

South Boulevard Corridor

CORRIDOR
PROJECT AREA



South Boulevard Corridor

CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION PLAN. The South End corridor, which includes South Boulevard, and South Tryon Street generally south to Tremont Avenue and the Atherton Mill Complex, and including the Norfolk Southern Railroad corridor in between, is the oldest, and most historic transportation corridor in Charlotte. The rich history of this corridor and the role it played in Charlotte's emergence as one of the leading cities of the New South after the Civil War makes it a unique opportunity to build on and enhance it as a citywide and regional attraction.

This is one of five targeted transportation corridors that are the focus of major revitalization efforts by the City. Over one million dollars is being spent on public improvements within the corridor that will greatly improve its visual quality, enhance its historic character and attract new investment.



South Boulevard Corridor

REVITALIZE THE ABANDONED RAILROAD CORRIDOR

Revitalize the abandoned Norfolk Southern Railroad corridor and eliminate it as a barrier between the Wilmore and Dilworth Neighborhoods. The reuse of the rail corridor is seen as one of the most important elements of the overall plan not only in terms of stimulating economic development but also in terms of overcoming its perception as a barrier between Wilmore and Dilworth. The railroad clearly has the potential to become the seam that binds the neighborhoods and also to become the focus of activity in the corridor. The railroad would provide a direct connection between the South End corridor, the new convention center and other uptown destinations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Work with Charlotte Trolley Inc. to upfit the existing railroad to accommodate trolley operations.
- Construct a continuous parallel pedestrian/bicycle path with lighting and benches.
- Encourage owners of buildings located along the railroad to emphasize their rear orientation to the railroad by providing pedestrian access to the railroad and other measures such as outdoor displays and outdoor eating areas which would enliven the rail corridor.



Intersection of South and East Boulevard

REESTABLISH A COMMERCIAL CENTER

Reestablish a neighborhood commercial center in the area bound by East Boulevard, South Boulevard, East Park Avenue, and Camden Road. A once thriving commercial district existed in this area up until the mid-sixties, but most businesses have moved or closed and few viable businesses remain, with many storefronts standing vacant. The plan recommendations are aimed at reestablishing a neighborhood oriented commercial district that would provide such businesses as drug stores, grocery stores, hardware stores and book stores.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Reconstruct broken and deteriorating sidewalks, curbs and gutters.
- Provide streetscape improvements including decorative, pedestrian scale lighting, canopy trees, and the provision of other pedestrian amenities such as small pedestrian plazas, benches, information signs and trash cans.
- Delineate on-street parking on all of the streets in this area, including South Boulevard.
- Implement the most appropriate urban zoning district in this area to ensure an urban-scale, pedestrian oriented development pattern.

ENHANCE GATEWAYS

Enhance South Boulevard and South Tryon Street as gateways to uptown Charlotte and as prime locations for new urban scale, office, commercial, and residential development. These two major transportation corridors carry significant traffic volumes into uptown Charlotte every day. The current appearances of these streets, characterized by broken sidewalks, curbs and gutters, an abundance of overhead utilities, and overall poor maintenance, gives a negative impression to those approaching the city center.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Reconstruct sidewalks and provide grass planting strips between the sidewalk and the street.
- Plant continuous rows of canopy trees on both side of the streets.
- Consolidate all overhead utilities to one side of the street.
- Provide decorative street lighting and pedestrian scale lighting.
- Provide clear signage to provide directions to South End and Uptown places and activities.
- Develop street oriented office and commercial uses intermixed with residential that will provide a comfortable and lively pedestrian environment.
- Delineate on-street parking along both

sides of South Boulevard through the provision of neckdowns (reduced street width and widened sidewalks — see detail) at the intersections of East Boulevard, East Kingston Avenue, and Park Avenue along with appropriate signage, and pavement markings.

PEDESTRIAN & VEHICULAR CONNECTIONS

Provide better pedestrian and vehicular connections between the Wilmore and Dilworth neighborhoods. In addition to the abandoned railroad corridor that divides Wilmore and Dilworth, existing connecting streets have poor sidewalk conditions; some that don't continue over the railroad.

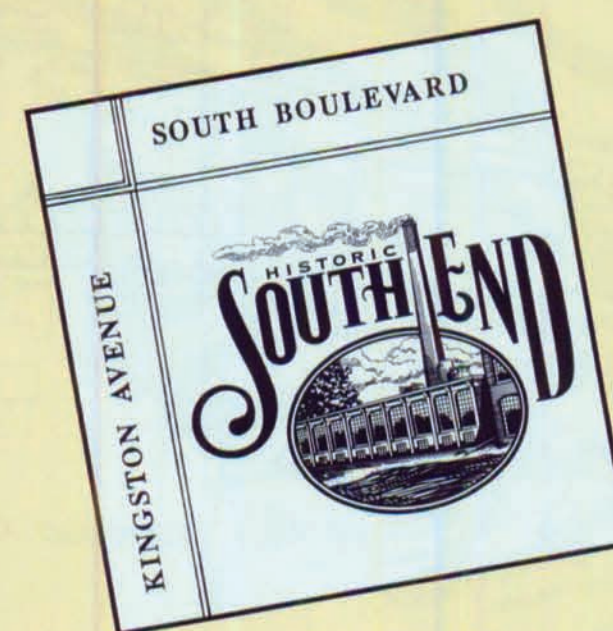
RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Replace broken sidewalks and build new ones where they don't exist.
- Provide sidewalk crossings of the railroad at Tremont Avenue, West Boulevard, Park Avenue, and Bland Street.
- Emphasize Park Avenue as the principal vehicular and pedestrian route between Wilmore and Dilworth with distinctive signage, lighting, and canopy trees.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

The general objectives for the corridor includes the following:

1. Revitalize the abandoned Norfolk Southern Railroad corridor and eliminate it as a barrier between the Wilmore and Dilworth neighborhoods.
2. Provide the framework for a revitalized neighborhood commercial center between East Boulevard, South Boulevard, East Park Avenue and Camden Road.
3. Enhance South Boulevard and South Tryon Streets as gateways to uptown Charlotte and as viable locations for new urban scale mixed use development.
4. Provide better pedestrian and vehicular connections between the Wilmore and Dilworth neighborhoods.
5. Emphasize the urban historic character of the area.
6. Provide for new urban scale development that promotes pedestrian activity and is sensitive to the existing historic fabric in the corridor.
7. Promote the development of an entertainment/arts/residential district.



CONCLUSIONS

The time is clearly at hand for a renewal of this historic corridor. Its proximity to the uptown, its relationship to Wilmore and Dilworth, and the trolley and light rail transit possibilities that the railroad offers add to the development potential of the corridor. Recent developments indicate a renewed interest by the private sector in this area, which should be further encouraged by implementation of these plan recommendations. The expenditure of corridor funds to significantly improve the visual quality and pedestrian environment will go a long way towards improving private sector confidence in investing in the area, and will ultimately result in the South End area becoming one of the most unique attractions in the city.

Once initial objectives and goals are reached, it becomes extremely important for organizations to remain active and proactive to prevent the decline of their community. Groups should remain focused and continually set new goals so that the community experiences positive growth.

Call the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission at 336-2205 for additional information.

- Emphasize the intersection of Park Avenue and Camden Road as a major node with neckdowns, canopy trees and other landscaping, benches, lighting and the provision of a trolley station alongside the railroad.
- Evaluate the feasibility of installing traffic signals where Park Avenue crosses South Tryon Street and Camden Road to provide safe movement between Wilmore and Dilworth.
- Establish a pedestrian crossing where Kingston Avenue crosses the railroad at Camden Road.

design are characteristic of these districts. Higher density residential uses are also components of these districts.

DEVELOP AN ENTERTAINMENT, ARTS, & RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Promote the development of an entertainment/arts/residential district throughout the corridor. The proximity to uptown Charlotte, the Convention Center, and the Carolina Panthers stadium, gives



Lance and Park Elevator Buildings

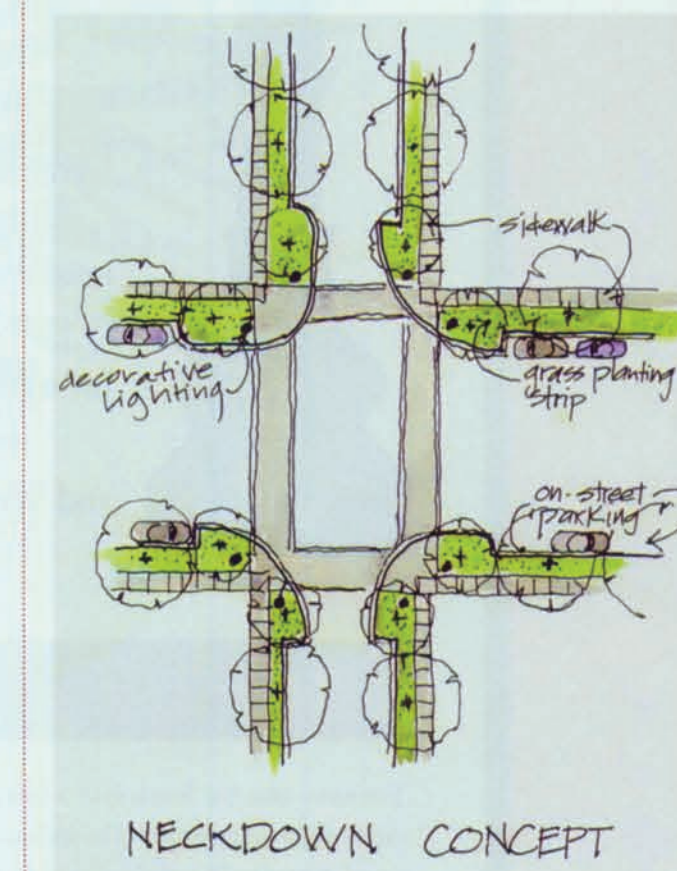
EMPHASIZE THE URBAN, HISTORIC CHARACTER

The development of this corridor dates back to 1852 when the Columbia/Augusta/Charlotte Railroad was extended north from Columbia. The railroad and the development of cotton mills were largely responsible for Charlotte's development in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, primarily because of the efforts of two men, Daniel Augustus Tompkins, who made his fame with the development of cotton mills and other industries, and Edward Dilworth Latta, who extended the trolley from uptown and began the development of Dilworth. Many historic buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century still exist. In addition, the center of Charlotte's gold mining activity took place just to the west of the corridor, in fact Summit Ave. was once named "Gold St."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Identify buildings with historic, cultural, and architectural significance with plaques or other type of markers.
- Place signage throughout the corridor to tell about important places and events that were part of Charlotte's early history.
- Provide pedestrian scale lighting, street signs, benches and other pedestrian amenities that reflect the historic nature of the area.

this area strong potential. The renovation of Factory South, in the Lance Building, and Atherton Mill are innovative projects which will provide residential units and commercial uses. The renovation of the Lance Plant and Park Elevator buildings will provide the impetus for other new development. Ample vacant land provides a significant opportunity for this new, development. Access to the railroad further enhances this area because of the trolley and pedestrian linkage possibilities to the Convention Center and other uptown destinations.



URBAN SCALE DEVELOPMENT

Provide for new urban scale development throughout the corridor that promotes pedestrian activity and is sensitive to the existing historic fabric of the area. Most of the existing zoning in the corridor is suburban in character and precludes the development of an urban, pedestrian oriented environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Replace existing zoning with the most appropriate urban zoning district. The urban zoning districts are similar in terms of their development standards that enable the development of urban scale, pedestrian oriented streets. Buildings placed directly behind the sidewalk with a strong street orientation, revised parking requirements and attention to facade

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Begin a process to implement the appropriate urban district zoning changes needed to implement proposed development or renovation plans.
- Provide a pedestrian crossing/trolley stop along the railroad between the Lance and Park Elevator buildings as part of the renovation plans for this building complex.
- Develop a pedestrian/bicycle path parallel to the railroad which along with the trolley, will provide a connection to the Uptown area.

South Boulevard Corridor

The plan envisions a thriving, pedestrian oriented mixed use corridor with a unique character that reflects its rich historic past. A reconstructed railroad carrying vintage trolleys with stops at street crossings would provide a direct connection to uptown and would be the focus of the corridor. South Boulevard and South Tryon Street would become prime locations for new office and retail activity, taking advantage of their proximity to the uptown area and the revitalized railroad. Major streetscape improvements would further enhance these streets as gateways to the uptown area.

New development within the corridor would be oriented to the street, creating a rich, lively, pedestrian oriented district, consistent with the remaining historic buildings. Decorative street lighting and canopy trees will further enhance it as a pedestrian oriented street as would the provision of on-street parking. Renovated historic buildings containing restaurants, shops, offices, studios, and galleries mixed with residential units would add to the uniqueness of the corridor and help to establish it as a citywide and regional attraction.

A neighborhood commercial center in the heart of the corridor between East Boulevard and Park Avenue would provide necessary goods and services to the Wilmore and Dilworth neighborhoods, and would become a natural gathering place for residents of the area. Overall, linkages between Wilmore and Dilworth will be improved with streetscape improvements to East and West Boulevard, East Kingston Avenue, and East and West Park Avenues.



South Boulevard at Tremont Avenue



Park Avenue toward Camden Road

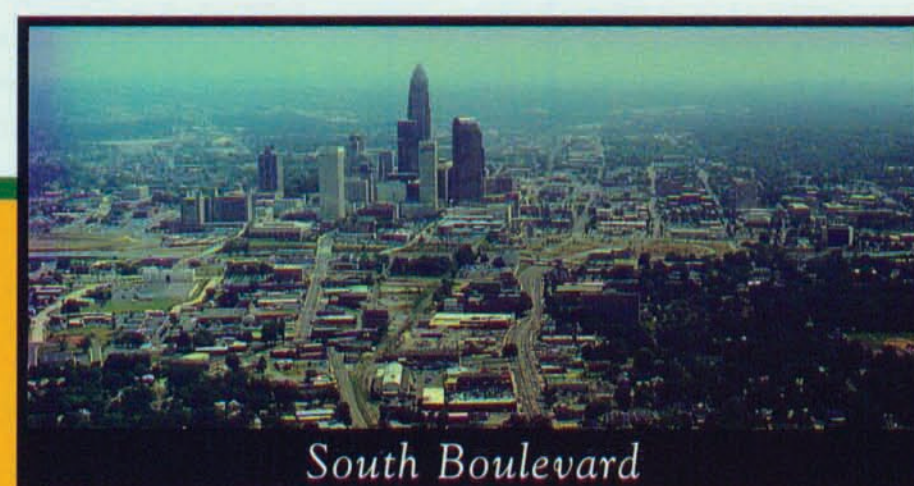


Camden Road



Gateway

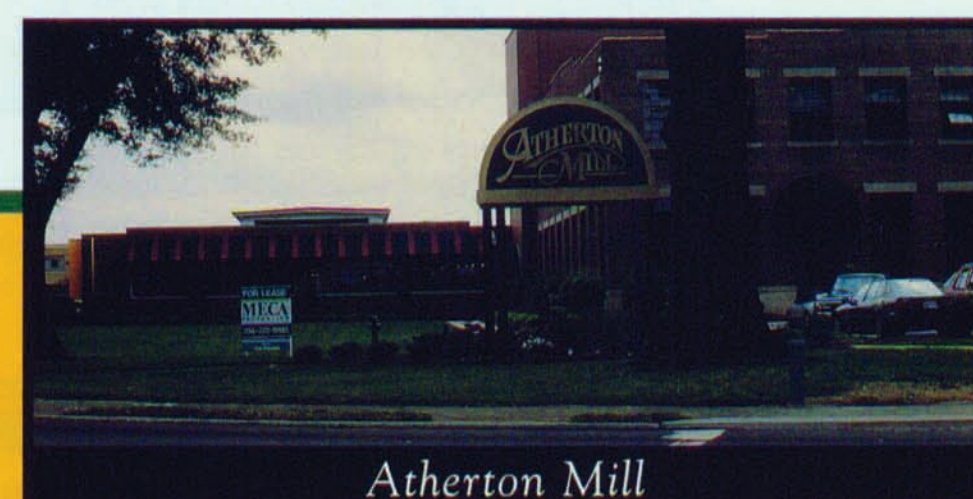
The entry into the South End corridor from Uptown will be dramatic and clearly mark the arrival into this historic district. The widening and landscaping of the existing median with an ornamental sign designating "South End" will be the focal point of improvements in this area. The predominant trees in the median are willow oaks, that will ultimately arch over the road and help to reduce its scale. At the beginning and end of the median will be planted crepe myrtles, with their summer long, vibrant colors. Ornamental shrubs and groundcovers occupy planting beds beneath the crepe myrtles to add texture and interest. The gateway to the corridor along the railroad corridor will be even more dramatic for pedestrians and riders of the proposed trolley that will come from the Uptown/Convention Center area. The railroad tracks upon which the trolley will run crosses I-277 and goes under the Morehead St. bridge, which acts as a literal gate to the northern end of the corridor and its collection of rich historic buildings, including the Lance and Park Elevator buildings. Vacant land on both sides of Carson Boulevard provides significant opportunity for new urban scale development that would be on the trolley line with quick access to Uptown Charlotte.



South Boulevard

South Boulevard

A nine block section of South Boulevard from Carson Boulevard to East Tremont Avenue will be planted with continuous rows of Athena elms, centered in grass planting strips between the curb and the sidewalk, both of which will be reconstructed. Athena Elms are substitutes for the magnificent American Elms that once lined the streets of cities in this country until devastated by Dutch Elm disease. Their canopies are broad and will arch over the street and sidewalks providing ample shade from our hot southern springs and summers. Twelve foot tall decorative, pedestrian scale lighting will be located at even intervals among the street trees. In addition, the overhead utilities will be consolidated to the east side of South Boulevard and installed on taller poles to provide a higher clearance for the elms underneath.



Atherton Mill

Intersections

Neckdowns (see detail on reverse side) will be constructed at the intersections of East Park Avenue, Kingston Avenue, and East Boulevard. This will increase pedestrian safety and comfort with wider sidewalks and tree plantings. In addition, granite cornerstones inscribed with the street names and "Historic South End" will be installed. The neckdowns also delineate the on-street parking which is allowed along this area.

Park Avenue

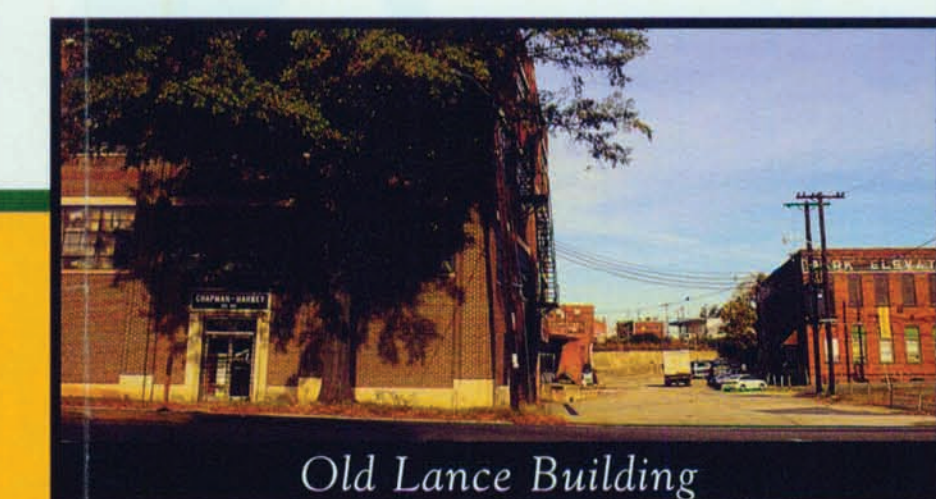
Park Avenue is the principal connecting street for pedestrians and vehicles between Wilmore (West Park Avenue) and Dilworth (East Park Avenue). Dilworth Elementary School, Latra Park, and Carolinas Medical Center are frequent destinations along Park Avenue and a significant rebuilding of the section from South Tryon Street to South Boulevard will not only improve pedestrian safety, but will act as a catalyst for new development in what was at one-time the heart of the business district. New curbs and gutters, and canopy trees in 8' wide planting strips will be provided from South Tryon Street to Camden Road along with pedestrian scale lighting. The intersection of West Park Avenue and South Tryon Street is the principal gateway into South End from Wilmore and is crossed each day by an increasing number of pedestrians and vehicles, particularly since the opening of the Revco Drug Store on South Boulevard. A high percentage of these pedestrians are handicapped, and endanger their lives every time they make trips to and from the South End corridor across this busy thoroughfare. The Charlotte Department of Transportation should work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to develop a pedestrian crossing signal or other method to insure the safety of pedestrians.



Trolley

Park/Camden Intersection

The intersection of Park Avenue and Camden Road is the most pedestrian intense in the corridor. Price's Chicken Coop and the New Big Village Restaurant located on opposite corners of the intersection generate substantial pedestrian and vehicular traffic. This creates a good opportunity to establish the intersection as a major public open space with places to sit and eat under the shade of the live oaks that will be planted as an octet, with two on each corner. New curbs and sidewalks will be built as neckdowns (see detail on reverse side) and pedestrian scale lighting will be provided on each corner. Ultimately a trolley station will be located at this intersection providing further activity.



Old Lance Building

Camden Road

All of Camden Road, from its beginning at South Tryon Street, to West Tremont Avenue will receive streetscape improvements. The block from South Tryon to Park Avenue will receive new, wider sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting, and the delineation of on-street parking to serve area businesses and studios. The very "point" of Camden Road at its intersection with South Tryon Street will be reconstructed with neckdowns and planting strips that will be planted with street trees. This point, with its acute angle and existing building is highly visible and represents a good opportunity to provide signage, sculpture, or an historical marker. From Park Avenue to Tremont Avenue, Camden Road will have canopy trees and pedestrian scale lighting, as well as new sidewalks, curbs, and gutters in some sections.