



# Albemarle County

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-597, **Version:** 1

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**AGENDA DATE:** 10/5/2016

**TITLE:**

Resolution Regarding Collaborative Redevelopment Project at Southwood

**SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:** A Resolution endorsing a collaborative relationship between the County and Habitat for Humanity regarding a comprehensive redevelopment project for the Southwood Community

**ITEM TYPE:** Regular Action Item

**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Foley, Walker, Kamptner, Blair, Graham, Echols, McClintick,

**PRESENTER (S):** Doug Walker, Deputy County Executive

**LEGAL REVIEW:** Yes

**REVIEWED BY:** Thomas C. Foley

**BACKGROUND:** The Southwood Mobile Home Park (Southwood) is located on Hickory Street south of I-64 and east of Old Lynchburg Road in the Southern Urban Neighborhood and is located in one of the County's Development Areas. Southwood currently has 341 mobile homes and more than 1,500 residents and is the County's largest concentration of substandard housing. Habitat for Humanity ("Habitat") purchased Southwood in 2007 with a stated intention of redeveloping the site into a 700-800 unit, mixed income, mixed-use development, removing all 341 mobile homes and replacing them with a variety of housing unit types including site-built homes. Habitat has already invested more than \$2 million on deferred and emergency maintenance, including road improvements, sewer system upgrades, and emergency repairs.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** Development Areas: Attract quality employment, commercial, and high density residential uses into development areas by providing services and infrastructure that encourages redevelopment and private investment while protecting the quality of neighborhoods

**DISCUSSION:** The redevelopment of Southwood, as currently contemplated by Habitat in the summary included as Attachment A, represents a unique opportunity to make a distinct and meaningful improvement in the health and welfare of the largest concentration of people living in substandard housing in the County. Habitat's plan to remove 341 mobile homes and replace them with safe and affordable structures, while advocating non-displacement of current residents, would be transformative. Additionally, proposed private investments in mixed-income residential and commercial uses would add further residential and non-residential land value, allow for more high-quality, affordable housing units, and provide a variety of new employment opportunities. Future consideration of specific public infrastructure investments tied to the success of this redevelopment project is also a distinct possibility.

The County's interest in this project is guided by a number of factors, including the promotion of health, safety and welfare generally, and the economic stability and advancement of individuals and families living in Southwood. Further, because Southwood currently places such a high demand on a number of County services, including police, fire, social services and County schools, it is reasonably expected that successful

efforts to reduce prevailing risk factors among residents in Southwood through a comprehensive redevelopment strategy will result in a significant reduction in demand for these same County services.

County staff from multiple County operating departments, including Community Development, Economic Development, Housing, Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Facilities and Environmental Services and the County Executive's Office, have actively engaged with representatives of Habitat on creating a partnership to address the needs and opportunities in Southwood. This work includes preliminary identification of infrastructure needs in and around the Southwood project area that would both benefit the project and provide broader public benefit by improving future multi-modal access to and through Biscuit Run Park from the west. Further, staff and Habitat have acknowledged that innovative land use strategies will likely be needed to maximize the mixed-use, mixed-income development potential of the site while supporting key principles of affordability and non-displacement of current residents. From these discussions, staff recognized that in order to best position the County to work together with Habitat in their role as developer, the Board should acknowledge the unique nature of this project for the good of the County and identify it as a collaborative effort by adopting a resolution that specifically endorses the partnership. While this endorsement in and of itself does not commit the County to provide any specific funding, it would provide a clear and compelling indication of the Board's support for staff's proactive involvement with Habitat in the preparation of development plans and specific land use proposals associated with the Southwood project.

Finally, the timing of this request is tied intentionally to the Board's consideration of its Strategic Plan, which includes specific reference to the Southwood project as a proposed Tier 1 two-year objective supporting the Board's goal of revitalizing aging urban neighborhoods. Accordingly, if acceptable, the objective would be that the Board adopts an action plan in partnership with private and non-profit interests for the redevelopment of Southwood for both residential and business uses by January, 2018.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** Existing County staff from multiple departments will need to contribute a limited amount of available time as part of a collaborative effort to help Habitat develop a project action plan. Any further opportunities for the County to participate in providing other specific County resources, including any investment in public infrastructure and/or more extensive staff support, would be identified in a proposed action plan and presented to the Board for consideration and action accordingly.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment B) as presented or as modified by the Board supporting a collaborative approach regarding the redevelopment of Southwood.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

A: Habitat for Humanity Southwood Project Summary

B: Resolution