



West Morehead Corridor

Vision and Concept Plan

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
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VOLUME I: VISION AND CONCEPT PLAN

Introduction	1
Plan Purpose.....	3
Plan Development Process	3
Existing Conditions	4
Greenbelt District - Wilkinson Boulevard to Freedom Drive	4
Gateway District - Freedom Drive to Interstate 77.....	11
Third Ward District - Interstate 77 to Norfolk Southern Railroad	17
West Morehead 100 District - Norfolk Southern Railroad to South Tryon Street	21
The Plan for Change.....	25
Vision for the Corridor.....	25
Key Planning Objectives	26
Land Use and Urban Design Concepts	28
Greenbelt District	28
Gateway District	33
Third Ward District	39
West Morehead 100 District	43

VOLUME II: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation Priorities.....	I-1
--------------------------------	-----

MAPS

Map 1: West Morehead Corridor Boundary	iii
Map 2: Existing Land Use	5
Map 3: Existing Zoning	6
Map 4: Greenbelt Existing Land Use	9
Map 5: Gateway Existing Land Use	15
Map 6: Third Ward Existing Land Use	19
Map 7: West Morehead 100 Existing Land Use	23
Map 8: Greenbelt Adopted Future Land Use.....	31
Map 9: Gateway Adopted Future Land Use	37
Map 10: Third Ward Adopted Future Land Use	41
Map 11: West Morehead 100 Adopted Future Land Use	45
Map 12: West Morehead Corridor Adopted Future Land Use	46
Map 13: Zoning Recommendations	I-3

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Executive Summary

Introduction

West Morehead Street was one of Charlotte's first urban industrial corridors, dating back to the 1920s. Over the years, many changes have taken place along the corridor. Until recently, new development activity along the corridor has been limited. However, this is a changing area and new life is being breathed into the Corridor with such developments as Ericsson Stadium, the renovated Coca-Cola Bottling building for offices, the new American City Building, Colony West Business Park near Wilkinson Boulevard and the nearby Summit Grandview, a 266-unit apartment building.

The West Morehead Corridor is gaining recognition as a good place for business investment. However, the development activity is somewhat piece-meal. This plan provides the context for redevelopment to occur as part of an overall vision. It will be used as a policy guide to help elected and appointed officials, City staff and the private sector make decisions about West Morehead's future, and can also be used as a tool to promote the Corridor and its possibilities.

Planning Process

City and County staff members worked with area residents and business and property owners to develop the West Morehead Corridor Plan. A series of public workshops were held to receive public input on the planning process. All meetings were open to the public. Interested parties met several times to develop a vision for the Corridor and key recommendations and concepts to achieve the vision.

Plan Organization

The *West Morehead Plan Corridor Vision and Concept Plan* is divided into two planning documents: *Volume I: The Concept Plan*, and *Volume II: The Implementation Plan*. The Concept Plan provides background information on the West Morehead Corridor and includes the vision and key recommendations to achieve the vision for the corridor.

The Implementation Plan identifies strategies to implement recommendations in the Concept Plan. The Implementation Plan is not intended to be an adopted document; rather, it is intended to provide direction to Planning staff and other implementing agencies carrying out the Concept Plan.

Study Area Boundaries

The area addressed in this plan for West Morehead Street encompasses an approximate two-mile stretch of the Corridor that extends from South Tryon Street to Wilkinson Boulevard. Properties located along both sides of the street are included within the study area. **Map 1, page iii** shows the boundaries of the plan.

Issues and Opportunities

For planning purposes, the Corridor has been divided into four distinct subareas as shown on the West Morehead Corridor Boundary Map, which together form the Corridor's unique character. The districts are:

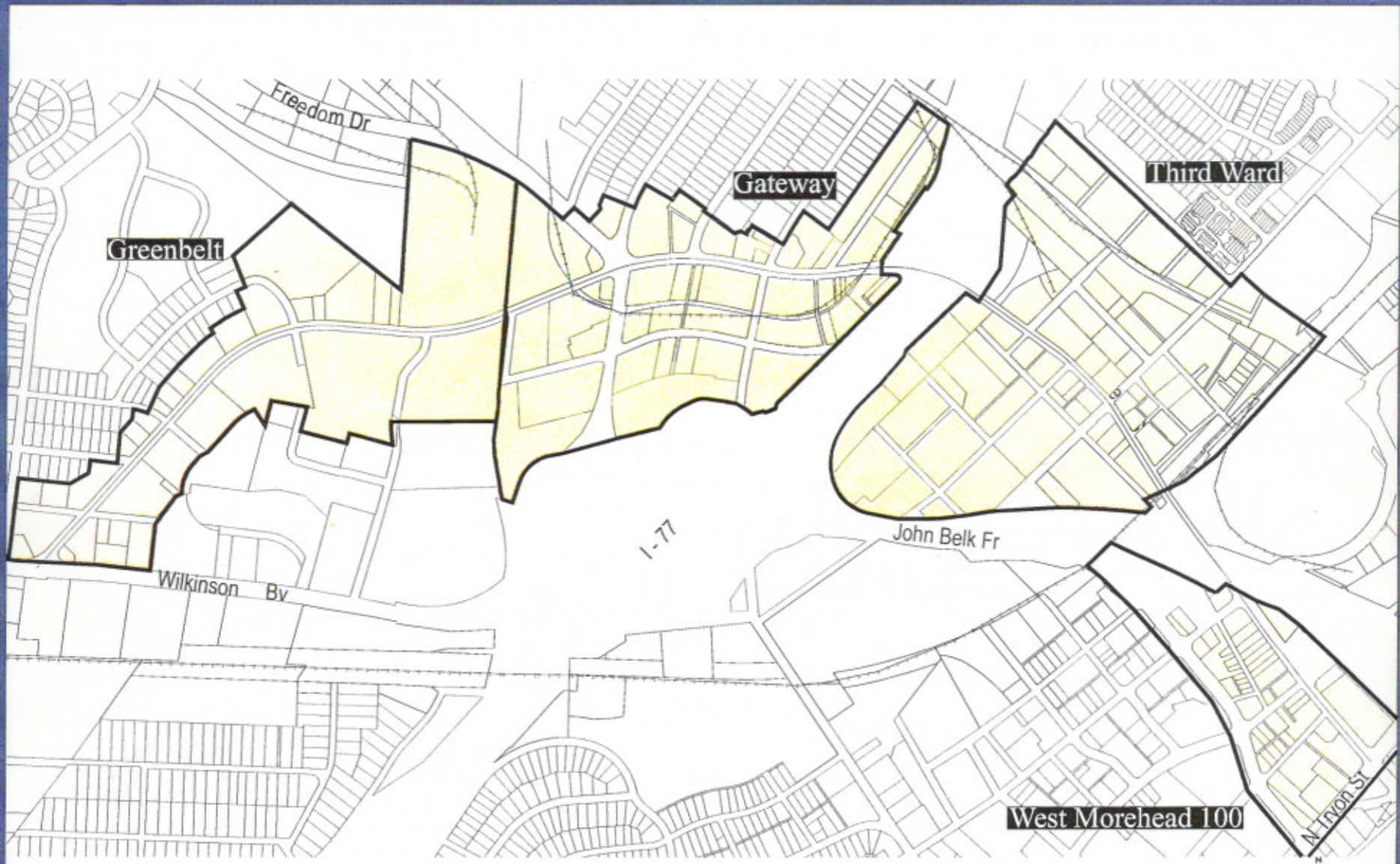
- ***Greenbelt District*** - Wilkinson Boulevard to Freedom Drive
- ***Gateway District*** - Freedom Drive to Interstate 77
- ***Third Ward District*** – Interstate 77 to Norfolk Southern Railroad
- ***West Morehead 100 District*** - Norfolk Southern Railroad to South Tryon Street

Issues to Consider

Several issues that need to be addressed along the Corridor were identified at the public meetings. These include:

- relationships with adjacent neighborhoods
- vacant and/or underutilized buildings and structures
- poor streetscape image--lack of landscaping, surface parking lots, billboards, overhead utilities, and lighting
- nondescript and confusing intersections with major cross streets
- flooding due to undersized storm water pipes
- preservation of historic and architecturally significant buildings
- pedestrian connections and safety
- appearance of auto-oriented uses
- large amount of industrial zoning along most of the Corridor
- preservation of existing open space
- traffic and potential for on-street parking
- perception of crime
- fortified wine sales and loitering

Map 1: West Morehead Corridor Boundary



Corridor Assets

Numerous assets contribute to the Corridor's potential for redevelopment. These include:

- proximity to Ericsson Stadium, Charlotte Convention Center, and other Center City attractions and developments
- strong connections to adjacent neighborhoods: Ashley Park, Wesley Heights, and Third Ward
- proximity to the Center City and the Airport; access to I-77, I-277, and other major thoroughfares
- historic character and urban scale of some of the buildings
- vacant and underutilized buildings
- properties available for reuse
- single ownership of land in some districts
- proximity to future transit and trolley lines
- potential expansion of the greenway system along Stewart and Irwin Creeks
- public open space - Bryant Park
- scenic views of the Uptown skyline

Corridor Vision

The concepts presented in this plan are based on the following vision:

Over the next five to ten years, West Morehead Street and the surrounding area will become one of Charlotte's most attractive, cohesive and economically viable urban corridors.

The corridor will have:

- *a mixture of successful and diverse businesses and offices providing employment opportunities, new urban housing options and a variety of retail shops, restaurants and services;*
- *a unique historic character;*
- *a good multi-modal transportation network;*
- *a pedestrian-oriented streetscape with well designed gateways;*
- *public open space woven throughout the Corridor; and*
- *an organized group of residents and business owners working together to support the Corridor's ongoing success.*

Land Use and Urban Design Concepts

Greenbelt District - *Wilkinson Boulevard to Freedom Drive*

Key Concepts

- Develop a major gateway at the Wilkinson Boulevard and West Morehead Street intersection that is anchored by three- to four-story office buildings with ground floor retail and enhanced streetscape improvements such as street trees and other landscaping, signage, crosswalks and lighting.
- Encourage new office and mixed-use development on vacant and underutilized properties along the Corridor.
- Establish a linear greenspace along both sides of the road, building on the existing landscaping and setbacks of Colony Park West Business Park, WBT/Jefferson Pilot Communications and other well-landscaped properties.
- Revitalize Bryant Park and connect it to proposed greenways along Irwin and Stewart Creeks.

Gateway District - *Freedom Drive to Interstate 77*

Key Concepts

- Create a dramatic entry point or gateway at the intersection of Freedom Drive and West Morehead Street that includes terminating and removing a portion of Walnut Avenue at the intersection, encouraging development of three- to four-story office buildings with ground floor retail built close to the street edge, and providing pedestrian-oriented streetscape improvements to visually announce the gateway.
- Encourage a mixture of neighborhood oriented retail, office and urban residential development near the intersection of West Morehead Street and Grandin Road and along Summit Avenue.
- Promote upper story residential development in renovated or new buildings.
- Reinforce the pedestrian environment in the area through building setbacks, sidewalks, crosswalks, street tree plantings, pedestrian-scale lighting and other amenities.
- Coordinate and provide parking in the area, including shared and on-street parking.
- Develop a greenway along Irwin and Stewart Creeks that connects to Bryant Park, Third Ward and Wesley Heights.

Third Ward District - I-77 to Norfolk Southern Railroad

Key Concepts

- Preserve and adaptively reuse the numerous vacant and underutilized industrial buildings in this area for office and upper floor residential use, with some ground floor retail.
- Encourage development of new office construction that is compatible with the existing architectural character of buildings principally on the south side of West Morehead Street and at the intersection of South Cedar and West Morehead Streets.
- Develop Irwin Creek as a greenway connecting to the Cedar Yards, Third Ward and the Center City.
- Reinforce the pedestrian environment through building setbacks, sidewalks, a crosswalk at South Cedar Street, street tree plantings, pedestrian scale lighting and other amenities.
- Provide public parking, including on-street parking.

West Morehead 100 District - Norfolk Southern Railroad to South Tryon Street

Key Concepts

- Create a major, well landscaped gateway entrance to the Center City around the South Tryon/West Morehead intersection that includes new buildings up to eight stories in height with a mixture of uses such as offices, ground floor retail and a hotel.
- Redevelop properties between South Tryon and South Mint Streets to include three to four story office buildings with ground floor retail and restaurants with outdoor seating, a shared parking lot or deck and small public plaza.
- Create a pedestrian-friendly environment by repairing and widening sidewalks, designing crosswalks at key intersections and providing street trees and pedestrian lighting.

Implementation Priorities

Volume II of the *West Morehead Corridor Plan* identifies several implementation priorities for the redevelopment of the Corridor based on the concept plan. These priorities focus on:

- identifying design priorities and developing detailed design plans and cost estimates for implementation
- implementing design guidelines through the development process
- initiating rezonings to encourage and accommodate more urban-scale development
- identifying opportunities and ways to preserve historic buildings
- assessing and setting priorities for needed infrastructure; including storm water retention, curb, gutters, sidewalks, traffic improvements and parking
- developing a funding strategy for public improvements
- forming collaborative partnerships among business and property owners and residents that are linked to established groups and urban revitalization efforts
- developing a marketing strategy to promote the Corridor

Summary

Below is a summary of key recommendations that should be implemented along the West Morehead Street Corridor. These recommendations, if implemented, will contribute to improving the appearance of the corridor, improving traffic circulation, making the corridor more pedestrian friendly, attracting new businesses to the area, and contributing to the continued success of the corridor.

Key Recommendations

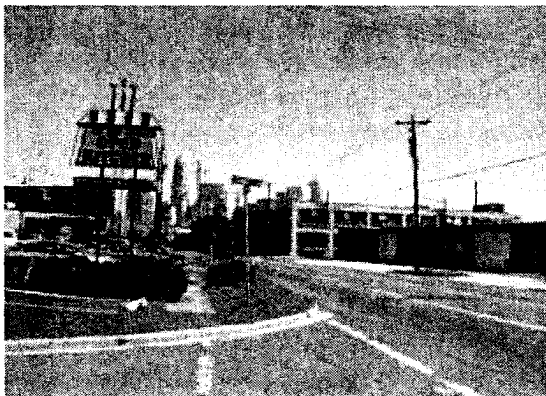
- Develop gateways at major intersections that are anchored by mixed use developments with ground floor retail, office and residential development enhanced with streetscape improvements, such as street trees and other landscaping, wide sidewalks, signage, crosswalks, and pedestrian-scale lighting.
- Encourage development of new office and light industrial development on vacant and underutilized properties along the corridor.
- Establish streetscape improvements where possible and reinforce the pedestrian environment in the area through building setbacks, sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, street tree plantings and pedestrian-scale lighting and other amenities.
- Revitalize Bryant Park and expand the greenway system along Irwin and Stewart Creeks to connect with Bryant Park, Cedar Yards, Third Ward and Wesley Heights.
- Coordinate shared parking and provide on-street parking.
- Encourage development that is compatible with the existing architectural character of buildings along the corridor.

Volume I: CONCEPT PLAN

Introduction

West Morehead Street was one of Charlotte's first urban industrial corridors, dating back to the 1920s. At one time, this gateway Corridor thrived with such industries as the Coca-Cola Bottling Company and smaller retail businesses and restaurants. Over time, however, many of the businesses closed or moved to suburban locations, leaving many vacant or underutilized buildings behind. While a few businesses, such as WBT Television/Jefferson Pilot Communications and Wachovia Bank, have been in the area for several years, new development activity along the Corridor has been slow until recently.

Today, new life is being breathed into the West Morehead Corridor. The historic Coca-Cola building and several other industrial structures closer to the Center City have been restored and converted to professional offices, coffee shops, galleries and museums. For example, The American City Building, an attractive 4-story structure, now houses *The Business Journal* and other offices. Summit Grandview, a 266-unit residential development two blocks east of West Morehead Street, was recently completed. Colony Park West is an urban business park located near the intersection of Wilkinson Boulevard and West Morehead Street.



Small retail businesses and restaurants along the corridor.



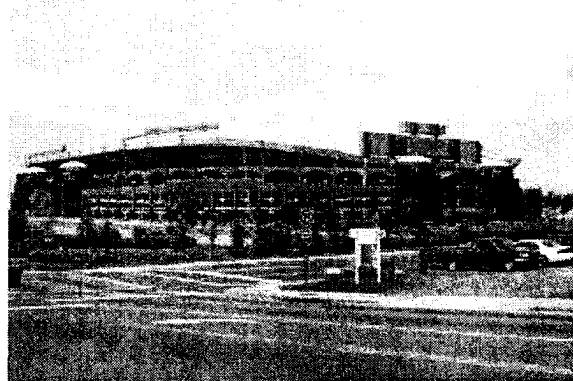
1230 West Morehead – new offices in a redeveloped structure.

Driving Forces of Change

There are numerous factors that contribute to the changes taking place along the West Morehead Street Corridor. The Corridor's close proximity to other hot spots is paramount to the success it is experiencing. The Corridor lies within the shadows of both the Center

City and Ericsson Stadium. The Center City is a hot bed for office, residential and other development activity. While Ericsson Stadium attracts large crowds several times a year, there are other factors that make this location a good one to live, work and play.

Ericsson Stadium is one of the most significant driving forces of change along the Corridor. This landmark sports facility has been a magnet for new development, drawing attention to West Morehead Street as well as the Third Ward and Wesley Heights neighborhoods, where considerable investments have recently been made.



Ericsson Stadium, a major feature along the Corridor.

The growth and expansion of the Center City also contributes to the Corridor's appeal.

The new Charlotte Convention Center is located only a few blocks from West Morehead Street and new office towers are being constructed on the southern end of North Tryon Street and in the Gateway Center off Cedar Street, just minutes away from the Corridor. In addition, increased residential development in the Center City is creating opportunities for more restaurants, retail and entertainment. With Center City land costs rising, investors desiring a Center City location are looking for land on its periphery as an affordable option.

The search for inner-city charm and character is another reason the West Morehead Corridor is gaining attention. Developers and other entrepreneurs, with the support of the City of Charlotte, are revitalizing older inner-city areas such as SouthEnd and Plaza Central, reflecting a growing trend for infill development. With its unique character, distinct views of Charlotte's skyline, strong neighborhood edges and historic industrial buildings, the West Morehead Corridor has many of the qualities inherent in revitalization projects.

Finally, **the desire for convenient, accessible locations** in a time when traffic congestion is mounting makes the Corridor a good candidate for revitalization. It has immediate access to I-77 and I-277, as well as other key business corridors including Freedom Drive, Wilkinson Boulevard and South Tryon Street. In addition, the Corridor is on a public transit route and is close to the future SouthEnd/Uptown trolley line and Charlotte/Douglas International Airport. Additionally, West Morehead Street is adjacent to the West Rapid Transit Corridor.

Challenge for the Future

West Morehead Street is well positioned for revitalization. But the challenge is to ensure that as the Corridor redevelops, it does so within the context of a larger, comprehensive vision: a vision that builds on and ties together the Corridor's distinct character, historic flavor and functional relationship to the Center City, surrounding neighborhoods and business corridors. Without a vision to guide revitalization efforts, the Corridor's full potential may never be realized.

Plan Purpose — A Context For Revitalization

The purpose of this plan is to provide a context for redevelopment to occur within the Corridor. It includes a comprehensive urban design and land use vision articulated through a series of development concepts for the Corridor. The plan also provides general strategies to begin implementation.

When adopted by City Council, this plan will become a policy guide to help elected and appointed officials, City staff and the private sector make decisions about West Morehead's future. It can also be used as a tool to promote the Corridor and its potential. In short, this plan lays the foundation for continued and increased public and private sector involvement as momentum and synergy build on the Corridor.

Several plans have been adopted in past years that address changes along the Corridor. This concept plan builds on those adopted plans which include the *West Morehead Special Project Plan (1987)*, *Charlotte Center City Plan (1990)*, *Third Ward Plan (1997)*, *Wesley Heights Plan (1999)* and the *Center City 2010 Plan (2000)*.

Plan Development Process

Planning Commission staff worked with residents, businesses, property owners, local government staff and other interested parties to develop the vision and concept plan for the Corridor. Through a series of public meetings and workshops, issues and opportunities for the Corridor were identified, leading to consensus on the overall concept and generalized strategies. During the process, a business/merchants association was formed to spearhead the Corridor's redevelopment.



Public involvement at one of the meetings conducted along the corridor.

Existing Conditions

Assessing existing conditions was the first step taken to develop a vision and plan for the West Morehead Corridor. To help with this assessment, the Corridor was divided into four subareas. Each subarea has a distinct visual and functional character, creating a series of places, which together form the Corridor's unique personality.

- **Greenbelt District** - *Wilkinson Boulevard to Freedom Drive*
- **Gateway District** - *Freedom Drive to I-77*
- **Third Ward District** - *I-77 to Norfolk Southern Railroad Tracks*
- **West Morehead 100 District** - *Railroad to S. Tryon Street*

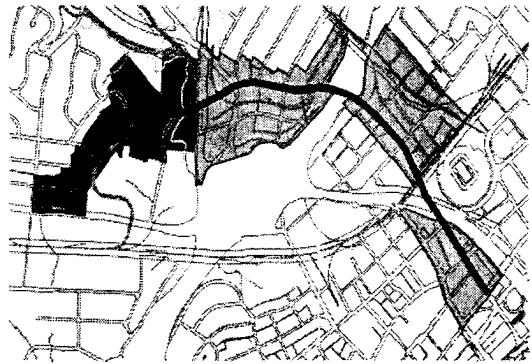
EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING

There are a variety of land uses located along the corridor. However, the primary land uses are light industrial, office and retail. The zoning along the corridor is mostly industrial, although there is some office and Uptown Mixed-Use District (UMUD) zoning along the corridor. See **Map 2**, Existing Land Use and **Map 3**, Existing Zoning.

Greenbelt District

Wilkinson Boulevard to Freedom Drive

This western most section of the Corridor was developed after the areas closer to the Center City. Therefore, it is slightly more suburban in its development character, as evidenced by the one- to two-story buildings with larger setbacks and well-landscaped front lawns. By far, it is the greenest and most heavily landscaped section of the Corridor, with street trees concentrated in several locations.



Context Map of the Greenbelt District

Map 2: Existing Land Use



Land Use

- Mixed Use
Office/Commercial/Residential
- Single Family
- Office

- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial

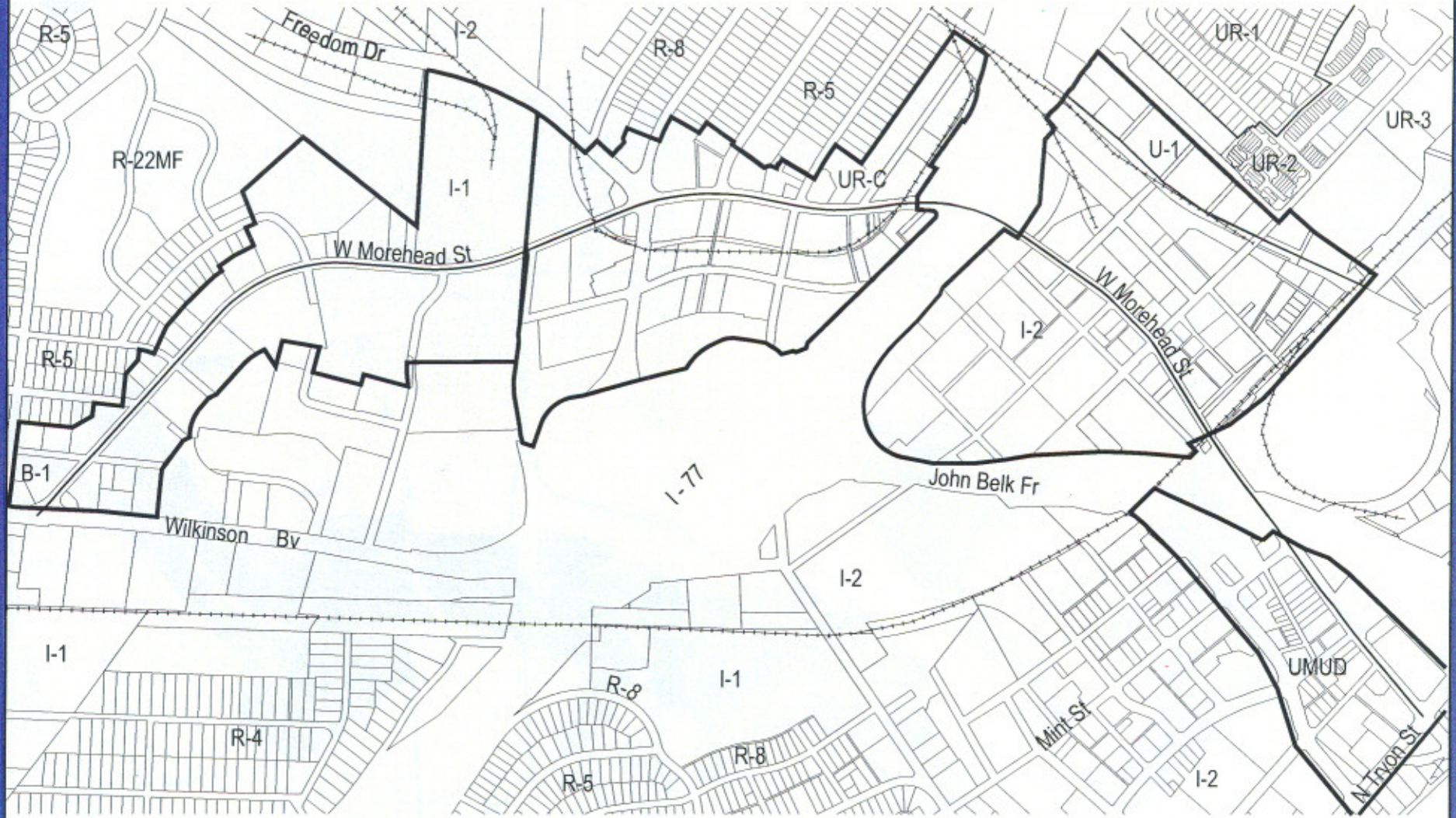
- Parks / Open Space
- Vacant



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, September 2001.

Adopted by Charlotte City Council, October 8, 2001.

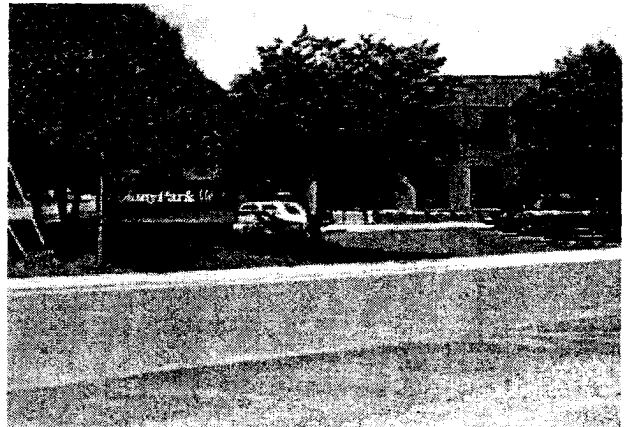
Map 3: Existing Zoning



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, July 2001.

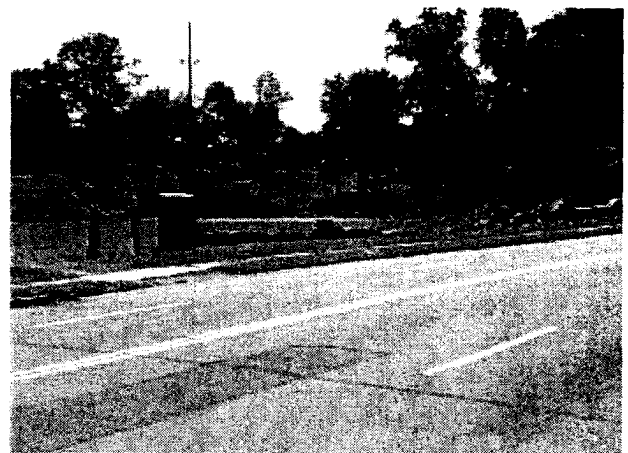
Adopted by Charlotte City Council, October 8, 2001.

A variety of land uses exist in this district, but light industrial and office uses dominate. Colony Park West, an 115,000-square-foot business park, and WBT/Jefferson Pilot Communications, both on the south side of the Corridor, are the largest land holders in the Greenbelt District. Other uses include a few bars, an old motor court, several professional offices and auto-oriented businesses. A number of vacant properties also exist, including a relatively large and heavily wooded lot near the Wilkinson Boulevard intersection.



Colony Park West Business Park

One of the most notable features of this portion of the Corridor is Bryant Park, a small neighborhood park next to Jefferson Pilot and on the edge of Stewart and Irwin Creeks, which converge and cross under West Morehead Street. The park only has a ball field and little else in the way of amenities. However, an old, attractive stone wall laces its way through much of the park, and one of the most spectacular views of Charlotte's skyline can be seen from here and adjacent properties. The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department is in the process of redesigning the park and bond funds have been allocated for its improvement.



Bryant Park

Abutting the Corridor to the north is Ashley Park, an older, moderate-income neighborhood. This neighborhood has several connections to West Morehead Street. Homes in this neighborhood consist of one-story bungalows and ranch houses, many of which are rental properties, although homeownership is on the rise. According to the *Quality of Life Index*, Ashley Park is considered a fragile neighborhood, indicating a need for housing, employment, infrastructure and other social and physical improvements. Strengthening the nonresidential edge of the neighborhood would be a positive influence on Ashley Park.

The existing zoning for properties located within the Greenbelt District is predominantly I-1 (light industrial) on the north side and I-2 (heavy industrial) on the south side. Several B-1 zoned properties exist at the Wilkinson Boulevard intersection.

Opportunities and Issues/Concerns in the Greenbelt District

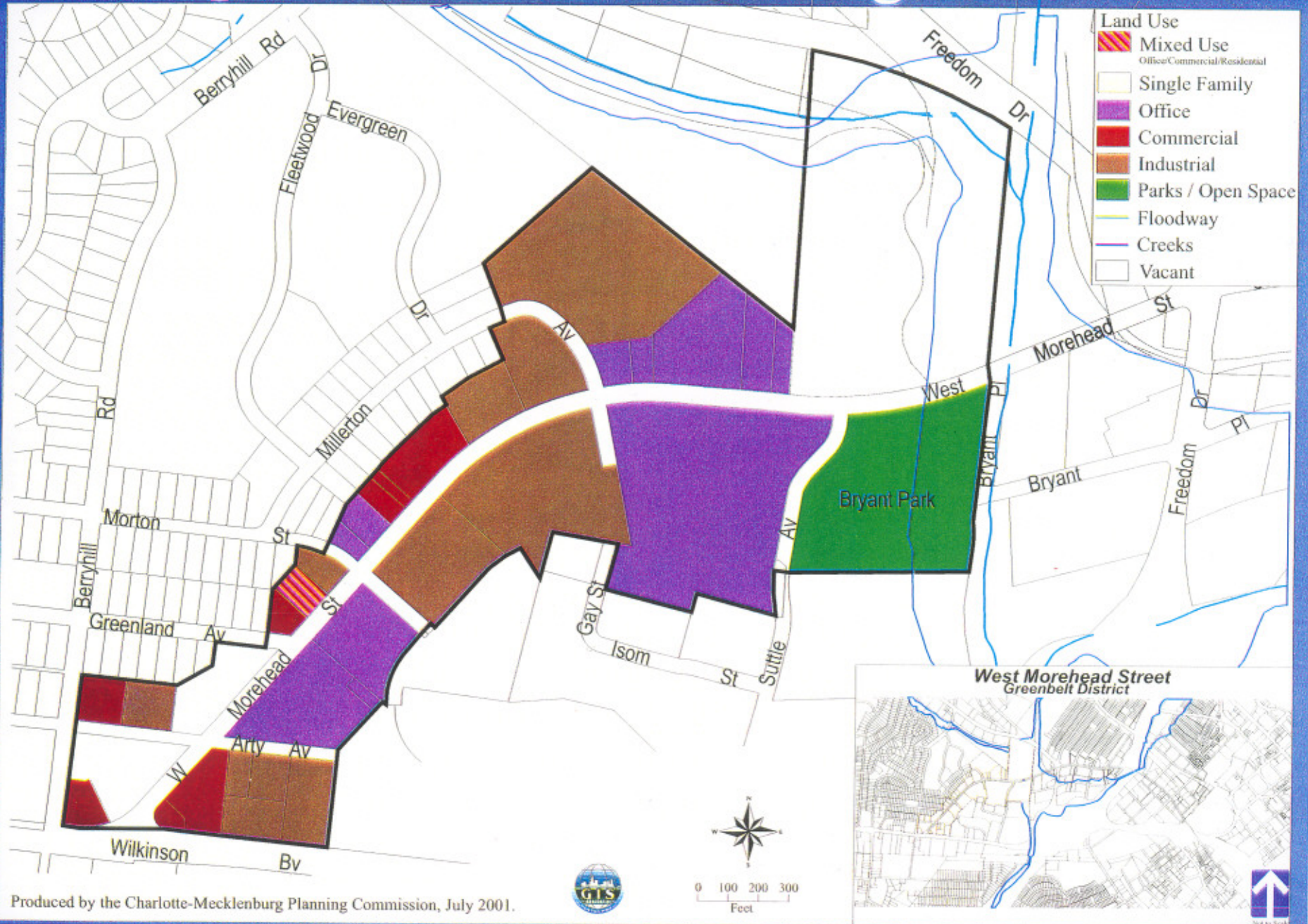
Key Opportunities To Build On

- Gateway at Wilkinson Boulevard and Morehead Street
- Proximity to future rapid transit corridor
- Access to Wilkinson Boulevard and linkage to Airport
- Development potential of vacant and underutilized properties
- Well landscaped and attractive developments such as Colony West Business Park and WBT/Jefferson Pilot create a strong street presence
- Excellent views of the Center City skyline
- Rolling topography
- Bryant Park
- Potential expansion of the greenway system along Stewart and Irwin Creeks as public open space

Key Issues/Concerns To Address

- Unattractive entrance to the corridor at Wilkinson Boulevard
- Number of properties with old, barren parking lots in front
- Lack of landscaping and street trees in many areas
- Marginal late-night businesses that cause complaints from area residents and affect the image of the area
- Perception of crime, particularly at Bryant Park
- Loitering, transient population and sale of fortified wine
- Billboards
- Stormwater improvements along Stewart Creek and the surrounding floodplain
- Amount of heavy industrial zoning
- Protection of neighborhood edges

Map 4: Greenbelt Existing Land Use



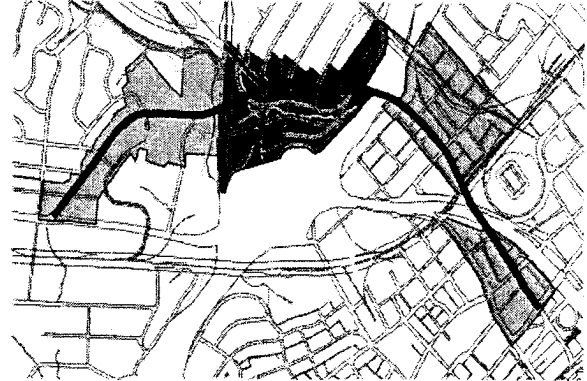
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Gateway District

Freedom Drive to I-277

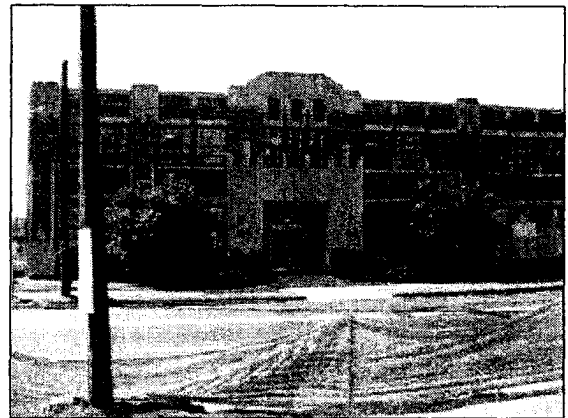
Developed in the early 1900s, the Gateway District is the oldest section of the West Morehead Corridor. Several buildings remain from that era. Most impressive is the former Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, which was restored by and is now home to Edifice, one of the largest commercial builders in the region. This building, which also houses an architecture firm and a graphic design office, has been designated as a National Register Historic Property.



Context Map of the Gateway District

Other buildings in this area have the potential for this designation as well. Unfortunately, a number of buildings have been demolished and replaced with surface parking lots or more modern buildings. A Wachovia Bank branch anchors the corner of Freedom Drive and West Morehead, and several auto-oriented businesses occupy a number of other sites, a stark contrast to the older industrial structures.

Even with the loss of some of the older buildings along the Corridor, enough of the original fabric exists for consideration for National Register or Local Historic District designation. Along with professional offices that have moved into some of the older buildings, several restaurants, a health food distributor and a coffee shop also exist in this section of the Corridor. Some of the architectural features of the buildings are hidden behind remodeled facades or covered with signs or other materials.



The former Coca-Cola building has been renovated for office use

Several vacant structures and/or properties exist in the Gateway District, including property on the northeast corner of Freedom Drive and West Morehead Street. However, because of the configuration of Walnut Street entering the three-way intersection, the land is chopped into small tracts, making development difficult.

The southern boundary of the Gateway District extends to Irwin Creek and includes the industrial uses along Bryant Street and Summit Avenue. This is not a well-developed industrial street, due in part, to the floodplain that covers much of the property. A number of vacant and underutilized tracts exist in this area.

The northern boundary borders Wesley Heights, a locally designated historic district. Wesley Heights developed around the same time as the industrial area and consists of a mixture of bungalows, two story homes, duplexes, triplexes and quadraplexes. It is a fairly stable and increasingly popular neighborhood with large canopy trees and considerable street appeal. Several streets connect Wesley Heights to West Morehead Street, and the makings of a pedestrian environment exist where these streets intersect the Corridor.

(Note: An area plan was completed for Wesley Heights in 1999. The plan encourages a stronger connection between the neighborhood and the Corridor.)



Wesley Heights Neighborhood

The existing zoning in the Gateway District is I-1 on the north side and I-2 on the south side. However, one building, Carolina Transfers and Storage, was recently rezoned to UR-C. This is an urban commercial district that provides greater flexibility for redevelopment and encourages pedestrian-oriented urban scale development.

Opportunities and Issues/Concerns in the Gateway District

Key Opportunities To Build On

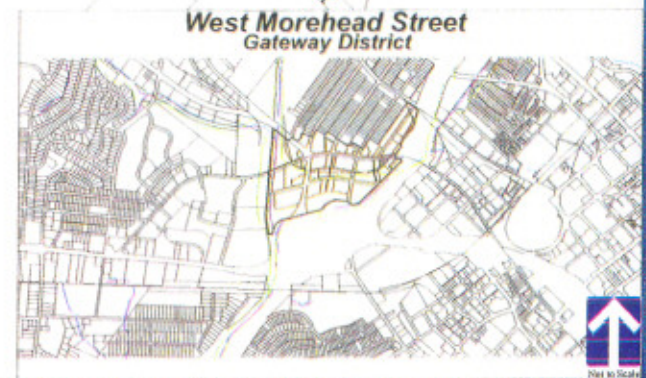
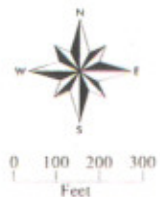
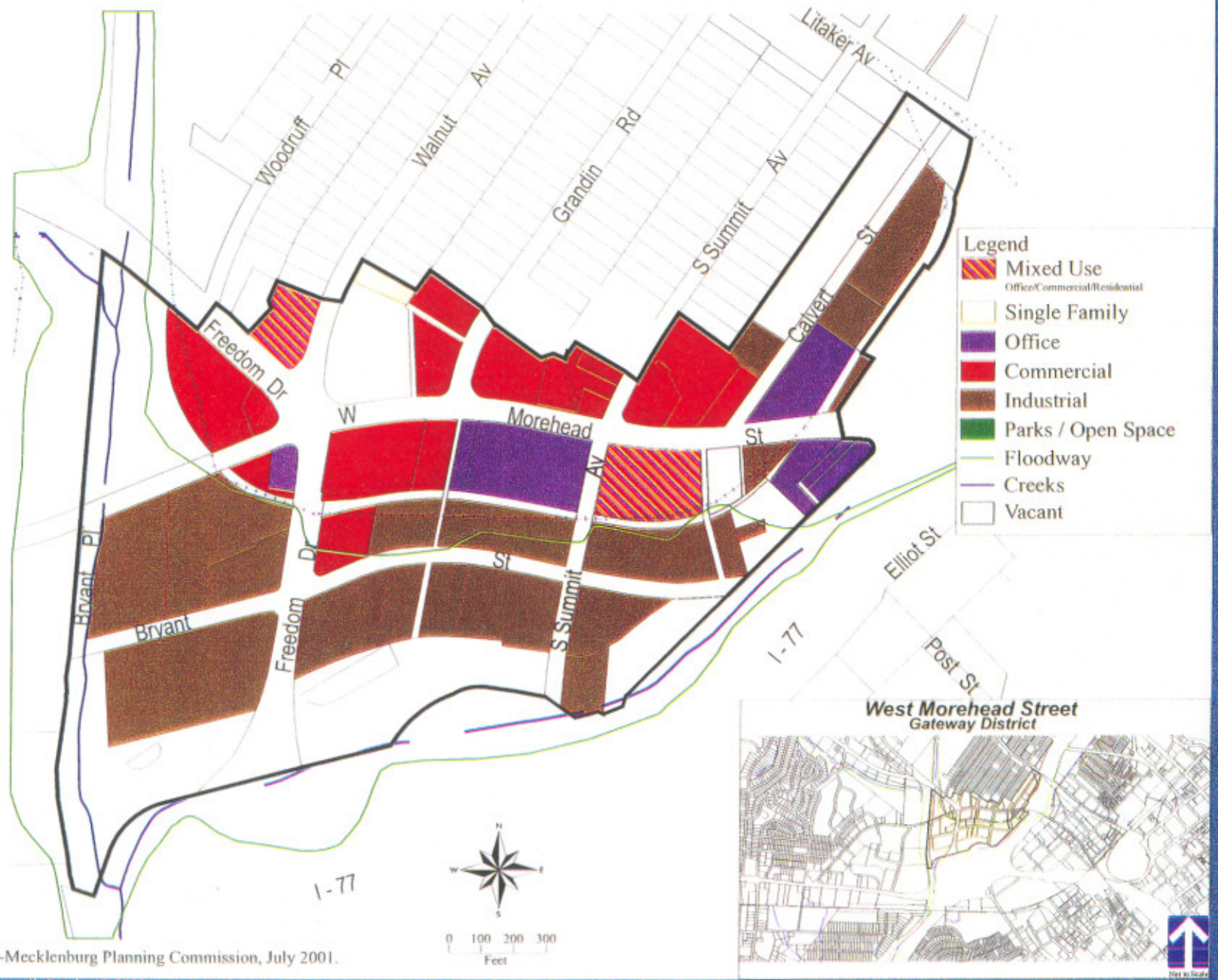
- Restoration potential of older buildings
- Vacant or underutilized land providing development possibilities
- Building setbacks that help frame the Corridor
- Strong connections to the Wesley Heights neighborhood
- Potential expansion of the greenway system along Irwin Creek

Key Issues/Concerns To Address

- Reconfiguration of the Freedom Drive/West Morehead Street intersection
- Preservation of the character of historic and architecturally significant buildings
- Appearance of utility poles and overhead wires
- Repair of old sidewalks
- Pedestrian safety
- Number of curb cuts
- Lack of landscaping along the street and in parking areas
- Appearance and image of used car lots and auto repair shops
- Flooding in low areas
- Need for additional parking for future development
- Relationship of nonresidential uses to neighborhood edges
- Perceptions of crime
- Industrial zoning

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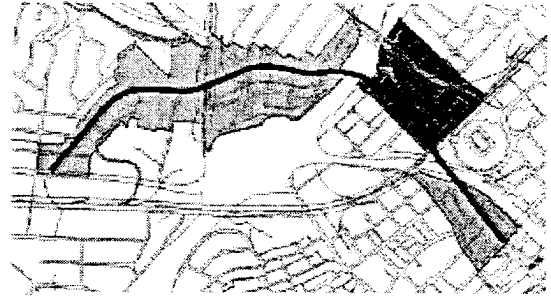
Map 5: Gateway Existing Land Use



Third Ward District

I-77 to Norfolk Southern Railroad

This section of the West Morehead Corridor, wedged between I-77, I-277 and the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks is within the boundaries of the Center City. Ericsson Stadium is located here, and one of the main entrances to the Stadium opens onto the Corridor. The area extends only one block south of West Morehead Street to Dunbar Street. However, it reaches several blocks north to West First Street, which borders the residential area of Third Ward. The Third Ward neighborhood is experiencing renewed popularity and is attracting several new urban housing developments such as Oak Park at Third Ward.



Context Map of the Gateway District



Redevelopment along South Cedar Street.

South Cedar Street provides several excellent redevelopment examples such as the Foundry, an old industrial building converted to artist studios, offices and a restaurant; the Cedar Yard, a former Piedmont and Northern Railroad Yard, jointly owned by the City of Charlotte and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, provides entertainment opportunities during stadium events. Future plans include the development of a hotel, entertainment, retail and recreational uses and parking. In addition, a coffee shop and the Light Factory, a non-profit photography gallery and center, have opened on West Hill Street.

Several three to four story industrial buildings as well as a one story strip center remain vacant along this portion of the Corridor. Other uses include an auto detailing shop, an auto parts and service establishment, restaurants, a few offices and numerous surface parking lots that provide nearby parking for events at the stadium.

With the exception of a strip of Urban Industrial (U-I) zoning along the south side of West First Street, the entire area is zoned I-2.

Opportunities and Issues/Concerns in the Third Ward District

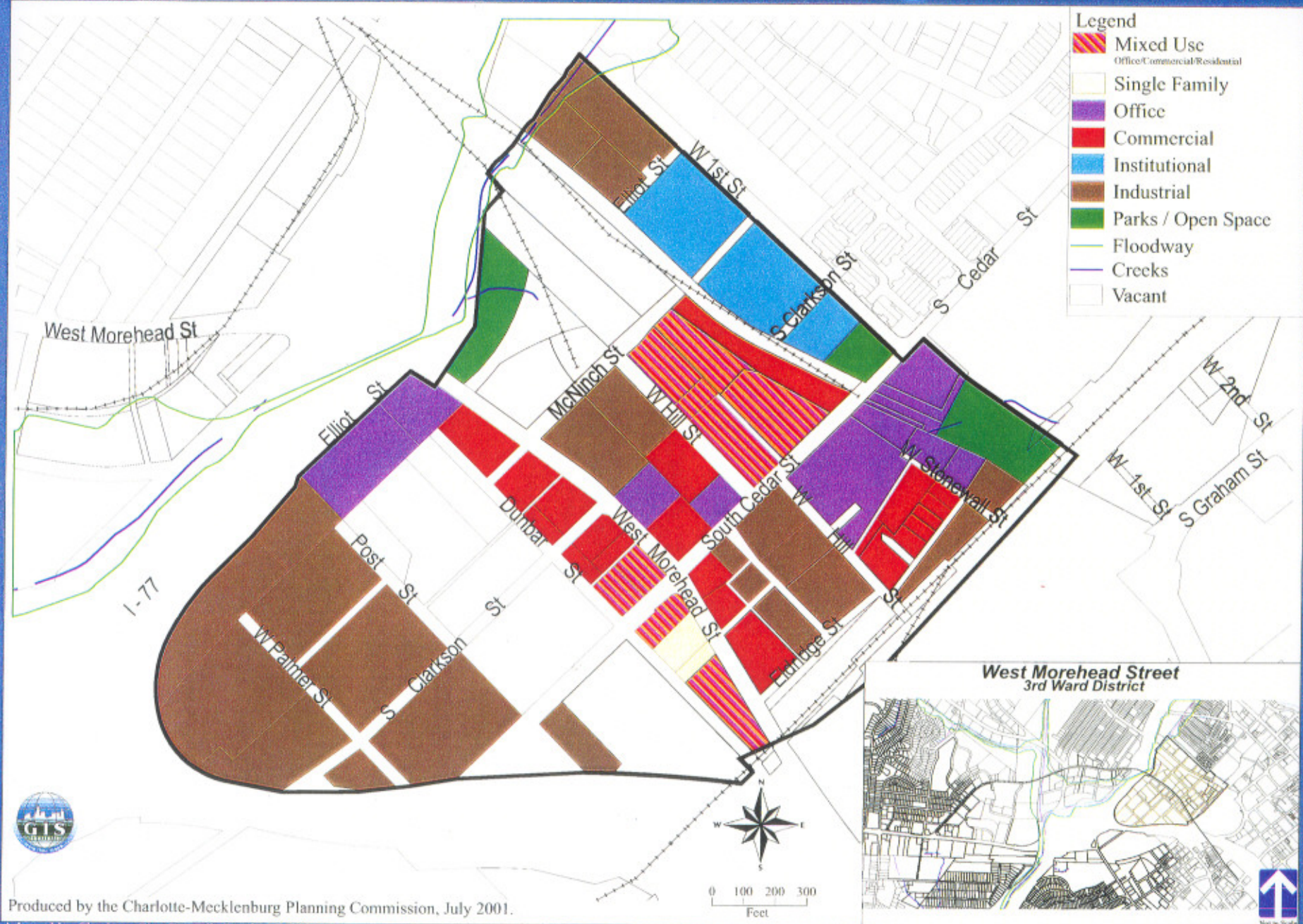
Key Opportunities to Build On

- Proximity and relationship to Ericsson Stadium
- Number of old large buildings with restoration potential
- Vacant and underutilized buildings
- Piedmont and Northern Railroad right-of-way
- Positive image along South Cedar Street
- Strong relationship to Third Ward
- Potential expansion of the greenway system along Irwin Creek
- Single ownership of much of the land between John Belk Freeway and West Morehead Street (Duke Power)
- Potential site for major sports facility between West Morehead Street and I-277

Key Issues/Concerns to Address

- Potential loss of historic industrial structures
- Safety and comfort of pedestrians crossing streets
- Old sidewalks in need of repair and missing in some locations
- Number of curb cuts in some locations
- Number of surface parking lots and potential parking shortage
- Lack of landscaping along street and in parking areas
- Major flooding from undersized storm water system
- Appearance of overhead utilities

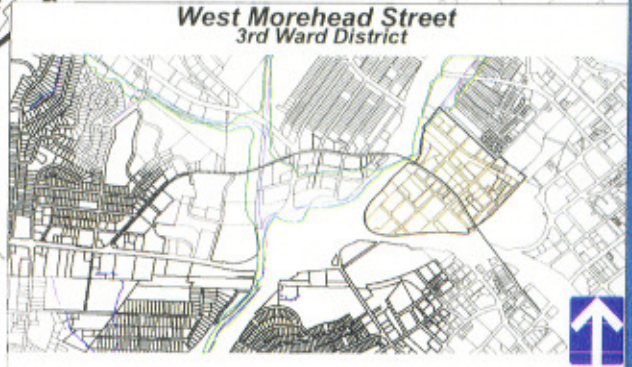
Map 6: Third Ward Existing Land Use



- Legend**
- Mixed Use
Office/Commercial/Residential
 - Single Family
 - Office
 - Commercial
 - Institutional
 - Industrial
 - Parks / Open Space
 - Floodway
 - Creeks
 - Vacant



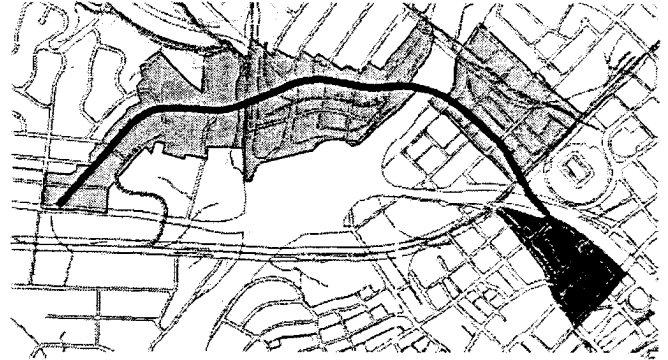
Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, July 2001.
 Adopted by Charlotte City Council, October 8, 2001.



West Morehead 100 District

I-277 to South Tryon Street

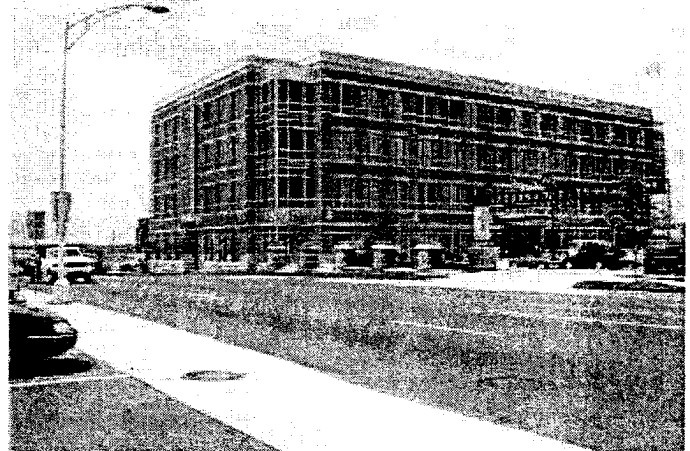
This is the most urban section of the West Morehead Corridor and the closest to the Center City and the activity occurring along Tryon Street, and the rapidly developing SouthEnd District off South Boulevard. Recent development taking place in this area includes the four-story American City Building and the Summit Grandview, a 266-unit apartment building, which is located two blocks east of the plan's boundary. These and other investments indicate a strong private sector commitment to the Corridor.



Context Map of West Morehead 100 District

Other uses that directly front on West Morehead Street in this area include MECA Properties' office, a motel, an outlet shoe store and a row of one-story retail buildings that house a restaurant, service and repair shops and a telecommunications office.

Several single family houses remain along Dunbar Street between West Morehead Street and Carson Boulevard, and the United House of Prayer occupies a prominent location at the corner of South Mint Street and Carson Boulevard. Numerous surface parking lots exist throughout this portion of the Corridor.



The American City Building is a recent addition to the corridor.

The entire area is zoned UMUD, (Uptown Mixed-Use District), which accommodates the type of high quality, pedestrian-scaled development envisioned for West Morehead Street.

Opportunities and Issues/Concerns in the West Morehead 100 Area

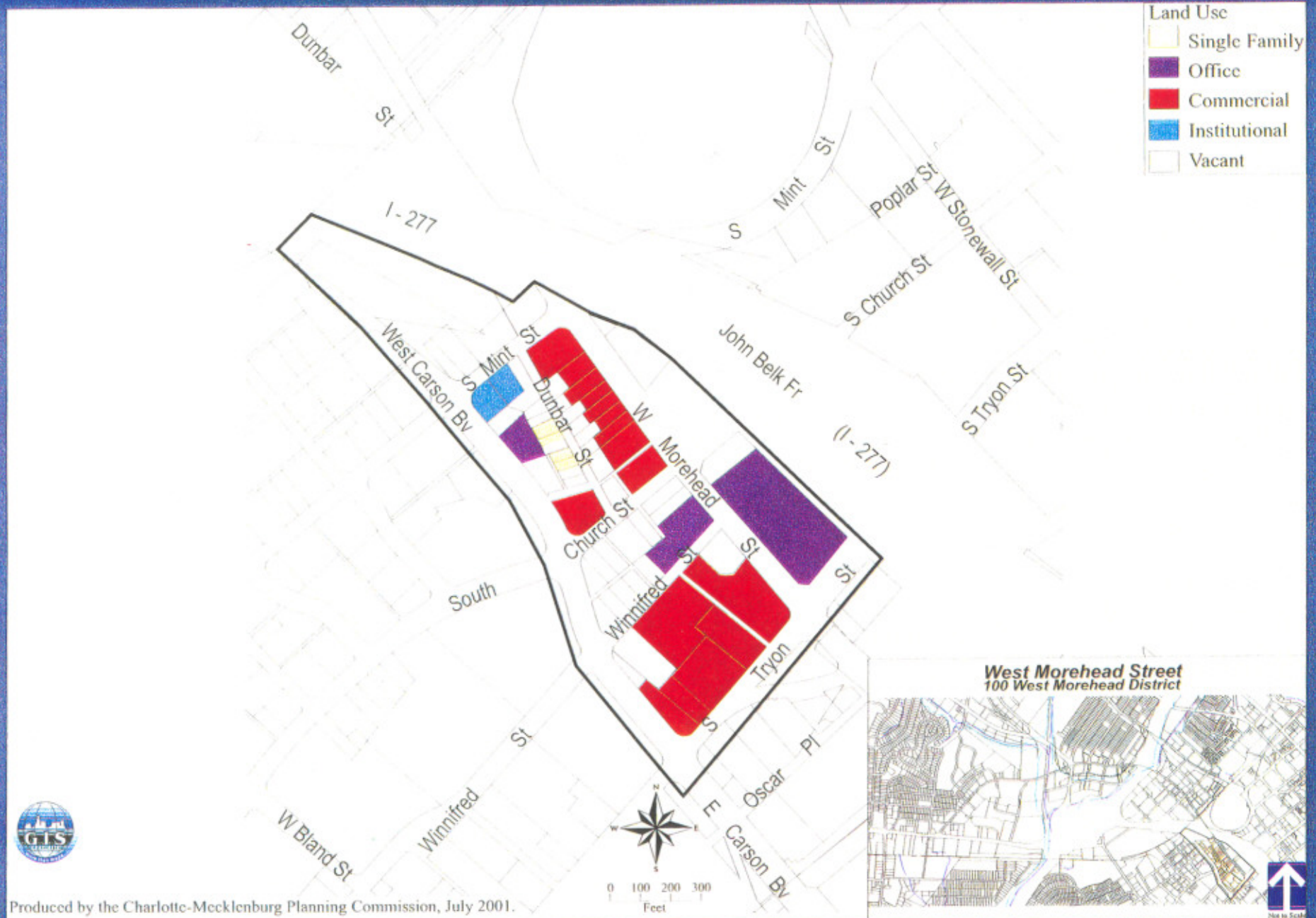
Key Opportunities to Build On

- Highly visible, major entry point to the Center City
- Proximity to future rapid transit and trolley lines
- Vacant and underutilized buildings with redevelopment potential
- Proximity and relationship to Ericsson Stadium
- Proximity to Charlotte Convention Center
- Older buildings with character
- Buildings located close to road help frame Corridor
- Excellent view of Uptown skyline
- Much of property under one ownership
- Underground utilities in place

Key Issues/Concerns To Address

- Pedestrian safety and lack of sidewalks
- Need for additional streetscape improvements
- Lack of greenspace and landscaping along Carson Street
- Vehicles backing into street from parking spaces in front of several buildings
- Parking for Panther's game day and events
- Potential displacement of residents along Dunbar Street
- Toxic site southwest of Morehead Street
- Streetscape potential along Carson Street

Map 7: West Morehead 100 Existing Land Use



The Plan for Change

Vision for the Corridor

The West Morehead Corridor has great potential to be transformed into a vibrant and successful area with a mixture of land uses over the next several years. This plan sets the stage for change, starting with the following overall vision for the Corridor:

To Become One Of Charlotte's Most Attractive, Cohesive and Economically Viable Corridors with:

- *A Diverse Mixture of Uses*
- *Distinct Historic Character*
- *Multi-modal Transportation Network*
- *Pedestrian-Oriented Streetscape with Gateways*
- *Network of Public Open Space*
- *Public/Private Marketing and Support*

Over the next 5 to 10 years, West Morehead Street and its surrounding area will become one of Charlotte's most attractive, cohesive and economically viable urban corridors. It will have:

- A mixture of successful and diverse uses, providing numerous employment opportunities, new urban housing options and a variety of retail shops, restaurants and services that cater to area residents and complement Center City businesses;
- A unique historic character reflected in the architecture that has been preserved and adaptively reused, and new structures that blend well with it;
- Good vehicular traffic flow, access to public transportation, and a safe pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment that attracts people day and night;
- An attractive, pedestrian-oriented streetscape with a series of gateways that visually tie the four subareas of the Corridor together and create its distinct identity;
- Public open space that is woven throughout the Corridor, connecting neighborhoods and parks; and
- An organized group of committed residents and business owners working with the public sector to promote and support the Corridor's continued success.

Key Planning Objectives

Diverse Mixture of Uses

- Limit heavy industrial uses.
- Encourage a mixture of uses within the same structure that include: light industrial, office, retail, service and residential uses that promote urban-scale development/redevelopment.
- Concentrate higher intensity development around major intersections.
- Encourage neighborhood-oriented uses to locate where main residential streets intersect with West Morehead.
- Redevelop the large number of surface parking lots along the Corridor with new urban-scale buildings.

Distinct Historic Character

- Preserve, restore and adaptively reuse architecturally and historically significant buildings.
- Ensure that the scale, orientation and over-all design of new construction is compatible with existing structures in the area.

Multi-Modal Transportation Network

- Improve the flow of traffic through the Corridor.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the Center City, Ericsson Stadium and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Incorporate the Norfolk Southern Railroad right-of-way as part of the overall pedestrian and bicycle network as well as a possible trolley connection to the Center City, Ericsson Stadium and SouthEnd.
- Promote public transit service along the Corridor, considering the feasibility of expanding the Uptown Shuttle Bus route to include areas from Freedom Drive to Tryon Street and linking it to the future rapid transit line along Wilkinson Boulevard.

Develop an overall parking network that emphasizes shared parking and possible on street parking along portions of West Morehead Street during non-peak traffic hours.

Streetscape Design and Image

- Implement a streetscape plan and design guidelines for the Corridor that focus on:
 - creating a distinct visual image for the Corridor
 - enhancing the Corridor's pedestrian environment
 - developing gateways at major intersections
 - providing street trees and other landscaping and pedestrian lighting
 - reducing the dominance of power lines
 - integrating open space throughout the Corridor
 - evaluating sheltered bus stop locations
 - reducing flooding

Open Space Network

- Create a continuous greenway along Irwin and Stewart creeks, linking adjacent neighborhoods and including a pedestrian/ bicycle path, benches and other amenities.

Public/Private Marketing/Support

- Expand the role, commitment and involvement of residents, businesses and the Merchants' Association in revitalization efforts.
- Actively promote the Corridor as a good place to do business.
- Provide public funding, including Business Corridor and/or CWAC funds, for Corridor improvements that will serve as a catalyst for private sector investment.
- Provide support and/or incentives for private sector investment in the Corridor.

Land Use and Urban Design Concepts

Greenbelt District – *Wilkinson Boulevard to Freedom Drive*

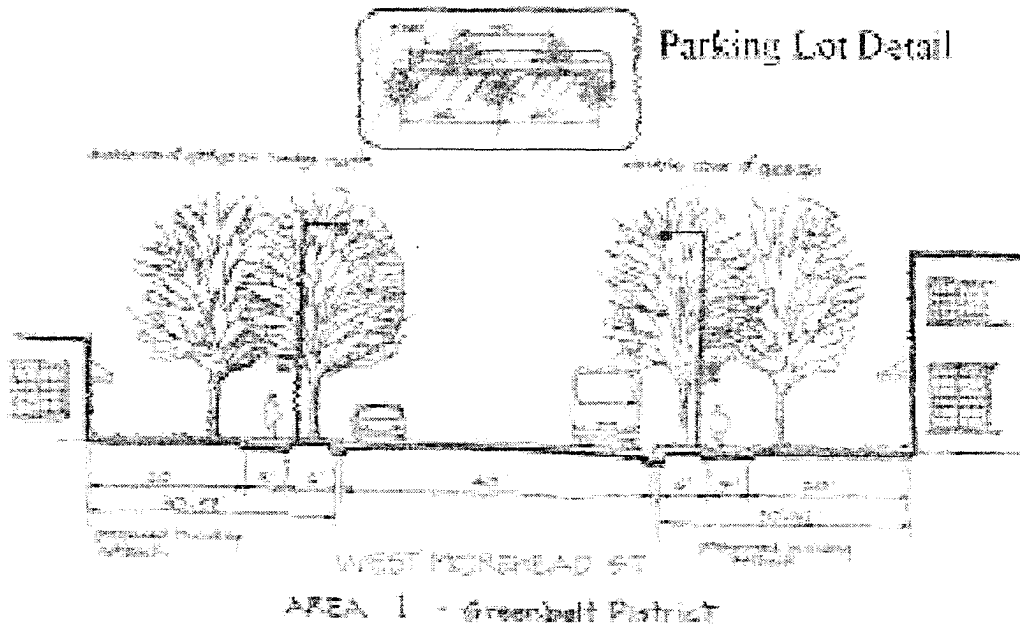
Key Recommendations

- 1. Gateway Development at Wilkinson Boulevard intersection**
- 2. New office and light industrial development along the Corridor**
- 3. Linear greenspace framing the Corridor**
- 4. Expansion and revitalization of Bryant Park**

Office and light industrial uses are envisioned as the predominant land use in this district with the possibility of high density residential overlooking an expanded Bryant Park. Plan recommendations are listed below.

1. Redevelop the intersection of Wilkinson Boulevard and West Morehead Street as an attractive gateway to the Center City area. This should include:
 - Development of three to four story office buildings with ground floor retail on the northeast and northwest quadrants of the intersection with buildings located close to the road and oriented toward the intersection, with parking at the rear.
 - Streetscape improvements such as street trees, crosswalks, signage, and pedestrian-scale lighting to accentuate the gateway.
2. Expand Bryant Park to include a part of the Stewart Creek floodplain and build a pedestrian bridge across Stewart Creek to give access to the park. Also, evaluate Bryant Park for National Register or Local Historic Property designation.
3. Redevelop the tract of land directly across from Bryant Park with a mixture of uses that includes mid-rise housing that overlook Stewart Creek.

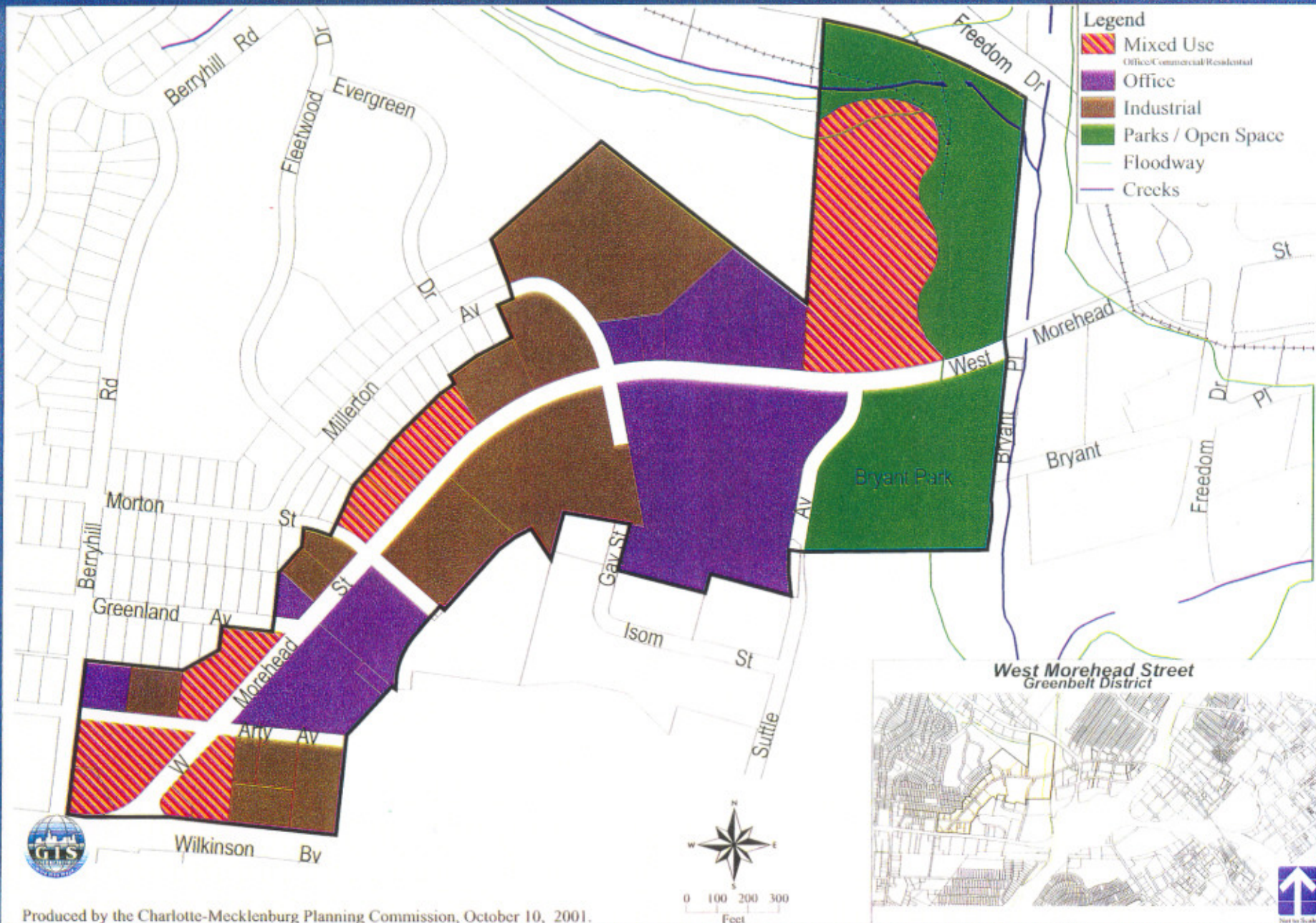
4. Establish a linear greenspace along both sides of West Morehead by:
- Maintaining a minimum building setback (approximately 30 feet from the curb) to allow for front lawns and landscaping similar to that of Colony West or WBT/Jefferson Pilot.
 - Planting a double row of canopy trees in a planting strip along both sides of the street, where space permits.



Typical Section – 30'32" setback with 20' building setback, 5' sidewalk and 6' planting strip

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Map 8 : Greenbelt Adopted Future Land Use



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 Adopted by Charlotte City Council, October 8, 2001.

Gateway District – Freedom Drive to I-77

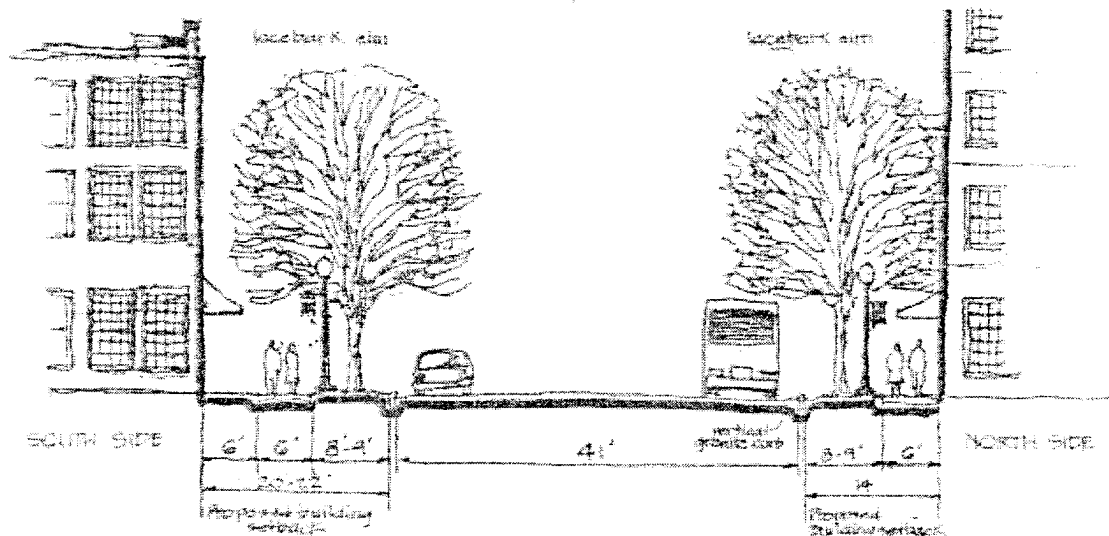
Key Recommendations

1. Encourage major gateway design and development at Freedom Drive intersection
2. Develop a mixture of neighborhood retail, urban residential and office uses along the Corridor
3. Improve the streetscape with strong pedestrian orientation and connections to Wesley Heights
4. Preserve and redevelop older buildings
5. Improve vehicular circulation
6. Develop and expand the greenway system
7. Coordinate public parking

Office, retail and residential uses are envisioned in this district, which includes several early 20th Century buildings that are proposed for renovation and reuse. (Note: Neighborhood-oriented office, retail and residential development is proposed for the north side adjacent to Wesley Heights with office and some retail with upper floor residential in renovated and new development on the south side.) Plan recommendations are listed below.

1. Create a dramatic entry point or gateway at the intersection of Freedom Drive and West Morehead Street. To accomplish this:
 - Walnut Avenue, on the northeast quadrant, should be terminated at the end of the residential area and its right-of-way abandoned. This change will minimize traffic conflicts at the intersection and make land available to assemble for development.
 - The northeast, northwest and southwest quadrants of the intersection should be developed with three- to four-story office buildings with some ground floor retail space. Buildings should be oriented toward the intersection and have short setbacks and limited driveway cuts. Parking should be located at the rear of the sites, possibly in decks, and shared parking should be considered to reduce pavement. Also a landmark civic building should be considered for this area.

- Streetscape improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, landscaping, street trees, signage and pedestrian scale lighting should be provided in the public right-of-way to visually announce the gateway and create a pedestrian-friendly environment.
2. Develop two- to three-story townhouses on the west side of Calvert Street adjacent to Wesley Heights and three- to four-story studio apartments and/or live/work units on the east side.
 3. Consider rezoning properties fronting West Morehead Street that are zoned UR-C, I-1, and I-2 to the MUDD or PED district (see proposed rezoning map in the Implementation Plan.)
 4. Reinforce the pedestrian environment in the Gateway District by:
 - orienting new buildings toward the street
 - maintaining building setbacks for new construction that are consistent with existing buildings (approximately 20 feet from curb)
 - limiting curb cuts
 - repairing and widening sidewalks
 - designing a crosswalk at the Summit/West Morehead intersection
 - planting street trees in planting strips along the edge of the road
 - providing pedestrian scaled lighting.



Typical Section – 20'-22" south side setback including 12' sidewalk, and 8'-9" planting strip and 14' north side setback including 6' sidewalk and 6' planting strip

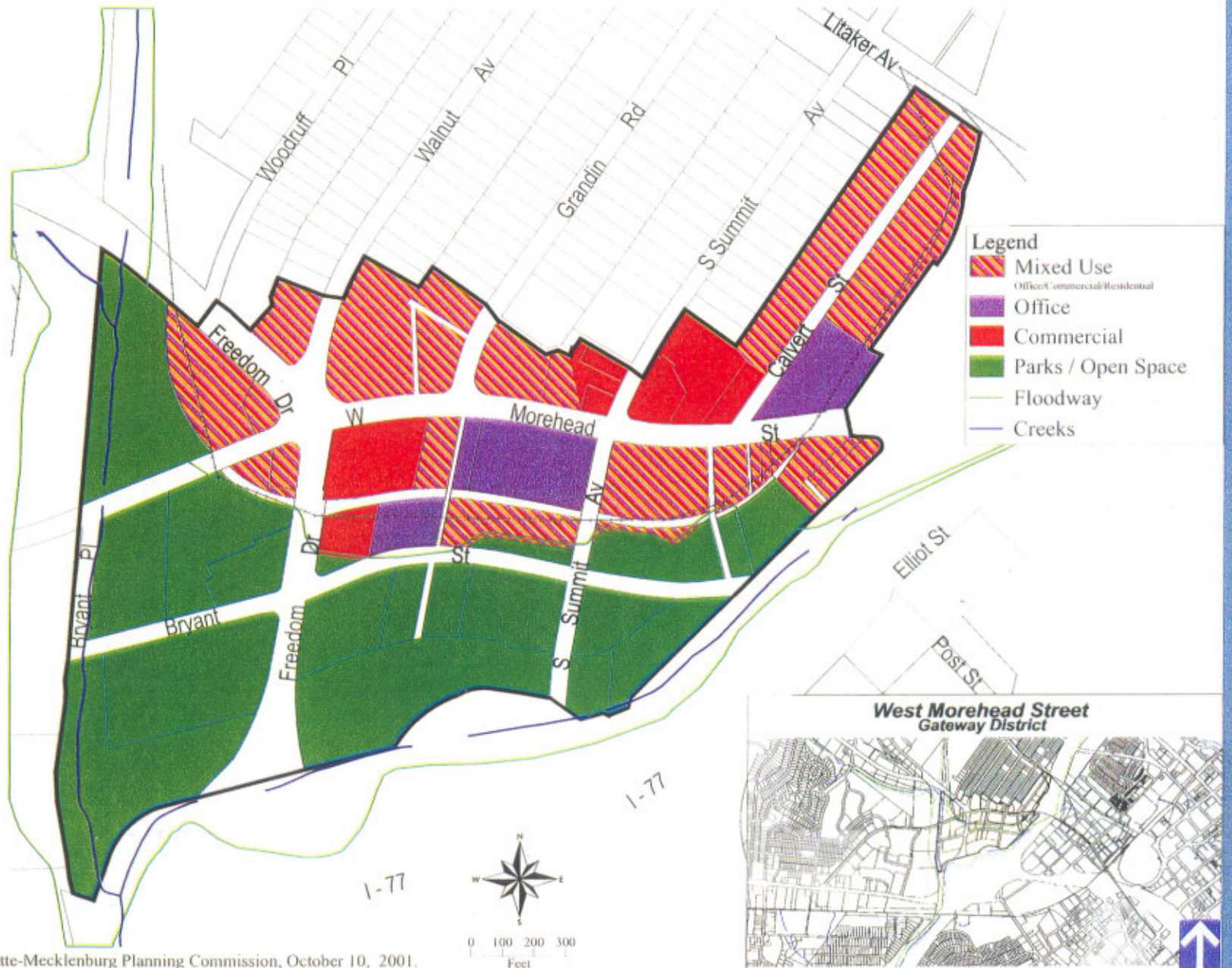
5. Improve vehicular circulation in the Gateway District by:
 - creating a “T” intersection at the Grandin Road/West Morehead intersection by removing the existing concrete median and constructing new curb and sidewalk
 - constructing a 20-foot wide street that connects Walnut Avenue, Grandin Road and Summit Avenue to provide a secondary circulation network between West Morehead Street and the Wesley Heights neighborhood.

6. Provide and coordinate parking in the area by:
 - developing shared parking lots south of Bryant Street
 - developing a parking deck adjacent to I-77
 - considering on-street parking during off-peak hours
 - extending Bryant Place to West Morehead Street.

7. Develop a park/greenway along the portion of Irwin Creek adjacent to Bryant Park where it is exposed between West Morehead/I-77 and Walnut Avenue.

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Map 9: Gateway Adopted Future Land Use



Produced by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, October 10, 2001.

Adopted by Charlotte City Council, October 8, 2001.



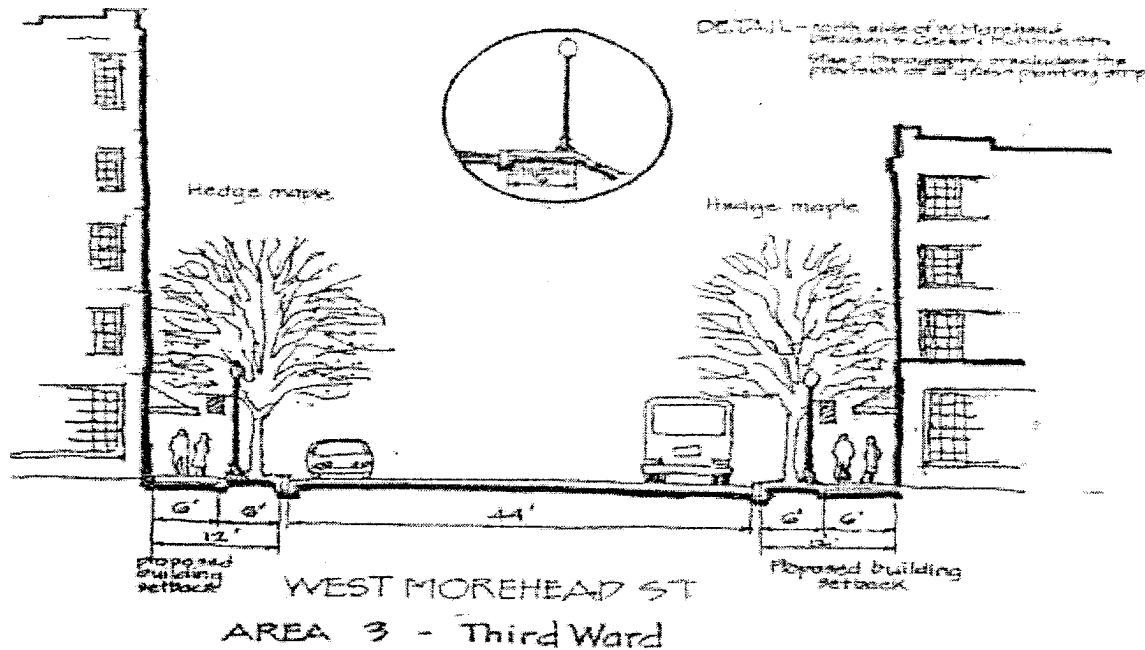
Third Ward District – I-77 to Norfolk Southern Rail Line

Key Recommendations

- 1. Preserve and reuse older buildings**
- 2. Provide a mixture of office, retail and upper floor residential development**
- 3. Create a pedestrian environment with connections to the Third Ward residential area**
- 4. Develop Irwin Creek Greenway**
- 5. Provide ample public parking**

Office, retail and upper floor residential uses are envisioned for this district, which contains several early 20th Century buildings that are proposed for reuse. Development opportunities exist along the south side of West Morehead Street and at the intersection of West Morehead Street and Cedar Street. Plan recommendations are listed below.

1. Renovate existing industrial buildings located in this area and adaptively reuse them with a mixture of office, retail and upper floor residential.
2. Encourage the development of similar new buildings on vacant property, principally on the south side of West Morehead and at the intersection of South Cedar Street and West Morehead.
3. Develop Irwin Creek as a greenway with a continuous pedestrian/bicycle path from West Morehead Street to the Cedar Yards, providing a connection between Wesley Heights, Third Ward and the Center City.
4. Reinforce the pedestrian environment by:
 - positioning new buildings at the street edge (minimum of 20 feet from the curb)
 - repairing and widening sidewalks and installing a planting strip with street trees between the curb and sidewalk where feasible
 - providing crosswalks and/or other pedestrian amenities at the South Cedar Street/West Morehead intersection
 - installing pedestrian-scale lighting
 - limiting the number of curb cuts

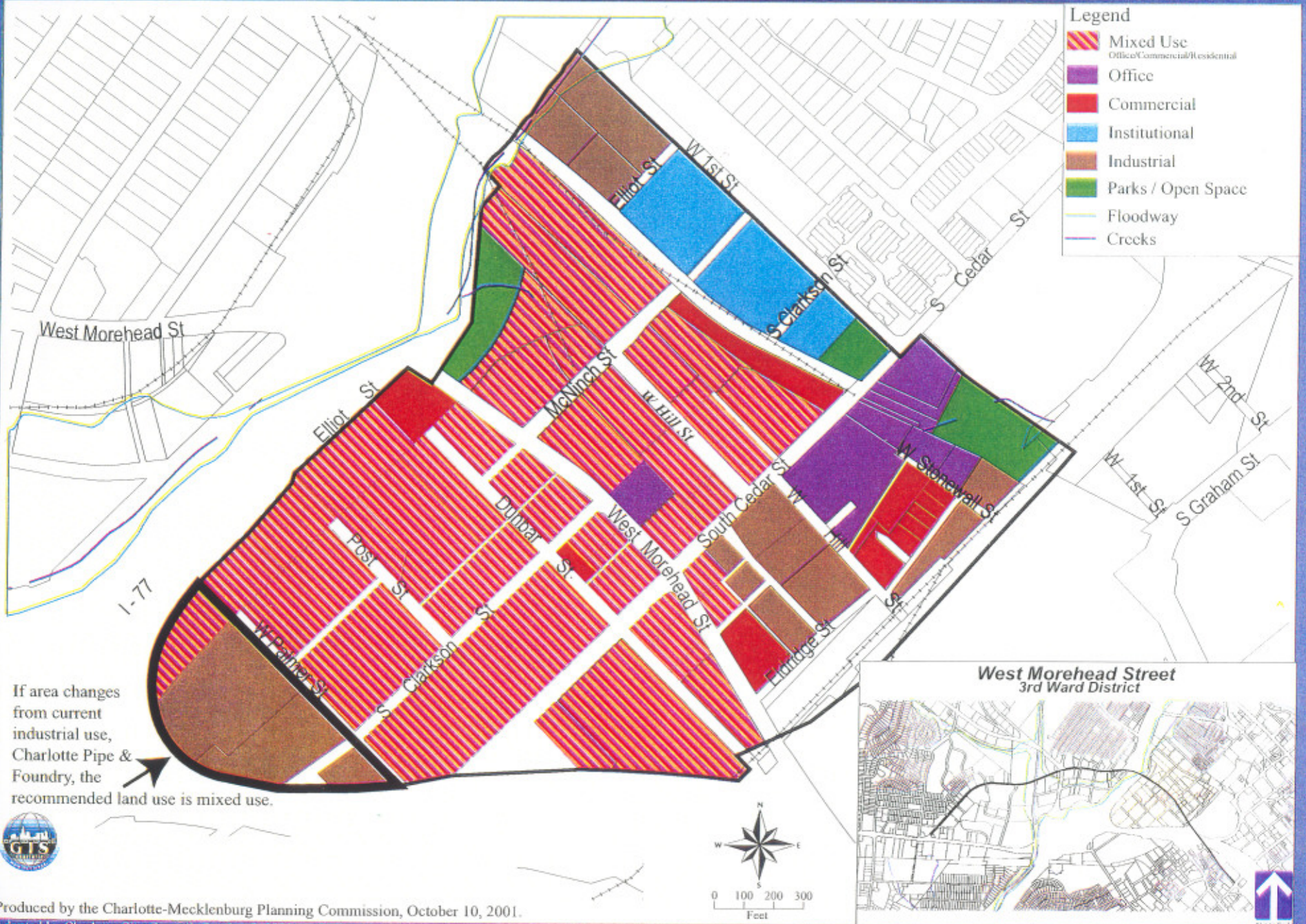


Typical Street Section – 12' setback including a 6' planting strip and 6' sidewalk

5. Abandon all or part of Dunbar Street, if necessary, to accommodate future development.
6. Provide a large public parking area in the area bounded by McNinch Street, West Morehead Street and the Piedmont and Northern and Norfolk and Southern railroad tracks, and consider on-street parking along West Morehead during off-peak traffic hours.

The recommended land use for the entire Third Ward Area is mixed use. However, it is recommended that the area bounded by W. First Street, Interstate 77, Post Street and the railroad tracks be rezoned from UR-1 (urban residential) and I-2 (heavy industrial) to the Mixed-Use Development District (MUDD). See proposed rezoning map in the Implementation Plan. The area located between Post Street and John Belk Freeway is to remain zoned industrial unless the area transitions over time from its current land use, then the proposed land use and zoning should be mixed used.

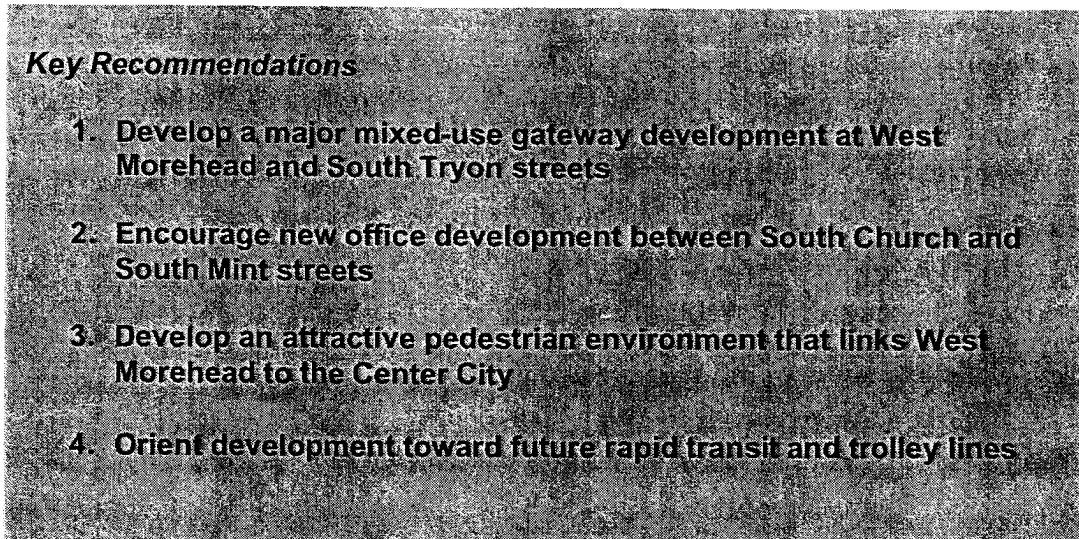
Map 10: Third Ward Adopted Future Land Use



If area changes from current industrial use, Charlotte Pipe & Foundry, the recommended land use is mixed use.



West Morehead 100 District – Norfolk Southern Rail Line to South Tryon Street

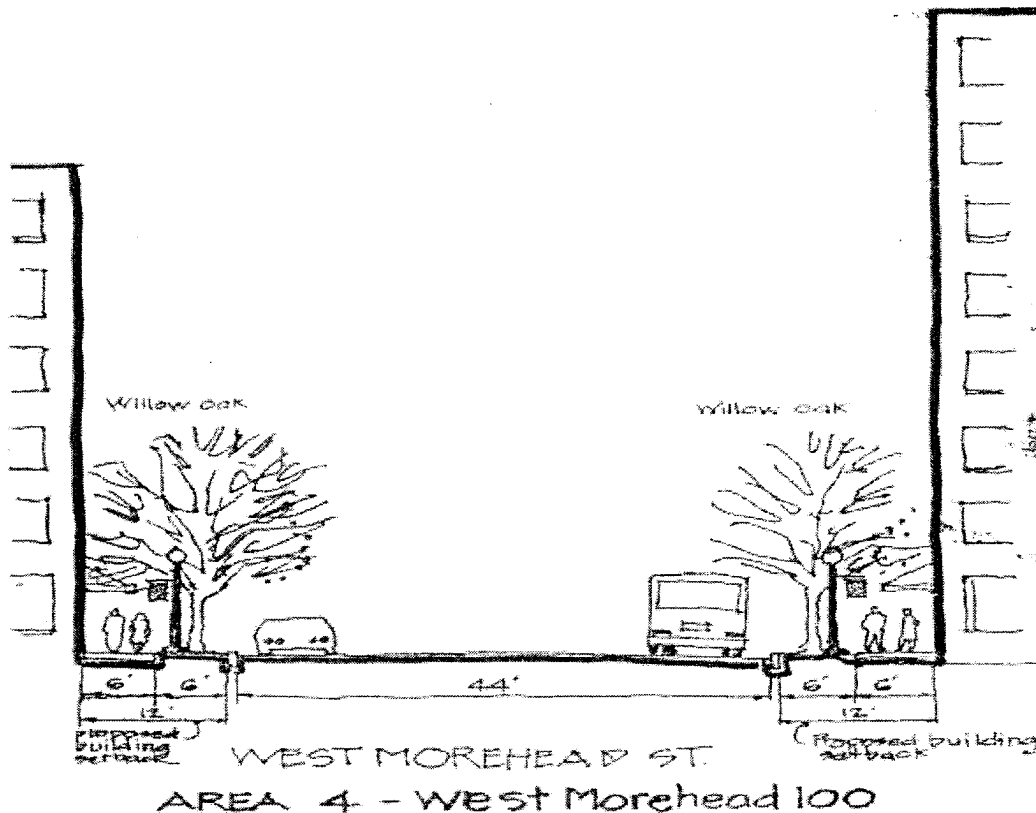


Urban scale office development with a mixture of retail, restaurants and a hotel is envisioned for this district, which will be developed more intensely than the other three districts. Plan recommendations are listed below.

1. Create an impressive gateway at the intersection of South Tryon and West Morehead Streets by:
 - developing new office buildings up to eight stories in height in the two-block area between South Church Street and South Tryon Street
 - encouraging development of a mixed use project including offices, ground floor retail and a hotel on the southwest corner of West Morehead and South Tryon Streets
 - providing streetscape improvements such as crosswalks, street trees, signage and pedestrian scale lighting to visually emphasize the intersections and provide a distinct entrance to the Center City

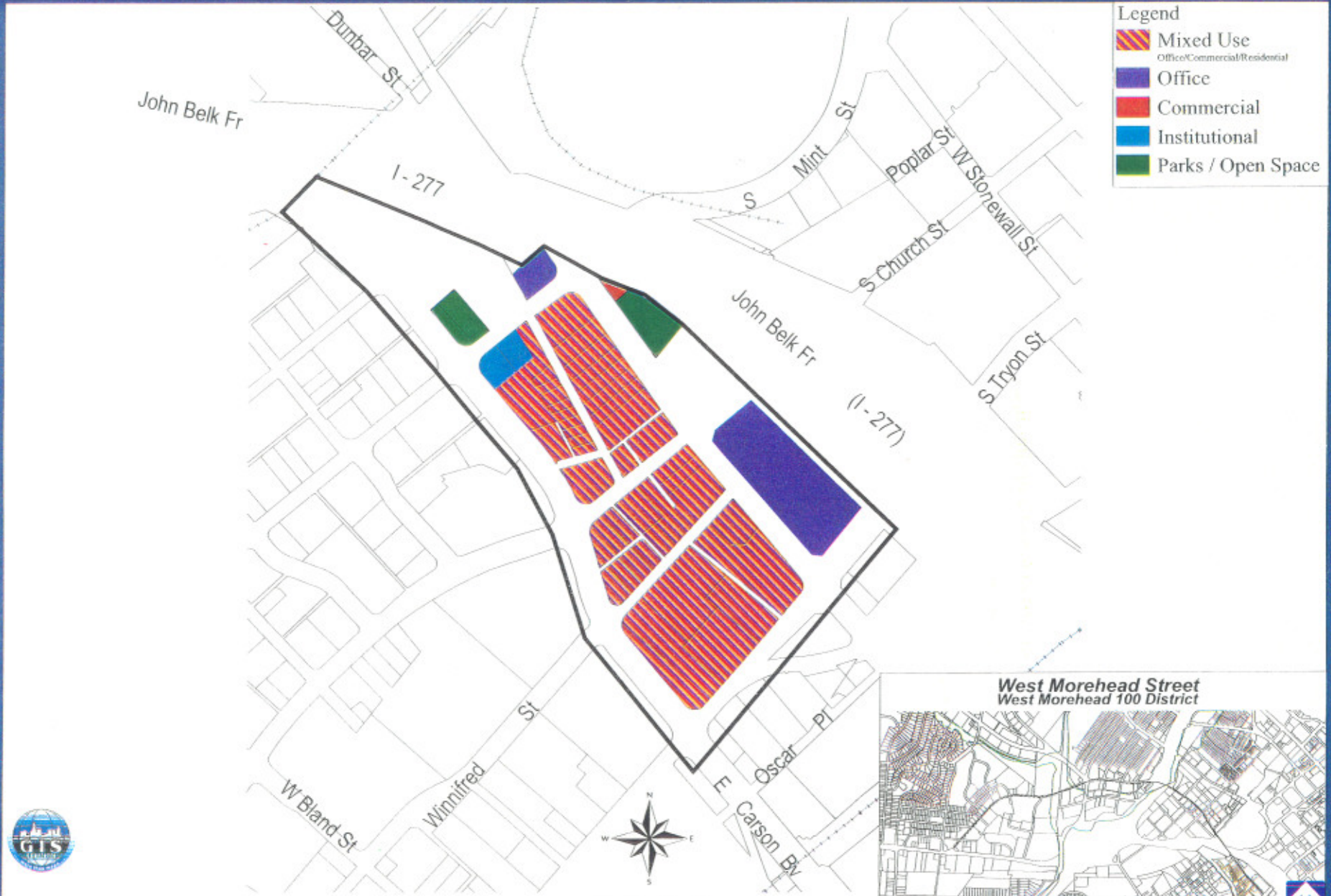
2. Redevelop properties between South Church and South Mint Streets to include:
 - three- to four-story office buildings with ground floor retail and restaurants with outdoor seating
 - shared parking structure(s) at the rear of the properties
 - a small public plaza on the tract of land bounded by West Morehead, Mint Street and I-77 on the northeast side of the Corridor that would include vendors and concessions on event days

3. Create a pedestrian-friendly environment by:
 - repairing and widening sidewalks
 - designing crosswalks at key intersections
 - limiting curb cuts
 - planting street trees in planting strips, where space permits
 - installing pedestrian-scale lighting
 - allowing on-street parking during non-peak hours

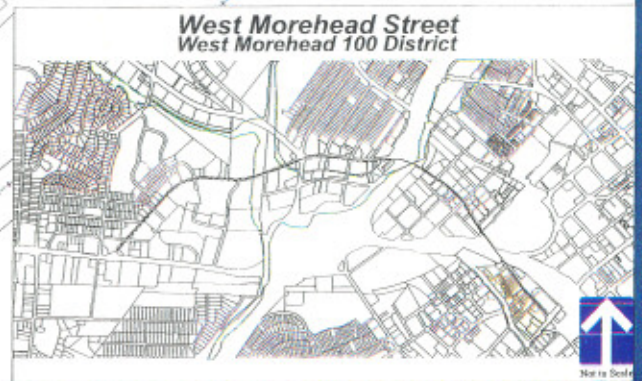


Typical Street Section – 12' setback including a 6' sidewalk and 6' planting strip

Map 11: West Morehead 100 Adopted Future Land Use



- Legend**
-  Mixed Use
Office/Commercial/Residential
 -  Office
 -  Commercial
 -  Institutional
 -  Parks / Open Space

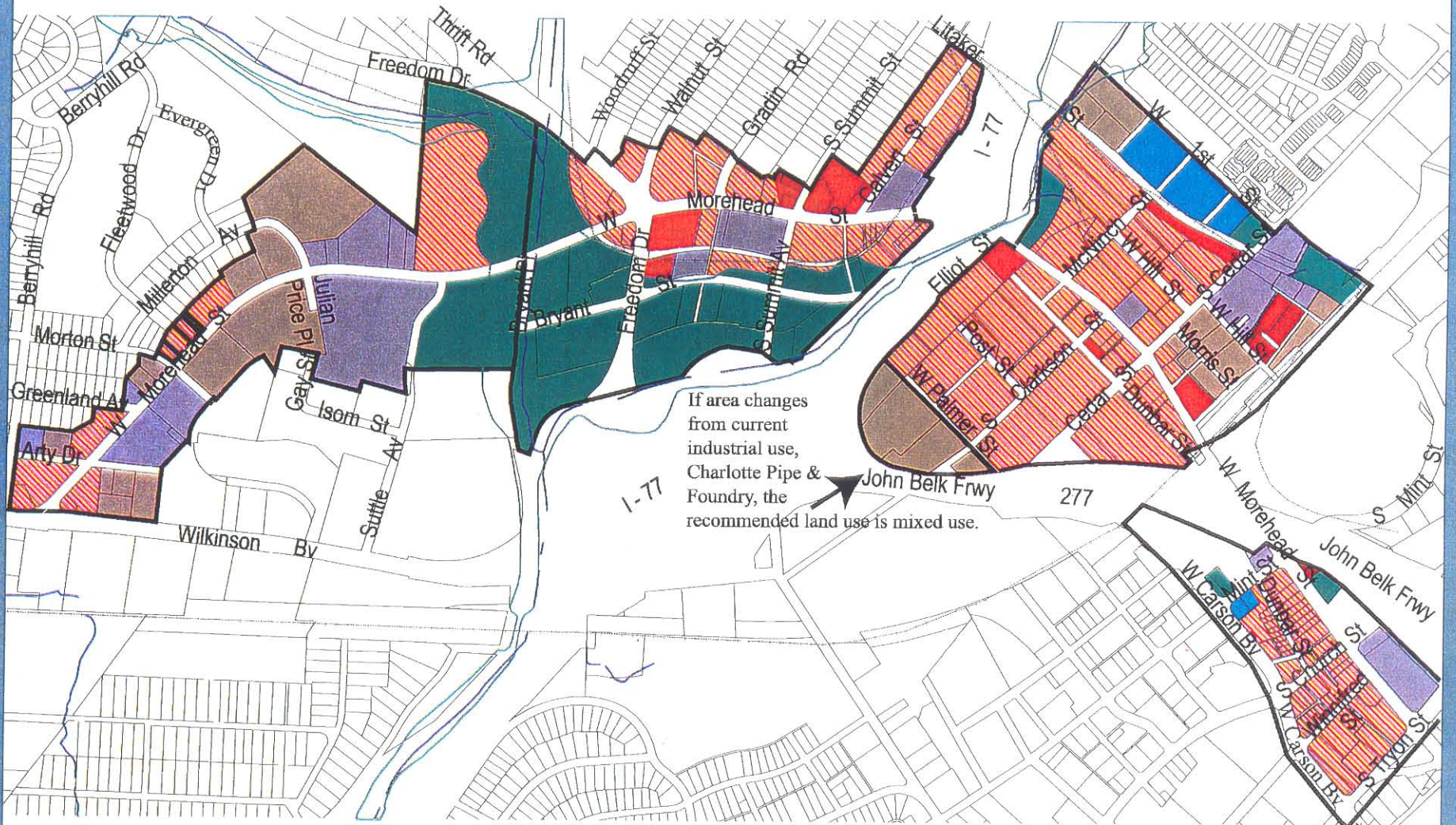


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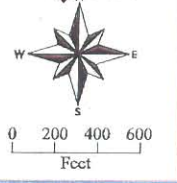


Map 12: West Morehead Corridor Adopted Future Land Use



Legend

Mixed Use Office/Commercial/Residential	Institutional	Floodway
Office	Industrial	Creeks
Commercial	Parks / Open Space	



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 Adopted by Charlotte City Council, October 8, 2001.

Volume II: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Priorities

Implementation of the vision and concepts for the West Morehead Corridor will require ongoing collaboration between the City of Charlotte, property owners, residents and the business and development community. Initial revitalization efforts should focus on a few key priorities to jump start redevelopment of the Corridor. These recommended priorities are as follows:

Design

Identify streetscape design priorities for the Corridor and develop detailed plans and cost estimates for implementation that can be included in future capital planning for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. In addition, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration when developing or redeveloping properties:

1. Maintain consistent and compatible building types throughout the corridor.
 - Locate buildings directly behind the sidewalk with front doors and windows that orient toward the street.
 - Where possible, attach buildings to each other, to help define pedestrian space along streets and create an attractive row of store fronts.
2. Encourage apartments on top of nonresidential uses and a mixture of uses in buildings.
3. Install clear glass in the first row of windows and buildings and enrich with displays, information, etc.
4. Minimize the size and location of parking areas and strategically position them to minimize their visual impact.
5. Provide parking behind the buildings and screen from public view.

Zoning

The vision for this Corridor as a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use pattern of office, retail and residential development can be implemented by changing the current industrial zoning to an urban zoning district classification that allows such a development pattern. The existing light and heavy industrial (I-1 and I-2, respectively) zoning forces buildings away from the street with excessive setback requirements and requires more parking than may be needed.

The industrial zoning classification does not allow residential development. Of the current zoning districts in the City of Charlotte Zoning Ordinance, the Mixed Use Development District (MUDD) is the most appropriate zoning classification to use along the Corridor. It is very similar to the Uptown Mixed Use District (UMUD) in its emphasis on a mixture of uses developed at a pedestrian scale, with the principal difference being a height limit of 120', whereas the UMUD has no height limit.

The Pedestrian Overlay District (PED) may also be appropriate. It will enable the development of a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development pattern and facilitate the renovation of existing buildings. However, the PED district is more sensitive to existing neighborhoods. It limits building heights adjacent to residential areas to 40' and 72'.

The following rezonings are encouraged and are illustrated on **Map 12**.

- **Gateway District**

1. Change from UR-C (urban residential-commercial), I-1 (Light Industrial) and I-2 (Heavy Industrial) to PED (Pedestrian Overlay District) properties located on the north side of Freedom Drive and West Morehead Street from just west of Woodruff Place to Interstate 77.
2. Change from U-I (Urban Industrial) and I-2 to PED properties on the south side of West Morehead Street from Freedom Drive to Interstate 77.

- **Third Ward District**

1. Change from UR-1 and I-2 to MUDD (Mixed Use Development District) the area bounded by West First Street, Interstate 77, Post Street and the railroad tracks.

Historic Preservation

The business association should inventory buildings to determine viable options for preserving older structures in the Corridor.

Infrastructure

Assess and set priorities for specific infrastructure needs along the Corridor, in particular addressing storm water, parking, curb and gutter, sidewalks and circulation issues.



Legend

 PED

Overlay district that promotes pedestrian oriented development.
40' building height abutting residential use

 MUDD

Mixed use development district, more intense pedestrian oriented
development pattern with maximum building height of 120'

Not to Scale

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

West Morehead Corridor

Adopted by Charlotte City Council
October 8, 2001

Map 13 Zoning Recommendations

Transportation

1. Request that the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) evaluate the reconstruction of the West Morehead Street and Freedom Drive intersection to improve safety for pedestrians, provide additional development opportunities and provide streetscape improvements to establish this as a principle gateway intersection. At a minimum, CDOT should consider closing Walnut Avenue at the intersection, and eliminating the existing free-flow right turn from West Morehead onto Freedom Drive.
2. Create a standard "T" intersection at West Morehead Street and Grandin Road. Eliminate the concrete median and the right-in, right-out lanes. Provide a standard two-lane cross section on Grandin Road.
3. Provide a crosswalk at the West Morehead Street and Summit Avenue intersection.
4. Install a traffic signal, crosswalk and pedestrian crossing signal at West Morehead Street and I-77.

Partnerships and Coordination

Form collaborative partnerships among business and property owners, area residents and neighborhood organizations to promote and plan for the Corridor. Link with established groups on Wilkinson Boulevard, Freedom Drive, the Center City and the Charlotte Trolley to ensure coordination and joint planning.

Marketing

Develop and implement a marketing strategy to promote the Corridor.

More detailed implementation strategies will be developed as planning for the Corridor continues.



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