

CARVER/NEWTOWNE WEST



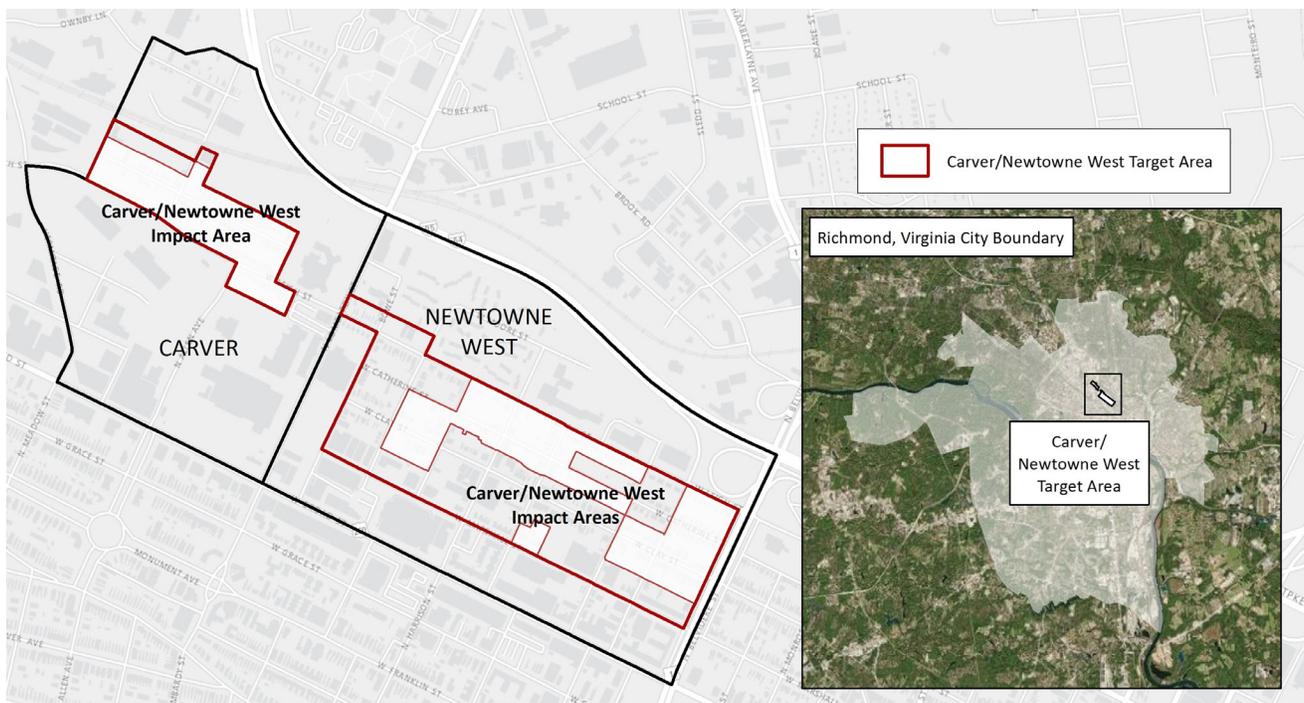
Neighborhoods in Bloom Retrospective

NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

The Carver/Newtowne West target area is composed of two adjacent neighborhoods in the heart of downtown Richmond that share a history of industrial-spurred growth and decline. Although the first building in the area was constructed in 1787, the neighborhoods did not formally develop until the mid-1800s. As industrialization boomed, Carver/Newtowne West was increasingly established as residential areas, becoming home to laborers and immigrants. The neighborhoods were densely populated following the Civil War.

By the early 1900s, Carver/Newtowne West was home to at least six major industries and several black-owned businesses. The City segregation policy and the departure of many white residents spurred the rapid racial transition of Carver/Newtowne West to an almost entirely African American community in the mid-1900s. In 1943, Richmond's zoning ordinance discouraged residential development, compounding disinvestment in the neighborhoods.

Map 1: Neighborhoods in Bloom Impact and Target Areas – Carver/Newtowne West



From 1920 to 1949, the City employed a new strategy for reviving the Carver/Newtowne West community whereby blight was cleared before redevelopment began. This program razed many more houses than it could rebuild, forcing large numbers of African American residents into the unsuitable dwellings that remained.

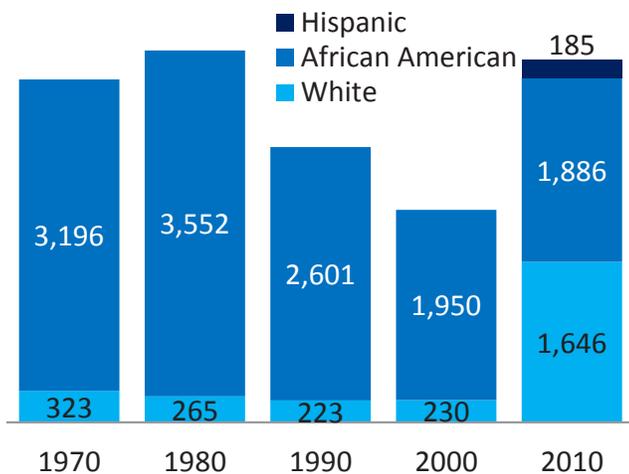
In the 1950s, the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) proposed a redevelopment plan, which was contested by the community. Known as the "Carver Plan," the proposal included plans to raze more than 400 residences to make room for the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (today Interstate 95). Although the expressway was ultimately constructed, community criticism redirected future revitalization efforts in Carver/Newtowne West. By 1959, 97 percent of the 888 substandard dwellings in Carver/Newtowne West had been rehabilitated and were in compliance with

building codes. Since 1986, community associations have been actively involved in the redevelopment and revitalization efforts of these two neighborhoods.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

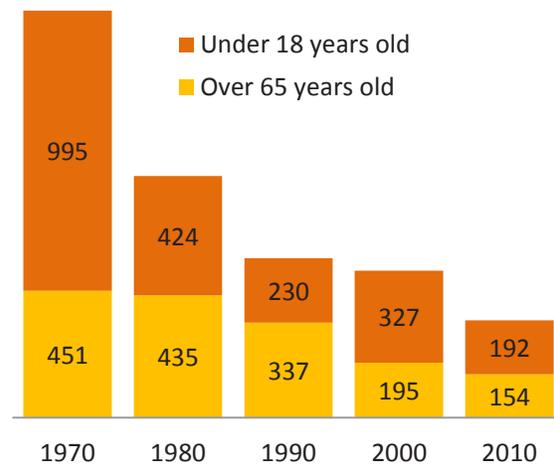
The population in the census tract containing the Carver/Newtowne West target area decreased by 2,019 individuals from 1970 to 2000 (3,501 residents to 1,482 residents). The first decade of the 21st century reversed this trend, and by 2010, the tract had approximately 3,900 residents. The racial composition of the surrounding census tract remained relatively consistent from 1970 to 2000. Over this time period, approximately 85 to 90 percent of residents were African American and 10 to 15 percent of residents were white (see Figure 1). By 2010 Carver/Newtowne West's population was 50.6 percent African American, 44.4 percent white and 4.9 percent Hispanic. Carver/

Figure 1: Racial Composition in Carver/Newtowne West's Surrounding Census Tract, 1970-2010



Note: Sample only includes individuals who self-identify as one race.
Source: GeoLytics, Neighborhood Change Database (1970-2010).

Figure 2: Age Composition in Carver/Newtowne West's Surrounding Census Tract, 1970-2010



Source: GeoLytics, Neighborhood Change Database (1970-2010).

Note: When measuring the investment and impact of NiB in the early 2000s, the City and external researchers defined the Carver/Newtowne West measurement area as the census tract that contained the target area. This profile also uses that definition, and the measurement area includes the following 2010 census tract: 51760040200.

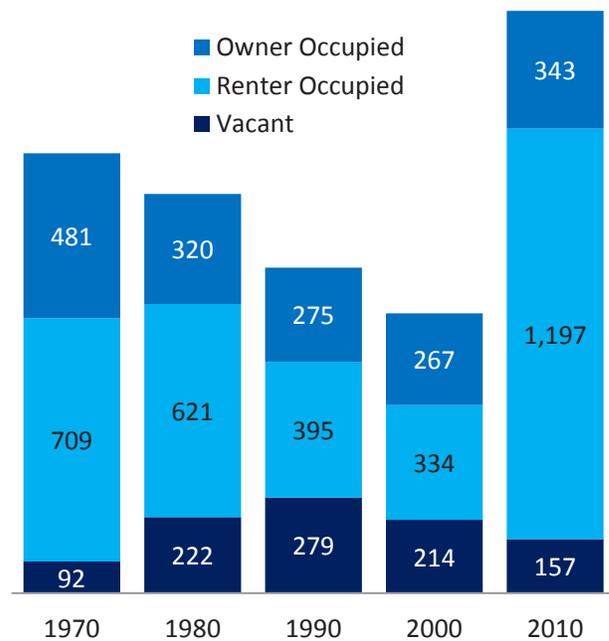


Newtowne West's populations of individuals under 18 and individuals over 65 both decreased steadily from 1970 to 2010 (see Figure 2).

The majority of housing units in the census tract that contains Carver/Newtowne West have consistently been renter-occupied from 1970 to 2010 (see Figure 3). Over this time period, the percentage of homeowner-occupied units topped out at 37.5 percent in 1970. Decennial census data indicate that the homeownership rate has fallen more recently, with 20.2 percent of occupants owning their homes in 2010. The number of vacant housing units in Carver/Newtowne West peaked in 1990 at 279 units.

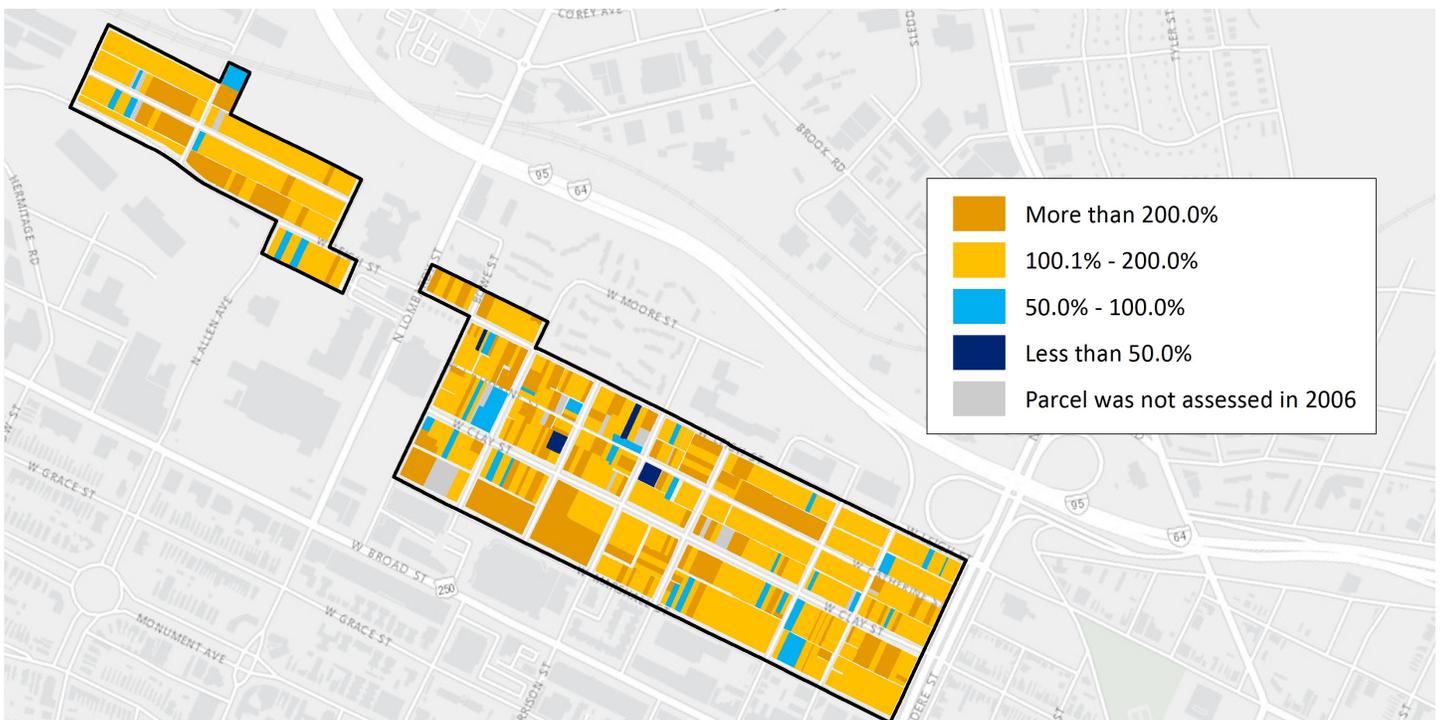
Of the 631 Carver/Newtowne West residential land parcels that were assessed both in FY2006 — immediately following the official end of the NiB program — and in FY2016, 585 (92.7 percent) experienced an increase in nominal assessment value (see Map 2). Of these, 169 parcels (26.8 percent) more than doubled their 2006 assessed value by 2016. One parcel (0.2 percent) experienced no change in nominal assessment value over the 10 year time period and 45 parcels (7.1 percent) had a lower nominal dollar value in FY2016 than in FY2006.

Figure 3: Housing Occupancy in Carver/Newtowne West's Surrounding Census Tract, 1970-2010



Source: GeoLytics, Neighborhood Change Database (1970-2010).

Map 2: 2016 Assessment Value as a Percent of 2006 Assessment Value in Carver/Newtowne West



Source: City of Richmond Assessment Data, FY2006-FY2016.

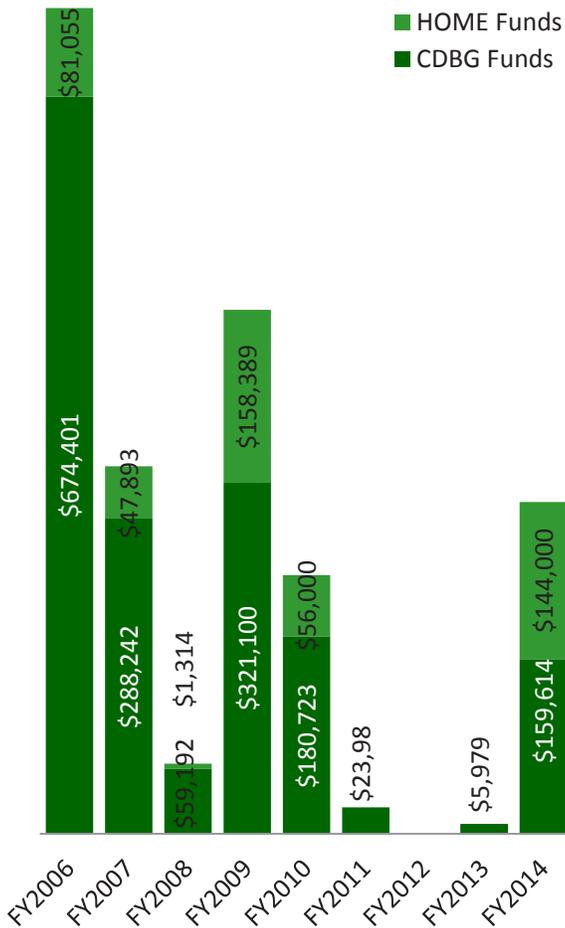


INVESTMENT AFTER NEIGHBORHOODS IN BLOOM

Public Investment

After NiB, the City’s investment of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funding in Carver/Newtowne West fluctuated year by year. Local government investment in Carver/Newtowne West was highest in FY2006 with a total of approximately \$755,456 and lowest in FY2012 when the neighborhoods did not receive CDBG or HOME funding (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Local Government Investment in Carver/Newtowne West (FY2006-FY2014)



Source: City of Richmond CAPER Reports, FY2006-FY2014.

Nonprofit Investment

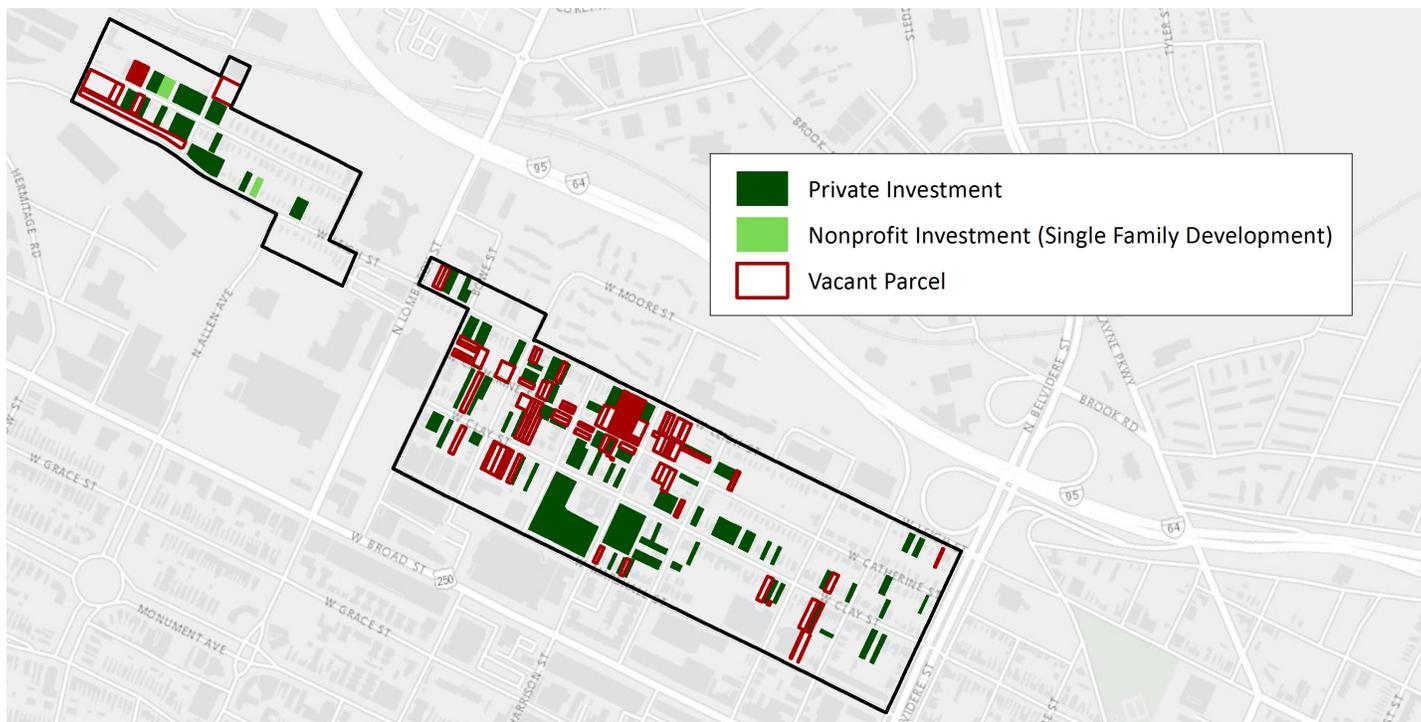
The nonprofit organizations operating in Carver/Newtowne West during NiB included Housing Opportunities Made Equal (H.O.M.E.) and the Carver Area Civic Improvement League. These organizations invested in Carver/Newtowne West through the construction of new housing units, the rehabilitation of existing units and the provision of housing counseling services. In total, nonprofit development groups invested an estimated \$700,000 in four Carver/Newtowne West properties from 2006 to 2015 (see Map 3), and all of these properties experienced property value increases over the same time period. H.O.M.E. provided approximately \$75,131 in down payment assistance to eight Carver/Newtowne West homeowners during this time period.

As of 2016, 12.6 percent of the parcels in the Carver/Newtowne West NiB target area were vacant, which is roughly equivalent to the overall vacancy rate in the City (see Map 3).¹ The 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates indicate that 54.1 percent of residents in the census tract containing the Carver/Newtowne West target area are housing-cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs.² This figure is 8.2 percentage points above the 45.9 percent of housing cost-burdened residents in the City as a whole.

According to the 2015 ACS 5-year estimates, the census tract that contains the Carver/Newtowne West target area has a median family income of \$51,771 and a poverty rate of 20.9 percent. By comparison, the City has a median family income of \$50,307 and a poverty rate of 19.3 percent.



Map 3: Nonprofit Investment and Vacant Parcels in Carver/Newtowne West (FY2006-FY2015)



Note: This map quantifies investment based on property sales and renovations, and thus may underestimate reinvestment. Source: City of Richmond Property Sale Data, Building Permit Data and Land Use Data, FY2006-FY2015.

CONTINUING TO BLOOM: CARVER/NEWTOWNE WEST TODAY

Carver/Newtowne West has seen major development projects since NiB began in 1999. In 2001, Maggie L. Walker High School, which historically served as a high school for African American students and had been vacant for a decade, was reopened as the Governor’s School for Government and International Studies.³

The expansion of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has compelled Carver/Newtowne West to forge a relationship with the university. In 1996, the presidents of VCU and the Carver Area Civic Improvement League partnered, committing to creating a shared community

and protecting its historic value to the City. In 1997, VCU police began patrolling Carver/Newtowne West to help reduce crime in the area, which serves the interests of students and residents.⁴

Although VCU and Carver/Newtowne West have formed a relationship to improve the area, residents have expressed concern over the development of multifamily and rental housing in Carver/Newtowne West, including the 2012 construction of a 136-unit apartment complex built by a private developer to provide student housing.

Cover photo by Emily Wavering

Additional sources: [U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, “Carver Residential Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form” \(October 1990\).](#)
[Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Urban Studies and Planning, “Carver: The Neighborhood Plan” \(June 2002\).](#)

³ “After Years of VCU Growth, Carver Fights Back,” *Style Weekly* (May 24, 2011).

⁴ C.W. Howard and Allison, K. W. (2004). “Bringing All Partners to the Table: The Virginia Commonwealth University and Carver Community Partnership.” *Metropolitan Universities* 15(3): 57-76.

¹The American Community Survey 2015 5-Year Estimates for the City of Richmond indicate a vacancy rate of 12.3 percent.

²The share of the population that is housing-cost burdened may be a function of housing supply, housing prices, household incomes and personal preferences.

