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We hope to see  
you there!

- Housing Task Force Meeting #2 on Tuesday, December 20th
- Steering Committee Meeting #3 on Thursday, January 12th
- Housing Task Force Meeting #3 on Tuesday, January 17th
- Neighborhood Task Force Meeting #2 on Tuesday, January 17th
- People Task Force Meeting #2 on Wednesday, January 18th

Meeting times  
and locations  
are posted on  
the website.



NEWPORT NEWS CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD

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For questions or to **VOLUNTEER**, please contact: Garrett Morgan, Senior Planner at [gmorgan@nnva.gov](mailto:gmorgan@nnva.gov) Phone: 757.926.8761 (Department of Planning) Britta Ayers, Manager of Comprehensive Planning at [bayers@nnva.gov](mailto:bayers@nnva.gov)

**Here We Go!**

November was a busy month for the Newport News Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI). Our Steering Committee met for the second time, the task forces held their initial meetings, local residents took part in the Citizen's Planning Workshop, and the Planning Team engaged the youngest members of the neighborhood at a community event held at Ridley Place. **Community Fun Day**, hosted by Hidenwood Elementary School, Crossroads Community Church and Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority, was held on November 20th and featured an afternoon of fun, food and entertainment for residents of all ages. Crossroads Community Church gave away turkeys for Thanksgiving. Catalyst Church and the CNI Planning Team gave away gift cards.

**Housing Task Force**

Task force members reviewed basic facts about housing, household size, and income. They found out that there is a high concentration of public and assisted housing in the neighborhood, a low rate of homeownership, and that the demand for public and assisted housing in Newport News is very high: the waiting list in November was over 3,500 people.

Some of the initial housing goals the task force discussed are: housing for veterans; housing for the homeless and people in transition; senior accessible housing; workforce housing targeted to young professionals; increasing homeownership;



*Kids hung out at the CNI table, coloring and sharing what they like about their neighborhood and what new things they want to see in their parks.*

improving blighted properties; and making sure that affordable housing is not largely concentrated in one area of the city.

Goals identified by the task forces are preliminary and will continue to be discussed and refined as the planning process continues. For complete meeting summaries, go to the project website.

**Neighborhood Task Force**

The Neighborhood Task Force had a lively discussion at Jim's Market, where they reviewed baseline data about the community related to poverty, crime and safety, parks, and transportation.

Some of the initial goals identified to improve the neighborhood include: ensuring the safety of children; improving lighting on all neighborhood streets; improving the safety, visibility and frequency of safe

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crosswalks; introducing traffic calming measures to reduce speeding; and revisiting the one-way street network.

### People Task Force

The People Task Force discussed data related to education, employment and health. A review of information about the neighborhood revealed that there are many assets in the community, including many houses of worship.

Task force members identified several initial goals: bring employers to the table to discuss strategies to improve employment opportunities; better connections between jobs and transportation; identify available jobs and the skills necessary to perform them, creating training programs if needed; increase neighborhood schools; expand free Wi-Fi access for kids; expand programs for infants to 3 years old; and connect people to available programs.

### Meet Kaaleah Jones, Member of the Southeast CARE Coalition

Kaaleah Jones and her mother Latonya Wallace joined community residents, elected officials, and city staff at the Citizen's Planning Workshop on Saturday, November 19th at the Marshall Early Learning Center. Kaaleah's energy and thought-provoking participation impressed everyone in the room. She spoke with us about her experience at the workshop and with the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative.

#### Before you attended the Workshop, did you know what a Planner does?

*I had a general idea of what a planner was based on prior knowledge that I acquired from observing and listening to other people's definition of a planner.*

#### Why did you decide to attend the Citizen's Planning Workshop?

*I decided to attend the workshop because the planning and development of Ridley*

*Place is something that affects my family and me personally and I wanted to get more insight on the changes to come in our community.*

#### Did the Workshop provide you with the information you were hoping it would?

*Yes, it did. It provided me with new information, specifically on where to find zoning ordinances and how they are used. It also showed me all of the work that goes into buildings and developments before construction.*

#### What are some of the tools that you learned?

*I learned how to contact the right people at the city efficiently and effectively when it comes to wanting to see changes in the development of my community. I also learned how to plan so that changes that will be made will always have the best interest of the community in mind.*

#### What are three things that you like most about your neighborhood?

*I like the convenience of the local corner stores and how I do not have to travel very far to get the little things I need. I also like how we have a daycare center at Ridley Place, so mothers and fathers have a place to drop off their children while they are at work. Finally, I like how there is a school in our community so that the children do not have to go far from home to receive their education.*



*Kaaleah Jones shares a summary of her group's discussion during the workshop.*

#### If you could make three significant changes to your neighborhood/community, what would they be?

*The first thing that could be changed is the condition of the housing in the complexes in which we live. They are wearing down, and the residents are experiencing more and more problems making a living; it is a challenge day-to-day. I would like increased access to technology, specifically faster internet service in the schools. This would give students of color an equal playing field when going up against other schools in school-related activities.*

*I would also like the strip mall to reopen and for the Moton Theatre to play movies again. This would make activities that teens like more accessible and attract teens to the community. Now we have to go to Peninsula Town Center or Patrick Henry mall for our shopping. If we could shop and hang out in our community, we'd also have more jobs here, which would keep money here and keep teens out of trouble.*

## What we are working on this month...

**Market Analysis:** Our consultant will research housing, demographic and economic factors that affect housing and non-residential development in and around the target neighborhood. Findings will be presented to the committees, task forces, and other stakeholders in late winter.

**Needs Assessment and Community Surveys:** We continue to collect information to understand the key challenges facing the community. Part of this effort includes a Community Survey and a Youth Survey (be on the lookout for these in February).

**Bus Trip:** We are looking at opportunities to take our task forces on a road trip to see examples of successful neighborhood transformation efforts. We plan to take a bus trip this winter. Stay tuned.