

Saint Paul's Area Plan



Newton, North Carolina
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Introduction

Beginning in September of 1998, the Newton Planning Commission, with the assistance of City Staff and Division of Community Assistance Planner, John Anthony, began the process of developing a Plan for future development of the St. Paul's Area.

Factors which generated the need for the Plan were the proximity to a City of Hickory business park currently under development known as the Fairgrove Business Park on the west side of St. Paul's Church Road and development of the Conover-West Industrial Park on the north side of US Hwy 70/321. Various factors influence development and the St. Paul's Area is no exception. It has major thoroughfares, significant utilities available, both existing commercial and industrial development, and quite a bit of vacant land that is available for development. It is anticipated in the near future that pressures will be brought to bear for this area to become an area for commercial and industrial uses and probably some residential uses as well. It is felt by the Staff and Planning Commission that a Plan to provide guidance for land development is essential if the City is to realize the maximum potential of the area.

Please refer to the **map** entitled **St. Paul's Area Plan Surrounding Development** for perspective.

The main details that the Planning Commission and Staff looked at were existing development, including structures, parking and loading areas, and major highways and transportation corridors, as well as topography, water features and flood plain mapping to determine the development potential for the area.

Please refer to **map** entitled **St. Paul's Area Plan—Land Features**. The area is bisected primarily by Cline Creek, which is a tributary of Clark Creek. There is an existing industrial development off of St. Paul's Church Road

known as the Mid County Industrial Park, as well as another industrial park located off of Nathan Street. Both of these industrial parks are essentially built out and are older parks in terms of when they were planned and constructed. The largest parcel in the Planning Area is a parcel owned by the Hickory American Legion Fairgrounds, which sits right in the middle of the Planning Area.

The Planning Commission also took into account soil suitability of the area to determine which areas would have the best prospects for new development. Please refer to the **map** entitled **St. Paul's Area Plan—Soil Suitability**.

The Commission looked at existing zoning for the area, (see **map** entitled **St. Paul's Area Plan—Zoning**), as a precursor to establishing what future development patterns might look like if current zoning were adhered to, as well as discussing the possibilities of zoning changes to alter the land development pattern and types of uses that would occur within the planning area.

The next step was to have discussions with the adjoining municipalities of Conover and Hickory with the County Economic Development Corporation President, a Representative of the Hickory-Conover MPO Thoroughfare Planning Organization, and the County Planning Director to talk about the issues that they felt were significant for the area.

After reviewing the responses of the meetings, the Planning Commission determined that several factors should guide planning for the area. One is that there should be connectivity between the Hickory Fairgrove Business Park, the Conover-West Industrial Park with the St. Paul's Area in terms of streets. The Hwy 70 and St. Paul's Church Roads are existing thoroughfares that provide boundaries between the different planning areas. Also the proposed Catawba Valley Blvd. extension would connect the Hickory Fairgrove Business Park with the St. Paul's Planning Area,

and further that the Old Conover-Startown Road Extension will connect the St. Paul's Planning Area with the Conover West Industrial Park. The Planning Commission also noted there were several logical extensions of roads from the Conover area south into the Newton area that would lend itself to good connectivity and traffic flow. (Please refer to **Map** entitled **St. Paul's Area Plan—Transportation Map**.)

The Staff then met with representatives of Piedmont Natural Gas, Duke Power and Charter Communications to evaluate available utilities and discuss concerns and preferences for development of the area.

Once all of the issues had been identified, they were then organized into topical areas, those being **UTILITIES, TRANSPORTATION, ZONING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, APPEARANCE, JURISDICTIONAL, PROPERTY OWNERS, SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND OPEN SPACE/RECREATION**. In addition to identifying the land uses, plans for the Hickory Fairgrove Business Park and the Conover-West Industrial Park were obtained, analyzed, and compared and contrasted with the St. Paul's Area, in an attempt to determine future land use patterns that would be most desirable and probable for the St. Paul's Area. A **map** was developed entitled **Generalized Land Use**, which is an overall plan to guide future development for the area. This Plan was presented to the Planning Commission and was unanimously agreed upon.

The Staff was then given a directive to organize public forums with property owners for the residential areas separate from the non-residential areas. Public Forums were held on October 17, 2000 with the residential property owners and October 24, 2000 with the non-residential property owners. At the October 17, 2000 Forum Public Meeting, study maps were presented for consideration and discussion. A presentation was made on the progress to date and the findings and

the issues that had been identified in evaluating the area. The attendees heard a presentation from City Staff, as well as Professor David Walters of UNCC. He spoke specifically about how residential and non-residential areas could coexist and in some cases, could co-mingle. He introduced the concept of traditional neighborhood design and discussed the amenities and the probabilities of the desirability of this kind of development in proximity to employment centers, such as those that will exist in the St. Paul's area, as well as the Fairgrove Business Park and the Conover-West Industrial Park.

The questions posed by Staff to those present as to agreement that there was a need for planning, agreement on the issues and concerns and agreement that plans and regulations were necessary and desirable for the area which would address the issues. There was a consensus of those present that all of these answers were affirmative and there was a genuine desire of those attending the residential meeting to participate in development of regulations and recommendations that would ensure quality development, preservation of open space, farm land and connectivity to employment centers for the future.

At the October 24, 2000 Meeting, the same issues were presented to the non-residential property owners. Staff made a presentation that included images and maps, not only of the St. Paul's Area, but also from industrial and business parks in other areas of North Carolina. Issues were discussed. Primary feed back and comments from those in attendance was that there was an agreement that a plan was needed, there was an agreement that there should be cooperation and coordination with property owners since there was a multitude of those affected. Thoroughfare Plans were the major concern and should be reviewed as to their impact on properties, and that they would support the recommended Plan for the Area, and further that they would participate in developing regulations that would encourage development in

compliance and in conformity with the Plan recommendations.

Following are the Policy Statements that were gleaned from the issues and the comments during the process. These are being recommended to the Board of Aldermen for consideration and adoption in anticipation of the further work of developing regulations and steps necessary to implement the recommendations and policies of the Plan.

Industrial Development

During the planning process for the St. Paul's Area Plan, the opportunity for significant industrial development with the Planning Area was recognized. A recurring theme that was apparent throughout the plan's preparation was that the Planning Commission favored economic growth that would occur as a result of expansion of existing industry and recruitment of new industry, and that such industry should be appropriately located, and should meet state environmental quality performance standards.

Regarding the location of industrial development generally, the policies call for advanced planning for the identification of future industrial sites. In terms of specific locational standards, the policies place all industrial and industrially related activities into one of three categories. **Heavy industries**, for example, are generally characterized as having large physical plants, high land requirements and low worker-to-land ratios. Heavy industrial sites should have easy access to all major modes of regional and inter-regional transportation. The availability of major highway and rail facilities are particularly necessary to provide for the efficient movement of raw materials, labor and finished manufactured products. Heavy industrial sites may also require substantial buffering or separation from non-industrial uses. These buffers may include, for example, natural features, major transportation corridors, etc.

Light industries are generally characterized as having smaller physical plants, lower land requirements and higher worker-to-land ratios. Since light industries typically do not require large land areas, they can be more easily located within urbanized areas, thus enabling them to take maximum advantage of available services and to minimize home to work distances. Light industries should also have easy access to major highway, rail and air facilities. However, care should be taken to ensure that light industries are located in a manner that will prevent additional traffic generation onto residential streets. Light industrial sites should also be compatible with surrounding and nearby areas. Natural buffers and other types of separation may be required to prevent degradation of adjacent areas and preserve visual aesthetics.

Warehousing, storage and distribution facilities are an essential component of most industrial operations and are accommodated within areas planned for both heavy and light industry. In recent years, however, many new forms of warehousing, storage and distribution facilities have emerged in the development marketplace. When these new warehousing facilities occur along major thoroughfares in a community, it is important that they are properly landscaped and buffered so as not to detract from the overall image of the area.

Industrial Development Policies

ID-1.0 The City shall encourage a public service and regulatory environment conducive to industrial development, tempered by environmental quality considerations and the availability of public financial resources.

ID-2.0 Industrial development shall not be located in areas that would diminish the desirability of existing and planned non-industrial uses,

nor shall non-industrial uses be allowed to encroach upon existing or planned industrial sites.

ID-3.0 Industrial development shall be located on land that is physically suitable and has unique locational advantages for industry. Advanced planning for the identification of such land shall be encouraged.

ID-4.0 Heavy industrial sites shall be separated from non-industrial areas by natural features, greenways, major transportation facilities, and/or other suitable means.

ID-5.0 Light industry should be located where it can take advantage of available services and minimize home-to-work distances. Careful design and/or buffering shall be required to insure compatibility with surrounding areas.

ID-6.0 Warehousing, storage, and distribution facilities shall have direct access to appropriate thoroughfares, and shall be visually buffered according to their location.

ID-7.0 The City should consider proactive rezoning of current residential zoned portions of the planned industrial areas to an industrial classification to ensure a foreknowledge of development expectations and requirements.

Commercial and Mixed Use Development

In Newton, as in many cities across the country, new commercial development is oftentimes viewed by city planners and elected officials as the most challenging from of land use with which

to deal. Residents participating in the public involvement process for the St. Paul's Area Plan amplified this viewpoint. Concerns clearly expressed included an excess of strip commercial development, commercial encroachment into residential areas, the need for stronger buffering and landscaping requirements for commercial development, and the need for fewer driveways onto thoroughfares.

Typical commercial development occurs either in downtown or in shopping centers—varying from regional centers which provide a broad range of goods and services and are heavy traffic generators to neighborhood centers which offer a limited variety of convenience goods and service to a small area. Mixed Use developments that incorporate retail, office, and professional, as well as industrial and residential development as integral parts to an entire development scheme are becoming popular in some areas of the County and the plan contemplates this as desirable, especially as a transition zone between purely industrial and residential uses.

The Commercial area of the plan is expected to serve as Highway commercial. Highway oriented commercial uses provide goods and services to the traveling public and accommodate businesses which require extensive display and storage areas. Without proper safeguards, however, these areas may evolve into extensive lengths of strip commercial development containing a variety of business activities which are inappropriate and which result in traffic congestion, unsafe proliferation of curb cuts, and visual blight. Extreme caution should be taken to ensure that only those commercial activities, which are truly highway oriented, locate in these areas. Although it is often difficult to develop highway commercial areas as a unit, concentrations of businesses, adequate parking provisions provision for coordinated ingress and egress and attention to aesthetic factors should be encouraged. They should be located only on major thoroughfares

and the number of driveways serving these areas should be limited.

Commercial Policies

- C 1.0** Highway oriented commercial uses shall be clustered along segments of arterial streets and contain land uses which are mutually compatible and reinforcing in use and design; they should be designed in such a way as to minimize signage, access points, and excessive lengths of commercial strip development.
- C 2.0** Commercial uses shall be encouraged to develop by consolidation and depending on existing commercially zoned property, only when such consolidation and deepening is compatible with adjacent land uses.
- C 3.0** Excessive strip development along the areas through streets shall be prohibited. Commercial strip development shall be reduced and/or zoning should be made more restrictive when redevelopment opportunities permit.
- C 4.0** Effective buffering and/or landscaping shall be provided where commercial development adjoins existing or planned residential uses.

The Mixed-Use area proposed by the plan is anticipated to provide a transition between commercial uses along US 70 and interior and exterior Industrial areas of both Newton and Hickory along the St. Paul’s Church Road. There are topographical limitations to some of the land

that must be overcome with proper grading solutions that are environmentally sound. It is expected that the proposed Mixed Use area will consist of retail, office and professional uses as well as possible lodging and restaurant facilities to serve the adjoining commercial and industrial land uses.

In preparation of the St. Paul’s Area Plan, some of the discussion focused on the “appropriate” use of Mixed-Use development as a transition between the industrial area of the Plan and the commercial areas. The need for Mixed-Use development on the perimeter of the Plan Boundary seems clear.

Care should also be taken to ensure that the Mixed-Use development does not become simply another form of linear strip development along the St. Paul’s Church Road. Mixed Use developments oftentimes lend themselves to office park configurations, and this form of development should be encouraged wherever possible.

Mixed Use Development Policies

- MU 1.0** Mixed Use Development should be encouraged to locate as a transitional land use between activities of higher intensity and those of lower intensity.
- MU 2.0** Linear stripping of uses along St. Paul’s Church Road shall be discouraged in favor of planned office parks or clusters of offices and retail and services with common access, parking, etc.

Economic Development

Diversity and quality are words that describe Newton’s attitude toward economic development. Most of the residents were not in favor of having growth simply for growth’s sake, but would

support new growth that would enhance economic opportunity and quality of life in the area.

Economic diversity is beneficial in that a diverse and broad-based local economy is less subject to fluctuations in key industry segments that may occur at the national level.

Quality of life considerations in economic development may be viewed from at least two perspectives. First, area residents expressed a strong desire to see that any future economic development will be compatible with the area’s existing natural and man-made resources. Second, economic development should seek to capitalize upon existing human resources in the Newton area. New businesses and industries, which draw upon the existing labor force or which, require area workers to train and upgrade their skills, are especially desired.

Economic Development Policies

- ED-1.0** The City should coordinate its efforts with the EDC to target specific business and industries for the plan area.
- ED-2.0** The City should explore and develop incentive options with utility providers, the County and the State.
- ED-3.0** The City should encourage a mix of “For Sale” and “For Lease” Property in the plan area.
- ED-4.0** Wherever and whenever practicable, parcels should be accumulated to further the marketability and effective use of land within the plan area.
- ED-5.0** The City shall work with EDC, State Agencies, and Developers to effectively market the area.

ED-6.0 Expansion and relocation of existing industries and businesses within Newton and Catawba County shall be encouraged in the area. Companies with growth potential, whether small, medium, or large shall be targeted.

ED-7.0 Maximum efforts shall be made to attract clean businesses and industries that meet the air and water quality standards desired by the City.

ED-8.0 The City shall encourage new and expanding industries and businesses which (1) diversify the local economy (2) utilize a more highly skilled labor force and (3) increase area residents’ incomes.

ED-9.0 The City shall protect, enhance, and encourage a high quality of life, image, and cultural amenities as an effective approach to economic development.

ED-10.0 Area residents shall balance the benefits of continued economic development against the possible detrimental effects.

ED-11.0 Appropriate educational and training programs shall be encouraged to help unemployed and underemployed local residents take advantage of business expansion and new development.

ED-12.0 Economic Development efforts should encourage the revitalization and reuse of unused or underutilized structures and sites in appropriately located commercial and industrial areas.

ED-13.0 The City should adopt regulations that emphasize research and development while minimizing the potential for industries that produce or use large quantities of hazardous materials.

ED-14.0 Regulations to encourage improvements to existing businesses and industries should be adopted to promote the blending of old and new development areas.

ED-15.0 The City should pursue a territorial agreement with Duke Power for future electrical service within the plan area.

ED-16.0 The City should develop regulations to take into account requirements for effective and efficient fire protection for structures.

Housing and Residential Development

Residential development policies for the St. Paul’s Area Plan reflect a variety of issues and priorities for housing in the City of Newton. Foremost among all issues was the need to conscientiously protect existing viable neighborhoods as an important component of Newton’s quality of life. Residents participating in the public involvement process for the Plan felt strongly that commercial and industrial encroachment into residential areas continued to be a problem in the area.

At the same time, there was candid recognition that remaining pockets of certain residential neighborhoods have become so completely infused or surrounded by non-residential uses that their continued viability as a housing resource has become questionable. In these cases, it is better to plan for an orderly conversion from former residential uses to higher density residential use,

office use or some other compatible alternative land use.

The theme of neighborhood protection was also evident in the public’s desire to minimize and prevent through traffic in existing neighborhoods and to design new subdivisions so that through traffic is discouraged. Also, new residential development should be discouraged from locating adjacent to incompatible development or in environmentally hazardous areas.

Regarding housing types, there continues to be strong support for the traditional single family home as a major housing source in Newton. The Plan encourages the use of flexible or innovative land planning techniques when such land planning can better preserve the natural topography, vegetation, or other natural attributes of a given site.

Regarding high-density residential development, the policies reflect the planning principle that such high-density uses must have available adequate urban services. In addition to centralized water and sewer services, high-density residential development must be provided with direct access to major thoroughfares and/or transit systems. Such development should also be located near existing or planned concentrations of employment, schools, and shopping.

Housing and Residential Development Policies

HRD-1.0 The protection of viable neighborhoods shall be encouraged to insure their continued existence as a major housing source and as a reflection of the long-term quality of life in Newton.

HRD-2.0 Residential neighborhoods, which have become infused or surrounded by non-residential uses, may undergo an orderly conversion

from residential use to higher density residential use or other compatible alternative land uses.

HRD-3.0 Efforts to reduce through traffic in existing neighborhoods and prevent through traffic in planned residential areas shall be encouraged.

HRD-4.0 Proposed residential development, which would expose residents to the harmful effects of incompatible development or to environmental hazards, shall be prohibited.

HRD-5.0 The continued viability of single family homes as a major housing source shall be encouraged.

HRD-6.0 Innovative and flexible land planning techniques shall be supported as a means of encouraging development configurations which are more desirable and which may better safeguard existing natural land and water resources.

HRD-7.0 Factors in determining preferred locations for high density residential development shall include: close proximity to employment and shopping center, access to major thoroughfares and transit systems, and the availability of public services and facilities.

HRD-8.0 Proactive rezoning of the residential portion of the plan area, to exclude mobile homes, should be considered.

HRD-9.0 The City should adopt regulations that create and encourage the preservation of open space through

mandatory clustering of residential uses.

Transportation

Newton’s transportation policies reflect an acute awareness of the high cost of building new transportation facilities. At the same time, they recognize that the existing road system represents a significant public investment that must be protected and exploited in terms of development potential.

The dual objectives of minimizing new road construction while maximizing the use of existing roadways can be achieved through several means, all of which are reflected in the transportation policy statements. First, existing roadways can be improved and maintained through widening, coordinated signalization, etc. Minimizing the number of driveway cuts onto area thoroughfares can reduce the disruption of traffic flow. Encouraging the use of public transit services can reduce the number of vehicle trips on area roadways, while at the same time providing an alternative means of transportation to those who may not be able to afford their own automobile. In addition, creating safe environments conducive to walking and bicycling can reduce the demand for conventional automobile trips, while at the same time enhancing the quality of life in the area. It should also be noted that by maximizing the use of the existing transportation system, transportation improvements are less apt to be disruptive of existing residential and commercial uses.

Transportation Policies

T-1.0 The City should request that the MPO adopt the proposed street network as an amendment to the MPO Thoroughfare plan.

T-2.0 Development regulations should be adopted which encourage street connectivity and prohibit cul de

- sacs with an emphasis being placed on a grid or manipulated grid system for new development.
- T-3.0** Development regulations should be adopted which provide for sidewalks on both sides of streets wherever feasible and practicable, or as an alternative, sidewalks on one side and a bike lane.
- T-4.0** The cross section of Catawba Valley Blvd (four-lane with divided median) shall be the required construction standard wherever the proposed thoroughfare crosses development sites.
- T-5.0** Truck traffic shall be limited to industrial, commercial, and mixed use areas only.
- T-6.0** Appropriate speed limits should be established for all streets.
- T-7.0** New streets within the plan area shall be constructed according to intended uses, i.e. industrial/non-industrial standards as appropriate.
- T-8.0** The City should request assistance as needed from the MPO to establish appropriate locations for stops for Piedmont Wagon Transit System.
- T-9.0** The City should consider adopting regulatory incentives and encourage and facilitate public transit usage by business, industrial, and residential developments.
- T-10** New development and redevelopment areas and projects should provide for central location

- of express pick up and delivery services and should encourage shared use thereof by business and industries within the Plan Area.
- T-11** The City should work with NCDOT and appropriate agencies to adopt driveway cuts and spacing requirements for all streets, new and existing within the plan area.
- T-12** The City should encourage parking lot connectivity whenever practicable to limit the number of trips and miles traveled within the plan area and to maximize the effective usage of property.
- T-13** A program of improvements and maintenance to maximize the use of existing roadways shall be encouraged as a cost-effective and environmentally sound means of meeting area transportation needs.
- T-14** Encouraging common access points and discouraging frequent driveway cuts shall protect the safety and usefulness of area thoroughfares.
- T-15** Pedestrian, bikeway and other similar facilities shall be encouraged as energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation alternatives.
- T-16** The integrity of established residential and commercial areas shall be preserved, to the extent possible, from environmental and traffic impacts associated with new or improved transportation facilities.

- T-17** Transit services shall be supported which (1) provide mobility to population groups lacking personal transportation, and (2) reduce the demand for parking.

Open Space and Recreation

It has been over ten years since the 1988 Parks and Recreation Plan for the City of Newton was prepared. In addition to being ten years out of date, the plan also focused on a much larger geographic area, primarily to the City limits. The Open Space and Recreation Policies contained in the St. Paul's Area Plan are particularly future oriented and deal with the need to plan for and set aside appropriate sites and areas to keep pace with the anticipated growth of the planning area.

Within the context of an overall plan for future park development and open space preservation, several key items were identified during the planning process. First, to maximize the utility of future park sites while minimizing acquisition costs, natural areas, watershed, and/or flood prone areas should receive special consideration for acquisition of public easements. Properties that have visual, cultural or historic significance should be given even greater weight. All land acquisition should be done as far as possible in advance of actual need, as soon as a projected need can be confirmed. Again, the emphasis is to acquire critical or strategic areas now before future development drives up land costs.

One open space concept that received particularly strong support from area residents was an open space greenway system. The greenway concept, which is receiving significant attention across the country currently, encourages the use of natural corridors such as river and creek floodplains, for linear park systems. These natural corridors can be supplemented as necessary by manmade corridors such as utility and transportation rights-of-way to assemble a complete, inter-connected system of linear open space ways within a

community. Judging from the public support for the concept, a greenway system should be primary consideration in the development of an updated park, recreation, and open space master plan for the greater Newton area. See attached map entitled: **St. Paul's Area Plan—Proposed Greenways.**

Open Space-Recreation Policies

- OSR-1.0** The City should develop a detailed plan for a greenway and pedestrian network.
- OSR-2.0** The City should adopt regulations which require land dedication when development sites impact parcels where a designated greenway is planned, regardless of the type of land use.
- OSR-3.0** The City should evaluate the need for and the potential locations of small parks within the plan area.
- OSR-4.0** The City should discourage development that encroaches into established flood plains, wetlands, and areas with poor soil conditions.
- OSR-5.0** Future park development and open space preservation shall be carefully planned to provide for the rational and equitable distribution of recreation and open space opportunities within the planning area.
- OSR-6.0** In determining future sites for park, recreation and open space facilities, multiple objectives for natural area conservation, visual enhancement, promotion of culture and history, watershed and flood prone area protection, etc. shall be consideration.

OSR-7.0 Provision of open space and recreation facilities in private development shall be encouraged to complement the demand for publicly financed facilities.

OSR-8.0 The identification and appropriate recreational development of a system of open space greenways within the planning area shall be encouraged. The use of natural corridors, such as stream floodplains, and secondarily, man-made corridors, such as utility and transportation rights of way and easements shall be emphasized.

Community Appearance

Newton, like many other Cities in the southeast and across the nation, is awakening to the fact that community appearance and image are important factors not only for the quality of life of existing residents, but also as important tools in attracting desirable businesses and industries. Components of community appearance can include a multitude of visual images including the presence or absence of street trees, the appearance of public and private signage, streetscape conditions, parking lot landscaping, architectural design and building rehabilitation, public and private outdoor art, the presence or absence of overhead wires and the way in which local development practices seek to preserve the natural features of land and properties within the community.

Newton has made significant strides in recent years to enhance its overall appearance. A community Appearance Commission, for example, was re-established some 12 years ago. In recent years the City has also worked progressively toward improving signage controls throughout the community in general as well as along certain critical roadway corridors.

Public attitudes toward community appearance as expressed during the public involvement process indicated support for placing overhead wires

underground, and improving the City’s landscaping and buffering requirements.

Community Appearance Policies

A-1.0 Development and redevelopment Proposals should preserve existing vegetation wherever practicable.

A-2.0 Setbacks along existing and proposed streets shall only be occupied by landscaped materials and approved driveway cuts.

A-3.0 Shared parking and access between adjacent uses shall be encouraged wherever practicable.

A-4.0 Parking and loading areas should be located either at the rear of structures and uses or sufficiently screened with landscaped materials and/or incorporating berms with landscape materials to effectively shield those areas from view.

A-5.0 The City should encourage area lighting and street lighting to be consistent between and among development and redevelopment sites of the Planning Area in terms of style, spread, and luminosity.

A-6.0 Design standards should be developed and adopted which will encourage the use of masonry and concrete products for building walls and discourage the use of metal wall buildings.

A-7.0 The City, along with private property owners and developers, shall endeavor to jointly improve the appearance and design of major street corridors through improved landscaping and sign control.

A-8.0 Sign policies and standards shall be periodically updated to enhance community identity and create a high quality business image.

A-9.0 Measures to improve the effectiveness of landscaping and buffering standards for new and existing developments shall be encouraged.

A-10.0 The significance of street trees in providing visual relief, summer cooling, improved air quality and livability shall be recognized through public policies and actions to encourage planting and maintenance.

A-11.0 Development, which preserves the natural features of the site, including existing topography and significant existing vegetation, shall be encouraged.

A-12.0 The placement of overhead wires underground shall be strongly encouraged in all public and private developments.

Environmental Quality

One subject area discussed during the preparation of the Plan revealed public sentiment and interest in favor of enhanced environmental quality. Environmental quality issues receiving the strongest support included keeping development out of flood prone areas, and keeping hazardous waste out of the community. Other issues also receiving strong support included stricter enforcement of environmental regulations, recruiting only clean industries, and better controlling storm water runoff.

One important conclusion that may be deduced from the public’s concern for environmental quality may be that any major economic development projects, while generally welcome, should be subjected to careful scrutiny to determine their potential environmental impacts.

Environmental Quality Policies

EQ-1.0 Street connectivity should be a major element in development and redevelopment plans.

EQ-2.0 The City should adopt development regulations that permit only business and industry that do not detract from existing air quality.

EQ-3.0 The City should consider adopting an incentive program and regulatory incentives for business and industries that can enhance air quality characteristics.

EQ-4.0 The City should develop a method or process to monitor compliance of industrial and business uses with established federal and state air pollution regulations of the state and federal agencies.

EQ-5.0 Business and industries should be encouraged to consider and implement expert solutions to overcome topographical limitations of sites and areas.

EQ-6.0 Development activities in the 100-year floodplain shall be carefully controlled. If development must occur, low intensive uses such as open space, recreation, and agricultural activities shall be preferred.

EQ-7.0 Runoff and drainage from development and agricultural activities shall be of a quality and quantity as near to natural conditions as possible.

EQ-8.0 Industries producing excessive noise, odor, air and water pollution, or other harmful impacts, shall be discouraged, unless such adverse impacts can be clearly overcome through effective mitigation.

Agricultural and Rural Preservation

The more rural and agricultural areas of the Planning Area hold different values to different people. For farmers, the preservation of agricultural land can mean the preservation of a livelihood. The active production of farmland also contributes to the economy of the City, the State of North Carolina, and the nation. For urban dwellers, the preservation of farmland can mean the protection of open space and the provision of visual relief to the more intense development patterns of the City. Finally, rural residents not actively engaged in agriculture or other resource production activities may simply prefer the more relaxed and less congested lifestyle offered by rural area living.

In any event, agricultural and rural lands are becoming increasingly recognized across the country for the multiple values they hold. Land development policies, which encourage a more compact urban growth pattern, have the dual benefit of conserving agricultural and rural land areas. Urban services such as public water and sewer, which tend to promote growth, can be directed away from prime agricultural lands or can be used in such a way as to require clustering of land development so as to minimize the impacts of roads and drainage systems.

Area residents who participated in the public involvement process for the Strategic Growth Plan expressed a strong desire to see that rural and agricultural land is protected.

Agricultural and Rural Preservation Policies

ARD-1.0 Farms and woodlands shall be recognized as an integral part of the planning area's open space system.

Planning Coordination

As Newton continues to grow, its area of influence in Catawba County becomes greater. Along with this urban expansion comes greater challenges to serve the area's ever growing population. Public decision making on key issues such as land use, transportation, and water and sewer facilities will require greater levels of advanced planning and coordination among Hickory, Conover, and Catawba County. Certain key elements of the area's economic base can benefit significantly from mutual support and common interest among these local governments. Elements specifically mentioned during the public involvement process as being particularly important include coordination of transportation, utilities and appearance standards. Through these policies, the City of Newton wishes to go on record as being strongly in favor of local intergovernmental efforts to provide and plan for these critical facilities and elements.

Beyond increased coordination between local governments, there is also an identified need for stronger communication between local government, the public at large, and developers. The preparation of the Plan has provided a useful forum for this exchange of information, but better mechanisms must be continually identified and explored to provide additional opportunities for

the discussion of common growth objectives for the area.

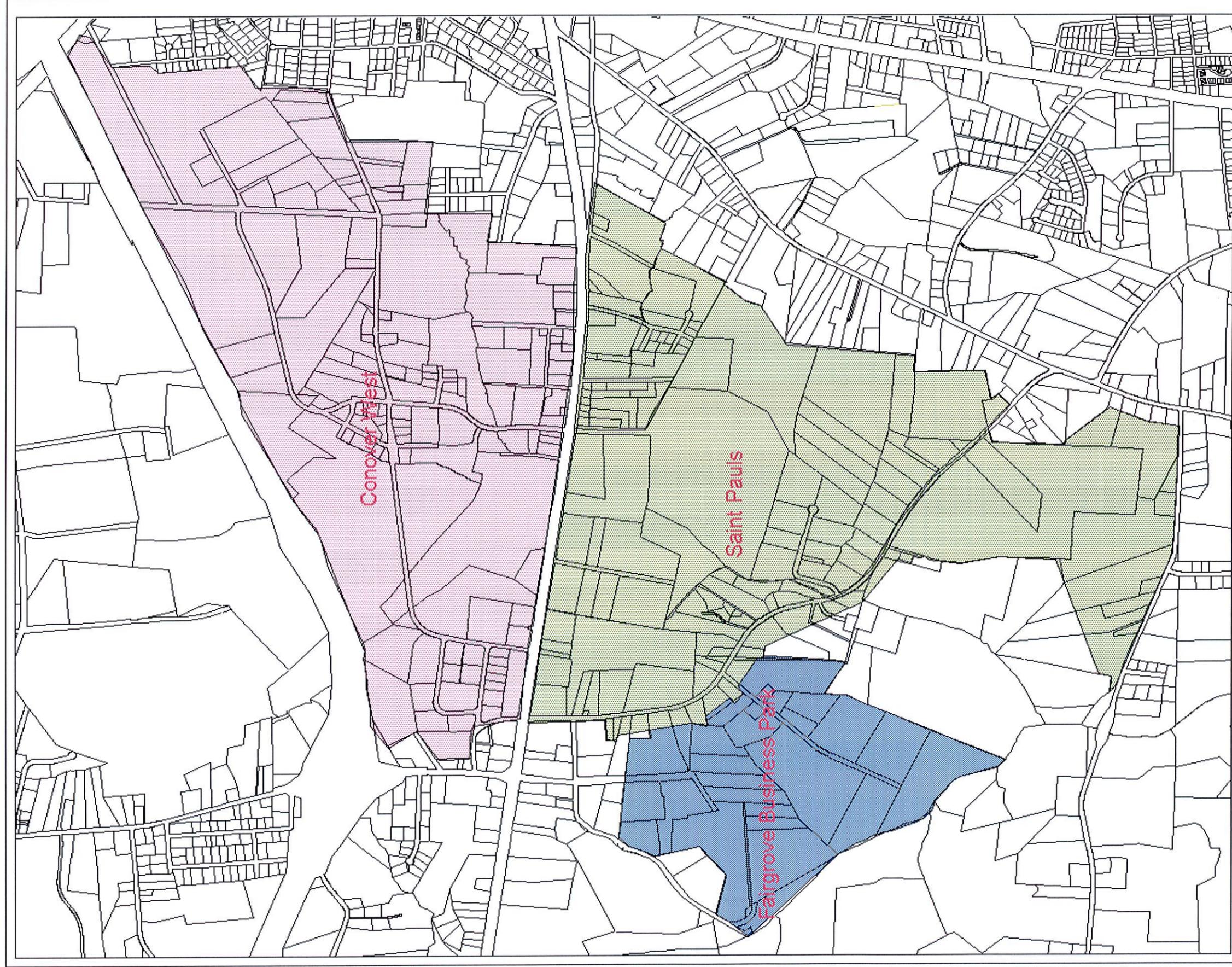
Planning Coordination Policies

PC-1.0 The City of Newton and the City of Hickory should work together to encourage Catawba County to reallocate ETJ based on Boundary and Annexation Agreements between the two cities.

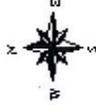
PC-2.0 The City should coordinate with the City of Hickory on development of parcels partially within each municipality to ensure proper land use access and appearance code compliance.

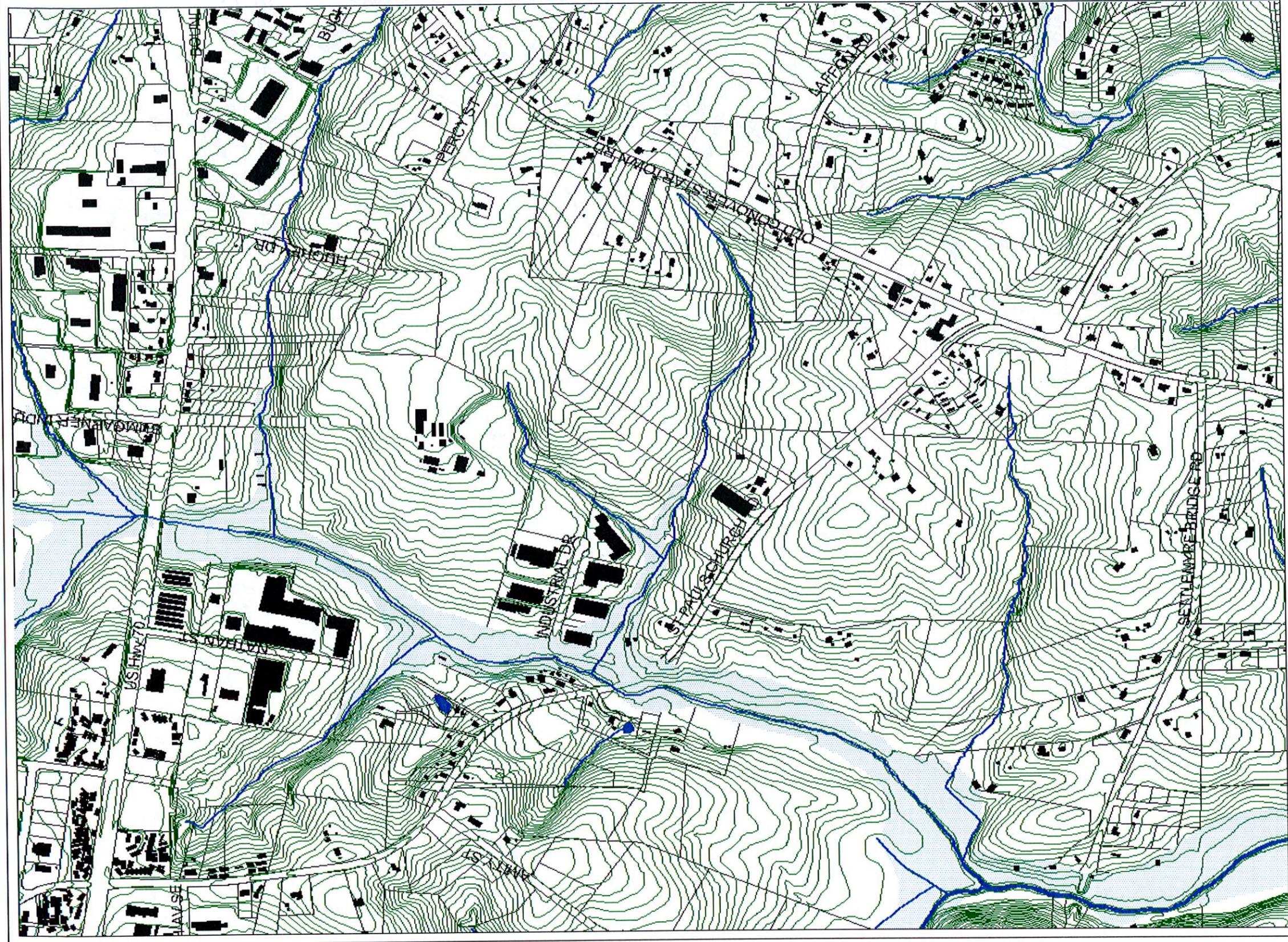
PC-3.0 The City should work with the City of Hickory to adjust the existing Boundary and Annexation Agreement as it affects the Fairgrove Business Park which is in each municipality.

PC-4.0 Coordinated intergovernmental planning for land use, transportation, water and sewer, and economic development shall be encouraged.



SAINT PAUL'S AREA PLAN SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT



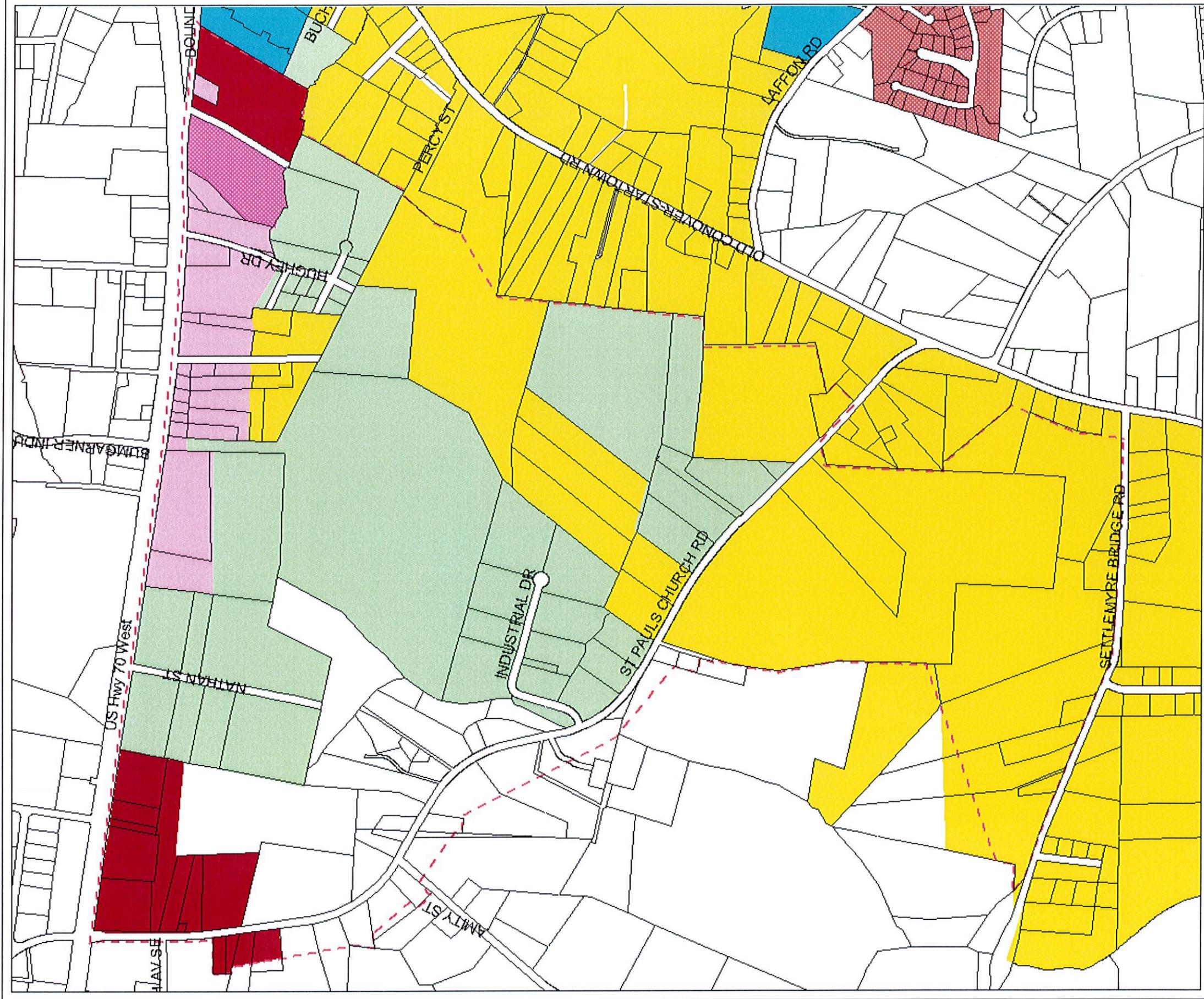


SAINT PAUL'S AREA PLAN

LAND FEATURES

- Structures
- Water Features
- Flood Plain
- Contour-line
- Parcels





SAINT PAUL'S AREA PLAN

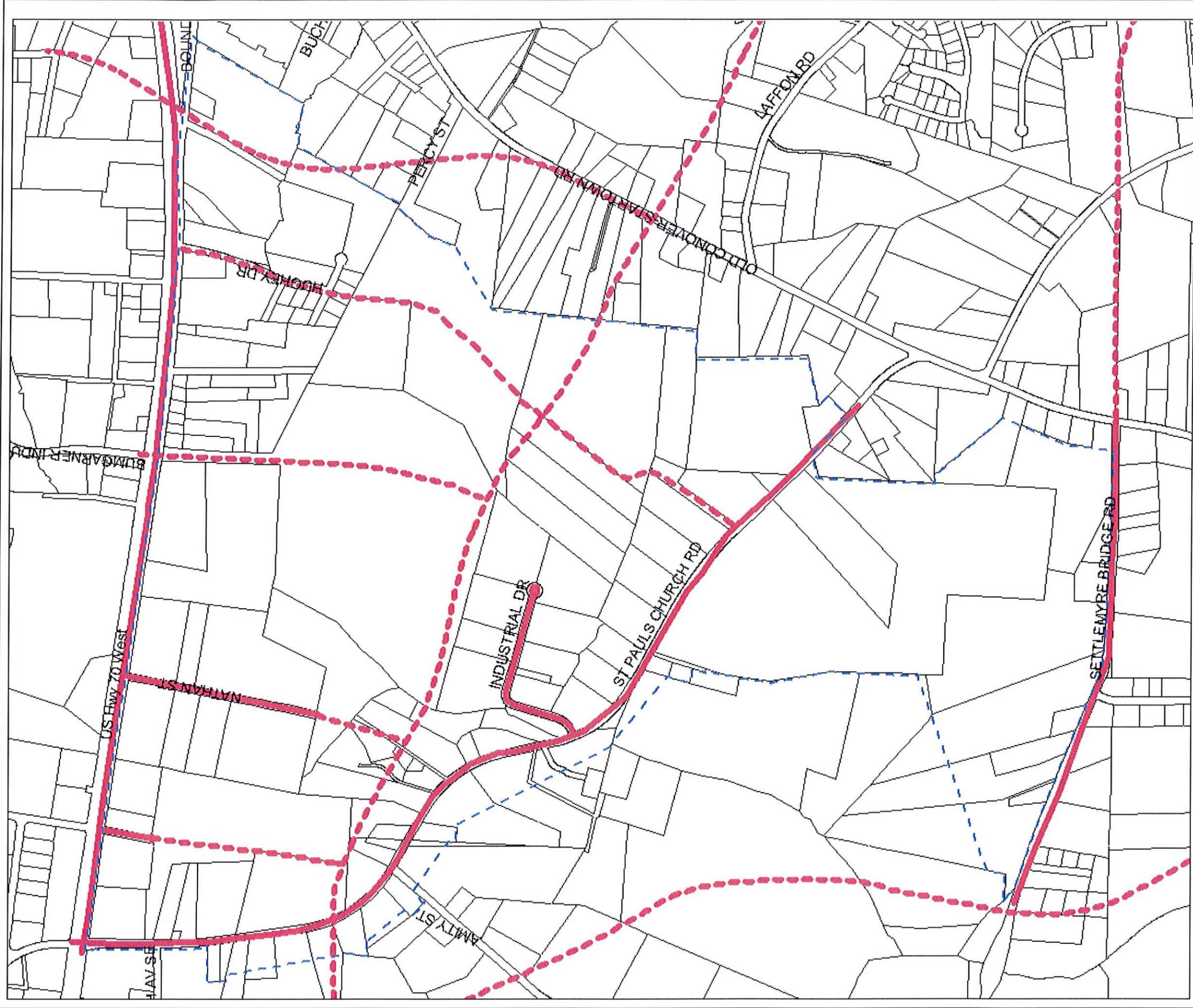
Zoning



Study Area Boundary
Parcels

0.25 0 0.25 Miles

- Medium Density Residential (R-7)
- Medium Density Residential (R-7A)
- Medium Density Residential (R-9)
- Single-Family Residential (R-1)
- Single-Family Residential (R-2D)
- Single-Family Residential (R-2DA)
- Neighborhood Shopping (B-1)
- Highway Business (B-2)
- Central Business (B-3)
- General Business (B-4)
- General Manufacturing (M-1)
- Exclusive Manufacturing (EM-1)
- Office and Institutional (P-1)
- Planned Development/Residential (P-D-H)
- Planned Development/Residential (P-D-SC-C)
- Planned Development/Residential (P-D-SC-M)
- Planned Development/Residential (P-D-SC-N)



SAINT PAUL'S AREA PLAN

Transportation

General

Transportation



Property Lines

Existing

Study Area

Proposed

0.25

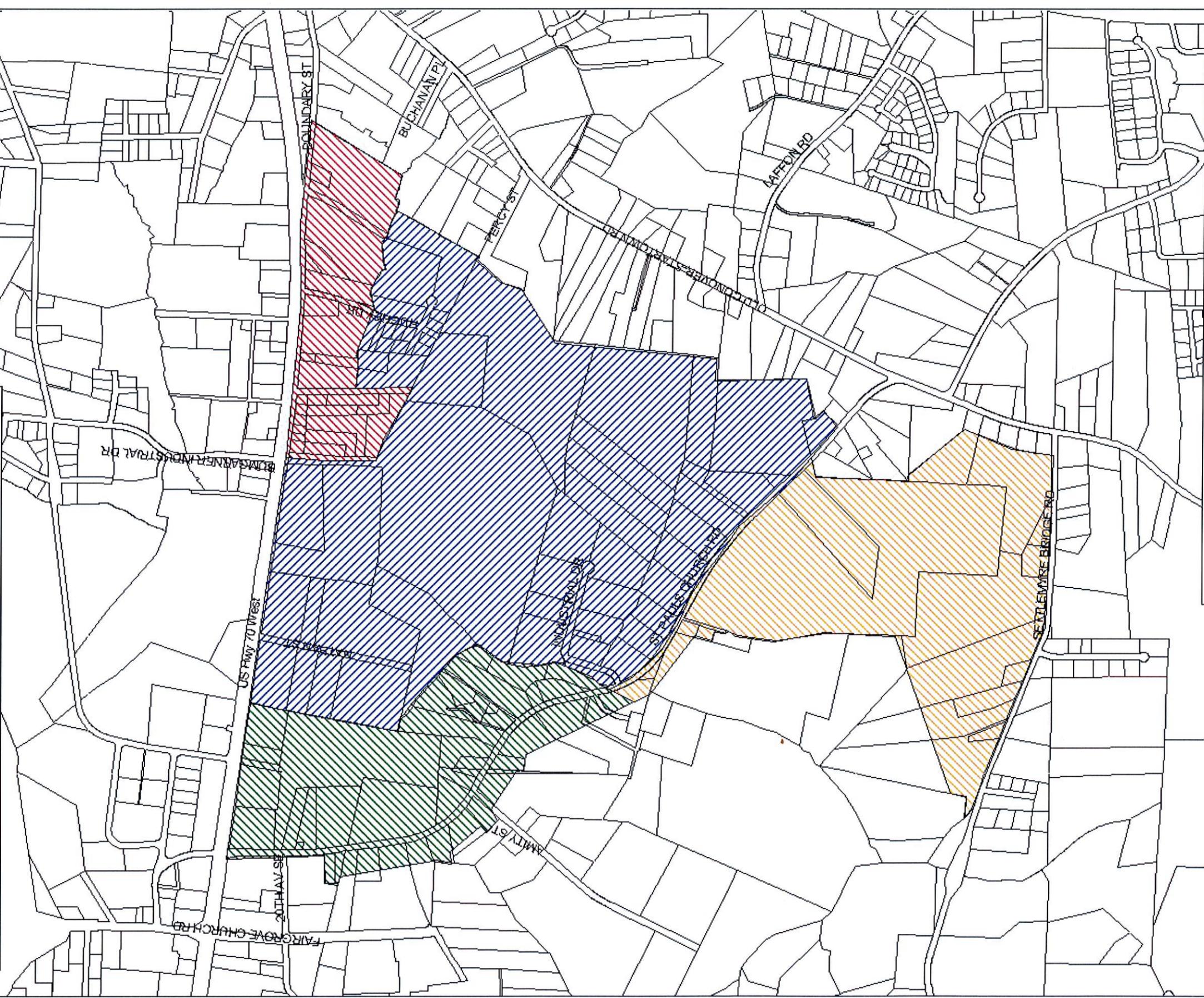
0

0.25 Miles



SAINT PAULS STUDY AREA

Generalized Land Use



General



Property Lines

Generalized Land Use



Mixed Use



Industrial



Commercial

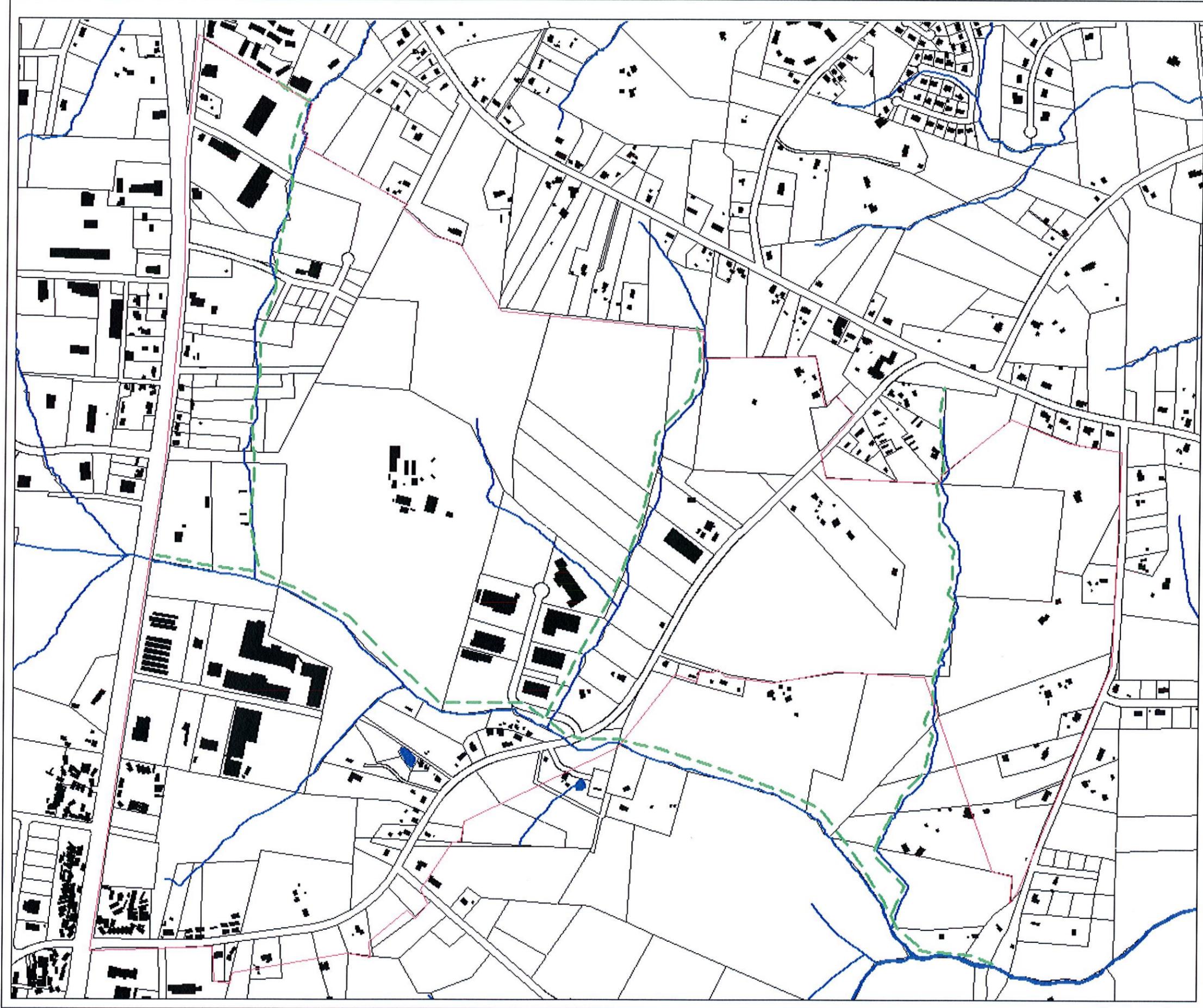


Residential



Scale
1" = 800'

Prepared by Newlon Planning 05/22/00.



SAINT PAUL'S AREA PLAN GREENWAYS

-  Property Lines
-  Proposed Greenways



0.25 0 0.25 Miles



