

WORKING DRAFT

City Council Focus Areas

During a City Council Retreat on October 23 and 24, the City Council developed three focus areas that require immediate attention by elected officials, staff and community partners in order to transform Danville into a safe, strong and thriving community with opportunities for residents to achieve economic success and personal fulfillment. The focus areas are as follows:

1. Implement long- and short-term strategies to reduce violent crime.
2. Strengthen the working relationship with the School Board for the purpose of improving education in City Schools.
3. Grow Danville.

Focus Area #1 - Implement long- and short-term strategies to reduce violent crime.

Police-focused efforts

- Establish a Gang Task Force consisting of representatives from the Danville Police Department, Danville Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Danville Sheriff's Office, W.W. Moore, Jr. Juvenile Detention Home, Probation and Parole Office, Danville Adult Detention and Danville Public Schools. The goal of the Gang task force will be to share information, implement strategies and coordinate efforts designed to curb the growth and activity of gangs.
- Increase funding support to the Danville Police Department's informant fund to adequately compensate individuals who wish to share critical violent crime information.
- Continue successful burglary reduction programs.
- In addition to continuing existing community policing efforts, the Danville Police Department will implement additional evidence-based community policing strategies and techniques that are applicable to our community and will have both long- and short-term impact on crime.
 - Develop a housing incentive program available to police officers who choose to live in targeted neighborhoods.
 - Expand beyond the Green Street precinct to develop a fixed presence in at least two at-risk neighborhoods.
 - Improve police visibility by incorporating highly visible patrols in targeted areas to include foot beat, bicycle, motorcycle and automobile patrol.
 - Increase interactions with citizens by permanent beat officers.
 - Develop "safe zones" for children and others to go when they feel threatened. (Fire stations, recreation centers, or partner businesses)
 - Increase collaboration with Danville Public Schools.
- Develop a public awareness and education campaign to educate the public on issues related to crime prevention and suppression.
 - Create a "Gang Awareness Education" program to be presented to schools, neighborhood groups and civic groups.

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- Provide gang awareness training to Fire, EMS, Social Services and code enforcement officials.
- Develop a public advertising campaign about the need for responsible firearm ownership to reduce the number of stolen firearms.
- Expand the use of technology to enhance the effectiveness of crime detection and suppression.
 - Enhance the Community Crime Map for further transparency.
 - Expand use of fixed video surveillance in key intersections and high crime areas.
 - Fund the acquisition of a gunshot detection system in high crime areas.
- Fund the civilian position of crime analyst when grant funds expire and consider the addition of a second crime analyst.
- Fund a civilian position of property and evidence technician to manage more effectively all firearm related evidence to enhance prosecution possibilities.
- Implement an alarm reduction program to reduce the amount of time officers spend handling false alarms in order to focus attention on crime prevention and suppression. This can be accomplished either by privately contracting the program or funding a civilian position to manage it internally.
- Provide funding for additional, fully equipped patrol vehicles which would be utilized to provide increased patrol when necessary to protect public safety.

Other efforts

- Immediately form a Youth Services Task Force consisting of professionals from local youth-serving agencies (Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, etc.), Social Services, Danville Public Schools, and citizens to create recommendations for serving at-risk youth before they get involved in criminal activity.
- Continue working to eradicate devastating property blight, deterioration, decline and abandonment that are undermining Danville's neighborhoods.
 - Proactively enforce the City's property maintenance code, including effective response to public complaints and rigorous implementation of provisions relating to vacant and blighted structures, graffiti, accumulated trash, overgrowth and weeds, inoperable vehicles, right of way encroachment, hazardous trees, and automobile junkyards.
 - Consider a graffiti abatement program that would enable private property owners to get assistance with graffiti removal.
 - In order to promote compliance with health and safety standards and reduce substandard conditions in rental housing for low-income residents, continue the Rental Housing Inspection Program within the three existing districts and consider expansion, where allowed by state law.
 - Support the newly-established non-profit Community Development Corporation through an annual appropriation and staff support.
- Partner with other city departments and the school system to implement new Parks and Recreation programs targeting at-risk children and youth.
 - Develop programming focused on developing youth leaders.

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- Initiate short-term intensive programming focused on the relationships between self-development, character building and community resources.
- Develop community-based programming in order to bring structured activities to children in their communities.
- Develop outreach efforts for the Danville Public Library to take materials and programs into at-risk neighborhoods.
- Explore development of a Community Wealth Building Task Force charged with developing strategies to reduce poverty.
 - Work cooperatively with the Danville Public Schools, West Piedmont Workforce Investment Board, Danville Community College, Averett University, the Commonwealth, and other partners to train our workforce for the jobs available in our community.
 - Consider a multi-generational approach to combatting poverty by developing incentive programs for parents to participate in programs that would help their families improve their economic condition.

Focus Area #2 – Strengthen the working relationship with the School Board for the purpose of improving education in City Schools.

- Work with the School Board to help create the best environment for our children to achieve success by ensuring excellence in both the physical condition of the schools and the learning environment inside the classroom.
- Regularly meet with the Danville School Board and administration to maintain a good understanding of public education system operations and budget requirements.
- Hold a joint City Council/School Board retreat in early 2017 in order to better understand each other's perspectives.
- Shift to funding schools by purpose of allocation, as allowed by law.

Focus Area #3 – Grow Danville.

Business recruitment

- Continue to aggressively recruit new businesses and industries to the area that will diversify the economy, increase overall average wage rates, and strengthen the tax base.
- Continue the aggressive redevelopment of the River District (including the riverfront) which is a major attraction tool for millennials, tourists and citizens.
- Continue to support retention and expansion of existing businesses through visitation, regular contacts and provision of needed assistance.
- Determine unmet market demand throughout the City for retail, service and restaurant businesses and utilize recruitment firms that can best meet those demands.
- Work cooperatively with the Danville Public Schools, West Piedmont Workforce Investment Board, Danville Community College, Averett University, the Commonwealth and other partners to build and sustain a well-trained workforce.

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Business-friendly permitting

- Develop and implement a program to make Danville the most “business friendly” city in the Virginia-North Carolina region.
 - Conduct a review of the City’s land use development ordinances to ensure that it is easy to do business in Danville through a reasonable, predictable, effective and efficient permitting process.
 - Create a process for developers to submit plans in a digital format in order to streamline the review process, which would reduce costs and time for the customer.
 - Explore implementation of a credit card system to accept payments for all City services, to include permit applications.
 - Within constraints posed by Virginia law, maximize purchase of goods and services from Danville businesses.

Quality of life – Resident and visitor attraction

- Ensure that all of Danville’s neighborhoods are attractive, desirable places to live to ensure that newcomers choose to live in the City.
 - Continue to expand the nDanville network into additional residential neighborhoods.
 - Use the forthcoming housing market study by the Danter Company to recruit developers for housing projects that fulfill an identified unmet need on the housing ladder.
- Advocate for continuing Virginia’s Historic Tax Credit program, which has enabled significant redevelopment of property within the River District and other areas of the City.
- Hire a consultant to develop gateway corridor improvement plans to improve the appearance of the main transportation arteries leading into the city.
- Generate small area plans for the redevelopment of the Schoolfield and Edgewood areas to support economic development efforts to develop the former Dan River Mills Schoolfield site.
- Develop a master plan for expanding the Riverwalk Trail, which would include connectivity to regional trail systems.
- Evaluate the development of a “Creative District” in order to increase cultural and arts opportunities within the City.
- Conduct a city specific floodway and floodplain study to help facilitate development of the Dan River riverfront in order to improve access and utilization of the River.

Legislative Action

- Support Virginia First Cities Community Wealth Building Policy Initiatives.
- Support the Virginia Municipal League legislative agenda where it aligns with Danville goals.