



THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

HENRICO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

ERIC LEABOUGH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Thank you for taking the time to read another edition of the Community Connection. This newsletter will provide important updates about the work that we are doing to improve the County and your community. In this edition, I will highlight our Community Maintenance Division.

The work that the Community Maintenance Division does is extremely important, as there are costs associated with allowing unmaintained, vacant, and distressed properties to remain in a community. Researchers estimate that the direct revenue losses associated with these types of properties vary between \$5,000 and \$35,000 per house. These costs manifest themselves in the form of reduced home values, costs associated with abating code violations, increased public safety costs, etc.

Distressed properties in communities have been found to reduce home values by 4.2 to 7.5 percent. As a result, we seek to educate the community about the importance of maintaining their property, and the department deploys resources to assist when there may be a hardship. Our code enforcement efforts always begin with a “soft approach,” where an inspector will deliver an informational brochure and work with the property owner to negotiate a timeline for compliance. Approximately 70% of code violation cases are closed in this manner without the issuance of a formal Notice of Violation. Property owners who are elderly/and or disabled or facing a personal hardship are offered volunteer assistance or are referred to a non-profit agency that may be able to provide home repairs/other types of assistance. In addition, we operate a volunteer assistance program that assists lower-income seniors with one-time limited assistance. This assistance is provided on a case-by-case basis and is limited in scope (see pg. 4 for further details).

A small percentage of code violations are not resolved by the property owners through voluntary compliance or program assistance. At times, abatement or court action is necessary to satisfy County code requirements, and property owners can be billed or fined in an effort to resolve their code violations. Chronic code violators, businesses, and rental properties are of particular concern, so resolving violations for these properties is expedited. Our main objective is to obtain voluntary compliance, and the “soft approach” has allowed our residents to buy into the community maintenance program, knowing we are pursuing compliance over conviction, considering individual circumstances, and seeking assistance for those in need.





DEPARTMENT CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 30th - Memorial Day (Office Closed)

June 20th - Juneteenth Observed (Office Closed)

June 28th (Anticipated) - Board of Supervisors Public Hearing on 2022-23 Annual Action Plan and Federal Funds Budget

July 4th - Independence Day (Office Closed)



NEED A MEETING TOPIC?

As a way of keeping in close contact with Henrico neighborhoods, the Community Maintenance Division attends meetings hosted by various congregations, civic associations, and neighborhood watch groups. Our team is available to share information about the Community Maintenance Program. We can present a slide show and distribute brochures that explain the zoning issues we handle and the responsibilities of property owners. If your group is having a meeting, or if you would like brochures delivered to you, please contact our office at 501-4757 to make arrangements. We are also available to participate virtually to accommodate distancing requirements.

2022 NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK

National Community Development Week is April 11th-15th, 2022. Here in Henrico County, we are so grateful to be able to help improve the lives of community members using funds from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) each year. This program year, Henrico County received \$1,747,341 in CDBG funds from the federal government, which are being used to contribute to projects across the County aimed at improving housing and infrastructure, as well as supporting various economic development efforts.





WHAT'S HAPPENING IN COMMUNITY MAINTENANCE?



The Division of Community Maintenance is responsible for enforcing the zoning ordinance and other code sections which relate to the condition and maintenance of privately owned residential and commercial properties.

GRASS MOWING SEASON IS HERE!

The Division of Community Maintenance enforces Henrico County's code related to grass and weeds. Grass and weeds are defined per County code Sec. 10-135 as: *grass, weeds, bushes, poison ivy, poison oak or any other vegetative growth other than trees, ornamental shrubbery, flowers and garden vegetables.*



Your lawn should be consistently mowed and not exceed 12 inches in height. If our code compliance inspector observes tall grass and weeds on your property, or receives a complaint from the community, they will reach out to you to negotiate a compliance timeframe.

Voluntary compliance is the goal of our program and staff will make a reasonable effort to work with you. If voluntary compliance is not attainable, the County may respond by having a contractor cut the grass and weeds, and the cost of abatement will be billed to you.



*To report a property with overgrown grass and weeds, please contact Community Maintenance at:
(804) 501-4757 or go to the [Build Henrico website](#) to register a complaint*



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

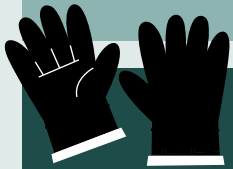
The Community Maintenance Division is currently seeking volunteers to assist low-income elderly, and/or disabled citizens during the 2022 calendar year. We match groups of volunteers with projects depending upon their skill level and time commitment. Most of our projects are more labor intensive than skill based, such as painting and basic yard maintenance. Scheduling is based on the availability of projects and volunteers.

You may be asked to perform light tasks such as:

1. Yard Maintenance - Grass cutting and/or trimming of shrubbery or hedges.
2. Removal of trash or yard debris from the property.
3. Minor exterior painting.

Please note that assistance will be provided to homeowners on a one-time basis and cannot serve as an alternative to routine lawn maintenance.

If your congregation, civic group, or business is looking for an opportunity to give back to the community, please contact Ashley Catterton at 501-7632 or cat016@henrico.us, or Jane Howk at 501-7628 or how064@henrico.us.



VOLUNTEER PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

The County was able to connect a volunteer group to an elderly homeowner in eastern Henrico who was facing a hardship and was unable to address code violations filed on his property.

On August 21st, 2021, volunteers from Wave Church assisted the homeowner with yard maintenance activities. The homeowner set up break stations for volunteers and was very appreciative of the work performed.

The County leveraged additional volunteers during the month of February to repair damaged fencing on the property. Thanks to the volunteers, this project was a huge success!





WHAT'S HAPPENING IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?



The Division of Community Development administers the County's federal block grant programs (CDBG, HOME, and ESG), assists businesses through the Enterprise Zone program and the new Henrico Investment Program, undertakes special revitalization projects, and serves as a resource on housing and community development issues.

HILLIARD HOUSE RENOVATION AND EXPANSION

Housing Families First is excited to undertake the \$4 million Hilliard House renovation project. Henrico County ESG-CV funds are supporting the shelter renovation that will increase their shelter capacity for families in need and will provide a shelter space that mitigates the risk of spreading COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. With construction currently underway, the newly renovated facility will be fully operational this summer. To find out more, please visit <https://housingfamiliesfirst.org>.



SANDSTON SIGN ADDITIONS

In September of 2021, Sandston was officially listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register, and in December of 2021, Sandston was officially added to the National Register of Historic Places. The Sandston community has two welcome signs that were originally installed with the help of the Department of Community Revitalization. To acknowledge the community's historic standing, the two welcome signs will be receiving an additional plaque that reads "National Register of Historic Places." The improvements will hopefully be completed by the end of April 2022.



For more information about Community Development, contact our division at:

(804) 501-7617



The Planning Department has embarked upon an update to the Henrico County comprehensive plan (Vision 2026). HenricoNext is the planning process undertaken to develop a new 2045 comprehensive plan that will articulate a renewed vision, policy direction and implementation strategy for the County’s future. The plan will address a broad array of community issues important to our overall quality of life. To learn more about the project and to sign-up for email updates, visit www.henriconext.us



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

ROY PROPS
ENTERPRISE ZONE PROGRAM MANAGER

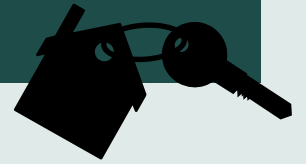
Roy manages the Enterprise Zone Program, as well as the Henrico Investment Program, aimed at incentivizing investment in targeted commercial areas.

YEARS AT HENRICO COUNTY: 10 years with the Dept. of Community Revitalization, 26 years total at Henrico County (other time spent in Planning Dept.)

FUN FACT: Roy has a small farm and has 2 goats (Cam and JJ Jr.) and 1 sheep (Belle)!



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE



For over a decade, Henrico County has been able to partner with two local non-profit agencies, HOME Inc. and SCDHC, to work towards assisting first-time homebuyers within the County. Through these programs, low- to moderate-income first-time homebuyers can receive housing counseling and education on the purchasing process, along with down payment and closing cost assistance.

These programs focus on making sure that first-time homebuyers have the resources and education necessary to be successful in purchasing a home in Henrico. Applicants to these programs receive both pre- and post-purchase housing counseling in order to ensure that they are being placed in a financially secure position with the knowledge they need to stay in that secure position. Counseling and education through these programs covers a wide variety of topics including: understanding the mortgage loan process, budgeting for a mortgage, working with real estate agents, what the bidding process entails, how to navigate closing on a property, and where to begin when finding your first home.

Clients of these programs will be assigned a housing counselor who will guide them through the process, and help in getting necessary documentation in order to begin the process of purchasing their first home. Henrico County will assist through these non-profit agencies by providing up to \$14,500 for purchasers of existing housing or up to \$20,000 for purchasers of newly constructed units to be applied towards the down payment and closing costs of the sale to clients purchasing within the County.

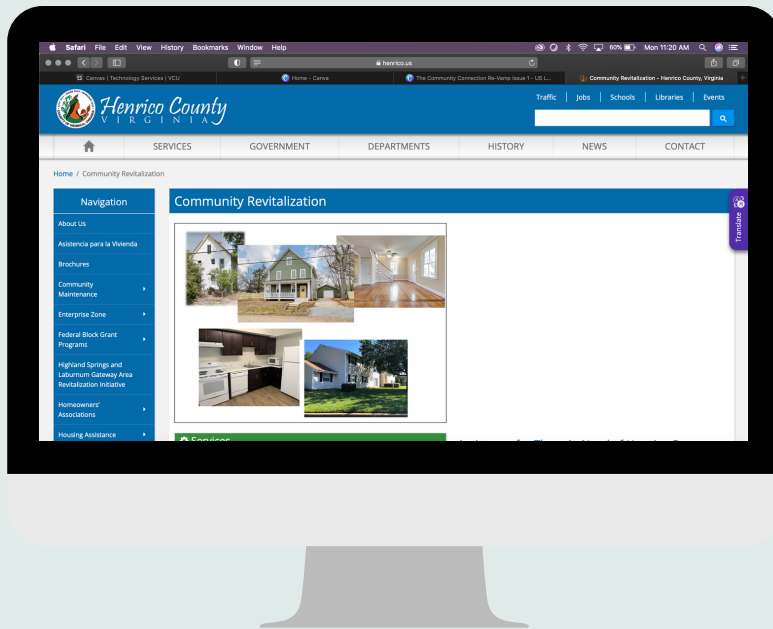
For more information regarding Henrico’s Down payment and Closing Cost Assistance programs, please contact Rachael Thayer at [tha006 @henrico.us](mailto:tha006@henrico.us) or (804)-501-7614.



To start the application process for down payment and closing cost assistance through one of the non-profits, please call or visit these websites:

Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation (804) 231-4449 or <https://www.scdhc.com/>

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia (804) 354-0641 or <https://homeofva.org/>



Visit our Community Revitalization Website at: <https://henrico.us/revit/>

OR

Give Us a Call at: (804) 501-4757

We would like to give a special thanks to everyone who has worked so diligently to make our volunteer projects successful!

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If you would like our newsletter to be sent to someone you know, please contact us at commrevit@henrico.us.

