L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
Virginia Commonwealth University

Redevelopment Plan for Fairmount Avenue, 25th Street and Nine Mile Road and Surrounding Neighborhoods

Prepared for
Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority
May 2008
Marilynn McAteer
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By
Marilynn McAteer

Panel members:
Michela Zonta, PhD. Assistant Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Virginia Commonwealth University

Morton Gulak, PhD. Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Virginia Commonwealth University.

John Sydnor, Senior Project Manager, Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority

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Redevelopment Plan
25th Street and Nine Mile Road

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I am especially grateful to Frances Stanley at Virginia LISC for her help with preparing the maps and John Taylor, City of Richmond Community Development Department for his help in gathering Neighborhoods in Bloom data. The members of the three civic associations were very gracious to provide insight and suggestions to me in the development of this plan.

I would also like to thank Better Housing Coalition, T.K. Somanath and all the BHC staff members who provided guidance and inspiration throughout my studies at Virginia Commonwealth University.

And finally, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my husband for his unending support.
Executive Summary

Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority was established in 1940 and been the primary provider of affordable housing in the city of Richmond. Its mission is to be the catalyst for quality affordable housing and community revitalization.

RRHA works closely with the city of Richmond to combat blight and revitalize and beautify the city through the construction of new housing and commercial properties and the redevelopment of existing housing and commercial properties. The Church Hill Redevelopment Area is a strategically important area in the City and it will play a critical role in the revitalization of this historic part of the City.

The Church Hill Redevelopment Area is advantageously located along a major travel route for Church Hill and eastern Henrico County. The arduous task of site assemblage and demolition of obsolete building has been accomplished. The nationally acclaimed Neighborhoods in Bloom program has been a very successful revitalization strategy through the targeted application of federal community block grant dollars. Blight has been removed and funding has been made available to nonprofit developers for the building of high quality single family homes for first time homebuyers. This investment has proven to be a catalyst for private market development.

Despite the increased residential development that has occurred in the neighborhoods the commercial corridor including 25th Street and Nine Mile Road remains blighted, forlorn and uninviting for the shopper and for the small business owner. There are very few retail shops left to serve neighborhood needs. The only grocery store serving the neighborhood, Sunny Market, closed in late 2007. Richmond Community Hospital, only a few blocks away, is isolated from the corridor.

The Development Plan was undertaken to assess the best and highest use for the land located at the intersections of Fairmont Avenue, 25th Street and Nine Mile Road along with the two neighborhoods in closest proximity.
After years of incremental acquisition, the study area is ready for development. If developed in a sensitive and flexible manner, it can be the anchor for the redevelopment of entire 25th street corridor. Slowly but surely, the urban fabric is being restored. Vacant properties have been developed with architecturally compatible houses and many older homes have been restored. Conversations with three neighborhood groups indicate a pride in the area and a yearning for neighborhood retail. On several occasions the following statement was made “I’d love to be able to walk to a coffee shop or have a nearby market to buy groceries”.

**Recommendations:**

Establish a sense of place at the intersection of 25th Street and Nine Mile Road by building two mixed-use buildings at the intersections of Fairmount, 25th Street and Nine Mile Road. Each building would provide approximately 10,000 square feet of retail or office and 10,000 square feet of residential use.

The first floor should be neighborhood oriented retail with the second floor being residential. Keeping the street level space flexible would allow businesses to decide the appropriate amount of space for their needs. The market analysis indicates sufficient demand for approximately 28,000 square feet of retail use. Suggestions include a coffee shop, small market, restaurant, clothing, and video stores. On street parking should be restored along Nine Mile Road and additional parking can be located in the rear.

The northern end of the site at Fairmount and 25th Street has sufficient space to build at least four townhouses. These could be two duplexes or four detached townhouses. Placing residential at the end of the block provides for a smoother transition to the neighborhood to the north.

A small park should be built to provide much needed community space and would act as a connector to the neighborhood directly north of the center.
The residential fabric should be reestablished along 24th Street. The corner lot should be anchored with two story homes, while the houses in the middle of the block should be compatible with the cottage style that is represented on the western side of the street.

The redevelopment area also includes several blocks on 26th Street. This area should remain residential. The density should remain intact but there is an opportunity to have a mix of house styles. Some should be universally designed one-story homes. This provides options for buyers with accessibility challenges or even empty nesters looking for one-story and lower maintenance homes. By shortening lots there is room to build a small mews that acts as a community garden space. There is sufficient space for the alley to be rebuilt.

Design matters - the rich architectural history of the surrounding neighborhoods must be respected. Sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, bicycle racks all add to a sense of place. Consideration must be made to the somewhat awkward intersection at 25th Street and Nine Mile Road. Installing crosswalks and time pedestrian signals will improve safety.

This intersection is the gateway to Church Hill from the east and the opportunity exists to create an identity that reflects and honors the past. Appropriate signage and streetscapes are ways in which this can be reinforced.

Implementing a multi-faceted redevelopment approach calls for a variety of partners that have expertise in the urban market place. Establishing linkages with Richmond Community Hospital would provide retail opportunity for its employees as well as the opportunity for affordable workforce housing. Combining commercial with residential development ensures a balanced strategy that creates a market and serves existing residents. After many years of decline, the area is ripe poised for creative, well-designed development that serves the needs of the residents.
Introduction
The Redevelopment plan for 25th Street and Nine Mile Road was undertaken as a requirement of URSP 762, Planning Studio II at Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2008. Specifically, this plan examines the current commercial and residential land use conditions and recent development activities that impact development potential for the study area. The study area has undergone some major changes in the last decade that position it for growth. This report briefly examines the history of the corridor, the existing conditions, and real estate development. Following the Introduction the report is divided into three sections.

The first section describes the corridor and the immediate neighborhoods (within a 1 mile radius) as it is today. Demographic data from the 2000 Census are analyzed along with a market analysis completed in 2002. Input was gathered from three stakeholder groups from the neighborhoods closest to the planning site.

The second section describes the assets and liabilities of the study area and sets the stage for the development recommendations for the planning site.

The third section outlines the goals and objectives for the planning site that include a zoning change, and a small change in the land use pattern. It also presents financing options as well as a marketing plan for the proposed development and identifies marketing strategies for the 25th Street corridor. This plan is intended to serve as a guide for future development at this pivotal intersection in the Church Hill neighborhood. Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority (RRHA) currently owns the planning site. It is anticipated that a request for proposal will be published within the next 12 months.
History
The study area is located within the city of Richmond’s East Planning District which is bounded by the James River to the south, Interstates 95 and 64 on the west and east, and the city limits to the north, east and south. It has a rich history dating back to the establishment of the city itself. Most of the district still contains the original street pattern established in 1737.\(^1\) The south side of Broad Street was the earliest to development and most of the neighborhoods north of Broad Street developed during the Reconstruction and Victorian times.\(^2\)

As this portion of Church Hill developed, commercial enterprises followed, first around the intersection of 25\(^{th}\) Street and Broad St, and later development occurred northward on 25\(^{th}\) Street. With the advent of the trolley system at the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century, there was a cluster of businesses at 25\(^{th}\) and Q Street that included a grocery, barber, and a druggist. At its heyday there was an array of stores that included a furniture store, hardware, department store, and a men’s clothing store. There were also a number of theaters including the Bojangles Theater, pictured below, located on 29\(^{th}\) and O Streets. Even though there was an exodus of both white residents and middle class African Americans during the 1950s to 1960s, an active commercial district survived. By the 1980s very few of the businesses remained.

The maintenance and rehabilitation of the district’s large stock of residential, commercial and industrial properties has become a priority for the city and the use of federal, state and local tax incentives has played a major role in the preservation of historic structures.

\(^1\) City of Richmond Master Plan, 2003, p157
\(^2\) Alliance to Conserve Old Richmond Neighborhoods
Description of the Area
Conservation Area

The Church Hill North Conservation Area adopted in 1995, was designed to eliminate blight and deterioration within a 26-block area in a historic area of Church Hill, north of Broad Street. Redevelopment areas are targeted for additional federal, state and local rehabilitation and redevelopment funds and frequently result in land use changes. Such designation allows for public acquisition of property for redevelopment purposes. In 2003 the study area was designated as a redevelopment area by the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority in 2003. The planning site is located in the heart of the Redevelopment Area.

The planning site is located within a CARE Zone and an Enterprise Zone. The CARE program is designed to revitalize and return economic development viability to older neighborhoods by providing loans and rebates to businesses located there. An Enterprise Zone provides a wide variety of financial incentives to businesses to locate or expand their business.

3 City of Richmond Master Plan, 2003. p.161
The Planning Site

The 25th Street and Nine Mile Road is located at the northern end of 25th Street in the historic area of Church Hill in the city of Richmond. The planning site is located within the larger Redevelopment Area that is bounded on the west by 24th Street, County Road to the north, 27th Street to the east and Fairmont and S Street to the south. The eastern boundary is approximately one mile from the Richmond/Henrico County boundary.

Map 2. Aerial View of Study Area
The planning area includes the eastern side of the 1300 block of 24th Street, the western side of 1300 block of 25th Street, the 2500 block of Nine Mile Road and the eastern side of the 1300 block of 26th Street. There are approximately 40 parcels. Over the course of five years RRHA has acquired contiguous property so that over time enough land is now assembled and large-scale development can occur. Approximately $2 million have been spent on acquisition and demolition. The following pictures represent the conditions of the planning site.
Land Use and Zoning
The Planning site’s land use currently allows for residential, mixed-use, commercial, institutional and public and open space activities. The Plan is recommending that Open & Public space be allowed in two additional locations (outlined in black on the Land Use Map).

Map 3. Land Use Map

The district is representative of many aging urban neighborhoods in cities across the United States. There is a mixture of residential, commercial, retail, and one remaining manufacturing site. Additionally, there are several institutional uses along the corridor. The city of Richmond maintains a neighborhood service center, a fire station, police station, and a highly used public library. Richmond Community Hospital (part of the Bon Secours Health System) is located at 28th and T Streets.

There are several large churches that control significant amount of land.

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Zoning
The planning site’s (the outlined area) land use is zoned for both residential and commercial activity. 24th, 25th and 26th Streets are zoned single family and Nine Mile Road is zoned business (B-2). The existing zoning map shows a variety of uses allowed within the study area. A large portion is zoned for several types of residential use that range from low density (R-5) to medium density (R-6) to higher density (R53). The Nine Mile Road and a portion of 25th Street is zoned B-2. The central portion of 25th Street is zoned Urban Business. There is one manufacturing site (M1), a working mill shop.

Zoning Definitions
R-5: This is a single-family designation with lot size of at least 6,000sf, width of 50 feet, front yard greater than 25 feet, side yard and back yard greater than 5 feet; and height restriction of 35 feet.

R-5A: This is a single and two family residential designation. It allows for single family detached or two-family detached dwelling units. Lot size is consistent with R-5 designation.
**R-6:** This is a single family detached and attached designation, allowing for greater density (10 units per acre). Lot sizes can be as small as 2,200 square feet with average width of 16 sf. SF detached units must have front, side and rear lots that are equal or greater than 15 sf. SF Attached units have similar requirements but have only a 3 sf requirement for side yard.

**R-7:** This is a Single and up to four family urban residential designation with up to 4 units attached laterally. Single-family attached and detached units have smaller lot sizes 2,200 and 3,600 sf respectively. Two family attached and detached have 4,400 sf lot sizes.

**R-53** The purpose of R53 is to allow multifamily buildings that have minimum lot sizes of 5,000 sf and each dwelling unit must be at least 1250 sf. It also requires usable open space that is equal to at least 40% of the lot size.

**UB** (Urban Business): The purpose is to encourage business areas with a densely populated pedestrian oriented urban shopping character compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods. The district is intended to promote continuity of storefront character along principal street frontages, preserve scale and character of existing urban shopping areas. Examples of allowed uses include: banks, art galleries, grocery stores, convenience, and specialty food and beverage stores. Dwelling units on the upper floors are allowed but not to exceed three times the amount of square footage allocated to commercial use.

**B-2** (Business): The purpose is to allow for a wide variety of business uses.

**M-1** allows for a variety of light industrial and manufacturing uses.

**I-1** Institutional Uses include library, churches, museums, hospital, and philanthropic organizations.
Description of Surrounding Area

A .5-mile and a 1-mile radius around the intersection of 25th Street and Nine Mile Road define the Study Area.

Residential areas surround the study area. To the south and west the neighborhoods are characterized predominately by two-story single-family homes. Many were built in the early twentieth century and are rich in architectural detail. Although this neighborhood suffered from years of neglect, it is showing significant signs of renewal. The zoning is R 6.

To the north the neighborhood is characterized by one-story ranch and bungalow style homes on larger lots. The pictures below illustrate the variety of architectural styles. It is less densely populated and the zoning is R5. Following Nine Mile Road to the east the corridor becomes a mix of residential and marginal businesses.

Less than a mile away on Nine Mile Road is Creighton Court, a large 400-unit public housing development.
Map 5. Map of the Study Area

Source: ESRI
Existing Building Conditions

Historically, the commercial corridor served the local neighborhoods everyday retail needs. There were a grocery store, drug store, bakery, clothing, and “dime store”. Over the past twenty years the district has suffered significant deterioration; most of the buildings are vacant and in serious state of disrepair. In spite of this, the corridor still provides a limited number of retail services to the neighborhood.

There are two commercial nodes, circled in blue, on 25th Street. Between Venable and Fairmount Ave. there is a cluster of businesses (listed in the table below) There are a small convenience store at the corner of Venable and 25th Street, three beauty and
barber shops, a beauty supply store, Edloe’s Pharmacy, and a Dollar General. The library is extremely active although the building is in poor condition.

Between Venable and Jefferson there is a cluster of institutional uses. There is a police precint, Vernon Harris Health Clinic, City offices known as the East District Initiative. Continuing south on 25th Street there is a small post office in the 400 block of 15th Street.

**Public Library at 25th St and R Streets**

Table 1. Building Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Approximate Square Footage</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dollar General</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>2500 Nine Mile Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundromat</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>2501 Nine Mile Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edloe Pharmacy/Medical Center</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>1132 25th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former gas station, car repair</td>
<td>3,750 sf</td>
<td>1133 25th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber Shop</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>1134 25th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DaVinci Pizza Shop</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1120 25th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakery/Residential (under renovation)</td>
<td>5,192 sf</td>
<td>1111 25th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair Salon/Barber</td>
<td>744/512 sf</td>
<td>1108-1110 25th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJ’s Fish Market</td>
<td>840 sf</td>
<td>1102 25th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Grocery</td>
<td>1,155 sf</td>
<td>2438 Venable Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Beauty Supply</td>
<td>2,356 sf</td>
<td>2500 Q Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Infrastructure

Over the past several years, as RRHA has been acquiring properties old buildings have been demolished and the sites cleared. Since these sites are vacant there is “no man’s land” mindset and so frequently the sites are littered. Along the Nine Mile Road section there are still a couple of vacant houses that have become a haven for loitering.

The planning site has few continuous sidewalks and crosswalks are poorly defined. There are traffic signals at this intersection although it remains awkward as 25th Street, S Street, Fairmount Avenue and Nine Mile Road Street meet. On 25th street there are decorative light posts.
**Demographics**

Between 1990 and 2000 the population experienced a gradual decline due to out migration within the .5-mile area and stayed approximately the same at the 1-mile radius. This trend was reflective of the overall changes in population in the city of Richmond, which had a 2.6% decline from 1990 to 2000. According to estimates by ESRI the population at the .5-mile and the 1-mile radius continued to decline by .6% and .38% respectively by 2007. In a recent report conducted by ZHA, Inc., the city population continued to shrink by another 2.5% between 2000 and 2006 and this trend is expected to continue until 2012.

Corresponding to the decline in population at the .5 mile there was a decline in the number of households with the trend projected to continue. At the one mile range the number of households increased slightly. The average household size is also decreasing slightly at both the .5-mile and 1-mile radii.

**Table 2 Population and Households 1990-2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>.5 mile</th>
<th>1 Mile</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>6,192</td>
<td>20,448</td>
<td>203,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5,266</td>
<td>20,464</td>
<td>197,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage change</strong></td>
<td>-1.61%</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>-2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Households</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,399</td>
<td>7,597</td>
<td>85,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,270</td>
<td>7,757</td>
<td>84,549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average HH Size</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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5 Marketability Features Contributing to the Next Decade of Downtown Richmond Virginia. ZHA, Inc.2007
Gender, Race, and Age

This area of Church Hill has long been predominately African American. According to the 2000 Census African Americans comprised 93% of the population within the .5-mile radius and 87% with the one-mile radius while the city’s population was 57.2% African American and 38.3% White. It is interesting to note that the White population increased by approximately 1% between 1990 and 2000 in both the .5 and the 1-mile radius. This may be attributed to escalating real estate prices in neighborhoods just south of the study area and the growing gentrification of Church Hill.

There is very little racial diversity within the planning area; other minority groups make up a very small percentage of the population (less than 2%). This compares to a 5% of the total city population including Hispanics, Asians and other minority groups.

The gender composition of both the .5 and 1 mile radii the area indicates that the area is predominately female and this is representative of the city as a whole.

Table 3 Population by Race, Gender, and Age 1990 - 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.5 Mile</th>
<th>1 Mile</th>
<th>Richmond City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Alone</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Alone</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990 0.5 mile</th>
<th>1990 1 mile</th>
<th>2000 0.5 mile</th>
<th>2000 1 mile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There is a general aging of the population in the study area that mirrors the trend experienced in the city between 1990 and 2000. There was an increase in the age group 35 to 54 years at both the .5 and the 1-mile radius (7% and 5% respectively).
And, according to estimates by ESRI, this trend continued into 2007. The study area is experiencing similar population shifts as the “baby boomer” generation begins to swell. For example, at the 1-mile radius the 35-54 age group was projected to increase to 30.1% and the 55+ population was expected to comprise 29.1% of the population, an increase of 9%. These changes in demographics will have ramifications for the neighborhoods surrounding the planning site in terms of housing preferences, services, and lifestyle choices.

**Education, Employment and Income**

The educational attainment level of adults 25 years and older is below the levels for the city as a whole at both the .5 and 1-mile radii. Nearly 50% do not have a high school degree and only 22% of the population has a college degree.

**Table 4 Population by Education Census 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.5 Mile</th>
<th>1 Mile</th>
<th>Richmond City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than HS</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Grad</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College/Degree</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5 Employment 16 years+ Census 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.5 Mile</th>
<th>1 Mile</th>
<th>Richmond City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Workforce</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6 Median Household Income Census 1990-2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.5 Mile</th>
<th>1 Mile</th>
<th>Richmond City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990 dollars adjusted</td>
<td>16,378</td>
<td>16,921</td>
<td>31,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for inflation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>18,800</td>
<td>19,348</td>
<td>31,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$23,267</td>
<td>$25,368</td>
<td>$35,764</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census 2000
Projections and Estimates: ESRI
The disparity of median income between the study area and the city is not surprising given the high percentage of residents not finishing high school. The median household income did have modest gains between 1990 and 2000 in the .5-mile and the one-mile areas even when adjusted for inflation. The incomes are significantly lower than the city as a whole due to a disproportionate percentage of households who have incomes at the poverty level. In 2000, the poverty rate for families was 17.1% for the city. While 35.4% of the families living within the .5-mile radius had incomes at the poverty level and at the one-mile area 35.8% had incomes at or below the federal poverty area. This is partially explained by the fact that Creighton Court, a public housing community, is located within the mile radius as well as three low-income senior housing buildings.
Housing

The health and stability of a neighborhood is often gauged by the percentage of owner occupied housing units. Vacant properties are considered problematic because of the risk of vandalism, crime and blight. Most neighborhoods are cautious about the percentage of renter occupied units because of the perceived lack of long-term investment.

In 1990 within the .5 mile radius 35% of the housing units were classified as owner occupied, 43.5% were renter occupied; and there was a 21.6% vacancy rate. By 2000 these numbers were beginning to shift slightly. The rate of owner occupied stayed constant at 35% but there was an increase in the percentage of renters. This shift may be due to the decrease in the percentage of vacant properties. At the 1 mile point there was a small increase in the total number of properties but owner occupied tenure decreased by a 2%.

According to projections and estimates provided by ESRI, at the half-mile radius owner occupied housing was projected to decrease slightly by 2007 with a corresponding increase in renter occupied housing. Vacant properties decreased by 3.2% from 1990 to 2000 and then creep upward to 21.4% by 2007. At the one mile radius the picture changes slightly, there is an increase in the number of housing units, the ratio between owner occupied and renter occupied stays the same but the number of vacant properties was projected to increase from 14.9% in 2000 to 17.5 % in 2007.
Table 7 Housing Units Census 1990, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.5 Mile</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>1 Mile</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units 1990</td>
<td>3,058</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>9,088</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>2,803</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>4,794</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units 2000</td>
<td>2,821</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>9,116</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>2,611</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>5,146</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>1,359</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 8 Housing Units 2007

Source: US Census 2000
Projection and estimations: ESRI

Affordability

Since housing costs are the largest household expense, another measure of economic health for families is the portion of household income that is devoted to housing costs. According to the 2000 Census approximately 20% of the owner occupied households within the .5 mile radius paid more that 30% of their income on housing and nearly half of all renters paid over 30%. At the 1-mile level there were a higher percentage of owners who had housing costs exceeding the affordability mark (30%). And for the renters at the 1-mile point approximately 41% had housing costs over 30%.
Surrounding Influences

Richmond Community Hospital (RCH) is located less than 1 mile from the study area. It has been a part of this community for many years. It is the only major employer in the community, employing approximately 320 people. RCH is a part of the Bon Secours system of health care centers in the region. It has 104 beds along with medical offices.

Richmond Community Hospital

Creighton Court is a large public housing community that is located approximately one mile from the study located on Nine Mile Road. It provides housing for 545 households with a total population of 1,444 residents.

Table 9. Creighton Court Characteristics

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age Head of Household</td>
<td>39.3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Dependents</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Households with Employment</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average income</td>
<td>$9,539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RRHA
Public Safety

Table 10 INCIDENTS IN NEIGHBORHOODS SURROUNDING NiB AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Violent</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001*</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>1182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>1012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Richmond, Community Development Department

Analysis of reported criminal incidents demonstrates that the Church Hill Central neighborhood had a high number of criminal activities at the beginning of the decade. But over the past several years the number of reported incidents has decreased sharply. This data was obtained from the City of Richmond’s Community Development Department, which tracks a number of statistics from the Neighborhoods in Bloom (NiB) areas.

The table demonstrates the reduction of crime in the Church Hill Central NiB neighborhood between 2000 and 2007. The study area is in the heart of this district. The downward trend of crime occurred across the NiB neighborhoods as well as the city as a whole.

Despite this downward trend, crime remains problematic and the perception that the area is dangerous remains a barrier in attracting prospective homebuyers and businesses.

Table 11 Crime

![Crime in NiB Neighborhoods](image)
Development Activities - Neighborhoods in Bloom Program

In 1999 the city of Richmond launched an innovative program that supported the restoration of Richmond’s historic neighborhoods by focusing the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funding to six neighborhoods. The goal was and remains to promote housing renovation, restoration, construction, and sales in select neighborhoods. The hope was that with targeted funding a “tipping point” would be reached that would reverse the downward slide.⁶

Map 7. Map of the Target and Impact NiB areas

⁶ City of Richmond website www.richmond.ci.va.us
Real Estate Assessments
The study area (outlined in red in the map on the preceding page) is located at the northern end of the NiB Church Hill Central district. A review of the real estate tax assessment data paints a much different picture than the 2000 Census data and the projections that are based on that data. The total residential assessed values experienced a significant increase during this time. The Impact area, (outlined in pink) is where public funding has been focused. It has benefited the most with values increasing over 1000%. Even when the values are adjusted for inflation the increase was 838%. There was spillover effect to the target area (outlined in dark orange), which saw an increase of 439% when adjusted for inflation. Both areas outpaced the overall increase in residential real estate values in the city. And, both the Impact Area and the Target areas saw an increase in the number of homeowners. These new home owners are very likely to have incomes higher than the 2007 projected median income of $25,368.

Table 12 Aggregate Assessed Residential Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Residential Value</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact Area</td>
<td>$8,122,500</td>
<td>$98,124,800</td>
<td>1108%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Area</td>
<td>$21,354,800</td>
<td>$154,201,300</td>
<td>622%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>$5,664,061,275</td>
<td>$17,203,837,900</td>
<td>204%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Richmond, Department of Community Development

Table 13 Single Family Assessed Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single Family Residential</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>% Chg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact Area Avg Value</td>
<td>$34,407</td>
<td>$117,686</td>
<td>242%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Area Avg Value</td>
<td>$28,803</td>
<td>$110,983</td>
<td>285%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Value</td>
<td>$91,319</td>
<td>$190,897</td>
<td>109%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Richmond, Department of Community Development
In a study sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond the authors reported that the city’s investment of $14.8 million would pay for itself through increase real estate taxes over the course of 20 years. Their analysis only examined impact on single family residential properties in the NiB area and not other types of residential and non-residential properties in the target area.

**Future Development Activity**
The city of Richmond and its community partners including RRHA will continue to target financial resources to the study area and the surrounding neighborhoods. Residential development is slated to expand north of Fairmount Ave. between 23rd and 29th St. and in the neighborhood between 25th Street and 28th Street south of Nine Mile Road. Better Housing Coalition (BHC), a local community development organization, has played a significant role in the residential development in the NiB neighborhoods. The one remaining industrial site, located at 28th and S Street is under contract pending a rezoning application. If developed it will add another 50-60 residential units and possibly commercial space.

**Map 8 Future Development**

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7 John Accordino, PhD and George Glaster, PhD, Peter Tatian. The Impacts of Targeted Public and Nonprofit Investment on Neighborhood Development. 2005.
Traffic
According to a Traffic Profile obtained from ESRI data (2002), the daily traffic counts indicate that there are approximately 9,000 vehicles traveling through the intersection of Fairmount and 21st Street, just four blocks from the planning site. At the intersection of Nine Mile Road and N 28th Street the count is about the same. Nine Mile Road is major thoroughfare to and from this section of Church Hill. It provides easy access to Interstate 64 enabling travelers to access downtown and suburban shopping within a 10-minute drive.

Map 9 Traffic Counts

Source: ESRI

Public Transportation

Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) is the Richmond area’s public transportation system. It serves the city of Richmond and provides limited service in the surrounding counties. Residents living near the planning site have access to four public
transit routes. The # 7 is a circular route that extends into the eastern portion of Henrico County. Routes 3, 4, and 10 are specific to Church Hill; the #3 and #4 routes connect riders to the downtown area. Seniors living in the city are eligible for curb-to-curb service through the Care Van. This is reserved for seniors and the disabled; reservations must be made for specific trips.

Map 10  GRTC Route Map for Church Hill

Source: GRTC

There are three bus stops within walking distance to the planning site: Nine Mile Road and 26th St., 25th and Q Streets, and Fairmount Ave. and 22nd St. Data obtained from GRTC’s Comprehensive Operations Analysis Report indicates that daily ridership on the #7 was 750; daily ridership on the #3 and #4 was 3800.

Worker’s Mode of Travel and Commuting Time

According to the 2000 Census data, at the .5-mile radius 17.5% of workers aged 16 and older use public transportation to get to places of employment. At the 1-mile radius this percentage increases to approximately 20%. The majority of workers (61.1%) who live within .5 mile of the planning site travel over 20 minutes to reach their place of employment and 57% of workers who live within the 1 mile radius travel over twenty minutes to work.
Community input is a critical component to crafting a redevelopment plan. The influence and power of community groups are an integral part of the process. For too many years urban revitalization plans literally imposed redevelopment plans on minority communities without any regard to their needs or the value of their ideas.

Three civic associations were interviewed to ascertain their views of the 25th Street corridor, their shopping patterns, and their ideas for the study area. The civic associations are: New Visions Civic Improvement League, Unity Civic Association, and Union Hill Civic Association. These groups represent the neighborhoods directly to the south, north and southwest of the study area. There is not a functioning civic group to the east.

Members of the New Visions and Unity associations were predominately African American, older, and have lived in the neighborhoods for many years. They have fond memories of the corridor in its heyday. Members of the Union Hill association were predominately white, middle aged residents who have moved there in the past few years.

When asked about where they shop for convenience goods, responses varied from Kroger and Ukrop’s on Laburnum, WalMart in Mechanicsville. Those who rely on public transportation travel to the Willow Lawn Shopping center located at Broad and Willow Lawn Drive (over 7 miles away) or Kroger on Lombardy Street. Only a few said they shopped at The Market on E. Main St., which is only about 1 mile away. For other retail needs, e.g. clothing, most indicated that they shop in Henrico County.

Many of the residents reported that they do patron a few of the shops on 25th Street: Edloe’s Pharmacy, Da Vinci’s Pizza Parlor, the Public Library, ABC store and the Family Dollar.

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8New Visions Civic Improvement League February 15, 2008 1100 N. 23rd Street
Unity Civic Association March 17, 2008 1500 N. 23rd Street
Union Hill Civic Association March 23, 2008 303 N. 22nd Street
There was great interest in what type of uses should be included in the study area. Most said a small grocery with a prepared foods service would be the primary choice. Other suggestions include: coffee/ice cream shop, bakery, medium priced restaurant and pub, bike shop, gym, and a small park. Several members thought relocating the 25th Street Post Office or the Library would an appropriate use.

The majority of the members said they preferred owner occupied residential development. Most felt there was sufficient senior housing in the vicinity. (There are 3 communities within the .5-mile radius)

**Existing Commercial**

The table below indicates where many residents shop for groceries and other convenience goods. There was not any preferred shopping center that residents identified that they shopped at most frequently.

**Table 14 Preferred Shopping Locations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Store</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Distance from Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kroger/Ukrop</td>
<td>Laburnum Ave</td>
<td>4 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Lion</td>
<td>Nine Mile Rd.</td>
<td>4 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Lion</td>
<td>Williamsburg Rd.</td>
<td>2.5 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrop</td>
<td>Harrison Street</td>
<td>3 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kroger</td>
<td>Lombardy St.</td>
<td>3 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Market</td>
<td>E. Main St.</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Lion</td>
<td>Mechanicsville Tnpk</td>
<td>2 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kroger</td>
<td>Willow Lawn Dr</td>
<td>7.5 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal Mart</td>
<td>7430 Bell Creek Rd</td>
<td>6.5 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Market Analysis

There remains a small business district on 25th Street. There are ten shops that are actively doing business. There is one store that is under renovation. (See page 13 for the chart of existing businesses). There are three residences on the street and several other uses that are not open to the public.

In 2001 Nottingham Associates completed a Market Analysis for the 25th Street corridor, which included the planning site for this study. Over the past seven years little has changed in terms of commercial or retail activity. It is even reasonable to state that the conditions are worse. The grocery store, which was the focal point of the 2001 Market Analysis, is no longer in business. The building was sold and the store reopened but no improvements were made. It too went out of business in 2007. The building is once again up for sale. There was a Rite Aid on the corner of 25th Street and Fairmount Ave. It closed and has reopened as a Dollar General. Da Vinci’s Pizza Parlor is the only new business on 25th Street to open although there is another building that is undergoing renovation.

The recommendations of the Nottingham analysis hinged on having a 28,000 square foot anchor grocery store along with the then existing 15,000 sf pharmacy: Rite Aid. It also suggested that the corridor could support 15,000 square feet of service retail: video, cleaners, mail, bank, and 5,000 sf of restaurant and food establishments. Another key component of the overall revitalization strategy was the development of a strong civic and institutional cluster that would focus on workforce development, training, and education services.

The challenges of assembling enough land, attracting the necessary capital, and garnering enough political will to implement any of the recommendations were too daunting to overcome. Additionally, changes in the city’s leadership including the RRHA left the study on the proverbial bookshelf. A positive outcome though was RRHA’s

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decision to have the northern end of the corridor (the focus of this plan) designated as a Redevelopment Area. By focusing resources both financial and manpower, enough land has been assembled to initiate redevelopment.

There are powerful reasons to begin development at this pivotal intersection. It has visibility, it has the opportunity to create a linkage with Richmond Community Hospital, the only major employer in the area, and there have been significant improvements in the real estate market.

Data obtained from ESRI and the Consumer Expenditure Survey (2002, 2003, 2004)\textsuperscript{10}, confirms the findings from the Nottingham Study. There is considerable unmet retail demand within the .5 radius. This is understandable given that there are very few retail opportunities. At the 1-mile radius, there is sufficient expenditure to support a full service restaurant, florist, clothing and shoe store, office and gifts and a book store.

\textsuperscript{10} ESRI. Retail MarketPlace Profile. 2007
Part II - ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
Assets and Liabilities

Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a district whether it is a neighborhood based retail center or a larger market area is a critical step in determining the area’s competitive advantage and it can act as a guide for the development plan.

Assets

➢ The location is a major asset. In addition to its proximity to Interstate 64, making access to downtown and suburban areas quick, the study area is located on a major arterial road leading into the city.
➢ There are approximately 9,000 commuters who pass by this site every day and another 3,800 who use nearby public transportation.
➢ Acquisition of a sufficient amount of land to build to scale is always a challenge especially in urban neighborhoods. Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority has spent several years acquiring the needed properties. Most of the land has been cleared and is ready for development.
➢ The site is within an Enterprise and CARE Zones. This makes various tax incentives programs available for developers.
➢ The area has a long and rich history of being a vibrant neighborhood.
➢ There is support from neighborhood groups that are eager to have a high quality retail center within walking distance.
➢ There are strong institutional uses, e.g. library, hospital, city offices within a half-mile of the site.
➢ Continued residential development will provide more rooftops and capital investment in the neighborhoods.
➢ There are several churches in the study area. They generate traffic on Sundays and occasionally during the week for special events.
➢ The reduction of crime is a positive indicator of improved safety of the surrounding neighborhoods.
➢ The lack of existing retail provides opportunity for new businesses.
➢ The city is considering extending the Urban Business designation along Nine Mile Road in order to allow more flexible use.
Development along 24th and 26th Street is primarily residential infill. Opportunity exists to recommend housing that could suit a variety of demographic needs.

Creating an anchor development could be a catalyst for further commercial development

**Liabilities**

- The surrounding neighborhoods have relatively lower median incomes as compared to the city.
- There is very little surrounding retail to support new retail development.
- The deteriorated condition of 25th Street is a barrier to recruiting and marketing efforts.
- There is a lack of cohesive urban design or pedestrian amenities.
- There is no physical connection to Richmond Community Hospital, the only major employer in the area.
- Further deterioration creates an atmosphere of apathy at best and can have a negative affect on residential values.
PART III – SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AREA
Summary of Study Area

This section of the report will provide an overview of the study area based on all the information gathered from the city of Richmond, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, stakeholder interviews, personal observation, and previous reports.

The planning site at Fairmount Avenue, 25th Street and Nine Mile Road and the surrounding neighborhoods has been undergoing significant change for the last twenty years. From the period of 1990 to 2000 it saw a decline from a number of perspectives. There was a loss of population, little gains in terms of income and employment of its residents. There was a decline in the business activity along 25th Street that added to a sense of neglect.

But as a result of a bold change in urban policy, there is reason for hope. The Neighborhoods in Bloom Initiative and the designation of the planning site as a Redevelopment Area has poured millions of dollars into this area. And, it is having a very positive effect. Property values have climbed steadily, on the whole more than the rest of the city. There has been an increase in homebuyers and new development continues to occur. Typically vacant properties are viewed as a sign of decline but it can be argued that in this instance, the vacant properties will facilitate new development.

The location is the area’s primary asset along with the history and architecture of the surrounding neighborhoods. It has good public transportation and high traffic volume on a daily basis. In any urban setting assembling enough land to have a development of scale is extremely difficult. In this case RRHA has spent a number of years and over $2 million to prepare the site for development. This will allow for flexible site design and reconfiguration of the number of houses to be built. Density can be increased slightly by decreasing lot sizes on the 24th and 26th Street.
Apartments on the second floor of the two corner buildings add more population.
PART IV - THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
The Vision

The 25th Street and Nine Mile Road corridor is a vibrant, pedestrian friendly destination for nearby residents and commuters. The mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses serves as an anchor for the revitalization of the neighborhood-shopping district. Further it acts as a catalyst for additional development on 25th Street.

The Plan

Strengthening the 25th Street and Nine Mile corridor is a critical component of the overall revitalization of Church Hill. Over the past eight years the neighborhood has experienced significant residential development. Block by block, neighborhoods have been rebuilt by eliminating blight, building new homes on vacant lots and restoring and preserving houses dating from the late 19th and early 20th century. Real estate values have seen dramatic increases. Homebuyers are typically young singles and couples anxious to own their first home, build equity, and be part of the revitalization effort.

Healthy urban neighborhoods are characterized by a variety of uses: residential representing many types and sizes, commercial, institutional, and great public spaces. The overarching goal of this plan is to create an exciting neighborhood destination that will serve some shopping needs but also provide residents with a place to congregate. This will be accomplished by creating a mixed-use anchor development at the highly visible intersection that serves as a gateway to this historic area of Richmond.

The plan builds on the residential development that has occurred over the past eight years. The plan provides a framework for development that includes recommendations for new retail, commercial and residential, and park spaces that respect the history and urban character of the neighborhood. The plan also makes specific recommendation to improve the urban design of the planning site.

The urban design portion of the plan recommends a variety of building styles that are appropriate for both function and aesthetic appeal. It provides guidelines on the type of building materials that add value and durability. The urban grid is improved so that
alleys can perform their function but also be considered an amenity for residents. Attention is paid to how the primary streets Nine Mile Road, 25th Street and Fairmount Ave. function. Emphasis is placed on improving pedestrian flow and adding elements that enhance the image and visibility of the corridor. Signage that welcomes travelers to the corridor, street trees that provide needed shade, and street furniture all add visual appeal and contribute to the sense of place.
Site Plan

- Residential
- Mixed-Use Buildings
- New Park
Goals and Objectives

Goal 1
A mixed-use development combines neighborhood oriented retail on the first floor and residential space on the second floor at the intersection of Fairmount Ave. and 25th Street and the 25th St and Nine Mile Road junction.

Objective 1.1
Build two 2-story buildings in L shaped configurations to maximize the corner locations. This creates a strong presence on highly visible streets and creates a gateway. Both buildings can provide 20,000 square feet. The street level, (10,000 sf) should be flexibly designed for retail or even a civic use, like the post office. The second floor can comfortably have 8 apartments each.

Objective 1.2
Improve access to the 25th Street and Nine Mile Road site by expanding the alley that intersects with Nine Mile Road. See site plan.
Objective 1.3
Design parking to be located behind the buildings thus preserving the face of the shops.

Objective 1.4
Recommend one hour on street parking for convenience shopping.

Goal 2
1300 blocks of 24th and 26th Streets and a portion of 25th Street are consistent with residential character of the neighborhood. Both sides of 26th Street can accommodate 19 single family homes. 24th Street will have 10 single family homes.

Objective 2.1
Build houses that mirror and compliment the existing architecture of the neighborhood. Two 2-story Italianate duplexes are recommended for the 25th Street site. Duplexes will be a smooth transition from the larger building to the less dense residential configuration in the neighborhood to the north.

Objective 2.2
Two story houses and one and one and half story cottage styles should be built on 24th and 26th Streets. These styles are attractive to a wide variety of homebuyers including “baby boomers” interested in downsizing.
Objective 2.3
Re-establish the alleys on 24th and 26th Streets. The alley serves an important function within the urban neighborhood. It can accommodate extra parking spaces, small garages and improve trash removal.

Objective 2.4
Create a mews behind houses on 26th Street. Shortening the depth of these lots provides space to a mews that would provide extra community space. Smaller yards are also attractive to the urban homeowner as there is less yard to maintain.

Goal 3
A small park exists behind the mixed-use building on 25th and Nine Mile Road. The park is visible from the duplexes on 25th Street and also the neighborhood directly behind the planning site.

Objective 3.1
Reclamation of previously unused space will be a neighborhood amenity for nearby residents and shoppers.
Goal 4

The urban design features of the planning site are enhanced.

**Objective 4.1:**
Lighting is an important function within urban neighborhoods. It should contribute to a sense of safety but also promote the neighborhood feel. The city of Richmond has detailed Urban Design Guidelines that should be followed.

**Objective 4.2**
Define street crossings at the intersections to define the space and increase safety with brick pavers. This will increase safety for pedestrians crossing the streets by clearly identifying where to cross.

**Objective 4.3**
Repair and rebuild sidewalks to promote walking to the shops.

**Objective 4.4**
Install street trees. Street trees are an important element to the urban streetscape. They not only provide shade but contribute to the sense of enclosure.

**Objective 4.5**
Install bike racks to promote alternate travel modes. Bike racks should be installed in front of both anchor buildings. Landscaping can enhance the appearance.
Objective 4.6
Install signage at key intersections to create a sense of identity. The city of Richmond allows the use of banners affixed to utility poles as a way to enhance the visual and aesthetic character of the city.11 Banners can be used as a way to announce that someone has arrived at the historic area of Church Hill Central.

Goal 5
High quality building materials compliment and enhance the surrounding architecture. This not only adds to the visual quality but decreases maintenance.

Objective 5.1
The anchor buildings will be brick clad.

Objective 5.2
Residential buildings will be sided with HardiPlank™ or comparable material for aesthetics and durability.

Objective 5.3
All new construction will be built to conform to EarthCraft™ or a similar set of standards. This method of building provides for high energy efficiency and low maintenance. This contributes to long term affordability and durability of the structures.

Objective 5.4
The one and one and half story homes will be built to accommodate an older buyer with features like wider doorways, master baths on the first floor, and minimum grade to front porch.

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Implementation Plan:

Request for Development proposals
Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority should begin putting together Request for Proposals for the different aspects of this Plan:

- The two mixed-use buildings that include reestablishing the alleys on 25th Street and Nine Mile Road. This process should begin within the next six months.

- Single-family development on 24th and 26th Streets.

- Park design proposal from a certified Landscape Architect

Rezoning

- Participate and facilitate the rezoning of Nine Mile Road to UB. This zoning classification is more suited to the goal of this plan to re-establish this corridor into a pedestrian oriented shopping and residential destination.
Financing

The planning site is located in an Enterprise Zone. There are a number of incentives available to businesses that locate there. A sampling of them includes:

- Real Property Investment Grant, which is available to enterprise investors whose minimum investment for new construction, is $250,000.
- Real Estate Tax Abatement Program provides for ten-year tax relief on a graduated basis.
- Machinery and Equipment Rebate equal to 50% of the value. This could be an incentive for a coffee shop.
- Development Fee Rebate provides a one-time fee rebate up to a maximum of $1,000.

The site is also located within a CARE Zone. This program is designed to revitalize and return economic development viability to older neighborhoods. Loans and rebates are available for businesses located in a CARE Zone.

The NiB Revolving Loan Fund provides up $50,000 in for working capital, machinery and equipment purchase

New Market Tax Credits is a viable source of financing for this type of mixed use development. It is designed to provide investors such as banks, insurers, investment funds, corporations, and individuals with credits against federal income tax in return for new investments made in eligible businesses and commercial projects in low-income areas. Local Incentives Support Corporation (LISC) has received an allocation; and there is a local LISC affiliate in Richmond.

There is CDBG funding available through the city of Richmond to support residential development. This funding is awarded to nonprofit community development corporations, which use the funding to subsidize single-family development. There is downpayment assistance available to assist qualified first time home buyers. This is also administered through the nonprofits.
Capital Improvement funding is available for infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, water and sewer connections.
Marketing Plan

The purpose of the marketing plan is to provide a framework by which the anchor development, which includes the two buildings at the intersections of Fairmount and 25th Street and the 25th Street and Nine Mile Road, are leased at the retail and the residential levels. It also outlines strategies to attract a variety of homebuyers to the new residential development. The plan also addresses the longer-term issue of branding and promoting the 25th Street corridor.

The marketing plan described assumes that the developer has experience developing mixed-use properties in the urban context and has sufficient resources to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy. It also assumes that Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority is an active partner in promoting the development.

Part 1 Site Specific:

➢ The short-term plan establishes recommendations for recruiting businesses and possible civic uses for the anchor developments.
➢ It establishes a set of recommendations for attracting a mix of buyers for the single-family homes and well as the rental opportunities in the anchor development

Strategies for Anchor Development – total of 20,000 square feet of business space

It is important that at least one primary tenant is secured before other recruiting begins. With a tenant in hand, like the library, other businesses are more likely to lease space.

1. Create an attractive marketing prospectus that paints the picture of the development as a pedestrian family friendly destination where someone can see himself or herself stopping at the post office or library, getting a cup of coffee on their way to work.
2. Establish graphic guidelines that reinforce consistency of message and look, which begin to reinforce the identity.

3. Develop a tag line that can be used in all marketing materials: “The heart and soul of Church Hill”. Use the tag line to begin the creation of the neighborhood’s identity: banners attached to street lamps, neighborhood festival, marketing materials.

4. Create a website for the entire development, neighborhood retail, apartment living and single-family homes. Link to the City of Richmond’s site

5. The brochure should list the advantages of the location: daily traffic counts, proximity to public transportation with ridership, market profile, available square footage, rents, tax incentives.

6. Initiate discussions with the nearby library and post office to determine interest in relocating to newer space. The advantages include space designed to meet their particular needs. The site has a highly visible location. Parking is available.

7. Begin discussions with Richmond Community Hospital about need for office or ancillary space.

8. Work with City of Richmond’s Office of Economic Development to promote the site.

9. Include the churches in the neighborhoods in any community event or publicity, e.g. announcement in church bulletins.

10. Coordinate a community event in conjunction with an existing community event

11. Advertise in neighborhood civic associations newsletters as well as websites.

12. Find a Church Hill friendly reporter and pitch a story

**Strategies for Residential Development:**

A healthy neighborhood has a mix of incomes and age groups, from the first time homebuyer to the aging baby boomer interested in an urban lifestyle. The styles of houses recommended in this plan are suitable for a wide range of buyers.

There is sufficient space for 16-18 one and two bedroom apartments located on the second floors of the anchor buildings.
The plan also identifies space for a 33 single-family homes including new and rehabbed homes.

These recommendations assume that RRHA has solicited development bids from homebuilders with extensive experience building in urban neighborhoods and that they have resources to properly market the neighborhood.

1. Create a marketing brochure that describes the qualities and advantages of the neighborhood. It is important to remember that it’s the neighborhood and its qualities that are being sold; the houses come next. Special financing and other incentives should be highlighted.

2. Create a workforce housing partnership with the hospital. Richmond Community has 350 employees, many of whom work in nearby neighborhoods. The housing plan can also be applied to the rental market. The hospital has a home buying incentive program that is not being widely used. Home buying workshops could be hosted by the hospital.

3. Other outreach efforts to employers could also be used. Examples include Virginia Commonwealth University and the medical campus and the biotechnology companies.

4. Taking advantage of electronic marketing, linking to the city’s website as well as neighborhood blogs and websites (Church Hill News), A.C.O.R.N.,

5. There is the opportunity to partner with the churches in this initiative and create a “Return to Church Hill “ Campaign.

6. Conduct Open Houses

7. RRHA could promote some of the housing to qualified residents of Creighton Court.

8. All the traditional marketing efforts should be used: contracting with a real estate agent familiar with Church Hill, MLS listing
Part II

Long-term campaign for the 25th Street Corridor:

2. Investigate advantages of applying for Main street program.
3. Once established, the association should establish a few working committees to work on identity and image making, business retention, improvement, and recruitment.
4. Educate all existing businesses of advantages of financial incentives for façade improvement and other city programs aimed at improving business districts.
5. Work with city to enforce building code requirements.
6. Sponsor a clean up day.
7. RRHA offers relocation packages to businesses that want to leave.
8. Form linkages with businesses all along the corridor, including those closet to Broad Street
Appendix
References


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