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WILLIAMSBURG ROAD COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION PLAN

RACHAEL THAYER

MAY 2022

MASTER OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING

L. DOUGLAS WILDER SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY



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WILLIAMSBURG ROAD COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Williamsburg Road is the heart of the Sandston neighborhood, and has served as the area's economic base since the early twentieth century. With representation along the corridor for office spaces, restaurants, retail, civic spaces, religious uses, among others, this corridor allows the Sandston community to have a strip of development that not only celebrates the history of the area but the adaptability of the neighborhood. Recently, there has been a concern among citizens and the County of Henrico that the commercial corridor is experiencing a stagnation and possible downturn in its economic viability. This concern stems from infrastructure deterioration creating issues for the businesses along the roadway, lack of pedestrian friendly design, and a need of economic development support for the local businesses currently present.

While the corridor was originally developed with a post-World War II automotive orientation, residents of the neighborhood have voiced preference towards a typical Main Street design, especially as it would deal with the necessary infrastructure improvements along the strip. This solution has experienced barriers during past action by the County, due to Williamsburg Road being owned by the State. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has not enacted any improvement plans or proposals in recent years, despite the crumbling sidewalks and severe drainage issues caused by the roadway. While the County will need to pursue infrastructure maintenance through VDOT, gaining a thorough understanding of the issues present within the corridor is imperative to recommend functional market uses.

This plan discusses the methodology used to get community input from several community members, including property owners, business owners, and users of the corridor. This input, along with the qualitative analysis performed through the market analysis, informed several recommendations for the Williamsburg Road corridor in Sandston. These recommendations centered around design, community connections, and bolstering the commercial corridor in order for it to thrive long term. An implementation table was provided in order to assist in guiding the revitalization efforts in Sandston. Through the implementation of this plan, Sandston will become a healthy, strong commercial corridor that serves all needs of the community that supports and surrounds it through a revitalized pedestrian experience, bolstered businesses, and stable social and professional networks.

INTRODUCTION

Plan Purpose

Williamsburg Road has been the primary commercial corridor for the neighborhood of Sandston since the 224-acre tract was purchased by the Richmond Fairfield Railway Company in 1921. This mile long stretch of roadway housed the commercial force of the town, however it has seen a stagnation in economic growth since the 1960s. Over at least the past two decades, the residents of Sandston have raised concerns over both the economic stability of the commercial corridor and the businesses that currently occupy the structures that line the corridor, especially as they face infrastructure issues that conflict with the outspoken want for the area to be transformed into a Main Street. Sandston has been one of the areas focused on by the County of Henrico for potential revitalization efforts to address the mounting issues that the town faces. The County has been working in the area through departmental work and consultant work since 2002, when the first design-based plan was created for the corridor. As this area has been facing commercial stagnation, and with the hopeful introduction of a historic district listing in the National Register of Historic Places as well as the Virginia Landmarks Registry, tax credit incentives are being pushed by the County to encourage commercial investment and growth in the area.

This plan uses a market analysis of the present Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor in order to recommend development opportunities for the corridor, as well as design guidelines that fit within the historic character of Sandston. The purpose of this plan is to identify potential markets that would benefit from being introduced to the corridor, evaluate the potential of the Main Street program, and design to mitigate the infrastructure difficulties identified.

Client Description

The client for this plan is the Henrico County Department of Community Revitalization, represented by the Community Development Manager, David Sacks. Mr. Sacks has worked for the County for ten years, and has actively been involved in the process of working towards finding a solution for the neighborhood of Sandston's infrastructure and commercial corridor obstacles. The Department of Community Revitalization, in partnership with other County departments such as Public Utilities, Public Works, and

Planning, have sought to identify the problems that need to be addressed in Sandston and develop a plan of action. It was through this effort that the historic district nomination process began, as a way to introduce tax credits into the area in order to assist business owners in revitalizing the commercial corridor, which is a primary focus for this plan.

Outline of Plan

There are five major components of the Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Plan:

- **Background:** Includes the overall context of the plan, including the existing conditions of Williamsburg Road, including the current land uses, zoning, and existing conditions. A theoretical framework is included in this section, as well as an extant literature review.
- **Methodology:** Research questions were developed to address the client’s needs. Sources of information include relevant sources to commercial revitalization, as well as stakeholder outreach methods and analytical methods for quantitative data.
- **Findings:** Survey results are analyzed and discussed, and stakeholder interview discussions are triangulated into significant patterns. A market analysis was also performed and is detailed within this section. The assets and limitations of the area are summarized to inform the Recommendations section.
- **Recommendations:** Informed by the analysis described in the Findings section, recommendations have been created. An implementation table is offered for the client.
- **Conclusion:** A reiteration of key points and a summarization of findings and recommendations.



Figure 1: A gas station located on the western end of Williamsburg Road.

History of Sandston and the Williamsburg Road Corridor

The area that is currently known as Sandston within the County of Henrico was originally a planned development for the Seven Pines Munitions Plant #3, created by the DuPont Company during World War I. The area where the neighborhood of Sandston stands was the area where single-family Aladdin kit houses were placed, along with dormitories, community centers, and munitions plant supporting offices were developed. After the war, the village tract was sold to Oliver J. Sands in 1923, who began development of an affordable subdivision for workers commuting to the City of Richmond using the railway line. The subdivision was based off of the original planned community design for the transportation network, which had Williamsburg Road as the main arterial for the area. As Williamsburg Road is also Route 60, it was the primary roadway that connected the City of Richmond to Williamsburg, Norfolk, Newport News, and Hampton. The commercial development along this main roadway began in the 1920s, and continued to grow in development until the 1960s. Typical of post-World War II development along these major state routes, which the majority of the commercial development qualifies as along Williamsburg Road, the focus is on site design to accommodate automobiles rather than pedestrian oriented spaces (Summers, 2019). This design has continued on with the corridor until the present day.

Study Area

The neighborhood of Sandston is located in the Varina magisterial district in the eastern half of the County. The boundaries for the study area are E Nine Mile Road and Early Avenue on the East-West axis. The North-South axis of the study area is half to a full block either way from Williamsburg Road. This places nearly all commercial properties in the historic district within the study area boundaries. Surrounding uses include single-family detached residential, open recreational areas such as baseball fields, and semi-public facilities such as the library and community center. The primary use around the commercial corridor is single-family residential.



Map 1: Location of Sandston within Henrico County, Virginia.

Transportation is a major factor for this study area, due to the major influences it has on the corridor. This section of Williamsburg Road is located directly northeast of the Richmond International Airport and directly south of Interstate 64. The creation of extension of Interstate-64 through the Richmond area in 1972 began the transition for Williamsburg Road from being the primary roadway for travel between the City of Richmond and eastern Virginia localities to seeing uses like a traditional local streetway.

Williamsburg Road, which is a portion of Route 60, is a Virginia state owned roadway, meaning all maintenance and infrastructure changes to the right-of-way are the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Transportation. Geographically, the majority of Sandston is nearly flat with only small changes to the slope of the area. However, the commercial corridor along Williamsburg Road is at a slightly decreased elevation from the roadway itself. This situation has resulted in substantial drainage issues and flooding for both adjacent commercial properties and the right of way itself.

There are sidewalks present along the Williamsburg Road, however due to present drainage issues the concrete materials are experiencing mass deterioration. There are no denoted crosswalks along the corridor or traffic lights. The speed limit for this section of Williamsburg Road is 35 miles per hour, a two-lane road despite being wide enough for three lanes, no left turn lanes, and a lack of street parking. The street lighting along the corridor is automotive oriented and no pedestrian level streetlights are in place. Sandston is within a designated lighting district for the County, called a sanitary district, so pedestrian level lighting as part of future infrastructure improvements.



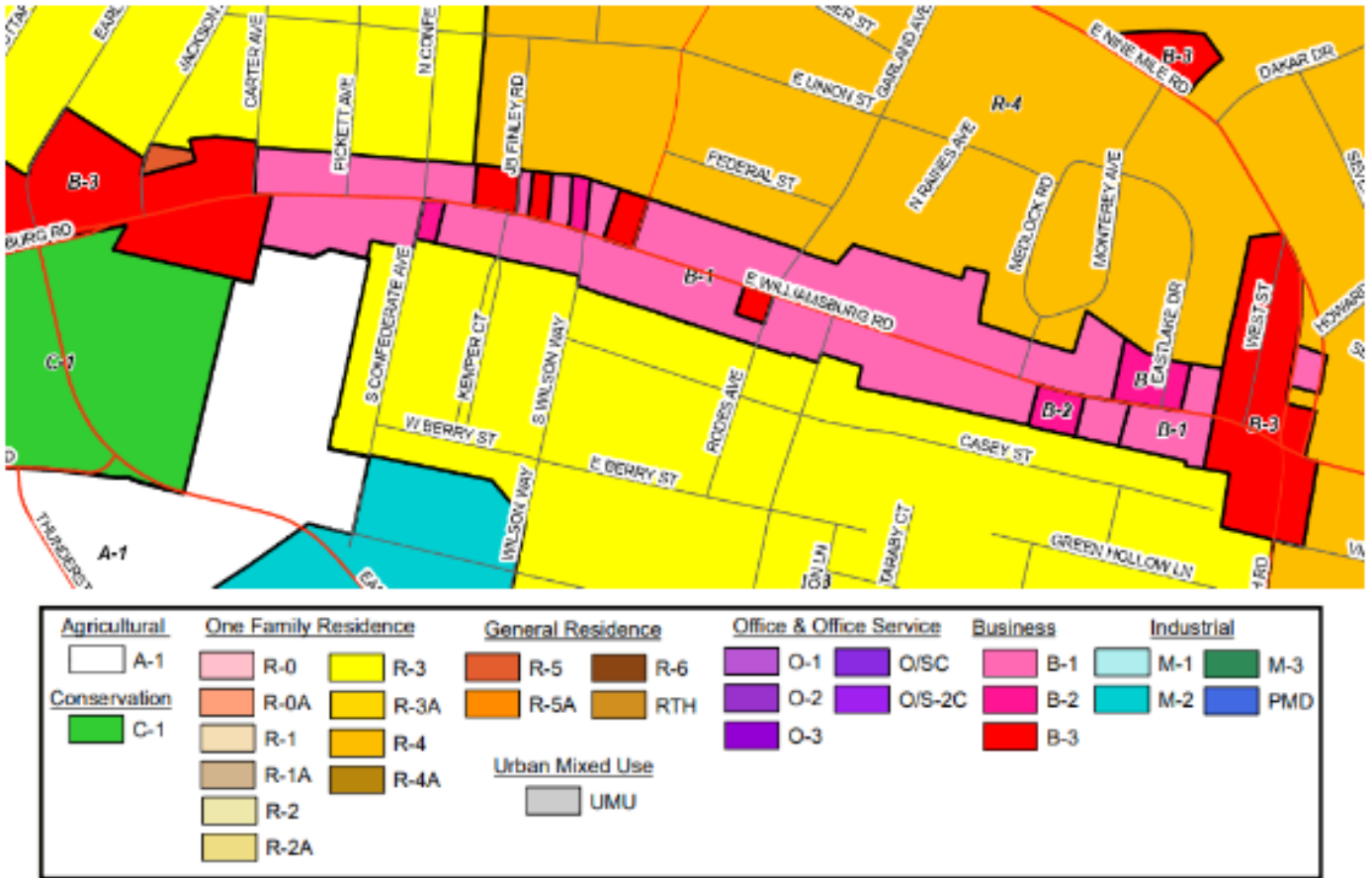
Map 2: Existing Land Uses in Sandston.

Zoning

All parcels found within the study area are zoned for commercial uses under the three types of “Business Districts” within Henrico. The primary zoning type within the study area is B-1, which is defined within the Henrico Zoning Code as primarily low-density retail and personal services uses. The allowed by-right uses include offices, retail uses, recreational centers, religious institutions, live/work dwellings, among others. Uses that require provisional use permits in this zone include funeral homes, vocational or trade schools, hospitals or hospice care, and automotive care or filling stations. The automotive uses found along Williamsburg Road have been grandfathered into this zone, and all found automotive uses that are currently present would now require a provisional use permit.

The B-2 zone has the second most area within the district, and is defined to have the purpose to provide a mix of commercial, automotive, and recreational activities. Allowed by-right uses include offices, retail uses, drive-thru and specialty restaurants, automotive services, live/work dwellings, recreational uses, and kennels. Provisional uses include general industrial service and repair, car rentals, and research and development facilities.

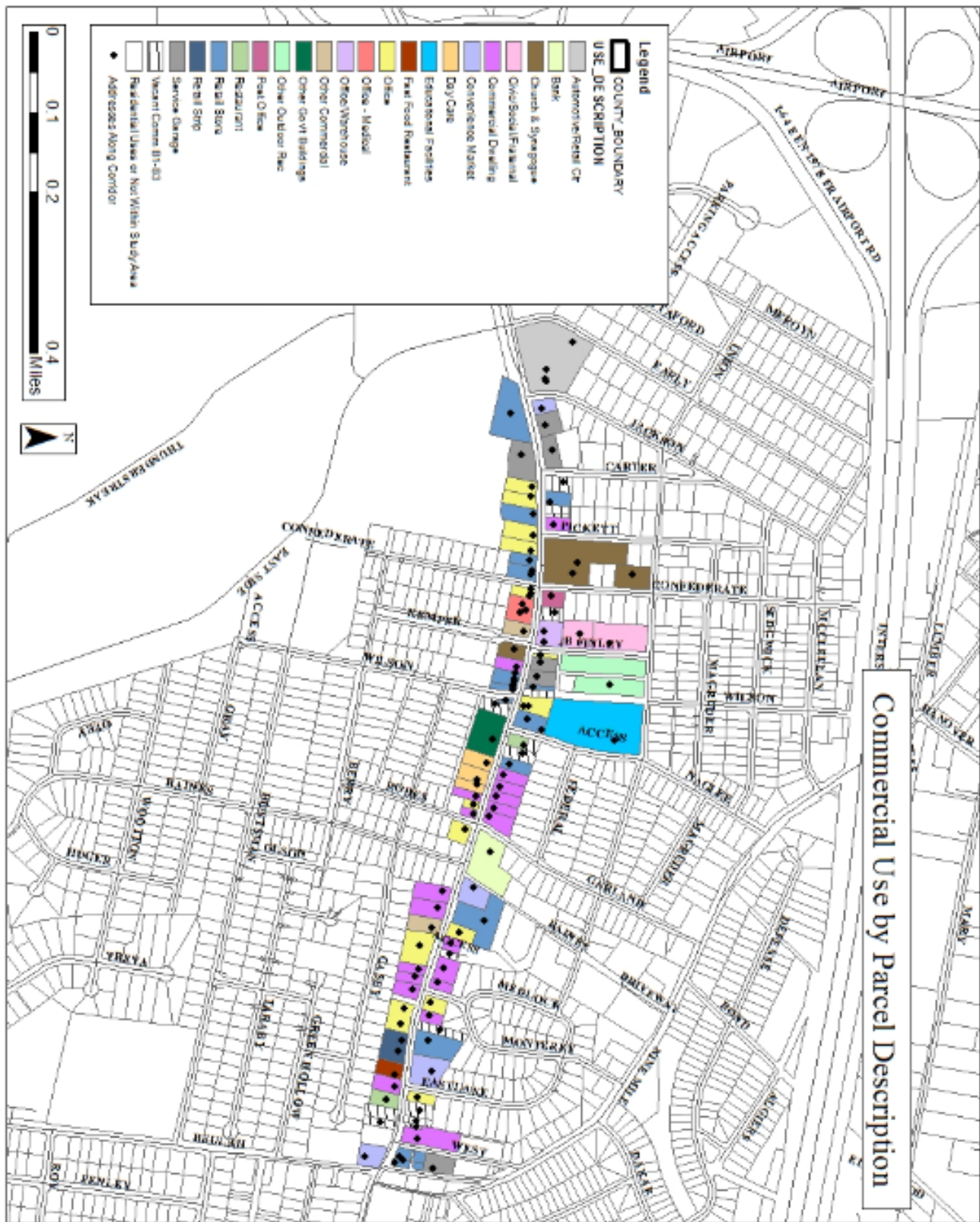
Lastly, there are six parcels that are zoned as B-2, which has the purpose of community shopping, recreational, and service activities. By-right allowed uses include offices, retail uses, drive-thru and specialty restaurants, automotive filling stations, and live/work dwellings. Provisional uses of note include artisan manufacturing, contractor services, and outdoor recreational facilities such as racetracks, amphitheaters, and waterparks.



Map 3: Zoning designations in Sandston.

Current Commercial Types and Locations

The current classification in the Henrico comprehensive plan *Henrico County Vision 2026* for the study area, “Commercial Concentration,” is meant for areas with commercial and office uses that were not developed along a major arterial roadway. Smaller, local businesses are more likely to be found in these concentrations due to the placement along minor arterials or collector roadways. This designation provides an opportunity to access a specific fund for additional or enhanced commercial development within these designations. Present along the Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor are mostly non-residential use parcels with a total of one hundred and ten addresses associated with those parcels. An itemized list of the addresses associated with the corridor is included in Appendix A, along with the business name associated with that address.



Map 4: Types of commercial uses by parcel along the Williamsburg Road corridor as classified by real estate assessment data.

There is a significant number of addresses that are found within the “Commercial Dwelling” type, which act as both a commercial business to the public as well as a primary residential unit, that were excluded from the total count of seventy two businesses. Other remaining addresses include residential uses, vacant lots, and parcels which are currently being used for off-street parking. The structures with these uses follow the typical layout of a single family detached home, and do not follow the commercial architecture patterns of the rest of the corridor. These types of uses are also difficult to discern from the public right-of-way and have been eliminated from the address list due to those concerns. The use with the majority of addresses associated with it is the “Office” use, and the other two offshoots include medical facilities and warehouse uses.

The diversity of the corridor indicates that the area is able to adapt to a variety of uses over time. Based on the available real estate assessment data for the County of Henrico, there are currently fourteen vacant parcels zoned for commercial along the corridor and at least one known vacant commercial structure.



Figure 2: Image of a For Sale sign on a currently vacant lot along Williamsburg Road.

Precedent Plans and Actions

Precedent plans and actions are previous efforts and projects that have been developed in a way that either directly or indirectly influence the study area or intended to influence the study area. This section includes three previous plans or actions that the County of Henrico has either developed, or hired a consultant to develop on their behalf, which directly influence the study area. The other projects discussed in this section are actions that the County has participated in which provide opportunities to the residents of Sandston. The County also engages in several programs such as the Enterprise Zone program and the Henrico Investment Program, which provide assistance through grants for local businesses meeting certain criteria to aid in activities such as façade improvements, signage updates, and permit fee waivers.

Comprehensive Plan

Existing efforts of the County of Henrico for land use planning are encapsulated within the *Henrico County Vision 2026* Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2009. For the Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor focus area, the adopted future land use is Commercial Concentration with the neighborhood surrounding it being Suburban Residential 2 as seen in Appendix A. The concentration classification defines the area as “applied to land intended for retail and/or whole sales and service establishments with coordinated design for shared parking areas and shared points of access to roadway” (Henrico County Vision 2026, 2009). Within this comprehensive plan, the Williamsburg Road corridor was classified as a Revitalization/Reinvestment Opportunity Area which was defined as an area that “show(s) signs of disinvestment by the private sector, and could benefit from a strategic approach to revitalization or reinvestment” (Henrico County Vision 2026, 2009).

Historic District Nomination

The Sandston Historic District was first proposed by the County in the Fall of 2019, when the Department of Community Revitalization hired a consultant agency to begin the process of evaluating the Sandston neighborhood for listing on the National Register of Historic Places to obtain a recommendation to proceed with a National Register Nomination.

After receiving that recommendation in early Spring 2020, the Department of Community Revitalization partnered with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in a cost-share grant to complete architectural surveys and a historic district nomination for Sandston. On September 23, 2021, the nomination was unanimously approved by the Virginia State Review Board for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register, as well as unanimously approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources for the nomination to be recommended to the National Park Service for listing on the National Register (Department of Historic Resources, 2021). The National Park Service then approved its listing in the National Register of Historic Places in December 2021.



Map 5: The Sandston Historic District boundary, displaying that a majority of the study area will fall within the boundary for the district.

Previous County Actions

Lastly, there have been two previous County actions within the last two decades that surround the Williamsburg Road corridor. The first happened in 2002 with the Sandston/Williamsburg Road Streetscape Design and Construction Drawings proposal, where a consultant agency was hired by the Department of Planning to develop design strategies for the Williamsburg Road corridor. This plan is primarily oriented towards redesigning the infrastructure in the area to become more pedestrian oriented as well as beautification of the area. This study was not primarily rooted in the revitalization of the commercial aspects of the corridor itself. The next primary action done by the County was in 2017, where the Department of Community Revitalization collaborated with the Planning Department and Department of Public Works to do enhanced code enforcement throughout the corridor and neighborhood, and undertake roadway and gateway beautification. This action was decided as a way to diagnose common infrastructure issues along the strip in order to leverage the Virginia Department of Transportation to address roadway deficiencies that were causing problems for business owners. No action from the Virginia Department of Transportation has been taken to address these deficiencies as of Spring 2022.

Background Knowledge

Commercial revitalization is defined for this plan as the act of focusing on economic corridors and concentrations experiencing great decline in an effort to encourage fiscal growth, development, and stability for the area. The reason commercial revitalization is an important activity for municipalities is that it offers a way to target areas experiencing economic instability through multiple means in order to increase the vitality of the economic base.

Revitalization Tools

There are multiple tools or funding sources available to pursue commercial revitalization; Community Development Block Grants, Enterprise Zones, Opportunity Zones, Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, and Main Street Programs are a few. On the federal grant side, many of these tools are not beneficial to the types of businesses found in smaller commercial corridors and concentrations, such as Williamsburg Road.

Inner-ring suburbs of large urban centers, such as Sandston, often exist in “policy blindspots,” due to not meeting regulatory thresholds to receive service through federal block grant funding or Enterprise Zone funds (Grodach & Ehrenfeucht, 2015). Small or medium sized businesses have difficulties meeting the requirements for the Job Creation Grants or cannot support growth in their labor force as they need assistance in other facets of their business (Adhikari, MacKenzie, & Accordino, 2016). CDBG funds are also difficult due to the income thresholds that are needed to serve certain block groups.

It is due to these roadblocks stemming from federal and state requirements that other avenues of commercial revitalization tools have been explored for smaller corridors and communities. Targeted infrastructure investments, tax increment financing, business improvement districts, and tax credit incentives begin to set the stage for effective corridor redevelopment strategies while allowing the municipalities time to set up a larger commercial revitalization plan by continuing to encourage development and redevelopment along the corridor (Nunez, 2021). These strategies have begun to be implemented in place of solely relying on federal or state grant programs to stimulate economic corridors as the municipality continues addressing needs within the community, such as infrastructure improvements that may be needed to support any new development.

Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

These tax credits aid in obtaining funding for rehabilitation based ventures for properties that contribute to a historic district. These rehabilitation based ventures are typically lengthy endeavors that cost a large amount of capital to complete. Economic inputs are typically the first breaking point of any capital improvement project, as the types and amounts of funding sources steer the project as a whole. Rehabilitation tax credit programs are an important factor in whether or not a project is funded by other investors and stakeholders, as the reimbursement from the state or federal governments made the investments safer. Having tax credits available to pursue these ventures gives investors and stakeholders a backing for the rehabilitation process as well as increases the availability for debt capital through loans (Accordino & Fasulo, 2014). These tax credits from both state and federal sources have the potential of covering up to 45% of project costs for income producing properties (Virginia Department of Historic Resources).

Main Street Programs

The Virginia Main Street Program was established in 1985 and is used to provide opportunities to commercial corridors through networking, specialized training, and funding opportunities. There are specific requirements for a commercial corridor to join the Main Street Program as outlined in the Virginia Main Street 2020 Program Guidelines by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development:

- A central business organization
- Population greater than 75,000 as of the 2010 census
- Have at least 50 commercial enterprises and 70 commercial structures
- Demonstrate active partnership with at least one local government partner
- Have a plan for organizational sustainability
- Be an Affiliate member of the National Main Street Center
- Demonstration local program support through a 502(c)(3) non-profit organization that is dedicated to downtown revitalization.

If a commercial corridor does not meet these requirements, it may join the Affiliate Program, which provides access to the national network and a portion of the training opportunities provided through the primary program. While no operating funds are available through this program, there are training opportunities geared towards promotion of stabilization of businesses and business sectors with minimal government support (Accordino & Fasulo, 2015).

The economic impact on the State was a ratio of \$1.60 added to the state economy for every \$1 spent for or in relation to the Main Street Program as of 2015 (Accordino & Fasulo, 2015). This impact is felt greatly in areas with struggling commercial corridors, as there is minimal governmental need or regulations imposed, however the resources needed are still being offered to businesses in the area. This program encourages the usage of rehabilitation tax credits as another way of incentivizing the evolution of an area while keeping the core character (Accordino & Fasulo, 2014). Introducing new economic functions or supporting the functions already present through the training and networking opportunities is a strong way of promoting businesses to stay in the area that they are currently located in, versus moving and leaving a vacant storefront. The dispirit character that vacant storefronts have in a commercial corridor affects the appeal and likelihood of shoppers continuing to use that corridor or concentration of businesses for future expenditure (Accordino & Fasulo, 2015). The Main Street Program encourages any currently vacant structures to be refurbished, rehabilitated, and reoccupied in order to bring assets back into the commercial corridor and increase its vitality.

Research Questions

The Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Plan focuses on gauging stakeholder opinions on multiple facets of the corridor and at different levels of engagement. Local experts, those who use the space consistently either for employment or the consumption of goods and services, were engaged throughout the process in order to gain a deeper understanding of the concerns surrounding the strip. These expert opinions led to the pinpointing of areas that need to be improved along the corridor, and design opinions known have shaped the overarching suggestions for revitalization and infrastructure changes. Technical experts were also engaged during this process in order to gain an understanding of the infrastructure, and the processes that are required to initiate large-scale changes to state-owned roadways of this type.

The following questions were the framework for the methodology of the plan:

1. What do local experts in the employment and ownership sectors feel are the major deficiencies and concerns of the infrastructure and economic viability of the commercial corridor?
2. In what ways would local experts in the employment and ownership sectors prefer the County of Henrico support the economic development of the corridor?
3. What would local experts in the consumption and use sectors like to see implemented in the design of the corridor and the types of uses present?
4. What are the regulatory processes required to make large-scale design changes to the Williamsburg Road corridor and how effective are those processes?
5. What commercial uses are supported along the corridor, and where is the primary customer base located?
6. What design aspects will need to be addressed in the potential redevelopment of the corridor? What design guidelines for the historic district should be recommended for the area?

These questions were answered using stakeholder interviews and a consumer survey. The instruments used for this engagement are found in Appendix B, C, and D.

The core of the research questions relied on gaining information from experts, meaning the main forms of outreach were done through reaching out to local and technical experts. The local experts have an in-depth understanding of how Williamsburg Road operates, the strengths, weaknesses, and conflicts that have arisen with the corridor. The technical experts have knowledge on the regulatory processes involved in making changes to infrastructure and design along the corridor.

Local Experts

For local expert interviews, the survey instrument found in Appendix B was used for each interview. These interviews assisted in identifying key concerns from experts about the operation side of Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor. The questions focused on gaining context for what works best to attract business, if they're able to gauge if the business is receiving more foot traffic versus automobile traffic, key trends of the area, and major concerns that are present for the overall economic health of the corridor. Other questions included gauging the level of knowledge about current County run programs and non-profit partnerships that are available to these local businesses, and gaining an understanding of the level of involvement that businesses would like to see from the County. These interviews were completed either in person or through other meeting software available, such as Zoom, Webex, and phone calls. Interviews were scheduled by the end of February and conducted throughout January and early March. The responses were aggregated, as explained in the Findings section, and used for the Recommendation section.

Technical Experts

Technical expert interviews were conducted in the same overall manner as the local expert interviews, using the instrument found in Appendix C. The goal of these interviews was to obtain a deeper understanding of the County's previous efforts in economic development and revitalization for Williamsburg Road and other local commercial concentrations. Discussions surrounding the infrastructure and design were geared towards the regulatory requirements for the large-scale improvements that would need to be made along the strip. General timelines for these processes were discussed in order for the recommendations to have realistic objectives in place.

Consumer Base and User Survey

The user survey was based on the questions found in Appendix D. These questions were focused on the design aspects of the corridor, along with the types of businesses that consumers would prefer to see along Williamsburg Road. These questions guided the overarching design principles for the recommendations along with pointing out key areas to focus on in the market analysis. It was used to gauge how satisfied the consumers are with the corridor and determining what improvements or changes that user base would recommend be implemented. These answers would then be aggregated to gain a full understanding of the preferred look, feeling, and uses of the corridor, as seen in the Findings section. This survey was created using Google Forms, and a QR code created for easy access to the survey. A Gmail account was created for individual comments, questions, or submissions of the survey. These two pieces of information, along with a brief summary of the purpose of the survey, were printed on flyers and distributed along the corridor.

Quantitative Methods

The quantitative core of the revitalization plan for Williamsburg Road is the market analysis, the purpose of which was to generate recommended uses that complement the existing uses and provide potential market opportunities to the corridor. The primary method to gain an understanding of uses that are not being provided, or provided adequately, is the “unmet demand” approach. Through this approach, three steps were established:

1. Total dollar amount of potential demand for each good and service within a specified geographic area is calculated.
2. Number of business establishments and the total square footage of each that provide goods and services to the specified geographic area is determined. The addresses found in Appendix A will be the beginning data source for gathering these amounts.
3. Analyze the information gathered in the first two steps to determine if there is an unmet demand for certain products or services by calculating the unmet need of demand in square feet, comparing to the number of supportable square feet and determining whether the number of potential new units would be viable in the study area.

The unmet demand approach was calculated for each type of primary level business, along with the secondary and tertiary levels (i.e., fast food as a secondary level from food away from home). Once the number of potential new units of the different types of goods and services are determined, the highest number of units per category would determine which categories had the highest level of development potential.

The anchors of the area were identified through field work observations and information gained through the stakeholder outreach. Anchors, or nodes, of an area provide places or services that continuously bring people to an area. These are services such as schools, recreational fields, churches, and community centers. These three places were chosen as nodes because they are the driving non-commercial based forces bringing people into Sandston. Acting as primarily community and social anchors, they draw potential consumers into the neighborhood to then explore and shop after the original event has concluded. Eating at restaurants, exploring retail stores and oddities, or potentially drawing people in for one-time services to be performed while they're attending the anchor's event or purpose. Once these anchors of Sandston were identified, they influenced the types of economic development recommended, along with where necessary infrastructure improvements were recommended to be located.



Figure 3: Examples of potential anchor locations: Corinth United Methodist Church, Sandston Public Library, and the Recreational Baseball Fields.

Local Expert Interviews

A total of twelve property owners and eight business owners were contacted in regard to being interviewed for this plan. There were also three interviews that took place with Sandston residents that were interested in the development of the plan. These interviews took place in late January and went through early March. The thoughts, opinions, and sentiments given by the interviewees for this section were divided up into three themes: perception of Sandston, County involvement, and the consumer base.

Perception of Sandston

Sandston has a strong community that supports the businesses within it, and the property owners had a majority stance that Sandston was a strong knit community that they had been a part of for decades. Eight of the property owners grew up in Sandston and have strong ties and networks to the residents and other property owners in the area. It was stated that there was an overall feeling as though the community was a prime area to hold onto property, as the residential district allowed a security net for the continued use of their land, even if the use changed over time. Citizens that were interviewed echoed these opinions, as they too, had grown up and raised families in the area. This group of interviewees stated that there was a pride in owning land in Sandston and passing it down to their families or other long-standing members of the community. Several of the property owners stated that they were proud to live in Sandston and own parcels that contributed to the unique history of the area.

The business owners interviewed were more pragmatic with their answers regarding their thoughts about Sandston and Williamsburg Road. All of the business owners cited the low rents for the use of buildings along Williamsburg Road, along with the fact that a majority of the buildings have paved parking available for their customers. A few stated that while Sandston as a community was welcoming, there was not a strong connection to stay besides having a consistent customer base and lower rent prices. The historic aspects did not draw them in, as they said their customers do not have an explicit interest in that aspect of the community when using their services. Three of the business owners stated that they would move from the area if the opportunity arose.

County Involvement

Upon questioning property owners on what ways the County of Henrico can better support Williamsburg Road, the answers fell into two main categories. The first, was that the property owners felt as though the increased zoning code enforcement put too much pressure on property owners with no follow through from the County in terms of support or active programs. The increased zoning code enforcement targeted primarily paving issues for parking lots, interviewees discussed as being expensive to fix on short notice, especially as their parking lots were being damaged by the poor drainage of Williamsburg Road. Their input can be summarized that the County put in extreme effort to lay down zoning code enforcement, however it failed to support the property owners in fixing these issues.

The second was that multiple property owners felt as though there was not enough information about current County programs that could benefit Sandston. Property owners were knowledgeable about the Enterprise Zone, however they felt as though the informative materials were not easily accessible. The majority of property owners did not know about the Henrico Investment Program, which was launched in January 2022, despite Williamsburg Road being one of five zones. Business owners echoed this sentiment of the County not having easily accessible information for opportunities to participate in business-oriented programs, such as the partnership the County of Henrico has with Virginia LISC to assist with microenterprises and small businesses during COVID-19.

Consumer Base

When questioned as to what they thought brought customers into Sandston, one business owner stated “Brought in? They’re not being brought in; they’re already here.” Six of the eight business owners stated similar thoughts as they stated that most of their business comes from the Sandston neighborhood itself, with a minority of customers coming in from adjacent areas, such as Highland Springs. From the perception of the business owners, Williamsburg Road provides staple needs for the community, such as a laundromat and restaurants. There are a handful of specialized services along the corridor, including a tattoo parlor and a taxidermist, however the business owners stated that they saw themselves as primarily focused on providing everyday services to the residents of the neighborhood.



Figure 4: Examples of deteriorated sidewalks with leftover pooling water from a previous rain, uneven walkways, broken asphalt and concrete, and random discontinuation of sidewalks.

Technical Expert Interviews

There were five technical interviews that took place during the creation of this plan. Five of these interviews were from Henrico County employees from the Department of Community Revitalization, Planning Department, Department of Public Works, and Department of Public Utilities. These interviews used the instrument found in Appendix D. These interviews took place during the month of January and early February. These interviews centered around previous projects in or around Williamsburg Road and the necessary procedural processes involved in state or local agency involvement in revitalization efforts.

County of Henrico Perspective

From the County, the interviews garnered information regarding six main previous or current efforts to revitalize Sandston, with specific focus on the Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor. These efforts include the Sandston Revitalization Plan of 2002, efforts to increase Zoning Code enforcement starting 2018, infrastructure and roadway improvement studies, the Sandston Historic District nomination process, the Enterprise Zone, and the Henrico Investment Program. All County employees that were interviewed agreed that Sandston has been a “target area” of County involvement for nearly two and a half decades due to multiple issues that have persisted to today.

Members of the Department of Community Revitalization (DCR) and the Planning Department (PD) discussed the process of choosing Williamsburg Road for the increased zoning code enforcement project. There had been an increase in complaints by residents, business owners, and property owners within the area regarding the poor conditions of the paved areas. There had also been several issues with property ownership and management further to the east of Williamsburg Road towards Laburnum Avenue. This triggered these two departments to begin the increased enforcement efforts, as a process of understanding the larger issues at play within the area. Employees from DCR discussed the fact that the intent of the enforcement was to compile monthly reports that would be used to analyze what areas of infrastructure needed immediate improvements. Unfortunately, this process was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus forcing the project results to be left untouched. This project did, however, result in DCR moving forward with a Cost-Share Grant through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for the Sandston neighborhood.

As discussed previously, the Sandston Historic District project was meant to assist with getting property owners more access to available funds for rehabilitation and revitalization of their properties. Other programs focused on these goals are the Enterprise Zone and the Henrico Investment Program, which allow property owners to apply for different grants through the County for work such as: pavement, signs, rehabilitation design, and others.

When speaking with employees from the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Utilities, the concerns regarding the infrastructure of the corridor were discussed. These departments were open about previous efforts in having VDOT address the grading known grading issues with Route 60, along with the paved-over

drainage vents. It was discussed that previous proposals from Henrico County have been denied by VDOT over funding constraints. Discussions continued regarding getting funding for the sidewalk repairs that are needed, along with implementing pedestrian level street lighting. The answers received amounted to needing the funding and the decision makers of the County to agree to pooling resources together for the area, which has proven difficult in the past.

Consumer Survey

The online survey originally was opened on January 3rd, however due to the inclement weather the area experienced over the course of three weeks, was postponed until January 26th. The survey was open from the second starting date until February 18th, 2022. There were 56 responses collected in that time frame. The survey was spread through physical flyers placed in key spots around the study area, including the Sandston Memorial Recreation Center, Sandston Public Library, the Babe Ruth Baseball Fields, and along utility poles.

The consumer survey had primarily respondents that identified intersections found within Sandston zip codes: 23150, 23231, and 23250. These respondents made up 92.3% of the survey respondents. The five outliers in the survey were identified as being from 23223, 23233, and 23228. All of these zip codes are from Henrico County, meaning the users identified through the survey are local to the area.

The majority of the users from the survey use Williamsburg Road bi-weekly, at a total of nineteen respondents. A majority of these users take their personal vehicle to shop along the corridor and the second highest form of transportation was walking.

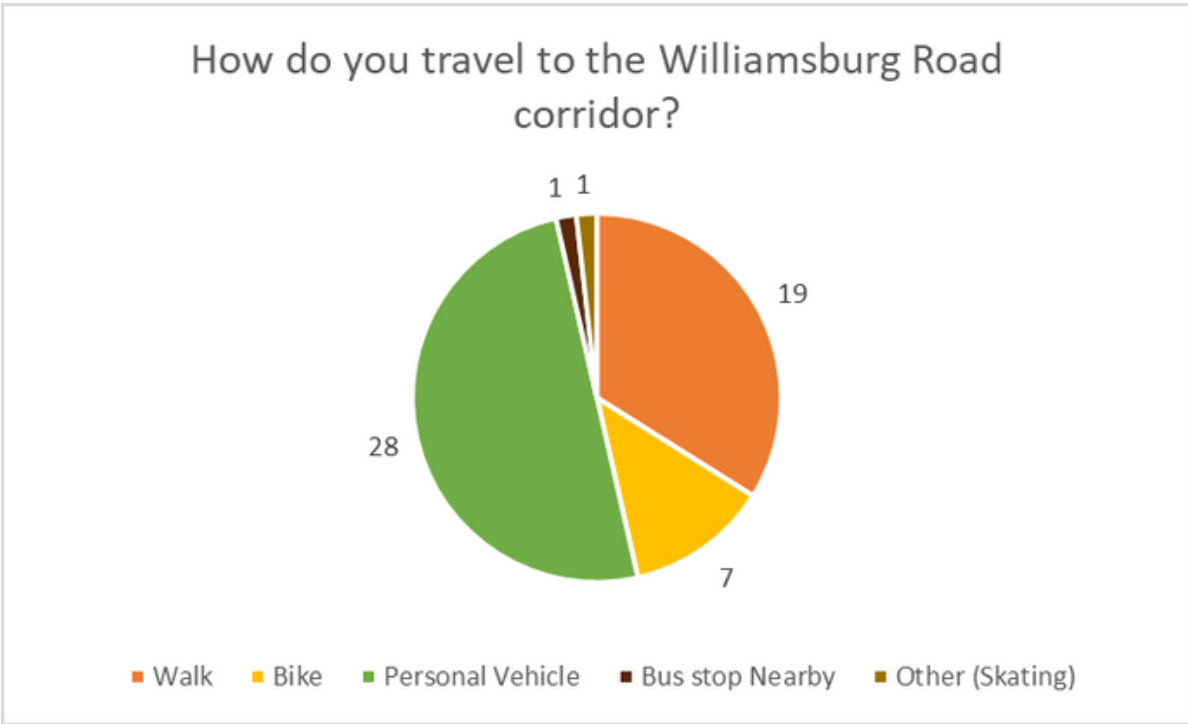


Figure 5: Question 3 on the consumer survey discussing the primary mode of transportation to get to the Williamsburg Road corridor.

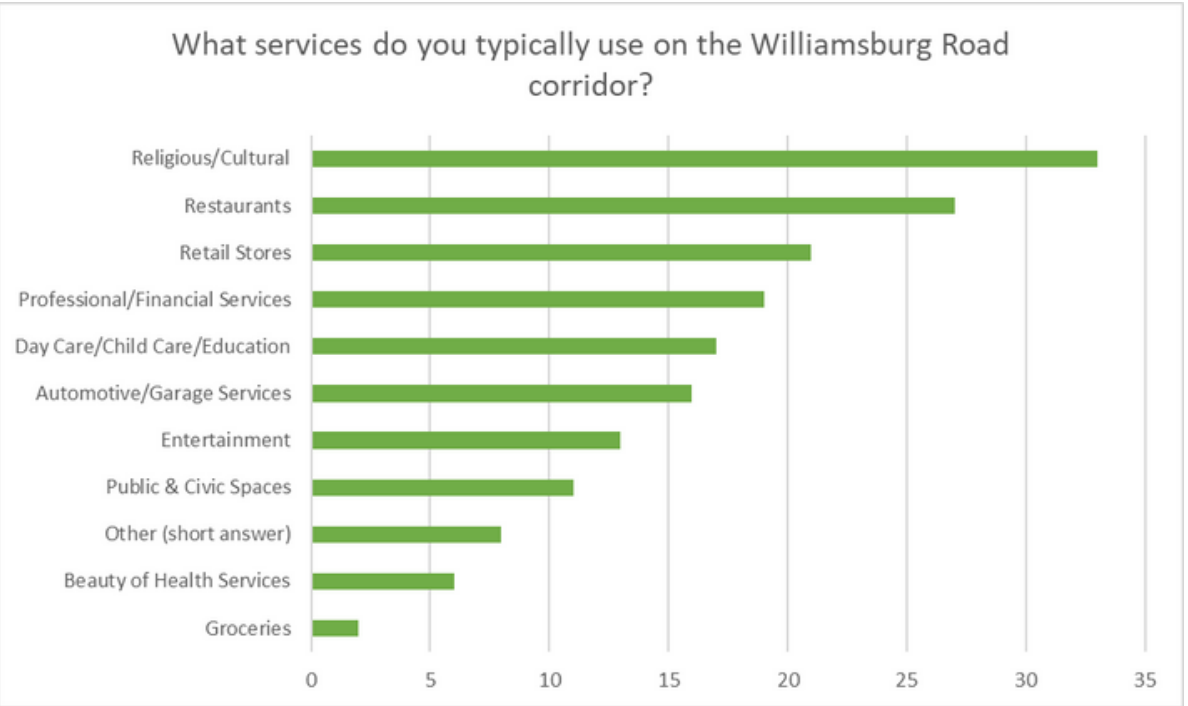


Figure 6: Question 4 on the consumer survey discussing the primary uses of the corridor. Religious and cultural uses far outweigh other uses.

The top three uses indicated for the corridor are eating at restaurants, going to retail stores, and attending religious or cultural services. These uses line up well with the respondents' answers to Question 8 in the survey "What do you like best about the Williamsburg Road corridor in Sandston?" The top answer was that the local businesses and the individuals that work or own them are one of the biggest draws to the corridor. It became apparent that having local connections with those that bring the commercial draw is a vital aspect of Williamsburg Road to its users. Religious and cultural services, along with restaurants, are social activities that bolster the community connections made between the consumer and those providing the service. These responses bring a partial understanding as to why these are the two top uses currently in Williamsburg Road.

Another aspect that was brought up seven times as an answer to Question 8 was that the structures themselves on Williamsburg Road were visually appealing, and that the historic character was a point of pride in the community. As the corridor was primarily developed starting in the 1940s to 1966, there is a wide variety of architectural styles that provide a unique character to the user experience.

When discussing the changes that consumers would like to see, answers came in two parts: services offered and design of the corridor. Multiple respondents indicated that all of their needs are not met currently by the services offered on Williamsburg Road, as seen by the total of 19 respondents answering "Other." The range of answers input for this question induced: convenience stores, diverse outdoor recreation areas, technology retailers, secondhand or buy-sell-trade services, music retailers or services, arcades, and specific types of restaurants. While entertainment has the total number of responses at twenty-seven, the short answer responses for this question only included three entertainment related services: a soccer field, an area for skateboarding, and an arcade. However, there were four respondents to the short answer that requested specific retail for entertainment purposes, specifying technology, recreational sports, and video game/movie retailers.

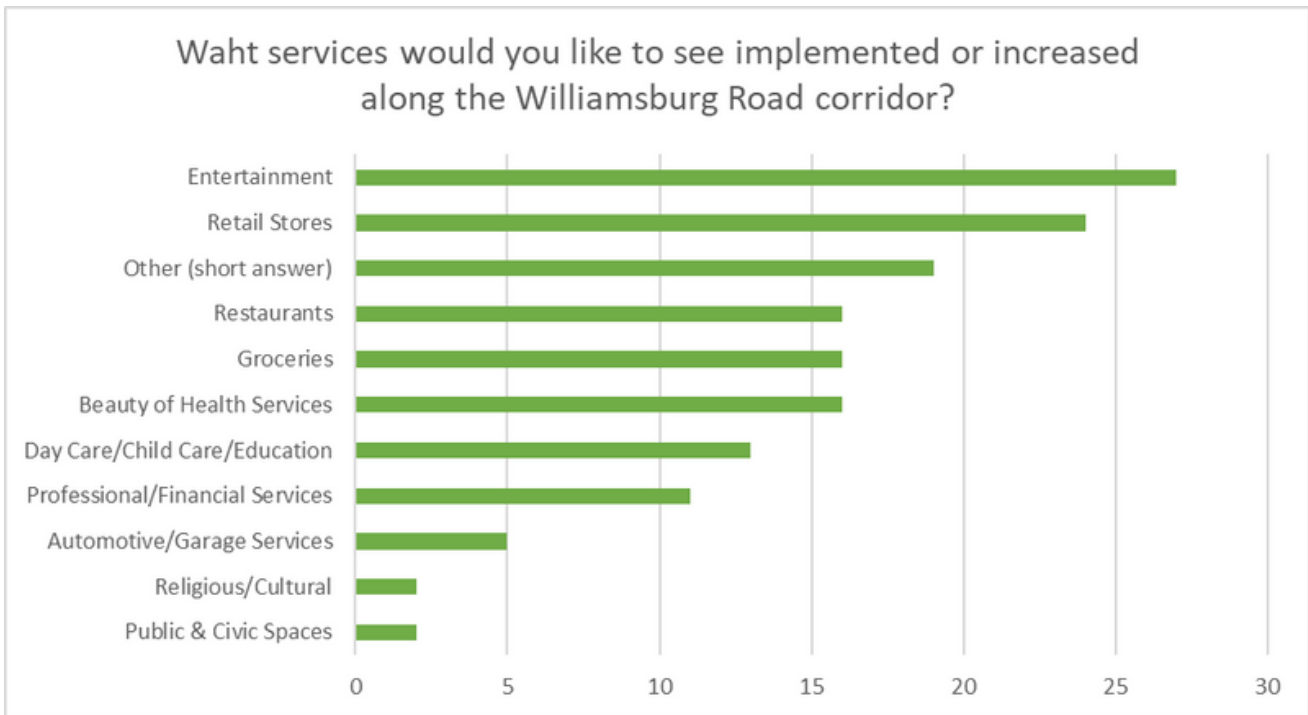


Figure 7: Question 5 on the consumer survey discussing what services would be preferred to have or have an increase along Williamsburg Road.

For the design pieces, users indicated that the infrastructure on the corridor was less than satisfactory. The scores for items that make corridors pedestrian friendly were primarily in the “Poor” to “Average” range. When asked what respondents liked least about the corridor, the top responses regarded the sidewalk quality and that it was unpleasant to walk down Williamsburg Road. Short answer submissions discussed that Williamsburg Road was not currently an area that they wanted to spend time in due to the lack of thought towards customers using the corridor without a vehicle. Thirty-two respondents also rated the crosswalk photo as their highest wish for Williamsburg Road. The second highest photo chosen was one for painted bike lanes. These infrastructure issues were also the highest voted for what changes should be made to Williamsburg Road. Sidewalk widening had the highest number of “Yes” answers regarding the wanted changes along Williamsburg Road.

Table 1: Results from Question 6 on the User Survey “How would you rate your satisfaction on the following elements of Williamsburg Road?” Totaled 53 respondents that completed this question.

	Excellent	Average	Poor
Sidewalks	0	11	42
Street Lighting	0	26	27
Street Crossing	0	15	38
Street furniture	0	4	49
Parking	24	20	9
Prices	33	12	8
Signage	18	25	10
Pedestrian Friendliness	3	16	34
Store Hours	36	15	2
General Appearance of Buildings	32	13	8
Selection of Goods/Services	19	26	8

Table 2: Results from Question 7 on the User Survey “What design changes would you like to see implemented on the Williamsburg Road corridor?” Totaled 53 respondents that completed this question.

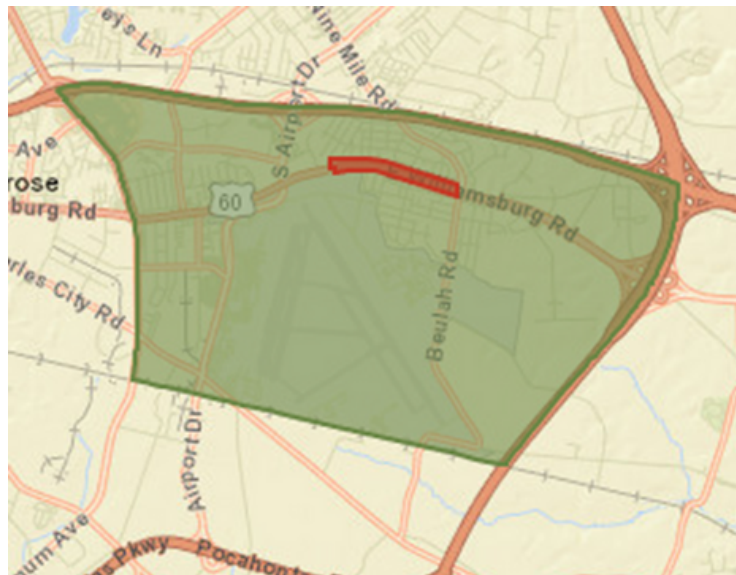
	Yes	No
Street Parking	36	17
Painted Crosswalks	39	14
Painted Crosswalks with Flashing Lights	31	22
Pedestrian Level Street Lighting	42	11
Benches	39	14
Trash Cans/Recycling Bins	29	24
Tree Plantings or Shrubs Coverage	35	18
Traffic Lights	24	29
Sidewalk widening	48	5

The overall satisfaction of Williamsburg Road was rated by respondents to be “Fair” to “Poor.” Question 9 of the survey asked respondents to input the aspects of the corridor that were the most disliked, and received a total of 38 completed answers. Respondents that submitted the survey without typing anything or typing answers not applicable were removed from this count. Answers primarily focused on the unappealing nature of walking along the corridor. Eight respondents specifically discussed the severe deterioration in the sidewalks and the issues pertaining to the sidewalks being too short in width. One respondent described the difficulties of going down the street in their wheelchair, saying they must drive to go anywhere along the corridor because the sidewalks render their chair immobile. Three respondents described how cars usually speed down Williamsburg Road, making it difficult to cross the street during peak travel times.

Market Analysis

Using the ESRI Business Analyst tool, the market analysis used the Sandston CDP as the defined study area. This area has a population of 7,828 as of the 2021 American Community Survey, with a median household income of \$46,684 and an unemployment rate of 6.1 percent. This geographic area was chosen in order to obtain the most accurate information from the ESRI Business Analyst for the greater area as a whole, and due to the traffic count data showing the majority of users for Williamsburg Road come from the near immediate surrounding area.

The Sandston CDP encapsulates a majority of the convenience area for the Williamsburg Road commercial corridor. Based on this geographic area, there are a total of approximately 8,180 employees within the Sandston CDP for the 512 businesses, including the Richmond International Airport. Comparatively, the Williamsburg Road corridor contains seventy-two of these commercial uses.



Map 5: Representation of the area included in the Sandston CDP designation from the ESRI Business Analyst and the Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor.

Using the NAICS Code designation for the commercial uses, the highest number of individual commercial uses within this geographic area is for Retail Trade, specifically Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers. There are sixteen automotive businesses within this area, employing fifty-two individuals. However, while the automotive businesses have the largest presence in terms of number of stores, the highest employment rate in the Retail Trade sector, at 308 employees, is in the Building Material, Garden Equipment, and Supplies Dealers.

The highest number of employees for a specific NAICS Code is 1,640 for the Accommodation and Food Services commercial type. This encompasses 20 percent of the total employment for the Sandston CDP, and there are sixty-nine individual stores of this type.

The commercial types that do not have a strong presence in the Sandston CDP include electronic retail stores, professional services, and information services. These services are currently being sought after elsewhere within the County of Henrico or the City of Richmond. The ESRI Business Analyst shows that for electronics alone, the Sandston CDP spent \$2,642,950 for computers, TV, audio, and video equipment in 2021. This is a prime example of a gap in services provided in the area that could be bridged through incentivizing electronic retailers to set-up on Williamsburg Road. Electronic devices also showed the highest Market Potential Index (MPI) for the Sandston area, indicating that residents in the area showed a higher potential to purchase electronic items such as cellphones and computers compared to the national United States average.

Other goods that the Sandston CDP has a higher MPI include convenience store goods, with the only category below the national average being "Spent at convenience store in last 30 days: \$20-39." This matches with the three respondents in the consumer survey requesting convenience stores to come to Williamsburg Road. Insurance and financial matters showed an increase in MPI for 2021. This falls into how there are only four businesses that are classified as the "Information" NAICS Code within the Sandston CDP.

Assets and Limitations

The biggest asset that was discussed during these interviews and consumer surveys was the community and the strong network that has been built up in Sandston over the decades. Both property owners and business owners alike discussed how supported by the community they felt when asked about what made Williamsburg Road the best place for their business. Other assets included the historical value that Sandston brings to Henrico, as the second oldest official neighborhood. The varied architecture and connection to several points in history made individuals feel like Williamsburg Road was more than just a place to do business and rent properties. The varied types of businesses were also mentioned as an asset, as one business owner mentioned that the culture of Williamsburg Road in Sandston was less of economic competition and more of a unique set of trades supporting each other, unlike other commercial concentrations within Henrico. Survey respondents enjoyed the small-town feel that Williamsburg Road brings, along with the access to local businesses. For future development, the corridor is already zoned as one of the three Business Districts (B-1, B-2, or B-3), which do not have any restrictions on the suggested uses from the market analysis.

The limitations mentioned were far more physical than the assets described by interviewees and consumer surveys. All those who were interviewed discussed the poor condition of the infrastructure found within the corridor. The sidewalks and drainage problems being the main concerns. Business owners mentioned that there would be standing water up against their buildings for days after a moderate amount of rain, and that there were no drainage vents that were not paved over by VDOT until Williamsburg Road connected with E Nine Mile Road. While not necessarily true, there is a significant lack of adequate drainage vents to the east of Beulah Road. Similarly, the sidewalks are incredibly deteriorated for the majority of the study area. It is common to find large cracks, uneven pavement, and discontinuation of the sidewalk at random intervals. Other limitations included the need for off-street parking as there is no on-street parking available on Williamsburg Road itself, lack of pedestrian lighting making customers feel unsafe, and the lack of marked pedestrian crossing made for a less pleasant shopping experience according to the business owners and consumer survey respondents.

Design Standards

This section recommends basic design standards that could be implemented along Williamsburg Road in order to assist with the development of new uses that fit within the diverse architectural design of Sandston. These recommendations can be used as a starting point for further implementation of design regulations within Sandston, though input from the community must be pursued. These recommendations are not currently requirements found with the Henrico zoning code for this area but do fall in line with similar design standards created for Glen Allen's commercial concentration.

Structure Height:

1. New development will not have a structure height greater than forty-eight feet at the peak of the roof line.

Front Set-Back:

1. New development will have a front set-back of at least eight feet and a maximum of thirty feet. This is in accordance with other commercial uses along Williamsburg Road.

Architecture:

1. Due to the historic properties of Williamsburg Road in Sandston, new development should not be allowed to replicate any present historic architectural style present along the corridor in order to "imitate" the historic character of the district.
2. Properties used for office or commercial use must have the heating and air conditioning units, ventilation units, trash containers, and mechanical equipment screened from view at the property line.

Streetscape Buffers:

1. Streetscape buffers that face Williamsburg Road are required to have a sidewalk of a minimum of 48 inches in width.
2. Streetscape buffers must be irrigated and properly maintained.
3. Streetscape buffers may also contain trails, utility easements, and signs.
4. Streetscape buffers shall adhere to all sight distance requirements as determined by the Department of Public Works or the Virginia Department of Transportation.
5. Vegetation that is allowed within the streetscape buffers include flower beds, shrubbery that does not exceed three and a half feet, and trees that are maintained to keep the lower six to eight feet clear of branches and vegetation. Vegetative species native to Central Virginia are recommended for any plantings.

Signage:

- Free standing signs should be placed no more than ten feet from the primary structure, along Williamsburg Road.
- Free standing signage should range from six feet to fourteen feet high, in order to keep the signage easily visible from the pedestrian level.
- Electronic message centers are allowed after review and recommendation by the planning commission at the time of plan development.

Parking Lot Design:

- Parking lots should be located behind the primary commercial structure, or to the side if the rear of the lot is not enough to accommodate the parking lot. No parking areas will be located in front of the primary façade and entrance to the building.
- All parking lots shall be paved using asphalt or an alternative material approved by the planning commission at the time of plan of development.
- No parking area shall include a line of more than five spaces uninterrupted by a landscape area with planted greenery, such as grass, shrubbery, or trees.
- Entry to the parking lots will not be placed directly on Williamsburg Road.
- Parking lots that are 1,400 square feet or greater are required to have at minimum one storm drain connected to the County storm drainage system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision Statement

Sandston will be a healthy, strong commercial corridor that serves all needs of the community that supports and surrounds it through a revitalized pedestrian experience, bolstered businesses, and stable social and professional networks. The following recommendations strive to provide a commercial corridor that reflects the community core while supporting Henrico County's second oldest established neighborhood.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

For this plan, the recommendations have been broken into three categories: goals, objectives, and actions. These are defined as such:

- **Goal** - different end states that ultimately feed into achieving the vision statement.
- **Objective** - defined implementation steps to attain the identified goal.
- **Action** - tangible, specific steps towards the assigned objective that are measurable in some capacity.

The goals, objectives, and actions were established to provide an outline on how to achieve the vision statement. These goals are broken into three main themes: design, community connectivity, and market vitality.

Design

Goal 1: An accessible and safe pedestrian user experience on Williamsburg Road

Goal 2: An attractive and aesthetically pleasing image of the corridor and Sandston

Community Connections

Goal 3: Promote relationships along the corridor

Market Vitality

Goal 4: Stable commercial business presence with longevity

Goal 5: Expanded retail customer base

Goal 1:

An Accessible and Safe Pedestrian User Experience on Williamsburg Road

The corridor currently has an underperforming pedestrian experience due to the lack of accessible design causing the corridor to be unsafe for pedestrian users, thus playing into the vehicular dependency of the corridor. After reviewing the consumer survey and local expert interviews, it is apparent that the current infrastructure along Williamsburg Road is detrimental to the customer experience through the dilapidated sidewalks, lack of street furniture and poor lighting. Similarly, the property owner's ability to maintain quality structural integrity for the buildings and parking lots due to flooding is a primary concern with the current street infrastructure and design. Williamsburg Road is a Virginia Department of Transportation owned roadway, thus the responsibility of maintaining and funding improvements falls with VDOT. However, despite the multiple attempts at lobbying for attention to be placed on Williamsburg Road, there has not been an effort from VDOT in fixing these issues. With these issues present, Williamsburg Road will continue to be an undesirable place for customers to walk around and experience.

Objective 1.1: Build a complete sidewalk network that provides accessible walking paths and safe egress

Action 1.1.1: Take inventory of the existing sidewalk and curb cut conditions if this has not been done in the last five years. Otherwise, update the existing inventory.

Action 1.1.2: Assess what areas will require an easement to increase the sidewalk width to a standard size of 48 inches at minimum.

Action 1.1.3: Pursue relevant easements to create an appropriate right of way along the complete corridor, including in front of residential properties.

Action 1.1.4: Remove existing sidewalk assessed to be in dilapidated, unsafe, or non-compliant condition and replace in accordance with ADA requirements. Regrade the curb cuts as necessary to meet ADA requirements.

Action 1.1.5: Develop sidewalk bump-outs at the locations denoted in Objective 1.2 for crosswalk safety.

Objective 1.2: Install crosswalks at the intersections with JB Finley Road, Naglee Avenue, and E Nine Mile Road.

Action 1.2.1: Use thermoplastic road marking paint in white to make the crosswalks stand out from the asphalt roadway.

Action 1.2.2: Implement rectangular rapid flashing beacon pedestrian signals at the JB Finley Road and Naglee Avenue intersections with crosswalks for increased visibility.

Action 1.2.3: Implement crosswalk signals at the intersection of E Nine Mile Road and Williamsburg Road.

Objective 1.3: Install pedestrian level lighting

Action 1.3.1: Take inventory of the existing utility connections and easements along the corridor. Work with the Department of Public Utilities to understand the current connections and easements in the area.

Action 1.3.2: Analyze the current “candle lumens” measure of the existing lighting, and identify areas where the lighting is not optimal for pedestrians

Action 1.3.3: Analyze the current Sanitary District tax, the reserved funds within the Sandston Sanitary District account, and research the capital costs to implement the decided amount of pedestrian light fixtures.

Action 1.3.4: Pursue the necessary easements needed for the implementation of the street lights.

Action 1.3.5: Install light fixtures in the identified areas that are no more than sixteen feet in height and provide the needed “candle lumens” measure. These light fixtures should be decorative in nature to fit with the historic character of the neighborhood.

Objective 1.4: Develop a plan of action to address flooding along the corridor

Action 1.4.1: Establish which areas along Williamsburg Road have prominent flooding issues, such as near JB Finley Road. Work with the Henrico County Department of Public Works to gather this data.

Action 1.4.2: Survey the existing drain locations and efficiency.

Action 1.4.3: Discuss with relevant partners, such as the Henrico County Department of Public Works and Virginia Department of Transportation, how to fund the replacement and installation of street drains.

Action 1.4.4: Review existing grants and programs in Virginia for opportunities to assist property owners with damages caused by flooding. Consider using Community Development Block Grants or the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant.

Action 1.4.5: Community members should work with VDOT or Henrico County to repave the roadway with the proper grading and without the covering of street drain vents. This can be done through public meetings, notifying the Board of Supervisors or County Manager, or reporting directly to VDOT.

Goal 2:

An Attractive and Aesthetically Pleasing Image of the Corridor and Sandston

Sandston is an incredibly historic area, and that should be used to its full advantage in the design of the user experience. The customer survey showed that users do not find the current situation of Williamsburg Road appealing and would like to see changes made to the overall aesthetic design of the streetscape. The historic character of the area should also be preserved through design standards for new construction along Williamsburg Road. Business owners expressed that the residents of the Sandston neighborhood are the primary consumer base and that the focus is on everyday services for these residents. This is not sustainable, however, if the residents do not enjoy spending time on the Williamsburg Road corridor or feel unsafe. In order to maintain this support by the residents, it is important to create an attractive and aesthetically pleasing environment for residents and consumers to promote continued support.

Objective 2.1: Create a streetscape design plan to enhance the pedestrian user experience under a cohesive theme

Action 2.1.1: Release a Request for Proposal to landscape architects and design firms that specialize in commercial corridor revitalization design, focusing on local design firms such as Cite Design or HG Design Studio.

Action 2.1.2: Hire a contractor to create a design plan that has a cohesive theme that plays into the important history of Sandston, leaning into the importance of the historic development in the 1940s to 1960s. This design plan should address the following elements: benches, bus stops, light fixtures, signage, sidewalks, trash receptacles, crosswalk design, and on-street parking.

Action 2.1.3: After streetscape design completion, over the next five years implement the design suggestions for the corridor, prioritizing the pedestrian experience.

Objective 2.2: Capitalize on the Eastern and Western entrances of the corridor

[Action 2.2.1](#): Observe the current “Welcome to Sandston” sign for damages and potential improvements. Repaint the signs at a minimum, or replace the signs fully if damage is too severe.

[Action 2.2.2](#): Plant appropriate foliage around the signs that brighten the area. Currently, the foliage around the signs does not create a striking or inviting presence and the signs are easily missed by vehicular traffic.

Objective 2.3: Suggest “Design Standards” for infill development and rehabilitation of current structures that are in line with the architectural history of the corridor

[Action 2.3.1](#): Create a stakeholder committee to review the proposed “Williamsburg Road Design Standards” within this plan’s Findings section.

[Action 2.3.2](#): Make necessary changes per the stakeholder committee’s recommendations, and put the design standards up for public comment.

[Action 2.3.3](#): Publish the design standards as helpful guidelines to give property owners the opportunity to follow in line with the historic character of Sandston.

[Action 2.3.4](#): Design standards will have a section on utilizing the historic rehabilitation tax credits that are available to contributing properties to the Sandston Historic District. This should serve to educate property owners and discuss what types of rehabilitation work is typically accepted by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

[Action 2.3.5](#): Adopt the community approved design standards officially as an overlay district to support the enforcement of these standards.

Goal 3:

Promote Relationships along the Corridor

Throughout the local expert interviews, it was brought up that the community does not feel that Henrico County has shown adequate support for the commercial corridor. There were statements of confusion on County programs and the information available to property and business owners. Further investigation found that there is not currently an advocacy group for the businesses found within Williamsburg Road. A business association is a vital tool that can provide this necessary advocacy, networking opportunities, and support for the business owners. This group can also represent the corridor for the County or VDOT as these goals are put into motion. Goal three also discusses how business owners can better network in order to provide a better social networking circle to open up more educational and training opportunities.

Objective 3.1: Implement a business association for the commercial corridor along Williamsburg Road

Action 3.1.1: Establish a new business association that targets the commercial businesses along Williamsburg Road.

Action 3.1.2: Hold workshops that focus on marketing, employment recruiting, legacy plans, and property upkeep for commercial business owners and managers.

Action 3.1.3: Strive to meet once a month in a convenient location for the targeted business owners and managers.

Action 3.1.4: Have the business association partner with the Department of Community Revitalization in order to assist in gaining access to resources.

Objective 3.2: Develop a clear, concise way of notifying property and business owners of programs

Action 3.2.1: Review current processes (mailing, website postings, social media outreach) within relevant County departments for notifying stakeholders and community members of new and existing programs.

Action 3.2.2: Utilize the business association referenced in Objective 3.1 to implement ways to better inform and educate business and property owners of opportunities within the County to assist business and property owners.

Action 3.2.3: Review the current Henrico County website list serves for County programs, and identify potential holes within the program.

Goal 4:

Stable Commercial Market with Longevity

Support is needed for the existing commercial businesses found along Williamsburg Road, and the ways that potential new development could be brought in. Social networks, County support, and incentives to developers will play a key role in how the corridor will revive into the thriving corridor of the mid-twentieth century. The market analysis provided in the Findings section will discuss in detail the potential uses that the County and future developers should focus on when discussing ways to strengthen the economic viability of Williamsburg Road. Business owners expressed struggling to upkeep their margins during the COVID-19 pandemic and how their business models have needed to adapt in order to come back from that type of halt in business. Similarly, there were discussions regarding the lack of legacy planning for the businesses once their current owners move on or retire, meaning the longevity of the corridor is not in a stable place. Goal 4 focuses on addressing these issues through potential actions that business owners and the County can pursue to better support the corridor and the present businesses.

Objective 4.1: Improve performance of existing businesses

Action 4.1.1: Henrico County Economic Development Authority should hold workshops and educational meetings on small business management, performance, and sales measures.

Action 4.1.2: Small businesses should reach out to non-profit initiatives in the area, such as Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corporation, to establish a relationship with local partners that can assist in the success of their business.

Objective 4.2: Strengthen the network of support available to business owners

Action 4.2.1: Establish a network of similar business associations and corridors in the Greater Richmond area.

Action 4.2.2: Connect with the Main Street Program for training opportunities and networking for business owners through the Business Association described in Objective 3.3. Williamsburg Road would qualify as a General Member to the national Main Street Program, thus opening up workshop opportunities and technical assistance.

Objective 4.3: Encourage development of supported commercial uses in the area

Action 4.3.1: Review the provided market analysis and explanation in the deliverables section to pinpoint potential supported uses along Williamsburg Road. All zoning found in Sandston will allow the supported uses.

Action 4.3.2: Work with developers for infill development of vacant lots present along the corridor through incentives and technical assistance.

Objective 4.4: Attract potential supported uses to the corridor

Action 4.4.1: Using the business association created in Objective 3.1, target new businesses that have the possibility to be supported. These businesses include electronics and sports retailers, professional development businesses, and information services.

Action 4.4.2: Review the Enterprise Zone and Henrico Investment Plan programs and use the available grants as incentives to attract new businesses.

Action 4.4.3: Provide building permit fee waivers to developers of properties to be used for previously approved uses for vacant or underutilized parcels along Williamsburg Road.

Goal 5:

Expanded Retail Customer Base

This commercial corridor is uniquely situated between several major arterial roadways, Interstate 64, and in close proximity to the Richmond International Airport and White Oak Village. Leveraging these connections to the rest of Henrico County and the Greater Richmond region would be incredibly beneficial to the commercial corridor. This goal suggests several ways that the local businesses found in Sandston could expand the regular retail customer base through marketing opportunities. The Consumer Survey and market analysis indicated that electronic retail, information services, and professional services were supported uses for Williamsburg Road, and these uses should be pursued in order to assist in bringing in more customers to the area.

Objective 5.1: Implement a targeted advertisement campaign for the corridor in nearby areas such as the Richmond International Airport and White Oak Village

Action 5.1.1: Work with large areas of activity to better advertise the local businesses found in Sandston.

Action 5.1.2: Research potential funding opportunities for local businesses to market to outside customers.

Action 5.1.3: Henrico County Economic Development Authority should implement a “Buy Local” campaign that businesses can opt into for increased exposure.

Action 5.1.4: The business association created in Objective 3.1 should create a cohesive marketing campaign through partnership with the Henrico County Department of Community Revitalization, Henrico County Economic Development Authority, and local non-profit partners.

Objective 5.2: Increase frequency of special events along the corridor

Action 5.2.1: Hold one large event along the corridor twice a year to bring in Henrico citizens from outside the neighborhood. There is already the Memorial Day Parade, indicating that large event planning is possible for the area.

Action 5.2.2: Leverage the recreational fields in Sandston to host community events that do not completely shut Williamsburg Road down, allowing for commercial businesses to stay open and cater to the increased customer traffic.

Objective 5.3: Improve signage visibility along the corridor and the surrounding major arterial roads

Action 5.3.1: Improve the zoning code regulations around signage to better suit the Sandston area, and smaller commercial concentrations. Bring signage down to pedestrian levels for better visibility to consumers.

Action 5.3.2: Implement new signage along E Nine Mile Road and Airport Drive leading to Sandston to bring attention to the corridor. Apply for Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs through VDOT.

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

The purpose of the implementation table is to guide how the Goals, Objectives, and Actions should be implemented. This includes the proposed timeline, responsible and suggested parties, and potential funding sources for each action. Each Goal has its own table. The following are common abbreviations found within each implementation table.

Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners

- DCR - Department of Community Revitalization
- DPW - Department of Public Works
- DP - Department of Planning
- EDA - Economic Development Authority
- VDOT - Virginia Department of Transportation
- NMSP - National Main Street Program

Funding Sources

- CGF - County General Fund
- CDBG - Community Development Block Grant
- SDF - Sanitary District Fund
- RF - Revitalization Funds
- SCRPG - Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

Goal 1 Implementation Table

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Goal 1: An accessible and safe user experience on Williamsburg Road					
Objective 1.1: Build a complete sidewalk network that provides accessible walking paths and safe egress					
Action 1.1.1: Take inventory of the existing sidewalk and curb cut conditions if this has not been done in the last five years. Otherwise, update the existing inventory.	X			DPW	-
Action 1.1.2: Assess what areas will require an easement to increase the sidewalk width to a standard size of 48 inches at minimum.	X			DPW, DP	-
Action 1.1.3: Pursue relevant easements to create an appropriate right of way along the complete corridor, including in front of residential properties.	X			DPW, DP	CGF
Action 1.1.4: Remove existing sidewalk assessed to be in dilapidated, unsafe, or non-compliant condition and replace in accordance with ADA requirements. Regrade the curb cuts as necessary to meet ADA requirements.		X		DPW, DP	CGF, CDBG
Action 1.1.5: Develop sidewalk bump-outs at the locations denoted in Objective 1.2 for crosswalk safety.		X		DPW	CGF, CDBG
Objective 1.2: Install crosswalks at the intersections with JB Finley Road, Naglee Avenue, and E Nine Mile Road					
Action 1.2.1: Use white paint to make the crosswalks stand out from the asphalt roadway.	X			DPW, DP	CGF, CDBG
Action 1.2.2: Implement Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon Pedestrian Signals at the JB Finley Road and Naglee Avenue intersections with crosswalks for increased visibility.		X		DPW, DP	CGF, CDBG
Action 1.2.3: Implement crosswalk signals at the intersection of E Nine Mile Road and Williamsburg Road.		X		DPW, DP	CGF, CDBG

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Objective 1.3: Install pedestrian level lighting					
Action 1.3.1: Take inventory of the existing utility connections and easements along the corridor if not completed in the last five years. Update the current inventory if it was taken after 2017.	X			DPW, DPU, DP	-
Action 1.3.2: Analyze the current “candle lumens” measure of the existing lighting, and identify areas where the lighting is not optimal for pedestrians.	X	X		DPW	-
Action 1.3.3: Analyze the current Sanitary District tax, the reserved funds within the Sandston Sanitary District account, and research the capital costs to implement the decided amount of pedestrian light fixtures.	X			DPW	-
Action 1.3.4: Pursue the necessary easements needed for the implementation of the street lights.		X	X	DPW, DP	CGF, RF, SDF
Action 1.3.5: Install light fixtures in the identified areas that are no more than sixteen feet in height and provide the needed “candle lumens” measure. These light fixtures should be decorative in nature to fit with the historic character of the neighborhood.		X	X	DPW	SDF, CDBG, RF
Objective 1.4: Develop a plan of action to address flooding along the corridor					
Action 1.4.1: Establish which areas along Williamsburg Road have prominent flooding issues, such as near JB Finley Road. Work with the Henrico County Department of Public Works to gather this data.	X			DPW	-
Action 1.4.2: Survey the existing drain locations and efficiency.	X	X		DPW	-
Action 1.4.3: Discuss with relevant partners, such as the Henrico County Department of Public Works and Virginia Department of Transportation, how to fund the replacement and installation of street drains.		X		DPW, VDOT, Property Owners	-
Action 1.4.4: Review existing grants and programs for opportunities to assist property owners with damages caused by flooding.		X		DPW, VDOT, DCR	CDBG, SCRPG
Action 1.4.5: Community members should work to have VDOT or Henrico County to repave the roadway with the proper grading and without the covering of street drain vents. This can be done through public meetings, notifying the Board of Supervisors or County Manager, or reporting directly to VDOT.		X	X	DPW, VDOT, DCR	-

Goal 2 Implementation Table

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Goal 2: An attractive and aesthetically pleasing image of the corridor and Sandston					
Objective 2.1: Create a streetscape design plan to enhance the pedestrian user experience under a cohesive theme					
Action 2.1.1: Release a Request for Proposal to landscape architects and design firms that specialize in commercial corridor revitalization design, focusing on local design firms such as Cite Design or HG Design Studio.	X			DCR	RF
Action 2.1.2: Hire a contractor to create a design plan that has a cohesive theme that plays into the important history of Sandston, leaning into the importance of the historic development in the 1940s to 1960s.		X		DCR	RF
Action 2.1.3: After design completion, over the next five years implement the design suggestions for the corridor, prioritizing the pedestrian experience.		X	X	DCR, DP	CDBG, CGF, RF
Objective 2.2: Capitalize on the Eastern and Western entrances of the corridor					
Action 2.2.1: Observe the current “Welcome to Sandston” sign for damages and potential improvements. Repaint the signs at a minimum, or replace the signs fully if damage is too severe. Raise signs to be taller if allowed by VDOT.	X			DCR, VDOT	CDBG
Action 2.2.2: Plant appropriate foliage around the signs that brighten the area. Currently, the foliage around the signs does not create a striking or inviting presence and the signs are easily missed by vehicular traffic.	X	X		Sandston Women's Club, DCR	RF

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Objective 2.3: Suggest “Design Standards” that are in line with the architectural history of the corridor					
Action 2.3.1: Create a set of "design standards" that encaptures the shared aspects of the current development along Williamsburg Road. These design standards should be general, and no too specific on architectural style choices.	X			DCR, DP	CGF
Action 2.3.2: Make necessary changes per the stakeholder committee’s recommendations, and put the design standards up for public comment.	X	X		DCR, DP	-
Action 2.3.3: Publish the design standards as helpful guidelines to give property owners the opportunity to follow in line with the historic character of Sandston.		X	X	DCR, DP	-
Action 2.3.4: Adopt the community approved design standards officially as an overlay district to support the enforcement of these standards.			X	DCR, DP	-

Goal 3 Implementation Table

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Goal 3: Promote relationships along the corridor					
Objective 3.1: Implement a business association for the commercial corridor along Williamsburg Road					
Action 3.1.1: Establish a new business association that targets the commercial businesses along Williamsburg Road.	X			Business Owners, DCR	-
Action 3.1.2: Hold workshops that focus on marketing, employment recruiting, legacy plans, and property upkeep for commercial business owners and managers.		X	X	Business Owners, DCR, Virginia LISC, NMSP	-
Action 3.1.3: Strive to meet once a month in a convenient location for the targeted business owners and managers.		X	X	-	-
Action 3.1.4: Have the business association partner with the Department of Community Revitalization in order to assist in gaining access to resources.		X	X	DCR	-
Objective 3.2: Develop a clear, concise way of notifying property and business owners of programs					
Action 3.2.1: Review current processes (mailing, website postings, social media outreach) within relevant County departments for notifying stakeholders and community members of new and existing programs.	X			DCR	-
Action 3.2.2: Utilize the business association referenced in Objective 3.1 to implement ways to better inform and educate business and property owners of opportunities within the County to assist business and property owners.	X			Business Owners, DCR	-
Action 3.2.3: Review the current Henrico County website list serves for County programs, and identify potential holes within the program.	X			DCR	-

Goal 4 Implementation Table

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Goal 4: Stable commercial business presence with longevity					
Objective 4.1: Improve performance of existing businesses					
Action 4.1.1: Henrico County Economic Development Authority should hold workshops and educational meetings on small business management, performance, and sales measures.	X	X		EDA	CGF
Action 4.1.2: Small businesses should reach out to non-profit initiatives in the area, such as Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corporation, to establish a relationship with local partners that can assist in the success of their business.	X	X	X	Business Owners, Business Association, Non- Profit Partners	-
Objective 4.2: Strengthen the network of support available to business owners					
Action 4.2.1: Establish a network of similar business associations and corridors in the Greater Richmond area.	X	X		Business Association, DCR	-
Action 4.2.2: Connect with the Main Street Program for training opportunities and networking for business owners through the Business Association described in Objective 3.3. Williamsburg Road would qualify as a General Member to the national Main Street Program, thus opening up workshop opportunities and technical assistance catered towards small business owners.	X	X	X	NMSP, DCR, Business Association	-
Objective 4.3: Encourage development of supported commercial uses in the area					
Action 4.3.1: Review the provided market analysis and explanation in the deliverables section to pinpoint potential supported uses along Williamsburg Road.	X			DP	-
Action 4.3.2: Work with developers for infill development of vacant lots present along the corridor through incentives and technical assistance.		X	X	DP	-

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Objective 4.4: Attract potential supported uses to the corridor					
Action 4.4.1: Using the business association created in Objective 3.1, target new businesses that have the possibility to be supported. These businesses include electronics and sports retailers, professional development businesses, and information services.	X	X		Business Association, EDA	-
Action 4.4.2: Review the Enterprise Zone and Henrico Investment Plan programs and use the available grants as incentives to attract new businesses.	X			DCR	Enterprise Zone and HIP Zone grants
Action 4.4.3: Provide building permit fee waivers to developers of properties to be used for previously approved uses for vacant or underutilized parcels along Williamsburg Road.		X	X	DP	CGF

Goal 5 Implementation Table

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Goal 5: Expanded retail customer base					
Objective 5.1: Implement a targeted advertisement campaign for the corridor in nearby areas such as the Richmond International Airport and White Oak Village					
Action 5.1.1: Work with large areas of activity to better advertise the local businesses found in Sandston.	X			Business Association, DCR	-
Action 5.1.2: Research potential funding opportunities for local businesses to market to outside customers.	X			Business Association, DCR	-
Action 5.1.3: Henrico County Economic Development Authority should implement a "Buy Local" campaign that businesses can opt into for increased exposure.	X	X		EDA	-
Action 5.1.4: The business association created in Objective 3.1 should create a cohesive marketing campaign through partnership with the Henrico County Department of Community Revitalization, Henrico County Economic Development Authority, and local non-profit partners.		X		Business Association, EDA, Virginia LISC	CGF
Objective 5.2: Increase frequency of special events along the corridor					
Action 5.2.1: Hold one large event along the corridor twice a year to bring in Henrico citizens from outside the neighborhood. There is already the Memorial Day Parade, indicating that large event planning is possible for the area.	X	X		Business Association, Sandston Founders Club, Sandston Women's Club	CGF, Donations
Action 5.2.2: Leverage the recreational fields in Sandston to host community events that do not completely shut Williamsburg Road down, allowing for commercial businesses to stay open and cater to the increased customer traffic.	X	X	X	Business Association, Sandston Founders Club, Sandston Women's Club	CGF, Donations

Williamsburg Road Commercial Corridor Revitalization Implementation Plan	<= 1 Year	1-3 Years	>= 3 Years	Responsible Parties & Suggested Partners	Funding Sources
Objective 5.3: Improve signage visibility along the corridor and the surrounding major arterial roads					
Action 5.3.1: Improve the zoning code regulations around signage to better suit the Sandston area, and smaller commercial concentrations. Bring signage down to pedestrian levels for better visibility to consumers.		X		DP	-
Action 5.3.2: Implement new signage along E Nine Mile Road and Airport Drive leading to Sandston to bring attention to the corridor. Apply for Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs through VDOT.		X	X	DP, DCR, VDOT	CGF

CONCLUSION

Williamsburg Road has been serving as the primary commercial corridor to the Sandston neighborhood since 1920. This is a commercial corridor that has incredible community support and assets that encourage the continuation of this area as an economic concentration. There is a wide array of “every day” services that keep the corridor alive such as restaurants, laundromats, and retail. This is a historic neighborhood that thrives off the historic character and community influences, which is reflected in the business sector of Williamsburg Road. There is strong potential for this area to continue the growth that has stagnated since the 1960s to provide uses that are more in line with how the corridor is used today versus the traditional uses of when Williamsburg Road was the main arterial between the City of Richmond and the eastern coast of Virginia.

This plan delves into the ways that this corridor has not been properly supported over the last several decades as seen in the dilapidated and failing infrastructure, lack of necessary networking and support systems for businesses, and the need to strengthen and diversify the economic industries found along the corridor. The recommendations in this plan focus on infrastructure revitalization and capitalizing on the historic fabric that is found within Sandston to create a safe and pleasing pedestrian experience along the corridor. There is a focus on the establishment of a business association that can take responsibility for the advocacy of these businesses to establish stable relationships with the County of Henrico, non-profit partners, and developers interested in infill development. Through the proposed design standards in this document, there is a set expectation for future development and rehabilitation to fall within the chosen cohesive theme that represents the historic value of Sandston. Finally, this plan recommends ways to not only strengthen the current commercial presence, but expand the retail base further outside of Sandston to increase the stability of the market.

The Williamsburg Road commercial corridor has been the primary commercial service to the Sandston neighborhood for over one hundred years. This plan has shown that this corridor is deserving of the attention, support, and fiscal commitment to bring the corridor adequate infrastructural amenities that serve the pedestrian user base and promote new development along the corridor. It is imperative that these commercial corridors that were created at an important time in American history continue to experience the necessary endorsements from their communities to best serve the neighborhoods they reside in. Through the recommendations in this plan, Williamsburg Road will continue to support its community through necessary services and economic development, just as it has for the last hundred years.

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APPENDIX A:

Table of All Current Commercial Businesses

Full Address	Business Name	Business Type
1 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance Company	Insurance
1 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Commonwealth Clinical	Healthcare
10 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Nolte Machine LLC	Service
100 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	C&F Bank	Banking
100 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston Baptist Church	Church
103 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	All Tangl'd Up	Salon/Beauty
105 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Temptation Tattoo Company	Tattoo & Piercing
11 JB FINLEY RD	Sandston Memorial Recreation Center	Recreation/Public Use
11 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Office Pride Commercial Cleaning Services of Richmond-Sandston & Medical Insurers of Virginia	Cleaning Services & Healthcare
111 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Graffiti's Ink Gallery	Tattoo & Piercing
119 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Starr & Holmes Attorney	Law
12 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Fidelity Printing Inc	Printing
125 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Piedmont Taxidermy	Taxidermy
13 N CONFEDERATE AVE	Sandston Presbyterian Church	Church
15 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston Barber Shop & Be Unique Custom Clothing and Alterations	Salon/Beauty & Alterations
18 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston Bistro & Shakes	Restaurant
18 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Atwood's Printing	Printing
2 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Vaperz Advantage	Retail
2 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Fat Boy's Bar & Grill	Restaurant
20 EARLY AVE	Unknown Name	N/A
20 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Industrial Control Systems	Service
200 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Lucky Mart	Convenience Store
202 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Dollar General	Convenience Store/Retail
202 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Unknown	N/A
203 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Headfeathers Salon	Salon/Beauty
21 JB FINLEY RD	American Legion	Non-profit
211 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	All Around Towing LLC & State Farm Insurance Agent & Rejuvenation Spa and Salon	Automotive & Insurance & Salon/Beauty
217 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Craftcorps	Construction
225 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Vacant	N/A

2251 E NINE MILE RD	M.R. Performance & Calibration	Automotive
23 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston - Henrico County Public Library	Library/Public Use
23 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Corinth United Methodist Church	Church
245 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Social Security Administration	Government
262 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Galanides Theodore M Attorney	Law
3 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Mehfoud Realty	Real Estate
30 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Little Peeples World Childcare & River City Dentistry & Industrial Control Systems	Daycare & Healthcare & Healthcare
300 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	SV Sandston Clinical Services	Healthcare
300 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston Muffler Center & Sign Worx Warehouse	Automotive & Warehouse
307 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Divine Catering	Restaurant/Service
309 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Allstate Insurance & Lee Conner Realty and Associates Inc	Insurance & Real Estate
319 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	N & W Salvage Inc	Retail
32 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston Cleaners Inc	Laundromat
320 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Pope's Bait & Tackle	Retail
320 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Lloyd's Tire & Auto Repair	Automotive
322 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Top-Notch Tire and Auto Center	Automotive
325 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Roma Restaurant, Catering, and Events	Restaurant
335 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	VT Nails	Salon/Beauty
338 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Valero & Fast Mart	Fuel & Convenience Store
342 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Total Trends Hair Design & Day Spa	Salon/Beauty
345 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Golden Skillet	Restaurant
35 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston Primary Care	Healthcare
353 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Hillbilly Red's Barbeque	Restaurant
369 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Guaranteed Financing	Banking
378 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Back to Life Towing, Inc & Bright Auto Sales LLC	Automotive
382 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	For the Low Auto	Automotive
389 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	7-Eleven	Convenience Store

39 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Seven Pines Dental Group Sandston PLLC & East End Orthodontics	Healthcare
40 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	United States Postal Service	Government
400 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Nanny Jo's Closet	Retail
404 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston Automotive & Gorman and Sons Collision Center & East Side Automotive LLC	Automotive
43 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Seven Pines Dental Group Sandston PLLC	Healthcare
45 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	East End Orthodontics	Healthcare
49 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Sandston Insurance Agency, Inc	Insurance
49 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Mom 2 Mom	Retail
5 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Indoor Motor Sports	Retail
55 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	A Special Touch	Salon/Beauty
63 E WILLIAMSBURG RD	Computax of Virginia	Banking
7 NAGLEE AVE	Sandston Elementary	Education
7 W UNION ST	Outdoor Recreation (Baseball Fields)	Recreation
7 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	IM eGor & Virginia Staffing, Inc.	Insurance
8 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Burton's Auto Repair	Automotive
9 W WILLIAMSBURG RD	Rising Sons: Computer Clearance and Electronic Repair	Retail/Service

APPENDIX B:

Local Expert Interview Instrument

Interview Instrument:

Local Experts at the Business and Property Ownership or Management Level

Survey # _____
Day ___/___/___ Time _____ Location _____
Name of Interviewee _____
Business Associated _____
Address of Property _____

This interview is being conducted as part of a capstone project for the Virginia Commonwealth University's Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program through the Douglas L. Wilder School of Government. The purpose of this interview is to gain an understanding of the community position on certain topics surrounding the commercial corridor found on Williamsburg Road in the neighborhood of Sandston. The discussion points from this interview will be used to develop recommendations for future commercial revitalization efforts within this geographic boundary. A map of the study area has been provided for your convenience. This interview should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Do you consent to having this interview recorded? This recording will only be used for the purposes described above, and will not be released for the public in any capacity. All records of the recording will be expunged upon completion of the project. **YES / NO**

Questions/Topic Points

1. What is your association with the commercial corridor along Williamsburg Road? How long has your business been in service in Sandston?

2. What originally brought you and your business to Sandston? Was there anything in particular that made this area a prime location for your business?

3. *Follow Up* – are those still factors that influence your decision to stay in the area? Why or why not? Is this still the best place for your business to be located?

4. What brings clients to your business? How does your business stand out from other competitors in the area? Do you have consistent regulars that use your business or services?

5. Have you noticed any changes in the volume of customers that the corridor/your business is seeing over the last **5/10/15** years (*increase depending on length of time operating in Sandston indicated by business representative*)? Do you have any speculations as to why those changes have happened?

6. What, in your opinion, attracts customers to Sandston? What are the key factors that give Williamsburg Road a distinct advantage to customers over other available commercial corridors?

7. Are there factors or qualities of the Williamsburg Road corridor that might give disincentives to customers from shopping along the corridor? Why do you think those qualities influence consumers in this way?

8. Are there factors or qualities of the Williamsburg Road corridor that impact your view of owning/operating a business in this location? (*Follow Up – ask if there is anything that sways them the other way depending on their answer.*)

9. What are changes to the Williamsburg Road corridor that you would support or would like to see put into action? (*Examples if they don't follow need to be general such as "infrastructure" versus "sidewalk improvements."*)

10. What are changes to the Williamsburg Road corridor that you would **not** support or would **not** like to see put into action? (*Examples if they don't follow need to be general such as "infrastructure" versus "sidewalk improvements."*)

11. Do you use the corridor often for any of your shopping needs? Are there any types of businesses, goods, or services you would like to see along the corridor? Why or why not?

12. Is there a strong support network in place for businesses in the area for economic development or technical assistance? Are any local or state government based programs or non-profit based programs available that you know of?

13. Would you like to see more involvement from the County in Sandston? What types, if any, of involvement would you like to see?

14. Is there a business association that helps assist or advocates for Sandston businesses? Are you a member? Do you think one would be helpful? Why or why not?

APPENDIX C:

Technical Expert Interview Instrument

Interview Instrument:

Technical Experts working with Henrico County

Survey # _____
Day ___/___/___ Time _____ Location _____
Name of Interviewee _____
Department Associated _____

This interview is being conducted as part of a capstone project for the Virginia Commonwealth University's Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program through the Douglas L. Wilder School of Government. The purpose of this interview is to gain an understanding of the County of Henrico's involvement in programs or initiatives that either focus on or include the commercial corridor found on Williamsburg Road in the neighborhood of Sandston. The discussion points from this interview will be used to develop recommendations for future commercial revitalization efforts within this geographic boundary. A map of the study area has been provided for your convenience. This interview should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Do you consent to having this interview recorded? This recording will only be used for the purposes described above, and will not be released for the public in any capacity. All records of the recording will be expunged upon completion of the project. **YES / NO**

Questions/Topic Points

1. What projects, programs, or initiatives has the **[Insert Appropriate Department Name]** recently pursued in or around the study area? If there have been none in the study area, areas of similar make-up and size (i.e., Highland Springs, S Laburnum Avenue).

2. *If not naturally brought up in the first question* – What brought this project about? What were the initial objectives of the project? Why had these objectives been deemed important enough to warrant a project?

3. What successes have these projects achieved? Were they the intended goals and objectives? (*Follow Up* - If the project is still ongoing, what are the projected successes and the timelines that surround those objectives?)

4. What pitfalls were experienced while implementing these projects? How did this pitfall(s) affect the overall project in the sense of timelines, effectiveness, or completion standards?

5. What types of community response did this project receive? What was the volume of response? (*Follow Up* – If not much of a community response was received, is this a normal amount of community response/engagement for projects performed by this department/line of work?)

6. Were there any project changes implemented due to the community response? (*Follow Up* – If yes, what was the process of changing the program? Did these changes yield a better response from the community while maintaining the original objectives?)

7. Were any other local, state, or federal agencies involved in this program? What did that partnership entail? What regulatory processes were required of the County when working with these agencies?

8. Was there a portion of the original project that was not completed due to any local, state, or federal regulatory process? What were the reasons given for declining a portion or the entire proposed scope of the project?

APPENDIX D:

Consumer Base and User Survey

Survey Instrument:

Local Experts at the Consumer or User Level

Form to be distributed through Google Forms, physical forms, or by email. Goal is to be a quick 5 minute survey.

This survey is being conducted as part of a capstone project for the Virginia Commonwealth University's Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program through the Douglas L. Wilder School of Government. The purpose of this survey is to gain an understanding of the community position on certain topics surrounding the commercial corridor found on Williamsburg Road in the neighborhood of Sandston. The discussion points from this interview will be used to develop recommendations for future commercial revitalization efforts within the boundaries of E Nine Mile Road and Jackson Avenue.

This survey is completely confidential, and no identifying information is asked or collected.

1. How often do you shop or use services provided on Williamsburg Road in Sandston?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Bi-Weekly
 - d. Monthly
 - e. Seldom
 - f. Never
2. How satisfactory is your shopping experience on Williamsburg Road?
 - a. Extremely satisfactory
 - b. Pleasant
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor
3. How do you travel to the Williamsburg Road corridor?
 - a. Walk
 - b. Bike
 - c. Personal Vehicle
 - d. Bus Stop Nearby
 - e. Other (short answer)
4. What services do you typically use on the Williamsburg Road corridor? (multiple choice)
 - a. Restaurants
 - b. Day Care/Child Care/Education
 - c. Retail Stores
 - d. Automotive/Garage Services
 - e. Religious/Cultural
 - f. Public & Civic Spaces
 - g. Groceries
 - h. Entertainment

- i. Beauty or Health Services
- j. Professional/Financial Services
- k. Other (short answer)

5. What services would you like to see implemented or increased along the Williamsburg Road corridor?

- a. Restaurants
- b. Day Care/Child Care/Education
- c. Retail Stores
- d. Automotive/Garage Services
- e. Religious/Cultural
- f. Public & Civic Spaces
- g. Groceries
- h. Entertainment
- i. Beauty or Health Services
- j. Professional/Financial Services
- k. Other (short answer)

6. How would you rate your satisfaction on the following elements of Williamsburg Road?

	Excellent	Average	Poor
Sidewalks			
Street Lighting			
Street Crossing			
Street furniture			
Parking			
Prices			
Signage			
Pedestrian Friendliness			
Store Hours			
General Appearance of Buildings			
Selection of Goods/Services			

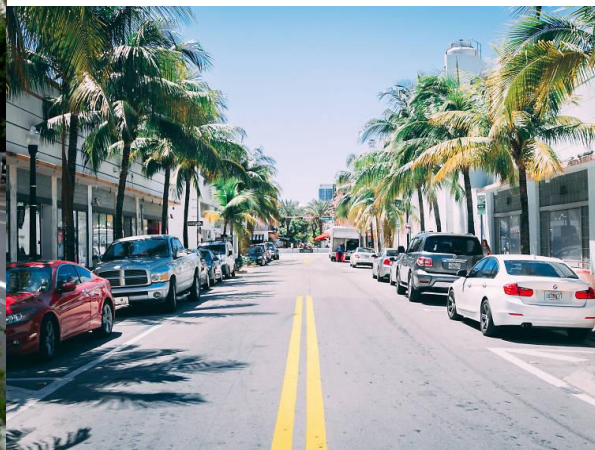
7. What design changes would you like to see implemented on the Williamsburg Road corridor?

	Yes	No
Street Parking		
Painted Crosswalks		
Painted Crosswalks with Flashing Lights		
Pedestrian Level Street Lighting		
Benches		
Trash Cans/Recycling Bins		
Tree Plantings or Shrubs Coverage		
Traffic Lights		
Sidewalk widening		

8. What do you like best about the Williamsburg Road corridor in Sandston? (short answer)

9. What do you like least about the Williamsburg Road corridor in Sandston? (short answer)

10. Out of the photos below, please rate these photos from highest to lowest in order to represent the closest design choices you would like to see implemented along Williamsburg Road.





Consumer Profile

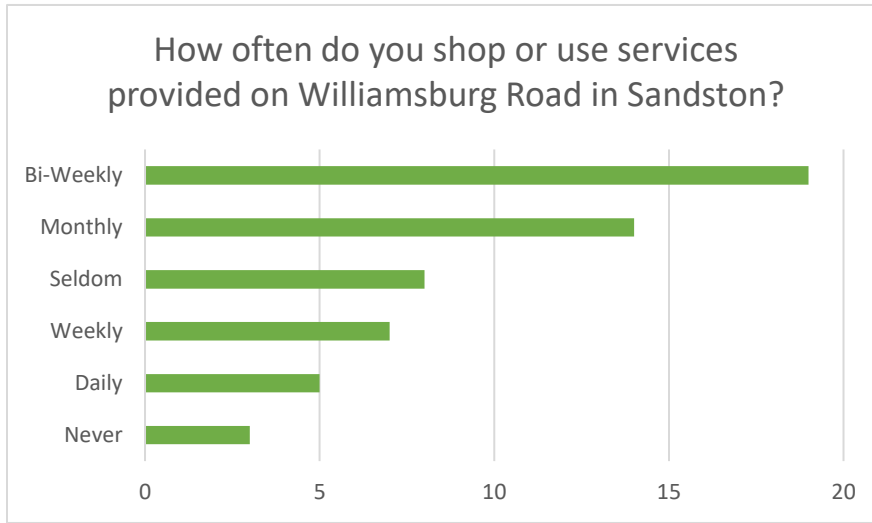
These questions will be kept completely confidential. This is only to gain an understanding of the general demographic characteristics of the user base of the Williamsburg Road corridor. No individual answers will be released or published.

1. What is the closest intersection to your primary residence? (short answer)
-

APPENDIX E:

Results from Survey

1. How often do you shop or use services provided on Williamsburg Road in Sandston?



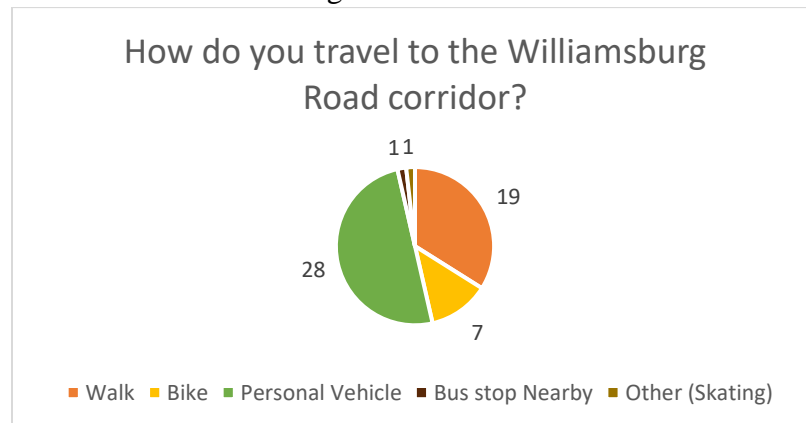
Never	3
Daily	5
Weekly	7
Seldom	8
Monthly	14
Bi-Weekly	19
Total	56

2. How satisfactory is your shopping experience on Williamsburg Road?

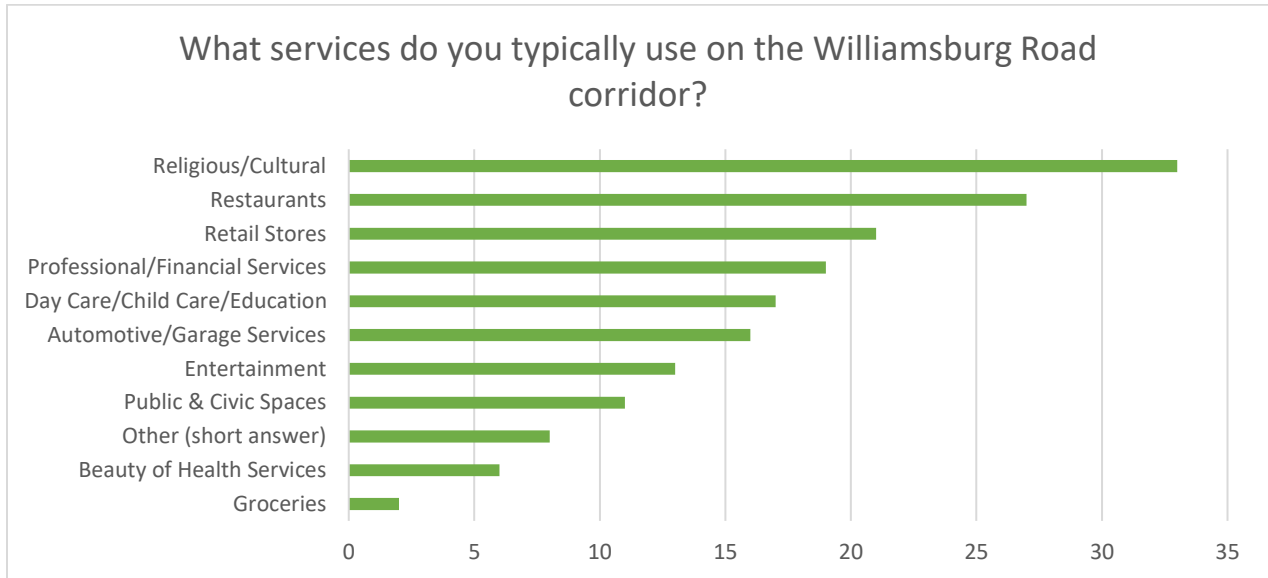


Extremely satisfactory	3
Poor	13
Pleasant	14
Fair	26
Total	56

3. How do you travel to the Williamsburg Road corridor?



4. What services do you typically use on the Williamsburg Road corridor? (multiple choice)

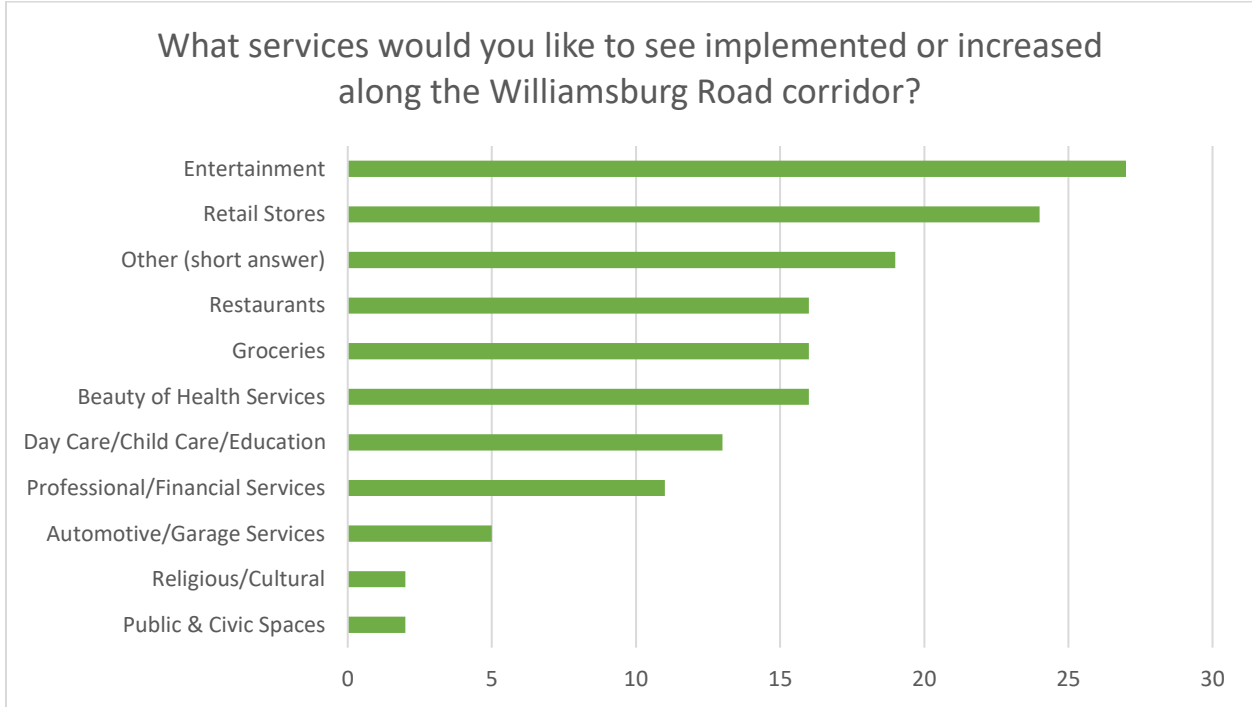


Groceries	2
Beauty of Health Services	6
Other (short answer)	8
Public & Civic Spaces	11
Entertainment	13
Automotive/Garage Services	16
Day Care/Child Care/Education	17
Professional/Financial Services	19
Retail Stores	21
Restaurants	27
Religious/Cultural	33
Total	173

“Other” Answers Included:

- Tattoo Parlor (3 respondents)
- Laundry (4 respondents)
- Baseball Fields (2 respondents)
- Bus Stop (1 respondent)
- Computer Repair (2 respondents)

5. What services would you like to see implemented or increased along the Williamsburg Road corridor?



Public & Civic Spaces	2
Religious/Cultural	2
Automotive/Garage Services	5
Professional/Financial Services	11
Day Care/Child Care/Education	13
Beauty of Health Services	16
Groceries	16
Restaurants	16
Other (short answer)	19
Retail Stores	24
Entertainment	27
Total	151

“Other” Answers Included:

- Soccer field (1 respondent)
- Convenience Store (3 respondents)
- Skate Park (1 respondent)
- Nail Salon (2 respondents)
- Youth Services (1 respondent)
- More Transportation/Increased Bus Frequency (5 respondents)
- Arcade (1 respondent)
- General Store (2 respondents)
- Technology Stores (2 respondents)
- Entertainment Retail (4 respondents)

6. How would you rate your satisfaction on the following elements of Williamsburg Road?
(53 total respondents)

	Excellent	Average	Poor
Sidewalks	0	11	42
Street Lighting	0	26	27
Street Crossing	0	15	38
Street furniture	0	4	49
Parking	24	20	9
Prices	33	12	8
Signage	18	25	10
Pedestrian Friendliness	3	16	34
Store Hours	36	15	2
General Appearance of Buildings	32	13	8
Selection of Goods/Services	19	26	8

7. What design changes would you like to see implemented on the Williamsburg Road corridor?

	Yes	No
Street Parking	36	17
Painted Crosswalks	39	14
Painted Crosswalks with Flashing Lights	31	22
Pedestrian Level Street Lighting	42	11
Benches	39	14
Trash Cans/Recycling Bins	29	24
Tree Plantings or Shrubs Coverage	35	18
Traffic Lights	24	29
Sidewalk widening	48	5

8. What do you like best about the Williamsburg Road corridor in Sandston? (short answer summarized)
- Businesses are friendly/provide “go-to” spots (8 answers)
 - Prices are reasonable (8 answers)
 - Upkept buildings (6 answers)
 - Historic presence/family history (7 answers)
 - Flat land is good for skating/recreational activities (2 answers)

- Provides community resources (4 answers)
 - Live in the area (3 answers)
9. What do you like least about the Williamsburg Road corridor in Sandston? (short answer summarized)
- Sidewalks and crossing the road are unsafe (8 answers)
 - Not enough entertainment-based stores or activities (4 answers)
 - Feel unsafe to walk around at night (6 answers)
 - Floods all the time (7 answers)
 - Looks dirty and poorly maintained (9 answers)
 - No where to rest when walking (1 answer)
 - Not a lot of variety in businesses offered (1 answer)
 - Too many parking lots (1 answer)
10. Out of the photos below, please rate these photos from highest to lowest in order to represent the closest design choices you would like to see implemented along Williamsburg Road.

Highest to Lowest Rating:



3.



7.



4.



8.



9.

