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Equitable Development on the Richmond Highway Corridor in Richmond, Virginia

Amelie M. Rives
Virginia Commonwealth University

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Amelie Rives
Master of Urban & Regional Planning Program
L. Douglas Wilder School of Government & Public Affairs
Virginia Commonwealth University

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Professional Plan Advisor:
Dr. Kathryn Howell
Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning
Virginia Commonwealth University

Capstone Coordinator:
Dr. Meghan Gough
Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning
Virginia Commonwealth University

Professional Plan Client:
Lea Whitehurst – Gibson
Founder and Executive Director
Virginia Community Voice

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In memory of Joan Reed and Vince Brown, my sweet grandparents who both passed away during my time in the MURP program. They were always supporters and believers in the power of education, and I know they are proud.

Introduction

Project Purpose

This professional plan supports the work of Virginia Community Voice to organize with neighbors advocating for equitable development of Richmond's Southside neighborhoods along the Richmond Highway (formerly known as the Jefferson Davis Highway Corridor). This plan identifies opportunities for neighbors to take control of development in their own community and formulates a strategy for ongoing organizing and community collaboration. The analysis explores gentrification and displacement, community development practices, and envisions examples of community change building from the desires of current community members. Utilizing an asset-based and radical-planning approach to create a people-focused equitable development plan that represents the neighbors' vision of their community, Virginia Community Voice and community members can influence the direction of development on Richmond's Southside along the Richmond Highway Corridor.

Client Profile

Virginia Community Voice is a community-based non-profit organization with a mission to equip neighbors in historically marginalized communities to realize their vision for their neighborhoods and prepare institutions to respond. They have two programs: RVA Thrives increases neighborhood leadership over decisions that affect communities along Richmond Highway and the Community Voice Blueprint trains and coaches institutions that seek to more equitably engage historically marginalized communities. RVA Thrives engages neighbors in creating positive community change through leadership opportunities, connecting through advocacy, and promoting strengths and investment in the corridor (Virginia Community Voice Blueprint, 2017). As redevelopment has increased at a fast pace in the last few years, Virginia Community Voice seeks to create an "equitable development scorecard" that reflects the desires and needs of residents for housing and business development along the Richmond Highway in the City of Richmond. Virginia Community Voice hopes to use the scorecard to equip neighbors with tools to prevent displacement, hold policymakers and developers

accountable, and retool the power structures at play with community development to better allow the neighbors' visions of their community to lead development decisions.

Research Questions

Virginia Community Voice identified the need for an equitable development plan as an ideal next step to accomplish their mission and vision – a Commonwealth where decisions are made equitably. How can this professional plan give the Richmond Highway neighbors control of the future of their homes and public spaces through an inclusive equitable development plan? The following questions are researched and explored deeper in the literature review to identify next steps leading to the methodology for the professional plan.

Table 1: Research Question

Research Questions
1. How can a community be in control of its own development?
a.   *What community assets and strengths exist in the neighborhood?*
b.   *What does the community want their neighborhood to look like?*
c.   *What is the resident vision for the future?*
2. How can we make the City accountable to this vision?
a.   *How can the resident vision of the future be the central focus of development over speculation and profit?*

Researcher Position Statement

Using the radical planning approach, this plan seeks to redistribute the power that is often placed in white planners and bring it back to the voices who have often purposely been excluded from planning decisions (Goetz, et al., 2020 and Williams, 2020). Virginia Community Voice has created an empowered process with the neighbors and I participate to promote strategic organizing and advocacy through the equitable planning process. The lived expertise and knowledge of the Richmond Highway community serves as a commitment to radical planning outcomes (Williams, 2020). My job is to enter this well-established and ongoing process, and act as a translator between the community meetings, city processes, and our

proposed radical outcomes, which is the redistribution of power from developer and landowner to Richmond Highway neighbor. Power and community control is kept in the hands of Virginia Community Voice, their process, and the neighbors of the Richmond Highway Corridor.

In discussing powered relationships, I acknowledge the history and my own position of power and privilege associated with being a white woman, college-educated researcher, and planner working in communities of color. I work with neighbors as a student among learners to co-create an equitable and thriving community together. This work avoids co-opting the experiences of a community for personal gain by centering the expertise of community neighbors, who have valuable lived experiences that are grounded in the history of living in these spaces.

Literature Review

Economic and community development practices have disproportionately disadvantaged low income, Latinx, and Black communities, while benefiting middle and higher income, white communities (Ding et al., 2016; Howell, 2018, 2020; Summers & Howell, 2019; Wolf-Powers, 2010). Middle and higher income households, who are often white and can afford higher cost luxuries, move into these newly invigorated areas, pushing out and displacing existing, lower income residents and businesses to less convenient or "desirable" neighborhoods (Ding et al., 2016; Howell, 2018, 2020; Summers & Howell, 2019; Wolf-Powers, 2010). This leads to speculation, or viewing property as a potential income investment or beneficial sale. Displacement, either gently or forcefully pushing neighbors out, can affect communities directly, collectively, and culturally.

A community benefits agreement (CBA) could be an example for redistributing power from new, white neighbors or speculative interests to African American, Latinx and low-income community members, and provide positive results when completed in coalition with a broad array of community-based organizations in the beginning of the development process. If this is the case, infrastructure must be built into the plan to ensure accountability in follow through by developers (Janssen-Jansen & van der Veen, 2017; Saito & Truong, 2015; Wolf-Powers, 2010).

CBAs decidedly work within the system, though, versus challenging accepted policy and forms of development that disproportionately affect current neighbors.

Participatory planning within a people's plan offers valuable examples for how to challenge the current development structure without sacrificing neighbors' trust (Thomas et al., n.d.). This people's planning process would rely on countermapping the assets and strengths of neighbors, rather than risk and speculation, whose outcomes are built around changing systems by visualizing the built environment from the neighbor's self-determination and agency (Kidd, 2019; Maharawal & McElroy, 2018).

The Power Imbalance of Economic Development and Speculation

Speculation on low cost land in historically Black areas allows for cheaper business ventures for investors and the potential of new beginnings in neighborhoods that have been neglected in the past (Summers, 2019 and Williams, 2020). Decades of disinvestment, or low to no infrastructure or maintenance investments or new development driven by racist practices like redlining and urban renewal, have lowered the current land valuation in communities of color (Goetz et al., 2020; Summers, 2019; Williams, 2020). Land speculation and community development have their roots in white supremacist, colonialist systemic histories (Maharawal & McElroy, 2018). White supremacy, as understood in a larger American context, is more than just the overtly apparent racism of the Ku Klux Klan or Jim Crow (Williams, 2020). White supremacy is a systemic power imbalance and race-based hierarchy that prioritizes and codifies the needs and wants of whiteness over other races, ethnicities, and ways of being (Goetz et al., 2020).

This legacy of white supremacy and whiteness goes beyond individual past acts of exclusion and causes communities of color harm through collective and codified action in both the past and present. This has happened through de facto racism of the Federal Housing Administration denying mortgages to African Americans (a past legacy) to the lack of physical bank presence in African American neighborhoods (a current legacy) (Goetz et al., 2020). As Williams (2020) points out, "Swaths of black neighborhoods come to mind with inferior or non-

existent public services, surrounded by a sea of white space, fully accommodated" (p. 5). Whiteness and white spaces are valued in our society, through land values, wealth gaps, access to transportation, clean water and other public service, and other examples of power that are advantaged in white spaces (Goetz et al., 2020). Now, there are "rent gaps" that make investment in the often historically African American, disinvested areas more feasible to developers because of this low cost of land. Investments are then returned to the developer who can quickly make changes and sell the property at an increased price (Bond & Browder, 2019).

Economic development does not benefit neighborhood residents unless the neighbors have the monetary assets to partake in this new economy, making both physical and cultural displacement in low-income neighborhoods all the more likely (Carr & Servon, 2008). Without careful consideration for the income and assets of the current neighbors, new developments can displace residents from their homes through eviction, foreclosure, or even just through the increasing cost of rent and daily necessities (Carr & Servon, 2008; Summers & Howell, 2019). Furthermore, all of these aspects of speculation and investment creates a powered binary between current Black and low-income residents and middle and high income white residents who move in through cultural gentrification. Speculation signifies that current residents in gentrifying neighborhoods provide little value as they are, driving a dynamic that pits current neighbor stability and place against the economic "potential" of the area. The current system of speculative development discourages an asset-based, community level approach to placemaking and frames investment as an "all or nothing" approach, without which the community will fail (Goetz et al., 2020; Howell, 2018, 2020, p. 202; Summers & Howell, 2019; Summers, 2019). It is a powered relationship, where developers have ownership of the process, its risks and outcomes, and neighbors must agree or face continued disinvestment of their communities (Summers, 2019). "Gentrification is about struggles over land use – how people use space and create place" (Summers, 2019, p.16).

Forms of Gentrification and Displacement

Real estate speculation and economic development in historically devalued neighborhoods leads to gentrification, which alienates neighbors by devaluing their land and homes and challenges the culture that they've known. Summers (2019) defines gentrification as, "…The investment of public and private capital into previously disinvested neighborhoods, primarily inhabited by poor and working class Black people…"(p. 16). Summers (2019) points out that most people in the neighborhood sense this change occurring too. Development and speculation make space for a new class of people, displacing current residents as "revitalization" happens. As the money flows in through investments in new development, high cost businesses, and infrastructure improvements, gentrification becomes a power struggle over land and exclusion (Bond & Browder, 2019; Goetz et al., 2020; Howell, 2018; Summers & Howell, 2019; Summers, 2019).

Race is inextricably intertwined with gentrification, as it is often white middle class households moving into Black and low-income neighborhoods (Bond & Browder, 2019; Goetz et al., 2020; Howell, 2018; Summers & Howell, 2019; Summers, 2019.). People with rising educational attainment also have the potential for higher economic mobility compared with their less educated counterparts. The current neighbors that are able to stay, perhaps through protections to affordable housing, risk watching their neighborhoods changing before their very eyes. Gentrification means many things, but displacement and exclusion from the space and stability is a common ground in many descriptions of it.

Direct Displacement

Direct or physical displacement can be described as a forced move through eviction or foreclosure. Transforming property based on the low cost of real estate allows speculators to serve a different demographic than currently lives in the neighborhood (Bond & Browder, 2019; Summers, 2019). This demonstrates the role that speculation plays in direct displacement and forcibly moving Black, Brown, and low-income households from communities. Developers take a risk by investing capital into low-valued, disinvested land (which houses Black families and

neighbors) with a goal to get a return on investment in the form of the appreciating value of that land (white, middle class people and businesses moving in).

Within the context of gentrification and displacement, the eviction rates along Richmond Highway, some as high as 33%, tell the story of speculation and disenfranchisement based on race in Richmond. Additionally, RVA Eviction Lab data show that Black renters in majority African American areas are more likely to be evicted when they owe the same amount as their white counterparts (McCoy, 2018). This contributes to an extremely high level of neighborhood turnover, exacerbating and contributing to disenfranchisement and disinvestment of Black communities. In this process, households can be forcibly moved through eviction, but communities can also be collectively displaced from that appreciating cost of land and goods.

Collective Displacement

Collective displacement refers to a type of neighborhood change in which residents of the same income level of current residents aren't able to move to the neighborhood as part of normal household turnover (Howell, 2020; Summers & Howell, 2019). While subsidized housing can offer stability to long term residents, households with similar incomes and housing tenures cannot afford to stay. Essentially, residents with the greatest housing stability are those living in public housing, but as the cost of rent and goods rise, other people of similar socioeconomic backgrounds are forced out of the neighborhood (Howell, 2020; Summers & Howell, 2019; Teresa, n.d.). Costs rising in a changing neighborhood is another form of collective displacement. Collective displacement, working with direct displacement, changes neighborhoods by preventing low income people from moving in or forcing people out through increased cost of living and goods (Howell, 2018; Summers & Howell, 2019). These forms of displacement easily contribute to cultural displacement, which enforces systemic hierarchical and often racial powered relationships between old neighbors and new neighbors (Howell, 2018; Summers & Howell, 2019).

Cultural Displacement

Cultural displacement is a process that erases important racial and ethnic history as a neighborhood redevelops: higher income white households move in and exert their forms of power on the residents who have been there, changing the social fabric of what the neighborhood was before they moved in (Bond & Browder, 2019; Howell, 2018; Summers, 2019). Current African American neighbors who stay in the area are, "…Prevent[ed] from a more democratic utilization of the space" (Bond & Browder, 2019, p. 239) by higher income white neighbors, as cultural displacement centers control of community-decision-making with the new, white residents, who yield their white privilege, power, and money over city policing and planning processes (Howell, 2018, 2020; Summers, 2019). New neighbors exert their power over the land by taking part in homeowner's associations, neighborhood associations, community watches and they call the police when neighborhood activities are unfamiliar to them (Howell, 2018; Summers & Howell, 2019; Summers, 2019). This problematizes blackness and Black spaces by adding police pressure and loss of control of public space, making it so Black residents no longer feel welcome in shared spaces or in newly white-owned businesses in gentrified areas (Bond & Browder, 2019; Goetz et al., 2020; Howell, 2018; Lipsitz, 2007; Summers & Howell, 2019; Summers, 2019).

Cultural displacement pits the "promising" economic future of a changing neighborhood against the "dangerous and disinvested neighborhood" of the past and the loss of culture that occurs in a mixed income neighborhood as White power and fear are used to push political changes (Howell, 2017, p. 1). The speculative investments made in gentrified areas make it so that Black history is erased as new, white and higher income neighbors are ignorant to the important Black history and connections that have been made in the spaces before they moved in (Bond & Browder, 2019). This drives a power differential between who can afford to *move into* the "problem" neighborhood and who cannot afford to *stay* in the "improving" neighborhood and who is ultimately forced out.

Examples of Community Power and Control

Community Benefits Agreements

Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) are offered as a democratic alternative to the displacement caused by speculation and economic development. CBAs are legal contracts that outline agreements between developers and community groups (Wolf-Powers, 2010). CBAs are most useful when they have wide ranging support from community members and groups, so they serve the broad interests of a neighborhood (Howell, 2020, p. 2; Janssen-Jansen & van der Veen, 2017; *Virginia Community Voice Blueprint*, 2017; Wolf-Powers, 2010). CBAs are a more flexible document that, when done right, gives collective control to community groups over development decisions (Howell, 2020). This could offer an institutionalized frame to hold Richmond City accountable for development decisions along Richmond Highway.

Countermapping and People's Planning

Another form of community power-making is the use of countermapping or participatory mapping to create a "people's plan." Countermapping is used to reassess systemic power structures, and reassert the community's power through the visuals that are developed on the map (Kidd, 2019; Maharawal & McElroy, 2018; Sletto et al., 2010). Countermapping can be a participatory mapping process, which can be adapted based on the situation and desired outcome, to take the control of land visualization and real estate speculation. With participatory mapping residents are the experts who "participate" in the research process and control what ends up on the map. What's mapped with the neighbors, and more importantly what's viewed as blank space by developers, is a narrative that's controlled by neighbors and their realities (Kidd, 2019; Sletto et al., 2010). From a speculative real estate perspective, important neighborhood cultural narratives are ignored or forgotten on a map, whitewashed away because what does not have monetary value is not mapped out. Countermapping challenges the white supremacist, patriarchal, and colonialist nature of development maps, by centralizing the neighbors' experiences both as a visual and through the process of mapping by

challenging the ownership of land and what that looks like on paper (Kidd, 2019; Maharawal & McElroy, 2018; Sletto et al., 2010).

People's planning uses countermapping and a participatory process to bring power over community changes. This is modeled by sustainability efforts in Marin City, California through the Community Partnership Process (Thomas et al., n.d.). Based in the self-determination and agency of neighbors in Marin City, the community identifies strengths and weaknesses of their climate resiliency through participatory mapping. This community-based process reinforces the voice and vision of neighbors to make the land and housing more resilient to climate change based natural disasters (Thomas et al., n.d.). Using a people's plan and centering the experiences of low income and Black and Brown communities asks, "…How, why, and with whom maps are made" (Maharawal & McElroy, 2018).

Countermapping and participating with neighbors as experts allows for data to be centralized around the social setting and the outcomes reframed from the value for developers or the City, but to the value of shared community knowledge and spaces. Countermapping could help identify what speculation is like in Richmond and call attention to the people being displaced by development efforts (Maharawal & McElroy, 2018). In addition, completing a participatory map for the Richmond Highway community could also reframe the worthiness of development there, from being based in speculation to seeing self-worth. Open communication and involvement of community members throughout the process is critical to including social context and keeping their experiences and vision accurate for a people's plan (Sletto et al., 2010).

Existing Conditions

Table 2: Census Tracts on Richmond Highway in Richmond, Virginia (US Census Bureau)
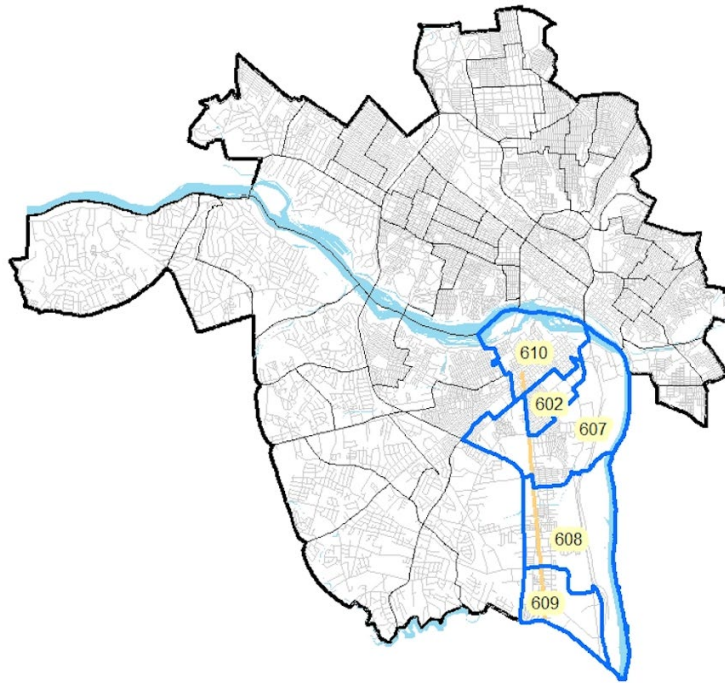
Richmond, Virginia is divided into informally recognized geographic quadrants by the James River and Interstate-95. The neighborhoods and communities within those quadrants are West End, East End, Northside, and Southside. The Southside community consists of many neighborhoods, and Virginia Community Voice's service area is made up of Manchester, Swansboro, Blackwell, Oak Grove, Bellemeade, Hillside Court, and many more (the 602, 607, 608, 609, and 610 census tracts). These neighborhoods follow the Richmond Highway going south of the James River towards Chesterfield, County.

The West End is a majority white, middle to upper class area, while East End, Northside, and Southside have been majority Black and disinvested in recent history. These neighborhoods are now considered "up-and-coming" by largely white homebuyers and renters and outside developers. In contrast, the West End, with the Fan and Museum District, are considered "well-established." Southside was a White working-class neighborhood, centered around industry and manufacturing jobs in the area, but as a result of White flight has been majority Black since the 1980s. The "up-and-coming-neighborhoods" are changing before the eyes of their long-

time residents, and like other cities nationwide, as Richmond sees an influx of young professionals moving back into cities, these neighborhoods are at risk of displacement to make room for new and often higher-paying tenants (Hyra, 2015; Summers, 2019). Southside is not the only area gentrifying, as East End and Northside are seeing middle class and white households move in and displace longtime residents also.

These existing conditions identify factors about the Southside of Richmond that put the neighborhood at risk of gentrification, speculation, and displacement. Furthermore, this proposal takes an asset-based approach and strives to avoid placing the neighbors, their homes, and their shared spaces at a deficit. The residents of the Southside deserve dignity and agency in description and approach. The existing conditions first describe the demographic data in the area, outlining important historical background to better understand community conditions and neighbor distrust of city processes. These conditions begin to define and establish that, as the neighbors recognize in real time, the Southside is gentrifying and changing.

Systemic and Historical Segregation

These demographics reflect systemic and historical segregation by race and income in Richmond. As identified by longtime Southside resident Mrs. McQueen, "blockbusting" occurred along Richmond Highway in the 1960s, when the neighborhoods were primarily white. Real estate agents fueled fear among white homeowners and convinced them that their homes would lose value by hiring Black families to move in, spurring the white families to sell quickly and move to the newly built suburbs away from African Americans. Just the potential of Black families moving into the neighborhood was enough to change entire neighborhoods (Bond & Browder, 2019; *Virginia Community Voice Blueprint*, 2017). Real estate practices and segregated schools, among many other accepted forms of white supremacy like this, fueled "white flight" to the suburbs in Henrico and Chesterfield Counties, leading to rapid demographic changes between the 1960's and 1980's in Southside (*Figure 2*) (*Virginia Community Voice Blueprint*, 2017).

Table 3: Race Over Time on Richmond Highway, Richmond, Virginia (U.S. Census)
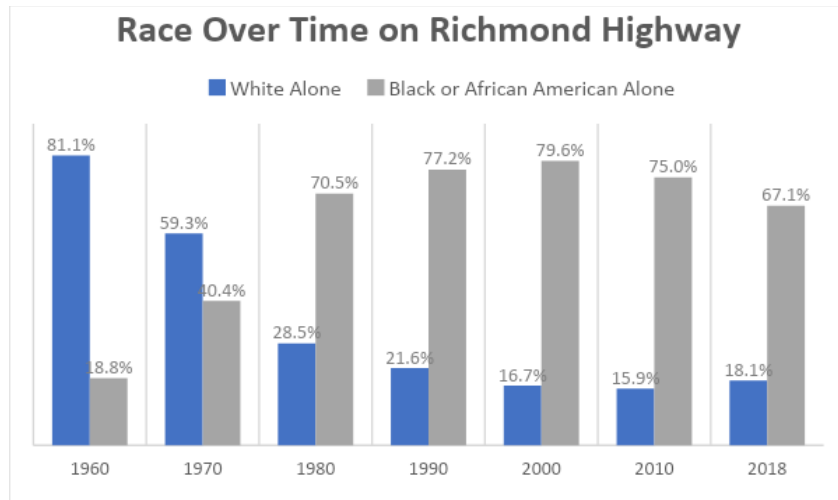
In 1939, the Home-Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) created maps in many cities across the United States that identified areas of high-risk lending based on "blight." The areas deemed as having the most blight and highest risk, D-rated areas, correlated with where African Americans or immigrant families lived (Rothstein, 2018). As a result, people who wanted to buy in D-rated areas could not get their property insured because of the presumed high risk of the investment and could not get approved for affordable mortgages (Bond & Browder, 2019; Imbroscio, 2020; Rothstein, 2018). This made "reinvestment" nearly impossible for Black homebuyers. Even if they were able to buy homes, they could not rely on mortgage lending and needed to buy with cash, thus lowering the value of their homes (Bond & Browder, 2019). This undervalued whole communities and fueled disinvestment into the present.

In the present, the Southside faces demographic shifts as the neighborhoods continue to change as new residents move to Richmond and find convenient and affordable places to live along Richmond Highway. While redlining did not *create* racism in the real estate environment, redlining codified racism, allowing race-based policy to legally infiltrate our housing, financial, and even environmental systems until the Fair Housing Act of 1968 made discrimination in housing illegal (Imbroscio, 2020). While the Fair Housing Act of 1968 ended legal housing discrimination, the legacy of race-based discrimination and real estate racism remains systemic

(Imbroscio, 2020) and continues to effect Richmond Highway residents as a result of the devaluation of their communities from white flight and blockbusting (Bond & Browder, 2019).

Figure 1: Redlining in the VACV Service Area (US Census Bureau)
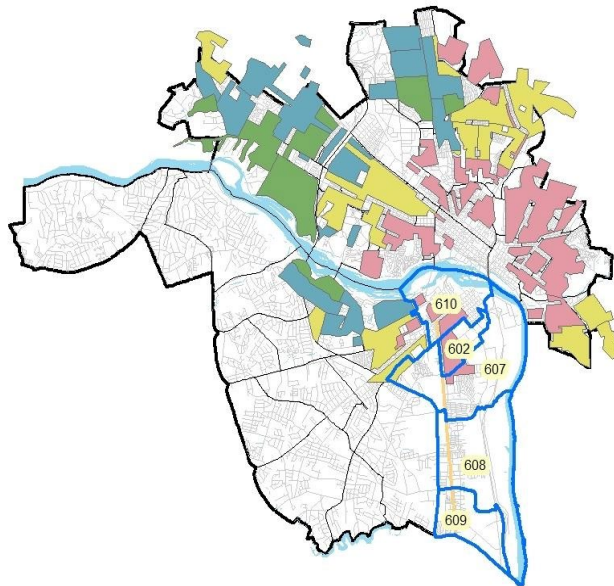
Current Demographic Considerations

These census tracts combined reflect a diverse community of people that are 67.1% Black and African American, 18.1% non-Hispanic white, 8.9% non-white Hispanic, and 6% "other" race peoples (*Table 2)* (American Community Survey, 2018). Compared with the Black and White population over time, changes are occurring to the demographics in this community. Of note is the relatively high proportion of Hispanic or Latino, (non-white) residents in the area compared with the rest of Richmond. As illustrated by the historical demographic data in Table 3, it is clear that the Richmond Highway Corridor is becoming a more diverse and multicultural area. There is an increasing Latinx population that lives along Richmond Highway, as well as an increasing White, non-Hispanic population.

Racial Demographics	Route 1	Richmond
Non-Hispanic, White	18.1%	40.4%
Black or African American Alone	67.1%	47.5%
Asian Alone	0.3%	2.1%
Two or More Races	5.6%	2.9%
Non-White, Hispanic or Latino	8.9%	6.7%

Table 4: Racial Demographics of Richmond Highway Corridor and Richmond, Virginia (American Community Survey, 2018)

The age breakdown for the Southside skews younger with 25.3% of the population under 18, compared to almost 18% across the city of Richmond. Meanwhile, 31.5% of the population is aged 18 to 34, 35.5% of the population aged 35 to 64, and 7.8% of the population aged 65 or over (*Table 3)* (American Community Survey, 2018). These data are skewed at a similar range in the rest of Richmond, likely an influence of young people moving back into cities as a whole. This data also demonstrates the eligible working population on the Richmond Highway Corridor and Richmond at large. Ultimately, a young population could be an indicator of a population that is more mobile and likely to move as they age. Homeowners who are higher in age may be more likely to stay in the area, which could be why the plurality of the population is 35 -64 range.

Age of Residents (Years)	Route 1	Richmond
Under 18	25.3%	17.9%
18 to 34	31.5%	34.3%
35 to 64	35.5%	35.4%
65 and Over	7.8%	12.4%

Table 5: Age of Residents of Richmond Highway Corridor and Richmond, Virginia (American Community Survey, 2018)

Educational attainment along Richmond Highway is relatively low compared with the rest of Richmond (American Community Survey, 2018). The rates of those aged 25 and up with a high school diploma on Richmond Highway is higher compared with the rest of Richmond at 58.6% compared with 46.5%, but Richmond at large has 38.5% of people with a bachelor's degree or higher compared with just 19.6% of people on Richmond Highway (*Table 4*). This could indicate that there is less income mobility on Richmond Highway, if less people have high

educational attainment compared with Richmond. If people with higher educational attainment, or job training even, are better able to gain higher incomes, then they could potentially better adapt to the rising cost of rents and goods that comes along with gentrification and collective displacement.

Educational Attainment (Population 25 Years Old and Over)	Route 1		Richmond	
Population 25 Years and Over:	11,984		154,419	
Less than High School	2,614	21.8%	23,142	15.0%
High School Diploma	7,026	58.6%	71,835	46.5%
Bachelor's Degree or More	2,344	19.6%	59,442	38.5%

Table 6: Educational Attainment on Richmond Highway and Richmond (American Community Survey, 2018)

The census tracts along Richmond Highway have a household median income that has changed over time, but more rapidly in the last 5 years (*Table 5*) (American Community Survey, 2018). Education reflects the ability for upward economic mobility and expands on the ability for neighbors to adjust to collective displacement because of the increased earning potential associated with higher education. The household median income is much lower than the median household income for all of Richmond, so there is also a question of equitable access to employment based on the education and training of residents on Richmond Highway, as well as the wages available to people living in the southside. Furthermore, the unemployment rate in Richmond in August 2020 was 9.6%, so the job market where the Richmond Highway is located is relatively high competition for those without degrees or opportunities for higher education.

Median Household Income on Richmond Highway				
Census Tracts	2000	2005-2009	2010-2014	2015-2019
51760060200, VA (Census Tract, 2010 and 2000) (Blackwell)	$21,835	$25,129	$35,541	$35,733
51760060700, VA (Census Tract, 2010 and 2000) (Manchester, Swansboro, Oak Grove)	$21,542	$22,459	$21,276	$30,616
51760060800, VA (Census Tract, 2010 and 2000) (Oak Grove, Hillside Court, Bellemeade)	$20,755	$31,250	$28,585	$28,214
51760060900, VA (Census Tract, 2010 and 2000) (Davee Gardens, Clopton, Broadrock)	$27,750	$27,346	$40,139	$24,595
51760061000, VA (Census Tract, 2010) (Old Town Manchester, Swansboro, Blackwell)	N/A	N/A	$31,049	$45,000

Table 7: Median Household Income of Residents along Richmond Highway over time (American Community Survey, 2018)

For housing, vacancies and tenure can indicate signs of speculation and displacement. The census tracts along the Richmond Highway Corridor are only 24.9% owner occupied, with Richmond at 42.3% owner-occupied units. This means that most units are renter occupied along Richmond Highway. Renter occupied units are broken down along Richmond Highway with 75.1% of units being renter occupied, with 57.8% in Richmond as renter occupied *(Table 6)* (American Community Survey, 2018). Homeownership itself is also broken down by race, with 71.5% of owner-occupied units in the Southside owned by non-white homeowners and 28.5% owned by non-Hispanic, white homeowners, whereas in all of Richmond 39.2% of owner-occupied units are owned by non-white homeowners and 60.8% non-Hispanic, white homeowners (*Table 6)*.

Housing Tenure	Route 1		Richmond	
	Total		Total	
Occupied Housing Units:	7,115		89,846	
Owner Occupied	*1,771*	*24.9%*	*37,956*	*42.3%*
White (Non-Hispanic)	504	28.5%	23,081	60.8%
Non-White	1,267	71.5%	14,875	39.2%
Renter Occupied	*5,344*	*75.1%*	*51,890*	*57.8%*
Vacant Housing Units:	7,910	10%	10,273	10.30%

Table 8: Housing Tenure and Vacancy Rates among Whites and Non-Whites on Richmond Highway and Richmond (American Community Survey, 2018)

It's encouraging that most homeowners in the southside are non-white, however, only 24.9% of homes on the corridor are owner-occupied. More would need to be done to encourage equitable homeownership along the southside, as well as making more inclusive and equitable options for renters. According to the U.S. Census ACS, 2,935 renters of the 5,547 total renters living in neighborhoods along the Richmond Highway are cost burdened or paying 30% or more of their income towards rent (U.S. Census, 2021). That makes 53% of renters living on the Richmond Highway Corridor cost burdened. With median income relatively low throughout the Southside, it's imperative to preserve housing affordability for the stability of residents.

Additionally, the vacancy rate in the census tracts on Richmond Highway is 10.05% (2014 – 2018), according to the Census. Vacant lots or dwellings could be a sign of speculation, as developers can just hold vacant property until the land values increase, making it more profitable to develop the land based on the exchange value increasing as the land value increases. With the median gross rent on the corridor ranging from $905 to $1,139, there is an opportunity to raise rents even higher, becoming more and more cost prohibitive to live in the Southside.

Median sale price of homes over time could also be an indicator of neighborhood change, even if it's a sign that gentrification is already happening. Of the five census tracts that make up the Richmond Highway Corridor home sales over time seem to show no pattern, other than a steep loss of median home sales prices in 2011 (Policy Map, 2020). Home sale prices remained stable after the Great Recession in the southern half of the area, while the rest of Richmond and Manchester have risen over time (*Figure 3*). This merely shows that the northern-most census tract, containing Manchester and Blackwell, have been gentrifying due to real estate speculation and development that's likely related to the neighborhood's proximity to Downtown, Interstate 95, and the James River. Since the most recent available data is from 2017 and with the changes in the housing market based on COVID, it's likely home sales prices have increased throughout the Richmond Highway Corridor in the last year.
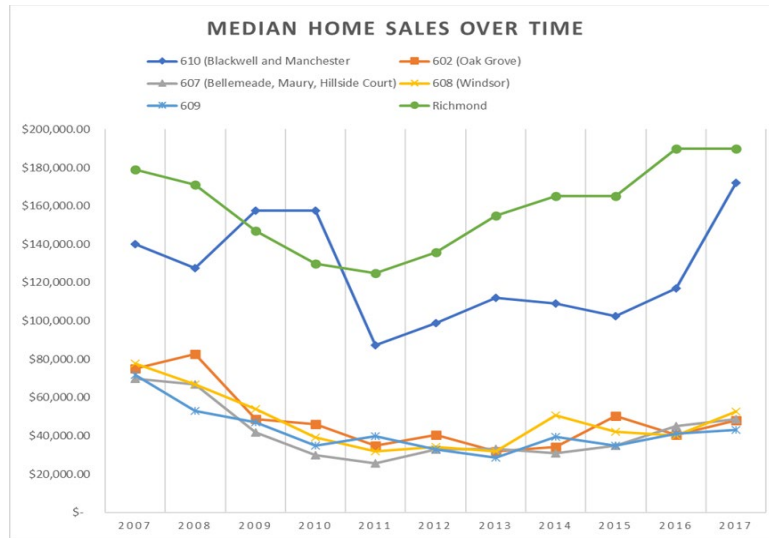
Figure 2: Median Home Sales Over Time on Richmond Highway and Richmond (Policy Map)

Eviction in the Southside

Eviction, as a form of physical displacement, can be a precursor to gentrification making space for new residents to come in. Displacement in Richmond's Southside, unfortunately, isn't a new topic. High rates of physical displacement through eviction along Richmond Highway already indicates a high level of neighborhood change and turnover. Overall, Richmond is ranked second in the nation for evictions in major cities with an average eviction rate of 11%, and with de-aggregated data the Southside of Richmond has some census tracts with two to three times the eviction rate of the citywide average at 22 to 33% (Princeton Eviction Lab, 2015). It's clear that eviction and displacement is not evenly distributed amongst the population in the city (Princeton Eviction Lab, and RVA Eviction Lab, 2018). These eviction rates are merely the beginning of understanding how eviction and displacement can indicate speculation is happening as a beginning stage of gentrification.

2000-2016 Average Eviction Rates

☐ Below Average, <11%
■ 1-2x Average, 11% - 21.9%
■ 2-3x Average, 22% - 32.9%
■ 3x Average, >33%
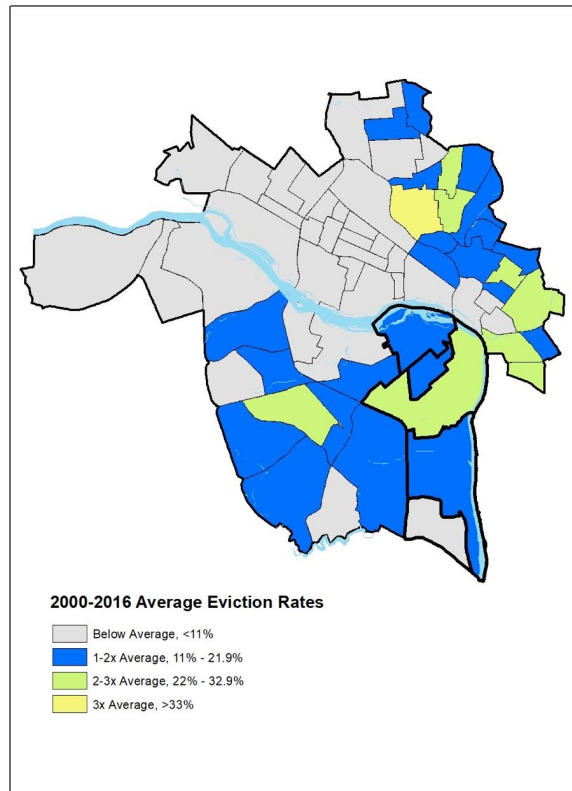
Figure 3: Average Eviction Rates in Richmond, VA (RVA Eviction Lab)

The Richmond Highway eviction rates are all upwards of two times the average eviction rate for the city. These rates have likely changed too given the data available is from 2016. As folks move into the City and we continued to face an ongoing housing crisis and increasing evictions brought on by COVID-19, it's unlikely that eviction rates will go down.

Methodological and Theoretical Framework

Using a radical and communicative action planning framework, these research questions can be answered by coproducing a people's plan with Southside neighbors, leading to a radical planning framework that, "…Is dedicated to changing existing relations of power" (Friedmann, 1987, p. 61). The goal here is not to empower developers, who have changed the neighborhood without a thought to resident input, it's to retool the power structures that ignore residents in

the first place (Kidd, 2019; Maharawal & McElroy, 2018; Sletto et al., 2010). As such, this plan is a direct challenge to the white supremacist structures that continually ignore communities of color and their worth (Williams, 2020). Desensitizing the whiteness inherent in planning and calling attention to the systems that oppress Black communities is merely a start (Goetz et al., 2020; Williams, 2020). Radical planning must do more to benefit communities disparately impacted by white supremacy, but first acknowledges the durability of whiteness and the realities of the legacy of white supremacy by… "Fundamental[ly] rethinking of the role of African American communities in setting planning goals and enacting planning policies" (Williams, 2020, p. 8).

This methodology co-establishes community power through deliberate relationship building, community self-determination, outlining a clear process and vision of the outcomes, and co-formulating the results. It is only through reframing the imbalanced power relationships of whiteness in community development, real estate speculation, and city investment that neighbors can see their agency and vision take hold. Intentional inclusivity allows for a more authentic experience and result for the neighbors involved, who know they have the power over the change they would like to see in their community. Using an inclusive community of practice approach that includes Black and Brown neighbors in a Black led process in Spanish and English, where neighbors define "community" and guide the development plan, is a direct challenge to the status quo and exclusivity of white oppression (Friedmann, 1987; Quick and Feldman, 2011; Williams, 2020).

Research Questions
1. How can a community be in control of its own development?
a.   *What community assets and strengths exist in the neighborhood?*
b.   *What does the community want their neighborhood to look like?*
c.   *What is the resident vision for the future?*
2. How can we make the City accountable to this vision?
a.   *How can the resident vision of the future be the central focus of development over speculation and profit?*

Table 9: Research Questions Repeated

Methodological Framework

Honoring the work of Virginia Community Voice to advocate, organize, and co-produce community change on Richmond Highway, this methodology started with extensive and careful community listening through a people-focused process established by Virginia Community Voice staff with a Housing Working Group. These methods prompted the development of an equitable development scorecard, which is embedded in this plan, and is used to challenge the power structures at play in Richmond.

Housing Working Group (HWG) Meeting Observation

The primary method for the professional plan were observation and focus groups. This professional plan builds on an ongoing organizing process by Virginia Community Voice for neighbors who were advocating for change in their community. Observations occurred during preplanned meetings with neighbors participating in the Housing Working Group (HWG). Every measure needed to be taken to ensure the health and safety of everyone who was engaged in this process, as the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing. Virginia Community Voice already built the capacity of and engaged with neighbors online and via telephone for the HWG. Virginia Community Voice staff established the agenda monthly and also ensured translators were available for the Spanish-speaking neighbors in attendance. Zoom allowed the groups to separate into breakout groups based on English speaking or Spanish speaking preference, while still fully participating in the process.

The Housing Working Group is made up of residents living in the Southside of Richmond. The demographics of the group are made up of primarily African American and Latinx households. Of the two groups, the English speakers are largely homeowners, while the majority of the Spanish speakers are renters with some who own their homes. Across both groups, many households have children and grandchildren.

Virginia Community Voice staff formatted the HWG meetings around the focus areas that were previously identified in community surveys: neighborhood beautification, housing affordability, community safety, food security, jobs access. Each HWG meeting had a focus area

and Virginia Community Voice staff asked the neighbors about what they felt about development and how they liked to be engaged and notified by developers for each focus area. What outcomes did neighbors hope for with the focus area? Virginia Community Voice and I took extensive notes during these conversations to properly capture neighbors' words and visions. This allowed for two to three notes pages for every meeting. I can speak and read Spanish, so notes from Spanish-speaking staff were also included from the hispanohablantes – Spanish speaking neighbors. The meetings were not recorded nor transcribed, and the notes do include some direct quotes, but all quotes shared have some form of paraphrasing.

All of the notes were categorized and uploaded into the research software Dedoose, which was provided by Virginia Community Voice. Once uploaded, the notes pages were coded according to focus areas, and then broken down into narrower themes depending on where the conversation went in each meeting. Dedoose tracks each code, counts them, and allows researchers to give names to the codes they choose. Some themes arose because they related to the focus area, or because of the number of times they were mentioned. Themes also arose simply because of the perception of the phrasing and how the conversation was going. These themes will influence the at large recommendations and implementation of the equitable development plan and scorecard.

Community Mapping, Countermapping Exercise

Following examples set from the Marin City People's Plan and the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, the participants in the focus groups engaged in assets-based research about their own community (Maharawal & McElroy, 2018; Thomas et al., n.d.). Two focus group meetings were built into the existing meetings to complete a community-based countermapping exercise to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. The English-speaking neighbors completed the exercise in February and the hispanohablantes completed the same exercise in March 2021. Using Google Maps, spaces of strength (places the neighbors definitely wanted to stay in the community) and opportunity (places that could improve or ideas for where development could go) were "pinned" on a map over Zoom. See the focus group framework and questions in *Table*

8. The questions for the focus groups were open ended in order to promote the thoughtfulness and engagement of the participants and to make Spanish translation as simple as possible. The focus groups operated within the usual HWG times with five to seven neighbors in each group. The specific inclusion of a Spanish-speaking session allowed the Latinx members of the Housing Working Group to elaborate on their own focus areas and themes for Richmond Highway, which manifested differently than the English-speakers.

Assets/Strengths: *(where is awesome, where we want to see stay, grow, and develop in the future?)*
• What are the strengths in the community? (Can you mark them on the map?)
Liabilities and problems (and opportunities): *(What are the problems, even if we kind of know what they are, and what can we do about it? Use this as a way to reframe.)*
• What are the problems in the community? (Can you mark them on the map?)
Opportunities: (What do we want to change about the community and what do we see working out really well?). Ex: Wawa on the empty lot on Semmes and Cowardin
• What are the opportunities in the community?
• Where are the development opportunities?

Table 10: Focus Group Protocol

Research Findings

After observing the Housing Working Group (HWG) meetings and conducting focus groups with Richmond Highway neighbors from August 2020 through April 2021, several obvious themes arose (*Table 9*). These themes are categorized as internal or external threats to community stability – threats from within and from outside the neighborhood (Howell, 2021). Quotes from Richmond Highway neighbors are included in *italics* to maintain their anonymity.

External Threats	Internal Threats
Challenges for Trust ● Approachability ● Accountability ● Transparency	*Neighborhood Beautification* ● Vacancies ● Health effects/heat ● Greening ● Water/Runoff
Community Engagement ● Knowing first ● In person engagement ● Ongoing, long-term engagement	
Housing Affordability ● *E*viction ● Landlord quality ● Tenant rights ● Code enforcement	
Food Access/Scarcity ● Convenient and affordable food ● Accessibility/walkability ● Community involvement	
Jobs/Employment ● Jobs equity ● Length of job opportunity ● Number of jobs available ● Marketing the jobs ● Wages offered	
Community Safety ● Violence and deportation ● Traffic ● Streetlights ● Walkability ● Maintenance	

Table 11: Themes, External and Internal Threats

External and Internal Threats

External threats capitalize on what Summers (2019) describes as the tension between long-time residents and investment in historically disinvested neighborhoods. The renewed interest from developers and Richmond City to improve historically disinvested communities makes it so neighbors feel beholden to speculation to see improvements made (Summers, 2019). Neighbors recognize the risks that are associated with community improvement. As one neighbor pointed out in February, "*What's going to happen to renters and homeowners who have been here when these improvements are made?*" As the Richmond Highway Corridor

improves, so will the likelihood of the collective displacement of neighbors who otherwise were able to afford living here.

Whoever controls the development and maintenance of the land is a strong external threat to community stability, because in many cases it's not the neighbors. The external threats identified lay the groundwork for an equitable development scorecard for Virginia Community Voice and the need to retool the power systems in Richmond that rule economic revitalization practices. Infrastructure improvements, like those identified by the internal threats, can influence speculation and draw new developments to the area that longtime residents can't afford, an external threat. These threats are often intertwined with internal threats.

Internal threats describe the community challenges to stability from within the neighborhood. Internal threats also can be tackled within systems and processes that have been defined by the law or by the City. However, it's worth noting that without community trust or accountability, it is extremely difficult to tackle these themes within the system. It all goes back to challenging the power structures at play in the Southside, an external threat. Internal threats are intertwined with external threats and they represent a larger question of who has control of the community and its land: Is it the neighbors, who in some cases own houses, land, and businesses, or is it the City and speculators who envision a different Southside community?

Community Engagement

"We need some input from the residents, and if they are going to put something in our community, don't tell us to come downtown. Come with us and go to the area with chalk and maps to give us an idea of what you're going to do. Let us have a seat at the table, not downtown, but in our community."

The need for timely, consistent, and in-person community engagement was mentioned 71 times in the last eight months. More broadly, the HWG neighbors want to know about developments before it is traditionally required to alert the community, before permitting or contracts: *"The neighbors should know about the plan in the inception phase before it is*

finalized and decisions have been made." Being alerted early in the development stages was mentioned 22 times and would clearly influence the community's trust in developers and the City if this were done consistently.

"If they're gonna bring something to the neighborhood, it's common courtesy to bring it to the neighborhood first. If they did that then people would patronize your business more because they would feel like they were a part of it." Neighbors feel like if they are a part of community engagement for business development, then development would be more successful. They also want to know about updates throughout the process. Neighbors do not want to be a check box, they want ongoing intentional engagement:

> *I want to see a bottom up approach. I want to see what the community wants to see in their community and then have the city council react to us and bring in businesses and jobs to do the kind of development we want to see. I also want to see a timeline, just like with school board proposals, where there's a 30-day notice to allow the public to respond before the project even begins. We should have that access too.*

While neighbors acknowledge in-person engagement is difficult with COVID-19, they know it has to happen to properly alert the neighborhood of potential community changes and to get feedback. With more widespread vaccination and warmer weather, it's more possible that these events could occur.

> *Have a meet and greet with the developer and the city and introduce what they are planning to develop in the community with an in-person event. Community events bring people together. A BBQ and kids games would attract parents, like just a meet and greet kind of thing. People would stop to see what was going on."*

<u>Community Trust</u>

"The lack of investment from the city and developers shows that this is what people truly think of us."

Rooted in the racist history of real estate and even the recent actions of bad actors in the Southside, the neighbors do not trust the city, landlords, or developers to do what's in the neighbor's best interest: *"I am sick and tired of being the last to know what's about to go in my backyard. No one's bothered to ask me what I want and need."* As a result, the "lack of community trust" theme is rooted around community benefits and accountability to the

neighbors over profit-making and speculation. Breakdown in trust between neighbors and the powers that be came up in discussions of accountability, transparency, and approachability 44 times: *"In a neighborhood with marginalized people, we are always the last people to know. Even the city is in on it."*

The reasons neighbors don't trust these power structures are nuanced, systemic, and historic. *"Be aware of the historical and cultural context of the community that you are proposing to develop in."* A few of the neighbors participating in the HWG lived in the neighborhoods in the 1960s and witnessed blockbusting, then white flight and the subsequent deprivation of the neighborhood first-hand, which are discussed in the existing conditions. Equitable solutions to develop along the Richmond Highway will be conscious and sensitive to these realities.

Neighbors have been disappointed by proposed changes and improvements to their community that have never happened. One example of the neighbors' distrust and disbelief in the City and development is the well-known failed implementation of HOPE VI funds in the Blackwell neighborhood, directly south of Manchester. In 1997, the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) was awarded $26.9 million in HOPE VI funds from the federal government to redevelop "severely distressed public housing" and revitalize the surrounding neighborhoods (Johnson-Hart, 2007, p. 7). Plagued with consistent planning and staff changes, and resident distrust due to lack of intentional community engagement, the HOPE VI goal to demolish and replace 440 units and to rehouse half of the residents was never fulfilled (Howard & Williamson, 2016; Johnson-Hart, 2007). Blackwell still has vacant lots, dilapidated housing and businesses, some of which are still owned by RRHA, as the neighborhood wide redevelopment and improvements that were promised though HOPE VI never came to be.

More recently, Michael Hild and his mortgage company, Live Well Financial, filed to expand the Manchester Historic District into the Blackwell and Swansboro communities to take advantage of federal historic tax credits to renovate property there (Robinson, 2018a). Hild is a white man who did not grow up in Richmond: he lacked a historical, familial connection to the neighborhood and his other investment properties in Manchester rapidly changed that area

before the neighbors' eyes (Robinson, 2018b). Years of poorly managed community engagement soured Hild's projects on the Richmond Highway Corridor and the neighbors viewed him as a harbinger and real life example of gentrification (Giligan, 2019). The community's distrust of Hild was validated when news of the federal fraud charges went public in 2019 (Giligan, 2019).

Neighbors do not feel that redevelopment over the years has benefitted them, and as a majority Black community for the last forty years, many things coming from the city and developers have actively harmed the community in their eyes. With an upcoming proposal for a casino to be placed along the Richmond Highway, neighbors are sensitive that their voices could not be heard again. *"What is going to happen to the rest of the community once the casino is built?"* Neighbors need concrete proof of the community benefits that will result in improvements for their lives:

> *We should know before anything happens. They need to tell people in the community from jump street, up front, so we know where it's going to be placed if we have objections. We should have input upfront and not read about it in the paper after it's decided. Instead of building a casino, build something beneficial.*

Without approachability, transparency, and accountability true community engagement is unlikely to successfully result in intentional community benefits for the neighbors, and therefore, support for proposed projects.

Housing Affordability

"When these areas start to get built and when these benefits come up, the majority of the people that have been in the neighborhoods will get pushed out."

As investment is made in the area, rent and property taxes rise and businesses are unaffordable to those who stay in the area. Neighbors are concerned over what will become of their fellow neighbors. *"Homeownership is getting harder [for moderate- income buyers] because they're being outbid by developers and probably gentrifiers."* Affordability in the neighborhood is an asset and neighbors are openly concerned about what improvement and more development means for them, despite that improvements in infrastructure, greening, and

well-maintained homes is what they advocate for. The neighbors see displacement occurring along the Corridor and continue to meet and organize to prevent it from happening: "*When the community does improve, we don't want to be pushed out, and it's affordable now.*" These concerns are amplified by ongoing discussion on what development really means for the community. The changes neighbors see lead them to believe business and housing developments are not meant for them:

> *Let us know timelines and how they're going to do things. Give us a space to talk. When you were pondering on opening up a business in our neighborhood, did you think it would benefit our community? Is it going to benefit the people who live here right now? When gentrification happens, our businesses go away and is this a business that I would patronize?...People from the outside come in, they dictate what they want in the community because they have the resources and money, but the philosophy we want is that the community directs the changes and we don't need outsiders for it.*

Additionally, neighbors openly discussed a desire for improved tenant rights and landlord/property management quality along the Richmond Highway Corridor. Neighbors are unsure of their rights as tenants, as they face housing discrimination and eviction. This is especially the case for Spanish-speaking and/or undocumented neighbors who fear what challenging a landlord could do for their households:

> *I suggest providing us* [the Latinx community] *education about our rights according to what are our circumstances: are we documented, are we not – what are our rights and how can we protect ourselves from all of the discrimination and abuse and potential eviction?... and what if they get deported? Where can we live as undocumented individuals without fear in this area?*

Neighbors are also increasingly concerned about eviction, as COVID has made job security more tentative: one tenant with her husband and children had received three eviction notices since March 2020. "*We've received legal and financial help from some organizations. They [the landlord] keep charging us a late fee every time.*" Some neighbors have received judgments and had to move already. Eviction is only the beginning of how neighbors, especially Spanish speakers, understand the housing challenges that they face and is how they would like to improve safety and challenge housing development along the corridor.

Community Safety

"The children can't go to the park because of the gun violence. We have reported it and we don't see enough police around. The kids don't go to the park alone, they don't do anything without us. Safety is my main concern."

The neighbors witness violence in their communities and see a need for increased policing as a result. They are primarily concerned for children and elder neighbors, and fear gun violence and deportation for Southside's undocumented neighbors, and as a result want increased police routes throughout the corridor. *"…Unless you're calling for gunshots, I don't see people patrolling the area. I would like to see more of that because there's more neighbors now and there are a lot of seniors that should be protected."*

Neighbors also feel that improved infrastructure like better street lighting, walkways, and streetscapes would reduce community violence:

I don't see gun violence, but…I wake up and have to call the police. It's very unsafe where there are a lot of cars on Hull Street and they go really fast. There have been a lot of accidents. That is something I worry about, those trees falling on my house and how unsafe the streets are.

Improved streetscapes and greening would also improve safety and accessibility for residents who would like to walk in their communities and to use public space with fewer mobility challenges.

Longtime neighbors feel that adequate measures have not been made to slow and make traffic safer in the corridor. Neighbors have made requests about traffic to the City before to slow the traffic and clean up trash along the roadways, and these needs have not been met. They do not feel that the roundabouts in place properly slow vehicles speeds and don't think they are well-maintained: *"People aren't respecting the roundabouts' rules, because everything is yield rather than a stop. The cars cut others off, park too close to the roundabout, then you can't see who's coming…"*

Jobs and Employment

"…We want the people who are on Jeff Davis [Richmond Highway] *to work there and build there. We should benefit if it's in our backyard. We don't always want you to hire cashiers*

either, but managers and higher ups, as well. Hire from communities and ensure they are living wage and jobs with economic mobility. If it's on Jeff Davis, we need to be involved..."

The focus on access to employment goes back to community benefits and engagement with development: neighbors want to be informed when job opportunities are available, what the wages are, the length of the contract, and they want to be able to share it widely:

> *With so many jobs needed in the Southside, I would love to know if they are young people friendly, are they drug testing? Is it manual or skilled labor? We could have both it it's both. Is it a private contractor? Private contractors don't give any jobs to people in the Southside.*

Neighbors want their fellow community members to have jobs and the stability this provides, especially opportunities for young people and those reentering the workforce after facing incarceration. As a result, the neighbors mentioned jobs, employment, and access to opportunities 27 times, and was often interwoven in discussion on other focus areas.

Developers need to invest in community by hiring from within the community, paying a living wage, and providing opportunities for future employment over coming to the community and hiring contractors from out of the area. The existing conditions highlight that 58.6% of neighbors have a high school degree, indicating opportunities for training and higher education to ensure opportunities for advancement (American Community Survey, 2018). This would allow for a focus on racial equity and inclusion of those who are employed: *"There should be a policy of including youth and ensuring racial demographics."* One neighbor had the idea to survey community members for what job skills were available in the area and to offer training based on what developers say is needed: *"Have a job fair so they can include people in the Southside and know what the skills are in the Southside and then offer trainings to ensure these people can fit the skills they want."*

Food Access and Scarcity

"Where are the opportunities for a grocery store? They keep putting in all this stuff and they are doing all of this building up, but we still need a grocery store. We need like a Walmart, where we can fill our pharmacy needs and get food in one store."

Neighbors bring up food access and scarcity in almost every meeting. They desire a grocery store because their community is deserving of walkable, access to affordable food, treats, and amenities like anyone else in Richmond. Officials tell the community that it's not right for a grocery store development:

> I've talked with some of our elected officials and they say that the big stores say that they won't come to some of our communities. There needs to be greater transparency about why grocery stores won't come here and there needs to be more accountability on not working with communities like this one.

Responses like this frustrate neighbors and drive distrust of food development practices since Carytown, a more affluent and whiter neighborhood in the western part of Richmond City, has so many grocery stores: *"…There was never a lot of variety in one vicinity like there is in Carytown, with four grocery stores within three blocks of each other."* Richmond Highway neighbors want the convenience that other neighborhoods are often offered and don't understand why the Richmond Highway Corridor isn't selected as an ideal location.

"S*ometimes they put stores in with products that people from the neighborhood won't buy and we still won't have a good grocery store. Will we really benefit from it*?" Neighbors described the nice restaurants in Manchester and Blackwell and want to see this kind of attention paid to the rest of the Southside. Community input is a central need for food business to ensure that what's opened is affordable and relevant to the neighbors' wants and needs. They also recognize the potential for gentrification from food and business development.

Furthermore, food is seen as a way to connect cultures and people to each other, as well as to the rest of the neighborhood. A grocery store or farmer's market that is built in with other development on the corridor would connect people socially, but also create more walkable, accessible, and convenient spaces that are lacking on Richmond Highway. Neighbor's feel they are worthy of such places. *"The community already has assets itself and we don't always need for others to come save us. We don't have to reach out to outsiders. We're using the assets from the community that we're in, that we've always been told we don't have, but we really do."*

Neighborhood Beautification

"…They don't take care of what they have. They don't take care of the sidewalks, the houses, the greenspaces. Nobody knows who is going to take care of it. No one knows who is supposed to take care of it. Is it homeowner's association or something? But, someone has to take care of all of it."

Neighbors identified several factors of neighborhood maintenance, resilience, and upkeep that they would like to change. The overall theme of neighborhood beautification came up 45 times. These themes intersect with the health, resiliency, and safety outcomes that the Southside faces. Efforts to green the Richmond Highway Corridor would allow improved water runoff that regularly turns into flooding on roadways, in people's yards, and alleys. Greening would also alleviate the extreme heat that the corridor faces in the summer. *"Southside and Church Hill have more concrete surfaces that don't absorb water and it creates heat. We need to green it up and get some canopies."* Neighbors not only want the area cleaned up, they also want it to be regularly well-maintained, a reflection of the need for better accountability and transparency for infrastructure. For example, *"…If you put in greenspace, make sure maintenance is done. Greenspace that's overgrown with trash looks terrible."*

Neighbors also want to see vacant houses and lots better maintained. One neighbor suggested combining efforts with housing and greening to improve the maintenance and safety of these properties:

> *I would like for them* [developers or the city] *to increase greenspace and more community gardens, and I'd like for the area to definitely be cleaned up before we start all this. Put in bushes and greenery in the vacant houses. Board up the windows and put in flower gardens and hold the owners accountable for these beautification efforts.*

Assets and Opportunities

Using a community mapping exercise, the focus group sessions with the HWG identified assets and opportunities on the corridor through a community mapping exercise. While many of the themes have already been discussed above, the opportunities and assets along the corridor are displayed in *Figure 5* below. The main opportunities throughout the corridor reflect a desire to see safer streets with slower vehicular traffic, as well as more community resources,

like health clinics, community centers, and parks. Residents want to know that young neighbors can safely walk to school. They also identified opportunities for a supermarket, health clinics, and areas for increased trails and trail maintenance in the neighborhood. Problem areas focused on opportunities for policing and crime that neighbors have experienced. A majority of problem areas were easily translated into opportunities for growth and change in the neighborhood.

The green points on the map represent strengths or assets of the Corridor, purple are opportunities, and yellow are problem areas. *Appendix 1* displays the tables outlining the neighbors' specific responses. Their responses are geographically centered on the Richmond Highway, but some assets and opportunities expand beyond the confines of the study area. This highlights the importance of the interconnectedness of the area.
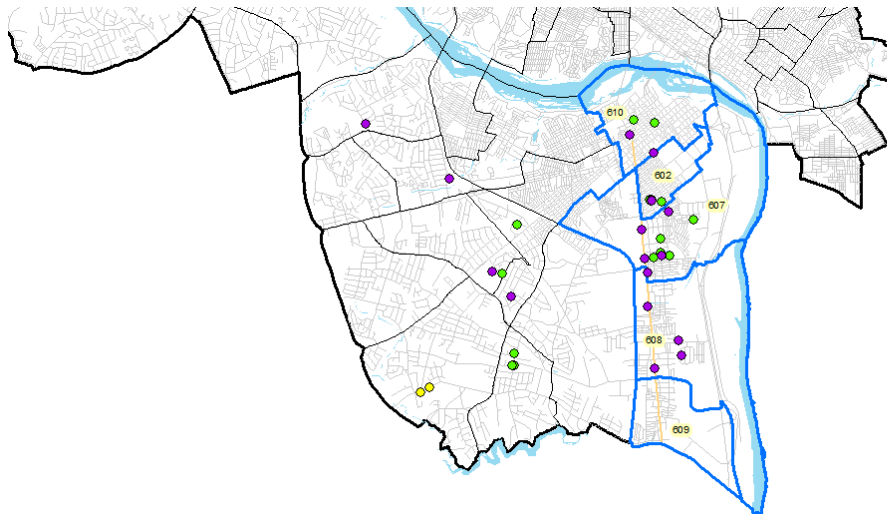
Figure 4: Assets and Opportunities Map

English speakers completed the map in February 2021 and the Hispanohablantes completed the map in March 2021. Despite their different life experiences, suggestions from residents were relatively similar. Many of the strengths and opportunities from the community also represent external threats. There is severe lack of trust for the City and development processes: what will happen if all of these improvements are made? Are these improvements being made for us, or will renters be forced out by rising rents and owners forced out by rising taxes? Ultimately, the focus group and continued engagement of the Richmond Highway

community shows the need for neighbor control of development and the neighborhood. Community engagement and increased control in the development process could significantly increase neighbor stability by challenging the external threats they see on the Richmond Highway Corridor. While Virginia Community Voice has the resources, advocacy, and organizing power to tackle internal threats, external threats will take more resources, time, and strategizing to implement effective change.

Recommendations

Neighbors of the Richmond Highway Community deserve to be included in the development process, to have their ideas heard, and have them brought to fruition. Central to all of the findings is the notion that development is an exclusive process – the neighbors are excluded. Gentrification is fueled by exclusive land use and use of power (Summers, 2019) and the Richmond Highway neighbors have been excluded from a process they want to be a part of. Overall, these recommendations outline strategies for neighbors to build power, decision-making, and agency over their homes, developments, land, and neighborhoods.

Guiding Principles of the Equitable Development Plan:

> *"We can have it all. We can have affordable housing and we can have high end housing. We can have green and we can have clean, nice stores and grocery stores, and places to shop. That to me is planning and trying to make an inclusive community. We all want to be included and we have to work towards making sure our future is well-educated. We want the best and what we all have to remember is that we pay taxes too and we have a voice and our voice matters. And so I think we can have what we want."*

As a team, we've worked together for the last nine months to carefully hear and envision an equitable Richmond Highway Community. Virginia Community Voice's Blueprint outlines that listening to community is a core part of a long-term community engagement practice that builds on relationships and trust. The Housing Working Group has been organized and advocating together for the better part of three years. As a result, these recommendations may look different from other plans or planning related documents. The recommendations are grounded in principles of neighbor empowerment and community listening by seeking radical

and reparative planning outcomes of community power and voice. Neighbors define the shared values and inspiration of the Equitable Development Plan and Scorecard and the Richmond Highway Community as:

- o A widespread, inclusive community of neighbors seeking to join the growing collective with a roadmap for building community power.
- o A multicultural community with bilingual resources.
- o Using the tools and information available to work together as community to safeguard change-making on the Richmond Highway Corridor.
- o Promoting a safe place to live for neighbors and their children to play and grow.
- o Success in widespread recognition of the Scorecard and improvements made along Richmond Highways neighborhoods.
- o Prioritizes affordable opportunities to rent and purchase homes equitably through the Corridor.
- o Caring for fellow neighbors by providing accessible resources and support for community members.
- o Legislators and policy makers that create programs along Richmond Highway with transparency, accountability, and consistency.
- o Southside is deserving of prioritization, beautification, pride, celebration, affordability, education, and diversity.

An Equitable Development Vision for Richmond Highway:

<u>The Richmond Highway Corridor is a thriving, multicultural community with equitable access to food, security, housing, infrastructure, economic opportunity, and environmental resilience for all neighbors who live, work, and play there.</u>

Goals and Objectives:

The following goals and objectives outline strategies and action steps to organize neighbors who advocate for their vision of the Richmond Highway. The recommendations

center the themes identified from the last nine months working with neighbors: community engagement, housing, food, neighborhood beautification, jobs access, and safety on the corridor. While low community trust in development was a major finding, these recommendations influence neighborhood trust of city processes and development through positive community engagement on an ongoing basis. The following are in no particular order of importance.

Goal 1: There is sincere, intentional, and ongoing community engagement with neighbors on Richmond Highway for development and community change.

1. ***Objective:*** *Virginia Community Voice develops an equitable development scorecard that developers fill out with neighbors, neighbors use for advocacy and organizing, and VACV uses to evaluate the equity and appropriateness of developments coming to the Richmond Highway.*
    o An template Scorecard was developed as a part of this professional plan that VACV can use and draft further for their efforts.

    1.1. **Action Step:** Develop a network of neighbors to respond to development proposals, city council needs, tenants' concerns, and use the scorecard when called upon.
    o There are levels of engagement that neighbors can choose depending on their capacity and time available.
    o The Housing Working Group will continue meeting with funds that pay neighbors for their time and can act as a paid group to respond to developments with the scorecard. As described by a planning grant written by VACV, members of the community are either "aware, engaged, or committed." This would determine how to engage and pay community members.
    o **Aware** members come to community conversations on focus areas and may be willing to volunteer occasionally.
    o **Engaged** members are a part of the Housing Working Group and attend a certain number of meetings per year. These members are paid for the number of

meetings they attend. Engaged HWG neighbors spend their time responding to scorecard development proposals. Engaged members could expand into other focus areas.

- o **Committed** members of the community can speak to the community's priority levels and organize together around development. They use the scorecard and lead meetings with other neighbors and attend city council meetings or planning commission meetings, as necessary. These members of the community are also paid and may devote more of their time than an "engaged" neighbor.

1.2. **Action Step:** Ongoing development efforts that intend to engage neighbors utilize the equitable development scorecard.

- o The scorecard is well known in the community and other gentrifying communities utilize the scorecard, as well.

- o Developers that wish or need to engage with neighbors in the course of any infill proposals that require special approval, which is likely given the restrictive zoning of the neighborhood, should use the scorecard as part of a coordinated response from neighbors and VACV asking for amendments or clarifications in these processes. The future development in the neighborhood will be small, infill development that could be too small for most non-profits (Wilson, 2021).

2. ***Objective***: *VACV continues to work with and educate neighbors on city and development processes.*

2.1. **Action step:** VACV staff markets the use of the scorecard to more neighbors and residents living along the Richmond Highway Corridor.

2.2. **Action step:** VACV recruits volunteers to train neighbors and HWG leaders in planning and city processes.

- o Could ask or contract with local consultants, land use attorneys, or the VCU Wilder School Land Use Education Program (LUEP) to provide information and sessions explaining development processes and zoning regulations, etc. in layman's terms.

o   This can prepare the Housing Working Group for discussions about future development with the city and developers.

3. ***Objective***: *VACV educates developers, transportation planners, and the City on the need to engage with Richmond Highway neighbors for ongoing, consistent community engagement.*

    3.1. **Action step:** VACV engages with developers (for-profit and non-profit) and transportation planners about the need to engage with community with the scorecard.

       o   Marketing the scorecard and its goals to developers and the city is necessary for widespread acceptance and use. It's likely that developers in the city may be willing to engage with residents the way the neighbors want. Starting with non-profit housing developers familiar with VACV's work is a good way to start marketing this work. Then VACV can move on to marketing with for-profit developers on a case by case basis until the scorecard is well-known and recognized tool.

    3.2. **Action step: Committed** neighbors develop an ongoing community sharing session with local developers to exchange ideas, needs, and gaps of the development process and go over scorecard proposals and reactions.

    3.3. **Action step: Committed** community members attend planning commission and city council meetings to share the needs of the community on a larger scale.

4. ***Objective:*** *VACV establishes a community-wide system of notification for potential or ongoing development changes.*

    4.1. **Action Step:** A point person with VACV follows the goings on of development and public policy changes.

       o   When permits or changes are suggested through city council, planning commission, or the board of zoning appeals, neighbors feel like they are the last to know, so VACV should have a staff person monitor and alert the community of proposed changes through city council amendments, special use permits, variances, etc.

       o   VACV staff can use the City's "Energov" permit portal to search a swath of the City at once to see what has been applied for (Wilson, 2021). This would involve manual searches on a parcel-by-parcel basis. It would be unreasonable to expect any

community member to take on this task, so it would be best for a paid staff person to complete this.

4.2. **Action step:** VACV staff review the Richmond 300 Comprehensive Plan and other "Small Area Plans" that would affect the future of the Southside and Richmond Highway Communities more generally.

- o This would give VACV and the HWG an idea of what proposals have been made in the Richmond Highway Communities and to jumpstart a plan of action for or against the proposals being made.

4.3. **Action step:** VACV develops a "policy agenda" of sorts with the information available and ensures that **Committed** and **Engaged** neighbors are made aware and attend related city meetings.

- o This agenda also tracks the outcomes of different proposals and the use of the scorecard.

4.4. **Action Step**: The VACV point person alerts the HWG and Committed neighbors as development proposals are made, including special use permits, variances, changes of sale, traffic improvements, etc.

- o The HWG and **Committed** neighbors would respond to these changes with the scorecard and attend the appropriate city meetings as required to achieve the desired results.

4.5. **Action step**: VACV staff helps the Richmond Highway neighborhood and community associations update their contact information on the City website so that neighbors get quick, engaged contact from developers responding to proposals.

4.6. **Action Step**: VACV and HWG members establish working relationships with the city counselors and liaisons that represent the Richmond Highway corridor, mostly the 6th and 8th Districts and portions of the 9th and 5th district in Richmond.

- o Positive relationships with city counselors would make neighbors aware of developments sooner in the process than they currently are.

- o City counselors would support the needs and vision of the community members by advocating that developers engage with neighbors using the scorecard before plans are made and ground is broken.
- o City counselors could also help with marketing the scorecard by alerting developers to the need and desire of neighbors to be engaged in the process before permits are submitted.

4.7. **Action Step:** VACV advocates for a Richmond office of neighborhood planning with embedded planners for the city.

- o This would build capacity of Virginia Community Voice staff. If funded through the city, it's likely that they could also develop trust between city processes and neighbors too.
- o This would also allow someone to be taxed with analyzing zoning changes that need to be made, SUP, council recommendations, or other changes that require community input without putting the onus on non-profits, neighbors, or individuals.

Goal 2: Richmond Highway neighbors can easily access food sources that are affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate in a way that brings people together.

1. ***Objective:*** *VACV engages the community in Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) practices (Aguilar et al., 2019).*

- o This development practice centers a corporate and convenient grocery or supermarket built from the collective power of the neighborhood. Other businesses, transit, and housing follow the food business and center around it.
- o This would make the grocery store more convenient and accessible to housing, addressing the walkability and accessibility that neighbors feel is missing from the Richmond Highway now.

1.1. **Action Step**: VACV Advocates promote the development of a grocery store that is affordable, culturally appropriate, and convenient on Richmond Highway. (The ideal location would be the old Gene's Supermarket location.)

- o   Neighbors think this would be widely used, especially if it was a more "corporate" grocery store with affordable options and a pharmacy inside.

1.2. **Action step**: VACV identifies **Committed** and **Engaged** community members to lead efforts around food development on Richmond Highway.

- o   There are food access advocates along the Highway now, but it would be beneficial to have one VACV Food Point Person for VACV to go to that hosts meetings and handles scorecard meetings around food-based development.

1.3. **Action step**: VACV's **Committed** or **Engaged** community members work to form a Richmond Highway specific collaborative around this focus area on Richmond Highway.

- o   This would encourage partnership and collective spirit from Black and Latinx focused organizations on Richmond Highway that would like to center food systems and access work.

2. ***Objective:*** *VACV advocates that vacant land is used for farm stands or markets that Black farmers and land-owners can use to sell goods or seeds (RVA Black Farmer's Market).*

2.1. **Action step**: The food point person partners with local farmer's markets to establish a mobile farmer's market spots that can travel throughout designated spots on Richmond Highway. Ideally, these markets would be Black or Latinx led.

- o   The advocate could reach out to the Farm Bus, LEAP for Local Food (Roanoke), Real Roots Food Systems, RVA Community Fridges, or Shalom Farms to do this.

2.2. **Action step**: The Food Point Person or collaborative partners with community gardens that are already established to create a network of caretakers to manage and maintain gardens and land that can produce food.

- o   The food produced could be sold at the markets or used by community members.
- o   Happily Natural, LLC., Resiliency Gardens, Groundwork RVA, Real Roots Food Systems, or Shalom Farms could be good places to start.

2.3. **Action step:** VACV partners with GroundworkRVA to create stewards for the gardens and trails that exist on the corridor and ensure their upkeep and maintenance.

2.4. **Action step:** VACV, or the food point person, partners with neighborhood associations and churches in the area to hold block parties with the farmers market and food access collaborative to center an event around food and fellowship.

- o Perhaps even cultural festivals based on the various Latin and Hispanic cultures that are present on Richmond Highway would be appropriate.

Goal 3: **Richmond Highway communities are safe and secure for all neighbors.**

1. ***Objective:*** *VACV advocates for the security and safety of all neighbors, but especially young people, seniors, and immigrants through improved infrastructure in the neighborhood, like lighting and sidewalks.*

    - o This would increase safety for walkers of all abilities and influence crime rates.
    - o Policing should be rare and just. Introducing more policing could increase risk of violence for young people of color and immigrants, some of whom are undocumented.
    - o The police should be seen as a support system to positively influence a community of care and fellowship, rather than being an added risk of violence for community members who live in the Southside.

1.1. **Action step:** VACV establishes a safety point person, whose position as a **Committed** neighbor is to engage neighbors and transportation planners in the City with the scorecard and ensure to connect with other neighbors and groups to improve perceived safety.

    - o It's recommended to have more stop signs, speed tables, parking, and bike lanes in the streets to narrow the roads, stop traffic, and slow traffic in the inner neighborhood streets as development continues.

1.2. **Action step:** In partnership with local community watch groups and neighborhood associations, VACV establishes a community of care network with community watch groups, after school programs, and peacekeepers that develop fellowship and improved neighborhood outcomes.

- VACV neighbors and parents (potentially PTAs with the local schools) establish a network of common walking paths from the neighborhoods to schools and parks.
- Traffic would ideally be routed to outer streets and away from these paths to ensure the safety of walkers in the neighborhood.
- Until that is possible, this group of neighbors and parents could at least make sure the walking paths were well populated during school times.

1.3. **Action steps:** VACV staff work to improve pathways to mental health supports and social work for Southside neighbors.

- This is happening through the use of Advocates and other staff people.

1.4. **Action steps:** VACV establishes community support groups and systems for undocumented neighbors in the Southside with a Spanish speaking staff person.

- This leadership could connect Spanish speakers to needed social systems of support, as well as legal aid, health clinics, educational opportunities that are available along Richmond Highway.

2. **_Objective:_** _VACV works to slow the fast-moving traffic throughout the neighborhoods on Richmond Highway._

2.1. **Action step:** VACV partners with Bike Walk and Sportsbackers to establish campaigns for the Richmond Highway that promote slow streets, walkability, and accessibility for all who visit and live on the Richmond Highway.

2.2. **Action step:** The Safety Point Person encourages Richmond transportation planners and PlanRVA to engage directly with community more before changing or constructing more roadway.

- Neighbors don't feel like their concerns about traffic and vehicular safety are listened to. This could be a function of traditional transportation planning, which does not typically involve community beyond the minimum survey.

2.3. **Action step:** VACV and the Safety Point Person works with neighbors to call the Richmond Department of Public Works (DPW), or use their new 311 app, to identify

areas that need infrastructure improvements and monitor changes proposed with the Scorecard.

Goal 4: **Jobs, training, and advancement opportunities are available, accessible, and fairly compensated on Richmond Highway.**

1. ***Objective:*** *VACV advocates for the City Office of WealthBuilding, LISC, or another workforce based non-profit, to establish a job training and financial empowerment center on Richmond Highway.*
    - o This would provide opportunities and coaching to folks who need more skills or certifications to advance the opportunity to fill the gaps.
    - o A center like this could expand into a business development center.
    1.1. **Action step**: VACV engages youth in training opportunities for employment through continued work like ARCA and connections through the schools.
    1.2. **Action step:** VACV partners with the Sacred Heart/Sagrada Corazon Church that operates on Richmond Highway or the Office of Community WealthBuilding to offer classes focused on the Spanish Speaking and Latinx population.

2. ***Objective***: *VACV designates an employment point person to use the scorecard to build relationships and advocate that developers hire from within the neighborhood and have opportunities for advancement.*
    - o Neighbors want to see job opportunities with advancement opportunities and fair, livable wages.
    2.1. **Action step**: VACV advocates for a living wage and fair wage policies, as well as equitable hiring practices for the reentry population and youth.
    2.2. **Action step**: With the help and influence of the city counselors and the economic development department, as well as the scorecard, VACV creates community benefits agreements as necessary to establish legal documents for creating, hiring, and maintaining fair-wage jobs on the corridor.

Goal 5: Housing is stable, quality, and affordable in Richmond Highway's neighborhoods with well-maintained lots and dwellings in well-situated and walkable neighborhoods convenient to well-designed and affordable amenities.

1. **_Objective_:** _VACV identifies a staff person, neighborhood advocate, or **Committed** HWG member to be a housing development point person._

    1.1. **Action step**: Housing developers engage the community for their proposed developments with the scorecard so the community can have input on the affordability and appropriateness of developments.

    1.2. **Action step:** The housing point person leads investigations on housing matters through city hall or city council, i.e. SUP, variances, or ordinances related to housing.

    o Ideally, this person should be the contact person on the City Civic Association website, so they can be readily available to developers seeking input.

    1.3. **Action step:** The Housing point person creates relationships with other neighbors in the area, but directly seeks to include more renters in community engagement efforts.

    o This would allow for a more inclusive and representative sample of neighbors living in the area.

    1.4. **Action step:** The HWG point person and VACV staff explore the usefulness of homeowner cooperatives or "limited equity cooperatives" where appropriate, in partnership with tenant associations.

2. **_Objective:_** _VACV develops a relationship with the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust and formally sends a HWG member to attend committee meetings._

    o As properties along Richmond Highway are built up in the land trust, the neighbors can have more control over what development looks like in their community as a result of the land tenure agreements with the Land Trust.

    2.2. **Action step**: VACV staff develops a formal committee for the Land Trust devoted to the Richmond Highway that can be attended by **Committed** HWG members.

- o This committee uses the scorecard to determine what housing development is appropriate in the Richmond Highway, as well as gaining more control over proposed developments on the Southside.
- o It's recommended that VACV look at examples in Boston, Massachusetts and the Dudley Neighborhood Initiatives for examples of governance structures here.

2.3. **Action step:** VACV staff identifies what parcels are owned by the City and outside investors that are just sitting on vacant or dilapidated properties and challenge the city to either buy this land back or sell it to the Land Trust or the City Land Bank.

- o Ideally, then parcels would be created into neighborhood-wide useful and appropriate housing stock, viable land for business, or green park space.
- o Outside investment and the city sitting on vacant properties until land values rise is a form of speculation and identifying these parcels would be just the beginning of this process.

2.4. **Action step:** VACV develops a relationship with the City Land Bank (managed through the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust) and advocates for City-owned lots to be repurposed into appropriate affordable housing or green space.

3. ***Objective:*** *VACV reduces the likelihood of displacement through evictions and foreclosure on the corridor by partnering with tenant organizers to connect people with resources and assistance.*

- o A tenant member of the HWG could be the point person to direct these efforts.
- o Eviction should be rare and only enacted with a just cause.
- o Tenants are secure in their housing.

3.1. **Action step:** VACV continues systems of mutual aid throughout the Richmond Highway community to help people in crisis that are facing eviction or housing instability.

- o Continue these actions in partnership with other organizations on the Southside.

3.2. **Action step:** VPLC and/or Central Virginia Legal Aid should open satellite offices on Richmond Highway to serve the tracts with the highest eviction rates. These services should be offered in Spanish and in English.

3.3. **Action step:** VACV advocates that the city creates programs to stabilize rent and tax payments for tenants and homeowners at risk of displacement as property values rise.

Goal 6: **Neighborhoods on Richmond Highway are beautiful, walkable, well-maintained, and resilient to foster wellness and safety for neighbors.**

1. ***Objective:*** *VACV staff partners with the VACV greening master plan, RVA Green (City Sustainability Office), Groundwork USA, and Groundwork RVA to identify areas susceptible to flooding and brownfields to alleviate environmentally concerning areas for now and in the future.*

   1.1. **Action step:** VACV works to identify a Greening/Resiliency point person who works to raise awareness and alleviate flooding in roadways, alleys, and homes through infrastructure improvements among neighbors, the city, and developers.
      - This person brings their concerns back to the HWG for updates as needed.

   1.2. **Action step:** The Greening/Resiliency point person uses the scorecard to work with developments proposed in the Southside to encourage more green space, environmental resiliency improvements, and brownfield development as developers consider construction in the area.
      - This could be a form of community benefit that is negotiated through the scorecard as development occurs throughout the Southside.

   1.3. **Action step:** The Greening/Resiliency Point Person works with the Richmond DPW and Code Enforcement to identify problem areas and areas for opportunity in the street scape and vacant lots.

   1.4. **Action step** VACV partners with youth in the Richmond Highway to use street art to slow traffic, beautify the area and beautify walking paths where appropriate.
      - This is a similar program to what RVA Thrives, a program of VACV, has accomplished in the past through ARCA.

2. ***Objective:*** *VACV advocates for zoning changes throughout the Southside to ensure lots are buildable and maintained based on an appropriate zoning district regulation.*

2.1. **Action step:** VACV staff, in partnership with the HWG, considers advocating for appropriate alternative zoning patterns for Richmond Highway neighborhoods based on the assets and opportunities discussed in the findings, and where neighbors would like to see development patterns.

- o New and improved zoning would allow for more "mixed uses" throughout the neighborhoods on Richmond Highway, making small grocers, restaurants, farmer's markets, as well as park spaces and well-maintained housing development, legal throughout the corridor.

- o Currently, the majority of Richmond Highway's neighborhoods is inappropriately zoned as R-5, which leaves many vacant lots as "nonconforming." Many lots and dwellings if built new would be illegal, because only single-family detached dwellings can occur by-right with this zoning (Wilson, 2021).

- o Any multi-family dwellings or business development existing in the neighborhoods are "legally nonconforming" or illegal with the R-5 zoning designation.

2.2. **Action step:** VACV staff, in partnership with the Greening/Resiliency point person and the Housing point person, consider advocating for a "Design Overlay District" (DOD) for the Richmond Highway Corridor.

- o DODs and "City Old and Historic" Districts are currently the only options in the Richmond Zoning Ordinance that ensure public notice or hearings for by-right development (Wilson, 2021). This would legally ensure that neighbors must be engaged for development decisions and would also ensure future use and commitment of the scorecard for neighborhood improvements and beautification efforts.

- o There is only one DOD in Richmond, the West of the Boulevard DOD, which is in the Museum District Neighborhood (Wilson, 2021). This may be the better option over a City Old and Historic District, which is present in the Southside along Cowardin and Semmes Avenues in the Springhill Neighborhood.

- City Old and Historic Districts require new development to go through the Commission of Architectural Review (CAR) process and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to even receiving building permits. This might deter development, which is not the desire of neighbors.
- DODs more seamlessly integrate with the building permit process and are potentially less disruptive to developers and homeowners as a City Old and Historic District could be.

2.3. **Action step:** VACV uses the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance to propose and formalize creating a DOD: Sec. 30-940 through Sec. 30-940.9 and Sec 30-940.4 to formalize (Wilson, 2021).

2.4. **Action step:** The DOD and any zoning changes are contextually sensitive and meet the criteria developed by the community in accordance with the Scorecard.

- A DOD implementation with respectful zoning changes to allow mixed uses by right for the neighborhoods along the Richmond Highway Corridor could signify VACV and the neighbor's willingness to encourage new housing and business development to the City and developers.

Implementation:

These recommendations are organized into a timeline of short-, mid-, and long-term tasks. Short term goals can be completed in the next 6 months to one year, mid-term can be completed in the next year to two years, and long – term goals will be considered three years or beyond in this case. While many would consider three years to actually be short term, it's best that this plan, the scorecard, and the efforts with neighbors are regularly revisited and adjusted accordingly to make sure the outcomes are as equitable as possible. Sections marked with all three boxes should be considered ongoing goals.

An Equitable Vision for Development on the Richmond Highway Corridor			
The Richmond Highway Corridor is a thriving, multicultural community with equitable access to food, security, housing, infrastructure, economic opportunity, and environmental resilience for all neighbors who live, work, and play there.	Short	Mid	Long
Goal 1: There is sincere, intentional, and ongoing community engagement with neighbors on Richmond Highway for development and community change.	1. Objective: Virginia Community Voice develops an equitable development scorecard that developers fill out with neighbors, neighbors use for advocacy and organizing, and VACV uses to evaluate the equity and appropriateness of developments coming to the Richmond Highway.	X		
	1.1 Action step: Develop a network of neighbors to respond to development proposals, city council needs, tenants' concerns, and use the scorecard when called upon.	X		
	1.2. Action Step: Ongoing development efforts that intend to engage neighbors utilize the equitable development scorecard.	X		
	2. Objective: VACV continues to work with and educate neighbors on city and development processes.	X		
	2.1. Action step: VACV staff markets the use of the scorecard to more neighbors and residents living along the Richmond Highway Corridor.	X		
	2.2. Action step: VACV recruits volunteers to train neighbors and HWG leaders in planning and city processes.	X		
	3. Objective: VACV educates developers, transportation planners, and the City on the need to engage with Richmond Highway neighbors for ongoing, consistent community engagement.	X		
	3.1. Action step: VACV engages with developers (for-profit and non-profit) and transportation planners about the need to engage with community with the scorecard.	X		
	3.2. Action step: "Committed" neighbors develop an ongoing community sharing session with local developers to exchange ideas, needs, and gaps of the development process and go over scorecard proposals and reactions.	X		
	3.3. Action step: Committed community members attend planning commission and city council meetings to share the needs of the community on a larger scale.	X		
	4. Objective: VACV establishes a community-wide system of notification for potential or ongoing development changes.		X	
	4.1. Action Step: A point person with VACV follows the goings on of development and public policy changes.	X		
	4.2. Action step: VACV staff review the Richmond 300 Comprehensive Plan and other "Small Area Plans" that would affect the future of the Southside and Richmond Highway Communities more generally.	X		
	4.3. Action step: VACV develops a "policy agenda" of sorts with the information available and ensures that Committed and Engaged neighbors are made aware and attend related city meetings.	X		
	4.4. Action Step: The VACV point person alerts the HWG and Committed neighbors as development proposals are made, including special use permits, variances, changes of sale, traffic improvements, etc.	X		
	4.5. Action step: VACV staff helps the Richmond Highway neighborhood and community associations update their contact information on the City website so that neighbors get quick, engaged contact from developers responding to proposals.	X		
	4.6. Action Step: VACV and HWG members establish working relationships with the city counselors and liaisons that represent the Richmond Highway corridor.		X	
	4.7. Action Step: VACV advocates for a Richmond office of neighborhood planning with embedded planners for the city.			X

Goal	Objective / Action Step			
Goal 2: Richmond Highway neighbors can easily access food sources that are affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate in a way that brings people together.	1. Objective: VACV engages the community in Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) practices.			
	1.1. Action Step: VACV Advocates promote the development of a grocery store that is affordable, culturally appropriate, and convenient on Richmond Highway.			
	1.2. Action step: VACV identifies Committed and Engaged community members to lead efforts around food development on Richmond Highway.			
	1.3. Action step: VACV's Committed or Engaged community members work to form a Richmond Highway specific collaborative around this focus area on Richmond Highway.			
	2. Objective: VACV advocates that vacant land is used for farm stands or markets that Black farmers and land-owners can use to sell goods or seeds.			
	2.1. Action step: The food point person partners with local farmer's markets to establish a mobile farmer's market spots that can travel throughout designated spots on Richmond Highway.			
	2.2. Action step: The Food Point Person or collaborative partners with community gardens that are already established to create a network of caretakers to manage and maintain gardens and land that can produce food.			
	2.3. Action step: VACV partners with GroundworkRVA to create stewards for the gardens and trails that exist on the corridor and ensure their upkeep and maintenance.			
	2.4. Action step: VACV, or the food point person, partners with neighborhood associations and churches in the area to hold block parties with the farmers market and food access collaborative to center an event around food and fellowship.			
Goal 3: Richmond Highway communities are safe and secure for all neighbors.	1. Objective: VACV advocates for the security and safety of all neighbors, but especially young people, seniors, and immigrants through improved infrastructure in the neighborhood, like lighting and sidewalks.			
	1.1. Action step: VACV establishes a safety point person, whose position as a committed neighbor is to engage neighbors and transportation planners in the City with the scorecard and ensure to connect with other neighbors and groups to improve perceived safety.			
	1.2. Action step: In partnership with local community watch groups and neighborhood associations, VACV establishes a community of care network with community watch groups, after school programs, and peacekeepers that develop fellowship and improved neighborhood outcomes.			
	1.3. Action steps: VACV staff work to improve pathways to mental health supports and social work for Southside neighbors.			
	1.4. Action steps: VACV establishes community support groups and systems for undocumented neighbors in the Southside with a Spanish speaking staff person			
	2. Objective: VACV works to slow the fast-moving traffic throughout the neighborhoods on Richmond Highway.			
	2.1. Action step: VACV partners with Bike Walk and Sportsbackers to establish campaigns for the Richmond Highway that promote slow streets, walkability, and accessibility for all who visit and live on the Richmond Highway.			
	2.2. Action step: The Safety Point Person encourages Richmond transportation planners and PlanRVA to engage directly with community more before changing or constructing more roadway.			
	2.3. Action step: VACV and the Safety Point Person works with neighbors to call the Richmond Department of Public Works (DPW) to identify areas that need infrastructure improvements and monitor changes proposed with the Scorecard.			
Goal 4: Jobs, training, and advancement opportunities are available, accessible, and fairly compensated on Richmond Highway.	1. Objective: VACV advocates for the City Office of WealthBuilding, LISC, or another workforce based non-profit, to establish a job training and financial empowerment center on Richmond Highway.			
	1.1. Action step: VACV engages youth in training opportunities for employment through continued work like ARCA and connections through the schools.			
	1.2. Action step: VACV partners with the Sacred Heart/Sagrada Corazon Church that operates on Richmond Highway or the Office of Community Wealthbuilding to offer classes focused on the Spanish Speaking and Latinx population.			
	2. Objective: VACV designates an employment point person to use the scorecard to build relationships and advocate that developers hire from within the neighborhood and have opportunities for advancement.			
	2.1. Action step: VACV advocates for a living wage and fair wage policies, as well as equitable hiring practices for the reentry population and youth.			
	2.2. Action step: With the help and influence of the city counselors and the economic development department, as well as the scorecard, VACV creates community benefits agreements as necessary to establish legal documents for creating, hiring, and maintaining fair-wage jobs on the corridor.			

Goal	Objective / Action step			
Goal 5: Housing is stable, quality, and affordable in Richmond Highway's neighborhoods with well-maintained lots and dwellings in well-situated and walkable neighborhoods convenient to well-designed and affordable amenities.	1. Objective: VACV identifies a staff person, neighborhood advocate, or Committed HWG member to be a housing development point person.	■		
	1.1. Action step: Housing developers engage the community for their proposed developments with the scorecard so the community can have input on the affordability and appropriateness of developments.	■	■	
	1.2. Action step: The housing point person leads investigations on housing matters through city hall or city council, i.e. SUP, variances, or ordinances related to housing.		■	
	1.3. Action step: The Housing point person creates relationships with other neighbors in the area, but directly seeks to include more renters in community engagement efforts.		■	
	1.4. Action step: The HWG point person and VACV staff explore the usefulness of homeowner cooperatives or "limited equity cooperatives" where appropriate, in partnership with tenant associations.			
	2. Objective: VACV develops a relationship with the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust and formally sends a HWG member to attend committee meetings.	■		
	2.2. Action step: VACV staff develops a formal committee for the Land Trust devoted to the Richmond Highway that can be attended by Committed HWG members.	■		
	2.3. Action step: VACV staff identifies what parcels are owned by outside investors that are just sitting on vacant or dilapidated properties and challenge the city to buy this land back, so it can be sold to the Land Trust or the City Land Bank.		■	
	2.4. Action step: VACV develops a relationship with the City Land Bank (managed through the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust) and advocates for lots to be repurposed into appropriate affordable housing or green space.	■		
	3. Objective: VACV reduces the likelihood of displacement through evictions and foreclosure on the corridor by partnering with tenant organizers to connect people with resources and assistance.	■		
	3.1. Action step: VACV continues systems of mutual aid throughout the Richmond Highway community to help people in crisis that are facing eviction or housing instability.	■		
	3.2. Action step: VPLC and/or Central Virginia Legal Aid should open satellite offices on Richmond Highway to serve the tracts with the highest eviction rates.		■	
	3.3. Action step: VACV advocates that the city creates programs to stabilize rent and tax payments for tenants and homeowners at risk of displacement as property values rise.	■		
Goal 6: Neighborhoods on Richmond Highway are beautiful, walkable, well-maintained, and resilient to foster wellness and safety for neighbors.	1. Objective: VACV staff partners with the VACV greening master plan, RVA Green (City Sustainability Office), Groundwork USA, and Groundwork RVA to identify areas susceptible to flooding and brownfields to alleviate environmentally concerning areas for now and in the future.	■		
	1.1. Action step: VACV works to identify a Greening/Resiliency point person who works to raise awareness and alleviate flooding in roadways, alleys, and homes through infrastructure improvements among neighbors, the city, and developers.	■		
	1.2. Action step: The Greening/Resiliency point person uses the scorecard to work with developments proposed in the Southside to encourage more green space, environmental resiliency improvements, and brownfield development as developers consider construction in the area.	■	■	■
	1.3. Action step: The Greening/Resiliency Point Person works with the Richmond DPW and Code Enforcement to identify problem areas and areas for opportunity in the street scape and vacant lots.	■	■	
	1.4. Action step VACV partners with youth in the Richmond Highway to use street art to slow traffic, beautify the area and beautify walking paths where appropriate.	■		
	2. Objective: VACV advocates for zoning changes throughout the Southside to ensure lots are buildable and maintained based on an appropriate zoning district regulation.			■
	2.1. Action step: VACV staff considers advocating for appropriate alternative zoning patterns for Richmond Highway neighborhoods based on the assets and opportunities discussed in the findings, and where neighbors would like to see development patterns.		■	
	2.2. Action step: VACV staff, in partnership with the Greening/Resiliency point person and the Housing point person, consider advocating for a "Design Overlay District" (DOD) for the Richmond Highway Corridor.		■	
	2.3. Action step: VACV uses the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance to propose and formalize creating a DOD: Sec. 30-940 through Sec. 30-940.9 and Sec 30-940.4 to formalize.			■
	2.4. Action step: The DOD and any zoning changes are contextually sensitive and meet the criteria developed by the community in accordance with the Scorecard.			■

Professional Plan Summary

Neighbors living in the Richmond Highway Corridor are devoted to their community but aren't often consulted when changes are proposed in their backyards. What would it take for residents to know what's coming first? Residents want to be a part of the real estate development process but are rarely included as early in the process as they would like to be. What tools can help establish power for neighbors within social structures that often devalue them? A development plan for the Richmond Highway Corridor that promotes equity would guide Richmond policymakers and developers-alike to create and invest in a way that reflects the needs and vision of the neighbors there. Virginia Community Voice has not had the capacity to complete a project like this, and the professional plan will create an action plan for relevant equitable development.

This plan is grounded in the history and existing conditions of the Southside and draws heavily on neighbors' knowledge and lived experiences. A radical planning approach with a communicative process with Southside neighbors, guides the methods with the intention for the plan to lead to more redistributive and inclusive land use and development practices. The methodology involves a process led by Virginia Community Voice to collect the community's knowledge and form an equitable development plan to shift power into the hands of current neighbors on Richmond Highway. An equitable development scorecard (*Appendix 2)* is shaped using a people-based approach with focus groups and community counter-mapping.

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Appendix 1

Assets, Liabilities, and Opportunities along Richmond Highway Corridor:

Richmond Highway Assets	
Location/Name	**Description from Neighbors**
Oak Grove Bellemeade	This school is a strength. It's great - it's brand new, it's got a community center here. It's important!
Bellemeade Park	Been working really hard and it's a beautiful park. Really beautiful place to be - flowers and trees. Can cook out there. Really wonderful.
Oak Grove playground	Redid the shed and the water fountain and a brand new fence. Replaced all the benches in the playground.
Old Elementary School	
Hillside Improvements	Sidewalks and computer room for young people. Improved the standing water problem. New cabinets for residents! People have new trash cans. Feeling overwhelmed by all of the improvements.
Mimosa Creek Subdivision	Really nice houses that are newly redeveloped. Are affordable housing.
Croaker's Spot	Newly rebuilt restaurant - really nice. The area surrounding it is improving too
el barrio es tranquilo (The neighborhood is peaceful)	Broadrock and Monsley in between hopkins road and Monsley. The neighborhood is peaceful and it's a nice place to be.
Pharmacy and stores	Likes to be around where everything is. Is near broadrock elementary.
El parque (Oak Grove Park)	This park is a great place for the kids to be and play.
health clinic	There are lots of health clinics throughout the southside!
Summer Hill Preschool	Free and public. Is a good resource for littles.
Southwood Resource Health Clinic	Free clinic with gynocological exams based in the apartments. There's family planning and a trabajadora social (social worker) who can help you apply for medicaid para los ninos (for the kids). It's bilingual and they serve people who are undocumented.
Sacred Heart Center	They have clases de GED (GED classes), food distribution, otras clases (other classes), deportes para ninos (sports for kids), etc.). They are doing a lot of help for the community.

Richmond Highway Liabilities	
Location/Name	**Description from Neighbors**
Oak Grove Park	There's drug activity with young people who hang out in the park.
Stolen Property	Kids taking from kids - what to do? Young people taking bikes from kids and our houses don't have cameras. They'll take bikes right in front of the neighbors.
Abandoned roads	The streets need work and maintenance.

Opportunities on Richmond Highway	
Location/Name	Description from Neighbors
Oak Grove Park - Policing	More police to patrol thhe park and better lighting to discourage drug activity. Mas vigilancia - change the drug activity so kids can play.
Community center	Opporunity for a Latinx community center to share information with all of the neighbors. Share the culture, share information, enjoy each other, jugar los ninos (kids can play).
Centro de recreacion for los jovenes (Recreation Center for young people)	Young people need a place to go on the weekends and after school to play or watch movies. Without this the kids get in trouble. This would be good close to Richmond Highway.
Mas clinicas! (More clinics)	More clinics like the one in Southside! It would make it faster to be seen because of better access to more appointments sooner - there's so much need and not everyone can get seen.
Supermarket	Con farmacia (with a pharmacy), preferably a big big store where we can get everything we need - walmart, clothes store, shoes stores. Other places have these stores!
Small tiendas para verduras y frutas (Small stores to sell fruits and veggies.)	It would be good to get fresh greens and fruits.
Schools are great - throughout Southside	They are safe and a good place for us to learn and our kids too. Everyone can go.
Old OakGrove Building	There's an opportunity here to get involved with the development. Development may already be happening.
Gene's Market	Used to come all the way over here to get meat from the market and all of a sudden it was gone. There is an attachment to this quality market space! It's about as big as the block - just sitting here and there's a ton of potential. If the right people bought in it would be a good supermarket.
Summer Hill Center - Adult Learning Center	There's a huge opp for this building. It could be an opportunity for adults to get job skills. Could also include trails and park space.
Trail Field	Need some help with upkeep, but there's trails and would love some additional help to keep everything clear.

King's Market	Has amazing meats and approachable owner, John. Would donate goods to the church. Amazing support of the National Night Out too. Gives out huge boxes for Christmas and Thanksgiving. Only downside is many people hang out there and makes it a bit uncomfortable to get in there alone when so many people are there. People hang in the side or in the parking lot. There's an opportunity for improved security outside and to engage the people who are hanging there. Workforce opportunity for the people who are there.
Roundabout (all Southside!)	Opportunity here because the greenspaces aren't well maintained and they are dangerous. Opportunity for community engagement and other traffic calming measures to keep people safe.
Safer Streets (all of Southside - farther south than Blackwell - deeper in to the neighborhood)	People fly! There's a lot of opportunity for community engagement for traffic calming measures throughout Southside. More speed tables and stop signs. Opportunity to explore the Master Plan to see what they have addressed that we've brought up. We can realize our power and voice for traffic enforcement here!
Renter and Owner Displacement	As areas start to get built up, the majority of the residents do not benefit because rents rise and taxes also displace people. When the moratoriums end from major evictions filings during COVID, there will be a big problem. Speak to the development that is rolling Southward and has the potential to move out long time neighbors or those who won't even be able to benefit from the improvements being made. Affordability is changing rapidly and what will happen to folks as the changes continue? With betterment could be a cost. Opportunity to leverage our power to protect and engage with people who could be negatively displaced or moved out unwillingly. The scorecard is an opportunity here!
Green Alleys! (All of Southside)	There is a huge opportunity for improvement here. They flood frequently and need improved greening opportunities. More frequent trash pick up.
Sidewalk improvements for kids walking to school.	Been trying to maintain space between Blakemore and Glenway Sidewalk not maintained to Lucillle Brown Middle School. Have to walk in the street. People drive fast around the curve and children have to walk in the street.
Opportunity for a Park	Boroughbridge and Covington empty lot could be a park.

Southside Plaza	High traffic area and there are opportunities here for business and development. Bring diversity from the Latinx community and multiculturalism is a plus.
More opporunity for igelsias (churches) to do more.	Could do more community programs around for the neighbors.
Mas oportunidades para deportes para ninos. (More opportunities for sports teams for kid)	We live near a park but there aren't sports for kids in the park. a park where we can feel safe and together would be good but also have organized sports for kids to play and for parents to watch.
Gimnasio (Gym)	Other neighborhoods have a ton of courts and fields. It would be great to have a gym here.

Appendix 2:

Equitable Development Scorecard

Richmond Highway's Equitable Development Scorecard *This excel sheet will be utilized by staff to help calculate the total scoring associated with each section. This scorecard is specific to the Richmond Highway Corridor as neighbors there have provided specific input leading to the development of this tool. It's ideal that a developer has come to the neighbors first to establish a relationship before feedback is requested. Developments, plans, and proposals will be evaluated with the following criteria: excellent, good, or poor. 5 points are given for excellent achievement of the criteria, 3 for good response, and 1 point for developments that maybe meet the mark. NO is for developments that are beyond "poor." They have not engaged, they deserve no points. NO is reserved for extractive developments with no community benefits. Fill out all sections that apply to the proposal - not all developments will apply!*		**Excellent (5)**	**Good (3)**	**Maybe (1)**	**NO (0)**
Community Engagement	Neighbors were engaged before the development process began (i.e. not as a requirement of the SUP process).				
	Neighbors were engaged at least 6 months into the development process.				
	Neighbors are given power in the decision making process.				
	Neighbors were engaged in the idea stages of the development and shaped the process.				
	The development proposal outlines ways to engage the community on an ongoing basis.				
	The developer is transparent about outcomes and intentions.				
	The developer or the city had completed targeted in-person events.				
	The developer has demonstrated accountability for community engaged requests.				
	The project was initiated by community members or neighbors themselves.				
	The developer or the city has made a concerted effort to engage and educate neighbors about the proposed development and the processes around it.				
	The developer or business has other developments throughout Richmond Highway Corridor. If yes, they have responded to the community positively and been generally well-received.				
	The proposal matches the neighbors vision of their community or even enhances the neighbors' ideals.				
	Engagement Score				
Food Access and Security	The proposal centers equitable access to food.				
	The proposal promotes a grocery store or supermarket on Richmond Highway.				
	If developed the business would sell what the neighbors determine to be affordable food products. (For grocery or restaurants)				
	The food business is owned by a person of color (POC or non-white person).				
	The proposal reuses vacant land for farm stands or markets.				
	The proposal promotes the sale of fresh and locally grown produce or goods.				
	The development is a culturally appropriate restaurant.				
	The proposal would promote food entrepreneurship for people living in the area (a community commercial kitchen or a food business hoping to hire from the neighborhood.)				
	The proposal supports the development of community gardens or neighborhood grown foods.				
	The project would help to maintain community gardens or development of them on vacant lots or dwelling units.				
	The proposal is neighbor-led and initiatived, or owned by someone from the neighborhood.				
	The development would improve walkability and accessability of the neighborhood because it centers food.				
	The proposal highlights fellowship of neighbors through the use of food.				
	Food Score				
Safety	The proposal has a plan to improve streetscaping (sidewalks, lighting, traffic patterns, and greening) where the development will occur.				
	Pathways to mental health supports and social work for Southside neighbors are increased through this proposal.				
	The developer or business owner participates in community based meetings, neighborhood watch events, and National Night Out events to promote neighborhood relationship building and overall security.				
	Developer works to improve the street scape to slow fast moving traffic (narrowing the streets, improving greening and art, etc.)				
	The project partners with local pedestrian safety advocates to ensure the safety and accessability of all pedestrians in the community.				
	Transportation planners or transportation plans associated with the project are appropriate with the development pattern and have engaged citizens.				
	The developer has shown due diligence to maintain their buildings, green spaces, offices, business, or right of way.				
	Safety Score				

Equitable Jobs Access	The development intends to hire from within the neighborhood.				
	The development would like to hire and train young people.				
	The development can hire people who are immigrants or who speak Spanish.				
	The jobs that are created hire at a living wage with benefits and the right to organize.				
	The developer hires neighbors who are re-entering the workforce after facing incarceration.				
	The project partners with workforce development or training programs to work to hire from within the neighborhood.				
	If the developer or project uses short term work, priority is given to locals for contracts.				
	The jobs that are available are not only low wage jobs, but also provide opportunity for long-term employment and advancement.				
	Jobs Score				
Housing and Neighborhood Development	Housing developments and businesses are well maintained.				
	The housing development is appropriately designed to fit in with the surrounding neighborhood.				
	The housing development is designated as affordable or preserves affordable housing for people who make 50% of Area Median Income.				
	The development ensures they will not displace current residents.				
	If a redevelopment of a current property, the rent will not increase.				
	The development is consistent with the vision of the neighbors.				
	The project commits to low eviction rates and will engage with the Eviction Diversion Program.				
	The project commits to homeownership or wealth building for POC in the neighborhood.				
	The project is initiated from developers, non-profits, or owners that are neighbors or community members.				
	The project redevelops vacant lot or vacant dwelling.				
	Housing units will improve the infrastructure of the neighborhood, thereby improving the overall walkability,				
	Developments proposed improve the quality and accessibility of the amenities in the neighborhood.				
	If developer has previous units built in the Corridor, they have demonstrated accountability to maintain their properties.				
	If developer has previous units built in the Corridor, their eviction rate remains low or only evict for "just cause."				
	Housing and Development Score				
Neighborhood Infrastructure Maintenance and Resiliency	The development improves drainage or flooding in a roadway, alleyway, or walkway.				
	The development includes greening with planned maintenance.				
	The development improves the heat resiliency in the neighborhood by planting trees, creating designated green space, or reducing the use of pavement, building energy efficient homes, or ensuring efficient HVAC systems for health and safety.				
	The development plans to improve the sidewalks, pavement, alleyways, and roadways near to the development.				
	The proposal includes street art, like murals, statues, or designs that come from neighbors.				
	With previous developments, the developer has improved or maintained the project well.				
	The development improves a designated brownfield or industrial area, making it more welcoming and safe for neighbors to enjoy.				
	Beautification Score				
	Total Score				

The pre totals for each focus area are added together for a final score. These provide a numbered ranking system that would allow neighbors and the VACV staff to help determine the equity, inclusion, and beneficial impact of develpoments and proposals in the Richmond Highway neighborhoods.

Proposals with the highest scores in the excellent section should be given priority support for development and partnership. Proposals and developments in the good range have room for improvement, but could face either support or disapproval. Proposals ranked as "good" can resubmit or have their scores changed. Poorly ranked proposals should prepare for neighbor disapproval and backlash. Maybe proposals should not be developed or approved by neighborhood associations or council. Proposals with the highest score in the NO column should be prepared to face organized opposition to the development.