



**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

*Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.*

**DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff)** 122-1200

**1. General Information**

District name(s): Campostella Heights Historic District

Main Streets and/or Routes: Campostella Rd, E Indian River Rd, Arlington Ave, Montclair Ave, Springfield Ave, Princeton Ave, Canton Ave, Mt. Vernon Ave, Oakwood St, Waltham St, Sycamore St, Sycamore Ln

City or Town: Norfolk

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: City of Norfolk

**2. Physical Aspects**

Acreage: Approximately 65 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban X Town \_\_\_\_\_ Village \_\_\_\_\_ Hamlet \_\_\_\_\_ Rural \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe the district's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

Campostella Heights is a large streetcar neighborhood platted in the late nineteenth century and built out over several decades from the early to mid-twentieth century. The neighborhood is bordered by busy arterial streets to the west and south, though there isn't much resulting traffic within the neighborhood because the back of the neighborhood is bordered by waterfront property on the north and east resulting in dead-end streets. There are six avenues running east to west along with two to three streets running north to south creating a grid street layout. There are mature trees and shrubs throughout most of the neighborhood. In the southeast quadrant of the neighborhood is a small creek surrounded by woods. Additionally, the waterfront maintains its natural boundary with uneven property and shore lines. The net result is a quiet, early twentieth century street car suburb relatively isolated from the busy streets and business corridors outside its boundaries.

### 3. Architectural/Physical Description

Architectural Style(s): Craftsman/Bungalow, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Dutch Revival, Ranch, Late Victorian, Modern Movement, Commercial  
Style \_\_\_\_\_

If any individual properties within the district were designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: None known

If any builders or developers are known, please list here: Campostella Heights Company: developer;

Date(s) of construction (can be approximate): ca 1903-2018

Are there any known threats to this district? Neglect, flooding

#### **Narrative Description:**

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire historic district, such as building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district, as well as typical updates, additions, remodelings, or other alterations that characterize the district.

Campostella Heights is in South Norfolk and is bordered by the Elizabeth River to the North, Steamboat Creek to the east, East Indian River Road to the south, and Campostella Road to the west. The neighborhood primarily consists of single-family dwellings with three churches. There are a handful of noncontributing commercial buildings along the perimeter of the district, which are not incorporated into the boundary. There are a total of 271 primary resources and of those, 243 are contributing resources to the Campostella Heights Historic District.

The neighborhood began developing in the early 1900s with the sale of the land to the Campostella Land Company. The neighborhood was only partially developed by the 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. It was not until after World War II that the neighborhood began to be built out, with the areas south of Mt. Vernon Avenue and east of Sycamore Street not fully developed until the 1960s and 1970s. The streets are laid out in a grid pattern with six avenues running east to west and two streets running north to south. Sycamore Street breaks off from Waltham Street at Canton Avenue and extends northeast for four blocks to account for the natural projection of the neighborhood. Lot sizes are typically 40 x 120 feet, however, there are several dwellings that are constructed on double and triple lots throughout the neighborhood. Parking is generally on-street, or on narrow concrete driveways between the houses. Concrete sidewalks line most residential streets, and large, mature trees and vegetation are scattered throughout the residential area. Individual lots also feature landscaping and planter beds, and concrete walks.

The architectural styles of Campostella Heights are typical of Norfolk neighborhoods of the same period. Dwellings are a mix of one and two-story buildings and have a variety of basic building forms, including American Foursquare, Bungalow, and Cape Cod. The variety of styles is wide-ranging and contains most of the early-to-mid 20th-century styles, including Colonial Revival, Dutch Revival, Folk Victorian, Queen Anne, Shingle, Craftsman, Tudor Revival, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch. The larger and more elaborately styled homes are generally located on the northern end of the district concentrated along Arlington Avenue, Montclair Avenue, and Springfield Avenue. These streets constitute the area that was substantially developed prior to World War II.

Some notable examples of the earlier, robust dwellings located on the northern three avenues include 1721 Arlington Avenue (122-1058) a Shingle Style building that is two-and-a-half stories tall, three bays

wide, and has a combination of wood and masonry stone cladding. The house has a cross-gabled pyramid roof and a corner turret. There is a similar example of a late Victorian Era dwelling at 1820 Montclair Avenue (122-6237). This building is a large, three-story, wood-frame Queen Anne-style dwelling with a hipped roof, several hipped dormers, and another corner turret. The house at 1720 Montclair Avenue (122-1073) is a notable example of Dutch Colonial Revival Style, it is a two-story, wood frame dwelling with a side gambrel roof and a full-width shed dormer. 1824 Springfield Avenue is a 1.5-story, wood frame craftsman-style bungalow with a front gabled roof and features craftsman-style elements such as exposed rafter tails, and large stone porch piers.

On the southern side of the neighborhood, the dwellings are generally smaller and include Tudor Revival, Ranch, Craftsman, and Minimal Traditional. An example of Tudor Revival influenced house can be found at 1904 Princeton Avenue. This is a smaller, two-story dwelling with an irregular shape and front gabled roof. Its diverse front gabled features and asymmetrical façade are typical of the Tudor Revival style. The houses along Princeton and Canton Avenues were constructed in the years following World War II with a mixture of vernacular styles taking a variety of different forms. 1817 Canton Avenue is a typical example of the Cape Cod-style houses found in the southern section of the neighborhood. This building is a one-and-a-half-story dwelling with three symmetrical bays, a brick porch with square posts, and the tow from gabled dormers typical of the Cape Cod style. Many of the other houses in this area are constructed with similar massing and heights but with other Colonial Revival and Eclectic influences. Another common plan is the elaborated shotgun. These houses are front-gabled with three bays and a long rectangular plan that is considerably larger than the typical shotgun house. These homes also often have distinct porches constructed with brick, stone, or wood. Scattered throughout these streets are vernacular bungalows with large either shed or front-gabled dormers and continuous brick foundations,

On the block bound by Mt Vernon Avenue, Campos Place, and East Indian River Road, the houses are of similar design and were constructed in 1963 or later. These houses are typically one-story, three-bay, rectangular plan dwellings with a front gable roof, shotgun plans, and Minimal Traditional styling. This block is much more homogenous than the other parts of the neighborhood. The location of this block is consistent with the southward trend of development and it constitutes the southernmost block of the neighborhood as well as its youngest housing stock.

There are three churches within the Campostella Heights neighborhood. The Morning Star United Holy Church (1801 Princeton Avenue, 122-0983) was constructed ca. 1921 and expanded ca. 1928 it is a wood-frame Vernacular church with asbestos siding on the main church, vinyl siding on the addition. It retains its historic four-over-four and six-over-six wooden sash windows. Campostella Heights Seventh Day Adventist Church (1006 Oakwood Street, 122-1062) was constructed ca. 1950 and is a front gable church clad in common bond brick and features stepped buttresses at the corners. The Metropolitan AME Zion Church and Community Education Center (122-6261), located at 1710 Springfield Avenue, was constructed early in the neighborhood's development, first appearing on the 1928 Sanborn map By 1962 the current additions were present and the church had reached its current form. In the parking lot to the west of the church there used to be a community bank until at least 1971. This is the largest of the three churches and is constructed of reinforced concrete clad with a mixture of American bond, stretcher bond, and a modified Flemish bond brick veneer.

The neighborhood contains a diverse array of residential building materials including brick or brick veneer, wood, asbestos, aluminum, and vinyl. Roof materials are generally asphalt shingles, although a few dwellings have asbestos, standing-seam metal, or composite shingles. Common alterations include replacement vinyl windows and metal doors, roof material, siding material, and secondary additions. These alterations, usually, do not detract from the overall character and form, and most properties retain a majority of the seven aspects of integrity. Overall, the neighborhood retains strong integrity in the areas of

location, design, setting, feeling, and association. The neighborhood also has good integrity in regards to workmanship and materials.

Discuss the district's general setting and/or streetscapes, including current property uses (and historic uses if different), such as industrial, residential, commercial, religious, etc. For rural historic districts, please include a description of land uses.

The general setting of the Campostella Heights Historic District is much as it was when development first began in the early twentieth century. The streetscapes feature sidewalks, traditional housing types and mature trees and vegetation. As has been true throughout its history, the only property use has been residential combined with a small number of churches.

#### 4. District's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the district, such as when it was established, how it developed over time, and significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.) Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.

If the district is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

#### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Campostella Heights Historic District in Norfolk, Virginia is locally significant under Criterion A (Social History: Civil Rights) as a good example of the legal housing discrimination which was embedded into the new form of suburban development that expanded across the United States with the emergence of streetcars. The neighborhood also highlights the chronologically and developmentally uneven history of housing desegregation in the mid-twentieth century. Additionally, Campostella Heights is locally significant under Criterion A (Community Planning and Development) as an excellent example of an early streetcar suburb in the City of Norfolk. The development of the neighborhood demonstrates the evolution of housing types and lot configurations seen with early twentieth century streetcar suburbs, while later housing with larger lots featuring driveways and garages shows the dramatic effect of the displacement of streetcars by automobiles. Additionally, with its street grid, platting, and housing configuration completely intact from its original late nineteenth century platting and early housing construction, the neighborhood has strong integrity of location, design, setting, feeling and association. The Period of Significance for the district begins ca. 1903 with the earliest housing construction and ends in 1973 as the neighborhood became fully integrated and housing development filled most of the remaining parcels with dwellings reflecting the evolution from a streetcar suburb to a racially-integrated, automobile dependent neighborhood.

#### Campostella Heights

During the Civil War the land which makes up Campostella Heights (and the larger Campostella area) was named Camp Stella by Confederate Captain Fred Wilson, who organized a company of soldiers and had them encamped on the site. This camp was named Camp Stella after Wilson's oldest daughter's first name. Captain Wilson died in 1876 and his land was eventually sold to developers, who then added the middle 'o' to the name. Wilson also built the original Campostella Bridge which evolved through many iterations before becoming today's six-lane modern bridge between the north and south sections of the City of Norfolk.

According to the 1900 Bowman's Atlas, the area which would become Campostella Heights was already platted into individual parcels by that time, and labeled as Woodward's Plan. However, a revised plat from 1903 shows roughly the current street and parcel configuration and reflects the plans of the newly formed Campostella Heights Company. The Campostella Heights Co. had purchased the seventy-six-acre Woodward Farm (formerly known as the Wilson place) for \$80,000. An April 6, 1902 article describes the development as being set aside for a suburban site with only residences; no factories or industries allowed. The goal of the developers was to make this "the ne plus ultra of all properties for residential sites along Elizabeth River in Norfolk County." The future community is highlighted as lying equidistant between the two cities of Norfolk and Berkley, with either reached in five minutes by street railway, also called an electric car line. The particular line which served Campostella Heights was called out as the Norfolk branch of the Berkley Street Railway near the Campostella Bridge. With the electric streetcar being first used nationally in Richmond, Virginia in 1887, streetcar suburbs such as this were still a relatively new concept allowing development much further outside the traditional core of existing cities.

The same article details the planning for the development with the entire site graded and divided into lots and streets, with streets and driveways paved and sidewalks made of Granolithic and stone curbing. Additional improvements included a complete sewerage system, electric lights, and a water supply for the entire community. Parcels were originally laid out with forty feet of frontage and one hundred twenty feet deep; while some lots retain this size, many are wider to accommodate driveways, and a few are more narrow. The owners of parcels along the half mile of Elizabeth River frontage and quarter mile of Steamboat Creek frontage were deeded riparian rights.

Unfortunately, while Campostella Heights was an outstanding example of an early twentieth century planned streetcar suburb, it was also a terrible but typical example of the racial prejudices and housing segregation that was the *de jure* (legally enforced) and *de facto* (“by fact” rather than legally required) reality of that time. Among the things that the neighborhood was not going to be, was “flooded with Afro-American settlements and the nearest colored residents are something like half a mile away.” Comparably undesirable, it was declared that “no intoxicating liquors are sold in this section and none will be allowed to be sold,” which was to be added to the neighborhood charter. Finally, it was clearly stated that “none of the lots are to be sold to colored people...” Even more insidious, an announcement of the beginning of lot sales trumpeted that “one of the most desirable features about the property is that there is a 20-year restriction against African descendency owning or residing on the property...”

Sales for the Campostella lots began in July of 1902, and the first three lots were sold by early August bringing in \$2,600. Additionally, to maintain housing quality, and potentially demographic makeup, there was a pricing floor on new houses. With the installation of water, sewer, electricity and gas delayed until “there is a demand,” construction of homes started slowly. There are accounts of residents occupying homes by 1903, though the 1921 Sanborns show only a few dozen completed dwellings. Even by the 1928 Sanborn map, fewer than half of the lots were developed. By the mid-twentieth century the neighborhood had filled in with most lots either developed or combined into larger parcels. The exception was some of the parcels south of Canton Avenue and along Sycamore and Arlington Streets to the north and east. Many of these remained undeveloped into the 1960s and 1970s.

The reality of housing segregation in the area continued until well after World War II with a 1952 article entitled “House Sales To Negroes Draw Protest” highlighting the angry resistance to integrating neighborhoods. The article specifically addresses two parcels in the 1600 block of Indian River Road, just outside Campostella Heights to the southwest. Approximately two hundred residents of the neighboring Campostella area met to protest the sale and request that the seller, W. Calvin Etheridge be charged with “improper dealing.” Ironically, by 1968 an article in the *Norfolk Ledger-Star* discussed “Homeowners in the predominantly Negro Campostella Heights neighborhood...” revealing a rapid desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1970s, Campostella Heights became a racially integrated community, which was largely united in preserving the residential character of the neighborhood. In the late 1960s the residents successfully fought off an attempt to build a hotel and marina at the northern edge of the neighborhood and had the Planning Commission rezone the neighborhood land to single-family dwellings.

A 1978 article merely described the area as a “working-class neighborhood...almost two-thirds of the homes are resident-owned.” A longtime white resident declared that “When we first came, there was no curbing, no sewage system, no nothing. The neighborhood at that time from Colon Avenue was all white. Colored was on the other side. Relations was always good, though, that’s why I never moved.” The same article stated that the neighborhood was predominantly white “until the mid-’60s when blacks moved in and caused a panic of whites selling their homes.” Another longtime white resident declared that “I’ve been here about 20 years. I didn’t want to move out. This place is quiet and friendly. What little trouble we do have is from the hippies who come in here.”

Campostella Heights is an excellent example of an early, but evolved, Norfolk, Virginia streetcar suburb which retains its entire original platted street plan with a POS from the earliest homes (ca 1903) to the later developed parcels (ca 1973). A significant majority of the dwellings are original and contributing resources to any potential historic district. While there are examples of infill, and many homes have some updated exterior materials, most retain strong integrity of design and workmanship. The district is estimated to have 243 Contributing as opposed to 28 Non-contributing resources. Additionally, Campostella Heights tells the familiar and difficult story of housing discrimination, and eventual desegregation in American suburbs.

### **Criterion A: Social History: Civil Rights**

In 1948 the Supreme Court ruled in *Shelley v Kraemer* that racially restrictive housing covenants were unenforceable, and derived the argument from the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause: "restrictive agreements, standing alone, cannot be regarded as violative of any rights guaranteed to petitioners by the Fourteenth Amendment." Twenty years later Congress passed the Fair Housing Act in 1968 which made illegal "discrimination of sale, rental, and financing of dwellings and other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion..." Together these changes in the law eliminated de jure housing segregation, and began to address the realities of de facto segregation in the housing market. However, Campostella Heights was developed beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was a clear example of the housing policies which led to *Shelley v Kraemer* and the Fair Housing Act. The Campostella Heights Company in sales advertisement stated that "none of the lots are to be sold to colored people..." At the beginning of sales it was also announced that "one of the most desirable features about the property is that there is a 20-year restriction against African descendancy owning or residing on the property..." A 1952 article entitled "House Sales To Negroes Draw Protest" described two hundred residents assembling to protest the potential sale of two houses to African Americans, highlighting the strong resistance to desegregating neighborhoods fifty years after Campostella Heights was first developed. While Campostella Heights was fully integrated, and saw a reported shift in the demographic composition to a Black majority by 1968, the story of the development of the neighborhood and its history for over half a century is one of segregated housing. From the mid-twentieth century forward, the history of Campostella Heights is one largely of desegregation and successful integration of the community.

### **Criterion A: Community Planning and Development**

While there were early suburbs developed around horse transportation (for suburbs close to the city) or railroads (for communities much further out from the city core), the street car revolutionized the development of, and access to, neighborhoods outside the city. The first electrical streetcar was established in Richmond, Virginia in 1887 and the concept of the "streetcar suburb" was established. These streetcars extended into formerly rural areas (such as the former Camp Stella) and often joined together formerly separate communities (such as Norfolk and what was then then independent town of Berkley). The less expensive land outside the cities, and the readily available transportation back to the jobs in the cities led to an increase in home ownership, particularly for the white middleclass. Reflecting its status as an early streetcar suburb, Campostella Heights features narrow lots, often without driveways or garages. The house styles often seen nationally in these suburbs (Bungalow, Foursquare) are also common in Campostella Heights, as are the inclusion of front porches on most early houses. Later houses embrace Colonial Revival styles. One aspect now largely lost at Campostella Heights is the collection of businesses which were built to serve the new neighborhood and were established along Campostella Road. Streetcar use began to decline in the mid-1920s with the growth in automobile ownership, and later Campostella dwellings reflect this with larger lots incorporating driveways and garages. By the 1950s streetcars had almost entirely been replaced by buses and automobiles.

### **Bibliography**

*Vertical Aerial Survey Photograph*, 1937, FG 115-062, -063, Norfolk County, VA.

*Campostella Heights*. Preliminary Information Form. Completed by Hanbury Evans Newill Vlattas & Company. 1996.

Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority. *Conservation Plan for the Campostella Heights Conservation Project*. Norfolk, VA: NRHA and City of Norfolk, 2000.

Parramore, Thomas C., Peter C. Stewart, Tommy L. Bogger. *Norfolk, The First Four Centuries*. Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1995.

Schlegel, Marvin W. *Conscripted City, Norfolk in World War II*. Norfolk, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Company, Inc., 1991.

*Virginian-Pilot*, various.

Wertenbaker, Thomas J. and Marvin W. Schlegel. *Norfolk, Historic Southern Port*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1962.

## **Maps**

*Atlas of Norfolk, Portsmouth and Berkely, Virginia* (Norfolk, VA: Sam W. Bowman: 1900).

*Amended Plat of Campostella Heights*: Norfolk, VA: 1920, map book 17, page 7, 8, sheet 3830-31.

*Amended Plat of Blocks A, B, C, D, E, I, J, K, L and M, Campostella Heights*: Norfolk, VA: 1910, map book 10, page 21, sheet 3548.

*Campostella Heights*, Norfolk, VA: 1903, map book 5, page 86, sheet 3297.

*Campostella Heights*, Norfolk, VA: 1903, map book 5, page 87, sheet 3298.

*Map of Campostello*. Norfolk, VA, 1881, map book 1, page 12, sheet 3005.

*Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*.



**5. Property Ownership** (Check as many categories as apply):Private: X Public\Local \_\_\_\_\_ Public\State \_\_\_\_\_ Public\Federal \_\_\_\_\_**6. Applicant/Sponsor** (Individual and/or organization sponsoring preparation of the PIF, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: City of Norfolk  
 organization: Office of the City Manager  
 street & number: 810 Union Street, Suite 1101  
 city or town: City of Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23510  
 e-mail: citymgr@norfolk.gov telephone: 757-664-4242

Applicant's Signature:  Date: 8/3/2023 | 12:44 PM PDT

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Patrick Roberts, City Manager  
 Daytime Telephone: 757-664-4242

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than applicant/sponsor listed above)

name/title: Marcus Pollard, historian; Erica Howard; Jack Galle  
 organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group  
 street & number: 536 W 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
 city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23508  
 e-mail: marcus@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com telephone: 757-651-0494  
 Date: 6/9/2023

**7. Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager.

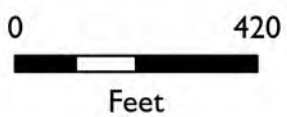
name/title: Patrick Roberts, City Manager  
 locality: City of Norfolk  
 street & number: 810 Union Street, Suite 1101  
 city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23510  
 telephone: 757-664-4242



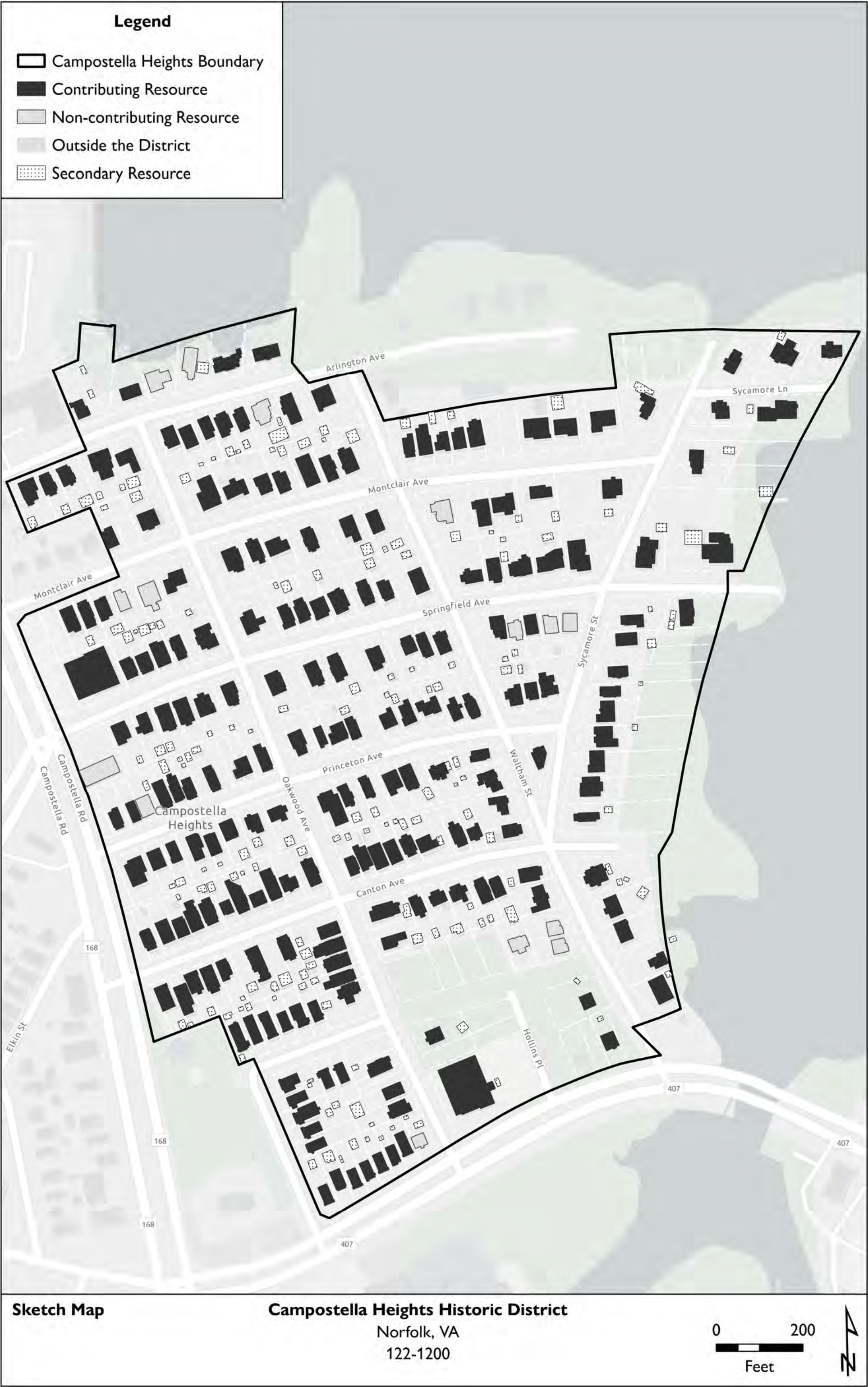


**Location Map**

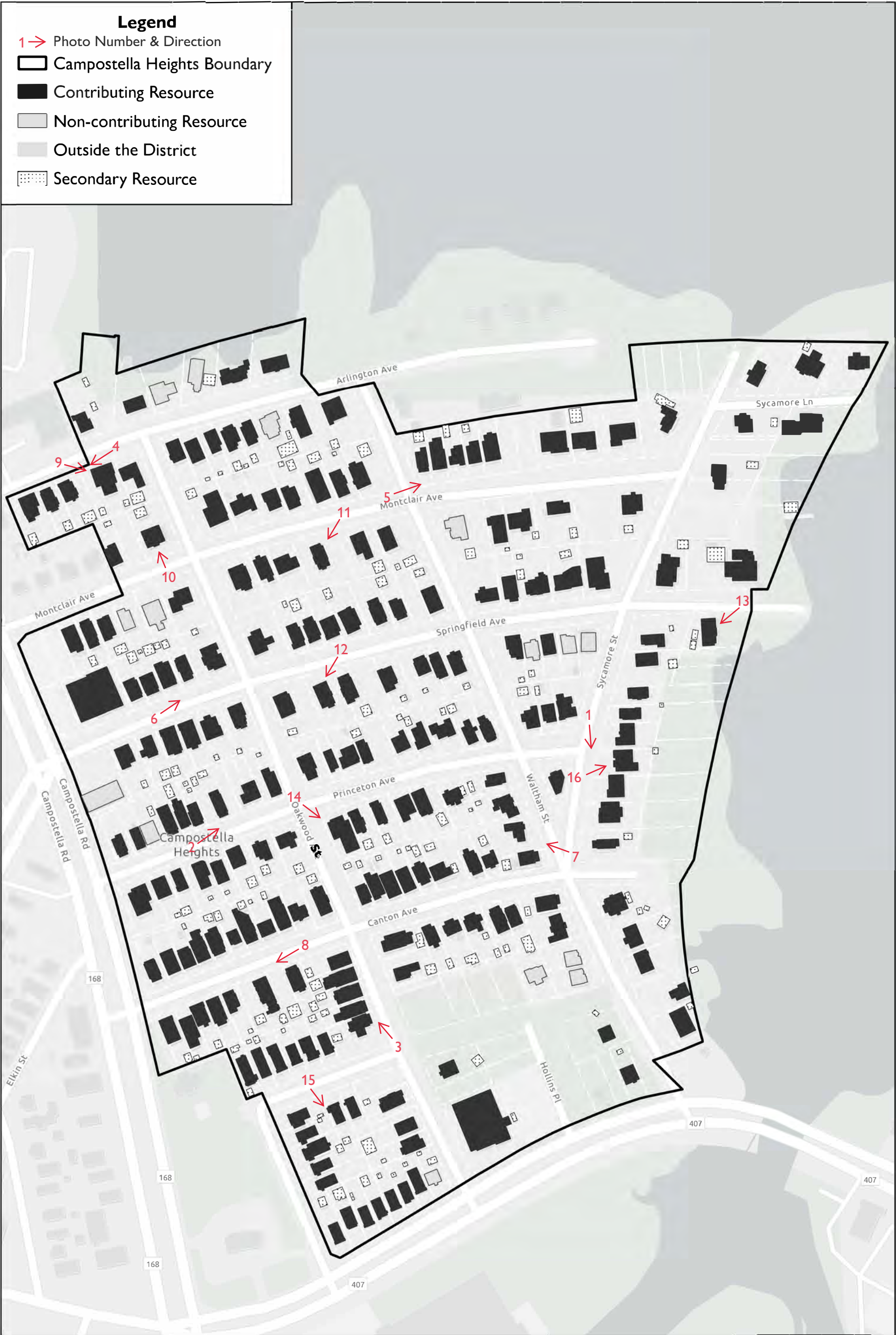
**Campostella Heights Historic District**  
Norfolk, Virginia  
122-1200





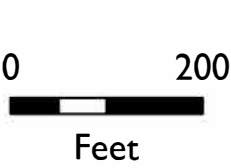






**Photo Key**

**Campostella Heights Historic District**  
Norfolk, VA  
122-1200







Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_01\_Sycamore\_Street\_View\_SE





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_02\_Princeton\_Avenue\_View\_NE



Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_03\_Corner\_Oakwood\_St\_and\_Mt\_Vernon\_Ave\_View\_NW





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_04\_Arlington\_Avenue\_View\_SW





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_05\_Corner\_Montclair\_Avenue\_and\_Waltham\_St\_View\_NE



Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_06\_Springfield\_Avenue\_View\_NE





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_07\_Intersection\_Waltham\_&\_Sycamore\_at\_Canton\_View\_NW



Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_08\_Canton\_Avenue\_View\_SW





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_09\_1721\_Arlington\_Ave\_View\_SE





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_10\_1720\_Montclair\_Avenue\_View\_N





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_11\_1815\_Montclair\_Avenue\_View\_SW





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_12\_1807\_Springfield\_Avenue\_View\_SW





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_13\_Springfield\_Avenue\_View\_SW





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_14\_1801\_Princeton\_Avenue\_Morning\_Star\_UHC\_View\_SE





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_15\_1729\_Mt\_Vernon\_Avenue\_View\_SE





Campostella\_Heights\_Historic\_District\_2023\_16\_716\_Sycamore\_Street\_View\_E