



Strip commercial development is prevalent in the SouthSide, including along S. 17th (above) and Market (below) streets.



### Existing Conditions

The SouthSide study area is located south of the downtown core, within the 1945 corporate limits. The area is generally bound by the Cape Fear River to the west, S.17<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, Market Street to the north, and Greenfield Park and Gardens to the south. The area includes the Dry Pond, The Bottom, and Lake Forest neighborhoods.

### **Land Use & Zoning**

The majority of the SouthSide area was laid out in a traditional grid street pattern and in most areas, the grid is still in tact. As development grew further south from the downtown core of the city, a more suburban development pattern emerged.

There are four Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) developments in the SouthSide area, including Robert S. Jervay Place, Houston Moore, Hillcrest, and the former Nesbitt Court. With the exception of Lake Forest co-op and William Hooper apartments, the remaining residential areas in the SouthSide are zoned R-3 and R-5, and contain primarily single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, and quadraplexes. The northwest corner of the study area is located within the boundaries of the locally designated Theater Historic District or the Residential Historic District.

The SouthSide contains many commercial areas, which largely lie along the more heavily traveled corridors. Market Street, Castle Street, and portions of Dawson

Street contain commercial uses such as offices, churches, schools, restaurants, and shops. Strip commercial development and auto repair shops can be found further east along these corridors. While Wooster Street is a heavily traveled corridor, the uses along the street are primarily residential. A corridor overlay area exists along Dawson and Wooster streets between S. Front and S. 9th streets. The corridor overlay regulates the use and development of nonresidential buildings along these roadways in addition to the regulations of the zoning district of the properties. The purpose of the corridor overlay is to recognize the roads as entryways into the city and respect their cultural and historic contribution to the city. The majority of the development along S. 16th and S. 17th streets is commercial, with the exception of the northern portion, which is residential and located within the Westbrook-Ardmore National Register Historic District. Scattered throughout the SouthSide are grandfathered commercial uses within residential neighborhoods, such as corner stores, as well as seven parks and five schools. For a detailed account of land use and zoning in the study area, see appendices A and B.

The FLUP identifies several commercial areas within the SouthSide study area as *Tier 2 Redevelopment Areas*. These areas include properties along Castle, Dawson, and Greenfield streets as well as the “Gateway” site south of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. These properties typically have little to no landscaping, neglected buildings and facades, unattractive signage including excessive concentrations of billboards, and, in some cases, do not meet current

zoning regulations. The planning process for the SouthSide Plan provided a chance to take a closer look at these sites as well as others within the SouthSide study area that are ripe for redevelopment. Redevelopment opportunities exist on a large scale, such as the Nesbitt Court site, and on a smaller scale, such as vacant lots scattered throughout the study area. (See appendix D—*Redevelopment Opportunities*).

### Transportation Network

Located within and around the SouthSide are number of roadways maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). These roadways include Market Street (US 17 Business), S. Front Street (US 421 Truck), S. 3rd Street (US 421), Dawson and Wooster streets (US 76), and S. 16th and S. 17th streets. While these roadways are an essential part of the regional transportation system and are part of the established grid network, the level of traffic can disrupt the largely residential nature of the area. These roads are often seen by residents as a detriment to the communities through which they run.

Due in part to the substantial number of major roadways in the SouthSide, the density of the residential neighborhoods, and the area's proximity to the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority's (WAVE Transit) downtown transit station, six of WAVE Transit's eleven bus routes run through the study area. Issues including the relocation of bus stops and wait times have arisen since WAVE Transit restructured its bus routes in 2008; however, new route alternatives are being explored.

The SouthSide also includes portions of two important transportation routes that hold state and national significance: the Cape Fear Historic Byway and the East Coast Greenway. The Cape Fear Historic Byway, North Carolina's first urban scenic byway, runs along S. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Willard Street, and around Greenfield Park and Gardens. A portion of the East Coast Greenway runs along S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and around Greenfield Park and Gardens. Still under development, the East Coast Greenway is anticipated to be the nation's first long-distance urban trail, providing a 3,000-mile non-motorized connection from Maine to Florida. Both of these important designations serve as a mark of distinction for the city and the SouthSide.

Although the sidewalk network in the SouthSide is more substantial than other parts in the city, areas remain where sidewalks are missing or are in need of repair. Moving away from the downtown core, these gaps become more frequent. In addition to the incomplete sidewalk network, the area lacks a fully-functional pedestrian system, as relatively few intersections in the area have marked crosswalks or pedestrian signals.



Six WAVE Transit bus routes run through the SouthSide area.



Pedestrians walk along S. 5th Street where no sidewalk exists.