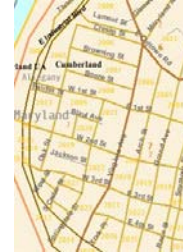


Virginia Avenue Revitalization

Chapel Hill West Neighborhood
Association Meeting
February 26, 2004
<http://www.AdventureGovernment.com>

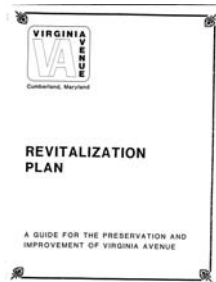
Virginia Avenue Revitalization

- Planning
 - Revitalization Plan (1984)
 - Comprehensive Plan, 1996 and 2004 (forthcoming)
- Current Projects/Incentives
 - Community Betterment
 - HUB Zone
- Planned Projects/Incentives
 - Rolling Mill Improvements
 - Community Legacy
- Other Incentive/Investment Options
 - STAR
 - Lenders Loan Pool
 - Microenterprise grants
 - Historic Preservation incentives
 - Zoning changes
 - Main Street Program
 - Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District
 - Infill development tax incentives
 - Workforce Housing
- Timeline



Virginia Avenue Revitalization Plan, 1984

- Recommendations
 - Firm targeting
 - Conducting space inventory
 - Historical preservation incentives (*)
 - Assessing parking needs
 - Streetscape/landscape (*)
 - Signage
 - Lighting/safety (*)
 - Staffing
 - Marketing/brochure/networking



Comprehensive Plan, 1996

- Objective 8.4 (Economic Development) Develop and implement an economic development strategy for Virginia Avenue to promote economic development within the downtown.
 - Action 8.4.1 Work with local property owners to develop and implement an economic development strategy for the Virginia Avenue corridor from First Street to the intersection with River Avenue, including encouraging start-ups of new businesses and use of programs such as the Maryland Business Development Program.
 - Action 8.4.2 Consider defining the responsibilities of the "downtown manager" hired in accordance with Action 8.3.3 to include promoting economic development within the Virginia Avenue corridor.

Comprehensive Plan Updated

- Objective 8.4 (Economic Development) Develop and implement a revitalization strategy for the Virginia Avenue corridor from First Street to the intersection with River Avenue in South Cumberland
 - Conduct a study to define 1) the proper niche for the development of Virginia Avenue corridor in the Cumberland market and 2) a strategy to maximize the corridor's long-term economic potential.
 - Work with local property owners to implement the revitalization strategy for the Virginia Avenue corridor, including encouraging startups of new businesses and use of available programs and incentives for business improvements.

Planning Pitfalls

- There has been a lack of follow upon Virginia Avenue Revitalization Plans



Community Betterment

- Community Betterment
 - Block grant funded program based on plans submitted by Neighborhood Associations
 - Program began in 2001
 - Applications for this year are being accepted



Community Betterment

- **2001**
 - Street Lighting (\$22,000)
- **2002**
 - Street Lighting (\$22,098)
- **2003**
 - Lighting Project (\$11,050)
 - Commercial Facades (\$8,000)
- **2001-2003 Total** (\$63,148)



HUB (Historically Underutilized Business) Zone

- Advantage
 - Bid preferences on federal contracts (set-asides and 10% preference)
- Requirements
 - Small business
 - Located in HUB Zone
 - Owned/controlled by U.S. Citizens
 - At least 35% of employees reside in HUB Zone
- 3 certified businesses in Cumberland (compared to 7 in Garrett County)



Rolling Mill Improvements

- Goal is to improve accessibility to Rolling Mill site for commercial development
 - Street reconstruction, water, sewer, and sidewalk improvements
 - ARC funding (60% share), Block grant, Water/Sewer fund, and Bond fund remaining.
 - 5 phases (first 2 phases nearing completion)
 - ARC funding for third phase was postponed and placed into Barton Business Park
 - If funding resumes, phase 3 (summer 2005) and phase 4 (summer 2006).



Rolling Mill Improvements-- Virginia Avenue Phase

- Improvements to Virginia Avenue from Oldtown Road to southbound Industrial Boulevard. These improvements include milling, patching, and resurfacing of the street; along with drainage improvements. Also included, if funding is available, will be the replacement of curbs and sidewalks; if funding is not available, then only the missing and/or hazardous portions of the curbs and sidewalks will be replaced.
- Summer 2007 schedule for phase V.
- If ARC funding is not provided, City will need to look elsewhere for funds



Community Legacy

- State "Smart Growth" program aimed at revitalizing older neighborhoods
 - Multi-phase program (Plan statement: Virginia Avenue Streetscape Improvements years 3-5)
 - FY 05 program request included two Va. Avenue projects
 - Funding was obtained for Town Centre and Decatur Heights programs but not for proposed Maryland Avenue and Virginia Avenue programs



Community Legacy— Commercial Improvement Funding

- **Commercial Improvement Funding programs** (\$108/\$100k) for commercial facades, commercial business loans, and commercial version of the Rehabilitation/Code Enforcement program.



Community Legacy— Revitalization Strategy

- **Revitalization Strategy** (\$60k/\$30k). Similar to Downtown Design and Development Plan. The plan would include streetscape/infrastructure improvement recommendations.



Community Legacy: Out-year Proposals

- How to choose Virginia Avenue revitalization projects?
 - Choose what was funded previously
 - Self-help housing renovations (including focusing on housing split into apartments and duplexes)
 - Over-the-store housing
 - Community Betterment provides a laboratory for new ideas.



Options: STAR (Strategic Areas for Revitalization)

- Tax Freeze for improvements for a period up to 10 years.
- Length of STAR is directly related to the amount invested in the property.
- In order to qualify for the tax credit, the property owner must invest a minimum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) in improvement costs.
- Used about 20 times (\$1 million in renovations) since program began in current STAR district.

Improvement costs as % of market	Available tax exempt status of commercial/residential development
10 percent	7 years
20 percent	8 years
30 percent	9 years
40% or more	10 years

Options: Lender's Loan Pool

- This program was created to encourage development of the downtown area by financing the start-up costs and renovations of businesses relocating and/or expanding within the Central Business District
- Loans ranging from \$10,000 - \$100,000 are provided at lower than market interest rate for a maximum of 60 months and can be used for expenses such as inventory, leasehold improvements, equipment, and receivables.
- Funds are provided by the City of Cumberland in partnership with Local Banks and the State of Maryland



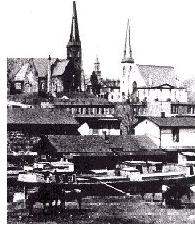
Options: Microenterprise Grants

- Grants of up to \$5,000 are made available to assist micro businesses with start-up or retention costs including job creation, marketing, staff development, and project expansion.
- Businesses must not have more than 5 employees (including the owner).



Options: Historical Preservation Incentives

- Three types of Historical Preservation incentives (local, state, and federal)
- Tax credits available for historically significant properties in historical district
- Restrictions on materials and design for some types of improvements



Options: Zoning Changes

- Virginia Avenue is currently B-L (Business-Local zone)
- B-H (Business Highway) or B-CBD (Central Business District) would permit additional uses
- Alternative would be to expand uses permitted in B-L zones (e.g., bed and breakfasts, assisted living, retail larger than 5k sq. ft, brewpubs, commercial laundry, veterinary offices, child care, commercial indoor recreation, indoor theaters, educational institutions)



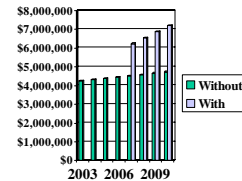
Options: Adopt Maryland Main Street Features/Special Assessment Taxing District

- Only one Maryland Main Street Program allowed per community (provides architectural and marketing assistance)
- Establish entity to coordinate planning/marketing of district
 - Develop themes—target retail/service sectors
 - Develop a brochure/website that details neighborhood specific incentives (along with city wide incentives like One Maryland, Enterprise Zone)
- Tough to accomplish without dedicated staffing



Options: Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)

- A TIF is a designated district where improvements are made with bond issue and increased development/enhanced property values pay back fully cost of bond issue.
 - Two TIFs are being created in vicinity of Willowbrook Road
- Virginia Avenue Downtown assessed values are currently about \$4.3 million
 - Downtown Baltimore street is about \$19.3 million
- Must identify specific development that could not occur without public investment (no 'build it and they will come')



Options: Infill Development Incentive

- Tax abatement up to difference between current assessment taxes and amount of demolition would be granted
- State of Maryland granted City ability to use this incentive but the exact parameters have not yet been designated.



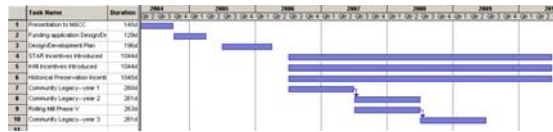
Options: Workforce Housing

- Also known as the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC)
- Construction and rehabilitation of housing for low and moderate income families
- Developer who is building Cascades Apartments between Vancouver/Quebec and Fourth Street is proposing a development on Virginia Avenue



Plan for Action: A Possible Timeline

- Package revitalization plan and present to the public at worksession (fall 2004).
- Undertake design/development plan (2005)
- STAR-type incentives/Infill/Historical incentives (2006)
- Community Legacy programs – year 1 (2006) [business], (2007) [housing], (2008) [expand]
- Rolling Mill Improvements Phase V (2007)
- Other?



What you can do

- Support organizations that submit Community Betterment funding applications.
- Contact your State and local elected officials and indicate your support for Rolling Mill improvements and Community Legacy funding
- Begin the process of “updating” the *Virginia Avenue Revitalization Plan*
 - Put together a committee to see the improvements through.
 - Set objectives/establish a timeline.

