

Old Southwest

Adopted by City Council NEIGHBORHOODAdopted by City CoPLANJuly 20, 2009



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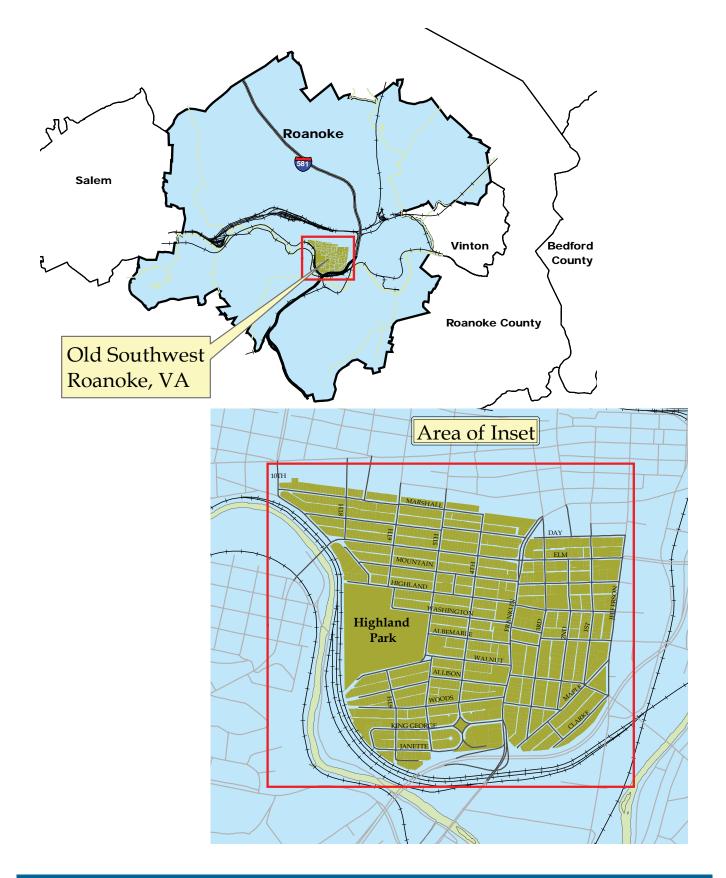
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Thanks to all the residents and property owners who participated in the community workshops. A special thanks to the *Old Southwest, Inc.* neighborhood association for their assistance with this plan and their continued commitment to the area's quality of life.

2009 City of Roanoke 215 Church Avenue, SW Roanoke, VA 24011



Introduction

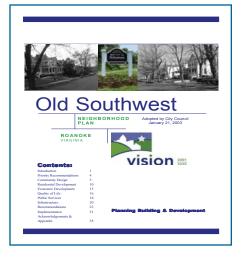
Old Southwest is an historic neighborhood listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. Old Southwest has a wealth of architectural styles ranging from Vernacular and Neoclassical to Tudor Revival. The development of Old Southwest dates to the late 19th Century when the land was annexed by the City from Roanoke County in 1890. A great number of homes were built around the turn of the century. Most of the structures in the neighborhood today were built by the end of the 1920s.

Old Southwest is an attractive community that presents opportunities to live and work in the same neighborhood. The neighborhood's proximity to downtown provides Old Southwest residents with convenience to public services, commercial establishments, and the region's premiere cultural amenities. It also has the City's oldest park and a nationally recognized elementary school. The neighborhood is bound on the north by Marshall and Day Avenues, by the Roanoke River to the south and west, and Jefferson Street to the east.

The purpose of this neighborhood plan is to build upon Old Southwest's character and resources through the priority recommendations established by residents and City staff. Residents of the neighborhood and the City will use it to guide actions for neighborhood improvement. The plan is a component of Vision 2001-2020, the City's comprehensive plan.

The previous Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan was adopted by City Council in 2003. In 2008, with adopted neighborhood plans for each neighborhood in the City consistent with Vision 2001-2020, Planning staff chose Old Southwest as the first plan to update. Two public meetings were held at Highland Park Elementary School in 2008. The public input from those meetings, combined with the policies of the previous Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan and *Vision 2001-2020*, form the foundation for the recommendations of this plan.

Neighborhood Planning



History

The Colonial Era and Early Settlement



This nursing home on King George Avenue sits on site of the former Lone Oak, one of the earliest houses in the neighborhood.

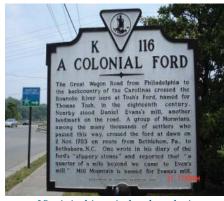
As the Norfolk Western Railroad created jobs in the City's dawning days in the 1880s, a larger wealthy class emerged and began moving further from downtown. Old Southwest was born in this first phase of the City's suburban growth, with its large, grand Victorian mansions making it one of the premier addresses in the area. After several decades of decline, it has experienced almost a full cycle of revitalization. Today, it is in one glance a living example and a vestige of the purest denotation of suburban settlement; life once removed from the urban core, while not withdrawn or remote from it, still obviously dependent on and linked to the City's institutions and functions.

By the mid 1700s it appears that two men had settled in and owned all of what is now the Old Southwest neighborhood; William Alexander and Thomas Tosh. Though little is known of their lives, they appear to have fared exceedingly well in maintaining their estates through times of warfare and unrest with indigenous peoples and the colonial powers. Both of these men passed their estates on to their children and laid a foundation, figuratively and literally, for the development of Old Southwest as we know it today.

Alexander owned 50 acres on the north side of the Roanoke River. The house today known as the Alexander/Gish House is on this land and partially named after the Alexanders. Tosh bought 120 acres of land from his brother Tasker, who along with Mark Evans, settled much of the present day City of Roanoke in the 1740s. By 1781, Thomas Tosh owned 426 continuous acres in this area and had built a home.

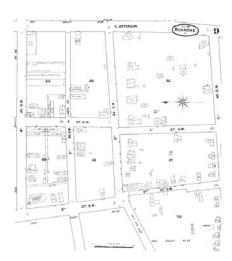
The Carolina Road, as it is commonly referred to in Virginia, at this time extended from around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to the interior of North Carolina. The road was a path created by Native Americans who had likely traveled it for centuries. Today, Franklin Road roughly follows the path laid by the Carolina Road.

The first Tosh home place has been deemed by some as the first brick house in the Roanoke Valley. Built by Thomas Tosh, it was just off the Carolina Road in the present day King George Avenue and Franklin Road lots where a nursing home and rehabilitation center now sit. It was later referred to as "Rock of Ages" as it was perched atop rock ledges. In the 20th century, one of its last owners re-named it "Lone Oak."



Virginia historic landmark sign on Franklin Road commemorating Tosh's Ford.

Pre-Railroad; From Gainesborough to Big Lick



1889 Sanborn Map (note the north arrow points to the left)

A short distance from Lone Oak was Tosh's Ford, a shallow point at which the Roanoke River could be crossed on the route of the Carolina Road. Today, the bridge on Franklin Road that crosses the River and railroad tracks is roughly in the location of Tosh's Ford. A Virginia Department of Historic Resources landmark sign on Franklin Road entitled "A Colonial Ford" commemorates the travels of a group of Moravians across Tosh's Ford on November 2, 1783, en route to Bethabara, North Carolina.

"Tosh's Ford and Evans Mill was the base of supplies for military expeditions of colonial days in all this region" according to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources' "A Guidebook to Virginia's Historical Markers." In addition, in several entries in Frederick Kegley's "Virgina Frontier," the ford was noted as the starting point for the planning and connection of several roads that would later become vital to settlement in the valley.

Thomas Tosh's only son, Jonathan, was said to have met his wife Elizabeth on a chance romantic encounter at Tosh's Ford when the latter's carriage got stuck and couldn't make the crossing. In 1805, their daughter Jane was born. Perhaps as much as or more so than any other figure, she was connected to Roanoke's earliest settlement, and to its burgeoning modernization.

In 1823 Jane Tosh married William Lewis, great grandson of General Andrew Lewis. William and Jane (Tosh) Lewis had four sons that served for the Confederacy in the Civil War. Day and Marshall Avenues both were originally named Charles and John Streets respectively, after sons of William and Jane Tosh Lewis who died in the war.

Another son of William and Jane, Colonel Thomas Lewis, married Mary Ingles in 1859, a distant cousin and relative of Mary Draper Ingles, locally famous for her escape and trek from Shawnee warriors on the Ohio River after the Draper's Meadow Massacre in 1755. The two lived in Salem for about 30 years, before moving into the Lewis Reserve at 617 6th Street, one of the earliest houses in the neighborhood.

Big Lick was incorporated as a town in 1874. In 1881, after a conceptual deal had been agreed upon between the Norfolk and Western and Shenandoah Valley Railroads (SVRR) to join their lines at Big Lick, a few prominent local families hosted members of a railroad delegation as nightly accommodations for travelers were then very limited. The widowed Jane Tosh Lewis was one of such hosts, entertaining railroad officials at Lone Oak as they worked out the details of what would be the single most defining contractual agreement in the City's history.

The First Land Companys of the Magic Era



Early picture of 106 Mountain Avenue. This house remains in good condition today.

By the time the City of Roanoke was chartered in 1884, the era of the Magic City was well underway. With the land annexed into the City in 1882 and 1892, the neighborhood sprouted up in step with the magic pace of the City.

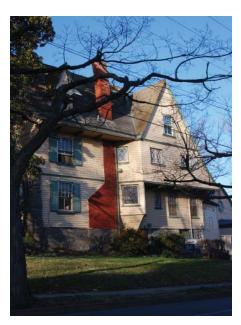
The Roanoke Land and Improvement Company (RL&IC), a subsidiary of Norfolk and Western, was chartered in 1881 to develop housing and infrastructure in Roanoke. The RL&IC played a major role in the early development of the neighborhood's eastern side, and several other land companies formed to take advantage of the City's unmet need for new housing. In 1883, railroad officials began building their homes on the east side of Jefferson Street where the Carilion Community Hospital and Jefferson College of Health Sciences currently sit. This area was known as "Orchard Hill," but was dubbed "Official Hill" by locals for its abundance of railroad officials living in the upscale Queen Anne style mansions.

In addition to the RL&IC, the Virginia Company, a real estate and development subsidiary for the SVRR, was another major developer on the eastern side of the neighborhood. The National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Southwest Historic District (which includes Old Southwest) in 1985 noted the Virginia Company developed "one of the most prestigious sections of Old Southwest," which includes "three distinctive model homes" on 2nd Street to market the east side of the neighborhood to upper middle class citizens. These three houses; 1112, 1130, and 1144 2nd Street, are still standing today, and according to the nomination, are the "most unusual examples of romantic Victorian architecture in the district."

> Early picture of 1225 Jefferson Street. This house and most others on Jefferson Street were razed for commercial development.



Between the development of the Virginia Company and the RL&IC, by the early 1890s the eastern side of the neighborhood between Franklin Road and Jefferson Street was home to a number of railroad officials and other families that played vital roles in the City's development, the names of which are too numerous to mention here. The earliest of the larger houses were usually of the Queen Anne style popular during the Victorian era, while in the early 20th Century, several Colonial Revival mansions were built. There are still numerous examples of these and other architectural styles in the neighborhood today. (For a more detailed overview of the neighborhood's architectural styles, refer to the City's H-2 Historic District Guidelines and the Residential Pattern Book.)



These three houses on 2nd Street were designed and built as upscale model homes by the Virginia Company; a real estate subsidiary of the Shenandoah Valley Railroad

While upscale development was taking place to the east, a number of smaller, more modest homes were being built in the northern end of the neighborhood. Some of the earliest houses in the neighborhood were on Day and Marshall Avenues (then 7th and 6th Avenues respectively) close to downtown. Miller's Hill, the area between Elm and Marshall Avenues, and 4th and 5th Streets, wasn't developed until after 1906.

In the same year that Orchard Hill was conceived, 90 acres of the Lewis land was subdivided and put on the market. The Lewis Addition spanned across most of the neighborhood west of Franklin Road with the exception of the Gish property (Highland Park). The western side of the neighborhood was largely developed after sales of the Lewis estate by the Janette Land Company. The Janette Land Company was formed in 1890, and named after Jane Tosh Lewis.



Infrastructure and Public Facilities



6th Street looking south in 1915. The car belonged to the photographer.*



Marshall Avenue looking west in 1915*

George C. Davis

George C. Davis' photographs of Roanoke span from the City's early days in the late 1800s to the mid 20th Century. Davis lived for years in Old Southwest on Day Avenue in the Miller's Hill block.

These three photographs in Old Southwest provide glimpses of what transportation infrastructure was like in the neighborhood's early years. While Davis is known for having photographed Roanoke's major institutions, prominent downtown buildings and big events, pictures such as these demonstrate that he also captured the more common elements of the City and a sense of what everyday life was like.

As with the rest of the City, the growth of housing and population in the neighborhood in the late 1800s was at a faster pace than public services could keep up with. Such improvements came gradually, and by the 1920s the neighborhood was relatively filled out with modern infrastructure; side-walks, paved streets, electricity, gas, and public sewer and water lines. Some of the original brick sidewalks are still in use to this day. By 1891 there were bridges across the river at Jefferson Street and Franklin Road, as well as two railroad bridges north of Franklin Road. A fire station opened on the 300 block of Highland Avenue in 1911.

Old Southwest was already a well established neighborhood in the City when construction of the Franklin Road street car line began in 1892. The line originally went as far south as Highland Avenue, then in 1903 was extended to Woods Avenue. The Highland Line began operation in 1908. It extended from Franklin Road and Marshall Avenue, west to Fifth Street, south to Elm Avenue, then west to Ferdinand Avenue.



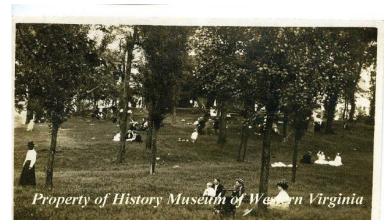
Franklin Road Bridge looking south in 1934*

* Courtesy of the History Museum of Western Virginia

The First Public Park

Although Woodland Park in Southeast Roanoke was open to the public, it was privately owned. The land for Highland Park was purchased from Nannie Gish in 1901, making Highland Park the first City-owned park. As it developed the park was heavily used by the neighborhood for various large events and gatherings. In 1911 sports facilities were added at the top of the park where fields were graded level.

Part of the land acquired from Gish was sold for the development of homes on Washington, Walnut and Albemarle Avenues, and for Park Street School. The school opened in 1907, was damaged by fire in 1920, and rebuilt in 1921. Its name was changed to Highland Park in 1924.



Highland Park circa 1900 after a concert. Courtesy of the History Museum of Western Virginia



Park Street School, the precursor to Highland Park Elementary School, was built in 1908



Postcard of Second Presybterian Church, postmarked May 1912. Courtesy of the History Museum of Western Virginia

Early Churches and Synagogues



Saint John's Episcopal Church

Three of the Valley's oldest churches are in or near the neighborhood; First Baptist, Second Presbyterian, and Saint John's Episcopal. As Roanoke developed and attracted a substantial population of newcomers, the few churches that were located downtown could not accommodate the rising population. A few of the churches in the neighborhood today are a result of such expansion.

Saint John's Episcopal Church moved from Gainesborough to Church Avenue, and finally to its present location at Jefferson Street and Elm Avenue. Second Presbyterian also located near its growing congregation in the 1890s. First Baptist Church was erected in 1875 across 3rd Street from where the present church sits. It lies just outside the neighborhood, but expanded in Old Southwest to accommodate one of the largest congregations in the Valley.

The United Brethren Church was at Franklin and Day Avenue by the late 1890s. Several other churches developed in the early to mid 20th Century, such as Trinity Methodist and Saint Mark's Lutheran. Beth Israel Synagogue was dedicated in 1926 on Franklin Road.

The Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression



MOUNTAIN AVENUE AND PRANKLIN ROAD Showing jog intersection Picture from the City's (John Nolen's) 1928 Comprehensive Plan

The 1920s was a time of tremendous wealth creation and technological modernization throughout America, until 1929 when the U.S. Stock Market crashed and sent investors into a panic that would last through most of the next decade.

Old Southwest reaped its share of the benefits of the 1920s, as it was a wealthy neighborhood. Most of the streets were paved, Jefferson Street was widened, and new infill development of houses and apartments continued, bringing more energy and vitality. Yet it was during this era that the world around Old Southwest began to catch up to its standards and offer alternatives. The automobile's emergence made it feasible for people to live further from downtown, the Highland Line street car was abandoned in 1929, and South Roanoke began to emerge as the chic neighborhood of choice for the well heeled and upper middle class, a number of which began to leave Old Southwest.

The Great Depression's impact was obvious on the surface; Lone Oak was foreclosed upon, the Saint Charles Hospital on Mountain Avenue closed, and service on the Franklin Road street car line was discontinued, just to name a few of many unfortunate events. Yet it is difficult to determine the true extent of its long-term impact on Old Southwest. City real estate records indicate a number of foreclosures on homes, but not a disproportionate amount. At the same time many long-time homeowners maintained their properties, while many sold their houses in the 1940s when the country was beginning to recover.



The first Easter service held at Highland Park in 1928. Photograph by George C. Davis. Courtesy of the History Museum of Western Virginia

Post World War II



Dentist's office on Highland Avenue

Reclamation, Redevelopment and a New Name

The exodus of City residents to new suburban neighborhoods elsewhere was a fact of life in post World War II America, a period of great economic expansion and prosperity for most of the country, but often at the expense of older urban areas.

Roanoke and Old Southwest were not exceptions to these national trends. As homeowners left the neighborhood, many if not most, of the large houses were bought by investors who created several rental units in each. The autooriented, suburban development trends and public policy of the times shaped the neighborhood's eastern and northern boundaries in particular. A number of houses were razed to make way for apartment buildings or offices, most of which remain today. As automobile traffic increased, properties on the heavily traveled streets – Franklin Road, Jefferson Street and Elm Avenue - were redeveloped for commercial uses.

For over three decades the neighborhood's original fabric and status declined until it was primarily inhabited by renters, and commercial establishments on its edges. By the 1970s, crime and blight came to define the neighborhood, and its origin as one of the elite early suburbs was virtually unknown to younger Roanokers.

In the early 1970s, with the assistance of a federal grant, a small group of people committed to turning the neighborhood around with a permanent renaissance, formed the Old Southwest Neighborhood Alliance. The organization later changed its name to Old Southwest, Inc. and became a non-profit organization.

One of the organization's major accomplishments was the renovation and lease of the Alexander/Gish House, which it lobbied City Council to save. In 1979 a lease agreement was signed, and with help from federal grants issued through the City, the house was restored. It is still used as a meeting place for the neighborhood today. Its first Holiday Parlor Tour was held in 1980.





Headline of Old Southwest, Inc. web page (http://www.oldsouthwestinc.com)

In 1985 the Southwest Historic District was created and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This led to the current local H-2, Historic District in 1987, and the creation of the Architectural Review Board. The years of suburban development and preference for new buildings in place of the old, have been counterbalanced by the creation of the historic districts. Federal, state and local governments all now realize the civic and economic value of preserving their communities' architectural heritage.

The Alexander/Gish House: Then...then... and now

This log house with clapboard siding in Highland Park's western end derives its name from the first and last private owners of the land it sits on, William Alexander and Nannie Gish. It is the oldest building in Old Southwest. It cannot be dated precisely, but is believed to have been erected in the mid 1800s, perhaps as early as 1818.

Prior to that time William Alexander was the first European settler on the land, having established a home there until his death in 1750. Remnants of any structure from this period have not been found, however Old Southwest, Inc. historian Joel Richert theorizes in her pictorial history of the neighborhood, "In Retrospect...The Old Southwest Neighborhood. Roanoke, Virginia," that the foundation of Alexander's house may be underneath the addition that was added on the west side of the current structure circa 1920.

Since 1979 Old Southwest Inc. has leased it from the City and uses it as its regular meeting place. In 2008 it was painted.



1983 prior to Virginia and National Register of Historic Places Nomination



Photograph by Bruce Muncy in the 2003 Neighborhood Plan



Alexander/Gish house today





2007 "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" house painting event Photograph by Tim Taylor

Through the last 30 years or more the neighborhood has seen a fairly dramatic increase in homeownership and overall improvement in property upkeep. The eastern side of the neighborhood still has a number of single-family homes and apartments, but over the years has become a viable office district. Property values and sales rose significantly in the early 2000s and new infill development, as well as rehabilitation of older houses continue. The Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority began a redevelopment project of 17 houses on Miller's Hill in 2005. The development of the Janette Avenue Townhomes is also currently underway on the former "Victory Gardens" site where residents followed the patriotic trend of planting vegetables during war times.

Homeownership and a sense of community have returned to Old Southwest. Residents today are proud of their neighborhood and the diversity of people that live in it. The sense of history and sense of place are one in the same on the streets of Old Southwest. Although it has weathered periods of sweeping change and instability, Old Southwest is not haunted by its past, figuratively or literally. Rather, it manages to wear its past on its sleeve, a past that today evokes a warm resilience that continues to comfort those that call it home.



Neighborhood Demographics



Even as the sun goes down, this Day Avenue resident is eagerly awaiting the 2010 Census Bureau staff!

In 1990, the total population of Old Southwest was 3,771 (Of Census Tract 12, which covers an area approximate, but not precisely, to the boundaries of Old Southwest). The population decreased by four percent (3,628) between 1990 and 2000, resembling the City's gradual decline over the same period. Additional factors in the reduced population of Old Southwest are the conversion of homes from multi-family structures back to their original single-family use, and changes in the zoning ordinance that increased square footage requirements per unit. Nationwide, the 2000 Census also reports a decrease in household size. These factors - more single-family units and households with fewer residents - have contributed to a slight population decline in Old Southwest, yet during the last decade the neighborhood has attracted a more stable population base.

Table 1 below shows racial diversity in the neighborhood has increased over the last decade, with a six percent increase in the number of African Americans and a five percent increase in the population of other non-white ethnic and racial groups.

	1990	2000	Difference
Population	3,771	3,628	-4%
Households	2,061	1,918	-7%
White	90%	79%	-11%
African	9%	15%	+6%
American			
Other Races	1%	6%	+5%
0-17 Years Old	19%	17%*	-2%
18-34 Years Old	35%	33%**	-2%
35-64 Years Old	31%	39%	+8%
65 Years and	15%	11%	-4%
Over			

 Table 1: Old Southwest Population Trends, 1990-2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Refers to ages 0-19 **Refers to ages 20-34 The neighborhood has experienced a decline in all age groups since 1990 with the exception of people aged 35-64, which increased by eight percent. Despite decreases in all the other age groups, the percentage of young adults (20-34 years old) living in Old Southwest (33%) is significantly higher than that for the City as a whole (21.3%). This suggests that Old Southwest has become an attractive place for young adults.

Old Southwest may continue to experience an increase in young adults due to its location adjacent to downtown and the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area (SJRA). It is estimated that the SJRA will create positions for over 2,000 once all phases are complete.



Ready for Halloween on Mountain Avenue!

Table 2: Education for Population 25 Years of Age and Older.2000 U.S. Census Bureau

	% Less than 9th Grade	% High School Graduate	% Bache- lor's Degree or Higher
City of Roanoke	7.3	76.0	18.7
Old Southwest	10.7	71.6	21.0
(Census Tract 12)			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,

The educational attainment data shown above in Table 2 points out an unusual juxtaposition. Old Southwest has a higher percentage of college-educated residents than the City overall, yet at the same time has a higher percentage of residents with less than a high school education.

Demographic data is not available for the neighborhood since 2000, as the next decennial Census is conducted in 2010. Recent Census population estimates show a decline in the City's population, however the Weldon-Cooper Research Center at the University of Virginia has estimated that the City's population has recently trended upward. It is expected that Old Southwest will show significant changes in the 2010 Census, namely a decrease in population, an increase in households, and higher educational attainment and income levels.

Neighborhood Organization



2008 Roanoke Saint Patrick's Day Parade Photograph by Tim Taylor

Old Southwest, Inc. was created in 1974 under the name *Old Southwest Neighborhood Alliance*. The organization was founded with the assistance of a federal grant that identified it as one of five core neighborhoods in need of revitalization. At the time there was a small group of residents committed to saving the neighborhood's historic structures and reducing the crime and poverty that had contributed to its overall decline in previous years. Since then it has become a registered non-profit organization (501(c) (3)) and grown to include four officers with a board of directors, plus 13 committees that oversee various projects and focus on specific neighborhood goals.

Old Southwest, Inc. was instrumental in the City's establishment of the Southwest Historic District (a large portion of which comprises the H-2 Historic District), and in preserving the City-owned Alexander/Gish House at Highland Park, which it now leases from the City and meets in regularly. In addition, the organization has spearheaded numerous projects to improve the park itself, several of which were assisted with grants from the City. Recently, the organization partnered with NewVa Connects to gain City approval for a dog park in Highland Park. *Block Pride* is another regular event the organization created. Twice a year neighborhood residents pitch in and help clean up trash on Elm, Day and Marshall Avenues. The City provides trucks and labor to haul the trash away.

The Old Southwest Parlor Tour is the organization's only fund raising event. Started in 1980, the tour showcases approximately 10 homes each year and allows the public to view the interior of each. Paying visitors often walk from house to house, while in recent years a shuttle service has also been provided. The tour is usually scheduled on the first weekend of December, with scheduled visiting times over the course of two days. It has attracted nearly a thousand visitors in some years and has increased public exposure of the neighborhood tremendously.



In 2008 Old Southwest, Inc. received second place in the Neighborhood of the Year Award in the Social Revitalization/Neighborliness category from Neighborhoods USA for its *Food with Friends* event. Food with Friends, now in its third year, is a monthly potluck event hosted by different households each month. A different culinary theme is chosen for each event and neighborhood residents contribute accordingly.

Old Southwest, Inc. has done a number of grant projects with the City, particularly for infrastructure in Highland Park. At present, the organization is installing period street lights on Elm Avenue and Franklin Road, using funds it obtained through the City's Neighborhood Development Grant Program.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, a strong community of dedicated homeowners has established itself on Day and Marshall Avenues between 5th Street and Ferdinand Avenue. These homeowners started the *Block Pride* cleanup days, held weekly dinner meetings, and generally share information and assist each other with various household projects, while reporting illegal or suspicious activity to the police.

As the neighborhood continues to attract more homeowners, membership in Old Southwest, Inc. has likewise increased. Its coordinated efforts were a large part of the original Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan and this update as well.



Priority Initiatives

Based on resident input and the staff's evaluation of conditions in Old Southwest, five priority initiatives have been identified for this plan:

- **Code Enforcement** continue the Rental Inspection Program, general code enforcement, and identify properties to be targeted by the Code Team. Residents cited this as the top priority.
- **Highland Park** work with Parks and Recreation to develop a master plan, potentially including pathway and greenway connections.
- Village Center Enhance the 5th Street village center with streetscape improvements between Marshall and Mountain Avenues per the Street Design Guidelines.

Transportation:

a. Evaluate and consider altering Elm Avenue between Ferdinand Avenue and Franklin Road to:

- i. Evaluate the intersection of Elm and Ferdinand Avenues at the Wasena bridge, and the addition of parking lanes and bicycle lanes if possible on each side of the street.
- ii. consider improvements at the intersection of Elm Avenue and Franklin Road to enhance the pedestrian crossings.
- b. Improve the Jefferson Street corridor per the *Street Design Guidelines* and promote mixed use development that will create a seamless transition between the neighborhood and downtown.
- **Public Safety** continue to focus on crime prevention in the neighborhood and maintain regular attendance at meetings by Police officers. Assist the neighborhood with long-term record keeping of criminal activity to evaluate progress.

Community Design

Development Pattern



Marshall Avenue

Old Southwest was developed as an early suburb close to downtown and was originally platted in the typical fashion of the time; two-lane streets with 40 to 50 feet of right-of-way set in a grid street pattern with 10 foot alleys in the middle of each block. Many lots were large (50 feet or more wide) for its era, though there were a number of lots only 25 feet wide. The rolling topography of the neighborhood adds to its attractiveness and offers broad vistas in some areas, while not steep enough in any section to make access a challenge. Much of Highland Park is atop a hill, while other areas of the park are on hillsides.

Most of the houses in Old Southwest are two story structures with an attic, though in later years some one-storey homes were built in the neighborhood. Architectural styles offer a good representation of the various styles of the late 19th and 20th Centuries. On some blocks early two-storey Victorian houses are next door to modern one-storey offices. Several small 'pocket commercial' structures are scattered around the neighborhood. These structures typically were 'zero lot line' developments, i.e. the building facade is flush with the sidewalk with no front yard. Residential structures in the neigh-



King George Avenue

Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan



borhood typically are set back from the sidewalk at least 15 feet in a consistent pattern throughout each block, though later developments often didn't observe these patterns. Many early houses were built well above the grade of the street and are bounded by stone or concrete retaining walls, many of which still exist today. Wrought iron fencing was common in early development, but is not a prevalent feature today. Most streets are lined with concrete or brick sidewalks. Street trees are a common feature on many streets, however there are noticeable gaps that new trees should be planted in. Most of the planting strips between the sidewalk and curb are no more than two feet.

The neighborhood has six churches and a synagogue. Highland Park is a 33-acre park and is the City's first public park. Across from the park is Highland Park Elementary School. Both of these public institutions are central to the neighborhood and have long been a source of pride for neighborhood residents.



Many homes in Old Southwest are painted with several colors, such as these on Mountain Avenue, top, and Elm Avenue, bottom

Two streets in the neighborhood have seen significant increases in traffic for several decades as the Roanoke Valley has grown, creating barriers between different areas. Franklin Road and Elm Avenue both are used heavily by commuters from other parts of the City and Roanoke County en route downtown and northward. The volume of traffic on these streets makes them difficult to cross for pedestrians at some intersections. The most important intersections in the neighborhood are Ferdinand and Elm Avenues at the Wasena bridge, 5th Street and Elm Avenue, and Franklin Road and Elm Avenue. All of these intersections are gateways into the neighborhood. These intersections and these streets are addressed in greater length in the *Transportation* chapter.



Surpentine brick wall on 6th Street

The mixed-use zoning east of Franklin Road creats compatible office and residential uses, such as this on Highland Avenue

In part due to the traffic patterns, Old Southwest currently has three distinct areas:

- **Highland Park** south of Elm Avenue and west of Franklin Road. This is the core of the neighborhood and has the highest concentration of owner-occupied housing units.
- **Mixed-Use District** east of Franklin Road. This area has a mixture of office and residential uses, including a number of modern buildings.
- Elm, Day, and Marshall Avenues north of Elm Avenue, adjoining downtown and the Mountain View neighborhood. While the northern end of the neighborhood has the same development pattern and architectural style housing as the Highland Park area, it is somewhat disconnected from the neighborhood by the traffic volume on Elm Avenue. This area has higher concentrations of multifamily and sub-standard housing, however crime has dropped significantly in recent years. This area is an important interface with downtown and needs to become a seamless transition.

Overall, the community design of Old Southwest must be regarded in a comprehensive manner; the H-2 guidelines apply not only to structures but also the streetscapes and yards which accompany them. Maintenance of the neighborhood's public facilities and streetscapes is as much a priority to residents as maintenance of their own homes. Future public investment in the neighborhood should be undertaken with that in mind.



View of downtown from Mountain Avenue behind Saint John's Episcopal Church

H-2 Historic District



Rehabilitation underway; Day Avenue, above, and Mountain Avenue, below

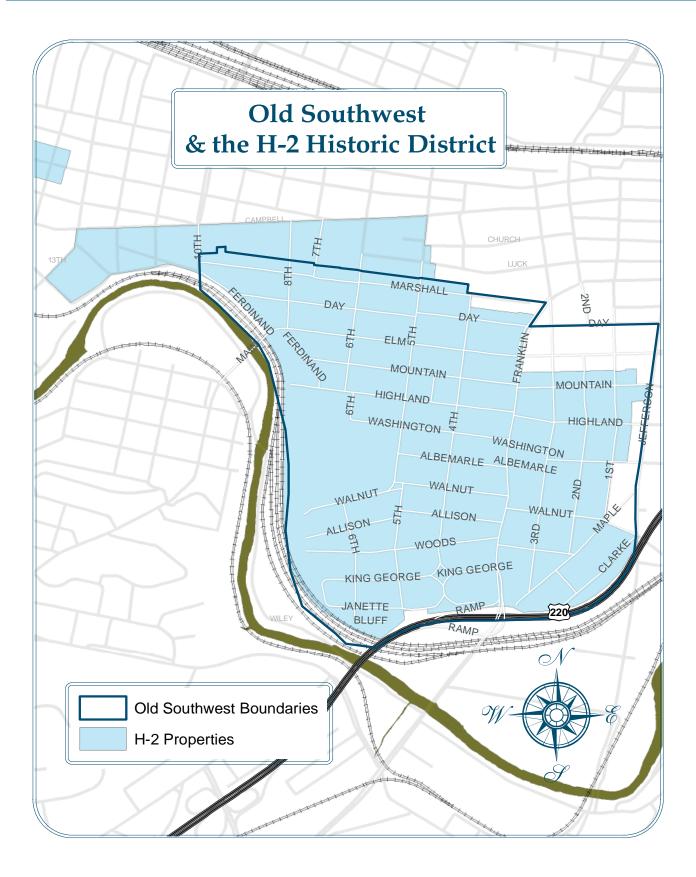


The H-2 Historic District overlay zoning regulates design features on the exterior of all structures in the neighborhood, as well as improvements on public property. The H-2 District began as the "Neighborhood Preservation District," which was adopted by City Council in 1987. The district comprises a large portion of the *Southwest Historic District*, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

Properties within National Register districts are eligible for state and federal tax credits. Owners must apply, and then comply with rehabilitation design guidelines to restore structures to their proper era of historic significance. Aside from tax credit applications, properties within National Register districts are not subject to historic district regulations unless the locality creates a local district, such as the H-2. Property owners should be aware that City (H-2) and state and federal processes are not connected. City staff often guide property owners interested in these tax credits, but does not administer them. However, the design guidelines of each are very similar. In fact, the H-2 Design Guidelines are largely based upon the Department of Interior's (National Register) standards.

While the H-2 District and the City's design review process is not directly linked to state and federal tax credit projects, the City offers real estate tax relief to owners of properties in the H-2 District that improve old structures. The *Partial Tax Exemption on Rehabilitated Buildings* program provides tax relief to owners of structures in the district over 25 years of age. Applicants must apply prior to starting any renovation work, so that an on site inspection can be conducted by a Real Estate Valuation appraiser. In order to qualify for the tax exemption, the property's assessed value must be increased by 40% or more, and designed for residential use. Properties in the H-2 District are eligible for twice the normal period of tax relief in the City. Old Southwest utilizes the *Partial Tax Exemption on Rehabilitated Buildings* program more than any other neighborhood in the City.

All of Old Southwest is within the H-2 District. The Architectural Review Board (ARB) is responsible for the review and authorization of work on the exterior of buildings in the district per the H-2 Historic District Design Guidelines. Prior to making any changes to the exterior of their property, owners must first apply to the *Agent* to the ARB, which is a City staff person in the Department of Planning Building and Development.



The ARB is a body of seven citizens appointed by City Council to serve no more than three four year terms. The ARB must have at least 3 architects, while other members must have a demonstrated interest in and knowledge of historic preservation and the history of the City of Roanoke. The mission of the ARB is to preserve, protect and enhance the character of significant historic, architectural or cultural properties located in historic districts by ensuring the design compatibility and appropriateness of new construction and rehabilitation and restoration of existing structures. The Board also identifies historic properties and recommends historic designation for such properties.



Bracketed porch columns on one of the early houses on Day Avenue

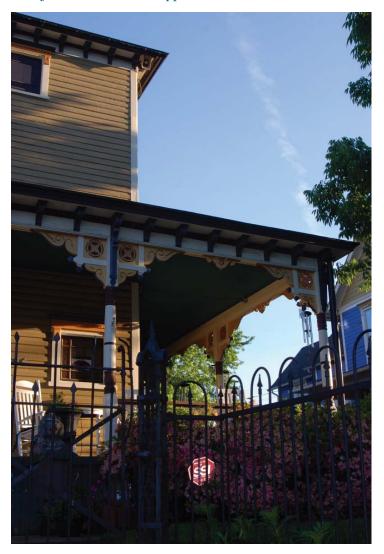


House with bracketed eaves on Mountain Avenue

This house on Day Avenue has many of the Queen Anne design features common in the Victorian Era, including the wrought iron fence

The H-2 Historic District Guidelines provide the ARB and property owners with information about the various architectural styles found in the neighborhood, and appropriate treatment for their preservation. The guidelines were updated in 2007 after a series of public meetings and extensive study by the ARB. In addition, as a result of the input received during the update process, several administrative changes were made to improve the application and monthly meeting processes.

Old Southwest, Inc., while not affiliated with the City or the ARB, helped facilitate the creation of the district, and has since helped a number of neighborhood property owners research their historic homes. In 1983 the organization created a file on each structure in the neighborhood, including a current photograph. Since then additional historic photos and documents have been added to the files. These files are often made available by Old Southwest, Inc. and used in conjunction with ARB Applications for historical information.



Zoning and Land Use



Apartment building on 2nd Street

The highest priority of the previous Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan was to make zoning changes to encourage village center development on 5th Street and facilitate a greater balance between single and multifamily housing units. Per the guidance of the plan, in 2005 the City adopted a new zoning ordinance and Old Southwest was perhaps altered more than any other area of the City. Though not coinciding precisely with the three aforementioned areas of the neighborhood, there are essentially three main zoning districts that reflect the transitions, RM-1, CN, and MX.

The 2005 zoning map reduces density on properties that still have the potential to be single-family. West of Franklin Road the vast majority of properties are zoned *RM-1*, *Residential Mixed Density*. This district allows singlefamily by right, but requires duplex uses to be approved in a public hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals. Franklin Road and most of the properties to the east are zoned *MX*, *Mixed Use*, which allows office and residential uses. The residential zoning on Clarke and Maple Avenues is an exception. Most of the area identified in the Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan as the 5th Street village center is zoned *CN*, *Neighborhood Commercial*.

With many of its original buildings intact, the neighborhood is dominated by single-family and multifamily residential forms. Some of the larger structures along Franklin Road and east of Franklin Road are occupied by light commercial uses such as offices. During the latter half of the 20th century, many single-family dwellings were converted to multifamily dwellings. However, over the past 10-15 years, the trend began to reverse with significant numbers of homes restored to single-family use.

The zoning changes made in 2005 reinforce the private investment that has gone into the neighborhood, and aim to protect those investments as much as possible. Many apartment buildings were constructed in the neighborhood, and any other use of these properties is for the most part impractical. Therefore, several structures that were originally built to house apartments were zoned RM-2 in the update of the ordinance in 2005, which allows them to be used as single or multifamily.

Some neighborhood homeowners have requested the City downzone these structures or allow office or other low impact commercial uses in these properties that would make them more attractive and reduce density in the neighborhood. While understanding these concerns, it is important that a balance of housing options are available in the neighborhood, and that renters are as welcome as homeowners (though zoning cannot dictate whether units are rented or sold). It should also be noted that there are a few apartment buildings in the neighborhood that were built prior to World War II and are significant to the architectural heritage of the neighborhood.

At the same time, there has been a long history of sub-standard rental units in the neighborhood, and often criminal activity has been associated with these same properties. Code enforcement was one of the priority initiatives of the original plan, and residents were adamant in public workshops that it should be the highest priority of this update. Residents would like to see communication improve between City staff, residents, and the Commonwealth Attorney's office that prosecutes such cases. In addition, residents urged the City to request legislative amendments from the Virginia General Assembly that would bolster the City's police powers in enforcing local ordinances.

City staff, neighborhood residents, and Old Southwest, Inc. should continue to communicate as they have in the past when there are problems. In addition, alternative strategies to improve such properties should not be ruled out. Specific zoning and land use recommendations are not included in this plan. However, such changes should be considered in the long term vision for these properties.

The Fifth Street village center identified in Vision 2001-2020 was rezoned in 2005 per the Future Land Use map of the original plan. Village centers are centers in neighborhoods containing a mixture of higher-density residential uses and neighborhood commercial uses. They serve as the focus of neighborhood activity and vary in size and scale depending on the nature of uses and size of the surrounding area. Village Centers should be dense, compact in size, and identifiable. Centers generally have fixed limits so that commercial activity does not encroach in the surrounding residential areas. Some ideal village center commercial uses are restaurants, coffee shops, convenience stores, specialty shops and small retail establishments. Live/work space is also an appropriate use for village centers. Live/work space is a mixed-use tactic that employs office or retail use on the bottom floor and residential use in the upper floor of a structure. In recent years the City has encouraged and seen an increase in such uses, particularly in the expansion of downtown housing options. To encourage a pedestrian environment and desirable streetscape, buildings in village centers should be placed close to the street, immediately adjacent to the sidewalk.

5th Street Village Center



5th Street looking south toward the neighborhood

Further development and enhancement of the 5th Street Village Center was cited by residents as one of the top priorities for improving the neighborhood. In 2005 the zoning map adopted by City Council zoned several parcels for residential use that were identified in the future land use map of the Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan as village center properties. Only the properties that were at the time of a commercial use, were zoned CN, Neighborhood Commercial. However, all of the properties in the village center of the future land use plan, will be publicly considered for village center uses if appropriate plans and rezoning application are submitted. The structures in question are of a residential design. The current zoning will allow these properties to be used for residential development until appropriate steps are taken to convert them into commercial uses. If and when such requests are submitted, the public will have the opportunity to review the plans and comment.

The future land use map has been updated from the previous plan to reflect the zoning changes made in 2005. While it primarily matches the zoning pattern, a couple of areas are identified for potential changes.

> 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.

> The overall land use plan reflects the neighborhood's core residential function, its physical relationship to downtown to the north, to existing and proposed commercial / institutional uses to the east, and to natural and physical barriers to the south and west.

The core residential area, primarily located to the west of Franklin Road, is slated to remain residential with single-family housing the predominant use. Large public open spaces should be retained and enhanced, and appropriate natural buffers to the Roanoke River should be established and maintained. The land use plan also recognizes a small existing node at the intersection of Elm Avenue and Ferdinand Avenue for small scale low intensity commercial activity.

To the east of and including Franklin Road, is an area proposed to remain a combination of residential and office uses. The area along the Jefferson Street corridor, south of Mountain will remain a commercial corridor, though the range of future commercial uses should be focused on those complimen-

Future Land Use



These lots on Marshall Avenue could be opportunities for future infill residential development

Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan



View of the northeastern edge of the neighborhood from downtown

Grandfathered Land Uses



Former St. Charles Hospital on Mountain Avenue, now an apartment building.

tary to the neighborhood and to redevelopment efforts further south along Jefferson Street. Jefferson Street is Roanoke's historic main street and it should extend the development pattern of downtown while at the same time providing a transition to outlying neighborhoods.

The northeastern portion of the neighborhood should provide a transition between the neighborhood and the commercial uses to the north in the core of downtown. This area should have a mix of downtown housing and commercial uses at densities higher than in the core of the neighborhood. These types of uses include a mix of residential structures, with those south of Elm Avenue not exceeding three stories, restaurants, offices, convenience/specialty retail establishments, and financial institutions, oriented to the street with appropriate site/landscaping improvements with off-street parking to the rear or in an enclosed structure.

In addition to the 5th Street Village Center, an area that should be considered for land use changes is the north side of the 600 block of Marshall Avenue. These properties are currently zoned D, Downtown, but should ideally be developed for residential use consistent with the opposite side of the street. Most of these lots are vacant at present, and their small size would limit viable residential development. However, combining some or all of these lots would create a good opportunity for infill residential development.

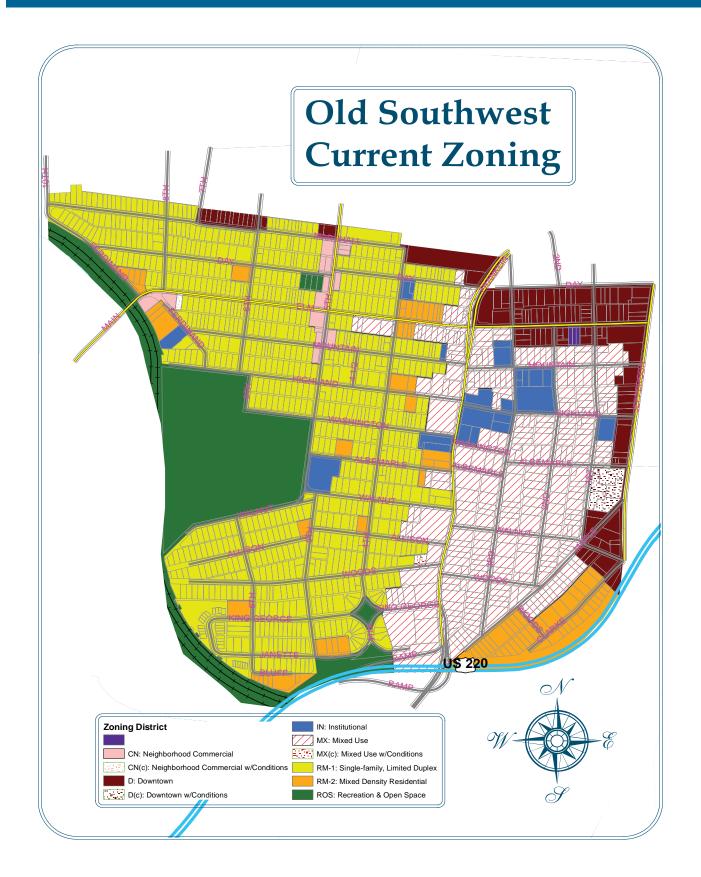
Many properties in Old Southwest are "non-conforming" and have "grandfathered" land uses. The grandfather clause is a legal distinction that grants a property owner the right to continue an established use after a locality changes the zoning of the property. In addition to land uses, building and lot dimensions can also be considered "nonconforming."

In Old Southwest, a number of multi-unit structures are non-conforming with the current zoning ordinance. The number of such properties increased significantly after the adoption of the new zoning ordinance in 2005. While these properties do not meet the intent of the zoning ordinance, it is important to recognize their legal rights to continue in the manner in which their use was originated.

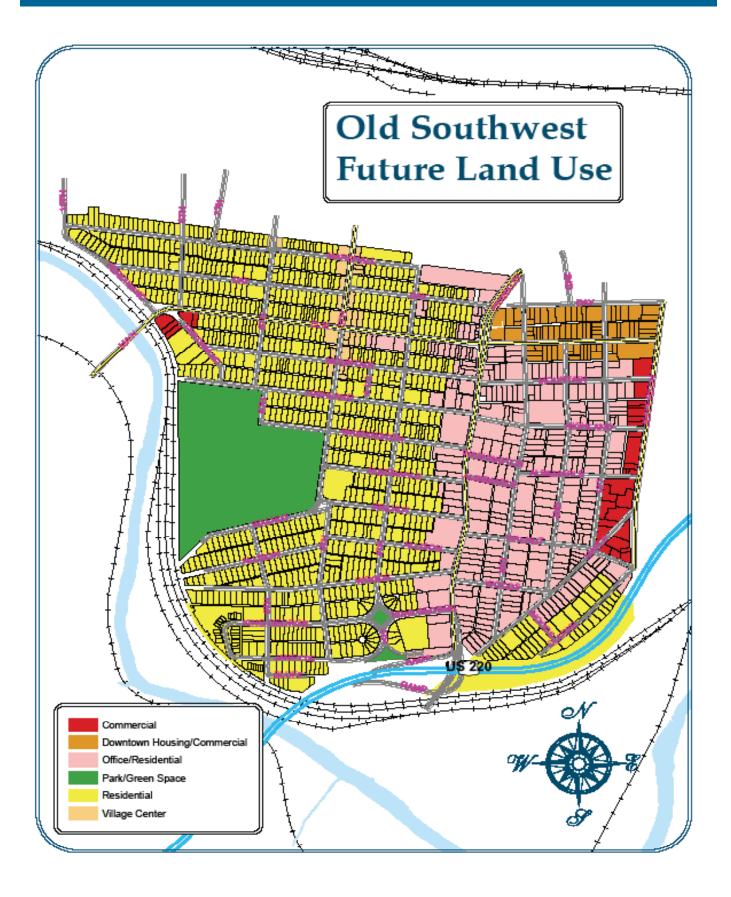
Community Design Issues:

- At intersection with Elm Avenue, 5th Street is not conducive to pedestrian friendly, village center development
- Lack of street trees on some streets

Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan



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Residential Development



Courtesy of the History Museum of Western Virginia



Marstellar House, Mountain Avenue This house was renovated in 2004, and in 2007 was featured in The Roanoker magazine

The City's Strategic Housing Plan identifies Old Southwest as an "urban advantage neighborhood" and notes that it has generated most of the applications to the Department of Real Estate Valuation for rehabilitation tax exemptions (formerly referred to as "tax abatement"). The plan identified the northern edge of the neighborhood, particularly Elm, Day, and Marshall Avenues as a neighborhood strategy area. Since the previous Old Southwest plan was adopted in 2003, and the Strategic Housing Plan in 2006, significant progress has been made in this section of the neighborhood, while new development and extensive renovations are underway in other areas.

Residents say the quality of housing is a major draw for the neighborhood. Preserving the early housing stock retains the neighborhood's sense of character and continuity in design. While new housing units have been added over the years, signaling confidence, the growing real estate market in the neighborhood has been fueled primarily by private investment in the renovation and restoration of the neighborhood's original homes.

The need for a more appropriate balance between single-family and multifamily units was a recurring theme expressed by Old Southwest residents during the planning process of the original plan. City residents also raised this sentiment during the development of *Vision 2001-2020*. As a result, a housing policy in Vision 2001-2020 states, "The City will have a balanced, sustainable range of housing choices in all price ranges and design options that encourage social and economic diversity throughout the City."

According to the 2000 Census, Roanoke has 45,257 housing units, 64.7% of which are single-family. The City's homeownership rate is 56.3%. In contrast, Old Southwest has 2,177 housing units, 1,918 of which are occupied. Only 22% of the occupied units are owner-occupied, with multi-family units making up over 84% of the total. The 2010 Census data will undoubtably reveal significant shifts in these numbers with greater owner occupancy in the neighborhood.

Since the previous plan's adoption, several significant development projects have gotten underway, including Miller's Hill, renovation of the former Cotton Mill building just outside of the neighborhood on 6th Street, and a townhouse development on Janette Avenue.

Janette Avenue (Victory Garden) Townhomes



Recently completed units



"Victory Gardens" became an international trend during World Wars I and II to reduce food costs. The land of the Janette Avenue Townhomes (pictured at top) was once used for neighborhood gardening.

Picture Source: Wikipedia

The Janette Avenue Townhomes is the largest development of new construction the neighborhood has seen in many years. The site of the townhomes was once the neighborhood's "Victory Gardens," where neighborhood residents planted fruits and vegetables during World Wars I and II. The development of these units addresses two major needs identified in the Strategic Housing Plan; increasing the homeownership rate, and the supply of townhomes and condominiums, which were previously lacking in Roanoke's market.

In late 2003 development of six new townhomes on the western end of Janette Avenue began. By early 2005 all of the units were complete, sold and occupied. In 2006 the same developers were granted a certificate of appropriateness from the ARB to bulid 20 similar townhomes on over three and a half acres on the western end of Janette and King George Avenues. At the time of the planning process, a few of these units were occupied, while construction is not yet complete on the majority. Once finished, there will be 20 units in five groups with four units side by side.

Janette Avenue was extended for the development and now connects to King George Avenue in a semi-circular pattern. Private alleys were created to the rear of the units for access to off-street parking and space for solid waste pickup. The design of the site followed the traditional development pattern of the neighborhood as much as possible, while adjusting to the limitations of the site, such as the railroad tracks and the flood plain.

The site has almost two acres of "common area" that will be maintained by a homeowner's association, most of which is green space. A number of trees had to be cleared for the development, however many new trees have been planted to restore the natural buffer between the railroad tracks and the neighborhood.



These units were built and sold between 2003 and 2005

	1990	2000
Households	2,061	1918
Housing Units	2,410	2,177
Owner Occupied	402 (20%)	424 (22%)
Median Value \$	52,100	85,000
Renter Occupied	1603 (80%)	1494 (78%)
Vacant	405	259

Table 3: Housing, 1990-2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 4: Housing, 2000

	2007	2008	2000-2008
No. of Transactions	115	82	857
Median Sales Price*	\$160,975	\$107,500	\$120,000
Parcels classified "residential"	n/a	871	n/a

Source: City of Roanoke, Real Estate Valuation

* Values of '0' were not included in calculation, but are considered a transaction

**Denotes no. of parcels, not housing units, & assumes occupancy based on mailing address



Recent 'sold' sign at Marshall Avenue and 6th Street. Despite a recent downturn in the real estate market, this area has seen a surge in investment.

Miller's Hill

In 2005, a private group approached the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) about selling 17 properties on the 400 block of Day Avenue at a minimal cost. The RRHA subsequently not only purchased the properties with funding from the City, but also began an extensive and comprehensive historic renovation of the structures to return them to their roots as single-family homes. The RRHA partnered with Hill Studio, Breake-II, Inc., Old Southwest, Inc., real estate agencies and various City staff to fine tune a plan for each structure based on its specific history and current market demands.

Several homes sold quickly, some before construction was completed. At present, the project has slowed down due to the national housing market slump. However, recently several more units were sold.





Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan

Cotton Mill



View of the Cotton Mill apartments from Marshall Avenue

Elm, Day, and Marshall Avenues



Well-maintained house on Marshall Avenue

The redevelopment of the former Cotton Mill building on 6th Street just north of the neighborhood began in 2007. The building will feature 108 units, and will include several live/work units that will cater to artist studios.

The redevelopment of the Cotton Mill property with full occupancy of residential units will alter the area considerably, and should provide a much needed boost to the blocks of Marshall Avenue nearby. The parking lot for the Cotton Mill residents faces and will be accessed from Marshall Avenue. Onstreet parking will need to be monitored in the area in response to increased demand. The visibility and activity of residents in the area will help connect the northern end of the neighborhood to downtown, and make the area more attractive for potential homeowners.

Despite the strong civic pride that exists among some homeowners in this area, there remains great room for improvement. Several of the neighborhood's poorly maintained rental properties are on these streets, and criminal activity is still a major concern.

The best long-term solution for Elm, Day, and Marshall Avenues is an improved housing stock with more homeowners to complement those already there. There are a number of structures that offer opportunities for the kind of redevelopment that has occurred elsewhere in the neighborhood. This part of the neighborhood is in greatest need of improvement, which should be considered in any future investment in Old Southwest.



Corner of Day and Ferdinand Avenues. This house's design, with facade orientation on three sides, is unique to the neighborhood.

Health Department Site



While on the outskirts of the neighborhood, redevelopment of the Health Department site could provide a needed boost to Marshall Avenue

The City Health Department, located on 8th Street abutting the northern edge of Old Southwest, is in the process of relocating its current offices. The City owned 1.7 acre site is proposed for a residential development. Once the move is complete, a request for proposal will likely be advertised to attract developers. The site offers another opportunity to redevelop a significant space close to the neighborhood and bring in new homeowners to the area.

While this site is just outside the boundaries of Old Southwest, its development could have a tremendous impact on Marshall Avenue and the northern side of the neighborhood. Old Southwest residents should take an active role in any public meetings pertaining to this site, and any development should compliment the neighborhood in terms of land use and design. It lies within the H-2 Historic District, thus requiring the design of the site and structures be approved by the ARB, as well as any demolition.

Key Issues:

- Abundance of non-conforming residential units
- Concentration of sub-standard units on portions of Elm, Day, and Marshall Avenues
- Lack of market activity on portions of Elm, Day, and Marshall Avenues

Economic Development

As previously noted, Old Southwest's commercial development consists of a concentration of office uses on and to the east of Franklin Road, and miscellaneous pocket or corner establishments in the western portion of the neighborhood. However, there is substantial redevelopment underway near the edges of the neighborhood, with potential projects on the horizon as well. The expansion of the central business district around the Jefferson Center has promoted revitalization at the northern edge of the neighborhood around Sixth Street and Marshall Avenue.

Jefferson Street is a commercial corridor that extends into downtown and is the eastern edge of the neighborhood. Jefferson Street is lined predominantly with medical offices and parking lots, however the Jefferson Street and Walnut Avenue area has several other commercial amenities. In addition, the office district between Franklin Road and Jefferson Street, includes a variety of services. Elm and Ferdinand Avenue intersect at a busy thoroughfare by the Wasena Bridge. Currently, there are two commercial establishments at this intersection.

During the public workshops residents expressed support for more pocket commercial uses and improvements to the village center to attract more services.

The Fifth Street village center has seen little development of neighborhood commercial land use. However, some plans are in progress and nearby properties that are currently available offer opportunities to spur some economic growth and transform this area with a seamless transition from the neighborhood to the Jefferson Center area and downtown. One positive development is the convenience store at 5th and Elm, which recently added gas pumps and underwent a significant transformation in the appearance of the building as well as the general operation of the business

The redevelopment of the Cotton Mill building on 6th Street just north of the neighborhood is currently underway. As it is currently planned, the building will feature 108 units. Beside and across from the Cotton Mill on opposing corners of Marshall Avenue and Sixth Street are two recently redeveloped buildings, one as a restaurant, the other as the property management office for the Cotton Mill.

Village Center





6th Street Streetscape Above; corner of 6th Street and Marshall Avenue today. Below; simulated picture with streetscape elements.

To reinforce recent residential & commercial investment in this area, a streetscape project will be undertaken to beautify and improve pedestrian connections. Final design of the streetscape has not been completed, but will incorporate some of the improvements shown below. Construction may begin by Spring 2010





New gas station at 5th Street and Elm Avenue

Storefront on 5th Street Two City-owned properties near the village center offer development opportunities:

- The former YMCA building at the corner of Church Avenue and 5th Street. This building has been vacant since the development of the new YMCA across the street. The site is over 1.2 acres and includes the 57, 868 square foot building and a parking lot. At present, the City has a developer under contract to redevelop this site with commercial and residential units.
- Fifth Street and Luck Avenue. This property is over 1.3 acres and is currently being used as a parking lot with no structures on it.

Both of these properties require a plan for mixed use with parking. Both are also within Enterprise Zone One A, making them eligible for several incentives.

Due to the current and potential projects near the 5th Street village center, it is recommended that the boundaries and concept of the village center be expanded. While zoning changes aren't necessary, streetscape improvements should be considered that will define the area, and make it more attractive, and pedestrian friendly.



Key Issues:

- Lack of a sense of place and attractiveness in the 5th Street village center
- Lack of commercial services within walking distance

Transportation and Infrastructure

Existing Transportation System

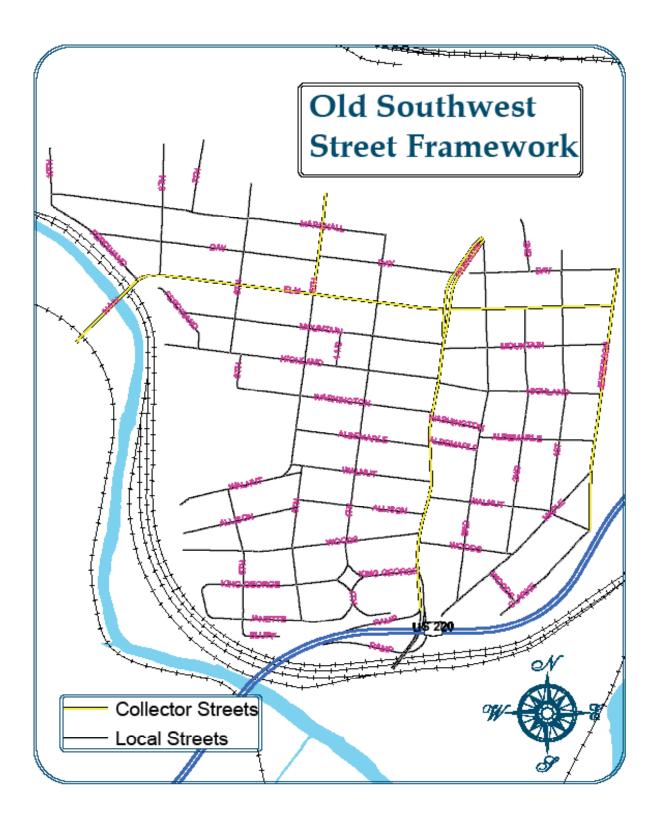


Argonne Circle at King George Avenue

The streets of Old Southwest are arranged in a traditional grid pattern, with most characterized by narrow lanes, on-street parking, sidewalks and street trees. The neighborhood's local streets are a good example of how residential streets should be designed to accommodate vehicles while not compromising safety and pedestrian access. Most of the intersections have four stop signs, a feature that is generally not employed elsewhere in the City. The stop signs, combined with the relatively narrow width of the streets and the presence of parked vehicles, keep traffic at a reasonable speed. These features should be maintained, though additional tree planting is needed on most streets throughout the neighborhood where the planting strips are wide enough.

Old Southwest has an urban design feature that also functions as a traffic calming device, Argonne Circle, which was originally designed as a park. Argonne Circle is located at the intersection of King George Avenue and Fourth Street. Neighborhood residents expressed the importance of maintaining this feature. Calvin Place, at 4th Street and Janette Avenue, was originally a counterpart to Argonne Circle, however it was impacted by the development of the Roy L. Webber Expressway (Route 220) and half of it is now privately owned. Interest in seeing this portion of Calvin Place acquired and restored as public green space was expressed in the public workshops.

In contrast to the residential streets in the neighborhood, which have manageable volumes and of traffic at reasonable speeds, Old Southwest has four collector streets which link to arterial streets; Franklin Road, Elm Avenue, 5th and Jefferson Streets. These streets bring large numbers of vehicles through the neighborhood every day, and need to be evaluated for future changes that will maintain their current function while better integrating them into the neighborhood.



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Franklin Road



Franklin Road

Elm Avenue



Elm Avenue, US Route 221, has a high volume of traffic

Franklin Road is the major arterial street that serves the neighborhood. Franklin Road connects to Routes 419 and 220, which are major arterial routes for the southwestern side of the valley. Franklin Road is also one of the City's main gateway streets, connecting to downtown via Old Southwest. The capacity of the street is adequate for projected traffic and there are no current plans for improvements to Franklin Road, however some intersections need to be improved for pedestrian safety, most notably at Elm Avenue.

Most of Franklin Road is two lanes wide. The northern end widens as it enters downtown. At its southern end it has two travel lanes and a center turn lane that alternates sides in different blocks. The turn lanes allow access to the offices along the street while allowing through traffic to continue without stopping. At the same time however, the continuous flow of traffic makes Franklin Road difficult to cross for pedestrians. A traffic signal at Walnut Avenue is the only point at which motorists might have to stop before or after Elm Avenue. Intersection improvements that would improve pedestrian safety and accessibility should be considered for the most frequently traveled streets. Due to the narrow width of the streets intersecting Franklin Road, alterations to the curb might negatively impact turning radii. Therefore, changes to the street pavement such as stamped or painted crosswalks, are likely to be preferable.

Overall, given the land use and volume of traffic on Franklin Road, it is a street that at present adequately serves the neighborhood and commuter traffic. However, as previously noted, it is not easy to cross for pedestrians. Short term changes to Franklin Road should focus on pedestrian accommodations at the intersections, while long-term the street should be evaluated per the City's *Street Design Guidelines* to determine if more substantive design alterations need to be implemented.

Elm Avenue connects to Route 221, also a major arterial route for the southwestern side of the valley. For this reason, it is a busy street. Traffic is often backed up during peak times at the intersection of Ferdinand Avenue on the Wasena bridge, and also at the intersections of Fifth Street and Franklin Road. It should be noted however, that typically the queue of vehicles doesn't usually last beyond one signal change. However, Elm Avenue is projected to see increases in traffic over the next 10 years. In addition, much like Franklin Road, crossing Elm Avenue is often not easy due to heavy traffic and motorists not slowing down for pedestrians. In particular, 5th Street is not conducive to village center pedestrian activity, although the previous plan recommends development of the village center there. Elm Avenue has for years been a de facto dividing line between the more revitalized southern, and



This intersection at Elm Avenue and Franklin Road is difficult for pedestrians to cross.

less revitalized northern sides of the neighborhood. The street will continue to attract large numbers of vehicles, but slowing the traffic down while allowing it to flow with fewer stops at traffic signals could improve conditions for motorists and residents alike.

A long-term strategy for Elm Avenue is the neighborhood's most significant infrastructure need. A comprehensive approach should be developed to address the segment from Ferdinand Avenue to Franklin Road. Potential improvements based on the Street Design Guidelines might include:

- Consider landscaping and placing public art in the public right-of-way of Ferdinand Avenue where it intersects with Elm Avenue.
- Stripe parking lanes on one or both sides of the street to reduce the number of travel lanes to two. Allow full-time on-street parking on the north side of Elm Avenue at appropriate sight distances from intersections.
- Consider improvements at the intersection of Elm Avenue and Fifth Street that will make it easier and safer to cross for pedestrians.
- Consider improvements at the intersection of Elm Avenue and Franklin Road that will make it easier and safer to cross for pedestrians..

5th Street

Fifth Street is a gateway into the neighborhood and features a variety of commercial uses on the edge and north of Old Southwest. As it is slated for village center development, 5th Street should be easily accessible and attractive to pedestrians and motorists coming to visit. There has been recent improvement with a couple of businesses in the village center, however the current traffic pattern of 5th Street is not conducive to neighborhood commercial development. The southbound side of the street is two lanes wide north of Elm Avenue. The inside lane could be used for on-street parking while maintaining both turn lanes at the intersection with Elm Avenue. In addition, while maintaining the segments of brick sidewalk on the western side of the street, trees should be planted where feasible.

Jefferson Street



Recently many 'no parking' signs were removed from Jefferson Street, which may reduce the speed of traffic

Jefferson Street is the eastern boundary of the neighborhood, however it is largely detached from it. On a positive note, Jefferson Street's commercial, auto-oriented development does not encroach significantly into the neighborhood west of 1st Street, and the mixed use district co-exists well with the uses on Jefferson Street, at least to the extent there appears to be no land use conflicts.

However, Jefferson Street could be much better integrated with the neighborhood and downtown. Jefferson Street was once the City's main street. Originally an urban and early suburban street, modern suburban development has replaced much of the early structures. This development, while serving a regional clientele, is low density and an inefficient use of the land.

The street connects downtown and the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area, passing right by Old Southwest. A rubber tire trolley service, *The Star Line*, began running from downtown to the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area in November 2008. The Star Line, combined with development underway downtown on Jefferson Street, could present opportunities for redevelopment on the eastern edge of Old Southwest.

Jefferson Street has four travel lanes with curb, gutter, sidewalk, and some decorative lighting but very few trees. There is no on-street parking . At present, Jefferson Street is not in dire need of any improvements and any changes to it are not crucial for the neighborhood. However, as the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area takes shape, Jefferson Street will need to be evaluated, and potentially re-designed per the Street Design Guidelines.



Jefferson Street looking north by the former College of Health Sciences Building. Jefferson Street is the eastern edge of Old Southwest, but is not well integrated with the neighborhood.

Proposed I-73 Route

Neighborhood residents, particularly those located closer to I-581 and U.S. 220, have expressed concerns about the noise generated by passing automobiles. Improvements such as noise barriers will not be considered by the Virginia Department of Transportation unless there are plans to widen or improve the existing roadway. Currently, plans for Interstate Route 73 (I-73) follow the path of the present Route 220 within the City limits. Residents of Clarke Avenue in particular, will be impacted by the creation of I-73. Any noise barriers installed along this segment of the neighborhood.

Old Southwest residents feel that alleys are an important asset to the neighborhood. Alleys are an important part of Old Southwest's traditional neighborhood design, and several original brick alleys remain in good condition. Alleys that are part of the original grid street pattern should be preserved and continue to be used for solid waste service.

Residents have reported that some alleys in the Elm, Day, and Marshall Avenue area are littered with trash and tires. Clean-up efforts, such as *Block Pride*, sponsored by neighborhood residents and City staff encourage residents to take a proactive approach to alley maintenance. Residents are required by City Code to maintain the portion of the alley that adjoins their property to the center line. Still, better maintenance of the alleys by residents is needed as well as more aggressive code enforcement to discourage dumping in alleys.

The narrow streets and on street parking of Old Southwest act as a traffic-calming device in the neighborhood. However, the neighborhood's high residential density and professional offices create a relatively large demand for parking. Urban neighborhoods such as Old Southwest usually lack the area for parking that can be found in more suburban areas.

City Council adopted a residential parking program, which allows some neighborhoods to limit parking on their streets to residents via a vehicle sticker. The neighborhood may consider implementing the program in certain portions of the neighborhood to address parking issues. Rezoning the neighborhood in 2005 to decrease the density is the best long-term parking strategy, as more houses are restored to their original single-family designs, the demand for parking will decline.

Alleys



Brick Alley

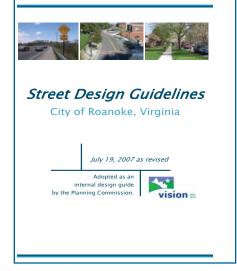
Parking and Lighting



On-street parking on Day Avenue

The neighborhood has expressed concerns about inappropriate, inadequate (too dim) or absence of street lighting in some areas. At the same time, residents also expressed concerns with lighting fixtures that are too tall and illuminate excessive glare. Recently, Old Southwest, Inc. received a neighborhood development grant to install pedestrian scale period lighting on several streets.

Complete Streets



Roanoke's Street Design Guidelines are a guide to 'complete streets,' which improve neighborhoods like Old Southwest In 2008, City Council adopted the Complete Streets Policy. The policy states "the City shall routinely plan, fund, design, construct, operate, and maintain their streets according to the Complete Street principles of the City's "Street Design Guidelines" with the goal of creating an attractive connected multimodal network that balances the needs of all users, except where there are demonstrated exceptional circumstances." The Street Design Guidelines were adopted by the Planning Commission in 2007, and provide recommendations and typical sections for retrofitting existing streets, and designing anew.

All streets should provide means for multimodal transportation (pedestrians, bicycles, and motorized vehicles). Pedestrian and bicycle transportation are encouraged by providing complete sidewalk systems and bicycle accommodations. Pedestrian accommodations can be improved by completing gaps in the sidewalk system and providing marked crosswalks at busy intersections. Particular areas of concern are the 5th Street Village Center, and the intersection of Elm Avenue and Franklin Road.

Because of low traffic volumes and speeds, local streets should provide safe bicycle travel without special accommodations. Accommodations, as identified in the City's Street Design Guidelines (e.g., wider travel lanes, marked bike lanes, etc.) may be required on collector streets because of higher volumes of traffic and higher speeds. Specific neighborhood concerns include multimodal access to the Roanoke River Greenway.

Sidewalks are a vital part of the streetscapes in Old Southwest. The sidewalks make Old Southwest a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, with downtown, Highland Park and the Roanoke River only minutes away by foot. Most of the streets in the neighborhood have curb, gutter, and sidewalk, with a few exceptions. The previous Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan included a list of portions of eleven streets which lacked curb and/or sidewalk. The status of these projects is included in Table 3 on the following pages.

Much of the list has been completed, however several areas in Old Southwest are in need of new sidewalks, and some existing sidewalks are in need of repair. Of particular importance to the neighborhood are its brick sidewalks.



Mature tree and recent sidewalk infill on 4th Street.

Per the H-2 Design Guidelines, these sidewalks are required to be maintained to preserve the bricks, and the method and pattern in which they were originally laid. No surface treatment or adhesives should be applied to them.

Many sidewalks appear to be in disrepair due to their proximity to old trees. Throughout most of the neighborhood little more than two feet of grass separates the sidewalk from the curb where trees have been planted. Many of the trees that were originally planted in these rights-of-way are still alive, and their roots have broken up or created undulations in nearby segments of sidewalks. Preserving and increasing tree canopy is a primary goal of the City's Urban Forestry Plan. Throughout the City, these old, large trees are a major part of the City's overall tree canopy. They provide numerous environmental benefits, such as reduction of storm water runoff, reduction of carbon and improved air quality. Trees also provide shade in spring and summer, which reduces temperatures and in turn, energy consumption, plus making streets more pedestrian friendly. The zoning ordinance includes tree canopy requirements for all new developments.

Trees are a vital component of complete streets, as are sidewalks and other pedestrian accommodations. In areas where sidewalks are buckled due to tree growth, the trees should only be removed if they are dead or likely to fall, but not solely for sidewalk maintenance. Such sidewalks that are affected by trees should be maintained as much as possible, while realizing that a flat surface cannot be achieved in some places. Eventually, once the older trees die and must be removed, new trees will be planted that are more suited to the narrow planting strips in the public rights-of-way.



Brick sidewalk on Marshall Avenue. Many residents want these original sidewalks to be maintained better.

Several sidewalks with curb ramps such as this one on Mountain Avenue have been installed since the 2003 plan was adopted.



Table 5: Curb, Gutter and Sidewalks

The following table lists all of the projects included in the previous Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan as well as new streets identified, and the status of each. Those that are listed "incomplete" will be evaluated for future installation.

Street	Sidewalk Location	Work Required	Status
1 st Street	800 Block Mountain to Elm	New Sidewalk and Curb Alley to Elm West Side New Curb East Side	Incomplete
1 st Street	1000 Block	New Sidewalk, mid block West Side	Incomplete
1 st Street	1100 Block	New Curb West Side	Incomplete
3 rd Street	11-1200 Block	New Curb West Side	Incomplete
4 1/2 Street	900 Block Mountain to Highland	New Sidewalks and Curbs East and West Side	Incomplete
4 th Street	700 Block Day to Elm	New Curb East Side South of the Alley New Curb West Side	Complete
4 th Street	1000 Block Highland to Washington	New Curbs East and West Side	Complete
5 th Street	1600 Block	New Sidewalks East and West Side New Curb East Side	Incomplete
6 th Street	1300 Block Allison to Walnut	New Curb Alley to Allison East Side	Complete
6 th Street	1400 Block Woods to Allison	New Curbs East and West Side	Complete
6 th Street	1500 Block King George to Woods	New Sidewalk West Side from Alley to Woods New Curbs East and West Side	Complete
6 th Street	1600 Block Janette to King George	New Sidewalk and Curb West Side New Curb Alley to King George East Side	Complete
8 th Street	600 Block Day to Marshall	New Sidewalk West Side	Incomplete
Albemarle Avenue	300 Block East of Franklin	New Sidewalk North Side	Incomplete
Clarke Avenue	1400 Block	New Curb West Side	Incomplete
Elm Avenue	379	New Curb	Complete
Highland Avenue	700 Block	New Curb South Side	Complete
Janette Avenue	500 Block Vacant Lot West of 504	New Sidewalk and Curb South Side	Complete
Janette Avenue	531 to 6 th Street	New Curb North Side	Complete
Woods Avenue	100 Block from Clarke to Maple	New Curbs North and South Side	Complete
Woods Avenue	200 Block	New Curbs West of the Alley	Complete
Woods Avenue	300 Block East of Franklin	New Curbs North Side New Curbs South Side Where Missing	Complete
Woods Avenue	300 Block West of Franklin	New Curb South Side	Complete

Public Transit Service

Currently, fixed-route transit service to the Old Southwest Neighborhood is provided by Valley Metro routes 55/56 and 61/62 (outgoing buses from Campbell Court downtown have odd numbers, while those returning downtown have even numbers). On-demand, curb-to-curb transit service is provided by RADAR for physically, mentally disabled, or transportation disadvantaged individuals.

The previous Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan proposed the idea, with resident support, of a trolley or shuttle that would link the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area to downtown via Old Southwest. As previously noted, the City has implemented a rubber-tired trolley service connecting downtown to the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area and Carilion Memorial Hospital along Jefferson Street. This service is provided by Valley Metro and the route provides another transportation option to and from downtown.

Fiber and Telecommunications

Fiber and telecommunications lines serve Old Southwest via several corridors. The primary lines are located along 5th, 3rd, and Jefferson Streets. Access from these corridors is provided by individual service providers to residents, as there are no public lines in the neighborhood.



The recently implemented Star Line Trolley was one of the recommendations of the 2003 Old Southwest plan.



Parks and Recreation

Highland Park

Highland Park was Roanoke's first public park. Established in 1901 on a 33-acre tract of land, this community park has served as a center for recreational activities and festivals for the entire City, and continues to host events today. In 2001, a festival was held to celebrate the park's centennial anniversary.

The park is located across 5th Street from the Highland Park Learning Center (formerly Highland Park Elementary School). The park provides a significant amount of green space within a relatively developed area. Highlights of the park include its rolling terrain and lush vegetation, ornamental fencing, adjacent school and its location in an historic neighborhood. The park has two baseball fields, three tennis courts, a basketball court, two totlots, a small ampitheater, rest rooms, brick paths, and scenic views. Additionally, a new dog park (off-leash area) has been designated in the western end of the park.



Highland Park in October



Ready for a run in the park. The Alexander/Gish house is in the background

As a "community park," Highland Park follows design standards to make it accessible to multiple neighborhoods, available for family oriented recreational opportunities, contain an equitable balance of active and passive recreational facilities, maintain a strong landscape design element, and possess an integrated design theme throughout the park property that seamlessly flows into surrounding land uses.

Highland Park has witnessed increased use over the years, and as a result has a backlog of maintenance needs. Some of the needed improvements identified include rest rooms, parking enhancements, improved traffic circulation, better bike and pedestrian access outside of the right-of-way, improved pedestrian level lighting, updated playground equipment, picnic tables, repair and general maintenance of brick paths, and surface improvements to the street through the park. Recently, the street through the park was changed to allow only one-way traffic from Washington Avenue. This should reduce the number of vehicles that are driving through that are using the park unlawfully. Increased visitation, observations and reports to police by nearby residents have helped make the park a family venue.

Old Southwest, Inc., has maintained a park fund that it has used in conjunction with City investment in the Park. The organization has procured grants to install period lighting, benches, fencing, relocation of a downtown horse trough, and other various park improvements, such as trees and landscaping.



Above, May 21, 2009; Mayor Bowers and other City officials at the "leash cutting" for the dog park with members of Old Southwest, Inc. and NewVa Connects Right, the park is already getting considerable use.



Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan



Period street light in Highland Park. Old Southwest, Inc. has recieved several grants from the City to install these lights.

The Active Living Initiative

At the time of the planning process, the Department of Parks and Recreation was beginning to prepare a master site plan per the recommendations of the previous Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan. Such a comprehensive planning approach would balance the existing citizen need with park maintenance, design, and resource standards, so that a better long-term capital improvement plan can be created to include a sustainable approach to park stewardship. The needs of the park and its importance to the neighborhood warrant a separate, focused planning effort.

> The street through the park was recently made one-way at the neighborhood's request. Residents have also requested that the street be repaved.



Active Living by Design is a concept that promotes environments that offer choices for integrating physical activity into one's daily life. By designing structures, communities, and environments that reduce automobile reliance and support pedestrian and bicycle activity, physical structures can help improve public health by promoting active living.

The City values the high quality of life that its citizens enjoy, and recognizes that health and the physical environment are key components. Due to our national, state, and local trends in childhood obesity and overall chronic health levels, we have learned that routine physical activity is necessary to prevent premature death, unnecessary illness and disability, enhance physical and mental health, and help maintain a high quality of life for everyone. A healthy environment that is designed to positively affect physical activity by providing pedestrian-friendly amenities would: encourage walking and biking; promote human interaction and social cohesion; remove barriers to activity for everyone; and make healthy levels of physical activity attainable for large numbers of people during their daily routine. 16

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It is the desire of the City to create livable, safe, healthy, and attractive environments with a special focus on the landscape design of our built environments in our neighborhoods, public spaces, parks, greenways, trails, and streetscapes. By designing human-scale communities with buildings, signs, lighting, vegetation, and other improvements, people can feel more comfortable interacting in and moving around their neighborhood within a safe and visually stimulating system of parks, greenways, and trails.

PLAY Magazine

Parks and Recreation's seasonal publication offers a wealth of information on classes, activities and resources for residents interested in a variety of hobbies, organized team and individual sports, and nutritional tips for healthy living. Download PLAY at: www.roanokeva.gov/play



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Greenways and Walking Trails



The Roanoke River Greenway links Wasena and Smith parks. Users can enter this greenway from Elm Avenue and Franklin Road, allowing them to bypass heavy traffic.

As part of the City's active living initiative, greenways and walking/hiking trails are being planned and developed. At the time of the planning process, a "Pathways to Healthy Neighborhoods Plan" was being developed to identify potential walking and bicycle paths for improved active transportation for a multitude of user-types.

The term "greenway and/or linear park" are corridors of protected open/ green space used for recreation, conservation and alternate transportation. The regional greenway system links our various water resources, parks, neighborhoods, and connects the City to the greater region. In 1997 City Council adopted the Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan. The plan was updated in 2007 to reflect the changes and progress made to that point, and prioritizes potential greenway corridors. The Roanoke River Greenway is the first priority of the plan.

The Roanoke River Greenway runs along the west side of the neighborhood. When complete, it will provide a shared-use, paved pathway spanning the entire length of the City along the river. By late 2009, the greenway will extend from Wasena Park through the River's Edge area to the eastern edge of the City, completing a 5-mile section of trail. Eventually, the greenway will extend from Dixie Caverns to Explore Park, creating a 30-mile trail. Roanoke's portion of the Roanoke River Greenway should be complete by 2012, in conjunction with the flood reduction project.

Support for a direct connection to the Roanoke River Greenway and access to trails was widely expressed in the neighborhood workshops. However, the Roanoke River Greenway is in close proximity to Old Southwest, with access by three bridges; Franklin Road, Jefferson Street or Wasena. The latter was recently re-striped with bicycle lanes, which reduced the vehicular travel lanes. Accessing the Wasena bridge from the cul de sac of Ferdinand Avenue (the land between it and the intersection is public right-of-way) provides direct and convenient access to the Roanoke River Greenway for pedestrians and bikers. The Norfolk Southern railroad tracks and right-of-way are between the greenway and the neighborhood. Creating an intermediate connection to the greenway at Highland Park would require Norfolk Southern's approval and would require significant investment. As long as those tracks remain in use, a new bicycle/pedestrian bridge would likely be the only means of direct access. Nevertheless, ideas should remain open for future possibilities for another connection from the neighborhood to the greenway and the Roanoke River. At the same time, it should be noted that Old Southwest's current connections to the greenway, while perhaps not ideal, are much closer and convenient than for most Valley neighborhoods.

Old Southwest residents are adamant in their support for more outdoor recreation amenities, and their desire to connect to greenways and trails. Future greenway and pathways planning efforts should continue to include the neighborhood and explore ways to connect it.



Wasena Bridge at the intersection of Elm and Ferdinand Avenues. Recently the bridge was restriped to narrow the travel lanes, allowing more space for bicyclists, and thus facilitating access to the Roanoke River Greenway from Old Southwest.

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Public Services

Fire/EMS



EMS station at Day Avenue and 4th Street

Police



Watch dog on Mountain Avenue!

The previous Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan noted that the Fire/EMS Department's long-range plan recommended consolidation of Fire Stations One and Three into one larger station. That consolidation has since been completed. The new Roanoke Fire-EMS Station 1 Headquarters, which serves Old Southwest, opened in May of 2007 at the northeast corner of Elm Avenue and Franklin Road, right on the edge of the neighborhood. The station is over 29,000 square feet, three stories tall, and houses not only Fire-EMS Crews, but also Fire-EMS Administration, including the Office of the Chief and the Fire Prevention Division. When this station opened it consolidated crews from Fire-EMS Station 3, which was located on Sixth St., SW, and crews from Historic Station 1 on Church Ave., SE. The new station houses Engine 1, Ladder 1, Medic 1, the EMS Supervisor and the Southside Battalion Chief.

The Vision 2001-2020 Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of involving the community to solve public safety issues. The City's Police Department has adopted a community policing approach. The intention of the community policing approach is to strengthen close interaction and mutual cooperation between police, residents, businesses and community groups.

The majority of the calls for service in Old Southwest are for domestic disorders, security alarms, alcohol and drug violations, noise violations, and larceny/robbery. The Elm, Day, and Marshall Avenue area is the most problematic, however neighborhood residents are working closely with police officers to concentrate on addressing issues there and have seen substantial progress recently.

Officer Next Door

Neighborhood Involvement

Solid Waste Management

Residents stated in the public workshops that having a police officer living in the neighborhood would be of great benefit. If possible, the *Officer Next Door* program should be considered in Old Southwest. *Officer Next Door* is a program administered by Blue Ridge Housing in partnership with the City. The program assists City Police Officers in purchasing a new or renovated home in neighborhoods where their presence will have a positive impact.

Old Southwest, Inc. has an active public safety committee made up of neighborhood residents. The committee meets monthly, and police officers regularly attend. The committee has made considerable progress in facilitating valuable information to the police officers that work in the area. The committee has expressed a need for long-term record keeping to track crime in the neighborhood. In addition to calls for service, the Police Department should work with the committee to create a method of data collection that will allow both to evaluate the neighborhood's progress in the future.

The Division of Solid Waste Management provides weekly collection of residential refuse, bulk & brush, recycling, commercial refuse collection, seasonal collection of leaves, and occasionally hazardous waste. Increasing the volume of recycling is a goal of *Vision 2001-2020*. Recycling helps conserve energy and natural resources, reduces solid waste, protects the environment, and creates jobs.

Recently a number of public trash cans were installed by Old Southwest, Inc. with volunteer labor after recieving grant funds from the City.



Highland Park Elementary School



Highland Park Elementary celebrated its 100th birthday in 2008. It is often cited as one of the neighborhood's greatest assets.

Highland Park Elementary School has long been cited by neighborhood and City residents as one of the City's best schools, and one of several reasons that homeowners are attracted to Old Southwest. Enrollment was at 317 students in 1995. At the time it was a magnet school and brought in some students from outside of its district. In September 2007 enrollment was down to 220, owing mainly to the small district boundaries it serves and it no longer bringing in as many students from outside its district. While the district is small, Highland Park is a "school of choice" per the No Child Left Behind Act and receives students from other schools which have not met the Standards of Learning requirements.

Enrollment went up in the 2008-9 school year due to the recent closing of Forest Park Elementary School. During the neighborhood workshops, residents expressed a strong desire to enable all children in the neighborhood to attend Highland Park Elementary School.

In April 2009, the School Board adopted a new attendance zone map that will be go into effect in September 2009. In the current school district mapping, students residing in the northern portion of the neighborhood attend Hurt Park Elementary School. In the new zone for Highland Park Elementary School, all students in the neighborhood except those north of Highland Park and west of 5th Street, will attend the school. Thus, some students that previously attended Highland Park will now attend Wasena Elementary School, while some students that previously attended Hurt Park will now attend Highland Park. In addition, the new zone extends north to encompass all of the Gainsboro and Gilmer neighborhoods.



Recommendations

Community Design Policies:



Exposed portion of brick street serving as a gutter pan on Janette Avenue.

- **Historic Preservation:** Old Southwest's character stems from its historically significant architecture, streetscapes, and public spaces. The historic character of Old Southwest must be preserved, protected and enhanced.
- **ARB Process:** The process of the Architectural Review Board should emphasize in kind repair and replacement over modification of character defining features.
- Village center: infrastructure should be conducive to pedestrian friendly, village center development
- Future neighborhood commercial development should adhere to the design principles of *Vision 2001-2020* for village centers:
 - o Concentrations of higher-density, mixed use development and live/ work space.
 - o Increased lot coverage, collocated signs, efficient lighting, on-street parking, pedestrian accommodations and orientation of buildings close to the street that emphasizes pedestrian activity.
- Vacant Lots: Parcels that are now vacant should be developed per their appropriate zoning.
- **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. when possible.
- Neighborhood gateways should include signage to identify the neighborhood.
- The tree canopy should be maintained and increased per the City's Urban Forestry Plan.

Community Design Actions:



Picture of a period street light from the 2003 plan taken by Bruce Muncy.

- Use the future land use map to evaluate rezoning and special exception requests. In particular, requests for properties in the village center should be considered if the design and uses are supported by the neighborhood.
- Maintain the H-2 Historic District overlay zoning and continue public out reach to inform citizens about the Architectural Review Board:
 - o Communicate benefits and purpose of H-2 design review.
 - o Inform residents about the process and when it applies.
 - o Continue to recognize exemplary projects.
- Encourage the appropriate development of vacant lots per the zoning ordinance.
- Continue to explore methods to improve the effectiveness of Code Enforcement, including improving communication between City staff, residents, and the Commonwealth Attorney's office, and requesting legislative amendments from the Virginia General Assembly that would bolster the City's police powers in enforcing local ordinances.
- Encourage the use of on-street parking by identifying areas where spaces can be added.
- Encourage participation in the City's adopt a park/street/spot program for residential street and public space beautification efforts.
- Implement the Percent for Public Art Program to place public art in public spaces per the Public Art Plan with the following consideration:
 - Consider the public right-of-way between Ferdinand and Elm
 Avenues, Highland Park, and the southwest corner of Elm
 Avenue and Franklin Road.
- Plant street trees in accordance with the City's Street Design Guidelines where feasible within the public right-of-way.
- Where possible, replace tree canopy within the City's rights-of-way with large deciduous trees.

Residential Development Policies:

- Infill development should be compatible with adjoining development.
- Vacant structures should be preserved and rehabilitated. Demolition may be considered only per the zoning ordinance standards of the H-2 district.
- A variety of housing options should be available in Old Southwest, including detached single-family, town homes, condominiums, apartments and live/work units.
- Property Code Compliance: Property owners are expected to maintain their properties and abide by all City codes.

Residential Development Actions:



Porches of recent condominium redevelopment on Highland Avenue.

- Use the *Residential Pattern Book for The City of Roanoke* in conjunction with the H-2 Historic District Guidelines as a guide for de signing residential infill.
- Encourage market rate housing that will increase homeownership in accordance with the City's Strategic Housing Plan.
- Continue to market the City's Rehabilitation Tax Exemption program, as well as state and federal tax credits, as a means of renovating and restoring structures.
- Continue the Rental Inspection Program.
- Include Old Southwest, Inc. and neighborhood residents in publicmeetings pertaining to the redevelopment of the Health Department siteon 8th Street.

Economic Development Policies:

- Economic Development Actions:

Above, picture of the Wildflour from the 2003 plan taken by Bruce Muncy. The restaurant on 4th Street has solid patronage in the neighborhood. Right, the recently opened Fork in the City at 6th Street and Marshall Avenue is a welcome addition to the northern edge of Old Southwest.

- Village centers should be designed to promote pedestrian accessibility. Businesses should attract clientele from the neighborhood and else where in the City.
- Industrial uses and large scale commercial development are not compatible in this neighborhood.
- **Parking:** The supply of on-street parking should be maximized along commercial streets as a strategy to encourage short-term parking.
- **Infrastructure:** Couple improvements with significant private development when possible.
- Expand the neighborhood commercial district of the original Old South west plan to connect to the Jefferson Center area. Install infrastructure improvements on 6th Street before making any changes to 5th Street:
 - a. Designate 6th Street as a village center between Campbell (out of the neighborhood) and Marshall Avenues. Recommended improvements include:
 - i. Curb/sidewalk extensions with trees and landscaping
 - ii. Period lighting
 - iii. Stamped crosswalks
 - iv. On-street parking on the south side of the 600 block of Mar shall
 - v. *Pinch points* at 6th and Marshall such as curb extensions
 - b. Enhance the 5th Street village center with streetscape improvements between Marshall and Elm Avenues per the Street Design Guidelines.
- Redevelop vacant pocket or corner commercial buildings.





Transportation and Infrastructure Policies:

- Complete streets: Old Southwest will have safe, pleasant streets that accommodate all modes of transportation.
- Capacity enhancements should be discouraged.
- Alleys should be retained and maintained, as locations for trash pickup and rear access to properties.
- Streetscapes: The streetscapes of Old Southwest are important to maintaining the historic character of the neighborhood. Emphasis shall be placed on the compatible design of sidewalks, street lighting and planting strips. Maintenance of existing streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters shall be improved, including preservation of original or historically significant infrastructure such as stone curbs and brick gutter pans.
- Utilities: Underground utilities are preferable to above ground utilities, and whenever possible installation should be underground.
- Street trees: Streets should have mature tree canopies.
- Gateways: Gateways are those key entrances to the neighborhood most frequently used by incoming and through traffic. They should convey a positive impression to residents and through-traffic.



Franklin Road in 2003.

Transportation and Infrastructure Actions:

- Avoid widening of any neighborhood streets for additional travel lanes.
- Encourage residents to park on street thereby narrowing the effective street width and reinforcing slower travel speeds.
- Streets should be kept at the minimum width necessary to accommodate vehicular traffic and on-street parking.
- Complete curb, gutter and sidewalk installation
- Plant street trees where feasible
- Consider the following on Elm Avenue between Ferdinand Avenue and Franklin Road:
 - o Evaluate the intersection of Elm and Ferdinand Avenues at the Wasena bridge.
 - Intersection of Elm Avenue and Franklin Road consider improvements that will make this intersection easier and safer to cross for pedestrians.
 - Striping each side to create a defined area for on street parking and bicycle lanes if possible.
- Franklin Road consider for bicycle accommodations
- Jefferson Street improve the Jefferson Street corridor per the Street Design Guidelines.



Calvin Place by Janette Avenue.

Parks and Recreation Policies:

- Highland Park should be a safe and accessible park for all City residents, and maintenance of the park is vital to the neighborhood.
- Greenways and trails: safe connections to nearby parks, trails and green ways should be available.
- Pedestrian Amenities: Residents should have facilities for pedestrian mobility within the neighborhood.
- Street Trees: Street trees should be installed in accordance with the City's Street Design Guidelines.

Parks and Recreation Actions:

- Highland Park: work with Parks and Recreation to develop a master plan, potentially including pathway and greenway connections.
- Greenways and trails: explore options to connect Old Southwest to nearby parks, trails and greenways.
- Plant street trees where possible and replace dead trees as needed



Picture of the fountain in Highland Park from the 2003 plan taken by Bruce Muncy.

Public Services Policies:	 Police officers should keep neighborhood residents informed of occurrences of crime in the area. Likewise, residents should provide information to assist officers Potential home buyers should be confident that Old Southwest is a safe place to reside. Fire/EMS stations should provide the most efficient service possible Recycling of materials should be done by as many households and businesses as possible to reduce waste The preservation of neighborhood schools and the ability of neighbor hood children to attend them reinforces the neighborhood's attractiveness and viability and reduces transportation demand.
Public Services Actions:	 Work with the Police Department to create a database or other means of tracking crime in the neighborhood, so that Old Southwest, Inc. (or any other body of residents) can keep informed and monitor the progress of crime prevention in the neighborhood. Continue regular Police attendance of neighborhood meetings, and ensure that neighborhood residents are advised of the officers assigned to the zone that includes Old Southwest. Consider the neighborhood for the <i>Officer Next Door</i> program, particularly in the northern portion. Promote recycling in the neighborhood through Old Southwest, Inc., businesses and residents Continue to assist neighborhood residents with Block Pride and other cleanup efforts Consider installing appropriate public recycling containers in the village centers Continue to encourage the school board to preserve Highland Park Elementary School as a neighborhood school.
Picture of Highland Park Elementary School from the 2003 plan taken by Bruce Muncy.	

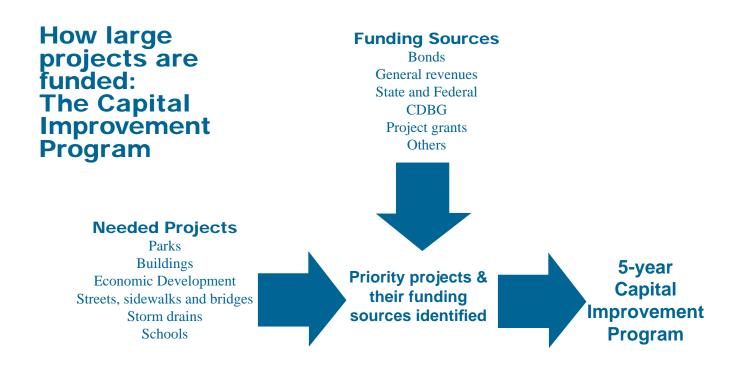
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Implementation

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.



Implementation of Original Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan

Below is a list of projects and actions included in the Implementation and Recommendations sections of the original Old Southwest Neighborhood Plan. The *projected time period* denotes the time needed for implementation from the date of Council adoption of the plan, which was January 21,2003. An updated list of projects and their implementation schedule is on the following page.

Action	Projected Time Period	Lead Agency	Status
Zoning Changes	1 Year	PBD	Complete Zoning Ordinance Updated on December 5,2005
Code Enforcement	Ongoing	PBD	Ongoing 2 additional zoning inspector positions were created in 2008
Expand H-2 District	3 Years	PBD	Complete H-2 boudares were expanded to Campbell Avenue in 2005. H-2 Guidelines updated in 2007
Historic Surveys	3 Years	PBD	Ongoing H-2 will eventually need to be re-surveyed per the Deparment of Historic Resources
Develop Village Center at 5th Street/Elm Avenue	Ongoing	PBD,PW	Ongoing Update of the plan includes recommenda- tions for infrastructure
Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvements	Ongoing	PW	Ongoing Majority of curb, gutter and sidewalk installed. Update of the plan includes recom- mendations for future installations
Plant Street Trees	Ongoing	PR	Ongoing Some trees have been planted, additional list of locations provided in the plan update
Expand Neighborhood Watch	1 Year	PBD	Watch has not expanded, but the OSW, Inc. public safety committee meets monthly with police officers.
Develop a Master Plan for Highland Park	Ongoing	PR	Ongoing Plan development scheduled for 2008
Make Improvements to Highland Park	Ongoing	PR	Ongoing To be identified in Master Plan
Develop Greenway Connections	Ongoing	PR	Ongoing Recommendations also included in plan update.
Develop streetscape standards in the zoning and subdivision ordinances	Ongoing	PBD	Complete The zoning ordinance was updated in 2005, the subdivision ordinance and the Street Design Guidelines in 2007.
Identify alternative funding sources for burying above ground utilities throughout Old Southwest.	Ongoing	PW	Ongoing Zoning ordinance requires underground utilities for new development unless above ground service is available
Consider establishing public shuttle routes linking the RCRT to downtown via Old Southwest.	Ongoing	VM	Complete Star Line trolley began operation in Fall 2008

PBD = Planning Building and Development

PW = Public Works

VM = Valley Metro

PR = Parks and Recreation

Implementation of Old Southwest 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-2	Y-3	Y-4	Y-5+	Lead Agency	Potential Funding Sources
Plant street trees per the list provided			*			PR	PR Operating Fund
Complete the Architectural Pattern Book						PBD	PBD Operating Fund
Include Old Southwest, Inc. and neighborhood residents in public meetings pertaining to the redevelopment of the Health Department site			*			PBD	PBD Operating Fund
Install village center infrastructure improvements on 6th Street to coincide with the Cotton Mill redevelop- ment		*				PW	PW Operating Fund
Enhance the 5th Street village center with streetscape improvements between Marshall and Elm Avenues per the Street Design Guidelines.					*	PW	PW Operating Fund
Complete sidewalk infill per the curb, gutter and sidewalk list					*	PW	PW Operating Fund
Evaluate options for Elm Avenue between Ferdinand Avenue and Franklin Road					*	PW	PW Operating Fund
Improve the Jefferson Street corridor per the Street Design Guidelines					*	PW	PW Operating Fund
Develop a Master Plan for Highland Park						P R	PR Operating Fund
Work with the Police Department to create a database or other means of tracking crime in the neighborhood		*				PD	PD Operating Fund
Consider installing appropriate public recycling con- tainers in the village centers			*			PW	PW Operating Fund

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PD = Police Department