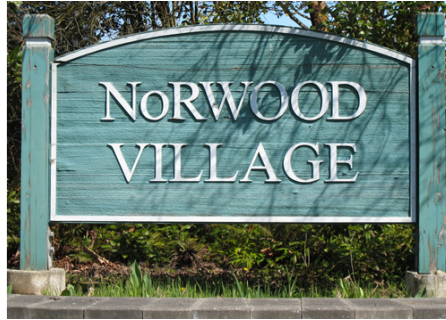


Historic Norwood Village Bellevue, Washington



Welcome!

If you are new to Norwood Village, we welcome you to our community and know that you will enjoy your new home. We hope this little history will help you quickly become one of us.

If you have lived in Norwood Village for a while, we hope that you will enjoy this brief history, and that it will add to your appreciation for the village.

If you're an old-timer on the hill, you know that there is much more to Norwood Village than could ever put in this short piece. We hope you'll share some of that rich history that you are so familiar with, with those who have not been fortunate enough to have lived it with you.

The Beginning

The history of Norwood Village goes back to 1946. Most of Woodridge hill was then undeveloped. It was a tangle of blackberry bushes and trees and undergrowth covering the hill from what is now the Factoria Interchange to the Wilburton trestle as can be seen in the photo below that shows a southwest view from what is now 122nd Ave. toward Mercer Island and Lake Washington around 1948.



Southwest View from 122nd Ave.

This photo shows State Highway 2A, now I-405, near the old entrance to Norwood Village in about 1951. This entrance, located at what is now the turning circle at the bottom of 121st Ave., no longer connects to the “outside world.”



State Highway 2-A (Now I-405)

In 1946, returning veterans of World War II everywhere faced a severe housing shortage. In July of that year, a nonprofit group spearheaded by national veterans' organizations announced in six column headlines an intention to build 1,000 low cost homes on "...a

300 acre tract to be announced," to help alleviate that shortage in this area. In spite of the headlines, it was almost five years before the first house was completed.

In 1947, a 28 acre tract, which became Lower Norwood, was bought at a tax sale for \$885.00 after other prospective bidders were persuaded to allow the property to go to the veterans' group, now formally organized as the Veterans Mutual Building Association (VMBA). The owner of considerable adjoining land gave the young association an additional 20 acres free of charge. In 1950, the property under the Seattle City Light transmission lines, now called Long Park, was bought by the Norwood Village Corporation and is still owned by the Village.

This photo shows an organizational meeting of the VMBA in around 1950. Seen from left to right (faces visible) are: Ed Shield, Eleanor and Earl Nein, Mario Starlazzi, and Del Wright. (If anyone can assist in identifying the folks facing away from the camera, please contact us at norwoodvillage@gmail.com.)



Organizational Meeting of VMBA

The VMBA was organized as a mutual building association. During the early years of the Association (VMBA), control passed to the members of the Norwood Village Corporation who had paid a \$5100.00 deposit when they indicated they wished to build in Norwood Village. The members selected what they felt were two of the most talented architects. Their aim was to build a truly livable community, not just houses. Property was set aside for greenbelt and park areas. Five basic house plans were selected and situated on the lots by the architects to take maximum advantage of the splendid views available. Their efforts were successful and they completely avoided the usual "tract look" common at that time. The Norwood Village project received national recognition

for this planning in detailed articles about Norwood Village in the September 1952 issues of "House and Home" and "Living for Young Homemakers" magazines.

Board members met weekly. They obtained FHA and VA approval for loan guarantees and a group mortgage commitment. They also received permission for Norwood Village roads to connect with existing state and county roads. The main access to Norwood Village was up 121st Avenue SE which connected the Village with the Factoria-Wilburton road (now I-405). There was no public water system in the area, and the board worked to establish a water system acceptable to the Health Department. A community well was placed on Village property in lot 22A.

There were nearly 100 lots in the Village. Fifty-seven veterans had paid an initial deposit, but because construction bids were much higher than estimated, only 34 were able to sign mortgage contracts. G. Weldon Gwinn, the successful bidder, agreed to provide financing for the roads and water system if VMBA agreed to sell the remaining lots to him at the original member cost. Tired of delays, the membership agreed, and construction began in the summer of 1950. The Korean War brought material and labor shortages, but the first home, owned by the Seymour Standish family, was finally completed in March of 1951. The remaining houses of that first group were completed within a few months.

Enter the Norwood Village Corporation

The Norwood Village Corporation was formed in 1951 to operate the Village owned water system and to manage the parks and greenbelt areas. All home owners in Norwood, whether members of the VMBA or not, became members of the corporation. Membership continues to be automatic with home ownership in the Village.

Early in 1952, the members voted to fluoridate the water system, and Norwood Village has had continuous fluoridation longer than any other community in the state of Washington.

In January 1955, almost four years after Norwood Village was incorporated, a special meeting of the corporation was held. At that meeting the residents of Norwood Division No 2 (now known as Upper Norwood) asked to join the Norwood Village Corporation. Membership was granted.

The Village well was abandoned in 1960, and a contract was signed to obtain water from Water District 68, which by then was able to serve the rest of the Woodridge hill.

In 1962, a lease was signed between the Norwood Village Corporation and the Norwood Pool group (Community Swim Club) for construction of a community swimming pool on Village property, with memberships available to all residents of the Woodridge hill area. This arrangement continues, and the taxes and other expenses for the pool area are paid from pool receipts. More information about the pool and pool membership is available at <http://norwoodswimclub.org>

In 1966, Woodridge hill, including Norwood Village, became a part of the City of Bellevue. The following year, Bellevue's first city owned tennis courts were built on a part of the Norwood Village playfield which had been deeded to the city. After many years of paying for maintenance, taxes, and assessments, Villagers voted in 1970 to deed the remaining playfield property to the city for use as a park.

The Present

Now we are a part of the City of Bellevue. Yet, our historic past remains with us in the form of our homogeneous architecture derived from those five basic home designs and our community park, greenbelts and open areas that all add to the livability of Norwood Village. We have the sense of being a community family; we demonstrate a willingness to work for the betterment of our neighborhood, now as did those people in our past who we have replaced. As a maturing neighborhood, Norwood Village will continue to face challenges. We will always keep Norwood Village a great place to live.

In a January 2006 "Improvement Project Environmental Assessments" report on the I-405 expansion project in section 4(f) on "Historical, Cultural and Architectural Resources Evaluation" it states in part: "A residential neighborhood just east of I-405 known as Norwood Village, is a unique, architect-designed, post World War II housing community designed and built in the early 1950s. Based on criteria used by the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) this neighborhood is considered eligible for listing in the National Register (NRHP) as a "Historic District" for possessing distinctive design characteristics and being associated with two important northwest architects, Fred Bassetti and Paul Hayden Kirk. Property owners have not requested such designation".

Village Governance

Though the issues have changed over the years, Norwood Village Corporation continues to serve the residents of Norwood Village. The Norwood Village continues to own 10 common areas. These areas include the Norwood Village Swimming Pool, the Berm Walkway, Long Park, Ravine Park, South Park and four greenbelt areas; block H, block I, F-1, and D-1, and the property designated for pool parking. The Norwood Village Corporation is responsible for payment of taxes, insurance and assessments that go with them. It is also the coordinating body for major Village projects and is responsible for enforcement of the Norwood Village covenants, restrictions and bylaws.

A Board of Trustees is elected by the members of the Norwood Village Corporation at the Annual Meetings and is responsible for the ongoing operation of the Corporation.

An Architectural Control Committee, established at the time the Norwood Village Corporation began, continues to serve Norwood Village. This committee reviews plans for new construction and remodeling of homes and fencing in the Village for compliance with the Norwood Village Covenants. Recently, the committee worked with Village homeowners to preserve and reclaim views through tree trimming and removal.

An Area Development Committee, composed of Norwood Village residents, was also organized in the beginning to initiate and implement community improvements. This Committee is currently inactive. Early projects included clearing and grading the playfield area, subsidization of driveway lighting (there were no streetlights), and the construction of mailbox shelters. The shelters and mailboxes were subsequently replaced as part of another project the early 1990's. Expansion of the mailbox shelters to accommodate locking mailboxes is underway in 2009.

The efforts of many members of the Village were instrumental in construction of an earthen berm along 1-405 in Lower Norwood to reduce the impact of traffic noise on the homeowners in that area.

Financing

The activities of the Norwood Village Corporation are funded primary by yearly assessments of members as voted by the membership at the annual meetings held in late January or early February. Much of the work necessary to operate the Corporation, and to accomplish its projects, is done by volunteers without cost to the Village. The volunteers are gratefully welcomed. They are the backbone of the Village. The Norwood Village has financial obligations that must be met from these assessments. Members we provided with financial statements each year.

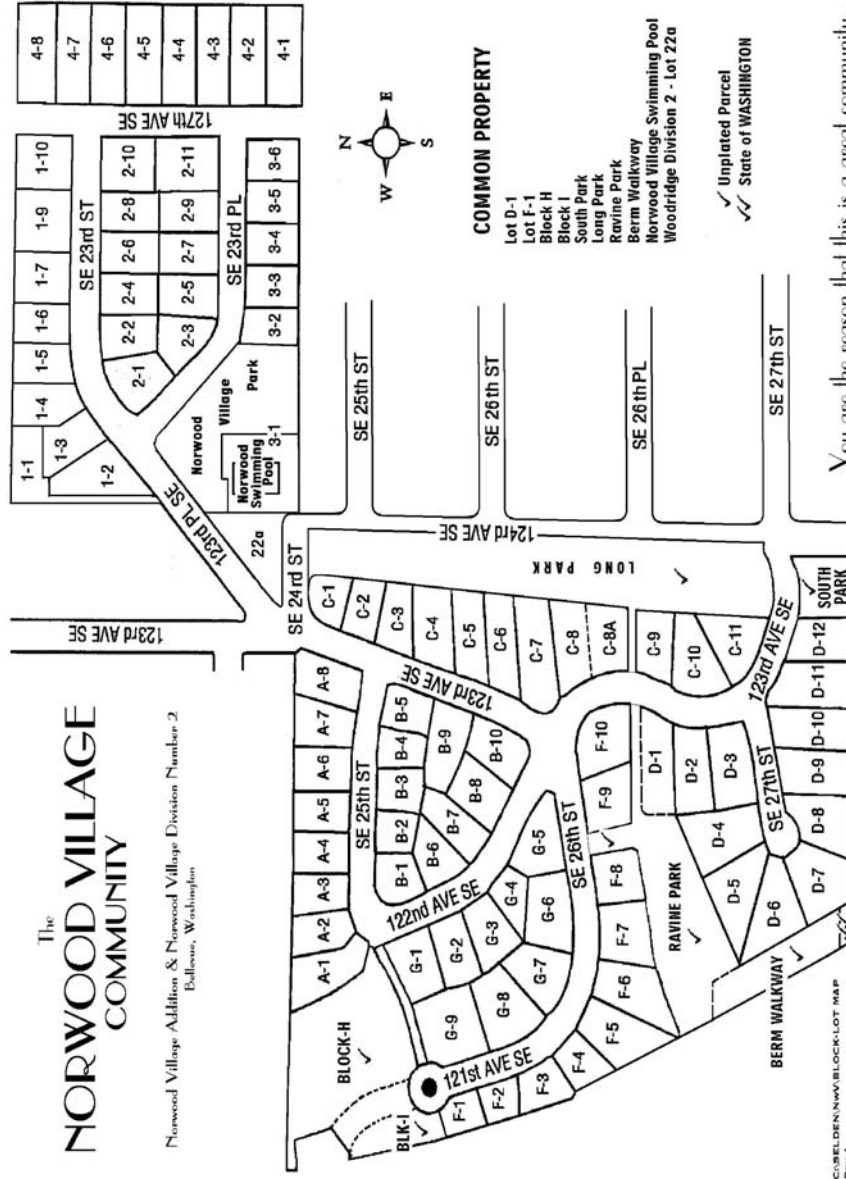
Credits

This material was largely adapted from "A Brief History of Norwood Village", by Frances Sherbrooke, an original veteran/resident of Norwood Village.

Photographs of view from what is now 122nd Ave., view of State Highway 2-A (now I-405), and of an organizational meeting courtesy of: Terry Strasser, Shaun LeMieux, and Caron Chorlton.

The NORWOOD VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Norwood Village Addition & Norwood Village Division Number 2
Bellevue, Washington



COMMON PROPERTY

- Lot D-1
- Lot F-1
- Block H
- Block I
- South Park
- Long Park
- Ravine Park
- Berm Walkway
- Norwood Village Swimming Pool
- Woodridge Division 2 - Lot 22a

- ✓ Unplated Parcel
- ✓ State of WASHINGTON

You are the reason that this is a great community.

CISELDEN\NW\BLOCK-LOT MAP
REV 1