Shockoe Bottom
Equitable Economic Redevelopment Resource Guide

Richmond, Virginia | August 2019

Report prepared by

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Facilitating Change

In Partnership with

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Preservation Virginia
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Introduction

Richmond, Virginia’s Shockoe Bottom was an epicenter of the domestic slave trade in the mid 1800’s, second only to New Orleans, making it a site of international importance. It tells a uniquely American story of the contradictions between the American ideal of personal freedom and the reality of American slavery. Slave-trade auction houses, offices, slave jails, and residences of the most prominent slave traders were scattered throughout Shockoe Bottom.

Currently, Shockoe Bottom is a significant historical asset situated in a prime downtown development area with much its rich history buried or razed. In the last decades, the City—through the diligent work of the Slave Trail Commission—has invested in archaeological research of Devil’s Half Acre/Lumpkin’s Slave Jail, the 1.7-acre site of a holding jail for the enslaved, and is planning for an interpretive facility. With care, intention and a commitment to equity, Richmond can become a national and international leader for truth and reconciliation by highlighting Shockoe Bottom as an internationally recognized Site of Conscience as well as leveraging its history to create a thriving cultural and economic center.

Building on these efforts, the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Preservation Virginia support an extraordinary solution: the community-generated proposal for Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park completed in 2017. This proposal marries a memorial park and interpretive education center with equitable economic revitalization. The proposal suggests securing the land and protective zoning, tourism promotional planning, existing local and state funding, and independent oversight. Consideration of this proposal should be at the heart of any planning and development efforts going forward.
In 2018, after participating as a Rose Center fellow, Mayor Levar Stoney established the Shockoe Alliance to support, guide and embrace a unified vision for Shockoe Bottom, rooted in history and collaboration. It is our desire that the Shockoe Bottom Small Area Plan generated from this process consider the community generated Memorial Park proposal and is rooted in equitable development principles, practices and policies.

To inform the process, we brought together a group of experts in racial equity, real estate development and neighborhood revitalization that volunteered their time and talent to consider the equitable economic redevelopment of Shockoe Bottom.

Resource Group members included:

**Christopher Coes**, Washington, DC. Smart Growth America  
**Fabrizio Fasulo**, Richmond, VA. VCU Center for Urban and Regional Analysis  
**Chenee Joseph**, Atlanta, GA. Historic District Development Corporation  
**Julie Nelson**, Berkeley, CA. Race Forward  
**Kennedy Smith**, Arlington, VA. Community Land Use + Economics Group  
**Khalil Uqdah**, Baltimore, MD. Cross Street Partners

The group focused on the study area recognized by the Shockoe Alliance, a 50 block area adjacent to the African Burial Ground and the proposed sites of the Devil’s Half Acre/Lumpkin’s Jail museum and the Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park.

Through discussions facilitated by Ebony Walden Consulting, the Resource Group developed a definition of equitable redevelopment, a set of recommendations for the future redevelopment of the study area and case studies of innovative models of equitable redevelopment to inform the Shockoe Bottom Small Area Planning Process. This report is a compilation of their recommendations. Other resources that informed the development of this report are listed in the reference section at the end of this document.

To complement the Resource Groups’ findings, VCU’s Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CURA) has developed a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the heritage tourism opportunities of a transformed African Burial Grounds, Lumpkin’s Slave Jail site and parking lots into Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park, a Site of Conscience for truth and reconciliation. This two-part study was made possible through a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.
Equitable Economic Redevelopment: Definition, Principles and Recommendations

The Resource Group gathered in April of 2019 for a two-day meeting that began with an orientation tour of Shockoe and surrounding neighborhoods and concluded with an evening community conversation. The second day was focused on developing a set of recommendations that would inform Shockoe Bottom’s future.

Those recommendations include: A) A definition of equitable economic redevelopment B) Principles of equitable economic redevelopment in Richmond C) Opportunities to pursue equitable redevelopment in Shockoe Bottom and D) Examples of equitable redevelopment projects and programs from other U.S. cities. The Resource Group’s recommendations are outlined below:

A. Definition of Equitable Economic Redevelopment

Combining equitable development definitions from The Government Alliance on Race and Equity and The Metropolitan Council of Twin Cities Minnesota, this report defines equitable development as:

“Equitable economic redevelopment creates healthy vibrant communities of opportunity where low-income people, people of color, new immigrants and people with disabilities participate in and benefit from systems, decisions, and activities that shape their neighborhoods. Public and private investments, programs, and policies reduce disparities and take into account past history and current conditions.”
Thus, quality of life outcomes such as affordable housing, quality education, living wage employment, healthy environments, and transportation are equitably experienced by all.

Building upon this foundation, the Resource Group defined equitable economic redevelopment in Shockoe Bottom:

**Equitable economic redevelopment in Shockoe Bottom is a cohesive vision that builds community wealth and aims toward racial justice, ultimately dismantling past and present systems of supremacy.**

The following elements are imperative:

- Access to wealth creation tools for new and existing businesses based on the level of need while creating a clear path to wealth and land ownership;
- Protecting the physical, social, cultural and historical resources of Shockoe Bottom and making them accessible to all; and
- Converting the history and heritage of African enslavement into places, spaces and narratives that are owned by and used for the advancement of African Americans.

## B. Principles of Equitable Economic Redevelopment in Shockoe Bottom

To compliment this definition, the Resource Group crafted a set of principles that future development and redevelopment in Shockoe Bottom should be built upon. Below are values and principles that should shape future developments processes and plans.

### Values:

- **Wealth Building** – Improving the economic opportunities of the most vulnerable – supporting living wage jobs, workforce development, business ownership, minority developers and sub-contractors.
- **Cultural Protection** – Protecting the tangible and intangible cultural and historic resources of Shockoe Bottom. Adaptively re-using historic structures and supporting human-scaled development that respects the historic fabric.
- **Inclusive & Shared Prosperity** – Allowing all Richmond residents and guests to participate in the activities and economic prosperity of the place.

- **Affordable Transportation and Mobility Options** – Providing affordable, accessible, integrated transportation options that are connected to residential and commercial uses and adjacent neighborhoods.

- **Inclusive Land Use/Development Policies** – Providing housing and commercial options for all, prioritizing affordable housing for those that lack access to wealth and resources.

- **Centering Descendant Community** – African American history, resilience, ownership and participation should be prominently centered in future development plans.

**Process Principles:**

- **Long-term Sustainability** – Focus on projects that support existing residents and businesses indefinitely and incorporate sustainable/green-building practices.

- **Executable Tasks/Milestones & Timelines** – All processes must be clear, outlining the actionable tasks, timeline and resources necessary to move toward implementation.

- **Collaboration** – Strengthen the relationship between the city, residents, property owners and other stakeholders to encourage greater collaboration and success.

- **Trust Building** – Open and honest communication, relationship building and seeking of win-win solutions between stakeholders are necessary. Select a trusted group or entity to lead the collaboration and trust-building efforts.

- **Racial Equity Lens** – The process, policies and projects should focus on reducing racial disparities and adequately mitigating any disparate impact.

**C. Historic Preservation and Transit Oriented Development Principles**

The economic redevelopment principles outlined above are consistent with historic preservation studies that prove the economic benefits of preservation and adaptive re-use (**Ten Principles of Re-Urbanism**) and local transit-oriented development goals included in the City of Richmond’s **Pulse Corridor Plan**.
1. The Benefits of Preservation & Adaptive Reuse of Small Older Buildings

According to The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Atlas of ReUrbanism, there are 60 percent more women and minority-owned businesses on blocks with older, smaller, mixed-age buildings. In many cities in the Atlas, the number is twice as high compared to areas with larger, newer developments. Their Older, Smaller, Better report found that established neighborhoods with a mix of older, smaller buildings perform better than districts with larger, newer structures when tested against a range of economic, social, and environmental outcome measures.

Relevance to Shockoe Bottom

The preservation and adaptive re-use of the existing small-scale buildings in Shockoe Bottom could have a variety of benefits. Human-scaled redevelopment that respects the existing neighborhood and street fabric would add to the cultural and economic vibrancy of the area.

2. The Pulse Corridor Plan supports equity, affordability, preservation, commemoration and small business development.

The Pulse Corridor Plan recommends Thriving and Equitable (CW.24 - CW.35) development along the corridor including incentivizing and funding affordable housing, preserving historic structures, and supporting small business development, and supports mixed use, transit options and connectivity (pg. viii).

The Pulse Plan notes “ongoing efforts to commemorate, memorialize, and interpret the historic and cultural significance of Shockoe Bottom” for the Main St. Station area. The plan also anticipates “intense development” near Main Street Station and infill development of underutilized parcels in the flood plain near the Shockoe Bottom Station Area.

Relevance to Shockoe Bottom

The tension between infill intensity/density (up to 12 stories), preserving smaller buildings, commemoration and the constraints of the flood plain could be resolved if the Memorial Park proposal were considered. It offers a balance of commemoration, memorialization, education and economic development with new buildings and a nine-acre park, which could lessen the impact of developing in the flood plain area.
D. Equitable Economic Redevelopment Opportunities in Shockoe Bottom

The Resource Group generated both citywide and Shockoe specific recommendations. Citywide initiatives could be focused or piloted specifically to foster equitable development in Shockoe Bottom. Many of the recommendations can be implemented immediately, while others may take years to garner support and bring to fruition.

Immediate Opportunities for Shockoe Bottom

1. **Implement Tactical Urbanism** - Use vacant space in Shockoe Bottom for events such as festivals and community gatherings that claim and drive activity in this space in preparation for change.

2. **Harness the presence of existing Black-owned businesses** and claim (create a map and market) Shockoe Bottom as a Black entrepreneurial space.

3. **Partner with local corporations** such as Capital One for business development, support and incubation.

4. **Engage landowners as part of the Small Area Plan process** through the Shockoe Alliance. Gauge their interest in Opportunity Zones.

5. **Take advantage of Opportunity Zones (OZ)** – Explore opportunities to use Opportunity Zone funds for the equitable development of Shockoe Bottom. Promote education and understanding of OZ, start a city-wide initiative and/or hire a coordinator. See more on OZs in the case study examples below.

6. **Inventory existing available land** within the target area, outlining land costs to identify prospects for acquisition whether by City or through a potential non-profit developer or land trust.
7. **Create a non-profit development corporation** to oversee Shockoe redevelopment. Hire local and outside staff experienced in preservation and real estate development with a team/board that is representative of community stakeholders. This organization can move things forward and be a moral compass, convener and key collaborator for the existing stakeholder groups.

8. **Utilize a Community Land Trust (CLT)** - Create CLT focused on Shockoe or utilize the current CLT to benefit this area. They can buy and hold land to make sure the community has ownership, control and benefits from future Shockoe Bottom redevelopment.

**Opportunities to Promote Equitable Economic Redevelopment in the Near Future:**

9. **Create a unifying vision with accompanying land/use development regulations.**

Any current or future small area planning processes should be contingent upon a co-created vision for the area that incorporates the recommendations from the Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park Proposal outlined below. Plans should also be accompanied by a development process/land use regulations that implements the vision and clearly outline the pathway forward for developers (a by-right and predictable process if possible).

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**COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS:**
Nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. To do so, the trust acquires land and maintains ownership of it permanently.

![Proposed View between Rail Lines](Source: Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park Proposal)
10. **Uplift and Complement the Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park Proposal.**

The Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park Proposal is a great example of a community-based engagement process that is the heart of any principles of equitable economic redevelopment. It’s a viable proposal that would allow the area to serve the public through commemoration, education and artistic expression. Any future development should blend respectful commemoration of this country’s slavery-related history, cultural heritage tourism and economic opportunity.
Proposed View at Side of Seaboard Building  Source: Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park Proposal
Below are key elements and recommendations of the Memorial Park Proposal that the City of Richmond should strongly consider:

- **A PROCESS GUIDED BY AFRICAN AMERICANS:** As the community whose history has been most shaped by Shockoe Bottom’s role in the slave-trading practices of Richmond’s civil and civic society, the African-American community must have the primary voice in how this Memorial Park area is to be developed. For this reason, it is imperative to pro-actively and creatively engage the African-American descendant communities of Richmond during each stage of the development of the Memorial Park, as well as having sufficient stakeholder representation on the committee or other body developed to monitor, review and implement the policies of an historic design Overlay district.

- **SECURING THE LAND:** The City should acquire key parcels to ensure development is consistent with a historic/heritage development district: set aside city-owned lots and purchase the few adjacent privately-owned lots.

- **A MEMORIAL PARK:** As a next step to securing the nine-acre site, establish and demarcate a Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park – large enough to convey a sense of the enormity of the slave trade practiced there, while still allowing development of surrounding areas. Two thirds of the proposed park area already is set aside for memorialization: the site of the Devil’s Half Acre/Lumpkin’s Jail (site of future museum/interpretive center) and the African Burial Ground, which included the Town Gallows where the great slave-rebellion leader Gabriel gave his life. The other third would encompass the additional two square blocks east of the CSX railroad tracks, between East Broad, 17th and East Franklin streets to provide visual and physical access at the pedestrian/street level.

- **AN HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT:** Update zoning to reflect current use, and establish a Historic Overlay District or “old and historic district” to protect existing historic resources in Shockoe Bottom and to guide future development initiatives. A key component of a Historic Overlay District should be a plan for archaeological investigation as land is developed, including any land associated with the Memorial Park.

- **A HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN:** Develop and invest in a comprehensive historic/heritage tourism development plan. This should include prominent promotion of Richmond and

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THE SHOCKOE BOTTOM MEMORIAL PARK PROPOSAL is a great example of a community-based engagement process that is the heart of any principles of equitable economic redevelopment.
Shockoe Bottom at Welcome Centers and every rest stop in Virginia, especially along Interstates 95 and 64, as well as at key national and international tourism transportation hubs.

- **COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT:** The Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park should be operated by an independent non-profit organization, working in cooperation with a Community Advisory Committee made up of individuals and organizations with proven records of working to reclaim and properly memorialize Shockoe Bottom.

11. Launch an Equitable Development Initiative in the City of Richmond and/or at the neighborhood level in Shockoe Bottom, considering adoption of the following tools:

- **A Racial Equity Impact Assessment** of future land use and development decisions. A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. They help reduce, eliminate and prevent racial discrimination and inequities. REIAs are best conducted during the decision-making process, prior to enacting new proposals or plans.

- **An Equitable Development Scorecard** can be used to ensure future development benefits the community and promotes equity. A scorecard is an analysis or scoring of new development projects or policies based on a predetermined set of priorities and criteria. This helps the community analyze projects based on equitable development principles and set expectations for developers.

- Performance-based Community Benefits Agreements (more information below).

- Develop incentives/requirements for affordable housing in Shockoe Bottom.

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**RACIAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT:**
A systematic investigation of how different racial and ethnic groups may be affected by a proposed action.

**EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT SCORECARD:**
An analysis or scoring of new development projects or policies based on a predetermined set of priorities and criteria.
12. Use Performance-Based Community Benefits Agreements (with a few cautions).

- A Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) is a contract signed by community groups, government and a developer that requires the developer to provide specific amenities and/or mitigations to the local community or neighborhood. They ensure new developments meet the needs of the surrounding community and address any negative impacts. The Resource Group recommends using community benefits agreements with the following precautions:
  - Make sure there is a mechanism for enforcement – a legal document outlining the repercussions for not complying and a contingency plan.
  - Create a vision to hold the CBA process together from beginning to end.
  - Develop a clear and transparent process to get to a final agreement with the developer and community to ensure adequate buy-in.
  - Do not focus on one non-profit partner. Make sure the CBA benefits the community or many groups.

13. Create a Development 101 workshop for community residents.

- In order to increase trust, collaboration, and understanding, it is imperative that community members understand the process of land development and basic finance. This will enable them to have more informed conversations with local government representatives and developers.

Equitable Economic Redevelopment in Shockoe Bottom is a cohesive vision that builds community wealth and aims toward racial justice, ultimately dismantling past and present systems of supremacy.
Equitable Economic Redevelopment
Case Studies and Exemplary Programs

The Resource Group outlined a set of practical examples of equitable redevelopment projects and programs from other U.S. cities that can help inform the City of Richmond’s equitable development strategy in Shockoe Bottom. Below is an array of case studies that range from citywide equitable development initiatives, neighborhood-based revitalization efforts, development projects and economic empowerment programs that support African American business and ownership.
1. Local Government Equitable Development Initiatives

The City of Richmond should consider launching a citywide Equitable Economic Redevelopment initiative to pilot in Shockoe Bottom. A broader discussion and commitment to Equitable Economic Redevelopment is warranted, ensuring the equitable development of Shockoe Bottom. Seattle’s Equitable Development Initiative is an innovative model.

Seattle Equitable Development Initiative

The Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) created the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) in 2016. EDI is a set of strategies that emerged from their Growth and Equity Report that was adopted by City Council in 2016 as part of their Comprehensive Plan – Seattle 2035. As part of this initiative, various City departments coordinate solutions to address displacement and equity in underserved communities. Their goal is to implement strategies to:

- Advance economic mobility and opportunity
- Prevent residential, commercial, and cultural displacement
- Build on local cultural assets
- Promote transportation mobility and connectivity
- Develop healthy and safe neighborhoods.
- Enable equitable access to all neighborhoods.

To fund EDI, Seattle established a $16 Million Equitable Development Implementation Fund, with proceeds from the sale of property. The projects support Community Capacity Development, Real Estate Development, and Entrepreneurship and Talent Development. The new partnerships ensure capacity building among marginalized groups in Seattle while working towards racial equity outcomes in jobs, education and childcare, recreation, cultural expression, healthy food, and other community needs and amenities.

Below are a few projects that have been funded:

- **African Women Business Alliance** — $75,000 for capacity building to explore a permanent home for the Alliance and to support economic development of women-owned businesses.

- **Africatown** — $1,075,000 for capacity-building and development expenses to include affordable commercial space to the Midtown affordable housing project.
Chief Seattle Club — $925,000 for capacity-building, project development, and construction of affordable housing, healthcare, and art gallery space serving the American Indian/Alaska Native community.

**Relevance to Richmond and Shockoe Bottom:**

- Richmond needs to be intentional about ensuring that marginalized groups have a cultural and economic presence and participation in the prosperity of the City and Shockoe Bottom in particular.

- Creating a fund and initiative that specifically supports the community development, real estate development and entrepreneurship in Richmond, designating Shockoe Bottom as one of the target areas, would go a long way in showing Richmond’s commitment to equity.

**Newark, New Jersey – Commission on Equitable Growth**

The City of Newark established a 15-member commission consisting of experts from various sectors to ensure that development policies and projects in Newark incorporate the principle of equitable growth. The Advisory Commission is one of many anti-displacement and equitable growth strategies that the city is implementing to ensure that all residents benefit from the development boom.

**Washington, DC – Opportunity Zone Initiative**

Opportunity Zones (OZ) are a new federal program that provides tax incentives for investments in new businesses and commercial projects in low-income communities. There are 11 opportunity zones in the City of Richmond including portions of Shockoe Bottom. Richmond can utilize OZ to attract capital to social impact projects that truly benefit low-income communities or disinvested areas.

DC Mayor Bowser recently announced new efforts to maximize the benefits of Opportunity Zone investment to DC communities, which included:

- **The OZ Community Corps**, which will enable community organizations and small businesses to tap into pro bono advice from lawyers and other experts.

- An **online Opportunity Zone marketplace** for project sponsors, fund managers, investors, and community members.

**OPPORTUNITY ZONES:**
A new federal program that provides tax incentives for investments in new businesses and commercial projects in low-income communities.
A commitment of $24 million to projects that support affordable housing, workforce development, and the growth of small businesses in DC’s Opportunity Zones.

The goals/priorities for opportunity zone investment projects in DC are to:

- Deliver new amenities, such as community-serving retail and fresh food grocers
- Increase affordable and workforce housing
- Capitalize DC small businesses
- Create jobs for DC residents and pathways to the middle class

**Relevance to Richmond/Shockoe Bottom:**

The City of Richmond can convene OZ conversations helping to coordinate and direct efforts. For example, DC held an event with local businesses and OZ experts to discuss options for application.

The City could also: 1) Launch an OZ program with goals, complementary support and incentives to invest in its 11 OZ’s, including Shockoe Bottom. 2) Learn from Baltimore who just hired an OZ coordinator to lead their efforts and attract investors.

PolicyLink developed specific recommendations to guide Opportunity Zone investments toward equitable development outcomes. To ensure OZ promote equitable development, **Richmond could:**

1. Engage residents in setting priorities for investment in the zones.
2. Design and advance local equity policies that govern investments within zones.
3. Dedicate local dollars to projects in Opportunity Zones, which can deliver equitable growth, development without displacement, and healthy communities of opportunity.
4. Monitor and report outcomes of the Opportunity Zone investments such as: living wage jobs created, the number of dedicated affordable housing units created or preserved and investments in minority/disadvantaged/women-owned businesses.
5. Establish publicly-administered Opportunity Funds or catalyze existing Opportunity funds.
2. Redevelopment/Revitalization of Historic African American Neighborhoods

Walnut Hill in Cincinnati, OH

Located just outside of downtown, Walnut Hills is one of Cincinnati’s oldest neighborhoods. It has been known for its cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity since its founding in 1869, and has a predominately African American mixed-income base.

Source: National Trust for Historic Preservation
Walnut Hills in Cincinnati, OH

Located just outside of downtown, Walnut Hills is one of Cincinnati’s oldest neighborhoods. It has been known for its cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity since its founding in 1869, and has a predominately African American mixed-income base. In the early 19th Century, Walnut Hills thrived as a manufacturing hub and boasted the busiest commercial center outside of downtown. However, the area lost over 70% of its population between 1960-2010. After six decades of decline and disinvestment, the neighborhood has stabilized, reporting modest population growth along with the rest of the city. Recent transformations in the downtown core and certain pockets experiencing rapid growth have raised concerns about displacement. These concerns have driven local leaders to prioritize equitable growth. Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation (WHRF), a local non-profit, expanded its mission from affordable housing to achieve more inclusive outcomes using hands-on, holistic, and tactical urbanism strategies.

In 2015, the WHRF commissioned the Walnut Hills Strategic Investment Plan, after an extensive community engagement process, to provide a framework for equitable development. To date, WHRF has acquired and held a local grocery store site that recently closed (and is studying market feasibility for future development) and the historic Paramount Building, which will be turned into a 10,000 SF minority-owned brewery (Esoteric Brewing), 10,000 SF CVS, 4,500 SF food/production, 20 housing units and office space. This is part of a larger project with six historic and 4 non-historic buildings.

Lessons Learned:

- Pursuing site control of property early and often can give power and influence to groups focused on inclusive development.

- Cultivating reliable community-based partners can create a more sustainable inclusive growth ecosystem and strong leadership that engages the community.

- Investing in initiatives that support mobility for residents should be seen as a priority to mitigate unintended outcomes of neighborhood change.

- Prioritizing projects that create opportunities, services, and amenities accessible to diverse groups in terms of culture, age, and income helps uphold inclusive growth values.
Developing tools to measure, guide, and evaluate projects (e.g. equity scorecard) based on clear and transparent equitable development best practices builds trust, mitigates risk, and encourages growth.

When possible, reusing and giving new life to historic buildings boosts civic pride, deepens community connections and trust, and helps establish a more culturally robust environment.

Relevance to Shockoe Bottom:

- The Walnut Hills Case study supports the Resource Group’s recommendation of having a Shockoe Bottom focused nonprofit to acquire land for future development to ensure that redevelopment is community-driven.

- Incorporating historic and new buildings that respect the character of the neighborhood as well as provide needed housing, services and small business opportunities are key factors.

- The community developed a vision and form-based code (a type of development code that specifies design guidelines that are in keeping with desired neighborhood character) so that future development would conform to their vision, both in use and in design of buildings.

Reference Links: https://walnuthillsrf.org
Jefferson Chalmers in Detroit, MI

Built out primarily in the 1920s, Jefferson Avenue on the Lower east side of Detroit was once a vibrant and thriving residential and business community. Over the last 30-40 years, Jefferson Chalmers has suffered the impact of the loss of manufacturing jobs and population. Whole blocks in the residential area are vacant. Commercial storefronts lie empty and are in need of maintenance.

However, the area has many assets including being adjacent to the Detroit River with a unique series of canals leading into residential areas. There are a substantial number of intact commercial structures from the 1920s, including the Vanity Ballroom—a strong economic and community development partner in

Conceptual rendering of proposed mixed-use development at East Jefferson and Piper  Source: City of Detroit
Jefferson East, Inc—and residents and business owners who are invested in seeing their neighborhood transform.

In 2019, the City of Detroit, including 5 departments and a number of community organizations, completed the Jefferson Chalmers Neighborhood Framework Plan to support the strategic revitalization of this area. The Jefferson Chalmers Neighborhood Framework Plan is part of the $100 million Strategic Neighborhood Fund. Mayor Mike Duggan’s administration seeks to improve commercial corridors and attract investors. The effort includes the rehabilitation of historic buildings, streetscape improvements, and affordable housing, as well as bringing new neighborhood-scaled and service-oriented development to the area. New development will include:

- A new grocery store at East Jefferson and Piper Street including local shops, 68 “affordable” rental units and 40,000 SF of retail space.
- Redevelopment of a former elementary school to community space and 40 affordable units.
- Renovation of the vacant Kresge Building into offices for a non-profit, and a restaurant called Mi Alma Kitchen, and renovation of the vacant Vanity Ballroom.
- Rehab of 10 vacant single-family homes and duplexes for affordable housing.
- Infrastructure, park, streetscape and bus service improvements.

Money for the Jefferson Chalmers vision will come from the City’s Strategic Neighborhood Fund, bonds used for commercial corridor improvements, private developers and federal and state incentives where applicable.

**Relevance to Shockoe Bottom:**

- Similar to the Jefferson Chambers Framework, the Shockoe Alliance process can incorporate community voice and public benefit, prioritize development on vacant lots, balance preservation and redevelopment of vacant historic buildings with new development, as well as incorporate green space and streetscape improvements.

- A key element to the Jefferson Chambers plan, however, was City funding designated for the development of specific areas of investment that support affordable housing, small scale commercial development, infrastructure improvement and human-scaled development of vacant lots.

**Reference Links:**

https://savingplaces.org/places/jefferson-chalmers-district#.X0M2wFNKgWo
3. Historic Development Projects that Support Adaptive Re-use

Studioplex on Auburn Ave, Atlanta, GA
Located near the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District and downtown Atlanta, Studioplex on Auburn offers an outstanding opportunity for entrepreneurs to live, work and market their creative efforts.

Source: Historic District Development Corporation
Studioplex on Auburn Ave.,
Atlanta, GA

**Community Impact:**
Studioplex was the community’s first mixed-use development comprised of 112 residential lofts, 17 commercial units, and 24 retail or gallery spaces. Studioplex sits on 8 acres of land and has a large amount of open green space, including parking for more than 250 cars. The facility was regularly reserved for community gatherings, exhibits, shows and business events hosted in the courtyard, under the large shed adjacent to the main entrance or in the community room with access to lawn space for party tents.

**Relevance to Shockoe Bottom:**

**Adaptive Reuse & Arts Engagement** - This cotton compress warehouse from the late 19th century was once a candidate for the wrecking ball. Now converted into a unique combination of high-ceilinged, exposed-brick spaces mixed with high-tech networking and contemporary finishes, Studioplex offers Atlanta’s artistic community a synergistic ambiance for living and working.

**Affordable Housing** - Through special financing, Studioplex was able to offer a percentage of the units as low income, affordable housing. Studioplex was the catalyst to drive rehabilitation and economic growth in this part of the neighborhood. What once was a large eyesore has become a trendy location and one that has continued to bring creative and innovative talents to the area.

**Lessons Learned:**
To ensure the long-term benefits for community members, it is important to make sure a good portion of the project (and even adjacent parcels) is owned by a non-profit who can maintain affordability. If the Historic District Development Corporation would have bought and kept ownership over land around Studioplex, this would have ensured that as the area became more attractive, the commercial and residential rent and homeownership opportunities for low-income and African American residents would be available in perpetuity amidst the pressures of gentrification.

**Timeframe of Project:**
1998-2000

**Total Development Cost:**
$18 Million

**Financing Sources:**
$13 Million in residential and commercial bonds, and HDDC contributed $5 million in equity.

**Project Partners:**
Historic District Development Corporation, Atlanta
Neighborhood Development Partnership, City of Atlanta and Columbia Ventures
Crosstown Concourse, Memphis, TN

A diverse group of stakeholders, including real estate developers, artists, and local government leaders, led the adaptive reuse of an old Sears distribution center, creating a hub of economic activity complete with affordable housing, artist spaces, and community services.

Source: Crosstown Concourse
Crosstown Concourse
Memphis, TN

Community Impact:

- Affordable housing: 265 apartments, designated as affordable at 80% or below AMI. Anchor tenants, like St. Jude’s and Memphis Teacher Residency, receive discounted housing for their employees and students.

- Artist housing: 13 “micro-units” for revolving artists in residence—also get access to shared studio space—who offer public lectures along with other community engagement activities.

- Multi-purpose public spaces that can host informal gatherings and arts and cultural activities.

- Support of local and minority-owned business: 95% of contracts went to Memphis-owned businesses. The project including 32 minority and women-owned businesses totaling 32% of construction spending.

- Catalytic development: The surrounding neighborhood is experiencing an increase in the rehabilitation of blighted buildings, accompanied by a rise in interest in the community (demonstrated by growth in Crosstown Memphis CDC).

- Projected to bring in around 3,000 people a day, driving economic activity in the area.

- Job creation: projected to create 500 permanent jobs and $37 million in wages annually.

Relevance to Shockoe Bottom:

- Adaptive reuse of an old Sears distribution center (designated as an historic building/Richmond), and Shockoe Bottom, specifically, is home to many former tobacco industry warehouses.

Timeframe of Project:
2010 – 2017

Total Development Cost:
$200 million

Financing Sources:
$56 million in New Market Tax Credits from community development entities, $46 million in historic tax credits, 30 different funding sources (bank debt, philanthropy, City/County funding, private funding, in addition to tax credits) + 40 founding tenants.

Project Partners:
Crosstown Development, Crosstown Arts
Anchor tenants provided early support for the project and continue to provide essential community services, from healthcare to education. Richmond has a lot of anchor institutions (top of mind - Bon Secours, VCU/MCV) that could be brought in to not only support project development, but to increase access to amenities and services.

The combination of arts, education, and health services has created a vibrant “vertical urban village.” This “recipe” of anchor tenants could be replicated in Richmond.

Crosstown Concourse also houses a charter high school - in 2018, the Rose Fellowship Panel recommended placing a high school in Shockoe Bottom, potentially with an urban agriculture component to interact with the 17th Street Farmers Market.
4. Initiatives Stimulating and Supporting Black-Owned Business and Workforce Development

In order to ensure that there is equitable and inclusive access to the future prosperity in Shockoe Bottom, local government and non-profit groups must be intentional about supporting black and minority business presence, ownership and workforce development programs. Below are examples of projects and programs that have achieved these goals. The City of Richmond and other local organizations can learn from these examples and potentially adopt these models and tools in Shockoe Bottom.

**Oakland, CA’s 23rd Avenue Community-Owned Real Estate Initiative**

When the owner of a mixed-use building on the edge of Oakland’s Fruitvale neighborhood decided to sell the building, the building’s tenants – a bike shop, martial arts studio, maker space, and a food justice nonprofit – were worried that they would be displaced. Fortunately, the Oakland Community Land Trust and neighborhood residents helped the tenants buy the building themselves. The landlord offered her tenants the right of first refusal to buy the building – but the property’s estimated $1.5 million market value was too expensive. They approached the land trust, which has a history of focusing on resident-driven projects, and asked for help. The land trust bought the building with the help of the Northern California Community Loan Fund, the City of Oakland, and $90,000 from a crowdfunding campaign. The property will now belong to the community in perpetuity.

**Buy The Block**

With the passage of the JOBS Act in 2012 and finalization of its regulations in 2016, crowdfunding has taken off as a tool for small businesses and nonprofits to raise as much as $1 million annually from individuals (who can invest up to $10,000 annually in a small business). To make crowdfunding easier for minority-owned businesses – particularly those in neighborhoods at risk of gentrification – a Denver-based real estate investor, Lynn Smith, founded the first African American-owned real estate crowdfunding platform two years ago. The platform – Buy The Block – makes it possible for people to invest as little as $100 to help capitalize minority-owned businesses. Some of the businesses for which it has helped raise money so far include: Roots & Vine, a fresh food market and café that buys its produce from black-owned farms; a distillery in Florida; and Broadway Project ONE, a business rehabilitating older commercial buildings in downtown Gary, Indiana.
Downtown Forgivable Loan Program, Waterville, ME

In 2010, Waterville, Maine’s Main Street program launched a forgivable loan program to encourage expansion or development of retail, restaurant, and service-sector businesses identified by the program’s market research as being high priorities to the downtown district. Funded by Tax Increment Finance revenue, the program offered forgivable loans of up to $50,000 to interested entrepreneurs, with a 1:1 match required. Entrepreneurs paid a modest application fee, a one percent commitment fee, and paid annual interest on the loans. They also had to agree to guidelines, such as operating the business at least 48 hours per week. The program gave priority to businesses that filled ground-floor vacancies. Twenty percent of the loan principal was forgiven each year. The forgivable loans could be used for exterior or interior improvements and/or for buying business equipment.

Ascend Capital Accelerator, Washington, DC

Launched in 2017 by the Washington (DC) Area Community Investment Fund (WACIF), the Ascend Capital Accelerator functions much like other business accelerators created in recent years – with two exceptions. First, it focuses exclusively on minority-owned small businesses. Second, while traditional accelerators favor tech-related enterprises with high growth potential, the Ascend Capital Accelerator focuses on businesses with more modest growth potential but that can have a significant ripple impact on their neighborhoods – businesses like restaurants and gyms that provide jobs for neighborhood residents and help stabilize the neighborhood’s commercial district. Businesses must have been operating for at least three years and have annual revenues of at least $150,000 in order to be selected for the accelerator.

PUSH Community Hiring Hall, Buffalo, NY

Established in 2014, PUSH’s Community Hiring Hall focuses on establishing new pathways to work for under- and unemployed Buffalo residents. PUSH’s staff works with our local community members to connect skilled workers and general laborers to local building projects, particularly in the green technology field. Such efforts are part of PUSH’s overall community jobs pipeline strategy of engaging low-income communities of color and disconnected workers in the struggle to create an equitable community-controlled green economy. This work builds the region’s capacity to continue building and maintaining this infrastructure, while helping employers meet equitable workforce and first source hiring goals. To date, they have trained over 224 workers and employed over 48 workers with companies across Buffalo.
With care, intention and a commitment to equity, Richmond can be a leader in truth and reconciliation by highlighting Shockoe Bottom as an internationally recognized Site of Conscience. What lies before us is a great opportunity to leverage the rich history of Shockoe Bottom to create a thriving cultural and economic center that includes and benefits all. It is clear from the recommendations of the Resource Group and the exploration of various case studies from around the country that future development in Shockoe Bottom has the potential to implement and embody equitable economic redevelopment principles and practices through:

1. **Collaboration & Community Engagement** - A unified vision that brings a broad array of stakeholders together, including those historically marginalized, as well as investment by the public, private, and philanthropic sectors. This vision should be founded on the equitable economic redevelopment principles outlined in this report and consider the community-supported Memorial Park Proposal.

2. **Preservation, Commemoration and Education** – The vision should center on the history of enslavement, foster black prosperity and respect the existing historic fabric, while incorporating adaptive reuse of historic buildings, new human scaled infill development and infrastructure improvements that enhances the vibrancy of the district.

3. **Inclusive Land Use Policies** and clear development processes that ensure the community benefits from future development including but not limited to: a development code that carries out the vision; community benefits agreements; affordable housing; and an equitable development assessment/scorecard for future development projects.

4. **Site Control** - a community land trust or Shockoe Bottom focused non-profit developer to compile and develop available land and buildings to ensure the long-term ownership of and positive impact for the community.

5. **Wealth Building** - Wealth building initiatives and tools that promote both workforce development and Black entrepreneurship and property ownership. Shockoe Bottom could be a Black business district and a model place for supporting minority entrepreneurs.

The Shockoe Alliance and Small Area Planning Process offers an opportunity to create and embrace a unified vision for Shockoe Bottom rooted in history, collaboration and equity that could build upon the goals and principles outlined in the Pulse Corridor Plan. The Resource Group and project partners encourages the City of Richmond to make a commitment to equitable development that
would help shape the future of Shockoe Bottom. It is our desire that the Small Area Plan generated from the Shockoe Alliance process consider the Memorial Park proposal and is rooted in the equitable economic redevelopment principles, practices and policies presented in this report.

Acknowledgements

The Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Preservation Virginia assembled an incredible Resource Group that generated the recommendations and case studies presented as innovative models in this report. Thanks to Christopher Coes, Fabrizio Fasulo, Cheneé Joseph, Julie Nelson, Kennedy Smith and Khalil Uqdah for the generous use of your time and expertise toward the future of equitable economic redevelopment in Shockoe Bottom. Your contribution was invaluable.

This effort would not have been possible without the support of public officials, community leaders and local residents.

Thank you to The Honorable Levar Stoney, Mayor of Richmond, the Honorable Delores L. McQuinn, Member, Virginia House of Delegates, and, the Honorable Cynthia I. Newbille, President, Richmond City Council, for supporting this process, for your words of encouragement at the Resource Group’s community gathering, and through the organization of the project. We appreciate Dr. Henry Lucas, President of Virginia Union University for your presence and participation at the Resource Group’s community gathering.

Thank you to The Valentine Museum, Capital One 1717 Innovation Center, Sarah Garland Jones Center, Richmond Peace Education Center and The Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia for helping us host the Resource Group tour and discussions in your space during the two-day gathering. Special Thanks to Ana Edwards for developing and leading the tour of Shockoe Bottom and other adjacent neighborhoods.

Thank you to Bill Martin, Free Egũŋũfemi, Art Burton and Sal Musarra for helping the team orient the Resource Group and grounding them in the history and existing conditions of Shockoe Bottom. Thank you, Osita Iroegbu from the Mayor’s Office, for being a resource in helping the partners put the two-day event together.

Thank you to the community members who have been working to highlight and shape the history and future of Shockoe Bottom through their participation in the Resource Group’s gathering and steadfast participation in developing the proposal for the Shockoe Bottom Memorial Park. We also want to thank Max Page and the team from the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s Center for Design Engagement for their work in developing the proposal for the Memorial Park.

This report was made possible by a grant from The National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Heritage Action Fund. Thank you for your support of this project and the future of Shockoe Bottom.
Project Partners and Participants

Biographies of Resource Group Members

A Resource Group of experts in community development, neighborhood revitalization, city planning and racial equity met on April 4-5, 2019. Members included:

- **Christopher Coes, Washington, DC. Smart Growth America.**
  Christopher is the Vice President of Land Use and Development at Smart Growth America. Under his leadership, he oversees Smart Growth America’s real estate programs.

- **Fabrizio Fasulo, Richmond, VA. VCU Center for Urban and Regional Analysis.**
  Fabrizio is the Director of the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CURA) at VCU. Fabrizio’s expertise is in community development, urban economic analysis and policy and economic impacts.

- **Cheneé Joseph, Atlanta, GA. Historic District Development Corporation.**
  Cheneé is the Executive Director of the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) and the Vice-Chair of the Beltline Affordable Housing Advisory Board (BAHA) She is committed to using her expertise and experience to help revitalize the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District.

- **Julie Nelson, Berkeley, CA. Race Forward.**
  Julie is the Director of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, Senior Vice President at the new Race Forward, and a Senior Fellow with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society (HIFIS) at the University of California, Berkeley.

- **Kennedy Smith, Arlington, VA. Community Land Use + Economics Group.**
  Kennedy is one of the nation’s foremost experts on commercial district revitalization, downtown economics, and independent business development. She co-founded the CLUE Group in 2004.

- **Khalil Uqdah, Baltimore, MD. Cross Street Partners.**
  Khalil is a Development Associate at Cross Street Partners responsible for financial modeling, strategic focus, organizational capacity, partnership advancement, and community engagement.
Sponsoring Organizations:

**Sacred Ground Project**

The Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project is the cultural heart of the Virginia Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality, and an all-volunteer social justice organization. Through the Sacred Ground Project, the Defenders have been engaged in advocacy for the preservation and interpretation of Shockoe Bottom’s African and African American history since 2004.

**Preservation Virginia**

Preservation Virginia is the first private statewide historic preservation organization in the nation. Their mission is to make Virginia’s communities and historic places of memory stronger, more vital and economically sustainable through preservation, education and advocacy. In 2014 and with the support of individuals and other local organizations, Preservation Virginia nominated Shockoe Bottom to America’s Most Endangered Historic Places and included the site on the 2014 Virginia’s Most Endangered Historic Places list.

**National Trust for Historic Preservation’s African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately-funded nonprofit organization, works to save America’s historic places. Their mission is to protect significant places representing our diverse cultural experience by taking direct action and inspiring broad public support. The National Trust provided a grant through their African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund to promote equitable economic revitalization in Shockoe Bottom. The African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund’s goal is to draw attention to the remarkable stories that evoke centuries of African American activism and achievement, and to tell the nation’s full history.

**Consultant:**

**Ebony Walden Consulting**

Ebony Walden Consulting designed and facilitated the two-day meeting of the Resource Group, lead discussions with community members and prepared this report. Ebony is an urban planner, consultant and facilitator working with a diversity of practitioners, organizations and residents to transform communities. She leverages her experience to design and facilitate workshops, retreats and engagement processes that explore race, equity and the creation of more just and inclusive communities. Ebony is the founder and Principal Consultant at Ebony Walden Consulting, an urban strategy firm based in Richmond, Virginia.
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National Trust for Historic Preservation. *Walnut Hills Case Study.* Compiled by Di Gao, Real Estate Specialist. NYC Field Office. 2019


Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation. 2019 https://walnuthillsrf.org

Equitable Economic Redevelopment in Shockoe Bottom is a cohesive vision that builds community wealth and aims toward racial justice, ultimately dismantling past and present systems of supremacy.