
Bladen Street Area Revitalization Plan

Beaufort, South Carolina



September 2001

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Bladen Street Area Revitalization Plan

City of Beaufort, South Carolina

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Table of Contents

Introduction	
Purpose	1
Project Definition	1
History	4
Site Analysis/Existing Conditions	
Historic District	7
Zoning	9
Land Use	15
Streetscape	15
Recent Rehabilitations	19
Opportunities for Development/Redevelopment	19
Upcoming Projects	19
Initial Findings	
Opportunities	22
Concerns	23
Recommendations for Improvement	25
Conclusion	40
References	42
Appendix A: Meeting Participants	44
Appendix B: Input Responses to Public Meeting	46
Appendix C: Bladen Street Committee Members	50
Appendix D: Sec. 5-6047. GC general commercial district	52
Appendix E: Sec. 5-6048. OC office commercial district	58
Appendix F: Sec. 5-6049. NC neighborhood commercial district	62
Maps/Images:	
Locator Map	2
Bladen Street Study Area	3
Beaufort Historic District	8
City of Beaufort Zoning Map- Historic District	10
Bladen Street - Land Use	16
Greenways Trail	21
Areas of Opportunity	24
Existing Zoning-Study Area	29
Proposed Zoning Changes-Study Area	30
Conceptual Site Plan	35
Residential Street Section	36
Commercial Street Section	37
Sitting Steps on the Bluff	38
Perspective at the Intersection of Duke and Bladen	39

Introduction

Purpose

For many years major revitalization efforts in the City of Beaufort have focused on the downtown Central Business District. However, recent efforts have expanded this focus to surrounding areas, such as Carteret Street, Charles Street and Boundary Street, recognizing the importance major corridors have on creating an identity for the city. Throughout these revitalization efforts Bladen Street has received little attention, and this neglect has become increasingly apparent. With no sense of unity or continuity among the land uses, varied building types and setbacks, deteriorating sidewalks, inappropriate lighting, and haphazard landscaping, it is easy to understand why there has been so little new development or redevelopment along this corridor.

While the private sector is key to any revitalization efforts, public sector initiatives are often required to stimulate interest and support for the revitalization of an area. City resources are limited however, so it is important to determine how and where they should be used.

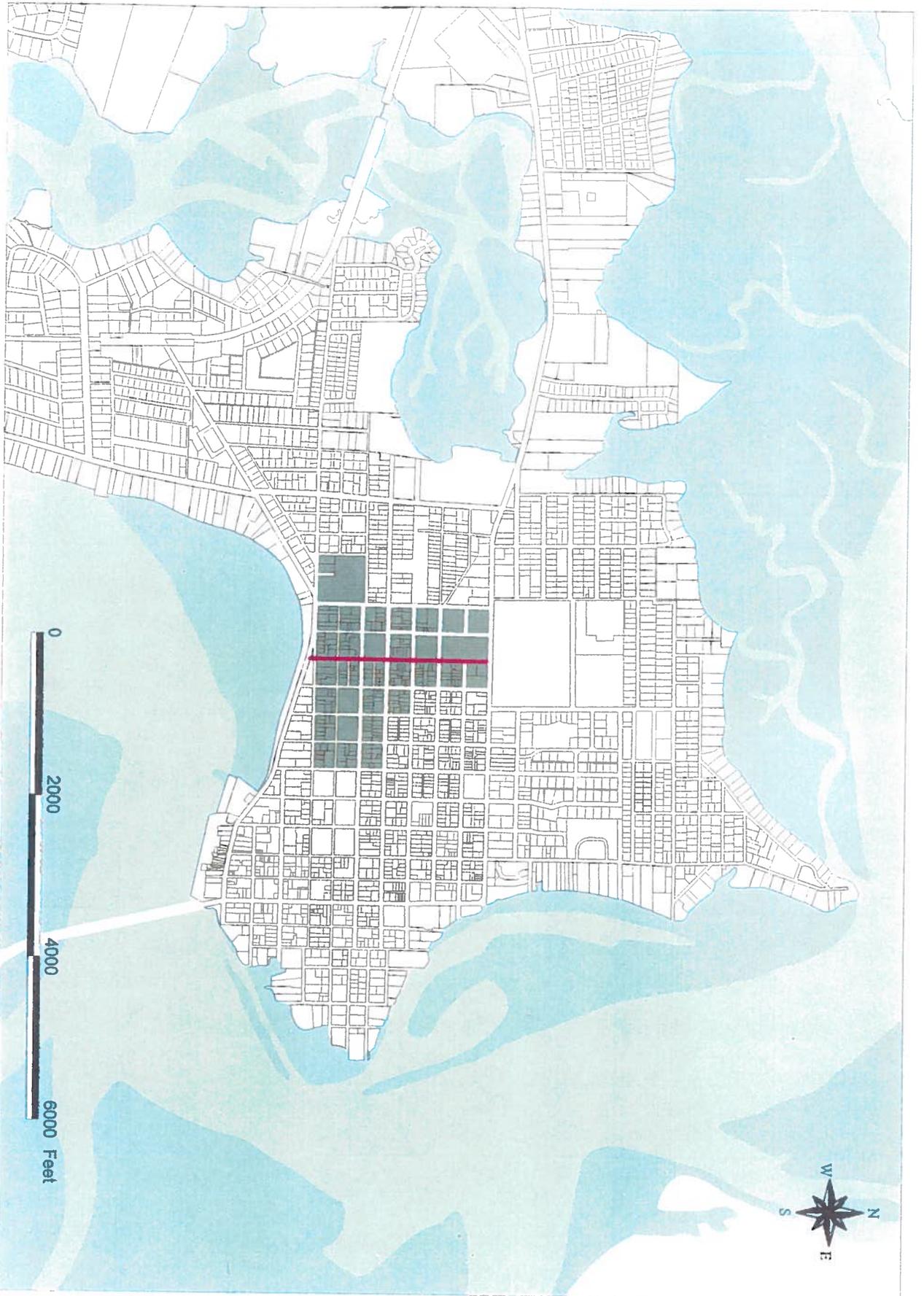
Given the level of development activity currently occurring in the City, and particularly in the Historic District, Bladen Street is likely to change in the coming years. Thus, the purpose of this plan is to set a vision for that change, and outline the steps necessary to achieve this vision so that the impact on the area will be a positive one. In addition, this plan will also function as a guide for why and how City resources should be used to enhance and revitalize Bladen Street.

One of the first steps in this process was to conduct an assessment of the current situation. This was done primarily through observation. Additional information was gathered through interviews with key property owners and decision makers in the community.

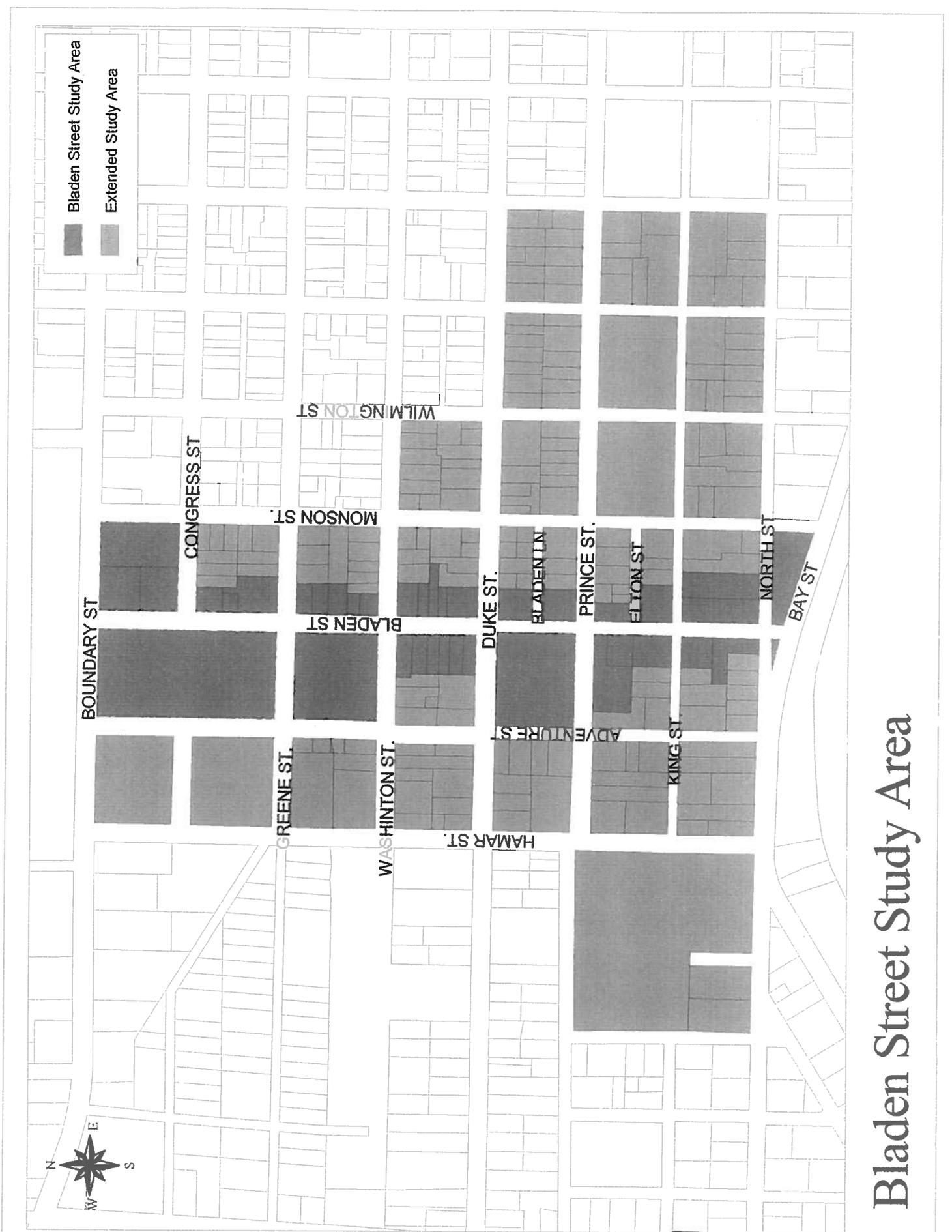
Following this assessment a public meeting was held to gain input on the direction Bladen Street should take. Based on the input from the public meeting and information gathered from the initial assessment, recommendations for improvements were made. A committee meeting was then held to review the recommendations, and a final draft of the recommendations was completed.

Project Definition

The focus of the study area consists of parcels located on, or adjacent to Bladen Street between Boundary Street and Bay Street. Specific parcels included are: 762, 657, 658, 233, 225, 216, 207, 594, 587, 451, 441, 153, 330, 329A, 328, 323A, 323, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 36, 35, 224, 225, 226, 230, 231, 120, 120A, 112, 34A, 34B, and 34.



Locator Map - Beaufort, South Carolina



Bladen Street Study Area

Bladen Street is the main focus of this study, although the importance of the impact of the surrounding areas on Bladen, and of Bladen Street on the surrounding areas, visually as well as conceptually through both zoning and land use is also recognized. Therefore an extended study area is proposed, which is broader in scope, and includes areas identified as potential assets or opportunities for Bladen Street.

This extended study area, shown on the Bladen Street Study Area map, is contained within Boundary Street, from Hamar to Monson; Monson Street, between Boundary and Washington; Washington Street between Monson and Wilmington; Wilmington Street from Washington to Duke; Duke Street from Wilmington to Church Street; Church Street from Duke to North; North Street from Church to Monson Street; Monson Street from North to Bay; Bay Street from Monson to Hamar; North Street from Hamar to Pilot; Pilot Street from North to Prince; Prince Street from Pilot top Hamar; Hamar Street from Prince to Boundary.

History of Bladen Street

Beaufort was established ca.1710; however, there was no known plat until 1717, which shows nine named streets embracing 18 squares. While Bladen was not one of the original nine streets, it is not known exactly when Bladen Street was added. The earliest date given is sometime after 1740, with the establishment of "An Act for Better Serving the Town of Beaufort" (Rowland 147), while other sources suggest that it was not until after Beaufort was incorporated as a town in 1803, and the Statutes of 1809 and 1811 were established (Spieler October 5, 1999).

The origin of the name of the street is also in question. Most sources indicate it was named for Lt. Col. Martin Bladen, whose many achievements include: Comptroller of the Mint in 1715; one of the Commissioners of the Board of Trade and Plantations in 1717; Service under the Duke of Marlborough; Translator of Caesar's Commentaries; and author of a Masque-Orpheus and Eurydice. He is also honored by Bladen County, North Carolina, which was named after him in 1734 (Bladen County NCGen Web Page).

Information on the historical development of Bladen Street is scarce, however the Sanborn Insurance Maps of 1899, 1905, 1912, and 1924 provide some information. These maps indicate a mix of residential and commercial uses occurred along Bladen Street throughout this 25-year period. The 1899 map shows a variety of uses from King to Bay Street including a grocery and hardware store, a machine shop, the Beaufort County courthouse, and residential dwellings, with the later maps showing much of the same.

Interviews conducted with various property owners and residents of Beaufort uncovered some interesting memories. Several people indicated that at one time (1920's-1940's) there was a band shell located on the Bay Street Bluff across from the Federal Courthouse. It was open underneath and held up by stilts. Residents remember this being the site for street dances, political speeches, and the military band.

In the 1950's residents recall that the street was primarily residential, with some grocery stores and retail. Coastal Construction is believed to have been a bar at one time, and in the early 60's the Palmetto Building was a liquor store, and the current liquor store was an auto garage. In the early 1960's the Patterson Building was moved to its present location from behind the current Federal Courthouse.

Streetscape

An interesting discovery was made when researching the history of the layout of this street. The 1912 Sanborn map indicates Bladen Street was widened from Duke to Boundary sometime before 1912. Based on this fact, it is possible that the difference in street width is a result of the original layout and later extension of these streets. "By 1809 the original development was extended northward from Duke to Congress Street" (Wright 8).

Bladen Street was covered with oyster shells at some period before 1922; however, in 1922 all the shell streets were covered with tar. Sometime around 1926 the State Legislature passed an act to connect every county seat with a concrete highway, and Bladen was covered with concrete 18 ft wide (Spieler June 16, 1977). No historical documentation has been found on whether or not Bladen Street was ever paved with brick, but the present conditions of the asphalt on the south section of the street, where it connects with Bay Street, reveal brick paving underneath. Unfortunately, how far this brick extends is unknown.

Street signs within the City were originally cypress wood painted black, with street names painted in white enamel (Spieler March 22, 1978).

Cemeteries

Bladen Street is unique in that two cemeteries define close to 50% of the northern section: Beth Israel and Evergreen. In addition to this, the National Cemetery located on Boundary Street is the termination point for the North end of Bladen. Each of these three cemeteries is over 100 years old, and their historical value should not be undermined.

U.S. National Cemetery

President Abraham Lincoln established one of the first U.S. National Cemeteries in Beaufort, on February 10, 1863. "The Cemetery contains a cross section of veterans of every conflict between the Civil War and the Persian Gulf," including the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, and Vietnam. (National Cemetery Information Sheet).

Evergreen Cemetery

In September 1913, the City of Beaufort sold Block 124 to the Evergreen Cemetery Corporation. In July 1938 Evergreen Cemetery was deeded back to the City to be maintained as a municipal cemetery, and it has remained under municipal control since that time. (Spieler August 7, 2001).

Beth Israel Cemetery

The site of the Beth Israel Cemetery was originally intended to be where Evergreen Cemetery is currently located. The "Evergreen" lot, purchased for \$150.00, was later traded for the current Beth Israel Cemetery lot and a \$50.00 reimbursement. This cemetery "was established in March 1912, just five years after the construction of Beth Israel Synagogue on Scott Street" (Spieler August 7, 2001), and it has been an active Cemetery since that time. Notable Beaufort residents buried here include Leon Keyserling, who was Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors to President Truman, and M.S. Lipsitz, founder of Lipsitz department store.

Site Analysis/Existing Conditions

Historic District

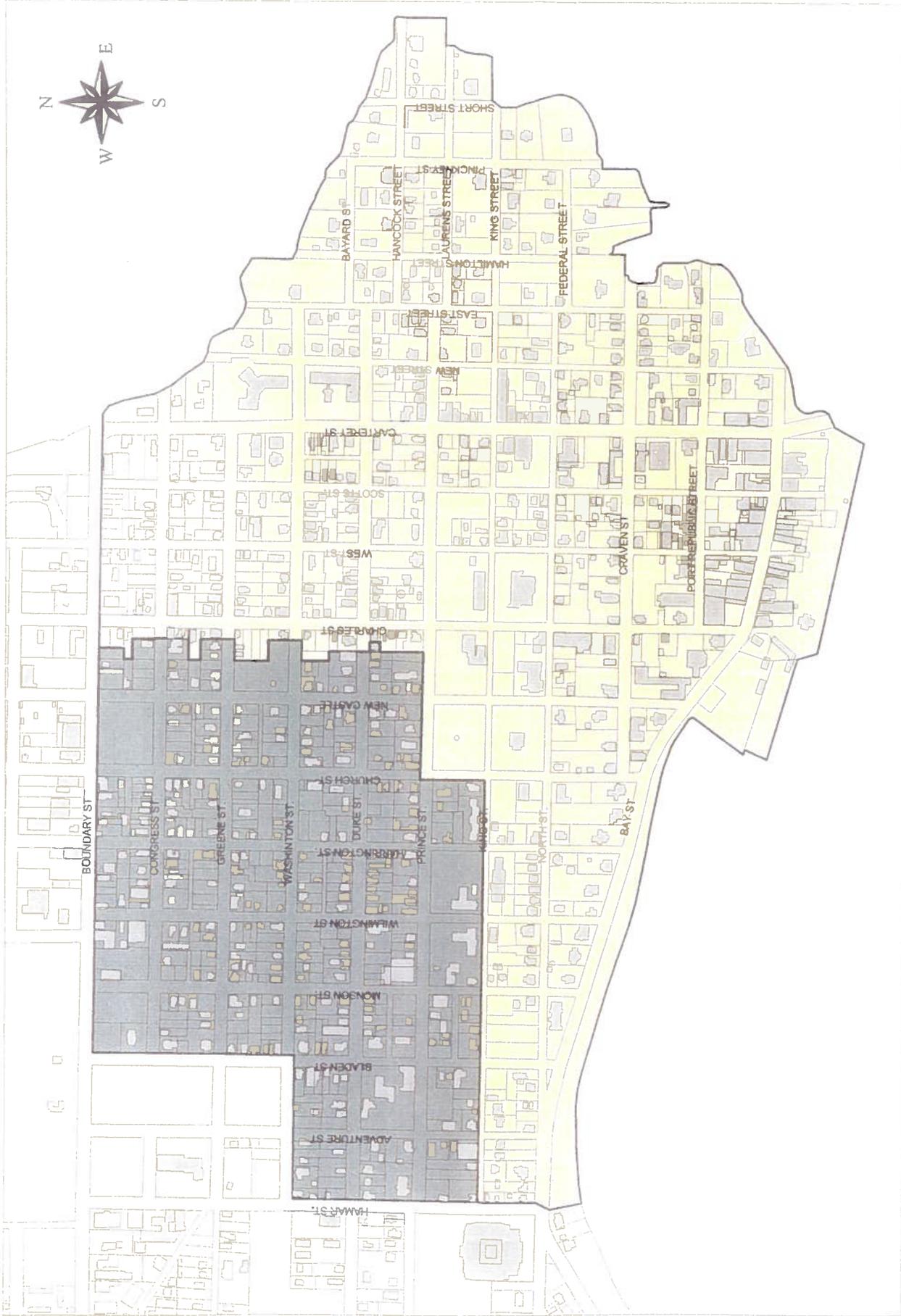
“Beaufort, South Carolina has become nationally known in the past twenty years for its collection of historic buildings and its efforts to preserve and protect those resources. The entire historic area of the City was recognized in 1969 with its listing as a National Historic Landmark” (Barge, Waggoner, Sumner, and Cannon 19). The National Historic Landmark District area is defined by the same boundaries as the Beaufort Historic District. “The Beaufort Historic District encompasses approximately 304 acres representing the original town and substantially all of its pre-twentieth century expansions. The relatively compact district contains 439 contributing resources” (National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form).

A considerable portion of both the study area along Bladen Street and the extended study area is located in the National Historic Landmark District and the Beaufort Historic District. As indicated on the Beaufort Historic District Map, the entire District is defined by two separate neighborhood designations: The BPN, or the Beaufort Preservation Neighborhood, and the BCN, or the Beaufort Conservation Neighborhood.

The entirety of Bladen Street is located in the Beaufort Conservation Neighborhood, with the exception of Evergreen and Beth Israel Cemeteries at the North end, and one block at the south end (which is in the Beaufort Preservation Neighborhood). The Beaufort Conservation Neighborhood designation provides some protection for historic structures in this area, yet requires less stringent standards and design guidelines than in the Beaufort Preservation Neighborhood. This protection is found in the *Northwest Quadrant Design Principles*, created in May of 1999.

The Northwest Quadrant is a common term used to describe the Beaufort Conservation Neighborhood, and the modifications to the Preservation Ordinance designating it as a conservation overlay district “reflects the growing awareness of the contribution that the northwestern quadrant of the district makes to the architectural and historical character of the entire Historic Beaufort District” (*Preservation Manual Supplement* 68). According to the Historic Beaufort Foundation in *A Guide to Historic Beaufort* (127),

The Northwest Quadrant represents the city’s largest traditionally African-American neighborhood. Developed after the Civil War, its modest folk style buildings reflect an important chapter in Beaufort’s history. They are tangible reminders of the contributions made to the city by the many trades people, domestics, laborers, small business owners, and others who lived in the neighborhood.



BCN, Beaufort Conservation Neighborhood
 BPN, Beaufort Preservation Neighborhood

Beaufort Historic District

There are six structures on Bladen Street that contribute to the Historic District, the oldest dating from the early 19th century. These structures are:



604 Bladen Street (1890)



809 Bladen Street (ca 1895)



807 Bladen (ca 1895)



813 Bladen (1915)



901 Bladen (19th c, early)

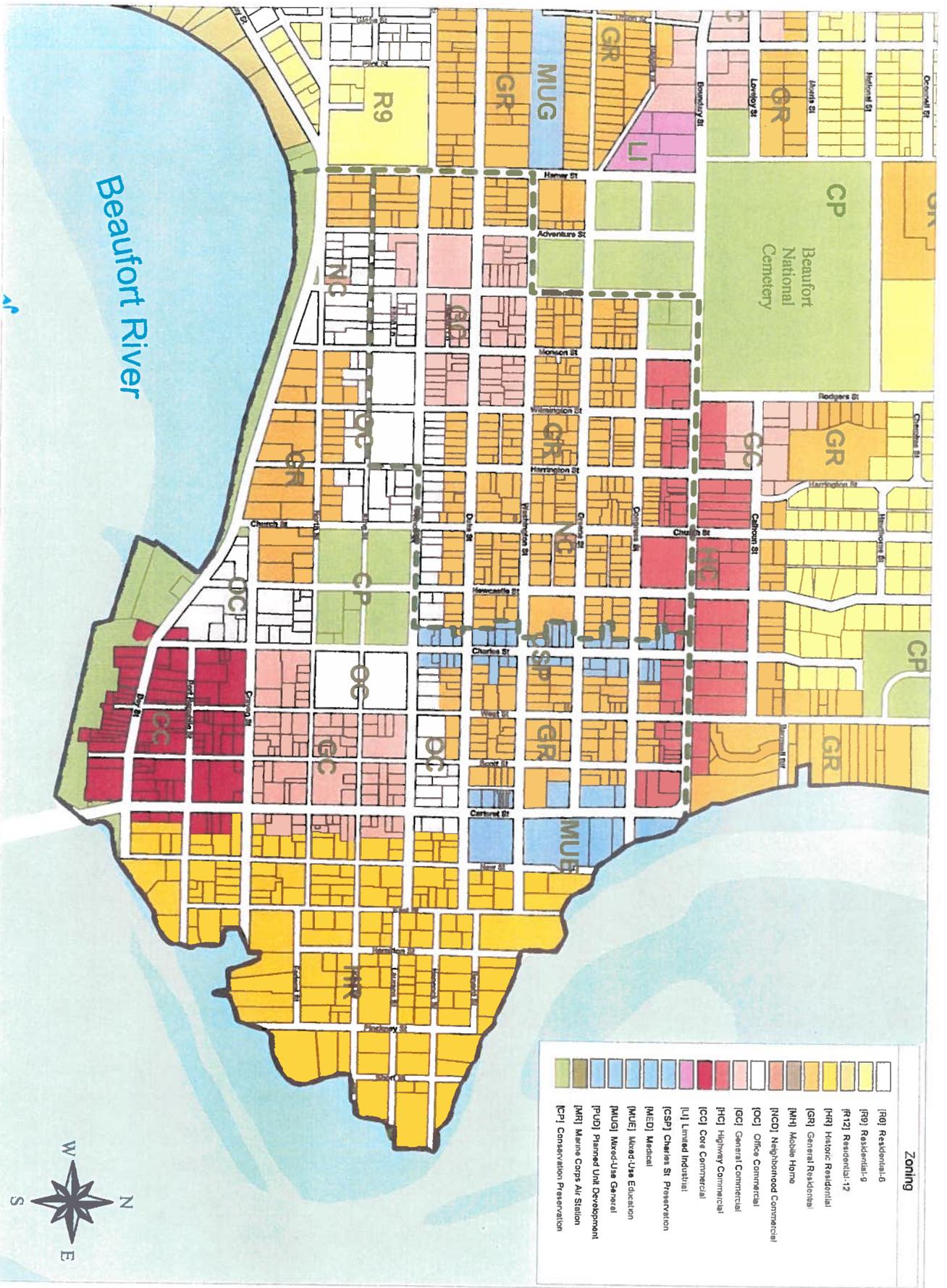


909 Bladen (1925)

Zoning

Zoning serves to guide the development process by designating areas within the city for specific uses, such as residential, commercial, or conservation. There are currently five zoning districts found along Bladen Street: General Residential, General Commercial, Office Commercial, Conservation Preservation, and Neighborhood Commercial. The current zoning map of the Historic District is included for reference, and below is a brief description of each of the zoning districts as they relate to Bladen Street, and a listing of some of the uses permitted under each designation. For a more complete understanding of the permitted uses, conditional uses, uses permitted by special exception, and other requirements in each of these districts, refer to the *Official Zoning Ordinance of the City of Beaufort, South Carolina*.

City of Beaufort Zoning Map



Sec. 5-6045 GR: General Residential District

The structures located in the general residential district along Bladen Street consist of single-story, one-family dwellings. However, in addition to the single-family dwellings, the permitted uses under this designation would allow multi-family, and group dwellings.

Under certain conditions, it would also allow public or private care homes, townhouses, condominiums and duplexes.

Sec. 5-6047 GC: General Commercial District

The General Commercial District along Bladen Street contains the largest variety of both physical structures as well as types of businesses. There is an entire block along Bladen that appears residential, yet, is zoned General Commercial. This is probably due in part to the fact that the businesses in this "residential" area are located in renovated houses, or structures that favor residential architecture over commercial architecture.

Uses located within the General Commercial district along Bladen Street include residential dwellings, offices, a liquor store, a funeral home, a retail cosmetics store, and a contracting company-including the office and the storage of equipment.

There are many other uses allowed in the General Commercial District including:

- Any use permitted in the NC, neighborhood commercial district, the OC, office commercial district, or in any R-12 residential district;
- Retail, wholesale, or storage business;
- Business involving the rendering of personal services;
- Off-street commercial parking or garage;
- Public or private recreational facility;
- Commercial Trade or Vocational School;
- Eating and/or drinking establishment; and
- Bed and Breakfast

Requirements:

1. Minimum Lot Area: 2,500 square feet.
2. Minimum Lot Width: 25 feet
3. Minimum Front Yard: 10 feet
4. Minimum Side Yard: none
5. Minimum Rear Yard: none, unless a corner lot
6. Maximum Building Height: 50 feet

Sec. 5-6048 OC: Office Commercial District

There are only two structures, a law office and a construction company, that are currently in the Office Commercial District along Bladen Street, with the remaining parcels under this designation being vacant land. There are a variety of uses allowed in an office commercial district including the following:

- Business involving the rendering of a personal service, specifically including:
 - Barber or beauty shop
 - Dressmaker, seamstress, or tailor
 - Jewelry and watch repair shop
 - Any medically oriented office, clinic, and/or laboratory
 - Office building
 - Photographic studio
 - Business school or college
 - Funeral home or mortuary
 - Insurance agency
 - Real estate agency
 - School offering instruction in art, music, dancing, drama, or similar activity
- Any uses permitted in a GR general residential district

Requirements:

1. Minimum Lot Area: Four Thousand (4,000) square feet.
2. Minimum Lot Width: 40 feet
3. Minimum Front Yard: 25 feet
4. Minimum Side Yard: 10 feet
5. Minimum Rear Yard: 15 feet
6. Maximum Building Height: 50 feet

Sec. 5-6041 CP: Conservation/Preservation District

There is a large amount of land along the North section of Bladen Street that is designated as a conservation/preservation district. This includes Evergreen, Beth Israel, and the National Cemeteries, as well as the County tennis courts. On the south end is the small park at the corner of Bladen and North Street. While these are probably some of the most typical uses under this designation, other permitted uses also include:

- Private dock or boat house
- Publicly owned parks/open space
- Wildlife refuge
- Activities related to soil and water conservation
- Sites or structures acknowledged to be of historical significance
- Municipal and other public surface parking lot
- Visitors Center/public information facility

Sec. 5-6049 NC: Neighborhood Commercial District

There is only one parcel, Koths Corner Store, which is designated as Neighborhood Commercial, and it appears from the current zoning map that the NC designation has been used to allow a single, specific use within a neighborhood. However, the Neighborhood Commercial zone offers many permitted uses not found under other designations along Bladen, such as:

- Retail Business involving the sale of merchandise on the premises in stores specifically including:
 - Antique store
 - Book, magazine, newspaper shop
 - Candy store
 - Drug store or pharmacy
 - Florist shop
 - Fruit, nut and/or vegetable store
 - Gift or curio shop
 - Grocery store
 - Hobby and/or toy shop
 - Millinery or hat shop
 - Music store and/or record shop
 - Package liquor store
 - Photography studio or supply store
 - Shore store

- Business involving the rendering of a personal service or the repair and servicing of small equipment specifically including:
 - Barber or beauty shop
 - Dressmaker, seamstress, or tailor
 - Jewelry and watch repair shop
 - Any medically oriented office, clinic, and/or laboratory
 - Office building
 - Photographic studio
 - Bank
 - Bicycle repair and sales shop
 - Dry-Cleaning self-service, and/or laundry self service facility
 - Locksmith or gunsmith
 - Public utility business office
 - School offering instruction in art, music, dancing, drama, or similar activity
 - Secretarial and/or telephone answering service
 - Shoe repair shop
 - Telegraph office

- Private or semi-private lodge, or social center
- Church
- Residential use, if existing at the time of adoption
- Publicly owned and operated building, facility, or land.

Conditional Uses:

- Bakery
- Delicatessen, restaurant, soda fountain or other eating and/or drinking establishments.
- Meat, fish, and/or poultry shop.
- Combination of residential structure with any use herein permitted.

Requirements:

1. Minimum Lot Area: Six Thousand (6,000) square feet.
2. Minimum Lot Width: 60 feet
3. Minimum Front Yard: 25 feet
4. Minimum Side Yard: 10 feet
5. Minimum Rear Yard: 15 feet
6. Maximum Building Size: 3,000 square feet
7. Maximum Building Height: 35 feet

Beaufort Historic District Ordinance

In addition to the regulations set forth in each of the zoning districts, Bladen Street, being located within the Beaufort Historic District, also falls under the Beaufort Historic District Ordinance. This ordinance affects properties located in the Historic District, and was implemented to provide added protection of the character of the Historic District by prohibiting specific uses and permitting additional uses under certain conditions, thereby overriding any other zoning designations allowing these uses. The prohibited and limited uses are listed below.

Uses Prohibited in the Historic District:

- Sale or rental of vehicles, boats, and/or manufactured homes
- Newspaper publishing plant
- Private outdoor recreation facility
- Radio and/or television station
- Contractor's office where there is any outside storage of equipment and/or where any vehicles over 1 ½ tons are parked or stored.
- Public or private airfield
- Communication tower
- Car wash
- Truck terminal
- Recreational vehicle park
- Animal hospital and/or boarding facility
- Any use containing a drive through facility, except for banks
- Mini-warehouse
- Automobile service station and/or garage
- Any use containing gasoline fuel pumps
- Any use having outdoor storage of materials or equipment

Uses Permitted on Bladen Street based on certain conditions:

- o Restaurant provided it is located in the Core Commercial District or has direct frontage on Boundary Street, Carteret Street, Charles Street, or **Bladen Street**.
- o Inn provided it has direct frontage on Boundary Street, Carteret Street, Charles Street, or **Bladen Street**.

Land Use

The combination of the five zoning districts along Bladen Street allow for a variety of land uses to occur. Current uses in the area were identified in a walking survey on June 19, 2001, and are listed below:

- Law Firm (1)
- Cemeteries (2)
- Liquor Store (1)
- Vacant Land (4)
- Residential Dwellings (8)
- Construction/Contracting Companies (2)
- Funeral Home (1)
- Tennis Courts (3)
- Offices (4)
- Cosmetics/Skin Care (1)
- Convenience Store (1)

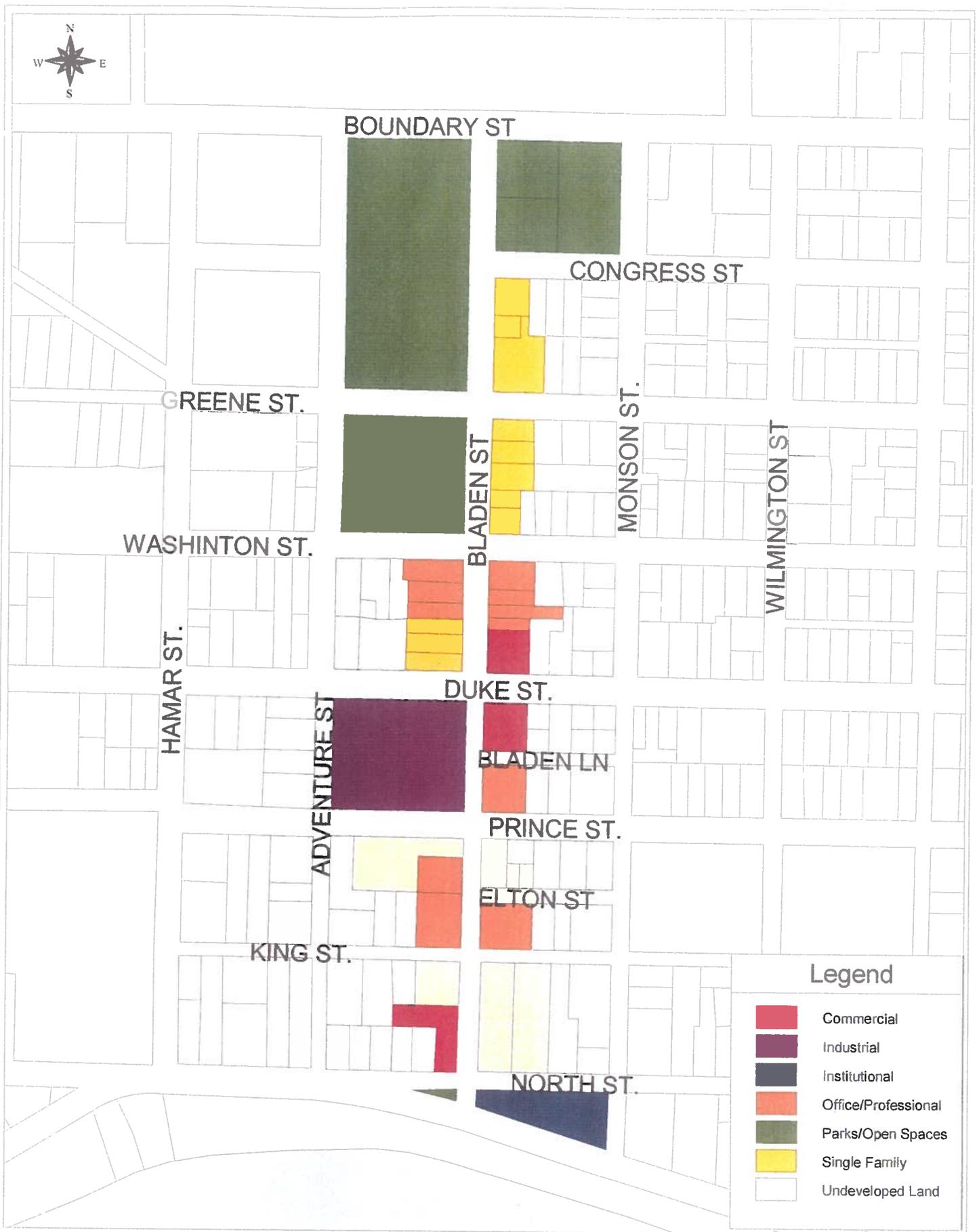
Under the *City of Beaufort Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, the uses along Bladen Street fall into seven separate land use categories: single-family residential, office/professional, commercial, institutional, industrial, undeveloped land, and parks/open space. The map on the following page illustrates the broad mix of land uses occurring on Bladen Street.

Surrounding land uses were also identified in order to gain a better understanding of how the uses in the area could affect or complement the uses happening along Bladen Street. A selection of the surrounding uses is listed below.

- Beaufort Elementary School
- Residential Dwellings
- Law Firms
- Bed & Breakfast
- Mortgage Services
- Greene Street Gym
- Churches
- DHEC-South Carolina Low Country Health District
- School District Complex
- County Courthouse
- Literacy Volunteers
- Sprint Building
- Offices
- Cemeteries
- Pest Control

Streetscape

The character of any street is affected by multiple elements, each of which adds to or detracts from the general feeling of the street. Bladen Street however is unique in that while the road is approximately a third of a mile long, the general feeling changes from the North end to the South. This can be attributed in part to the fact that the North end of the street is primarily residential and conservation preservation areas, while the South end is commercial. Interestingly, the heaviest commercial activity on Bladen is located on the



Bladen Street - Land Use

South end, towards Bay Street, which is predominantly residential, while the residential section of Bladen is located on the North end of the street, towards Boundary, which is a predominantly commercial street.

Street Width

Another factor in this uniqueness is the street width. From Boundary to Duke Bladen Street is approximately 8' wider than from Duke to Bay, and the wider section of the street is in the predominantly residential end, while the narrower section is in the commercial end.

From Duke to Boundary, the street width is approximately 38', with an extra 5' of sidewalks, with a right-of-way of 48'. From Duke to Bay, the road width is approximately 30', with 5' of sidewalks, creating a right-of-way of 40'.

Signage

There is a sign ordinance in effect for the entire city, and specific sign guidelines for the Beaufort Historic District. Bladen Street falls into the Residential/Commercial Zone under the Beaufort Historic District sign guidelines.



Commercial Signage

The commercial signage along Bladen varies from large freestanding signs, such as the Palmetto Office Building, to small projecting signs, such as the one found on the Coastal Contractors Building. Wall signs and monument signs are other examples of signs found along Bladen Street.



Public Signage

There are no signs along Bladen to indicate one is in a Historic District. There is a directional sign, however, located in the park at the south end of Bladen Street, leading towards the downtown historic district. There are two signs located on Boundary, one serving as a directional sign located before Bladen Street pointing towards Bladen, or down Boundary, and an informational sign just past Bladen Street indicating one has entered the National Historic Landmark District.

Traffic Signage

There are no speed limit signs anywhere on Bladen; in fact, the only vehicular related signage is located at the south end of Bladen Street, where Bladen connects to Bay. This is a two-headed arrow directional sign to let drivers know they may turn left or right, but may not continue straight.

Trees

There are street trees located along Bladen, but there is no uniformity in type, placement, or location. Furthermore, it appears as if the street trees, and any other type of landscaping that is currently on Bladen Street, have been planted by the property owners.

Utility Lines

Utility lines along Bladen Street are currently above ground.



Lighting

The current lighting on the street consists primarily of the typical streetlights supplied by the South Carolina Electric and Gas. In addition to the streetlights, there is also some lighting provided by the tennis courts located at the corner of Bladen and Boundary. Some of the commercial buildings along Bladen Street provide their own lighting as well.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are located on both sides of Bladen, and run the length of the street; however, certain sections are in a great state of disrepair. Sidewalks are located on at least one side of a majority of the connecting streets as well, and new sidewalks have recently been constructed on Prince Street, to accommodate the Beaufort Elementary School.



Parking

On-street parking occurs on both sides of the street from Boundary Street to Duke Street and on the east side of Bladen from Duke Street to Bay Street, however specific spaces are not delineated

Traffic

The most recent data concerning traffic counts that is available from DOT is from 1999. These counts indicated that the average daily trips taken on Bladen Street in 1999 were 3,600. This is fairly low when compared to Charles Street, in which the average daily trips totaled 4,800, and Carteret Street, where the average daily trips totaled approximately 13,000.

Pedestrian Use

There is little daytime pedestrian activity along this street. Use of the street appears to be merely of purpose, with pedestrians aimed at a specific destination. There is some increased activity on the street, when the school year is in, before and after school, due to the close proximity of Beaufort Elementary.

Currently there appears to be very little activity occurring on Bladen near or after dusk, aside from the activity provided by the tennis courts and the funeral home. This is probably due to the fact that no commercial buildings appear to be open past 7 pm.

Building Height

All of the residential structures located along Bladen Street are one-story structures. In addition, a considerable number of the commercial buildings are

also one-story. The tallest buildings on Bladen are commercial two-story structures, and they all occur on the South end of Bladen (closest to Bay).

Building Conditions

Of the 30 main structures along Bladen Street (including Beth Israel Cemetery, Evergreen Cemetery, and the Tennis Courts), approximately 10 are in good condition, 12 are in fair condition, and 6 are in poor condition. The remaining 2 have been approved for demolition.

Building Materials

The predominant materials used in the structures along Bladen Street are wood, or faux wood products, and brick. Approximately 75% of the residential structures are wood or faux wood, with the remaining 25% brick; approximately 41% of the commercial structures are brick, 34% are wood, and the remaining 25% other materials.

Density/Setbacks

While the residential lots are typically rectangular in shape, the sizes vary from the smallest lot, at 40' x 70' to the largest lot at 125' x 300'. The commercial lots are primarily square or rectangular in shape, and run from 40' x 125' at the smallest lot to 250' x 300' at the largest.

Residential setbacks vary from approximately 5 to 35 ft. Over 60% of the residential setbacks are between 5 and 10 ft, with 7 ft being the most frequent. The commercial setbacks vary from approximately 0 to 65 ft, indicating that the residential setbacks are somewhat more consistent than the commercial. The two most frequent setbacks along Bladen for commercial structures are 0 and 40, which further supports the inconsistency of the setbacks for commercial structures.

Recent Rehabilitations

While there have been no major developments along Bladen Street for some time, there have been steady but slow signs of improvements, specifically in the private sector. Some examples of improvements that have been made along Bladen Street in the past couple of years include: 608, 711, and 806 Bladen Street.

Opportunities for Development/Redevelopment

With the amount of vacant land along Bladen Street as well as other large parcels that could soon become available for redevelopment, new opportunities are created for how this area should or could develop. The redevelopment of or a change in each of these properties could provide a subtle or dramatic change in how Bladen Street is viewed.

Upcoming Projects

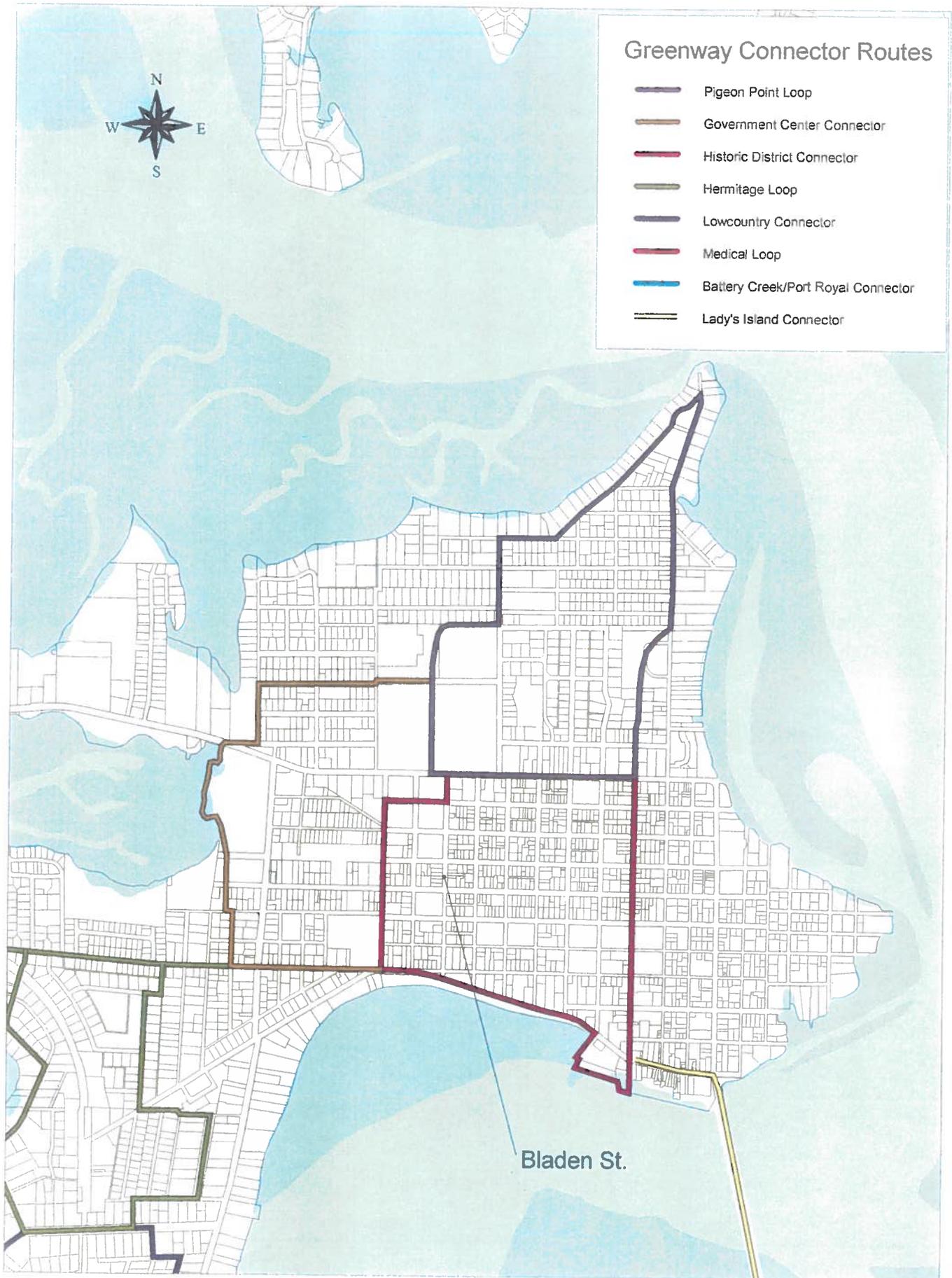
Although the majority of change occurring along Bladen has come from the private sector, there are plans for improvements to be made in the public sector as well. Resurfacing of Bladen Street is scheduled in the next few years, and the County has plans to expand and improve the tennis court facilities located at the corner of Bladen Street and Boundary Street. This will include 2 new tennis courts, public restrooms, a picnic shelter, and additional landscaping.

Another project that will have a direct effect on Bladen Street is the proposed greenways trail. "A greenways is a corridor of open space managed for conservation and recreation purposes. Greenways protect natural resources preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources, offer recreational opportunities, and provide a place for people to walk, bicycle, and move from place to place" (Palmetto Greenways Initiative 2).

The *Greenways Plan* of April 1997 identifies four areas along Bladen Street and in the surrounding areas as part of the Greenways path: The National Cemetery, the County Tennis Courts, the Greene Street Gym, and Beaufort Elementary School. As it is shown, the trail goes through the National Cemetery and across Boundary Street at Bladen Street, then through Evergreen Cemetery to the Greene Street Gym. The trail then continues along Hamar, connecting the Greene Street Gym to Beaufort Elementary.

Stemming from the 1997 study is the "Great Bend in the River" pedestrian trail. This proposed trail connects the Waterfront Park along the Beaufort River to the Beaufort Elementary School. The proposed project is to construct a multi-surface, pervious pathway approximately 8 ft in width adjacent to the Beaufort River at the base of the Bay Street Bluff.

City of Beaufort Greenway Plan



Initial Findings

Stemming from the analysis of existing conditions along Bladen Street was the identification of opportunities that could provide distinct advantages for future growth. In addition to these opportunities, specific areas of concern were also identified.

Opportunities

Vistas

The vistas that occur at each end of Bladen offer impressive views of the Beaufort River at the south end, and the decorative brick wall surrounding the National Cemetery at the north end. The caretaker's house, located in the National Cemetery, is on direct axis with Bladen Street, offering a definitive termination point for the street.



Recreational Opportunities

Recreational Opportunities are found along, and in close proximity to Bladen Street. These occur at the County tennis courts located on the corner of Bladen Street and Boundary Street, and the Greene Street Gym located one block from Bladen Street, on the corner of Greene Street and Adventure. Both of these facilities are open to the public and encourage community activity through their use.



Recreational Opportunities may also arise with the implementation of the Greenways trail. The trail, as proposed, would cross Boundary Street at Bladen, and continue to run along a small section of Bladen Street. In addition, proposed trails will also run parallel to Bladen Street on Hamar, and perpendicular to Bladen Street on the Bay Street Bluff.

Proximity to other key areas within the city

The location of Bladen Street in relation to other areas of the city is beneficial to the success of the street for a variety of reasons. Bladen Street is within a ten-minute walking or biking distance to the core downtown district, which offers access to a variety of businesses, restaurants and shops. In addition, the close proximity of Bladen Street to the Beaufort Elementary School could provide a unique opportunity to increase pedestrian activity along the street.

The location of Bladen Street within the Historic District, and as a partial edge to the Historic District boundaries provides an excellent opportunity for the City to encourage the use of the street both as an entrance into the Historic District and as a major corridor or alternative route into Beaufort's Central Business District (CBD).

Architectural and Historical Fabric

While Bladen Street is not the most architecturally or historically significant street in the Beaufort Historic District, its historical resources should not be

underestimated. There are six structures contributing to the Historic District along Bladen Street, adding to this historical fabric are each of the cemeteries, which are all at least 100 years old.



Contemplative Spaces: Park, Cemeteries

Contemplative or Green Spaces are found in the cemeteries located at the North end of Bladen Street, and the park located at the South end of Bladen Street. Each of these “green” spaces offers a shady, and somewhat quiet place to enjoy the surroundings.

Vacant Land/Undeveloped Land

The southern end of Bladen Street has a considerable amount of vacant land, which provides a unique opportunity for new development in an established neighborhood.

Concerns

Abandoned Houses

A main concern along Bladen Street is the two abandoned houses located at 811 Bladen and 903 Bladen. While both of these houses have been approved for demolition, they have yet to be demolished, and continue to be an eyesore for the community.

Abandoned Signs/Poles

In addition, there are two unsightly sign poles that are no longer in use, and are adding to the negative perception of the area: The first pole is located on the Northwest corner of Bladen and North Street (in front of Koths) and the second is on the Southeast corner of Washington and Bladen.



Sidewalk Conditions

The conditions of the sidewalks on Bladen Street are a major concern. Considerable portions of the sidewalks are dilapidated with cracked and broken sections throughout.

Horse Trough Park

Although the park in general is seen as an opportunity, there are some concerns surrounding the use of Horse Trough Park. The use of the park, located at the South end of Bladen Street appears to be minimal if any. The fact that the park is situated in the center of 3 separate lanes of traffic, in conjunction with the limited useable area of the park, probably deters any potential users.

Un-screened Parking Areas

While some parking areas on Bladen are screened properly, there are just as many that are not. Un-screened parking areas fronting Bladen Street offer a view of asphalt.

Recommendations for Needed Improvements

Based on initial findings from the analysis of the site, as well as input provided by participants in the public meeting held on June 25, 2001 and a committee meeting held on August 8, 2001, a list of recommendations for improvements has been developed. In addition to the written recommendations, a site plan and accompanying drawings are included to illustrate the design and streetscape ideas discussed in the recommendations.

During the public meeting, several key issues were identified by participants as important to the success of Bladen Street. The top three issues are appropriate, new streetlights, additional landscaping and burying the utility lines. There are, however, additional elements that should be discussed regarding both the streetscape and other needed improvements.

The proposed recommendations are intended to increase the sense of place that makes Bladen Street unique, while enhancing the character of the street as a whole. The prevailing design concept is to create a mixed-use zone that will encourage the linkage of residential and commercial development in this area, while emphasizing the transition that occurs as one moves from the North end to the South.

Development of the Bladen Street Area Revitalization Plan is part of the implementation of the *City of Beaufort's Comprehensive Land Use Plan*. The Comprehensive Plan is seen as a blueprint for future growth and development in the city, and so, where applicable, excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan are included throughout these recommendations.

Comprehensive Plan (V-9): Beaufort's residential neighborhoods, comprising the majority of the City's land use, are of primary importance to the City's future. There should be a continuing focus on improvement and upgrading of these neighborhoods, including rehabilitation of the downtown redevelopment area and the Northwest Quadrant, while preserving the historic integrity of these areas.

Landscaping/ Sidewalk Improvements

Responsible Agency: City of Beaufort

Time Frame: 2-3 Years

Possible Funding Sources: TEA-21

Russell Wright stated in his 1972 *Preservation Plan for Beaufort, South Carolina*, "Planting and landscaping are critical to the visual character of Historic Beaufort. Unfortunately this important element is under-utilized...There is a marked lack of quality planting and landscaping in the Historic District". While many of the streets in Beaufort's Historic District have seen significant

improvements in planting and landscaping since 1972, it is fair to say that Bladen Street has received little attention.

Comprehensive Plan (V-11): Create walkable neighborhoods by providing the necessary infrastructure to create an environment that is pedestrian friendly and that encourages walking rather than driving to neighborhood destinations

Recommendations from Boundary to Duke Street:

- The planting of indigenous, overstory trees on private property should be encouraged, possibly through a public/private partnership program, where the City provides the trees to be planted on private property.
- A 3' tree lawn, or planting buffer, should be implemented between the sidewalk and the curb.
- Sidewalks should be replaced or repaired, and the width of the sidewalk on the west side of Bladen Street (in front of the cemeteries) should be increased from 5' to 6'6".
- Alternative "low maintenance" grasses/plants should be considered for the tree lawn in place of regular grass.



Recommendations from Duke Street to Bay Street:

- The sidewalks should be widened to 9', which would require the removal of any existing parking.
- Crepe Myrtles should be planted at intervals along the outside edge of the sidewalk.

Landscaping/Screening

- Require a significant amount of foliage to hide or obstruct views of parking lots and large commercial dumpsters, especially in the commercially zoned areas.
- Review ordinance on screening to see if it needs to be updated.
- Eliminate "grandfather" status of existing dumpsters and require screening within a specified amount of time.

Signage

Public Signage

- Relocate the National Historic Landmark District Sign on Boundary Street (by the tennis courts) to the corner of Bladen and Boundary. Consider taking this a step further and provide new signage where Bladen meets Boundary (creating significance with landscaping and night lighting) to indicate the Beaufort Conservation Neighborhood and the National Historic Landmark District. Include Historic Beaufort Foundation in this process.

Comprehensive Plan (III-7): Enhance the “historic district with improvements to historic district entrance points.” Suggestions listed in the plan are special signage and landscape improvements to areas that may serve as formal entrances to historic district.

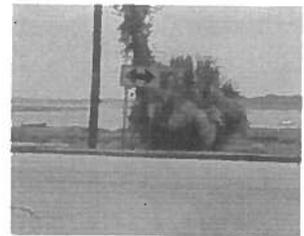
Comprehensive Plan (VII-16): Gateway visual improvements are recommended for the major entry and exit points along vehicular routes into the city and to different areas of the City. The purpose of these improvements is to enhance the City’s identity through improvements such as lighting, landscaping, planting and signage. Gateway visual improvements are recommended at...entrances to the City’s downtown historic district.

- The City should take an active role in promoting the historical nature of the cemeteries (specifically for the ones they own: Evergreen and Citizens cemeteries), by providing adequate signage that is both aesthetic and informative. In addition to this, Historic Beaufort Foundation should be encouraged to provide Historical Markers for Evergreen, Citizens, and Beth Israel Cemeteries.
- The possibility of Historical Markers or signage for any additional historic structures or sites in the area should also be investigated.
- To emphasize the importance of the Historic District, street signs within the Historic District should be of a different color and/or material. To further emphasize the uniqueness of the area, the “neighborhood name” should be included on the street signs as well.

Comprehensive Plan (III-7): Consider special street signs within the Historic District that will distinguish areas within the district from those without.

Traffic Signage

- The directional sign located at the south end of Bladen on the Bluff should be removed, so as not to block the view of the river.
- A speed limit sign should be added along Bladen as a means of traffic calming.



Private Signage

- Because there is already a sign ordinance in place, the only necessary step is to make sure that all of the signs are in compliance.

Historic District

- Extend the boundaries of the Beaufort Historic District/Beaufort Conservation Neighborhood to include the cemeteries.

Lighting

- The scale and design of the current lighting is incompatible with the historic character of the district. It should be removed and replaced with similar streetlights to those found in the downtown area. Additional lighting should be provided around the cemeteries.



Fencing

- The City should evaluate the fencing/shrubs for Evergreen Cemetery, using Beth Israel as an example.
- To better define the residential space, appropriate fencing should be encouraged in the residential section.

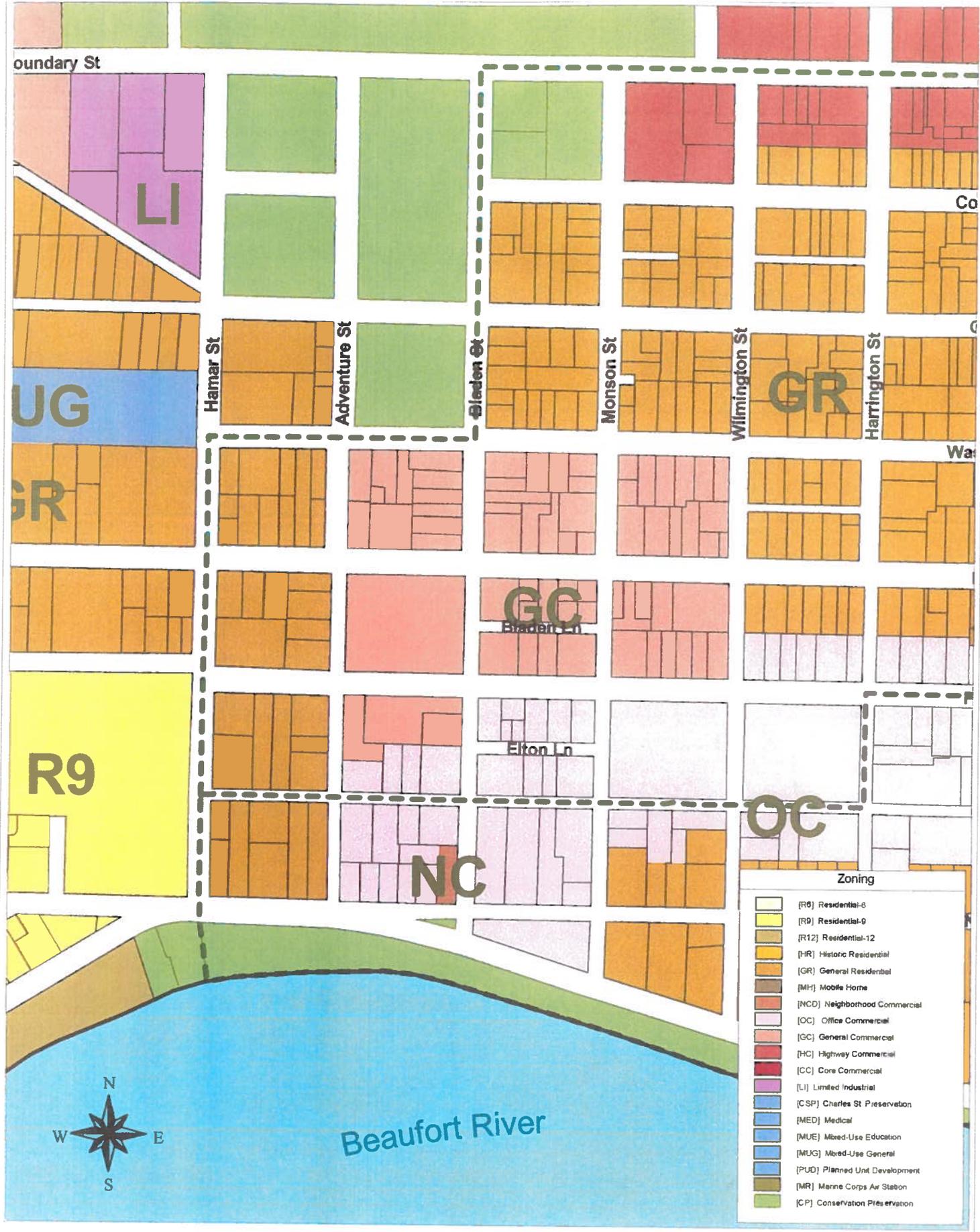
Zoning/Requirements

“Zoning is intended to avoid disruptive land use patterns. That is, to prevent the activities on one property from generating external effects that are detrimental to other properties. In undeveloped areas, zoning is intended to preserve the status quo, or to serve as a guide for new land use patterns” (Larz Anderson, *Guidelines for Preparing Urban Plans* 153-154).

Under the City’s *Comprehensive Plan*, special attention is given to Land Use Planning and Zoning in order to preserve the Historic District and protect it from disruptive change. Based on the goals and policies stated in the *Comprehensive Plan*, as well as observation and analysis of the current zoning along Bladen Street, two separate zoning changes are recommended.

In order to prevent undesirable land uses, and create a more cohesive environment for Bladen Street and the surrounding area, the 6 1/2 block area currently zoned General Commercial (as highlighted on the current zoning map) should be rezoned as Office Commercial, with the exception of properties fronting Bladen Street from Duke to North Street, which should be rezoned Neighborhood Commercial. This zoning will ensure that any new development or redevelopment in this area will have a low impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

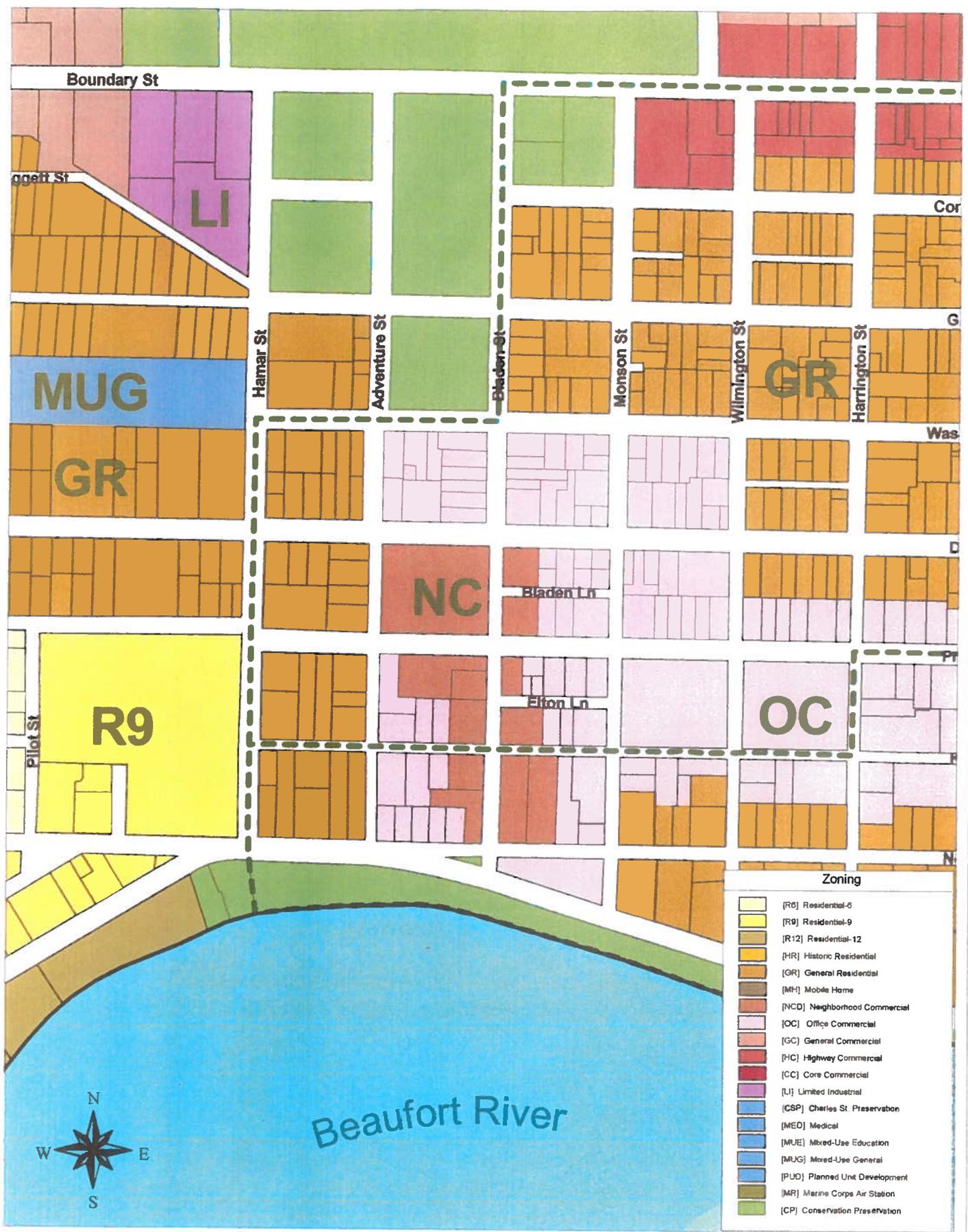
Comprehensive Plan (VII-14): Neighborhoods should be protected from encroachment of undesirable land uses and should be buffered at their edges with the use of transitional land uses.



Zoning

[R8] Residential-8
[R9] Residential-9
[R12] Residential-12
[HR] Historic Residential
[GR] General Residential
[MH] Mobile Home
[NCD] Neighborhood Commercial
[OC] Office Commercial
[GC] General Commercial
[HC] Highway Commercial
[CC] Core Commercial
[LI] Limited Industrial
[CSP] Charles St Preservation
[MED] Medical
[MUE] Mixed-Use Education
[MUG] Mixed-Use General
[PUD] Planned Unit Development
[MR] Marine Corps Air Station
[CP] Conservation Preservation

Current Zoning - Study Area



Zoning

[R6] Residential-6
[R9] Residential-9
[R12] Residential-12
[HR] Historic Residential
[GR] General Residential
[MH] Mobile Home
[NCD] Neighborhood Commercial
[OC] Office Commercial
[GC] General Commercial
[HC] Highway Commercial
[CC] Core Commercial
[LI] Limited Industrial
[CSP] Charles St. Preservation
[MED] Medical
[MUE] Mixed-Use Education
[MUG] Mixed-Use General
[PUD] Planned Unit Development
[MR] Marine Corps Air Station
[CP] Conservation Preservation

Proposed Zoning Change

In addition to the change in zoning, a set of overlay requirements specifically created for Bladen Street should be enacted. There are two subsets of this overlay area. The first, subset A, will affect the properties fronting Bladen Street from Duke to Bay, and the second, subset B, would affect the properties fronting Bladen Street from Washington to Duke.

Subset A requirements are recommended as follows:

1. Minimum Lot Area: 2,500 square feet
2. Minimum Lot Width: 25 feet
3. Build to Line, measured from the nearest abutting street right of way line: 3-10 feet
4. Minimum Side Yard: No side yards are required
5. Minimum Rear Yard: 10 feet
6. Maximum Building Height: 40 feet measured to mean roof height
7. Minimum Building Height: 2 stories or 20 feet, measured to mean roof height
8. Signs: No freestanding signs shall be permitted. Other signs permitted in this overlay district are set forth in Article F, Sign Guidelines-Beaufort Historic District, of the Beaufort Zoning Ordinance.
9. There shall be no off-street parking fronting Bladen Street, and to encourage development in this area, there will be a 50% reduction for parking requirements affecting properties along Bladen Street. The network of connecting side streets can handle some of this additional parking.
10. In addition to this, parking requirements should be revised so that residential uses built over nonresidential uses would not require parking.
11. No additional curb cuts should be allowed on Bladen Street.

Comprehensive Plan (VI-28): Seek to minimize curb cuts on City streets by encouraging the sharing of curb cuts by multiple developments and by closing curb cuts where appropriate as part of a property redevelopment.

12. The following uses shall be permitted subject to the conditions as outlined herein:

- a. Any residential use developed in conjunction with a use permitted in the underlying, zoning district, provided the residential use(s) is either located above a nonresidential use or does not front Bladen Street.

Comprehensive Plan (V-13): Encourage redevelopers of commercial properties in the city to consider a residential component to their redevelopment plans.

Comprehensive Plan (V-12): Modify Zoning to allow for and encourage housing in a mixed-use fashion in the Historic downtown, allowing specifically for second and third story living units above first floor commercial uses.

Subset B requirements are recommended as follows:

1. Minimum Lot Area: 2,500 square feet
 2. Minimum Lot Width: 25 feet
 3. Minimum front yard, measured from the nearest abutting street right of way line: Should be conducive with current setbacks.
 4. Minimum Side Yard: No side yards are required
 5. Minimum Rear Yard: 10 feet
 6. Maximum Building Height: 35 feet, measured to mean roof height
 7. Signs: No freestanding signs shall be permitted. Other signs permitted in this overlay district are set forth in Article F, Sign Guidelines-Beaufort Historic District, of the Beaufort Zoning Ordinance.
 8. There shall be no off-street parking fronting Bladen Street, and to encourage development in this area, there will be a 50% reduction for parking requirements affecting properties along Bladen Street. We feel that the network of connecting side streets can handle some of this additional parking.
 9. In addition to this, parking requirements should be revised so that residential uses built over nonresidential uses would not require parking.
 10. No additional curb cuts should be allowed on Bladen Street.
- Enforce Section 5-6109 "Nonconforming or building use discontinuance" in the Zoning Ordinance.
 - Reevaluate the land uses within this area for their appropriateness.

Enhance Vista of Beaufort River

This will be done through the implementation of a majority of the recommended improvements, including streetscape improvements and the proposed overlay zoning requirements.

Comprehensive Plan: Policy 2.C Protect Scenic Areas and Views, suggests that all new development and redevelopment activity in the City should be encouraged to enhance views to waterways and marshes from Public Roads.

Emphasize Connections

- Provide brick crosswalks, or a detailed paving design using contrasting paving materials where Bladen meets Boundary, where Bladen meets Duke, and where Bladen meets Bay to emphasize areas of transition.
- Install a different type of street paving (brick), from Duke Street to Bay Street, to further emphasize the transition area at the connection of Duke and Bladen and the idea of moving from a residential area into a commercial one.

- Emphasize the connection at the south end of Bladen by reducing the lanes of traffic on North Street, from Bladen to Adventure, from two lanes to one, traveling westward, and extending the park area out to replace the east bound traffic lane. To encourage the use of and promote a more park-like atmosphere, the asphalt paving over the original brick street at this juncture should be removed to expose the brick.

Comprehensive Plan (VI-30): Neighborhood parks and recreation facilities should be used as a means for improving conditions in the Northwest Quadrant, which are in need of community revitalization.

- Create a connection at the end of Bladen Street to the proposed Bay Street Bluff/Greenways Trail using stairs and landscaping.

Remove Eyesores:

Responsible Agency: Public Works
Time Frame: 1 month

- Remove the abandoned sign poles along the street

Responsible Agency: Codes Enforcement
Time Frame: 3 months

- Prioritize structures throughout the city approved for demolition, with structures in redevelopment areas having a higher priority. Demolish the abandoned structures located at 903 and 811 Bladen Street.

Bury Utilities

Responsible Agency: South Carolina Electric & Gas and the City of Beaufort
Estimated Cost: \$350,000-\$400,000 (lines running parallel to Bladen).
\$2 million to bury all utility lines along Bladen except two lines running perpendicular that cannot be buried, and lines running along Bay from Bladen to downtown Beaufort.

Possible Funding Sources: Franchise Fee

Additional Costs: Converting Overhead Services to Underground Services

Time Frame: 3-5 years

- Bury the utilities underground

Comprehensive Plan (III-7): Within a coordinated Public Utilities Plan, the city should place emphasis on future measures of improving the Historic Districts visual quality such as underground utilities...

Create a Neighborhood Association

- The residents and business owners of Bladen Street are strongly encouraged to start a Neighborhood Association. Becoming a unified neighborhood is key to success in any area.

Comprehensive Plan (V-11): Encourage the development of, and support the activities of, strong neighborhood associations.

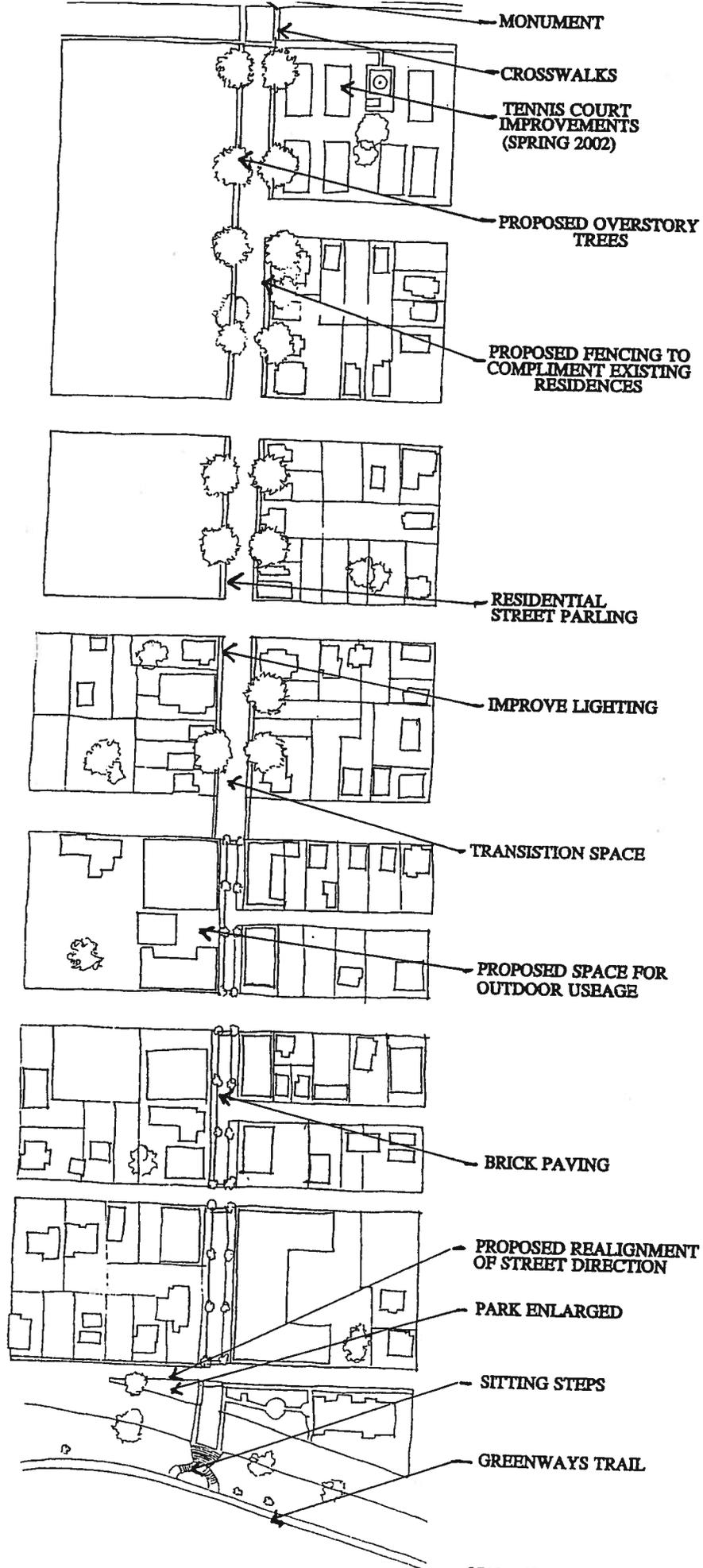
Rehabilitate the Old County Jail

- Investigate the King Street area/the old County Jail as a possible location for the Police Department (if city government complex is not built). This building is a contributing resource to the historic district, and a well-developed example of Art Deco/Moderne style of Architecture.

Comprehensive Plan: the City should consider rehabilitating the old City jail for office use.

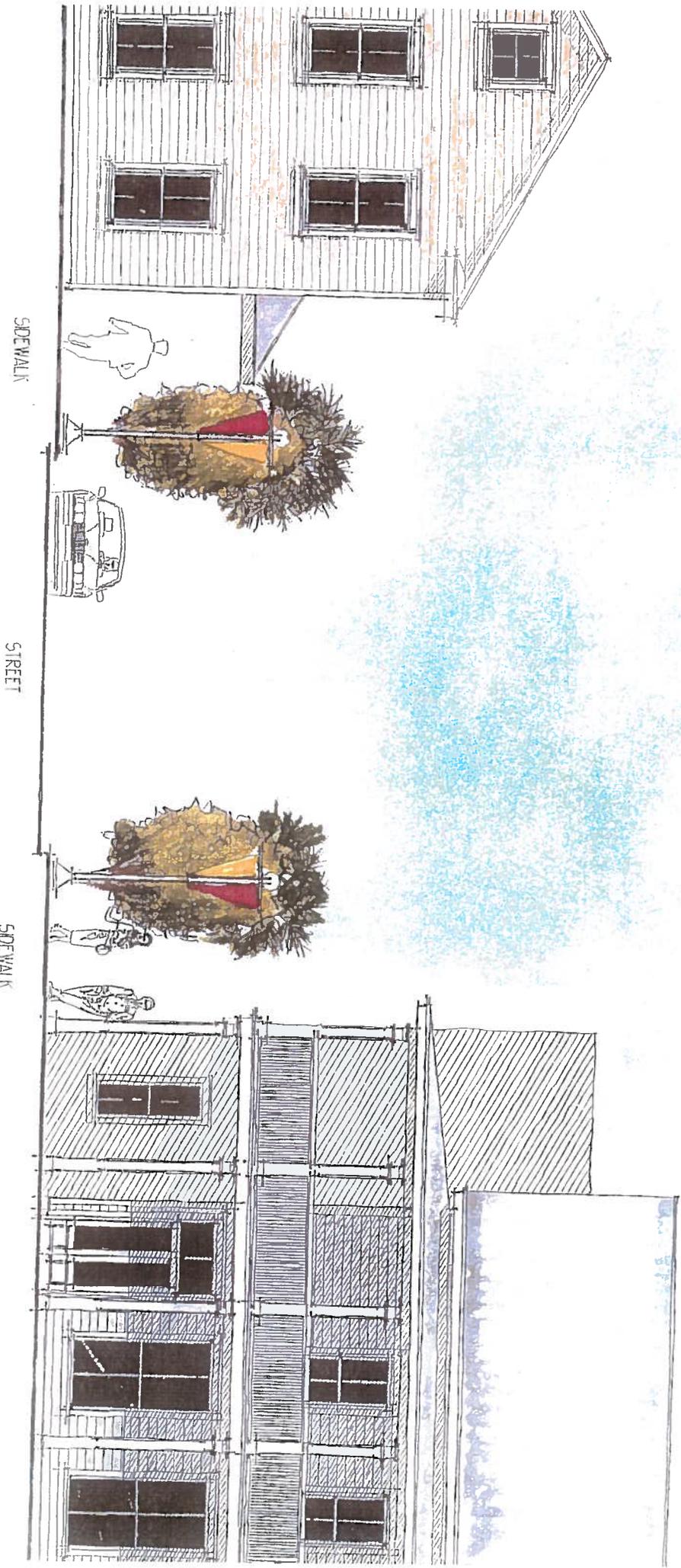
Increase Police Presence

- Active enforcement of the speed limit in this area is highly recommended.
- "Foot" police should be established as in the core downtown district.
- Support Community-Oriented policing.

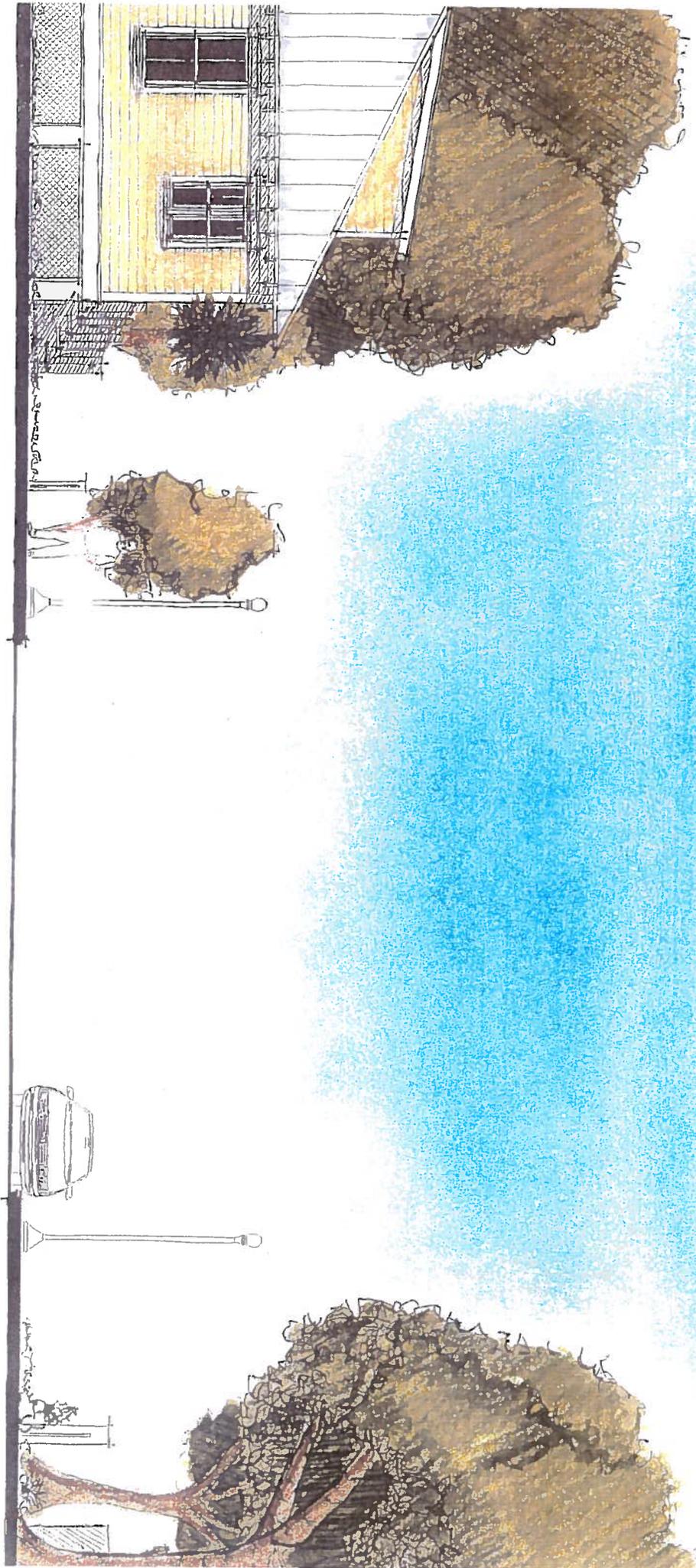


SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"

COMMERCIAL STREET SECTION



SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



RESIDENTIAL STREET SECTION

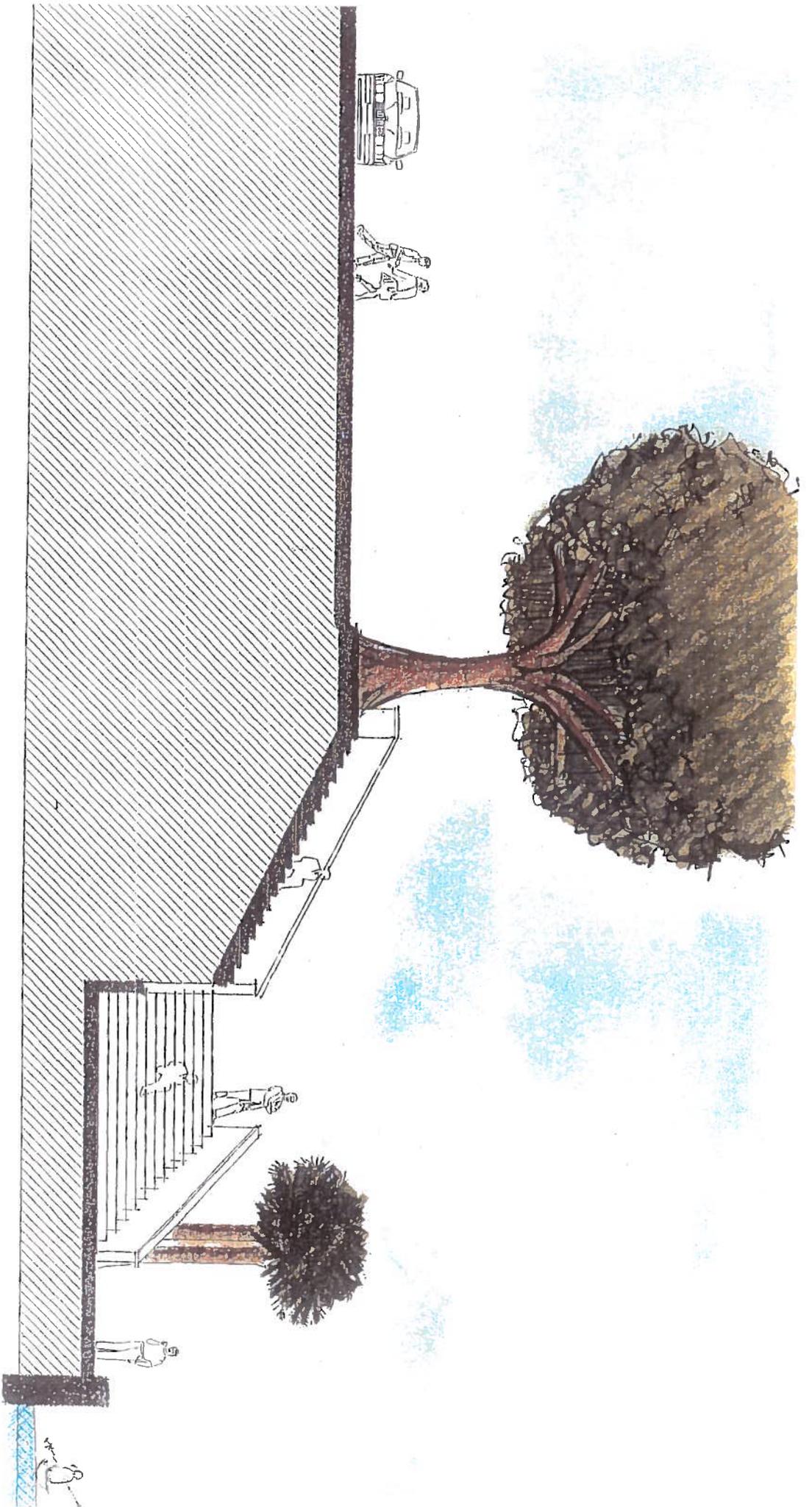
SIDEWALK

STREET

PARKING

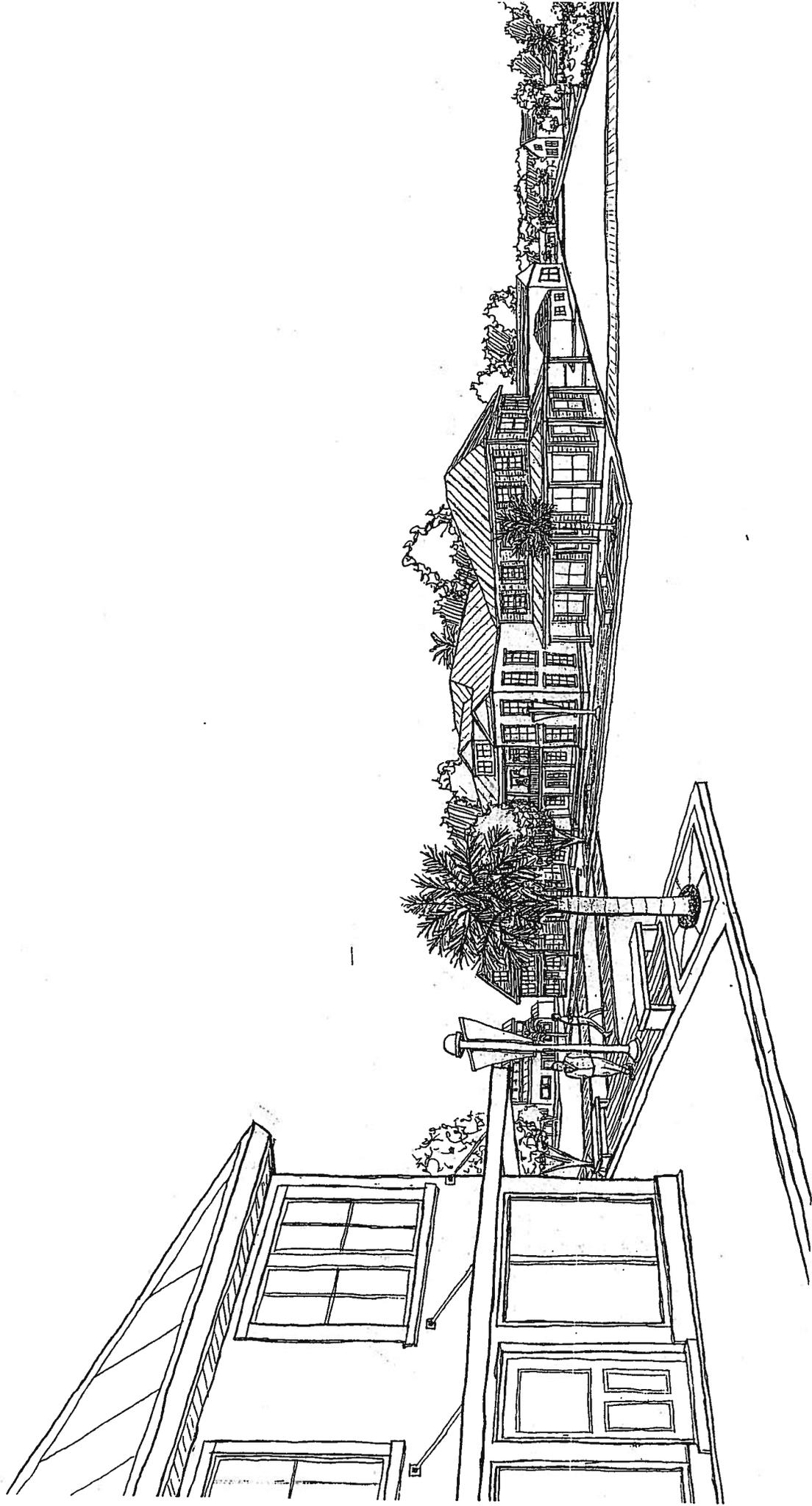
SIDEWALK

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



SITTING STEPS ON THE BLUFF

NOT TO SCALE



PERSPECTIVE AT THE INTERSECTION OF DUKE AND BLADEN

Conclusion

The purpose of the recommended improvements, once implemented, is to act as a stimulus for revitalization of the neighborhood. This would in turn, encourage redevelopment and new development in the area. New businesses generated by these improvements will increase business license revenues as well as property values, thus increasing the tax base.

For example, a new, 10,000 sq. ft., 2-story building built along Bladen Street would likely have a market value for tax purposes of \$450,000. The City property tax on this building would be approximately \$1,800. In addition to the actual building, the land would also be taxed, and with the recommended streetscape improvements, land values would increase as well.

Using a 10,000 sq. ft. 2-story basic building footprint as an example, based on the proposed overlay requirements, specific properties along Bladen that have been identified as properties available for development or redevelopment were analyzed for their potential to provide increased property tax to the city. These examples are listed below:

Parcel # 153

Current Property Tax on Land and Buildings: \$1,957.00

Estimated Property Tax on Land and 4 Example Buildings: \$9,157.00

Total Annual Increase in Property Tax: \$7,200.00

Parcel #: 657 & 658

Current Property Tax on Land: \$1,231.00

Estimated Property Tax on Land and 4 Example Buildings: \$8,431.00

Total Annual Increase in Property Tax: \$7,200.00

Parcel #: 225

Current Property Tax on Land: \$147.00

Estimated Property Tax on Land and 1 Example Buildings: \$1,947.00

Total Annual Increase in Property Tax: \$1,800.00

Parcel #: 587

Current Property Tax on Land: \$73.00

Estimated Property Tax on Land and 1 Example Buildings: \$1,873.00

Total Annual Increase in Property Tax: \$1,800.00

Parcel #: 441

Current Property Tax on Land and Building: \$738.00

Estimated Property Tax on Land and 1 Example Buildings: \$2,538.00

Total Annual Increase in Property Tax: \$1,800.00

Because Bladen is such a short street, small changes could have a large impact on the area. The implementation of these recommendations would be the first step in rejuvenating the street to one of flourishing businesses with a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

In addition, using Bladen Street as a gateway to Bay Street and the Beaufort Historic District offers a promising alternative to entering the downtown area. A visitor or resident is offered a view of the Beaufort River, the waterfront park, the grand homes located along Bay Street as well as access and exposure to public parking, carriage tours, and downtown shops and restaurants.

The next step in the process is to develop a plan for implementing these recommendations and to investigate funding sources for the recommended improvements.

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Appendix A

Meeting Participants