office development at the designated quadrant of the interchange of I-485 and East John Street, when careful buffering is provided against planned or existing residential locations.
- Encourage mixed use developments that incorporate offices within buildings and within multi-building projects, especially in the downtown or at transit station locations.
- Require conformance to any adopted plan for the 300+acre Small Area Plan location at I-485, Independence Boulevard, and Matthews-Mint Hill Road so that the appropriate types and sizes of office development are incorporated into the entire project.

INSTITUTIONAL

Existing Conditions

Institutional developments centered in Downtown Matthews are comprised of the government offices, library, educational facilities and churches. Numerous houses of worship are also located throughout the community. In the past several years, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools have expanded school facilities in Matthews to include three elementary schools (Matthews, Crown Point, and Elizabeth Lane), a middle school (Crestdale), and a 1600-student high school (Butler). The South campus for Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) has been in operation for a couple years at Independence Boulevard and I-485, and an expansion is already being designed. Carrington Place nursing home has operated for several years on Fullwood Lane. Plantation Estates is a full-service community for senior citizens, including a newly-expanded nursing home operation. Christ Covenant Church, with its 1800-seat sanctuary addition, operates a private school at the main campus but continues to plan for a permanent school location. Carmel Baptist Church also operates a sizable private school on its campus on Pineville-Matthews Road. A group of parachurch ministries have opened at the former Matthews United Methodist Church property on West John and Ames Streets.

In 1991 a zoning category titled Residential/Institutional was created to assist in placing institutional uses around town, because there was concern about large institutional uses affecting neighboring residential developments. All the schools listed above as well as a number of local churches, are now zoned R/I. Some of the institutional uses in the Downtown have commercial zoning designations, while smaller churches spread throughout the area are zoned single-family residential.

Senior day care has been made available at one location, and may be determined to need additional sites in the future. A senior center location has recently been located, and fund-raising is currently underway for construction of the facility. A location for apartments for senior citizens was zoned in 1999, although no construction has yet occurred.

Objectives

- To encourage quality institutional services and facilities for all residents.
- As demographics of the community indicate need, provide for senior citizen housing, day care, recreation, assisted living, and nursing/rest home care.

Recommendations

- Consider rezoning petitions that provide for quality institutional development at the designated quadrant of the interchange of I-485 with East John Street, when careful buffering is provided against planned or existing residential locations.
- Require conformance to any adopted plan for the 300+acre Small Area Plan location at I-485, Independence Boulevard, and Matthews-Mint Hill Road so that provisions are made for any institutional locations that may be appropriate within the entire project.
- Encourage programs and development projects that provide services/opportunities for senior citizens.

COMMERCIAL/RETAIL

Existing Conditions

There are significant concentrations of commercial and retail development in Matthews. The majority of the establishments are located along the Independence Boulevard corridor, including Independence Pointe Parkway, Matthews-Mint Hill Road, Monroe Road and in the Downtown area. Much of the development along Independence Boulevard is either small strip commercial development, or planned commercial centers developed within the past *fifteen* years such as Windsor Square. Existing sites along Independence Pointe Parkway include side or back entrances to restaurants or retail spaces which have access to other roads as well. Commercial development along Matthews-Mint Hill Road has been limited to the properties near the Independence Boulevard intersection or leading back to the downtown. Commercial development on Monroe Road between the Charlotte city limits and Matthews Township Parkway is primarily located in small strip centers.

There are a couple commercial development sites with zoning already approved but which are not yet fully built, mostly along the Independence or NC51 corridors. The two largest sites are a power center now under construction, Sycamore Commons, containing 620,500 square feet of retail, at the interchange of the NC51 and Independence Boulevard, and 850,000 square feet of mixed use development, named Matthews Place, across from the CPCC South Campus, which has a 25% cap on retail uses.

In addition to sites not yet developed there are several "big boxes" standing vacant along Independence Boulevard. As of January 2002, there were four boxes totaling just under 300,000 square feet of unused retail space. Some big boxes which had been empty for some months were recently refilled -- Big Lots took the former Sav-a-Lot in Matthews Festival, several smaller shops took the HomePlace site, and Furniture ROW Outlet replaced Waccamaw. Matthews needs to develop and implement a policy plan to reuse these, and any future, big box facilities.

Within Downtown, the commercial and retail development is a mix of uses including gas stations, specialty shops and a limited number of restaurants. The 100 block of N Trade Street includes a group of historically significant commercial buildings that provide the character for the Downtown area. New development within the Downtown, such as Matthews Station, can use the architectural context of these historic buildings to complement the look and feel of a small town downtown which is so appealing to residents and visitors alike.

Other pockets of commercial/retail uses are at the intersection of Idlewild Road and Matthews-Mint Hill Road, the intersection of Sam Newell Road and the new NC51, and an approved, but still undeveloped site at the interchange of I-485 and East John Street.

Commercial zoning classifications generally are: B-2 General Business, basically limited to the major highway link of Independence Boulevard; B-1 Neighborhood Business which acts as the catch-all commercial category anywhere in town; BD Distributive Business for warehousing and distribution uses, with limited locations in Matthews at this time; B-3 High Rise Business, a category created for specific sites and uses as they request this zoning along major thoroughfares; and HUC the Historic Urban Core for the heart of the Downtown. In addition, there are B-1SCD locations, specifically designed shopping centers of 100,000 square feet in size or larger, and there are a few old zoning categories just identified as Conditional, with stipulations on the commercial development that can occur on them.

Objectives

- To provide a variety of business opportunities and services to meet the needs of all residents while protecting existing residential areas.
- To promote planned commercial/retail centers to limit strip commercial development along major thoroughfares.
- To approve additional retail sites of significant size only if there are compelling public service reasons for doing so, and encourage reuse of existing commercial/retail sites in preference to new construction.

Recommendations

- Prohibit encroachment by new or expanded commercial uses into viable existing or planned residential areas.
- Direct commercial development to occur in clusters or planned shopping centers where zoning is already in place for such retail expansion to minimize strip development.
- Limit existing strip commercial areas from further expansion and encourage them to redevelop by consolidation and deepening of existing commercially zoned properties, but only when such development is compatible with adjacent land uses.
- Provide effective buffering and/or landscaping where commercial development adjoins existing or planned residential uses.
- Encourage retail in the downtown, and especially target those specialty shops and smaller businesses that fit the needs and the character of Downtown. (See additional Objectives and Recommendations on Downtown in the chapter on Transition Strips and Areas.)
- Town Board, working alongside the Matthews Chamber of Commerce, should develop and maintain an inventory of available commercial space - buildings and vacant land - and market it to specific businesses which would complement existing businesses within the community.
- Town Board, working alongside the Matthews Chamber of Commerce, should develop and keep updated a clear list of types and sizes of businesses needed/desired in the community.
- Town Board should provide public comment opportunities to the community on potential reuse of vacant big boxes, and should find ways to dialog with the local business community and the area commercial real estate professionals about the future of retail in Matthews.

DOWNTOWN

Existing Conditions

For both Town residents and officials, Matthews Downtown is viewed as a critical and central feature of the entire community. This has been expressed in the discussions held over the years on future directions for the Town as a whole and for the Downtown in particular. The Downtown Master Plan was adopted by the Town in Spring 1997. The expectation at that time was that the Downtown area was poised for new growth and expansion into adjacent vacant or under-developed properties. The Matthews Downtown Master Plan outlines the goals to direct this expansion effort, including increasing the number of residential units within a short walking distance of the downtown core, and improving pedestrian amenities.

Today, the Downtown area consists of a mix of land uses including commercial/retail, institutional, office, park land, light industrial, and residential. The area exhibits a composition of both old and new construction, with much of the nonresidential development one story in height. The current zoning is a mix of residential, office, and business districts. The Town has embarked on a unique public-private partnership, Matthews Station. This project includes a new Town Hall/Library building at the terminus of a new “main street” enclosed by new retail/office buildings.

The former location of the NC51 route went through the middle of Downtown, causing traffic problems especially when a train stopped traffic on Trade Street or when large trucks had difficult times turning tight street corners. The NC51 designation is now gone and heavy truck traffic has been barred from entering the downtown core, but traffic still regularly backs up whenever a train goes through town and at peak commuting hours. Despite the traffic tie-ups, the presence of the railroad has been viewed very positively. It is a vital historical element of the community.

Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the unique and small-town character of Downtown Matthews.
- To retain and promote a harmonious blend of compatible, pedestrian-oriented land uses.
- To enhance the vitality of Matthews Downtown.
- To promote the provision and construction of safe pedestrian facilities within the downtown periphery and residential areas.
- To expand the Downtown area to the boundaries established in the Downtown Master Plan and Downtown Overlay zoning district, with development that complements and enhances the existing downtown core businesses.

Recommendations

- Budget through the annual budgeting process for that portion of the implementation efforts that will be accomplished with public funds, particularly pedestrian and bicycle facilities, while identifying private sources for development funds.
- Follow the Downtown Master Plan, to verify status of implementation, and amend the Master Plan as needed to keep it current.
- Implement methods for procuring the following desired results:

- sidewalks on both sides to be continuous throughout expanded area and to the exterior boundaries of the defined 'downtown' area
- streets, or at least designated crosswalk areas, need to be short enough to feel comfortable to cross on foot, especially if a pedestrian is carrying merchandise or with children
- where streets need to be wide due to several lanes of traffic and on-street parking, provide 'neck-downs' around the mid-block and/or at intersections; this means the sidewalk is juttied out into the parking lane in order to reduce the distance a pedestrian needs to walk to get across a street
- wide, slightly raised pavement or other durable material can be considered for crosswalk locations, to better define them to both drivers and pedestrians by different pavement color, texture, riding/walking surface, and height (in comparison to street surface) with gentle sloped edges from street pavement up to crosswalk and back down again for vehicular ease
- alternate pavements are OK as long as they don't create difficulty for walking in heels or for someone in a wheelchair or with a baby stroller
- new construction to be built to a 'build-to' line, a set maximum distance from the curb
- to the greatest extent possible in new construction, and also in revitalization of existing commercial core, parking should be placed in the interior of blocks, so that buildings are set close to streets and parking is at the rear; to be done along with clear and consistent signage indicating where to get to parking
- rear doors to shops and offices directly off interior parking lots should be clearly identified with the store/office identification, and that it is a public entrance - in effect, these buildings should consider they have two 'front doors'
- all directional signage (to public parking, to main roads, etc.) should have similar colors, shapes, logos, or whatever features to indicate they are there for informational assistance
- provide adequate and consistent lighting along all pedestrian ways - this includes sidewalks along streets as well as interior pedestrian pathways - to assure there are no dark areas
- on-street parking should be provided, but should not be the predominant location for client parking
- downtown merchants and office workers should be aware of the desire of downtown visitors to use on-street parking spaces and should not park their vehicles on-street all day
- provide adequate space along newly constructed streets and any revisions to existing streets for small-bus transit and for delivery vehicles - this may be accomplished by specially designated turn-outs at mid-block; also need to be aware of adequate turning radii at street intersections and at driveways to interior parking/loading areas for larger delivery vehicles
- provide places for bicycle racks, out of the pedestrian pathways
- allow a variety of residential options, including apartment units over garages, which could also be allowable areas for home occupations
- in residential areas, do not have individual private drives for each unit directly off the public street;

instead, use alleys in rear or joint driveways off the street to rear of homes, then dividing to individual properties; also encourage/require all garages to be located behind or under residential buildings (no garage doors fronting directly toward the street at the same general plane as the fronts of buildings)

- front porches to be required in higher density single-family housing, and as much as possible on multi-unit dwelling structures

- Charleston style long houses, courtyard homes, zero lot line homes, row houses, townhouses, patio homes, and similar higher density detached/semi-detached architectural styles should be encouraged

- specific uses desired in the downtown should be identified and made public, such as a grocery store, certain convenience services, day care center

- when a street goes straight for a distance and then either 'T' intersects or curves, place a building at the point where the road stops or curves as a visual focal point

INDUSTRIAL

Existing Conditions

Matthews currently has a mix of both regional industrial centers as well as small industrial facilities which provide a portion of the Town's strong tax base. The majority of these facilities are located along the CSX railroad line, north of Downtown along West John Street and Industrial Drive. Additional industrial uses are located along Matthews-Mint Hill Road at Crestdale Road east of Downtown, between Independence Boulevard and Stevens Mill Road at the Union County line, and an industrial park at Sam Newell Road between Matthews Township Parkway and Independence Boulevard. Industrial areas were traditionally zoned I-1 Light Industrial until the Town took over zoning in the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and placed I-2 categories on the Martin-Marietta quarry and Hill Sand and Gravel. The new Town Public Works site on Tank Town Road at I-485 also carries I-2 zoning to allow for outside storage.

Existing industrially zoned undeveloped land exists around the Martin Marietta stone quarrying operation. There is both I-1 zoning along the frontage of Sam Newell Road which serves as a buffer to the quarry, and I-2 in the interior of the site which currently has the county's communications tower and two asphalt plants, with room for more users. The Hill Sand and Gravel site also has excess undeveloped I-2 zoned property and is adjacent to vacant I-1 and BD zoned parcels. A single parcel on East John Street at the Union County line is zoned I-1 for a series of warehouse structures, but remains mostly undeveloped.

With the acceptance by Matthews in 1991 of the ETJ area, two existing industrial uses were brought under Matthews zoning jurisdiction. East Coast Container, a steel drum recycling facility, and Bio Medical Waste (BMWNC), a medical waste treatment/incinerator facility, are located along the railroad on Campus Ridge Road, but are now nonconforming uses under Matthews zoning. Both properties' management companies are aware of their limitations to continue operations, and BMWNC is currently closed due to environmental violations. Since the Matthews Zoning Ordinance does not have provisions for incinerators, steel drum recycling, or medical waste handling, no change to the current operations could make these uses "conforming" without first revising zoning regulations.

The recent trend toward inside ministorage facilities has taken hold in Matthews. Two climate controlled facilities exist today with zoning approval for a third. One of the open facilities is a renovated industrial structure. There are other vacant or underutilized industrial or warehouse structures in Matthews where new industrial or warehouse uses could be located.

Objective

- To ensure that industrial development only be located on land which is suitable for the proposed use, compatible with surrounding uses, and is tempered by environmental quality considerations and the availability of public financial resources.

Recommendations

- The location of hazardous waste disposal facilities, air polluting incinerators, or other environmentally damaging uses within the area should not be supported. The elimination of processes that could be potentially harmful to the environment should be encouraged at existing locations, even while the facilities continue to operate.

- Industrial uses producing excessive noise, odor, air and/or water pollution, or other harmful impacts should be discouraged in both the area under Matthews planning jurisdiction and in surrounding locations that will have an impact on the Matthews planning jurisdiction.
- No expansion of industrially zoned land should be encouraged at this time except within existing planned industrial parks.
- The Town Board and the Matthews Chamber should do an evaluation of existing industrial properties - vacant land and buildings - and determine appropriate potential new uses for these sites. This list of properties and list of target users can then direct inquiries by potential business relocation representatives to likely matches.
- Encourage additional setbacks and buffering requirements over minimums for industrial sites adjacent to other zoning districts or uses to ensure minimal impacts on surrounding areas.
- As the transit corridor is determined and transit stations identified, then County and Charlotte owned properties along the CSX rail line should be studied for best development opportunities. Due to these land parcels' access to the rail line, some distribution uses may be considered possible, but only if the adjacent roads can accommodate the necessary increase in truck traffic and proposed adjacent development will find distribution a compatible use.

RECREATION

Existing Conditions

The number of recreational facilities in Matthews is limited, but growing. Arthur Goodman Memorial Park, located on South Trade Street, is operated by the Matthews Athletic and Recreation Association (MARA) and coordinates a variety of youth team ball sports much of the year. Idlewild Road Park, near Margaret Wallace Road, is a Mecklenburg County operated facility which has considerable additional acreage yet to be developed. Town parks include Clyde Baucom Park and Sardis Park, both neighborhood playground facilities, Windsor Park (formerly Fullwood Park) off Northeast Parkway adjacent to Windsor Square, Stumptown Park in the Downtown, and Squirrel Lake Park developed jointly with the County. The Town also owns and operates the old Matthews High School as a Community Center. Many residential subdivisions offer their residents some recreational amenities, from tennis courts to pools. The Siskey YMCA offers programs in their facility on Weddington Road at I-485. Matthews Tennis Club is a private facility offering tennis, swimming, and a golf driving range.

Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte combined their Parks and Recreation departments in 1994. At that time, it had been the policy in Mecklenburg County that the municipalities provided their own neighborhood parks, and the County provided district parks, community parks, nature preserves and recreation centers. The County's Greenway Master Plan anticipates expansion along certain creeks into the Matthews area.

There is a strong desire and need for continued recreational development within Matthews. A survey and a series of public meetings were undertaken during the summer of 1997 to solicit residents' comments about what recreational facilities and offerings they wish to see in Matthews. These comments were incorporated into a local recreational master plan.

Two single-family subdivisions have been designed and constructed to include opportunities for greenways in the future. Passive open space as well as active recreational fields are important. Town Board adopted revised subdivision requirements in 1998 to include a land dedication element for all new single-family lots so that new parkland and open space can be added to the Town.

Objectives

- To encourage the provision of open space and recreation facilities in private development to complement the demand for publicly financed facilities.
- To promote the protection of environmentally sensitive areas along streams and in flood prone areas from development and for use as greenways to create a link between residential uses and recreational areas.
- To protect and preserve the natural environment from adverse effects of development.
- To provide a comprehensive system of open space and recreation.

Recommendations

- The expanded acreage at Idlewild Road Park should be developed for regular use.
- Continue to develop Town owned parks, including Windsor and Stumptown.
- Encourage development of the greenway system along floodways and as called for in the Master Park Plan and Greenway Master Plan. Encourage the linkage of potential bikeway systems through greenways where feasible.
- Encourage the donation of usable recreation areas and passive open space land through the rezoning and subdivision process for neighborhood park development.
- Promote continued coordination with the Siskey YMCA on the location and need for specific recreational facilities.
- Implement the Park and Recreation Master Plan for the Town of Matthews.
- Pursue the acquisition and development of additional Town parks and recreational facilities, from tot lots or vacant corner picnic areas or basketball courts to a new full-scale recreation center offering a variety of active recreational opportunities.
- Identify one or more tracts of land dispersed throughout the community, especially on the northeast side of Independence Boulevard, as potential Town park sites, and find ways to acquire the most appropriate sites.

TRANSITION STRIPS OR AREAS

Although the vast majority of the already-built acreage in the Matthews planning and zoning jurisdiction is consistently one type of land use - single-family residential - some sections are undergoing a transition in uses. These specific locations are receiving pressure from encroachment of nearby uses, increased traffic, or a change in road alignments that may provide new or improved road frontage for property not previously able to be developed.

These special locations need more site-specific objectives and policies than are found elsewhere in this document. Their eventual development can then be guided by these policies as private property owners propose specific layouts.

All or portions of the corridors or areas listed below have been determined to be the most likely locations to receive development pressure over the next several years. As some areas become predominantly built out and new areas become hot spots for development, this list will change. By giving more detail to specific sites, property owners and developers will have a better understanding of how the Town anticipates requests for development projects. Plans submitted that do not agree with the general objectives and recommendations of the first part of this Plan, or do not match specific goals of the following pages, will not likely receive approval by the Town.

1. MONROE ROAD/JOHN STREET

- A. CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO NC51 - EAST SIDE
- B. CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO NC51 - WEST SIDE
- C. NC51 TO COVENANT CHURCH LANE - BOTH SIDES
- D. COVENANT CHURCH LANE TO POST OFFICE - BOTH SIDES
- E. POST OFFICE TO UNION COUNTY LINE - BOTH SIDES

2. Current NC51

- A. TOWN/SPHERE LIMITS BY REVERDY LANE TO SARDIS ROAD
- B. SARDIS ROAD TO JOHN STREET
- C. JOHN STREET TO SAM NEWELL ROAD
- D. SAM NEWELL ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE
- E. INDEPENDENCE TO MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD
- F. MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD TO IDLEWILD ROAD

3. I-485

- A. WEDDINGTON ROAD TO EAST JOHN STREET
- B. EAST JOHN STREET TO INDEPENDENCE
- C. INDEPENDENCE TO IDLEWILD ROAD

4. INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD

- A. CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO NC51
- B. NC51 TO UNION COUNTY LINE

5. INDEPENDENCE POINTE PARKWAY

- A. CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO NC51
- B. NC51 TO MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD
- C. MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD TO CAMPUS RIDGE ROAD

6. NORTHEAST PARKWAY

- A. CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO SAM NEWELL ROAD
- B. SAM NEWELL ROAD TO NC51
- C. NC51 TO END

7. MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD

- A. DOWNTOWN TO INDEPENDENCE
- B. INDEPENDENCE TO CURRENT NC51

8. SAM NEWELL ROAD

- A. MATTHEWS STREET TO NC51
- B. NC51 TO INDEPENDENCE
- C. INDEPENDENCE TO MARGARET WALLACE ROAD

1. MONROE ROAD/JOHN STREET

A. MONROE ROAD: CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO NC51 - EAST SIDE

Currently all properties along this stretch are zoned I-1 except for the former McAteer's store which is zoned B-1. A portion of this road was widened from two to five lanes in 1997, which resulted in reduced front yards and front parking on some adjacent properties. A streetscaping plan was developed for Monroe Road/John Street, and new trees have been planted within the narrow public right-of-way in accordance with that plan. A new retail strip center has been built and zoning approval has been received for a three-story indoor storage facility, so most of the vacant land on this side of the road is now developed in some way. It is possible, though, that redevelopment of this area will occur in the future, which will warrant a set of policy guidelines.

- Property along this length should be I-1, and the one B-1 property should be rezoned for consistency along this side of the road at such time as a specific use for the site is proposed.
- As any property is developed or altered, owners/developers should provide landscaping in excess of minimum zoning requirements and which will complement adjacent parcels' landscaping. The public streetscaping should also be protected and further enhanced as development occurs.

B. MONROE ROAD: CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO NC51 - WEST SIDE

Properties on this side have an assortment of zoning, either R-15MF, B-1 or B-1(CD), I-1 or I-1(CD), or R-20. This mixture is confusing, especially since many of the individual parcels of land are too small to be used in a typical multi-family or business development project. It appears to be the result of cumulative parcel-by-parcel zoning approvals, except the R-20 tract came into being when the ETJ was blanket-zoned in 1991. The predominant uses in this stretch are the Drake Apartments, various small commercial/retail uses, mini-storage facility, and small strip centers. As a result of the Monroe Road/John Street streetscaping plan, several new small trees have been installed within the narrow right-of-way strip between curb and sidewalk. A comprehensive outlook for this side of the road is created by the following policies.

- Because most of the sites zoned R-15MF are too small to be economically feasible as stand-alone apartment developments, they are encouraged to be considered with adjoining parcels for joint development and/or rezoning. Multi-family housing, such as apartment buildings, a complex, townhouses, condominiums, or patio homes, any of the above with single driveway access from Monroe Road, may be acceptable if the site plan design provides sufficient landscape buffers against traffic, noise, and lights. There should be careful attention paid to buffering the rear of these parcels where they abut single-family developments.
- Matthews Board of Commissioners and the Planning Board should anticipate requests for zoning changes here. Due to the small size of most individual lots, zoning requests will not be successful unless they: incorporate several parcels, have shared driveway access points, provide excellent landscape buffering to the rear, include streetscape planting that complements recently installed plant materials and preferably exceeds minimum zoning standards, and do not have straight building frontage parallel or perpendicular to the road giving the impression of a strip center.
- Strip shopping centers, convenience stores, vehicular service-oriented uses, or other 24-hour operations will not be considered for zoning approval here because the land backs up to residential, and there is generally insufficient lot depth for adequate separation from noise,

lighting, and pedestrian cut-through traffic where no public pathways are provided.

- Additions to, or expansion of, existing strip centers is not encouraged, unless they are combining lots and sharing driveway access points. Such shared driveways should be spaced as far from road intersections or adjacent drives as is practical.
- The large vacant tract adjacent to The Drake Apartments now zoned R-20 may be considered for zoning to a higher density residential classification if the site plan provides sufficient landscape screening between the housing and Monroe Road. Because there is single-family detached housing to the rear and apartments and townhomes on the two sides, there could be a mix of housing styles on this site with lower density to the rear. Only one vehicle access to Monroe Road should be designed and approved, although a secondary access to Green Gardens Place would be appropriate if it can be provided.

C. WEST JOHN STREET: NC51 TO COVENANT CHURCH LANE - BOTH SIDES

This two-block stretch has a mix of zoning and land uses on it. The existing houses fronting this portion sit very close to the road, since it was widened from two to five lanes a few years ago. These houses are deteriorating, and are no longer favorably viewed as single-family residences. Careful conversion to low-intensity office uses is a practical alternative. This short stretch is vitally important to the downtown, as it is a major viewshed and entranceway. It makes a visual transition from modern-day commercial area to traditional village atmosphere. The corner of NC51 and John Street on the downtown side has been identified as a 'gateway'. The downtown gateway sign has been purposely located on West John Street away from the immediate NC51 intersection in order to allow drivers to pass beyond the signalized highway congestion before being informed the downtown lies ahead.

Proposed streetscaping, including trees, streetlights, sidewalks, and later, possibly street furniture, should be automatically added to any zoning requests for this area. Although the houses here may not be historically significant, they provide a sense of entry into an older, small-town downtown and they should not be allowed to be removed unless there are significant over-riding factors. Any conversions or new development in these two blocks should continue to give the visual impression of village residences, with no parking in front of the structures, architectural materials and details consistent with residences, small yard signs if any freestanding signs are used at all, and where possible shared driveways. Any proposed development/redevelopment here should carefully follow the design guidelines of the Downtown Master Plan.

- Consider sensitive conditional district rezoning on a case-by-case basis that will protect the visual and spatial compatibility of the existing single-family structures while allowing reuse/new construction for non-residential purposes. With the downtown commercial core only a few blocks away, non-residential uses here should not be solely or predominantly retail, as that will weaken the benefits of concentrating downtown retailers. Offices and service uses are the preferred uses for this section.
- All conversions of existing houses and all new construction should retain and emphasize the image of a village neighborhood atmosphere. Parking should be to the rear of structures, with shared drives where possible, signage should be reduced in size and should be in architectural harmony with the structure, and any new construction should be designed to complement the surrounding structures.
- This stretch lies within the Precinct 2 category of the Downtown Master Plan, and should follow the guidelines and goals as may be adopted for Precinct 2.

D. WEST AND EAST JOHN STREET: COVENANT CHURCH LANE TO POST OFFICE

The properties along this portion of John Street are generally considered to be part of the downtown. Most of the road through this section is four lanes, although it narrows just before the Post Office. Properties fronting John Street here include a mix of residences, churches, offices, small service businesses, restaurants, and retail, including two nonconforming gas stations. As soon as the curve in the road at the Grier Furr House and Covenant Church lane is rounded, the view is of an entrance to an older village center. The stretch discussed in Section C. above can be considered the 'approach and anticipation', while this stretch becomes the fulfillment of that anticipation.

The Downtown Master Plan gives greater detail regarding policies for revitalization, conservation, and reuse of properties in the downtown. This section of John Street falls into Precincts 1 and 2, with different redevelopment strategies for each. The Downtown Master Plan includes specific streetscaping improvements, which include preserving the large shade trees lining parts of this roadway.

Some architecture and some uses along this road are not consistent with the desired image of an older downtown. Redevelopment or reuse of properties should give specific attention to policies stated here and in the Downtown Master Plan.

- Single-family structures along this section of road should be preserved and maintained. Careful case-by-case rezoning requests for conversion to office or service businesses, such as explained in C. above may be acceptable when they exhibit controls on any visual changes that would detract from the ambiance of a village center. Parking should not be in front of structures, building materials and architectural details should be in character with the individual house and its residential neighbor structures, signage should be limited in size and location to be in scale with a village atmosphere, and additions to structures should be complementary to the main house.
- Existing non-residential structures should be maintained in good repair, and when improvements or expansions are made, they should follow the design guidelines of the Downtown Master Plan and/or downtown zoning overlay district provisions. When a nonconforming use ceases operation, all efforts should be made to return that property to use as a conforming permitted use.
- Where commercial structures are partially or completely vacant, the property should continue to be maintained, and where first floor windows can be seen from the sidewalk, every effort should be made to provide attractive displays in them.

E. EAST JOHN STREET: POST OFFICE TO UNION COUNTY LINE

Except for a small amount of retail zoning at the I-485 interchange, the Duke Power substation, and a couple individual commercial sites near the county line, the properties along the remainder of John Street are residentially zoned and developed. The I-485 interchange has created significant traffic pattern changes and has increased accidents along this stretch of two-lane road. There is no allocated funding or schedule for widening. The Monroe Road/John Street streetscaping plan proposes a green median divided two-lane cross section for this portion of John Street as an alternative design to the standard four- or five-lane design typically built today without concern for bikes or pedestrians. When McKee Road is extended from Pleasant Plains to John Street, new local traffic patterns will make it easier for residents of this portion of John to get to the existing shopping center at Weddington and McKee Roads, and for residents along Pleasant Plains

to access I-485.

The shopping center approved in 1991 for one quadrant of the Outer Loop interchange was subsequently rezoned for apartments and a few retail building sites, thereby reducing the potential for strip commercial pressure. Further rezonings for commercial/retail uses will create unneeded additional traffic on the two-lane road and will weaken the downtown commercial core. Property sandwiched between the Outer Loop, Duke Power substation, and the railroad tracks may be considered for an office park. The quadrant bounded by the I-485 interchange, the railroad tracks, the future Independence Pointe connector road, and backing up to the Crestdale residential area may be an appropriate site for institutional or R-VS residential development. The quadrant backing up to Brightmoor is now rural residential, with sufficient separation from the road to continue without zoning change, although this area too could be sensitively designed as an R-VS location.

- Case-by-case conditional district rezoning of the quadrants at the I-485 interchange may be considered when a specific development design is provided consistent with the descriptions provided here:
 - ** Independence Pointe connector quadrant: traditional single-family, R-VS single-family, or institutional.
 - ** Duke Power substation quadrant: low intensity, low truck traffic office or office/warehouse development in a coordinated business park setting.
 - ** Brightmoor quadrant: traditional single-family or R-VS single-family.
 - ** The Vinings quadrant: apartments or retail/office as currently zoned, with adjacent vacant land limited to some form of single-family design.

- Continue the single-family, lower density development pattern as anticipated by existing zoning except as listed in this section.

- The nonconforming commercial sites near the County line should be well maintained until such time as they cease to operate there. Uses and structures consistent with the neighborhoods should then be provided.

2. CURRENT NC51

A. NC51/PINEVILLE-MATTHEWS ROAD: TOWN/SPHERE LIMITS BY REVERDY LANE TO SARDIS ROAD

Matthews has zoning and planning jurisdiction of only one side on Pineville-Matthews Road for most of this section. The north side, under Charlotte-Mecklenburg jurisdiction, includes single-family subdivisions and some vacant land at Alexander Road that has multi-family zoning on it. Just beyond the Town's jurisdiction, both adjacent to and across from Providence High School on NC51, are apartment complexes. On the Matthews side, it is predominantly single-family homes. Two large institutional uses, Carmel Baptist Church and school at Reverdy Lane, and a public elementary school at Elizabeth Lane, front on this road segment. A child day care center for up to 210 children is located at the intersection of Sardis Road and NC51, adjacent to another growing church, Cross and Crown Lutheran. A new subdivision of traditional single-family design is now under construction between Courtney and Lakenheath Lanes.

- Maintain the single-family development pattern here as has been clearly established and has been relied upon by residents and home owners in the neighborhoods off NC51.
- Do not allow small vacant land parcels adjacent to institutional or non-residential uses be rezoned or developed for uses not compatible with the single-family character of the area. Where these singular sites would qualify for R-VS zoning and can be designed to be compatible with their neighboring properties, rezoning may be appropriate.
- Road cross-connections between roads running perpendicular to NC51 (Bubbling Well, Lakenheath, Courtney, Sardis Plantation, Elizabeth, Reverdy) should be seriously considered if an opportunity to create them arises. This would allow alternate access to NC51, and would be useful for area residents to access the traffic signal at Elizabeth Lane or Sardis Road/Lakenheath once these road intersections are rebuilt, and would be useful where left-turn barriers are installed on NC51.
- A realignment of Lakenheath Lane and Sardis Road at NC51 should be reviewed.

B. NC51/MATTHEWS TOWNSHIP PARKWAY: SARDIS ROAD TO JOHN STREET

This is mostly new roadway construction, creating road frontage where there formerly was none. Matthews Board of Commissioners has in the past strongly advocated keeping this area low density residential. Much of the land here is vacant, has single-family houses, or is part of the cemetery. Existing zoning designations in this corridor portion are mostly single-family in keeping with the already-stated official stand. The only exceptions are the properties on each side at the intersection of W. John Street/Monroe Road. Due to their configuration and the NC51 Highway Overlay district requirements, these lots are already oriented toward, and will have their primary access on, John Street/Monroe Road rather than NC51. Zoning requests for higher density residential and institutional uses are anticipated here.

- Development of property along this stretch should be in conformance with the goals and requirements of the Highway Overlay District which do not allow direct driveway access onto NC51 from new single-family subdivisions. New street connections for new subdivision development should be carefully designed so as not to create undue restriction of traffic flow on NC51.
- The streetscaping elements of the Highway Overlay District and underlying zoning should be

satisfied, as a minimum for any new development here. Where possible, additional setbacks, berms, or additional landscaping is encouraged to separate noise, lights, and view of traffic on NC51 from residences.

- Development of properties at the corners of NC51 and W. John Street/Monroe Road shall be oriented toward John/Monroe, with driveway access onto John/Monroe as called for in the Highway Overlay provisions. Where width of individual lots at these corners limits development design, these lots should be combined with one or more other tracts to obtain shared driveways and greater flexibility in development options. Any development of these corner properties shall include sufficient rear buffering to protect residential zoning and uses from any detracting factors of commercial development.
- The large tract currently being used by Christ Covenant Church for recreational activities may be considered for more intense institutional uses provided no additional median breaks are allowed along NC51 and any ingress for northbound traffic is provided at the signal at Fullwood Lane.

C. NC51/MATTHEWS TOWNSHIP PARKWAY: JOHN STREET TO SAM NEWELL ROAD

This section includes the former Shelby Street and the overpass of the railroad tracks. Shelby Street was developed prior to the NC51 construction, so a portion of the section is already built at different standards than the Highway Overlay District would now allow. Road right-of-way was increased when two-lane, dead end Shelby Street was converted into NC51 where it rises above grade to cross the rail line. The bridge over the railroad, as well as both approaches, allow drivers to see a substantial distance, including rooftops, parking lots, and open storage yards of adjacent uses. Because the steep slope of the banks on each side of the bridge were created when the road was built a few years ago, any trees there were removed and the new topography makes it difficult to replant for effective visual screening. Even if trees can be planted on the slopes, they will be lower than the road pavement, still allowing drivers and passengers to see over them for years. New tree planting here should be seen as important to the image of the Town.

The Downtown Master Plan incorporates one side of this corridor section in the downtown study area. Property near the corners of NC51 and John Street and NC51 and Sam Newell Road are both determined to be 'gateways' to the downtown, and appropriate signs, landscaping, and other elements need to be designed and installed to properly identify these gateways. Due to its proximity to the downtown, new development along the east side of NC51 in this stretch needs careful attention to all details. Commercial development should be compatible, and not competitive, with the downtown core. Existing industrial uses have recently expanded, using the standards of the Highway Overlay District. Office and service uses, and mixed use developments are encouraged here.

- As existing uses along former Shelby Street (NC51 between W John Street and railroad) are redeveloped, they should conform as closely as possible to the regulations of the Highway Overlay District.
- Development proposals for property along NC51 between the railroad overpass and Sam Newell Road, on the east side, should include a direct and positive linkage to the downtown, strengthening it by compatible and not competing uses. Provisions of the Downtown Master Plan and design guidelines should be carefully followed.
- Development along the west side from the bridge to Sam Newell Road should preserve the tree buffer a greater than required minimum distance in order to retain the image the Highway

Overlay District was designed to protect. Development here should continue as it is now unfolding, in a planned industrial park setting. Those land parcels not part of the existing industrial park property should be designed to complement, and add to, the industrial park now approved. Commercial/retail uses should be discouraged in this area, as it will weaken the existing and proposed downtown commercial core, and will dilute the effectiveness of the emerging park as an industrial focus location.

- Development proposals should include pedestrian-friendly amenities. On the east side, the provisions in the Downtown Master Plan and design guidelines give proposed methods for pedestrian links. On the west side of NC51 in this stretch, sidewalks or internal walkways separate from the vehicular pavement should be encouraged. Sidewalks should not be designed, however, to encourage pedestrians to cross the railroad tracks except where it can be safely created at the bridge overpass.
- Additional median breaks in NC51 should not be allowed as they can create traffic hazard locations.

D. NC51/MATTHEWS TOWNSHIP PARKWAY: SAM NEWELL ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

This was the first portion of the new alignment of NC51, built in the mid-1980's. It was designed and constructed as a part of the very first Conditional zoning approved in Matthews, and the project at that time included property where Matthews Festival shopping center, Paces Commons Apartments, Matthews Village Apartments, Matthews Township Office Park, and Presbyterian Hospital Matthews now stand. Across NC51 from Matthews Festival is mixed use development called Independence Pointe, including Target and Chef's Market. At the opposite end of this section is property zoned as a commercial business park including a medical office building, a bank, a pharmacy, and an industrial office facility. The entire length of this section of NC51 has zoning with conditions attached. New development also falls under the Highway Overlay District requirements. The hospital was designed to meet and exceed Highway Overlay landscaping requirements, and is an outstanding example of the intent of the Highway Overlay as it relates to preserving existing trees. This same care to meeting the intent of the Overlay District may not be present on other sites, where variances to the undisturbed front buffer have been granted.

- Reaffirm the Town Board of Commissioner's stand that the intent of the Highway Overlay District is to create a positive image of Matthews, which is to be created and maintained by preserving mature trees along the new road and limiting curb cuts, while allowing development of vacant parcels.
- Additional median breaks in NC51 should not be allowed, as they will create more traffic congestion and possible accident locations.

E. NC51/MATTHEWS TOWNSHIP PARKWAY: INDEPENDENCE TO MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD

The bridge over Independence and the continued road back to the old alignment of the designated highway was opened to traffic in late 1994. Long before the road was built, though, virtually all the land adjacent to it had been zoned with conditions that restricted development until the road was in place. At Independence Boulevard, one quadrant was zoned in 1986 for a regional shopping mall, while the other was rezoned and built in 1993 as a convenience commercial center. The mall zoning was amended in 2000 to be a grouping of retail spaces sharing access and open space, and that development is now under construction. The developers have donated a 9.8 acre tract along NC51 to the Happy Times Club for a senior citizens center.

Continuing on up the new road, most of the property on the Union County side of NC51 is part of a combination business and office conditional district zoning from 1996, which replaced an older conditional zoning approved in 1987. The approved zoning site plan for this area allows only two access points from the current NC51. Silverstone Business Park is being subdivided here now, and housing for senior citizens has been approved for portions of the office section.

On the other side of the current NC51 property is zoned single-family residential past the senior citizens center site, and is essentially vacant. Town policy has long been to limit creeping extensions of commercial uses from existing or proposed future single-family neighborhoods. There is sufficient depth of property here from the new road to existing neighborhoods to create single-family - traditional or R-VS - development with tree buffers against the new road.

- The Board of Commissioners should again affirm their commitment to preserving mature trees along this new road, as indicated in the Highway Overlay District.
- The area now zoned single-family should not be rezoned to another residential density or to R-VS unless a careful design retaining maximum natural area is offered.

F. NC51/MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD: MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD TO IDLEWILD ROAD

This two-lane portion of NC51 designation has been part of the highway route for many years. Land uses along this portion of road are primarily single-family homes and farms, with commercial uses just at the intersection of Idlewild Road. On the Mint Hill side of Idlewild Road is a neighborhood shopping center, Hoods Cross Roads. Long-range transportation plans call for eventual widening of both Matthews-Mint Hill Road and Idlewild Road. Water trunk mains have been installed along both roads as well. Town Board has stated over the years their position that this portion of NC51 should remain a residential area.

- Do not allow commercial, industrial, or office uses along this section of road except at the intersection of Idlewild Road where they currently exist.

3. I-485

I-485 now bisects properties under Town planning, zoning, and subdivision jurisdiction. Vehicular road connections are limited to a handful of interchanges and fly-overs. Greater efforts will be needed to develop safe and convenient pedestrian connections over or under I-485, either in connection with streets or as separate pathway locations.

Presently there is an Environmental Impact Study underway to determine the most favorable route for where the Monroe ByPass for US74 will enter Mecklenburg County and how it will rejoin the present alignment of Independence Boulevard. Three alignment corridors are being studied, and they include 4 potential connections back to the existing US74 pavement. One proposal that has been initiated by the Town of Stallings is to connect on top of the existing I-485/US74 interchange. This is not a desirable location from Matthews' perspective, since it would require massive additional land within the Matthews jurisdiction now being developed.

- Town Board needs to keep informed about the process to decide where the US74 ByPass will intersect with I-485 and reconnect to Independence Boulevard.

A. I-485: WEDDINGTON ROAD TO EAST JOHN STREET

There is currently no connection between Weddington Road and I-485, although a future interchange is anticipated to be built in the next several years. This interchange is desired by Mecklenburg and Union County jurisdictions, except Matthews, because it can provide a new access to I-485 for travelers in Southeast Charlotte and western Union County other than Providence Road or East John Street. Matthews Town Board has objected to the interchange, which will be located only on the Matthews side of Weddington Road, because its presence will significantly increase commuter traffic on the already-overburdened two-lane winding road. No major road improvements for Weddington Road, Weddington/Pleasant Plains/S Trade intersection, or South Trade Street are proposed to coincide with the interchange construction, yet all will be severely impacted by the interchange's location.

This area of Town has been solely single-family residential and continues to be a desirable location for new housing developments. Several single-family residential communities were designed and built with the knowledge that I-485 would be nearby, and they incorporated common open space between homes and the new highway. The Town Board has in the past denied zoning for commercial uses on Weddington Road about one-half mile out on both sides of I-485. Office and commercial zoning on the Charlotte side of Weddington Road was approved a decade ago, and is now being built out. This places more pressure by developers and property owners on Charlotte City Council and on Matthews Town Board for nonresidential development at Weddington and McKee Roads.

Siskey YMCA built adjacent to I-485, and uses the future ramp property as open playing fields. They have built a large and loyal membership, and can be expected to expand their facilities and land area in the future. The remaining area of land that can be developed near Weddington Road and I-485 is limited. Continued single-family development - detached or attached styles - would be appropriate along this portion of I-485. These alternative styles may take the form of townhouses, patio homes, zero lot line homes, clusters, or duplex/triplex/quadrplex structures. Where such alternatives are considered, they should provide adequate buffering between I-485 and the new homes, and should limit their vehicular access to main roads. These alternative styles of residential development create opportunities to maximize the existing natural tree cover for buffering and can reduce the amount of grading and/or paving on the site while still providing enough density for a developer to favorably consider the project.

- Where alternative styles are considered, they should include substantial buffering from I-485, and should provide primary vehicular access to a main road (Weddington, Pleasant Plains, McKee, John). Specific sites which may be appropriate for alternative housing styles are: Weddington Road next to Winterbrooke, and next to the Matthews Tennis Club.
- The quadrant at East John/I-485 interchange backing up to Brightmoor should remain single-family residential, either as traditional rural residential or one of the alternative residential styles there. Development proposals should indicate how an alternative style will encourage and maintain high quality of life amenities. Again, careful consideration to buffering and vehicular access will assist in obtaining rezoning approval.

B. I-485: JOHN STREET TO INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD

Between John Street and Independence are the CSX railroad tracks and considerable land under County ownership. This land was intended for a landfill. Now that the County has officially abandoned the concept of landfill, the site is being studied for a comprehensive development scenario. Although the Town does not have jurisdiction of this land, the Town will have zoning control of any portion of the County property as soon as it is sold or leased. The Town and County are coordinating development concepts on this and adjacent properties in a method never tried here before. The development concept finally agreed upon by both governmental bodies should be adopted by reference into this document.

Also in this segment is the new South satellite campus for CPCC. The college campus is on part of the land the County originally obtained for landfill purposes, but it is across I-485 from the bulk of the County property. A vacant tract between the CPCC campus and the railroad track has been leased by the college from the County for recreational facilities.

The extension of Independence Pointe Parkway is proposed to extend to, and across, I-485 toward the CPCC campus, and connect with the extension of McKee Road/Campus Ridge Road. Another new vehicular improvement on the approved Thoroughfare Plan is a road that will connect Independence Pointe Parkway to East John Street near the I-485 interchange at an unscheduled time in the future. This will allow traffic to exit I-485 here and directly get on the collector road rather than driving through the downtown area. These two new roads are critical to the development of the County-owned former landfill area, and will provide substantial traffic relief to Downtown Matthews whenever they open.

- At the John/I-485 quadrant backing up to the Crestdale neighborhood, traditional single-family residential or R-VS alternative styles of housing should be requested. Institutional uses may also be appropriate here. Care should be given to adequate buffering from the interchange and the railroad track, and vehicular access should be directed to John Street or the new connector road, if built or under construction. A pedestrian connection along the creek should be a mandatory element of any zoning or subdivision request here.
- The quadrant of the interchange bordered by the railroad and a Duke Power substation should be considered for a high quality office park development. Some warehousing uses that would not encourage tractor-trailer size vehicles would be acceptable here. Limited retail and services primarily for the office workers within the development should be incorporated into the design, along with generous buffering from residential uses across John Street. Protection from noise and lighting from off-site should be a primary concern of any development proposal here.

- On the Union County side of I-485 between John and Independence, the existence of the CPCC campus will direct the type of surrounding development. Related and complementary service and light commercial/office uses, with very limited retail, should be considered for the surrounding land on that side of the Outer Loop, only when proposed as a mixed use development plan. Single-lot or small parcels should not be developed without the framework of an overall mixed use project.
- Property across from the front entrance of the campus, bounded by Campus Ridge Road, Matthews-Indian Trail Road, and Independence has already been zoned for a mixed use development (January 1998 approval) but has never been developed. Planning Board should consider whether to initiate a zoning action to rescind the conditional zoning after three years of the date of approval.
- Although not part of the Matthews ETJ, the portion of County-controlled land on the Charlotte side of I-485 is recommended to be developed as a mixed use site, when a specific development concept has been endorsed by both Town and County elected bodies. Future developers/owners should agree to voluntarily annex and use Matthews subdivision standards as part of the conditional zoning packages. Town Board should adopt an overlay zoning district that will incorporate the approved development concept plan for the area.

C. I-485: INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD TO IDLEWILD ROAD

Land on each side of Independence and I-485 will have tremendous visibility to traffic but limited vehicular access. Their development patterns therefore should not be impulse-buying dependent, such as retail or restaurant, but should be destination-oriented, such as housing, offices and hotels. The land closest to the roads should have the greatest intensity of usage, and transitional office, multi-family or alternative housing styles should be designed as part of the first tier of uses. Retention of natural tree cover should be encouraged to its greatest extent.

This corridor will be greatly impacted by the potential realignment of US74 ByPass traffic. If the ByPass reconnects to existing US74 in Union County, then widening and loss of driveways may be all the impacts that Matthews sees on Independence between the County line and the I-485 interchange. If the ByPass is routed on top of the existing I-485/US74 interchange, significant vacant or underdeveloped properties now bordering these roads will be taken up by additional right-of-way.

The Town Boards of Matthews and Mint Hill have both stated they want to protect and preserve the residential quality along Idlewild Road at I-485. Both towns see continued lower-density residential development here. Union County, however, has chosen to encourage business development as close to interchanges as possible, and has zoned land for commercial use on Idlewild Road immediately over the County line.

- Land directly fronting the Independence/I-485 interchange should be designed for destination uses, in a mixed use concept. Mid-rise development is appropriate here. These uses can then form a buffer to the second tier of uses that would be lower-rise offices or various residential styles. Adequate access is essential, with separate access points for residential and nonresidential portions. Because gravity-flow sewer and major water lines are not currently available in this area of Town, specific plans for any development here should indicate in detail how public utilities will be provided.
- A full-service hotel could be an appropriate use in the first tier uses at this interchange area, if utilities and access can be adequately provided.

- As I-485 continues away from Independence, the prevailing development pattern of single-family is acceptable and encouraged. Alternative styles of housing may be considered for properties bordering I-485, as long as the proposals include sufficient landscaping and vehicular access is provided to through roads.
- No nonresidential uses except institutional uses should be considered at or near the interchange at Idlewild Road.

4. INDEPENDENCE BOULEVARD

Although currently a very busy divided highway through Matthews, in the future Independence is scheduled to become a limited access freeway. In anticipation of lost drive and street connections, and in order to provide alternative exits now, any development along Independence needs to include drive connections or cross access easements to another road than US74. As new sites are developed, assurance of future access to either Independence Pointe Parkway or Northeast Parkway should be part of the design and approval process. The Town has now adopted transitional setback requirements for roads shown on the Thoroughfare Plan to be built or widened in the future, and the extent of additional future right-of-way should be considered for any development proposal on Independence. This will assure that any on-site improvements and development occurring today will not be adversely affected by improvements to Independence Boulevard in the coming years.

- As each development project fronting Independence is reviewed for zoning or site plan approval, a guaranteed access to another public street should be identified. This may take the form of a recorded easement or actual construction.

A. US74: CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO CURRENT NC51

Much of the land fronting Independence has already been zoned for specific projects, and a good portion of those have already been, or are being, constructed. A substantial tract of undeveloped land exists along the Martin-Marietta property frontage, zoned for commercial uses. Directly across the highway is another vacant piece, although it backs up to a small residential community. A second tier property, behind IHOP/Midas Muffler/Suburban Lodge area is zoned for office use, with only a day care center constructed there at this time. Because the predominant use along this stretch and continuing into Charlotte is retail, future development should provide other uses. Mid-rise office buildings, multiple-tenant occupancy projects and other non-retail commercial uses with shared access points should now be encouraged for remaining vacant land. The Quorum, an office park on Independence in Charlotte, is an example of the style of development preferred here. The proposed mall site from the mid-1980s has now become Sycamore Commons, a group of various-sized retailers in one complex. A full-service hotel should be considered along this section of road if it is properly designed for access.

- Encourage development of the Martin-Marietta frontage, already zoned B-2(CD), to be planned in a coordinated effort. So far, one business has been built there without a clear picture of the remaining land's development pattern or business mix. The current zoning conditions limit access points onto Independence, and internal cross access will be essential to proper traffic flow.
- The remaining vacant land at East Point, zoned for office uses, should only be developed as offices. This was part of a mixed use concept when first zoned, and the commercial aspects have been completed. Other zoning conditions, including buffering of nearby residential should be complied with.

- Alternate vehicular access needs to be a high priority when considering approval of any new development on Independence.

B. US74: NC51 TO UNION COUNTY LINE

This portion of the Independence corridor contains older developed properties, with much of it zoned straight B-2. There will be infill of smaller lots as well as redevelopment of existing shops and restaurants. Again, access will be a major issue for any development or reuse of parcels fronting US74, and portions do not have a parallel collector road nearby. Additional collector roads may need to be designed and built prior to some properties being open to new use. Emphasis should again focus on non-retail service or office uses. When major road improvements occur here as envisioned by the Thoroughfare Plan, some businesses will not be able to remain viable due to reduction of convenient driveways.

- When property requires rezoning for a new use, the applicant should take into account surrounding uses that the proposed new use will complement. Retail uses should not be included or only a minor portion of the overall project. The proposal should include current and future vehicular access points, and address landscaping.
- Uses near the interchange should follow the recommendations given in that part of this chapter.
- Properties near the County line should include consideration of a possible new connection with the Monroe ByPass when planning any development/redevelopment.
- Redevelopment of the former K-Mart center and development of the adjacent mostly-vacant acreage should follow the development concept plans as they are endorsed by the County and Town elected bodies.
- Any development proposed between Matthews-Mint Hill Road and the Union County line should clearly demonstrate how public utilities will be provided, especially if off-site facilities are necessary.

5. INDEPENDENCE POINTE PARKWAY

A. INDEPENDENCE POINTE PARKWAY: CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO NC51

Currently, only the middle portion of this road segment is built and open to traffic. The portion connecting to Charlotte's Krefeld Drive will run through Martin Marietta stone quarry. Zoning conditions for the quarry include a provision that this section of the road will not be built while the quarry is active, unless the state determines they need to develop it sooner. The zoning plan indicates the points of entrance at each end for the road, and the quarry's entrance now is where the future road will be extended. When the quarry use is finished, and the quarry site itself is reclaimed, then other uses can be developed here.

The portion of the road now open from Sam Newell Road to the Duke Power substation has been about 75% developed with mixed uses. The last section of road right-of-way is secured except through the Duke Power substation. Duke Power has excess buildable land that would front on that road once it is completed, while Matthews Festival shopping center forms the edge of the future road over to Matthews Township Parkway.

- When Martin Marietta quarrying operations are over and the land is reclaimed, new uses along this future section of Independence Pointe Parkway should be a combination of offices, specialty retail and service uses. Mixed use projects here should be designed to ensure any easement for road/driveway access to properties fronting Independence are included.
- The remaining vacant land in the Matthews Park and Eastwalk developments (between Sam Newell Road and Duke Power) should be developed with uses that are complementary to those already there, and should not include more retail.
- As right-of-way is obtained through the Duke Power property and that portion of the road is opened, new building sites should be designed for office and related uses.

B. INDEPENDENCE POINTE PARKWAY: MATTHEWS TOWNSHIP PARKWAY TO MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD

This is the first portion of this collector road to be opened. More than half of the road frontage property has already been built, and the entire area is a single mixed use district. The remaining properties can be developed as planned.

- As remaining properties along this road are proposed for development, they should follow already existing criteria for access points, landscaping, and usage.

C. INDEPENDENCE POINTE PARKWAY: MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD TO CAMPUS RIDGE ROAD

This is an unbuilt but critical link in Matthews thoroughfare plan. The road alignment in the approved Thoroughfare Plan extends through primarily vacant tracks of land owned by only a few property owners, including substantial County-owned land. The approximately 300 acre area between Matthews-Mint Hill Road and I-485 has been the subject of a Small Area Plan. After Mecklenburg County Commissioners and Town of Matthews Commissioners approve the development concept for this area, then additional zoning regulations and design/development guidelines will be necessary to assure build-out follows the approved concept plan. The new section of Independence Pointe Parkway is critical because it acts as a "front door" entrance to the

300 acre area.

The proposed alignment then crosses over I-485 without an interchange connection, coming alongside the CPCC South campus property. The road will connect to the future extension of McKee Road. This provides area residents an opportunity to travel between the southeast corner of Mecklenburg County to other portions of Matthews or Charlotte without accessing major highways.

- Where the road will extend from Matthews-Mint Hill Road, all new development should closely conform to the adopted Small Area Plan. New design and development guidelines and new zoning provisions should be created and approved that would assist in further refining the anticipated development standards for property owners and developers.

6. NORTHEAST PARKWAY

A. NORTHEAST PARKWAY: CHARLOTTE CITY LIMITS TO SAM NEWELL ROAD

This unbuilt portion of the collector road will form the link between Sardis Road North and points east. Past Town Board zoning actions have set the stage for separating residential and commercial with this road. Properties between this new road and Independence may become a mixed use of nonresidential categories, while the other side will be limited to single-family uses.

- As this section of road is constructed, development proposals for mixed uses including multi-family residential should be encouraged on the west side. Careful use of landscaping and shared drive access should be included.
- Development on the east side of the new road should be limited to single-family residential. Lots and internal streets should be designed so that new driveways for individual house lots do not connect to Northeast Parkway.

B. NORTHEAST PARKWAY: SAM NEWELL ROAD TO NC51

This section of road is now completely open. The portion behind Windsor Square was built when that development occurred in the late 1980, and the eastern half was constructed with the start of Sycamore Commons Shopping Center. Much of the land fronting Northeast Parkway is already improved, except for property limited to natural open space and recreational purposes by zoning commitments. The Windsor Square zoning plans were designed as a mixed use development, incorporating retail, office, service, and multi-family uses. The regional mall zoning plan, now replaced by the Sycamore Commons plans, called for a variety of uses as well, but now is predominantly retail.

- Town officials should discuss whether they wish to accept the narrow strip of land between Northeast Parkway and the adjacent neighborhood offered to them as a part of the Sycamore Commons zoning case. The Town needs to understand the ongoing maintenance and liability responsibilities, as well as have a plan for how that land may be improved, if at all.

C. NORTHEAST PARKWAY: NC51 TO END

Currently, there is no guaranteed right-of-way for Northeast Parkway beyond the service road beside Matthews Corners shopping center. The intent is for the road to be continued over to Matthews-Mint Hill Road across from Moore Road. If this can be accomplished, then Moore/Marglyn Road can act as a continuation of the connector road system paralleling Independence. The portion of the road now built has a shopping center on one side, and has zoning approved for another center on the other side. Zoning beyond that point calls for office or residential uses over to Matthews-Mint Hill Road.

- Town Board should authorize an engineering study to determine the road corridor for Northeast Parkway where it does not currently exist. This study, once accepted by Town Board, can then be used by prospective developers in preparing their proposals for vacant land in the vicinity.
- Through the conditional zoning process, require construction of Northeast Parkway beyond its current end as new development proposals are submitted.
- Mixed use concepts should include shared access points and quality landscaping.

7. MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD

A. MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD: DOWNTOWN TO INDEPENDENCE

This road was designated NC51 for many years, and developed as a commercial street due to the traffic it carried. Now that it is no longer a designated route, it is a local connector, and still serves a valuable purpose. Where the Downtown Master Plan covers uses, design guidelines, and streetscaping, these policies should be followed. The area by the hospital rear entrance is designated as a downtown gateway, and a sign posted there assists in creating the downtown atmosphere. From the hospital property back toward Independence, several properties are undeveloped or underdeveloped and should be considered for office uses.

- Where new uses or redevelopment is proposed, it should focus on professional or service offices.

B. MATTHEWS-MINT HILL ROAD: INDEPENDENCE TO CURRENT NC51

Butler High School opened in the fall of 1997, along this road. Fullwood Plaza and some commercial uses exist near the Independence intersection, and Chambers Ridge apartments are at the corner of Moore Road. The remaining undeveloped land is mostly covered by two conditional zonings, limiting uses across from the high school to housing and offices, with one commercial location. Traffic on this road has been greatly impacted by the events at the high school. When Independence becomes a limited access freeway and the intersection is closed off, the commercial uses at Independence will likely be redeveloped to non-traffic dependent uses.

- For that portion of land across from the high school not yet developed, various residential uses only should be considered, with patio homes or other alternative styles of medium density preferred.

8. SAM NEWELL ROAD

A. SAM NEWELL ROAD: MATTHEWS STREET TO NC51

This portion of Sam Newell Road is covered by the Downtown Master Plan, and any development should follow the guidelines set up for the downtown.

- A specific street cross section should be adopted for this section of the road, so that any proposed development will know what improvements will be necessary. This may include on-street parallel and/or angle parking, curb and gutter, bike facilities, sidewalks wider than the Town's 5' standard, and may limit additional traffic lanes.

B. SAM NEWELL ROAD: NC51 TO INDEPENDENCE

A variety of zoning already exists along this stretch of road, and uses are being developed in accordance with these zoning cases. Retail, office, industrial, multi-family, and institutional uses are all developing here, and some residential zoning on vacant land may still be appropriate. The frontage of Martin Marietta property is not likely to be developed until the quarry ceases operation, as it now acts as a required buffer.

- Zoning requests to change the residential zoned parcels should be considered only on a case-by-case basis, when they clearly identify benefits of their proposed use. Limited new driveways and substantial landscaping should be included. Any proposal should show how it blends and supports neighboring uses.
- This section of roadway, with the heavy and slow-moving truck traffic from the quarry and associated industrial uses, should be widened. An appropriate cross section needs to be adopted that will allow for vehicular traffic, bicycle facilities, and pedestrians.

C. SAM NEWELL ROAD: INDEPENDENCE TO MARGARET WALLACE ROAD

Except for Windsor Square and East Point development at Independence, all uses along this portion of Sam Newell are relatively low-density single-family residential. Three churches and one elementary school front on this road, and are in keeping with the residential character of the area. As utility extensions allow homes on smaller lots, properties may be subdivided and more houses built. Long-range transportation plans call for part of this road to become an "inner belt" road link, which would increase traffic. It is already used as a through road between Independence and W. T. Harris Boulevard.

- Maintain the current commercial boundary developed at Northeast Parkway, and do not allow nonresidential uses further up the road.
- Protect and preserve the residential, lower density character of this area while allowing new homes to be constructed.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order for this Plan to be effective in guiding the future growth of Matthews, it is imperative that the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations be consistently complied with and implemented by the Town. The following tools will aid in implementing this Plan:

- Continue to develop and enhance good relations and communications with the surrounding County, State, and municipal government bodies and agencies.
- Promote public involvement in decisions on land use and development by making the public aware of proposed developments at the earliest opportunity, as well as encouraging ongoing and open communication between developers and the public.
- Promote neighborhood and special area planning, where feasible and appropriate, to foster public involvement in the production of closely tailored, action-oriented neighborhood plans and programs.
- Coordinate plans, policies, public investments and regulatory tools as appropriate with those of adjacent counties and municipalities, and with those of other governmental levels.
- Utilize the Matthews Zoning Ordinance, the Matthews Subdivision Ordinance, site plan reviews, the Thoroughfare Plan, the Master Park Plan, the county's Master Greenway Plan, the Downtown Master Plan, and other site-specific studies.
- Strengthen the existing zoning, subdivision, sign and landscape ordinances where necessary to provide regulatory standards to meet this Plan's recommendations.
- Consistently apply land use policies of this Plan through the rezoning process.
- Initiate recommended discussions with developer/owners.

The Land Use Plan is a guide for decision-making regarding land use, development and rezoning proposals. While aggressive in places, it is designed to be flexible enough to respond to market conditions while promoting health, safety, welfare and long-term interests of all citizens of the Town. This Plan is intended to give direction to elected officials, the general public, and the development community as land use decisions are made.

The adherence to Plan policies, goals, and objectives through consistent application and support by the elected officials will be the most significant means of ensuring that the desired land use patterns will evolve. Although some deviations may be considered necessary at times, they should be kept to a minimum, and the reasons for deviating from adopted policies should be clearly explained. Changes made in one area may necessitate changes elsewhere, thus affecting the overall pattern and effectiveness of the Plan. A concentrated review of the Plan should be undertaken every few years, so that it can be updated to meet changed perspectives and visions.