



SOUTHWEST SECTOR

The Southwest Sector is the largest and perhaps the most diverse of the six 2010 Sectors. The Sector has the following boundaries:

North: US 29/74 and Garrison Blvd.

East: The C & NW railroad and a branch of Crowders Creek.

South: Crowders Creek.

West: The 2010 Planning Area boundary.

The Southwest has a diverse population and land use mix. The Sector has residential neighborhoods, shopping centers and an industrial corridor, and it also has farms, a state park, and rural general stores. It is generally agreed to have the most attractive *land* and views in the 2010 Planning Area, but it also suffers from jumbled land use and blight in a few of its most naturally attractive areas.

The urbanized portion of the Southwest Sector is a combination of established residential neighborhoods, commercial areas and an industrial corridor. Residential neighborhoods cover a broad range of housing styles, from large historic homes on York Road to modest former mill villages near Garrison Boulevard. A common characteristic of most of the established neighborhoods in the Sector is a population which is “aging in place,” a process in which housing turnover is low and households decline in size as children grow up. This can lead to a declining population, even if housing is stable.

Commercial development in the Sector has undergone a decline in most uses except for

convenience goods and groceries. Apart from a branch of Matthews-Belk, the area has a lack shopping opportunities for apparel and household goods.

Industrial development in the Sector is concentrated in the US 321 South corridor, historically an important industrial area for Gastonia. This area has several of Gastonia’s largest industrial employers. Further development of industry is possible on several infill sites in the 321 South Corridor.

In recent years Gastonia has laid a foundation for growth in the Southwest Sector through improvements in water and sewer service. The Crowders Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, located just south of the Sector, is a regional facility which could serve much of the Crowders Creek drainage basin. Gastonia has built a sewer trunk line along Crowders Creek, improving the growth prospects in much of the Sector.

Crowders Mountain State Park is located in the Southwest Sector. This park, with its mountain ridges, hiking trails and rock climbing opportunities, has become a regional tourist attraction. It is perhaps Gaston County and Gastonia’s most important natural and scenic feature, and protection of the park and its surroundings will be a critical strategy for the Southwest Sector.

LAND USE

The Southwest Sector has the following land use ratios as shown in Figure 1.

Farmland and vacant land account for a majority of the acreage in the Southwest, about 58%. The farmland category is somewhat misleading, as it is based on the tax status of the property and not agricultural output.

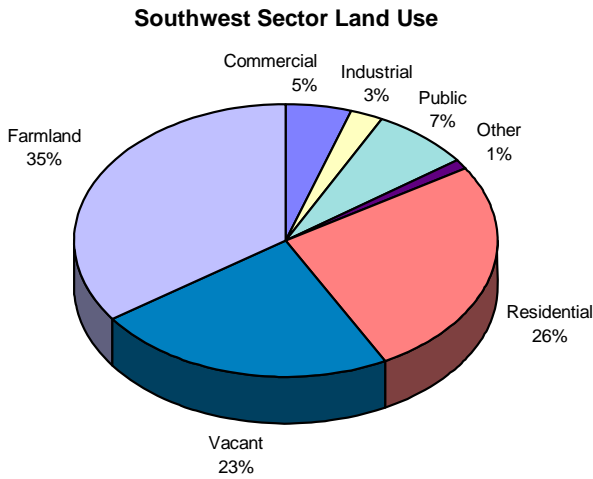


Figure 1

Residential land is the next largest land use category, with about 26% of the acreage. This is not surprising, since the Southwest Sector is the largest of the six sectors not only in area, but also in population. Residential land use is more concentrated, logically, in the northern and eastern portions of the Sector.

Public land use accounts for 7% of the acreage in the Southwest Sector, primarily due to the 700+ acres of Crowders Mountain State Park within it.

Commercial land use, 5% of the total, is concentrated on US 29/74, US 321 and, to a lesser extent, Linwood and Davis Park Roads.

Perhaps surprisingly, industrial land use is only 3% of the acreage in the Southwest Sector. This may be due, however, to the relatively small size of industrial parcels compared to the large area of the Southwest Sector.

TRANSPORTATION

The Southwest Sector has the following thoroughfares, as shown in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2
Southwest Sector Thoroughfares

Major		Minor	
North-South	East-West	North-South	East-West
US 321	US 29/74	Whitesides Rd	Davis Pk Rd.
Myrtle Sch./ Davis Pk Rd	Garrison Blvd		Linwood Rd
Lewis Rd	Hudson Blvd		Carson Rd
Chapel Grove (School) Rd	Linwood Rd		
Sparrow Springs Rd	Crowders Creek Rd		

Part of the old C & NW railroad crosses the sector near its eastern boundary. The C & NW, now a light-traffic branch of the Southern Railroad, serves primarily industrial customers in the 321 South corridor.

Several new or expanded thoroughfares are planned for the Southwest Sector. The US 321/74 bypass will cross the Southwest Sector, parallel to and west of Myrtle School-Davis Park Road. This four lane divided highway, still ten to thirty years in the future, will open up much of the Southwest Sector, providing an easy trip to Charlotte. Two important strategies are associated with the Bypass. The first is to determine the corridor and begin protecting the corridor, in cooperation with Gaston County. The second is a possible first section of the Bypass, from Hudson Blvd to US 29/74, that could be built prior to the rest of the road.

One of the links of Hudson Blvd is planned to run from the current terminus at Davis Park Road to an interchange with the proposed US 321/74 Bypass. Another new thoroughfare is the "Crowders Mountain Parkway," connecting I-85 with Chapel Grove Road. Also planned for the Southwest Sector is the Little Mountain Road Extension, which will link Lewis Road to US 321 at the present Little Mountain Road.

Two other thoroughfare improvements are contained in the Thoroughfare Plan. The first is a relocation of Linwood Road between East Drive and Myrtle School Road. The second is a short relocation of Chapel Grove School Road to connect directly to Chapel Grove Road.

POPULATION AND HOUSING TRENDS

The population of the Southwest Sector was approximately 21,500 in 1990. By 2010 the sector is projected to have modest population growth and a resident population of 23,000, a gain of about 7% between 1990 and 2010, as shown in Figure 3. Although the Sector has abundant vacant land and farmland, population growth is expected to be only moderate due to the following reasons: population loss in some of the older neighborhoods of the Sector, a soft housing market for new development, a lack of urban amenities, and a rural residential pattern of development that has already taken hold on most of the outer thoroughfares in the western part of the Sector. The City of Gastonia, through its Gastonia-West Citizens Committee for Progress, is taking steps to improve the competitive position of the Southwest Sector. Should these steps prove successful, the actual population growth could be higher.

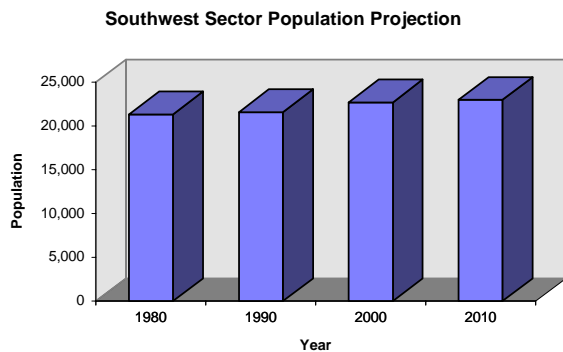


Figure 3

The Southwest Sector is currently has the largest population of the six sectors, with approximately 26% of the 2010 Planning Area population.

The Southwest Sector had an estimated 7,800 housing units in 1990, of which 80% were single-family, 11% multi-family and 9% mobile homes. Multi-family housing in the Sector is largely scattered among many small complexes of 20 units

or less, the majority of which are located east of Myrtle School Road and north of Hudson Blvd. The Sector also has two large publicly-assisted housing complexes, Camelot Apartments and Mountain View Apartments, both located near Hudson Boulevard.

Mobile homes in the Southwest Sector are mostly located outside the city limits of Gastonia.

Housing production has been relatively steady in the Southwest Sector since 1950. The percentage of housing built by decade is shown in Figure 4 below:

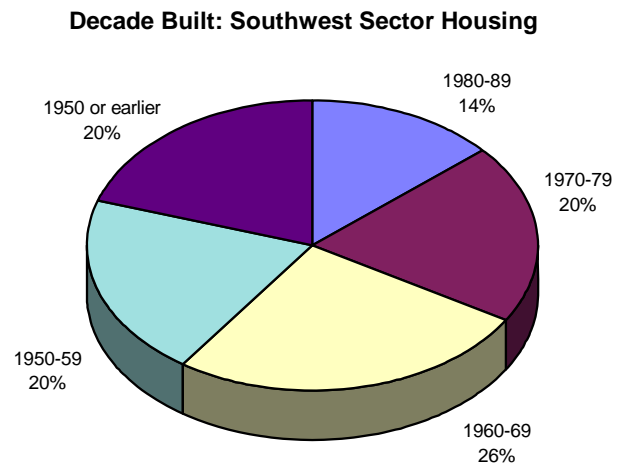


Figure 4

Each time period accounts for about 20% of the total housing, except for the 1980's (14%) and the 1960's (26%).

EMPLOYMENT

Workplaces in the Southwest Sector employed approximately 8,160 people in 1989. Manufacturing employs a majority of people in Southwest Sector workplaces, as shown in Figure 5.

Manufacturing employment in the Southwest Sector is concentrated in the US 321 South corridor, which is home to some of Gastonia's largest manufacturing employers, including Threads USA, A.B. Carter, Rauch Industries and Homelite Textron.

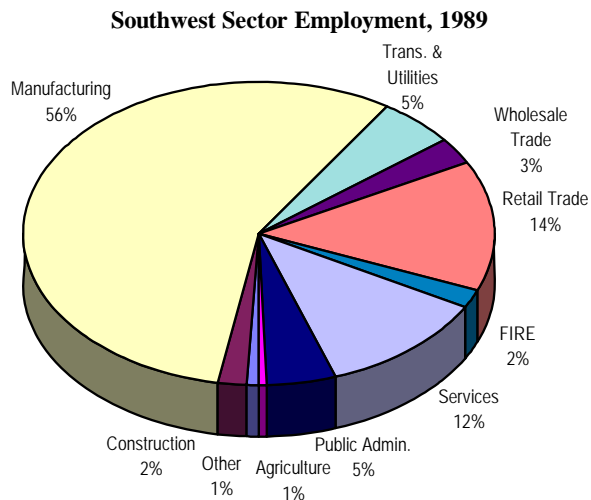


Figure 5

The next largest employment category is retail trade, with approximately 14% of the employment in the Sector. Retailing is located along Franklin Blvd with a concentration at Dixie Village, and along US 321, Linwood Road and Davis Park Road.

Service employment is the only other employment category with more than 10%. Services are located in the commercial corridors of the Sector, such as Franklin Blvd. and US 321.

A. ISSUES

A-1. Despite an abundance of land and the best scenery in the area, the Southwest Sector is lagging in population growth behind the Northeast, East and Southeast Sectors.

A-2. Crowders Mountain State Park is an outstanding natural asset and tourist attraction, and it should have compatible development in its vicinity.

A-3. The Southwest Sector has some attractive and viable neighborhoods, but housing values in these neighborhoods have not kept up with similar neighborhoods in the East and Southeast Sectors.

A-4. Housing deterioration is a concern in the older neighborhoods of the Southwest Sector.

A-5. Four of Gastonia's twenty highest crime areas are located in the Southwest Sector.

A-6. The Franklin Blvd. commercial corridor is suffering from commercial vacancies, under-use of buildings, general urban clutter and a lack of buffering between pedestrians and traffic.

A-7. The Southwest Sector has had a decline in shopping and retail outlets, requiring a trip to the east side for all but groceries and the most basic goods and services.

A-8. The Southwest Sector has a lack of primary care health services, such as family physicians and dentists.

A-9. Many of the older Southwest Sector neighborhoods are "aging out," with fewer families and children, and a stable or declining population.

A-10. The housing stock in the Southwest Sector is aging, but it is also an important source of quality affordable housing, and it should be conserved.

A-11. With public commitment, new investment, and enhancement of the assets of the area, the competitive position of the Southwest Sector can be enhanced.

A-12. Real estate markets apparently reflect a perception of Southwest Sector Schools as less desirable than schools in the East and Southeast Sectors.

B. FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIES

B-1. Include recruitment of retailers to new or under-used sites as part of our economic development efforts.

B-2. Develop a retail/office marketing package, providing information necessary for promoting new retail and office development.

B-3. Study the preservation and adaptive re-use of the historic Firestone Mill.

B-4. Support the redrawing of school attendance zones to adjust the socio-economic balance in Southwest Sector schools and better reflect the overall student population.

B-5. Initiate systematic code enforcement on a rotating basis for endangered neighborhoods, with each neighborhood to be reviewed at least once every five years.

B-6. Establish neighborhood conservation strategies for stable Southwest Sector neighborhoods which may become threatened in the future.

B-7. Evaluate older neighborhoods for historic designation, upon request of neighborhood residents.

B-8. Work with property owners and the NCDOT to screen salvage yards along US 29/74.

B-9. Determine the corridor of the proposed US 321/74 Bypass, and use all available tools, in cooperation with Gaston County, to protect the right-of-way.

B-10. Work with banks, home builders and the Board of Realtors to improve the marketing of Southwest Sector neighborhoods and businesses.

B-11. Pursue an annexation strategy focused on the Southwest Sector to bring City services

to some of the unincorporated parts of the Sector.

B-12. Construct the following road improvements:

Project	Construction
Efird St.	New two-lane road
Linwood & Myrtle Sch. Rd.	Widen all 4 approaches

B-13. Complete the following water main construction projects:

Line/Location	Size"	Length'
1. Edgefield Ave.	12	500
2. Franklin fr. Garrison to Myrtle Sch. Rd/Myrtle Sch. Rd. to Hudson/ Hudson to Lynhaven	12	12,500
3. Vance St.(Garrison-Hooper)	8	1,800
4. Weldon	8	1,400
5. Vance fr. Garrison to W. 2nd/W. 2nd to Firestone/ Firestone St. & Blvd./to easement N. of Rankin	12	4,500
6. Franklin Blvd, Webb-Linwood	12	500

B-14. Develop a plan for trails and greenways.

B-15. Support the establishment of primary health care practices on the west side.



Crowders Mountain as seen from Camp Rotary Road.

C. LONG-RANGE STRATEGIES

- C-1.** Extend Hudson Boulevard to the alignment of the proposed US 321/74 Bypass.
- C-2.** Consider building a portion of the US 321/74 Bypass, from Hudson Blvd. to US 29/74.
- C-3.** Determine and protect the corridors of the proposed roads shown on the Thoroughfare Plan.
- C-4.** As the City annexes land along the western US 29/74 corridor, consider relocating Fire Station #3 if it will improve response time and fire protection in the Sector.
- C-5.** Construct the following wastewater treatment improvements:
- **Phase II:**

Crowders Creek Outfall	17,700'	30"
Crowders Creek Outfall	12,400'	18"
Crowders Creek Outfall	16,700'	15"
 - **Phase III:**

Crowders Creek Outfall	23,900'	18"
Crowders Creek Outfall	18,800'	15"
- C-6.** Support the establishment of a full-service branch library on the west side of Gastonia.
- C-7.** Begin stream maintenance on Blackwood Creek, from Phillips park to 1,300' north of Linwood Road, if a funding source can be identified.
- C-8.** Expand the Crowders Creek wastewater treatment plant from 6 to 9 million gallons per day.
- C-9.** Improve and develop Davis Park as a functional recreational park.

D. LAND USE STRATEGIES

- D-1.** Support the development of a first-quality business/industrial park in the vicinity of the proposed US 321/74 Bypass and West Franklin Blvd.
- D-2.** Evaluate the zoning of established single-family neighborhoods.
- D-3.** Develop a corridor plan and zoning overlay district for Linwood Road.
- D-4.** Develop corridor plans for US 321 and Franklin Blvd, with emphasis on public sector/private business cooperation.
- D-5.** Conserve residential land use on US 321 from Tenth Avenue to Carolina Avenue.
- D-6.** Work toward the eventual removal or conversion to indoor operations of salvage yards along West Franklin Blvd.
- D-7.** Use development incentives to encourage new single-family residential development on the west side. Targeting of the incentives can be accomplished by providing additional incentives for the west side only.
- D-8.** Use a targeted, site-specific enhancement strategy to create high-potential nodes of growth in the Southwest Sector. This “priming of the pump” could spark further residential growth in its vicinity.
- D-9.** Protect established residential neighborhoods from additional commercial encroachment.
- D-10.** Avoid the placement of additional assisted family housing projects in the Southwest Sector.

SOUTHWEST SECTOR STRATEGY MAP

The Strategy Map on the next page is a graphical representation of some of the strategies—short-term, long-term, and land use—in this plan. The map is generalized, showing *approximate* locations for the various strategies.

Southwest Sector Strategy

Figure 6

