

LAND USE PLAN

4 Section

4.1 LAND USE PLAN

The Framework Plan described in Section 3.7 provides the overall guidance for future land use in Belmont. The Land Use Plan, as described in this section, provides more specific policy guidance for the City, residents, business owners, institutions and developers in considering the existing City's conservation and improvements as well as future growth and development.

The structure of the land use plan has three general categories, all of which work together to describe the intent of the Plan. They all should be considered together as a whole when considering developments which will influence the functional operations and quality of life of Belmont. These categories are:

- Land Use Typologies,
- Land Use Districts, and
- Small Area Plans.

The existing land area for the Planning Area is approximately 15,618 acres. Existing land use as of the time of adoption of this plan are described in section 2.4 and illustrated in Figure 4. The quantities of existing land uses are indicated in Table 11.

Table 11. Existing Land Use

| Land Use | Acreage | Land Use | Acreage |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Ag/Forest/Vacant | 6,063 | Multi-Family Residential | 146 |
| Commercial | 242 | Office | 24 |
| High Density Residential | 432 | Rec/Open Space | 449 |
| Industrial | 434 | Rural Residential | 1,181 |
| Institutional | 871 | Unknown | 100 |
| Low Density Residential | 894 | Utilities | 1,452 |
| Manufactured Residential | 475 | ROW | 1,210 |
| Mid Density Residential | 1,645 | | |
| Total | | | 15,618 |



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4.1.1 Belmont Land Use Plan

At the time of adoption of this Comprehensive Plan by the City of Belmont, the North Carolina Turnpike Authority was considering the feasibility of constructing the Garden Parkway as a limited access toll road which would pass across the Peninsula (Figure 17). The Garden Parkway has been under consideration for several years, and is included on the Gaston Urban Area MPO Thoroughfare Plan. The Turnpike Authority's preliminary financial feasibility analysis indicates that the Parkway may be feasible as a toll road between I-485 and NC 279 New Hope Road in its initial phase, and between NC 279 and US 321 in a second phase. However, many studies are left to be completed before a determination can be made on whether or not to build the road and on what alignment, including completion of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Due to the uncertain status of the Garden Parkway, which will have a major influence on land use if it is built, three alternative land use plans are included as part of this Comprehensive Plan:

- Garden Parkway on Northern Alignment
- Garden Parkway on Southern Alignment
- No Garden Parkway

The variations between the three alternatives only affect land uses and roadways south of approximately Gaither Road/Henry Chapel Road.

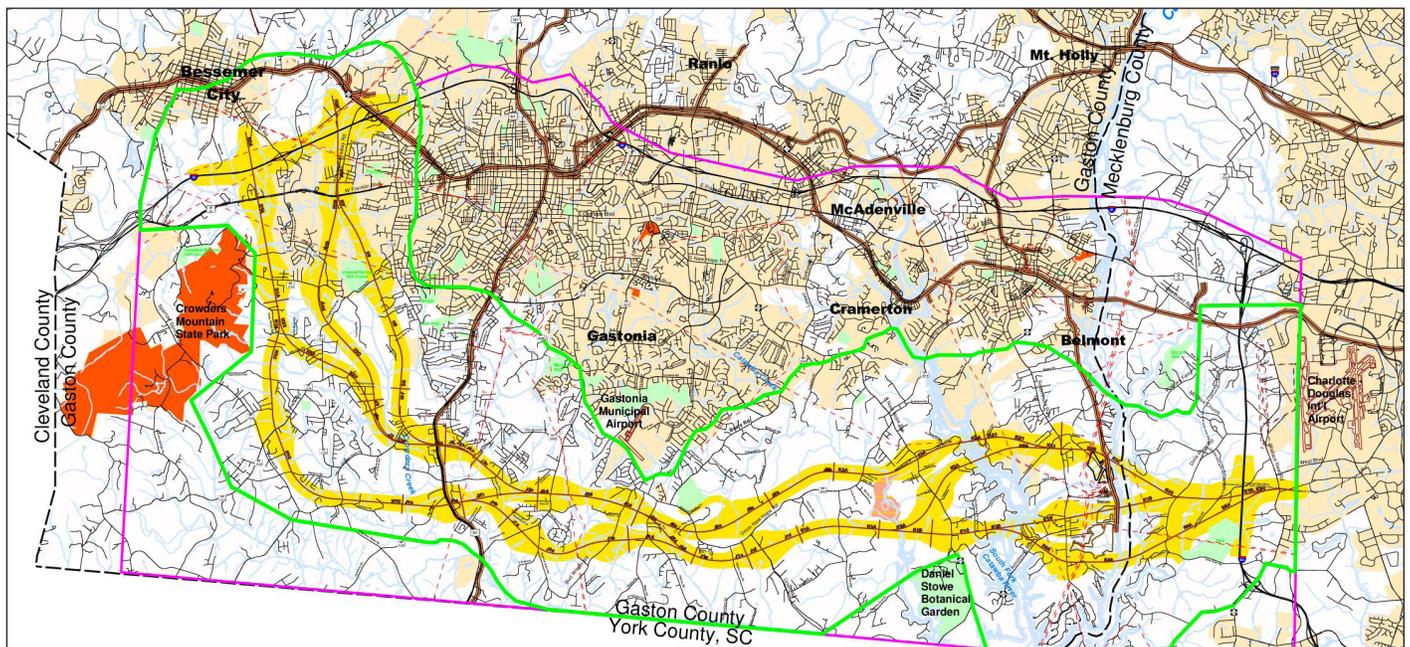


Figure 17: Garden Parkway Alternative Alignments
Source: North Carolina Turnpike Authority



a. Land Use North of Gaither Road/Henry Chapel Road

Downtown Belmont remains the core of the city, surrounded by a downtown primarily residential neighborhood. Neighborhood conservation programs will protect and enhance the traditional Belmont. New “gateway” districts and traditional neighborhood development on the Catawba River waterfront at the Wilkinson Boulevard “South Fork Gateway” expand the walkable, connected neighborhoods of central Belmont. Existing central Belmont mills will remain as long as they are viable, ultimately transitioning to mixed use or residential uses.

I-85 will be a regional commercial corridor with a planned commercial district expanding Montcross south of the freeway to include Wilkinson Boulevard. Montcross north of I-85 will be a regional commercial, industrial and residential district around Belmont Abbey and its College.

North Belmont will continue to be a growing residential neighborhood with new residences blending with the established neighborhood. North of Hickory Grove Road will provide opportunities for new semi-rural neighborhoods. Two Village Centers will provide neighborhood civic and shopping services.

Existing suburban development south of Gaither Road/Henry Chapel Road and north of the Garden Parkway northern alignment will be complemented by new suburban neighborhoods west of South Point road and by semi-rural neighborhoods in the water supply watershed east of South Point Road and suburban neighborhoods just north of Plant Allen. An emerging Village Center at South Point High School and a new Village Center will provide neighborhood civic and shopping services.

Duke Energy’s Plant Allen will remain in its existing location.

A system of greenways will connect the neighborhoods, Village Centers and two regional parks to the Catawba River and South Fork waterfronts. Along with new mixed-use development and riverwalks, these will allow vastly expanded public access to Belmont’s waterfronts.

These land uses will remain the same regardless of whether or not the Garden Parkway is built and regardless of the alignment chosen. They are shown in Figures 18, 19 and 20. Because of the uncertain status of the Parkway, three alternative land uses are part of the Land Use Plan for the area south of Gaither Road/Henry Chapel Road and west of the South Fork of the Catawba River. These alternatives are described in the following three sections.



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b. Garden Parkway on Northern Alignment

The ultimate build-out land use totals would be as indicated in Table 12 below. If the Garden Parkway is built on an alignment north of Plant Allen, an opportunity will be created for a destination regional commercial center at the interchange with South Fork Road, between the highway and Plant Allen, adding to Belmont’s non-residential tax base by serving Belmont and regional residents. An opportunity will also be created for mixed use area with restaurants, retail and residences on the South Fork waterfront, connected to the west side of the Belmont Peninsula by the new Belmont/Mount Holly Connector and greenways.

South of Plant Allen in this alternative will be suburban neighborhoods near Plant Allen and a large area of semi-rural neighborhoods reflecting the subdivisions that are already there. A new Village Center will provide neighborhood civic and shopping services. South Point Landing can be expanded into a regional park.

West of the South Fork, suburban neighborhoods will be close to New Hope Road and at the confluence of the South Fork and Catawba Creek. Semi-rural neighborhoods will be adjacent to the more environmentally sensitive water bodies. Two Village Centers will provide neighborhood civic and shopping services. Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens will remain in its current location as a regional attraction.

The Land Use Plan for Belmont with the Garden Parkway on a Northern Alignment is shown in Figure 18.

Table 12. Garden Parkway on Northern Alignment: Build-Out Land Use

| Land Use Type | Acreage | Land Use Type | Acreage |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Downtown Commercial and Civic Center | 35 | Mixed Use | 653 |
| Downtown Neighborhood | 333 | Regional Center | 307 |
| Neighborhood Conservation | 1,240 | Montcross North Small Area Plan | 754 |
| Traditional Neighborhood Development | 232 | Montcross South Small Area Plan | 328 |
| Suburban Neighborhood | 2,771 | Industrial | 1,161 |
| Semi-rural Neighborhood | 3,811 | Major Institutions | 184 |
| Village Center Neighborhood | 2,064 | Greenways | 1,016 |
| Village Commercial and Civic Center | 203 | Regional Parks | 526 |
| Totals | | | 15,618 |



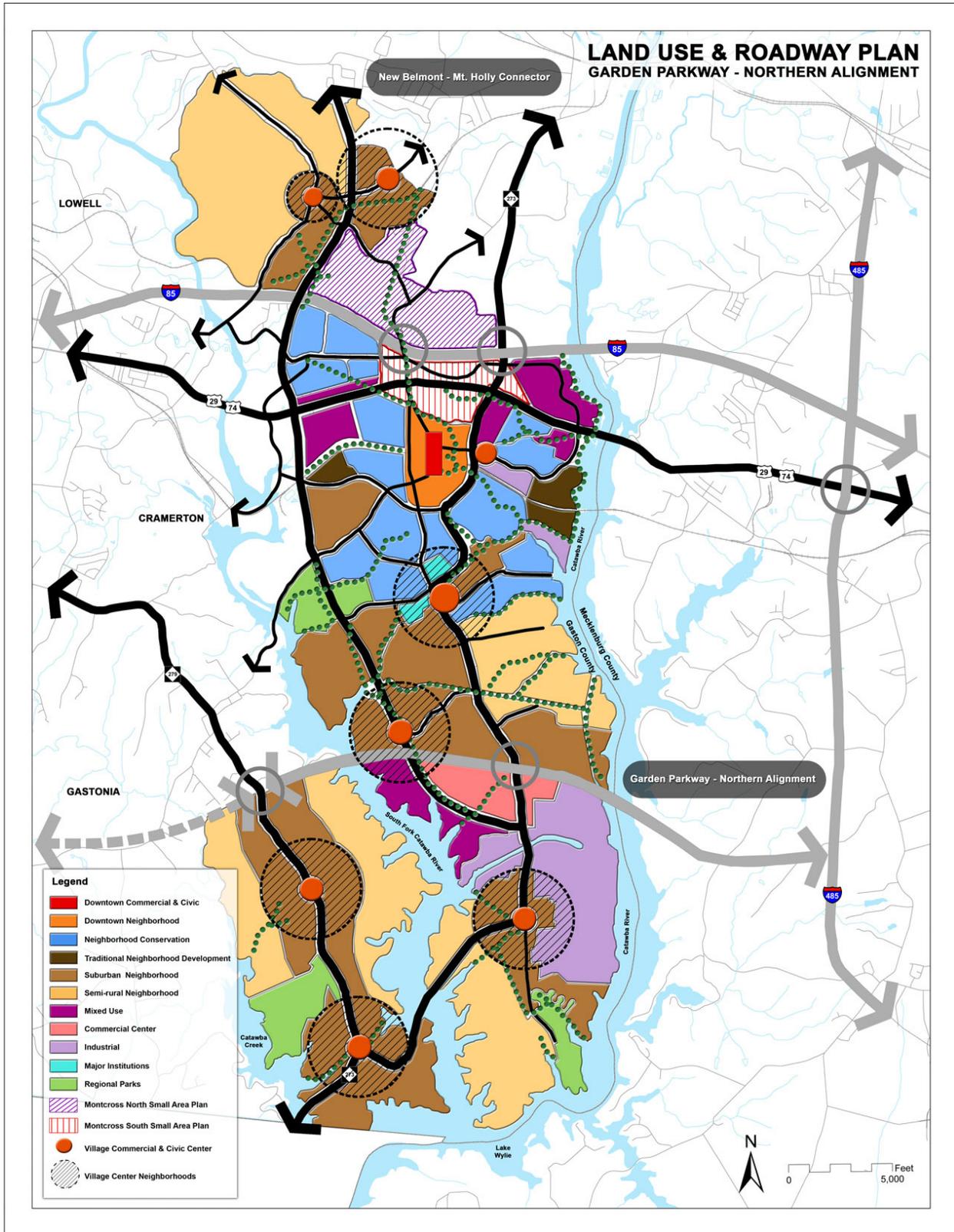


Figure 18: Land Use Plan - Garden Parkway on Northern Alignment Alternative



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c. Garden Parkway on Southern Alignment

The ultimate build-out land use totals would be as indicated in Table 13. If the Garden Parkway is built on an alignment south of Plant Allen, an opportunity for a will be created for a destination regional commercial center at the interchange with South Fork Road, between the Plant Allen, South Point Road and Armstrong Road, adding to Belmont’s non-residential tax base by serving Belmont and regional residents. An opportunity will also be created for mixed-use area with restaurants, retail and residences on the South Fork waterfront, south of Plant Allen and north of Armstrong Road.

The area north of Plant Allen and south of Gaither Road/Henry Chapel Road will be suburban neighborhoods, with a third Village Center providing neighborhood civic and shopping services.

Because of the increased access provided by the Garden Parkway, south of the highway will be suburban neighborhoods as future development complementing the existing semi-rural developments. The regional commercial center and waterfront mixed-use district will also provide locations for neighborhood civic and shopping services. South Point Landing can be expanded into a regional park.

West of the South Fork, because of the increased access provided by an interchange in the middle of the district by the Garden Parkway, all of the area will be suburban neighborhoods, with two Village Centers to provide neighborhood civic and shopping services. Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens will remain in its current location as a regional attraction.

The Land Use Plan for Belmont with the Garden Parkway on a Southern Alignment is shown in Figure 19.

Table 13. Garden Parkway on Southern Alignment: Build-Out Land Use

| Land Use Type | Acreage | Land Use Type | Acreage |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Downtown Commercial and Civic Center | 35 | Mixed Use | 607 |
| Downtown Neighborhood | 333 | Regional Center | 179 |
| Neighborhood Conservation | 1,240 | Montcross North Small Area Plan | 754 |
| Traditional Neighborhood Development | 232 | Montcross South Small Area Plan | 328 |
| Suburban Neighborhood | 3,878 | Industrial | 1,161 |
| Semi-rural Neighborhood | 2,644 | Major Institutions | 184 |
| Village Center Neighborhood | 2,296 | Greenways | 1,008 |
| Village Commercial and Civic Center | 213 | Regional Parks | 526 |
| Totals | | | 15,618 |



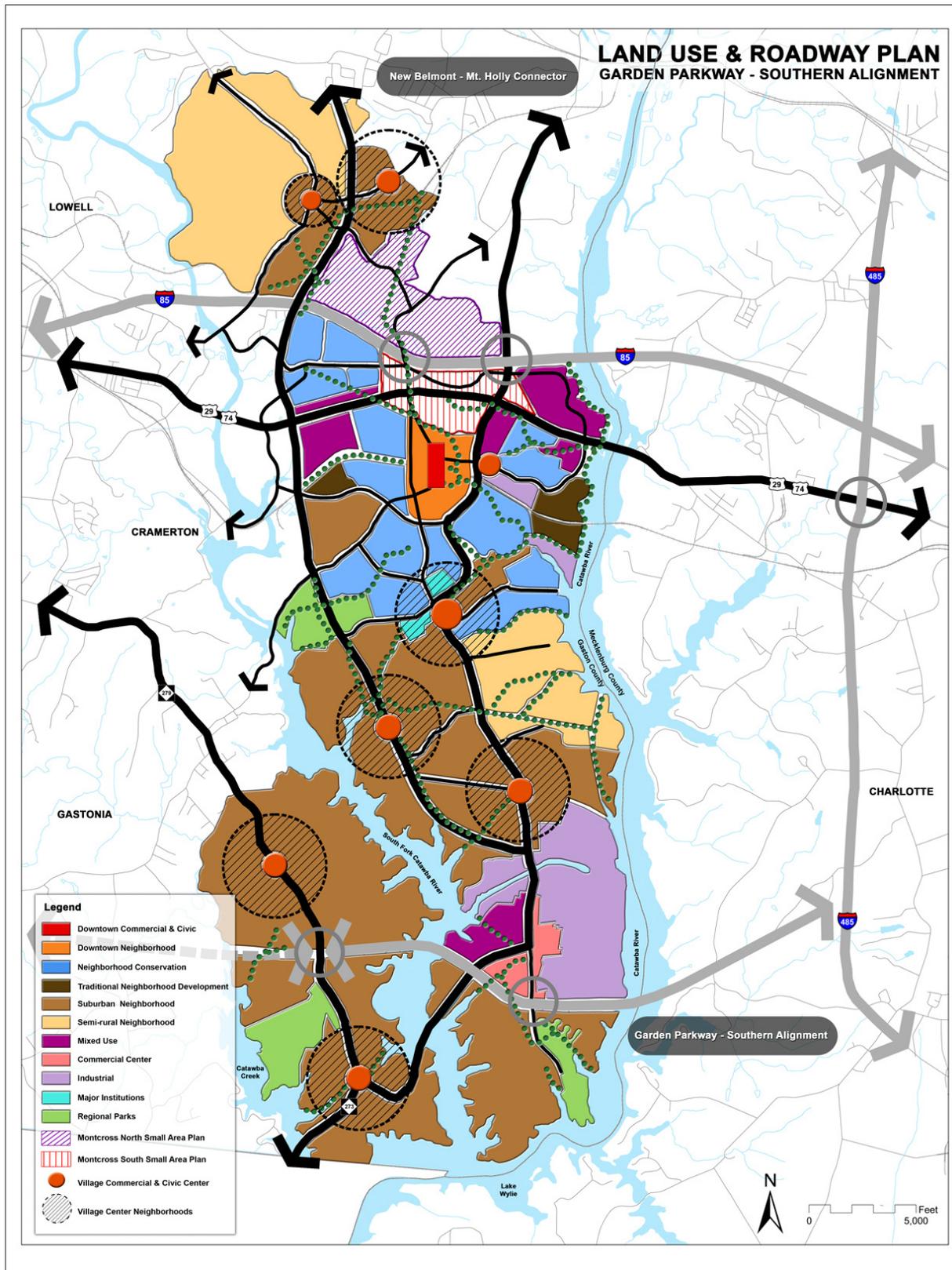


Figure 19: Land Use Plan - Garden Parkway on Southern Alignment Alternative



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d. No Garden Parkway

The Ultimate build-out land use totals would be indicated in Table 14. Without the regional access provided by a Garden Parkway, the area south of Gaither Road/Henry Chapel Road will be all residential neighborhoods. South of Gaither Road/Henry Chapel Road, west of South Point Road and north of Plant Allen will be suburban neighborhoods. East of South Point Road and north of Plant Allen will be semi-rural neighborhoods. A third Village Center will provide neighborhood civic and shopping services.

South of Plant Allen and in the vicinity of the South Point Road/Armstrong Road junction will be suburban neighborhoods. The remainder will be semi-rural neighborhoods. A Village Center will provide neighborhood civic and shopping services. South Point Landing can be expanded into a regional park.

West of the South Fork, suburban residential will be along New Hope Road in the southern part of the district, and at the confluence of the South Fork and Catawba Creek. Semi-rural neighborhoods will be adjacent to the more environmentally sensitive water bodies and in the northern part of the district. Two Village Centers will provide neighborhood civic and shopping services. Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens will remain in its current location as a regional attraction.

The Land Use Plan for Belmont with no Garden Parkway is shown in Figure 20.

Table 14. No Garden Parkway: Build-Out Land Use

| Land Use Type | Acreage | Land Use Type | Acreage |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Downtown Commercial and Civic Center | 35 | Mixed Use | 432 |
| Downtown Neighborhood | 333 | Regional Center | 0 |
| Neighborhood Conservation | 1,240 | Montcross North Small Area Plan | 754 |
| Traditional Neighborhood Development | 232 | Montcross South Small Area Plan | 328 |
| Suburban Neighborhood | 2,398 | Industrial | 1,161 |
| Semi-rural Neighborhood | 4,279 | Major Institutions | 184 |
| Village Center Neighborhood | 2,457 | Greenways | 1,017 |
| Village Commercial and Civic Center | 242 | Regional Parks | 526 |
| Totals | | | 15,618 |



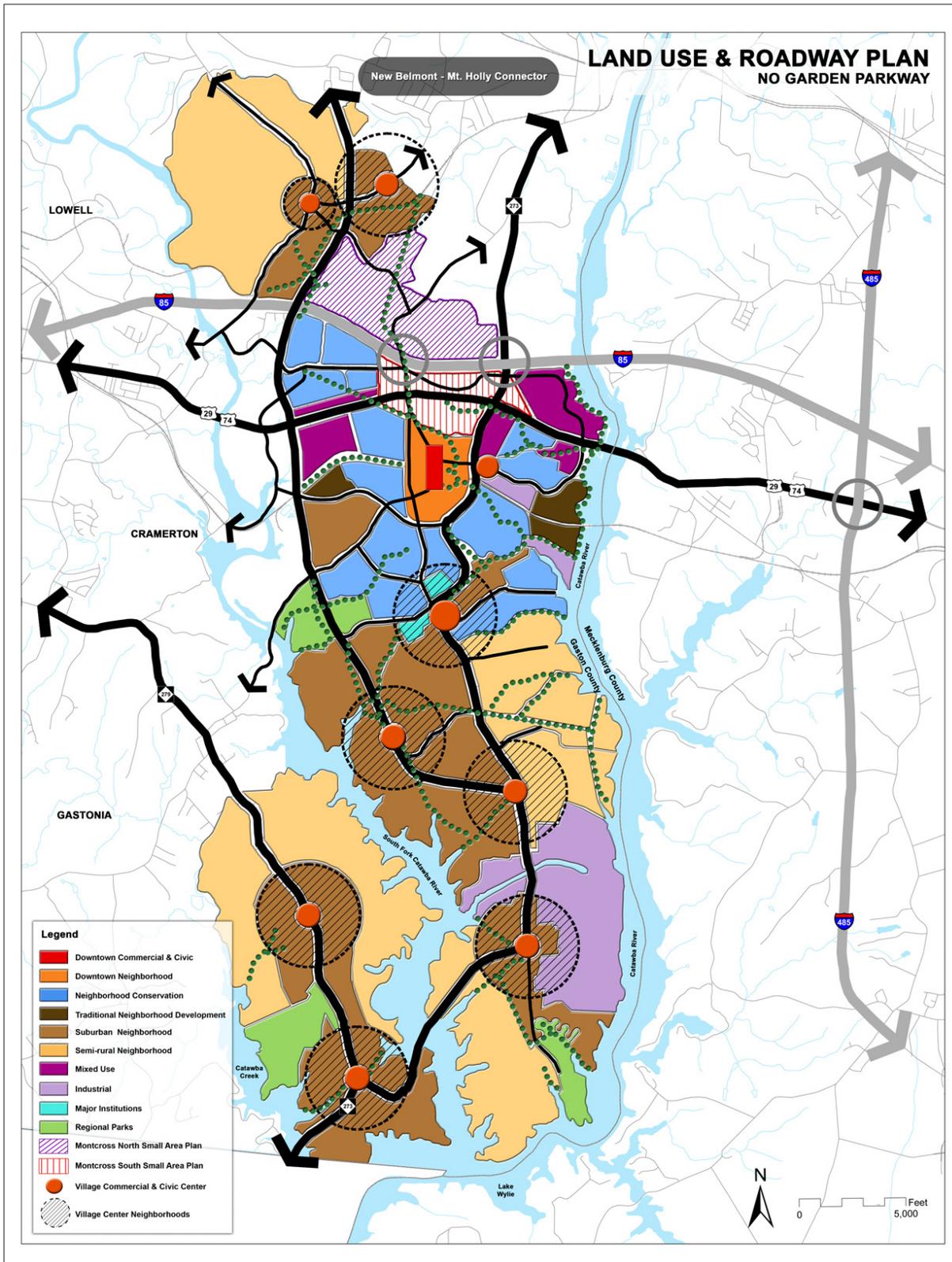


Figure 20: Land Use Plan - No Garden Parkway Alternative



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Rural Density Residential

4.1.2 Land Use Typologies

The following typologies are land uses which are represented throughout all of the Land Use Districts. They provide written and visual depiction of the various types of land use throughout Belmont which are included in the Comprehensive Plan. They are intended to be used as a reference for the Land Use District descriptions.

a. Residential Land Uses

i. Rural Density Residential

Rural density residential land uses are parcels 5 to 10 acres with a single family dwelling, which may or may not have active agricultural uses in conjunction with them. Parcels over 10 acres would be considered an agricultural land use, even if a residence is located on them.

The comprehensive plan rural density land use category would correspond to the RR Rural Residential zoning classification in the Belmont Zoning Ordinance, and to the R-R Residential Rural classification in the Gaston County Zoning Ordinance.

ii. Estate Density Residential

Estate densities are over 1 acre and up to 5 acre single-family detached residential land uses. Existing examples in Belmont would include Reflection Pointe and Forest Bay subdivisions, as well as individual residential lots which are not in a designated subdivision.

Corresponding City of Belmont zoning classifications include RR Rural Residential, and Gaston County zoning classifications include R-R Residential Rural.

iii. Low Density Residential

The low-density residential classification is for single-family detached residential land uses which are approximately 1 unit per acre. This classification is typical of many of the residential subdivisions in Belmont's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), and in Gaston County, such as Cloister Pointe and Harbortowne. It is also typical of many individual residential uses which are not in a formal subdivision.

Corresponding City of Belmont zoning classifications include GR General Residential, and Gaston County zoning classifications include R-S Single Family Residential.



Estate Density Residential



Low Density Residential



iv. Medium Density Residential

Medium density residential represents single-family detached development of 3 units per acre. This designation is typical of most of the residential subdivisions in Belmont and Gaston County developed since the 1970's which are served by City water and sewer.

Corresponding City of Belmont zoning classifications include GR General Residential, and Gaston County zoning classifications include R-S Single Family Residential.



Medium Density Residential

v. High Density Residential

The high-density land use designation refers to single-family detached subdivisions of 4 to 5 units per acre, or lots of approximately 1/5 to 1/4 acre.

Corresponding City of Belmont zoning classifications include GR General Residential, INF-D Infill Development, and NC-R Neighborhood Center Residential. Gaston County zoning classifications include R-S Single Family Residential and R-SM Single and Multi-family Residential.



High Density Residential

vi. Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)

A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a human scale, walkable community with moderate to high residential densities and a mixed use core. A TND is served by a network of paths, streets and lanes suitable for pedestrians as well as vehicles. This provides residents the option of walking, biking or driving to places within their neighborhood. Present and future modes of transit are also considered during the planning stages. Public and private spaces have equal importance, creating a balanced community that serves a wide range of home and business owners. The inclusion of civic buildings and civic space -- in the form of plazas, greens, parks and squares -- enhances community identity and value. TND developments often will include a neighborhood commercial center.

TND developments typically have a build-out density of approximately 4 to 5 units per acre. In some circumstances, this density could be higher, depending on the amount of multi-family development included. Plans for the full build out of Hawthorne Place in Belmont reflects an example of Traditional Neighborhood Development.

The City of Belmont has a TND zoning classification which would include this designation. Gaston County has a corresponding PUD Planned Unit Development zoning classification.



Traditional Neighborhood Development



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Conservation Development



Multi-family



Neighborhood Retail



Urban Retail

vii. Conservation Development

Conservation development refers to a type of development in which the number of lots permitted by a given zoning classification is permitted, but the development is encouraged to preserve an amount of open space in exchange for building the permitted number of residential units on smaller lots. For example, if a parcel of land were entitled to build 100 1-acre lots under its current zoning classification, it would be allowed to build 100 ½ acre lots in exchange for leaving half of the property in permanent open space. The open space could be natural area, equestrian facilities, golf courses, or similar types of open space. Some communities grant a density bonus to conservation developments.

Conservation development is generally most applicable to zoning classifications of ½ acre lots or larger. Under that application, conservation development could apply to City of Belmont zoning classifications of GR General Residential and RR Rural Residential.

viii. Multi-Family

The multi-family land use designation can refer to a variety of attached housing types, including townhouses, condominiums or rental apartments. As used in the Belmont Comprehensive Plan, this designation refers to developments of 10 to 12 units per acre, without implying a specific type of housing unit.

Corresponding City of Belmont zoning classifications include GR General Residential, NC-R Neighborhood Center Residential, and TN-D Traditional Neighborhood Development. Gaston County zoning classifications include PUD Planned Unit Development, R-SM Single and Multi-Family Residential District, and R-MF Multi-Family Residential District.

b. Non-Residential Land Uses

i. Retail

The Retail land use designation includes a range of retail uses. Neighborhood Retail provides services serving the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods, generally a trade area of approximately one mile. Neighborhood Retail ranges generally from 1,000 square feet up to 250,000 square feet. Urban Retail is set closer to the street and generally has shared or reduced parking standards. This retail product supports a street-level, pedestrian-oriented environment within a higher-density location. This use works well with adjacent Office and Mixed Use structures. Urban Retail structures can be either



single-story or up to three-stories in height but frequently must be at least two stories. Regional Retail serves a trade area of approximately five miles. Regional Retail generally ranges from 250,000 square feet up to 2,500,000 square feet.

Corresponding City of Belmont zoning classifications include DD Downtown District, NC-R Neighborhood Center Residential, TND Traditional Neighborhood Development, and HC-O Highway Corridor Overlay. Gaston County zoning classifications include B-P Planned Business District and B-H Highway Business District.



Regional Retail

ii. Commercial

Commercial uses can include some of the more intensive commercial uses such as hotels, auto dealerships, department and furniture stores, as well as banks, restaurants, large home improvement stores, etc. Entertainment uses might also be included in this designation.

Corresponding City of Belmont zoning classifications include DD Downtown District, NC-R Neighborhood Center Residential, TND Traditional Neighborhood Development, and HC-O Highway Corridor Overlay. Gaston County zoning classifications include B-P Planned Business District and B-H Highway Business District.



Commercial

iii. Office

The Office land use designation provides for office buildings with supportive retail and service uses intended primarily for occupants of such office buildings. It may also include an office park, which is a tract containing multiple office buildings, support uses, and open space designed, planned, constructed, and managed on an integrated and coordinated basis.

Corresponding City of Belmont zoning classifications include BC-D Business Campus Development. Gaston County zoning classifications include O-P Planned Office District and O-I Office and Institutional District.



Office

iv. Industrial

The industrial land use designation can cover a fairly broad range of uses. Heavy industrial includes mining, salvage yards, concrete batch plants, and similar intensive manufacturing and processing operations. Light industrial refers to land and buildings used for the production of some type of goods with minimal outside storage such as electronics, manufacturing, products assembly, etc. Uses are



Light Industrial



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Institutional - Churches



Mini Park



Neighborhood Park



Community Park

relatively nuisance free. Duke Energy's Plant Allen qualifies as heavy industrial. The Oaks industrial park would fall in the light industry category. The many current and former textile mills in Belmont would typically be considered heavy industry, though several of them are transitioning to less intensive light industry uses.

City of Belmont industrial zoning classifications include BC-D Business Campus Development. Gaston County zoning classifications include I-G General Industrial District, L-I Light Industrial District, and I-P Planned Industrial District.

v. Institutional

Institutional land uses include public and private schools, city and county government facilities, churches, colleges and universities, and similar non-commercial uses. Major institutions in Belmont include Belmont Abbey and the Sisters of Mercy Convent.

City of Belmont institutional zoning classifications include IC-D Institutional Campus District. Gaston County zoning classifications include O-I Office and Institutional District.

vi. Parks

The park land use designation refers to a range of parks as defined by Belmont's "Parks and Recreation Facilities Comprehensive master Plan 2003/2013," adopted by the City Council in 2003. These include:

Mini-parks provide small open spaces within neighborhoods for a broad variety of purposes, ranging from simple seating areas to tot-lots. A mini-park could be anywhere from 1/4 to 2 acres per mini park, or about the size of a single family residential lot.

Neighborhood parks are for both active and passive recreation activities geared specifically for those living within the service area. They serve an area of 1/2 to 1 mile radius, and can be anywhere from 7 to 15 acres.

Community parks are focused on meeting the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. They include both active and passive recreation activities. A desirable size is about 25 acres.

District parks function as the major source of active recreation in the City, and include athletic facilities for league and possibly tournament play. They range from 75 to 200 acres, with about 100 acres being a desirable size.



vii. Greenways and Trails

Greenways and Trails are defined by Belmont’s “Parks and Recreation Facilities Comprehensive master Plan 2003/2013,” as linear parks. A linear park is an area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking and biking. Often the linear park will be developed to connect recreational facilities, as well as schools and residential neighborhoods. The acreage and service area of a linear park is variable and subject to existing natural and man-made features, the existence of public right-of-way, and the public demand for this type of park. In some cases, a linear park is developed within a large land area designated for protection and management of the natural environment, with the recreation use a secondary objective.

viii. Open Space

Open space is large publicly or privately owned and managed land with a unique or special purpose. Conservation land is protected from future development for protection of a natural resource or unique environment. Regional parks preserve wooded or natural areas with some active uses such as trails or camping, but are largely undeveloped. Working farms are active agricultural uses, generally 40 acres or larger. A unique open space in Belmont’s planning area is the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, which is included in the open space category because of its large land area.



Greenway



Trail



Working Farm



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City Hall



Downtown Belmont



Main Street



Stowe Park

4.1.3 Land Use Categories

a. Downtown Commercial and Civic Center

The Downtown Commercial and Civic Center is a separate category for the traditional and distinctive downtown of Belmont. It includes a mix of retail and restaurants, entertainment, both neighborhood and regional office and commercial uses as well as community facilities - government offices, churches, schools and parks. Future development opportunities are mostly in-fill or adaptive use in nature.

Land Use

The downtown is mostly developed and includes a wide variety of land uses. There are, however, opportunities for new growth within the Downtown Commercial and Civic Center. Appropriate future land uses could include retail, commercial, office, civic and institutional buildings, as well as parks and open space. Some limited multi-family residential uses might be appropriate, but should not be the predominant ground floor use in a building.

Community Form

The following are some general principles applicable to the Downtown Commercial and Civic Center:

- Mixed Land Use
- Provide a variety of uses that enhance the quality of life and meet the needs of current and future residents
- Take advantage of compact building design in keeping with the scale of existing downtown buildings
- Keep new buildings architecturally compatible with the early-Twentieth-Century style of the existing downtown
- Provide sidewalks throughout downtown making connections to adjacent neighborhoods
- Foster a distinctive, attractive downtown with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas

Location Criteria

LC1. The Downtown Commercial and Civic Center does not have precise boundaries, but is generally comprised of Main Street between Todd St./Circle Drive on the north and Central Avenue on the south, and extends about one block to the east and west towards Central Avenue as far as the back of the City Hall property. Any future non-residential buildings should strive to remain within these approximate boundaries.

LC2. Residential buildings adjacent to the Downtown Commercial and Civic Center should be shielded from any visual, noise or traffic intrusion from new



non-residential buildings or reuse of existing residential buildings for non-residential uses.

LC3. Infill development should be compatible with and complementary to adjacent existing land uses.

LC4. Land use transitions need to occur at the rear of property. Land uses across the street from each other should be similar or compatible, in most instances.

LC5. Off-street parking should be located at the rear or side of buildings, not between the building and the street.

LC6. New or reused buildings should face the street, and should provide sidewalks between the building and the street which are wide enough for sidewalk cafes, sidewalk displays and similar activities, in addition to accommodating pedestrian traffic.

LC7. On-street parking in front of buildings is encouraged.

LC8. Infill development should be designed to connect to the existing street grid pattern, and to the existing sidewalk network. The siting of the buildings, parking and pedestrian facilities should be an extension of the existing downtown, rather than an isolated development.



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Central Avenue



Glenway Street



Hawthorne



Police Station

b. Downtown Neighborhood

The Downtown Neighborhood is the primarily residential district surrounding the Downtown Commercial and Civic Center. It is bounded by Park Street/Keener Boulevard, Central Avenue, Sisters of Mercy Convent, and the creek south of Garrison Drive. It includes the properties on the west side of Central Avenue

Land Use

Land use in the Downtown Neighborhood is predominantly residential. This includes single family detached residential, traditional neighborhood development, and multi-family residential.

There are some non-residential uses within the Downtown Neighborhood. These include the Belmont Police Station, R.L. Stowe Co. Chronicle Mill, and some small office uses in converted residential buildings.

Most of the non-residential uses are anticipated to remain for the foreseeable future. However, if the non-residential use ceases to operate, the property should convert to a residential use, which could be medium density residential, high density residential, traditional neighborhood development or multi-family.

Community Form

Because the Downtown Neighborhood features a variety of residential and non-residential land uses in close proximity to each other, the relationship and interaction between them is critical to its function. The variety of land uses function well in the Downtown Neighborhood due to several factors. A grid street pattern allows for land uses to easily front and/or back each other and therefore limits negative impacts. Appropriate edges and buffers are also important in the placement of these varying land uses.

All development within this district needs to use a grid street pattern. Pedestrian sidewalks need to be included on both sides of streets for all land uses in this village. Much of the future development in this village is anticipated to occur as infill. The infill pattern should be compatible with and complimentary to existing land uses.

The Downtown Neighborhood is overall a higher density residential area than other Belmont neighborhoods, so attention to urban detail is important as it continues to develop. It should have a high amenity value, and a distinct identity. Entrances to the neighborhood along the major streets should be architecturally distinctive, to form a gateway effect.



Location Criteria

LC1. While further non-residential developments or conversion of existing properties are discouraged, if they occur they should be located and designed so that they do not infringe on existing or future residential properties.

LC2. Streets in the district should be planned as extensions of the existing street grid, with multiple connections to existing streets.

LC3. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of all streets, with many routes and connections to the Downtown Commercial and Civic Center.

LC4. Land uses across the street from each other should be similar uses, densities and scales. Transition between land uses should occur at the rear of properties or developments.

LC5. Infill development should be compatible with and complementary to adjacent existing land uses.



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Historic District



Davis Park



Reid Park



Secrest Avenue

c. Neighborhood Conservation District

The Neighborhood Conservation district is intended to provide a vehicle to initiate and implement programs for the revitalization or conservation of older areas or districts possessing distinctive features, identity, or character worthy of retention and enhancement. A Neighborhood Conservation plan and a set of guidelines will facilitate maintenance and protection of the neighborhood character and the compatible development of vacant or underused lots. Incompatible mixes of uses will be reduced or prohibited by adding limitations to the list of permitted, limited and special uses of the base district. Some funding programs may be available to assist neighborhood conservation through projects such as sidewalk, curb and gutter construction, park improvements, traffic calming, street lighting, beautification and neighborhood signs - all of which would contribute to the livability of Belmont's neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods within the Neighborhood Conservation classification could qualify for designation as historic districts.

In Belmont, Neighborhood Conservation plans would generally be applied to neighborhoods which are at least 15 years old. Newer subdivisions and current development typically have covenants or restrictions overseen by a homeowners' association or formalized deed restrictions. The intent of this district in the Plan is to protect the intrinsic neighborhood structure which has given the City much of its unique character, and has been expressed by stakeholders as a high priority for the City's future.

Land Use

Land use in the Neighborhood Conservation District is overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, residential. In most neighborhoods, the typical residential use is single family detached housing.

Civic uses in a Neighborhood Conservation District could include schools, churches, libraries and similar uses which support a livable community.

Supporting or occasional commercial uses, such as neighborhood stores, personal services, or home-based occupations may be appropriate.

Parks and open space are highly desirable in Neighborhood Conservation Districts. In neighborhoods which do not currently have parks or open space, the Neighborhood Conservation plan should address the appropriate type and amount of parks and open space in each neighborhood.

Service commercial, industrial and other non-supportive uses are generally not appropriate in Neighborhood Conservation Districts. If residents involved in the preparation of a Neighborhood Conservation plan feel that existing uses of this type are appropriate for their neighborhood, then they should included them in the plan. Otherwise, such uses should be anticipated to be phased out and relocated over time.



Community Form

Community form will vary somewhat from neighborhood to neighborhood, since the intent is to protect and build upon the characteristics and form that make each neighborhood unique in the opinion of its residents. The overall goal of all Neighborhood Conservation Districts is to perpetuate strong, viable, livable neighborhoods that are valued by their residents as places to live, which provide a sense of place and community.

Individual neighborhoods within the District may request the City to work with them to prepare an individual Neighborhood Conservation Plan. This will allow residents and property owners to determine what aspects of a neighborhood should be preserved, and what new aspects might be introduced.

In the preparation of a Neighborhood Conservation plan, it would be the neighborhood's and stakeholders' decision as to what is appropriate and what is not within the district. The neighborhood would create its own design guidelines and conservation plan with the help of City staff. The City would then serve to help property owners comply with the neighborhood's goals.

The focus for protection is on neighborhood characteristics, rather than details pertaining to individual buildings. Massing, scale of buildings, siting and orientation tend to be the neighborhood qualities that are managed.

Walkable aspects of the neighborhood should be incorporated, including sidewalks. Traffic planning should emphasize slower driving speeds that respect pedestrians, children playing, and the residential character of the neighborhood. Convenient connections to other parts of Belmont should be given careful consideration, especially for pedestrians and bicycles.

Above all, the Neighborhood Conservation plan should strive to preserve those aspects of a residential area from development impacts which might threaten the quality of life of the neighborhood.

Location Criteria

LC1. Boundaries should reflect a cohesive built environment that represents common characteristics and setting of the neighborhood.

LC2. Non-residential civic and commercial uses should be adequately buffered to protect residences from unwanted visual, traffic and noise intrusion.

LC3. Parks and open spaces should be located to maximize convenient access to the maximum number of residents that they would serve.

LC4. New infill development or redevelopment, besides complying with the City's zoning ordinance, should respect the scale, massing, siting and sight lines of houses on the same block.



Adams Bluff



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Eagle Park



Hawthorne



Traditional Neighborhood Development



Traditional Neighborhood Development

d. Traditional Neighborhood Development District

A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a human scale, walkable community with moderate to high residential densities and a mixed use core. A TND is served by a network of paths, streets and lanes suitable for pedestrians as well as vehicles. This provides residents the option of walking, biking or driving to places within their neighborhood. Present and future modes of transit are also considered during the planning stages.

Public and private spaces have equal importance, creating a balanced community that serves a wide range of home and business owners. The inclusion of civic buildings and civic space -- in the form of plazas, greens, parks and squares -- enhances community identity and value.

Land Use

Land uses within a TND district are predominantly residential, but a mix of civic, commercial and open space is essential to achieve a true community. Residential uses typically would include a mix of single family detached on relatively small lots, attached single family, townhouse, and possibly condominium or apartment multi-family. TND's typically have an average gross density of 4 to 5 units per acre but could be somewhat higher depending on the amount of multi-family residential units included.

The higher densities typically associated with TND development is offset by a variety of open spaces integrated throughout the neighborhood. These would include neighborhood parks, mini-parks, town squares, small pocket parks and the like.

TND will ideally include a small neighborhood commercial and civic center, if the development is large enough to support the uses, or can draw on support from other adjacent neighborhoods.

Civic uses such as churches, community buildings, libraries, etc. are important to create a full community within the TND.

Community Form

Based on research and case studies regarding the design of TND development, the following attributes should be used as a guide to good TND planning:

Buildings within TNDs should be aligned and close to the street. Buildings should form the space of the street, plus form and protect private open space as well.

Whether a yard, garden or courtyard, private open space is an important complement to the public space of the neighborhood. Buildings should also have front porches or balconies. This overview of the street contributes to healthful streets and safe neighborhoods, while serving as a buffer between the house interior and street activity.



Buildings should be designed to create a scale and sense of place generally associated with traditional small towns. Rather than being simply pushed closer together, as in many suburban developments, buildings must be designed for the close siting of towns and cities. Views should be directed to the street and the backyard, not toward the neighbors. Property lines should be physically defined by fences, hedges or garden walls.

Land should be clearly public or private—in public view for surveillance or private and protected. Vehicle storage, garbage and mechanical equipment should be located away from the street. Access to garages should be from an alley. Where garages must be front-loaded, they should be set at least 20 feet behind the front plane of the house.

There should be a variety of dwelling types within the neighborhood. These usually take the form of houses, town houses, and apartments, so that younger and older people, singles and families may find places to live.

The streets within the neighborhood should form a connected network. This provides a variety of itineraries and disperses traffic congestion. They should also be relatively narrow and shaded by rows of trees. This slows down the traffic, creating a comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Location Criteria

The following location criteria are applicable for the Traditional Neighborhood Development land use category:

LC1. The neighborhood has a discernible center. This is often a square or green, and sometimes a busy or memorable street intersection.

LC2. Most of the dwellings are within a five-minute walk of the center. This distance averages one-quarter of a mile.

LC3. There are shops and offices at the edge of the neighborhood. The shops should be sufficiently varied to supply the weekly needs of a household. A convenience store is the most important among them.

LC4. There are small playgrounds quite near every dwelling. This distance should not be more than one-eighth of a mile.

LC5. Buildings at the neighborhood center are placed close to the street. This creates a strong sense of place.

LC6. Certain prominent sites are reserved for civic buildings. Buildings for meeting, education, religion, or culture are located at the termination of the street vistas or at the neighborhood center.

LC7. If no neighborhood commercial and civic center is included in the TND district, it should be located within ½ mile of supporting neighborhood commercial and civic services.



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LAND USE PLAN



Belle Meade



Glenmere



Graystone Estates



Pebble Creek

e. Suburban Neighborhood District

The Suburban Neighborhood is made up of single family detached houses as the predominant development type. This type of neighborhood, with typical lot sizes of approximately 1/3-acre, is representative of mostly more recent residential subdivisions in Belmont and eastern Gaston County. Suburban Neighborhoods may also include parks, churches or other civic uses that enhance the quality of life for residents in the neighborhood, and some limited commercial uses.

Land Use

Land uses within a Suburban Neighborhood are predominantly residential, and residential densities typically do not exceed three dwelling units per acre. Parks, churches and other civic uses are important parts of the neighborhood, and are incorporated into the district to limit the amount of distance that needs to be traveled by residents to access these types of facilities. Commercial uses may be included on a limited basis.

Community Form

The built environment in a Suburban Neighborhood often features suburban-style homes in a neighborhood unit. This neighborhood unit may have commercial land uses (retail and office) located at the intersections of major roadways. Pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks and trails are used to provide access from the residential to the commercial uses.

Community form for medium density residential uses is best described as enclaves. The layout can be either urban or garden style. Urban style buildings (medium density) have common setbacks and parallel public streets, while garden style housing sites are in clusters away from public streets. Commercial uses, if there are any, should have unified architecture, with buildings sited to create pedestrian spaces and smaller parking fields with landscaping. The commercial uses should also have well planned pedestrian connections linking buildings, parking and adjacent neighborhoods.

Community facilities should be sited to act as a transition between land uses that are not directly compatible. Small parks, open space and civic uses should be sited internally, and pedestrian connections to these parks and civic uses are desirable.

Floodplains, heavily wooded areas, and other land not best-suited for development can be used to provide greenways, open space, hike & bike trails or other pedestrian connections. Lower density and higher density development is offered in the City of Belmont; however, the Suburban Neighborhood offers housing for many citizens at typical suburban densities. This type of neighborhood provides significant opportunities for owner occupied housing on medium-sized lots, with convenient access to retail, office and civic uses.



Location Criteria

Each district is defined by a set of location criteria for the particular set of land uses. The criteria are recommendations for placing specific land uses together, and they are further defined in the City's codes and ordinances regulating land development and construction. The goal is to achieve high-quality residential neighborhoods, commercial villages, employment areas and civic centers while preserving the natural environment.

The following criteria are for the Suburban Neighborhood District:

LC1. Residential development will comprise most of the district, and densities will average three dwelling units per acre.

LC2. High density and multi-family residential uses, if there are any, should be located in a Village Center Neighborhood between lower density uses and higher density uses.

LC3. Non-residential low impact development may be located in certain situations at the intersection of major roadways. This low impact development may include such things as veterinary clinics, professional offices, day care facilities, etc.

LC4. Retail, office and other commercial uses should not be organized in a linear form.

LC5. Parks should be located so as to preserve existing trees, wetlands or other natural habitat. Parks should be accessible by foot, bicycle and automobile.

LC6. Open space should be used as an amenity for surrounding development, and it may take the form of a floodplain, wetland, or stand of existing trees. This integration can occur in several ways – a common method is to have a road front the open space providing a public view or “front door” to the amenity.

LC7. Transportation networks should be well planned to ensure adequate/appropriate levels of service.

LC8. Streets in residential areas should be designed to connect homes to services, not for “cut-through” traffic. Residential areas with only one connection to a major road are discouraged.

LC9. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of streets within a residential neighborhood.



Section 4

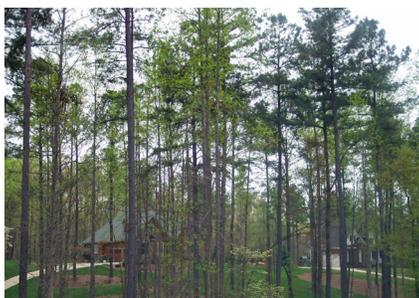
LAND USE PLAN



Conservation Development



1 acre lots



1 to 5 acre lots



5 to 10 acre lots

f. Semi-Rural Neighborhood District

The Semi-Rural Neighborhood is primarily made up of single family detached houses on large lots. The preservation of open space is encouraged, as is the maintenance of rural character. These neighborhoods may include parks, churches or other civic uses that enhance the quality of life for residents, as well as rural commercial uses on a limited basis. The Semi-Rural Neighborhood is located in more environmentally sensitive areas than the Suburban Neighborhood.

Land Use

Land uses within a Semi-Rural Neighborhood are predominantly residential. Residential densities are typically one dwelling unit per acre, but may include estate residential or rural residential. Conservation development is appropriate and encouraged.

Rural commercial uses, parks, churches and other civic uses are included in the Semi-Rural Neighborhood; however, these types of uses are limited. The remaining land should be left undeveloped in order to preserve the rural character of the area.

Community Form

The built environment in a Semi-Rural Neighborhood is characterized by single family homes on large lots. The development is similar to, but may be more rural than that found in the Suburban Neighborhood. Agricultural uses are permitted, but they should be limited to activities that do not conflict with the enjoyment of residential properties.

Residents should expect the agricultural uses to provide a different character and quality of life than in other districts. Uses allowed in the Semi-Rural Neighborhood are intended for rural areas, and are not typical of what would be planned in a more suburban setting. Structures such as barns or sheds, and agricultural activities, may be permitted on residential lots.

Any medium density single family development should be located within a Village Center Neighborhood, with buffers between the residential units and the rural/agricultural uses that are typical in the Semi-Rural Neighborhood. Single family development is intended to be dispersed throughout the district, and clusters of single family homes should not exceed 50 units in any one location.

Commercial uses should be well planned with parking fields broken into smaller sizes through the use of landscaping. Although not as prevalent as in the Suburban Neighborhood, small parks, churches and civic uses are located within the Semi-Rural Neighborhood and lands not suitable for development may be used to provide open space or pedestrian connections.



Location Criteria

Each district is defined by a set of location criteria for the particular set of land uses. The criteria are recommendations for placing specific land uses together, and they are further defined in the City's codes and ordinances regulating land development and construction.

The following criteria are for the Semi-Rural Neighborhood District:

LC1. Residential development will comprise most of the district, with gross densities of no more than one dwelling unit per acre.

LC2. Medium density residential uses should be located in Village Center Neighborhoods.

LC3. Non-residential low impact development may be located in certain situations mid-block along boulevards or thoroughfares. This low impact development may include such things as veterinary clinics, professional offices and day care facilities.

LC4. Commercial uses, if there are any, should be located at the intersection of a boulevard or thoroughfare.

LC5. Parks should be located so as to preserve existing trees, wetlands or other natural habitat. Parks should also be accessible by foot, bicycle and automobile.

LC6. Parks can and should relate to the quantity and quality of the natural environment.



Section 4

LAND USE PLAN



Apartments



Condominiums



Townhouses



Small Lots

g. Village Center Neighborhood District

The Village Center Neighborhood is intended to provide for higher density residential opportunities than in the surrounding residential neighborhood. It provides a location for single family detached residential on smaller lots, traditional neighborhood development, and multi-family. The Village Center Neighborhood is a transition between single family neighborhoods and the Village Commercial and Civic Center, where more intense non-residential uses will be located. The Village Center Neighborhood will locate more people close to commercial and civic services, reduce the length of automobile trips, provide highly walkable environments, and create a sense of identity that is an extension of Belmont's older neighborhoods which are a foundation of the city's character.

Land Use

The Village Center Neighborhood provides a location for higher density residential uses than in the surrounding neighborhoods. When located adjacent to a Semi-Rural Neighborhood, medium density, high density or traditional neighborhood development uses are appropriate. When adjacent to a Suburban Neighborhood or Neighborhood Conservation District, high density, traditional neighborhood development and multi-family uses are appropriate.

Parks, churches and civic uses need to be part of the Village Center Neighborhood. Some limited commercial might be acceptable, but it would be preferable for those uses to be located in the Village Commercial and Civic Center.

Community Form

The Village Center Neighborhoods should be similar to a village or urban neighborhood, with interconnected, walkable landscaped streets and a distinct sense of place. They will be predominantly composed of one to two story residential buildings, intermixed with small parks and civic buildings. While there should be a unity of scale, a mix of architectural styles will avoid monotony.

Separate residential developments will relate to each other, rather than being separate enclaves or gated communities. All of the developments in the Village Center Neighborhood will connect to the Village Commercial and Civic Center. Traffic planning should encourage slower speeds and pedestrian-friendly streets.

A successful Village Center Neighborhood will have the same sense of community that is the hallmark of Central Belmont's neighborhoods.



Location Criteria

Each district is defined by a set of locational criteria for the particular set of land uses. The criteria are recommendations for placing specific land uses together, and they are further defined in the City's Land Development Code regulating land development and construction.

The following criteria are for the Village Center Neighborhood District:

LC1. Streets in residential areas should be designed to connect homes to the Village Commercial and Civic Center, not for "cut-through" traffic. Residential areas with only one connection to a major road are discouraged.

LC2. Sidewalks and greenway trails should connect the Village Center Neighborhood to its Village Commercial and Civic Center.

LC3. Non-residential low impact development may be located in certain situations at the intersection of major roadways. This low impact development may include such things as veterinary clinics, professional offices, day care facilities, etc.

LC4. Parks and open space should be located so as to preserve existing trees, wetlands or other natural habitat. Parks should be accessible by foot, bicycle and automobile.

LC5. Existing natural features should be incorporated into the planning and design of the neighborhood.

LC6. Buffers and attractive screening should be provided between higher density residential uses and the surrounding single family neighborhood.

LC7. Buffers and attractive screening should be provided between the Village Center Neighborhood and the Village Commercial and Civic Center.



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LAND USE PLAN



Village Commercial Center



Catawba



Lake Park



Pebble

h. Village Commercial and Civic Center

A Village Commercial and Civic Center is intended to concentrate higher-intensity commercial uses, civic uses and some higher-density residential around intersections of boulevards and thoroughfares in residential districts. The co-location of more intense uses creates opportunities for a sense of place not possible in a more sprawling pattern of commercial uses along an arterial.

Some existing Belmont neighborhood centers, such as the East Belmont center on Catawba Street and the Pebble Creek Shopping Center, have the potential to become Village Commercial and Civic Centers.

Land Use

Non-residential uses make up the majority of the Village Commercial and Civic Center, depending upon location and market support. The non-residential core of these centers would include retail, office, entertainment, and civic uses (such as post offices and churches). Each center should have a supporting population in the adjacent neighborhoods of approximately 5000-7500, which is typically enough to support a grocery store and an elementary school. Multi-family residential uses can be higher densities than the surrounding Village Center Neighborhood District.

Community Form

The built environment in a Village Commercial and Civic Center is defined through unified architecture, and a well-planned transportation system, including safe pedestrian and bicycle links between residential uses, commercial uses and other amenities. Facilities for public transit are also encouraged.

Ground floor retail and office space should be situated with respect to the pedestrian linkages and pedestrian spaces. Parking fields are typically broken up into smaller sizes through the use of landscaping and are preferably behind or at the side of buildings, rather than between buildings and the street. Although buildings are typically multi-storied, they should be constructed with respect to adjacent uses. Residential uses may be located in the taller buildings, or at the periphery of the Village Commercial and Civic Center, as a way to transition to the Village Center Neighborhood uses surrounding the center.



Location Criteria

The following criteria are for the Village Commercial and Civic Center:

LC1. Higher intensity uses such as retail, office or entertainment should be located at the core of the Center.

LC2. Civic uses such as schools, churches, community centers, and parks should be used to transition to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

LC3. Buildings should be higher in the more intensive core of the Village Commercial and Civic Center, and lower in the periphery of the Center.

LC4. Any existing natural features or amenities should be incorporated into the urban framework of the Village Commercial and Civic Center.

LC5. An interior roadway should allow traffic to circulate in the commercial core, but this roadway should not create additional traffic in the peripheral residential areas.

LC6. Pedestrian linkages, including walkways and courtyards, are encouraged, in order to provide circulation within the Village Commercial and Civic Center, and to connect the commercial and civic uses to adjacent Village Center Residential neighborhoods.

LC7. In the center's commercial core, parking fields should be broken into smaller sized areas with the use of landscape.

LC8. At least two major roadways should cross within or be adjacent to the Village Center.



Section 4

LAND USE PLAN



Mixed Use Districts



Retail



Riverwalk



TND Single Family

i. Mixed Use Districts

Three areas are designated as mixed use districts in the Belmont Comprehensive Plan:

- Catawba Gateway,
- South Fork Gateway, and
- Adjacent to the Garden Parkway (in the Garden Parkway on Northern Alignment and Garden Parkway on Southern Alignment alternatives).

The potential of the Mixed Use Districts is based on their locations near a major highway, with a few major boulevards or thoroughfares also serving them. This accessibility and “gateway” position within Belmont contribute to the ability of these districts to attract a mix of higher density development that can take advantage of the convenient regional transportation access. In the case of the Catawba Gateway and the mixed use district adjacent to the Garden Parkway, they also can take advantage of their highly desirable waterfront locations.

Land Use

The largest land use category within a Mixed Use District is dedicated to Medium Density Residential, but a substantial amount of residential use would be in the two “high density” housing categories (High Density Residential and Multi-Family Residential).

Not all of the land use is reserved for residential uses. The Mixed Use Districts are anticipated to have a large amount of commercial, retail and restaurant land uses, as well as parks, open space and institutional uses. The major streets of Wilkinson Boulevard and the Belmont-Mt. Holly Connector are expected to be commercial-oriented corridors which take advantage of their regional access.

Community Form

The form of the built environment in a Mixed Use District is centered on well designed commercial uses fronting major boulevards with complementary, higher density residential development scattered throughout. In a waterfront Mixed Use District, the waterfront should be developed as a “riverwalk,” to maximize its accessibility to the greatest number of people. This high density district can have commercial land uses (retail, commercial and office) located along the “riverwalk” and near neighborhoods at the intersections of boulevards. Pedestrian connections such as sidewalks and trails are important to provide access from the residential areas to the “riverwalks” and commercial uses.

Community form for medium density residential and high density residential uses is best described as enclaves. It can be either urban or garden style in layout. Urban style medium density buildings have common setbacks and parallel public streets. Garden style housing sites buildings in clusters away from public streets. Commercial uses should have unified architecture, well



planned pedestrian connections linking buildings, parking, and amenities, buildings sited to create pedestrian spaces, parking fields broken into smaller sizes with the use of landscape, and pedestrian linkages to adjacent neighborhoods, commercial areas, parks and the waterfront.

Community facilities should be sited to act as a transition between land uses that are not directly compatible. Neighborhood parks and open space intended to serve the district's residents should be sited internally or on the waterfront, with pedestrian connections to them from neighborhoods.

Floodplains, heavily-wooded areas, and other land not best-suited for development can be used to provide greenways, open space, hike & bike trails, or pedestrian connections.

A Mixed Use District provides housing for a large percentage of citizens, yet does so with slightly higher densities. The village provides significant opportunities for primarily owner-occupied housing on small-sized lots or in multi-family townhouses or condominiums, with convenient access to the most frequently needed retail uses.

Location Criteria

The following location criteria are applicable for Mixed Use Districts:

LC1. Commercial uses may be located in a linear form along major boulevards within the Mixed Use District, but should be planned with high attention to access management.

LC3. Parks should be developed in areas to preserve existing trees, wetlands, or natural habitat. Parks should also work in conjunction with the waterfront and be accessible by pedestrians, bicycles, and public streets.

LC4. The "riverwalks" in the Catawba Gateway and adjacent to the Garden Parkway should include retail and restaurant uses and be highly accessible to the public.

LC5. High density residential should be located near the intersection of two boulevards. This land use can be sited between lower density residential uses and higher density commercial uses.

LC6. Residential developments need to have street layouts that provide primary linkages to community facilities and amenities.

LC7. Streets in medium density residential areas should be designed primarily to connect the homes to arterials, and not be designed to encourage "cut-through" traffic. Developments with only one connection to a boulevard or thoroughfare are strongly discouraged.

LC8. Sidewalks should be provided to accommodate pedestrians on both sides of public streets within developments.



Section 4

LAND USE PLAN



Corporate Office



Entertainment



Regional Retail



Retail Residential

j. Regional Center

A regional center is an area of large scale commercial development providing for retail and service uses on a regional level, as well as large scale office and potentially light industrial/research development providing employment on a regional level. Higher density residential uses integrated with the retail and employment uses are also included. Birkdale Center in Huntersville is an example of a regional center. A regional center would typically be a development of 500,000 to 1 million square feet.

In the Belmont Comprehensive Plan, a Regional Center is included in the Garden Parkway on Northern Alignment and Garden Parkway on Southern Alignment alternatives, at the interchange of the Garden Parkway with South Point Road.

Land Use

Land use within the Regional Center would include regional oriented retail, commercial and office uses. Some higher density residential uses could be appropriate if integrated with the non-residential buildings, but most residential uses would be more appropriately located in the adjacent Mixed Use District. Light industrial or research/development uses could be included if they are in a form compatible with the overall development.

A detailed market analysis would be required to determine the most appropriate mix and quantity of uses within the Regional Center.

Community Form

The current trend in regional retail developments is the “lifestyle center,” which emphasizes a mix of uses and businesses formerly associated with enclosed regional malls. These “lifestyle centers” emphasize the outdoor environment and pedestrian amenities similar to a small downtown. This trend would be very appropriate for Belmont’s goal of retaining its small town sense of place even as it grows.

Office, light industrial or research/development uses in the Regional Center should be planned to fit into the same type of outdoor, pedestrian-friendly environment. If both office and retail development are included in the Regional Center, they should be well integrated. Restaurant services should be very convenient to office workers by foot, to minimize traffic pressures on local roadways during the lunch period.

The Regional Center should have excellent architectural and urban design qualities, exhibiting a style that will be appropriate for many decades.



Location Criteria

LC1. The Regional Center should be located for easy, efficient vehicular access from the Garden Parkway, South Point Road, and, in the Garden Parkway on Northern Alignment alternative, the Belmont-Mt. Holly Connector.

LC2. Parking should be located internally within the Center, with easy access from major roads but minimizing visibility of surface parking from local roads.

LC3. The Regional Center need not be contained on a single site. A Regional Center that occupies land on both sides of South Point Road would be desirable.

LC4. Pedestrian connections should be provided between the Regional Center and to encourage residents of the adjacent Mixed Use District to walk to the Center and to minimize short driving trips between the two.

LC5. Retail and commercial uses within the Regional Center should be planned to be compatible with the location of retail and commercial uses within the Mixed Use District.



Section 4

LAND USE PLAN



Belmont Business Park



Plant Allen



13th Street



The Oaks

k. Industrial Districts

Industrial uses serve as economic generators within the local economy. The added value is captured within the local economy, multiplying into office jobs, retail goods and services, and residential investment. The Industrial districts provide much of the city's opportunities for manufacturing, assembly, and warehouse uses. Industrial uses are dependent on reliable transportation, and function better with the rest of the community if they are located along and near major regional access points, such as I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard. Some of the existing industries have access to existing railroad lines.

Land Use

There are three predominant types of industrial land use provided:

- Duke Energy's Plant Allen,
- Light industrial, and
- Remaining textile mills and related industries

Plant Allen

Plant Allen is a regional electric generation facility that will remain operational into the foreseeable future. The Allen Steam Station is the third largest Duke Power coal-fired plant. With five generating units, Allen is capable of producing over a million kilowatts of electricity, enough to power approximately 54,000 residences, 8,600 businesses or 300 industries. The plant employs approximately 145 people. It is not anticipated to expand beyond the existing land area, though facilities and operations could expand within its current boundaries. Other than industrial and ancillary uses, there are some small public recreation facilities on Duke Energy land: a small baseball field on Boat Club Road and the Allen Access Fishing Area on the canal near the South Fork of the Catawba River. If compatible with Duke's facilities and operations, and its future land needs, some additional relatively small recreational facilities might be located on the periphery of Plant Allen land.

There are numerous electric transmission lines throughout Belmont associated with Plant Allen, some on property owned by Duke and others on easements. As discussed further in Section 4.4.3 Greenways and Trail Systems, some of these might be used as locations for greenway trails.

Light industry

Light industry, office showroom/office warehouse, storage and similar "clean" industrial uses are located primarily in a Small Area Plan district north of I-85. This district is described in more detail in section 4.2.4.a Montcross North Small Area Plan.

Some additional light industry is currently located in other parts of Belmont. Future light industry will be most desirable and most compatible if it is located in a planned, coordinated district.



Existing mills and related industries

There are a number of textile and related mills still operating to some extent in Belmont. The City is strongly supportive of these industries, and they remain as designated industrial land uses within the Comprehensive Plan.

Due to the evolving nature of the textile industry, it is possible that some of these mills may no longer be operational in the future. If that occurs, any redevelopment or reuse should be undertaken only as part of a plan that ensures compatibility with the surrounding area., whether that happens to be residential, commercial, industrial or some other use.

Related uses

Industrial districts provide for a combination of uses that support industrial activities. Office uses provide the administrative and management support industrial activities need, and are often desirable in close proximity to them. Retail uses within the module provide convenient goods and services to those employed in the industries and office. The industrial uses are anticipated to dictate the amount of support type uses. To some degree the market will also dictate the location of the uses if in keeping with the overall development pattern.

Community Form

The form of the built environment for industrial uses often features large structures with large floor plates used for manufacturing, shipping, and storing materials and products. These buildings are typically of a single floor with taller than average ceiling heights.

Industrial form includes storage in covered or semi-enclosed structures. Support structures and facilities are common and provide backup electricity, reserve equipment, and maintenance systems. Shipping facilities and docks are frequently required for the loading and unloading of trucks or rail cars. Facilities may be secured through fencing and screening walls, and significant lighting may be required to secure the grounds and equipment at night.

Industrial districts are most compatible with the rest of the community when they are internally organized, with visually attractive edges and buffering from adjacent non-industrial uses and major public roadways.

Location Criteria

Each module defines a set of locational criteria for the components that comprise that set of land uses. The locational criteria are recommendations for siting these specific land uses together. This list of criteria is further developed and defined in the City of Belmont's codes and ordinances that regulate land development and construction. The goal of the locational criteria is to achieve high-quality employment areas, commercial villages, and civic centers while responding sensitively to the natural environment.



The following location criteria apply to the Industrial module:

LC1. The impact of potential industrial uses on adjacent existing residential uses and environmentally sensitive areas should be considered when determining the appropriate intensity of uses for particular areas.

LC2. Buffers and screens are important components in industrial development patterns. They are used to minimize the adverse impacts of light, noise, and views of truck traffic, storage yards, movement of freight, and manufacturing processes. They should be used in the planning for industrial development as needed.

LC3. Transportation networks should be well planned to ensure adequate/appropriate levels of service.

LC4. Public facilities can be planned as an amenity for industrial districts. These areas can be the focus for planning and site organization. This planning will allow pedestrian linkages to and from public facilities and the adjacent development.

LC5. Open space should be used as an amenity for surrounding development.

Many times the open space takes the form of a floodplain, wetlands, or stands of existing trees. This integration can occur in many ways; a common method is to have a road front the open space providing a public view, access or “front-door” to the amenity.



I. Major Institutional Districts

There are three major institutions in Belmont, each of which is important to the cultural, civic and economic health of the City. These are:

- Belmont Abbey and Belmont Abbey College,
- Sisters of Mercy Convent, and
- Gaston College East Campus and Textile Technology Center

Belmont Abbey and Belmont Abbey College are incorporated as part of the Montcross North Small Area Plan. Land Uses, Community Form and Locational Criteria for that district are included in Section 4.1.4.a Montcross North Small Area Plan.

Sisters of Mercy Convent and its associated uses are recommended to be incorporated as part of the Montcross South Small Area Plan. Land Uses, Community Form and Locational Criteria for that district are included in Section 4.1.4.b Montcross South Small Area Plan.

Gaston College East Campus and Textile Technology Center is part of the Catawba Gateway Mixed Use District. Land Uses, Community Form and Locational Criteria for that district are included in Section 4.1.3.i Mixed Use Districts.

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, which could be considered as a major institution, is included in Section 4.3.4 Regional and Special Parks.



Belmont Abbey



Gaston College East Campus and Textile Technology Center



Sisters of Mercy



Section 4

LAND USE PLAN



Belmont Abbey College



The Oaks Industrial Park



Corporate Office

4.1.4 Small Area Plans

a. Montcross North Small Area Plan

Belmont Abbey, R. L. Stowe Company and Parkdale Mills, acting as Belmont LLC, have collaborated on a long-range land use plan for land owned by those three entities in Belmont, Mt. Holly and McAdenville. Of the total land area, 754 acres are located within the City Limits, ETJ, or Planning Area of Belmont.

North of I-85, within the Belmont City Limits, ETJ or Planning Area, the plan anticipates an eventual mixed-use development comprised of the following uses:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| • Belmont Abbey College | maximum of 2,400 students |
| • CCRC | 300 units |
| • Apartments | 200 units |
| • Mixed Use Development | 500,000 square feet |
| • Business Park (with limited retail) | 200,000 square feet |
| • Office Park | 400,000 square feet |
| • Corporate Office | Not currently available for development |

The location of these anticipated uses, to be developed over a 20 year or longer period, are shown in Figure 21.

The land uses indicated in the Belmont LLC plan are consistent with the City of Belmont's goals of furthering the historically strong relationship with the Abbey, Stowe Mills and Parkdale, and with supporting economic development in the corridor north of I-85. Because of the compatibility of the plan with the City's objectives, this plan has been incorporated into the Belmont Comprehensive Plan as a small area plan for future land uses on the designated properties.

These land uses are anticipated to exhibit the same high standard of architectural and landscape design as they are implemented as do Belmont Abbey College and The Oaks industrial park, which are included in the small area plan.

For consistency with the City's broader goals of creating a livable environment, providing efficient traffic movement, and strengthening physical connectivity of the City across I-85, the following elements will make the implementation of this plan consistent with the overall comprehensive land use and transportation plans of the City:

- Preserve right-of-way on Belmont-Mt. Holly Road and Woodlawn Street for the eventual development of these key roads as indicated in the Transportation Plan section of this Comprehensive Plan;



- Provide landscaping, signage design, lighting, sidewalks and other streetscape design elements along Belmont-Mt. Holly Road and Woodlawn Street to provide a high quality of public environment; and
- Allow development of a rails-to-trails or trails-along-rails pedestrian and bicycle path along the currently inactive railroad lines owned by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, which is included as a recommended part of the City's greenway system in this Comprehensive Plan.

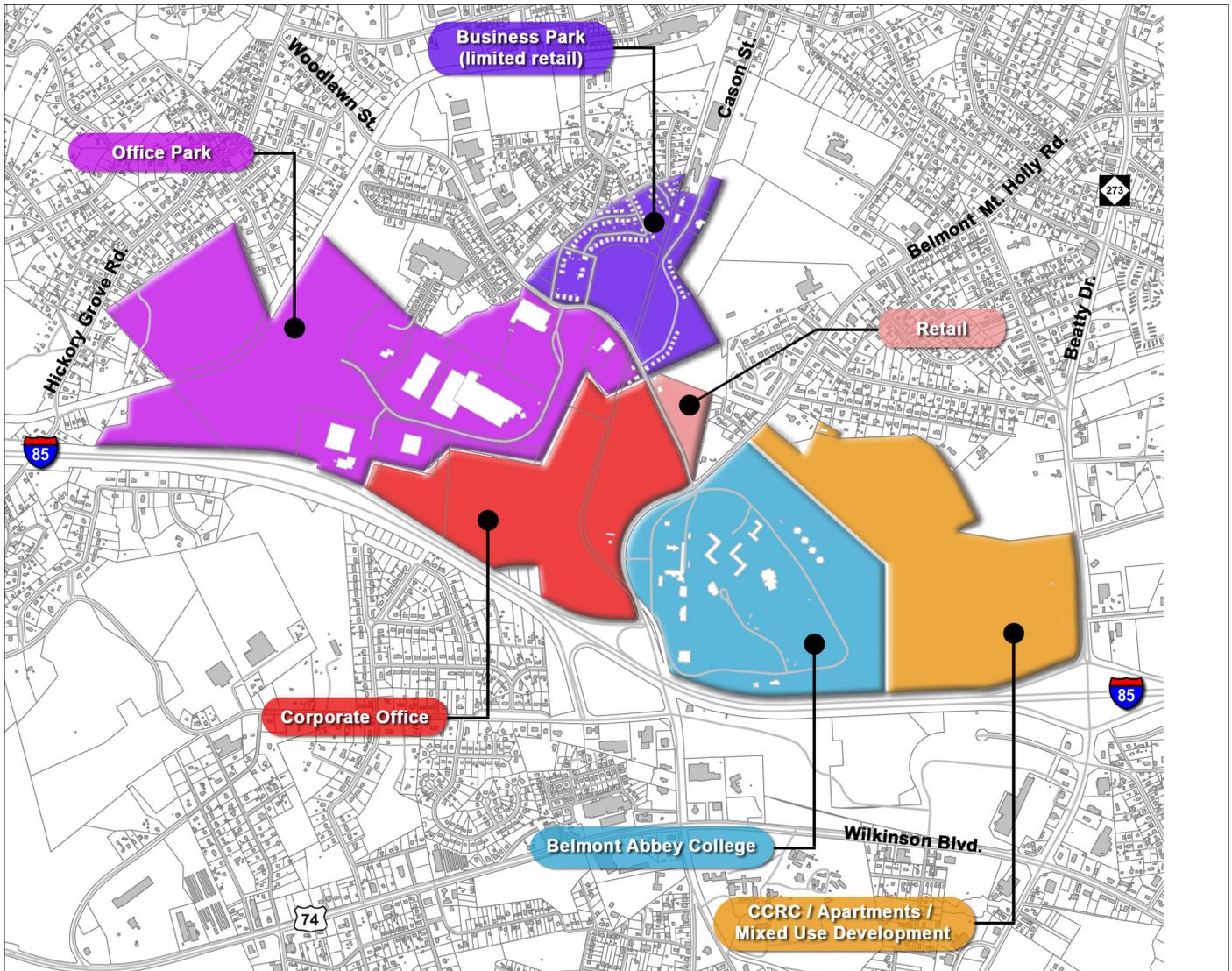


Figure 21: Montcross North Small Area Plan



Section 4

LAND USE PLAN

b. Montcross South Small Area Plan

The long-term land use plan developed by Belmont Abbey for their land south of I-85 indicates an area for development of 750,000 square feet of retail, restaurants and banks generally between Park Street (NC 273) and Belmont-Mt. Holly Road north of Wilkinson Boulevard (US 74). The initial development of this area between Park St. and Belmont-Mt. Holly Road, known as Montcross, was begun in 2005. This long-range land use plan is also consistent with the goals of the City of providing economic development and encouraging a revitalization of the Wilkinson Boulevard commercial corridor.

Because the area surrounding Belmont Abbey's property would benefit from the same degree of coordinated land use, transportation and urban design planning, this Comprehensive Plan has designated the area shown in Figure 22, approximately bounded by I-85, Browntown Road, Wilkinson Boulevard, Park

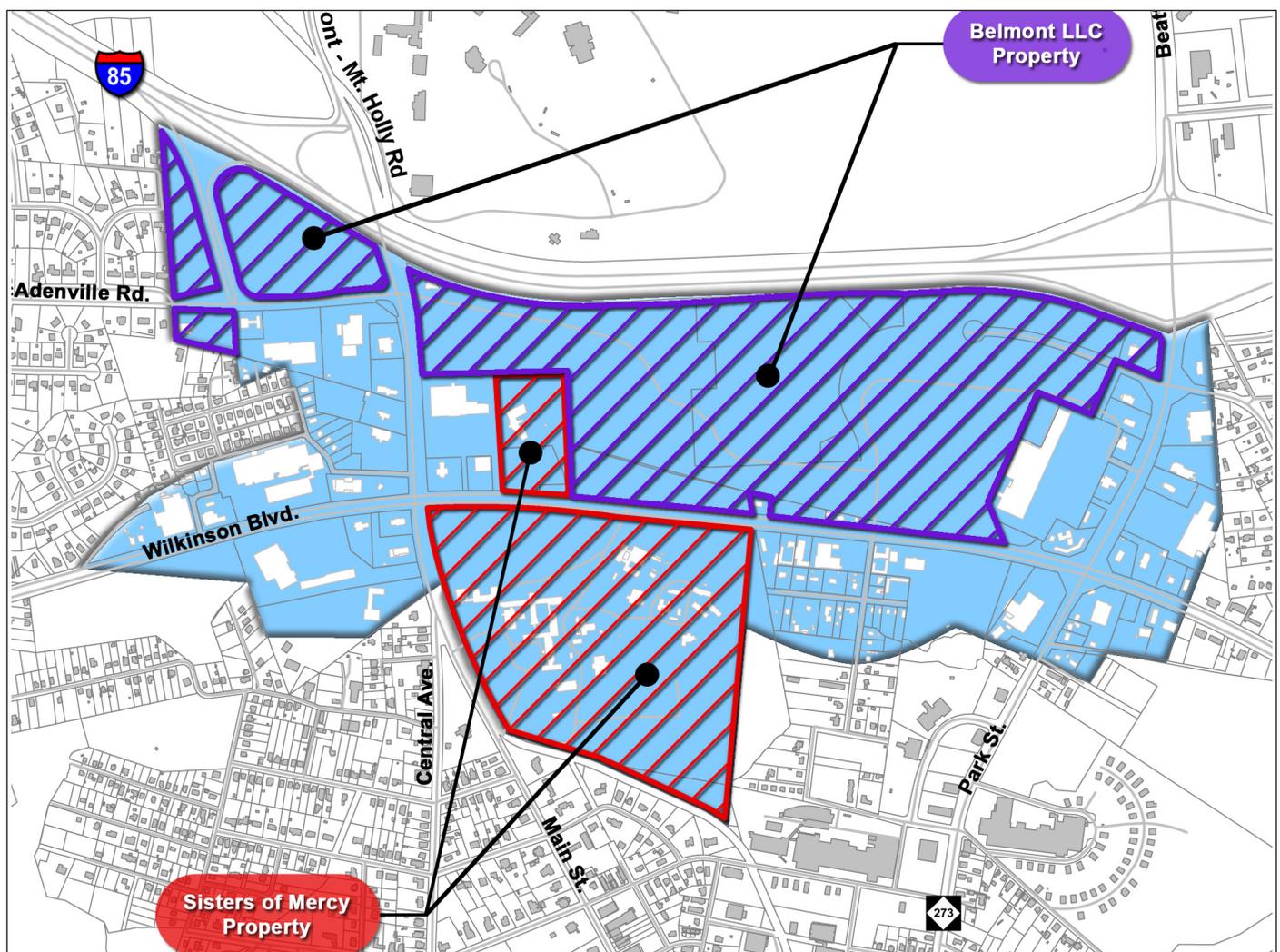


Figure 22: Montcross South Small Area Plan



Boulevard, Kent Drive, the NCDOT railroad tracks, Ford Street and the I-85 to McAdenville Road exit ramp as the Montcross South Small Area, with the goal that a small area plan be developed for this area. It is the City's belief that such a plan will provide an economic stimulus for the corridor, while protecting properties such as the Sisters of Mercy Convent. The approximately 400 acre small area plan (including the Sisters of Mercy campus) will be most effective by addressing coordinated and compatible land uses among the properties, opportunities for revitaliation of older or underutilized commercial properties, coordinated vehicular and pedestrian circulation, access management, and urban design of public streetscapes.



c. Catawba Street Corridor Plan

The City and the residents of East Belmont believe it is highly desirable to strengthen the connection between East Belmont and Downtown. Catawba Street, the principal street through East Belmont, is the most logical connection to develop for this purpose. The distance between the neighborhood commercial area on Catawba Street is too far from the Main Street commercial and civic area for continuous commercial or non-residential development, but an active, vital street can reinforce the desired connection both physically and perceptually.

This Comprehensive Plan has designated the corridor from Central Avenue to the NCDOT inactive railroad line as the Catawba Street Corridor, with the goal that a corridor plan be developed.

The plan area for this corridor should include an area roughly bounded by Central Avenue, Church Street, Park Street, the NCDOT inactive rail line, and the CSX mainline railroad tracks. This includes the Catawba Street neighborhood commercial area, several active and transitioning textile mill facilities, single family “mill village” neighborhoods, and undeveloped land. The goal for a corridor plan would be revitalizing the Catawba Street neighborhood center to make it comparable to a Village Commercial and Civic Center, and to make Catawba Street a landscaped, pedestrian-friendly street that would be the “main street” of East Belmont connecting to Main Street in Downtown Belmont.

While the policy of the City is to support existing textile mills as long as they remain active and viable, the corridor plan might also anticipate future appropriate uses of those properties in the event that their uses change in the future.



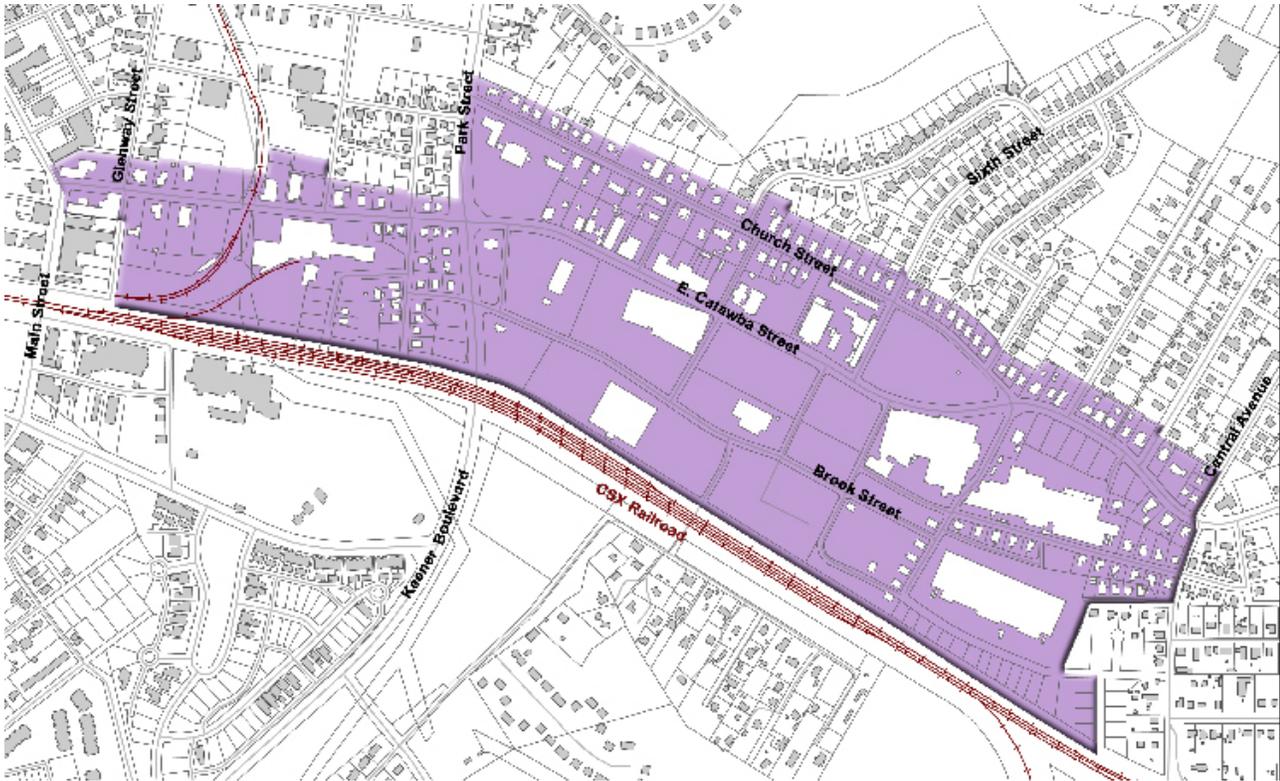


Figure 23: Catawba Street Corridor Plan



4.2 TRANSPORTATION

4.2.1 Process

The Transportation Plan of the Belmont Comprehensive Plan is the product of a process that included collection of existing transportation data from various sources (North Carolina Department of Transportation, Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization, the City of Belmont, and Gaston County), community input at Comprehensive Plan Public Meetings and Workshops, and analysis of the opportunities and constraints presented by the existing transportation system and land use patterns.

The refinement of the Belmont Comprehensive Plan - Transportation Plan has correlated with the refinement of the land use plan for Belmont. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance the current transportation system to serve the desired land use intensity and spatial distribution in the City.

4.2.2 Capacity, Connectivity and Choice

Three guiding elements in the development of the Transportation Plan Plan of the Comprehensive Plan were capacity, connectivity and choice. The three “C”s organize the evaluation of the existing transportation system and provide guidance for the development of future improvements.

The Plan defines capacity as the amount of transportation system needed to meet or exceed a given demand for mobility. The primary quantitative assessment of system capacity is related to traffic conditions on existing (and future) roadways, since roads almost exclusively currently define transportation in Belmont. The Plan seeks to provide adequate capacity for anticipated transportation growth around the City, by providing expanded facilities, facilities on new alignment, and by identifying areas for realignment to improve the safe and efficient flow of traffic. The Plan also seeks to include improvements already committed to in the NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the GUAMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Connectivity, the second “C”, is vitally important in overall transportation system performance, regardless if the trip is made by car, bus, pedestrian or bicycle. Some existing traffic problems in Belmont can be traced to a lack of connectivity between major roadway facilities, collector streets, and even adjacent neighborhood streets. Part of the problem lies with the relationship between the historic and more recent land use development patterns, and the lack of a guiding transportation plan to link the system together. Improved connectivity of the future roadway system in Belmont will result in fewer vehicle-miles traveled, shorter vehicle trips in town, and a reduction in the need for the widening of existing roadways. Connectivity is also vitally necessary for efficient public transportation systems, in terms of the area that transit serves and the efficiency of developing fixed routes.



From a safety perspective, probably the most important aspect of connectivity relates to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Belmont has little, if any, extended sections of sidewalk that connect more than local neighborhoods and the historical downtown area. With little or limited connectivity to other areas of town, there is a missed opportunity for a more trips being made without the need for a vehicle, since many pedestrians are wary of walking where portions of the trip do not feature continuous sidewalk, crosswalk, or pedestrian signalization at high traffic volume intersections. Similarly, there are no designated bicycle facilities that connect various areas of City. There are a number of existing streets that are used by bicyclists that are not, due to their design, particularly “bicycle-friendly”. Again, in many semi-rural, low density areas within the planning area, roadway designs are such that bicycling is very prohibitive on 10 and 11-foot travel lanes with no shoulders. These roadways could provide scenic, accessible environments for bicycling, but due to the safety factor, are underutilized for this travel mode.

To serve these modes of transportation in a safe manner, a designated, connected system of on-road and off-road facilities needs to be created to make non-motorized transportation a viable option for residents.

The third “C” relating to the Transportation Plan of the Comprehensive Plan is “choice”. The Plan needs to identify ways to allow Belmont residents to move around their community and beyond with options beyond the use of an automobile. There are viable possibilities for extended regional and local bus service developed in the Plan, as well as the integration of pedestrian/ bicycle on-street and off-street greenway systems. Overall, the Plan serves to enhance the streets of Belmont as a land use in and of themselves, not a barrier between land uses or just a place where cars go. The aspect of “choice” is also important in freeing some capacity for existing and future roadways to serve anticipated demands.



4.2.3 Existing Conditions

The existing transportation system in the Belmont Planning Area was inventoried for roadway capacity, geometrics, and traffic demand. Daily traffic count growth was compiled from information provided by NCDOT for the years 1990-2005. Information from existing transportation planning documents and thoroughfare plans was also reviewed to make an assessment of the current transportation system.

The initial assessment of the 2007 transportation system in Belmont is that current and recently approved commercial and residential development is outpacing the system-wide improvements made to the transportation system that serves it. Many intersections around the City are congested during peak travel periods, due to a lack of adequate turn-lanes and/or traffic signal phases. There are relatively few sidewalk facilities that connect neighborhoods or along major roadways outside of the historic downtown district. Several roadways located on the periphery of the City planning area have substandard lane widths, no shoulders, and sharp curves leading to intersections that are poorly aligned for safe sight distances.

Alternative transportation modes in the City are somewhat limited. Transit service through Belmont is limited to the Charlotte Area Transit (CATS) Route 85 Express Bus, which makes one stop in Belmont, while serving both Gastonia and downtown Charlotte with east-west service along I-85. Pedestrian facilities and usage are highest in the historic downtown district.

Existing local and state Transportation Plans were reviewed and the following improvement projects were noted:

Table 15. NCDOT 2007-2013 TIP for Belmont

| TIP No. | Project Name | Description | Length | Cost | Schedule |
|---------|---------------------------------------|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| U-3608 | NC 7 from US 29-74 to I-85 | Widen to a five-lane section | 0.4 miles | \$3,600,000 | Unfunded |
| E-4572 | Enhancements (CALL) Project - Belmont | Streetscape improvements along US 29-74, Catawba River to intersection of Wilkinson Blvd/Catawba Street | | \$285,000 | In progress |



Table 16. GUAMPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for Belmont - Unmet Needs List

| MPO Rank | Project Name | Description | Length | Cost | Horizon Yr Complete |
|----------|--|--|------------|--|---------------------|
| 10 | Belmont-Mt. Holly Loop (South Point & Western Segment) | Construct new, four-lane divided facility from South Point Road (NC 273) to the proposed Gastonia-Mt. Holly Connector | 10.0 miles | \$20,972,428 - South Point Segment \$53,339,013 - Western Segment | 2020 |
| 11 | Wilkinson Blvd. (US 29/74) Bridge Catawba River Bridge | Widen existing four-lane bridge to six lanes, and widen existing four-lane cross section to six lanes from Catawba Street (NC 7) to the east bank of the Catawba River | 0.5 miles | \$13,923,750 | 2020 |
| 14 | US 29/74 (Wilkinson Blvd) Bridge over the South Fork River | Replace existing four-lane bridge to match existing six-lane cross section of Wilkinson Blvd in Cramerton | 1.5 miles | \$33,136,000 | 2030 |
| 18 | Gastonia-Mt. Holly Connector | Construct new, four-lane divided facility from South Point Road (NC 273) to the proposed Gastonia-Mt. Holly Connector | 7.0 miles | \$42,726,000 | 2030 |
| 25 | NC 273 (South Point Road) Widening | Widen existing two-lane road to a four-lane facility from Nixon Road (SR 2534) to Lower Armstrong Road (NC 273) | 4.0 miles | \$14,202,100 | 2020 |

Table 17. GUAMPO LRTP Thoroughfare Plan Recommended Laneage Improvements for Belmont (Not Defined in LRTP Project List or TIP)

| Road Segment | Existing Laneage | Proposed Laneage |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Hickory Grove Road | 2 lane undivided | 3 lanes with Coninuous Center-Turn Lane |
| Woodlawn Road | 2 lane undivided | 3 lanes with Coninuous Center-Turn Lane |
| Belmont-Mt. Holly Road | 2 lane undivided | 3 lanes with Coninuous Center-Turn Lane |
| McAdenville Road | 2 lane undivided | 3 lanes with Coninuous Center-Turn Lane |
| Eagle Mill Road | 2 lane undivided (with some left-turn bays) | 3 lanes with Coninuous Center-Turn Lane |
| R.L. Stowe Road | 2 lane undivided | 4 lanes undivided |
| Nixon Road | 2 lane undivided | 3 lanes with Coninuous Center-Turn Lane |
| Armstrong Ford Road | 2 lane undivided | 3 lanes with Coninuous Center-Turn Lane |
| New Hope Road | 2 lane undivided | 4 lane median divided |



With few projects currently under construction or funded by the NCDOT TIP, most roadway improvements in the City are currently the result of private developments constructing internal circulation roadways or making spot improvements (turning lanes, traffic signals) onto existing adjacent roadways throughout the City.

4.2.4 Anticipated Demand

Traffic demands were estimated from two sources for the Transportation Plan of the Belmont Comprehensive Plan. Historic traffic growth patterns for City and Planning Area roadways were projected forward to the year 2030 using linear regression techniques to estimate daily traffic flows. This information was compared to results of the latest approved Metrolina travel demand model. The model is vital in assessing the future travel network because it accounts for a) land use and socio-economic changes in the City between now and different forecast years, b) changes in the transportation network that make improved roadways more desirable to travel on, and c) new roadways – particularly the Garden Parkway and Belmont – Mt. Holly Connector – that will have an effect on traffic on existing paralleling facilities and facilities that intersect the new roads.

Table 18 shows the Belmont Planning Area primary roadway segments, high-end ranges of existing and future demand (model and regression estimates) and their relation to the roadway's future capacity.

As shown in Table 18, there are a number of roadways that will need additional capacity to accommodate existing and/or future projected travel demands. The number of lanes needed for capacity has a "+" denomination for roads where auxiliary turn lanes are also needed for the facility to operate safely and efficiently given projected travel demand.

No specific changes were made to the model's land use inputs for trip generation, based on the Land Use Plan. However, a comparison was undertaken to qualitatively assess the amount of projected growth in designated areas within the Belmont Planning Area from data in the Comprehensive Plan to data from the Metrolina Model. In most cases, the model accurately projects growth patterns that are comparable to densities recommended in the preferred Comprehensive Plan scenario. With the official approval of the Comprehensive Plan by the City of Belmont, it is recommended that the City update the land use data in the regional model to more accurately reflect projected and desired land-use development in transportation network decision-making processes.



Table 18. Belmont Existing and Future Roadway Demand/Capacity

| Roadway | 2007 Existing Traffic Volume | Existing Lanes | 2030 Linear Growth Volume | 2030 Model Volume | Lanes Needed for Capacity |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Interstate 85 | 130,000 | 6-8 | 250,000 | 168,000 | 6-8 |
| US 29/74 (Wilkinson Blvd.) | 22,500 | 4-6 | 24,000 | 47,800 | 6 |
| NC 273 (Beatty Drive) | 28,000 | 4 | 41,000 | 31,500 | 4 |
| NC 273 (Central Avenue) | 10,700 | 2 | 15,000 | 12,500 | 2 |
| NC 273 (South Point Rd.) | 14,700 | 2 | 19,500 | 35,000 | 4 |
| NC 273 (RL Stowe Blvd.) | 8,000 | 2 | 14,000* | N/A | 4 |
| NC 279 (New Hope Rd.) | 7,500 | 2 | 11,800 | 25,700 | 4 |
| NC 7 (McAdenville Rd.) | 5,000 | 2 | 3,000 | 9,100 | 2+ |
| NC 7 (N. Main Street) | 15,500 | 2 | 19,500 | 16,300 | 4 |
| NC 7 (Catawba Street) | 4,800 | 2 | 5,000 | 5,700 | 2 |
| Park Street | 13,700 | 4 | 19,500 | 20,700 | 4 |
| Hickory Grove Road | 9,500 | 2 | 5,000 | 10,300 | 2+ |
| Woodlawn Street | 12,300 | 2 | 17,300 | 11,600 | 2+ |
| Perfection Road | 7,000 | 2 | 8,000 | 6,000 | 2 |
| Belmont-Mt. Holly Road | 21,000 | 2 | 30,000 | 15,700 | 4 |
| Armstrong Ford Road | 6,000 | 2 | 5,800 | 12,400 | 2+ |
| Main Street | 7,400 | 2 | 9,400 | 10,400 | 2 |
| Central Avenue | 10,700 | 2 | 15,000 | 4,900 | 2 |
| Eagle Mill Road | 3,000 | 2 | 4,000 | 1,600 | 2+ |
| Keener Boulevard | 13,200 | 4 | 16,500 | 19,900 | 4 |
| Garden Parkway | N/A | N/A | N/A | 57,300 | 4 |
| Belmont-Mt. Holly Connector | N/A | N/A | N/A | 23,500 | 4 |

* - Road not shown in MUMPO Travel Demand Model



4.2.5 Proposed Transportation Plan

The proposed Transportation Plan for Belmont roadways seeks to provide adequate traffic movement capacity, based on the estimates from the historic growth projection, Metrolina travel demand model, and input from the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Plan. The proposed plan also seeks to organize roadways into an ordered Functional Classification, to better provide standards and design criteria for roadways in the City. In addition, the Plan seeks to improve connectivity between existing facilities through the development of a network of local connecting roadways. These extensions/realignments of existing roads provide a "backbone" of transportation options through the City. Thus, there are multiple options for each vehicular trip, which avoids the current pattern of saturating the few major roadways with all trips from a particular subdivision or development. Finally, a qualitative assessment of important intersection improvement is noted, mostly stemming from the need to realign a particular intersection to acceptable AASHTO/NCDOT design standards. This will improve safety and efficiency of the intersection.

Figure 23 shows the Transportation Plan. Roadways are delineated into three major functional classes, and then separated by number of lanes, and by whether the roadway is on existing alignment or new alignment. The Functional Classification scheme was taken from current NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch standards for development of municipal and County Transportation Plans across the state. Since most major roads in Belmont are State-owned and maintained, it will be beneficial to maintain integrity between the City's Functional Classifications system and NCDOT's.

The Plan was developed assuming the Garden Parkway is completed and open to traffic on a final alignment at or close to the one that is shown in the Figures. This major improvement affects many other roadways and estimated traffic volumes in the City's transportation network. Diversion of through travel on the Parkway, whether or not it is operated as a toll road facility, reduces traffic growth on US 74/Wilkinson Boulevard. Potential interchanges with the Parkway increase the importance of the crossing Y-Line roadways (Southpoint Road, New Hope Road). New facilities especially the Belmont-Mt. Holly Connector, allow increased mobility for north-south cross-town traffic and take the existing demand burden off of Southpoint Road/Central Avenue.

All existing NCDOT TIP and GUAMPO LRTP projects are included in the Plan, and most remain in the same level of proposed improvement as was listed in the tables above. All roadways and improvements were compared to the intensity and location of the various Land Use Plan elements to ensure consistency and viability of a transportation system to support the Land Use Plan. The Transportation Plan also contains separate plan elements for pedestrian/bicycle circulation and transit (see Figures 24 and 25). These elements, like the thoroughfare plan, were developed in concert with the land use plan and complement the overall goals for the City.



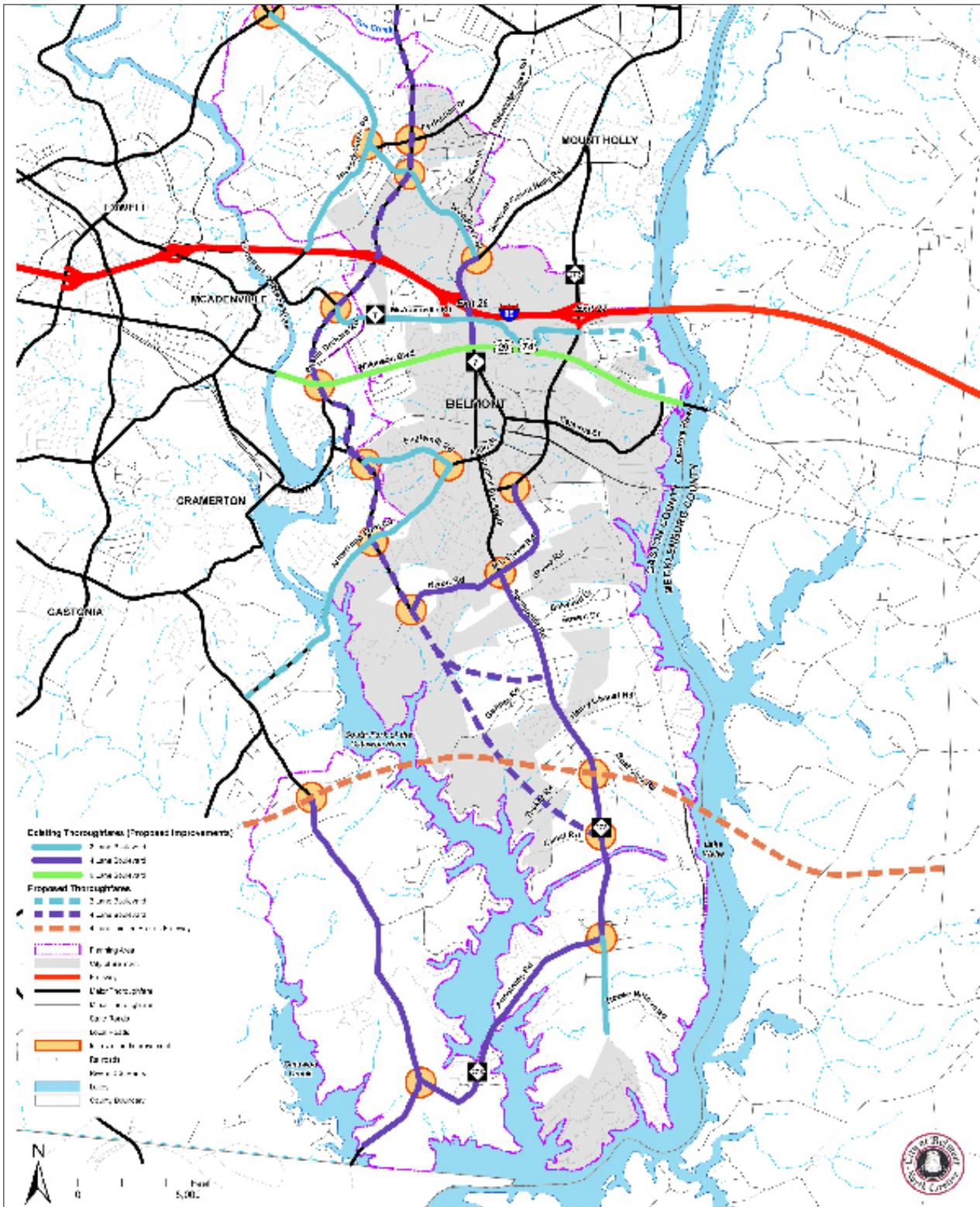


Figure 24: Transportation Plan



Section 4

LAND USE PLAN

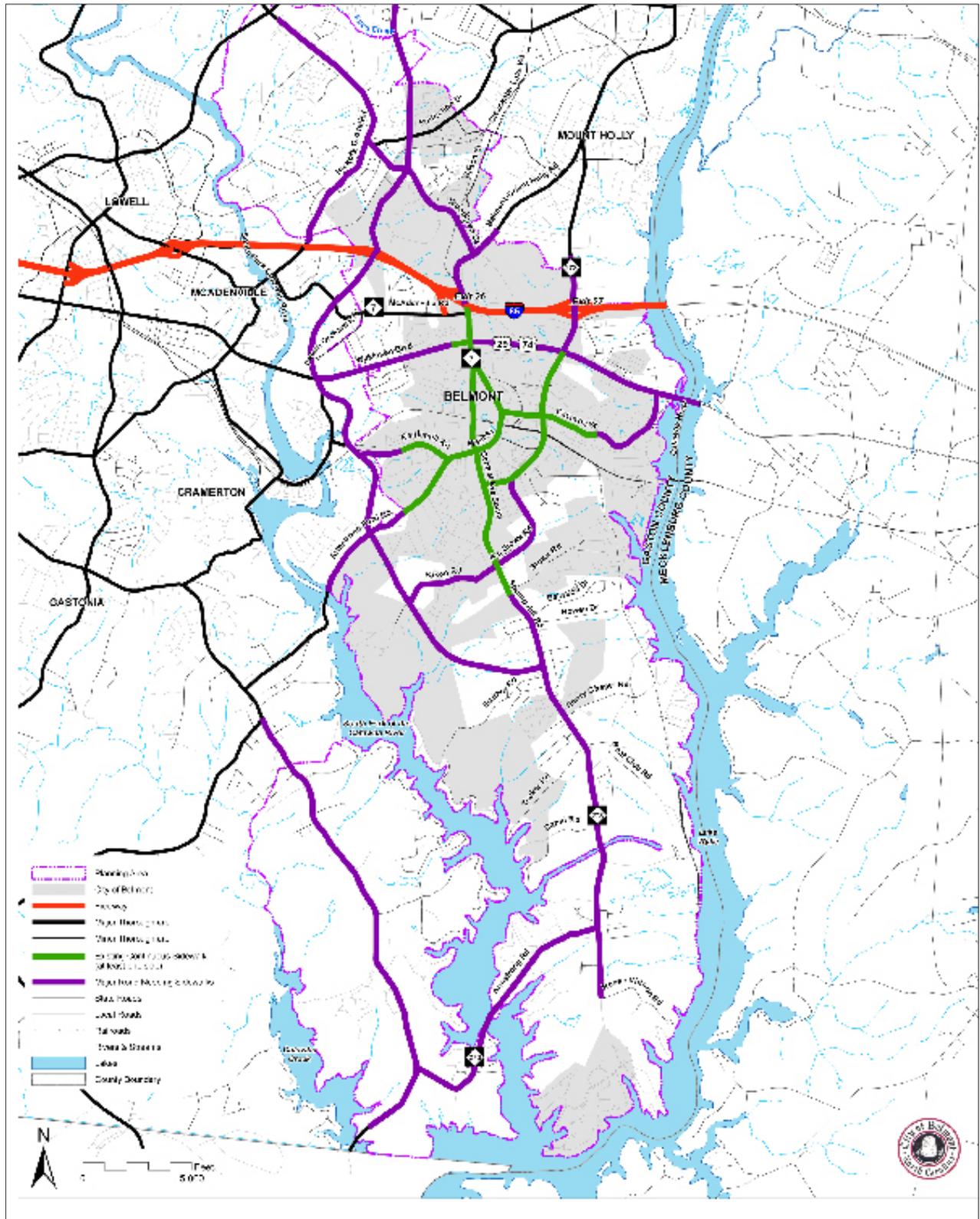


Figure 25: Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities



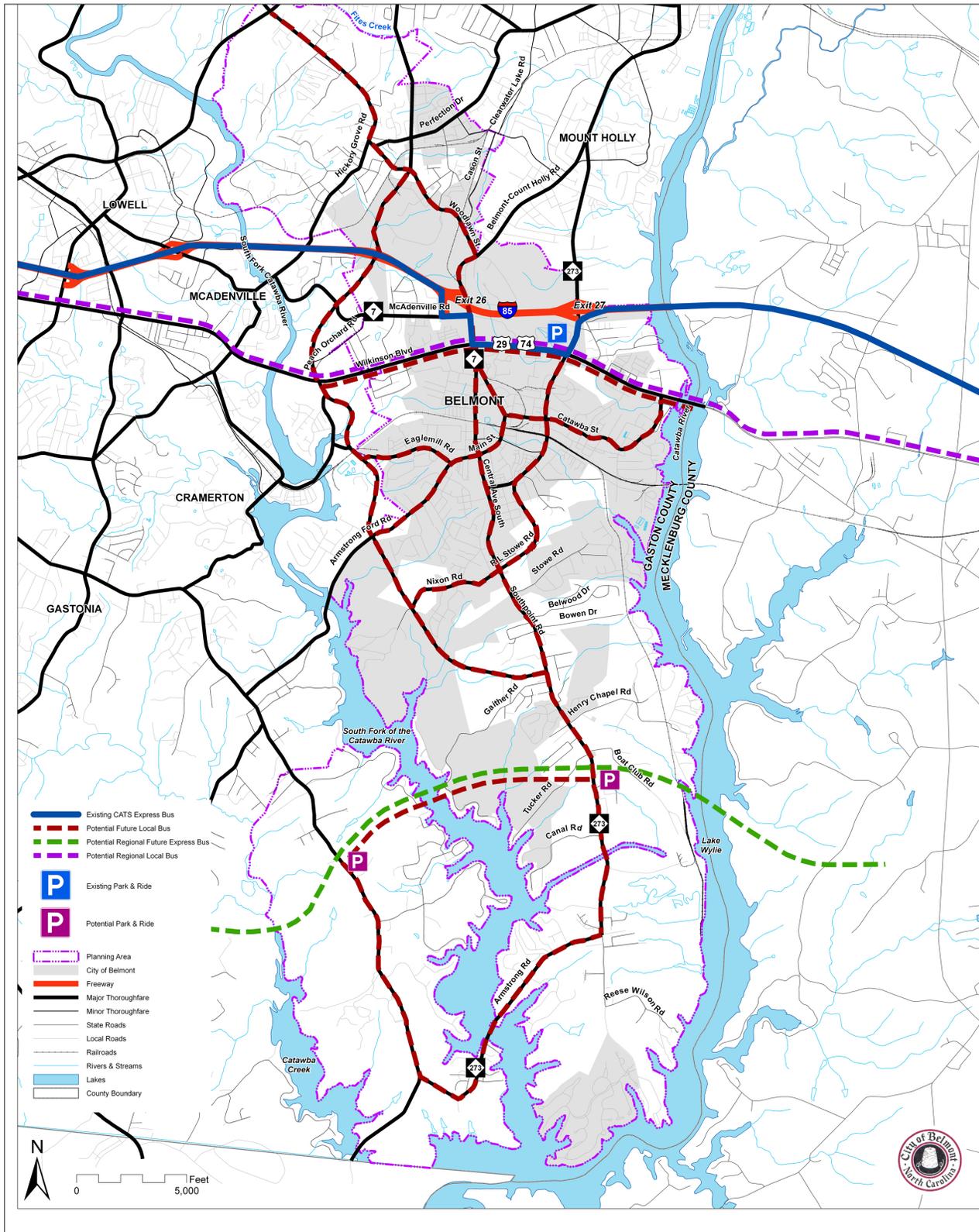


Figure 26: Transit Facilities



4.2.6 Street Typologies

A series of Street Typologies have been developed as part of the Transportation Plan. The purpose of these typologies is to allow a variety of boulevard designs in addition to undivided two-lane and four-lane streets to fit the varying land use and environmental contexts throughout the City. The typologies provide a range from two travel lanes to six travel lanes, in order to meet the anticipated traffic volumes in different locations throughout the City.

Accommodation of pedestrians and bicycles is incorporated into the street typologies. Trees are located between the roadway pavement and sidewalks wherever possible, to provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.

Eleven foot travel lanes are proposed throughout the typologies, which will be appropriate to the proposed speed limits and in compliance with AASHTO standards. The distance between the edge of travel lanes and trees complies with AASHTO and NCDOT standards.

Drainage for all of the street typologies is anticipated to be curb and gutter with underground storm drains. Curb and gutter would be provided on the outside of bicycle lanes, and a mountable curb provided at the median.

The typologies used are the ideally desirable street type for roads where they are indicated. They should be followed by the City in reviewing development plans, to assure that adequate right-of-way is preserved for the eventual full development of the roadway. They should be used by NCDOT as the City's desired configuration of the roadway to be compatible with the intended land uses which will emerge. There will undoubtedly be situations where topography, environmental constraints, existing development, or right-of-way availability will constrain the ability to fully realize the typology.

a. Two Lane Boulevard

The intent of this typology is to provide a suburban scale road that is compatible with predominantly medium density residential and commercial development (Figure 27).

This typology will be appropriate for new or existing alignment situations with existing residential or small commercial development, or for new alignment sections. It is intended to be posted for 35 mph speed limits, and should accommodate up to 15 - 20,000 AADT.

Pedestrians are to be accommodated with sidewalks adjacent to the roadway as shown. Trees are to be provided between the curb line and the sidewalk for pedestrian comfort and safety.

Bicycle lanes are provided adjacent to the travel lanes. The combination of the bicycle lane and travel lane are essential minimum widths, to allow for vehicles to pass in emergency or incident management situations, and to provide room for allowable U-turns.



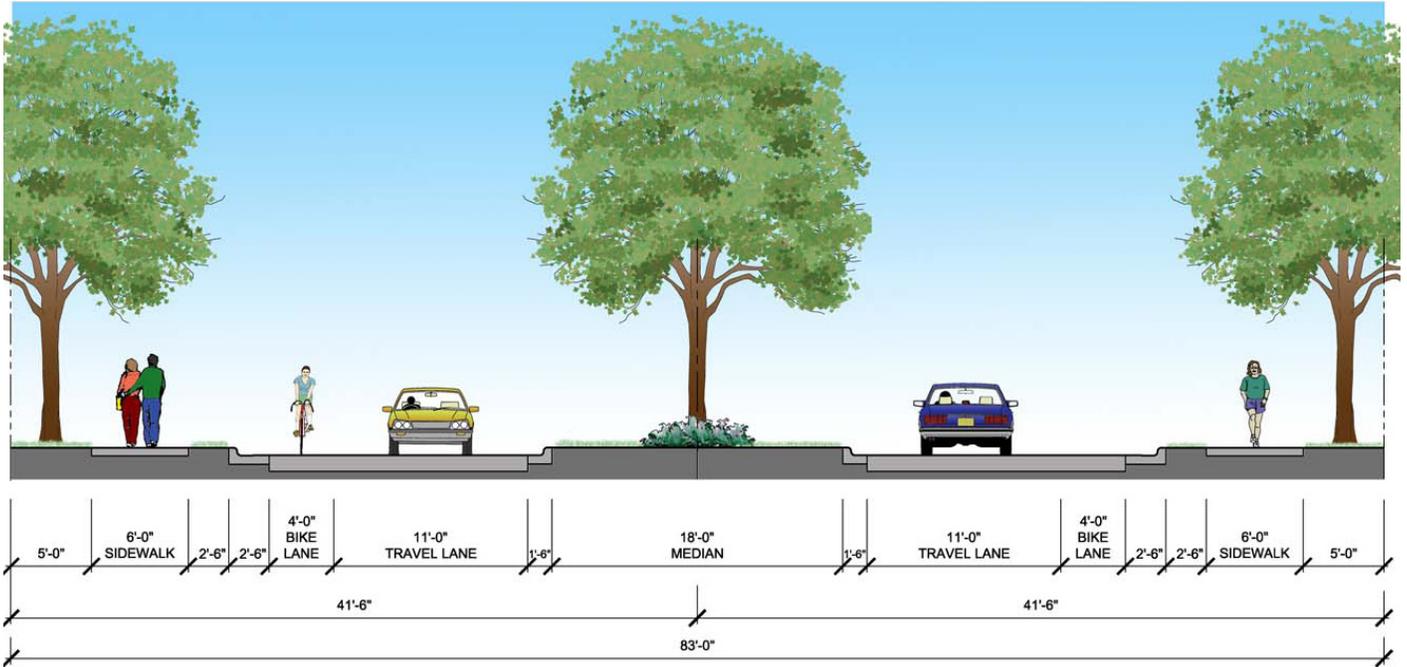


Figure 27: Two Lane Boulevard



b. Four Lane Boulevard

This will provide a suburban scale road that is compatible with predominantly medium to high density residential and commercial development (Figure 28).

This typology will be appropriate for new or existing alignment situations with existing residential or commercial development, or for new alignment sections. It is intended to be posted for 35 mph to 40 mph speed limits, and should accommodate up to 40,000 AADT.

Pedestrians are to be accommodated with sidewalks adjacent to the roadway as shown. Trees are to be provided between the curb line and the sidewalk for pedestrian comfort and safety.

Bicycle lanes are to be provided adjacent to the travel lane as shown. The bicycle lanes will help the road function efficiently, as they will provide additional turning room for buses and trucks.



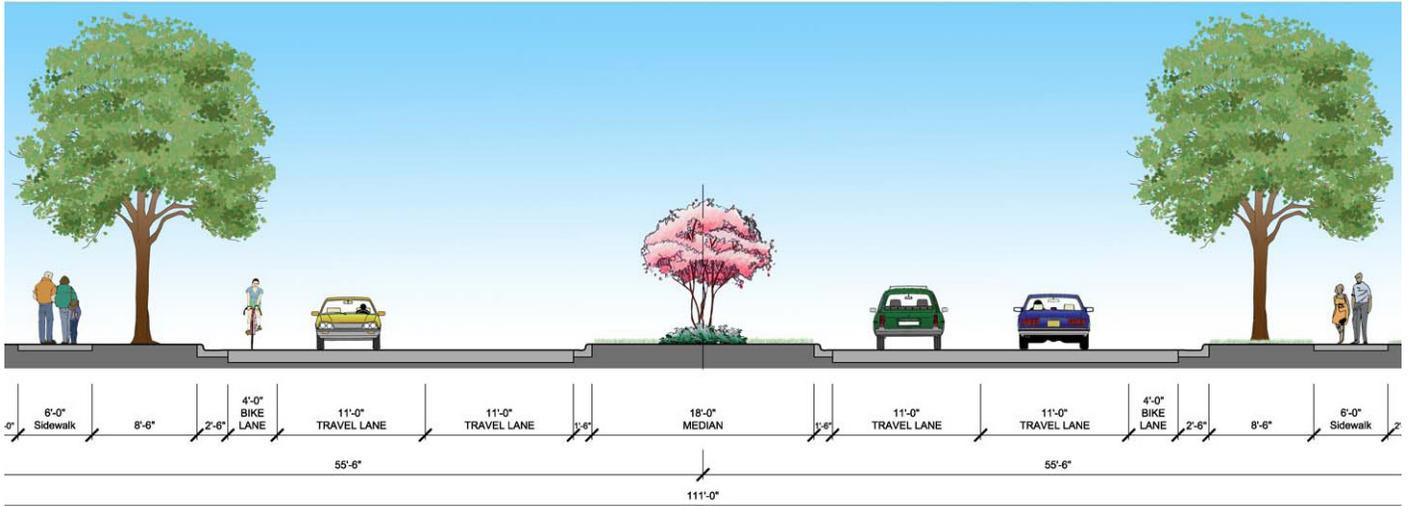


Figure 28: Four Lane Boulevard

c. Four Lane Village Center Boulevard

The intent of this typology is to provide an urban scale road that is compatible with Village Center mixed use and commercial development, with a strong pedestrian emphasis, while still providing traffic continuity with the Four Lane Boulevard (Figure 29).

The character of Village Center development where this typology is used is anticipated to resemble small town or small urban village or town centers. The Four Lane Village Center Boulevard street typology would be appropriate for approximately 1/2 mile in each direction from the primary street intersection in the Village Center, although this will vary depending on the actual Village Center plan and development. It is intended to be posted for 35 mph speed limits, and should accommodate up to 40,000 AADT.

To maintain efficient traffic movement through the area at the lower speeds compatible with pedestrians, on-street parking would not be appropriate for this typology.

The right of way indicated for this typology should not be reduced. The right of way shown is considered to be a minimum, to provide a minimum width sidewalk and tree well/street furnishing zone.

Pedestrians are to be accommodated with sidewalks adjacent to the roadway as shown. In planning for individual Village Center development, additional sidewalk width should be provided by requiring an additional building setback from the right of way line.

Bicycle lanes are to be provided adjacent to the travel lane as shown. The bicycle lanes will help the road function efficiently, as they will provide additional turning room for busses and trucks.



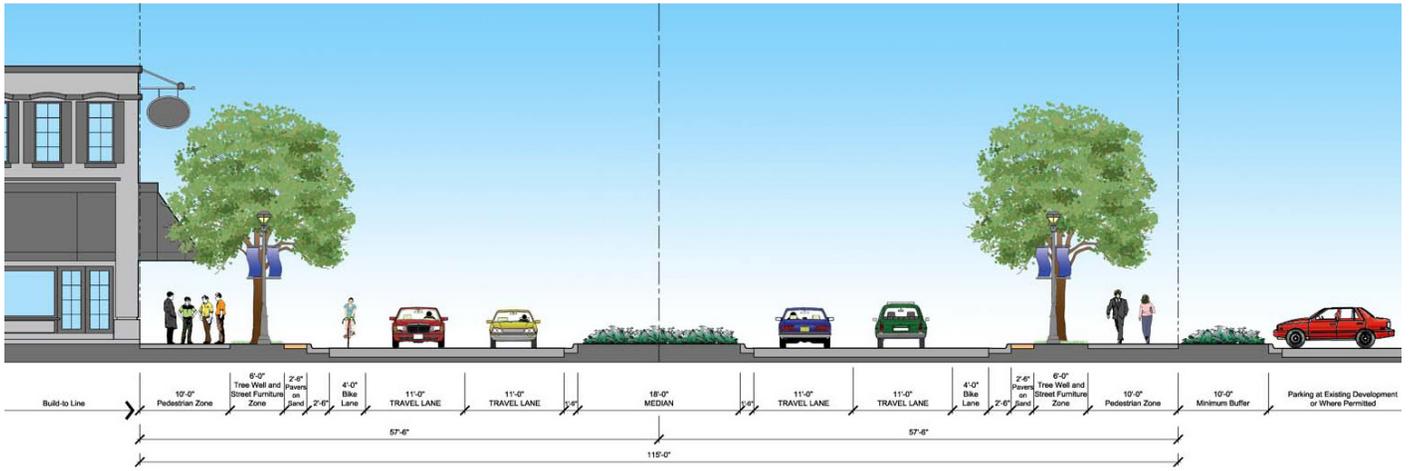


Figure 29: Four Lane Village Center Boulevard

d. Six Lane Boulevard

The intent of this typology is to provide a suburban scale road that is compatible with predominantly medium to high density commercial development. Its only application anticipated in Belmont would be on US 74, Wilkinson Boulevard.

The six lane boulevard typology is intended to be posted for 45 mph speed limits, and should accommodate up to 50,000 – 60,000 AADT.

Left turn traffic volumes in some instances could require two left turn lanes in the median, which might require additional right-of-way.

Pedestrians and bicycles are to be accommodated with a shared use path as shown.



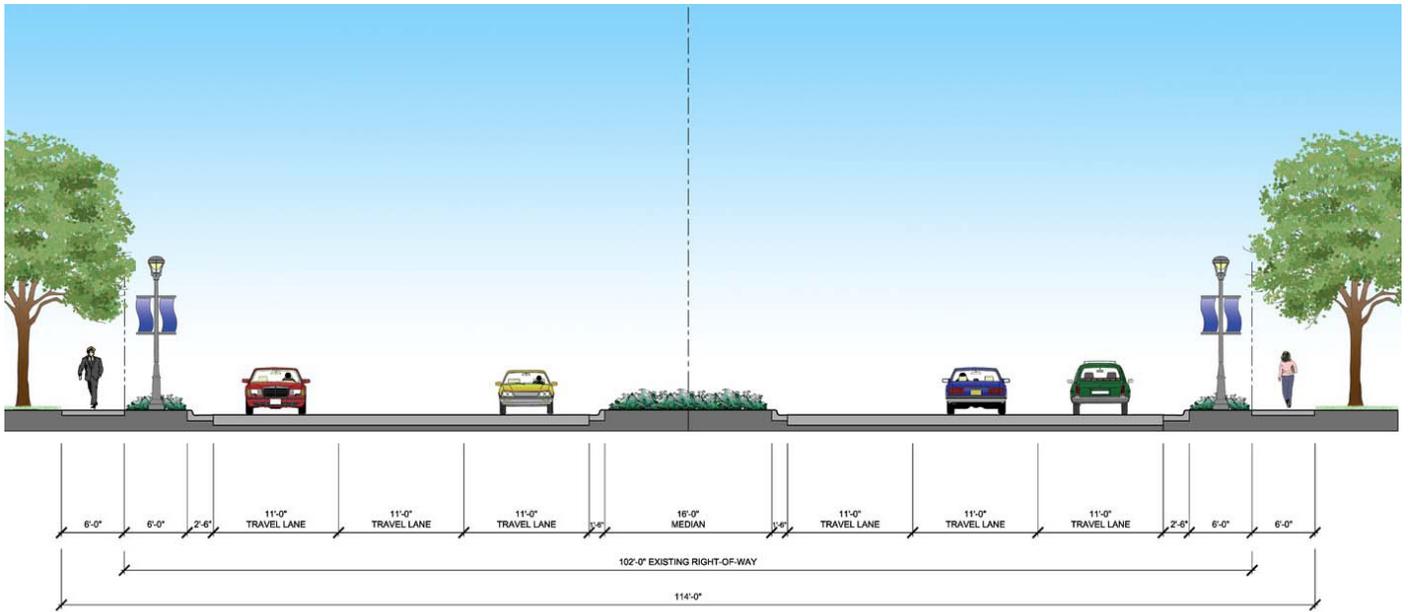


Figure 30: Six Lane Boulevard



4.3 PARKS AND GREENWAYS

4.3.1 Existing Park and Recreation Plan

Source: Belmont Parks and Recreation Facilities Comprehensive Master Plan 2003/2013

The Belmont Parks and Recreation Facilities Comprehensive Master Plan 2003/2013 was adopted by the City in 2003. It sets city-wide standards and goals for park land and facilities, and an action plan for implementing those goals and standards. The Comprehensive Plan provides updated city-wide park land area requirements as an update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

A comprehensive park system is made up of a variety of park types. These park types range from very Large nature Preserves (often encompassing hundreds of acres) to the very small mini parks (sometimes less than one acre). Not all of these parks are the responsibility of the municipal agency. Instead, a variety of agencies play a role in providing a comprehensive plan (federal, state, county, and municipal). To understand the City's role in providing recreation services to its citizens, one needs to understand the context that makes up a total park and recreation system.

Regional Parks/Nature Preserves

Nature Preserves are typically very large sites, encompassing unique qualities that exemplify the natural features found in the region, the diverse land formations, and the variety of vegetation and wildlife. Examples of the types of facilities provided in a Nature Preserve are environmental centers, camping, nature trails, observation decks, and picnic areas. Open fields for non-structured activities, such as Frisbee throwing or kite flying, are also generally found.

Land chosen for future preserves, or the expansion of existing sites, should contain the previously mentioned characteristics accompanied with natural water features such as lakes, rivers, and creeks. The majority of the site should be reserved for passive recreation, with the remaining acreage used for active recreation.

Specific standards/criteria for developing Nature Preserves are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Service Area: | County Wide |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 10 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Minimum Size: | 150-1,000 acres minimum with sufficient area to encompass the resources to be preserved and managed (10% of the site may be developed with facilities found in Community Parks) |



District Parks

District parks function as the major source of active recreation in the areas they serve. Athletic facilities developed in district parks are typically designed for league and possibly tournament play. Passive recreation opportunities are found in the undisturbed areas, preferably within surrounding buffers.

Sites for district parks should be relatively flat to alleviate excessive grading of active facilities. Where possible, there should be an equal balance of wooded and cleared areas. If a natural water feature is present, the adjoining land should be developed primarily with passive recreation. Accessibility to neighborhoods should also be a consideration when choosing sites.

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Service Area: | 1 to 2 ½ mile radius |
| Acreage/population Ratio: | 5 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Desirable Range: | 75-200 acres |
| Desirable Size: | +100 acres |

Community Parks

Community parks provide for the recreation needs of a few neighborhoods. A smaller range of facilities, compared to district parks, is typically provided and may support athletic and league sports or passive recreation. Fifty percent of the community park site should be developed for only passive recreation; these relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the park and/or act as buffers between active facilities.

Community park sites should have varying topography and vegetative communities. Forested areas should have a variety of tree species. Cleared areas should be present for siting active recreational facilities. Park land should also be contiguous and strategically located in order to be accessible to all users within the neighborhoods it serves.

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Service Area: | 1-2 mile radius |
| Acreage/Population ratio: | 2-5 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Desirable Range: | 15-50 acres |
| Desirable Size: | 25 acres |

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks offer the public a convenient source of recreation. These parks are usually located within walking distance of the area serviced, and they provide a variety of activities to interest all age groups. While their small size requires intense development, fifty percent of each site should remain undisturbed to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent land users.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Service Area: | ¾ to 1 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Desirable Size: | 7 to 15 acres |



Mini Parks

Mini parks are the smallest park classification. These parks are located within walking distance of the area services, and they provide limited recreational needs. Their small size requires intense development, and little to no buffer between the park and adjacent land users is provided.

The standards for Mini Park development are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Service Area: | ¼ to ½ mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 0.5 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Desirable Size: | +/- 1 acre |

Linear Parks

A linear park is an area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking and biking. Often the linear park will be developed to connect recreational facilities, as well as schools and residential neighborhoods.

The acreage and service area of a linear park is variable and subject to existing natural and man-made features, the existence of public right-of-way, and the public demand for this type of park. In some cases, a linear park is developed within a large land area designated for protection and management of the natural environment, with the recreation use a secondary objective.

Unique or Special Use Facilities

The unique or special use facilities are park types that exist to enhance or utilize a special man-made or natural feature. They can include beaches, parkways, historical sites, sites of archeological significance, arboretums, conservation easements, flood plains, etc. Minimum standards relating to acreage or population have not been established by the park and recreation industry for this category. A size that is sufficient to protect and interpret the resource, while providing optimum use is considered desirable.



4.3.2 Required Park Areas

The required park land areas needed to support the Land Use Plan at its ultimate build-out population of approximately 50,000 people are as shown in Table 19.

Table 19. Park Land Requirements by Classification

| Type Population | Existing | 2003 (8,769) | 2013 (15,000) | Build-Out (50,000) |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Regional Parks 1,000 acre park (10 acres/1,000) | N/A | 88 acres | 150 acres | 500 acres |
| District Parks 200 acre park (5 acres/1,000) | N/A | 44 acres | 75 acres | 250 acres |
| Community Parks 20-30 acre park (2.5 acres/1,000) | 0 acres <i>0 sites</i> | 22 acres <i>1 site</i> | 38 acres <i>1 site</i> | 125 acres <i>5 sites</i> |
| Neighborhood Parks 10-15 acre park (2 acres/1,000) | 52 acres <i>3 sites</i> | 18 acres <i>2 sites</i> | 30 acres <i>3 sites</i> | 100 acres <i>8 sites</i> |
| Mini Parks 1-2 acre park (0.5 acres/1,000) | 16 acres <i>2 sites</i> | 4 acres <i>4 sites</i> | 8 acres <i>7 sites</i> | 25 acres <i>22 sites</i> |
| Total Acres Needed for Mini, Neighborhood and Community Parks | 68 acres | 44 acres <i>24 acre surplus</i> | 75 acres <i>7 acre deficiency</i> | 250 acres <i>182 acre deficiency</i> |

Notes: Existing, 2003 and 2013 areas and sites are from the *Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan*; Regional and District parks are typically provided by state or county agencies; Existing acreage and sites include undeveloped park property; Crescent Park is leased and not counted in this table





Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden



Electric Transmission Line Trail



Greenway Trail



Regional Sports Complex

4.3.3 Greenways and Trail Systems

The Parks and Recreational Facilities Comprehensive Master Plan 2003/2013 included a recommendation that the City develop a greenways system:

“The City should support the greenway initiative proposed in the Gaston County Comprehensive Planning Program. This greenway initiative, when complete, will provide a greenway corridor connecting the Educational Forest in northeast Gaston, Stowe Botanical Garden, Crowder’s Mountain State park, and other areas in Gaston County. The City should also provide greenways or pedestrian friendly streets between existing city parks, schools, residential neighborhoods, and businesses. Greenways are considered important to the success of the City’s recreation program and the quality of life for Belmont residents.”

The Land Use Plan includes an interconnected system of greenway trails throughout much of Belmont, using a combination of creeks, Duke Energy electric transmission line easements or rights-of-way, and NCDOT inactive railroad rights-of-way (Figure 31). This system links neighborhoods together, and provides access to Lake Wylie and the South Fork of the Catawba River, where waterfront parks can be developed. The greenway system also links, wherever possible, to the Downtown Commercial and Civic Center, Village Commercial and Civic Centers, and schools.

4.3.4 Regional and Special Parks

a. Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

In 1989, Daniel J. Stowe, a retired textile executive from Belmont, reserved 450 acres of prime rolling meadows, woodlands and lakefront property and established a foundation to develop a world-class botanical garden. A lifelong nature lover and gardening enthusiast, Dan Stowe and his wife, Alene, envisioned a complex evolving over several decades to rival other internationally renowned gardens. Final construction of the Visitor Pavilion and surrounding Gardens was completed in 1999. In January, 2004 Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens was named one of the nation’s “20 Great Gardens” in the new HGTV Flower Gardening Book. The Gardens are privately owned and operated, and are open to the public. The Garden is located on the west side of the South Fork of the Catawba River, with frontage on the Catawba Creek inlet from Lake Wylie.

b. Regional Park and Sports Complex at Armstrong Ford Road and the Belmont-Mt. Holly Connector

Approximately 260 acres between Armstrong Ford Road and Nixon Road along the future Belmont-Mt. Holly Connector has been suggested as a Regional Park.



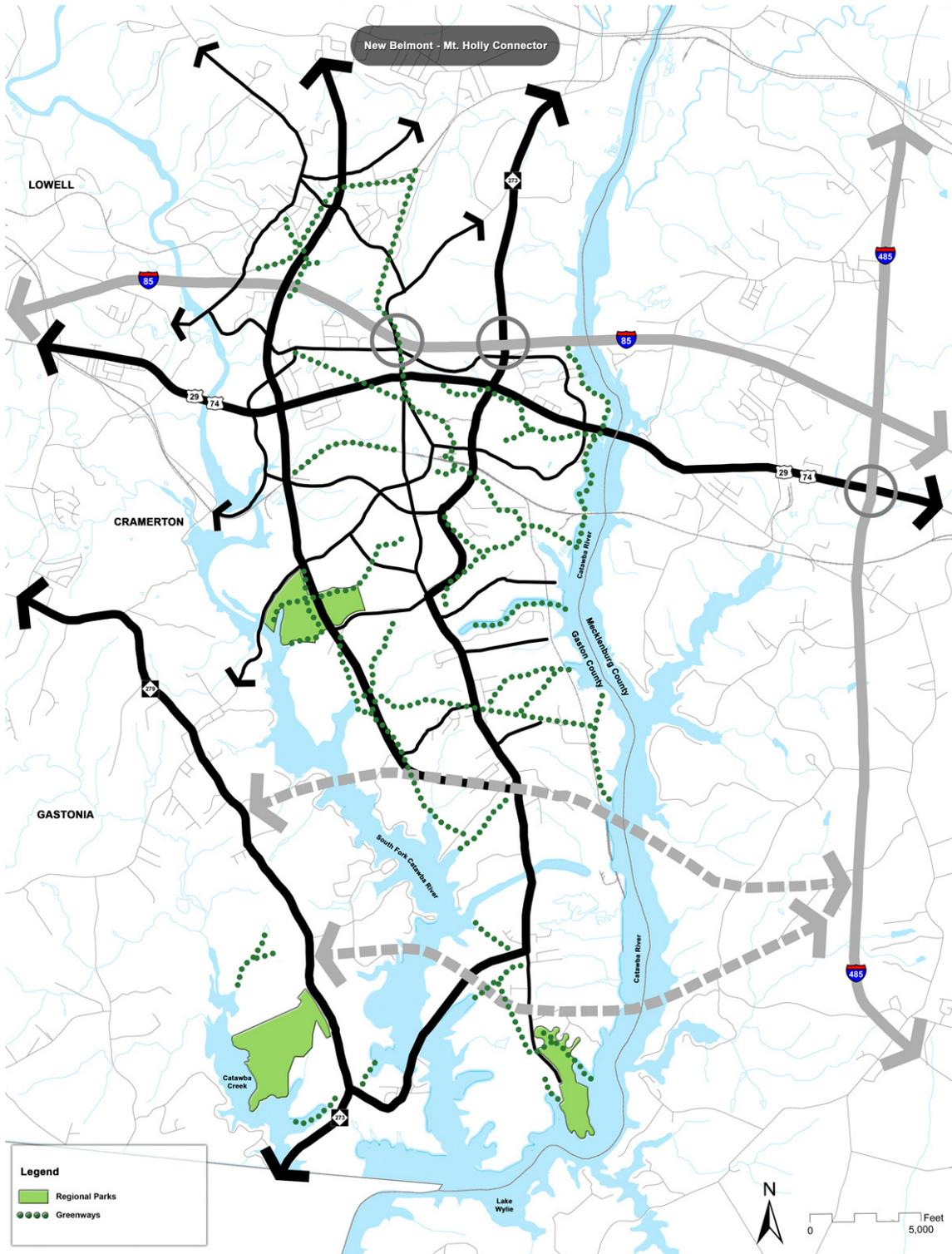


Figure 31: Greenways & Regional Parks



Section 4

LAND USE PLAN



South Point Landing

With the completion of the Connector, this will become a highly accessible location within Belmont. With a location on the South Fork of the Catawba River, it would provide an excellent waterfront location at relatively shallow waters, providing opportunities for canoeing, kayaking and fishing. The steep topography and wooded character of most of the site would provide a good location for trails and other nature activities appropriate for a Regional Park.

Within the designated site, there are approximately 115 acres in three separate locations where the topography is less steep. This appears to provide an opportunity for a Sports Complex that was set as a priority goal by the City Council in 2006. The accessibility of the location with the completion of the Connector would make it suitable for events which could attract visitors and teams from out of town.

c. South Point Landing

South Point Landing is a site at the southeastern tip of the Peninsula, operated as a boat launch area by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. This will remain as a regional recreational area, and could be expanded as a larger Regional Park on land which is likely unsuitable for development because of its steep terrain.

