PUBLIC VOICES on Redevelopment

Redeveloping Virginia Beach - Who Decides?
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Issues Framed: Public Voices on Redevelopment Leadership Team
Concept Review: Public Voices on Redevelopment Leadership Team
Redevelopment “Reader” Writers: Jerry Alley, Carolyn Caywood, Betsy McBride
Copy Editing: Chuck Applebach, Lisë Chandler-White, Kevin Fairley, Ellis Hinnant-Will, Stephanie Klinkenberger, Mary Luskey, Cynthia Whitbred-Spanoulis
Design: Susan Curcio
Original Political Illustrations: Denise Holden

PUBLIC VOICES ON REDEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

A. B. Al Ablowich  Rosemaire Fraites  John Moss
Merrilu Ablowich  Andy Friedman  Greg Nelson
Nony Abrajano  Mike Glenn  Richard Norman
Fred Adams  Rob Goodman  Robert O’Connor
John Allen  Reid Greenmun  John Olivieri
William Almond  Eugene Hansen  Coring Padilla
Beatriz Amberman  Dr. M. Julius Hayes  Ralph Parham II
Deborah Baisden  Bob Hedrick  Jim Pendergast
Daniel Baxter  Toni Hedrick  Lee Pitman
Celeste Bollinger  Jay Hessey  Kim Rizzo
Danny Bollinger  Ellis Hinnant-Will  Hollis Robertson
Rob Bradham  Sandy Horning  Chandler Scarborough
Tina Bradley  Robert Jones  Curtis Schmidt
Henry Boyd  Paul Kirchhoff  Diane Schmidt
Allan Brock  Rev. Constance Lew  Donald Schultz
David Browning  Thomas Lewis  Bob Scott
Patricia Bryant-Franza  Erin Liestman  Raymond Sides
William Terry Calhoun  Carolyn Lincoln  Marcy Sims
Barbara Clark  Pam Majumdar  Todd Solomon
Sanford Cohen  Beth Markley  Jim Spore
Gloria Connor  Rachel Markley  Juanita Summers
Leslie Cornwell  Scott Markley  Wayne Summers
Claudia Cotton  Don Maxwell  Patrick Thompson
Matthew Croy  Timothy McCarthy  Susan Thompson
Alvie Quino Culanding  Glenn McClanan  Emmanuel Voces
Robert Dean  Ashley McLeod  Al Wallace
Belinda Adele Dillard  Patricia McNeil  Patricia Washington
Bob Elms  Steve McNulty  Rich Werber
Wally Erb  Carolyn McPherson  Beverly Williams
Je’Nein Ferrell  Sherry Miley  Ned Williams
Ray Firenze  Bob Miller  Gil Zulueta
Dr. Charles Flowers  Audrey Mills  
Public Voices on Redevelopment

The need for redevelopment in Virginia Beach is identified in the city’s most recent Comprehensive Plan, and in response the City Council directed that a strategy for redevelopment be created. To begin this process, the citizen-based Public Voices on Redevelopment Leadership Team is asking: “How do we create a ‘city vision’ and process for redevelopment that serves all interests?” This question is at the center of the community deliberation on how to proceed with redevelopment.

Choice One: Liberate the Free Market to Redevelop Virginia Beach

Market forces drive decisions of property owners with speed, efficiency and fairness.

Choice Two: Provide Municipal Government with the Tools to Redevelop Virginia Beach

Only government has the long-range view, resources and expertise to plan redevelopment that provides for economic growth and other public needs.

Choice Three: Strengthen the Citizens Role in Redeveloping Virginia Beach

Citizens decide and government implements the community’s vision.

Consider Deliberate and Choose

Summary: Comparing the Choices

Redeveloping Virginia Beach - Who Decides?

Another Consideration: Affordable Housing

Glossary

Additional Reading

Who Decides? - Send Us Your Preferences
Public Voices on Redevelopment

In December 2004 the Virginia Beach City Council directed the city staff to incorporate citizens’ viewpoints into the creation of a redevelopment strategy. As in many cities, the very mention of redevelopment creates controversy and suspicion.

An ambitious project, Public Voices on Redevelopment was designed to demonstrate meaningful public involvement and move the community debate beyond the slogan level while confronting citizens with realistic trade-offs and hard choices. The secondary objective was to increase the community’s (including the government’s) capacity for broad-based problem solving and constructive dialogue.

The major work components of the plan include:

• Web site with research and library reading centers
• Reader on redevelopment to be used for community dialogues
• High-profile event to focus community attention and bring in new ideas
• 50 or more community dialogues
• Report on the preferences of the citizens revealed by the dialogues

Several teams, both external and internal, have responsibility for the work.

The Leadership Team – Open to any person interested in the topic of redevelopment and willing to accept the responsibility to participate in framing the issue, review project information for balance, and ensure that competing views are captured and represented throughout the process.

The Research Team – Library staff and other city employees compiled and indexed massive amounts of information for the project Web site and for the redevelopment reader. Leadership Team members helped provide for alternative information sources and viewpoints.

The Project Team – Staff from several departments and citizens met weekly to plan, respond to Leadership Team input and carry out the support tasks.

The Leadership Team meets in the evening, sometimes for two hours or longer. In the beginning, many thought their role was to argue for the redevelopment strategy that would best serve their interests.

In the end, the team members met a bigger challenge. They worked together to define what concerns our community about the term “redevelopment.” The redevelopment reader is a result of the work so far. The Leadership Team framed the issue by using their views and also sifting through the views represented by another 80 interviews in the community. These concerns were then captured in the question “How do we create a ‘city vision’ and process for redevelopment that serves all interests?”

From this statement of the problem, the Leadership Team outlined the three choices described in the reader. These choices aren’t the end of the possibilities. Instead, the question asked and the choices offered represent the hard work of many who honored their role. They now invite the citizens of Virginia Beach to engage in deliberation and add their voices to an issue that will be central to the future of our city.
Community Interviews: Adding More Public Voices

To expand the search for community concerns beyond those of the members of the Leadership Team, interviews were conducted by Jerry Alley, a retired local journalist. The Project Team wanted a person from outside the city staff to listen to additional persons who have been or could be affected by redevelopment. Mr. Alley provided summaries of comments for the Leadership Team as he worked through the interviews.

The objective was to come as near as possible to a comprehensive list of concerns. When the concerns began to be repeated and nothing new was being heard, the interview process was considered finished. What follows is Mr. Alley’s final report on the interview process and what he heard. The report has not been altered in any way.

In late April 2005, a resident of the Burton Station community was on her way to a banquet when the telephone in her home rang. She answered and listened patiently while the caller explained that he was conducting interviews for the City of Virginia Beach.

“I don’t have time to talk now,” the woman said. “You’ll have to call me back later. What did you say you wanted to ask me about?”

“Redevelopment in Virginia Beach,” the caller said.

Some 45 minutes later, the conversation ended. The woman had done most of the talking. She criticized the city government for offering her only $200,000 for her house, a price that would have been more than enough a few years ago, she said. Now, in a heated real estate market, $200,000 wouldn’t buy her an acceptable house in Virginia Beach.

The Burton Station woman was one of 80 citizens interviewed over the past few months as part of the city’s ongoing Public Voices on Redevelopment endeavor.

As much as any, this interview was indicative of just how sensitive the redevelopment issue is. The word redevelopment stopped the woman in her tracks. She may have missed her banquet, but she hadn't missed an opportunity to chide city government.

A catalyst for debate

When it comes to redevelopment, practically no one claims neutrality. One person we attempted to interview did say, “I don’t know why you called me. I don’t know a thing about redevelopment.”

Most of the others we contacted had an opinion and were eager to share it. Some saw redevelopment as a diabolical tool of government to relieve people of their private property. Some of these mentioned the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority as an example of a government agency abusing its power.

A retired Navy captain who lost a battle with the NRHA said the agency condemned his investment property in East Ocean View and paid him a price that wasn’t close to being fair, even though he took the matter to court.

“The lawyers and bureaucrats representing NRHA spent two years and thousands of dollars (in court) driving an honest taxpayer deeper in debt,” he said.

On the flip side, another Virginia Beach citizen who claims a financial loss because of NRHA action says the Beach must create a redevelopment authority if it is to reach its potential as a city.

“Forget about Norfolk. A redevelopment authority is essential for Virginia Beach,” she said. “Some neighborhoods are declining to the point that we can’t just turn a blind eye to it.”
‘We Like This City’

Most of the people we interviewed said they are happy in Virginia Beach and wouldn’t want to live anywhere else. The youngest of these, a high school student, suggested that the city is fine just the way it is.

“I wouldn’t change a thing,” he said. “I think the city government in Virginia Beach is doing a fine job.”

Not many, however, are wedded to the status quo. A few older people said they liked the city much better 30 years ago, when the population was less, before green fields were covered with residential and commercial developments, and when traffic congestion wasn’t a problem.

None of the people we interviewed so much as hinted at a racist remark. Most seemed sympathetic to the plight of poor minorities, the citizens most likely to be uprooted by redevelopment. Many thought the city should play a role in guaranteeing affordable housing to displaced citizens.

Government Not Trusted

Not surprisingly, we found a widespread lack of trust in government to protect citizens’ rights as redevelopment occurs. In most cases this wasn’t for any specific reason, but simply part of a general attitude toward government.

Communication between the government and the citizenry was mentioned often in our interviews. In the minds of many, it breaks down somewhere between City Hall and the environs. Most blame this on the government, but a few suggested that citizens don’t pay enough attention to what’s going on.

Nearly everyone we interviewed approved of Town Center.

“I didn’t like the idea at first,” one citizen said. “But now I think Town Center is one of the most important things to happen in Virginia Beach. I love going there.”

Almost to a person, the people we interviewed expressed a desire to keep NAS Oceana in Virginia Beach. It should be noted that this was prior to the conditions announced by the Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. We have not conducted interviews since this occurred on Aug. 24, 2005.

What’s in a Name?

The interviews demonstrated among some citizens a narrow perception of what the word “redevelopment” means. Some equated the word with demolition and reconstruction. Some, however, viewed redevelopment as a constantly evolving process that would occur naturally, without government involvement.

Redevelopment that increases population density bothers some of the people we interviewed.

“Police and fire officials have made it clear that they don’t have the manpower to protect any more high-density developments,” one said.

Another observed that “schools are already overcrowded, and trailers are becoming permanent fixtures rather than temporary places to house students.”

The People Interviewed

Our interviews weren’t intended to be a scientific sampling of public opinion. They were an exercise in public pulse-taking. We listened to the voices of people from different walks of life, different socio-economic groups and different parts of the city.

We interviewed former elected officials, a trailer park resident, retired
senior citizens, lawyers, a teacher, ex-municipal government employees, former members of city boards, developers, hotel operators, high school students, homemakers, farmers, a former member of the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, a labor union executive, the owner of a business in Town Center, people with disabilities, people who do volunteer work, residents of retirement centers, Navy officers and civilians from NAS Oceana, representatives of civic leagues and homeowners associations, bankers, a landscape architect, retired Navy officers, a handyman, a realtor, a real estate broker, the owner of a trucking company, a public relations executive and the owners of two businesses that redevelopment forced to move.

We interviewed people in their 80s, in their teens and in between. We interviewed one person who is blind and another who is bound to a wheelchair. We interviewed people who live at the Oceanfront, on the Chesapeake Bay, in rural Blackwater, in Kempsville and in other parts of the city.

An Issue is Framed

Some interviews lasted an hour or more. Others took only 15 minutes or so. In most cases, interviews were done by telephone. On a few occasions, we walked up to someone on the street or in their yard and started a conversation about redevelopment. On one such occasion, an elderly handyman on a stepladder said he was selling his house near NAS Oceana because he could no longer bear the jet noise. “I love the Navy, and I hope they stay in Virginia Beach,” he said. “But I’m going to sell out and move. And I don’t expect one penny from the government. I know the city can’t afford to buy all that property near the air station.”

Without realizing it, the handyman had framed, in his own words, an issue that appears likely to dominate government and politics in Virginia Beach for some time.

Every person with whom we spoke was polite, somewhat remarkable given the general opinion of telemarketers and others who disturb dinner with a phone call. We told each of them that their comments weren’t for attribution. We would share their names, but not link them to quotes.

Our Conversations

We didn’t adhere to a rigid set of questions in the interviews, although an effort was made to include certain subjects. Our interviews were more conversational, allowing the citizens to express their views in a relaxed manner.

One question always asked, for example, was along the lines of “How do you feel about establishing a redevelopment authority in Virginia Beach?” Another was “What is your position on public-private partnerships?” Another was “Where do you stand on the controversy over jet noise at NAS Oceana?”

One of our questions was also about “affordable” housing.

We worked from a list of names supplied by members of the Public Voices on Redevelopment Project Team, the Leadership Team and other sources. Many of the names were familiar. Their voices have been heard before. Some have been critical of municipal government in the past.

We also talked with “ordinary” people without public profiles.

Overall, we telephoned about 85 people to request interviews. A majority couldn’t be reached on the first call. On the second call, we left messages. A few didn’t return our calls. Only one person with whom we spoke declined to be interviewed.

We wrote summaries of the interviews and presented them to the Project Team weekly. The Leadership Team received summaries at its monthly meetings. Team members had an opportunity to question the person doing the interviews.

After the Leadership Team compiled its own list of redevelopment concerns, it reviewed summaries of the interviews to look for additional issues. A significant number was found, adding more voices from across the city to the conversation.
When the English first settled Virginia nearly 400 years ago, they managed it with a stock company that treated colonists as employees and expected them to work for, and live off, a common supply of food. Allocation of private property soon replaced this approach. After his early experience of communal living at Jamestown, John Smith praised the motivations and benefits of private ownership of land in his Generall Historie, writing “Nay, the most honest among them would hardly take so much true pains in a weeke, as now for themselves they will do in a day.” The lesson sank in and Virginia attracted those who sought to become landholders who would fiercely defend their rights.

Government in Virginia has other important legacies from a more rural era. In 1868, a court decision known as Dillon’s Rule, which still applies in some form in 38 states, created a “doctrine that a unit of local government may exercise only those powers that the state expressly grants to it,” according to the City of Virginia Beach 2003 Comprehensive Plan. Among other effects, this means revenue sources for funding city government require approval by the state’s General Assembly. The result is a dependence on property taxes for the funding of local government. This increases the focus on profitable land use.

In the past half century, Virginia Beach has changed from a predominantly rural county, to a suburb of Norfolk, to the most populous city in Virginia. The majority of residents have sought a suburban lifestyle in Virginia Beach. That common land use pattern offers the country feeling of open spaces, while still requiring the urban demands for government infrastructure. This has led to skepticism from some about the long-term vision inherent in market-driven, private development, and the politics and limitations of government planning oversight.
Questions and Controversy

As a result of all of these and other factors, many policy questions related to redevelopment stir up controversy. Questions begin with how to fund infrastructure – the expectations residents have for government services like roads, water, public health and safety, education and recreation – and how much is enough. Choices about land use determine both infrastructure demands and the tax revenue to pay for them.

Government is expected to protect property values. Growth and rising values spread the costs of providing government services across more taxable units. But rising values also mean that affordability of housing can limit who can be part of the community. Left behind may be family members needing starter housing or entry-level service industry workers.

Land use affects the demands of the transportation network and can also determine whether specific transportation solutions will work. For example, successful public transit is presumed to require greater housing density while cul-de-sac development limits interconnecting road networks.

The 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Kelo v. New London raises questions about citizens’ property rights, the potential overreach of eminent domain and what level of government defines “public good.” Many citizens acknowledge the need to take land for public use, but object when private property is taken to apparently benefit other private interests or when the compensation for property is seen as unjust.

Then, partially because it is an American trait, there is the question of trust. In Virginia Beach, does every discussion on redevelopment have to lead to an argument about the establishment of a redevelopment and housing authority? And whom do we, as a community, trust to take the lead on making land use decisions? The government and its expert staff? The business community in response to market forces? Or the citizens whose homes and other property make up our community?

Redevelopment in Virginia Beach

Redevelopment is a relatively new concept for Virginia Beach. Until recently there has been ample land in our large city, and most of the developed areas are less than 50 years old. Now there is a scarcity of vacant land in the area north of the Green Line. The area south of the Green Line is protected from urban development, and some developed areas are not aging well or include obsolete commercial land uses.

Meanwhile, the community faces decisions about the fate of military bases and the land near them, the supply and cost of housing, the transportation needs of the future, and the compatibility of various land uses. Decisions made now will shape the future of our city.

While we cannot know what will happen to gas prices or transportation proposals, to housing costs or military bases, we do know that the growing scarcity of vacant land creates both pressure and opportunity for redevelopment. Redevelopment will proceed. It is up to the community to choose its level of involvement in the goals and direction of the redevelopment.

---

**Average Assessed Values of All Owner-Occupied Housing by Year Built**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Built</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1959</td>
<td>2,920</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>$242,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1959</td>
<td>10,364</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>150,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1969</td>
<td>19,971</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>157,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>28,140</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>150,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1989</td>
<td>47,029</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>133,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>17,247</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>204,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2002</td>
<td>5,296</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>244,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of Real Estate Assessor, Annual Report to Virginia Beach City Council.
Through a lengthy process, the citizens working on the Public Voices on Redevelopment Leadership Team identified infrastructure, fair housing, transportation and citizen rights as critical matters directly associated with redevelopment.

The team recognized that various groups have differing visions of what Virginia Beach should be and differing methods of achieving their vision. It also recognized that choices about the redevelopment of Virginia Beach will have consequences that affect many other issues of concern to the community.

The team captured the challenge in a central question. The question is about division of political power and responsibility, of who will lead the creation of a city vision: “How do we create a ‘city vision’ and process for redevelopment that serves all interests?”

**Public Voices on Redevelopment Leadership Team**

**Choice One:** Liberate the Free Market to Redevelop Virginia Beach. The owners of private property would take the lead in directing the redevelopment of Virginia Beach.

**Choice Two:** Provide Municipal Government with the Tools to Redevelop Virginia Beach. Government would take the lead in directing the redevelopment of Virginia Beach.

**Choice Three:** Strengthen the Citizens’ Role in Redeveloping Virginia Beach. Citizens outside of government would take the lead in directing the redevelopment of Virginia Beach.

The study, entitled ‘Hidden in Plain Sight: Capturing the Demand for Housing Near Transit,’ finds that across the U.S. more than 14.6 million households are likely to want to rent and buy housing near transit by 2025, double the number that lives in these neighborhoods today.”

A free market includes everyone who owns or desires to own property. In a completely free market, each private property owner would determine the use of his or her property without government intervention. While each pursues his or her own self-interest, individual decisions naturally culminate in the “highest and best” use of the land for that time.

In a free market, property is only sold when the owner and buyer agree. In his book, *Free to Choose*, University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman writes, “The price system works so well, so efficiently, that we are not aware of it most of the time. We never realize how well it functions until it is prevented from functioning, and even then we seldom recognize the source of the trouble.”

By contrast, government regulation can create gaps in the supply, frustrating demand and skewing the market.

Proponents of the free market approach say that it is private enterprise that is most capable of responding quickly...
to the need for affordable housing. The market has no bias against anyone buying the housing they can afford, but government and neighborhoods often resist the construction of lower priced housing, even when it is in short supply.

Other needs or changes in demand easily identified and supplied by the market can be restricted by government’s zoning rules. The dense urban mixed-use neighborhoods praised by those calling for “walkable cities” and public transit were generated in the past by market demand. Now they are often forbidden in most zoning classifications.

In places such as Houston, where there is no zoning, any divergence in vision is resolved by the market. Someone who wants to change how land is used has either to buy it or persuade the owners to make the change.

Choice One, as outlined, would not eliminate zoning. Code enforcement is also retained as a tool of government. The choice also permits normal government planning activities and encouragement of specific development as long as financial incentives are not used.

Proponents of this choice generally believe that deliberate city planning has more drawbacks than benefits because government and experts simply cannot predict the future. They also point out that, historically, city planning has resulted in the loss of affordable housing, destroyed neighborhoods and displaced low-income residents. Historic architecture has not been protected.

Supporters of the free market approach doubt that future planning efforts will have outcomes more likely to stand the test of time. Instead they have confidence that Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” of the free market, particularly when not distorted by regulations, will respond quickly and naturally to change.

Fairness is also a major issue for proponents. They see the financial incentives that governments sometimes provide as robbing property taxpayers to provide unfair advantages to favored developers. Viewed as even more unfair is condemnation for economic development purposes. By contrast, it is felt that the free market neither guarantees anyone financial success nor makes the competition uneven. The power of choice is left in the hands of each property owner, large and small.

Moreover, market-driven development does not have to be hodgepodge sprawl that neglects the environment, open space or historic preservation. According to an article in the May 2005 issue of Planning, “Southern California’s Irvine Ranch is the largest privately developed, master-planned community to be built in the U.S.” The article continues, “Some see the company as a leader in habitat preservation and landscape architecture.”

T rusting the free market is not just a practical solution to contentious issues; It is a solution that respects the

“By 2030, the U.S. will need 44% more total built space than existed in 2000 to accommodate population and job-growth projections, according to a new study by the Brookings Institution.”

individualist, entrepreneurial spirit at the core of America. It ensures that the individual’s labor and dreams invested in his or her land cannot be arbitrarily lost. It does not use tax money to provide advantages to certain property owners over others. At the same time, reliance on the market as a driving force keeps the community economically competitive and able to respond quickly to change.

**Those in Support Would Say:**

- **Land owners have the opportunity to make the profit they deserve.** When property is bought and sold voluntarily, the market determines its “highest and best use.” At the same time, if an owner doesn’t want to sell for whatever reason, no one should be able to force the sale. Land has historically been the wisest form of investment and the one open to the widest range of people. The right to own property, and to make personal choices about it, is fundamental to liberty.

- **Forces the municipal bureaucracy to get out of the way of private enterprise.** Everyone wants a healthy, sustainable economy, and the best way to ensure that is to remove government barriers to the free market. Then, when gaps develop between supply and demand, business will move to fill them without having to wait for bureaucracy to catch up to reality. A city that makes it easier and quicker for business to respond to changes in the market will attract development. Regulations that cost business time and money make a community less competitive in the redevelopment market.

- **The market will provide for the development of affordable housing.** By unleashing the power of the private sector, we will achieve public good.

If there is a demand for affordable housing, private enterprise is best suited to finding ways to meet it. As a natural and rational response to market signals, investors will provide for the range of housing needed by different groups of people at different stages in their lives at an affordable price. Left alone, the free market eliminates entities out of step with demand. But when government requires that all housing meets artificial standards, affordable housing is impossible.

**Guarantees less tax money will be spent on redevelopment.** The regulatory bureaucracy that manages redevelopment costs the taxpayers. Government should not be engaging in land speculation with money taken from other taxpaying landowners. The market will result in redevelopment whenever it is profitable. And if government subsidizes redevelopment that is not profitable, it either becomes an ongoing drain on public monies or leads to blight.

**Opponents Would Say:**

- **Places profit above other values.** Communities and their governments have other societal values besides property rights. Not everyone can participate equally in a free market, but those citizens have rights too. And we have a responsibility to future generations – historic and natural areas are nonrenewable resources, but the free market values them only in terms of profit. In our society the free market must operate within the constraints of other important values.

- **Produces ugly development, puts stress on infrastructure and services, and impacts the most vulnerable.** Citizen dissatisfaction with the look and quality of some development is the motivation behind much of the regulation this choice
opposes. Infrastructure is another kind of subsidy that needs to be counted as a cost of development. City planning seeks to control this taxpayer-funded cost that free market proponents ignore. And those who don’t own property are nevertheless affected by what happens to the places where they live and work. When the market is the only driver of redevelopment, the larger community has no voice.

Private redevelopment stagnates during economic downturns, creating blight. The empty strip malls and big box stores in parts of Virginia Beach are the end result of market forces. Their only profitable uses now are those that just add to the blight. It will take government incentives to encourage uses that protect adjacent neighborhoods and the quality of life.

Eliminates long-term accountability. Sometimes problems with development don’t come to light until much later. The original developer may be gone from the business or the area. For example, property owners in Chesapeake recently discovered that their homes were built on a potentially toxic landfill. It is a reasonable and expected role of government to protect citizens from the consequences of purely profit-driven development. It is foolish not to plan for the long term, and that is not something the market can do.

What Can Be Done:

- Forbid government’s role in private land use decisions beyond normal planning, zoning and code enforcement
- Cut government red tape to make redevelopment less expensive
- Encourage developers, but avoid government financial incentives
- Vote against any redevelopment and housing authority
This approach presumes that the government has satisfactorily overseen development of the city in the past and thus should be entrusted with additional powers to direct redevelopment in the future.

Government expertise, experience and resources argue plausibly for this approach. The government has at its disposal money, planning and housing experts, traffic engineers and so on.

The needs of the city change over time. Government is likely to be keenly aware of what these needs are and can best address the economic feasibility of meeting them.

Government is also in the best position to prioritize problems and solve them in a way that benefits the most citizens.

For government to respond effectively, proper tools must be available. This may involve fine-tuning old tools or replacing them with new ones. Infrastructure, housing and commercial property are aging in many areas. Pockets of blight are developing. Over time, this could have a serious negative economic and social impact on the city.

The answer might be a redevelopment authority with its staff of experts. This authority could meet redevelopment challenges, while freeing up other
government agencies to concentrate on the everyday problems of running the city.

For Virginia Beach to prosper, reach its potential and provide the best lifestyle possible for its people, the city should remain the location of choice for young, professional people. Other cities offer stiff competition in this regard. Virginia Beach ignores this at its economic peril.

Virginia Beach must also recognize its growing diversity. It should tap into the creativity and opportunity that diversity offers and improve life for all citizens. The city can ill afford to allow spotty blight to continue to spread in older neighborhoods. Those who can afford it will move, sometimes selling their house to an absentee landlord or renting it themselves. This can accelerate a neighborhood’s decline because some landlords are driven by a “minimum in, maximum out” attitude – spend as little as possible taking care of the property while renting it for the highest possible price.

With the proper tools in hand, Virginia Beach government joined private enterprise to create Town Center, a shining example of what can be accomplished. Proper government tools reclaimed the resort beach and transformed it into one of the more attractive oceanfront playgrounds on the East Coast. The city’s park system, its recreation centers and libraries, and its modern new schools are products of government tools.

In interviews with 80 Virginia Beach citizens, a large majority expressed satisfaction with their city. Many said they wouldn’t consider living anywhere else. Others, however, expressed dismay over traffic congestion and the faster pace of life. They long for the days when there were fewer people, fewer cars and an abundance of green space visible through the living room window.

Government can’t roll back the years. It can, with the proper tools, seize an opportunity and meet a responsibility to create the most livable city possible.

Those in Support Would Say:

Long-term, professional planning creates economic growth that keeps taxes low. Long-term, professional planning is one of government’s most important tools to strike a balance between residential, commercial and industrial development. Such a balance is necessary to help solidify and expand the tax base and offers the best prospect for controlling taxes.

During most of the city’s existence, residents of Virginia Beach enjoyed comparatively low taxes. The rapid increases in real estate taxes over the past few years, however, strained some budgets and created one of the more volatile political issues experienced by the city. The increase was due largely to a rise in real estate market value. This was driven by low mortgage rates and a demand for housing that outstripped the supply. The demand for housing proves that people want to live in Virginia Beach. To keep it that way, the city must control taxes. It cannot accomplish this satisfactorily without proper, long-term planning.

A redevelopment and housing authority is a useful tool to compete for economic development. Virginia Beach needn’t look far to observe an obvious example of a redevelopment and housing authority as a major economic development tool. Norfolk’s RHA has been a powerful force behind the rejuvenation of the city. A modern medical complex, along with commercial, residential and cultural centers and a waterfront park, occupies land where slums once stood. In Virginia Beach, slums aren’t yet a serious problem, but pockets of residential and
commercial blight are a reality. Blight tends to breed more blight, and the city can ill afford to postpone solving a comparatively minor problem before it becomes a major one. One of the most powerful tools with which to accomplish this isn’t available to Virginia Beach. Proponents say that an authority charter could be written with a property owner’s "bill of rights" that would provide a tool without controversial powers.

**Government could protect neighborhoods from blight, preserve open space and lower the costs for redevelopment.** Human nature dictates that laws are necessary for protection and preservation. If government doesn’t adopt and enforce strict housing codes, some owners will allow property to become run down. If government doesn’t require developers to set aside open space, many won’t. It follows that minimal government participation could eventually drive up the cost of redevelopment because more redevelopment will be necessary for the city to remain livable. In a city that is running out of buildable land, inferior housing will be constructed. Population density will rise to unacceptably high levels. Open space will all but vanish beneath the crush of building as many dwellings as possible on limited space. The results will be more blight, more redevelopment at a higher cost and a city that ages far too fast for the good of its citizens.

**Elections are the public’s voice in government planning.** In the relatively brief history of Virginia Beach, the City Council has been controlled by pro-growth majorities, anti-growth majorities and majorities that seemed to be somewhere in between. Voters decided which group would have control and, to an extent, influenced the planning process in their city. Elections will continue to reflect the citizens’ satisfaction or dissatisfaction with government planning.

If planning is a large enough issue in an election, it could decide the outcome. The advocates of pro-growth and anti-growth might not speak as forcefully in elections as they once did. This is because the supply of buildable land is dwindling. The issue of government planning is more subtle; the buildable land more precious. There are traffic problems to solve, jobs to create, and aging neighborhoods that require serious attention. Elections will continue to play an important role in how government defines and solves the problems and how it meets the challenges that lie ahead.

“**For local officials, strips may prove to be an even bigger redevelopment challenge than a dead or dying mall. You can’t demolish a miles-long strip and start over the way you can with a mall site. And whereas malls typically have one owner, strips can have dozens. Some own large chunks of land while others own very narrow slivers ....**

“Michael Beyard, a senior fellow at the Urban Land Institute, offers one solution: Pare back the amount of land zoned for retail. Most strips are zoned for far more retail than their communities need. This makes it especially easy for big-box retailers to ditch one site for another just down the road. Rezoning for a mix of uses and denser development will help transform strips from Anywhere to Somewhere - gradually.”

("After the Mall" by Christopher Swope, *Governing* magazine, October 2002)
Opponents Would Say:

Government abuses individual property rights. One of the themes repeated in interviews with Virginia Beach residents is that many people don’t trust government. While most of those expressing this opinion were nonspecific, some voiced it in the context of private property rights. The prospect of having the government buy their homes to protect NAS Oceana angered and frightened many citizens. Condemnation of private property – whether for roads, schools or other public necessities – amounts to government intrusion on individual rights. This is true regardless of the nobility of the purpose. Government is greedy and subject to pressure from special interests. The bureaucracy has little sympathy for ordinary citizens when it comes to advancing the cause of government.

City planning doesn’t work. City planning can’t work because it is often at odds with the free market system and the desire of elected officials to satisfy influential developers. Rules made by professional planners are bent or ignored by elected officials so often that citizens have become cynical when it comes to comprehensive planning. While planners may be able to predict future needs of a city with some certainty, economic, social and political events can derail the best-laid plans. Proper planning and a willingness of elected officials to enforce it would, in theory, prevent major problems from developing. But the problems Virginia Beach faces today and in the future show that city planning is an anemic government tool at best.

Government incentives give some businesses advantages that others do not receive. Philosophically speaking, tax breaks, infrastructure improvements and other government enticements to private enterprise tend to undermine the free market system. Practically speaking, they make it difficult for businesses that don’t receive them to compete. Few could argue that a business in Virginia Beach’s new Town Center – a public/private enterprise – doesn’t have an advantage over a competitor in a less desirable location. Someone traveling on business, for example, is likely to prefer a hotel room at Town Center to one in a less central location. Even the highest of intentions – assisting minority businesses with special incentives, for example – sometimes trigger complaints from competitors. The same is true for such things as granting “density bonuses” to developers, which allows them to build more on less land in exchange for public amenities.

Government doesn’t listen to citizens. Citizens’ voices are often drowned out by government’s inclination to pay more attention to the clout of special interests. Government is also likely to pay much closer attention to the “big picture” than to a group of people complaining about improper drainage or poorly maintained streets. The voice of the citizenry is strongest at election time when promises are made to influence voters. It tends to grow weaker after the election is history. Promises are often broken then or, at best, filed away for future consideration – perhaps when it’s time for another election.

What Can Be Done:

• Create a government office to plan and pursue redevelopment
• Use tax breaks and other incentives to encourage desirable redevelopment
• Use public-private partnerships to jump-start redevelopment (e.g., Town Center)
• Vote for a redevelopment and housing authority with condemnation power
Citizens could have a central role in determining preferred goals and outcomes of the redevelopment of their community. In this model the role of government would be to organize and facilitate the community visioning processes and then to protect and implement the resulting vision. A widely publicized and open visioning process encourages differing interests to be involved in the creation of a redevelopment plan.

Several advantages are inherent in this approach. The process itself results in more information being offered and received. Advocates and opponents insert fresh arguments into the public debate. The observant citizens have an opportunity to be exposed to the complexities of the policy implications.

New connections profiting the entire community are made as advocates and opponents organize and discover others sympathetic to their interests. Robert D. Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*, describes how these civic interactions give a community a measurable economic advantage: “A well-connected individual in a poorly connected society is not as productive as a well-connected individual in a well-connected society” (p. 20, *Bowling Alone*).
A very public debate surrounding a redevelopment vision leaves behind a common understanding of what is needed for implementation. At the conclusion of a community process, the various stakeholders, including those with significant economic interests in alternative outcomes, can make decisions and plans with clear expectations for what is, and what is not, likely to happen. The possibilities are more settled and planning can be done with a higher level of confidence.

Implementation of the common vision is an opportunity to increase trust between the citizens and its government. Implementation begins with localized planning honoring the theory that public involvement brings more productive resources to public decision making. Representatives from residential, commercial or industrial neighborhoods will become invested in the outcomes through their involvement in the planning that may impact them.

Government is both the protector and the enforcer of the public policies that make up the implied community contract for redevelopment. This reduces the need for the political apparatus to be forced to continually debate the plan in response to each project. Projects either fit the vision or they do not. Decisions in conformance with the community vision are more supportable because they are better understood by the public. Consistency and transparency attached to the path forward signals to the entire community that the rules are the same for everyone.

Additional trust in government can come from increased accountability for the redevelopment process. The use of condemnation, the approval of variances or other politically sensitive tools are likely to be more acceptable to the public when the usage and rationales are systematically reported along with the progress on the plan.

But the preferences and needs of communities can change abruptly or over time. The commonly-understood redevelopment vision governed by public policies will need to accommodate change. To continue the commitment for a vision that serves an entire community, major policy changes should be sent back to the citizens for their active consideration and ultimate approval.

“The measure of a decision is not just whether it is made efficiently and economically, but whether the process by which it was made has sufficient legitimacy, and whether the decision itself has sufficient acceptability, to allow implementation.”

(P. 21, Public Participation Handbook, Jim Creighton author)
Those in Support Would Say:

Maximizes the innovation generated by diverse viewpoints. There are natural limitations to innovation when the same people play the same role over and over. Innovation comes with an open process where residents with diverse needs, expertise and creative solutions are welcomed and involved.

Facilitates vision-based planning with widespread understanding of goals and public costs. Planning associated with a long-term vision has a higher political risk of being misunderstood or not supported long enough to come to fruition. This problem is mitigated when the community has invested in authentic public involvement. Then, broad understanding provides the more lasting support needed for the implementation of a long-term vision. This is particularly important for goals with immediate costs and long-term benefits.

Increases the investment that citizens have in implementing their vision. In our system owners are investors and there is a direct correlation between participation and ownership. In other words, the citizens involved in working out the vision for redevelopment will be the most invested in its implementation.

Increases trust by making expectations and policies enforceable and clear to all. It is essential that all of the stakeholders in the redevelopment process have a clear understanding of what the community vision means to them. This makes individual decisions less complicated by unknown variables. Further, consistent application of the policies would be perceived as fairer and even less risky than the possibility that policies can be negotiated to give advantage to insiders over others.
Opponents Would Say:

Overly cumbersome, causing delays, raised costs and missed opportunities. Adding public involvement to the planning and implementation of a redevelopment vision has more costs than benefits. Redevelopment is already occurring and it is successful without adding new levels of public involvement.

Open nature of the process could foster land speculation and other detrimental effects. There could be such a thing as too much information when it comes to some land use transactions. Speculation could be driven by common knowledge. This could increase the cost of redevelopment to private interests and to taxpayers.

Makes property owners’ rights dependent on public opinion. A community redevelopment vision worked out through a public process might serve the community as a whole, but at a cost to individual property owners. It is not fair or just to make some shoulder the costs so that the community can benefit.

Not an appropriate role for citizens, they are not experts, not elected and not accountable. Our form of government entrusts decisions to those elected to make them. Further, decisions associated with redevelopment are site specific, technical and beyond the interest and expertise of most citizens.

What Can Be Done:

- Diverse community interests work out the broad redevelopment vision and policies and refer it to citizens for approval
- Systematic reporting to citizens on the use of redevelopment tools (e.g., zoning variances and condemnation)
- Affected neighborhoods have a meaningful role in redevelopment planning
- Major changes to the redevelopment plan are offered to the community for ballot approval
Consider, Deliberate and Choose

How do we make informed choices?
How can we as citizens ensure that our choices are heard?

The deliberation process has offered an informed and effective public voice in other communities. Deliberation is not a win/lose debate, but rather a way to consider multiple options and learn to understand other citizens’ points of view. The entire community profits from increased understanding of contentious issues and of each other.

Understanding others does not mean you must change your position, but it will help with understanding the concerns, consequences and tradeoffs inherent in each position.

Three choices for leading redevelopment have been offered for examination. Each has been stated strongly to be distinct and stimulate thinking and discussion. No single choice is likely to be exclusively preferred across the community.

Some merger of the three choices, or others emerging from the discussion, might figure in the outcome. Consider the relative proportion of power you allocate to each choice. Consider also what now exists and how well it works so that your deliberation does not unnecessarily complicate the necessary checks and balances on power or duplicate existing agencies.

If you have identified a new alternative, test its consequences and consider what opponents would find objectionable. Scrutinize it with the same model that has been applied to the choices presented here. Remember that all choices will favor some people or interests over others.

There may be a strong tendency to seek approaches that will make everyone happy, but we need to be careful not to gloss over fundamental differences with feel-good generalities.

There is also the option for leaving the redevelopment process as it is. However, we would not be having these deliberations if that approach was fully satisfying to most citizens. Moreover, our circumstances are changing, whether we want change or not, and we will not necessarily be able to preserve what we valued in Virginia Beach’s past without making conscious decisions to do so.

By participating in this deliberation process, you have become a more influential and informed resource for our community. You have acquired a common base of understanding and added your voice to the creation of public policy. While any public policy is rarely a unanimous choice and never without consequences, you have helped lay the groundwork for an acceptable approach that can last through the challenges that will confront our community.

Deliberation: The Practical Matters

This reader on redevelopment is designed for community deliberation which is a process of talking and listening done in a group. Deliberate with your civic league, your book group, any group you want to assemble. Diverse views will make the deliberation more informative and interesting.

The deliberations can be done without a moderator BUT we strongly suggest that you obtain a moderator guide. It is available at the Virginia Beach libraries and on the Public Voices on Redevelopment Web site at www.VBgov.com/voices. Several citizens from the Leadership Team will be receiving moderator training and may be available to help moderate your deliberation.

Everyone should get a copy of this redevelopment reader in advance. The Virginia Beach Public Libraries have free copies that can be picked up. There is a “ballot” in the back of each reader for each participant to fill out AFTER the deliberation.

The Public Voices on Redevelopment Leadership Team will see all of the returned forms and they will be reflected in a report on the preferences of our citizens who chose to participate in the creation of a redevelopment strategy for our community.

For additional information call (757) 385-5042 or (757) 385-4679.
Redeveloping Virginia Beach — Who Decides?

Problem Statement: “How do we create a ‘city vision’ and process for redevelopment that serves all interests?”

Choice One:
Liberate the Free Market to Redevelop Virginia Beach

Position Statement:
Market forces drive decisions of property owners with speed, efficiency and fairness.

What Can Be Done:
• Forbid government’s role in private land use decisions beyond normal planning, zoning, and code enforcement
• Cut government red tape to make redevelopment less expensive
• Encourage developers, but avoid government financial incentives
• Vote against any Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RHA)

Those in Support Would Say:
• Land owners have the opportunity to make the profit they deserve
• Forces the municipal bureaucracy to get out of the way of private enterprise
• The market will provide for the development of affordable housing
• Guarantees less tax money will be spent on redevelopment

Opponents Would Say:
• Places profit above other values
• Produces ugly development, stresses infrastructure and services and impacts the most vulnerable
• Private redevelopment stagnates during economic downturns, creating blight
• Eliminates long-term accountability

Likely Trade Offs:
• When property owners have complete control over their own land they have no control over the land next door.
• Greater individual rights will diminish community choices and may not meet community needs.
Choice Two:
Provide Municipal Government with the Tools to Redevelop Virginia Beach

Position Statement:
Only government has the long-range view, resources and expertise to plan redevelopment that provides for economic growth and other public needs.

What Can Be Done:
• Create a government office to plan and pursue redevelopment
• Use tax breaks and other incentives to encourage desirable redevelopment
• Use public-private partnerships to jump-start redevelopment (e.g. Town Center)
• Vote for a Redevelopment and Housing Authority with condemnation power

Those in Support Would Say:
• Long-term, professional planning creates economic growth that keeps taxes low
• A Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RHA) is a useful tool to compete for economic development
• Government could protect neighborhoods from blight, preserve open space and lower the costs for redevelopment
• Elections are the public’s voice in government planning

Opponents Would Say:
• Government abuses individual property rights
• City planning doesn’t work
• Government incentives give some businesses advantages that others do not receive
• Government doesn’t listen to citizens

Likely Trade Offs:
• Pursuit of economic growth destroys the quality of life that makes the community attractive.
• When the only accountability is the ballot, government may turn over at every election and thus be unable to carry out long-range planning.

Choice Three:
Strengthen the Citizens’ Role in Redeveloping Virginia Beach

Position Statement:
Citizens decide and government implements the community’s vision.

What Can Be Done:
• Diverse community interests work out the broad redevelopment vision and policies and refer it to the citizens for approval
• Systematic reporting to citizens on the use of redevelopment tools (e.g. zoning variances and condemnation)
• Affected neighborhoods have a meaningful role in redevelopment planning
• Major changes to the redevelopment plan are offered to the community for ballot approval

Those in Support Would Say:
• Maximizes the innovation generated by diverse viewpoints
• Facilitates vision-based planning with widespread understanding of goals and public costs
• Increases the investment that citizens have in implementing their vision
• Increases trust by making expectations and policies enforceable and clear to all

Opponents Would Say:
• Overly cumbersome, causing delays, raised costs and missed opportunities
• Open nature of the process could foster land speculation and other detrimental effects
• Makes property owners’ rights dependent on public opinion
• Not an appropriate role for citizens, they are not experts, not elected and not accountable

Likely Trade Offs:
• Every official process citizens create to control government becomes part of government.
• The “not-in-my-backyard” mentality gets in the way of vision.
In the scruffy Virginia mill town, a home large enough to accommodate a family of six rented for about $12 a month. If a window was broken or the roof needed replacing, you notified the company.

In the postwar 40s and 50s, living was cheap in the little textile mill towns of the southern United States. Since the turn of the century, companies had been building their own towns from scratch, or creating villages within cities. Mill workers earning $50 a week, or less, could afford a decent place to live. The company saw to it.

This little slice of Americana has all but vanished now, courtesy of globalization and other economic complexities. But in their heyday, company towns represented one of the purest examples of reaching a goal that, today, is as elusive as it is desirable – an adequate supply of affordable housing.

Affordable housing is generally defined as a decent place to live that costs no more than 30 percent of a household’s gross monthly income. If a company town of 2,500 blue-collar souls could accomplish this decades ago, why can’t a thriving city of nearly 450,000 do the same today? Why are so many people in danger of being squeezed out of the housing market in Virginia Beach?

Virginia Beach has a deficit of 8,500 affordable rental units. The median assessment of new houses built in Virginia Beach has exceeded $200,000 for each of the last three years.

In today’s market, the supply of buildable land has dwindled. There is a strong demand for what’s left.
Affordable Housing – Generally defined as a residence that an individual or family can afford by spending no more than 30 percent of gross household income on a mortgage or rent.

Cash Proffers – A tax on development, which drives up the cost of new housing to the developer. In turn, the developer passes the extra expense to home buyers.

Community Development Block Grant Programs (CDBG) – One of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s oldest programs, CDBG provides annual grants through many types of programs.

Comprehensive Plan – Defines long-term land use goals throughout a municipality citing many of its unique areas and identifying the location of important natural resources. It provides guidance for growth and development through transportation planning, housing and community appearance policies, and many other related elements.

Condemnation – When government takes private property for public use if the owner refuses to sell. The owner is compensated at market value.

Conditional Zoning – Rezoning accompanied by the applicant’s voluntary, legally binding commitment of development improvement, accepted by the city to protect the community.

Density Bonus – When the city grants additional density in a development in exchange for desirable amenities such as open space.

Dillon’s Rule – Localities may exercise only those powers expressly granted by the state, along with powers implied by the grant and indispensable to the locality. (Virginia is a Dillon-Rule state).

Economic Vitality – Enables all people within a community to prosper. It is both energy and a condition created by a thriving business environment, a qualified workforce, and the recognition that global competition and change link the success of an area to the success of its people and businesses.

Eminent Domain – The authority of government to take or to authorize the taking of private property for public use, with fair compensation.

Exurban Area – The region beyond a city and its suburbs.

Fair Housing Act – Prohibits housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, family status or disability.

Grayfield – Suburban strip commercial area made up mostly of parking lots and single-story buildings.

HOPE VI Program – HUD’s main funding for revitalization of the nation’s most distressed public housing developments. Grants allow flexibility in providing housing and social needs.

Housing Choice Voucher Program (formerly Section 8 Program) – The federal government’s major housing assistance program for very-low-income families, the elderly and the disabled.

Impact Fee – Based on the premise that developers should pay for infrastructure necessitated by new developments.

Inclusionary Zoning – Regulations that provide the opportunity to construct more diverse and economical housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income families.

Mixed-Use Development – Development of a tract of land or structure with a variety of complementary and integrated uses – such as residential, office, retail, public or entertainment – in a compact urban form.

Proffers – A developer’s voluntary commitment that quantifies how the property will be developed or used and what on-site and off-site improvements will be provided.

Redevelopment – The replacement of less productive uses or structures, with more productive uses or structures, to significantly better serve the community values of our citizens and the goals of the city, and to revitalize the city.

Section 811 Program (nonprofit only) – HUD funds provided to nonprofit organizations to develop rental housing with supportive services for very low-income adults with disabilities.

Transfer of Development Rights – When a sensitive area is identified as needing protection from development, the “rights to develop” are transferred to another identified area.

Urban Renewal – A program intended to redevelop and rehabilitate primarily urban blighted areas using public expenditures like comprehensive planning and government assistance.
Additional Reading

Books:


Articles, Papers, & Perspectives:
For Virginia Beach Public Library cardholders, available through the database at http://www.vbgov.com/dept/library/electronicresources/0,1520,12437,00.html.


Web Sites:


For reading materials on the various aspects of redevelopment, please view the Redevelopment Research link to reading lists on subjects including eminent domain, housing, property rights and transportation from the Virginia Beach Public Library Web site at www.VBgov.com/libraries.
How do we create a “city vision” and process for redevelopment that serves all interests?

Now that you’ve had a chance to read this booklet or attend a dialogue, we’d like to know what you think about this issue. Your opinions, along with those of many others who participated in this discussion, will be reflected in a summary report prepared for participants, the public and elected officials.

1. Here is a list of principles on which redevelopment in Virginia Beach might be based. Which best explains your personal opinions/values?

   a. Market forces are best suited to drive decisions for land use and redevelopment.

c. Citizens should decide and government should implement the community’s vision for redevelopment.

2. Of the three choices listed in Question 1, which most closely describes the current redevelopment process?  a.__   b. __   c. __

3. Indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

   a. If redevelopment objectives are focused on economic growth, quality of life amenities like open space, entry-level housing and good education will follow.

   b. Citizens should be more involved in redevelopment decision making even if it raises the costs of making decisions or slows the process.

4. Under which of the following circumstances or not, should owners of private property be forced to sell their land?

   a. To clean up or remove a deteriorating home or business.

   b. To build a new school needed to relieve overcrowding.

   c. To construct a new road needed to relieve congestion.

   d. To attract a new company with high-paying jobs.

   e. To create or preserve open space for parks, greenways and/or environmentally sensitive areas.

   f. To create or enhance community amenities for cultural and recreational opportunities.

   g. Private property owners should never be forced to sell their property.
5. Under what circumstances should government incentives be used to encourage redevelopment?
   a. To encourage redevelopment in targeted areas of the city.
   b. To facilitate the construction of affordable housing units.
   c. To “jump start” economic activity ahead of the market.
   d. Incentives should never be offered.

6. Under which of the following circumstances or not, should the role of citizens in redevelopment be strengthened?
   a. When a redevelopment project involves a citizen’s neighborhood.
   b. When public monies are being utilized.
   c. When land is rezoned or reclassified.
   d. When major policies or land use practices are being decided.
   e. When proposed development follows approved zoning and land use policies.
   f. It is not the role of citizens to lead the redevelopment process.

7. Other comments you would like to make about a redevelopment strategy for Virginia Beach?

8. Will the material is this booklet aid your future participation in issues and decisions related to redevelopment? Are you more likely to participate in this and other issues in the future?

Please give this form to the dialogue leader or moderator to be mailed to:

The Public Voices Leadership Team
Betsy McBride
City Manager’s Office
2401 Courthouse Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Ballots should be sent in as a group with the date of the deliberation and a sign-in sheet where names can be gathered separately from the ballots.
Public Voices on Redevelopment Project Team

Jerry Alley
Chuck Applebach
Sean Brickell
Carolyn Caywood
Lise Chandler-White
Kathy Conroy
Kevin Fairley
Ellis Hinnant-Will
Stephanie Klinkenberger
Mary Luskey
Betsy McBride
John Stewart
Cynthia Whitbred-Spanoulis

Public Voices on Redevelopment Research Team

Kathy Conroy
Cheryl Gayton
Dorothy Harland
Martha Hewitt
Wayne Ja Kob
Stephanie Klinkenberger
Mary Luskey
Susan Marziani
Nicole A. McGee
Janice Miller
Dee Dee Taylor
Pauline Tyler

Project Contact Information

Betsy McBride
(757) 385-5042, 385-4679
bmcbride@vbgov.com

Project website: www.VBgov.com/voices

© 2006 City of Virginia Beach