

# Retaining a Unique Sense of Place at the Edges of Metropolitan Growth

## Proceedings from the Regional Summit of Northern Virginia and Virginia Piedmont Main Street Communities

### Executive Summary

Forty leaders from six Northern Virginia and Piedmont communities including Berryville, Culpeper, Manassas, Orange, Warrenton, and Winchester met in March, 2005 to discuss ways to accommodate growth in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area while retaining the unique character of their respective communities. It is estimated that over 800,000 new housing units will be required to accommodate the two million new residents expected to live in the metropolitan area by 2030.<sup>1</sup> These six communities lie in the exurbs of the metropolitan area and are starting to experience some of the externalities of the metropolitan expansion.<sup>2</sup> For example, people who work in or near Washington are moving further from the city because of lower housing costs in exurban communities. The leaders of these communities shared ideas about best practices and solutions centered on three primary issues of concern derived from a pre-summit survey: property development; changes in the retail business climate; and transportation. This document lists tools that these public leaders suggested could shape what they want their community to be in the face of regional change.

<sup>1</sup> Stella Tarnay. Reality Check: Envisioning Our Region's Growth. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2005, p.7.

<sup>2</sup> Exurb refers to prosperous rural communities beyond the suburbs that, due to high-speed and/or limited-access highways act as dormitory communities for an urban area.

<sup>3</sup> Tarnay, 24.

### Property Development Issues

Property development emerged as the primary issue of concern for the summit participants. With the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area growing at a rate of 46 to 76 acres per day, the amount of land developed annually equates roughly in size to two-thirds of the District of Columbia.<sup>3</sup> Public officials in these exurban jurisdictions must consider tools to help them guide development as this growth begins to affect what are currently the exurbs of the metropolitan area. Related to development, leaders from the exurban communities mentioned ideas such as encouraging a mix of uses in the downtown, including housing in upper stories, retail at the street level, and redevelopment that promotes investment while minimizing demolition. Participants discussed the following tools for guiding property development:

- Local comprehensive plans that spell out the goals of the community and include the objectives and policies that will support these goals;
- Historic rehabilitation tax credits to encourage developers to rehabilitate older structures, minimizing the need for demolition;
- Advocacy and education initiatives to help increase public awareness of development issues;
- Revitalization of deteriorating neighborhoods near downtown commercial districts to bolster revitalization of the historic commercial core;
- Using proffers to guide development by attaching conditions to rezoning requests by developers;
- Certified Local Government (CLG) Programs that give local governments access to special grants for planning and educational activities related to historic preservation;



Virginia Department of Housing  
and Community Development  
501 North Second Street  
Richmond VA. 23219



- Local historic districts which enable a jurisdiction to impose urban design guidelines on renovation, remodeling and sometimes new development in order to ensure that the existing character of a neighborhood is respected;
- Conservation easements (legal agreements between local governments or land trusts and property owners) to restrict the use of the land and preserve rural landscapes;
- Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) as an alternative clustered form of subdivision development that reduces infrastructure costs;
- Master planning that details specific elements and tools for directing investment and revitalization activity in the historic commercial area of a community;
- Overlay zoning to promote compact, mixed-use development;
- Enforcement of the existing building maintenance code within the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code;
- Sliding-scale zoning to reduce allowable residential density permitted during subdivision or development with the increasing size of a parent parcel;
- Brownfield assessments to provide actual data about the environmental conditions of brownfield and to help determine the feasibility of various infill development uses;
- Affordable housing set-aside ordinances that require affordable housing be made available in new developments so as to help mitigate the effects of rising housing costs;
- Application of the forthcoming Virginia building rehabilitation subcode for existing buildings that allows flexibility for rehabilitating historic properties while complying with the spirit of current development standards outlined in the Uniform Statewide Building Code;
- Innovative zoning codes which allow for easier development of mixed-use and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods;
- Regional cooperation where public leaders meet for a mutually beneficial exchange of ideas;
- Split-rate property tax assessments to discourage benign neglect of properties while encouraging infill development in existing residential and commercial areas that are already served by existing infrastructure; and
- Visualization and build-out studies to allow public officials to see what their community would look like if it were built out under current zoning ordinances.

## *Changes in the Retail Business Climate*

The changing climate for independent and locally owned retail business also generated concern among local leaders. The summit participants wonder if the proliferation of big box stores and lifestyle centers, which mimic authentic downtown shopping areas, will erode the overall sense of place and history of their communities. Community leaders would prefer to encourage local independent businesses in their historic commercial areas because they tend to generate a higher economic impact than big box retailers. Participants identified the following tools for encouraging a healthy retail business climate:

- Building a community of merchants to encourage communication among people



with a vested interest in the health of the retail district;

- Promotional events to attract visitors to the retail district;
- Cooperative advertising which merchants can purchase jointly;
- Street trees that make a commercial district attractive and encourage shoppers to stay longer;
- Façade improvement incentives for property owners to improve the exteriors of their buildings;
- Street flower and landscaping programs that attract customers and contribute to higher storefront occupancy rates;
- Commercial building size caps to discourage the development of large buildings which may be hard to lease once the original tenant vacates;
- Virginia Enterprise Zones in which qualifying businesses may receive financial incentives from the local and state governments jointly;
- Lease-back programs where a local Main Street organization signs a long-term lease and rehabilitates a deteriorating building and sublets to another tenant;
- Retail preservation ordinances to preserve retail in downtown areas so as to maintain pedestrian traffic and retail vitality;
- Revolving funds to purchase and resell buildings on the condition that money from the selling of buildings is returned to the fund;
- Mystery shopping at local retailers in order to assess and improve existing levels of customer service in the district;
- Coordination of downtown store hours to encourage shops and restaurants to remain open during times when more people can

browse and generate cross-sales; and

- Economic and community impact review requirements for developers to show what kind of economic impact a large new development would have on the community.

## *Transportation Issues*

Finally, summit members identified transportation issues as their third most pressing regional concern. At present, the majority of residents in these communities have daily commutes of 30 minutes or less. Officials recognize, however, that as the number of residents commuting long distances grows, transportation networks and options will have to adapt. Summit participants discussed the following policy tools:

- Local-oriented, not just commuter, transit systems to and from community destinations to help reduce road congestion;
- Non-motorized transportation networks to enhance movement and access for pedestrians, cyclists, etc.;
- Mixed use parking decks that blend with the surrounding area and may include built-in street-level retail;
- Delivery truck regulation to coordinate motor vehicle travel and business deliveries on narrow primary roadways in a small town setting;
- Enticing commuters to become members of the local workforce;
- Offering incentives to local insurance companies that offer lower use-based insurance costs to drivers who drive less;
- Location efficient mortgages that offer more favorable mortgages to people who live near or tend to

rely more on public transportation;  
and

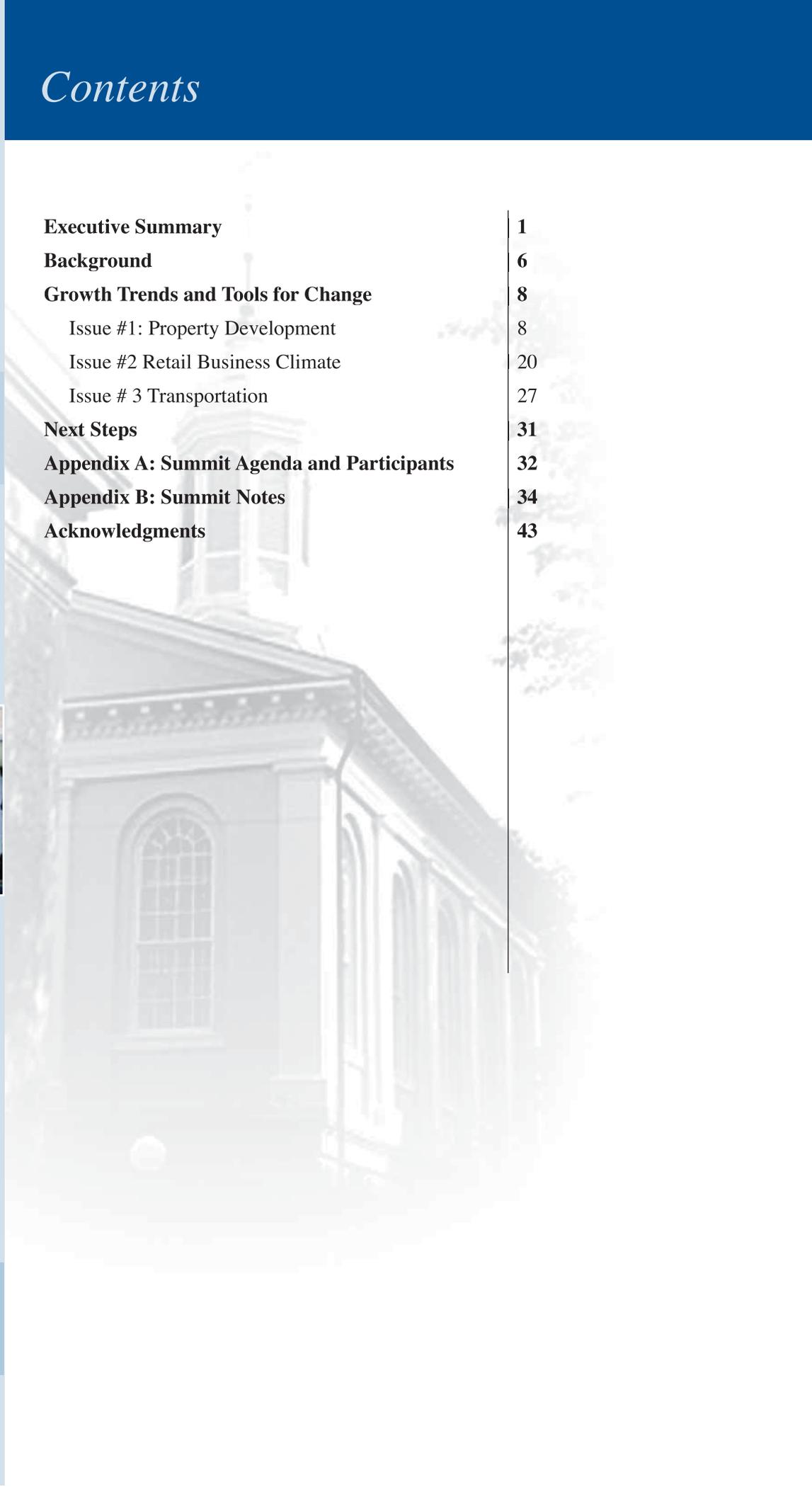
- Transit-oriented development that encourages mixed use centers near transportation centers.

## *Next Steps*

A few months after the summit, executive directors from the Main Street organizations in the six communities met to discuss next steps to build on the information shared during the summit. These next steps include: the development and distribution of a summary of the summit proceedings; cooperating with one another during the other's comprehensive planning processes; hosting a mini-Reality Check similar to those being conducted by the Urban Land Institute throughout the Washington metropolitan region; and development of a regional marketing plan. This plan would both emphasize their identity as a group and as part of a larger coalition of small rural and exurban communities located along a corridor of important historic sites from Gettysburg to Monticello known as the Journey Through Hallowed Ground corridor.

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# Background



On March 30, 2005, forty local leaders and decision makers from six northern Virginia communities in the exurban Washington, D.C. commuting-shed convened a summit in Warrenton, Virginia.<sup>1</sup> During this summit, the participants discussed their experiences stemming from the rapid growth of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area as well as policy tools and techniques to address some of the impacts of that growth. All six communities represented – Town of Berryville (population 3,000), Town of Culpeper (population 9,875), City of Manassas (population 35,100), Town of Orange (4,000), Town of Warrenton (population 6,500), and City of Winchester (population 23,600) – are designated Virginia Main Street communities with collectively almost one hundred years of downtown revitalization experience.<sup>2</sup>

At this summit, Doug Loescher, Director of the National Main Street Center, led a team of facilitators and policy specialists in guiding the diverse community representatives in an open discussion about local policy tools and techniques that might allow them to retain the unique character of their respective communities while accommodating growth. Their ideas about best practices and solutions centered on three primary issues of concern derived from a pre-summit survey: property development; changes in the retail business climate; and transportation.<sup>3</sup> As a follow-up to this summit of local leaders, this document builds on the conversation by highlighting key local and state policy tools to address growth. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but rather a starting point for further discussion within each community and among neighboring historic market towns within the Washington, D.C. commuting-shed.

<sup>1</sup> Exurb refers to prosperous rural communities beyond the suburbs that, due to high-speed and/or limited-access highways act as dormitory communities for an urban area.

<sup>2</sup> Rounded from US Census Bureau summary tape file 3 data, 2000.

The Virginia Main Street program, housed within the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, is a state coordinating program of the National Trust Main Street Center. The National Trust Main Street Center was created in 1980 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation with primary goals of saving historic downtown commercial districts from economic decline and from physical demolition. Since 1985, Virginia Main Street has helped Virginia localities revitalize their downtown commercial districts using the Main Street Four Point Approach™, a comprehensive, incremental approach built around a community's unique heritage and attributes.

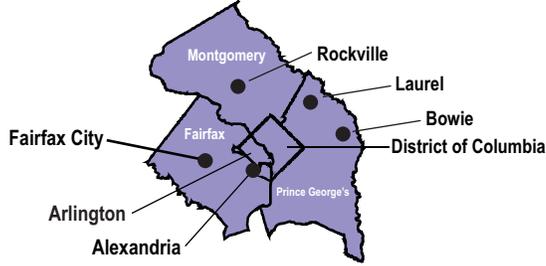
<sup>3</sup> Prior to the summit, each community convened a delegation including: city and county elected officials; planning commission members; zoning board of appeals members; preservation commission members; zoning administrator; the local Main Street organization executive director; local Main Street organization board members; city/town managers and county administrators. By consensus, each of the six delegations offered up its two most critical issues to discuss at the summit.



Figure 1: Washington, DC-MD-WV Primary Statistical Area, 2000

# CHANGING DEFINITIONS OF THE FEDERALLY-DEFINED WASHINGTON, D.C. METROPOLITAN AREA

## 1950-1960

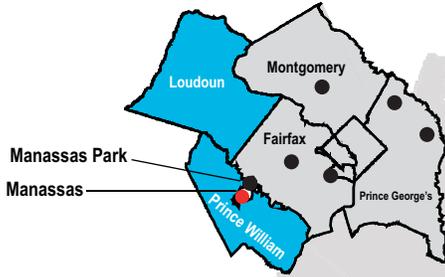


### Washington, DC-MD-VA Standard Consolidated Statistical Area (SCSA)

**COUNTIES**  
Arlington, VA  
Fairfax, VA  
Montgomery, MD  
Prince George's, MD

**CITIES**  
Alexandria, VA  
Bowie, MD  
District of Columbia  
Fairfax, VA  
Laurel, MD  
Rockville, MD

## 1970

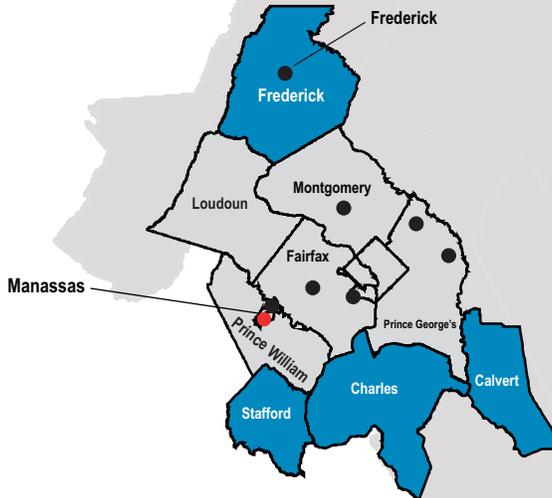


### Washington, DC-MD-VA Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA)

**COUNTIES**  
Arlington, VA  
Fairfax, VA  
Loudoun, VA  
Montgomery, MD  
Prince George's, MD  
Prince William, VA

**CITIES**  
Alexandria, VA  
Bowie, MD  
District of Columbia  
Fairfax, VA  
Laurel, MD  
Manassas, VA  
Manassas Park, VA  
Rockville, MD

## 1983

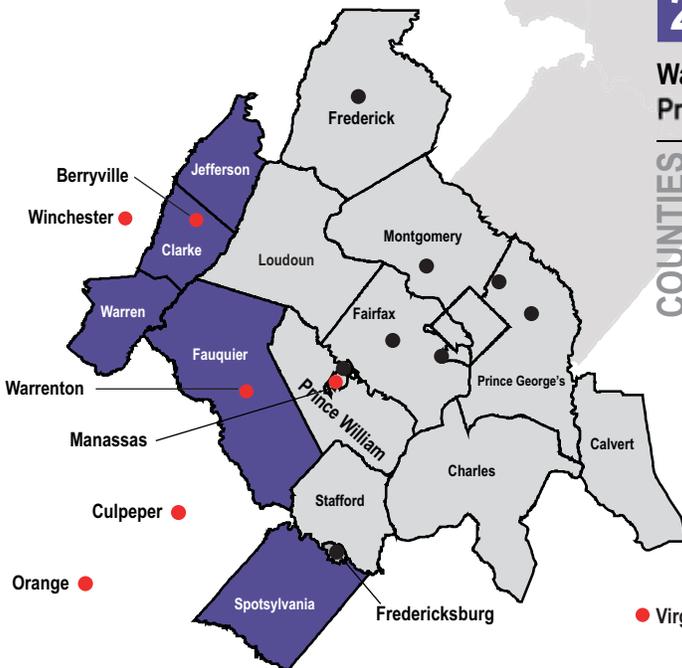


### Washington, DC-MD-VA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

**COUNTIES**  
Arlington, VA  
Calvert, MD  
Charles, MD  
Fairfax, VA  
Frederick, VA  
Loudoun, VA  
Montgomery, MD  
Prince George's, MD  
Prince William, VA  
Stafford, VA

**CITIES**  
Alexandria, VA  
Bowie, MD  
District of Columbia  
Fairfax, VA  
Frederick, MD  
Laurel, MD  
Manassas, VA  
Manassas Park, VA  
Rockville, MD

## 2003



### Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV Primary Statistical Area (PMSA)

**COUNTIES**  
Arlington, VA  
Calvert, MD  
Charles, MD  
Clarke, VA  
Fairfax, VA  
Fauquier, VA  
Frederick, MD  
Jefferson, WV  
Loudoun, VA  
Montgomery, MD  
Prince George's, MD  
Prince William, VA  
Stafford, VA  
Spotsylvania, VA  
Warren, VA

**CITIES**  
Alexandria, VA  
Bowie, MD  
District of Columbia  
Fairfax, VA  
Frederick, MD  
Fredericksburg, VA  
Laurel, MD  
Manassas, VA  
Manassas Park, VA  
Rockville, MD

● Virginia Main Street communities: Berryville, Culpeper, Manassas, Orange, Warrenton, and Winchester

# Growth Trends and Tools for Change



*notes*

<sup>4</sup> A brief but comprehensive overview of growth in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is available from the Urban Land Institute at [www.realitycheckwashington.org/guidebook.php](http://www.realitycheckwashington.org/guidebook.php).

<sup>5</sup> Stella Tarney. *Reality Check: Envisioning Our Region's Growth*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2005, p.7.

<sup>6</sup> Tarney, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Tarney, 24.

As indicated in Figure 1, the robust growth of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area over the past fifty years has been expanding its urban envelope to include previously rural areas, including the historic market towns which served them.<sup>4</sup> Current growth trends for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area show that the region will generate an additional 1.6 million jobs and two million new residents by 2030, requiring an estimated 833,000 new housing units.<sup>5</sup> At present, three of the six communities participating in the summit lie outside the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area as defined by the United States Census Bureau. Yet even these three, Culpeper, Winchester and Orange, demonstrate evidence of strong residential growth among metropolitan Washington commuters seeking lower house prices or better value for money, just as they do in Berryville, Manassas and Warrenton. Rapid population growth presents challenges for all six of these historic communities, and others like them, as they transition from rural trade centers to exurban ones with new demands for public services and competition from new commercial development.

## ***Issue #1: Property Development***

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation and American Farmland Trust estimate that the amount of land being consumed for development within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area ranges from 16,000 to 28,000 acres annually – about 46 to 76 acres every day.<sup>6</sup> Put another way, this is the equivalent of almost two-thirds the area of the District of Columbia. A study by the University of Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation estimates that if current trends continue, more than 800,000 acres of land will be developed in the next twenty years.<sup>7</sup>

With their rural landscapes giving way to suburbanization, the consensus among participants from all six communities placed the development of real property as their greatest growth-related concern. Specifically, participants mentioned their desire for a broader range of tools and considerations in their local comprehensive and land use plans. While Appendix B lists all the ideas generated during the summit, the following list outlines some of their preferred best practices, tools and techniques to address property development identified by the participants. In descending order

of prevalence, these ideas include encouraging a mix of uses in the downtown, including housing in upper stories, retail at the street level, and redevelopment that promotes investment while minimizing demolition.

## Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans, defined as plans for the long-term development of a local government jurisdiction such as a city or county, have evolved over time and presently tend to include several attributes: values driven; collaborative; thematic based; linking process and outcome; regional in focus; and implementation or action-oriented.<sup>8</sup> By spelling out a locality's goals for future development, informing infrastructure decisions and economic development strategies, the comprehensive plan provides a level of certainty to individuals or firms seeking to own or develop property. The plan also provides a level of certainty for the community that, all things being equal, land will be developed in a way that is compatible with the community's goals and desires. Virginia statute requires that communities have and update their comprehensive plans every five years. As of this writing Berryville, Culpeper and Orange are updating their comprehensive

plans and each process includes a citizen participation element wherein residents may present their concerns about growth issues. The American Farmland Trust, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit group, offers Community Farmland Protection Consulting Services that help communities estimate the costs of services for various development patterns, identify valuable resource lands, and engage the public in planning and even creating purchase of development rights.<sup>9</sup>

## Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

One of the most effective incentives available for the renovation of historic commercial structures is the 20 percent Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which may be paired with the 25 percent Virginia Rehabilitation Tax Credit for historic rehabilitations. Both tax credits are based on eligible costs that are incurred when old/historic structures are rehabilitated in compliance with set guidelines.<sup>10</sup> Buildings must be contributing structures within a historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places or be listed individually. When neither of those credits is available to a building, the 10 percent Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit also may offer cash or the equivalent for renovating



<sup>8</sup> David Rouse Rouse, David, AICP, Todd Michael Chandler, and Jon Arason, AICP. "The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Comprehensive Plan." 1999. Retrieved from <http://www.asu.edu/caed/proceedings99/ROUSE/ROUSE.HTM#INFO>.

<sup>9</sup> International City/County Management Association & the Smart Growth Network. Smart Growth II: 100 More Policies for Implementation. November 2003. p 93.

<sup>10</sup> For more information go to Virginia Department of Historic Resources at [www.dhr.virginia.gov/tax\\_credits/tax\\_credit.htm](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/tax_credits/tax_credit.htm).

qualified existing structures for productive use. All six communities offer good examples of using the tax credits to offset the costs of rehabilitating historic buildings, while creating high value entertainment, office, public, residential, and retail space in their historic commercial cores.

## **Advocating and Educating**

Local Main Street programs are grassroots organizations which advocate and educate as key means for achieving their goals. Advocacy and education take many forms including, but not limited to: seminars for property owners and merchants, developing relationships with local public officials and other complimentary organizations, presenting and reporting to local governing bodies, development and dissemination of print material, and organizing individuals to take a stand on key issues related to the historic commercial core. All six of the summit communities practice downtown advocacy and education. In 2005, Orange Downtown Alliance and the Partnership for Warrenton Foundation helped sponsor community-wide educational campaigns featuring Ed MacMahon, a senior resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute (ULI), and Dan Burton of the Virginia chapter of

the American Planning Association who talked about the value of historic preservation in the midst of community change. Similarly, Downtown Berryville, Inc. volunteers lead walking tours of the downtown on weekends in order to educate new residents about its history and importance as a commercial center.

## **Adjacent Neighborhood Revitalization**

Main Street organizations that support and include resident associations from adjacent historic neighborhoods can further their own mission by preserving the authentic architectural context of the historic downtown. Since its inception, Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. (CRI) has always had at least one resident from the adjacent historic South East Street neighborhood on its board of directors. The South East Street neighborhood includes one of the oldest streets in Culpeper and lies at the heart of the Town's historic core. In the early days of downtown revitalization, both the neighborhood and the Main Street district suffered from persistent and dangerous vice crime at the Town's deteriorating train depot. South East Street Neighborhood Watch (SENW) initiated a series of community policing efforts, staking out the depot at night and collecting

license plate numbers and other key information, while CRI worked with local government to secure federal Transportation Enhancement Act funding for the redevelopment of the historic depot structure. Today the rehabilitated depot, in what was once a lawless abandoned part of downtown, serves as a visitor center for tourists, as well as a meeting facility. CRI and SENW continue to work together on issues that impact the historic core of Culpeper.

## Proffers

Proffers are a form of conditional zoning, or rezoning with conditions attached. In every state that enables conditional zoning, it consists of a local governing body approving a rezoning request, while unilaterally placing conditions on the rezoning, like buffer areas, limitation on uses, increased setbacks, etc. Virginia is the only state that also allows cash monies as part of the rezoning. Cash proffers are now allowed in most jurisdictions in Virginia, particularly “high growth” ones. While noncash proffers are no more of a growth management tool than zoning itself, cash proffers operate much like impact fees, the exception being that they may only be taken at the rezoning stage. Despite their intentions, cash proffers do not necessarily fairly allocate the cost of infrastructure with developers

carrying the weight of extending new infrastructure. Thus developers usually pass the cost on to new residents and/or commercial tenants who move into the development. Adjoining jurisdictions often do not coordinate their proffer policies so they can differ so dramatically. When a developer finds it difficult to recoup the cost of the proffers, he/she seeks to leapfrog to further outlying counties. Thus in practice, proffers can exacerbate as well as limit sprawl. For most of the summit communities, smaller towns and cities, undeveloped land is scarce, making proffers more prevalent in the counties surrounding them, particularly those which are underzoned. For example, during 2003-2004, three summit communities, Manassas, Warrenton and Winchester, collected \$72,904 in proffer revenues, received \$189,000 in proffer pledges but spent none of their proffer revenue. By comparison, the counties that surround all six of the summit communities Clarke County (Town of Berryville), Culpeper County (Town of Culpeper), Prince William County (City of Manassas), Orange County (Town of Orange), Fauquier County (Town of Warrenton) and Frederick County (City of Winchester) collected \$16 million in proffer revenue, received \$1.9 million in proffer pledges, and spent \$6.8 million of proffer revenue.<sup>11</sup> Most of this revenue was

<sup>11</sup> Commission on Local Government, “Report on Proffered Cash Payments and Expenditures by Virginia’s Counties, Cities and Towns 2003-2004.” Appendix D. available at [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/CD/CLG/PDFs/proffrpt1104.pdf](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/CD/CLG/PDFs/proffrpt1104.pdf).

spent on: schools; roads and other transportation improvements; fire rescue and public safety; and parks, recreation and open space. It should be noted that Clarke County also uses proffer payments to fund acquisitions of conservation easements.

## Certified Local Government

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980, created the Certified Local Government Program (CLG) which established a partnership between local governments, the federal historic preservation program, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Designation as a CLG gives a local government access to special grants for planning and undertaking educational activities related to historic preservation, such as developing brochures, giving tours, hosting events and promoting the economic benefits of preservation. The City of Manassas used CLG funding to prepare, print, and distribute design review guidelines. Three of the summit communities, Culpeper, Manassas and Winchester, are designated CLGs as is Clarke County, which oversees Berryville.

## Local Historic District

Usually already recognized at the state and federal level, locally designated historic districts offer protections

that state and federal designations cannot. Local historic district ordinances outline design guidelines which property owners must follow when rehabilitating or altering their properties. Sometimes the ordinance also outlines specific guidelines for contextually sensitive new construction as well. An architectural review board oversees property improvements to all contributing structures within the district and issues a Certificate of Appropriateness that ensures that improvements adhere to local guidelines before allowing a project to receive a construction permit. Clarke County (Berryville), Warrenton and Winchester have each adopted local historic district ordinances and established architectural review boards to oversee them.<sup>12</sup>

## Conservation Easements

A conservation easement, a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency, permanently limits the use of a property by recording deed restrictions that prohibit development in order to protect the property's conservation value. Conservation easements allow a property owner to continue to use the land within the terms of the easement and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. The Orange County Land Conservation Fund, the Fauquier Land Conservation Fund, and Clarke

<sup>12</sup> To review Clarke County's ordinance go to: <http://departments.umw.edu/chpr/www/vlprc/ordinances/clarke.html>; to review Warrenton's ordinance go to <http://departments.umw.edu/chpr/www/vlprc/ordinances/warnton.htm>; and to review Winchester's ordinance go to [www.ci.winchester.va.us/planning](http://www.ci.winchester.va.us/planning).

County Conservation Authority seek to protect historic resources, open space and the rural landscape in their counties. The Clarke County Easement Authority targets important viewsheds, streams, springs, the river frontage on the Shenandoah River, farms and agricultural property, and other strategic areas that will enhance the preservation of natural, agricultural, and historic resources. Starting with a \$75,000 budget, the Clarke County program now has a budget of \$15 million to purchase easements that lower or remove development potential on parcels that have agricultural, historical or natural resource significance, using property evaluation criteria based on the county's Land Evaluation and Site Assessment system. An unusual feature of the program is a "means-testing" component that allows the percentage of the appraised easement value paid by the county to vary based on the applicant's annual income, requiring high-income landowners to sell their easements at lower values.<sup>13</sup>

## **Planned Unit Development/ Cluster Subdivision**

A planned unit development (PUD) is "a form of development characterized by unified site design for a variety of housing types and densities, clustering of buildings, common open space, and a mix of building types and land

uses in which project planning and density calculation are performed for the entire development rather than on an individual lot basis."<sup>14</sup> PUDs offer an alternative, clustered, form of subdivision development that reduces infrastructure costs by permitting a developer to create smaller residential lots than specified in regular zoning regulations in exchange for leaving the remainder of the tract undeveloped and usable for open space, a local park, or a natural preserve.<sup>15</sup> Cluster subdivisions distinguish themselves from conventional subdivisions through minimum open space requirements, minimum district size requirements, reduced lot size requirements in certain circumstances and reduced yard requirements. PUD and cluster development ordinances are currently fairly common among the summit communities. Clarke County and the Town of Warrenton allow cluster development by right in conservation areas and PUD districts, respectively.<sup>16</sup> Both Culpeper County and the Town of Orange also have PUD ordinances to support residential growth, though these ordinances raise concerns among some citizens that PUDs may encourage the development of insular sub-communities while not including open space preservation in their overall goals for PUD design.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Clarke County's original Agricultural-Open Space Conservation ordinance may be viewed at [www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/29272/VA\\_ClarkeCounty\\_AgZoning.pdf](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/29272/VA_ClarkeCounty_AgZoning.pdf) with amendments at [www.co.clarke.va.us/documents/ZoningOrd/SETBACKSSummarySheet.pdf](http://www.co.clarke.va.us/documents/ZoningOrd/SETBACKSSummarySheet.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Virginia Code § 15.2-2201.

<sup>15</sup> Bernstein, Richard (Editor). *A Guide to Smart Growth and Cultural Resource Planning*. Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society. [www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/smartgrowth/SmartGrowthGuide.pdf](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/smartgrowth/SmartGrowthGuide.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Town of Warrenton Zoning Ordinance, Article 14. [www.townofwarrenton.com/meSWFiles/pdf/pz/ARTICLE%2014.pdf](http://www.townofwarrenton.com/meSWFiles/pdf/pz/ARTICLE%2014.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> *Town of Orange Zoning Ordinance*, Section 11. [www.townoforangeva.org/government/ordinances/zoning\\_article11.htm](http://www.townoforangeva.org/government/ordinances/zoning_article11.htm).

## Downtown Master Plan

A downtown master plan is similar to a comprehensive plan except that its geographic focus is on the historic commercial core of the community, providing greater detail about the manner in which the area will be improved and (re)developed in the future. Usually grounded in sound economic market research, a master plan helps to position the downtown as a unique, authentic, mixed-use environment steeped in community history to differentiate it from new development outside the district. Incorporated into the municipal comprehensive plan, the downtown master plan may act as the keystone for the community's collective vision and identity. It also gives developers and property owners a sense of their investment opportunities, guidance for compatible improvements and new construction and how those improvements will be supported by local government and civic organizations, such nonprofit Main Street programs. Culpeper and Warrenton have both used downtown master plans to influence the aesthetic appearance of both public and private property improvements within the historic downtown district.

## Overlay Zoning

Overlay zoning supplements, or overlays, existing land use zoning.

Overlay zoning may be used to promote compact, mixed-use development by offering greater detail about height, density and use in a specific zoning district, such as a downtown or commercial corridor. Overlay ordinances also may allow for a greater or lesser degree of variety and intensity of use, as well as more flexibility in site planning and development regulations, than is generally permitted outside the overlay zone. Culpeper and Manassas both enacted overlay districts to preserve buildings in their historic districts and ensure compatible new construction as reviewed and approved by their local architectural review boards.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Culpeper County created entrance corridor overlay districts, an architectural review board to oversee the districts, and design guidelines for reviewing applications within.<sup>19</sup>

## Enforcement the Virginia Maintenance Code

Virginia's Uniform Statewide Building Code includes an existing building maintenance code in addition to its regulations for new construction. At present, local governments may enforce the maintenance code voluntarily to ensure public safety, health and welfare through proper building maintenance, repair, use and continued compliance with minimum standards of building

<sup>18</sup> To review Culpeper's ordinance go to <http://departments.umw.edu/chpr/www/vlprc/ordinances/culpeper.htm> and to review Manassas' go to <http://departments.umw.edu/chpr/www/vlprc/ordinances/manas.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> Piedmont Environmental Council: Culpeper County. "News Archives." [www.pecva.org/counties/culpeper/culpeper.asp](http://www.pecva.org/counties/culpeper/culpeper.asp).

construction, energy conservation, water conservation, and physically handicapped and aged accessibility. The code applies to each building according to the building regulations in effect when the building was constructed or when its use changed. Enforcing the maintenance code also helps to reduce blight as well as to ensure that properties remain in a revenue producing condition. Both Manassas and Warrenton have adopted local ordinances to enable enforcement of the maintenance code in their jurisdictions by a local inspector officer.<sup>20</sup> On the Eastern Shore of Virginia, the Town of Cape Charles (population 1,130) developed a strong maintenance enforcement program for all buildings and structures in the historic district. If a property is found in violation of the maintenance code, the owner or caretaker must remedy the decay or defects within 90 days. If the property remains in violation after that time, the Historic District Review Board may recommend to the Town Council that local government administrators enter the property and have repairs made with Town funds and the costs placed as a lien against the property.<sup>21</sup>

## Sliding-Scale Zoning

Sliding scale zoning refers to the reduction of allowable residential density permitted during subdivision or development with the increasing

size of a parent parcel, (a parcel existing on the date of ordinance adoption). For example, in Clarke County, a tract of land less than 15 acres may have one single family unit but the number of permitted dwellings on a parcel of more than 1,030 acres may have 15 homes rather than 69, which would be the extension of the 1:15 ratio. As a tool for farmland and open space preservation, sliding scale zoning works most effectively when paired with a purchase of development rights or conservation easement program, like in Clarke County. Clarke County spells out the specific sliding scale requirements for Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation Districts and Forestal-Open Space-Conservation Districts in its zoning code.<sup>22</sup> While Clarke County's program has met with minimal opposition, Fauquier County's sliding scale provision within the zoning ordinance is currently being challenged in court.

## Brownfield Assessments

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." Underdeveloped industrial sites still persist near the historic commercial cores of

<sup>20</sup> The existing building maintenance code may be viewed at [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/Forms/DBFR/1USBC.pdf](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/Forms/DBFR/1USBC.pdf) in section three. See "Article 4: Administration and Enforcement" of the Warrenton zoning code at [www.warrentonva.gov/viewpage.cfm?pgname=2.05a](http://www.warrentonva.gov/viewpage.cfm?pgname=2.05a) for an example of a maintenance enabling ordinance.

<sup>21</sup> See section 8.23 of the Town of Cape Charles Zoning Ordinance: Article VIII – Historic District Overlay at [www.capecharles.org/pdf/zoning/articleviii.pdf](http://www.capecharles.org/pdf/zoning/articleviii.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> *Clarke County Zoning Ordinance*, Section 3 available online at [www.co.clarke.va.us/documents/ZoningOrd/zone\\_ord.pdf](http://www.co.clarke.va.us/documents/ZoningOrd/zone_ord.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> For more information about applying for EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants and funding for other brownfield programs go to [www.epa.gov/brownfields/pilot.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/pilot.htm).

<sup>24</sup> The summary of that meeting, “Toward Affordable Workforce Housing: Growth Trends, Conclusions and The Need for Action Planning,” may be found at [www.rregion.org/pdf/rrc\\_affordable\\_housing\\_conclusions\\_05.pdf](http://www.rregion.org/pdf/rrc_affordable_housing_conclusions_05.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Summarized in David Rusk, “Building An Inclusionary Society: Virginia’s Great Opportunity,” January 30, 2004 presentation to the United Methodist Church Urban Academy in Richmond, VA. Available online at [www.gamaliel.org/DavidRusk/Urban%20Academy%20overheads%2004.pdf](http://www.gamaliel.org/DavidRusk/Urban%20Academy%20overheads%2004.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> For specific language, see the Town of Warrenton Zoning Code Article 11, available online at [www.townofwarrenton.com/meSWFiles/pdf/pz/ARTICLE%2011.pdf](http://www.townofwarrenton.com/meSWFiles/pdf/pz/ARTICLE%2011.pdf); the City of Alexandria Zoning Code, Section 7-700; or the Code of the City of Falls Church, Section 38-43.

most of the summit communities, perhaps due to contamination or perceived contamination of the property itself. Assessing the truth about contamination on these brownfields gives the community better information to share with developers and lenders in order to encourage infill development and rehabilitation of these properties that are near downtown districts and thus are already served by existing infrastructure. In 2002, the EPA selected Winchester as a Brownfields Redevelopment Assessment Pilot recipient and granted the City \$250,000 to assess three, possibly more, key properties impeding the implementation of the City’s Comprehensive Redevelopment Master Plan and its park and pathway “Green Circle” plan meant to interconnect the historic downtown with outlying city areas.<sup>23</sup> The City of Winchester allocated the funding to create an inventory of brownfields sites, select and assess priority sites, identify and remove other barriers to redevelopment of the priority sites, and convene community meetings and information exchange forums.

## Affordable Housing Set-Aside Ordinances

Leaders of the six summit communities expressed a great deal of concern about the rapid loss of affordable housing. This concern

was echoed by business leaders from Culpeper, Fauquier, Orange, and Madison Counties who convened one month later, in April of 2005, to discuss possible policy approaches to the impending shortage of affordable housing in the region.<sup>24</sup> Section 15.2-2305 of the Code of Virginia explicitly authorizes any local government in Virginia to adopt a zoning ordinance establishing an affordable housing dwelling unit program, which sets aside a certain number of newly (re)developed units for moderate-to low-income occupants. That program may include, among other things, reasonable regulations and provisions to: require a minimum of 12.5 % affordable dwelling units in single family home subdivisions of 50 or more; authorize up to 20% density bonus for homebuilders; require a minimum of 6.5% affordable dwelling units in garden apartments; authorize up to 10% density bonus for apartment developers; and authorize a local housing agency to buy/rent one-third of affordable dwelling units.<sup>25</sup> In an effort to boost production of new affordable dwelling units, Warrenton, Alexandria (population 128,300), and Falls Church (population 10,400) have all adopted set-aside ordinances that offer development bonus allowances for increases in floor area ratio, density and height or reductions in required off-street parking as incentive for provision of low- and moderate-income housing.<sup>26</sup>

## Rehabilitation Subcode

In addition to the Uniform Statewide Building Code, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's State Building Codes and Regulations office is now in the process of developing a version of New Jersey's Rehabilitation Subcode, written specifically for existing buildings. In New Jersey, which adopted the first rehabilitation-specific code in the nation, this kind of code has made the reuse of buildings safer, cheaper and encouraged the preservation historic buildings. The New Jersey Rehabilitation Subcode encourages the redevelopment and reuse of existing structures by lowering barriers to rehabilitation, while still retaining its focus on protecting human life. The New Jersey code requirements take into account the project's full scope of work including repair, renovation, alteration, reconstruction, change in the use of building, and additions. For example, while a new building-focused code would require a minimum width for staircases, the New Jersey Rehabilitation Subcode allows for flexibility in width for existing stairways that allows builders to keep existing safe stairways and preserve their character. The Rehabilitation Subcode in New Jersey has reduced building rehabilitation costs by as much as 50 percent – generating a dramatic rise in

historic preservation and downtown revitalization projects. In 1998, the first year of the new Subcode, historic rehabilitation projects totaled \$510 million, a 40 percent increase over the previous year. In 1999, rehabilitation totaled almost \$600 million, a 60 percent increase from 1997, the year prior to adoption of the Subcode.<sup>27</sup>

## Innovative Zoning Codes

Traditional, "Euclidian," zoning completely segregates types of land uses to mitigate the negative impacts of one land use on another. Euclidian zoning has dominated local government planning nationwide for much of the past century but sometimes frustrates development in the mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented environment of a traditional downtown. More recently, local governments began exploring alternative zoning ordinances such as form-based codes and hybrid codes which also seek to promote health, safety and welfare, but not at the expense of aesthetic value and quality of life. In 2003, Arlington, Virginia adopted a form-based code to guide redevelopment along its Columbia Pike Corridor. The Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code seeks to foster a vital main street for its adjacent neighborhoods by using simple and clear graphic prescriptions and parameters for

<sup>27</sup> The full text of the New Jersey Rehabilitation Subcode may be accessed [www.state.nj.us/dca/codes/rehab/index.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/dca/codes/rehab/index.shtml).

<sup>28</sup> Arlington, VA “The Columbia Pike Special revitalization District Form Based Code.” [www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Forums/columbia/current/CPHDForumsColumbiaCurrentCurrentStatus.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/Forums/columbia/current/CPHDForumsColumbiaCurrentCurrentStatus.aspx).

<sup>29</sup> Savannah’s Zoning Code is available online through the Chatham County Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission at [www.thempc.com/Administrative/SavannahZoning.htm](http://www.thempc.com/Administrative/SavannahZoning.htm).

<sup>30</sup> For more information about which kinds of groups/entities with which to become involved, please contact the greater Washington Smart Growth Alliance at (202) 624-7003.

height and building elements to ensure the formation of good public space.<sup>28</sup> Savannah, Georgia (population 131,600) also adopted the first phase of its innovative hybrid zoning ordinance in 2003. The hybrid code uses performance-based zoning to describe uses, districts, and development standards but also includes form-based elements when illustrating districts and development standards. Savannah’s hybrid code fits particularly well with its diverse, historic districts by encouraging mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods and requiring vertical zoning (by floor), while replace approximately 19 existing zoning districts in the area with four new districts. To ensure future compatibility of infill development, the new regulations include staff-based design review, new design standards and performance standards for fine-grained mixing of uses.<sup>29</sup>

## Regional Cooperation

Though growth crosses jurisdictions throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region, governance and planning for growth remain circumscribed, for the most part, by local political boundaries. With numerous regional bodies offering a variety of services to municipalities in the region, the summit communities must be vigilant and flexible about participation in and with regional

partnerships, planning districts and economic development initiatives. The discussions and decision made by these groups, even though they do not necessarily all have direct governing power, do impact the tenor and direction of the discussion to which elected officials ultimately respond. While Warrenton and Manassas appeared on the map for the ULI’s large regional visioning exercise, *Reality Check*, and were listed as participating organizations, not one of the local leaders at the Main Street had attended or even heard about the event. Main Street summit participants from Culpeper, another summit community that was also included on the map for the visioning exercise, similarly had not been aware of the possible consequences of *Reality Check* exercises for their community. Because the Main Street model thrives on grassroots organizing, Main Street communities may need to adjust or draw in a few individuals who are more politically connected for involvement with regional partnerships and/or working groups that lead regional opinions and decisions about broad-based economic development, land use, real estate development, transportation and so forth.<sup>30</sup>

## Split Rate Property Tax

By offering two different rates on a single property, usually a higher one for land and a lower one for

buildings and improvements, localities discourage benign neglect of properties while encouraging infill development in existing residential and commercial areas that are already served by existing infrastructure. A few municipalities in Virginia have implemented this two-tiered, or split rate, tax since 2003, including, the Cities of Fairfax and Roanoke. While it is a bit early to assess the impacts of the split rate system on property owner behavior in Virginia, this tool has been authorized for use by Pennsylvania cities since 1913. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania adopted a split-rate system in 1975 that taxes buildings at one-third the rate of land and it collects 36% of all city real estate tax dollars from land. Mayor Stephen Reed credited the two-tier tax with sparking more vertical development in the traditional core of Harrisburg, as opposed to low-density suburban development by encouraging property owners to leverage their investment in land with higher value, higher density buildings. He also points out that within the first 20 years of the two-tiered tax system, Harrisburg, a city of just over 52,000, experienced \$1.5 billion of private investment.<sup>31</sup>

## Visualization and Build Out Studies

A build-out study is an emerging modeling tool that demonstrates

visually the impacts to the community and, to some extent its neighbors, if the community were completely built out according to current municipal policies and ordinances. Using computer simulated visualizations as well as quantitative analysis, build out studies illustrate graphically to local decision makers the potential consequences of existing as well as alternative land use and development choices. In the late 1990's Calvert County, Maryland, also within the Washington, D.C. commuting shed, conducted a build-out study which demonstrated that the county could expect another 54,000 homes to be constructed under its existing zoning. The county used this information as the keystone of a public information campaign to educate county residents about the inevitable future unless the municipality made some changes in its zoning. At public hearings, residents overwhelmingly told officials they wanted to reduce build-out significantly, avoid new school construction, and avoid major road improvements that would be necessary to accommodate the projected new growth. Since that time, the County adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in 2004 and is currently revamping its Zoning Code with the input of residents, leaders and public officials.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> 2005 dollars. Quoted in Albert Hartheimer, "Affordable Housing and the Land Value Tax." [www.newcolonist.com/tworate.html](http://www.newcolonist.com/tworate.html)

<sup>32</sup> For up to date information about the current planning and zoning events in Calvert County, Maryland, go to [www.co.cal.md.us/government/departments/planning/default.asp](http://www.co.cal.md.us/government/departments/planning/default.asp).

## Issue #2: Retail Business

With rising populations, the growth of retail demand in most of the six communities has started to cause churn in several retail categories of as well as pressure for the development of additional retail space. Specific concerns of the summit participants include a proliferation of new “big box” development along corridors and the proposed development of several “lifestyle centers,” new mixed use developments which mimic downtown areas. Participants see that both of these phenomena threaten to create a sense of “sameness,” resembling every other suburb in the United States, while reducing foot traffic in the historic commercial core.

A few of these communities already have or expect to develop retail corridors with typical characteristics such as deep setbacks for large parking lots, large building footprints, traffic lights at each access point and few pedestrian linkages between retail sites. The community leaders at the summit want to encourage the existing historic commercial areas because they tend to host small independent retailers as they usually generate greater positive local economic impact than chain retailers. A study by Tischler & Associates found that in one small city, the businesses of the historic downtown generated an

annual tax surplus of \$326 per 1,000 feet of retail space, while big box stores created an annual tax *deficit* of \$468 per 1,000 feet of retail space.<sup>33</sup>

Participants identified the following tools for supporting independent locally owned businesses as they can thrive in a vibrant, authentic downtown with activity on the streets around the clock.

### Building a Community of Merchants

Being a downtown merchant can be lonely and discouraging at times. To reach out to merchants and support them, the six communities conduct business development workshops either on their own or the assistance of a partner organization such a local college, university or small business development center. In the past year, topics covered throughout the summit communities included: advertising, business planning, crime prevention, customer service, e-commerce, methods for increasing sales, leases, tax strategies, basic computer skills, and window display techniques. Pulling merchants together builds their sense of community, even if they do not agree about everything, creating a forum that supports community interaction and cooperation among merchants who can then promote each other’s businesses. Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. holds monthly

<sup>33</sup> Surplus and deficit calculated by taking the difference between tax revenue and cost of providing municipal services to each business. Tischler’s study of Barnstable, Massachusetts (population 48,000) cited in Stacy Mitchell, Main Street News, February 2004, page 3.

merchants meetings early in the morning before stores open to encourage cross advertising among merchants and to bring issues to the attention of Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. so they can be addressed with local government. The Partnership for Warrenton Foundation sponsors regular familiarization tours at key points during the year, such as back to school and Christmastime, to acquaint merchants with each other's merchandize for the season. Held early before the shops open, the tour group of participating merchants visits three shops for fifteen minutes each. Merchants who want to host tours must also agree to visit their neighbors' shop fronts.

## Promotional Events

Downtown special events, image building events and retail promotional events are all mainstays of Main Street communities. An annual events calendar balanced among these three event types and spread throughout the year not only builds a sense of community, but it should also ring cash registers in the downtown area. All six communities offer great examples of strong promotional events that encourage people to visit their respective downtown areas to see how they have changed and improved over the years. In 2005, Culpeper and several other Virginia Main Street communities joined the

American Independent Business Alliance in declaring the first week of July as national Independents Week.<sup>34</sup> Culpeper held special Independents Week activities in its downtown in conjunction with its traditional July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations. In Staunton, Virginia (population 23,850), Independents Week inspired a group of street artists to show their support for local businesses by participating in a sidewalk chalk art contest - "Chalk One Up For Independents." Meanwhile, downtown merchants in Staunton also spread the word to customers with bag stuffers listing, "What's so great about independents? 1) Character; 2) Community well-being; 3) Decision-making; 4) Keeping dollars at home; 5) Benefits outweigh costs; 6) Environmental sense; and 7) Competition and product diversity."<sup>35</sup>

## Cooperative Advertising

Independent merchants often band together to purchase advertising cooperatively. This allows them access to more expensive media outlets, such as newspapers and/or radio ads, while keeping costs to the individual business reasonable. The merchants from all six communities are involved in cooperatively advertising in some form, though print and radio ads dominate. Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. and the Partnership for Warrenton Foundation both help

notes

<sup>34</sup> American Independent Business Alliance. [http://www.amiba.net/independents\\_week.html](http://www.amiba.net/independents_week.html).  
<sup>35</sup> For more information about Staunton Downtown Development Association's Independents Week activities look for its August 2005 newsletter on its website: [www.stauntondowntown.org](http://www.stauntondowntown.org).

to coordinate cooperative ads by purchasing a newspaper or magazine frame ad and then enabling downtown merchants and professionals to buy an ad block within the frame to promote their individual stores. Berryville Main Street hand delivers welcome bags to new residents in the town each month as another form of cooperative promotion. The welcome bags include a variety of samplers and promotional materials for downtown shops as well as volunteer opportunities with the organization. All the communities with websites also host online downtown business directories to make information about each merchant available at all times.

### **Encourage Street Trees**

On average, consumers of convenience-driven goods and destination-driven goods willingly pay 11 percent more for goods and services in shopping districts with street trees.<sup>36</sup> All six Virginia Main Street summit communities partner with local organizations and/or with their municipal public works department to encourage the planting and maintenance of street trees downtown. In 2004, the Virginia Main Street architect developed standard guidelines for street and parking lot tree installations. Also, Warrenton is updating the landscaping requirements of its zoning code to include detailed local policy about

the planting and maintenance of street trees.<sup>37</sup> The Virginia Department of Forestry administers the Urban & Community Forestry Assistance matching grant program with applications typically due in late spring/early summer. Nonprofits, civic and community groups, and local governments are eligible for grant awards worth between \$1,000 and \$20,000 for street tree installation.<sup>38</sup>

### **Street Flower Incentives**

Window boxes, planters, and hanging baskets not only create a cozy, festive atmosphere for pedestrians and shoppers, they also have a direct impact on boosting occupancy and property values in commercial areas. Research demonstrates that landscape elements have a higher correlation to occupancy rates than architecture, urban design or even direct access to arterial routes.<sup>39</sup> Orange and Warrenton each have grant programs that provide \$50 to businesses willing to plant and maintain plant materials near their storefronts.

### **Façade Improvement Incentives**

Façade improvement incentive programs may include either grants or loans to property owners for improvements to their signage and, more typically, the exterior (front, side or rear facades) of their downtown

<sup>36</sup> Kathleen Wolf, "Trees in Business Districts: Positive Effects on Consumer Behavior!" November 1998. Retrieved from: [www.cfr.washington.edu/research.envmind/consumer.html](http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.envmind/consumer.html).

<sup>37</sup> Contact Virginia Main Street for an electronic copy of Frazier Associates', "Landscaping Guidelines for VMS Entrance signs and Parking Lots." For up to date information about Warrenton's zoning ordinance go to [www.townofwarrenton.com](http://www.townofwarrenton.com).

<sup>38</sup> Contact VDF urban forestry coordinator Paul Revell at (434) 977-6555. [www.dof.virginia.gov/urban/index.shtml](http://www.dof.virginia.gov/urban/index.shtml).

building. Typically, grant programs apply to smaller rehabilitation projects or signs, while loan programs cover large rehabilitation projects, such as removing a metal façade slipcover or restoring bricked-up windows. Culpeper, Manassas and Orange each have façade grant programs to encourage the maintenance of downtown facades. Culpeper and Manassas cap grants at \$500 and Orange caps them at \$250.

Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc. administers a revolving a loan program which includes façade improvements in the historic downtown core of Winchester. Upon approval by the Board of Architectural Review, Preservation of Historic Winchester offers grants of up to \$10,000 with no match requirement for façade improvements to properties in Winchester’s historic district. They have even given a few grants totaling about \$20,000 for key projects.

## **Commercial Building Size Caps**

Limiting the size of commercial buildings along auto-oriented corridors can discourage the development of large buildings that may be difficult to lease again once the original tenant departs. The resulting grayfields, or large tracks of vacant retail property, project a negative image of the entire community and demonstrate

an inefficient use of existing infrastructure. The Town of Warrenton currently caps any new commercial construction outside the historic downtown at 50,000 square feet of gross floor area by right and requires a town council-approved special use permit for commercial buildings greater than 50,000 square feet. Inside the historic central business district, the cap is set at 3,000 square feet.<sup>40</sup>

## **Enterprise Zones**

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development administers the Virginia Enterprise Zone Program. This program is currently being revamped, but will continue to provide financial incentives to qualified businesses within the boundaries of an Enterprise Zone.<sup>41</sup> All localities with Virginia Enterprise Zones compliment those incentives with local ones. For example, the Town of Orange’s local incentives include: real estate tax exemption for qualified rehabilitated structures in the zone; waiver of fees for zone businesses for zoning, rezoning, and sign permits; fast track permit processing for review services; five-year, low-interest loan program for commercial, industrial and residential facade improvements within the zone; and the services of Orange Downtown Alliance, Inc, the local Main Street organization.

<sup>39</sup> Kathleen Wolf, Urban Forest Values: Economic Benefits of Trees.” November, 1998. Retrieved from [www.cfr.washington.edu/research.envmind/Policy/EconBens-FS3.pdf](http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.envmind/Policy/EconBens-FS3.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Town of Warrenton Zoning Code, Article 3, Zoning Districts and Maps.

<sup>41</sup> Go to [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/EZones](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/EZones) for up to date information on changes to the Virginia Enterprise Zone.

Counties and independent cities may apply for new Virginia Enterprise Zone designations in 2007.

## Lease-Back Program

When a property owner hesitates to invest in a downtown property, the local Main Street organization may try to broker a long-term lease to reduce its blighting influence. An effective long term lease usually includes provisions that allow the Main Street organization to renovate and then sublease the space to bring an idle storefront back into circulation, improve the appearance of an important building, or to hold it for just the right tenant to compliment a business niche. The Danville Development Association created its Lease-Back Program in Danville, Virginia to generate usable space for new businesses in July 2004. With the support of the City, Danville Development Association signed its first \$1.00, 84-month lease in October 2004 and completed renovating the Old Butler Shoe Building in December of 2004 for \$72,000. The subtenant, a new business which bolsters a budding home furnishings niche in the historic downtown, moved in 30 days later after completing finishing improvements to the space. Market-rate rents from the sublease return to the lease-back fund to replenish it for future lease-back projects. At the end of the lease,

control of the improved, occupied property will revert back to the owner with the stipulation that the space is used only for retail in the future.<sup>42</sup>

## Retail Preservation Ordinances

While small independent retailers and downtown residents keep the heart of a unique downtown beating, some of the community leaders worry that rising rents jeopardize the ability of retailers and residents to remain in historic downtown areas. For example in Culpeper, upper story residential units have been converted to office space while in Warrenton retail spaces are also giving way to offices and similar service businesses. In both cases, the introduction of office uses at the expenses of retailers and residents, removes the kind of foot traffic characteristic of lively a shopping district, especially in the evening. Several Virginia communities have adopted first floor retail ordinances which restrict non-retail uses at the street level. The zoning ordinance of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia (population 640) endeavors to allow its historic commercial district “to accommodate a wide variety of commercial activities (particularly those that are pedestrian oriented) that will result in the most efficient and attractive use of the town’s central business district.”<sup>43</sup> Middleburg’s ordinance prohibits professional office

<sup>42</sup> Virginia Department of Business Assistance. [Inside Virginia](http://www.dba.state.va.us/mediacenter/files/Dec%2004%20Inside%20VA.pdf). “Danville Finds Creative Way to Recruit Businesses Downtown.” December 2004/January 2005. Retrieved from: <http://www.dba.state.va.us/mediacenter/files/Dec%2004%20Inside%20VA.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Town of Middleburg Zoning Ordinance, page XI-6. For a complete list of permitted uses in Middleburg’s Town Commercial District go to [www.middleburg.org/town.pdf/Article%20XI%20Commercial324C0F.pdf](http://www.middleburg.org/town.pdf/Article%20XI%20Commercial324C0F.pdf).

uses, except for real estate offices, at the street level by right and allows them only through a special exception permitting process.

## Revolving Funds

A revolving fund is a pool of capital created and reserved for a specific use, such as purchasing and re-selling buildings, with the restriction that the monies are returned to the fund to carry on the same activity.<sup>44</sup> A variety of public or private entities can operate a revolving fund, but nearly all funds that buy and sell properties are managed by private, nonprofit organizations.<sup>45</sup> The Main Street organization in Salisbury, North Carolina (population 26,000), administers a revolving fund that has gone from \$0 to \$85,000 in four years. It all started with the donation of a vacant soda bottling plant to Downtown Salisbury, Inc. Downtown Salisbury, Inc. used the property to establish a line of credit with a local bank and start a revolving fund that has purchased, resold and rehabilitated three downtown buildings slated for demolition while redeveloping the bottling plant too. The four buildings purchased and sold through Downtown Salisbury, Inc.'s revolving fund have resulted in \$1.6 million in investment in downtown Salisbury. In Virginia, a professional staff allows APVA Preservation Virginia's revolving fund to use a variety of

methods to save historic properties including: options to purchase; deeds of gift; bargain sales; direct acquisitions; and marketing properties to find potential buyers. To qualify for assistance, properties must: be individually listed in the National Register or a contributing property to a National Register district; be listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register; or deemed eligible by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources as eligible for listing in either the Virginia Landmarks Register or the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>46</sup>

## Mystery Shopping

The Mystery Shopping Providers Association describes mystery shopping as “the practice of using trained shoppers to anonymously evaluate customer service, operations, employee integrity, merchandising, and product quality.”<sup>47</sup> The Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center (SBDC) which serves Berryville, Culpeper, Orange, Warrenton and Winchester offers mystery shopping evaluation services, primarily by engaging employees in everyday customer service scenarios.<sup>48</sup> The City of Winchester used the Lord Fairfax SBDC mystery shopping program to evaluate the customer service skills of city employees, but this service may also be used to provide feedback to individual business owners or the Main Street

<sup>44</sup> Unlike a revolving *loan* fund, a revolving fund does not engage in the lending of capital, rather a revolving fund spends its capital and recoups it during the resale of the property acquired.

<sup>45</sup> Pope, Sarah Dillard. *Virginia Main Street Monitor*. “A Revolving Fund: Can It Save Buildings In Your Downtown?” September 2003. Contact Virginia Main Street to receive a copy of this article.

<sup>46</sup> For more information, go to APVA Preservation Virginia's website at [www.apva.org/apva/revolving\\_fund.php](http://www.apva.org/apva/revolving_fund.php).

<sup>47</sup> For more information about the mystery shopping profession go to [www.mysteryshop.org/index-na.php](http://www.mysteryshop.org/index-na.php).

<sup>48</sup> For more information about mystery shopping services through Lord Fairfax SBDC, contact Caroline Majors at [cmajors@lfsbdc.org](mailto:cmajors@lfsbdc.org).

<sup>49</sup> Community Land Use Economics Group, LLC. "Sales Gap Analysis for South Boston, Virginia." December 1, 2004. p.21.

organizations about key aspects of customer service in downtown. The Town of Luray, a Virginia Main Street community, used mystery shopping services in this way and discovered a variety of strengths, like friendliness, and weaknesses, such as lack of information about other stores, among its downtown businesses. In response to the mystery shopping results, Luray Downtown Initiative has brought merchants together in order to meet each other and learn about the products and services available at other stores in downtown.

### **Coordinate Downtown Store Hours**

Unlike shopping centers that are owned and operated by a single entity, downtown stores do not necessarily gravitate to a specific market segment nor do they have a predictable range of operating hours. Because the goods and services offered by downtown merchants vary so widely and because shopkeepers are not required to keep specific hours, the quest for uniform store hours in downtown may not be possible or even desirable. However, Main Street organizations should work with merchants to keep their stores open during the hours of their greatest possible sales. For most retailers, working women are the primary purchasers of goods and services and their preferred

hours of buying activity are in the evenings and on weekends. Offering early evening shopping hours (5-7 p.m., for example) and convenient weekend shopping hours is crucial to strengthening an historic commercial district's economy.<sup>49</sup> While the Main Street organization may initially provide incentives to business owners to have more hours appropriate to their customers, eventually the greatest incentive will come in the form of increased sales.

### **Economic and Community Impact Review**

Municipalities usually require some form of environmental and/or fiscal impact review before approving new development. When outlining projected economic impacts, developers usually detail gross jobs and taxable sales to be created, but rarely balance this with projected costs to the existing business community. A number of localities have adopted economic and community review ordinances that require large new construction projects to demonstrate their *net* impacts on the community based on certain criteria. These criteria may include: employment, wages, tax revenue, public service expenses, traffic, historic resources and environmental resources. In Homer, Alaska (population 4,700), the city council not only capped the size of new retail development at 45,000

square feet, but it also adopted a community impact review process for any retail project greater than 15,000 square feet. Homer's review process requires developers to pay at least \$300 per 1,000 square feet for an independent review that examines the projects impacts on traffic, scenic and historic resources, tax revenue, city services, employment, the downtown business district, and the city's character. If costs outweigh benefits, the developer would be denied a permit.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Issue # 3: Transportation***

Overall, summit participants ranked transportation as the third priority issue for discussion. Participants discussed changes that may be necessary in order to connect commuters and local workers to their places of work, businesses with their customers and residents with civic and social networks. At present, most of the six communities demonstrate a balance of homes and jobs with 30% or less of residents commuting more than 30 minutes to work each day.<sup>51</sup> This balance may be disrupted in the future if the new residential population swells beyond local job growth in each community. Participants generated the following list of transportation policy tools and practices that to improve access and mobility for all people, including those without access to automobiles.

## **Transit Systems**

Several summit leaders mentioned transit solutions as a means of reducing congestion on local roads and between commuting destinations. The five most rural summit communities offer in-town and on-demand bus or trolley services to increase the mobility of local people, while Manassas participates in a Washington, D.C. regional commuter-oriented bus service. Manassas also offers commuter rail service to Washington, D.C. in addition to regular passenger rail service.<sup>52</sup> In the future, existing transit options should be well-documented and marketed to potential residents as well as local people. Some new residents of Woodstock, Virginia (population 3,700) moving from the inner Washington suburbs have been dismayed by the lack of commuter transit options available in the Shenandoah Valley after having already purchased homes more than two hours from their places of work in the Washington, D.C. metro area. If/when commuter transit options become available, one possible way for summit localities to improve average transit travel speeds, schedule adherence, and the number of passenger seat-miles per hour carried by transit vehicles would be to introduce bypass lanes at bottlenecks, intelligent traffic signals that recognize buses and give them

<sup>50</sup> For more details about community impact review in other states go to [www.newrules.org/retail/impact.html](http://www.newrules.org/retail/impact.html).

<sup>51</sup> US Census Bureau, 2000 Summary Tape File 3 data for Town of Berryville, Town of Culpeper, City of Manassas, Town of Orange, Town of Warrenton, and City of Winchester.

<sup>52</sup> Culpeper also offers passenger rail service, though on a much more limited basis.

notes

priority, or a combination of both these tools.<sup>53</sup>

## Nonmotorized Transportation

Walking, bicycling, small wheel transportation (such as skates, skateboards, or scooters), and wheelchair travel also provide significant alternatives to automobile travel in small downtown areas.

During streetscape development and improvement, downtowns may seek to accommodate many forms of nonmotorized transportation among customers and visitors, who usually arrive by automobile or transit, as well as residents, who usually do not. Several summit communities have engaged in streetscaping, including Orange, Warrenton and Culpeper. The City of Winchester made its sidewalks more accessible as part of its streetscape improvements by widening its sidewalks to eight feet, burying overhead utilities, and bumping out city block corners to shorten the crosswalk distance for pedestrians and gathering spaces. Winchester's Green Circle nonmotorized transportation trail system connects the historic downtown to outlying neighborhoods, schools, economic activity generators, and major visitor destinations encircling the city core, while protecting green space downtown and increasing the opportunity for exercise among residents. Winchester

Parks and Recreation hosts events and promotions throughout the year along the Green Circle Project trail system to encourage tourists and residents to use the trails when linking to destinations in the city and thus provide relief to some of its transportation challenges.<sup>54</sup>

## Mixed-Use Parking

The completion of a municipal parking deck in Staunton, Virginia in 2001 demonstrated that a downtown parking deck can be beautiful, functional, and blend with its environment. Wrapping the deck with retail at the street level encourages pedestrian safety and visual interest while still providing important parking spaces at the back of the structure.<sup>55</sup> Mixed-use parking decks may also include office space and/or residential space all the way up street-view façades and elevator corridors. Some of the summit communities are considering contextually sensitive parking deck developments of their own. For example, the Town of Culpeper recently asked a consultant to prepare a design concept for a mixed-use parking deck that includes a police station and retail stores at the street level.

<sup>53</sup> For more information about the benefits and mechanics of developing high-quality transit in rural and exurban areas go to the American Public transportation Association's website at [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com).

<sup>54</sup> For the latest Green Circle Project developments and events go to [www.winchestergreencircle.com](http://www.winchestergreencircle.com).

## Delivery Truck Regulations

Coordinating the use of parking lanes and spaces for vehicular traffic and delivery trucks at different times can prevent backups caused by deliveries during their peak traffic hours. If the hours are predictable, businesses will know when they are able to receive and send deliveries.<sup>56</sup> For example, an ordinance could state that all deliveries in the historic district must take place before 10 a.m. In some parts of Cape Cod, Massachusetts deliveries are limited to morning hours in the downtown districts to cut down on traffic congestion and backups.<sup>57</sup>

## Turning Commuters into Local Workers

People commuting long distances each day may difficulty integrating with their new hometowns due to lack of time. Culpeper has an initiative called “Work Where You Live” to entice new businesses and entrepreneurs to relocate and tap into Culpeper’s skilled workforce of long-term residents and commuters. Commuters switching to local jobs can save up to \$17,000 per year by working closer to home. When welcoming new folks to their small town, the Berryville Main Street program tries to educate new residents about their community and slower

pace of life. In order to show people that life in small towns can be different from what they are used to, Berryville wants to include copies of the book *Moving to a Small Town* in every welcome bag it gives out to new members of the community.<sup>58</sup>

## Use-Based Car Insurance

Communities may consider a tax credit to local insurance companies with policies that encourage short commutes, such as basing at least 75 percent of the cost of a motor vehicle insurance policy on the number of miles driven, number of hours driven, or a similar use-based factor. This encourages drivers to drive less so that they can save money, therefore reducing traffic congestion. It is also an incentive for people to live and work in the same place, reducing the probability of a place becoming a bedroom community for the Washington, D.C. area. Texas began taking steps in 2000 to adopt distance-based insurance with HB 45, a law which authorizes insurance companies to offer distance-based motor vehicle insurance policies. The Federal Highway Administration is supporting research and pilot projects for use-based insurance in Georgia and Massachusetts, and efforts are underway to expand state incentives for this innovation in other states.

<sup>55</sup> For more facts and figures about this award-winning design, go to <http://staunton.halyardsystems.com/default.asp?pageID=DAF6B460-453C-40F4-92E9-A92117D2CC09>.

<sup>56</sup> Coalition for Smarter Growth [www.smartergrowth.net](http://www.smartergrowth.net)

<sup>57</sup> Cape Cod Commission. “Transportation Information Center.” <http://www.gocapecod.org/>

<sup>58</sup> Frank Levering and Wanda Urbanska. *Moving to a Small Town*. Fireside: New York, NY, 1996.

## Location Efficient Mortgages

Fannie Mae has implemented a program in Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles that will qualify those who live near transit, own one or no cars, and have lower monthly commuting costs, for a higher mortgage. This enables many people to buy homes closer to transit and decrease automobile traffic, while also qualifying people that may not otherwise be able to get a loan. Expanding this program to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan could enable households driven to the outer edges of the urban envelope in search of affordable housing to buy closer to their work places.

Virginia created a comprehensive plan for the area around the Ballston Metro station that called for a dense mix of uses with appropriate streetscape design to encourage a lively 24 hour neighborhood. To encourage housing and retail uses, the plan allowed density bonuses in office buildings that included these uses. A site plan review process assures that each proposed development promotes the concepts of the comprehensive plan.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency. "Smart Growth Policies." Retrieved from: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/sgpdb/policy.cfm?policyid=789>.

## Transit Oriented Development

Accessed primarily by transit, mixed-use developments near transportation centers encourage a constant flow and presence of pedestrians, even on evenings and weekends. Transit oriented developments (TODs) often include essential goods and services, such as dry cleaners or sandwich shops, so errands can be run by pedestrians on the way to and from work without an additional vehicle trip. TODs also may encourage residential diversity, reduce the need for surface lots around transit stops, and lower the amount of cars within the town center. Arlington County,

## Next Steps

The community leaders represented at the summit greatly benefited from meeting their peers in other communities and sharing their ideas. Several Main Street organization executive directors met after the Summit to discuss possible follow-up and collaboration that might build on the discussion. They agreed that the executive summary of this white paper should be made available for their use in educating their partners and peers locally. In addition to the compilation of the proceedings in the form of a white paper, the executive directors also agreed, in the short term, to personally share information and act as resources to one another's communities during comprehensive and other planning processes taking place throughout the year. One or two communities would like to consider hosting mini-*Reality Checks*, similar to those being conducting by the ULI throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region. The executive directors also acted in concert by seeking consulting assistance with the development of a regional marketing proposal that emphasized their identity as a group. Virginia Main Street shared this proposal with other communities in the region experiencing similar issues, organized under the banner of the National Park Service's Journey Through Hallowed Ground. This much larger group of communities, spanning three states, brings even greater capacity to heighten

awareness of growth and its impacts on small communities at the edges of the Washington exurbs – communities which also steward nationally significant historic places.

notes

# Appendix A: Summit Agenda and Participants

## Facilitation Agenda March 30, 2005

### Lead Facilitator

Doug Loescher, National Trust Main Street Center Director

### Small Group Facilitators

Courtney Anderson, Christa Donahue, Mary Reynolds, Sarah Pope, Kate Sipes, and Amy Yarcich from  
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

### Resource Facilitators

John Bailey, Urban Land Institute/Smart Growth Alliance  
Joe Pettiford, Jr. and Renee Viers, National Trust for Historic Preservation

- 12:00 Arrival and lunch
- 12:40 Break into mixed small groups
- 12:45 Opening and welcome
- 1:00 Mixed small group introductions
- 1:20 Mixed small group discussions of the issues
- 2:00 Resource facilitator session
- 2:30 Mixed small group discussions of policy approaches to each issue
- 3:45 Mixed small groups report out
- 4:15 Community small group discussions of next steps
- 4:35 Large group discussion of regional next steps
- 5:00 Adjourn

## Community Participants

### *Berryville*

1. Susi Bailey, Downtown Berryville, Inc. Executive Director
2. Keith Dalton, Berryville Town Manager
3. Christy Dunkle, Berryville Town Planner
4. George Dellinger, Downtown Berryville, Inc. President
5. Allen Kitselman, Berryville Town Council, Berryville Area Development Authority Chair
6. Jeanne Krohn, Downtown Berryville, Inc. Design Committee Chair
7. John Lincoln, Berryville Town Planning Commission
8. Sue Ross, Downtown Berryville, Inc. Executive Assistant

## *Culpeper*

1. John Lassiter, Culpeper Town Planner
2. Diane Logan, Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. Executive Director
3. Carl Sachs, Culpeper Economic Development Office

## *Manassas*

1. Tricia Davis, Historic Manassas Inc. Executive Director

## *Orange*

1. Michael Collins, Town Planner and Zoning Administrator, Town of Orange
2. James Harrison III, Exec. Director of the Orange Downtown Alliance, Inc.
3. Catherine Gillespie, Member of the Town of Orange Planning Commission
4. Deborah Sturm Kendall, AICP, County of Orange Planning Dir. and Zoning Adm.
5. Stanley Livengood, Director of the Orange County Office of Economic Development
6. Dr. Barry Mangum, President of the Orange Downtown Alliance, Inc.
7. Christopher Nielsen, Town Manager, Town of Orange
8. Albert Sanborn, Compatible Economic Development Coordinator, Town of Orange
9. Steven Satterfield, District 3 Representative on the Orange County Planning Commission

## *Warrenton*

1. John Albertella, Warrenton Town Council, Ward 1
2. Mike Baldauf, Town of Warrenton Architectural Review Board

3. Jolley de Give, Piedmont Environmental Council Planning Services Director
4. Virginia Farrar
5. Andrew Hushour, Town Zoning Administrator
6. Doug Larson, Partnership for Warrenton Foundation Board of Directors
7. Christopher Mothersead, Town Planning and Community Development Director
8. Dennis Sutherland, Warrenton Town Council, Ward 3
9. Terrence Nyhous, Warrenton Town Council, Ward 4
10. Richard Calderon, Senior Planner Fauquier County
11. Steve Wagner, AIA
12. Anne-Marie Walsh, Partnership for Warrenton Foundation Executive Director

## *Winchester*

1. Jim Deskins, City of Winchester Economic Development Director
2. Karen Helm, Old Town Development Board Executive Director
3. Susan Masters, Old Town Development Board President

# Appendix B: Summit Notes

**Table 1**  
**Facilitator: Christa Donohue**

## Rank of Primary Issues

- 1) Property Development – 4 votes
- 2) Retail Business Climate – 2 votes
- 3) Transportation – 1 vote

## Primary Issues - Other Examples

### Property Development

- Need traditional neighborhoods *and* Main Street
- Difficult property owners with unrealistic expectations
- Keeping retail prominent on Main Street
- Concept of building “new Main Streets” (expanding on existing Main Street – not lifestyle centers)
- Need more freedom – nix Dillon Rule (feel handcuffed by the Commonwealth)
- Need better public/private dialogue forum (more creative legal mechanism)
- Balancing private investment with rent increases

### Retail Business Climate

- Empty storefronts/unsightly
- Losing residential downtown
- Competition with developers to “recreate” downtown elsewhere (lifestyle centers)
- Accessibility issues/perceived accessibility

### Transportation

- Need better public/private dialogue forum (more creative legal

mechanism)

- Need West Virginia and Virginia to work together (Route 9)
- More creative approach to parking (combine with retail on street level like Staunton)
- Need a way to maintain foot traffic across parking
- Local government needs to be better educated about possibilities
- Accessibility issues/perceived accessibility

### Issue: Retail Business Climate

Success in 5-10 years would be:

- Transport linkage (including walkways) to other areas and enough parking
- Forum for communication to business owners
- Interesting events where retail businesses support each other
- A great business in every building
- Expand Main Street district (side streets and parallel streets)
- A gathering place with a sense of community
- Design reflecting community character
- Redevelopment and mixed-use (including residential)
- Expand (evening) and uniform hours of operation
- Streetscape if pleasing
- Pedestrian friendly
- Social capital (organizations, partnerships building culture) events planning
- Encourage property owners to establish streetscape

Strategies that exist to address this issue in my community:

- Hired consultant to look at parking deck that incorporates retail and police department (Culpeper)
- Receiving grant to evaluate neighborhoods with blight (Culpeper?)
- Bury utilities – 2 block zones (Winchester)
- Creating an Arts & Cultural district state legislation got it approved in GA (Winchester)
- Town and County starting to have more dialog on the future of downtown (Orange)
- Sponsoring special events (Warrenton)
- Monthly merchants meetings to bring issues to light (Culpeper)
- Encouraging cross advertising among merchants (Culpeper)
- Bringing social capital organizations together regularly (Culpeper)
- Considering zoning regulations
- Neighborhood initiatives grassroots – includes downtown to get property owners to make needed improvements (city inspectors/ maintenance code) – Winchester
- Program to plug-in new community members – Berryville
- Reduced parking requirements at time of change of use
- Transportation enhancement \$ from VDOT to do streetscape improvements – Orange

Strategies that exist to address this issue in other communities:

- Secret shoppers
- Multiple Main Street (side streets, etc.)
- Greenville, SC -- great streetscape and evening events
- Great signage
- Cooperative advertising
- No strategies that we know of to address rising rents
- Private Developer recruiting Main

Street businesses

- Just say no to Big box through zoning
- Need strategy for addressing poor customer service

Trade-offs related to the strategies:

- Loss of autonomy for individual business owners
- Loss of property rights
- Loss of diversity
- Roadblock -- Greedy landlords
- Loss of revenue or investment
- Perceived loss of convenience (may be short term)
- Exposure to loss of office if initiatives fail

What I can do to support one or more of the strategies identified:

- Work with supervisors and council
- Educate citizens and business owners
- Create incentives for business and property owners

**Next Steps for Berryville and Manassas**

- Research zoning issue
- Education
  - ◊ Do a “Tale of Two Cities” piece
  - ◊ Distribute through media, universities, newsletters
  - ◊ Welcome for newcomers
  - ◊ Coupons for downtown
  - ◊ Info on volunteers opportunities
  - ◊ Ads for special events
- Get business owners to feel sense of owners
- Plan is there – need to seek outside recognition
- Mini-reality check event

**Table 2**  
**Facilitator: Mary Reynolds**

**Rank of Primary Issues**

- 1) Property Development  
 – 4 votes
- 2) Retail Business  
 Climate – 2 votes
- 3) Transportation – 1 vote

**Primary Issues - Other Examples**

**Property Development**

- Cluster housing: moderate-income housing, ex: older citizens housing; develop in or near downtown
- Zoning for shopping centers outside city
- Re-zone for multifamily housing (not good)  
 Better: mixed use, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> floor; use existing space
- Difficult to develop downtown (changing markets)  
 Winchester  
 down zoned, then based residential on building size

**Retail Business Climate**

- Policies/Planning where you allow business to develop (outside town)  
 Rezoning
- People shopping in other cities  
 Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, Winchester (Berryville)
- Retail for local and tourists (antiques)
- Other destination (museums, etc.)

**Transportation**

- Parking garage (perceptions of no parking)

- Short-cut through downtown from major roads (esp. rush hour)
- Bypass – good or bad? (ban trucks?)
- Traffic signals
- Traffic calming needed – no speed bumps  
 Better public transportation  
 Brick crosswalks

**Issue: Property Development**

Success in 5-10 years would be:

- Planning process includes *diverse* inputs (incomes, race, business owners, home owners)
- Diverse housing products (income, owners, renters)
- More retail, less office
- Self-sustaining (econ)
- Fully occupied
- Downtown vision is part of larger region/county vision (ex.: preserve rural areas, limit housing development)
- Historic districts/tourism, tax credits (fewer tear-downs)

Strategies that exist to address this issue in my community:

- CDBG funds target nearby downtown neighborhoods; make safe, remove blight (Winchester)
- Historic Preservation (Warrenton)
- Investment tax credits (Winchester)
- Architectural Review Committee  
 Cultural context; keep “piece of past” (regulatory)
- First floor must be retail unless special use permit [in process, not yet adopted] (Warrenton)

## Existing Transportation

### Strategies

- Walkability – brick crosswalks, brick sidewalks (Warrenton), neighborhood paths link to downtown
- increase to 8 feet (Winchester), bury utilities, bumpout corner
- Green Circle (Winchester)
- Organization to spearhead economic development in downtown, ex. Main Street organization, to help recruit ideal retailers (Berryville, Orange, Warrenton, Winchester)
- Arts and Cultural Center (Berryville Dairy Barn rehabilitation downtown, Orange)
- Arts & Cultural District tax abatement (Winchester)
- TIF (Winchester)
- Increase property values -  
- housing or other on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors (Fredericksburg, Culpeper, Winchester, Warrenton ordinance)
- Small manufacturers -  
- employment near downtown (Berryville)
- Regional Cooperation PDC#9 transportation summit study of 211 (Warrenton/Fauquier)

### Strategies that exist to address this issue in other communities:

- Complying with BOCA
- CODES
- NJ – rehab standards changed to encourage historic rehab
- Architectural Review Committee/Board  
Stand your ground  
“Corridor overlay districts” (Winchester)  
Ex: McDonald’s looks like historic buildings

### How:

- Get town council to pass
- Get property owners on your side
- Get Historic District
- Convince that Historic District brings value to buildings
- State preservation office (or university) can do surveys for historic district designation
- Arts & Cultural District tax abatement (Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Staunton)
- TIF (Culpeper)
- Billboard reduction (Lexington)
- Performance zoning and regulatory linkages, ex.: 80% market rate, 20% affordable set asides elsewhere or on site
- Shared vision by town and county
- Get rid of independent cities?

### Trade-offs related to the strategies we identified:

- “Liberty” – Property rights, in and outside town
- Stronger Econ/downtown Tax revenues Tourism
- Benefits for all

### What I can do to support one or more of the strategies identified:

- Educate public and ourselves (tools and how to use) through the MEDIA
- Invite speakers, use resources, visit other towns with speakers (Winchester & Berryville)
- Educate/lobby town council and Boards of Supervisors
- Make part of comprehensive plan town/county
- FIX zoning

### What an ordinary citizen can

do to support one or more of the strategies identified:

- Take part in meetings, get more people active
- Newspaper reports/stories TV
- Spread the word to neighbors, garden clubs, other service clubs, women's clubs (Red Hats)
- Organize!

### Table 3

Facilitator: Sarah Pope

#### Rank of Primary Issues

- 4) Retail Business Climate – 3 votes
- 5) Property Development – 2 votes
- 6) Transportation – 1 vote

#### Primary Issues - Other Examples

##### Property Development

- Landlords not committed to downtown
- Losing housing for offices
- Raise Awareness about architectural review boards

##### Retail Business Climate

- Expectations of new residents who are used to “convenience” and shopping at strip malls

##### Transportation

- Perceived problem – people don't want to walk
- Lack of public space and street furniture

##### Parking Lot

- Raise awareness in the community
  - Partnership development
  - ARB, Planning Commission, Economic development office

#### Issue: Retail Business Climate

Success in 5-10 years would be:

- Full storefronts
- Affordable rents
- Less service industries on 1<sup>st</sup> floors
- Not a 9-5 office park
- Business clusters/market niches
- Well-maintained, charming streetscape
- Support/encourage the independent businesses
- Open during Evening hours
- Mixed-use restaurant, entertainment, retail
- Longevity of businesses
- Increased pedestrian traffic

Strategies that exist to address this issue in my community:

- Ordinance to contain commercial area downtown – Berryville
- Updating comprehensive plan to be more conducive to a thriving downtown – Berryville and Orange
- Survey of county residents about where growth should occur – Orange
- Networking with community on comprehensive plan for *County* – Berryville
- Downtown forum for merchants
- 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail ordinance – Warrenton
- Re-classifying banks from retail/ service to office – Warrenton
- Welcome bags for newcomers – Berryville
- Walking tours – Berryville

Strategies that exist to address this issue in other communities:

- CT communities -- Ordinance – 1<sup>st</sup> 10 feet must be retail back can be offices
- Use new language, how you “call” your strategies or educate, your vocabulary ex.: “protecting unique character” instead of “protecting retail”
- Incentives to business owners to

have longer hours. Must get all businesses on board.

- In the lease, stipulate business must be open on Sunday and/or have evening hours, etc.
- Burlington, VT -- Online shopping for Main Street merchants – train them how

Trade-offs related to the strategies:

- May limit types of businesses for downtown
- Handicapped accessibility (retail on 1<sup>st</sup> floor ordinance) – offices on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Roadblocks -- ADA compliance
- Roadblock -- change in government leadership
- Roadblock -- lack of cooperation

What I can do to support one or more of the strategies identified:

- Educate the public
  - Getting merchants on board
  - Personally visiting merchants from MD manager and board members
- Good communication with elected officials, planning and zoning.
  - Need to be seen as equal
  - Be at meetings
  - E-mail, get in the info loop
  - Task force that meets monthly – made up of all local players (transportation, planning code)

**Next Steps for Orange**

- Delegation reconvene
- Comprehensive Plan – including Main Street
- Political leadership in County and Town to meet regularly – group to make recommendations to Town Council and County Board of

Supervisors

- Review zoning ordinance – County and Town
- Public-private development entity for Town and/or County
- Make sure to know all financial assistance available on website (make a website!)
- Work with business community on benefits of an ARB or Tourism overlay district, different zoning tools
- Find “local champions” effective
- Get other community business groups to come to Orange

**Table 4**  
**Facilitator: Courtney Anderson**

**Rank of Primary Issues**

- 1) Property Development – 2 votes
- 2) Transportation – 1.5 votes
- 3) Retail Business Climate – 1 vote

**Primary Issues Other Examples**

**Property Development**

- Underutilization of public assets, such as parking lots
- Demolition of historic structures to accommodate new development
- Decrease in amount of affordable housing
- Property maintenance

**Retail Business Climate**

- Chain retailers in downtown can cause rents to rise
- Need for management of vacancies – brokering to find good tenants
- Importance of downtown residents/customers
- Need for more customers for the

businesses we want

- Importance of pedestrian-friendly shopping
- Parking

### Transportation

- Inadequate transit (public)
- Need for parking management
- Parking is not paying its way (public lots cost too much in lost revenue and maintenance)

### Issue: Transportation

#### Success in 5-10 years would be:

- Transportation system including pedestrian friendly environment
- Sufficient parking
- People will want to walk places
- Downtown residential population will be healthy – a critical mass of individuals
- Balanced land use and more transit options will make cars less necessary
- VDOT will work with us as a partner/peer (or at least come closer)

#### Strategies that exist to address this issue in my community:

- Bus systems – Orange, Warrenton, Berryville for seniors only
- Elect the right people to local government
- Educational campaigns (featuring Ed McMahan and Dan Burton) – Orange, Warrenton
- Mixed-use zoning – Berryville, Orange, Warrenton
- Reform site plan requirements for commercial access – Warrenton in the works
- Have a comprehensive plan that addresses transportation trends & research – Berryville, Warrenton, Orange in the works
- Sliding scale zoning (where town and county plans are completely inter-related and share same overall vision/goals) – Berryville/Clarke,

Warrenton/Faquier

- Coordinating policy between town and county at the staff level – Orange

#### Strategies that exist to address this issue in other communities:

- Seattle -- created regional government (Cities of Tacoma/Seattle and surrounding counties) with authority to *create and implement* transportation policy
- Staunton -- parking deck that is mixed-use, public/private, and multi-tiered (smaller footprint, more land on tax rolls)
- London -- commuter toll to enter central business district (for extreme congestion – not recommended for our communities)
- Washington, D.C. -- business enabling hourly rental of cars, decreases car ownership
- Many places -- public bicycles (they tend to be stolen)
- Leesburg -- rolley between downtown and the outlets
- Roanoke City/San Antonio -- circuit rider buses
- Anywhere but here -- synchronized traffic lights

#### Trade-offs related to the strategies we identified:

- Roadblock -- local governments want their sovereignty rather than sharing power for policy-making
- Roadblock -- Inertia/leadership is not motivated to change
- Regulation makes private sector annoyed which feeds political inertia
- Roadblock -- Cost of implanting transportation projects/policies are legitimately high (synchronizing lights costs more than you think)
- Roadblock -- public sector can be too cheap to implement sound policy recommendations, even lower cost

- ones, let alone high cost ones
- Education take time investment & persistence among public officials

What I can do to support one or more of the strategies identified:

- What more can I do? The political will takes time to change.
- Use visual models and pictures to build argument/educate public and stakeholders, not just words
- Selling good ideas to other elected officials (my vote alone is just one)
- Be willing to learn from local govt. staff/professionals who are experts in planning, etc.
- Knowing scope of action/regulation that a community can accept at present and push them a little further through education

**Table 5**  
**Facilitator: Kate Sipes**

**Rank of Primary Issues**

- 7) Property Development – 5 votes
- 8) Transportation – 4 votes
- 9) Retail Business Climate – 2 votes

**Primary Issues - Other Examples**

**Property Development**

- Need to expand downtown district (to reach side streets and 1 or 2 other parallel streets)
- Need to have multi-level parking/retail/mixed use
- Neglected properties
- Need to keep business climate balanced with historic preservation
- Losing downtown housing

**Retail Business Climate**

- Need balance between retail and other commercial activity

- Downtown district v. suburban development
- Programming/events/management of district v. manipulated economies (store hours, etc.)

**Transportation**

- Studied parking to death!
- Bypasses
- One-way/two-way circulation
- Truck traffic
- Perception of lack of parking

**Issue: Property Development**

Success in 5-10 years would be:

- Mix of residential, retail, services
- Education/outreach to new residents -- explanation & celebration of what we have
- Expanded district, but still defined
- More activity in the evening
- Use-friendly -- easy parking
- Vitality
- Opportunities for work, housing & recreation -- balanced
- Protecting historic resources
- Allowing new development
- Sensitivity to environmental issues (storm water)
- Demographic diversity -- appealing to all (including families with kids)

Strategies that exist to address this issue in my community:

- Comprehensive plan
- Implementer: Enlightened political leadership
- Implementer: Downtown advocate -- Main Street
- Implementers: Volunteer network
- Conservation easements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights
- Historic site signs
- Design awards
- Community services awards -- people & orgs

• Events calendar -- market existing activities for locals and visitors  
Strategies that exist to address this issue in other communities:

- Façade easements
- Tax credits for physical improvements
- Economic development targeted at local job creation v. commuter traffic
- Zoning to accommodate upper story housing in downtown district
- TIF district
- Business Improvement District
- Create downtown development authority or organization
- Corporation to buy available properties & market them -- revolving funds
- Form-based codes

Trade-offs related to the strategies:

- Access to capital (purchasing property, redevelopment corporations)
- Cooperation & attitude of property owners (absentee owners – willing to sell? Asking price?)
- Public perception/psychological barriers
- Consensus building
- Planning for long-term while working with short term leadership

What I can do to support one or more of the strategies identified:

- Involve & outreach to “next generation of workers”
- Communication with all stakeholders (merchants association, property owner association)
- Promote participation
- Be sure Comprehensive Plan discusses all features of “Perfectville” -- energize Comprehensive Plan rewrite process

## **Next Steps for Warrenton and Culpeper**

### **Property Development**

- Create a building inventory

### **Transportation**

- Clean up connector alley
- Wayfinding sign project
- Clean up parking lots

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