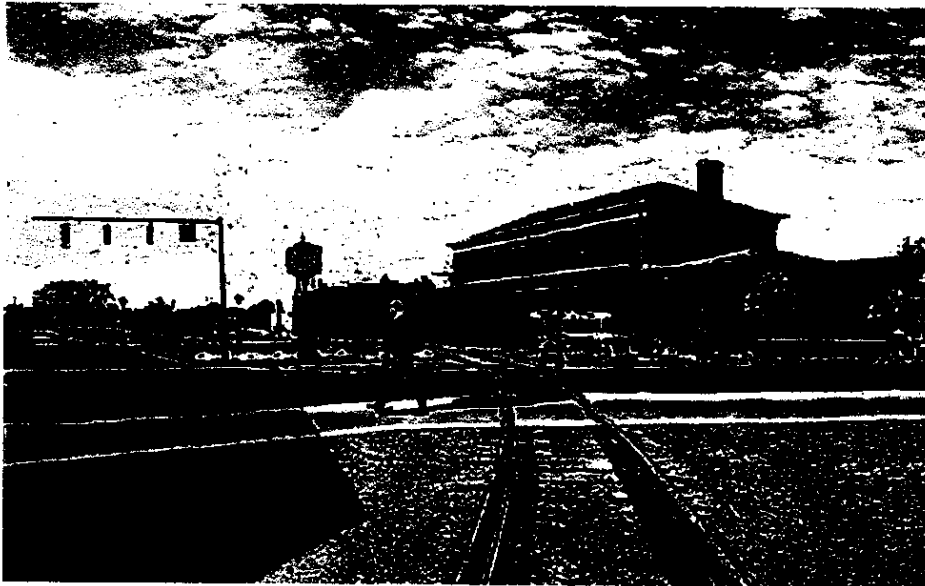
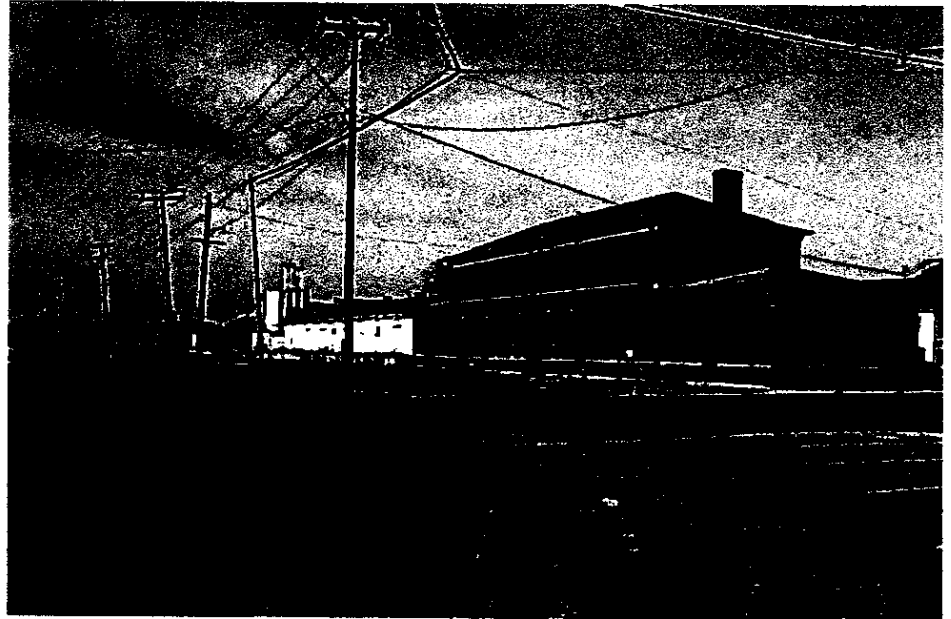


Riverstation Neighborhood Plan

New Bern,
North
Carolina



Written by:

Greg Sekula, AICP
and
Annette D. Stone,
AICP

Adopted by the New Bern Board of Aldermen
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RIVERSTATION NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

PART I: DEFINING THE VISION

The vision for the *Riverstation* neighborhood involves the creation of a revitalized, mixed use, in-town neighborhood that serves as a vital link between two significant national register historic districts (New Bern's Downtown Historic District and Riverside Historic District). The neighborhood will rely on its rich industrial heritage and riverfront location to define its unique character. Planning tools, such as, historic preservation, urban design, and traditional neighborhood planning which places a special emphasis on creating a pedestrian-oriented environment are the principal vehicles for revitalization of this important neighborhood. The following is a list of key components that collectively will create synergy for future sustainability of *Riverstation*.



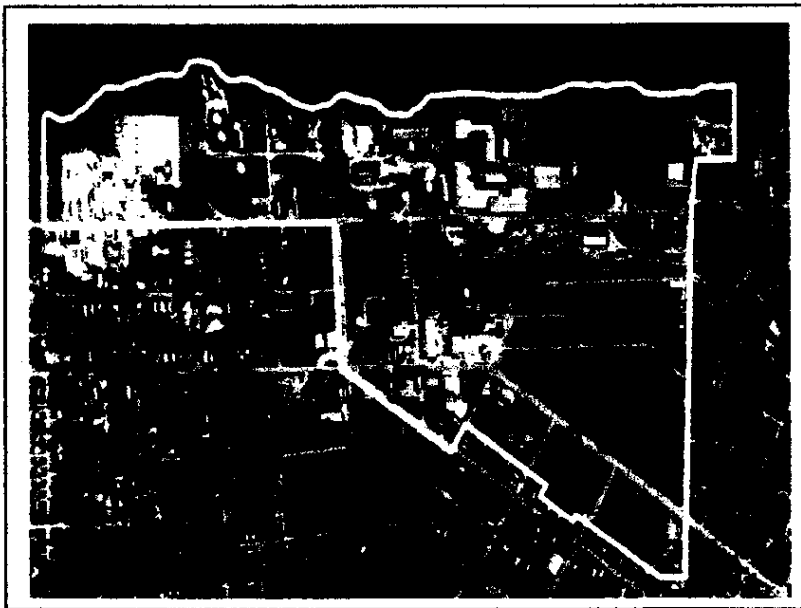
- ◆ Union Station and the surrounding freight yard provide a unique opportunity for expanded office, commercial and light industrial uses. The vision for this area is development of rehabilitated and newly designed buildings creating the flavor of a turn of the century railroad complex, but functioning as a modern day office complex or small scale industrial park.
- ◆ Rehabilitation of other important landmarks, including Historic African American landmarks, will raise awareness of the rich unique cultural and racial diversity of *Riverstation*.
- ◆ New in-fill residential construction that borrows from existing architectural styles, emphasizing one and two story buildings, fronting the street, connected by sidewalks, side and rear parking, will provide the re-establishment of essential traditional neighborhood components and create a sense of place.
- ◆ Community parks, open spaces, and an organized network of pedestrian pathways can be important features that enhance the quality of life for the residents. New and repaired sidewalks offer increased pedestrian safety and access to local businesses and jobs. A riverfront promenade extending from Queen Street to and including the Maola Milk Company property will provide pedestrian access to nearly one mile of the Neuse River shoreline.
- ◆ Other pockets of potential redevelopment and investment include the 900 and 1000 blocks of George Street. This area has the

potential to be a charming small neighborhood business district with mixed uses. Public investment of lighting, trees, less visible utilities on George Street can help to establish this street as the grand civic boulevard befitting it's strategic location linking important community landmarks like the Tryon Palace, Cedar Grove Cemetery and National Cemetery.

PART II: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LOCATION

The intown neighborhood known as *Riverstation* encompasses roughly an 18-block area strategically located along the bank of the Neuse River between the City's locally designated Downtown National Register Historic District to the South and the Riverside National Register Historic District to the North. Portions of both historic districts fall within the boundaries of this newly named neighborhood. The area is generally bounded by Queen Street on the South, Dunn Street on the North, George Street on the West, and the Neuse River on the East. Properties along the Neuse River shoreline extending from the Queens Point Development at Queen and East Front Streets northward to Maola Milk & Ice Cream are included in the planning area.



HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Impact of the Railroad

The area known today as *Riverstation* emerged as New Bern's principal industrial corridor in the late 1850s when the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad arrived in New Bern. Completed in 1858, the newly formed railway ran from Morehead City

through New Bern westward to Kinston and Goldsboro. There it joined the tracks of the North Carolina Railroad, which then ran as far inland as Charlotte. This facility became one of New Bern's major industrial operations and employers during much of the period between 1850 through 1925.

The prosperity of the railroad continued as new lines were added to meet demands of consumer product markets and passenger travel. With added connections to the north and south, a new train station was constructed in 1910, the monumental, pressed red brick, Colonial Revival and Neo-Classical Union Station is a testament to growth of the railroad industry in New Bern and its importance to the City's history.

The Industrial Base

If the presence of the railroad precipitated the birth of what is today known as the *Riverstation* neighborhood, it was the growth of the lumber industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that insured the area's continued growth as an industrial center. The cutting, processing, and exporting of timber and its related by-products became the City's principal source of wealth during the early decades of the 20th century. The largest of the City's mills was the ca. 1890 Blades Lumber Company, which was eventually, acquired by the Norfolk-based Roper Lumber Company in 1906 and later the Rowland Lumber Company in 1921. Maola Milk & Ice Cream Company today occupies four of the buildings previously a part of the Rowland Lumber Company. The majority of the complex, however, was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1922.

In addition to being the heart of the City's lumber industry in the late 19th to early 20th centuries, *Riverstation* also housed other industrial operations, several of which were agricultural products-related. In the early-to-mid 20th century,

the New Bern Oil and Fertilizer Company on North Craven Street



Figure 2 - Maola Milk Plant located on North Craven Street

operated Craven County's only cotton gin. S.M. Jones and Company, located at the corner of Dunn Street and National Avenue in the building now occupied by S.B. Parker Company, specialized in the sale of seed, fertilizer, and farm produce. The A.C. Monk and Company, Incorporated, located on North Craven Street on the site of the present day Monk-Mallard Park, operated a tobacco redrying plant and stemmery. Maola Milk and Ice Cream Company opened its doors in 1935 and was the only milk pasteurization and ice cream plant within a 35-mile radius of the City. In 1940 the company employed between 33 and 40 workers and continues to operate today with an employee base of 183 workers. Machine shops also made *Riverstation* their home. In addition to the railroad shops, Riverside Iron Works began operations in the 1920s employing blacksmiths,

machinists, and boilermakers to produce iron and structural steel, smokestacks, and metal tanks. Nearby Gaskins Foundry manufactured tobacco grates, furnaces, and brass and iron castings.

Residential Development

The *Riverstation* neighborhood occupies portions of land that was originally platted in 1806 by Benjamin Smith who later became governor of North Carolina from 1810-1811. The land had been owned by Smith's father-in-law, William Dry, and became known as Dryborough. By 1859, the town had expanded its limits to include Dryborough. A portion of the subdivision had been used to create Cedar Grove Cemetery, which would continue to expand its boundaries until the 1930s.

Following the Civil War, the area became predominately an African-American neighborhood. Churches and businesses were interspersed with houses. Many residential structures were constructed to house workers employed in the nearby railroad yard and lumber mills. By the turn-of-the-20th century, *Riverstation* was a densely built, mixed-use neighborhood as revealed in the Sanborn Fire Rate Insurance Maps of the period.

The Great Fire of 1922, which involved two simultaneous blazes, forever changed the face of *Riverstation*. Early in the morning of December 1, a fire started in the Rowland Lumber Company mill on North Craven Street and nearly destroyed the vast complex of



Figure 3 - Row Houses located on Pastner Street

buildings. While firemen attempted to control the blaze, a second fire erupted in the vicinity of Bern Street and raged out of control sweeping westward and eventually consuming some 40 blocks of housing. In the fire's aftermath, nearly 3,000 people were left homeless and an estimated one million dollars in property damage had occurred. The decline of the railroad and lumber industry coupled with the onset of the Great Depression and a growing awareness of the undesirability of living close to industrial areas resulted in a slow rebuilding period. A flurry of residential building occurred within a decade of the Great Fire, but gradually slowed. Kafer Park replaced residential properties that once lined George Street near Cedar Grove Cemetery. Cemetery expansion claimed yet more land. Few residential dwellings have been constructed in the neighborhood since the 1930s.

Those residential buildings that remain have generally suffered from years of deferred maintenance and are in need of rehabilitation today.

Charting a Course for the Future

Today, *Riverstation* is at a crossroads. After suffering several decades of economic decline and disinvestment, development interest in the neighborhood is growing as rehabilitation activities in the adjoining Downtown Historic District and Riverside Historic District begin to encroach upon its edges. Preservation efforts have focused attention on the now abandoned Union Station and rehabilitation of housing is occurring along Queen Street. As redevelopment activities begin, *Riverstation* needs implementation of the vision to positively direct development activity in a manner that enables this important intown neighborhood to serve as a point of connection between the revitalized residential neighborhoods of the Downtown Historic District and Riverside.

PART III: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Land Uses

The *Riverstation* neighborhood encompasses approximately 150 acres of land. Industrial uses account for 43% of the neighborhood, totaling nearly 64 acres. The majority of industrial land uses are concentrated along the shores of the Neuse River and the North Craven Street corridor and represent the largest

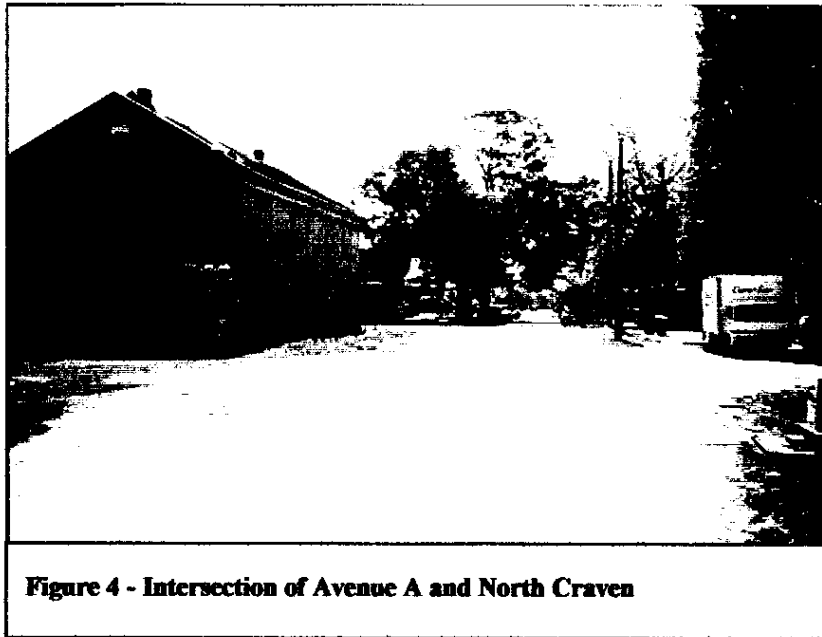


Figure 4 - Intersection of Avenue A and North Craven

tracts of land in single ownership in the neighborhood. The largest land-owning industrial operations in *Riverstation* include, Maola Milk & Ice Cream Company, Coastal Lumber Company, Precision Molding, Royster-Clark, and the North Carolina and Norfolk-Southern Railroad. Smaller industrial operations include: Caro-San Maintenance Supply Company, Ultra-Precision Machining, R.E. Bengel Sheet Metal, the Atlantic Ice & Coal Company, Hardison Heating & Air, and Register Glass Shop.

Excluding street rights-of-way, parks and cemeteries represent the second largest land use category, representing 15% of the total land area or approximately 22 acres. Within *Riverstation's* boundaries are found Cedar Grove Cemetery, Kafer Park, the George Street Recreational Area, Mallard Park and Ave A Park. These open space resources are publicly owned amenities and play an important role in defining the neighborhood's character.

An almost equal amount of land area - 18.89 acres - is vacant land. This represents 13% of the total land area in *Riverstation*. Many of these vacant parcels were previously occupied by residential structures. The Great Fire of 1922 coupled with a period of economic disinvestment in the neighborhood over the past four decades has eroded the once densely built residential character on streets such as Howard, Pasteur, Queen, and North Cool. Several large tracts of vacant land are situated along the Neuse River and Cypress Street. Previously occupied by industrial land uses, these tracts may have been subjected to environmental contamination and will require testing and monitoring to determine their viability for redevelopment. Optimistically, however, these vacant parcels, both small and large, represent tremendous potential for new development and the emergence of a unique, mixed use, intown neighborhood.

Residential land uses account for 9% of the total land uses in the *Riverstation* neighborhood. There are 130 residential housing units contained within 89 structures. The majority of these units are single-family dwellings. Of the 64 single-family structures, 21 units or 33% are rental units and an equal number are owner-occupied dwellings. The remaining 22 units are vacant, representing 34% of the single family housing stock. Multi-family structures constitute the second largest housing type in the neighborhood. There are at present 8 multi-family buildings containing a total of 23 housing units. These are exclusively rental units. An additional 4 buildings with a total of 13 units are under construction as phase one of the Queens Point Development at the southeast corner of Queen and East Front Streets. Twenty housing units, which constitute 16% of the total housing stock, are contained within duplex structures. Two manufactured homes are found in *Riverstation*. One is located on Howard Street and the other is found on Pasteur Street. The Pasteur Street manufactured home has been brick-veneered. No additional manufactured homes are permitted in the neighborhood as a result of zoning district changes.

Commercial land uses constitute a mere 1% of the *Riverstation* neighborhood. The majority of these businesses are concentrated in the 900 and 1000 blocks of George Street. Additional commercial development is found on Queen Street near Union Station.

Institutional and civic uses comprise 3% of the total land use in *Riverstation*. Churches in the neighborhood include the Biblical House of God and the Salvation Army. New Bern's police station headquarters is located at the gateway to the neighborhood. The area also is the home of Religious Community Services (RCS) which operates a soup kitchen and food and clothing pantry out of its Guion Street location. United Senior Services located nearby on George Street provides outreach and support services for the elderly of the

community. The Phoenix House, located on Cypress Street, provides rehabilitation assistance to those suffering from drug and alcohol addiction and disease.

Housing

With few exceptions, the housing stock that remains in the *Riverstation* Neighborhood was constructed in the first quarter of the 20th century as single family housing. These

buildings were built largely to accommodate the housing needs of workers employed in the industries that were located in the area. The typical housing type found in *Riverstation* is a two story, frame, gable front house with an interior side hall plan. The

houses range in size from 1,000 to 1,500 square feet.

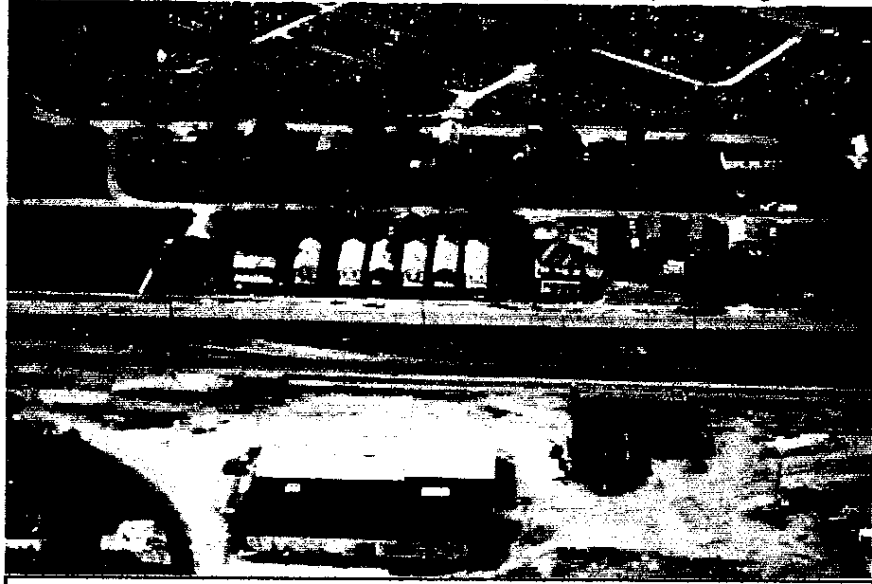


Figure 5 - Aerial View of Railroad Yard, Residential Housing and Cemetery

Notable examples of this building type are clustered on the 300 block of Guion Street, the 400 block of Dunn Street, and the 800 block of Pasteur Street. Riverside resident, Oscar A. Kafer, who developed numerous houses in the Riverside neighborhood for rental purposes during the early decades of the 20th century, constructed the first two groupings. One-story variations of the gable-front, side hall-plan house are also present in the neighborhood. Representative examples are found on the 800 block of Howard Street. Other notable concentrations of early 20th century housing in *Riverstation* are found along the 1000 block of North Craven Street, the 300 block of Guion Street, the 400 block of Dunn Street, the 1000 block of George Street, and the 800 block of Pasteur Street.

Riverstation retains a small collection of houses from the second half of the 19th century. The most significant and earliest known grouping is found on the 800 block of North Craven Street. Here three (originally four) Carpenter Gothic-style cottages constructed between 1858 and 1860 on the east side of the block were built for Alonzo Jerkins, a prominent local businessman and one of the directors of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. Other late 19th century houses are found at 402 and 404 Queen Street, 845 Pasteur Street, and 809 North Craven Street. The house at 807 North Craven, although extensively altered, is also of late 19th century origin and retains its original, decorative, bargeboard gable trim. The structure at 819 North Craven Street, although undocumented, also appears to be of 19th century origin.

Few residential properties have been constructed within the last fifty years in *Riverstation*. Those that have been constructed have generally ignored the established building traditions in the neighborhood. These later houses typically have been one story rather than two stories in height, constructed with shallower roof pitches, in some cases built on concrete slabs instead of masonry crawl spaces, and have maintained deeper front yard setbacks than their predecessors. Examples of houses that have deviated from the established building standards are found on Howard and Pasteur Streets.

Queens Point, located at the intersection of Queen and East Front Streets, is a townhouse development that, when completed, will add approximately 23 units to the Neighborhood's housing stock. The red brick, Victorian Revival buildings are being constructed in two phases and reflect the migration of revitalization activities northward from the Downtown Historic District. Likewise, rehabilitation of historic residential properties is occurring along Queen Street and portions of North Craven Street due, in part, to the efforts of the New Bern Preservation Foundation. The non-profit organization's revolving fund has purchased and sold six houses in the neighborhood, several of which are currently under restoration. Such rehabilitation and development activities may have a "domino effect" on the rest of *Riverstation*.

Of the 89 residential buildings found in *Riverstation*, 24 or 27% are currently being monitored under the City's Minimum Housing Code Enforcement Program (Minimum Housing). Administered by the City's Inspections Division, Minimum Housing establishes basic standards for habitable housing within the City. The Program is largely complaint-based and provides an enforceable schedule for the making of improvements to substandard dwellings. Failure to upgrade property to the basic standard may result in the demolition of the structure depending upon the severity of building condition.

Many of the buildings found in *Riverstation* have suffered from years of deferred maintenance and/ or repairs that may not meet current building code standards. Approximately 83% (74 out of 89 residential structures) are at least 50 years old. Several structures that were originally constructed as single-family dwellings are presently duplex or multi-family residences.

Population

Approximately 204 persons reside in the *Riverstation* Neighborhood based on 1990 U.S. Census figures. African-Americans comprise the largest population group with 149 persons representing 73% of the total neighborhood population. There are 53 Caucasians, which constitutes 26% of the total population base. The remaining 1% of the population is of Hispanic or Asian origin.

The male and female population in *Riverstation* is evenly divided with 102 persons of each gender. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of residents (120 persons) are of working age and fall within the 18-64-age cohort. The second largest age group is the 0-17 age cohort

representing 29% of *Riverstation's* total population. Thirty-five percent (35%) of residents (54 persons) in *Riverstation* have never married. Another 28% (43 persons) currently are married, while the number of persons widowed (19), separated (19), or divorced (22) is nearly evenly spread at 12%, 12% and 14% respectively.

Economic Base and Employment

Industrial and commercial uses in the neighborhood have diminished since the height of *Riverstation's* economic prosperity in the early 20th century. A once active railroad yard is currently sporadically used, its buildings demolished, boarded up, or leased. Only one lumber mill, Coastal Lumber Company, occupies the Neuse River waterfront. Fertilizer and petroleum storage and distribution industries, which became the focus of industrial operations in the neighborhood in the mid- 20th century, have either closed their doors or curtailed their operations. Coastal Lumber Company presently occupies significant river front tracts, Maola Milk & Ice Cream Company that has been in operation in New Bern since 1935 and Royster-Clark Fertilizer Company whose grain elevators has become a landmark presence in the *Riverstation* Neighborhood for the past forty years. Several small businesses have opened operations within the last forty years along the 900 block of George Street, North Craven Street, and Guion Street. In all, 19 businesses presently are in operation in *Riverstation* representing a total permanent workforce of 358 persons.

Resources

Natural Resources: The Neuse River forms the eastern boundary of the *Riverstation* neighborhood. Nearly one mile of shoreline extends from the Queens Point Development on the southern end of the neighborhood to the Maola Milk & Ice Cream complex on the northern end of the neighborhood.

One of North Carolina's most ecologically and commercially significant rivers, the Neuse River has been the focus of increased national attention in recent years due to large fish kills and algae blooms. In addition, runoff from urban point and non-point pollution sources have contributed to nutrient loading, producing water quality problems that are being addressed basin wide. Today the Neuse River and other river basins located in the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine Study Area are benefiting from implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

Once intensively used by New Bern's downtown riverfront industries and cluttered with piers, docks, and barge and boat traffic, the Neuse today is little used by the remaining industry in *Riverstation*. Royster-Clark is the only industry that relies on the water to move goods.



Figure 6 - Neuse River

Barges transport liquid Nitrogen from storage tanks leased to Royster-Clark and located at a tank farm to the north of Avenue A adjacent to Maola Milk & Ice Cream Company. A once extensive network of docks and piers that connected the shoreline to the navigable channel of the River has largely disappeared leaving only pilings protruding from the water's surface and making boat travel hazardous. In certain areas, natural vegetation has begun to re-establish itself along the shoreline and has become a sanctuary for water-dependent wildlife.

Despite the close proximity of the Neuse River to *Riverstation*, there is a lack of physical connection between the River and the neighborhood. No public access points to the River exist except for a small park at the end of Avenue A. This river access project has come about as a result of this plan and the Riverside Neighborhood Associations. Buildings and overgrowth obscure most of the visual access. Recommendations on reconnecting the neighborhood to the Neuse River are contained in this plan.

Open Space Resources. Open space resources constitute the second largest land use in *Riverstation*, an important ingredient to the future vitality of the neighborhood. Cemeteries and parks in the area include:

Cedar Grove Cemetery, Queen and George Streets - New Bern's principal 19th century burying ground, this historic landscape encompasses 15.53 acres and is characterized by densely arranged grave markers and monuments, manicured lawns and mature trees. The Cemetery contains one of the State's finest collections of funerary art and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. An extension to Cedar Grove Cemetery was developed in the 1930s and occupies the eastern half of the block bounded by George, Bern, Main, and Cedar Streets.

Kafer Park, George and Cedar Streets - Developed with funding provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the years following the Great Fire of 1922, this 3.2 acre park contains a ball field, restroom facilities, and a concession stand. The present bleachers in the park replaced a concrete grand stand that was removed in 1986. The park has strong connections to the City's black community, which utilized the recreational area heavily during the years when the nearby West Street School was in operation. Local legend holds that baseball great Willie Mayes played minor league ball in the park. Negro League great, Satchel Page, also played here. Murals painted on the concrete walls lining the outfield of the ballfield were executed in 1995 through a grant from the North Carolina Arts Council.

George Street Park, George and Main Streets - This 2 acre park facility was created with funds provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The park contains two tennis courts, one lighted practice field, a basketball court, and restroom facilities. The site adjoins the United Senior Services Building.

Monk-Mallard Park - This 2 acre neighborhood park for the Riverside community

was created in 1993 on the site of the former A.C. Monk and Company, Inc. tobacco redrying plant and stemmery. A passive recreational space, the park has picnic tables and grills.

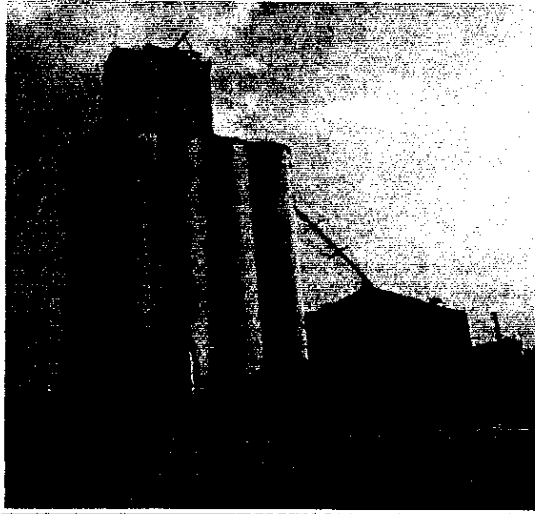


Figure 7 – Grain Silo located at the Royster Clark Property on North Craven.

Historic Resources One of the *Riverstation* neighborhood's greatest assets is the number of historic resources that are found within its boundaries. The buildings and sites contribute to the Neighborhood's character and importantly communicate its historical development and significance. Portions of the planning area lie within the boundaries of the Downtown New Bern National Register Historic District and the Riverside National Register Historic (see Appendix A). Some of the most significant properties and sites include:

Cedar Grove Cemetery, Queen and George Streets - New Bern's principal 19th century burying ground, Cedar Grove Cemetery is an historic landscape that contains the graves of individuals of local, state, and regional importance. The Cemetery contains one of the State's finest collections of funerary art and was the first cemetery in North Carolina to be listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places.

King Solomon Lodge Number One, 710 Howard Street - Built in 1870, this Italianate-style landmark is the home of the first black Masonic Lodge established in North Carolina following the Civil War and is considered the mother lodge for the state's other African-American Masonic Lodges. Although many of its original exterior architectural features have been obscured by recent alterations, the building does retain its distinctive hipped roof, cupola, and ornamental cornice brackets. The Lodge's present location dates from a 1920s move. The structure originally stood nearby on Queen Street and was moved to accommodate an expansion to Cedar Grove Cemetery.

Rhone Hotel, 512 Queen Street - Built in 1923 following the Great Fire for Henrietta Rhone, this two-story brick building is significant as the first hotel in New Bern built for and operated by African-Americans. The building also has the distinction of being the home of Charlotte Rhone who is thought to be the first black registered nurse in North Carolina. She is also responsible for helping to establish the first library for African-Americans in the City. The Hotel serves as a reminder of the days when *Riverstation* was a well-established African-American

enclave, a presence that greatly diminished following the destruction of the Great Fire of 1922.

Cohen & Goldman Company Building ("Old Sewing Room"), Queen and Pasteur Streets - This prominent two story brick factory building was constructed ca. 1923 as the Cohen & Goldman Pants Factory. One of America's largest producers of men's clothing at the time, Cohen & Goldman Company employed 250 men and women by 1940. The New Bern plant was the Company's only facility south of Baltimore, Maryland. The building housed a sewing room, cleaning and pressing operation, and a packing facility. The business was one of several manufacturing and processing operations in the neighborhood that relied on the close proximity of the railroad for transportation of goods and was a significant area employer.

S.M. Jones and Company, 1104 National Avenue - Constructed ca. 1937, this two story, gabled roof structure was the home of the S.M. Jones and Company which was a distributor of fertilizer, seed, and produce. The building replaced an earlier structure that housed the Banner Tobacco Warehouse that was destroyed by fire in the mid- 1930s. The building currently houses the S.B. Parker Company, a century-old business specializing in air conditioning and heating supplies.

Union Station, 416 Queen Street - Symbolizing New Bern's status as an early 20th century regional rail center, Union Station stands as the pivotal landmark of the *Riverstation* neighborhood. The notable, two-story, pressed red brick, Colonial Revival and Neo-classical Revival structure was constructed in 1910. Sited prominently on Queen Street near the intersection of Hancock street, the landmark building consists of a main two story block flanked by one story wings.

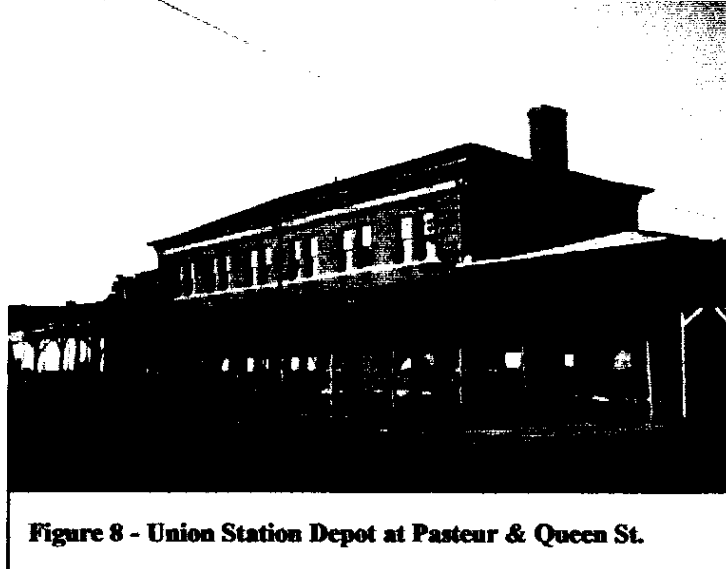


Figure 8 - Union Station Depot at Pasteur & Queen St.

The building's restrained exterior ornamentation consists of corbelled brick quions at the corners of the two story section, a rusticated stone beltcourse defining the building's base, and an egg-and-dart and dentilwork wooden cornice. An extensive passenger shed system supported by cast iron columns originally surrounded the

building and extended along Queen Street from the Station to North Craven

Street. The City removed the last remaining portions of the canopy in 1994 after falling into ruinous condition. Cast iron columns and wooden bracing from the sheds were salvaged following dismantling and are stored in the building.

Union Station Freight Yard Buildings, Queen and North Craven Streets - Standing in the freight yard behind Union station are two surviving shop buildings from what was once a bustling railroad repair complex of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. One of the remaining buildings was constructed in 1910 and used as a paint shop. This painted brick building has distinctive corbelled brick pilasters along its wall sections and is capped by a low monitor roof with clerestory. Behind this structure is the surviving section of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad's back shop and locomotive repair facility. The structure was originally connected to a roundhouse that was demolished in the mid- 20th century. This building may have been part of the original railroad complex that was constructed at this site in the late 1850s, although a fire in the first decade of the 20th century probably resulted in a rebuilding of the structure.

Cottage Row, 814-818 North Craven Street - Constructed between 1858 and 1860 as rental houses for Alonzo T. Jerkins, a prominent businessman and one of the directors of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, these three cottages form the City's finest collection of Gothic Revival dwellings. There were originally four nearly identical cottages built on the east side of what was once known as Griffith Street. The houses retain their distinctive sawn bargeboard trim in the gable ends and on the dormers. The house at 814 North Craven is the best preserved of the grouping and retains its original kitchen.

New Berne Ice House, 820 North Craven Street - Now in a state of serious disrepair, the brick warehouse that was occupied by the New Berne Ice Company was constructed in the 1870s and may have originally been connected with the nearby railroad. In 1891 the New Berne Ice Company was incorporated and by 1893 had renovated the brick warehouse to accommodate its operations. The building continues to function as an icehouse today, albeit on a reduced scale. Later 20th century one story additions to the building have been largely abandoned and have begun to collapse.

North Carolina National Guard Armory (New Bern Police Station Headquarters), 601 George Street - One of several identically styled armories funded in North Carolina by the Works Progress administration, the New Bern National Guard Armory is one of several important Depression-era projects undertaken in New Bern. The streamline-designed brick building was constructed between 1935 and 1937 and has more recently served as the police headquarters of the New Bern Police Department. The building will be replaced in 1998 with a new facility designed by Peterson Architects of New Bern.

Mamie Sadler's Store, 1116-1118 North Craven Street - Designated as a contributing structure in the Riverside Historic District, this two story, frame commercial and residential building was constructed in 1917 and served as the principal general store for the Riverside neighborhood for nearly 40 years. Long vacant and now deteriorated, the building includes a first floor commercial store with original storefront treatment and a second story apartment that served as the living quarters of the Sadler family.

PART IV: ISSUES & PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

In February 1997 the Planning and Inspections Department initiated the public participation component of the *New Bern Neighborhood Initiatives* Program by holding two initial community meetings to solicit input on issues affecting the Riverstation Neighborhood. Meetings were held on February 3, 1997 and February 26, 1997. Community participation at both meetings was good with 70 individuals attending the first meeting and 50 attending the second meeting. The assembled groups represented a cross-section of business leaders, community groups, property owners, residents, and interested citizens.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In addition to the two initial community meetings, the Planning and Inspections staff also conducted door-to-door interviews with some of the residents of *Riverstation*. The community meetings that were generally attended by residents of Riverside and Downtown revealed a perception of a high crime area. Door to door surveys of the neighbors indicated that the residents generally felt that the neighborhood was safe. The New Bern Police Department has provided actual crime figures and compared these statistics with numbers for other neighborhoods and the city in general.

Crime	Riverstation	Riverside	Downtown	City
Larceny/Burglary/Theft	31 1.6%	17 0.9%	100 5.2%	1915
Assault	11 1.0%	12 1.1%	26 2.4%	1091
Vandalism	21 2.6%	5 0.6%	38 4.7%	811
Drug/Alcohol Related	5 0.8%	2 0.3%	5 0.8%	661
Nuisances	4 3.1%	0	6 4.6%	130
Trespassing	4 2.5%	1 0.6%	5 3.1%	163
Rape/Sexual Assault	1 2.8%	0	2 5.6%	36
Murder	0	0	0	3
Robbery	1 2.0%	0	0	59
Miscellaneous	18 1.8%	4 0.4%	31 3.1%	1002
Total Incidents Reported	96 1.6%	41 0.7%	213 3.6%	5871

Table 1 - City of New Bern Police Reports between July 98 and July 99

The table above shows the percentage in each neighborhood of all incidents reported throughout the city. This data indicates that of all crime reported 1.6% occurred in Riverstation, .7% occurred in Riverside and 3.6% occurred in the Downtown area. As a further comparison the area studied for crime in the Downtown was the area north of Broad Street, which is approximately 893 people in a 23-block area. Riverside is the area generally defined by the Riverside National Register District boundaries and includes 568 people in an 11-block area. As previously mentioned the Riverstation neighborhood consists of approximately 204 people in an 18-block area.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public facilities include streets, utilities, drainage, and other infrastructure and city services. The public perceptions of city services were varied. The issues that were identified by the community were as follows:

- ◆ Violations by trucking companies regarding speed and following truck routes.
- ◆ Traffic problems at the intersections of Queen/Hancock/Pasteur, North Craven and Queen Streets, and Cypress and George Streets.
- ◆ Lack of adequate sidewalks and bike paths throughout the neighborhood. Sidewalks are broken and in need of replacing and edging.
- ◆ Drainage problems are widespread in the neighborhood, especially on Cypress and North Craven Streets.
- ◆ More street lighting is desired.
- ◆ Public access to the Neuse River is limited.
- ◆ More trees are needed throughout the neighborhood on both public and private property.
- ◆ Overhead lines are numerous and contribute to visual clutter.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Environmental issues relate to and include neighborhood appearance, nuisance abatement, minimum housing code enforcement, urban design, historic preservation, housing, parks and recreation, and tree preservation. The following concerns were stated during the community meetings.

- ◆ Re-use of deteriorated historic buildings, such as Union Station and the Old Sewing Room is essential to the revitalization of the neighborhood.
- ◆ Deteriorated and dilapidated housing and commercial properties are prevalent in the neighborhood. There was a concern over consistency in enforcement of the Minimum Housing Code.
- ◆ More affordable housing is needed in the neighborhood.
- ◆ Trash, debris, and abandoned vehicles are a widespread problem throughout the neighborhood. Leaf and limb pick-up was cited as not being prompt.

- ◆ Outdoor storage of equipment at area businesses contributes to visual clutter and communicates a lack of neighborhood pride.
- ◆ Railroad property is not maintained. There are overgrown areas that contribute to the un-kept appearance of the neighborhood.
- ◆ Public access to the Neuse River is desired.
- ◆ Tree and shrubbery planting is needed throughout the neighborhood to beautify the streetscape. Tree pruning and maintenance are needed on right-of-ways.
- ◆ Compatibility of land uses in a neighborhood where residential and industrial properties co-exist is deemed to be a challenge.
- ◆ Environmental contamination of current or past industrial sites, whether real or perceived is seen as an obstacle to redevelopment of the area.

PART V: POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

PUBLIC SAFETY

The residents within the defined boundaries of Riverstation generally reported that they felt safe in their neighborhood. However, there is a perception of crime by adjacent neighborhoods. Business leaders that were interviewed during a City sponsored Riverstation Business Forum held in December of 1996, expressed concern that the neighborhood's appearance contributed to the perception that the area was "crime-ridden" and that this adversely affected the image of their business and discouraged further investment. Several business leaders thought that the neighborhood's centralized intown location was an asset, however, many of the business owners thought that the isolated nature of the businesses made them a target for crime. The statistics in the table on page 13 indicate that the problem of "high crime" is mostly perceived, largely due to the appearance of the neighborhood.

The recommendation to improve public perception is to develop a non-profit neighborhood association of property owners, tenants, and business leaders. A formal association would facilitate a network of communication between neighborhood stakeholders. The non-profit status would provide a vehicle with the potential access to grant funds for community-related improvement projects. Subcommittees could work with property owners on improving property appearances thereby creating a sense of community pride. Neighborhood associations have proven to be effective in the Downtown, Riverside and Ghent Historic Districts.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Several of the issues identified under Public Facilities are very common to many urban neighborhoods. For example, a very typical concern in coastal plain communities is

poor drainage. With little or no change in elevation positive drainage is difficult to achieve. However, Riverstation has a unique situation with the highly conflicting land use types between industrial and residential. This conflict is emphasized by the traffic problems with large trucks in the community, high traffic volumes, speeding, etc. New traffic studies may reveal a slightly different pattern now that the new Neuse River Bridge is open to traffic.

The following are recommendations to address the issues and problems identified by this plan.

- ◆ Implementation of various traffic calming techniques at strategic locations (see table 2) will reduce speeds, improve the safety for bikers and pedestrians, and make the area less desirable to through traffic. The Riverstation Neighborhood Association should request a meeting with the City of New Bern Public Works, Planning and Inspections, Police and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. These stakeholders should identify problem traffic areas, and discuss various techniques of traffic calming to appropriately address concerns.

- ◆ Create a detailed map of needed sidewalk repairs, areas for new sidewalks and potential bike paths. This work could be accomplished through the help of volunteers and students. Once mapped, develop a priority list for repairing, replacing and installing new

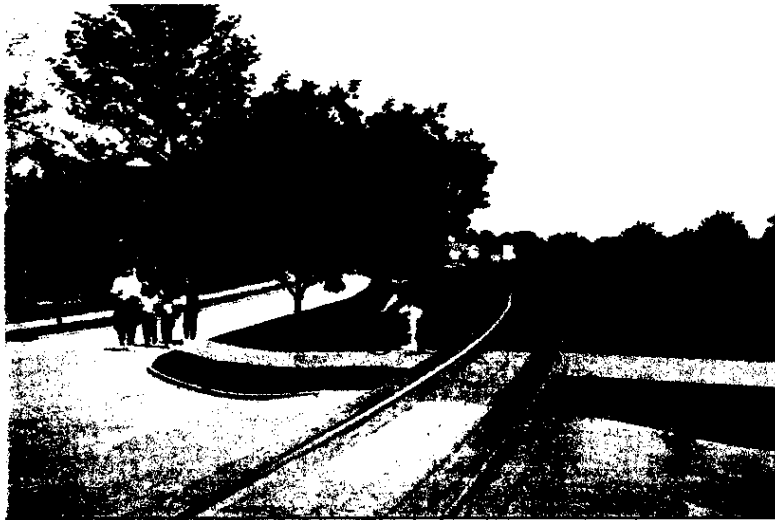


Figure 9 - Image of Crescent and Guion Streets

sidewalks where needed. A bike path project could be undertaken as a neighborhood project through the use of association dues and/or grant funds.

- ◆ The City of New Bern is currently undertaking a citywide Comprehensive Drainage Study. This study will identify problem drainage areas and techniques that are feasible and cost effective to mitigate stormwater.
- ◆ The New Bern Electric Utilities will undertake a comprehensive street light elevation to determine adequacy of lighting in the neighborhood. Adequate street lighting levels are deemed an important feature of safe streets. Any existing

Mercury Vapor lights will be changed to High Pressure Sodium for improved lighting. Adjustments in street light locations may be necessary in accomplishing retrofitting of existing lights.

- ◆ Visual clutter of the utility lines and poles is another common concern to many neighborhoods. The cost of putting utilities underground is prohibitive. Where new development occurs and to the greatest extent possible the City of New Bern works to consolidate lines to provide the highest level of service possible.
- ◆ Improved access to the river has already begun in the Riverstation neighborhood with the improvements to Ave. "A" east of North Craven Street. A larger long-term goal should be to support and encourage a pedestrian promenade along the water's edge from Queen Street to the Maola Milk Company property. Access points for the promenade will be Avenue "A", intersection of Queen Street and East Front Street, and a railroad right-of-way to the north of the New Berne Ice House. Opportunities usually present themselves with new investment and new development in revitalized communities. This type of improvement would greatly enhance the appeal and appearance of this neighborhood.
- ◆ A tree planting and replacement program that prioritizes areas with the greatest impact and benefit to the neighborhood. This program would be a coordinated effort between the Riverstation Neighborhood Association, New Bern Parks and Recreation and the New Bern Appearance Commission. New development and redevelopment projects will require the appropriate tree planting for each individual site.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Environmental issues are wide, varied and frequently overlap other areas of concerns like public safety and facilities. Again, the uniqueness of the Riverstation neighborhood and the highly diverse land uses present a challenge. Communication maybe the key to improved housing stock, community appearance and economic development. A Riverstation Neighborhood

Association is important in providing the platform for better communication.



Figure 10 - Image of a Revitalized Union Station Depot

The following are recommendations to address concerns identified on pages 13 and 14 of this plan.

- ◆ The adaptive reuse of Union Station and other historic properties are essential to economic growth and vitality. The value of the historic resources in this neighborhood cannot be over emphasized. It is strongly recommended that the Riverstation Neighborhood Association, the Historic Downtown Neighborhood Association and the Riverside Neighborhood Association join with and support the New Bern Preservation Foundation in its effort to preserve and revitalize the Union Station property. This site is essential to the success of preservation and revitalization in all three neighborhoods.
- ◆ Minimum housing code generally addresses issues such as adequate plumbing, ensuring the electrical system is safe, structural integrity such as holes in the roofs, walls, or floors. Minimum housing code rarely addresses issues of a aesthetic nature. The City of New Bern Inspections Division will work with the Riverstation Neighborhood Association to identify houses to be inspected for minimum housing code violations and properties that require nuisance abatement actions. Appropriate actions for abatement will be pursued as prescribed by city ordinance.

- ◆ Affordable housing does not necessarily equate to low income or subsidized housing. Affordable means the cost of housing in the area reflects the income levels generated by local jobs. The businesses and industries in the Riverstation commonly generate moderate incomes for workers. Affordable housing in this area could provide convenient



Figure 11 - Image of Restored Row Houses on Pasteur Street

housing for employees of local businesses and further stimulate revitalization. Any housing projects in this historic neighborhood should be respectful of traditional building patterns in terms of setback from the street, roof pitch, building mass, etc. There are two recommendations for generating affordable and appropriate in-fill housing to the existing neighborhood;

- 1) City develops a neighborhood conservation overlay district similar to

Ghent and Longwharf Overlay Districts. This type of regulation ensures the historic architecture and development patterns are continued with new development.

- 2) With the support of the Riverstation Neighborhood Association the City of New Bern Planning Division will actively seek housing investment opportunities, and work with local housing organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the Neuse River Community Development Corporation to create affordable housing opportunities for residents.

- ◆ One of the greatest challenges of the Riverstation neighborhood is its' highly diverse land use. In the yesteryear, co-location of work and home were essential. Today with modern zoning and personal transportation there is less tolerance for mixed uses. Mixed uses can coexist and provide for a diverse and vital neighborhood. Visual separation from industries and promotion of industries that are neighborhood friendly are two ways to mitigate impacts.



Figure 12 - Image of Potential Adaptive Reuse of Old Sewing Room

Existing industrial properties should be evaluated for adequate buffers, and the presence of visual clutter in the public view. Also, through zoning enforcement, future industries can be closely examined for neighborhood compatibility. The City of New Bern Planning and Inspections Department will work with the Riverstation Neighborhood Association to identify possible improvements to industrial sites.

- ◆ Brownfields as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are abandoned, idle, or underutilized industrial or commercial sites where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination that can make redevelopment of the property financially or logistically prohibitive. Riverstation's industrial heritage makes it a candidate for potential brownfield sites. The City of New Bern in cooperation with property owners should seek out grant funds for an environmental assessment of the entire Riverstation neighborhood. The assessment would point to potentially contaminated sites and open the neighborhood up to funding opportunities for clean up.

PART IV: IMPLEMENTATION

PRIORITIES

The following are identifiable projects that have the greatest benefit to this neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods. Projects are listed in the order of importance and recommended priority. However, as investment opportunities arise, and market demands vary and are not always predictable, all opportunities to implement any of these projects in any sequence are encouraged.

1. Establish a non-profit Riverstation Neighborhood Association to open and establish lines of communication between other neighborhood associations, businesses, and local government, establish sub-committees to address specific issues, and make the community eligible for potential grant funds.
2. Create a neighborhood conservation overlay district. This district would be similar to the effort undertaken in the Ghent neighborhood and establish basic design guidelines that would facilitate appropriate in-fill housing.
3. Rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the Union Station and Old Sewing Room properties are important to economic growth and revitalization of the Riverstation neighborhood. The New Bern Preservation Foundation has made progress in this project toward acquiring the Union Station property from the railroad and making contacts with Preservation North Carolina. They are currently working on a business plan in order to market the property.
4. The City of New Bern in cooperation with property owners should seek out grant programs for an environmental assessment of the Riverstation neighborhood. The assessment would point to potentially contaminated sites and open the neighborhood up to funding opportunities.
5. Opportunities for appropriate in-fill housing that is affordable to existing and future homeowners should be sought out. In-fill housing should respect the historic traditions of the neighborhood and following design guidelines established under the neighborhood conservation district. In addition, the City of New Bern Planning and Inspections Department will actively seek out affordable housing opportunities with the support of the Riverstation Neighborhood Association, Downtown Neighborhood Association, Habitat for Humanity and the Neuse River Community Development Corporation.
6. Improved access to the river provides continued opportunity for economic growth and revitalization for the Riverstation neighborhood. All efforts should be made to encourage development of waterfront promenade and river access points. The

community has already taken a step toward this end with the improvements at Ave. "A". Continued community and city efforts will reinforce this long-term goal.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

It is important to point out this neighborhood plan is long term in it's focus and that improvements will occur incrementally based on available resources and funding. Funding will also involve public and private sector participation to become reality. In order to initiate renewed public investment two actions must occur; 1) there must be a coordinated and focused neighborhood association to work with local officials to make the needs of the neighborhood a priority in the city's work plan; and 2) private investment that has the potential for positive return for the neighborhood can be an impetus for public spending.

The following is a list of some potential funding mechanisms that may be employed to assist in the implementation of public and private improvements in Riverstation:

- 1) ***Annual Municipal Budgeting Process*** - Riverstation Neighborhood Association should become actively involved with the City's annual budgeting process and work to have projects identified, i.e., sidewalk replacement, tree planting, traffic calming measures can be incorporated into the city's budget.
- 2) ***Seek funding through TEA21*** - Originally known as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA), this act has received reauthorization by Congress. One component of TEA21 provides for funding for "transportation enhancements" aimed at integrating transportation into the community and natural environment. Eligible enhancement activities include but are not limited to; 1) pedestrian and bicycle facilities, 2) landscaping and other scenic beautification, 3) historic preservation, 4) rehabilitating and operating historic transportation buildings and facilities, etc.
- 3) ***Seek funding through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)*** - Riverstation neighborhood does not rank well competitively against other areas of concentrated need throughout the city for housing rehabilitation grants. However, if funded the program could provide funds for new in-fill housing or economic development opportunities. The City could also elect to allocate a portion of the Local Option funds from a successfully funded project to fund improvements in Riverstation. It should be noted that in order to qualify for CDBG funds at least 51% of the beneficiaries must be low-to-moderate incomes and the demand for Local Option funds by other distressed neighborhoods is great.
- 4) ***Coordinate with local banks to increase housing opportunities*** - With the assistance of local banks the City could offer low-interest construction loans and mortgages to qualifying buyers who are interested in purchasing, rehabilitating, or constructing properties in Riverstation for residential and commercial uses. In addition, work with local banks to promote programs such as the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Section 203(k) Program. This mortgage finance plan was developed to promote and facilitate the restoration and preservation of existing houses by streamlining the financing process. Under the program, a borrower receives one mortgage loan, at a

long-term fixed or adjustable rate, to finance both the acquisition and rehabilitation of a property. The program attempts to avoid the hurdle experienced by homebuyers who must obtain separate financing for house purchases, renovation work, and then permanent financing. Finally, the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency offers first time homebuyer assistance, new housing construction, rehabilitation and other housing programs intended to provide affordable housing.

- 5) ***Utilize Tax Incentives*** - Tax incentives are available at both the state and federal levels for rehabilitation of certified historic structures, economic development projects and affordable rental housing projects.
- 6) ***Seek funding through private foundations, corporations and government agencies*** - North Carolina is home to 865 foundations with assets totaling \$4.9 billion. Several private foundations fund historic preservation, parks and recreation, and community development projects. Corporate America has discovered the economic benefits of good public relations and giving back to the community. Begin with the businesses located right in the Riverstation neighborhood. Finally, many state agencies also sponsor matching grant programs for community improvement projects such as the National Park Service sponsor Urban Forestry Grants. The Division of Coastal Management with the CAMA grant and waterfront access program will be key in assuring the river access component of this plan.

What, When and Who - Action Plan

Actions	Adopted with Plan	On Going	Within 1 year	Next 5 years	Next 6 to 10 years	Implementers/Advocates
Form a Riverstation Neighborhood Association	X					RNA
Implement Traffic Calming Techniques				X		RNA, NCDOT, NBPW, NBPD, NBPI
Create map of pedestrian, bike path and sidewalk needs			X			RNA, NBPI, UNCS
Comprehensive Drainage Study		X				NBPW
Comprehensive Street Light Evaluation	X					NBEU
Reduce visual clutter of overhead utility lines		X				NBEU, NBPI
Improve access to the Neuse River				X		RNA, NBPI, DCM, NBPW
Initiate a tree planting program			X			RNA, NBPR, AC
Adaptive reuse of historic properties and landmarks		X				RNA, NBPF, NBPI
Begin aggressive enforcement of minimum housing code and nuisance abatement on dilapidated properties		X				RNA, NBPI
Adopt a neighborhood conservation overlay district			X			RNA, NBPI
Pursue and support affordable housing projects				X		RNA, NBPI, HH, NRDC
Mitigate impact of conflicting land uses			X			RNA, NBPI
Brownfield identification and clean-up					X	RNA, NBPI, NBPW, EPA, NCDHR

Acronyms: RNA - Riverstation Neighborhood Association, NBPI - New Bern Planning and Inspections, NBPD - New Bern Police Department, NBPW - New Bern Public Works, NCDOT - North Carolina Department of Transportation, NBPR - New Bern Parks and Recreation, NBPF - New Bern Preservation Foundation, HH - Habitat for Humanity, NRDC - Neuse River Community Development Corporation, EPA - Environmental Protection Agency, NCDEHR - North Carolina Department of Environmental Health and Natural Resources, DCM - North Division of Coastal Management, AC - New Bern Appearance Commission, UNCS - University of North Carolina Schools

Appendix B

Table 2 *Menu of Traffic Calming Strategies and Devices*

Type	Description	Applications		Impacts	
		Arterial	Local	Volumes	Speeds
Speed Limits	Reduced speed limits	X	X	Yes	Yes
Speed alert, enforcement	Radar-clocked speeds displayed to drivers. Strong speed limit enforcement	X	X	No	Yes
Vehicle restrictions	Limit vehicle types (trucks) or users (residents only) on specific roads	X	X	Yes	No
Warning Signs & entranceway	Signs & gateways indicating changing road conditions, traffic calming, residential or commercial districts	X	X	No	Yes
Speed tables, raised crosswalks	Ramped surface above roadway, 7-10 cm high, 3-6 m long	X	X	Possible	Yes
Median Island	Raised island in the road center	X	X	No	Yes
Channelization islands	A raised island that forces traffic in a particular direction, such as a right turn only.	X	X	Possible	Yes
Speed humps	Curved 7-10 cm high 3-4 m long humps	X	X	Possible	Yes
Rumble Strips	Low bumps across road make noise when driven over	X	X	No	Yes
Mini-circles	Small traffic circles at intersections	X	X	Possible	Yes
Pavement Treatments	Special pavement textures (cobble, bricks, etc.) and markings to designate special areas.	X	X	Not likely	Yes
Bike lanes	Marking bikelanes narrows traffic lanes	X	X	No	Possible
Curb extensions	Extending curb a half-lane into the street to control traffic and reduce pedestrian crossing distances	X	X	Possible	Yes
Lane narrowing, "pinch points"	Curb extensions, planters, or centerline traffic islands that narrow traffic lanes. "Also called chokers."	X	X	Not likely	Yes
Horizontal shifts	Lane centerline that curves or shifts	X	X	No	Yes
Chicanes	Curb bulges or planters (usually 3) on alternating sides, forcing motorists to slow down		X	Possible	Yes
2-lanes narrow to 1-lane	Curb bulge or center island narrows 2-lane road down to 1-lane, forcing traffic for each direction to take turns.		X	Possible	Yes
Semi-diverters, partial closures	Restrict entry/exit to/from neighborhood. Limit traffic flow at intersections.	X	X	Yes	Possible
Street closures	Closing off streets to through vehicle traffic at intersections or midblock		X	Yes	Yes
Stop Signs	Additional stop signs, such as 4-way-stop intersections.		X	Possible	Yes
"Neotraditional" road designs that limit traffic	New or rebuilt roads can be designed with narrower lanes, shorter blocks, T-intersections, and other design features to limit traffic speed and volumes.	X	X	Yes	Yes
TDM	Various strategies to reduce total motor vehicle use.		X	Yes	Yes
Woonerf	Low-speed streets allow vehicle traffic to share roadspace with pedestrians.		X	Yes	Yes

Based on Carman Hass-Klau, et al, *Civilised Streets; A Guide to Traffic Calming*, Environmental and Transport Planning (Brighton, UK), 1992; Joseph Savage, R. David MacDonald and John Ewell, *A Guidebook for Residential Traffic Management*, WSDOT (Olympia; www.wsdot.wa.gov), 1994; *Making Streets that work*, City of Seattle (www.ci.seattle.wa.us/npo/tblis.htm), 1996.

Appendix A

