



Melrose-Rugby

NEIGHBORHOOD
PLAN UPDATE

Adopted by City Council
August 16, 2010

ROANOKE
VIRGINIA



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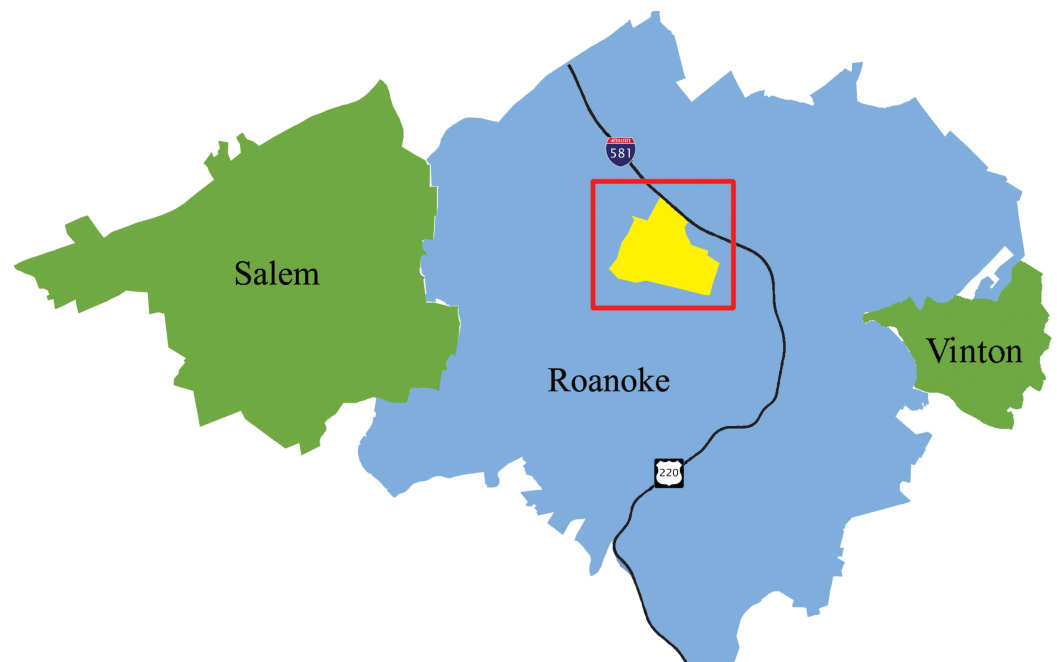
Thanks to all the residents and property owners who participated in the community workshops. A special thanks to the Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Association for their assistance with this plan and their continued commitment to the area’s quality of life.

Introduction

Melrose-Rugby is one of Roanoke’s ‘streetcar suburbs,’ a neighborhood that developed after the Melrose streetcar line was established in 1890. It has experienced a few significant transitions in its history. At its core remains a single-family neighborhood with a relatively high proportion of homeowners and long-time residents.

Melrose-Rugby is bound by Lafayette Boulevard to the west, the Heritage Acres subdivision off of Andrews Road to the north, 10th Street to the east, and on the south by Melrose and Orange Avenues (Route 460 West), a major four-lane arterial street with a mix of commercial and residential properties. Aside from its edges, the neighborhood is somewhat secluded and quiet, with many old Foursquare and Arts and Crafts style homes uniformly situated along hilly streets. Many streets have exceptional mountain views.

The neighborhood’s predominantly African-American population is largely the result of major social and public policy changes that impacted the City in the latter half of the 20th Century. In the 1950s and 60s, federally funded Urban Renewal programs forced many African-American families out of the Gainsboro neighborhood and older northeast area of the City. In the 1970s the City started to comply with state and federal desegregation laws. These factors led to demographic shifts in the City, and over time resulted in many African-American families moving into Melrose-Rugby.



Perhaps at the least, the silver lining to the loss of community in Gainsboro could be considered the sense of community that developed and has been maintained since in Melrose-Rugby. Many families living in the neighborhood have been there throughout these transitions, and the Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum has reinforced the community spirit and identity of the neighborhood over the years.

Although it is a healthy and stable neighborhood, it faces some of the same challenges as many of Roanoke's older neighborhoods. Its challenges lie on the edges of the neighborhood where it is impacted by arterial and collector streets that get high volumes of traffic. The first Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan was adopted by City Council in 2001 prior to the adoption of Vision 2001-2020, the city's comprehensive plan. This update will replace that plan as a component of Vision 2001-2020. This updated plan is needed due to the progress that has been made since the original plan was adopted, the time that has elapsed since then, and an expanded geographic area.

Neighborhood Planning and the Implementation of the 2001 Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan

Neighborhood plans are City Council adopted components of Vision 2001-2020, the City's comprehensive plan. Neighborhood plans follow the policy framework of Vision 2001-2020, while incorporating the unique factors and citizen input of each neighborhood. Like Vision 2001-2020, each plan is a long-range policy guide. Many items in a neighborhood plan are reactive, while others are proactive. Neighborhood plans are not tied directly to capital improvements or any funding mechanism; however they guide such decisions by the City administration. Residents and City staff alike will refer to this document in the future when faced with decisions regarding actions in zoning and land use, public facilities, and infrastructure needs. Its intent is to guide Melrose-Rugby in a manner consistent with City policy, improving identified areas of need, and maintaining the positive attributes of the neighborhood and recognizing its unique characteristics.



Public meeting at Roanoke Academy of Mathematics and Science

In 2001 City Council adopted the first Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan. In 2008, with adopted neighborhood plans for each neighborhood in the City consistent with Vision 2001-2020, Planning staff began to update the older plans, with Melrose-Rugby one of the first identified. Public meetings were held at the Roanoke Academy for Mathematics and Science in 2009. The public input from those meetings, combined with the policies of the previous Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan and Vision 2001-2020, form the foundation for the recommendations of this plan.

Since City Council adopted the first Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan in 2001, numerous goals have been achieved. For that reason, and simply due to its age, the 2001 plan has become obsolete. An implementation table from that plan is included in the Implementation chapter of this plan with a column added to show the status of each item that was recommended.



Sign at Melrose Rugby Center

The 2001 plan included four priority recommendations:

- Establishing the first Neighborhood Design District for improved design of infill houses.
- Changing the zoning for lower residential density and concentration of future commercial development into existing commercial areas.
- Providing for a complete system of sidewalks and curbs.
- Targeting code enforcement efforts.

Of these items, the first two have been completed. The latter two items are ongoing, though notable progress has been made. The Transporta-

tion and Infrastructure chapter contains an update of curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements, as well as priority areas this plan recommends. Several streets have been improved in the neighborhood over the past eight years, though code enforcement remains a priority for the neighborhood. Since the adoption of the first plan the staff has been bolstered and has increased its efficiency.

Overall, a significant number of recommendations of the 2001 Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan have been implemented. At the same time, there remain areas of need and some of the issues remain the same.

Neighborhood Organization

The Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum, Inc. is one of the City’s most active neighborhood associations. The organization has earned numerous achievement awards for its work.



*Melrose Neighborhood Forum President
Estelle McCadden*

It was one of the first Roanoke neighborhood organizations to take part in National Night Out, an annual event that highlights neighborhoods and promotes safety and community spirit. It also started the Virginia Neighborhood Statewide Conference and will be hosting the conference in 2010. It has won a “Physical Revitalization” award from Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) for renovation work done by volunteers in the neighborhood.

Unlike most neighborhood organizations, the Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum owns the building it meets in. In 1997 the organization purchased a house on Orange Avenue, which it renovated for a community center where its monthly meetings and other events are held. Several times a year the organization hosts a well attended fish fry at the center to raise funds.

The Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum’s long-time president, Estelle McCadden, recently received Total Action against Poverty’s “community” award, and was named Roanoke’s Citizen of the Year in 2008.



High Priority Initiatives

Code Enforcement: Continue the Rental Inspection Program (RIP) and emphasize regular code enforcement action to reduce nuisance violations.

Transportation: Per the Key Transportation Nodes map, evaluate existing and potential connections in and around the neighborhood to determine long-term traffic patterns and improvements.

Zoning and Land Use: Per the Future Land Use map, maintain the current residential and commercial zoning districts.

Parks and Recreation: Ensure that the existing services of Eureka Park are improved if a new recreation center is built and that children can safely walk or bike to it. Maintain the existing services at Eureka Park Community Center if a new center is not built to serve the neighborhood.

Federal Grant Funds: Consider the north side of Orange and Melrose Avenues in Melrose-Rugby in conjunction with the Loudon-Melrose neighborhood as a potential focus area for future Housing and Urban Development grant funds.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities: Evaluate potential pathways and infrastructure improvements to increase opportunities to walk and bike, with particular emphasis on connections to the Lick Run Greenway.



Intersection of Rugby Boulevard and 10th Street, N.W.

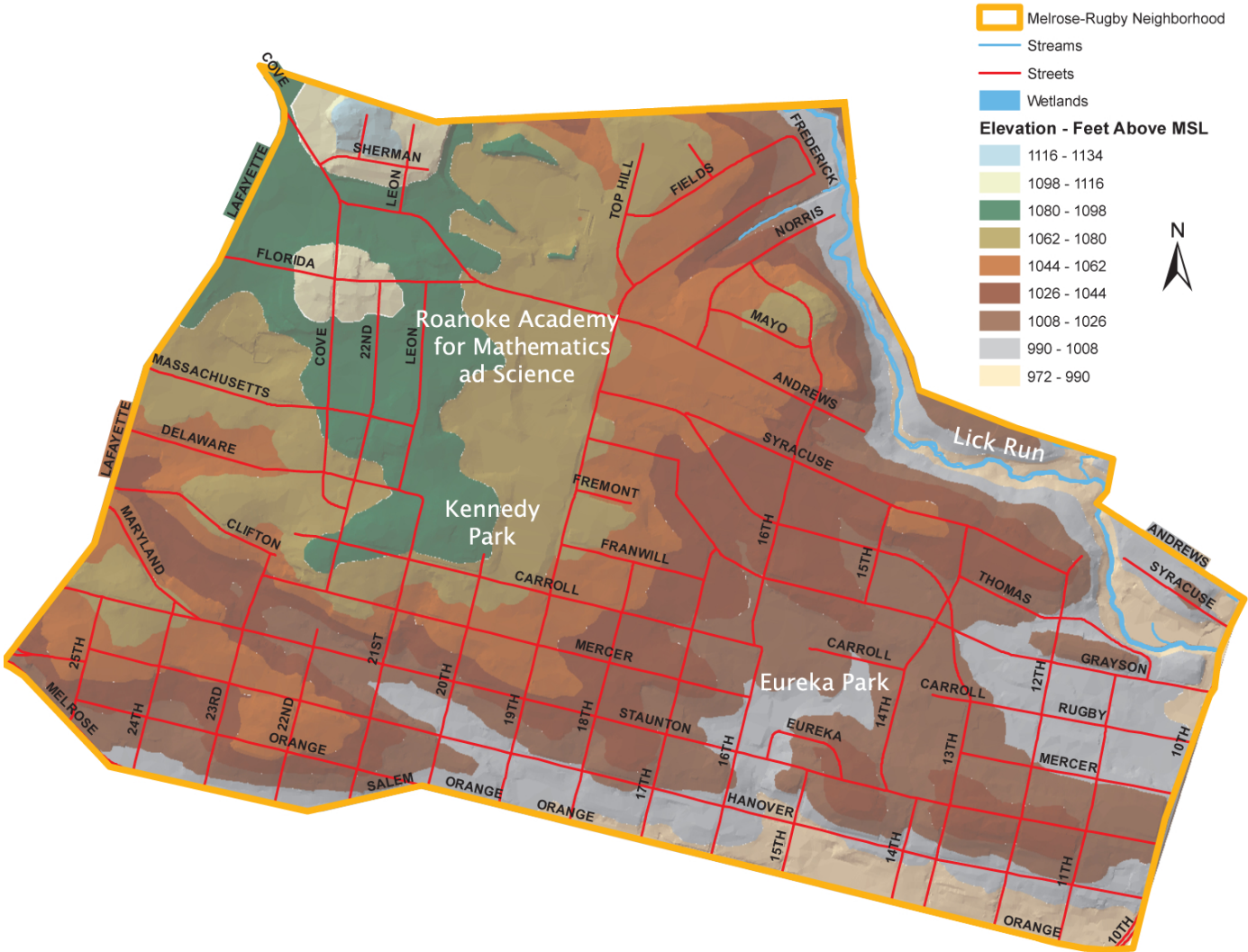
Community Design

Physical Layout

Melrose-Rugby is a medium density neighborhood that bridges the City's early and more recent suburban growth. Its southern edge, closest to downtown, features traditional neighborhood design and a typical grid street pattern. Further north into the neighborhood are streets that curve away and deviate from the traditional grid. The housing styles of these areas reflect their era, with primarily two-story American four-square and cottage style houses in the south, and one-story ranch style and bungalow style houses in the north.

Throughout the interior of the neighborhood, all of the streets have two lanes, most with curb, gutter and sidewalk. The neighborhood is bordered by one arterial, two collectors, and one local street; Lafayette Boulevard on the west, Tenth Street to the east, Andrews Road and the Heritage Acres subdivision on the north, and Orange Avenue and Melrose Avenue to the south. These streets provide the main points of access for neighborhood residents and see considerable through traffic.

One of the neighborhood's most popular features is its parks. There are three parks including the only facility in the City that was originally built as a recreation center, Eureka Park. In addition to the parks within the neighborhood, Brown-Robertson Park is on 10th Street along the neighborhood's eastern edge and is connected to the neighborhood by the Lick Run Greenway. Although there is considerable green space, many streets lack trees.



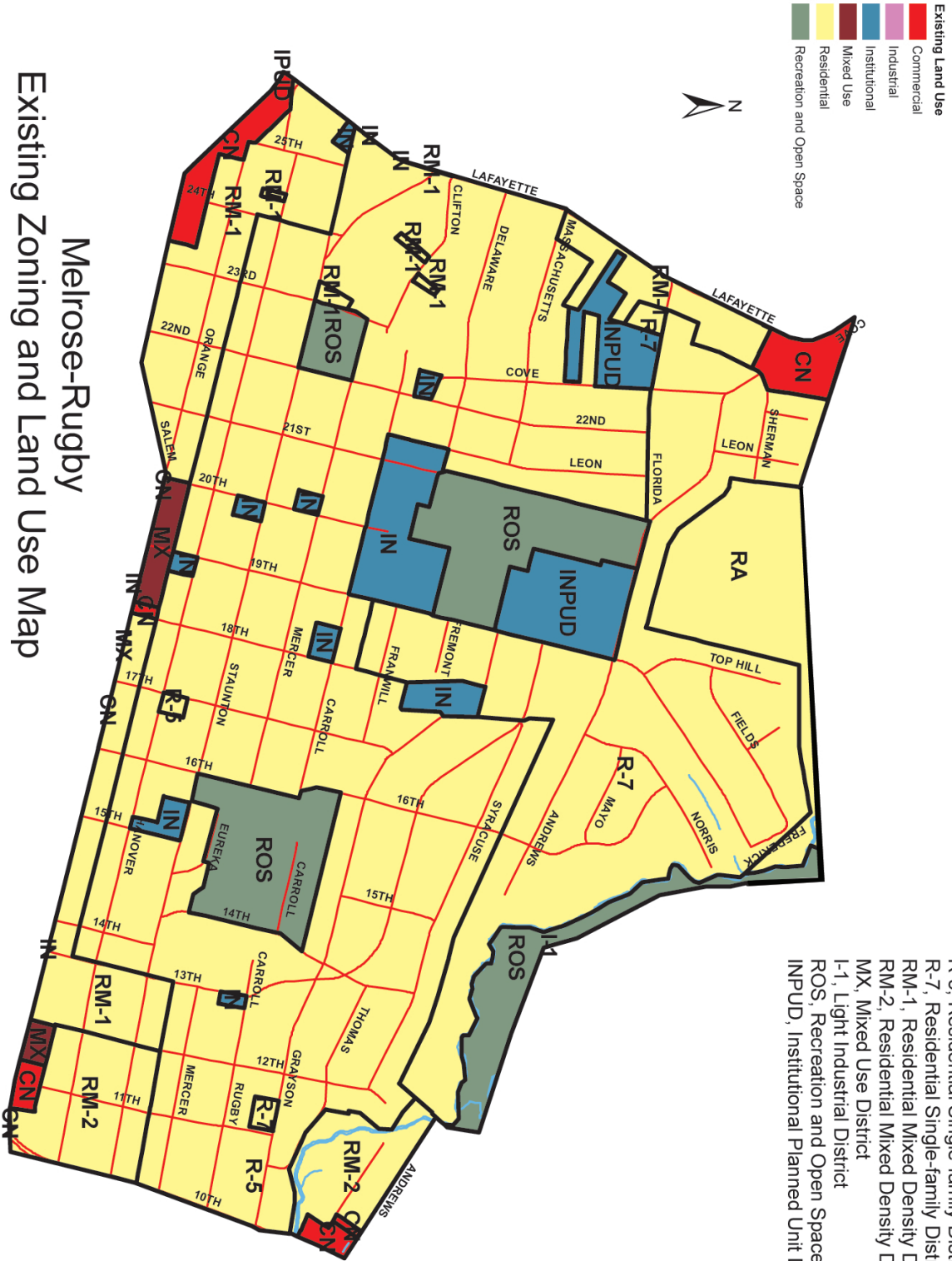
Melrose-Rugby Topography Map

Zoning and Land Use

Melrose-Rugby is predominantly residential and has few commercial establishments on its edges considering the volumes of traffic. Residents stated they preferred to keep the core of the area residential and not allow commercial uses within the interior of the neighborhood.

Two of the major issues facing Melrose-Rugby - design of infill housing and the high proportion of rental properties - have been addressed since the original plan’s adoption in 2001. With the support of the neighborhood, Melrose-Rugby was the first neighborhood in the City with the Neighborhood Design District (NDD) overlay zoning, adopted by City Council in 2002. In 2005, the City adopted a new zoning ordinance and map. The zoning map downzoned much of the neighborhood

Melrose-Rugby
Existing Zoning and Land Use Map



- CN, Commercial Neighborhood District
- CLS, Commercial Large Site District
- IN, Institutional District
- RA, Residential Agricultural District
- R-5, Residential Single-family District
- R-7, Residential Single-family District
- RM-1, Residential Mixed Density District
- RM-2, Residential Mixed Density District
- MX, Mixed Use District
- I-1, Light Industrial District
- ROS, Recreation and Open Space District
- INPUD, Institutional Planned Unit Development District

from multifamily to its original single-family residential designation, per the future land use map of the 2001 plan.

The relatively few commercial establishments in the neighborhood are located on the neighborhood's edges on highly traveled streets. There are some scattered 'pocket commercial' establishments on 10th Street, Rugby Boulevard, Orange and Melrose Avenues. Lafayette Boulevard has a concentration of businesses, including a small village center at its intersection with Cove Road. This area is fairly well-traveled. Streetscape enhancements could improve its appearance and pedestrian safety.

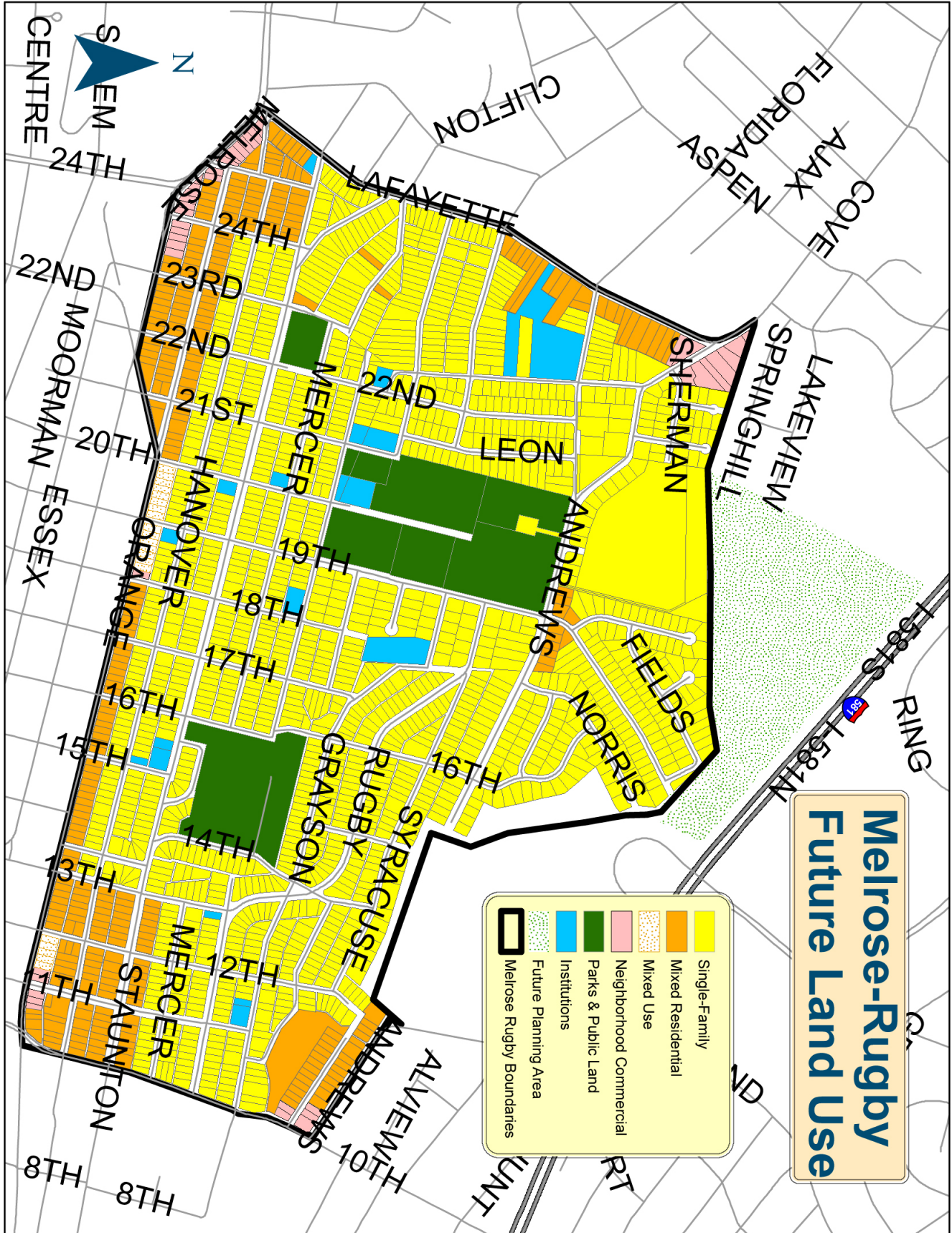
Melrose and Orange Avenues converge on the neighborhood's southern edge as part of U.S. Route 460, which is a major arterial street that has very high volumes of traffic in some segments. Much of Orange Avenue is lined with commercial development. However, it is predominantly residential along the segments in Melrose-Rugby. In 1987, the segment in Melrose-Rugby was rezoned for general commercial use, but was returned to primarily residential zoning in 2005 due to the lack of commercial development and the abundance of vacant commercial lots and structures elsewhere.

Kennedy Park and the Roanoke Academy for Mathematics and Science is right in the core of the neighborhood. The site is over 30 acres and provides substantial green space and playing area for children in the neighborhood.

Future Land Use

The future land use map of the neighborhood reflects a balance between the desired development pattern that residents would like to see and the existing conditions and land use in the area. This map will be used as a guide for the zoning of the neighborhood whenever zoning ordinance and/or zoning map amendments are proposed.

Large public open spaces should be retained and enhanced, and appropriate natural buffers to Lick Run should be established and maintained. The zoning changes made in 2005 when the City adopted its current zoning ordinance should remain in place. The core residential area is slated to remain residential with single-family housing the predominant use. One small change is proposed for a portion of the Heritage Acres (see Residential Development chapter) subdivision. Several properties fronting on Andrews Road are identified on the future land use map for higher density residential development.



**Melrose-Rugby
Future Land Use**

Vacant Land to the North of the Neighborhood

North of Heritage Acres and south of Interstate 581 there are over 103 acres of land that are mostly vacant. The only exceptions are a single-family house off Andrews Road and a City-owned detention pond. Collectively, these tracts present one of the largest, if not the largest, sites of relatively level, vacant land in the City. While this land is comprised of several different parcels with a few different owners, the proximity of it warrants that it should be considered as a whole. Consolidation of all these properties would be ideal for any future development. It should be noted however, that this plan does not provide the City with any means or intent to facilitate acquisition or transfer of these properties.

This land adjoins the I-581 Valley View Boulevard interchange. At the time of the planning process, VDOT was studying potential improvements to complete the interchange on the southern side of I-581 and create a connection to it. This potential connection is also being discussed for potential inclusion in the update of the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Long-Range Transportation Plan. It should be noted however, that both projects are only conceptual at this point and do not have any dedicated funding. Both are long-term ideas that will likely take several years to become part of the City and VDOT's funding plans.

When completed, this connection will almost certainly facilitate development of the vacant land to the north of the neighborhood. Vision 2001-2020 states "transportation and land use will be integrated to promote compact urban development and reduce the frequency and length of automobile trips. Bicycle facilities and pedestrian improvements will be a fundamental part of land use and transportation planning."

*Vacant Land north of
Melrose-Rugby*



The potential of this land should be maximized if it is developed. Crucial to any development on this site will be street designs and connections. Designs that limit access or create additional barriers to the surrounding neighborhoods are not conducive to building and maintaining a sense of community. Valley View Mall was designed for traffic to flow in and out from I-581 and Hershberger Road, while the neighborhoods adjoining it were separated by fencing. In recent years, neighbors have requested more direct access to Valley View Boulevard.

Streets should be interconnected in a system designed for local traffic that allows vehicles to pass through, but only at lower speeds. It may not be possible to design a traditional grid pattern on this land; therefore bisecting curvilinear streets may offer the optimal development potential. Roundabouts or traffic circles would also be ideal in creating traffic patterns that discourage speeding, and excessive through traffic. In addition, entrances and exits into the site should discourage vehicular speeding into the surrounding neighborhoods.

By developing this land intensively in some areas, more open space can be preserved. Lick Run passes through this tract, and any design should avoid development in the flood plain, and preserve green space. One possibility is a mixed-use community that blends into and complements the surrounding neighborhoods. Small housing clusters combined and interspersed with commercial development could create a village atmosphere.

Although it is not within the boundaries of Melrose-Rugby it is important that the neighborhood is engaged in the future of this land and potential street connection to Valley View Boulevard. There will be an additional planning process to discuss potential options for this land in the future. All of the surrounding neighborhoods, Melrose-Rugby, Fairland, and Washington Park, will be invited and encouraged to participate in this process.

At the time of the planning process, there have been no official requests of the City to rezone this property for development. However, it is certain that any substantial development of the vacant land north of the neighborhood will require a rezoning and public hearing process.

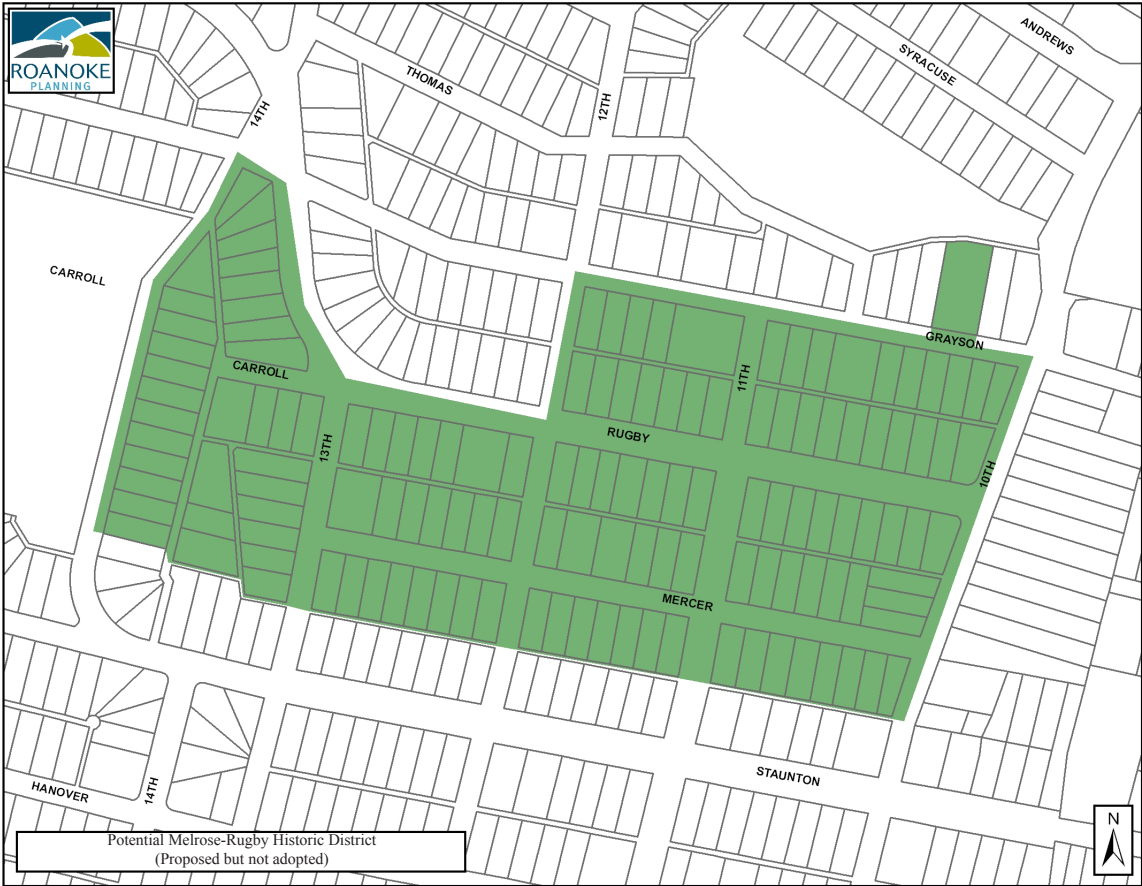
Historic Preservation



Gargoyle on Rugby Boulevard pillar.

During the public workshops, residents voiced concern over a couple of the neighborhood’s historic landmarks; the stone pillars and wall at the entrance to Rugby Boulevard off 10th Street, and the gargoyles at 11th Street. City transportation staff does not work on projects like these, although both are in the public right-of-way and are thus the City’s responsibility. A neighborhood development grant should be pursued by the Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum through the City’s Neighborhood Services office to hire a qualified stone mason to repair these landmarks. If such a grant isn’t sufficient, this project should be considered through a larger Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application.

Residents expressed interest in having a historic survey done for the neighborhood for potential listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A survey was completed in 2010 and the area is now designated “eligible” for the National Register. It will make a positive long-term economic impact, and maintain a sense of pride and history for residents. Placement on the National Register allows all “contributing (considered old enough)” structures to be eligible for historic tax credits in any rehabilitation work.



Residential Development



Melrose-Rugby is primarily a neighborhood of owner-occupied, single-family dwellings. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the housing units are single-family, well above the city's rate of 62%. Sixty-seven percent (67%) are owner-occupied, which is also above the city's rate. Most of the houses in Melrose-Rugby reflect the character of the homes found in Roanoke's older neighborhoods. The American Foursquare and Cottage styles are the common types of housing in the southern part of the neighborhood. The northwestern part of Melrose-Rugby is more suburban. Here, split-levels and one-story ranch style homes are common. Some infill development has occurred on vacant lots in the older sections of Melrose-Rugby. Most infill housing are modern duplexes and small single-family homes.



Example of incompatible infill development at Staunton Avenue and 21st Street N.W.

The incompatible design and poor construction quality common of new infill houses was a problem in the past as they detracted from the architectural character of the original homes. The adoption of the Neighborhood Design District (NDD) in 2002 was due largely to the request of neighborhood homeowners. The NDD regulations are based on the neighborhood's housing styles, and thus require new architectural designs to be compatible with the neighborhood. Each building plan that is submitted must be approved per the NDD guidelines prior to any building permits being issued. In addition to the NDD, in 2008 the City Planning Commission endorsed the Residential Pattern Book for the City of Roanoke. This document is a resource for residents and home builders to identify the housing styles in different neighborhoods, and the specific design features that each includes.

Heritage Acres



Aerial View of Heritage Acres property.

Heritage Acres is a large, mainly vacant subdivision off Andrews Road across from the Roanoke Academy of Mathematics and Science. The owner subdivided and partially developed the property in the early 1980s, but financial problems halted the development. At the time of the 1985 comprehensive plan, the site was identified for potential industrial development. The 2001 Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan identified it as an opportunity for mixed-use development. This plan recommends maintaining most of its original intention with single-family housing. However, the portion fronting on Andrews Road is identified on the future land use map for townhouses or multifamily development.

Allowing for higher density housing; e.g., townhomes or apartments, on this portion of Andrews Road will not detract from the single-family character of the surrounding neighborhood. Andrews Road is fairly well traveled and this style of housing is suitable and would expand the diversity of housing options. Developing more units on the site is an environmentally more responsible use of the land, while also making the entire site more financially viable.

Development of this site with market-rate housing will further the goals of the City's Strategic Housing Plan by providing new housing options in the neighborhood and increasing the diversity of housing options.

CDBG and HOME Eligible Opportunities



Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) funds are issued to the City from the Federal government's Housing and Urban Development (HUD) department. Since 2002, City Council has employed a policy of devoting 75% of the City's annual allotment into one selected neighborhood. This strategy has been employed in three different neighborhoods to date. The time period spent in each selected neighborhood has been two to three years.

At present, Hurt Park is the focus area with plans to continue redevelopment of that neighborhood through fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) 2010-11 at least. Thereafter, City Council must either decide on a new focus neighborhood or amend the policy. In 2002, six neighborhoods were selected by City Council as finalists for grant funding. Although Melrose-Rugby was not one of the neighborhoods selected, Loudon-Melrose, its southern neighbor, was.

The two neighborhoods adjoin at Orange Avenue, which is one of the problem areas in terms of property maintenance. Future consideration should be given to addressing this corridor between the two neighborhoods. A comprehensive approach to this corridor would also entail the streets that are parallel to Orange Avenue on both sides. Hence, such an approach would involve two neighborhoods at the same time, while addressing the most problematic areas for each of them.

An alternative or additional approach to focusing grant funds would be the Lafayette Boulevard and Cove Road village center corridor, extending to Heritage Acres. This would combine streetscape improvements in the village center with housing development on its outskirts.



Orange Avenue corridor looking east from 18th Street, N.W.

Economic Development



Village Center at Lafayette Boulevard and Cove Road, N.W.

Melrose-Rugby shares the common concerns of other neighborhoods in that its residents need access to more and better employment opportunities. Within the neighborhood itself, there are few jobs. As previously noted, Melrose-Rugby has few commercial establishments within its boundaries. There are some commercial services on its edges that are valuable to the neighborhood. Concentrations exist on Melrose Avenue and the intersection of Lafayette Boulevard and Cove Road. Maintaining these establishments and keeping commercial spaces occupied provides convenience for the neighborhood and improves the City's economy.

Melrose-Rugby's residents benefit from its geography, land use and development pattern, which separate them from the industrial development other neighborhoods often have in their backyards. There have been conflicts with small businesses over the years, but such issues typically have not had a major impact on a significant portion of the neighborhood.

Commercial land use encroachment can become an issue in any neighborhood where commercial properties abut residences. Melrose-Rugby has little history of such problems. The future land use map serves as the guide for any potential land use changes.

Village Center Development

Vision 2001-2020 promotes the village center concept; small neighborhood commercial services surrounded by residential development within a neighborhood. While there is commercial development on the edges of Melrose-Rugby, there is essentially one village center that serves the neighborhood; the commercial entities at Lafayette Boulevard and Cove Road.



This intersection features a gas station/convenience store, two restaurants, and a retail establishment. One of the restaurants, La Cove, has been in this location for many years. These establishments all have some parking in the front of their business. However their proximity to residences in the surrounding neighborhoods should attract pedestrians. This intersection is particularly difficult to cross in some areas however. While in recent years sidewalk was added to the south side of Cove Road, the north side where the businesses are located, lacks enough public right-of-way at present. In addition, Cove Road east of Lafayette Boulevard was noted by residents as a high priority for sidewalks.

In conjunction with any design alterations or improvements to Lafayette Boulevard and Cove Road, the streetscape of this village center should be adjusted accordingly per the City's Street Design Guidelines (see the Transportation chapter).

La' Cove Restaurant (above) and the Cultural Arts For Excellence - A project of Kingdom Life Ministries International (right) located in the Lafayette/Cove village center



Programs and Incentives

Recently, the City's Economic Development Authority created an Entrepreneur District. Virginia Tech, Virginia Western and the Small Business Development Center have partnered with the City in this effort to assist and develop entrepreneurs with training, research, loans and cost reduction initiatives. The intent of the district is to provide additional services to current or potential business owners in areas that are currently underserved or have unrealized economic development potential.

There are two portions of the district within the boundaries of Melrose-Rugby, both on the north side of Orange Avenue. One is between 18th and 20th Street, the other west of 23rd Street to Lafayette Boulevard. However, the district spans along the south side of Orange Avenue and north side of Melrose Avenue in Loudon-Melrose, adjoining the neighborhood. Thus, the district has the potential to impact business activity on the neighborhood's commercial corridor.

These same portions of the neighborhood are also included in Enterprise Zone 1A. An Enterprise Zone is a geographically defined area designated by the Governor. The Virginia Enterprise Zone program was established by the General Assembly in 2005 through the Virginia Enterprise Zone Act. The state and City are entered into a ten year partnership to encourage business expansion and recruitment by offering both state and local incentives. Businesses locating within the boundaries of an Enterprise Zone may qualify for state and local incentives. In Enterprise Zone 1A these include facade grants (to improve buildings), development fee rebates, utility hookup rebates, job grants and others.

The village center at Cove Road and Lafayette Boulevard should be evaluated and considered for any future expansion of Enterprise Zone 1A or the Entrepreneur District.

Transportation



Rugby Boulevard, N.W.

Transportation and Infrastructure

The City's Street Design Guidelines, endorsed by the Planning Commission in 2007, identify Orange Avenue as an arterial street and both Lafayette Boulevard and 10th Street as collector streets. Arterial streets are major routes that typically allow motorized vehicles to travel longer distances at faster speeds. Access off of arterial streets by through traffic should be minimized. Collector streets typically provide more access to properties, are usually narrower and have smaller volumes of traffic than arterial streets. As a rule of thumb, half of the people using a collector street are passing through, and are reaching a destination off of that street.



Orange Avenue

The neighborhood's edges are defined by arterial and collector streets, all of which are well traveled. As is the case with any residential neighborhood, residents would like to minimize traffic on their streets while at the same time have the ability to travel in and out as conveniently as possible. The current traffic volumes and the configuration of local streets works well for residents. While many residents would prefer less traffic on the neighborhood's edges on Orange and Melrose Avenues, 10th Street, and Lafayette Boulevard, these streets provide regional connectivity and serve a large number of vehicles. Decreases in traffic on these streets are unlikely. Therefore, addressing land uses and street design are crucial to improving conditions for the neighborhood.

At the time of the planning process, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) was working on two significant projects in the neighborhood; the widening of 10th Street and a study of the Valley View Boulevard interchange. These projects and other street design issues are discussed in the following section and on the Critical Transportation Nodes map.

I-581 Valley View Boulevard Interchange and Connector

The vacant land north of the neighborhood and the potential interchange improvements of and connection to Valley View Boulevard poses significant additions to the neighborhood's street network. The impact of the interchange on the neighborhood needs to be considered with regards to the potential creation of new traffic patterns and the alteration of others. This part of the neighborhood should be addressed with a comprehensive strategy for street improvements between Cove Road and I-581.

The primary decision for the City is where and how the connection will be accessed by and into the neighborhoods surrounding it. Vision 2001-2020, the City's comprehensive plan, recommends that streets are pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and connected into a grid or similar street system as much as possible. Connectivity of streets allows motorists more options and distributes traffic across more streets, rather than channeling it onto one or two routes. The City's Street Design Guidelines will be used as a reference to design any new connection to the interchange. Per the Complete Streets Policy, new or reconfigured streets will be designed to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as automobiles.

There are several potential options for this connection, but at the time of the planning process there has not been any preliminary engineering and design work completed to identify any routes. However, per the principles of Vision 2001-2020 and the location of this site, some form of connection will likely be made into Melrose-Rugby. A public planning process will be undertaken in the future to address the potential options for this land and new street.

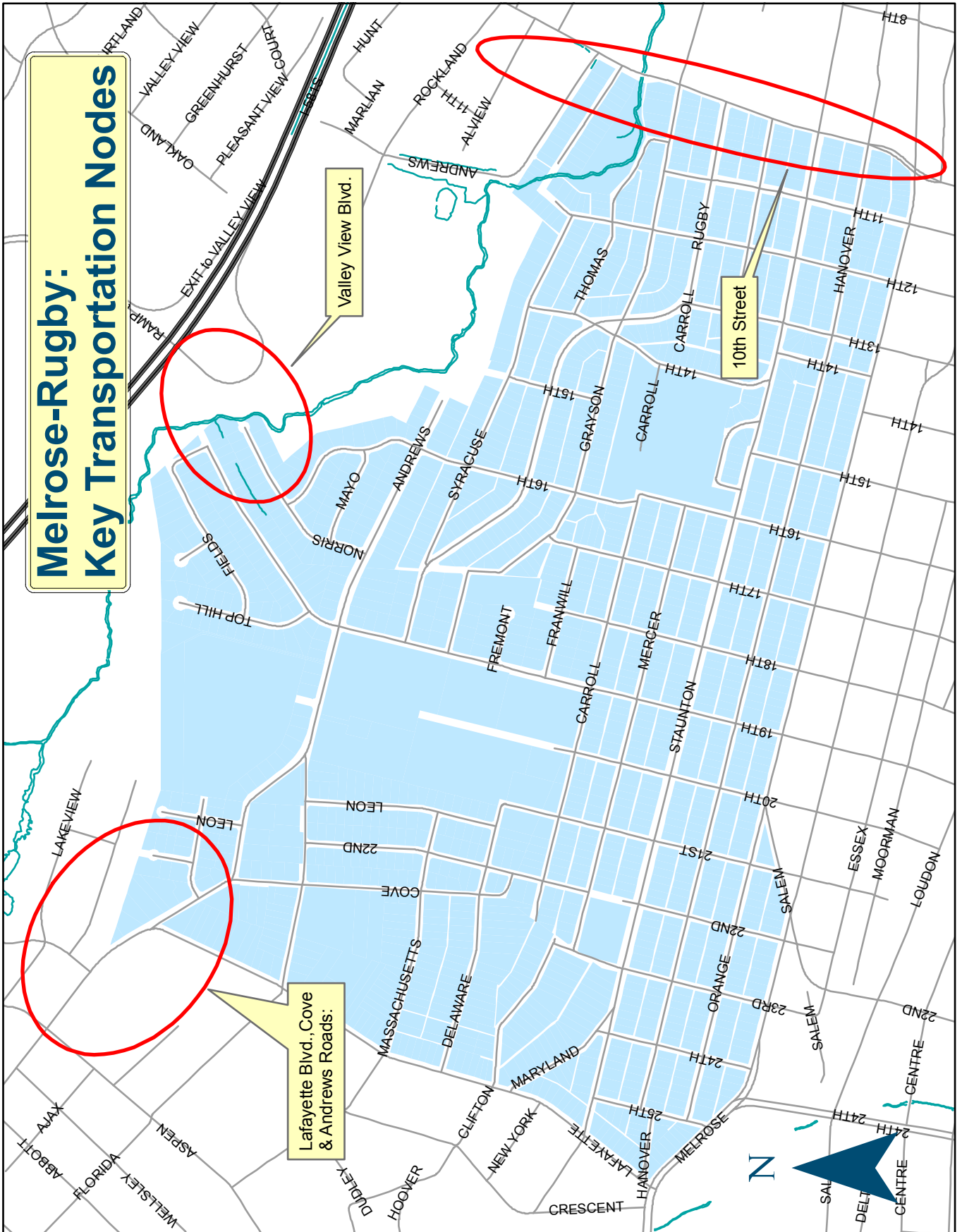
Lafayette Boulevard, Cove and Andrews Road

Cove Road has been identified by the City's Street Design Team as one of the City's streets that should be prioritized for improvements. It is also included in the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Long-Range Transportation Plan, which recommends an urban two-lane design that typically includes curb, gutter, sidewalks and turn lanes.

The commercial establishments at the intersection of Lafayette Boulevard and Cove Road provide the neighborhood with much needed amenities within walking distance. However, traffic is fairly heavy and typically travels at fast speeds to and from Cove Road, which makes crossing the street unsafe in this area.

As previously noted, the north side of Cove Road lacks sidewalk, yet is the side with the commercial establishments. For a number of years residents along Cove Road in the Fairland and Villa Heights neighborhoods have requested curb, gutter and sidewalk on the street. Several years ago sidewalk was installed on the south side of Cove Road, but couldn't be installed on the north side due to a lack of right-of-way.

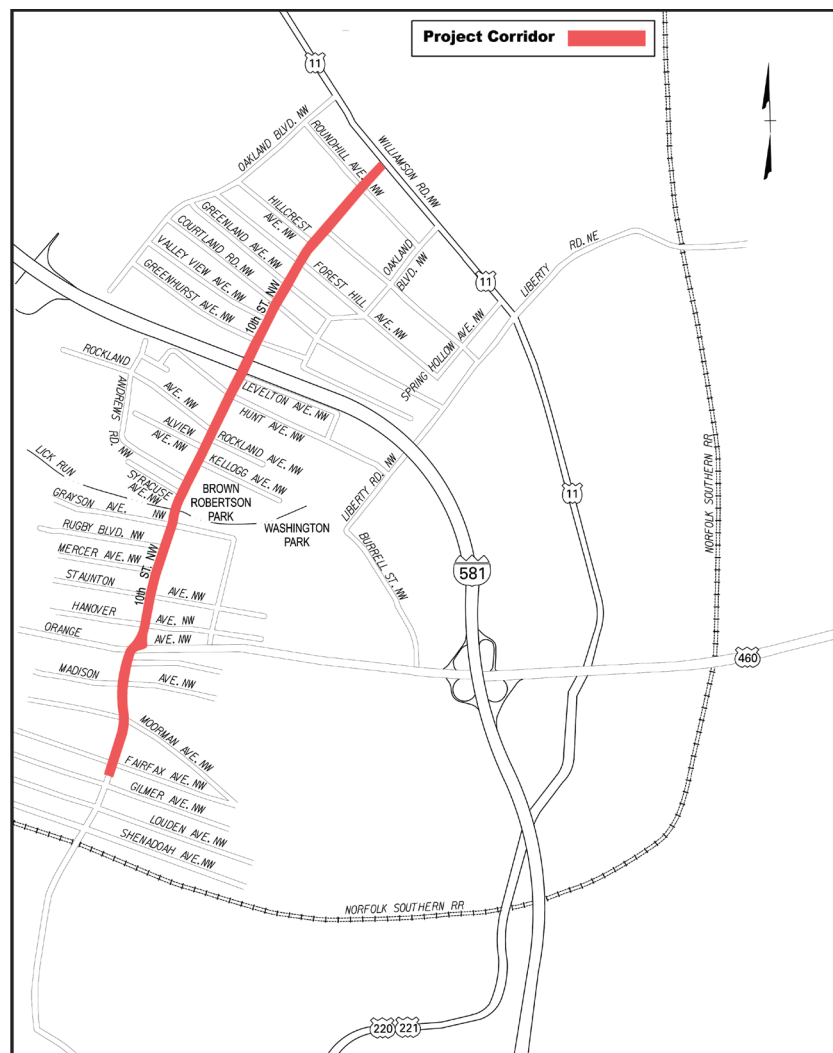
Considerable improvement of this street and intersection will require the City to purchase private property to use as right-of-way. Cove Road needs to be evaluated from Peters Creek Road to its intersection with Lafayette Boulevard, irrespective of any impact that the potential connection to the Valley View Boulevard interchange might have. However, the design of that connection may necessitate that Cove Road and Andrews Road are addressed as one corridor with considerations for increased connectivity to the north. The businesses on Cove Road should be enhanced with a village center streetscape if any street projects are undertaken here.



10th Street

VDOT has nearly completed designs for the widening of 10th Street between Fairfax Avenue and Williamson Road. This project has been in progress for a number of years with a number of design options considered. With input from City staff and residents, VDOT altered the design to two travel lanes, several turn lanes, with bicycle lanes and curb, gutter and sidewalk on each side. The bridge over Lick Run will be reconstructed at a higher grade, raising the grade of this portion of 10th Street so that it will be less likely to flood. The Lick Run Greenway, which currently crosses 10th Street, will be rerouted under 10th Street through a concrete arch under the new bridge. Street trees should be planted along 10th Street in accordance with the Street Design Guidelines.

Construction of the project is scheduled to begin in 2014.



10th Street Project Corridor

Curb, Gutter, and Sidewalk

Since adoption of the previous plan in 2001 a number of streets have been outfitted with curb, gutter and sidewalk. There are still a number of streets lacking curb, gutter and sidewalk; however, the most heavily traveled east-west streets have been addressed. Due to topography and right-of-way issues, it is not feasible to install curb, gutter and sidewalk on all of the streets in the neighborhood.

A new inventory of curb, gutter and sidewalk needs is included in the Infrastructure Needs map.

Storm Drainage

The 2001 plan noted issues with storm water runoff and ponding in several areas of the neighborhood. Since then, a few projects have been completed, and in some cases the addition of curb has improved drainage on some streets. However, isolated drainage problems persist in the neighborhood, and residents noted several in the public workshops.

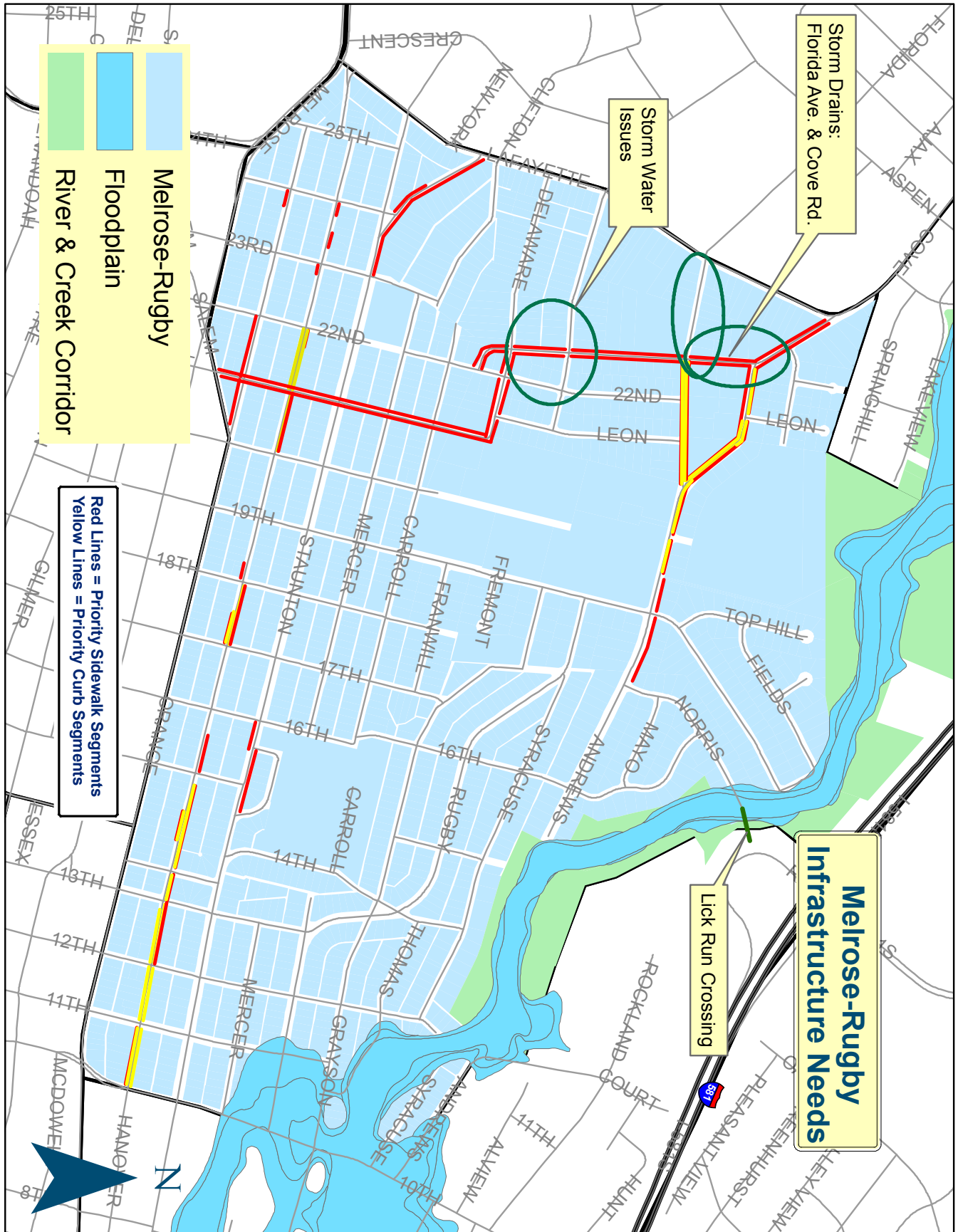
There are three projects in Melrose-Rugby listed in the storm water Capital Improvements Plan:

- 750 feet of 18” storm drain in the 1500 block of Cove Road
- 1,450 feet of 15” storm drain in the 2400 block of Florida Avenue
- Raising the 10th Street bridge over Lick Run to meet 10-year flood levels (see the VDOT 10th Street project in the Transportation chapter)

In addition, during public workshops, residents identified the following problem areas at these intersections:

- Cove Road and Massachusetts Avenue
- Cove Road and Andrews Road
- Cove Road and Delaware Avenue

The 2001 plan recommended creating a long-term funding strategy for storm water improvements. Recently, City Council has considered a storm water utility fee that would be used to fund the repair of storm water infrastructure. These funds will be used to repair and replace much of the original pipes, culverts and inlets that are no longer sufficient to receive the current volumes of storm water. At the time of the planning process, this utility was still being considered. Regardless of its outcome, future capital improvement plans need to be devoted to storm water infrastructure.



Parks and Recreation



Brown-Robertson Park

Melrose-Rugby was developed at a time when parks were considered an essential part of any urban neighborhood. Melrose-Rugby has three parks, including the Eureka Recreation Center. From anywhere in the neighborhood, a four-block walk is all that is needed to reach a park. This access to parks and recreation was cited as a major amenity for the neighborhood. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update notes that the northwest quadrant of Roanoke is generally underserved in relation to the rest of the City; however, Melrose-Rugby is an exception.



Staunton Park

The residents of Melrose-Rugby are proud of their parks and frequently use them. In the 2001 plan, residents voiced concerns with the maintenance of the parks and the need for more amenities. Some improvements have been made since then. Most notably, a picnic shelter was installed in Kennedy Park and the Lick Run Greenway was opened. Residents would nevertheless like to see the existing facilities maintained and improved with up-to-date equipment as needed.

Eureka Park



Eureka Park is the only facility in Roanoke that was originally built as a recreation center. It has been a vital part of the neighborhood and the greater community since the City began acquiring the land between 1940 to 1945. On Carroll Avenue, the park spans almost 15 acres with indoor and outdoor facilities. Indoors, the center has a full-sized gym, a game room, kitchen, and a craft/club room, and can hold up to 400 people at one time. Outdoor facilities include a picnic shelter, basketball court, playground, ball field, four tennis courts, and restrooms.

A critical recommendation of this plan is to evaluate the existing facilities and their users with respect to potential projects from the master plan. If and when a new recreation facility is planned for the greater northwest Roanoke area, the services currently provided at Eureka Park should be accounted for as it pertains to the neighborhood. Any new facility should at least provide equal or greater value both in the quantity and quality of services currently available at Eureka Park. If a new facility cannot be built that will adequately service the users of Eureka Park, or is not within a reasonable distance of Melrose-Rugby, Eureka Park should continue to operate.

Lick Run Greenway

The Lick Run Greenway is one of the major additions to the neighborhood since the 2001 plan. The greenway is a shared-use path (bicycles and pedestrians) that extends from the edge of downtown in the Gainsboro neighborhood, through Washington Park and across 10th Street through Melrose-Rugby en route to Valley View Mall.

In 2009 phase III of the Lick Run Greenway was adopted by City Council as an amendment to Vision 2001-2020. This phase of the greenway will extend to the west beyond William Fleming High School. It will provide more connections and protect the habitat of Lick Run with a natural buffer.



Lick Run Greenway where it crosses 10th Street

A key feature of the greenway is its gateway into the neighborhood at 10th Street. A crosswalk with medians and warning lights in the middle of the street enables safe access across the street and allows for bikers or pedestrians from the neighborhood to enter onto the paved trail. Much of the trail through the neighborhood is through a relatively wooded area and gives bikers or pedestrians a safe and pleasant alternative to traveling on sidewalks or alongside streets.

However, residents noted in the public workshops that their only access to the greenway is via 10th Street, despite it being right on the edge of the neighborhood. Recently, the City commissioned a pathways study to determine potential bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the City. The study recommends creating new pathways for pedestrian

and bicycle use and improving connections to existing greenways. It also recommends identifying such improvements in neighborhood plans.

A logical connection to the greenway would be via Norris Avenue in the Heritage Acres subdivision. This would entail building a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Lick Run and an opening in the greenway's fence. Combined with additional infill sidewalk and trail improvements, this would make the greenway accessible for residents in the core of the neighborhood and for Loudon-Melrose residents on its western end.



Lick Run Greenway where it crosses 10th Street

Public Services

Police

Police have worked closely with the neighborhood group for years to successfully address some problems. Crime has been reduced due to geographic policing, but it remains an issue. The police sub-station on Lafayette Boulevard is closed, however Police regularly attend neighborhood meetings and the assignment of officers to zones encourages familiarity with the issues the neighborhood faces. The majority of the neighborhood is not problematic. The areas with recurring problems are on or close to Orange Avenue and Lafayette Boulevard. Residents noted that these areas have improved in recent years but remain a concern.

The Police Department routinely evaluates its allocation of officers and resources in each zone of the City. Continued communication with the neighborhood will ensure that the Police are best informed on where to focus their efforts.

Fire/EMS



LEED Certified Fire Station No. 5 on Orange Avenue

The grand opening of the new Fire-EMS Station 5 at 1920 Orange Avenue took place on June 28, 2010. Members of City Council, Commonwealth of Virginia officials, City staff and both presidents of the adjoining neighborhoods, Melrose-Rugby and Loudon-Melrose, took part in the station's opening. The event not only showcased the new Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified structure, but also emphasized the partnership the Fire-EMS staff and other public service departments have with the community.

The new Station 5 houses the department's new 105 ft. Pierce Ladder Truck, community meeting space and space for Police officers on duty in the area. The new station replaces former Fire Stations 5 and 9, both of which were recently closed and sold. The new Station 5 provides an upgrade in service over the two older stations in that it houses state of the art modern equipment.



*Picture by Shirley Harris,
Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum*



*Fire Station No. 5 Grand Opening
June 28, 2010. State and local officials
attended, as well as residents of
Melrose-Rugby and Loudon-Melrose*

Property Maintenance Code Enforcement

Residents say nuisance violations such as outdoor storage, inoperative motor vehicles, and weeded properties have become less widespread, but some problems remain. Residents cited code enforcement as a special concern. They noted that violations seem to be concentrated in certain areas of the neighborhood that could be targeted by proactive inspections. In 2008, despite cuts in every City department's budget, two additional property maintenance inspector positions were added. The additional staff has created greater oversight of issue and allowed for more proactive enforcement work.

Hanover, Staunton and Orange Avenues should continue to be targeted by proactive inspections and violations reported by residents. Vacant houses are also more prevalent in these areas. Residents say most violations occur with rental properties; however, violations frequently involve homeowners. Residents felt that enforcement of bulk pickup and inoperable regulations have improved recently.

Policies and Actions

Community Design Policies:

- Housing Design and Zoning: New housing should be compatible with the existing structures in the neighborhood.
- Established neighborhoods should retain their overall character and development patterns, while incorporating new development that is compatible with the neighborhood, the design guidelines of Vision 2001-2020, and efficiently uses limited land resources.
- Future commercial development should adhere to the design principles of Vision 2001-2020 for village centers:
 - Concentrations of higher-density, mixed use development and live/work space.
 - Increased lot coverage, co-located signs, efficient lighting, on-street parking, pedestrian accommodations and orientation of buildings close to the street that emphasizes pedestrian activity.
- Require new residential developments to incorporate the traditional neighborhood model and urban amenities such as sidewalks and curbing.
- Off-street surface parking lots should be limited. Where necessary, surface lots should be located to the side or rear of buildings and heavily landscaped to minimize their visibility.
- New utilities should be located underground and existing utilities should be screened from view as much as possible.
- The tree canopy should be maintained and increased per the City's Urban Forestry Plan.
- Properties and landmarks of historic significance should be preserved to maintain a sense of history in the neighborhood.

Community Design Actions:

- Maintain the current single-family residential, institutional and commercial zoning districts as well as the Neighborhood Design District overlay zoning.
- Use the Residential Pattern Book for the City of Roanoke in conjunction with the Neighborhood Design District as a guide for designing residential infill properties.
- Limit surface parking lots and encourage use of on-street parking for periodic uses.
- Participate in City's adopt a park/street/spot program for residential street and island beautification efforts.
- Street trees should be installed in accordance with the City's Street Design Guidelines. Where possible, large deciduous trees should be used when replacing tree canopy within the City's rights-of-way.
- Encourage and assist the Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum to apply for grants to professionally repair the stone pillars on Rugby Boulevard and the gargoyles on 11th Street.
- Pursue a historic survey of the neighborhood for potential listing on the National Register of Historic Places as funds become available.



Roanoke Academy of Mathematics and Science

Residential Development Policies:

- Established residential neighborhoods should retain their current character. Zoning should reinforce the maintenance of this character.
- A variety of housing options should be available in the neighborhood.
- Homeownership and market-rate housing should be encouraged, while limiting low-income housing.
- New housing should be compatible with the existing structures in the neighborhood per the Residential Pattern Book for the City of Roanoke and the Neighborhood Design District.

Residential Development Actions:

- Maintain the current single-family residential zoning districts.
- Diversity of Housing Options: Melrose-Rugby should have a balance of single and multifamily housing, and should discourage the development of more multifamily low-income housing.
- Promote homeownership in the neighborhood through the Mortgage Assistance Program and other incentive programs.
- Encourage market rate housing in accordance with the City’s Strategic Housing Plan.
- Refer to the Residential Pattern Book in designing or renovating housing.
- Maintain the Neighborhood Design District overlay zoning to ensure compatible design of housing.



Suburban style homes in the neighborhood

Economic Development Policies:

- The current commercial zoning districts should be maintained, while encouraging more efficient use of existing commercial land.
- Village Centers: Village centers should provide a pedestrian-oriented commercial area for nearby residents.
- Additional jobs and increased economic opportunities are needed, but must be considered only within the context of the neighborhood's setting.
- Industrial uses and large scale commercial development are not compatible in the neighborhood. Where such uses abut the neighborhood, they should have as minimal impact as possible on adjoining residential areas in terms of visibility, noise and air quality.
- Parking: The supply of on-street parking should be maximized along commercial streets.
- Programs and incentives should improve and create neighborhood businesses on appropriately zoned properties.

Economic Development Actions:

- Maintain the current zoning of commercial properties.
- Enhance the existing village centers in the neighborhood with streetscape improvements. Potential improvements include:
 - Wide sidewalks with street trees and landscaping
 - Pedestrian crosswalks
 - Street lights and furniture, such as benches
- Market and encourage economic development opportunities, such as Enterprise Zone incentives and the Entrepreneur District.
- Consider expansion of Enterprise Zone 1A and the Entrepreneur District to include the village center at Cove Road and Lafayette Boulevard.

Transportation and Infrastructure Policies:

- Discourage widening of any local streets (local, as defined by the Street Design Guidelines) for additional travel lanes. Streets should be kept at the minimum width necessary to accommodate vehicular traffic and on-street parking.
- Streetscapes should be well maintained, attractive and functional for pedestrian, bicycle and motor traffic, and traditional neighborhood streets should have urban amenities such as sidewalks and curb and gutter. Appropriate species of trees should also be planted along streetscapes.
- The connectivity of streets and the grid street system should be promoted and maintained.
- Traffic-calming measures should be considered where appropriate to influence travel speeds.
- A comprehensive approach should be taken when evaluating improvements to the neighborhood's street network.
- Public facilities, such as schools and parks, should be easily accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Transportation and Infrastructure Actions:

- Maintain the basic design of all residential, local streets.
- Work with VDOT to determine the best connection to the Valley View interchange from the neighborhood.
- Per the Key Transportation Nodes map, in conjunction with the Valley View interchange, evaluate its potential impact and the possibilities for Cove Road at its intersection with Lafayette Boulevard, and Andrews Road, and develop a design per the Street Design Guidelines to provide connectivity.
- Consider village center streetscape improvements at Lafayette Boulevard and Cove Road.
- Require adequate pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity in any public facilities projects.
- Complete the priority projects identified in the Infrastructure Needs map. Enter priority curb, gutter and sidewalk projects into the Engineering Division's database.

Parks and Recreation Policies:

- Parks: Park land should be well maintained and available for use by neighborhood residents.
- Pedestrian Amenities: Residents should have facilities for pedestrian mobility within the neighborhood. Greenways should be easy to access within the neighborhood.
- Street Trees: Street trees should be installed in accordance with the City’s Street Design Guidelines to reach the goals of the Urban Forestry Plan.

Parks and Recreation Actions:

- Passive Use Park Land: Maintain and continue passive use park land (areas not dedicated to programmed activities) for the general public.
- Ensure that the existing services of Eureka Park are improved if a new recreation center is built. Maintain the Eureka Park Community Center if not.
- Lick Run Greenway:
 - Improve neighborhood access to the greenway per the infrastructure needs map.
 - Ensure that the Lick Run Greenway is improved in conjunction with the Valley View Boulevard interchange, such that its connectivity and capacity is maintained per the Lick Run Phase III study.
 - Protect riparian buffers during future construction

Public Services Policies:

- Police officers should continue to communicate with neighborhood residents regarding occurrences of crime in the area.
- Fire/EMS stations should be outfitted to provide the most efficient service possible and be a part of the neighborhood.
- All buildings should be maintained up to code standards.

Public Services Actions:

- Continue regular attendance at neighborhood meetings by Police Officers and communication with the neighborhood in between meetings as needed.
- Work with staff of the new Fire/EMS station (Number 5) to explore possible public uses of the facility, and to get the staff involved with the neighborhood.
- Continue the Rental Inspection Program and other Code Enforcement efforts as a top priority.

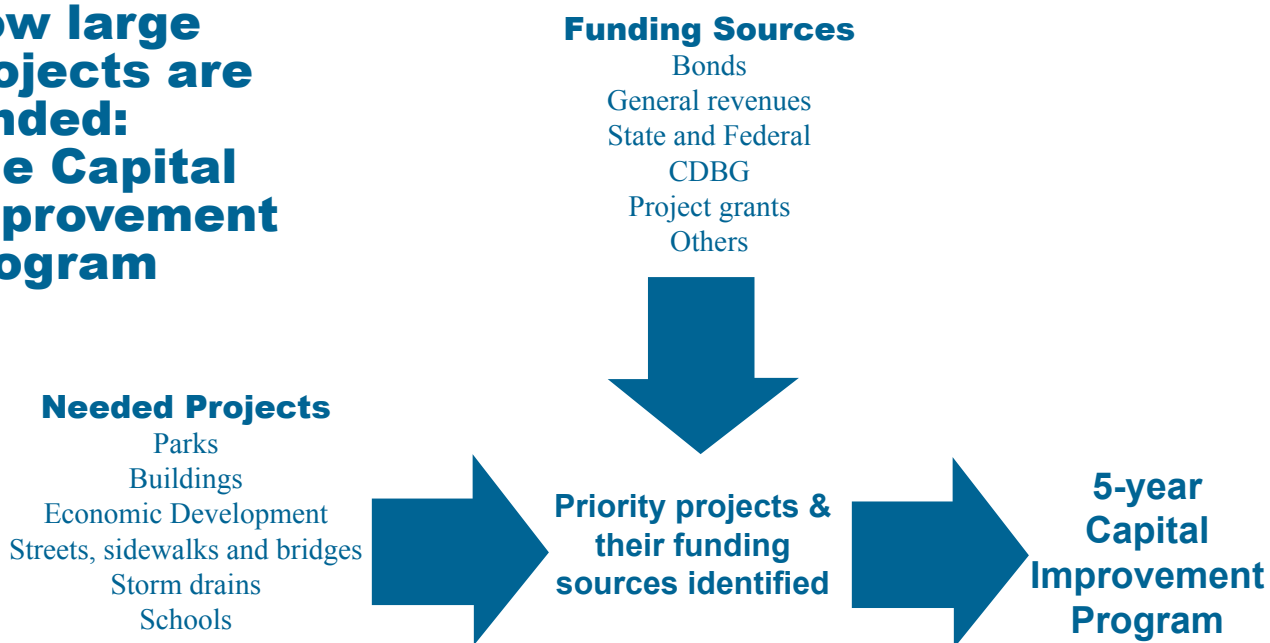
Implementation

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 Community Development Block Grants, 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 is usually determined after more detailed planning is completed.

How large projects are funded: The Capital Improvement Program



Implementation of Original Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan

Below is a list of projects and actions included in the Implementation and Recommendations sections of the original Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan. The *projected time period* denotes the time needed for implementation from the date of Council adoption of the plan, which was June 18, 2001. An updated list of projects and their implementation schedule is on the following page.

Action	Projected Time Period	Lead Agency	Status
Zoning Changes	2 Years	PBD	Zoning Ordinance Updated in 2005
Support Rental Inspections Program	Ongoing	PBD	Ongoing
Neighborhood Design District	1 Year	PR	Complete NDD implemented in 2002
Rehabilitation District Expansion	1 Year	PBD	Complete Expanded in 2002
Commercial Market Study	2-3 Years	ED	Incomplete
Master Plan for Kennedy Park	2 Years	PR	Picnic Shelter installed, land graded and stormwater ponding mitigated, Lick Run trail added
Identify access to Lick Run Greenway	2 Years	PR	Underway At time of writing, crossing was being established at end of Norris Ave.
Tree planting and landscaping	1 Year	PR	Incomplete
Start a porch light program	3 Years	MRNF/NS	Incomplete
Environmental safety study	3 Years	PR	Incomplete
Improve noise ordinance enforcement	3 Years	PD	Ongoing
Address Speeding	2 Years	PBD	Complete The zoning ordinance was updated in 2005, the subdivision ordinance and the Street Design Guidelines in 2007.
Construct New Sidewalks and Curbs	Ongoing	PW	Ongoing Zoning ordinance requires underground utilities for new development unless above ground service is available
Develop strategy for sidewalks/curbs	Ongoing	EN	Ongoing
Drainage Improvements	4 Years	EN	Incomplete Projects estimated, but not yet funded
Joint Neighborhood meetings	Ongoing	MRNF/NS	Ongoing
Programs at community center	Ongoing	MRNF/NS	Ongoing
Neighborhood marketing guide	4 Years	MRNF/NS	Incomplete

PBD = Planning Building and Development
 PW = Public Works
 MRNF = Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum

ED = Economic Development
 PR = Parks and Recreation
 NS = Neighborhood Services

TD = Transportation Division
 EN = Engineering
 PD = Police Department

Implementation of Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Plan Update

Below is a general guide to the time needed to carry out the actions of this plan. It is intended to assist with scheduling priority projects, but does not provide a specific time frame for each item.

Action	Y-1	Y-2	Y-3	Y-4	Y-5+ or Ongoing	Potential Funding Sources
Maintain NDD and residential zoning districts					*	PBD Operating Fund
Use pattern book in infill development					*	PBD Operating Fund
“Adopt” a street or public place			*			City General Funds, Grants
Plant street trees					*	PR Operating Fund
Restore pillars and gargoyles at Rugby Boulevard and 11th Street		*				CDBG
Conduct a survey and consider placement on the National Register of Historic Places	*					CDBG
Promote homeownership through Downpayment Assistance and other programs					*	PBD Operating Fund, CDBG
Enhance village centers with streetscape improvements					*	PW Operating Fund
Market economic development incentives and districts						ED Operating Fund
Expansion of Enterprise Zone 1A and Entrepreneur District		*				ED Operating Fund
Determine best connection to Valley View interchange			*			PW Operating Fund, VDOT
Evaluate intersection of Cove, Andrews and Lafayette					*	PW Operating Fund, VDOT
Install high priority curb, gutter, and sidewalk				*		PW Operating Fund
Complete storm water projects					*	PW Operating Fund
Continue passive use park space					*	PR Operating Fund
Improve access to Lick Run Greenway	*					PR Operating Fund
Utilize Fire Station #2 for meetings and events					Fire/EMS, MRNF	Fire/EMS Operating Fund, MRNF
Continue the Rental Inspection Program						PBD Operating Fund

PBD = Planning Building and Development

PW = Public Works

MRNF = Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum

EN = Engineering

ED = Economic Development

PR = Parks and Recreation

NS = Neighborhood Services

CDBG = Community Development Block Grants