B

BELMONT PENINSULA

Sponsored by:

Belmont Abbey College
The City of Belmont
The Belmont Chamber of Commerce
Robert L. Stowe Foundation
The Associated Foundation
Parkdale Mills
N.C. Center for Applied Textile Technology
Southern Bell
Duke Power Foundation

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The City of Belmont

1994

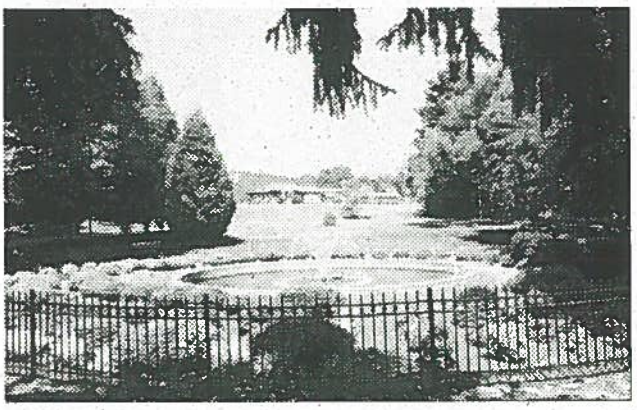
PART 1
CONTEXT

Preface.....i

Introduction...iii

- **Section One:** Foundation
- Scales of Reference.....4
- Evolution.....6
- Metro Context.....8

- **Section Two:** Managing Growth
- Alternatives.....12
- Growth Conditions.....14
- Implementation.....18
- Positioning & Marketing.....20



Stowe Park

Throughout the Belmont Peninsula, there are examples of unique beauty which are the foundation for creating a community of quality for the future.

Table of Contents

PART 2
THE PLAN

Section One: Primary Goals

- Primary Goals.....24

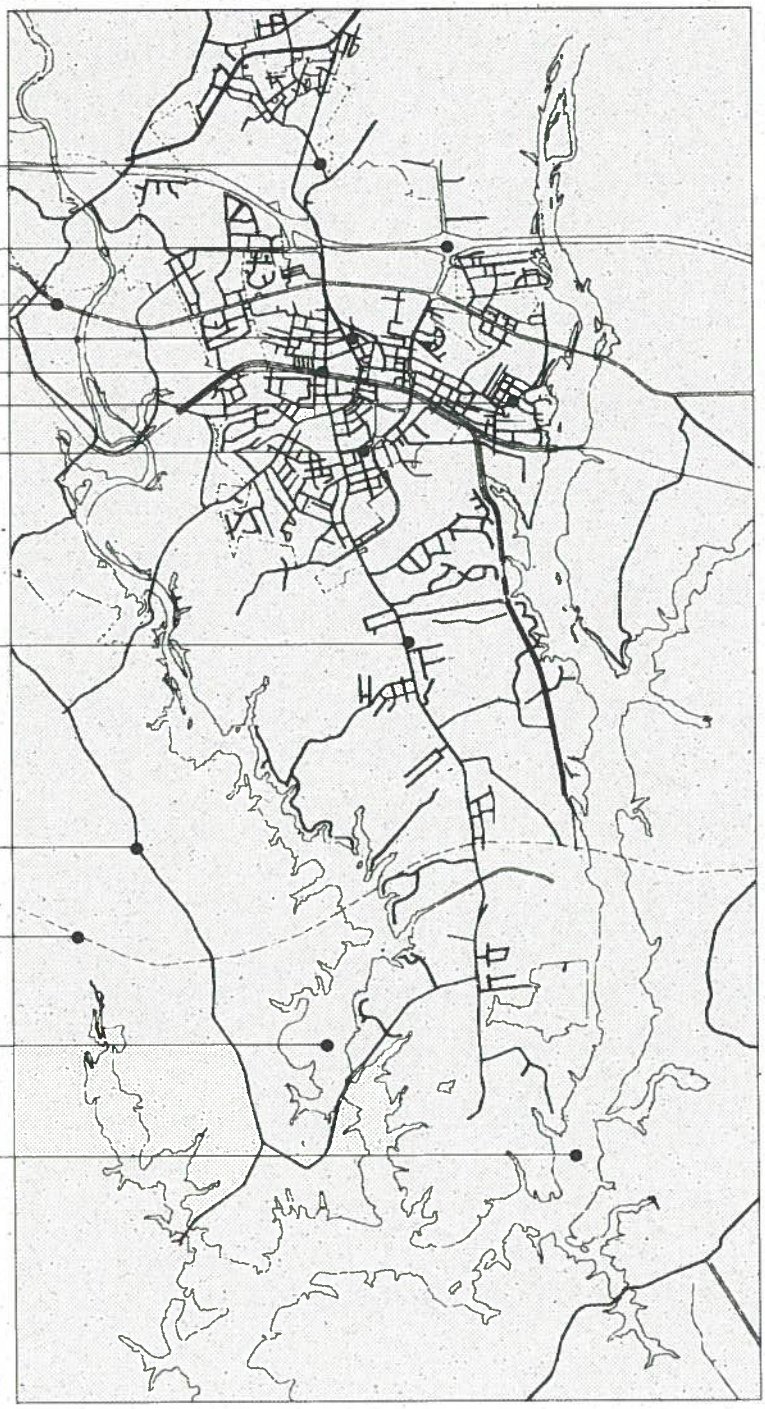
Section Two: Urban Systems

- Environment.....28
- History, Culture & Arts, Education, Religion.....34
- Transportation & Infrastructure.....40
- Economic Development.....46
- Health, Social Services, Public Safety.....50
- Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation.....54
- 10 Year Schedule.....60

PART 3
APPENDIX

- Key Statistics.....66
- Glossary of Terms.....68
- Projections.....70
- Citizen Involvement.....76

Growth will be inevitable and a result of the combination of these factors. Understanding the inevitability of growth and the need to manage growth are the keys to creating a livable future.


Woodlawn Road
I-85
U.S. 74 / Wilkinson Blvd.
Main Street
Central Avenue
N.C. 7 / Catawba Street
Keener Blvd.
South Point Road
New Hope Road
Proposed 29/74 By Pass
South Fork River
Catawba River

Preface

Strategic Planning is a community based planning process which seeks to build broad consensus on key issues affecting the future of the community. The process involves establishing visions, goals, and the strategies necessary to achieve those goals and visions.

The Strategic Planning Project process began in November 1991 and will continue through intended completion the Fall of 1993. The "Strategic Plan" was to be completed in three phases. The first phase was an "Audit" to collect, analyze, and systematically document information regarding the condition, activities, and plans of the various bodies effecting Belmont. Phase Two was the citizen input/task force phase to provide the forum for citizen discussions of alternative choices and development strategies for the Belmont Peninsula. Phase Three was for the steering committee to prepare the Final Strategic Plan and Report.

During the Fall of 1992, a Steering Committee was formed of a leadership group led by Belmont Abbey College, The Belmont Chamber of Commerce, The Robert L. Stowe Foundation, The Associated Foundation, Parkdale Mills, The NCCATT, the City of Belmont, and private citizens to organize and direct Phase Two of the Strategic Planning Process for the Belmont Peninsula. The process began with a Town Hall meeting, January 26, 1993, at which time the results of the "Urban Audit" completed during Phase One and the schedule and scope of Phase Two were presented. Following this Town Hall meeting, a series of four Task Force meetings were held for each of six target areas, including 1. Environment, 2. History, Culture & Arts, Education, Religion, 3. Transportation & Infrastructure, 4. Economic Development, 5. Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation, and 6. Health, Social Services, Public Safety. The steering committee commissioned Michael Gallis & Associates of Charlotte, North Carolina to prepare Phases Two and Three of the Strategic Plan.

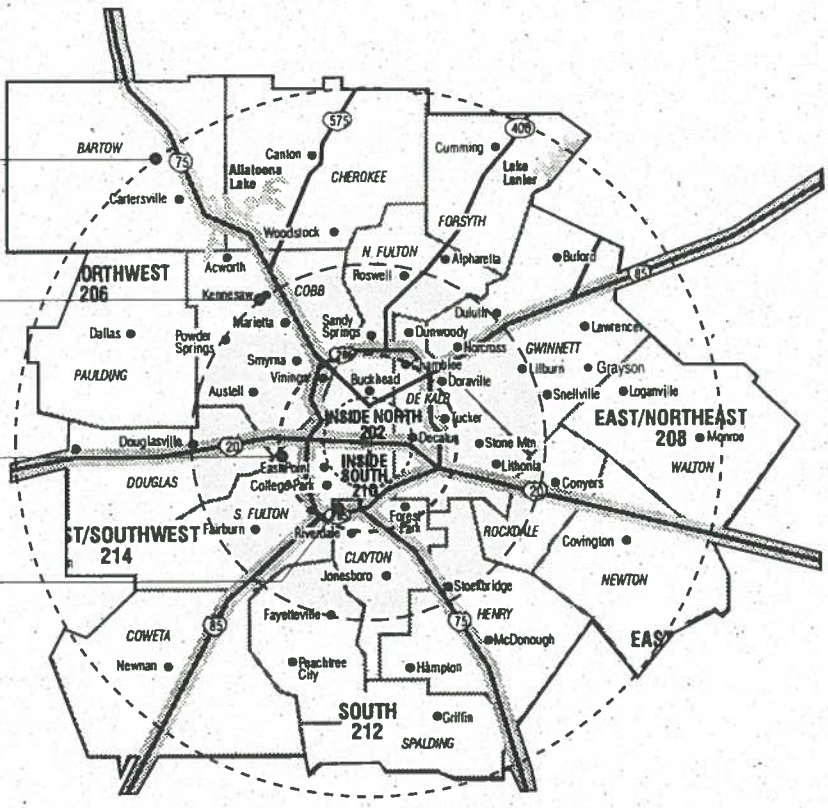
40 Mile Ring

20 Mile Ring

10 Mile Ring

Comparatively, **Belmont** is located at the 10 mile metro ring.

Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport



METRO ATLANTA

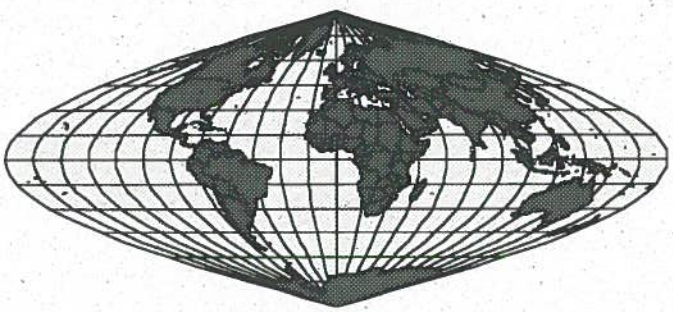
Charlotte's Metropolitan population will pass two million people within 25 years. By the year 2015, Charlotte will approach the size Atlanta is today. Belmont, one of the 30 metro cities, will be located midway, deep within Metro Charlotte's urbanized area.

Introduction

The decade of the nineties will be a key period in the historic evolution of the Charlotte Metro Area, the Town of Belmont and the Belmont Peninsula. The thirty cities within the 20 mile ring around Charlotte contain over one million people today. These cities are meshing together into a single large urban area. Belmont, ten miles from the center, is in the middle of this growing urban area.

Over the next two decades, the Town will grow larger in population and area than it grew in the last hundred years. Decisions made in this decade will define the pattern the Town will take for the next hundred years and longer. Many large undeveloped tracts of land will develop and the established pattern will be the framework for the future Town. With a remarkable environmental setting, two colleges, a historic town center, a strong economy, and the premier Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, the Belmont Peninsula is positioned to become the most beautiful and desirable community in the metropolitan area.

The Strategic Plan for the Belmont Peninsula is intended to provide an overall framework for the development of the peninsula including the existing urban areas as well as the newly urbanizing areas. Over the future course of years, specific plans for residential development, parks, arterials, health facilities, schools, etc., will be required. This initial plan outlines the issues, opportunities, and recommendations which can help guide the development of future specific area or urban system plans. It is, therefore, conceived as a flexible yet comprehensive tool to assist in clarifying the conditions and goals effecting future developments.



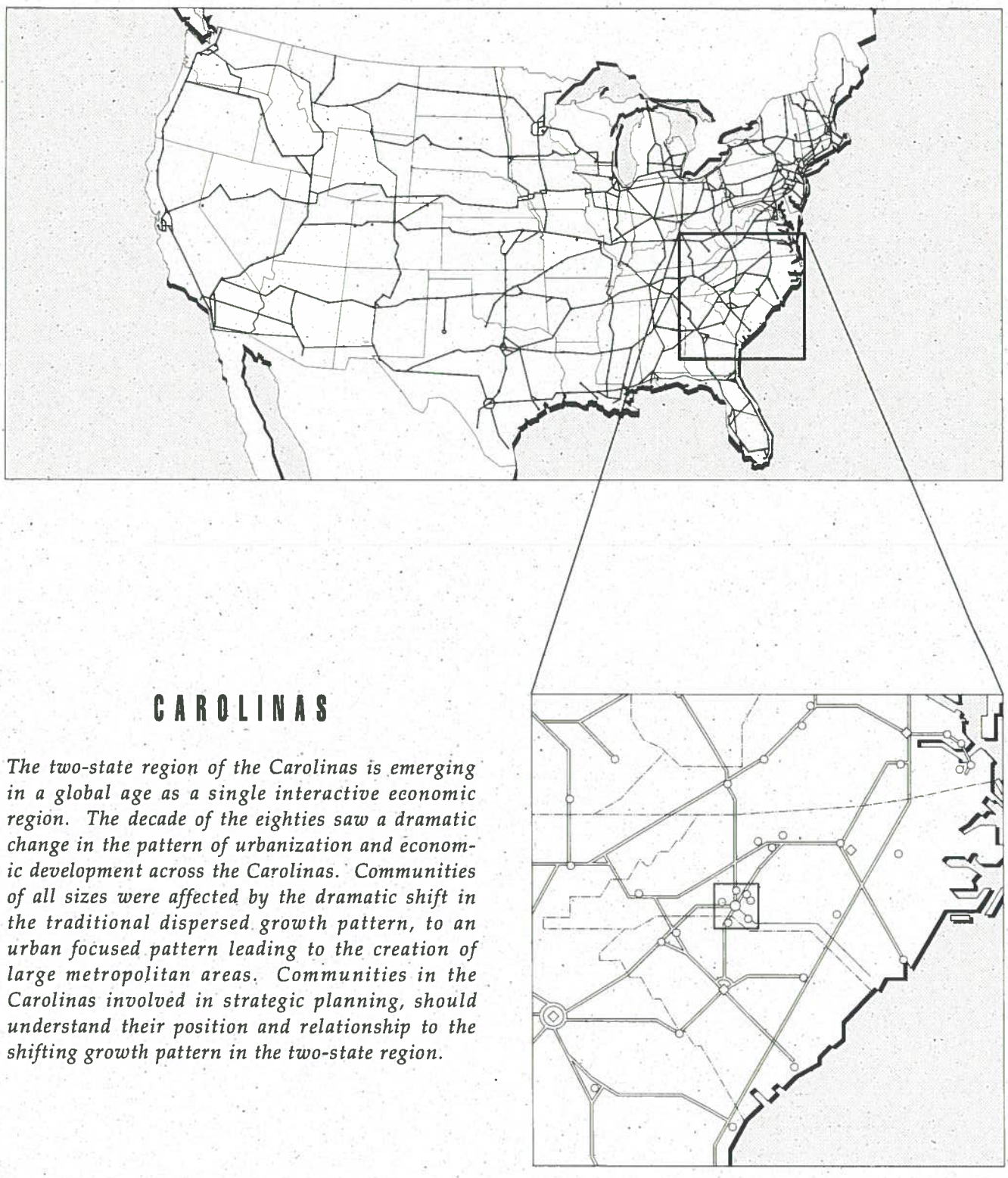
Globalization: *is changing the traditional social, economic and urban structure of the Carolina piedmont. The focus of population and economic growth has entirely shifted over the past decade from the rural areas to the metropolitan centers. Understanding the impact of globalization is vital for communities of all sizes throughout the Carolinas.*

PART 1

Section One

FOUNDATION

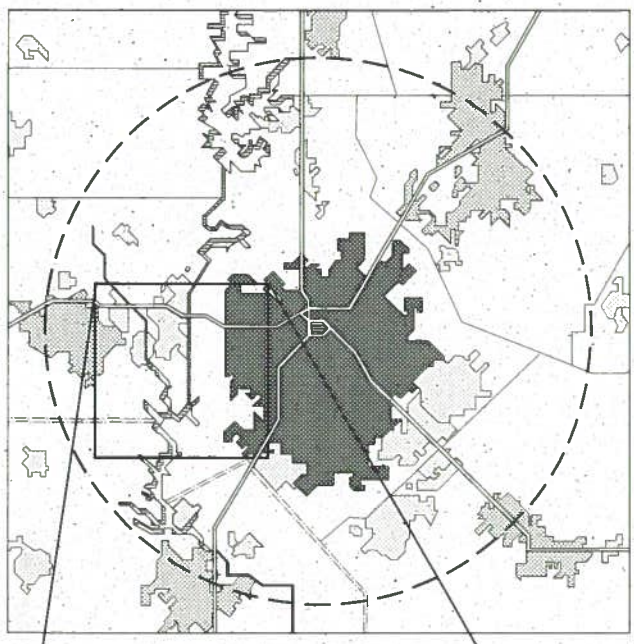
- SCALES OF REFERENCE
- EVOLUTION
- METRO CONTEXT



CAROLINAS

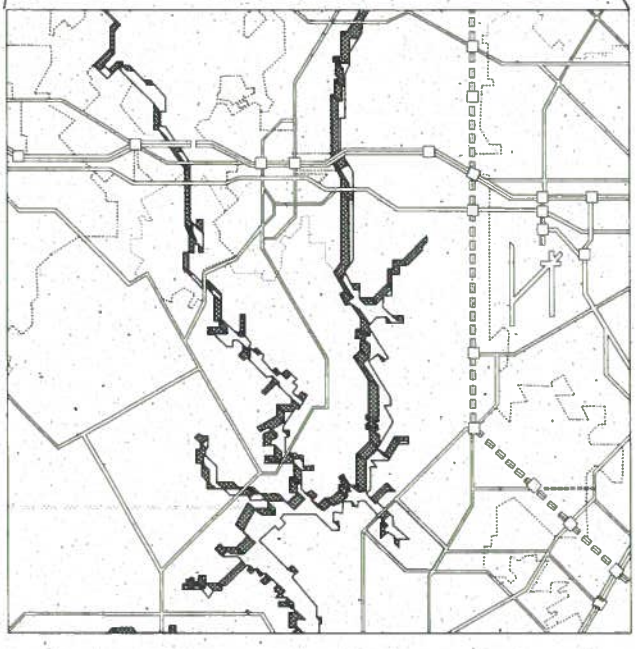
The two-state region of the Carolinas is emerging in a global age as a single interactive economic region. The decade of the eighties saw a dramatic change in the pattern of urbanization and economic development across the Carolinas. Communities of all sizes were affected by the dramatic shift in the traditional dispersed growth pattern, to an urban focused pattern leading to the creation of large metropolitan areas. Communities in the Carolinas involved in strategic planning, should understand their position and relationship to the shifting growth pattern in the two-state region.

Scales of Reference



CHARLOTTE METRO

The Charlotte Metro is emerging as the urban, social and economic center of the two-state region. The fourteen-county Charlotte Region was transformed during the decade of the eighties by the emergence of an urban metropolitan area within the twenty-mile ring at the center of the region. Communities within the twenty-mile ring began experiencing extremely high growth rates sometimes exceeding 1000% while many communities beyond the twenty mile ring stood still or declined. A key focus for communities involved in strategic planning is to define their socioeconomic niche in the new metro region.

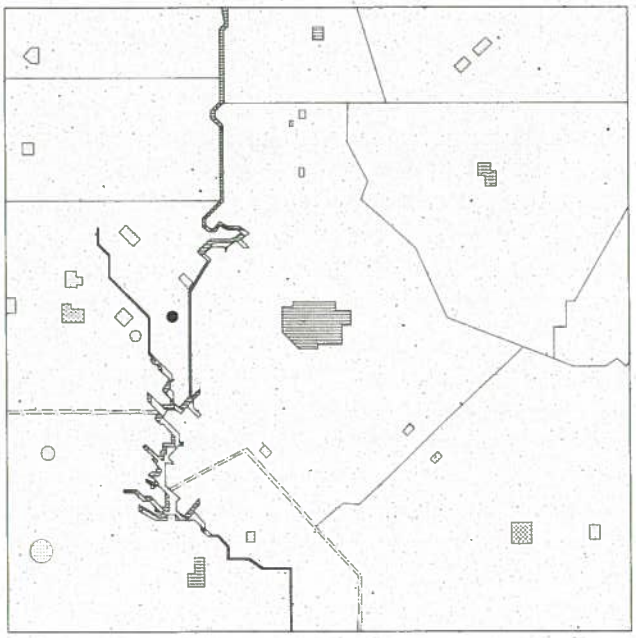


BELMONT PENINSULA

The Belmont Peninsula is the only metro city located entirely on a peninsula. Directly adjacent to the peninsula is the recently announced Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, planned to become one of the nation's premier garden developments. Complementing Belmont's unique environmental assets are a set of equally unique historic, social and economic resources. Located at the ten-mile ring, within ten minutes of an international airport, the strategic plan is an opportunity to define a unique niche which can maximize the opportunities afforded by this rare combination of assets.

ORIGINS OF THE CITY

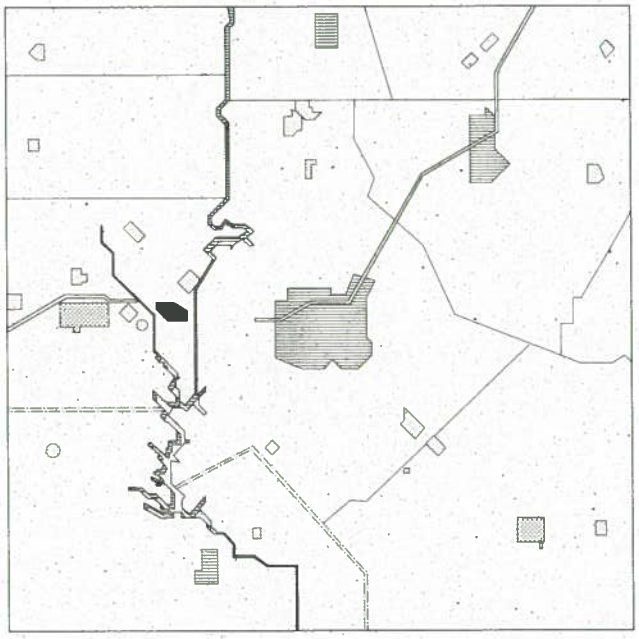
The Belmont Peninsula was originally an agricultural area where farming was prevalent. Belmont was separated from both Charlotte and Dallas (later Gastonia), by its location between the Catawba and the South Fork Rivers. Ferry crossings were required to reach the two county seats to the east and west, which reinforced Belmont's sense of uniqueness. The origin of the town of Belmont lay in the first mercantile store which was built to serve the agricultural community on the peninsula. With the construction of the railroad in 1871 combined with the building of the Garibaldi Station, Belmont was now connected with others urban centers in the state-wide rail network. Just one year later, 1872, the 500 acre Caldwell Plantation was purchased and donated to the Benedictine monks, which was followed by the founding of Sacred Heart in 1892. Additional stores grew up in the vicinity of the station which formed the basis of the town, which was incorporated as the town of Belmont in 1895. As the town continued to grow, the peninsula continued to retain its rural character,



which remains into the present.

GROWTH CHANGES THE CITY

While Gaston County's first textile mill was built in 1848, and Gaston had grown to become the state's fourth largest textile center by 1860. In 1901 the first textile mill, the Chronicle Mill, was built in Belmont. The access provided by rail, coupled with Belmont's location along the Catawba River, provided an ideal location for the emerging textile industry. Over the next 30 years, over 20 more area mills were constructed in Belmont. The population of the town grew from 145 people at the turn of the century to almost 4,000 by 1930 in response to the growth of the local textile industry. Many businesses emerged to serve this growing population, and Belmont became a thriving town. The impact of this phase of growth still dominates the visual appearance and layout of Belmont today. Many of the mills were



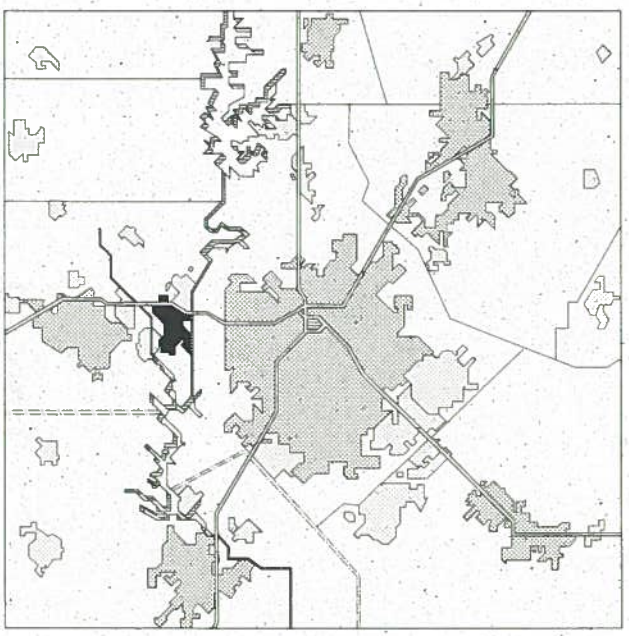
constructed with planned mill villages around them, churches were built, the downtown grew, and large and small houses sprouted along the town's major thoroughfares. Many of these buildings were of exceptional design and are considered some of the areas architectural "jewels".

1871 - 1900

1901 - 1950

THE CITY MATURES

Following WW II, the state's first super-highway, US 74, was built between Charlotte and Gastonia, giving rise to the area's first strip commercial development. The area's first freeway, I-85, was completed through Belmont by 1970 and divided the Abbey from the downtown and peninsula. Additional changes caused by global competition in the early

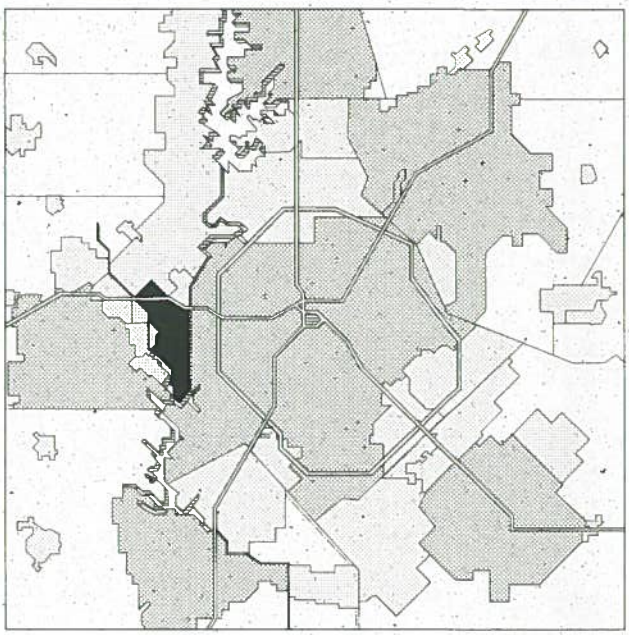


1970's affected the textile industry which began to slow its expansion. This was less of an impact on Belmont than some of the other textile towns in the region. At the same time the economic base of the region began to change. This change was primarily caused by the growth of Charlotte. By the end of the 1980's, Charlotte had been transformed into one of the nation's major financial and distribution centers. Charlotte /Douglas International Airport, located just 5 miles from Belmont, had become one of the nation's major air hubs. While towns such as Matthews and Pineville located along the same 10 mile metro ring as Belmont, had experienced explosive population and economic growth, Belmont had remained relatively stable.

1951 - 1992

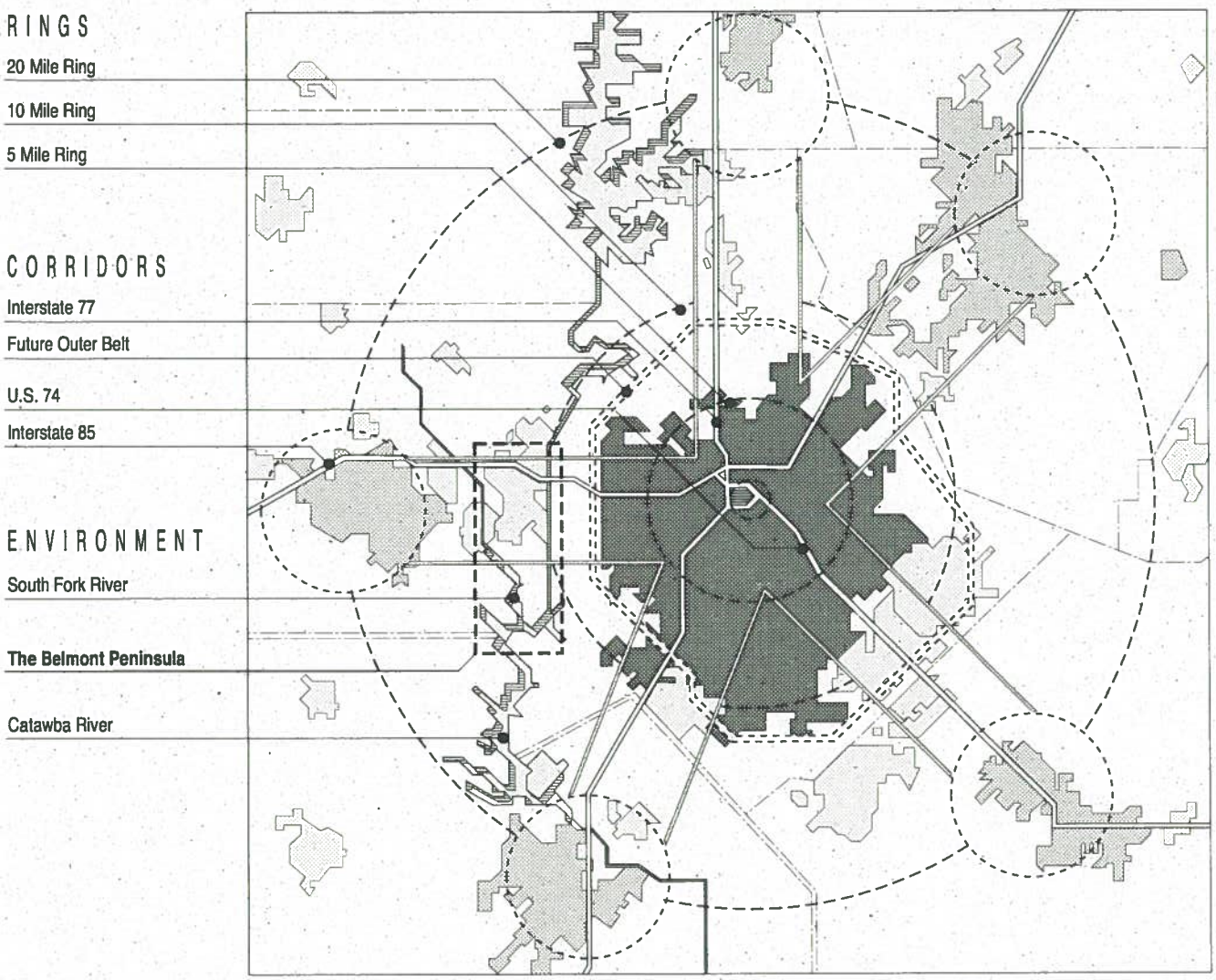
THE CITY ABSORBED

The Belmont Peninsula is still in an early stage of



urbanization. Once an isolated agricultural area, Belmont is today located midway between the center, Charlotte, and outer edge, Gastonia, of a rapidly growing metropolitan area. Although the town of Belmont was incorporated in March of 1895, and is almost a hundred years old, the current area of the town is only a fraction of the total area of the entire Belmont Peninsula. The original quarter-mile city limit radius expanded to a three quarter-mile radius in 1907. The next annexation took place in 1945, and in three successive annexation periods, mid-sixties, mid- and late eighties slowly enlarged the city limits. The total population living on the Belmont Peninsula in the town and unincorporated areas is 11,713, of which 8,434 live in the town, 7,534 south and 900 north of I-85. South of I-85, 4,179 live in unincorporated areas. Studies done by the Belmont Planning Department indicate that within 25 years the total population of the Belmont Peninsula could reach as high as 25 - 30,000 people, or between two and three times the current population.

1993 - 2010



The Charlotte Metro Area is a purely concentric and radial form, marked by a distinct environmental feature, the Catawba river with three large man-made lakes. The elegant simplicity of this form is unique among other U.S. and world metro areas.

RINGS

The concentric form of the region is evidenced by the four metro rings within twenty miles of the center and a fifth regional ring, forty miles from the center. The four metro rings begin with the one-mile ring at the core surrounded by distinct five and ten-mile suburban rings and terminate with the twenty-mile perimeter ring. The Belmont Peninsula area, located along the fast-growing ten-mile ring, experienced the least growth of any of the five major centers on that ring. Once the economically strongest area on that ring, Belmont has today a tax base only one third the amount of Matthews. The proposed outer-belt freeway is to be located along the ten-mile ring.

CORRIDORS

The development structure of the Metro Area is focused along the five major radial corridors. These five corridors are formed by the crossing of the two interstate freeways, which creates I-85 North and South as well as I-77 North and South, and US 74. Among these five corridors, I-77 South has received the greatest level of investment and experienced the fastest rise in land values while I-85 South, the location of the Belmont Peninsula, has experienced the least investment and rise of value over the past decade.

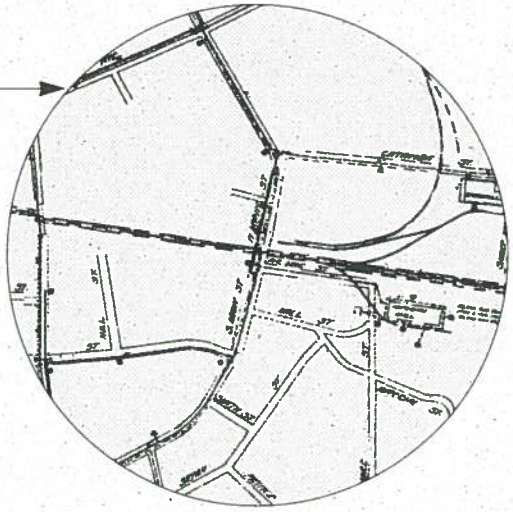
ENVIRONMENT

The strongest and most unique environmental feature of the Metro Area is the Catawba River and the three man-made lakes. The lakes, once an industrial sewer and power generating site, have become the focus for high quality residential development. The Belmont Peninsula, between Mt. Island Lake and Lake Wylie, is the only one of the thirty metro and over one hundred regional cities geographically positioned entirely on a peninsula. This environmental setting offers Belmont unique opportunities in defining its long-term future.

BELMONT 1895

The decade of the nineties is key to the future of Belmont. The remaining open areas of the peninsula will be either planned for or developed by the end of the decade.

Original City Limit Line: 1/4 Mile Radius

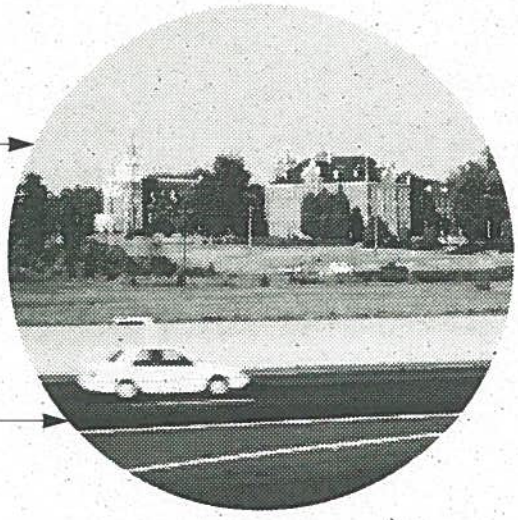


There are two different alternative approaches in managing the future of the peninsula, reactive or proactive.

BELMONT 1993

Historic Belmont Abbey

Metro Corridor: I-85 Freeway



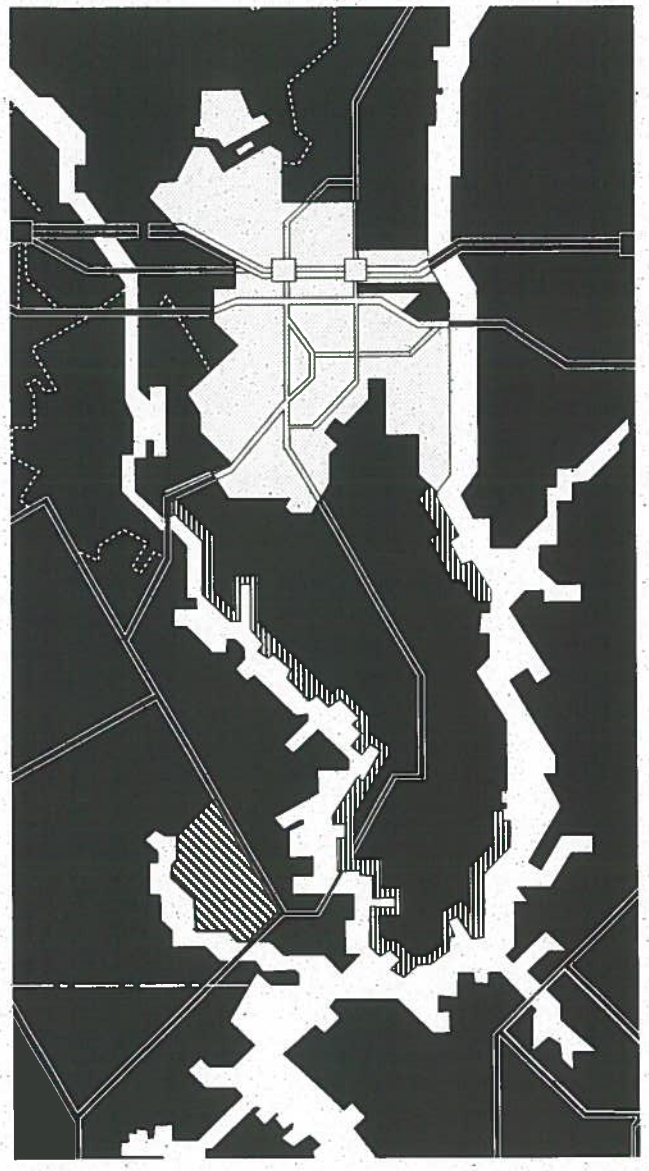
The choice is between directing the future or being directed by it.

PART 1

Section Two

MANAGING GROWTH

- ALTERNATIVES
- GROWTH CONDITIONS
- IMPLEMENTATION
- POSITIONING & MARKETING



DEFINING THE ISSUES

Cities are not static objects. They are in a state of constant growth and change. There are two main areas of concern related to growth and change: one is managing the expanding urban edge, and the other is reurbanizing the existing urban fabric.

Reurbanization addresses the issues of deterioration by "re"-urbanizing vacant and decaying strips, centers, and residential areas. Reurbanization refers to the creation of policies, regulations, and investments necessary to reduce and reverse the trends that lead to decline.

Managing the ***edge*** refers to the need to create the framework (transportation, infrastructure, etc.) and guidelines (policies, regulations, etc.) necessary to control urban growth as it spreads across areas with high environmental quality.

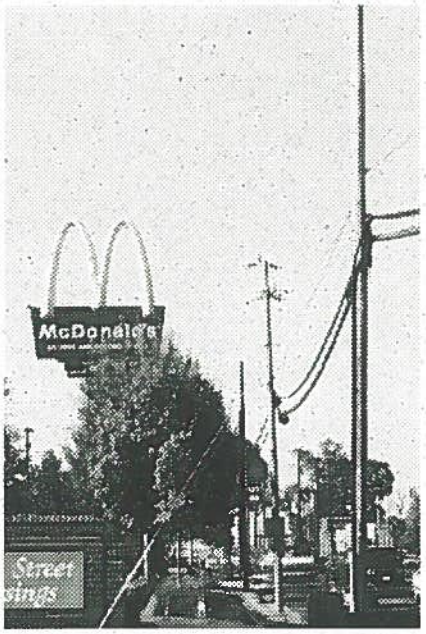
Existing Belmont City Limits

Undeveloped River's Edge

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

ALTERNATIVE #1: REACTIVE

Traditionally, because of the slow rate of growth, long range planning was not an issue. Development that occurred was accommodated without debate on the short or long term consequences. The cumulative affect of this approach can be seen along Wilkinson Boulevard and in some of the newer subdivisions. As growth accelerates the type of sprawl that typifies other cities and the accompanying pollution and traffic, will become common in Belmont (see Population Projections, pp. 70-72).

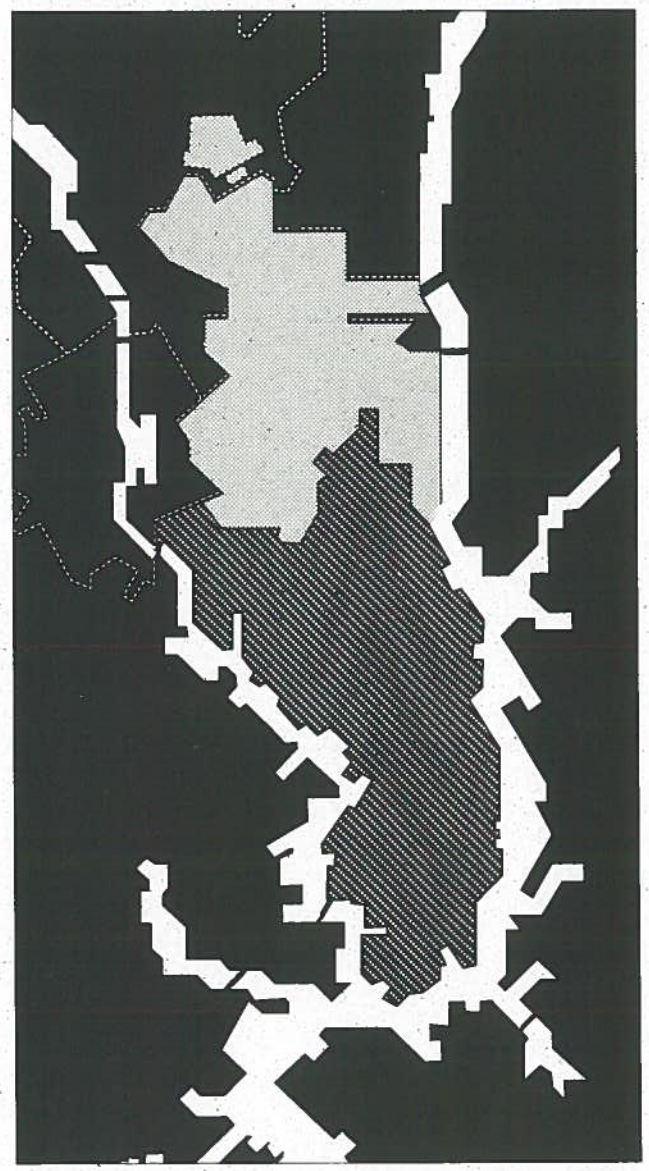


Gateway to Belmont: The lack of development controls and a vision for the City.

ALTERNATIVE #2: PROACTIVE

To cope with the new growth and maintain a high quality of life, a proactive approach will have to be developed, to lessen the negative impacts of development, and maintain the small town charm that makes the area attractive. The resulting urban pattern can be highly unified and coordinated, leaving large amounts of green space, while at the same time maximizing the development potential of the entire peninsula. This will reduce infrastructure costs substantially, keeping taxes relatively low, and at the same time maximize property values. Pollution and traffic will remain manageable (see Projection III). The goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan can help to influence quality growth.

Gateway to Rock Hill: A symbol of the City's vision and its proactive planning strategy.



INEVITABLE GROWTH

Due to its location on a peninsula, in close proximity to other political units, Belmont has a limited growth potential.

North - *The northern edge of Belmont is fixed and cannot grow north due to the position of Mt. Holly*

East - *The eastern edge of Belmont is bounded by the Catawba River and Mecklenburg County across the river.*

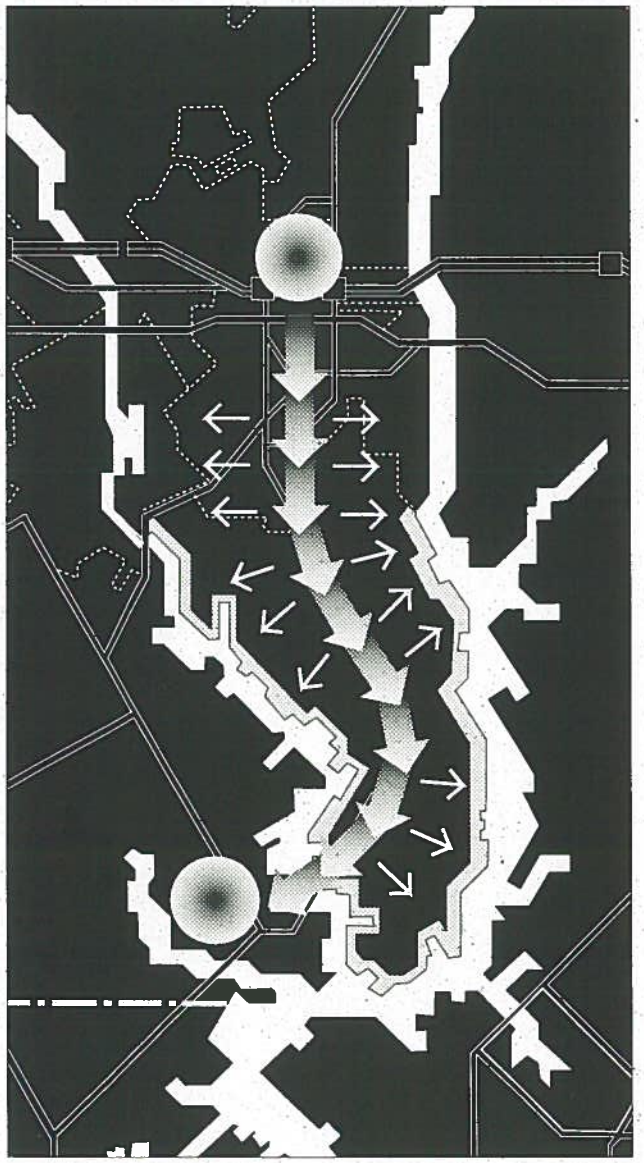
West - *The western edge of Belmont is bounded by Cramerton and the difficulty and expense of supplying infrastructure across the South Fork River.*

South - *The southern edge is the only possible area of contiguous urban expansion .*

Existing Areas - *Cities are in constant flux and already urbanized areas are in the process of change.*

Existing Belmont City Limits

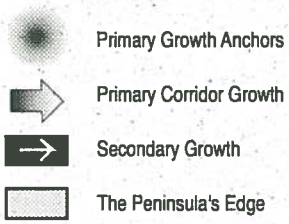
The Belmont Peninsula

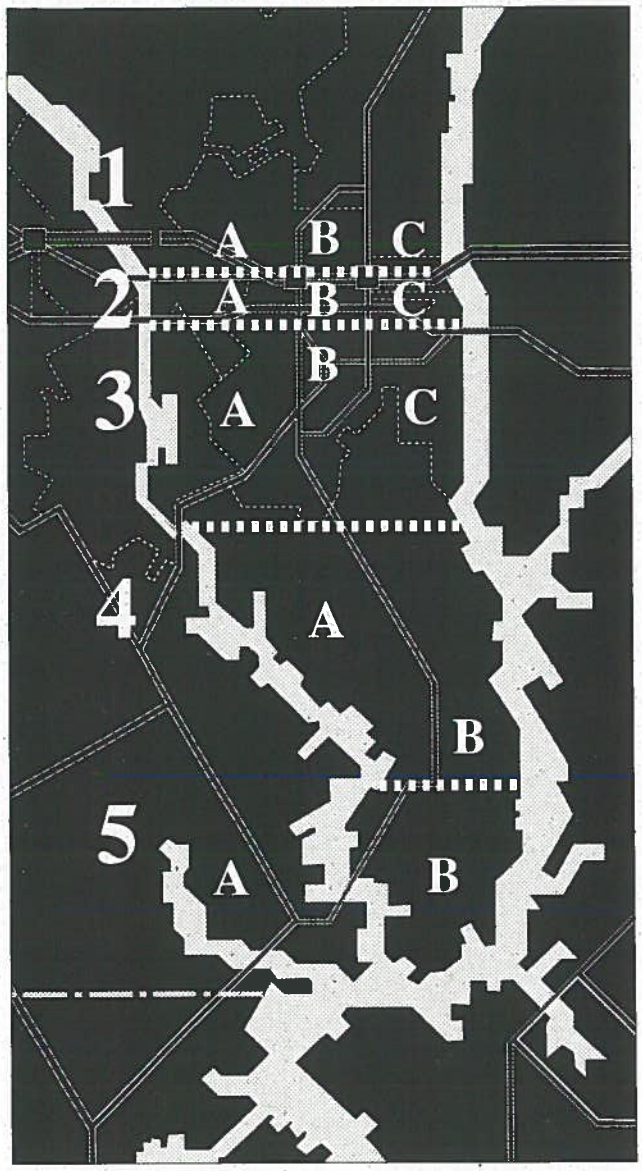


GROWTH DETERMINANTS

Belmont, positioned mid-way between metro core and perimeter at the ten-mile ring, is in the path of rapid metropolitan growth. The direction and dynamics of future growth is a function of those entities (Belmont Abbey College, the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, etc.) which attract growth, the corridors which channel growth (I-85, US 74, South Point Road, etc.), or special environmental features (the Catawba River and the waterfront edge).

Growth for Belmont will be inevitable and a result of the combination of these factors. Understanding the inevitability of growth and the need for Belmont to manage growth are the keys to creating a livable future.





STRUCTURE OF GROWTH

The Belmont Peninsula, a single contiguous geographic feature, has been divided since the coming of the railroad by successive transportation improvements, into a series of identifiable sub-sections and communities such as North Belmont, East Belmont, Reid Neighborhood, South Point, etc. These sub-sections and communities divide Belmont into a series of development zones, each with its own special resources, requirements and potential. Some areas have been heavily developed while others remain vacant, still in forest. The division of the peninsula has also created a series of differing political constituencies, each of which views the other sections of the peninsula as separate and independent communities. The sets of subdivisions are a barrier to defining a unified vision and future for the peninsula.

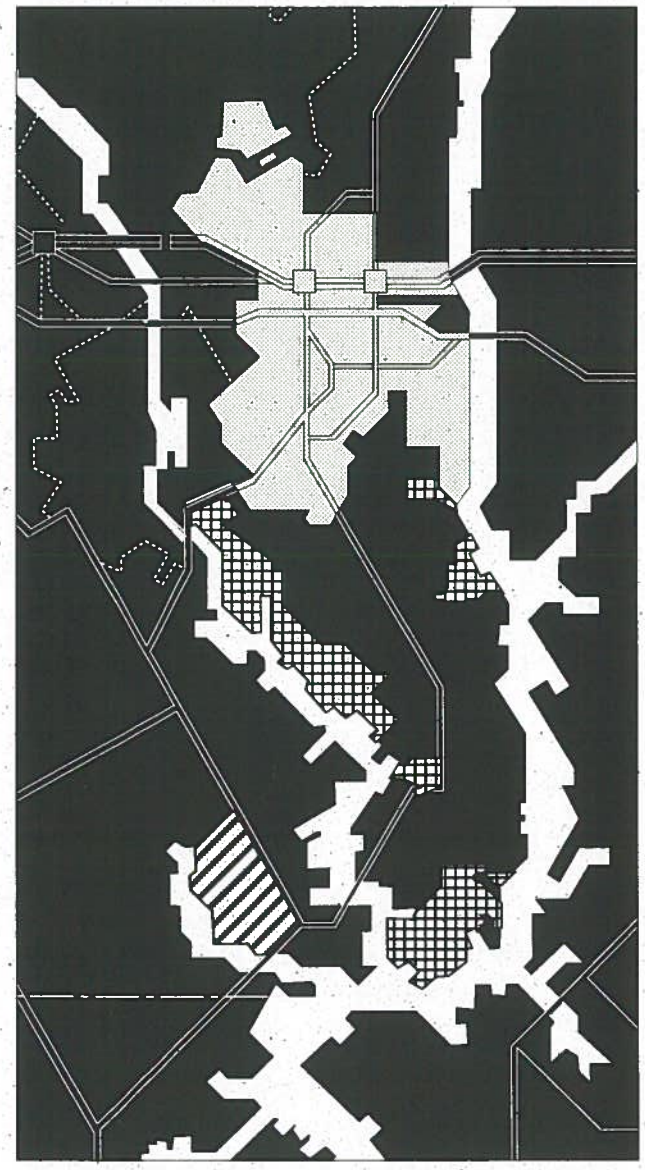
1 North Belmont Area
- **A** North Belmont
- **B** Belmont Abbey College and Monastery
- **C** "Gateway"

2 I-85 / U.S. 74 Corridor Area
- **A** Commercial Area
- **B** Sacred Heart Campus
- **C** Browntown

3 City of Belmont
- **A** Reid Neighborhood
- **B** Downtown
- **C** East Belmont

4 South Point Area
- **A** South Fork River Side
- **B** Catawba River Side - Plant Allen

5 Lower Peninsula
- **A** Seven Oaks - Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden
- **B** Marina - Largely undeveloped area



PARCEL SIZE & OWNERSHIP

The Belmont Peninsula, by virtue of having fixed boundaries on all sides, has a fixed amount of developable land. An analysis of the land ownership pattern shows that the remaining developable land can be divided into two parcel size and ownership categories. Along the water's edge, large parcels controlled by a single owner dominate the pattern. Down the center of the peninsula, primarily smaller parcels held by multiple owners dominates the pattern. In the long-term, the expanding edge will cause development activity to take place on both small lots and large parcels. The problem of unrestricted growth is that poor quality development on the small parcels will destroy the value and development potential of high quality growth on the large parcels.

Existing Belmont City Limits

Large Undeveloped Tracts of Land

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

Implementation, a process by which visions, goals, and objectives become realities, involves many different public and private agencies, each of whom has a specific responsibility for the various areas defined in the plan. Implementors are the agencies, councils, boards, and other entities which have a variety of "tools" , policies, regulations, plans and studies, and investments in both operations and capital improvements, by which they can implement a plan.

Implementation is impossible without revenue. Successful implementation requires understanding the relationship between long-term development policies and the tax base and resulting public revenue stream.

I. Implementors

A. Public Sector

1. State Agencies: State government has a variety of agencies which offer various types of financial support for transportation, arts, economic development, and other plan component areas.
2. County: Counties are typically involved in education, social services, and environmental issues.
3. City: Cities are involved in transportation, infrastructure, public safety, and land use and zoning controls.
4. Special Interest, Volunteer & Non-Profit Organizations: Public groups covering a variety of area from garden clubs to drug abuse.

B. Quasi-public

1. Educational Institutions (K-12 & Colleges): The institutions of a community have a powerful affect on all aspects of the social and economic life of a community.
2. Religious Institutions: Religious institutions can greatly influence the attitudes and direction of the community.

C. Private Sector

1. Business: Businesses impact the physical appearance, financial strength, and job opportunities of the community.
2. Chamber: The Chamber of Commerce is primarily an economic development and marketing organization concerned with increasing economic opportunity.
3. Foundations: Private foundations, from large national to small local, can become financial partners in the future of the community.

II. Public Revenue & Private Development

The ability to carry out the visions and goals of a plan is related to the financial strength of a community. Long-term quality require money to build and to maintain. The stronger the local tax base, the higher quality the community can sustain. Too often citizens do not understand that "balanced growth" means balancing types of residential and commercial development with the tax base and revenue stream to maintain the long-term quality of a community.

The quality of a community is measured by the distinction of its parks, police force, infrastructure, roads, schools, health and social services. Each of these need financial support to maximize their potential. A strong tax base requires strong and diversified commercial development and balanced residential which includes a percentage of each housing range from affordable to luxury. If the value of residential and commercial development is not high, the schools, parks, police, roads, etc. all suffer.

III. Tools

a. Policies:

Policy guides refer to locally adopted statements of community goals and objectives. Through policy guides, local elected leaders spell out the future pattern of growth and direction that the community will follow. The best known example of a policy guide is the strategic plan. The plan does not have spending powers or regulatory requirements, but it charts the course for the future.

b. Regulations:

Regulatory tools refer to local ordinances designed to protect public health, safety, morals, and general welfare. The term police powers is often used to describe these regulations. Several planning controls used for guiding urban development and carrying out plans are based on this power. The most important of these are: zoning, subdivision regulations, building codes, housing codes, health codes and fire codes. There are also miscellaneous ordinances controlling such things as signs, aesthetics, historic preservation, mobile homes, and floodplains which are a part of the polices powers.

c. Investments:

Investment tools refer to public capital investment. Public investment in facilities such as schools, municipal buildings, infrastructure, and parks determines the use of publicly owned land. Public capital investment also exerts a powerful influence on the development of privately owned land. The construction of roads, water lines, sewer lines, schools, public buildings and parks changes the pattern of what is economically feasible and thus changes private decisions.

d. Plans & Studies:

Plans and studies are the means of acquiring information (studies) or establishing specific future projects or programs. Studies, such as a market analysis for residential development, are the means to deepen the knowledge and create the base of understanding the issues upon which to make public and private decisions. Plans are the means to establish specific projects and programs such as a parks or transportation plan or a social action plan aimed at enhancing social and health programs.

e. Positioning & Marketing :

Developing the future of a community must involve the communications of the visions, goals, strategies, and successful implementation steps to the general public and special audiences. Marketing involves the preparation of reports, brochures, media strategy, advertising, and all other means of communication.

The ultimate value of any plan is the degree of influence it has on future growth. Implementation does not start at the end of the planning process. Rather, implementation must begin as part of the planning process. Implementation Strategies must be considered as each component of the plan is developed. Implementation typically involves both the public and private sector. It ranges from identifying the approval process, to building public support, regulations and ordinances, and finance.

Positioning and marketing are the means to maximize public and private awareness and interest in the area. Positioning involves identifying the geographic, social, and economic characteristics that distinguish the Belmont Peninsula from other metro and regional communities while marketing seeks to find the most effective means of communicating the inherent strengths of the town and peninsula to both general and specialized local, regional, and national audiences.

The Eiffel Tower was built along the banks of the Seine River at the entrance to the Exposition Universelle in 1889. Known as the "Iron Cathedral" for the People in the 19th century the Eiffel Tower has become the icon of Paris' identity throughout the world.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

At the regional level, the Belmont Peninsula should forge close ties with Gaston and Mecklenburg economic development commissions as well as the Charlotte/Douglas International Airport. The peninsula's strategic location on the boundary between Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties, less than five miles from the airport, makes it an ideal site for business, office, residential and industrial development. Area strengths should be emphasized by use of recruitment brochures and other marketing tools which make Belmont's strategic location better understood.

DOWNTOWN OWNERS ORGANIZATION

Downtown owners need to organize to promote the downtown as a viable business and investment location. Through a strong organization, state and federal funding and grants would be easier to attain, providing needed capital for infrastructure improvements business loans, and marketing campaigns.

TOURISM

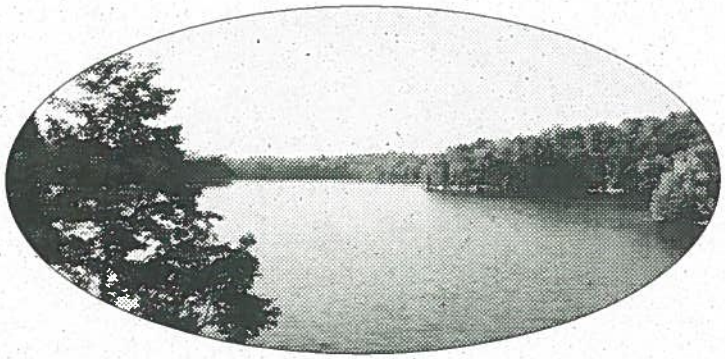
Local resources, such as the ongoing development of the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, the proximity to lakes Norman and Wylie, Carowinds, and easy access to downtown Charlotte, should be used to draw tourism to the peninsula area. Promotion through a Visitor's Bureau, the Gaston and Belmont Chambers, and by community groups could more effectively attract a significant segment of the regional tourist market. At the same time, local events and festivals need to be increased and expanded to make the entire community a destination place.

MEDIA ADVERTISING

Various aspects of the community including downtown events, local businesses, and area attractions should be promoted heavily through the local and regional media to emphasize Belmont as a destination place. To draw people to the town, there will need to be active marketing of local shops and events which complement one another.

SPECIAL ORGANIZATIONS

Local community groups should be supported which create, promote, and coordinate events and festivals for the town. The Belmont Peninsula has several ongoing events and festivals which could be built into metro and regional attractions which would help to build its identity in the area.



Belmont: *the only Metro City located along a peninsula, offers a unique opportunity, with its rich historic traditions, to create the regions' premiere community.*

PART 2

Section One

PRIMARY GOALS

- PRIMARY GOALS

1 Belmont has the ***opportunity*** to take control of its future and create a highly desirable and livable community. This can occur if future developments are based upon the unique set of urban and environmental resources which distinguish it from any of the other thirty Metro area cities. Fundamental is a ***growth strategy*** which seeks to preserve important historic and environmental assets, strengthens the educational, economic, and cultural resources, and balances the impact of future urbanization.

2 In order to maximize the existing ***environmental*** assets, a thorough and complete investigation of the environmental conditions of the Belmont Peninsula is needed. This investigation should document the Peninsula's ecology and environmental potential. Any regulations affecting its development should be catalogued and included. The pattern of future ***urbanization*** should maximize the development potential of the peninsula by incorporating and preserving important environmental assets in any general development plan.

3 The long term development of ***environmental amenities*** including landscape, parks and open space will enhance the beauty, desirability and quality of the peninsula. In order to maximize the effects of local investments, joint projects with adjacent municipal and/or county governments should be encouraged. Joint projects could be useful in extending local projects across political boundary lines to provide buffers and additional environmental amenities in a more continuous network.

4 Chartered in 1895, Belmont over the past century has developed many important traditions, resources, and buildings. Strategies to preserve and enhance Belmont's built environment through zoning, grants, and the creation of incentive programs, should be developed to insure the upkeeping of important major ***historic, cultural, educational, religious,*** and other unique structures.

5 Belmont's special environmental assets are matched by its very special position within the Metro ***transportation*** network, especially the close proximity to the airport. By developing a long-term strategy to link Belmont externally to the Metro transportation network, while internally developing a scenic arterial system, the city can maximize the potential benefits of its unique location.

6 Solutions to the long-term ***infrastructure,*** sewer and water plants and distribution facilities must be developed. The quality of future urbanization and economic development are dependent upon the development of infrastructure with the capacity to adequately handle future needs.

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7 New ***economic initiatives,*** a strong marketing program, and a plan of action for the downtown are urgently needed for the future of the Belmont Peninsula economy. These initiatives are important for increasing the number and quality of jobs while strengthening and diversifying the local tax base. The downtown should be a focal point for developing new initiatives to create new economic activity. A large scale business park involving multiple land parcels and ownerships, should be created to attract new industry, while new regulations aimed at enhancing and improving the physical conditions along US 74 should be considered.

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8 Promoting ***tourism*** should become a goal in strengthening the local economy. With close to a million visitors a year anticipated at the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Belmont has the opportunity to benefit from this increased tourist activity. This will require stronger marketing and image development programs for the Belmont Peninsula. The potential benefits of promoting tourism and image building for the Peninsula will include strengthening all other areas of economic development.

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9 Create a long-term strategy to encourage ***quality growth*** in both newly urbanizing and the traditional urban areas by recognizing the importance and quality of Belmont's historic areas. These new growth areas and changes within the existing urban fabric, should blend with those traditional historic areas of the Belmont Peninsula. This is critically important in the highly visible "gateway" locations along US 74 and I-85, where the image of Belmont is created.

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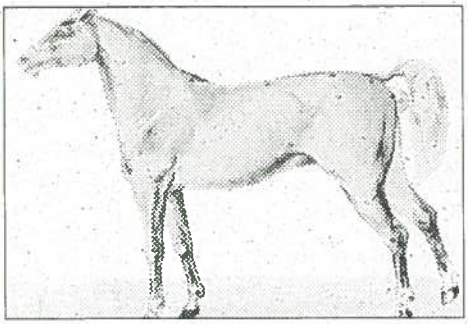
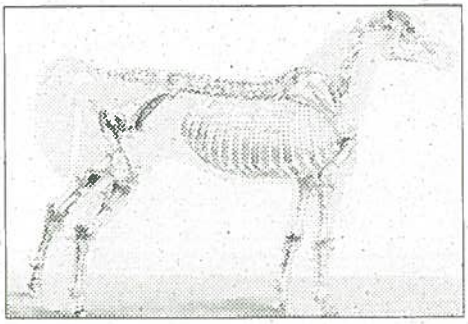
10 Establish Belmont's identity as "A Safe and Caring City" by developing facilities and programs which focus on all aspects of good personal, community and environmental ***health.*** This could be achieved through maximizing existing resources such as the Peninsula's setting, Sacred Heart Campus, etc., in combination with needed additional programs.





Cities are living things. They are composed of systems. Urban areas have transportation, education, etc., while living organisms have skeletal, nervous, and other systems. Each system must be cared for if the organism, urban or biological, is to remain healthy.

Each system of the city must be studied and become an integral part of the plan.

PART 2

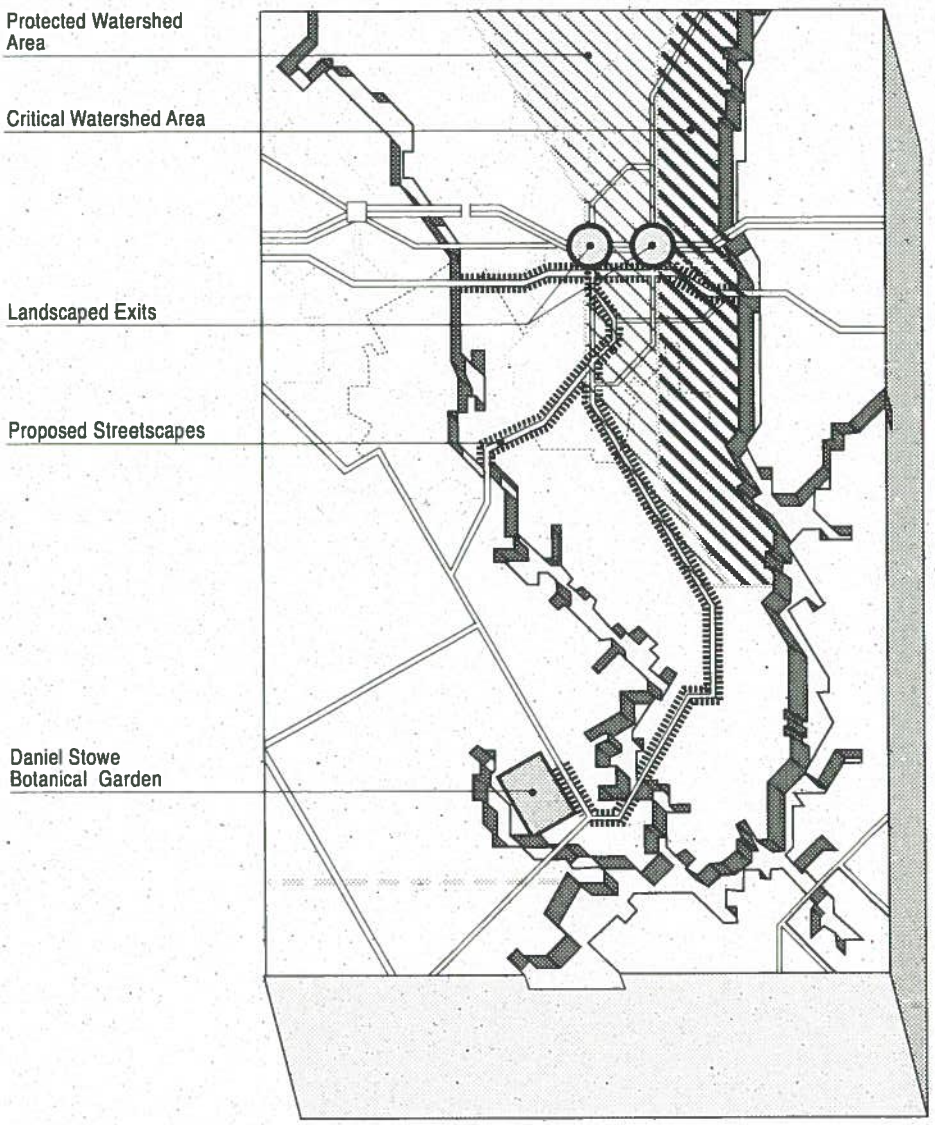
Section Two

URBAN SYSTEMS

- ENVIRONMENT
- HISTORY, CULTURE & ARTS, EDUICATION, RELIGION
- TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- LAND USE, ZONING HOUSING, ANNEXATION
- HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, PUBLIC SAFETY
- 10 YEAR SCHEDULE

DEFINITION:

Includes the visual and physical environmental conditions and their influence on the long-term development of the community. Considered in this category are issues of the long-term interface between the environment and urban growth as well as the development of streetscapes, recreation needs and parks.



GOALS:

1. Inform and build support for maximizing Belmont's unique environmental assets.

Belmont is the only one of the thirty metro cities which is entirely located on a peninsula. Maximize the opportunity presented by a continuous waterfront and large tracts of undeveloped land. The new Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden gives focus to the environmental issue by establishing a large, high quality , high visibility environmental amenity. Gaston County has established a scenic overlay district covering a portion of the South Point area to protect the visual qualities of areas surrounding the Botanical Garden.

2. Encourage the creation of a joint parks/greenway system with adjacent governmental units.

The Belmont Peninsula is bounded by Cramerton to the west, Mt. Holly to the North, and Mecklenburg County to the east. Mecklenburg County has purchased land for two major parks along the Catawba River and is considering a third in the section opposite the Belmont Peninsula. Just North of I-85 is the Catawba River Community Park, between I-85 and US 74 is the "Gateway Park" and a large tract is currently under consideration just opposite Plant Allen. Belmont should encourage a relationship between the Gaston County Parks Department and the Mecklenburg Parks Department for a coordinated development of a parks system along both sides of the river which could be utilized by residents of both counties. The City of Cramerton has begun an ambitious greenway program along the South Fork River which will run along the river front and through the downtown area. An extension of this program onto the Belmont Peninsula would allow for the continuous greenway and parks system to be established from Cramerton along the South Fork to Upper Armstrong Road and across Belmont to the Catawba which would have the potential to comprehensively link the entire peninsula with both Mecklenburg County and Cramerton.

3. Investigate and document the environmental potential of the peninsula.

The unique geographic form of the peninsula is defined by the topography, ridge lines, drainage pattern, soils, vegetation, animal life, etc. (QNRC Report). The future pattern of urbanization and development should be based on identifying and maximizing the potential of these important environmental assets. All available environmental reports should be assembled to begin a comprehensive environmental study to thoroughly inventory and describe the ecology of the Belmont Peninsula and identify any special environmental qualities. This would facilitate the evaluation of potential sites and uses for public and private development. A long-term development framework to guide and define new and existing areas of growth and change should be established.

4. Catalogue the environmental regulations effecting the development of the peninsula.

A listing of all regulations which refer to environmental conditions including air, water and earth should be compiled. Air pollution laws would include the clean air act affecting Plant Allen, open burning of refuge, leaves, automobile emissions, etc. Regulations referring to water should include watershed, wetlands, storm water run off, soil erosion, etc. The watershed regulations established by the State and defined by the City and County will affect the future of development. The watershed critical area on the peninsula is limited to a section along the Catawba River, half of a mile down river from the water intake (Henry Chapel Road). The City's watershed proposal will be for the City only; the remainder of the peninsula is currently under watershed regulation of Gaston County. Any solid waste regulations or other waste disposal requiring sites should be included.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

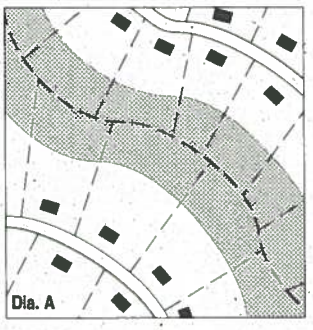
A. Urbanization

With large tracts of undeveloped land along the waterfront, Belmont has the opportunity to define the pattern of urbanization. Once defined, it will be necessary to create development guidelines to insure managed growth will follow the chosen pattern. Market conditions will dictate the range and type of amenities and the tax base which will provide revenue to acquire and maintain public greenspace areas which include parks, greenways, bike paths, jogging trails, etc.

1. Market conditions will dictate alternate patterns of urbanization in terms of environmental impact, neighborhood development, and financial feasibility.

Typically, continuous forested drainage areas (shown in grey) are used as rear yard separations between adjoining house lots. These areas have restrictions on cutting trees, vegetation or altering the water flow pattern.

Diagrams A and B illustrate two alternative concepts of utilizing this zone.



2. A market study to determine the potential of residential and commercial real estate on the Belmont Peninsula should be completed.
3. Extend ETJ (Extra-territorial Jurisdiction) as a planning tool, to Botanical Garden to insure that the selected pattern is realized without deterioration.
4. Evaluate the impact of the watershed and other environmental regulations.
5. Coordinate with Task Force 3 (Infrastructure, Transportation), and Task Force 6 (Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation).
6. Define the desired qualities of development and the issues which must be addressed to bring about those qualities for the Belmont Peninsula.

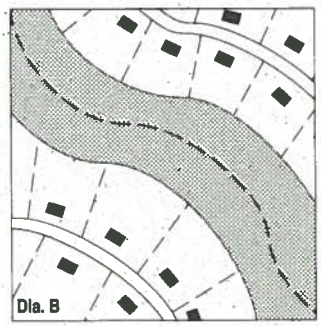


Diagram A illustrates a buffer zone arrangement, wherein the continuous area is divided into individually owned and maintained units. Collectively these areas can never become community or public greenways.

Diagram B illustrates a common area wherein the continuous zone is held in common ownership by a community or public entity.

B. Open space, Recreation

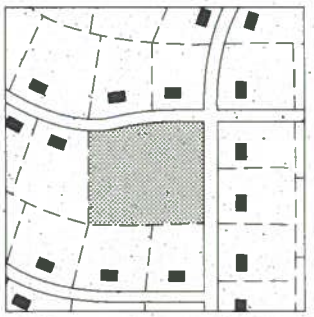
Define the greenspace network of greenways, parks, streetscapes, natural areas, and recreational facilities. Gaston County has expressed an interest in supporting parks in the peninsula area.

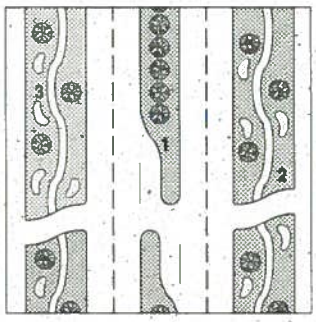
1. Link proposed open space/recreation developments to existing city to produce a continuous network of amenities.
2. Upgrade existing condition and landscape of major city streets (Main Street, U.S. 74, I-85) and parks.
3. Garden planting program to upgrade residential areas (mill villages, Reid neighborhood, etc.)
4. Tree and landscape ordinances to protect existing forests and treelined roads (South Point Road, N.C. 273, Armstrong).
5. Create bike paths throughout the peninsula; initially along South Point Road.
6. Seek to establish pedestrian paths across Catawba River to allow Belmont residents to access Mecklenburg Parks.
7. Build a relationship with Cramerton and Mt. Holly to extend the greenway system across Belmont Peninsula.
8. A public sector environmental, openspace and parks plan for the Peninsula should be devel-

oped in conjunction with the private sector development plans to produce the maximum benefits for both sectors. The plan should be phased to coordinate with the pace of urbanization on the Peninsula and identify key locations for public parks and define their use (i.e. natural preserves, recreation areas, greenways).

9. Social and environmental regulations need to be developed to control crime, litter, and environmental deterioration in park areas.
10. Work with Mecklenburg County and the Charlotte/Douglas International Airport and future developers to extend Wilkinson Boulevard landscaping project to Belmont.
11. Seek additional grants to continue the I-85 landscape program.
12. Landscape Highway 7/Main Street from North Belmont (Abbey) and through the City.

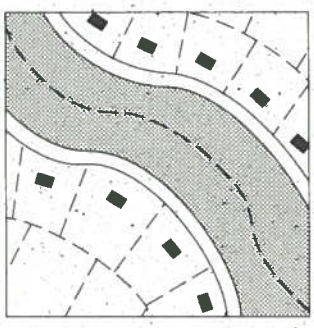
One concept of a **neighborhood park** is a lot(s) on a corner. While useful as a small recreation area, this arrangement has no beneficial affect on the environment or the landscape appearance of the neighborhood.

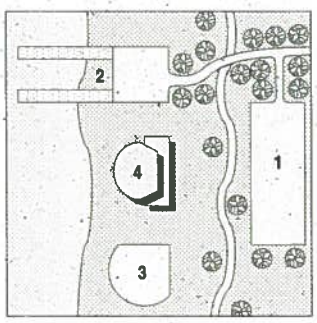




Major arterials can either become beautiful landscape areas or undesirable asphalt strips. Shown to the left, is a concept of a four lane road designed to be a community amenity by having a landscaped center median (1) and sides which include jogging trails and bike paths (2), and retention ponds (3).

Neighborhood parks can also be created by utilizing the continuously wooded drainage areas typically used to separate house lots. By running streets along each side and facing the houses towards the park, a beautiful and environmentally beneficial **greenway park** can become a neighborhood amenity.





Belmont has a long waterfront along two rivers. As part of the parks concept, a **comprehensive waterfront park** could easily be developed which has adequate parking (1), accessible boat docks (2), ballfields (3), and enclosed recreation facilities (4).

POLICIES:

a. Urbanization to proceed in an integrated manner coordinating transportation, infrastructure, land use, zoning, housing, and annexation.
b. Pursue joint action with adjacent political units.
c. Seek financial support for continued environmental improvements including landscape, greenways, etc.

REGULATIONS:

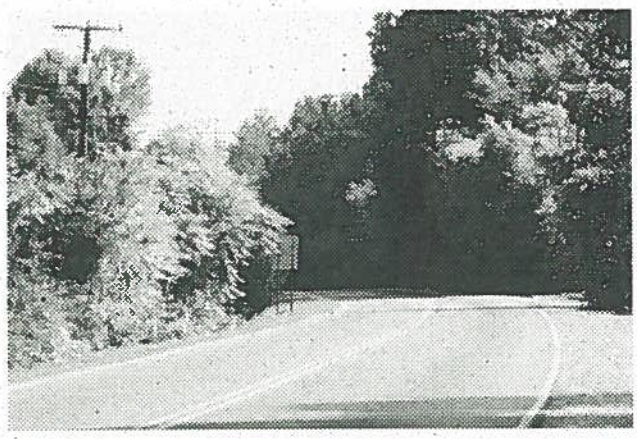
a. Upgrade and enlarge zoning ordinance to include landscape and screening regulations as well as thoroughfare and corridor regulations for setbacks and tree preservation.
b. Upgrade subdivision ordinance to include tree protection regulations.
c. Develop water run-off and soil erosion provisions for new development.

PLANS & STUDIES:

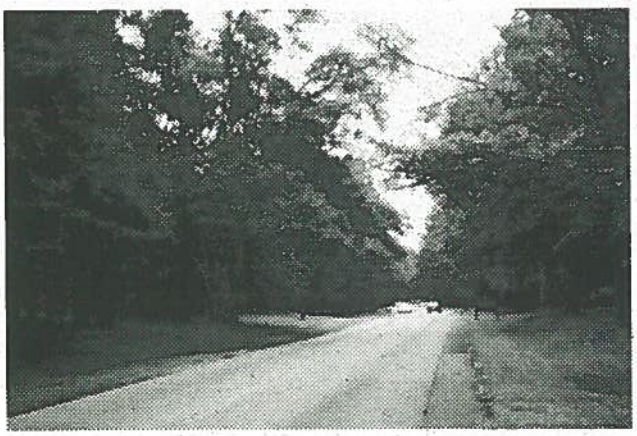
a. Market study to include description of environmental amenities
b. Open space plan to define a network of parks through a series of alternative configurations which should react to housing market and urbanization and land use pattern.

INVESTMENTS:

a. Create a planting program aimed at enhancing area neighborhoods.
b. Develop a long-term capital improvements budget to implement recommendations of a greenspace plan.
c. Maximize use of grants and moneys from public and private sources.
d. Renovate existing parks and plan for the expansion of a park system to be tied in with the local greenways and parkways.
e. Streetscapes for the downtown.

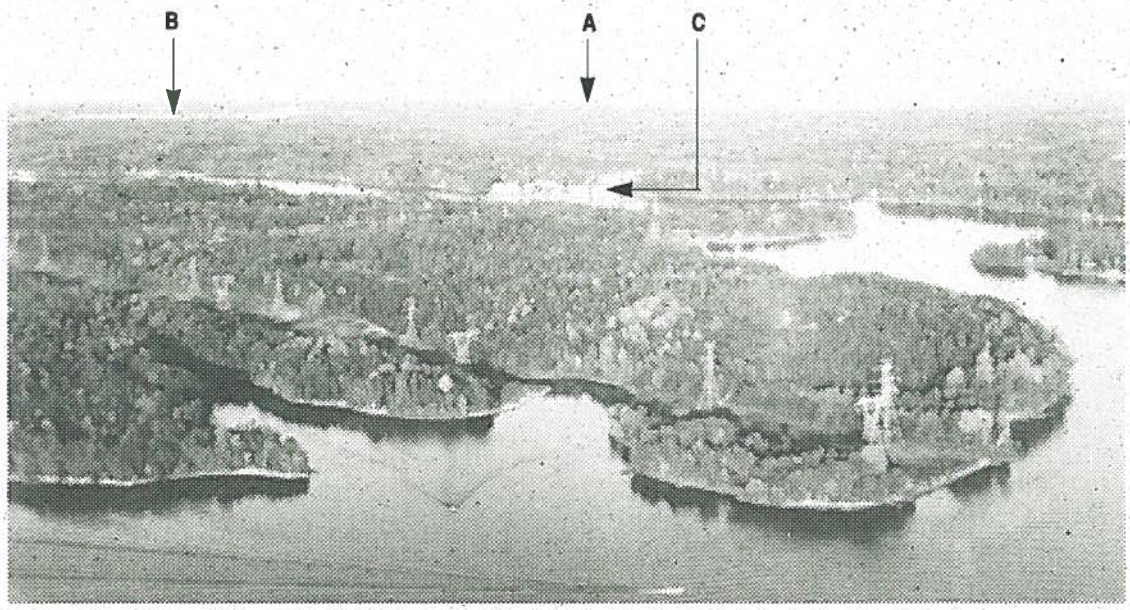


Shown above is South Point Road. With only minimum zoning controls in Gaston County, South Point Road will lose its scenic beauty and could become a commercial strip, similar to U.S. 74.

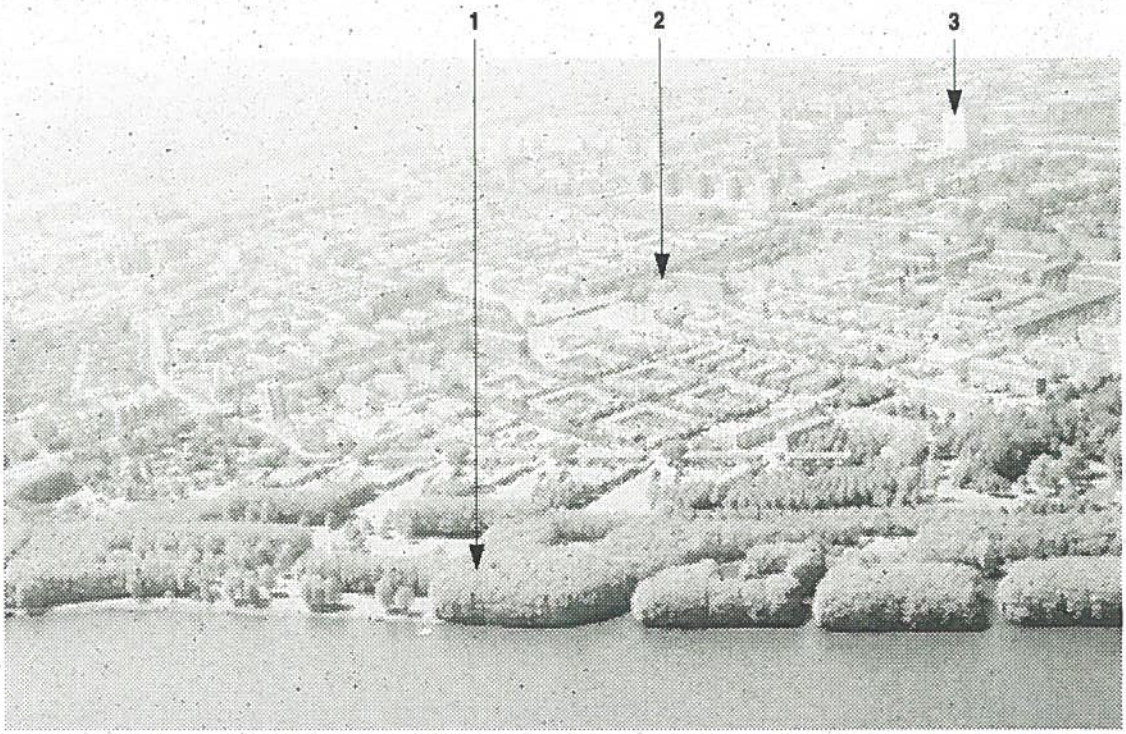


This fully developed two lane road has kept its inherent natural beauty due to zoning controls which require landscape, buffers, and jogging trails.

Belmont Peninsula Waterfront:
This view depicts the pristine and natural beauty of the Belmont shoreline. In the background are seen (A) downtown Charlotte and (B) Charlotte / Douglas International Airport. The Emerald Point development (C) demonstrates what can happen to the water's edge without proper development controls.

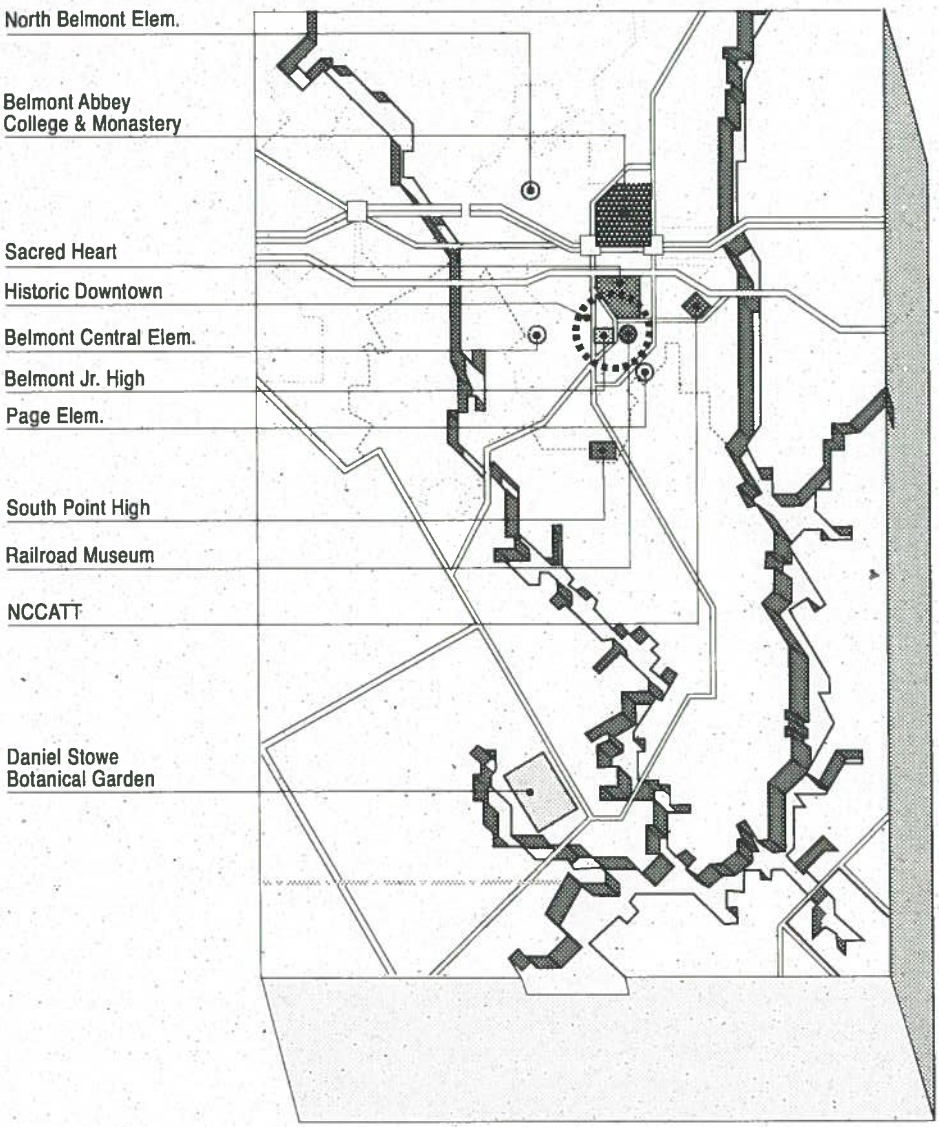


A Dutch Waterpark:
This image shows how development of a waterfront park can become a valuable public amenity. The edge of the waterpark (1) is well designed and has been meticulously maintained. Landscaped corridors (2) and quality developments, such as midrise housing (3), are located adjacent to the waterpark to give access to the amenities of the waterpark.



DEFINITION:

History, Culture & Arts, Education and Religion are key factors which define quality of life in a community. History refers to important "historic sites and districts" from each stage of the city's growth and identifies strategies to preserve and enhance them. Culture, Arts, and Education refers to the facilities and programs relating to education and the visual and performing arts. Includes special facilities, programs and events which have educational and cultural meaning.



History, Culture & Arts, Education, Religion

GOALS:

1. Preserve and enhance Belmont's image as a historic, cultural, educational and religious center within the Metro Area.

Maximize the importance of the cultural, educational and historic resources of Belmont to the long-range development of the Belmont Peninsula. For a city its size, Belmont has remarkable strengths in a variety of urban resources which contribute to the quality of life and amenity value of the City and peninsula. To make any program work, it must involve both government and the public in a joint effort.

2. Develop the concept of Belmont as a "College Town."

Belmont is one of only four possible "College Towns" among the thirty cities in the Charlotte Metro Area. Both Belmont Abbey and the N.C. Center for Applied Textile Technology are institutions of historic importance. Each has a special and unique meaning within the peninsula, the Metro Area and the Carolinas. Belmont Abbey is the only four year institution in Gaston County and the only Catholic College along the East Coast from Washington D.C. to Atlanta. The NCCATT is the only technology oriented two year college in the State of North Carolina.

3. Expand and enlarge the cultural facilities and programs to identify Belmont as a growing cultural center.

With the Railroad Museum, the Abbey Players, Woodwind Quintet and numerous other visual and performing arts events, Belmont has an active cultural life. Realize the potential of creating a "Downtown Cultural District" for artists, galleries, and related shops.

4. Create historic districts, overlays and investment areas to build the quality and perception of Belmont as a historic city.

The City was incorporated in 1895 and remains, today, one of the most intact and diverse group of historic buildings in the metro area. The historic center is a complete village containing commercial, industrial, educational, and residential from grand houses to mill villages. Recognize the historic Afro-American communities in Belmont.

5. Utilize the religious institutions as important components of future development.

Belmont has a diverse and rich religious history. Sacred Heart, the home of the Sisters of Mercy N.C., celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1993. Goshen Presbyterian is the oldest Presbyterian church in Gaston County. Mount Pleasant and Mt. Moriah Baptist, The Holy Comforter Lutheran and First Presbyterian are all historic churches with rich traditions. The home of the only Benedictine Monastery in the two Carolinas, the religious community of Belmont has a heritage and long tradition. This unique resource should be preserved and enriched to be a strong foundation for the future urbanization of the peninsula.

6. Utilize the historic and cultural resources of Belmont to build a stronger tourism component to the local economic base.

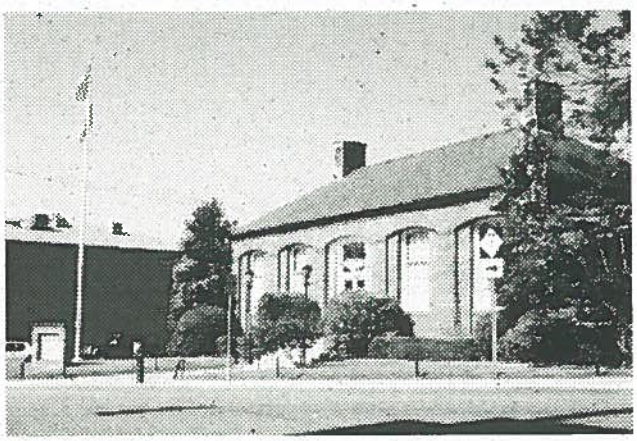
The historic and cultural resources of Belmont, when combined with the growing environmental qualities (Stowe Botanical Garden), are the basis for the long-term development of a tourist economy which could be of great benefit for the economic development of the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. History

Preserve and improve historic areas of the City. Build awareness of the important relationship between historic preservation and education in the development of Belmont. Recognition of Belmont as a historic "College Town" will enhance future development potential.

1. Comprehensive inventory of buildings and neighborhoods to augment Gastonia study including a. Colleges and schools, b. Churches, c. Commercial/Industrial, d. Housing/Residential, mill villages.
2. Promote writing of a comprehensive history of Belmont
3. Create historic districts and historic district overlay zones.
4. Connect historic areas on both sides of I-85 and form a coalition of Historic Towns.
5. Civic Art program to enhance historic areas which could identify a. Key citizens, b. Key events, c. Themes, d. Entries / gateways.
6. Investigate the applicability of the "Gaston County lighting of historic sites" program to Belmont.



Established in 1939 as Belmont's Post Office, this building was renovated in 1973 to become City Hall. It currently houses the City Administration, Accounting and Planning departments.

B. Culture & Arts

Belmont's cultural offerings are very strong for a city of its size. They contribute to the unique quality of life available to residents of the Belmont Peninsula.

1. Create a non-profit "Belmont Arts Foundation" to facilitate the cultural arts development of Belmont.
2. Enhance Belmont as a cultural center.
   a. Enlarge festivals - Garibaldi Fest with visual and performing arts.
   b. Community arts programming: utilize empty buildings.
   c. Artists in residence.
3. Bring schools more actively into arts programs.
4. Promote existing area as film location with N.C. Film Commission.
5. The presence of the Railroad Museum and Stowe Mercantile Building along with other available buildings offers the possibility of creating a community cultural center as the visual arts focus in the downtown.
6. Explore the potential of creating a cultural district in the downtown with artists studios, galleries, bistros, cafes, etc.
   a. Investigate available funding from N.C. Arts Council.
   b. Investigate use of arts area consultant.

C. Education

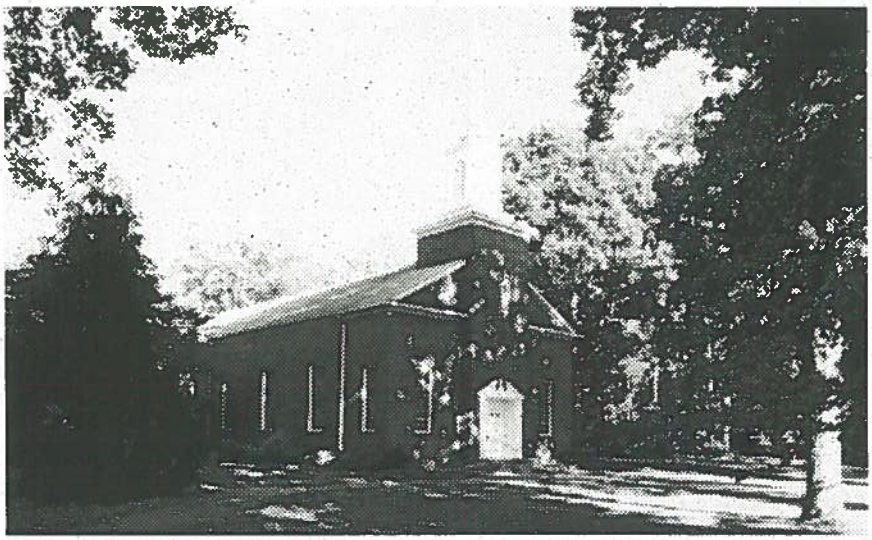
Belmont's colleges and schools are part of the unique characteristics which distinguish Belmont among the thirty metro cities.

1. Increase relationships of schools to community.
   a. Facilities and programs for the young.
   b. Belmont Abbey is the only 4-year and graduate educational resource in Gaston County.
2. Encourage the development of the NCCATT to become a regional resource for textile technology.

D. Religion

Belmont has a long and diverse tradition of religious institutions which should be preserved and enhanced.

1. Encourage participation of churches with the development of the City.
2. Encourage the establishment of an ecumenical association of clergy and lay people to collect , record, and display historic documents and artifacts from area churches.
3. Seek grants to support research, writing and presentation efforts.



Goshen Presbyterian Church was organized in 1764 by Elihu Spencer and Alexander McWhorter. The oldest congregation of Belmont has been housed in five successive structures. The current church building was erected in 1956.

POLICIES:

a. Support further development and expansions of historic, cultural and educational facilities and programs.
b. Promote cooperation between groups, including ecumenical and historic, for the development of the City.
c. Connect the north and south historic areas.
d. Establish a civic art program to enhance the beauty of the City.
e. Support community festivals and cultural events.

REGULATIONS:

a. Preserve historic assets and neighborhoods through the creation of historic districts and overlays.
b. Include architectural and building codes in new ordinance that are specific to historic areas as well as non-historic areas (the rest of the community).

PLANS & STUDIES:

a. Comprehensive inventory of buildings.
b. Written history of Belmont including churches, schools, neighborhoods, economic development.

INVESTMENTS:

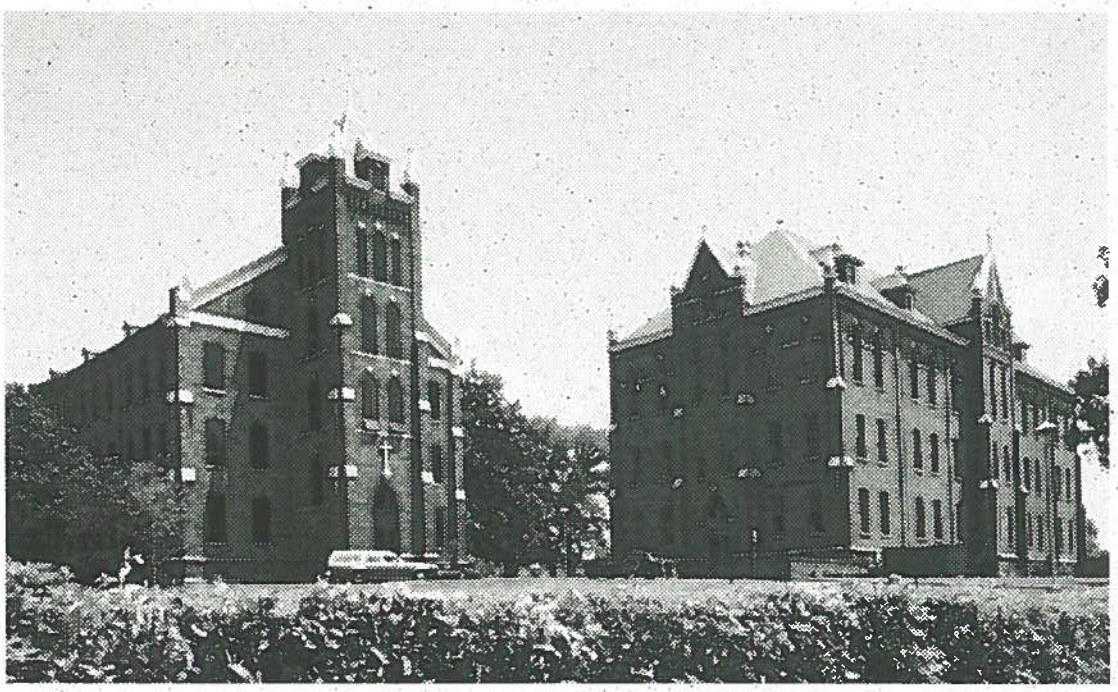
a. Investigate Gaston County's "Lighting of Historic Sites."
b. Identify grants to support historic improvements (e.g. Main Street Program, Railroad Museum, etc.).

The Piedmont & Northern Railroad depot was built on a lot bought in 1915. The building is now a railroad museum operated by the Piedmont Carolinas Chapter, of the National Railway Historical Society. It was first opened to the public on April 9, 1988 and was dedicated on October 1, 1988.

Alexander Memorial Baptist Church, located near Belmont's uptown, is a fine old building that is but one of many beautiful churches in Belmont.

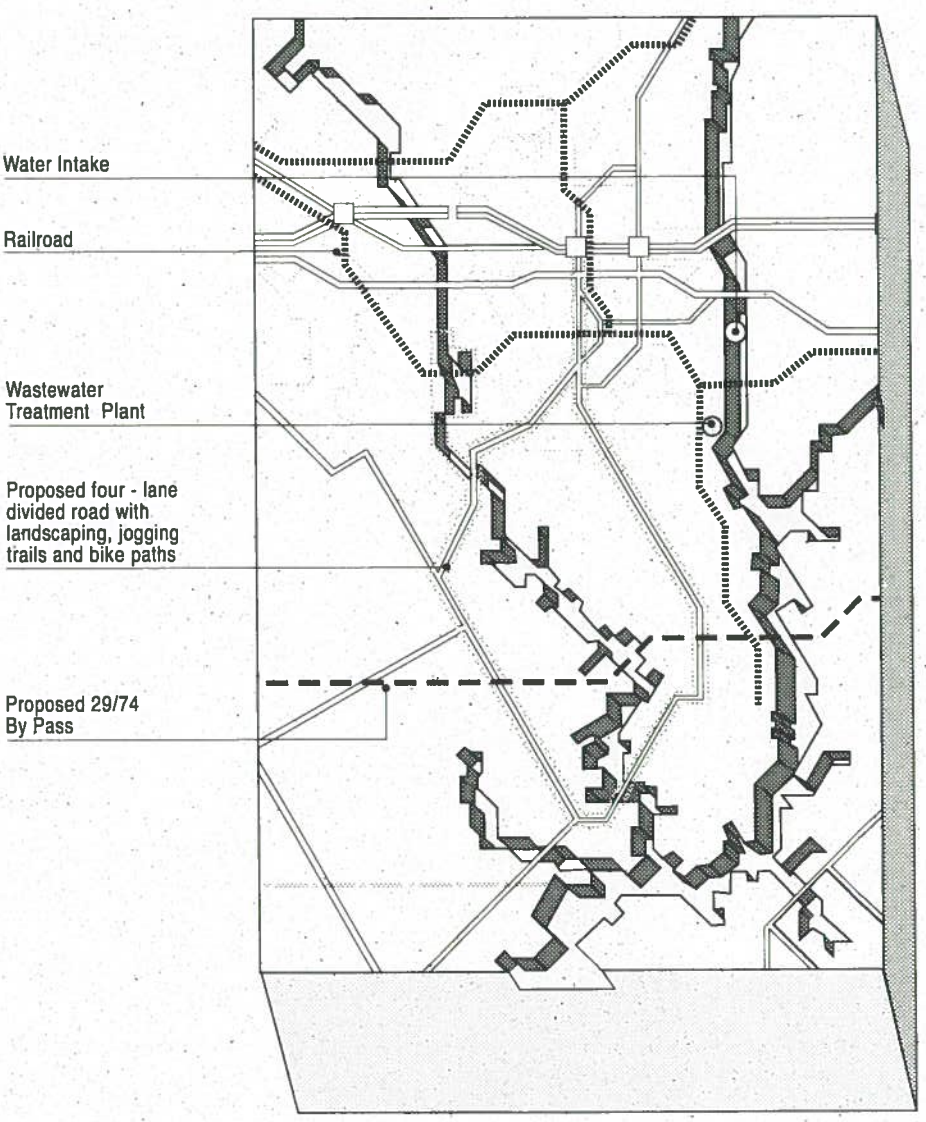
The **North Carolina Center for Applied Textile Technology** was founded in 1943 and should be considered an important element in Belmont's historic educational tradition. The NCCATT was the first technical school in the state of North Carolina, pre-dating the community college system.

Belmont Abbey College, founded in 1876 by the Order of St. Benedict, is Gaston County's only four year college. It is the only Benedictine college within a 300 mile radius of Charlotte. Its student body of approximately 1,000 students consists of area, regional, national, and international students. The central portions of the Belmont Abbey Campus have recently received designation as a National Historic District. The Abbey Church is listed as part of the district and is also listed separately on the National Register of Historic Places.



DEFINITION:

Transportation and Infrastructure are the framework upon which urban growth takes place. Transportation refers to the pattern and dynamics of movement of all modes of transportation including roads, rails, and air. Infrastructure refers to the sewer, water, and solid and other waste facilities and systems. This includes elements such as sanitary sewer systems, storm water drainage, electricity, water plants and distribution systems, etc.



Transportation & Infrastructure

GOALS:

1. Recognize the potential of the accessibility offered by the position of the Belmont Peninsula within the Charlotte Metro Area transportation network.

Located within minutes of the Charlotte/Douglas International Airport and the future Outer Belt, the Belmont Peninsula is within easy driving or rail (proposed) distance to any important location within the metro area region. Major decisions regarding the location and character of regional road and rail connectors should be considered.

2. Develop an arterial plan for the long-term development of the peninsula.

As the peninsula urbanizes, new arterial roads will be required for easy movement within the peninsula. A simple, clear system of major and minor roads is still possible to plan before additional development blocks potential right-of-way needed for the arterial pattern.

3. Solutions to the long-term infrastructure sewer and water plants and distribution facilities must be developed.

A simple and clear pattern of sewer and water and distribution lines is still possible to plan. Peninsula-wide sewer system and water lines should replace the current well and septic tank system which is in use in some areas of the peninsula.

4. Coordinate storm water run-off, greenways, jogging and bike paths with arterial development pattern.

In both the newly urbanizing and existing city areas, a continuous pattern of storm water retention basins, greenways, jogging and bike paths could be integrated with the major arterials. This would increase the utilization of the entire peninsula as a health and fitness and an environmental amenity. It would also increase the desirability of the residential developments which would be linked together by a public amenity network.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

I. **Transportation**

Regional connections by road and rail are important to the future of Belmont. Additionally, a clear arterial system, which offers easy access to the commercial, industrial and residential areas, can still be planned and developed.

A. Improve regional connectivity for economic growth.

1. Investigate alternate routes, including those off the Peninsula, for the 29-74 Bypass.
2. Emphasize rail connection over new roads. Seek to expand the regional light-rail system to the Belmont-Mt. Holly area along the median of US 74.
3. Create feeder shuttle system from North Belmont to the Abbey, Downtown and the Botanical Garden to connect to rail and parking areas.

B. Improve movement and arterial structure.

1. Develop bike paths and jogging trails in existing and expanded arterial right-of -way.
2. Evaluate the location and design of the Belmont-Mt. Holly Bypass with home owners and land owners to determine maximum benefits.

C. Landscape program for major roads.

1. Interchange landscaping.
2. Enact ordinances and regulations to insure the development of landscape, bike paths and jogging trails along the major arterial.
3. Protection of existing vegetation in existing or planned roadway corridors.
4. Storm water drainage, retention ponds.

The Water Tower at Belmont Abbey College and Monastery, is part of the Peninsula's infrastructure. As one of the oldest water towers in Belmont, this towers' construction is similar to the Eiffel Tower's riveted plate structure.

II. Infrastructure

A safe and sanitary water supply is vital to the existing and future developments on the peninsula. This can only be met by development of a comprehensive storm water and sanitary sewage system.

A. Improved sewer system, plants and lines for environmental health.

1. Investigate the alternatives of a single, large new sewer plant versus two or three smaller plants within the next five years.
2. No future septic tanks on peninsula.
   a. Eliminate need for septic tanks by providing continuous sewer throughout peninsula area.
   b. Explore the creation of an independent county-wide sanitary sewer district.

B. Investigate alternatives for storm water drainage, (2 year moratorium on storm water and waste discharge into the Catawba River) such as retention ponds.

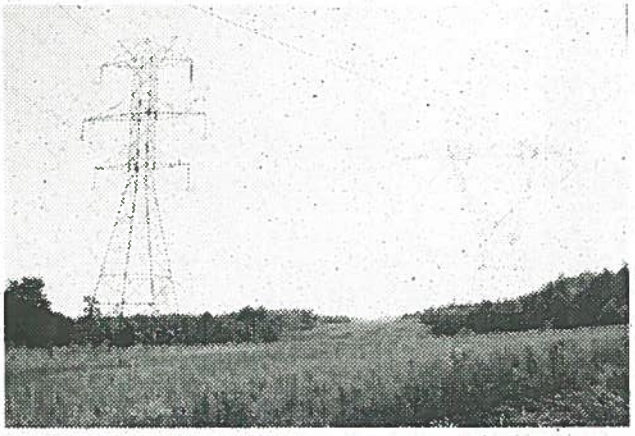
1. Integrate storm water with landscape and greenway program.

C. Develop long-term program to insure quality water.

1. Eliminate contamination of wells and septic tanks.
2. Put entire peninsula on water lines.
3. Insure water plant capacity will accommodate future growth.
4. Adequate distribution system to the tip of the peninsula (Needs engineering).

D. Solid waste disposal / Recycling.

1. Coordinate a long-range solid waste disposal program with Gaston County.
2. Long-range plan to determine site for recycling facility and curb-side pick-up.



Power lines along the peninsula emanate from Plant Allen and form part of the backbone of the regions power grid.

POLICIES:

a. Develop an integrated transportation network to provide ease of access within the Peninsula as well as connect it to the rest of the Region.
b. Work towards elimination of septic tanks and wells, and the development of a County-wide water and sewer system.
c. City to integrate landscape and amenities with transportation improvements.
d. Work with adjacent political units for coordination of regional transportation and infrastructure including Charlotte/Douglas International Airport.
e. Create bike paths and jogging trails as part of the transportation system.

REGULATIONS:

a. Include bike paths and landscaping, including storm water retention ponds, with major arterial improvements.
b. Regulate the expansion of wells and septic tanks on the Peninsula.
c. Designate thoroughfare corridors and waterfront areas for landscaping and preservation regulations.

PLANS & STUDIES:

a. Develop and evaluate a long-term arterial plan for the Peninsula.
b. Develop a 201 facilities plan for the Peninsula.
c. Long-range planning for recycling and curb-side pick-up.

INVESTMENTS:

a. Determine long-term capital budget needs for transportation improvements.
b. Determine long-term capital budget needs for infrastructure improvements.
c. Investigate joint applications, grants and cost sharing programs to reduce cost to City for transportation and infrastructure improvements.

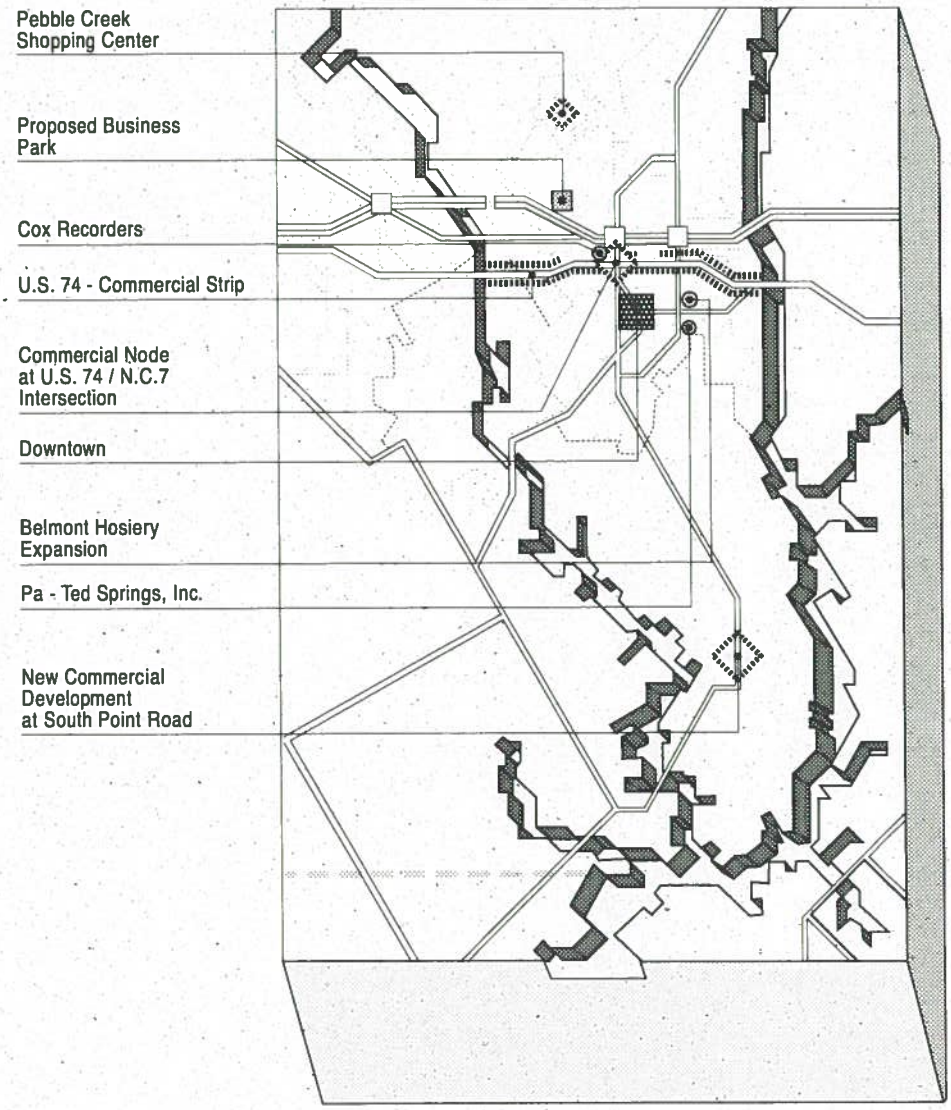
The I-85 Corridor, going across the Catawba River and with the truck weigh station on the left, forms the gateway to Belmont going south and Charlotte going north. The opportunity to use this environmental amenity to create a beautiful gateway to both cities was overlooked.

The **U.S. 74 / Wilkinson Boulevard** corridor has become a six-lane commercial strip. This divided highway has only minimal sign ordinances, landscaping, set-backs, or any other similar development controls.

This well planned four-lane divided highway can be used as an example of how Belmont's major arterials could look. Development similar to that along U.S. 74 lines both sides of this road but is not visible due to vigorous development controls, sign ordinances, landscaping, set-backs, and buffers. Bike paths and jogging trails have also been incorporated into the design of this corridor.

DEFINITION:

Economic Development refers to the evolving structure and pattern of economic activity within the city such as a component of the metro. Defines the retail, manufacturing, tourism, service, etc. components and their relative strengths and potential for development. Also includes the issues of recruitment, marketing, and strategies by which to strengthen the city's economy.



Economic Development

GOALS:

1. New economic initiatives and a strong marketing program are needed for the future of the Belmont Peninsula economy.

Traditionally, the textile industry was the foundation of the economy. Today, Belmont is primarily a combination of industrial, educational, and retail economies. Barriers to economic development have been a lack of strong development controls to guide the location and quality of new developments. The lack of a modern business park has limited the potential of attracting new business. Define the Chamber's role in expanding the future marketing efforts for Belmont.

2. Encourage joint action for maximum utilization of land parcels, marketing efforts, and planning for economic initiatives.

Joint action between Belmont Peninsula land owners, adjacent city governments, chambers, and business interests, can maximize the potential for quality development. Throughout the peninsula, adjoining land parcels could be more effectively developed if they were combined to create larger more comprehensive development projects. Adjacent municipal governments could work together to market and plan the area.

3. Recognize the importance of the image to the quality of life and the economic development of Belmont.

Investing in upgrading, enhancing and developing the potential amenities, environmental, historic, cultural and educational resources of Belmont is important in developing the economy of the area. Control the uneven quality of developments along U.S. 74 which have created an image problem.

4. Seek to build a stronger tourism component in the local economy.

With the development of the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, tourism can become an important component of the local economy. A strong historic downtown and cultural program can build the basis for strengthening both a tourist and retail economy. The Visitor's Bureau could be enlarged to support tourism.

5. Protect and strengthen the tax base and revenues of the City.

The tax base of the City of Belmont is 62% commercial/industrial and only 38% residential. A high percentage of the property tax base is found in intangibles, which are easily susceptible to relocation. A stable, long-term tax base can be created through a proper balance of commercial and industrial development, which emphasizes the support for existing industries and seeks to attract new industry.

6. Create the necessary non-profit foundations to assist in the development of Belmont.

Many of the necessary developments required to begin the improvement of the existing urban core of Belmont will be based on culture and the arts. Many of these developments will require public and private assistance which will require a non-profit foundation to apply for and receive public and private gifts, grants and donations.

7. Develop a plan of action for downtown.

The downtown does have potential as a specialty area linked to the growth in recognition and visitors to the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden. The historic and cultural resources of Belmont can strengthen the identity of the downtown as an emerging arts, studio, gallery, antique and other specialty shops.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

I. Private Sector

A strong private sector economy is vital to the long-term health of the community. While Belmont has benefited from a strong industrial base, new initiatives should be developed to increase economic activity.

A. Increase the perception of Belmont within the Charlotte Metro economic structure.

1. Work with area Chambers and Gaston E.D.C. to strengthen recruitment efforts for Belmont.
2. Develop Belmont marketing materials.
3. Develop long-term plan for attracting and locating business.
4. Improve quality of life and opportunities for children (e.g. playgrounds, music and dance programs, art programs, etc.).
5. Strengthen health programs.

B. Strengthen commercial areas.

1. Downtown has opportunity as specialty center based on galleries, antiques and tourism.
2. Wilkinson Blvd. commercial strip needs upgrading and improvement.
3. Locate new commercial nodes on south peninsula and consider a mixed use combination marina and commercial center along the waterfront.

C. Strengthen manufacturing and industrial base.

1. Investigate the feasibility of additional business/manufacturing/industrial parks.
2. Public/Private business incubators for commercial business development.
3. Inventory existing industrial stock and vacant buildings.

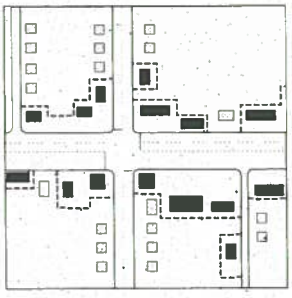
D. Strengthen tourism on the Peninsula.

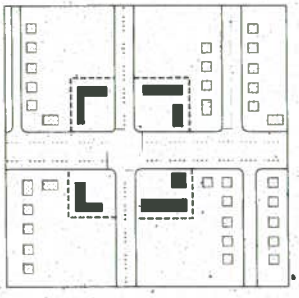
1. Recognize the importance of the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden to the long-term development of tourism.
2. Develop attractive areas within the City which could promote tourism.
   a. Preserve and enhance historic districts and develop walking tours.
   b. Create a cultural district with artist's studios, downtown galleries, RR Museum, etc.

E. Financial Programs for the strengthening of Belmont.

1. Investigate the potential of a community development foundation to be a catalyst for developing financial programs to assist in the development of the peninsula.
2. Establish a low-interest rate loan fund for economic development.
3. Support the creation of a business incubator facility.
4. Promote the creation of a cultural district in the downtown.

This diagram illustrates a commercial **Strip** which is a dispersed area of development along thoroughfares that has occurred due to lack of development controls which allows commercial uses to invade residential areas.





This diagram illustrates a commercial **Node** which is a controlled and limited area of development separated by a buffer zone from the surrounding residential areas. By creating a node, commercial sprawl along corridors is prevented which increases both the commercial and residential value of the area.

II. Public Sector

Belmont has a tax base which is 62% industrial/commercial and 38% residential. The industrial component has a large amount of intangibles, such as machinery. While the current tax base is adequate, it is also very one-dimensional and fragile due to its dependence on intangibles. The revenue from the industrial base could be easily disrupted by changes in the industry and, therefore, the industries currently in Belmont should be supported while new industries such as the Cox Recorders should be attracted to the area to maximize the potential of the local economy.

A. Establish a financial strategy.

1. Investigate revenue resources.
2. Diversify and strengthen tax base through broader commercial and industry recruitment.

The historic uptown was the commercial center of Belmont. Today it is an underutilized area in need of revitalization.

The commercial strips have replaced the uptown as the major retail areas. Due to a lack of development controls, they have none of the character of the historic city.

POLICIES:

a. Support new economic initiatives to expand and strengthen the local economy.
b. Support development of downtown area as "specialty" / arts district.
c. Strengthen tourism in City.
d. Strengthen the public revenue.

REGULATIONS:

a. Designate commercial nodes along US 74 and South Point Road to prevent sprawl.
b. Determine the best pattern for new industrial, manufacturing, and business zoning.
c. Promote beautification requirements to enhance appearance of the Belmont Peninsula.

PLANS & STUDIES:

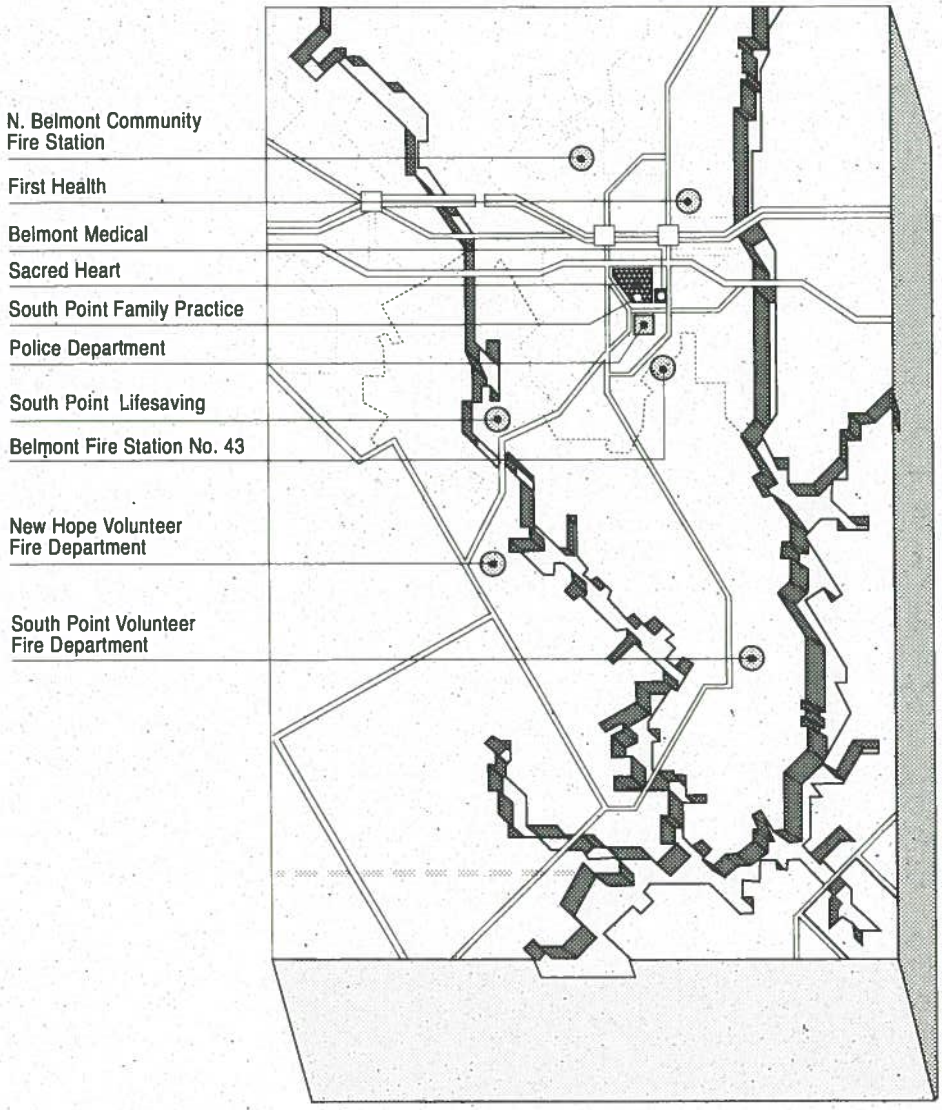
a. Market study for housing-commercial
b. Study to determine feasibility of downtown as a "specialty" cultural district.
c. Develop marketing plan for Belmont (Cramerton, McAdenville, etc.)
d. Inventory of existing commercial properties including vacant buildings.
e. Long-term City capital budget and revenue plan.

INVESTMENTS:

a. Create non-profit foundation to promote development in downtown.
b. Establish low interest rate loan fund for historic residential areas and defined economic development zones (i.e. downtown galleries, etc.)
c. New full-service restaurants and hotels.

DEFINITION:

Health, Social Services, and Public Safety refers to the support mechanisms which sustain the life and vitality of the community. Health includes all aspects of health care facilities and programs. Social Services includes all facilities and programs which provide assistance to the community. Public Safety includes the Police and Fire facilities and community programs which are aimed at controlling and preventing crime and fire.



GOALS:

1. Support programs leading to "A Safe and Caring City" to match Belmont's "City of Amenities" goal.

Located midway between Charlotte, Gastonia and Rock Hill, Belmont is a crossroads with many unique resources and amenities. A "Healthy Community" not only is based on medical services, but on the overall quality of its development pattern which includes recreation and physical fitness facilities e.g. bike paths, jogging trails, etc.

2. Seek to address public safety with a multi-faceted approach.

Belmont experiences typical social issues of today's society, and should continue its development of police/fire/community service programs to address any areas of concern.

3. Belmont can emerge as a special place for comprehensive health services.

Recognize the importance of the perception and reality of Belmont as a safe, healthy and supportive city to the long-term development of the Belmont Peninsula. Health services have generally moved to the larger cities, Charlotte or the twenty mile ring cities. Belmont has an unusual resource in the campus of Sacred Heart College which is an ideal setting for multiple health programs.

4. Increased growth can require increased social programs.

Growth inevitably brings change, and increased community/social issues can arise. While many social services are the responsibility of the County, Belmont has a very active Community Organization comprised of local churches and individual citizens who provide financial, material goods, and services-in-kind for our community. Coordination with the City can provide a "clearing-house mechanism" for more efficient delivery of these various services.

5. Work with Gaston County to improve health care opportunities for Belmont Peninsula residents.

The County has major responsibilities for the delivery of public health facilities and programs. The City should be actively involved in acquiring additional facilities and programs to serve the Peninsula residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. Health

A "Healthy Community" is a community which supports physical fitness and comprehensive medical services.

1. Medical training programs potential at Sacred Heart/Belmont Abbey? No medical school within 100 miles.
2. Need for elderly daycare services/nursing home
3. Encourage relationships with major hospitals: Mercy, Gaston Memorial, Carolinas Medical, etc.
4. Improve conditions of infrastructure and environment for general public health. Eliminate septic tanks and wells which contaminate water source.
5. Air Medivac location on lower peninsula.
6. Explore the possibility of establishing 24 hour emergency services available on peninsula.
7. Investigate need for Wellness Center which would stress fitness, nutrition, exercise, meditation, and preventive medicine.

Belmont Fire Station No. 43 is a fine example of a contemporary building which attempts to blend with Belmont's traditional urban fabric. As the population grows, additional public safety and social services will be required.

B. Social Services

With many of the typical social problems, Belmont should develop programs to answer these problems.

1. Need for youth activity center.
2. DARE should be in every school.
3. Need for services to victims of abuse, possibly through creation of Community "Help Center" to provide information and counseling services for all socioeconomic groups.
4. Work to reduce teen pregnancy
5. Work to increase accessibility of client group to program location. Often programs are located away from some client groups; utilize transit or location.

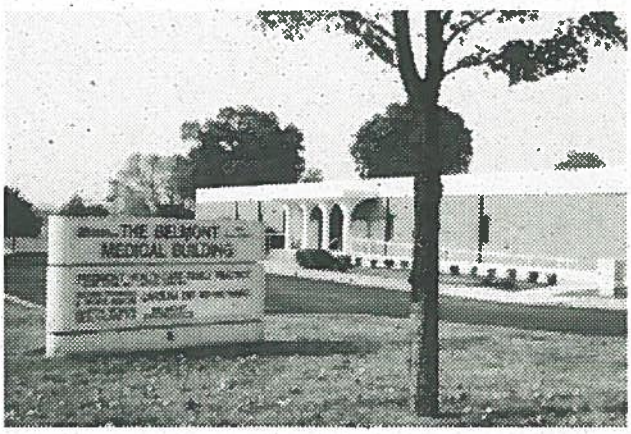
C. Police/Fire

As a small city, Belmont needs to combine its capital facilities program to create joint police/fire community centers as nodes on the peninsula. Programs are needed to create the safe city image for Belmont.

1. Support strengthening of Gaston criminal justice program.
2. Crime prevention classes and activities for individuals and neighborhoods.
3. Investigate the potential of having P.S.O. (Public Service Officers) for the Belmont Peninsula.

POLICIES:

a. Support development of improved health, social services, and public safety for the City of Belmont and the Peninsula.
b. Support the development of Sacred Heart as a comprehensive health and social services facility.
c. Encourage relationships with other major regional hospitals.
d. Investigate, evaluate and support initiatives which are determined to be helpful in resolving the health, social services and public safety needs of Belmont (i.e. P.S.O., D.A.R.E. PROGRAMS, MEDEVAC, etc.)



The Belmont Medical Building houses a number of medical services and agencies. The building originally housed offices for several textile manufacturing companies.

REGULATIONS:

a. Improve the condition of infrastructure and environment for general public health and well being.

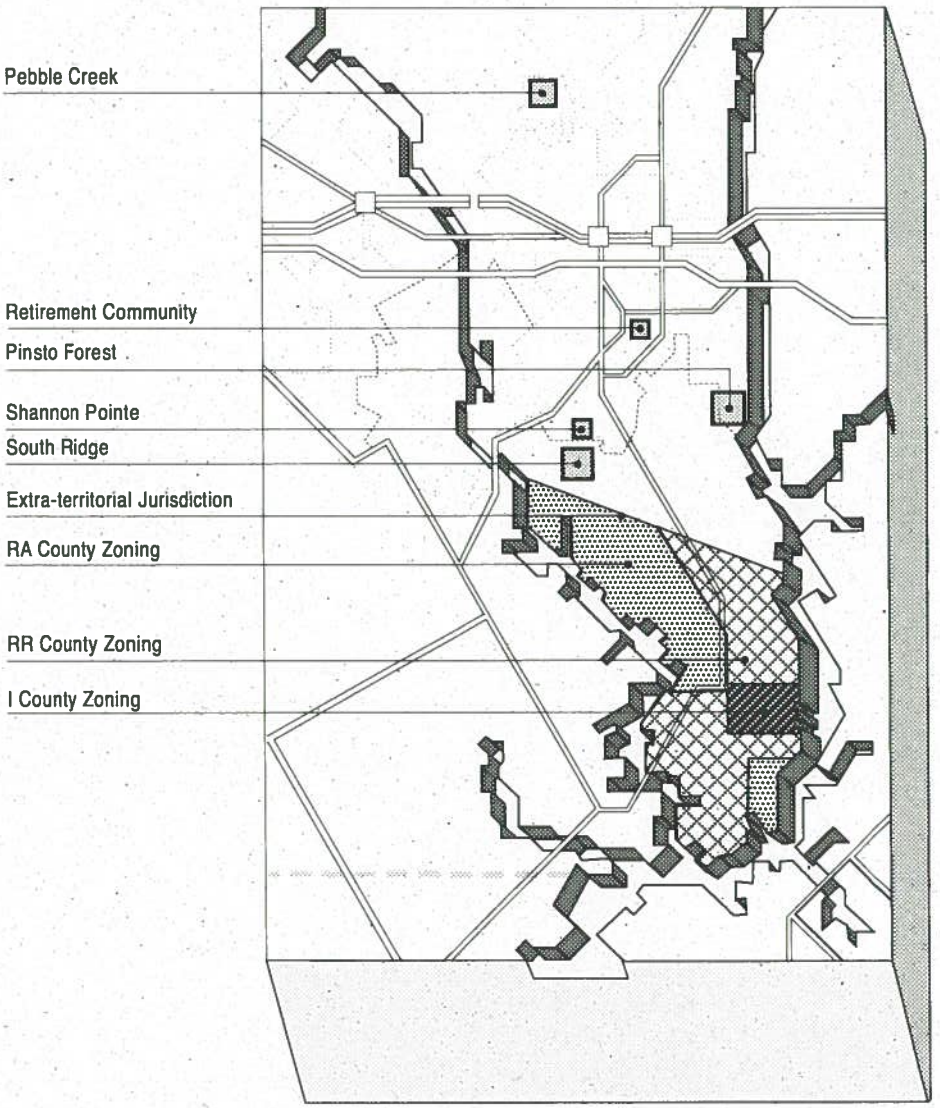
PLANS & STUDIES:

a. Need for long-term facility plan including location, concept program, area needed, and interface with surrounding land uses.

Sacred Heart Campus is one of the important historic sites in Belmont currently evolving as a comprehensive social and health services center. The campus is home to Holy Angels, the House of Mercy (AIDS patients), Catherine's House (homeless and/or battered women), East Gaston Branch–YMCA, With Friends (shelter for runaway teens), Gaston County Department of Social Services adult day care, and Well of Mercy (provides psycho-spiritual development programs and counselling).

DEFINITION:

Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation refer to the urban components which direct and effect growth. Land Use is the pattern of development decisions which define the built environment. Zoning is the regulations used to guide the development of land within the city and its sphere of influence. Housing includes the entire range from affordable to upper end. Annexation is the expansion of existing city boundaries to incorporate newly urbanized areas.



Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation

GOALS:

1. Create a "Community of Amenities" via land use, zoning controls and a systematic approach to annexation.

The Belmont Peninsula has an unusual opportunity to build on its strengths as an environmental, historic, cultural, educational and residential community to create a "Community of Amenities" within the metropolitan area. Developing guidelines to manage growth in an orderly and systematic pattern will benefit the Belmont Peninsula. Many of its strengths are diluted by the impact of poor quality development. This mixed message is confusing and counter-productive to long-range quality growth in an area with such unique amenities.

2. Create a long-term framework to encourage quality growth of urbanization on the Belmont Peninsula.

Growth is taking place in a haphazard and fragmented way which is reducing the potential of quality development on the Belmont Peninsula. There is no plan for the development of commercial, industrial, residential and park areas nor an understanding of how they can reinforce or conflict with each other.

3. Address the problem of deteriorating and vacant buildings and areas.

There are several areas in the Peninsula, vacant buildings, deteriorating commercial, etc. which will need to be improved as new development takes place. The use of zoning controls should be investigated as a tool to upgrade these deteriorating areas by establishing standards for buffers, setbacks, landscaping, parking, removal of unsightly, unsanitary or unsafe buildings, etc.

4. Seek to work with Gaston County to promote orderly growth on the peninsula prior to annexation.

The entire peninsula may ultimately be annexed by the City. To make the future developments compatible with the existing City fabric, transportation, infrastructure, City parks, etc., growth standards should be compatible with City standards. To insure quality development on the Belmont Peninsula, the consistent use of a single set of land use and zoning controls should be established. Provide a framework for integrating the interests of the various neighborhoods and communities on the Belmont Peninsula including South Point and the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden.

5. Recognize the importance of historic areas and insure that new developments and improvements blend with historic fabric.

Belmont is a historic town with many important historic sites and neighborhoods. Over the years, erosion of these historic areas and incompatible new development have diluted the historic impact of the City. New regulations in the form of historic districts and overlays of adjacent neighborhoods will be required to preserve the character of the City.

6. Encourage building of a full range of quality housing.

Belmont is the primary location for the development of quality homes in Gaston County. The level of residential construction will directly effect the tax base and revenue to support the kinds of environmental amenities which can make Belmont desirable and viable community for the long-term.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. Land Use & Zoning

Utilize land use and zoning controls to guide Belmont into becoming a "Community of Amenities."

1. Develop land use/zoning guidelines to encourage restoration of existing resources including commercial, cultural, educational, religious, etc.
2. Develop major overview land use pattern, discourage piecemeal zoning and evaluate the impact of proposed roads and transit.
3. Major commercial corridors are "out of control" and need land use/zoning controls to encourage upgrading (e.g. signage, landscape, storage, lighting, parking, etc.).
4. "User Friendly" zoning should be flexible to allow for creative and innovative zoning categories and procedures.
5. Encourage zoning which would support transit vs. roads by locating commercial and higher density developments where the proposed mass transit rail line would be located.
6. Include vacant, dilapidated and unsafe building removal in zoning code.
7. Include required outdoor lighting, signage and landscape ordinances for new and upgrading of existing developments.
8. Coordinate the planning of public facilities with the overall pattern of land use.
9. Limit commercial to a "node" area to prevent commercial strip from developing along South Point Road.
10. Buffer requirements in transitional areas between different land uses should be developed.
11. Workshops for citizens throughout the Peninsula to become familiar with the benefits of zoning.

B. Housing

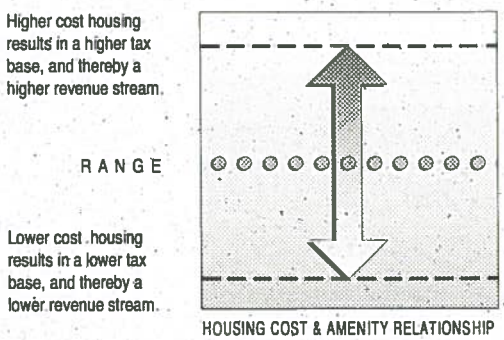
Strengthen the existing market and develop a full range of housing on the undeveloped tracts on the peninsula.

1. All housing should meet minimum build-to, landscape and amenity requirements.
2. Preservation, restoration and improvement of mill villages and historic buildings and neighborhoods.

C. Annexation

Long-term annexation may cover entire peninsula.

1. Land use and zoning in unincorporated areas which would be annexed in the long run, should conform to City codes.
2. Extend the ETJ (Extra-territorial Jurisdiction) to cover the entire peninsula in order that the areas developed prior to annexation will conform to the long-term development pattern established for the peninsula.
3. Infrastructure plans for the entire peninsula must be developed if there is to be annexation of quality developments.

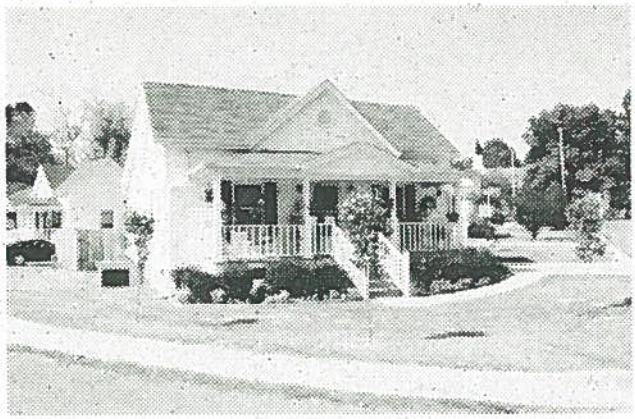


HOUSING COST & AMENITY RELATIONSHIP

The development of community amenities is linked to the value of the residential areas as shown above.

POLICIES:

a. Work with Gaston County and adjacent municipalities to insure orderly growth on the Belmont Peninsula by preventing "piece-meal" development which will deteriorate the long-term value.
b. Support stronger zoning controls which will require improved appearance (removal of unsightly buildings to the preservation of trees).
c. Support land use and zoning workshops to educate residents on the need for development guidelines.
d. Support preservation enhancement and reuse of historic structures and neighborhoods.
e. Encourage zoning which would support transit versus roads by locating commercial and higher density developments where the proposed mass transit rail line would be located.



Cottonwood, a historic mill village, has been redeveloped by current owners to become one of the more attractive residential areas in Belmont.

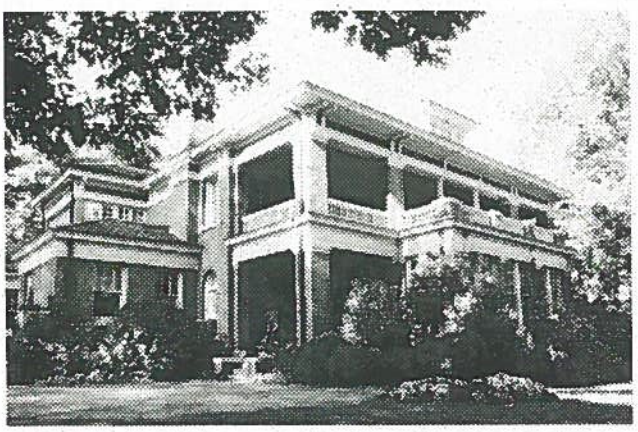
REGULATIONS:

a. Include bike paths and landscaping along major arterials.
b. Upgrade and enlarge zoning ordinance to include landscape and screening regulations as well as thoroughfare and corridor regulations for setbacks and tree preservation.
c. Create a historic overlay district to ensure the design appearance of new and remodeled structures in or adjacent to historic areas.
d. Remove unsafe and dilapidated buildings.
e. Enforce lighting, signage, and landscape ordinances.

This historic home is a fine example of the traditional mid-range housing in Belmont.

PLANS & STUDIES:

a. DPZ study completed
b. New zoning and land use regulations in preparation



This is a classic example of one of the many beautiful historic houses located along Belmont's Main Street which have gained the attention of architectural historians throughout the region.

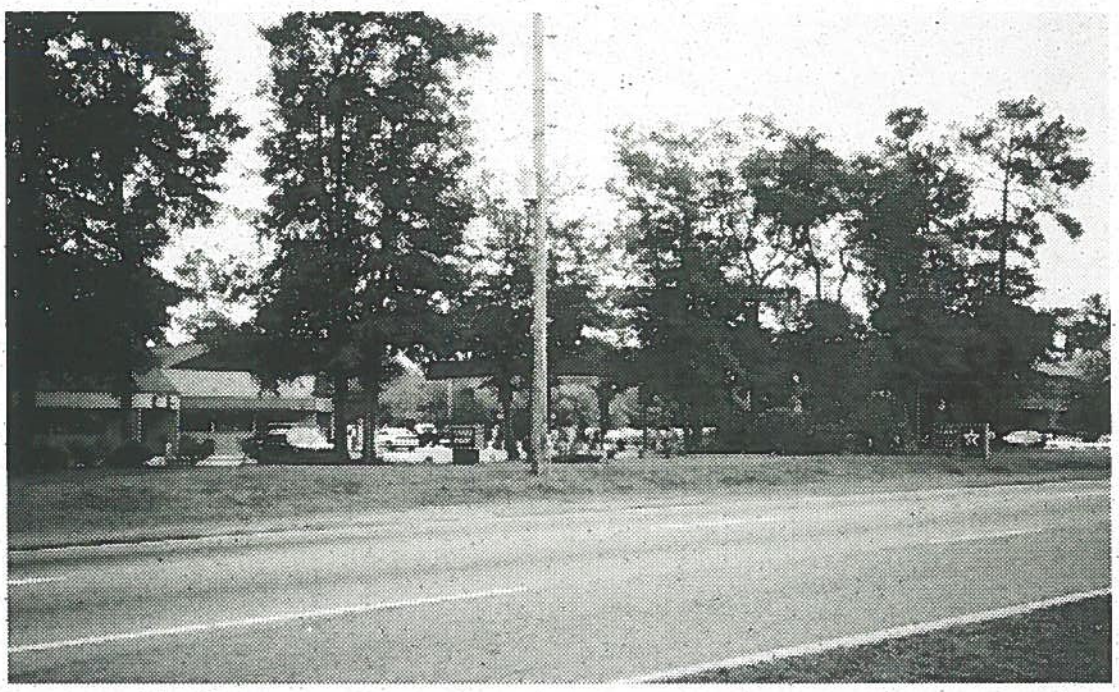
A COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS.

ALTERNATIVE A

A typical example of highway commercial development, this gas station located along South Point Road demonstrates what happens when developments are allowed to occur without strong development controls.

ALTERNATIVE B

This gas station, located along a two-lane road, is an example of a high quality development which utilizes vigorous zoning regulations such as sign ordinances and set-backs to maintain the natural beauty of the environment by screening development behind a landscaped buffer and limiting the height of signs.



POLICIES:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
ENVIRONMENT	1.a. Integrate with other urban systems 1.b. Pursue joint action with other political units. 1.c. Seek financial support for environmental improvements.	
HISTORY CULTURE & ARTS EDUCATION, RELIGION	2.b. Seek to promote cooperation between groups 2.d. Seek to establish a civic art program 2.e. Support community festivals and cultural events	
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE	3.d. Work w/ adjacent units to coordinate regional tranportation 3.e. Est. regional water & sewer authority outside political entities	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	4.a. Support economic initiatives to strengthen local economy. 4.c. Strengthen tourism in City 4.d. Strengthen the public revenue	4.b. Support development of downtown as "specialty" district
LAND USE & ZONING HOUSING, ANNEXATION	5.b. Support stronger zoning controls 5.c. Support land use and zoning workshops	5.a. Work with adjacent units to insure orderly growth 5.d. Support preservation and reuse of historic areas 5.e. Encourage zoning which supports mass transit
HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES PUBLIC SAFETY		6.a. Support development of improved health, services,safety

REGULATIONS:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
ENVIRONMENT	1.a. New zoning ordinance to include landscape and screening. 1.b. Upgrade subdivision ordinance; include tree protection. 1.c. Develop water runoff and soil erosion provisions.	
HISTORY CULTURE & ARTS EDUCATION, RELIGION	2.a. Preserve historic assets through historic districts and overlays 2.b. Include architectural and building codes in new ordinance.	
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE		3.c. Designate areas for landscpaing and preservation regulations.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		4.a. Limit commercial zoning / eliminate "spot" zoning 4.b. Determine pattern for new industrial, manufacturing, business 4.c. Promote beautification requirements to enhance City
LAND USE & ZONING HOUSING, ANNEXATION	5.b. New zoning ordinance to include landscape and screening. 5.e. Enforce lighting, signage and landscape ordinances.	5.a. Include bikepaths and landscaping along major arterials 5.c. Create historic overlay district 5.d. Remove unsafe and delapidated buildings
HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES PUBLIC SAFETY		

10 Year Schedule

YEAR 3-5	YEAR 6-10
2.a. Support development of facilities and programs 2.c. Seek to connect north and south historic areas	
3.c. City to integrate landscape w/ transportation improvements	3.a. Develop network to provide ease of access w/in Peninsula 3.b. Work to eliminate septic tanks and wells
6.b. Support the development of Sacred Heart 6.c. Encourage relationships with major regional hospitals 6.d. Support initiatives determined to be helpful to City.	

Policies are the means of defining the goals and direction of actions.

YEAR 3-5	YEAR 6-10
3.a. Include bike paths, landscaping w/ major arterial improvements 3.b. Regulate expansion of wells and septic tanks along Peninsula	
6.a. Improve condition of infrastructure for general public health	

Regulations are the legal parameters used to direct and control activities.

INVESTMENTS:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
ENVIRONMENT	1.c. Maximize use of grants, moneys from public/private programs	1.a. Create a planting program 1.b. Develop long-term capital improvements budget. 1.e. Streetscapes for the downtown.
HISTORY CULTURE & ARTS EDUCATION, RELIGION	2.a. Investigate Gaston Co.'s "Lighting of Historic Sites"	2.b. Seek to identify grants to support historic improvements
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE	3.c. Investigate joint applications, grants, cost sharing programs (Establish regional water & sewer authority)	3.a. Determine long-term capital budget for trans. impovements 3.b. Determine long-term capital budget for infr. improvements
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		4.a. Create non-profit foundation to promote downtown development 4.b. Establish low interest rate loan fund
LAND USE & ZONING HOUSING, ANNEXATION		
HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES PUBLIC SAFETY		

PLANS & STUDIES:

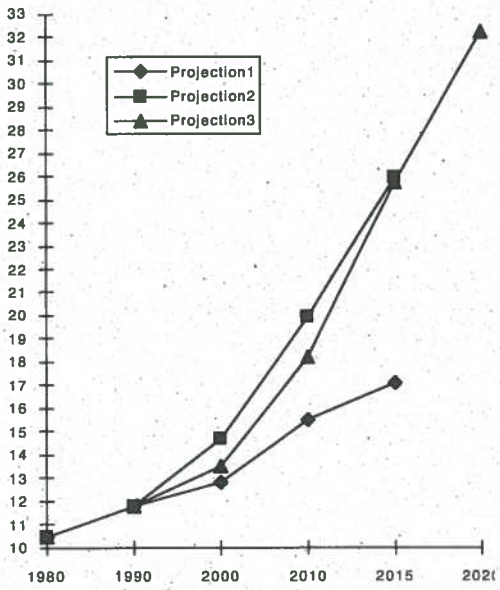
	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
ENVIRONMENT		1.a. Market study to include description of environmental amenities 1.b. Open space plan to define network of parks
HISTORY CULTURE & ARTS EDUCATION, RELIGION		2.a. Comprehensive inventory of buildings
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE		3.a. Develop and evaluate long-term arterial planfor Peninsula
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	4.d. Inventory of existing commercial properties	
LAND USE & ZONING HOUSING, ANNEXATION	5.a. DPZ study completed; recommendations in new ordinance.	5.b. New zoning and land use regulations in preparation
HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES PUBLIC SAFETY		6.a. Need for long-term facility plan

YEAR 3-5	YEAR 6-10
1.d. Renovate existing parks; plan expansion of parks system.	
4.c. New full-service restaurants and hotels.	

Investments are the financial means used to build and/or operate desired community facilities and services.

YEAR 3-5	YEAR 6-10
2.b. Written history of Belmont	
3.b. Develop 201 facilities plan for Peninsula 3.c. Long-range planning for recycling and curb-side pick-up	
4.a. Market study for housing / commercial 4.b. Study to determine feasibility of downtown as "specialty"district. 4.c. Develop marketing plan for Belmont	4.e. Long-term City capital budget and revenue plan

Studies are the means to understand future conditions while plans are the tools used to define what actions are deemed necessary



Peninsula Population Projections:
The above graph illustrates the effects of different land use policies and planning strategies on the projected maximum size of the future population.

See pages 70-72 for detailed explanations

PART 3

Section One

APPENDIX

KEY DATES

1871 - Charlotte Airline Railroad stops at Garibaldi Station in center of town.
1872 - Father Jeremiah O'Connell purchases 500 acres (Caldwell Plantation), less than one mile north of Garibaldi Station. Land donated to the Benedictine Monks of Saint Vincent's Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Maryhelp Abbey established as men's college.
1883 - Garibaldi Station named changed in honor of August P. Belmont
1889 - Robert Lee Stowe and W. B. Puett open a mercantile store.
1892 - Sisters of Mercy establish Sacred Heart as convent and school for girls.
1895 - Belmont becomes incorporated as a city.
1901 - Belmont's first cotton mill, Chronicle Mills, is organized. Belmont becomes textile center.
1904 - Stowe Mercantile Company's second (and current) store is built.
1915 - Belmont Piedmont & Northern Railroad Depot locates next to Stowe Mercantile Company.
1939 - New U.S. Post Office building is built.
1973 - The U.S. Post Office building becomes the Belmont City Hall.
1986 - Lineberger textile plants sold.
1988 - Construction of Raymond Helms Plant by R.L. Stowe Mills.
1989 - Sale of Belmont Heritage Corporation to Parkdale Mills.
1990 - The Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden is announced.

ANNEXATION HISTORY

1895 - One fourth mile radius circle from the point that Main Street crosses the railroad tracks.
1907 - Circle increased to a one and one third mile diameter.
1945 - East Belmont.
1966 - Piedmont Processing Mill and neighborhood.
1984 - Wilkinson Blvd., Secrest Ave., Central Ave. area.
1988 - The remaining parts of the present City limits.

POPULATION HISTORY

1895 - 100
1930 - 3,793
1970 - 5,054
1980 - 4,607
1990 - 8,434
2020 - Max. buildout of peninsula projected, 32,414

HOUSING - 1990

Gaston County owner occupied housing under $100,000 ..... 87%
Belmont Peninsula owner occupied housing under $100,000 ..... 80%
Gaston County owner occupied housing under $50,000 ..... 40%
Belmont Peninsula owner occupied housing under $50,000 ..... 31%

INCOMES PER HOUSEHOLD

	1980	1990	% change
Gaston County	$27,154	$28,126	3.6%
Peninsula	$26,443	$31,006	14.7%

EMPLOYMENT

	% of total 1980	% of total 1990	% change
Exec/Admin/Mngr	6.8%	11.5%	89% (greatest increase)
Machine operators/assemblers	26%	18%	-24%(greatest decrease)

build-to-line - differs from a set-back line, in that, when a new structure is built on a lot with a build-to-line, the facade of that structure must be flush with the required distance on that lot.

city - a usually large or important municipality in the United States governed under a charter granted or by the state.

ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) - A defined area outside of and adjacent to the City limit, in which a city has the power to exercise planning, zoning, and subdivision regulation, extending no more than one mile from the municipal limits. With approval by the County Board of Commissioners, cities with populations over 10,000 but less than 25,000 can extend ETJ's up to two miles and cities over 25,000 can extend up to 3 miles beyond existing municipal limits. ETJ extensions beyond the 3 mile limit require enactment of special legislation.

DARE - Drug Abuse Resistance Education

greenway - a linear park intended to accommodate pathways principally for foot traffic and /or bicycles. Typically, greenways are planned along creeks, streams or rivers and managed as natural environments.

incubator - used in economic development as a place to assist start up businesses by providing low-cost rent, group services, and technical support.

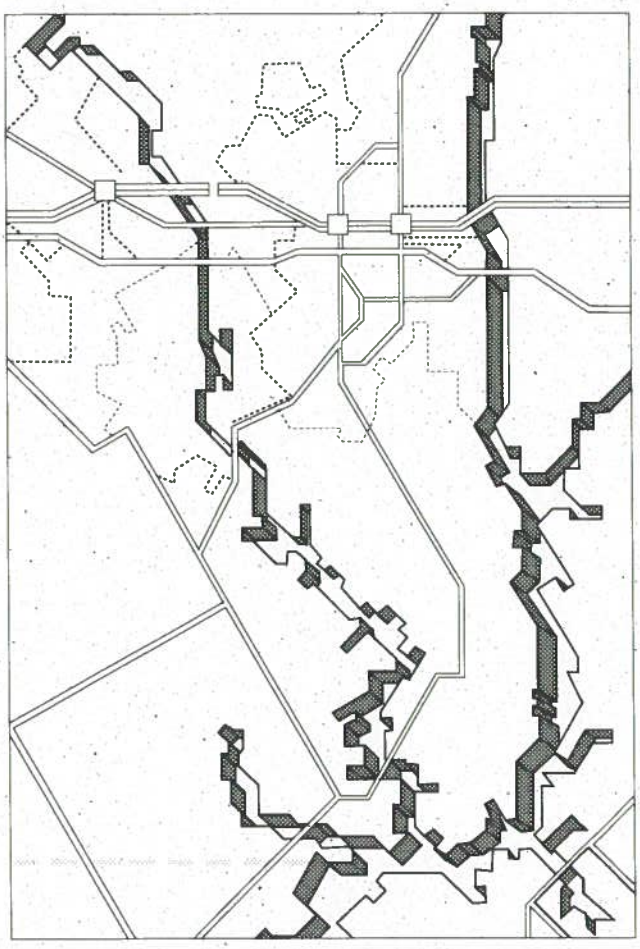
intangibles - a component of the real tax category referring to non-permanent improvements such as machinery, equipment, etc.

node - A term used in planning to refer to a specific area, which has a defined and delineated activity (i.e. specialty retail in downtown, a business park development, a college campus, etc.)

NCCATT - North Carolina Center for Applied Textile Technology

peninsula - a body of land almost completely surrounded water

The Belmont Peninsula



P.S.O. (Public Safety Officer) - police officers trained in fire fighting techniques that are able to respond on an average of less than one minute to a destination.

Q.N.R.C. (Quality of Natural Resources Commission) - A broad-based citizen advisory group appointed by the Gaston County Commissioners to study the state of natural resources in Gaston County, review state and federal regulations regarding their ability to address local concerns, make recommendations for local policy action, and communicate those recommendations to the public. For additional information write to, call, or fax: Gaston County, Quality of Natural Resources Commission, P.O. Box 476, Dallas, N.C. 28034-0476 Tel. 704-922-0301 Fax. 704-922-3416

retention pond - a flood control structure engineered to retain surface water runoff temporarily caused by sudden storms with heavy rainfall.

scenic overlay district -a customized zoning overlay district which provides for an additional layer of restrictions (i.e. setbacks, minimum lot width, maximum height of structures and signage) onto the underlying zoning district(s) to protect views within and around an area of particular scenic importance and natural beauty.

town - a cluster or aggregation of houses recognized as a distinct place with a place-name

U.S. Wetlands - An area of land defined by the federal Department of the Interior, and located by the State Environment Department, as having the following three factors inclusively: 1. Saturated soil, 2. "water loving" plants, 3. Hydrology, such that water is present during the growing season.

watershed - a topographic unit (shaped like a basin) defined by ridge and valley lines which define the pattern of rainfall and surface water runoff. Water discharges caused by rainfall runoff to the lowest point within the topographic unit.

TRENDS OF THE PENINSULA

The following analysis uses 1980 and 1990 data compiled by the United States Census Bureau for the 3 census tracts that make up the Peninsula The area bounded by the 3 tracts includes all the land south of I-85 to the tip of the Peninsula. Not included are the municipal limits of McAdenville and Cramerton.
Where monetary values are used to compare incomes, an inflation adjustment formula was developed using inflation rates provided by the Consumer Price Index.

POPULATION

The Belmont Peninsula covers 14.98 square miles or 9587.2 acres. Of the population of 11,713, 7,534 are within the city of Belmont, and 4,179 are in the county. All the population projections use this as the basis for natural limits to future growth. Within these natural limits, however, there are several different potential outcomes which depend on the level of infrastructure and planning which may take place. For this study 3 projections were made.

PROJECTION I

This projection assumes that current growth patterns for the Gaston County region continue and that no water sewer and road improvements are made into the Peninsula. It also assumes that county zoning remains the same. Being the closest to Charlotte, growth in eastern Gaston County will be greater than in the rest of the county. The model used to make all the following projections takes this into account.

Year	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Population	10,607	11,713	12,803	15,812	17,020
Per SQM.	708	782	855	1056	1136
Per Acre	1	1.2	1.3	1.6	1.8

Under this scenario, peninsula build out will occur around 2015 with an additional 5,307 people, a majority of whom will be living somewhere south of South Point High School. At that point, due to existing zoning and lack of sewer, the area will not be able to accommodate any more growth. As a result some tracts of land will be underutilized or

undevelopable (up to 22%). Where land is developed, the pattern will be a hodge podge of uses. Traffic on South Point Road will more than triple to about 20,500 cars a day from a current 6,600. Well water contamination, resulting from large numbers of septic tanks, could become a problem.

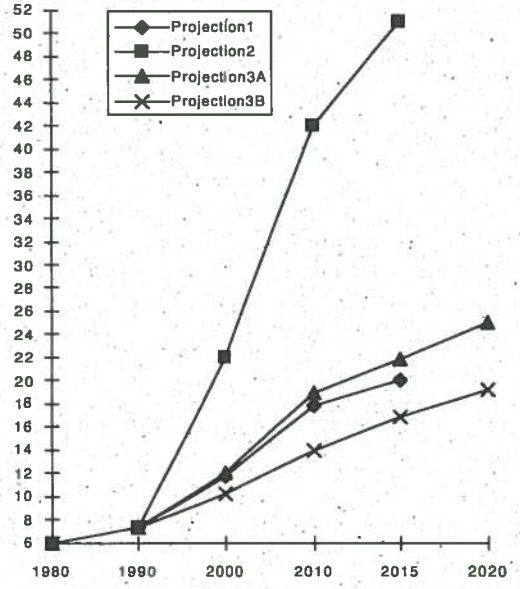
PROJECTION II

This projection assumes that water and sewer extensions occur and that the current urban pattern continues to develop. Zoning reflects new infrastructure development and allows for higher densities.

Year	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Population	10,607	11,713	14,591	19,883	25,771
Per SQM.	708	782	974	1,327	1,720
Per Acre	1	1.2	1.5	2.1	2.7

Under this scenario build out of the Peninsula occurs at the same time as Projection I, but with 13,958 new residents, most of whom will be living south of South Point High School. The pattern of development will be that of suburban sprawl leaving up to 9% of the land underutilized or undevelopable.

These types of patterns have the greatest impact on traffic congestion. Daily traffic counts on South Point Rd. will exceed 50,000 cars a day between Armstrong Rd. and R. L. Stowe Blvd. To accommodate the new traffic and due to the shape of the peninsula and pattern of development, South Point Rd. would have to be at least 4 lanes, **not including** turn lanes.



Four traffic projections for the Belmont Peninsula.

PROJECTION III

This projection assumes that adequate planning for roads, water and sewer, and a comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance are implemented.

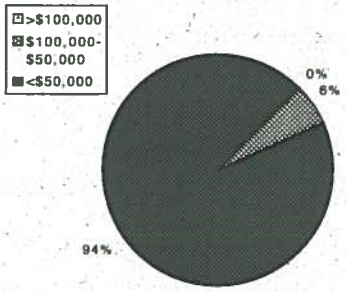
Under this scenario growth occurs at a more manageable pace than in Projection II. Being better planned, a foundation for longer, sustainable growth is also achieved. After 2010 the increase in population equals that of Projection II and this growth continues until 2020, 5 years later than Projections I and II. Total build out population is projected at 32,414. The pattern of development in this scenario is better organized, maximizing property values and land use. If planning is adhered to until build out there should be no unused land.
Traffic congestion is reduced due to arterial parallel roads to South Point which would provide alternate routes of travel. One parallel road would reduce traffic by 45% on South Point. Using Projection II, this reduction would result in 22,500 fewer cars on South Point. If 2 parallel roads are built to complement South Point, traffic on the 3 roads would average 18,500 cars daily. That is the lowest of the 3 projections.

Year	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020
Population	11,713	13,603	18,572	25,961	32,414
Per SQM.	782	908	1240	1733	2164
Per Acre	1.2	1.4	1.9	2.7	3.4

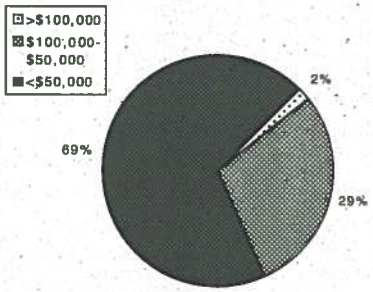
HOUSING

The number of owner occupied housing units increased by 23% on the Belmont Peninsula from 1980 to 1990. In 1980 there were 2002 owner occupied units on the Peninsula, compared to 2,462 in 1990. This rate of increase in relation to size was almost twice as fast as for Gaston County as a whole.
Within the Peninsula there were dramatic differences in growth. The area of South Belmont, the Peninsula itself and the area west of downtown accounted for all the growth. East Belmont had an 8% decline in owner occupied housing. This area

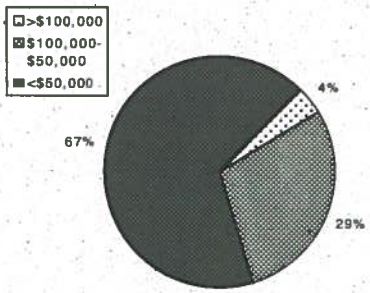
HOUSING STOCK



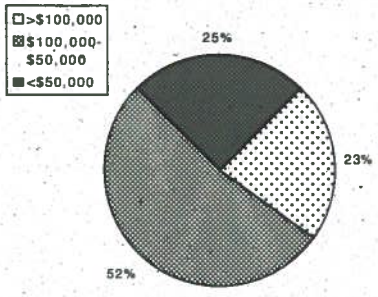
East Belmont 1980



East Belmont 1990



Peninsula 1980



Peninsula 1990

also had the lowest housing values of the 3 tracts. Sixty-eight percent of the owner occupied homes in East Belmont were less than $50,000. Ninety-seven percent were under $100,000. For the whole Peninsula 80% of the owner occupied homes were under $100,000, with 31% of this number below $100,000 with 72% of this number under $50,000. These figures show that the overall housing values have increased over the past 10 years. In East Belmont, however, the percentage of housing under $100,000 and under $50,000 has remained the same.

Compared to the County the Peninsula had lower percentages of housing less than $100,000 and $50,000.

The oldest housing stock on the Peninsula is located west of Downtown. Almost 24% of the houses were built before 1939. Over 25% of the homes built on the Peninsula south of Armstrong Ford Rd. were built in the last 10 years.

INCOMES

Household incomes in adjusted 1990 dollars are as follows:

	1980	1990	% Change
Gaston County	$27,154	$28,126	3.6%
Peninsula	$26,443	$31,006	14.7%

West Belmont, South Belmont and the Peninsula have the highest household income, $34,200 and 18.2% increase since 1980. East Belmont's household incomes were $24,458, $10,000 less than the rest of the Peninsula, but had the highest percentage increase of the 3 tracts, 23.5% since 1980.

EMPLOYMENT

Occupation- specific job description of an employee within an industry.

The following is a breakdown of the occupational characteristics of the working population (16 years of age and over) residing in Belmont. These people may or may not work in Belmont.

	% of total 1980	% of total 1990	% Change
Exec/Admin/Mngr	6.8%	11.5%	89%
Tech. & Support	2.4%	4.0%	83%
Sales	8.7%	11.2%	45%
Clerical	13.1%	16%	36%
Transportation	3.3%	3.6%	20%
Professional	8%	7.9%	11%
Production/Craft Repair	16%	14%	-1.3%
Service	10.1%	8.8%	-4%
Handlers/helpers/laborers	6%	4.5%	-13%
Machine operators/assemblers	26%	18%	-24%

The total labor force increased 10.6% from 5,377 in 1980 to 6,013 in 1990. White collar employment now accounts for 59% of the labor force. This is a 35% increase from 1980. Blue collar employment declined 10.4% since 1980. East Belmont accounted for almost all the decline. Of the 41% of the labor force currently in blue collar employment, 36% live in East Belmont. The following list ranks occupational categories by size for the Peninsula:

1 ---Machine Assemblers /Inspectors.....1075
2 ---Clerical.....955
3 ---Production / Craft Repair.....850
4 ---Exec. / Admin. / Managerial.....689
5 ---Sales.....675
6 ---Service.....525
7 ---Professional.....475
8 ---Handlers /Laborers / Helpers.....272
9 ---Tech. & Related Support.....240
10--Transportation.....215
11--Agricultural.....42

-----Total.....6013

The Peninsula's transition towards high paying white collar service oriented jobs is occurring at a faster percentage than Gaston County's.

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