

Tomorrow Starts Today IN COLONIAL BEACH

Results of the Downtown Colonial Beach

DHCD VA Main Street Commercial District Affiliates and
Virginia Downtown Grants

Presented to community members and the Colonial Beach Town Council, October 20, 2021

PURPOSE

- ▶ Create designs to guide and inspire potential investors
- ▶ Produce a marketing prospectus to recruit new retail to the downtown and commercial core

RESULTS

- ▶ Streetscapes of the downtown we'd like to see. Building designs for property owners
- ▶ Compelling marketing prospectus
- ▶ Foundation of a downtown revitalization plan with:
 - Reasonable projects that could anchor the downtown's character
 - Meet many community needs
 - Build a year-round customer base for businesses in our commercial core

MADE POSSIBLE BY:



Edward Hart

Raised the matching funds to qualify for the grant



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Citizens and businesses of Colonial
Beach, Community Foundation,
COC, Artists' Guild, Historical
Society and other members of the
Alliance of Community
Organizations.

DESIGNS AND CONCEPTS

- ▶ Historic Preservation & creative reuse of historic buildings
- ▶ Retro motels - Might carryover style to the Boardwalk
- ▶ Retail & restaurants on first floor
- ▶ Second story rentals to augment retail income, meet housing needs
- ▶ Jump on “Destination Retail” opportunities
- ▶ If need to rebuild, reference historic style
- ▶ Continue Hawthorn transformation with beautification, upscale restaurant & distinctive shops

A Vision for the Future of our Downtown Commercial Core

Downtown Colonial Beach, the community's Main Street Affiliate, initiated an effort to “envision” a downtown that would be beautiful and vibrant reflecting residents' pride and joie de vivre about living in Colonial Beach, preserve its historic, small town character, and respond to community needs reflected in the town's Comprehensive Plans (2009 and 2021 draft) and other surveys. A grant awarded by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) enabled us to translate these thoughts and sentiments into renderings to inspire and guide the new investors and businesses we hope to attract to help us realize this vision in our downtown and commercial core. Realistically, we don't believe that an infusion of additional retail stores and restaurants would in and of themselves become a year-round tourist draw. But when combined with other attractions like the beach, boating, fishing, historic sites, hiking and naturalist activities that build upon each other, together they add up to an appealing package that is more than the sum of its parts.



We celebrate the historic renovations of our mid-century motels. A local icon, Doc's Motor Court built in 1948, is slated for a historic renovation. The “Retro” restoration of the Riverview Inn (below), awakened interest and confidence in the downtown's potential.



With a creative “adaptive reuse,” the distinctive Westmoreland Bank Building (above) could become a showpiece in the downtown.



We envision a deteriorating old garage charmingly renovated into a replica of its former self to house interesting shops or a gallery (above).

Hawthorn St. (right) with its inviting shops, gallery, restaurant, museum and playhouse could play a starring role in the downtown revitalization.



DESIGNS AND CONCEPTS



Empty lots present opportunities for building new developments that complement the old. Rental over retail improves financial viability (left).



Restorations on eastern Colonial Avenue are already underway such as this former fraternal lodge (left) that presents a number of commercial possibilities. Historic tax credits could cut renovation costs nearly in half for the shop next door (above). Second story rental could further off-set costs.



As in bygone eras, large old homes are making space for today's visitors, such as the Center House pictured above reputed to be the town's oldest building. It's expected to become a B&B.



The graceful arch in the new development (above) references the Town Pier's artistic gateway. Reinterpreting historic features in novel ways links new construction to the past.



Meeting community needs is another way to build year-round foot traffic in our commercial district. To the left, a new municipal center has been proposed for a large, empty warehouse near the entrance to town. Further down, a rental development with units for workforce housing could be built on or replace what is now a vacant motel.

Artistic Renderings created by Jackie Steward | graphicinteriors1@mac.com

- ▶ Small scale developments of rental over retail
- ▶ Identify just the right paint colors
- ▶ Find spaces for small conferences and meetings for customers weekdays and during off-seasons
- ▶ Explore whether charming features and design flourishes allowable under tax credits
- ▶ Reinterpret historic features in novel ways
- ▶ Build Municipal and Recreation Center, rental development to replace blight, increase year-round foot traffic
- ▶ Coordinate landscaping for four season color

MARKETING PROSPECTUS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- ▶ Explicit about recruiting retail
- ▶ Offering something old, but also new and exciting

Starting a new retail business?
Relocating or opening a
second location?



Be part of an exciting new chapter
in the history of the beautiful beach town
of Colonial Beach, VA!

This marketing brochure was produced to further stimulate economic vitality in the downtown and commercial core of Colonial Beach, VA. The intent is to provide market assurance and preservation-based design concepts and guidance for new developers, retailers and other businesses looking for promising opportunities. The project was initiated by Downtown Colonial Beach, the community's Main Street America Affiliate program, and was funded by the VA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) VA Main Street Commercial District Affiliates and Virginia Downtown grants. The grant was matched by generous contributions from the citizens of Colonial Beach.



HIGHLIGHT STRENGTHS

- Historic riverside resort
- Mid-century gaming mecca
- Once again, a town for the times
 - For today's active lifestyle
 - Renewed interest in history and nature.



(Photo courtesy of Mary Carter)

(Photo courtesy of Mary Carter)

(Photo courtesy of Jackie Steward)

The Town of Colonial Beach, Virginia (CBVA), has a rich history and storied past. By preserving and building upon it, the town has an equally vibrant future--one that you can be a part of!

Colonial Beach offers all that and more. It's a historic beach town on the Potomac River, a port-of-call for recreational boaters and watermen, a golf cart community, art and music haven, foodie destination, bird sanctuary, and base camp for exploring notable Colonial and early American sites nearby.



Steamboat mural
Steamboat era in
Colonial Beach during the
late nineteenth and early
twentieth century depicted
on one of the downtown's
many murals.
(Photo courtesy of
Mary Carter)



Historic picture of the Reno Casino during gambling's
heyday mid-century. (Photo courtesy of the Colonial
Beach Museum)

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Colonial Beach flourished as a popular riverside resort with steamboats bringing in tourists from Washington, DC and Baltimore. The town experienced a resurgence mid-twentieth century and earned the moniker, the "Little Las Vegas," when a quirk in MD law temporarily legalized gambling on the waterfront for nearly a decade.

Now, once again, Colonial Beach is a town for the times with people of all ages favoring an active lifestyle where they live and where they travel. Swimming, boating, fishing, walking, biking, and hiking are all part of everyday life in Colonial Beach. Today's travelers savor the natural world, open space and observing wildlife. There is also a renewed appreciation for the authentic and original, for history and the historic buildings that reveal it. Recent designation of the Colonial Beach downtown as a National Historic District affirms the town's significant history and will further its preservation.



But Colonial Beach is more than just fun and games. With Washington, DC, 65 miles away and Richmond, VA, 70 miles away, it is already benefitting from the telecommuting trend (which accelerated during the pandemic) since home-based employees here can readily reach metropolitan employers.

The town is also close to other major employment centers. 7,500 military and civilian employees work at the nearby Naval Support Facility Dahlgren. "Beach" residents also bring back income from jobs in the 300,000 person strong Greater Fredericksburg area just 45 minutes away. Fredericksburg residents head this way for recreation.

We invite you to join other investors and retailers who are finding Colonial Beach to be fertile ground for new ventures during this exciting time of growth, adding to the solid foundation of shops, restaurants and entertainment venues that have already earned loyal patrons over the years.

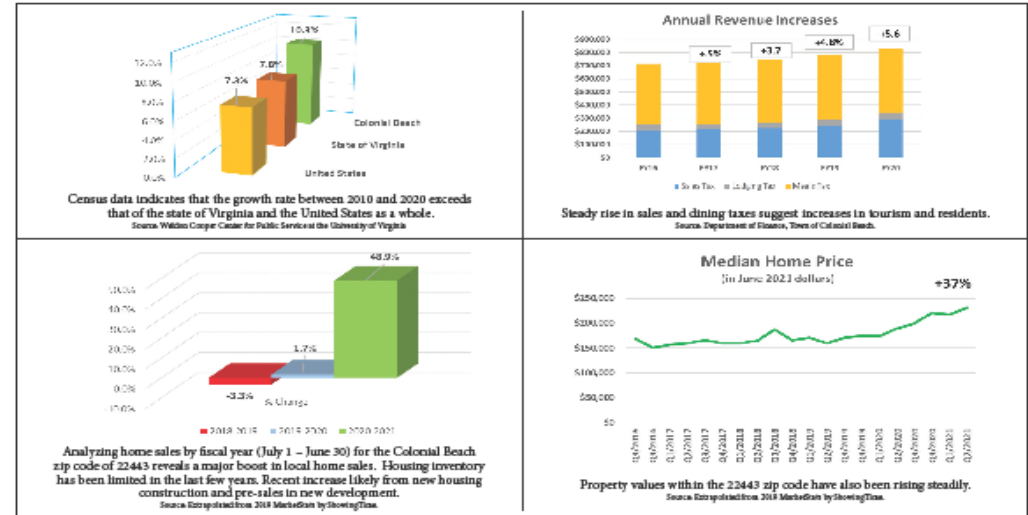
Important to identify and track relevant data.

► Prospectus highlights both steady growth and the major boost in residents and tourists coming our way

- New Four-lane Nice Bridge
- Dodson and other development

It's a town that has been experiencing steady growth in population and tourism.

Several indicators point to a town on an upward trajectory.



Substantially *more* growth is on the way.

A four-phase, \$27 million dollar development project will bring 23 new townhomes to the downtown, along with two new boardwalk condo buildings, one mixed use to include retail space. A beachfront boutique hotel is also part of the project, as well as historic renovations of several buildings for retail and office use.

Construction of the new \$765M Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge is underway. When completed in 2023, it will double the vehicle capacity of the current bridge, helping to alleviate traffic congestion

and enabling a higher volume of people to enter the region more easily for work, business, or recreation.

A nomination to name the Northern Neck a National Heritage Area has been presented to Congress. Designation will showcase the rich history of the Northern Neck. Colonial Beach is the natural entry point and base camp for exploring the area.



New Townhome Development



New Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge

Colonial Beach has been dubbed the "Playground of the Potomac."



(Photo courtesy of Mary Carter)



(Photo courtesy of Mary Carter)



(Photo courtesy of Joyce Reinherz)

There are so many ways for people to enjoy themselves here.

- Savor Chesapeake Bay favorites, crabs, oysters, and rockfish, and a variety of ethnic cuisines at award winning restaurants.
- Sip wine under a vine covered pergola at a local bistro, or quaff craft beers while listening to rockabilly, country or folk music. One-of-a-kind coffee houses are centers for socializing.
- Sunbathe on our beautiful beach, then take a cooling dip before drying off under a palm tree.
- Dance in the sand at the Tiki bars that feature popular regional bands.
- Try off-track betting at the Riverboat Restaurant and Casino, carrying on a mid-20th century gaming tradition. An expansion of gaming opportunities may be on the horizon.
- Sleep in luxurious B&Bs in restored mansions or historic homes, a 1950s retro boutique hotel, beach cottage vacation rentals, a campground or RV park. Shop in antique and beach shops.
- Paddle a canoe, kayak or paddleboard along the Potomac, Monroe Bay, inlets and creeks. Take out your sailboat, motorboat, or jet ski from one of the many marinas.
- Just outside CBVA, in the Northern Neck, are 1000s of miles of unspoiled shoreline, state parks and nature preserves with trails for walking, hiking, biking and birdwatching, as well as historic sites.



Birdwatchers on a trail at George Washington's birthplace, considered a premiere site on the Northern Neck for birding observation.
(Photo courtesy of Joyce Reinherz)

Festivals Draw Crowds Every Season of the Year.

From birdwatchers to bikers, Colonial Beach has festivals and events for every taste and interest, and is continually coming up with more.

Spring

- The newly inaugurated "Osprey Festival" sponsored by Downtown Colonial Beach attracts nature lovers in early spring. Colonial Beach is a bird sanctuary and home to a multitude of breeding ospreys from mid-March through September.

Summer

The Colonial Beach Chamber of Commerce shines when it comes to sponsoring popular festivals and events throughout the year. These are their summer festivals.

- Potomac River Festival
- Father's Day Classic Car Show
- Annual Rod Run to the Beach
- Water Fest
- Arts and Crafts Festival



The Town of Colonial Beach hosts a spectacular fireworks display on July 4th attended by upwards of 10,000 people.
(Photo courtesy of Rob Rudick)



Bolivian dancers are a highlight of the Riverfest Parade that kicks off the summer season.
(Photo courtesy of Rob Rudick)

Autumn

- The Beach Music Arts And Mentoring Program's free Labor Day Concert
- Northern Neck Beach Music Concert sponsored by the Colonial Beach Foundation
- The Chamber of Commerce Colonial Beach Bike Fest brings in thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts every October

Winter

- A delightfully lighted Santa's Wonderland is set up in the middle of town for the whole month of December. It becomes the site for a Winter Festival and culmination of a holiday parade.

On-going:

- The Second Friday Art Walk is a monthly tradition featuring new works at local art galleries and art spaces throughout the downtown.

Historic Sites are Making Colonial Beach a Year-Round Destination.

Heritage tourism generates \$7.7 billion annually in Virginia. Designation of the downtown of Colonial Beach as a National Historic District and the rest of the Northern Neck as a National Heritage Area will open up a new frontier for "Heritage Tourism" in Virginia. The Northern Neck Tourism Commission is expected to launch a major promotional campaign once the Heritage Area is declared.

Westmoreland County, VA has been called the birthplace of the nation. Within 16 miles of Colonial Beach are the birthplaces of three presidents, more than anywhere else in the United States. Faithful replicas of the Washington and Monroe homes have been constructed, with Washington's home open for tours much of the week year-round. The grounds of the ancestral Monroe Plantation are likewise open year-round, while the home and Visitor's Center are currently open summer weekends. On the foundation of the 1670s plantation where Madison was born is the exquisitely restored and fascinating Belle Grove Plantation built in 1791 and now a bed and breakfast.



The Stratford Hall Great House (Photo courtesy of Stratford Hall)

The area is also notable for the Lee Family ancestral home, Stratford Hall. While Robert E. Lee was born here, one of his ancestors built this magnificent plantation house that is a restoration of the original, not a replica. What is little known is that other ancestors who lived there played a crucial role in spurring and waging America's fight for independence. Tours also highlight the lives and contributions of the enslaved and indentured people who made the bricks and built the Great House, as well as the lives of women in the Lee family.



President James Monroe Birthplace (Photo courtesy of Bucky Doerr)

The Museum at Colonial Beach chronicles the town's history with permanent and changing exhibits. There have been displays of recovered artifacts documenting a Native American presence dating to 500 B.C., long before John Smith visited the area during his voyage of discovery in 1608.



Detail of the Watermen's exhibit at the Colonial Beach Museum.
(Photo courtesy of Joyce Reinherz)

One of the permanent exhibits highlights the town's colorful maritime past and "watermen" culture. This includes being the epicenter of the century-long Potomac River Oyster Wars that lasted from the 19th Century to the 1960s. Photographs and artifacts also showcase the town's heydays during the Steamboat and gambling eras. Its extensive collection makes possible changing exhibits that zero in on unique facets of life in earlier times.

A walking tour brochure available at the Museum and via cell phone directs visitors to some of the grand, late Victorian and Edwardian mansions that recall Washington, DC's wealthy magnates who incorporated the town in 1892 and turned it into a popular riverside resort during the late 19th and early 20th century. One such building is the summer home of Alexander Graham Bell's family (originally built for Colonel J.O.P. Burnside, son of Union General Ambrose Burnside). It is a Virginia Historic Landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Another is the home of the first mayor of Colonial Beach, the beautifully restored Dennison Street Inn.



The Bell House (Photo courtesy of Mary Carter)

Now a new era has begun, one in which the past is remembered, and new stories are being made!

*(Note: The Colonial Beach Museum is currently open on summer weekends. As heritage tourism expands, the hope is that all historic sites will be expanding their hours.)

There are so many ways to enjoy oneself here, but, we point out, not just in summer anymore. High season for naturalists can be Sept. through May. Boaters still come in the fall and spring. Historic sites are open year-round. Festivals are held every season of the year.

Colonial Beach is in the news.

Colonial Beach may be a small town, but we've got a lot of heavy hitters on our team!

ASK US ABOUT THESE COLLABORATIONS.

Add your business to our town's on-going story.

Town of Colonial Beach, Virginia, welcomes entrepreneurs and strives to make the process of owning and operating a business in CBVA seamless and lucrative. When you arrive you'll find a town committed to supporting you.

Formulation of an economic development strategy.
 Vigorously pursuing state and federal community development funding.
 Municipal and additional development projects to increase year-round retail trade downtown.
 Commercial and retail property available for sale, lease or development.
 Funding for Downtown Colonial Beach, the Main Street America Affiliate program that is working towards full Main Street certification.
 Support for Commercial Historic District.
 Collaboration with Colonial Beach Chamber of Commerce, which is taking a lead in formulating incentives for business investment and sponsors numerous festivals that bring thousands of visitors into town.
 Professional marketing firm to promote the Town.
 Revised Town website (in development) for easier access to permits, forms, licenses and business applications.
 Town support for an Alliance of more than 20 community organizations mutually support each other on community improvements and meeting community needs.
 Business-friendly incentives that support job growth and attract missing staples of our local economy.

- Local Technology Zone and a Tourism Zone Economic Incentives
- Local Revitalization Revolving Loan Fund for Capital Improvements
- Enterprise Zone Regional Incentives
- Rehabilitation Tax Credits in Historic District
- 504 Loan Programs & SBA Development Center

Many business owners choose to live in Colonial Beach.
It's a great place to raise a family.

You'll be able to walk, bike, or take a golf cart to work. Your children can get to their neighborhood school on their own. It's also reassuring to know that Colonial Beach is one of the safest towns in Virginia.

Colonial Beach is a Golf Cart Community
(Photo courtesy of Joyce Gundersen)

Colonial Beach Foundation "Meet-Ups" introduce newcomers to the community.
(Photo courtesy of Eric Nelson)

New Colonial Beach Elementary School.
Our independent school system is a focal point for community interactions.
(Photo courtesy of Joyce Reinherth)

Destination Downtown Colonial Beach | Marketing Brochure

Colonial Beach has been receiving a lot of attention lately. We've been partnering with major universities and government agencies. Business incentives have been introduced. New business owners might even want to live here and raise their children in our safe, walkable, bikeable, golf cart community.

From Robin Schick, Mayor, Town of Colonial Beach
*A lot of exciting things are happening--Town of Colonial Beach is coming of age!
We are excited about the growth and diversification that will be realized through
a number of revitalization efforts that welcomes anyone to join our vibrant,
livable, fun, and business-friendly waterfront community.*



Founded in 2016, Downtown Colonial Beach has been guided by Main Street America's preservation-based approach to downtown revitalization. Part of that involves a determination to create an "entrepreneurial ecosystem" that will not just welcome new retailers and businesses when they arrive, but help them thrive.

At the same time, we seek to preserve our public-spirited, small town ambiance, diversity and commitment to economic revitalization for the benefit of all residents and businesses. Our aim is a people-centered prosperity that promotes one of the best things about Colonial Beach – its warm, interesting and caring people. The motto for our community foundation is "Community Found."
Our hope is that is exactly what you will find when you set up your business in Colonial Beach.

For help, information, networking, and support in investigating or setting up your business in Colonial Beach, contact:

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This prospectus represents the approach and values of Downtown Colonial Beach, a Main Street America affiliate program. While reporting on Town of Colonial Beach economic development initiatives and that of other community groups, it does not constitute their official policies. For more information, please check with the contacts above.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- ▶ Share prospectus with desired retail
- ▶ Target best prospects based on Market Analysis
- ▶ Collaborate with Town Government and other economic development organizations on Rural Community Development Initiative
- ▶ Activate design component of RCDI for commercial district beautification
- ▶ Gear up for SBDC Small Town and Merchant program training and consultations
- ▶ Weigh all regulatory and policy changes for the downtown on whether they help or hurt downtown businesses
- ▶ Take steps to assure that downtown revitalization benefits all the residents of Colonial Beach. Expand and secure resident housing