

SOUTH END/UPTOWN RAIL CORRIDOR PLAN
Volume 1: Concept Plan

Adopted by the Charlotte City Council
June 1998

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SOUTH END/UPTOWN RAIL CORRIDOR PLAN

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South End/Uptown rail corridor extends from Eleventh Street in First Ward to the area just south of Tremont Avenue in South End. The study area for the plan includes both the rail line and adjacent properties.

The purpose of this document is to provide a concept plan that will guide public policy decisions concerning the South End/Uptown rail corridor. Specifically, the plan addresses the use of and improvements to the rail line, as well as development standards for adjacent properties. The plan also identifies implementation actions necessary to make the recommended concept a reality.

CORRIDOR GOALS

The primary goals for the South End/Uptown rail corridor are listed below. These goals provide the basis for the recommended corridor concept.

- **The rail line will serve as a multi-modal transportation facility** which will eventually include transit, trolley, pedestrian, and bicycle activity.

- The rail corridor will be transformed into a unique **community gathering place** for Charlotte area residents and visitors.
- Public improvements to the rail corridor will be an investment for the City, serving as an **economic development stimulus** for the South End and Uptown areas and **leveraging substantial private investment** along the rail line.

THE CONCEPT

The corridor concept recommends immediate use of the rail line for trolley, pedestrian, and bicycle activity, while preserving the opportunity to add transit in the future. This plan outlines two alternative concepts for capital projects. Both of these alternatives include improvements needed to extend trolley service from Tremont Avenue to Eleventh Street.

The first concept, the **Short-Term Concept**, provides the

minimum improvements needed to extend trolley service into Uptown. This concept includes a new bridge over Stonewall Street and upfitting of the Convention Center, needed to allow trolleys and future transit vehicles to pass through the facility. Few amenities are included in this concept.

The second concept, the **Best Value Concept**, provides additional features that will allow more frequent trolley service and will create a more attractive pedestrian environment. This concept is also designed to accommodate the addition of future transit without extensive removal of initial trolley improvements or disruption of trolley operations.

The Best Value Concept is more expensive than the Short-Term Concept, but it is more consistent with the corridor goals and the long-term transformation of the rail line into a multi-modal transportation facility which includes transit. These two options will be considered as potential capital projects during the City of Charlotte's FY99 capital budgeting process.

The land use concept for the properties along the rail line promotes development which will complement the immediate use of the corridor for trolley service and pedestrian and bicycle activity, as well as the eventual use of the corridor as a multi-modal transportation facility. A mixture of residential, retail, and office uses is encouraged, ideally with a mix of uses in each building. Development

along the corridor should be of an urban form, with structures directly connecting to the rail corridor.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A number of strategies needed to implement the recommended corridor concept have been identified. These strategies include:

- Rail Corridor Acquisition;
- Construction of an initial capital project to allow extension of trolley service from South End into Uptown;
- Expansion of trolley service by Charlotte Trolley Inc.;
- Completion of studies needed to identify characteristics of future transit on the corridor; and
- Regulatory changes needed to protect the rail corridor and to implement the recommended land use concept.

SOUTH END/UPTOWN RAIL CORRIDOR PLAN

Section 1: Introduction and Background

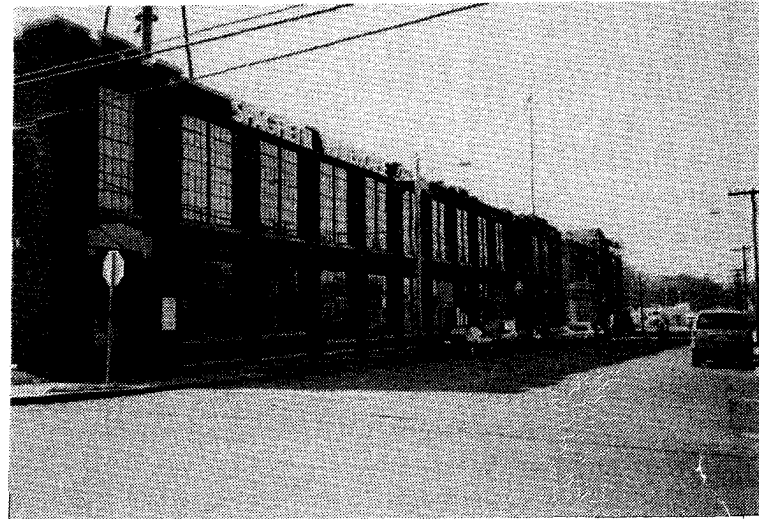
INTRODUCTION

FACTORS LEADING TO THIS PLAN

The City of Charlotte is acquiring rights to the rail line which travels through South End and Uptown. (See Map 1 in the Appendix for location of rail line.) This rail corridor has been identified in numerous documents as an important route for transit because it runs through the center of the city. Charlotte Trolley Inc. has been running demonstration trolley service on the South End segment of the rail line since 1996.

In the last few years, development along this rail line has been occurring at an increasing rate. South End has seen intense development interest and activity. It has been estimated that, within the last five years, over \$40 million in reinvestment has occurred in South End. Much of that redevelopment has been on properties adjacent to the rail line.

Additionally, there has been strong interest in Uptown development. The old Charlotte Convention Center has been marketed for sale, with positive results. NationsBank is constructing a new parking deck at Seventh Street, with ground-level retail oriented toward the rail line. Interest has also been expressed in the First Ward area. In July of 1997,



The Spaghetti Warehouse restaurant, in Wilmore/South End, was one of the first redevelopment projects along the rail line.

the Charlotte City Council adopted a new First Ward plan which promotes urban, mixed-use development along the rail corridor.

In addition to the extensive interest in development along the rail corridor, there are also numerous expectations about the future of the rail line. In some cases, those expectations may

conflict. This plan addresses the future use of the rail line and development of adjacent properties.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This plan outlines the desired future for the South End/Uptown rail line and adjacent properties in **Section 2: The Concept Plan**. When adopted, it will guide public policy decisions concerning the rail corridor and adjacent development. Specifically, the plan:

- Provides a concept for multi-modal use of the rail corridor. This concept accommodates transit, trolley, pedestrian, and bicycle use of the corridor.
- Provides general development guidance for properties adjacent to the rail line. Items addressed include appropriate uses, building setbacks and orientation, building heights, parking characteristics, and desired urban design elements.

Actions, both public and private, needed to make the proposed concept a reality are identified in **Section 3: The Implementation Program**. City Council adoption of the **Concept Plan does not imply approval of implementation strategies such as capital projects or zoning changes**. Any publicly constructed capital improvements recommended by this plan will be funded only through the City's capital

budgeting process. Zoning changes implied by this plan will require a full public hearing and review process by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission and the Charlotte City Council.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION PROCESS

This document has been developed by a team representing the City's Budget, Engineering, Planning, and Transportation Departments, the City Manager's Office, Charlotte Trolley Inc., and Charlotte Center City Partners. Additionally, the Citizens Project Group for the South End/Uptown Rail Corridor has provided considerable input. Prior to drafting this plan, a series of interactive meetings with the interdepartmental team and the Citizens Project Group was held. At these meetings, the group discussed ideas about the use of the inactive rail line and adjacent properties. Citizens Project Group members were:

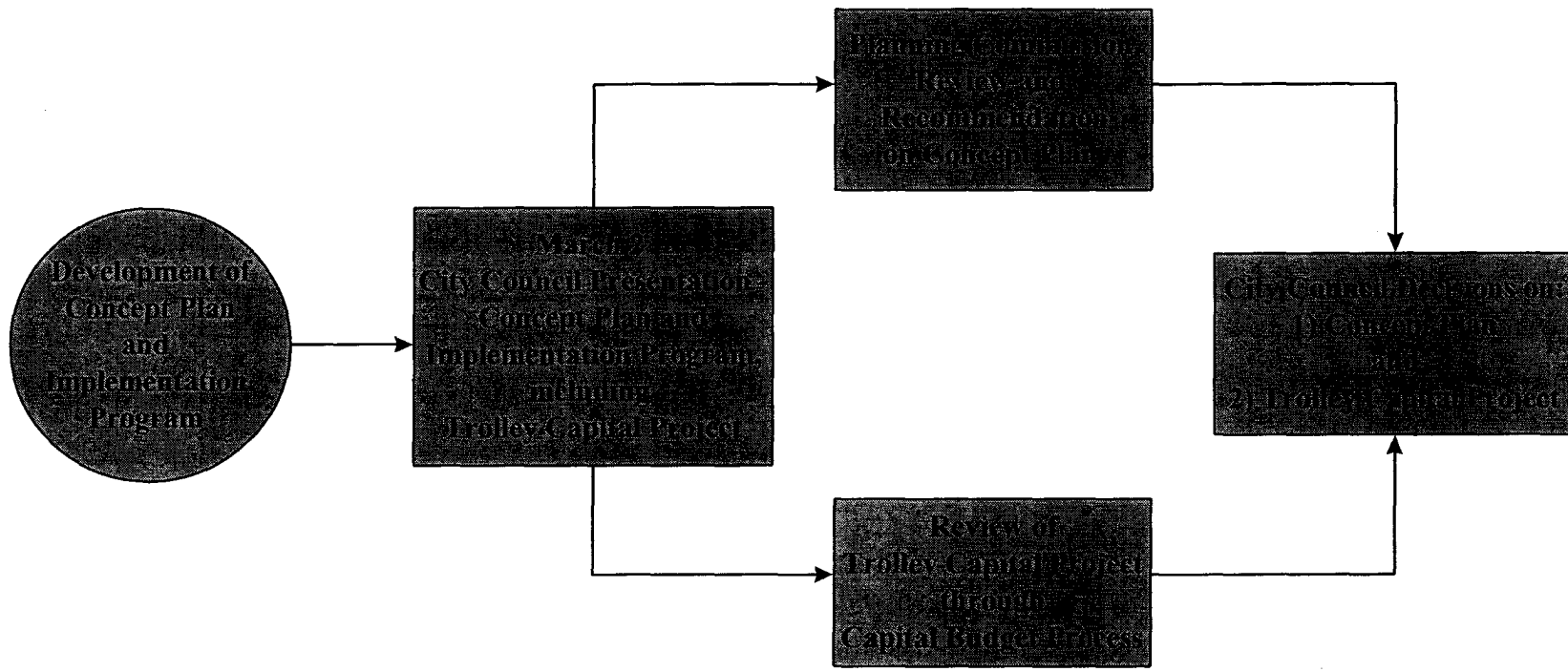
- Renee Alexander, Duke Energy
- Wade Alley, Charlotte Transit Advisory Committee
- Ed Baesel, Dilworth Community Development Association
- Tom Coyle, Childress Klein Properties
- B.S. (Skeeter) Davis, Price-Davis Construction, Inc.

- Ron Funari, Charlotte Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Lecil Henderson, Henderson Designs Limited
- Rick Hill, Hill Partners Inc.
- Lindsey Hobbs, North Carolina Wildlife Federation
- Kevin Kelley, South End Development Corporation
- Daniel Levine, Levine Properties
- Ted Lewis, Charlotte Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Tony Pressley, MECA Properties
- Dennis Rash, NationsBank
- Brian Schick, Charlotte Trolley Inc.
- Louise Shackelford, Wilmore Neighborhood Association
- Walter Stone, Charlotte Transit Advisory Committee

City staff will provide the Charlotte City Council with an overview of the plan on March 2. The plan will then be taken to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission for consideration. A public meeting will be held with the Planning Commission members. The public meeting will give area property owners, business owners, residents, and other interested parties an opportunity to learn about the concept for the rail corridor, and to comment on the plan's recommendations.

After the public meeting, the Planning Committee of the Planning Commission will consider the plan. Their comments and recommendations will be forwarded to the Charlotte City Council, which will make a final decision concerning adoption of the plan. Concurrently, the Charlotte City Council will be reviewing a capital request for upgrading and expanding trolley service on the rail corridor. It is anticipated that the decision about the overall concept for the rail corridor will be made prior to, or at the same time as, the decision regarding the trolley capital project. (See Figure 1 for process overview.)

**FIGURE 1:
SOUTH END/UPTOWN RAIL CORRIDOR -
REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS**



**SEPTEMBER 1997 -
FEBRUARY 1998**

MARCH 1998

APRIL/MAY 1998

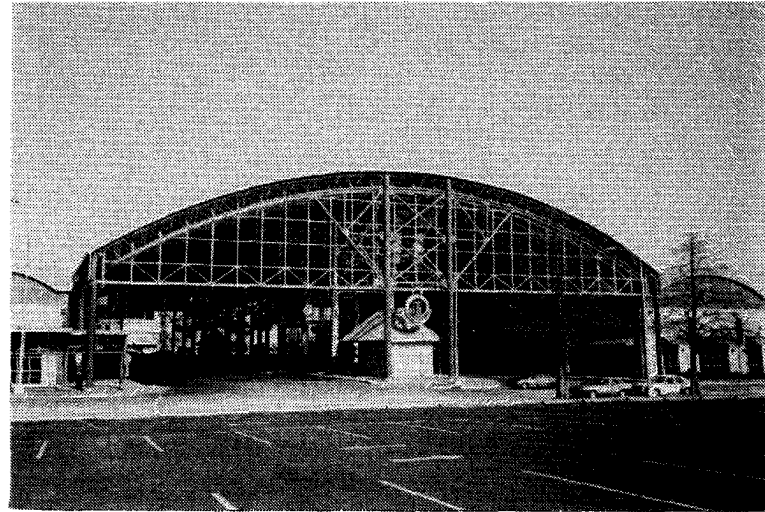
MAY/JUNE 1998

BACKGROUND

THE PLANNING AREA

The planning area includes the 2-mile rail line running between Meacham Street/Rampart Street in South End and Eleventh Street, as well as those properties adjacent to this segment of the rail line. The study boundaries are South Boulevard and South Tryon Street/Hawkins Street, in the South End area, and Brevard and College Streets, in the Uptown area. The study area is divided into three segments: South End, Uptown, and First Ward. (See Map 1 located in the Appendix for an overview of the study area.)

The **South End segment** of the study area extends from Meacham Street/Rampart Street to I-277. Within this segment, the rail corridor is the dividing line between two neighborhoods, Wilmore and Dilworth. The rail line functions as the spine of the South End district. Within the last few years, there has been significant reinvestment in this area. A number of older industrial buildings have been converted to residential, retail, entertainment, and office uses. Frequently these uses have been mixed within one building. Notable examples include Atherton Mill, the South End Steelyard, Factory South, and Camden Square. Many who have been involved with these projects have indicated that the attractiveness of this area is, at least in part, due to the potential of the trolley.



The Charlotte Transportation Center is adjacent to the rail line.

The **Uptown segment** of the study area is located between I-277 and Sixth Street. Much of the rail line in that area is grade separated from cross streets. The rail line runs between the Charlotte Transportation Center and the old Convention Center, which is being marketed for sale to the private sector. The new Charlotte Convention Center, which was specially designed to accommodate transit, is also located in this segment of the study area.



*Older industrial buildings
in First Ward provide opportunities for adaptive reuse.*

The **First Ward segment** of the study area is located between Sixth and Eleventh Streets. Within this segment, the rail line is at grade. Many of the buildings in this area were originally used for industrial purposes but now are vacant or are significantly underutilized. However, it is anticipated that the redevelopment activity occurring along North Tryon Street and construction of new housing in First Ward will spur revitalization and redevelopment along the rail line in First Ward. Active examples of such revitalization include the new NationsBank market and parking facility, located on the rail line between Sixth and Seventh Streets.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of issues and opportunities related to the use of the rail line and development along the corridor. The success of this plan will depend upon dealing with the issues and capitalizing on the opportunities.

Multiple Transportation Uses in the Rail Corridor: The South End/Uptown rail line has been identified as a unique asset for Charlotte because it runs through the heart of the city. A number of potential uses have been identified for the corridor. These include:

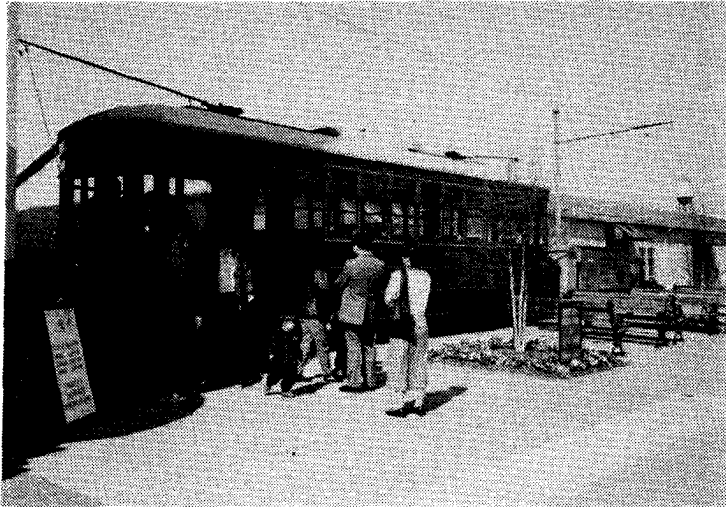
- Transitway;
- Trolley Line;
- Bikeway; and
- Pedestrian Paths.

This rail line has been identified in numerous documents, including the 2015 Transportation Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization in 1995, as a potential location for future transit. In February of 1997, the City requested federal funding of \$50 million of an estimated \$100 million needed to construct transit facilities in the South Corridor, between Pineville and Uptown Charlotte. The major investment study (MIS) process, which is required prior to federal funding for construction of a transit facility, is underway.

Trolley service is another potential use of the rail corridor.

In 1996, Charlotte Trolley Inc. initiated limited trolley service on the South End portion of the rail line. The City assisted with this effort by constructing a temporary trolley station at Stonewall Street. Trolley operations in the corridor have been highly successful, with an estimated annual ridership of 65,000 people. Charlotte Trolley is interested in expanding trolley service in the corridor by extending the trolley line through the Convention Center and into Uptown.

In addition to the trolley and transit options, pedestrian and bike paths have been identified as another desirable use for



Charlotte Trolley Inc. currently runs weekend operations on the South End segment of the rail line.

the rail corridor. The addition of these facilities could provide a valuable linkage to the County's expanding greenway system.

To address the numerous transportation alternatives identified for the rail corridor, the City hired Barton-Aschman Associates in 1996 to help determine whether transit, trolleys, pedestrians and bicyclists could co-exist within the rail right-of-way. The consultant's study addressed the compatibility, both physical and operational, of these varying uses. The study concluded that, with proper design, all of these modes could be accommodated. The results of the study were used as a basis for the rail corridor concept outlined in this report.

Economic Development Potential along the Corridor:

Until recently, little development activity had been occurring along the inactive rail line. Typically, properties either remained vacant or housed older unused industrial buildings. Additionally, some large parking decks which turned their back on the rail line, were constructed along the corridor. However, the resurgence of development activity in the Center City as a whole, and in South End in particular, shows that there is significant potential for redevelopment along the corridor.

While some properties have already been redeveloped, there are numerous others in the study area that remain underutilized. Redevelopment of those properties will

benefit nearby neighborhoods and will increase tax revenues for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Convention Center Maximization: A recent study for the Charlotte Convention Center, which is located in the heart of the study area, indicates that one of the primary shortcomings of the facility is the lack of entertainment amenities for conventioners. This rail line provides an opportunity to create a unique amenity and to provide local transit connections to entertainment destinations along the corridor.

Development Character: While redevelopment of the corridor is a priority, the desired character of new development has often been questioned. Reactions to recent development projects show that there are diverse opinions about the desired development for the corridor. Successful revitalization of the study area will depend, at least in part, upon creation and implementation of a commonly held vision.

Partnership between the Public and Private Sectors: Successful implementation of the proposed concept for the rail line and adjacent properties will require participation from both the private and public sectors. There has been considerable cooperation between City staff, private sector representatives, and non-profit entities during the development of this concept plan. This partnership will be an asset during implementation of the plan.

SOUTH END/UPTOWN RAIL CORRIDOR PLAN

Section 2: The Concept Plan

GOALS

The primary goals for the South End/Uptown Rail Corridor are:

- The rail line will serve as a multi-modal transportation facility which will eventually include transit, trolley, pedestrian, and bicycle activity.
- The rail corridor will be transformed into a unique community gathering place for Charlotte area residents and visitors.
- Public improvements to the rail corridor will be an investment for the City, serving as an economic development stimulus for the South End and Uptown areas and leveraging substantial private investment along the rail line.

Additional objectives for the rail line and adjacent properties include the following:

- The design of improvements to the rail line will have a strong **pedestrian orientation**.
- **Short-term improvements** to the rail line will be **designed for trolley service**, and will include paths for pedestrians and bicyclists. These improvements will also be designed to **accommodate the addition of transit** to the corridor in the future.
- **Future transit** improvements will be designed to be **consistent with the pedestrian-oriented character** of the corridor.
- When selecting the **type of transit** to be used in this corridor, consideration will be given to decibel levels, emissions, speed, and character of alternatives.

- The **trolley line** will be used to **connect the Wilmore and Dilworth** neighborhoods, to **move people** along the corridor, to **attract people** to the area, and to **enhance the character** of the corridor. The location of trolley stops will help to organize development along the corridor.

- The **trolley line** will be a unique amenity for Charlotte and **will increase the attractiveness of the Charlotte Convention Center.**

- **Development along the rail line will be urban** in form, of high quality, and will provide access to the rail line. A **range of development types and uses** will be encouraged, including offices, housing, and retail and entertainment establishments.

- The **public and private sectors will work cooperatively** to implement the adopted concept for the rail corridor. The success of the concept outlined in this plan will be largely dependent upon the ability of the City, Charlotte Trolley Inc., Charlotte Center City Partners, the South End Development Corporation, and the property owners along the rail corridor to agree upon the concept and to coordinate their efforts.

THE CONCEPT

OVERVIEW

The rail corridor will be transformed into one of Charlotte's primary community gathering places, where residents and visitors alike come to shop, dine, and stroll. Along the corridor will be housing, retail, entertainment, and offices uses which directly connect to the corridor.

While serving as an urban gathering place, the rail corridor

will also function as one of the spines of Charlotte's transit system. Regional transit vehicles will travel along the rail corridor to Charlotte's Transportation Center. The trolley will provide local transit service along the corridor.

THE RAIL CORRIDOR

Long-Range Concept: The long-range concept for the rail corridor includes joint transit, trolley, pedestrian and bicycle

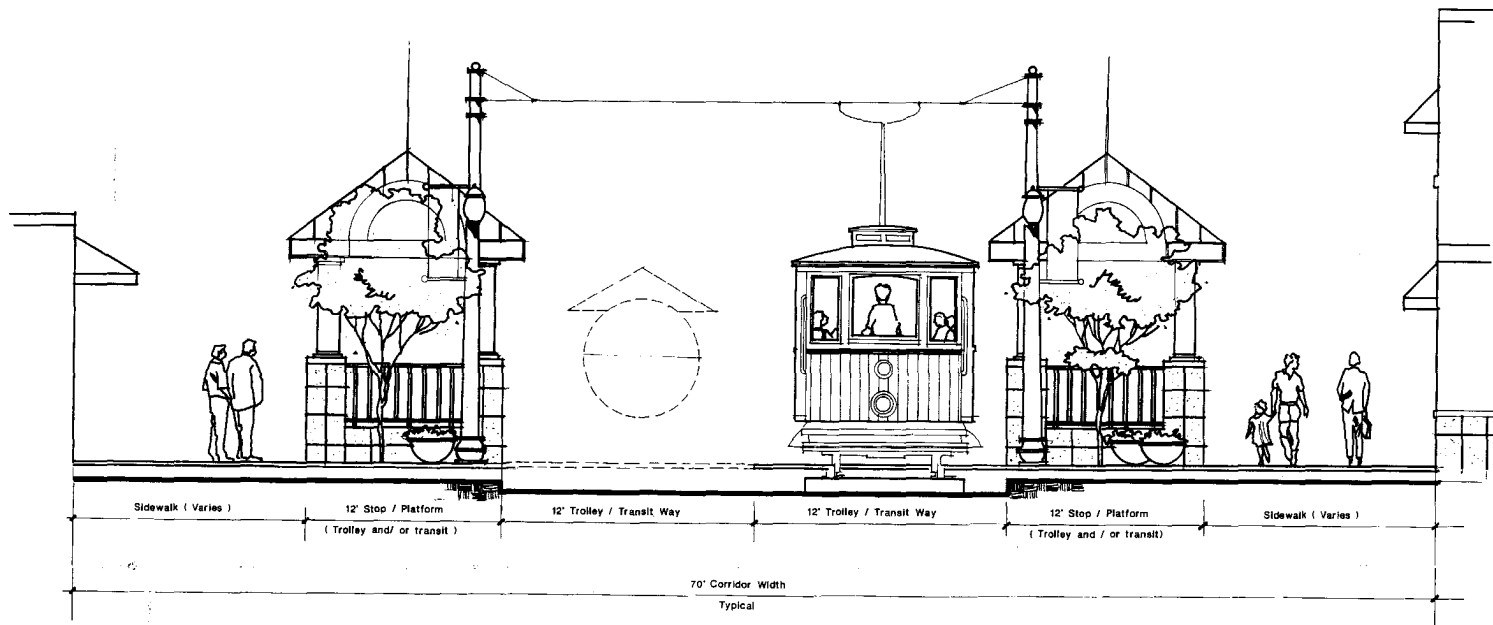


FIGURE 2: CROSS-SECTION FOR LONG-RANGE CONCEPT



Trolleys, pedestrians, and bicyclists will share the rail corridor initially. Transit vehicles will be added in the future

use in a unique urban environment. These uses, as well as support facilities such as transit and trolley stations, will be located within a 70' wide section, typically centered on the existing railroad tracks. (See Figure 2 for typical cross-section.) In some cases, the section width may have to be adjusted to accommodate existing structures within the 70' width.

Two parallel travel lanes, one running in each direction, will be installed for the length of the study area. Typically, these parallel travel lanes will be located in the center of the right-of-way and will be used for both trolley and transit vehicles. A third parallel lane or track may be provided at intervals to allow transit vehicles to pass trolleys.

Pedestrian, transit, and trolley amenities will be located beside the trolley and transit lanes. Except for the section that travels through the Convention Center property, pedestrian and bicycle pathways will parallel the trolley and transit lanes. Trolley and transit stations will also be located adjacent to the rail line. Additional amenities, such as seating, landscaping, public art, and directional signage will help make this facility a signature amenity for the Charlotte region.

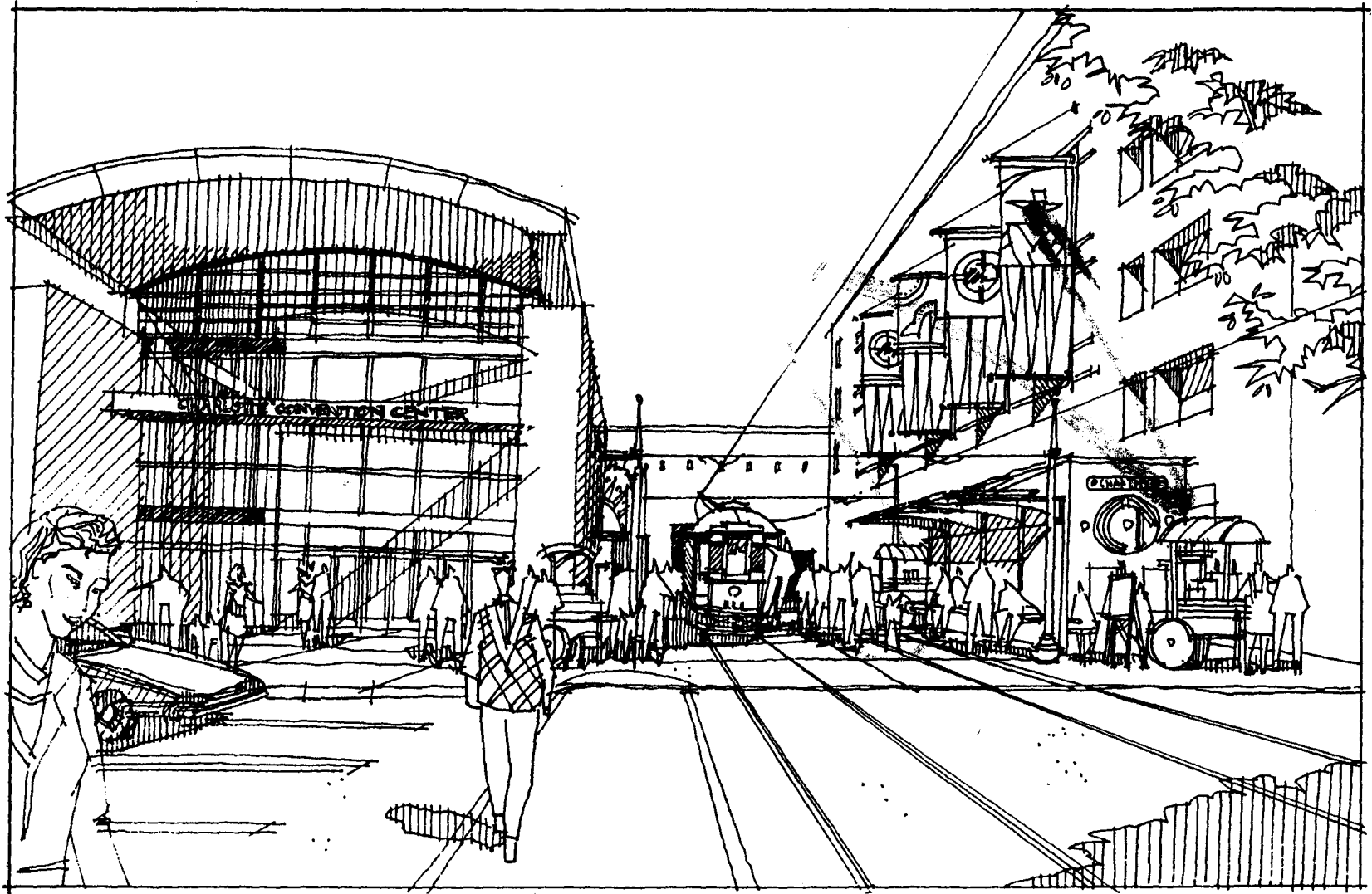
Immediate Opportunity: The implementation of transit service on the South End/Uptown rail line will not occur for a number of years. However, there is an opportunity to use the rail corridor immediately for trolley service and

pedestrian and bicycle paths, while preserving the ability to add transit service in the future.

Two trolley service concepts have been developed, both of which extend trolley service from South End into Uptown. The first, called the **Short-Term Concept**, provides the minimum improvements needed to extend trolley service into Uptown. This concept includes a new bridge over Stonewall Street and Convention Center upfitting to allow trolley and future transit service through the facility. The remainder of the improvements are designed to extend trolley service through Uptown, but do not allow future implementation of transit service without removal and reconstruction of many of the initial improvements. Minimal amenities are included in this concept.

The second concept, the **Best Value Concept**, provides additional features that allow more frequent trolley service and create a more attractive pedestrian environment. This concept is also designed to accommodate the addition of future transit without extensive removal of initial trolley improvements or disruption of trolley operations.

The Best Value Concept is more expensive than the Short-Term Concept, but it is more consistent with the corridor goals and the Long-Term Concept which includes transit. These two options will be considered as potential capital projects during the City of Charlotte's FY99 capital budgeting process.



The trolley line, and future transitway, will travel through the Charlotte Convention Center.

The **Short-Term Concept** includes the following features:

- Replacing the **bridge over Stonewall Street**;
- **Upfitting** the existing transit corridor through the **Convention Center**;
- **Track construction and rehabilitation** as needed to create a single continuous track extending from Tremont Avenue to Eleventh Street;
- Installing **electrical substations and overhead electrical lines on wood poles** to power the trolley;
- Constructing a simple **bicycle/pedestrian pathway along the track** from Tremont Avenue to Stonewall Street, and from Second to Eleventh Streets;
- Installing simple **wooden trolley platforms** at selected locations; and
- Providing **other miscellaneous improvements** such as minimal landscaping.

See Map 2 in the Appendix and Figure 3 for additional information about the Short-Term Concept.

City staff worked with the Rail Corridor Citizens Project Group to identify features that should be added to the Short-Term Concept to create the **Best Value Concept**. This group helped to identify those features needed to insure that

improvements to the corridor would: 1) be of the quality needed to attract new development to the corridor; 2) allow a high level of trolley service; and 3) accommodate the future addition of transit with minimal disruption to the corridor.

The additional features that were identified include:

- **Shifting the existing track horizontally** so that it will not be disturbed by future transitway construction;
- Constructing a **second parallel track between Bland Street and Carson Boulevard, I-277 and Third Street, and Fifth and Sixth Streets**, providing additional passing opportunities for trolleys travelling in opposite directions, and as a result allowing more frequent trolley service;
- Improving aesthetics by **using decorative steel poles** to support the overhead electric lines to power the trolley, and to support light fixtures;
- Constructing a **larger number of trolley stations and improving the aesthetic quality** of the stations; and
- Providing other minor enhancements such as **increased landscaping**.

See Map 3 in the Appendix and Figures 4 and 5 for illustrations of the Best Value Concept.

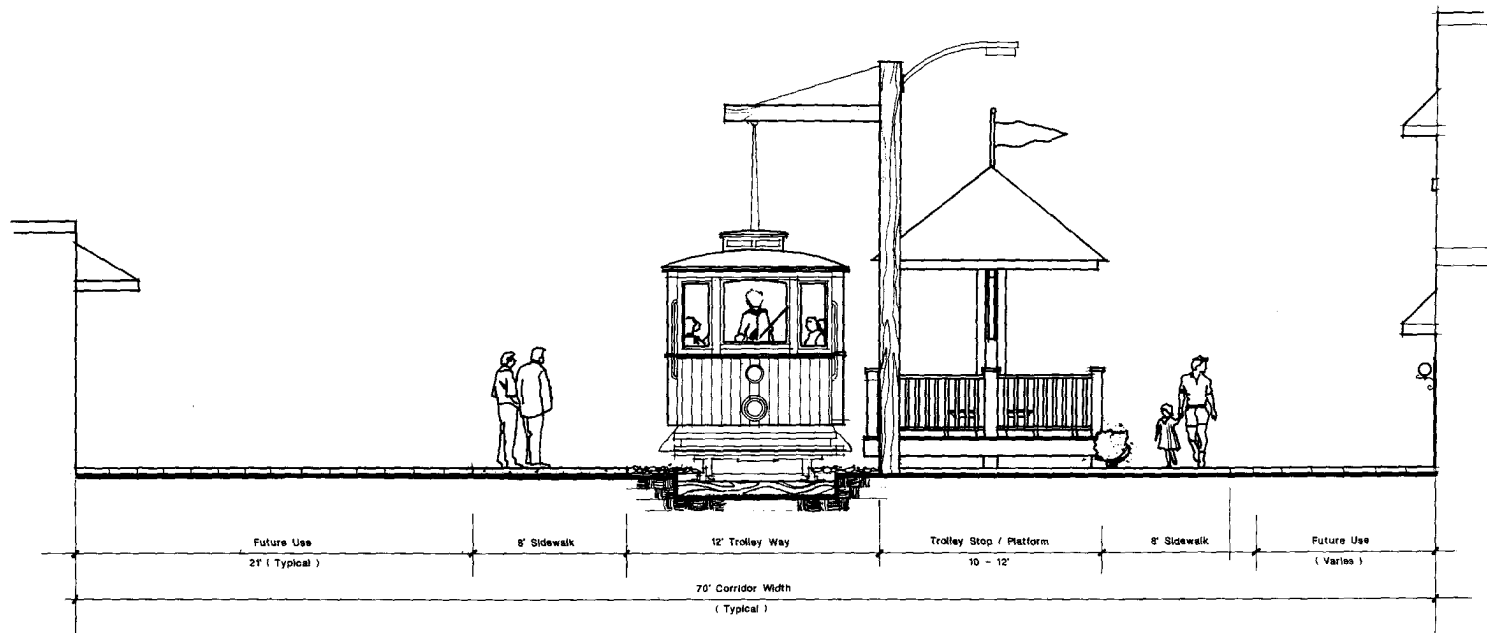


FIGURE 3: TYPICAL CROSS-SECTION FOR SHORT-TERM CONCEPT

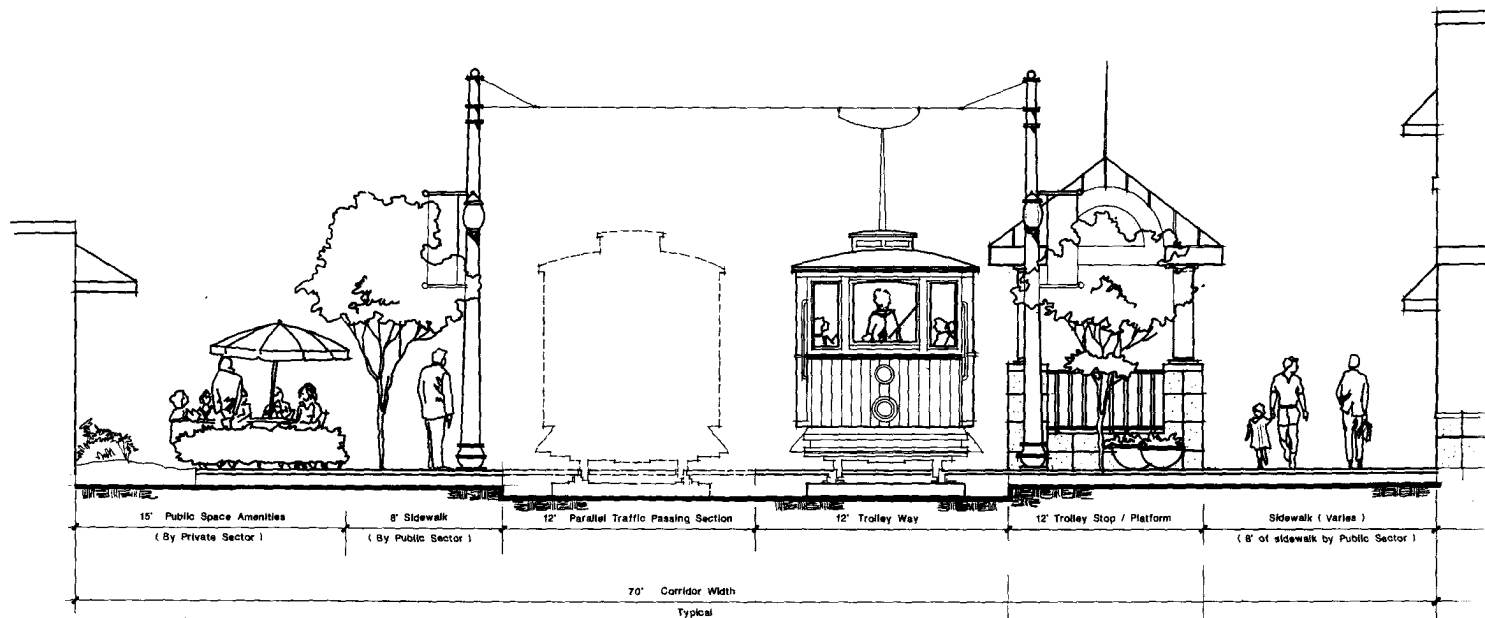
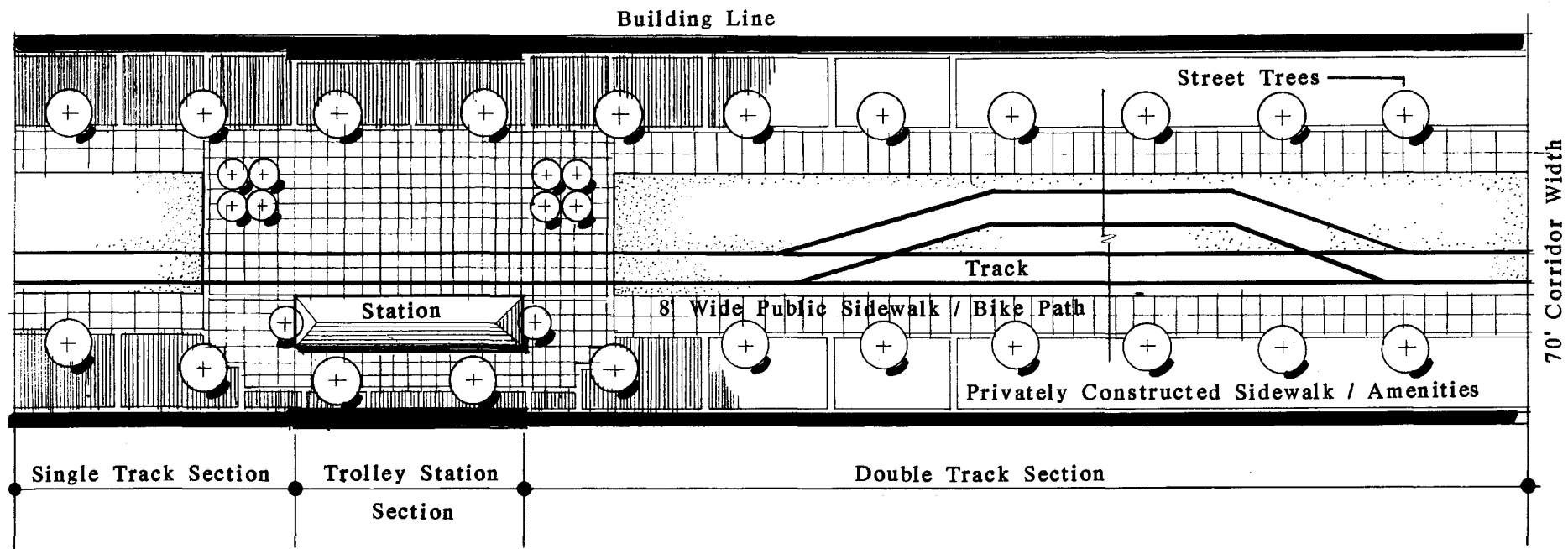


FIGURE 4: TYPICAL CROSS-SECTION FOR BEST VALUE CONCEPT



NTS

FIGURE 5: TYPICAL PLAN VIEW OF BEST VALUE CONCEPT



Older industrial buildings provide opportunities for adaptive reuse.

Operations and Maintenance: The trolley system will be operated by the non-profit organization Charlotte Trolley Inc. The trolley will typically operate daily, with the frequency of trolley service scheduled to meet demand. Trolley headways will range from every 10 minutes, during peak hours, to every 30 minutes. The construction and maintenance of the public facilities along the rail line will be the responsibility of the City of Charlotte. (See Implementation Program for further discussion.)

ADJACENT LAND DEVELOPMENT

The successful transformation of the rail corridor into a community gathering place and multi-modal transportation facility will require a strong connection between the rail line and adjacent buildings. Development along the rail line should complement the immediate use of the corridor for trolley service and pedestrian and bicycle activity, as well as the eventual use of the corridor as a multi-modal transportation facility which includes transit service.

Existing Development: The South End/Uptown rail line originally provided rail service to adjacent properties. Consequently, many of the properties along the rail corridor were developed with industrial uses. Some industrial uses and vacant structures remain along the corridor, especially in South End and First Ward. A number of these older structures have been creatively reused for both residential and

commercial uses. Examples include Atherton Mill, South End Steelyard, and Factory South.

In the Uptown area, development along the rail corridor has a different character. Many of the structures are new. A number of parking decks which serve Uptown office workers have been built. Offices buildings have also been located along the corridor. With the exception of the new parking deck at Seventh Street, these structures typically are oriented away from the rail line. In addition to private development, publicly owned facilities exist along the corridor. These include both the old and the new Charlotte Convention Centers and the Charlotte Transportation Center. (See Map 4 in the Appendix for existing land use.)

Recommended Land Use: A mix of uses which includes housing, retail, entertainment, and offices, typically in mixed-use structures, is recommended. (See Map 5 in the Appendix for recommended land use.) Wherever possible, older industrial buildings should be converted to allow reuse of the structures. New infill buildings are also appropriate. There remain a number of industrial uses along the corridor. It is anticipated that these industrial facilities will eventually be replaced with residential, retail and office uses.

Development Guidelines: The development character of the corridor will be impacted by site design, as well as allowed land uses. This concept plan recommends an urban form of development, with structures directly relating to the

rail corridor. The site design characteristics, as outlined below, have been developed to encourage that type of development:

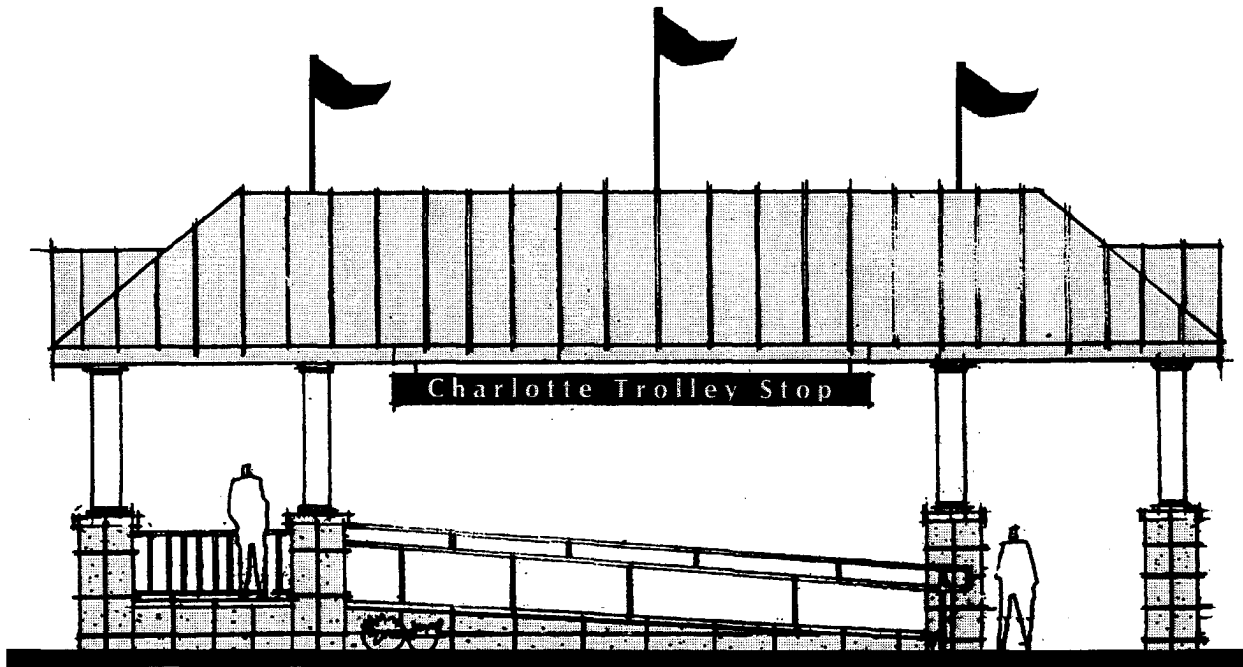
- **Adaptive reuse** of older industrial buildings is desired whenever possible;
- Large, monolithic structures along the corridor are discouraged, especially in South End and First Ward. Instead, **smaller scale structures** are recommended. If large-scale structures are constructed, an open space element should be included in the design;
- Typically, buildings in South End and First Ward should be of a **low to mid-rise scale**. Greater heights may be allowed in the Uptown section; however, taller buildings should not tower over the corridor but instead should be designed to step back to allow sunlight on the corridor;
- **Building faces** along the corridor should be **well articulated**, with windows facing onto the corridor. No blank walls should be constructed along the corridor;
- **Service entrances** should **not front** on the rail corridor;
- Buildings should have **minimal setbacks** and should be located **directly on the corridor**;
- Buildings should have a **connection to the rail corridor**. While the primary building entrance may be on another street, each building should have at least one entrance facing the corridor;
- **Surface parking lots** should be located in the **interior portion of blocks**, with rail and street frontage reserved for buildings;
- Typically, **parking decks** should not front on the corridor; however, they could front on the rail line if there is an **active use adjacent to the corridor**. Examples include retail on the ground floor of the parking deck or the creation of a unique open space which includes pedestrian amenities such as benches and street trees;
- **Parking** must be **screened from all public rights-of-way**, including the rail corridor and adjacent streets;
- **Shared parking** is encouraged to minimize the number of parking facilities along the rail line;
- **Streetscape improvements** along the corridor should be provided by the private sector to complement the publicly proposed improvements along the rail line. These streetscape improvements should include sidewalks and street trees. Special amenities for pedestrians, such as benches and public plazas, are also encouraged; and
- **Amenities such as banners and public art** are encouraged, especially to serve as visual landmarks along the corridor.

SOUTH END/UPTOWN RAIL CORRIDOR PLAN

Section 3: The Implementation Program

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

A proposed set of implementation strategies is outlined in this section. Each action outlined will be assigned to the appropriate City department or private/non-profit organization. Each entity will determine the steps needed to accomplish their assigned actions, including City Council review and approval when needed. Adoption of **Section 2: The Concept Plan** does not imply approval of the implementation strategies listed on the following pages.



Private sector assistance with the funding of trolley stops is expected.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Concept Plan for the rail corridor outlines a multi-step investment strategy. The initial investment is acquisition of the rail right-of-way from Scaleybark Road to just north of Twelfth Street. The next investment, if approved by City Council, will be the construction of a capital project that will extend trolley service from South End into Uptown. This project will also include pedestrian and bicycle paths. In the long-term, additional capital investments may be made to allow commuter transit service to operate in the corridor. (See Transit System Strategy for further discussion of transit planning for the corridor.)

Rail Acquisition: In late 1997, the City acquired the segment of the rail line that extends from Second Street at the Convention Center to just north of Twelfth Street. At the same time, the City also began negotiations to acquire Norfolk-Southern Railroad's charter easement rights to the segment of the line between Scaleybark Road and Stonewall Street. The City anticipates finalizing an agreement to acquire these rights by Spring of 1998. The connecting segment, between Stonewall Street and Second Street, has already been acquired by the City as part of the Convention Center project.

Initial Capital Improvement Project: Options for initial capital improvements are outlined in Section 2: The Concept Plan. Two concepts have been developed: the Short-Term Concept and the Best Value Concept. The Short-Term

Concept provides the minimum improvements needed to implement trolley service in the corridor. The Best Value concept includes enhancements that make it more compatible with the goals outlined in the Concept Plan.

Both the Short-Term and Best Value Concepts are being evaluated as part of the FY 99 capital budgeting process. The estimated cost for the Short-Term project is \$9.6 million, while the cost for the Best Value project is \$19.7 million. (Neither cost estimate includes environmental remediation or land acquisition). The City would be responsible for maintaining any improvements installed on the corridor.

Private sector participation is a vital component of the funding strategy for both capital improvement alternatives. In particular, private sector assistance in funding trolley stops is expected.



If the necessary improvements to the rail line are made, the trolley will operate daily from South End to Uptown.

TROLLEY OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

The following is a summary of the proposed operating and maintenance plan for an expanded trolley system. A full discussion of that plan is included in the Charlotte Trolley Inc.'s "Operations and Maintenance Plan", produced by LTK Engineering.

Charlotte Trolley Inc. will be responsible for funding, operating, and maintaining the expanded trolley system proposed to run between Tremont Avenue and Eleventh Street. Charlotte Trolley Inc. is a private, non-profit organization staffed primarily by volunteers.

Since August of 1996, Charlotte Trolley Inc. has been operating a demonstration program on the segment of the rail corridor between Tremont Avenue and Stonewall Street. The City assisted in this effort by constructing a temporary trolley station at Stonewall Street. Charlotte Trolley Inc. has been operating one trolley between the hours of 10 am and 9 pm on Fridays and Saturdays, and between 10 am and 6 pm on Sundays. The trolley runs twice an hour and the fare is \$1.00 per person. In the last year, over 65,000 trips have been taken on the trolley.

The expanded trolley system would run between Tremont Avenue in South End and Eleventh Street in First Ward. The trolley system would operate daily, between 7 am and

10 pm. The trolley would run at least twice an hour, and as often as every 10 minutes during peak periods. Charlotte Trolley Inc. would maintain a system of four trolley cars, with a maximum of three cars running at one time. Annual ridership on the expanded trolley route has been projected to be 165,000. The system would have an annual operating budget of approximately \$600,000.

TRANSIT SYSTEM STRATEGY

The Long-Term Concept for the rail corridor proposes that several complementary transportation uses, including transit, trolleys, pedestrians and bicyclists, share the corridor. Trolley, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities are included in the initial capital project proposed for the corridor. Transit facilities, including a connection to the existing Transportation Center, may be added in the future.

Additional study will be required prior to developing a specific plan to implement transit on the South End/Uptown rail corridor. Two transit studies and a complementary land use study, which have already been initiated, will begin to define future transit options for the entire South Transit Corridor.

South Corridor Transitway Major Investment Study (MIS): This study is the next step in obtaining federal funding for a transit project in this corridor. The MIS will investigate feasible transit service alternatives for the South Corridor, which runs between I-485 near Pineville and the Charlotte Transportation Center in Uptown Charlotte. This corridor includes most of the South End/Uptown rail corridor. The study will lead to the identification of a “Locally Preferred Alternative” for transit in this corridor. Additional studies, design, and approval processes will occur before implementation of a transit capital project in the South Corridor.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Land Development Plan for Transit: This study will develop transit oriented land use concepts and will identify transit station locations for the five designated corridors, including the South Corridor. The consultant hired to perform this study will analyze development incentives and special development/zoning regulations designed to encourage transit and pedestrian oriented development. In addition, the direct economic impacts of various transit modes on the areas immediately surrounding recommended station locations will be quantified. The land use guidelines outlined in this document will be used as background information for the Transit Land Development Plan for this section of the South Corridor.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Transit Development Plan: This study will more clearly define the need for and benefits of potential near-term, mid-term and long-term transit improvements in four of the region’s primary transit corridors. The South Corridor, which includes most of the South End/Uptown rail corridor, is not included in this study but will be addressed in the South Corridor Study outlined above. However, one or more of the four transit corridors addressed in this study could feed onto the Uptown segment of the South End/Uptown rail corridor. Consequently, the recommendations in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Transit Development Plan are likely to have implications for the addition of transit to the South End/Uptown rail corridor.

LAND USE AND REGULATORY STRATEGY

Rail Corridor Protection: The Concept Plan for the rail corridor recommends providing a 70-foot wide cross-section for a trolley and transitway, as well as room for pedestrian and bicycle paths. This width will help to create a feeling of openness along the corridor, enhancing the appeal of this unique public space.

A regulatory mechanism will be developed to protect this 70-foot wide cross-section. Although there are existing encroachments in the 70-foot width, the addition of permanent improvements should only be allowed if they are consistent with the long-term concept for the corridor. Building expansions should not be allowed. Parking lots and driveways should only be allowed on a temporary basis. Different alternatives for protecting the 70-foot cross-section, including amendments to the zoning ordinance, should be considered.

Zoning Changes: Typically, the current zoning for properties along the rail line is inconsistent with the proposed land use concept outlined in Section 2: The Concept Plan. Some of the South End properties are zoned I-1 or I-2, industrial districts which do not allow the mixed-use type of development called for in the Concept Plan. Zoning for First Ward properties is UMUD, a district that will accommodate unlimited high-rise development which is inconsistent with the recommended concept. Additionally,

current zoning along the rail line does not address the relationship of buildings to the corridor or the streetscape improvements which will be needed to create a desirable public space.

Revisions to the existing zoning should be undertaken, both to permit the desired types of development, and to insure that future projects along the corridor are consistent with development concept. Alternatives which should be considered include revisions to the existing zoning categories found along the rail line, creation of a new zoning category for the properties along the rail corridor, and development of an overlay zoning district for the corridor.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

As implementation along the corridor begins to occur, additional strategies required to successfully achieve the proposed concept will be identified. Three action steps which already have been identified are outlined below.

Marketing Strategy: Promoting and marketing the rail corridor as an attractive community gathering place will be a key ingredient in the implementation of this unique concept. It is recommended that the non-profit entities involved in this effort, Charlotte Center City Partners, Charlotte Trolley Inc., and the South End Development Corporation, take the lead in this effort.

Parking Strategy: As the rail corridor is transformed, numerous people will be drawn to the corridor, and many of those people will arrive by car. Limited parking facilities, particularly in South End, will become an issue. To address this, a parking strategy should be developed, with an emphasis on using existing public parking facilities in Uptown and taking advantage of shared parking opportunities in South End.

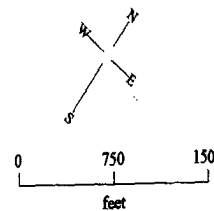
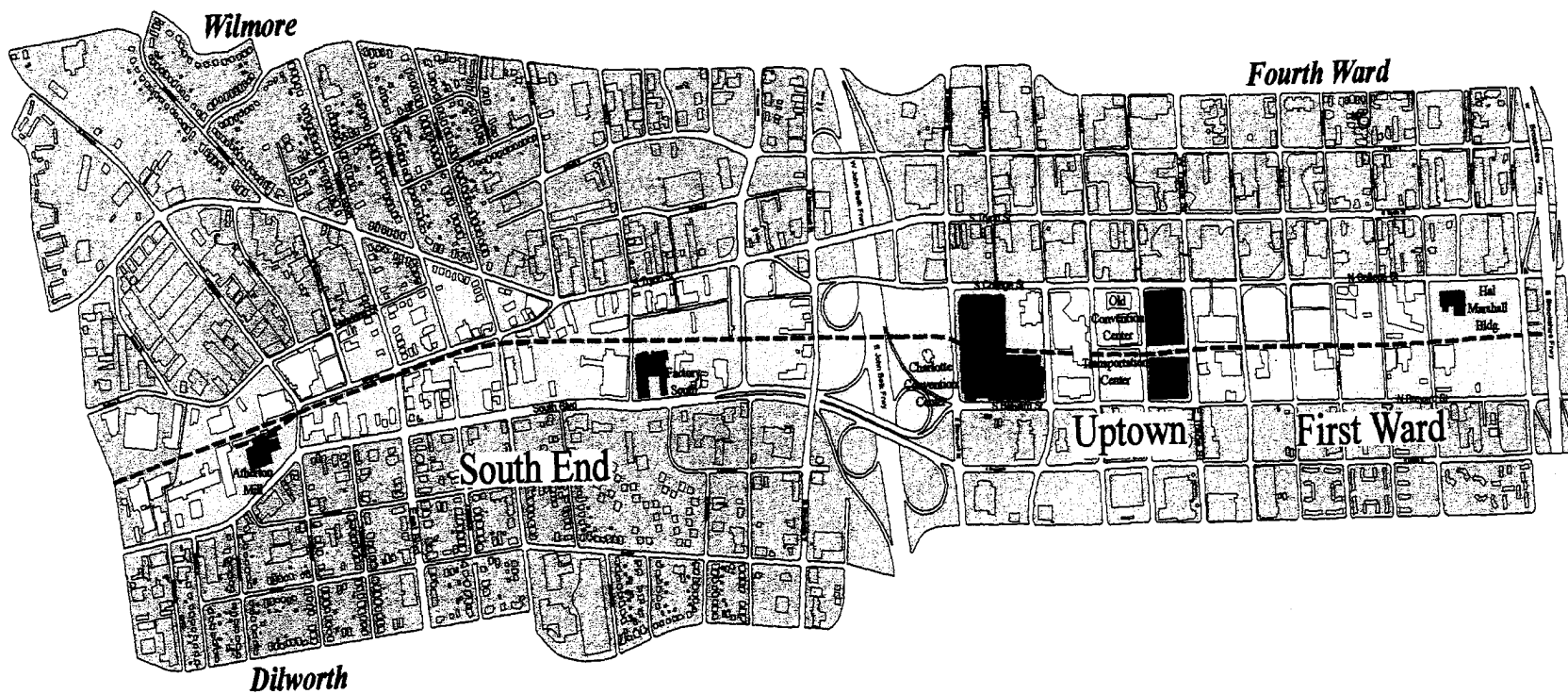
Special Taxing District: The possible use of a special taxing district along the rail line has been discussed. The South End Development Corporation is pursuing the creation of a new special taxing district for South End. The City may wish to

assist in these efforts, particularly if new State legislation is required.

SOUTH END/UPTOWN RAIL CORRIDOR PLAN

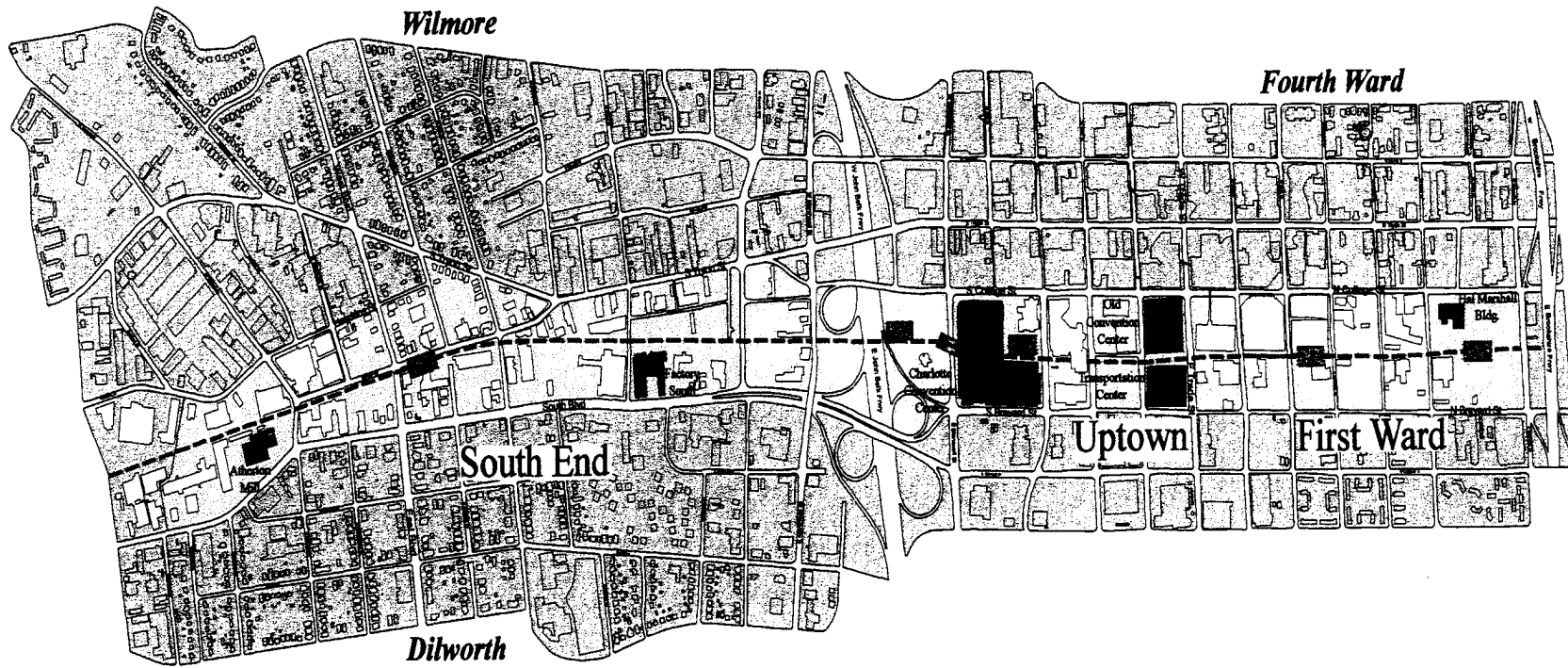
Appendix

South End/Uptown Rail Corridor - Study Area



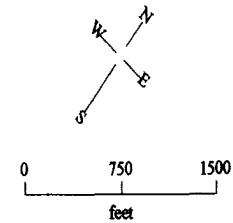
Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

South End/Uptown Rail Corridor - Short-Term Concept



Legend

- Single Track
- Trolley Passing Zone
- Existing Wooden Platform
- New Wooden Platform
- ⊙ Stonewall Street Bridge
- Important Buildings



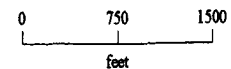
South End/Uptown Rail Corridor - Best Value Concept



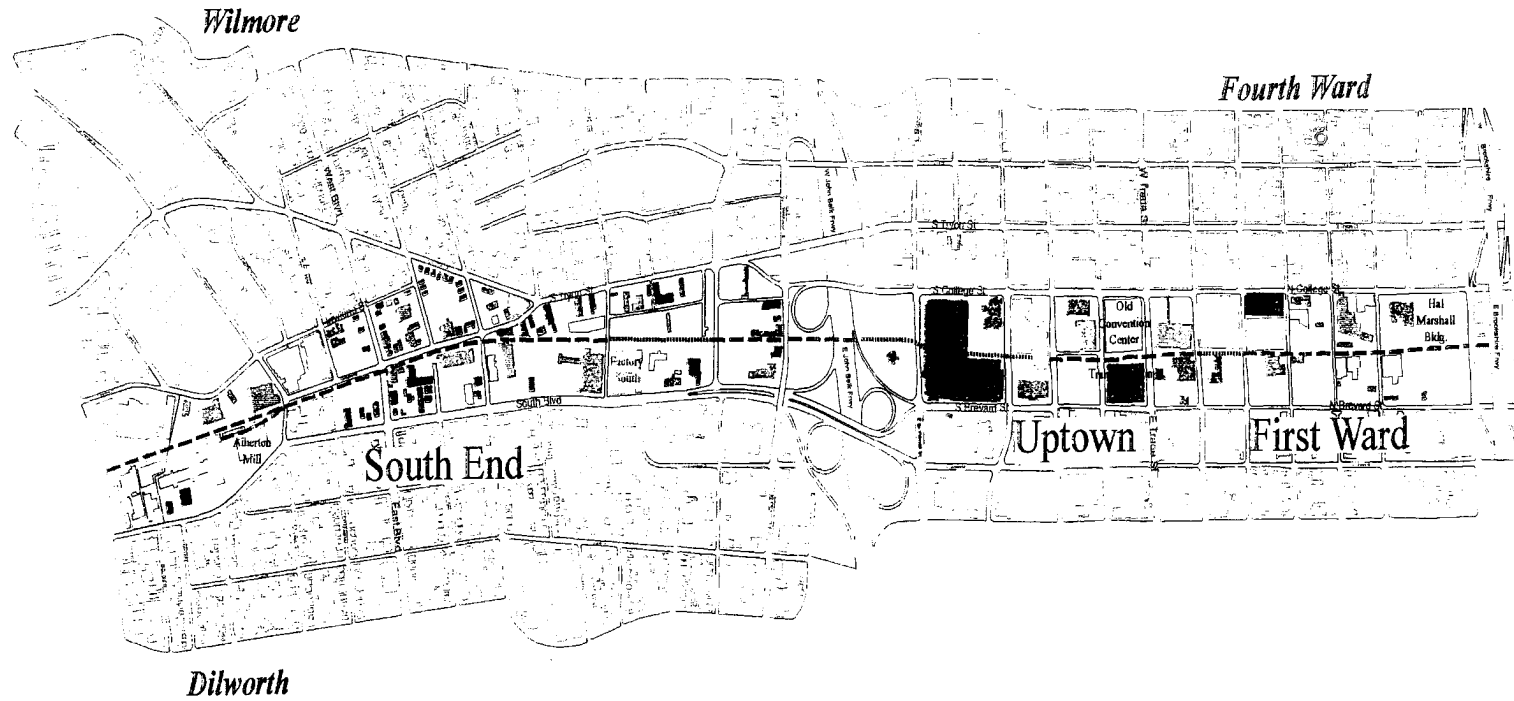
Ditworth

Legend









- Single Track
- Dual Track
- Station
- Future Station
- Temporary Station
- Stonewall Street Bridge
- Important Buildings

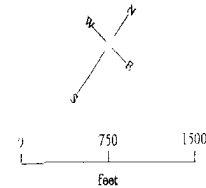


South End/Uptown Rail Corridor Project - Existing Land Use

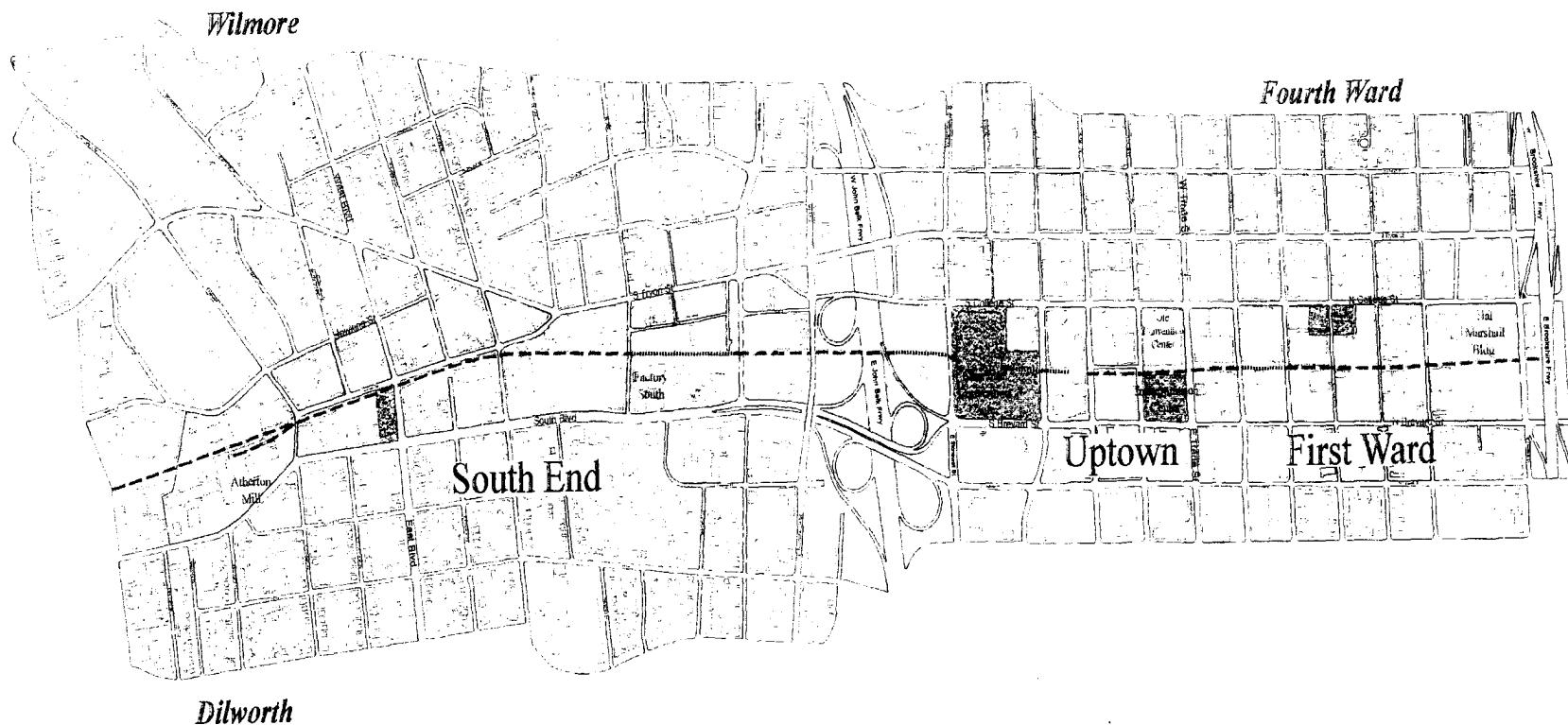


Legend



-  Residential
-  Retail
-  Institutional
-  Office
-  Mixed Use - Residential, Retail, and Office
-  Structured Parking
-  Industrial
-  Vacant



South End/Uptown Rail Corridor - Proposed Land Use



Legend

-  Mixed Use - Residential, Retail, and Office
-  Institutional

