

SOUTHERN BARTON HEIGHTS



Neighborhoods in Bloom Retrospective

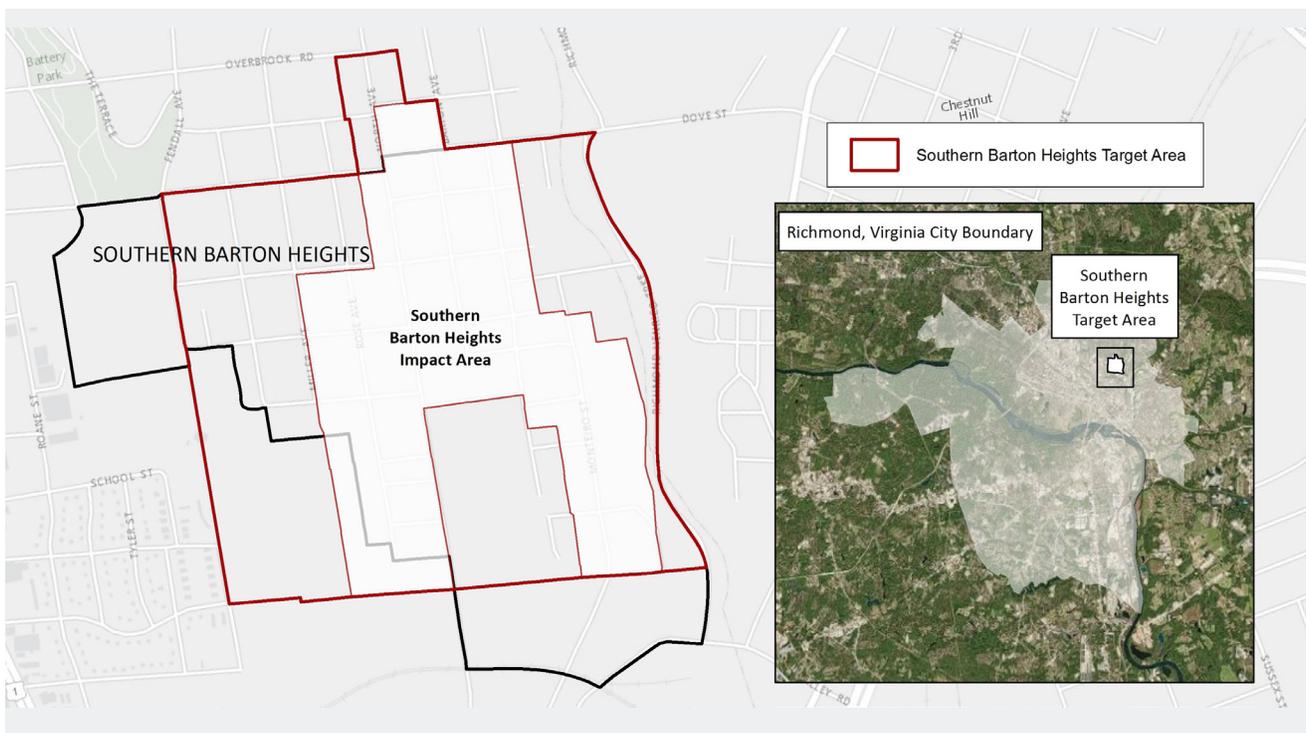
NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

The north Richmond neighborhood of Southern Barton Heights attracted the City’s business class at the end of the 19th century with its overlook of the Bacon Quarter Branch ravine and Shockoe Creek. The neighborhood’s founder, James H. Barton, worked to create a well-developed neighborhood by attracting middle-class laborers with a “pay-to-own” model. Merchants, entrepreneurs, and lawyers predominantly speculated on the land in the neighborhood’s early years. Following the destruction of the Civil War, the business community

agreed to reinvent the neighborhood by introducing industrial and commercial economies.

James Barton also endorsed the construction of a streetcar line that connected residents of Southern Barton Heights to the heart of downtown Richmond. By 1889, landowners were riding this groundbreaking technology into and out of the northern suburbs. Although Southern Barton Heights was a predominantly white neighborhood at its inception, African American residents began to settle in the area by the end of the 19th century. Many prominent Richmond business owners remained in Southern Barton Heights

Map 1: Neighborhoods in Bloom Impact and Target Areas – Southern Barton Heights

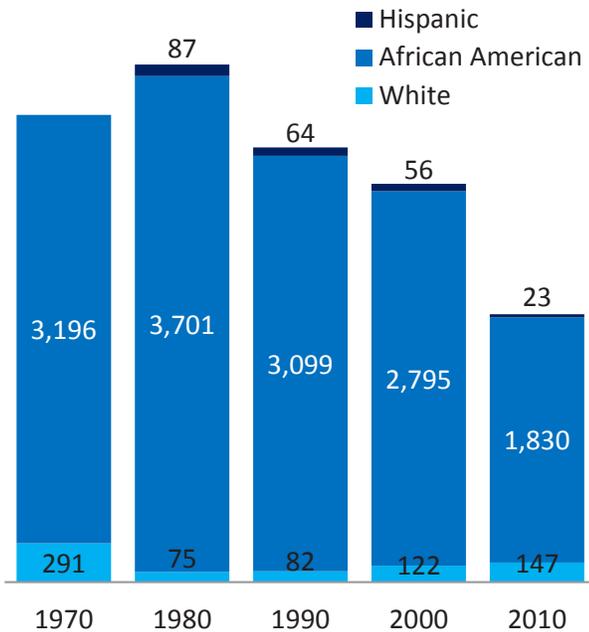


throughout the first half of the 20th century. By 2000, Southern Barton Heights was experiencing vacancy and poverty rates above the City average. In 1995, the City had collaborated with the Southern Barton Heights Community Association to create a revitalization plan for the neighborhood. In 2002, the plan was amended to encourage mixed-income development. Both the original and revised master plans designated most of the neighborhood for single-family residential use with limited tracts for multi-family housing.¹ However, the 2002 amendment included small swatches of land on the neighborhood’s western boundary for commercial and industrial use, and the addition of an “economic opportunity area” to encourage investment in the southwestern corner of the community.²

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

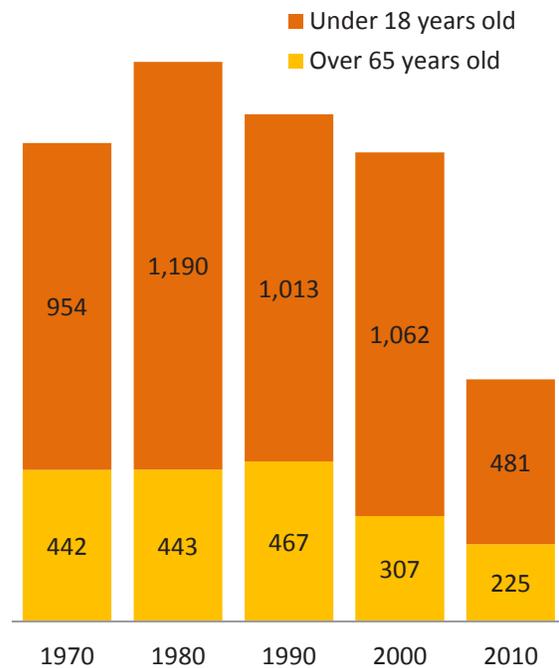
The census tract containing the Southern Barton Heights target area experienced slight population growth from 1970 to 1980, followed by population decline of 1,782 residents from 1980 to 2010. The area has consistently been predominantly African American since 1970, and as of the 2010 census, 91.6 percent of area residents were African American (see Figure 1). On average, 31.6 percent of area residents were under the age of 18 from 1970 to 2000, which decreased to 4.1 percent by 2010 (see Figure 2). Similarly, although the number of residents over the age of 65 has decreased in recent years, these individuals have consistently been between 10 percent and 13 percent of the tract’s population.

Figure 1: Racial Composition in Southern Barton Heights’ 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 Southern Barton Heights’ Surrounding Census Tract, 1970-2010



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

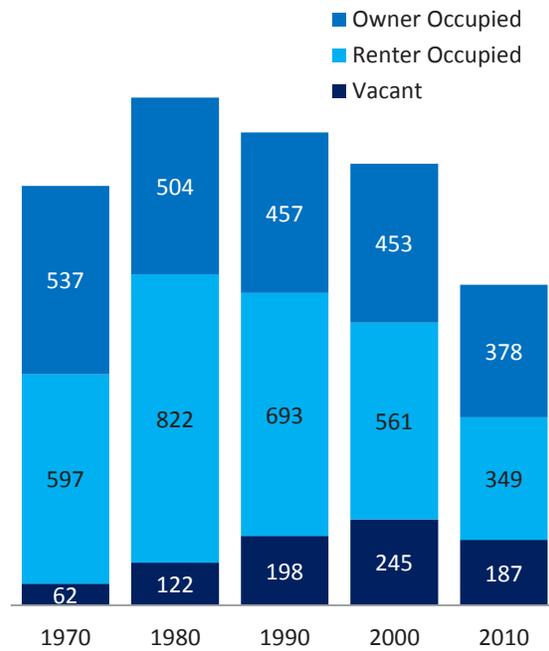
Note: When measuring the investment and impact of NiB in the early 2000s, the City and external researchers defined the Southern Barton Heights measurement area as the census tract that contained the target area. This profile also uses that definition, and the measurement area includes the following 2010 census tract: 51760011000.



In recent years, the census tract containing Southern Barton Heights has experienced a decline in the number of housing units, particularly the number of renter-occupied housing units (see Figure 3). As of 2010, 41.4 percent of the tract's 914 housing units were owner-occupied and 38.2 percent were renter-occupied. The percentage of vacant housing units in the census tract has steadily increased since 1970, and peaked at 20.5 percent in 2010.³

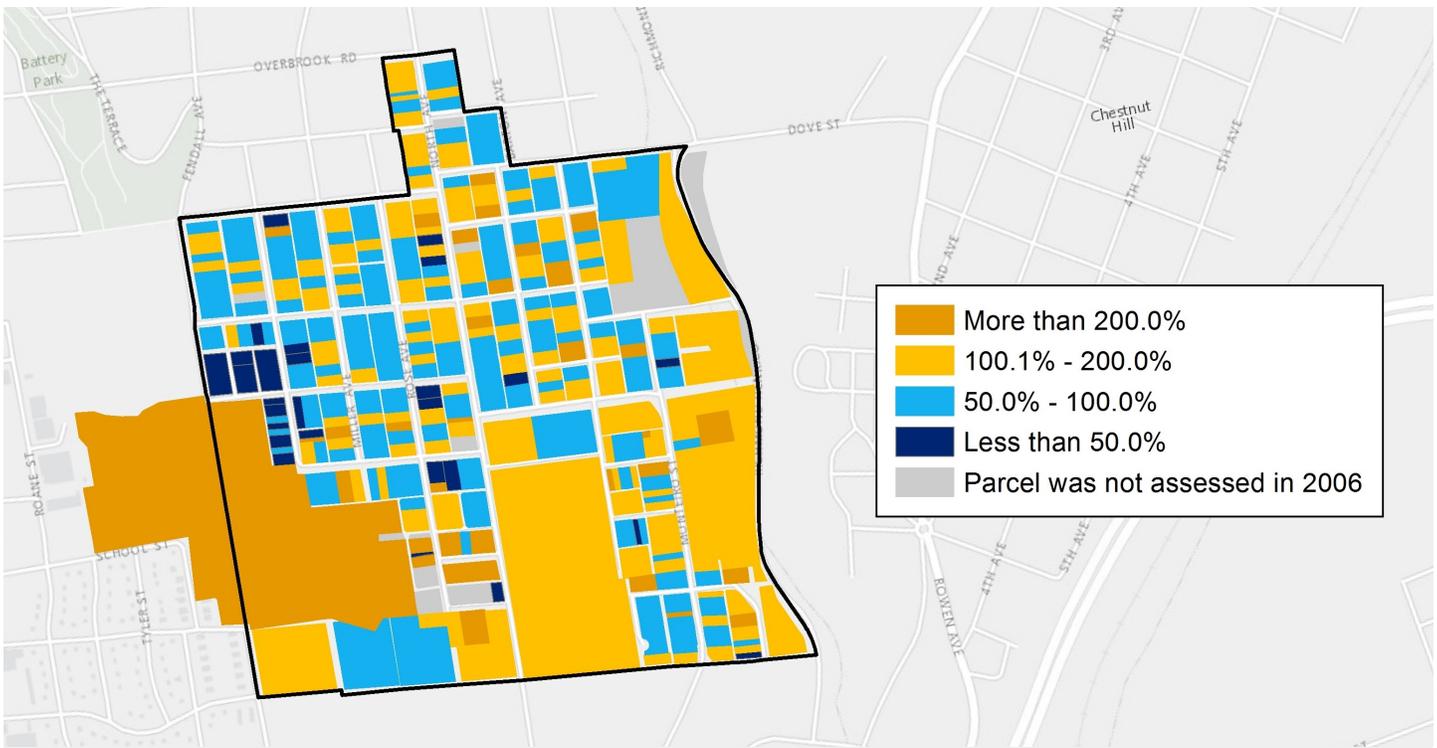
Of the 417 Southern Barton Heights residential land parcels that were assessed both in FY2006 — immediately following the official end of the NiB program — and in FY2016, 196 (47.0 percent) experienced an increase in nominal assessment value (see Map 2). Of these, 44 parcels (10.6 percent) more than 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 220 parcels (52.8 percent) had a lower nominal dollar value in FY2016 than in FY2006.

Figure 3: Housing Occupancy in Southern Barton Heights' 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 Southern Barton Heights



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

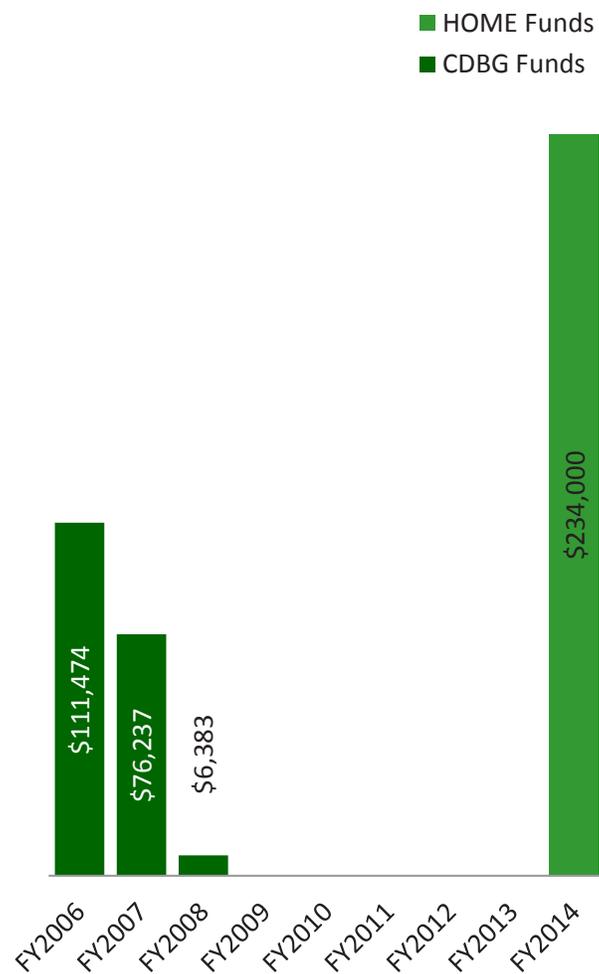


INVESTMENT AFTER NEIGHBORHOODS IN BLOOM

Public Investment

After NiB officially ended, the City continued to make limited investments in Southern Barton Heights using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funding. Investment in Southern Barton Heights peaked in FY2014 at \$234,000, but the neighborhood did not receive public investment from FY2009 to FY2013 (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Local Government Investment in Southern Barton Heights (FY2006-FY2014)



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

Nonprofit Investment

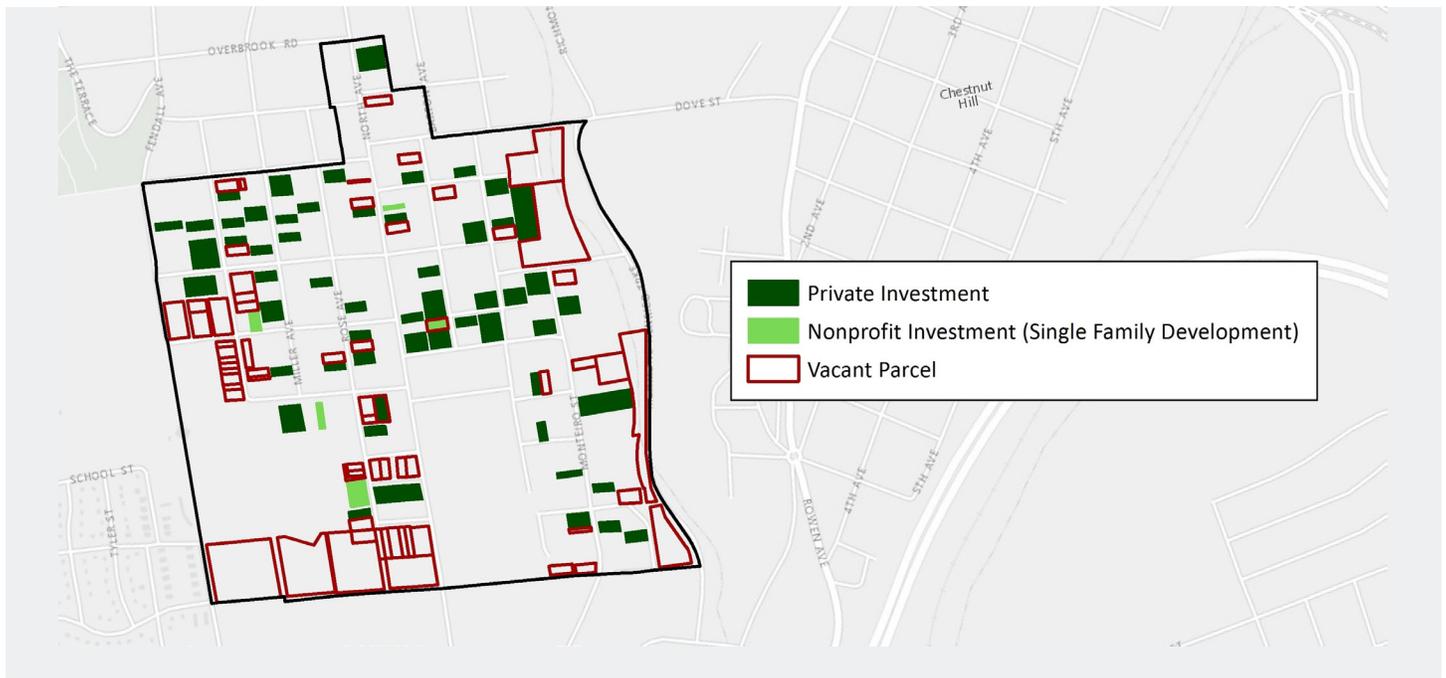
The nonprofit organizations operating in Southern Barton Heights during NiB included the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA), Housing Opportunities Made Equal (H.O.M.E.), Neighborhood Housing Services of Richmond and the Southern Barton Heights Community Association. These organizations invested in Southern Barton Heights through the construction of new housing units, the rehabilitation of existing units and the provision of housing counseling services. After the culmination of NiB, sales and building permit data from the City indicate that nonprofit development organizations invested approximately \$870,304 in seven Southern Barton Heights parcels and H.O.M.E. provided approximately \$23,075 in down payment assistance to three Southern Barton Heights homeowners.

As of 2016, 14.9 percent of the parcels in the Southern Barton Heights NiB target area were vacant, which is 2.6 percentage points higher than the overall vacancy rate in the City (see Map 3).⁴ The 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates indicate that 56.2 percent of residents in the census tract containing the Southern Barton Heights target area are housing-cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs.⁵ This figure is 10.3 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 Southern Barton Heights target area has a median family income of \$40,147 and a poverty rate of 24.3 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 Southern Barton Heights (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: SOUTHERN BARTON HEIGHTS TODAY

In 2014, a private company called Ark Construction, which specializes in historic rehabilitations, purchased the abandoned mansion of neighborhood founder James H. Barton. The building, which was used throughout the 20th century as a sanitarium and nursing home, had fallen into serious disrepair despite

its historical significance. Ark Construction hopes to transform the building into an 18-unit apartment building and as of 2016, the City had adopted a rezoning ordinance that authorized the site for multifamily dwelling.^{6,7}

Cover photo by Emily Wavering

Additional Sources: U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, "Town of Barton Heights Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (October, 1990).

- 1 City of Richmond Planning and Community Development, "The Southern Barton Heights Revitalization Plan" (September, 1994).
- 2 City of Richmond Department of Community Development Division of Comprehensive Planning, "Southern Barton Heights Master Plan Amendments" (September 3, 2002).
- 3 Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- 4 The American Community Survey 2015 5-Year Estimates for the City indicate a vacancy rate of 12.3 percent.
- 5 The share of the population that is housing-cost burdened may be a function of housing supply, housing prices, household incomes and personal preferences.
- 6 Ned Oliver, "Rotting Mansion in Barton Heights to Get New Life," *Style Weekly* (July 15, 2014).
- 7 "Barton Mansion Property Could Become Apartments, Coffee Shop," *Brookland Park Post* (December 31, 2015).

