

*Chapter VII:*

**HISTORIC AREAS**

**ADOPTED  
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### **Introduction**

Longtime Smithfield residents refer to the essence of the Town as having always been best exemplified by the area “between the bridges.” Those bridges, of course, are those traversing the Pagan River and Cypress Creek, respectively, carrying vehicular and pedestrian traffic along Church Street. These two landmarks delineate the approximate boundaries of Smithfield’s historic Downtown. The fundamental premise of this Historic Areas Plan for the Town is to demarcate this Historic Area, explain its importance to the soul of the Town, and put into place measures that will ensure that this area “between the bridges” will always exemplify Smithfield and what its residents value and hold dear about their community.

Smithfield is home to one of the most unique and extensive collections of historic buildings in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The community has done much to maintain this rich architectural heritage. The historic structures defining Downtown Smithfield have long served as a source of pride within the community, and as such, historic preservation has been given high priority in the Town in recent decades. This tradition continues today in Smithfield as local residents, property owners, businesses and the Town government invest valuable resources in the preservation of historic structures. This Historic Areas Plan attempts to capture the spirit of the Town’s commitment to protecting and preserving its past through historic preservation by summarizing past and ongoing efforts, as well as introducing specific recommendations for future planning efforts.

### **Goals and Objectives for Historic Preservation**

The Town’s major goal statement for Historic Preservation is best expressed as follows:

*Preserve and protect the Town’s rich architectural and cultural heritage which positively impacts tourism and contributes to the overall well-being of the community. Integrate opportunities for pro-active expansion of the Town’s public parks and recreational amenities within the context of Smithfield’s historic and cultural traditions.*

The Town is committed to furthering the following planning objectives and policies as they relate directly to historic preservation:

**Planning Objectives and Policies:**

- A. Preserve the integrity of the architectural and historic character of Smithfield by protecting historic buildings and neighborhoods from inappropriate uses, as well as design practices and materials.
- B. Encourage the appropriate adaptive reuse of both publicly and privately owned, historically significant structures in the Town.
- C. Guide contemporary development in a way which compliments the historic fabric of the Town and works to strengthen the overall character of the community.
- D. Update and expand the inventory of privately held historic properties of significance, and develop strategies for their protection.
- E. Encourage the continuation of the ongoing revitalization activities along the South Church Street corridor.
- F. Implement new architectural and land development guidelines and ordinances for the Town's historic districts and entry corridors.
- G. Evaluate the feasibility of the Town maintaining the Windsor Castle property for long-term historic preservation, incorporating appropriate and compatible public and quasi-public parks and recreational uses by the Town.

These goals and objectives reflect the great importance stressed on historic preservation over the years by the Town and its residents. This importance was underscored by the results of the Citizens' Survey conducted in support of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. Two distinct questions among the over forty included in the survey focused upon preservation of the Town's waterfront and architecturally significant structures. The questions and results are shown below, as well as a summary of the results of citizen responses received from a similar survey conducted in 1998:

*Protection and preservation of the Town's waterfront area is a high priority and should be a major goal for any future land use planning.*

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>460</b>	
	<b>(2%)</b>	<b>(4%)</b>	<b>(11%)</b>	<b>(19%)</b>	<b>(64%)</b>	

*Results from*

1998:	28	11	73	126	437
	<b>(4%)</b>	<b>(2%)</b>	<b>(11%)</b>	<b>(19%)</b>	<b>(65%)</b>

Over 83% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, down slightly from 84% in the 1998 survey. Of all the attitudinal questions included in the survey, this question received the fourth strongest response in terms of overall agreement among respondents. In 1998, the same question received the second strongest attitudinal ranking in the 1998 survey.

*The preservation of historic sites and buildings is an important goal for the Town, and I support the expenditure of public funds to promote and maintain the Town's historic character.*

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
	<b>55</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>331</b>	
	<b>(8%)</b>	<b>(6%)</b>	<b>(15%)</b>	<b>(24%)</b>	<b>(47%)</b>	

*Results from*

1998:	60	45	77	160	337
	<b>(9%)</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>(11%)</b>	<b>(24%)</b>	<b>(50%)</b>

Nearly 71% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, down slightly from 74% in the 1998 survey.

### **Brief History of Smithfield's Development**

Incorporated in 1752, the oldest section of the Town was originally established on a slight crest along a bend in the Pagan River, encompassing the blocks which now constitute South Church, Main, Mason and Cedar streets. In its earliest form, the Town consisted of approximately 72 lots. While early settlement centered on the courthouse and neighboring wharf area, growth in the area led to the geographic expansion of new development beyond what is now considered to be the Downtown Area. Eventually, the original grid pattern street design was abandoned as new streets were designed to fit within the constraints imposed by the Pagan River, Little Creek and their adjacent marshlands.

Smithfield has a richly diverse collection of historic buildings. An unusually high number of eighteenth-century structures survive, including town buildings and the two farm complexes of Windsor Castle and Pierceville. Other notable examples are the Georgian-style residences on South Church Street, the Smithfield Inn, and several public buildings including the courthouse, clerk's office, and the original jail. Federal-style homes from the early nineteenth century are well represented on South Church and North Mason streets.

The late nineteenth-century was a period of great expansion in Smithfield and good examples of Victorian styles, from showcase Queen Anne residences to more modest vernacular houses, are common throughout the district. Steamboat traffic contributed significantly to Smithfield's prosperity during this era. The Town's two major products, peanuts and ham, were shipped out from the wharf. Local merchants enjoyed direct connections with ports up and down the seaboard.

The town's street plan was extended from its confined block pattern to include Grace Street in 1882. North Mason Street was also added soon thereafter. Compact adjoining neighborhoods, such as Riverview, were developed in the early twentieth century. Grace and Thomas streets were subsequently connected to the Town's grid.

As Smithfield has evolved, the Downtown has witnessed periods of both economic prosperity and discouraging economic times when several established businesses relocated to outlying highway sites. For instance, a major fire in 1921 coincided with the decline of water transportation to effectively shut down the commercial and industrial area that had grown to define the Town's waterfront. The large Gwaltney's peanut factory, a mainstay of the town's successful post-bellum economy, was not rebuilt after it burned, and in the late 1930s the meat-packing industry, rather than expanding at its Commerce Street location, moved across the Pagan River beyond the Old Town boundaries. Meanwhile, retail business had shifted inland along Main Street. Most of the district's historic commercial buildings were erected on Main Street in the early twentieth century, and today this area still forms the heart of the historic district.

Through these various turns in the Town's economic cycle, Downtown Smithfield has managed to retain a historically significant building stock and a strong sense of community cohesiveness. Historic preservation and revitalization efforts undertaken over the past twenty-five years have played a major role in preserving the integrity of the Downtown Area. Today, historic Smithfield is identified by residents as the area "between the bridges." The Comprehensive Plan seeks to promote and protect the legacy of the unique sense of place that defines this area. The Main Street area is comprised of a variety of vernacular commercial structures dating from around the turn of the century. The residential areas which surround the Downtown contain a number of high-style Georgian, Federal and Victorian homes, and thus incorporate structures from a broad time frame which help to tell the story of the Town's evolution.

### **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION EFFORTS**

Downtown Smithfield has traditionally functioned as the "heart" of the community, and its health and character are reflective of the Town's values and its prospects for the future. Over the past three decades, the community has done much to maintain its rich architectural heritage. Smithfield citizens and business leaders have developed and implemented a number of strategies to help revitalize the appearance and economic health of the downtown. A brief review of past historic preservation and revitalization efforts is provided below.

Formal historic preservation efforts in Smithfield began in the early 1970's when the Town commissioned an architectural survey identifying significant historic properties in the area. This survey led to the development of the Smithfield National Register Historic District in 1973. During the early part of the decade, an alarming number of businesses began to leave Downtown Smithfield for outlying highway locations, and Main Street began to suffer during a deteriorating economic environment. Downtown property owners became cautious about reinvestment, building maintenance was often neglected and public areas and infrastructure began to show signs of age and disrepair. In spite of these challenging trends, Downtown Smithfield retained a number of important characteristics that enabled it to survive this difficult period including: a historically significant building stock; few actual vacancies; a strong office/professional service presence; and a growing tourism trade.

Case history clearly indicates that successful historic preservation is ultimately up to the locality and to individual property owners to protect the integrity of the historic district. Toward this end, the Town enacted a Historic Preservation District Ordinance in 1979. This ordinance set boundaries for a local historic district roughly comparable with that of the National Register District, and created an architectural review board (known as the Board of Historic and Architectural Review or BHAR) to review proposed changes to property in this district. The ordinance included general design guidelines to provide direction to the review board and promised "more definite standards" later. The resulting *Smithfield, Virginia Historic Design Guidelines*, were first published in 1990 to help staff and citizens to determine what is

“appropriate” in terms of new development and redevelopment within the district. In 2006, Frazier and Associates of Staunton, Virginia developed an update to the design guidelines, which were adopted by the Town Council that same year. These guidelines stand today as a valuable means of identifying what is valuable and worth preserving in the district, as well as an outstanding tool for Town residents and property owners in the ongoing quest to respect these features as they make changes or repairs to historic buildings or in designing new buildings adjoining the old.

Since the 1998 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, several other important public efforts, beyond the update to the design guidelines, have been developed by and for the Town which have targeted the historic area and have aided the historic preservation efforts in Smithfield. The most important of which culminated in the Main Street Beautification Project. In 1999, the Town completed this decade-long, \$2-million public improvement project in downtown Smithfield. Several efforts involving Downtown revitalization had been initiated over the preceding decades, but none ever came to fruition. Finally, in 1988, Mr. Joseph W. Luter, III, president of Smithfield Foods, Inc. offered to make a challenge grant if an organization could be established and formal plans adopted for a downtown project. *Historic Downtown Smithfield, Inc.* was created a short time later in January 1989, and that formation served as a catalyst in securing a financial commitment by a large percentage of Main Street businesses and property owners.

The Main Street project concluded in February 1999 with the completion of street landscaping. Additional public improvements associated with the project included: the relocation of all overhead utilities underground; construction of brick sidewalks; installation of period street lights and street signage; landscaping, granite curbing, street resurfacing, water and sewer line replacements and enhancements; additional parking; and the introduction of informational kiosks on local history and street art sculptures. Private investment resulted in many significant building renovations, reconstruction, and/or façade improvements, as well. The Virginia Downtown Development Association (VDDA) singled out Smithfield for its Main Street Beautification Project in April 1999 in recognition of these improvements. The Town of Smithfield was one of 20 communities in the United States designated a Preserve America Community. The Preserve America initiative is a White House effort developed to encourage and support community efforts for the preservation and enjoyment of America’s priceless cultural and natural heritage. On March 18, 2004 in Washington, D.C. Smithfield Mayor, James B. Chapman and Town Manager, Peter M. Stephenson received the certificate of designation signed by First Lady Laura Bush.

## **SMITHFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT**

The purpose of the Town's Historic Preservation Overlay District ordinance is to maintain, preserve, protect and enhance the architectural excellence, cultural significance, economic vitality, visual quality and historic importance of the Town of Smithfield. The district is designed to protect designated landmarks and other historic or architectural features and their surroundings from destruction, damage, and the incompatible development of adjacent lands. The ordinance also established formal boundaries for a local historic district and created an architectural review board to review proposed new construction and alterations to existing structures in the district.

Prior to 1991, the boundaries of the Smithfield National Historic District were located slightly inside those of the Local Historic District. However, these boundaries have since been expanded to include Riverview, Cedar Street, the open space west of Cary Street and the farmland surrounding Windsor Castle. As a result, the boundaries of the two districts now roughly coincide. The local historic district includes a few small extensions of the boundary in order to make the district a bit more self-contained.

Designation in the National Register district does not restrict the property owner in any way. It does, however, offer the benefit of several federal and state programs:

- *If a property owner is undertaking a major rehabilitation of a contributing building in the historic district, he might qualify for state and/or federal tax credits.*
- *Any adverse impact of a federally funded or licensed project on the district must be determined and minimized if possible.*

The distinction between the two districts is that properties in the local district are under architectural review. These restrictions are placed on property owners in order to protect the rich architectural integrity of the district.

The Smithfield Historic Preservation Overlay District encompasses 295 acres and is bounded roughly by the Pagan River on the north, Cypress Creek on the east, the Windsor Castle tree line and southern marshlands on the south, and Route 10 on the west. The district contains the Downtown commercial area and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Historic Preservation Overlay District (HP-O) is an overlay zone which provides for the review of certain changes that affect the appearance of buildings located within it. The underlying zoning, however, still governs basic site development features like setback, minimum lot size, maximum height, and use.



## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT SUB-AREAS**

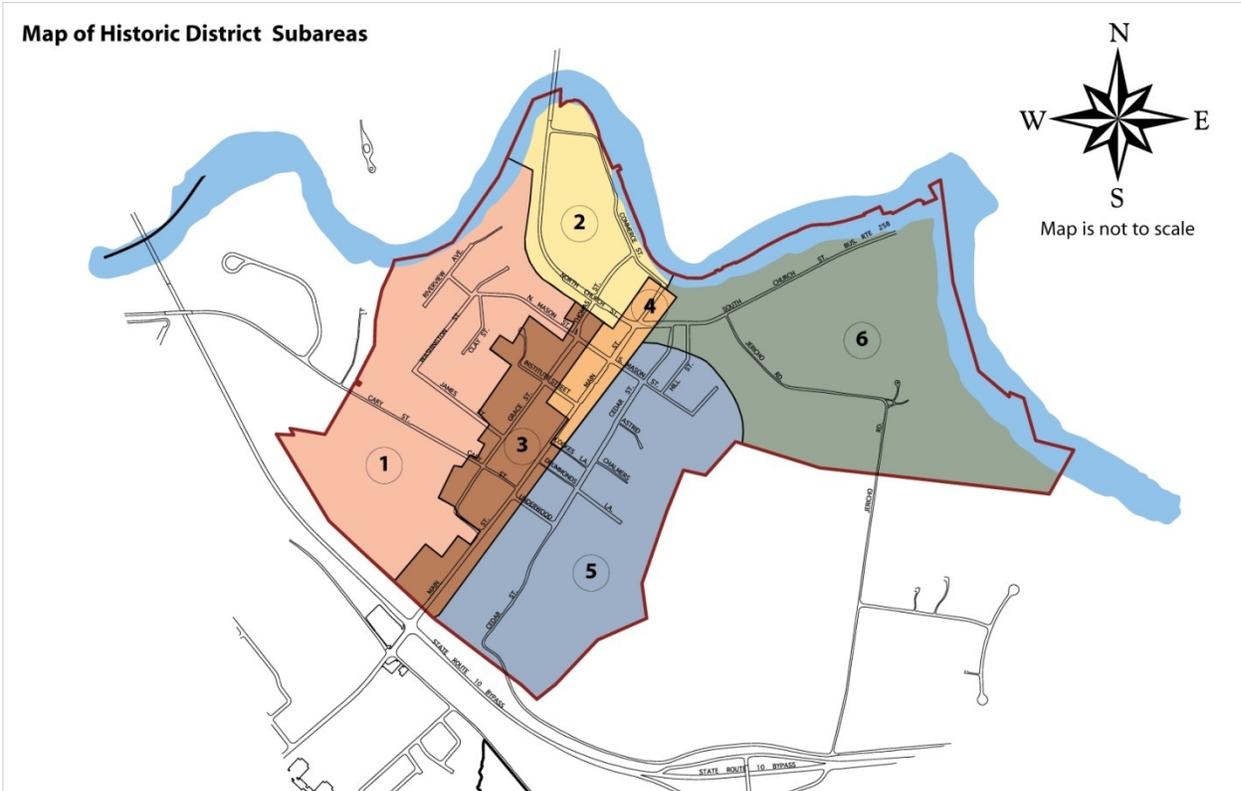
Smithfield's Local Historic District is divided into six distinct neighborhoods or sub-areas, which are marked by their own unique architectural styles and characteristics that are representative of the development patterns witnessed over time in Smithfield. These sub-areas include:

- *Riverview/James/Cary Streets;*
- *North Church Street;*
- *Main and Grace Streets;*
- *Commercial Main Street;*
- *South Church Street; and*
- *Cedar Street*

A brief summary of each of these neighborhoods is provided below:

### *1. Riverview/James/Cary Streets Historic Planning Sub-Area:*

This sub-area is located within the district's western half and encompasses Riverview Avenue and Washington Street and the north ends of James, Clay, North Mason and Cary streets. Riverview Avenue and Washington Street contain a number of one- and one-half story dwellings set close to the road. Sections of the area have been paved and have had curbs installed. Private landscaping in the area is minimal, and consists mainly of a few mature trees and foundation plantings. The residences located on James and Cary streets are larger and set farther back from the road. A variety of architectural styles dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be found within this sub-area, including notable examples of highly decorative Victorian-era homes. Recent additions to the sub-area include the Child Care Day Center built on James Street in 2003 and the major addition to the YMCA completed in 2004. This addition included an indoor swimming pool and additional recreational opportunities.



**Subareas**

- 1** Riverview
- 2** North Church Street
- 3** Main and Grace Streets
- 4** Commercial Main Street
- 5** Cedar Street
- 6** South Church Street

Exhibit VII-2: Smithfield Historic District Sub-Areas

## *2. North Church Street Historic Planning Sub-Area*

This sub-area, located in the northwestern portion of the Town, encompasses North Church Street from the Pagan River to Main Street; Commerce Street; and Thomas Street from North Church Street to Commerce Street. This neighborhood has experienced a dramatic revival since the 1998 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. Smithfield Foods, Inc., a Fortune 500 company, has constructed its corporate headquarters and an administration building on Commerce Street. In 2000, the Smithfield Center, a town-owned and operated event/conference facility was built adjacent to the Smithfield Foods headquarters overlooking the Pagan River. All town meetings are held at the Center. The Little Theatre was razed, and a new Little Theatre was built adjacent to the Smithfield Center. Five new townhouses have also been constructed at the intersection of Main and Commerce streets. These homes feature attractive landscaping with foundation plantings and planters.

## *3. Main and Grace Streets Historic Planning Sub-Area*

This sub-area is located within the center of the Historic District and contains several well-maintained, medium- to large-scale residences, many of which are a variation of Victorian styles. The majority of these dwellings are two stories in height, set close to the road, with large backyards and manicured lawns. Sidewalks are located on both sides of Grace Street, with a row of mature trees between the walkway and the street. On-street parking is promoted on both sides of Main Street.

Several noncontributing commercial buildings, fronted by parking lots, are located at the west end of Main Street near Route 10. Pierceville Farm, one of the Smithfield Historic District's two major farm sites, is located in this sub-area. The associated farm buildings sit quite close to the bend in Grace Street, while the remainder of the land is in open space.

In 1999, the Town completed a decade long \$2 million public improvement project in downtown Smithfield. The Main Street project concluded with the completion of landscaping along the downtown corridor. Public improvements included: relocation of all overhead utilities underground; construction of brick sidewalks; installation of period street lights and street signage; landscaping; granite curbing; street resurfacing; water and sewer line replacements; drainage enhancements; additional parking; informational kiosks on local history; and street art sculptures. Private investment resulted in many significant building renovations, reconstruction, and/or façade improvements. In April 1999, the Virginia Downtown Development Association (VDDA) awarded Smithfield for its Main Street Beautification Project.

#### *4. Commercial Main Street Historic Planning Sub-Area*

This sub-area encompasses the traditional Downtown Area dating from around the turn of the 20th century. The majority of the contributing commercial buildings are two-story brick structures with little or no setback, while residences tend to have small, landscaped front yards. Several of the lots have been converted to parking areas, predominantly beside the noncontributing buildings. Sidewalks line both sides of Main Street, and parallel parking is permitted as well. Hayden's Lane, a notable passageway in the sub-area, provides an attractive walkway from Main to Grace Streets.

#### *5. South Church Street Historic Planning Sub-Area*

This northeastern sub-area possesses some of the most magnificent residences in Smithfield. The Town's finest examples of Georgian, Federal and Victorian architecture are found here. Wetlands define the edges of the Church Street corridor, providing owners with long lots, extending back to these conservation areas. In general, residences are sited in close proximity to the street and to one another. The north side of the street has larger lots with larger-scaled homes. The narrow width of Church Street cannot support much on-street parking; however, the deep lots described above allow for private driveways. Sections of the sub-area are lined with mature trees which provide a natural canopy over the road. Landscape and building maintenance in the sub-area is characterized as good to excellent, and a variety of architectural styles and decorative detail contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood. A South Church Street Beautification Project which will involve landscaping, the placement of utilities underground, and the installation of brick sidewalks, traditionally styled lighting and signage is also in the Town's current plans for capital improvements.

Windsor Castle, located on Jericho Road, is also located within this sub-area. This farm complex, one of two located within the historic district limits, is also visible from South Church Street. The property contains the main house and an extensive collection of outbuildings sited next to open fields. The Windsor Castle property is cherished within the community, and the Town has placed a high priority on preserving the integrity of this historic property, including its vast, adjacent open space.

The Town has recently adopted a master plan for Windsor Castle Park. The town's adopted master plan provides for passive recreational use on the site, being sensitive to the state historic conservation easement which has been placed on 42 acres of the overall property, inclusive of the private home and outbuildings. Extensive trails will encompass the property affording the public the opportunity to experience the diversity of the site's environmental features, from woodlands and agricultural fields to marsh. The trail system also includes proposed pedestrian boardwalk connections to other areas within the historic district. A kayak and canoe launch is planned along Cypress Creek and equestrian trails are also to be incorporated into the park.

#### *6. Cedar Street Historic Planning Sub-Area*

This sub-area is located east of Main Street and is characterized by a mixture of residential, institutional and business uses. A narrow sidewalk lines the south side of Cedar Street; however, sidewalks are absent on the side streets. Parking lots associated with the Main Street business area front on Cedar Street. The east end of the street contains several church parking lots, while the west end is comprised of several multi-family buildings. The neighborhood's cross streets contain small, two-story dwellings set on narrow lots with minimal landscaping. South Mason and Sykes streets are comprised of small residences, as well; however, a majority of these are one-story dwellings on well-maintained lots with foundation plantings. Since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted, a new subdivision has been constructed on Cedar Street. This subdivision, Evergreen Acres, consists of a mixture of single family residences, townhouses, and duplexes.

### **ENTRANCE CORRIDORS**

Since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the Town has devoted a significant amount of time and attention to the future of its major entrance corridors. Included in this effort has been the implementation of a new overlay district, the ECO, Entrance Corridor Overlay District, as well as complementary Design Guidelines for these corridors. Both of these implementation tools focus attention on the protection of the future of the Town's critical entrance corridors.

#### **Entrance Corridor Protection District**

In Smithfield, entrance corridors are important transition passages and serve as gateways to the Historic Area. Therefore, these corridors should provide visual clues which indicate one's entrance to the historic area, and contribute significantly to the visual and historic character of the community. Virginia law allows localities to establish overlay zoning districts along its major entrance corridors providing they offer direct access to defined historic areas and/or tourism areas. The Town has advanced this provision in Virginia law locally in order to establish the formal Entrance Corridor Overlay zoning district along its six identified principle entranceways as part of the Town's ongoing effort to plan for the future of its corridors.

These corridors include the following:

- *North Church Street/Business Route 10, extending from the Town limits to the Pagan River Bridge;*
- *West Main Street/United States Route 258, extending from the town limits to the intersection of U.S. Route 258 and U.S. Route 10 Bypass;*
- *South Church Street from Battery Park Road to the Cypress Creek Bridge;*
- *South Church Street from the Bypass to Battery Park Road;*
- *Benns Church Boulevard/U.S. Route 10 Bypass, extending the entire distance between the Town's corporate boundaries; and*
- *Battery Park Road from South Church Street to the corporate Town limits*

The Entrance Corridor Overlay zoning district augments the Town's successful historic preservation efforts by serving to mark distinct entrance points to the historic area, preserve viewsheds and important landmark views, guide development and ensure compatibility with existing zoning, conserve the natural, historical, and architectural character of the district and finally, define a visual identity for the district. All development proposed within the overlay district is subject to the procedures, standards, and guidelines specified in the Ordinance. These include:

- *Tree protection;*
- *Minimum visual buffer;*
- *Exemption from buffer requirements;*
- *Yard and height requirements;*
- *Access and internal circulation;*
- *Site development guidelines;*

- *Landscape Requirements;*
- *Signs;*
- *Site design standards;*
- *Sign landscaping standards; and*
- *Development plan review*

The overlay district seeks to achieve the following objectives with respect to protecting the Town's major entrance corridors:

1. *Encourage and better articulate positive visual experiences along the town's major existing and proposed highway corridors;*
2. *Provide for the continued safe and efficient use of these highway corridors;*
3. *Maintain natural beauty and scenic, cultural, and historical character of these corridors, particularly distinctive views, vistas, and visual continuity;*
4. *Protect existing natural vegetation and wildlife habitats along these corridors;*
5. *Discourage indiscriminate clearing, excessive grading, and clear cutting along these corridors;*
6. *Minimize cut and fill operations by placing emphasis on the retention of natural topography of these corridors; and*
7. *Minimize intersections and individual site access points along these corridors.*

### **FORMAL CORRIDOR OVERLAY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

In order to further the ongoing attempt to both protect the function of and improve the aesthetic quality of the streetscape along its entrance corridors, Smithfield has implemented a set of specific entrance corridor-related design standards similar those established for the Historic District. As with the Historic District guidelines, these standards have been adopted in the form of a stand alone document which provides specific guidance and examples of appropriate building and landscaping improvements within the transitional corridor zones.

Developed under the thoughtful guidance and dedicated direction of Frazier Associates and adopted by the Town in 2005, these guidelines were developed as an official policy document responsive to the desired vision for each of the identified, individual corridors. The intent was to establish a clearly written and well illustrated document in order to provide a framework for better designed corridors in Smithfield. This manual provides recommendations more specific than the vision statements and design principles set forth in the Comprehensive Plan and less detailed than the requirements found in Town's Zoning Ordinance. While these guidelines provide specific recommendations for development, they cannot, and are not intended to, cover all circumstances. Rather, the structure and content of the manual are meant to give property owners, developers and reviewers the perspective to address the unique conditions of each project and the flexibility to develop designs that meet the intent, principles and spirit of the guidelines.

The Corridor Overlay Design Guidelines focus attention on the importance of the relationship between the entrance corridors and the Historic District, and specifically upon the role the corridors play in protecting the Historic Area and attracting attention and visitors to it. Within this context, the Guidelines place heavy emphasis on the following objectives outlined for the ongoing role of each entrance corridor:

- *Mark distinct entrance points to the historic area;*
- *Preserve viewsheds and important landmark views;*
- *Provide visual clues which draw visitors to the Historic Area;*
- *Create a strong sense of arrival to the historic area through the use of distinctive signage; and*
- *Achieve consistency in streetscape through simplicity of design and repetition of common landscape and streetscape elements*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRESERVATION PLANNING**

While Smithfield has been extremely proactive in successfully implementing historic preservation strategies within its Historic Area, particularly over the past decade, several opportunities exist to expand the protection of the Town's historic resources and to increase public awareness of the additional opportunities in preservation and rehabilitation that exist in the area. The following sections provide a brief summary of future efforts which may be undertaken in order to continue to enhance the visual and historic character of the district.

### **Expansion of Corridor Overlay District**

The Town should consider an expansion of the scope of the entrance corridor overlay district and its accompanying design guidelines to include the Great Springs Road and Cary Street corridors. Both of these streets link outlying Town areas directly to the Historic District and serve as important gateways to the Town. The Town should amend its current Entrance Corridor Overlay District boundaries to include these corridors. Following the strategy invoked in the development of the Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines, specific guidelines should be established for each of these corridors upon their inclusion within the Town's formal Entrance Corridor Overlay district.

The Town should also work with the County to cooperate in the extension of the application of corridor overlay design guidelines to those portions of the identified entrance corridors which extend outside of the Town's corporate limits. As growth pressures continue to press into the County service districts surrounding the Town, it will become increasingly important for the Town and the County to coordinate in the review and regulation of future development which will impact the future form and function of these important gateways and entrance corridors leading to the area "between the bridges" in Smithfield.

### **Additional Opportunities in Public Education**

The development of additional public education and awareness programs would help to inform residents and visitors as to the variety of historic resources which exist in Smithfield. Several new programs should be considered for implementation in order to accomplish this goal. Walking tours which provide a sense of community history and highlight architectural focal points within the Town often serve as a valuable means to increase awareness of historic resources and encourage public participation. While one such tour is currently offered in the Town, it is hoped that this tour could be extended beyond the core of the historic district to incorporate additional sites, such as the Windsor Castle estate and planned park facility, which deserve greater attention.

The Town should also seek to integrate ties between recreation area planning and historic properties. The Master Plan for the public park at the Windsor Castle estate provides the perfect vehicle to implement this objective, particularly, with the planned pedestrian connections between the estate and Main Street and Church Street. Additional opportunities exist to introduce eco-tourism tours incorporating a historical theme via the many waterways that are found in Smithfield. The new Master Plan for Windsor Castle designates several specific opportunity areas within which such a tour could be initiated.

A series of public workshops have been conducted in previous years by the Town Staff in order to provide owners of historic properties with guidance in the areas of building maintenance, renovation and restoration through a grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The Town should consider revisiting these work sessions to advance this program. The National Park Service publishes a series of technical briefs which provide assistance in choosing the proper materials for building repairs which meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These briefs are made available to property owners so as to ensure that building improvements preserve the integrity of individual buildings and contribute to the character of the historic district as a whole. Property owners are also made aware of the federal tax credits available for the rehabilitation of income-producing properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places or located within National Register Historic Districts. Fundraising strategies should be implemented which would enable the town to purchase important historic and cultural resources, as well as support ongoing maintenance of existing publicly-owned historic properties, such as the Windsor Castle estate. Possible funding sources may include private contributions, donations from corporate sponsors and community fundraising activities.

### **Promoting Preservation Incentives**

Owners of income-producing properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places or located within the Smithfield National Register Historic District may be eligible for a twenty percent federal tax credit for rehabilitation projects which meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. In order to qualify for tax credits, a structure must be deemed a "certified historic structure" by the Secretary of the Interior, and thereby contribute to the historic character of the district in which it is located. The Town should actively promote these programs among residents and property owners within the Historic District.

For qualifying properties, state tax credits are available as well, to any individual, trust, estate, or corporation incurring eligible expenses in the rehabilitation of a "certified historic structure." Properties must be "certified historic structures", but do not need to be income-producing, and may qualify as owner-occupied residences. The credit is applied to improvements or reconstruction consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Project expenses must total at least fifty percent of local real estate tax assessed value for the year before rehabilitation expenses were incurred.

The rehabilitation tax credit is calculated as a percentage of the eligible expenses which include: architectural and engineering fees, site survey fees, legal expenses, insurance premiums, developer's fees, and other construction-related soft costs. Applications must be filed with the VDHR and approved before construction and rehabilitation efforts begin. Property owners should contact the Town of Smithfield Department of Planning, Engineering and Public Works, P. O. Box 246, 310 Institute Street, Smithfield, Virginia 23431, (757) 365-4200 and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, located at 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia, 23221, (804) 367 2323 for more information on federal tax credit programs and project expenses eligible for reimbursement. State designation of historic properties provides eligibility for several programs administered through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Grant programs, when available, provide funds to owners of threatened landmark properties, and to non-profit groups for work on historic properties. The State also accepts donations of preservation easements from owners listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Under this program the owner can claim the value of easements as charitable contributions for tax purposes in exchange for preserving the property in perpetuity. The Town of Smithfield may also consider developing a local tax abatement program which would relieve property owners of property tax increases for certain time periods following the rehabilitation of historic properties as an added incentive for preservation efforts.

### **Continued Town Staff Support**

Throughout the successful past of Smithfield's historic preservation efforts, the Town Staff has played a crucial role in promoting the ongoing effort, informing local residents and property owners of opportunities, assisting the Board of Historic and Architectural Review in administering the regulations of the Historic District and monitoring maintenance of both public and private properties within the district. In order to ensure the continued success of the historic preservation effort in Smithfield, the Town Staff should continue to provide its valuable assistance in the future planning and implementation of preservation strategies in the Historic District. More specifically, Town Staff should continue to be diligent in the maintenance of an up-to-date inventory of the Town's Historic Properties. Staff should also continue to maintain its excellent standard in providing property owners with ongoing technical assistance and guidance in the areas of building maintenance, renovation and restoration, as well as information on tax credits available for rehabilitations to income-producing properties. Furthermore, the Town Staff could expand its role in historic preservation by working together with Historic Downtown Smithfield (HDS) to promote and conduct fundraising activities in order to support the preservation of historic and architectural resources. The continuation of proactive Staff support in the process will be critical in ensuring that the momentum of past historic preservation efforts is carried forward into the new millennium.