



# PAWTUCKETVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN 2006



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*The Pawtucketville Citizens Advisory Committee and the Division of Planning & Development wish to acknowledge the D'Youville Senior Care for their support and dedication to the creation of the Pawtucketville Neighborhood Master Plan.*

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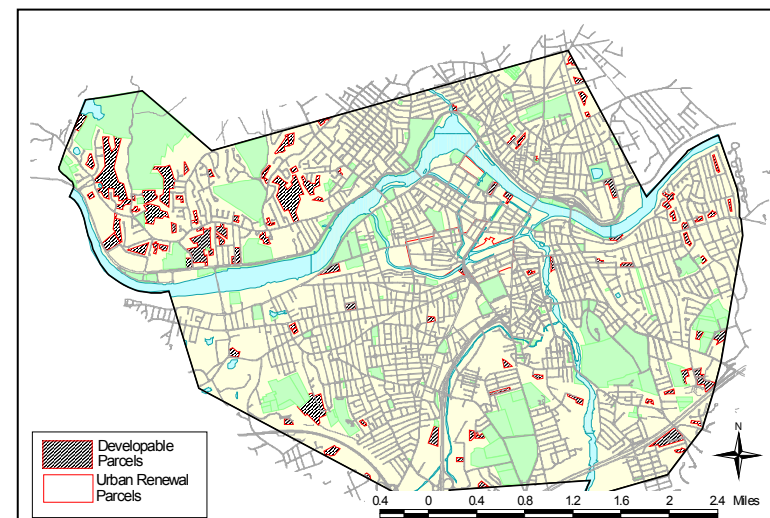
# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

"The largest concentration of the existing developable land that was identified in the Master Plan is located in the Pawtucketville neighborhood. As a result, this area faces strong and growing development pressures and merits a more detailed study. In order to create a unified vision for this neighborhood's future, the Division of Planning and Development, in partnership with neighborhood residents, institutional partners, and community groups, will develop a neighborhood action plan specifically for Pawtucketville. The plan will develop specific recommendations concerning transportation, open space preservation, housing, and commercial development as well as institutional expansion and the protection of natural resources."

— Lowell's Comprehensive Master Plan

In March of 2004, the Lowell City Council voted to direct the City Manager to have the Division of Planning and Development work with the Pawtucketville Citizens Council to produce a Pawtucketville Neighborhood Plan. The purpose of this plan is to create a shared vision for the future development of the neighborhood, and to set policies and guidelines to implement that vision over a ten-year period. The Division of Planning and Development (DPD) and a representative group from the neighborhood, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), collaborated with residents, business people, and other stakeholders to create this document to identify relevant neighborhood strengths as well as neighborhood problems and corresponding solutions. The following are the subject areas that are addressed in this plan: Housing, Economic Development, Transportation and Access, Public Services, Natural Resources and Recreation, Culture, and Land Use and Zoning.



As seen in this map from the Lowell's Comprehensive Master Plan, many of the City's largest developable parcels are located within the Pawtucketville neighborhood.

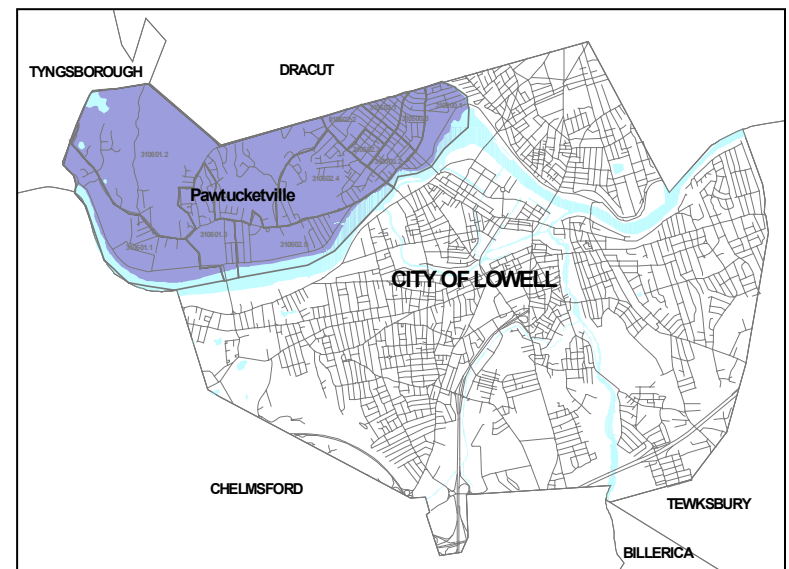
# 2006 PAWTUCKETVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN

# DEFINING PAWTUCKETVILLE

## Geographic Context

Pawtucketville is located in Lowell’s northwestern corner, bordered in the south by the Merrimack River and on the east by Beaver Brook. The City’s municipal boundary forms the northern and western edges of the neighborhood. Pawtucketville is connected to the rest of Lowell by a series of bridges: the Rourke Bridge connects Pawtucket Boulevard to Middlesex Village and the Highlands; the O’Donnell Bridge connects Mammoth Road to the Acre; and the University Avenue Bridge (also known as Moody Street Bridge and Textile Memorial Bridge) connects University Avenue to the Upper Merrimack Street section of the Acre. Martin Street and the VFW Highway both cross Beaver Brook, linking Pawtucketville to Centralville.

Three major sub-areas make up the Pawtucketville neighborhood. The eastern section, including the Rosemont Terrace area, is a traditional neighborhood district, featuring commercial nodes along University Avenue and Mammoth Road, City-scale residential neighborhoods, and the UMass Lowell North Campus located at the southern end of University Avenue. The western section of Pawtucketville is often described as a “suburb of Lowell” due to the predominate form being single family homes on lots a quarter acre or larger; numerous parcels of protected and unprotected open space such as the State Forest are located in this section of Pawtucketville, along with institutional uses located on large leafy campuses, including Lowell General Hospital and a number of nursing homes. The last subarea, the Pawtucket Boulevard corridor, is characterized by, parks and water utility facilities along the waterfront, a mix of commercial strip development, large condominium and apartment complexes, and the MA/COM plant campus. The land along Pawtucket Boulevard includes some of the most attractive and visible undeveloped land in the city. This roadway, parkland, and built environment serve as Pawtucketville’s, and Lowell’s, front door, in addition to being important features in their own right.



Pawtucketville is located in Lowell’s northwestern corner, bordering the Merrimack River and the towns of Dracut and Tyngsborough.

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View of present-day Pawtucket Falls from Pawtucketville



Present-day Pawtucket Congregational Church, established 1797

## The History of Pawtucketville

Before settlement by the Europeans, Native Americans of the Pennacook tribe inhabited the area now known as Pawtucketville. Their word “Pawtucket” means “place of loud noise,” referring to the falls in the Merrimack River. The Pennacooks were not unfriendly to the first settlers and the Massachusetts legislature, in 1653, granted them a tract of land near Pawtucket Falls. These first Europeans gave the district the name “The Village at Pawtucket Falls,” which was later shortened to Pawtucket Village and finally to Pawtucketville. Unfortunately, hostilities increased and the settlers constructed several garrison houses for protection. As an outcome of King Philip’s war in 1674, many of the Native Americans moved to Canada.

In the 1600’s, the government had given land in this area as military grants to reward men for their service; but these men soon sold their holdings without settling here. In 1664, Samuel Varnum and Edward Colburn bought land and became the first permanent European settlers in Pawtucketville. By 1701, 135 years before Lowell became a city, permission was received to incorporate Pawtucketville as part of the Town of Dracut. By this time, there were 23 families farming land north of the river.

Carving a community out of the wilderness gave the early settlers a sense of independence from settlements on the south side of the river. They were anxious to establish their own church and in 1711 voted to build the first meetinghouse. The present Pawtucket Congregational Church is a descendant of this first church. Established in 1797, it is the earliest church within present day boundaries of Lowell. Participation in the Underground Railroad, a Paul Revere Bell and impressive stained glass windows are all features contributing to the Church’s historic importance.

The first bridge linking Pawtucketville to the south side of the Merrimack River was constructed as a toll bridge in 1792. The bridge corporation also constructed Mammoth Road, a major highway linking Massachusetts to Concord, New Hampshire and beyond. Increased traffic over the bridge resulted in the development of commercial activity nearby. As Lowell’s mills were built over the decades of the nineteenth century, mill workers saw opportunity to escape crowded living conditions in the city by crossing the bridge, resulting in the dense settlement of East Pawtucketville that came to resemble Lowell’s more traditional, industrial-era neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are still in existence today. Immigrants, especially from Ireland and Canada, further swelled the population of Eastern Pawtucketville. West Pawtucketville, with its location further away from the bridge, remained sparsely developed with farms and abundant open space.

## DEFINING PAWTUCKETVILLE

As the City of Lowell continued to grow, the increased population and dense living conditions became an increasing public health concern. Pawtucketville's abundance of undeveloped land and unpolluted sources of water and air were necessary elements to support Lowell's growth. The need for adequate, pure water was first met by constructing an inlet station above Pawtucket Falls along the Merrimack River in Pawtucketville in the 1870s. Eventually, legislation was passed providing rights to the City of Lowell to take any water and make use of any land in Pawtucketville in order to supply the City with healthy water. Hundreds of wells driven in West Pawtucketville soon became the source of most of the water for the City of Lowell. In 1874, a petition was presented to the Legislature of Massachusetts by the City asking for "the annexation of a portion of Dracut to Lowell, the area to include the entire line of the Water Works." Pawtucketville was now an official neighborhood within the City of Lowell.

By the late 1880's, an initiative was launched to establish a 'driving park' or 'riverfront boulevard' in West Pawtucketville. Landowners whose property ran to the bank of the river were asked to donate the riverfront acreage for construction of a grand tree lined roadway. In all, nearly forty acres were donated by over a dozen landowners for the construction of the boulevard with the stipulation that it be used for the road and the creation of a public park. The riverfront parkland and boulevard so enjoyed by residents today is the result of these landowners' foresight and generosity.

In 1891, Lowell General Hospital, one of the larger more influential institutions in the neighborhood and City, was established on the Fay estate. In 1913, the City felt a need for an isolation hospital to treat those with contagious diseases and took part of the Varnum farm by eminent domain. This land today is the site of the schools and park in West Pawtucketville.

In 1895, Lowell Textile School was established and has today become part of the University of Massachusetts at Lowell (UMass Lowell). This institution originally trained technicians and managers for the textile industry. Today it retains a very high reputation for technical training. UMass Lowell and Lowell General Hospital grew into and along with Pawtucketville, and continue to play significant roles in shaping the character of the neighborhood.

As the population of Pawtucketville grew, efforts were made to provide more accessibility to the neighborhood. An electric trolley line was extended into the neighborhood in the 1880s, and in 1896 the Moody Street Bridge was built and led to the growth of East Pawtucketville as a French-Canadian immigrant neighborhood. The neighborhood was nicknamed, "Le Haut Canada" - the High Canada - to distinguish it from working-class Little Canada. The community grew so fast that by the fall of 1897 residents formed the



West Pawtucketville's farming heritage continued well into the 1900s when this picture was taken.



Southwick Hall, of the former Lowell Textile Institute, now a part of UMass Lowell

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Pawtucketville Social Club on Moody Street to encourage citizenship and petition the City to provide neighborhood services. Moody Street, which later was renamed Textile Avenue, also became the home for dozens of French-owned businesses. The religious life of the community was brought to maturity with the founding of Saint Jeanne D'Arc Church in December of 1922.

After World War II, Western Pawtucketville became an attractive location for suburban-style development, a trend that continues to the present day. The subdivision of woodlands and fields into lots for single-family homes has created a neighborhood character within Pawtucketville distinctly different from Lowell's more traditional neighborhood districts. Most of the farms had disappeared by the 1950's. Nursing homes such as D'Youville Manor and Fairhaven were built here due to the availability of large tracts of land. Despite this rapid development, the character of modern Pawtucketville exudes a feeling of isolation, self-sufficiency and open space.

With the opening of the Rourke Bridge in the early 1980's, Pawtucket Boulevard's accessibility increased, attracting a variety of suburban style commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential development. Traffic through the neighborhood became a concern that continues today. This period of uncontrolled growth proved to be alarming to the long-term residents of Pawtucketville, who appreciate the neighborhood's rural, natural appearance. Efforts should be made to control future development, prevent unregulated growth, and curb growth in a way that preserves and enhances the existing character of Pawtucketville and protects the valuable green and open spaces that define the neighborhood.

Pawtucketville's history reaches back to before the founding of Lowell, and plays host to some of the City's more significant historical sites. These include all the site already mention, as well as Lowell's oldest schoolhouse, the Colburn Schoolhouse, 1755; Webb-Durkee house, circa 1656; Varnum Garrison House, 1676; Colburn Garrison House, 1676; Thomas Varnum House, 1745; Parker Varnum house, 1775; Ansart House, home of a French nobleman who aided the colonies in the Revolutionary War; Lew house, a stop on the Underground Railroad; Clay Pit, Woodbine, Hamblet and Mammoth Road Cemeteries; St. Rita's Church; and places author Jack Kerouac not only lived in but also wrote about in his novels. These and other historical sites are vital to the preservation and protection of Pawtucketville's heritage.



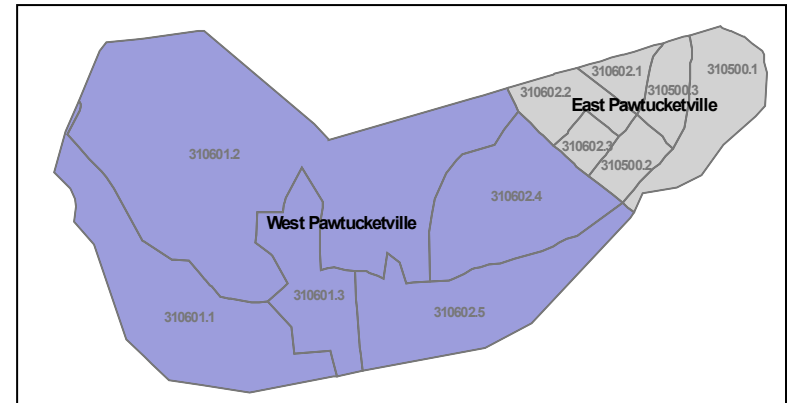
The historic Lew House, circa 1844

Photo: DPD

## The People of Pawtucketville – a Demographic Analysis

Demographics for the neighborhood as a whole can be misleading, as the suburban West Pawtucketville area differs considerably from the traditional district in East Pawtucketville. Thus, for the purposes of this study, the data will be broken down by West and East Pawtucketville, which will consist of the U.S. Census 2000 Block Groups shown on the map to the right.

Pawtucketville’s population as of the 2000 Census was 14,355. This represents a 3.7% increase over 1990 levels, which is higher than the 1.7% increase experienced by Lowell as a whole, but lower than the 5.5% increase within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts during the same time period. At the neighborhood level, the data appears to show that West Pawtucketville has seen a significant increase in its population over the ten-year period, whereas East Pawtucketville has seen a slight decrease. The increase in West Pawtucketville reflects the significant housing development that has occurred there, in the form of new subdivisions off Varnum Avenue and Totman Street, and new apartment and condominium projects along Pawtucket Boulevard.



Pawtucketville is comprised of 11 census tracts; 5 in West Pawtucketville and 6 in East Pawtucketville.

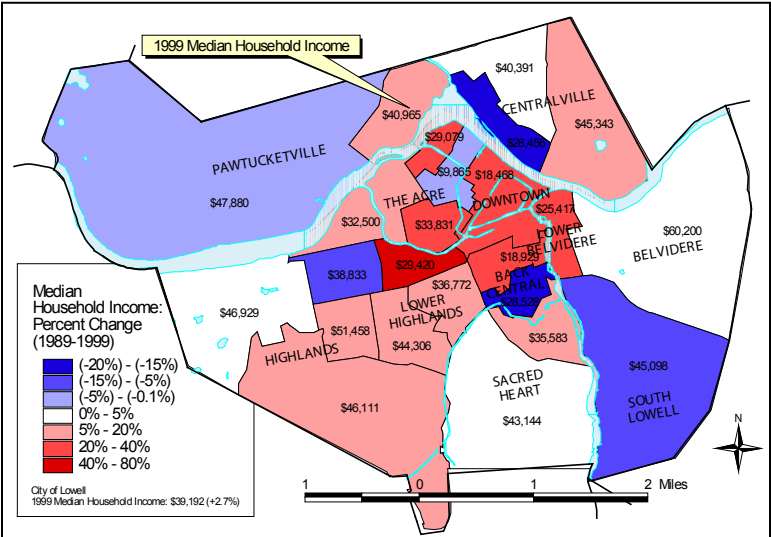
**Table 1: Population (1990-2000)**

	1990 Population	2000 Population	% Change
<b>West Pawtucketville</b>	<b>7,941</b>	<b>8,558</b>	<b>+7.8%</b>
<b>East Pawtucketville</b>	<b>5,896</b>	<b>5,797</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>

Overall, the distributions of age groups in East and West Pawtucketville are similar. One striking difference is that East Pawtucketville has nearly three times as many 18 to 24-year olds than West Pawtucketville possibly due to the high percentage of UMass Lowell students living in the area. The ages of Pawtucketville residents has changed dramatically over the ten-year period (See the Appendix). The biggest decline was among the 18 to 24 year old group, most likely due to more young people obtaining higher education outside of Lowell. A dramatic increase was amongst people between 45 and 64, particularly in West Pawtucketville, while East Pawtucketville only saw a small increase in this age group.

Pawtucketville has become more diversified racially and ethnically in the past ten years with Caucasians making up about 80% of the neighborhood in 2000 down from 90% in 1990. A comparison of the racial composition between West and East Pawtucketville shows little difference. Since the 2000 Census, Pawtucketville has seen significant growth among its African and Indian populations (See the Appendix).

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Median household income trends from the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.

As mentioned previously, Pawtucketville residents who were 25 years and older were better educated in 2000 than in the previous decade. There was a decrease in the number of high school dropouts, a 20.8% increase in the number of people whose highest level of education was a high school degree, and a 41.7% increase in the number of people who obtained Bachelor's degrees (See the Appendix).

In 1999, the median household income for Pawtucketville was \$45,612, more than 15 percent higher than Lowell's average of \$39,192. Within the neighborhood, West Pawtucketville's median household income (\$47,395) was nearly \$7,000 greater than East Pawtucketville's median household income (\$40,965). From 1989 to 1999, Pawtucketville's overall median household income experienced relatively little change.

## Community Life

Many Pawtucketville residents consider their neighborhood to be “a suburb of Lowell.” This characterization captures both the connection to the larger city, as well as the sense of being a distinct, cohesive community-within-a-community. Socially, Pawtucketville is both a part of, and distinctly separate from the City of Lowell. This sense of independence from Lowell has helped shape the character and distinctiveness of the neighborhood.

The Pawtucketville Citizens Council (PCC), originally formed to oppose the construction of a highway bypass linking Pawtucket Boulevard and Dracut to Route 3, has proven to be an effective voice for the concerns of the Pawtucketville community. Issues of particular concern for the PCC include the impact of inappropriate commercial and residential development within the neighborhood, particularly regarding unsuitable densities and heights; the neighborhood’s relationship with UMass Lowell; and the development and operations of Lowell General Hospital. Citizens seek neighborhood appropriate development and relationships that promote the preservation of the community. This sense of activism is not uncommon for Pawtucketville. The people of Pawtucketville have a long history of actively pursuing the protection and preservation of the character of their neighborhood.

Similar to Lowell as a whole, Pawtucketville has its own rich history that continues to influence the life of the community. Historic sites, such as cemeteries, old houses, and archaeological sites, represent a great resource for the community, yet one that has been under-appreciated. While the history and culture of the entire City of Lowell has been incorporated into the curriculum of the public and private schools in Pawtucketville, little attention has been given to the unique history the neighborhood itself provides. Integrating Pawtucketville’s distinctive history into the curriculum of the local schools is a goal of the PCC.

The presence of UMass Lowell in East Pawtucketville has a tremendous impact on the character and culture of that section of the neighborhood. On one hand, the presence of college students renting apartments in East Pawtucketville pose many challenges, most significantly with regards to parking, the quality of housing, and concerns about the effects student lifestyles have on older residents. At the same time, the student population has provided thousands of hours of volunteer labor to the neighborhood, helping to continue East Pawtucketville’s progress. Further, the student population provides a stable, captive population for the economy of the neighborhood businesses.



The PCC, in cooperation with UMass Lowell, holds annual neighborhood clean-up days to help beautify the neighborhood and show the community’s commitment to Pawtucketville life.

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Pawtucketville neighborhood Zoning, June 2006



East Pawtucketville Zoning, June 2006

## Land Use and Zoning

One of the great strengths of Pawtucketville is the presence of manageable, concentrated business districts. The current mix and balance between residential and commercial land gives the neighborhood a unique blend of suburban living with urban employment and cultural amenities.

With the implementation of new zoning in 2004, the City of Lowell addressed concerns with the quality of neighborhood development and implemented goals of the Master Plan, by establishing districts that more accurately reflect the character of existing neighborhoods. Much of the city was placed in zones with titles that identify them as “Urban”, “Traditional Neighborhood” or “Suburban” districts. Much of Pawtucketville is in the Traditional Neighborhood or Suburban districts. The Traditional Neighborhood districts have form-based front-yard setback requirements to encourage new development to reflect traditional neighborhood design. The “Suburban” districts are designed to ensure that residential development has a more suburban character with adequate private yard space.

East Pawtucketville, the traditional-style neighborhood around University Avenue and Mammoth Road, is divided into several zoning districts that relate to the neighborhood character. The UMass Lowell campus and the area immediately adjacent to it around University Avenue are in the Institutional, Mixed-use zoning district. This zoning district is intended to promote the retail and multi-family housing developments that complement the university. It is important to note that since the university is a state-funded and operated entity, UMass Lowell is not subject to the City’s zoning regulations.

Moving further down University Avenue, from the Gershom Avenue intersection to Sixth Avenue, is the Traditional Mixed Use (TMU) zoning district. This district reflects the established character of the corridor, which includes a significant number of apartment houses mixed with commercial properties.

In keeping with the commercial nature of the area, Mammoth Road is zoned Neighborhood Business (NB) from the Merrimack River to the Father Maguire Playground, including the parcels across Mammoth Road from the park. As with University Avenue, this zoning district extends to mid-block on either side of the main street, reflecting the historic pattern of retail and commercial uses fronting these roads. The new NB districts regulations are designed to sustain a walkable commercial core, with storefronts along sidewalks.

Traditional residential districts – Traditional Multi-Family (TMF), Traditional Two-Family (TTF), and Traditional Single-Family (TSF) – extend outwards from the commercial centers of East Pawtucketville. The boundaries of these districts are drawn to reflect

the established character of the individual blocks that make up the neighborhood. For example, the streets extending from the UMass Lowell campus to the Mammoth Road commercial area and the area immediately north of Riverside Street, east of the campus, are zoned TMF to protect the traditional neighborhood of multi-family buildings. TTF zoning encompasses most of the land between the commercial areas of University Avenue and Mammoth Road, as well as Mammoth Road north of the business district, the two blocks east of University Avenue's commercial area. Outside of these TTF districts are blocks of TSF. A small Traditional Mixed-Use (TMU) district encompasses the businesses located at the East Meadow Road and Mammoth Road intersection. A Suburban Multi-Family (SMF) district covers the large multi-family campus-like developments near the Dracut border at Mammoth Road, and a Suburban Single-Family (SSF) district covers the blocks in the far eastern section of the neighborhood off the main roads, where the house lots are typically 8000 square feet or larger.

Most of West Pawtucketville is zoned SSF, in keeping with its established character. The eastern boundary of this zone follows the wetlands north of the Lowell General Hospital, through the hospital campus itself, and east of Orchard Street. At this point, the neighborhood's larger house lots transition to the more traditional 5000-8000 square foot lots of the TSF district.

The SSF zone extends to Pawtucket Boulevard in areas that are open space, such as near the Varnum Avenue and Pawtucket Boulevard interchange, the Anne Dean Welcome Regatta Field, and in areas where the single-family residential pattern extends to the Boulevard, such as Cheryl Lee Lane and Lebanon Street. It also continues across the Boulevard, to encompass the north bank of the Merrimack River and its associated open space.

Within the large expanse of SSF in West Pawtucketville, there are two islands of different zoning. The Planned Development - Medical Institutional District (PDMI) covers the Lowell General Hospital Campus. A small Neighborhood Business District covers a shopping center at the intersection of Totman Street and Varnum Avenue.

There are two locations where single-family residential streets extend from Varnum Avenue to Pawtucket Boulevard and incorporate a mix of commercial and residential uses located on the parcels that front Pawtucket Boulevard. This land use pattern occurs along Pawtucket Boulevard between Old Ferry Road and Bedford Avenue and between Delaware Avenue and Lebanon Street. While most of the length of these streets are zoned SSF, the parcels fronting on the Boulevard are zoned Suburban Mixed-Use (SMU) (Bedford/Old Ferry Road) and NB (Delaware/Lebanon). The NB district includes dimensional and use standards that promote development that is consistent with abutting residential streets. The SMU district on the other hand, is intended for the development of large parcels



West Pawtucketville Zoning, June 2006

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while offering a considerable buffer from neighborhood streets. However, present zoning may not adequately provide enough of a buffer to protect the suburban single-family neighborhood from the impact of larger developments.

SMF districts are located where townhouse and apartment campuses are established along the Boulevard – near the Tyngsboro line and at Camelot Court at the other end of Pawtucket Boulevard. The large parcels extending from Townsend Avenue to the MA/COM property are zoned SMU, a zone that allows a mixture of commercial and residential uses, providing a great deal of latitude in development options. This SMU zone also extends to the retail node located in front of the multifamily campuses near the city line, where the area is built out with single story commercial structures.

## Current Housing Conditions

The people of Pawtucketville are very proud of their neighborhood and feel that it is a very diverse and desirable place to live. The neighborhood is filled with a wide range of housing options, ranging from new suburban style, single-family developments, to well-maintained historic structures, to single and multi-family homes in traditional compact neighborhood settings. The neighborhood has a high home ownership rate indicating a population that is vested in the community and its continued success. The presence of UMass Lowell's North Campus in East Pawtucketville creates a large rental population in that neighborhood, and the immediate area around campus is dominated by multi family, rental properties to accommodate the student population.

While residents of Pawtucketville appreciate its diverse housing stock, they are still aware of the many housing barriers residents must overcome in order to live in the neighborhood. Pawtucketville is becoming an increasingly expensive area to purchase a house, making affordable housing limited and harder to find. This puts a strain on individuals and families wanting to live in the neighborhood over the long term. Further, in the more densely settled East Pawtucketville, there is a concern with the prevalence of absentee ownership, and a lack of commitment by these owners to maintain the aesthetic quality of their homes. More attention needs to be paid to ensuring that all health and building codes are adhered to in this section of the neighborhood.

The architectural character and heritage of Pawtucketville is one vital aspect of long-term success. For this reason, new development projects must be held to the highest of standards, and be especially mindful of the aesthetic features of its surrounding neighbors and development patterns. New development should take into account the surrounding neighborhood's character, architectural heritage, open space, density and height, and incorporate these elements into its own design. Additionally, deteriorating or distressed properties should be identified and rehabilitated. To assist in this process, the neighborhood, City and UMass Lowell should work together in taking an active role in addressing the need for sufficient on campus housing while also helping to ensure the quality of off campus housing offered to its students and residents alike.



Residents seek to prevent townhouse projects lacking consistency with the surrounding traditional neighborhood like this one in East Pawtucketville.

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Traffic leading to the O'Donnell Bridge

## Transportation and Access

From a geographic perspective, Pawtucketville is disconnected from much of the rest of Lowell. There is limited access between the neighborhood and major transportation routes to the south of the Merrimack River, i.e. Route 3 and Interstate 495. Furthermore, the neighborhood lacks connections within its borders, which produces access issues to the bridges over the Merrimack River that connects the neighborhood to other parts of Lowell. Resolving these issues of connectedness while maintaining the sense of separation and independence from Lowell proper are of high importance to both the neighborhood and the City.

Fortunately, Lowell is home to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA), the local public transportation system servicing the City and its surrounding neighborhoods. This system provides bus services to parts of the Pawtucketville neighborhood. Currently the bus route runs from University Ave, down Mammoth Road and down Varnum Avenue to the Greater Lowell Regional Technical High School, leaving stops at 30-minute intervals. While the Bus will stop for pickups along its route, there is currently a lack of designated bus stop locations along the route. Preserving and increasing this connectivity is important to people of Pawtucketville, as it provides a much needed service to its residents.

Traffic congestion is a major concern for the neighborhood, as many of the residents of Pawtucketville are commuters. Because of this, traffic congestion is common in the neighborhood, especially around the three Merrimack River bridges during peak commuting hours. Local traffic problems are greatly augmented by the prevalence of cut-through traffic. As developments north and west of the city continue to grow, so does the amount of outside traffic within neighborhood. Drivers often try to skirt around areas of heavy congestion by utilizing neighborhood streets at high speeds. While the neighborhood has experimented with traffic calming measures to address these issues, a more comprehensive traffic strategy is needed to assist Pawtucketville in improving its traffic issues and maintaining a suburban traffic flow.



LRTA provides bus service to neighborhood residents

## Open Space and Recreation

“The [Lowell Open Space] Plan encourages an overall greening of the city, especially in urban areas where more trees and recreational spaces are needed. This document also calls for a better integration of local and regional open spaces and goals, as well as more linkages between parks and other recreational areas within the city itself. We hope that the end result of all of these objectives is to foster community pride and unity through an increased use and appreciation of Lowell’s open spaces, recreational services and natural environments.”

— **City of Lowell Open Space and Recreation Plan**

Among the legacies left to Pawtucketville by its early property owners is an extensive open space system. There are 95.36 acres of parkland in the neighborhood, as well as over 200 acres of the State Forest. The centerpiece of this open space system is the riverfront land along the north bank of the Merrimack. This combination of state and city parks includes a boat launch, the Bellegarde Boathouse, and a linear walking and passive park. Much of this land, as well as that of Pawtucket Boulevard itself, were donated to the city by its citizens, and was originally intended for use as parks and a parkway. With the widening of the Boulevard and growing traffic volume, access to this land from the neighborhood has suffered. Despite the difficult connection to the neighborhood this river way is a resource of citywide and regional significance, as well as a neighborhood asset.

There are a number of open space parcels in Pawtucketville that are owned by public entities, but have no formal protection. Preservation of many of these parcels is of vital importance to maintain the character of the neighborhood that residents enjoy. For example, Lowell’s comprehensive master plan calls for the development of a recreational connection between the State Forest and the waterfront. Such a connection may require protection of some of these parcels, including parcels off Trotting Park Road, and/or a portion of the large parcel of open space behind the Wang School, formally known as LeBlanc Park.

Pawtucketville is home to several vibrant and active organized youth sports organizations, as well as a number of special events every year. Unfortunately, one shortcoming of the neighborhood’s recreational system is its shortage of active, recreation parks. While rich in natural places to walk and relax, Pawtucketville lacks a variety in the types of ball fields for sports. In addition, the changing demographics of the neighborhood suggest that the sports facilities that do exist may not be designed or located in areas that best meet the needs of the population. Many non-traditional sports, like soccer or cricket are becoming increasingly popular as the neighborhood continues to become more diverse.



“The Boat House” at Regatta Field is a recreational amenity that is in need of major repair and preservation.



Many non-traditional sports are becoming popular within Pawtucketville, such as cricket being played here by the local youth.

# 2006 PAWTUCKETVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN



Public green space in East Pawtucketville is imperative to the quality of life within this neighborhood.

Many of the residents do not recognize or utilize the State Forest. Furthermore, safety standards as well as a lack of funding for the proper upkeep of existing public facilities act as a deterrent to the full use of the neighborhood's open spaces.

East Pawtucketville, as with most of Lowell's traditional neighborhoods, the built environment defines the landscape. The quality of life in this area is thus dependent upon the 'greenscaping' of public and private land, as well as on providing high quality neighborhood parks. As is common in older neighborhoods, areas with the highest population density are also those with the least tree cover and the smallest yards. Thus, taking an active role in preserving and enhancing the green spaces within these neighborhoods is of high importance.

Residents of Pawtucketville appreciate the open space provided in private yards located throughout the neighborhoods. Preserving and promoting this type of contiguous open space in present and future housing developments is important to the residents of Pawtucketville. Through zoning yard setback requirements and usable open space requirements, such open space patterns ensure the open character of the community.

## Development Trends

Pawtucketville plays an important role in Lowell's economic structure. The neighborhood plays hosts two of Lowell's largest institutions: Lowell General Hospital and the University of Massachusetts Lowell's North Campus. These two institutions provide a large, stable employment base for the neighborhood and the city, and making the neighborhood a prime location for other complementary businesses and organizations. Smaller institutions, like nursing homes along Varnum Avenue also play a vital role in the neighborhood's economy.

There are two main concentrations of retail businesses in Pawtucketville; one along University Avenue and one along Mammoth Road, which both host a variety of small and large businesses such as restaurants and retail outlets. In order to continue the economic development in these concentrated areas, certain development restraints must be addressed. Primarily better pedestrian access to the business districts is needed in conjunction with increased service by public transportation. Such measures will greatly assist in the reduction of cut through traffic in the district. These locations are going to be studied in more detail as to their viability as business districts.

There is also a need to provide better usage of the limited parking in the neighborhood's business districts. The development and implementation of a common streetscape design can help to establish a unique character for the district by which future development must conform. Furthermore, establishing better connections, both vehicular and pedestrian, between the residential and commercial districts of the neighborhood can unify the neighborhood and enhance its unique sense of place.

The lack of direct vehicular access to Pawtucketville from major highways (i.e. Route 3 and Interstate 495) has proven to be a limiting factor to the development of Pawtucketville. Furthermore, this lack of connection has allowed the neighborhood to retain its residential character and limit the amount of commercial development within its boundaries. However, as area-wide development trends increase, so does the demand for development within Pawtucketville. The traditional neighborhood districts around University Avenue and Mammoth Road are experiencing the type of infill development similar to Lowell's other historic neighborhoods. The remaining larger parcels are being subdivided, while smaller homes in multi-family areas are being replaced with multi-unit projects. Not all of this development is sensitive to the established character of the neighborhood, especially the residential areas, which are seeing some campus-style townhouse developments. Recent changes to the zoning ordinance and map were made to steer development towards more appropriate models. In addition, some of the apartment houses near the University are suffering from disinvestment, as the "captive market" of students has allowed owners to



A variety of businesses are located along Mammoth Road and University Avenue, serving both students and residents.



This townhouse project is inconsistent with surrounding neighborhood character.

# 2006 PAWTUCKETVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN



Suburban multi-family developments are common along Pawtucket Boulevard.



The new 'Grandview' project continues the trend towards multi-family developments along the Boulevard, but has generated a discussion in the neighborhood about the proper height, density, open space, screening and parking requirements for new higher-density development that is close to existing single-family neighborhoods.

secure high rental incomes for low quality housing. The commercial corridors themselves are proving to be attractive for business investment. However, a lack of parking along University Ave. restricts its growth.

The residential sections of West Pawtucketville continue the decades-long trends towards more suburban style subdivision development in its fields and forests. While this development is designed to meet Lowell's housing needs and diversify its housing options, it has come at a cost to the environment, as open space is lost and flooding problems in the Clay Pit Brook basin worsen. This trend of development is expected to continue, making open space protection and storm water mitigation essential.

Pawtucket Boulevard never developed into the retail strip corridor envisioned during the second half of the 20th century. Instead, most of its development moved toward suburban multi-family residential and small-scale commercial projects. The Boulevard's location – between a string of riverfront parks and suburban single-family neighborhoods – requires that future developments occur in a manner that provides protection from unattractive and inappropriate projects.

Pawtucketville citizens, as well as City officials, are becoming increasingly frustrated with inappropriate infill development. While the City is working to amend zoning regulations to address these concerns, efforts should be made to address future issues that may arise from infill projects. Such projects must be consistent with the existing character of the neighborhood landscapes, paying specific attention to development patterns and architectural details, as well as the relationship of building height and volume to lot area and setbacks.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STEPS

## Housing

### **Goal Statement:**

*To encourage the stability of residential neighborhood districts by promoting a housing stock that meets the neighborhoods diverse needs, and by encouraging reinvestment in existing structures.*

Pawtucketville offers its residents a unique blend of suburban lifestyle and comfort with urban life and culture. Pawtucketville provides a vast array of housing opportunities to its residents, from rental apartments, to condominiums, to traditional single and multi-family homes. As the population of the neighborhood grows, it is important to meet those housing needs while maintaining the current suburban feel of the neighborhood, and ensuring that all resident's long-term housing needs are met. In formulating a strategy to maximize the housing potential while maintaining suburban feel and implementing neighborhood sensitive design standards, the following action steps are recommended.

# 2006 PAWTUCKETVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN



East Pawtucketville's traditional neighborhoods should be preserved, protected and enhanced.

## 1. Ensure that all developments, both new construction and renovation, be sensitive to current neighborhood design.

**Action Step:** The City will work with existing neighborhood groups to incorporate a neighborhood sensitive design standard to guide future development and redevelopment.

**Action Step:** The City will continue to work with neighborhood residents and leaders to identify the significant characteristics of the neighborhood that must be preserved, protected, and enhanced.

**Action Step:** The City will explore the adoption of the Community Preservation Act as a tool for protecting and strengthening neighborhood character as well as affordable housing.

## 2. Encourage the rehabilitation of distressed rental properties, including two- and three-family homes.

**Action Step:** The City will identify distressed rental housing units/properties within the neighborhood, and create a database of these units in order to assist in their future rehabilitation.

**Action Step:** The City will establish a program to facilitate the preservation of older existing distressed properties by encouraging their redevelopment into residential and/or mixed-use facilities.

## 3. Address the insufficient enforcement of building and health codes. Ensure future compliance with such codes in order to increase the quality of housing.

**Action Step:** The City will identify and catalog properties that currently do not meet building and health codes standards and enforce those standards.

**Action Step:** The City will create a program where property owners are informed about health and building codes, and as necessary, alert property owners of code violations. A timeframe will be developed during which property owners will be required to bring their properties up to code.

**Action Step:** In accordance with Lowell's Master Plan, the City will provide and promote housing rehabilitation loan programs to help residents make repairs to meet building code requirements.

**4. Address the effects on the community, both negative and positive, of the student population in the neighborhood.**

**Action Step:** The City will work with UMass Lowell to minimize the effects of the student population on the neighborhood with regards to parking, housing, and other quality of life issues.

**Action Step:** The City will encourage partnerships between itself, the PCC, and UMass Lowell to ensure that future developments acknowledge and incorporate communitywide housing concerns and needs.

**5. Encourage home ownership throughout the neighborhood in order to ensure and enhance the stability of the neighborhood.**

**Action Step:** The City will encourage owner occupied ownership of properties through employer-assisted housing programs, the Two for Lowell initiative and other first-time homebuyer lending programs (as outlined in the Master Plan).

**Action Step:** The City will work with and encourage the employees of neighborhood institutions such as UMass Lowell and Lowell General Hospital in utilizing local home-ownership programs such as the Homebuyer Incentive Program (HIP), through LDFC and Project Genesis, both of the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership (<http://www.mvhp.org>).



Owners of dilapidated structures should be informed about possible building code violations.



University Avenue (seen here) and Mammoth Road should develop common streetscape designs, taking into account parking, traffic and pedestrian mobility.

## Economic Development

### Goal Statement:

To support the existing business districts, allowing them to enhance the neighborhood quality of life and fulfill the needs of residents while supporting the city's job and tax base.

Pawtucketville is a largely suburban, residential neighborhood within which several large institutions are located. These institutions, along with neighborhood residents, have aided in the creation and success of various neighborhood business districts within Pawtucketville. In creating a strategy to ensure their future success, the following objectives and action steps seek to enhance the appearance, vitality, and stability of the business districts through the creation of partnerships and the implementation of new and existing development programs.

### 1. Maintain and enhance the streetscapes of the neighborhoods' business districts.

**Action Step:** The City will create a streetscape standard for each of Pawtucketville's neighborhood business districts, that includes standards for uniform signage, landscape improvements, dumpster screening, and parking lot design. Standards should promote the unique characteristics of the individual business districts, while creating safer and more attractive districts for both consumers and businesses.

**Action Step:** Continue and expand current partnerships between the Lowell Police Department and the local business community and PCC to identify specific problem sites, facilities, or properties and work to improve conditions at those areas.

### 2. Encourage and implement a strategy for providing better pedestrian mobility, enhanced public transportation, and better parking options to the business districts.

**Action Step:** The City will develop a parking management plan to address timing, location and prioritization of parking for the business districts, specifically at locations along University Avenue and Mammoth Road where there is the perceived lack of sufficient parking. The plan may include the re-structuring of on street parking into temporary, 30 minute parking, preserving off-street parking lots for employee

and long-term parking, and instituting an employee parking program so local business employees can utilize parking lots free of charge freeing up more on street parking for consumers.

**Action Step:** Lowell Parking Department and the Lowell Police Department will ensure that all parking regulations are enforced.

**Action Step:** The City will identify measures to lessen the impact that residential parking has on local businesses, including car condos for residents and small public parking lots for businesses. Locate these lots where they will support the intended use.

**Action Step:** The City will create and implement a plan to make the business districts more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

### **3. Foster partnerships between neighborhood institutions and businesses.**

**Action Step:** The City will facilitate partnerships between businesses and research institutions within the neighborhood to promote the sharing of resources that may enhance the viability of the neighborhood's business districts.

### **4. Ensure the implementation of a vision for Pawtucket Boulevard, University Avenue, Mammoth Road, and Varnum Avenue.**

**Action Step:** The City will incorporate the sentiments of the Lowell Master Plan with those from this plan, local residents, businesses, and institutions to develop a comprehensive vision for the development of Pawtucket Boulevard, University Avenue, and Mammoth Rd.

**Action Step:** The City will ensure that the current balance of existing employment centers along Varnum Avenue remain sensitive to the character of the surrounding residential neighborhood. While existing businesses and institutions along Varnum Avenue are important to the City and the Neighborhood, ensuring their future harmony with the residential character of Pawtucketville is a priority of the City and neighborhood residents.

**Action Step:** The City will work with local residents, business owners, and UMass to study and create an action plan for the future success of the business district around University Avenue.



Lowell General Hospital is an important and defining institution in Pawtucketville.

## Transportation and Access

### Goal Statement:

To minimize the impact of traffic on community life, while maintaining adequate access to and from the neighborhood.

Transportation and access have always been very important issues to Pawtucketville, especially due to the Merrimack River and the issues of access that it creates. Pawtucketville enjoys a suburban, residential character and ensuring that increased traffic volume does not encroach upon this lifestyle is a high priority to its residents. In light of this, the following actions steps aim to address the major concerns of connectedness to and from the neighborhood while limiting traffic congestion and offering alternative means of transportation.

### 1. **Develop a comprehensive traffic-calming strategy that includes the long-term implications of population growth.**

**Action Step:** The City will work with citizens groups to identify locations of high traffic difficulty, excessive speed, noise and lack of flow.

**Action Step:** The City will identify high hazard locations for automobile accidents, and implement safety measures.

**Action Step:** The City will work to reduce automobile dependence among residents by improving access to public transportation, and creating neighborhood scale commercial opportunities for residents within the existing neighborhood business districts.

**Action Step:** The City will improve pedestrian safety by providing clearly marked cross walks, enforce crosswalk laws and provide well-illuminated pedestrian walkways.

**Action Step:** The City will ensure that neighborhood traffic does not increase as development occurs on Pawtucket Boulevard by encouraging traffic onto Pawtucket Boulevard.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STEPS

## 2. Develop a comprehensive traffic strategy to address the long-term growth of the institutions located within the neighborhood.

**Action Step:** The City will ensure that future growth at the Lowell General Hospital site will be accessed primarily through the easterly access drive to the site, closest to Pawtucket Boulevards, to limiting the amount of traffic growth experienced through the surrounding residential neighborhood.

**Action Step:** The city will work with UMass Lowell to reduce the automobile dependence among students and faculty, paying specific attention to traffic flow between the university's campuses.

## 3. Assess the impact of the bridges over the Merrimack River and develop strategies to improve traffic flow to and from the bridges.

**Action Step:** The City will identify neighborhood cut through routes used by commuters and address traffic calming solutions.

**Action Step:** The City will institute traffic calming measures at the access points most influenced by the Rourke Bridge.

**Action Step:** The PCC will partner with the City to ensure a community sensitive design for the proposed University Avenue Bridge and Rourke Bridge replacements.

## 4. Address the need for alternate means of mobility.

**Action Step:** The PCC will work with the City and UMass Lowell to create better pedestrian access throughout the neighborhood and the university through better sidewalks and illumination.

**Action Steps:** The City and UMass Lowell will work to make the neighborhood more accessible to bike traffic through the creation of a system of bike paths and the addition of more bike racks in business districts.

**Action Step:** The City will analyze and study the current condition of public transportation, and work with LRTA to develop better access to public transportation for all of Pawtucketville's citizens through expanded bus routes and frequency.



The Rourke Bridge seen here is one of three bridges over the Merrimack River connecting Pawtucketville to the rest of Lowell. Traffic flow to and over the bridges is a major concern of neighborhood residents.



Creating safe bike and pedestrian ways provide needed alternative internal neighborhood connectivity for the residents of Pawtucketville.

## Natural Resources and Recreation:

### Goal Statement:

To maintain the neighborhood's green character through the preservation and expansion of open space and to develop more programs that will allow the public to appreciate and enjoy open spaces while expanding Pawtucketville's complement of recreational opportunities.



Regatta Field and the Vendenberg Esplanade should be preserved to retain its current use.

The open, suburban nature of West Pawtucketville and the traditional neighborhood feel of East Pawtucketville are some of the principal defining characteristics of the neighborhood. Natural resources like the State Forest, Merrimack River and extensive park systems are just some of the aspects of the neighborhood's green character. In order to ensure that open space remains a significant part of the flavor of Pawtucketville, the following action steps aim to protect the current green space and preserve its future, as well as opening up new opportunities and awareness of natural resources to all of Pawtucketville's residents.

### 1. Ensure the preservation, expansion and use of Pawtucketville's existing open spaces.

**Action Step:** The City will develop a greenway system, including a neighborhood trail system that creates links between existing neighborhood parks, the State Forest and the Merrimack River.

**Action Step:** The City will work with the State Legislative delegation to develop a preservation easement or restriction that preserves the present use of Regatta Field.

**Action Step:** The City will develop a database of all vacant public and private properties with natural resource value, recreational potential or historical interest. If currently under City ownership, ensure their preservation status for the future.

**Action Step:** In conjunction with Friends of the Forest, the City will work to improve access to and increase usage of the State Forest through a program aimed at advertising the natural resources it provides the citizens of Pawtucketville.

**Action Step:** The PCC and local resident agencies will work with City and State agencies to ensure the protection of and reduce encroachment into wetlands and flood plains.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STEPS

**Action Step:** The City will work with local land trusts and owners of large parcels on new development proposals to encourage open space preservation.

**Action Step:** The City will work to permanently protect land at 520 Varnum Avenue by donating the parcel to a land trust or by placing a conservation easement upon the property.

**Action Step:** The City will initiate steps to protect Rollie's Farm by exercising its right of first refusal once the agricultural easement is lifted on the property. The City will work with the PCC and Friends of the Forest to create an action plan ensuring the preservation of the farm once the preservation designation is lifted.

**Action Step:** The City will identify and protect wildlife corridors through acquisitions and easements within the neighborhood, paying specific attention to land in and around the State Forest, Clay Pit Brook, Scarlet Brook, Flagg Meadow Brook, Pawtucket Boulevard, and scattered sites along Varnum Avenue and Trotting Park Road.

## 2. Improve safety and upkeep of the existing and future recreational facilities.

**Action Step:** Local neighborhood groups will work with the Lowell Police Department to improve safety in and around public recreational facilities, State Forests, and the river walk through improved neighborhood vigilance and police presence.

**Action Step:** The City will work with the Parks Department to identify public recreational facilities with a high priority of need for upkeep and develop a strategy to implement the required renovations.

**Action Step:** The City will improve access to the various neighborhood recreational facilities.

**Action Step:** The City and the PCC will work in conjunction with the State Legislative delegation on a plan to rehabilitate or replace "The Boat House", and preserve it as an important public resource.



Rollie's Farm, seen here, is the last remaining farm in Pawtucketville, which residents seek to preserve.



A recently updated park in East Pawtucketville



John Barry Gannon Memorial Garage on Mammoth Road

## Public Services

### Goal Statement:

To meet the growing need for services in order to maintain Pawtucketville's high quality of life, prevent crime, and improve public safety in the neighborhood.

Pawtucketville is fortunate to be one of Lowell's safest and well-maintained neighborhoods. However, as Pawtucketville continues to experience growth, its public services are being continually utilized to handle the impact of new development. The following actions steps are designed to ensure that future development within Pawtucketville does not hinder the present quality of the neighborhood's services and safety.

### 1. Ensure that public services will be able to handle the impact of future population growth on the neighborhood infrastructure.

**Action Step:** The City will update as necessary all neighborhood public facilities in order to accommodate significant population growth over the next decade, noting that any costs for upgrades or augmentations to public facilities due to new developments be born by the developer.

**Action Step:** The City, the PCC and the School Department will explore uses for the public schools in order to maximize them as a resource to the community.

### 2. Ensure that neighborhood safety improves and expands to meet the growing needs of the community, and address the growing number of possible hazards.

**Action Step:** The PCC will work with the Lowell Fire Department to examine the feasibility of continuing to provide fire service with the existing John Barry Gannon Memorial Garage fire station on Mammoth Road.

**Action Step:** The City will develop partnerships with local institutions and residents in order to institute a neighborhood-wide preparedness program to respond to possible safety hazards and inform the public of current public safety procedures.

**Action Step:** The PCC will partner with the Lowell Police Department to increase neighborhood vigilance and safety standards through increased monitoring and communication.

**Action Step:** The City will explore ways to protect houses and public utilities located within the flood plain, as well as create and enforce more stringent regulations for development within the flood plain.

**Action Step:** The City will work with the Army Corps of Engineers in order to update the Flood Mitigation Plan for the neighborhood and the City, paying specific attention to the Rosemont Terrace area of the neighborhood.

### **3. Continue to ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of the City's neighborhood public services.**

**Action Step:** The City will establish a neighborhood maintenance program that allocates funds from the City for the continued upkeep of the business districts within Pawtucketville.

**Action Step:** The City will properly maintain the neighborhood's sidewalks, streets, pedestrian paths, etc.

**Action Step:** The City will properly maintain the various brooks, waterways, and other natural features within the neighborhood through an annual clean-up and maintenance program.

### **4. Improve communication between and partnerships with local institutions.**

**Action Step:** The City will increase communication with the Boott Hydro plant in order to understand and reflect upon possible future expansions or projects.

**Action Step:** The City will increase communication with local institutions in identifying potential hazardous materials located within the neighborhood, and develop necessary safety precaution procedures.



The recent floods in May 2006 showed why projects built in the 100 Year Flood Plain, such as these, must meet strict development standards.

## Culture and History

### Goal Statement:

To develop partnerships between institutions and the neighborhood, and share resources each group has to offer, so that Pawtucketville's historical and cultural resources become defining features of the neighborhood's character.



UMass Lowell directly abuts the more traditional neighborhood section of Pawtucketville. Forging partnerships with the institution and its students and faculty is a primary goal of neighborhood residents.

Pawtucketville is one of Lowell's oldest established communities. In its early years, Pawtucketville was actually part of the Town of Dracut. The neighborhood was annexed by the City of Lowell in 1874, when Lowell was experiencing rapid growth during the Industrial Revolution. Pawtucketville brought to the City many "oldests" and "firsts." The neighborhood is a hidden jewel of many of the City's and the larger region's historical and cultural assets. The following action steps are designed to create better understanding and appreciation of Pawtucketville's historical and cultural significance within the City of Lowell and the larger region.

### 1. Strengthen the bond between the neighborhood and the University of Massachusetts Lowell to maximize cultural assets.

**Action Step:** The City will form a partnership with UMass Lowell to identify opportunities for cultural activities within the neighborhood, such as athletic events, theater and art. This will also include the development of a list serv/e-mail distribution list to better inform the public about upcoming events.

**Action Step:** Realizing that the student population brings a unique diverse population to the neighborhood, the PCC will explore opportunities to integrate the student population into cultural activities within the neighborhood.

**Action Step:** The PCC and UMass Lowell's Community Relations Office will create a more formal relationship through semi-annual meetings, ensuring communication between the University and the neighborhood with the hopes of fostering a stronger relationship between the two.

**Action Step:** In cooperation with the PCC, UMass Lowell will generate an informational brochure on Pawtucketville that will be distributed to students living on and off campus in an effort to foster better understanding of neighborhood values, history, and culture.

**Action Step:** In cooperation with the PCC, UMass Lowell will explore the development of a Neighborhood Volunteer Corps of students to participate in community-related events, such as neighborhood clean-ups and mentoring and tutoring in public schools.

**Action Step:** The City will work with UMass Lowell to explore a program that will allow current and new businesses along University Avenue to accept the university's 'River Hawk Dollars' card points at local businesses frequented by local students.

### **2. Develop historical initiatives that take into account Pawtucketville's unique and vibrant past both individually and also as a part of Greater Lowell's history.**

**Action Step:** The City will work to identify the historical landmarks in the neighborhood and create a database of significant sites including historical houses, cemeteries, churches and institutional sites as well as cultural landmarks.

**Action Step:** The PCC and the City will develop strategies to inform the public of Pawtucketville's history, possibly including a historical walking tour of the significant sites within the neighborhood, a historical marker system and an interactive website providing historical information.

**Action Step:** The PCC will work with the Lowell School Council and local schools to integrate Pawtucketville specific information into lesson plans on local history.

**Action Step:** The City will work to expand awareness of the current National Park Service preservation district, and find ways to expand and develop a Pawtucketville historical preservation district.

**Action Step:** The PCC will explore ways to celebrate Pawtucketville's history, through cultural events, historical calendars and annual neighborhood celebrations.

**Action Step:** The City will create a program to fill vacant or underutilized storefront windows in the neighborhood's business districts with a collection of local arts, crafts and historical artifacts.



Historical marker designating the former site of the Varnum Garrison House (1670-1887)



One of West Pawtucketville's new suburban style subdivisions, displaying an appropriate floor area ratio



This single-family house, in Centralville, reflects the existing character of its surrounding neighborhood.

## Land Use and Zoning

### Goal Statement:

To preserve the character of Pawtucketville's developing residential districts, and to support appropriate development in commercial and institutional districts that enhances their attractiveness and utility, while respecting the character of abutting residential blocks.

Pawtucketville is a unique blend of residential, institutional and business districts. Each district has its own flavor and set of uses, and therefore its own set of design standards for development. A delicate balance has developed within Pawtucketville to support these varied uses. In addition, the waterfront properties along Pawtucket Boulevard continue to be a resource for both the City and the Neighborhood. In order to protect the character and use of each of these distinct districts, as well as continuing the balance between the three, the following action steps are recommended.

### 1. **Ensure that the zoning regulations of Pawtucketville's residential districts seek to preserve and protect the neighborhood character of these districts.**

**Action Step:** The City will protect the character of Pawtucketville's existing Suburban Single Family (SSF) districts by ensuring the proper application of subdivision standards and zoning regulations as they relate to the volume, height, setbacks and size of new developments.

**Action Step:** In an effort to ensure that future development is consistent with existing neighborhood characteristics, DPD will explore changes to the SSF dimensional requirements as they relate to Pawtucketville, which may include the lowering of Floor Area Ratio.

**Action Step:** The City will work to develop a new design and development review process within the traditional neighborhood zoning districts of East Pawtucketville. DPD will monitor ongoing work within these districts and continue to ensure protections for the existing traditional neighborhood character.

**Action Step:** The City will regulate the development and use of in-law apartments within the neighborhood. Additionally, DPD will develop a set of regulations formalizing the permitting, construction, and use of in-law apartments.



### **3. Ensure that the future use of properties along Pawtucket Boulevard is both sensitive to neighborhood design and economically viable.**

**Action Step\*:** The City will rezone a majority of the existing Suburban Mixed Use (SMU) zoning district along Pawtucket Boulevard into a new Suburban Waterview (SWV) zoning district. This new zoning district will have a set of underlying regulations allowing low-density development by right, as well as a new set of regulations that will ensure economically viable, neighborhood sensitive development on the land through a special permit process in front of the City Council. The City will continue to work with the Pawtucketville Master Plan CAC on this new set of regulations in order to balance the goals of Lowell's Master Plan with the desires and concerns of the neighborhood. These regulations will specifically address and incorporate the following:

- Provide adequate protected open space
- Provide the highest quality of landscaping and architectural design
- Enhance the public's opportunity to access and enjoy the waterfront
- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle access to the waterfront
- Traffic must not overburden neighborhood streets
- Protect and enhance the open, public character of the system of riverfront parks
- Protect abutting residential uses from glare, shadow, and noise impacts

**Action Step:** The City will rezone the remainder of the property in the existing SMU zoning district as Suburban Multi-Family (SMF), Suburban Single-Family (SSF), and Neighborhood Business (NB), which ever is most appropriate.

\* The Division of Planning & Development differs in opinion from the Member of the CAC regarding the zoning requirements of the Suburban Waterview zoning district. More specifically, the Member of CAC is most concerned about possible height requirements/limits of proposed buildings within the district. Review of the final SWV zoning and any future development within this district must include discussion, analysis, and compromise from both the City and the Neighborhood in order to ensure future development is sensitive to the community and adheres to City and Neighborhood Master Plan goals.

# IMPLEMENTATION STEPS AND TIMELINE

The Division of Planning & Development (DPD) and the Pawtucketville Citizens Council are charged with creating an implementation steps and timeline strategy in order to ensure the execution of the goals, objectives, and action steps located within this document. Below is a short-term list of action steps DPD is committed to implementing over the next 6 months to 1 year. DPD will work with the PCC and other members of the Pawtucketville community in order to ensure the full execution of the list below.

Over the next several months, DPD will also work closely with the PCC in creating a more comprehensive short-term and long-term list of action steps to be implemented based on this document. This list will be added to the Pawtucketville Neighborhood Master Plan as an amendment at a later date.

Additionally, the Pawtucketville Neighborhood Master Plan, in coordination with Lowell's Comprehensive Master Plan, should be utilized by various City officials and departments, and other members of the community to inform decision making about municipal policies and activities, including expenditures, grant funding, capital projects, property dispositions, and the review of development proposals.

## Short Term (6 months – 1 year)

Throughout the Pawtucketville Neighborhood Master Plan process, the preservation of existing neighborhood character was identified as a primary goal of the community. Through the Master Plan process, some pressing and immediate concerns were raised by the CAC as issues that must be handled and considered in the short-term time period. To address these concerns, the Division of Planning & Development seeks to ensure that the following proposed changes and additions to local regulations are enacted within the next 6 months to 1 year:

### **1. Establish new zoning for the parcels along Pawtucket Boulevard as appropriate**

- a. Create a new Suburban Waterview (SWV) zoning district, with new development regulations, for parcels along Pawtucket Boulevard currently zoned Suburban Mixed Use (SMU)
- b. Re-zone remainder of land within this section of the neighborhood as appropriate

### **2. Establish new zoning regulations for proposed SWV zoning district, known as Section 8.5 Suburban Waterview (SWV) Special Permit**

- a. Require City Council special permit, preceded by Planning Board Site Plan approval and Design Review Committee review
- b. Establish strict dimensional requirements to ensure minimal impact on surrounding single-family neighborhood
- c. Include neighborhood character requirements, such as:
  - i. Provide adequate open space
  - ii. Create connection between waterfront and surrounding neighborhood
  - iii. Ensure highest quality site, architectural, and landscaping design
  - iv. Ensure minimal traffic impacts on the neighborhood, such as making sure that any increase in traffic is accessed on the Boulevard and not onto neighboring street roads
- d. Include site design character requirements, such as:
  - i. Completion of view shed analysis
  - ii. Required review by internal Design Review Committee
  - iii. Required review by neighborhood group

### **3. Research and propose changes to Suburban Single Family and Traditional Single Family districts within Pawtucketville**

- a. Lower the Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) in these districts from 5.0 to 3.0
- b. Develop & implement an in-law apartment ordinance
- c. Propose new increased rear yard deck setback requirements

### **4. Develop new regulations for Neighborhood Business (NB) zoning districts, specifically regarding Mammoth Road and University Avenue**

- a. Develop NB design and use standards specific to individual business district(s)
- b. Create form-based code reflecting neighborhood concerns and desired development outcomes for these districts

### **5. Re-examine Institutional Mixed-Use (INST) zoning district**

- a. Develop possible zoning requirements that promote a link between future developments in the INST district with the institutions for which they serve

### **6. Create and implement new design requirements, and design review processes for developments within the traditional neighborhood districts**

## **Long Term (1 year – 5 years)**

The Division of Planning and Development, working in conjunction with the PCC, will ensure the long-term implementation of this neighborhood master plan. Upon the endorsement and adoption of the Pawtucketville Master Plan by the community, DPD's Neighborhood Planner will meet with the PCC in order to create an implementation strategy to ensure the goals, objectives, and action steps outlined within this document are put into practice over the next several years. Periodic updates to this Master Plan will also be necessary to guarantee the relevance of the plan as it relates to current and future neighborhood concerns and desires.



## APPENDIX – POPULATION DETAILS

### Age (1990-2000)

Age Group	West Pawtuckeville	% Change	East Pawtuckeville	% Change
0 to 17	22.2%	+18.2%	21.6%	+12.8%
18 to 24	8.2%	-21.7%	16.8%	-21.5%
25 to 44	33.5%	+0.7%	29.2%	-7.9%
45 to 64	20.6%	+35.4%	17.0%	+6.9%
65 and over	15.4%	+2.9%	11.9%	-12.4%

### Racial Composition (1990-2000)

Racial and Ethnic Group	2000	% of Total	1990	% of Total
Caucasian	11,444	79.7%	12,490	90.3%
Asian	1321	9.2%	725	5.2%
Hispanic	817	5.7%	372	2.7%
Black	484	3.4%	195	1.4%
Other	289	2.0%	55	0.4%
Total	14,355		13,837	

# 2006 PAWTUCKETVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN

## Highest Level of Education (Age 25+)

Education Level	Pawtucketville	Lowell	Massachusetts	Pawtucketville (Change since 1990)
Less than High School Diploma	19.5%	28.8%	15.2%	-27.2%
High School Diploma	55.5%	47.8%	44.4%	+20.8%
Associate Degree	5.4%	5.3%	7.2%	-5.9%
Bachelor's Degree	13.3%	11.5%	19.5%	+41.7%
Graduate Degree	6.3%	6.7%	13.7%	+3.9%