

# The Path Forward

Sustaining Chesterfield County's  
Older Communities



Preparing for Future  
Generations

# The Path Forward

Prepared by

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## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

New growth and development has long been the dominant issue that has defined Chesterfield County. However, Chesterfield County is no longer a new suburban community. The median age of the county's single-family housing stock is now 23 years. Several commercial buildings stand vacant and require redevelopment. Several neighborhoods have large numbers of houses that require substantial rehabilitation.

Increasingly, the challenge for the county is to sustain the health of its older commercial and residential areas. This challenge is not confined to its buildings and physical infrastructure. As communities age, the social and demographic characteristics of the population begin to change. In



Vacant Cloverleaf Mall



House Requiring Rehabilitation

America today, there are more people living under the poverty line in suburban neighborhoods than in central cities. Demographers project that the suburban poverty rate will continue to increase while the urban rate will stabilize or decline. In Chesterfield County, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates in 2007 that there were 5.2 percent to 6.6 percent of County residents living under the poverty line compared to 4.5 percent in the year 2000. The city of Richmond poverty rate of 21.4 percent in the year 2000 was estimated to be 18.9 percent to 21.7 percent in 2007.

The purpose of this report is to provide recommendations on programs that can help Chesterfield County sustain its older communities. Actions undertaken across Virginia by local governments were analyzed for their potential applications in

Chesterfield County. In addition, national studies and several national programs have demonstrated success and were critically reviewed.

No single program will arrest blight and decline. However, combining active citizen and business initiatives with targeted government programs guided by community based planning can significantly improve the economic health and quality of life in older communities.

The recommended new or expanded initiatives are organized as follows:

1. Programs that help citizens and community groups help themselves
2. Expansion or re-emphasis of existing government programs
3. Development of new government programs

## **Strengthen Community Ability to Self Help**

- Continue providing planning assistance to residents and community organizations
- Provide professional staff assistance and community-leadership training to community organizations
- Prepare a housing-modernization and improvement pattern book for older homes
- Expand neighborhood cleanup efforts



Enterprise Zone on Jefferson Davis Highway

## **Improve Existing Government Programs**

- Expand Proactive Code Enforcement
- Target county physical and social resources and nonprofit funds to critical communities
- Enhance school programs and physical facilities serving older communities
- Focus private and public resources on housing rehabilitation
- Expand community policing and safety design



## **Develop New Government Programs**

- Develop county program to redevelop select blighted properties
- Construct streetscape improvements on key community corridors

## **THE DETAILED REPORT**

The following sections of this report present an outline of Chesterfield County's efforts to address the improvement of its older communities and prevent blight and deterioration. These include programs and major studies recommending actions the county should take. A review of successful national programs and research applicable to Chesterfield County is presented along with a review of programs and initiatives undertaken by Virginian communities facing similar challenges. This report recommends programs and initiatives that Chesterfield County should undertake to maintain the health and vitality of its older communities.

## **CHESTERFIELD TODAY**

Chesterfield County has made a substantial beginning in addressing the decline and deterioration of its older communities. Community plans were prepared beginning in the late 1980s focusing on improving communities that have blight issues. Residents and business leaders of the Village of Ettrick, Village of Chester, the Jefferson Davis Highway Corridor (Route 1), Meadowbrook/Meadowdale Area, and Eastern Midlothian Turnpike Area established community organizations as plans were prepared for their communities. Many new programs, such as an enterprise zone, proactive code enforcement, streetscape improvements, new development and blight removal, were identified through these planning efforts and implemented over time.



Winchester Greens Neighborhood  
Jefferson Davis Highway Corridor

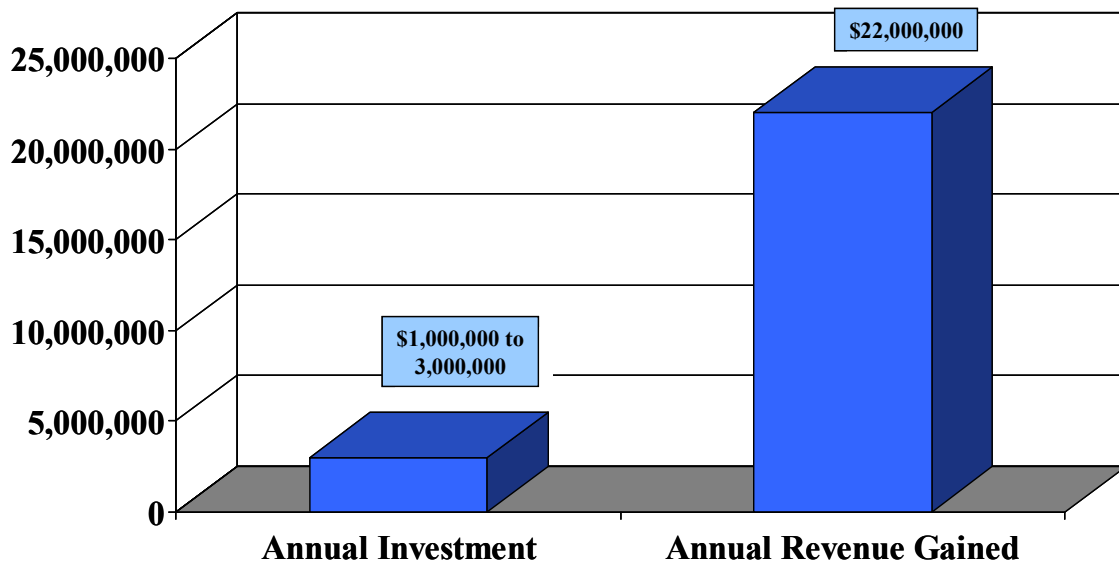
For example, a 2008 study of the revitalization efforts and results of the Jefferson Davis Highway Corridor documented the improvements within the study area. Major crime was down 11 percent over the last seven years, while the countywide rate increased 8 percent. The value of existing homes in the corridor increased by 122% from 1993 through 2007. This is a greater increase in assessed value than experienced countywide.

The Police Department began a community policing program in the late 1980s. This program has assigned police officers to work directly with community organizations and residents in Ettrick, Meadowdale, Jefferson Davis and Route 60, as well as the Cloverleaf Mall and Chesterfield Towne Center, and the Bermuda Run area.

In 1998, the Planning Department established an ongoing countywide database that provides key indicators of the economic and social health of 25 county communities.

A report by the Neighborhood Strategy Team, composed of Chesterfield County department directors in 2000, concluded that a comprehensive revitalization program would reduce the cost of blight and deterioration by more than seven times the cost of this program; saving taxpayers approximately \$20 million per year. See the chart below.

### **Annual Projected Investment vs. Revenue Gained in Year 2020**



The major recommendations of the Neighborhood Strategy Team, along with the current status of these recommendations, are shown below.

Recommendation	Status
Blight Eradication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopt a blight ordinance</li> <li>▪ Initiate a demolition program</li> <li>▪ Mobile home improvement strategy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Inspection program</li> <li>○ Redevelop worst trailer courts</li> <li>○ Improve parks through zoning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Yes  Yes  Yes  One Underway  Denied by Virginia General Assembly
Proactive code enforcement	Yes, 2 inspectors added in 2009; now 6 (4 Building Inspections, 2 Planning)
Community support teams	No
Ordinance amendments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commercial/Industrial Rehabilitation tax incentive</li> <li>▪ Residential Rehabilitation tax incentive</li> </ul>	Yes Yes
Identify and develop focal points	minimal–Chester and Cloverleaf
Advertise county’s 25 communities	Yes
Landscaping/streetscape improvements along major roads and gateways	Projects underway along Routes 1 and 60
Expand community policing	No
Commercial and Industrial zoning revisions – greater use flexibility	No

In 2004, the county purchased Cloverleaf Mall with the intent of redeveloping the site to stimulate private investment and improvement in the Eastern Midlothian Turnpike corridor. A developer has been recruited. Zoning and plans have been approved, and construction is scheduled for 2010. In 2005, the county established a Revitalization Office.



Proposed Stonebridge Development  
Old Cloverleaf Mall



Revitalization staff assists community organizations with preparing community improvement plans and implementing projects.

In 2006, the Board of Supervisors established a new committee, the Sustain Our Communities Committee, to provide analysis and advice on the revitalization of aging communities. In 2009, the Board of Supervisors expanded the county's proactive property inspection program.

## THE NATIONAL EXPERIENCE

A recent survey of urban scholars ranked the deterioration of the older suburban areas as one of the most likely influences on metropolitan America for the next 50 years. The Brookings Institute report, *A Fifth of America*, issued in 2006, observed that these suburban areas are "struggling with the unexpected and often unrecognized problems that demand new solutions and leadership." The Brookings Institute authors concluded that older suburban jurisdictions needed to "provide more apartments and assisted living for the elderly, integrate the influx of immigrants, promote business development, and combat poverty and blight."

What is happening in America's suburban communities? Similar to the experience of American city neighborhoods, scholar Goran Cars describes suburban decline. As the community ages,

"... the neighborhood becomes less safe and secure. Those who are better off socially and economically move from the area. They are replaced by people with fewer resources. The number of people with social problems increases. The area is caught in a vicious cycle of decline."

New development is difficult in these blighted areas. Developers perceive projects to be very risky while projects on the suburban edge are less risky and easier. As the University of Virginia's William Lucy and David Phillips have observed, "Land development outcomes can be a product of what is easy to accomplish rather than a product of what consumers prefer."

There is no program or formula to successfully maintain the health of older communities. Each neighborhood and wider community has unique assets and issues. However, successful community revitalization and blight prevention efforts frequently include the following key elements:

- Partnership between local residents, businesses and government
  - Empower local resident and business leadership.
  - Provide staff support to community organizations.
  - Plan, then be action-oriented



Manchester Middle School

- Attract new development at key locations, and improve major streetscapes
  - Redevelop blighted property.
  - Provide incentives to attract private development.
- Enforce community maintenance standards through proactive code enforcement
- County government to provide financial assistance
  - An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
  - Don't wait for the federal or state government.
  - Redevelopment pays increased taxes that can assist redevelopment (CDAs, TIFs).
- Schools --- attracting families require successful schools

## FINANCING REVITALIZATION

The federal government provides funds to local governments for a variety of housing and social service programs. Unfortunately, these programs do not assist local governments in their efforts to prevent blight and sustain their older residential and commercial areas. The Community Development Block Grant, or CDBG, program, a major initiative of the Federal Housing and Urban Development Department focuses on low-income resident programs and improvements in existing blighted areas. Strict census-tract criteria are used to require funds to be spent on low-income residents or in low-income geographic areas.

Professor Thomas Bier of Cleveland State University said bluntly at a Brookings Institute conference on May 24, 2001: "It's absurd. Until you are a slum, their attitude is "We're not going to help you."

Enterprise Zones adopted by many states have resulted in significant new economic reinvestment in older commercial corridors.

Chesterfield County has successfully attracted more than \$475 million of new investment along the Route 1 Corridor through state and local economic incentives. However, in Virginia, no significant resources are available at the state level to assist in stabilizing and sustaining older residential areas. Virginia has established a Revitalization Zone Program that is intended to provide state financial assistance to owners, who will revitalize their properties if the local government will provide infrastructure and development incentives. However, to date, Virginia has provided no funding for this program.

Therefore, unless federal or state efforts change, the initiative for addressing blight prevention falls to the local government. Many suburban government jurisdictions, with principally older residential business areas, are consequently developing a wide variety of initiatives and partnerships with the private and nonprofit sectors to counter the forces of deterioration and



Enterprise Zone Revitalization

decline. However, some suburban jurisdictions continue to face historic growth issues of building infrastructure and public facilities for a growing population as well as the recent and ominous trend of increasing blight and deterioration. As Robert E. Lang from the Virginia Tech Metropolitan Institute observed, "The old division of city and suburbs doesn't hold up anymore." Now, "...the more important divide is older and newer suburb."

## TEN PRINCIPLES FOR REVITALIZING INNER-RING SUBURBS

The following summarizes the findings from national symposiums and forums sponsored by the Urban Land Institute.

### 1. Empower Local

#### Leadership

- Encourage community dialogue and grass-roots involvement in decision making
- Forge coalitions and partnerships among the for-profit, nonprofit and the public sectors
- Build leadership and consensus through local neighborhood-based organizations
- Have a stated and shared goal
- Create a rational and exciting vision of the future and provide dramatic and extensive visual, physical, and verbal portrayals of the future



Sustain Our Communities Committee Meeting

### 2. Be Competitive

- Build on "location, location, location" as a key asset
- Remodel aging housing stock
- Make your community clean and safe

### 3. Find a Niche/Attraction/Market/or Purpose

- Build from strengths and be what you are. Use the competitive advantages of location and exploit any special characteristics
- Explore transit-adjacent development projects
- Use historic preservation strategies to advance economic development
- Consider heritage tourism as a magnet

### 4. Create Opportunity, Stability, and Diversity

- Homeownership strengthens community. Facilitate homeownership and business ownership so that interests are deeply vested

- Promote mixed-income housing in exurbs to take some of burden away from inner-ring communities
- Encourage infill that fits with the architectural context of the neighborhood
- Create affordable housing opportunities

5. Strengthen Schools to Achieve Balance

- By whatever means necessary, provide the best schools and best teachers
- Work with the local real estate board to counteract "steering" and adopt a fair housing ordinance that legally requires an open community
- Devise ways to attract and retain middle-income families
- Consider school district tax-base sharing
- Help schools from the outside



Meadowbrook High School  
Cogbill Road

6. Incentivize the Private Sector

- Recruit multiple participants: one person, one agency, one project is rarely enough



ChesterFest on Chester Village Green  
Library in the background

- Government should assist in land assembly
- Political will must be strong to withstand local objections
- Use inducements such as training grants, favorable zoning, tax abatements and tax increment financing districts to reduce the private sector's risk.
- Eliminate bureaucratic red tape and expedite development through "green tape"
- Relax some development controls
- Lead in building public support and consensus

7. Maintain and Strengthen Infrastructure

- Sewer, power lines, bridges, roads and highways must be kept in good repair, costly though this.
- Provide extraordinary public safety



8. Embrace Smart Growth Principles
  - Build mixed-use, mixed-income communities that are less automobile-dependent
  - Establish growth zones with incentives to develop in the zone
  - Encourage higher density through policy and practice
  - Make places and spaces where people can congregate
  
9. Think and Act Regionally
  - Consider pooling property and sales tax bases among neighboring communities
  - Promote sharing of resources through some form of tax-base sharing to ensure equitable distribution of larger regional assets throughout a region
  - Form governance structures that support cooperation for inner-ring suburbs to solve issues together
  - Work toward regional approaches to affordable housing and economic development policy
  - Participate in regional visioning processes and develop a plan that stakeholders buy for coordination of land use and transportation policies
  
10. Be Results Oriented by Asking the Right Questions
  - Has the quality of life been improved?
  - Will the deal pencil out and prove financially sound so the return on investment pays off?
  - Has the public sector properly set the stage for private investment to help minimize the risk?
  - Is the revitalization sustainable? Does it possess permanence and is it self-supporting? Ultimately, a project is economically sustainable only if beneficial private investments are made.

## HOUSING REHABILITATION

The centerpiece of most neighborhood revitalization projects is a housing rehabilitation program



Post World War II House in Chesterfield County

aimed at repairing and modernizing the existing housing stock. As housing structures age, it is likely that major housing elements will deteriorate and the house design will become dated and less functional for the modern household. An increase of housing deterioration with the age of the structure is expected however, this is not the case. A study of more than 3,400 suburban communities found that neighborhoods with housing built between 1950 and 1969 exhibited the highest extent of deterioration. New neighborhoods and older neighborhoods

with houses built before 1939, were more affluent and in better physical condition.

Many of the houses built after World War II were small and of inexpensive construction. Many of these homes were constructed in rural jurisdictions just beyond the central city that lacked



development review experience and development standards that central cities had adopted over time. Therefore, drainage and utility problems often exist, sidewalks and neighborhood parks are missing, and these early suburban subdivisions often lack the design quality of their earlier city neighborhoods.

To combat this, suburban jurisdictions are improving neighborhood infrastructure, building new parks and sidewalks, providing loans, grants, and design advice to improve and modernize older suburban homes.

Chesterfield County has a significant number of its existing housing stock constructed between 1950 and 1969. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Chesterfield County has 14,736 homes constructed between 1950 and 1969 while there is only 3,905 homes built before 1950.

Similar to other suburban jurisdictions across America, Chesterfield County was a rural county undergoing significant urbanization after World War II. Consequently, it lacked quality subdivision and infrastructure standards that resulted in no sidewalks, parks and quality neighborhood design that could have resulted from state-of-the-art standards.

## TARGETED SOCIAL SERVICES

Successful revitalization often requires provision of social and educational services to the residents of neighborhoods where the housing, parks and physical character of the neighborhood is concurrently improving. These programs require solid communication and cooperative development with adult and youth residents. A physical facility, being a community center or similar, should be conveniently located for all residents of the neighborhood to house these services. The specific services offered will vary depending on the issues and priorities of the community, however, youth mentoring, enhanced education and recreational activities are common.



Social Services at Winchester Greens

Internationally, public housing projects in London, England have been undergoing significant revitalization and improvement. Called regeneration, physical improvements in these social housing estates are accompanied by targeted social and educational services to the residents. These efforts are making significant progress in the quality of life for residents. Old Ford Housing Association in northeast London is a 2008 Gold Award Winner for building a cohesive community.

In Chesterfield County, the Better Housing Coalition provides three full-time and two part-time social workers to provide services and activities to youths and parents living in 240 dwelling units and seniors living in 176 dwelling units at the Winchester Greens project. Significant increases in school performance, a reduction of crime, and ability for seniors to age in place have been documented.

## VIRGINIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Successful national programs and research applicable to Chesterfield County has been reviewed and discussed earlier in this document. Virginia local government programs also were analyzed to determine which local governments had successful programs that tackled and addressed issues relating to their older communities. Eight local governments facing similar problems as Chesterfield County were contacted and asked questions about programs and initiatives they have undertaken or are working on to address sustainability. Communities that have proactive code-enforcement programs, which target their Community Development Block Grant funds, have pattern books to address redevelopment and community support teams to assist their citizenry were explored. Information obtained from these communities is documented below.

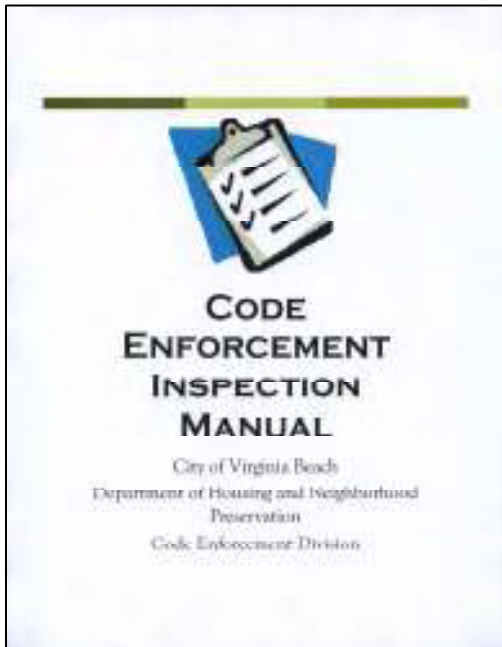
### ANALYSIS OF VIRGINIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

	<b>Chesterfield</b>	<b>Henrico</b>	<b>Richmond</b>	<b>Fairfax County</b>	<b>Prince William</b>	<b>Chesapeake</b>	<b>Hampton</b>	<b>Virginia Beach</b>	<b>Roanoke</b>
Population ( <i>Census Quick Facts</i> )	299,689 as of 2007	289,822 as of 2007	192,913 as of 2006	1,010,241 as of 2007	390,771 as of 2008	223,743 as of 2008	145,017 as of 2006	436,619 as of 2006	91,552 as of 2006
Poverty Rate ( <i>Census Quick Facts</i> )	5.8% as of 2007	8.5% as of 2007	21.4% as of 2000	4.9% as of 2007	5% as of 2007	7.3% as of 2000	11.3% as of 2000	6.5 % as of 2000	1539% as of 2000
Federal Funds (CDBG & HOME)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Target CDBG Funds	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
▪ Leverage Funds	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Housing Rehab Loan/Grant Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rental Rehab Program	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Tax Abatement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pattern Book / Design Services	No	Initiating	No	No	No	No	Yes	Initiating	Yes
Pro-active Code Enforcement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
▪ Pro-active CE Officers	9*	15	32	N/A	N/A	9	11	26	14
Community Support Teams	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
▪ Community Staff Support	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

\* 17 Total staff for zoning code compliance and proactive building-code enforcement

### **Pro-active Code Enforcement**

The majority of the localities listed in the Virginia Local Government Programs table have proactive code- enforcement programs; however, Fairfax and Prince William counties do not. The locality with the most comprehensive program is Virginia Beach. The Code Enforcement Division of the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation maintains the safety and appearance of the city's existing structures and properties through routine inspections throughout the city. The division addresses code violations through enforcement of the Virginia Maintenance Code and the city's property maintenance codes. Code enforcement inspectors respond to complaints about housing and property maintenance code violations. The inspectors patrol their assigned areas for violations, conduct systematic exterior inspections of neighborhoods as needed, notify property owners of violations, and take appropriate legal action to obtain compliance.



Virginia Beach has created a Code Enforcement Inspection Manual. The purpose of the manual is to provide a consistent, uniform process for the inspectors to follow when conducting a full evaluation of a residential structure. This manual also serves as a tool to educate property owners and landlords on what the inspectors look for and check. Virginia Beach has 26 code enforcement officers. These officers attend a minimum of four meetings a month where they address civic, community and real estate groups. They present a PowerPoint presentation on code enforcement and take complaints at the meetings.

On July 1, 2005, in adherence to state law, Virginia Beach established Rental Inspection Districts in which rental dwellings within the designated district are subject to interior inspection upon written notice to the owner. Census block groups were used for designation instead of census tracts. Rental property owners are charged a \$50 fee for a Certificate of Compliance. A certificate exempts a dwelling unit from the rental inspection ordinance for four years.

### **Targeting CDBG Funds**

Chesterfield County and the City of Virginia Beach are the only two localities that do not target Community Development Block Grant funds in their communities. The locality with the most notable and award-winning program is the City of Richmond with its Neighborhoods in Bloom program. In the 1990's, Richmond faced the challenge of revitalizing deteriorating, distressed and older neighborhoods. In the past, the city distributed grant funds across all of its blighted neighborhoods, and it became evident that dollars were being stretched thin and did not address problems effectively.

Richmond developed the Neighborhoods in Bloom, or NiB, program in 1999. It was an aggressive and innovative approach to reversing neighborhood decline and stimulating the private housing market. The program focused most of the city's federal dollars on six neighborhoods. The city also concentrated on building and environmental code compliance in the neighborhoods, fast-tracked the historical review of rehabilitated houses, and made vacant



1600 Block of Decatur Street Before Revitalization

areas decreased by 19 percent, compared to a 6 percent reduction citywide. The NiB strategy, combined with other neighborhood revitalization tools, reversed the physical and economic decline in the targeted neighborhoods and encouraged the return of the private market.



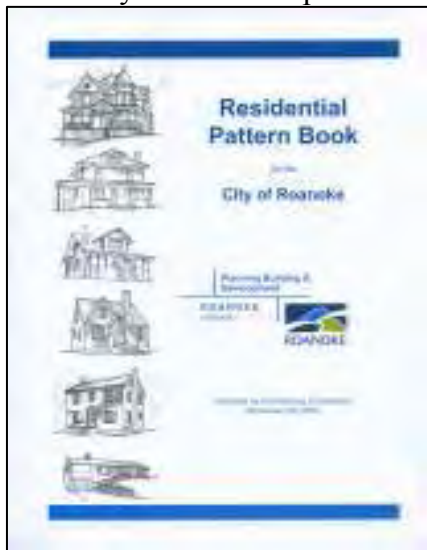
1600 Block of Decatur Street After Revitalization

and abandoned properties a priority for disposition. Average home-sale prices increased citywide after 1996, but housing prices in targeted NiB areas appreciated at a rate of 9.9 percent per year faster than the citywide average. During the first three years of the initiative, crime in the targeted

The NiB program in 2006 was a HUD Secretary’s Opportunity and Empowerment Award winner because of the program’s success and collaborative efforts. Richmond formed partnerships that included community development corporations, financial and educational institutions, and community residents who created a strategy for each neighborhood. These partnerships provided financial and technical resources and facilitated the development of political capital and consensus.

**Pattern Book**

The cities of Hampton and Roanoke currently have pattern books in place. Henrico County’s and Virginia Beach’s design documents are under development. Hampton appears only to have a pattern book for their Buckroe Bayfront area, while Roanoke’s pattern book addresses the entire city. Roanoke’s pattern book was unanimously endorsed by its planning commission on Nov. 20, 2008.



In developing a Residential Pattern Book, the city of Roanoke strives to preserve and enhance the character and quality of its residential neighborhoods. The pattern book is a design aid for new construction and renovation of residential buildings. By exploring the historic development of the city’s existing neighborhoods and residential forms, the Pattern Book aims to guide homeowners, builders and design professionals to appropriate maintenance and design decisions. But most importantly it is intended to instill pride in homeowners and encourage them to preserve the unique character of their homes and neighborhoods. (*Residential Pattern Book for the City of Roanoke, Nov. 2008*)

Roanoke took into account that older homes are admired for their character and charm, but are often passed over by potential buyers in favor of newly constructed homes with modern amenities. With a little vision and creativity, Roanoke’s pattern book suggests that older homes can easily be modernized to today’s standards. Housing layouts can become more open by removing non-load-bearing walls or by converting an attic or basement, which will add considerable square footage. This modernization technique is called “repurposing” space within a home’s existing footprint. The pattern book also addresses additions and new construction in established and historic neighborhoods.

### **Community Support Teams**

The cities of Hampton, Chesapeake, and Roanoke have active community support teams. Out of the three Hampton’s approach to community support excels. Hampton’s Neighborhood Initiative was approved by their City Council in 1994. Its mission is to bring all community resources together into a partnership that will make all Hampton neighborhoods great places to live. People, skills, knowledge and physical places of importance are all key resources that neighborhoods need to succeed and realize their full potential for a better quality of life.

In 1993, the Hampton Neighborhood Office was established to lead and implement the city’s strategic focus on neighborhoods. Staff consults and coach neighborhood leaders and organizations as they move through the process of outreach, organizing, planning and project implementation. A 21-member Neighborhood Commission was appointed by the City Council with representation from neighborhoods, businesses, non-profits, faith-based organizations, schools, city government and youth. The Commission meets monthly and provides leadership, policy guidance and support to the Neighborhoods Initiative.

Hampton’s Neighborhood Office also designed a Neighborhood College for those interested or involved in the city and its neighborhoods. The college offers two different ways to inform and train citizens with the Hampton 101 Series and the Neighborhood College Workshop Series.

### **Community Cleanup**

Henrico County provides a local-government administered neighborhood cleanup program. The program targets neighborhoods for an annual pickup of yard brush and letter, bulk trash, old furniture, and appliances for pickup on the curb on Saturdays. Sixty-two neighborhoods are provided with this service through 31 weekends in the spring, summer and fall. Pickups are scheduled once a week on Saturdays, with county staff providing marketing and administration of the program.



Youth of Ettrick Participating in Clean Up Day



## **RECOMMENDED COUNTY PROGRAMS TO SUSTAIN OLDER COMMUNITIES**

After analyzing programs across the United States and detailed benchmarking with jurisdictions within Virginia, the following county programs should be expanded and new programs instituted as a funding priority:

### **Strengthen Community Ability to Self Help**

#### Provide Community Support Teams

Community organizations can be significantly more effective if they have talented staff support to carry out work assignments. Paid professional assistance or volunteer retired professionals should be provided to community organizations demonstrating a strong record of accomplishment and potential for greater effectiveness. This program was recommended by the Neighborhood Strategy Team in 2000. Hampton provides an excellent model for program development.

The Revitalization Office's program of assisting community organizations with visioning and developing community improvement plans should be continued.

The county should establish a community leaders college to provide leadership and effectiveness skills to present and future community leaders.

#### Prepare a housing modernization and improvement pattern book

A housing pattern book illustrating typical Chesterfield County house styles and ideas to modernize these older houses will assist homeowners in home improvements. This will increase the desirability of older communities. The City of Norfolk pattern book is an excellent example.

#### Neighborhood Cleanup Program

Several county neighborhoods organize an annual cleanup day to remove neighborhood trash and yard waste. Many older neighborhoods would significantly benefit from an annual cleanup but lack the skill and organization to conduct a cleanup. A county program to assist neighborhoods in an annual cleanup should be modeled after the Henrico county program.

### **Improve Existing Government Programs**

#### Expand Proactive Code Enforcement

Proactive building and zoning enforcement should be extended to all neighborhoods showing early signs of decline (increasing rental of single family homes, lagging housing assessment value, and increase in crime rate). Code officers should actively work with neighborhood organizations to set enforcement priorities and develop effective neighborhood communication. According to the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Center of Performance Measurement, Chesterfield County in fiscal 2007 spent \$2 per capita on code enforcement compared to the national average of \$5.32 per capita. In July 2009, Chesterfield County added additional pro-active code enforcement officers to the previous three building and property maintenance inspectors.

### Target county and nonprofit funds to critical communities

Chesterfield County's Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program, transportation enhancement grants, and a significant portion of capital improvement program funds should be targeted to selected areas to reverse deterioration and stimulate private investment in these older areas. Other appropriate programs should be considered for concentration in select areas. Targeted social services, youth programs, and youth and adult training classes also are important to assist residents in their improvement. The city of Richmond's Neighborhoods in Bloom program and the Winchester Greens project provide excellent models for the development of this program.

### Enhance school programs and physical facilities serving older communities

Updated school buildings and facilities are critical to attracting families to purchase homes and reside in older neighborhoods. School performance and reputation also are key in maintaining and recruiting families to live in older Chesterfield neighborhoods. Test scores provide parents with a common measure of school performance, however, other benefits of older community schools (i.e. cultural diversity programs, extra-curricular opportunities in art or science) needs to be marketed to realtors and citizens. Student mentoring programs have been effectively implemented in several lower-income neighborhood schools and should be supported and expanded.

### Focus private and public resources on housing rehabilitation

Major attention and new approaches will be required to finance the rehabilitation and repair of the county's aging housing stock. Private banks and financial institutions will need to provide most of the home-repair loans. Lower income families can be encouraged to make home improvements if low interest loans are available and marketed. A combination of public and private financial sources will be required to fund this increasing housing repair need.



Private Funded Rehabilitated House in Ettrick

### Community policing and improved safety design

Community policing increases the safety of county residential and business areas and should be expanded. Redevelopment and older community improvement projects should use the principles of the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, or CPTED program. As more residents from culturally diverse backgrounds reside in county neighborhoods, communication and the development of trust with police officers become paramount in providing safety and security in older neighborhoods.

## Develop New Government Programs

Deteriorating and blighted properties have a significant negative impact on surrounding property, and constrain investment and area improvements. The current redevelopment of Cloverleaf Mall is an example of the removal of blighted property to spur area improvement. Similar and smaller-scale properties will require public-assisted redevelopment. The community development authority approach will provide an effective means of financing the redevelopment of larger properties. However, a similar tool using the tax increment of new development is needed for smaller-scale projects. The Arlington County "Shadow TIF" Program provides an excellent model



## Streetscape improvements of key community corridors

A presentation slide with a dark green background. In the top left corner is a circular logo featuring a tree and a person. To the right of the logo, the text "Eastern Gateway Design" is written in a light green font. Below the text is a large architectural rendering of a street interchange with landscaping. To the left of the rendering, the following text is listed in a light green font: "Interchange", "Landscaping", "Sign", and "Structure or Sculpture". In the bottom right corner of the slide, the number "2" is visible.

Interchange  
Landscaping  
Sign  
Structure or  
Sculpture

The current low quality of maintenance of the county's major street corridors must be improved. In addition, sidewalks, lighting and street trees will enhance the function, safety and aesthetics of these major corridors. Well-designed major street corridors will enhance the investment and economic development of these business corridors. Business corridors are front doors to most of the county's residential areas, and their high-quality function and appearance will add value and increase the appeal of these neighborhoods.