



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Category: \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Executive Summary:**

Chesterfield County's Department of Communications and Media and the Planning Department collaborated for a community outreach effort about the Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan. Community involvement is important in any effort of this scope, but especially in the Northern Jefferson Davis area – 13.5 square miles along Jefferson Davis Highway – one of the county's oldest and most important highways which has some of the county's densest population diversity. Outreach focused on meeting people where they were: in their neighborhood Latino-owned business, during their civic group's meeting, at community centers and schools, and even on school buses. The county laid out a comprehensive communications strategy to increase citizen understanding of the planning process, and ensure maximum citizen participation in the plan. We especially wanted to ensure the Latino population was reached and empowered to participate in the process. Print materials in Spanish, door-to-door outreach and local media coverage helped with this effort. Local civic groups also were invaluable, and will continue to assist as the plan moves into implementation. The success of this project is measured by support the community has for the plan, which takes into consideration their needs and desires, and community participation throughout the process.

### **Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality**

The Chesterfield County Planning Department is in the process of drafting several Special Area Plans as part of the county's Comprehensive Plan. Each plan looks at a specific geographic area – the challenges and opportunities inherent in each one, specifically – and provides a road map for the future of that area. The Department of Communications and Media collaborated with the Planning Department to help ensure a cohesive community outreach. Community involvement is important in any effort of this scope, but especially in the Northern Jefferson Davis area – 13.5 square miles along Jefferson Davis Highway – one of the county's oldest and most important highways which has some of the county's densest population diversity. There was a need to enhance the level of citizen participation in the planning process, and to increase the understanding of already-existing government programs that may aid residents. We wanted to get feedback from residents and other stakeholders to form a better plan, incorporating the things that are most important to them. We also wanted to ensure we provided information to facilitate effective public policy making – in this case, through the adoption of the special area plan.

### **How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria**

The county's efforts meet criteria to merit an achievement award, and serves as a model for other localities. This innovative project increased the level of citizen participation in, and the understanding of, government programs and services. It provided information to residents, and they were able to participate in developing the plan. This made the plan stronger, as it represents the community's desires and needs. The community supports the plan, thanks to the efforts made by county staff.

This project is worthy of a VACo award because it demonstrates the results that can be garnered by reaching out to people where they are in their community. These efforts are a model that will serve to inspire other localities to reach out to the public in new ways, seek to find people in their own territory where they are most familiar, and there engage with them.

### **How Program Was Carried Out:**

Outreach about The Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan, which will provide a vision for the community, was focused on meeting people where they were – in their neighborhood Latino-owned businesses, in their civic group, at their community centers and schools, and, in one occasion, on their school bus. The plan, and its communication efforts, provide a vision for how community planning and citizen engagement should be done. The plan's theme of "A Place with a Past, A Place with a Future," was echoed throughout all promotional materials and outreach efforts. This was about community involvement and hearing what residents wanted in their area.

The Department of Communications and Media, along with the Planning Department, laid out a comprehensive communications strategy to increase citizen understanding of the planning process, and ensure maximum citizen participation in the plan. A concerted effort was made to ensure the Latino population along the Jefferson Davis Highway corridor was reached, and empowered to participate. Initial outreach and planning efforts began in 2015. Between June 2015 and June 2016, county staff participated in 64 meetings with various officials, organizations and businesses, including planning staff-initiated community workshops. These community workshops were an open-house format, where people could speak with staff members, get information about the process, sign up for the contact list and provide thoughts on questions like: What do you love about the area? What would you like to see changed? What would make this area better? Planning staff also visited about 35 Latino-owned businesses in the plan area. During this time, the Planning Department made 1,048 contacts.

During this first year, two ads were placed in local publications – The Richmond Times-Dispatch and the Chesterfield Times-Dispatch insert. Communications and Media also launched a social media campaign to inform the public about the planning process, and to encourage residents to participate by attending a meeting or commenting on the plan online. During the two years, dozens of meetings were held, and about 50 Latino businesses reached, in addition to comments online on the draft plan.

Communications and Media worked with Planning to film a short video explaining what the county's special area plan process was, and how residents could participate. Phil Cunningham, then-president of the Jefferson Davis Association, a local civic group, was included in the video talking about the importance of community participation. This video was shared during community meetings and on social media to help inform the public about the planning process.

Communications and Media also helped Planning translate documents into Spanish, including media releases, flyers, the plan itself and the plan website. Chesterfield County has a growing Latino population, and many residents who live along the Jefferson Davis Highway corridor speak Spanish. Information about the plan was disseminated on a local Spanish-language radio station on which a Communications and Media staff member has a regular slot. Local Spanish-language print media also published news releases, furthering the reach of the information. The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce made meeting information available to its members. In addition, Planning Department staff went door-to-door to many of the Latino-owned businesses along the corridor with flyers, asking business owners and customers to share information about upcoming community meetings. Business owners expressed their appreciation that representatives of the county asked them specifically about their ideas, needs and special situations. In a few cases, problems these business owners had, unrelated to the plan, were able to be addressed. A Spanish-speaking member of the Planning Department attended the community meetings, and was able to converse with people in the language they were most comfortable using. Community meetings were also held at three area churches with a large Latino membership. And, social media posts written in Spanish performed as well or better than their mirror posts in English.

In addition, the Planning Department made a concerted effort to include several community groups in the planning process. The Jefferson Davis Association, in particular, was counseled, and planners met with members monthly. This civic group has long had the interest of the plan area at its heart, and the Planning Department recognized the member's expertise and sought their opinion during

the process. The Jefferson Davis Association, and other community stakeholders, are partners in realizing the implementation of the plan moving forward. Members of the Amphill Civic Association, Falling Creek Ironworks Foundation, area churches and business partners like the DuPont Community Advisory Council were also consulted as part of the planning process, among many others. The plan could not have been developed as it has without the input of these community groups. Planners also got input from fourth grade students at Bellwood Elementary, riding the school bus with them along the corridor to discuss their concerns and ideas. Planners attended National Night Out events and held a special meeting at a local mobile home park specifically for those residents. Flyers and other information about the plan were also shared with Chesterfield County Libraries, specifically the branches near the plan area. Information was also disseminated at John Tyler Community College's Chester Campus, which is in the plan area. More than 300 individuals, businesses and organizations requested to be added to the community contact database, from which planning staff regularly sent out updates about the plan process and opportunities for public input.

Local media were engaged with the planning process as well, and several articles appeared in local newspapers, in Spanish-language print media and on local television. Planners and Communications and Media worked with the reporters to ensure they understood the concepts and meaning of the plan.

The Planning Department recorded all comments from all the various meetings, and made them available on the plan's website, which not only promoted transparency through the process, but further increased community participation, as residents could see what others had said. Many of the comments were eventually incorporated into the plan, and the Planning Department responded to suggestions and inquiries from the public and community stakeholders.

As the plan was being drafted, communications efforts continued into late 2017 and early 2018.

Communications and Media developed a short, easy-to-understand booklet explaining the draft plan and its themes. Images used in the booklet were provided by Planning, including graphics

developed to show citizens proposed ideas for the plan. This booklet, too, was translated into Spanish, and Planning staff distributed it to area churches, businesses and community groups.

Communications and Media filmed a short video about the Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area plan, highlighting the plan’s themes and intent. Planning staff provided graphics used in the video, which was shared with elected officials and on social media.

By February 2018, when the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the plan, many residents turned out to voice their support, and many publicly thanked the planning staff who had included them throughout the process.

The plan was just adopted in April into the county’s Comprehensive Plan by the Board of Supervisors, but the citizen engagement and participation in the process has set the stage for future planning efforts to come. The success of this program is seen not only in the number of people who we reached with information and who participated, but in the standard that has been set for resident, business and community engagement moving forward.

**Financing and Staffing:**

Printing costs – booklet	\$139.20	
Planning Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Travel to businesses and meetings</li> <li>- Developing graphics and videos</li> </ul>	In-kind – part of the Planning Department’s typical job duties	
Communications and Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Graphics</li> <li>- Videography</li> <li>- Media Consultation</li> <li>- Social Media posts</li> </ul>	In-kind – no charge for these services typically provided by the department	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Translation services</li> <li>- Media Relations</li> <li>- Travel to meetings</li> </ul>	
Advertising in the Richmond Times-Dispatch and Chesterfield Times-Dispatch	In-kind – No charge for Communications and Media to design and submit the ads, which ran in 2015.

**Results/Success:**

The success of this outreach is best measured in the enthusiasm the community has about the Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan. The community backs the plan, thanks to the work of county staff who met people where they were, listened to them and then incorporated their ideas into the plan. This outreach garnered participation from the Latino community, a population the county struggles to reach. It has backing from local civic groups, which have been part of the plan’s formation. People from along the corridor turned out to meetings and public hearings to voice their enthusiasm for the project and appreciation for the county’s efforts to enact changes in the area. Efforts to reach those people, where they were, has led to involvement and support from the community.

*By the numbers:*

<b>96</b> total meetings with officials, organizations and businesses	<b>7,000+</b> received information via Weekly Update, the county’s e-newsletter
<b>1,000+</b> contacts	<b>45</b> comments on the draft plan in summer 2017
<b>50+</b> number of Latino-owned businesses visited	<b>31,000+</b> reached via social media posts
<b>300+</b> people signed up for regular contact	<b>1,000+</b> reached by videos



The real success of this outreach is in the relationships and partnerships that will help the plan move forward. As a steering committee starts work on the implementation process, those people who have been engaged by this variety of methods will be included.

The outreach conducted as a part of developing the draft plan was unique and thorough. It was much more intensive than other planning efforts in terms of the varying ways in which staff sought out public input. The sheer numbers of individual contacts may not have been as great compared to planning efforts in more affluent areas, but we believe our efforts here yielded much higher input because of our efforts to talk to people where *they were* in a demographic that is very difficult to engage.

**Brief Overview:**

The Chesterfield County Planning and Communications and Media departments collaborated to share information about the Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan as it was being drafted. Outreach was focused on meeting people where they were: in their neighborhood Latino-owned business, during their civic group's meeting, at community centers and schools. The county laid out a comprehensive communications strategy to increase citizen understanding of the planning process and ensure maximum citizen participation in the plan. County staff especially wanted to ensure the Latino population was reached and empowered to participate in the process. Print materials in Spanish, door-to-door outreach and local media coverage helped with this effort. Local civic groups also were invaluable, and will continue to assist in implementation efforts.

**Photos of Outreach on The Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan**

Plan Website: <http://www.chesterfield.gov/jeffdavis/>



Staff talk with residents at a October 2015 community meeting at Bellwood Elementary School.



Residents speak with then-Planning Director Kirk Turner at a May 2017 community meeting at Bensley Recreation Center.

**Videos part of the Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan Outreach**

Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wk467fWz8uo&t=39s>

Special Area Plans: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVH0lo58gek&t=49s>


Other Videos and Renderings: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wk467fWz8uo&list=PLgZDAsqBP--Ns0aVtA-vZyrwpg\\_q6gDzk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wk467fWz8uo&list=PLgZDAsqBP--Ns0aVtA-vZyrwpg_q6gDzk)

**Screenshots from the videos:**



**Booklet, cover and back:**


**A Sense of Place**



THE PLAN RECOMMENDS CREATING A NEW DOWNTOWN as the center of community activity, vibrancy and reinvestment in the area.

It also promotes new residential and commercial development along Jefferson Davis Highway, near existing neighborhoods, that conform to a walkable, mixed-use pattern. The plan includes suggestions to develop and implement new development standards that promote mixed use, walkability and placemaking, or people-centric, principles. When these are incorporated into the creation of people-friendly places, it can result in welcoming and interesting neighborhoods in which to live, visit and socialize.

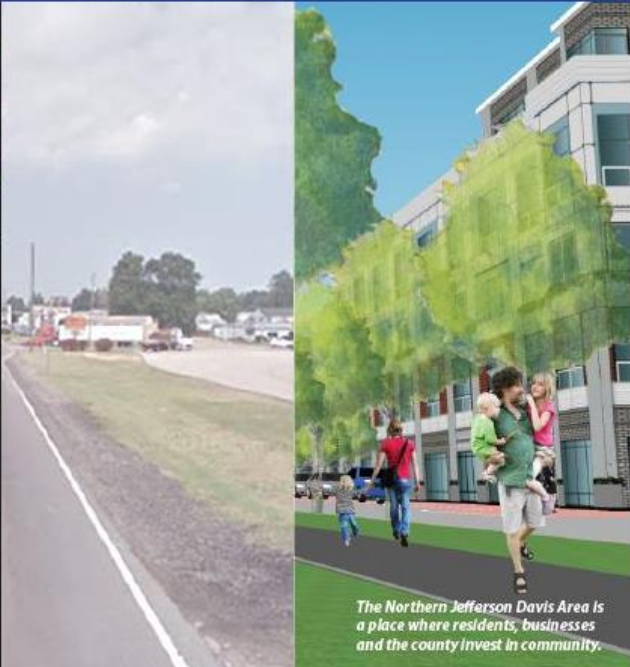
For more information, contact  
 Project Manager Jimmy Bowling  
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 804-748-1086  
[bowljing@chesterfield.gov](mailto:bowljing@chesterfield.gov)



*Providing a FIRST CHOICE community through excellence in public service*

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**The Northern Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan**  
*A Place with a Past, A Place with a Future*



*The Northern Jefferson Davis Area is a place where residents, businesses and the county invest in community.*

**Booklet, inside page example:**

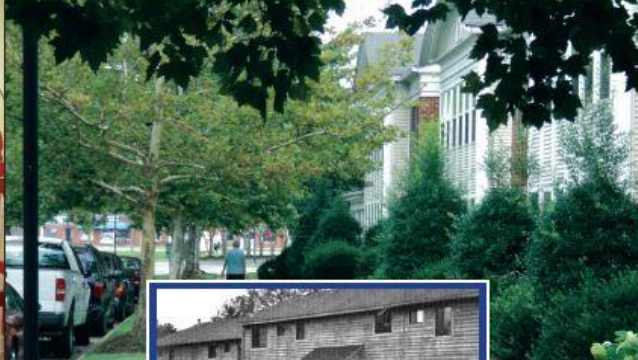

**Enhance Community and County Partnerships**

THE NORTHERN JEFFERSON DAVIS SPECIAL AREA PLAN is centered on Jefferson Davis Highway, which joins the area's diverse neighborhoods, businesses and industries. Jefferson Davis Highway is one of the county's oldest and most important highways, where some of the county's first modern subdivisions and major industries developed.

This plan recognizes and promotes the community's desire to have a high quality of life through attractive, orderly, fiscally responsible, and well-planned and well-designed development. Successfully implementing the plan will require close coordination and cooperation among government officials, citizens, business leaders, property owners and others. The plan encourages the creation of ordinances, regulations and policies to guide growth and development decisions.

**Stabilize and Improve Existing Neighborhoods**

THIS PLAN IS THE REVITALIZATION STRATEGY for the area and will serve as the basis for similar initiatives in other areas of the county. This plan encourages revitalization through property rehabilitation, redevelopment and new development, in addition to public investment and community partnerships.