

Process: A Strategy for Developing Community Life and Place Attachment

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Place Attachment, Place Identity, Community Life, Sense of Community, Cultural Identity, Inner-City Neighborhoods, Gentrification, Revitalization

Abstract

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Inner-city neighborhoods are being recognized for their potential to contribute visually, economically, and culturally to the urban core. Efforts to revitalize these neighborhoods will need to address the economic, cultural, and social structure of the neighborhood. Resident groups, in particular long-time and newer residents, will likely be affected by the cultural changes that inevitably accompany revitalization. This project explores the processes of community life and place attachment, and their role in fostering healthy communities. Residents, depending on their length of time in the neighborhood, will be at different stages of these processes. Design and planning may support community life and place attachment by understanding this continuum and providing for the processes that engender them. This project began with a review of literature on the subject of inner-city neighborhoods, gentrification, community life, and place attachment. From this literature design and planning criteria were extracted. These criteria were then applied to the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood in Roanoke, Virginia, and were evaluated based on the conditions of the neighborhood and levels of attachment of long-time and newer residents. Design implications were developed that may support the process of place attachment within this community. These implications were then illustrated and tested through design.

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Introduction

Introduction

One of the problems facing many inner city neighborhoods is the migration of residents from these neighborhoods to areas outside the urban core. What is left behind is often a community of aging residents, a number of homes that are vacant or converted to accommodate renters, and a number of deteriorating built structures. These neighborhoods are important to the city for a number of reasons. Often they are located close to the downtown and business districts. In addition, these neighborhoods may date to times of early settlement, and so many possess traces of the city's architectural, social, and political culture. Also, it should be noted that this migration from the inner city to the suburban areas surrounding the city has obvious implications on the environment. As people move from the more densely built inner city to single-family homes on larger lots outside of the city, the human footprint on the environment grows exponentially. More natural and social resources are used, including land for homes, roadways, commercial districts, and other services. Although many central city neighborhoods are in decline, they are nonetheless an important part of any city. Here exists a diverse population, valuable land, a potential tax

base, and architecture and other structures layered with the culture of the city.

Revitalization of these neighborhoods will often depend on the influx of new residents to support housing and commercial markets. However, building healthy communities goes beyond economic revitalization. As new community groups enter the neighborhood it will require the development of a sense of community, a feeling of belonging for new residents, and their integration with the incumbent community of residents. This interaction between members of the neighborhood is a powerful means of building bonds between people and place. Landscape architects and planners may begin to work toward this goal of fostering community life in neighborhoods undergoing a population shift by developing physical places that can support the various affiliation needs and interactions of old and new members of the neighborhood.

In addition, the changing culture of the neighborhood will present uncertainty for incumbent, especially long-time residents, as well as new residents. With the introduction of new community groups, the cultural identity, the shared social, natural, and political values and artifacts, of these neighborhoods will be ambiguous. Places that encourage

interaction among members of the neighborhood may help to build and define the neighborhood's changing culture. This is particularly important in a neighborhood in transition. Though culture is always dynamic, constantly being redefined and reorganized as times and people change, the culture of these neighborhoods will rapidly change, as a result of new values, backgrounds, perceptions, and interests being introduced to the community. This ambiguity weakens the bond of residents, incumbent and new, to the neighborhood. Places and symbols that express the existing culture of the neighborhood will help long-time residents to maintain and newer residents to build attachments to their community, as well as help to preserve the character of the neighborhood. It may be assumed, that in part it is this character that drew new residents to move to the neighborhood. It should be noted, that because the culture of these neighborhoods is in a state of change, public places should also provide a channel for the expression of new cultural values as they develop over time.

The components, the development of community life and place attachment, are often missing in inner city neighborhood redevelopment and contribute to the broader problems facing many regions of lack of sense of community

and place identity. This project explores the dynamics of community change, the process of socialization and place attachment for new and long-time residents, and the qualities of physical space that may support the processes of community life and the place attachment. Design criteria have been extracted and developed from a review of literature regarding these processes and the spatial qualities that may support community life and place attachment. The following pages outline the literature review, the subsequent application of the criteria developed from this review, and an evaluation of this application.

Literature Review

Literature Review

Definitions

At this point I should clarify and elaborate on a number of terms that will be referred to throughout this study.

Neighborhood: The term neighborhood, as it is used in this project, and as defined by Miriam Webster, indicates a section of land with distinguishing characteristics that is made up of neighbors. Building on this definition, a neighborhood is made up of people living in close proximity to one another and is defined by unique characteristics that set it apart from adjacent tracts of land. These characteristics may include physical, such as land use or architectural style; social, such as ethnic groups or age; or economic, such as middle or lower income levels. The characteristics distinguishing many inner city neighborhoods are that they are often located near the urban core, the physical structure is often highly fragmented, the architectural style is unique as compared to styles in suburban areas, and the community of residents is typically comprised of lower income minorities and older residents.

Community life: The expression ‘community life’ refers to one of three forms of spatially defined social relationships promoted by authors Michael Brill and Lynn Lofland. The

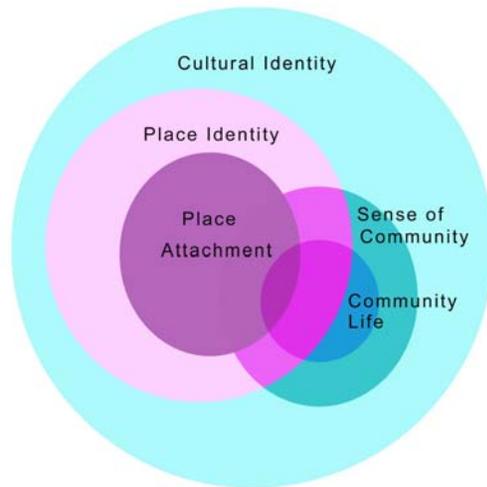
first type of social interaction is ‘public life’ and refers to sociability with a diversity of strangers, those of whom we know little more than what we see. This type of interaction typically takes place within publicly held places such as a town square, park, or the street, although it may also take place in privately owned places accessible to many, such as the mall or a nightclub. The second level of social relationships is ‘community life,’ also referred to as ‘parochial life;’ this is the interaction between people who know each other to some extent. These persons may include acquaintances, the clerk at the local drug store, town officials, the mailman, or a fellow parishioner. This level of interaction often takes place within the realm of the neighborhood or semi-public, semi-private places such as a local coffee shop. The third category of social relationships is ‘private life,’ and refers to relationships with family and close friends, those we know most intimately. These social relations usually take place within the private realm, such as the home. This review and the subsequent design project will focus on ‘community life’ within a neighborhood. This is not to say that private life or public life is not important to the well-being of the neighborhood. However, it is assumed, for purposes of this study, that the

neighborhood's physical setting already supports the private life within the neighborhood. In the neighborhood where the design project is located, which will be discussed in a later chapter, many of the homes are single-family homes, most with fairly large private outdoor space. Also, it is the feeling of the author that for purposes of encouraging the development of a strong sense of community and place identity in a neighborhood experiencing a population shift, design and planning should first focus on identifying the physical structures that may support community life. Therefore, this review will primarily focus on 'community life' within the neighborhood.

Culture: The term culture is one of the more ambiguous words of the English language and is often used to describe a range of issues, such as social, political, historic, environmental, physical, and economic forces that have shaped our social behavior and physical environment. The tendency to use this term to describe many characteristics of society contributes to its ambiguity. Pamille Berg, in his article *Sustainability, Identity and the Redefinition of Self*, discusses two primary definitions of culture, the first originating in archaeological theory and the second based in sociological traditions.

According to Berg, Barry Cunliffe of Oxford University notes that the archaeological definition of culture is "...that aspect of social behavior which can be recognized in the archaeological record," as material culture or artifacts. Secondly, Ronald Fletcher, of the British sociological tradition defines culture as "...the social 'heritage' of a community: the total body of material artifacts: of collective mental and spiritual artifacts and of distinctive forms of behavior created by a people in their ongoing activities within their particular life-conditions and transmitted from generation to generation." Based on these two definitions, Berg provides his own summation for the definition of culture "as the total body of our material, mental, and spiritual artifacts and as the distinctive forms of behavior created by a people. Then in the simplest sense, our culture is our collective 'making' at all levels and the tribal sense which distinguishes our making from that of other people, delineated by whatever kind of boundaries we may identify." To further simplify the definition of culture, I will provide my own derivation based on the three defined above: culture is a group of persons' collective making of their environment over time. And cultural identity is that which defines and distinguishes one group's collective making from another's. Though the

terms culture and cultural identity will not be used directly for the remainder of this paper, it is important to understand these terms, as sense of community, community life, place identity, and place attachment contribute largely to this broader concept.



Place: Place is another word in the English language that is ambiguous and can infer different meanings to different people. In the dictionary I found more than a dozen entries on the meaning of the word 'place.' Therefore, if one is to better understand the concept of place attachment it is necessary to first clarify what 'place' means. Irwin Altman and Setha Low's definition of 'place' focuses on the environmental settings to which people are emotionally and culturally attached. More specifically they define place as a space that

has been given meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes. The word attachment, they point out, emphasizes affect, the affect of these meanings and processes on an individual or group. Therefore, in order for place identity to develop, there must first be an attachment to place. Residents must be 'affected' by places within the neighborhood. The factors that contribute to place attachment are multifaceted. It is a process that has many inseparable and mutually defining features or properties (Altman and Low 1992). In order to narrow the examination some, I am going to focus on attachment to community and the literature and findings available on this aspect of place attachment and ultimately place identity.

Evolution of the Inner City Neighborhood

The cultural forces that have affected the physical and social structure of many inner city neighborhoods are many, however perhaps the most powerful has been segmentation. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, downtown districts were characterized by mixed land use and a diversity of activity that radiated out from the urban core. Industries were located downtown where they were supported by servicing businesses, transportation corridors for the movement of products, and a

work force who lived in close proximity. Commercial businesses that sold goods and products to urbanites were also located near these downtown areas. With further industrialization, industries began to expand and desired more space for their factories and production. Many moved outside the central areas of cities to outlying areas where there was more land and land cost less to purchase. In addition, introduction of new modes of transportation facilitated the movement of products and lessened industries' need to depend on transportation once only available within the city. The advent of the train and then the automobile provided movement between the downtown and outlying areas. Although migration from inner city neighborhoods to suburbs along the periphery of the city picked up during industrialization, it was not until post World War II that downtowns began to experience a mass migration. The motivation for veterans returning from war to purchase homes with no down payment outside the city also increased this flight. The suburbs offered the opportunity for home ownership, as well as the perception of a safe environment in which to live (Bennett 1990).

Though all of these factors contributed to the segmentation of the modern city, none probably contributed

more to the fragmentation and separation of land uses than the large-scale public works projects of the 1950s and 1960s, in particular urban renewal and urban expressway development. The urban renewal initiatives, with a vision of removing blight from the city and replacing it with high rise residential complexes in park-like settings, had unforeseen consequences. Zealously large swaths of land were cleared from neighborhoods considered to be eyesores, and in some cases whole neighborhoods were removed, to make way for newer, more attractive development. In the process residents of these neighborhoods had to relocate, and squeezed into whatever lower income homes they could find, overcrowding surrounding districts. In addition, many of the homes that were razed and the land that was cleared were never rebuilt. Officials had overestimated the demand for these properties, and were later unable to attract developers. What remains today are neighborhoods, many of which once had viable and cohesive communities, that are fragmented both physically and socially. In addition, many of the commercial centers of these neighborhoods, with fewer residents to support the business, have long since closed their doors (Bennett 1990).

Similarly the urban expressway projects segmented the modern city and its neighborhoods. Again residents of these poorer neighborhoods had to relocate to make way for highway rights-of-ways that cut through the urban fabric connecting the outlying areas of the city to the downtown. Often neighborhoods were bisected by these expressways or removed altogether. Residential sectors were not the only districts affected. Many commercial and industrial areas were also removed or relocated. Many of these businesses either closed their doors or moved to areas outside the city. This led to a substantial amount of unemployment for the urban workforce that supported these businesses (Bennett 1990). The psychological impact of this segmentation continues to have a hold on the city today. In addition to the mistrust and feelings of abandonment felt by many residents of inner city neighborhoods, the perception of the city as a 'bad' place continues to hinder initiatives to draw residents from the suburbs to the inner city.

After at least fifty years of neglect and failed regeneration plans, many of these neighborhoods have become a perceptually and physically deteriorating ring of land encircling the urban core. This presents a number of problems

for city officials, planners, and designers, as well as social services. In addition to the loss of potential tax revenue, these rings create a negative perceptual image of the city and city life. These districts are often what one sees upon entering the downtown. As well, the deteriorating ring creates a physical and perceptual barrier between areas outside the core and the downtown district. Many cities are realizing that they cannot have viable downtown districts without reviving these surrounding neighborhoods. They are recognizing that city life has a number of attributes that are appealing to potential residents. The city center remains a place that offers a diverse population, a unique architectural character, a convenient location to downtown jobs and amenities, and an energy and creativity that is often lacking in the suburbs (Bennett 1990). It is these attributes that should be encouraged, communicated, and celebrated, to communities both within the city and outside its limits.

Many people are attracted to living within the city because of these characteristics. These people are often young professionals who purchase and rehabilitate homes within older inner city neighborhoods. This trend has often been referred to as gentrification. Interestingly enough, this was the original

intention of urban renewal, to lure young professionals with the money to invest in property near to the urban core. It should be noted, though, that many of the neighborhoods that have experienced gentrification are those that were passed over by urban renewal. However, some, both critics and supporters of gentrification, have credited urban renewal programs, which removed some of the blight surrounding the downtown, with clearing the way for future construction and interest in rehabilitating these areas (Barth 1982).

There is debate over the benefits versus the disadvantages of gentrification. Yet, although gentrification is taking place in many cities it represents a small percentage of neighborhood rebuilding. In addition, gentrifiers typically make up one segment of the population, younger professionals. The capacity for this sector to fill the housing needs of the inner city is limited by the number of persons within this segment and by the even smaller percentage who may be attracted to city life. Though this may represent a type of renewal for some neighborhoods, the rebuilding of modern city neighborhoods should not rely on gentrification. Other drawbacks of gentrification are that, echoing the consequences of earlier urban renewal, incumbent residents are often forced

out of the neighborhood by increasing costs associated with living there, such as higher rents and taxes (Bennett 1990).

There are alternatives to gentrification such as incumbent upgrading. This refers to the process of rebuilding sections of the neighborhood and moving existing residents into newer rebuilt homes (Bennet 1990). Other alternatives may include innovative programs such as the Tenant Interim Leasing (TIL) Program, which protected low-income housing, restored a number of tenement buildings, as well as reestablished a sense of community in Harlem and The Lower East Side of New York. Sixty percent of the buildings in these neighborhoods, over-run with drug dealers, dilapidated, boarded up, and passed on from speculator to speculator, were eventually bought by the city. This program helped tenants organize, run their buildings, and ultimately purchase their homes as co-ops (Pierce and Guskind 1993). Such programs are commendable and should be considered when developing innovative redevelopment plans for our inner cities. In most cases, however, the introduction of new residents willing to invest in these neighborhoods and stay for a while is a good thing. It can restore the physical character and charm of the neighborhood, reduce crime, increase the value of existing

homes, and restore a sense of pride, ownership, and sense of community to the neighborhood, in addition to supporting the economy and life of the urban core.

Dynamics of Community Change

Although there are a number of economic, physical, and psychological benefits of revitalization, there are also some problems associated with the changing environment. A major cost is that people often lose environments for which they have developed strong emotional attachments (Holcomb 1981). This loss can occur either after displacement or when environments are radically altered. Elderly persons are particularly vulnerable to the stress associated with revitalization because of the span of time over which their attachments to place have developed. A recent study was conducted comparing the mental and physical health of 400 elderly residents in two apartment complexes in Florida, one of which was being converted into condominiums. Results determined that persons in the building scheduled for conversion experienced an increased sense of futility, disenchantment, confusion and despair as compared to residents in the building not scheduled for construction. The residents also experienced physical symptoms of stress such as

headaches, high blood pressure, and insomnia (Holcomb 1981). Other consequences of revitalization on an existing community of any age may be a loss of a sense of identity and belonging, as familiar aspects of the neighborhood change. Holcomb recommends alleviating this loss by creating new patterns and places that are instilled with the same kinds of sentiment that prior places and patterns held for residents. This would require exploration of what these places were and what types of feelings they evoked.

The literature I found that relates to newcomers pertains primarily to gentrified neighborhoods. Although many inner city neighborhoods may be undergoing revitalization that is not necessarily spurred by gentrification, this information is nonetheless informative. The notion of the neighborhood is often different for long-time residents and newcomers. Existing residents view their neighborhood as an extension of their home, a community, and a way of life. In contrast, many of those entering gentrified neighborhoods are middle-class persons who may not value the neighborhood as much for its past but for its future potential (Levy and Cybriwsky 1980). Whether the inner city neighborhood is undergoing gentrification or experiencing a more natural form of transition,

it is important to recognize that the values of long-time residents and those of incoming residents may not necessarily be the same, and in some cases they may not be compatible. It is important to provide open lines of communication and equal representation and voice between long-time and new community groups. This may assuage concerns or conflicts that could potentially arise between groups. In addition, this may also provide an additional forum for residents to communicate and potentially identify common values and interests.

Rebuilding a Sense of Community

The remaining pages of this chapter are devoted to the importance of community life and place attachment. It should be emphasized again that the two are closely related and in many ways mutually supportive. However, although there is a great deal of overlap between the two, for purposes of understanding the impact of each on rebuilding a neighborhood, I have separated this analysis into two sections, Human Needs and Interaction/Development of Community Life; and Building Connections between People and Place/Development of Place Attachment.

Human Needs and Interaction/ Development of Community Life

There exist a number of theories based on the motivating factors of human interaction. Although these differ in some ways they all include some constants: that not all factors are of equal importance and these factors assume varying priorities at different points during the life cycle. Abraham Maslow's hierarchical model of basic human needs is probably the most widely accepted model (Hester 1985, Designing). He asserts that human beings have needs that must be met in order to reach a state of fulfillment. These needs range from most to least pressing. According to his model we first seek to fulfill our most pressing needs, these being basic survival needs, such as food and drink. Once these needs are met we seek to fulfill the next level of needs, security and shelter. As these are satisfied, we attempt to realize the next level, the need for affiliation. And once our need for affiliation is met we can then concentrate on the final level, which is a need for self-actualization. Meeting these needs is essential to our well being, failure to meet these needs can lead to feelings of alienation, isolation, and lack of control (Lang 1994). Though the physical environment may support some of these needs, this discussion will focus primarily on the need for

affiliation and the qualities of physical space that may support the processes of affiliation and ultimately community life.

Affiliation with individuals or settings provides us with affection, support, and identity. If affiliation needs are not met, an individual will feel isolated and alienated from the community or neighborhood. Involvement in a supportive social system is not only necessary to an individual's survival but also to her psychological comfort. Once we are no longer focused on satisfying needs such as hunger, thirst or safety, most people feel the need to belong to a group of people or several groups (Lang 1994). There are however differences in how each individual fulfills her need for affiliation, dependent on personal patterns and preferences. Membership within a group, as well as the uniqueness of each person's patterns of membership, contributes to that person's personal identity and their feelings of self worth (Lang 1994, Hester 1985). In addition to providing a sense of belonging, connections to people are also important because they offer a sense of security, that one's rights are protected to some extent through membership with the group (Carr 1992). It is important for designers to understand the links between people as well as patterns of membership. Design of physical space, it should be

noted, is limited in its capacity to determine where and what types of social interaction will occur. However, it can affect the formation of groups by providing the opportunities that encourage interactions that may then lead to the formation of groups (Hester 1985, Gehl 1987).

The predisposition for the need to be a member of a group and to form groups suggests the need for places for groups to form (Hester 1985). Group formation may develop if individuals have similar backgrounds or interests, if they have shared experiences, or through regular use of a space. It may occur where people with similar interests come in contact with one another (Hester 1985). It has been found that proximity plays a role in initiating the formation of friendships. This makes sense since friends are selected from the persons we know best, and the persons we know best are often those to whom we are physically closest. Friendship groups are typically small, two to three persons. Therefore when designing public spaces it is important to provide seating for groups this size (Hester 1985). It is also recommended that seating be provided at intersections or at locations where people are drawn by necessity; at these locations conversations may develop which may eventually lead to friendships. In

addition, design can direct people to move in certain paths and allow for the opportunity for people to come in contact with each other (Hester 1985). Again it is important for designers to understand individual and group patterns so that decisions could be made as to where might be the best chance for interaction.

Encouraging social interaction and group formation is important in any community design. However, it is essential for communities experiencing a population shift. Most likely friendships and group membership, unless perhaps it is membership within a formal group, does not exist among new residents. And it is likely that these residents will not be aware of other persons within the neighborhood who have similar interests or backgrounds. Physical settings that provide opportunities for interaction will facilitate the process of group formation. It is also important that new residents interact with incumbent residents. Interaction is essential if community life is to develop. In addition, it may assuage concerns, may help residents determine a common ground, and may confirm shared values. Without such interaction the neighborhood may become increasingly socially segmented.

There are two types of group organizations, formal and communal groups. Formal groups differ from communal groups in that they are functionally oriented. These organizations have specific goals and members are linked by contract to support these objectives. Each member has a role and assigned tasks. In return for members' input the organization provides a means for fulfilling individual's goals, such as the need for affiliation (Lang 1994). Formal groups may also include communal groups within their organization. Communal groups, in contrast to formal organizations, have a loose or informal structure (Lang 1994). As a result these groups are more difficult to identify. Members are linked by generally understood rules for cooperation. In addition, members may play a variety of roles within the organization. Friendships fall within communal organizations. Designers have a greater influence to affect the patterns of formal organizations because they have a prescribed purpose and more defined patterns. In addition, goals of the formal organizations may be incorporated into a community design plan in order to confirm their role within the community. Communal groups, on the other hand, cannot be developed from the outside; they must generate themselves. However, as for friendship groups,

design provides the affordances for these groups to develop by recognizing the patterns that may encourage interaction (Lang 1994).

In order for any group to form or communal activities to develop there must be a common denominator. If there is no common interest between residents, there will be no basis for interrelating (Gehl 1987). If common interests are not evident, repeated activities could encourage ties between existing and new residents. In addition, specific activities, such as sports or public performances, can reinforce group connections (Carr 1992). As Gehl describes in Life Between Buildings, when outdoors, where interaction may be likely to occur, perhaps the best way to encourage conversation is to be doing something. This provides the doer with a reason to be outside and offers a neighbor a starting point for conversation, such as, “your yard is looking great this year.” Understanding patterns of behavior may be helpful in linking interests. Designers may do this by conducting behavior mapping which may provide cues of use, social activities and settings where social interaction occurs (Hester 1985, Subconscious). Also, if a space meets users needs it is likely to be used more frequently. Designers can

gain a better understanding of these needs by simply asking residents (Carr 1992).

It is likely that incumbent residents, especially long-time residents, will have different needs than new residents. For instance, it is more likely they will require some familiar settings, in order to maintain a sense of psychological comfort within the neighborhood. However, this may not be as important for new residents, who are not yet attached to these settings. On the other hand, settings that may seem welcoming and accessible to incumbent residents may not be perceived as such by new residents. Efforts should be made to recognize such places and where appropriate design for the inclusion of all groups. New residents may also feel more comfortable observing activities than directly participating. Observation, however, can also promote a sense of belonging, if only temporary. By observing other people and their activities, and thus participating in some sense, there can be a direct sense of sharing in the community and a sense of community can be confirmed (Carr 1992). Incorporation of communal areas into the design plan may provide an opportunity for observation as well as verbal interaction.

Communal symbols are an important means of confirming group identity. Territoriality can be a powerful factor. It can create a sense of shared ownership among members of the group. Such symbols confirm group identity and a sense of belonging to the group, as well as establish a sense of personal esteem (Lang 1994). In addition, they can help to ensure that an area is properly used and maintained. Disputes can arise as a result of a groups' claim over a space. However these disputes can typically be traced to ill-defined boundaries (Hester 1985). Design can reinforce feelings of ownership and minimize conflict by delineating spaces that are collectively owned (Hester 1984). Places can also be temporarily 'owned' by individuals or groups (Hester 1985, Designing). For instance, if a woman is sitting in the park reading and leaves her bench to walk to the trashcan, when she returns someone has taken her seat, she may feel a sense of violation. Again providing clearly marked boundaries may minimize such violations (Hester 1985, Designing). Designers must consider which territories are considered to be owned by a group. Territoriality can be a sensitive issue as groups can develop strong feelings about their 'rights' to a space. However, it should be noted that designation of group owned

spaces may be affective in enforcing feelings of shared ownership among existing groups, but it may also alienate new residents, inhibiting them from using the space. A compromise should be met between distribution of space between new and existing groups. In addition, some spaces may be defined as communal and others left undefined so that they may develop a definition over time. Group participation in planning, design, and management of a place is an effective means of reinforcing identity while also determining group needs and resolving conflicts (Lang 1994).

Another type of communal symbol is personalization. Personalization identifies individuals with a group through the display of symbols. It can also indicate that one is not a member of a group. This is another method of defining territory. Such personalization can add to the character of the neighborhood and provide a visual indicator of the groups and organizations within. Design should provide the opportunity for personalization so that individuals and groups can maintain or develop a sense of ownership. If one of the functions of design is to support the identity of a group and of a place than designers must recognize these symbols and how they are used or how they may be transformed (Lang 1994).

Another aspect of meeting affiliation needs is having strong associations, or familiarity, with a specific place or geographical area. (Though this is an important part of completing the need for affiliation, this concept of association with a place will be discussed in greater detail in the latter portion of this paper.)

Designers should be careful to maintain the character or uniqueness of place in the face of change (Lang 1994). This is a concern for all design, however this is particularly relevant to a neighborhood in transition. As Randy Hester discovered while developing a revitalization plan for the town of Manteo, North Carolina, changes to the physical and social structure of the town could have had a devastatingly disruptive impact on the social and cultural structure of the community. “Social imageability,” the collectively held social meanings of a community, is an important part of a neighborhood’s identity (Uzzell 2002). Designers should be careful to understand collective social meanings and values if these are to be preserved. Yi-Fu Tuan’s term, topophilia, describes such emotional attachments to place. He asserts that people have a need to connect to places in an emotional and loving way. Though he feels this is difficult to achieve in American public

places (though the case of Manteo, North Carolina, might prove otherwise), it appears that the public’s longing for places with meaning indicates that this depth of connection is certainly a need felt by many.

Bonds can be developed between people and places through nature (Carr 1992). The authors of the article *Design lyrics* call this the ‘common thread’ (Moreno 2001). Natural scenery strikes a primordial chord in all humans (Hough 1984). It is a universal connection, a commonality, one we can all understand. Designs that incorporate natural elements may offer a link that brings individuals and groups with various needs and interests together. It can provide the bridge between disparate groups and between people and place.

Finally, one must also note the value of idiosyncratic users and their needs and impact on sense of community and identity (Hester 1984). Those persons who have unique needs and distinctive ways can add to, rather than detract from, a person’s memory of place. I am reminded of my hometown where every morning I saw a gentleman seated on a bench outside the Laundromat with his bike at his feet, eating his cereal out of his military helmet. If there were no bench there,

chances are that he would not have been a part of my daily life or my memory of my hometown.

Connections between People and Place/ Development of Place Attachment

Attachment to community begins with community satisfaction. If residents are dissatisfied with their community or environment they are unlikely to form attachments. Social ecologists have found that communities, as spatial-social contexts, have a significant influence on resident satisfaction. Smaller rural communities have typically reported higher levels of satisfaction than larger urban communities. These ecological factors seem to affect levels of satisfaction irrespective of socio-economic factors, which suggests that spatial-social contexts have a direct impact on sentiment (Marans & Rogers, 1975; Rogers, 1980). Fried (1982) asserts that other factors of the built environment affect community satisfaction as well, such as housing quality, neighborhood quality, ease of access to nature, and home ownership. Guest and Lee (1983) support this evidence claiming that home ownership, larger residences, access to local parks, and block design using cul-de-sacs generate higher levels of satisfaction (Altman and Low 1992).

Other studies have examined the effect of perception of environment on levels of satisfaction. A study conducted by La Gory, Ward, and Sherman (1985) analyzed the neighborhood satisfaction of elderly metropolitan residents and found satisfaction with objective qualities of the neighborhood, such as income level and amount of vacant housing, produced more consistent levels of satisfaction among residents. However, perceptions of the neighborhood, such as maintenance and relationships with neighbors, register more variation of satisfaction. A second and exhaustive study performed by Herting and Guest (1985) also examined objective and perceptual factors effect on levels of satisfaction with similar findings. Therefore a wide range of ecological, social, environmental, and perceptual factors influence local sentiment. According to David Hummon (1992), objective factors, such as the size and type of community, the quality and ownership of housing, and the quality of the physical neighborhood are particularly important in developing a sense of satisfaction and sentiment toward the community. In addition, residents' social positions within the community as well as their perceptions also influence levels of satisfaction (Hummon 1992).

Social surveys have indicated that community attachment, which is much more complex than community satisfaction, is also affected by environmental qualities and perceptual features, though their role in increasing levels of attachment is minimal (Brown, 1989; Gerson et al., 1977; Goudy, 1982; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Sampson, 1988). Unlike resident satisfaction, the only environment qualities that seem to increase attachment are quality of housing and home ownership. Social involvement has proven to be the most consistent and significant means of developing sentimental ties to the community. (Gerson et al., 1977; Guest & Lee, 1983; Goudy, 1982; Hunter, 1974; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; St. John et al, 1986). Therefore attachment must be understood in terms of processes that promote bonds or ties between individuals and place. Long-term residency, which develops bonds through increased local social ties, is one such process. Other factors that have been found to affect community attachment, though also to a lesser extent, are age (Goudy, 1982; Sampson, 1988), physical quality of and perceptions of the built environment, proximity to local landmarks (Gerson et al., 1977; Guest & Lee, 1983), and crime (Sampson, 1988; St. John et. al., 1986).

Once attachment to a place has been achieved a place can become imbued with personal and social meanings. This association is known as place identity. It can at a minimum enhance self-esteem, and more significantly it may involve deeper ties of emotional commitment and affiliation with the community (Hummon 1992). Research has shown that place can be transformed into a symbolic extension when imbued with personal meanings of life experiences. Similarly, neighborhoods may be instilled with public meanings and as a result may serve as symbolic locales with distinct cultural identities (Hummon 1990). Residents may appropriate imagery that identifies their community, such as ‘small town and friendly.’ Such imagery facilitates the construction of a positive self-image and a sense of attachment to the community (Hummon 1992). Identities that are unfavorable may also stigmatize residents. This is particularly a problem for inner city neighborhoods that are more likely to struggle with negative imagery. Krase (1979) recommends that activists work to construct a more favorable identity, and they may do this by working through block associations, house tours, and banners. Various social identities can also be imbedded in and expressed through the environment, which reinforces social

bonds, as well as ties to place. Such an expression may involve differences in landscaping. These differences may communicate moral reputation, social rank, and other significant qualities of self (Hummon 1992).

When someone experiences a sense of place or an association with place, they experience to varying degrees a sense of rootedness. This suggests that persons being separated from such valued places may feel displaced. This may arise from mobility, however this feeling can also be the result of transformation of a place. Such separation results from spatial or temporal processes and can produce real estrangement from the community. This alienation will be evident in a person's perspective on and feelings about their community (Hummon 1992). This is particularly important to consider when designing for a community experiencing a population shift. Both incoming residents may be feeling a sense of displacement as they leave their old locales, and long-time residents may experience such feelings as their familiar landscape undergoes transformation.

In summary, attachments to place and place identity are complex processes; both are heavily influenced by social factors and both develop over time. Henri Lefebvre's

statement that "space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations but is also producing and produced by social relations" (Hayden 1995) certainly rings true when considered in this socio-spatial context. Both individuals and groups are shaped by place, and as well a place is shaped by individuals and groups. As was alluded to in the previous paragraphs, places with a strong positive identity will help to enhance community bonding, and conversely social cohesion will help to enhance the identity of place (Uzzell 2002). The remainder of this discussion will focus, first on how design may facilitate the process of building connections between people and place, and second how design may help to express the meanings and values of place in order to support or encourage feelings of place identity.

There are a number of basic needs that should be met if a person or group is to develop connections with a place. It should be clarified that these needs differ from the needs for affiliation outlined earlier, in that the former relate more specifically to requirements for interaction between residents, while basic needs as discussed here deal with the interaction between people and place. However, you will notice that there is some overlap.

If a place does not meet basic needs, it is unlikely that it will be used and in turn it is unlikely that connections and ultimately attachments and meanings will develop. The following are brief descriptions of these basic needs, or prerequisites. The first requirement is that a place must be physically comfortable. Amenities that fulfill this need will not only promote return visits but will also encourage people to stay in a place longer. As Gehl suggests, 'stays' are valuable in encouraging social interactions, and for purposes of this discussion they are equally important if connections with a place are to develop. Stays may be incorporated at intersections or where everyday activities take place (Gehl 1987). Also it is important that users feel a sense of psychological comfort. Designs that recognize the rights of users will lessen feelings of alienation (Carr 1992) and improve the potential for place attachment (Hummon 1992). As well places that provide a sense of safety and security are more likely to be used. This is particularly true for elderly or lower-income users. Formal or informal surveillance or the programming of activities on the site may lessen fears concerning safety (Hester 1984). It is also important that design incorporate familiar settings with new settings. This

balance between old and new visual stimuli allows users to adapt to and enjoy new stimuli (Hester 1984). Accessibility is an important factor in determining use. These needs include location (Hester 1984), visual cues, and legibility (Carr 1992). If a site is inconvenient to go to it is less likely that it will be used. Likewise, if a site does not appear welcoming most will feel uncomfortable using it (Hester 1984).

In addition to designs that meet the basic needs of users, there are other factors that have the potential to affect the development of place attachment. In most cases, repeated direct experience of a place is necessary for persons or groups to build attachment and meanings (Carr 1992). Continued use promotes a sense of ownership and an extension of personal identity. As a result, meanings and place identity may form. Definition of boundaries and providing opportunities for the display of social images can promote a sense of ownership (Hester 1984). User participation in the design process and management of a space is also a highly effective means of supporting and encouraging a sense of ownership (Carr 1992). Meanings may also be acquired through functions, which are determined by residents' lives and patterns of use (Carr 1992). Settings for activities that are compatible with the interests and

activity patterns of users will more likely encourage continued use. For instance, sports and fitness is a strong interest among young middle-class urbanites (Carr 1992); amenities, such as walking and cycling paths, may be used frequently by this group. Designers can gauge the feasibility of incorporating various amenities into a design by categorizing the characteristics of the site and matching these to desired activity settings (Hester 1984). Use of a space is also impacted by aesthetics. Visual qualities can improve, or may detract from, one's experience of place, for instance visual unity of paths will provide a visitor a better sense of the entire space (Hester 1984). And last but certainly not least, studies have found that a user's ability to change and claim a space will greatly affect their feelings of ownership and attachment to a place (Carr 1992)(Whyte, c1980).

In a broader sense, a place must be relevant to the larger culture and social practices for which it exists (Carr 1992). In other words, it must fit within the context of the area. Local conditions must inspire the design of the space so that it is appropriate to the site (Moreno 2001). If a place is perceived as foreign, residents may have difficulty developing associations between self and place. On the other hand, if a

place is richly embedded in its context, it is more likely to achieve deeper and more lasting meanings. Designers must gather cues as to the qualities that make an area unique and give it character. These cues may first come from the natural landscape. In addition to being a potential means of expressing the culture of an area, nature is also a powerful tool in drawing people together and into the environment (Moreno 2001, Carr 1992). Our affection for nature is universal. Nature appeals to all the senses and can significantly influence experience of a place and the development of attachment. Other qualities may be historical or social. More difficult to define are qualities and associative meanings that are special to the present (Carr 1992). However, when determined and expressed these can be a powerful means of achieving connections between people and place.

There are particular types of spaces that are important to community life as well as personal and place identity. These places are most often ordinary places that have become a part of our daily experiences and patterns (Carr 1992). One such type of place is the 'nurturing place,' which may include the local drugstore or post office. Through our daily visits to such places we build relationships with the people who work or visit

there. Through repeated visits and the relationships that develop, these places become a part of our identity of self and place. Similarly personal places that develop over time, along familiar paths, become a part of our daily experiences and identity. A sense of comfort and belonging develops as one can count on encountering familiar faces and activities. In his book The Great Good Place, Ray Oldenburg illustrates the importance of such places for our well-being. These places, which occur in what he has coined the ‘third realm,’ are separate from our private and public realms. They are those places, such as the local café or restaurant, where acquaintances are made and informal conversations develop. Such places are special because they provide an escape from the other realms, they are neutral, one can come and go as one pleases, and there are no obligations. People develop high levels of attachments to such places for a number of reasons, such as regular use, social relationships, expression of self, and the freedom of use that the ‘third realm’ affords. He recommends a balance among realms. Designers should recognize and preserve ‘third realm’ places within the community. Very different from the places discussed by Oldenburg, the special event space, is not an ordinary place

typically, but contributes to our self and place identity nonetheless. These places are the locations of personal events that hold special and lasting significance in our perception of self and place.

Symbolism is another important component of place identity. As Michael Hough attests in his work Out of Place, it is the markers, reference points, boundaries and other symbols of everyday life that create meaning for people. The name of a place is a powerful symbolic reference. It defines for residents and outsiders that this place is here, and perhaps what it is about. Unnamed neighborhoods are likely to lack a strong identity as a place. Other physical attributes of a place, such as a mural or a sign, can become symbols that represent group membership (Carr 1992) and produce connections to place. Public art can also be an effective way of conveying symbols of shared social values. It can also help to connect history to place, such as the mural project on the Orange Line in Boston, which depicts the social history of the area (Hayden 1985).

It is important to preserve the symbols that have supported social values and ways of life. While working on a town revitalization plan in Manteo, North Carolina, landscape architect Randolph Hester discovered that often these symbols

(or in this case structures) could be symbols that individuals associated with place on a subconscious level. Preservation of these structures became a means of preserving the town's culture while also providing the guidelines for new development (Hester 1985, Subconscious). Associated meanings are nonmaterial values that often outweigh the values of physical attributes (Buggey 2000). Psychoanalysts describe these as an unconscious component of the mind where memories are stored to be awakened later in the form of symbols (Lang 1994). Such places are often collectively identified by the community and should be preserved for both their social and historical value (Hester 1985, Subconscious). In addition, the use of materials and forms in design can influence such meanings (Carr 1992).

Landscapes that interpret the social history of a place can be very effective in reconnecting people to place. Place fuse the political and social meanings of a space with urban history (Hayden 1985).

Finally, design must allow for the creation of settings that are flexible and therefore can evolve over time. Over-design of a place makes it difficult for users to adapt a space to their changing needs and values (Smirniotopoulous 2001). A

memory can be triggered by social memory (Hayden 1985). Delores Hayden, author of The Power of Place, emphasizes the importance of interpreting vernacular landscapes, the landscapes of ordinary people. It is the ordinary people and landscapes that have played a vital role in shaping our social, political, and economic history. And it is these persons who should be commemorated and their stories that should be told. These stories may more effectively trigger social memory, because it is these people and their lives that more closely parallel the life of the common person. For instance, the interpretation of workers' landscapes will educate people about their lifestyles and hardships, as well as their role in shaping our society. Similarly the interpretation of cultural landscape history could connect efforts to protect our natural resources with a broader understanding of urban history. Or designs that identify sites where a territorial struggle was waged can help to design and a place must be open-minded not single-minded, it must be open to the various possibilities that may occur within it (Carr 1992).

Design Criteria

A matrix summarizing the design implications identified in the literature review is provided below:

Goal: Developing Sense of Community: development of social ties to community						
Objective: Community Life: <i>interaction</i> between members of community						
Level I & II: Prerequisites						
Basic needs: Physical comfort	Ask residents about their needs: participation in the planning, design, and management process	Include elements that address physical comfort: seating, shelter				
Basic needs: Psychological comfort	Ask residents about their needs: participation in the planning, design, and management process	Recognize rights of various users (individuals and groups)	Lessen opportunities for criminal activity	Include elements that lessen concerns of safety: informal or formal surveillance, programming	Accessibility: welcoming, legible, proximity	Integration of new with familiar settings
Level III: Types of Affiliation						
Affiliation with individuals	Identify places/ locations where interaction occurs	Incorporate communal spaces for interaction between individuals to occur	Incorporate spots for observing and direct participation/ interaction	Include 'stays' at intersections	Include 'stays' near routine activity locations	Direct movement through path layout

	Understand existing social links	Evaluate potential for new social links: common interests, values, backgrounds	Resident involvement in the planning, design, and management process			
Affiliation with a group	Incorporate larger spaces for organizing and gathering	Incorporate communal places for potential interaction between individuals and groups	Recognize needs of long-time resident groups may differ from needs of newer resident groups	Design for inclusion of long-time and new resident groups	Resident involvement in the planning, design, and management process	
Affiliation with community	Provide opportunities for interaction to occur between long-time and new residents	Incorporate communal spaces	Include new and long-time residents in design and management process	Provide opportunities for social investment/ involvement	Incorporate display of community activities/ events	Resident involvement in the planning, design, and management process
Group Formation						
Informal group formation	Provide seating for smaller groups, 2-3 persons	Provide opportunities for interaction between individual's	Identify individual and group patterns of use	If possible understand group patterns of membership	Resident involvement in planning, design, and management process	
Formal group formation	Incorporate long-time and new group's goals in design plan	Involve groups in design and management process	Identify individual and group patterns of use	Identify group patterns of membership	Resident involvement in planning, design, and management process	

Common denominator	Identify and develop places where repeat activities occur or may occur	Identify and develop places where specific activities occur or may occur	Understand patterns of behavior: link interests	Incorporate natural elements into design	Resident involvement in planning, design, and management process	
Ownership						
Territoriality	Identify spaces collectively or individually owned	Delineate spaces	Resident involvement in planning, design, and management process	Designation of communal spaces	Distribution of spaces between long-time and new groups	Include undefined spaces
Symbolism/ Personal-ization	Identify existing symbols	Provide opportunities for personalization of space	Provide spaces that may be personalized over time	Resident involvement in planning, design, and management process		

Goal: Developing Place Identity: public and personal <i>meanings</i> imbued with place						
Objective: Place Attachment: development of <i>bond</i> between individual and place						
Prerequisite						
Basic needs: Physical comfort	Ask residents about their needs: participation in planning, design, and management process	Include elements that address physical comfort: seating, shelter				
Basic needs: Psychological comfort	Ask residents about their needs: participation in planning, design, and management process	Accessibility: welcoming, legible, proximity	Integration of new with familiar settings	Lessen opportunities for criminal activity and concerns for safety	Recognize rights of various individuals and user groups	Visual quality: unity, legibility

Community Satisfaction						
Resident satisfaction	Determine levels of satisfaction	Identify issues that contribute/detract from satisfaction	Identify negative perceptions of the built environment	Preserve factors that promote satisfaction	Ameliorate, where possible, negative contributors	Resident participation in planning, design, and management process
Community/ Place Attachment						
Social Involvement/ Investment	Provide opportunities for social interaction/ involvement	Resident participation in planning, design, and management process				
Programming	Identify programs that encourage repeat use and specific activities	Resident participation in the planning, design, and management process	Determine activities compatible with interests and activity patterns	Match site characteristics with activity settings		
Territoriality/ Ownership/ Symbolism	Provide opportunities for personalization/ expression/ display of images	Define boundaries: neighborhood, public space, private space	Resident participation in planning, design, and management process	Designate group and individually owned spaces	Incorporate communal spaces	Distribution of spaces
	Identify/ incorporate community symbols/ values	Preserve/ highlight landmarks	Include symbols that draw on physical and social character of area	Identify elements valued by long-time and new residents	Name spaces/ places	Recognize subconscious symbols may exist

Social Imageability	Resident participation in planning, design, and management process	Identify collectively held social meanings/values	Provide opportunities for expression of social images	Maintain character of neighborhood		
Context	Resident participation in planning, design and management process	Design appropriate to the site/ area	Design inspired by local conditions	Gather cues of elements and values	Cues may come from the natural, historic, or social features	
Flexibility	Include opportunities for users to adapt or claim spaces	Allow for transformation of space over time; don't over design	Resident participation in planning, design, and management process	Design for variety of activities that may occur; open-minded design	Brainstorm variety of activities that may occur	Consider activities that may not occur as a result of design
Interpretation	Resident participation in planning, design and management process	Interpret ordinary or vernacular landscapes and landmarks	Interpret monumental landscapes and landmarks	Interpret individual and shared histories	Interpret social, political history	Represent contributions of minority groups
Associative Meanings	Identify associative meanings	Identify approaches for day lighting	Resident participation in planning and design process			
Ordinary places	Identify 'ordinary' places and role in residents' lives	Preserve ordinary places that hold special meaning for residents	Identify nurturing/ 'third realm' places	Resident participation in planning and design process		
Special event Places	Include spaces for special events	Resident participation in planning, design, and management process				

Design Position

Design Position

Understanding and supporting the processes that engender community life and place attachment, is perhaps the most significant means of encouraging community life and attachment to place. These processes develop over time. Design is limited in its capacity to influence these processes, however, opportunities for interaction to occur through design of the physical environment and through programming that encourages community participation, repeat visits, regular use, and/ or specific activities, may most effectively support this continuum.

In addition, design of the physical environment may provide the context for connections between people and place to occur. Social involvement is a vital component of both community life and place attachment. Provision of places for people to come together and interact is essential if these processes are to develop. In addition, the built environment may reinforce these connections by providing opportunities for the display and expression of communal symbols and users' adaptation of the space over time.

Many of the spatial functions and social factors that support the development of community life also contribute to

the development of place attachment. And, as was discussed earlier, community life may support place attachment, and vice versa. The first two chapters of this document have focused on these two processes. The remainder of this study, however, seeks to explore the process of place attachment. It may be assumed that many of the factors that contribute to place attachment may also contribute to community life.

The design project seeks to explore the process of place attachment and to apply and test the Design Criteria outlined in Chapter Two, within the context of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood, located within the City of Roanoke, Virginia. More specifically, this project will explore two groups' attachment to place: long-time and newer residents.

Claim

Process is a strategy for achieving attachment to place. Designers may support the processes that contribute to the development of place attachment through design of the physical environment, programming, and the design process itself.

Goals

- Test claim through design
- Application of Design Criteria to a neighborhood context, an existent set of issues and conditions
- Test Design Criteria through design

Objectives

- Identify factors that contribute to or detract from residents' satisfaction and perception of their neighborhood
- Determine degree of long-time and newer residents' satisfaction and perception of their neighborhood
- Identify factors that contribute to or detract from long-time and newer residents development of attachment to place
- Determine long-time and newer residents' level of attachment to their neighborhood
- Identify social and physical features that are valued by long-time and newer residents, and that may be unique to the neighborhood

- Identify programming that may engage residents over time and fit within the context of the neighborhood
- Develop design alternative based on processes that may support long-time and newer residents' attachment to place
- Develop design alternative derived from the physical and social conditions of the neighborhood
- Test efficacy of design

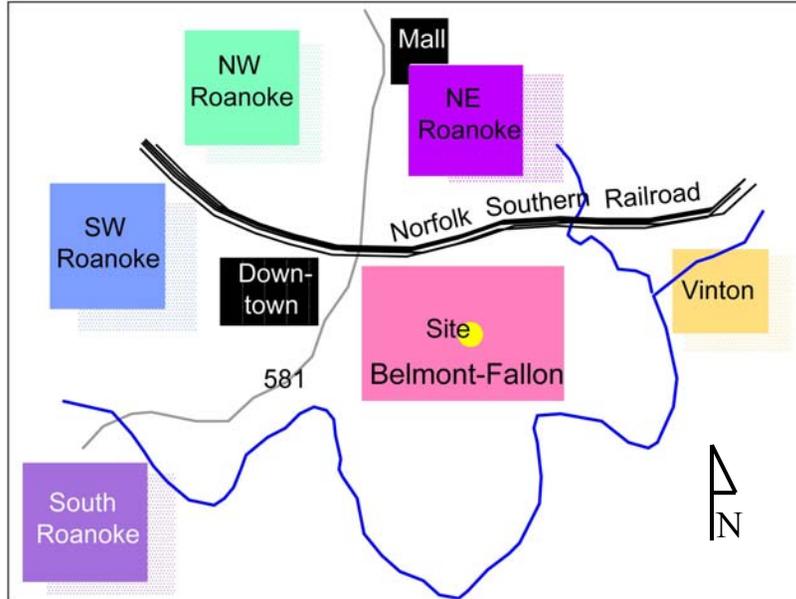
Design Project

Design Project

The Neighborhood

Background

The design project provides a venue for exploration and testing of the design position and criteria. The study area is the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood; an inner city neighborhood located in Roanoke, Virginia, a stone's throw from the city's



Context Map

downtown district. This neighborhood is a working class neighborhood settled primarily by railroad workers who

supported the city's rail industry. Over the years, many of the workers migrated out of the city, leaving behind a community of older residents. Since then many of the homes in the neighborhood have fallen into decline, and a number of vacant lots mark the location of homes that have since been demolished.

Currently the neighborhood meets the criteria for a neighborhood in decline; overall the population is decreasing, the number of unoccupied and vacant properties is rising, the housing stock is aging and deteriorating, there is a marked increase in rental units and multi-family housing, and there is a decrease in the value of homes (see demographic profile comparison chart p. 151.)

Belmont-Fallon, however, due to its location, unique housing stock, existing infrastructure, and potential for outside reinvestment, has been targeted by the City of Roanoke to receive revitalization funding, \$1.2 million to be applied over the next two years. Also, the neighborhood is beginning to experience a population shift as a number of the older residents begin leaving their homes for reasons associated with aging and younger residents begin to move into the neighborhood. It is the city's hope that over the next five to ten years, as the

community starts to show signs of investment, an increasing number of younger residents and families will move into the neighborhood. It is also anticipated that as the neighborhood begins to show signs of investment, incoming residents will be of working to middle income levels, differing from the current population's socio-economic level, most of whom primarily fall within lower income levels.

Long-time and newer resident groups, as a result of age, background, and length of time in the neighborhood, may have different needs, levels of satisfaction, and attachments to their neighborhood. These differences will be considered in terms of their effect on the process of developing attachment to place and the elements that may initiate or support attachment.

The Site

Background

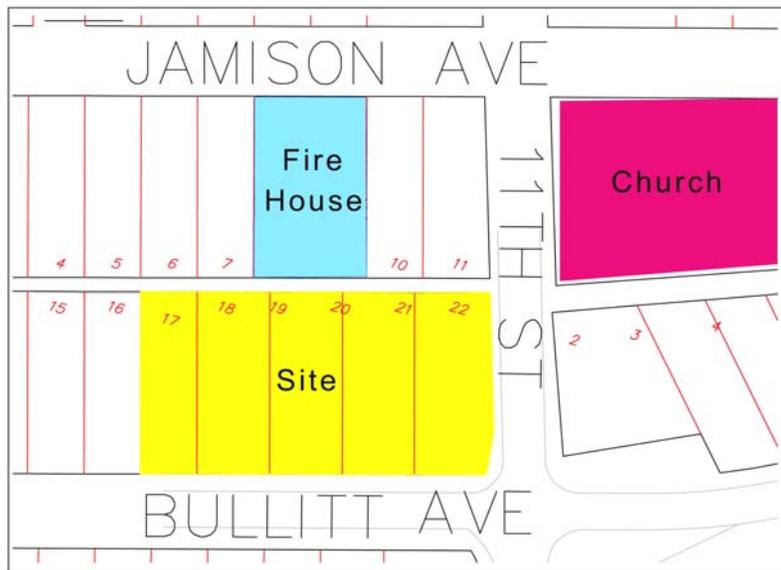
Statistics have shown that the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood has an aging population, and the highest morbidity and infant mortality rates in the city (which may be a product of its aging population and lower income level.) There are currently few health care amenities, public or private, within the neighborhood. The closest health care providers are emergency services located near the Elm/ Bullitt Street

entrance to the neighborhood. These services are within the downtown area. Figures have also shown that 80-90% of students in the neighborhood's school systems are on free or reduced lunch, confirming that many residents fall within lower income levels. As a result, the neighborhood has been determined by the city to be a 'medically underserved area (MUA).'

In light of this need, community organizations and advocates have mobilized to begin application and project proposals for a Health Clinic within the neighborhood. A Health Care Commission was organized through the Southeast Roanoke Christian Partnership, also known as the Partnership or SERCP. The Partnership, an organization comprised of representatives from six churches in the Southeast (SE) district, developed some years ago through Faithworks, a national organization with an office in Roanoke. (Southeast is the larger district in which the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood is located. Residents often associate themselves with this larger district, rather than their individual neighborhood.) The Health Care Commission is made up of Southeast residents, a representative from the City Special Services Department, a member of City Council, SERCP's Parish Nurse Coordinator,

the District Manager of the Health Department, and the Director of Kuumba, a public health facility in Southwest Roanoke. (The SE Health Care Clinic will be modeled after the Kuumba program.)

The Health Care Commission has identified a location for the proposed Health Care Clinic. The proposed site is on the corner of Bullitt Avenue and 11th Street, opposite the Belmont Christian Church and adjacent to the Old Firehouse #7. This site extends across five city lots (lots 17-22 on the city planning map.) The lots are currently vacant. The corner



Proposed Site for Health Care Clinic

lot is owned by a parishioner of the church and is currently for sale. The adjacent and center two lots are owned and used for overflow parking by the Belmont Christian Church. Leaders of the church, as well as many of its parishioners, are advocates for the neighborhood and the proposed Clinic. The church has offered to share this land with the Clinic. The inside two lots, #17 and #18, are also privately owned.

This location is within the area targeted for the initial phase of revitalization. The funding area extends along the Bullitt-Jamison corridor, a one-way pair making up the main arteries in and out of the neighborhood and from outlying neighborhoods to downtown. This corridor, and the location for the Clinic, are highly visible and geographically mark the center of the SE district. The Health Care Clinic, in addition to providing a needed service, may support these initial revitalization efforts.



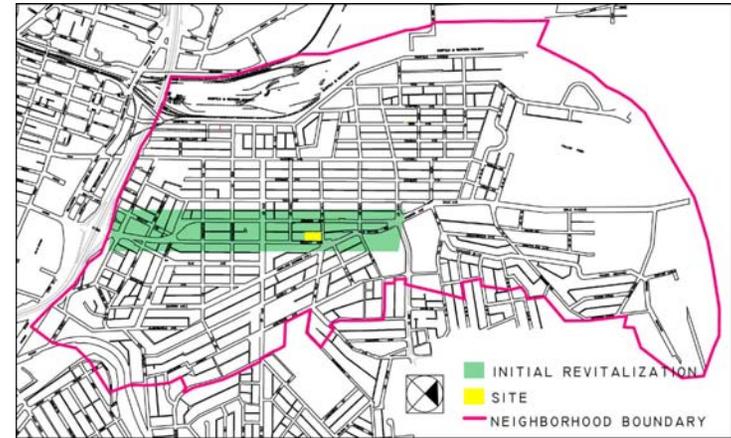
View of Site from 11th Street



View of Old Firehouse #7 (center) from the site



View of Belmont Christian Church from the site



Initial Revitalization Zone

Site Selection

This project was identified as a viable thesis studio project for the exploration, application, and evaluation of the design position and criteria for the following reasons:

- Its program, health care, by its nature, will be applicable to all age groups. This is particularly important for this study, which examines two user groups who are likely diverse in age
- Residents support and welcome the introduction of a health care facility to the neighborhood. Residents initiated and have been involved in the planning process

- The proposed Clinic is intended to be a community facility, providing accessible health care to all members of the community
- The proposed site is located near the physical center of the neighborhood, and therefore accessible to the widest range of residents, and may support the notion that it is a community facility
- The clinic will be public rather than private (which should facilitate accessibility to all residents)
- The site is located on a main access route, facilitating access to the Clinic
- The site is within the area targeted for revitalization. The Clinic may help to support these efforts
- Belmont Christian Church, is adjacent to the proposed site, and is an activity focus within the neighborhood
- Old Firehouse #7, a historic landmark and beloved feature of the neighborhood is also adjacent to the site. The new police sub-station is located on the bottom floor of the firehouse. Residents have maintained the house for the past three decades and continue to hold monthly meetings there

- Belmont Christian Church, Old Firehouse #7, and the Health Care Clinic, may become an anchor within the community, a community center. There are currently few community centers within the neighborhood

Project Scope

The scope of this project is to develop a setting for the Health Care Clinic that may support the process of long-time and newer residents' attachment to place.

Design Process

The design process included the following steps and will be discussed in greater detail in later sections of this document:

- Preliminary Research of Neighborhood: meeting with neighborhood and city leaders (these findings are outlined in the above neighborhood, site, and project description)
- Research Methodology
 - In-depth Interviews
 - Study of Trace Observations
- Inventory and Analysis
 - Neighborhood
 - Site

- Development of Preliminary Design Alternatives
- Presentation of Preliminary Alternatives to Residents
- Resident Evaluation of Preliminary Alternatives
- Development of Final Design Alternative
- Final evaluation of design position, criteria, and design alternative

Research Methodology
Method I: In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews of both long-time and newer residents were conducted to gather information concerning residents' perceptions, emotions, memories, and values regarding their community. In addition questions were asked relating to behavior patterns (such as regular activities), personal preferences (such as needs and concerns), and goals (such as aspirations for the neighborhood.) Twenty-three residents were interviewed, 12 long-time residents, 11 new residents (see sample chart on p. 152-153.) The criterion for long-time residency was having lived in the neighborhood for more than 15 years, and the criterion for new residents was conversely having lived in the neighborhood for less than 15 years. Long-time residents interviewed were all over the age of fifty. Most have lived in the neighborhood all their lives, or for most of their adult lives. Newer residents were primarily between the ages of 25-40. Most have moved to the neighborhood from other neighborhoods within the city limits.

The interview consisted of 13 questions and required approximately one hour of respondents' time (see interview questions on p. 154). The questions were designed to explore residents' values, emotions, and connections to their neighborhood. The sampling was developed from a variety of

sources: references from neighborhood leaders, personal references, and contacts made through visits to neighborhood activities and facilities.

Interview Process

Residents were contacted by phone to schedule a time for the interview. The majority of interviews took place in residents' homes, though some were conducted in a semi-public place, such as a nearby coffee shop or church. Residents were informed of the overall thesis project goals, to develop a conceptual plan for a proposed project in their neighborhood that supports attachment to place.

The average time for each interview was one hour. Interviews required a one-time meeting with the resident. Most interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis, with the exception of a two small group interviews that were arranged by the residents.

Interviews were taped upon the resident's consent. Taping was conducted to ensure that the information given by the respondent was accurately recorded. These tapes were transcribed shortly after the interview. All tapes have subsequently been destroyed.

Residents had the option to not answer a question if the question made them uncomfortable or if it was information they did not wish to share. All residents' names will remain confidential. Residents' responses were compiled and the composite content was studied for patterns in their responses. Conclusions were drawn from this composite. The information presented in the analysis and conclusion of the composite responses has been arranged in such a way that the identities of residents may not be inferred. These conclusions will be mailed to participants.

The following pages include conclusions regarding long-time and newer residents' responses to the interview questions. The analysis of the responses from which these conclusions were derived is included in the Appendices of this document (p. 155-187.)

Interview Conclusions: Long-time Residents

1. How long have you lived in Belmont Fallon?

Analysis:

Of the 12 persons interviewed, 4 have lived in the Belmont-Fallon area their whole life. 2 respondents were born in the area, left for an extended period of time and returned later in life. The remaining moved into the area as adults. All respondents have lived in the area for a large portion of their lives.

2. What made you choose to move to Belmont Fallon? (or if long-time resident) what made your family come here? What things about Belmont-Fallon have made you want to stay?

Many of the longtime residents of the neighborhood settled in this area because of its proximity to American Viscose (once located along its southern border), Norfolk and Western (now Norfolk and Southern) Railyards (located along the northern boundary of the neighborhood), and other places of employment. Its proximity to amenities, such as grocery stores and schools, and other services that were a part of their

daily lives was also a major factor. Convenience to these amenities influenced their decision to settle, remain or return to the neighborhood.

Efforts should be made to preserve and provide necessary amenities, as they have a strong influence on resident satisfaction and decision to live within the neighborhood.

The Belmont-Fallon neighborhood has a strong sense of community. This sense of community one may assume developed its roots years ago as many families worked together, went to school together, and lived near to one another. Many of the residents share similar backgrounds, goals, and histories. It has developed over many decades and is deeply ingrained in residents' lives. One resident described it as "an extended family." This sense of community is a unique characteristic and strength of the neighborhood.

The neighborhood has begun to evolve as more persons must find work outside its limits, children settle elsewhere after college, children are bussed to school outside the neighborhood, seniors leave the area for reasons related to



Norfolk & Southern Railyards

aging, and properties deteriorate and/or become rental units. Maintaining this sense of community may become more difficult as the demographics and physical structure of the neighborhood continues to change. However, it may be gleaned from the past that it is the daily encounters, similar interests and backgrounds, and shared experiences that helped to make the community strong. Therefore, efforts may be made to provide opportunities for residents to interact with one another, for them to affiliate with persons of similar interests and backgrounds, and that these shared experiences may help to preserve and strengthen the sense of community within the neighborhood.

Residents also have a strong attachment to their homes and the homes in the neighborhood. Most are satisfied with their homes, though many are dissatisfied with the deterioration of other homes in the neighborhood.

The housing stock is an asset of the neighborhood and should be preserved. The majority of homes date to pre World War II,



Typical row of homes in the neighborhood

are sturdy, and have detailing that may not be found in many modern homes. The housing in the neighborhood is a source of pride for residents and is also a unique characteristic of the neighborhood. Efforts should be made to preserve these homes and to follow guidelines for the construction of new structures so they may fit within or do not disrupt the existing character.

In general residents seem fairly satisfied with their neighborhood. Factors that promote this satisfaction, as mentioned earlier, are proximity to amenities, strong sense of community, and the housing stock of the neighborhood. These factors will be discussed in more detail in the following conclusions as residents respond to more specific questions concerning the social and physical environment of their neighborhood. There are factors that also contribute to resident dissatisfaction, which will also be discussed at a later point. However, it should be noted that factors contributing to resident dissatisfaction, though these do affect the degree of satisfaction, seem to be secondary. This is good news because for place attachment to occur or to be sustained it may be difficult if residents have strong feelings of dissatisfaction towards their environment.

3. Do you think there is anything about your neighborhood that makes it unique?

Long-time residents feel that the qualities that make their neighborhood unique today are the interaction between neighbors, its location, and the homes. Though many of these qualities currently exist, many are threatened. For instance, as more long-time residents leave the neighborhood, residents know fewer of their neighbors, as properties are converted to rental units the degree of care often decreases, and as amenities begin to leave the neighborhood (such as the grocery store and post office) residents lose some of the convenience they have enjoyed and value. Some of the comments by residents begin to indicate these changes, such as “I don’t even know my neighbors now.” These responses reflect residents’ feelings regarding the decline of their neighborhood. Such feelings, if they progress, may have a greater affect on resident satisfaction and attachment to their neighborhood.

Opportunities for interaction among neighbors, new and old, should be encouraged and when possible provided. Such opportunities may help long-time residents become acquainted and build new relationships with incoming residents. The

physical environment should provide places for interaction to occur. Though interaction may occur in private areas, such as a front yard or the home, semi-public and public places should also be provided as a ‘neutral ground’ for chance meetings and relationships to develop.

4. If I were thinking of moving to Belmont Fallon, and wanted to know a little bit about the neighborhood, how would you describe it to me?

It was interesting to me that this question produced many negative images of the neighborhood, as I was anticipating responses that might indicate what residents feel are the selling points of their neighborhood. I think what this question produced instead are clues as to what residents perceive would be an outsider’s perception of their neighborhood. In looking over the responses to previous questions, where residents overwhelmingly noted that interaction between neighbors, proximity, and quality of homes, are unique and special qualities of their neighborhood, there was little mention of these characteristics for this question.

This response may be a symptom of what residents perceive as the city's perception of the neighborhood or the SE district in comparison to other areas of the city. One of the respondents said, "SE has not been considered one of the best places to live." This is interesting because it does not seem in sync with what residents have shared with me about the neighborhood. However, it is evident that what may be perceived as other's perception of the neighborhood does factor into residents' perception of their neighborhood.

Rental properties were one of the main problems identified by the residents. First, this may be because these properties in many cases do detract from the overall attractiveness of the neighborhood. Secondly, these properties may be perceived as being perceived by outsiders as indicators of a lower quality neighborhood.

Pairs of residents did indicate that the people, quiet atmosphere, schools, and number of churches were attributes that someone considering moving to the area might be attracted to. The traffic on Bullitt and Jamison Avenues was identified as dangerous feature of the neighborhood.

Overcoming the perception that outsider's may perceive the neighborhood negatively may come in time as the

neighborhood begins to show signs of investment and renovation. Whether outsiders do perceive the neighborhood in this light, I'm not sure. However, within the neighborhood, I think it is important that if features, such as multifamily housing, landlords lack of care for their properties, and run down homes, detract from residents' pride and perception of their neighborhood, they should be addressed. The Belmont-Fallon neighborhood, as was discussed in the introduction to the project, is commencing two revitalization efforts. The first, the SE by Design project, a renovation and beautification project, and the second a comprehensive plan developed by the city and neighborhood that identifies areas in need of revitalization, as well as guidelines for implementation and future goals. It might be interesting to ask residents this same question following implementation of these programs to see if their responses change.

Efforts on a smaller scale may also help to improve such perceptions, both internally, and externally. Signs and



Traffic along Bullitt Avenue

symbols that celebrate the achievements and unique qualities of the neighborhood may help to change such perceptions, such as banners celebrating school victories, high school seniors who go onto college thanks to the hard work of their parents, community groups who pitch in to care for their community, or winners of the church baseball league championships. In addition, signs of care, such as the landscaping done in the median strips on Elm Street, may help to dispel perceptions that the neighborhood is not cared for. Events that bring together the community in an area that is visible to outsiders may also help in communicating the strength and viability of the neighborhood both internally and externally.



*Elm/ Bullitt Entrance:
green median strip,
newly planted trees*

5. Are there social qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as nice neighbors or visiting with your neighbors? Are there places where you usually see or talk to people in your neighborhood? Are there social qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood, such as not having much contact with your neighbors or disruptive

groups of people? Is there anything that you would like to be different about the social life in your neighborhood?

The churches' involvement in the community and the number of churches in the area are highly valued by longtime residents. Also, the people in the neighborhood, in particular residents who have been in the neighborhood for a long period of time, are an important part of the social life of the neighborhood. Relationships have developed over many years, and these long-long-time residents have become a part of many residents' memories, association with their neighborhood, comfort, and support. One of the residents had described the neighborhood as "an extended family." And truly it is, as many of the residents who have been there, some 50, 60, 70 years, have helped to raise neighborhood children. Older residents feel comfort in knowing that they have a support system in their neighbors and that their neighbors look out for them and check on them. As well, many of the residents interviewed also feel a responsibility to help their neighbors if they need it, either by driving them somewhere or mowing their lawn.

Many of the residents feel comforted that the police

substation has moved into the area and are hopeful that it will discourage crime.

Also, some of the residents interviewed care for their grandchildren, or their grandchildren live nearby and are active in their lives. This is an important part of the social life of many long-time residents. Activities that integrate accommodations and interests for seniors and youth may be welcomed and more widely used by these residents.

The majority of residents interviewed primarily interact with their neighbors at church or church activities. These activities vary and may include religious services, volunteering, church ball teams, and eating together. Although there may be variation in the people attending these functions, the opportunity for the residents to meet persons outside the church group is limited. These activities are affiliated with particular interests, such as faith or community service. Persons who do not belong to these groups or who do not share these same interests may feel uncomfortable participating in these activities. The primary groups that participate in the



Police substation: located in Old Firehouse

church activities are older, long-time residents. This may make it more difficult for older residents to become acquainted with younger or newer neighbors, who are less active in the church and have different interests and places they visit regularly.

The qualities of the church that residents embrace, as is described in more detail in question # 8, are that many grew up in these churches, and the members of the church are people they have known much of their lives. One resident described it as “just the old home church.”

It is true that no design can make such relationships instantly occur; they must develop on their own. However, it may be assumed that residents’ attachment to their churches is partially the result of repeat attendance of church activities. Attendance twice a week, weekly, monthly, or even



Neighborhood churches

occasionally throughout the year, and over the years, has helped to develop and reinforce residents' attachment to their church and church groups. This is something that can be considered in designing places in the neighborhood. Places with programs that encourage repeat visits, may help to develop residents' attachment to that place. In addition, such a program may provide the opportunity for repeat interaction with individuals and for relationships to develop.

Bringing church groups together with other groups in the neighborhood may open new lines of communication and provide opportunities for new relationships to develop. Many of the churches have open house events where the entire neighborhood is invited. These events should be encouraged. It may be helpful too if such events were hosted by a group but held in a neutral community area, so that other groups and individuals may feel more comfortable attending.

Some of the residents interviewed have limited time, strength and energy. Though all residents may desire legibility and accessibility of a place, it will be particularly important to this group with limited mobility. Places that are in close proximity, have clearly defined layouts and boundaries, and provide places to rest may be more likely to be used by this

group. Adequate lighting and cues of changes in the environment may also facilitate navigation of a place and users comfort.

Some interaction between neighbors occurs on the porch. Residents indicated that they enjoy sitting on their porches, where they talk with neighbors, and see what their neighbors are doing. Much like the porch setting, environments that include places to sit with clearly defined boundaries, an opportunity to observe people, and a shady spot to relax in the shade, may be well received by residents.



Porch swing and moveable chairs

One third of the residents interviewed expressed their affection for the Old Firehouse located on Jamison Avenue. This firehouse was a community symbol when it operated as a firehouse prior to 1979. More importantly, it currently serves as a symbol of community as a result of residents' efforts to maintain the house over the past three decades. Members of the community pitched in to raise money to maintain the house.

They also performed much of the maintenance themselves, including painting, fencing, repairs, and mowing the grass, as if it were their own home. Here they also had community gatherings, meetings, and dinners. For some of long-time residents there are many memories and emotions tied to the house.



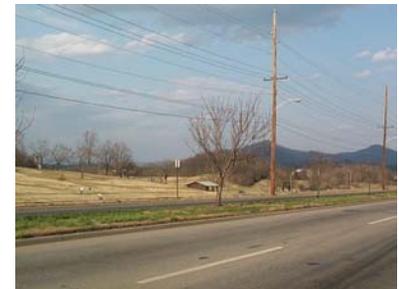
Old Firehouse #7

The residents, approximately a year ago, burdened by the cost of upkeep, relinquished responsibility for care of the house to the city. However, it is still a center for the community. It recently became the home for the neighborhood police substation. In addition, the neighborhood group, the SE Action Forum, the primary group who cared for the firehouse over the years, continues to hold its meetings at the firehouse on the first Tuesday of the month. Many of the original members and founders of the Forum are still active in the organization today.

The Forum's monthly meetings, like the church activities, require repeat visits to the firehouse and help to strengthen residents' feelings of attachment toward the house.

Most of the long-time residents interviewed referred to and recognized the introduction of the police substation as something they valued. Most also identified the location of the substation as being housed in the Old Firehouse. It should be noted that although all residents interviewed commented on the police substation, the respondents who associated the firehouse itself with their social activities were those that are or were active in the Forum. These persons most likely have strong personal attachments to the house as a result of their efforts and their repeat attendance at gatherings and meetings here over the years. Activities that are structured around the firehouse and which involve the entire community, may help to reinforce these feelings, it may also help in strengthening other residents' attachment to the firehouse as well as their recognition of the structure as a community gathering place.

Fallon Park and Jackson Park were a large part of residents' lives growing up, however few of the residents interviewed associate the parks with their current social life.



Fallon Park

However, some residents visit the parks for group activities such as church group functions and reunions. One resident indicated that he takes his



'Big House' at Jackson Park

grandsons to the park fairly often and when there interacts with other parents. One resident noted that she and her husband participate in neighborhood events, such as festivals and exhibits held at Jackson Park. For the most part, residents' value the parks for time spent there as a child and for the facilities they provide the community. However, the parks do not currently play a prominent role in most of the older or long-time residents' social lives.

Rental properties detract from the social quality of the neighborhood according to almost half of the residents interviewed. Most indicate that this is the result of the high turnover rates of the units. Residents do not have an opportunity to learn about or interact with renters. Some of the residents attributed the crime in the area to the influx of renters. Whether they are responsible for the crimes is unknown, but not knowing very much about persons renting probably

contributes to suspicions. Programs that may attract both renters and homeowners, such as playgroups, public services, or classes, may provide opportunities for interaction, may help to dispel suspicions, and may help renters establish ties to the neighborhood, which may reduce the rate of turnover.

Being alone is a challenge for a number of long-time residents. Some are suffering from the loss of a spouse and feel uncomfortable engaging in activities by themselves, especially if their previous interaction within the neighborhood was as a couple. Some residents interviewed, all women, indicated that they feel less safe when alone, especially at night. Persons who feel awkward participating in group programs may appreciate programs, such as card groups and classes, which are geared towards individuals. Design features, such as pedestrian lighting, visual access, a legible layout, and signs of care, may help to assuage residents' concerns regarding safety.

Residents' suggestions for additional amenities that may enhance the neighborhood's social quality related primarily to places and activities where they could interact, these suggestions included a family-oriented restaurant and

block parties. Other residents recommended organized programs such as classes and card groups.

6. Are there things that can improve your sense of belonging to your neighborhood? Are there things that currently reduce your sense of belonging?

Overall long-time residents feel they belong to the neighborhood. This may largely be due to their familiarity with the neighborhood, having lived there for many years.

One third of the residents interviewed expressed concerns regarding the proposed changes for the neighborhood. Some of these fears are more than founded, as some of the homes will be directly affected and some eradicated by the highway interchange extension (a proposed extension for I-77 will cut through the southwestern corner of the neighborhood). As well, the introduction of Interstate 581 many years ago substantially changed the nature of the neighborhood, severing its connection with downtown.

Most concerns stem from uncertainty as to what these changes will bring to the neighborhood and how these changes will affect them personally. In addition, many of the residents

that shared their concerns with me also expressed their frustration and despondency that they do not have power to affect the changes.

In light of the many physical and social changes taking place within the neighborhood it is especially important that care be taken to preserve the character of the neighborhood. For instance, the homes are a source of pride, comfort, and identification for many long-time residents. The old homes in the neighborhood should be preserved, and converted if necessary, rather than torn down. In addition, landmarks within the neighborhood should also be preserved. For example, if possible, the Heironimus Warehouse, located on Albemarle Avenue, should be preserved and converted, rather



*Interstate 581, above
Albemarle Street*



Warehouse slated for demolition

than torn down. The protection of such landmarks, their preservation, and even their celebration, signifies to long-time residents that their interests are being considered and though the neighborhood may be undergoing change, it will remain fairly intact, and familiar.

Some of the residents are hopeful that the improvements proposed for the neighborhood, such as the SE by Design project, will help to restore the quality of the neighborhood. Once this initiative gets underway it may provide comfort to residents as the physical structure of the environment is preserved and enhanced.

Traffic is a problem, especially along the Bullitt and Jamison corridor. These roads separate the neighborhood. They are difficult to cross and dangerous for both children and adults. Residents between the two roads are especially isolated, as they must cross these roads to reach most places in the neighborhood. The roads are heavily



Intersection at Jamison Avenue and 13th Street

traveled and important connector roads between Roanoke County and downtown. It seems unlikely that these roads will be reverted to two-way streets. However, measures will have to be taken to facilitate the movement of pedestrian traffic throughout the neighborhood. Traffic calming devices may be implemented to improve these conditions. As well, cross walks, with traffic lights, on less busy intersections, may also provide pedestrians opportunities to safely and comfortably cross the street.

Two residents expressed their feelings regarding being alone in the neighborhood. Again, additional activities that are geared toward individual participation, rather than couples, or families, may alleviate some of this discomfort. As well, features that reduce the potential for criminal activity, and which promote a sense of safety, may alleviate fears of being alone. The police substation is a welcomed addition to the neighborhood and appears to provide a great sense of comfort for all the residents interviewed.

And finally, not knowing one's neighbors also reduces residents' sense of belonging. Programs and places that allow residents to meet, sit and talk may provide opportunities for

neighbors to become acquainted and for relationships to develop.

7. Are there physical qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as the streets, houses or yards? Are there physical qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood?

Police presence and the new police substation in the neighborhood is highly valued by residents. It offers an increased sense of security to residents. Other emergency services located nearby, such as the new fire station and the rescue squad, also provide a sense of security.



New Firestation

Interestingly, there was no mention of the Old Firehouse building being a physical quality that residents liked about the neighborhood. In fact, there were very few references to specific places or buildings. This may be an oversight, or the wording of the question (though similar wording was used for question 5, and this question did generate

specific responses). I think though that residents did not comment on specific places because many of these places are valued more strongly for their social qualities.

The age and character of the homes in the neighborhood are also highly valued and a great source of pride for residents. As was stated earlier, efforts should be made to continue to preserve these structures, as they are a large part of the neighborhood's identity.

Residents also have an attachment to their porches. They offer an opportunity for residents to relax in the shade, and interact with their neighborhood. Participation may be through either direct or indirect interaction. Most homes have front porches. This too is an important physical characteristic of the neighborhood, and an important part of its



Welcome sign and flower bed at Jamison Avenue and 13th Street

identity. New homes should include front porches so that they may better fit within existing housing patterns.

Residents value signs of care, such as landscaping in the median strips and upkeep of the properties. Landscaping along visible corridors, in public places, between the sidewalks and curbs, in commercial areas, and in remnants of land, may strengthen residents' perception of the neighborhood.

The sidewalks throughout the neighborhood are also a unique physical quality of the neighborhood. Two of the residents indicated that these are highly valued; one even said, "I don't think I would live in a place that didn't have sidewalks."

Physical qualities that residents do not like mainly include structures and situations that indicate the decline of the neighborhood, such as the rundown homes and some of the more notorious rental properties.

Traffic is also a problem in some sections of the neighborhood, and has greatly changed the physical environment in these sections. Once off the main roads the feel of



Quieter Road

the neighborhood is quite different, it is peaceful. Bullitt and Jamison Avenues, are quite busy, and do not feel like residential roads. Traffic calming devices would not only increase safety while on these roads, but it would also improve residents' perception of the neighborhood, in particular residents who live along this corridor.

8. Are there places in your neighborhood that you visit regularly? If so, what are they? Who else is there? What do you like about these places?

Residents' answers for this question confirm that for a large portion of the long-time resident population, the churches in the neighborhood serve as a central role in their social lives. As well, residents are attached to the churches primarily, though this is not to say this is the only reason, for the repeated contact with other members as well as regular visits to the church.

Other places that long-time residents visit regularly are largely places to purchase goods and carry out necessary and routine tasks, such as the drugstore and the grocery store. When asked what it is they liked about these places answers included things such as economy, affordable prices, and

proximity to their home. There was little indication that residents feel a sense of emotional attachment to these establishments, except perhaps the security it affords that such places are accessible to them.

9. If you were to visit an outdoor place, such as a park or a garden, what kinds of things would you like there to be there?

As was touched on in question 5, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are an important part of many of the residents' lives. They participate in activities that involve their grandchildren. These residents may frequent outdoor areas that include amenities and activities for both children and adults.

Also, many of the residents indicated they would like to have benches in an outdoor place. There currently exist few benches in the neighborhood. An outdoor place that includes benches and seating for small groups may be well received by these residents. Such areas may provide a place for residents to meet, talk, and observe.

In addition, many of the trees in the area, particularly along Bullitt Avenue and to its north, have been removed as a result of age or street widening. There are currently few trees

remaining. Many residents mourn this loss. Tree plantings may help to assuage feelings of loss and reinforce the perception that the area is a residential neighborhood. In addition, they will provide shade for



*Montrose Avenue area:
few trees remaining*

residents and habitat for wildlife. Based on most residents' comments it seems that trees would be a welcomed addition to the neighborhood, and highly valued by the residents.

Some of the residents enjoy seeing flowers in the neighborhood. An outdoor place with flowerbeds may be a source of pride and comfort for residents. In addition, it will portray a sense of care in the neighborhood.

There are no small parks in the area. The closest parks are located along the periphery of the neighborhood. Some residents indicated they would prefer a small park nearby.

10. Do you tend to drive or walk through your neighborhood? When you walk (or drive) on one of the quieter streets of your neighborhood, could you tell me some of the places and things you may notice?

Most of the qualities residents notice relate to the level of care of individual properties and the greater neighborhood. There were no references to individual places that residents notice when moving through their neighborhood. All references related to overall character and care.

Residents may notice overall care because this is highly valued, and to most residents is a reflection of the quality of people living there. In addition, as some of the physical structure of the neighborhood is changing, in some areas negatively, residents look for signs of improvement.

11. Are there places or things within the neighborhood that you would miss if they were removed, such as gathering places, landmarks, or an old tree? What is special about these places?

I was surprised that most residents identified stores and convenience as places and things they would miss in the neighborhood. I had anticipated that other places, such as the churches, the Old Firehouse, or the parks would be the primary places that residents would miss. And this is not to say that residents would not sorely miss these places. However, these

landmarks were identified following other places in the neighborhood.

It may be concluded that the stores and conveniences in the neighborhood provide a sense of security for residents.

Residents may feel comforted that the goods and services that they need are accessible to them. These are basic needs, the need for groceries, the need for medicine, etc. The churches fulfill another type of need, the need for affiliation. Though this is also a basic need, it is not as pressing as say the need for food or medicine. And for this reason may have not been foremost in residents' minds of places and things they would miss.

Residents have come to rely on stores being available to them. As they age, they may have increasing concerns as to whether they will have access to the goods and services they need to survive. Efforts to attract and maintain stores and other services that fill these needs will most likely be highly valued and a comfort to residents.



CVS: valued and used regularly by many

Time spent in the parks as a child is a large part of many residents' memories of their youth and the neighborhood. Children spent most of their free time at the parks playing and participating in activities that were organized by the city.

In addition, some of the residents continue to use the parks today, now with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. These parks, perhaps now landmarks to many residents, are an important part of residents' memories of the neighborhood.

Churches were identified by three of the residents. Specific churches were not identified, but more generally residents would miss the churches in the area. One might conclude that residents value not only the church to which they belong, but also the number of churches in the area and their contribution to the community. As was noted in responses to question 5, many of the churches also host neighborhood and community events.



*Wonder Drug and Post Office:
neighborhood landmark,
slated to close soon*

Residents shared with me some of their feelings regarding the changes in the neighborhood. The neighborhood, based on the needs of the community and environment, has changed over the years, businesses have come and gone, trees have died, churches have closed, and schools renovated or closed. Residents feel sadness over these changes, because they have developed attachments to many of these places and things. Some changes are inevitable, however it should be understood that residents might feel a sense of loss as these places are altered or removed. This may also contribute to their fear and anxiety of future changes and losses.

Preservation of the character of the physical environment may help to assuage some of these fears and anxieties. Also, when possible incorporation of familiar elements with changing environments may also help to alleviate this loss. For instance, one resident expressed sorrow over changes made to the Jackson Middle School. He was sad to see the old oak doors removed and the original entrance moved. Renovations to Jackson Middle School may have incorporated the oak doors and entrance into the design.

12. When you think of Belmont Fallon can you tell me some of the images that come to mind of places, people, or things?

This question also surprised me because I had anticipated the responses to be geared more towards residents' current perceptions of the neighborhood. However, almost all of the descriptions were of images of their memories of growing up in the neighborhood, working, and raising children.

Residents' responses to this question relate to their daily experiences in the neighborhood, and not to special or occasional events, or to specific landmarks or people. It may be concluded that it is these places, the places that become a part of residents' daily lives, which may develop the strongest attachments. The next question more specifically asks residents if they will share their memories of the neighborhood. Some of the themes touched on here are repeated in greater detail in question 13.

13. Would you mind sharing with me some of your memories about the neighborhood?

Most of the residents' memories relate to images that were a part of their daily lives. These are images of ordinary,

everyday places and things. It is also interesting that the residents' responses fall into groups that relate to life cycle stages: school activities as a child, and raising children and working as an adult.

Ordinary places that may be frequented through daily or routine activities may be a likely place for attachments to develop. This is not to say that places for special occasions are not important, however it is the daily or frequent visiting of these places that provide opportunities for relationships to develop.

Interview Conclusions:

Newer Residents

1. How long have you lived in Belmont Fallon?

Of the 11 newer residents interviewed, one is a homeowner who has lived in the Belmont-Fallon area for ten years, three are home owners that have lived in the neighborhood for more than six years, two are home owners who have lived in the area for over a year, two are homeowners who have lived in the neighborhood for almost a year, two are leasing with the option to buy and have lived in the area for slightly under a year, and two are renters who have lived in Belmont-Fallon for nearly seven years.

2. What made you choose to move to Belmont Fallon? (or if long-time resident) what made your family come here? What things about Belmont-Fallon have made you want to stay?

As might be expected the value of the homes in the area played a large role in residents decision to move to the neighborhood. This makes sense given that a number of the residents interviewed are first time buyers. The opportunity for

home ownership, as well as the potential economic benefits and investment is unique, exciting, and attractive to many newcomers. As well the renters interviewed have chosen to stay because of the lower cost of living.

Some felt moved to locate to the area to serve a greater cause. The neighborhood is diverse, in terms of ethnic backgrounds, with 12% of residents representing minorities. In addition, the neighborhood is diverse in terms of income level. 32% of residents fall within poverty levels. The remaining fall within lower-middle income levels. Four of the residents interviewed expressed that they hope to help poorer residents. These residents identified diversity in terms of socio-economic differences, however ethnic diversity was also valued (in later questions) by a range of the newer residents.

Location of the neighborhood was also identified as a feature that influenced residents' decision to move to the area. Persons already living in the city, urbanites, may be interested in living in the neighborhood because of its proximity to jobs and a variety of activities. As well, persons living in outlying areas and suburbs may be attracted to the neighborhood for these same reasons. It is important that the neighborhood maintains and improves its connections to the downtown and

nearby amenities. Potential newcomers, as well as current residents will most likely value such connections.

The size of the homes and yards also drew a number of the newer residents interviewed to the neighborhood. These are characteristics that may be atypical so close to a downtown area. The neighborhood has many suburban qualities, such as larger homes and yards, and also qualities unique to an inner-city neighborhood, such as proximity to activities and jobs. This too is a unique characteristic of the area.



Larger yards

3. Do you think there is anything about your neighborhood that makes it unique?

Proximity to a number of activities and amenities is highly valued by newer residents. As was discussed in question #2, the neighborhood's location is perhaps one of its greatest assets, both for those considering moving to the area and current residents. The provision of a variety of activities

within the neighborhood and access to activities outside the area are likely to be appreciated by this group.

The older homes and unique architecture in the neighborhood is valued by many of those interviewed. Efforts should be made to preserve the existing character of the architecture.

The current 'personality' of the neighborhood was valued by one third of those interviewed. Words used to describe this were 'relaxed,' 'rugged,' and 'small town.' These traits may be threatened as the neighborhood undergoes revitalization. Guidelines preserving and renovating the existing infrastructure may be a step towards protecting the neighborhood's personality.

However, the people in the neighborhood largely contribute to this personality. Provision of environments that allow for the informal and casual interaction among residents may promote its 'relaxed' and 'small town' personality.



River: near southern boundary of neighborhood

Belmont-Fallon has the benefit of being surrounded by mountains and bordered by the River on one side. Residents value such natural features. Efforts to improve connections to the River should be encouraged and are likely to be appreciated by residents.

4. If I were thinking of moving to Belmont Fallon, and wanted to know a little bit about the neighborhood, how would you describe it to me?

Most residents described the neighborhood in terms of its personality. As was discussed in question 3, residents perceive the neighborhood as being ‘home towny,’ as well as peaceful and quiet. The neighborhood, although it has the benefits of an urban location, proximity to downtown and other amenities, it also has characteristics that may be considered more suburban and separate from the hustle and bustle of urban life. This combination appealed to many of these residents and may attract other potential homeowners and renters.

Diversity, in terms of age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, was considered to be a positive attribute of the neighborhood. Though residents, for the most part, did not elaborate on why they value diversity, some assumptions may

be made. Many of the residents interviewed moved to the neighborhood from other urban neighborhoods and cities. These residents may have come to appreciate the cultural exchange a diverse population adds to a community. Also, they may feel some comfort within a diverse population because as newcomers they in a sense are a minority, if only temporarily. Design may encourage exchange between various groups, minority and majority, by providing places that support interaction. These places may be informal, such as benches at the park, outside a store, or at a children’s play area, or more formal, such as a community-gathering place.

A number of residents indicated that they feel safe in the neighborhood and frequently walk along the streets. This is an important component of resident satisfaction, and it is encouraging that newer residents feel a sense of safety. Overall residents indicated that given their perception moving into the neighborhood, they were surprised by their sense of safety. They dispelled notions that the neighborhood was unsafe, at least the areas they were familiar with. Many indicated that they have noticed and feel confident in the level of police presence in the neighborhood.

A quarter of the residents interviewed indicated that the people in the neighborhood are friendly. Though some also noted that their neighbors keep to themselves. This is significant in that it affects overall satisfaction with the neighborhood and newer residents' sense of belonging. This deserves mentioning here but will be discussed further in questions 5 and 6.

In describing the nature of the neighborhood some of the residents interviewed noted that there are many long-time families in the neighborhood. This is certainly a characteristic of Belmont-Fallon and deserves further examination as it relates to newer persons moving to the neighborhood. Long-time families, an existing and dominant group in the neighborhood, add to the personality, history, and cohesiveness of the neighborhood. However, they present an obstacle to integration of new residents who may find it difficult or intimidating to be accepted by this group. Again this deserves mentioning here but will be discussed at greater length in questions 5 and 6.

The number of children in the area is highly valued by many of the newer residents interviewed and a selling point of the neighborhood. Of the newer resident group interviewed

four respondents were newly married and with no children of their own. Four others had children of various ages. Three were single. The residents expressed that they enjoy and look forward to the children playing in the street and near their homes. Designs that provide opportunities for adults to be around children at play are likely to be appreciated by many of the newcomers. As well, provision of activity choices within the neighborhood promoting safe and interesting play areas for children may be appreciated by current or future parents.

5. Are there social qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as nice neighbors or visiting with your neighbors? Are there places where you usually see or talk to people in your neighborhood? Are there social qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood, such as not having much contact with your neighbors or disruptive groups of people? Is there anything that you would like to be different about the social life in your neighborhood?

Most of the newer residents were aware of the activeness of many of the neighborhood organizations and the level of community involvement in these organizations. For more than half of the residents interviewed this was a social quality that they liked about the neighborhood. And for some, this activity contributes to the character and uniqueness of

Belmont-Fallon and the greater SE area. Though only a couple of the residents interviewed indicated that they are or have been involved in these activities, many appreciated that they exist. Such activities may represent for newer residents a sign of investment, of cohesiveness, and sense of community. They may also afford these residents the potential opportunity to become involved should they choose. These groups should continue to reach out into the community to try to draw in newer residents. Participation with these groups may strengthen newer residents attachment to their neighborhood, as well as provide opportunities for interaction with their neighbors.

Residents also appreciate the level of police presence in the neighborhood and at neighborhood meetings. This too indicates a level of investment in the community, as well as provides a sense of security. Such efforts or gestures are recognized by residents and should be continued and encouraged.

Many of the newer residents appreciate having small businesses within their neighborhood. They described small, Mom and Pop businesses within walking distance, where they can develop relationships with the people who work there and

visit there. The Eatwell Chili Shop on Bullitt Avenue was described as one such place. Otherwise, there are not many local businesses within the neighborhood. The 2002 Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood Plan, developed by the city and neighborhood, indicates that drawing businesses to the area is considered a priority. Efforts should be made to attract locally owned businesses and restaurants that might not only provide this environment and these activities, but also support the ‘small town’ feel that many of the newer residents value.

The parks in the area were also valued for the variety of activities they provide. A range of activities and activity places is valued by newer residents and is a theme that comes up throughout the interviews.

The residents seem to value not only activities that they could participate in, but also the provision of activities for other user groups, such as children, teens, and seniors. This may again be, at least partially, an indicator of signs of investment and a healthy community.



Courts at Fallon Park

More than half of the newer residents interviewed indicated that interaction with their neighbors is minimal, and often requires their initiation. Many of these residents have recently moved to the area, having lived in SE for less than a year. Interestingly, overall, newer residents who are more established, having been in the area for more than five years, did not perceive this as a problem. They had transcended this initial awkwardness and integration and developed relationships with their neighbors. The participant's range of time in the neighborhood revealed and confirmed aspects of socialization and attachment that I had not anticipated. At first newcomers find it difficult to interact with neighbors and this barrier detracts from their overall satisfaction and attachment to the neighborhood. As time progresses, long-time residents are more open to newcomers and the barriers begin to break down and relationships develop. The newer residents become more connected to their community and as a result develop a greater sense of satisfaction, belonging, and attachment. As was evident with more established newer residents, who, overall, identified interaction with neighbors as a social quality they value. The relationship between interaction with neighbors and sense of belonging and satisfaction was identified later and

at greater length in question 6, which more specifically addresses residents' sense of belonging.

The social barriers in the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood may be more pronounced or may differ from many contemporary inner-city neighborhoods. Many of the residents are members of long-time families, having lived in the neighborhood for generations. One of the newer residents interviewed, when describing the difficulty in getting to know her neighbors, explained that it is hard to build relationships with her neighbors because they 'can' keep to themselves, they know most of the people in the neighborhood. She described it as 'interconnectivity,' everybody knows or is related to each other. New residents must truly feel like outsiders. This may be compounded by the fact that there are currently few new residents moving into the neighborhood. Efforts should be made to facilitate interaction between residents. This might not only hasten the socialization process but it would improve new residents' satisfaction, sense of attachment, and desire to stay in the neighborhood. Retention of new residents will be important if the city and neighborhood are committed to reviving the area.

The quantity and quality of rental units in the neighborhood was identified by a number of the respondents as a negative social quality. Overall, rental properties were considered to detract from the quality of the neighborhood. Residents expressed their concern for the renters living under these conditions and the impact of high turnover on a sense of ownership. They also remarked that the quantity and quality of rental units can be improved and need not detract from the overall quality of the neighborhood. Standards should be enforced that improve both the social and physical condition of rental properties.

A quarter of the residents interviewed indicated that they would like the pedestrian environment to be improved. Residents appreciate the sidewalk system in the neighborhood but explained that it is difficult and often dangerous to cross some of the major roads. Traffic calming, pedestrian lighting, and improved pedestrian connections throughout the



Sidewalks line most streets

neighborhood are likely to be valued and utilized by many of the newer residents.

Some of the newer residents noted that they often learn of activities in the neighborhood after they take place. They recommended a central community notice board so that they may learn about organizations and activities. This is a good idea and indicates that residents are interested in participating in neighborhood activities. As newer residents are becoming acquainted with the neighborhood a central notice board may facilitate this process and provide an opportunity for new residents to participate in community events.

6. Are there things that can improve your sense of belonging to your neighborhood? Are there things that currently reduce your sense of belonging?

The quantity and variety of amenities and activities within the neighborhood affects newer residents sense of belonging. The availability of activities affects their sense of belonging because it determines whether they will participate in activities within their neighborhood or outside its boundaries. There are currently few activities that residents who fall within the young adult category may participate in,

outside of the local parks. Many of the newer residents expressed that they would like a variety of businesses within walking distance. Such businesses would provide opportunities to interact with other neighbors while carrying out routine activities.

Some of the residents who have only been in the neighborhood for a short time indicated that interaction with would improve their sense of belonging. They currently feel disconnected from the community and find it a challenge developing relationships with other residents. This disconnection, as indicated by their response to this question, affects their feelings of satisfaction and attachment to the neighborhood. Places and programming that provides for communal gatherings might be a comfortable venue for these residents to meet long-time and newer residents, and might facilitate the development of relationships and the socialization process.

7. Are there physical qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as the streets, the houses or the yards? Are there physical qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood?

Interestingly newer residents had many more responses to this question than long-time residents. This makes sense given that they are becoming acquainted with the neighborhood. The physical characteristics of the neighborhood are how they identify the area, still mapping out its layout and discovering what makes it special. These physical qualities therefore play an important role in newer residents development of attachment to place. They associate physical characteristics with their neighborhood, because the social associations, especially for very new residents, have not yet developed. At the other end of the spectrum, long-time residents' associations were primarily with the social qualities of the neighborhood rather than physical features. It is the social involvement and relationships with fellow residents that makes a greater contribution to their attachment to their neighborhood. There may be a couple of explanations for this phenomenon. First, over time residents may become less sensitized to physical qualities. And second, just by its nature, social connection creates a personal association to the neighborhood. Such a personal association and connection may transcend physical associations, which just by nature of

their properties, in general are more removed from the individual.

This continuum is particularly evident when evaluating the responses of less-new residents, those who have lived in the neighborhood for more than five years. These residents associate both physical and social qualities and connections with their neighborhood, and feel a greater sense of attachment than very new residents. It would be interesting to interview less-new residents and very new residents in five to ten years to study how their associations evolve.

A couple of conclusions may be gleaned from this analysis. First, physical places, things, and symbols, may greatly impact newer residents attachment to their neighborhood. The provision and preservation of such physical elements and symbols may help to initiate the development of attachment. However, opportunities for social interaction, are particular important for this group if they are to develop more personal, and perhaps deeper, associations with the neighborhood. While for long-time residents social interaction is important if they are to maintain these associations with the neighborhood.

This is not to say that once a resident has lived in the neighborhood for a longer period of time that the physical qualities of the neighborhood are no longer important. It may be that highlighting the physical attributes of the environment and reconnecting these residents with these qualities may help to strengthen their attachment to their neighborhood.

Some of the physical qualities that newer residents identified were the views, the topography, the Roanoke Star, the River, and the history of the area. These qualities were barely mentioned, if mentioned at all, by long-time residents interviewed. Efforts should be made to highlight these qualities, as they may help to support pride and attachment to the area. Other qualities that newer residents liked



View of surrounding mountains



View of Roanoke Star

were the parks and mature trees. Although some of those who indicated they liked the parks, had not yet visited them.

Most of the newer residents indicated that they value the neighborhood's proximity to downtown. Many visit this area often and participate in downtown activities. Some expressed that they would like to see the downtown area and activities extend into the neighborhood. Most long-time residents, on the other hand, did not participate in downtown activities, and aside from the convenience of being located near to this area should they need to visit, did not view the downtown as contributing to the neighborhood. Such an extension may be at odds with long-time residents wishes, many whom fear that encroachment of businesses and such may negatively impact their neighborhood, and potentially their individual homes. The introduction of various businesses and entertainment options to the neighborhood is likely to be highly valued by newer residents. Placement and selection of these amenities should be carefully considered, both in terms of their short-term contribution and future development patterns. As well, amenities that provide opportunities for social

interaction might help newer residents develop social ties to the neighborhood.

Physical qualities that newer residents do not like about the neighborhood were in line with many of the long-time residents' responses.

The abundance of trash in the area, the condition of rental units, narrow roads, and run-down homes were the primary responses by both groups.

Both groups have an interest in seeing these conditions improved. Newer groups perhaps because they have recently made an investment in the neighborhood, and long-time residents because they would like to see the neighborhood restored to its original grandeur.

The physical qualities that newer residents would like added to the area are also in line with many of the amenities



Trash and other debris visible from road



Run-down home

long-time residents would like. These included flowers, streetlights, benches, and improved and safer pedestrian corridors.

8. Are there places in your neighborhood that you visit regularly? If so, what are they? Who else is there? What do you like about these places?

Primary places that newer residents visit regularly in the neighborhood are businesses, both service and commodity stores. Though there is a limited range of businesses currently within the neighborhood, many of the residents make a conscious choice to support the local businesses that do exist, rather than visiting businesses outside the area. This may indicate that if newer resident populations do increase there may be a sufficient customer base within the neighborhood to support fledgling businesses.

9. If you were to visit an outdoor place, such as a park or a garden, what kinds of things would you like to be there?

Again the variety of activities available to residents is a theme that reoccurs throughout the interviews with newer residents. These residents would like to have a variety of

options within their neighborhood. The residents were also aware of the amenities that were or were not available to groups outside their age group. They voiced a concern that there weren't more activities available for some groups, in particular teens.

A handful of residents also expressed that the community needs a symbol or icon for which it can identify itself. Residents expressed that such a symbol may be a marker, a source of pride, and a rallying feature for the community. Some suggestions included an element that expresses the history of the area, a community mural (to encourage community participation and ownership), community art, a monument or sculpture. As was discussed earlier, the importance in physical elements in developing attachment to place is particularly important for newer groups. However, as the newer residents noted, it may also support or strengthen long-time residents' attachment to their neighborhood.

10. Do you tend to drive or walk through your neighborhood? When you walk (or drive) on one of the quieter streets of your neighborhood, could you tell me some of the places and things you may notice?

In conclusion, newer residents had few responses to this question. This question produced little information that has not been stated in earlier responses. However, many of the residents did indicate that they often walk through the neighborhood. With the increase of new residents to the neighborhood, it is likely that pedestrian activity will also increase. Pedestrian corridors and paths should be defined and where necessary improved to facilitate this circulation. In addition, traffic will most likely need to be slowed if pedestrian activity is to circulate throughout the neighborhood, rather than being confined to an area bordered by heavy traffic.

11. Are there places or things within the neighborhood that you would miss if they were removed, such as gathering places, landmarks, or an old tree? What is special about these places?

In conclusion, again there were fewer responses to this question. Some of the residents indicated that they would miss the parks if they were removed; others noted that they would

miss the churches; others would miss the mature trees; and others would miss the businesses and sidewalks. Answers to this question confirm earlier responses regarding the physical qualities of the neighborhood that residents' value.

12. When you think of Belmont Fallon can you tell me some of the images that come to mind of places, people or things?

Analysis:

When residents were asked what images come to mind when they think of their neighborhood, many responded that they think of the children in the



Neighborhood children

neighborhood. The presence of children is highly valued by many of the residents. There was less mention of the presence of children in the neighborhood when interviewing long-time residents. This may have partially been due to the location of some of the long-time residents interviewed who live along the busy vehicular arteries in the area. Also, long-time residents may

participate in activities that have less contact with the children in the neighborhood.

The churches in the neighborhood have a strong presence in newer and long-time residents minds.

The history of the area has a greater presence in newer residents minds. This may be because what might be considered history for newer residents was just a part of everyday life and growing up for long-time residents. Many long-time residents' families worked for the Norfolk and Southern Railroad and American Viscose. Efforts should be made to highlight the history of the area, both to educate newer residents about the neighborhood's development and to celebrate the hard work and lives of long-time residents. This may help to strengthen both newer and long-time residents attachment to the neighborhood.

13. Would you mind sharing with me some of your memories about the neighborhood?

Newer residents, as might be expected, had few memories to share about their time in the neighborhood. As a result it was difficult to identify any definitive patterns in the residents' responses.

Method I:
Design Implications

Design Implications:

Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

I. Basic Needs As Abraham Maslow identified in his hierarchy of human needs, residents must first fulfill basic survival needs, such as food, shelter, security, and safety, before they can achieve the next level, the need for affiliation (discussed later in Section IV.) Interview responses indicated that overall residents' basic survival needs are met. However, some responses suggested that residents do not always perceive that basic needs are met or will continue to be met. These concerns related primarily to issues of safety and accessibility. These issues may be considered and provided for through neighborhood planning and site design, for instance natural surveillance may be incorporated into design. Basic needs also relate to physical and psychological comfort. As was discussed in Chapter Two, if residents are not comfortable in a place, they will be less likely to visit it. It may be concluded that if basic needs are not met, residents will have lower levels of satisfaction with their neighborhood, will be less likely to visit a place, will be less likely to affiliate with their neighbors, and ultimately will have fewer attachments to their neighborhood. The below list outlines Belmont-Fallon residents' comments

regarding realization of their basic needs and is followed by potential design implications. These implications were developed based on the literature review and Design Criteria in Chapter Two, and were applied to the context of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood.

Basic Needs

- Availability of goods and services provide a sense of security for long-time residents. They have concerns that as they age, goods and services they need to survive may not be accessible
- Some long-time residents have limited time, mobility, strength and energy
- A number of the long-time residents, especially women, indicated they feel less safe when alone, especially at night
- Emergency services are valued by long-time residents for their services and the security they provide
- Long-time and newer residents feel comforted by the presence of the police substation

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

Neighborhood Planning:

- Attract and retain stores and services

Site Design:

- Legibility and accessibility
- Adequate lighting, cues of change
- Natural or formal surveillance
- Visibility: site lines, alternate escape routes
- Ownership
- Signs of care: lighting, maintenance, community involvement, activities, landscaping, signage

II. Satisfaction and Perception The literature review indicated, as did residents' comments, that satisfaction and perception of one's neighborhood can *affect* attachment to place. It should be emphasized that although satisfaction and perception of the built environment can affect attachment, environmental qualities play a minimal role in increasing attachment. These qualities, however, are important in terms of their role in reducing attachment. Conditions that might reduce attachment should be identified and where possible ameliorated. (Unlike environmental conditions, however,

social qualities do have the power to not only *affect* attachment to place but also *increase* the development of attachment. This will be discussed in greater detail in Section IV.) Listed below is an outline of Belmont-Fallon residents' comments regarding their satisfaction and perception of their neighborhood. This outline is followed by potential design implications, developed from the literature review and Design Criteria in Chapter Two, and applied to the context of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood.

Also considered in the design implications were responses regarding residents' fears and concerns. These fears and concerns may negatively affect satisfaction and ultimately attachment to place. The culture of inner-city neighborhoods that are undergoing the process of gentrification, revitalization, or a shift in population, will be rapidly changing. This will likely cause some excitement, and concerns by many residents. However, long-time residents are most vulnerable. Comments by long-time residents of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood confirm this notion. Though these residents overall were hopeful of the proposed changes of the neighborhood, many also expressed concerns and uncertainty regarding the affect it will have on the neighborhood and on them personally. Some

residents also expressed their feelings of loss for changes that have already taken place in the neighborhood. As well residents indicated that they feel frustrated and despondent that they have been unable to affect changes in the past.

Environmental Qualities that affect Satisfaction/ Perception

- Factors that promote satisfaction and perception for long-time and new residents are convenience (location/ accessibility), housing stock, expressions of care (such as landscaping), and level of police presence
- Long-time residents' satisfaction is also positively impacted by amenities such as: stores, emergency services, and post office
- Newer resident satisfaction is also positively impacted by the low cost of living, the cost to rent and buy a home
- Long-time and newer residents' satisfaction and perception is negatively affected by the quantity and quality of rental units, high rental turnover, run-down homes, and high volumes of traffic

- Newer residents' satisfaction is also negatively impacted by the lack of amenities in the neighborhood

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

Neighborhood Planning:

- Community involvement in planning process
- Guidelines/ initiatives to attract and retain businesses
- Restoration of existing homes
- Preservation of physical environment when possible
- Guidelines and enforcement of rental standards
- Addition of activities for young adults
- Dissemination of information regarding the progress and plans

Neighborhood Design:

- Traffic calming along busy corridors
- Crosswalks and traffic lights
- Expressions of care: landscaping, visual unity

Site Programming:

- Places and activities that attract renters and homeowners

Site Design:

- Resident participation in design process and management
- Expressions of care: landscaping, visual unity

- Incorporation of familiar with new

III. Physical Associations Physical qualities have a supportive role in the development of attachment to place. In terms of their spatial functions they may encourage social interaction. However, perhaps more powerful in affecting the development of place attachment is their potential symbolic role. Physical places and things are expressions of the unique character of a neighborhood. It may be gleaned from newer residents' comments that such elements provide an opportunity to form visual associations to their neighborhood, to map out its layout, and discover what makes it special. This is helpful in initiating the process of attachment, while deeper connections, such as social relationships are developing. The residents who have been in the neighborhood for longer than five years and less than ten years, and who will be referred to as less-new residents, have begun to develop these deeper connections. As a result they are experiencing perhaps the next level of attachment to place, and associate both physical and social qualities, and have developed attachments to their neighborhood. Long-time residents of Belmont-Fallon, on the other hand, who have strong social ties and attachments to the

area, primarily associate social qualities with their neighborhood. It should be noted that although long-time residents' associations indicate the power of social connections in developing attachments to place, there may be an opportunity to reinforce their attachment by highlighting and celebrating the physical qualities of the neighborhood. The below list outlines Belmont-Fallon residents' comments regarding their associations with physical elements in their neighborhood and is followed by potential design implications. These implications were developed based on the literature review and Design Criteria in Chapter Two and were applied to the context of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood.

Physical Qualities that affect Development of Place Attachment

- Age and architecture of the housing stock is a source of pride for long-time and newer residents
- Long-time and newer residents consider the large homes and yards a unique characteristic
- Long-time and newer residents consider porches a unique characteristic
- Long-time and newer residents consider sidewalks a unique characteristic

- Long-time and newer residents value trees
- Long-time and newer residents value expressions of care: landscaping in the median strips and upkeep of the properties
- Parks in the area are valued by long-time and newer residents for the variety of activities they provide for the community
- Long-time and newer residents do not like the abundance of trash, condition of rental units, and run-down homes
- Long-time and newer residents notice structures and situations that indicate the decline of the neighborhood
- Parks, a part of long-time residents social lives growing up, are now landmarks to these residents
- Most physical qualities long-time residents notice relate to the level of care of individual properties and greater neighborhood
- Long-time residents had few references of physical qualities of specific places or things
- Aside from church, places long-time residents visit regularly are places to carry out necessary and routine tasks

- Newer residents associate the nearby River with the neighborhood
- Newer residents value the views of the surrounding mountains
- Newer residents value the topography
- Newer residents associate the nearby Roanoke Star with their neighborhood
- Newer residents value the history of the neighborhood
- Newer residents value the neighborhood's proximity to downtown, and visit downtown often
- Newer residents appreciate small, locally owned businesses within walking distance
- Primary places newer residents visit regularly are businesses
- Newer residents often walk through the neighborhood
- Church structures have a strong presence in newer residents' minds
- Newer residents expressed the need for a community symbol or icon to help define the identity

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

Neighborhood Planning:

- Community involvement in planning process
- Efforts to preserve old homes
- Provision of guidelines for the construction of new homes
- Inclusion of porches in new home construction
- Improved pedestrian corridors: traffic calming and lights
- Improved connections to River

Neighborhood Programming:

- Introduction of variety of business, entertainment options

Site Design:

- Resident participation in design process and management
- Opportunities for residents to adapt spaces for expression
- Opportunities for present and future display and identification of neighborhood symbols
- Expressions of care: landscaping, trees, visual unity
- Highlight physical symbols/ valued places
- Definition/ improvement of pedestrian corridors
- Highlight history
- Frame view sheds

- Expressions of care: landscaping, trees, visual unity
- Identification, preservation, highlighting physical elements/ symbols
- Opportunities for display of neighborhood symbols
- Opportunities for future display of neighborhood symbols
- Maintain and improve connection to downtown
- Attract and retain small, local businesses
- Improve connection to natural elements

IV. Social Connections Social qualities, as was mentioned earlier, have a more significant role in increasing attachment to place. Long-time residents' comments confirm this relationship, indicating that although environmental qualities may affect their level of satisfaction and perception, they continue to have strong attachments to place. These attachments remain intact primarily because of their social connections and involvement in their neighborhood. (And in turn these social connections positively affect their satisfaction. It should be noted that long-time residents indicated that although there are environmental conditions they are

dissatisfied with, overall they are satisfied with their neighborhood.)

Comments of newer residents, those who have lived in the neighborhood for less than five years, also confirm this relationship. They, on the other hand, have not yet formed social ties to the neighborhood. As a result, they have lower levels of satisfaction and few attachments to their neighborhood. The actual process of socialization and its relationship to attachment to place becomes evident when reviewing the comments of less-new residents. These residents have developed social ties to the neighborhood, have a greater sense of satisfaction, and in turn have begun to develop attachments to their neighborhood.

It may be concluded that it is vital then, if attachment to place is to develop, that social involvement is encouraged. Though relationships ultimately must develop on their own, there are means of supporting the process of socialization, as was outlined in the Literature Review and Design Criteria in Chapter Two. In summary, spatial relationships may support interaction, however programming plays a greater role in supporting and encouraging social involvement, and ultimately attachment to place. Programming that requires repeat visits,

regular interaction, specific activities, and community involvement may be most likely to support the development of attachment to place. The below list outlines Belmont-Fallon residents' comments regarding the social qualities of their neighborhood and is followed by potential design implications. These implications were developed based on the literature review and Design Criteria in Chapter Two and were applied to the context of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood.

Social Qualities that affect Development of Place Attachment

- Long-time residents' attachment to their churches is primarily the result of repeat attendance of church activities and regular interaction with members
- Long-time residents' need for affiliation is filled, for the most part, through church activities
- Long-time residents have a need to maintain their affiliations with individuals and groups within the neighborhood
- Long-time residents enjoy sitting on their porches, where they talk with neighbors and observe

- Newer residents' affiliation needs, for the most part, are not being met
- Some long-time residents are coping with the loss of a spouse, participating in activities alone reduces sense of belonging and comfort
- Lack of activity amenities for young adults reduces newer residents opportunities for interaction with their neighbors
- Social barriers, such as the prominence of long-time families, a dominant group, presents a challenge to building relationships with members of this close-knit community
- Newer residents have a need to affiliate with individuals and neighborhood groups, as well as the larger Belmont-Fallon community
- Less-new residents, those who have lived in the area for more than five years, have developed social ties to the neighborhood
- Long-time residents for the past three decades maintained the Old Firehouse as if it were their own; those who were involved in these efforts are strongly

attached to the house and view it as a symbol of community

- Repeat visits to the Old Firehouse for Forum meetings has helped to strengthen participants', most long-time residents, feelings of attachment toward the house
- Long-time residents value physical elements in the neighborhood for their social qualities, rather than physical qualities
- Long-time residents' images of their neighborhood relate to daily experiences
- Long-time and newer residents value the level of involvement of neighborhood organizations and consider this an identifying feature of the neighborhood
- Long-time and newer residents value the presence of children
- Long-time and newer residents indicated that rentals detract from the social quality of the neighborhood; due to high turnover, little knowledge about renters, and minimal interaction between renters and homeowners
- Not knowing one's neighbors reduces long-time and newer residents' sense of belonging

- Long-time and newer residents value provision of activities for range of user groups: such as children, teens, and seniors
- Newer residents appreciate small, locally owned businesses where interaction with neighbors and development of relationships may occur
- Newer residents value the diversity of the neighborhood: socio-economic, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation
- Newer residents value proximity to a variety of activities and amenities (most are currently located outside the neighborhood)
- Newer residents value the small town and relaxed ‘personality’ of neighborhood
- Newer residents indicated interaction with neighbors is minimal, and often requires their initiation
- Newer residents feel disconnected from the community and find it a challenge developing relationships
- Newer residents desire to be better informed of neighborhood activities

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

Neighborhood Planning:

- Community involvement in planning process
- Identification and preservation of valued ‘ordinary places’
- Addition of amenities for young adults
- Provision of variety of amenities
- Access to activities outside the neighborhood
- Efforts to attract small, local businesses
- Standards enforced to improve conditions of rental units
- Guidelines preserving existing infrastructure/ informal, small town personality

Neighborhood Programming:

- Activity choices within neighborhood
- Outreach by neighborhood organizations

Site Programming:

- Activities that encourage repeat visits/ regular use
- Community involvement activities/ activities that facilitate interaction
- Activities for specific interests
- Activities that bring together community

- Activities structured around the Old Firehouse
- Activities that integrate accommodations and interests for various age groups: i.e. youth and seniors
- Activities that bring together common and different interests
- Activities for range of interests and number of participants

Site Design

- Resident participation in design process and management
- Communal places
- Places for interaction to occur: intersections, 'stays'
- Places to sit, talk, gather
- Seating options: group, individual, communal, for observing
- Range of participation options: i.e. direct, observation
- Accommodations for interaction at ordinary places
- Places with porch-like qualities: defined boundaries, shade, option to observe/participate
- Central community notice board

Research Methodology
Method II: Trace Observations

Trace observations were conducted to gain a better understanding of how Belmont-Fallon residents adapt space. It was hoped that this study would reveal the types of settings residents prefer and the activities they engage in within these settings. I referred to John Zeisel's Inquiry by Design: tools for environment-behavior research for recommendations on studying the physical environment for clues of adaptation of space.

This survey was conducted by walking along sidewalks and alleys and observing residents use of personal and public space. During these walks I took pictures of various signs of adaptations of space. Some of the more telling, and some my favorite, pictures are displayed at the end of this section. It should be noted that adaptations occurred primarily on private property.

The patterns observed fell into two categories, *porches* and *territoriality*.

Patterns, Analysis, & Design Implications

Porches

Patterns

Below is a list of patterns observed on porches throughout the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood:

- Most residents adapted porches to accommodate social activities
- Most porches had chairs arranged in small groupings
- Some chairs faced the street
- Some chairs faced each other
- Porches accommodated a range of activities: eating, playing, storing belongings, hanging laundry, and display of personal signs
- A number of porches adapted to accommodate use throughout the year
- Porches were the primary place for expressions of self

Analysis

Qualities of Porches:

- Most fairly small, seven to twelve feet wide
- Option for level of participation: observation or direct
- Small social groups

- Informal gathering place
- Intimate space
- Level of privacy
- Removed from the street
- Removed from activities (potentially)
- Expressions of self
- Shelter: protection from sun, heat, rain
- Close to building/ private residence

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

The following indicate design implications based on the qualities of porches, and their application to the design of the physical environment:

- A variety of activities
- A degree of privacy
- Intimate spaces
- Spaces that are adaptable, such as movable chairs
- Opportunities for direct or indirect participation
- Shelter
- Seating for small groups
- Proximity to a building or near residences

Territoriality

Patterns

Below is a list of patterns of territoriality observed throughout the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood:

- Most private space is defined
- Smaller spaces within property boundaries often defined
- Some boundaries defined with impermeable markers, some symbolic markers
- Fences define many properties
- Vegetation, retaining walls define some properties
- Residents fenced in Old Firehouse #7

Analysis

Qualities of Territoriality:

- Ownership
- Expression of Self
- Statement of strength
- Marking place
- Separating
- Variations of boundary definition

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

The following indicate design implications based on the qualities of territoriality, and their application to the design of the physical environment:

- Well defined spaces, boundaries
- Indications of ownership
- Smaller spaces that may be claim as one's own
- Spaces for personalization
- Degree of separation from other spaces/ people
- Indications of activities within

Conclusions

Some observations confirmed information provided by residents interviewed. For instance, interviews revealed that long-time residents enjoy using their porches. Residents indicated that while on their porches they talk with their neighbors, observe neighborhood activities, and escape from the heat. It may be concluded from these trace observations that porches are indeed valued by many of the Belmont-Fallon residents. As well, this study produced additional information

as to how residents use their porches, what types of seating arrangements they prefer, and what types of social settings they may feel most comfortable.

On the other hand, the degree to which territoriality is expressed by residents was not revealed during the interviews. Territoriality it appears is an important part of Belmont-Fallon's culture. Some markings are subtler, and others can't be mistaken. Many yards are fenced, especially where the topography is flatter. In sections of the neighborhood where the topography is steeper there is less marking of boundaries. This may be due to the topography, which as a result of grade changes provides a natural boundary. It seems that places that are valued are often clearly marked. This value manifests itself in the residents' decision to fence in the Old Firehouse #7. The Firehouse is highly valued and therefore it too has a fence around it. This fence was paid for and installed by the neighborhood organization.

Trace Observation Photographs

Porches		Territoriality	
	<p>This is one of my favorites. Here a seat has been provided for everyone, notice the child's chair near the door</p>		<p>Pilings mark the boundary between private properties</p>
	<p>This porch may be used in most seasons, a space heater keeps users warm during off-seasons</p>		<p>Evergreen boundary</p>
	<p>This porch, though small, has room enough for a few chairs</p>		<p>Church property: backyard fenced in</p>
	<p>Grouping of chairs looking forward</p>		<p>Line of fencing along street</p>

	<p>Drying laundry, chairs, barbeque</p>		<p>Pilings mark boundaries between small business and alley</p>
	<p>Placed very close to the door, a small grouping of chairs, some facing forward, some sideways</p>		<p>Topography provides division between private property and alley</p>
	<p>Porch swing, and couple of individual chairs, facing forward</p>		<p>Fencing around front yard. Extra high fencing marks the entrance</p>
	<p>Self expression, privacy</p>		<p>Retaining walls provide a boundary for many properties</p>

	<p>Dinosaurs on this porch</p>		<p>Cinder block wall</p>
	<p>Some seating and a hibachi</p>		<p>Pilings between private properties</p>
	<p>Seating, storage, play</p>		<p>Smaller pilings left between occupied property and vacant lot</p>
	<p>Room enough for a couple of chairs</p>		<p>Front yard fencing</p>

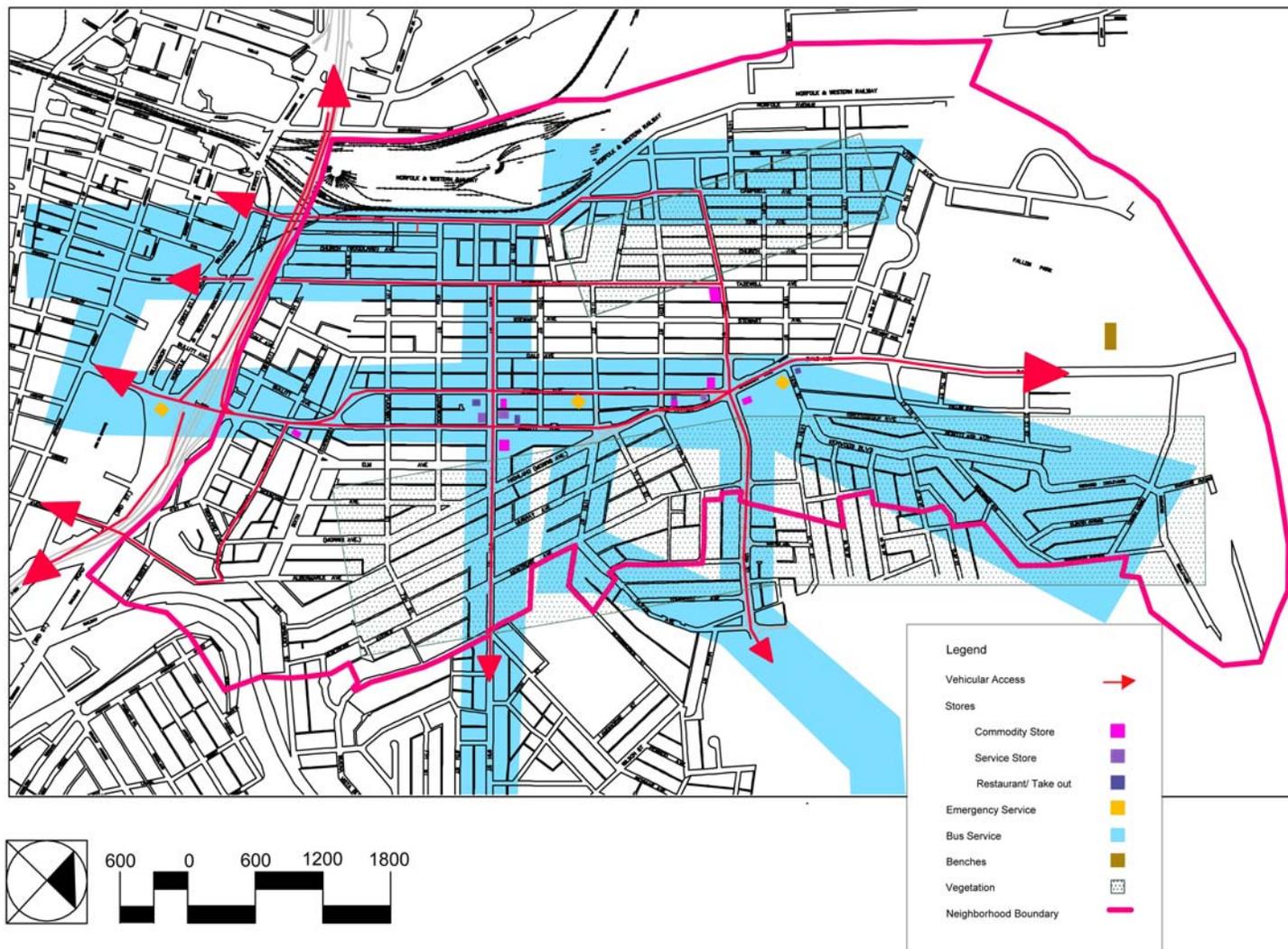
	<p>Privacy</p>		<p>Front yard fencing. Houses on one side of the street, a field is on the opposite side</p>
	<p>Optional privacy, seating, barbeque</p>		<p>Old Firehouse back yard</p>
	<p>Small but room enough for four chairs</p>		<p>Old Firehouse front yard</p>

Neighborhood Inventory and Analysis

Introduction

The inventory and analysis illustrated and discussed on the following pages is derived from a variety of sources. These sources include: interviews with residents, the neighborhood plan developed by residents of Belmont-Fallon and the City of Roanoke, and information provided by leaders of the city and neighborhood. This information was mapped and analyzed to explore the potential limitations or opportunities that may deserve further exploration, have been previously overlooked, or have not yet been identified. This exploration was conducted on two scales, the neighborhood and the site.

Figure 1: Basic Needs Inventory
 Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



Basic Needs

Analysis

Sidewalks line most streets in the neighborhood. Some streets have sidewalks on both sides, some on one side of the street. Sidewalks are not represented on this map because they exist throughout the neighborhood. It should be noted that although an infrastructure exists for pedestrian traffic, it is difficult, if not dangerous, for pedestrians to cross primary access routes, indicated in red on the map, especially the Bullitt-Jamison corridor which has heavy volumes of fast moving traffic. Traffic lights exist at the intersections of the primary routes. However, it is difficult to cross at these nodes, due to the volume of traffic and width of the roads.

The neighborhood is well served in terms of emergency services. The new fire station, the police substation, and the hospital, are all located on or near to the center of the neighborhood.

Residents along the central band of the neighborhood, along the Bullitt-Jamison corridor, have access to a variety of amenities, including bus service, commodity and service commodity stores, and primary access routes. This area however is void of vegetation. Very few, if any, trees exist

along much of this band. As well, it is isolated between access routes.

The northwest quadrant of the neighborhood, zoned for multi-family housing, is underserved in terms of access to service and commodity stores. It is also void of vegetation. This section of the neighborhood is also isolated due to heavily traveled roads along most of its borders.

With the exception of the central band, most of the neighborhood is underserved in terms of access to stores. This may be a problem for residents with limited mobility.

Residents in the southern portion of the neighborhood appear to best served. They have easy access to bus service, and primary vehicular routes (though these routes do not run through most of this section), and there exist a good number of mature trees in this area. It should be noted that this is also a quieter section of the neighborhood, and has more of a residential feel than other sections.

Heavily traveled roads divide the neighborhood. Many of these roads are connectors between outlying neighborhoods and the downtown area.

Few benches exist within the neighborhood. The only known benches are in Fallon Park, on the northeastern edge of the neighborhood.

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

Neighborhood Planning:

- Development should seek to emphasize the residential character of the neighborhood, in particular along primary access routes
- Efforts should be made to slow the speed of traffic along the central band, traffic calming devices should be implemented
- Trees should be incorporated into development within the northwest quadrant of the neighborhood
- Due to heavy volumes of traffic, access to stores may be difficult for persons walking from the NW or NE quadrants
 - Efforts should be made to attract small locally owned stores to these sections of the neighborhood

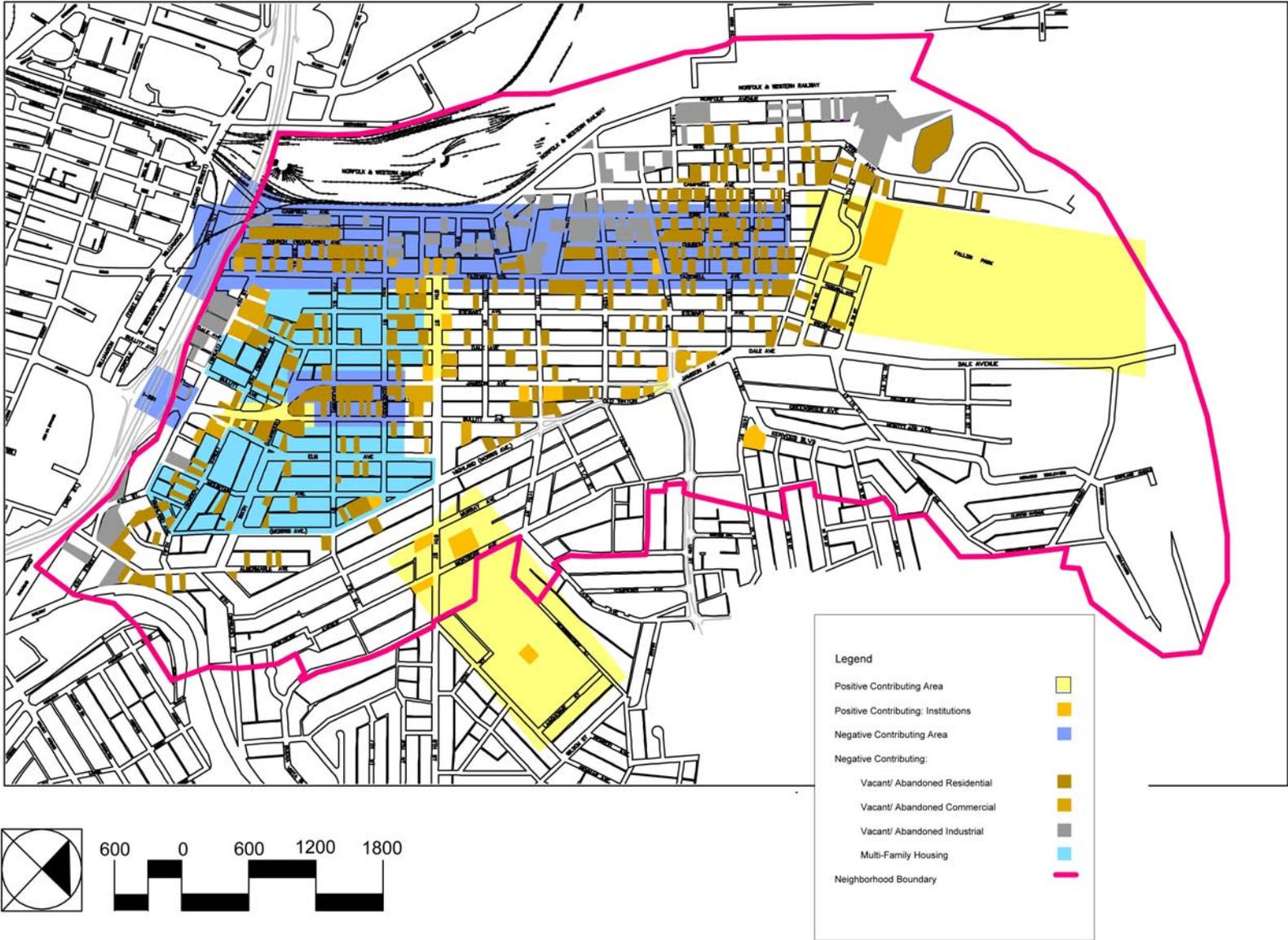
- Stores in this area should provide goods and services that meet the needs of children, families, and renters
- Improved pedestrian corridors between sections of the neighborhood may facilitate circulation

Site Design:

- Design along the central band of the neighborhood should incorporate vegetation, wherever possible to soften the environment, create a more residential feel, provide shade, and provide addition of natural elements to the neighborhood
- Designs should incorporate benches whenever possible and appropriate. Additional benches will provide residents a place to rest and sit, as well as increase opportunities for social interaction

Figure 2: Contributing to Resident Satisfaction/ Perception Inventory

Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



Contributing to Resident Satisfaction/ Perception

Analysis

Perception and satisfaction can affect residents' attachment to place. Therefore, it is important to consider the factors that positively and negatively affect satisfaction and perception. As is indicated on the map, there are a large number of vacant and abandoned properties in the neighborhood. This data was provided by the City of Roanoke's Department of Planning, Building and Development. This data does not discern between spaces, such as parking lots, and properties that are indeed vacant or abandoned and not in use. However, it should be clarified that although these are not differentiated in this inventory, vacant area such as parking lots, cause a break in the continuity of the physical fabric and can negatively affect perception. As well, it should also be noted that many of the vacant or abandoned properties indicated on this map are indeed vacant or abandoned. Due to a decline in population, the homes of elderly falling into probate or family members not in the area to care or move into the homes, and other causes associated

with this condition, the neighborhood is dotted with lots and homes with no building or no resident.

Not indicated on this map is the quality of some of the homes in the neighborhood. Though many homes are well kept, many have fallen into disrepair. Residents interviewed attribute much of this condition to absentee landlords. Residents interviewed also indicated that the run-down condition of many homes is a negative quality of the neighborhood.

The northeastern and northwestern portions of the neighborhood have a high percentage of industry and vacant residential properties. Portions of this area also have a high degree of rental units. In particular the section of the neighborhood adjacent to Interstate 581, has the highest percent of rental units. This area is zoned for multi-family housing. Problems associated with absentee landlords are particularly evident in this area. The living conditions of many of these units are also a problem. A number of the residents interviewed identified these sections as negatively affecting their perception of the neighborhood.

It is also a concern that the sections of the neighborhood that experience the greatest degree of vacancy,

abandonment, and industrial development are along primary access routes and adjacent to entrances to the neighborhood. This affects outsiders' perception of the neighborhood, and as was discovered in the interviews, in turn affects residents' perception and satisfaction of their neighborhood.

Areas that contribute positively to residents' perception and satisfaction are in and around the two parks in the neighborhood, Fallon Park and Jackson Park. These two sections, surrounding Jackson Park and south of Fallon Park, represent the most stable areas of Belmont-Fallon. The parks are valued for their upkeep and the activities they provide for the community. Schools are also located near these parks. Their location may contribute to the more residential feel of these areas and the lower turnover rates of residency.

Residents value the Elm Street entrance for the flowering trees planted along the median strip. A number of residents identified these expressions as positively affecting their satisfaction of the neighborhood, and requested such plantings be continued throughout the neighborhood.

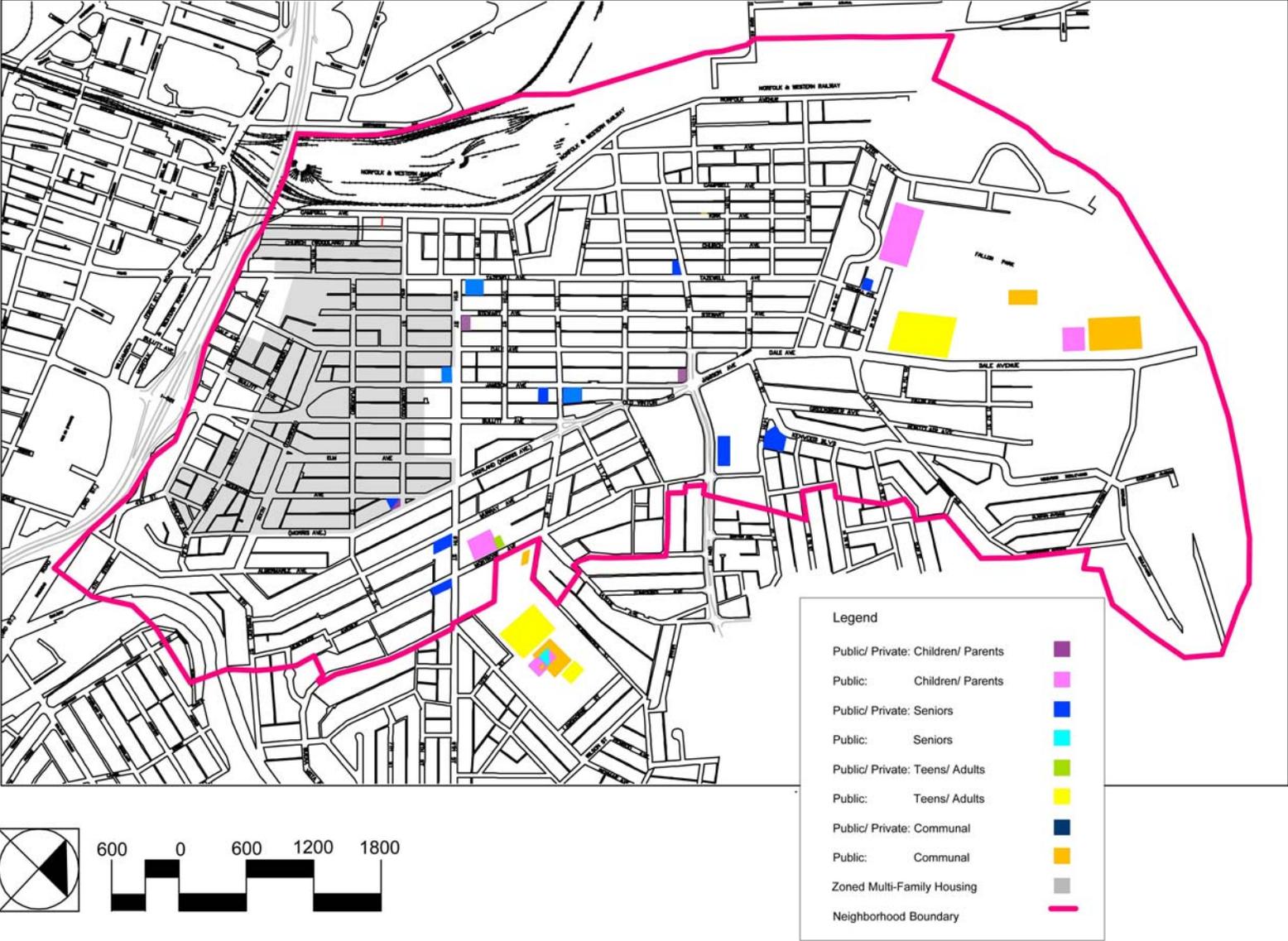
Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

Neighborhood Planning:

- Expressions of care should be continued throughout the neighborhood
- Expressions of care should be extended through negative contributing areas
- Programs should be instated to temporarily make use of or beautify vacant lots
- Community involvement and participation programs should be implemented to help repair homes Qualities that residents appreciate about the parks, such as planters, trees, green areas, should be extended into the neighborhood
- Abandoned or vacant properties should be targeted for restoration or development
- Additional incentives should be provided for the investment in vacant or abandoned properties
- Efforts should be made to restore homes in disrepair rather than tearing them down
- When possible development should be infill
- Rental unit standards should be enforced

Figure 3: Places for Affiliation Inventory

Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



Places for Affiliation

Analysis

Public and semi-public facilities in the neighborhood provide the lion's share of opportunities for affiliation for seniors and younger and middle school age children.

Facilities available for children are weighted along the edges of the neighborhood, some just outside the neighborhood boundary. Areas on the northern half and along the northwestern and southwestern sections of the neighborhood have few amenities for children. Though most places are within walking distance for most residents, younger children may not easily reach these places. The volume and speed of traffic on many of the roads in the neighborhood is dangerous and would not be safely navigated by a young child. It is therefore important that activities for this age group be more evenly and greatly distributed throughout the neighborhood. The addition of activities for children may provide opportunities for children to develop ties to their neighborhood, interact with other children, and may also provide opportunities for parents to interact and build relationships. Aside from churches and playing courts there are few places where middle-age residents may affiliate with each other.

There are few places for teens to congregate, aside from the playing fields and courts located in Jackson Park and Fallon Park. These parks, as was noted earlier, are located along the perimeter or outside the neighborhood. However it is an asset that these facilities are available to this group. Specific activity amenities, such as playing fields and courts, provide opportunities for affiliation. As well, repeat activities and visits support the discovery of similar interests, and friendship formation. Although members of this group use the courts often, there are no activity alternatives. If a teen is not interested in these activities, there will be little opportunity to affiliate with other teens with similar interests. As well, the courts are isolated and provide few opportunities for interaction with other age and user groups.

Seniors' activities are centered around the churches in the neighborhood. Many of the seniors participate in church activities and have developed friendships with other members over the years. Though there are a number of churches (most of the blue sites on the map are churches), there are few activity alternatives for seniors. It is difficult for seniors to meet others outside the church. Though it should be noted that this group's, along with younger children, affiliation needs are

better served than other community groups in the neighborhood.

Currently the only areas used for communal gatherings are in the parks, which are located near the edge or outside the boundaries of the neighborhood. No communal areas exist within the center of the neighborhood. Communal areas are an important place for the formation of friendships to occur, especially among persons who might otherwise never come in contact with one another. As well, participating in community events can help to fulfill the need for affiliation. This is especially important for new residents who have yet to develop social connections to the neighborhood, and who also have a need to affiliate with the greater community.

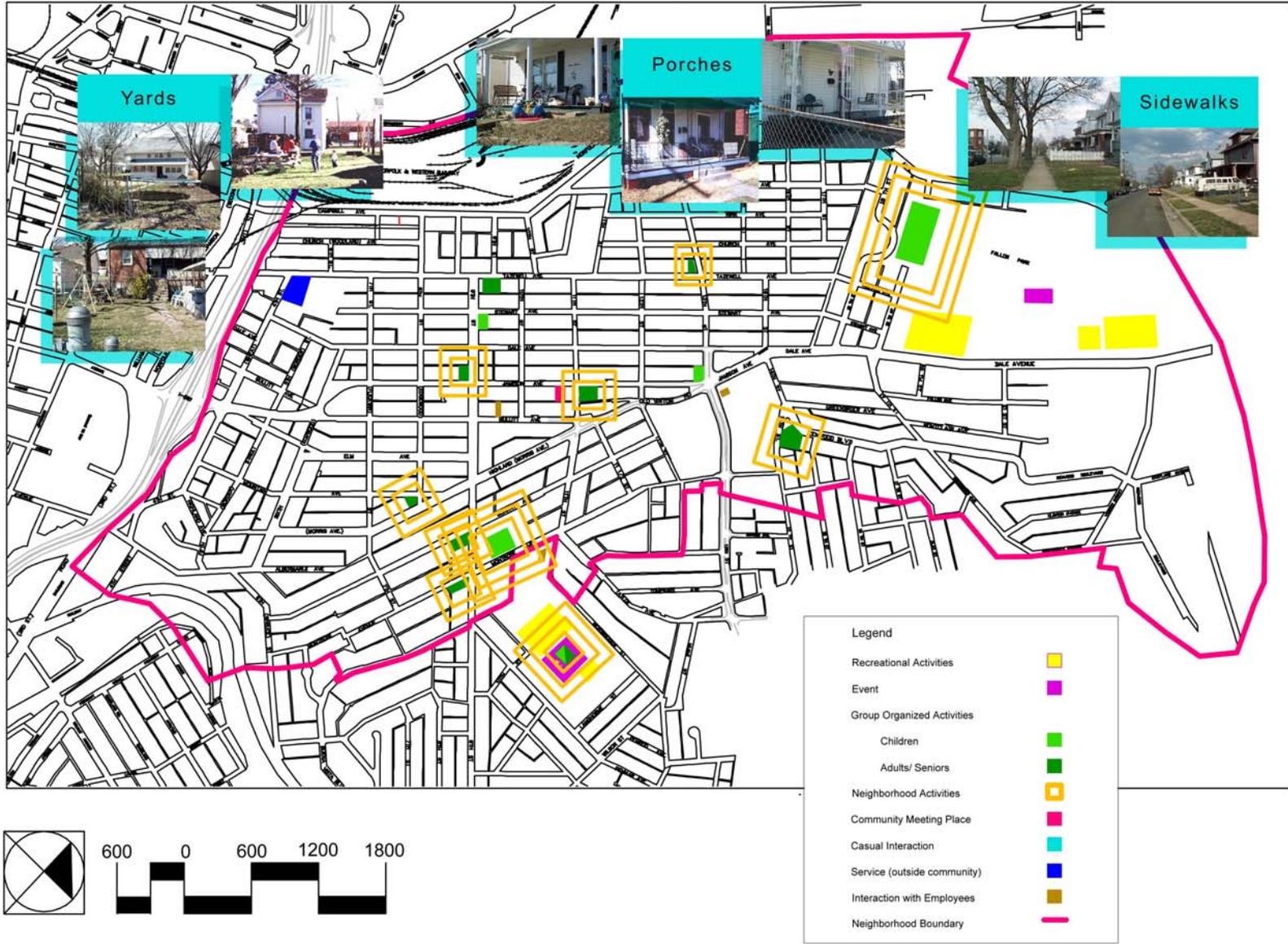
Areas west of 9th Street and northeast of Jamison Avenue are grossly underserved in terms of activities for all age groups. These areas also have a high proportion of the rental units in the neighborhood. The addition of amenities to these areas may provide opportunities for these residents to interact more with the neighborhood, experience a sense of community, and may reduce the rate of turnover.

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

Neighborhood Planning:

- Even and greater distribution of activities for younger children
- Addition of places where middle-age residents may interact
- Addition and variation of places for teens to congregate and interact
- Additional activities for seniors
- Addition of community gathering places, especially within the center of the neighborhood or within the western portion of the neighborhood
- Addition of places for residents to gather west of 9th Street and northeast of Jamison Avenue
- Addition of amenities that may appeal to a range of age and user groups

FIGURE 4: SOCIAL PLACES VALUED BY RESIDENTS INVENTORY
 BELMONT-FALLON NEIGHBORHOOD



Social Places Valued by Residents

Analysis

Places that residents value for their social qualities are the churches, schools, parks, and community service organizations. Two such community services organizations are the Boys and Girls Club and the Presbyterian Center, both of which provide after school programs for children.

The 'Big House' is located within Jackson Park and is valued for the social activities it has for children and seniors. Many of the seniors have been visiting the House since they were children, and have developed strong attachments to the House. These attachments are the result of fond memories and repeat visits.

Churches are highly valued by both new and long-time residents for their contribution to the greater community. Long-time residents however also value the churches for their social activities. They enjoy seeing other members who they have known most of their lives.

Schools are valued for their contribution to the community. They are also valued by many of the long-time

residents for their memories of attending school there, or their children's attendance at the school.

The playing courts are valued for the activities they provide teens in the neighborhood. Only one of the persons interviewed indicated that he uses the courts.

Residents enjoy their porches. Here they talk with their neighbors and observe the goings-on in the neighborhood. Residents indicated that they enjoy sitting on their porch, relaxing, and seeing neighbors. They also noted that they use their porch for other activities, such as barbequing.

Sidewalks are highly valued by residents. Some residents interviewed own dogs and indicated that it is while walking their dogs that they see and talk to their neighbors.

Yards are highly valued. As one might assume, most interaction with neighbors takes place near the home. The front and back yards were the primary places residents indicated they see their neighbors. Some of the residents interviewed also noted they often get together in neighbors yards and barbeque.

Porches, sidewalks, and yards, are informal areas where the majority of interaction occurs with neighbors. It may be

gleaned from this that residents may prefer and may be more comfortable in a less formal environment.

Also, aside from spaces near the home, the places that residents were most attached to were places they have frequented often, and for a number of years. It is through this repeated activity that they have built friendships, familiarity, and attachments. Residents are more likely to develop attachments to places that have programs that require repeat and frequent visits.

Geographically it may be concluded that places that residents value for their social qualities are primarily along the perimeter of the neighborhood. Few places exist within the middle of the neighborhood.

There are no places devoted to neighborhood activities. Semi-public groups host neighborhood events occasionally, however these events most often hosted at the group's site, rather than a space shared and owned by the community. A neighborhood-gathering place may contribute to the social qualities of the community. As well it will provide for opportunities for interaction. Community involvement and participation in the planning and management of this space may deepen ties to this place and the community. New

residents should be approached to become involved in the development of a neighborhood space. As well, so too should renters, who perhaps experience some of the same problems of disconnectedness as new residents.

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

Site Design:

- Informal versus formal places
- Programs that require repeat and frequent visits
- Places for community gathering, neighborhood activities
- Resident participation in planning, design and management
- Outreach directed toward newer residents and renters

Figure 5: Physical Places and Things Valued by Residents Inventory
 Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



Physical Places and Things Valued by Residents

Analysis

The physical qualities valued most by long-time residents were informal places that are a part of their everyday lives, such as homes, yards, and porches. Newer residents also valued such places. However, new residents also identified a number of other features that they value, such as the Roanoke Star, a symbol located outside the neighborhood, the topography, and the surrounding mountains.

The homes are an identifying and unique characteristic of the neighborhood and a great source of pride for residents.

Residents also value the churches in the neighborhood. These churches are landmarks, and dot the neighborhood.

Schools were also valued for their physical qualities and are also landmarks.

The parks are valued for their upkeep, their natural features, and in the case of Jackson Park, its history.

Newer residents value the rail yard for its historical significance. The rail whistle is valued for its symbolic and historical role in the development of the neighborhood and residents' daily lives.

The median strips at the Elm Street entrance and 9th Street are valued for their expressions of care. Trees are planted along these strips.

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

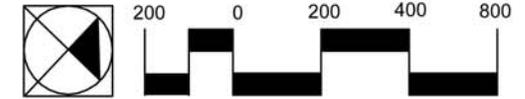
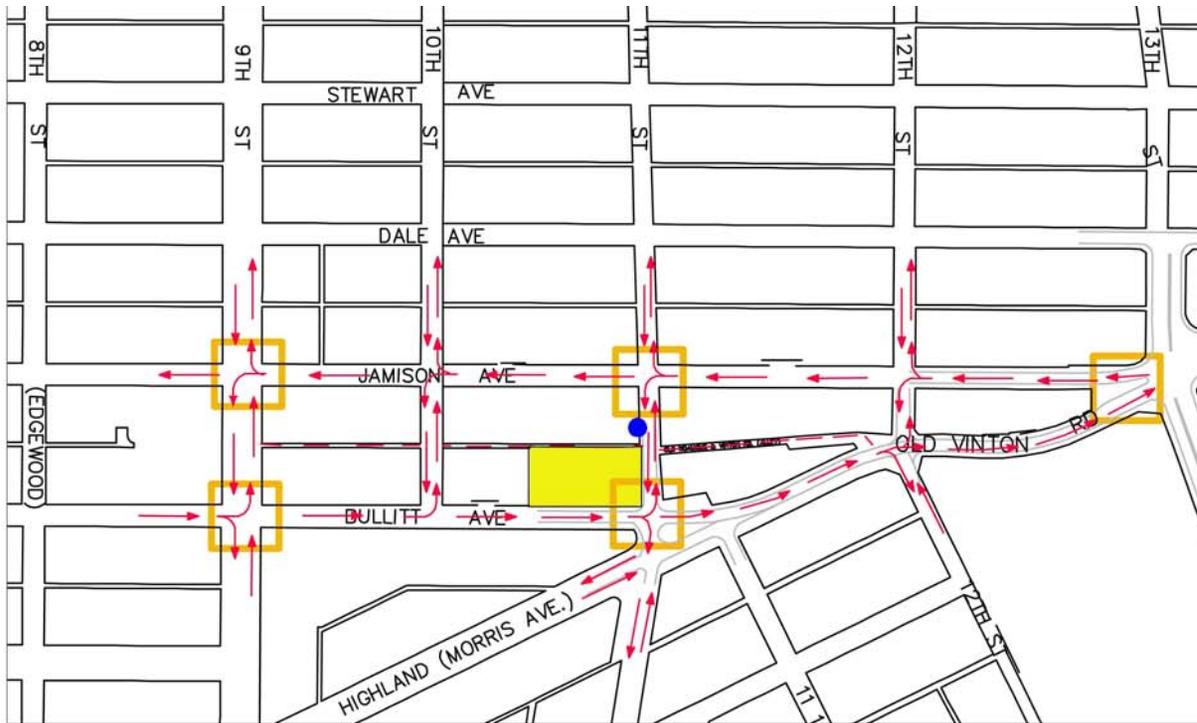
Site Design

- Value informal, everyday places
- Interpretation of history
- Expressions of Care
- Preserving symbols
- Highlighting symbols

Site Inventory and Analysis

Figure 6: Accessibility

Project Site, Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



The project site is located between the busy Bullitt-Jamison corridor. This is a one way pair, with Bullitt Avenue, which runs along the front of the site, heading northeast. The site is easily



accessible, either by foot or automobile. Bullitt however is a busy corridor. Those accessing the site by automobile would benefit from signage that is visible from the road and fairly large. Persons heading west on Jamison can access the site by turning onto 11th Street, or 10th Street and then Bullitt. The alleyway behind the site provides an additional option for turning around. However, the alley is only wide enough for one vehicle and would need to be designated in one direction. The site is within walking distance of most of the neighborhood. However access to the site by those walking will be dangerous for most, because of the need to cross Bullitt and Jamison. It will necessary to provide some means of protecting pedestrians attempting to cross these roads. A traffic light, cross walk, or bump outs at the intersection of 11th and Bullitt or 11th and Jamison may help to protect pedestrians.

Figure 7: Surrounding Land Use Inventory
 Project Site, Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



The site is located between two commercial nodes, one on 9th Street and the other on 13th Street. Here is an opportunity to provide an activity node between these two areas. This might encourage pedestrian activity along this stretch of the corridor. To encourage such connections, a consistent and coherent streetscaping may be developed between these two commercial nodes.

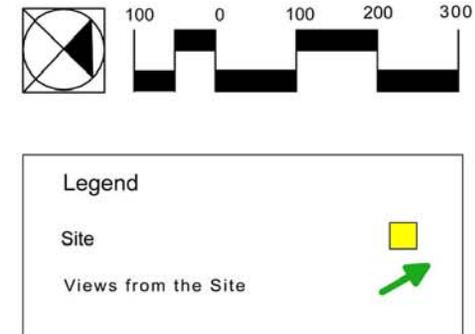
Also, the primary land use surrounding the project site is residential. In order to continue and preserve the character of this land use, it is important that the design fit within this residential context.

The site is also near to two landmarks, the Old Firehouse #7, which backs up to the site, and the Belmont Christian Church, on the far opposite corner of Jamison Avenue. Design should seek to incorporate these two landmarks. This may further define this activity node. In addition, and perhaps more important to this study, the incorporation of these neighborhood landmarks, and social gathering places, may help to support the development of attachment to place.

On the opposite corner of 11th Street is one of the Church’s parking lots. Design might incorporate an element that extends to this lot, softens the lot, or perhaps screens it.

Figure 8: Views Inventory

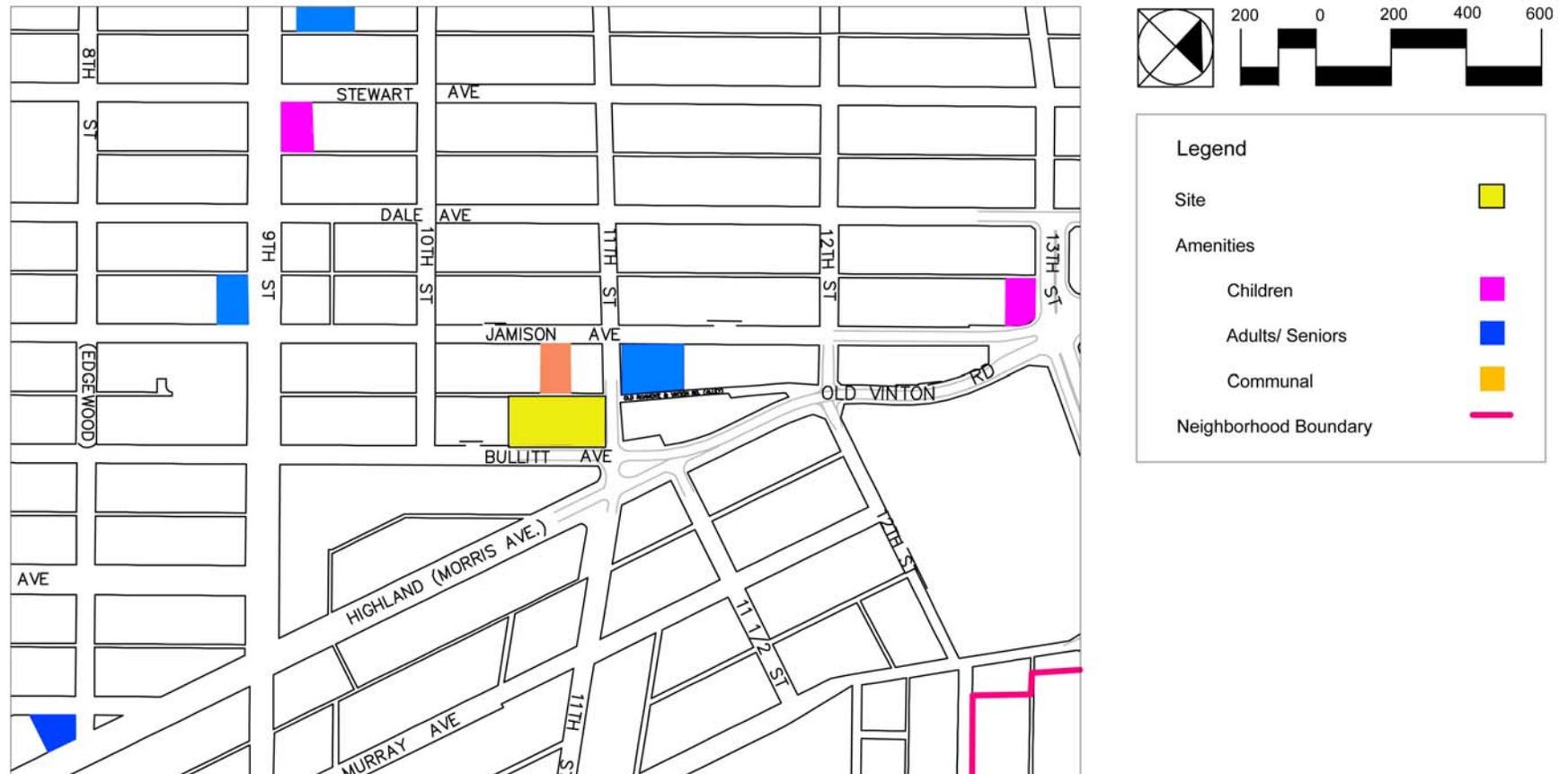
Project Site, Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



The project site is located on a flat section of the neighborhood. It is surrounded by two and three story homes on three sides. Most views from the site are of residential homes, the facades of homes on Bullitt, and the back of homes from Jamison Avenue. This is interesting and conceptually and physically may support the notion that the Clinic will be a neighborhood facility. The cobalt blue doors of the Old Firehouse back up to the center of the site and may be an organizing feature. The noble Belmont Christian Church on the opposite corner may also be a focus. Downtown is barely visible from the front right corner of the site.

Figure 9: Nearby Amenities Inventory

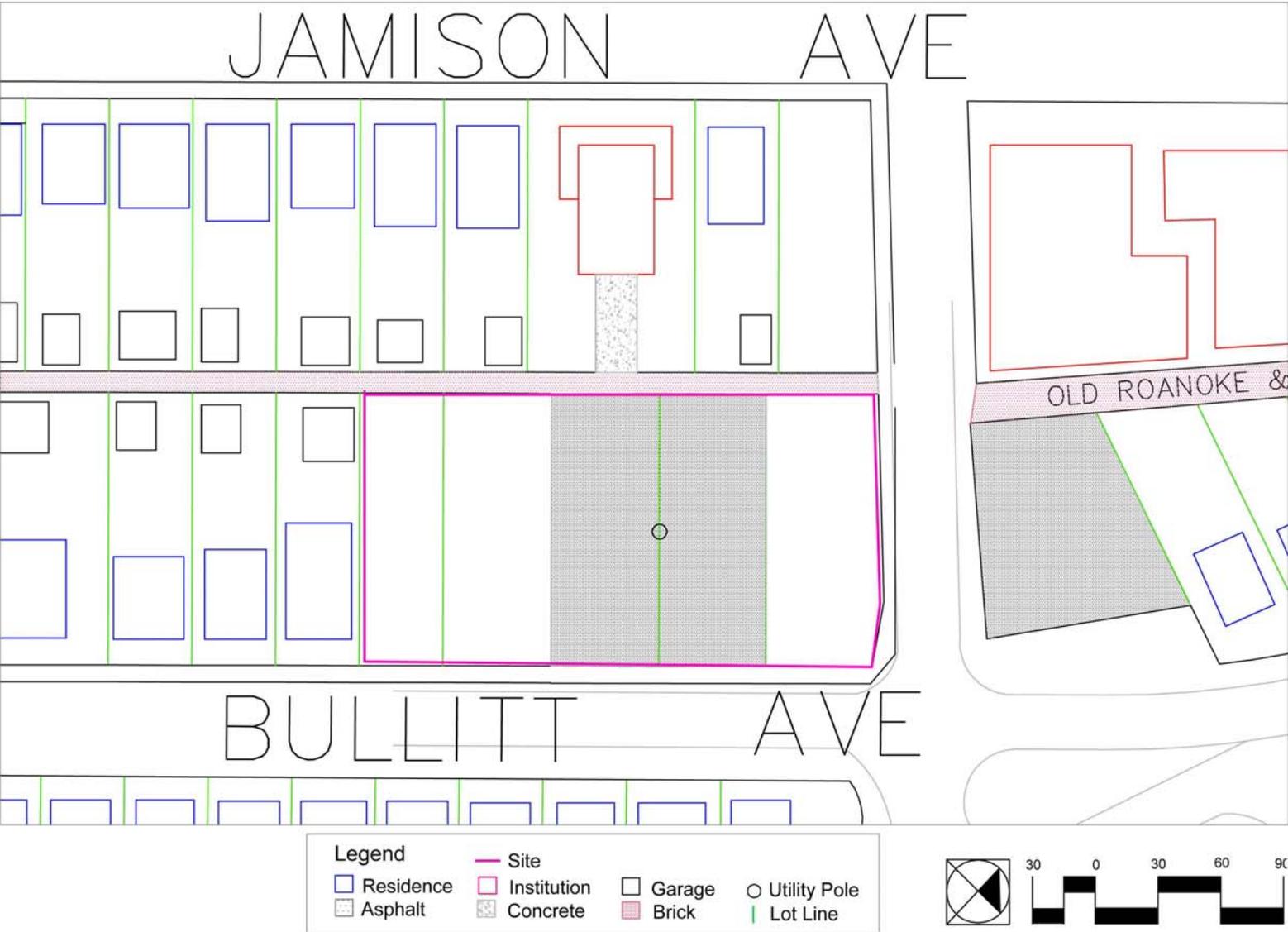
Project Site, Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



The amenities noted on this map are social amenities, which may fulfill the affiliation needs of community groups. The primary amenities nearby are churches that have a variety of activities that appeal to seniors, and some activities for children. The Presbyterian Center and Boys and Girls Club are also located near the project site. These organizations have after school programs. The Old Firehouse is marked in orange. Though the house has not been used for neighborhood gatherings, aside from the SE Action Forum meetings, it is a community-gathering place. The area surrounding the Health Care Clinic may become an extension of the community space that currently exists at the Firehouse. As well, it may help residents identify the Firehouse and this node as a community-gathering place. Design should seek to complement these existing programs, provide programs/ activities for all age groups, in particular those not represented on this map, such as teens and adults.

Figure 10: Existing Conditions Inventory

Project Site, Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood



Existing Conditions

Analysis

The site is comprised of five vacant lots. Three of the lots are grassed and two are paved with asphalt. Residents face the site and back up to the site. Garages in the backyards of the homes on Jamison Street are visible from the site. Most of the homes on this block have garages along the rear property line. These garages produce a nice rhythm, and provide a screen for residents, creating some additional privacy. These garages may also provide a buffer between the site and residences. There are concrete slabs that stretch from the alley to the back doors of the Firehouse. The concrete is in good condition. Brickwork lines the alleyway that stretches through most of the neighborhood. The parking lot behind Belmont-Christian Church faces the site. It is surfaced with asphalt. The site is fortunate to be adjacent to two neighborhood landmarks, the Old Firehouse #7 and Belmont-Christian Church. The lot on the northeast corner of Jamison is vacant. It was the site of the original Belmont-Christian Church and is currently owned by the church. Church leaders have indicated that the lot is in a sense considered sacred by the church and will not be sold.

Summary: Site Scale

Design Implications for the Belmont-Fallon Neighborhood

- Signage that is visible from the road and fairly large
- Pedestrian crossing
- Fit within context of the area: residential
- Highlighting firehouse
- Communal space
- Programs and activities for all age groups

Design Proposal

The literature review, discussed in Chapter Two, indicated that place attachment is a process. It develops over time. And designers may contribute to this continuum by supporting the processes that engender attachment to place. The in-depth interviews of long-time and newer residents of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood confirmed this hypothesis. Residents, depending on their years of residency and their social involvement in the neighborhood, experienced varying levels of attachment to place.

The previous chapter documented the development of design implications for the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood. These implications are based on the Design Criteria (extracted from the literature review, and outlined at the end of Chapter Two), and respond to information gathered through interviews, trace observations, and analysis of the neighborhood and site. They apply to factors that influence the process of place attachment, which may be roughly divided into: basic needs, satisfaction and perception, physical association, and social involvement. In addition, they are operational at different scales, and have been separated into neighborhood planning and site programming and design criteria.

The design alternatives and final design developed for the proposed Health Care Clinic seek to apply the design implications identified for site scale design that address the four categories of factors affecting attachment to place. The following pages document this application and test, to the extent possible through this project, the efficacy of the design.

Guiding Concept

The overall concept guiding the structure of the design is a Community Wellness Center. Miriam Webster defines wellness as “good health especially as an actively sought goal.” Research on activities that promote wellness revealed that there are many activities that may improve one’s well-being depending on the needs of the individual. It may be concluded, that wellness may be improved or maintained by addressing the needs of one or more parts of one’s being, or total self. These parts may be roughly grouped into five categories: *physical, social, spiritual, psychological* (this being perhaps a product of physical, social, and spiritual), or *combinations thereof*. The setting of the Wellness Center is intended to provide places where residents may participate in activities that meet their individual needs and the needs of the community. Design of

the space considered the various activities that may take place within these spaces, however, aside from general accommodations, such as seating or surfacing, no specific activities have been prescribed. It is the feeling of the author that the community and residents have a better sense of their needs and may assign activities to these spaces based on their current or future needs.

From this point forward the discussion will refer to the *Clinic* and the *Center*. Reference to the Clinic relates specifically to the building that will house medical facilities such as doctors' offices and examination rooms. Discussion of the Center pertains to the site as a whole, interior and exterior.

Potentials and Limitations

There are a number of potentials, and some limitations, of the Wellness Center and site location. Some of these were first discussed in Chapter Three, and others were later discovered and identified during research and analysis of the neighborhood and site. These are important to the overall objectives and success of the project and deserve mentioning before more explicit discussion of the design of the site.

Potentials

Repetitive Use: In terms of its program, the Clinic has the potential to support processes that contribute to attachment to place. Health Care, by its nature, as was discussed in Chapter Four, is applicable to all ages and backgrounds. As well, it may require repeat or regular visits for preventative or rehabilitative medical care. In addition, programs such as exercise, nutritional classes, daycare, pre- or postnatal care classes, babysitting classes, sexual education classes, etc. may be incorporated into the overall program of the site. Such classes may also require repeat and regular use of the Clinic and its surroundings. As has been stated throughout this project, repetitive use is an effective means of establishing a sense of ownership and the opportunities for relationships to develop, and may ultimately contribute to attachment to place.

Resident Participation: Residents are actively involved in the all aspects of the planning process. They petitioned the city for a Health Care Clinic in their neighborhood, submitted applications to the respective agencies, organized the Health Care Commission, are leaders in the planning process, and have identified the location for the proposed Clinic. They are also actively pursuing funding for the project.

Physical Association: Located adjacent to the site is the Old Firehouse # 7. The Firehouse is a beloved feature of the neighborhood and is a symbol of community. The Health Care Clinic will also be a community facility. The two may together become a community facility, and a symbol of community, hosting community events, and providing a community center for the neighborhood.

Physical Association: Located on the far opposite corner of the proposed site is Belmont Christian Church. The church is an advocate for the neighborhood and a focal point in the community. The church, though a private institution, may contribute to this ‘community center.’ Church leaders and parishioners are members of the Health Care Commission and have been active in the planning process. The Church has offered to share land with the Clinic.

Perception: The number of vacant lots in the neighborhood affects many of the residents’ perception of their neighborhood, which can ultimately affect attachment to place. The proposed location for the Clinic is on five vacant lots

within a highly visible corridor. Development on these lots may help to reduce this negative perception.

Accessibility: Due to its location, geographically near to the center of the neighborhood, and along a main access route the site is easily accessible by most in the neighborhood. It is within walking and driving distance of most residents.

Connector: Potential to provide an activity node between two existing commercial districts, one on 9th Street and the second on 13th Street.

Amenity: Potential to provide a range of activities that may appeal to a diverse group of users.

Limitations

Accessibility: The site is located between two main thoroughfares. These roads are two lanes each with traffic directed one way. The speed and volume of traffic on these roads may make pedestrian crossing dangerous. Pedestrians

would need to be protected at the corner of 11th Street and Bullitt Avenue and 11th Street and Jamison Avenue, by traffic lights, cross walks, or other traffic calming devices.

Funding: Funding for the project will need to come primarily from sources outside the neighborhood. Potential funding sources will need to be identified and solicited.

Land Acquisition: A private investor owns the two interior lots proposed for the site of the Health Clinic. Currently these lots are not for sale. Leaders of the city and community will need to approach this individual regarding sale of the land.

It may be concluded from review of these potentials and limitations that this particular site and program has many of the ingredients to support the development of place attachment. It fulfills, foremost through its program, basic needs such as health care; the site is easily accessible by most residents; it is adjacent to the Old Firehouse and the Belmont Christian Church, two landmarks in the neighborhood; and most importantly it has a program that may require repeat or regular visits for varied or specific activities.

Preliminary Design Alternatives

The first step in this process was to develop preliminary design concepts for the proposed Health Care Clinic. These concepts will be introduced and discussed briefly, with the weight of the discussion and evaluation being on the final design alternative (a product of the two preliminary alternatives), which is presented toward the end of this chapter.

Shared Elements

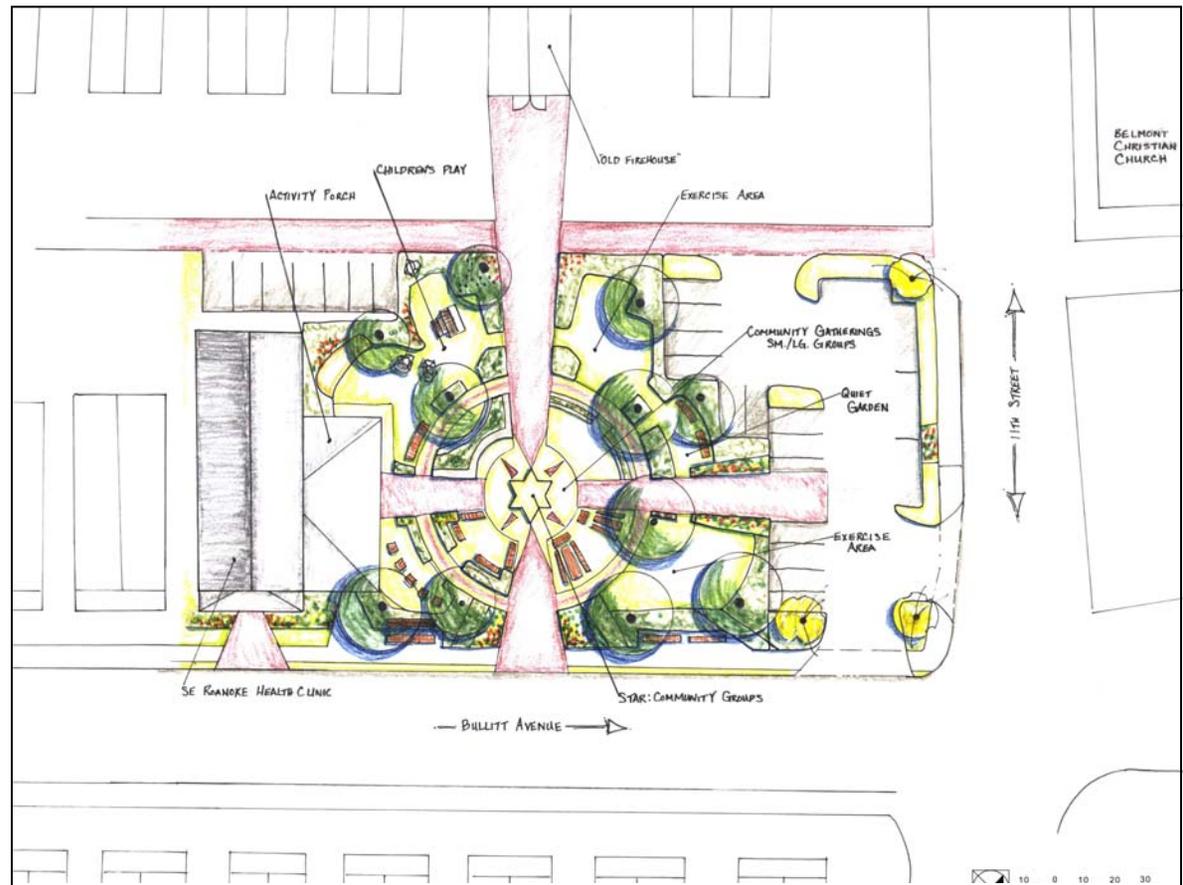
Alternatives A and B share the following elements:

- The space is intended to be a framework: adaptable by its users, and adaptable over time
- The center is a courtyard for both the Health Care Clinic and the Old Firehouse
- Planting beds exist throughout the site that residents may participate in designing, preparing, and maintaining
- Nature is intended to be a healing element, and is incorporated to varying degrees throughout the site

Design Alternative A

Structuring Concept: The center of the courtyard is where the most active and social activities take place. In a sense it is ‘charged,’ it is where pedestrians must cross paths, children run, classes gather, individuals and groups sit and talk, and where community events take place. As residents move from this central area, they may choose to participate in more individual or passive activities, such as reading, meditating, or painting.

Structuring Concept: In the center of the courtyard is a six-pointed star. The points of the star represent the six churches that have for many decades supported and help to build the community. The points that radiate from the star represent the many additional organizations in the neighborhood that are also active. The ‘voice’ of these organizations and the residents of Southeast has resulted in a movement for revitalization and change. The courtyard is a celebration of their efforts and affection for Southeast.



Design Alternative B

Structuring Concept: Opportunities for social participation are concentrated at the front of the site, nearest the street. Activities near the front of the site are more formal. As one moves away from the ‘public’ areas, activity spaces become less formal and potentially more passive. These spaces are less structured and are intended to provide opportunities to address a range of physical and spiritual needs.

Structuring Concept: The space is laid out in the form of a home, with a front porch, formal rooms to the front, informal rooms toward the back, and a backyard. In the center is the family room, a gathering place for the community. The ‘rooms’ along the street edge are active areas, where residents encounter one another, talk, observe, and participate in classes. The ‘rooms’ furthest from the road are designed for a range of less formal, less structured, and potentially more passive activities, much like the private rooms of one’s home and a backyard.



Resident Evaluation

The two preliminary alternatives were presented at the SE Building Committee Meeting to residents of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood and the larger Southeast Roanoke community. The committee meets periodically and extends an invitation to all Southeast residents. Approximately twenty-five people were in attendance. Eight of the attendees were interview participants and four are members of the Health Care Commission.

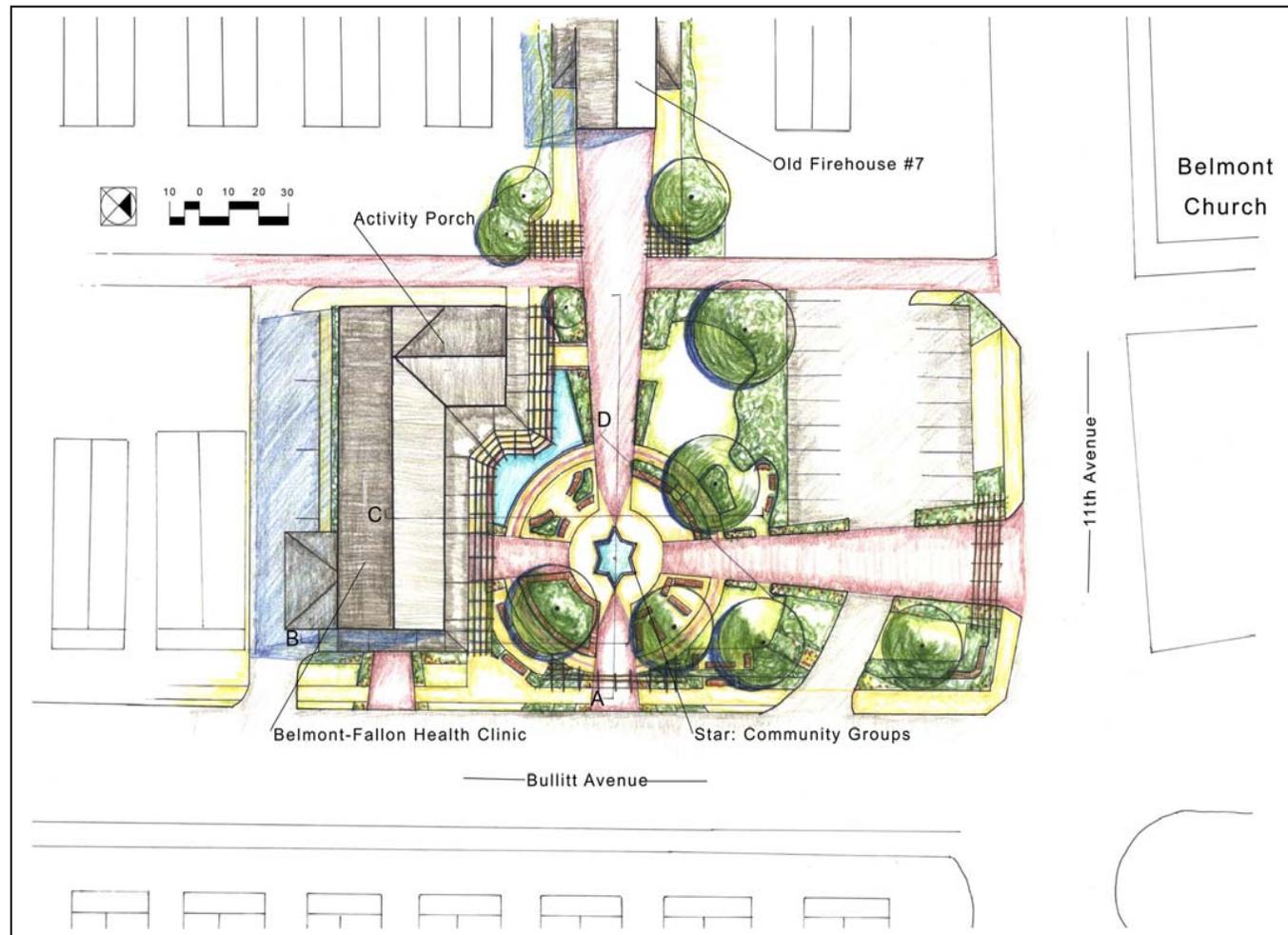
Following the presentation residents were asked to evaluate the two proposals. They were requested to indicate: which concept they preferred and why; if they felt they could become attached to the Wellness Center; if they would participate in activities at the Center; if they would visit the Center regularly; and if the Center fit within the character of the neighborhood. Seventeen residents responded.

Of these residents, approximately two-thirds preferred Alternative A, the remaining favoring Alternative B, some also noted they liked both alternatives. Overall residents' comments were positive. Some specified features they liked about the designs: the star, the porch, the vegetation, the water feature, the variety of potential activities, and activities for children. One of the residents questioned whether a Wellness

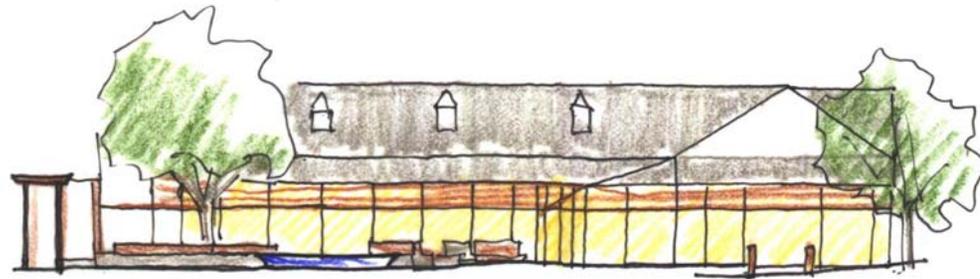
Center would fit within the context of the neighborhood. Most respondents were interested in the potential activities that could take place at the Center. And the majority indicated they would visit the Center regularly. All seventeen respondents indicated they could become emotionally attached to the Wellness Center: seven residents felt they could become attached to either of the alternatives; six expressed that they could become attached to alternative A; and four indicated they could become attached to alternative B.

Final Design Alternative

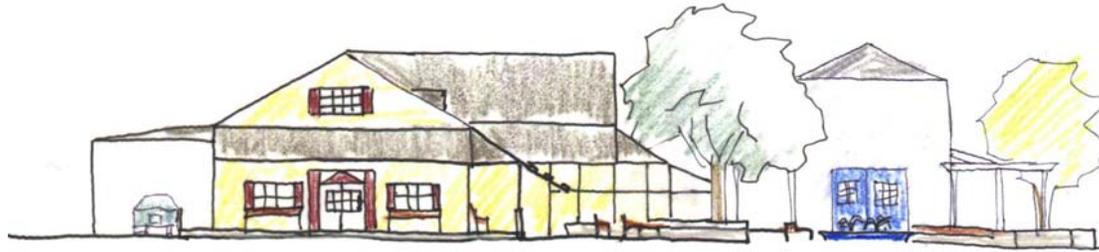
Residents' evaluations of the preliminary designs were incorporated into a final design alternative. The final plan emphasizes features embraced by residents, such as the star, water, and vegetation. It also draws on other elements of the preliminary plans, such as a collection of places for activities to take place, a central communal gathering place, definition of boundaries, and an extended porch. Below are drawings of the final design alternative, followed by a diagrammatic interpretation and evaluation of the design for its relationship to and success in addressing the various site design implications developed for the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood.



Section A



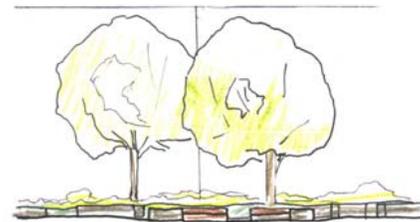
Section B



Section C



Section D



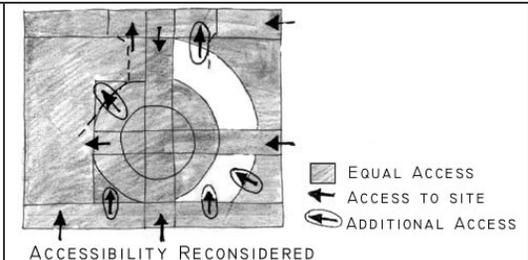
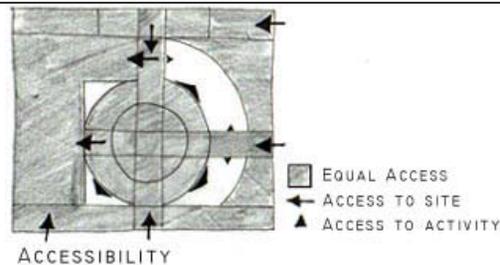
Diagrammatic Interpretation and Evaluation

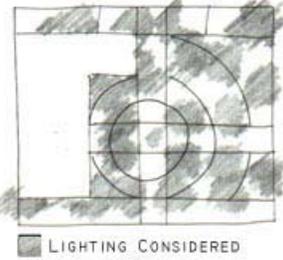
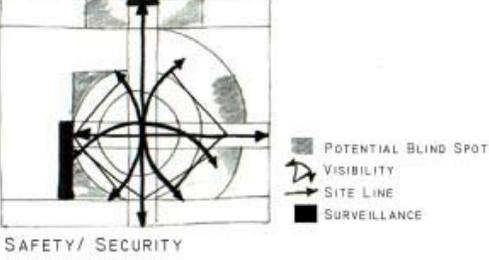
Evaluation of the design and site's potential to support the development of attachment to place should be considered in terms of its spatial qualities, the processes it supports, and programming. Spatial qualities, and programming, where possible, have been figuratively diagrammed below. Programming and process are more nebulous, depending on a number of variables, such as the health needs of residents, wellness activity programs, affiliation needs of residents, degree of attachment to the neighborhood, and more. The diagrammatic interpretations for such implications may be endless. In instances where a diagrammatic interpretation did not seem most appropriate, a qualitative interpretation and evaluation is provided.

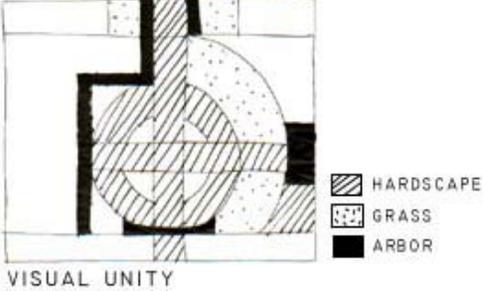
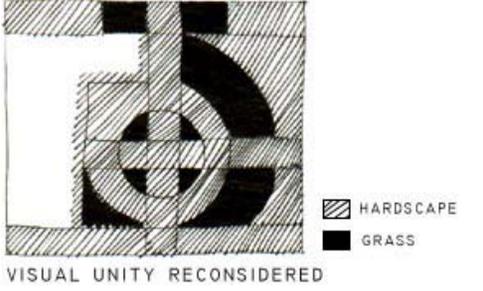
Basic Needs

Meeting residents' basic needs is a prerequisite to developing attachment to place. Health Care, by its nature, has the potential to meet some of residents' basic needs. As discussed earlier, spatial qualities of the site may also address basic needs. The below diagrams and discussion evaluate the designs' ability to meet these needs and where applicable suggests possible alternatives that may better satisfy these needs.

- **Legibility and accessibility:** There are a number of access points to the site and activity areas. Material changes and entrances mark these points. The colored areas represent places that are easily accessible by wheelchair or persons with mobility limitations. The areas not colored are primarily grassed. Revision of the design may include additional access points, to present a more 'open' feel to the Center. Reorientation of the activity porch to open onto the central courtyard may increase accessibility and inclusiveness.

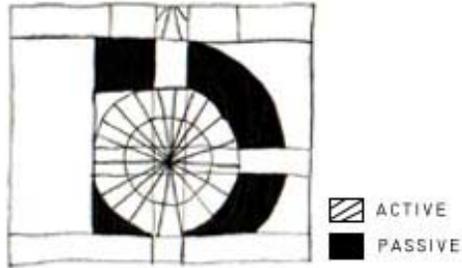
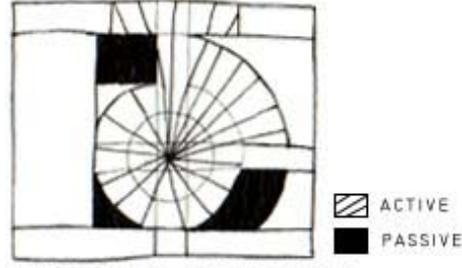


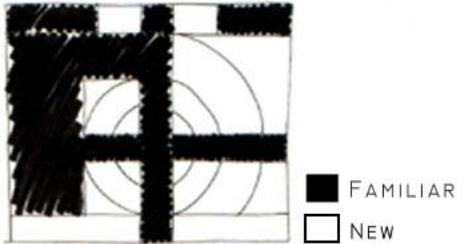
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate lighting, cues of change: Lighting was not considered in the final design alternative. Safety is a concern, therefore it is suggested that lighting be provided throughout the site. Lighting should relate to human dimensions and should softly illuminate the site. Though some of the site's surroundings may be lit, care should be given to respect the property rights of nearby residents. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural and formal surveillance, site lines, and alternate escape routes: Upon entering the site, or exiting, there is the potential for blind spots. Widening entranceways, visually or physically, can improve visibility. Changing the orientation of the activity porch to incorporate a wider angle of vision may improve opportunities for natural surveillance. Widening the physical and visual entrance between the site and police substation may improve opportunities for formal surveillance. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process: Ownership: Signs of ownership will foster a sense of safety and security. Such signs may include community involvement, signage, maintenance, physical symbols that express residents' values, and use of the space. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressions of Care or Signs of Care: community involvement, landscaping, signage, visual unity, lighting, and maintenance: Expressions of care are closely related to signs of ownership. Such expressions may convey ownership over a place. Signs of care, such as flowerbeds, should be continued along main corridors, vehicular and pedestrian. They should also be visible from within the Clinic. 	 <p>SIGNS OF CARE</p>	 <p>SIGNS OF CARE RECONSIDERED</p>
<p>Visual Unity may be developed through coherent and consistent design, and use of materials. Visual Unity in this case may be improved by having materials more completely carried throughout the site and surrounding area.</p>	 <p>VISUAL UNITY</p> <p>  HARDSCAPE  GRASS  ARBOR </p>	 <p>VISUAL UNITY RECONSIDERED</p> <p>  HARDSCAPE  GRASS </p>

Resident Satisfaction and Perception

Resident satisfaction and perception can affect attachment to place. Understanding what may contribute to or detract from satisfaction, may better equip designers and planners to support the development of place attachment. The below diagrams and discussion address the designs' capacity to positively contribute to resident satisfaction. These implications relate specifically to issues that affect long-time and newer community groups in the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood. It is also hoped that the introduction of the Wellness Center to the community, and the careful development of a site plan for the Center will positively contribute to satisfaction.

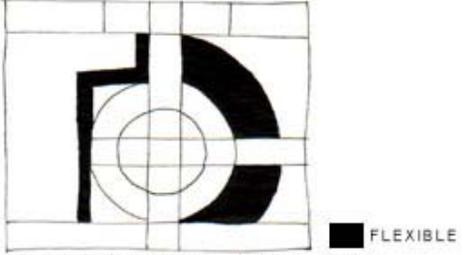
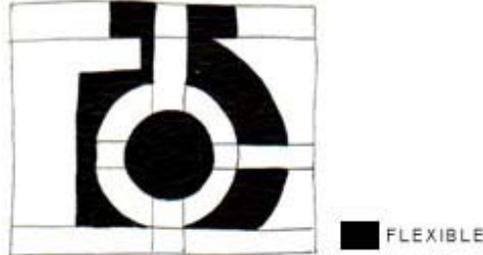
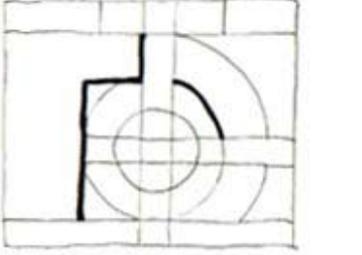
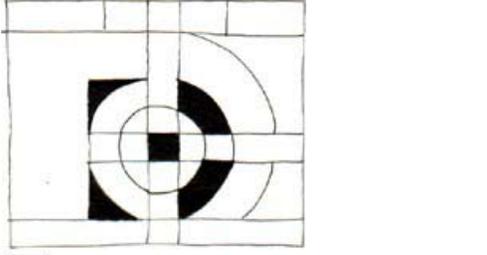
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming: Places and activities that attract renters and homeowners: Programming should target homeowners and renters. Common needs and interests might be day care, health classes, educational classes, gardening, financial advisement, support groups, card groups, and exercise activities. Activities and the environment should be accessible, ‘open’ to all who wish to participate. When possible free or reduced fees may support accessibility. 	 <p>PASSIVE AND ACTIVE AREAS</p>	 <p>PASSIVE AND ACTIVE AREAS RECONSIDERED</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process: Resident participation in design process and management: Through participation residents are better positioned to influence change, more aware of changes taking place, and most importantly, will develop stronger social ties to the community. Residents of Belmont-Fallon initiated the project, have been involved in the design and planning process, and have a vested interest in completion and success of the project. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressions of Care: Discussed in Design Implications and Evaluation, Basic Needs 		

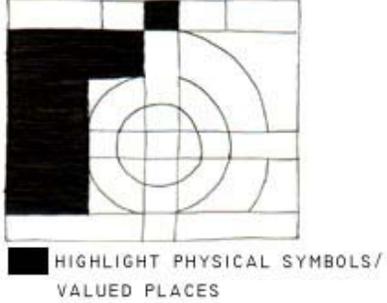
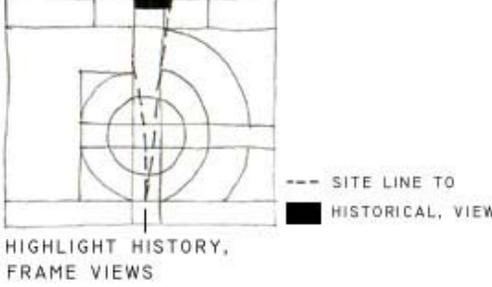
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation of familiar with new: Incorporation of familiar elements with new elements may assuage concerns regarding change. Familiar qualities incorporated into the design: Clinic resembles the homes in the area, highlighting the Old Firehouse, and continuation of brickwork that currently exists in alley. 	 <p>INCORPORATION OF NEW AND FAMILIAR</p>	
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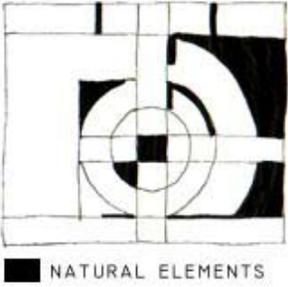
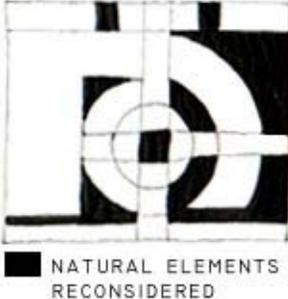
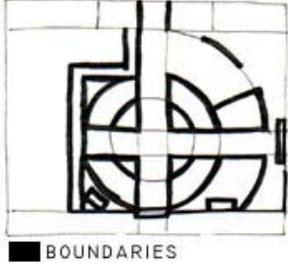
Physical Associations

Physical elements play an important role in initiating and reinforcing attachment to place. Physical space, and users ability to adapt that space, mark it, and display images, also plays an important role in establishing a sense of ownership. The below diagrams and discussion evaluate the designs' effectiveness in addressing the physical qualities that may offer opportunities for association, may support the process of ownership, and where applicable suggests possible alternatives that may better meet these needs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process: Resident participation in design process and management: As stated earlier, residents are involved in the planning of the Health Clinic. Resident participation in the design process and management may bring to light valued physical features of the neighborhood, and a sense of pride and ownership for highlighted symbols. A process should be developed for future community involvement in generating symbols and on-going participation over time. 		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for residents to adapt spaces for expression: Areas currently adaptable are the side porch, movable chairs and optional spaces, and the green surrounding the courtyard, which is an open area, fixed primarily by ground level planting beds. Adapting space promotes territoriality, symbolism, and expression. Perhaps it is most important then that the courtyard itself be adaptable, so that here, the center of the site, may become imbued with personal and communal meanings. 	 <p>OPPORTUNITIES TO ADAPT SPACE</p>	 <p>OPPORTUNITIES TO ADAPT SPACE RECONSIDERED</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for present and future display and identification of symbols: Incorporation of surfaces and areas for display of symbols may facilitate expression. Currently, with the exception of the outside wall of the Clinic itself, and the community notice board, there are few places for such display. Places that allow for displays visible from the inside of the Clinic and perhaps the road may promote expression and ownership. The community should be involved in generating and identifying symbols. 	 <p>OPPORTUNITY FOR DISPLAY OF SYMBOLS</p>	 <p>OPPORTUNITY FOR DISPLAY OF SYMBOLS RECONSIDERED</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressions of care: Discussed in Diagrammatic Interpretation: Basic Needs 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight physical symbols/ valued places: The site is fortunate to be located adjacent to the Old Firehouse. The firehouse should be highlighted and a part of the overall design. Also the physical character of the neighborhood's housing stock is a source of pride for residents. The Clinic is intended to fit within this existing character: front porch extending along facade, two stories, and constructed of wood. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition/ improvement of pedestrian corridors: The pedestrian corridors are highlighted with a brick path, matching the brickwork existing in the alleyway. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight History, frame view sheds: The Old Firehouse is highlighted and framed by an entranceway and processional walk. Revisions may include highlighting the Belmont Christian Church and framing this view. 		

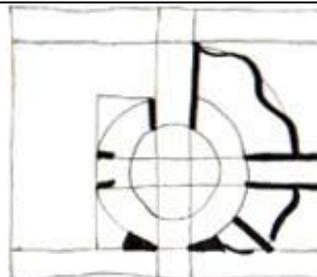
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connection to natural elements: The site is located between two busy arteries. Vegetation may provide residents the perception of escaping this noise and activity. Revisions should include increased vegetation, particularly along the street fronts, and a greater variety of trees (flowering, large canopy.) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries: Materials and colors mark the boundaries between spaces. Signage marking the Center is at the entrance of the Clinic and parking area. Revisions might also include signage as to different activity areas, and places for personalization (as was described above.) 		

Social Connections

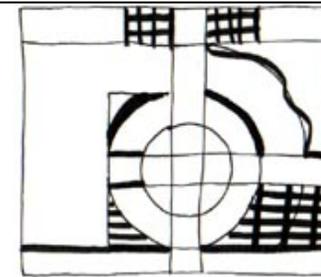
Providing a physical environment that may support the social connections is vital to the development of place attachment. Programming plays an important role in encouraging social ties and involvement. Recommendations for programming are provided below. As well, the design is interpreted and evaluated for its effectiveness in providing physical space that may support the development of relationships. Alternative solutions are also provided.

- **Programming: Activities that encourage repeat visits/ regular use:** Health care has the potential of requiring repeat or regular visits, for preventative treatment, for treatment of existing health problems, or rehabilitation. Additional programs such as classes and the like activities may also encourage repeat visits. In addition opportunities for social interaction may encourage regular visits.

- **Programming: Community involvement activities/ activities that facilitate interaction:** Activities that encourage resident participation, and interaction among residents, may strengthen social connections to the neighborhood. Such activities may also help to break down social barriers among resident groups. There exist in the current design opportunities for resident participation in maintaining the planting beds. Revisions might include an area for resident gardening plots; these plots may be highly visible and in quieter areas. A mechanism or process should be developed for on-going resident participation over time.

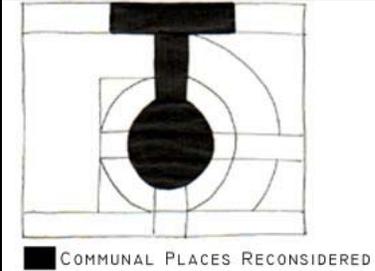


RESIDENT PLANTING BEDS

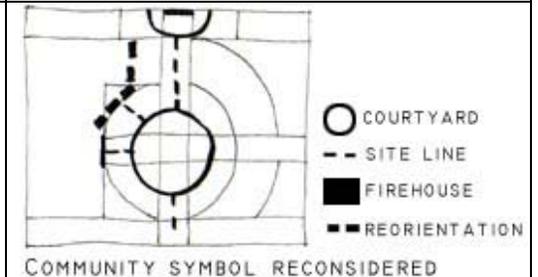
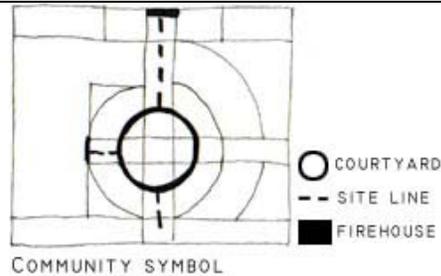


RESIDENT PLANTING BEDS
RECONSIDERED

- Programming: Activities that bring together community:** Activities that bring together various groups or the community may facilitate exchange, tolerance, and the development of social connections. Communal places that accommodate small and larger gatherings should be incorporated into the design.



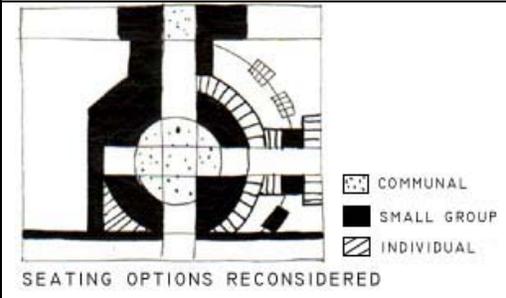
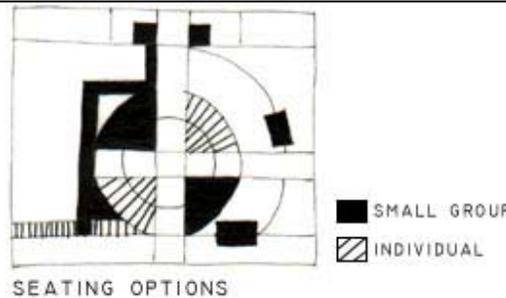
- Programming: Activities structured around the Old Firehouse:** The Firehouse is symbolic of the Belmont-Fallon community, especially for long-time residents. The house should be highlighted and emphasized as a symbol and place for community. The house itself is currently highlighted in the design. Revisions might also include a communal courtyard near the Firehouse and widening the area for social interaction near the house. This would strengthen the notion that the two, the firehouse and Wellness Center are community facilities. The activity porch might be reoriented to improve these connections.

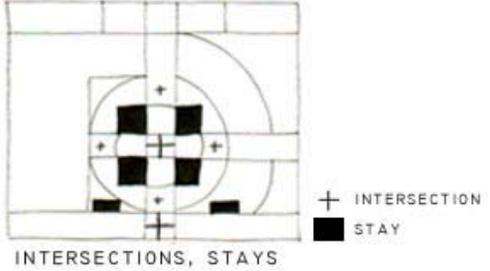
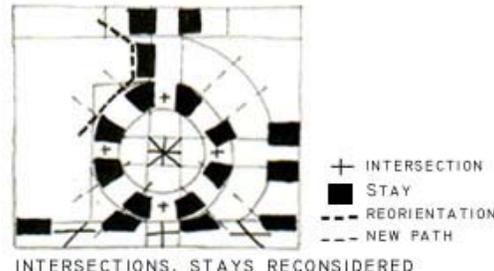


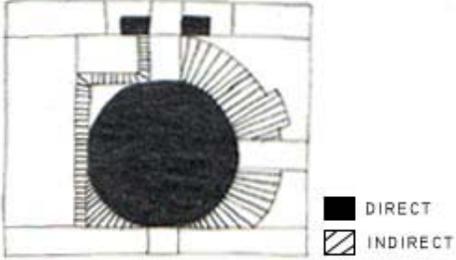
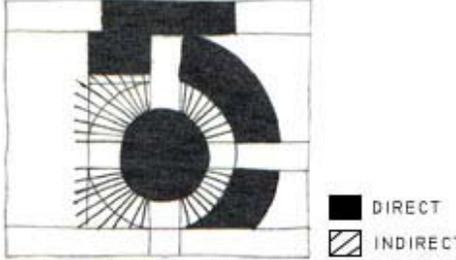
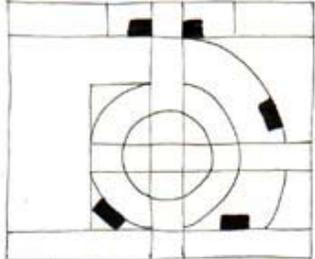
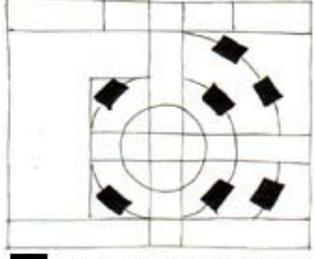
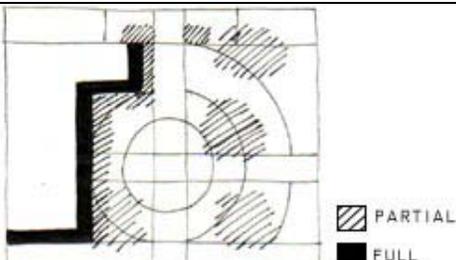
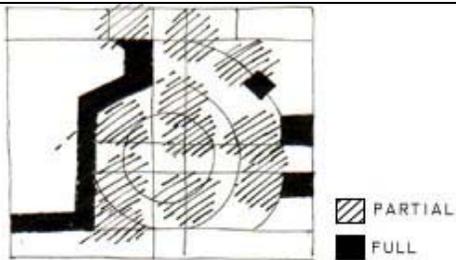
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming: Activities for specific interests: Activities that bring together people with similar interests may, through regular use, support the development of relationships. Such activities might include exercising, card groups, day care, and classes. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming: Activities that integrate accommodations and interests for various age groups: Such activities might include: classes for young and old, such as crafts, and programmed games for grandparents and grandchildren. Activities for children may also be conducted in spaces where seniors can comfortably observe, such as in the courtyard or on the activities porch. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming: Activities for range in number of participants: Activities that require individuals and groups to perform a task, such as gardening, exercising, card groups, painting, mentoring a child, etc., may lessen the discomfort of becoming acquainted with fellow residents. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming: Activities that bring together persons with different interests: Placement of different activity areas near to each other and communal gatherings may facilitate and provide opportunities for exchange. 		

- Process: Resident participation in design process and management:** As was stated earlier, Belmont-Fallon residents have been very active in the design and planning process. Management of the site should also incorporate residents. Activities may include caring for the grounds, welcoming patients, mentoring children, organizing and facilitating classes. A process should be developed that supports on-going participation and involvement.

- Seating options: group, individual, communal:** Currently the majority of seating options are for small groups and individuals. There exist no places for larger groups to sit. Revisions might include places for larger groups to sit. The courtyard and area near the Firehouse may be a good location for large group seating. Existing seating might be reorganized, with more small group seating in the courtyard (this may also be used by individuals), more individual seating in the perimeter surrounding the courtyard, and inclusion of individual seating along the exterior ring. Revisions might also include a greater amount of small group seating near the Firehouse.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places for interaction to occur: intersections, 'stays': Currently there are a handful of places where intersections and stays occur on the site. The addition of new access points might be considered and the provisions of stays at these points. This will increase seating options and opportunities for interaction. Reorientation of the building may provide a more legible circulation and an additional opportunity for visitors to encounter one another. 	 <p>INTERSECTIONS, STAYS</p>	 <p>INTERSECTIONS, STAYS RECONSIDERED</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places to sit, talk, gather: There are currently a number of places for residents to sit and gather. Revisions might include the addition of places for social interaction near the building and along the front of the site. These two places are more likely places for social encounters to occur. 	 <p>PLACES TO SIT, GATHER</p>	 <p>PLACES TO SIT, GATHER RECONSIDERED</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal places: Communal places support identification with neighborhood, social connections, and opportunities for direct or indirect observation. There is currently one area allocated for community gatherings. Revisions might include a second area near the Firehouse for community gatherings. 	 <p>COMMUNAL PLACES</p>	 <p>COMMUNAL PLACES RECONSIDERED</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of participation options: direct, indirect/ observation: There are options for direct and indirect participation in the current design. Revisions might better incorporate the two. 	 <p>PARTICIPATION OPTIONS</p>	 <p>PARTICIPATION OPTIONS RECONSIDERED</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodations for interaction at ordinary places: The Wellness Center itself might be considered an ordinary place. It may be visited for routine purposes and be a part of daily patterns. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places with porch-like qualities: defined boundaries, shade, option to observe/ participate: There are a handful of seating areas within the site that provide some privacy to users. Revisions might include additional seating that is semi-private or intimate. 	 <p>PRIVACY</p>	 <p>PRIVACY RECONSIDERED</p>
<p>There currently exists both partial and full shade on the site. Revisions might include more tree canopy to increase shade on the site. The building might be reoriented as well to provide more comfortable seating and viewing areas in full shade.</p>	 <p>SHELTER</p>	 <p>SHELTER RECONSIDERED</p>

- **Central community notice board:** A community notice board will facilitate the development of social ties for residents by providing a place where residents can learn of neighborhood activities. It can also symbolize community and provide indications that the site is a neighborhood facility. The current notice board is located near the entrance to the Clinic. Revisions might relocate the board within or near to the courtyard. The diagram on the right identifies alternate locations for a notice board.



Evaluations

Evaluations

Position

Most inner cities are being recognized and valued for their unique architecture, existing infrastructure, and the conveniences they afford. Many cities are committed to revitalizing their downtown areas, embarking on projects that highlight their waterfronts, provide entertainment, and attract businesses. However, it is becoming increasingly evident that these areas cannot reach their full vitality without revival of surrounding neighborhoods. Revitalization of these neighborhoods, many of which are in decline, can provide a potential community of residents who may support the downtown area. In addition, reclamation of these areas will improve the overall image and perception of the city.

Revitalization and the development of healthy communities will need to go beyond economics. It will also require an investment in the social and cultural structure of the neighborhood. In any neighborhood these two structures are constantly undergoing change. However, these changes will occur more rapidly in a neighborhood undergoing gentrification or experiencing a population shift. The rate of change to the physical environment and, more detrimental, to

social connections among residents can affect residents' attachment to their neighborhood. As a result, sense of community is weakened, as well as the identity of the neighborhood.

The two groups most likely to be affected by the changes that will inevitably accompany revitalization are long-time and newer resident groups. These groups, as a result of their length of residency, will be at different stages of the process of attachment to place. Design may reinforce long-time residents' attachments and encourage the development of newer residents attachment by supporting factors that contribute to this process.

Information gathered from residents of the Belmont-Fallon community confirmed the notion that place attachment is a continuum. Responses to interview questions provided insight as to the stages of this process. Physical associations initiate and may reinforce the process of attachment. However, ultimately bonds between people and place must result from social involvement, which produces deeper connections to both place and community.

Design Process

The process of design is also an important component of supporting the development of place attachment. Resident participation in the design of their neighborhood contributes to attachment to place, both for the information it may provide designers regarding the values and needs of the community, and for the social involvement and opportunity to contribute it affords participants.

The overall objectives of the design project were the following:

- Identify factors that contribute to or detract from long-time and newer residents development of attachment to place
- Determine long-time and newer residents level of attachment to their neighborhood
- Develop design alternatives based on processes that may support long-time and newer residents' attachment to place
- Develop design alternatives derived from the physical and social conditions of the neighborhood
- Test efficacy of design

Long-time and newer residents' needs, their levels of attachments, and the culture of the neighborhood was largely identified through interviews of Belmont-Fallon residents. Trace observations provided additional information regarding the physical qualities of space that residents preferred. And the inventory and analysis of the site confirmed and revealed potentials and limitations of the design project. This information was then applied to the Design Criteria, which had been developed from a review of literature on the subject of place attachment.

The Design Criteria was a useful means of organizing and addressing the spatial-social qualities that may contribute to the development of place attachment. It was also helpful in identifying the qualities that most relate to the conditions and issues of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood, and more specifically long-time and newer resident groups. These qualities were considered in terms of these criteria and design implications were developed for the neighborhood. The criteria are intended to be a framework and therefore may be applicable to any design project or planning effort that seeks to support the processes of community life and place attachment.

The interviews, although they required the greatest amount of investment, (aside from the literature review) contributed most to my understanding of the process of place attachment and the culture of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood. The value of talking with residents should be emphasized. Even the keenest observer may not be privy to such information regarding the values and desires of residents. For instance, visits to the neighborhood would most likely not have revealed that the Old Firehouse is a symbol of community for many of the residents, or that residents highly value convenience, and most desire the addition of amenities that help them to complete their routine tasks.

Design

The design implications identified for the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood may aid designers and planners in supporting the process of place attachment for long-time and newer residents of the neighborhood. As the diagrammatic interpretation and evaluation, and subsequent recommendations suggested: incorporation of these implications may satisfy basic needs, encourage physical associations, and provide accommodations for the

development of social connections. Programming is a critical component of this process. The most successful aspect of this project is the potential programming of the Clinic, which will relate to wellness. This program will encourage repeat visits, regular use, and a diversity of activities.

Recommendations regarding potential programming were provided in the diagrammatic evaluation.

In its current form, the final design alternative addresses to an extent many of the design implications for the development of place attachment in the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood. However, the exercise of evaluating the design revealed that in order to most effectively support the processes that contribute to place attachment, a greater commitment should be made to many of the design implications. It is evident through this exercise, and the subsequent recommendations that resulted from this evaluation, that making such a commitment can help to shape and define a place. Such shape and definition in itself may imbue a space with meaning and character that may then be further defined by its community. This final design alternative is therefore a draft, a step in the right direction toward supporting the process of place attachment. The

suggested revisions, noted qualitatively and in most cases diagrammatically, may be incorporated into a masterplan for the Wellness Center and may more aptly meet the requirements for supporting residents' attachment to place.

Implications to Professionals

The bonds between people and place are important and may be achieved by supporting the processes that contribute to these bonds. Landscape architects are in a unique position to affect and support the development of these connections. Such bonds may improve not only relationships between people and place, but also provide a greater sense of community and a stronger identity of place (two larger problems affecting many locales world-wide.)

Further Research

In the course of this project and its evaluation, there are questions raised that go beyond the scope of this project. Exploration of these questions may build on this research and provide a larger and more complete body of work. The following are questions that were raised during the project:

It seems logical that physical elements may help to reinforce long-time residents attachments to place. To what extent may these elements reinforce attachment? Or can they?

New communities many times do not have the benefit of distinct physical elements that may help initiate attachment. Are there other elements that may help to develop associations to environment and initiate attachment in newer communities?

What issues and conditions might affect residents' attachment in neighborhoods in decline, and not slated for revitalizations? As social connections break down, how might design slow this process and strengthen attachment to place? Or can it?

How might the correlation between the length of time new residents stay in a neighborhood and their degree of attachment affect mobility? What are the implications of place attachment on the lack of rootedness?

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Appendices

Belmont-Fallon Demographic Profile

Data provided by the City of Roanoke Department of Planning Building and Development

Ethnic Groups	Up/ down	+/-	2000 #
Overall Population	Down	-7%	4,411
White Population	Down	-8%	88%
African American	Up	+4%	7%
Other minorities	Up	+4%	5%
Age Groups	Up/ down	+/-	2000#
0 – 17	Down	-1%	28%
18 – 39	Down	-3%	30%
40 – 64	Up	+6%	30%
65+	Down	-3%	12%
Housing	Up/Down	+/-	2000#
Occupied Unites	Down	-83	1643
Owned Units	Down	2%	50%
Rented Units	Up	2%	50%
Persons per household	Down	.07	2.68
Compared to rest of Roanoke	Belmont-Fallon	Roanoke	Difference
Median Household Income	\$22,008	\$30,719	-\$8,711
Below Poverty Level	32%	16%	+16%
Owner Occupied	50%	56%	-6%
Renter Occupied	50%	44%	+6%
Persons per household	2.68	2.30	+.38
Median house value	mid-\$40,000	low-\$80,000	-\$40,000
Rents below \$400 per month	76%	55%	+21%
Units	Public & Subsidized		
Total Housing	1726		
Public Housing	80		
Publicly Subsidized	100		

Interview Sample: Long-time Residents

<i>Length of Time in Neighborhood</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>
50+ years	M	Late 60s	Single/ divorced	White	Owens
69 years	F	69	Widow/children/ grandchildren	White	Owens
51 years	F	54	Single	White	Owner
40+ years	F	50s	Married, grown children	White	Lives with Aunt who owns house
27 years	F	70s	Single	White	Owner
46 years	F	66	Married/children/ grandchildren	White	She and husband own
55 years	F	Late 70s	Widow/children/ grandchildren/great- grandchildren	White	Owner
18 years	M	42	Divorced/children/ grandchildren	White	Owens
56 years	F	84	Widow/children/ grandchildren/great- grandchildren	White	Owner
36 years	F	66	Single	White	Owens
51 years	F	Late 60s/early 70s	Married/children/ grandchildren/ great- grandchildren	White	She and husband own
51 years	M	Late 60s/early 70s	Married/children/ grandchildren/great- grandchildren	White	He and wife own

Interview Sample: New Residents

<i>Length of Time in Neighborhood</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>
Less than 1 year	M	mid-late 20s	Married	Mexican	Owens with wife
Less than 1 year	F	mid-late 20s	Married	White	Owens with husband
7 years	M	42	Married	White	Rents
1 year	F	47	Married/ children	White	Lease to buy
1 year	M	42	Married/ children	White	Lease to buy
1.5 years	F	Late 20s/early 30s	Married	White	Owens with husband
1.5 years	M	Late 20s/early 30s	Married	White	Owens with wife
7 Years	M	49	Married	White	Rents
6.5 years	M	mid-late 30s	Single	White	Owens
	F		Married/Children	White	Owens with husband
10 years	M	late 30s/ early 40s	Divorced/children	White	Owens

Interview Questions

1. How long have you lived in Belmont-Fallon?
2. What made you choose to move to Belmont-Fallon? (or if long-time resident) what made your family come here? What things about Belmont-Fallon have made you want to stay?
3. Do you think there is anything about your neighborhood that makes it unique?
4. If I were thinking of moving to Belmont-Fallon, and wanted to know a little bit about the neighborhood, how would you describe it to me?
5. Are there social qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as nice neighbors or visiting with your neighbors? Are there places where you usually see or talk to people in your neighborhood? Are there social qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood, such as not having much contact with your neighbors or disruptive groups of people? Is there anything that you would like to be different about the social life in your neighborhood?
6. Are there things that can improve your sense of belonging to your neighborhood? Are there things that currently reduce your sense of belonging?
7. Are there physical qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as the streets, the houses or the yards? Are there physical qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood?
8. Are there places in your neighborhood that you visit regularly? If so, what are they? Who else is there? What do you like about these places?
9. If you were to visit an outdoor place, such as a park or a garden, what kinds of things would you like there to be there?
10. Do you tend to drive or walk through your neighborhood? When you walk (or drive) on one of the quieter streets of your neighborhood, could you tell me some of the places and things you may notice?
11. Are there places or things within the neighborhood that that you would miss if they were removed, such as gathering places, landmarks, or an old tree? What is special about these places?
12. When you think of Belmont Fallon can you tell me some of the images that come to mind of places, people, or things?
13. Would you mind sharing with me some of your memories about the neighborhood?

Interview Analysis: Long-time Residents

1. How long have you lived in Belmont Fallon?

Of the 12 persons interviewed, 4 have lived in the Belmont-Fallon area their whole life. 2 respondents were born in the area, left for an extended period of time, and returned later in life. The remaining moved into the area as adults. All respondents have lived in the area for a large portion of their lives.

2. What made you choose to move to Belmont Fallon? (or if long-time resident) what made your family come here? What things about Belmont-Fallon have made you want to stay?

Of the 12 persons interviewed, 3 indicated that they or their family chose to settle in the area because of its proximity to American Viscose, a plant that produced rayon fibers and which was within walking distance of the Belmont-Fallon neighborhood. One of the respondents worked directly for the plant, American Viscose employed a second participant's husband and father, and the third's parents and grandparents worked for the company. The plant closed in 1959 and is no

longer in existence, though an industrial center is in operation at this site.

N&W Railyard, also within walking distance of the Belmont Fallon neighborhood, and which later became the Norfolk & Southern Railyards was at one time the largest employer for the area. Of those interviewed, 1 respondent's parents settled in the area to work for the rail yard. Her father-in-law was also employed by N&W.

Either American Viscose or the N&W Railroad employed one to two generations of many families in the area. Following the closing of American Viscose in 1959 and the later transfer of the Norfolk and Southern offices to Atlanta, many families chose to continue to live in the neighborhood.

Proximity to the workplace influenced two other respondents' decision to settle in the area as well, one to be near to the fire department, where her husband worked frequently as a fireman, and the second because the neighborhood marked the halfway point between he and his spouse's jobs.

Later generations have chosen to return to the neighborhood because of family and friends who live in the

area. Three respondents indicated that this influenced their decision to settle in the neighborhood. 2 returned to Belmont-Fallon, one after a short leave, and the second as a retiree.

Twelve percent of the Belmont-Fallon population is an aging population, over 64 years old. As a result, some residents have returned to the neighborhood to care for ailing parents. Of those interviewed, 2 respondents returned for this reason and elected to stay in Belmont-Fallon following the passing of their parents. One of the respondents was left the family home and chose to settle here rather than sell.

The cost of housing in the neighborhood is low. In fact, by today's standards, as compared to the rest of the city of Roanoke, a home in Belmont-Fallon is almost half the value. This influenced 3 respondents decision to remain and relocate to the area. One interviewee indicated that it was a choice between educating their children and living elsewhere.

Residents' reasons for staying in the neighborhood vary. Overwhelmingly residents indicated that the location of the neighborhood and its proximity to necessary amenities, both within the neighborhood and along its periphery, have influenced their decision to stay. These amenities include: schools, parks, churches, drug stores, a post office, grocery

stores, a hospital, bus service, and a fire station. Most of these amenities, the schools, the parks, the churches, and the drug stores, still exist within the neighborhood and are within walking distance of most residents. As one resident put it, "(Belmont-Fallon) had everything that a growing family would need."

Residents lament the loss of grocery stores within the neighborhood. At one time there existed numerous smaller neighborhood grocery stores, and one large chain store on 9th Street. (The need for a grocery store within the neighborhood has been recognized in the 2003 neighborhood plan developed by the city and neighborhood.) In addition, presently there are postal services available at Wonder Drug, located near 13th Street and Jamison Avenue. This store is slated to close. The next nearest post office is outside the periphery of the neighborhood. However, there is a mailbox within the CVS drug store located at 9th Street and Bullitt Avenue.

The friendliness of people within the neighborhood as well as the sense of community, were also factors that influenced many of the respondents decision to stay, and for one of the respondents to relocate to the neighborhood. Responses from residents included: "more of a community", "I

like being part of a community,” “friendly neighbors,” “most of the neighbors are nice,” and “being somewhere else you had few neighbors that you knew.”

The housing in the area also played a role in residents’ choice to stay or return to Belmont-Fallon. Two respondents indicated that they prefer older homes. One respondent indicated when she was a child she had an affinity for the house she now lives in. A third was renting her home, and liked it, so decided to buy. As well, two others reflected on how well the homes were once kept.

Seven of the 12 residents indicated that basically they just like it in Belmont-Fallon, that it is comfortable to them, and that it is home.

A number of the respondents raised children and now have grandchildren in the area. They noted that their children or grandchildren’s satisfaction with the neighborhood has/had affected their desire to stay.

Three of the residents noted that, in the not so distant future, they will not physically be able to continue to care for their homes or will not need as much space. At this point they anticipate that they will have to make a decision whether they will move from their homes.

3. Do you think there is anything about your neighborhood that makes it unique?

When asked what residents feel makes their neighborhood unique all responded that the people make their neighborhood special. Some reflected on the characteristics of their neighborhood that made it unique ‘back then.’ Some of these responses included “growing up sitting on the porch in the summer, everybody’s outside, everybody talks,” “neighbor helping neighbor,” and “you knew everybody in your area.”

For most this relationship between the residents and persons in their neighborhood continues to exist today. Most described their neighbors today as friendly, decent, and good. Also, some shared stories of their neighbors helping them or them helping their neighbors. As well, some also noted that many of the people in the neighborhood know them, or have known them all their lives.

Though all had positive comments about the residents of Southeast, some of the respondents are also feeling the affects of the population changes in their neighborhood. Two of the respondents indicated that many of the people that they knew on their block have passed away or have moved. Both said they do not know their neighbors anymore. One felt that

the new people moving into the neighborhood do not want to get to know their neighbors and are not interested in associating with their neighbors.

Most residents identified the neighborhood's location and its proximity to almost anywhere in the city as a unique quality.

Three of the persons interviewed noted that the homes in the neighborhood are a unique characteristic of Belmont-Fallon. Two commented on the quality of the homes, and the third indicated that he was hopeful for the improvements slated (through the SE by Design project) for the homes in the neighborhood. Two of the residents commented on the run down condition of the homes and the decrease in homeownership in the area, which they feel detracts from the uniqueness of the area.

Two of the residents indicated that the age of the homes, and the neighborhood itself, is a unique quality.

Two reflected on the safety of the neighborhood when they were younger, commenting that no one locked their doors. They noted that they do not feel this same safety and trust today, and lock the doors at all times of the day.

4. If I were thinking of moving to Belmont Fallon, and wanted to know a little bit about the neighborhood, how would you describe it to me?

There was less of a consensus on this question. Most of the respondents had few comments.

Four of the longtime residents described the neighborhood in general terms indicating that it was both good and bad. That a lot of the neighborhood is run down but that it is a pretty good neighborhood.

Four respondents noted problems with rental properties, the decrease in home ownership and the abundance of rental units in the neighborhood. Most identified these conditions as detracting from the quality of the neighborhood. Comments included: "every house that looks bad is usually a rental" and "rentals just don't take pride in their property," and "if it were your home you would take care of it."

Three residents noted that many of the homes are run down, not kept up anymore, or need to be torn down.

Two respondents made references to income level and persons who would be interested in moving to the neighborhood. Both indicated that anyone who had money would not be interested in living in this neighborhood. One

resident felt the diversity of financial situations of persons in the neighborhood might hinder improvements.

Two residents noted that the people in the neighborhood are nice and decent. Two described the atmosphere of the neighborhood as quiet. Two noted that the schools in the neighborhood are a positive attribute. Two residents feel the number of churches in the area is an asset to the neighborhood. And two residents commented on the renovations that have been made to the Old Firehouse.

Two respondents noted that there are few children on their block. And two residents identified the traffic along Bullitt and Jamison Avenues as being dangerous.

5. Are there social qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as nice neighbors or visiting with your neighbors? Are there places where you usually see or talk to people in your neighborhood? Are there social qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood, such as not having much contact with your neighbors or disruptive groups of people? Is there anything that you would like to be different about the social life in your neighborhood?

When asked what social qualities residents liked about their neighborhood over half responded that the churches in the neighborhood were a social quality that they liked. Most

commented on the work the churches do to help the community and that there are many churches close by.

Five of the residents commented on the nice neighbors in their neighborhood. Four residents remarked on the unique relationship between neighbors. Many of the neighbors look out for one another. Neighbors check in with one another, and help one another. One of the respondents noted that neighbors did look out for one another, but he does not experience this with his neighbors today.

The police substation that has recently been introduced to the neighborhood, and which is now housed in the Old Firehouse provides a sense of comfort for a number of the residents. Four residents commented that they feel safer with the substation in the neighborhood and are thankful that it is there.

There are many persons in the neighborhood that have lived here for many years. These persons are an important part of the neighborhood and stand out in many of the residents' minds. Three of the residents interviewed named a number of people who have lived in the neighborhood for many years and described their relationship or association with them.

Three of the residents shared with me information about their grandchildren. Some of the residents' grandchildren live nearby and they are very active in their lives, each of those who commented on their grandchildren for this question care for them periodically, some on a regular basis. They noted that they enjoy participating or watching their grandchildren in activities. For a number of residents, activities with their grandchildren are a large part of their social lives.

The majority of the respondent's social activities take place at the local churches or church activities. Ten of the twelve persons interviewed indicated that they primarily interact with their neighbors at church activities. These activities include services, bible study, volunteering, eating together, participating in church ball leagues, and participating in community meetings and seminars. Many of the churches also hold events periodically where the entire neighborhood is invited, these include cookouts, community meetings, and special events. One of the respondents indicated that she and her husband often attend or participate in preparation for these neighborhood events.

Three residents indicated that the majority of their interaction with neighbors takes place near their home, and

with neighbors that live in close proximity. One of the three respondents is recovering from an illness, and a second is disabled. The third respondent said he is usually just tired after working long hours and therefore does not get out much.

Also around the home, three of the residents indicated that they usually interact with their neighbors while they are out on their porch. Here they said you can talk to your neighbors, see what the neighbors are doing, that it is relaxing, and that it is cool.

Four of the persons interviewed commented affectionately regarding the Old Firehouse located on Jamison Avenue. This firehouse closed as a fire station in 1979, however it remained active as a community center for the neighborhood. A neighborhood group, the SE Action Forum, took over management of the building and its operation, paying the city \$1 a month for nearly 22 years. They put a great deal of effort into maintaining it; raising funds for its upkeep, paying the insurance on it, painting it, putting a roof on it, and fencing it. Here they also held SE Action Forum meetings, community dinners, and other community affairs.

As a result of the cost of maintaining it, the Forum recently forfeited its control of operation of the building to the

city. The city is now responsible for its upkeep and has moved, upon the request of residents, a police substation into the first floor of the building. The Old Firehouse continues to be the location of SE Action Forum meetings held the first Tuesday night of every month and remains a community building, and, for many of the long-time residents, a symbol of the SE community. Three of the four residents who mentioned the firehouse are currently members of the Forum; the fourth is a prior member.

The parks in the area are a place where some of the residents interact with neighbors. Though the number of residents interviewed who interact with neighbors at either Jackson Park or Fallon Park, 3 residents, is much fewer than the churches and near the home.

The activities that these residents participate in at the parks are primarily group activities. One of the residents indicated that she has attended church, family, or special events at the picnic shelter at Fallon Park. A second resident noted that he and his grandsons frequent the play equipment at Fallon Park. Here there are often other children and parents that they have a friendly interaction with.

Neighborhood events are offered at Jackson Park, such as festivals and exhibits. Only one respondent indicated that she and her husband visit these events. A second resident indicated that she visits Jackson Park because it is close by.

The public library is also located near Jackson Park. Two residents indicated that they visit the library fairly regularly.

The neighborhood has sidewalks on most streets. One of the residents explained that she has some casual interaction with other persons in the neighborhood along the route that she walks her dog. She also said that most of her interaction is with older people because they have more time, though she does not know their names.

The Hardees on 9th Street is a gathering place for a breakfast group of older men and women, mostly men though. According to one of the residents most of the group know each other, though anyone is welcome to join in. They meet and talk over breakfast. I asked the resident if he participates, he replied once in awhile but not very often.

Three residents offered explanations why they did not or currently do not interact with their neighbors. These reasons included differences in age, working, illness, people do not

want to talk and meet unless you are close friends, and does not feel welcome visiting neighbor's properties.

When asked what social qualities residents did not like about the neighborhood, five respondents replied that the rental properties were a quality they did not like. Issues related to the rental properties included: lack of care, high turnover, they do not go to church, and association with crime in the area.

Four residents also indicated that disruptive groups in the neighborhood were a problem. These groups, it was felt, were probably responsible for vandalism and theft in the area. Most indicated that these groups were most likely kids or youth. Most of the residents who commented on the disruptive groups in the area attributed these activities to the children's upbringing.

For a number of the residents, one third of those interviewed, being alone impacts the quality of their social life in the neighborhood. Most indicated that they do not like to do activities by themselves, and for some, as a result of their age or health, there are things they cannot do by themselves, such as not being able to drive to activities.

Two residents indicated that they do not know the neighbors on their block. Two claimed that safety affects the

social quality of the neighborhood. Two residents lamented that the neighborhood no longer has a grocery store. And two residents identified drinking within the neighborhood as a problem, though they also said that the people who do drink do not bother them.

Residents had a number of suggestions regarding things that could be added to the neighborhood to enhance its social quality. Three residents indicated that the addition of a restaurant would enhance the social quality of the neighborhood. All concluded that the type of restaurant they would like in their neighborhood would be family oriented and affordable. Such a place, according to the respondents, would provide a place to meet with, sit, and talk to neighbors.

Two residents noted that street or block parties would be a good way to meet people and for the community to come together.

Two residents expressed the desire for additional organized activities within the neighborhood. Suggestions for such activities included: classes in ceramics, sewing classes, bridge groups, and Canasta groups.

Two of the residents noted the need for programs for children. One of the respondents suggested a recreational center for kids in the neighborhood.

Additional recommendations included more children in the area, activities for seniors, places to work in the area, a health clinic, gardens, cookouts, and greater interest and involvement by the community.

6. Are there things that can improve your sense of belonging to your neighborhood? Are there things that currently reduce your sense of belonging?

When asked if there was anything that could improve their sense of belonging to their neighborhood, half of the residents interviewed responded that having lived in the neighborhood as long as they have, they feel at home, they are comfortable here.

Though many are comfortable in the neighborhood some expressed concerns regarding the proposed changes for the neighborhood. Four residents shared their fears of encroachment from business and highways. Most of their responses related to the proposed extension of I-73 through the southwest corner of the neighborhood, which would radically change this area of the neighborhood, taking many homes and

turning some roads into dead end streets. Other concerns related to the proposed expansion of 13th Street, and uncertainty as to what changes this will bring to the neighborhood. Two residents expressed their fears of businesses encroaching on the residential areas of the neighborhood, and qualms about the types of businesses these might be, such as fast food restaurants. Also, two residents mentioned the expansion of the Carilion Health Services, which is planning to expand into a large portion of land along the southern boundary of the neighborhood and tear down buildings that have been there for decades, such as the Heironimus Warehouse. One resident remarked, “I hope the hospital doesn’t expand into this area.” The Rescue Mission located on Tazewell Avenue, near the northwestern corner of the neighborhood is also planning to expand. One resident shared his concern regarding the affect this might have on the neighborhood, noting that it “may cause trouble.”

Some residents interviewed are hopeful for the improvements that are being proposed for the neighborhood. Three of the residents commented on the SE by Design project, noting that it “is going to make a difference.” One resident expressed his skepticism that residents will be able to make the

improvements to their homes, remarking that many cannot afford to.

Three residents responded if the traffic were alleviated they would feel a greater sense of belonging. Each of these residents lives along the busy streets of Bullitt and Jamison Avenues. Two live between the two streets and one lives on one side of the connector road. One of the residents responded, “I feel if the traffic cleared up none of us would want to move.”

Being alone or the prospect of being alone is an issue that is facing some of the long-time residents in the neighborhood. One person interviewed is grieving from the loss of their spouse, and no longer feels comfortable interacting with neighbors when not part of a couple. Another resident expressed that she would not feel as safe or comfortable in the neighborhood without her spouse, and does not think she would continue to live in the neighborhood if she were by herself.

Two women that I spoke with said they do not feel afraid in the neighborhood. One said she walks and is not afraid to walk by herself. The second woman said that she feels safe, especially with her husband here. She also commented that it is comforting that the police substation has

opened in the neighborhood, and that she might feel safer if individuals owned more of the homes.

Not knowing the neighbors detracts from two of the residents’ sense of belonging to the neighborhood.

7. Are there physical qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as the streets, houses or yards? Are there physical qualities that you don’t like about your neighborhood?

When asked what physical qualities residents liked about the neighborhood seven respondents indicated that they like the police activity and presence in the area. Most commented that they feel safer with the increased level of police presence in the neighborhood. Two mentioned that they appreciate that the policemen and women who are active in the community, befriending residents, purchasing a house, and attending meetings.

Six residents interviewed expressed an affinity for the homes in the neighborhood. A few showed their pride for their own homes, comments included “my house is about 80 years old” and “my house was built in 1904, one of the first in the neighborhood.” And some noted that they like the age and character of the homes in the neighborhood.

Three residents identified their porches as a physical quality they love. These residents explained that they enjoy sitting on their porches and use their porches often. One of the residents also noted that the swing that is on her porch was “from mama and daddy’s porch.”

Two residents noted that they like the flowers that the city plants in the median strips (especially 9th Street), at the parks, and throughout the city. A third resident mentioned that she likes that many people try to plant flowers in their yards.

Three residents indicated that they are satisfied with the layout and condition of the streets in the neighborhood.

Three residents noted that the location of the neighborhood to various amenities is a characteristic that they like about the neighborhood.

Three residents commented on the upkeep of the properties and public areas in the area. One resident feels the yards and sidewalks are kept up fairly well. Two residents feel the upkeep of the neighborhood is improving, and said they try to do their part to help keep the neighborhood clean.

Two residents indicated that the emergency services in the area are very good and located nearby.

Two residents commented that sidewalks throughout the neighborhood are a physical quality they like. One of the residents explained that SE is “a good place to walk.”

Two residents noted that they like ‘old things.’ One of the residents identified the old churches in the area as a physical quality she likes.

The parks in the area are a physical quality that two of the residents interviewed like. One of the residents indicated that she likes that there is a swimming pool at Fallon Park.

Residents also shared with me physical qualities about the neighborhood they do not like. Though many of the residents interviewed like the homes in the area, five residents also indicated they do not like the condition of some of the homes in the area. One of the residents expressed her frustration that the city continues to tear down old houses. Another resident noted that he does not like the ‘cracker box houses’ being built in the neighborhood.

Four residents discussed the problems with some of rental properties in the neighborhood. Comments related to the length of time renters stay in these units, the quality of people renting some of these properties, and some renters lack of care of the properties. Two of the residents explained that some of

the renters in their area “drink beers and throw them in the yard.”

Three respondents identified traffic as a physical quality and problem of the neighborhood. Residents commented on the speed of traffic, difficulty crossing the roads, and fears of grandchildren playing near this traffic.

Three residents noted that they do not like that there is not a grocery store located within the neighborhood.

Two residents commented on the landscaping in the neighborhood. One of the residents feels that landscaping is not available to the neighborhood because of the cost of landscaping. A second resident identified places in the neighborhood that could benefit from landscaping, such as the corner of Elm Street, near the entrance to the neighborhood. Also two residents identified the loss of trees in the neighborhood as a quality they do not like. And two residents do not like the Section 8 housing that is in the neighborhood.

Residents did have some recommendations of amenities that may improve the physical quality of the neighborhood. These recommendations included a family restaurant, suggested by four residents, a health clinic suggested by two

residents, and lighting, recommended by one of the residents interviewed.

8. Are there places in your neighborhood that you visit regularly? If so, what are they? Who else is there? What do you like about these places?

Nine of the residents interviewed indicated that they go to church regularly. Three of the residents noted that, “people at church are people you’ve known all your life,” they are “those who have come for years and years.” One of the residents also noted that the church cares for children after school.

When asked what they like about the church comments ranged from its proximity, to talking with people, to eating together, to programs the churches offer, such as speakers for older people, to ball leagues, to community meetings and events.

Five residents responded that they visit the CVS on 9th Street regularly. None had comments as to what they liked about the store, except one resident noted that it has a mailbox.

Residents indicated that there are a number of places that they visit regularly that are located outside the

neighborhood. Three residents visit the grocery store, and one the Hallmark store that is downtown. One of the residents also works at the Market downtown. Another resident participates in an adult group that meets outside the neighborhood.

Two residents visit the parks in the neighborhood on a regular basis. One of the respondents visits Jackson Park for its festivals, and the second visits Fallon Park with his grandsons. He enjoys watching the kids and some of the parents at the park.

Two residents frequent the Advance Auto store on 13th Street. They are satisfied with the service at the store, and one commented, "I like Greg, he helps me."

9. If you were to visit an outdoor place, such as a park or a garden, what kinds of things would you like there to be there?

When asked what things residents might like in an outdoor place I received a wide range of suggestions and some insight into the qualities that currently exist.

Four of the residents proudly shared with me the number of grandchildren, and for some great-grandchildren that they have. Some indicated that they participate in the

children's activities by watching their ball games or watching them play.

Most of the responses were of suggestions of what they would like to have in an outdoor area. Some of the shared wishes are listed below:

6 residents indicated they would like benches. One of the residents commented that "a place to sit down would be nice," another described, "would be nice if two or three people wanted to they could sit and talk."

6 respondents noted that they would like trees. Two of the six residents commented that there are no woods in the area. Two lamented the loss of trees in the neighborhood. Two residents indicated they would like some trees for shade. And one resident recommended specific trees such as dogwood and rosebud.

Two residents commented that they like flowers and would like to see flowers in an outdoor place. One went further to say, "I'll go visit flower gardens."

Two residents indicated they would like a small park in the area that is within close proximity, that the "closest one is up that way."

Some of the residents enjoy watching wildlife. Two of the residents interviewed expressed that they enjoy watching the birds and bees and other wildlife in their yard.

10. Do you tend to drive or walk through your neighborhood? When you walk (or drive) on one of the quieter streets of your neighborhood, could you tell me some of the places and things you may notice?

8 residents replied that they primarily drive through their neighborhood, though 5 residents responded they also walk for exercise. Two of the residents do not drive, one must depend on others to get around the neighborhood, and the other respondent walks to nearby destinations.

Residents interviewed primarily notice the upkeep of properties and the homes. Four residents noted that they notice when properties are cared for, when it is not cared for, or when there have been changes made to a property. Three residents indicated that they look more specifically at the homes themselves, the work that is being done to them, and the style and architecture of the homes. And two residents replied that they notice the landscaping in the yards, how people arrange the rocks and flowers, and the flowers that are planted by the city.

Some other qualities that residents may notice included: two residents noted they notice whether they feel safe in an area (both respondents were female), two responded that they notice whether the sidewalks are getting bad, two notice the volume of traffic, and two notice the garbage that is storage in the yards and on front porches.

11. Are there places or things within the neighborhood that you would miss if they were removed, such as gathering places, landmarks, or an old tree? What is special about these places?

When asked what places or things in the neighborhood residents would miss if they were removed, three residents responded that they would miss everything.

Residents also noted specific things and qualities they would miss. Six residents indicated that they would miss some of the stores. These stores included, drug stores, in particular Wonder Drug, which delivers your medicine and also has a barber shop and beauty shop within it. They would also miss the Advance Store, CVS, Salibas, Arby's, beauty shops in the area, and the bread store. Stores outside the neighborhood that residents would miss included: Food Lion, Galaxy grocery

stores, and Walmart. Three residents commented that they would miss the convenience.

Four residents indicated that they would miss the parks in the neighborhood, Jackson and Fallon Park. Some of the residents shared with me memories of playing in the park when they were younger. This included playing ‘down on the Hill’ in Jackson Park, organized activities in the summer time, and attending parties at the Buena Vista House, the ‘Big House,’ as teens. One gentleman commented on his use of Fallon Park today, “if the park wasn’t there my grandsons would have no place to go, I’d have to drive.”

Three residents indicated that they would not want the churches to be removed. Two churches in the neighborhood recently closed, one closed because of low membership, the other I am not certain as to why it closed. One of the residents commented, “I’d hate to see anymore churches closed.”

Two residents indicated that they would miss the new fire station located on 14th street. Also, two residents identified the police substation as an amenity they would miss.

The homes in the area were identified by two of the residents as something they would miss if they were removed.

Although I did not specifically ask residents what they miss in the neighborhood, a number shared with me their sorrow for places and things that have been removed from the neighborhood.

Two residents expressed their sadness over the closure of Belmont Methodist Church. One respondent replied, “Belmont Methodist, I was a member of and it recently closed, it broke my heart.”

Two residents were sad to see the grocery stores, both the larger chain store and the numerous neighborhood stores, leave the neighborhood.

There used to be trees throughout the neighborhood. Two residents are sad that these have been removed and not replaced, one of the residents commented, “I really miss the trees we used to have around.”

One resident expressed his feelings regarding the drug store that used to be on 9th Street. Here he said, “you could go in there and get a drink, sit down, he sold candy, as you got older it was kind of a place to stop and meet people, and sit. He had a little bar stool sitting, you could sit and talk to friends and neighbors.”

Another resident was sad to see the closure of Jefferson High School, where she and many other long-time residents went to school. Many of the residents also attended Jackson Middle School. The school has recently undergone renovations. One resident expressed his sadness to see the entrance to the school changed and the two big oak doors replaced.

Many of the streets used to be cobblestone. Up until recently part of 6th Street was cobblestone. One of the residents expressed that she liked that the street was cobblestone, and was sad that it was paved over it.

12. When you think of Belmont Fallon can you tell me some of the images that come to mind of places, people, or things?

When long-time residents were asked what images come to mind when they think of the neighborhood, half responded that they think of the schools. Many reflected on their time at Morningside Elementary, Jackson Middle School, and Jefferson High School. Many of these residents' children also attended these schools. Residents recall the nice teachers and walking to school with other neighborhood children (students were not bused to school then).

One third of the residents recalled playing at Fallon and Jackson Parks and the activities and games that were organized for the children and teens. These activities included ball teams, different games, picnicking, and watermelon feasts.

One third of the residents also recalled memories of their children growing up in the neighborhood. Some commented on the nature of rearing children then, anyone would correct a child that was misbehaving and that was expected.

Three residents noted the various amenities that were in the neighborhood and the neighborhood's convenience and proximity to jobs.

Two commented on specific homes in the neighborhood. One resident remembered a home he had always admired with a wrap around porch (though this porch has since been changed), and the second remembered the large white house her sister had lived in on Bullitt Avenue (this is the house that is adjacent to the project site).

Two remember the churches. One of the residents commented, "the church has always been a part of our lives, so we think about that."

And two residents thought fondly of the friendly neighbors when they were younger. These neighbors came to visit and talk.

13. Would you mind sharing with me some of your memories about the neighborhood?

Seven of the residents interviewed shared with me memories about schools in the area and school activities. Some reflected on their time at Jamison Elementary (which was located at the site of the new fire station on 14th Street and Jamison Avenue), Jackson Middle School, and Jefferson High School. ‘The three J’s,’ as one resident described it. Another resident attended Belmont Elementary, which was located at the site of the current Salvation Army. Others noted which schools their children, grand children, and great-grandchildren have attended or are currently enrolled. Their memories included walking to school, attending school, the nice teachers, and belonging to the Parent Teachers Association.

Five residents reflected on jobs they held over the years. One resident’s father worked for the Norfolk and Western Railroad. She remembers the whistle that marked the workday. The whistle still blows today at 7:00 a.m., 12:00

noon, 12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. She also recalled the dirt, or the ‘coal dust,’ that the trains would dispel. This dirt she said would be thick on the porch and she remembers having to “clean like the dickens.” Some recalled their parents going to work in the area, but many reflected on their own jobs over the years. Most of the women interviewed worked over the years and all shared with me the places, and often the decades, they held these positions.

Raising children was a large part of residents’ lives and experiences in the neighborhood. Five residents shared with me memories of their children growing up in the neighborhood. Two of the residents’ children learned to walk on the sidewalk in front of their homes. One of the residents recalls his daughter and her first bike out on the sidewalk in front of his home. Also, residents noted the differences in child rearing then, everyone in the community would help to raise children. If a child misbehaved some one would set her straight.

Two residents remember walking to various places in the neighborhood. One of the residents noted that she “used to walk to everything.”

Two residents remember stores in the area, one Garland's Drug Store (which is now Wonder Drug), and the second a family owned store.

Two residents recalled the streetcars that used to run from 9th Street and Jamison Avenue down to the American Viscose plant.

And two residents mentioned family members that are also from the neighborhood.

Interview Analysis: Newer Residents

1. How long have you lived in Belmont Fallon?

Analysis:

Of the 11 newer residents interviewed, one is a homeowner who has lived in the Belmont-Fallon area for ten years, three are home owners that have lived in the neighborhood for more than six years, two are home owners who have lived in the area for over a year, two are homeowners who have lived in the neighborhood for almost a year, two are leasing with the option to buy and have lived in the area for slightly under a year, and two are renters who have lived in Belmont-Fallon for seven years.

2. What made you choose to move to Belmont Fallon? (or if long-time resident) what made your family come here? What things about Belmont-Fallon have made you want to stay?

When residents were asked what influenced their decision to move to the Belmont-Fallon area, five respondents indicated that the value of the homes in the area was the primary factor. Three of the residents noted that they were looking to buy a home and the homes in the neighborhood are

reasonably priced. The other two respondents are renters and indicated that the price for rent was one of the lowest in the area. And it is the cost of rent that is keeping them in the neighborhood.

Four residents indicated that they felt moved to locate to the neighborhood because of their desire to minister to the poor. There are some broken and lower income families in the area. These residents felt that here was an opportunity to have a Christian influence in the neighborhood and make a difference.

Three residents indicated that the location of the neighborhood played an important role in their decision to move and stay in the area. Two of the respondents valued its proximity to their places of employment. One appreciates its proximity to downtown, and the third indicated that their home is not located near to any major roads saying, "I liked that the neighborhood wasn't right next to a highway or a big road because we wanted a dog."

For three of the residents the size of the yard was one of the prime factors affecting their decision of what home to buy. One resident replied, "all we cared about was a big yard," and a

second said, “we wanted a yard and it’s rare to have a yard around here.”

Three residents noted that the size of the homes attracted them to the neighborhood. They needed a bigger place to live. One resident mentioned that they already had property in the area, which they were renting out. It was convenient then to move into this home. They continue to rent half of the home.

Two residents indicated that they appreciate the close proximity of parks and recreational activities.

Sidewalks were a feature that drew one resident to the neighborhood. He walks to work and appreciated that there is a comprehensive sidewalk system throughout the neighborhood.

The friendliness of the neighborhood affected another resident’s decision to purchase a home in Southeast and stay in the area.

3. Do you think there is anything about your neighborhood that makes it unique?

When asked what residents felt was unique about the neighborhood five replied that the location of the area made it

unique. It is centrally located, near to downtown, malls, the hospital, and other activities.

Four of the residents commented on the homes in the area. Three respondents said they like the older homes and architecture. While one resident noted that portions of the housing in the area are run down.

Three residents indicated that the history of the neighborhood makes it unique. Residents shared with me what they knew of the area’s past. They noted that the homes are historic, some dating to the 1800s, its history with the railroad, the corner stores that were throughout the neighborhood, the industries, and stories of the Buena Vista plantation house located in Jackson Park.

Two described the personality of the neighborhood. These descriptions included: “a rugged sort of independence,” “a little more relaxed, more easy going,” and having “a small town feel.”

Two indicated that the people in the neighborhood make it unique. And that there are “a lot of good people.”

Two noted that the perception of the neighborhood is negative, and not a true reflection of what the neighborhood actually is like.

The natural features of the area also make it unique. Two respondents indicated that its proximity to the River makes it unique and different from other neighborhoods.

Other responses included the high level of community involvement, railroad, diversity, good neighbors, number of broken families, old industrial parks, and the Roanoke Star, which overlooks the neighborhood.

4. If I were thinking of moving to Belmont Fallon, and wanted to know a little bit about the neighborhood, how would you describe it to me?

When residents were asked how they would describe the neighborhood to fellow newcomers, seven residents provided descriptions of the atmosphere and personality of the neighborhood. Two residents described the neighborhood as peaceful and quiet. Two noted it is slower paced, easy going, and relaxing. One described the area as casual and laid back. Another resident indicated it is a working class neighborhood. And another resident described it as “home towny” and nice.

Four residents identified the diversity in the neighborhood, culturally, sexually, and in age, as a positive attribute of the neighborhood.

Four residents referred to the safety and police presence in the neighborhood. Two residents said they feel safe in the neighborhood. Both walk through the neighborhood; one is a male respondent and the other female. Each indicated that they do not feel unsafe or threatened in their neighborhood.

One resident expressed his satisfaction with the level of police presence in the neighborhood. And another noted that he has heard of crime in the area of 13th and Jamison Avenue, but that this is more likely because it is a commercial area between two main roads and therefore an easily accessible area.

Three referred to the friendliness of the neighborhood. Two of the three indicated that the neighborhood is generally friendly. Two indicated that the people generally keep to themselves but that they are nice.

Three residents indicated that the neighborhood’s location, close to downtown and the public library near Jackson Middle School, are valued features.

Two respondents identified areas that were more desirable to live. They noted that the areas nearer to the highways are less desirable due to absentee landlords and vagrancy. 10th Street and Dale Avenue were also identified as

an area that seems to have a high turnover of residents and higher crime. They noted that areas closer to Fallon Park are more stable and good for families. In addition one of the respondents also indicated that the area near to the Boys and Girls Club on 9th Street is also generally good for families.

The neighborhood is unique in that there are many generations of families who have lived here for many years. Two residents commented on this aspect of the neighborhood, one noting that it is rich in family history, and a second described the neighborhood as “old blood.”

The number of children in the neighborhood and playing in the streets and yards was greatly valued by two residents. One of the residents replied, “there are a lot of children in neighborhood which makes it a nice neighborhood.”

Two residents commented on disruptive groups in the neighborhood. One of the residents reflected on the youth in the area and their desire to be members of gangs. And the second resident indicated that she has not seen any gang activity in the area.

Other responses included: the cost of homes and the value for first time buyers, history of the homes, vagrancy, the Fallon Greenway, and the accepting nature of neighbors.

5. Are there social qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as nice neighbors or visiting with your neighbors? Are there places where you usually see or talk to people in your neighborhood? Are there social qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood, such as not having much contact with your neighbors or disruptive groups of people? Is there anything that you would like to be different about the social life in your neighborhood?

There were a number of social qualities about the neighborhood that newer residents value. Seven residents, over half of those interviewed, indicated that one of the social qualities they like most about the neighborhood is the level of community involvement by neighborhood organizations. Many cited groups that are active such as, the church groups, the PTAs, the Presbyterian Center, the Boys & Girls Club, the neighborhood watch groups, and the police. Often residents will organize for various clean up efforts, such as the 'adopt a lot' clean up program. One resident noted, “a source of pride for this neighborhood is its unified voice.” Another resident noted that she “had never seen such an active community.”

Two residents, however, indicated they would like to see more neighborhood direction and vision.

Five residents said they appreciate the friendliness of the neighborhood, that most people are friendly and nice.

The level of police presence in the neighborhood was valued by three of the residents. One resident said, “whenever I see them at meetings (the police officers), I’m like you rock.” Another resident said she appreciates the police substation located on Jamison Avenue

Two residents indicated that they highly value the neighborhood businesses. One of the residents referred to Eatwell Chili Shop on Bullitt Avenue. She appreciates this small restaurant for the atmosphere, service, and the conversation that comes with visiting a local neighborhood restaurant. A second resident described it as “the idea that the little stores might not have all the same things (as big stores) but the people actually talk to you.”

Two of the newer residents interviewed noted that they value the level of participation in the community centers and local churches.

Two respondents appreciate the various activities neighborhood organizations provide for the community such

as, festivals, Easter egg hunts, the swimming pool, and the playground equipment at Fallon Park and Jackson Park

Two respondents indicated that they appreciate that there are schools in the neighborhood.

Other places residents identified for the services they provide to the community were the Buena Vista House, public library, and Refuge and Immigration Services.

Other responses included, that many people are often outdoors, the wildlife in the area, and the development of the Belmont historic district.

Interaction with neighbors: Almost half of the newer residents interviewed indicated that interaction with their neighbors is minimal, and often requires them taking the initiative to interact.

Interaction usually takes place around the home, for one resident he checks on his neighbor at his neighbor’s home daily, others interact with their neighbors in the street, their yard, or their front porch.

One resident, who has been in the neighborhood for a longer length of time, interacts with her neighbors frequently. She and others on her block often host gatherings where many of the nearby neighbors are invited.

One respondent noted that he runs into his neighbors at businesses, within and outside the neighborhood.

Social qualities do not like: Six residents commented on the affect of rental units on the neighborhood. Two residents identified the high turnover, as a problem for the neighborhood, noting that it reduces sense of ownership over the property and the neighborhood. Two residents expressed that the more rental properties in the neighborhood, the less desirable an area it is. Though one respondent noted that other neighborhoods with a number of rental units are still desirable, and that it doesn't have to affect the quality of the neighborhood. Two residents also expressed their sorrow over the condition of many of these rental units. They identified the volume of people who are living in these units, and the lack of storage space that is available to them. They also noted that the condition of the units is not the fault of those renting, but is the responsibility of the landlords. Another resident was in agreed that many of the landlords do the bare minimum.

Five residents expressed that they do not like that many of their neighbors keep to themselves. As a result they do not know very much about their neighbors. Three of the residents I spoke with said they realize that this is because they are

'outsiders.' One of the residents said she feels that her neighbors are to themselves because 'they can be,' they already know or are related to many people in the neighborhood. There is no need to meet new residents. Another resident replied, "people don't tend to reach out to you, but once you reach out with them, they're open."

Two residents indicated that they do not like the lack of diversity in the area. That there are not many cultures represented in the neighborhood or area organizations.

Two residents expressed that the number of big dogs in the area and the fencing put up around properties and kennels to contain them is a social quality they do not like.

The amount of trash and debris and the low value placed on cleaning up was a social quality that two residents do not like.

Two residents identified the 'sketchy' bars in the neighborhood as a negative feature, in particular in areas with families and children.

Other responses included the Rescue Mission, that many of the residents have been here for years and years, disruptive groups of kids in the neighborhood, immorality, hopelessness of some of the residents, losing many elderly

homeowners, outdoor storage, traffic, barking dogs, and unkempt properties.

Would Like: More pedestrian activity and a friendlier environment for pedestrians was identified by three of the newer residents as a feature they would like improved. One of the residents noted, “it is so dangerous, this neighborhood is not pedestrian friendly at all.” Another resident commented that “from some areas there is no way to get to Fallon Park, and it’s got all of these things over there” and that from some areas children cannot safely walk to the library, the Boys & Girls Club, Jackson Park, etc. Another resident commented that if pedestrian connectivity were to be improved, the infrastructure would need to give people who are walking “a break.” Suggestions to alleviate the dangers to pedestrians included traffic lights and pedestrian bridges.

Two residents indicated that it is difficult to learn about the neighborhood events and programs. A means for residents to learn about various functions would be appreciated by some of the newer residents. Suggestions to disseminate and advertise this information included a public notice board and an activities map. In addition one of the residents noted that some people are very loyal to the church they belong to and

might not feel comfortable going to other places. She suggested a central and mutual spot as a better or alternative location for various functions.

One resident recommended programs to help get the community, in particular children, motivated to participate in various programs. He suggested perhaps a star athlete to help with recreational programs.

6. Are there things that can improve your sense of belonging to your neighborhood? Are there things that currently reduce your sense of belonging?

When residents were asked if there were things that could improve their sense of belonging to the neighborhood, three replied that additional places to go and things to do would improve their sense of belonging. They identified places that offered different types of activities and amenities that they would like to have in walking distance of their homes. These places included a coffee shop, a restaurant with outdoor seating, shops and stores to buy necessities, and places with entertainment. Another resident added that long-time residents would probably rather less businesses and more houses in the neighborhood.

Three of the residents interviewed, two homeowners (both having been in the neighborhood between five and ten years) and one a renter, indicated that they feel accepted and do not feel like an outsider.

Two residents said the more people they can meet would help to improve their sense of belonging. They also shared that they currently have a few acquaintances in the neighborhood, but no one that they can call friends.

Two residents commented on some of the dynamics of the neighborhood. They have noticed that many of the residents grew up in this area and have lived here all their lives. And for many of these long-time residents, their reputation and label is placed on them at an early age and they seem to live up to this label.

Other responses included the interconnectivity of the neighborhood, that everybody knows everybody, and the problem of absentee landlords.

7. Are there physical qualities about your neighborhood that you like, such as the streets, the houses or the yards? Are there physical qualities that you don't like about your neighborhood?

When asked what physical qualities residents liked about their neighborhood almost half the residents interviewed indicated that they like that there are parks in the area. Two of the residents who have children noted that they foresee themselves visiting the park in the summer. One resident noted that she hasn't been to the park yet, but likes that it is nearby. A third resident commented on the pool at Fallon Park, and was excited to learn that it has a diving board.

The neighborhood's proximity to downtown is highly valued by a number of the newer residents interviewed. Four of the residents indicated that they visit the downtown area frequently. Two of the residents often walk downtown. Residents would like to see more connection between downtown and the neighborhood. One of the residents expressed that they would like downtown life to extend into the neighborhood. Some recommendations that were made to improve the connection between downtown and Belmont-Fallon included converting some of the homes along the already busy Bullitt Avenue into shops, rather than making perpendicular streets such as 13th and 9th Street commercial areas.

Four residents appreciated the mature trees that are in their neighborhood and at Jackson Park.

Three residents appreciate the views of the surrounding mountains. One resident noted that if you go to the intersection of Stuart Avenue and 13th Street, and you turn around, you could see downtown, Stuart and Tinker Mountain, Mill Mountain and Windy Gap. One resident wondered why there was not more of an emphasis on view shed in the area. Though one resident enjoys the views she did note that a lot of the views also overlook factories.

Four residents indicated that the old homes and their individual homes are a physical quality about the neighborhood that they value.

In addition to being located near to the downtown area, three residents commented on the neighborhood's central location. They noted that its proximity to work, option to walk to places if necessary, to Victory Stadium, and to the hospital were conveniences they appreciate about the neighborhood.

Three residents identified the Roanoke Star as an attribute they like about their neighborhood. This unique feature and symbol of the city is visible from most of the neighborhood. At night it shines down on the neighborhood.

The topography in some areas of the neighborhood is commanding to say the least. There are rolling, and in some sections, steep hills, throughout the southern and northern portions of the neighborhood. Houses step up and down the hills. Two of the residents identified this as a physical feature they like about the neighborhood.

Two residents identified the River, located along the southern boundary of the neighborhood, as a unique physical quality they like about Belmont Fallon.

The area is rich in history. Two residents replied that the historical nature of the area was a quality they liked. They also shared with me what they knew of the neighborhood's history. One of the residents commented on the history of the Buena Vista House, a plantation house located in Jackson Park. And a second resident noted the role of industry in the settlement of the area and the remaining industrial parks.

Two residents commented on the physical improvements in the neighborhood. One respondent noted that he has noticed people putting siding on their homes and new buildings being built where old ones have been taken down. Another seemed hopeful for the improvements being proposed by the SE by Design Project.

Other physical qualities that residents like are the ‘Buena Vista House’ (it’s role as a community gathering place), the yards, the upkeep, recreational facilities, the library, the signs and planters in the area, the daily chimings of local churches, and the industrial parks.

Qualities residents do not like: Two residents commented on the abundance of trash and debris in the neighborhood, and that it would be nice to see the debris cleaned up.

Two residents identified the lack of upkeep of some of the rental units as a quality they do not like. They noted that the community should have standards that landlords must meet. Also one of the residents indicated that it could be different; these homes can contribute to the community rather than detract from it.

Narrow roads and the lack of parking are considered negative qualities and a nuisance by two of the residents interviewed.

Two residents are put off by the smell that is emitted by the nearby water treatment plant, especially during the evenings in the summertime.

Two residents feel the number of run down homes in the neighborhood is a negative feature.

Other responses included disappointment over the pollution of the River, and sorrow over the quality of the Morningside Manor retirement home (that its physical environment does not provide much retreat for its residents), and the Rescue Mission (does not belong in a neighborhood).

Would like: Two of the residents interviewed would like to see more flowers in the area. One of the residents requested “bright yellow and pink” flowers.

One resident would like the lighting on the streets to be improved and said the streets are very dark.

Another resident would like additional seating to be provided near Fallon Park’s children’s play area. He explained, it gets fairly crowded there and there is often nowhere to sit while his children are playing.

One resident noted that it is difficult to walk through the neighborhood because of the heavy traffic. He requested features that may slow the traffic and more four-way stops at intersections.

There are many children that play in the streets throughout the neighborhood. One of the residents remarked

that he fears for the children's safety because of the volume and speed of the cars even on the quieter streets. He indicated that he would like to see signs throughout the neighborhood that remind drivers that there are children playing.

Another resident would like the addition of bike lanes, especially on roads with heavier traffic.

A recent homebuyer indicated that he would like the real estate value of the homes to increase.

And one resident commented that he would like more restaurants in the neighborhood, perhaps a fine restaurant, places where you could sit down to eat.

One resident would like the sidewalks in her neighborhood to be completed; some of the sidewalks are missing.

8. Are there places in your neighborhood that you visit regularly? If so, what are they? Who else is there? What do you like about these places?

When the residents interviewed were asked which places in the neighborhood they visited regularly five indicated that they visit businesses. These places included CVS, the post office, the Laundromat, gas stations, a movie rental store,

Hardees's and Emilio's pizzeria take out. The residents travel outside the neighborhood to purchase groceries.

Three residents indicated that they would go out to dinner periodically in the neighborhood. Two of the respondents said that they used to go to Crossroads, a newer restaurant, and used to go to Eatwell Chili Shop. When asked why they visited these places they responded that they visited Crossroads to support it because it was a fledgling and local business. They stopped going there when Crossroads received its ABC license and its atmosphere changed.

Two of the residents interviewed noted that they enjoy visiting Jackson Park. One of the respondents replied that he likes the trees and natural aspect of the park. He walks his dog there often. Also he likes that a diverse group of people also visit the park. He also appreciates the range of activities the park offers.

Two residents are active in their church and visit there on Wednesday's and Sunday's.

Two residents enjoy visiting the Star Trail, located outside the neighborhood. Two residents attend martial arts classes also located outside Belmont-Fallon. One resident visits her neighbor's homes regularly. Another visits the public

library at Jackson Park. He appreciates the staff that work there and the computers that are available. One resident has school age children and spends a good amount of time at the local schools. Another resident frequents the Tinker Creek Greenway. He and his daughters enjoy the nature trails along the greenway. One respondent visits Fallon Park frequently with his children. They enjoy climbing on the playground equipment and spending time with other children they know at the park.

9. If you were to visit an outdoor place, such as a park or a garden, what kinds of things would you like to be there?

Residents provided a range of suggestions when asked what types of things they would like to have in an outdoor place. Four of those interviewed responded that they would like trees.

Four commented they would like play equipment. They gave suggestions as to the different types of play structures such as swings, slides, monkey bars, and a mini castle or some type of imaginative structure.

Four residents also indicated they would like benches in an outdoor place.

Three of the residents felt that the outdoor place should be something that bolsters the community's sense of pride and contributes to its identity. One resident described that he would like something that says "oh yeah SE, that's where 'this' is, something to help create a sense of community." Another resident commented that she feels the outdoor place should be "an icon, a source of pride for the neighborhood." And another replied "a park that would make SE special or would draw people."

The history of the area is one of the attributes that make the neighborhood unique. Two of the residents thought the outdoor place should draw on this characteristic. One suggested a monument explaining the history of the neighborhood. Another suggested a sculpture.

Two residents identified things that might promote ownership and provided suggestions such as a community mural created by residents of all ages and handprints or designs in concrete that children can create in the walkways or walls.

Two residents noted that there needs to be a place for teens to gather and 'do their thing.' Residents recommended a skate rink, skateboarding park, or a BMW park.

Two residents would like more walking trails within the neighborhood and a longer walking trail.

And of the resident interviewed two would like to have flowers in an outdoor place. One of the residents recommended a walking flower garden with plaques indicating the different types of flowers.

Other responses included: barbeque pits, a dog park, a park nearby, fitness activities, an amphitheater, soda machines, restrooms, and a gazebo.

10. Do you tend to drive or walk through your neighborhood? When you walk (or drive) on one of the quieter streets of your neighborhood, could you tell me some of the places and things you may notice?

Six residents indicated that they drive through the neighborhood. Five residents indicated they often walk through the neighborhood.

Of the residents that responded to this question three usually notice the children that are playing outside and in the streets.

Three residents notice the homes in the area. One of the residents commented on the age of many of the homes and also added “older homes are nice to look at.”

Two of the residents interviewed notice the lack of parking and the narrow streets.

Two notice the River.

Two notice the traffic.

Other responses included: trash and debris, vagrancy, outdoor storage, gardens, stores, retirement home, Rescue Mission, the Jesus Saves sign outside the Rescue Mission, fencing, signs of development, the Buena Vista House, old trees, Mill Mountain, Jackson Park, and the number of stray animals.

11. Are there places or things within the neighborhood that you would miss if they were removed, such as gathering places, landmarks, or an old tree? What is special about these places?

Four of the residents interviewed indicated that they would miss the parks if they were removed. They like that these places are large open areas, that they are kept up, and that they provide a place for children to play.

Three of the residents would miss the churches in the area. One of the respondents indicated that he likes the work the churches do with the community. A second resident likes the “old, beautiful buildings.” Another resident enjoys the

daily chiming of a church nearby. One of the residents more specifically indicated that he would miss the Evangelical Foursquare Church if it were removed, because he used to attend this church and because he is accustomed to seeing it upon entering the neighborhood.

Three residents would miss the trees. There are a number of older trees in their section of the neighborhood. Two of the respondents noted that it makes them sad to see any of the trees taken down.

Two residents would miss the businesses in the neighborhood. One would miss the Eatwell Chili Shop, for its service, local color, and conversation. A second would miss Advance Auto Parts for its convenience.

Two residents would miss the sidewalks.

Other responses included: the homes, city cemetery, smaller neighborhood recreational centers, Victory Stadium, the schools, the library, the Buena Vista House, the convenience, the Heironimus warehouse, and the rail whistle.

12. When you think of Belmont Fallon can you tell me some of the images that come to mind of places, people or things?

Five residents responded that when they think of Belmont-Fallon images of children come to mind. Residents noted that they often see kids playing. They also noted that there seem to be more children in the neighborhood than in a suburban neighborhood, and more children per household.

Three residents think of the churches in the area.

Three residents think of the railroad and its history in the area.

Other responses included: the rural feel to the neighborhood, neighbors, history, city cemetery, cars, older people, Roanoke Star, Mill Mountain, spring, people, pedestrians, longtime families, and the industrial park.

13. Would you mind sharing with me some of your memories about the neighborhood?

Newer residents, some being in the area for less than a year had fewer memories to share about their time in the neighborhood.

Two of the residents interviewed recalled private parties they have had in their homes.

Two remember pleasant interactions with their neighbors and getting to know their neighbors.

Two remembered sledding in the neighborhood this winter.

Two residents recalled the home improvements that have taken place in the neighborhood.

Other responses included: community service activities, incidents of crime, torn down homes, work, classes in the neighborhood, church, visiting local businesses, and their yard.