



North Main Street Small Area Plan

Planning Division
Land Management & Development

Salisbury, North Carolina

**Adopted by the Salisbury City Council
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Background

The North Main Street neighborhood has evolved from its early 20th century roots into a multi-faceted enclave with both a small-town feel and an urban edge. Factors that influenced the neighborhood's early growth – the development of the railroad, the growth of local manufacturing and the evolution of the downtown - continue to define and shape its physical character. North Main Street and its adjoining streets show off an impressive collection of early 20th century architecture, a lasting testament to the growth of the middle and working classes in Salisbury during the early 1900s.

Conversely, the North Main Street neighborhood has undergone varying degrees of transformation in more recent decades. Some have been positive, while others have changed the landscape in ways that do not contribute to its long-term sustainability. The neighborhood entered a period of significant decline during the 1960s, partly due to the popularity of newer suburbs, but then experienced a burst of revitalization during the 1980s as the historic preservation movement took hold.

Despite ongoing preservation efforts since the 1980s, the neighborhood has not fully recovered from its earlier decline. A relatively large amount of rental property, coupled with the higher level of maintenance required of early-mid 20th century housing, have resulted in a fair number of homes in a deteriorated state. Some of the commercial development that took place during the latter part of the 1900s incorporated large expanses of parking and suburban-style structures that were not in harmony with the neighborhood's urban location and character. The heart of the neighborhood is dominated by large tracts of industrial property that were once tied to a flourishing manufacturing-based economy. The majority of these tracts are now vacant or have been converted to warehousing and storage uses.

However, the North Main Street neighborhood holds the enviable position as the only prominent downtown gateway which still retains its primarily-residential character. Its proximity to downtown gives it a locational advantage shared by few other neighborhoods, while housing prices have remained relatively low. A core group of long-time residents and compatible businesses, churches and institutions have provided a measure of

stability. More recently, the neighborhood has caught the attention of a pioneering subset of residents, including artists, designers, and entrepreneurs – attracted by the neighborhood's curb appeal, its socioeconomic and cultural diversity, and availability of low-cost housing. The result has been a renewed energy and heightened interest in revitalization.

Purpose

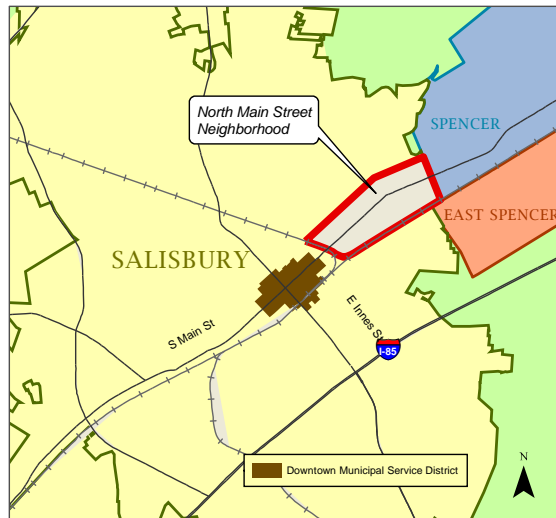
The purpose of this Plan is to provide recommendations for land use and infrastructure that are in alignment with the neighborhood's vision for its future.



View along North Main Street with downtown in the distance.

Location

The neighborhood stretches from downtown Salisbury along the North Main Street corridor to the Town of Spencer and is bounded on its eastern edge by the Norfolk-Southern Railroad. It encompasses approximately 224 acres (**Map 1**).



Map 1 - Vicinity map

History & Development

Advances in transportation and industry around 1900 were pivotal factors in the development of the first residential suburbs along North Main Street. Foremost among them was the establishment of the Spencer Shops, which resulted in the extension of North Main Street to Spencer around 1898. An influx of new residents also followed each of the major expansions of the Southern Railway repair and maintenance facility between 1905-1907 and again in 1913.

Salisbury was simultaneously experiencing rapid growth of its industrial base, largely due to its excellent rail facilities. The suburb that sprang up along North Main Street coexisted with the Vance Cotton Mill, later known as the Cartex Mill, which occupied a large tract on North Lee Street alongside the Southern Railway tracks.

The population growth that came as a result of industrial expansion produced a dramatic increase in business activity in the downtown. The first leg of the city's electric streetcar system was installed between downtown Salisbury and Spencer in 1904 and a trolley barn was built in the 1300 block of North Main Street. The ease of mobility provided by the streetcar



Vance Cotton Mill, org. 1898, 1303 North Lee Street

enabled more downtown merchants and railroad employees to live beyond walking distance of their workplaces.

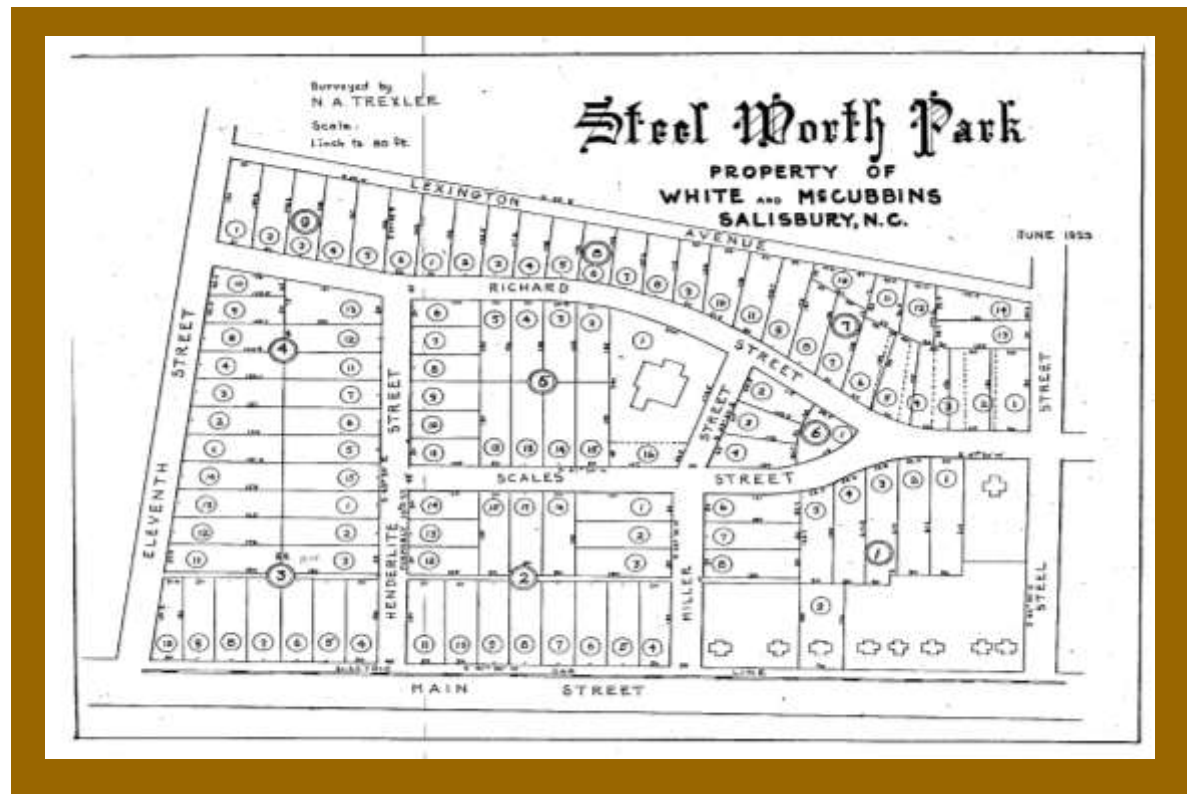
All of these factors combined to produce a large demand for housing in the vicinity of North Main Street. The first major period of housing development occurred between 1900-1910. The more elaborate homes of merchants and factory superintendents were generally concentrated in the 600-1000 blocks, while working class cottages built and occupied by Southern Railway employees were located closer to Spencer.

A second period of active residential growth occurred between 1920-1930. Most of this activity was the result of speculative development as large tracts of land became available. One such development was

“Steel North Park”, carved from land that was once part of the John Steele plantation. Most of the development during this period consisted of small bungalows patterned after those popularized by Sears and Roebuck house catalogues.

Home construction slowed until the late 1940s when the neighborhood began to fill out in the blocks to the east and west of North Main Street. Particularly near City Park, the predominant pattern is a mix of post-World War II cottages and mid-20th century ranch-style homes.

From its earliest beginnings, the residential character of the neighborhood was punctuated by institutions and landmarks such as the John S. Henderson School, built in 1918, and “Lombardy,” the circa 1799 home of John Steele. A few neighborhood-scale commercial enterprises stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the residences along North Main Street during the early-mid 1900s, such as the Trexler Grocery (1436 North Main Street, ca.1920), while later commercial development tended to be more intrusive. In many instances, the commercial redevelopment of infill lots in the later half of the 20th century introduced incompatible uses and over-sized parking lots that were out of character with the neighborhood.



A 1923 subdivision plat. The property had been a part of the large plantation owned by John Steele, a Salisbury native who was appointed by President George Washington as Comptroller of the U. S. Treasury.

Demographic Characteristics

Some basic socioeconomic indicators for the North Main Street vicinity are included in **Table A**. The table also includes comparison data for three other Salisbury neighborhoods which are generally similar in their proximity to downtown and their historic nature. The values shown were determined based on the corresponding census block groups, giving a *general* impression of the demographic characteristics of each neighborhood; however, actual and perceived neighborhood boundaries vary somewhat from the census boundaries.

TABLE A – Demographic and Income Comparison					
	<i>North Main Street</i>	<i>Park Avenue</i>	<i>West Square</i>	<i>Fulton Heights</i>	<i>City</i>
	Census Trc. 506 Block Gr. 1	Census Trc. 502.01 Block Gr. 1	Census Trc. 503 Block Gr. 1	Census Trc. 503 Block Gr. 2	
Year 2000 Population	802	723	624	1,253	26,462
Race					
White	52%	23%	54%	63%	57%
Black or African American	41%	74%	33%	30%	38%
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Asian	<1%	<1%	4%	3%	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pac. Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Some other race alone	4%	1%	6%	2%	2%
Two or more races	2%	26%	2%	2%	2%
Hispanic or Latino	10%	2%	10%	6%	4%
Median Age	34.2	31.3	34.9	36.9	37.1
Average Family Size	3.12	3.06	3.02	2.95	2.92
Median Household Income (\$)	28,871	16,695	33,125	35,769	32,923
Households Receiving Public Assistance Income	4%	5%	3%	3%	4%

Source: Census 2000

Planning Framework

The Salisbury Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan provides the policy framework for all planning-related activities and initiatives in the city. The purpose of the plan is to provide guidance on issues that have an impact on the city's quality of life, including streets, housing, open space, appearance, historic preservation and environmental quality, among other concerns. The Vision 2020 Plan includes specific policies for older neighborhoods and existing commercial areas, in addition to new development.

Small area plans fit underneath comprehensive plans in a hierarchy. While the comprehensive plan speaks to the city's broader vision, small area plans seek to confront neighborhood issues with actions and strategies that are in harmony with the city's broader goals.

Salisbury Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Policies for Older Neighborhoods

Policy N-1: Concentrated police protection shall be provided to targeted neighborhood areas, preferably in the form of foot and bicycle patrols.

Policy N-2: Pedestrian-level streetlights and appropriately designed private property lights shall be encouraged, particularly in walkable neighborhoods.

Policy N-3: Housing programs and code enforcement activities shall be concentrated in targeted neighborhood areas.

Policy N-4: The provision of meeting places to encourage community interaction and cohesiveness shall be encouraged, particularly in older neighborhoods.

Policy N-5: New infill development shall be architecturally compatible with existing structures, landscape features and the streetscape within its vicinity. Efforts by neighborhood associations to establish their own standards for development compatibility shall be encouraged.

Policy N-6 The City shall continually reinvest in the infrastructure of its older urban neighborhoods, including but not limited to: park improvements, sidewalks, street maintenance, street trees, street lights, water and sewer lines, and drainage.

Policy N-7: Appropriately located, designed and scaled stores and services providing basic necessities to residents of the city's older neighborhoods shall be encouraged.

Policy N-8: Public transit shall continue to be supported, including opportunities for service expansions.

Citywide policies for older neighborhoods

Planning Process

The Plan was developed from information gathered during a series of neighborhood meetings, with supplementary data gathered by planning staff from other sources. Input and feedback from residents of the neighborhood was a crucial part of the process. This dialogue was necessary to ensure that the final adopted plan accurately reflects their needs and desires.

The meetings incorporated a variety of formats and activities:

- Trolley tour of the neighborhood with residents.
- Strengths and Weaknesses prioritized by participants
- Photographic survey conducted by residents
- Committee meetings held to focus on specific livability issues and concerns
- Design Workshop

Summary of Priorities

Residents were asked the following questions and then asked to prioritize the issues brought forward. A complete list of their responses is included in **Table B** on the following page.

What are the neighborhood's most valued features?

- **Overall attractive neighborhood**
- **Interesting, historic architecture and efforts to preserve**
- **Racial and socioeconomic diversity**
- **Mature trees and landscaping**
- **Close to downtown and to City Park**

What are its most pressing challenges?

- **Amount of rental property**
- **Vacant and rundown homes and businesses**
- **Need more pedestrian/bicycle facilities and sidewalk repair**
- **Traffic conditions (North Main Street)**
- **Appearance issues**
- **Crime and personal safety**



The public process

TABLE B		
<i>(Orange "dots" represent the number of votes cast for each item.)</i>		
TEAM	NEIGHBORHOOD STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
1	Architectural styles (historic) ●●●●●●●● Close to downtown ●●●● Defined boundaries Excellent sanitation services ● Nice trees Diversity ●●●●● Affordable housing ●● Investment opportunity Pedestrian friendly	Need more sidewalks & repair old Need more traffic control I-85 alternate route Convenience store ● Safety & more patrol Need bike lanes ●● Vacant homes ●●●● Nuisance violations Empty warehouses ● Dumping trash Absentee landlords
2	Trees along streets ● Quiet Safe ● Diversity (people/economic) ● Park areas/ greenspace ● Asset of historical property General energy/ interest to connect Opportunity	Improve R.R. crossings ● Rent property in lieu of sale (rental property) Run down/ vacant houses ●●●●● Lack of homeless shelters ● More opportunity for home ownership Greenways/ safeways (more) Unkept yards Cannot walk w/o solicitation (Long St.) ●●● Benefits of property tax? Neighborhood identity ●●● More artists

<i>TEAM</i>	<i>NEIGHBORHOOD STRENGTHS</i>	<i>CHALLENGES</i>
3	<p>Nice neighbors</p> <p>Diversity</p> <p>Arch. / style of homes ●●</p> <p>Owner occupied</p> <p>Henderson School (historic) ●</p> <p>Peace & quiet / convenient location</p> <p>Last residential entrance</p> <p>Unimproved open space ●</p>	<p>More owner occupied houses ●</p> <p>Maintenance of rentals ●●</p> <p>Improved street maintenance</p> <p>M & L Mini Mart gone ●●●</p> <p>Coalition of landlords & property owners●●●●●</p> <p>Too many Section 8 ●●●●●</p> <p>Crime rate / increase patrols ●●●●●●</p> <p>Some streets – traffic too fast ●</p> <p>I-85 detours away from N. Main ●●●●●</p> <p>No parking spaces too close to corners</p>
4	<p>History/ memories</p> <p>Architectural diversity ●</p> <p>Convenient</p> <p>Excellent city services ●●</p> <p>Gateway to Spencer/ Salisbury</p>	<p>Protect single-family zoning ●●</p> <p>No parking in front yard ●●●●●●</p> <p>Median – N. Main St.</p> <p>Move school system offices to Henderson ●●</p> <p>More landlord accountability ●●●</p>

<i>TEAM</i>	<i>NEIGHBORHOOD STRENGTHS</i>	<i>CHALLENGES</i>
5	Residential character ●●●● Available greenspace / parks Historic buildings ●●●● Diversity of people & building stock ●●●● Location, location, location Trees Houses Affordability Connectivity Clean look ● Landscape Preserve opportunities for home ownership ●	Need gas station ●● Discourage additional (new) rental properties ● Realtors knowledge of neighborhood ● Develop safe & friendly neighborhood grocery ●●●●●● Bus station in Salisbury ●● More cross cultural gatherings Neighborhood news – Bilingual Sell tax credits to potential developers (adaptive reuse) ●● Enforce/ reduce automobile speeds ●● More crosswalks/ pedestrian scaled lighting ●● Reduce “sea of pavement” Sidewalk repair ● Noise pollution Access to financial incentives/ education (to help fix up existing homes) Bicycle & pedestrian friendly? ●●●
6	Sense of community ● Home ownership ● Mature trees & landscaping ●● Older houses being saved ●●●● Embrace diversity & make it our identity ●●●	Enforce special use permit (A.T.T.I.C.) Police enforcement (14 th & N. Main, 11 th & N. Main) after midnight ●●● Pedestrian traffic use sidewalks ●●●● Current enforcement of porch and yard clutter ●●● Need renters & landlords to participate in community ●● Continue to involve all of our residents in events ●

Vision Statement

Residents of the North Main Street neighborhood have a strong sense of community and recognition of the neighborhood's many desirable features, as well as its potential for further revitalization. The following statement seeks to capture the vision for the neighborhood as expressed by its residents:

The North Main Street neighborhood is a vibrant, progressive, safe, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood and important residential gateway to downtown that

- Embraces the history and cultural diversity of its residents,**
- Takes pride in its historic architecture and tree-lined streets,**
- Reflects a spirit of friendship, respect and neighborliness, and**
- Offers a high quality of life for its residents.**



Neighborhood Landmarks

The North Main Street neighborhood is home to several distinctive landmarks which add to its unique character and help define sense of place. In addition to an abundance of historic residential architecture, these landmarks help anchor the neighborhood with its history. For the most part, they have remained relatively unchanged in both appearance and function over many years, further enhancing the sense of neighborhood continuity.

Where opportunities exist, linkages between the neighborhood and its prominent, character-defining landmarks and institutions should be strengthened.



North Main Street Baptist Church



Henderson Independent High School



John Steele House



City Park



Grimes Mill

Existing Land Use

Single-family residential is the predominant land use (**Table C**). A comparatively small number of duplexes and apartment buildings are primarily interspersed in the blocks closest to downtown . During the energy crisis of the 1970s, many of the larger single-family homes were converted into apartments. It is difficult to ascertain precisely how many are still functioning as multi-family housing. While a few cases can be confirmed, more recent trends with residences in other historic districts have leaned toward conversion and restoration of homes back to their original use as single-family housing.

A few small office and retail uses are interspersed among the residential properties which front North Main Street (**Map 2**). On the whole, they tend to be appropriately clustered near street intersections. Some are engaged in services which add value and contribute to the overall livability of the neighborhood, while others are marginal or otherwise less compatible with the residential character of the area.

Parts of the neighborhood are overshadowed by industrial property, which makes up about 19% of all land uses. Industrial uses historically occupied

several large tracts to the east of North Main Street near the railroad tracks. The majority of the acreage that was once involved in light manufacturing and production activities is now vacant or the structures have been converted for use as warehousing and storage. Active uses include Value Clothing, Inc., which operates an assembling and shipping facility on Richard Street.

Over time, higher intensity commercial uses became concentrated on North Main Street between 11th and 13th Streets where the old Duke Power building (the former trolley barn) stands. More recent uses located there tend to be tenuous and do not adequately serve the needs of the neighborhood.

The large amount of vacant and underutilized property in these areas offers significant opportunities for redevelopment. Though largely dependant on market conditions, redevelopment should be encouraged and should incorporate high-quality, neighborhood-scale services and gathering places with mixed use building forms in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. This location would be suitable for the development of a neighborhood “town center” that could be a multi-purpose destination for shopping, socializing and entertainment.

Land Use	Acres	%
Single-Family	117	52%
Industrial/Storage	43.3	19%
Vacant Land	34.5	15%
Institutional	9.5	4%
Two-Family	6.9	3%
Office	5.3	2%
Retail	4.5	2%
Multi-Family *	1.9	< 1%
Parking **	0.7	< 1%
Total	223.6	100%

* Does not include house conversions

** Parking as the primary land use (no structures)

MAP 2



Existing & Proposed Zoning

For more than three years, work has been underway to streamline and modernize the city's codes for zoning and land development. As part of this process, a proposed zoning map was created to translate every existing zoning district in the city to a corresponding new district.

The main distinctions between the existing zoning code and the proposed code that are relevant to the North Main Street neighborhood include:

- **Urban Residential-Preservation (URP)** – A new zoning district created specifically for historic districts. Existing historic homes (built prior to 1955) may not be subdivided for multi-family use. The boundary of this zoning district coincides with the North Main Street Historic District.
- **Mixed Use** – The proposed code enables and encourages more compact development through a mixing of residential, office and retail uses. The result is more walkable, neighborhood-friendly development that will, in the long run, help reduce vehicle trips per day and improve air quality.
- **Architectural Standards** – A key component of the proposed code. The code places as much importance on the overall form and architecture of buildings as it does on the uses that go in them. In form-based development, buildings are generally placed closer to the street and parking areas are less noticeable. The increased emphasis on design helps to improve the pedestrian realm and result in more sustainable development.
- **Infill Standards** – In the proposed code, infill houses must borrow some of their basic architectural elements from adjacent structures. These standards will help ensure that new housing on vacant lots respects the architectural tradition set by neighboring structures. and will apply to all infill residential lots.

The existing and proposed zoning districts are shown in **Map 3**. Existing zoning lines are outlined with a bold dotted line and labeled with the district name. Proposed zoning districts are color-coded (see map key).

Residential Zoning

The new proposed residential districts are consistent with the existing residential pattern, with the added protections for historic residential (UR-P), as well as new architectural and infill standards.

Office Commercial Zoning

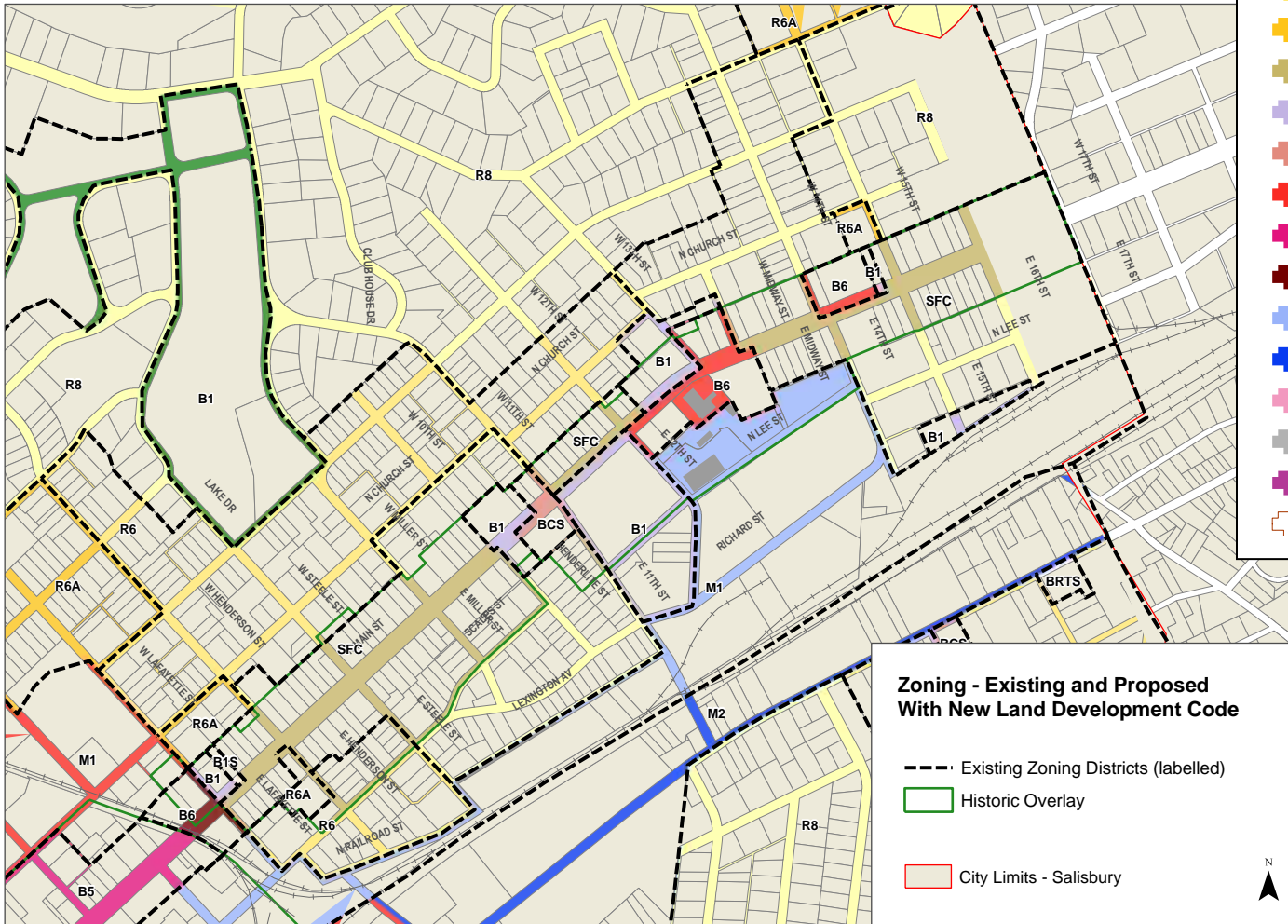
The proposed Residential Mixed Use district RMX (shaded in light purple) allows primarily neighborhood-friendly, low-intensity office uses, as well as live-work spaces and other residential uses. The existing B-1 zoning is a district primarily for office uses.

Retail Commercial and Industrial Zoning



















Under the proposed zoning, neighborhood-scale retail would be allowed in the NMX district. This zoning is proposed for the 11th Street/North Main Street intersection currently zoned BCS. More intensive commercial zoning (CMX) is proposed for the area near 12th and 13th Streets and a direct conversion of existing light manufacturing zoning is proposed for a large area along Richard Street and along the railroad tracks.

A primary consideration of the proposed zoning districts was to avoid, as much as possible, the creation of non-conformities among existing uses. However, some of the proposed zoning is not consistent with the larger vision expressed by residents.




MAP 3



LDO Districts

-  OSP Open Space Preserve
-  RR Rural Residential
-  GR3 General Residential 3
-  GR6 General Residential 6
-  UR8 Urban Residential 8
-  UR12 Urban Residential 12
-  URP Urban Residential Preservation
-  RMX Residential Mixed Use
-  NMX Neighborhood Mixed Use
-  CMX Corridor Mixed Use
-  DMX Downtown Mixed Use
-  HB Highway Business
-  LI Light Industrial
-  HI Heavy Industrial
-  HS Hospital Services
-  IC Institutional Campus
-  TND Traditional Neighborhood Development
-  CD Conditional District

Zoning - Existing and Proposed With New Land Development Code

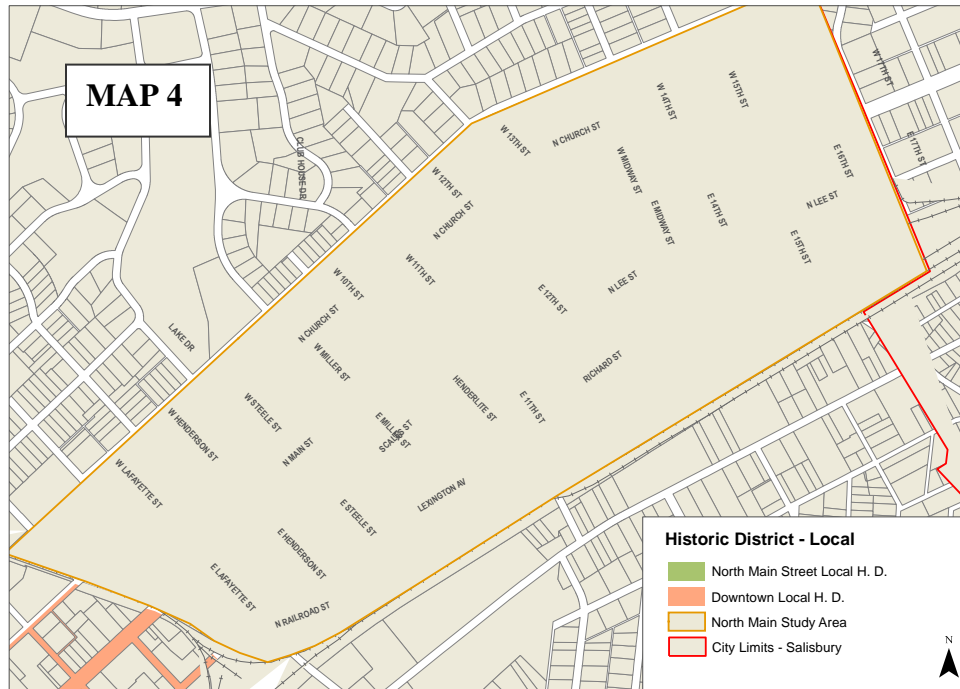
-  Existing Zoning Districts (labelled)
-  Historic Overlay
-  City Limits - Salisbury



National Register Historic District

In 1985, the North Main Street Historic District became the city’s second district to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the distinction that nomination provides, properties located within a National Register district are eligible for tax credits to help offset the costs of rehabilitation. This advantage can be a significant factor in achieving revitalization of a neighborhood.

In 2001, an architectural survey was conducted to explore the potential for expanding the district. Several areas were identified. However, a follow-up study by staff from the North Carolina Office of Historic Preservation determined that the area located between Scales Street and Lexington Avenue had the highest probability of qualifying (**Map 5**). It was felt that too many of the structures in the previously highlighted areas had been altered or replaced with newer construction, making these areas less likely to qualify for national designation.

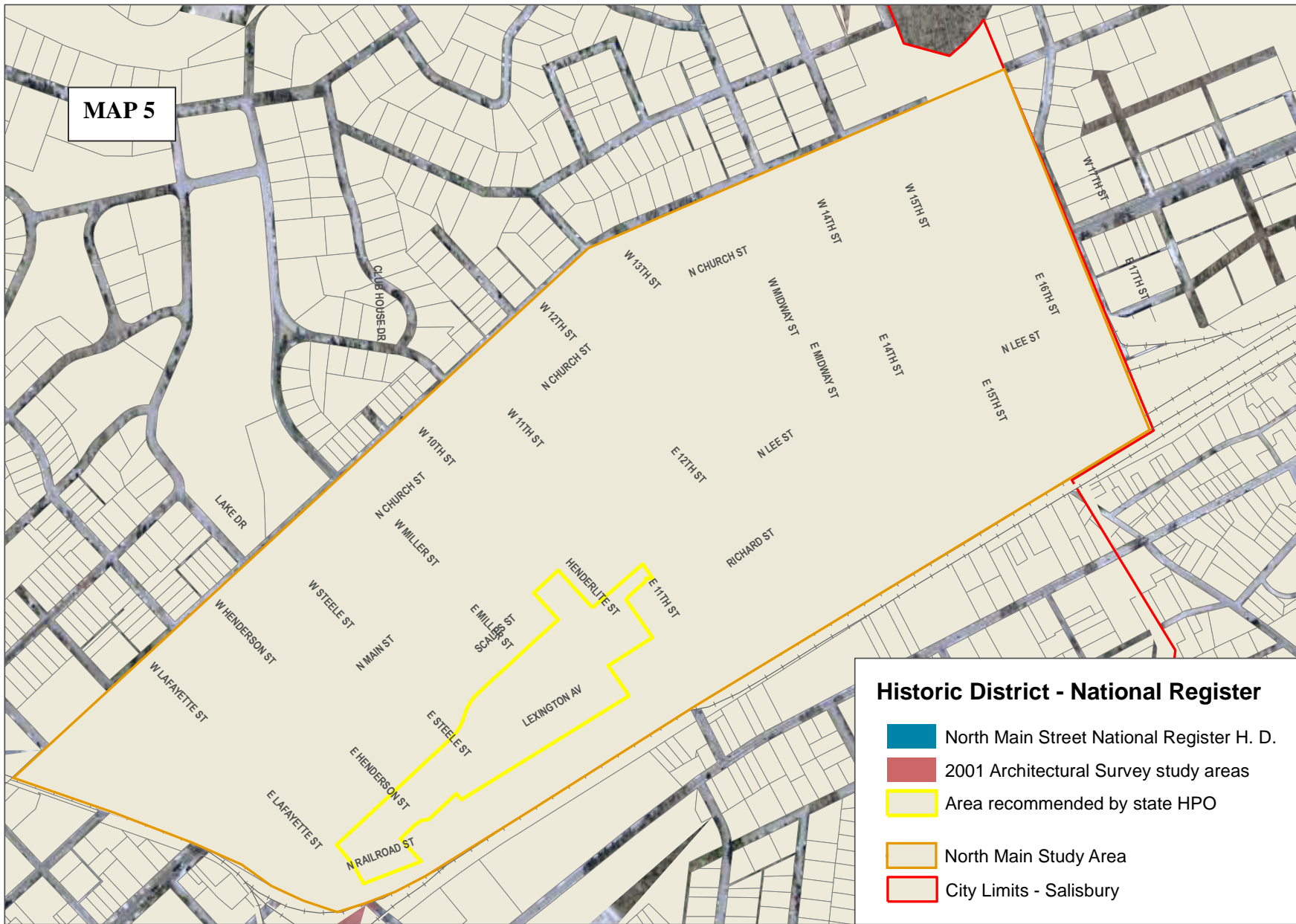


Local Historic District

The locally-designated North Main Street Historic District Overlay was adopted by the City Council in 1993 (**Map 4**). This set in motion the requirement for design review by the Historic Preservation Commission. The review process can be credited for helping to safeguard the historic integrity of the district. Historic Preservation Grants made available each year by the City Council are another benefit available to property owners within a local district.

Expansion of the national district should be pursued in order to extend tax benefits to more historic properties. Expansion of the local district overlay should be considered in light of any future expansions to the National Register District.

MAP 5



Residential Ownership Patterns

Residents point to the residential character of North Main Street as one of the neighborhood’s most defining features, made all the more important by the fact that it is a major gateway into the downtown. Residential land uses account for 76% of all land uses in the neighborhood. Single-family is the predominant residential type and makes up 85% of all residential uses (**Table D**).

The neighborhood is about evenly divided between owner-occupied and rental housing (**Map 6**). While the occupancy status of individual properties fluctuated between 2005 and 2006, the overall proportions remained roughly the same. The amount of rental housing as a proportion of all single-family units is 49%, slightly higher than the city average (46%). As a matter of comparison, some of the city’s inner neighborhoods have significantly higher percentages of rental property. Census 2000 data showed that Park Avenue, for example, had approximately 76% renter-occupied units. A large amount of rental units is known to have detrimental effects on neighborhood stability and is a contributing factor to the problem of neglected and deteriorated housing.

On the other hand, there are a number of examples of well-maintained rental properties which add value to the neighborhood. Having an adequate supply of rental units helps provide low-cost housing opportunities and create socioeconomic diversity. In fact, rental units were a part of the neighborhood housing mix from early on, evidenced by a handful of duplex and apartment buildings which date to the early 1900s.

Strategies to increase homeownership and reduce the overall number of rental units will help improve neighborhood stability, as will efforts to engage more renters in neighborhood organizations and activities.

TABLE D		
2007 TENURE	# Units	%
Single-Family – Own	217	43%
Single-Family – Rent	211	42%
Two-Family	52	10%
Multi-Family *	24	5%
TOTAL		100 %

Source: Rowan County tax data

* Does not include house conversions



729-731 North Main Street



Housing Conditions

There may be no more obvious indicator of neighborhood instability than deteriorated and abandoned housing. Structures left vacant and untended for long periods of time attract vandalism, arson, drug-related crime and other undesirable activity. Whereas some of these negative impacts tend to stay confined to the general area of the affected properties, the *appearance* of neglect can be a powerful deterrent to additional private investment over a broader area, thereby affecting an entire neighborhood.

The housing conditions in the North Main Street neighborhood are generally fair to good (**Map 7**) (**Table E**). A large majority of the homes appear to be in serviceable condition in terms of providing safe, sound and conditioned shelter for residents. Quite a few are in excellent shape, exhibiting new roofs, fresh coats of paint and well-tended gardens. This is evident among both large, more elaborately-styled homes and more modest homes as well.

On the flip side, there are homes in a serious state of disrepair, a few to the extent that their structural integrity may be in jeopardy. Long-term vacancy is a factor in some cases. Also concerning is the number of homes that are just beginning to show evidence of neglect. If left

unchecked, this deterioration is likely to escalate quickly.

Not surprising is the fact that many of the houses that are in the worst condition are located on North Main Street where many of the oldest homes are located. This pattern is troubling because of the high visibility along this corridor and the negative image that it projects about the neighborhood as a whole.

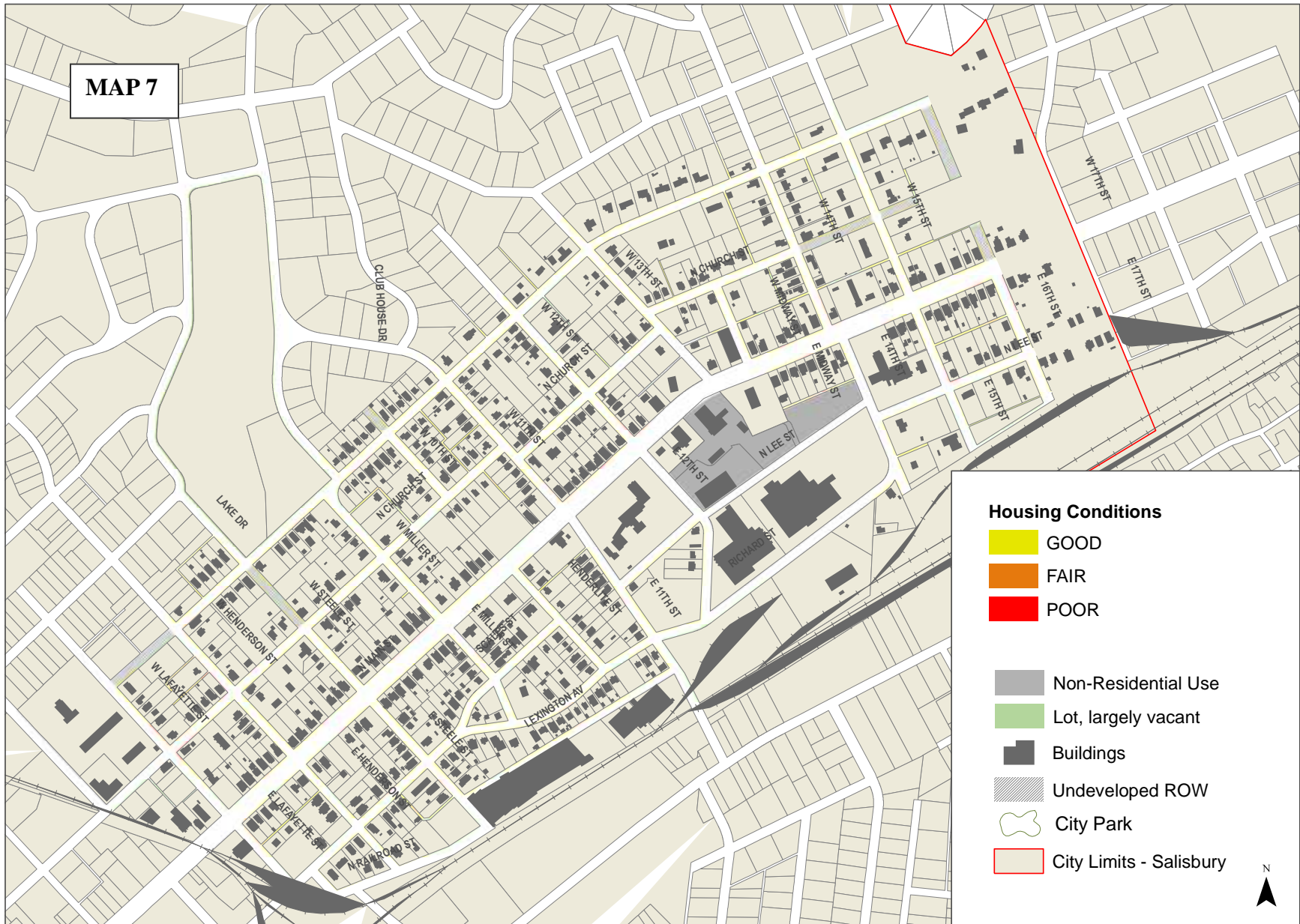
The problems associated with deteriorated housing, and how they come to be, are complex. All possible incentive mechanisms for housing rehabilitation should be explored. Efforts should be focused primarily along the North Main Street corridor. Strategies are also needed

to help rectify situations of negligence when incentives and all other good faith attempts are unsuccessful.



House in deteriorated state.

TABLE E - Key to Map 7		
Scoring Criteria Used to Determine Housing Condition		
Scoring Criteria		Description
Good	Exterior in serviceable condition	
Fair	Showing significant signs of wear or deterioration	One or more features* affected (e.g., severe peeling paint, crumbling roof)
Poor	Evident state of disrepair	Two or more features affected (e.g., broken windows, holes in roof or walls, hanging or missing siding or trim, sagging porch, structural integrity compromised)
* <i>Features include roof; vertical finish materials such as siding, trim, or masonry; paint; doors and windows; and porches.</i>		



North Main Street Corridor

A grid of interconnected streets surrounds U.S. Hwy 29 / North Main Street which forms a broad central axis cutting south to north through the neighborhood. The width that was originally necessary to accommodate the electric streetcar has resulted in a host of problems for the neighborhood. It hinders pedestrians as they attempt to safely cross from one side to the other. The excessive width of North Main Street also encourages motorists to travel above the posted speed limit. From an appearance standpoint, the four-travel lane-width of North Main Street is simply not in keeping with the residential character of the neighborhood.

As the designated detour route for I-85, the corridor is also clogged from time to time with heavy traffic and semi-tractor trailers diverted from the interstate after wrecks or during construction delays. This creates significant problems with connectivity when it occurs and is a major source of frustration for residents.

Significant modifications to North Main Street are needed to ease pedestrian-vehicular conflicts, to help provide more parking for residents, to help make the corridor more accommodating to all modes of transportation and to give it an appearance that is more in keeping with a

largely-residential neighborhood. For instance, the existing pavement width and volume of traffic would allow for a reduction of travel lanes from the current four-lane cross-section to three lanes (two travel lanes with a center turn lane combined with strategically-located medians). Bicycle lanes and marked on-street parking are also possible; however, to provide both would entail the loss of portions of greenspace adjacent to the roadway. In short, additional study is needed to determine the optimal treatment for the neighborhood.

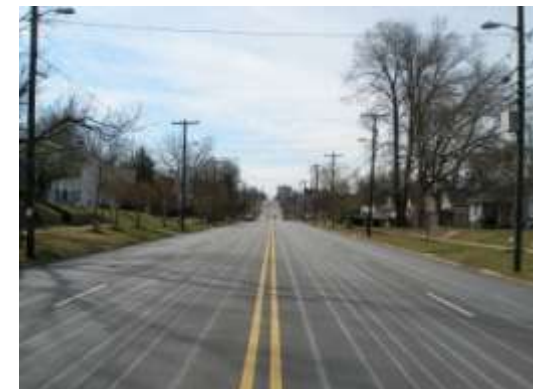
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

The neighborhood includes approximately 26,000 linear feet of sidewalk which is concentrated mainly in the southeastern parts of the neighborhood along Scales, Lee, Steele and Henderson Streets, and along the extent of North Main Street. A survey of the neighborhood revealed that about 10% of the existing sidewalks are in need of repair or replacement (**Map 8**). One area of particular concern includes the 100 block of West Henderson Street, between North Main Street and North Church Street, due to the higher traffic volumes experienced along West Henderson Street

Neighborhood residents identified several locations where additional pedestrian

accommodations are needed. New sidewalk along West Miller Street would provide an important east-west link between North Main Street and City Park. Although West Steele Street does not currently connect through to North Jackson Street, the opportunity may exist in the future to provide an additional connection to City Park by means of a pedestrian footbridge. The property is currently in private ownership.

Residents also voiced strong support for bicycle accommodations. However, no specific recommendations for bicycle facilities are included in this plan since a city-wide bicycle plan is being developed and should be completed sometime in 2008.



Excessive pavement width of North Main Street is not conducive for pedestrian travel.

Map 8



Sidewalk Priority Index

The early part of the twentieth century was a time when most people walked to work, school and other destinations. Sidewalks were a matter of necessity and were an inherent part of road construction as a result. But as the automobile became the predominant form of transportation for most Americans, sidewalks were commonly considered more as an afterthought in street design, if they were thought of at all. As awareness has grown about the benefits of reducing automobile dependence, both in terms of environmental quality and public health, transportation authorities and local governments have taken note and begun to retrofit their streets to better accommodate all modes of transportation.

Since the need for sidewalk installation and repair is so pervasive, the city needed a method to help determine priorities. The Sidewalk Prioritization Plan, adopted in 2006 by the Salisbury Planning Board, is a tool to help rank the relative need for sidewalk in a specified area. It is based primarily on land uses that are known to generate larger volumes of pedestrian activity, such as schools, parks and shopping destinations.

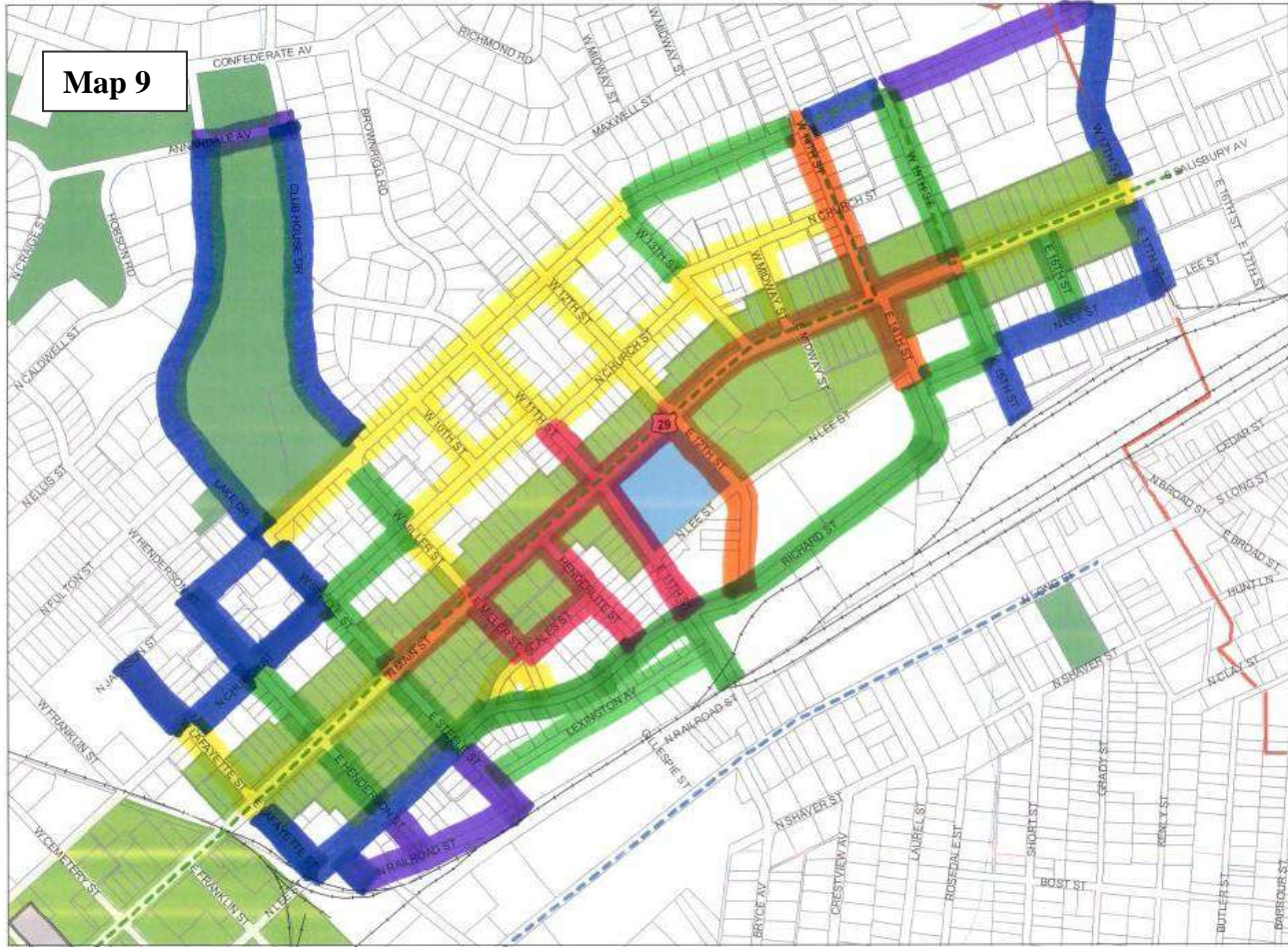
The priority areas for sidewalk installation or repairs in the North Main Street neighborhood are centered along the North Main Street corridor (**Map 9**). Higher numbers, as shown in red, orange and yellow on the map, indicate higher relative priorities. Secondary areas include the blocks between North Main Street and City Park.

This prioritization method is just one way to help assess the need for sidewalk accommodations and can be used along with neighborhood input to help make decisions about sidewalk priorities.



Broken sidewalk in the 1000 block of North Main Street.

Map 9



**North Main
Neighborhood
Sidewalk Priority Index
Scoring**



- 60+
- 50-59
- 40-49
- 30-39
- 20-29
- < 20

Legend

- City Limits - Salisbury
- Rowan County Parcels
- Historic Overlay
- Civic
- Medical Facility
- Parks
- RoSal Schools
- Route 1
- Rte 3b
- Rte 3a

Trees and Open Space

According to residents, one of the neighborhood's most valued features is its tree canopy. The North Main Street corridor is greatly enhanced by generous tree lawns located between the street and the sidewalk.

Urban trees perform a vital role by cleansing the air of impurities, filtering stormwater runoff and storing carbon dioxide. CITYgreen© is a recently-developed software program used to analyze tree cover and calculate the real dollar benefits that trees provide within a specified area.

The CITYgreen© analysis of the North Main Street neighborhood (**Map 10**) shows that trees make up 49.3% of the landcover in the North Main Street neighborhood. At this rate of coverage, the trees are responsible for storing 4,636 tons of carbon annually and removing 10,468 lbs. of pollutants from the air. The dollar value of the pollutants removed, which is derived from the indirect costs of air pollution on healthcare and tourism, amounts to \$25,276 annually.

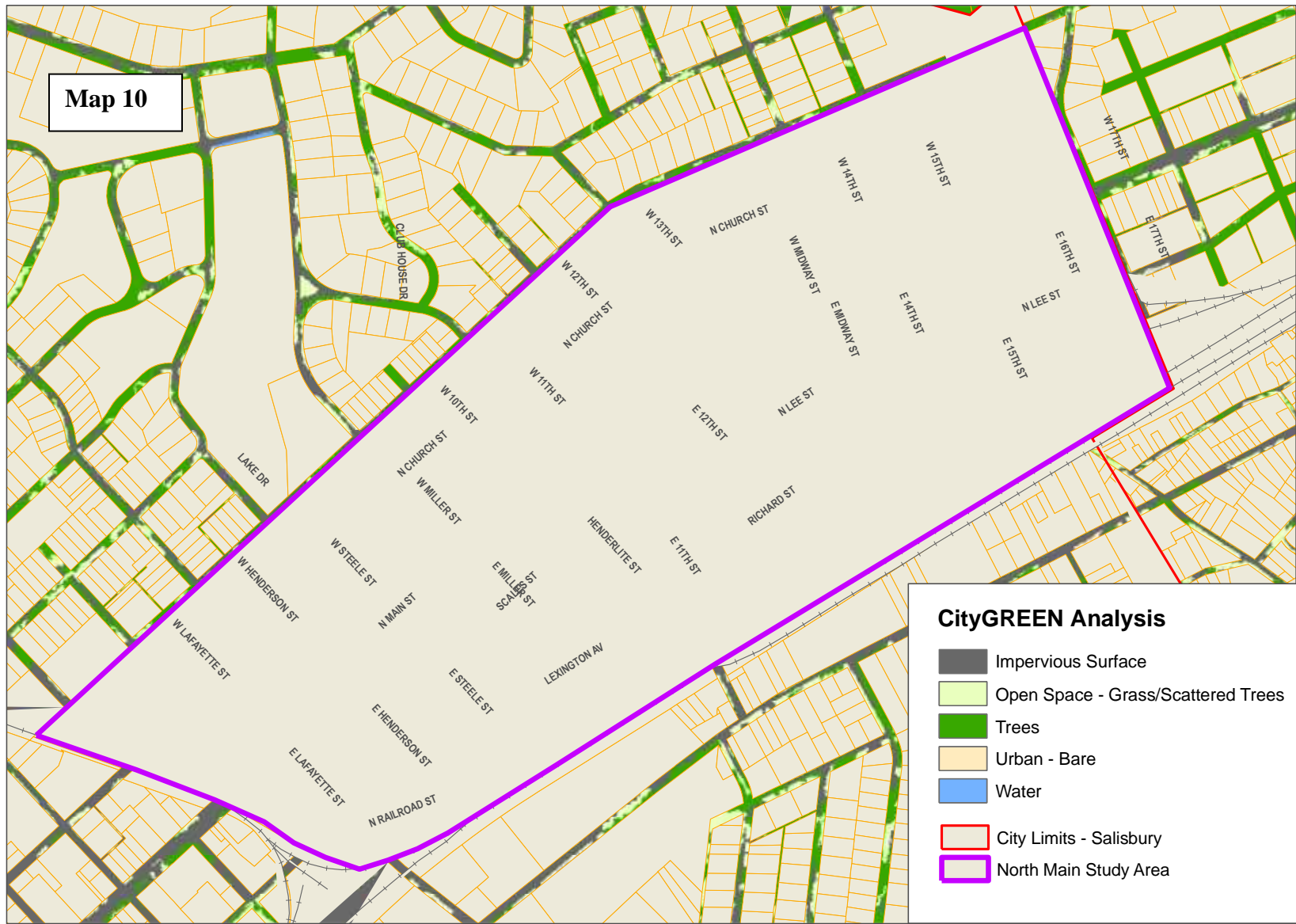
The map confirms that large expanses of impervious paving cover much of the property near 12th and 13th Streets, areas dominated by vacant commercial and

industrial buildings. The tree canopy is also sparse along North Main Street near the neighborhood entrance to the downtown. Tree planting efforts in the public right-of-way could be focused along the North Main Street corridor near the center of the neighborhood and near the southern gateway to help screen commercial uses and begin to re-build the tree canopy in these areas for future generations.

City Park provides a total of 41 acres of active and passive open space that is readily accessible to most of the neighborhood. The development of a pocket park or plaza along North Main Street between 11th and 13th Streets would serve at least two purposes. Additional greenspace in this vicinity would increase accessibility to open space for residents further removed from City Park and it would help counter the impact of intrusive past development patterns until the time that market conditions support more compatible redevelopment.



Map 10



Commercial Property

A few office and small retail uses are interspersed among residential properties along most of North Main Street. Some of these uses, such as the Flowers Baking Co. at 1405 North Main Street and Bostian Retirement & Investment Specialists at 1400 North Main Street, are neighborhood-compatible businesses providing valuable services to residents.

However, the overall viability of the North Main Street neighborhood is hampered by a large amount of vacant commercial and industrial property. The redevelopment of this property is a priority, with the goal of providing high-quality, neighborhood-scale services and amenities.

The neighborhood has numerous buildings of historic significance and architectural merit that are good candidates for adaptive reuse. The preservation and reuse of these buildings is of paramount importance to facilitating redevelopment in a fashion that enhances and builds upon the neighborhood's unique appearance. Larger buildings, such as the former trolley barn, could be incorporated into a broader redevelopment, such as a Neighborhood Center, while smaller structures or those located closer to residential property would be suitable for artisan workshops, galleries and other less intensive uses.



Examples of compatible neighborhood businesses



Examples of vacant historic buildings suitable for adaptive reuse

Eligibility for CDBG Funds

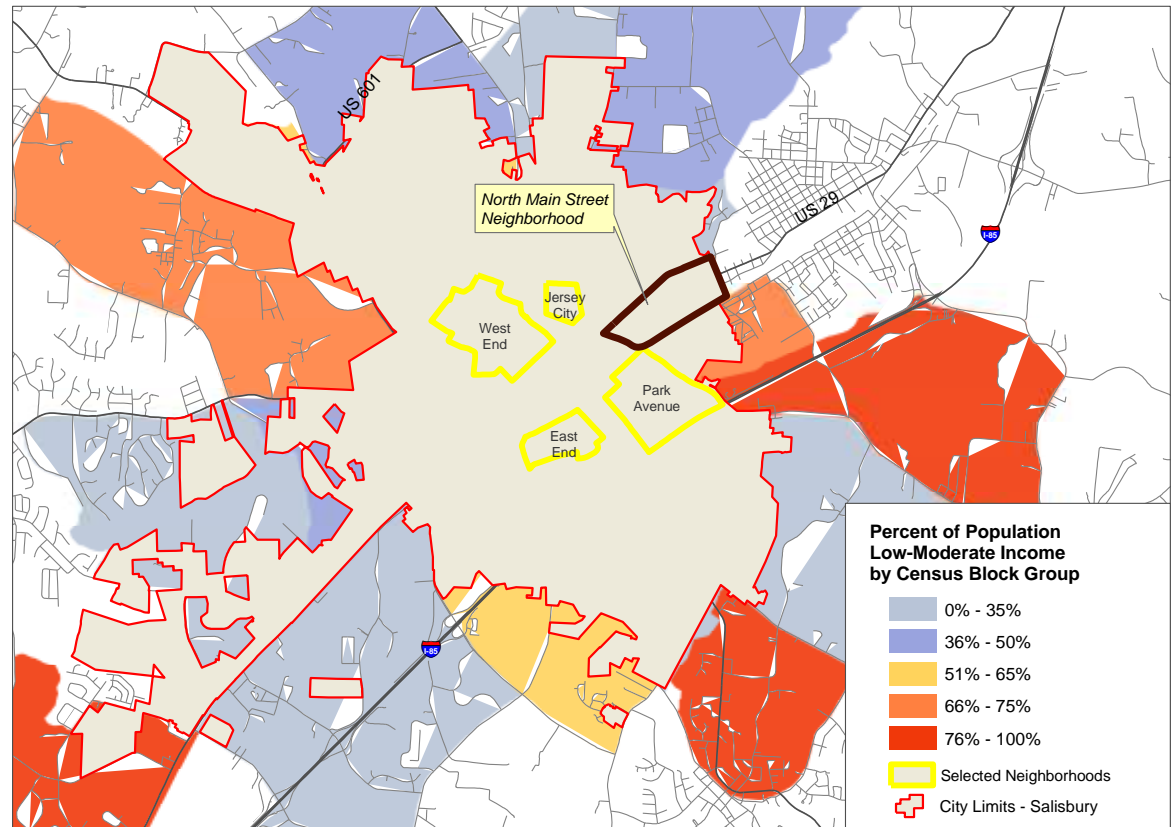
The City of Salisbury is an entitlement community for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). These funds are used to assist neighborhoods in two ways:

- Individual benefits, such as housing rehabilitation, for low-moderate income persons.
- Area-wide benefits, such as sidewalks or other types of infrastructure. In order to qualify for an area-wide benefit, 51% or more of the area's population must qualify as low-moderate income under HUD guidelines.

The census block groups which qualify under the area benefit rule are shown in **Map 11** (shaded in orange).

This includes the North Main Street neighborhood, where 69% of the population is low-moderate income according to data from HUD. To date, most of the city's community development activities have focused on four selected neighborhoods - Park Avenue, Jersey City, the East End and the West End.

Map 11



Appearance

Parking on Front Lawns

Parking on front lawns was a frequently-cited appearance issue in the neighborhood. The problem is tied to changing lifestyles with more cars per household becoming the norm, as well as situations where single-family residential units have been converted for multiple tenants.

Modifications to the North Main Street corridor should take parking into account, and include provisions for marked on-street parking on North Main Street wherever possible.



Overhead Utilities

The profusion of utility poles and overhead wires along North Main Street creates visual clutter which detracts from the overall attractiveness of the neighborhood. However, these facilities are part of a trunk line between downtown Salisbury and the Town of Spencer, making the prospect of burying the utility lines at some point in the future an extremely costly, and possibly cost-prohibitive, endeavor. Nevertheless, the feasibility of underground utilities should be explored in the context of any proposal involving substantial redevelopment of an area. An alternative, but still costly, approach could include the relocation of overhead utilities to a less visible area.



Conceptual Views

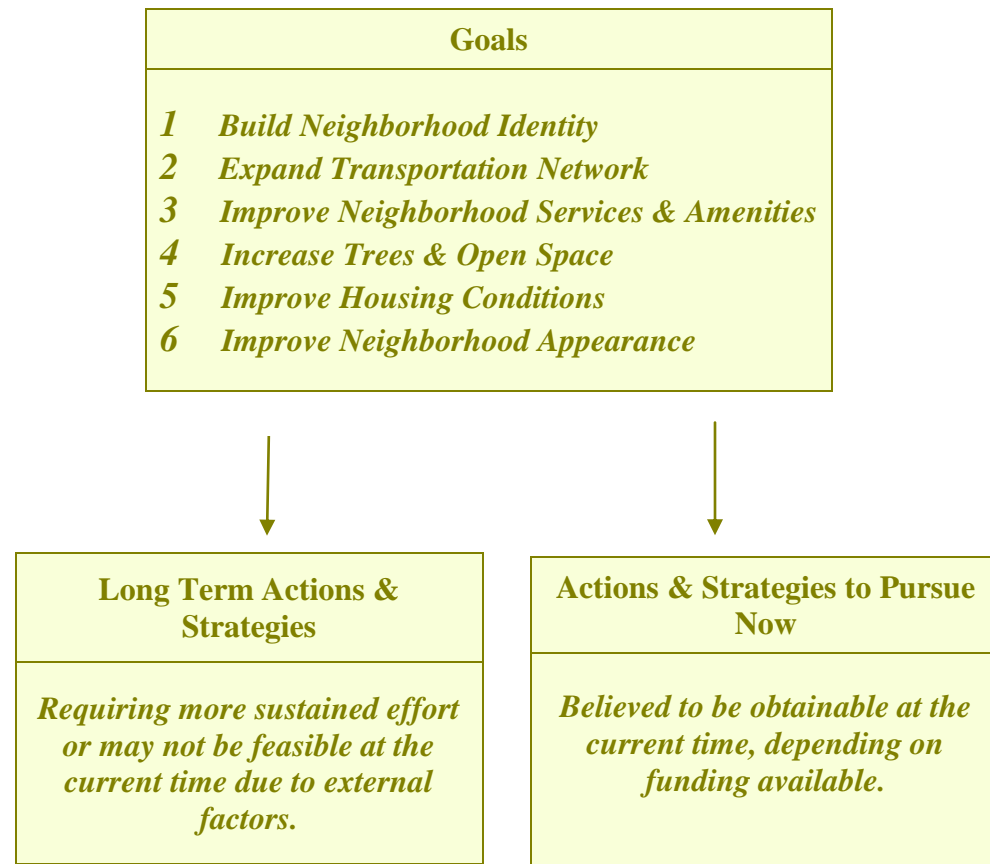
During the planning process, neighborhood residents put pen to paper during a design workshop to illustrate their ideas about further revitalization of the neighborhood. Two design professionals, one representing the landscape architecture tradition and one from the field of architecture, translated the neighborhood’s visions into Conceptual Views, incorporating many of the elements sketched by the residents during the workshop (**Views A and View B**).

Both views build upon the ideas expressed by residents, so they share much in common. However, there are differences between them that originate from the designer’s unique interpretation of the vision to the physical characteristics of the area.

Finally, it should be noted here that Views A and B represent largely *conceptual* ideas for long-term neighborhood improvements and redevelopment. Factors including market conditions and availability of funding will impact the timing and the scale to which these ideas can be implemented. In other words, the improvements and amenities may come to fruition in a way that helps achieve the overall vision, although in a slightly different arrangement or location from that shown in the conceptual models.

Goals, Actions & Strategies

This Plan recommends a series of Actions & Strategies for achieving the neighborhood’s future vision. They have been organized according to the broader Goals as follows:



View A



View B



**NORTH MAIN STREET
SMALL AREA PLAN**
SALISBURY, NC 1" = 200'
MARCH 1, 2007 NORTH ▲

1 Build Neighborhood Identity

Long-Term Actions & Strategies

Recognize the “gateways” on each end of North Main Street with treatments such as wide planted medians, signage or public art to establish a sense of entry and to help create place through recognition of the area’s history.

Encourage adaptive reuse of the Parkdale Fibers facility alongside the railroad tracks at Steele Street as artisan studios or comparable neighborhood-scale activities.

Support any changes to Henderson Independent High School which may be proposed in the future that will help strengthen its ties to the neighborhood.

Actions & Strategies to Pursue Now

Collaborate with the Waterworks Visual Arts Center on ways to promote the neighborhood among local artists and help draw more artists to the area.

Partner with the Henderson Independent High School to offer classes taught by resident artists, designers and craftsmen.

Work with the Branding & Wayfinding Committee to develop unique signage for the neighborhood which expresses its distinctive appeal.

Continue to broaden participation among both homeowners and renters in neighborhood organizations, including the Old North Main Association and the Community Watch Program.



2 *Expand Transportation Network*

Long-Term Actions & Strategies

Consider changes to North Main Street to make it more conducive to pedestrian and bicycle travel and to make it more compatible with the residential character of the neighborhood. Determine the feasibility of a three-lane cross-section with turn lanes and explore opportunities for planted medians, marked on-street parking by means of curb extensions or parking bays, crosswalks, bicycle lanes, and roundabouts at key intersections.

In the context of street design or commercial redevelopment, consider the focal point created at 13th Street where the “vista” along North Main Street terminates.

Consider the addition of an attractive pedestrian footbridge along the axis of West Steele Street from where it terminates at North Church Street to enhance connectivity to City Park.

Create a “mini-gateway” to City Park at the intersection of East Miller and Jackson Streets to include crosswalks and possibly a traffic circle.

Ensure that new street patterns that are created through the subdivision of larger parcels respect the existing pattern of gridded streets.

Actions & Strategies to Pursue Now

Install crosswalks on North Main Street at Henderson, Miller, Steele, 11th & 13th Streets.

Install new sidewalk on Miller Street between City Park and North Main Street while narrowing the roadway width.

Replace sidewalk on the 100 block of West Henderson Street. Complete repairs needed to other existing sidewalks.

Mark transit stops on North Main Street with signage and seating.



3 Improve Neighborhood Services & Amenities

Long-Term Actions & Strategies

Encourage the development of a neighborhood center between 11th and 13th Streets incorporating neighborhood-scale buildings, gathering places and mixed uses offering high-quality services and amenities that serve the needs of area residents.

Adaptively reuse the historic trolley barn for art studios, gallery space, a small performing arts center/community center or other neighborhood-scale activities. Restore it to its original appearance or redesign the façade to be more in keeping with the architectural fabric and scale of other historic buildings on North Main Street.

Rehabilitate other historic commercial buildings located along North Main Street to help attract quality, low-impact businesses and services.

Encourage redevelopment that brings vibrant, eclectic gathering places such as coffee houses, bookstores and similar destinations.

Actions & Strategies to Pursue Now

Establish a commercial façade and/or landscape grant program for the North Main Street corridor.

Promote existing tax credits that are available for historic income-producing structures.

Encourage participation in public hearings concerning adoption of the proposed Land Development Ordinance to ensure that zoning decisions take into account neighborhood needs and desires, especially those related to more intensive land uses (commercial and industrial).

Establish a corridor overlay district similar to the East Innes Gateway Overlay model to ensure that land uses are compatible with neighborhood character.



4 Increase Trees & Open Space

Long-Term Actions & Strategies

Create a train watchers' station and park on North Railroad Street.

Build a soccer park complex on vacant property near the railroad tracks.

Incorporate high-quality, improved public open space into commercial redevelopment projects, including plazas, neighborhood greens and pocket parks.

Develop a pocket park in the vicinity between 11th & 13th Streets and consider opportunities for a park near the Spencer gateway.

Include improved public open space with any residential infill involving subdivision of property into multiple lots.

Actions & Strategies to Pursue Now

Focus tree plantings in the tree lawns on North Main Street, particularly between 11th and 13th Streets, and also along the approach to the downtown, to help screen more intensive commercial uses and parking areas.

Establish a commercial landscape grant program to help reduce the "sea of pavement" effect that exists among the older commercial properties long North Main Street.



5 Improve Housing Conditions

Long-Term Actions & Strategies

Establish a housing commission to work with landlords and tenants.

Develop a rental occupancy permitting program to ensure that rental homes are adequately maintained and repaired between tenants.

Actions & Strategies to Pursue Now

Adopt a Demolition by Neglect ordinance to help reduce the incidence of severely neglected and deteriorated housing.

Explore potential for designation as a selected neighborhood for CDBG funding. Apply funding toward housing rehabilitation, sidewalk construction or other infrastructure.

Expand the National Register Historic District to include the areas which have been recommended along East Steele, Scales and North Lee Streets. Encourage property owners to take advantage of the tax credit benefits available for major home rehabilitation projects.

Continue to work with local realtors to raise awareness about the neighborhood and help increase homeownership.

Expand city code enforcement capabilities, especially concerning housing code enforcement.

Continue promoting Historic Preservation Incentive Grants for home repairs.



6 Improve Neighborhood Appearance

Long-Term Actions & Strategies

Explore possibilities for burying existing overhead utilities along North Main Street as part of any substantial commercial redevelopment project.

Identify ways to incorporate pedestrian-scaled lighting along North Main Street, taking into consideration the existing overabundance of utility poles which carry overhead wires.

Actions & Strategies to Pursue Now

Adopt ordinance regulating parking on front lawns as part of the new Land Development Code.

Work with existing commercial property owners to voluntarily screen existing outdoor storage areas and other unsightly views.

Continue and increase enforcement capabilities concerning porch and yard debris and overgrown lots.



