

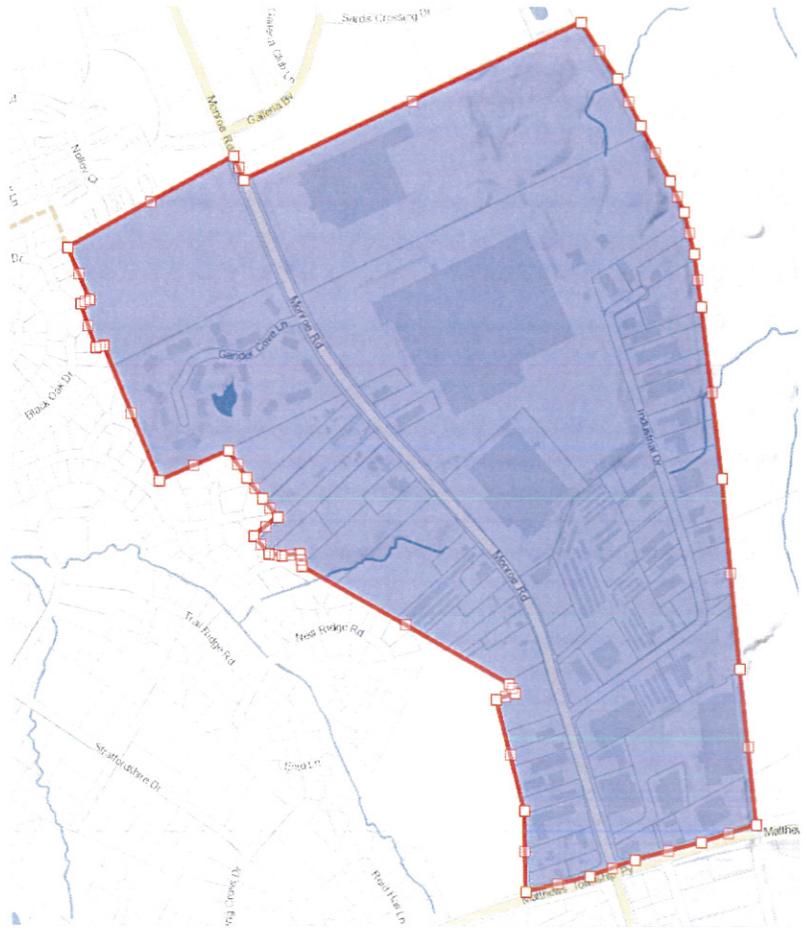
**APPENDIX:**  
**MONROE ROAD**  
**SMALL AREA PLAN**

ADOPTED  
6-9-2014

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the existing infrastructure, service capacity, age and condition of structures, and the demographics and environmental constraints of the area. The plan builds on the recommendations and strategies set forth in Chapter 4 of the Land Use Plan. This plan will create a vision for build-out and redevelopment of the area and provide recommendations for implementing the vision. The plan identifies opportunities to make the corridor safer and more aesthetically pleasing to travelers, residents, and businesses alike, and to improve the pedestrian experience.

The study area consists of approximately 300 acres or 1/2 square mile and follows the Monroe Road corridor from the Charlotte city limits to the intersection of Matthews Township Parkway (NC 51). The area is predominately zoned light industrial with a mix of industrial / warehouse uses along with other commercial and residential uses blended in.



## 2. BACKGROUND



The Monroe Road Small Area Plan was prepared following the study of the existing issues, opportunities and constraints of the corridor. The vision for the plan started to unfold during the stakeholders meeting on September 26, 2013 with further refinement and dialog at the public workshop on October 24, 2013. The plan was further refined in subsequent weeks based on input received by the stakeholder group and community at large.



In addition to issues, opportunities and constraints, a set of guiding principles were established early in the planning process with input from the community and stakeholders. These guiding principles set the direction for the planning process to proceed and help provide a framework for the plan preparation and recommendations. At the workshop on October 24, 2013 the community was given the opportunity to prioritize planning and transportation elements prior to preparing the final draft of the Monroe Road Small Area Plan. This allowed the plan process to better reflect the importance the citizens placed on achieving the plan's recommendations.

The Monroe Road Small Area Plan provides a physical plan with recommended improvements. A complementary mix of land uses is shown on the plan that is consistent with the community vision for the corridor. Urban design principles played a significant role in the development of the plan and are important in achieving the vision. Current and new land uses can take advantage of the existing infrastructure in the study area and the plan identifies potential sites for future redevelopment.

### 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Below are the guiding principles, set early in the planning process, which describe in more detail the purpose of the Monroe Road Small Area Plan.

#### General Guiding Principles

- Create a vision for the Monroe Road corridor.
- Provide specific guidance in a manner that is consistent with the adopted plans and policies to ensure coordination with current planning activities.
- Involve affected stakeholders and citizens.
- Provide specific guidance and continue to build upon the recommendations of the Land Use Plan and other adopted plans and policies.
- Incorporate transit-supportive design and development.
- Ensure that non-residential uses within the study area include office and employment uses along with associated support services or retail uses to the surrounding businesses and neighborhoods.
- Ensure development is urban in both form and scale and supports future multimodal transit that is pedestrian friendly.

## Specific Guiding Principles

- Identify a mix of land uses along the corridor that are consistent with the vision.
- Protect and preserve the industrial zoning within the study area while enhancing the streetscape and built form along the street edge.
- Emphasize design and urban form of future development.
- Consider strategies for potential redevelopment opportunities.
- Promote an interconnected transportation system and promote safety at identified areas of concern.
- Create land development strategies that promote the use of alternate travel modes including foot traffic, bicycles and public transportation via development design standards and public infrastructure.
- Identify a system of shared open space and recreational opportunities.
- Buildings should be oriented directly to streets and should be multi-story. Although such building relationships are critical to the built environment, new construction should be close to the street edge to maximize use of the property.
- Surface parking should be to the side or rear of buildings or structures.



*Concept plan for a pedestrian friendly development with bulk and mass fronting the corridor and smaller scale buildings to the interior*

## 4. MAP OF STUDY AREA



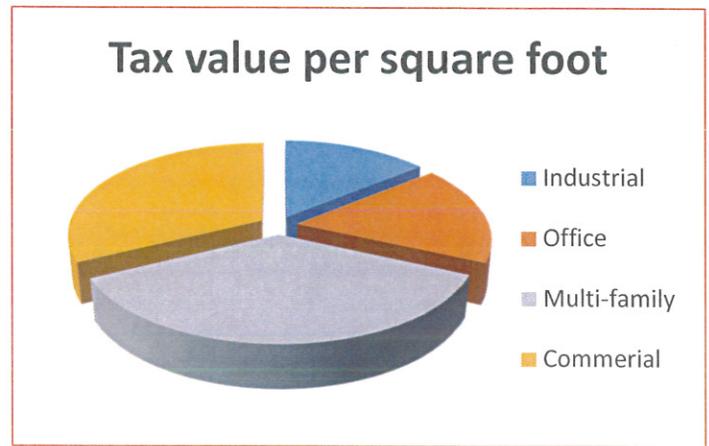
## 5. ECONOMIC STATISTICS

The study area covers approximately 300 contiguous acres along a one mile segment of Monroe Road that extends south from the Charlotte city limits to the intersection of Monroe Road and Matthews Township Pkwy. The study area is bordered to the west by the Sardis Forest neighborhood and the CSX rail road line to the east. CSX currently services several sites along Industrial Drive. The study area is predominately zoned light industrial while the land uses range from vacated single family detached houses to a corporate employment center.

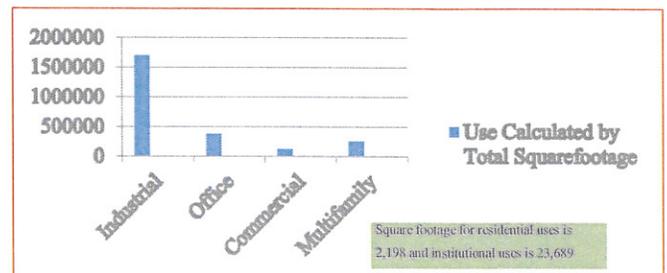
The study area currently consists of nearly 2.5 million square feet of building space which is broken up by land use. The pie chart below indicates the square footage tax value by land use.

The aggregate tax value for all the properties in the study are computed to just over \$84 million generating approximately \$269,000 in property tax revenues for the Town of Matthews.

The study area is predominately zoned for light industrial uses along with limited single family, multi-family, and neighborhood business zoning designations. Family Dollar's headquarters is located within the study area along with a multitude of smaller light industrial uses, a few abandoned single family houses, a 288 unit apartment complex, and several mini storage facilities along with strip commercial retail. The majority of the retail is located in the southwestern quadrant of the study area close to the intersection of Matthews Township Parkway.

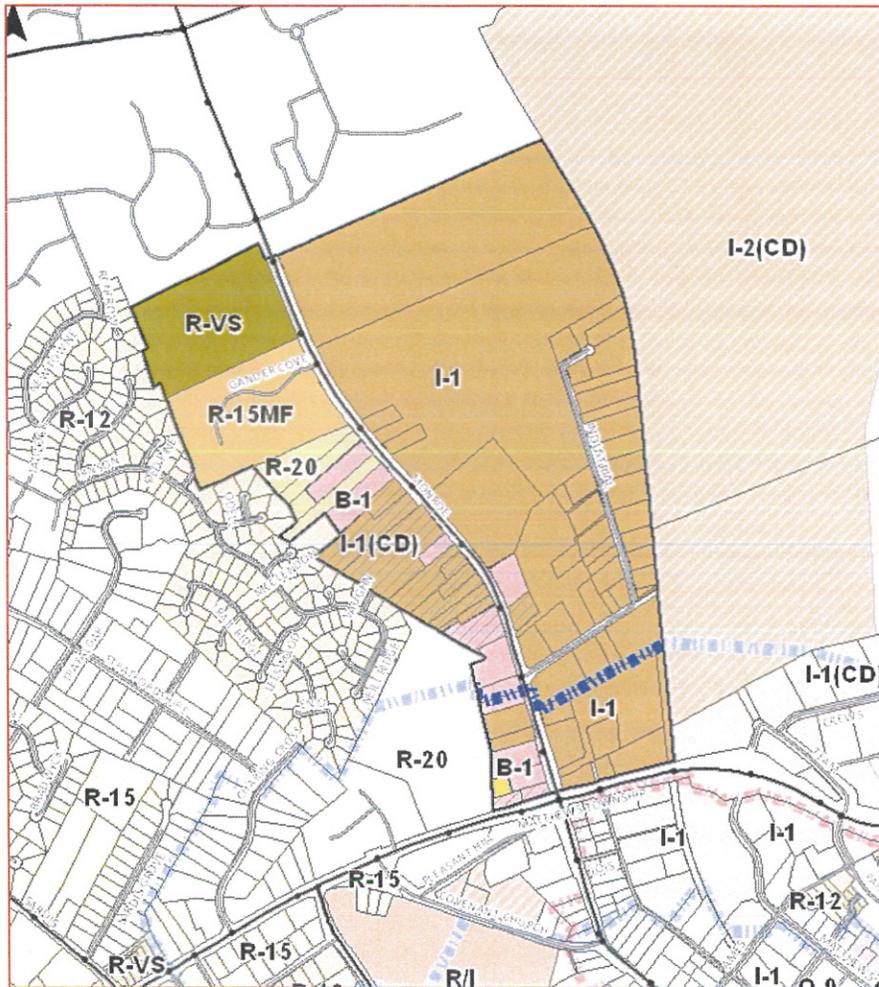


Though an abundance of the Town's light industrial zoning designations lies within the study area, it is important to note there are limited areas zoned light industrial within the Town limits compared to areas zoned for residential and other nonresidential uses. Therefore it is important that the Town place an emphasis on protecting properties zoned for light industrial uses.



## 6. LAND USE

The small area plan approached land use by identifying existing uses, vacant land, and market potential for redevelopment. The majority of the buildings and associated improvements within the study area occurred between the 1960s and 1990s. Most of the buildings are set back off the road with surface parking located between the street edge and the front building facade. The built environment consists of mainly single and two story buildings that are not consistent with today's urban design standards.

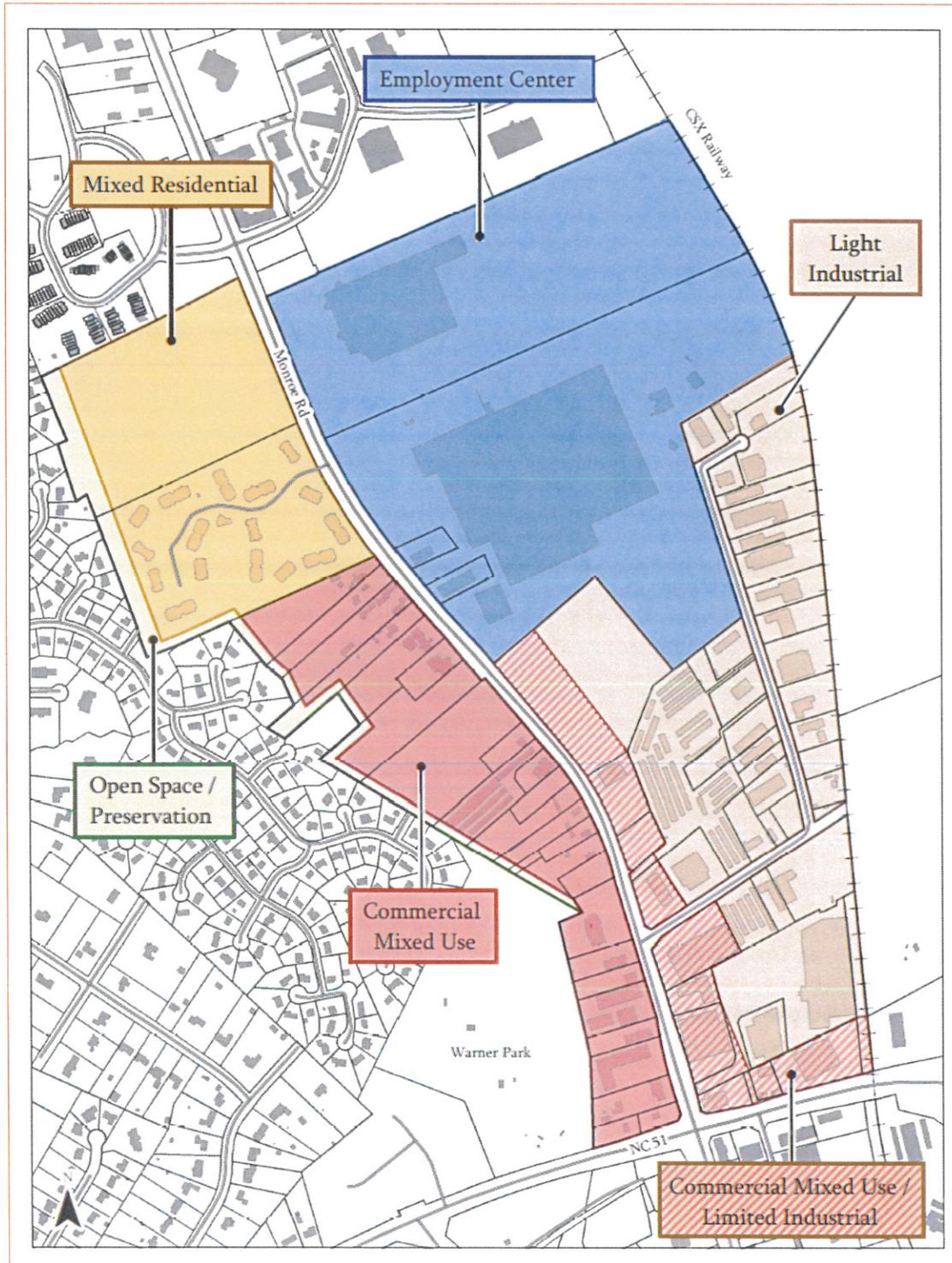


*Current Zoning Map*

The guiding principles in Section 3 suggest that new development should be oriented directly to the street and encourages multi-story to create a commercial corridor. Such building relationships are critical to the implementation of the corridor vision. Large employment centers may have a greater setback consistent with the bulk of their building while smaller multi-story mixed used buildings can complement the street edge creating a safe pedestrian friendly environment. This will create strong visual cues for focal points and destinations. It is recommended that surface parking lots be oriented to the side and rear of buildings.



*Example of light industrial design*



## Land Use Terminology

*Mixed Residential* – This category is intended to support a mix of housing types from detached single family to attached condo and town homes. Densities for an entire development project should not exceed 16 units per acre.

*Employment Center*- This type of use is intended to support large corporate offices and headquarters within a single structure or campus setting. Buildings may be set back off the road with parking to the side and rear creating a park like setting to the campus which is warm and inviting. In order to get maximum use of the property vertical construction and structured parking is preferred. Employment centers should be located on tracts of 20 acres or greater.

*Commercial Mixed Use* – This type of use should consist of two and three story buildings located in close proximity to Monroe Road. with parking to the side and rear of the building. The principle commercial establishments may consist of restaurants, cafes, print/copy shops, dry cleaners, live-work units, office, and other services targeted to support local employers/employees and the surrounding neighborhoods. While retail may be allowed as a first floor use within the study area, it should not be the dominate use on a property, and big box uses should not be allowed within the study area. Where allowed, drive through service windows and gas station canopies should to be located behind the principal structure and out of view from the public street.

*Commercial Mixed Use / Light Industrial* – This type of use is similar to commercial mixed use and is located on the frontage conditions along the east side of Monroe Road. Buildings should be two and three stories and located in close proximity to Monroe Road. All the uses in the commercial mixed use category are allowed along with light industrial uses.

*Light Industrial* – This land use is intended to support employment uses. The principle uses supported by this category include office, employment center, research and development, and light manufacturing with indoor storage of products and materials. Limited on-site retail, wholesale, and outdoor storage uses are permitted.

*Open Space Preservation / Buffer* – When located next to Sardis Forest neighborhood, the open space, much of which is existing tree canopy, will serve as a buffer between existing residential and new development or redevelopment. This land use category supports passive recreational uses.

| <b>Land Use Category</b>           | <b>UDO Districts</b>    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mixed Residential                  | R-15MF, R-VS, SRN       |
| Employment Center                  | O, B-1, B-3, I-1, MUD   |
| Commercial Mixed Use               | B-1, B-3, MUD           |
| Commercial Mixed Use/Light Indust. | B-1, B-3, B-D, I-1, MUD |
| Light Industrial                   | B-D, I-1                |
| Open Space Preservation/Buffer     | Any                     |

• Note – Each land use category could be a mix of zoning designations.

**MONROE ROAD SMALL AREA PLAN LAND USE ACTION ITEMS:**

1. *Construct a "Welcome to Matthews" sign at the town limits, build gateway to downtown.*
2. *Redevelop strip retail and replace with multi-story mixed use buildings*
3. *Create a more pedestrian friendly environment.*
  - A. *Bring buildings closer to the street.*
  - B. *Parking should be to the side and rear of buildings.*
  - C. *Complete the sidewalk network.*
  - D. *Strengthen landscape requirements*
  - E. *Consider minimum building heights of two stories*
  - F. *Incorporate green and open space into design*
  - G. *Protect and promote industrial uses with no direct relationship to Monroe Road and along Industrial Drive.*
4. *Consider design and architectural guidelines for the all new development and redevelopment that occurs*
5. *Create a cohesive landscape plan and built form among all developments fronting Monroe Road.*
6. *Consider preserving as much light industrial zoning as possible and take into consideration the impacts of rezoning properties from light industrial to other zoning classifications*
7. *Promote economic development through employment centers.*
8. *Consider working with utility companies and require new development to bury overhead lines.*
9. *Encourage the preservation of large canopy trees along the corridor.*
10. *Consider installing decorative street lighting*
11. *Consolidate driveways, and ingress/egress points*
12. *Limit uses that generate significant new traffic*

**MONROE ROAD SMALL AREA PLAN LAND USE ACTION ITEMS (Cont.):**

13. *Allow increased setbacks for employment centers or corporate campuses.*
14. *Employment centers should provide structured parking where feasible*
15. *Protect residential properties from commercial development by requiring a 50 foot vegetative buffer*
16. *Prohibit strip development and big box development*
17. *Drive through service windows and gas station canopies should to be located behind the principal structure and out of view from the public street.*

**7. URBAN DESIGN**

In keeping with the Matthews Land Use Plan and the Unified Development Ordinance, this plan places an emphasis on design and urban form.

With regard to the built form, the plan and supplemental street cross section support future development and redevelopment that better orients the public street network, which includes additional recommendations for street network linkages.



*Example of mixed-use, urban design*

The plan also identifies that there are a number of abandoned residential and commercial structures along Monroe Road within the study area. The plan recommends that these parcels transition to multi-story office and vertical mixed uses when redeveloped.



*Conceptual drawing of urban form and scale*

The public realm consists of areas that are not privatized, but accessible to all. This includes the streetscape in the study area and nearby parks and open space. The quality of this environment is important because it represents the fabric of the overall community and should be taken in strong consideration. Enhancing this environment through streetscape improvements is intended as a key objective to the plan.

**MONROE ROAD SMALL AREA PLAN URBAN DESIGN ACTION ITEMS:**

1. *When different façade materials are used, the heavier material shall be applied at grade level.*
2. *Encourage building articulation with windows every 16 feet.*
3. *Avoid single story structures that are horizontally integrated*
4. *Uses should be vertically integrated with most intense uses on ground level and less intense uses on upper levels.*
5. *Building Height and scale should be proportional with the façade facing Monroe Road creating the greatest linear dimension.*
6. *Buildings should occupy 60 percent of the lot width fronting Monroe Road.*
7. *Massing and scale should be complimentary to other buildings facing Monroe Road.*
8. *Drive through service windows and gas station canopies should to be located behind the principal structure and out of view from the public street.*
9. *No side or rear elevation shall face Monroe Road and all mechanical equipment shall be out of View from Monroe Rd.*

The following illustrations demonstrate key urban design elements by creating the public realm along the road side:



*Conceptual two story gas station with gas canopy to rear*



*Conceptual two story urban design creating a public realm*

## 8. TRANSPORTATION

There are only two public streets within the study area, Monroe Road and Industrial Drive. Monroe Road is a five lane cross section that parallels with US 74 and consist of a mix of uses including industrial, institutional, and commercial land uses.

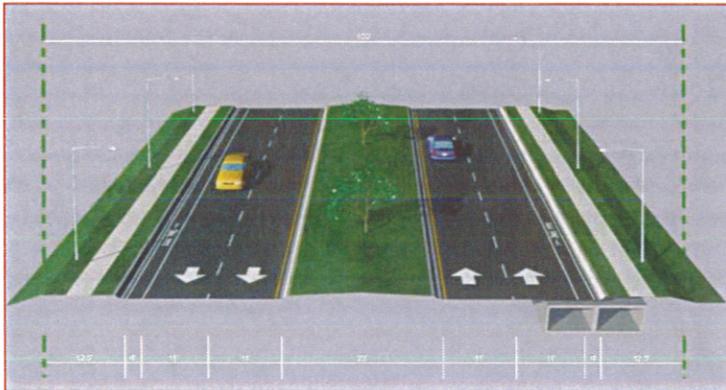
The cross section includes curb and gutter with a partial sidewalk network that terminates just before Family Dollar

Corporate Headquarters. The center lane functions as a dual directional turn lane and each parcel is served by individual curb cuts.

The posted speed is 45 mph from the Charlotte city limits to Industrial Drive where the speed limit transitions to 35 mph. There are no

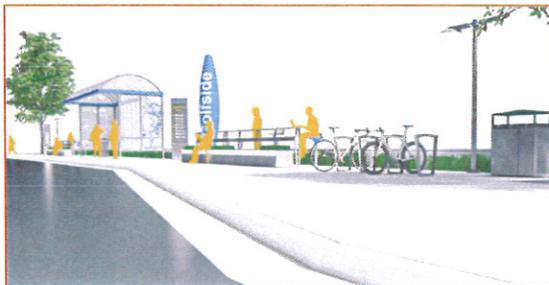


bike lanes present in the study area nor safe passage for pedestrians to cross the road. Monroe Road is served by CATS (Charlotte Area Transit Service) with bus stops in both the east and west bound directions. The bus stops are curbside with buses occupying a travel lane for loading and unloading. Industrial Drive is a two lane local street that accesses a number of smaller light industrial uses off of Monroe Road. There are no sidewalks or curb and gutter and run-off is sheet flow into drainage ditches that parallel the blacktop. Travel lanes are narrow and street lighting is inadequate.



*Example of a 4 lane landscaped median divided cross section*

Traffic studies indicate that there are upwards of 32,000 vehicular trips a day on Monroe Road.<sup>1</sup> As growth continues in the Charlotte metro region, this number can be expected to increase. Crash data indicates that between 2000 and 2010 there were 580 automobile accidents reported, most occurring at signalized intersections.



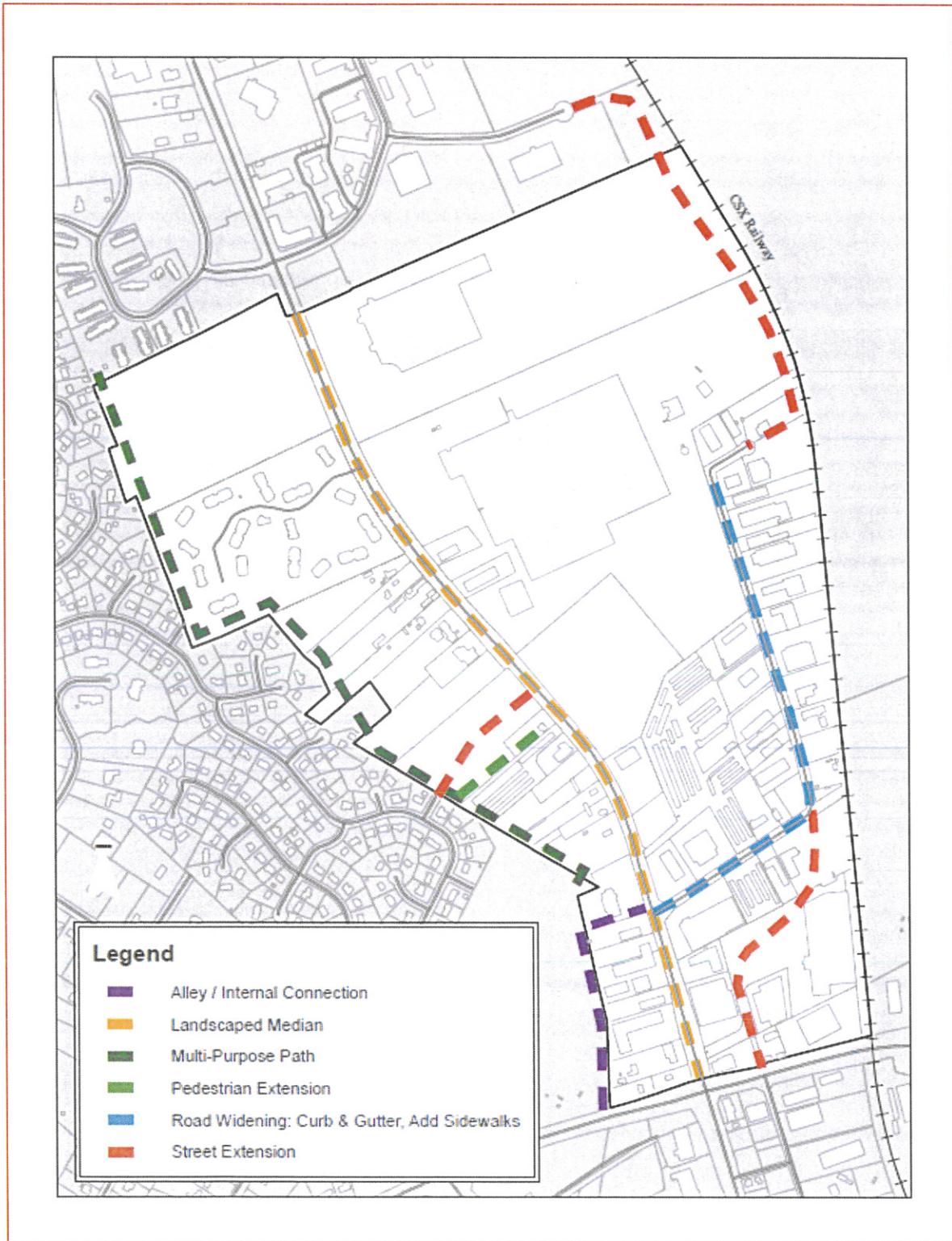
*Concept of bus stop with shelter and dedicated lane*



*Conceptual pedestrian safety zone*

<sup>1</sup> Traffic Study Group – 2012 Charlotte AADT Map 8

# Proposed Connections and Improvements



**MONROE ROAD SMALL AREA PLAN TRANSPORTATION ACTION ITEMS:**

1. *Consider a feasibility study for replacing the center turn lane with a landscaped median with strategically located left overs and pedestrian safety zones at designated crosswalks,*
2. *Work with Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) to locate and construct bus stops that utilize bulb outs or dedicated turn out lanes and decorative shelters.*
3. *Reduce speed limit and synchronize traffic signals.*
4. *Consider a feasibility study for putting a traffic signal at the intersection of Monroe Road and Industrial Drive.*
5. *Consider researching an alternate entrance/access to the Sardis Forest neighborhood via Monroe Road and identify possible pedestrian connection to the commercial development from the neighborhood*
6. *Work with Family Dollar and City of Charlotte to extend Industrial Drive to Galleria Boulevard*
7. *Encourage internal connectivity between and within developments. Consider working with Covenant Day School to create an alley adjacent to commercial properties in order to allow for internal connectivity for developments along the west side of Monroe Road between NC 51 and Industrial Drive.*
8. *Complete sidewalk network within corridor and add sidewalks and curb and gutter along Industrial Drive*
9. *Consider a multi-use path at the rear of properties adjacent to Sardis Forest*
10. *Consider studying traffic warrants to see if there could be a possibility of reducing signalized intersections within the study area to increase traffic flow.*
11. *Consider adding bike lanes or other bike facilities*
12. *Consider an alternate entrance/access to the Sardis Forest neighborhood via Monroe Road.*

## 9. UTILITIES

Charlotte – Mecklenburg Utilities Department (CMUD) provides both water and sewer to the study area. The study area is currently served with a 20 inch cast iron water line that runs along Monroe Road with a current pipe capacity of 16.6 million gallons per day (mgd). The current pipe flow is 1.39 million gallons per day with an average daily demand of .11 mgd and a maximum daily demand of .212 mgd in the study area. Maximum build out conditions estimate that pipe flow will only be at 20% to 25% capacity.

The study area is also served by four sewer basins, each operating at less than 20% of available flow capacity. Currently all sewer lines within the study area are gravity fed with no lift stations. Water and sewer capacity is very good within the study area and should be more than capable of sustaining maximum build-out conditions.

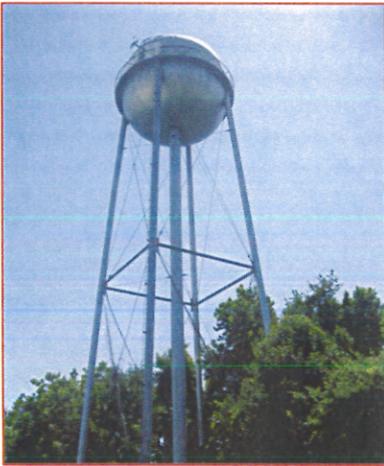
In addition to the underground utilities, the study area is also served by overhead transmission wires primarily consisting of power, cable, and phone. These utilities are supported by above ground poles that run along the eastbound side of Monroe Road with jumpers to service the properties fronting the west bound side of Monroe.

### MONROE ROAD SMALL AREA PLAN UTILITIES ACTION ITEMS

1. *Utilities should be buried for all new development and redevelopment*
2. *Any sidewalk or street construction activity should be reviewed to include taking existing overhead line underground*

## 10. CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Once part of Potters Road, Monroe Road was the primary route for commercial potters to transport their wares from western Lincoln County to markets in Charleston, South Carolina. Following the collapse of the pottery industry in western Lincoln County, Monroe Road transitioned into a farm to market rural route. Today, Monroe Road serves as a gateway to Matthews' historic downtown core and is a major thoroughfare that feeds into uptown Charlotte. Although this section of Monroe Road no longer visually demonstrates its historical significance, the study area contains cultural/historic resources.



Dating back to the 1860s is Roseland Cemetery. Originally known by local African Americans as “Renfrow Quarters”, this cemetery is located in the woods, surrounded by neighborhoods and vacant land. Overgrown and virtually forgotten by many, this property serves as an important piece of history for African Americans in Matthews. On September 24, 2012 the Matthews Board of Commissioners designated the Roseland Cemetery as a local historic landmark. The Roseland Cemetery is one of the few reminders of the quickly disappearing rural African American experience in Mecklenburg County in the years following Emancipation through the last decade of Jim Crow Segregation.

Located at 10701 Monroe Road is the old water tower which is all that remains of an old textile plant once located there. The water tower dates back to the early to mid 1960s when the textile industry was prosperous in North Carolina. The tower was originally constructed for onsite fire suppression.

### MONROE ROAD SMALL AREA PLAN CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTION ITEMS

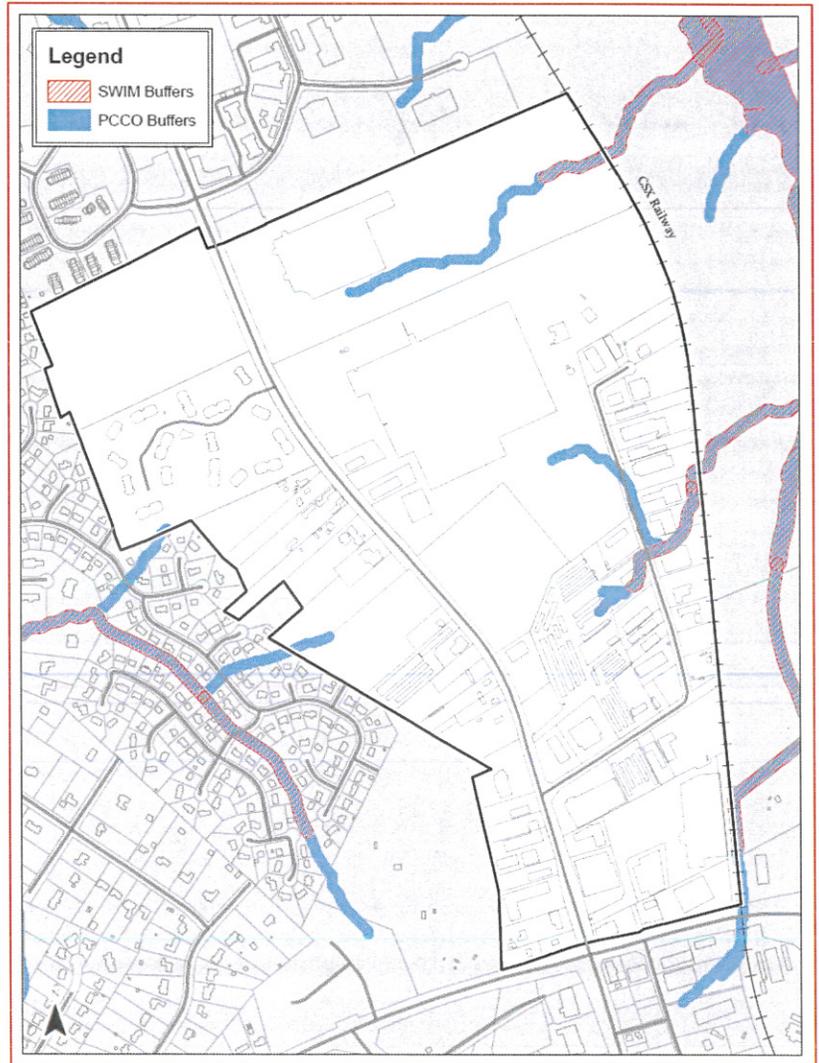
1. *Continue working with the Mecklenburg County Landmarks Commission and Matthews Historical Foundation to restore and preserve Roseland Cemetery. Prohibit any disturbance of the Historic Roseland Cemetery.*
2. *Evaluate the structural integrity of the water tower and investigate ways of preserving it.*

## 11. NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

There are a few undeveloped tracts of land within the study area which are heavily wooded with large mature trees and the study area overall has gentle slopes posing little to no development challenges. Some parcels have been timbered in recent years.

The Post Construction and storm water provisions in the UDO regulate erosion and sediment control requirements for the Town. These provisions were adopted by the Town Board and are administered by the Town and/or Mecklenburg County Department Land Use and Environmental Services (LUESA). Any land disturbing activities of 20,000 square feet triggers soil erosion review by LEUSAS, and any disturbance of one acre or greater will trigger compliance with the post construction chapter of the UDO.

Though there is no publicly owned open space or parks located in the study area, such amenities exist in the larger community. Warner Park adjacent to the study area is owned and operated by Covenant Day School. The Town encourages the use of multi-use pathways as a means to connect both existing and new development. Parks and open space can provide other benefits, such as protecting stream buffers, mature tree stands, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas. New development is encouraged to incorporate pocket parks as part of the public realm in their design.



## MONROE ROAD SMALL AREA PLAN NATURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE ACTION ITEMS

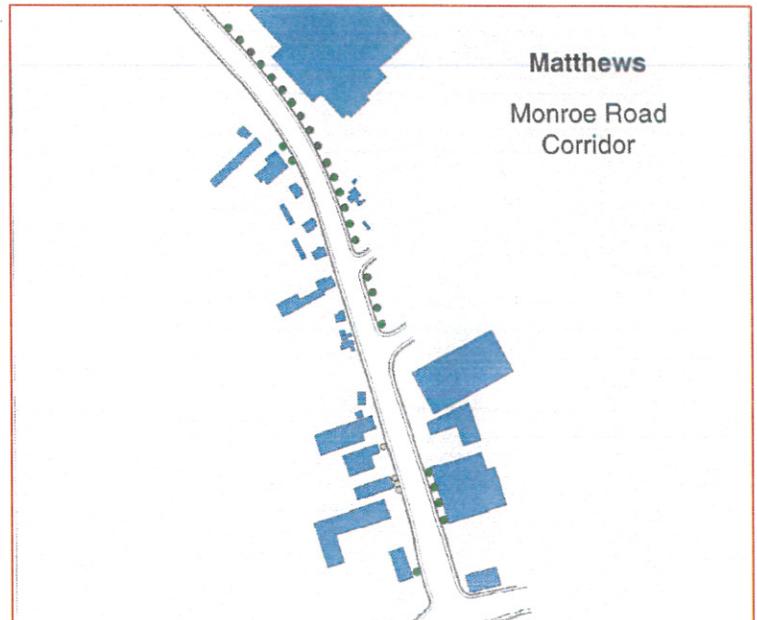
1. *Encourage open space through the design of new development and redeveloped parcels*
2. *Encourage underground storage where storm water detention is required*
3. *Consider a multi-use pathway along the rear property boundaries in or adjacent to Sardis Forest neighborhood.*
4. *Explore opportunities to incorporate pocket parks into development design.*

## 12. ADOPTED POLICIES AND PLANS

### Monroe Road/John St Streetscape Plan

A Streetscape Plan was developed in 1998 after the Monroe Road corridor was widened from two to five lanes. This was the Town's first Urban Forestry Grant and it served as a guide for the development of future street tree plans for Matthews. The 1998 street tree plan specifically addressed the corridor and gateway that is the focus of the Small Area Plan.

- Current DOT policy requires small trees be planted 8 feet from the street, large trees 15 feet, and does not allow trees in sight triangles. The purpose is to eliminate obstructions should vehicles leave the roadway.
- Duke Energy requires new trees be planted a specific minimum distance from overhead power lines.
- With the 1998 streetscape plan, all trees for this area were planted behind the sidewalk in the narrow public right-of-way.
- Roughly 30 trees were planted within the Small Area Plan's scope; mostly on the east side of Monroe Road. Several have been severely compromised.



- An updated inventory of these street trees and locations of overhead utility lines should be taken.

As NCDOT continues its conversion in philosophy regarding streets becoming “Complete Streets”, their requirements on street trees may be amended.

### **Town of Matthews/Stallings Comprehensive Transportation Plan**

In 2012 the Towns of Matthews and Stallings jointly developed a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The plan was created to address the following fundamental principles:

- Provide safe, dedicated facilities for multi-modal transportation including automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians and transit.
- Bridge transportation gaps between neighborhoods, communities, towns, and counties.
- Balance the diverse needs of local trips and commuting traffic, and create transportation facilities for users of all ages, abilities, and skill levels.
- Provide multi-modal transportation connections between mixed, diverse land uses.
- Encourage non-vehicular local trips by providing multi-modal transportation facilities that make useful connections.
- Support current and future land uses with proactive transportation facility development and improvement.
- Assign funding for the improvement and development of a multi-modal transportation facilities.

As drafted, the CTP does not make any specific recommendations for Monroe Road, but does call for the widening of East John Street from two to four lanes to the east of the study area through downtown to Interstate 485 by 2025. This will improve access to 485. The MTP (Metropolitan Transportation Plan) calls for Highway 51 to be widened to six lanes between Monroe Road and Sardis Road by 2025. Any recommendations that result from this plan should be incorporated into the CTP upon adoption.

#### **MONROE ROAD SMALL AREA PLAN ADOPTED PLANS ACTION ITEMS**

1. *Adopt the Comprehensive Transportation Plan*
2. *Continue to build on existing plans and verify implementation is consistent with adopted plans*
3. *Update adopted plans as needed*

## 13. STRATEGIES

The Monroe Road Small Area Plan functions as a policy guide to direct future growth and redevelopment along the corridor. In order to successfully implement the recommendations of the plan the Town should employ specific strategies. These may include the creation of partnerships, encouraging and enhancing new and existing land use regulations, identification of short, medium, and long term action items, and identifying funding mechanisms. In many cases, strategies may be coupled to achieve the recommended action items.

### 1. Create a phased approach

Staff along with the Town Board should evaluate each recommendation and rank it on its need, time it will take to complete, and total cost then determine if such actions can feasibly be implemented in 1-5 years, 5-10 years, or greater than 10 years.

- A. *Short Term Action Items*- Action items that can be feasibly accomplished within 1-5 years at minimal to moderate cost.
- B. *Medium Term Action Items* – Action items that can be feasibly accomplished within 5-10 years. Typically these action items are associated with higher cost and/or approval by additional agencies.
- C. *Long Term Action Plans* – Action items that typically will take over 10 years to implement.

### 2. Build Partnerships

The Town Board needs to look at the Action Items for each category and identify what partnerships should be created. This could include partnerships between town departments, between the Town and other government agencies, or partnerships between the Town and private individuals, developers, or companies. In creating a partnership the Town needs to identify the applicable party, the reason for their involvement, and what their role is in implementing the action item. At times partnership agreements may be formalized, detailing the scope of work, each partner's responsibility, and commencement and completion dates.

### 3. Evaluate and Design Regulations

The small area plan creates a vision to model future development for the Monroe Road corridor. The Town Board should periodically evaluate the land use regulations to verify that these regulations provide enough direction to effectively shape the future of the corridor. The Town Board may also consider adding regulations such as design guidelines to ensure that new development and redevelopment conform to the vision.

### 4. Find Potential Funding

Identifying funding sources is always a challenge for local governments but some sources to consider are state and federal grants for redevelopment, transportation, air quality and environmental, aesthetics, healthy communities, and/or infill and