

## NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN

### Introduction

Danville's residential neighborhoods represent a unique blend of rural and metropolitan lifestyles. Architectural styles range from turn of the century Victorian, Queen Anne, Georgian Revival, and Edwardian homes to suburban Colonial style homes and rural farm settings. Several developments are built around golf courses and many others have neighborhood amenities such as pools and recreation areas.

According to the 2000 Census, 33% of Danville's housing stock was built prior to 1950. Older housing stock is concentrated in certain areas of the City and accommodates a high percentage of low- to moderate-income and minority persons. Improving these older neighborhoods, maintaining the viability of Danville's newer and "middle-aged" neighborhoods, and not over-developing new housing at the expense of existing neighborhoods that overtax the City's resources stand as the foundations for the Housing & Neighborhoods goal stated in this Comprehensive Plan:

**Housing & Neighborhoods Goal:** Promote opportunities for a wide variety of housing types in the City through adaptive reuse, redevelopment, and new development within established neighborhoods and districts and through sustainable and well-planned new development, including mixed use development, on vacant land with an emphasis on providing safe, sanitary, and affordable homes for low- to moderate-income residents as well as residents with higher incomes.

### Policies / Objectives

The policies/objectives established in support of this goal are:

- Plan and implement on a regular basis housing and neighborhood improvement programs in designated

Neighborhood Revitalization Target Areas that create affordable homeownership opportunities for low- to moderate-income residents through the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing units, the development of new housing units, the provision of down payment assistance to qualified households, and improvements to public infrastructure.

- Plan and implement housing and neighborhood improvement programs in designated Neighborhood Revitalization Target Areas that assist low- to moderate-income homeowners and tenants/landlords with the rehabilitation of existing housing units and improvements to public infrastructure.
- Support and promote the creation of new housing units in The River District through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, the development of upper-floor housing units, and the revitalization of existing housing units.
- Support and promote the creation of high-quality infill housing throughout the City in partnership with the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority through the acquisition and assembly of infill parcels for development.
- Support and restore older neighborhoods through targeted removal or rehabilitation of derelict structures and other blighting influences.
- Adopt and implement "sustainable growth" development polices and ordinances that require developers to fund public facilities sufficiently adequate to serve the needs of new residential, commercial, and industrial development except where incentives are warranted in keeping with established economic development goals and policies.



### Affordable Housing

The provision of quality affordable housing in Danville is a priority for the community. The City can maintain its stock of quality affordable housing in a number of ways that improve living conditions, stabilize neighborhoods, and promote responsible home ownership.

The City receives an annual allotment of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds that can be used to further the improvement of low-income housing through housing rehabilitation. The City has successfully utilized these funds for this purpose in the past, such as in the Westmoreland Neighborhood. The continued use of these funds in targeted neighborhoods will have a larger impact on the city as a whole by improving the housing stock, providing affordable homeownership opportunities, and increasing energy efficiency in older homes.

The Weatherization Assistance program, funded through the US Department of Energy and implemented in Danville by the Pittsylvania County Community Action Agency (PCCA) also provides financial assistance to low-income households to make energy efficiency improvements to homes. Along with Weatherization, the PCCA implements the Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation (IPR) program that could address inadequate plumbing facilities found in the central Danville neighborhoods. The City can coordinate with PCCA on both of these programs to better serve the low-income households in Danville.

The City offers its own program involving financial assistance to qualified Danville residents who want to rehabilitate their homes. The financial assistance is in the form of a low (or no) interest loan that can be used to repair deficient critical systems. All taxes must be kept current and clear ownership of the property must be demonstrated.

Affordable homeownership is promoted by the City through a local program that provides financial and technical assistance to eligible low and moderate-income first-time homebuyers. The types of assistance available to qualified residents include rehabilitation funds, down payment assistance, and closing cost assistance. All City-sponsored programs are implemented by the Danville Housing and Development division of the Community Development Department.

### Housing for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

As Danville's population continues to age and expand, demand for elderly and disabled housing will continue to rise. Various levels of senior and assisted housing will be required to address the various needs of the increasing elderly and disabled communities.

Two popular U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant programs exist that promote new housing for elderly and disabled populations: 1) Supportive Housing for the Elderly (HUD 202) and 2) Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (HUD 811). Both programs are currently active but may be replaced with other, more comprehensive programs in the future.

Both programs provide construction funding for new multi-family housing units that cater to low-income individuals of each respective group. The grant allows a developer to provide quality housing at a reduced cost to these low-income persons.

### Adaptive Reuse

Danville has been encouraging adaptive reuse strategies in the development community for many years. The former warehouses in the Tobacco Warehouse District have been steadily converted to residential, commercial, institutional, and office uses, thereby creating a vibrant, mixed-use community with a singular identity. The addition of community amenities such as a riverfront trail and amphitheater have added to the allure of the neighborhood and



## Comprehensive Plan

contributed to its continued desirability.

Adaptive reuse strategies should continue to be utilized in Danville. The promotion of the federal and state historic tax credit programs will enable developers to structure projects that are financially sound and successful. They offer unique housing types such as loft units and condominiums that are desirable to many different household types.

### Historic Neighborhoods

The preservation of Danville's historic neighborhoods is critical to maintaining elements of the city's character and vitality. Historic homes provide a specific housing type that appeals to many types of residents and preserves the unique character of Danville's older neighborhoods. The federal and state historic tax credit programs are the most popular vehicles for homeowners to receive financial assistance for the rehabilitation of historic homes. Both historic preservation tax credit programs are administered through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and when combined, can provide up to 45% tax credit eligibility to the homeowner.

The Safe and Sound Neighborhoods initiative has successfully addressed crime, blight and substandard housing in north-central Danville. This program could be an effective tool to encourage infill development and housing rehab in its historic neighborhoods.

### Blight Elimination

The value and quality of Danville's older neighborhoods is undermined by certain housing units that are ageing and have not been properly maintained over an extended period of time. A 2010 Housing Study identified that 14% (2,321) of all housing units were in poor condition and that 1,180 were vacant or abandoned. These structures have fallen into such disrepair that they are derelict, a threat to the public health and safety of the community. As a means of restoring older and historic neighborhoods and removing threats to public health and safety, the City should actively pursue the

removal of these structures.

### Additional Initiatives

Danville should consider the following initiatives to supplement the existing, successful programs and to target housing and other type of development onto lands most suited to development:

- **Tax Sale Properties** – Through the purchase of tax delinquent properties, the City could offer homes for sale in targeted areas at a discount price. By participating in this program, a buyer would commit to rehabilitating the home within a certain period of time.
- **Homesteading Program** – This program would allow qualified low- to moderate-income households to acquire deteriorated homes at a drastically reduced price plus the cost of rehabilitation. Buyers would agree to live in the property for a specified period of time.
- **Habitat for Humanity Partnership** – Formalize and expand a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to rehabilitate houses and build new houses in blighted areas.
- **Expansion of the Residential Real Estate Tax Abatement Program** – The existing Residential Real Estate Tax Abatement Program could be expanded to include additional targeted neighborhoods or be made citywide. Additionally, the age requirement could be changed to buildings no less than 20 or 25 years old (the Code of Virginia allows buildings no less than 15 years old), making more homes eligible for the program and spurring additional investment in the City's housing.
- **Adoption of a "Sufficiently Adequate" Ordinance** – This kind of ordinance requires developers to fund public facilities sufficiently adequate to serve the needs of new



residential, commercial, and industrial development except where incentives are warranted in keeping with established community and economic development goals and policies. While the City would likely incentivize any project with a significant economic development impact, such an ordinance would provide a means whereby smaller, less sustainable projects of limited impact could be discouraged.

- **Acquisition and Assembly of Infill Parcels** – In partnership with the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the City could acquire and assemble infill parcels that may be overlooked for development because of blight, unclear title, small lot size, or inefficient economies of scale.
- **A Comprehensive Housing Study** – In order to strategically address all housing issues and prioritize neighborhoods in terms of greatest need, the City is undertaking a comprehensive housing study with the goal of developing a comprehensive housing plan. In this way, the most important neighborhoods and housing needs could be delineated and addressed in systematic fashion over a number of years.
- **Blight Remediation** – Blight prevention can be accomplished through active code enforcement. Existing blight can be addressed through a systematic acquisition and demolition program under Title 36. (see Monument Berryman Plan referenced as Appendix A)
- **Rental Inspection Program** – The State Code allows for localities to adopt rental inspection programs in neighborhoods where there is a high concentration of substandard rental housing. The program allows for a more targeted effort to ensure rental property is maintained to standards prescribed in the local building code.

- **Safe and Sound Neighborhoods** – The results of the Safe and Sound Neighborhoods initiative should be assessed to understand the long-term impacts of the program on the local housing market. If successful, it should be implemented in other historic and inner-urban neighborhoods.

### Summary

The City has a number of strategies to maintain strong, stable, and vibrant neighborhoods that serve the residents of Danville. Through housing rehabilitation, real estate tax abatements, new construction, adaptive reuse, code enforcement, and the introduction of new housing types, the City is making strides in providing sufficient and affordable housing to all residents of Danville. With the additional initiatives outlined here and a systematic and strategic approach to addressing the City's housing needs, the City should be able to make even more strides in the future.

