



PROVIDENCE TOMORROW

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CHARLES AND WANSKUCK NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

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Introduction

On May 31, 2006, Mayor David N. Cicilline and the City Council announced Providence Tomorrow – an innovative planning process designed to provide a framework for the growth and preservation of Providence neighborhoods. Since then, the City Council has adopted a new Comprehensive Plan and the Department of Planning and Development has undertaken detailed planning studies for each of the city's neighborhoods. In July 2009, the tenth neighborhood "charrette," or detailed planning process, was held in the Charles and Wanskuck neighborhoods. This report is a summary of the information that was collected from residents and business owners over the course of an intensive week of public meetings.

This plan summarizes neighborhood history and demographics, illustrates existing neighborhood character through building typologies, and identifies key issues and neighborhood priorities. The most important part of this report is the Action Plan, which identifies short-, mid- and long-term goals for the neighborhoods and the parties that will lead each effort. The Action Plan identifies not only City-led actions, but those projects that can be initiated by groups of residents working together. This report will be used to guide the review of development projects in the Charles and Wanskuck neighborhoods by City boards and commissions, and will help prioritize funding for projects and infrastructure improvements, as well as provide a guide for redevelopment efforts.



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Providence Tomorrow Neighborhood Charrettes



Providence has 25 distinct neighborhoods, each with unique character and identity. While neighborhoods share many features, each has its own set of planning issues and concerns. An important part of Providence Tomorrow is the in-depth, detailed planning studies that are conducted at the neighborhood level. The neighborhoods have been grouped together so that there will be ten neighborhood charrettes, or planning workshops, conducted from 2007 to 2009.

Charles and Wanskuck Charrette



The Charles and Wanskuck Neighborhood Charrette was held July 13 – 16, 2009. Sessions were held at the DaVinci Center for Community Progress at 470 Charles Street. Approximately 30 people participated in the charrette, voicing their opinions on how to improve parks and other public spaces in their neighborhoods, where and how they would like to see redevelopment in the future, and where traffic and circulation problems currently exist, among other issues. The planning team collected all of the information from the week, and drafted an action plan that was presented at a follow-up meeting in October 2009. After further comment and review, this neighborhood plan was developed.

What is a Charrette?

The term “charrette” originated at Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, the world’s top architectural school in the nineteenth century, and is derived from a French word meaning “little cart.” Carts were circulated to collect final plans. Students would jump on the cart, polishing their drawings up to the last minute.



Today the word “charrette” describes a process of dynamic, interactive community planning. Its goal is to bring all the stakeholders and all the issues into one room. This process can be applied to different projects, but always uses the same basic strategy. A team consisting of citizens, elected officials, planners, architects, developers, business owners, City officials, and other stake holders works to root out potential problems, identify and debate solutions, and create a plan within a set amount of time. Meeting day and night for several days, participants work together in both large and small groups through a series of brainstorming sessions, sketching workshops and other exercises.

The Benefits of Charrettes in Planning

Charrettes provide a framework for creating a shared vision shaped by community involvement, directed by consultants representing key disciplines.

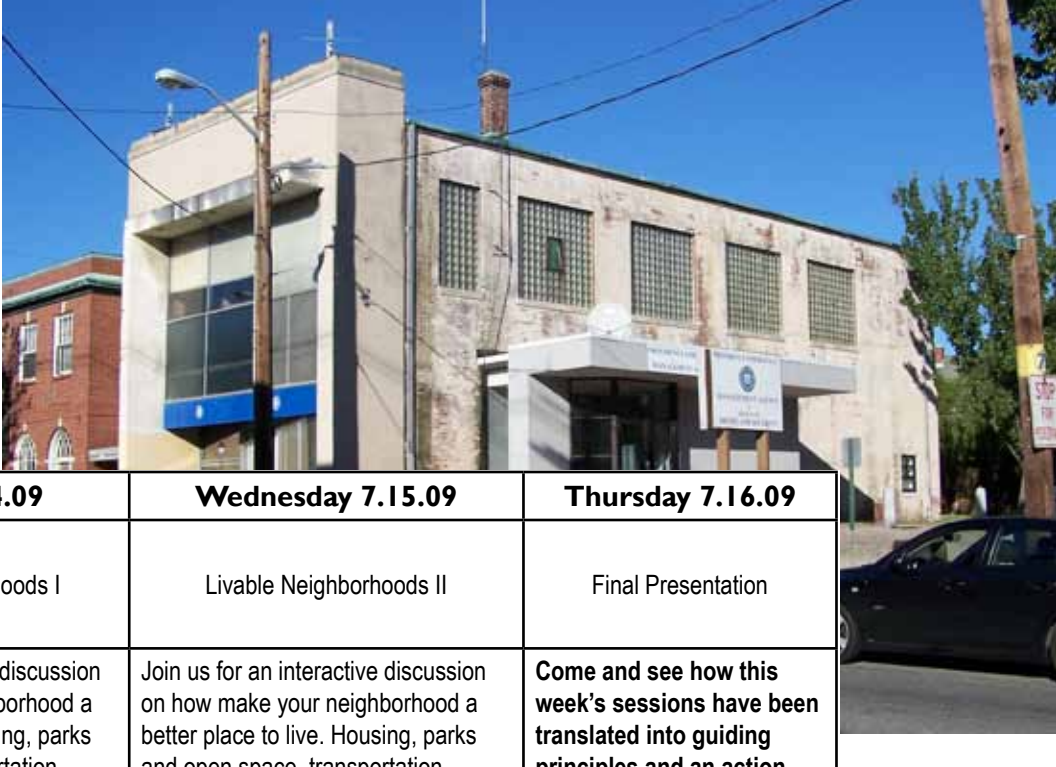
Charrettes provide an opportunity to improve and expand the relationships between residents and their government through meaningful public involvement and education.

Charrettes help a community to develop a shared vision of its future by allowing for increased opportunities for residents to make positive contributions to the planning process.

Charrettes help to create better plans by gaining more diverse input and involvement and help increase the likelihood that plans will be realized.



Charrette Schedule



	Monday 7.13.09	Tuesday 7.14.09	Wednesday 7.15.09	Thursday 7.16.09
	Charrette Kick Off and Neighborhood Visioning 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Liveable Neighborhoods I	Livable Neighborhoods II	Final Presentation
Evening 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Do you have a vision for what you want your neighborhood to be like in 20 years? What obstacles do you think exist to achieving that vision? Come share your thoughts and ideas with your friends, neighbors, and elected officials and help to create a common vision for the future.	Join us for an interactive discussion on how make your neighborhood a better place to live. Housing, parks and open space, transportation, infrastructure-we want to hear your thoughts and ideas on these and other topics of concern to you. Tuesday and Wednesday nights meetings are the same. Come to one or both, whatever is easiest for you!	Join us for an interactive discussion on how make your neighborhood a better place to live. Housing, parks and open space, transportation, infrastructure-we want to hear your thoughts and ideas on these and other topics of concern to you. Tuesday and Wednesday nights meetings are the same. Come to one or both, whatever is easiest for you!	Come and see how this week's sessions have been translated into guiding principles and an action plan for the future of these neighborhoods. Tell us what is most important to you - help to prioritize the neighborhood actions into a plan.



Neighborhood Overview

The History - Neighborhood Backgrounds

Charles



Charles, along with Wanskuck, comprises the North End of Providence. The Charles neighborhood is bounded by Wanskuck and Route 146 on the west, Smith Hill on the south, North Providence on the north, and the West River and the New York & New Hampshire Railroad tracks on the east. Major north-south thoroughfares in the neighborhood include Branch Avenue, Charles Street and Silver Spring Street, while Ledge Street provides an important east-west axis between the two. Windmill Hill, located in the northeastern part of Charles, is one of the highest points in Providence and has a breathtaking view of the skyline.

Until the completion of the Wanskuck Road (now Branch Avenue) in 1706, the North End lacked a major road or highway and had only a few farms and houses. Largely disconnected from the more developed areas of Providence, the North End was annexed to the town of North Providence in 1765. In the early 1800s, industry first came to the North End with the establishment of a small cotton mill on Wanskuck Pond. Because of this, the Charles side of the North End grew much more slowly than did Wanskuck.

Substantial settlement followed industrial growth in the various river valleys in and around Providence. After the mid-19th century, corporations began arriving in the North End area seeking to capitalize on the natural resources of the West River and its clearwater ponds. The Silver Spring Bleaching and Dyeing Company, established in 1864, became a driving force in the physical and social development of the Charles neighborhood and attracted different types of workers, including many immigrants, to the area. Capitalizing on the demand for new housing, developers constructed many one- and two-family homes along Charles Street, Branch Avenue and Silver Spring Street towards the end of the 19th century.

The growing population, combined with the rapid development of the area, served as the major factor behind North Providence's decision to return the North End to the city of Providence in 1874. By the turn of the century, the North End had grown to have an extremely diverse population of Irish, English, German, Scottish, and Italian immigrant families. Italian residents, in particular, became a large part of the community by the first decade of the 20th century. Neighborhood growth continued into the 20th century, spurred mostly by the extension of streetcar service into the North End. Trolleys running on Branch Avenue by 1895, and on Charles Street and Silver Spring Street by 1908, fully connected the Charles neighborhood to the rest of the city. By the 1930s, the North End was a densely settled working and middle class area for residents employed both inside and outside the neighborhood.

After the Silver Spring Bleaching and Dyeing Company closed in 1939 and the Wanskuck Company shut down in 1957, the North End was no longer the site of major industry. The North End today is primarily a residential and commercial area. In the 1990s, the Providence Redevelopment Agency (PRA) developed and marketed the area near Silver Spring Street as an industrial park with a mix of uses.

Hopkins Square, at the intersection of Branch Avenue and Charles Street, remains the center of commercial and transportation activity in the neighborhood. The nearby DaVinci Center for Community Progress has provided the area with many services including day care, programs for elderly residents, and G.E.D. classes since 1972.

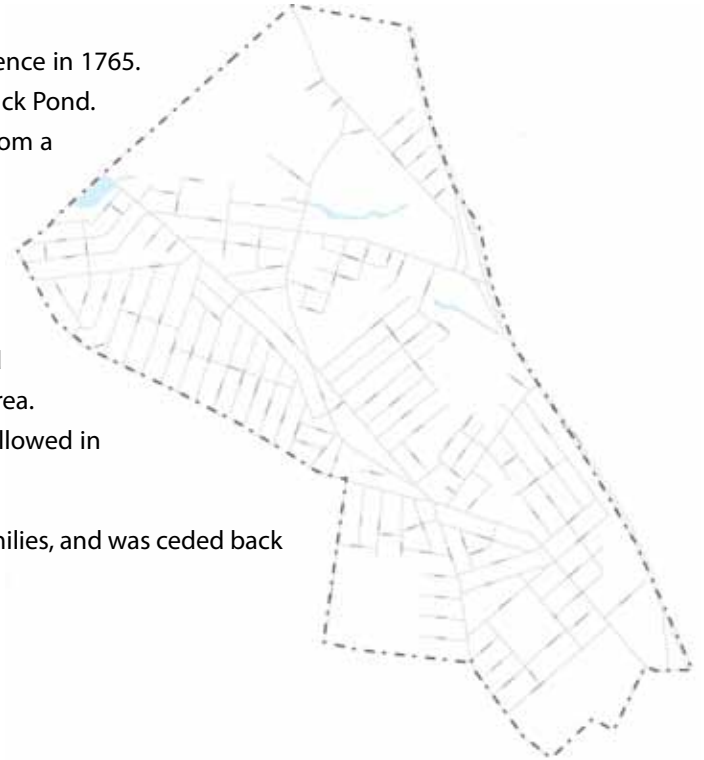
Wanskuck

The Wanskuck neighborhood is bounded by Elmhurst to its west, Smith Hill to the south, Charles to the east, and North Providence to the north. Its two major north-south thoroughfares are Douglas Avenue and Admiral Street, which run from the center of Providence through the Wanskuck neighborhood and eventually to North Providence.

Largely unconnected to the developed areas of Providence, the North End was annexed to North Providence in 1765. In the early 1800s, industry first came to the area with the establishment of a small cotton mill on Wanskuck Pond. Soon thereafter, the first village in Wanskuck developed around the mill. The name “Wanskuck” derives from a Native American word meaning “low land.”

As in many surrounding areas, substantial settlement followed industrial growth. The Wanskuck Company, established in 1862, began as a major manufacturer of woolens for the Union Army in the Civil War, and was the driving force in the physical and social evolution of the Wanskuck neighborhood. The textile company constructed two-family dwellings south of Branch Avenue to house workers. The need for labor brought skilled English workers and mostly unskilled Irish and French-Canadian workers to the area. As the Wanskuck Company expanded over the next 50 to 60 years, residential and commercial growth followed in the developing village.

By the turn of the century, Wanskuck had grown to have an extremely diverse population of immigrant families, and was ceded back to the City of Providence in 1874.



Charles and Wanskuck History Timeline

1706 – Wanskuck Road (now Branch Avenue) is completed.

1765 – Charles and Wanskuck are annexed to North Providence. Esek Hopkins, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, builds his house on Admiral Street.

1862 – Wanskuck Company, a major manufacturer of woolens for the Civil War, is established.

1864 – The Silver Spring Bleaching and Dyeing Company is established in the Charles neighborhood.

1874 – Charles and Wanskuck are ceded back to the City of Providence.

1895 – Trolley service is extended to Branch Avenue.

The neighborhood continued to grow into the 20th century, prompted mostly by the extension of streetcar service into the area. Trolleys running on Branch Avenue by 1895, and on Douglas Avenue by 1908, fully connected Wanskuck to the rest of the city for the first time.

By the 1930s, Wanskuck was a densely settled working and middle-class neighborhood for residents working both in and outside the neighborhood. When the Wanskuck Company ceased operation in 1957, Wanskuck was no longer the site of major industry. According to the 2000 Census, however, one in four employed residents in Wanskuck still worked in the manufacturing sector.

1908 – Trolleys run on Douglas Avenue, Charles Street and Silver Spring Street.

1930s – The “North End” is established as a densely settled working and middle class area comprising Charles and Wanskuck.

1939 – Silver Spring Bleaching and Dyeing Company closes.

1957 – Wanskuck Company shuts down.

1990s – The 37-acre area adjacent to Silver Spring Street, including Royal Little Drive, is designated as an industrial park and developed by the PRA.

Neighborhood Statistics	Charles	Wanskuck	Citywide
Size (Square Miles)	0.84	1.11	18.2
Population			
Households	2,802	3,928	62,389
Individuals	6,381	11,270	173,618
Percent Under 18	23.3%	31.1%	26.1%
Diversity (%)			
Percent White	76.1	54.7	54.5
Percent Black or African American	8.2	20.6	14.5
Percent Non-Hispanic White	69.7	47.4	45.8
Percent Hispanic	16	26.2	30.0
Percent Asian or Pacific Islander	1.1	2.4	6.2
Percent Native American	0.8	1.2	1.1
Percent Other	9.4	15.6	17.6
Percent Claimed 2 or more races	4.4	5.5	6.1
Percent of public school children primarily speak a Language Other than English	33	39	54.0
Income			
Median Family Income	\$36,966	\$26,662	\$32,058
Median Household Income	\$24,760	\$25,693	\$26,867
Families Below Poverty	15.80%	29.00%	23.9%
Households on Public Assistance	7.00%	12.90%	10.2%
Housing			
Total number of housing units:	3,019	4,251	67915
Percent Owner-occupied housing units	41.4%	32.6%	26.4%
Percent Single-family units	32.7%	31.4%	22.2%
Percent Duplex units	30.7%	26.5%	50.1%
Percent Multi-family units	36.6%	41.9%	70.1%
Percent of Housing built before 1960	60.8%	58%	34.6%
Percent Vacant units	7.2%	7.6%	8.1%
Percent Overcrowded housing units	5%	8.7%	8.4%
Median Sales Value and Number of Sales by Year			
for Single-family residence	\$124,000	\$119,000	\$130,000
for 2- to 5-family residence	\$122,000	\$127,500	\$129,000

Development Patterns

Neighborhood Typologies

The Planning Department is reviewing ways to preserve the existing character of the residential neighborhoods throughout the city, those areas that were identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan, *Providence Tomorrow*, as "Areas of Stability." The goal for these areas is to reinforce their stability, character and diversity by respecting valued development patterns and attributes. The strategies to achieve this goal include ensuring that new development maintains existing density levels and complements existing neighborhood scale, massing and design, and preserving the existing building stock in each of the city's neighborhoods.

One step toward that goal is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the existing development patterns in each neighborhood. The character of an area is defined by a number of elements that combine to create a cohesive identity. Building placement and form, and lot coverage, as well as lot size, shape, and orientation are some of these elements. As part of the neighborhood planning process, streets, blocks and structures were evaluated and grouped into areas that have common features. These areas are referred to as "typologies." By understanding the elements that combine to create the character of an area, it is possible to then identify those characteristics that current and future development may need to reflect or respect in order for this character to be maintained and preserved over time.

Key characteristics of the typologies identified for each neighborhood will be used to fine-tune zoning to make it a more effective tool to protect neighborhood character.

Charles

The residential development patterns and housing types in the Charles neighborhood can be broken down into five distinct areas as shown below:

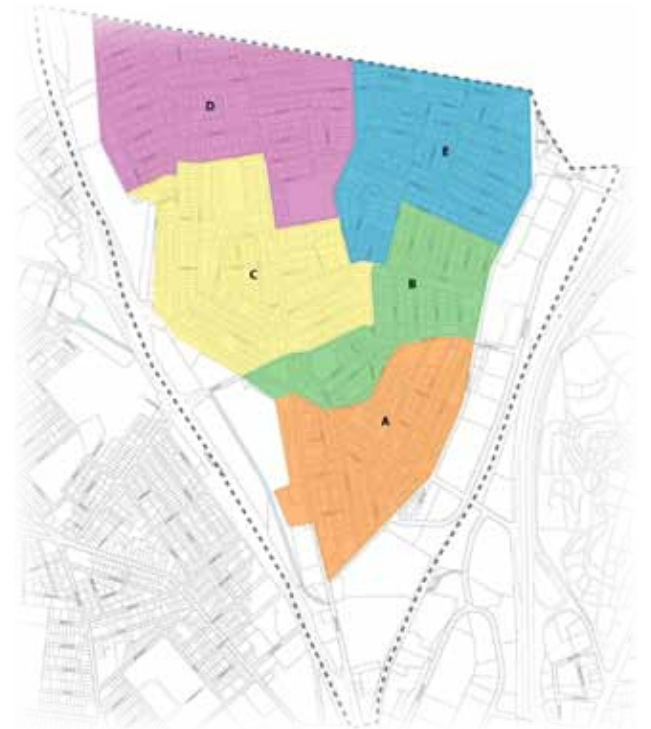
A: The area bounded roughly by Silver Spring Street on the east and south, Northup Avenue and Luna Street on the north, and Charles Street on the west.

B: The area can be divided into two geographic sites for ease of description: first, the roughly rectangular area bounded by Silver Spring Street on the east, Bismark Street on the north, Job Street and Hall Street on the west, and Northup Avenue on the south; and second, the fish-shaped area bordered by Hall Street on the east, Hawkins Street on the north, Charles Street on the west, and Luna Street on the south

C: The area bordered by Charles Street down to Paul Street, then Windmill Street and Hall Street on the east, Paul Street up to Charles Street, then Hagan Street and Newbury Street on the north, Canada Pond and Branch Avenue on the west, and Hawkins Street on the south.

D: The area surrounded by Windmill Street on the east, the Charles neighborhood boundary on the north, upper Canada Pond on the west, and Newbury Street and Hagan Street up to Charles Street, then Paul Street on the south.

E: The area bounded by Silver Spring Street on the east, the Charles neighborhood boundary on the north, Windmill Street on the west, and Ledge Street (to Job Street) and Bismark Street on the south.



Charles is dense, with a mix of single-, two- and three-family houses; single-family housing is predominant in areas D and E. Conditions of sidewalks vary: areas A, C and D have continuous sidewalks, while areas B and E have discontinuous and poorly maintained sidewalks. Most of the sidewalks are paved with concrete. Street trees are mostly irregular (except for area A, where street trees are well-kept) and in many cases poorly maintained. On-street parking exists on both sides of most streets, except in area C.

Wanskuck

The Wanskuck neighborhood breaks down into four areas:



A: The area bounded by Route 146 on the east, Longmont Street and Clym Street on the north, Douglas Avenue on the west, and the Wanskuck neighborhood boundary on the south.

B: The area bounded by Route 146 on the east, Stansbury Street (to Douglas) and Devonshire Street on the north, Admiral Street and Huxley Avenue on the west, and Eaton Street, Longmont Street and Clym Street on the south.

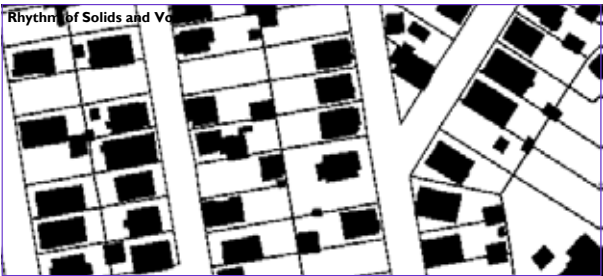
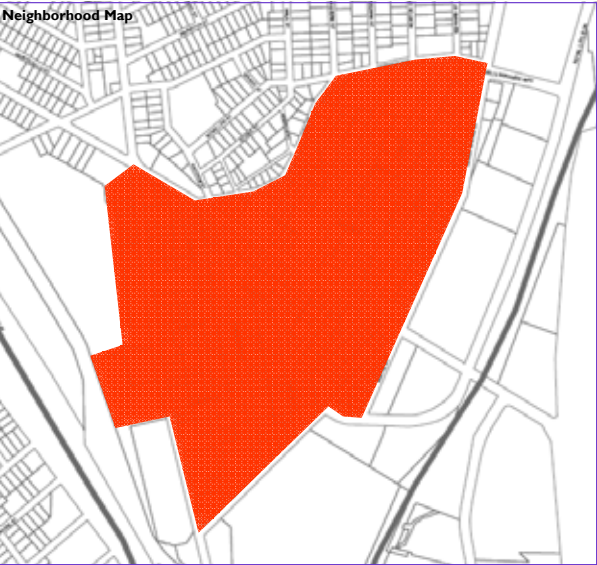
C: The area bordered by Douglas Avenue on the east, the Wanskuck neighborhood boundary on the north, Admiral Street on the west, and Devonshire Street on the south.

D: The area bounded by Route 146 on the east, the Wanskuck neighborhood boundary on the north, Douglas Avenue on the west, and Stansbury Avenue on the south.

Wanskuck has a primarily rectilinear street grid with single- and multi-family houses. Sidewalks are mostly irregular (except for area B) and paved with both asphalt and concrete. Street trees are irregular throughout the neighborhood and are not in healthy condition. Streets have both double- and single-sided on-street parking.

Sample Charles and Wanskuck Neighborhood Typologies

Charles—Typology A



Defining Characteristics

Streetscape		Lots		Buildings			
Pavement Width	25, 40, 50 ft	Lot Size	3000—6500 sq ft	Type	1-3 family	Roof Type/Pitch	Gable, hipped 6/12
On-Street Parking	Double-sided	Lot Width	40, 60, 80 ft	Lot Coverage	30—50 %	Materials	Vinyl, wood
Sidewalks	Continuous, asph, conc.	Density	1-2 units per lot	Height	1-3 stories	Garages	Rear
Street Trees	Well-established	Side Yards	0—10 ft	Porch/Stoop	Mixed	Outbuildings	No
Front Yard	0—15 ft	Rear Yard	25—55 ft	First Floor Elevation	1-2 ft		
Fences	Metal, vinyl	Parking	Side, rear	Street Facing Transparency	25%		

Above is a sample neighborhood typology, consisting of a typology area map, fieldwork photos and observational data, an aerial photo of the area, and an illustration of the area's lot layout.

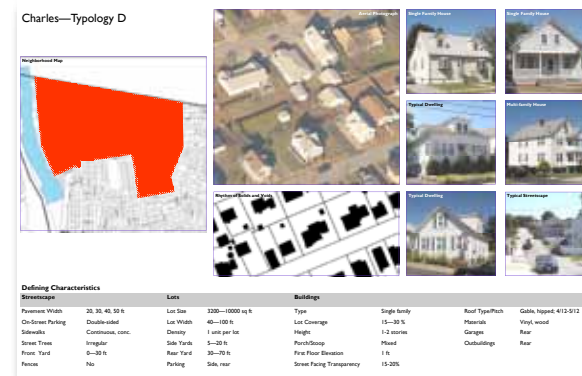
Charles—Typology B



Charles—Typology C



Charles—Typology D



Charles—Typology E



Wanskuck—Typology A



Wanskuck—Typology B



Wanskuck—Typology C



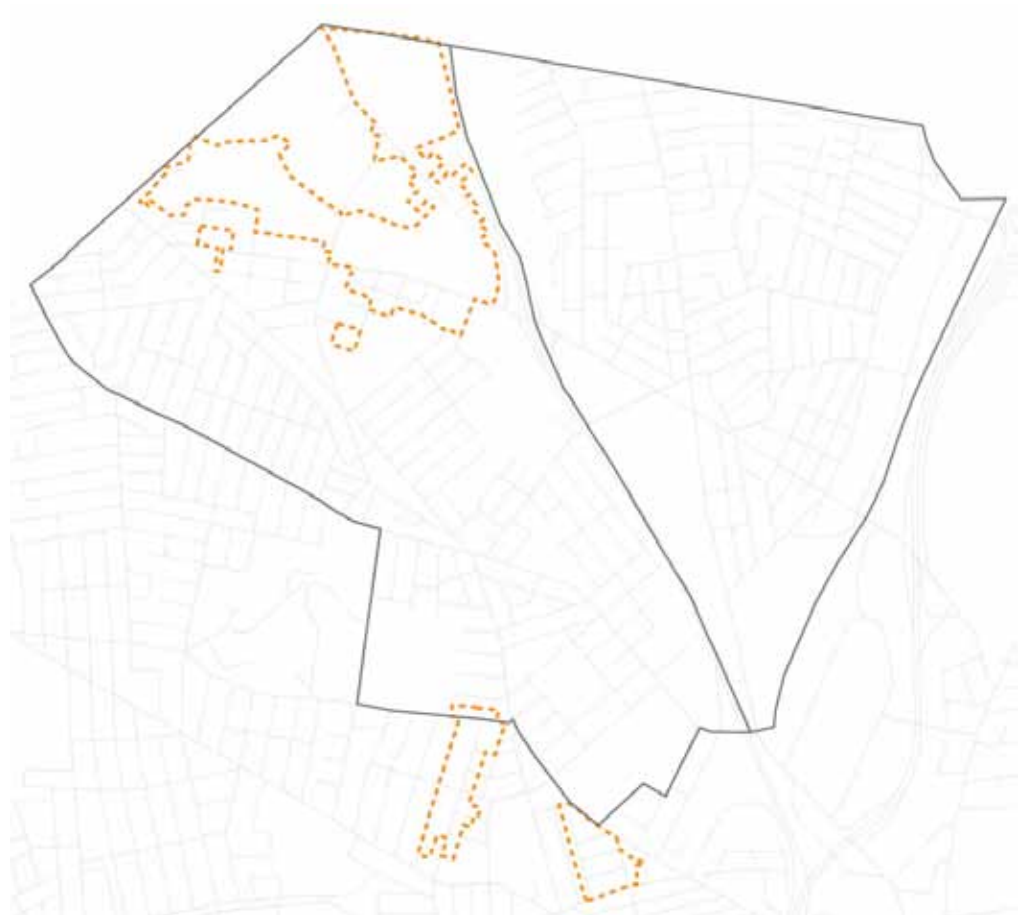
Wanskuck—Typology D




Historic Districts

Providence derives much of its character from its large stock of historic buildings. The City has long recognized the value of preservation and has established eight Local Historic Districts and 40 National Register Districts that cover over 9,000 properties citywide. In addition, there are 150 individual properties listed on the National Register. National Register Districts identify areas or groups of buildings that are significant on a local, state or national level. However, they do not provide regulatory protection through local zoning. Property owners in National Register districts may be eligible for state and federal tax credits for maintenance and renovation. Properties listed in a Local Historic District (LHD) are in zoning overlays, which require that building alterations be approved by the Providence Historic District Commission. This is to ensure that the historic attributes and qualities of the properties within the district are maintained and preserved over time. Property owners in LHDs are eligible for the same tax credits as in the National Register Districts. The Industrial and Commercial Buildings District (ICBD) is one of the eight LHDs in the city. Many of the buildings that made up the industrial and manufacturing centers in Providence's history are included in this district.

Wanskuck has one National Register District, the Wanskuck Mill Historic District. The Wanskuck Branch of the Providence Public Library is included in the Colonial Revival Branch Libraries Multiple Property Listing. Some of the buildings in the Wanskuck Mill Historic District have also been locally designated in the ICBD. In total there are three properties listed in the ICBD for the Wanskuck neighborhood. There are no National Register Historic Districts or locally designated properties in the Charles Neighborhood. Much of the original fabric of the North End consisted of mills, small mill villages and farmhouses, and most of the open spaces in between have long since been filled with residential suburban development, as well as routes 146 and 95. As such, there is no dominant historic architectural theme, though the Wanskuck Mill, Wanskuck Hall, other industrial buildings, remaining mill housing, along with Hopkins Square, the small scale of many streets, and some scattered extant farmhouses provide a somewhat diminished historic context.



 National Historic Districts

Manufacturing

The Charles and Wanskuck neighborhoods evolved physically and socially around major manufacturing companies – Silver Spring Bleaching and Dyeing Company and the Wanskuck Company. Workers, including new immigrants, flocked to these neighborhoods and housing was built to accommodate the newly arrived workers. Although these companies were closed by the mid-twentieth century and industries in general have declined throughout Providence over the past several decades, a number of manufacturing businesses still operate in these neighborhoods, mostly concentrated in the jewelry and metal manufacturing and plating industries.

Examples of diverse businesses in these neighborhoods include the following: Universal Shaped Wire, located in the Charles neighborhood, has been manufacturing and shipping wires of copper, brass, nickel, silver, and Phos Bronze since 1988. World Trophies is a manufacturer of trophies and awards including items such as: etched crystal, etched glass, etched marble, acrylic awards, custom framing, clocks, cast bronze plaques, and promotional products; the company has been in business in Charles for over 35 years.

Electrolizing Inc, an EPA award-winning metal plating company for outstanding pollution prevention, is housed in a clean, modern 24,000 sq. ft. building in the Wanskuck neighborhood. Mainelli Tool & Die is a family owned and operated manufacturing company that has been operating in the Wanskuck neighborhood since 1967.



Neighborhood Issues

Neighborhood Character

Concerns about neighborhood character focused mainly on poorly maintained properties and absentee landlords, the need for more trees and landscaping, as well as lighting and streetscape improvements. Enforcement of building codes and increased enforcement of building code violations was also discussed. Suggested solutions itargeting specific streets such as Russo Street, Douglas Avenue, Veazie Street, and Hagan Street for landscaping and lighting improvements, and targeting properties for code enforcement, particularly in cases where there have been numerous violations and complaints. Streets cited as having problem properties include Tappan Street, Hawkins Street, Anchor Street, Lancashire Street, and Moy Street.

Mobility and Circulation

Much of the discussion at the charrette focused on traffic, circulation, pedestrian amenities, and other mobility issues such as public transit. Many of the problems cited are very specific and are itemized in the Action Plan. Pedestrian issues were a lively topic of discussion, including the need for better connections to downtown along Douglas Avenue and Charles Street and across major corridors including Branch Avenue, Hawkins Street, and Admiral Street; and the need for crosswalks at numerous locations such as between Hopkins Park and the Chad Brown complex, along Stansbury Street, Grand Broadway and Hyacinth Street to Lola French Park, at the Branch Avenue/Route 146 interchange, and to Wanskuck Park on Woodward Road. A defined mid-block crossing needs to be established on Branch Avenue at Hopkins Square, where there is a wheelchair ramp. Residents expressed strong interest in seeing the sidewalk grid completed throughout these neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Finally, Branch Avenue and Admiral Street were singled out as needing to be more pedestrian-friendly.

Discussion of transit issues dealt primarily with bus stops and shelters, specifically the need to analyze the placement of stops to ensure that they are appropriately located. This is a particular concern in Wanskuck along Douglas Avenue, where vandalism and noise can be a problem at shelters. Any analysis of stop locations should consider the needs of transit riders in the context of nearby residents' quality of life. Transit discussion regarding Charles focused on the potential installation of distinctive bus shelters around Hopkins Square.

Necessary traffic circulation and intersection improvements discussed at the charrette include traffic signal synchronization (Charles Street near Home Depot, in particular), speed limit enforcement (Vandewater, Sherwood and Langdon streets), enforcement of parking and traffic restrictions (Stansbury Street), and the effectiveness of circulation around key intersections (Branch and Douglas avenues; Douglas Avenue and Veazie Street). Other specific issues include the need to evaluate Hawkins Street between Branch and Charles, where safety can be an issue due to the width of the one-way street and the frequency of vehicles traveling the wrong way (consideration of making it two-way was suggested); and the possibility of installing stop signs at the Greeley Street/Alaska Street intersection and at Oppen and Nahant (currently there is a yield sign).

Specific streets cited as needing attention due to their condition include Branch Avenue (repaving) and Douglas, Charles, Branch, and Admiral (restriping). The striping on Charles Street in front of Home Depot is of particular concern, as this high volume area needs clear marking to differentiate the turn-only lane from the travel lane. In Charles the sight lines on some streets are poor due to overgrown shrubbery; it was suggested that this should be addressed through enforcement.

On-street overnight parking received mixed reviews. It was recommended that suitable areas be identified for potential inclusion in the City's pilot Resident Permit Parking (RPP) program.

Neighborhood Issues (Cont'd.)

Parks and Open Space

Parks generated a great deal of discussion during the charrette. Most residents expressed positive feelings about their neighborhood parks but said they'd like to see more maintenance, safer environments and, in some cases, additional programming. Specific recommendations include evaluating programming and upgrading facilities at Corliss Park to reflect current needs; considering enclosed dog parks or dog run areas at Corliss and Wanskuck parks; analyzing the feasibility of a water/spray park at Corliss and a playground at Wanskuck; and redesigning and reprogramming Ascham Park to make it more appealing to residents. Lighting and the need for additional trees were cited in reference to Iola French Park while Ascham Street Playground was singled out for needing upgraded lighting and graffiti removal.

Hopkins Square, though recently improved, needs additional lighting repairs and upgrades to ensure safety after dark, and was cited as a candidate for a farmers market.

The need for benches in Corliss Park could possibly be addressed by relocating the Hopkins Square benches, which need to be replaced to coordinate with recent



Corliss Park

upgrades.

Other parks and open space recommendations include upgrading benches and trash receptacles at Wanskuck Park, identifying potential locations for community gardens, establishing gardens at area schools, and setting up a schedule for opening and closing the park adjacent to St. Ann's Church (it is currently locked at all times to prohibit overnight use).

Discussion of Canada Pond centered on its condition and public access. Suggestions for improvement include working with DEM to improve water quality, restoring the beach area, scheduling cleanups, and improving/defining neighborhood access points.

Community Safety

Safety in public open spaces and along some streets in both neighborhoods was raised as a concern at the charrette. In addition to improved lighting in parks, potential solutions include the establishment of additional neighborhood crime watches (in addition to the North End Community Action Crime Watch Committee) and a neighborhood police liaison program. Residents also expressed concerns about "spas" locating in the neighborhoods, especially along Douglas Avenue.

Commercial Corridors

The commercial corridor discussions focused primarily on revitalization, aesthetics, upkeep, and the character of the business districts. The main commercial corridors discussed are Charles Street, Branch Avenue and Douglas Avenue. Specific recommendations include promoting the Charles Street Business Association and its efforts through the Neighborhood Markets

program in particular, which helps with job training, façade improvements, developing district identities, and improving signage; and working with the business association to install gateways to Hopkins Square along Charles Street and Branch Avenue.

Redevelopment Opportunities

Beyond the commercial corridors and traditional retail opportunities, Charles and Wanskuck contain some of the largest and most intriguing development parcels in Providence. Four sites dominated the charrette redevelopment discussion.

The largest of these is the American Tourister/Steere Mill site, which has tremendous potential to benefit the Wanskuck neighborhood and the City's tax base. Among the possibilities cited by charrette participants are senior assisted living, and commercial and industrial uses. The former industrial site also has potential for open space conservation and passive recreation use in the area near Whipple's Pond, which would be enhanced by a more formalized trail system and convenient neighborhood access.



Neighborhood Issues (Cont'd.)

The former A&P site in Eagle Park also has the potential to be used to the benefit of the neighborhood and the city as a whole. Suggested potential uses include a youth center, a farmers market and larger-scale commercial development.

The former site of an automotive business on Douglas Avenue between Lancashire and Columbus streets is currently a neighborhood eyesore and represents an opportunity for significant reinvestment. Suggestions for this site focused on neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

The large vacant parcel on the west side of Charles opposite the intersection of Silver Spring is the other site that was discussed. Despite recent plans to redevelop the site, its future remains uncertain and it is often subject to illegal dumping. Suggested use of the site focused on large-scale commercial that would be useful to the neighborhood while generating significant tax revenue for the City.

Infrastructure, Maintenance and Repair

In addition to the street and sidewalk repair needs detailed above under mobility and circulation, a number of both general and specific issues were discussed relating to maintenance and litter control, street trees and drainage in particular.

Trees:

Some streets in the two neighborhoods need additional trees, and tree maintenance needs to be coordinated between property owners, businesses, the Parks Department, and the City Forester. The Trees 2020 initiative should be promoted in these neighborhoods.

Drainage

As in all of the city's neighborhoods, sustainable, "green" approaches to storm water management should be encouraged. An additional general point that emerged from the charrette is that a regular storm drain cleaning schedule should be set up and publicized.

Specific drainage issues that need to be addressed were cited at the following intersections: Charles Street/Route 146 ramp; Branch Avenue/Hawkins Street; Admiral Street/Fillmore Street; Branch Avenue/Charles Street; and Grand Broadway/Vandewater Street.

Litter

Litter was identified as a key concern of most neighborhood residents. One way to address litter is through neighborhood cleanup days. It was suggested that concerns about shopping carts from Wal-Mart and Home Depot being left around the neighborhood should be dealt with by community groups working directly with the businesses. Concerns about trash, sometimes in bulk, on the Charles Street property opposite the intersection with Silver Spring must also be addressed. Finally, some residents expressed interest in having a regular street sweeping schedule.

Housing

Two principal directives emerged from discussion of housing issues: support the work of the North End Housing Development Corporation and encourage the potential involvement of the Smith Hill Community Development Corporation and other CDCs in the North End to develop affordable housing and assist in neighborhood renovation.

Action Plan

The key outcome of the Charles and Wanskuck charrette was the development of a multi-phase action plan for the neighborhood and its associated map. The action plan below details the short-, mid- and long-term goals (spanning <5 years, 5–10 years and 10+ years, respectively) of the neighborhoods and identifies specific actions needed to achieve the vision.

Key to Acronyms for City and State Departments and Agencies:

DPD - Department of Planning and Development (City of Providence)

DPW - Department of Public Works (City of Providence)

DIS - Department of Inspection and Standards (City of Providence)

ZBR - Zoning Board of Review (City of Providence)

TED - Traffic Engineering Division (City of Providence)

Recreation - Recreation Department (City of Providence)

PEDP - Providence Economic Development Partnership

RIDEM- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

HDC - Historic District Commission (City of Providence)

RIDOT - Rhode Island Department of Transportation

RIPTA - Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

Schools - Providence Department of Public Schools

Parks - Parks Department (City of Providence)

PPD - Providence Police Department

ONS - Office of Neighborhood Services (City of Providence)

Charles and Wanskuck Initiatives

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Actively involve the Charles and Wanskuck neighborhoods in community decision-making.			
Promote collaboration between City government, neighborhood residents and businesses to achieve the vision for Charles and Wanskuck.	Identify strategies to broaden community participation in implementing the plan, such as organization of neighborhood and merchant associations where needed, and development of outreach plans.	Community Groups, DPD	Short-term
	Identify potential partners, such as businesses and non-profit organizations, that can assist in completing specific projects.	Community Groups, DPD	Ongoing
Ensure that all projects and initiatives contribute to achievement of the long-term vision.	Evaluate proposed projects for consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan and the adopted neighborhood plan.	DPD	Ongoing
	Include neighborhood outreach and communication as part of the planning and development of significant public and private projects.	DPD	Ongoing
	Develop education and awareness programs to assist residents in understanding how different projects and initiatives, including street tree planting and recycling, can improve their neighborhoods.	DPD	Ongoing

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Preserve and enhance Charles and Wanskuck as urban neighborhoods with a high quality of life.			
Maintain and improve the character of the neighborhoods, particularly the residential areas.	Use the neighborhood typologies to develop zoning regulations that promote the best examples of existing neighborhood character.	DPD	Short-term
	Strictly enforce hardship requirements for zoning variances that may be detrimental to neighborhood character.	ZBR	Ongoing
	Increase enforcement of city regulations such as for paving limits, property maintenance and residential occupancy limits.	DIS	Ongoing
	Establish landscaping and lighting standards for residential neighborhoods, and target the following streets within the neighborhoods for improved landscaping and lighting: Russo Street, Douglas Avenue, Veazie Street, Hagan Street.	DPW	Ongoing
Increase opportunities for and access to safe and affordable housing.	Target properties with minimum housing code violations and complaints for enforcement, particularly along the following streets: Tappan Street, Hawkins Street, Anchor Street, Lancashire Street, Moy Street.	DIS	Ongoing
	Increase enforcement of existing building codes. Consider increasing fines when there have been numerous citations for code violations.	DIS, DPD	Ongoing
	Require all foreclosed residential units to meet code requirements before being occupied.	DIS	Short-to Mid-term
	Publicize existing housing programs such as down payment assistance, emergency repairs and lead abatement, through distribution of brochures at neighborhood centers, meetings and events.	DPD	Ongoing
	Support the efforts of the North End Housing Development Corporation to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed homes in the neighborhoods.	DPD	Ongoing
	Encourage CDCs such as the Smith Hill CDC working in adjacent neighborhoods to build partnerships with the North End Housing Development Corporation and other community groups.	DPD, CDCs	Ongoing
Preserve historic resources.	<p>Consider adding regulatory protection to the following properties that are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places or determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register, but are not currently protected by Historic District Zoning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esek Hopkins House • Berkshire Street School • Wanskuck Branch Library 	DPD, HDC	Short-term

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Preserve and enhance Charles and Wanskuck as urban neighborhoods with a high quality of life.			
Improve neighborhood infrastructure.	Consider applying guidelines that would require "green" approaches to storm water management, reducing new storm water discharges.	DPW, DPD	Short-term
	Fix drainage issues at the following intersections: Charles Street/Rt. 146 on-ramp, Branch Avenue/Hawkins Street, Admiral Street/Fillmore Street, Branch Avenue/Charles Street, Grand Broadway/Vandewater Street.	DPW	Mid-term
	Install a mid-block crossing on Branch Avenue at the wheelchair ramp on Hopkins Square or move the wheelchair ramps to the corners for safety.	DPW	Short-term
	Work with the City Forester to evaluate trees in the neighborhood that are damaging sidewalks and streets, particularly along Silver Spring Street.	Community Groups, City Forester, Parks	Short-to Mid-term
	Work with the City Forester to install and maintain street trees in the neighborhoods and to promote Trees 2020 in these neighborhoods.	Community Groups, City Forester	Ongoing
	Repave Branch Avenue as part of the City's Pavement Management program.	DPW	Short-term
	Re-stripe roads where lane markings have faded over time including: Charles Street, Douglas Avenue, Branch Avenue, and Admiral Street.	TED	Short-term
	Synchronize traffic lights along Charles Street in the vicinity of Home Depot and Wal-mart to improve traffic flow through the area.	TED	Short-term
	Sponsor neighborhood clean up days to address widespread concerns about litter. Work with Wal-mart and Home Depot to address the issue of shopping carts being littered around the neighborhood.	Community Groups	Ongoing
	Publicize the storm drain cleaning and street sweeping schedules.	DPW	Short-term
Improve community safety.	Promote continued and improved interaction between the police and the community so that the police are better acquainted with community issues and community members.	Community Groups, PPD	Ongoing
	Establish additional neighborhood watch programs in addition to the North End Community Action Crime Watch Committee.	Community Groups, PPD	Ongoing
	Create a neighborhood police liaison program.	Community Groups, PPD	Short-term

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Preserve and enhance Charles and Wanskuck as urban neighborhoods with a high quality of life.			
Promote locally owned business growth in the neighborhood.	Promote the Charles Street Business Association's Neighborhood Markets program and reach out to businesses on Douglas Avenue, Admiral Street and Branch Avenue to establish Neighborhood Markets programs to help with training, façade improvements, district identities and signage.	DPD, PEDP	Ongoing
	Publicize incentives available for job creation, such as the revolving loan fund.	DPD, PEDP	Ongoing
	Promote business assistance programs such as technical assistance, storefront improvement grants and micro-loans.	DPD	Ongoing
	Work with the Charles Street Business Association to install gateways to Hopkins Square along Charles Street and Branch Avenue.	DPD, Community Groups	Short-term
	Meet with business owners to understand needs, concerns and issues.	DPD	Ongoing



Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Improve connections within the neighborhoods and from the neighborhoods into downtown for cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and drivers.			
Pedestrian Improvements	Enhance pedestrian connections to downtown, particularly along Charles Street and Douglas Avenue.	DPD, DPW	Short-term
	Improve pedestrian connections across major corridors such as Douglas Avenue, Charles Street, Branch Avenue, Hawkins Street, and Admiral Street.	DPW, RIDOT	Mid- to Long-term
	Improve crosswalks between the Chad Brown Housing Development and Hopkins Park.	DPW	Short-term
	Improve crosswalks to Iola French Park along Stansbury Street, Grand Broadway and Hyacinth Street.	DPW	Short-term
	Improve crosswalks to Wanskuck Park along Woodward Road.	DPW, RIDOT	Short-term
	Upgrade the crosswalks at the Branch Avenue/Route 146 interchange.	DPW	Short-term
	Evaluate ways to make Branch Avenue more pedestrian-friendly.	DPW	Mid-term
	Evaluate ways to make Admiral Street more pedestrian-friendly.	DPW	Mid-term
	Complete the sidewalk grid throughout the neighborhoods.	DPW	Short-to Mid-term
Bicycle Access	Improve bike access throughout the neighborhoods, particularly on Branch Avenue and Smithfield Avenue.	DPD, DPW	Mid-term
Transit Improvements	Work with RIPTA and other departments to develop distinct branding for transit maps, schedules and signs.	DPD, RIPTA	Mid-term
	Review bus stops along commercial corridors to ensure they are in appropriate locations, particularly along Douglas Avenue.	DPD, RIPTA	Short- to Mid-term
	Work with RIPTA to install signature bus shelters in Hopkins Square.	Community Groups, RIPTA	Short- to Mid-term

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Improve connections within the neighborhoods and from the neighborhoods into downtown for cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and drivers.			
Traffic Circulation and Intersection Improvements	Enforce speed limits on Vandewater, Sherwood and Langdon streets.	PPD	Ongoing
	Enforce existing no parking and travel restrictions on Stansbury Street during school hours.	PPD	Ongoing
	Evaluate the Greeley Street/Alaska Street intersection and install stop signs if warranted.	TED	Short-term
	Evaluate the effectiveness of the yield sign at Oppen and Nahant and consider replacing with a stop sign.	DPW	Short-term
	Evaluate traffic flow on Hawkins Street between Branch Avenue and Charles Street and consider instituting two-way travel if warranted.	DPW, TED	Short-to Mid-term
	Evaluate the Branch/Douglas intersection for pedestrian and circulation improvements.	DPW, TED	Mid-term
	Evaluate the Douglas/Veazie intersection for circulation improvements.	DPW, TED	Mid-term
	Enforce trimming of shrubbery to prevent sight line impairments along neighborhood streets.	DPW	Short-term
On-street Parking	Identify areas suitable for on-street overnight parking.	Community Groups, TED	Short-to Mid-term



Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Revitalize the key areas for redevelopment in the Charles and Wanskuck neighborhoods.			
Steere Mill/American Tourister Site	Facilitate redevelopment of the former Steere Mill/American Tourister site into a beneficial use to the neighborhood and the City. Potential uses include: senior assisted living, commercial or industrial development.	DPD, PRA	Mid to Long-term
	Through the redevelopment process, ensure the preservation of a portion of the site as open space including Whipple Pond with a walking path with easy neighborhood access.	DPD, Parks	Mid to Long-term
Former A&P in Eagle Park (Angelo Di Maria Building)	Facilitate redevelopment of the former A&P in Eagle Park into a use beneficial to the neighborhood and the City. Potential uses include: a youth center, a farmers market or large-scale commercial development.	DPD	Mid to Long-term
Former auto body shop on west side of Douglas Avenue between Lancashire Street and Columbus Street.	Facilitate redevelopment of this site with neighborhood-serving commercial development.	DPD	Mid to Long-term
Vacant lot on west side of Charles Street at the Silver Spring Street/Charles Street intersection.	Facilitate redevelopment of this sizable vacant lot into a large-scale commercial use beneficial to the neighborhood and the City.	DPD	Mid to Long-term
Based on an extensive review of use patterns and current land use regulations, zoning amendments and comprehensive plan amendments should be considered for the following areas to reflect existing uses, encourage appropriate new uses and protect neighborhood character.			
Charles	West side of Charles opposite Smart north to Raphael from Heavy Commercial to Limited Commercial.	DPD	Short-term
Wanskuck	North of Shiloh, east of Hyacinth from Multi-Family Dwelling to General Residence.	DPD	Short-term
	Branch and Douglas from Limited Commercial to General Commercial.	DPD	Short-term
	South of Shiloh from General Residence to Open Space and Public Space.	DPD	Short-term
	North and south of Branch east of Veazie from Industrial to Open Space and Public Space.	DPD	Short-term

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Improve access to and increase opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of open space.			
Improve neighborhood maintenance, programming and access to existing parks.	Evaluate possible locations for community gardens within existing parks.	Parks	Short-term
	Add recycling receptacles and discourage residential use of trash receptacles in the parks.	Parks	Short-term
	Continue the overall upkeep and maintenance of Corliss, Lola French, Ascham Street Playground, Hopkins Square, and Wanskuck Park.	Parks	Ongoing
	Establish an opening and closing schedule for the park adjacent to St. Ann's Church.	Parks, St. Ann's, Community Groups	Short-term
Corliss Park	Evaluate the programming in Corliss Park and upgrade facilities to fit current neighborhood needs.	Parks	Mid-term
	Consider the installation of an enclosed off-leash dog park area at Corliss Park.	Parks	Short-term
	Work with the Parks Dept. to relocate benches from Hopkins Square to Corliss Park when the Hopkins Square benches are replaced by the Charles Street Business Association.	Community Groups, Parks	Short to Mid-term
	Examine the feasibility of installing a spray park at Corliss Park.	Parks	Mid-term
Wanskuck	Examine the feasibility of installing a playground at Wanskuck Park.	Parks	Short to Mid-term
	Upgrade benches and trash cans at Wanskuck Park.	Parks	Short to Mid-term
	Consider the installation of an enclosed off-leash dog park area at Wanskuck Park.	Parks	Short to Mid-term
Lola French	Upgrade lighting in Lola French Park.	Parks	Ongoing
	Plant additional trees in Lola French Park.	Parks	Short to Mid-term
Ascham Street Playground	Evaluate the feasibility of redesigning the Ascham Street Playground to make it more appealing to neighborhood residents.	Parks	Mid to Long-term
	Evaluate programming at Ascham Street Playground.	Parks	Short-term
	Remove graffiti at Ascham Street Playground.	Parks	Ongoing
	Upgrade lighting at Ascham Street Playground to make it more inviting.	Parks, DPW	Short to Mid-term

Initiatives/Projects	Actions	Project Lead	Target Date
Improve access to and increase opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of open space.			
Hopkins Square	Repair broken lights in Hopkins Square and evaluate lighting to ensure safety in the evening hours.	Parks	Short-term
Create opportunities for new park and open spaces and community gardens.	Examine the possibility of a seasonal farmers market at Hopkins Square.	Parks, Community groups	Short to Mid-term
	Recognize Canada Pond as a valuable neighborhood resource: work with RIDEM to improve water quality; restore the beach, if feasible; schedule area cleanups; and improve access to the pond and its surroundings by neighborhood residents.	Parks, RIDEM, Community groups	Mid to Long-term
	Identify and evaluate the best locations for community gardens and the level of sustained interest among residents in those areas to maintain and support community gardens.	Parks, Community groups	Short-term
	Work with local PTOs to consider establishing community gardens on school grounds, with an education component for students.	Parks, Schools	Short-term



Next Steps

This plan is not meant to sit on a shelf - it is a guide to neighborhood action. City departments, neighborhood leaders and residents should use this plan to guide decisions in the neighborhood, and to prioritize funding and neighborhood improvement projects. The action plan sets out short-, mid- and long-term goals so that we can periodically check in to see how we are doing. The plan is also not a static document – it can and will be changed over time. New concerns, issues or conditions in the neighborhood will be reflected in updates to the plan. Finally, the plan will set out the course for amending zoning regulations that have impacts in the neighborhood.

Thank you to the charrette team, to the residents of Charles and Wanskuck for participating in this effort, and to the DaVinci Center for generously donating space for the charrette.

The Charrette Team

Mayor David N. Cicilline

Council President Peter Mancini

Councilman Nicholas J. Narducci, Jr.

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Bonnie Nickerson, AICP, Director of Long Range Planning

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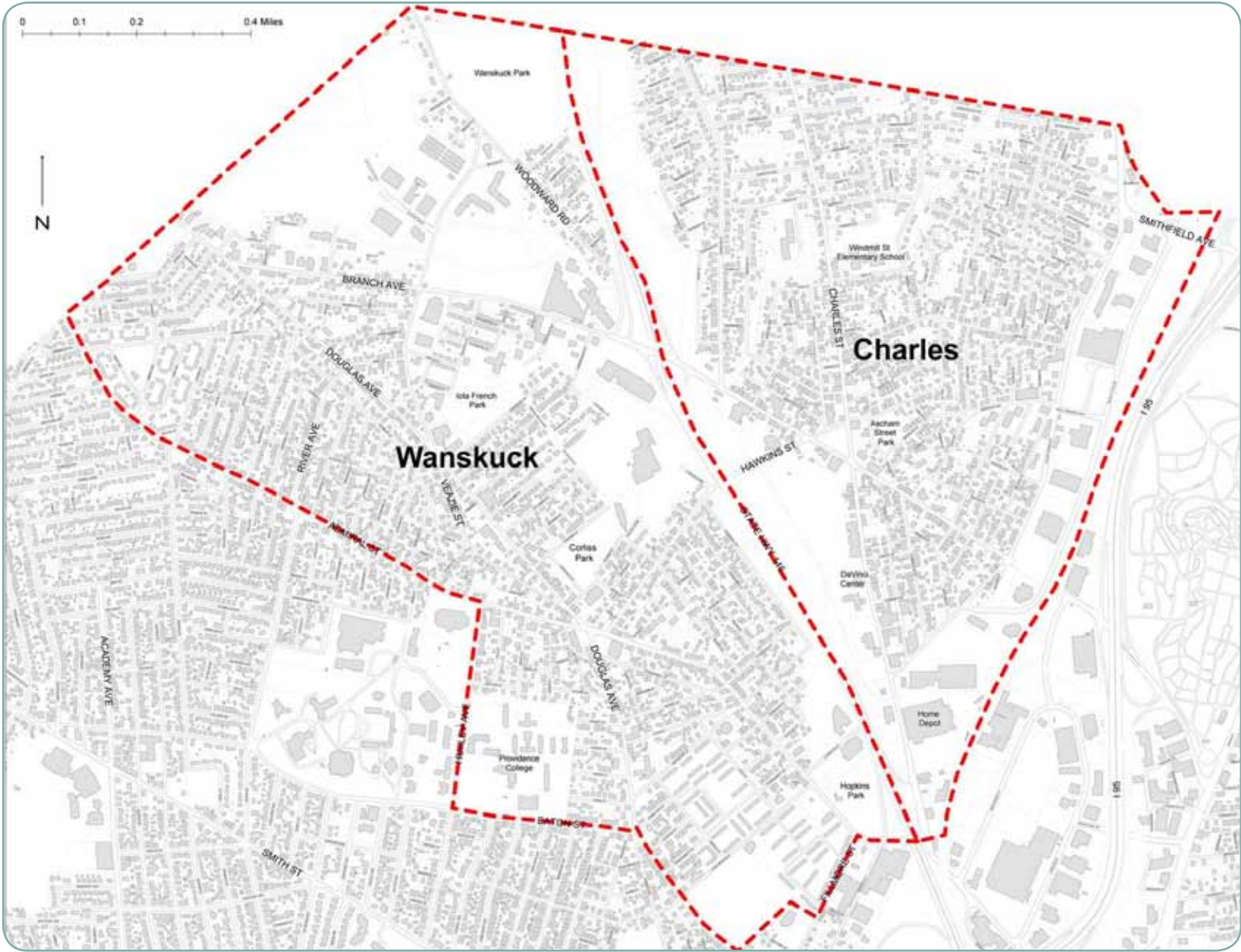
Melanie A. Jewett, AICP

Eunha Kwon



APPENDIX A- NEIGHBORHOOD DATA

Neighborhood Boundaries



Legend

- Neighborhood Boundary

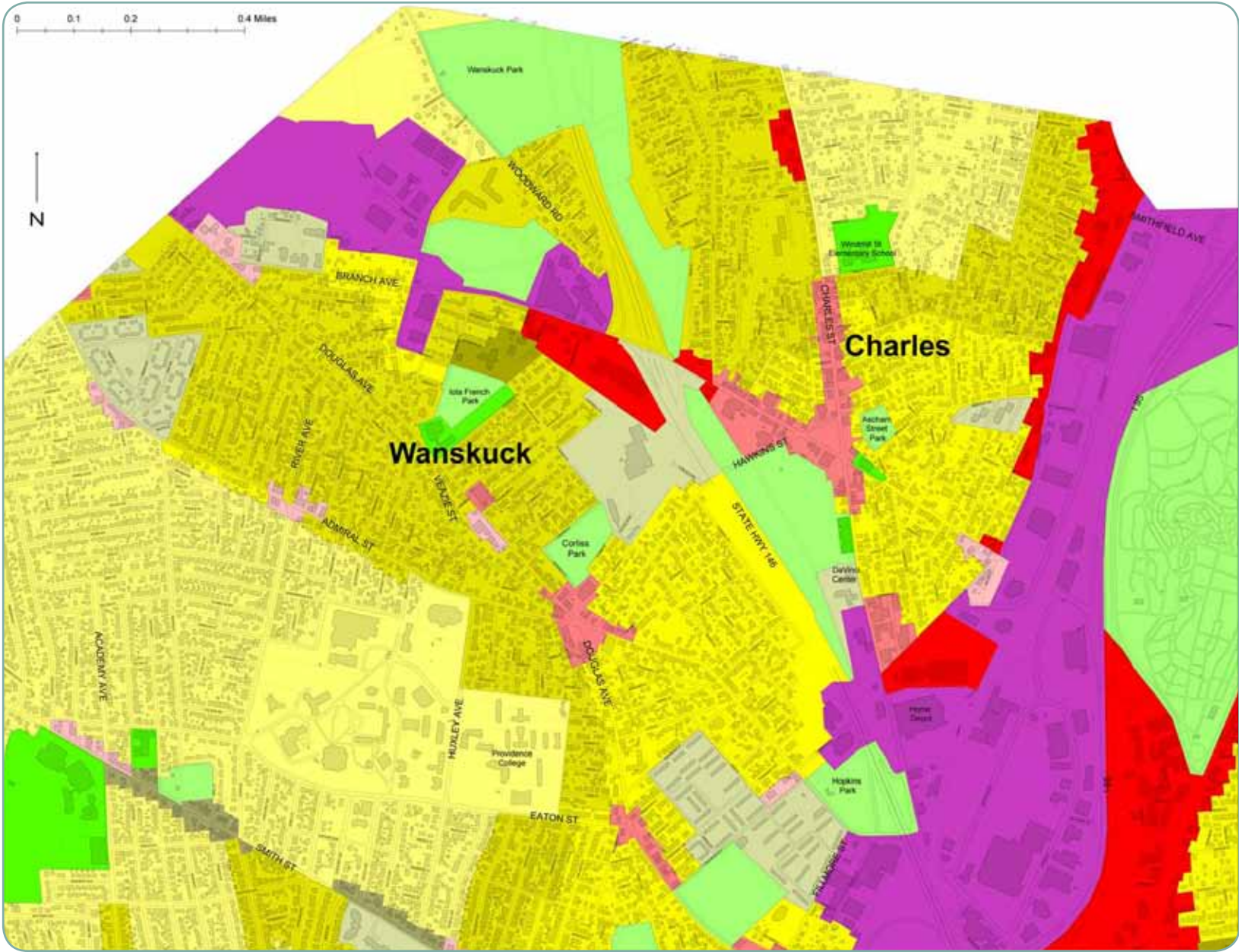
Aerial Photograph



2004

A-3

Current Zoning

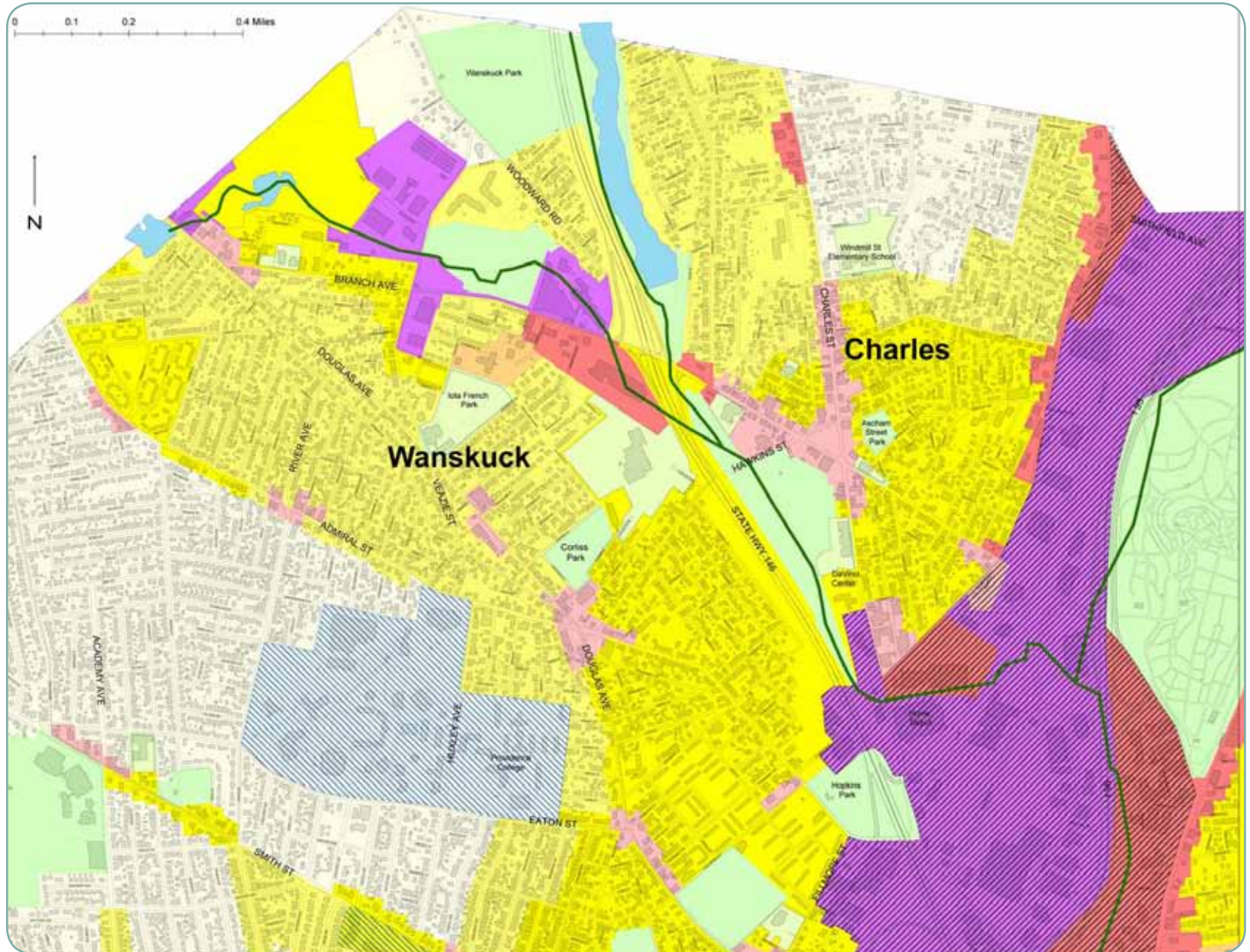


Legend

R1	RG	C1	O.S.	D1-45	D1-150	D2	W1
R2	RM	C2	P.S.	D1-75	D1-200	M1	W2
R3	RP	C4	CD	D1-100	D1-300	M2	W3

June 2009

Future Land Use



Legend

- Institutional
- Jobs District
- Single Family Res.

- Low Density Res.
- Medium Density Res.
- High Density Res.

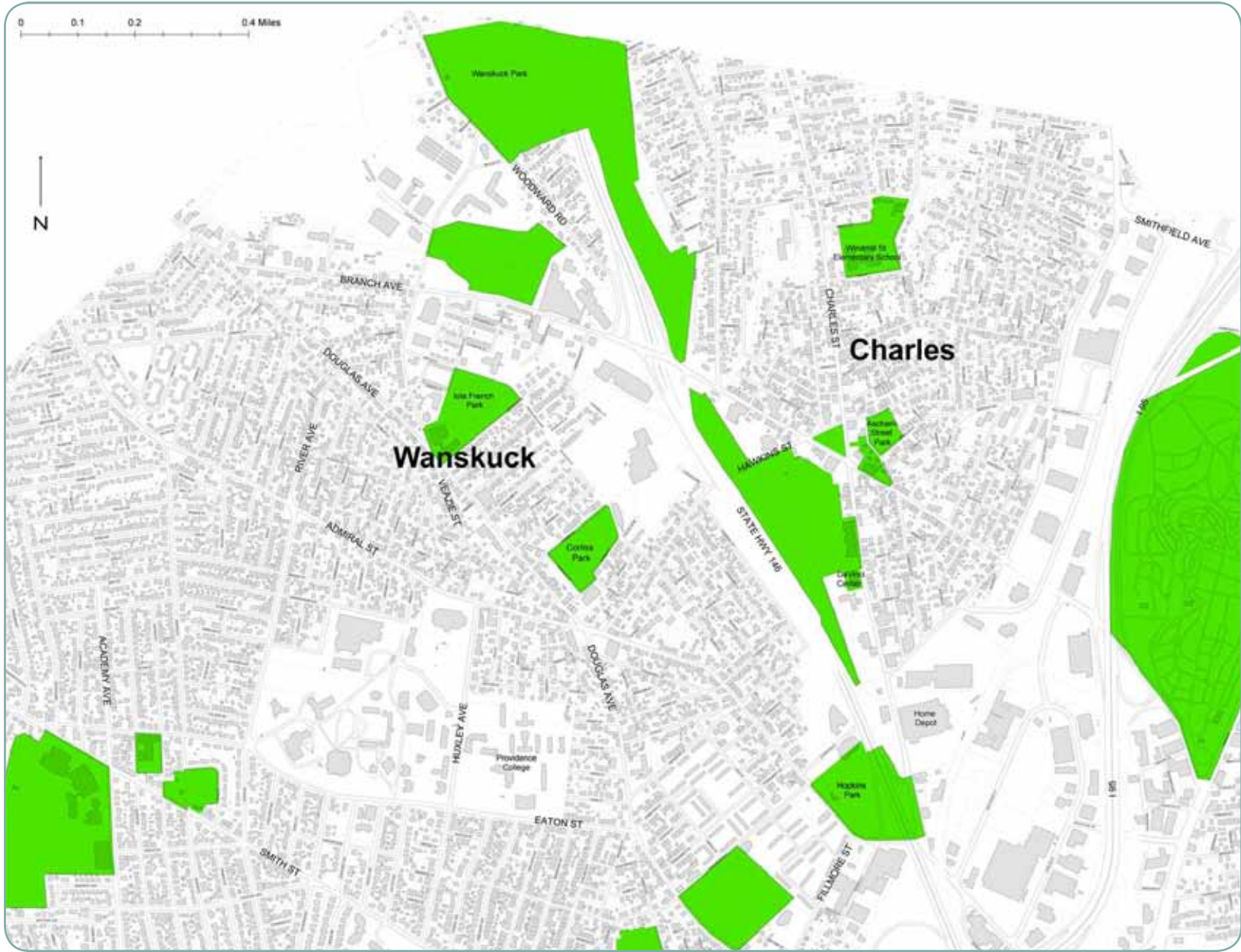
- Neigh. Comm./Mixed Use
- Gen. Comm./Mixed Use
- Downtown/Mixed-Use

- Business/Mixed Use Waterfront
- Mixed Use/Neigh.
- Waterfront Mixed Use/Gen.

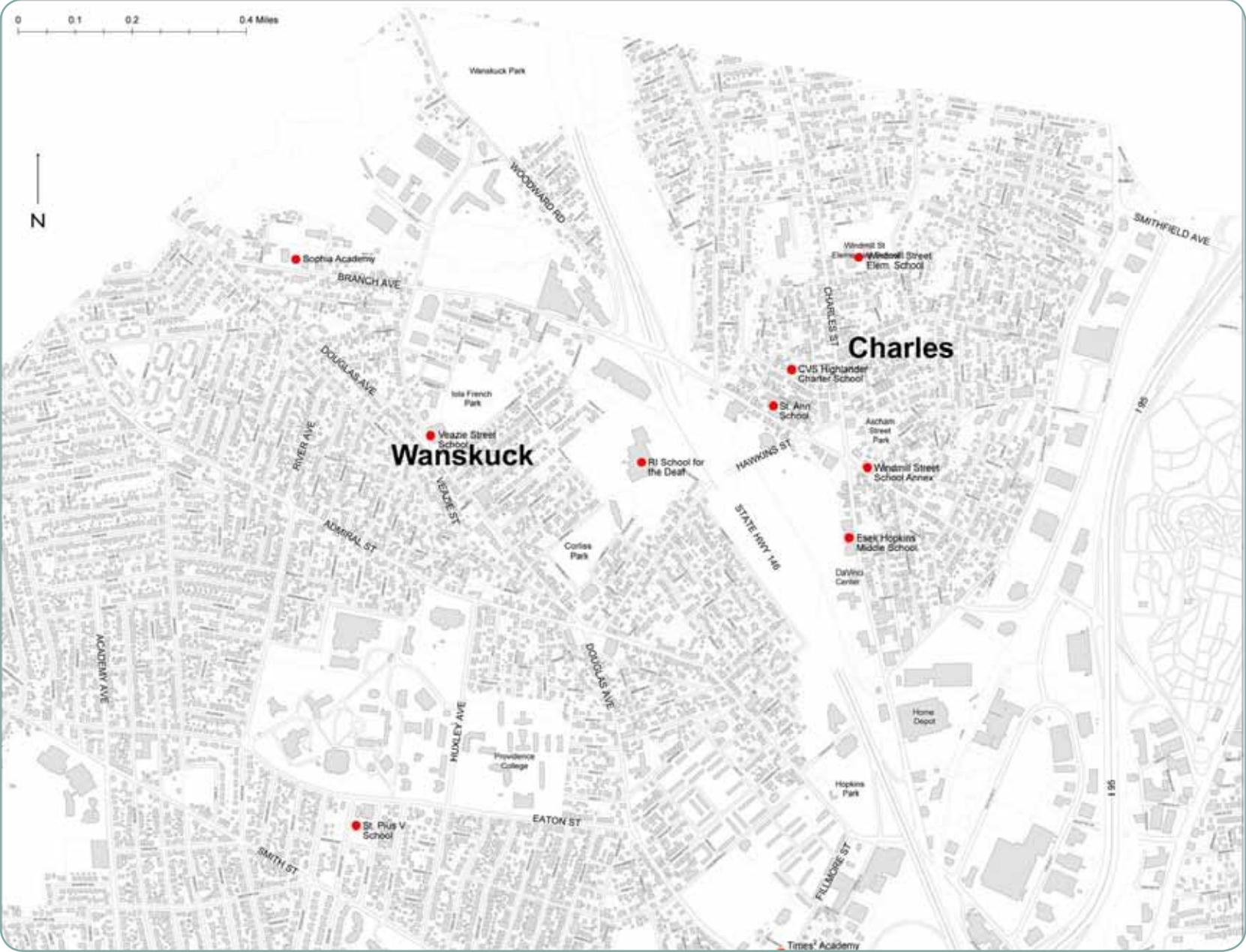
December 2007 (Comprehensive Plan)

- Waterfront/Port
- Public Space/Open Space
- Conservation

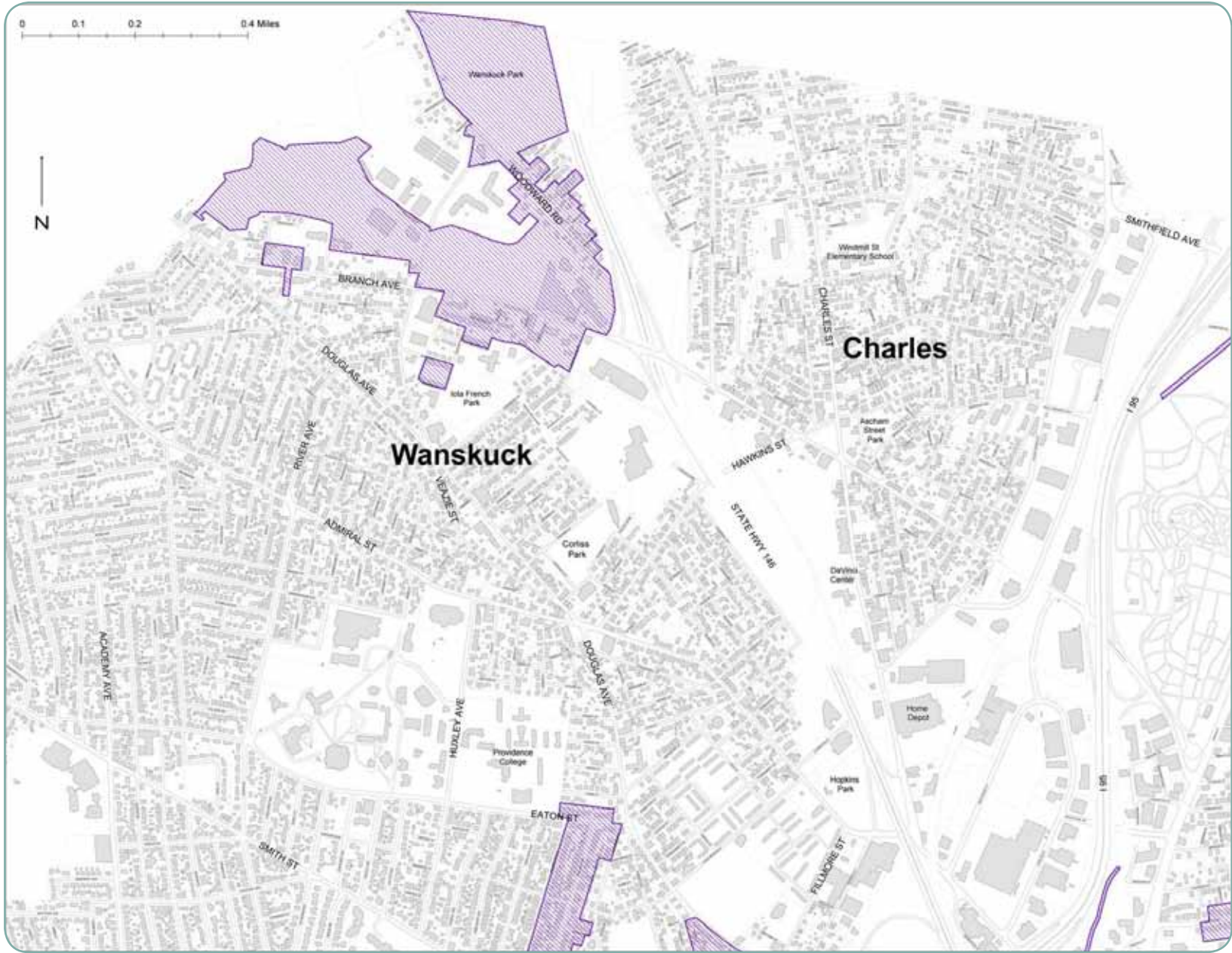
Parks and Open Space



Schools



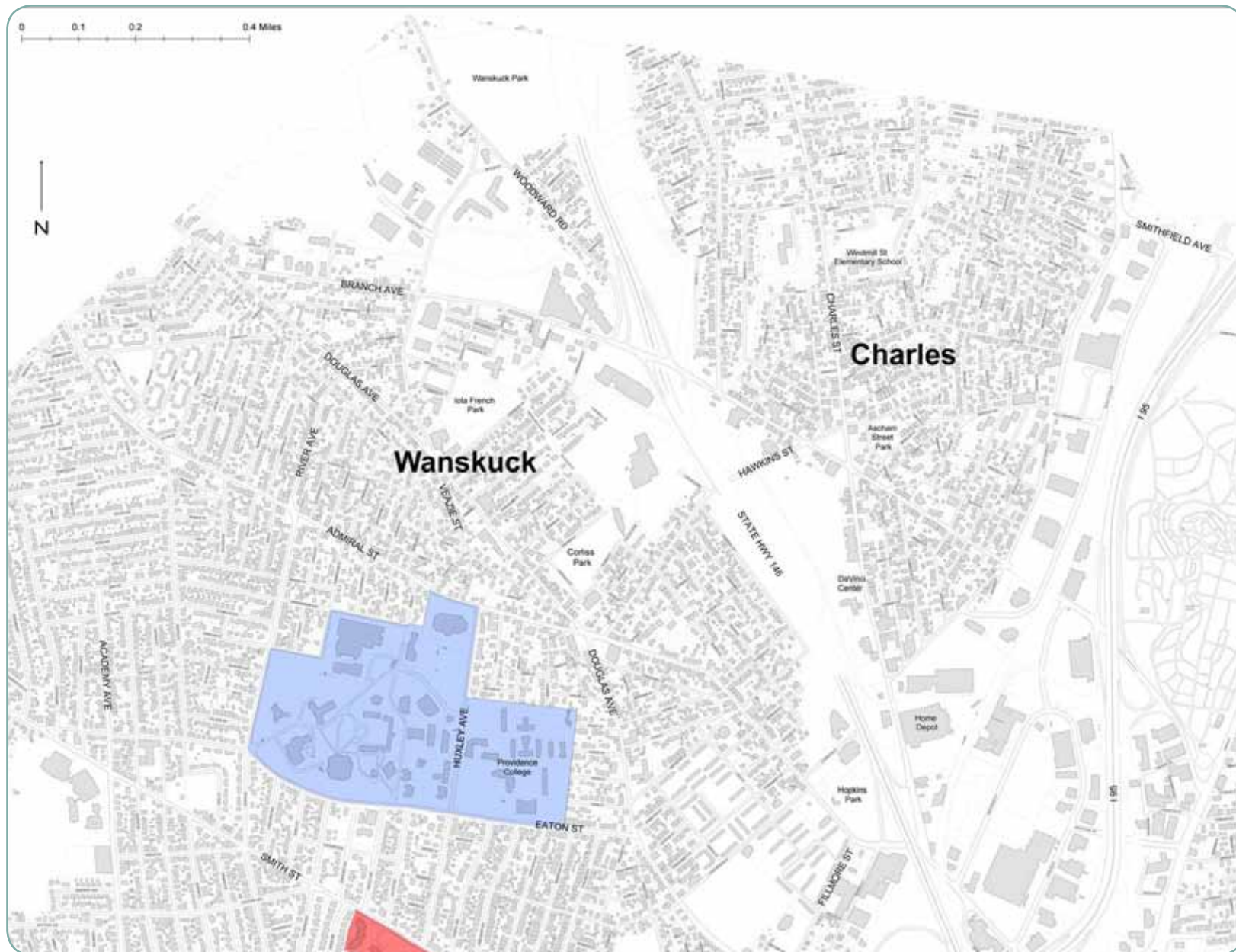
Historic Districts



Legend

- Local Historic District
- National Register Historic District
- ICBD

Institutional Zones



Legend

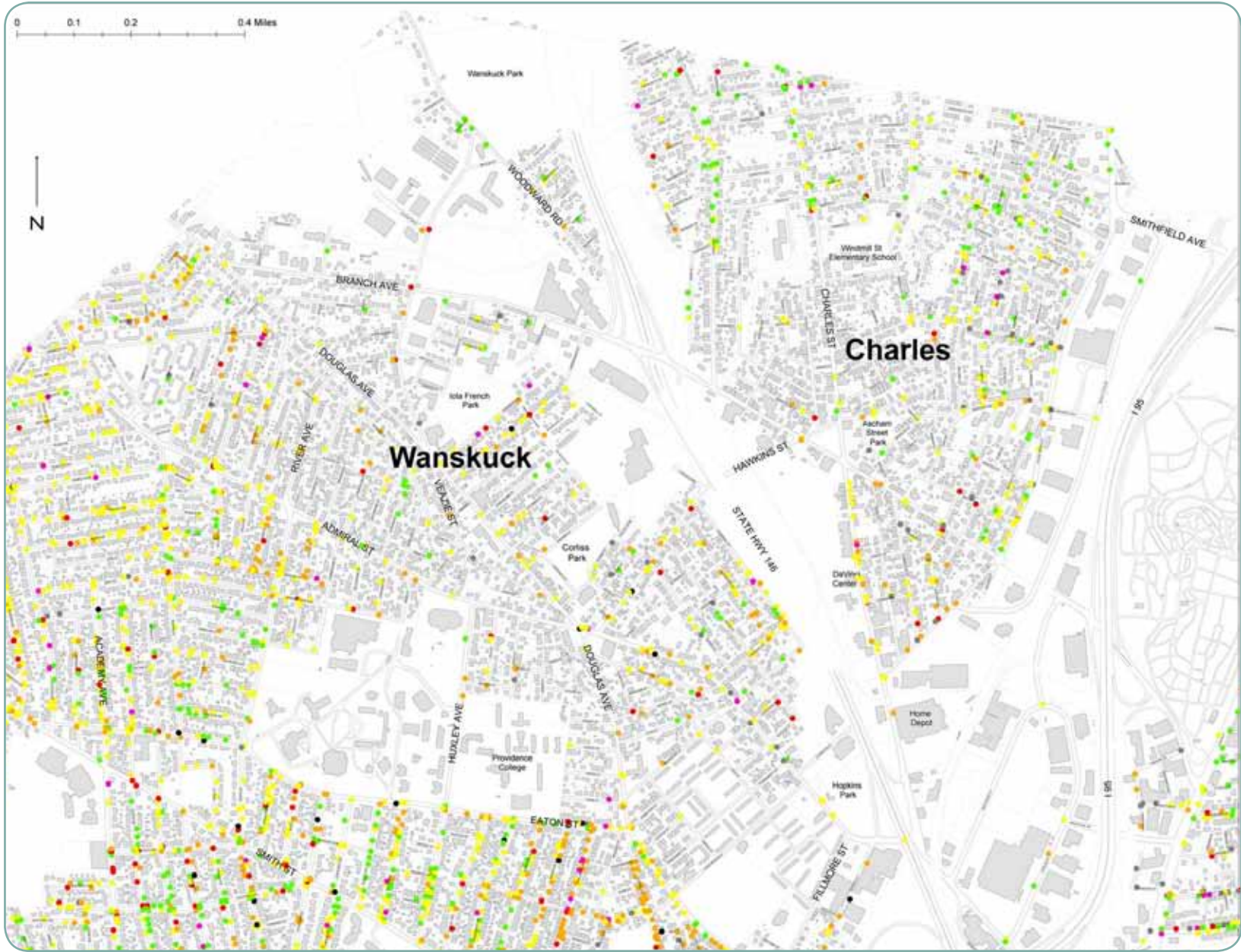
I-1 Health Care Zone

I-2 Educational Zone

I-3 Educational Downtown Zone

June 2009

Street Tree Conditions

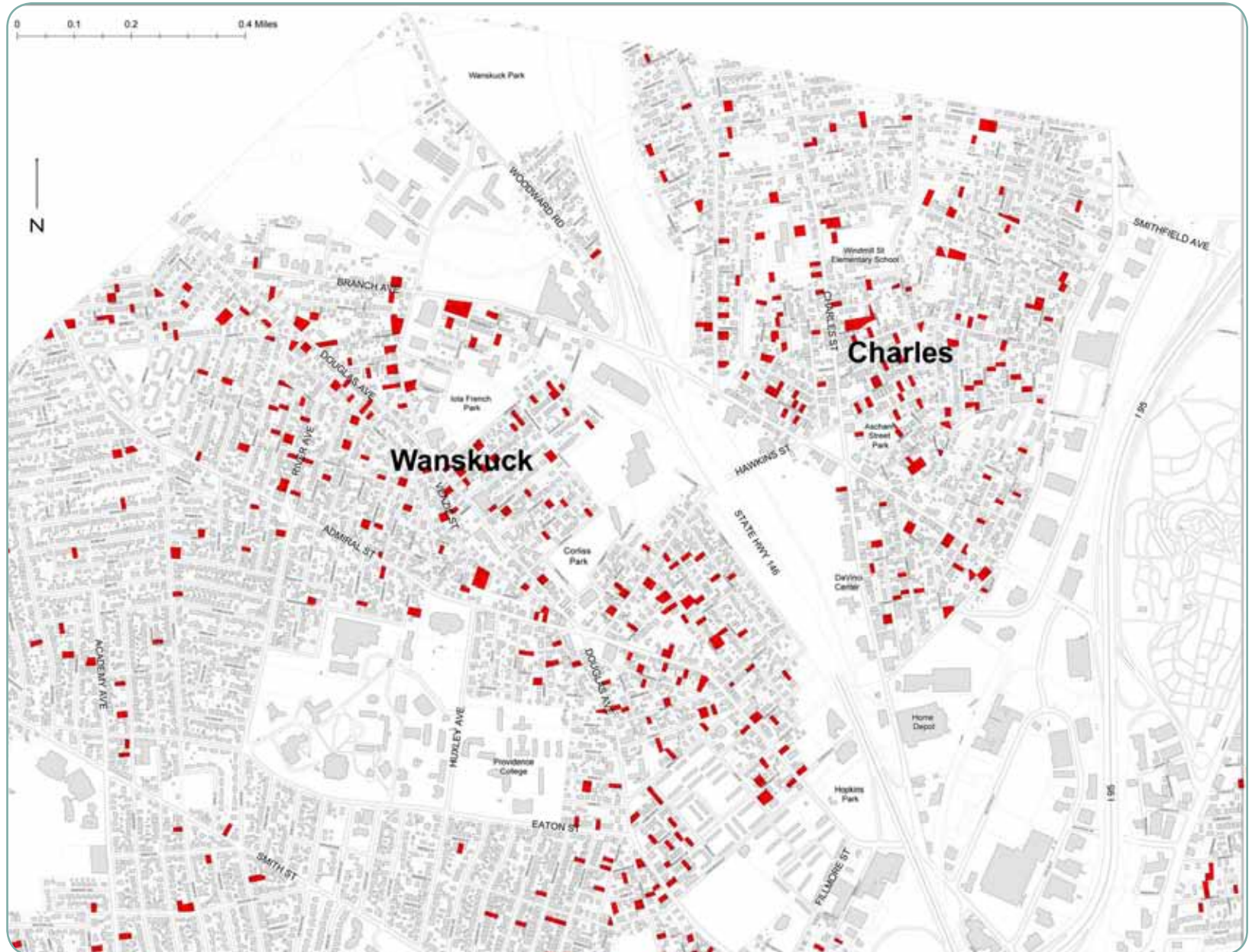


Legend

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Dead
- Stump
- Empty Pit

March 2007

Foreclosures

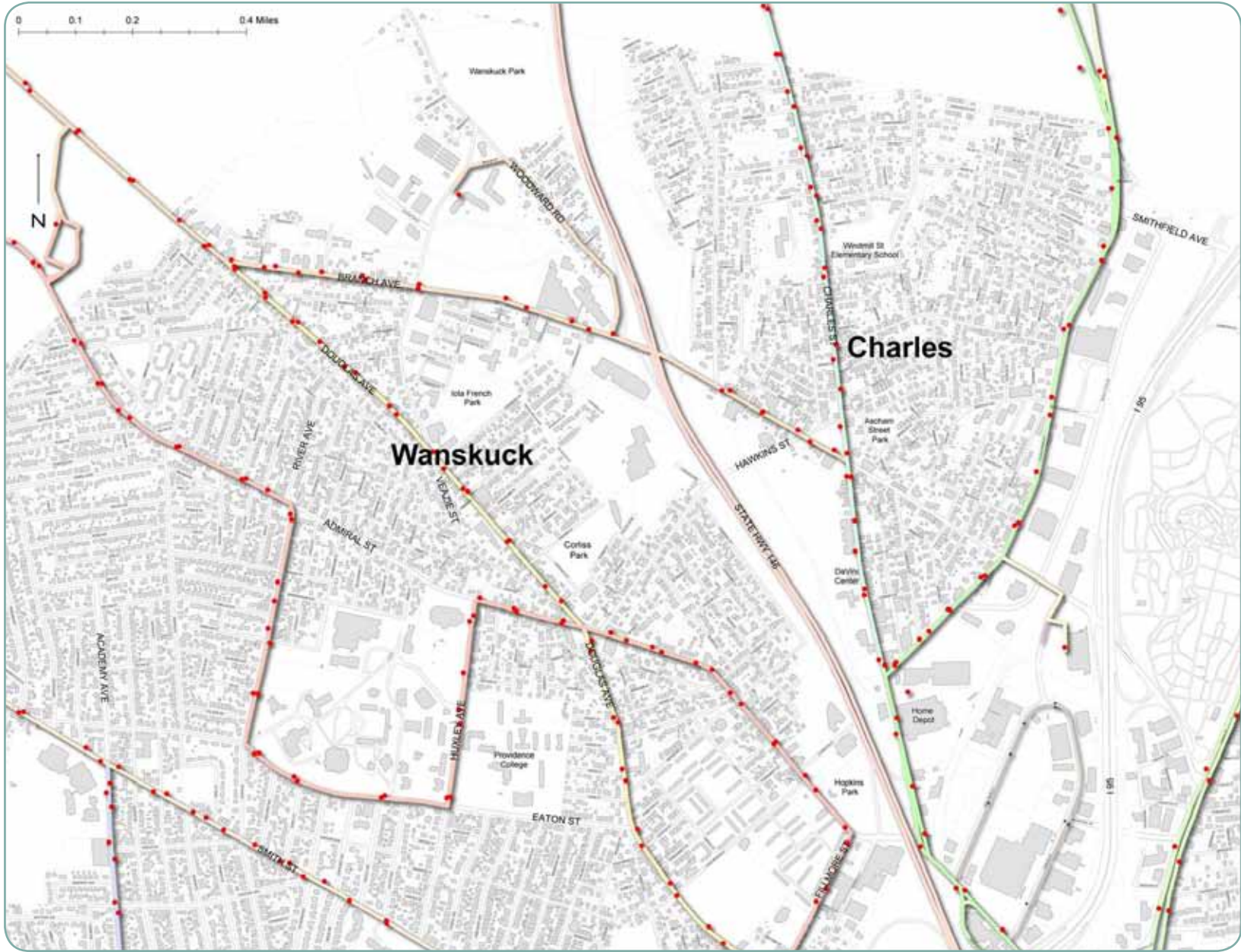


Legend

■ Foreclosure

January 1, 2006 - May 31, 2009

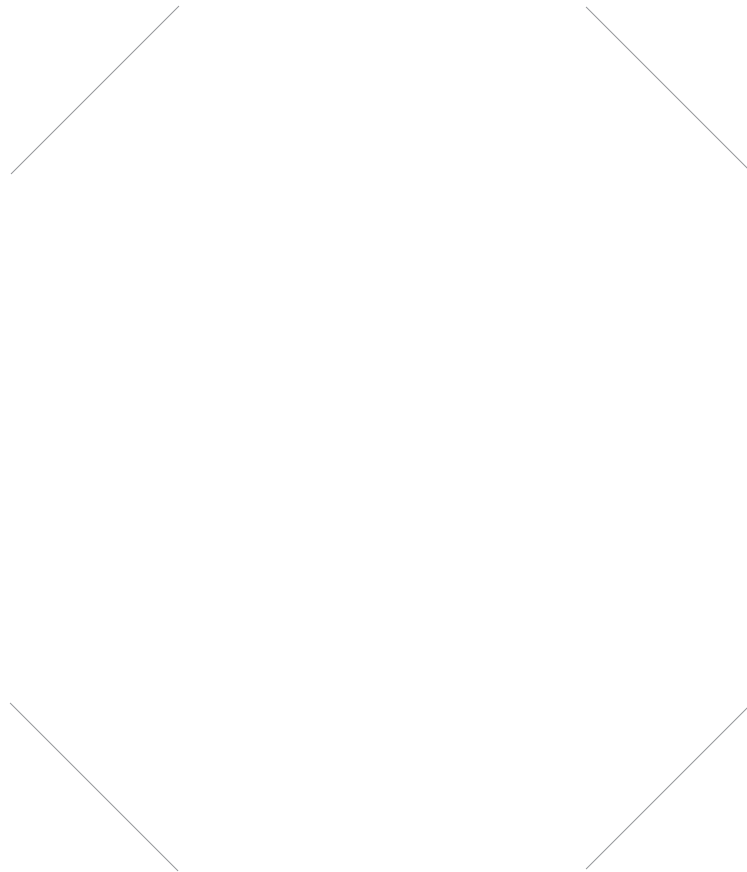
RIPTA Routes



Legend

- RIPTA stop
- RIPTA route

APPENDIX B– NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN MAP



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PROVIDENCE TOMORROW

our city ■ our neighborhoods ■ our future

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