

Workshop

Jefferson Davis Corridor Assets and Needs Study, Richmond, Virginia

The City of Richmond, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and Groundwork Richmond referred to as the “Core Stakeholders” recognized the need for revitalization of a four mile stretch of the Jeff Davis Highway located in the City of Richmond, Virginia. This approximately four mile long corridor has suffered many of the ills associated with post industrialization, beginning in the mid-1970s with the collapse of the steel industry as well as that of manufacturing in general. Much of the industry, primarily associated with tobacco and paper production, has long since left the area taking with it a significant number of jobs and the need for the businesses that served that workforce. The overall decline and disinvestment in the area has left many vacant and underutilized parcels as well as a lack of diversity in business and commercial types, the area being dominated by car service related uses.

These Core Stakeholders reached out to NJIT TAB for assistance in the preparation of an assets and needs study, the foundation of which would be based on strong community engagement. The goal of this assets and needs



study is three-fold: first, through community engagement activities, identify what the community sees as assets and needs in the study area, as well as preferred development types; second, identify underutilized properties with revitalization potential where clean up and redevelopment can act as a catalyst for redevelopment activities along the Jeff Davis Highway; and third, use the information obtained to identify potential reuses of the identified catalyst sites that have the potential to meet the needs identified by the community but have a high probability of economic viability. For the purpose of the study a catalyst site was defined as *sites that: are known to be contaminated or have the potential for*



contamination; are vacant or abandoned; and because of their attributes (e.g., size, location, etc.) their redevelopment would spur other development.

NJIT TAB conducted an assets and needs workshop, the goal of which was to garner input from the participating residents as to what they believed the assets and needs were for the Jeff Davis Corridor and to provide feedback as to what types of development they preferred, e.g., mixed use, pedestrian friendly, big box versus small business. NJIT TAB coordinated all the activities associated with the workshop including: event invitations and advertising, development of workshop materials, and the conducting of all workshop activities and exercises with participants. The information obtained from the basis of determining potential redevelopment scenarios for any given catalyst site that would meet the community needs, build upon those assets already existing in the area, and be of the preferred type of development. The information obtained from this workshop served as the basis in evaluating potential catalyst sites for redevelopment and the application of federal assessment grant funds.