

Implementation

Many resources, both public and private, will have to be mobilized to implement the South Military Highway Master Plan. The projects will require multiple funding sources and a firm organizational foundation. The tools and mechanisms can be organized into five categories:

- 1 Organizational
- 2 Regulatory
- 3 Public Finance
- 4 Private Finance
- 5 Additional Studies

ORGANIZATIONAL

The City of Chesapeake has been proactive in the development of public projects and cultural institutions for its citizens. The City has many examples of such initiatives including museums, libraries, and parks. The City has also forged public/private partnerships that have facilitated both commercial and residential development.

South Military Highway Development Authority

The recommendations in this Plan suggest a new climate of development in which the City may consider forming a South Military Highway Development Authority to focus on development opportunities in the study area. The creation of such an agency, could be done either by amending the bylaws of one of Chesapeake's existing authorities currently enabled under state law, or by creating a new agency with a specific development charter and strong accountability to the City.

Coordinating Task Force

While the creation of a redevelopment authority is being considered, existing public/private agencies should convene on a regular basis to ensure a coordinated effort to support the implementation of the Plan. These existing agencies operate under their own charters and have their own missions, but many of their decisions have far reaching implications on the quality of life and economic development opportunities for the entire community.

It is recommended that the City form a Coordinating Task Force of these existing agencies to implement specific projects and to ensure that their efforts complement each other for the best possible outcome consistent with the Plan. As a minimum, the following organizations should be represented in the Coordinating Task force:

- Hampton Roads Transit Authority
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Chesapeake Public Schools Board
- City of Chesapeake Planning, Economic Development, and Parks and Recreation Departments
- City of Chesapeake Department of Public Works
- City of Chesapeake Economic Development Authority
- Citizens Advisory Board and Neighborhood Associations
- Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, Chesapeake Division
- Chesapeake Conventions and Tourism Bureau

This list is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive; however, the intent is to establish an ongoing, task oriented forum to leverage public projects and investment to the greatest extent possible in fur-

thering the development goals of the Plan. It is intended to be a working forum that provides and receives regular reports on the status of projects under way and on new projects as they are being planned and implemented.

Working Committees

During the planning process, the Chesapeake community demonstrated significant interest in the Plan. The persons who attended the focus groups (residents, major employers, developers, service providers, merchants, and transportation officials) that were convened during the planning process should continue their involvement as a resource for the Coordinating Task Force. They could be organized into Working Committees (such as Business Needs and Amenities; Neighborhood Needs and Amenities; Cultural and Entertainment Support; Permitting and Development Procedures; and District Committees) to promote, direct, and enact current components of the Plan, as well as incubate new ideas in furtherance of the Plan. The committees could be organized and supported administratively by the City.

REGULATORY

Land Use

Current zoning designations and permitted land uses for office, business, institutional, commercial, and residential, and industrial parcels in the study area would remain valid under the Plan. However, the Plan also makes bold recommendations for land use in the "core" area of the corridor, some of which suggest changes in category, such as the expansion and enhancement of residential development to

include mixed-use housing types and the expansion of service oriented business. Most of these changes are consistent with the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan, which identifies this corridor as a major activity center for regional scale commercial and industrial activity.

In general, the current zoning designations for the study area allows for the type of mixed use development that the Comprehensive Plan recommends. However, there are aspects of the existing zoning pattern that still need to be addressed to facilitate project mixes and support developers who undertake these projects. At a minimum, specific steps need to occur.

The first is to update parking requirements to support market driven on site needs and to account for the availability of off site parking in the area.

The second, implement a range of zoning incentives for developers when they achieve other objectives of the plan for mixed market housing, open space, or similar targeted outcomes of the Plan. Such incentives should have the ultimate objective of facilitating a more compatible and unified zoning pattern along the corridor, rather than the disjointed pattern that now exists.

Thirdly, formalize heavy-industrial and light-industrial development zones at the eastern and western ends of the corridor to further promote property availability, land use intent, and economic incentives.

Next, update the City's development review and/or zoning requirements to require more landscaping, screening, and buffering between mixed land uses, particularly where industrial and residential uses are located near to each other.

Lastly, enhance or expand the City's zoning inspections program as needed to support a sustained and proactive effort aimed at ensuring better compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and other pertinent City Codes.

Overlays

In addition to the land use, zoning, and district designations there will be opportunities to apply special overlay regulations that induce plan objectives in specific areas. This exercise will call for focused investigation of overlay boundaries, development intent, and design character to have tangible value as a development tool. The City of Chesapeake City Council has adopted a Transportation Corridor Overlay District (TCOD) Policy that applies to Route 17 (Dominion Boulevard Corridor) and Route 168 (Battlefield Boulevard Chesapeake Expressway Corridor). The intent of the TCOD is to preserve the economic development potential of those two corridors by creating opportunities for high quality, attractive development. Although the overlay approach for the South Military Highway corridor is appropriate, the intentions for development/redevelopment management in this area are slightly different from those for the TCOD growth corridors.

As a part of the needs assessment conducted during this study, and extensive public, input during the design charrette indicated the need to promote commercial-retail, light industrial, and heavy industrial development opportunities within the corridor. That intent, combined with the geographic location of the corridor and surrounding area land uses shape the need to establish – via an Industrial Corridor Overlay District (ICOD) – guidelines for industrial oriented development along the improved roadway.

As with the existing TCODs, the Industrial Corridor Overlay District will provide a policy framework that will define industrial and commercial/retail development consistent with the character of the corridor. The establishment of an ICOD for the South Military Highway corridor will offer the ability to generate tax revenue and employment opportunities for the City of Chesapeake.

PUBLIC FINANCE

The City has used two primary sources for financing public infrastructure along South Military Highway: Federal Aid transportation program funding using Federal and State funds for road improvements and acquisition, if necessary; and the City bond fund program under the Capital Improvement Budget for park projects, sewer construction, and street improvements.

City bond funds can also be a source for financing affordable housing programs, as well as public facilities, such as schools, museums, libraries, and public buildings.

The two main public funding sources for affordable housing are the Federal HOME program and Federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). HOME is used exclusively for housing, while CDBG funds can be applied for both housing and infrastructure in eligible areas. A good housing strategy is to use CDBG funds for rehab of existing low and moderate income housing and infrastructure and HOME funds for down payment assistance, first time home buyer counseling and assistance, and construction of new infill affordable housing. The City should consider promoting the establishment of a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) to facilitate the creation of affordable housing in the area.

Other special purpose Federal and State grant and loan programs should also be considered, such as: Federal Aid transportation program funding for streets, trails, and parking; Federal Brownfield funds for environmental remediation of industrial/commercial sites; the Federal Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program; the Industrial Development Loan Fund; and Federal Home Loan Bank Economic Development & Growth Enhancement (EDGE) funds.

Designating the corridor as an Enterprise Zone, special taxing district, or business improvement district could be a mechanism for facilitating revitalization activities and economic development, including the provision of dedicated revenues streams for various corridor improvements. Additionally, the City should consider promoting the establishment of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) to promote economic opportunity and improved quality of life in the project area.

Lastly, Federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) could be used for public infrastructure and for site assembly in the project area, as well as special code enforcement activities by the City.

PRIVATE FINANCE

All Federally chartered banks are required to provide loans and equity investments in low and moderate income neighborhoods under provisions of the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 (CRA).

Three Federal tax credit programs are especially valuable in attracting private equity to historic downtowns undergoing revitalization: New Markets tax credits; Low Income Housing tax credits; and Historic Rehabilitation tax credits.

Local and national foundations, such as the Ford Foundation, and non profit organizations, such as the Urban League of Hampton Roads, Inc., can invest private dollars for progressive housing and economic development projects in the project area and in adjacent neighborhoods. The City should explore and promote public/private partnerships and efforts by service clubs, faith-based entities, and other community-based organizations whose desire and goal is to engage in mutually beneficial and sustained efforts to improve the overall quality of life along the corridor.

The backbone of private financing will come from developers, anchor tenants, merchants, entrepreneurs, and institutional investors (insurance companies, pension funds, and trusts). These private investments will be attracted to the area by the leverage provided by the public finance programs listed above, by a favorable business climate provided by groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Economic Development.

ADDITIONAL STUDIES

The South Military Highway Plan is a policy document, in essence a strategic development plan, a road map for the future. The hard work of implementing the Plan will now be the focus of the City's policy makers and administrators, the major stakeholders, and the citizens of Chesapeake. Additional detailed studies and plans will need to be undertaken to implement specific aspects of this overall strategic plan for the S. Military Highway Corridor, such as:

Commercial Market Study

Residential Market Study

Neighborhood Stabilization Plan

Industrial Market Study

These and other detailed studies and plans that may be conducted should maintain continuity with, and serve as an enhancement to, this strategic plan, the City's Comprehensive Plan, and other City economic development, housing, and quality of life goals and objectives.