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PROSPERITY CHURCH ROAD VILLAGES

A Land Use and Urban Design Plan for the Prosperity Church Road and I-485 Interchange

Prepared by

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission
Mecklenburg County Engineering Department
Charlotte Department of Transportation

Adopted by Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary i
Issues
Vision
Summary of Recommendations

Introduction iv
Purpose of Plan

Background 1

Area Profile 2
Physical Description
Land Use
Zoning
Population
Transportation System

Issues 4

Plan Vision 5

Goals 6

Guiding Principles 7

The Land Use and Urban Design Plan 8
Village Concept
Circulation Concept

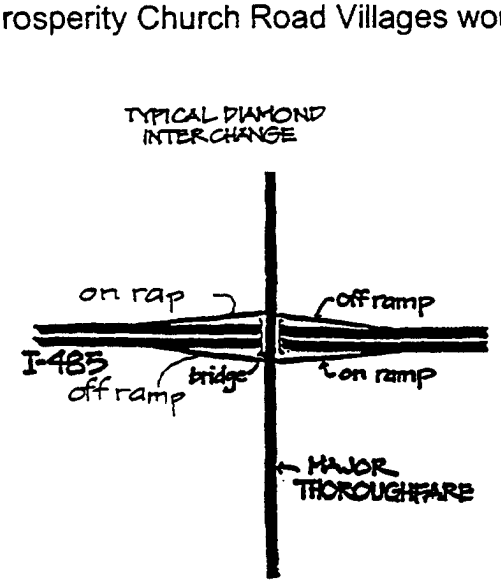
Development Guidelines 11

Implementation Strategies 30

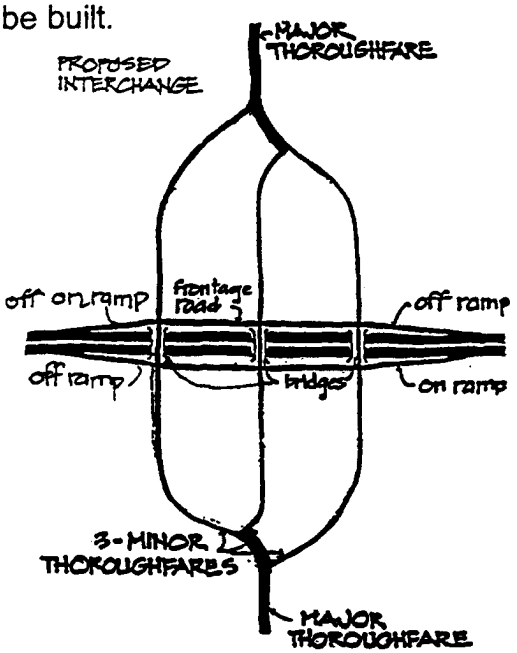
Conclusion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan was undertaken to implement a recommendation of the Northeast District Plan that a "compact, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use village" be developed at the proposed interchange of Prosperity Church Road and the Outerbelt, I-485. Planning staff, along with staff from Mecklenburg County Engineering and the Charlotte Department of Transportation worked with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to develop a unique interchange featuring three bridge crossings within a quarter mile of each other that would provide the framework for the development of a grid street network. It is upon this pedestrian oriented street network that Prosperity Church Road Villages would be built.



- unrelated development on 4 quadrants
- traffic concentrated at 1 bridge



- Expands opportunity for coordinated, mixed-use development
- traffic dispersed among 3 pedestrian oriented streets with 3 bridge crossings
- provides greater connectivity across I-485

The development of the Land Use and Urban Design Plan was done with an emphasis on the following principles:

- mixing uses within buildings as well as within blocks;
- pedestrian oriented development with buildings oriented to the street;
- an interconnected street network with a hierarchy of pedestrian-oriented streets;
- diversity of housing and other building types;
- and a sustainable development pattern that minimizes disruption of the natural environment.

To develop the plan, staff conducted two public meetings to get a better understanding of property owner concerns and answer their questions regarding the proposed outerbelt/interchange design, and the proposed village concept. A final public presentation of the Plan was held on July 14, 1998.

ISSUES

- Impact of the proposed outerbelt
- Location of the outerbelt and proposed interchanges
- Timing of right of way acquisition
- Phasing of construction of the bridge and frontage road
- Traffic congestion
- Benefits of the proposed village concept
- Incorporating and/or preserving natural features
- Impact of proposed development on adjacent neighborhoods
- Design of the transportation system

VISION

- Two pedestrian oriented villages, one on each side of I-485 with a mixture of retail, office, and residential uses oriented to public streets and squares.
- A village square as the center of activity for each village
- A connected street and open space network that encourages walking and bicycling as well as vehicular connectivity between uses.
- A development pattern that places the tallest buildings and most intense traffic generating mixed commercial uses adjacent to or in close proximity to I-485, then transitioning from the highest density residential to increasingly lower densities as the distance from the village center increases. The lowest density within the village would be single family detached of 6-8 units per acre

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use

The Plan emphasizes a mixture of higher density residential and non-residential land uses in close proximity, to encourage walking from one destination to another, particularly from place of residence to work, shopping, recreating etc. The highest density, highest traffic generating land uses - office, retail, lodging, mid-rise residential - would be located adjacent to I-485. This would transition to predominantly multi-family (up to 30 units per acre) two to three blocks from I-485, transitioning further to lower density townhouses (up to 20 units per acre) then to single family detached at the village edges at a density of 6-8 units per acre.

Urban Design
The basic urban design concepts are as follows:

- The development of a hierarchy of building heights with the tallest buildings up to four or perhaps five stories directly adjacent to I-485. Height reduces as the distance from I-485 increases, until there is a predominance of one to three story single family and townhouse residences where the villages abut existing single family subdivisions.
- The orientation of buildings is to the street. Pedestrians have direct access and the building fronts engage the pedestrian whether with attractive entrances and creative window displays on the shopping street, or porches and balconies on residential streets.
- An interconnected street network with sidewalks, bike lanes, and street trees connecting to an open space network of village squares and greenways is essential to establishing a coherent circulation pattern.
- Development that is sensitive to the existing natural landscape. The preservation of creeks and flood zones, and significant forested areas, and their inclusion in the overall open space network will provide a rich public resource that can be enjoyed by many.

The development guidelines are recommended to ensure that these concepts are carried through in the planning and development process.

Transportation
The previously proposed diamond interchange at Prosperity Church Road and I-485 has been redesigned to provide three bridge crossings within a quarter mile of each other with on and off ramps at the two outside bridges. Leading up to the three bridges will be three minor thoroughfares with sidewalks and bike lanes that will provide the framework for the village development concept. An interconnected street network is proposed that minimizes dependence on the thoroughfares and encourages walking and bicycling as two viable transportation modes.

The existing Thoroughfare Plan should be amended to reflect proposed roadway changes recommended in this plan. Special roadway design standards unique to this area are proposed for thoroughfares and collectors.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose & Nature of Plan

The development of a mixed-use, pedestrian oriented, urban village as part of an innovative new design for the interchange of Prosperity Church Road and I-485 (The Outerbelt) was one of the principal recommendations of the Northeast District Plan, adopted by Charlotte City Council (1995) and the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners (1996). This plan was developed in response to that recommendation. The proposed plan will be used as a guide for decision making regarding land use changes to land adjacent to the proposed interchange. It will provide guidance to property owners, developers, elected officials, and many others who seek to invest or live in the area.

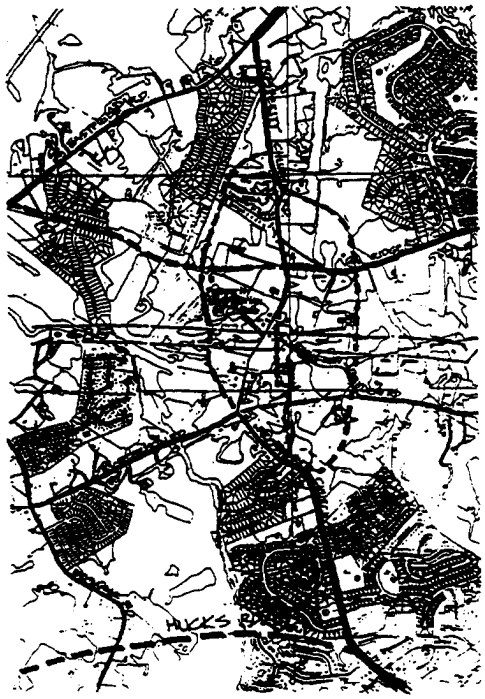
A unique opportunity is at hand to create a mixed-use community that is sensitive to the natural environment connected with a network of pedestrian oriented streets and open spaces designed for people whether they are driving through, walking to a nearby store, or riding their bicycle to a park. This plan will focus on land use; what type of uses will be developed and, urban design; what will it look like, how do new buildings create outdoor space and help establish a strong pedestrian environment? This plan and development guidelines were developed by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, staff working with property owners and developers in the Prosperity Church Road area as well as City, County and State Transportation staffs.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the development of the Northeast District Plan, NCDOT had proposed a traditional diamond interchange for Prosperity Church Road and I-485, with one bridge crossing and on and off access ramps in both directions. Soon after adoption of the Northeast District Plan, Planning staff began working with (NCDOT) in the development of a concept for an interchange that would facilitate the development of an urban, mixed use community and avoid the type of segregated development that typically occurs at interstate highway interchanges. The proposed urban villages recommended by the Northeast District Plan would be planned and developed along the lines of traditional neighborhoods with a grid or modified grid street network, and where employment, shopping, living, recreating etc., are mixed together so that nearby residents are able to walk to them. The unique design for this interchange with multiple bridge crossings was developed specifically to facilitate an urban community at this location. The proposed new design is envisioned with three bridge crossings of I-485 within 1/4 mile of each other, with on and off access provided at the 2 outside bridges. (See diagram below) All three bridges would be connected by frontage roads, and lined with new development. The three bridge crossings would disperse the traffic onto three pedestrian oriented minor thoroughfares, and further dispersed to a network of collector and local streets and provide the framework for the development of the urban villages. It is proposed that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Thoroughfare Plan be amended to accommodate the changes. (see below)

Existing Thoroughfare Plan

Proposed Thoroughfare Plan



existing ——
proposed - - - - -

AREA PROFILE

Physical Description

The study area is located in northeast Mecklenburg County and consists of approximately 600 acres. The area is approximately 12 miles from uptown Charlotte, 3 miles from the Town of Huntersville, and 6 miles from the Town of Davidson, giving it a very rural context. The area extends about one half mile on either side of the existing Prosperity Church Road from Dearmon Road to Eastfield Road. The area could be characterized as farmland, consisting of open pastures and fields, enclosed by densely forested, undeveloped areas. Most of the existing structures in the area are houses, barns and storage sheds. Immediately adjacent to the planning area, single family residential development is occurring at a very rapid pace, with Highland Creek to the east, Eastfield Ridge to the west, Devonshire to the south, and Hayden Commons to the southeast.

The area is part of the Mallard Creek/Rocky River/Pee Dee River watershed, and contains the headwaters of three tributaries of Mallard Creek: Clarks Creek, Stony Creek, and Clarke Creek. Clarks Creek forms a portion of the western boundary and is on the Mecklenburg County Greenway Master Plan. The topography is typically of low or moderate slopes in the open fields, with some areas of steeper topography principally in the forested areas and near the creeks. Elevations range from 730 feet in the Stony Creek headwaters in the southeastern portion of the study area, to 820 feet just north of Ridge Road.

Land Use

Farm activities are still the principal land use in the area although this is changing quickly. Widely scattered single family houses is the predominant development pattern. There are 30 single family houses located in the area and three of these units are vacant. Other residential structures include a 74 unit mobile home park and two duplexes. Public uses include Prosperity Presbyterian Church and a Montessori School. Additionally, there are two small convenience stores in the area. The map on page 3 depicts existing land use.

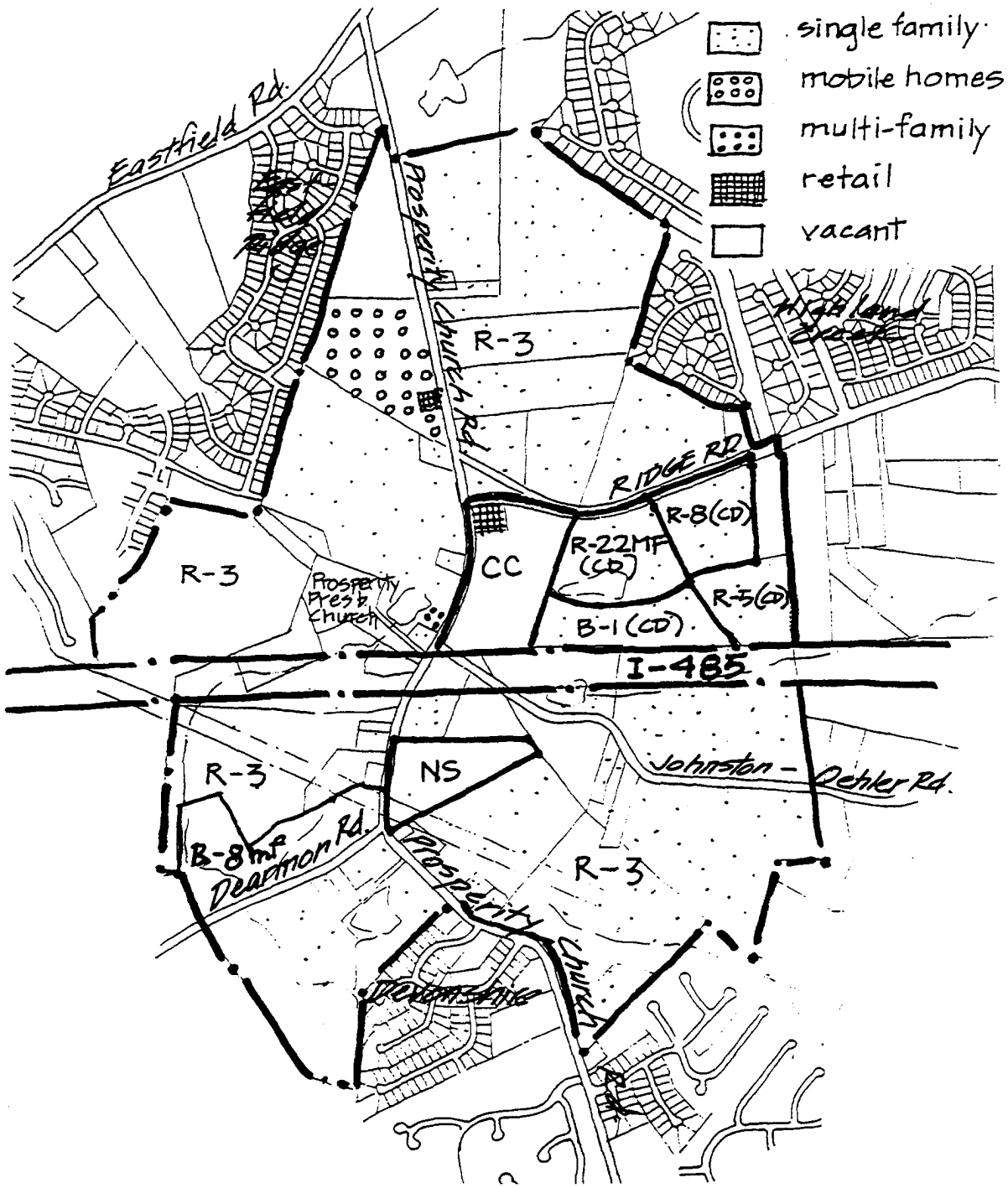
Zoning

The existing zoning for most of the land in this area is R-3, a single family detached residential zoning classification that allows up to three units per acre. There is also some R-4 zoning in the area. However, several significant tracts of land adjacent to the interchange have been recently rezoned for higher density uses, including retail, office, and multi- family residential uses. Another zoning request is pending and many more are expected as the development around this interchange intensifies. Planning staff is working with developers to be sure that their plans are consistent with the plan concept and development guidelines. (See page 3 for existing zoning)

Population

Approximately 260 people live within the study area boundaries. Being rural in character, the study area is not heavily populated. However, just outside of the study area boundaries are several single family subdivisions that have a tremendous population impact on the area. Highland Creek, a large single family subdivision to the northeast will have approximately 4,500 single family and multi family units upon completion. Residents of Highland Creek and other surrounding subdivisions add a substantial amount of people to the general area.

Existing Zoning & Land Use Map



ISSUES

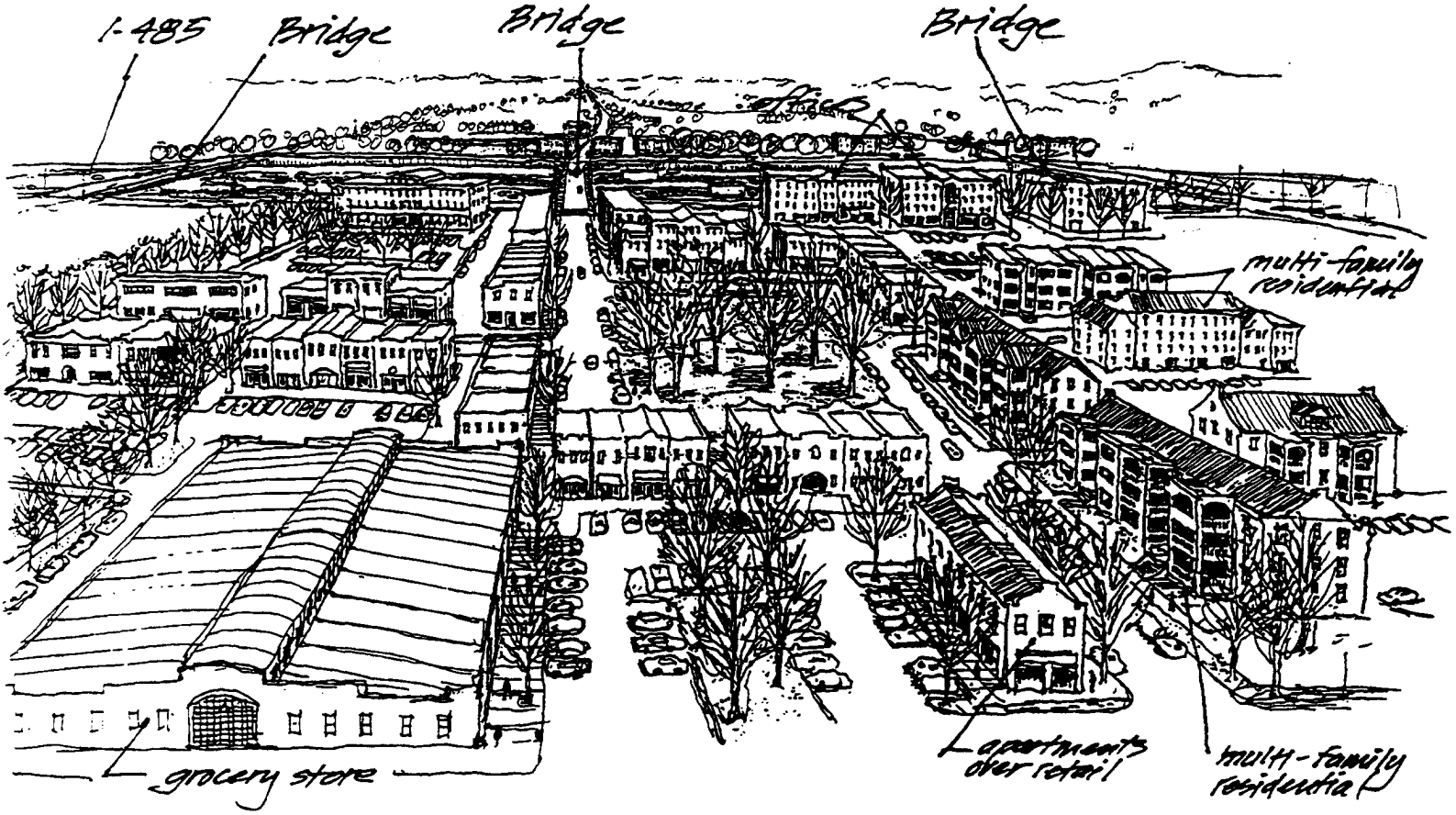
In addition to three public meetings, Planning staff met individually with most of the property owners to listen to their concerns, and explain the plan concept, and how they can best plan their future given the changes that are occurring. The proposed plan attempts to address the following issues which were identified by the property owners:

- Impact of the proposed outer belt
- Location of the outer belt and proposed interchanges
- Timing of right of way acquisition
- Phasing of construction of the bridge and frontage road
- Traffic congestion
- Benefits of the proposed village concept
- Incorporating and/or preserving natural features
- Impact of proposed development on adjacent neighborhoods
- Design of the transportation system

PLAN VISION

The vision for this area as described in the Northeast District Plan is for the development of a compact, pedestrian-oriented mixed use "village" that is developed along the lines of "traditional" communities. Components of this vision include:

- Development of a rich, vibrant, public realm consisting of a connected street and open space network that encourages walking and bicycling.
- Some of the existing natural landscape remaining undeveloped and becoming a part of a meaningful, connected open space network.
- Commercial, office, and residential development mixed within blocks and within buildings.
- A village square as the center of activity for the villages.
- Buildings designed at a pedestrian scale, oriented to the street.
- Taller, signature office buildings directly adjacent to and highly visible from I-485
- Larger scale retail uses adjacent to I-485.
- Smaller scale neighborhood oriented office and retail uses around or close to the village square.
- Medium and high density housing close to the village square; transitioning to lower density single family at village edge.



GOALS

The major goals guiding the development of this land use and urban design plan are:

- To provide a land use and urban design plan that promotes a mixture of compatible land uses at varying densities that creates a highly livable, sustainable community that is supportive of public transit, is pedestrian oriented, and sensitive to the natural features of the land.

- To provide a coherent, connected, circulation and open space network that encourages walking and bicycling.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To realize the plan vision, the following key principles are intended to guide development:

Mixture of Uses
The development pattern envisioned consists of varying types and densities of housing in close proximity or intermixed with commercial, employment and civic uses and connected with a network of streets and squares.

Pedestrian Oriented
The principal pedestrian activity of a building is at its entry. When the entry is directly from the public street, the greatest pedestrian activity occurs, and the interaction makes for lively, enriching, safe streets.

Interconnected Street Network
Streets should be viewed as a multi-purpose mixing ground, a part of the public realm, rather than a single-use utility for cars. There should be an interconnective network, that minimizes use of arterial streets to reach destinations. Sidewalks on both sides of every street are essential for pedestrians, and many streets will have bike lanes as well.

Diversity
Diversity should characterize the development pattern: small shops, and large corporate offices, small rental apartments, and larger condominium townhouses; narrow lanes, and thoroughfares with bike lanes and sidewalks; small urban squares and a larger greenway network etc.

Sustainability
Development should minimize disruption of natural ecosystems, minimize the development footprint through compact, pedestrian oriented development, as well as minimize dependence on automobiles. These and other conservation efforts that result in an overall reduction of waste and consumption of natural and economic resources will lead to the development of highly livable places.

THE LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN PLAN

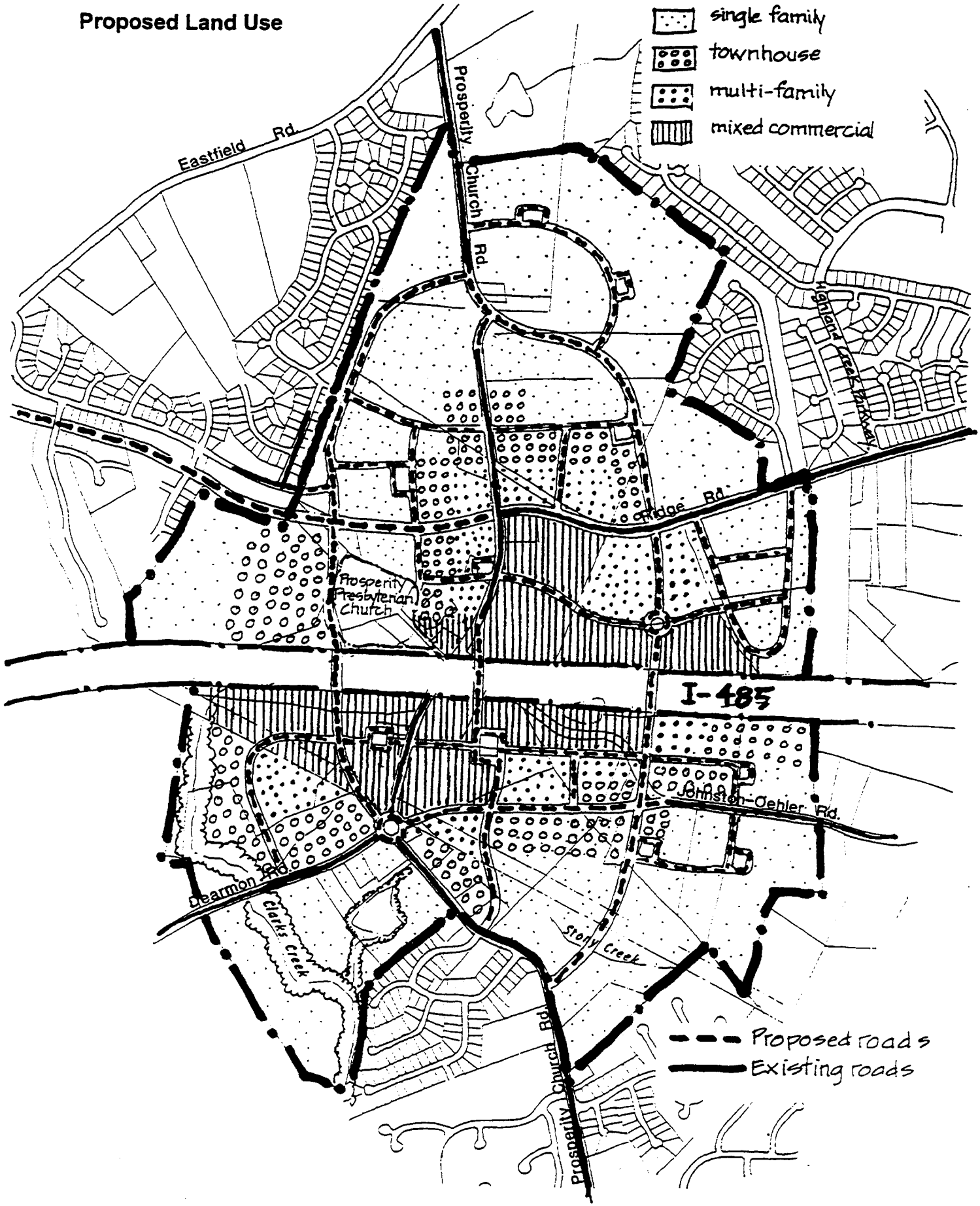
Village Concept

The plan proposes two villages, developed on opposite sides of I-485, a north village and a south village. The villages would be connected to each other across the interstate with three bridge crossings. Each village is envisioned as having a mixture of uses and building types at varying densities and has a village square as its focus. The village square is a public open space enclosed by streets and 2-3 story retail/office/residential development. The square would be large enough for public gatherings, farmers markets and other activities. The village square is the public core of the community and should be planned and designed for the maximum pedestrian activity and to support public transit. Retail opportunities and housing within walking distance of the village center and transit stops are essential to the goal of reducing automobile dependency and increasing transit usage.

The concept provides for a high density, mixed office, retail and residential development in and adjacent to the village square, with very urban, pedestrian scale development and amenities. An abundance of street level retail and restaurants oriented to the square or streets approaching the square enhance the street life and generate a high level of activity. High density residential uses and shops with upper floor apartments are also desirable, to provide a continuous presence of people in this area. The tallest buildings, up to four stories, would be located directly adjacent to I-485 and would act in part as a noise wall.

The blocks immediately adjacent to the center would begin to diminish in scale and density as the distance from the center increases. Multi-family residential with some street level commercial uses would be predominant on the blocks adjoining the village center. Higher density townhouse developments may be interspersed. Two to three blocks from the center there would be a predominance of townhouse development, and the village edges would contain primarily small lot single family development of six to eight units per acre beyond the 1/4 mile, five minute walking distance from the center. These lower density edges would be adjacent to existing single family neighborhoods.

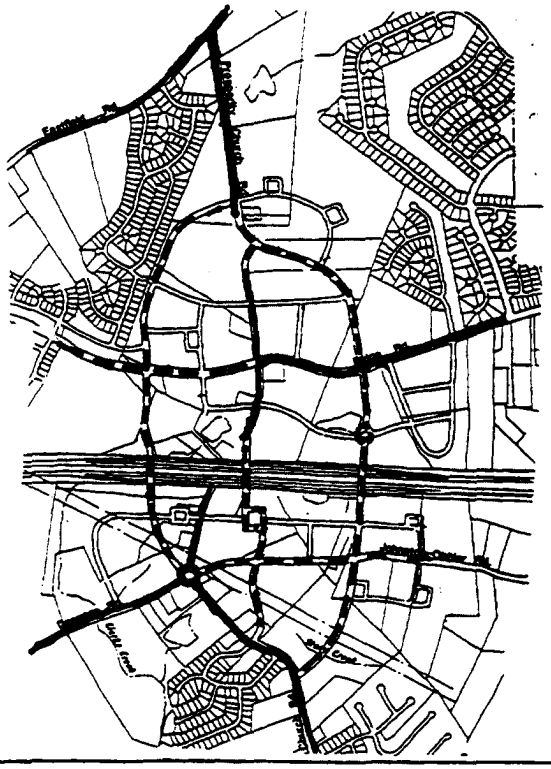
Throughout the proposed villages, would be a network of public open spaces where existing natural areas are maintained as development amenities and for passive recreational use. These would range in size from the village squares and other squares of similar size, to the Clarks Creek Greenway which connects to the larger Mallard Creek Greenway. In addition, an emphasis is placed on the provision of civic uses such as branch libraries, post offices, schools, churches, etc.


Proposed Land Use
single family
townhouse
multi-family
mixed commercial
Eastfield Rd.
Prosperity Church Rd.
Ridge Rd.
Prosperity Presbyterian Church
I-485
Johnston-Oehler Rd.
Dearmon Rd.
Clarks Creek
Stony Creek
Prosperity Church Rd.
Proposed roads
Existing roads

Circulation Concept

Public streets and spaces are the focus of pedestrian-oriented development. An innerconnected network of streets that give many options for the motorist, pedestrian or cyclist to reach their destination is essential to the concept of pedestrian orientation. The level of quality of streets will be just as important as level of service. The proposed streets in this village will accommodate automobiles, but will be designed to be comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists, and will be designed to accommodate on-street parking. The street network should be simple, memorable, and direct, avoiding circuitous routes. Streets should converge at common destinations, such as transit stops, core commercial areas, and parks. The ability to walk comfortably along the streets of the proposed villages to various destinations or for leisure is a principal emphasis of the proposed circulation network. A clearly defined network of streets and public spaces will provide the framework for the incremental development of the proposed villages. Streets will be designed for a pleasurable driving, walking and bicycling environment, with traffic calming devices that will moderate the traffic speed.

The three minor thoroughfares that cross I-485 will provide the backbone of the circulation network and will have bike lanes, on-street parking, wide sidewalks and street trees, in addition to two lanes for vehicular traffic. Turning lanes at principal intersections will be provided. These streets are expected to carry the traffic that would have been on the one thoroughfare that was originally proposed. It is expected that the three minor thoroughfares will carry nearly equal distributions of traffic, with the two outside thoroughfares carrying the traffic around the villages and the center thoroughfare carrying the bulk of the traffic destined for the urban villages. A network of pedestrian oriented collector and local streets will provide the connectivity between developments, and facilitate walking and biking. Portions of the circulation network will be restricted to pedestrian or bicycle traffic such as along greenways to provide auto-free connections in some of the more environmentally sensitive areas.

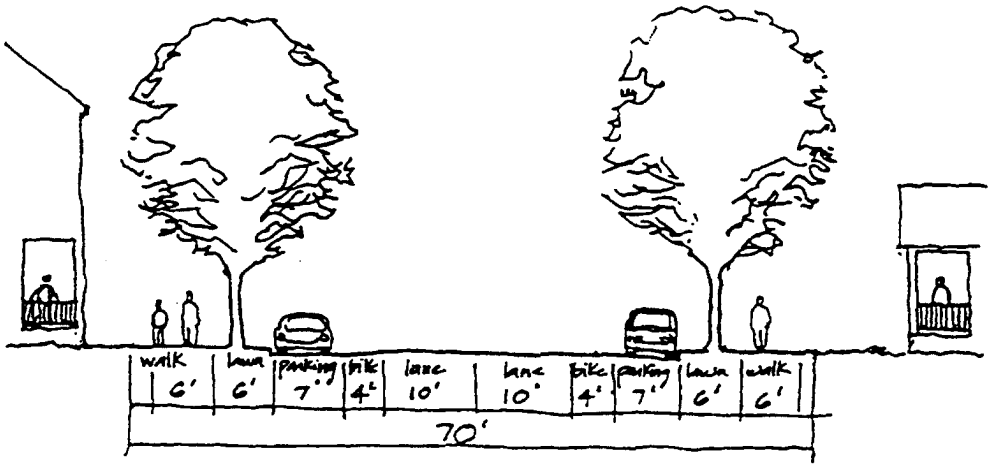


Development Guidelines

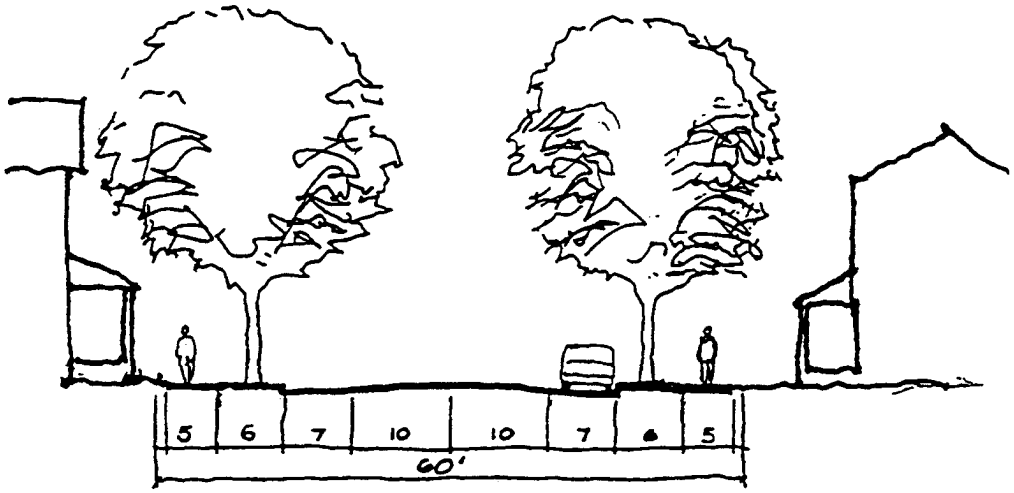
The purpose of the following guidelines are to recommend development of a pedestrian oriented, mixed-use community. The guidelines are divided into three categories: Circulation and Open Space, Buildings, and Site Development.

1. **Circulation and Open Space Network**
   The public streets, parks and squares constitute the public realm and are where the greatest opportunities exist for the establishment of a sense of community. The intent of the guidelines are recommended to guide the development of a pedestrian friendly network of streets and other open spaces that will encourage people to walk and ride bicycles, minimizing dependence on automobiles for travel.

   Street Types

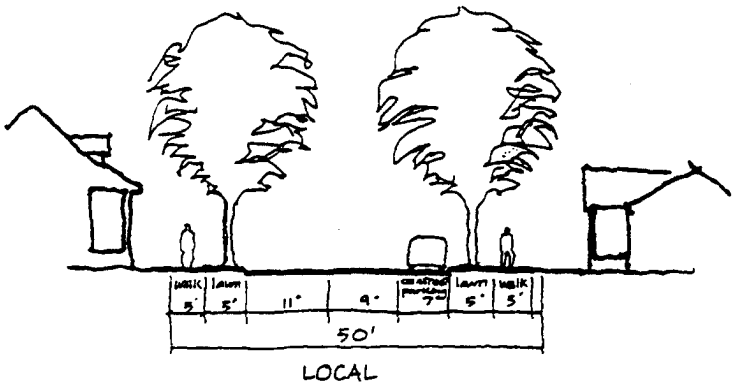


Minor thoroughfare 70' r/w

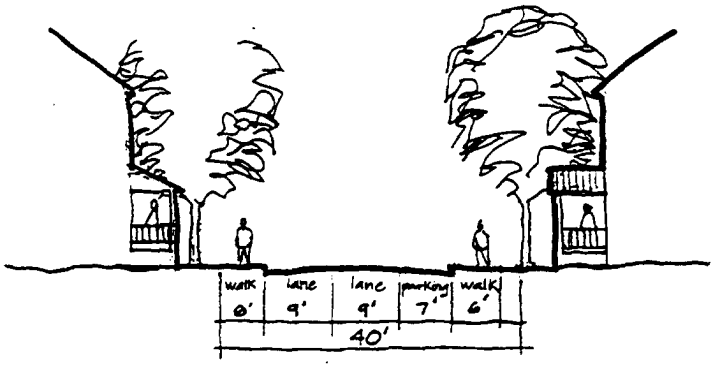


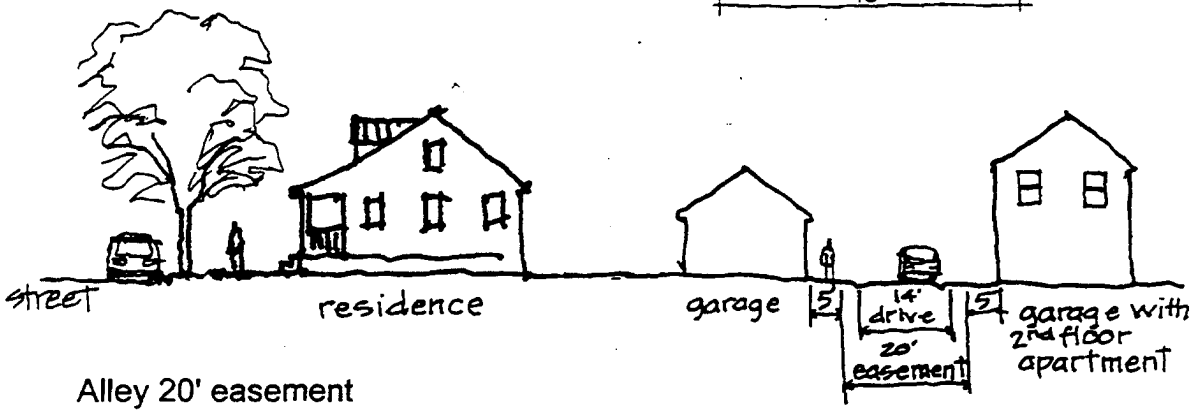
Collector 60'r/w

Local 50' r/w



40' r/w





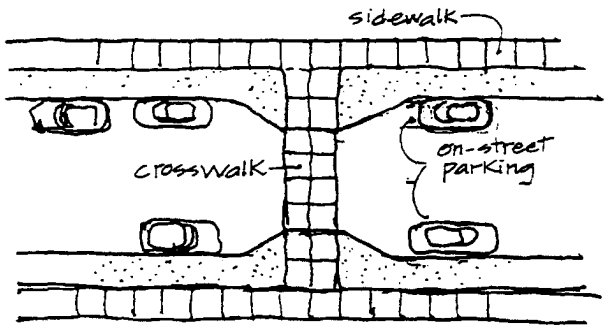
Alley 20' easement

Streetscape Plan

The development of an overall streetscape plan for the villages will ensure a continuity to the street network and help in shaping the identity of the villages. A minimum 6' wide planting strip for street trees will be provided on all streets with a right of way of 50' or more, and a consistent pattern of large maturing trees should be established as indicated in the proposed streetscape plan. At principal intersections a change in the tree planting pattern should occur to add emphasis to the intersection as well as a degree of clarity to the overall street network. The streetscape plan is currently being developed by Planning staff and other City and County staff.

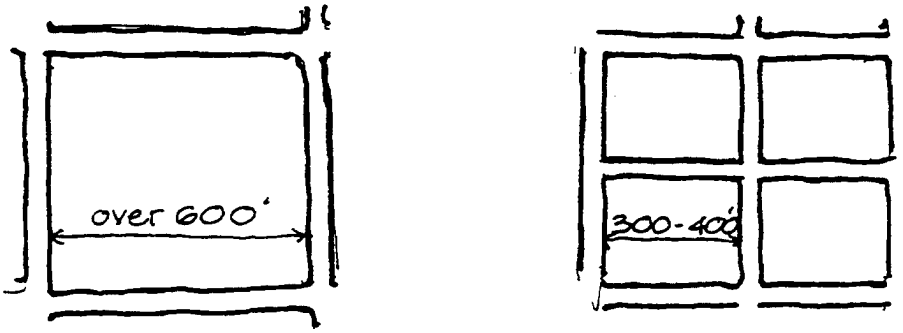
Sidewalks
The minimum width of sidewalks should be 5' except along the three minor thoroughfares where the sidewalks are 6'.

Crosswalks
At principal intersections, clearly marked crosswalks should be provided with pedestrian crossing signals. Additional crosswalks may be needed mid block to provide safe pedestrian access across the thoroughfares. On street parking should be eliminated at these points and the curbs extended out to minimize the crossing distance for pedestrians.



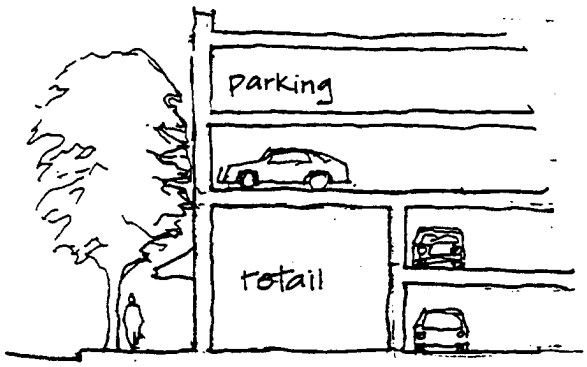
Bicycle Lanes
Walking and biking are two principal modes of transportation in any pedestrian oriented community. Principal bike lanes will be provided as part of the street network, with a 4' wide bike lane on the minor thoroughfares and some collectors as shown on page 11. Bicycle and pedestrian only trails will be part of the open space network running along greenways and the Duke Power right of way and should be a minimum of 8' wide.

Block Size
The size and arrangement of blocks are critical to the development of an urban scale community. Blocks that are too long work against connectivity and community interaction and will discourage walking. Maximum public discourse occurs where the blocks are smaller, with more intersections and increased opportunities for people to interact. Block sizes will vary but in general should be in the range of 200-300' by 300-600 'with the smaller blocks occurring in the most densely developed areas near I-485.



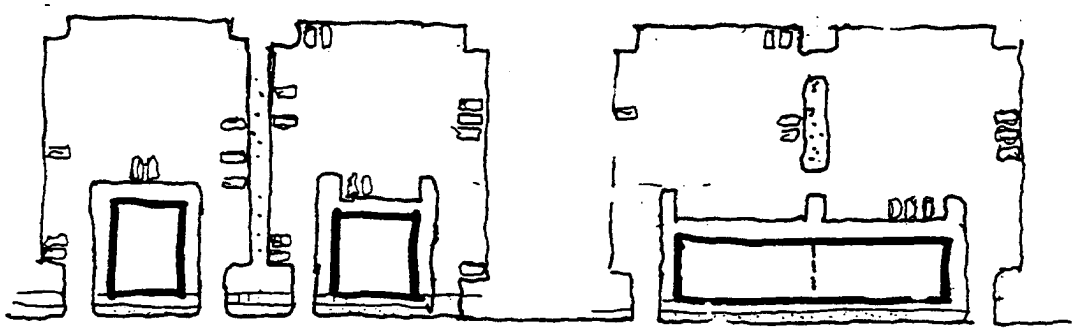
Vehicle Parking
As a general rule, parking lots should be located behind buildings in order to enable the building to come up to the sidewalk and engage the pedestrian. The buildings also serve as a screen to the parking lots. Where parking lots are not screened from public view by buildings they will be screened according to section 12.303 of the County Zoning Ordinance.

Parking Decks
Parking decks are encouraged to minimize the amount of land coverage. Even one additional level of parking can help greatly. Where parking decks adjoin public streets the first floors at the street should contain leasable non-residential space.



On Street Parking
On street parking will exist on most streets.

Shared Parking
Shared parking with adjacent uses with different peak hours of activity can result in less overall pavement and is strongly encouraged. Parking lots on adjacent parcels should be connected to each other.



Shared Driveways
Shared driveways are encouraged to minimize the number of driveways on public streets and reduce automobile/pedestrian conflicts. Reducing the number of driveways also provides less interruption to vehicle flow, particularly on the three minor thoroughfares.

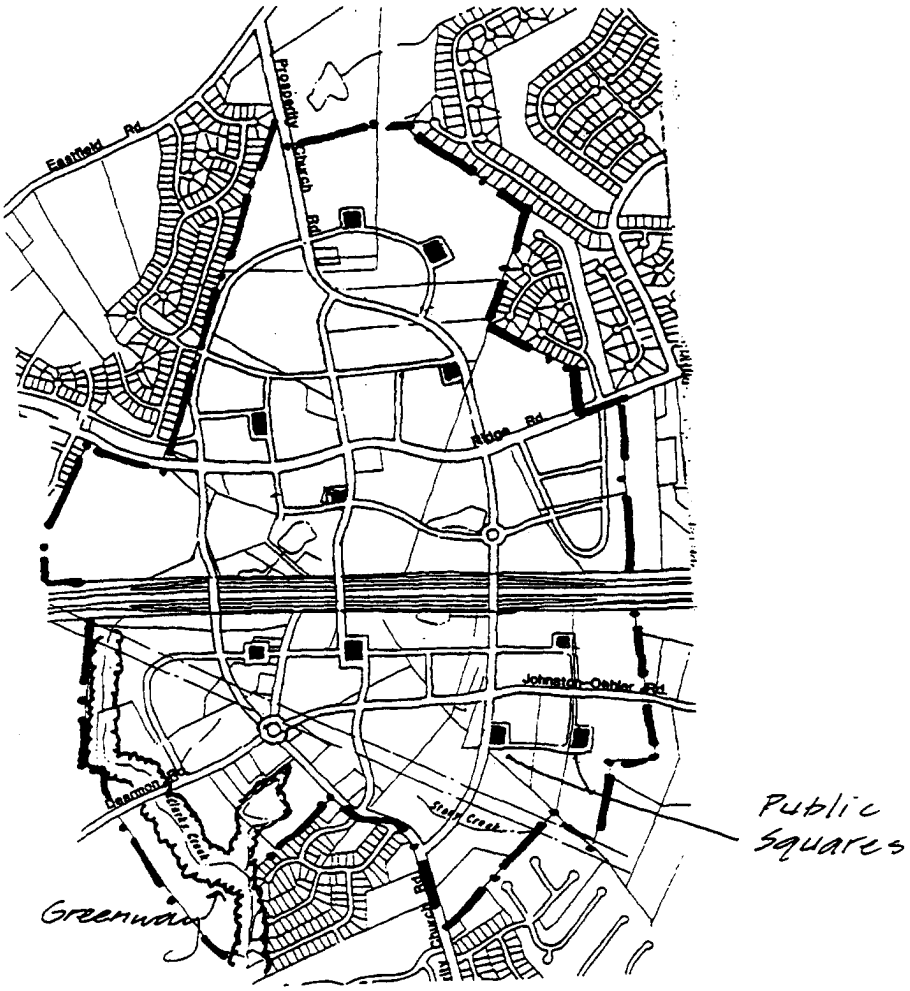
Bicycle Parking
Bicycles are considered to be a principal mode of transportation in the traditional neighborhood, and in addition to providing bike lanes along streets, bicycle parking should be provided at places of residence and business.

Bus stops
Bus stops should be located in or near the village square within walking distance for many residents. Bus stops should be attractive, sheltered, comfortable places to wait.

OPEN SPACE NETWORK

In addition to the public streets and squares, a variety of open spaces including parks, greenways, and playgrounds are essential to the development of a highly livable community. Within one mile is Mallard Creek District Park a 493 acre County park that contains the entire spectrum of recreational activities including all field sports. Clarks Creek Greenway forms the southwestern boundary of the south village and will ultimately contain bicycle/pedestrian paths that will form an important link in the overall open space network. Paths along the Duke Power r/w are also envisioned.

In addition to the proposed public squares in the two village centers, additional public squares or parks should be included in the residential areas so that every resident can be within a 3 minute walk, without having to cross major streets. There is an excellent opportunity for the establishment of public squares on the sites of the original home places that dot the landscape. These sites are usually located on high points, and typically have several large shade trees that were planted around the homes. Incorporating these trees into a public green space could become the focal point of new development, and would provide an opportunity to honor former residents by naming the square after them.



2. BUILDINGS

The walls of buildings facing streets are the third dimension of the street and are very much part of the public realm. Their design can largely influence the character of the street and can help define a sense of enclosure which is a necessity for the provision of pedestrian oriented streets. The guidelines place an emphasis on buildings that strengthen the pedestrian environment by orienting them to the street and engaging the pedestrian with the activity generated by street level shops, offices, and residences.

Building Typology

The guidelines include descriptions of the type of buildings and the basic architectural elements that are needed in order to create walkable streets that reinforce the street as a friendly inviting place. The building types proposed for this area are as follows:

Mixed Commercial: Contains a mixture of the highest intensity office and retail uses, and possibly upper floor or high density residential.

Residential over Commercial: Multi-family residential placed above office or retail uses.

Multi-Family Residential: Apartments that are stacked one on top of another, frequently called garden apartments, flats, or walk-ups. Upper floor units are accessed from a common stair.

Townhouse: (single family attached or rowhouses) 2-3 story single family units that are attached at a common wall. Individual entrances and private outdoor space characterize this building type.

Single Family Detached: Residential units that have no attachment to other structures.

Civic Buildings: Includes libraries, post offices, police and fire stations, day care, churches and other civic buildings.

Mixed Commercial

These buildings should be located adjacent to or within a block or two of the interstate where their higher traffic volumes can best utilize the on and off ramps and frontage roads for circulation. These building types are primarily for business uses including retail, restaurant, office, entertainment, and lodging. High density residential is also appropriate including residential uses above street level commercial. Each building should be designed to be a part of a larger composition of the area it is located in.

Height: Three and four story buildings are appropriate directly adjacent to the I-485 frontage roads. Two and three story buildings are envisioned in and adjacent to the village square to provide a more urban, pedestrian oriented character to the streets on which they front. One story buildings are discouraged. Maximum height is 60'.

Setback: Buildings should be placed directly behind the sidewalk to allow direct pedestrian access. Greater setbacks may be justified for outdoor cafes and other street-oriented activities but in no case should parking be placed between the building and the sidewalk.

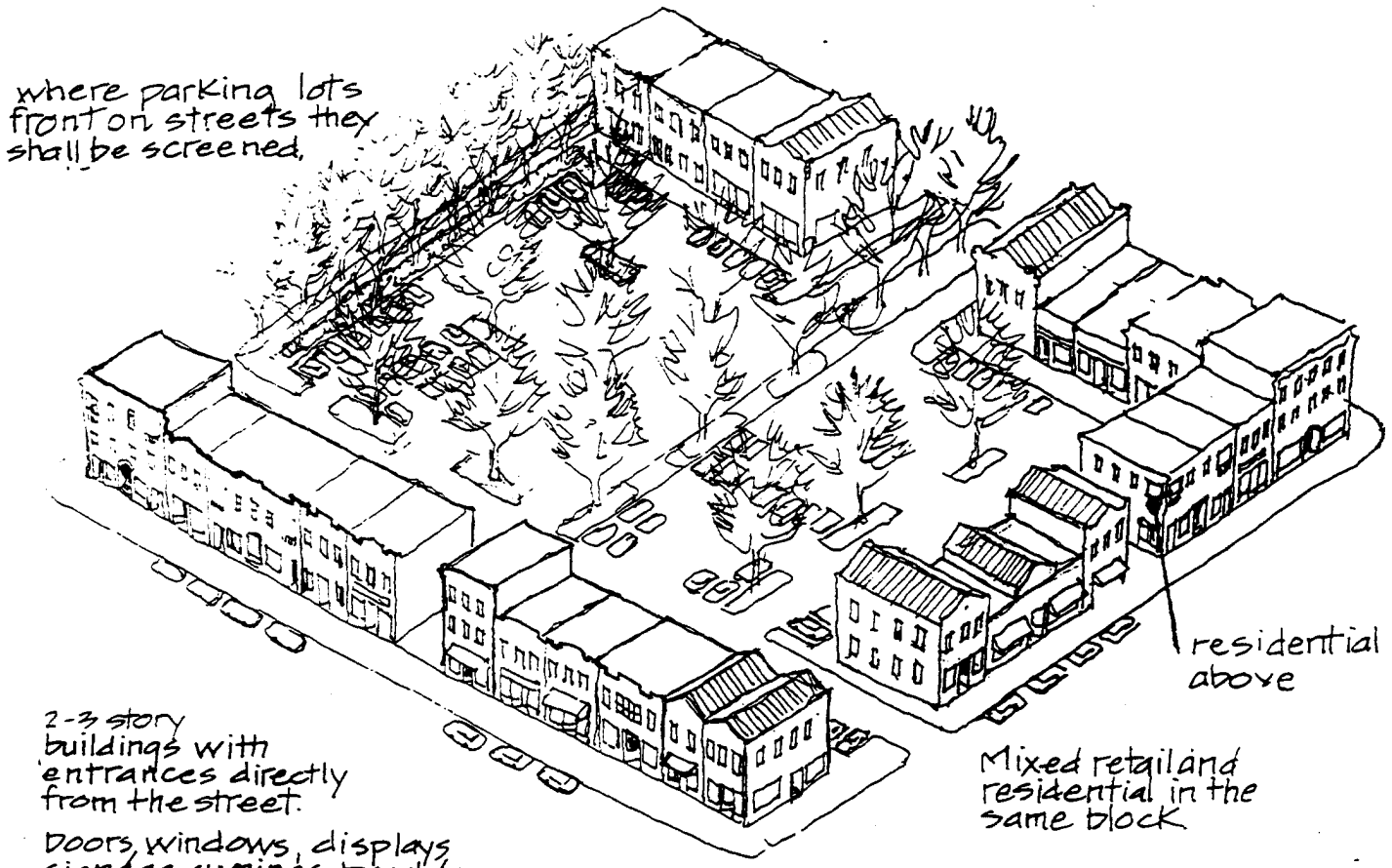
Entrances: Main entrances should be dominant and clearly recognizable from the street. Primary ground floor entrances should be accessible directly from the street, public plaza or park. Principal entrances should not orient to interior blocks or parking lots.

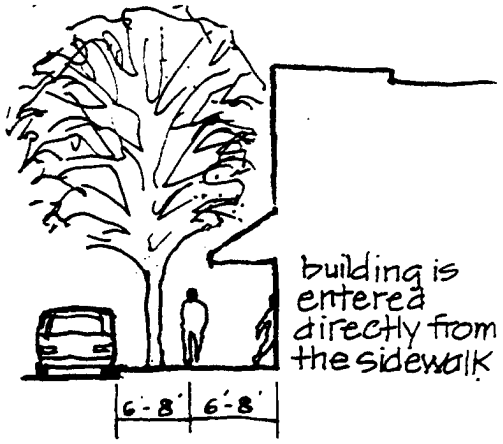
Facades: The walls of commercial buildings facing the streets should be varied and transparent with a frequency of doors and windows to encourage pedestrian interaction. Long expanses of blank walls with no openings or changes in material are discouraged. Awnings, changes in building materials, creative signage and window displays are encouraged to enliven the street. At least 50% of the facade should be treated in this manner.

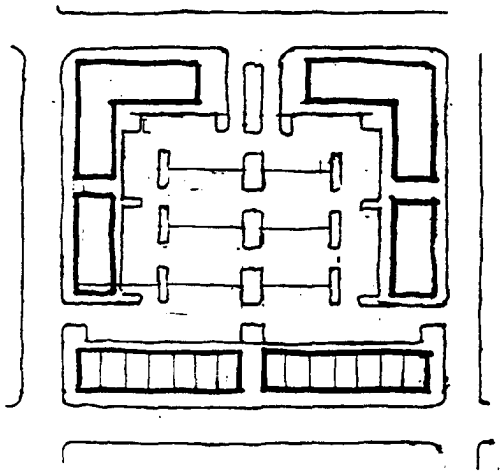
Lot Width: To enable a more diverse street, with a repetition of interesting storefronts, lot widths for commercial buildings should be as little as 16 feet, to accommodate the smallest of entrepreneurs.

Parking: In general, parking should be placed behind buildings. No proposed development should have more than 1/3 of its street frontage in parking.

Mixed Commercial







buildings placed on the perimeter of the site with parking behind.

2-3 story buildings defining a village square

Residential Over Commercial

Placing one or more floors of residential apartments above shops and other non-residential uses has many advantages including the provision of windows overlooking the street, and having people present at all hours of the night both of which make for safer streets and squares and contribute greatly to their vitality. This building type is to be used primarily in or near the village center.

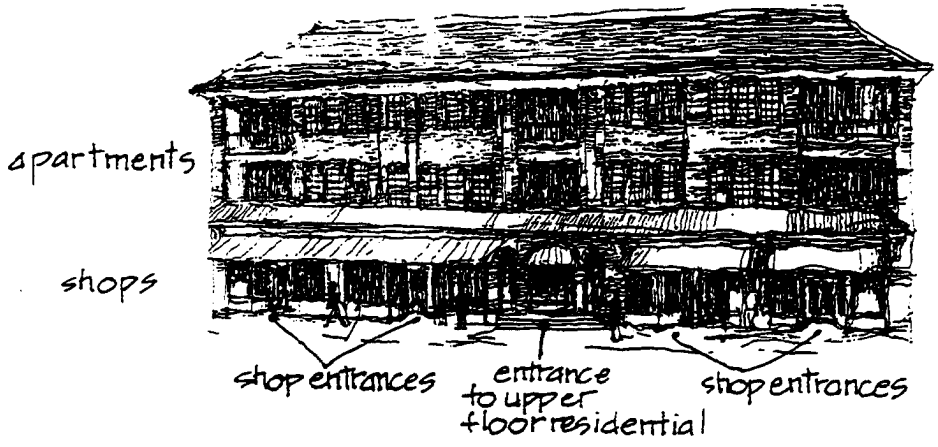
Height: One to two stories above street level.

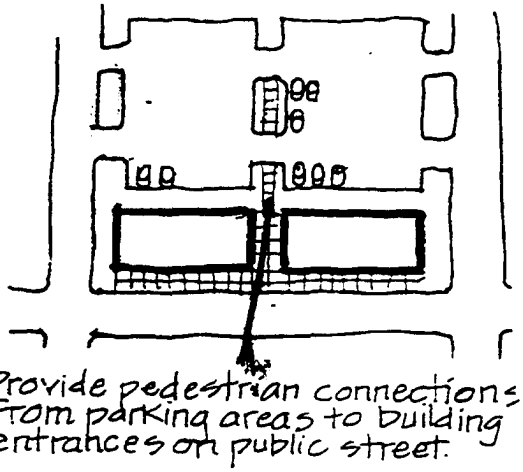
Setbacks: Same as ground floor setbacks, or they may be stepped back from the ground floor setback.

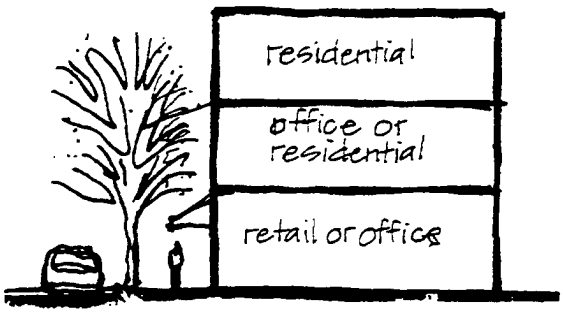
Entrances: Principal entrances to stairwells to upper floor apartments should be oriented to the street and separated from entrances to first floor uses.

Facades: A degree of openness should characterize upper floor apartments with balconies, or french doors.

Parking: Behind buildings with pedestrian access from parking lot to front entrances on public streets.







Multi-Family Residential

This higher density housing type should be developed as a part of the fabric of the neighborhoods formed by blocks and streets and should not be developed as large, separate, inward oriented communities. Multi-story apartments of 2-4 stories will be principally located directly adjacent to the mixed commercial districts with smaller fourplex and eightplex units being dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Densities will range from 15-30 units per acre and should include some housing for the elderly.

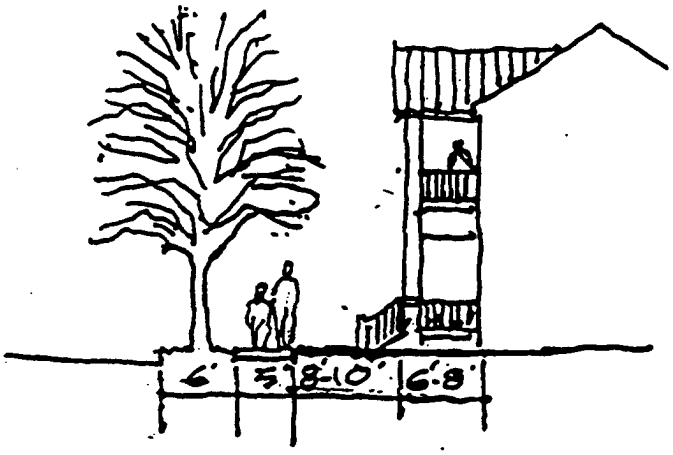
Height: Buildings should be between two and four stories. Taller buildings should be located closer to I-485, with two story buildings 2 or 3 blocks away, next to medium density residential.

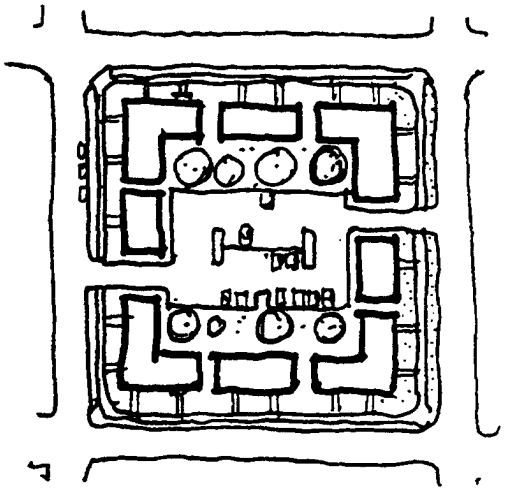
Setback: 20'-25' from the curb along the three minor thoroughfares, 12'-20' on other streets.

Entrances: The front door/guest entry should orient to the street and be slightly elevated, no more than 3'. Stoops (exterior steps going from street level to first floor level) should be provided to improve the transition from public street to private dwelling. Back door entries are from alleys, garages, and parking lots.

Facades: Should be varied with frequent building entries and windows overlooking the street. Porches and balconies are encouraged to encourage street dialogue and provide more eyes on the street.

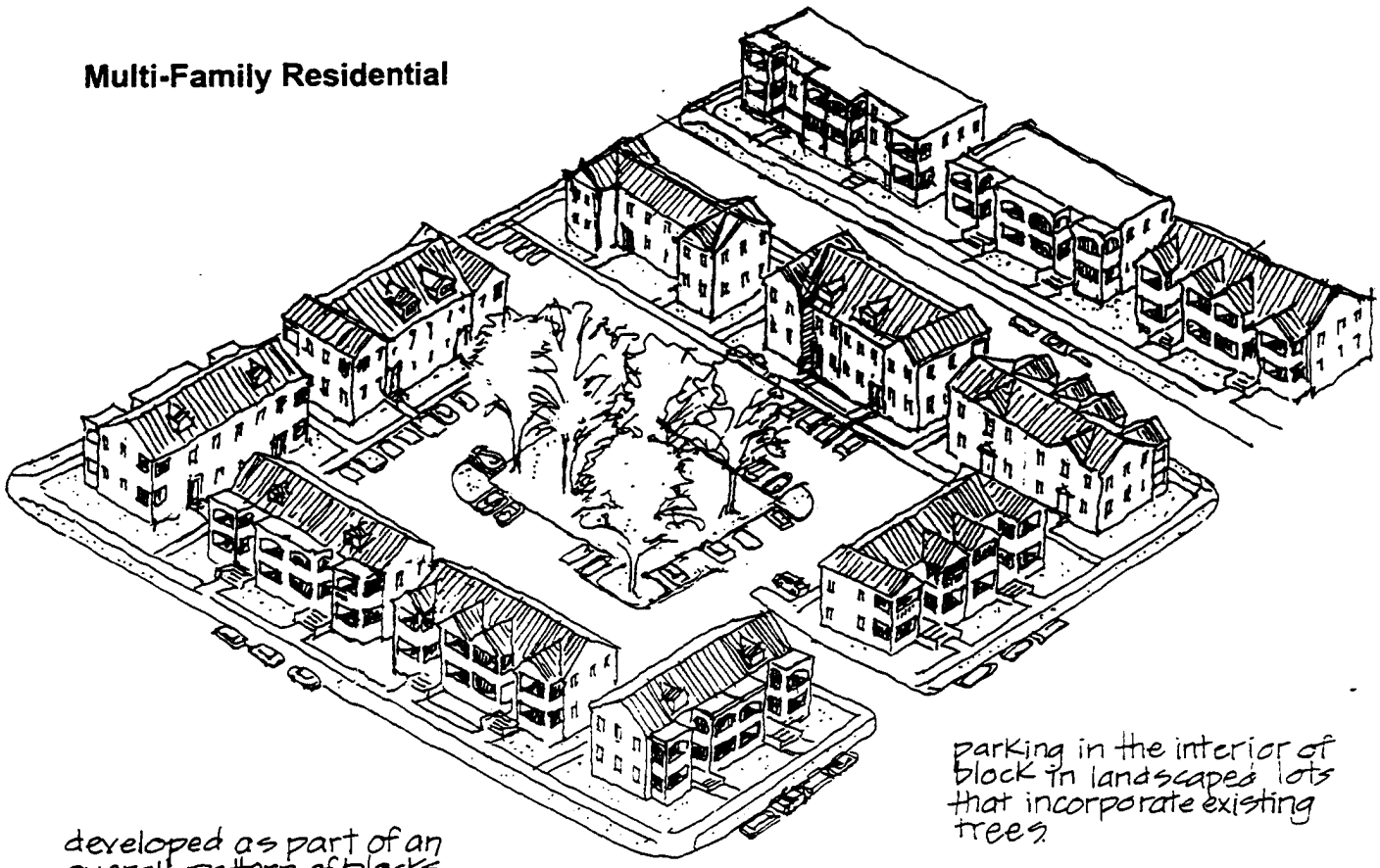
Parking: Should be placed behind buildings in the interior of the block in well landscaped parking lots that are broken down into smaller lots.





buildings placed on the perimeter of the site with parking behind.

Multi-Family Residential



developed as part of an overall pattern of blocks with units oriented to the street

parking in the interior of block in landscaped lots that incorporate existing trees

Charlotte has a rich collection of street oriented apartments with porches and balconies, usually in 4 unit buildings, frequently combined to make 8 and 12 unit buildings

the relationship of the front of the building to the street is vitally important

porches & balconies allow residents to engage in conversation with passers by

front stoops are important points of interaction between the public and private realm.

Townhouse (single family attached)
Townhouses, or row houses are an excellent medium density urban housing type and are appropriate throughout the proposed villages. They are especially important for the definition they give to the street edges, and the establishment of a sense of enclosure along the streets upon which they front. Density ranges from 8-20 units per acre.

Height: 2-3 stories

Setback: 25'-35' from curb along 3 minor thoroughfares, 15'-25' along other streets.

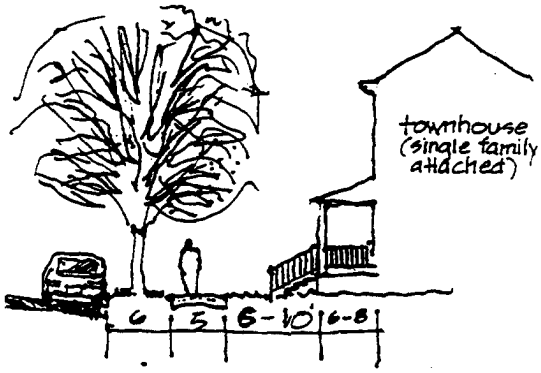
Entrances: The front door/guest entry should orient to the street and be slightly elevated, no more than 3'. Stoops should be provided to improve the transition from public street to private dwelling. Back door entries are from alleys, garages, and parking lots.

Facades: Porches and balconies are encouraged to allow interaction between the private residential units and the public street activity.

Lot size: 1,500 square foot minimum.

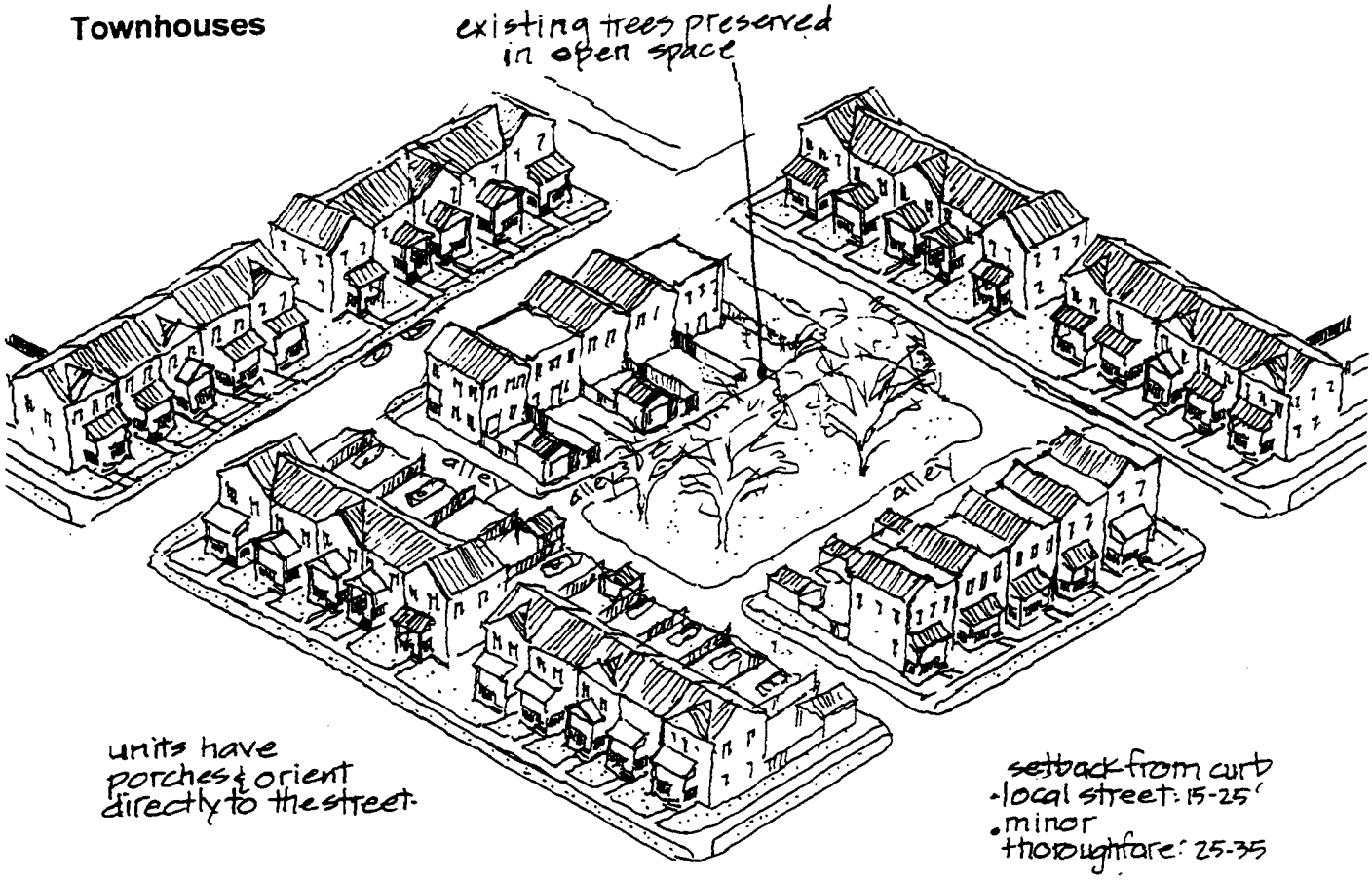
Lot width: 16' minimum.

Parking: From the rear, associated with each individual unit, either in private parking spaces or garages off of rear alleys.



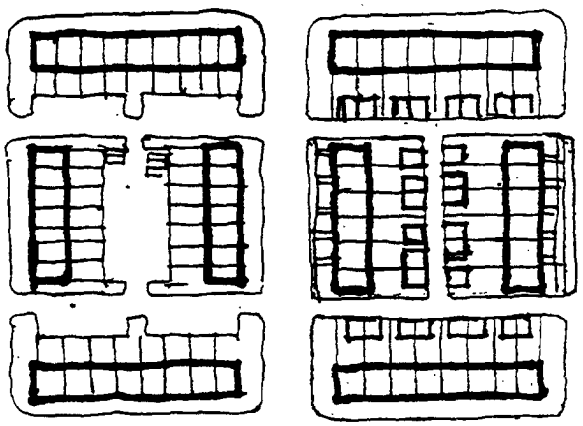
front doors orient to the street

Townhouses



typical street

Porches play an important role in the creation of pedestrian-oriented streets by providing an opportunity for conversation between residents and pedestrians as well as establishing a wonderful rhythm to the street



parking in rear parking lot

parking off of rear alleys in garages

Single Family Detached

This housing type is the most predominant type being built in the area and will also constitute a major portion of this plan proposal. However it is envisioned that instead of the predominant 3 or 4 units to the acre development pattern in existing neighborhoods, the densities of the single family detached in this concept would be in the range of 6 or 8 units to the acre. This implies a much smaller lot size, and a different house design to work well.

Height: 1-2 stories

Setback: 20'-30' from curb along 3 minor thoroughfares, 15'-20' along other streets.

Entrances: Front door entrances directly from the street with private access from alleys, garages or driveways.

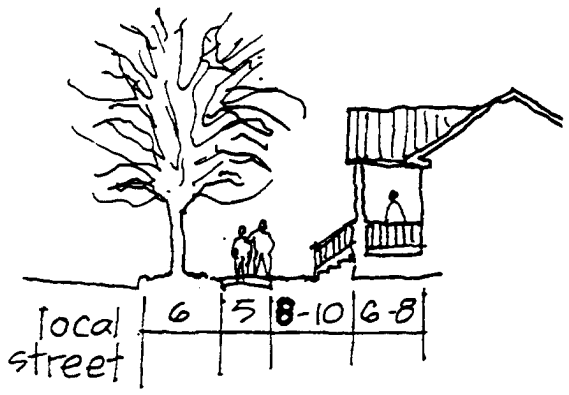
Facades: Porches and balconies are encouraged to allow interaction between residents and people on the street.

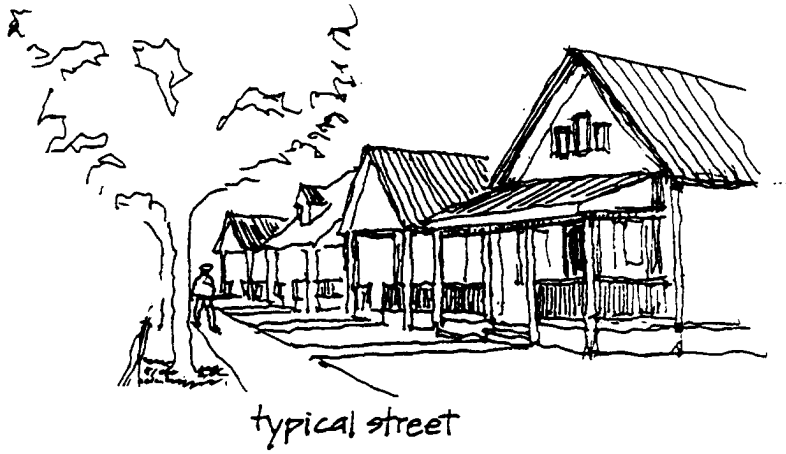
Lot Size: 3,000 square feet minimum

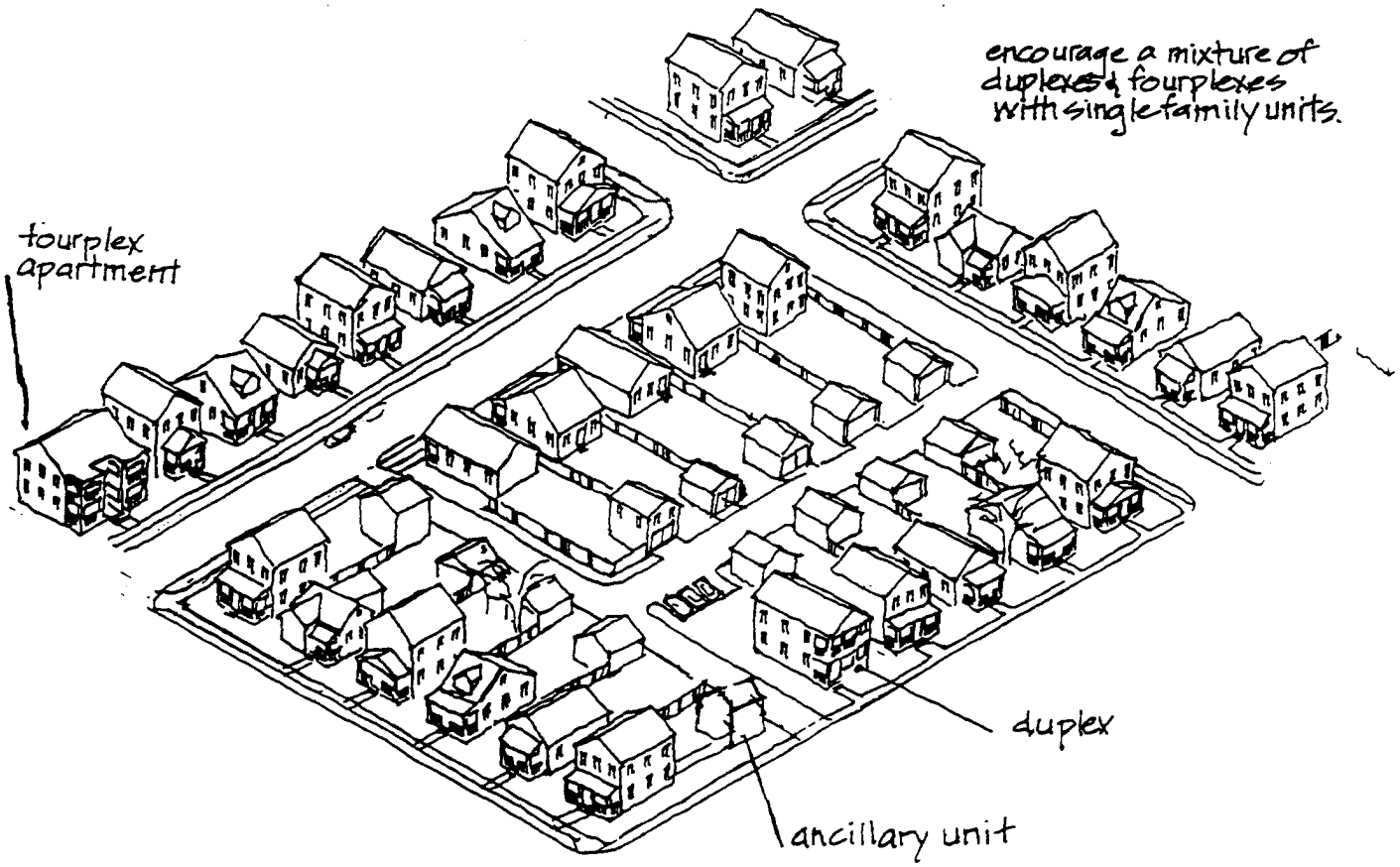
Lot Width: 30 feet minimum

Parking: In garages off of rear alleys preferably. When garage is in front off of public street it should be recessed a minimum of 10' behind the building facade.

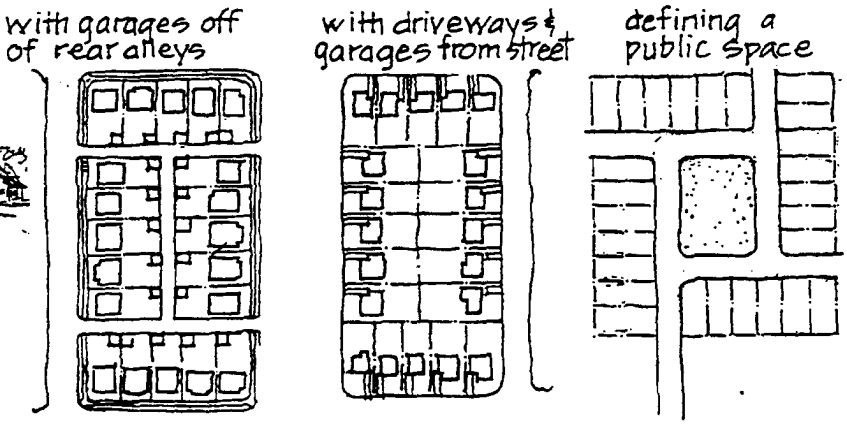
Ancillary Units: An additional unit, typically above a detached garage that are encouraged in single family detached developments to provide affordable rental housing opportunities.



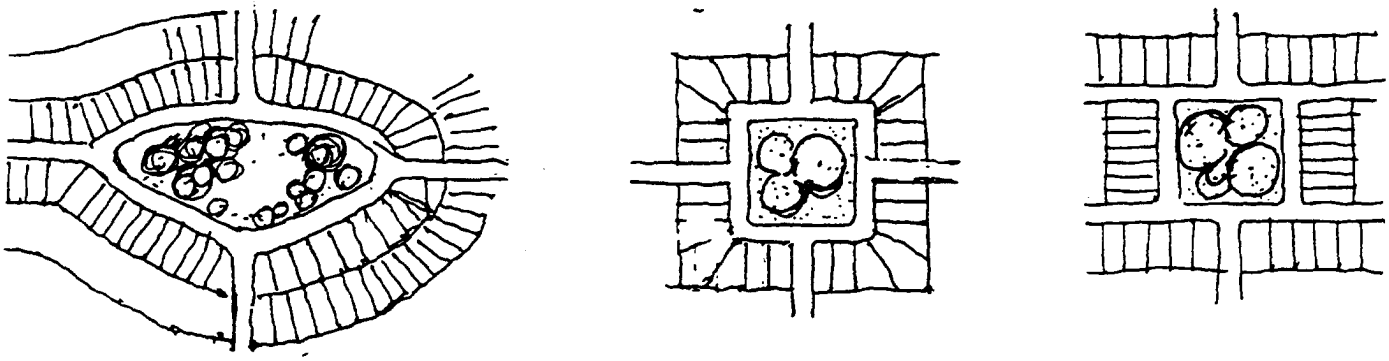




Single Family residential development around existing trees



alternatives for defining public space & saving trees



Civic Buildings
Libraries, post offices, police and fire stations, day care, churches and other civic buildings should be given prominent locations in commercial areas or adjacent to village squares. Their architecture should reflect their prominence and civic importance. Principal public entrances should be clearly defined with access directly from the public street network. Buildings should be designed to maximize vistas along streets.

Height: In general, these buildings are 1-3 stories. Church steeples may extend to a greater height.

Setback: Varies from directly behind the sidewalk to 30' or 40' from curb with landscaping or plazas in front to enhance the civic importance of the building.

Entrances: Should be a dominant feature and should be oriented to the street.

Facades: Richly articulated to reflect the prominence and importance of the building.

Parking: Behind and to the side of the building, but not in front.

3. Site Development

"Preservation and care for a region's natural ecologies is the fundamental prerequisite of a sustainable and humane urbanism." Peter Calthorpe

The overall development form of the community should be strongly influenced by the existing landscape, primarily its topography, wooded areas, and watercourses. Much of the land in the study area is wooded including some specimen trees of significant size and age. Preservation of existing landscape features will add to the unique character of the community, and provide a valuable natural resource for generations to come.

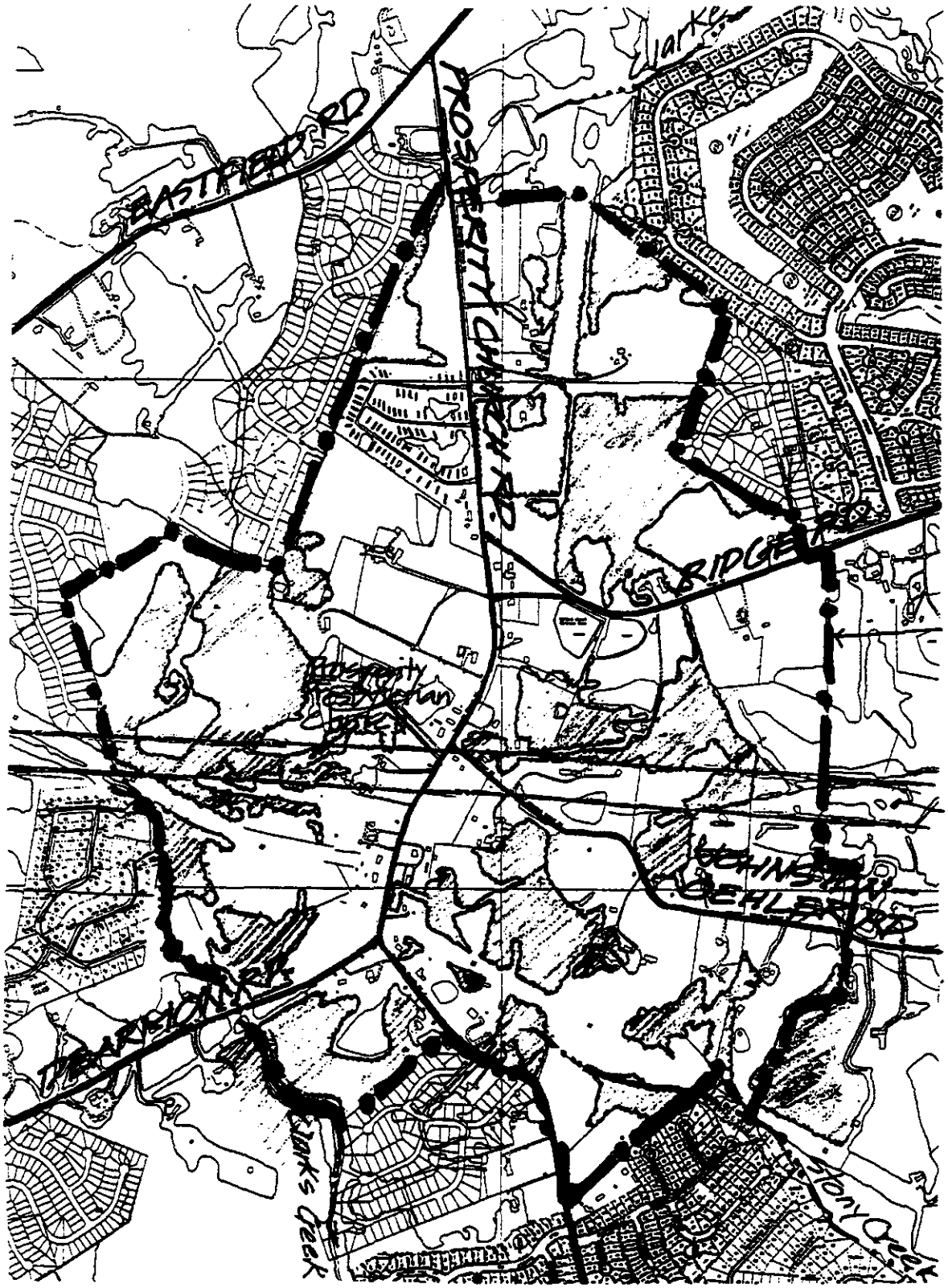
Analysis and Inventory
Prior to the development of preliminary plans a site analysis and inventory of existing natural and cultural resources on the property should be undertaken and should locate the following as a minimum:

- Slopes exceeding 15%
- Existing vegetation - open fields, outline of forested areas including trees of over 12" in diameter, as well as significant individual tree specimens or small groves of trees over 12".
- Floodplains, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, drainage patterns
- Features of historic cultural or archaeological value

Development
Sensitive development of the existing landscape that minimizes disturbance of natural areas and the inclusion of these natural areas into a continuous network of usable open space is the goal of the site development guidelines for Prosperity Church Road Villages. The site analysis and inventory will be the basis for the development of all plans. The following guidelines should be considered when developing:

- Development should be concentrated on the most level, open fields leaving the most significant wooded areas as natural, open space.
- The natural areas should be continuous from one development to the next to result in continuous, usable open spaces.
- Significant trees or groupings of trees should be incorporated into new development
- Development near creeks should be kept out of the floodplain, saving creek side vegetation.
- Construction around existing trees should exercise extreme care and should utilize construction techniques shown in the appendix.

Existing Forested Areas



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The plan concept will be implemented primarily through development activities by the private sector. As rezoning proposals are considered for higher density development City and County staff will work with developers to ensure their proposals are consistent with the plan concept and development guidelines. The following process should be followed in the rezoning/plan development process:

- Developers will be encouraged to meet with Planning, and City and County transportation staff before any detailed design is done to discuss the subject site and its natural features and other characteristics that might influence site design. Planning and Transportation staffs will explain the plan concept and roadway design recommendations at this meeting. The alignment of the three minor thoroughfares will be generally indicated for the developer to begin site planning.

- A second meeting will be held with staff when preliminary plan concepts are developed to ensure their consistency with the Plan and recommended development guidelines, and to review the proposed alignment of the minor thoroughfares if applicable.
- A third, pre-submittal meeting will be held to evaluate the technical aspects of the plan (setbacks, parking, square footages, final roadway alignment, etc.). Submitted plans should be of sufficient detail to show proposed buildings, parking, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and open space.

Planning staff is in the process of recommending revisions to the Mecklenburg County Zoning Ordinance to include urban zoning districts that are currently only applicable in the City. The UR-1, UR-2, UR-3, and UR-C zoning districts are proposed to be allowed in the County to enable the development of a village scale, mixed use community. Other changes may be recommended to the development standards in current zoning districts with the County such as the Commercial Center district (CC) which was amended to reduce the required setback from a minimum of 40 feet from the right of way to a minimum of 12 feet from the curb.

The proposed streets shown in the Plan will be constructed by private developers as they build their projects. Afterwards, roads will be turned over to the City for maintenance. Coordination between adjacent property owners is critical to ensure the desired roadway alignments for the minor thoroughfares and collectors that cut-through several parcels.