

Helpful hints to navigate Hickory, NC streets

Sometimes the statement “You can’t get there from here,” is considered by some to be the best explanation of how to get around in the City of Hickory. With the one-way streets, avenues, Northwests (NW) and Northeast (NE) and numbers, trying to get around can seem pretty confusing to a newcomer or lifelong resident. Actually, the streets and avenues of Hickory are not that difficult to locate, if you take a few moments to find the key to the pattern.

When selecting a street-naming and house-numbering system, a city has a few guidelines to follow. The system should be as simple and logical as possible; it should be flexible enough to accommodate growth; it should be established uniformly throughout the city and all governmental and quasi-governmental agencies should use it.

Prior to adopting the present street-numbering system, Hickory had a confusing system of naming and numbering streets and houses. There were many dead end roads and uncompleted streets, which picked up several blocks from where they ended. There were also four of each street or avenue, one in each quadrant of the city.

In 1951 the city streets in Hickory, NC were changed to their present names and the city was divided into four quadrants:

- Northeast (NE)
- Northwest (NW)
- Southeast (SE)
- Southwest (SW)

Other points of interest:

- Center Street is the East-West dividing line.
- The railroad track is the dividing line between North-South.
- All roadways running East-West are Avenues.
- All roadways running North-South are Streets.

Dividing the city into four quadrants simplified finding addresses, because the quadrant designation on each Street or Avenue showed you in which section of the city you should begin your search. To find a house in the Northwest section of the city, you would start West of Center Street and North of the railroad tracks.

Each city block was then assigned a number with numbers getting larger as you move away from the center of the city. The first block is numbered 1-100, the second block 101-200, and so on. It is sort of like your elementary math where you plotted the points on the x and y axis. In this case one point is the house number and the other point is the

actual street name and the quadrant is the quadrant. Also, the house number tells you which side of the street the house is on.

- Even-numbered houses are on the right side of the street as you move from the center of town.
- Odd-numbered houses are on the left side of the street.

A lot of addresses seem to be confusing because they end in Place, Court, Circle, Drive, Lane, or Way. These addresses usually fall within a defined block, according to the city's grid system. For example, 7th Ave. Pl would be between 7th Ave. and 8th Ave. and 7th St. Pl would be between 7th St. and 8th St.

What is a grid system? The city map was laid out so that Streets and Avenues would have numbers assigned to them. The farther you go from the center of the city, the higher the Street or Avenue would be numbered. For example, the Avenue one full block either side of the railroad tracks is First Avenue. The Avenue two blocks from the tracks is Second Avenue, and so on. The same applies for Streets which increase as they move away from Center Street.

The addresses that fall within that grid system are Court, Place, Circle, Lane, and Way. They are offshoots of or related in some definitive way to their namesakes; and they are given the number of the Street or Avenue proceeding to them, and the Court, Place, Circle, Lane, or Way designation is added to distinguish them.

The City of Hickory has 236.44 miles of paved streets and 1.33 miles of unpaved streets and encompasses an area of 28.445 square miles.

So, you might think that perhaps there are some exceptions to the numbering system. And there are! Highland Avenue SE&NE, Tate Boulevard SE and McDonald Parkway SE & NE are the three most notable exceptions. Highland Avenue lies mainly in the Northeastern section of the city and Tate Boulevard lies entirely in the Southeastern quadrant. Also not conforming to the numbering system is A through F Avenues in the Southeast section of the city. This is an older section of the city and the Streets were named when it was a part of the Shuford Mills village. Another exception to the numbering system is Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard. That street was 8th Street Drive. SE, but was renamed by the Hickory City Council.

One of the most common complaints by city travelers is that a street will pick up on one side of town and perhaps stop and start several times on its way to the other side. This is to be expected due to buildings and institutions, such as schools and churches or a drainage way such as a creek. It only makes sense to continue that street name on the other side of the building, rather than assign a new name. As the road still follows the grid layout even on the other side of the building it just may be in a different block range.

Just remember you need to get or give three pieces of information when referring to an address in the city. The house number, the street name and the quadrant.

Definitions of Thoroughfares Designations used by Hickory, NC

Boulevard (Blvd.)

- ✓ A major thoroughfare running in a diagonal direction, rather than East-West or North-South. It must connect at least two sections and act as a collector.

Court (Ct.)

- ✓ Permanently closed streets such as cul-de-sacs.
- ✓ Dead-end rights-of-way under 1,000 feet in length, which run East and West.
- ✓ A minor street less than 500 feet in length, ending in a turnaround.
- ✓ Horseshoe-shaped streets generally designated by one name throughout their entire length.
- ✓ All dead-end streets.

Drive (Dr.)

- ✓ Winding thoroughfares.
- ✓ Curving streets longer than 1,000 feet.
- ✓ Roads that meander about and continue through to other rights-of-way.

Lane

- ✓ Indicate the direction and to some extent the location of minor dead-end streets lying between numbered thoroughfares.
- ✓ Curving streets of less than 1,000 feet. An uninterrupted street ending in a cul-de-sac and generally designated by a name.
- ✓ Secondary roads connecting with each other.

Loop and Circle

- ✓ Circles could be short streets that return to themselves. Loops could be short drives that begin and end in the same street.
- ✓ Circular or semicircular roads.
- ✓ Circles--loop streets.

Place (Pl.)

- ✓ A cul-de-sac or permanent dead-end road.
- ✓ Dead-end rights-of-way under 1,000 feet in length, running North and South.
- ✓ North-South streets less than 1,000 feet in length.
- ✓ Short streets parallel to the grid pattern or in between the regular grid streets.
- ✓ Indicates the direction and to some extent the location of minor or dead-end streets lying between numbered thoroughfares.

Street and Avenue - In incorporated cities with a grid system (Hickory), streets run north and south and avenues run east and west.

Avenue (Ave.)

- ✓ A thoroughfare running principally in an East-West direction and usually terminating at a North-South Street.

Street (St.)

- ✓ A thoroughfare running principally in a North-South direction and usually terminating at an East-West Avenue.

Way

- ✓ Dead-end rights-of-way under 1,000 feet running at oblique angles to the four points of the compass.
- ✓ A minor street that changes direction or begins and ends on the same thoroughfare.
- ✓ Diagonal streets less than 1,000 feet in length.