

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

DESCRIPTION

The Department of Community Revitalization coordinates the County’s housing initiatives, revitalization efforts and community development programs. The department plays an integral role in the enhancement of existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas in the County. The Department is divided into two major divisions (Community Development and Community Maintenance) and is responsible for administering the following programs: Community Maintenance program; CDBG, HOME and ESG programs; Virginia Enterprise Zone program; Commercial Revitalization Assistance; Henrico Investment Program (HIP); Neighborhood Revitalization Assistance; Volunteer Assistance Program; and property maintenance and zoning enforcement in developed communities.

OBJECTIVES

- To administer and aggressively market the County’s Enterprise Zone and HIP programs to potential new and existing businesses and/or property owners.
- To administer the CDBG, HOME and ESG programs to assist in meeting the County’s community development objectives, develop community partnerships, and implement programs necessary to meet rapidly changing needs of the County and respond to changing federal funding.
- To administer the Community Maintenance program of environmental and zoning code enforcement.
- To identify needs within the County’s older communities and offer staff and volunteer services to improve properties and structures as a part of the Volunteer Assistance Program.
- To prepare plans and design programs for older commercial corridors and in the County in order to identify opportunities to facilitate investment and improvement and to develop realistic plans of action for addressing concerns.
- To coordinate the review of tax credit applications and low-interest bond financing requests in order to encourage rehabilitation and new investment in the County’s aging multi-family developments.
- To develop neighborhood enhancement strategies for mature residential and commercial areas of the County in order to ensure that such areas remain attractive for existing and potential residents and retain viable businesses.
- To perform special projects requested by the Board of Supervisors, County Manager, or other departments.

FISCAL YEAR 2024 SUMMARY

| Description | Annual Fiscal Plan | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 | Change |
| | Actual | Original | Approved | 23 to 24 |
| Personnel | \$ 1,490,233 | \$ 1,716,179 | \$ 1,829,518 | 6.6% |
| Operation | 322,883 | 362,379 | 362,379 | 0.0% |
| Capital | 4,782 | 8,103 | 8,103 | 0.0% |
| Total | <u>\$ 1,817,898</u> | <u>\$ 2,086,661</u> | <u>\$ 2,200,000</u> | <u>5.4%</u> |
| Personnel Complement ⁽¹⁾ | 21 | 20 | 21 ⁽²⁾ | 1 |

⁽¹⁾ Does not include five Complement III positions funded through grant programs

⁽²⁾ Moved Revitalization Specialist II, a grant funded Complement III position, into the General Fund

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

| | <u>FY22</u> | <u>FY23</u> | <u>FY24</u> | <u>Change 23 to 24</u> |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Workload Measures | | | | |
| Community Maintenance Cases | 8,638 | 10,287 | 10,801 | 514 |
| Inspections Made | 27,199 | 27,989 | 29,388 | 1,399 |
| Technical Assistance/Outreach to Businesses | 998 | 600 | 700 | 100 |
| Enterprise Zone Design Asst. Provided | 4 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Efficiency Measures | | | | |
| Volunteers Participating | 134 | 160 | 200 | 40 |
| Volunteer Hours Worked | 504 | 550 | 600 | 50 |
| CCP Hours Worked | 2,200 | 1,680 | 1,800 | 120 |
| Effectiveness Measures | | | | |
| Notices of Violation Issued | 2,044 | 2,200 | 2,300 | 100 |
| Enterprise Zone Grants Completed | 18 | 18 | 19 | 1 |
| Value of Enterprise Zone Grant Assisted Projects | \$ 452,230 | \$ 450,000 | \$ 800,000 | \$ 350,000 |
| Value of All Enterprise Zone Projects | \$ 83,554,036 | \$ 70,000,000 | \$ 80,000,000 | \$ 10,000,000 |
| Value of Grants Awarded | \$ 59,571 | \$ 75,000 | \$ 90,000 | \$ 15,000 |
| Henrico Investment Program Grants Completed | 4 | 6 | 8 | 2 |

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Department's budget for FY24 is \$2,200,000. This represents an overall increase of \$113,339 or 5.4%, from the FY23 approved budget. This increase was driven solely by the personnel component and reflects heightened salary estimates as well as the associated benefit adjustments. Additionally, a Revitalization Specialist II position was moved from Complement III to Complement I, enabling the position to work on HIP projects and other commercial and business assistance projects. The operating and capital components remain flat from the previous fiscal year.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Community Revitalization Department's mission statement is: *"To coordinate the county's revitalization programs and services intended to promote healthy, vibrant, and attractive residential, commercial, and industrial communities."*

Community Revitalization collaborates with the Department of Building Inspections in a multi-faceted effort to proactively enforce compliance with applicable codes directed at creating and maintaining clean and safe communities. The Department is dedicated to preserving and revitalizing the County's mature neighborhoods, business corridors and industrial areas through its programs and activities. Staff coordinates with neighborhood, businesses, and community organizations to raise citizen awareness regarding community maintenance requirements, housing assistance, Enterprise Zone and HIP programs administered by the Department. Meetings with these organizations also allow for the collection of valuable feedback on Department programs and an opportunity to solicit volunteers for assistance projects.

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The Community Development Division administers the programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which includes the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs within Henrico County. Beginning with the latter part of FY20, special allocations of CARES Act funds from HUD are also administered by the Community Development Division. The ESG funds are used for homeless prevention, rapid rehousing, and support for the operation of homeless shelters. All three of these grant programs, which are awarded by the Federal government each year, are based on the Federal fiscal year that runs from October 1st through September 30th. There are six positions within the Department that are grant-funded and are not included in the County's personnel complement. This funding is appropriated once the grant awards are announced by HUD and the projects and programs to be supported by the award have been identified and approved by the Board of Supervisors. The projects and programs begin after grant contracts are signed by HUD and the County. Grant funding that is not expended by the end of the federal program year is re-appropriated in the following year to complete the use of this funding.

A few of the Community Development Division's major accomplishments within the CDBG, HOME, and ESG grant programs include the continuation of the Housing Rehabilitation program and Critical Home Repair programs, the CONNECT Program for at-risk youth, the down payment assistance program providing homeownership opportunities to first-time homebuyers, and funding of the Commercial Assistance and Enterprise Zone Programs.

CDBG funds from the 2020 program year were also used to enable the purchase of a building for Safe Harbor to use as a Human Trafficking Shelter and provide legal assistance to low-income renters to help avoid eviction. The ESG program provided homelessness prevention and assistance to homeless persons with shelter and case management, and rapid re-housing for homeless families. Programs funded with CDBG and ESG CARES Act funds helped to provide a variety of services to Henrico residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Such services include housing, food, and legal assistance for homeless persons as well as support for small businesses. The Community Development Division also administers the Enterprise Zone Program, Commercial Assistance Program, and Henrico Investment Zone Program to facilitate improvements to commercial buildings and business corridors. Enterprise Zone businesses in Henrico received just under \$1.3 million in State grants for work completed or jobs created in 2021.

The Community Maintenance Division conducts field inspections, coordinates community clean-ups, and aids activities for neighborhoods throughout the County. The Division is involved in volunteer assistance programs, which matches civic, church, business, and neighborhood groups with low-income senior citizens whose homes need minor yard work maintenance and painting. The community clean-up and all volunteer assistance programs have resumed in a reduced capacity due to the need to have participants work socially distant.

Community Corrections Program (CCP) participants that perform community service on weekends also contribute additional hours to the community maintenance programs; however, this additional service has been limited to work at the Woodland Cemetery. Staff expects the program will take on additional projects when COVID-19 is no longer a major health issue for our country.

During FY22, Community Revitalization staff participated in the hotel/motel task force charged with addressing the challenges faced by the County as it relates to hotels that have made a business decision to allow their properties to become de facto rental housing as well as pseudo crisis stabilization facilities. The Department engaged Commonwealth Catholic Charities to help long-term hotel guests find permanent housing. Commonwealth Catholic Charities started their work in September of 2022.

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The Department of Community Revitalization also plays a major role in coordinating the County's various housing initiatives. The Department has worked with other agencies to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with apartment owners interested in recapitalizing their apartment communities. To date, the County has entered 5 MOUs with the owners of Hope Village, Henrico Arms, St. Luke, Newbridge Village, and Place One.

Community Revitalization continues to work with the Maggie Walker Community Land Trust (MWCLT) to develop and sell homes at an affordable price point and those homes remain perpetually affordable to lower and moderate-income households under the community land trust model. To date, MWCLT has constructed or renovated and sold nine homes and have approximately 23 in their pipeline.

The Department has also supported the designation of revitalization areas for new development projects seeking tax-exempt and taxable bond financing from Virginia Housing. Such projects increase the availability of affordable housing because Virginia Housing's financing requires applicants to lease a percentage of the units to persons earning less than 80% of the County's median income. The Board has approved such determinations for Regency, Virginia Center Commons, Laurel Park, and Henrico Plaza.

In addition, the Department provided \$500,000 – \$100,000 in general fund dollars and \$400,000 in federal funding – to Virginia Supportive Housing to support their plan to convert a vacant assisted living facility into 86 units of affordable housing and onsite support services for formerly homeless and low-income residents.

Lastly, the Department of Community Revitalization partnered with Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to provide \$68.6 million in rent relief funds to over 11,200 households in the County during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Community Maintenance Division of the Department of Community Revitalization will continue to work closely with Building Inspection's Existing Structures Division as they provide certain community maintenance services related to violations of the building code in existing structures and ordinances on graffiti. Historical budget expenses in both areas are depicted below:

| Year | Building Inspections | Community Revitalization | Total |
|-------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| FY15 | 148,065 | 1,403,493 | 1,551,558 |
| FY16 | 210,521 | 1,520,717 | 1,731,238 |
| FY17 | 264,474 | 1,584,001 | 1,848,475 |
| FY18 | 236,784 | 1,684,625 | 1,921,409 |
| FY19 | 274,056 | 1,816,119 | 2,090,175 |
| FY20 | 267,358 | 1,639,828 | 1,907,186 |
| FY21 | 402,501 | 1,568,609 | 1,971,110 |
| FY22 | 277,985 | 1,817,900 | 2,095,885 |
| FY23* | 520,526 | 2,086,661 | 2,607,187 |
| FY24* | 548,484 | 2,200,000 | 2,748,484 |

*FY23 Approved and FY24 Approved

One of the many expectations placed upon Henrico County is the ability to look forward. As such, during the December 2022 Board of Supervisor's Retreat, Community Revitalization staff, along with employees from various

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agencies, presented a conceptual program called the Henrico Home Purchase Assistance Program. The program could help permanent full-time employees, who have been employed for more than 12 months and have a satisfactory or better performance appraisal, purchase their first home in Henrico. Employees would have to remain in the home as their primary residence and stay employed with Henrico for a minimum of five years. Staff feels that the program could serve as a potential recruitment and retention tool for qualified and performing employees.