

GREEN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

2017



HICKORY
North Carolina

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of this plan is the Green Park neighborhood, a well-established, traditional development neighborhood filled with a variety of housing types and architectural styles. The neighborhood's location provides residents with easy access to downtown, regional shopping centers, and transportation networks.

Located in the southwest quadrant of the city, the Green Park neighborhood is a quiet neighborhood of single and multi-family residences, bordered by commercial properties and offices to the north, east, and south. Green Park is surrounded by transportation thoroughfares. The Norfolk Southern rail line and one way pairs of 1st and 2nd Avenue SW border the northern, commercial corridor of the neighborhood. Fourth Street SW separates Green Park and the Ridgeview neighborhood, while 9th Street SW divides Green Park from the West Hickory neighborhood. Highway 70 lies at the southern edge of Green Park and provides access to nearby Highway 321 and Hickory's regional shopping destinations.

The Green Park neighborhood has experienced significant social and physical changes over the past 20 years. These changes are evident in the demographics, types of development, overall appearance and attitude toward the neighborhood. The neighborhood has seen a significant increase in the percentage of minority residents, home ownership has decreased as more housing units have converted to rentals, and property maintenance has also become a concern, as the number of dilapidated and vacant buildings has modestly increased.

Although all of these factors continue to influence the neighborhood, Green Park residents consider their area a good place to live and raise a family. Residents value the traditional sense of community. The quality and availability of affordable homes is attractive to first-time homebuyers as well.

A significant degree of physical change has occurred over the years based on the Green Park neighborhood's residential land use patterns and housing conditions. Data collected during the planning process demonstrates that new and redeveloped residential properties have been primarily rental units and multi-family units. Subsequently, some of these rental properties have been poorly maintained, sparking concern from homeowners seeking to preserve the appearance and property values of the neighborhood.

In addition to residential changes to Green Park, commercial properties have experienced modest changes. The northern commercial corridor is heavily influenced by downtown traffic and activity. Over the years, many businesses have relocated to more suburban, automobile oriented locations. The planned City Walk project may help revitalize this business strip. Along the eastern edge, many single-family homes have been converted from residential to office and personal service uses. This trend is expected to continue given 4th Street's connection from Highway 70 to downtown. The regional commercial corridor along Green Park's portion of Highway 70 has witnessed a decline in activity as development has clustered toward the Highway 70 SE and Catawba Valley Boulevard SE corridors. In 2014, a Walmart Neighborhood Market opened near Highway 70 SW and 4th Street SW, replacing a dilapidated motel and eliminating a food desert area in the city. In 2016, work began on Gateway Corners, a

redevelopment project of an abandoned furniture store. These two redevelopment projects will hopefully function as catalysts and draw additional development along this corridor.

The strategies, recommended actions and programs set forth in the Plan are designed to meet the social and physical development needs of the Green Park neighborhood over the next ten years.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Green Park Neighborhood Plan is organized into seven sections.

Purpose of the Plan

Introduces the Green Park neighborhood and identifies its issues, concerns, and assets.

The Planning Process

Outlines the process through which this entire plan is derived.

Neighborhood Character

Presents a review and analysis of Green Park's historical development.

Existing Conditions

Describes factors that have physical and social impact on the development and evolution of the neighborhood. These factors include: institutions, transportation, demographics, land use, zoning, economics, environmental characteristics, public infrastructure, property maintenance, trends in homeownership and public safety. This section also summarizes different concerns, trends, and issues raised during the Green Park neighborhood planning process based on the input of engaged residents, business owners, and city staff.

The Plan

Contains a full set of strategies and recommended actions and programs designed to address the issues and to provide guidance for Green Park's development over the next ten years.

Implementing the Plan

Identifies the framework within which these strategies, recommended actions, and programs should be implemented.

Appendix

Contains historical records, census tables, a summary of recommendations, and maps related to the neighborhood.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Green Park Neighborhood Plan is a working document, which addresses the concerns of neighborhood residents and property owners in an attempt to preserve the livability and long-term viability of the neighborhood.

The foundation of this plan is based on active citizen participation and informed decision making. With the input of residents, this plan is more effective in meeting the particular needs of Green Park and stands a better chance of being implemented and supported by the neighborhood.

This plan provides an analysis of a wide range of factors, which collectively foster Green Park's physical, social and economic environment while affecting its capacity to continue to function as an integral and unique part of Hickory's neighborhood composition.

The Green Park Neighborhood Plan provides the most detailed guidance of any City of Hickory planning document on the issues of planning and development of the neighborhood. When guidance is needed on an issue for Green Park, it will be important to refer to this plan, the Hickory by Choice Comprehensive Plan, and all other pertinent adopted city plans, in order to review and weigh all public interests in arriving at well thought out and viable decisions.

Issues and Concerns

During the planning process, Green Park stakeholders were engaged through regular neighborhood association meetings, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) assessment and analysis held in 2008, and an online/mailed survey conducted in 2012. By participating in the planning process, the group wanted to benefit not only their neighborhood but also the entire city.

The following are issues identified by the neighborhood and their justification for wanting to address these concerns in the Neighborhood Plan.

- Absentee landlords and rental property appearance. Over the years, Green Park has transitioned from an owner occupied single-family neighborhood to a mixed use neighborhood that now includes rentals, duplexes, and multi-family structures. Landlords and renters have less of a connection to neighborhood property values, which can result in unkempt yards and other maintenance issues that depreciate the work of homeowners. Addressing these issues through dialogue and stringent code enforcement is important to maintaining and improving Green Park's market value.
- Low participation within the Neighborhood Association. The Neighborhood Association has maintained activity through a core group of individuals who are passionate about maintaining Green Park's quality of life and addressing issues that arise. In order to be more successful, members of the neighborhood need to participate and attend neighborhood meetings and events. This will also help develop a sense of community and familiarity with neighbors.

- Addressing neighborhood crime and perceptions. Green Park residents are concerned about the level of criminal activity occurring within and around the neighborhood and the perception that follows. Local Police PACT statistics indicate that the issue is not as severe as residents may perceive, but continued policing and code enforcement are needed.
- Improving traffic safety. Traffic safety issues have long been a concern for neighborhood residents. Issues related to speeding, dangerous intersections, and cut-through traffic need to be addressed through traffic calming measures developed by the city and monitored by police and neighbors.
- Determining the future of neighborhood institutions. St. Paul's Church and the Green Park School were once cornerstones of the Green Park neighborhood, but have now lessened in that capacity. St. Paul's Lutheran congregation consolidated and left Green Park in 2015. A Hmong congregation purchased the property and now occupies the church. The former Green Park School is still utilized by the school system, but for administrative and storage purposes. Identifying future uses for the former school that are compatible with the neighborhood is a major goal for Green Park residents.
- Redevelopment and brownfields. The City of Hickory has seen significant success in the redevelopment of old industrial buildings and cleanup of other contaminated sites through the city's brownfield program. The program has received \$1 million in federal grants through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) since 2007. Small scale brownfields within Green Park have been identified and are eligible for assessment and possible cleanup. The city began carrying out an EPA awarded planning grant in 2015 to develop a future vision for the Southside area, which includes a portion of Green Park. The neighborhood hopes that this program and recent grant can help revitalize some of the underutilized commercial areas.

Neighborhood Assets

The Green Park neighborhood has many strengths and assets, which will contribute to the success in implementing their long-range neighborhood plan.

- Proximity to downtown and commercial areas. The location of Green Park provides easy access to shopping, dining, entertainment and workplace opportunities.
- The beautiful streetscape of an older neighborhood. Mature trees, streetlights, and sidewalks line most of the streets in Green Park, which enhance and capture the essence of this traditional and historical neighborhood.
- Affordable homes. Homes within the neighborhood are below the average median price of the Hickory real estate market, making the Green Park neighborhood attractive to first-time homebuyers.

- Open green space. Hickory Optimist Park is a cornerstone of the Green Park community and continued upgrades have improved the park's appearance and ability to serve the neighborhood.
- Neighbors know and care for each other. Residents of Green Park are friendly to their neighbors and welcome new families when they move into the neighborhood. This sense of community creates an environment in which collaborative neighborhood planning may occur, as a well-connected neighborhood is more apt to readily identify issues and concerns that impact them.
- Active neighborhood association. The Green Park Neighborhood Association meets on a regular basis to discuss neighborhood activities and issues. Leaders from the Association and city staff help spread the word about meetings to actively engage the community.
- History of success in addressing concerns. The Neighborhood Association has historically functioned as an effective outlet to address neighborhood concerns, such as land use issues, traffic, crime, code enforcement, and community appearance. Street sign toppers and a neighborhood preservation zoning overlay district are two achievements made through such collaboration.
- Excellent rapport with community police. The relationship between residents, business owners, and local PACT officers has continued to improve over the years and has become an integral resource to achieve neighborhood improvement success.
- Nonprofit community investment. Nonprofits and churches have invested in the neighborhood and greater community by building affordable homes and offering support programs.

PLANNING PROCESS

In May of 1996, Hickory City Council first endorsed the concept of a ten-step neighborhood planning process as developed and presented by Planning staff. This planning process was based on the philosophy of “What they plan, they own.” No one knows better than the people who live and work in a neighborhood as to what the concerns and needs are and how those issues can be addressed.

The Green Park Neighborhood Plan is the result of a consensus building process. This process fostered honest, thoughtful and thorough discussion that assisted the neighborhood in developing strategies to address concerns and implementation actions to achieve the neighborhood’s goals.

Steps in the Planning Process

ORGANIZATION AND MEETING PROCESS

The residents of the Green Park neighborhood came together as a body during the initial stages of the process to provide Planning staff a framework for the plan and later toward the review stages to provide meaningful critique of the draft plan.

The Planning and Development Department teamed with the Green Park Neighborhood Association to hold public meetings to discuss the neighborhood’s assets, issues, and goals for the future.

The neighborhood’s role in the planning process was to attend the meetings and discuss the topics presented. Each person’s participation was key to understanding the concerns of the neighborhood and developing strategies to address such concerns.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The Green Park Neighborhood Plan seeks to build upon the original plan’s work and to represent a consensus of the residents, business owners, and other stakeholders who participated in development of the plan. Meetings were held at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church until 2015, when the meetings were relocated to the Hickory Police Department headquarters. Both of these locations provided a meeting space that was convenient and accessible to all residents of the neighborhood. Upon completion of the new community building at Hickory Optimist Park, all neighborhood meetings will move from the police station to the new facility.

INITIAL PLAN PREPARATION AND REVIEW/ADOPTION

The first neighborhood plan was drafted in 1998 after receiving input from residents, city staff and other stakeholders. The draft plan was taken before the Hickory Regional Planning Commission for their review and recommendation. A final draft of the plan was presented to City Council and subsequently accepted. The neighborhood plan functioned as a guiding document for the Green Park neighborhood and supplemented the Hickory by Choice Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan.

PLAN UPDATE AND REVIEW/ADOPTION

Working in conjunction with the Green Park Neighborhood Association, city staff began to review the previously adopted neighborhood plan to analyze what actions had been completed, and to determine a new set of recommendations for such. The updating of the 1998 neighborhood plan began in 2012 and culminated in the completion of the current plan, which was presented to the Green Park Neighborhood Association for review in September 2016. The updated plan was presented to the Hickory Regional Planning Commission on May 24, 2017. After receiving a recommendation of approval, the plan was presented and accepted by City Council on June 20, 2017.

In reviewing the previously adopted plan, city staff and the neighborhood noted the following items had been completed:

Traffic Safety

- The Traffic Division and NCDOT reviewed the need for intersection improvements at 2nd Avenue SW and 7th Street SW and found that a traffic signal was not warranted. City staff reported that a traffic signal at this intersection would likely result in a higher frequency of motor vehicle crashes.
- Four way stops were added to the intersections of 4th Avenue SW and 7th Street SW, as well as, 5th Avenue SW and 7th Street SW to calm traffic, reduce cut through traffic, and improve pedestrian safety.
- Speed limits throughout the neighborhood were evaluated by the Traffic Division as a result from neighborhood concerns and accident rates. Some streets were reduced from 35 miles per hour to 25 and 30 miles per hour.
- The traffic calming program that started in 1998 was successful and transitioned into a full program. The program has since been utilized in Green Park and other locations throughout the city.

Public Infrastructure

- Circa 2002, the city installed sidewalk along the western side of 9th Street SW from 2nd Avenue SW to 7th Avenue SW.
- In the past three years, Community Development Block Grant funds have been used to help repave sections of 6th Avenue SW, 7th Street SW, and 8th Street SW.

Community Safety

- The Police Department has continued crime prevention efforts through various programs and activities that involve community engagement and outreach. According to the PACT Commander, complaints regarding noise and animals have decreased.

Land Development and Zoning

- The Hickory by Choice Plan was updated and renamed the Hickory by Choice 2030 Plan. The update of the plan addressed many of the land use and planning related recommendations contained in the previous Green Park Neighborhood Plan.
- As part of the Hickory by Choice 2030 Plan, the city simplified its zoning districts and rezoned portions of the Green Park neighborhood to promote better land use compatibility.
- The city successfully adopted a Neighborhood Preservation Overlay district which covers all of the residentially zoned parcels in the neighborhood.
- The Hickory Historic Preservation Commission has conducted architectural surveys of potential historic properties throughout the city since the 1998 plan. Green Park was most recently reviewed in 2015 and based on the architectural historian's opinion, the neighborhood did not have the necessary conditions for a nomination as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Properties. Specifically, the presence of post-1970 infill housing and multi-family dwellings, along with extensive material changes, diminished the historic integrity and character of the Green Park neighborhood.

Parks and Recreation

- Hickory Optimist Park began a two phase renovation that will be completed by mid 2017. The current tennis court will be converted to a four pickle ball courts, a 1,200 foot linear walking trail has been created through the park, the basketball court will be restriped, a new community center building with public restrooms will be constructed, and the entrance has been revised to improve traffic flow and safety. These upgrades address many of the recommendations outlined in the previous plan.
- The Green Park Neighborhood Association assisted with the efforts to improve the entrance sign through landscaping.



Code Enforcement

- In 1998, the Code Enforcement Unit was located within the Planning Department and only had one person dedicated to enforcing minimum housing and junk vehicle codes. Today, the Code Enforcement Unit operates under the Police Department and has a total of five budgeted positions.
- A streamlined process has been developed by Code Enforcement to expedite the process of building demolition. The commercial greenhouse on 2nd Avenue SW has since been demolished.

Neighborhood Enhancement

- As part of the entranceway beautification goals, the city was able to develop and place sign toppers on almost all of the neighborhood's street name signs.
- Circa 2002, the city performed streetscape improvements on the Highway 70 corridor of Green Park by installing a median with brick pavers and landscaping. The roadway was also resurfaced and restriped in 2015.



NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Historical Development of Green Park

The Green Park neighborhood can trace its roots to the 1880s when a Catholic seminary in the neighborhood opened. The Catholic women’s group the Sisters of Mercy arrived in America in the 1840s and eventually made its way to Hickory in 1880. A 1965 Hickory Daily Record article recounts how the group established a mission, which included a day school for girls and the seminary. The group’s efforts were short lived and they departed for Asheville in 1889. The seminary and remaining property were subsequently purchased by a Lutheran group and became St. Paul’s Lutheran Seminary. A rich historical account of St. Paul’s Seminary is included in the Appendix.

Beyond the seminary, Green Park remained predominately residential in its early history. No significant commercial or industrial operations are known to have occurred beyond the outskirts of downtown and along the railroad. The origins of the name “Green Park” are not known. The first mapped reference of the name is in 1940s. The earliest available maps of the Green Park area are in 1915. Sandborn maps that were used for fire insurance purposes show the old Green Park School, built in 1916, listed as “West School” in 1931 and then changed to “Green Park Junior High School” in 1945. A historical overview of the Green Park School can be found in the Appendix.

Catholics Build Fourth Sanctuary

Representing the fourth site of the Roman Catholic church in Hickory is the four-column brick and glass structure near the intersection on Second Street and Ninth Avenue, NE, which was dedicated on May 10, 1965, by the Rev. Vincent S. Walters, D. D., of the Raleigh Diocese. The first one dates from 1880 and is still standing near Green Park school. The second one was near the site of the present Episcopal church. The third was a stone building just south of the present location.

Catholics of the Hickory area celebrated their first mass in the new St. Aloysius Catholic church on Palm Sunday, April 7, 1965, offered by Father A. Hacaste, pastor of the church.

First Hickory Mass

Church records show that the present congregation of the Catholic church celebrated its first mass in Hickory on Dec. 7, 1915. On Nov. 5, 1915, a Catholic missionary made a train trip from Statesville to Hickory for the purpose of ascertaining how many members of the church were in residence here. He was the Rev. Celestina Backe, O.S.B. from the Abbey in Alchison, Kan. and was engaged in mission work in North Carolina.

Father Celestina located several families in Hickory, among them the Callanan, Roach, Oivins and Goodwin families, a Mrs. Ferrell and J. Teise Miller.

A month later, Dec. 6, 1915, Father Celestina left Statesville in his Ford car, laden with a complete portable altar set, en route to Hickory. At Newton he had lunch with the L. F. Long family.

In what is considered the beginning of the congregation that became St. Aloysius parish, a mass was celebrated in the parlor of the John Callanan home at eight o'clock Sunday morning, Dec. 7, 1915. Records show there were 12 persons present.

However, it is recalled that there was some earlier Catholic work in Hickory covering a period of some years.

First Missionary

The Catholic directory listed the Rev. Edward J. McQuinty as being a missionary in charge of Hickory in 1887, and listed the Rev. John J. Hill as being a resident of Hickory in 1888.

On Jan. 6, 1880, the Sisters of Mercy, with a Mother House in Wilmington, took residence in Hickory, but left after an eight-year stay, on July 15, 1888.

Older women residents of Hickory have recalled the days of the old convent here which later became a Lutheran Seminary and occupied for years by the Rev. J. E. Barb family on what is now 621 B Second Avenue, SW. The Sisters also conducted a day school which was attended by many Hickory girls.

It is assumed that the reason for the departure of the Sisters for Asheville was the inability to secure a chaplain. They were occasionally privileged to have a visit from a priest from Asheville who would say mass for them. However, failing to obtain a permanent priest, they moved to Asheville.

Mission Post

From the period of 1880 to 1900, Hickory was listed as a mission of Asheville, and from 1901 to 1915 as a mission of Salisbury. During these periods there was no Catholic church rectory or parish in Hickory.

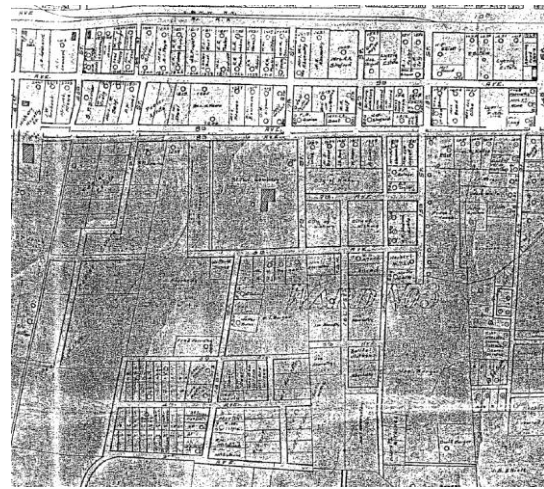
After coming here in 1915, Father Celestina continued his efforts to do justice to Catholicism in Hickory, and with some mission funds that were made available, joined J. Teise Miller in selecting a church site.

With a severe limit on funds, however, the beginning had to be a humble one. Selection was finally made of an abandoned Seventh Day Adventist church building on what is now First Avenue, NW. The unoccupied building was purchased from the late K. C. Monette for \$700, and what money remained was used to repair the structure and prepare it for use as a Catholic church.

The new parish was dedicated in the personage of St. Aloysius in honor of the memory of Aloysius Kelly, departed son of Dr. Joseph Kelly of Philadelphia. Dr. Kelly was the principal benefactor of the mission in Hickory during its infancy.

The Hickory church was dedicated by the Right Rev. Leo Haid, O.S.B., I.O.B., Abbot, Oratory and Vice Apostolic of North Carolina, at a 10 a.m. mass on Sunday, April 18, 1915.

The Rev. Sebastian Doris became the next pastor of St. Aloysius, and in 1916 was instrumental in obtaining a church building on Palm Sunday, April 7, 1965.



(L) A Hickory Daily Record newspaper article from 1965 recounting the history of the Catholic presence in Hickory. (R) A 1915 map showing “Ward 3,” which covered Green Park.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes and summarizes different concerns, trends and issues raised during the Green Park neighborhood planning process, based on the insight of the neighborhood, as well as, city staff.

Institutional Influences

GREEN PARK SCHOOL

The old Green Park School is located on 4th Avenue SW and consists of two buildings, the school, which dates to 1917, and a teacherage which dates to 1923. Hickory Public School Administrative Services has occupied the former teacherage since the mid-1950's, while the other portion of the building and school serve as warehouses for school system supplies. Additionally, some of the space is used to train state maintenance workers and custodians.

In its current state, the two buildings have limited uses according to school officials. Most of the school building is not handicap accessible, there are no restrooms on the second floor, and the plumbing has not been updated. The school building has interior gutters which have caused moisture problems resulting in structural damage. School officials believe it would be very expensive to rehabilitate the school to bring it up to state building code and ADA standards.

As of 2016, school officials do not have any plans to relocate Administrative Services from the Green Park School. Plans to relocate Administrative Services to the Catawba Valley High School building mentioned in the original Neighborhood Plan did not come to fruition.

According to school officials, the state's standards for a new school would prohibit the land from being developed into such. The amount of acreage needed well exceeds the available 4.29 acres. Therefore, it is expected that the school board will sell the land once Administrative Services relocates to a new facility in the future.



The current zoning of the property is High Density Residential (R-4). This zoning allows for a variety of housing options, including single-family, multi-family, and mobile homes, as well as, some institutional uses. The current base and overlay zoning for the parcel would allow up to 53 residential units to be constructed on the parcel, however the Future Land Use Map recommends that this area remain as a public/institutional use.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

St. Paul's Church was constructed in 1927 as an outgrowth of the old seminary. The church functioned as a meeting place for the Green Park neighborhood until recent years. The Lutheran congregation that once occupied the church has since left and the building was vacated until a Hmong congregation moved into the church in early 2016.

The current zoning of the church is High Density Residential (R-4), while the associated parking lot across the street is zoned General Business (C-2). As previously described in the Green Park School section, R-4 zoning allows for a wide variety of housing options. The General Business zoning district allows an eclectic variety of office, service, and some light industrial uses. The Hickory by Choice 2030 Future Land Use Map locates the church parcel within the High Density Residential and Revitalization Area designations, while the parking lot parcel is completely within the Revitalization Area. The Revitalization Area designation is for areas targeted for redevelopment and likely fall within the city's Urban Revitalization Area and Revitalization District Overlay, which provide redevelopment incentives.



Transportation Influences

STREETS AND THOROUGHFARES

Within Green Park's boundaries there are twenty streets. Two are major thoroughfares and four are minor thoroughfares. Major thoroughfares are roads designed to move traffic in and around the entire city, while minor thoroughfares collect traffic from local access streets and carry it to the major thoroughfares. Highway 70 and 4th Street SW are classified as major thoroughfares, while 1st Avenue SW, 2nd Avenue SW, 7th Avenue SW, and 9th Street SW are classified as a minor thoroughfares.

Current levels of service for these thoroughfares are considered acceptable, although long range transportation planning efforts have identified needed improvements. According to the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan created by the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the level of service for 4th Street SW is expected to deteriorate over the future and will require a road expansion. The plan's preliminary recommendation suggests widening the road to five lanes, although a four lane road with a divided median may be more suitable. The plan also recommends expansion of 9th Street SW from two lanes to three lanes by the 2040 timeframe. No improvements for the remaining thoroughfares were identified.

There are no immediate plans or funding available for these road expansions and they would be subject to further study and review by NCDOT, the Greater Hickory MPO, and City of Hickory before construction.



PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Greenway Public Transit System serves as the regional bus service provider for the area. Greenway operates six routes that cover stops in Hickory, Conover, and Newton, as well as, paratransit to neighboring counties. Given Green Park's proximity to downtown, residents are within a reasonable walk to the Downtown Hickory Transit Center. The Transit Center provides riders access to all six routes Greenway operates.

Within Green Park and its periphery, there are three bus stops along Main Avenue NW, four stops along 7th Avenue SW, and one stop along 4th Street SW. All of these stops are serviced by Route 1 (West Hickory), which arrives once every hour during regular service. All stops are located on sidewalks, but only one stop has a shelter. Between July 2014 and June 2015, Greenway staff conducted sampling to estimate the level of ridership for all routes. The sampling study found that the most utilized stop within Green Park was at 7th Avenue SW and 4th Street SW with 875 riders embarking/disembarking annually. Complete ridership statistics and a *Transit Route* map can be found in the Appendix.



TRAFFIC SAFETY

Given Green Park's access to multiple thoroughfares and street grid layout, traffic calming measures are critical for maintaining a safe, pedestrian friendly neighborhood. All of the streets within the neighborhood range from 20 to 35 miles per hour in speed, which is considered appropriate for a mixed use neighborhood. Challenges with traffic safety still exist, but improvements have been made over the years to the neighborhood.

The Traffic Division added stop signs at the intersection of 4th Avenue SW and 7th Street SW, as well as, 5th Avenue and 7th Street SW to create a four way stop and slow speeding. These stop signs have also reduced cut through traffic on 7th Street SW.

The Traffic Division and NCDOT reviewed the need for a traffic signal at the intersection of 2nd Avenue SW and 7th Street SW and found it did not find warrant changes. The Traffic Safety Unit reported that there had been five motor vehicle crashes at the intersection over the past three years. This is a significant decrease in the amount of accidents reported when the initial Green Park plan was adopted.

The intersection of 2nd Avenue SW and 4th Street SW has also seen a decrease of motor vehicle accidents compared to the 1998 plan, with a total of eight occurring within the past three year period. Given the current accident rate, the Traffic Safety Unit does not consider this intersection to be “dangerous.”



Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of Green Park have changed over the years based on information obtained by the Western Piedmont Council of Government’s demographer. The US Census of Population and Housing information for 2010 was used to examine and describe the population in Green Park. The 2010 Census indicated a total population of 831 residents, a slight decrease compared to the population of 853 in 2000.

RACE, AGE, AND HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Table 1: Green Park and Hickory by Race

Green Park	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
White, Not Hispanic	594	82.3	484	56.7	388	46.7
African-American	113	15.7	162	19.0	224	27.0
American Indian	2	0.3	2	0.2	3	0.4
Asian	6	0.8	72	8.4	12	1.4
Other Races	0	0.0	3	0.4	28	3.4
Hispanic	7	1.0	130	15.2	176	21.2
Total	722	100.0	853	100.0	831	100.0

Hickory	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
White, Not Hispanic	22,917	81.0	27,245	73.2	27,750	69.4
African-American	4,807	17.0	5,243	14.1	5,707	14.3
American Indian	70	0.2	70	0.2	131	0.3
Asian	286	1.0	1,474	4.0	1,277	3.2
Other Races	0	0.0	327	0.9	601	1.5
Hispanic	221	0.8	2,863	7.7	4,544	11.4
Total	28,301	100.0	37,222	100.0	40,010	100.0

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

Table 1 compares Green Park and the City of Hickory by race. According to the 2010 Census data, only 2% of the city’s population resides in Green Park. Residents identifying as White in Green Park accounted for 46.7%, which is below the citywide average of 69.4%. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the population of Green Park identifies as black, compared to 14.3% of the city’s black population. These numbers illustrate that the Green Park neighborhood has diversified over the years. In 1990, the breakdown closely mirrored the city makeup, however over the past two data collection cycles, the Black and Hispanic populations have increased significantly.

Table 2: Green Park and Hickory by Age

Green Park	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
Under 18	127	17.6	180	21.1	197	23.7
18-65	483	66.9	564	66.1	529	63.7
65 and Over	112	15.5	109	12.8	105	12.6
Total	722	100.0	853	100.0	831	100.0

Hickory	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
Under 18	5,858	20.7	8,669	23.3	9,425	23.6
18-65	18,311	64.7	23,495	63.1	24,852	62.1
65 and Over	4,132	14.6	5,058	13.6	5,733	14.3
Total	28,301	100.0	37,222	100.0	40,010	100.0

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

Table 2 shows the number of residents in Green Park and the City of Hickory by age. Overall, the data demonstrates that the neighborhood closely compares to the city's percentage and has done so for the past 30 years. Recent projections however indicate that the region will begin seeing an increase in the 65 and over category as the Baby Boomer generation ages in place.

Table 3: Green Park and Hickory by Household

Green Park	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
One Person Households	120	33.0	168	42.7	124	36.0
Single-Parent Households	30	8.2	63	16.0	52	15.1
Total Households	364	100.0	393	100.0	344	100.0

Hickory	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
One Person Households	3,717	31.5	4,954	32.2	5,593	33.7
Single-Parent Households	1,558	13.2	1,634	10.6	1,791	10.8
Total Households	11,803	100.0	15,372	100.0	16,614	100.0

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

Table 3 compares Green Park and City of Hickory single household information. The Green Park neighborhood has 36% of one person households and 15.1% of single-parent households as of 2010. These numbers closely match that of the citywide average.

HOUSING VALUES AND INCOME

Table 4: Green Park and Hickory Housing Values and Rent

Green Park	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009-13 ACS
Median Housing Value	\$42,199	\$67,100	\$84,200
Median Gross Rent	\$211	\$385	\$516

Hickory	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009-13 ACS
Median Housing Value	\$66,900	\$125,000	\$158,100
Median Gross Rent	\$400	\$540	\$661

Table 4 provides median housing values and gross rents for the Green Park neighborhood and City of Hickory. According to the table, the median value of a home in Green Park at most recent estimate is \$84,200. This is significantly lower (\$73,900) than the city's median value of \$158,100. Additionally, the median contract rent in Green Park was \$516 compared to the citywide median of \$661. Historically, Green Park's housing has been more affordable than other parts of the city, but has continued to rise in cost. While the trajectory of the median rent has closely followed that of the citywide average, the median housing value has not increased at a similar rate.

Table 5: Green Park and Hickory Median Incomes

Green Park	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009-13 ACS
Median Household Income	\$16,971	\$25,642	\$26,199
Median Family Income	\$21,301	\$27,259	\$34,005

Hickory	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009-13 ACS
Median Household Income	\$27,212	\$37,236	\$39,176
Median Family Income	\$33,303	\$47,522	\$53,962

Table 5 illustrates the differences in median household and family incomes between Green Park and Hickory. Green Park averages well below the citywide median household and family incomes, but has increased at a similar percentage rate.

Land Use Characteristics

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

The Green Park neighborhood encompasses approximately 229 acres, which is just over a third of a square mile. The neighborhood is mainly a single-family residential neighborhood, but also includes duplexes and multi-family housing.

A number of the vacant lots in the residential portion of the neighborhood are located on steep slopes and floodplains along Geitner Branch, making some of them difficult to develop due to topography. Other vacant lots are adjacent to undeveloped street rights-of-way making lack of accessibility the most likely reason they are not developed. In the past few years, some of this vacant land has been developed into affordable housing. Habitat for Humanity has

developed “The Glen” an eleven unit single-family, owner-occupied subdivision. The first house was constructed in 2012 and over half of the subdivision has been built out as of 2017.



NONRESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Commercial development is concentrated along Green Park’s thoroughfares which create the northern, southern and eastern boundaries of the neighborhood. With the exception of the vacant bed and breakfast on 7th Street SW, commercial development is located along 1st and 2nd Avenues SW, 4th Street SW and Highway 70 SW. Green Park’s proximity to the central business district and Highway 70 continue to make it appealing to existing and future businesses.

The only public land in the neighborhood is Hickory Optimist Park, which is operated by the City of Hickory’s Parks and Recreation Department.

The two institutional land uses in Green Park are the St. Paul’s Church and Green Park School now used as the administration building for the Hickory Public School System. The church campus includes a one acre parcel with three buildings (a church, rectory, and education building) and a half acre parcel across the street used for parking. The school grounds consist of a single, four acre parcel with two buildings and two acres of open space.

The *Existing Land Use* and *Future Land Use* maps illustrate the current and recommended future land uses in Green Park, respectively, and can be referenced in the Appendix.



Zoning

BASE ZONING DISTRICTS

The neighborhood is primarily zoned High Density Residential (R-4), which allows for a variety of residential uses including single-family, multi-family, and group living, as well as, some institutional uses by right. Up to 20 dwelling units per acre may be constructed for multi-family and duplexes and up to 12 units per acre may be constructed for single-family in the R-4 zoning district. Parcels with commercial zoning may also construct residential units, subject to certain standards outlined within the Land Development Code.

The Neighborhood Center Commercial (NC) zoning district is designed to promote walkability and provide neighborhood scaled services. Many of the parcels adjacent to 4th Street have been zoned NC. NC zoning allows for a wide variety of uses, including retail sales and service, offices, and various institutions. Residential uses are permitted as well.

Properties located in the northeast corner of Green Park lie along the fringe of the downtown area and are zoned Central Business District (C-1). This zone is a mixed-use district which allows for office, service, retail, entertainment, and residential land uses. The Central Business District allows for more intense uses and provides for taller buildings.

Along the one-way pairs and railroad, the zoning is General Business (C-2), which accommodates a wide variety of office, service, and light industrial uses in areas where past land development practices have produced a mixture of land uses. The General Business zone is designed to promote development intensities identical to those of Office and Institutional.

The area fronting Highway 70 is zoned Regional Commercial (C-3). This district is for designed for businesses located off of major thoroughfares targeting local and regional traffic, such as restaurants, retail stores, hotels, and other service oriented businesses.

The *Base Zoning District* map can be found in the Appendix.

ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICTS

In addition to the neighborhood's base zoning districts, two zoning overlay districts are present in Green Park. Zoning overlay districts have the effect of adding, reducing, or modifying the development standards of the underlying base district. The *Zoning Overlay District* map found in the Appendix illustrates the locations of these overlays.

Revitalization District Overlay

The Revitalization District Overlay (RD-O) district was created with the intent of easing development standards within the Urban Revitalization Area (URA) to foster redevelopment of idle or marginal properties that may otherwise remain vacant or fall into further disrepair. A small portion of the RD-O is found along the one way pairs and Main Avenue SW within the Green Park neighborhood limits.

Neighborhood Preservation Overlay

The Neighborhood Preservation Overlay (NP-O) district was expanded into the Green Park neighborhood as a result of the previous Green Park Neighborhood Plan and the city's comprehensive planning process titled Hickory by Choice 2030. This overlay covers almost all of the residential portion of the neighborhood. The intent of the NP-O district is to place additional standards on development activities to ensure the integrity and character of the neighborhood are protected and preserved. Specific changes include a reduction in the amount of dwelling units per acre and greater regulation on building placement and orientation.

Economic Growth Influences

While the Green Park commercial corridors have easy access to Highway 70, Highway 321, and Interstate 40, business growth in and around the area has slowed. A significant amount of commercial activity has moved toward the Valley Hills Mall area and away from Union Square and downtown. Revitalization efforts taken by the city will help areas, including Green Park, effected by this change in the market.

BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

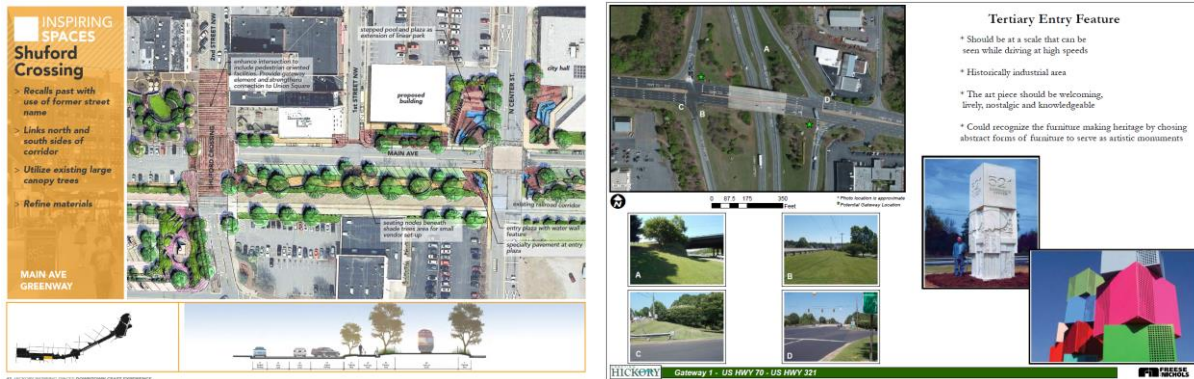
A number of former industrial buildings along the neighborhood's edges have been identified as suspected brownfield sites through the city's Community-Wide Brownfields Program. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies brownfields as "property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." The city's brownfields program assists with environmental site assessments that determine the presence of environmental contaminants, clean-up alternatives, and land-use restrictions that are needed in order to return the properties back to productive uses.

Examples of successful brownfield redevelopments within Hickory include the Piedmont Wagon Company, Hollar Hosiery Mill, MorteZ Mills, and the Lyerly Full Fashioned Mill. Within Green Park, approximately 10 buildings have been identified as potential brownfield sites. Most of these locations are small scale sites along Main Avenue SW, 1st Avenue SW, and 5th Street SW. The *Potential Brownfields* map found in the Appendix illustrates these locations. In 2015, the city received EPA funding to develop an area-wide plan for the city's Southside, which includes Green Park's Highway 70 corridor. The area-wide plan will develop a vision for key catalyst sites, as well as, the area as a whole using input from community stakeholders, research and analysis, and planning strategies. In August 2016, the city held a three day charrette to gather input from residents in the Southside neighborhoods. Moving forward, the city will finalize this plan and continue to apply for federal funding opportunities through the EPA to assist developers with the cleanup and redevelopment of these and other sites throughout the city.

INSPIRING SPACES

Inspiring Spaces is one of the chief economic development initiatives currently being undertaken by the City of Hickory. Inspiring Spaces includes the four bond referendum projects voted on in November 2014. One of the projects, the City Walk, is within a short distance of the Green Park neighborhood and will create a greenway stretch along Main Avenue from

Lenoir-Rhyne University to the western edge of downtown at 5th Street NW. This connectivity is expected to stimulate business redevelopment along these areas, which includes northern Green Park. An additional project to the west of Green Park will be the construction of a two welcoming gateway pieces along Highway 321 at the Highway 70 interchange. Streetscape enhancements along Highway 70 were identified as a priority area, but improvements will only be made if additional funding sources are attained in the future. It is anticipated that all of the bond projects will be completed over the next five to seven years.



Environmental Characteristics

Two creek beds control the natural drainage pattern in the neighborhood. One creek bed runs parallel to 8th Street Drive SW through Hickory Optimist Park, while the other cuts across 6th Avenue SW and 7th Avenue SW toward Highway 70 SW on the eastside. These features can be scenic and provide wooded green space in the neighborhood, yet they can also collect litter, become overgrown, and are prone to flooding during heavy rainstorms.

In addition to the aforementioned creek beds, Green Park contains older tree canopy growth, which is more prevalent in Hickory’s oldest neighborhoods. According to a 2005 analysis conducted by the City of Hickory using CityGreen GIS software, Green Park had 55.1 acres of tree canopy coverage, 23.9% of the total acreage. The remaining makeup included 39.6% of impervious surfaces and 36.5% of open space. According to American Forests, the average goal for an urban residential area like Green Park is 25% tree coverage, which Green Park is on target for. The City Arborist stressed the importance of improving tree canopy coverage, as trees provide numerous benefits. Trees reduce stormwater issues from hard rains on exposed soils and improve air quality by reducing the effects of air pollutants. Trees have also been shown to reduce air conditioning bills by 20% as they can decrease the amount of direct sunlight on building roofs and improve home resell values because of aesthetic appeal. The City Arborist recommends maintaining existing trees, planting new trees where feasible, and replanting dying trees. Through a partnership with the City Arborist and the Community Appearance Commission, free tree seedlings are available during Arbor Day.

The City of Hickory has also initiated a storm water public education program to help citizens understand where the storm water runoff from their property goes after it enters the numerous storm drains in our community. Through this initiative city staff has installed signs along major streets as well as markers on storm drainage inlets. The intent is to help citizens

understand that stormwater runoff from their property picks up pollutants from the surfaces it crosses and carries them directly to small streams and creeks in their neighborhoods. All of this stormwater runoff eventually finds its way into the Catawba River, which is the major source of drinking water for the region.

Another component of the city's stormwater education program consists of staff members who go out into the community to speak to school groups, business entities, and other governmental groups about the impacts stormwater runoff has on our community. City staff have spoken at numerous events, and continue to reach out to interested groups as part of their daily duties.

Public Infrastructure and Facilities

SIDEWALKS

Green Park has a significant amount of sidewalk coverage given the age of the neighborhood and presence of the old Green Park School. However, there are still some streets in the neighborhood that lack sidewalks completely or are missing sections. Additionally, maintaining the existing sidewalk infrastructure is important to preserving the neighborhood's walkability, safety, and property values.

The city's Sidewalk, Bikeway, Greenway, and Trail Master Plan identifies and prioritizes citywide pedestrian and bicyclist projects. The most recent version of the master plan is from 2005, but the associated sidewalk map is reviewed annually by city staff to determine where improvements have been made and where funds should be utilized for the upcoming year.



The need for sidewalk along 9th Street SW as mentioned in the initial neighborhood plan has since been completed. The most recent update to the Sidewalk, Bikeway, Greenway, and Trail Master Plan identified multiple short and medium range locations where sidewalks were needed in the Green Park neighborhood. The *Sidewalks* map found in Appendix

illustrates the locations of existing sidewalks and proposed locations for new sidewalks in Green Park.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Hickory Optimist Park is a six acre active park with a covered picnic shelter with tables and grills, four (4) new pickle ball courts, outdoor basketball court, softball field, horseshoe pits, 1,200 foot walking trail, playground, outdoor fitness area, and a new 1,700+ square-foot community facility with restrooms.

The ballfield in Hickory Optimist Park is only used for team practice from March through June. No official games or other forms of active recreation currently occur in Hickory Optimist Park.



Property Maintenance

One of the major themes that residents in Green Park are concerned about is property maintenance and upkeep. Issues such as deteriorated housing, vacant buildings, vandalism, and unkempt yards all rose to the top of an online survey sent to residents in 2012. All of these issues impact the neighborhood's appearance and property values.

STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

In order to determine the severity of the issue, city staff conducted two field surveys over the course of the planning process that evaluated the physical condition of Green Park's housing and commercial structures.

The condition of each structure was evaluated from the street by canvassing exterior features such as roofs, chimneys, exterior walls, doors, windows, gutters, soffits, barge boards, foundation, porch, stairs, and paint. Buildings were placed into one of the following categories: good, fair, or poor. Structures classified as "good" were considered well-maintained with no issues. Structures that were free of any obvious building deficiencies, but needed minor improvements were deemed "fair." Structures that appeared to be in need of multiple repairs or a major renovation were assigned a "poor" rating.

The first field survey was conducted in 2012. That survey found that 90.6 percent of the properties were in good or fair condition. The second survey was taken two years, which found that 90.9 percent of the properties received a score of good or fair. The results of the 2014 survey are illustrated in the *Structural Conditions* map in Appendix.

VACANT BUILDINGS

Beginning in 2007, city staff developed a comprehensive list of all vacant buildings within the City of Hickory zoning jurisdiction known as the vacant building inventory. The inventory is updated on a monthly basis and information is used for grants and other purposes. According to the city's vacant building report for August 2016, twenty-one buildings and multi-space units were vacant within the Green Park neighborhood boundary. A majority of these vacancies were located in northern Green Park, particularly along 1st Avenue SW. The remaining

vacancies were along the Highway 70 corridor. All of these vacant properties were located within the Urban Revitalization Area, which provides developers grant assistance for demolition and redevelopment. Additionally, these properties are given a higher weight on community appearance and landscape grant scoring. One vacant property that was approved for redevelopment incentives was the Gateway Corners project at the intersection of Highway 70 SW and 9th Street SW. The developers received funds from the Business Development Committee to redevelop an old furniture outlet into a new multi-tenant commercial building. The project was completed in November 2016 and is now leasing tenant space.



CODE ENFORCEMENT

Although data from the surveys and vacant building inventory indicates that Green Park is in modest shape, efforts to monitor and make improvements to the neighborhood are needed. The Police Department's Code Enforcement Unit is responsible for handling many of these concerns through the minimum housing and nuisance codes.

The minimum housing code addresses building dilapidation, unsanitary conditions, lack of electric and plumbing facilities, inadequate ventilation, light, and heating, and other related issues. Code Enforcement also carries out nuisance abatement within the City of Hickory. The city's nuisance code addresses issues such as junked vehicles, vermin, and overgrown lots and yards.

Statistics at the Green Park neighborhood level were not available, however Code Enforcement handled 90 minimum housing cases and 560 nuisance cases throughout the city limits in Fiscal Year 2014.

Trends in Homeownership

The Green Park neighborhood has evolved over the years from an owner occupied, single-family neighborhood to a diversified neighborhood where more than half of all the residential dwelling units are rentals.

Table 6: Green Park and Hickory Housing Characteristics

Green Park	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Housing Units	428	100.0	426	100.0	419	100.0
Occupied Housing Units					344	82.1
Vacant Units					75	17.9
Owner Occupied Units					138	40.1
Renter Occupied Units					206	59.9

Hickory	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Housing Units	12,701	100.0	16,571	100.0	18,719	100.0
Occupied Housing Units	11,800	92.9	15,372	92.8	16,614	88.8
Vacant Units	901	7.1	1,199	7.2	2,105	11.2
Owner Occupied Units	6,117	51.8	8,451	55.0	8,995	54.1
Renter Occupied Units	5,683	48.2	6,921	45.0	7,619	45.9

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

Table 6 displays housing characteristics of the Green Park neighborhood and City of Hickory over the past 20 years. Most data for the 1990 and 2000 Census was not available for the Green Park area.

Green Park has witnessed a slight decrease in the amount of housing units over the years, compared to Hickory which has grown by 47.4%. Given that Green Park is confined to a small area of land, this should not be cause for alarm. This does show however, that Green Park has not seen an increase in multi-family redevelopment, which is possible given the R-4 zoning designation. Further supporting this assessment is that no new multi-family units have been constructed since 2000 according to Census data. Comparatively, a total of 8 new single-family units have been constructed in that same timeframe. These numbers do not include the housing units built after 2010.

The Green Park neighborhood has a higher percentage of vacant housing compared to the city, however the number of vacant units increased from the 2000 to 2010 census count within the city. This may be reflective of the Great Recession, which affected the City of Hickory significantly. The amount of vacant housing combined with the slight decrease in total number of housing units in Green Park suggests that housing units are becoming dilapidated and having to be torn down.

The number of renter occupied housing is nearly 60% within the Green Park area, approximately 14% higher than the citywide amount. With no data available for previous census counts, it is not known exactly how much this has increased in the past few decades. According to Census information, the number of single family units is 254, compared to 165 multi-family units. This shows that the neighborhood is still predominantly single-family,

however it has a significant amount of multi-family units (39.4%). Of the single-family homes, approximately 33% (84 units) are rentals.

Public Safety

POLICE PROTECTION

The City of Hickory is divided into five sections for police resource allocation purposes. Each section is known as a PACT (Police and Community Together). The officers of Edward PACT are responsible for serving the Green Park neighborhood.

Over the years, the calls for police service have increased due to growth and annexation. Citywide, police officers responded to over 96,000 calls for service in 2013. During that year, officers responded to 3,148 calls for service in Green Park. According to the Edward PACT Commander, these numbers are considered normal for a mixed use neighborhood.

In the past, neighbors have expressed concerns about traffic safety issues, such as speeding, cut through traffic, and motor vehicle crashes. These issues have lessened over the years coupled with the traffic calming efforts on 7th Street SW. Nonetheless, speeding was the second highest concern according to a neighborhood survey conducted in 2012.

In that same 2012 survey, neighbors stated that they were most concerned about the overall level of crime. Statistics provided by the Hickory Police Department found that the most prevalent major crimes in Green Park between 2010 and 2014 were larceny, burglary, and breaking and entering into motor vehicles. Officers of Edward PACT have been working to increase crime prevention efforts throughout the city through various events, such as neighborhood meetings. In the four year reporting period, crime levels decreased from 2012 to 2014 and the lowest number of overall cases was in 2014.

FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Most of the Green Park neighborhood is serviced by the West Hickory Fire Station (Station #3), which houses an engine and ladder company. A small portion of the neighborhood along 4th Street SW falls within the Earl G. Moser Fire Station (Station #1) run area. Station #1 houses the department's administration, as well as, a fire engine, heavy rescue, and two Battalion Chiefs. All properties in Green Park appear to be within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant, a public safety standard for urban areas. In addition to fires, the department provides EMS care until the arrival of an ambulance. The Catawba County EMS base on Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard is the closest EMS base to Green Park. Beginning in February 2015, the Fire Department began keeping statistics at the Green Park neighborhood level. From February 1, 2015 to January 31, 2016, the Fire Department was dispatched to 136 calls for service (11.3 calls per month average) with an average response time (alarm to arrival) of 5 minutes 5 seconds to those incidents.

THE PLAN

The Green Park Plan is the result of a planning process that proactively involved the residents and other stakeholders who worked together to identify their priorities and devise action steps which meet the current and future needs of this neighborhood.

The set of strategies, action steps and recommendations in this plan were developed to preserve and improve the Green Park neighborhood. While the plan does not attempt to address all the issues and concerns in the neighborhood, the plan does provide the framework to begin the process of improving the quality of life in Green Park by: addressing concerns related to public safety; managing traffic; strengthening zoning and code enforcement efforts; developing attractive gateways into the neighborhood; improving the appearance of the business corridors; and building the neighborhood's organizational capacity to sustain the neighborhood's cooperative spirit while progressing toward their implementation goals.

The recommendations are the result of thoughtful consideration of information obtained through various resources, city staff, and members of the neighborhood. Thorough analysis of the data presented and examination of feasible options aided in the justification for making the recommendations.

Green Park School

Based on discussions with the school system, there are no immediate plans to vacate the old Green Park School from its current use as the administrative headquarters and maintenance facility. Nonetheless, there are no established long range plans for the complex and the neighborhood is concerned about future use compatibility if it were to change hands.

Neighbors view the campus as a cornerstone to the neighborhood and hope to see the site reused in a manner that preserves its historical significance, while also maximizing an underutilized space. In previous discussions with the neighborhood, suggested future uses for the property included: a park; a community center; a seminary; artist live/work space; charter school; senior housing; or business offices. The neighborhood would like to see the playground area preserved as open space and the existing trees protected.

The former teacherage may meet the criteria to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places which would make tax credits and low interest rehabilitation loans available to the owners of the property. The availability of these financial incentives might entice a developer to propose a project that residents would view as compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE OF GREEN PARK SCHOOL

Recommendations

- Request that the Hickory Public School Board develop a long range facilities plan that determines a timeline for the current use as an administrative and maintenance facility and evaluates future uses in the school system once the building is vacated.

- The Hickory School Board should have the Green Park School reevaluated for a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as an individual listing. The City of Hickory, Historic Preservation Commission, and the Green Park Neighborhood Association should support these efforts where possible.
- If the school stays in public hands, the Planning and Development Department should host further discussions with the neighborhood to build consensus on the future use of the site. Determining a short list of neighborhood compatible uses will help the city and School Board market or repurpose the site.

Transportation

MONITOR TRAFFIC SAFETY ISSUES

Traffic safety is of primary importance to the Green Park neighborhood. Efforts to continue addressing concerns over speeding, cut-through traffic, and crash rates are necessary.

Recommendations

- The Green Park neighborhood should continue to report dangerous vehicles to the Traffic Safety Unit, including detailed information such as the vehicle make and model, license plate, and time of day. The Traffic Safety Unit should target problematic areas as needed, while working with other city departments and NCDOT to make long term improvements, as identified.
- Residents and businesses in the Green Park neighborhood should notify the Police Department of any upcoming events that may impact traffic patterns, so measures can be taken to increase safety. The Police Department should work to develop a more streamlined communication tool for this type of notice.
- The Traffic Safety Unit, the Traffic Division, and NCDOT should review past accident data for the neighborhood to determine if any intersections have an abnormally higher accident rate and develop an action plan to make improvements.

INCREASE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION USE

Encouraging the use and accessibility of alternative transportation methods, such as Greenway Public Transportation, is a goal collectively shared by many groups.

Recommendations

- The Greenway Public Transportation system should work to improve the amenities at its bus stops within the Green Park neighborhood and its vicinity to improve ridership. Currently, most of the stops are only marked by a sign. Where space is available, adding benches and shelters should be a top priority. All stops are located on sidewalks, however the city should work to ensure sidewalk connectivity exists.

Public Infrastructure

ASSESS SIDEWALK NEEDS

Sidewalks exist in most portions of the Green Park neighborhood due to the presence of the Green Park School, however given the neighborhood's age, some sidewalks are in need of ordinary repair and maintenance. Other locations in the neighborhood lack connecting pieces of sidewalk.

Recommendations

- The Streets Division should conduct a comprehensive assessment of the sidewalk conditions in Green Park and perform maintenance and repairs where needed. The neighborhood should inform the Streets Division of any urgent repairs needed to sidewalks.
- City staff annually identify and prioritize sidewalk needs with available funds allotted by City Council. Prioritization is developed with guidance from the city's Sidewalk, Bikeway, Greenway, and Trail Master Plan. A major update for the plan has not occurred in over 10 years. A cross-functional team from the city's Planning Department, Public Services Department, and Parks and Recreation Department should jointly develop an updated plan. The Neighborhood Association should provide input to the functional team via the Neighborhood Liaison and request that certain Green Park sidewalk needs are given higher priority.

ASSESS STREET CONDITIONS

The Green Park neighborhood is laid out in a traditional grid network of streets, many of which are used solely for local residential traffic. Some of these streets are in need of maintenance.

Recommendations

- The neighborhood should inform the Streets Division of any urgent repairs needed to locally maintained streets as they arise.
- According to the Community Development Division, the Green Park neighborhood is a neighborhood where Community Development Block Grant funds may be utilized. The Streets Division and Community Development Division should identify and maintain a list of streets that need improvements where CDBG monies can be used. City staff should work with the Neighborhood Liaison to gather feedback from the neighborhood on any planned work and report any upcoming work within the neighborhood to the Liaison to provide advanced notice to residents and property owners.
- Street lighting enhances visibility for motorists and pedestrians, while also deterring crime. The Traffic Division should identify areas without adequate street lighting and work to make any necessary improvements. The neighborhood should pass along any known street lighting issues to the Neighborhood Liaison or Traffic Division as well. Edward PACT officers on patrol during the night shift should also pass along these issues to the Traffic Division.

Public Safety

PROMOTE CRIME PREVENTION

Maintaining a sense of safety and well-being in Green Park is a core objective for the neighborhood and Police Department. The crime statistics for the neighborhood did not indicate a high crime rate for the area, however crime reduction and prevention efforts are needed for further improvements.

Recommendations

- The neighborhood should continue to report incidents of illegal activity and suspicious behavior in the neighborhood to the Hickory Police Department. Edward PACT officers should ensure residents and businesses understand the importance of these reports and how to appropriately pass them along.
- Edward PACT officers should continue maintaining a presence at Green Park neighborhood meetings to inform citizens of recent crimes and present crime prevention tips.
- Edward PACT officers should also proactively monitor Hickory Optimist Park for vagrancy and vandalism.
- The Neighborhood Association should periodically review the need for and gauge the level of community support for a Neighborhood Watch program. The Police Department should support these efforts where possible.

PROMOTE FIRE EDUCATION AND SAFETY

The Hickory Fire Department's Fire and Life Safety Division is dedicated to educating citizens young and old about the dangers of fire and what to do in the event of an emergency. The Fire and Life Safety Division has multiple programs in place that citizens of Green Park should take advantage of, such as free installation of smoke detectors.

Recommendations

- The Fire Department should continue maintaining a presence at Green Park neighborhood meetings to inform citizens of upcoming public education events and past call statistics. Firefighters should also use this time to inform citizens about fire and life safety tips.
- The Fire Department should continue its efforts to obtain grants for smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms. The department's efforts to hand out and install these alarms at no cost has been shown to save lives.

Land Development and Zoning

The Green Park neighborhood contains a diverse housing stock and variety of commercial spaces. As an urban neighborhood, maintaining a residential character can be challenging given the development pressures that seek to increase density and use intensity. Maintaining land use compatibility and limiting negative impacts should be a priority for the neighborhood and city.

ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT CHANGES

It is important that the neighborhood is made aware of development proposals within the neighborhood and neighborhood concerns are addressed into new development and redevelopment projects that are approved by right or with public hearings.

Recommendations

- When petitions are received to rezone a property within the Green Park neighborhood, the Planning and Development Department should encourage the applicant to consider a conditional zoning process. The conditional zoning process allows for specific conditions to be imposed to provide the highest degree of certainty as to how the property is developed.
- When petitions are received for rezonings, special use permits, and variances within the Green Park neighborhood, the Planning Department should encourage the applicant to consider organizing a meeting with the Neighborhood Association to provide upfront notice and to solicit input and concerns from the neighborhood prior the public hearing process.
- The Planning Department should pass along any upcoming development projects within the Green Park neighborhood to the Neighborhood Liaison, who can subsequently inform the Neighborhood Association.

PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Green Park neighborhood is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city and the preservation of its character and resources should be a top priority.

Recommendations

- The Planning Department should discourage any zoning map amendments (rezonings) or special use permits that would introduce dissimilar land uses into the fabric of the neighborhood. This includes rezonings from residential to commercial, particularly when in close proximity to existing single-family homes.
- The Planning Department should promote new infill and residential redevelopment that complements the character of the existing neighborhood. Infill development of single-family homes should be encouraged. Strengthening the Neighborhood Preservation Overlay's effects should also be considered.
- The Planning Department should encourage the preservation of a pedestrian friendly atmosphere within the neighborhood. Sidewalks should be installed on new development projects where feasible and new residential homes should be encouraged to have porches and shorter setbacks from the main road.
- The Historic Preservation Commission should reevaluate the viability of a successful nomination for a Green Park Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. The neighborhood, particularly homes close to Green Park School, should carefully consider any exterior changes to structures over 50 years old. Consultation with the Planning Department about these changes and the impact on historic preservation is recommended.

PROMOTE BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

Although Green Park is predominantly residential in nature, there are some suspected brownfield locations. Many of these locations are along the Main Avenue corridor, where intense commercial and industrial uses were once present.

Recommendations

- The Planning and Development Department is overseeing the creation of an area-wide brownfield redevelopment plan for the Southside area (including Green Park) over the next year. The process includes a community engagement plan that seeks resident and business participation. The Planning Department should build on its citizen engagement plan by providing occasional updates to the Neighborhood Association through the Neighborhood Liaison and inviting interested individuals to its meetings.

PROMOTE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Green Park contains a mixture of single-family homes, duplexes, and apartment complexes. Promotion of community development homeownership and rehabilitation programs can assist property owners with redevelopment and improvement efforts that will result in an increase of neighborhood property values and attractiveness.

Recommendations

- The Community Development Division should continue providing the City's housing rehabilitation programs to promote homeownership and housing rehabilitation in the neighborhood.
- The Community Development Division should explore the feasibility of a rental rehabilitation funding program to improve rental housing quality and conditions.
- The Community Development Division should target banks and other money lending institutions with information regarding the City's First-Time Homebuyers program to increase awareness and improve access.

Parks and Recreation

Residents of Green Park consider Hickory Optimist Park an asset to the neighborhood that improves property values and provides open space for physical activity. The recent and planned upgrades to the park will maximize these benefits.

ENHANCE HICKORY OPTIMIST PARK

Recommendations

- The Parks and Recreation Department should continue to monitor feedback from the residents regarding the use, problems, and other concerns of the park after the upgrades have been completed. The neighborhood and city staff should work together to resolve the concerns in a timely manner.
- The Parks and Recreation Department should evaluate the need for dog stations in Hickory Optimist Park.

Code Enforcement

The Police Department's Code Enforcement Unit is responsible for enforcing the city's minimum housing code, nuisance code, and junk vehicle ordinance.

CONTINUE REPORTING CODE VIOLATIONS

The Code Enforcement Unit operates primarily through citizen complaints, and is therefore reliant on an active and watchful neighborhood.

Recommendations

- Neighbors should report all potential code violations to the Code Enforcement Unit when they become an issue. Ideally, neighbors should try to work out a solution prior to involving Code Enforcement.
- The Code Enforcement Unit should continue developing a positive working relationship with the neighborhood and attempt to proactively patrol the neighborhood for violations. This can be supplemented by occasionally attending Neighborhood Association meetings or providing a neighborhood report through the Police Department representative.

Neighborhood Enhancement

The Green Park Neighborhood Association feels that the neighborhood is a great place to live and raise a family. Enhancing quality of life factors will increase property values and community pride.

BEAUTIFY ENTRANCEWAYS

Green Park has eight streets and avenues that lead into the neighborhood. These gateways provide an opportunity to create a sense of neighborhood identity and upgrade the image of the neighborhood. After the previous plan, signage was added to the top of existing street name signs to demarcate the neighborhood, however these signs are out of date with the current City of Hickory branding.

Recommendations

- Working together, the Neighborhood Association, Communications Office, and Neighborhood Liaison should draft an updated design of the neighborhood identification signs. Once a design is determined, it should be presented to the Community Appearance Commission and City Council for approval.
- The Neighborhood Liaison should determine if money is available from the Sustaining Matching Grant Fund from the city to fund updated neighborhood street sign toppers and if so, apply for the grant. If not, explore other methods of funding.
- The Neighborhood Association and Liaison should brainstorm and subsequently evaluate additional ways to enhance the various identified gateways into Green Park. Coordination with the Community Appearance Commission and Public Art Commission is recommended.

Neighborhood Association

The organization and continued involvement of the Neighborhood Association is important to the success of the neighborhood planning process. Participation from the different groups of people that live and work in the neighborhood is very important to building a sense of community and shared vision for the future of the neighborhood.

CARRYOUT ORGANIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The Neighborhood Association should look for opportunities to publicize the success of the neighborhood through events and press releases. One of the keys to building the capacity of the neighborhood is being informed of decisions made by the City of Hickory that might impact Green Park.

Recommendations

- The Green Park Neighborhood Association should continue meeting on a regular schedule, at least quarterly, to maintain an active status. An active neighborhood association ensures that the neighborhood will be heard on long range plans and can voice feedback and neighborhood concerns to city staff.
- The Association should continue its efforts to increase membership and activity. The Association should maintain an email listserv to send notes to residents who are unable to attend or need reminders of upcoming meetings and events. The Neighborhood Liaison should provide guidance to the Association on what other neighborhood associations are doing to increase attendance. Additionally, the Liaison should send out a mailer to all neighborhood property owners and residents at least once a year. This mailer could highlight the Association's past work and need for better involvement.
- The Association should maintain a formal organizational structure with an elected neighborhood leader and assistants. A formalized organization ensures accountability, facilitates responsibilities, and helps with succession planning. Contact information for new neighborhood leaders should be passed along to the city.
- The Association should consider developing an annual work plan and delegating tasks to members. This work plan could include items such as neighborhood cleanups, social events, and reviewing the progress of the Neighborhood Plan.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Guidance offered in the Green Park Neighborhood Plan should be referred to during relevant decision-making processes about the area. To the extent that this plan charts a course for Green Park's future, the strategies and recommended actions should be followed and carried out by the Neighborhood Association, the city, and other stakeholders as referenced in the plan. The residents of Green Park themselves, regardless of whether or not they participated in the planning process, are viewed as playing a key role in all implementation efforts. This section discusses the implementation and review process.

Plan Adoption

After the adoption of the plan by City Council, the plan will become the most comprehensive guide for managing Green Park's future development. It provides the most detailed direction of any city document on planning and development issues within the Green Park neighborhood. This plan was designed to be generally compatible and supportive of other city adopted plans.

Active citizen input was involved in the plan's formulation, review, and adoption, which has resulted in a plan that reflects a community consensus on how Green Park should develop and address issues of concern.

Plan Implementation

The true measure of a plan's acceptance may best be described in terms of the degree to which it is used and supported during relevant decision-making processes. The residents of Green Park, Hickory City Council, service provider agencies, and the City Manager's Office each have important roles in the implementation processes.

The residents of Green Park have a critical role in participating in and monitoring the use of the plan's provisions. The Green Park neighborhood confirms its support for the plan by including the recommendations in the Neighborhood Association's activities and structure and initiating the petition processes necessary to accomplish the recommended policy changes.

Hickory City Council demonstrates its support for the plan by adopting the plan's strategies and encouraging timely implementation. During the annual budget review process, requests to execute the recommendations in this plan should be given greater consideration.

The plan sets forth several goals, which require the active involvement of service providing agencies including the city. These organizations are crucial to the implementation of the Green Park Neighborhood Plan. Residents can participate in support of the programs provided by these organizations; likewise the programs can be used by residents to address concerns, stabilize negative trends and enhance the quality of life for all Green Park residents.

Finally, the City Manager's Office plays an important role by overseeing the implementation responsibilities assigned to the various departments. The specific city departments must commit to implementing the plan by incorporating the recommendations into their annual

workplans within the recommended timetable. Revising strategies and even seeking more resources at a later date may be necessary to follow through on implementation of the plan.

Plan Evaluation

As part of the planning process, periodic plan evaluation should occur. Planning staff should review the progress of the aforementioned recommendations and evaluate the feasibility of the initial timelines after a significant amount of time has passed. The findings of this evaluation and any recommended intermediary revisions should be shared with the Neighborhood Association. A full evaluation and major update is recommended after ten years.

Conclusion

The Green Park Neighborhood Plan identifies the issues and concerns of the neighborhood, the tasks involved in addressing them, a time frame in which the strategy or action should be implemented, and the various parties involved in resolving them. Implementation is by far the most difficult phase of any planning process.

In short, this long-range neighborhood planning process offered, and will continue to offer the residents, business owners, and property owners of Green Park the opportunity to plan proactively for the future of their neighborhood.

APPENDIX

Historical Records

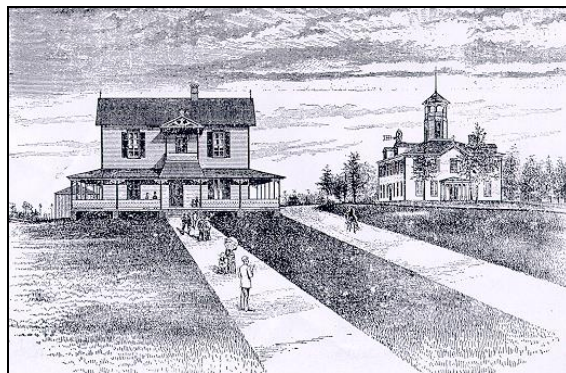
HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

The beginnings of St. Paul's Lutheran Church are not of a congregation at all, but rather of a school. The Practical English Seminary was established by the Concordia District through a Joint Synod which met in Saginaw, Michigan in 1886. Classes opened in Hickory in October 1887 at the sight of a former convent.

The convent was operated by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, an order of the Roman Catholic Church, as Mount St. Joseph's Academy. The property consisted of the convent proper, two small dwellings, stables and thirteen acres of land. The academy was primarily a finishing school for young ladies and a saddle and riding habit were required for admission.

This property is part of the block between 2nd and 4th Avenues SW and 6th and 7th Streets SW.

In 1888, the board of trustees of the seminary school purchased property from the Sisters for \$6,000 to open and operate a Practical Seminary. The managing board of the Seminary paid \$500 in cash and gave a promissory note for the remaining \$5,500. The note was secured for one year at which time the money was deposited in the Bank of Hickory to the credit of the grantors.



An artist's rendering of the Practical English Seminary that once stood in Green Park.

The seminary began to prosper. The following is a quote from the seminary catalog of 1895-96:

St. Paul's Seminary is located in Hickory, North Carolina, an enterprising town of about 2,500 inhabitants. The town is easily accessible by two railroads--the W.N.C., and the C. and L. RR. Hickory is beautifully located, in full view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, in the far-famed Piedmont section of the State, noted for its healthful and delightful climate in winter and summer. The town has seven churches, one public school, and five other educational institutions.... Subjects include Homiletics, Catechetics, Exegesis, German, Pastoral Theology, Church History, Syrnbolics, Dogmatics, Ethics, Isagogics, Hermeneutics.

In 1895, a 25 year-old man from Morristown, Tennessee named James E. Barb entered the seminary for study. In 1898 he graduated with honors and was ordained as pastor of Miller's, St. Luke's and Pisgah Lutheran Churches in the Hickory area.

However, in 1898, the Joint Ohio Synod of the Lutheran Church closed the institution. The Concordia District immediately took up ownership and reopened the seminary as St. Paul's Academy in 1898. Reverend J. H. Wannemacher assumed professorship, assisted by Rev. J. E. Barb and Professor S. M. Hamrick.

In 1900, the school was reorganized as a preparatory school for the seminary in Columbus, Ohio. Rev. L. M. Hunt who had been associated with the school since 1887 headed it. A Sunday worship service had been offered to the local community prior to 1900, but became a regular activity of the academy. As of 1900, the Rev. J. E. Barb held worship at St. Paul's Chapel on a weekly basis.

On March 16, 1901, the worshipers at St. Paul's Chapel organized under the leadership of Rev. Barb as a congregation -- the Congregation of St. Paul's Chapel, Hickory. He served until August 1, 1902 when Rev. L. M. Hunt was installed. He served until January 1, 1905.

At Rev. Hunt's resignation, Rev. Barb again supplied, followed by Rev. C. H. Pence, and then succeeding him again in supply. On March 1, 1906, Rev. D. E. Snapp was installed as pastor. He served until his resignation to accept a call in Ohio in 1908. Rev. A. A. Phillipp succeeded him, but resigned due to illness in the family, then died himself in 1910. Again, Rev. J. E. Barb took over the pastoral duties of the congregation.

During the period from 1889 until 1914 the Seminary expanded in size and scope and provided educational opportunities at different levels. The different levels and their cost to Students per month are illustrated below.

Good board could be had at the institution for \$6.00 every four weeks. For students "clubbing" together and providing their own supplies and employing a cook, the cost would be less. Good food, room, lights, and fires could be obtained from private homes for \$2.50 per week.

The different levels offered by the school were indicative of the educational reality of the time. The objectives of the Seminary department were to prepare young men for the ministry with the Lutheran Church. Pre-Seminary was to prepare them for entering the Seminary.

In addition to the Seminary courses, St. Paul's Seminary offered a preparatory course, a teachers course and a business course. The preparatory course was designed for students unable to pursue the other courses intelligently; the teachers' course, to train students in the most up to date method of teaching; the business course included bookkeeping, commercial law, commercial arithmetic, business correspondence, business forms, and penmanship.



One of the many distinguished graduating classes of the Seminary.

The object of the instruction in the Academy was to provide a thorough English education, good business training and to prepare students for a regular Collegiate Course.

Maintaining a school offering different levels of study was no easy task. Under the leadership of the Rev. L. M. Hunt the school flourished during its early years so that by 1885-86 it had a student body of fifty-nine: twelve Seminary students, twelve Pro-Seminary students and thirty-five academic students. From that high point the enrollment gradually declined until the school was closed in 1914 and the property put up for sale.

J. F. Abernethy, whose home is became the now vacant Bed and Breakfast on 7th Street SW, bought the Seminary for \$12,500. The chapel was rented by the congregation for worship and meetings.



The J. Fred Abernethy House was built in 1906 and most recently functioned as the Hickory Bed and Breakfast.

In 1916, the congregation purchased the lot where the seminary stood, at the peak of the hill of what is now the block bordered by 2nd and 4th Avenues SW and 6th and 7th Streets SW. Rev. Barb purchased contingent properties within this block, which would later be significant for the building of the church's own buildings.

Although it would be several years before plans were adopted and a contract for the construction of the church was awarded to Mr. Joe Bolch, the congregation was finally able to

build the existing structure housing St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church. The cornerstone was laid on October 23, 1927, and the congregation made its official transfer from the old chapel on April 1, 1928, Palm Sunday that year.

The congregation labored under the burden of a large debt at the building of this structure and with the onset of the depression, things worsened. To add to this, on December 23, 1931, Rev. James E. Barb died of a heart attack.

From 1901 until his death in 1931, Rev. Barb served as pastor of St. Paul's Chapel except for the specified intervals mentioned earlier. Because of years of financial distress within the congregation, Rev. Barb also taught in the Hickory Schools and surveyed. In fact, he was the prominent surveyor of what is now downtown Hickory and much of the contiguous properties.

An interim with Rev. L. M. Hunt and Rev. L. W. Miller as supply pastors ended on July 10, 1932, when Rev. Royal E. Walther was installed as pastor of St. Paul's, Pisgah and St. Luke's Lutheran Churches in the Hickory/Taylorsville area.

On January 22, 1937, the old seminary property changed hands being sold to Mrs. J. E. Barb who resided there until her death.

Pastor Walther served St. Paul's from 1932 until 1943, when he took a call in Ohio. He led the congregation from debt-ridden in 1932 to debt-free in 1943.

He was succeeded by Rev. Sylvanus L. Schillinger, being called to St. Paul's and Old St. Paul's in Newton. In 1946, the Parish Hall was erected. The parsonage next to the church was constructed in 1950 and the expansion of the Parish Hall to include educational facilities was completed in 1960.

Pastor "Pat," as Pastor Schillinger was called, died after a Sunday service in 1983. In 1984, Rev. Thomas Sall was called, but he left the following year.

In 1986, Rev. Lawrence Meyer was called to the parish. He served until 1991. From 1991 until 1995, Rev. Stanley L. Stiver served as a part-time pastor for the congregation.

In November 1995, Rev. Stanley J. Leas accepted a call to St. Paul's and served until the church's congregation consolidated and left Green Park.

HISTORY OF GREEN PARK SCHOOL

The closure of St. Paul's Seminary, which had provided training, not only for future ministers, but also for future teachers and businessmen as well, created an awareness of the need to fill the vacuum which had been left.

The Green Park area offered the land necessary for that purpose. In 1917, a public school building was erected in sight of Old St. Paul's Seminary on five acres of land. The school was

one of the three built in Hickory at the time. A teacherage for the housing of out-of-town, unmarried female teachers was added in 1923.



A photograph of the Green Park School used for a 1923 Chamber of Commerce booklet.

The high school was on the second floor of the school building. The first floor was for the elementary school. In 1925, the high school was transferred to the newly completed Hickory High School built where the old Claremont Female College once stood. The West School became known as Green Park School.

First, second, third, seventh and eighth graders were taught at the school in 1949 in an extremely inadequate building. The restrooms were all located in the basement, necessitating pupils to travel two flights of stairs to reach them. There were so many students that classes had to be held in the auditorium. However, the school had one modern feature - new fluorescent lighting.

In 1953, Green Park Elementary School expanded to 40,000 square feet with the construction of a gymnasium, lunchroom, kitchen and additional classrooms alleviating overcrowded conditions.

Enrollment at Green Park School was 373 pupils in 1949, slightly less than 200 pupils in 1955, 266 pupils in 1962, 203 pupils in 1968 and 199 pupils in 1970.

Green Park Elementary School closed in the early 1970's. In 1977, the school was known as Hickory Alternate High School for a short period. The Hickory City Schools Administration Services has occupied the buildings since the mid-1950's

In 1978, the Hickory Parks and Recreation Department operated a staffed recreation center at the school, but only for one year until the school system reclaimed the building for a maintenance facility. Additionally, the Hickory Police Department operated a PACT substation in the building for a short period of time in the 1990s.

Many Hickory residents have special mementos of attending school at Green Park. There is a feeling that this area should be recognized as playing a vital part in the history of Hickory.

HISTORY OF HICKORY OPTIMIST PARK

The Optimist Club of Hickory purchased the land, which now constitutes Hickory Optimist Park for \$18,000. The Club built a clubhouse and paved a play area, which is now the existing tennis court, and operated it for a number of years for boys in the community.

The Club continued operating the park until offering it to the City of Hickory Parks and Recreation Commission in 1968. The Optimists requested that the name of the park be “Optimist’s Green Park Recreation Center” or some such name as may be determined by the Recreation Commission that incorporates the word “Optimist.”

The Parks and Recreation Department estimated that \$61,991 was needed to acquire the property and develop the park. The city pledged \$10,000 toward the purchase of the property, while the remainder was raised through donations. Hickory Optimist Club pledged \$2,000 and challenged other organizations and individuals to assist in the cooperative development of the park. It was not until 1974 after securing \$30,995 in matching federal funds from the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Outdoor Recreation that the Parks and Recreation Department opened the new park.

Today, Hickory Optimist Park is undergoing a significant upgrade to address issues outlined in the previous neighborhood plan. Current and planned facilities include: A picnic shelter with tables and grills, tennis court that will be converted to four (4) pickle ball courts, outdoor basketball court, lighted softball field, horseshoe pits, new park entrance, walking trail, playground, outdoor fitness area, and community meeting facility with restrooms.



Photographs showing the new playground equipment (L) and upcoming community building (R).

List of Tables

Table 1: Green Park and Hickory by Race

Green Park	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
White, Not Hispanic	594	82.3	484	56.7	388	46.7
African-American	113	15.7	162	19.0	224	27.0
American Indian	2	0.3	2	0.2	3	0.4
Asian	6	0.8	72	8.4	12	1.4
Other Races	0	0.0	3	0.4	28	3.4
Hispanic	7	1.0	130	15.2	176	21.2
Total	722	100.0	853	100.0	831	100.0

Hickory	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
White, Not Hispanic	22,917	81.0	27,245	73.2	27,750	69.4
African-American	4,807	17.0	5,243	14.1	5,707	14.3
American Indian	70	0.2	70	0.2	131	0.3
Asian	286	1.0	1,474	4.0	1,277	3.2
Other Races	0	0.0	327	0.9	601	1.5
Hispanic	221	0.8	2,863	7.7	4,544	11.4
Total	28,301	100.0	37,222	100.0	40,010	100.0

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

Table 2: Green Park and Hickory by Age

Green Park	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
Under 18	127	17.6	180	21.1	197	23.7
18-65	483	66.9	564	66.1	529	63.7
65 and Over	112	15.5	109	12.8	105	12.6
Total	722	100.0	853	100.0	831	100.0

Hickory	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
Under 18	5,858	20.7	8,669	23.3	9,425	23.6
18-65	18,311	64.7	23,495	63.1	24,852	62.1
65 and Over	4,132	14.6	5,058	13.6	5,733	14.3
Total	28,301	100.0	37,222	100.0	40,010	100.0

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

Table 3: Green Park and Hickory by Household

Green Park	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
One Person Households	120	33.0	168	42.7	124	36.0
Single-Parent Households	30	8.2	63	16.0	52	15.1
Total Households	364	100.0	393	100.0	344	100.0

Hickory	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population	Population	% of Population
One Person Households	3,717	31.5	4,954	32.2	5,593	33.7
Single-Parent Households	1,558	13.2	1,634	10.6	1,791	10.8
Total Households	11,803	100.0	15,372	100.0	16,614	100.0

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

Table 4: Green Park and Hickory Housing Values and Rent

Green Park	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009-13 ACS
Median Housing Value	\$42,199	\$67,100	\$84,200
Median Gross Rent	\$211	\$385	\$516

Hickory	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009-13 ACS
Median Housing Value	\$66,900	\$125,000	\$158,100
Median Gross Rent	\$400	\$540	\$661

Table 5: Green Park and Hickory Median Incomes

Green Park	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009-13 ACS
Median Household Income	\$16,971	\$25,642	\$26,199
Median Family Income	\$21,301	\$27,259	\$34,005

Hickory	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009-13 ACS
Median Household Income	\$27,212	\$37,236	\$39,176
Median Family Income	\$33,303	\$47,522	\$53,962

Table 6: Green Park and Hickory Housing Characteristics

Green Park	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Housing Units	428	100.0	426	100.0	419	100.0
Occupied Housing Units					344	82.1
Vacant Units					75	17.9
Owner Occupied Units					138	40.1
Renter Occupied Units					206	59.9

Hickory	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Housing Units	12,701	100.0	16,571	100.0	18,719	100.0
Occupied Housing Units	11,800	92.9	15,372	92.8	16,614	88.8
Vacant Units	901	7.1	1,199	7.2	2,105	11.2
Owner Occupied Units	6,117	51.8	8,451	55.0	8,995	54.1
Renter Occupied Units	5,683	48.2	6,921	45.0	7,619	45.9

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

Summary of Recommendations

Green Park School			
PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE OF GREEN PARK SCHOOL			
Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
Request that the Hickory Public School Board develop a long range facilities plan that determines a timeline for the current use as an administrative and maintenance facility and evaluates future uses in the school system once the building is vacated.	Costs for the facilities plan	5 to 10 years	Hickory Public Schools, Neighborhood Association
The Hickory School Board should have the Green Park School reevaluated for a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as an individual listing. The City of Hickory, Historic Preservation Commission, and the Green Park Neighborhood Association should support these efforts where possible.	Costs for the individual nomination report	5 to 10 years	Hickory Public Schools, Planning Department, Historic Preservation Commission, Neighborhood Association
If the school stays in public hands, the Planning & Development Department should host further discussions with the neighborhood to build consensus on the future use of the site. Determining a short list of neighborhood compatible uses will help the City and School Board market or repurpose the site.	Staff time	5 to 10 years	Planning Department, Neighborhood Association
Transportation			
MONITOR TRAFFIC SAFETY ISSUES			
Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Green Park neighborhood should continue to report dangerous vehicles to the Traffic Safety Unit, including detailed information such as the vehicle make and model, license plate, and time of day. The Traffic Safety Unit should target problematic areas as needed, while working with other city departments and NCDOT to make long term improvements, as identified.	None	Ongoing	Neighborhood, Police Department
Residents and businesses in the Green Park neighborhood should notify the Police Department of any upcoming events that may impact traffic patterns, so measures can be taken to increase safety. The Police Department should work to develop a more streamlined communication tool for this type of notice.	Staff time	Ongoing	Neighborhood, Police Department

The Traffic Safety Unit, the Traffic Division, and NCDOT should review past accident data for the neighborhood to determine if any intersections have an abnormally higher accident rate and develop an action plan to make improvements.	Staff time	Annually	Police Department, Traffic Division, NCDOT
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INCREASE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION USE

Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Greenway Public Transportation system should work to improve the amenities at its bus stops within the Green Park neighborhood and its vicinity to improve ridership. Currently, most of the stops are only marked by a sign. Where space is available, adding benches and shelters should be a top priority. All stops are located on sidewalks, however the City should work to ensure sidewalk connectivity exists.	Staff time	5 to 10 years	Greenway Public Transit, Sidewalk Functional Team

Public Infrastructure

ASSESS SIDEWALK NEEDS

Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Streets Division should conduct a comprehensive assessment of the sidewalk conditions in Green Park and perform maintenance and repairs where needed. The neighborhood should inform the Streets Division of any urgent repairs needed to sidewalks.	Staff time	2 to 5 years	Streets Division, Neighborhood
City staff annually identify and prioritize sidewalk needs with available funds allotted by City Council. Prioritization is developed with guidance from the city’s Sidewalk, Bikeway, Greenway, and Trail Master Plan. A major update for the plan has not occurred in over 10 years. A cross-functional team from the city’s Planning Department, Public Services Department, and Parks and Recreation Department should jointly develop an updated plan. The Neighborhood Association should provide input to the functional team via the Neighborhood Liaison and request that certain Green Park sidewalk needs are given higher priority.	Staff time	2 to 5 years for plan update, Annually review	Sidewalk Functional Team, Neighborhood Association and Liaison

ASSESS STREET CONDITIONS

Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The neighborhood should inform the Streets Division of any urgent repairs needed to locally maintained streets as they arise.	None	Ongoing	Neighborhood, Streets Division
According to the Community Development Division, the Green Park neighborhood is a neighborhood where Community Development Block Grant funds may be utilized. The Streets Division and Community Development Division should identify and maintain a list of streets that	Staff time	Annually	Community Development Division, Streets Division, Neighborhood Association and

need improvements where CDBG monies can be used. City staff should work with the Neighborhood Liaison to gather feedback from the neighborhood on any planned work and report any upcoming work within the neighborhood to the Liaison to provide advanced notice to residents and property owners.			Liaison
Street lighting enhances visibility for motorists and pedestrians, while also deterring crime. The Traffic Division should identify areas without adequate street lighting and work to make any necessary improvements. The neighborhood should pass along any known street lighting issues to the Neighborhood Liaison or Traffic Division as well. Edward PACT officers on patrol during the night shift should also pass issues along to the Traffic Division.	Staff time and costs for street light work	Ongoing	Traffic Division, Neighborhood, Police Department
<i>Public Safety</i>			
PROMOTE CRIME PREVENTION			
Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The neighborhood should continue to report incidents of illegal activity and suspicious behavior in the neighborhood to the Hickory Police Department. Edward PACT officers should ensure residents and businesses understand the importance of these reports and how to appropriately pass them along.	None	Ongoing	Neighborhood, Police Department
Edward PACT officers should continue maintaining a presence at Green Park neighborhood meetings to inform citizens of recent crimes and present crime prevention tips.	None	Ongoing	Police Department, Neighborhood Association
Edward PACT officers should also proactively monitor Hickory Optimist Park for vagrancy and vandalism.	None	Ongoing	Police Department, Parks and Recreation Department
The Neighborhood Association should periodically review the need for and gauge the level of community support for a Neighborhood Watch program. The Police Department should support these efforts where possible.	Staff time	Annually	Neighborhood Association, Police Department
PROMOTE FIRE EDUCATION AND SAFETY			
Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Fire Department should continue maintaining a presence at Green Park neighborhood meetings to inform citizens of upcoming public education events and past call statistics. Firefighters should also use this time to inform citizens about fire and life safety tips.	Staff time	Ongoing	Fire Department, Neighborhood Association

The Fire Department should continue its efforts to obtain grants for smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms. The department's efforts to hand out and install these alarms at no cost has been shown to save lives.	Staff time and potential costs for grant writing assistance	Annually	Fire Department
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Land Development and Zoning

ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT CHANGES

Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
When petitions are received to rezone a property within the Green Park neighborhood, the Planning & Development Department should encourage the applicant to consider a conditional zoning process. The conditional zoning process allows for specific conditions to be imposed to provide the highest degree of certainty as to how the property is developed.	None	Ongoing	Planning Department
When petitions are received for rezonings, special use permits, and variances within the Green Park neighborhood, the Planning Department should encourage the applicant to consider organizing a meeting with the Neighborhood Association to provide upfront notice and to solicit input and concerns from the neighborhood prior the public hearing process.	None	Ongoing	Planning Department
The Planning Department should pass along any upcoming development projects within the Green Park neighborhood to the Neighborhood Liaison, who can subsequently inform the Neighborhood Association.	None	Ongoing	Planning Department, Neighborhood Association

PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Planning Department should discourage any zoning map amendments (rezonings) or special use permits that would introduce dissimilar land uses into the fabric of the neighborhood. This includes rezonings from residential to commercial, particularly when in close proximity to existing single-family homes.	None	Ongoing	Planning Department
The Planning Department should promote new infill and residential redevelopment that complements the character of the existing neighborhood. Infill development of single-family homes should be encouraged. Strengthening the Neighborhood Preservation Overlay's effects should also be considered.	None	Ongoing	Planning Department
The Planning Department should encourage the preservation of a pedestrian friendly atmosphere within the neighborhood. Sidewalks should be installed on new development projects where feasible and new residential homes should be encouraged to have porches and shorter setbacks from the main road.	None	Ongoing	Planning Department, Traffic Division

The Historic Preservation Commission should reevaluate the viability of a successful nomination for a Green Park Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. The neighborhood, particularly homes close to Green Park School, should carefully consider any exterior changes to structures over 50 years old. Consultation with the Planning Department about these changes and the impact on historic preservation is recommended.	Staff time and costs for the district nomination report	2 to 5 years	Planning Department, Historic Preservation Commission, Neighborhood
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PROMOTE BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Planning & Development Department is overseeing the creation of an area-wide brownfield redevelopment plan for the Southside area (including Green Park) over the next year. The process includes a community engagement plan that seeks resident and business participation. The Planning Department should build on its citizen engagement plan by providing occasional updates to the Neighborhood Association through the Neighborhood Liaison and inviting interested individuals to its meetings.	Staff time	Next year	Planning Department; Brownfield Advisory Group, Neighborhood

PROMOTE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Community Development Division should continue providing the City’s housing rehabilitation programs to promote homeownership and housing rehabilitation in the neighborhood.	None	Ongoing	Community Development Division
The Community Development Division should explore the feasibility of a rental rehabilitation funding program to improve rental housing quality and conditions.	Staff time	Ongoing	Community Development Division
The Community Development Division should target banks and other money lending institutions with information regarding the City’s First-Time Homebuyers program to increase awareness and improve access.	Minimal costs for outreach materials	Annually	Community Development Division

Parks & Recreation

ENHANCE HICKORY OPTIMIST PARK

Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Parks & Recreation Department should continue to monitor feedback from the residents regarding the use, problems, and other concerns of the park after the upgrades have been completed. The neighborhood and city staff should work together to resolve the concerns in a timely manner.	Staff time	Ongoing	Parks and Recreation Department, Neighborhood

The Parks & Recreation Department should evaluate the need for dog stations in Hickory Optimist Park.	Staff time and costs for the dog stations	2 to 5 years	Parks and Recreation Department
<i>Code Enforcement</i>			
CONTINUE REPORTING CODE VIOLATIONS			
Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
Neighbors should report all potential code violations to the Code Enforcement Unit when they become an issue. Ideally, neighbors should try to work out a solution prior to involving Code Enforcement.	None	Ongoing	Neighborhood, Code Enforcement Unit
The Code Enforcement Unit should continue developing a positive working relationship with the neighborhood and attempt to proactively patrol the neighborhood for violations. This can be supplemented by occasionally attending Neighborhood Association meetings or providing a neighborhood report through the Police Department representative.	Staff time	Ongoing	Code Enforcement Unit, Neighborhood Association and Liaison
<i>Neighborhood Enhancement</i>			
BEAUTIFY ENTRANCEWAYS			
Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
Working together, the Neighborhood Association, Communications Office, and Neighborhood Liaison should draft an updated design of the neighborhood identification signs. Once a design is determined, it should be presented to the Community Appearance Commission and City Council for approval.	Staff time, costs for a design professional, and costs for new signs	2 to 5 years	Communications Office, Neighborhood Association and Liaison
The Neighborhood Liaison should determine if money is available from the Sustaining Matching Grant Fund from the city to fund updated neighborhood street sign toppers and if so, apply for the grant. If not, explore other methods of funding.	Staff time	2 to 5 years	Neighborhood Association and Liaison
The Neighborhood Association and Liaison should brainstorm and subsequently evaluate additional ways to enhance the various identified gateways into Green Park. Coordination with the Community Appearance Commission and Public Art Commission is recommended.	None	Annually	Neighborhood Association and Liaison

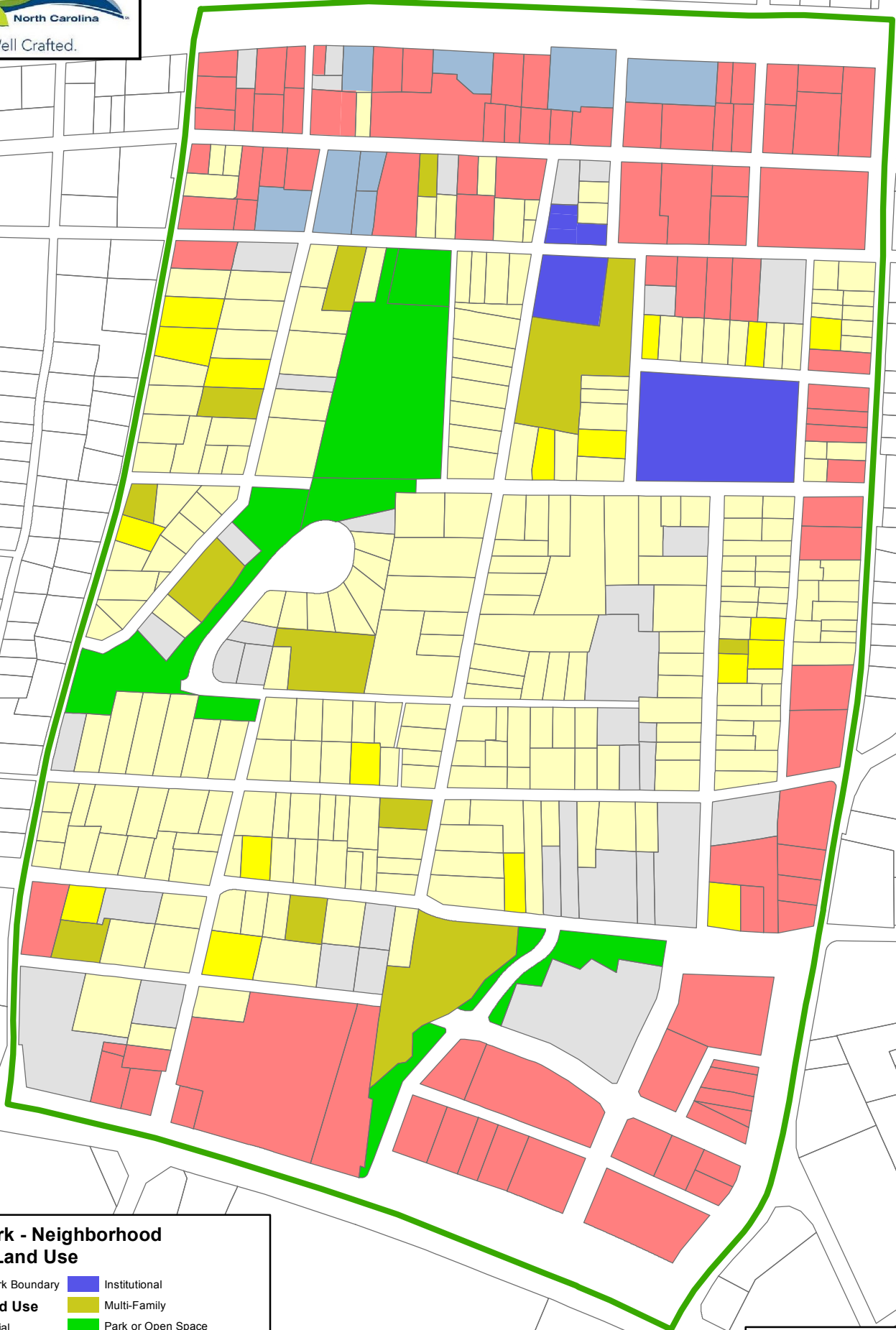
Neighborhood Association

CARRYOUT ORGANIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING










Recommendation	Cost	Time Table	Responsible Parties
The Green Park Neighborhood Association should continue meeting on a regular schedule, at least quarterly, to maintain an active status. An active neighborhood association ensures that the neighborhood will be heard on long range plans and can voice feedback and neighborhood concerns to city staff.	None	Ongoing	Neighborhood Association
The Association should continue its efforts to increase membership and activity. The Association should maintain an email listserv to send notes to residents who are unable to attend or need reminders of upcoming meetings and events. The Neighborhood Liaison should provide guidance to the Association on what other neighborhood associations are doing to increase attendance. Additionally, the Liaison should send out a mailer to all neighborhood property owners and residents at least once a year. This mailer could highlight the Association's past work and need for better involvement.	Costs for recruitment expenses	Ongoing	Neighborhood Association and Liaison
The Association should maintain a formal organizational structure with an elected neighborhood leader and assistants. A formalized organization ensures accountability, facilitates responsibilities, and helps with succession planning. Contact information for new neighborhood leaders should be passed along to the city.	None	Ongoing	Neighborhood Association
The Association should consider developing an annual work plan and delegating tasks to members. This work plan could include items such as neighborhood cleanups, social events, and reviewing the progress of the Neighborhood Plan.	None	Annually	Neighborhood Association

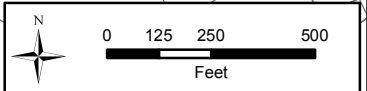
Maps

1. Existing Land Use Map
2. Future Land Use Map (Hickory by Choice 2030 Comprehensive Plan)
3. Base Zoning District Map
4. Zoning Overlay District Map
5. Thoroughfare Map (Greater Hickory MPO 2040 Thoroughfare Plan)
6. Greenway Transit Route Map
7. Greenway Transit Ridership Map
8. Sidewalk Map (2005 Sidewalk, Bikeway, Greenway, and Trail Master Plan)
9. Water and Sewer Map
10. Potential Brownfields Map
11. Structural Conditions Map





**Green Park - Neighborhood
Existing Land Use**

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Green Park Boundary |  Institutional |
|  Commercial |  Multi-Family |
|  Duplex |  Single Family |
|  Industrial |  Vacant |
| |  Park or Open Space |




Estimated Ridership of Greenway Transportation Fixed-Route Stops in Green Park Community in West Hickory (SFY 2015)


 Bus Stop

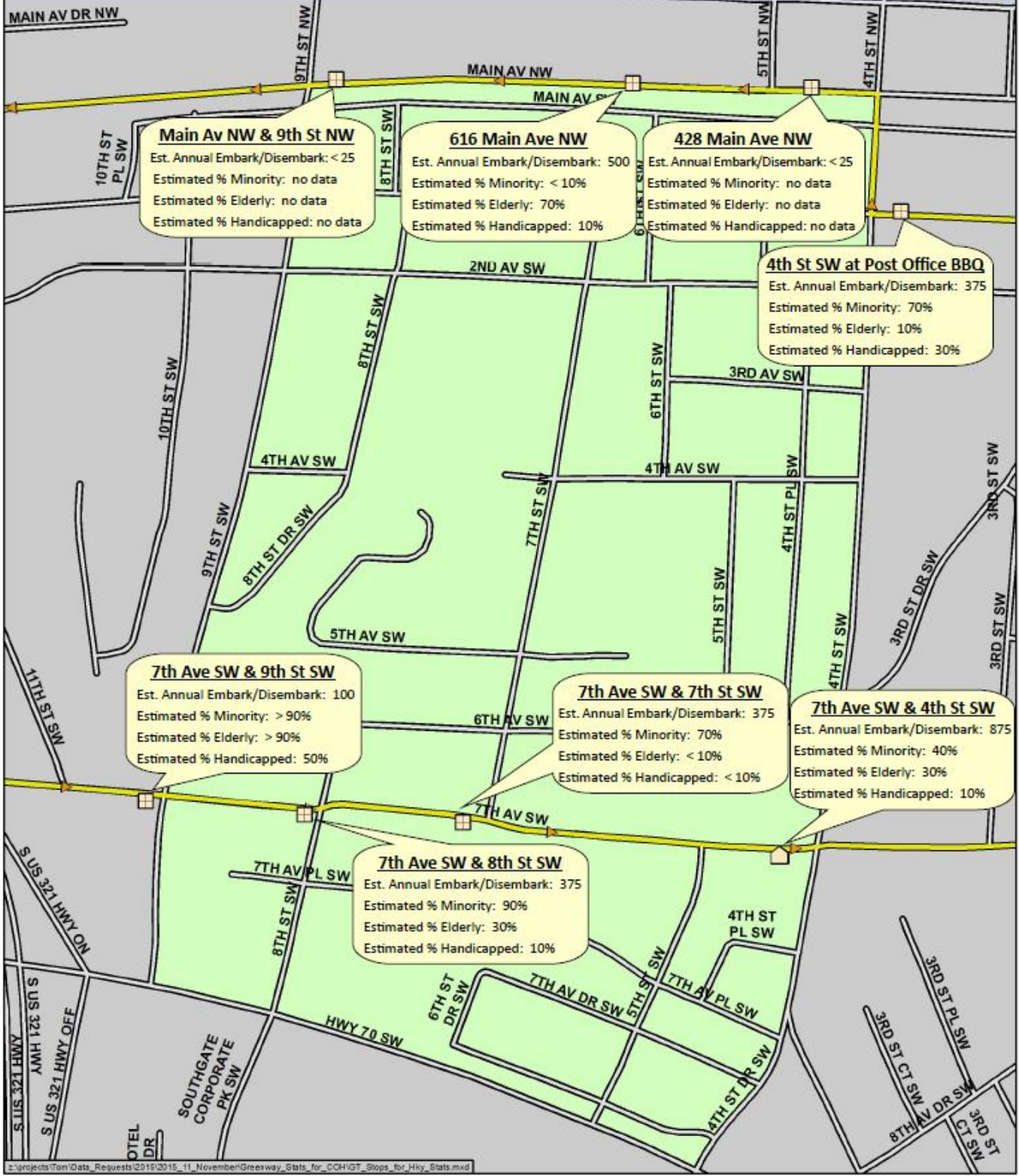
 Greenway Rt 1 (W Hickory)

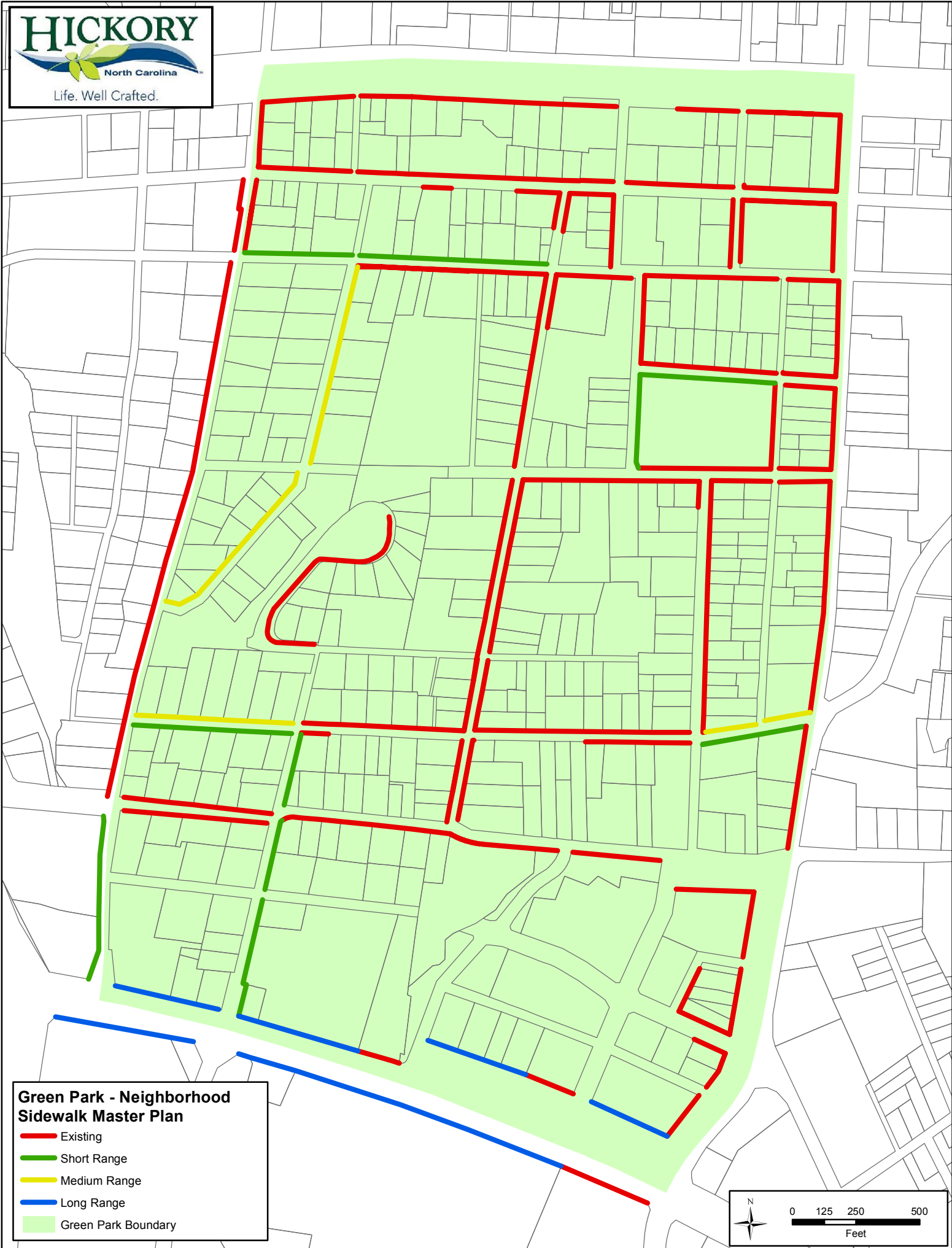
This map was created on November 11, 2015 by the IT/GIS section of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments using data from Greenway Transportation sampling rides for State FY 2015.



 Green Park Neighborhood

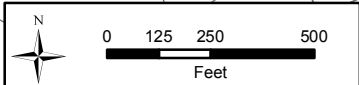
 Local Streets

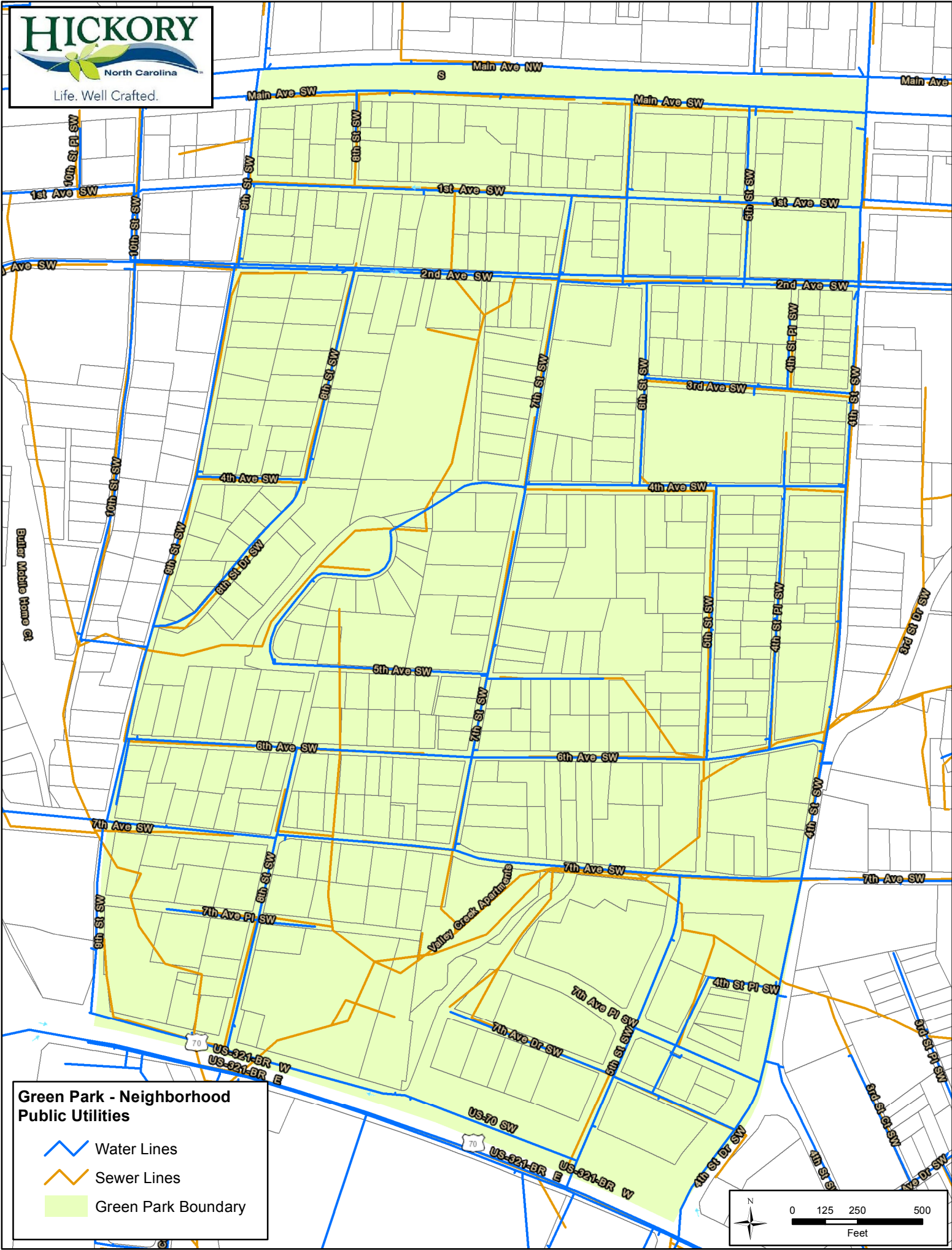




Green Park - Neighborhood Sidewalk Master Plan

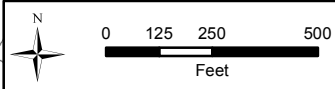
- Existing
- Short Range
- Medium Range
- Long Range
- Green Park Boundary

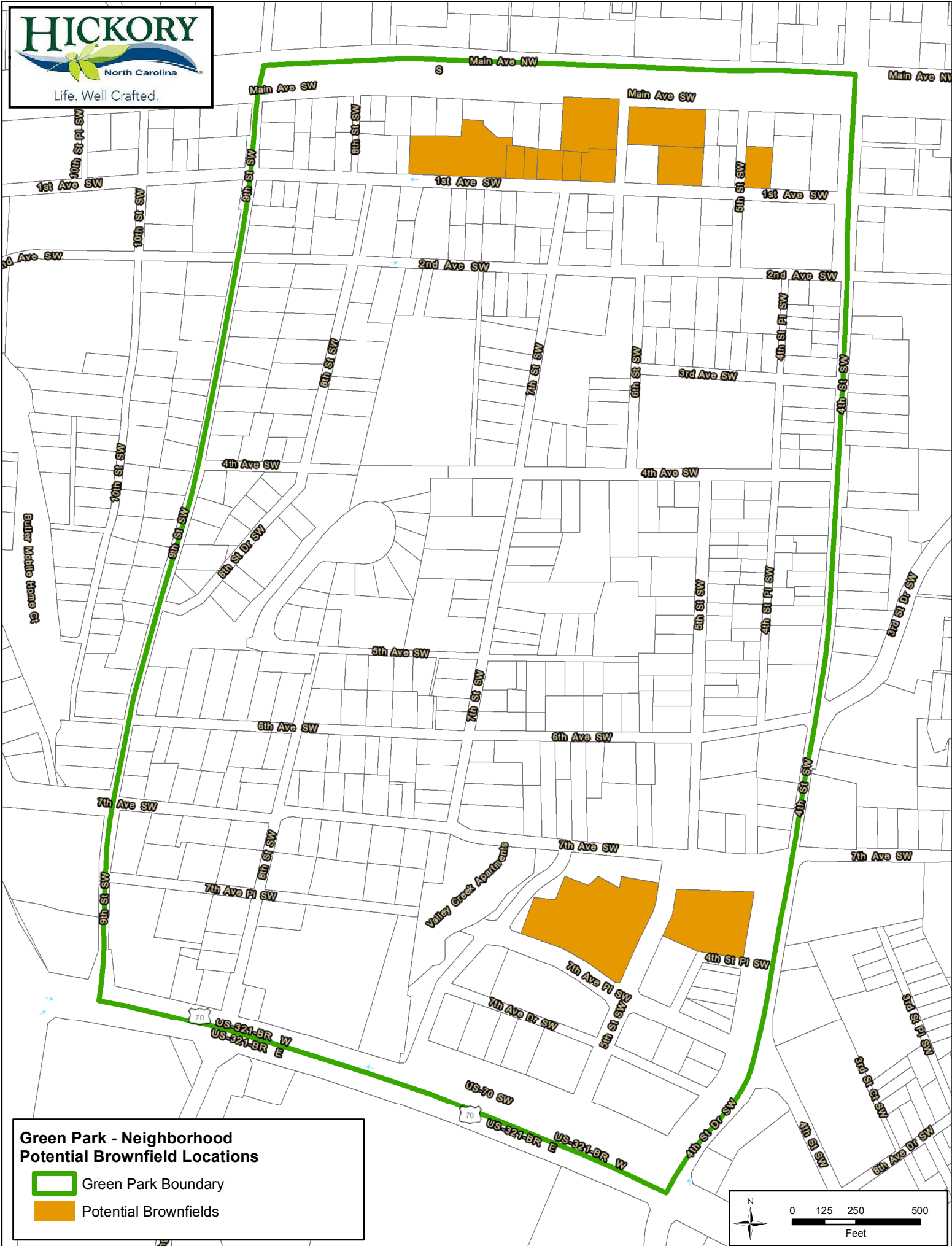




Green Park - Neighborhood Public Utilities

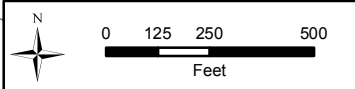
- Water Lines
- Sewer Lines
- Green Park Boundary

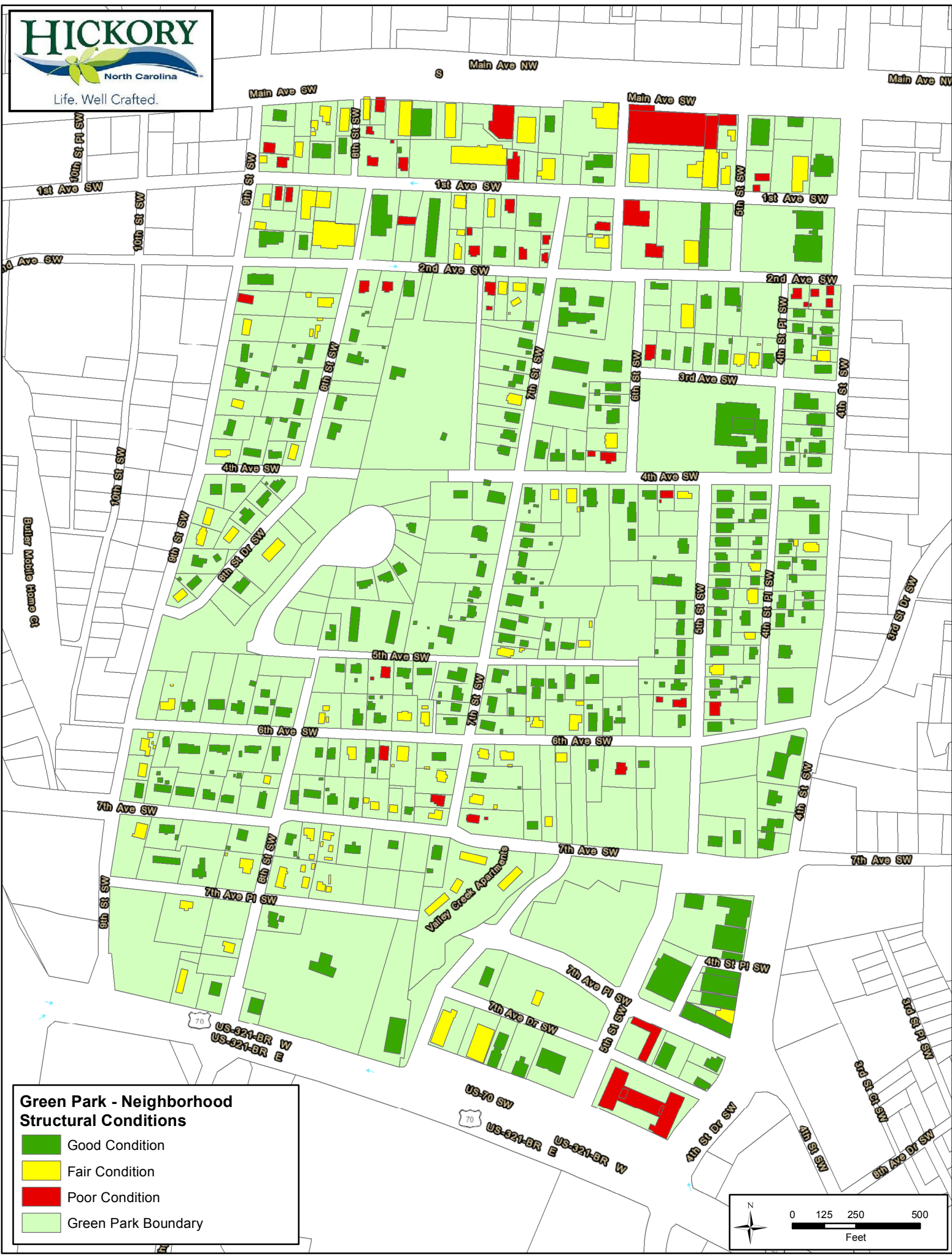




Green Park - Neighborhood Potential Brownfield Locations

- Green Park Boundary
- Potential Brownfields





Green Park - Neighborhood Structural Conditions

- Good Condition
- Fair Condition
- Poor Condition
- Green Park Boundary

