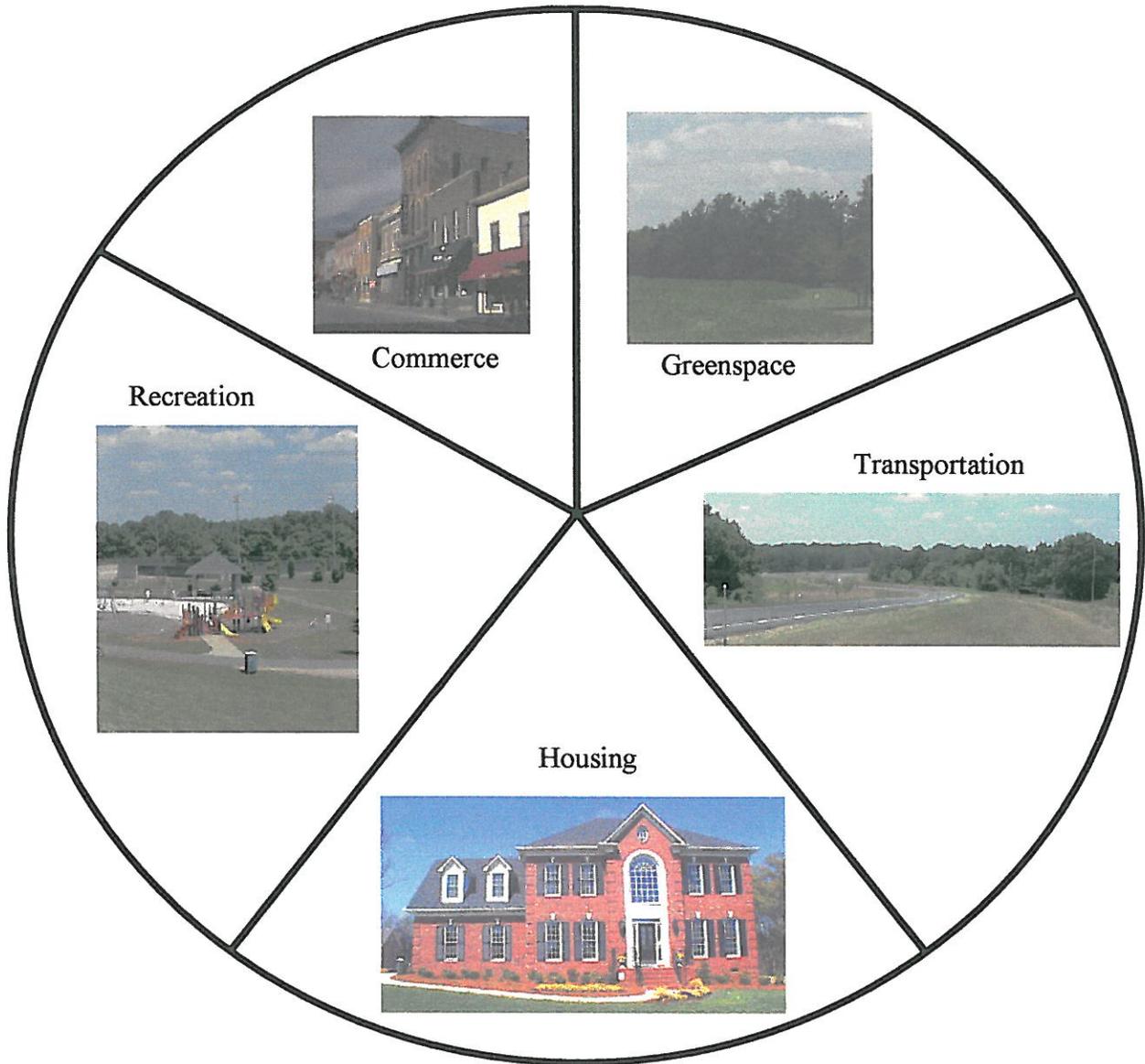


2000
Land Use Plan



Town of
Mint Hill
NORTH CAROLINA

2000 LAND USE PLAN

**TOWN OF MINT HILL
NORTH CAROLINA**

**ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON
JUNE 22, 2000**

MINT HILL LAND USE PLAN

1999 TOWN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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FUTURE LAND USE STEERING COMMITTEE

Lloyd Austin
Tony Brown
Mike Cochrane
Robert Ferguson
Terry Flowe
Tom Gatz
Andy Guzniczak
Joseph Hulsart
Barry King
Bill Leatherman
Tony Long
Paul Lyon
Roger Martin
Richard Newton
Merton O'Prey
Jack O'Rourke

PREPARED BY

Sandra Albrecht Montgomery, AICP
Centralina Council of Governments
P.O. Box 35008
Charlotte, NC 28235

MINT HILL LAND USE PLAN

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I. INTRODUCTION

Mint Hill is located in the southeastern portion of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, as shown on Map #1. It is one of six towns surrounding Charlotte, which is the largest City in Mecklenburg County. Mint Hill is the second largest municipality in Mecklenburg County. The Town itself encompasses 21.13 square miles or 13,523 acres. If the extra-territorial jurisdiction is included in the calculation, the greater Mint Hill area is 35.96 square miles, or 23,014 acres in size. Map #1 illustrates the municipal boundaries and the extra-territorial area. Both these areas combined form the Study Area, which is shown in bright yellow on Map #1.

The Town of Mint Hill is relished for its quiet, relaxing, small town lifestyle and rural environment. The natural vistas of undeveloped land and vacant, wooded parcels of land add to the ambiance enjoyed by area residents and business owners. This sense of openness and wooded areas are loved and recognized as an historic asset of the Town, and vital to its current small town image. Mint Hill's image ties strongly to the fact that the Town is primarily a residential community comprised of predominantly large lot (1/2 acre or greater) single-family homes, with a very low overall density.

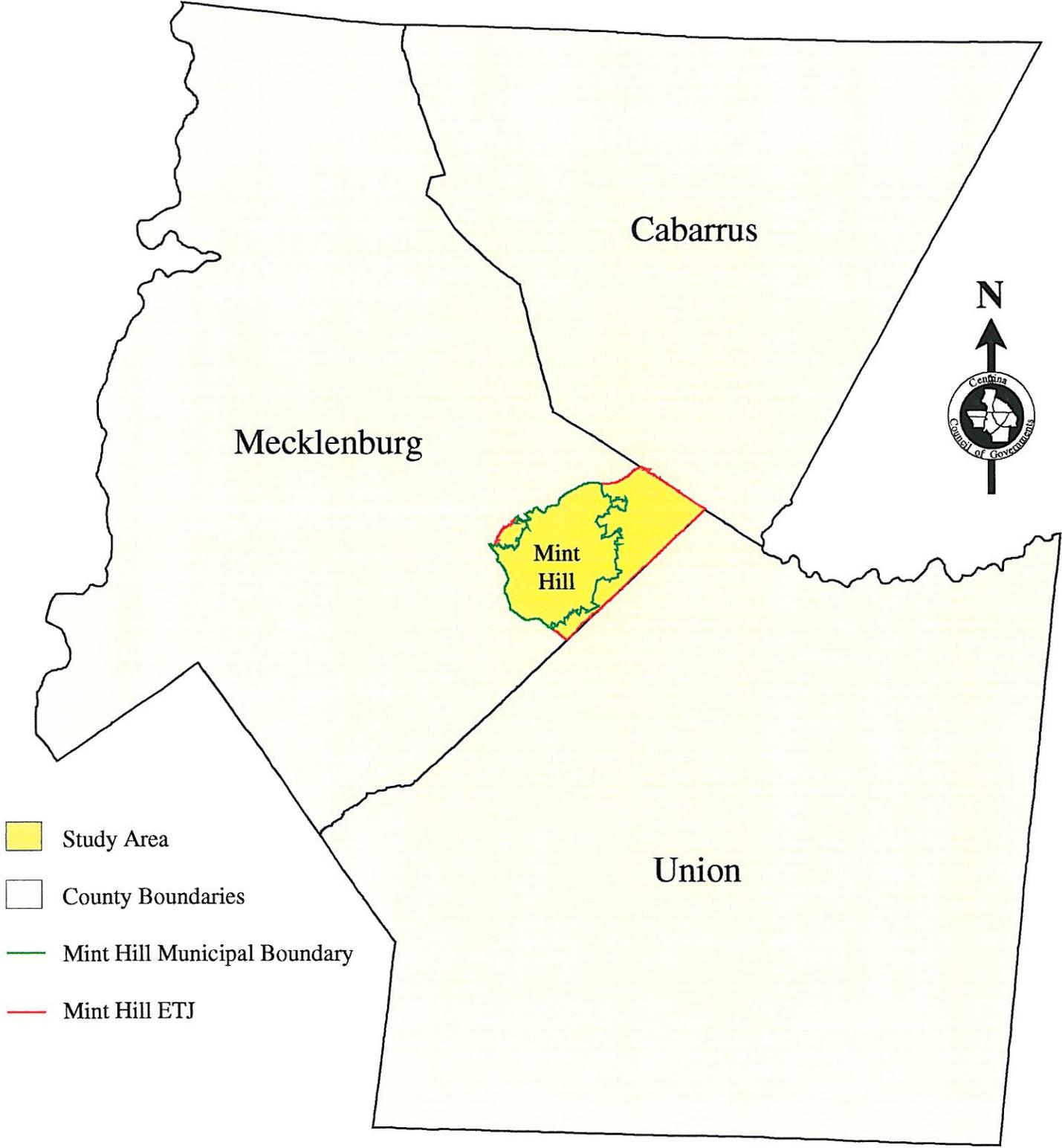
The traditional Downtown area is located at the intersection of N.C. 51 and Lawyers Road and includes the areas along N.C. 51 and around the intersection of N.C. 51 and Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road. The Mint Hill Festival Shopping Center, the First Citizens Bank, the Mint Hill Library, Whitley Commons Shopping Center, BB&T, and Star Lube are all fairly new additions to the Town, thanks to the expansion of public water and sewer to the southwest quadrant of N.C. 51 and Lawyers Road.

A secondary town center has begun to develop at the intersection of Wilson Grove Road, Lebanon and Lawyers Roads, approximately two (2) miles north of the traditional Downtown area at N.C. 51 and Lawyers Road. There are several shopping centers, drug stores, grocery stores, etc. located at this intersection. Other commercial hubs are at the intersection of N.C. 51 and Idlewild Road (Hoods Crossroads Shopping Center, the new CVS drugstore) and at the intersection of Albemarle Road and Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road and at Albemarle and Blair Road.

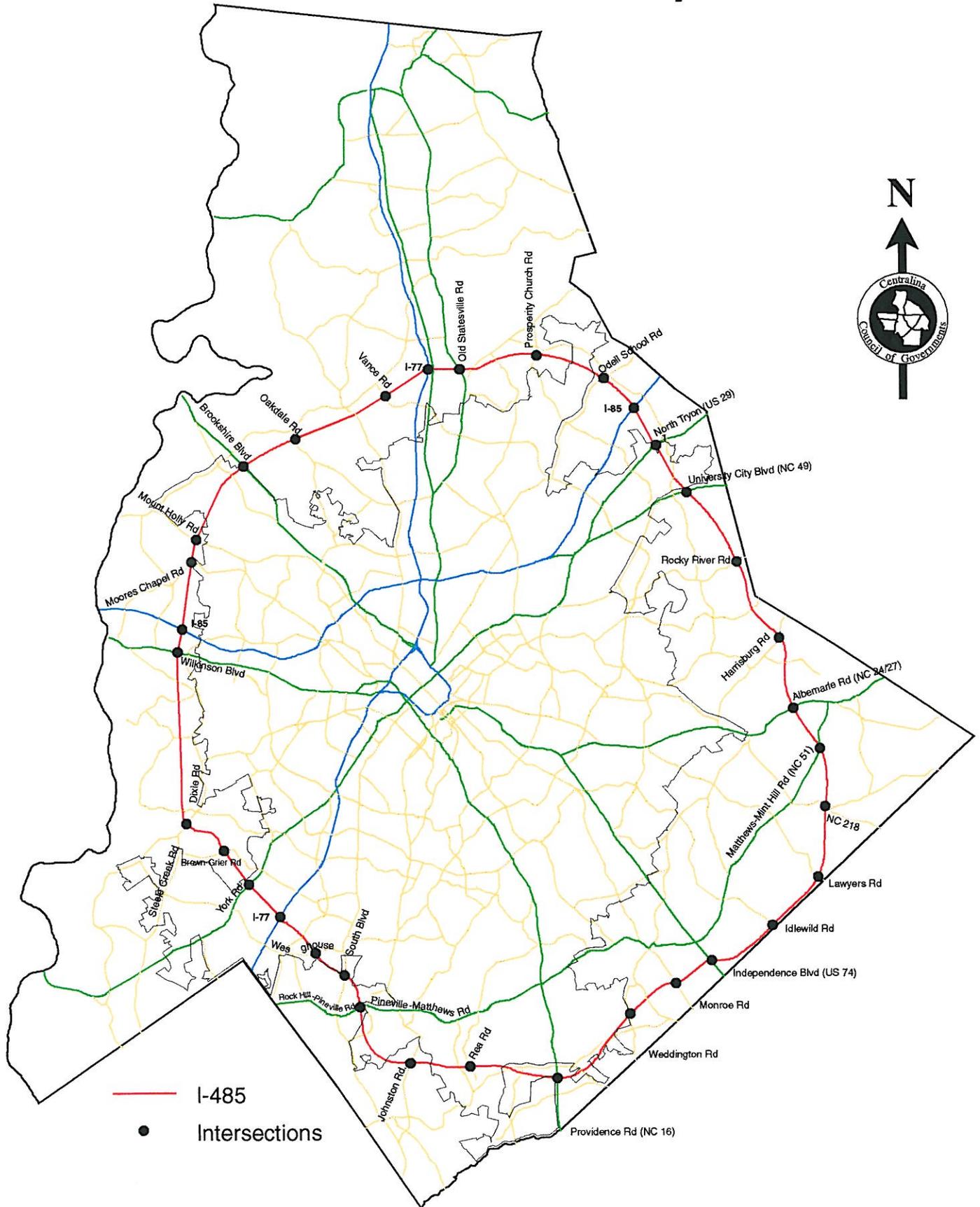
Mint Hill's close proximity to Charlotte is significantly influencing the development in Mint Hill. Continued urban expansion from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg core will continue to spur growth and development in Mint Hill, especially once public water and sewer is available Downtown and with the completion of I-485, a looped expressway system around Charlotte, which crosses within the Mint Hill area, as shown on Map #2.

I-485, once completed, will include 5 interchanges within the Mint Hill area: Albemarle Road (N.C. 24/27), Matthews-Mint Hill Road (N.C. 51), Fairview Road (N.C. 218), Lawyers Road, and Idlewild Road. Map #2 illustrates where I-485 is planned in Mecklenburg

Map #1 Mint Hill Location Map



Map #2 I - 485 Intersection Location Map



County. Not only will I-485 reduce driving times significantly, but land in Mint Hill will now become much closer in terms of driving time to other amenities and employment centers. For instance, travel time from Mint Hill to the Carolina Place Mall, in light traffic conditions, could probably be accomplished in 15-20 minutes. With the completion of this portion of I-485, development opportunities will initially occur along the I-485 route. Much of the rural character which dominates the area, will give way to neighborhoods, schools, and some retail and employment opportunities. Future development will be guided by the availability of utilities, adequate transportation networks, and proximity to schools, parks, social services, police, and fire services. Concentric growth from Charlotte outwards will continue to place pressures on the rest of Mint Hill, as the entire region continues to grow. As Mint Hill becomes more accessible to the center of the region, it will become important for the Town to preserve its positive and vibrant identity.

II. PURPOSE OF THIS LAND USE PLAN

The development of a land use plan is a "picture" of how a community, sees itself developing in the future. Planning is also a process. It is a continuous activity designed to produce a plan that should challenge and inspire everyone with a vision of what might be. It should also tell the reader how to get there, and how to make the best possible decisions affecting the future of Mint Hill.

Records indicate that the first Mint Hill Plan for Growth was undertaken in 1975, and adopted in 1976. This original plan also included a questionnaire that was distributed to households and businesses in Mint Hill. As with all plans, they must be revised after 5-10 years to take into account changing conditions.

The Mint Hill Board of Commissioners did just this in 1985. A new Land Use Plan was prepared and another questionnaire distributed to households and businesses to meet new concerns and issues.

With each adopted plan, the plan became the official policy guide for development of the Town. While not legally binding, each plan was intended to be used as a policy guide to rezoning, public investment, and other development decisions.

The need for updating plans every five to ten years is important in order to adjust to growth and development. Approximately 600 new residents are joining the Mint Hill community annually. This growth in population coupled with the knowledge that other communities experiencing growth have not fared well in controlling growth, has sparked a widespread interest in growth and its accompanying change. How growth should be handled in Mint Hill is one of the challenges facing the Steering Committee in the development of this plan.

We all know that growth is inevitable, expensive, and generates impacts. Each new home or building constructed in Mint Hill brings with it more users of the infrastructure (public water and sewer, if available; roads, etc.) and public services (police, fire, libraries, schools, parks, etc.). Consideration of how growth affects the quality of life of Mint Hill's residents and neighbors (adjacent counties and municipalities) is equally important, since we want to preserve the quality of life Mint Hill is known for.

Growth places demands on the varying systems which must be met and usually involves the expenditure of funds. While new residents do add to the tax base for the Town, the increase in the tax base will not pay for the total impact on the entire system. With added population comes congestion on roads, stress on the existing school system, increased need for additional police and fire protection and personnel; infrastructure extensions which are expensive to construct and maintain; increases in water-runoff and storm-water control devices as more and more land is covered with impervious surfaces; increases in the number of people visiting the

local park systems, and frequenting the libraries and post offices. It also means more people seeking planning and zoning advice and permits, as well as increased demands on other town staff members.

Each of these impacts of growth will be viewed differently by different groups of people. Pro-growth forces will view growth positively. They will enjoy the new restaurants that open, or the new employment opportunities available in the Town. Anti-growth forces will view growth with animosity. This group likes everything the way it was: no traffic congestion, the local grocery store, etc.

Slow growth forces, who include new residents as well as long-time residents, will desire to slow the influx of new residents now that they are here. This group sees the rural/suburban lifestyle they love threatened by the influx of growth spilling over from Charlotte. And yet still others will view growth with disinterest.

The next ten years will set the pattern for growth in Mint Hill. This growth can be managed. Growth management does not mean the stopping of growth. Rather, it refers to a conscious governmental program, or plan, to influence the rate, amount, type, location, and/or cost of new development. The traditional "tools" used to manage growth include a solid land use plan and adopted land use ordinances (zoning and subdivision) which should be user-friendly.

The development of this Land Use Plan which reflects the current needs and issues in the Town, is one step in guiding future growth. A good plan does not foreclose future growth decisions by prescribing the future in detail, rather it sets a framework to guide decision-making in order to bring about the goals and recommendations developed in the plan. As such, the purpose of the Mint Hill Land Use Plan update is two-fold. It should be used as a guide for the Board of Commissioners making land use decisions about the future growth and development in the Mint Hill area, and it should serve as a guide to citizens interested in the future growth and development planned for the Town over the next ten years.

There are many ways in which a plan can impact decision-making. The most common way is during the rezoning process. This process is best accomplished through reference to the land use goals and recommendations set forth in this plan. Another way this plan can impact decision-making is through the subdivision process described in the Mint Hill Subdivision Ordinance, which should be updated in accordance with the recommendations found in this plan. Most importantly then, a plan should not be left on a shelf. It must be implemented by the Board of Commissioners, who make the final call on rezoning petitions and other development decisions on a day to day basis. It must also be updated periodically in response to changing conditions and development policies.

III. THE LAND USE STEERING COMMITTEE

One goal of this plan is to involve Mint Hill residents and business men/women in the development of goals and recommendations addressing a broad range of issues and concerns in the Town. As such, the Mint Hill Board of Commissioners nominated individuals to represent the Town Board of Commissioner's, the Planning Board, the Mint Hill Business Association, a local Realtor, a local home builder, nine (9) Mint Hill residents, and three (3) residents from the Mint Hill extra-territorial jurisdiction.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Affiliations and Associations</u>
Lloyd Austin	Mint Hill Town Board of Commissioner's member, resident of Mint Hill for 15 years
Tony Brown	Realtor with Cambridge Realty, lifetime resident of Mint Hill.
Mike Cochrane	Resident of Mint Hill for 47 years, employed by the banking industry who has been providing banking services in Mint Hill for the last 18 years.
Robert Ferguson	Resident for 10 years, attorney in Gastonia, family has resided in the Clear Creek area since the 1860's.
Terry Flowe	Resident of Mint Hill ETJ, Planning Board member.
Tom Gatz	Resident for 18 years, retired from Philip Morris, Inc.
Andy Guzniczak	Resident for 12 years, software trainer for Technologies Edge and part-time teacher at CPCC, Computer Training.
Joseph Hulsart	Mint Hill Planning Board Chairman, resident of Mint Hill for 12 years, retired with 45 years of experience in engineering design.
Barry King	Resident for 23 years, business owner.
Bill Leatherman	Resident for 15 years, retired from Continental Insurance Co., operates a wholesale nursery on Blair Rd.
Tony Long	Business owner, resident for 34 years.
Paul Lyon	Retired from federal law enforcement after 30 years, resident for 13 years.
Roger Martin	Local home builder, native of Mint Hill, family lived in the area for a long time.
Richard Newton	Mint Hill resident for 7 years
Merton O'Prey	Retired Mechanical Engineer, involved with the building industry for 40 years, resident of Mint Hill for 20 years.
Jack O'Rourke	Local developer

Other Land Use Steering Committee Participants:

Sherry Ashley	Planning and Zoning Coordinator of Mint Hill since September, 1996.
Beth Hamrick	Town Clerk and Tax Collector, employed by the Town for 19 years, resident of Mint Hill for 23 years.
Todd Lamb	Town Administrator since 1997.
Kimberly Sandoval	Planner, Mint Hill since April, 1999.

A ten month process involving Steering Committee meetings began in January of 1999, and was completed in October, 1999.

IV. CITIZEN OPINION SURVEY CONDUCTED IN THE FALL OF 1998 - SURVEY RESULTS

Background

The current Land Use Plan was developed in 1985 and officially adopted in 1986. It has served the Town well in making land use decisions over the past 12 years. With public water and sewer now available in many areas of Town, and the impending arrival of the “I-485 Outerbelt Road”, the decision was made to review the Town’s Land Use Plan and Policies to enable it to deal with growth over the next 5-10 years.

As part of the process of updating the Land Use Plan, emphasis was placed on citizen input through a survey and community meetings. The Mint Hill Land Use Plan will become a guideline for Mint Hill’s future development and growth. The way the Town develops and grows in the future will have an impact on each citizen in the Town and its surrounding areas. The Citizen Survey, discussed here, was one method of gathering community input.

Method

In an effort to gather the general opinion of Mint Hill residents, a survey questionnaire was developed in the Fall of 1998 that requested both background information and opinion of land use issues for each household (see Appendix A to view the survey instrument). Respondents were instructed to mail the survey back to the Town by simply folding it so that the Town’s address was shown, and placing postage on it, or by dropping the survey off at any one of the following Mint Hill locations:

- Food Lion (All 3 locations in Mint Hill)
- Bi-Lo (Intersection of Lawyers and Lebanon Rd.)
- Harris Teeter (Mint Hill Festival Shopping Center)
- Public Library
- Town Hall

The intent of this study was to draw a random sample from the Mint Hill population with regard to feelings citizens had about land use issues affecting the Town. The questionnaire was mailed out to approximately 9,500 households in the Town and its extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). This process targeted four (4) specific populations: 1) residential owners within the Town’s limits, 2) residential renters within the Town’s limits, 3) businesses within the Town’s limits, and 4) residential owners in the Town’s ETJ. In total 1,008 responses, at a rate of approximately 10.6%, were obtained and can be broken down by the following categories:

	Town Residents	ETJ Residents	Residential Renters	Businesses
Number of Responses	802	173	20	13

Reliability

The response rate of approximately 10.6%, though somewhat low, is considered acceptable for mail-out surveys. The issue of the reliability of these data comes into question, however, with this rate of response. In other words, one might ask: Would the findings be the same if this study was repeated with another sample of the population? Additionally, this question can only be asked of truly random samples. It appears that the very nature of this survey is going to draw out respondents who are more likely to be affected by Land Use Plan recommendations. For example, it is probable that downtown residents and merchants, property owners and renters near high growth intersections, and citizens located near proposed I-485 interchanges are going to be more interested in returning the questionnaire than others in the study area. As such, it is difficult to label this sample as truly random.

Given the fact that this sample is probably not completely random and that there is a relatively low response rate, most researchers are not going to want to place measurements of sampling error on this study's results. These facts, however, do not render this study useless or invalid. Ultimately, the opinions expressed through the responses gathered represent over 1,000 of the households in the Town of Mint Hill and its ETJ along with many businesses. The sentiment that these respondents provide are very valuable in gathering the general opinion of land use issues facing the town and when forming plan recommendations that effect every land owner, business owner, and resident of the Mint Hill planning jurisdiction.

Findings

Once the survey return deadline passed, the responses were entered into a computer for analysis. As mentioned above, returned surveys were classified into four categories upon receipt for more in-depth analysis to occur. These categories include respondents who are residential owners within the Town's limits, residential renters within the Town's limits, businesses within the Town's limits, and residential owners in the Town's ETJ. While some open ended questions allowed responses to vary to a greater degree than questions with a limited number of response options, all of the data gathered could be reasonably classified and are summarized here.

Some initial findings and general observations include:

- The majority (67%) of all respondents have lived in Mint Hill, regardless of sub-population, for more than 10 years. Those within the Town's limits tend to belong to older age groups while a predominant number of people belong to the 25-44 years of age category in the remaining 3 targeted populations.
- More than 56% of all respondents commute to places *other* than Mint Hill and Uptown Charlotte, with 18% of the total working in Mint Hill.
- The majority of respondents choose to live in Mint Hill due to its "small town life style."

- The most important land use issue to those owning property within the Town limits and to businesses is density (maximum housing units per acre). Those residing within the ETJ are most concerned about development around new I-485 interchanges while renters are most interested in traffic and transportation alternatives.

In addition to the above general results, one can look more deeply at the characteristics of those that responded and the feelings respondents have for each land use related issue approached by the survey.

In Table #1, "Background Information", characteristics of respondents emerge. For example, respondents are typically those that have lived in Mint Hill for some time. The majority of respondents lived in Mint Hill for over ten years. Further, respondents tend to work uptown Charlotte, Mint Hill, or other areas not specified in the survey. Notable exceptions include businesses (not unexpectedly) and renters who appear to work predominantly in Mint Hill.

In Table #2, "General Opinions" respondents were asked to rank answers to the following two questions: **"Why did you choose to live in the Mint Hill Area?"**, and **"Which land use issues do you feel are critical for Mint Hill to address over the next 5 to 10 years?"** Table #2 breaks out responses by the major four surveyed sub-groups. For each population sub-group, the responses to each of the two questions are ranked by those that received the most "1", "2", or "3" ratings. The ranking "1" is the most important, with ranking #3 being the least important. From the responses, it is clear that a small town lifestyle is important to most who choose to live in Mint Hill and that density, development around new I-485 interchanges, and traffic and transportation alternatives show up with varying importance within population sub-groups.

The survey also provided a section for respondents to comment about what qualities they most liked and least liked about Mint Hill. Respondents were asked to make written comments in this section. The greatest majority of comments centered around the fact that residents enjoyed the large-lot residential image of Mint Hill, and its pleasant environment. Others liked the fact that apartments, commercial and industrial developments were limited in numbers, not adding to transportation problems. Others were happy that Mint Hill did not have a lot of fast-food restaurants, and "trash and flash" retail stores. Many respondents mentioned the value of the rural-look, abundant trees, and sidewalks which Mint Hill enjoys; they did not want future developments to cut down trees, unless absolutely necessary. Some respondents mentioned they valued the parks and old structures in Mint Hill.

As for items or concerns that people liked least in Mint Hill, responses ranged from lack of restaurants, video stores, and retail shopping choices, to lack of a vibrant, quaint downtown, to a lack of transportation options for the handicapped and elderly, to too many drugstores and grocery stores. Others disliked empty retail spaces which were not rentable for new enterprises due to fear of competition. Abandoned cars in yards was raised as an undesirable fact of life in some areas of Mint Hill. Some respondents disliked the fact I-485 was coming through the area.

Table 1: Background Information

	Town	ETJ	Business	Renter	TOTAL
How Long have you lived in the Mint Hill Area?	Total number, by group, for those responding				
Less than 1 year	6	8	1	2	17
1-2 years	42	21	0	1	64
3-5 years	109	17	1	5	132
6-10 years	93	23	2	0	118
More than 10 years	546	101	8	12	667
TOTAL	796	170	12	20	998

	Town	ETJ	Business	Renter	TOTAL
The number of people in household by age group.					
0-4 years	166	30	1	3	200
5-11 years	182	46	3	5	236
12-14 years	85	19	2	4	110
15-17 years	84	22	1	2	109
18-24 years	142	25	3	2	172
25-44 years	456	135	11	19	621
44-54 years	421	79	10	3	513
55 plus years	569	84	1	6	660
TOTAL	2105	440	32	44	2621

	Town	%	ETJ	%	Business	%	Renter	%	TOTAL	%
Where do you commute to work?										
Other areas	358	41.6%	66	33.2%	1	5.6%	6	26.1%	431	39.1%
Uptown Charlotte	206	23.9%	61	30.7%	4	22.2%	5	21.7%	276	25.1%
Mint Hill	154	17.9%	25	12.6%	12	66.7%	9	39.1%	200	18.2%
University Area	81	9.4%	30	15.1%	1	5.6%	1	4.3%	113	10.3%
Westinghouse Blvd Area	36	4.2%	8	4.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.3%	45	4.1%
Arrowood area	26	3.0%	9	4.5%	0	0.0%	1	4.3%	36	3.3%
TOTAL	861	100.0%	199	100.0%	18	100.0%	23	100.0%	1101	100.0%

Table 2: General Opinion

WITHIN TOWN LIMITS

Why choose to live in Mint Hill Area?	% of Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses			
			"1's"	"2's"	"3's"
Small town lifestyle	28.7%	593	54.5%	28.5%	17.0%
Low taxes	18.4%	381	30.7%	37.8%	31.5%
Proximity to Charlotte	17.3%	357	10.4%	37.3%	52.4%
Family and friends nearby	12.6%	261	40.2%	39.1%	20.7%
Affordable housing	10.8%	223	22.0%	43.5%	34.5%
Close to work	5.4%	112	37.5%	29.5%	33.0%
Lived here all my life	5.0%	104	76.9%	10.6%	12.5%
Other reasons	1.8%	38	39.5%	23.7%	36.8%
Commercial conveniences	1.4%	30	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%
Critical land use issues to address in 5 to 10 years.	% of Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	"1's"	"2's"	"3's"
Maximum housing units per acre	17.3%	358	52.2%	21.8%	26.0%
Development around new I-485 interchanges	16.9%	350	31.7%	35.4%	32.9%
Traffic/transportation alternatives	16.4%	339	34.8%	35.1%	30.1%
Extension of water and sewer lines	15.1%	314	47.1%	32.2%	20.7%
Location and type of commercial uses	14.3%	297	21.2%	43.8%	35.0%
Need for more recreation-open space	7.4%	154	31.8%	37.7%	30.5%
Location and type of industrial uses	7.1%	147	11.6%	37.4%	51.0%
Need for variety of housing types	5.5%	114	46.5%	35.1%	18.4%
Other land uses	Not rated and summarized here				

WITHIN ETJ

Why choose to live in Mint Hill Area?	% of Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses			
			"1's"	"2's"	"3's"
Small town lifestyle	27.0%	117	53.8%	26.5%	19.7%
Proximity to Charlotte	16.1%	70	18.6%	32.9%	48.6%
Low taxes	15.0%	65	20.0%	44.6%	35.4%
Family and friends nearby	13.1%	57	28.1%	50.9%	21.1%
Affordable housing	12.7%	55	23.6%	40.0%	36.4%
Lived here all my life	8.1%	35	82.9%	11.4%	5.7%
Close to work	5.8%	25	36.0%	24.0%	40.0%
Commercial conveniences	2.3%	10	20.0%	30.0%	50.0%
Other reasons	Not rated and summarized here				
Critical land use issues to address in 5 to 10 years.	% of Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	"1's"	"2's"	"3's"
Development around new I-485 interchanges	21.8%	103	45.6%	39.8%	14.6%
Maximum housing units per acre	15.0%	71	53.5%	25.4%	21.1%
Extension of water and sewer lines	14.0%	66	45.5%	30.3%	24.2%
Location and type of commercial uses	13.5%	64	21.9%	34.4%	43.8%
Traffic/transportation alternatives	13.3%	63	44.4%	28.6%	27.0%
Need for more recreation-open space	10.1%	48	25.0%	29.2%	45.8%
Location and type of industrial uses	8.0%	38	10.5%	26.3%	63.2%
Need for variety of housing types	4.2%	20	15.0%	65.0%	20.0%
Other land uses	Not rated and summarized here				

Table 2: General Opinion (cont.)

BUSINESS OWNERS

Why choose to live in Mint Hill Area?	% of Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	"1's"	"2's"	"3's"
Small town lifestyle	32.4%	11	63.6%	9.1%	27.3%
Close to work	20.6%	7	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%
Proximity to Charlotte	20.6%	7	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%
Low taxes	8.8%	3	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%
Commercial conveniences	5.9%	2	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Family and friends nearby	5.9%	2	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Affordable housing	5.9%	2	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Lived here all my life	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other reasons	Not rated and summarized here				
Critical land use issues to address in 5 to 10 years.	% of Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	"1's"	"2's"	"3's"
Maximum housing units per acre	21.2%	7	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%
Traffic/transportation alternatives	21.2%	7	42.9%	57.1%	0.0%
Development around new I-485 interchanges	18.2%	6	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%
Extension of water and sewer lines	15.2%	5	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%
Location and type of commercial uses	9.1%	3	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Location and type of industrial uses	9.1%	3	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Need for variety of housing types	3.0%	1	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Need for more recreation-open space	3.0%	1	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Other land uses	Not rated and summarized here				

RESIDENTIAL RENTERS

Why choose to live in Mint Hill Area?	% of Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	"1's"	"2's"	"3's"
Small town lifestyle	29.6%	16	87.5%	6.3%	6.3%
Proximity to Charlotte	20.4%	11	9.1%	36.4%	54.5%
Family and friends nearby	13.0%	7	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%
Close to work	13.0%	7	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%
Lived here all my life	11.1%	6	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%
Affordable housing	7.4%	4	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Low taxes	5.6%	3	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%
Commercial conveniences	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other reasons	Not rated and summarized here				
Critical land use issues to address in 5 to 10 years.	% of Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	Total 1, 2, or 3 Responses	"1's"	"2's"	"3's"
Traffic/transportation alternatives	24.4%	11	45.5%	27.3%	27.3%
Development around new I-485 interchanges	20.0%	9	11.1%	66.7%	22.2%
Extension of water and sewer lines	15.6%	7	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%
Location and type of commercial uses	13.3%	6	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%
Need for more recreation-open space	11.1%	5	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Maximum housing units per acre	8.9%	4	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Location and type of industrial uses	4.4%	2	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Need for variety of housing types	2.2%	1	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Other land uses	Not rated and summarized here				

The final section of the survey posed sixteen statements regarding land use issues for respondents to comment on. The responses were arranged in a "Likert-type" or ordinal scale of categories as follows:

A = Strongly Agree

B = Agree

C = Neither Agree nor Disagree

D = Disagree

E = Strongly Disagree

[Please see the survey instrument attached as Appendix A]

Sample statements included, "The Land Use Regulations are fair and reasonable", "Mint Hill should encourage more variety of housing types", or "I would use more transit services to and from Charlotte, if available". Responses to these sixteen comments are found in Table #9, "Opinions of Specific Land Use Issues". The last five columns of the table record the number of responses for each statement. The total number of responses and a corresponding "response rate" have been tabulated for each issue statement. Please note that not all issues were addressed by all respondents. Perhaps these differences reflect varying interest in the issues at hand. For instance, one citizen may not be concerned about non-residential screening and signage if their focus is strictly on residential development in neighboring areas. Another likely explanation for differing response rates is that those statements that were difficult to understand did not get responded to.

Adjacent to response rates is the column containing median calculations. For each of these questions, the median was taken to determine where the "half-way" point for all answers occurred. To classify responses, "A" answers were given a value of "1", "B" answers were given a value of "2", and so on through "E" with a value of "5." Calculating this descriptive statistic allows one to identify overall sentiment of the respondents and the strength of those responses. For example, a median of 1 shows greater "agreement" with a statement than a median of 2. Table #3 summarizes these opinions of specific land use issues.

There are some opinions on specific land use issues that stand out among the others. For instance, single family housing types are preferred while apartment complexes appear to have very few proponents. Other areas of strong agreement include the need to preserve open space during residential development and the fact that traffic congestion is experienced regularly. One can also conclude that many respondents disagree with encouraging the development of large-scale commercial uses. A final issue that appears to be strongly supported is that of applying strict screening and signage regulations to all non-residential developments.

Conclusions

Perhaps the greatest conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that the people of Mint Hill have reiterated the desires that have come out in many of the proceeding planning efforts and opinion surveys. These desires include promoting single-family detached residential

Table 3: Opinions of Specific Land Use Issues

Issue	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Median	Frequency				
				Strongly Agree A (1)	Agree B (2)	Neutral C (3)	Disagree D (4)	Strongly Disagree E (5)
1 The Land Use Regulations (i.e. Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances) are fair and reasonable.	935	93%	2	15.4%	36.6%	31.9%	9.4%	6.7%
2 Residential development should be restricted to large lot (1 acre minimum) single-family development.	983	98%	2	48.8%	18.9%	8.2%	14.2%	9.8%
3 Based on availability of water and/or sewer, Mint Hill should allow single-family development on lots smaller than 1/2 acre (i.e. 1/3 acre).	986	98%	4	9.3%	12.7%	6.1%	23.7%	48.2%
4 Mint Hill should encourage more variety of housing types (Rate each of the following:):								
Single-Family on individual lot	968	96%	1	58.9%	29.8%	6.0%	1.5%	3.8%
Townhouse or Condominiums	944	94%	4	8.7%	20.9%	17.4%	16.1%	37.0%
Cluster/Pinwheel Homes	932	92%	4	8.6%	10.9%	15.2%	20.6%	44.6%
Apartment Complexes	938	93%	5	2.9%	5.7%	7.9%	17.8%	65.8%
5 Mint Hill should promote residential development that encourages preservation of open space.	980	97%	1	67.1%	22.9%	5.8%	2.8%	1.4%
6 I experience traffic congestion on major roads on a regular basis.	985	98%	1	52.4%	28.9%	11.8%	5.5%	1.4%
I would use more transit services (i.e. bus routes) to and from								
7 Charlotte, if available.	981	97%	4	8.0%	11.7%	25.8%	25.1%	29.5%
8 I would like to see the following Mass Transit options available in Mint Hill:								
Bus	923	92%	3	14.2%	30.2%	26.3%	9.8%	19.5%
Light Rail	889	88%	3	16.6%	23.2%	24.7%	12.6%	22.8%
Van Pool	834	83%	3	6.2%	19.4%	40.6%	14.4%	19.3%
Other	546	54%	3	5.1%	7.1%	50.0%	11.9%	25.8%

Table 3: Opinions of Specific Land Use Issues

Issue	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Median	Frequency				
				Strongly Agree A (1)	Agree B (2)	Neutral C (3)	Disagree D (4)	Strongly Disagree E (5)
9 Mint Hill should promote large public/semi-public uses, such as hospital, schools, or similar uses.	984	98%	3	16.9%	30.0%	24.6%	16.2%	12.4%
10 I would be willing to pay more property tax for services in order to minimize the amount of non-residential development.	986	98%	3	16.4%	30.3%	16.5%	17.7%	19.0%
11 Mint Hill has an adequate amount of neighborhood commercial uses (i.e. banks, grocery stores, specialty shops).	989	98%	2	37.9%	32.8%	9.0%	13.5%	6.8%
12 Mixed uses of commercial and industrial development should be limited to the following areas (Rate each area):								
Downtown	921	91%	2	29.8%	33.4%	13.5%	12.6%	10.7%
I-485 Interchanges	920	91%	2	20.9%	37.5%	12.3%	12.5%	16.8%
Area's with Existing Commercial Uses	942	93%	2	31.8%	47.2%	9.6%	6.7%	4.7%
Other	209	21%	3	27.8%	15.3%	32.1%	10.0%	14.8%
13 Mint Hill should encourage the development of more large scale commercial uses (i.e. retail centers, malls, "big box" stores).	996	99%	5	8.3%	9.1%	8.3%	21.5%	52.7%
14 A mix of residential and neighborhood commercial uses should be encouraged in the downtown area.	982	97%	3	15.3%	34.2%	24.8%	13.5%	12.1%
15 Strict screening and signage regulations should be applied to all non-residential developments.	994	99%	1	56.6%	31.2%	7.0%	3.2%	1.9%
16 More sidewalks are needed throughout the Town.	999	99%	2	35.2%	24.9%	22.6%	10.2%	7.0%

development, minimizing large-scale commercial growth, and maintaining the small-town lifestyle which has drawn so many residents to live in Mint Hill.

Over 1,000 households or individuals have responded to the Town's Citizen Opinion Survey regarding land use planning issues. These voices provide strong sentiment as to what is liked (Table 3) and disliked about living in Mint Hill and what is desired and not desired in Mint Hill in the future. The opinions found here are one tool that can be used by Town staff, Land Use Steering members, and ultimately the Board of Commissioners when making recommendations and decisions that will alter Mint Hill's character for many generations to come.

V. COMMENTS AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

For a long-range plan to be effective, it is important that the plan have an overall direction or vision. In order to develop such a vision statement, it is important to first address the strengths and unique qualities of Mint Hill, as well as the Town's challenges, or weaknesses.

In order to get a better understanding of the important issues and needs in the Mint Hill Study Area, the Mint Hill Land Use Steering Committee spent several meetings discussing and identifying land use and development issues facing the Town. In addition to their comments, which are recorded below, to it were added the comments identified by the public at a public meeting held to specifically obtain citizen input regarding what issues are important to the Town. This list was also supplemented with written comments that were submitted through the Mint Hill citizen survey. And last, but not least, comments about issues and concerns that were discussed with the Mint Hill Board of Commissioners, Planning Board and staff were added to the list below. These comments were then grouped into the following general topic areas:

- Transportation
- Land Use Planning
- Housing
- Commercial/Industrial Facilities
- Downtown Issues
- Recreational Facilities
- Public Facilities
- Other Concerns

Please note that some comments listed below may contradict each other.

Transportation

- Many streets are too narrow and in need of maintenance (particularly N.C. 218)
- Lack of sidewalks for walkability in the downtown area.
- Lack of bicycle paths.
- Implement Downtown Study to provide new roads in the downtown area.
- Enjoy tree-lined streets.
- N.C. 218, N.C. 51, and Philadelphia Church Road are congested and dangerous.
- Intersections along N.C. 51 are congested.
- Congestion caused by significant commuter traffic coming to and from Union County.
- Speeding on N.C. 51, narrow roads, and in residential areas is a problem.
- Neighborhoods are not connected. Such interconnectivity would help alleviate traffic congestion.

- Implement the recommendations in the Downtown Study regarding the connectivity of roads in the downtown area.
- Experience traffic congestion on a regular basis on major roads.
- N.C. 51 should be a four (4) lane road.
- Congestion on all roads has worsened.
- Widen N.C. 51 and Lawyers Road with asphalt shoulders to allow drivers to circumvent vehicles turning left, particularly at the post office and school.
- Fix potholes on N.C. 218 from truck traffic.
- Brief Road is congested.
- Intersection of Wilson-Grove and Philadelphia Church Road and N.C. 218 are congested.
- Many commuters use N.C. 218, Lawyers Road, and N.C. 51.
- Adjust the timing of stop lights.
- Widen Lawyers Road to four lanes.
- Encourage the State to widen roads.
- Mass transit is needed along the railroad tracks.

Land Use Planning

- Need to preserve the small town character/atmosphere of Mint Hill...its sense of community.
- Desire to keep a sense of separation from higher density areas (both residential and non-residential).
- Large lots are desirable.
- Enjoy the quiet areas and the wildlife.
- Tree-lined highway corridors create an enjoyable driving/walking experience
- More development desired in Downtown
- Don't want the Town to change much.
- Enjoy the undeveloped land....lots of open space.
- Many people enjoy the large lot image of Mint Hill.
- The Town should grow slowly, but in the right direction.
- Different land uses (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) should be separated from each other, and well-defined.
- Controlled growth is important.
- Outlying residential areas need to maintain their open space.
- Need for consistent zoning.
- Need for controlled growth.
- Lack of patio homes, townhouses, and condominiums in the community.
- Need to clean up gateway areas. Perhaps coordinate with Charlotte.
- Many responded to the survey with the fact that they liked the wooded and rural areas and large open areas. This gives Mint Hill its character.
- Do not like telecommunications towers.
- Need to discourage or prohibit the clear-cutting of lots.

- A need to recognize that all future development will be here to stay.
- Enforce the sign ordinance and zoning ordinance.
- The creation of more residential lots creates more traffic congestion.
- Controlled development is desired at I-485 and Lawyers Road, with development serving local residents with offices, retail uses. No fast food restaurants or gas stations desired here.
- Subdivision regulations are costly to developers (putting in sidewalks).
- Mixed use development should be allowed at I-485 intersections, but not in all quadrants.
- Quality development should be required at I-485 interchanges: master plans, unified developments.
- Land locked parcels were created by I-485.
- Keep Mint Hill like it is, but grow.
- Balance land uses and tax base to keep quality of life.
- Need for a movie theater in Mint Hill.

Housing

- Residents enjoy the large minimum lot sizes found in the residential areas, and the open space that is created as a result.
- Preserve neighborhood pride.
- Housing options are needed so that people can stay in the community they enjoy when they can no longer maintain a house.
- Housing options can result in the preservation of open space.
- Mint Hill will continue to grow and it will be difficult to keep the small town atmosphere.
- Implement Downtown Development Plan which calls for downtown areas of smaller homes for individuals/families desiring that type of environment.
- Like minimum number of apartments, and individual homes.
- Need affordable housing for empty nesters and the young.
- Dislike of manufactured home parks.
- Many people responded in the survey that they like Mint Hill because there are no apartments or condominiums, and that there are quiet residential areas with homes on large lots.
- Many responded to the survey with the fact that they like Mint Hill because it is “residential” in nature, unlike other nearby towns.
- Townhouses, condominiums, pinwheel developments, and cluster homes could be acceptable if limited in numbers on any one site, and with small development sites.
- Multi-family developments need larger buffers on their perimeters.
- Need for some smaller lots, but control the quality of development.
- Need for alternative housing types: patio homes, pinwheel clusters, etc. with open space.

Commercial/Industrial Facilities

- Need more commercial property to support the tax base.
- A recent published study indicates that Mint Hill is one of the largest cities with the lowest amount of retail sales in the State. This places the tax burden on homeowners, and existing businesses.
- Would like to see a little more retail, business development in the Town.
- Business development should complement the growing residential development in Mint Hill.
- Limit new commercial/industrial development growth.
- Controlled growth necessary for added tax base to keep pace with infrastructure demands.
- Need for new business development, downtown development.
- Need for more employment opportunities.
- Lack of restaurants and entertainment opportunities.
- Lack of large employment base for restaurants.
- Lack of sufficient amount of vacant property zoned for commercial use.
- The Town has been selective in limiting the amount and type of commercial development. This is a plus.
- Dislike additional commercial development in areas where traffic congestion is a problem now.
- Lack of an ABC store.
- Too many drug stores.
- Need to require businesses to add landscaping in the front setbacks.
- Unattractive commercial business buildings.
- Need for more offices or light industry to provide employment opportunities for local residents.
- Discourage large scale commercial uses.
- Too many businesses encroaching upon residential areas.
- Vacant commercial property, i.e. old Food Lion.
- Many responded to the survey with the fact they liked limited commercial development....it was a good quality. Many felt that no more drug stores or grocery stores were needed.
- Discourage commercial uses that encourage drive-through services, and encourage those businesses that promote pedestrian traffic.
- Tax abatement to encourage more commercial development.
- Need for a district tax in the downtown area to pay for public improvements.
- Need to improve the image of the area around Lawyers Road and Margaret-Wallace Road.
- Need to discourage the business policy of leasing vacant buildings to prevent them from being leased, and utilized by competitors.
- Businesses can capture clients from the commuter population and increase the tax base of the Town.

- Industrial uses would be appropriate along Albemarle Road at N.C. 51 along the railroad tracks.
- A planned industrial/business park is needed.
- Attract non-residential uses that will serve the region.
- Commercial growth along N.C. 51 desired.

Downtown Issues

- More retail uses in the Mint Hill Downtown are desired.
- There is a pressure to develop interchanges with non-residential development. This pressure may impact the viability of Downtown merchants.
- Downtown looks poor in appearance; needs attention.
- The image of N.C. 51 and Lawyers Road needs improving: signs, banners, no “welcome” signs.
- Need to keep downtown viable and alive.
- Need for a walkable downtown, with sidewalks.
- Implement the Downtown Development Plan which calls for a denser residential area in the downtown area.
- Need for community development downtown.
- Lack of a well-defined “downtown” area of businesses.
- Need to review Downtown Overlay District regulations for applicability today.
- Need for sidewalks on both sides of the street in the Downtown area to make it pedestrian “friendly”.
- Desire to make downtown area more intense.
- Need to set Downtown Overlay District boundaries and rezone property to that designation.
- No significant vacant parcels of land downtown that are zoned for commercial uses.
- Development is market-driven.
- Need for mixed-uses in the downtown area.
- Need for more restaurants.
- Downtown lacks definition with too many styles of architecture; need for architectural unity.
- Keep retail in the downtown area.

Recreational Facilities

- The abundance of trees and open space is an asset to the area.
- Land Use Plan should be consistent with the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Plan.
- The park is a big asset.
- Need for more open space; development is moving too fast.
- Need a recreational center, perhaps in the vacant Food Lion store?
- Need for more recreational facilities besides parks: skating, movies, etc.

- Keep children in Mint Hill for recreational activities.

Public Facilities

- As the town grows, the infrastructure must keep pace: sidewalks, roads, parks, water and sewer.
- Parks are spacious, well-kept, and safe.
- Need for water and sewer to all areas.
- Residents on community water or sewer systems want public water and sewer service.
- There are septic tank problems in residential areas.
- Downtown has access to public water service.
- Need for a teen recreation center.
- Library is a great asset.
- Public water and sewer is desired along Mintwood Drive.
- The water table in Mint Hill may be compromised with more and more development, which could lower the water table thereby resulting in inadequate levels for existing wells.
- An infrastructure study is needed
- Need for sewer south of N.C. 51.
- Need land for a new fire and police department.
- Developers should be required to donate land for public amenities when they desire a mixed-use future.
- Need for a YMCA.
- Need for public water and sewer along N.C. 51 from Albemarle to U.S. 74.
- Need for a Senior Citizen Center.
- Need for a Teen Activity Center.

Other Comments/Issues

- Low crime rate.
- The quality of life in Mint Hill is great.
- Avoid the problems other communities have had with growth.
- People highly enjoy living in Mint Hill, and will commute/drive long distances to work/schools, etc. because they don't want to leave the Town.
- Good schools in the area.
- Proximity to Charlotte is a plus.
- The Town is environmentally clean.
- Lack of emergency medical facilities.
- Like to view rural farmland.
- Lack of adequate business setbacks.
- Need more police officers assigned to Baker 3.
- Elected officials need to represent the desires of the citizens.
- Elected officials need to educate the public on land use issues.

- Enjoy low taxes, but grow the tax base.
- Enjoy the Town Newsletter.

VI. VISION FOR THE FUTURE

In addition to identifying key issues, the Land Use Steering Committee members also discussed what they like about living and working in Mint Hill. From this information, the Steering Committee was asked to take a step back from their day to day activities and look at the big picture: Where are we now? Where are we going? Where do we want to be? And how can we get there? Visioning is simply a process by which a community envisions the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it.

By creating an ideal vision statement of how the Town should look over the next 10 to 20 years, the Committee members can then work towards developing goals and objectives to achieve this vision statement.

The following vision statement depicts in words what the community is striving to become:

- Mint Hill is relished for its quiet, relaxing, small town lifestyle and rural environment. The natural vistas of undeveloped land and vacant, wooded parcels of land add to the ambiance enjoyed by area residents and business owners. This sense of openness and wooded areas are loved and recognized as an historic asset of the town, and vital to its current image. The continued existence of large open spaces is anticipated, as it is an important part of the quality of life in Mint Hill.
- Downtown Mint Hill will develop with mixed uses of commercial, office, and residential uses. Medium density housing would be appropriate for this area, as well as residential uses in the upper floors of downtown buildings. Buildings and spaces will be pedestrian oriented, encouraging a pedestrian vitality downtown. New development will be aesthetically pleasing, with buildings setback from the street right-of-way to provide a sense of openness, and parking lots located to the rear and sides of buildings.
- Mint Hill will seek to maintain its image as primarily a “residential community” comprised of predominantly large lot (1/2 acre or greater), single-family homes, with a very low overall density. Pride in this image of low residential densities and large lots will continue.
- Alternative residential developments, other than single-family homes, are appropriate in the Mint Hill area when the development has a low to medium density (encouraged to have no more than eight dwelling units per acre) and a limited site size. In addition, such developments would ideally be dispersed throughout the Downtown area.

- Mint Hill will balance limited commercial and industrial development with residential uses to provide a sufficient tax base to implement this plan, and its budget. Non-residential nodes will be planned to guide non-residential growth to areas planned for such developments. The new development will be oriented to serve local residents, not to serve the highway traveler. New non-residential developments will have good transportation accessibility, traffic circulation, and be designed to blend harmoniously, and be sensitive to, the natural environment. Large big-box commercial uses, and large shopping centers would be discouraged from locating in Mint Hill.
- One I-485 interchange will be developed with limited office and business parks/light industrial uses. The other interchanges shall remain residential in character. The non-residential uses will be set in campus-like settings to blend with the rural character of the area. The interchanges will not promote commercial uses geared to the travelling public such as hotel/ motels, fast-food restaurants, big-box retail uses, or large shopping centers.
- The transportation network will be efficient and safe with wider roads and safe intersections, and additional transit opportunities. Such rail or bus service will be in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transit Commission's plan as needed.
- Mint Hill will continue to be known for its abundance of trees, especially along the tree-lined, scenic street corridors. The rural heritage of the area is enhanced and recalled, along these corridors, giving much pleasure to the motorist, pedestrian, or bicyclist.
- New schools will be planned in advance to meet expected growth in enrollments.
- Mint Hill will continue to enjoy a lower tax rate than found in other jurisdictions in Mecklenburg County, and a lower crime rate.
- Mint Hill will continue to be a good place to raise a family, with adequate open space, greenways, and park land, linking regional facilities with local destinations.

VII. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History of Mint Hill

Mint Hill was originally settled around 1750 by colonists which came from southern Pennsylvania and Maryland to the lush undeveloped land of what was then known as the Salisbury District of North Carolina, Mecklenburg County. The area had abundant wild game as well as flat grassy areas which were prime places to farm, requiring little reshaping of the topography. Some of the first settlers, in the 1760's, also lobbied for the county courthouse to be located in Mint Hill, but after some controversy, the decision was made to locate the courthouse in Charlotte.

The name, Mint Hill, is thought to have originated because of the large amount of wild mint that was growing in the area. However, others argue that the Town's name came from the fact that gold coins were made at one time in the assaying office located there during the gold rush days of the early 1800's. An elaborate network of gold mine shafts existed in the area, but the official minting facility was located several miles away in Charlotte. Rumors also have circulated that some platinum and rough diamonds were also found in the area.

The Town of Mint Hill originally established in the area surrounding the Philadelphia Church that was founded in 1770. The church grew along with the Town, and provided a symbolic nucleus for the residents, through today. This church still stands today. In 1889, the Bain Academy opened as a boarding school. This school was endowed by the church, and had almost 160 students at the time it burned at the turn of the century. It was, however, rebuilt in 1904, but became a county school facility in the early 1920's. Although several additions have altered its original architectural appearance, the school is still in use today.

Mint Hill, once the site of a military muster ground, was initially well grounded with industrial development. There was a cotton gin, a flour mill, a handle factory, a shingle factory, Henderson Roller Mills, a steam molasses plant, saw mills, brick yards, R. J. McEwen's Store and a funeral home.

It is not known exactly when Mint Hill received its first charter, but it is common knowledge that the town officials gave up their charter in 1910 so that Mecklenburg County would build a road through Mint Hill. While counties today are not in the road building business, back then they were given the authority to do so. In 1910, the County refused to build roads through incorporated areas.

It wasn't until sixty-one (61) years later, in 1971, that Mint Hill decided to become incorporated again. Spurred by the threat of a Charlotte-Mecklenburg consolidation and two bitter zoning battles with the county commissioners, the citizens of Mint Hill supported and backed a new charter on March 11, 1971. Independence is very important to Mint Hillians, as they are known. Residents are very proud of their small town and want to maintain their small town image, and not become overshadowed by Charlotte.

Since its incorporation, Mint Hill has progressed steadily. From a land use perspective, a Master Plan showing future land use was developed in 1976 to preserve the expanses of open land that make the Mint Hill area so pleasing. The majority of residents today still find the rural flavor of the Town combined with its large numbers of residential neighborhoods, extremely appealing. Because of these assets and strong sense of community, many residential areas have asked to be annexed by the Town, which would also lower property tax rates.

Population Trends and Projections

Mint Hill has experienced significant growth impacts from its geographic closeness to Mecklenburg County and Charlotte, the hub of the twelve county Metrolina area. Table #4, "Population Growth Trends" details population growth in Mint Hill, and the other six towns and cities in Mecklenburg County for contrast. As shown on Table #4, Mint Hill's population in 1970 was 2,262, compared to 7,915 in 1980. Much of this 249.9% increase in population growth is attributable to new residential growth in Mint Hill, and the fact that some percentage of people living in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area were moving out of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area to escape higher taxes, and to enjoy the small town living environment that Mint Hill offers. In addition, annexations played a role in increasing the number of dwelling units in the Town.

Figure #1 compares the growth rates between various decades for the seven communities. As can be seen in Figure #1, Matthews also enjoyed a 110.5% increase in population between 1970 and 1980, as families and households moved into the southeastern portions of Mecklenburg County. By 1980, Mint Hill was the second largest municipality within Mecklenburg.

During the decade between 1980 and 1990, Matthews led the seven municipalities with a 728.3% gain in population, mainly attributable to annexations. Mint Hill, however, grew by 46.7%, to include 11,615 people by 1980.

Table #4 and Figure #1 also show estimated population figures for the period between 1990-1997. During this seven (7) year period, Mint Hill has experienced a 42.8% increase in population to bring the population to 16,591 people. Only Huntersville and Cornelius are estimated to have grown at a faster rate than Mint Hill during this seven year period.

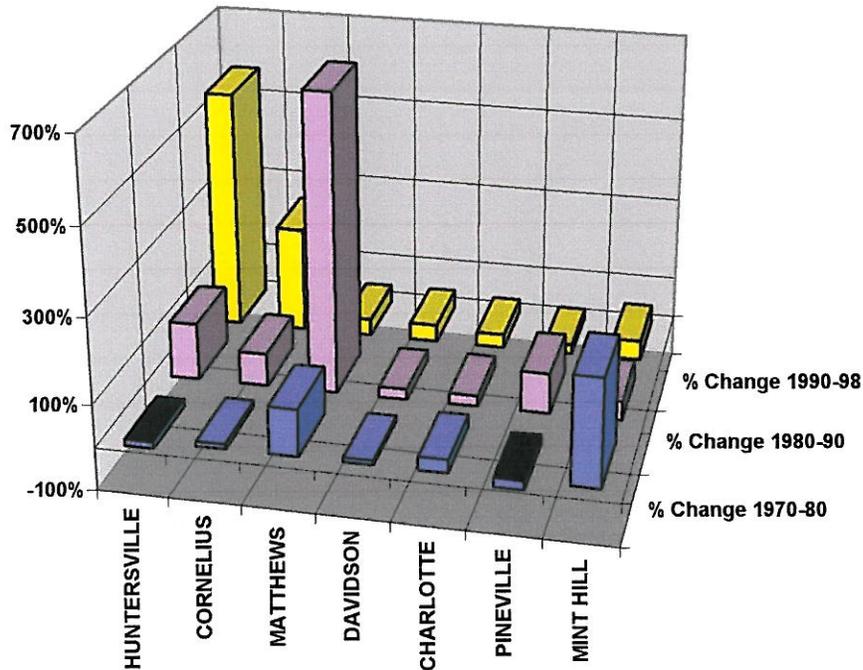
Household Income Characteristics

Map #3 illustrates the location of the various Census Tracts that comprise the Mint Hill area. The area shown in blue on Map #3 illustrates the location of Mint Hill within the County, and the red area is Matthews. The tan area is part of the Charlotte city limits. As can be seen on Map #3, Mint Hill is located within the following 1990 census tracts: 57.01, 57.04, and 57.05, and 19.07. The U.S. Census Bureau data which is presented in this document represents data for each entire census tract. Please note that the Mint Hill corporate limits do not

Table #4
Population Growth Trends
Mecklenburg County Municipalities
1970 - 1998

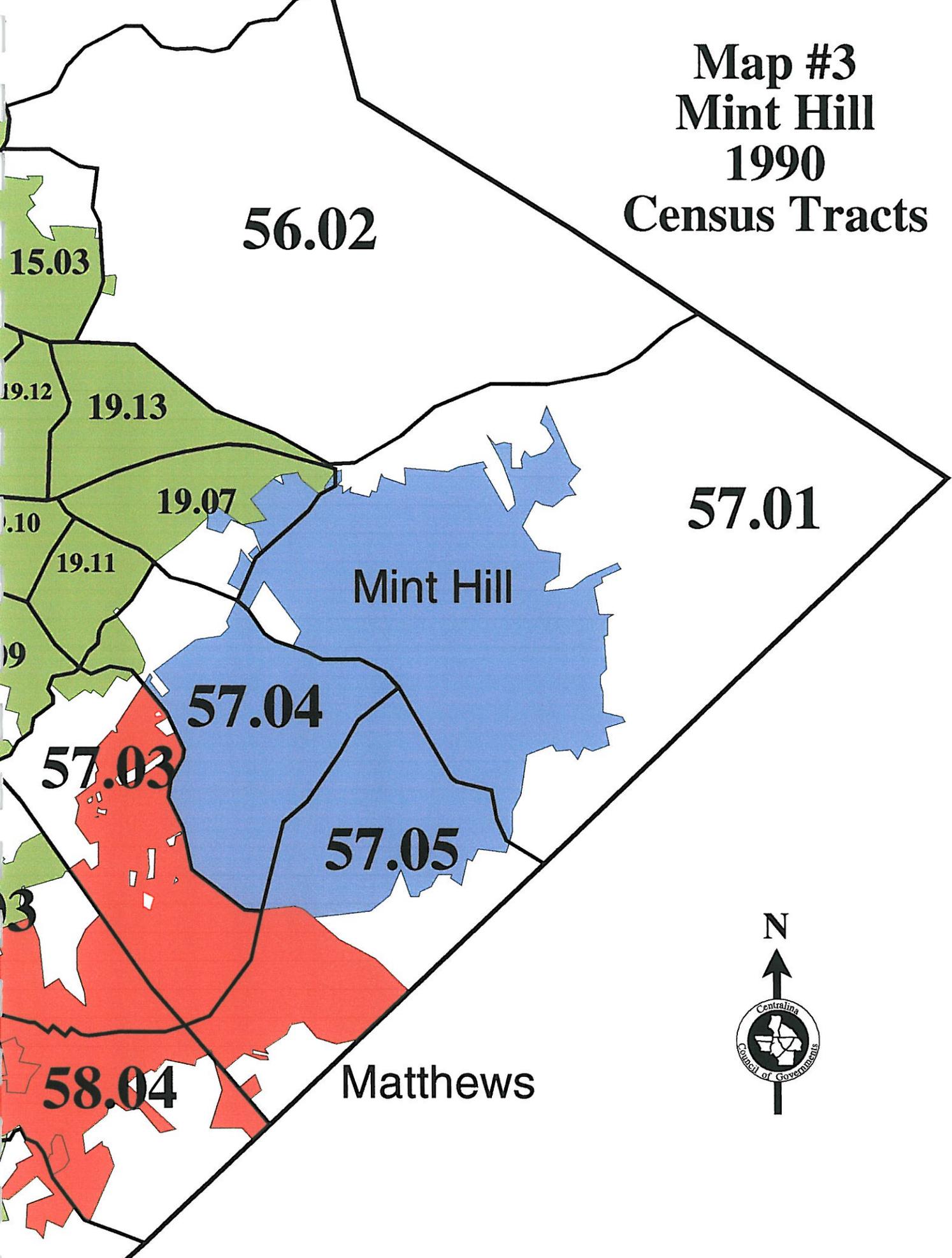
Municipality	1970	1980	% Change 1970-80	1990	% Change 1980-90	1998 Estimate	% Change 1990-98
MINT HILL	2,262	7,915	249.9%	11,615	46.7%	16,991	46.3%
HUNTERSVILLE	1,538	1,294	-15.9%	3,023	133.6%	20,281	570.9%
CORNELIUS	1,296	1,460	12.7%	2,581	76.8%	9,056	250.9%
MATTHEWS	783	1,648	110.5%	13,651	728.3%	19,029	39.4%
DAVIDSON	2,931	3,241	10.6%	4,046	24.8%	5,714	41.2%
CHARLOTTE	241,420	315,474	30.7%	395,934	25.5%	521,478	31.7%
PINEVILLE	1,948	1,525	-21.7%	2,970	94.8%	3,632	22.3%
Totals	252,178	332,557	31.9%	433,820	30.4%	596,181	37.4%

Figure #1 : Percent Change in Population, 1970-1998



Sources: US Bureau of the Census and NC Office of State Planning

**Map #3
Mint Hill
1990
Census Tracts**



Matthews

coincide with the census tract boundaries, and that Census Tract #57.05 includes statistics from Matthews.

Keeping this in mind, Table #5 illustrates median household income by Census Tract for 1989. The median household income ranges from \$37,186 per household to \$50,858. The median household income is lowest in Census Tract 19.07, which is north of Wilson Grove Road, and highest in Census Tract 57.05, which is the area west of Lawyers Road and south of N.C. 51. Figure #2 illustrates the median household income in a bar chart format.

Racial and Sexual Characteristics of the Population

Table #6 illustrates 1990 population figures by Census Tracts for the following racial categories: White, Black, American Indian/Eskimos, or Aleut, and Other. As can be seen in Table #6, the total population of all four Census Tracts is 25,753, of which 908 (3.5%) are black, 127 (.5%) are American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, and 147 (.6%) are Asian or Pacific Islander, and 34 (.1%) are classified as Other Race. Figure #4 presents this information in a pie chart format.

Table #6 also illustrates the breakdown of the population in these four Census Tracts by sex. There is a very proportional ratio of men to women: 12,844 males and 12,909 females. Figure #3 illustrates this in a pie chart.

Poverty Statistics

Table #7 and Figure #6 show the number of persons classified at the poverty level by Census Tract for 1989. In total, there were 498 persons classified at or below the poverty level in 1989 in the four Census Tracts covering the study area, which represents 2% of the population. Please note that some of these individuals may live in the Matthews or Charlotte portion of these Census Tracts.

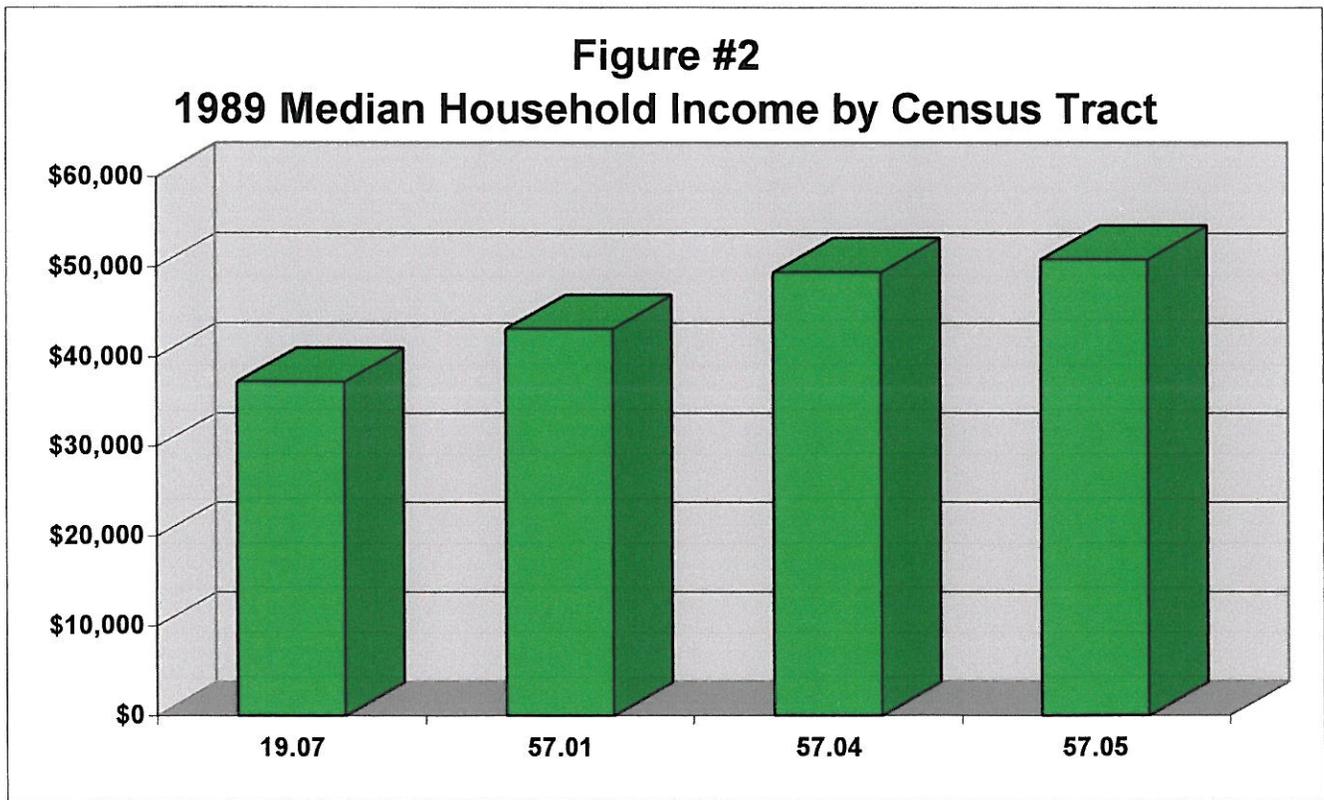
Housing Characteristics

Table #8 and Figure #6 illustrate characteristics of housing units by Census Tracts for 1990. The first portion of the table shows the number of structures by occupancy status: owner-occupied or renter occupied. In the four Census Tracts which cover the study area, 84.3% are owner-occupied units.

Table #8 also shows the number of housing units by Census Tracts by type for single-family, duplexes, multi-family, mobile homes, etc. Obviously, the housing type in most abundance are single-family structures, with 8,392 in existence in 1990 in these Census Tracts. There were 20 duplexes, 567 manufactured homes, 666 multi-family units, and 60 other type of units. In total there were 9,705 dwelling units in these four Census Tracts.

Table #5
1989 Median Household Income
By Census Tract

Census Tract	1989 Median Household Income
19.07	\$37,186
57.01	\$43,120
57.04	\$49,447
57.05	\$50,858



Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990.

Table #6
Population By Race
By Census Tract, 1990

Census Tract	Total Population	Sex by Type		Race by Type					Other Race
		Male	Female	White	Black	American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	Asian or Pacific Islander		
19.07	6,020	2,933	3,087	5,435	463	27	74		21
57.01	8,783	4,356	4,427	8,584	86	100	8		5
57.04	6,136	3,059	3,077	5,780	283	0	65		8
57.05	4,814	2,496	2,318	4,738	76	0	0		0
Total	25,753	12,844	12,909	24,537	908	127	147		34

Figure #3
Percent of Population by Sex,
1990

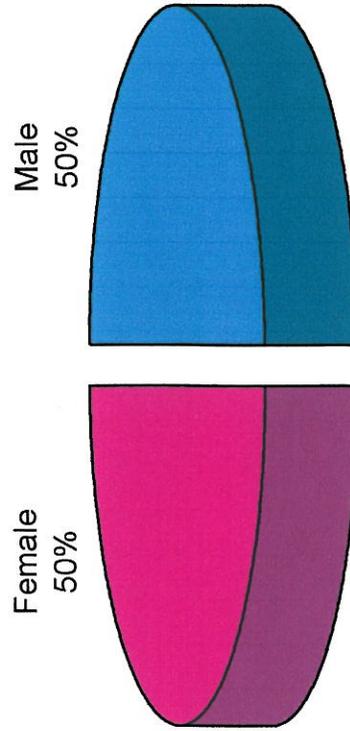


Figure #4
Percent of Population by Race,
1990

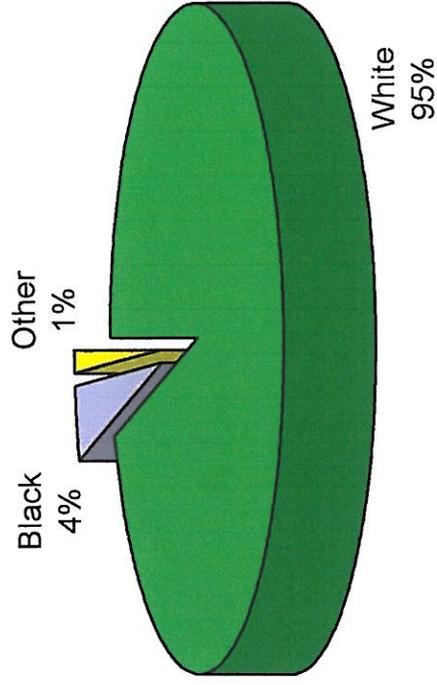
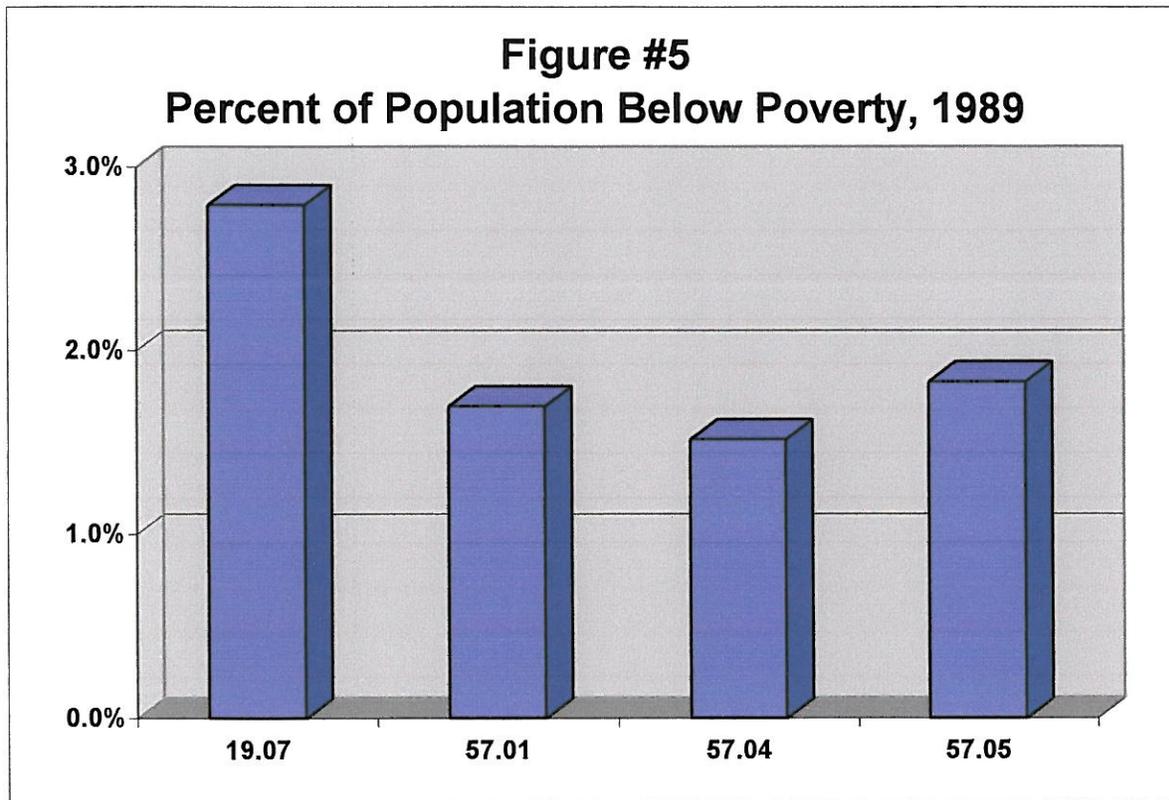


Table #7
Poverty Rates
By Census Tract, 1989

Census Tract	Total Above Poverty	Total Below Poverty	Percent Below Poverty
19.07	5,843	168	2.8%
57.01	8,634	149	1.7%
57.04	6,043	93	1.5%
57.05	4,720	88	1.8%
Total	25,240	498	1.9%

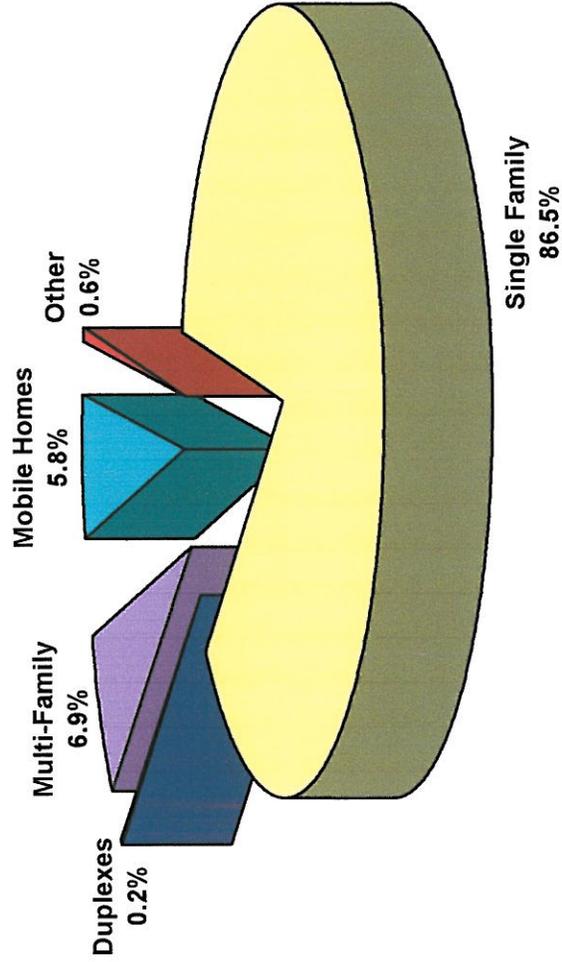


Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990.

Table #8
Characteristics of Housing Units, by Type
By Census Tract, 1990

Census Tract	Occupied Units by Type			Percent Owner Occupied	Number of Structures by Type						Total Housing Units
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Other Occupied		Single Family	Duplexes	Multi-Family	Mobile Homes	Other		
19.07	1,893	563		77.1%	1,782	12	551	145	36	2,526	
57.01	2,699	385		87.5%	2,952	0	0	227	17	3,196	
57.04	2,020	163		92.5%	2,047	8	18	176	7	2,256	
57.05	1,478	156		90.5%	1,611	0	97	19	0	1,727	
Totals	8,090	1,267		86.5%	8,392	20	666	567	60	9,705	

Figure #6 : Characteristics of Housing Units, 1990



Aging Characteristics of the Population

Table #9 and Figure #7 show the age breakdowns of the population by Census Tracts in 1990. While a majority of the population lies in age between 25-44 years of age (38.8%) , the next highest category is that with individuals 55 years of age, or older. This group makes up 14.1% of the total population in these four Census Tracts. The third largest group are those individuals age 45-54, totaling 12% of the population.

Commuting Patterns

Map #4 shows the 1990 commuting patterns of individuals to and from Mecklenburg County into adjacent counties. As can be seen on this map, a total of 14,949 individuals commute into Mecklenburg County from Union County each working day. Over 16,600 individuals commute into Mecklenburg County from Cabarrus County. It is difficult to know exactly what routes these commuters take, but it is reasonable to surmise that a number of commuters come into Mint Hill from Union County, particularly using N.C. 218, N.C. 51 and NC. 24/27. It is also difficult to know exactly the destination of these commuters once they enter Mecklenburg County. Probably, however, a significant number of commuters work in Charlotte.

Map #4 also shows that 2,681 commuters in 1990 traveled to Union County and 2,218 traveled to Cabarrus County for employment.

Building Permit Activity

Table #10 summarizes residential and non-residential building permit activity by Census Tract for the period January 1990 to December, 1997, a period of eight (8) years. Comparisons with Mecklenburg County are shown in gray at the bottom of the table, so that the Mint Hill numbers can be compared to growth in the County overall.

The average value of a single family home in the four Census Tracts was \$101,182. There were 1262 single family permits issued in this eight year time period, valuing a total of \$127,691,365. Please keep in mind that Census Tract 57.05 covers land which is in Matthews, too.

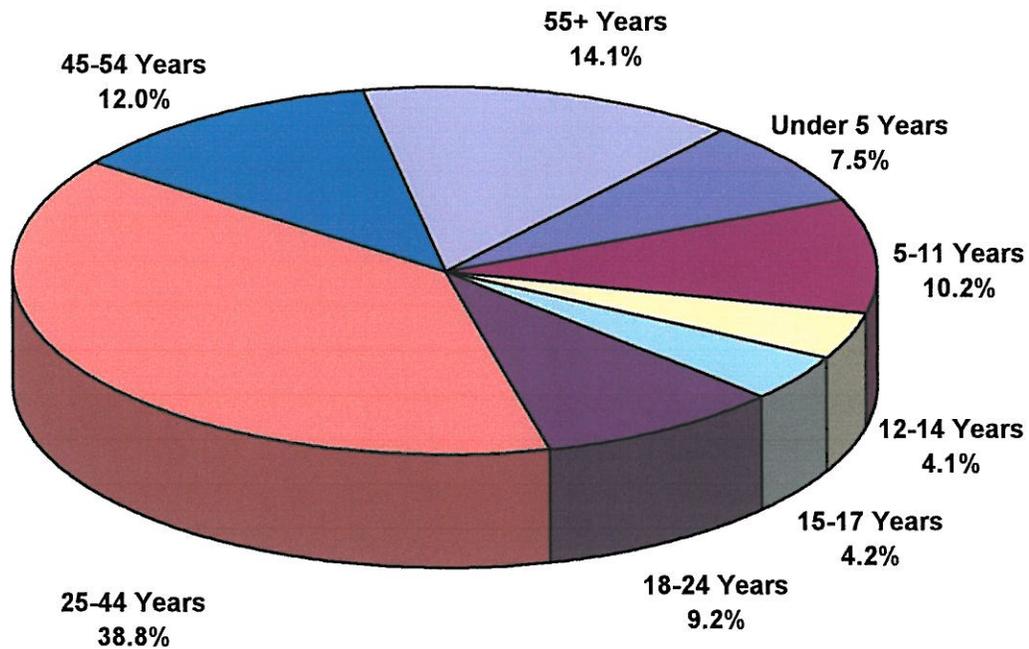
During this same eight year period, 856 multi-family unit permits were issued, with a total value of \$148,799,160. One hundred and fifty-seven (157) permits were requested for manufactured or modular housing units, valued at \$156,355 total.

Non-residential building permit activity is also reflected in Table #10. Two industrial permits were sought, valuing \$210,000, 26 commercial permits were requested, valued at \$14,557,336; and 17 institutional unit permits were issued, valued at \$22,565,320

**Table #9
Age Breakdowns
By Census Tracts, 1990**

Census Tract	Years of Age							
	Under 5	5-11	12-14	15-17	18-24	25-44	45-54	55 & Over
19.07	569	519	157	145	619	2,682	597	732
57.01	674	952	384	413	747	3,423	849	1,341
57.04	406	589	245	274	600	2,070	1,000	952
57.05	274	556	257	250	411	1,825	637	604
Totals	1,923	2,616	1,043	1,082	2,377	10,000	3,083	3,629

**Figure # 7
Greater Mint Hill Area : Age Breakdowns, 1990**



Source: US Census Bureau, 1990

Map #4 Mecklenburg County Commuting Patterns with Adjacent Counties, 1990

 In-Commuting
 Out-Commuting

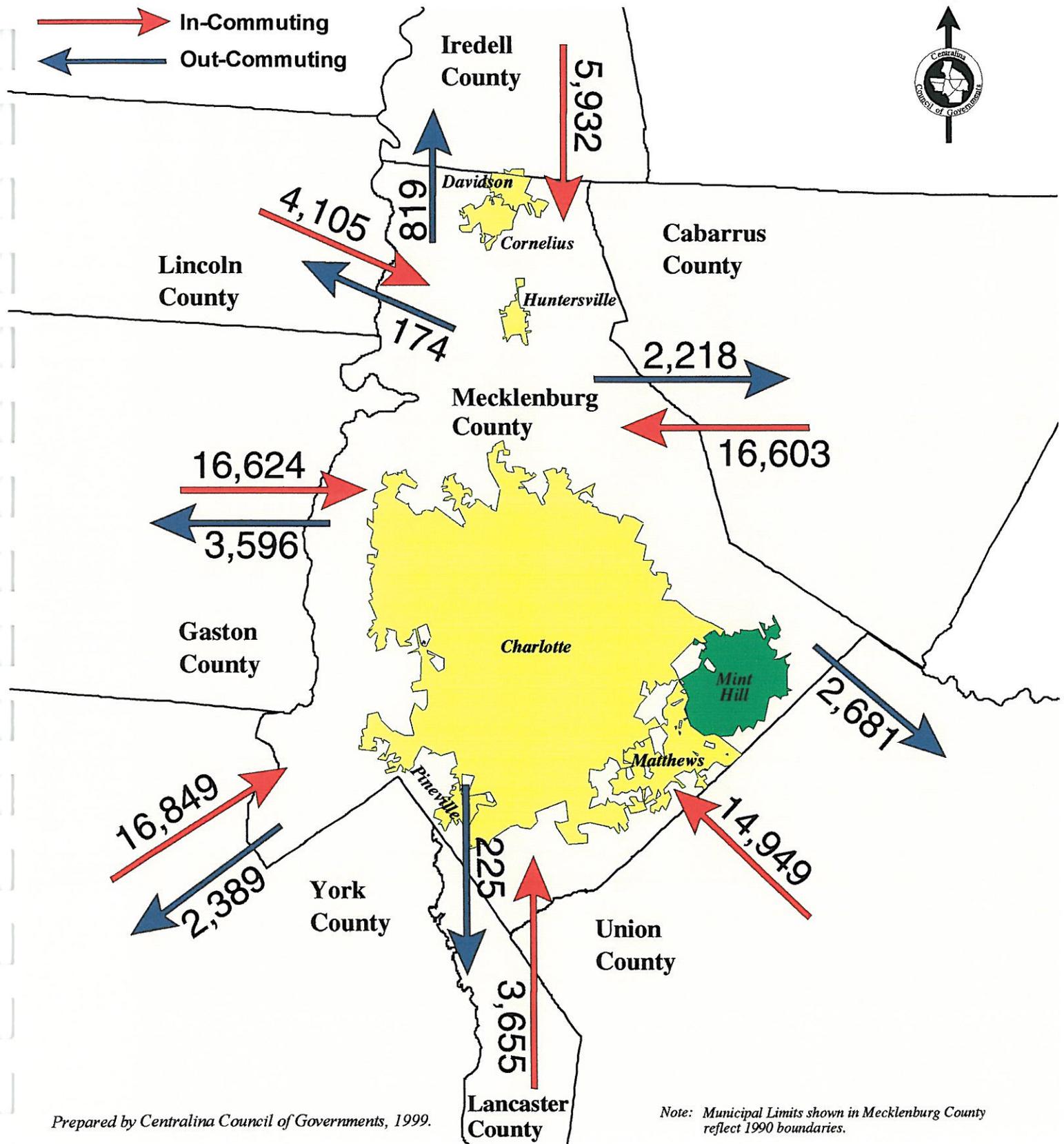


Table #10
Building Permit Activity by Census Tract
January 1990 - December 1997

Residential Permits

Census Tract	Single-Family			Multi-Family		Mobile/Modular Homes	
	Total Units	Total Value	Average Value	Total Units	Total Value	Total Units	Total Value*
19.07	131	\$8,031,554	\$61,310	4	\$158,400	49	\$66,925
57.01	587	\$66,112,634	\$112,481	4	\$659,324	58	\$55,690
57.04	182	\$14,849,025	\$81,588	848	\$147,981,436	44	\$30,170
57.05	362	\$38,698,152	\$106,901	0	\$0	6	\$3,550
TOTAL	1,262	\$127,691,365	\$101,182	856	\$148,799,160	157	\$156,335
Mecklenburg County Totals	38,309	\$4,596,997,520	\$119,998	17,584	\$2,061,242,076	1,583	\$2,567,566

Non-Residential Permits

Census Tract	Commercial		Institutional		Industrial	
	Total Units	Total Value	Total Units	Total Value	Total Units	Total Value
19.07	6	\$8,386,680	3	\$1,200,295	0	\$0
57.01	4	\$694,621	3	\$224,000	2	\$210,000
57.04	11	\$3,732,835	3	\$2,895,000	0	\$0
57.05	5	\$1,743,200	8	\$18,246,025	0	\$0
TOTAL	26	\$14,557,336	17	\$22,565,320	2	\$210,000
Mecklenburg County Totals	1,832	\$1,328,122,893	598	\$520,546,239	156	\$105,896,510

*Note: Values of Mobile/Modular Homes are not always reported on the building permits.

Transportation Access

The major transportation corridors in Mint Hill include N.C. 51, N.C. 24/27, N.C. 218, Lawyers Road, and Idlewild Road. I-485 will be a major freeway which will connect the Mint Hill area to other locations around Mecklenburg County, and reduce travel times significantly.

Railway service is provided by Norfolk Southern Railway, which parallels N.C. 24/27 (Albemarle Road).

Transportation Thoroughfare Plan

Thoroughfare Plans are a tool to aid officials in the development of an appropriate street system. It is vitally important that Mint Hill and its neighbors cooperate as a team, which they do, in the development of an overall Thoroughfare Plan for the general vicinity. By working together and sharing information on rezoning petitions, requesting and sharing traffic impact studies for major developments, the ability to plan for an efficient system for each community can be ensured. Funding of improvements, however, can be another issue.

A Thoroughfare Plan has been developed for the Mint Hill area, and the larger area of Mecklenburg County and a portion of Union County, as it abuts the southeastern portion of Mecklenburg County. This plan is known as the Mecklenburg-Union Thoroughfare Plan, and it was last updated in 1996.

In this plan, the following routes in the Mint Hill study area are designated as freeways, commercial arterials, major thoroughfares, and minor thoroughfares:

Freeways:

I-485 (proposed)

Commercial Arterials:

N.C. 24/27 (Albemarle Road)

Major Thoroughfares:

N.C. 51 (Matthews-Mint Hill Road)

N.C. 218 (Fairview Road)

Idlewild Road

Lawyers Road

Margaret Wallace Road

Eastern Circumferential (proposed)

Minor Thoroughfares:

Lebanon Road

Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road

Brief Road

Cabarrus Road

Wilson Grove Road
Arlington Church Road
Mill Grove Road

The North Carolina Transportation Improvement Program, 2000-2006

The North Carolina Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) document includes a section on Division 10 projects scheduled for work (either design, planning, or right-of-way acquisition, or construction) from the period 2000-2006. The following projects are listed in the NCTIP under Division 10:

1. I-485 - 18.8 miles of the Charlotte Outer Loop, a 4-lane, divided freeway from U.S. 74 East to I-85 North, on a new location. Construction is ongoing and expected to be complete by 2002 for most of the project. Five interchanges are planned from U.S. 74 through the Mint Hill area:
 - Lawyers Road - Diamond interchange planned to open late 2000.
 - Idlewild Road - Diamond interchange under construction, expected opening in late 1999.
 - N.C. 218 (Fairview Road)- Diamond interchange planned to open in 2002.
 - Albemarle Road - Half cloverleaf interchange (due to railroad on south side of interchange) planned to open 2002.
 - N.C. 51 - Diamond interchange planned. (Paving of the ramps for the I-485/51 interchange has been delayed and the projected year for paving of the ramps is 2010.)
2. Widen N.C. 24/27 (Albemarle Road) from N.C. 51 to U.S. 601 in Cabarrus County. This widening project is underway and expected to be complete by 2001.
3. Monroe Bypass from I-485 to U.S. 74, in both Mecklenburg and Union Counties. A triangular wedge of land from U.S. 74 north-east to Lawyers Road and then southeast towards U.S. 601 is being studied for possible alignment configurations from U.S. 601 to I-485. This new bypass would be 8.1 miles long. Right-of-way acquisition will begin in 2004, with construction beginning in 2006.
4. Replace bridge #36 along Lebanon Road where it crosses Greasy Creek/Irvins Creek

Existing and Proposed Public Water and Sewer Facilities

Currently, public water is available in parts of Mint Hill, as shown on Map #5. In particular, the following major water mains currently exist to provide water to adjacent properties:

- Along N.C. 51 from U.S. 74 to Bainview Drive
- Along Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road from N.C. 51 to Albemarle Road
- Along Lawyers Road from N.C. 51 to Albemarle Road
- Along Lebanon Road from N.C. 51 to Margaret Wallace Road
- Along Wilson Grove Road from Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road to Lawyers Road
- Along Idlewild Road from Margaret Wallace Road to Stillwell Place

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities (CMU) undertakes a 10 year Needs Assessment, with annual updates. Six new public water projects (water mains) are planned for the following areas located within the Mint Hill Study Area (see Map #5):

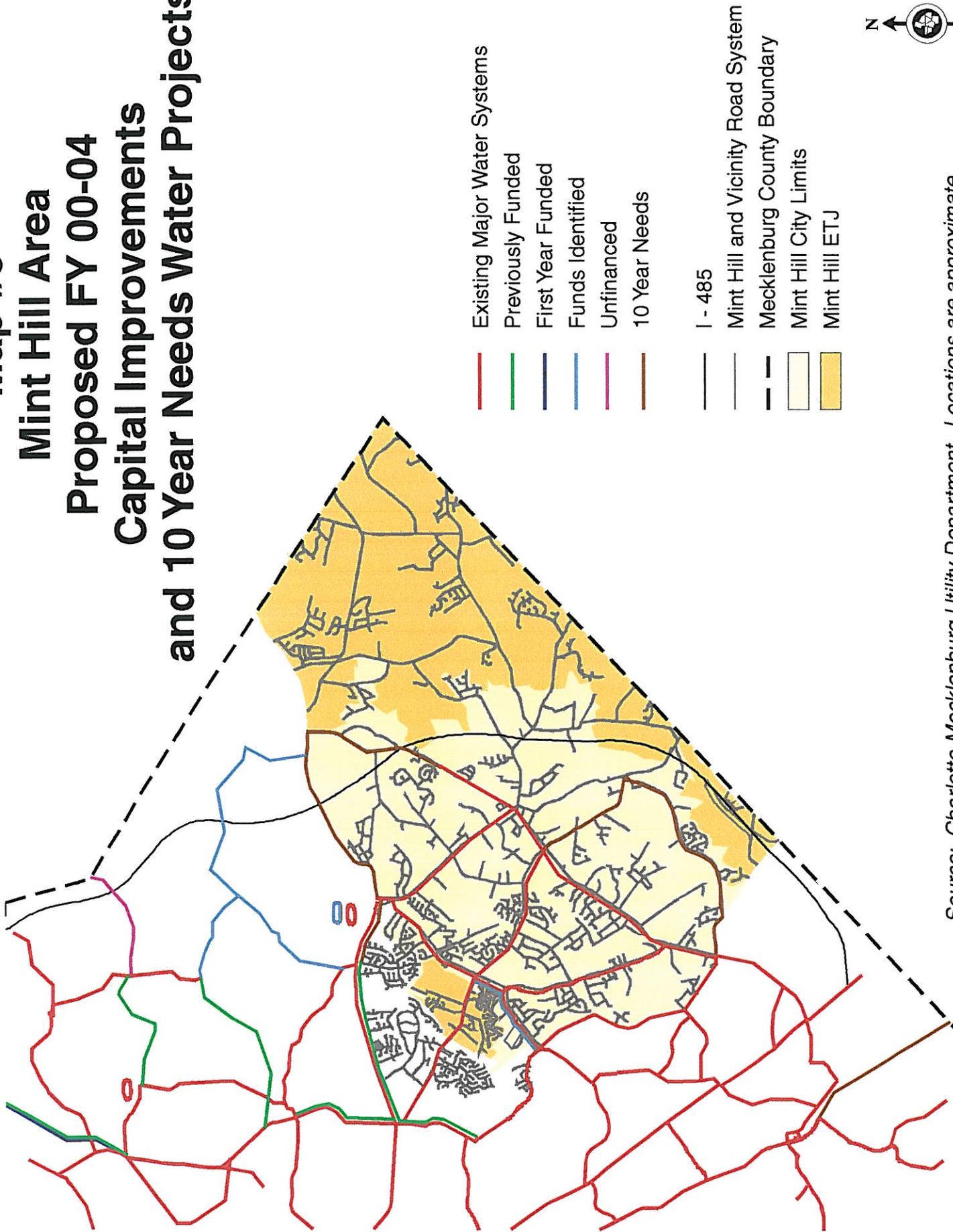
- Along Margaret-Wallace Road from Idlewild Road to Lawyers Road - FY 2002\3-2004, Funds Identified
- Along Thompson Road and Idlewild from N.C. 51 to Lawyers Road - FY 2004-2008
- Along Lawyers Road from N.C. 51 to Thompson Road - FY 2004-2008
- Along Blair Road (N.C. 51) from Bainbridge to Albemarle Road - FY 2004-2008
- Along Albemarle Road from Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road to Blair Road (N.C. 51) - FY 2004-2008
- Along Albemarle Road from Harrisburg Road to Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road - FY 2004-2008

Public sewer facilities also exist in Mint Hill, but to a more limited extent than public water, as shown on Map #6. Currently, there is a sewer facility running along Irvins Creek from McAlpine Creek to about Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road.

In the CMU 10-year needs assessment, the following extensions of the public sewer system are proposed (see Map #6):

- Tri-County Wastewater Treatment Plant Interceptor from the Wastewater Treatment Plant located in Union County across to Mecklenburg County FY 2002-2003. (The Tri-County Wastewater Treatment Plant which is being considered for location along Brief Road in Union County, is hoped to be completed by 2002.
- Duck Creek Pump Station, Gravity, and Force Main from approximately Fairview Road FY 2003-2004. Pump Station to be located in Union County, but sewer gravity and force mains will be in both Union County and Mecklenburg County.
- Goose Creek Basin - Sanitary Sewer FY 2005-2009
 - Goose Creek Outfall in Union County FY 2005-2009

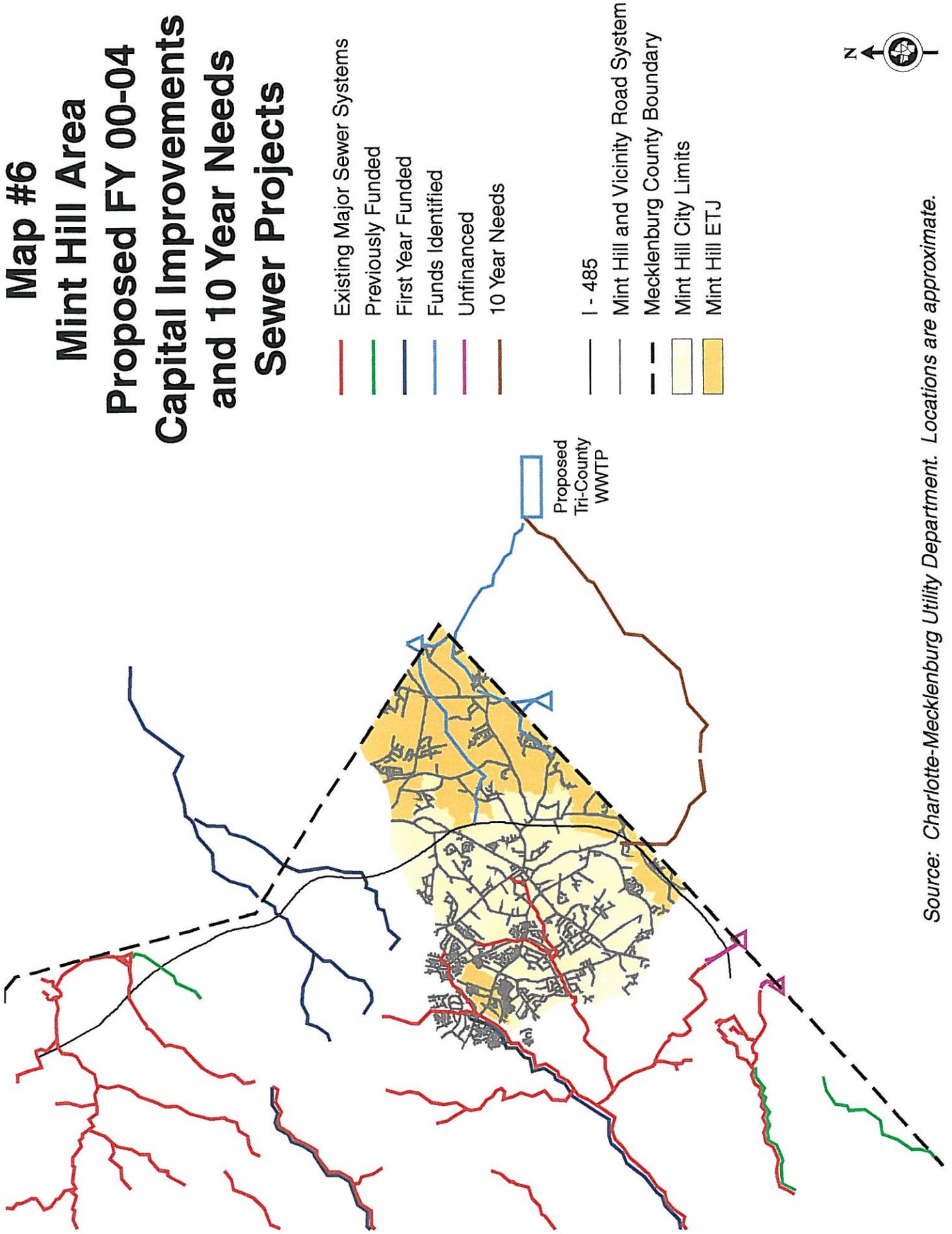
Map #5 Mint Hill Area Proposed FY 00-04 Capital Improvements and 10 Year Needs Water Projects



- Existing Major Water Systems
- Previously Funded
- First Year Funded
- Funds Identified
- Unfinanced
- 10 Year Needs
- I - 485
- Mint Hill and Vicinity Road System
- Mecklenburg County Boundary
- Mint Hill City Limits
- Mint Hill ETJ

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department. Locations are approximate.

Map #6 Mint Hill Area Proposed FY 00-04 Capital Improvements and 10 Year Needs Sewer Projects



Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department. Locations are approximate.

- Connections to the Tri-County Wastewater Treatment Plant in Cabarrus County FY 2001-2002.

In addition, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities offers a Street Main Extension Program which allows residential property owners along a public street to obtain up to a 1000' extension for public water and/or sewer. Costs beyond the 1000' are reimbursable at a 50% rate. Applicants for these extensions, which are funded by CMU, are on a first come, first serve basis. This program is only available to owners or renters of residential dwellings.

Drainage Basins

Map #7 illustrates the three drainage basins in the Mint Hill Study Area:

- McAlpine Creek Basin
- Clear Creek Basin
- Goose Creek Basin

As can be seen in Map #7, the McAlpine Drainage Basin drains to the north of N.C. 51 and to the west of Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road. The Clear Creek Basin drains to the east, in general, towards Cabarrus County and the Rocky River. The third basin, the Goose Creek Basin drains to the south into Union County. Understanding the natural flow of drainage water illustrated in Map #7 underscores the difficulties the Mint Hill study area has regarding the provision of public sewer to these areas. While the McAlpine Creek Basin drains towards Matthews and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities (CMU) facilities, the other two basins drain into areas where CMU does not currently operate. However, CMU may become part of a tri-county waste-water treatment plant addressed in the "Existing and Proposed Public Water and Sewer Facilities" section addressed above.

Existing Land Use

As part of this plan, an existing land use survey was undertaken in the summer of 1998, to determine what uses exist on each parcel of land. The process used to compile this information was a combination of windshield surveying, reviewing tax maps in the Planning Department, and consultations with Mint Hill staff. The actual base map was provided courtesy of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Map Department. As this map is now at least one year old, there are new subdivisions of property which have taken place, as well as some new road alignments, particularly near the I-485 interchanges.

Map #8 illustrates the general land use patterns in Mint Hill as of July, 1998. Categories include vacant parcels, single-family residential, multi-family residential, manufactured housing, office, institutional, industrial, commercial, and recreational uses.

Residential development in the Mint Hill study area consists primarily of single family homes on large lots. Single-family homes on lots are denoted on Map #8 in yellow. Please note that the proportion of yellow areas on the map should be viewed carefully, since a small lot with a home is shown in yellow, as well as a 200 acre parcel, associated with a home. If one looks carefully at Map #8, many large lots contain one single-family home, so even though the predominant color on Map #8 is yellow, certainly, we know that there are many acres of underutilized land shown as yellow on the map too.

The second most predominant color is light mint green. This color denotes property which is vacant, or used as woodland, pastures, fields, etc. Many of these lots are large in size, and offer opportunities for future development and growth. Of course, many of the large yellow colored lots also present opportunities for growth and development.

Commercial development, office uses, and service oriented businesses predominate in the downtown area of Mint Hill (along N.C. 51, N.C. 218, and Lawyers Road). Commercial uses are shown in red and office uses in violet. This area is the historical center of Mint Hill. The lack of public water and sewer has resulted in slow growth in the downtown area, with the exception of the Mint Hill Festival shopping center, the library, and Whitley Commons shopping center. In addition, the downtown properties which face onto N.C. 51 are generally small and shallow lots, which present a land-assemblage problem to developers/owners who might want to build a commercial/office development of even a modest size. A lack of properties that are for sale, is the third problem faced in the downtown area. Many of the lots have been held in private ownership and the owners are simply not interested in selling the land. As a result, many businesses continue to operate in converted residential structures, which line N.C. 51 between Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road and Lawyers Road.

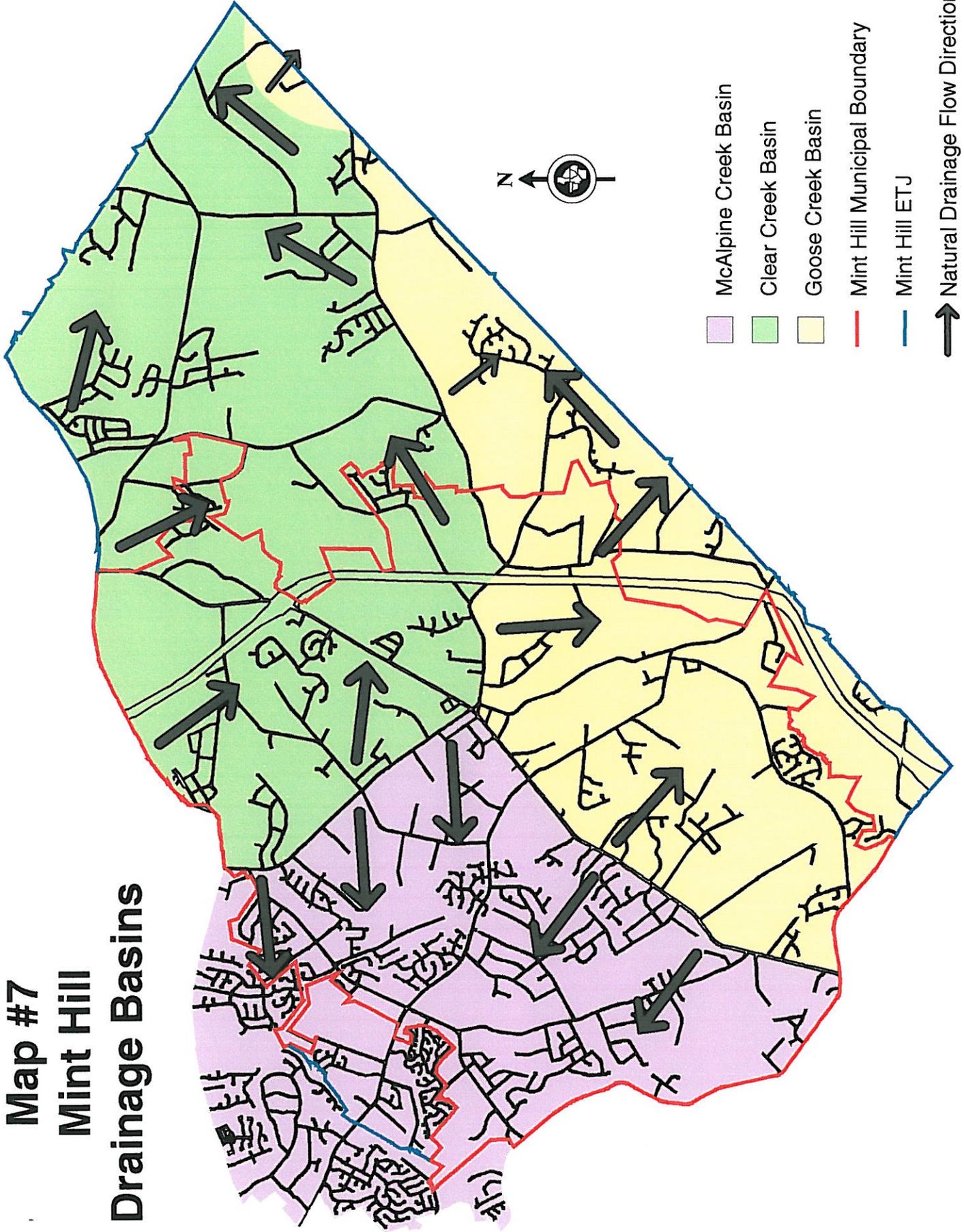
A secondary commercial center has evolved at the intersection of Lawyers, Lebanon, and Wilson Grove Roads, which is approximately two miles northwest of the Mint Hill downtown. This area most likely grew because of the availability of parcels of land for sale which were of a significant, usable size. This intersection also incorporates the Lebanon Road Elementary School in the southern quadrant of the intersection.

Other non-residential development has occurred at the following locations:

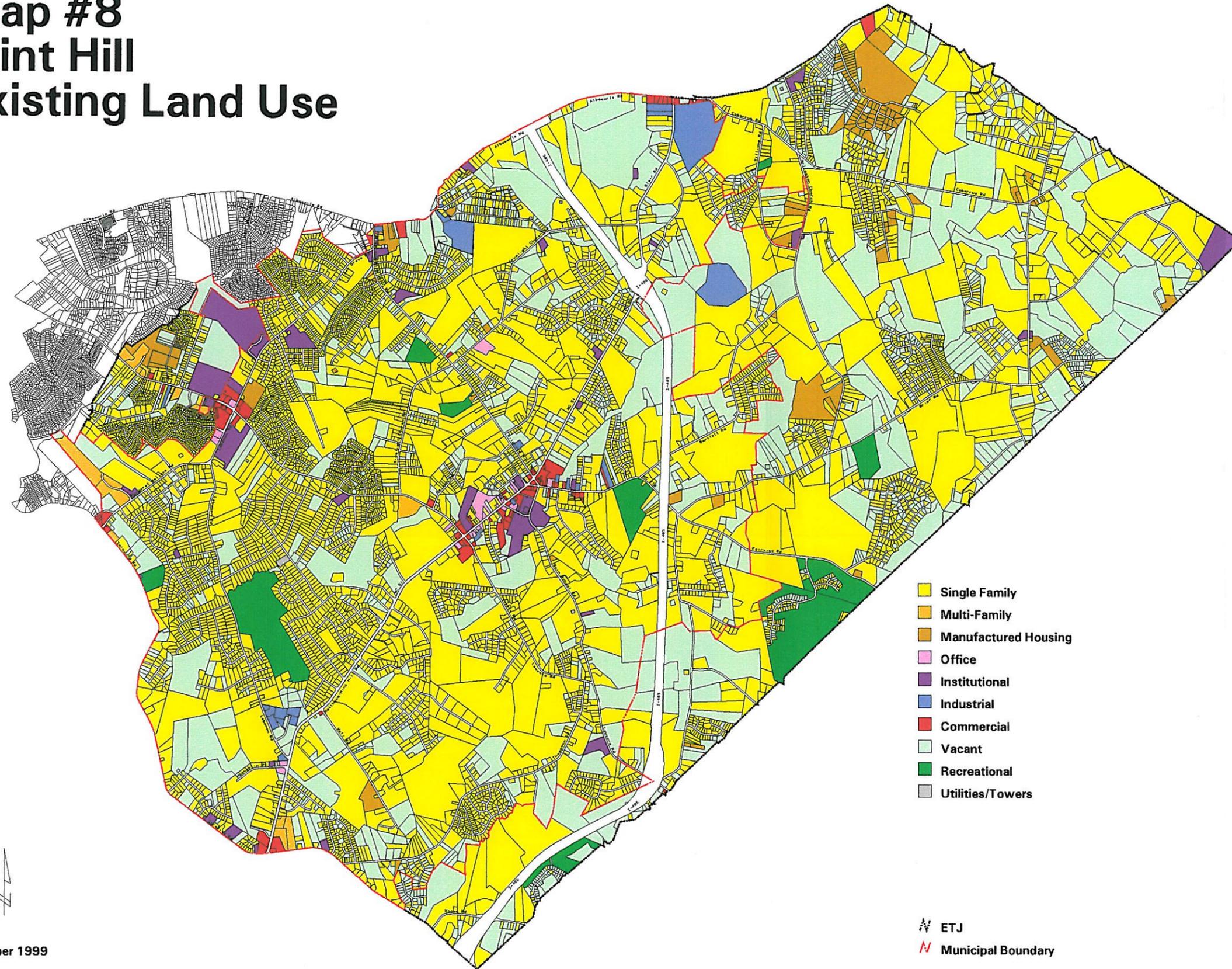
- Albemarle Road, near Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road
- Albemarle and Blair Road (N.C. 51)
- N.C. 51 at Idlewild (the northern part of this intersection is within the Mint Hill jurisdiction, while the southern portion is in Matthew's jurisdiction.)
- Along N.C. 51 between Hoods Cross Roads and the downtown center

Industrial development is shown in blue on Map #8. The largest industrial parcel is located in the center of the study area, to the south of N.C. 51. On this large parcel, a paving and gravel company have their operations on a small portion of the lot. However, the entire lot is shown as industrial.

Map #7 Mint Hill Drainage Basins



Map #8 Mint Hill Existing Land Use



September 1999

ETJ
Municipal Boundary

Other industrial areas include the following:

- An organic landfill located to the south of Albemarle Road, near Pine Grove Avenue.
- Morris Park Business Park located to the north of N.C. 51 at Lebanon Road.
- Mint Hill Business Park located at Blair Road (N.C. 51) and Cabarrus Road near Albemarle Road (approved, but not yet constructed).

Existing Recreational Facilities and Plans

At present, several parks and recreational facilities exist in Mint Hill:

- Idlewild Country Club - Facility for indoor events, a driving range, private swimming pool, private tennis courts.
- Mint Hill Sports Complex: Approximately 30 acres, owned by the Mint Hill Athletic Association, 15 softball fields, 2 soccer fields
- Mint Hill Park on Fairview: 55 acres with restroom facilities, concession stands, 2 soccer fields, baseball field, volleyball courts, tennis courts, Frisbee-golf, an asphalt in-line skating and bicycle and walking track, a nature trail, play facilities.
- Hickory Grove Baptist Church Recreational Complex: ballfields, owned by Hickory Grove Baptist Church.
- Mint Hill Park on Wilgrove: 13 acres, restroom facilities, softball fields, 4 tennis courts, gravel fitness walking track, playground facilities.
- Pine Lake County Club (private) : 18 hole golf course, dining facility, tennis courts, swimming pool.
- The Divide Golf Course (public, but soon to be private): golf course, swimming pool
- Old Sycamore (public, but soon to be private): golf course, swimming pool, tennis courts.

The Mecklenburg County Commissioners adopted a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Parks Master Plan in 1989. In that plan, the new goal for park land per population for Charlotte-Mecklenburg was raised to 19 acres/1000 population, which is to be subdivided as follows:

- Nature Preserve Parks - 6 acres/1000 persons
 - Sites of 1000+ acres encompassing unique qualities that exemplify the natural features found in the region, and diverse land formation, and the variety of vegetation and wildlife. Examples are: environmental centers, camping, nature trails, observation decks, picnic areas. Open fields for nonstructured activities such as Frisbee and kite flying are also found. Ninety percent of the site is usually reserved for passive recreation, with the remaining acreage used for active recreation.

Four such sites are recommended for Mecklenburg, of which 3 have been built. The fourth site was recommended for south Mecklenburg County, but land costs and the lack of available acreage has prevented the purchase of a site. The Plan recommends that a 1,000 acre nature preserve still should be located in south Mecklenburg.

- Community Parks - 5 acres/1000 persons

Community parks provide a full range of facilities to support competition for athletic tournaments and league sports in addition to district park activities. These parks also offer opportunities for nontraditional types of recreation. Activities which generate large crowds, such as festivals, will be well served in a community park where adequate space and parking are provided. Fifty percent of community park sites should be developed for only passive recreation; these relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the parks and/or act as buffers between active facilities.

Community park sites usually have varying topography and wooded acres consisting of a variety of tree species. Also, cleared areas should be present for siting active recreational facilities. One or more natural water features such as a lake, river, or creek should be included in the park. McAlpine/Boyce Park is an example of a community park with 433 acres.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Master Plan calls for developing additional facilities at the existing McAlpine/Boyce Road Park.

Service area in a 5-mile radius. Desirable size: 300-500 acres.

- District Parks - 5 acres/1000 persons.

District parks function as the major source of active recreation in the neighborhoods they serve. Activities are similar to those in community parks, but are not developed to support tournament competition. Also, due to the smaller size of these parks, they will be more intensely developed. Passive recreation opportunities are found in the undisturbed areas of the parks, preferably within surrounding buffers.

Sites for district parks should be relatively flat to alleviate excess grading when siting active facilities. Another desirable characteristic is an equal balance of wooded and cleared areas. If a natural water feature is present, adjoining land should be developed primarily with passive recreation.

Service area is 1 to 1-1/2 mile radius; desirable size: 40-200 acres.

Idlewild Road Park is a District park with 37.83 acres. Another 65 acres is proposed for acquisition in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Parks Master Plan to bring this park to a total of about 100 acres. Also, in the plan is a proposal to acquire an additional 50 acres for the Mint Hill Park on Fairview.

- Neighborhood Park - 3 acres/1000 persons

Neighborhood parks offer the public a convenient source of recreation, since they are primarily located within walking distance of the area served. They generally provide a variety of activities to interest all age groups. Their small size requires intense development; though, fifty percent of each site should remain undisturbed to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent land uses.

Neighborhood parks should be developed on relatively flat, wooded sites.

Service area is $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 mile radius. Desirable size is 15 to 25 acres.

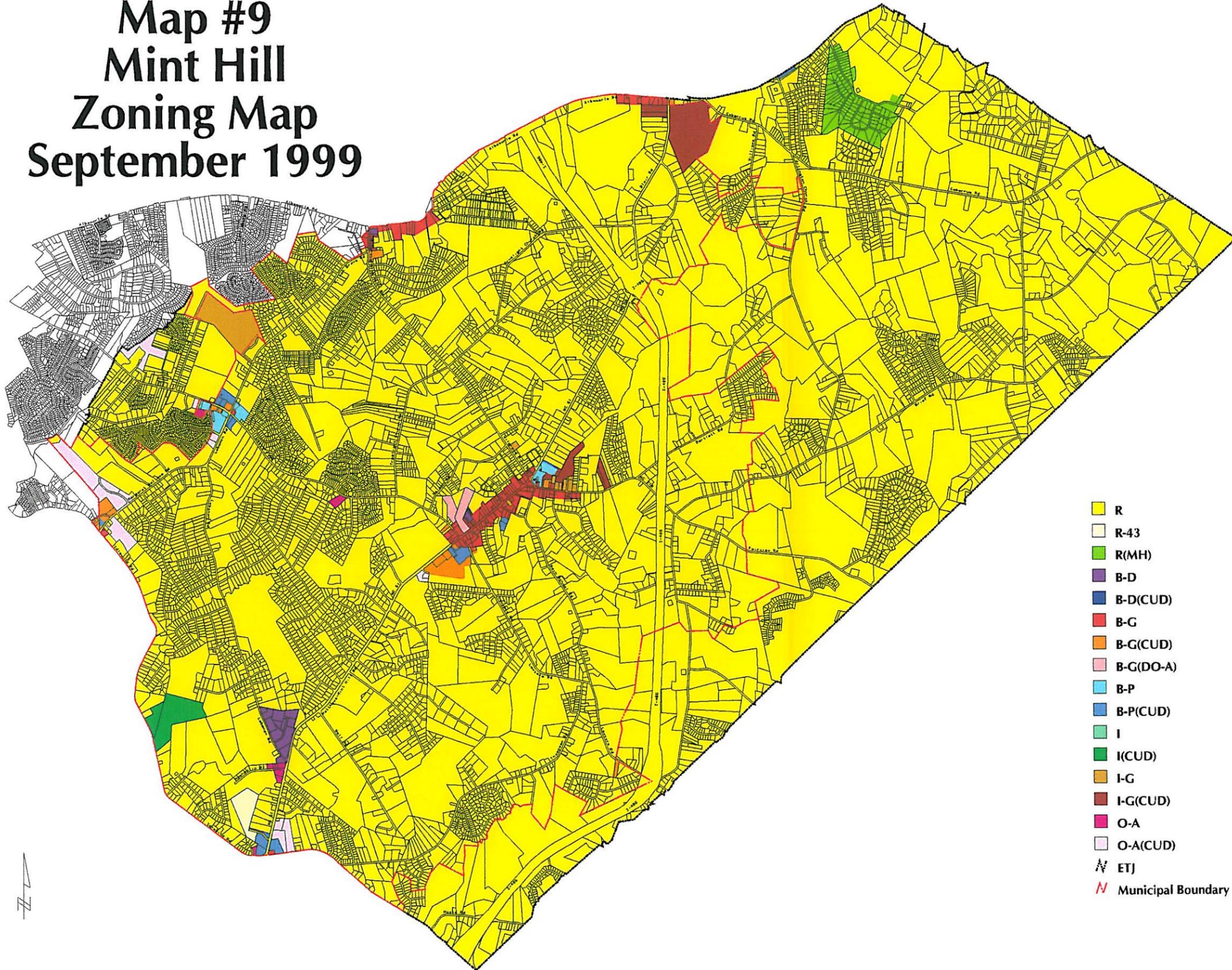
Existing Zoning

Map #9 shows the current zoning status of parcels within the Mint Hill area at the time the plan was developed. Note that the predominant zoning is “R”, which stands for Residential. Other zoning districts include the following:

- R Residential
- R-43 Residential
- R(MH) Residential – Manufactured Home Overlay
- B-D Distributive Business
- B-D(CUD) Distributive Business, Conditional Use District
- B-G General Business
- B-G(CUD) General Business, Conditional Use District
- B-G(DO-A) General Business, Downtown Overlay District A
- B-P Planned Business
- B-P(CUD) Planned Business, Conditional Use District
- I Institutional
- I(CUD) Institutional, Conditional Use District
- I-G General Industrial
- I-G(CUD) General Industrial, Conditional Use District
- O-A Office and Apartments
- O-A(CUD) Office and Apartments, Conditional Use District

The majority of non-residential zoning is centered in Downtown Mint Hill; along Albemarle Road; along Idlewild Road at N.C. 51 and at Margaret Wallace Road; at the intersection of Lawyers Road, Lebanon Road, and Wilson Grove Road.

Map #9 Mint Hill Zoning Map September 1999



- R
- R-43
- R(MH)
- B-D
- B-D(CUD)
- B-G
- B-G(CUD)
- B-G(DO-A)
- B-P
- B-P(CUD)
- I
- I(CUD)
- I-G
- I-G(CUD)
- O-A
- O-A(CUD)
- ↗ ETJ
- Municipal Boundary

VIII. CURRENT ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key issues and opportunities identified in Section V, and the Vision Statement for the future developed in Section VI were used to develop goals and recommendations for each of the following areas:

- Transportation
- Housing and Residential Densities
- Downtown Issues and Development
- Economic Development and Commercial and Industrial Facilities
- Public Parks, Open Space, and Recreation
- Public Water and Sewer Facilities
- Floodplain Issues

TRANSPORTATION

GOALS:

- Mint Hill will encourage and promote an efficient and safe transportation system that moves people and goods through a well-coordinated transportation network in an environmentally sensitive manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Town officials should continue to make formal, annual presentations of transportation projects for inclusion in the North Carolina Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Local governmental support for project inclusion should be demonstrated in person at the annual TIP meeting. Supporting projects in the County, such as I-485 is also important.
2. At present, one half of a cloverleaf interchange is planned for the I-485 interchange at Albemarle Road. This design was preferred for this interchange since the railroad tracks on the south side of Albemarle Road prevented the design of a full diamond interchange. Diamond interchanges have been designed for the following I-485 interchanges:
 - N.C. 218 (Simple diamond)
 - N.C. 51
 - Lawyers Road (already under construction)
 - Idlewild Road

The Board of Commissioners by unanimous vote supported the Interchange Analysis recommended by the Technical Coordinating Committee and adopted by the Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization.

3. Support the widening of the following roads to a four-lane cross-section with a landscaped median, where possible for traffic safety:
 - Widen N.C. 51
 - Widen N.C. 218
 - Widen Lawyers Road
 - Widen Idlewild Road
4. Widen all two-lane roads which are substandard in width to a standard two lane 24' cross-section. At present, many arterial roads are narrow and winding. Additional pavement will help prevent accidents and make motorists and bicyclists feel more

comfortable driving these roads. Two lane roads suggested for widening include the following:

- Lebanon Road
 - Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road
5. Support Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Bicycle Transportation Plan to expand opportunities for bicycling along greenways with a pea gravel type surface.
 6. It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners investigate amending the Subdivision Ordinance requiring the preservation of the integrity of existing neighborhoods by eliminating cut-through traffic. Existing subdivisions shall be accessible to new subdivisions or other existing subdivisions only when there is a demonstrated need. The terms 'cut-through traffic' and 'demonstrated need' will be defined by the Board of Commissioners and included in the Subdivision Ordinance.
 7. Minimize curb-cuts on major traffic thoroughfares and collector roads to reduce traffic congestion and accidents. For residential subdivisions, discourage reverse frontage lots that have access onto a neighborhood collector road which then accesses a thoroughfare. For non-residential multi-tenant developments encourage a well designed traffic and pedestrian circulation system with shared ingress/egress to thoroughfares.
 8. Investigate the addition of new regulations to the Subdivision Ordinance which would allow for shared ingress-egress points when property owners sign a joint agreement to share property for driveway entrances/exits. Such an agreement would have to be binding on the property in the future, so that future owners of the property could not terminate the agreement, leaving the other owner without an ingress/egress point.
 9. Gateway entrances into Mint Hill are encouraged and should be supported along major road corridors leading into Town: Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road, Lawyers Road, N.C. 51, N.C. 218, Margaret Wallace Road, and Idlewild Road.

Some roadways serve as primary entrance routes into town or as gateways into the area. These streets and roads have a special role in conveying first impressions to visitors and in shaping community identity for local residents. Entryways can also provide information to motorists by directing them to areas of interest and by providing insights into the historical, cultural, and economic foundations of the area. The Town Board of Commissioner's is encouraged to form a committee or use the Planning Board to suggest what type of gateway image is desired, and to plan for consistency of gateway elements around the study area. At a minimum, signs welcoming motorists and pedestrians into Mint Hill is desired.

Signs, landscaping, decorative fencing or wrought iron details can be used in creating an architectural gateway. Gateways can range from more formal to informal, depending on what image the Town would like to convey to motorists and the public.

10. The Board of Commissioners and staff should support a light rail facility and station along Albemarle Road in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transit Commission's plan as needed, and should promote a transit stop at the intersection of Albemarle Road and Blair Road as shown as a symbol on Map #10 and Map #13.

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

GOALS:

- To encourage and support a well-planned, diverse housing environment offering a safe and pleasant quality of life.
- Strengthen existing neighborhoods through nurturing of community spirit, and protection from adjacent non-residential uses by buffers and landscaping.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The primary residential property should continue to be single family homes on large (20,000 sq. ft.) lots.
2. The Future Land Use Map (Map #10) illustrates planned residential densities for the Mint Hill study area. The maximum housing density is 20,000 to 40,000 square foot lots, depending on the availability of public or private water and sewer facilities.
3. The Board of Commissioners should study cluster housing regulations and may propose zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments permitting cluster housing developments which are density neutral.

Cluster regulations provide a tool to protect the rural and open-space feel of land and to preserve such views and vistas. Cluster development is a tool to rearrange the density on a parcel so that only a portion of the buildable land is consumed by house lots and streets. The development remains “density neutral” compared to the traditional density allowed under the ordinance (e.g. a 20 acre traditional subdivision would allow up to 20 lots when no water or sewer is available and a 40,000 sq. foot lot is required; a cluster development on the same parcel could accommodate up to 20 homes maximum). The same number of homes are allowed, but are arranged in a less land consumptive manner. The balance of the property is then preserved as permanent protected open space (left natural, or improved with amenities) and deeded to a homeowner’s association for maintenance and upkeep.

The preserved open spaces enhances the value of developable land around them, and when designed as public spaces, provides a setting for planned and casual interactions among neighbors, contributing to the sense of neighborliness and community. These areas can also house community centers, tennis courts, swimming pools, playground equipment, and other neighborhood amenities.

Clustering development patterns can be fine or coarse-grained. It is recommended that the fine-grain approach be used which calls for small housing clusters which look more like small neighborhoods. Small housing clusters are safer than large ones because residents can identify “outsiders” and are more likely to exercise territorial control.

Clustering provides a fair and equitable way to balance conservation and development objectives and create a more livable community in the process. Without this provision, traditional subdivision development will continue to consume land in the Mint Hill study area, and the town will begin to look like Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The rural, open vistas and trees that Mint Hill residents cherish, will be consumed with neighborhoods of houses on large lots. This tool would give developers the choice of developing single family or alternative residential neighborhoods either as a cluster development or a traditional development.

Advantages of this method include the following;

- Infrastructure, engineering, and construction costs are reduced.
- Amenities of open space and facilities increase property values and the quality of life.
- Such development reduces the demand for new park land.
- Environmental advantages include preserving trees, wildlife habitats, floodplains, and allowing natural stormwater detention/retention.
- Recreational and exercise opportunities exist for residents.
- Views of open space, fields, natural areas, woods are preserved.
- No future development or subdivisions can occur in the permanently protected areas.
- Homeowner Associations can decide what type of additional amenities (walking trails, exercise areas, etc.) they may like to add to their neighborhoods on jointly held property.
- Clustering is a smart way for the town to embrace growth and yet retain those natural elements which make the town desirable. It is also a smart housing style choice for households that are seeking a lower level of yard maintenance responsibilities, through a reduction in the lot size, and/or homeowner association lawn care services.

Clustering is a method that can be applied to both single-family areas and alternative residential areas. It is recommended that if clustering provisions are considered, they be allowed only where public water and sewer facilities can service the property in question.

4. Alternative types of housing at medium densities, and in limited numbers would be appropriate in the Downtown area, as shown on Map #10 to promote residential village or neighborhood character and flavor. The following types of development are considered “alternative types of housing” , allowing up to eight (8) dwelling units per acre:

- Townhouses (a one-family dwelling in a row of at least three such units in which each unit has its own front and rear access to the outside, no unit is located over another unit, and each unit is separated from any other unit by one or more vertical common fire-resistant walls).
- Condominiums (a building, or group of buildings, in which dwelling units are owned individually, and the structure, common areas, and facilities are owned by all the owners on a proportional, undivided basis).
- Patio homes and/or zero lot line homes (a patio home is a one-family dwelling on a separate lot with open space setbacks on three sides; a zero lot line refers to the location of a building on a lot so that one or more of the buildings sides rest directly on a lot line).
- Garden apartments (one or more two- or three-story multifamily structures, built at a gross density of up to eight units per acre, with each structure containing at least four dwelling units and including related off-street parking, open space, and recreation)
- Quadruplex (a building containing four dwelling units, each of which has direct access to the outside or to a common hall).
- Triplex (a building containing three dwelling units, each of which has direct access to the outside or to a common hall).

These types of alternative housing developments are appropriate in limited numbers in the Downtown mixed use area (as shown on Map #10) to promote residential village or neighborhood character and flavor. To accomplish this, no one alternative density housing development should have more than forty-eight (48) of any one type of housing style in the entire development complex, with up to one hundred and twenty (120) dwelling units on any one site (i.e. 48 townhouses, 48 garden apartments and 24 units that are triplexes). The site itself shall be limited in size (twenty (20) acres or less) to more readily blend with the residential large lot image of Mint Hill.

5. Maintain the integrity of existing established neighborhoods to ensure their continued existence as a major housing source and as a reflection of the long term quality of life in the Mint Hill area.
6. It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners examine and consider a ban on building any new structures in the 100+ year floodway.

DOWNTOWN ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENT

GOALS:

- To encourage and promote the Mint Hill Downtown area (as defined in the 1992 Downtown Development Committee Study as the area near N.C. 51 and Lawyers Road and the areas along N.C. 51 and around the intersection of N.C. 51 and Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road) as a pedestrian friendly, retail center of the town, which also offers medium density housing alternatives to residents, and encourages mixed-use developments.
- To encourage and promote appropriate amounts and types of commercial and office development to meet the shopping, service, and to an extent, employment needs of area residents.
- To protect and promote continued quality of life amenities and services which influence the Town's positive image.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The 1992 Downtown Study Design and Development Concepts Plan is seven (7) years old, and still contains some viable concepts to guide development of property in the Downtown area. One major problem with the plan is that the Master Design Study Composite Concept Plan Map, as found on page 34 of that Plan, is difficult to interpret. The black and white map portrays a number of uses (single family housing, detached multi-family housing, attached multi-family housing, etc.), by a graphic symbol. If the graphic symbols in the legend were the only symbols used on the map, it would be easy to determine what uses were suggested for general areas. However, the graphic symbols found on the map vary greatly and cannot always be matched to the legend. Several professional planners, given the task of interpretation came up with totally different interpretations of the map.

Since the Downtown Study is over seven (7) years old, and significant changes in circumstances have occurred, the Land Use Steering Committee has updated the future land use for the Downtown area, as shown on Map #10. This new land use takes into account new circumstances, and issues, as well as the realities of property ownership. Land use is designated by color on Map #10, thus eliminating the confusion regarding graphic symbols. This color map provides a more user-friendly guide to the Board of

Commissioners and the public, about the type of development desired in the Downtown area.

The predominant land use color in the center of the Downtown is purple for “mixed-use” indicating alternative residential/office/commercial. Uses allowed in this category would include alternative forms of medium density housing, office uses and retail uses. No additional industrial uses are allowed. Uses which are already in existence, particularly retail uses, are shown in “red”. Existing industrial uses are shown in “brown”. Single-family use areas are shown in “yellow”.

2. The 1992 Downtown Study Design Plan addresses the concept of concentric boulevards with radial roads as spokes emanating from the Town square to the outlying neighborhoods, schools, and parks. While this concept was embraced in the 1992 Plan, it was not based upon any actual Engineering studies of the feasibility of these roads in the locations shown in the Plan. The plan map (found on p. 34 of that document) merely portrays a theory of what the Town could look like if such a concept was implemented.

The Land Use Steering Committee recognizes that the 1992 Downtown Plan of concentric and radial roads was meant to portray concept only. Certainly transportation circulation around the Downtown area is desired to aid the growth of the Downtown, and open other land for development. In order to bridge the gap between concept and reality, it is recommended that the Town take the next step in bringing the concept of these concentric and radial roads into fruition. In order to do this, a professional transportation engineering study of the concentric and radial roads promoted in the 1992 Plan, could determine the actual feasibility of roads such as these, or to suggest additional or alternative routes. Besides using tax revenues to fund such a study, the Town could seek alternative ways of financing the project, such as working with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte’s graduate programs, using volunteer UNCC graduate students in the transportation engineering field to undertake some portion of the study.

Once feasible routes are determined by professionals, the next step would be to protect the right-of-way from future development by a) either incorporating the new road into the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Thoroughfare Plan, or developing and adopting a local Downtown Collector Street Plan, which addresses most roads below the “minor thoroughfare” category. If such a “secondary” Downtown Collector Street Plan was adopted, it would work along side the MPO’s Thoroughfare Plan to ensure preservation of street rights-of-way as development occurs.

3. Amend Section 13 of the Mint Hill Subdivision Ordinance to require new subdivisions to take into consideration the MPO’s Thoroughfare Plan and a Downtown Collector Street Plan, if one is prepared and adopted. In order for reservation of right-of-way to take place, it must be officially stated in the Subdivision Ordinance. Section 13 states that “arterials” shown on an arterial street plan approved by the Planning Board and

adopted by the Town Board of Commissioner's shall be platted in the location and to the width specified in the arterial street plan. While this has sufficed up until now, it is recommended that it be revised to incorporate the actual names of the proper plan(s), and further details. The amendment might read as follows:

- (b) Street Right-of-Way. Whenever a tract of land to be subdivided includes any part of a major or minor thoroughfare as shown on the Metropolitan Planning Organization's Thoroughfare Plan, or a right-of-way as shown on a Downtown Collector Street Plan, as adopted by the Town Board of Commissioner's, then the right-of-way shall be platted in the location and to the width specified in the plan(s).

- 4. Amend Section 7, "General Requirements" to address subdivision consistency with adopted public plans and policies. At present, this section does address this as a general requirement for plats. Such an addition will ensure that subdivisions and roads are planned within the scope of adopted plans, such as the MPO's Thoroughfare Plan, and a Collector Street Plan. Such an amendment might read as follows:

- (o) Consistency with Adopted Public Plans and Policies. All subdivision of land approved under these regulations should be consistent with the most recently adopted public plans and policies for the area in which it is located. This includes general policy regarding development objectives for the area as well as specific plans for public facilities such as streets, parks and open space, schools, and other similar facilities. Adopted plans are on file at the Town Hall offices.

- 5. Encourage mixed uses, (commercial, office, and alternative medium density housing) in the Downtown Area, as shown on Map #10. These areas are also appropriate for uses that mix such uses within one building, such as retail on the first floor, office space on the second floor, and residential units on the third floor. (The maximum allowable height within the Downtown Overlay Districts is 50') Or, developments can incorporate different buildings to house different activities, such as an area for townhouses and another area for limited commercial space.

Alternative medium density housing development that would be appropriate in the Downtown area includes, but is not limited to, the following types of development with up to eight (8) dwelling units per acre:

- Townhouses (a one-family dwelling in a row of at least three such units in which each unit has its own front and rear access to the outside, no unit is located over another unit, and each unit is separated from any other unit by one or more vertical common fire-resistant walls).
- Condominiums (a building, or group of buildings, in which dwelling units are owned individually, and the structure, common areas, and facilities are owned by all the owners on a proportional, undivided basis).

- Patio homes and/or zero lot line homes (a patio home is a one-family dwelling on a separate lot with open space setbacks on three sides; a zero lot line refers to the location of a building on a lot so that one or more of the buildings sides rest directly on a lot line).
- Garden apartments (one or more two- or three-story multifamily structures, built at a gross density of up to eight units per acre, with each structure containing at least four dwelling units and including related off-street parking, open space, and recreation)
- Quadruplex (a building containing four dwelling units, each of which has direct access to the outside or to a common hall).
- Triplex (a building containing three dwelling units, each of which has direct access to the outside or to a common hall).

These types of alternative housing developments are appropriate in limited numbers in the Downtown mixed use area (as shown on Map #10) to promote residential village or neighborhood character and flavor. To accomplish this, no one alternative density housing development should have more than forty-eight (48) of any one type of housing style in the entire development complex, with up to one hundred and twenty (120) dwelling units on any one site (i.e. 48 townhouses, 48 garden apartments, and 24 units that are triplexes). The site itself shall be limited in size (twenty (20) acres or less) to more readily blend with the residential large lot image of Mint Hill.

6. While a “secondary” commercial and institutional area has developed at the intersection of Wilson Grove Road, Lebanon, and Lawyers Road, approximately 2 miles northwest of the traditional Downtown area at N.C. 51 and Lawyers Road, this plan places emphasis on development of the Downtown area as the heart of Mint Hill. Further development of the traditional Downtown area is encouraged rather than expansions to the secondary area of activity (i.e. additional rezonings). As can be seen in Map #14, there is little additional vacant land zoned non-residential for expansion of non-residential uses in this area.
7. The Downtown Overlay District regulations currently are a part of the Zoning Ordinance. However, the Town Board of Commissioner’s has only rezoned the property that the Town itself owns. The Town has studied possible overlay district boundaries over the past years, but has not officially rezoned any property (other than the Town property), to this designation. The Town has left the rezoning of property to this overlay designation to be an optional alternative for landowners in the Downtown area. However, not one property owner has sought to have his property rezoned to this classification, since the adoption of these provisions.

One of the possible reasons for this reluctance could be that the regulations themselves can be costly to developers/owners, require submittal of site plans, and require reviews by various governmental bodies. It is probably reasonable to state that property owners have more flexibility and fewer regulations to deal with if they do not rezone their property to this designation. And certainly, less costs are involved (no rezoning fees,

no site plan costs, less delays for review, etc.). Given this, then it is reasonable to say that the regulations, without becoming mandatory through the rezoning process, will not impact the development of the Downtown area as long as they are optional.

It is recommended that the Town Board of Commissioner's take one of two actions regarding these Overlay regulations:

a) The Town Board of Commissioner's can review the various overlay boundaries that have been proposed and select one, if they are interested in making the regulations mandatory. Property owners could then be invited to participate in a number of educational public meetings to educate the owners about the regulations, and what they would mean to each property owner when their property is rezoned to include this designation. A public hearing on rezoning property within the overlay district boundaries to this category would be held, and the property rezoned to this Overlay category. The result of this would be that all property owners in the Downtown area would have to abide by the Overlay regulations.

b) If the Town Board of Commissioner's perceives that the existing Overlay regulations are too detailed and complex, or that they are a deterrent to development, then they should investigate ways to amend the regulations by simplifying them to make them more palatable to downtown property owners. The best regulations are those where both sides agree that the regulations are reasonable and will meet the public intent for which they are designed.

8. It is recommended that the Town Board of Commissioner's should investigate ways to beautify the Downtown area. Investing tax dollars in the Downtown area for public amenities will help attract new quality development. There are a number of issues and concerns that should be addressed. These include the following:

a) Support the proposed Master Sidewalk Plan developed in 1999, with particular emphasis and priority given to implementing the sidewalks recommended in the traditional Downtown area. The plan attempts to link various destinations with sidewalks: the Downtown area, schools, parks, library, Town Hall, etc. and also provide safety for children, pedestrians, and bicyclists using the sidewalk.

b) Develop and implement a street tree plan for the major roads in the Downtown area, as a first priority. This plan would detail a specific street tree to be planted along both sides of the rights-of-way. Each road could have a different type tree, if desired. Trees could be financed by the Town or paid for by each property owner wishing to participate in a program which would purchase the trees and plant them for a reasonable cost. Or a grant could be sought for a 50%-50% match for acquisition and installation.

No trees identified as large maturing trees should be planted within 20' of an electrical distribution line.

- c) Strengthen and enforce the sign ordinance provisions in the Zoning Ordinance to remove illegal signs posted by individuals in the Downtown area, particularly at the intersection of N.C. 51 and Lawyers Road. This includes the practice of "advertising" by displaying products in front yards and along the edge of the street right-of-way.
- d) Activate the Community Appearance Committee (CAC) and the Downtown Development Committee (DDC) which were formed by the Town Board of Commissioner's in 1986. The original purpose of the CAC was to work with the Planning Board in reviewing development proposals to ensure that future development addressed aesthetic concerns. The original purpose of the DDC was to develop private and public, as well as joint strategies to foster commercial and business development in Downtown Mint Hill. At present, both Committees are inactive.

The Town Board of Commissioner's could utilize both these Committees, as well as the existing Mint Hill Business Association to study and make recommendations for consideration by the Town Board of Commissioner's. Tasks that might be assigned include:

- Designate and plan gateway areas to enhance the image of Mint Hill, and welcome motorists into the area.
- Work with the Planning Department to improve the architectural image of existing and new businesses seeking to locate or expand in the Mint Hill Study Area.
- Assist in the development of a street tree plan for the Downtown area and other areas.
- Work with the Planning Department to encourage the replacement of utilities underground in the Downtown Area, if feasible, and to promote any new utility lines to be underground.
- Investigate the desirability and feasibility of developing a mailbox replacement plan to encourage Downtown property owners to replace their existing mailbox with a uniform, attractive box, which will add to the image of Mint Hill.
- Investigate the desirability and feasibility of installing decorative streetlights and/or pedestrian scale street lights to improve the image of Downtown. Streetlights should include a canopy to cast light downward, not into the night sky.

- Investigate the desirability and feasibility of adding pedestrian oriented amenities along the sidewalk and public areas of Downtown. This might include benches, drinking fountains, water fountains, etc.
- Investigate fund-raising and volunteer activities to fund various projects.

9. Family oriented businesses should be encouraged to locate in Mint Hill.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES OUTSIDE THE DOWNTOWN AREA

GOAL:

- To encourage and promote appropriate amounts and types of commercial and office development to meet the shopping, service, and to an extent, employment needs of area residents.
- To protect and promote continued quality of life amenities and services which influence the Town's positive image.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Non-residential development at the intersection of Lawyers, Lebanon and Wilson Grove Roads has grown as a secondary hub of commercial activity, several miles northwest of the downtown area. This commercial area combines a number of institutional and governmental uses: Lebanon Road Elementary School, Independence High School, the U.S. Post Office, Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery, and a church on Wilson Grove Road.

Since this commercial area competes with downtown Mint Hill, only several vacant parcels have been projected for additional commercial use near the elementary school. No further enlargement of this commercial area is projected beyond the areas shown on the future land use map.

2. Non-residential development is needed to provide local job opportunities to Mint Hill residents. As such, the most appropriate location for such uses was deemed to be along Albemarle Road, which is a major corridor along the north side of the study area. As soon as public water and sewer are available, the following uses would be appropriate:
 - The intersection of Albemarle Road and Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road is a gateway entrance to the Mint Hill study area, and an ideal place for non-residential development. The future Land Use Plan recommends an office park theme at this intersection, when utilities are available to service the area. While several non-residential uses abound in this area (commercial, office, industrial, and a manufactured home park), it is believed that a unified office park development could be created in this area (particularly at the southeast quadrant).

Developers should be encouraged to plan for a development that would incorporate a number of properties for a large impact, and to seek rezoning to a conditional use district O-A, which would exclude the multi-family component for this large area. A conditional site plan would be appropriate to ensure quality development.

The type of development envisioned is a quality office park in a campus-like setting, much like the office areas surrounding SouthPark in Charlotte. Such a development could encompass wide, tree-lined boulevards along major routes, walking trails, pedestrian amenities, street lighting and architecturally interesting buildings, primarily of brick. Landscaping and entrance signage complete the unified development concept. No flat roof, metal frame construction, big-box type structures are envisioned.

- The intersection of Albemarle Road, Blair Road (N.C. 51), and Cabarrus Road presents another opportunity for non-residential development in an area which is close to the I-485 interchange at Albemarle Road. Due to this proximity, the future Land Use Plan projects, at build-out, two light industrial/business parks when public water and sewer are available to the sites. Both proposed light industrial/business parks will have access to Blair Road, at a minimum. Connection with Albemarle Road presents a problem due to the east-west railroad tracks along Albemarle Road which present crossing permission and safety hazards.

The type of development envisioned is a quality light industrial/business park in a campus-like setting, much like the Huntersville Business Park in Huntersville. Such a development would encompass wide, tree-lined boulevards along major routes, walking trails, pedestrian amenities, street lighting and architecturally interesting buildings, primarily of brick. Landscaping and entrance signage complete the unified development concept. No flat roof, metal frame construction, big-box type structures are envisioned, nor any mini-warehouses, or storage facilities. Industrial uses should be light industrial uses or research and design oriented. Shopping centers would not be included in these areas. In addition, such development shall require an access management plan from the developer to ensure easy and safe traffic flow at or near the interchange.

In addition, the area immediately along Albemarle Road at the intersection of Blair Road is proposed for continued commercial use. Several additional parcels have been added to the commercially designated area along Albemarle Road to Cabarrus Road, however, these parcels may not be deep enough for actual use as individual properties.

3. The intersection of N.C. 51 and Idlewild Road is the site of an existing shopping center, Hoods Crossroad, and a number of gas stations, office uses, and institutional

uses (church, day care, etc.). In addition, a new development of 84 townhomes is under construction now in Mint Lake Village. The buffer at Hoods Crossroads Shopping Center should remain the dividing line between the non-residential zoning at the shopping center and the residential zoning to the northeast. The zoning should not be expanded beyond the existing buffer. This is recommended to ensure the integrity of the Downtown area.

PUBLIC PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

GOAL:

- To provide a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities to persons of all age categories, placed at conveniently located sites throughout the Mint Hill study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Support the Mecklenburg County Greenway Master Plan which calls for a multi-objective greenway corridor system to control flooding, improve water quality, protect wetlands, conserve habitat for wildlife, and buffer adjacent land uses. Greenways can incorporate varying types and intensity of human use, including trails for recreation and alternative transportation, and passive and active park facilities, including open play fields. They have also been shown to increase the value of adjacent property as an amenity to residential and commercial developments.

In 1980 a Master Plan for Mecklenburg County's Greenway System was adopted which describes a network of corridors running along creeks and streams in the County. This plan was updated in 1998, and proposes an expansion of how the Greenway program functions and is operated. The Plan Update recommends that the Greenway System be expanded to include floodplain management and water quality buffer objectives.

In the Mint Hill study area, Irvins Creek was identified in the original Greenway Plan as a 3.3 mile long Greenway trail. A small portion of this original 3.3 mile trail has already been donated near Lawyers Glen and Ellington Farm.

In the 1998 Update Plan, this Greenway is now proposed to be 6.7 miles in length, running from Sunset Road in Mint Hill to the McAlpine Creek. Origins and destinations include the Mint Hill Municipal Park, Town Hall, and Idlewild Road Park. This Greenway would also connect with an existing 2-mile stretch of the Greenway system that runs along Campbell Creek and connects to the McAlpine Park and Greenway and James Boyce Park.

To implement this plan will include the following costs phased over time that makes use of coordinated resources. Detailed below are the costs included in the first three years of Greenway facility development according to the 1999 Capital Improvement Program for Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department:

- Land acquisition along Irvins Creek (\$ unknown)
- Design fees:
 - McAlpine confluence to Idlewild Road Park: \$30,000
 - Idlewild Road Park to Lawyers Road: \$60,000
- Construction:
 - McAlpine confluence to Idlewild Road Park: \$300,000
 - Idlewild Road Park to Lawyers Road: \$500,000
- Management, Maintenance, Administration and Security:
 - McAlpine confluence to Idlewild Road Park: \$9,750
 - Idlewild Road Park to Lawyers Road: \$22,750

Successful implementation of the Updated Master Plan will require a concerted effort by Mecklenburg County in partnership with local governments and private sector organizations who have the ability, influence and authority to guide the community toward acceptable multiple objective Greenway solutions. Mint Hill is a partner in the development of the county-wide Greenway system. As such, the Plan anticipates that the physical development, maintenance and land acquisition of the Greenway system should be a shared responsibility where ever and whenever possible. Mint Hill should embed the Greenway philosophy in their planning and zoning processes.

2. Encourage the Mint Hill Board of Commissioner's to endorse the Updated Mecklenburg County Greenway Master Plan 1999-2009, and specifically to adopt and designate the portion of the East Park District which describes the Irvins Creek Greenway as a future recreational site for the Mint Hill Study Area.

Currently the Mint Hill Subdivision Ordinance (Section 7(k)) states that when a tract of land has been approved by the Town Board of Commissioner's as a site for a recreational facility, and the tract lies wholly or partially within an area proposed to be subdivided, the Subdivider shall reserve the recreational site for a period of not more than 30 days from the date of tentative approval of the preliminary plan. However, for this reservation to take place, the Town Board of Commissioner's must have advised the Mint Hill Planning Board and the property owner of its prior approval of the recreational site prior to or within ten days after the presentation of the preliminary plan for Planning Board approval. In order for this Section to validly reference Irvins Creek, the Town Board of Commissioner's must take official action to approve Irvins Creek as a future recreational facility. The 30-day period gives various public parties (the Town of Mint Hill, the County Park Department, etc.) the time to determine if they wish to acquire the Greenway section in question.

3. Encourage the expansion of the Mint Hill Park on Fairview as per the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Park Master Plan. A possible expansion to the west is shown on the future Land Use Plan map.

4. Encourage the Town Board of Commissioner's to develop an arboretum at the Mint Hill Park on Fairview.
5. Encourage a large recreational center (for example, a YMCA) for all age groups within, or near the Downtown area. If ballfields are included, this site would be more appropriate outside of the immediate Downtown area.

PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER ISSUES AND **RECOMMENDATIONS**

GOALS:

- To work with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department to provide and maintain accessible public utility systems capable of accommodating and directing future growth in the most cost effective manner possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Support the Tri-County Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is anticipated to be located along the Rocky River. This plant is proposed to be able to handle around 4 MGD. Although there is no tri-county agreement at this time, a tentative site has been suggested in Union County. However, no site has been purchased, and the owners have not even been contacted about the possibility of selling the land. An agreement would include who would operate the plant, how it will be financed, and what portion of the flow would belong to which party. At present, this plant is projected to serve customers in Union, Mecklenburg, and Cabarrus County. All three counties would participate in the funding of this plant, as well as other contractual arrangements. Mecklenburg County has projected their possible share of the initial costs to be about \$15 million. That is the amount that is shown in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities CMU's Proposed Five Year Capital Improvement Program for 2001 and 2002. Again, since no details have been finalized, site acquisition, design, and construction dates are unknown at this time.
2. Support the Duck Creek Pump Station and 18" sewer gravity and force mains, which are estimated to cost \$1.65 million. Work on this project is expected to begin in 2003, with completion in 2004. This project will serve parts of the Mint Hill Study area located in the Duck Creek basin. This project is listed in CMU's Proposed Five Year Capital Improvement Program.
3. Support a 36" sewer interceptor located in the eastern most part of Mecklenburg County to connect the Tri-County Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant to the Long Branch area. This project is estimated to cost \$3.63 million and is planned for construction in 2002-2003. Note that this project ties in with the completion of the Tri-County Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. This project is listed in CMU's Proposed Five Year Capital Improvement Program.
4. Support the Clear Creek Pump Station, and 30" sewer gravity and force mains, which are estimated to cost \$5.93 million. This project is anticipated to begin in 2002. This

facility will provide service from I-485 to the Cabarrus County line, in the Clear Creek basin. The pump station will be located along the Mecklenburg County line. Sewage will flow by gravity eastward and then be pumped into the Tri-County Wastewater Interceptor line for treatment at the Tri-County Wastewater Treatment Plant. Again, this project is dependent upon the Tri-County Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant project. This project is listed in CMU's Proposed Five Year Capital Improvement Program.

5. Support the Goose Creek 30" sewer outfall project, estimated to cost \$6.66 million. This project is anticipated for construction in the 2005-2009 time frame. This project will be located in Union County. Because it will provide sewer service ultimately to Mecklenburg County, it is shown in the CMU Proposed Ten Year Needs Assessment, for the period 2004-2009.
6. Support the Goose Creek Basin 24" sewer project is also a new project in CMU's Proposed Ten-Year Needs Assessment, which is estimated to cost \$2.65 million. This project will provide sewer service in Mecklenburg County near Lawyers Road and I-485 and provide sewer service to the Goose Creek basin, which is basically south of N.C. 51 between N.C. 218 and Idlewild Road.
7. Support the Albemarle Road 16" water main project from Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road to Blair Road. This project is estimated to cost \$990,000 with construction taking place in the 2004-2009 time period. This project is included in CMU's Proposed Ten-Year Needs Assessment.
8. Support the Lawyer's Road 16" water main project from N.C. 51 to Thompson Road. This project is estimated to cost \$700,000 and is included in CMU's Proposed Ten-Year Needs Assessment.
9. Support the Blair Road 16" water main project from Bainview Drive to Albemarle Road. This project is estimated to cost \$710,000 and is included in CMU's Proposed Ten-Year Needs Assessment.
10. Support the Thompson Road/Idlewild Road 16" water main project. This project is estimated to cost \$1.35 million and is included in CMU's Proposed Ten-Year Needs Assessment.
11. Support the construction of the Wilgrove Tank #2, which is anticipated to cost \$3 million. This project has \$500,000 scheduled for 2003, and the remaining portion is shown for the period from 2005-2008. This project is in CMU's Proposed Five Year Capital Improvement Program.
12. Support the Albemarle Road 24" water main project from Harrisburg Road to Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road. This project has \$530,000 scheduled in the time period from 2005-2008, and is included in CMU's Proposed Ten-Year Needs Assessment.

13. Support the Margaret Wallace Road to Lebanon Road 16" water main project from Idlewild Road to Lawyers Road. This project is anticipated to cost \$570,000 and has money projected in both 2003 and 2004. This project is in CMU's Proposed Five Year Capital Improvement Program.
14. To speed up CMU projects, it may be possible for the Town to borrow money to issue General Obligation Bonds (GOB's) for public sanitary sewer systems and water supply and distribution systems. The Local Government Commission must approve all such bond borrowing. Local governments can issue GOB's, pledging their faith and credit to repay the debt. The Town, in this case, could agree to levy whatever amount of property tax is necessary to pay the principal of, and the interest on, the debt as it comes due. General Obligation Bonds must be voted on by the citizens to be approved.

Revenue bonds would not appear to be an option, since the Town cannot pledge CMU's revenues from the project. There may be creative ways to structure a revenue bond, which would be acceptable to all parties including the Local Government Commission.

15. Strongly discourage private wastewater treatment plants and discourage community wells in the Mint Hill study area by encouraging developers to plan for the extension of public water and sewer when cost effective and reasonable. New private package plants must construct their facilities and lines to meet CMU standards in the event the system is acquired by CMU in the future.
16. If unsatisfactory service occurs with the three existing private package systems that exist in the study area, the property owners can pursue the creation of service districts within the County to obtain public water and/or sewer.
17. Encourage the Board of Commissioners to continue planning efforts to provide public water and sewer to the entire Study Area. The public appreciates periodic news releases about the status of this effort.

FLOODPLAIN ISSUES

GOAL:

- To plan for safe building sites, free from the threat of flooding.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners examine and consider a ban on building any structures in the 100+ year floodplain.

IX. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Map #10 depicts the future land use pattern, at build-out for the entire study area. For graphic presentation purposes, portions of the study area, called “focus areas”, were enlarged to provide a more detailed look at the future land uses projected in the following areas:

- Map #11, Focus Area #1: Downtown Mint Hill
- Map #12, Focus Area #2: I-485 and Lawyers Road
- Map #13, Focus Area #3: Albemarle Road and I-485
- Map #13, Focus Area #4: Lawyers, Lebanon, and Wilson Grove Roads, and Idlewild Road and Margaret Wallace Road.
- Map #14, Focus Area #5: Idlewild and N.C. 51

Focus Area #1: Downtown Mint Hill

This plan continues past efforts at promoting mixed-uses (medium density residential, office uses, commercial uses) in the downtown area within walking distances of each other. It places significant emphasis on the further development of the downtown Mint Hill area, while discouraging expansion of the commercial hub developing at the intersections of Lawyers Road, Lebanon Road, and Wilson Grove Road.

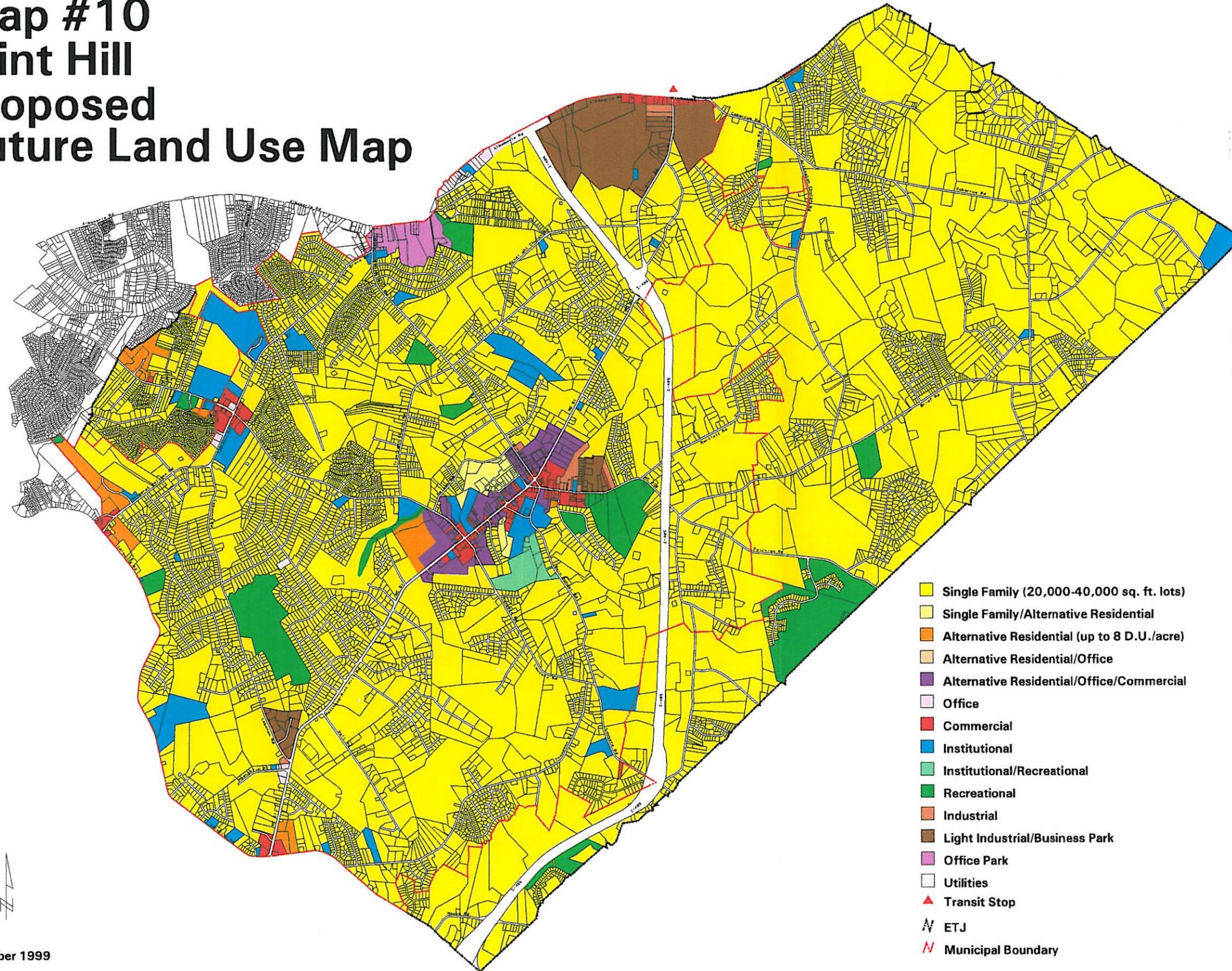
The Board of Commissioners have always been concerned about the downtown area, and have tried to promote the downtown with the adopted 1992 Downtown Study Design and Development Concepts Plan. Unfortunately, without public water and sewer facilities, and with the unavailability of prime property, the development of downtown has been slow.

The 1992 Plan placed emphasis on a concentric and radial road plan, which has not come to fruition, again due in part to the above listed circumstances. In addition, some opportunities for such roads have been lost due to continuing residential development around the downtown area.

This Land Use Plan takes the 1992 plan concept into consideration, and seeks to take the next steps to develop a professional transportation engineering study of the actual feasibility of concentric and radial roads. Once such a study is done (not only for the downtown, but also for other local road connectivity in the study area), these new proposed rights-of-way could be protected from future development, once a local and collector street plan are locally adopted. Then, as development takes place, portions of this road network could be built by each developer, or right-of-way dedicated to the Town for future road improvements.

It is impossible to show such alignments on Map #10 and #11, since no engineering study has been undertaken. However, this should not diminish the importance of providing a network of roads to serve the entire study area as alternative routes for motorists. At present, the area road network appears much like that found in south Charlotte today. As everyone knows, Charlotte lost many opportunities for north-south and east-west connectors which would have

Map #10 Mint Hill Proposed Future Land Use Map



September 1999

greatly improved the congestion problem experienced today. Mint Hill should learn from the lessons of neighboring communities, and try to avoid their mistakes by planning and taking action today.

Map #11 illustrates that the predominant land use proposed in the downtown area is a mixed-use category, shown in purple, defined as allowing a mix of the following uses:

- Alternative medium density (up to 8 dwelling units per acre) residential (townhouses, condominiums, patio homes, zero lot line homes, garden apartments, quadruplexes, triplexes), and/or
- Office uses, and/or
- Commercial/retail uses.

A mix means that one or the other of these uses may be present, or used in combination with other listed uses. For example, a 30 unit complex of condominiums might be built on a site, with ground level offices along a highway corridor, or a 40 unit complex of patio homes may be part of a site which also has a commercial hub along N.C. 51. These uses can be in the same building or on separate parts of the site. The main idea is to encourage a variety of these uses in the downtown area to promote a vibrant walkable downtown.

Map #11 shows areas in purple suitable for mixed uses along the following roads:

- N.C. 51, from near Hawthorne Drive past Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road and past Woodland Ave, to the northeast.
- Along Lawyers Road from just northwest of Hollow Oak Drive to just past Nelson Road.
- Along Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road from N.C. 51 to Nelson Road.

Areas either with existing retail uses, or proposed for future retail uses are shown on Map #11 in red. The majority of these parcels are in commercial use at present and have been zoned for retail uses if vacant. These uses are primarily concentrated along N.C. 51 and Fairview Road (N.C. 218). Several parcels are also in commercial use along Lawyers Road, both south and north of N.C. 51.

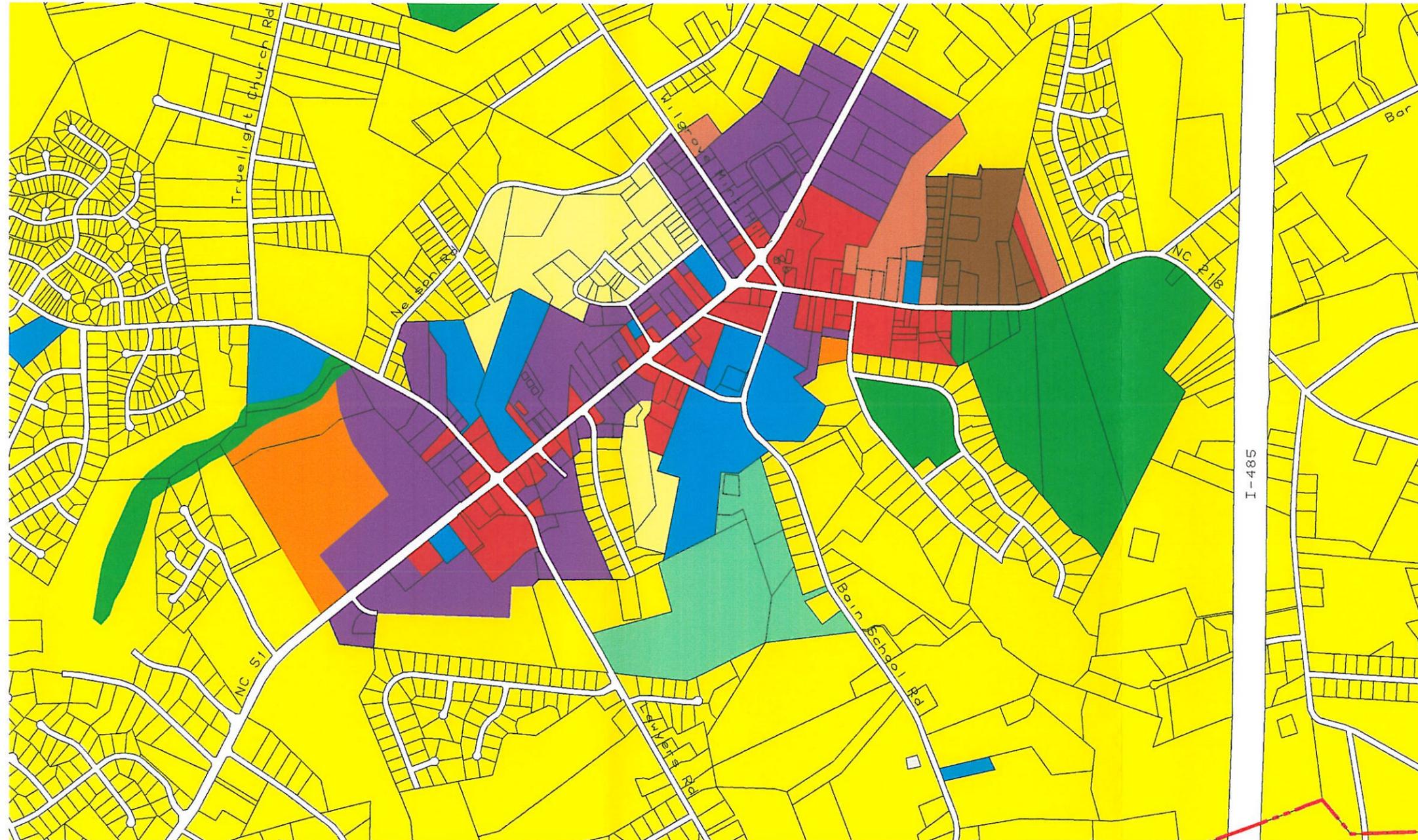
One area to the southwest of downtown is shown specifically as an appropriate area for alternative residential uses. This area is to the south of the existing Lawyers Glen Retirement Center (shown in blue), across the creek, and extends southward to N.C. 51, forming the gateway entrance into the downtown area.

Another area appropriate for alternative residential uses or office uses is located along N.C. 51 (Blair Road) past Woodland Avenue to the east, and adjacent to Whitley Commons Shopping Center. Since six of these seven properties abut industrial property to the rear and are across from property designated as appropriate for mixed uses, this area should serve as a buffer to the single family residential properties that lie to the east. Extension of non-residential uses beyond this boundary, to the northeast, is discouraged in this plan.

Map #11 Proposed Future Land Use Downtown Mint Hill



- Single Family
(20,000-40,000 sq. ft. lots)
- Single Family/
Alternative Residential
- Alternative Residential
(up to 8 D.U./acre)
- Alternative Residential/
Office
- Alternative Residential/
Office/Commercial
- Office
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Institutional/
Recreational
- Recreational
- Industrial
- Light Industrial/
Business Park
- Office Park
- Utilities
- ETJ
- Municipal Boundary



Scale: 1 inch = 1300 feet
September 1999

Institutional designated properties (shown in blue) are scattered in the downtown area and include the following existing uses:

- Philadelphia Presbyterian Church and cemetery property along Bain School Road and Philadelphia Church Road
- The Mint Hill Baptist Church at Sunset Road and N.C. 51
- The Lawyers Glen Retirement Community along Lawyers Road
- The Town Hall property on N.C. 51
- Bain Elementary School property on Bain School Road.
- The Mint Hill Library Branch on N.C. 51
- The Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department and Emergency Ambulance Service along Fairview Road (N.C. 218).

Map #11 shows the existing Mint Hill Park of 14.9 acres located at Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road and Jim Harper Lane and the existing new park of about 50 acres along N.C. 218 in green. The future land use map shows an area to the west of the existing park, which is suggested for future expansion of the park.

In addition, Map #11 shows one area in a light green color, just south of Bain Elementary School on Bain School Road which is suitable either for future institutional uses (schools, in particular) or a new park.

Surrounding the downtown area, shown in yellow, is land designated for low density, single-family development at one to two dwelling units per acre, depending on the availability of public water and sewer.

Focus Area #2: I-485 and Lawyers Road

Areas surrounding the interchange at Lawyers Road and I-485 are projected to be residential as shown on Map #12.

Focus Area #3: Albemarle Road and I-485

The southern side of Albemarle Road is depicted on Map #13 as having significant non-residential development along its length, from Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road to Cabarrus Road.

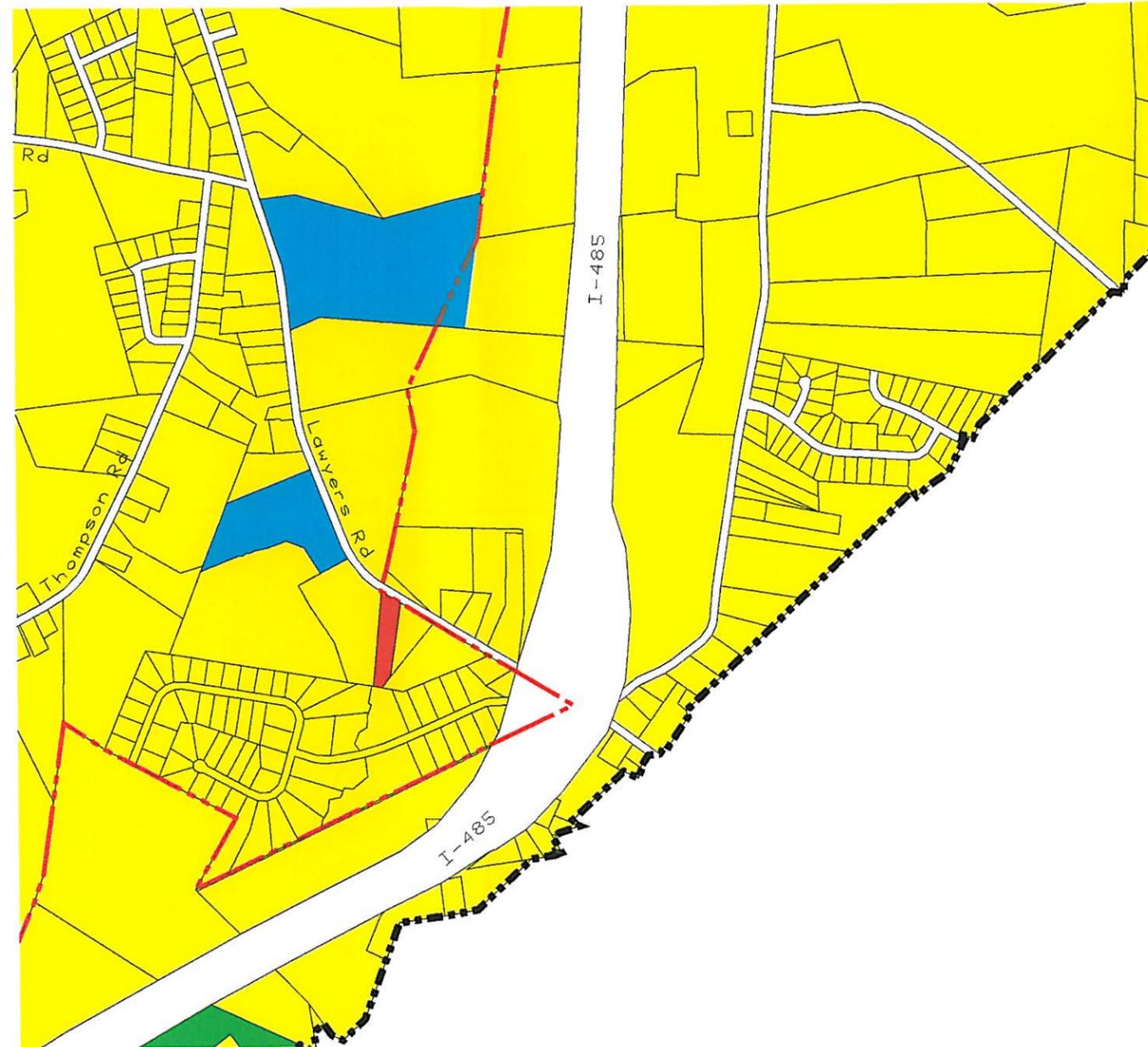
The Future Land Use Map depicts land appropriate for two significant size light-industrial/business parks in the southeast quadrant of the I-485 interchange, when public water and sewer is available to the area. The light industrial/business parks could extend from I-485 to Cabarrus Road. Due to its proximity to I-485, the Norfolk Southern Railway tracks, and being located along a major thoroughfare, this is a natural location for non-residential uses which will provide employment opportunities and expand the tax base of the Mint Hill study area. Challenges to development of this property include providing access to the property

Map #12

Proposed Future Land Use

I-485 and Lawyers Road

- Single Family
(20,000-40,000 sq. ft. lots)
- Single Family/
Alternative Residential
- Alternative Residential
(up to 8 D.U./acre)
- Alternative Residential/
Office
- Alternative Residential/
Office/Commercial
- Office
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Institutional/
Recreational
- Recreational
- Industrial
- Light Industrial/
Business Park
- Office Park
- Utilities
- ETJ
- Municipal Boundary



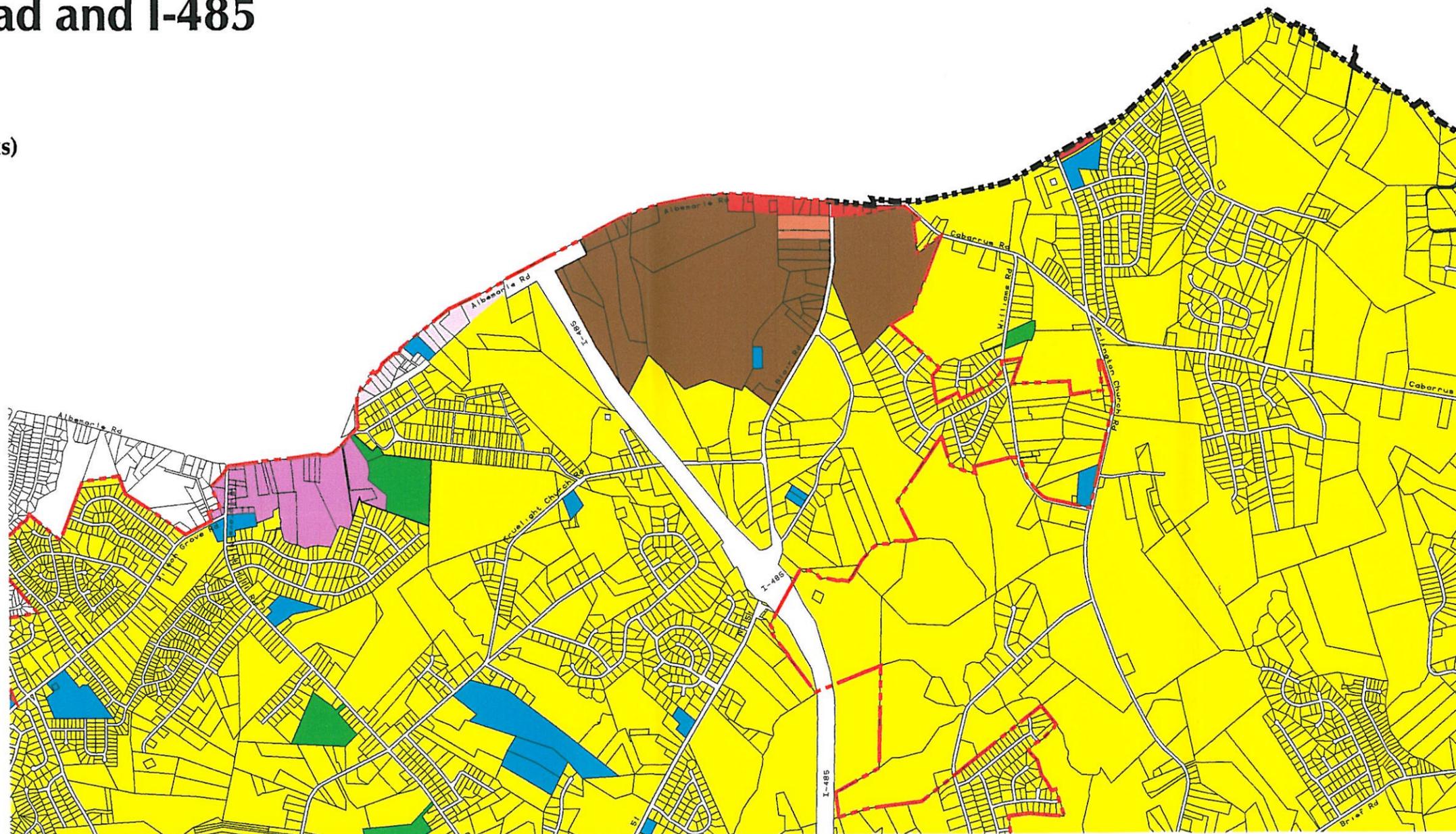
Scale: 1 inch = 1200 feet
September 1999

Map #13

Proposed Future Land Use

Albemarle Road and I-485

- Single Family
(20,000-40,000 sq. ft. lots)
- Single Family/
Alternative Residential
- Alternative Residential
(up to 8 D.U./acre)
- Alternative Residential/
Office
- Alternative Residential/
Office/Commercial
- Office
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Institutional/
Recreational
- Recreational
- Industrial
- Light Industrial/
Business Park
- Office Park
- Utilities
- Transit Stop
- ETJ
- Municipal Boundary



Scale: 1 inch = 2500 feet
September 1999



from Albemarle Road, since the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks parallel Albemarle Road and present crossing permission issues and safety hazards. However, in the event crossing permission is not allowed, alternative access to these two parcels could be gained from Blair Road.

The type of development envisioned is a quality light industrial/business park in a campus-like setting, much like the Huntersville Business Park, located in Huntersville. Wide, tree-lined boulevards along major routes would be constructed, with walking trails, pedestrian amenities, street lighting and architecturally interesting buildings, primarily of brick. Landscaping and entrance signage would complete the unified development concept. No flat roof, metal frame construction, big-box type structures are envisioned in this area, nor any mini-warehouses, or storage facilities. Industrial uses would be light industrial uses or research and design oriented. Shopping centers and retail uses would not be included in these areas shown in dark brown on Map #13. A conditional site plan would be appropriate to ensure quality development.

The area immediately along Albemarle Road near the intersection of Blair Road is proposed for continued commercial uses and shown in red on Map #13. These are shallow parcels, located north of the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. Several additional parcels have been added to the commercially designated area along Albemarle to Cabarrus Road, however, these parcels may not be deep enough for actual use as individual properties, and may need assemblage for utilization.

In addition, a future light rail transit facility and stop is shown in the general vicinity of N.C. 51 (Blair Road) and Albemarle Road. It is possible that such a facility could connect Mint Hill eastward to Stanfield and beyond, and westward to Charlotte. A park and ride facility could be part of the project.

To the west of I-485, Map #13 shows a number of parcels along Albemarle Road, and north of the railroad tracks which are colored in light pink. These parcels would be appropriate for office type uses. Assemblage of these parcels may be necessary for any new development. In the interim, existing single-family homes are envisioned to house office uses.

The future Land Use Plan recommends an office park theme at the intersection of Albemarle Road and Wilgrove-Mint Hill Road, when public utilities are available to service the area. While several non-residential uses abound in this area (commercial, office, industrial, and a manufactured home park), it is believed that a unified office park development could be created in this area (particularly at the southeast quadrant). Developers should be encouraged to plan for a development that would incorporate a number of properties for a large impact, and to seek rezoning to a conditional use district O-A, which would exclude the multi-family component for this large area. A conditional site plan would be appropriate to ensure quality development.

The type of development envisioned is a quality office park in a campus-like setting, much like the office areas surrounding South Park in Charlotte. Such a development could include

wide, tree-lined boulevards, walking trails, pedestrian amenities, street lighting and architecturally interesting buildings, primarily of brick. Entrance signage and landscaping would be designed to be complementary throughout the development. Flat roofs, metal frame construction, and big-box type structures are not envisioned.

Map #13 also depicts a number of institutional uses, shown in blue, which are for the most part, churches.

The existing demolition landfill on Albemarle Road is designated as a future recreational area. Other recreational developments shown on Map #13 include Hickory Grove's Recreational Complex, and the Wilgrove-Mint Hill Town Park (a portion of it is shown on the lower boundary).

Focus Area #4: Lawyers, Lebanon, and Wilson Grove Roads and Idlewild Road and Margaret Wallace Road

Map #14 focuses on the commercial hub at Lawyers Road, Lebanon Road, and Wilson Grove Road, and a smaller commercial hub at Idlewild Road and Margaret Wallace Road. Both areas were planned, developed and approved when the area was controlled by Mecklenburg County before Mint Hill had planning and zoning jurisdiction in the area. The future land use depicted in Map #14 for both commercial hubs is basically limited to the non-residential development which is currently in place. No significant expansion of non-residential uses, specifically, commercial or office uses, is proposed.

Commercial uses are shown in red in all four quadrants of this intersection of Lawyers Road, Lebanon Road, and Wilson Grove Road, and represent the existing shopping centers, restaurants, and retail uses currently in place. Three parcels are designated for office uses near the intersection, and are shown in a light pink color.

A number of institutional uses and governmental uses are illustrated on Map #14. Such uses are shown in blue, and include the Lebanon Road Elementary School, Independence High School, the U.S. Post Office, Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Little Flower Assisted Living Facility, and several churches.

Medium density residential developments, with up to six dwelling units per acre, are shown in light orange. The majority of this area is currently developed with multi-family housing, but several lots are still vacant.

Recreational areas are shown in green, and include Idlewild Country Club and the common open space entrance to Morris Farms subdivision.

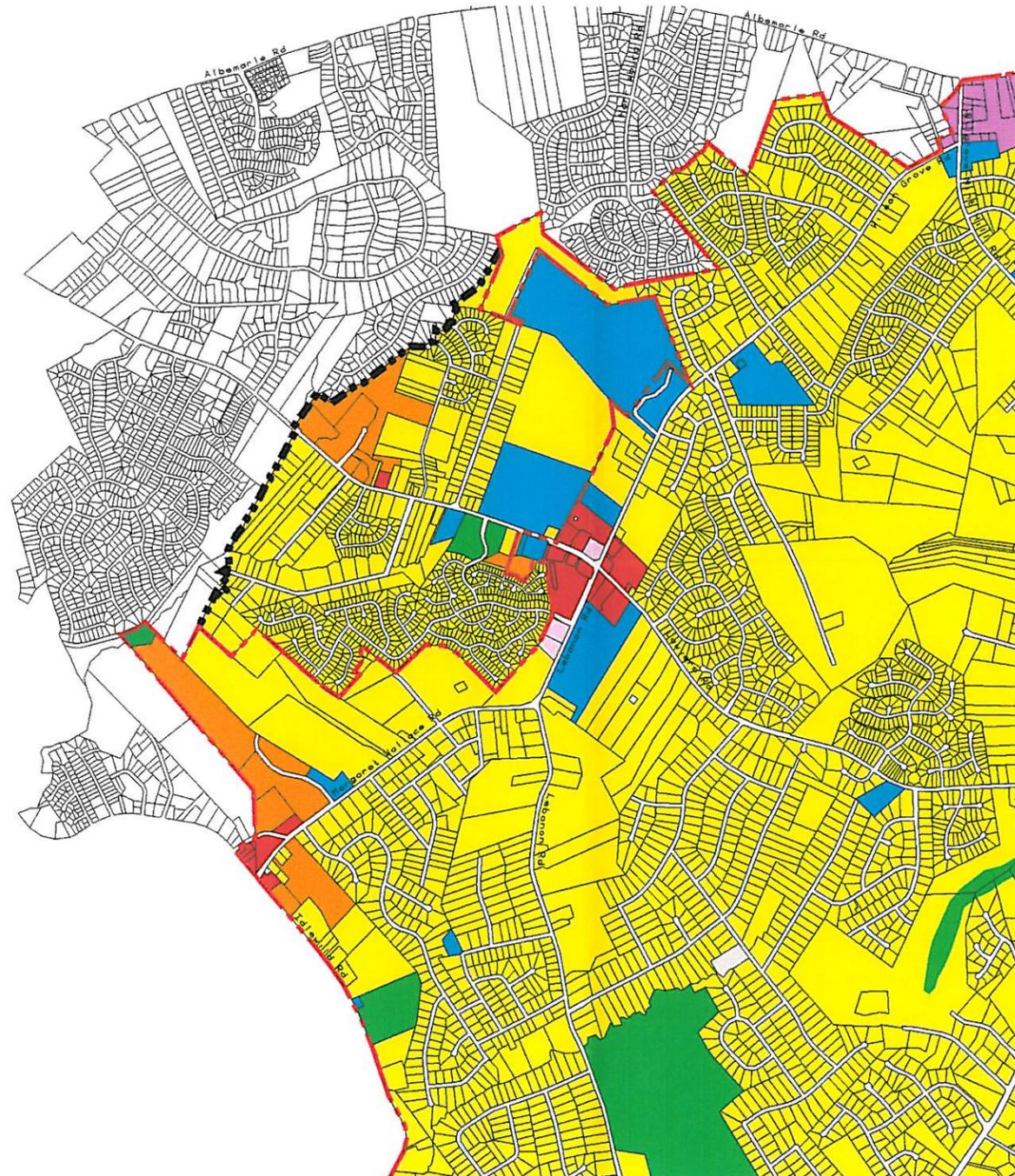
The remaining portion of Map #14 is shown for low density, single-family development of one to two dwelling units per acre, depending on the availability of public water and sewer.

Map #14

Proposed Future Land Use

Lawyers, Lebanon, and Wilson Grove Roads

- Single Family
(20,000-40,000 sq. ft. lots)
- Single Family/
Alternative Residential
- Alternative Residential
(up to 8 D.U./acre)
- Alternative Residential/
Office
- Alternative Residential/
Office/Commercial
- Office
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Institutional/
Recreational
- Recreational
- Industrial
- Light Industrial/
Business Park
- Office Park
- Utilities
- ETJ
- Municipal Boundary



Scale: 1 inch = 2500 feet
September 1999



Focus Area #5: N.C. 51 (Matthews-Mint Hill Road) and Idlewild Road

The last focus area centers around N.C. 51 (Matthews-Mint Hill Road) and Idlewild Road, as depicted on Map #15. Hoods Cross Roads Shopping Center, a gas station, and a drugstore are currently located on the northern quadrants of the intersection, in Mint Hill's zoning jurisdiction.

Other non-residential uses in the area include several parcels zoned, and used for office uses and industrial distributive uses, and a medium density residential development next to the drug store consisting of 84 townhomes called Mint Lake Village.

No additional commercial or office uses are proposed along N.C. 51 to preserve the residential flavor of the area as a gateway into Downtown Mint Hill.

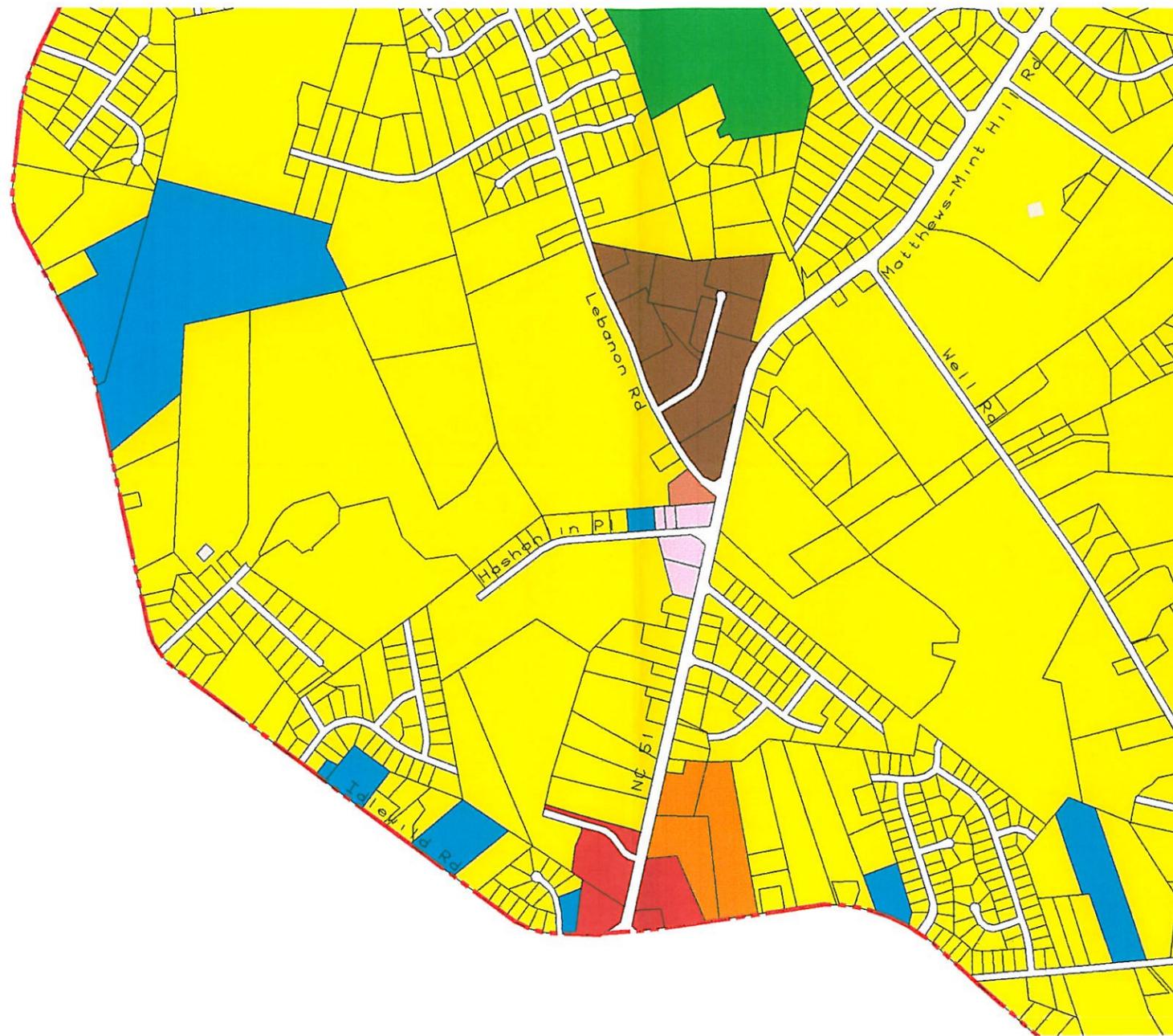
Low density, single-family uses with one to two dwelling units per acre are projected for the vast majority of land in this focus area, as shown on Map #15 in yellow. Density depends upon the availability of public water and sewer.

Map #15

Proposed Future Land Use

NC 51 and Idlewild Road

- Single Family
(20,000-40,000 sq. ft. lots)
- Single Family/
Alternative Residential
- Alternative Residential
(up to 8 D.U./acre)
- Alternative Residential/
Office
- Alternative Residential/
Office/Commercial
- Office
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Institutional/
Recreational
- Recreational
- Industrial
- Light Industrial/
Business Park
- Office Park
- Utilities
- ETJ
- Municipal Boundary



Scale: 1 inch = 1300 feet
September 1999



APPENDIX A

It's Your Future!

Dear Citizens:

The current Land Use Plan was developed in 1985 and officially adopted in 1986. It has served the Town well in making land use decisions over the past 12 years. With public water and sewer now available in many areas of Town, and the impending arrival of the "I-485 Outerbelt Road", it is time to review our Land Use Plan and Policies to enable us to deal with growth over the next 15 years.

It is important that you participate and provide input for the Land Use Plan. What do you think are the challenges facing Mint Hill today? What things would you like to see changed, and why? How would we like Mint Hill to look in 10 to 20 years? What is our ideal vision of the Town at that time? As part of the process of updating the Land Use Plan, we hope to gain citizen input through a survey and some community workshops.

The Mint Hill Land Use Plan will become a guideline for Mint Hill's future development and growth. The way the Town develops and grows in the future will have an impact on each citizen in the Town and its surrounding areas. This Citizen Survey is the first step in gathering community input. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, I strongly encourage you to take a few minutes to complete and return this survey. It's your future!

Robert G. Fox, Jr., Mayor

You can mail the survey back to the Town by simply folding it so that the Town's address is shown, and placing postage on it, or drop the survey off at any one of the following Mint Hill locations:

Food Lion (All 3 locations in Mint Hill) Bi-Lo (Intersection of Lawyers and Lebanon Rd.)
Harris Teeter (Mint Hill Festival Shopping Center) Public Library Town Hall

TOWN OF MINT HILL
POST OFFICE BOX 23457
MINT HILL, NORTH CAROLINA 28227

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
Paid
Charlotte, NC
Permit NO. 1833

FOR CONFIDENTIALITY — PLEASE REMOVE LABEL BEFORE RETURNING COMPLETED SURVEY

**TOWN OF MINT HILL
CITIZEN OPINION SURVEY
1998 LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

① How long have you lived in the Mint Hill Area? *(Check the appropriate category. It does not have to be at the same location, just within the area)*

Less than one Year _____	1 - 2 Years _____	3 to 5 Years _____
6 to 10 Years _____	More than 10 Years _____	

② Please tell us the number of people in each age group in your household.

0-4 _____	5-11 _____	12-14 _____	15-17 _____
18-24 _____	25-44 _____	45-54 _____	55+ _____

③ Why do you choose to live in the Mint Hill Area? *(Please indicate a maximum of three reasons, ranking them from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important.)*

Lived here all my life	Family and friends nearby
Close to work	Small town lifestyle
Commercial Conveniences	Affordable Housing
Low Taxes	Proximity to Charlotte
Other: _____	

④ Which land use issues do you feel are critical for Mint Hill to address over the next 5 to 10 years? *(Please rank any and all issues you feel apply, with 1 being the most important.)*

Maximum Housing Units per Acre	Traffic/Transportation Alternatives
Need for Variety of Housing Types	Development Around New I-485 Interchanges
Need for more Recreation/Open Space	Extension of Water and Sewer Lines
Location and Type of Commercial Uses	Location and Type of Industrial Uses
Other: _____	

⑤ Where do you commute to work? *(You can check more than one if more than one person works in household.)*

Mint Hill _____	Uptown Charlotte _____	University Area _____
Westinghouse Blvd. Area _____	Arrowood Area _____	Other _____

Please list the land use qualities you like most about Mint Hill. _____

Least _____

Please review the following statements and let us know how you feel about the following land use issues. Circle the letter that best describes your opinion based on the following categories: **A** = Strongly Agree **B** = Agree **C** = Neither Agree nor Disagree **D** = Disagree **E** = Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. The Land Use Regulations (i.e. Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances) are fair and reasonable. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 2. Residential development should be restricted to large lot (1 acre minimum) single-family development. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 3. Based on availability of water and/or sewer, Mint Hill should allow single-family development on lots smaller than 1/2 acre (i.e. 1/3 acre). | A | B | C | D | E |
| 4. Mint Hill should encourage more variety of housing types (Rate each of the following:): | | | | | |
| Single-Family on individual lot | A | B | C | D | E |
| Townhouse or Condominiums | A | B | C | D | E |
| Cluster/Pinwheel Homes | A | B | C | D | E |
| Apartment Complexes | A | B | C | D | E |
| 5. Mint Hill should promote residential development that encourages preservation of open space | A | B | C | D | E |
| 6. I experience traffic congestion on major roads on a regular basis. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 7. I would use more transit services (i.e. bus routes) to and from Charlotte, if available. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 8. I would like to see the following Mass Transit options available in Mint Hill: | | | | | |
| Bus | A | B | C | D | E |
| Light Rail | A | B | C | D | E |
| Van Pool | A | B | C | D | E |
| Other | A | B | C | D | E |
| 9. Mint Hill should promote large public/semi-public uses, such as hospital, schools, or similar uses. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 10. I would be willing to pay more property tax for services in order to minimize the amount of non-residential development. | A | B | C | D | E |

Please review the following statements and let us know how you feel about the following land use issues. Circle the letter that best describes your opinion based on the following categories: **A** = Strongly Agree **B** = Agree **C** = Neither Agree nor Disagree **D** = Disagree **E** = Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 11. Mint Hill has an adequate amount of neighborhood commercial uses (i.e. banks, grocery stores, specialty shops). | A | B | C | D | E |
| 12. Mixed uses of commercial and industrial development should be limited to the following areas (Rate each area): | | | | | |
| Downtown | A | B | C | D | E |
| I-485 Interchanges | A | B | C | D | E |
| Area's with Existing Commercial Uses | A | B | C | D | E |
| Other _____ | A | B | C | D | E |
| 13. Mint Hill should encourage the development of more large scale commercial uses (i.e. retail centers, malls, "big box" stores). | A | B | C | D | E |
| 14. A mix of residential and neighborhood commercial uses should be encouraged in the downtown area. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 15. Strict screening and signage regulations should be applied to all non-residential developments | A | B | C | D | E |
| 16. More sidewalks are needed throughout the Town. | A | B | C | D | E |

PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY BY OCTOBER 30, 1998

Place Stamp
Here or Drop
Off at
Designated
Drop Sites

Town of Mint Hill
Post Office Box 23457
Mint Hill, North Carolina 28227