



Norwich

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

ROANOKE
VIRGINIA



vision 2001
2020

Contents:

Introduction	1
Community Design	4
Residential Development	10
Economic Development	15
Infrastructure	18
Public Services	21
Quality of Life	22
Recommendations	25
Implementation	33
Acknowledgments	

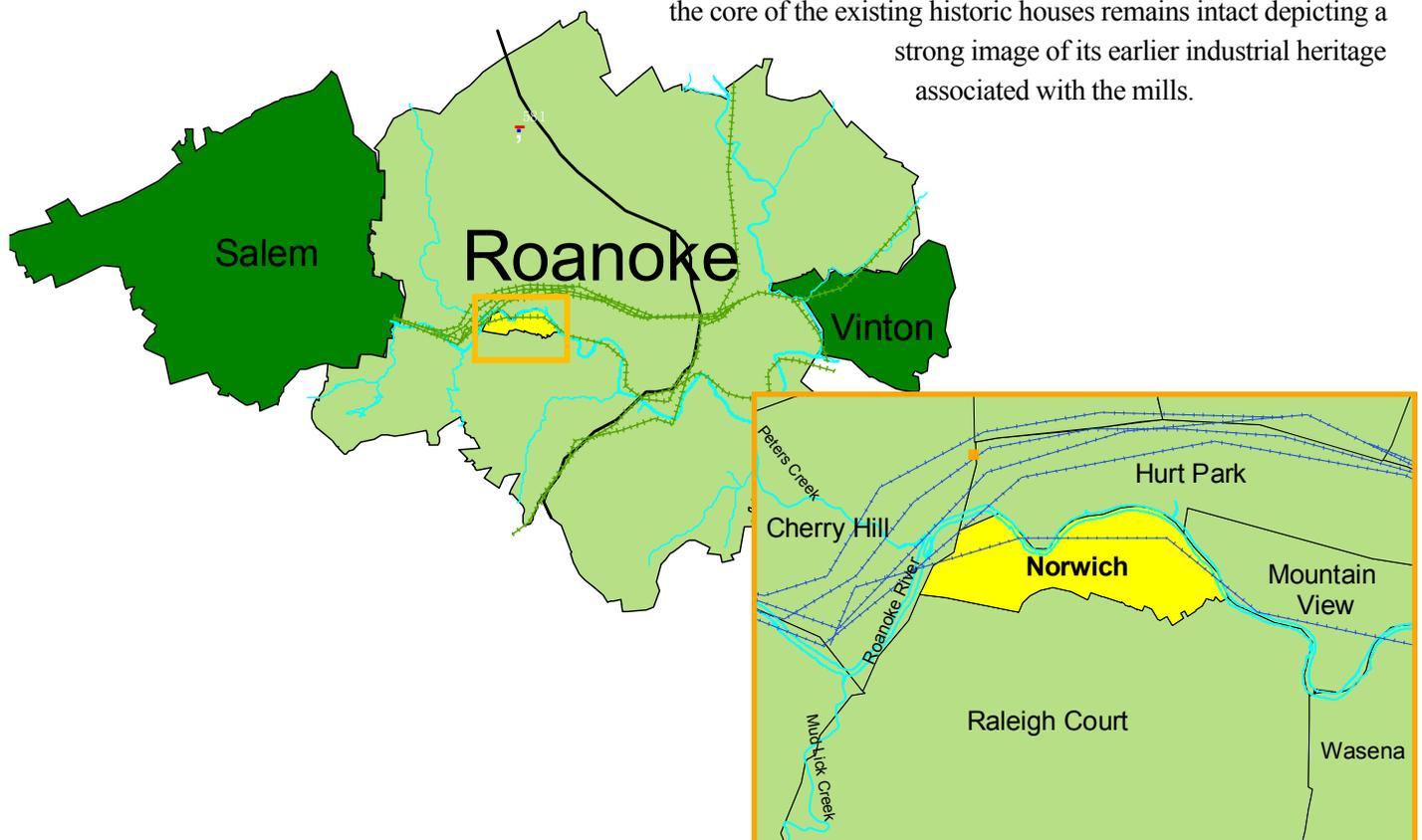
Adopted by City Council September 15, 2003

Planning Building & Development

Introduction

Norwich is a small, historic community that once thrived with factories, mills, grocery stores, churches, and a school— all supported by a community well from an underground spring. William Persinger built the first house near the spring around 1825. The two-story brick house formerly stood at the corner of Roanoke Avenue and Burks Street. Located approximately two miles west of downtown, the neighborhood dates back to the late 1800s when it was settled on the south bank of the Roanoke River with foundries and factories. The village flourished through the mid-twentieth century until a majority of its sustainable manufacturing plants, such as the Norwich Twine Mill and the Harris Hardwood Company lumber yard, succumbed to floods and fire. Since the 1960s, the area has remained essentially unchanged and residential in character with industrial infill development along its perimeter.

The quiet neighborhood contains a few side streets, rows of historic workers' houses (shotgun style houses), long-time residents, one park, two stores, three churches, and incredible potential for recreational land use along the river where the mill and lumber yard once stood. The residents pride themselves in their long and continuous ties to the neighborhood; one such family has resided there for five generations. There has been no modern residential infill development, and the core of the existing historic houses remains intact depicting a strong image of its earlier industrial heritage associated with the mills.





Neighborhood Planning

The planning staff involved the community in the development of this plan. Planners worked with Norwich residents in early 2003 through a series of workshops to identify priorities and issues of concern. Community input was used to develop the policies and actions in the plan.

In 1985, *Roanoke Vision*, the city's comprehensive plan, called for the preservation and enhancement of existing neighborhoods and recommended that city policies and actions support neighborhood revitalization and preservation. A major recommendation of *Roanoke Vision* was to develop plans for each neighborhood. The current comprehensive plan for the city, *Vision 2001-2020* continues support for neighborhood-based planning for a livable and sustainable city. Roanoke must work to retain its citizens and improve the livability of its neighborhoods.

This plan recommends actions that can be carried out by citizens, the city, neighborhood organizations, and other supporting interests, as well as policies that are used to guide future decisions. Neighborhood and area plans are official documents that are adopted by City Council and become part of the city's comprehensive plan. These initiatives are reflected in the policies and actions located in the Recommendations section of this document.

High Priority Initiatives

This plan proposes five priority initiatives:

- Housing renovation and revitalization
- Physical improvement of neighborhood gateways and side streets
- Encourage the establishment of a vibrant village center
- Develop a recreational use plan for the HM-zoned land along the Roanoke River
- Improve the existing neighborhood park (Norwich Park)

Plan Elements

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

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



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

Community Design

Land Use & Zoning Patterns

Norwich, located in the bottomland of the Roanoke River, is surrounded by residential areas on three sides: Hurt Park lies to the north, Raleigh Court (with access from Memorial Avenue to Roanoke Avenue) lies to the south, and Mountain View (with access from Patterson Avenue to Bridge Street) lies to the east. A spur line of the former Norfolk & Western Railroad runs along the northern edge of Norwich beside the Roanoke River, and the railroad repair shop area known as Shaffer's Crossing, lies northwest of Norwich across the river.

Along with Virginia Heights and Wasena, Norwich was annexed into the city in 1919, and is currently bordered by light and heavy industrial uses. The neighborhood is well-established with all of its housing stock built prior to World War II. Much of the industrially zoned land is now vacant due to fire and floods.



The view of Norwich from Mountain View Terrace, looking across Norwich Park and Roanoke Avenue.



The historic streetscape along Roanoke Avenue where most houses were built around 1907.

The zoning and land use patterns in Norwich can be summarized into five general categories:

- **Traditional Residential** - the southeast section of the neighborhood is primarily single-family detached houses. Zoned as a Residential Single-Family District (RS-3), it is intended to provide for medium population densities, and to promote and encourage the revitalization and preservation of single-family neighborhoods in the inner areas of the city. The district is also intended to allow for the development of small and irregularly-shaped vacant lots with single-family detached dwellings.
- **Single and Multifamily Residential** - Single family homes and two multi-family developments (apartment complexes) along Mountain View Terrace and Berkley Avenue in the southwest portion of the community primarily make up the Residential Multifamily, Medium Density District (RM-2). The RM-2 District is intended to encourage the preservation and enhancement of city neighborhoods which have historically developed with medium population densities and to provide for a compatible mix of housing types which encourage innovative infill development and to accommodate the efficient use of utilities. Along Berkley Avenue is a small RM-1 (Residential Multifamily, Low Density) district comprised of 14 parcels. The purpose of this district is to encourage a mixture of single-family, two-family, and townhouse dwellings. Currently this area supports single-family, duplexes, and converted single-family homes to multifamily uses.

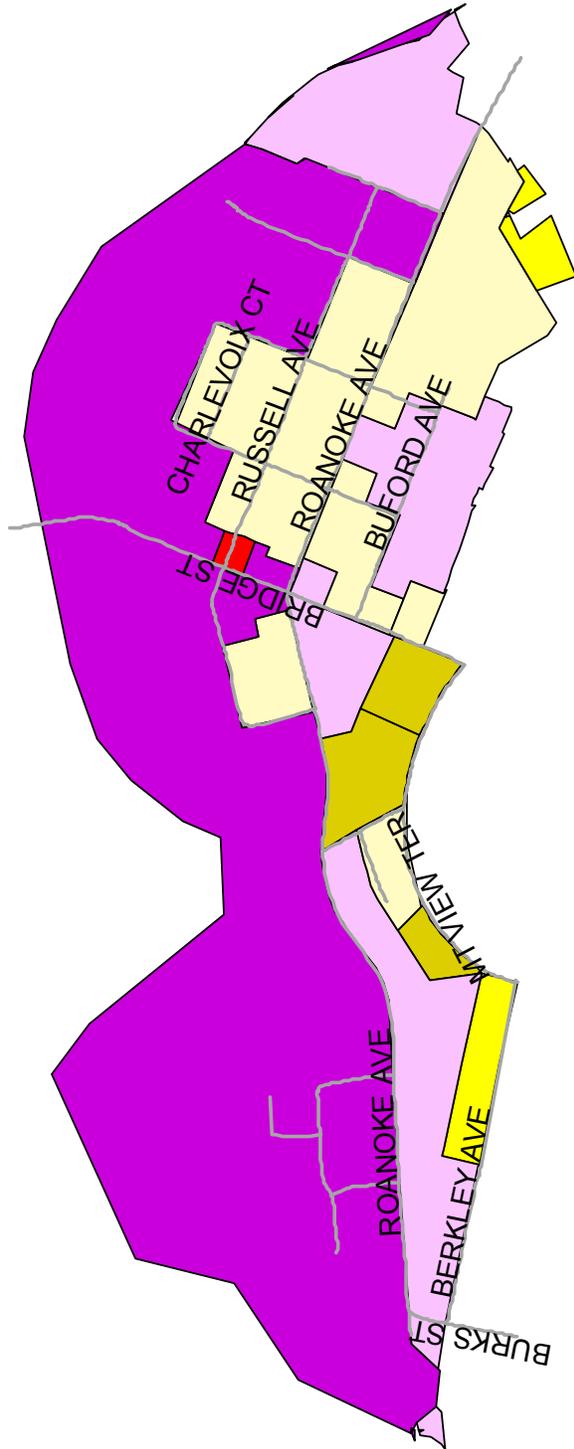
- **Commercial corridors** - A majority of the commercial development is found along Roanoke Avenue between Byrne Street and Union Street. Although only a few parcels are zoned for commercial uses in the entire neighborhood, many businesses have located in light and heavy industrial zoning districts.
- **Industrial Corridor** - occupies the largest portion of land area in the neighborhood; light and heavy industrial zoned parcels cover much of the northern portion of the neighborhood. There is a dense concentration of light industrial zoned properties on Buford Avenue, between Warwick Street and Rolfe Street.
- **Small village center** - there is a small commercial node consisting of two parcels at the corner of Russell Avenue and Bridge Street. Zoned Neighborhood Commercial (CN), this district is intended to enhance existing neighborhood shopping areas and provide for a range of neighborhood retail and service establishments serving the local community.



The residential areas of Norwich were zoned industrial in the 1960s, with the intention of slowly converting the area to industrial uses. The area remained a viable residential community, and in 1999, city staff worked with residents to initiate a comprehensive rezoning of the residential areas to RS-3 (Residential single-family) to preserve the existing single-family housing stock.

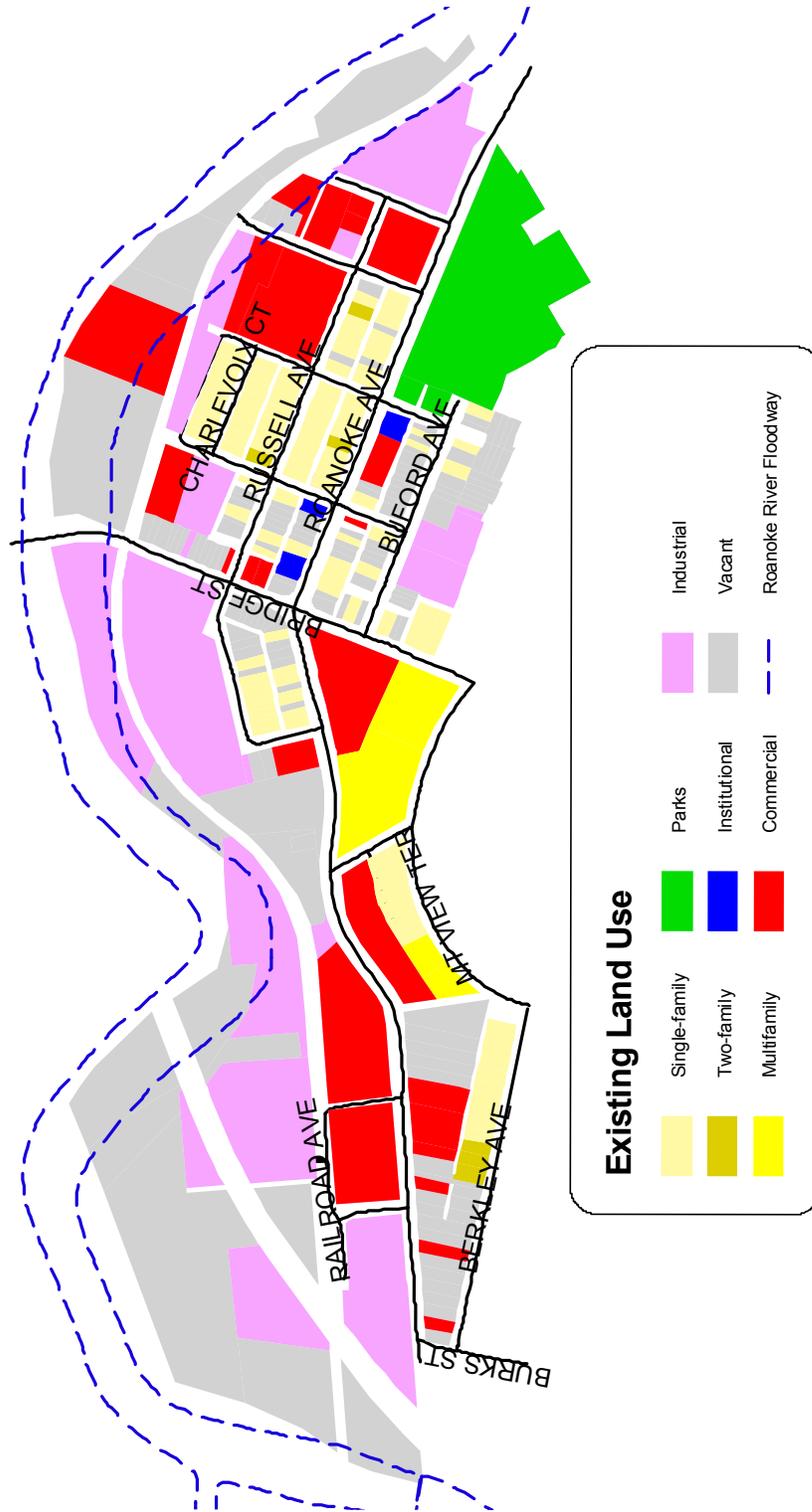


Modern industrial infill along the perimeter of Norwich.



Existing Zoning

	Single-family		Neighborhood Commercial
	Single- & two-family		Light industrial
	Multifamily		Heavy industrial



Physical Layout

Norwich is nestled along the bottomland of the Roanoke River; the river surrounds the community to the north, and a wooded bluff along Mountain View Terrace overlooks Norwich to the south.

The streets in the area were originally dirt streets, and despite being paved, still do not have curb, gutters, or sidewalks. Some of the streets, such as Roanoke Avenue, are partially tree-lined. Houses are typically located close to the front property line and are closely spaced. Gravel alleys provide access for small outbuildings, utilities, and trash collections along the rear of these properties. There is little room for garages in Norwich. The majority of houses tend to be of the same scale, massing, and architecture, and most have front porches; the related house styles create a pleasing rhythm along the streets.

Norwich was once a self-sustaining community with its own commercial, retail, and residential components. Being low-lying and flat, the area is more conducive to pedestrian and bicycle traffic than other hillier neighborhoods.

Norwich Park, conveniently located along the main corridor of Roanoke Avenue, is well utilized by the citizens. Access to the Roanoke River, which can provide for better boating, fishing, and biking opportunities, is currently underdeveloped. Roanoke Avenue, the main street leading into Norwich from Memorial Avenue, needs to be beautified with landscaping and lighting improvements.



The inviting gateway into the community of Norwich along Roanoke Avenue.

Residential Development

Traditionally a neighborhood dominated by single-family detached dwellings, Norwich and the surrounding area offers a balance of single family and multi-family housing options. Over the past 10 years, the perimeter of the area has seen a shift toward more renter-occupied units.

The majority of single family housing lies between Ashlawn Street and Warwick Street along Russell Avenue and Roanoke Avenue. Two developments located on Mountain View Terrace comprise the only multifamily developments in the neighborhood.



Norwich has many good examples of historic worker housing.



All of the existing single-family houses in the Norwich neighborhood were built prior to World War II, mostly between the 1890s and the 1920s for the employees of the factories and the mill. Housing in Norwich is quite affordable. Smaller houses on compact lots make for good values and lower maintenance needs. Although it is a tight-knit community, some rental housing along the perimeter of Norwich has created a lower percentage of owner-occupied housing than the city-wide average.

There are 303 occupied dwelling units in Norwich; 112 which are owner-occupied (37%) and 191 are renter-occupied (63%). In contrast, Roanoke has 56% owner-occupancy and 44% renter-occupancy. Residents note that the core area of Norwich around Russell and Roanoke Avenues is mostly owner-occupied with long-term residents. The area west of Bridge Street has several apartment buildings that account for the high level of renter occupancy.

Neighborhood Design



From a historical viewpoint, Norwich can be identified by its intact rows of one-story, frame, shotgun style houses that were built for the mill workers. Constructed during the housing boom of the 1890s, they were advertised as "attractive cottages are being built to accommodate the laborers."

Historic streetscapes composed of workers housing along Penn Street(above) and Roanoke Avenue.



The grouping of the worker houses remains predominantly intact along Roanoke and Russell Avenues and Penn Street. Larger, two-story frame houses are scattered along the perimeter of the workers' housing where the managers of the mills and other industrial plants in the area resided. While most of these houses remain, some of them, especially on both sides of Buford Street, have been destroyed by fire, time, and development.

Some light manufacturing properties have been built up along the southern edge of the Norwich neighborhood predominately along Buford Avenue, where larger residential houses once stood. A few apartment complexes have been built along the southern ridge that flanks Norwich along Mountain View Terrace.



A streetscape of the earliest houses that were built in Norwich along Penn Street in 1890.



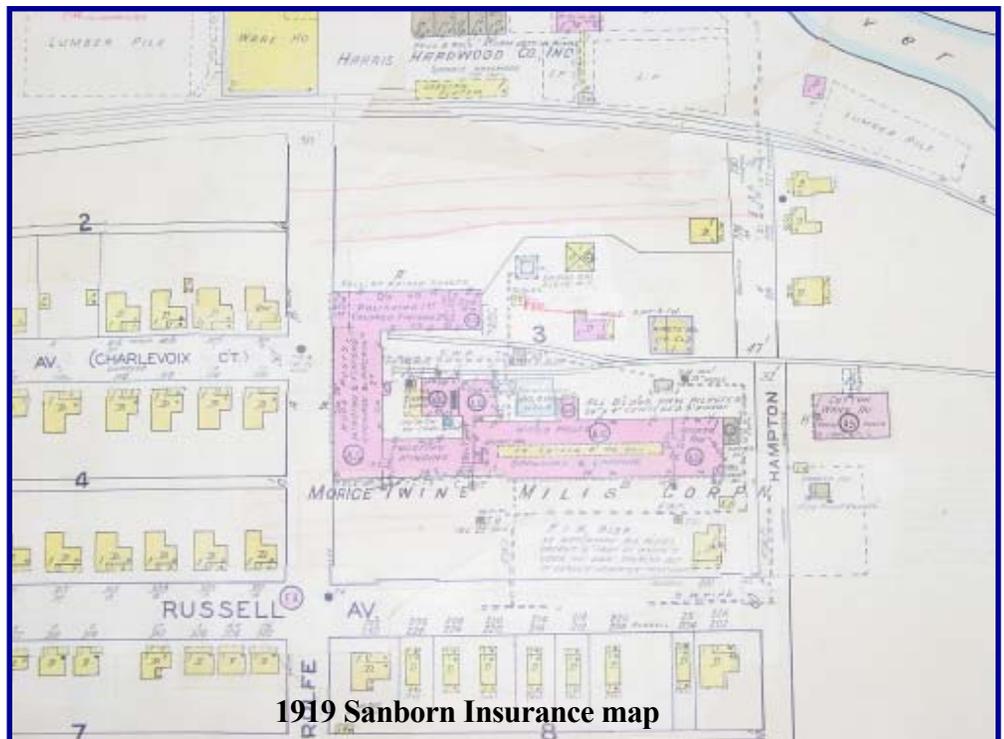
A good example of an early church in Norwich, the Woodside Presbyterian Church built in 1920.



Left intact over the generations, the core neighborhood appears to be eligible as a historic district. An important tool that can be used to maintain Norwich's historic architecture and sense of community is to nominate it as a historic district to the National Register of Historic Places.

This is an advantageous opportunity for a neighborhood because there are no restrictions for being listed on the National Register; it is strictly honorific and does not encumber the property owner in making changes to their property. It does allow them, however, to apply for state and federal tax-credits for major rehabilitative projects (such as converting the old Norwich School to a neighborhood center) as long as they follow National Park Service guidelines. While its residents are not currently receptive to it becoming a historic district, its aging housing stock, however, will require more repair and sensitive rehabilitation in order to maintain the historic character of the village-setting of Norwich.

Further, because of its proximity to the Roanoke River, Norwich in general, and the area along the river in particular, could contain a high concentration of Native-American artifacts. Its archeological potential should be considered a valuable asset and should be investigated in the future, especially concerning any development along the river.



Population

According to the 2000 Census, the Norwich neighborhood has 652 people and 303 households. The table below documents the general demographic profile of Norwich.

The age distribution in Norwich is similar to that of the city as a whole. Outlying apartment buildings significantly change the demographic profile from the core area of the neighborhood.

Age Distribution: Comparison between Norwich and Roanoke			
	Norwich		Roanoke
0-17 years	179	27%	23%
18-34 years	190	29%	31%
35-64 years	218	33%	30%
65 + years	65	10%	16%
Total	652		US Census 2000

The racial composition of Norwich is similar to that of the city as a whole.

Racial Composition			
	Norwich		Roanoke
White	472	72%	69%
Black	161	25%	27%
Multiracial	19	3%	4%
Total	652		US Census 2000

Economic Development

Norwich developed as an industrial center on the outskirts of downtown, and once flourished with large manufacturing companies such as the Norwich Lock Company, Norwich Twine Mill, and the Harris Hardwood Company along the south bank of the Roanoke River. Filled with factory workers, the neighborhood supported five grocery stores, mainly clustered around the Russell Avenue and Bridge Street intersection, near the Walker Foundry.

Currently, light and heavy manufacturing uses fill the perimeter of Norwich, except along the river, which remains vacant due to constant flooding. The neighborhood appears too small to support a diverse mixture of retail, commercial, and industrial uses. There is one convenience store and one restaurant located near the center of the community where Roanoke and Russell Avenues intersect with Bridge Street. There is no distinct village center that provides basic goods and services within walking distance, although economic development efforts could reinforce this area as a center of activity with concentrated business. Currently, residents drive to Grandin Village or to Towers Mall for their main shopping needs.



The Walker Foundry and Machine Company was important to the development of Norwich.



Modern convenience store located at the corner of Bridge Street and Roanoke Avenue.

Enterprise Zone

The community of Norwich is located in one of the city's Enterprise Zones. Businesses located within the boundary of any local Enterprise Zone may qualify for state or local incentives. Local incentives for businesses and residents, which were adopted by Roanoke City Council in July 2002, to spur economic growth and revitalization in the area, include incentives for new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings, rehabilitation of existing structures tax credit, façade grants, job training grants, and neighborhood revitalization incentives.

Village Center

The village center contains basic services such as convenience stores, drug stores, auto parts and hardware stores. Existing village centers should be limited in size to provide well-defined business areas. Uses should be small in scale and serve both the surrounding neighborhood and those passing through the neighborhood. The intersections around Roanoke and Russell Avenues with Bridge Street is a future development opportunity.



The intersection of Bridge Street and Russell Avenue, a potential village center.



Much of the industrial development in the neighborhood occurred along the former Norfolk & Western Railroad, which ran along the Roanoke River.

Industrial Development

A majority of Norwich is zoned both Heavy Manufacturing (HM) District and Light Manufacturing (LM) District; a large portion of the HM District contains vacant land because it is in the flood way. There are numerous vacant industrial buildings and building foundations. Only the Walker Foundry is one of the earlier industrial companies still in production. Numerous light manufacturing buildings have been erected recently along the southern half of Norwich that do not blend in well with the historic environment.



A view of the large Walker Foundry complex.

Infrastructure

Transportation

There are two collector streets in the neighborhood. Roanoke Avenue runs in an east-west direction and provides access to Memorial Avenue. Bridge Street runs in a north-south direction and feeds into Patterson Avenue to the north and Mountain View Terrace to the south. The streets have sufficient capacity to meet the foreseeable traffic demands volumes.

The residents voiced concern about the lack of a traffic signal at the intersection of Roanoke and Memorial Avenues. The intersection is congested during morning and evening rush hours. They stated that they have to wait a long time to pull out onto Memorial Avenue because of the volume of traffic. The Memorial Avenue Bridge has undergone renovation work and a new traffic pattern has been established to assist in traffic calming at this location. Memorial Avenue has been reduced from a four-lane street down to a two-lane street with bicycle paths. However, speed is still a factor, and affects the ability for the residents to pull left out into traffic. The need for a traffic signal at Roanoke Avenue was recently evaluated, but the traffic volume count did not warrant a new signal. A second study will be conducted when the traffic volumes appear to have normalized to evaluate the best traffic management practice to implement in order to accommodate left turns onto Memorial Avenue.



Memorial Avenue Bridge at Roanoke Avenue.

Most of the neighborhood's interior residential feeder streets are adequate for the current volume of traffic. The majority of the two-lane streets in the neighborhood do not draw much traffic from outside the neighborhood. However, there is a complaint of speeding along Bridge Street, with a special concern for safety at where it intersects Roanoke Avenue. Bridge Street is too wide and allows for excessive speed; wide planting strips and tall street trees could help to diminish speeding traffic.

The residents requested that tar and gravel be installed on the sides of Charlevoix, Roanoke, Warwick, and Russell Streets for better parking, and that the alley behind Charlevoix be tarred and graveled. Street edges throughout the neighborhood are poorly defined. Curbing or improved shoulders are needed to improve function and appearance.



An example of curbing along a side residential street.

Public Transportation

Valley Metro has two routes that serve the neighborhood. Route 65/66 is accessible on Memorial Avenue and provides residents with public transportation to Patrick Henry High School. The southbound section of Route 65 loops through the neighborhood providing access to Roanoke Avenue, Russell Avenue, and Bridge Street. This loop was added to Valley Metro's routing in the late 1990s in response to resident requests. Route 71/72 can be accessed from Memorial Avenue or along Mountain View Terrace and turns around at Lewis-Gale Hospital.

Sidewalks, Curb, and Gutter

Few streets have curbing or sidewalks. Two blocks of Roanoke Avenue between Warwick Street and Ashlawn Street have curb and guttering. The residents expressed concern about their lack of curb and guttering and requested it be installed in the 2100 block of Russell Avenue, the 2400 block of Penn Street, and along Rolfe and Warwick Streets. Curbing could improve storm water management, which is a recurring problem. Norwich is a compact neighborhood where a small amount of investment in the streets would produce large dividends in terms of neighborhood reinvestment.

Street Lights

Street lighting is good and is generally located at corners. The lighting along Roanoke Avenue, Bridge Street, and Norwich Park is sufficient for public safety. Citizens stated that they want more lighting in the 2100 block of Roanoke Avenue (near the park) for better security.

Utilities

Electrical service, telephone, and cable TV utilities are generally above ground and available throughout the neighborhood. Natural gas and public water/sewer are available throughout the neighborhood. However, some of the power lines are too low for the trucks to safely remove solid waste. Semi-annual neighborhood clean-ups, such as the one that Roanoke's Solid Waste Management conducts on Day and Marshall Avenues, would be an effective method of removal and a good neighborhood event in which the Norwich Neighborhood Alliance could support.

Public Services

Public Safety

The Roanoke Police Department monitors the city as 14 districts; Norwich is part of district 5. Other neighborhoods in district 5 include Hurt Park, Mountain View, and West End. Residents cite occasional problems with commercial vandalism and drug traffic. Residents work closely with police to address these issues as they arise.

The Norwich neighborhood is currently covered by Fire-EMS Station No. 7, located on Memorial Avenue, which houses a fire pumper and aerial ladder truck. Ambulance service is provided from EMS Station No.1 located on Day Avenue and Fire-EMS station located on 6th Street with an additional ambulance and fire pumper trucks servicing the neighborhood from Fire-EMS Station No. 9 located on 24th Street. Norwich receives excellent fire and ambulances services from these various locations and response times meet the department goals. There are no plans to alter these services currently, except that some responses will be based out of the new Fire Station No.1 when that station is completed.

Schools and Libraries

The children in Norwich attend Virginia Heights Elementary, Woodrow Wilson Middle School, and Patrick Henry High School.

A building that once housed Norwich Elementary School is located on Roanoke Avenue. It is currently a warehouse. The residents have stated that they would like to see this building become a community center. The two-story brick building once served first and second graders on the first floor, and third and fourth graders on the second floor.

The ca. 1920 Norwich School should be renovated for a new use to once again serve the neighborhood.



Quality of Life

Parks and Recreation

Norwich Park is a community focus point and gateway to the neighborhood. Norwich Park is an 11-acre community park which has a basketball court and athletic fields with lights. There is a 5,610 square foot recreation center. Built in 1968, recent improvements include new bleachers, and a new lighting system designed to light numerous sporting events.



Norwich Park is an excellent community gateway.

Norwich is classified as a neighborhood park, which serves the immediate area (within ¼ mile). The residents have expressed that there is a need for additional parking at the park because of the heavy attendance during softball games. Most people park in front of the rail fence that parallels the park along Roanoke Avenue. They have also requested that a separate play area for small children be established on the site.

Environment

Another identifying trait associated with the historic community of Norwich is its geographic flatness. Known as the Bottoms, it is aptly named because it was built upon the low-lying flood plain of the Roanoke River, and appears to be down in a bowl. This feature is a source of pride for its residents, who relish its early history along the river, its industrial development, and the close ties that have developed with its long-time residents.



The Roanoke River holds many possibilities for recreational purposes.

The vacant land around the river is zoned Heavy Manufacturing. Many residents expressed that developing the river for recreational use with better accessibility is a high priority.

Because of Norwich's proximity to the Roanoke River, a majority of its industrial and residential areas are in the 100-year flood plain. Storm drainage and flooding remain a constant threat in most areas.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project will widen the entire 10-mile length of the Roanoke River within the city limits. In Norwich, the project will

widen the south bank of the Roanoke River downstream from Bridge Street. The project will include a 12 foot-wide greenway trail located along the south bank through Norwich. The result of the bank widening (bench cut) will be that the 100-year storm will allegedly be lowered by almost three feet in this area; thereby removing many houses from the flood plain. The projected start of construction for this area is at least three to four years away, and is expected to be completed by 2007. Because this is a federally-funded project, archeological investigations should begin along the river before the start of construction.

Neighborhood Pride

The late Pat Toney was a guiding force in establishing the Norwich Neighborhood Alliance in 1996, to "improve, enhance, redevelop, upgrade, and promote Norwich." Serving as its first president, she initiated the renovations to Norwich Park. As a member of the Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership, the alliance focuses mainly on the core area of Norwich running along Roanoke Avenue from Memorial Avenue to Irvine Street, and from the Roanoke River to Mountain View Terrace. The organization meets monthly, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and conducts an annual fall festival. One of its future goals is to work more closely with youth activities centered around the recreation center.

Many of the residents of Norwich have lived there all their lives and are third to fifth generations. During the neighborhood meetings with city staff, they were anxious to share their stories. Delmer and Shelby Jean (Clements) Weeks, of Charlevoix Court, provided some historical glimpses of the neighborhood from the 1930s through the 1950s. Married for 44 years, the Weeks are third-generation 'Norweigans.' Typical of Norwich, Shelby's father worked at the Norwich Mill before it closed, and then another 43 years at the Walker Foundry. Shelby was one of 11 children and still lives in the same house that she grew up in.



*Third-generation
'Norweigans,' Delmer and
Shelby Weeks*

The Weeks' talked about the safety and comfort of growing up in a small neighborhood using an example of Henry Lights' "Club House," a small two-room frame building that was built around 1933 as a "hang-out" for the neighborhood kids and a place where soap-box cars were built. The clubhouse was located where the Quonset hut now stands at Norwich Park.

They recalled when the city park was the city dump and when the underground spring flowed from the hillside above Buford Avenue. The spring was the original source of water for the community and featured a well house with a stuccoed arch and windmill. Shelby and Delmer used to gather water from the well for their families and remember it fondly as the best water they had ever tasted. Later industrial development along Buford Avenue apparently closed down the well. The only school was the Norwich School, which only had grades one through four. However, most residents never graduated from high school, and most had to go to work or help with ailing families. No one ever visited the hospital or even a doctor, as it was not affordable, and most babies were born at home. Most residents relied on home remedies, but if a doctor was ever needed, he was called from Melrose Avenue where he lived. Entertainment was simple. Delmer remembers being able to go to the movies with 50 cents in his pocket on the streetcar from Roanoke Avenue (which turned around at the end of the street) down Memorial Avenue and into downtown Roanoke, enjoying the movie with popcorn, and returning home on the streetcar with change in his pocket! The Twine Mill sponsored local boxing, and there was great excitement when the circus once came to Norwich.

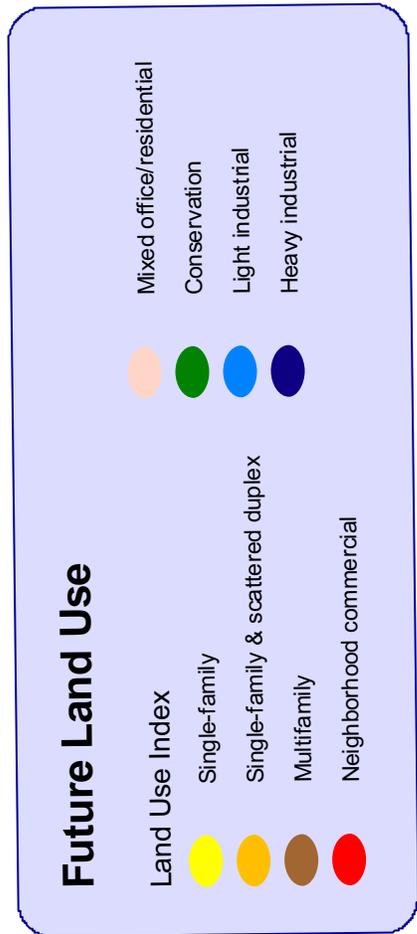
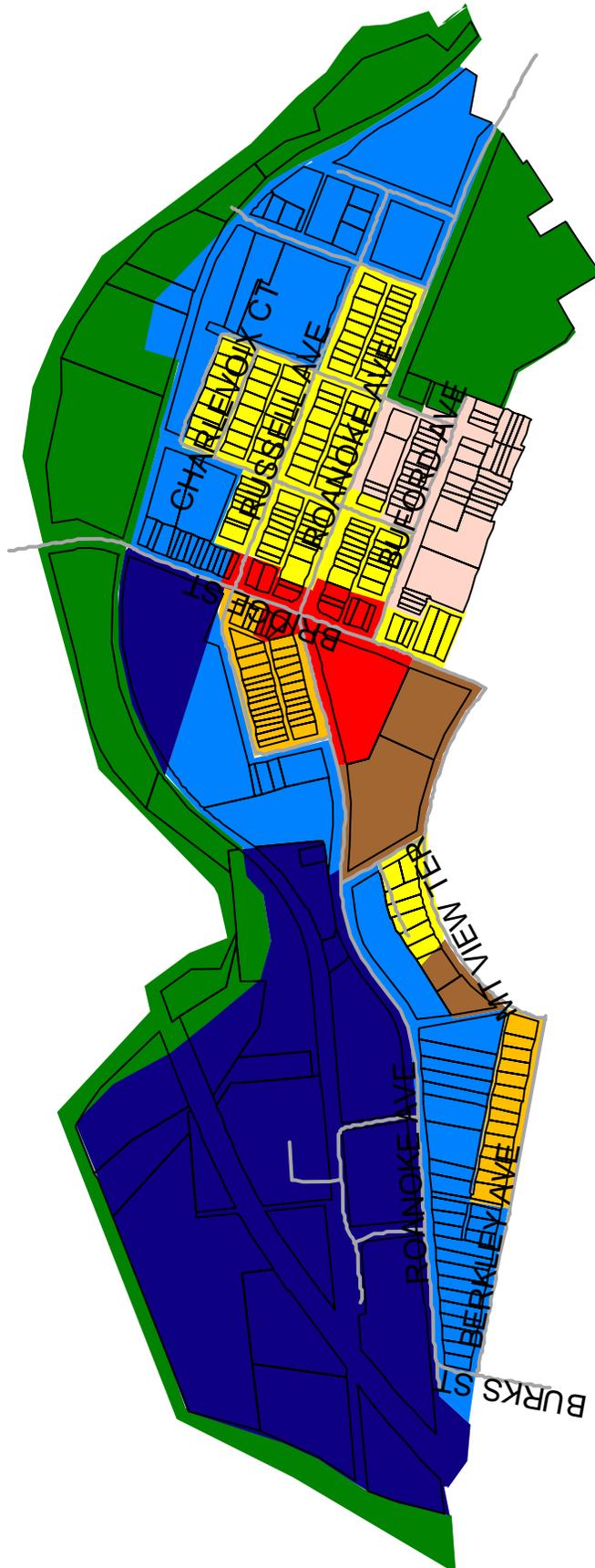
Recommendations

Recommended Policies and Actions

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

Future Land Use

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



Community Design Recommendations

Policies:

- Streets will be designed to support auto, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic. Street modifications should incorporate street design principles of the comprehensive plan.
- Access to and recreational opportunities near the Roanoke River should be enhanced.
- Village Center development should be encouraged on Bridge Street between Russell and Roanoke Avenues.
- Infill housing should be consistent with the established building line along the street. New residential buildings should be consistent with the scale, massing, and architecture as the current housing stock. Consider the use of the Neighborhood Design Overlay for the core residential area.
- New commercial development must consider adjoining uses during site design. Compatibility should be addressed first by thoughtful site and building design rather than by screening alone. Commercial building fronts should be oriented very close to the streets. Parking should be to the side or back of buildings. Parking lots should have generous amounts of interior landscaping and tree canopy coverage.

Community Design Recommendations

Actions:

- Develop a streetscape improvement plan for Roanoke Avenue between Memorial Avenue and Bridge Street. The strategy should address speeding problems, the need for parking for recreation events, and improving the appearance of the streetscapes.
- The Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project will provide more access to, and perhaps promote more study for, the use of the vacant HM District land along the Roanoke River as a park.
- Identify opportunities to establish community identity through its Roanoke Avenue gateway and unique history and architecture.
- Develop design guidelines for new infill housing and commercial development and implement Neighborhood Design District for core area.
- Expand the current CN zoning around Russell and Bridge Streets (and to include Roanoke Avenue) to reinforce the existing Village Center. Development codes should promote development of well-designed commercial structures that encourage pedestrian activity.
- Develop mechanisms to limit surface parking lots and encourage use of on-street parking for periodic uses. The use of on-street parking on Roanoke Avenue and Bridge Street will help with traffic calming practices.

The shotgun style house is a unique characteristic of the Norwich neighborhood.



Economic Development Recommendations

Policies:

- Support development of a compact village center around the Roanoke Avenue/Russell Avenue and Bridge Street intersections. Most businesses should be neighborhood oriented, but could contain at least larger-market businesses.
- Zoning regulations and incentives will promote development of well-designed commercial buildings that encourage pedestrian activity. Commercial buildings will be placed near the sidewalk with off-street parking located to the side or in the rear.
- Economic development in the village center will be encouraged with local, state, and federal incentives.

Actions:

- Change zoning in the village center to encourage a mix of uses and building scales that are appropriate in a neighborhood setting.
- Consider redevelopment of the Light Manufacturing (LM) District to encourage assembly and combination of small parcels in this area to provide suitable industrial properties.
- Promote the economic incentives associated with the enterprise zone that is located throughout Norwich.

Infrastructure Recommendations

Policy:

- Develop better streetscapes, especially at the gateway near the city park, and along Roanoke Avenue and Bridge Street. Functionally, streets will accommodate autos, pedestrians, and bicycles. Trees should be used to create a canopy over streets, so large species of trees should be used whenever possible. Streets need to be better engineered for traffic calming with respect to posted speed limits.

Actions:

- Develop site-specific plans for street designs at the Roanoke Avenue gateway and Bridge Street village center. Design and install a gateway sign with landscaping to promote the entrance into the community of Norwich near Norwich Park.
- Improve the streetscape of major corridors such as Roanoke Avenue and Bridge Street. Traffic-calming strategies will be incorporated into improvements. The priority should be on installing trees, on-street parking, and providing an improved pedestrian environment.
- Review other streets for installation of curbing and/or sidewalks.
- Continue regular bus transportation to Norwich, and consider the use of a bus shelter at the potential village center.

Public Service Recommendations

Policies:

- The city will continue providing excellent fire/EMS protection to the Norwich neighborhood.

Actions:

- Sponsor periodic cleanup days to pick up litter around the neighborhood and help senior or disabled residents move unwanted materials and debris to curbside for collection by the city.
- Distribute information about code enforcement to encourage reporting and tracking of code violations.
- Continue neighborhood watch activities through the partnership between Norwich Neighborhood Alliance and the Roanoke Police Department.
- Seek opportunities for converting the old Norwich School building to a community-serving facility or another appropriate use.
- Develop semi-annual neighborhood clean-ups in conjunction with Roanoke's Solid Waste Management.

Quality of Life Recommendations

Policies:

- Norwich Park should be maintained as a family-oriented park and community focus.
- Tree canopy should be increased throughout the neighborhood.
- Support continued organizational development of the Norwich Neighborhood Alliance.
- Ensure small children have safe recreational facilities available.

Actions:

- Consider survey and nomination of Norwich for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic designation makes federal, state, and local rehabilitation incentives available. The H-2 overlay zoning, which imposes design review standards, should not be considered unless there is significant resident support.
- Utilize the Roanoke River Flood Reduction Project to provide more access to the vacant HM District land along the Roanoke River to use as a park. Consider the use of an archaeological survey to determine the potential for pre-historic artifacts.
- Implement the Roanoke River Flood Reduction Program to remove numerous properties from the 100-year flood plain zone.

Norwich Park and America's favorite pastime help create a great quality of life for Norwich.



- Improve the existing parking along Roanoke Avenue for Norwich Park and also create a separate play area for small children.

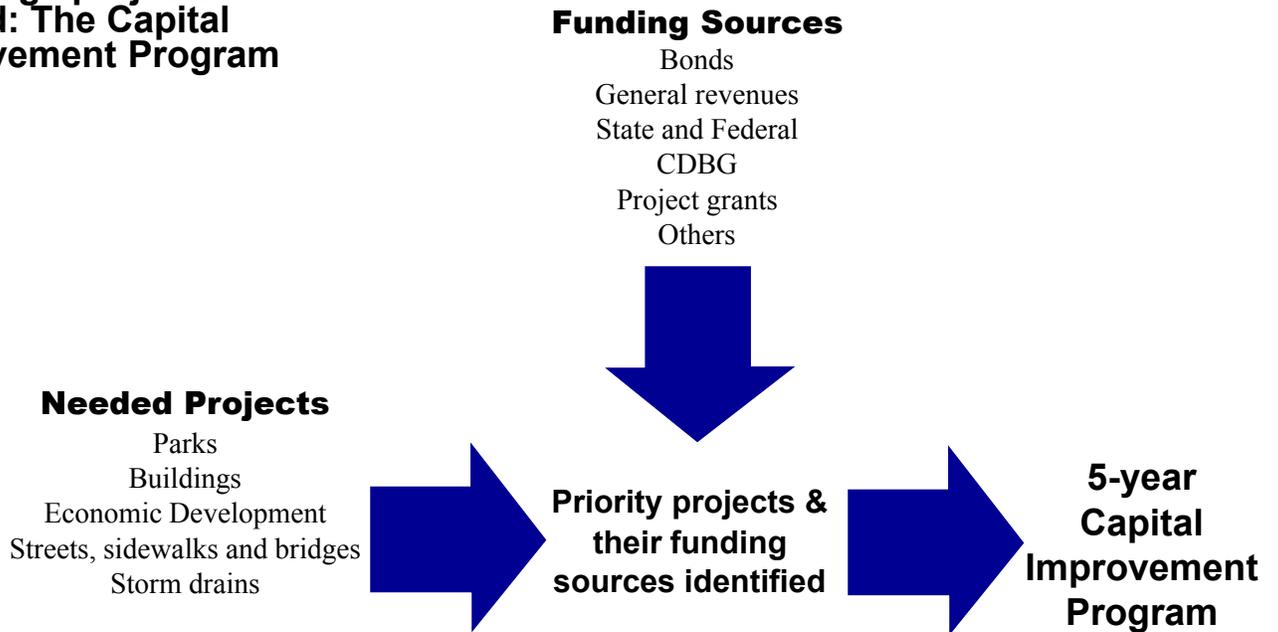
Implementation

Funding

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

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

How large projects are funded: The Capital Improvement Program



Actions, time frames, and participants

Action	Year	Lead Agency
• Zoning changes	1	Planning Building & Development
• Streetscape and gateway improvements	2-4	Transportation
• Economic incentives	2-3	Economic Development
• Historic surveys	3-4	Planning Building & Development
• Development of river park	5	Parks and Recreation

Acknowledgments

City Council

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

City Manager

Darlene L. Burcham

Planning Commission

Chairman Robert B. Manetta
Vice Chairman Richard A. Rife
Gilbert E. Butler, Jr.
D. Kent Chrisman
Paula L. Prince
Henry Scholz
Fredrick M. Williams

Planning Building & Development

R. Brian Townsend, Director

Project Manager

Anne Stuart Beckett, City Planner II

Thank you to all the residents, property owners, members of the Norwich Neighborhood Alliance, and other city staff, including Chris Chittum, Senior Planner and Andrew Warren, City Planner I, who participated in the community workshops and in the development and review of this plan.



Dedication

This plan is dedicated to the memory of its founding president, and 1997 Citizen of the Year, Pat Toney.