



Community Involvement During the Planning Process



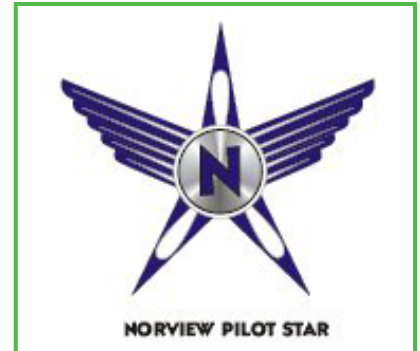
Pedestrian and Bicycle
Information Center

Problem

Norfolk wanted to foster economic development in several communities across the metro area, with an eye for enhancing individual community character.

Background

A community task force and an advocacy group—Civic League of Presidents—formed a partnership in the Five Points area of Norfolk, Virginia. They worked in coordination with a city-wide program that supported commercial development—the Commercial Corridors Program—to improve a busy corridor. One segment contained the high school, middle school, elementary school, and community center all in close proximity.



Solution

The partnership undertook a planning study to look at the streetscape and revitalize the area for commercial development.

Rather than impose a plan on the residents, the group conducted in depth community meetings and surveys to find out what the residents wanted their community to look like. Letters were sent directly to residents, flyers were posted in public areas, and meetings were arranged at convenient times. More than 13 public meetings and focus groups were conducted throughout the process, including a “pancake dinner” to draw participants. Between 40 and 50 residents regularly showed up to voice their concerns.



Priorities identified by residents in the detailed survey were adopted as top priorities for the project. The community voted a “pilot star” to be the recurring community symbol for bus shelters, light poles and more. Rather than bold, themed commercial development, citizens were most concerned about having a safe outdoor space to exercise and teach their children to ride bikes, a continuous and accessible sidewalk system, and improved lighting.

Results

In response to these concerns, Norfolk is in the process of developing a multiuse trail system that loops the high school and community center, providing a safe and useful space for jogging, biking, and other recreation.

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Images Source: Kevin Kluzak. City of Norfolk.