



Belmont-Fallon

NEIGHBORHOOD
PLAN

ROANOKE
VIRGINIA



vision 2001
2020

Adopted by City Council January 2003

Contents:

Introduction
Community Design
Residential Development
Economic Development
Infrastructure
Public Services
Quality of Life
Recommendations
Implementation
Acknowledgments



Click to jump
to a section

Planning Building & Development

Copyright 2003 City of Roanoke

Introduction

Belmont-Fallon is one of Roanoke’s oldest neighborhoods. At least three quarters of the houses were built between 1890 and 1950. The neighborhood grew around the railroad shops to provide housing for workers.

The traditional design of the neighborhood — with large parks, a mixture of businesses, closely-spaced houses, and narrow streets — encourages social interaction of neighbors and a close-knit community.

This plan covers the Belmont and Fallon neighborhoods. The area is bordered on the north by the Norfolk Southern shops, on the west by downtown, and on the east by Vinton. The southern border roughly follows Highland Avenue and Dale Avenue. The larger neighborhood known to many as “Southeast” has well-defined edges on the south and east with natural corridors along the Roanoke River and Tinker Creek. The western edge is defined by Interstate 581, which separates the neighborhood from downtown.

Like many older downtown neighborhoods, Belmont-Fallon has suffered from the flight of people to suburban areas. But the neighborhood remains viable. Concerted efforts are needed to revitalize the neighborhood. With renewed interest in traditional neighborhoods, the neighborhood is well positioned for revitalization.





High priority initiatives

This plan proposes **five priority initiatives**:

- Comprehensive zoning changes
- Implementation of the Neighborhood Design District to control design of new infill development
- Physical improvement of corridors and gateways
- Housing development and revitalization
- Encouraging vibrant village centers

These initiatives are reflected in the policies and actions located in the **Recommendations** section.

Plan Elements

Discussion in this plan is organized into six major **Plan Elements**:

- Community Design
- Residential Development
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Public Services
- Quality of Life

The Community Design element looks at physical design features and land use patterns. Residential Development addresses existing and new housing opportunities. Economic Development deals with commercial and industrial development in the neighborhood. The Infrastructure plan element evaluates transportation systems and utility systems such as water, sewer, and storm drainage. The Public Services element assesses Fire/EMS, police and other city services. Finally, the Quality of Life element addresses recreational opportunities, environmental issues, education, and community development. Each plan element contains information about current conditions and issues.



Community Design

Physical Layout

Belmont-Fallon is in the southeast quadrant of the city. It is the northern part of the area commonly known as “Southeast.” It has a traditional neighborhood design with narrow, tree-lined streets that are arranged in a classic grid system with occasional angles, offsets, and curves. Sidewalks are usually on both sides of the street and have a grass planting strip between the sidewalk and curb. Houses are typically close to the front property line (15’-25’) and are close to each other (10’-15’). Alleys provide access to parking and rear yards/garages and also provide a place for utilities and trash collection. Houses tend to be of similar scale, massing, and architecture, and most have porches. Though houses may differ slightly in materials and features, related house styles create a pleasing rhythm along streets.

The layout of the neighborhood — where residential areas, commercial areas, and parks are mixed together — makes it possible for residents to shop, work, and take advantage of recreational amenities without having to leave the neighborhood. More progressive developers throughout the nation are using this traditional design for new neighborhoods because it creates a sense of place, fosters interaction with neighbors, and is pedestrian-oriented.





Some major streets in the neighborhood such as Dale Avenue and a small portion of 9th Street near Tazewell Avenue are attractive landscaped boulevards planted with trees. Bullitt Avenue and Jamison Avenue work together as single arterial road and have no landscaping. The rolling topography of the neighborhood makes for excellent views of the downtown skyline as well as neighborhood roofscapes often featured in photos of Roanoke. The grid street system is superimposed on this rolling topography, which creates variety and results in a unique character on each street. The Mill Mountain Star is visible from most of the neighborhood.

The neighborhood has focal points and community gathering places in its schools and parks. Fallon Park and Jackson Park are picturesque with many mature trees and have a full complement of recreational facilities. Both provide large amounts of open space. The Old Fire House #7 on Jamison Avenue is another neighborhood focal point. Since its closing, community groups have used the fire house for meetings and community activities. Continuing in its role as a civic amenity, the building is now used as a satellite police station.

While people moved from traditional neighborhoods to outlying suburbs during the last half of the 20th Century, many people are now seeking out older neighborhoods for their sense of community, physical attractiveness, and convenience. As more people begin to reject long commutes, over-reliance on automobiles, and the lack of community that go along with conventional suburban development, neighborhoods like Belmont-Fallon are ripe for revitalization. Respecting and promoting this design is a key to the revitalization of neighborhoods throughout Roanoke.

Land Use Patterns

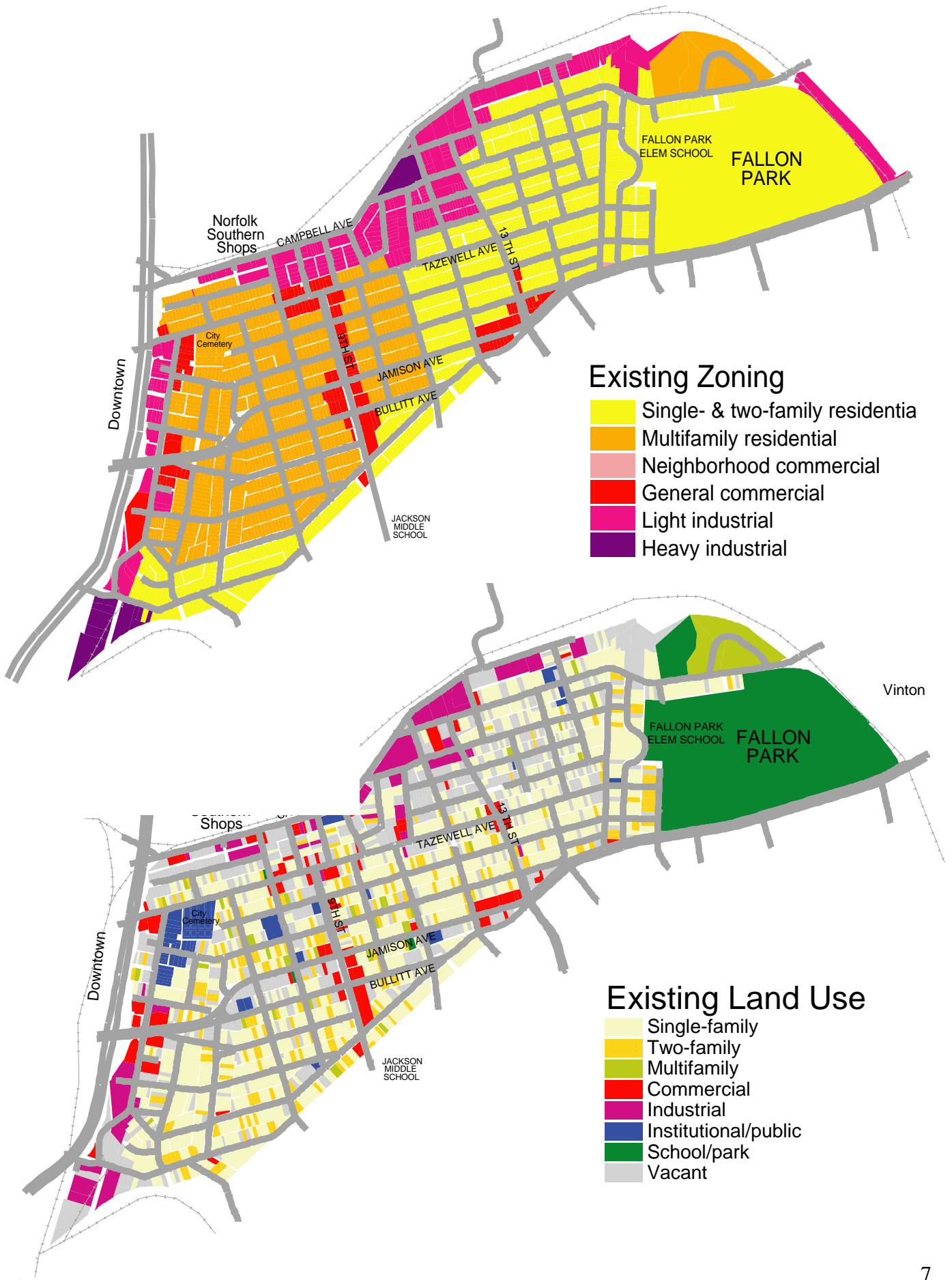
As a traditional neighborhood, Belmont-Fallon's residential, commercial, and industrial development function as a unit. The predominant land use in Belmont-Fallon is single-family residential which occupies nearly half of the properties. About 12% of properties are dedicated to duplex or multifamily uses. Multifamily housing is dispersed throughout the neighborhood and is generally contained in large foursquare structures rather than in apartment buildings. A substantial amount of land is devoted to parks.

Belmont-Fallon has a 60-acre industrial district concentrated along Campbell Avenue near the Norfolk Southern shops. Only about 2% of the neighborhood's land area is dedicated to industrial uses.

Most commercial uses are concentrated in four existing centers. These centers provide basic retail and services within close walking distance of the residents. Various commercial establishments are dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Commercial uses account for about 4% of the neighborhood's properties.

Nearly 30% of the neighborhood's parcels are vacant (about 108 acres). Along with the need for improved maintenance of existing housing, future use of vacant parcels will be a key to revitalization. Vacant land is generally in small parcels scattered around the neighborhood, which limits opportunities for major redevelopment projects.

Demolition of buildings for parking lots is a serious problem in Belmont. Over three acres of the vacant land in Belmont is dedicated to periodically-used parking. In Roanoke's downtown neighborhoods, there is a trend of businesses and institutions purchasing adjacent properties and demolishing the structure to provide more convenient parking. In some areas, a cycle of purchase and demolition has continued until entire blocks have become filled with asphalt rather than buildings. Removal of buildings for parking seriously compromises the urban fabric of the neighborhood and works against revitalization efforts. At a minimum, parking lots should be screened and buffered with vegetation to reduce their impact on the neighborhood.



Gateways

The appearance of gateways to downtown were cited as important to the image of the neighborhood. Currently, the gateways are unattractive highway overpasses that appear unsafe and uninviting. A once seamless connection between Belmont and downtown was severed by construction of Interstate 581 in the mid-1960s. Church Avenue, Dale Avenue, and Bullitt Avenue were dead-ended as part of the highway project.

There are four gateways that need improvement. *Campbell Avenue* leads to an industrial area and is a heavily used connection to Vinton. The gateway has an unkempt appearance and the areas under the bridge are covered with weeds, trash, and broken glass. The predominant land use west of the bridge is surface parking. The Norfolk Southern shops have interesting industrial structures and Lick Run parallels Campbell Avenue. *Tazewell Avenue* passes under I-581. Surface parking surrounds the area to the west of the overpass. There are signs of vagrancy underneath the bridge as well as litter and graffiti. *Elm Avenue* is a very congested gateway to downtown. The area is automobile-dominated and dangerous for pedestrians; small sidewalks have no separation from heavy traffic and it is difficult to cross the street. Vagrants congregate underneath the bridge and panhandle at the exit ramp and along Elm Avenue. Finally, *Albemarle Avenue* will be the neighborhood's connection with the Carilion Biotech Institute and also connects to Old Southwest. The gateway has a looming, elevated highway overpass and railroad tracks. There are industrial uses on both sides of the overpass. The Mill Mountain Greenway, which will run between the City Market and Mill Mountain will pass through this intersection.



Residential Development

While there are many different housing types in Belmont, the predominant style is the two-story American Foursquare. In the Fallon area, there are more single story cottage houses. As with most pre-WWII neighborhoods, the housing in Belmont-Fallon is very sturdy and well-designed. However, because of their age, the structures require maintenance. Housing maintenance is a primary concern with the neighborhood's housing. A 1997 survey determined that 60% of the houses in Belmont showed some deterioration and 18% of the houses were dilapidated. The City's Rental Inspection Program, created in 1997, establishes minimum maintenance requirements for rental properties. This program has resulted in visible improvement in many areas of Belmont.



Belmont-Fallon has a diversity of housing styles and sizes.



Population

Population		
1990	2000	Change (%)
4,539	4,411	-316 (-7%)
US Census 1990 & 2000		

Belmont-Fallon's population decreased by 7% (316 people) between 1990 and 2000. During the same period, Roanoke's population decreased by 1½%

Belmont-Fallon became more diverse neighborhood in the last decade. Its nonwhite population increased from 4% to 12% of the total population.

Racial Composition		
	1990	2000
White	96%	88%
African American	3%	7%
Other races & Multiracial	1%	5%
US Census 1990 & 2000		

Belmont has a very young population and fewer senior citizens compared to the city as a whole. Only 12% of Belmont-Fallon's residents are over 65 years old, while 28% are under 18 years old. The younger population profile points to the need for solid schools, health care, and youth programs.

Age Distribution : Belmont-Fallon		
	1990	2000
0-17 years	29%	28%
18-39 years	33%	30%
40-64 years	24%	30%
65 + years	15%	12%
US Census 1990 & 2000		

Age Distribution : Comparison between Belmont-Fallon and Roanoke		
	Belmont-Fallon	Roanoke
0-17 years	28%	23%
18-39 years	30%	31%
40-64 years	30%	30%
65 + years	12%	16%
US Census 2000		

Nearly a third of the area's residents are below poverty level.

Income comparison between Belmont-Fallon and Roanoke		
Median Household Income	\$22,008	\$30,719
Below poverty level	32%	16%
US Census 2000		

Homeownership is slowly decreasing. While multifamily development should be encouraged, more development should encourage homeownership.

Housing in Belmont-Fallon		
	1990	2000
Housing units (occupied)	1,726	1,643
Owner-occupied	52%	50%
Renter-occupied	48%	50%
Persons per household	2.75	2.68
US Census 1990 & 2000		

Homeownership rates in Belmont-Fallon should be closer to Roanoke's overall homeownership rate of 56%

Housing comparison between Belmont-Fallon and Roanoke		
	Belmont-Fallon	Roanoke
Owner-occupied	50%	56%
Renter-occupied	50%	44%
Persons per household	2.68	2.30
Median house value	mid-\$40K	low-\$80K
Rents below \$400/mo	76%	55%
US Census 2000		

Future development should focus on increasing income/housing diversity by increasing the supply of housing in the upper-income markets.

The neighborhood has an abundance of affordable housing opportunities. Over 10% of the neighborhood's housing units are publicly assisted and over three quarters of the neighborhood's rents are below \$400/month. The median house value is almost half the city's median value.

Public and subsidized housing	
Total housing units	1726
Public housing units	80
Publicly-subsidized housing units	100
US Census 2000 and RRHA	

Belmont-Fallon has two types of residential zoning: RM-1 (residential multifamily, low density) and RM-2 (residential multifamily, medium density). RM-1 is generally a single family zone that allows scattered duplexes (by special exception), while RM-2 permits multifamily development outright. There are 1,555 residential properties; 81% are single family, 17% are duplexes, and 2% are multifamily.

Some of the large, two-story houses were originally built as over/under duplexes. Access to the upper unit was provided either through a rear staircase or simply through the main entrance. It was common for an extended family to occupy both units.

Home-ownership is decreasing in the neighborhood. Over half of the residential properties in Belmont are not owner-occupied. While not a hard and fast rule, owner-occupied properties tend to be better maintained than absentee owner properties. With an aging population, more owner-occupied properties will likely be purchased by absentee owners and converted into apartments unless action is taken to encourage more home ownership.

The City has selected Belmont as a pilot area for its first years of targeting Community Development Block Grant funds. This project, called Southeast by Design, will focus over \$1 million into housing and infrastructure improvements along the Bullitt-Jamison corridor. A master plan for the corridor is underway and should be adopted as part of or as an amendment to this plan.

One of the city’s public housing developments, Indian Rock Village, is located at the eastern edge of the neighborhood. Indian Rock Village provides 80 public housing units in a series of townhouse structures. The Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority lists 100 households in the neighborhood that



receive Section 8 vouchers. This indicates that the neighborhood has a fair amount of affordable, very low-income housing. Creating income diversity is key to stabilization and revitalization. Future housing development should promote income diversity by focusing on market-rate housing and by encouraging home ownership. Public-sector intervention is needed to stimulate development by the private sector of quality market-based housing. This is a major challenge because traditional funding sources and incentives encourage the development of more low-income housing, which can perpetuate a neighborhood's status as a low-income area.

At community workshops, participants cited the need to improve housing conditions as the highest priority for the neighborhood. Most houses were built between 1890 and 1940, so maintenance needs tend to be higher. Residents say that older residents especially have trouble maintaining their homes.

The area is identified as having historic and unique architectural value. Many of the vacant lots (about 400) are good opportunities for new housing development. It is very important that new housing fit in with the existing housing. The Neighborhood Design District is a zoning overlay that is a tool to control the appearance of new infill housing. This plan recommends establishment of this zoning overlay throughout the neighborhood.





Economic Development

The neighborhood has a diverse mixture of businesses including commercial and industrial uses. Most business is focused into three village centers, a small strip shopping center, and an industrial district. Belmont-Fallon is fortunate to have retained viable village centers that provide basic goods and services within walking distance. Economic development efforts need to reinforce these areas as centers of activity and concentrate businesses into these areas.

Village Centers

The village centers contain basic services such as convenience stores, drug stores, auto parts stores, and hardware. Existing village centers should be limited in size to provide well-defined business areas. Uses should be small in scale and serve both the surrounding neighborhood and those passing through the neighborhood.



Parkside Plaza, near the city limits on Dale Avenue, is a future development opportunity. It was originally developed as a small strip shopping center. *Vision 2001-2020* encourages a “greyfield redevelopment” model that develops the street frontage for retail uses and uses the larger rear buildings for light industrial uses, with parking on the interior of the development. Parkside Plaza is an ideal candidate for this type of redevelopment. Eventually, it could function as a fourth village center serving the eastern part of the neighborhood.

Corner Commercial



Individual buildings that formerly housed corner commercial development such as grocery stores are scattered throughout the neighborhood. These are typically located at corners on side street frontages. Zoning should allow for appropriate reuse of these structures. Uses should be limited to low-traffic establishments that serve the surrounding neighborhood.



Office-Residential Mix

Larger houses in the areas near downtown are appropriate for a residential-office mixture. Permitting limited office development should encourage business to rehabilitate larger homes for offices. Two successful examples of this adaptive reuse are already located in the area. Time Technologies and Systems 4 are two businesses that have taken advantage of the location near downtown. The Systems 4 project rehabilitated an old house for office space on the first floor and retained the second-floor residential units. New office development that occurs in this area should maintain the residential character of the neighborhood. A 60-acre industrial district is located between Campbell Avenue and Tazewell



Adaptive reuse of residential structures: Systems 4 and Time Technologies





Much of the industrial development in the neighborhood occurred near the Norfolk & Western shops.

Industrial Development



Avenue across from the Norfolk Southern shops. This district has small-scale industrial uses as well as some commercial uses such as convenience stores and restaurants. There are numerous vacant industrial buildings. Most of the industrial area is in the flood plain. Properties in the industrial district tend to be very small and, individually, are not suitable for industrial development. The result is a fragmented and frayed development pattern with vacant buildings and underused property. Properties under multiple ownerships have to be combined before new development or expansion can take place. The city could have a role in assisting with the assembly of lots to encourage high quality development.

The industrial district also contains residential uses. The configuration of the lots suggests that the area was once residential. Wherever there are intact blocks of residential uses, the zoning should be changed to residential.

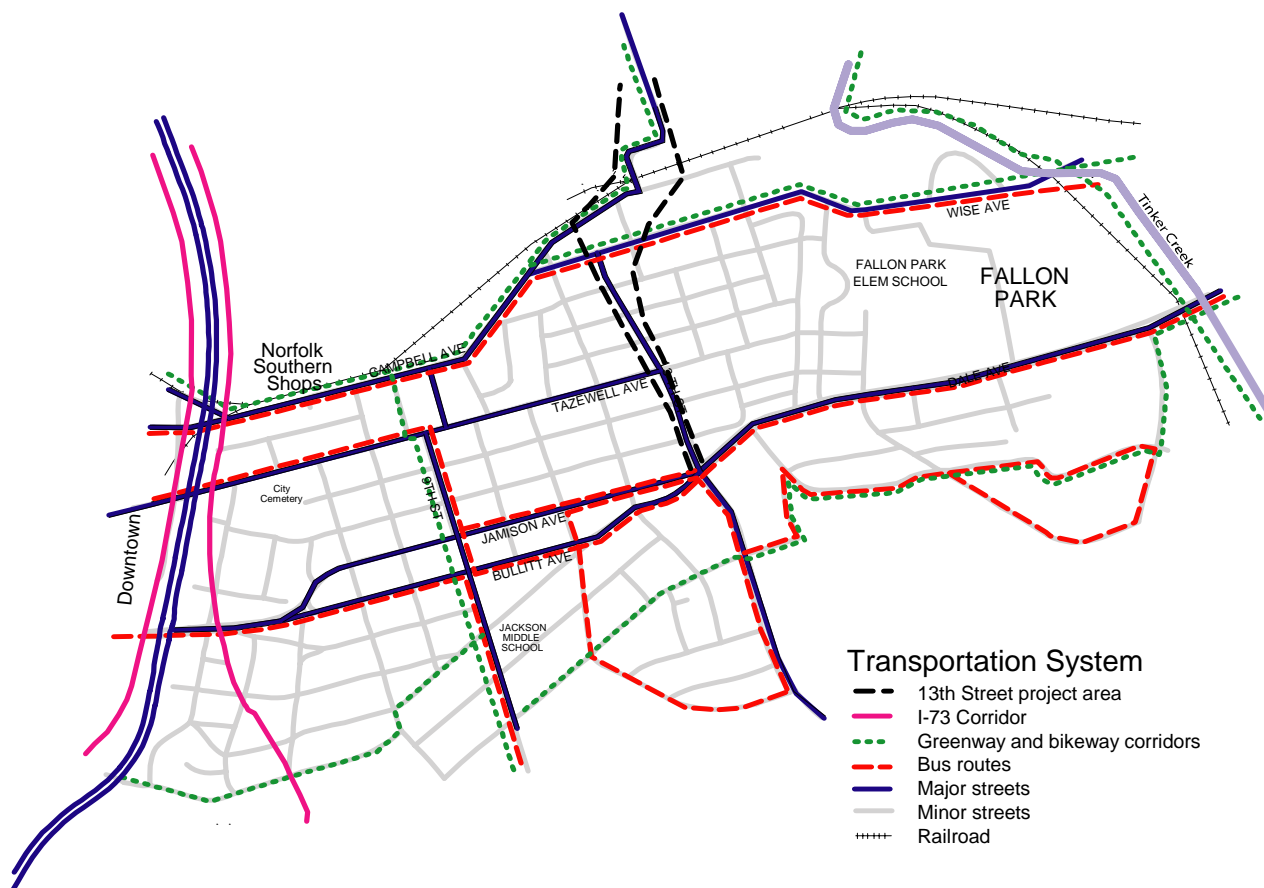
Infrastructure

Street System

The grid street system provides excellent access both within the neighborhood and to other parts of the city. The major east-west thoroughfares are Bullitt-Jamison (Route 24), Tazewell Avenue, and Wise Avenue. 13th Street and 9th Street serve as the north-south thoroughfares. Congestion exists on Bullitt-Jamison and is projected to worsen. 13th Street between Jamison Avenue and Wise Avenue is also congested. 9th Street and 13th Street (south of Dale Avenue) have excess capacity and can handle traffic needs well into the future.

Thirteenth Street Project

A future improvement project to realign and widen 13th Street is listed in the *Roanoke City Thoroughfare Plan* as a high priority. The proposed project includes a bridge over the railroad tracks to connect with Hollins Road. Residents see the project as an improvement to connectivity and an opportunity for revitalization along the corridor. However, they are concerned about the design of the road and its potential for negative effects on the surrounding area. New roads should be carefully designed to maintain the existing street grid and preserve neighborhood character. *Vision 2001-2020* provides design guidance for new streets. With recent state funding shortfalls, the status of this project remains uncertain.

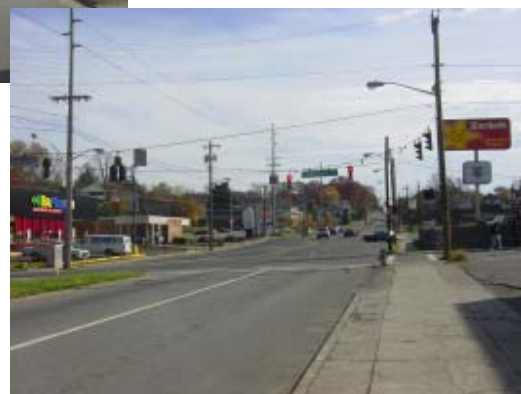


Ninth Street

The section of Ninth Street between Bullitt Avenue and Highland Avenue has four travel lanes and additional turning lanes. With fewer than 8,000 vehicles per day projected by 2015 (*1995-2015 Long Range Transportation Plan*), this street is grossly oversized. At 70 feet, pavement width on Ninth Street has become unnecessarily wide and is not pedestrian-friendly. On the surface at least, it appears that the street could be reconfigured with minimal negative impact on traffic mobility. This plan recommends reconfiguration of this thoroughfare to an urban boulevard by converting some of the pavement to a landscaped median and on-street parking. When considering reconfiguration options, potential impacts on traffic movement must be assessed.



The center median on 9th Street between Tazewell and Jamison makes it easier to cross. The median should be extended to Highland Avenue.



Bullitt-Jamison Corridor

Bullitt-Jamison connects downtown and Vinton and is the major east-west connection through the neighborhood. This corridor is a “paired one-way couplet”—two small streets, each with one-way traffic, that function as a large arterial street. Bullitt-Jamison is important because it carries considerable traffic through the neighborhood and connects four village centers. The primary use between village centers is residential. Walking along or crossing the street along this corridor is uncomfortable and dangerous. The corridor is unattractive and traffic travels at speeds well above the posted limit. Limited short-term improvements were recently made at some intersections to improve safety.

In the majority of cases, two-way streets are preferred over one-way streets. The City Design chapter of *Vision 2001-2020* recommends that “one-way streets should be converted to two-way streets, where possible, to improve access and promote safer speeds.” Conversion of the one-way streets of Bullitt-Jamison to two-way streets is more difficult than most conversions because the streets converge into four-lane arterial streets on both ends of the corridor. The few access points across I-581 limit opportunities for dispersing traffic. Some traffic can be dispersed among parallel east-west paths (i.e., Tazewell Avenue and Campbell Avenue).

Safety and livability issues should be addressed with comprehensive streetscape and traffic-calming improvements between 6th Street and 13th Street. Such improvements are important to improving livability along the corridor, supporting revitalization efforts, and improving neighborhood image. Improvement strategies for the Bullitt-Jamison corridor should address the following goals:

- Improve overall livability along the street
- Improve pedestrian safety
- Minimize disruption of existing neighborhood
- Reduce speed - at least 85% of the traffic should travel at 30 m.p.h. or less
- Retain capacity to handle current and future volumes, while not inducing more traffic
- Keep commuter traffic off of side streets
- Ensure other thoroughfares carry their "fair share" of traffic

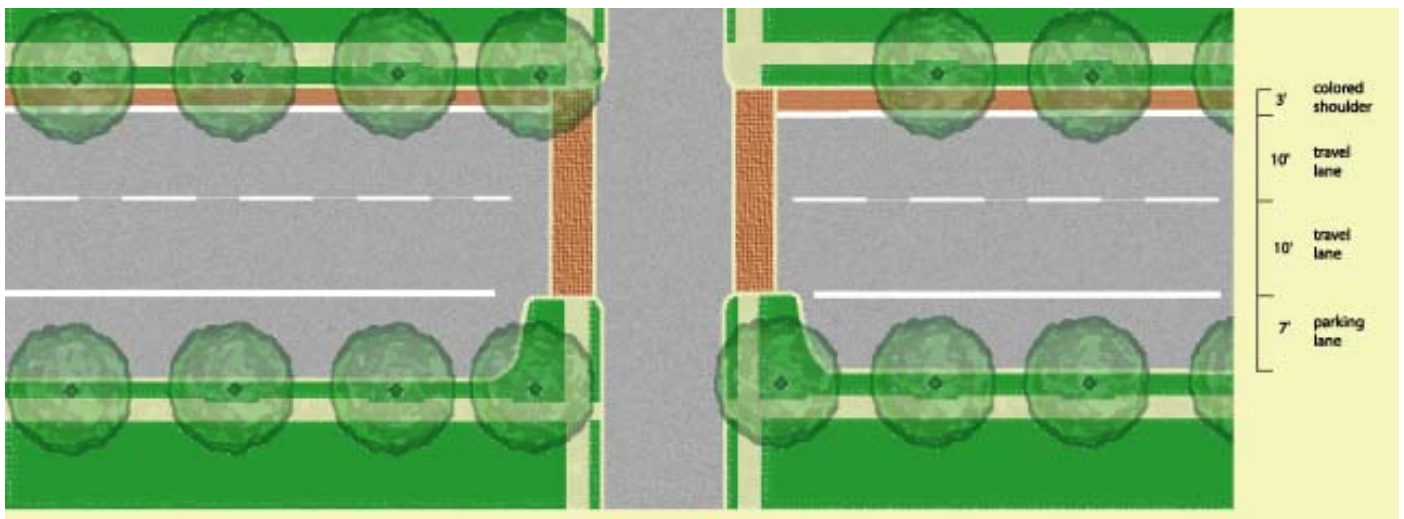
Streetscape and traffic-calming measures can respond to these goals. Following are some potential streetscape/traffic-calming tools that may be used along the corridor:

- Planting large-species trees on both sides of the street
- Installing curb extensions at intersections and mid-blocks to reduce crossing distance for pedestrians and define parking lanes
- Marking pedestrian crossings with stamped asphalt or other material to create a change in color and texture
- Painting the shoulder to reduce the apparent pavement width and keep traffic away from street trees
- Lateral shifts in the travel lanes from one side of the street to the other
- Speed tables (elongated speed bumps) and raised intersections
- Small medians between lanes to discourage weaving from lane to lane

This plan recommends that the Bullitt-Jamison corridor remain in the current one-way configuration, with implementation of extensive traffic calming measures. If the recommended traffic-calming strategies do not have the desired effect, additional measures could be explored, including two-way alternatives.



Streetscape and traffic-calming priorities for Bullitt-Jamison should be on tree planting. Planting trees along this corridor is a challenge because the planting strip between the curb and sidewalk is only 2-3 feet wide. Sidewalks are generally 5 feet wide and the width could be reduced to 4 feet in certain sections to provide more room for trees. The tree species must be selected to ensure survivability and to provide a generous canopy over the street.



Traffic calming tools shown:

- Trees
- Curb extensions
- Colored & textured crosswalks
- Colored & textured shoulder

The overall strategy is to narrow the apparent width of the street because speeds generally increase as the street width increases and vice-versa. Curb extensions and colored shoulders define the parking lane and narrow the travel lane area from 30' down to 20'. Trees improve appearance of the street and narrow the perceived width.

Traffic calming initiatives: Bullitt-Jamison Corridor

Simulation of Bullitt-Jamison with trees, crosswalks, curb extensions, and restriping. Note the apparent width is reduced while the actual width stays the same.



Interstate 73

The corridor for the planned I-73 interstate cuts along the western edge of the neighborhood. While Roanoke City Council advocated a different route, the Commonwealth Transportation Board selected the alignment that cuts through the Belmont and Morningside neighborhoods. The project is in preliminary stages of planning and little is known about the future design of the highway. It is certain that the highway will have a profound negative effect on the Belmont neighborhood. In addition to removing the area along Fourth Street and the village center at Elm Avenue and Fourth Street, it will have considerable impacts on properties just outside the study corridor. There may be an opportunity to reduce negative effects through “Context Sensitive Design.” The idea of context sensitive design is promoted by the Federal Highway Administration as a planning process that involves the local community in design decisions. This approach is an attempt to make the project work better within existing communities. The City should advocate the use of context sensitive design in the design process. It should be noted that context sensitive highway design can mitigate some negative impacts, but cannot eliminate them. If the project proceeds, future land use and development will need to be reevaluated along the entire corridor through the city.

Bicycle/pedestrian connections

Belmont-Fallon has an excellent network of sidewalks. However, segments of sidewalk are missing in some places and deterioration is evident, especially in the northern part of the neighborhood near the Norfolk Southern shops. A number of sidewalks are brick. Roanoke’s Engineering Division has surveyed the repair and construction needs for sidewalk and curbing. Most of the neighborhood’s need is in the form of repairs rather than new construction.

The Tinker Creek Greenway opened in 2001 and provides recreation and transportation connections along the eastern border with Vinton. The Mill Mountain Greenway will run along the western border of Belmont. As a fully developed neighborhood, there are few opportunities for separate greenway facilities. Most connections will be along existing streets and connect major destinations such as schools, parks, and other greenways.

Transit service

Belmont-Fallon is well covered by bus service. Three routes run through the neighborhood and all households are within a short walk of a bus stop. Valley Metro estimates that between the three routes, there are over 750 daily riders. These routes extend to areas outside of the neighborhood and allow residents convenient access to other areas of the city.

Utilities

Drainage is good and there are few problems. Street lighting is good and is generally located at corners and along avenues. Power, phone, and cable TV utilities are generally above ground. Natural gas and public water/sewer are available throughout the neighborhood. The neighborhood has good access to fiber optic cable. Additional fiber may be warranted in the 9th Street village center if the area is designated as a secondary Technology Zone.

Public Services

Public Safety

The Old #7 fire house has been established as a satellite police station. Officers will staff the station periodically, establishing a police presence in the neighborhood and increasing interaction between police and the community. The Police Department works closely with various neighborhood organizations and neighborhood watch groups in the area. Excellent fire and rescue response is provided by the 14th Street station and downtown stations.

The Old #7 Fire House is being used as a satellite police station.



Schools and Libraries

Belmont-Fallon also has excellent access to libraries. The Jackson Park branch is nearby and the main downtown library is within walking distance. Children in Belmont-Fallon have excellent school facilities. Children attend Fallon Park Elementary or Morningside Elementary. After elementary school, students then attend Jackson Middle School or Madison Middle School, and then either Patrick Henry or William Fleming High School. Morningside Elementary and Jackson Middle School have had major renovations. Jackson Middle School contains a fitness center that serves the surrounding neighborhood.



Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is cited as a priority among residents. The most common violations are disabled vehicles and outdoor junk storage. Housing maintenance code violations are also common. Residents are active in reporting violations through the Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership. Code enforcement will be an ongoing issue and consequently, code enforcement must be an ongoing effort.

With increasing levels of rental property, addressing the condition of rental housing is crucial. The Rental Inspection Program began in 1997 to address the issue of deteriorating housing and tenant safety and welfare. The program identifies rental housing structures in the City's *Conservation and Rehabilitation Districts* that do not meet housing maintenance code standards. Structures determined to be in compliance with the code are issued a certificate of compliance. For those that do not, inspectors issue orders for the owner to correct substandard conditions. In Belmont-Fallon, the program has resulted in over 127 structures being repaired, 27 vacant structures being boarded up, and 23 dilapidated structures demolished. Since its inception, the program has resulted in visible improvements in the condition of housing in the neighborhood.

Solid Waste Management

Trash collection is provided from the alley in most areas. Automated collection has transferred some refuse collection to the street. The Regional Transfer Station is located just north of the neighborhood.

Quality of Life

Parks and Recreation

Belmont-Fallon has access to some of the best parks in the Roanoke Valley. There are two very large community parks: Fallon and Jackson. Each has a full complement of recreational facilities. Jackson Park has the Buena Vista Recreation Center, which provides community programs and also houses the local office of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Fallon Park contains one of the City's two public swimming pools. Two of the neighborhood's schools are located in these parks. A fitness center, provided through the Parks and Recreation Department, is located in Jackson Middle School. Residents have close access to the Tinker Creek Greenway that borders the eastern part of the Fallon neighborhood.

The Belmont area needs a small park. The park should be relatively small (1/2 to 1 acre) and be in a central, visible location and ideally be surrounded by buildings. Since this is a developed neighborhood, it is difficult to identify potential sites. Parks are a desirable amenity and could be coordinated with new housing development. A possible site would be at the center of a proposed housing cluster between Bullitt and Jamison between Sixth Street and Eighth Street.



Fallon Park is an excellent community gateway.

Community Appearance and Security

There are high levels of vagrancy in the neighborhood and downtown areas. Residents cite problems with frequent public intoxication and littering. Streets and alleys are littered with bottles and other trash. The Roanoke Rescue Mission operates a homeless shelter in the neighborhood and plans to expand its services. Problems with vagrancy are concentrated in areas around this facility. Numerous public meetings have been held to address issues and attempt to develop consensus about future plans for the Rescue Mission. Regardless of the development outcome, the City and neighborhood residents must keep the neighborhood clean and safe to make future revitalization possible.

Area convenience stores provide easy access to alcoholic beverages. One area convenience store, Stop-In, has discontinued sale of malt liquor in response to community concerns. While access to alcoholic beverages will not be eliminated, this store's initiative should be commended and others should follow this lead.

Health

Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital is adjacent to the neighborhood. The numerous medical clinics in *Old Southwest* are accessible. The Presbyterian Center on Jamison Avenue provides periodic health and immunization clinics for residents of the neighborhood. Still, the Health Department and residents indicate that the area is under served and that a basic health care clinic is needed to respond to the needs of neighborhood residents. The health clinic should be located in a village center.

Human Services

Religious and secular agencies provide human services in the neighborhood. The Rescue Mission and the Salvation Army operate major centers in the neighborhood. The Southeast Roanoke Christian Partnership, a coalition of six neighborhood churches, the Presbyterian Center, the Rescue Mission and the Baptist Community Center, provides various humanitarian services such as food pantries, clothes closets, emergency financial assistance, and referrals to community services. In addition, the Partnership has an arrangement with the College of Health Sciences to provide a congregational nursing program.

The Rescue Mission is planning an expansion for a women's shelter. The rezoning for the expansion was approved, but was controversial as residents near the Rescue Mission opposed the expansion, citing negative affects the Rescue Mission's clients have on the surrounding area. The expansion also raised the issue of the city as a whole carrying too much of the social services burden for the region. While the Rescue Mission and other such agencies provide crucial human services, these facilities already have a considerable presence in the area and further expansion of homeless shelter functions should be avoided.

Environment

Much of the industrial area along Campbell Avenue is in the flood plain. As a result, storm drainage poses potential risks in some areas. Future development should incorporate design measures to reduce potential flood damage.

Street tree loss is heavy throughout the neighborhood. Many of the trees planted when the neighborhood was first developed have reached the end of their life expectancy. Improving the landscaping of the neighborhood and planting new trees are goals of *Vision 2001-2020*. This plan recommends aggressive reforestation along streets.

Historic and Cultural Resources



Belmont has retained many examples of fine historic residential, commercial, and industrial architecture that contribute to the city’s heritage and character. A historic survey of Belmont was conducted in 1999. Unfortunately, the area surveyed narrowly missed qualifying for historic district designation due to demolition of too many of the older homes. Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places can be influenced by the size of the district considered. Larger or smaller areas may be eligible. This plan recommends continuation of survey efforts to get as much of the neighborhood as possible designated as historic.

Some individual buildings are identified as historic. The Old #7 firehouse is on the National Register of Historic Places. *Buena Vista*, a brick Greek-revival dwelling in Jackson Park, is also on the National Register. The Norfolk Southern shops are also a major historic resource as the shops contributed to the development and growth of the neighborhood and the city, their development coinciding with the name change from Big Lick to Roanoke in 1882. All railroad-related structures were recommended in the Hill Studio study for potential listing on the Virginia Landmarks and National Register of Historic Places. Other significant historic properties include the City Cemetery near downtown, and the American Viscose Corporation plant, which has been determined eligible for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

The City Cemetery is an important historic landmark. The cemetery has issues with maintenance, security, and vandalism. Residents believe that the cemetery should be protected and maintained as a community asset.



Community Involvement

Belmont-Fallon is served by the **Southeast Action Forum**. Formed in the late 1970s, it was a founding member of the Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership. The Southeast Action Forum has a long history of neighborhood revitalization projects and has advocated for neighborhood improvement. The **Historic Belmont Preservation Association** works in the Belmont area to advocate neighborhood interests. In addition, various neighborhood watch groups operate in the area.

Recommendations

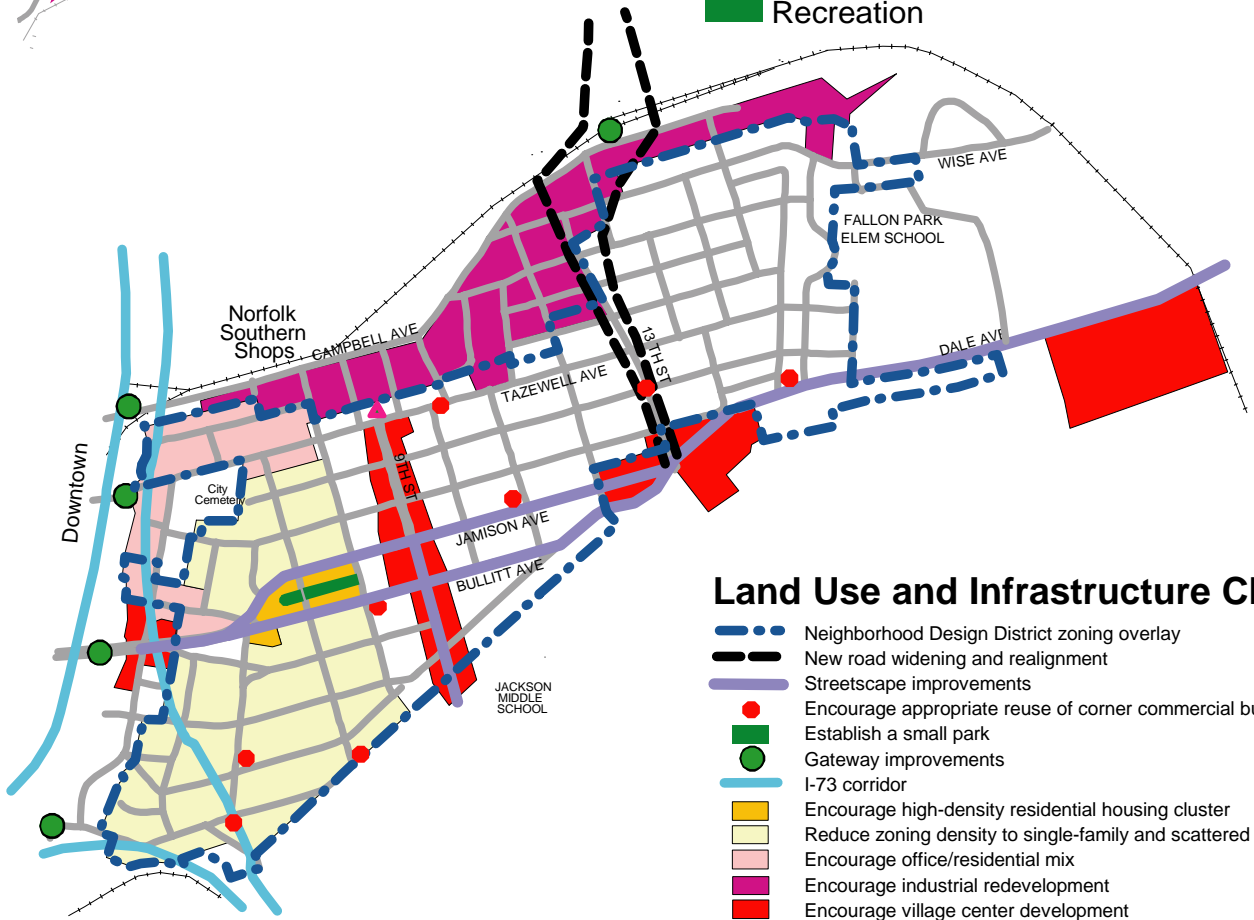
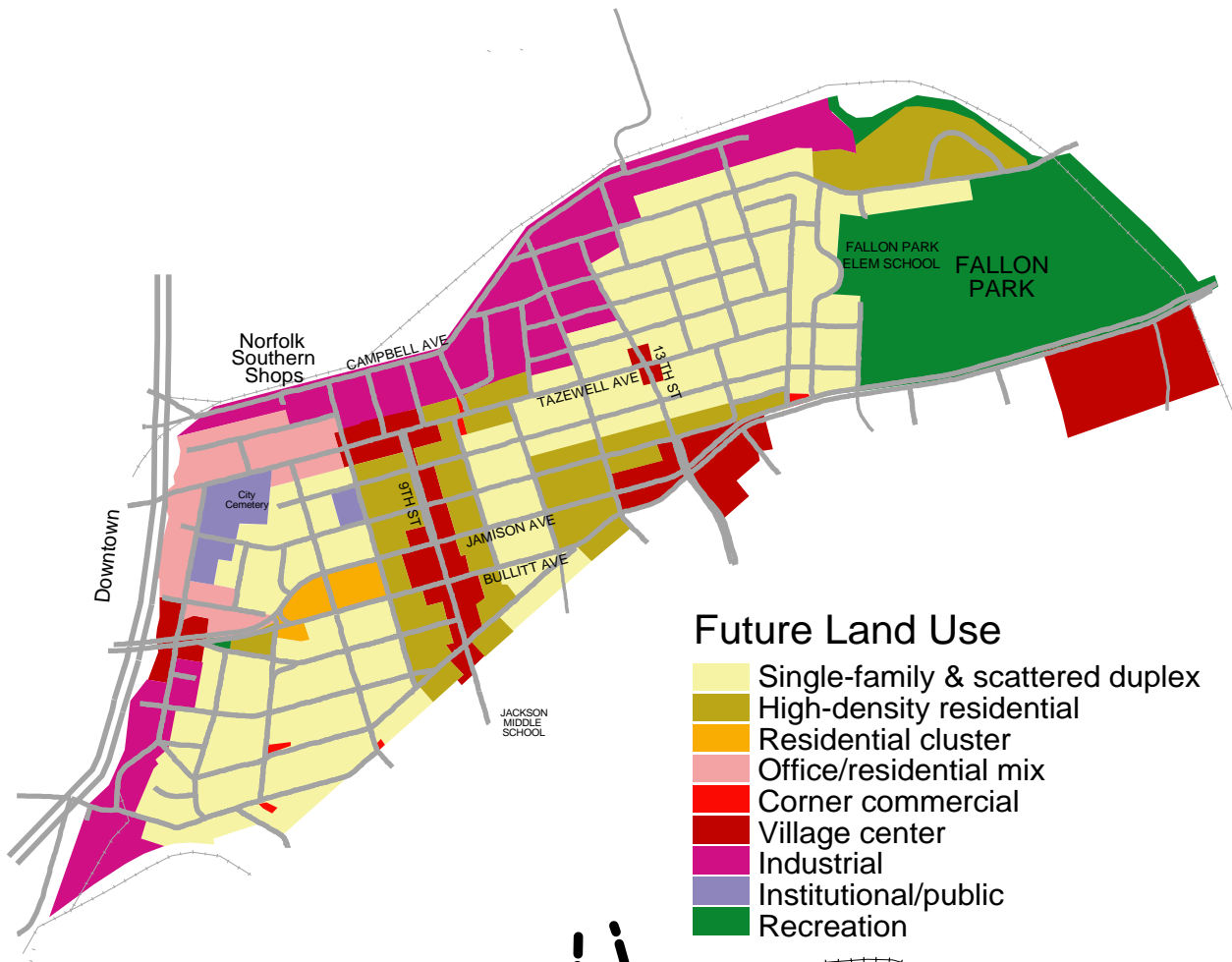
Recommended Policies and Actions

Recommendations are organized by the Plan Elements (community design, residential development, etc.). Recommendations take the form of “policies” or “actions.” Policies are principles or ways of doing things that guide future decisions. Generally, policies are ongoing. Actions are projects or tasks that can be completed and have a definite end.

Future Land Use

The *Future Land Use* plan on the following page is the most important recommendation of this plan. It specifies how future development should take place. Zoning is the principal tool that is used to implement the future land use plan. Some of the current zoning is not consistent with the future land use plan, so the plan recommends changes in zoning so that future development will be consistent with the future land use plan.

The *Land Use and Infrastructure Changes* map graphically illustrates many of the plan’s recommendations.



Community Design Policies

- **Development Model:** Future development should follow the traditional neighborhood model prescribed by *Vision 2001-2020*.
- **Village centers:** Neighborhood activity will be focused into four existing village centers spaced roughly at 1/2 mile intervals. Village centers should be dense, compact in size, and identifiable. Uses in village centers should generally be neighborhood-oriented commercial, but should also contain some businesses that serve a larger market. Live-work spaces and upper floor residential will be encouraged in village centers.
- **Medium- to high-density residential** development such as townhouses and apartments should be located near the village centers.
- **Areas between village centers** are designated for primarily single-family dwellings. Two-family dwellings and commercial uses will be interspersed throughout these areas, but the dominant character will be single-family. In areas with a single-family/two-family mix, duplexes should generally be limited to corner lots, which often have larger lots and more on-street parking available due to side street frontage.
- **Building scale:** Buildings in village centers should have at least two stories to encourage efficient use of limited commercial land, diverse uses, and compact village design. Residential buildings should be at least two stories in most cases except in limited areas such as Fallon, where one-story buildings are common. The number of stories should be guided by the surrounding traditional buildings.

Attractive retaining walls are used to accommodate building on some of the steeper terrain in Belmont-Fallon. These walls contribute to the special character of the neighborhood.



Village Center Design Features

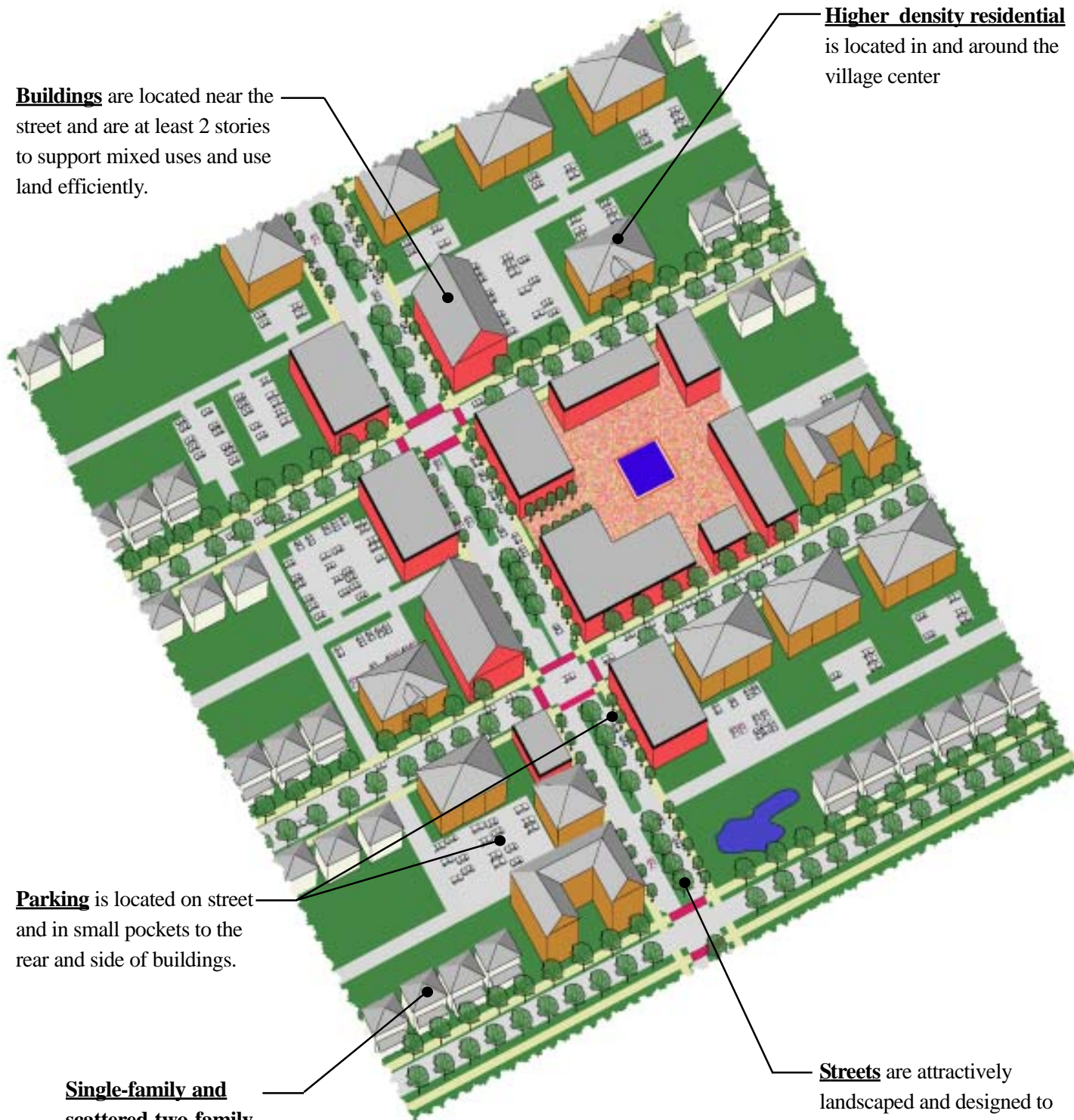
Buildings are located near the street and are at least 2 stories to support mixed uses and use land efficiently.

Higher density residential is located in and around the village center

Parking is located on street and in small pockets to the rear and side of buildings.

Single-family and scattered two-family dwellings are located in areas between village centers.

Streets are attractively landscaped and designed to encourage pedestrian activity. Street design also encourages neighborhood-appropriate vehicle speeds.

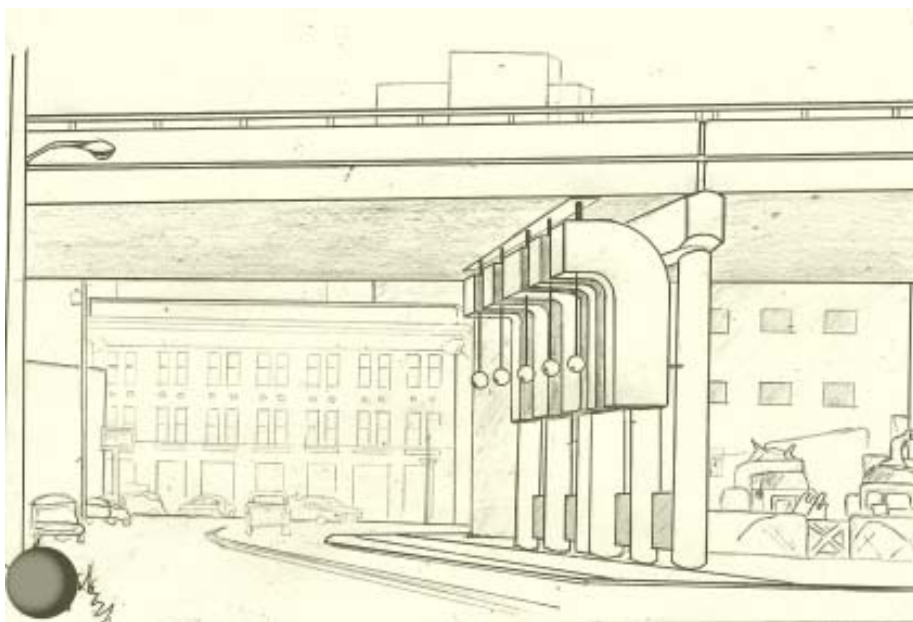


Community Design Policies (continued)

- **Building location:** To encourage a pedestrian environment and desirable streetscape, buildings in village centers should be placed close to the street, immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. Storefronts should be limited in width (25'-40'). Residential buildings should also be placed close to the front property line to maximize rear yards. Established building lines of existing development should be used to guide placement of infill dwellings.
- **Parking:** Parking is recognized as a necessity, but should not be allowed to dominate any development. Parking should be located primarily on-street. Zoning regulations should consider the availability of on-street parking when determining appropriate levels of on-site parking. Where additional parking is warranted, it should be located to the rear or side of buildings. Moreover, where on-site parking is provided, it should use alley access whenever possible.



Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture student Eric Galvin developed these design concepts for Campbell Avenue that would create a positive image of the neighborhood.



- **Gateways:** Development of buildings along the Tazewell Avenue and Campbell Avenue street frontages between Williamson Road and I-581 should be encouraged to establish a more continuous link between Belmont and downtown.
- **Ninth Street & Tazewell Avenue:** This intersection is special because it is the terminus of Ninth Street. The future use of the land at this location should be an attractive building or a small park oriented to the axis of the street.

Community Design Actions

- **Industrial District:** Development of the industrial district along Campbell Avenue should be encouraged to provide employment opportunities within the neighborhood. This area should generally have small-scale light industrial uses. Where industrial uses abut commercial and residential uses, careful building design and site layout should be used to reduce conflicts between adjoining uses.
- **Implement infill design regulations:** Establish the Neighborhood Design District zoning overlay to ensure that new construction is compatible with the traditional design of existing development.
- **Encourage office-residential mix:** Change zoning to allow mixed office and residential uses in areas near downtown to encourage rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and preservation of large, historic houses.
- **Lower residential density:** Lower zoning density from multifamily to single- and two-family in selected areas (away from village centers), leaving higher density zoning in and around village centers.
- **Change industrial zoning:** Where zoning is industrial, but the primary use is likely to remain residential, change zoning to a residential district.
- **Implement village center zoning:** Change zoning in village centers where needed to encourage a mix of uses and building scales that are appropriate in a neighborhood setting. Development codes should promote development of well-designed commercial structures that encourage pedestrian activity.
- **Encourage corner commercial:** Develop and implement zoning regulations to encourage appropriate reuse of corner commercial buildings.
- **Limit surface parking:** Develop mechanisms to limit surface parking lots and encourage use of on-street parking for periodic uses.



Residential Development Policies

- **Housing diversity:** An appropriate balance of diverse housing types will be encouraged in the Belmont-Fallon area. Residential uses will include single- and two-family dwellings, apartments, townhouses, above first floor retail, and live-work spaces.
- **Residential densities:** Generally, residential densities in and around village centers will be high. Between village centers, residential densities will be lower. Increased density in and around village centers should result in an increase in the overall density of the neighborhood.
- **Market-rate housing:** The primary focus for new development will be on market-rate housing, given current supplies of affordable housing in the neighborhood.
- **Public investment:** The city will make public investments in housing and infrastructure with the expectation of leveraging or encouraging future investment by the private sector.
- **Design:** New structures must be well-designed and compatible with existing buildings.
- **Maintenance:** Housing maintenance codes will be strictly and aggressively enforced.
- **Demolition for parking:** Demolition of houses is a last resort and should only be undertaken when rehabilitation options are sufficiently explored and found to be infeasible. Zoning regulations will discourage the demolition of houses for parking lots and will encourage on-street parking for periodic uses. Requests for zoning changes or special exceptions should be denied if they result in the demolition of a viable residential structure for parking.
- **Underused residential sites:** Zoning and incentives will be used to encourage mixed density cluster development on underused residential areas. The currently vacant property between Bullitt and Jamison between 6th and 8th should be considered for a higher density housing cluster with a central park. Development should attempt to incorporate and retain existing houses along the 700 block of Bullitt Avenue.

Residential Development Actions

- **Develop a housing master plan** for housing and infrastructure improvements along the Bullitt-Jamison corridor and target CDBG funds to implement the plan. (currently underway)
- **Identify and assemble** clusters of vacant lots for future residential development.
- **Initiate zoning changes** to support housing revitalization and desired future residential land use patterns.
- **Create a Community Development Corporation**, a nonprofit business to rehabilitate houses and develop appropriate new infill housing in the Southeast community.
- **Match rehab programs with need:** Develop an inventory of existing housing rehabilitation programs available through city and volunteer organizations and match needs with appropriate programs.
- **Market the neighborhood:** Develop materials to market the neighborhood's strengths, especially the pedestrian-oriented traditional neighborhood setting. A major strength is that downtown, village centers, parks, libraries, and schools are all within a short walk. The large, historic homes are also a primary asset.
- **Nominate historic districts:** Nominate eligible buildings and areas for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic designation makes federal, state, and local rehabilitation incentives available.



Economic Development Policies

- **Support development of compact village centers** in Belmont-Fallon and encourage appropriate development in them. Most businesses will be neighborhood serving, but village centers will ideally contain at least some larger-market businesses. Future business development will take place within commercial centers rather than as strip development along major streets.
- **Building design:** Zoning regulations and incentives will promote development of well-designed commercial buildings that encourage pedestrian activity. Commercial buildings will be placed near the sidewalk with parking on the side or in the rear. Commercial structures will be at least two stories to encourage efficient use of land and diversity of use.
- **Economic development** in village centers will be encouraged with local, state, and federal incentives.
- **Industrial development and redevelopment** will be promoted in the industrial district along Campbell Avenue.
- **Corner commercial:** Zoning regulations will encourage appropriate reuse of corner commercial buildings.

Economic Development Actions

- **Change zoning** in village centers to encourage a mix of uses and building scales that are appropriate in a neighborhood setting.
- **Implement Neighborhood Design District** to apply to new commercial structures.
- **Recruit a grocery store** to serve Southeast, downtown, and other downtown neighborhoods. The location should be in the part of the neighborhood close to downtown (9th Street or west of 9th Street).
- **Redevelop industrial area:** Initiate programs to encourage assembly and combination of small parcels in the industrial district to provide suitable industrial properties. Assist businesses with expansion/relocation/improvements through incentives.
- **Provide economic incentives** such as enterprise zones and technology zones only in recognized commercial/industrial districts.
- **Initiate historic survey and nomination** of buildings and districts for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places to make local, state, and federal rehabilitation incentives available.

Infrastructure Policies

- **Streetscapes**, especially at gateways and along major transportation routes, will be attractive. Functionally, streets will accommodate autos, pedestrians, and bicycles. Trees should be used to create a canopy over streets, so large species of trees should be used whenever possible.
- **Village center streets:** Special attention will be given to the quality of public street spaces in village centers. Decorative sidewalks, lamp posts, street furniture, trees and other public improvements will distinguish village centers.
- **Design of streets** will be carefully considered to ensure that design principles of *Roanoke Vision 2001-2020* are incorporated. The overall street system should be designed to enhance connectivity. However, the streets themselves should be designed to discourage induced commuter traffic demand. The I-73 project, if it proceeds, should incorporate a context sensitive design process into planning.

Infrastructure Actions

- **Develop site-specific plans** for streets at gateways and village centers.
- **Improve the streetscape of major corridors** in the neighborhood such as Bullitt/Jamison, Tazewell, 9th Street, and 13th Street. Traffic-calming strategies should be incorporated into improvements. The priority should be on installing trees and providing an improved pedestrian environment. Comprehensive streetscape and traffic calming improvements should be implemented along the Bullitt-Jamison corridor and the existing one-way arrangement should be evaluated for possible conversion to two-way streets. Ninth Street should be reconfigured into an urban boulevard, with a landscaped center median and on-street parking. Turn lanes at major intersections may need to be retained to provide adequate capacity.

Concept sketches for improvements to Lick Run Canal as proposed by Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture student Matthew Ogburn



Infrastructure Actions (continued)

- **Identify the 13th Street-Hollins Road project as a priority** to improve connections and access to the neighborhood and the industrial area.
- **Initiate aggressive street tree planting**, especially along major arterials and in village centers.
- **Develop safe bike/pedestrian connections** through the neighborhood to link schools, libraries, village centers, downtown, and greenways.
- **Install special infrastructure in village centers** such as decorative lights, street furniture, textured sidewalks, and covered transit stops.
- **Relocate or consolidate above-ground utilities** in village centers and along arterial streets.
- **Retain and repair existing sidewalks** throughout the neighborhood. Brick sidewalks should be retained where possible.
- **Continue regular bus transportation** available within a five-minute walk of residential areas. Evaluate routing to ensure effective connections to other parts of Roanoke. Provide covered stops in village centers.
- **Dead end streets:** Explore reopening of dead end streets wherever possible.

Quality of Life Policies

- **Health and human services:** Residents should have convenient access to health and human service services. Private & nonprofit human service initiatives should be supported
- **Additional shelter services** should be discouraged in light of the neighborhood's and the city's overall responsibility for providing these services for the region. Existing service providers should adopt policies and programs to discourage vagrancy and public intoxication. Programs to clean alleys and streets in the area should be continued and expanded.
- **Recreational areas** should be available throughout the neighborhood.
- **Tree canopy** throughout the neighborhood should be increased.
- **The City Cemetery** should be protected and maintained as an important historic resource and neighborhood asset.

Quality of Life Actions

- **Cause the development of a health clinic** in the Ninth Street village center or the Jamison and 13th Street village center.
- **Develop a small park** in the Belmont area.
- **Continue neighborhood review** of zoning and development changes.
- **Initiate private and public tree planting programs** in the neighborhood, especially along major streets
- **Engage area convenience stores** in addressing alcoholic beverage issues. Neighborhood groups should get involved in ABC licensing hearings for convenience stores.

Public Services Policies

- **Appearance and security:** The priority component of revitalization is making the neighborhood clean and safe.
- **Housing maintenance and nuisance abatement codes** will be strictly and aggressively enforced. Use public nuisance abatement ordinances to compel compliance.
- **Functional and open alleys** will be maintained. Zoning regulations will encourage the use of alleys for access to parking in the rear.
- **Litter and graffiti:** Adopt a zero-tolerance policy on litter and graffiti. Ensure that city and state properties are well maintained and free of graffiti, weeds, and trash.

Public Services Actions

- **Eliminate vagrant “camps”:** The city, VDOT (state), Norfolk Southern, and other property owners should close off access to hiding places for vagrants. Restrict access to underpasses, garages, overgrown lots, and vacant structures.
- **Regularly inspect alleys, streets, and properties** and coordinate quick cleanup of problem areas.
- **Establish a police satellite station** in the neighborhood (currently being implemented).

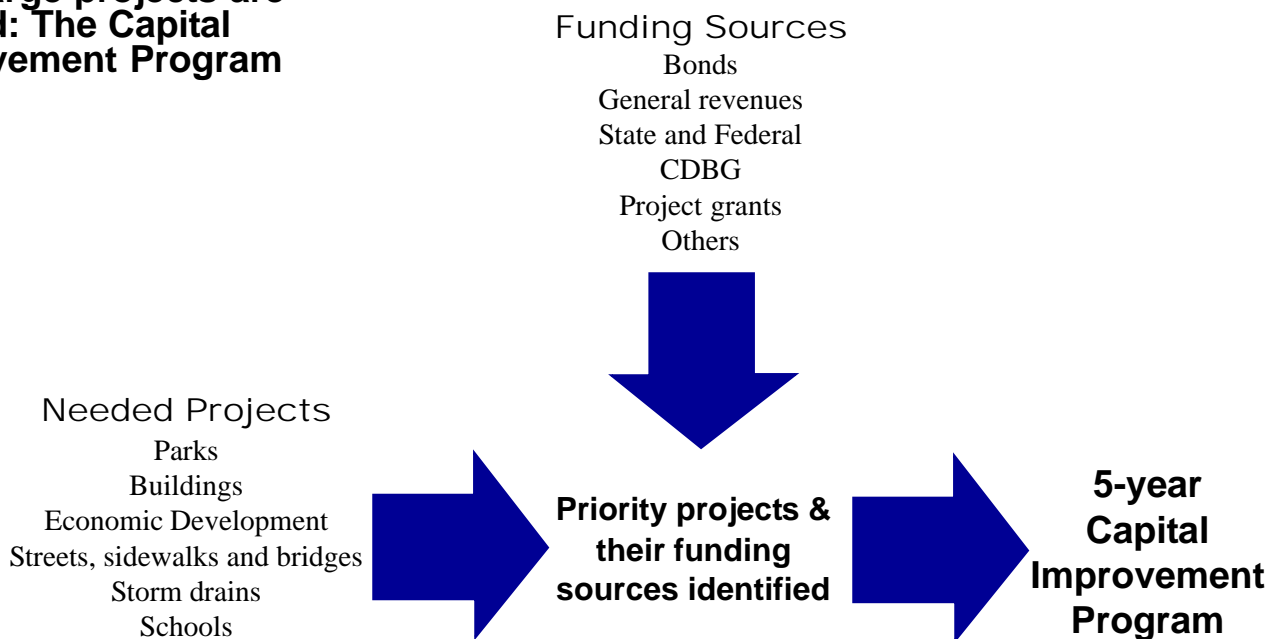
Implementation

Funding

Funding for major infrastructure projects is generally provided through the city’s Capital Improvement Program. Funding can come from a variety of sources, including CDBG, transportation funding, state and federal funds, and general revenue. The Capital Improvement Program is developed by identifying needed projects and matching them with potential funding sources. Each project is reviewed and ranked in terms of priority.

The chart on the following page identifies major projects, their time frame, the lead agency or department, and potential sources of funding. The cost of most projects such as streetscape improvements cannot be determined until more detailed planning is completed.

How large projects are funded: The Capital Improvement Program



Actions, time frames, participants and potential funding

Action	Year						Lead Agency	Potential funding sources
	1	2	3	4	5	Ongoing		
Zoning changes		*	*				PBD	PBD operating budget
Bullitt-Jamison Master Plan	*						CDBG	CDBG
Streetscape and gateway planning	*	*					PBD, VT	CDBG, TEA-21, PBD operating
Streetscape and gateway improvements		*	*	*			PW	CDBG, TEA-21, Bond, PW operating budget
Industrial redevelopment						*	ED	CDBG, Bond, ED operating budget
Economic incentives		*	*				ED	ED operating budget
Historic surveys			*	*	*		PBD	PBD operating budget, state grant
13th Street project						*	VDOT	VDOT
Development of small park			*	*			P&R	P&R operating budget, bond
Police satellite station	*						PD	PD operating budget
Code enforcement	*					*	HNS	HNS operating budget

Abbreviations:

- PW = Roanoke Public Works
- PBD = Roanoke Planning Building and Development
- CDBG = Community Development Block Grants (Federal funding to the city)
- P&R= Roanoke Parks and Recreation
- TEA-21 = Transportation Enhancement Act (Federal transportation funding)
- HNS = Department of Housing and Neighborhood Services
- VDOT = Virginia Department of Transportation
- ED = Department of Economic Development
- PD = Police Department
- VT = Virginia Tech Dept. of Landscape Architecture

Acknowledgments

City Council

Mayor Ralph K. Smith
Vice Mayor C. Nelson Harris
William H. Carder
William D. Bestpitch
M. Rupert Cutler
Alfred T. Dowe, Jr.
Linda F. Wyatt

Planning Commission

Chairman Robert B. Manetta
Vice Chairman Richard A. Rife
Gilbert E. Butler, Jr.
S. Wayne Campbell
D. Kent Chrisman
Melvin L. Hill
Fredrick M. Williams

Planning Building & Development

Brian Townsend, Director

Project Manager

Chris Chittum, AICP, Senior City Planner

Thanks to all the residents and property owners who participated in the community workshops. Special thanks to members of the Southeast Action Forum, Historic Belmont Preservation Association, and the Southeast Christian Partnership for their active involvement in development of the plan.

Thanks to the Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture students (Fall 2002)
Dr. Wendy Jacobson, Instructor