
Wilshire Park Community

Asheville, NC

Plan on a Page

Developed by the Wilshire Park Community Club

July 2016

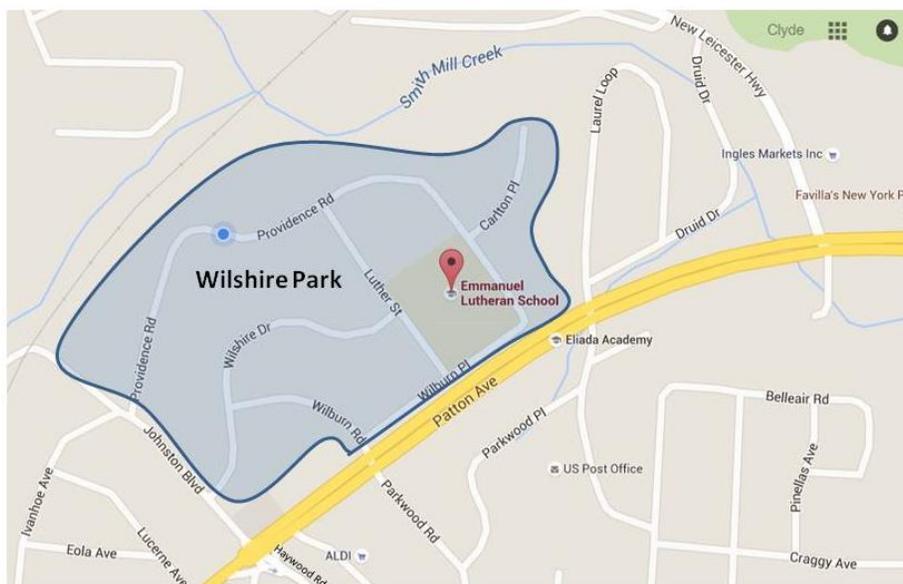
1. Wilshire Park Community Description

Wilshire Park is a residential community that was developed during the 1950s and 1960s in West Asheville. The community is adjacent to Patton Avenue and Johnston Boulevard, near Haywood Road and other connecting streets. There are approximately 120 households with around 75 percent of the residents owning their homes. Most of the homes are single-family dwellings and a few are duplexes. The typical dwelling size is 1000 to 1500 square feet. Wilshire Park is zoned RS-8 (Residential Single-Family High Density District) but covenant restrictions also apply. Most homes in Wilshire Park are at least 50 years old and are typically well maintained.

The center point of Wilshire Park is Emmanuel Lutheran Church and School. The church and residential neighbors cooperate in many ways to make Wilshire Park a desirable community.

Many Residents have lived in Wilshire Park for more than ten years, with some in the community since the 1960s. The community therefore has a measure of stability and commitment to maintaining our quality of life here. The Wilshire Park Community Club (WPCC) provides a framework for all residents to communicate with each other, organize neighborhood activities, and interface with city and county governments.

Approximately 248 registered voters live in Wilshire Park, which is located in Precinct 16.2 (West Asheville Library).



Wilshire Park Boundaries

2. History of Wilshire Park

In 1954 thirteen members of First Lutheran Church of Asheville (now Emmanuel Lutheran Church) formed Wilshire Park Inc. and purchased 64 acres in West Asheville, reserving 9 acres for building their church. They sold lots, which developed into Wilshire Park. In 1962 the home owners organized into The Wilshire Park Community Club and by January 1963 adopted by-laws and a constitution. This devoted group of neighbors, as expressed in Article II of their constitution, established these purposes:

- 1) “to promote improvements and cooperate on projects which will make our community a more desirable place in which to live.
- 2) to promote a community spirit which will lend to the growth of our community.
- 3) to give unselfish service to our neighbors in time of need.
- 4) to be an open forum for discussion of problems relating to the general welfare of the community.”

In the early years WPCC met monthly. In 1992, the group became a non-profit organization. We continue to meet regularly (at least twice yearly) and have elected officers and street representatives. We have a close relationship with Emmanuel Lutheran Church and School. As we in Asheville are proud of John Nolan’s early 20th century city plan, so we in Wilshire Park Community Club take pride in our 50+ year heritage and documents. We are determined to continue our founders’ vision to “promote improvements,” “cooperate on projects,” “promote a community spirit,” “give unselfish service” and “be an open forum ...relating to the...welfare of the community.”

Sources- Wilshire Park’s extensive records, Emmanuel Lutheran’s 110th anniversary bulletin, 2014

3. Vision for Wilshire Park for the next 10-20 years

- A safe park atmosphere for residents of all ages from the children who live or attend school here, up through our valued retirees and elders
 - With abundant green spaces including our yards, gardens, buffers on our perimeters, and Emmanuel Lutheran Churches' lovely greenway
 - With calm streets used for multimodal transportation, including motorists, pedestrians and cyclists
- Park residents (renters and owners) who are committed and connected to one another
- Park neighbors who are committed to the well-being, maintenance, and value of their property

50,000 foot fly-over / T-shirt version of Vision:

- Safe park atmosphere
- Committed, connected neighbors

4. Wilshire Park Strengths

I. Our people assets

a. Community Club. The Wilshire Park Community Club (WPCC) was established by the original homebuilders and owners in 1963 and continues to function as a driving force for the well being of our neighborhood.

1. The WPCC is Connected and inclusive

- i. All residents and home -owners invited to group meal and meeting twice each year
- ii. System of street representatives and paper newsletter delivery system (minimum four times each year)
- iii. Electronically connected
 1. Newsletters and announcements are emailed
 2. NextDoor.Com is used by neighbors and we have an Electronic Secretary who monitors activity on the site.
- iv. Neighborhood Watch- Along with support of a Community Resource Officer, we participate and have periodic refreshers to keep motivated.
- v. Alert network. We have a contact plan that we are in the process of updating and improving. Neighbors choose their preferred method to be alerted in emergency situation and we have contact people to spread an Alert message quickly.

2. We are Committed to service

- i. Adopt-A-Street. Our faithful neighbors have cleaned up our streets six times yearly for many years.
- ii. Serving as Street Representatives. Currently eleven neighbors deliver our announcements and newsletters as well as contact neighbors to keep our database updated yearly
- iii. Serving our fellow neighbors by maintaining our homes and yards. Most properties are well maintained and pleasant for neighbors to enjoy living near.

3. We are a diverse, skilled neighborhood. Wilshire Park's residents are varied in age, background, perspective, family structure and skilled in many fields including landscaping, education, music, computer skills, and editing. This varied and rich skill pool is an untapped wealth we plan to investigate and hopefully share with one another. We plan to survey and publish the skills, knowledge and gifts our neighbors would be willing to contribute to our Wilshire Park family.

II. Physical Assets

a. Buffers and Green space

1. Because Wilshire Park is situated between Patton Avenue (the major East West Corridor in Asheville), Leicester Highway, and Johnston Boulevard, and across the street from the busy Haywood Road Corridor, our community's existing barriers provide a crucial buffer between the

neighborhood and these heavily trafficked areas. Green space is vital for maintaining a high quality of life in a community situated between such heavily traveled corridors.

2. Wooded area between Providence Road and northern border that helps dampen the sounds from busy Leicester Highway and the train, as well as sounds from commercial storage units where bands practice. The dead end of Luther Street, where the hill is quite steep, also provides more green space, as does the wooded lot at the end of steep Carlton Place.
 3. Steep hill and trees on the southern border section (between Wilburn Place and Patton Avenue) help reduce the noise from the Patton corridor.
- b. Streets that are currently calm enough traffic-wise for walking and biking. The rolling hills are mostly easy walks, although Carlton Place, Providence Road, and Luther Street provide opportunity for challenge.
 - c. Emmanuel Lutheran Church and School generously share their greenway and playground after their school hours. Their hospitality is a big factor in WPCC's ability to have regularly scheduled community gatherings for more than 50 years.

5. Weaknesses/Challenges

- I. Traffic: Our biggest challenge is that Wilshire Park is bordered by the busiest East-West Corridor in Asheville.
 - a. Volume - Our streets must accommodate 120 households with approximately 275 residents as well as our Emmanuel Lutheran Church and School neighbors, with an average Sunday attendance of 220 people and their Monday through Friday school attendance of 245 students and 40 staff. These are our neighbors and we bought homes and moved in to Wilshire Park fully knowing and expecting this amount of traffic. The traffic that has been unexpected is from being used as a cut-through from Johnston Boulevard via Wilshire Drive and Wilburn Road to our main entrance and via Providence Road to Luther Street. This strains our neighborhood streets, especially during the early morning hours when the Emmanuel students are arriving, and our own neighbors are leaving the neighborhood. Any additional opening of streets into our already very open and connected Park would decrease the safety of our drivers, walkers, and bikers.
 - b. Noise - The recent resurgence of the weekend Patton “cruisers” is bothering neighbors, especially those near our entrance at the intersection of Wilburn Road and Patton Avenue across from Sonic and Aldi. Some of these are new families who bought their homes during the past few years when this old problem had been resolved. We are not only very disappointed in the return of Patton cruising but also at its extension farther from its previous turning point at Louisiana Avenue to current turning at the Sonic area directly across from our main entrance. The loud (possibly altered) mufflers may contribute to this nuisance as well as the very late hours that cruising occurs (as late as 3 am some weekends, per neighbor reports.) Although many neighbors’ sleep is affected, those with small children have been the most vocal in their frustration.
- II. Safety from Crime - As businesses near main roads have greater issues with crime, so it follows that neighborhoods do as well.* Neighborhoods with many entrances and exits (as we have) are even at greater risk.* With our three easy motor entrances and exits, an additional walking entrance behind Urgent Care, and our border with the railroad (which brings even more folks “camping” along our northern border), we are very open. Sadly, not all who take advantage of our many entrances have good motives. We have already been hit hard this year in the Providence Road and Luther Street area. We have had two break-ins when the Asheville Police Department was called (January 29 and April 5), many vehicle thefts in June which have been reported, including a back of the truck theft, a probable attempt that was thwarted when neighbors stepped outside, and a recent unreported garage break-in. The possibility of further openings that would make us even more vulnerable to crime seems very threatening and would not improve our beloved Wilshire Park’s safety.

*Source-POLICING PROBLEM PLACES: Crime Hot Spots and Effective Prevention.(pp.83-84) Authors-Anthony Allan Braga and David Weisband-Oxford University Press, Inc. Copyright 2010.

III. Growth of our community's commitment to working together to achieve our vision for Wilshire Park's future.

a. Community connection and safety.

Multiple responsibilities and the pace of life in 2016 make finding time for neighbors more challenging than when WPCC was founded in 1963. Although all residents (owners and renters) are invited to participate in our community club, fewer than a quarter of our residents attend our scheduled meetings. Yet the more engaged and tightly knit our neighbors become, the safer and more content we will be.

b. Keeping our property valuable and desirable.

Because most of our homes are more than 50 years old, they may require major replacements and more upkeep expense than newer neighborhoods. Further challenges are that neighbors have different opinions and tastes in what makes a lovely yard, where to park and when to put out and return garbage and recycle bins. Some landlords who don't live in Wilshire Park are not attuned to the condition of their property. Also as our neighbors age, the ability to care for their property may become limited, and although our deeds have covenant restrictions not all neighbors are aware of and honoring these.

6. Neighborhood Responsibility vs. City Responsibility

It is our neighborhood’s responsibility to solve our problems ourselves, if possible. For challenges that are beyond our own scope of influence or ability, we need to communicate these issues clearly to the City through our Neighborhood Coordinator, who will forward them to the appropriate department We must also contact any private entity who is negatively impacting Wilshire Park (for example in noise, traffic issues) In matters of safety and crime we need to contact our APD Community Resource Officer for non emergency issues.

It is the City of Asheville’s responsibility, through the department contacted, to respond to the concerns that we communicate to them. It is also the City’s duty to inform us about and seek our input in all Council decisions or other changes that could impact safety and quality of life in Wilshire Park.

A.Our Challenges	Who Responsible / Specify Actions		
	City	Wilshire Park	Others
I. Traffic			
A. Volume	Transportation Dept.: Open no new streets into WP	WP:Find ways to promote Multi-modal transportation (walking, biking)	
B. Noise	APD: Enforce noise ordinances	WP: Contact APD when problem occurs. Contact private businesses (e.g. Aldi, Sonic,Storage Co.) to enlist help	Private businesses should respond to WPCC’s concerns
II. Crime and Safety			
A. Criminal Activity	APD: Continue support of WP with quick response to calls, CRO continue attending meetings, training in Community Watch, and making contact available via phone, text and email	WP: Continue including CRO at meetings Improve our Community Watch Program and Alert network Continue contacting APD to report any crimes	
B. Traffic Safety	Transportation Dept.: Open no new streets into WP	WP: Remain aware of proposed city street plans and communicate with city government.	

III. Growth of our community’s commitment to working together to achieve our vision for Wilshire Park’s future

This responsibility lies with our neighborhood. The Wilshire Park Community Club (WPCC) provides a framework for solving these problems in a collaborative way. All residents and property owners of Wilshire Park are members and can fully participate in club activities and elect club officers. The WPCC is responsible for implementing actions for improvement.

WPCC is to make the Club more vital to our neighbors by:

- 1) Reviewing and proposing amendments so that our 1963 Constitution and By-Laws reflect life in 21st century
- 2) Increasing meeting frequency from 2 to 4 times/year
 - i. Social meetings that are family welcoming, picnics, soccer and other games
 - ii. Business meetings with crucial topics/activities viewed as valuable to our neighbors
- 3) Improving our Neighborhood Alert Communication plan and keeping contact information current.
- 4) Helping those who are technology challenged get connected electronically.
- 5) Seeking to attract varied ages and interests into club attendance, planning, and leadership
- 6) Continuing good communication and relationship with our generous Emmanuel Lutheran neighbors to keep our invitation open to meet at their fellowship hall

WPCC is to address property related challenges by:

- 1) Surveying our neighbors to identify those with time, skills, gifts that they are willing to share to improve Wilshire Park neighbors' properties (possible ideas- landscape, yard suggestions, garden ideas, simple repairs, recommendations of trusted home improvement contact names).
- 2) Recognizing and encouraging neighbors who are excelling in upkeep, serving thru Adopt a Street, serving through our club structure as street representatives and other needed leadership jobs.
- 3) Surveying our neighborhood regularly. When Adopt-a Street neighbors clean up (6X year), they can note any problems with property decline, and our Club can follow up with a call, email, or letter. We are currently in the process of getting contact info for all owners who don't live in Wilshire Park to add to our data base of all residents and their preferred contact info.
- 4) Investigating the implications of our covenant restrictions.
- 5) Being good stewards of the Emmanuel Lutheran Greenway and playground by cleaning up behind ourselves and our pets so our use of this neighborhood value-enhancing feature can continue.

7. Alignment with Asheville City Council's 2036 VISION

"We pride ourselves on building and growing partnerships-with.....neighborhood associations... to achieve our vision. If you live, work, or play here, you want to be involved and you have a voice.... Neighborhood engagement enables residents to express thoughts, visions, and concrete plans... When you live in Asheville, you belong and are valued." Excerpted from Asheville City Council's 2036 Vision

The city council has expressed their desire to partner with us and hear the voice of our neighborhood and we have replied with our Plan on a Page.

As our city council visualizes growth in eight particular areas for the next 20 years, so we in Wilshire Park strive to grow in these areas as well and will borrow from the verbiage in the City Council's 2036 Vision to summarize how our goals for 2036 and beyond line up with Asheville's.

In the previous pages of our Plan on a Page, we have shown that Wilshire Park, too, is committed to being a great place to live. We care about our neighbors, and invest our time, work, and resources in our community. We, too, celebrate our natural resources and our cultural heritage. Wilshire Park is for everyone. We are an inclusive community where every neighbor whatever age, race, background, religion, etc. is invited and welcomed. In Wilshire Park we seek to be well -planned and livable with resident- led planning, and our Plan on a Page has been a tool to facilitate that engagement. We plan to keep our limited buffers, green spaces, and forest spaces intact without further roads cutting into them. We plan to keep our neighborhood safe for walking and biking and safe for driving for our church, school and resident neighbors. We are a neighborhood with homes desirable for young families through retirees. Our proximity to the restaurants, shops, churches, post office and banks around Haywood Road makes our neighborhood even more desirable. We have economically priced natural gas available and we are close to the city bus line, which increases our accessibility and transportation choices. We are blessed to be partners with our largest neighbor, Emmanuel Lutheran Church and School, which is not only our grandfather but also a continuing benefactor. We also appreciate the partnerships we have with our city through our excellent Neighborhood Coordinator, Marsha Stickford, and our outstanding Asheville Police Department Community Resource Officer, Kevin Skonieczny.

APPENDIX A. How did we get the crucial information for our Plan on a Page?

A group of 9-10 Wilshire Park neighbors and two Emmanuel Lutheran Church representatives met together and listed our Neighborhood Strengths, Challenges/Problems, Responsibility to Solve the Challenges. We worked over a few weeks at three meetings. Some of the neighbors studied the city's goals as expressed in the annual city council goals and the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. A neighbor attended the March CAN meeting where the Plan was the major topic for two city planners. The chairman of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee and Malvern Hills' lead person on their plan met with us and gave us valuable ideas.

After putting our ideas for the Strengths and Challenges on paper, we created a survey that was given to all residents either by paper survey or a link to Survey Monkey. One neighbor took the lead in putting the survey on Survey Monkey as well as entering the paper respondents' data. Our 11 street reps distributed and collected the paper surveys. We received 60 returned surveys, or over 50% participation. When you factor a few vacant homes in Wilshire Park, we think our neighbors' interest, demonstrated in high percentage of response, is remarkable.

The results we found confirmed that our identified strengths and challenges are consistent with those of our fellow neighbors:

Strengths:

The people assets that we identified were agreed upon or agreed upon with further comments by 98.08% of respondents.

The physical assets that we identified were agreed upon or agreed upon with further comments by 96.16% of respondents.

Challenges/Problems:

The challenges of 1) traffic (including safety issues), and 2) for our neighborhood commitment to grow were agreed upon or agreed upon with further comments by 98.01% of respondents.

This large number of respondents and their overwhelming agreement with our assessment of our neighborhood's Strengths and Challenges give us confidence to speak for the Wilshire Park community in our Plan on a Page.

APPENDIX B. Summary

The residents of Wilshire Park and members of Wilshire Park Community Club were asked to submit a Plan on a Page. We appreciate the opportunity to give our input to the decision makers of Asheville, our city council and city employees, planners and others whose choices and plans impact our neighborhood, our homes and our quality of life.

We believe that our voice as expressed in these brief pages will be helpful as Asheville plans for the next 20 years. We trust that our input will always be sought, considered and weighed heavily in all decisions that impact Wilshire Park.

The Wilshire Park Community Club