

History of Southwood

The following is a summary of activities, meetings, and review to date:

Activities Prior to Preparation of Action Plan:

- 2007 - Habitat for Humanity (Habitat) acquired the Southwood Mobile Home Park. At the time, Southwood had serious infrastructure and safety hazards, including issues with sewage and electrical fires. Habitat began by investing \$2.5M in deferred maintenance to create a livable environment. Habitat also prioritized building trust with the community before any redevelopment projects were initiated. To date, Habitat has also spent \$20M in general management of Southwood.
- 2011 - Habitat established core values for the Southwood redevelopment project. The most important value is non-displacement, while others include increasing the net amount of affordable housing and using a community-driven approach.
- January 2017 through April 2017, Habitat led a series of bimonthly workshops through which 70 Southwood residents became versed in planning and design topics from neighborhood and land use planning to block patterns and road design.
- 2013 -- Habitat interviewed all 341 households in Southwood and gathered core guiding values for the community and its redevelopment vision, which included: family, affordable, education and community.
- Summer of 2015 --Habitat conducted 108 resident interviews, and found that housing, outdoor spaces, and businesses + amenities were the most important components to future development.
- October 5, 2016 - The Board of Supervisors approved a resolution for a partnership between the County and Habitat.
- November 2016, -- Southwood redevelopment Action Plan was included as part of the Albemarle County FY17-19 Strategic Plan, under the 'Revitalize Aging Urban Neighborhoods' priority.

Creation of and Adoption of Action Plan:

- March 2017 - Habitat acquired the 20 acre 'exchange parcel' from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, giving Habitat the space it needed for redeveloping Southwood. This would allow Habitat to build in a greenfield area without having to move residents out of their homes.
- June 2017 -- Habitat and Southwood's actively engaged residents formed three groups, the Community Outreach Committee, the Community Guides Committee, and the Master Planning Committee. Each group focuses on an aspect of community activism and cohesion specific to the Southwood redevelopment -- door-knocking and increased awareness within the community; presenting resident-driven design ideas and the redevelopment process to outside entities; and working with architectural consultants towards master planning and neighborhood design.
- Summer 2017 -- Habitat held community workshops for Southwood residents including discussing a model of existing conditions, creating a neighborhood elements design book, visiting other neighborhoods in the County and resident outreach.
- September 8th, 2017 - The Board of Supervisors considered questions from Staff on Southwood and provided additional input. The Board emphasized that this project should be flexible and adapt over time, and should be directed by residents as much as possible. The Board recommended that a variety of commercial uses be allowed, determined mainly by residents, and that residents have opportunities to start and continue their own businesses.

- The large scope and complexity of this project required approximately 2,000 hours of County staff time in 2017. Due to the scope and complexity of the proposed development, a redevelopment multi-disciplinary/functional team approach was presented to the Board that included teams for the following areas: Planning, Services, Policy Funding, and Executive team which would be led by the residents vision for Southwood. See diagram below.
- January 10, 2018-- The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the appropriations, redevelopment team approach, action plan for Phase I and the Performance Agreement for the Southwood redevelopment project. The appropriations included \$400,000 (FY18) for the ZMA application process and \$275,000 (FY19) for the application plan and code of development.

Rezoning Process to date:

After the adoption of the action plan, the teams were formed with members that include County Staff, Habitat Staff, and two representatives from the Board of Supervisors (Diantha McKeel and Rick Randolph). Since the submittal of the rezoning, each of these teams has met to discuss and resolve issues, and identify future collaboration and processes for long term goals and needs for Southwood.

- February 20, 2018 -- The ZMA application for Phase I was submitted by Habitat.
- April 11, 2018 -- The Board approved appropriations for a Project Manager and Planner position for implementation of the Southwood Action Plan.
- April – June 2018 -- Multiple meetings took place with the Planning and Executive Teams to provide guidance on Habitat's application, which included discussion regarding topics such as affordable housing, master planning, recreation, and detail within the submitted Code of Development. Habitat and the County have been working closely together to resolve issues and work collaboratively on solutions.
- June 2018 -- two charrettes were held to provide more clarity and detail for the application from discussions within the Executive Team, Southwood residents, Habitat staff (including their consultants BRW Architects, Water Street Studios, Timmons Group Engineers), Board of Supervisors members, Planning Commission members and County Staff attended. Residents used scaled wooden and paper pieces to build their concept of Phase I, including housing, parking, roads and greenspaces. They incorporated different types of housing, both market and affordable, as well as a mixture of uses. Habitat consultants are currently designing renderings that will use residents' models from the charrettes, while accounting for environmental and other limiting factors.
- July 2, 2018 -- The ZMA application for Phase I was resubmitted.
- July 26, 2018 -- Habitat and their consultants held a meeting/charrette where they presented the combined renderings from the results of the June charrettes to the Southwood residents.