

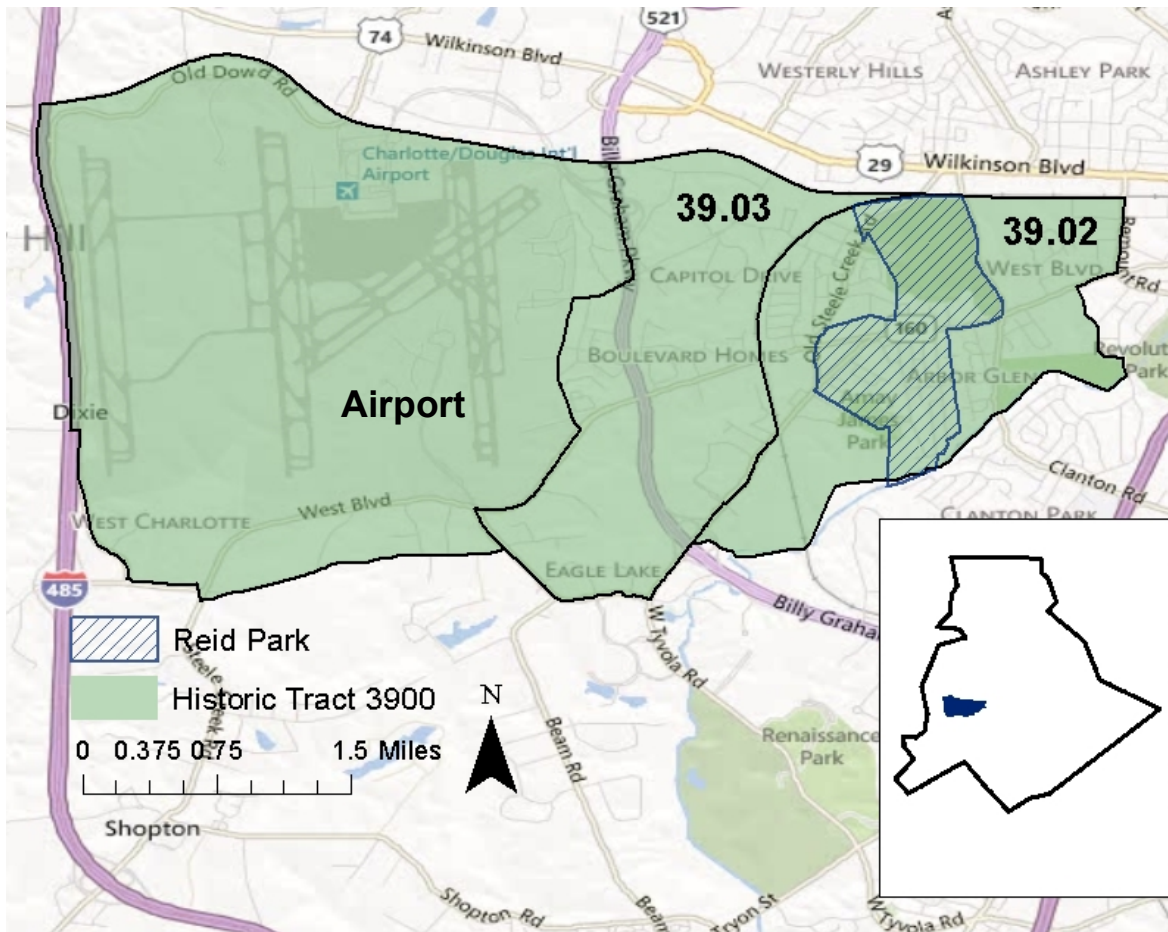
## 6.2. SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The 1976 Planning Commissions' report on Charlotte's neighborhoods was resourceful at its time of implementation, which displayed trends of neighborhoods between 1960 – 1970, but organized neighborhoods by census tracts, which is not realistic for all neighborhoods, since census boundaries and neighborhood boundaries differentiate. Reid Park was originally nestled in tract 3900, but since rapid growth and massive expansion of the airport, the tract was subdivided and Reid Park is now in tract 39.02. See Figure 6.2.1 for a map of the neighborhood boundary within census tract 39.02. The 1976 Planning Commissions' report describes census tract 3900 as a rare mixture of uses that at many times are not compatible between 1960 – 1970. The ever expanding airport consumes a third of the tract, and the homes to the south of the airport in 1970 were removed to accommodate the construction of a new runway at the time. Several massive public and low income housing projects were developed which caused social problems in the tract (“Neighborhoods in Charlotte” 1976). During the 1960s, population increased by 47.2 percent, however, the white population decreased by 8.4 percent and the African American population increased by 50.2 percent. The removal of predominantly white homes by the airport, coupled with the white flight led to the higher percentage of African Americans during the time period (“Neighborhoods in Charlotte” 1976).

The report ranks the socioeconomic ranking as medium-low but also notes that tract 3900 changing rapidly, which was affecting the socioeconomic and physical ranking. They note that the effects of the new runway and airport terminal on adjacent land uses by 1980 would be of tremendous magnitude on the western portion of the tract. Other forces such as urban renewal and public housing would affect the development of the eastern portion of the

tract (“Neighborhoods in Charlotte” 1976). Then and now, the projections proved to be current for the tract’s fate, resulting in a large majority of the land in tract 3900 is zoned for industrial uses. Tables 6.2.1. – 6.2.5. shows the socioeconomic characteristics of tract 3900 in comparison with Mecklenburg County.

**FIGURE 6.2.1. TRACTS AND NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY, REID PARK**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Cartography by: Author

As population grew, tract 3900 split into tracts 39.01 and 39.02. Tract 39.01 encompassed primarily the airport and other industrial and commercial land uses. Tract 39.02 started housing more and more of Charlotte’s public housing and low income communities. Boulevard Homes and Dalton Village were the worst of the public housing

projects that had horrible living conditions and high rates of crime in the tract. Dalton Village directly bordered Reid Park and Boulevard Homes was west of Reid Park towards the airport. Dalton Village is now a Hope VI project, Arbor Glen, and Boulevard Homes has been torn down and is being reconstructed as Hope VI project as this paper is written. The socioeconomic characteristics prove that the expansion of the airport and public housing projects as indicated by the Planning Commissions' report in 1976 that Tract 3900 would experience interesting trajectories. The amount of developable land in the tract proved that it is cheap and the place for noxious facilities for the city. An interesting note to make of Reid Park's neighborhood boundary is that it includes a golf course that historically excluded African Americans from using the facility. This instance has been a prime factor to the development of Reid Park's spatial justice (Hall 2013).

**TABLE 6.2.1. 1960 SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS IN REID PARK.**

<b>Decade</b>	1960 - 1970
<b>Census Tracts</b>	3900
<b>Population</b>	7,535
<b>Total White</b>	2,683
<b>Total Black</b>	4,839
<b>Median Housing Value</b>	\$12,100
<b>Median Family Income</b>	\$7,384
<b>Families Receiving Public Assistance</b>	104
<b>Percent Population Change, White 1960 – 1970</b>	– 8.4%
<b>Percent Population Change, Black 1960 – 1970</b>	50.2%
<b>Median Rent</b>	\$105

Source: Charlotte Planning Commission, 1976.

**TABLE 6.2.2. SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF REID PARK.**

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Tract 3900</b>		<b>Tract 39.02</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	7,650	9,711	5,546	3,667	4,390
<b>Total White</b>	2,758	1,188	175	89	112
<b>Total Africa American</b>	4,823	8,450	5,268	3,555	4,059
<b>Total HHs</b>	1,885	3,058	1,808	1,354	1,659
<b>Median HHs Income</b>	N/A	\$9,228	\$14,493	\$23,980	\$21,081
<b>Total HHs with Public Assistance</b>	104	808	455	184	863
<b>Total HUs</b>	2,396	3,229	1,930	1,497	1,840
<b>Total Renter Occupied HUs</b>	1,366	2,239	1,257	864	1,183
<b>Total Owner Occupied HUs</b>	875	746	511	489	476

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau

**TABLE 6.2.3. TRENDS BETWEEN DECADES, REID PARK.**

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Tracts 3900 + 39.02</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>% Change 1970 – 1980</b>	<b>% Change 1980 - 1990</b>	<b>% Change 1990 – 2000</b>	<b>% Change 2000 – 2010</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	26.9%	-43.8%	-32.8%	19.7%
<b>Total White</b>	-56.9%	-85.3%	-49.1%	25.8%
<b>Total African American</b>	75.2%	-37.7%	-32.5%	14.2%
<b>Total HHs</b>	62.2%	-40.9%	-25.1%	22.5%
<b>Median HH Income</b>	N/A	57.1%	65.5%	-12.1%
<b>Total HHs with Public Assistance</b>	676.9%	-43.7%	-59.6%	369.0%
<b>Total HUs</b>	34.8%	-40.2%	-22.4%	22.9%
<b>Total Renter Occupied HUs</b>	63.9%	-43.9%	-31.3%	36.9%
<b>Total Owner Occupied HUs</b>	-14.7%	-31.5%	-4.3%	-2.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**TABLE 6.2.4. MECKLENBURG COUNTY SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Mecklenburg County</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	354,656	404,232	411,433	695,454	919,628
<b>Total White</b>	269,283	291,856	364,484	450,090	508,946
<b>Total Africa American</b>	83,978	107,222	134,616	197,102	282,404
<b>Total Households</b>	91,089	147,730	200,125	273,561	398,510
<b>Total HHs with Public Assistance</b>	3,247	9,829	9,225	13,029	20,508
<b>Median Household Income</b>	N/A	\$17,837	\$36,823	\$74,106	\$54,401
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	114,736	155,750	216,416	292,780	398,510
<b>Total Renter Occupied HUs</b>	43,090	58,312	80,656	103,024	142,625
<b>Total Owner Occupied HUs</b>	66,442	90,634	119,563	170,392	219,588

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**TABLE 6.2.5. TRENDS BETWEEN DECADES**

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Mecklenburg County</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>% Change 1970 – 1980</b>	<b>% Change 1980 - 1990</b>	<b>% Change 1990 – 2000</b>	<b>% Change 2000 – 2010</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	13.9%	26.5%	36.0%	32.2%
<b>Total White</b>	8.3%	24.9%	23.5%	13.1%
<b>Total African American</b>	22.7%	25.5%	46.4%	43.3%
<b>Total Households</b>	62.2%	35.5%	35.7%	45.7%
<b>Total HHs with Public Assistance</b>	N/A	-6.1%	41.2%	57.4%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	202.7%	117.1%	101.2%	-26.6%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	35.7%	39.0%	35.3%	36.1%
<b>Total Renter Occupied HUs</b>	35.3%	38.3%	27.7%	38.4%
<b>Total Owner Occupied HUs</b>	36.4%	31.9%	45.2%	28.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### **6.3. PUBLIC EXPENDITURES IN REID PARK**

Analyzing public expenditures in Reid Park has proven that parks and recreational facilities appear to be of lesser quality in respect to Dilworth's facilities. Coupling expenditures with the closing of Amay James Recreation Center and the abandonment of Amay James Park has proven that spending in respect to parks and recreation in Reid Park is very low. Between 1997 and 2007, a total of \$243,417.47 was spent on Amay James Recreation Center, before closing in 2010. Renovations such as painting, flooring, roofing, and architect services were spent on Amay James Recreation Center. Between 1997 and 2007, only \$2,000 was spent in Amay James Park, and that was money put towards removal of existing play units. For a long time running, there has been planning for a new park since the land swap occurred between Mecklenburg County and Reid Park Associates. According to the most recent Capital Improvement Plan, a total of \$600,000 has been allotted towards planning and design of a new park space in Reid Park. However, funding has not been reserved, but according to Parks and Recreation employees, they are hoping to have the project funded for fiscal year 2014. They also mentioned that they are hoping to have funding by fiscal year 2014 for the Irwin Creek Greenway extension that would connect Reid Park to the greenway system, which is estimated to cost \$1.233 million (Mecklenburg County 2013). Since 1992, a mere \$55.90 per person has been invested in Reid Park. If the new park and greenway are developed, spending per person in Reid Park would be a closer approach to the equity found in Dilworth, with a figure of \$192.58 per resident. According to a Reid Park resident on discussion on facilities and amenities in respect to Reid Park, they

state that the lack of economic development may be altering the physical improvements to the neighborhood:

*“The West Boulevard corridor is and has always been looked at lesser than other areas of Charlotte. There are no economic development opportunities because of its housing developments. It’s the region in the city for senior housing, public housing, and habitat for humanity. All housing is geared towards low-income. There is no room for advancement.”*

#### **6.4. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN REID PARK**

As explained in chapter 6.1, the Reid Park Neighborhood Association formed in 1985, when Rickey Hall, who grew up in Reid Park, noticed the neighborhood declining. Hall grew up in the neighborhood and believed the community deserved better treatment by the city and absentee landlords. He first started organizing the neighborhood around those issues and started building the community there on out. Once action was being taken by residents, the City began installing street lights and installing water and sewer lines in undeveloped portions of the neighborhood and also reduced the speed limits within the neighborhood through Rickey’s civic engagement with the neighborhood (Borden 1985). Reid Park residents began combatting the issue of absentee landlords by taking them to task on their poor upkeep of properties. Illegal dumping was also a huge issue that Hall took on and organized the neighborhood around to help beautify the neighborhood. Neighborhood youth gathered on the weekends to clean up dumping sites and send a physical message that Reid Park is a not a dump for contractors. The Neighborhood Association established a crime watch, community festival and started creating change in attitude and appearance in Reid Park. The neighborhood did not start with any federal funds, and even though it is low-income, it does not need to be uncared for. The neighborhood is rich in history and it was built on hopes, dreams and aspirations of working-class people (Snow 1988). Just a few

years after organizing of the neighborhood, Reid Park received the Neighborhood of the Year Award from the Foundation for the Carolinas. Reid Park was chosen over nine other community organizations because of its tremendous progress since its organization a few years ago. Reid Park and the nine other organizations received grants totaling \$50,000 (“Communities Fighting Back. Reid Park Receives Neighborhood of the Year Award” 1990).

Reid Park Associates developed in 1989 to further take on Hall’s vision. Reid Park Associates started the vision of building affordable houses for low-income to moderate-income families on the vast undeveloped land in the neighborhood. They also continued to work with the city in regards to lack of sidewalks and the illogical street network due to planned streets never being built. The association started formalizing with the city on the neighborhood park because residents were afraid to use the park due to its seclusion. Amay James Park typically only had one occupant in the park during the day, and that was a park ranger sitting in their car (Smith 1991). The start to Reid Park Associates’ vision began with buying duplexes to provide safe and clean housing for residents of the neighborhood (Smith 1991). Reid Park Associates started getting active in local government by calling on the city for their lack of investment in Reid Park. The city moved Reid Park up on the list of neighborhoods that needed better services, by providing street connections, since street signs were literally in the middle of woods with no streets, storm drains, gutters, or sidewalks. Reid Park Associates purchased 26 homes by the mid-1990s and was combatting the run-down housing issue in the neighborhood. Residents also worked to form a plan that would enact corrective rezonings for many of the parcels in the neighborhood, from industrial to residential zoning classification. Still in 1991, Hall took civic leaders on a tour of Amay James Park showing how much of an eyesore it is to the neighborhood, rather than an



amenity. Two years prior, Hurricane Hugo littered the park with trees and branches, isolating the park from use (Smith 1991). The City and County took no effort to clean up its property after the hurricane.

By 1992, neighborhood officials in Reid Park unveiled plans for a new subdivision that would be located where the current Amay James Park is. The plan called for 46 affordable houses to be built on the site. The CDC also worked to set up classes on home buying and housing programs so that homes could be purchased with little or no money down. Reid Park Associates, at this time, anticipated with infill of 100 to 125 new homes throughout the neighborhood, not including the new subdivision (Norwood 1992). By the end of 1992, Reid Park Associates received grants that helped boost their housing efforts. The association received an additional \$25,000 to boost the neighborhoods' economic and community development (Smith 1992).

By 1993, progressive change started taking shape in Reid Park. Past neighborhood association projects, such as crime watches, cleanups and community days in 1985, transitioned to Reid Park Associates' plans on revitalizing the entire neighborhood. Home ownership increased to 50 percent, and the goal of Reid Park Associates was to increase it to 90 percent. Reid Park Associates also wanted to own and manage all rental properties, renovate 175 homes for elderly and low-income residents with the addition of 100 new homes, and start a day care center. Reid Park Associates' capital, through loans, grants and donations equaled \$4.5 million by 1993. The help included a \$2.5 million loan from First Union for first and second mortgages for home buyers; \$300,000 from First Union to buy neighborhood property; a \$487,800 loan from the city to buy and remodel housing; \$43,000 worth of vacant land; and a \$1 million pledge from the city for street improvements. The

City also started working to bring up the neighborhood to city standards with the pledge of fixing the flooding problems. Interestingly, since money was limited, city employees asked Reid Park property owners to donate, rather than sell, the city the few feet of right-of-way needed to build sidewalks, curbs and gutters (Whitacre 1993).

By 1995, more than \$2 million was invested by the City with the installment of curbs, gutters and sidewalks. However, today, only two streets have curbs and gutters, and one of those two, is the only street with sidewalks (Wright 1995). By 1995, weeds continued to overtake the abandoned neighborhood park, and Reid Park Associates started negotiating a land swap with the County Parks and Recreation department. Reid Park Associates was also in talks of redeveloping and operating the nearby Westover Shopping Center, which had been a high crime spot on West Boulevard, since it was previously owned by a drug dealer (Alexander 1995). By the end of 1995, Reid Park residents and city planners developed the Reid Park Small Area Plan to draw up recommendations to fight crime, improve housing and create jobs (Alexander 1995).

Rickey Hall's vision on the neighborhood was for Reid Park to be clean, safe, and beautiful and to take stands against negative elements in the community, by seeing residents sitting on boards and commissions and participating in civic life. Hall's vision was not only for Reid Park but also the entire West Boulevard Corridor (Wright 1995). Ten years after Hall's organizing, much had been accomplished. Streets were paved, the neighborhood crime watch reformed with residents that marched against crime. Reid Park Associates' success in 1995 resulted in turning two run-down duplexes into four-bedroom single-family homes, securing options to buy six lots - four vacant and two with buildings on them, and completing a master plan, detailing how it will refurbish properties street by street. Instead of

building and remodeling houses on scattered sites throughout the neighborhood, the CDC concentrated on one street at a time. The idea was to increase property values block by block and make it easier for police to prevent vandalism (Suchetka 1996). Reid Park was building community ownership. Other signs of hope on the West Boulevard corridor included a 12,000-square-foot public library that opened bringing life to the West Boulevard Corridor (Suchetka 1996), and a new \$8 million magnet school built in the Reid Park (Wright 1995). By November 1998, a plan was unveiled that would reshape Dalton Village, the public housing complex directly adjacent to Reid Park. Within four years, Dalton Village was proposed to change into a neighborhood of tree-lined streets, cottages and duplexes, by funding from Housing Urban Development's Hope VI program. In December of 1998, the city council approved the land swap that would allow a new 46-home subdivision on what's now Amay James Park in Reid Park (Norwood 1998).

Reid Park Associates and the neighborhood had achieved monumental success that would be found in any community development textbook, during its ten years of operation. However, by 2000, an audit presented to the Charlotte City Council showed that Reid Park Associates mismanaged hundreds of thousands of dollars (\$823,000) in its attempt to rehabilitate 16 affordably priced homes in the neighborhood (Markoe 2000). Construction money was used for administrative expenses, improperly transferred money between accounts, and a general lack of financial expertise and supervision on the scale of the project was identified in the audit. The private lender that approved an \$823,000 loan for the 16 homes foreclosed on the properties in 2001. Construction began in 1998 on the homes, and by the foreclosure, six of the homes were 95 percent complete and the rest were in various stages of rehabilitation. The city contributed a small amount of \$50,000 towards the housing

project, and the city manager at the time recommended the city to take over the project. The mayor and several council members at the time expressed frustration about the Reid Park Associates' board, which formally resolved in March 2001 to ask the city for "technical and financial assistance from the City of Charlotte to restore financial solvency to their organization. Quotes from the commissioners indicated anger and frustration towards Reid Park Associates. Direct quotes such as the Association's failing as being "absolutely pathetic" was written in the Charlotte Observer. The council approved to take over the project which led the city to spending about \$970,000 to complete the Reid Park homes, which made it very unlikely that the city broke even on the return on investment (Markoe 2000).

Reid Park Associates' vision was shattered, however, since the city paid off their debts, the city wound up with Reid Park Associates' only assets, land. The city ended up selling the remaining land to Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte at a very cheap, undisclosed, price to continue building affordable housing (Hall 2010). The bankruptcy of Reid Park Associates led towards a downward trajectory as Reid Park started declining again. However, Habitat for Humanity's mission of providing affordable housing has helped combat rising pressures of low home ownership in the neighborhood (Sullivan 2008). By 2010, a large cut to Parks and Recreations budget further pushed Reid Park down a negative trajectory by forcing Amay James Recreation Center to close (Henderson 2010). Similar to the Dilworth Community Development Association, Reid Park Associates was working to strengthen the community and improve quality of life. The process of community development for Reid Park Associates was identified by a former board member of Reid Park

Associates. The support of Reid Park Associates by the City of Charlotte is explained by the former board member:

***“Support was never fully solidified from the city, in respect to Reid Park Associates. The city fully supported inner city suburbs, such as Dilworth, Elizabeth, and the like because they were the crown jewels of Charlotte. Through the development of the light rail project, Reid Park was not even involved, nor has development of any type of transit system been planned to service the West Boulevard corridor. Wilmore and South End are not even on the West Boulevard corridor anymore. Once you pass under I-77 on West Boulevard, becomes the neglected area of the West Boulevard corridor.”***

During the time of Reid Park Associates organizing to improve quality of life, Dilworth had been seeing significant transition and gentrification. The former board member explains their perception of the role that Dilworth residents played to get resources to the neighborhood.

***“I think that the combination of a strong neighborhood advocacy base, coupled with strong ties to the corporate community served the Dilworth Community well in terms of getting the resources for that sector as opposed to Reid Park and the West Boulevard Corridor.”***

As Reid Park Associates continued to work under pressures on making change on the West Boulevard corridor, the former board member highlights the process of treatment by the City.

***“Grassroots Community Economic Development has always been a hard sell! Questions always centered around your commitment, your expertise, your background, and your ability to master the art of selling the vision and or generating financial backing.”***

Although Reid Park’s quality of life has been on a downward trajectory since the bankruptcy of Reid Park Associates, the neighborhood association still continued to combat blight and deterioration and worked to strengthen the neighborhood. The Reid Park Neighborhood Association has further strengthened, alongside assistance with organizations such as the Charlotte Action Research Project, by writing grants to provide for beautification

and community building efforts. Most recently, the Reid Park Neighborhood Associations' largest accomplishment has been the development and organization for a KaBOOM! Playground, which was built in October 2012. Residents worked tirelessly to organize and plan for the playground to be effectively built to standards set by KaBOOM!. Eight months of hard work granted a brand new \$56,000 playground that was built in one day. Even though Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation has slighted the neighborhood in respects to parks and recreation centers, the neighborhood has taken action to provide a heightened quality of life and safer place for neighborhood children and families to recreate.

**Figure 6.4.1. Reid Park's KaBOOM! Playground.**



Source: Author, 2012

**Figure 6.4.2. Reid Park’s KaBOOM! Playground.**



Source: Author, 2012.

Reid Park’s interesting and complex history illustrates that although the neighborhood has been stigmatized alongside the West Boulevard Corridor as nothing more than deterioration and crime, communities can come together to combat many issues challenged neighborhoods face. Reid Park’s historical development in West Charlotte has seemed to shape the neighborhood’s trajectory. Historically, African American neighborhoods were located on the western portion of Charlotte, and this has not changed much into modern day. Reid Park’s location in the city may be playing a role in Reid Park’s quality of life, which

was also indicated by the former board member of Reid Park Associates. If the City of Charlotte was historically concentrating minorities and low income neighborhoods on the west side of Charlotte, then an anecdotal answer to Reid Park's trajectory may be answered by the City creating a racial divide.

## **CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION**

Scholars have identified similar cases that resemble the case of Charlotte and its historical suburbs in reference to the literature review. The underclass debate has largely been present in the literature across urban geography. Lineberry (1975) indicates that historical forces lead to inequality, and from this research, Reid Park's historical development on the Westside seems to stigmatize its development in the 'shadows' whereas Dilworth was developed as a mill village. The two suburbs were developed for different purposes; Reid Park was developed exclusively for African Americans to purchase land and build homes, whereas Dilworth was developed as a village to supply housing to the growing industry in Charlotte. Lineberry (1975) identifies significant research that replicates Reid Park's history as supplementation to the literature by identifying that the Westside or West Boulevard Corridor of Charlotte seemed to trend into a homogeneous group of minority populations, or as Lineberry classifies, as a homogeneous group 'voting with its feet' towards higher quality of life.

The underclass debate typically coincides with the theory of spatial justice. As indicated in the analysis, Reid Park residents have identified that they feel pressures of spatial justice by not have access to services. The theory that 'our multi-scalar geographies are constructed by more powerful others indicates that the power regime plays a structural role especially in the case of Charlotte's Westside. The Westside of Charlotte has been



slated as the region of the city to house the city's noxious land uses, public housing, and airport. The geographical establishment and stigmatization as the 'Westside' has created a stigma for the neighborhoods on the West Boulevard Corridor, especially Reid Park. This extends and ties into the spatial justice literature as a prime example of social unjust and inequality in cities (Harvey 1996).

Inequitable distribution of investments has been and may continue to be a leading area of research across cities. This research has identified that at smaller areas of geographies, inequitable investments seem to be creating inequality. However, at a large scale, investments seem to show equity, and therefore no undeserving of the disadvantaged. As Talen (1998) explores through GIS mapping, the equity of resources over large areal units are equitable, but at the micro scale geographies, accessibility and equity concerns arise. Although Reid Park is directly experiencing spatial justice and inequitable distribution of investments, directly adjacent to the neighborhood are a number of investments and resources. This shows that measuring equity through mapping can show that investments and facilities could be equitable, however, the use of mapping, and field work at the micro level can differentiate, as it does in the case of Reid Park.

The analysis of complex histories, recreational space, socioeconomic characteristics, and the civic engagement of both neighborhoods has identified that both neighborhoods developed very differently, and had similar civic development around issues such as crime and deterioration. City forces, such as an emphasis on sprawl and possibly racial segregation tailored both neighborhoods' trajectories that led to their community development efforts (Hanchett 1998). This research has also identified different themes that seemed to potentially influence the quality of both neighborhoods' public facilities. Housing stock and

gentrification, civic engagement, and historical developmental patterns of the City of Charlotte are themes that have emerged from the research as vital pieces to answering the research question of socioeconomics affecting the quality of public facilities. Housing stock has been identified throughout the research, especially in Dilworth's history, as playing a vital role in gentrification. In contrast, Reid Park's housing stock varies from Dilworth, which may be a reason why Reid Park's quality of public facilities differentiates from Dilworth. The theme civic engagement within community development is key to the revitalization, sustainability, and vitality of neighborhoods facing social and physical pressures brought on by patterns of development in cities. Historical development of the City of Charlotte is also considered a theme that emerged from the research due to the impact of the development of suburbs. This is impactful because some White and African American historical suburbs have transitioned, while others seemed to have been spatially segregated and remain persistently disadvantaged.

Although the availability of data was limited, coupling socioeconomic characteristics, a content analysis on archival newspaper articles, historical developmental patterns, and the observation of both recreational spaces in Dilworth and Reid Park illustrated that socioeconomic characteristics may just influence quality of public facilities. I say may, because the City of Charlotte's interesting history with relentless annexations and embracing suburban sprawl plays a vital role in this research. Historical developmental patterns within the City and County prove that racial segregation and an emphasis on suburbanization plays a role in the Reid Park and Dilworth's trajectories. Although both neighborhoods are in similar proximity to Uptown, emphasis on revitalization and gentrification of Charlotte's inner-city

suburbs has been fully embraced mostly everywhere else in the central part of the city, except for the West Boulevard corridor.

Both historical developments are different for the neighborhoods because Dilworth was developed as Charlotte's first streetcar suburb, which essentially modeled the rest of Charlotte's inner-ring streetcar suburbs. Dilworth was also a planned community that offered housing and income stacking in the neighborhood that provided housing choices and programs for first time buyers who were working class, but yielded streets built for the elite. Reid Park developed forty years after Dilworth was established, and was built at the height of Charlotte's segregation. Reid Park was developed for working class African Americans, on the west side of Charlotte which developed primarily as the African American suburb in Charlotte, and in a census tract that was slated for all of Charlotte's noxious land uses. Reid Park's position in the Westside of Charlotte became a driving force in its stigmatization. West Charlotte has had a negative connotation across the City of Charlotte, and because of this, Reid Park residents and residents of other West Charlotte neighborhoods seem to experience patterns of spatial inequality. It is evident that spatial inequality exists in the Westside of Charlotte, physically and racially. The content analysis illustrated the 'Westside' having dilapidated parks and recreation centers over the rest of the County once the merger between the City and County Parks and Recreation departments happened. The Westside also became the region of town for all unwanted land uses – public housing, industrial land uses, and the airport.

Although both neighborhoods experienced deterioration and blight, their assistance from the City was different. The tenure of both neighborhoods has also affected this, since Dilworth is nearly forty years older than Reid Park. The period of Dilworth's development

yielded historical architecture and quality housing, even for working class households. Reid Park's housing was developed by individual land owners, and the housing stock ranged from military barracks to 1950s era architecture. Dilworth's historical and aesthetic architectural styles has played a vital role in Dilworth's gentrification and revitalization. Dilworth has gentrified fully, ranging from the first wave of 'hippies' renovating the charming craftsman homes, to the elite tearing down homes and building 'McMansions'. Also, the content analysis indicated that the City of Charlotte had a goal of revitalizing Dilworth before it became the prime inner-city neighborhood that it is today. The 1976 Planning Commission report indicated that the City was embracing revitalization of the neighborhood to bring interest and restore the historic elements. Another indicator of spatial inequality derives from the content analysis, regarding the parks in the neighborhoods. The content analysis indicated Latta Park as an aesthetic amenity to Dilworth, housing the annual Jubilee, great site for bird watching, and a destination for nature in the City. Amay James Parks is portrayed as a nuisance and detrimental to the image and quality of Reid Park due to its safety and seclusion concerns. Again, Latta Park was privately developed and taken over by the City and then County in 1992, whereas Amay James Park was publicly developed. However, Latta Park did get turned over to the City of Charlotte in 1920, so both parks were city owned for a tremendous amount of time, further expressing the city's lack of interest in Amay James Park. Although no information was able to be retrieved on why Amay James Park was developed in the rear of the neighborhood, the poor connection that existed in Reid Park, is proof that it may have been developed under the radar with little or no input from residents.

Although housing stock is dramatically different in both neighborhoods, civic engagement in both neighborhoods proves that community development is key to the sustainability and quality of life in neighborhoods. The history of both neighborhoods plays a key role in their trajectories, but both Dilworth and Reid Park possess strong civic participation and put that to use for improving quality of life. Both neighborhoods fought back to combat deterioration and blight, which was successful for both Dilworth and Reid Park, however, Reid Park Associates' decline seemed to have influenced Reid Park's downward trajectory in the early 2000s. The decline of Reid Park Associates seems to have impacted the neighborhood and residents, as informal conversations have identified that residents were upset and just simply did not care for the community after the bankruptcy went down. A sense of letdown has been identified by Reid Park Associates' bankruptcy. Reid Park has been promised a number of things by the City and County, and the persistent letdown, with the additional downturn of Reid Park Associates created turmoil for the neighborhood. Although Reid Park's CDC went bankrupt, the experience and process for the neighborhood during the years of activism and participation yielded great success for the neighborhood. The importance of community development shows successes that can arise and the outcomes that can be developed. Reid Park possessed and continues to possess forms of capital in the community development process; however it seems as if the City does not want to contribute or assist in anyway after Reid Park Associates' downfall, which led to the City paying in upwards of \$900,000 to pay off their debts.

It is apparent that the City of Charlotte has had a role in revitalizing Dilworth. Anecdotal observation of the content analysis and discussion with long time residents of Reid Park indicated that the City may have been forcing efforts on Dilworth because the City may

have had a goal of revitalizing the Dilworth/South End area to boost the tax base. The City's historical development of noxious land uses on the west side of Charlotte, with no respect to the minority and low income neighborhoods, has played a pivotal role in trajectories on the west side as well. Since Amay James Park was developed by the City of Charlotte, whereas Latta Park was privately developed and then later deeded to the City, this assumedly plays a vital role in the aesthetics associated with both parks. However, that can't account for the more recent actions and maintenance of the parks. The abandonment of Amay James Park and the constant planning and infrastructure developments in Latta Park shows that there is inequality of investments.

Although availability on investments was limited, an anecdotal result from this research indicates that other factors have played a role in the quality of public facilities in Reid Park and Dilworth. It proves that racial segregation and historical developments of Charlotte, although not confirmed, has and still may be influencing spatial inequality. Although this comparative analysis only analyzed the distribution of park and recreation investments, it is a starting point to analyzing other investments such as infrastructures, programming, and accessibility that are assumedly inequitably distributed. This analysis can help build case studies in neighborhoods not only in the City of Charlotte, but in other cities and neighborhoods that are experiencing spatial justice and equity issues.

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