

Grace Neighborhood - Plan on a Page

- 1 Neighborhood Description - include items such as your neighborhood name, general character, relative location and boundaries

Grace Neighborhood – Mainly homes built between 1920 – 1940, primarily single family residential with some duplexes and apartments. Generally a fairly quiet, walkable neighborhood in North Asheville bisected by the Merrimon Avenue commercial properties and transit corridor and, Gracelyn Road, a major cut-through from, Kimberly/Merrimon, bordered on the north by Beaverdam Road, and on the east by Kimberly.

The approximate boundaries currently are:

North – Beaverdam; East of Merrimon: Gracelyn, Clairmont, Temple; West of Merrimon: Larchmont, Hy Vu

South – West of Merrimon, Maney Ave; East of Merrimon, Edgewood

East – Kimberly;

North – Beaverdam; East of Merrimon: Gracelyn, Clairmont, Temple; West of Merrimon: Larchmont, Hy Vu

West – Hy Vu, Stillwell, Maney

Map on Nextdoor website are the boundaries we are using to define Grace

- 2 Neighborhood History - include a brief history, describing when and how your neighborhood was developed, including the factors that have shaped it over time.

Grace was its own community and was “out in the country” when originally developed. Grace High School built 1914-15 was the center of civic pride often winning the county football and basketball championships. Grace was the community at the end of the street car tracks.

From “Grace: A Community That Got Absorbed by an Avenue”

<https://packlibraryncroom.wordpress.com/2016/01/15/grace-a-community-that-got-absorbed-by-an-avenue/> :

“As far as when the community came to be called Grace and why, the post office at Grace was established November 9, 1889 and Charles B. Way was the postmaster— being the earliest found date for the name, as well as proof that the community was not named for the first postmaster, as some communities were. A good guess would be that the community was named after the early mission there, Grace Mission, established by Trinity Episcopal, which became Grace Episcopal Church, but the church’s history says that the mission “began in 1867

with the construction of a log chapel known as Beaverdam Mission. By the 1880s, the mission had taken on the name of the little community in which it was located, Grace.” A history of the church published in 1967, and quoting a history written by Miss Fannie Patton, says that “it is around 1889 that the name ‘Grace Mission’, or ‘Grace Chapel, comes to be used consistently, having replaced the earlier designation of ‘Beaver Dam Mission,’ Grace being the name of the steadily growing community in which the mission church was and is located.”

3 Neighborhood Vision - include the neighborhood's expectations and goals for what it will become over the next 10-20 years

- Preserve and recreate its history and identity with a culturally and economically diverse population
- Preserve and restore early 20th Century single family homes with small-scale, multi-family duplex homes and apartments interspersed as allowed within current zoning
- Sustain the mixture of commercial, residential, faith-based and public properties
- To the extent possible, provide incentives for a return to owner-occupied single-family homes
- Continue the development of neighborhood-based, locally-owned businesses;
- Increase public transit schedules and options including shuttles
- Recapture an identity that is not shaped or defined by the Merrimon corridor
- Provide transitional intermediate care housing so that aging residents can remain in the neighborhood
- Increase the availability of outdoor recreational opportunities, such as pocket parks, dog parks, greenways, and community gardens
- A suggestion to increase park space in the neighborhood without new land acquisition and with little cost, would be to expand Jones Park to the remaining grassy acreage bordered by Ottari and Lorraine. Picnic tables, benches and other ‘soft’ amenities could be added to encourage multi-generational use of the space, rather than just having a neighborhood playground for families with young children.
- Calm traffic and improve sidewalks along Gracelyn

4 Neighborhood Strengths - identify up to three things that you like about your neighborhood, including things that are working now and that you would not want to change

- Walkability, being able to walk on sidewalks to restaurants, grocery stores, banks, post office, etc.
- Population diversity

- Sense of community – we know our neighbors, we are a neighborhood where kids run and play. We look out for one another. We celebrate holidays together. High owner occupancy rates help drive this cohesiveness.
- 5 Neighborhood Challenges - identify up to three issues or challenges facing your neighborhood that community members feel need further study or attention.
- Too much density could destroy the character of our neighborhood. Many of us live on 50' wide lots with just a tiny greenspace in the backyard and our neighbor's backyards. There is a value to greenspace. Noise is an issue and increases with more density.
 - Make Merrimon Avenue and other bisecting streets more pedestrian and bike friendly. Encourage more mixed used development on commercial zoned parcels. We need a long term plan and implement steps to improve this part of our city and neighborhood.
 - Once a wholly owner-occupied neighborhood, many single family homes have been converted to long term rentals that predominantly house college students. This has created a more transient population whose investment in the community and its norms is limited, and often adds many additional people and vehicles to an area that is already congested.
- 6 Neighborhood Responsibility - based on your answer to item #5 above, identify the items for which the neighborhood is responsible or has influence over and can take care of itself, vs. items for which the City is responsible

We can work with the city to keep the existing zoning in our neighborhood and start advocating for elected officials, staff and the community to push for making changes to Merrimon Ave. and other bisecting streets. We can speak directly with tenants and landlords when there are problems, but also have the noise ordinance appeals board and city staff to call when we have ongoing issues and violations of the law.

- 7 Alignment with Council Goals - describe how the issues facing the neighborhood align with the goals identified in the City Council's Strategic Operating Plan

<http://www.ashevillenc.gov/Departments/CommunityRelations/StrategicOperatingPlan.aspx>

We check all the boxes here on the 2036 vision statement. We have and want to continue to have in our neighborhood:

- A diverse community
- A Well Planned and livable community – Lets not overdevelop, we like the character of our neighborhood and want to maintain historic structures. Our neighborhood is socioeconomically diverse with a wide range of housing options. We value and want to promote more pedestrian friendly development such as making Merrimon and other bisecting streets safer for pedestrians and bikes. We don't want large apartment buildings in single

- family residential and value the zoning rules in place today.
- A clean and healthy environment – We like our greenspace for gardens and kids to play and love our trees and vegetation that makes Asheville a “Tree City USA”. Developing much more than we are already will destroy what makes our neighborhood attractive.
- Affordable Housing – We have a diverse mix of housing options from single family homes, apartments, government subsidized apartments, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units. We have multiple generations of adult families living together in a single home.
- Transportation & Accessibility – We value walking, biking and having public transportation so close. We need to keep enhancing these options. This is central to why many of us chose to live here.
- Thriving Local Economy – We have many home based businesses and many small business owners with shops in town making our economy stronger.
- Connected and Engaged Community – We are as engaged as we want to be on local, state and national issues. Loosely organized, our neighborhood engages on issues we are concerned about.
- Smart City – We appreciate the city having a AAA bond rating, we want our tax dollars used wisely making zoning and public policy changes that do not undermine our city goals.

8 Alignment with *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* Goals (current comprehensive plan) - describe how the Plan on a Page corresponds to the major themes(such as affordable housing, land use, transportation, air and water quality and economic development) of the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* Comprehensive Plan. Refer to the Plan Management and implementation Matrix #1 of the 2025 Plan for more information

Historic Preservation – We want to keep the look and feel of our neighborhood buildings and community. We support the goal to: “Encourage neighborhood livability and protect property values through the restoration and rehabilitation of existing and future historic districts”

Our neighborhood goals do not align with the city stated density bonuses for infill development on residential zoned parcels. Granting doubled density to a developer to make building more profitable undermines the desire for greenspace and trees. Most of our neighborhood is RS-8 or RM-8 allowing 8 units per acre or 16 households now with the accessory dwelling unit rules. We do not need or want additional density increases in our residential zoned property

The current zoning allows all single family homes to essentially be duplexes. The zoning rules and incentives in place today provide lots of options for homeowners and developers to make money as landlords and create substantially more housing. The new Accessory Dwelling Unit rules passed in 2015 may actually allow structures to be built that are too large and will seem out of scale with our existing homes. Our desire for greenspace may be overshadowed by the city stated goals of creating more housing options and affordable housing. We want to promote more housing options, but not at the expense of preserving historic character of our neighborhood which is already densely built and can be built quite a bit more under the existing

rules.

The Grace Neighborhood agrees with and supports the city stated goal of:

“Working with other City departments, develop plans and policies for the enhancement and strengthening of existing neighborhoods. These plans and policies should address infrastructure improvements, amenities (parks, streetlights, landscaping, etc.), crime prevention, litter control, and code enforcement, as well as seeking ways to protect these neighborhoods from inappropriate non-residential encroachment.”

We would like to work with the city to utilize “Strategy 20” under land use and transportation. “Identify infill lots suitable for community gardens and similar open space uses.” The City owns the small piece of undeveloped property surrounding the #7 fire station, which could be cleared for hiking trails, a small park or a dog park. The program utilizing goats would be an inexpensive and environmentally-friendly way to begin the clearance process in the parcel that borders the storm water drain field.

Grace Neighborhood is near and bisected by Merrimon and Gracelyn and bordered by Edgewood, Kimberly, and Beaverdam. We understand the goal of promoting more density on the traffic corridors such as Merrimon, Beaverdam, and Kimberly, but as a neighborhood of primarily single family homes do not want to be destroyed as part of the “Missing Middle” plan. Goal IV “The City should revise its development standards for primary corridors to ensure that the corridors are developed in an urban manner.” We support goal IV on commercially zoned parcels –NOT RESIDENTIAL ZONED PARCELS.

We are in support of the city plan to bury utility lines when possible and to create a long range plan for getting this goal accomplished.