



HOPEWELL STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

“A Roadmap to a More Prosperous Future”

February 2014

Draft





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I. Executive Summary

Hopewell is an independent City located in south central Virginia on the southern edge of the Richmond-Petersburg Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and is strategically located to be a vibrant urban center. Having a population of just over 23,000 and at just bigger than 11 square miles, our riverfront community located at the confluence of the James and Appomattox Rivers has a small town feel. However, Hopewell is only 25 miles southeast of the amenities of the larger metropolitan Richmond market and only 120 miles south of the nation's capital of Washington D.C.

Hopewell also borders Prince George County and Fort Lee. Fort Lee is the military home of the Combined Arms Support Command and has recently gone through a major expansion offering many opportunities for Hopewell.

The City's traditional economy has primarily been based upon advanced manufacturing and industry. In the years between 1920 through the 1980s industry made the town prosperous with many of the thousands of workers from industry living and shopping within the City's borders. Manufacturing today is still the single largest employer¹ located in the City and the City is supportive of its industrial past and wants to maintain those industries for the future. Hopewell is also looking to diversify its economy and stimulate the environment for new growth and investments from business and retail development as well. Hopewell is fortunate to also be the home of John Randolph Medical Center, a HCA hospital.

With the development of I-295 on the western corridor, Hopewell can now be easily accessed from Richmond, Chesterfield and many other surrounding localities and even though this corridor has been successful in attracting food retailers and hotels/motels, more investment and planning is needed to continue this change and development farther into Hopewell and flow to the downtown. Unfortunately, over the past decade Hopewell has not seen the commercial investment that neighboring localities have. Hopewell has numerous advantages in its favor that can influence future economic expansion such as:

- Direct access to 295
- Historical sites of national importance
- Ready access to international ports
- A regional Hospital
- Frontage on two rivers
- Advanced manufacturing base of international companies
- Proximity to Fort Lee
- Proximity to Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CCAM)
- Proximity to Commonwealth Center for Applied Logistics (CCAL)

All of the advantages above position Hopewell well for future economic growth. Any business growth will eventually lead to additional revenues which will help the City to

¹ Source Virginia Employment Commission

invest in improving the lives of local citizens, address outstanding bond obligations and help diversify the long-term tax base. However, research demonstrates that the current economy suffers from the loss of revenues to other localities.² Additionally, the current demographics of the population limits economic expansion.³ Hopewell needs to set economic development strategies and formulate a plan that will help initiate strategies for not only growth and development but also redevelopment of the City.

The mission of this plan is to help City leaders understand and make decisions on key issues that affect future growth potential of the local economy. The strategies and recommendations contained in this plan address the City's unique assets and opportunities related to the economy as perceived by local stakeholders.

The Hopewell Economic Action Committee (HEAC) was formed by the Economic Development Authority (EDA) of Hopewell to help with the strategic Plan. The HEAC was comprised of the EDA members and other key community stakeholders at the request of the City Mayor and additionally included two council members, Jackie Shornak and Jasmine Gore, acting as citizen representatives. This HEAC team met every other week from July to December of 2013 to develop the Plan and its recommendations.

While there have been copious plans written in the last 20 years related to the revitalization of the City, many of the recommendations contained in those plans have not been executed for a variety of reasons.

The City should keep in mind that economic development is a process which must be continually addressed and molded. This current planning process addresses viable previous planning recommendations and melds them with numerous new economic prospects into an overall economic development strategy for the City and charting a course forward.

Throughout the planning process it was the consensus that Hopewell must strive to achieve great economic prosperity. This strategic plan provides perspectives and recommendations for essential economic development policymaking, business, sustainability, and marketing focused on revitalizing sections of the City, supporting existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses. The proposed strategies and action plan outline the specific projects/initiatives to implement the objectives and are intended as a working document for implementation by City, organizations, and stakeholders.

Key issues discussed in the plan indicate a need to link economic growth to the community:

² Retail Supply and Demand Analysis 2007 - Plan for Redevelopment and Conservation "B" Village/Waterfront

³ Chapter V - Economic Overview

- The importance of supporting neighborhood and housing revitalization efforts to provide a variety of modern housing options and community amenities that will attract workers and their household spending.
- The importance of building and maintaining **on going working** relationships with the industries, manufacturers, John Randolph Hospital, and Fort Lee. They are all potential economic drivers which create opportunities for the local economy.
- The need to provide a supportive atmosphere with infrastructure for local new small and existing businesses in the downtown and other commercial areas.
- The need to capitalize on the historic, natural and business assets of the City and the region.
- Ensuring that economic growth brings the right level of prosperity to the City.
- The importance of providing education and training to prepare our existing workers and youth, with 21st century skills and abilities.

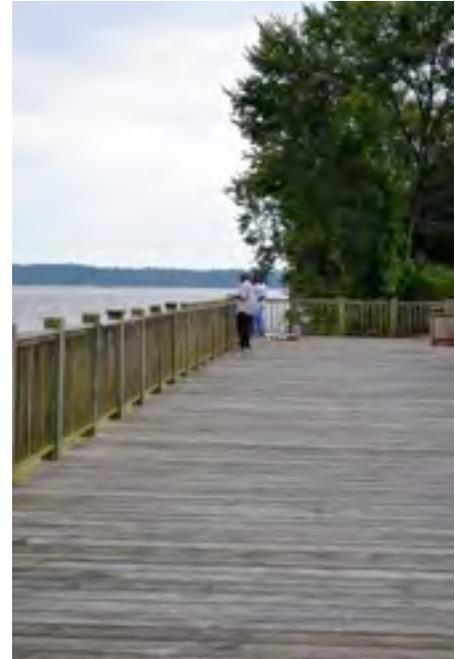


Any strategic plan is only as good as its implementation. A plan that looks attractive but sits on the shelf after it is adopted is only a wish list.

The City and all of the key stakeholders that have rolls in implementing the plan must embrace this plan and be willing to implement its recommendations. The Plan must also be flexible but that flexibility should not be misused to dramatically change aspects of a plan simply to suit the whims of a few. This is a plan for the betterment of the whole City and Council should take immediate action to start the implementation of the catalyst initiatives outlined in the Plan. These initiatives can be started while a broader process of stakeholder and community engagement is moving forward on the remainder of the Plan's recommendations.

The EDA can play a pivotal role in the implementation of the strategies of the Plan and the EDA's unique powers and abilities offer additional opportunities to leverage resources towards economic revival provided the EDA has the support and encouragement of the City Administration and Council. The EDA is here to work with and for the City of Hopewell.

The future of Hopewell rests in a restructure and revitalization of its economic base. The time for concerted action to reverse economic decline is NOW. National economic revival is under way and the timing for an economic plan and positive economic action for Hopewell is NOW.



II. Economic Overview

Employment Sectors

The economy of the Hopewell began more than 400 years ago when the first English settlers sailed up the James River and established the first agricultural plantations and commercial businesses. At that time, Hopewell was a part of Prince George County. Hopewell played a significant roll in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and became a City during WWI when the industrial base exploded creating a community the size that it is today. The industrial base continued to expand during WWII to support the war efforts. The City has a rich history of being an industrial town. As the manufacturing base has become more automated, the need for employees has diminished. The manufactures today produce more products with fewer workers. The economy has to look to other business sectors in addition to manufacturing if the City is to expand its economic base.

EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Total	7860	
Manufacturing	1961	24.9%
Health Care	1460	18.6%
Local Government	1242	15.8%
Accommodations and Food Services	794	10.1%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

The manufacturing sector is the largest employment sector representing a quarter of the total employment. Manufacturing has continued to decline in employment over the years. Manufacturing employment was declined 20% since 2001 down from 2400 workers. Health care, local government and the travel industry are the next largest employers in the City. These four industry groups account for close to 70% of total employment in the City.

Many of the commercial and recreational/entertainment needs of City residents are provided for in the nearby localities.

Income and Wages

Median household income in Hopewell is about 60% of the household income for Virginia and is lower than any of the surrounding localities except Petersburg. The poverty rate in the City is 50% higher than Virginia and is higher than all neighboring localities except Petersburg. As a result of lower incomes and a high poverty rate, the City has

one of the highest rates of students that qualify for free and reduced lunches with three quarters of the student population receiving free or reduced lunches. Again, this is equivalent to the rate in Petersburg. While the incomes are lower in Hopewell than the surrounding localities the manufacturing wages exceed the average wages in Virginia and all of the surrounding localities. The wages for professional and business services lags behind Virginia and Prince George but exceeds the other surrounding localities. If the workforce living in the City was employed in the City they would have much higher incomes. The significant supply of older, lower-cost, housing in Hopewell provides lower-income families affordable housing.

	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2011)	POVERTY RATES (2011)	AVE. WEEKLY WAGE - MANUFACTURING (Q1 2012)	AVE. WEEKLY WAGE - BUS. & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (Q1 2012)	FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH % (OCT. 2012)
Hopewell	\$36,792	18.3%	\$1,734	\$876	74.5%
Virginia	\$61,877	11.6%	\$1,093	\$1,585	40.2%
Colonial Heights	\$48,299	9.7%	\$1,031	\$532	30.1%
Dinwiddie	\$50,152	13.3%	\$1,453	\$776	50.1%
Petersburg	\$32,615	24.3%	\$1,247	\$686	74.8%
Prince George	\$56,374	10.7%	\$1,156	\$921	39.5%

Sources: US Census, Virginia Employment Commission, Virginia Department of Education

Unemployment

The total employment in Hopewell is slightly shy of 8,000 workers but the unemployment rate in the City averages two to three percentage points higher than Virginia and is higher than all of the neighboring localities except Petersburg. Again, the concentration of lower-income households occupying the abundant supply of older, lower-cost, housing tends to be less educated and a more vulnerable population that is susceptible to being unemployed.

	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT (MARCH 2012)	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2012)
Hopewell	7,900	8.7%
Virginia	3,583,180	5.9%
Colonial Heights	11,000	6.8%
Dinwiddie	7,860	6.5%
Petersburg	13,853	11.3%
Prince George	14,046	6.5%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Educational Attainment

With the concentration of lower-income households in Hopewell the educational level of the workforce is lower than the State and most all of the surrounding localities. The percentage of individuals with a Bachelor's degree is only a third of the State and lower than any of the surrounding localities.

	Educational Attainment, Bachelor's Degree or more (2007-2011)	Educational Attainment, High School Diploma or more (2007-2011)	High School Graduates Continuing Education (2011-2012)
Hopewell	10.6%	76.3%	77.8%
Virginia	34.4%	86.6%	85.6%
Colonial Heights	21.2%	87.5%	86.9%
Dinwiddie	13.0%	77.7%	57.1%
Petersburg	13.9%	70.8%	69.8%
Prince George	16.8%	84.6%	78.3%

Sources: Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Department of Education

Commuting Patterns

Most of the workforce leaves Hopewell in the morning and returns in the evening. Similarly the jobs in the City are held by residents of the neighboring localities. This commuting pattern is not uncommon among the regional localities. If there were a greater range

of housing types and price ranges in the City, workers could choose to live and work in the City. There are slightly more workers out-commuting than there are total jobs in the City.

	I N - C O M M U T E R S	O U T - C O M M U T E R S	L I V E A N D W O R K I N L O C A L I T Y
Hopewell	6,615	7,997	1,685
Colonial Heights	9,098	6,238	912
Dinwiddie	4,809	9,589	2,015
Petersburg	9,592	11,935	2,589
Prince George	6,180	10,222	1,143

Source: US Census

Housing

The housing stock in Hopewell is generally more affordable than in other localities within the region. Median sales prices are less than half of what they are in Chesterfield and about half of what they are in neighboring Prince George County. Median sales prices in Petersburg are about \$30,000 less than Hopewell. While the cost differential is striking for owners there is much less difference among the localities for renters. Typically, rents run \$100 to \$300 less in Hopewell than the surrounding localities. Even in Petersburg the median rents are higher than in Hopewell. Given the lower sales prices in Hopewell it is cheaper to own the median priced home than it is to rent. This contributes to the conversion of some owner occupied properties to investor-owned rental properties.

	M E D I A N S A L E S P R I C E (3 R D Q 2 0 1 3)	M E D I A N G R O S S R E N T (3 R D Q 2 0 1 3)
Hopewell	\$89,550	\$808
Virginia	\$269,000	\$1116
Chesterfield	\$204,900	\$1116
Colonial Heights	\$134,725	\$926

	MEDIAN SALES PRICE (3RD Q 2013)	MEDIAN GROSS RENT (3RD Q 2013)
Dinwiddie	\$134,000	\$964
Petersburg	\$50,225	\$860
Prince George	\$168,000	\$1153

Source: Virginia Center for Housing Research, Housing Virginia

Hopewell has a very large proportion of its housing stock as rental, 50%. This percentage has increased over the years from 43% in 1990 to 44% in 2000 and today standing at 50%. This is much higher than the surrounding counties but equivalent to Petersburg. The national average for the percentage of rental housing has ranged over time from 30% to 35%. Virginia's average is 33%. The income of renters in the City is slightly more than half of that of owners even though it takes less income to own the median "for sale" house than it does to rent.

	HOUSEHOLDS (2011)	% OWNER	% RENTER
Hopewell	8,859	50.1%	49.9%
Virginia	2,990,650	67.3%	32.7%
Chesterfield	110,729	77.8%	22.2%
Colonial Heights	7,136	65.3%	34.7%
Dinwiddie	9,598	77.5%	22.5%
Petersburg	12,175	47.9%	52.1%
Prince George	10,725	75.9%	24.1%

Source: US Census

	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2012)	MEDIAN RENTER INCOME	MEDIAN OWNER INCOME
Hopewell	\$37,783	\$29,992	\$52,991

	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2012)	MEDIAN RENTER INCOME	MEDIAN OWNER INCOME
Virginia	\$64,098	\$40,761	\$78,716
Chesterfield	\$73,656	\$47,104	\$83,149
Colonial Heights	\$53,236	\$42,281	\$64,994
Dinwiddie	\$52,394	\$39,269	\$62,087
Petersburg	\$37,588	\$28,252	\$47,058
Prince George	\$65,177	\$45,838	\$76,306

Source: Virginia Center for Housing Research at VA Tech

Federally assisted rental housing in Hopewell is just over 1000 units or 11.5% of total housing stock and 23.1% of rental units. These percentages are higher than the State and all surrounding localities except Petersburg where assisted rental units are 21.7% of the housing stock and 41.6% of the rental housing.

LOCALITY	TOTAL ASSISTED UNITS (2010)	% VERY LOW-INCOME UNITS	% ASSISTED UNITS OF TOTAL RENTAL HH
Hopewell	1,021	100.0%	23.1%
Virginia	171,855	61.9%	17.6%
Chesterfield	3,268	32.7%	13.3%
Dinwiddie	112	74.1%	5.2%
Petersburg	2,639	65.1%	41.6%
Prince George	288	45.8%	11.1%

* Assisted housing units serve households less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) -

* Very low-income units serve households less than 30% of AMI

Source: Virginia Housing Development Authority

Hopewell's housing stock is older with over 90% of the housing units built before 1990. These housing units are also smaller, built on smaller lots, with few of the modern amenities desired today's homebuyers.

The following excerpt from the Hopewell Housing Plan adopted in 2003 summarizes the current situation that the City faces. It is unfortunate that more progress has not been made to improve the quality and variety of housing options available in the City since the adoption of that plan. Until more is done to provide a broader range of housing types for middle- and upper-income families the City's economy will continue to lag behind neighboring localities.

"As a built-out city with few tracts of vacant land, Hopewell has not been able to accommodate much new construction in recent years."

"One of the key reasons for the City's decline is that it is not attracting and retaining enough middle-income households to maintain a stable and healthy economy. Hopewell's housing stock is not able to compete well with new housing in surrounding communities, particularly for move-up housing for middle-income families. The city's existing housing stock is skewed toward small units on small lots, and there has been little new construction. Households seeking new houses with four bedrooms have few options available to them in Hopewell, and too few of the city's neighborhoods have the types of amenities being sought by today's homebuyers."

"The long-term economic health of the community depends on its ability to support and retain a diverse mix of households. Property values only increase when there is a steady demand from homebuyers. With their house as their largest investment and a major component of their wealth, residents have a direct financial interest in improving the demand for housing in the City. The City's fiscal strength depends upon having industry, businesses and households that can afford to support the cost of providing municipal services. A stable residential base is essential to attracting and retaining retail and service businesses. Thus, an effective strategy to enhance the City's housing base is critical." (Hopewell Housing Plan - 2003)

Tourism

Tourism is the fourth largest employment sector of the Hopewell economy with a total of 794 employed in accommodations and food services. The total Impact of tourism on the local economy produces over \$23M in total expenditures annually and generates close to \$1M in local taxes. Tourism grew 3% between 2011 and 2012. With the national economic recovery taking hold, travel expenditures are expected to increase. The opening of the 1000 bed hotel on Fort Lee may dampen the lodging revenues for 2014 going forward.

HOPEWELL TOURISM	2012	% CHANGE 2012/2011
Expenditures	\$23,641,896.01	3.7%
Payroll	\$4,302,248.28	3.1%
Local Tax Receipts	\$936,155.06	2.5%

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

Hopewell has an opportunity to increase tourist expenditures if it can capture an increasing share of the visitors and trainees at Fort Lee and capture visitors traveling to other destinations in Virginia. Hopewell lacks the variety and quality of dining and shopping experiences offered by other localities in the region.

Regional Economy

The regional economy is closely inter-twined. The Tri-cities – namely Colonial Heights, Petersburg and Hopewell and the Counties of Chesterfield, Prince George and Dinwiddie all are a subset of the greater Richmond Metropolitan Area. Businesses in these localities all provide employment opportunities for the residents in the other localities. People who work at Honeywell or Rock-Tenn and Fort Lee commute from all of these localities in the region.

Hopewell is 20 miles southeast of Virginia's capital city of Richmond. The Richmond metropolitan area stretches throughout the region and impacts Hopewell and other localities in the Tri-cities area. The metropolitan area continues to grow and prosper but not all communities within the region participate equally in that growth. Hopewell's challenge is to capture a significant portion of the region's economic expansion.

Hopewell's economy is favorably impacted by commerce coming through the Virginia Seaport in the Hampton Roads to other parts of the state and the Eastern U.S. Additionally, tens of thousands of tourists pass Hopewell each year on their way to and from Virginia Beach and Colonial Williamsburg – two of the most popular tourist destinations in America. Many of these tourists make a brief stopover in Hopewell.

As a participant in the regional economy, Hopewell helps fund the efforts of several regional economic development organizations, marketing partnerships and planning organizations. These include the Virginia's Gateway Regional Economic Development Organization, the Crater Regional Planning Commission, and the Petersburg Area Regional Tourism (PART) partnership.

III. Introduction

Purpose of this Strategic Plan

This strategic plan is part of ongoing efforts by the City of Hopewell to stimulate economic growth for the benefit of local citizens. The plan offers a way forward to help guide policy decisions regarding the development of the local economy.

This strategic plan discusses the “big picture” of economic development in the City and its place in the region. Finally, this plan provides recommendations for specific strategies, projects and initiatives that are designed to make the City a more successful investment destination for the future.

The City’s economy has not seen the growth that surrounding localities have. The City has few “greenfield” sites to support new development. The City has to rely upon the redevelopment of existing already developed property to accommodate future business development. There has been significant development along the border of the City due in large part to the \$1.5 billion expansion of the Fort Lee “Army Sustainment Center of Excellence,” a focused training base for military supply, subsistence, maintenance, munitions and transportation. This development has created new business expansion opportunities in the western portion of the City. The renewed efforts to revitalize downtown with the opening of the Beacon Theater and recent designation as a Virginia Main Street community provides an opportunity to attract visitors and shoppers from neighboring areas to the downtown.

The City wishes to be more aggressive in its economic development efforts and participate more fully in the economic growth projected for the region.

Taking into consideration the economic challenges that have occurred over the last several years, this plan revisited current economic conditions, past development plans and efforts in the City. The resulting plan incorporates some of the previous strategies with new strategies and proposes priorities that are designed to help the City achieve the following vision and goals:

Vision for Economic Development

When establishing a vision for the community we need to look at what constitutes “success”. These measures of success establish the values of the community that are then reflected in the vision for the future. Here are some of the measures that were identified as constituting success.

How do we measure success?

- Comprehensive shopping (retail) generates significant revenue
- Tax revenues from businesses are greater than residential tax revenue
- The City has met its economic development goals
- Distressed properties are redeveloped

- Hopewell is a desirable community where families want to live and shop
- Hopewell offers a unique experience
- A public bus service serves all of the community
- The negative perceptions of the City are now positive perceptions
- Pockets of higher-end homes flourish throughout the City
- Youth return to live and work in the City
- Hopewell is a tourist destination
- There is a increase in homeowners
- Hopewell is considered a “safe” community
- The residents are well educated
- The City is considered a “clean” city
- City employs want to live in the City

Based upon these measures of success the following vision was developed:

VISION 2030

While Hopewell has been known as an industrial town, the City has been transformed into an attractive community serving a larger regional economic and population base. The City has been able to capitalize on the economic growth of the region, particularly the expansion of the military presence at Fort Lee and the residential growth in eastern Chesterfield. City residents and residents from the surrounding communities stroll through the vibrant historic downtown shopping at specialty retailers, dining at restaurants and cafes, attending shows and programs at the Beacon and other entertainment venues. The City provides a broad range of housing options ranging from higher-priced waterfront homes to quality affordable housing. The waterfront now is bustling with activity from boaters and kayakers on the water to walkers and bikers traversing the waterfront trail system. The City school system is working to be one of the best in the region boasting that the graduates are “college or career ready”. The quality of comprehensive health care services and cultural and recreational offerings attract retirees and pre-retirees to the community. The newly constructed interpretation centers at our historical venues attract tourists from across the world. The commercial development along Rt. 36 at the I-295 interchange has helped bolster City tax revenues. Hopewell’s industrial base is part of the region’s growing advanced manufacturing sector which supports a large highly-skilled workforce. Today, Hopewell is a revitalized livable, waterfront community providing a unique quality and variety of life experiences unmatched in the Richmond/Tri-cities metropolitan region.



Goals for Economic Development Efforts

The following set of goals have been developed to provide a way to achieve the vision of the City outlined in the previous section. These goals are the desired outcomes/results needed to fulfill the vision and establish the direction for the economic development efforts for the City.

Goals

- **I-295 Interchange Development** – Accelerate the development/redevelopment of the highway oriented commercial district emanating out from the I-295 interchange along the Rt. 36 corridor.
- **Downtown Revitalization** – Revitalize the historic downtown to be a vibrant district offering specialty shopping and dining experience with multiple entertainment venues.
- **Riverfront Redevelopment** - Redevelop the riverfront providing a variety of activities associated with the use and enjoyment of the two rivers.
- **Housing Development and Redevelopment** – Redevelop many of the older functionally obsolete residential neighborhoods into mixed-income communities meeting modern-day market preferences.
- **Tourism Development and History Interpretation** – Develop unique attractions and/or redevelop the historical venues to provide additional interpretation and quality visitor experiences. Provide a variety of auxiliary activities, shopping, dining, lodging, that will enhance the visitor’s stay in the community.
- **Health Care Expansion** – Develop a comprehensive medical care campus that expands the medical offerings in the City and supports the continued expansion of the facilities and resources at the John Randolph Hospital.
- **Manufacturing Base Expansion** – Assist the existing and new manufactures to be more competitive and help them be in a position to expand their operations in the future.
- **Education and Youth Development** – To create a “career ready community” where all students are provided quality educational experiences preparing them for college or for work.
- **Gateways Improvements** – Improve/redevelop the major gateway highway corridors leading to and through the City.





IV. Objectives and Strategies for Economic Development

Specific objectives and strategies have been established for each goal. Several of the goals require implementation by organizations outside of the direct sphere of influence of the City offices. These organizations are encouraged to incorporate these strategies as a part of their planning processes. Many of the individual strategies are designed to impact several goals.. Additionally, within each goal, there are strategy line items which are bolded. These bolded strategy items represent short term initiatives ready for potential implementation and thus the beginning of the economic development process.

- **I-295 Interchange Development** – Accelerate the development/redevelopment of the highway oriented commercial district emanating out from the I-295 interchange along the Rt. 36 corridor.

The expansion of Fort Lee has spurred significant commercial development in the Tri-cities region with a portion of that development located along Rt. 36 at the I-295 interchange. With the development of some of the undeveloped land and the redevelopment of some older commercial properties Hopewell can further capitalize on this market opportunity. The recent construction of a 1000 bed hotel on base has limited the future development opportunities for additional lodging but additional retail and office development does offer potential for this area. In addition, I-295 has become a significant north-south transportation corridor and the Rt. 36 interchange provides a prime location for significant regional retail expansion. The residential expansion in eastern Chesterfield and Henrico Counties can easily be served from this location.

The following objective and specific strategies are recommended to further develop the Rt. 36 corridor.

Objective

- Develop and implement a comprehensive development/redevelopment strategy for the Rt. 36 corridor from I-295 heading east.

Strategies

- **Improve the landscaping, lighting and streetscaping along Rt. 36 from city limits leading towards downtown Hopewell. This will improve the image of the city for tourists, residents of other localities and potential developers.**
- **Change City ordinances so that they don't allow businesses to locate in residential structures along the Rt. 36 corridor and throughout the City.**
- **Extend the existing Enterprise Zone to the Hopewell City Limits along Route 36 and incorporate strategic properties along the Rt. 36 corridor within the Zone.**
- Prepare a comprehensive commercial revitalization plan for the western Rt. 36 corridor. This planning strategy would include specif-

ics on such items as funding, attracting developers, and best usage of land, etc.

- Gain site control and assemble strategic properties at the intersection of I-295 and Rt. 36 and along Rt. 36 for future commercial development.
- Aggressively market the available commercial properties along the Rt. 36 corridor from I-295.

- **Downtown Revitalization** – Revitalize the historic downtown to be a vibrant district offering specialty shopping and dining experiences with multiple entertainment venues.

The recent efforts of the City and the Hopewell Downtown Partnership (HDP) as a Virginia Main Street organization, has been a major step forward to bringing increased activity back to the Downtown. With the renovation of the Beacon Theater now complete, the performances at the Beacon will attract theater goers from the greater regional market. It is important for the City to take full advantage of this situation and to look at the potential for a full range of shopping and dining opportunities in the downtown.

The City prepared a Downtown Master Plan for the redevelopment of the downtown several years ago but most of the recommendations in that plan have yet to be realized. The City in partnership with Downtown Hopewell Partnership should aggressively employ the principles of the Virginia Main Street program towards the realization of the redevelopment of the downtown area as envisioned in the Downtown Master Plan. The downtown will not be able, nor should it compete with the regional retail malls in neighboring communities but it can provide a range of unique speciality retail and dining opportunities. The Downtown needs to have a greater supply of higher-priced housing close to downtown to provide a locally based market in support of the speciality retailers and dining.



The following objectives and strategies are recommended to bring additional vitality to the downtown area.

Objectives

- Continue to implement a comprehensive strategy for the revitalization of downtown by revising and adopting amendments to the comprehensive Downtown Master Plan through a team comprised of the HDP, the City staff and any other groups as needed.
- Provide a safe, secure and attractive downtown environment for shoppers, visitors and residents
- Foster the location of arts and entertainment activities/functions in the downtown.
- Continue the aggressive marketing campaign for shoppers and new businesses
- Create physical connections to other strategic development areas in the City

Strategies

- Increase police presence in the Downtown and institute a neighborhood security program. Focus on improving the safety and attractiveness of the area around the newly renovated Beacon Theater including the travel paths to and from the facility and parking areas.
- Continue to offer a series of successful performances and events at the newly renovated Beacon Theater.
- Enhance the streetscapes along the Rt. 10 corridor leading to the downtown as a part of a comprehensive “Gateway” improvement program as noted in the Plan under the Gateway Improvements strategies.
- Increase the entertainment offerings and events conducted in the downtown including sponsoring a Farmer’s Market.
- Adopt the recently developed Branding for the downtown as a part of the overall marketing “Brand” for the City.
- Continue to support the Hopewell Downtown Partnership and other public/private downtown development partnerships.
- Create a physical connection between the downtown business district and the Appomattox River, possibly through the River Walk discussed in Riverfront Development in this Plan.
- Renovate the existing commercial buildings to modern day standards and encourage renovation of the upper stories into modern residential apartments through incentives and/or tax relief options.
- Selectively replace/demolish obsolescent structures without major historic significance with buildings consistent with the Downtown Master Plan.
- Conduct an annual downtown beautification campaign starting in 2014.
- Provide activities in the downtown and transportation services to the downtown for the military and civilian personnel at Fort Lee.
- Consider developing an annual revenue stream to be used to advance economic development efforts for the downtown by the City.
- Revise and adopt amendments to the comprehensive redevelopment plan, Downtown Master Plan - 2002.
- Review and modify the existing land use regulations to accommodate the proposed mixed-use development.



- **Riverfront Development** - Redevelop the riverfront providing a variety of activities associated with the use and enjoyment of the two rivers by residents and visitors.

The Appomattox and James Rivers are key assets of the City that are underutilized and underdeveloped. The rivers are the reason that Hopewell was established. They have served as the commercial corridors linking central Virginia to world markets. While a portion of the waterfront is still used for heavy commercial activity there is a significant portion of the waterfront that is undeveloped or underdeveloped. Today people are attracted more than ever to the water for recreation and the scenic beauty. The rivers offer an opportunity to capitalize on these desires to live and recreate on the water. The recent renovation of the City Marina is a positive step in making better use of the shoreline and providing those opportunities.



Several planning efforts by the City have recommended significant redevelopment of the waterfront for more intense development that offers the public greater access to the water. The Downtown Master Plan, the “B” Village Plan and the Appomattox Riverwalk and Trail System Plan all recommend significant redevelopment along the waterfront. The implementation of these plans complemented by greater activities and events on the water would be a major market advantage separating Hopewell from other communities in the region.

The following objectives and strategies are recommended to take full advantage of Hopewell’s extensive waterfront.

Objectives

- Develop/redevelop the marina area and Coleman property as mixed-use waterfront oriented developments.
- Develop a continuous waterfront trail system on land and on the water connecting the major activity centers along the waterfront and providing connection to neighborhoods inland.

Strategies

- **Construct a riverfront pedestrian and bike trail system, Appomattox River Walk and Trail System, from City Point to the Appomattox Regional Park west of the City in phases as identified in River Walk Plan.**
- **Set up a River Walk project plan coordinator and committee to work the project with such partners as FOLAR, John Randolph Hospital, Envision the James, and James River Advisory**

Council. Solicit partners with ability to garner donations of money, supplies and workers. Set grant applications in motion.

- **Create a water trail, “Blueways Trail”, along the two rivers.**
- **Develop a series of accessible canoe and kayak launch facilities along the water trail.**
- **Offer River Safety, Swimming, Boating, and Kayaking instruction classes through Hopewell school system or Parks and Recreation.**
- **Sponsor a series of “on the water” events such as summer band series at the overlook site, fishing tournaments, boating rendezvous, raft races, etc. and have some of these events in conjunction with Hooray and other land events.**
- Establish a series of green- ways connecting the residential and commercial neighborhoods to the riverfront.
- Create a Broadway Landing interpretation Center for Revolutionary and Civil War retrospect. Create a City Point Civil War interpretation Center.
- Recruit a river cruise operator to provide entertainment options.
- Develop an event center on the river with views and access much like what was developed in Smithfield.
- Redevelop and expand the City owned marina into a mixed-use complex.



- **Housing Development and Redevelopment** – Redevelop many of the older functionally obsolete residential neighborhoods into mixed-income mixed-use communities meeting modern-day market preferences.

Housing is critical to the economic and social wellbeing of Virginia

“State housing policy should recognize that the long-term economic viability and sustainability of Virginia’s localities and their regions depends on adequate ongoing investment in the preservation and expansion of housing choices. The state and localities should recognize the linkage between housing and other critical needs and priorities.”

Housing is not an isolated policy issue

*“Housing should be an integral part of the framework of state, local and regional planning and policy-making for community development, transportation, **economic development**, education, health and human services.”⁴*

A large portion of Hopewell’s housing stock was built from the early 1900’s up to 1960. This housing stock typically is in poor condition and does not meet the expectations of modern households in size, amenities, energy efficiency and design. Approximately half, 4500 units, of the housing stock is rental, and as evidenced in our statistics in Section II of this plan, much of this rental inventory has lower rents than rental units in neighboring communities. Slightly less than a quarter of the rental housing, 1000 units, is federally assisted housing serving households with incomes less than 30% of area median income (@\$22,800.00 per year). The school administration indicates that a third of the student population transfers into and out of the school division in any school year and more than three fourths of the student population are eligible for free or reduced lunches (please reference data in Section II). The combination of these housing and demographic factors results in Hopewell having a significantly higher percentage of a more transient lower-income population.

If Hopewell is to achieve a vision of prosperous waterfront community it needs to begin to actively encourage the development of new higher priced housing for workers in the City and region as well as redevelopment of some of the older neighborhoods that have concentrations of older, functionally obsolete housing stock. According to the Urban Land Institute, National Association of REALTORS and Housing Virginia, market conditions are trending towards smaller homes in urban settings. Given these trends, Hopewell can be a community of choice for the “boomer” and “millennial” generations if significant redevelopment occurs.



⁴ “Guiding Principles of State of Va Housing Policy”, VHDA/DHCD 2006

The following objectives and strategies are proposed to encourage new housing development and the redevelopment of older neighborhoods.

Objectives

- Reduce the percentage of rental housing stock in the City from 50% of the total housing stock to 40% of the housing stock (900 unit reduction) by 2020 and further reduce that percentage to 33% by 2030. The national average of rental vs homeownership in cities around the country is approximately 33% rental 67% owner. The emphasis should be placed on the reduction in concentration of poorer quality, older and functionally obsolete housing in the City.
- Target select neighborhoods for major renovation of existing housing stock and look at opportunities to add median and higher-priced housing to the range of housing options available in the City.
- Continually add higher-priced housing to the range of housing options available in the City.

Strategies

- **Vigorously enforce the existing rental inspection program and neighborhood nuisance ordinances. Strengthen the rental inspection program to the full extent allowed by State law. Petition the General Assembly to allow Hopewell to adopt additional blight abatement provisions in the City code.**
- **Recruit successful developers and redevelopers who have helped other VA localities in their targeted neighborhood revitalization efforts. Insure the close coordination of the neighborhood revitalization and new development/redevelopment efforts with the City.**
- **Work with Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority on a new Housing Plan for the City.**
- **Discourage commercial businesses locating in residential structures along the major Rt 10 and Rt. 36 commercial corridors.**
- Recruit developers for higher-priced housing on City owned and private properties along the riverfront.
- Encourage private sector development of vacant residential zoned land and the development of existing property for residential and mixed-use purposes.
- Replace some of the existing public housing projects with scattered-site, subsidized housing which would also include homeownership opportunities.

- **Health Care Expansion** – Develop a comprehensive medical care campus that expands the medical offerings in the City and supports the continued expansion of the facilities and resources at the John Randolph Hospital.

Health care has been and is projected to be an important growth sector in our economy. Today, the health care industry is the second leading employer in the City. The delivery of health care is dramatically changing as a result of national trends and federal law. These trends indicate that there will be a more comprehensive approach to health delivery that encourages healthy life styles and greater collaboration between and among health specialities. These trends offer opportunities for Hopewell to partner with the John Randolph Hospital to encourage the location of a variety of health resources and specialities in close proximity to the hospital.



As with any industry, health care has become fiercely competitive with health care providers seeking to lure new patients to newer and more modern facilities. The HCA John Randolph Hospital, a major employer in the City that serves a regional population is in the process of making capital investments that will improve its facilities and access to quality health care in the City. These improvements should allow the facility to compete more favorably with some of the hospitals in the adjacent communities.

If John Randolph Hospital is to remain competitive it will need to continually expand and modernize. It is common today, to see a variety of medical services and specialities offered in medical office complexes often with a hospital as the anchor. The area surrounding the hospital offers the potential to become such a complex if the City and the Hospital can create a strategic partnership for the redevelopment of the area. We have seen how these strategic partnerships have benefited other communities. The recent partnership between the City of Richmond and Bon Secours Hospital is a good example.

The following objective and strategies are recommended to expand the health care sector and offerings in the City.

Objective

- In partnership with John Randolph Hospital develop and implement a master redevelopment plan for a “medical care campus”.

Strategies

- **The City and the EDA should develop and adopt a plan for a “Health Care Campus” in the area adjacent to the John Randolph Hospital bounded by 2nd and 6th Avenues and the Appomattox River to West Broadway Avenue. The Health Care Campus is envisioned to be an office complex housing a variety of health related businesses that provide a broad range of health specialties and services. This Campus would provide office space for doctors and other health specialties practicing at the John Randolph Hospital.**
- **Partner with John Randolph Hospital to develop facilities that would support their future needs and support a full range of auxiliary medical services.**
- Improve the transportation infrastructure along the Rt 10 corridor to accommodate the expansion of John Randolph Hospital and the proposed Medical Care Campus.
- Provide significant landscaping and streetscaping, sidewalks, street lighting, signage, benches, banners, etc., along the Rt. 10 corridor through the City.
- Provide a full range of quality housing options, price and type, for health care workers. Construct a housing development targeted for health care workers, teachers and other City employees such as the “Mercer Place” in Lancaster County.
- Recruit a “high-end” assisted living facility to the City.

- **Tourism Development and History Interpretation** – Develop or redevelop the historical venues to provide additional interpretation and quality visitor experiences. Provide a variety of auxiliary activities, shopping, dining, lodging, that will enhance the visitor's stay in the community.

The roll that Hopewell has played in the history of the United States is one of the greatest untold stories in Virginia. From the earliest colonial times through supporting the war efforts of our troops during WW II Hopewell has played a major roll in multiple historical events. Weston Plantation, City Point, National Cemetery are key historical sites that can form the basis for further historical interpretation of the events that occurred in Hopewell. Many of the older revolutionary and Civil War sites in the City have been destroyed or redeveloped but there are significant historical structures and landmarks that tell a compelling tale of our nation's development. The City along with the Historic Hopewell Foundation should work with the National Park Service to further develop the sites for interpretation of the City's rich history.



In recent years the tourism marketing budget has been cut to support other City priorities. With the Civil War Sesquicentennial celebrations fast approaching, now is the time to increase marketing of Hopewell's pivotal roll in that war. Tourists begin their trip planning in the winter for summer vacations so the earlier and more frequent the marketing of Hopewell's roll in the Civil War the greater the impact will be on the City's economy. The visits by President Lincoln to Hopewell in 1864 and 1865 offer great opportunities to market City Point and all of Hopewell to the traveling public.



Further development of the waterfront and sponsoring activities on the rivers provides opportunities for attracting visitors seeking experiences in addition to learning more about our history. Hopewell can be a destination that offers a variety of water dependent or supported activities from events that overlook the water to boating regattas on the river to a canoe or kayak trips along a water trail.

When tourists visit a community they wish to not only visit the attractions but spend time in the area to shop, dine and explore. The City needs to develop a range of auxiliary ac-

tivities that will enrich the visitor's experience when they are in Hopewell. Those visitor expenditures help support local businesses and boost the tax revenues to the City.

The key to increasing tourist traffic to the City is increased marketing. The City tourism marketing efforts should be accelerated and strategic partnerships strengthened between the City and regional tourism organizations. Tourists don't come just to one community to take in the sites but they come to an area to enjoy a variety of experiences. The greater the variety and richness of the experience the more likely the visitor will return or recommend your community to a friend.

The following objectives and strategies are recommended to increase tourism in the City and help better tell the story of Hopewell's roll in the development of our country.

Objectives

- Increase tourist visitation and expenditures annually by 2% over the next 20 years.
- Enhance the existing tourism venues within the City.
- Create additional tourism venues/activities concentrated in the downtown area.
- Develop additional shopping, dining and lodging supporting tourism.

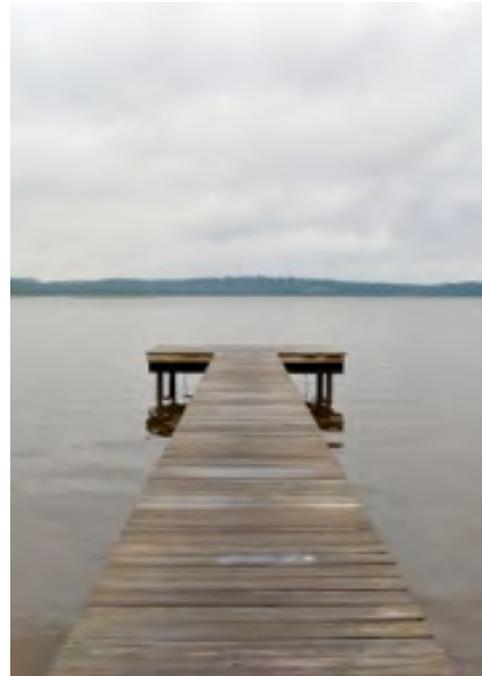
Strategies

- **Write and implement a Tourism Plan with appropriate funding and resources required.**
- **Revamp Hooray for Hopewell. This celebration is about the City and should be refreshed and renewed.**
- **Create strategic regional partnerships for targeted tourism and marketing efforts. Start with Prince George and begin to market tourist locations together.**
- **Forge a stronger partnership with the National Park Service for marketing and development of Appomattox Manor as an independent site from Petersburg National Battlefield with separate road signage etc.**
- Create a significant Civil War Center near City Point to provide a more complete interpretation of the roll of City Point in the Civil War.
- Develop the Hunter House as the site for the Civil War interpretation center or Hopewell Museum.
- Develop an event center with views and access to the riverfront.
- Provide better signage from I-295 to the historic sites in the City.
- Create a stronger partner-



ship including funding with Historic Hopewell Foundation for the repair, maintenance and operation of their historic properties in the City.

- Develop a system of pedestrian and bike trails leading to and along the waterfront and provide linkages to the larger regional trail system.
- Recruit a river cruise operator to provide a river cruise of the Appomattox and James Rivers based out of the City Marina and include trips to Berkeley and Shirley Plantations



- **Advanced Manufacturing Development** – Assist the existing and new manufactures to be more competitive and help them be in a position to expand their operations in the future.

Hopewell has a long history of manufacturing starting in the early 1900's with DuPont locating in the community. Almost over night a small rural hamlet became a bustling urban manufacturing center. While DuPont is no longer a manufacture in the City other national and international companies have taken its place. Manufacturing employment in the City still represents about one fourth of the City's total employment as evidenced in Section II Data of this report. With the severe competition within the world economy for manufacturing US manufacturing has had to restructure to be competitive. Today's manufacturers are leaner using fewer employees to produce more product than ever before. Additionally, the manufacturing processes today are more sophisticated requiring higher skilled workers than in the past and are now much more environmentally friendly.

Hopewell manufactures have to compete within their own corporate structures for the resources to expand and modernize. For a plant to continue to be competitive it has continually modernize and create efficiencies within its operations. Typically larger national and international companies have several options internally to expand and grow. This means that our Hopewell plants have to run as efficiently as possible to be able to earn the corporate resources to modernize. Maintaining a competitive cost advantage in Hopewell is imperative to encourage this investment in the existing manufacturing base.

While Hopewell has significant advantages that make it a desirable location for new manufacturers it lacks available land. The older industrial sites that have the potential to support new manufacturing often have environmental legacy issues that make them unattractive or unavailable for new companies. There may be opportunities to work with the industries to identify portions of existing industrial sites that could be used for their suppliers or for a customer of the industry's product. Co-location of such interdependent entities can often increase production efficiencies.



One of the biggest challenges for today's manufactures is finding and retaining qualified workers. As the skill levels of the manufacturing worker have increased it has become harder and harder for manufacturers to find qualified and dependable workers. There is also a continuing need to retrain the existing workers to the new advances in the manufacturing processes which potentially could be a positive for Hopewell. However Hopewell must also address the housing issue and the overall appearance and impression the City has on our current manufacturer's recruiting. The most recent example

came from Evonik, when they cited these issues when they moved their Operations Center to Chesterfield County.

The following objectives and strategies are recommended to assist existing manufactures expand and new manufactures locate in the City.

Objectives

- Prepare the workforce with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed by the manufacturing operations in the City.
- Have an abundant supply of suitable industrial sites to accommodate the expansion of the existing industrial base and location of new industries.
- Maintain a moderate and competitive cost of business within the City.



Strategies

- **Partner with John Tyler Community College and other institutions of higher education in the region to develop a virtual workforce development center for the City serving the needs of the manufactures and other commercial businesses.**
- **Per other sections, improve gateways, city appearance, and housing.**
- **Develop/redevelop “brownfield” sites making them suitable for industrial usage adjacent to existing manufacturing operations ensuring that the land has the appropriate environmental clearances for development.**
- **Strengthen the existing lines of communications between the existing industrial companies and the leadership of the City.**
- Aggressively market available industrial properties for expansion of existing industrial companies or the location of new manufactures.
- Partner with Prince George County on the future development of potential industrial properties along the City/County boundary.

- **Education and Youth Development** – To create a “career ready community” where all students are provided quality educational experiences preparing them for college or for work. Our education system should not be a deterrent for anyone working in the City to not live in the City.

The quality of the education system within the City is an important factor in meeting the economic goals outline in this plan. If Hopewell is to be the choice residential location for working families with children, the school system has to be of comparable quality and provide similar offerings to other school systems in the region. If the major employers are to be able to fill their job openings, the school system has to graduate students that are work ready with the skills to succeed and advance. It is not enough in today’s work place to have the technical skills for a job but employers expect that workers have the “soft” skills (team work, communications, punctuality, problem solving, etc.) necessary to function in the work place.

The challenge for the Hopewell school system is the demographics of the population it serves. With three fourths of the students receiving reduced or free lunches due to lower income, and a highly transient student population, extra efforts must be made to ensure that quality educational performance measures are met. To be able to achieve high standards of excellence and ensure that students are career ready or ready for higher education the total support of the community is required.

The following objectives and strategies are recommended to improve the career readiness and preparation for college.

Objectives

- Adequately prepare preschool students for entry into the public school system.
- Steadily increase the graduation requirements to be compatible with surrounding school divisions.
- Increase the career and technical education offerings available to students and adults. Also increase the offerings for advanced and gifted students at all levels.
- Increase the preparedness of the graduates entering college.



Strategies

- **Provide additional opportunities for students by expanding the “Smart Beginnings” program for pre-school youth in the City.**
- Increase the availability of quality, affordable and licensed day care for youth.
- Partner with John Tyler Community College and other institutions of higher education in the region to develop a “virtual” workforce de-

velopment center in the City serving the needs of the manufactures and other commercial businesses.

- Expand the dual enrollment program in the Hopewell High School.
- Raise the graduation requirements for High School Students.
- Increase the funding level for the school system consistent with the school demographic profile.
- Construct a housing specifically targeted for teachers, health care workers and other City employees.
- Utilize the Beacon to encourage students to pursue extracurricular activities in art, music and theatre.
- City to increase School Board budget to fund additional seats at VA Governor's Schools in the area and set goals to increase seats annually.

- **Gateway Improvements** – Improve/redevelop the major gateway highway corridors leading to and through the City.

The major gateways leading into the City, Rt. 10 and Rt. 36, have older commercial and industrial uses along the right-of-ways with minimal landscaping and streetscaping. The visual appearance of these entrances is not very attractive. Those major thoroughfares have some older and vacant properties lining the right-of-way that also detracts from the appearance of the City. If you are a visitor to one to the historical sites, or a businessman looking to locate/invest in the community, or a theater goer heading to the Beacon, or a family looking to buy a home in the City, your first impressions are import to your decision. The more positive those impressions the more likely you will be to invest or return. Evonik in recently relocating to Chesterfield County mentioned the poor appearance of the City as one of the reasons for their decision. The gateways are the front doors to the City. The entrances should be as attractive as possible to ensure that potential investors, home owners or visitors get a positive impression of the City. The way the entrances appear is a reflection of the pride a community has in itself. Every effort should be made to demonstrate that the community values itself and is proud enough to put its best foot forward. The entrance to the City is also the entrance to businesses. An unkempt appearance of its front door could deter customers and may encourage a business to relocate. Pride and quality are contagious.

The following objectives and strategies are recommended to improve the highway gateways coming into the City.

Objectives

- Provide significant landscaping and streetscaping, sidewalks, street lighting, signage, benches, banners, etc., along the major corridors, Rt. 10 and Rt. 36, leading to and through the City.
- Based upon the “Branding” recommendations create a wayfaring system of signage throughout the City including new entrance signs at the major entrances to the City.

Strategies

- **Develop and adopt an overall gateway development plan as a part of the capital improvements plan for the City to stage the sequence of improvements along the corridors.**
- **Partner with civic and community groups to install and maintain the landscaping and streetscaping along the corridor.**



- Place the appropriate signage on I-295 and major routes leading to the City directing travelers to the historic and other attractions in the City.



V. Key Issues and Catalyst Initiatives

In the Executive Summary to this strategic plan, a vision was provided, which is to develop the City as a revitalized waterfront community. This will lead to greater opportunities for the long-term benefit of Hopewell residents. This chapter further describes the key issues to encourage and nurture further growth opportunities and recommends some catalyst initiatives that will begin the implementation of numerous recommended strategies in this Plan.

Key Issues

- How to capture more of the local spending that is now being spent in neighboring communities;
- How to attract spending from the larger Tri-cities market area to Hopewell businesses;
- The importance of supporting the development of higher-income housing in the City;
- The importance of revitalizing many of the City's older commercial and residential areas;
- The need to encourage greater homeownership opportunities for working families;
- The importance of building working relationships with John Randolph Hospital, the major manufactures in the City and Fort Lee, all major economic drivers within the region as well as relationships with surrounding communities;
- The need to continually improve the education and workforce readiness of our students and existing workers;
- The need to capitalize on the significant roll Hopewell played in the history of our nation from Revolutionary War, to the Civil War, to WW I and WWII;
- The opportunity to focus economic development marketing efforts that best match the assets -- and long-term interests -- of the City;
- How to ensure that economic growth brings the right level of prosperity to the City;
- How to create revenue streams and targeted growth throughout the City.

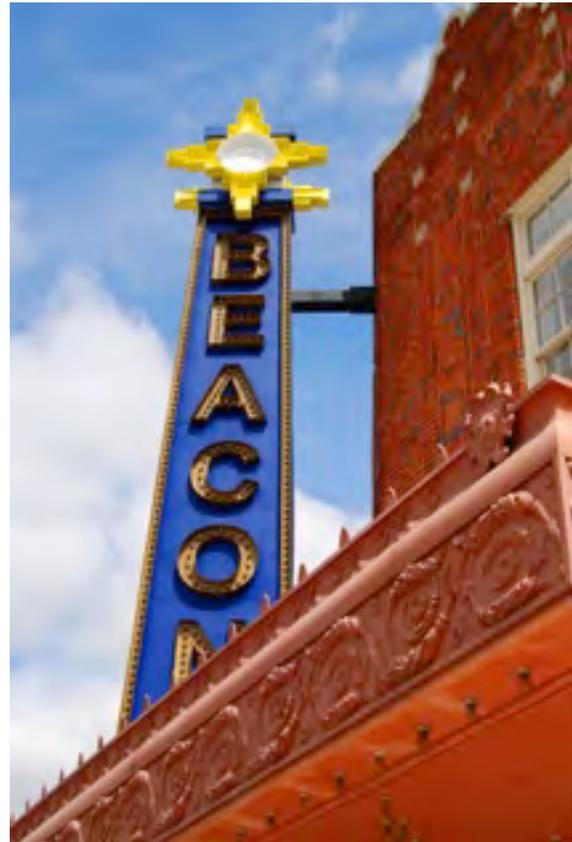
Catalyst Initiatives

Of all of the strategies recommended in the this plan there are five strategic initiatives that are recommended to be the focus of initial economic development efforts. These strategic initiatives build upon existing efforts by the City and several organizations

promoting the City that can have immediate short-term positive impacts on the community. Here is a brief discussion of these five catalyst initiatives:

- **Development Associated with the Renovated Beacon Theater as part of the Downtown Revitalization**

The historic Beacon Theater with a capacity for 600 people has opened after a \$4.5 million investment in significant renovations. This entertainment venue not only serves the citizens of Hopewell but attracts visitors and patrons from a sixty mile or greater radius. Patrons to the Theater events must have a positive experience while attending events or they are not likely to return. If they have a positive experience they are more likely to see Hopewell as a community that is on the rise and may even consider investing or locating in the City. Every effort should be made to create an inviting and enjoyable experience that includes; improvements along the highways leading to the Theater; insuring that the pedestrian corridors leading from parking lots are attractive, safe, clean and well lighted; and that we grow quality dining and shopping close by. The “Beacon Logistics Team”, that has been created to begin these efforts, needs the continuing support from the City, the Hopewell Downtown Partnership and other community organizations. Only through this combined effort will those who visit or attend the Beacon Theater and entertainment district have a positive experience.



- **Gateway Improvements**

The entrances along Rt. 10, Rt. 36, Rt. 156, River Road and I-295 are the front doors to the community. Lets make improvements that will put out the welcome mat. The appearance and character of development along these corridors leaves a lasting impression on all who travel to the City. If the corridors leading into and through the City are well planned, attractive and vibrant then the community presents a positive image for all the world to see. New entrance signage, landscaping, streetscaping, lighting along with the redevelopment of underutilized or blighted properties should all be a part of the Gateway planning. Not all of the improvements along these transportation corridors can

be accomplished in a short timeframe but the City can take those steps to make the improvements incrementally over several years. The City should develop a comprehensive gateway improvement plan and adopt it as a part of its Capital Improvements Plan. This will allow the City to systematically plan and implement those improvements that are critical to making the gateways attractive and more functional.

- **Increased Marketing and Tourism Development**

The City has historic sites and assets of national prominence but those assets are not aggressively marketed to travelers. Likewise, there are many significant development opportunities in downtown, along the waterfront, at the I-295 Interchange and elsewhere in the City that may be attractive to prospective developers and investors. The City should considerably expand its economic development marketing efforts which includes tourism. In recent years the tourism marketing budget has been cut to support other priorities. With the Civil War Sesquicentennial celebrations fast approaching, now is the time to increase marketing of Hopewell's pivotal role in that war. The visits by President Lincoln to Hopewell in 1864 and 1865 offer great opportunities to market City Point and all of Hopewell to the traveling public. The development of a tourism development plan followed by the designation of tourism development districts would help spur further tourism related investment in the City. The recent "branding" initiative by the Hopewell Downtown Partnership offers a prime opportunity to rebrand and expand all of the City's marketing efforts. With the national economy recovering, now is the time to increase the level of marketing to attract investment and travelers to the City. Detailed marketing plans for the individual areas of emphasis, downtown, riverfront, I-295 corridor and Tourism should all be developed and coordinated. The marketing efforts should recognize and complement the marketing efforts of regional and State organizations. The marketing efforts should also include better signage from the Interstate, along the corridors leading to the City and to the prominent sites within the City. These marketing efforts over time should have the desired effect of changing the image of Hopewell from an older industrial town to an attractive tourist and residential destination.

- **Strategic Site Development Strategy**

The City has identified key properties, both private and public, through a series of previous planning efforts that offer unique development potential. The City has over the years made selective purchase of some of these properties and has been actively engaged in assembly of parcels to be able to offer a real estate product attractive to potential developers. These development opportunities span the range of commercial and residential locations including the downtown area, along the riverfront, the area around the John Randolph Hospital, the I-295 interchange and the redevelopment of some



JAMES POINT MIXED USE CONCEPT
RT. 10 ENTRANCE CORRIDOR

older industrial “brownfield” sites. The City has recruited developers in the past with only partial success. The City along with the EDA should over the next several months look at setting up a committee to engage in open dialog with developers and redevelopers. This dialogue needs to address such topics as how and where to begin successful redevelopment in Hopewell, determine what successes these developers have had elsewhere that could be applied in Hopewell, determine what negatives the developers have experienced in Hopewell, determine what other localities are doing to successfully entice

new development and lastly to hopefully regain trust and partnership with some of these developers/redevelopers. Due to the economic recovery in progress, a renewed and expanded effort to recruit developers is now warranted. A comprehensive developer recruitment strategy that sets priorities among potential sites and focuses on incentives could be vigorously pursued in the open dialogue to attract developer investment. The EDA is uniquely positioned to assist the City in Site acquisition and development. The City in partnership with the EDA should establish a “strategic site acquisition fund” to facilitate the rapid acquisition of key properties when they come on the market. The purpose of the “strategic site acquisition fund” would be to acquire selected strategic properties prepare them for redevelopment and then turn them over to a developer for redevelopment according to adopted City plans. As a component of this initiative would be the compilation of all of the development/developer incentives and programs that are available for the selected properties and a streamlined process for taking advantage of them. The EDA is uniquely positioned to assist the City in site acquisition and development.

- **Riverfront Development**

Frontage on the Appomattox and James Rivers is one of the City’s most unique assets. Historically, the waterfront has been the hub of commercial activity. In our modern economy the waterfront is highly valued for a variety of residential and commercial uses. Continued development of the Appomattox Riverwalk and Trail System would provide greater access to the river by citizens and visitors alike. Connecting the Riverwalk and Trail System to other parks and recreational areas will provide access to a larger cross

section of Hopewell's citizens. The development of the City Marina and other City owned properties into mixed-use developments should be aggressively pursued to accommodate higher valued residential and marine uses. Enhanced use of not only the shoreline but the river is a possibility. The City already has launching sites that could form the basis for a "blueways" trail or other "on-the-water" activities; fishing tournaments, raft races, boating rendezvous, etc. The development of the riverfront as described above will make Hopewell a more "livable" community attractive to a broad range of lifestyles from aging "Boomers" to the younger "millennial" generation.



VI. Planning Process

How the Work Was Performed

A Hopewell Economic Action Council (HEAC), representing the City's Economic Development Authority and key stakeholders in the City, was formed to guide the development of the strategic plan (see attachment "A" for the members of the group). This group met twice a month to develop the strategic plan. The bi-weekly meetings started in late July and finished at the end of the calendar year 2013. The strategic planning process included a review of the factors of successful communities, the components of successful economic development programs, identification of the City's economic development assets and challenges facing the City. The HEAC group took a field trip to visit the economic development programs of the City of Franklin and the Town of Smithfield. This trip demonstrated several successful economic development efforts in these communities that are similarly situated to Hopewell. The strategic planning process also included an assessment of the City's economic development and tourism efforts by key leadership from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Gateway Region and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (see appendix "B" for the summary report). The HEAC group identified an economic vision for the City, goals, objectives and strategies that would help the City achieve that vision. Because of the close linkage between previous planning studies for the City and this strategic planning effort, the HEAC reviewed these studies and incorporated many of the recommendations from these efforts that had not been fully implemented.



This plan incorporates an evaluation of statistics of the City economy. Key questions addressed during the HEAC meetings included:

- What assets and advantages does Hopewell have in conducting business?
- What issues should be addressed now to make for a better business environment in the future?
- Is the local economy functioning efficiently and achieving maximum benefit?
- Can Hopewell continue to achieve growth if current conditions remain the same?
- Are there opportunities to improve the economy that have been overlooked?

An important goal of this report is to help Hopewell leverage its existing strengths, i.e. its central location, reasonable cost environment, existing momentum to revitalize the downtown, its significant roll in our nation's history and key developable properties under City control. The report also identifies certain weaknesses that, if left unattended, will eventually hinder the City's ability to expand the existing tax and employment base.

When developing conclusions, the HEAC team recognized that all recommendations must leverage limited resources. An effort was made to focus on practical, implementable strategies that can be scheduled for short, medium, and long-term action.

VII. Action Plans

The following action plans take each recommended strategy and identifies an organization(s) that could take a lead roll in the implementation of that strategy. The action plan also identifies a suggested beginning date for starting work on each strategy.

The implementation of this plan is contingent upon numerous organizations being willing to actively carry out the recommendations. The City Council and City administration first must adopt the plan and provide the leadership in moving forward on the five catalyst initiatives recommended. Once these initiatives are launched the rest of the recommendations can follow.

Goal	Objectives	Strategies	Timeframe (Start Time)	Lead Responsibility
I-295 Interchange Development				
	Comprehensive Redevelopment Strategy	Redevelopment Plan	1st and 2nd Quarter 2014	City Economic Development
		Property Acquisition	2015	City Economic Development
		Marketing Campaign	2nd Quarter 2014	City Economic Development
		Streetscaping	2nd Quarter 2014	City Economic Development
		Discourage Commercial in Residential Structures	2nd Quarter 2014	City, Code and Zoning

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Timeframe (Start Time)	Lead Responsibility
Downtown Revitalization	Comprehensive Downtown Revitalization	Revise "Downtown Plan"	3rd Quarter 2014 or new plan	HDP, City, EDA, Main Street
	Safety and Security	River Connection	2014 -2019	HDP, City, EDA, Main Street
	Arts and Entertainment	Beacon Theater Performances	2014	City Manager & Beacon LLC, HDP
	Marketing Campaign	Beacon Area Improvements	Complete	HDP, City, EDA, Beacon LLC, Wells Group
	Connections to development areas	Entertainment Offerings	Now	City Manager & Beacon LLC, HDP, Tourism, City Economic Development, Wells Group
	Rt. 10 Corridor Improvements	Building Renovations	Now	HDP, Property owners, City Manager & Beacon LLC
		Selective Demolition	ASAP	City, Planning
		"Brand" Downtown	2014	HDP, City, Tourism
		Marketing Campaign	2014	HDP, HDP, Tourism
		Safety	Now	City, Police
	Beautification	Now	HDP, FOLAR and City	

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Timeframe (Start Time)	Lead Responsibility
Downtown Revitalization (cont.)				
		Zoning update	2014	HDP, City
		Strengthen Partnerships	Now	HDP
		Streetscaping & Signage	2014	HDP and City
		Fort Lee Connection		
Riverfront Redevelopment				
	Mixed-use Waterfront Development	Marina Redevelopment	2014	City Economic Development, EDA, City Manager
	Waterfront Trail System	River Trail	2014	City\FOLAR
		Water Trail	2014	City\FOLAR
		"On-the-Water" events	2014	City\FOLAR
		Canoe and Kayak Launches	2015	City\FOLAR
		Greenway Development	2015	City\FOLAR
		River Cruises	2015	City\FOLAR
		Event Center	2016	City\FOLAR
		Civil War Center	2016	City\FOLAR

Goal	Objectives	Strategy	Timeframe (Start Time)	Lead Responsibility
Housing Development and Redevelopment	Reduce the % of rental housing	Adopt revised "B" Village Plan	2015	City, Planning, HRHA, EDA
	Neighborhood Revitalization	Recruit Non-profit Developer	2014	City
	Add higher priced housing options	Riverfront Housing	2015	City Economic Development, EDA, City Manager, Planning
		Market-rate Housing Development	2015	City Economic Development, EDA, City Manager, Planning
		Replace Public Housing	2016	HRHA, City
		Rental Inspection Program	2016	City Manager, Planning
		Discourage Commercial in Residential Structures	2016	City Economic Development, EDA, City Manager, Planning
Health Care Expansion				
	Medical Care Campus	Health Care Campus Plan	2014	JRH, EDA, City Manager, health vendor, Planning
		Medical Support Facilities	2015	JRH, EDA, City Manager, health vendor, Planning

Goal	Objectives	Strategies	Timeframe (Start Time)	Lead Responsibility
Health Care Expansion (cont.)				
		Transportation Infrastructure	2016	JRH, EDA, City Manager, health vendor
		Rt. 10 Streetscaping		JRH, EDA, City Manager, health vendor, Planning
		Health Worker Housing	2016	JRH, EDA, City Manager, health vendor, Planning
		Assisted Living Facility	2018	JRH, EDA, City Manager, health vendor, Planning
Tourism Development and History Interpretation				
	Increase Tourism Visitation and Expenditures	Increased Marketing	2014	City, Tourism Dept.
	Enhance Tourism Venues	Regional Marketing	Now	City, Tourism Dept., Nonprofit partners
	New Tourism Venues	NPS Partnership	Now	City, Tourism Dept., Nonprofit partners

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Timeframe (Start Time)	Lead Responsibility
Tourism Development and History Interpretation (cont.)				
	Added Shopping, Dining and Lodging	Civil War Center	2014	City, Tourism Dept., Nonprofit partners
		Historic Hopewell Support	2014	City, HHF, Tourism Dept., Nonprofit partners
		Hunter House Renovation	2016	City, Tourism Dept., HHF, Non-profit partners
		Wayfaring Signage	2014	City, Tourism Dept., Nonprofit partners
		Waterfront Trail	2014	City, Tourism Dept., Nonprofit partners, FOLAR
		River Cruises	2015	City, Tourism Dept., Nonprofit partners
		Event Center	2016	City, Tourism Dept., Nonprofit partners
Manufacturing Base Expansion				
	Workforce Preparedness	Virtual Workforce Development Center	2016	City, State, non-profit partners, EDA, Business
	Industrial Sites	"Brownfield" Redevelopment	Now	City, State, non-profit partners, EDA, Business

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Timeframe (Start Time)	Lead Responsibility
Manufacturing Base Expansion (cont.)	Cost of Doing Business	Marketing Campaign		City, State, non-profit partners, EDA, Business
		"Community-Industry Partnership	Now	EDA, Schools
		Prince George Partnership	Now	City, State, non-profit partners, EDA, Business
Education and Youth Development				
	Preschool Preparedness	New Licensed Day Care		
	Increase Graduation Requirements	Expand "Smart Beginingis"	2014	Schools
	Career and Technical Education	Virtual Workforce Development Center	2016	
	College Preparedness	Expand Dual Enrollment	2015	Schools
		Raise Graduation Requirements	2015	Schools
		Teacher Housing	Now	City, Planning and EDA
Gateways Improvements				
	Corridor Streetscaping	Gateway Development Plan	Now	City, Planning and EDA

Goal	Objectives	Strategies	Timeframe (Start Time)	Lead Responsibility
Gateways Improvements				
	Wayfaring Signage	Community Partnerships	Now	City, Tourism, Planning and EDA
		I-295 Signage	2014	City, Planning

VIII. Next Steps

Any strategic plan is only as good as its implementation. A plan that looks attractive but sits on the shelf after it is adopted is nothing more than a wish list. The City and all of the key stakeholders that have rolls in implementing the plan must embrace this plan and be willing to implement its recommendations. City Council should take immediate action to start the implementation on the five Catalyst initiatives. These initiatives can be started while a broader process of stakeholder and community engagement is moving forward on the remainder of the plan's recommendations.

The future of Hopewell rests in a restructure and revitalization of its economic base. The time for concerted action to reverse economic decline is now. National economic revival is under way and demographic trends favor urban lifestyles. Hopewell is strategically located and can capitalize on these trends if it embraces the course of actions outlined in this Strategic Economic Development Plan.

The first step in the implementation of the recommendations of the plan is the formal adoption of the plan by City Council and referral of the plan to the various organizations and groups that have key rolls in its implementation. Prior to the adoption of the plan by City Council the community should become more aware of the plan and its recommendations. A series of community forums on the plan and individual meetings with stakeholder groups is recommended as a part of the process for final adoption by City Council.

The staff of several City departments will be key to the implementation of the plan. It is recommended that the City Manager create a process where he can continually monitor the progress of implementation of the plan's recommendations and the important activities of key City department personnel.

The implementation of the plan requires the active engagement of organizations and groups not directly affiliated with the City Administration. It is recommended that these organizations and groups reconstitute the "Hopewell Economic Action Committee" (HEAC) to coordinate the activities among the organizations and to monitor success on the implementation of the plan's recommendations. One of the key rolls of HEAC will be the continual communication of progress back to City Council, the City Administration and to the citizens. City staff should be assigned to help with the administrative and organizational functions of HEAC.

The Economic Development Authority (EDA) of the City has been fairly inactive until recently. With the appointment of new members and a new charge from the Mayor to help generate new economic development activity in the City, the EDA has been the primary

group responsible for the development of this strategic plan and is vested heavily in its implementation. The EDA can not undertake all of the recommendations contained in this plan but can play a key important roll in the implementation of select recommendations. The EDA can be an important institution in spurring the revitalization in select areas and strategic sites in the City. The powers of the EDA are uniquely suited to the acquisition and redevelopment of key properties having the potential for development and administering business incentives. The EDA with the assistance of City staff and support of City Council is ready to move forward on the Strategic Site Development catalyst initiative. The EDA stands ready to help the City implement the recommendations contained in this document.

Appendix A - Hopewell Economic Development Action Council - Members

Hopewell Economic Development Authority (EDA) Members:

- Ken Emerson
- Bob Moore
- Tom Wagstaff
- Scott Firestine
- Elliot Eliades
- Debbie Randolph

Additional HEAC members

- Louanne Fortenberry – City of Hopewell, Tourism Director
- Becky McDonough – Hopewell Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Executive Vice President
- Scott Zweifel – John Randolph Medical Center, Facilities Management Director
- Suzanne Jackson – John Randolph Medical Center, Chief Executive Officer
- Paul Tuck, Ashland, Plant Manager
- Dr. John Fahey, Hopewell Public Schools, Superintendent
- Steve Benham, Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Executive Director
- Andy Hagy, City of Hopewell, Economic Development Director
- Jackie Shornack, Hopewell, City Councilor
- Jasmine Gore, Hopewell, City Councilor
- Evan Kaufmann, Hopewell Downtown Partnership, Director

Appendix B - State and Regional Partner Dialogue

08/19/13

State and Regional Attendees

- Virginia Economic Development Partnership – Jay Langston
- Virginia Tourism Corporation
 - Steve Galyean
 - Judy Watkins
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development – Michelle Jones
- Virginia’s Gateway Region
 - Renee Chapline
 - Kyle Meyer

Each of the regional and state partners gave a brief overview of the services and assistance their agencies provide to localities to expand their economies.

The state and regional partners were asked to identify from their perspective the key assets that Hopewell can build upon to strengthen their economy. Here is a partial list of the assets identified:

Assets:

- Wastewater treatment capacity
- Infrastructure
- Interstate access
- Geographic location
- Regional workforce
- Civil War heritage
- Rivers
- The Beacon
- Proximity to metropolitan services and facilities
- Attractive streetscape in the downtown
- Industrial base
- Industrial worker skill sets
- John Randolph Hospital

During the discussion several **weaknesses** were identified as well:

- Lack of marketable land available for development
- There isn’t an active developer in the City
- Financing can be a problem for businesses
- Lack of “night life” for young professionals

There was an active dialogue where several **opportunities**, potential strategies and assets were identified:

- Develop a “river walk”
- River is shallow at the point – good for swimming or wading

- Develop a “supply chain” strategy to recruit new businesses
- Build upon the proximity to Fort Lee
- Support local businesses more – Buy Local –Shop Local – The Harvest Restaurant
- Leverage the “Farm to Table” trend
- Prepare an “economic disaster” plan
- Need to have broad community engagement and buy-in for the plan forward
- Build a “creative economy” downtown
- Create a culinary school in partnership with Fort Lee
- Have an artisans boulevard in downtown
- Need a seafood restaurant on the water
- Have a “Friday Arts Night” or other regular evening event in the downtown
- Have a stage downtown for concerts and performances
- Activities and events for Fort Lee soldiers
- Host a cat fish tournament
- Build a greater sense of community – “Hopewell Root” campaign

Challenges:

- Need to raise incomes
- 20% poverty in the City
- Need to raise the homeownership rate
- Need to improve the condition of the rental housing stock
- Need to expand the rental inspection program

At the end of the meeting the agencies were asked to recommend one or two ideas that would help the City move forward. Here are some of the suggestions:

- Improve the visual aesthetics of the entrance ways coming into the City
- Create a new “Brand” for the City
- Develop some quality “workforce” housing in the downtown
- Establish an annual heritage festival
- Authentic – Real – build upon the cultural heritage – basis for a creative economy
- Leverage the regional market position to increase local investment
- Create a local “vision” of a more prosperous future

Appendix C - Assets and Challenges

Assets

- Rivers (2)
- History
- Geography and location
- People
- Significant industrial base
- Small town atmosphere
- John Randolph Hospital
- Location/access to I-295
- Low tax rate
- Solid leadership core
- The Beacon Theater
- Library
- Extensive rail service
- Fort Lee
- Metropolitan location
- Prince George potential partner
- “Gateway” Region
- Transportation access – I-295 and Rt 10
- 2 Bridges across the rivers
- Rolls Royce
- Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing
- John Tyler Community College
- Richard Bland College
- Virginia State University
- Excess capacity for water supply and wastewater treatment
- Ethanol plant site
- Commonwealth Center for Applied Logistics Systems
- Richmond Marine Terminal
- Hopewell Marine Terminal
- Elementary and Middle Schools
- Main Street designation
- Diverse ethnic heritage

Challenges

- Poor quality, age and small unit size of the housing stock
- Percentage of rental to ownership housing
- Loss of jobs over the years
- Quality of the school system offerings
- The low wage rates paid by employers
- The visual clutter along the gateways into the City
- The industrial appearance coming in on Rt 10

- **Apathy among the citizens**
- **Lack of strong leader continuity**
- **Fragmented planning**
- **Defense cuts impacting Fort Lee**
- **Limited higher-end market rate housing**

Appendix D - The Roll of Economic Development Authorities (EDA's) in Fostering Development

An Economic Development Authority (EDA) or Industrial Development Authority (IDA) has unique powers granted by the Virginia General Assembly that allow them to play key rolls in the spurring the local economy. The powers of an EDA are the same as those of an IDA only the name is different. The purpose of an EDA is “to promote industry and develop trade by inducing manufacturing, industrial, governmental, nonprofit and commercial enterprises and institutions of higher education to locate in or remain in the Commonwealth... increase of their commerce, or through the promotion of their safety, health, welfare, convenience or prosperity.”

Typically, an EDA will perform one or more of the following three functions supporting the local economic development efforts:

- Acquiring and developing commercial or industrial property,
- Administering local incentives to businesses that locate or expand in the locality, or
- Providing long-term debt to businesses and the locality.

Acquiring and Developing Commercial or Industrial Property

EDA's have long been used for purchasing land, developing that land as an industrial park and then selling the developed land to industries locating in the locality. EDA's have an a distinct advantage in this process since they have the power to negotiate directly with the private business entity without having to solicit bids on the sale or transfer of the property or having to hold a public hearing prior to the sale. An EDA can be used to acquire, develop and sell commercial property as well as industrial property. These powers also extend to buildings as well as land. EDA's/IDA's have constructed shell industrial buildings as well as office buildings, training facilities and research and development facilities. An EDA can lease any real property within its possession.

Administering Local Business Incentives

EDA's are often used to administer incentives offered for business expansion or location within the locality. Localities have the power to make grants to private businesses but can't make loans or extend the credit of the locality in support of a private business. If incentives for business development take the form of a loan even if it is a forgivable loan based upon performance, the EDA becomes the local organization that can administer that incentive. While Virginia localities can't abate local real estate taxes for a business incentive like some other states, it can make a grant equivalent to the taxes paid by the company to the EDA that then passes that “incentive” along to the company. The incentives developed by the locality and administered by the EDA can target a geographic area of the City or a target industry sector or size or character of business. Local businesses incentives should be specifically tailored to the type of business development desired and structured to provide a positive “return on investment” to the City. The EDA

can be a critical component in the structure and delivery of local incentives for business development.

Providing Long-Term Debt to Businesses and Locality

EDA's have the power to issue bonds, secure debt and administer loan programs to further business development and support the construction of local public facilities. This array of financing tools is available to the locality to encourage business development, retention of business or the provision of public facilities in the community. While the EDA can issue bonds the bonds "shall not be deemed to constitute a debt or a pledge of the faith and credit of the Commonwealth, or any political subdivision thereof, including the locality which created the authority." The bonds issued by the EDA are repaid from the proceeds of the facilities supported through the financing. An EDA is not limited to financing facilities within the City but can also finance eligible facilities anywhere in Virginia. EDA's often issue federal tax-exempt bonds for manufacturing or exempt facilities. If a locality wishes to establish a revolving loan fund to support business development the EDA is a natural candidate organization to be responsible for administering such a loan program.

Other EDA programs

While the functions listed above are the most prevalent throughout the Commonwealth there can be considerable more based upon the powers granted to EDA's by the General Assembly. Here are a few examples of activities conducted by other EDA's:

- **ED Cheerleaders and Ambassadors**
- **Keeper of all Knowledge / Introductions to Other Businesses as Vendors and Customers**
- **Own and Operate Business Incubators**
- **Develop Local Infrastructure**
- **Business Recruitment Marketing**
- **Existing Business Retention and Expansion Programs**
- **Administer Specialty Zones (Tourism, Enterprise, Technology, etc.)**

The range of economic development activities conducted by EDA varies from locality to locality. Henrico and Halifax Counties administer all of their economic development functions through their EDA/IDA. Other localities only call upon their EDA/IDA on an "as needed" basis for bond financing. The participation of the EDA in furthering the economic development goals of the locality are totally up to the desires of that locality. The unique powers of an EDA can be a powerful tool for the City to achieve its economic development goals. The City administration and Council must embrace and support the EDA creating a strong partnership if it is to be an effective economic development organization.