

Revitalization

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Revitalization is one part of an overall County strategy to bring about the economic rejuvenation of older retail and business centers. Specifically, through the targeted efforts of the Revitalization Program it is hoped that these areas will become more commercially competitive, offer better services and improved living and shopping opportunities and become viable candidates for private reinvestment. In 1986, the Board of Supervisors established a Commercial Revitalization Program to improve the economic health of mature commercial areas in the County. Three revitalization areas were designated: Annandale, Bailey's Crossroads and Springfield. In 1995, the Richmond Highway Corridor was added to the revitalization program. In 1998, as part of the County's continuing revitalization efforts, the Board of Supervisors added three more revitalization areas, bringing the total number of Commercial Revitalization Districts/Areas (CRDs/CRAs) to seven (7), including: the Commercial Revitalization Districts (CRD) of Annandale, Bailey's Crossroads/Seven Corners, McLean, Richmond Highway, and Springfield; and the Commercial Revitalization Areas (CRA) of Lake Anne Village Center, and Merrifield.

On July 1, 2007, the Fairfax County Office of Revitalization and Reinvestment (OCRR) was created to continue work related to revitalization in Fairfax County. This Office replaced the previous revitalization function housed within the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development. Since the initiation of the revitalization program, each of the Revitalization Districts/Areas has been the subject of one or more planning studies. Implementation of the recommendations of the studies is in different stages for each of the seven areas. Among other things, the studies identify actions including capital projects that would support the revitalization of these areas.

LINK TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan has established a number of objectives and policies in order to:

- ✓ Establish or expand community reinvestment programs to sustain the economic vitality and quality of life in older commercial centers and adjacent neighborhoods, improve the economic climate, and encourage private and public investment and reinvestment in these areas.
- ✓ Conserve stable neighborhoods and encourage rehabilitation and other initiatives that will help to revitalize and promote the stability of older neighborhoods.
- ✓ Eliminate the negative effects of deteriorating commercial and industrial areas. Revitalization efforts in Annandale, Bailey's Crossroads/Seven Corners, Lake Anne, McLean, Merrifield, the Richmond Highway Corridor, and Springfield should work in concert with other community programs and infrastructure improvements and strive to foster a sense of place unique to each area, thereby contributing to the social and economic well being of the community and the County.
- ✓ Implement programs to improve older commercial areas of the County to enhance their ability to provide necessary community services, including streetscape improvements.

Source: 2007 Edition of the Comprehensive Plan, Policy Plan Element, Revitalization, Housing, and Land Use Sections, as amended

CURRENT PROGRAM INITIATIVES

The last Commercial Revitalization Bond Referendum was approved in 1988 and included \$22.3 million for commercial revitalization projects in six areas of the County - Annandale, Bailey's Crossroads/Seven Corners, McLean, Springfield, the Richmond Highway Corridor and Vienna. The bonds have funded public improvement projects that have been completed, are underway or are in design. Projects to be funded were determined by the County and the local communities, and include improvements such as: under grounding utilities; roadway design and construction; streetscape improvements that consist of new brick sidewalks, street trees and plantings, street furnishings, signage, bus shelters; and land acquisition. Since 1988, this program has been supported primarily by the bond proceeds. However, the remaining funds are insufficient to implement the public improvements projects identified by the planning studies, or to provide incentives such as parcel acquisition for the purpose of consolidation and the construction of infrastructure improvements to private developers.

A variety of current revitalization program initiatives exist in addition to the projects described below. Among these are continuing efforts to identify creative financing mechanisms to support Fairfax County revitalization initiatives, programs and projects. In April 2009, the Board of Supervisors created the county's first Community Development Authority (CDA) with Tax Increment Financing (TIF); staff is also exploring public/private partnerships for projects at Laurel Hill, the Dunn Loring metro, Metro West, Tysons, the North County Government Center, and the East County Center in the "Southeast Quadrant" of Bailey's Crossroads.

RECENT PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ◆ **Annandale:** Funded the final phase of the Annandale Streetscape improvement program. Following the completion of an Urban Land Institute Five Day Advisory Panel Program for the Annandale Community Business District, the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) and the Office of Community Revitalization and Reinvestment (OCR) are undertaking a comprehensive planning study of the Annandale Community Business Center (CBC) to identify long range development opportunities and prepare development guidelines and standards for the area. The planning study will culminate in a Comprehensive Plan Amendment scheduled for approval in 2010. Additionally, OCR has produced new Urban Design Guidelines for Annandale.

- ◆ **Bailey's Crossroads:** Building upon the work of an Urban Land Institute Five Day Technical Advisory Panel, staff is undertaking a planning study for a portion of the Bailey's Crossroads CRD. The study focuses on transforming the area into a more urban place with improved pedestrian connectivity, while maintaining compatibility with the neighboring areas. The planning study will culminate in a Comprehensive Plan Amendment scheduled for approval in 2010.



Aerial photo of Bailey's Crossroads

- ◆ **Lake Anne:** In March 2009, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors amended the Comprehensive Plan to guide the revitalization of the Lake Anne Village Center (LAVC) in Reston. The amendment included urban design guidelines to encourage redevelopment that is supportive of the unique character of the historically significant Washington Plaza, and expanded the boundary of the LAVC Commercial Revitalization Area. OCR is facilitating a stakeholder group to effectuate the comprehensive redevelopment of the area, including the County-owned Crescent Apartments site and continues to work on methods to bring the Plan to fruition through a Master developer or other mechanism. Additionally, the Reston Historic Trust Storefront Museum was given grants by the county totaling \$250,000 to renovate the Reston Museum. The museum re-opened in September, 2009, and now accommodates a permanent core exhibit on the history and development of Reston, a rotating exhibit area, an audio-visual component focusing on community life, and an information center for Lake Anne revitalization initiatives.

- ◆ **Merrifield:** On April 27, 2009, the Board of Supervisors created the County's first Community Development Authority (CDA) with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for the proposed Mosaic-Merrifield Town Center. OCRR worked closely with the Department of Management and Budget, the Board, consultants, and the developer, Edens & Avant, to implement the CDA. Edens & Avant will fund a \$30 million portion of the public facilities to be constructed on-site through a 30 year bond to be issued by the CDA, whose debt service will be paid by a self assessment; and fund a \$42 million portion of the public facilities to be constructed on-site (road improvements, parks, and a small portion of the parking garage) through a 22 year bond also issued through the CDA, whose debt service will be paid through incremental real estate tax revenues. The CDA includes certain public improvements in conjunction with a public-private partnership to redevelop approximately 80 acres in Merrifield at the intersection of Route 29 and Eskridge Road. The new MOSAIC Merrifield Town Center development is expected to complete improvements to Eskridge Road and the intersection with Route 29 as part of its development plan within the next few years. An updated completion schedule will be included in a future CIP pending completion of financing. Staff is also working on a mechanism to facilitate the funding of the new Metro parking garage at the Dunn Loring metro station.

- ◆ **Richmond Highway:** On September 14, 2009, the Board accepted the dedication of the Fairchild property at Kings Crossing for use as a park. Progress was made on the WayFinding Sign Program. Sites for the secondary gateway and mileage wayfinding signs were identified and permit applications were submitted to the Virginia Department of Transportation. Once permits are granted these signs can be fabricated and installed. Also, staff devised and led a tour of transit centers in Fairfax and Arlington Counties for community stakeholders. Community workshops will be held in the coming year to identify the types and possible locations for transit centers along Richmond Highway and to define complete streets for Richmond Highway.

- ◆ **Springfield:** Building upon the Urban Land Institute's Five Day Technical Advisory Panel recommendations, the rezoning of the Springfield Mall and the Springfield Connectivity Study, a Plan Amendment that focuses on transforming Springfield into a more urban mixed-use area, with improved pedestrian connectivity was approved by the Board in early 2010. The county submitted a federal TIGER grant application to construct the Springfield Multi-Use Community Transportation Hub.

CURRENT PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

1. **Annandale Streetscape** (Mason District). \$7,305,000 for the design and construction of sidewalks upgraded street lighting, street furniture and tree planting in the Annandale CBC. Design has been completed on the final phase of the streetscape project on Columbia Pike between the fire station and Backlick Road. The project is proceeding to construction.

2. **McLean Streetscape** (Dranesville District). \$3,894,000 for streetscape improvements in the public right-of-way within the McLean CBC along Chain Bridge Road and Old Dominion Drive. The initiative to place utilities underground within the McLean CBC is underway. The McLean Revitalization Corporation is acquiring land rights. Once land rights are obtained, design plans will be updated and completed. A streetscape project on Chain Bridge Road from Westmoreland Street to Cedar Avenue was completed in 2009.

3. **Kings Crossing Town Center** (Mt. Vernon District). \$1,883,000 to facilitate the future consolidation and redevelopment of land by a private developer in the Penn Daw area. This project includes a \$1,308,000 reallocation of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for public infrastructure, provided as an incentive to the potential developer by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA). An amount of \$200,000 was approved in FY 2001 and an additional \$375,000 was approved in FY 2002 from the County General Fund for land acquisition, infrastructure construction, to develop design guidelines and to actively market the project to developers.

4. **Annandale Cultural Center Feasibility Study** (Mason District). A feasibility study for an Annandale Cultural Center has been completed. The consultant interviewed business and property owners, evaluated possible sites and prepared economic data for this study. The \$90,000 study was funded by a federal EDI Special Project Grant. Funding to purchase a site, and to design and construct the project, will be required.

5. **Maintenance – Commercial Revitalization Program** (Countywide). This is an on-going project which provides for maintenance of commercial revitalization areas including: landscaping, mowing, trash pick-

up, graffiti removal and maintenance of bus shelters, bicycle racks, area signs, street furniture and drinking fountains.

6. **Bailey's Crossroads Streetscape Enhancements** (Mason District). Fairfax County has been awarded \$90,000 in Federal Transportation Enhancement Funds to construct streetscape improvements in the Bailey's Crossroads area. The improvements are being constructed at the interchange of Route 7 and Columbia Pike in Bailey's Crossroads. The \$22,500 local match for the federal funding will be from bond funds. An additional amount of \$212,500 is estimated to complete the project and will be from pedestrian improvement funds from the 2007 Transportation Bond Referendum. Including previous bond funds the total project estimate is \$6,574,000.
7. **Richmond Highway Wayfinding Signage** (Lee/Mount Vernon Districts). The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation has initiated a project to improve signage along the Richmond Highway Corridor and help bolster community identity. Remaining bond funds of \$330,000 will be utilized. Including prior bond funds, the entire Route 1 Streetscape total project estimate is \$1,642,000.
8. **Revitalization Initiatives** (Countywide). This project provides for the continuation of revitalization activities including consultant services costs to foster revitalization. These projects will address program needs in conformance with area Comprehensive Plans for seven Revitalization Districts/Areas: Annandale, Baileys Crossroads/Seven Corners, Lake Anne, McLean, Merrifield, Richmond Highway, Springfield and, and to support revitalization efforts in Tyson's Corner.
9. **Revitalization Program Costs** (Countywide). This is an on-going project which provides for the continuation of revitalization activities including marketing materials for countywide revitalization activities, consultant services, training and staff and administrative costs associated with the continuation of previously approved revitalization projects. Funding for current program needs, staffing and other activities associated with countywide residential improvement and repair projects is managed within the Department of Housing and Community Development.