



**Department of Planning & Community Development  
Report to Town Council**

November 11th, 2025

Good evening, Members of Town Council,

Here are some updates on key long-term initiatives we are actively working towards as of November 5th, 2025.

**Downtown Revitalization**

- The Community and Economic Development Strategic Plan, facilitated by RVARC, is underway. This evening we will have Amanda McGee, Director of Community Development, present their findings to date and next steps.
  - We are tentatively planning to do a joint work session between Council and the Planning Commission from approximately 4-6pm, with dinner to follow in advance of the 7pm Council meeting, on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned for updates on this.
- Branding project – Arnett Muldrow & Associates conducted a series of roundtables and presented a draft branding strategy in October. The draft brand presentation is included in your packets. They are working on revisions based on the feedback received, and will be presenting the final brand to Town Council on December 9<sup>th</sup>.
- We submitted a grant on August 20<sup>th</sup> to DHCD for a downtown master plan. We should hear back by the end of the calendar year.
- We have quite a few businesses that have recently opened or soon will be opening in town. Please be sure to stop by and welcome them to our community!
- Business Spotlights: We wish to have Council's blessing on moving forward with this initiative, as we would like to reach out to businesses this month.
- Based off feedback that we have received by multiple community members and business owners, there is a strong desire for more central seating/gathering options in our downtown. Per Council's direction last month, we are working on drafting a survey to be distributed to downtown businesses to collect input on seating preferences.

## **Housing Development & Revitalization**

- Housing Needs Assessment/Local Market Assessment project (funded by Virginia Housing). S. Patz & Associates has closed their community survey and have conducted a number of interviews. They should be wrapping up the study by the end of the year.
- The Town of Clifton Forge is officially a part of the Housing Adopters Program under the Housing Supply Accelerator Challenge, an initiative of National League of Cities and the American Planning Association. Our local team roster includes representatives from town staff, town residents, Alleghany County, and the City of Covington.

## **Lodging Needs Assessments**

- SERCAP has prepared a lodging operators survey that will be distributed this month.

## **Building & Site Redevelopment**

- Jefferson School: We have a signed Performance Agreement with the Jefferson School Partners. We are awaiting a decision on the \$2M Virginia Housing Trust Fund grant to DHCD. This month, we applied for a \$228,530 Brownfields Remediation Grant and are submitting a \$1.4M Virginia Housing Workforce Development Program application on November 7th.
- 608 Main Street: Stabilization work should begin mid-November.
- Karen Weber/DEQ have inventoried 216 properties to date for the BAD Buildings Inventory. Of the 216, 45 properties are in good condition; 90 properties in fair condition; 45 properties in poor condition; and 34 properties identified as should be demolished. We will work with their team on next steps once the inventory is fully completed.

## **Other Grants Updates**

- We have been officially approved for the grant application to DCR for \$148,400.00 for a restroom facility at the Smith Creek Trailhead near the community gardens. We are working on the various environmental and historical reviews that are required as part of the grant.

## **Misc.**

- We attended the VML conference in Roanoke this month – great sessions and discussion!
- Chuck and I were honored to host representatives from both the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond and Federal Reserve Bank of Boston to show them various projects we have been working on. They have supported the efforts at 608 Main Street to date.
- The interpretive trail signs for Green Pastures have been completed and the sign frames have been delivered. Douthat has installed 3 of the 7 signs to date.
- The 'Visit Clifton Forge' site is now live and has been integrated into our official town website. We are continuously working to make improvements and keep this up-to-date.

- We held a free community rain barrel workshop, in partnership with RVARC on October 15<sup>th</sup>, which was a great success!
- We have signed a Purchase Agreement for the Yard Office building and are awaiting final approvals before moving into the due diligence period.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Saxton  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
Town of Clifton Forge