

## August 1, 2014

Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) is pleased to provide this report of its activities regarding the revitalization of Richmond Highway. It also contains a variety of news items about activities of other organizations active in the area. This report covers the month of **July 2014**.

## Marketing

- The SFDC “Business Roundtable” seminar continued the morning of July 11, 2014 at the SpringHill Suites with a session called “Government Contracting 2.0.” Attendance was about fifteen. The final 2014 session on August 8 is Veteran Owned Businesses. (SFDC has collaborated with FCEDA and the U.S. SBA on this series. We have received a grant from the Dominion Foundation for series funding, and a few private sponsors have made donations, as well.)
- SFDC will continue a series of events intended to update residents about new developments in the neighborhoods of Richmond Highway. The next is an event focusing on Hybla Valley, now set for 4-7 pm on August 27 at the new Fordson Place shopping center (after the restaurant tenants open). A December event is planned at the The Shelby, Insight’s new residential community in Penn Daw.
- SFDC continues to update our webpage to help citizens monitor the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) study of Route One transit (Tier I Environmental Impact Study – EIS, now called “Multimodal Alternatives Transportation Analysis”). VDRPT has hired contractor AECOM to conduct the study, and FCDOT has named SFDC to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Community Involvement Committee (CIC). (see **Transportation** section below)
- Jeff Todd Way is scheduled to open on Monday, August 18 with a ribbon-cutting August 25 at 9:30 am (at the intersection of Jeff Todd Way and Pole Road).
- The SFDC staff and board members continue our outreach to other organizations. Executive Director Edythe Kelleher spoke at the county’s Small Business Commission in July. She and Marketing & Communications Manager Suzanne Matyas attended a Bisnow event. Suzanne Matyas attended the three-day Bridge to Integrated Marketing & Fundraising Conference at National Harbor. We plan to drop by several communities hosting National Night Out celebrations on August 5.
- SFDC will exhibit at the “Community Showcase” hosted by the Mount Vernon – Lee Chamber of Commerce on Saturday, September 27 and Fairfax County’s “Vendor Forum” on October 9.
- SFDC’s monthly newsletter mailing list continues to grow. Our July edition was sent to our nearly 1,700 subscribers, and achieved an “open” rate of approximately 27% with 95 clicks.
- After distributing approximately 1,200 copies of the January, April and Fall 2013, and Winter 2014 versions of our brochure, “Current Projects on Richmond Highway,” we reprinted for Summer 2014. (This brochure is a static version of the “What’s Happening?” section of the SFDC website.)
- SFDC staff continues to reach out to local and regional press outlets to cultivate more positive reporting about investment and development activity in the corridor. There have been several stories in the past month that reflect this effort. (See “Selected Media News and Notes” section at the end of this report.)
- SFDC continues to maintain a solid social media presence. Our Twitter followers as of July are 288. We have 214 LinkedIn connections. Our website had 1,347 unique visitors in July. Our weekly Facebook “Likes” averaged 230.

## Economic Development and Business News

- The SFDC Business Roundtable Speaker Series continued the morning of July 11 at the Holiday Inn Express with Government Contracting 2.0. Attendance of fifteen was good for July. The eighth and final 2014 session is planned for Friday, August 8 and the topic will be Veteran-Owned Businesses. (SFDC received a grant from the Dominion Foundation and several private sponsorship donations to help fund this series.) We will apply for grants to return this successful series in 2015.
- The fourth of our video segments produced by Channel 16, a history of Richmond Highway from 1920 to about 1960, is now complete and posted on our website and YouTube.\* The early history video has had more than 3,800 views to date. The second video, highlighting the benefits of revitalization, has been viewed 396 times. The first segment, entitled "The Revitalization of Route 1," has been watched 1,100 times, and the video was screened at the MVCCA General Council. The fifth segment, a history of Richmond Highway, 1960 to the present, is outlined and soon to be in production at Channel 16. \* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPHul3\\_4\\_5o#t=20](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPHul3_4_5o#t=20)
- A new, local leasing broker has been hired to lease the ground floor retail at the Beacon of Groveton apartment complex at 6898 Richmond Highway. The building has 5 spaces for lease in 9,937 square-feet. (Residential units are approximately 95% leased.)
- SFDC staff and Board members are working to use the CoStar system to create targeted retail marketing pieces designed to focus on the attributes of each Commercial Business Center (CBC) in the corridor. The factors included will be those of primary interest to businesses and developers.
- SFDC committees are continuing to move forward with execution of their 2013-2014 Work Plans.

## Development News and Prospects

- SFDC staff continues to monitor public approval processes Zoning applications and development projects. In some cases, we have heard presentations from applicants, and in several, we have asked questions, expressed ideas about the effect of the project on the revitalization of Richmond Highway, and submitted letters delineating the pros and cons of the project on the basis of SFDC revitalization principles. See the attached "Status of Projects Report" for a full listing of the projects we are following. Below is a listing of some highlights and smaller items:
  - A new **Fairfield Inn** at 6421 Richmond Highway is making progress. The Hersha Group began demolition and has obtained construction permits. (A site plan was approved in 2011.)
  - Building construction continues at **Insight Property Group's** project in Penn Daw, to be called The Shelby. Completion is expected in the fall of 2014. (SFDC staff Edythe Kelleher and Suzanne Matyas toured the site in July. Insight has become an SFDC sponsor, and would like to host an SFDC Open House once the property opens.)
  - **Landmark Communities** filed a site plan for Skyview Section 2, a "two-over-two" townhome development on about an acre on Richmond Highway south of Frye Road.
  - An additional transportation study will begin soon for the MVCCA's **North Gateway Nominations**, APR 09-IV-1MV and 09-IV-15MV, which were approved by the Board of Supervisors on January 28. The study's results may allow redevelopment up to 2.0 FAR. SFDC President Walter Clarke wrote to all the affected property owners to offer assistance.
  - A Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) committee continues to review the PPEA proposals for **North Hill**, a vacant 33-acre lot.
  - Asif Mahmud filed a site plan as **4203 Buckman LLC** to demolish the old structure and construct five townhomes. However, a zoning issue was identified which caused the site plan to be disapproved. He met with Supervisor McKay to discuss options, and has hired a land use attorney to proceed.

- **Fordson Place** tenants Verizon Wireless, Hair Cuttery, Vitamin Shoppe have opened. The restaurant tenants (Paisano's, Peet's Coffee, and Pollo Campero) will follow. (SFDC will host an Open House with the tenants on August 27, 4-7 pm.)
- A few businesses have recently closed. Of note are Chevy's in Mount Vernon Plaza (**Buffalo Wild Wings** will open a corporate location there) and Checkers at 7511 (**Starbucks Coffee** has applied for a building permit at this location).
- Slightly off the corridor, **Lennar Homes'** by-right site plan to construct townhomes on .75 acre along Harrison Street just south of Groveton has been distributed to Bonding.
- **CVS** filed a by-right site plan for 7312 Richmond Highway, currently an Exxon station. All waivers requested have now been approved (for service drive, right-of-way dedication, storm water detention, screening requirements, trail construction and on-road bike lane provision). No drive-thru is included in this plan.
- The Hybla Valley **Five Guys** is undergoing renovations.
- UCM's **Back Porch** thrift shop relocated to the Sacramento Center in July.
- A by-right site plan by **Mohammed Chaudri** for a 2-story office building on less than half an acre at Richmond Highway and Napper Road was approved in June.
- **Ross Dress for Less** at Mount Vernon Crossroads (7844 Richmond Highway) is progressing with interior demolition. (The leasing broker has publicized that **Mattress Warehouse** is also moving to this center, but there is no signage and no record of a building permit application.)
- The sale of **6677 Richmond Highway** (where the SFDC office is located) to **Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services** closed on Friday, June 27.
- The **Best Way Center** by-right site plan resubmittal (for a two-story addition to the existing building, replacement of the Holly Woods and Vines structure, and a pad site at the southern front of the site) was disapproved in December. The engineer reports that outstanding VDOT issues now appear resolved, and the plan was re-submitted in July.
- Residential leasing at **The Beacon of Groveton** is approximately 95%. Retail spaces are for lease, and a new leasing broker has been hired.
- Construction of a new surgical center at **Inova Mount Vernon Hospital** is expected to be complete in late 2014. A future 21,000 square-foot addition to the Emergency Room is planned to begin in 2015.
- **7210 Richmond Highway** (old A-1 Electronics) was listed for lease with KW Commercial.
- Habitat for Humanity's **ReStore** has closed its 7770 Richmond Highway location. **Gold's Gym** will expand into the space. (ReStore will relocate to the City of Alexandria's West End.)

### Community Appearance and Planning

- The committee has scheduled a Transportation Summit for the morning of October 30, after the VDRPT study is complete. Location is the Hampton Inn & Suites, 5821 Richmond Highway.
- Phase II Wayfinding signs are pending. Discussions with staff from the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) and Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) took place in May.
- SFDC volunteers believe that the owner of Mr. Kleen Car Wash will not apply for the Façade Improvement Program, as he felt the project cost overall was too high.
- SFDC continues to monitor the Fairfax County Sign Removal Program. The Office of Community Revitalization is working with us toward an educational campaign for businesses. A representative from the Department of Code Compliance attended our July Board meeting.
- SFDC's monitoring of the Residential Studios (RSU) proposal seems to be over, as the Planning Commission has recommended the proposal be shelved for now.

## **Transportation**

- A groundbreaking ceremony was held April 28, and an informational meeting on June 4, for the BRAC-related project to widen Richmond Highway from Old Mill Road to Telegraph Road. Construction is scheduled to be completed in 2016.
- Construction continues on Mulligan Road/Jeff Todd Way, a four-lane connector road that will run from the intersection of Richmond Highway and Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (Route 235) and Telegraph Road. The road is scheduled to open on August 18 with a ribbon-cutting August 25 at 9:30 am.
- SFDC participates in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Community Involvement Committee (CIC) for VDRPT's Route 1 Multimodal Alternatives Transportation Analysis. The next round of committee meetings will be in September, with the third and final community meeting in September or October. The study group is scheduled to present to the SFDC Board in September.
- SFDC is very pleased that the approved list of projects from the "Countywide Dialogue on Transportation" includes widening the 2.4-mile segment of Richmond Highway between Buckman Road and Woodlawn Plantation. The list was approved by the Board of Supervisors on January 28.
- FCDOT has narrowed its study to two of the proposed Bus Transit Center sites, and a new site is also under consideration.
- Supervisor Jeff McKay hosted a community meeting on transportation issues in Penn Daw. Those in attendance voted for further consideration of two of the FCDOT proposals. Additional input may be provided via the county's website. (Executive Director Edythe Kelleher attended this meeting.) The MVCCA General Council adopted a resolution calling for no improvements beyond those proffered.
- Information on all transportation projects and studies is included on SFDC's website, in the Transportation section of the "What's Happening?" tab.

## **Databases and Information Resources**

- SFDC staff continues to monitor a variety of information:
  - Development opportunities
  - Retail vacancies
  - Office vacancies
  - Properties offered for sale or lease
  - Office condominium property value and sales data
  - Status of development projects
  - Civic and community organization leadership and contact information
  - CoStar real estate information system

## **Outreach, Community Relations, and Regional Coordination**

- In July, SFDC staff attended an event hosted by Bisnow, and Executive Director Edythe Kelleher made a presentation to the Fairfax County Small Business Commission.
- SFDC continued our "Business Roundtable" speaker series for small business owners on July 11 with good attendance. This monthly series has been developed in cooperation with the Economic Development Authority and the US Small Business Administration, and will be extended to last about eight months. The eighth session is on August 8.
- SFDC staff plans to stop by several communities' National Night Out celebrations on August 5.
- SFDC will exhibit at the "Community Showcase" hosted by the Mount Vernon – Lee Chamber of Commerce on Saturday, September 27 and Fairfax County's "Vendor Forum" on October 9.

- SFDC staff continues to regularly meet and coordinate with Fairfax County officials and staff members to exchange information and priorities. (In July, Executive Director Edythe Kelleher attended the Board of Supervisors' Economic Advisory Commission meeting. A representative of the Department of Code Compliance attended the July SFDC Board meeting.)
- The Executive Director and Board President Walter Clarke speak at least quarterly with representatives of the Mount Vernon and Lee District Supervisors' offices.
- The SFDC Executive Director periodically speaks with state Delegates and Senators who represent the area. She and President Walter Clarke attended a breakfast with Del. Scott Surovell in July.
- SFDC participates in various transportation studies and committees. Most recently, Executive Director Edythe Kelleher attended committee and public meetings for the Multimodal Alternatives Analysis, Countywide Dialogue on Transportation, and Penn Daw transportation improvements.
- The SFDC Executive Director and Board members participated in a few regional events in July, including:
  - The SFDC Executive Director attends the monthly meeting of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce Board as an ex officio member.
  - SFDC sits on the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce Program Committee, which meets monthly.
  - SFDC participates with a group of South County non-profit organizations, the South County Leadership Council (SCLC). The group meets for lunch bi-monthly.

### **Management and Administration**

- New Marketing & Communications Manager Suzanne Matyas began work on July 7. A graduate of the University of Virginia, Suzanne majored in Urban Planning, was a Communications Intern for a non-profit in DC and held a temporary position with an engineering firm.
- The SFDC Board of Directors elected attorney Mark Viani and former member Karen Pohorylo to at-large Board seats. Ron Glass was not returned to the Board. The Board voted to change at-large terms in its By-Laws from two to three years. There will not be a meeting in August; a new Secretary will be chosen at the September meeting.
- Board member Dick Knapp will head a sub-committee to review SFDC's MOU with Fairfax County, which expires in mid-2015, and the SFDC By-Laws.
- The Marketing and CAPT Committees are continuing to meet jointly.
- The SFDC Board adopted revised metrics, both for internal use and for inclusion in our annual budget submission request. We began tracking the new metrics in July.
- As a result of SFDC's CY2014 fund raising effort and a position vacancy, our FY2014 finances were in the black. The Board adopted our FY2015 budget, which anticipates breaking even with use of carryover funds from FY2014. (The difficulty hiring a new Marketing & Communications Manager is indicative of future issues, as the market moves forward while SFDC salaries stagnate. SFDC operations have not been fully funded since our county grant was cut by 25% a few years ago. Private funds raised through event sponsorships have been insufficient to fill the gap. We continue to seek grants, but they are not available to "keep the lights on." Anticipating only a 3.5% annual increase in expenses, our reserves will be depleted in 5 to 7 years.)

### **Upcoming Meetings and Events**

- Marketing/CAPT Committee, August 6 at 8:30 am, SFDC Conference Room
- SFDC Business Roundtable Speaker Series, August 8 at 8:30 am, SpringHill Suites
- Economic Development Committee, August 14 at 8:30, SFDC Conference Room - CANCELLED
- SFDC Board of Directors meeting, August 20 at 8:30 am, SFDC Conference Room - CANCELLED

- Hybla Valley open house, August 27 at 4 – 7 pm, Fordson Place Shopping Center
- SFDC Transportation Summit, October 30 at 8:30 am, Hampton Inn & Suites

#### **Selected Media News and Notes**

7/2/2014 “SFDC Business Roundtable July 11” – Mount Vernon Voice, Community Notes

7/2/2014 “Supervisors Approve Putting Transportation Bond on Ballot” – Mount Vernon Voice, by Steve Hunt

7/16/2014 “Public Input Sought on Penn Daw Intersections” – Mount Vernon voice, by Steve Hunt

7/16/2014 “Improving Mobility and Revitalization of Route 1” – Mount Vernon Voice, by Del. Mark Sickles

7/23/2014 “Richmond Highway Revitalization Continues Apace” – Mount Vernon Voice, by Steve Hunt

7/30/2014 “Council Supports Yellow Line Extension” – Mount Vernon Voice, by Steve Hunt