



Informed Neighbors Corps Final Report

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Introduction

The VCU Center on Society and Health (CSH) is an academic research center that studies the health implications of social factors – such as education, income, neighborhood and community environmental conditions, and public policy. CSH was funded by NIH in 2011 to build a partnership with the community in the East End. Our early work, which included a concentrated period of focus groups and other activities to listen to residents about community priorities, produced a strong community-university partnership known as *Engaging Richmond*. We have maintained and nurtured an ongoing relationship in the East End that is built on trust and aimed at empowering community members as coequal partners in a sustained effort to take action to improve public health. We meet weekly with the community members, many of whom live in the housing developments targeted for redevelopment. This community-university partnership, as well as our established

relationships with a host of community partners, served as a platform for building a successful community engagement initiative focused on the planned redevelopment in Creighton Court.

The redevelopment process is being planned by a partnership between national developer The Community Builders (TCB), the City of Richmond, and Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority (RRHA). The Community Builders became aware of our work in the area through the needs assessment we produced for Richmond Promise Neighborhood (RPN) and included us in their Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant proposal to conduct a needs assessment. TCB and CSH wished to ensure that community residents were engaged throughout the redevelopment of Creighton Court. To this end, CSH partnered with Richmond Promise Neighborhood to initiate a leadership and advocacy training program for interested community residents. After the training with RPN, the Center on Society and Health continued work with these residents to facilitate an Informed Neighbors Corps (INC). Under CSH leadership, the INC worked together to create and distribute informational materials about redevelopment and organize an informational campaign. This work supported the shared goals of increasing transparency about the redevelopment process and promoting resident leadership.

The following pages highlight the work of the INC under CSH leadership. The report is divided into sections according to the deliverables agreed upon by TCB and CSH, which include:

1. Identify and Engage the Informed Neighbors Corps
2. Summary of Session Topics
3. Develop Print Material
4. Organize Information Campaign
5. Recommendations for Continued Engagement

Identify and Engage the Informed Neighbors Corps

Recruitment

Recruitment of community residents interested in taking part in the engagement initiative was a joint effort by Richmond Promise Neighborhood and the Center on Society and Health over the course of 2 weeks.

The opportunity to participate was advertised via flyers –

- Distributed door to door

- Strategically placed in locations that residents visit, such as the Creighton Court Resource Center, the Creighton Court Recreation Center, and the East District Family Resource Center
- At a community meeting at Woodville on April 22nd

RPN also made phone calls to Creighton residents known for current and prior engagement in community efforts. Personal invitations were also extended face to face and door to door. Two information sessions were conducted to share the purpose and the expectations for the Informed Neighbors Classes and the Informed Neighbors Corps.

Richmond Promise Neighborhood concluded classes on June 17th, 2014 and the Informed Neighbors Corps meetings commenced a week later, on June 24th, 2014.

Convening the Informed Neighbors Corps

The targeted number of participants for the original scope of work and timeline was twelve and this was the number recruited. At the start of the group, the demographics of the participants were as follows:

- A total of 12 participants
- 4 participants are members of the Creighton Court Tenant Council
- About 50% of the participants have lived in Creighton 5 years or less; the others are members of families who have lived in Creighton Court for multiple generations
- 1 male; 11 females
- 11 Black/African Americans; 1 White/Caucasian
- 1 employed full time
- The majority are parents, and some are grandparents
- Half have other close family members who also live in Creighton Court
- The majority are regularly engaged in some East End community organization or group (e.g., school, church, parent group)

Attendance over time remained high: five attended all sessions, four missed one session, and three missed two sessions. The group of 12 residents was genuinely interested in the redevelopment process and most remained engaged in the Informed Neighbors Corps extension for September through October and a final extension through November and December. The additional residents, who joined the group, were identified and invited by existing Informed Neighbors Corps members. It was the responsibility of those members to update any invitees to orient them to the group. All participants who attended the majority of sessions received a stipend. The following table represents attendance by the Informed Neighbors Corps.

Time period	Continuing members	Additional members	Total members	Stipend
June – August	12	N/A	12	\$100
August – October	8	6	14	\$50
October – December	14	2	16	\$50

For the final group of 16 members, the demographics are as follows:

- 4 members are on the Creighton Court Tenant Council
- 1 male; 15 females
- 15 Black/African American; 1 White/Caucasian
- 4 work part-time
- The majority are parents, and some are grandparents
- The majority are regularly engaged in some East End community organization or group (e.g., school, church, parent group)

Informed Neighbors Corps Participation and Dynamics

The residents that attended regularly exhibited an explicit desire to be at the table, as evidenced by active participation at weekly meetings and attendance at community meetings and listening stations. In fact, at least 7 of the original 12 Informed Neighbors Corps members attended all community meetings. The commitment that was necessary to complete the schedule of activities for the Informed Neighbors Corps indicated their level of dedication.

Residents formed cordial relationships and displayed an increased sense of community during their time together. This unity was demonstrated by in-meeting conflict resolution that was driven by INC participants and resident facilitation to keep the group on task. For example, on multiple occasions INC members redirected tense conversations back to the agenda and reminded the group of the shared values to mutually respect one another and to value each other's opinions.

The interactive sessions were most impactful. Experiential opportunities worked best, especially for the evening class, as exhibited by residents being less distracted by electronic

devices and having fewer side conversations. Additionally, the courses that delved deeply into a particular topic, at levels usually provided in an academic or professional setting, were most appreciated by the residents such as exploring the effects of concentrated poverty, critically analyzing a frequently asked questions (FAQ) guide about the redevelopment process for distribution, effective communication, etc. For example, one INC participant felt shy about public speaking; however, she shared her reflections on the importance of being involved throughout the redevelopment process in a prepared speech, which she presented at a Neighbor-to-Neighbor meeting. She reported that she would not have been able to speak confidently without processing her thoughts during her work with the Informed Neighbors Corps.

Members of the Informed Neighbors Corps are working together toward increasing the well-being of all their neighbors in Creighton Court in the early stages of the redevelopment process. The impact on participants has been demonstrated by:

- An increased awareness of the broader redevelopment in the East End
- An improved understanding of the redevelopment process in Creighton Court
- Enthusiasm for continuing the Informed Neighbors Corps work beyond contracted dates
- Social network growth among neighbors living in Creighton (neighbors are reaching out to each other)
- Coordination of resident-led community information meetings, or neighbor-to-neighbor meetings, on September 8, 2014 and December 13, 2014
- A willingness and a desire to be kept informed
- 7 of the original 12 Informed Neighbors Corps members attended and participated in community meetings led by TCB, RRHA, and the City of Richmond

Summary of Session Topics

Curriculum planning began December of 2013. CSH worked with Richmond Promise Neighborhood (RPN) to research housing and community development curriculums in other areas across the country that would work well for our population and location.

The decision was made to use the Enterprise: Hope San Francisco Leadership Academy curriculum as the best practice model based on their topics, level of detail, and similar goals and outcomes for participants. We customized our topics and class outline to meet the needs of our community. Below is the curriculum outline that we developed for our sessions.

Two co-facilitators were present at every session. One was the Community-Academic Liaison at the Center on Society and Health as well as a member of the Engaging Richmond community-university research team. The other facilitator was Chimere Miles, a resident of Creighton Court, a Community Researcher with Engaging Richmond, and a Community Advocate for RPN. Beyond co-facilitating each session, they contacted participants between sessions, encouraging their continued participation, answering questions, and clarifying information.

Time Period	Frequency and Duration	Breakdown of the session	Location	Material covered
June – August	6 weekly events on Tuesdays 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm	2 hours of content 30 minutes for setup, a break, and closure	Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing issues of concern for residents • Working with CSH staff to develop print material to address common redevelopment questions • Distributing material in a door-to-door campaign
August – October	6 events on the 2 nd and 4 th Fridays of the month 10:00 am – 11:30 am	1 hour of content 15 minutes for setup and opening 15 minutes for closure and breakdown	Creighton Court Recreation Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting a neighbor-to-neighbor meeting on redevelopment • Working with CSH staff to develop print material on compliance • Offering direct feedback to representatives of TCB on phase one of the redevelopment process • Collaborating with the RPN Housing Results Based Action Team
October - December	6 events on the 2 nd and 4 th Fridays of the month 10:00 am – 11:30 am	1 hour of content 15 minutes for setup and opening	Creighton Court Recreation Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with CSH staff to develop print material on compliance • Offering feedback on the Church Hill RVA website • Collaborating with Douglas Dunlap of the

		15 minutes for closure and breakdown		<p>City of Richmond Office of Economic Development and Thad Williamson and Christina Mastroianni of the Office of Community Wealth Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing print material on compliance in a door-to-door campaign • Presenting a neighbor-to-neighbor meeting on the importance of getting informed and being prepared for the redevelopment
Highlights	18 Sessions	24 Hours of Content	20 Informed Neighbors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 informational bulletins or FAQs • 2 door-to-door campaigns • 2 neighbor-to-neighbor meetings

Below are general descriptions of the fifteen Informed Neighbors Corps sessions. Please refer to attachments in Appendix A for more detailed content.

Tuesday, June 24th Orientation and Unpacking the Census

Co-facilitators oriented the Informed Neighbors Corps to expectations and responsibilities for the upcoming sessions. The group viewed and discussed, “Unpacking the Census: The New Realities of Race, Class, and Jurisdiction” by John Moeser. This documentary offered data collected from the American Community Survey about what gave rise to concentrated poverty and what interventions are necessary to address it. Following a debriefing and discussion of highlights from the film, the Informed Neighbors Corps agreed that it is important to be informed. In turn, the group began to generate questions about what they thought the community needs to know about the redevelopment process.

Tuesday, July 1st Place Matters

The Informed Neighbors Corps offered the “Word on the Street,” or questions, concerns, and even myths that the members heard in the community about redevelopment. Following that, the group brainstormed important points of confusion and concern about the redevelopment process. Finally, the Informed Neighbors Corps viewed and discussed the “Place Matters” episode of *Unnatural Causes*, which explores how your street address affects your health.

Tuesday, July 8th Community Transformation

The Informed Neighbors Corps opened with “Word on the Street” in order to gain insight into the goings-on in the community, and to know what questions arose consistently or remained unanswered. Later, Gladys Medder, Senior Program Manager at TCB, gave a presentation on “Community Transformation.” She offered an abundance of information about potential funding sources for redevelopment and the phases of the redevelopment process. In addition, Gladys answered multiple questions for the Informed Neighbors Corps.

Tuesday, July 15th CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER

Tuesday, July 22nd Moving the Work Forward

The Informed Neighbors Corps agreed to continue their work together into September and October, and discussed the logistics and scope of the work extension. Following that, the group began to plan for their neighbor-to-neighbor community presentation, called the Neighbor*Good* Meeting. Finally, the Informed Neighbors Corps reviewed the Redevelopment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide and planned for the door-to-door campaign.

Tuesday, July 29th Putting Answers into Action

The group opened with “Word on the Street,” followed by a conversation about continuing their work past the originally planned August 12th date. The Informed Neighbors Corps discussed specific meeting times and locations, as well as how to include other residents in the engagement meetings. Next, the Informed Neighbors Corps debriefed from the Community Meeting that was held Thursday, July 24th at Woodville Elementary. Members that had attended the Community Meeting summarized the event and raised concerns and questions as they related to information that was shared. Afterward, the group reviewed the FAQ and organized teams and territory to complete the door-to-door campaign. Finally, the group deliberated the content of their Neighbor*Good* Meeting.

Tuesday, August 5th National Night Out and Door-to-Door Campaign

Informed Neighbors worked in teams of two to visit each of the 504 housing units in Creighton Court with a document outlining answers to frequently asked questions about the redevelopment process. More information about this process is outlined below in the summary of the development of print material and the organization of the information campaign.

Tuesday, August 12th Processing and Planning the Work

The Informed Neighbors Corps discussed the progression of the Community Needs Assessment Survey during the “Word on the Street” section of the meeting. The group aired grievances about the survey conduction as well as reviewed the purpose of the survey. Following that, each Informed Neighbors Corps member reported on their experience with the door-to-door campaign. Many members spoke face-to-face with their neighbors regarding facts known about the redevelopment process. In addition, the group processed preferable times to go door-knocking in the future as well as made recommendations for future engagement. The team reviewed logistics for continuing their work into September and October. Finally, the Informed Neighbors Corps discussed what additional information residents needed to know and reviewed a draft presentation for the community Neighbor*Good* Meeting.

Monday, September 8th Neighbor*Good* Meeting

This Community Meeting held at the Creighton Court Recreation Center included a PowerPoint and oral presentation of the Redevelopment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide by the Informed Neighbors Corps to their neighbors from Creighton Court. The Informed Neighbors Corps also answered or addressed attendees’ questions and concerns. There were approximately 30 residents in attendance.

Friday, September 12th Reviewing Compliance

The Informed Neighbors Corps discussed “Word on the Street” and debriefed the Community “Neighbor*Good*” Meeting. Overall, the Informed Neighbors were pleased with attendance and felt that the information they provided was useful to attendees. The Informed Neighbors Corps decided to create a phone-tree from the attendance list at the Neighbor*Good* Meeting in order to maintain attendees’ involvement. Following that, the Informed Neighbors discussed partnering with the Richmond Promise Neighborhood Housing Results Based Action Team (RBAT) for introductions and a discussion about the redevelopment process. Finally, the members reviewed the Compliance print material and offered feedback for its improvement. The Creighton Court Tenant Council President, Marilyn Olds attended the meeting.

Friday, September 26th Planning for Future Programs

As usual, the Informed Neighbors Corps opened the meeting with “Word on the Street.” Following that, the Informed Neighbors members discussed specific things in their routines that may be disrupted in the redevelopment process. The group also communicated their concerns in the community, weighed in on needed services and resources in the community, and talked about how mental health service providers could create a more secure treatment environment. Finally Thu Nguyen from The Community Builders, Inc. (TCB) gave a presentation on the overall transformation scope, and the working principles for neighborhood revitalization and East End transformation. Thu and Douglas Dunlap, Deputy Director, Richmond Department of Planning and Development Review, answered Informed Neighbors Corps questions about Phase One of redevelopment.

Friday, October 10th Phase One Recap and RPN Housing Action Team Visit

Thu Nguyen from The Community Builders, Inc. (TCB) continued her presentation from the previous meeting on the Phase One recap. She reviewed the working principles for neighborhood revitalization, including quality design and construction, one-for-one replacement, build-first, and a high-quality mixed income neighborhood. She defined the working principles, answered questions raised by Informed Neighbors Corps members, and clarified previously expressed concerns about the revitalization process. In addition, Thu announced a field trip to the Broad Creek development in Norfolk on October 24th. The Richmond Promise Neighborhood (RPN) Housing Action Team also attended the meeting and representatives from two organizations – The Better Housing Coalition and Habitat for Humanity – shared what they are doing in the community. Informed Neighbors Corps members were able to make connections with these folks and explore other available opportunities. Finally, the Informed Neighbors Corps reviewed the Transformation Website, called “Church Hill, RVA,” and offered feedback on its design and content.

Friday, October 24th FIELD TRIP TO BROAD CREEK

Monday, October 20th School Board Meeting

Informed Neighbor and Engaging Richmond team member Chimere Miles spoke to the City of Richmond School Board regarding the importance of combining better quality education with the redevelopment process. On behalf of the Informed Neighbors Corps, she stated, “It is our bold vision that our children live in, as well as learn in, healthy quality environments.” The agenda for the School Board Meeting was set to address the matter of the Armstrong High School and Whitcomb Court Elementary School properties at 8:30 p.m. However, based on the importance of the community issue brought forth by Chimere Miles when City

Council opened the meeting to public comments at 6:30 p.m., and the impassioned responses elicited by her comments, the meeting agenda was amended to address the issue an hour early. The Informed Neighbors Corps was galvanized by the agenda change and many learned that community voice does indeed matter in local politics. Ultimately, the School Board voted 7-1 to sign over the deeds of the two properties to the City of Richmond for the purpose of housing redevelopment.

Friday, October 31st Transition and Sustainability

The Informed Neighbors Corps applauded the collective impact of their attendance at the School Board Meeting on October 23, 2014, which included the vote on property ownership of the Armstrong site. Following that, the group discussed opportunities to sustain their unity and efforts as a group. In addition, Thad Williamson of the Office of Community Wealth Building and Douglas Dunlap of the Department of Planning and Development Review, attended the meeting and respectively introduced prospects for the group to continue to be involved in the redevelopment process. Finally, the Informed Neighbors Corps reviewed another draft of the Compliance FAQ and offered feedback on the print material.

Friday, November 14th Reimagining our Future

The Informed Neighbors Corps continued a discussion about the transition and sustainability of the group when the VCU contract ends December 12th. The group reflected on their successes and recalled their story, including the highlights and the reasons that they must continue work together. The group also enumerated the unexpected challenges that they had to overcome. Following that, the group had an open and honest discussion about what it would take to stay at the table. Overall, the group decided that while compensation had been welcomed, the group would continue to come together without compensation because they are committed to the future of their community. The Office of Community Wealth Building plans to put together monthly Chat n' Chews to unite the group. Finally, the Informed Neighbors Corps decided on topics to cover, and dates and locations for the neighbor-to-neighbor meeting and door-to-door campaign.

Friday, December 12th Closing and Transitioning

Many supporters of the Informed Neighbors Corps joined the meeting for the conclusion and transition of the group, including staff and professors from the University of Richmond. After doing a round of introductions, a Weather Report, and the Word on the Street, the group discussed that HUD did not put out a Choice Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA), but that TCB, the City, and RRHA are applying for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

in March 2015. The group discussed evidence that redevelopment is happening such as the work to rezone the Armstrong site and the Bon Secours sign on Nine Mile Road that says, “Good help is coming soon.” Next, the INC discussed key data found in the Creighton Court Needs Assessment. When CSH staff reviewed the Trauma Informed Community Building model with the INC, members of the INC agreed to the model’s principles as a driving force for redevelopment. Finally, the INC practiced for the neighbor-to-neighbor meeting and discussed future Chat n’ Chews.

Saturday, December 13th Neighbor-to-Neighbor Meeting

This meeting was given by the Informed Neighbors Corps to approximately 15 resident neighbors. The material covered was an overview of the Informed Neighbors series to-date; an update on evidence that redevelopment is happening; an emphasis on the importance of being prepared, informed, and involved; information on compliance; and information on opportunities to participate in the process. The neighbor-to-neighbor meeting concluded with a questions and answers segment.

Develop Print Material

From the outset of the work with the Informed Neighbors Corps, members were expected to speak with and hear their neighbors’ perceptions, questions, and concerns regarding the redevelopment process. This routine dialogue occurred outside of weekly Informed Neighbors Corps meetings and was brought back and processed with the Informed Neighbors Corps during the “Word on the Street” section of each session. Many Informed Neighbors Corps sessions were spent specifically brainstorming and prioritizing questions and concerns related to the redevelopment process, and each session was recorded. From these deliberations, CSH staff and the Informed Neighbors Corps designed a Redevelopment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide. It was designed in a collaborative and iterative process with TCB to ensure appropriateness and visual appeal. The Redevelopment FAQ was finalized and printed on July 31st. The Redevelopment FAQ can be found in Appendix B.

During the Informed Neighbors Corps extension from September through December, the group worked with CSH staff to create a document that defined lease compliance. This task required repeated rounds of analysis by CSH staff, TCB, and the Informed Neighbors Corps in order to craft clear language and accurate information. Multiple Informed Neighbors Corps meetings were spent discussing the utility and legibility of the Compliance FAQ, including potential points of confusion and potential negative reactions that resident readers might have. Ultimately, the Compliance FAQ was designed to help educate residents about what is expected and to prepare residents to correct any lease violations, so that

residents may have housing options when the redevelopment happens. The Informed Neighbors Corps and CSH staff then collaborated to format the document. The Compliance FAQ can be found in Appendix D.

Organize Information Campaign

CSH staff and the Informed Neighbors Corps collaborated to organize two door-to-door campaigns and two neighbor-to-neighbor meetings. In place of a meeting on the week of Tuesday, August 5th, Informed Neighbors Corps members worked in pairs to distribute the Redevelopment FAQ in a door-to-door campaign surrounding their own units. In this way, neighbors were discussing redevelopment information with their own neighbors. Informed Neighbors Corps members were well-versed with talking points about the information included on the Redevelopment FAQ guide.

Informed Neighbors Corps members reported that the door-to-door campaign was an excellent opportunity to speak with their neighbors face-to-face in order to share information and to dispel myths about the process. Members worked in pairs and left a Redevelopment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide at all 504 housing units as well as had talking points for speaking with those neighbors that were available to discuss the information. Informed Neighbors Corps members encouraged their neighbors to continue to seek information about the redevelopment process or to get involved in working groups.

Members reported that reactions to the information offered in the door-to-door campaign varied across individuals, and sometimes even by unit block. Some neighbors were open to the information shared, whereas others remained mistrustful of whether redevelopment would occur at all. Still, others believed redevelopment *is* happening, but expressed concern about the way that it is moving forward.

In addition, on Monday, September 8th the Informed Neighbors Corps held a “NeighborGood” or neighbor-to-neighbor meeting at the Creighton Court Recreation Center. This included a PowerPoint and oral presentation on the Redevelopment FAQ guide by the Informed Neighbors Corps to their neighbors from Creighton Court. The Informed Neighbors Corps also answered or addressed attendees’ questions and concerns. There were approximately 30 residents in attendance.

Additionally, the Informed Neighbors Corps worked to distribute a Compliance FAQ in a second door-to-door Campaign the week of December 8th through 12th. Informed Neighbors Corps members distributed the Compliance FAQ, which was about how to get prepared for the redevelopment process, including how to correct any lease violations. The goals of the

door-to-door campaign were to begin the conversation on lease compliance and to inform residents about opportunities to learn more about the redevelopment process. Due to the complexity of the Compliance FAQ content, additional information dissemination strategies will be necessary to support residents in becoming lease compliant. Emphasis was placed on getting the Compliance FAQs to all 504 units.

Finally, the Informed Neighbors Corps hosted another neighbor-to-neighbor meeting on Saturday, December 13th at Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School from 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm in order to further explore the information in the Compliance FAQ. The presentation included an overview of INC activities to-date, a discussion of the first phase of the redevelopment, and an invitation to residents to join the Informed Neighbors Corps, which will be opening to more members in January. The presentation stressed that redevelopment *is* happening and that it is important to get informed, prepared, and involved. There were approximately 15 residents in attendance and refreshments were served. While the attendance was low, those that participated in the event asked questions and delivered substantive feedback about how to engage residents.

Transitioning the Informed Neighbors Corps

CSH values sustainability as a best practice for work in vulnerable communities. Thus, sustaining the Informed Neighbors Corps beyond the contractual agreement between VCU and TCB is a high priority. To meet this goal, CSH staff preemptively connected other organizations and stakeholders with the Informed Neighbors Corps during the routine Informed Neighbors Corps meetings. Through those connections, multiple partners expressed interest and investment in maintaining the group or developing a supporting role in the following ways:

Organization	Point of Contact	Contribution
University of Richmond	Amy Howard amy.howard@richmond.edu	Bonner Scholars will provide childcare for monthly chat-and-chews
The Office of Community Wealth Building	Thad Williamson thaddeus.williamson@richmondgov.com Christina Mastroianni christina.mastroianni@richmondgov.com	Will sponsor six monthly Chat n' Chews through June 2015, which will unite Informed Neighbors Corps members and provide up-to-date information about the

		redevelopment process
The City of Richmond Department of Planning and Development Review	Douglas Dunlap douglas.dunlap@richmondgov.com	Invited the Informed Neighbors Corps to attend planning meetings, and offered to move those meeting to community spaces closer to Creighton
Engaging Richmond at the VCU Center on Society and Health	Albert Walker arwalker@vcu.edu Amber Haley haleyad@vcu.edu Chimere Miles cmiles4@vcu.edu Janie Williams williamsj22@mymail.vcu.edu	Will provide information on evidence-based practices for redevelopment Chimere Miles will continue to attend INC meetings

In addition to the previous table, which records agreed upon partnerships or deliverables, there may be other opportunities for investment in the Informed Neighbors Corps in the following ways:

Organization	Point of Contact	Opportunity
Storefront for Community Design	Ryan Rinn ryan@storefrontrichmond.org Tyler King tyler@storefrontrichmond.org	Student design team to create materials to further increase the knowledge of Creighton Court residents related to housing redevelopment and lease compliance
Richmond Promise Neighborhood	Gwen Corley Creighton gcreighton@rvapromise.org	Assist the INC in becoming connected to area service

	Adrienne Cole acole@peterpauldevcenter.org	providers
Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School	Principal Mike Maruca marucamajces.org	Will provide community meeting space
University of Richmond	Terry Dolson tdolson@richmond.edu	Connect University of Richmond faculty to support the work of the Informed Neighbors Corps
The City of Richmond Department of Planning and Development Review	Douglas Dunlap douglas.dunlap@richmondgov.com	Might provide flexible funding to support peer-to-peer community building activities for the Informed Neighbors Corps

To date, the Informed Neighbors Corps members have received financial incentive for their contributions. The Informed Neighbors Corps has agreed to continue to attend gatherings and to offer their insight in the redevelopment process even if future payments are not available. The Office of Community Wealth Building has permission to sign off on Informed Neighbors Corps hours to count towards the community service requirement as outlined in the lease agreement.

Recommendations for Strengthening Resident Participation

Regular and transparent bi-directional communication is the cornerstone of community engagement. Consequently, it is the Center on Society and Health’s recommendation that TCB establish regular pipelines of communication with residents using in-person, print-based, and electronic means of communication. The subheadings found below will specify ways to go about deliberate communication. It is important to ensure that residents who engage in redevelopment-related activities receive high quality information and have a genuine role in the decision-making process. Resident engagement can be facilitated by clearly outlining the decisions in which residents get to have a say, and by communicating the importance of their role in each decision. Finally, by assuring that residents gain

accurate and timely information, and have a clear role in informing the redevelopment process, TCB will create value for residents in showing up and being engaged.

Recommendations for in-person meetings. Real relationships and engagement happen at in-person meetings. In-person meetings are the crux of community building and engagement, and all other forms of communication reinforce what happens in these meetings. In-person meetings are, therefore, vital opportunities to demonstrate organizational goodwill in the community and must be handled with sensitivity and care.

- Plan regular meetings to consistently engage residents. Meetings should take place at least monthly.
- Hold meetings regarding the redevelopment process within walking distance from Creighton Court so that they are accessible to residents.
- Consider work and school schedules, as well as meal times, when scheduling meetings.
- Provide childcare services and food to boost attendance and build trust.
- Provide residents with a reminder phone call, text message, flyers and/or e-mail prior to meetings.
- Distribute meeting agendas to offer a way for members to follow along and refer to important information.
- Communicate the purpose of the meeting with clear objectives in the meeting agenda.
- In smaller group meetings, it is useful to do a brief check-in, such as a weather report, in order to gauge how each individual is doing that day. This leaves space for humanity at the table.
- Allow time at every meeting for residents to share any rumors or concerns about the redevelopment. The INC calls this practice “Word on the Street.” It is important to acknowledge and address these rumors and concerns in that meeting.
- Allow space for questions and regularly check-in with the group to ensure clarity. Do not be afraid to spend ample time on each agenda item; it is important to meet people where they are.
- Document all meetings.
- Share resident questions, ideas, and concerns with relevant stakeholder organizations so that they can be fully considered and addressed.

Recommendations for print-based and electronic information. Increase transparency in the partnership between residents and The Community Builders (TCB), Inc. by making information available to all residents regarding upcoming meetings, upcoming decisions,

other opportunities to participate in the redevelopment process, working timelines, any funding that has been awarded, etc.

- Publicize notes, PowerPoint slides, and any other material from community meetings for those that could not attend.
- Notes should be made available in a regular newsletter, on a webpage such as the Church Hill RVA website (www.churchhillrva.org), the Church Hill RVA Facebook page; and the Twitter account (@churchhill_rva).
- This information should be accessible at community resource hubs such as the Tenant Council space, the Creighton Court Recreation Center, the Creighton Court Resource Center, the East District Family Resource Center, the Richmond Public Library East End Branch, Peter Paul Development Center, etc.
- Create a monthly or quarterly newsletter to residents of Creighton Court that includes pertinent information and updates regarding the redevelopment process. In each newsletter, offer opportunities for resident engagement.
- Provide a “Creighton on the Move” folder for residents to keep all relevant and necessary documents for the assessment interview and transition process. Incorporate a checklist of necessary documents and/or achievements. Also include a guide of resources in the community that provide services to residents that need help with lease compliance.

Recommendations for process. The pace with which plans move forward must translate to the pace within the community. The Creighton residents recognize that there are tight deadlines, but time for adequate feedback from residents should be taken into consideration at each stage.

- It is recommended that a strong facilitator liaise between the priorities of the process and the needs of the community.
- Determine what kinds of questions residents might answer for TCB in the redevelopment process.
- Be clear about which decisions are most open to resident input and make sure all efforts to engage residents are based on a genuine opportunity to provide meaningful information or feedback.
- Offer space, reasonable time, and opportunities for residents to express substantive feedback. As stated earlier, make these opportunities widely known.
- Residents understand that you will not always have an immediate answer to every question. Acknowledge when information is not available and provide a forum to follow up on resident questions after a meeting if the answers are not immediately available.

- To reduce communication difficulties and misunderstandings, try to communicate a clear response to residents' questions and minimize the use jargon, industry-specific language, and acronyms. If these terms are necessary, provide a clear definition.
- Demonstrate that concerns and questions that arise in community meetings are documented by using a consistent facilitation strategy (such as a parking lot).
- Attend to people's concerns and address their needs. After meetings with a high level of conflict, devise a strategy for reviewing the concerns and addressing them in later community meetings. This action overtly demonstrates that concerns are taken into consideration.
- Within a reasonable timeline, report the Community Needs Assessment data back to the community. So often, community members never hear back on the results of community research. A timely and public summary of the findings might promote more resident confidence in TCB's goodwill in the community.

Planning for resident services. Resident services will be an important component to help residents attain lease compliance and succeed throughout the redevelopment process.

Lease Compliance

- Although the Informed Neighbors Corps began an early conversation about compliance, it will be necessary to provide ongoing guidance about what compliance entails. More importantly, it will be necessary to provide resources to support residents in establishing and maintaining lease compliance.

Substance abuse services

- The Informed Neighbors Corps was especially concerned about the lack of substance abuse services for adults and prevention activities for adolescents. Substance abuse service providers should be included in any planning for resident services.

Redevelopment Principles

- Incorporating a Trauma Informed Community Building model may help address resident fears and concerns. It would offer strategies to mitigate stress, foster resilience, strengthen social connections, and recognize trauma.