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# Planning Practicum Final Report: Petersburg, VA

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# Executive Summary

The City of Petersburg is located in east-central Virginia, just south of Richmond, the state's capitol. This connection informed the historical development of Petersburg by supporting its industries and wider economy. However, Petersburg has since experienced a decline in population and economic growth. The Petersburg CREATE Program was envisioned to address the issues that the city currently faces in the areas of climate adaptation, land use and transportation planning, and economic development. This report describes the steps involved in conceptualizing the project and consists of a review of literature and case studies that align closely with the city's comprehensive planning objectives. These form the basis of a robust and inclusive urban greening and forestry program that utilizes city-owned vacant lots and leverages diverse community skills and strengths.

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Planning Practicum Final Report: Petersburg, VA

University of Virginia Master's of Urban and  
Environmental Planning '23 Students

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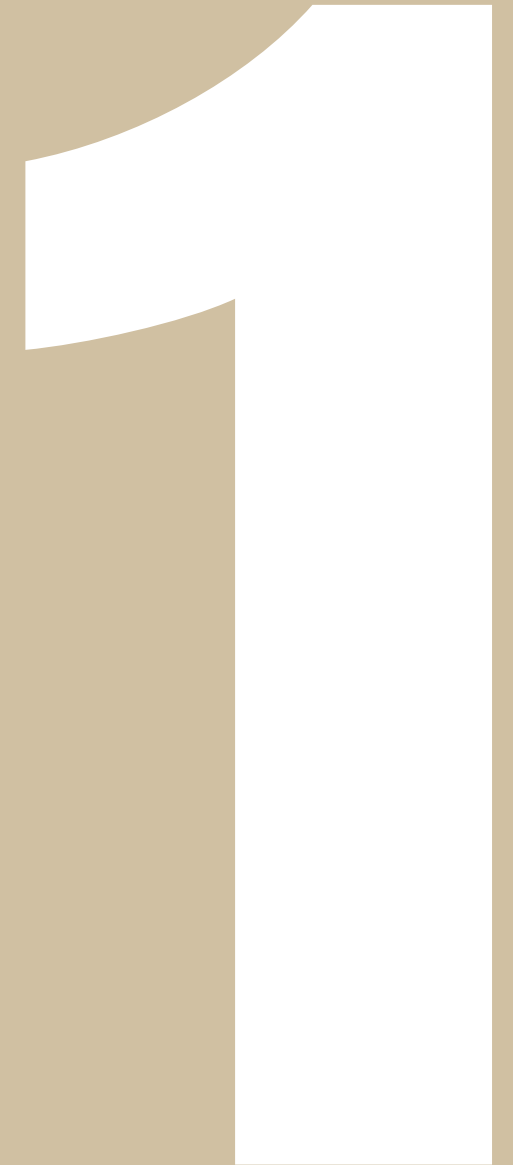
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# Context



Petersburg History &  
Framework for Comprehensive Plans

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# Petersburg History & Framework for Comprehensive Plans

**History:** Transportation networks have defined Petersburg, contributing to the city's identity and structure. Petersburg is twenty-four miles south of Richmond and surrounded by ten counties (Crater Planning District Commission, n.d.) The proximity to Richmond and major thoroughfares have enabled Petersburg residents to access job opportunities. The mean travel time to work in the 2020 Census was 24.3 minutes, approximately the time it takes to drive from Petersburg to Richmond (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Historically, the connection between Petersburg and Richmond supported industries and the economy in Petersburg. The Petersburg railroad started running in 1830 (City of Petersburg, 2019). The railroad connected Richmond to Petersburg, which enabled industries to flourish in Petersburg. While Richmond and the surrounding counties have supported Petersburg, they have also negatively impacted the city. Starting around 1990 there has been a population decline in Petersburg (City of Petersburg, 2019). Many residents were choosing to move to surrounding counties because of aging housing and a lack of new construction in Petersburg (City of Petersburg, 2019).

Petersburg has immediate access to Interstates 85, 95, and 295 and US highways 1, 301, and 460. The city became defined by its proximity to major interstates in the 1950s. Interstate 95 is the most significant gateway for Petersburg as it passes directly through Petersburg. Interstate 90, originally named 'The Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike' opened in 1958, costing drivers 70 cents (Holmberg, 2017). The turnpike provided a direct connection for vehicles between Petersburg and Richmond. In 1992, Petersburg residents advocated removing the toll on the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike. The last toll was collected on June 30, 1992 (Holmberg, 2017). The relationship to transportation networks has influenced development in Petersburg. Historically, the development pattern of Petersburg has traditionally been clustered around transportation routes, including the Appomattox River, railroads, state roads, highways, and interstates (City of Petersburg, 2019).

The Petersburg population saw a slight increase in growth in 2020, and the city projects a slight increase in the growth pattern in the future. Currently, one goal of the City of Petersburg is to continue to attract young residents to enable the growth of the city (City of Petersburg, 2019). While Petersburg faced a slight population increase in 2020, a large portion of the Petersburg population is aging (City of Petersburg, 2019). Developing a complete streets strategy and continuing to invest in public transportation can enhance connectivity within Petersburg and the region. It can support the aging population and enable many to age in place, while also attracting new residents to the city. Petersburg has a unique and rich history. Developing thoughtful transportation networks can provide connections between the historical sites and encourage tourism to the city. If designed with principles of equity, sustainability, and safety, transportation can be a tool to support population and economic growth for Petersburg.

**Framework for Comprehensive Plans:** Comprehensive Plans are long-range policy documents (typically 20 years) that are general visions for a community's future and should be a legislative “to-do” list. They plan for physical future development and act as an advisory or guidance document for the development of ordinances and programs. They should identify past, present, and future trends. They promise what a community is going to do and should not be viewed as a regulatory document.

Comprehensive Plans hold great value for communities because their decisions are based on studies and public input. Comprehensive Plans also protect planners and serve as legal foundations against claims of discrimination. In addition, they meet the prerequisites for grant funding. Lastly, they coordinate zoning ordinances, subdivision codes, and capital improvements. However, these plans do have some limitations such as not having the status of an ordinance and no requirements that existing uses or zoning must be consistent with the plan. In addition, elected officials aren't required to follow the goals in the plan in many states.

There are a variety of considerations for best comprehensive planning practices. The first is to have both vertical and horizontal consistency. Vertical consistency should exist between the plan (policy) and codes (law)/capital budget (program). Horizontal consistency should exist between different parts of the plan (internal consistency) as well as with other specific topic plans if there are any. A clear breakdown of goals, objectives, and action must be clear. Goals are general aspirational statements that should provide the “general what.” Objectives are general strategies for implementing the goals and should provide the “specific what.” Actions are specific actions for implementing the strategies and should provide “the how.” In addition, accurate and equitable data collection is essential. Keeping the plan’s written elements short supported by visual graphics, maps, and photos is also key. Lastly, an important question to ask is if it's better to have realistic goals or overarching “perfect vision” goals. These each have pros and cons but should align with what the community aspires to achieve.

The Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan (City of Minneapolis, 2023) exemplifies some of these best practices by organizing it by 2040 Goals, 2040 Topics, Plan Policies, and Implementation. It’s relatively unique given that many comprehensive plans break up their contents into Chapters rather than focusing on interdisciplinary and overarching goals which tap into many different planning topics. The goals listed are priority items identified by the community such as Eliminate Disparities and Climate Change Resilience. These goals are supported by relevant evidence and thorough data collection. The topics listed allow various stakeholders who have a prime interest in a specific topic such as Transportation and Housing. Under each goal and topic exists the respective policies that seek to achieve that goal or revolve around that topic. Each policy has clear action steps on how this policy will be implemented. The Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan is a great example because it has a clear breakdown of goals, objectives, and actions, has vertical and horizontal consistency, and includes accurate and relevant data to support its background findings and goals. There exists a user-friendly PDF (with built-in hyperlinks) and a website version of the Plan, which its community members have found accessible and easy to navigate.



The Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan

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# Goals & Methodology



Memorandum of Understanding &  
Methodology and Work Process

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# Memorandum of Understanding

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**1. The consulting process will result in the development of a two-part report:**

Part 1 will consist of case studies that provide research on innovative planning practices in cities of relevant comparison that address the concerns of urban heat island, stormwater management, transportation planning, vacant land use, and economic development.

Part 2 will provide an overview of how these case studies could be implemented within a particular neighborhood in Petersburg (to be determined in further communication between Reginald Tabor and the Student Consultants). One case study, determined through our mid-point presentation in April with the Planning Commission, will provide a more in-depth analysis of feasibility and funding.

**2. This report will also be presented in the form of a 20-minute presentation to our classmates in PLAC 6090 and to the Planning Commission for the City of Petersburg, VA.**

**3. Send all project files to the City of Petersburg for future use.**

# Methodology and Work Process

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**This project evolved through a series of weekly internal team meetings and biweekly reviews with Mr. Reginald Tabor, the City of Petersburg Planning Manager.**

The first stage included the collection and synthesis of background materials on the city's historical context, and case studies on climate change adaptation and sustainability, land use and transportation, and economic development.

The team then identified a set of three specific project directions relevant to Petersburg: 1) floodplain management interventions; 2) active transportation and Complete Streets; and 3) a community-engaged "Adopt-a-Lot" Program.

The team also presented early versions of the report to the Petersburg Planning Commission on April 6, 2023.

The final stage consisted of designing a single overarching program focused on urban greening and forestry which could serve as a flexible template for the city's efforts in the near future.

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# Case Studies

# 3

**Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainability,  
Land Use and Mobility & Economic Development**

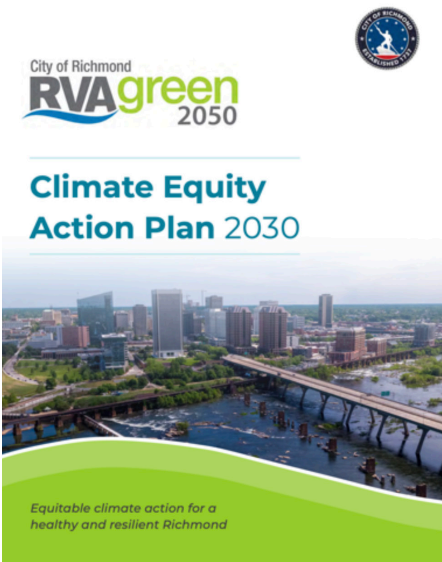
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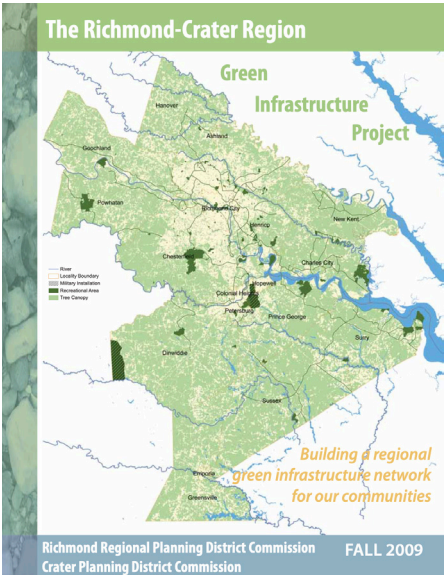
# Cliamte Change Adaptation and Sustainability Case Studies



GreenCorp Workforce Development Program



Climate Equity Action Plan



Climate Adaptation

## GreenCorp Workforce Development Program

**Case Study:** Youth Workforce Development Opportunities

**Location:** Detroit, MI

**Topic:** Green Corps Summer Youth Program (Greening of Detroit)

**Overview of Process and Community Partners:** Now in its 24th year, the Green Corps Summer Youth Program is one of several programs run by the community-based organization, Greening of Detroit (Green Corps Summer Youth Program, n.d). Founded in 1988, Greening of Detroit has planted over 100,000 trees in the city and runs several programs, including assisting in the implementation and maintenance of stormwater management projects utilizing native plants. Green Corps, a summer youth program emerged as a need to combine opportunities for high-school students in the summer with furthering Greening of Detroit’s mission.

In its current iteration, the program runs for 6-8 weeks for youth ages 14-18 years old. Within the program, students are paid to work on maintaining green spaces, execute conservation projects, and helping with other environmental efforts in the city. In addition, those involved in the program also receive soft skill training in leadership, conflict resolution, financial literacy, and also can participate in SAT prep. This program also employees young adults (ages 21+) as Crew Leaders. This program also provides participants with opportunities to meet professionals engaging in similar work, including ISA Arborists and Landscapers.

The organization also runs an Adult Workforce Development Program where they offer certification courses. These include a Certified Landscape Technician course, a Certified Tree Artisan, or a Snow Removal Technician. Participants who complete the course also receive a \$600 stipend, and can earn stackable credentials such as a CDL license and OSHA 10 Safety certifications. These programs, like the programs for youth, are complemented by training in soft skills such as financial literacy.

**Relevance:** Developing a program like this in Petersburg would have numerous benefits, including helping to provide opportunities for youth to become involved in their community, learn about best practices in environmental conservation and management, while also providing Petersburg with capacity to address overgrown vacant lots and publicly owned land.

**Limitation:** This program-while working closely with the City of Detroit-is managed by a non-profit partner. Other cities like Chicago, IL, however, run similar city-sponsored programs.

**Funding:** This project is run by a non-profit community partner, Greening of Detroit. According to recent news articles (Clynes, 2018; Spruill, 2021; Patterson, 2022; Perkins, 2022), Greening of Detroit is funded through both public and private grants. Within the last year, federal funding includes the US Forest Service (\$200,000) and the CDFI (Community Development Financial Institutions Fund). They have also received private funding from Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation (\$450,000).

# Climate Equity Action Plan

**Case Study:** Richmond Climate Equity Action Plan

**Location:** Richmond, VA

**Topic:** Community engagement and equity in climate action planning

**Overview of Process and Community Partners:** In December 2020, Richmond, Virginia completed a Master Plan update. Later that year, Mayor Stoney and the City Council unanimously adopted a resolution “to recognize the effects of global warming caused by human activity and establish a climate action goal... (Richmond Council, 2020).” To that end, the Office of Sustainability conducted an in-depth community engagement process to create Richmond’s first plan to address climate change, the Richmond Climate Equity Action Plan 2030 (City of Richmond, 2022).

The Plan was created as an addendum to the Mater Plan, which acknowledges the inequities ingrained in the community and historically perpetuated by local government. This resource was created in partnership with community members who served on a Racial Equity and Environmental Justice Roundtable aimed to shift power to those who have been historically under-represented in planning processes. Members of the Roundtable worked with technical experts to explore the intersections between climate change, equity, and race in a two-year process to create the plan.

The Plan creates goals for climate action and resilience as well as objectives, strategies, outcomes, and indicators. The pathways explored include buildings and energy, community, environment, transportation and mobility, and waste reduction and recovery. Each of the pathways is based upon community priorities and a central vision for Richmond’s future. Together, the Plan constitutes a useful resource for community leaders and local government.

**Relevance:** Petersburg can use the Richmond Climate Equity Action Plan 2030 as a model for community engagement and goal setting related to climate action. The Office of Sustainability and Working Groups used the ‘SMARTIE’ model to ensure the strategies in the plan meet the goals and objectives. This means that the strategies are Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable. Throughout the plan, equity and innovation tips are highlighted.

**Funding:** This project was funded through the Richmond City budget. The plan outlines funding for projects through the city budget. However, environmental advocates in the city have expressed concern that short-term environmental goals are not included in the city’s budget (Suarez, 2022).

# Climate Adaptation

**Case Study:** The Richmond-Crater Green Infrastructure Project

**Location:** Richmond-Crater Metropolitan Area

**Topic:** Preserving natural assets and expanding green infrastructure to bolster regional economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

**Overview of Process and Community Partners:** Between October 2008 and October 2009, the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC), the Crater Planning District Commission (CPDC), the Green Infrastructure Center, and the Capital Regional Land Conservancy undertook a cooperative project to document the Richmond and Crater regions’ Green Infrastructure Assets (Richmond Regional Planning District Commission & Crater Planning District Commission, 2009).

Throughout the year, workshops were held that brought together regional planners, local governments, state and federal agencies, and other interested organizations to discuss the region’s green infrastructure assets and priorities.

A summary report was prepared as a resource for green infrastructure planning activities across and among the Richmond and Crater Regions. Several main topics were emphasized. The region’s forests are a renewable economic resource that purify the region’s air and water, prevent soil erosion, and support biodiversity. More than 2800 farms covering approximately 558,000 acres provide habitat, filter water, and sequester carbon as well as sustain the region’s agricultural economy. Area trails, parks, and historical sites connect communities with the region’s rich natural and human history. State and federal wildlife areas provide habitat as well as opportunities for recreation, environmental education, and bird watching.

**Relevance:** Petersburg is incredibly rich in environmental and cultural assets which can be preserved and utilized as green infrastructure in order to bolster tourism from throughout the region and beyond. These efforts can easily be combined with flood mitigation strategies to simultaneously increase recreational, employment, and ecological opportunities within the city. Many parks, trails, and historic sites already exist in Petersburg, so work moving forward can focus on strategically connecting and enhancing these assets. While this study was conducted over ten years ago, it provides a critical blueprint of where sites are currently located, what priorities might be if the study were to be duplicated, and how to connect Petersburg within an emerging network of environmental tourism in Virginia.

**Funding:** This project was funded through the Virginia Coastal Management Zone, NOAA, the Green Infrastructure Center, and the Capital Region Land Conservancy



# Land Use and Mobility Case Studies



Complete Streets in South Bend, Indiana

## Complete Streets

**Case Study:** Complete Streets

**Location:** Multiple (cities in VA, IN, FL)

**Topic:** Complete Streets with a focus on community engagement, active mobility and creative placemaking

**Overview of Process and Community Partners:** Complete Streets has been implemented in a number of different ways across the country with broad applicability to Petersburg. The city places emphasis on the prioritization of people, the preservation and support of land use plans and the improvement of community health in its Comprehensive plan. These are all dimensions that are amenable to being included in a city-wide plan for Complete Streets. Given the importance of downtown Petersburg to the community’s economic vitality, it is useful to draw on local street scales to explore how interventions may be implemented in ways that simultaneously preserve and accentuate the historical landmarks of the city. In doing so, there is also a need to remain focused on ensuring transportation equity, through connectivity to underserved residential neighborhoods, accessibility of active transportation infrastructure to all and the creating safe and affordable transportation options.

There are a few important steps that draw on precedents from other cities which may be useful to Petersburg. First, a community outreach survey may be conducted to assess the anticipated problems with active transportation. In other cities, this has helped gain a better understanding of public perceptions of safety, usability, and demand. Second, the city may choose to map the stakeholders involved in coming together to ensure the success of complete streets. When Fairfax County conducted a similar exercise, they identified a range of stakeholders that included the VDOT, public schools, the health department and the National Parks Service; some key benefits to identifying multiple stakeholders include the possibility of gaining wider input in addition to the possibility of increased funding from each of these sources.

The stakeholder engagement strategy also has the potential to address a set of targeted questions such as the case of Wenatchee, WA shows, where the following questions created the basis for greater specificity: (i) who would be affected by Complete Streets? (ii) who would get to have a say in the project? (iii) who would help design and build the project? Next, cities like Orlando have successfully created engagement strategies around Complete Streets that rely on neighborhood mapping exercises; these helped the city better understand how residents sought out safety on their everyday routes through the flagging of site-specific traffic hazards (Smart Growth America, 2018).

**Relevance:** The city of Petersburg may be interested in exploring intervention strategies that encourage forms of ‘creative placemaking’, in ways that center downtown the history of the city. Cities like South Bend, IN have successfully created opportunities for locals to become involved in how the city is experienced by encouraging street art as a traffic calming mechanism (Smart Growth America, 2018). For Petersburg, this may help to slow downtown traffic and thus create a safer multi-modal mix. The introduction of median islands, rubber curbing and bump outs are all interventions that could play a major role in improving perceptions of safety and encourage walking and biking in the downtown area.

# Fare-Free Transit

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**Case Study:** Fare-Free Transit

**Location:** Multiple (Washington DC and cities in VA, MA, CT)

**Topic:** Fare-Free Transit

**Overview of Process and Community Partners:** In response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, numerous cities and transit systems across the United States started adopting permanent or indefinite fare-free policies as a means to counter declining ridership. Previously, such systems were relatively scarce in the U.S., and were typically found under specific circumstances: when subsidized by a university, when ridership was too low to justify the cost of fare collection, or when a municipality offered limited free routes within their downtown area (Walker, 2014). Since the pandemic, the adoption of fare-free transit has experienced a significant surge, with the transit agencies of Washington D.C., Richmond, Charlottesville, Alexandria, Boston, the State of Connecticut and Petersburg, VA, embracing this approach to public transportation.

The transition to fare-free transit, although presenting certain challenges such as loss of fare income and difficulties in collecting ridership data, brings with it a multitude of significant benefits. These advantages encompass increased ridership, reduced traffic congestion and pollution due to fewer cars on the road, expedited service resulting from the absence of fare collection, and the opportunity to treat transit as a public good. By embracing these advantages, cities can foster a more sustainable and equitable public transportation system, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being of their communities and promoting a better quality of life for residents.

**Relevance:** Petersburg Area Transit (PAT) is a regional transit system that began offering fare-free service for both its fixed and paratransit services in mid-2020. Prior to this change, PAT's fare collection made up approximately 10% of the system's funding, with the remaining revenue coming from federal, state, and local government sources (Kimley Horn and Connetics Transportation Group, 2021). Currently, the system has secured funding to continue operating fare-free for at least 1-2 more years, and city staff have expressed intentions to maintain the fare-free policy indefinitely (Jean-Charles, 2021).

The fare-free approach has significant implications for Petersburg's local transportation system. While funding is available to support the fare-free service, ridership still faces a considerable deficit following the Covid-19 pandemic. To address this issue, PAT is collaborating with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit on a grant and has planned multiple projects to enhance bus service. These initiatives include extending operating hours on Saturdays and optimizing bus routes for greater efficiency (City of Petersburg, 2022).

By adopting fare-free transportation, Petersburg aims to boost ridership, alleviate traffic congestion, and foster a more sustainable and equitable transit system for its residents.

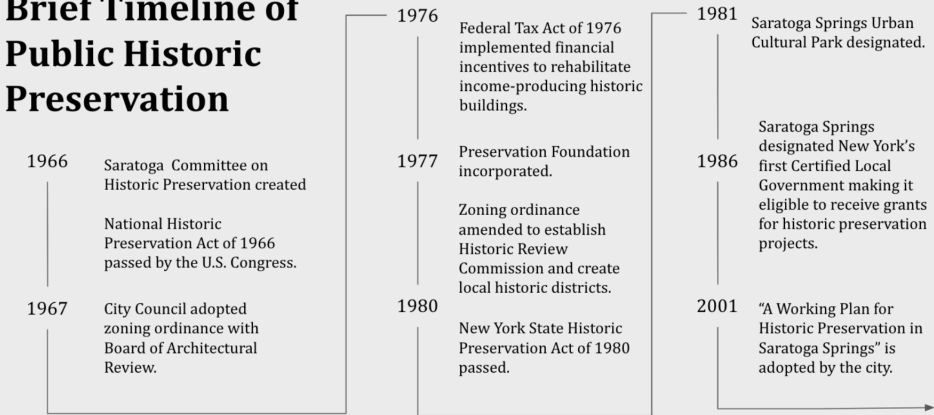


# Economic Development Case Study



Saratoga Spring, NY

## Brief Timeline of Public Historic Preservation



# Historic Preservation and Economic Development

**Case Study:** Historic Preservation and Economic Development

**Location:** Saratoga Springs, NY

**Topic:** Enhancing land values, expanding land uses, and spurring economic development through historic preservation

**Overview of Process and Community Partners:** Saratoga Springs has a population of about 30,000 according to the 2020 United States Census and is uniquely situated just over 30 miles north of New York's state capital, Albany. It is a city with a rich history and tourism industry, including a mineral springs resort it got its name from and the fourth oldest racetrack in the country. The City of Saratoga Springs has eight local historic districts that combined create one historic overlay district. Not only do the residents of the historic districts benefit from the preserved sense of place, but so do the rest of the city's residents and visitors. Approximately 6% of the total land area of the city is designated as a historic district.

Preserving many of the downtown historic buildings that were in disrepair or vacant were identified as critical successes of an Action Plan developed in the late 1950s. A grant program was then established to provide funding to building owners to rehabilitate the historic exteriors and make the buildings code compliant. They could receive up to \$25,000 to make their buildings code compliant and to renovate or restore the exteriors in exchange for a 25 year preservation easement. The grant program and historic preservation generally is managed by a planning committee at the city.

**Relevance:** In the late 2010s the city used state grant funding and worked with the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation to produce a study on the benefits of historic preservation on the economic, social, and cultural life in the city, which was published in 2016. Their hope was that the study would model and encourage other small cities to embrace preservation as a tool for revitalization. The study focused largely on economic impacts, as well as the social and cultural impacts. Some of the largest economic impacts were around the revitalization of the vacant areas. The study found that mixed use development improved the downtown area, making it significantly more walkable. Additionally, there are more housing options in historic districts than elsewhere in the city, which enables residents from a wide range of economic levels, household sizes, and age groups to live there. Approximately 40% of all apartment properties are located in historic districts. The lessons learned from the benefits of historic preservation of vacant buildings could be applied to Petersburg, given the similarities in population, distance from the state capital, and tourism opportunities.

**Limitations and Funding:** The city of Saratoga Springs capitalized on grant programs and easements, but also had a significant amount of upfront development costs that were taken on by private developers who lived in the area. The upfront costs and risks of gentrification could be major concerns.

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# Three Proposed Projects

# 4

Floodplain Management Interventions, Active  
Transportation and Complete Streets & A  
Community-Engaged "Adapot a Lot" Program

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# Floodplain Management Interventions

**Overview of the Project:** This proposal addresses concerns relating to floodplain management in Downtown Petersburg. The area includes a high density of historically significant structures which are acutely and chronically vulnerable to damage sustained from repeated inundation due to its immediate proximity to the Appomattox River and a projected climate change-induced increase in annual precipitation, respectively. Strategically locating a series of floodplain management strategies, such as native species bioswales, permeable pavement, and educational stormwater signage accompanied by QR code links, along the Appomattox River trail can provide opportunities to aesthetically and environmentally bolster an area crucial to the region's ongoing economic development.

**Location:** The proposed improvements would be situated along the Appomattox River trail between Fleet St and N Market St.

**Precedents:** Petersburg could draw on existing efforts with Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR) to expand the river trail in the area and utilize green space for stormwater management. Ideally, FOLAR's work installing a continuous trail along the river could be supplemented by the inclusion of a series of stormwater interventions mentioned above. Previous efforts to index and connect Green Infrastructure sites in the Greater Richmond area provide a critical resource, and combining floodplain protection efforts with a broad expansion of relatively low-cost green tourism interventions could be advantageous. Comprehensive greenway systems in cities like Fredericksburg (City of Fredericksburg, n.d.) serve as a potential precedent. Whitpain Township, Pennsylvania used Educational Brochures and Stormwater Links (Whitpain Township, PA, n.d.) and QR Codes (Stormwater A, n.d.) to provide mobile-friendly snippets from StormwaterPA.org's video case studies, which illustrated best management practices and green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff.

**Benefits:** The benefits of this proposal are as follows: (i) it would reduce damage from flooding caused by severe rain events and overflow from the Appomattox River (ii) it would increase access to green space along the Downtown and Battersea neighborhoods (iii) it would provide recreational and educational amenities for community members

**Challenges to Implementation:** The current challenges to the implementation of this project includes costs associated with installations, management of and coordination between the city and FOLAR, and long-term effectiveness absent a long term floodplain analysis.

**Considerations:** The current project considerations include the availability of funding sources, availability of space and coordination between public and private owners, and alignment with Comprehensive Planning objectives and other ongoing projects. An additional consideration is whether QR codes offer the best form of an additional educational component. Simple brochure pamphlets and/or short website links listed on the signage are great alternatives.

**Funding Sources:**

Virginia Environmental Endowment: <https://www.vee.org/grant-programs-application/general-grants/>  
Stormwater Local Assistance Fund: <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/water/clean-water-financing/stormwater-local-assistance-fund-slaf>  
Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP): <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/water/clean-water-financing/stormwater-local-assistance-fund-slaf>  
John Randolph Foundation: <https://johnrandolphfoundation.org/grants/>

# Active Transportation and Complete Streets

**Overview of the Project:** This proposal addresses the Comprehensive Plan's focus on a Complete Streets policy by emphasizing possibilities for the development of active transportation infrastructure along currently underserved routes. It specifically examines two street corridors that can serve as models for an expanded implementation of the city's new mobility policy.

**Location:** The first location is Grove Avenue, which serves as a connection between Virginia State University and downtown Petersburg. The second location is North Sycamore Street, an essential component of the city's historical identity, connecting the Appomattox River to downtown.

**Precedents:** Petersburg could benefit from drawing on various case studies to implement changes that highlight the city's focus on equity, improved health outcomes and historical awareness. The city of South Bend, IN, has implemented a policy that focuses on 'creative placemaking' through the installation of art on and along roadways, which simultaneously improve active engagement with spaces and simultaneously serve as traffic calming mechanisms (Smart Growth America, 2018). Fairfax County, VA, has finalized a plan to construct curb ramps that improve ADA accessibility and also create high visibility crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety (Smart Growth America, 2018).

**Other Petersburg Project Similarities:** Given the current focus within the Comprehensive Plan on the need for better health outcomes for Petersburg's marginalized residents, the city could explore forming an integrated food justice and active transportation alliance that addresses two significant issues – food deserts and mobility constraints.

**Benefits:** The benefits of this proposal are as follows: (i) it could improve access to downtown Petersburg for a wider cross-section of the city's residents through the creation of active transportation links; (ii) the focus on equity emphasis areas would place the focus on those who most need active mobility infrastructure; (iii) the location of these projects has the potential to stimulate economic growth and revitalize downtown businesses.

**Challenges to Implementation:** The current challenges to the implementation of both projects include the associated costs, the assurance of safety to pedestrians and bicyclists and the limitations imposed by existing transportation infrastructure. Changes to North Sycamore Street may face the added challenge of coordination with VDOT.

**Considerations:** The current project considerations include the availability of funding sources, availability of space on the selected street sections for implementation, identification of community mobility needs, alignment with Comprehensive Planning objectives and other ongoing projects.

**Funding Sources:**

Federal-aid programs and special funding: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/>  
Complete Streets waiver: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/spr-pl\\_match\\_waiver\\_memo.pdf](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/spr-pl_match_waiver_memo.pdf)  
Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A#:~:text=The%20FY22%20Notice%20of%20Funding,Review%20the%20NOFO>  
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/>  
Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/>  
Congestion Improvement and Air Quality Mitigation Program: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/)  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Program: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/funding/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/funding/)

# A Community-Engaged “Adopt a Lot” Program: Identifying Opportunities through Oral Histories

**Overview of the Project:** This project would utilize the community-engagement strategy of collecting oral histories and narratives to determine future land use of vacant parcels. This program would have two, interconnected outcomes: 1. A collection of oral histories from neighborhoods and communities where vacant parcels are located and 2. Funding opportunities available for individuals to develop vacant land for future green spaces or for permanent community uses. This program could incorporate an interactive educational element so that residents and visitors can learn more about the history of Petersburg, perhaps as an element of the redevelopment of the vacant lot. This has the potential to be used in other recreational or tourism purposes, such as walking tours. We are hopeful that a project that combines oral histories with revitalization could help spur community members to take on future projects related to historic preservation and education. Using the funding model of Chicago’s Adopt a Landmark program (2023), this project could be funded through development (new or infill) bonuses.

**Location:** This program would be applied on a city-scale, but should first be piloted in one of the three existing city-owned lots.

**Precedents:** This project idea was built upon precedents from the city of Chicago’s Adopt-a-Landmark Fund (2023), the Baltimore Green Network (2018), and Andrea Roberts’ Texas Freedom Colonies Project (2023, see also: A. Roberts, 2017, 2018; A. Roberts & Kelly, 2019). The city of Chicago provides insight into funding through development bonuses. The Baltimore Green Network is an effort to use sustainable, innovative, and cost-effective practices for redevelopment, including using vacant land to green neighborhoods. They created a guide in helping the city transform their vacant lots into community spaces. The Texas Freedom Colonies Project is an educational and social justice initiative that strives to support and preserve Black heritage and landscapes through research and place-making.

**Other Petersburg Project Similarities:** This project shares some similarities to the Department of Public Works’ “Adopt a Block/Street/Spot” program (City of Petersburg, n.d.). While it encourages community members and local businesses to take leadership on city beautification and improvement projects, the Adopt-a-lot program would focus on improving vacant lots/transforming vacant lots into green spaces or other community uses, rather than picking up litter.

**Benefits:** We identified four primary benefits. First, by using oral histories as a framework for community engagement and historical documentation throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, the city of Petersburg can leverage community place-making. Second, the educational component of oral histories is a great starting point to spur more conversation around history and revitalization (use in schools, planning processes, etc). Third, this project provides a new tourism opportunity, through creating public green spaces that incorporate historical elements, adding to revenue for the program and the city. And finally, the vacant lots can be used for community benefit without the pressures of intense development and be driven by the needs/desires of the community.

**Challenges to Implementation:** The current challenges to implementation include the training for conducting oral histories (Virginia Folklife Center, Andrea Roberts and other UVA community-engagement partners), capacity building and project management, and ongoing incentives for development. This project requires interest and ongoing development (or other upfront costs) to fund the program, which also means considering the incentives for other developers to provide money for the project.

**Considerations:** The considerations we identified are the current development patterns and zoning and what may need to be amended in an ordinance, the city’s capacity of creating new programs and partnerships, and how this program can complement existing tourism industries.

**Funding Sources:** This project would be funded through development bonuses, similar to the Chicago Adopt-a-Landmark Fund and Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus. Additional grants could be used such as:  
Virginia Outdoors Foundation Get Outdoors grant: <https://www.vof.org/protect/grants/go/>  
Virginia Outdoors Foundation Preservation Trust Fund: <https://www.vof.org/protect/grants/ptf/>  
Chesapeake Bay Trust Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns (G3): <https://cbtrust.org/grants/green-streets-green-jobs-green-towns/>



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# Petersburg **CREATE** Program Project Description

**C**ommunity-  
**R**esponsive  
**E**ducation &  
**A**rt for  
**T**ourism &  
**E**conomy



Project Introduction, Outcomes & Recommendations,  
Limitations, Stakeholder & Partnerships, and UVA  
Team Recommendations for Grant Submission Success

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# Project Introduction

Petersburg’s **CREATE (Community-Responsive Education and Art for Tourism & Economy)** program combines the diversity of skills across the City of Petersburg and its community partners to establish an urban greening and forestry program that utilizes city-owned vacant lots. The primary goals this project addresses within the Petersburg Draft [Comprehensive Plan Update](#) are as follows:

1. Build partnerships with private sector players and community stakeholder groups to capitalize on significant development opportunities.
2. Promote redevelopment of blighted areas comprehensively through both the Petersburg Housing Authority and the Industrial Development Authority.
3. Adopt customized park and recreation facility standards for livable communities and perform regular maintenance on all park and recreation facilities.

We are hopeful that this project could complement existing and future [Complete Streets Policy](#) (City of Petersburg, 2018) Projects, that address the following goals:

4. Establish a transportation system that preserves and supports land use plans.
5. Increase the mobility of the public through public transportation and regional cooperation.
6. Increase opportunities for physical activity such as walking, biking, and other forms of transportation, and create a community that is more inclusive and equitable (Complete Streets Policy)

This program would bring together several different city offices—including Planning and Community Development, Public Library System, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation—to establish an urban greening and forestry program that revitalizes city-owned vacant lots. This program will center an oral history engagement process, managed by the Petersburg Public Library System or other partners, that will inform community-relevant green spaces.

Green space interventions will be overseen by the Department of Public Works and Parks and Recreation, alongside community-based organization partners. Green space revitalization will be accompanied by educational and public art exhibits that take what was learned in the oral histories to create economic development through tourism. These exhibits would be created by community artists, using the analysis that emerges from the oral histories.

This project was based on precedents out of Chicago, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh. We have adopted Petersburg CREATE from these three programs to reflect Petersburg's specific goals. We have also identified a place-making-through-oral-history project based in Texas as a project precedent.

### Chicago: Citywide Adopt-a-Landmark Fund (2023)

This program provides grants that support the restoration of landmarks in the city of Chicago that meet the conditions of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (CCL) standards and guidelines. The funds for the grants are generated by downtown construction projects that contribute to the Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus (NOB) system and the Citywide Adopt-a-Landmark Fund. The NOB system is meant to accommodate ongoing growth through the city’s expanded downtown district and provide new funding to encourage commercial development in neighborhoods lacking private investment. The NOB Fund receives and allocates 80% of all bonus contributions and the Adopt-a-Landmark Fund receives and allocates 10% of the bonus contributions.

Petersburg CREATE could use the funding model here as a potential way to secure long-term funding.

### Baltimore: The Baltimore Green Network (2015, 2018)

The Baltimore Green Network is an effort to use sustainable, innovative, and cost-effective practices for redevelopment, including using vacant land to green neighborhoods while reducing stormwater runoff, creating community gardens and spaces, and aiming to mitigate negative impacts of vacant properties. A plan was developed to guide these efforts, resulting in the [Baltimore Green Network Plan](#), as well as frameworks for recreating vacant lots called the [Green Pattern Book](#). Additionally, the program has an interactive database for assessing the vacant properties.

The Baltimore Green Network relies on partnerships and resources to make this program work, including Baltimore City agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations, and individual residents. Petersburg CREATE could use a similar approach to community-engaged vacant lot planning and partnerships. We recommend an oral histories approach to community engagement for Petersburg.

### Pittsburgh: Adopt-a-Lot and Vacant Lot Toolkit (2015)

The city of Pittsburgh created an Advisory Committee of City departments, authorities, and non-profit partners to create a Vacant Lot Toolkit, Policy Guide, and Adopt-a-Lot program. A series of interviews and focus groups gave input from community stakeholders through this development process. The toolkit and the policy guide are used to refine the City process and policies for the reuse of vacant lots and guide the Adopt-a-Lot program. The program itself allows residents a process to access city owned lots for food, flower, or rain gardens. In the first two years over 114 vacant lots were transformed as part of 40 different community projects. This translates to 10 acres of formerly vacant land into community assets.

The city also adopted an Adopt-a-Lot ordinance as part of this program. Petersburg CREATE could adapt or model the policy and planning approaches taken by Pittsburgh.

### Texas Freedom Colonies Project (2023)

The Texas Freedom Colonies Project is an educational and social justice initiative that strives to support and preserve Black heritage and landscapes through research and place-making. The goal of the project is to “prevent the erasure, destruction, and decay of cultural properties within settlements in partnership with descendants communities.” The project is led by researchers who map disappearing places and assist in the creation of resilience strategies through recording stories, maintaining publicly accessible data, and identifying resources for resilience strategies and policies.

Petersburg CREATE could adapt these resources and objectives to the program by collecting oral histories and developing a community-engaged method for tourism and education related to the land use of the city.

### Project Objectives:

1. Establish CREATE Outreach Coordinator & Project Management
2. Use community-engaged methods to ensure robust stakeholder engagement and sustained community partnerships
3. Green space revitalization & vacant lot identification
4. Create education and tourism opportunities through the past and future of Petersburg
5. Complementary: Make green spaces accessible through active transit

The action items associated with these objectives are outlined in the timeline table **in section 6 of the grant proposal’s project narrative.**

# Project Outcomes & Recommendations

We have identified seven potential outcomes that we believe will allow the program to operate smoothly, align with current comprehensive plan goals, and give Petersburg the opportunity to implement this proposal.

1. Create an optimized and proactive system for tracking vacant properties and lots so that the program can function efficiently and accurately.  
Model a toolkit, based off of the toolkit from Pittsburgh's "Adopt-A-Lot" program. This would act as a resource and informational guide to how the program would work.
2. Create a Community Engagement/CREATE Coordinator position for the program that is based out of the Historic Preservation office, which will coordinate with the program out of the Department of Public Works and Parks and Recreation. This could also be done in collaboration with Petersburg's Public Library System to provide oral history training, conduct the oral histories, and strengthen partnerships. This position will oversee project implementation over the course of the grant period and be responsible for grant reporting and evaluation.
3. Use the economic issue in the Comprehensive Plan of "Promote the Brand 'I AM PETERSBURG' and use all assets to market the City to all economic sectors" for the oral histories to promote education and tourism opportunities. Hire community artists to design and create educational and public art exhibits that utilize the narratives that emerge from the oral histories.
4. Develop a long-term strategy for funding the program beyond the identified grant program. This should aim to create economic opportunities through infill development, which based on the precedents, would further and expand the program by using those bonuses. This would require the city to adopt a policy regarding how infill bonuses could be used.
5. Identify complementary active transportation projects that could correspond to increasing access to green spaces (Note: As of the writing of this grant proposal, active transportation projects fall outside of the scope)
6. Future projects should aim to include stormwater management through green infrastructure and could incorporate stormwater education into the program. (Note: In the three identified parcels, none are directly within a floodplain.)
7. Sustain partnership between all departments through the development of a Tool Loan program. This program would be housed within the public library system and provide residents with the opportunity to check out gardening tools such as shovels and rakes, similarly to how one would check out a book.

# Project Limitations

We have identified a few limitations to this project that we believe could be addressed by the City of Petersburg.

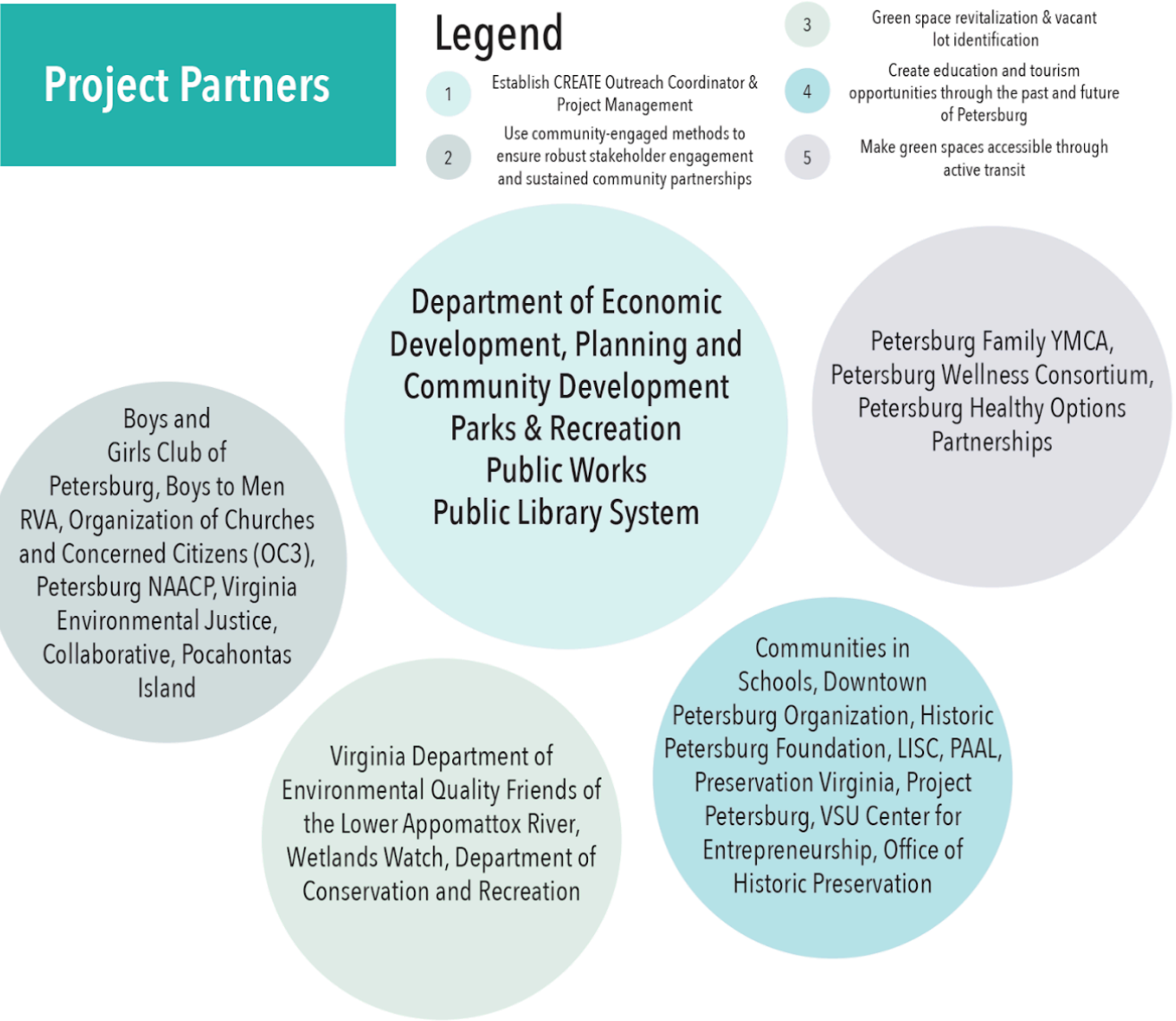
1. The most recent database lists only 3 sites of city-owned lots, one of them comprising dilapidated buildings. This list does not include any privately-owned vacant lots, which are included in the programming of some of our model initiatives. This database changes frequently and may not be the most up-to-date database for when this project is implemented.
2. Understanding what the incentives there are for developers to sell or adopt the lots, rather than developing them. For long term funding, this would need to be something that was more fully fleshed out between developers, the city of Petersburg, and community partners.

# Stakeholders & Partnerships

We have identified potential stakeholder partners for each of the project’s objectives. The project will be led by the Department of Economic Development, Planning, and Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and the Public Library System. Other project partners include community groups, environmental agencies, schools, and businesses. A contact list is included in the supplemental materials folder.

	A	B	C	D
1	Name	Affiliation	Title	Email
2	Brandie Lee	Boys and Girls Club of Petersburg, VA	Senior Program Director	blee@bgcmr.org
3	Warren McCrickard	Boys to Men RVA	Executive Director	warren.mccrickard@btmva.org
4	Darryl Walker	City of Petersburg	Stormwater Project Manager	dwalker@petersburg-va.org
5	Wanda Stewart	Communities in Schools	Director	wanda@cisofpetersburg.org
6	Thaddeus Huff	Crater Planning District Commission	Director of Economic Development	thuff@Craterpdc.org
7	Ron Svejkskovsky	Crater Planning District Commission	Director of Transportation	rsvejkskovsky@craterpdc.org
8	Angela Davis	Department of Conservation and Recreation	NFIP State Coordinator	angela.davis@dcr.virginia.gov
9	Reggie Tabor	Department of Economic Development, Planning and Community Development	Planning Manager	rtabor@petersburg-va.org
10	Will Isenberg	Department of Environmental Quality	Coastal Planner	william.isenberg@deq.virginia.gov
11	Dulaney Ward	Downtown Petersburg Organization	Local Historian	dulaney.ward@gmail.com
12	Sergei Troubetzkoy	Downtown Petersburg Organization	Director	tourismczar@gmail.com
13	Heather Barrar	Friends of the Lower Appomattox River	Regional Trails Program Director	hbarrar@folar-va.org
14	Justin Sarafin	Historic Petersburg Foundation	Director	justin.sarafin@alumni.virginia.edu
15	Jane Ferrera	LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation)	Executive Director	jferrara@lisc.org
16	Kate Sangregorio	Office of Historic Preservation	Preservation Planner	ksangregorio@petersburg-va.org
17	Jeff Butler	Organization of Churches and Concerned Citizens (OC3)	Staff	jeffb3812@gmail.com
18	Marquis Allen	Parks & Recreation	Director	mcallen@petersburg-va.org
19		Petersburg Area Art League (PAAL)		paal@paalarts.org
20	Marco Callender	Petersburg Family YMCA	Executive Director	callenderm@ymcarichmond.org
21	Fancie Terrell	Petersburg Healthy Options Partnership	Staff	fancie@vt.edu
22	Lisa Homa	Petersburg Healthy Options Partnership	Staff	lmh217@vt.edu
23	Kathy Hosig	Petersburg Healthy Options Partnership	Staff	khosig@vt.edu
24	Lafayette Jefferson	Petersburg NAACP	Member	jefferson.lafayette@gmail.com
25	Genevieve Lohr	Petersburg Police Bureau	Social Worker	glohr@petersburg-va.org
26	Robert Noriega	Petersburg Public Library System	Staff	rnoriega@ppls.org
27	Theresa Caldwell	Petersburg Wellness Consortium	Staff	Livingwell4now@gmail.com
28	Richard Stewart	Pocahontas Island	Mayor	unknown
29	Sonja Ingram	Preservation Virginia	Association Director of Preservation Services	singram@preservationvirginia.org
30	Audrey Smith	Project Petersburg	Director	acoxsmith@gmail.com
31	Randall Williams	Public Works	Assistant Director	rkwilliams@petersburg-va.org
32	Queen Zakia Shabazz	Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative	CEO	zakiashabazz8@gmail.com
33	Dr. Sarah Mellissa Witiak	Virginia State University	Biology Professor	switiak@vsu.edu
34	Matt Whalen	Virginia State University	Biology Professor	mwhalen@vsu.edu
35	Patrice Perry-Rivers	Virginia State University Center for Entrepreneurship	Director	pperry-rivers@vsu.edu
36	Shareen Hughes	Wetlands Watch	Assistant Director	shereen.hughes@wetlandswatch.org

Stakeholder Analysis



# UVA Team Recommendations for Grant Submission Success

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1. (Project Narrative, Section 1, 2, 4, 5, 6): Review proposed language, change as needed
2. (Project Narrative, Section 3): Insert contact information of project’s point of contact
3. (Project Narrative, Section 5 & 10): Investigate the EJ concerns as identified by the Environmental Justice and Screening Mapping Tool ([EJ Screen](#), 2014), the [EPA EnviroAtlas Interactive Map](#) (2015), and the [White House Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST, 2023\)](#) and add relevant language as needed
4. (Project Narrative, Section 7 & 8) Identify partners to conduct oral histories. If the Petersburg Public Library System is not interested, could establish partnerships with the Virginia Humanities’ Folklife Program, or UVA Assistant Professor Andrea Roberts
5. (Project Narrative, Section 7 & 8) Establish Point of Contact for each of the proposed partner offices and organizations.  
  
These include:
  - a. Public Works Department
  - b. Parks and Recreation Department
  - c. Petersburg Public Library System
  - d. Community-Based Organizations, identified by RAFT process (see Stakeholder Analysis on pages 38 and 39)
6. (Project Narrative, Section 9) Draft Communication Plan, based on best practices of project partners
7. Collect Letters of Commitment from future community partners and public sector office partners.
8. Review Budget Narrative & Budget

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# Petersburg **CREATE** Program Grant Proposal

**C**ommunity-  
**R**esponsive  
**E**ducation &  
**A**rt for  
**T**ourism &  
**E**conomy

6

Grant Proposal

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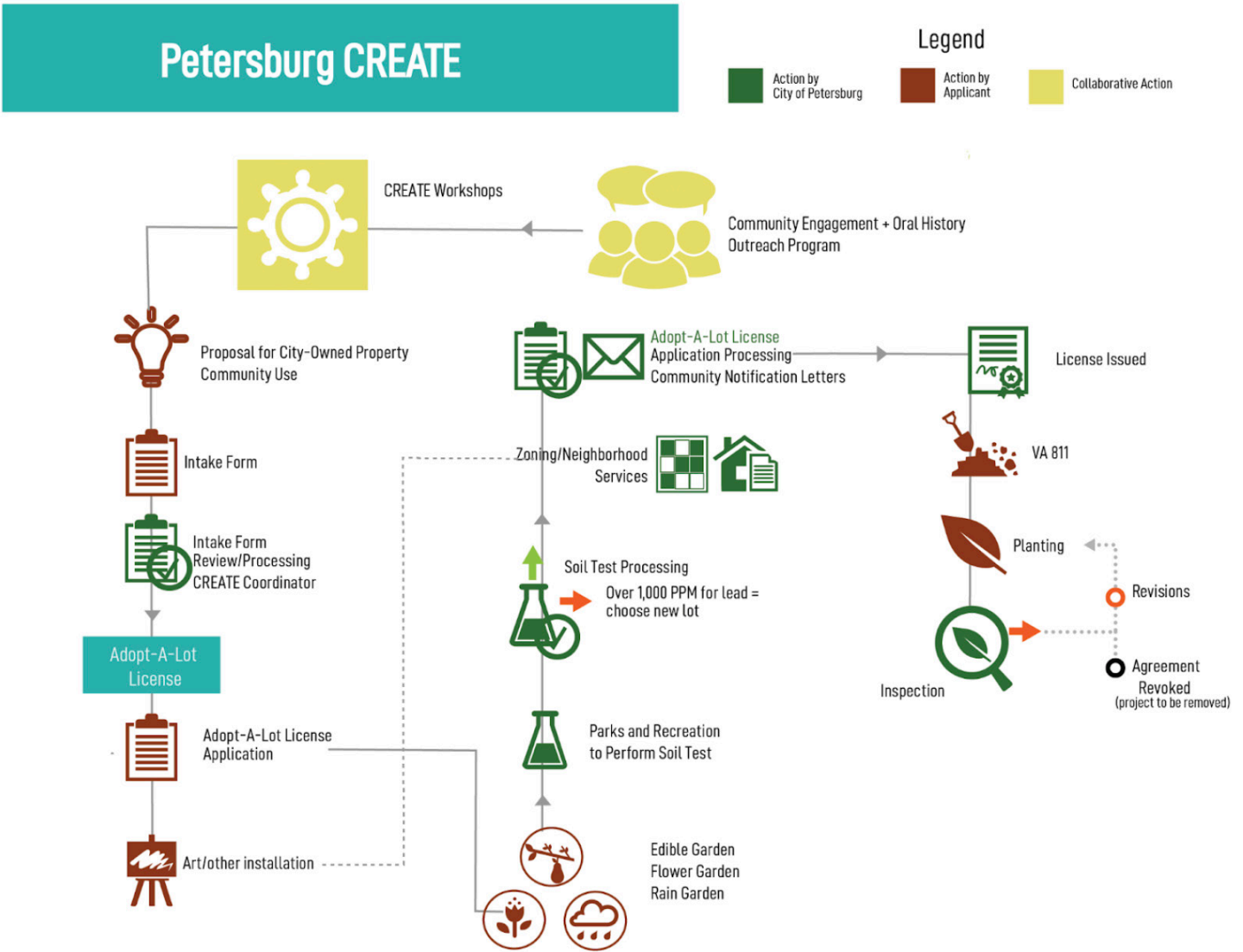
# Grant Introduction

We modeled the following grant proposal after the **USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act**. This is an active grant opportunity and the application is due by **11:59 pm on June 1, 2023**. Its' stated goal is: to provide multiyear, programmatic, competitive grants for tree planting and related activities, with a priority for projects that benefit underserved populations and areas through the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance program established under section 9(c) of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act Of 1978 (16U.S.C.2105(c)). It should be noted that this funding opportunity **cannot be used** for capital improvement projects (such as the building of facilities and roads) and land acquisition

In an effort to implement the goals established by Executive Justice 40 initiative, the USDA is piloting a “match waiver” within this funding opportunity. As stated in the funding opportunity, **“match may be waived for proposals that deliver 100 percent of the funding/program benefits to disadvantaged communities.”** According to the 2020 Census, the City of Petersburg is home to approximately 33,458 residents, 71% of whom identify as Black. The average median income in the city is \$44,890. Compared to other communities in the United States, the City of Petersburg is also highly vulnerable to several climate and environmental justice concerns, including but not limited to: air pollution causing cancer risk, inland flooding, and wastewater discharge (EJ Screen Tool). From Petersburg’s Comprehensive Plan—as well as community engagement efforts around this planning process—residents are also eager for more economic development opportunities that address vacant lots and blight within the built environment.

This project would work directly with disadvantaged communities in several ways. One, this project would directly engage disadvantaged communities through its community engagement process. Two, the green space revitalization outcomes associated with this project would not only engage disadvantaged communities through its community engagement process, it would also provide much needed green infrastructure benefits to address environmental and climate-related concerns such as inland flooding, stormwater management, and reducing air pollution through the planting and maintenance of trees and green space. Continued engagement with project stakeholders on the impact of the project and what could be improved, will also be used as a form of tracking how effectively this project engages disadvantaged communities.

We did identify another smaller grant opportunity from the **Chesapeake Bay Trust** titled **Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns**. This grant is regionally specific to states and the District of Columbia that surround the Chesapeake Bay, although it is currently inactive.



# Sample Project Narrartive

1. **Project Title:** Provide a uniquely descriptive title for this project. Use this full title consistently on all submission communications and supplemental documents, including letters of support, until an official application number is assigned by the Forest Service.

Petersburg CREATE (Community-Responsive Education and Art for Tourism & Economy) Program

2. **Project Applicant:** Provide the name of the organization applying for Federal funding.

City of Petersburg Planning & Community Development Department

3. **Contact Information:** Provide the name, title, address, phone number, and email address for the person leading the project or program.

To Be Added by City of Petersburg team

4. **Project Summary:** In less than 100 words, provide a summary of the project that includes the scope, location, key partners, and expected accomplishments.

Petersburg’s CREATE program combines the diversity of skills across the City of Petersburg and its community partners to establish an urban greening and forestry program that utilizes city-owned vacant lots. This program will center an oral history engagement process, managed by the Petersburg Public Library System, that will inform community-relevant green spaces. Green space interventions will be overseen by the Department of Public Works and Parks and Recreation, alongside community-based organization partners. Green space revitalization will be accompanied by educational and public art exhibits that take what was learned in the oral histories to create economic development through tourism. (99 words)

5. **Project Scope Alignment:** Describe the issues this project is seeking to address and how the project will contribute to the goals in this funding opportunity, including congressional, Justice40, [State Forest Action Plans](#), and [Ten-Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan \(2016-2026\)](#) priorities.

This project will contribute to the following:

1. **Justice 40 goals:** By combining community engagement with disadvantaged community memeres, innovative economic development, and highlighting public art, the project team believes this proposal embodies and implements the vision of Executive Order 14008, otherwise known as “Justice40”.

2. VA State Forest Action Plans:

- a. **Enhance-Enhance Water Quantity and Quality:** By transforming vacant lots into more well-maintained public green spaces that provide ecosystem services such as natural stormwater management
- b. **Support the Forest Economy and Diversified Markets:** By supporting diverse forest economies and markets by creating new economic development opportunities related to tourism and natural recreation
- c. **Expand and Improve Urban and Community Forests:** By expanding the urban tree canopy of the City of Petersburg.

3. Ten-Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan (2016-2026):

- a. **Goal 1. Integrate Urban and Community Forestry Into All Scales of Planning:** By creating cross-department collaboration, and by being housed within the Planning and Community Development office, this project would foster the partnerships needed to integrate urban and community forestry into all scales of planning.
- b. **Goal 2: Promote the Role of Urban and Community Forestry in Human Health and Wellness:** By pursuing complementary active transportation projects to support the project described in this grant proposal, this will expand the project’s opportunities to engage with issues around human health and wellness.
- c. **Goal 3: Cultivate Diversity, Equity, and Leadership Within the Urban Forestry Community:** By centering the diverse populations and partnerships that currently exist within the City of Petersburg in the community engagement and project implementation process.
- d. **Goal 7: Increase Public Awareness and Environmental Education to Promote Stewardship:** By creating educational and public art exhibits that discuss the past, present, and future of Petersburg so that visitors to community green spaces can learn more about history, as well current and future issues related to Petersburg’s natural resources and environment.

6. **Implementation Strategy/Methodology/Timeline:** Provide a detailed explanation of the proposed approach, methodology, operations strategies, project schedule/timeline with goals/milestones, expected accomplishments or measurable outcomes, and project assessment/evaluation methods.

**Implementation Strategy:** We modeled this pilot program off of programs and funding concepts in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Chicago. Both the Pittsburgh and Baltimore programs utilize city-owned vacant lots to facilitate community engagement. The projects range from art installations to rain gardens.

The city of Chicago’s Citywide Adopt-a-Landmark Fund (2023) provides grants that support the restoration of landmarks in the city of Chicago through funds generated by development projects and contributions to the Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus system and Adopt-a-Landmark Fund. The Baltimore Green Network is an effort to use sustainable, innovative, and cost-effective practices for redevelopment and resulted in a plan to guide the efforts, the [Baltimore Green Network Plan](#) (2018), as well as a framework for recreating vacant lots called the [Green Pattern Book](#) (2015). The city of Pittsburgh created an Advisory Committee of City departments, authorities, and non-profit partners to create a Vacant Lot Toolkit (2015), Policy Guide, and Adopt-a-Lot program.

Based on these precedents, CREATE will use oral histories and other forms of community-engaged best practices to understand input from the community and identify potential partnerships. Petersburg CREATE will then use the Baltimore and Pittsburgh precedents to create a policy and implementation guide that refine the city’s process and policies for the reuse and transformation of vacant lots, as well as an accompanying guide for residents and community partners to use as part of the program.

**Methodology:** This project utilizes a community engagement strategy of collecting oral histories to inform community benefits for vacant city parcels. The analysis of oral histories in addition to other engagement strategies such as the distribution of surveys will then identify community uses for city-owned vacant green spaces. The Parks and Recreation department, alongside the Department of Public Works, will then begin to implement those strategies. This may include contracting services for implementation as needed. Simultaneously, the CREATE Outreach Coordinator will begin to identify community artists to design and implement educational and public art exhibits that also utilize the analysis that emerges from the oral histories, who will also be contracted to provide services.



# Petersburg CREATE Timeline

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Create and Identify</b> Create and hire coordinator position. Create vacant lot database. Identify primary partners for conducting oral histories	<b>Identify and Develop</b> Hire local artists. Identify vacant lot pilot site. Conduct oral histories, and begin Toolkit development	<b>Develop</b> Conduct oral histories. Develop Vacant Lot Toolkit. Develop visuals and public art	<b>Implement</b> Develop long term funding. Implement green space revitalization projects at pilot project site. Implement public art exhibits	<b>Promote and Oversee</b> Promotion & engagement around pilot green space uses and educational and art exhibits
	<b>CREATE Outreach Coordinator &amp; Project Management</b>	<b>Community Engagement &amp; Partnerships</b>	<b>Green Space Revitalization &amp; Vacant Lot Identification</b>	<b>Create education and tourism opportunities through the past and future of Petersburg</b>
Year 1	Partnership planning meetings; conduct hiring process for CREATE Outreach Coordinator	Identify primary partners for conducting oral histories, provide training as needed	Create a map and database of all city-owned vacant lot properties	Identify and analyze current tourism and economic development opportunities related to public art and history
Year 2	Oversee oral histories and development of vacant lot model toolkit; Hire community artists	Conduct and analyze oral histories	Develop “Vacant Lot Model Toolkit”, modeled after City of Pittsburgh’s Toolkit; Identify pilot project site	Hire community artists to begin visualization of oral histories
Year 3	Oversee pilot project green space revitalization, community artist collaborations	Conduct and analyze oral histories	Begin implementing green space revitalization projects at pilot project site	Opening exhibit for community artist exhibit at pilot project site
Year 4	Oversee green space revitalization projects and community artist collaboration; conduct subsequent engagement of broader public	Promotion & Engagement around pilot green space uses and educational exhibits	Continue implementing green space revitalization programs at pilot project site, expand to other project sites; Begin drafting long-term management strategy	Complete educational and public art exhibits for other project sites
Year 5	Identify long-term strategy for continuing the program, including using capital improvement funds	Promotion & Engagement around pilot green space uses and educational exhibits	Implement first stages of long-term management strategy	Promotion of educational and public art exhibits, and process as a whole, to regional and national audience

# Sample Project Narrartive Cont.

7. **Capability and Capacity:** Describe how each contributing organization is suited for (mission) and qualified to deliver the project. Provide the names, titles, and organization affiliation and specific roles of key personnel for the project. Include qualifications and experience of key personnel to implement, monitor, and assess/report project outcome.

Organization	Contact Person	Relevant Qualifications of Contact Person	Role Within Project
Petersburg Public Library System	<i>Oral History Specialist (To Be Identified by City of Petersburg)</i>	<i>To Be Added by City of Petersburg</i>	Conducts and houses oral histories; collaborates with community artists
Department of Public Works	<i>Public Works Point Person (To Be Identified by City of Petersburg)</i>	<i>To Be Added by City of Petersburg</i>	Support program implementation through providing best practices from Adopt a SPOT program
Department of Parks and Recreation	<i>Green Space Revitalization Specialist</i>	<i>To Be Added by City of Petersburg</i>	Supports program implementation
Department of Planning and Community Development	<i>Planning Director, CREATE Outreach Coordinator (to be hired through grant process)</i>	<i>To Be Added by City of Petersburg</i>	Houses the CREATE Outreach Coordinator position; monitors and oversees program implementation
Community Artists	<i>To be hired through grant process</i>	Lived experience in Petersburg, art experiences	Create educational and public art exhibits from oral histories
Community Residents	<i>Various</i>	Lived experience in Petersburg, knowledge of Petersburg history and what the future could look like	Participate in community engagement, including oral histories

# Sample Project Narrartive Cont.

8. **Project Partners:** Provide the names of partner organizations, describe their involvement and contributions to the project, and qualifications of the organization and personnel as they relate to their roles in project implementation.

- Project partners include:
- Petersburg Planning and Community Development Department, including the Office of Historic Preservation
  - Petersburg Department of Public Works
  - Petersburg Department of Parks and Recreation
  - Petersburg Public Library System
  - Community Artists
  - Community Residents

9. **Communications Plan:** Share your plans for communication on the project, including plans for 1) signage acknowledging the source of funding at project locations 2) inclusion of funding information in press and promotional materials.

Communication around this project will include best practices from the partnering offices, such as newsletters and social media. Community artists will also incorporate acknowledgements of the funding opportunity within their educational and public art exhibits.

10. **Evidence of Disadvantaged Community Status for projects requesting Match Waiver (if applicable):** Clearly describe the scope of work to be performed in disadvantaged communities, and identify online vulnerability and environmental justice equity data and/or tools referenced to support a disadvantaged community designation, (e.g., White House Council on Environmental Quality [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#), EPA Environmental Justice and Screening Mapping Tool (EJScreen), [EPA EnviroAtlas Interactive Map](#), Opportunity Zones, or other vulnerability data/tools applicable to the scope of work). Multiple tools may be used. **All work must be tracked at the level that designates disadvantaged communities.**

According to the 2020 Census, the City of Petersburg is home to approximately 33,458 residents, 71% of whom identify as Black (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The average median income in the city is \$44,890. Compared to other communities in the United States, the City of Petersburg is also highly vulnerable to several climate and environmental justice concerns, including but not limited to: air pollution causing cancer risk, inland flooding, and wastewater discharge (EPA 2014; U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, 2023). From Petersburg's Comprehensive Plan—as well as community engagement efforts around this planning process—residents are also eager for more economic development opportunities that address vacant lots and blight within the built environment.

This project would work directly with disadvantaged communities in several ways. One, this project would directly engage disadvantaged communities through its community engagement process. Two, the green space revitalization outcomes associated with this project would not only engage disadvantaged communities through its community engagement process, it would also provide much needed green infrastructure benefits to address environmental and climate-related concerns such as inland flooding, stormwater management, and reducing air pollution through the planting and maintenance of trees and green space. Continued engagement with project stakeholders on the impact of the project and what could be improved, will also be used as a form of tracking how effectively this project engages disadvantaged communities.

# Budget Narrative

Along with a budget spreadsheet that can be found in the supplemental materials folder [HERE](#), this budget narrative expands upon the expected costs associated with the project.

- 1. Personnel (salary)**
- a. Full or partial salary for five positions:
    - i. CREATE Outreach Coordinator (housed within Department of Planning and Community Development): 45% of salary for Year 1; 100% of salary for Years 2-5; salary estimated at \$65,000
    - ii. Planning Director: 15% of total salary for Years 1-2 (to accommodate for hiring and training of CREATE Outreach Coordinator), then 10% of total salary for Years 3-5; salary estimated at \$175,000
    - iii. Oral History Specialist (Petersburg Public Library System): 10% of total for Year 1, 40% of salary for Years 2-3, 25% of salary for Year 4, 10% of salary for Year 1; salary estimated at \$68,000
    - iv. Point of Contact with Department of Public Works: 10% of total salary for Years 1-5; salary estimated at \$50,000
    - v. Green Space Revitalization Specialist (Parks and Recreation Department): 10% of salary for Year 1, 30% of salary for Year 2; 60% of salary for Years 3-5; salary estimated at \$50,000

- 2. Fringe Benefits**
- a. All Fringe estimated at 25% of salary

- 3. Travel**
- a. Site Visits to Model Cities: Visits for project team during Years 2-3 to Baltimore, MD and Pittsburgh, PA to see vacant lot programs and hear about best practices
  - b. Conferences: Funding for conferences in Years 3-5 (with additional funding in Year 5) to share findings on process, best practices

**4. Equipment - N/A**

- 5. Supplies**
- a. Office Supplies - General
    - i. Office Paper
    - ii. Licenses (when applicable) such as ArcGIS & Microsoft Office
  - b. Oral History Supplies (could be incorporated into contractual)
    - i. Microphones
    - ii. Data storage software
    - iii. Qualitative analysis programming
  - c. Artist Supplies (could be incorporated into contractual)
    - i. Paint/Clay/Other Medium
    - ii. Canvas
    - iii. Paintbrushes

# Budget Narrative Cont.

- d. Green Space Revitalization
- i. Garden supplies
- ii. Plants including shrubbery, trees, grasses as needed
- iii. Benches, public park spaces
- e. Promotional/Communication Materials
- i. Printing

## 6. Contractual

- a. Oral History: Advisor
  - i. External advisor with expertise in oral history engagement processes for Years 1-3, estimated at \$5000 for each year
- b. Green Space Revitalization Implementation Assistance
  - i. Implementation of green space interventions at 5 sites, estimated at \$10,000 (1 site in Year 3, 4 sites in Year 4)
  - ii. \$5000 to cover costs associated with complementing green space intervention
- c. Community Artists
  - i. 5 Community Artists contracted for Years 2-4 at \$25,000 each
  - ii. \$5000 in Years 1, 5 to cover costs associated with identifying community artists
- d. Community Residents
  - i. Oral History: 200 participants each receiving \$100 as participation compensation (100 participants in Year 2, 100 participants in Year 3)
  - ii. General Engagement: 200 participants each receiving \$10 as participation compensation for filling out survey (100 participants in Year 4, 100 participants in Year 5)

## 7. Other-no sub awards

## 8. Indirect Costs-idk how to figure these out

- a. Assumed 10% of MTDC in accordance with guidance below
  - i. **De minimis rate:** Any Non-Federal entity (except State and local governments that receive more than \$35 million per year in Federal funding) that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect rate (NICRA) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.
  - ii. **Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)** means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs,tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

# Budget Matrix

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1		Personnel (salary costs)	Fringe Benefits (Estimated at 25% of salary)	Travel	Equipment	Supplies	Contractual	Other--NO SUBAWARD	TOTAL (without indirect cost)	Indirect Costs
2	Year 1	\$ 74,800.00	\$ 18,700.00	\$ 18,700.00	\$ 0	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 105,000.00	\$ 10,500.00
3	Year 2	\$ 138,450.00	\$ 34,612.50	\$ 34,612.50	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 140,000.00		\$ 319,562.50	\$ 31,956.25
4	Year 3	\$ 144,700.00	\$ 36,175.00	\$ 36,175.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 150,000.00		\$ 351,375.00	\$ 35,137.50
5	Year 4	\$ 134,500.00	\$ 33,625.00	\$ 33,625.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 166,000.00		\$ 359,125.00	\$ 35,912.50
6	Year 5	\$ 124,300.00	\$ 31,075.00	\$ 31,075.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 11,000.00		\$ 188,375.00	\$ 18,837.50
7	TOTAL:	\$ 616,750.00	\$ 154,187.50	\$ 154,187.50	\$ 28,000.00	\$ 47,500.00	\$ 477,000.00		\$ 1,323,437.50	\$ 132,343.75
8										
9										
10	Personnel (salary costs)	CREATE Outreach Coordinator	Planning Director	Public Library Contact--oral History	Public Works Contact	Parks and Rec Contact				
11	Total Salary Used for Estimates:	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 68,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00				
12	Year 1	\$ 29,250.00	\$ 26,250.00	\$ 6,800.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 7,500.00				
13	Year 2	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 26,250.00	\$ 27,200.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 15,000.00				
14	Year 3	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 30,000.00				
15	Year 4	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 30,000.00				
16	Year 5	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 8,800.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 30,000.00				
17	TOTAL:	\$ 289,250.00	\$ 105,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 112,500.00				
18										
19	Travel:	Site Visits to Model Cities	Conferences							
20	Year 1	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
21	Year 2	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ -						
22	Year 3	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00						
23	Year 4	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 8,000.00						
24	Year 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
25	TOTAL	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 18,000.00							
26										
27	Equipment	not applicable?--has to last for longer than a year and cost more than 5000								
28	Year 1	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
29	Year 2	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
30	Year 3	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
31	Year 4	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
32	Year 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
33	TOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
34										
35	Supplies	Office Supplies - General	Oral History Supplies (could be included as part of contract)	Artist Supplies (could be included as part of contract)	Green Space Revitalization	Promotional/Communication Materials				
36	Year 1	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500.00				
37	Year 2	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500.00				
38	Year 3	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 500.00				
39	Year 4	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,000.00				
40	Year 5	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,000.00				
41	TOTAL	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 3,500.00				
42										
43	Contractual	Oral History (advisory assistance)	Green Space Revitalization (Implementation assistance at 5 sites, estimat	Community Artists (5 artists paid for 3 years at \$25,000/year)	Community Residents (200 participants receiving \$50 each)					
44	Year 1	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00					
45	Year 2	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 10,000.00					
46	Year 3	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 10,000.00					
47	Year 4	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 1,000.00					
48	Year 5	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,000.00					
49	TOTAL	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 385,000.00	\$ 22,000.00					

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# Conclusion & Citations



Conclusion &  
Citations

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# Conclusion

The Petersburg CREATE Program combines the elements of our initial project research, case studies, and three proposed projects into one larger project, of which establishes an urban greening and forestry program that utilizes city-owned vacant lots. Oral history engagement will inform community-relevant green spaces, accompanied by educational and public art exhibits to create economic development through tourism. This report outlines the project description, which includes a project introduction, project outcomes & recommendations, project limitations, stakeholders & partnerships, and UVA team recommendations for grant submission success. In addition, this report includes the grant proposal, which includes a grant introduction, sample project narrative, and budget narrative, of which we hope the City of Petersburg team can use as a template to revise and improve to their specific needs and circumstances.

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Planning Practicum Final Report: Petersburg, VA

University of Virginia Master's of Urban and  
Environmental Planning '23 Students

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