Redevelopment Work Plan for
Virginia Avenue
in the Fletcher Place Neighborhood

Introduction

This document focuses on redevelopment and reinvestment opportunities along Virginia Avenue in the Indianapolis neighborhood of Fletcher Place. This document is not a detailed neighborhood plan or redevelopment analysis, but instead provides a concise summary of existing conditions, observations, and broad-based recommendations for potential redevelopment and reinvestment oriented projects and initiatives. Each recommended redevelopment initiative includes a “work plan” with specific objectives and action steps for the Fletcher Place Neighborhood Association in partnership with the Southeast Neighborhood Development Corporation (SEND) to organize around over the short-term (1-3 years).

Study Area

Virginia Avenue is one of the four radial streets that were part of Alexander Ralston’s original plan for the City of Indianapolis. The street extends southeast from the intersection of Pennsylvania and Washington Streets in Downtown Indianapolis for 1.3 miles and terminates at the intersection of Shelby and Prospect Streets, better known as “Fountain Square”. Refer to the map on page 2 for context.

The study area for this Work Plan is the 2,000 foot stretch of Virginia Avenue between Fletcher Avenue and McCarty / Calvary Street.

City Context

Fletcher Place is one of the oldest residential areas in Indianapolis, having been platted in the 1860’s. Located just outside of the “mile square” area that was the boundary of the original city, Fletcher Place is one of a handful of neighborhoods with residential architecture predominately from the Victorian era, as opposed to the Progressive and Pre-War eras that exists in the majority of housing construction in central Indianapolis.

Today, Fletcher Place is a tight-knit community due in large part to strong physical borders that separate it from other areas of the city. Across East Street to the west is the primary campus of Eli Lilly and Company. To the south and east are Interstates 65 and 70. To the north, across Fletcher Avenue, are the offices of Farm Bureau and to the northwest is an office campus that is the local headquarters of Anthem, a medical insurance company. There are approximately 1,000 residents and 500 households in the neighborhood.

Corridor Context

Virginia Avenue is the primary commercial corridor in the Fletcher Place neighborhood. It is split into three distinct segments. The first, which is the most northern segment, is residentially oriented and characterized by a recently constructed condominium development and the conversion of a former church into condominiums. The middle segment consists of a variety of uses, but is best known as the location of the downtown branch of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. The third segment, on the southern end, holds the majority of the historic commercial building stock and virtually all of the small businesses located along the corridor.

Virginia Avenue serves as the border between two historic districts. The Fletcher Place Historic District, to the north and east of Virginia Avenue, was incorporated into the National Historic Register of Places in 1979. To the west and south, the Holy Rosary Danish Church Historic District (aka Fletcher Place II) was incorporated in 1986.

1 Fletcher Place Neighborhood Website (www.fletcherplace.org)
East Street Study Area & Context
Neighborhood Objectives

The Vision and Action Plan for Fletcher Place Neighborhood, written in the summer of 2008, has several objectives that relate to Virginia Avenue and this Redevelopment Work Plan. Among these are:

**Objective 5.** Increasing opportunities for current and prospective business owners by creating an environment of successful local businesses supported by unique services;  
**Objective 6.** Respectful use and care for the environment including beautifying Fletcher Place through proper landscaping, gateways, lighting and signage;  
**Objective 8.** Creating and promoting a culturally enriched environment by incorporating the Cultural Trail to welcome individuals from other communities to Fletcher Place in order to increase community presence.

These objectives do not mention Virginia Avenue specifically, but they are tied very closely to it. Although local businesses exist in several locations throughout the neighborhood, Virginia Avenue is the primary commercial corridor and merits a large portion of the focus on successful local businesses. Beautification of Virginia Avenue is important as it is one of the neighborhood's "front doors" from which those driving to or through gain impressions of the area. When the cultural trail extends south from Alabama Street to Fountain Square, it will travel along Virginia Avenue. Therefore, the most direct impact, in the short and long terms, will be on Virginia Avenue.

The Southeast Neighborhood Design Charette, conducted in October of 2007 and completed by the Ball State University CAP:Indianapolis Center (IC) identified three primary "nodes" to encourage future development and improvements. These included the intersections of Fletcher and College Avenues, College and Virginia Avenues, and Virginia Avenue and South Street. The charette called for a "Village Center" along Virginia Avenue that would consist of 2-3 story, mixed-use buildings with retail storefronts that would re-establish the historic nature of the Avenue. Where possible, pedestrian oriented plazas and trails would be integrated to encourage "social activity".

Goal of the Work Plan

With respect to existing documents that outline strategies and objectives for Virginia Avenue, this Work Plan will focus on the study area's potential to become an *active and vital neighborhood business district that serves as a destination and amenity to local residents, but which is also oriented to serving nearby markets.* The possibility for such a business district exists, but there are many details to organize that are independent from identifying development and redevelopment opportunities.

Pages 3-10 will examine the economic and physical context necessary for Virginia Avenue and the Fletcher Place neighborhood to achieve this goal. The remaining portion of the document will outline three redevelopment initiatives that will assist in achieving this goal.

Existing Conditions

**Market and Economic Context**

Examining economic indicators is important in understanding existing and future local market related business dynamics. For Virginia Avenue, this plan reviewed two primary markets; the Housing market, which assists in understanding the economic potential to be gained by local residents, and the Commercial market, which examines indicators mostly related to retailers, who would be expected to drive much of the activity and destination qualities of a Virginia Avenue Business District.

**Housing Indicators**

Despite its location within the boundaries of SEND, as a neighborhood Fletcher Place has much more in common with other Downtown historic districts like Lockerbie Square, Chatham Arch, St. Joseph and the Old Northside than it does to adjacent neighborhoods to the south and southeast. This was not always the case, and though it has yet to establish itself as an economic “equal” to these neighborhoods, Fletcher Place has been greatly impacted by the fast-paced housing market of the early 2000s that resulted in rising property values throughout Downtown and near-Downtown neighborhoods. These five historic districts, including Fletcher Place, averaged between $180,000 and $240,000 in home sales between the years 2000 and 2009. Alternatively, nearby Bates-Hendricks and Fountain Square only averaged between $30,000 and $42,000 respectively.

An inventory of unique historic housing stock is certainly one reason for the difference in home values between Fletcher Place and the rest of SEND, but physical boundaries likely play a much larger factor. The strength of the neighborhood housing market has brought households with higher incomes to the area. This is important because higher income households attract businesses. National and regional developers and retailers will look at local demographics as one of the primary criteria to base their decisions on investment. Fletcher Place’s income (per capita and median household) and education levels are competitive compared to other Southeastern neighborhoods, and overall within Center Township.

A disadvantage is the modest size of the neighborhood on a whole, which constricts the local “trade area” many businesses would look for.
Redevelopment Work Plan for Virginia Avenue
Existing Conditions

Commercial / Retail Indicators
The commercial retail potential of a district or corridor is tied to both “local” expenditure - i.e. residents who live near the district/corridor - and “inflow” expenditure, which comes from visitors traveling to or through the district/corridor. The primary indicators to measure inflow expenditure is Automobile and Transit traffic counts on key streets. The indicators that measure local expenditures are income and residential density. Transit counts along Virginia Avenue were unavailable, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the traffic from transit using the neighborhood as a destination is very low.

The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count at Virginia Avenue and Stevens Street was 7,300 in 2007. This is a moderate to low traffic count for a commercial street, and matches the modest number and size of retail and commercial businesses found throughout most of the study area.

Lacking traffic counts, an economically successful neighborhood commercial district would need to compensate with a high enough residential density and/or income level to generate enough demand from residents to support local businesses. Fletcher Place’s median household income of $41,000 (2009 estimate) is solid, especially in comparison to other SEND areas, but it is not ideal. Residential densities are relatively high in the areas immediately adjacent to Virginia Avenue, but the small size of the neighborhood and non-residential uses nearby means that the density falls sharply as one moves further from Virginia Avenue. The chart on the bottom left of this page examines the merging of residential income and density in terms of retail “demand” per acre. As one can see, Fletcher Place falls behind most other comparative business districts in Indianapolis, which, should be noted, are of relatively modest size compared to other metropolitan areas.

These indicators do not preclude retail growth, but they suggest that Virginia Avenue will need to draw business from outside of the immediate neighborhood in order to generate additional sales for local businesses. One potential source is local employers, such as Eli Lilly, Anthem and Farm Bureau. It is estimated that there are between 9,000 and 10,000 employees within a 1/2 mile of Virginia and College Avenues.

Comparison of Fletcher Place Neighborhood to Contextual Geographies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Fletcher Place</th>
<th>SEND</th>
<th>Center Twanship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied Units</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$41,396</td>
<td>$37,928</td>
<td>$33,804</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Home Value</td>
<td>$137,171</td>
<td>$59,118</td>
<td>$65,996</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$24,781</td>
<td>$17,995</td>
<td>$19,170</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Graduates</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Graduates</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Yr Structure Built</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached Homes</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: ESRI Business Analyst and the U.S. Census. Demographics are estimated for the year 2008.

Local Retail Demand Density - Fletcher Place and Comparison Commercial Nodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Demand per acre - 1/4 mile</th>
<th>Demand per acre - 1/2 mile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fletcher Place</td>
<td>$29,099</td>
<td>$19,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49th &amp; Pennsylvania</td>
<td>$83,866</td>
<td>$87,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56th &amp; Illinois</td>
<td>$55,465</td>
<td>$71,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irvington</td>
<td>$85,720</td>
<td>$63,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountain Square</td>
<td>$42,793</td>
<td>$48,346</td>
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</table>

Source: ESRI Business Analyst and DCI Analysis

Comparison of Fletcher Place Neighborhood To Nearby Historic Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fletcher Place</th>
<th>Lockerbie Square</th>
<th>St. Joseph</th>
<th>Chatham Arch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$41,396</td>
<td>$32,198</td>
<td>$66,176</td>
<td>$41,570</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$24,781</td>
<td>$57,288</td>
<td>$33,747</td>
<td>$38,122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Home Value</td>
<td>$137,171</td>
<td>$208,750</td>
<td>$148,864</td>
<td>$139,329</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Graduates</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ESRI Business Analyst and the U.S. Census. Demographics are estimated for the year 2008.

Recent Sales Prices of Housing in Downtown Neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fletcher Place</td>
<td>$209,941</td>
<td>$121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>$214,935</td>
<td>$141</td>
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<td>Chatham Arch</td>
<td>$187,664</td>
<td>$142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lockerbie Square</td>
<td>$238,027</td>
<td>$167</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Northside</td>
<td>$222,730</td>
<td>$118</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ransom Place</td>
<td>$132,998</td>
<td>$103</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Dream Company Real Estate, 2009
Redevelopment Work Plan for Virginia Avenue

Park
Single Family Residential Building
Commercial Building (Office, Retail, Services)
Multi-Family Building
Parking Lot
Public / Institutional
Planned Development

Landmarks / Key Destinations
1. Bureau of Motor Vehicles
2. Holy Rosary Parish (site of Italian Festival)
3. Edna Balz Lacy Park

Recent Development
A. Villaggio Condominiums
B. Fletcher Pointe Condominiums
C. Fletcher Place Lofts
D. Fletcher Place Terrace
Existing Conditions

Physical Context

The Villaggio Condominium Building is the most recent, and largest, private development found along Virginia Avenue. As a building, it is much more oriented towards the Downtown skyline to the northwest than to Virginia Avenue.

Virginia Avenue in Fletcher Place is situated between two well-established districts, Downtown and Fountain Square. Each have landmarks visible from the neighborhood, Chase Tower (top) and the Fountain Square Billboard (above). This helps establish a sense of “place” for Virginia Avenue and Fletcher Place.

Most of the buildings with retail storefronts on Virginia Avenue are smaller scale, between 1 and 2.5 stories. Four buildings between McCarty Street and Merrill Street have the potential for “vertical” mixed-use - i.e. office or residential uses above a retail storefront space. Currently it is unclear whether any of these upper stories are occupied.

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles building serves all of Center Township, and is a major destination along Virginia Avenue.
Four major properties (including the BMV property) have large parking lots fronting Virginia Avenue. These gaps detract from a pedestrian oriented environment appropriate to support small business storefronts.

Most of Virginia Avenue has infrastructure such as sidewalks, landscaping, and street trees that is desirable for a pedestrian oriented business district. However, the current configuration actually serves as a detriment. In many areas, Street Trees block visibility to businesses (above), reducing retail viability. Sidewalks are also relatively narrow, and overgrown trees make easy passage along the Avenue difficult.

There are many signs identifying the historic nature of the neighborhood, but many of them are positioned in non-visible areas, at least to those passing through the neighborhood. This creates little tangible advantage from a neighborhood marketing position.

New or renovated residential developments near Virginia Avenue help make Fletcher Place a unique neighborhood.
Recent / Planned Development

Fletcher Place has seen notable private investment in the past couple of years, though not quite near the scale of other Downtown historic districts. The most significant development is the Villaggio at Page Point Condominium Project, which has 64 units in a 9 story building with an attached parking structure. The Villaggio is on Virginia Avenue, but the main entrance is off a surface parking lot at the point created by the intersection of Virginia Avenue, East, and South Streets. During preparation of this work plan, the Villaggio still had unsold units, despite a completion date of 2007. The next largest new construction project is the completed Fletcher Place Terrace, which is a mixed use building with apartments and retail / commercial storefront space just south of the intersection of Fletcher and College Avenues.

Three existing buildings have been rehabilitated or converted to condominiums or apartment units. These include Fletcher Place Lofts, across from Fletcher Place Terrace, Fletcher Pointe, in a converted church, across from the Villaggio, and the Calvin Fletcher Apartments across from the BMV.

The most important planned project is the Cultural Trail extension, which will connect the existing segment along Alabama Street south along Virginia Avenue into Fountain Square. In June of 2009, a new mixed-use project was announced along the Cultural Trail (shown below). The $9 million Fletcher Place Arts Building plans to have 57 apartments, and 8,700 square feet of first-floor office or retail space. The Virginia Avenue segment of the Cultural Trail has had several start dates, with the most recent targeted for early 2010. In 2008 and 2009, approximately $35,000 was given out in facade improvement grants along Virginia Avenue.

Key Findings and Conclusions

STRENGTHS

Fletcher Place already has a positive reputation as a core historic downtown neighborhood.

The fact that Fletcher Place is already a well-known neighborhood “brand” throughout the city is a positive for any prospects of Virginia Avenue growing as a successful commercial corridor. Market indicators show past demand for housing in the neighborhood. This is an important trend that can be built upon to create a vibrant neighborhood and neighborhood business district.

Virginia Avenue has a good position between two major city destinations - Downtown and Fountain Square.

Fletcher Place’s location between Downtown and Fountain Square means that most of the traffic traveling between those areas goes through the neighborhood. This gives the businesses located on Virginia Avenue the benefit of the visibility created by this traffic. Soon, the Cultural Trail will add a second major traffic route. The success of any commercial uses on Virginia Avenue is connected to its ability to facilitate traffic between these two areas. Identifying Virginia Avenue as a destination by those traveling through it will be key to its success.

There is an existing cluster of business storefronts on Virginia Avenue.

Virginia Avenue has between 10-15 storefront spaces clustered on the southern segment of the street. These existing spaces, though not all occupied, are an advantage because they represent existing retail space where businesses can locate at a relatively affordable rate. Creating new retail space from new construction can be difficult, and is invariably more costly, something that could be a major hurdle for prospective businesses. Without clearly defined market support, it is very difficult to build a business district from scratch given the city’s relatively low densities. The clustering of the storefronts is another advantage. Retail, especially urban storefronts, prefer to cluster to gain the residual impact of shoppers and diners who visit a retail area vs. a single store. If existing retail businesses were spread along the street, the potential power of Virginia Avenue as a retail / dining destination would be diluted significantly.

Rendering of the proposed Fletcher Place Arts building, to be located at the southern end of Virginia Avenue on McCarty Street (see map on page 20).

i Indianapolis Business Journal, June 8, 2009
Virginia is located near several major employers.

Although Virginia Avenue is located beyond walking distance from the Downtown core, it is very close to the campuses of three major employers - Eli Lilly, Anthem and Farm Bureau. These three corporations employ several thousand workers, a potentially lucrative market for retail along Virginia Avenue, particularly dining establishments.

WEAKNESSES

Fletcher Place does not hold enough local resident market to support a truly vibrant retail and services district.

As discussed previously, despite higher incomes and reasonable residential density found within the Fletcher Place neighborhood, the area is simply too small (only 450-500 households) and too disconnected from adjacent districts (as described below) to support more than a modest amount of retail alone. In cities like Chicago, Boston and Seattle, neighborhood business districts thrive in large part because of the residential densities that surround them. In most cases the number of retail stores in these business districts are highly correlated to the number of people within easy walking, or driving, distance.

Neighborhood business districts in cities with lower residential densities, such as Indianapolis, Columbus, Nashville, and Milwaukee, rely upon business from local residents in similar ways, but must rely more heavily on the level of income of those local residents, as well as the number of visitors the district can attract from outside.

Though accessible by automobile and in the future more accessible by bicycle, Virginia Avenue is nevertheless disconnected from adjacent districts and neighborhoods.

The accessibility of Fletcher Place to nearby destinations and districts is somewhat mitigated by its lack of walkable connections. The Anthem, Eli Lilly and Farm Bureau campuses and the Interstate isolate Fletcher Place from other residential neighborhoods. This reduces the amount of potential local residential expenditures to support retail, as outlined above. Hopefully, this weakness can be balanced by the proximity of the very same employers who form the neighborhood’s physical boundaries. It is important to note, however, that the retail and service market characteristics of employees is vastly different from local residents. This dissimilarity may have a major influence on the types of businesses that prove successful on Virginia Avenue. The
same businesses that serve daytime employees might not necessarily serve local residents in the same manner.

**Many businesses lack signage and clear visibility to those traveling through the area.**

Visibility is one of the three key components of successful retail (the others being access and a good trade area). Most existing businesses have signage, but only readable at a walking, pedestrian scale. This is important because Virginia Avenue in Fletcher Place is not yet a pedestrian oriented district. Signs that identify businesses to passing cars (or bicycles) are not visible in the current marketplace.

**Some street amenities actually work against business vitality.**

Virginia Avenue has many features that are considered important amenities to neighborhood business districts, such as street trees, sidewalks, and landscaping. However, some of these amenities currently work against the success of the district. Street trees, for example often obscure the visibility of businesses from the street (see photo on page 7). Sidewalks are also very narrow, and landscaping, where it exists, does little to enhance the physical environment of the street.

On the southern side of the street, the design (and eventual construction) of the Cultural Trail will likely solve these problems. However, they are important details to address in moving forward towards a successful, pedestrian oriented Virginia Avenue commercial / business district.

**Parking for Virginia Avenue is not clearly defined.**

There is on-street parking along Virginia Avenue, but it is not clearly defined, and could cause confusion to potential customers. This is important because Virginia Avenue will need to attract visitors from outside of the Fletcher Place neighborhood to sustain its business. Well defined parking, as well as other streetscape and beautification components, help establish an understanding with customers that they are traveling through a retail district. Currently, the outer lanes of travel double as parking areas with little to no available off-street parking. The lack of defined parking along Virginia Avenue discourages patronage of area businesses. As the retail climate improves, attention will have to be placed on how intended customers access local businesses. The Cultural Trail may bring about a solution for this situation, but the neighborhood should consider locations for off-street parking.

### SWOT Summary

**Virginia Avenue Corridor**

**STRENGTHS**
- Reputation and Recognition as a Historic District
- Existing Cluster of Retail Storefronts
- Location Near Major Employers
- Positioned Between Two Major Destinations
- Demand for Housing in Neighborhood

**WEAKNESSES**
- Small number of households
- Cut-off from adjacent districts and neighborhoods
- Existing Street Amenities Work Against Business Vitality and Pedestrian Orientation.
- Parking not clearly defined
- Businesses lack signage and clear visibility to those traveling through.

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Cultural Trail Extension
- Growth of Fountain Square
- Continued Housing Renovation

**THREATS**
- Lack of perception as a separate, unique destination from Fountain Square.
- Lack of traffic growth along Virginia Avenue - autos or bicycles.
Redevelopment Initiatives

Based on existing conditions and key findings, this Work Plan recommends three redevelopment oriented initiatives for Virginia Avenue. These initiatives are based in part on organizational goals of the Fletcher Place Neighborhood and SEND, but also are considered to be the most impactful approaches to sustained investment within the study area. These initiatives are: (1) A Marketing / Branding Campaign that establishes an identity for a Virginia Avenue Business District; (2) Physical and design improvements that establish the Virginia Avenue Business District as a distinctive place; and (3) A focus of public and private investments around a potential urban “node” at the intersection of Virginia and College Avenues.

1. Officially Establish a Virginia Avenue Business District

Fletcher Place is a unique area of Indianapolis and its neighborhood business district needs to build upon, and personify this status. One of Virginia Avenue’s greatest detriments to being established as a business district is a lack of identity. What identity it may have is associated with Fountain Square, which in reality is a completely separate urban district.

The Fletcher Place Neighborhood should therefore organize around creating its own local business district that is identifiable within the city. This initiative is more than just creating physical boundaries for such a district, but involves creating a “brand” that is marketed throughout the city. Indianapolis has approximately a dozen urban neighborhood business districts. These vary from large districts that have established brands, like Broad Ripple and Fountain Square to small districts with little to no formal recognition, such as 52nd and College and 49th and Pennsylvania. It is estimated that only three of these neighborhood business districts have good to excellent “brands” which would be immediately recognizable by most Indianapolis residents. These are Broad Ripple, Fountain Square and Massachusetts Avenue. Several others are recognizable as locations within the city, but not necessarily for their qualities as a destination for retail, entertainment or service businesses. This relatively low percentage provides an opportunity for Virginia Avenue to enter into the mix of urban retail destinations within the city.

There are at least three separate city-wide programs to market urban neighborhood business districts. It is important to link this initiative with one or all of these programs in order to successfully market Virginia Avenue as a business district. The Cultural District program provides marketing and other types of assistance to Fountain Square, Broad Ripple, Massachusetts Avenue, Indiana Avenue and the Wholesale District. The Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC) provides FOCUS Corridor funding to seven business districts that are either established or targeted for revitalization, including Fountain Square, Irvington, East 10th Street, 16th Street, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, North Meridian Street and West Washington Street. Unsung Indy is an effort to market lesser known neighborhoods around the city. Their initial focus has been on five neighborhoods, including Irvington, West Indianapolis, Holy Cross, Ransom Place and Watson-McCord. Though it should be noted, however, that the latter three neighborhoods do not have neighborhood business districts.

District Image

One of the key initial decisions in establishing a neighborhood business district is the district’s name. District names typically come from one of three sources, the main street of the business district (Massachusetts Avenue), the name of the neighborhood encompassing the business district (Irvington), or a name historically associated with the area (Fountain Square).

The neighborhood must decide for themselves what the most appropriate name is for a business district on Virginia Avenue would be. There are some considerations regarding obvious choices. Fletcher Place currently carries recognition as a residential neighborhood. It must be determined whether this recognition can be transferred to the neighborhood as a retail / business destination. Virginia Avenue is an appropriate name given established districts on similar streets (Mass Ave,
District Offerings
Careful consideration needs to be given to the market that drives businesses on Virginia Avenue, as well as a potential market “niche” to compete with other neighborhood business districts. This is important because, as demonstrated in a scan of market conditions, Fletcher Place neighborhood does not have the local economics to support and sustain a vibrant business district on its own. This means that a business district on Virginia Avenue must draw people into the neighborhood. A brief assessment of the types of retail that would work on Virginia Avenue include dining establishments that draw the market from nearby employers and arts businesses that play off of the strength of Fountain Square and access to the Cultural Trail. It is important that Virginia Avenue be seen as a unique district, rather than an extension of Fountain Square.

District Management
It is important to note that this Redevelopment Work Plan recommends that the organization and management effort for this initiative come primarily from the Fletcher Place Neighborhood, not from SEND. Fletcher Place’s velocity of private investment distinguishes itself from other areas within SEND boundaries, and its momentum in the marketplace suggests that the neighborhood should organize its own resources to implement this Work Plan. It is anticipated that SEND would provide professional advisory services to support this initiative. Many successful neighborhood business districts have management organizations that work to beautify, maintain, market and recruit businesses for the district. There are two tiers of organizations such as this; Volunteer organizations and Professional organizations. Volunteer organizations such as existing neighborhood or merchant’s associations are more likely to produce short-term results due to financial capacity. Eventually, Fletcher Place will want to match its investment on Virginia Avenue with a funding source for the activities listed above. One option for this might be an Economic Improvement District (EID), also known as a Special Improvement District (SID). Information regarding this type of organization can be found in the resources section of this plan.

WORK PLAN - Initiative #1
Virginia Avenue Business District

OBJECTIVE #1
Establish a District Identity
- Action #1: Create a district name to use for marketing
- Action #2: Define district boundaries
- Action #3: Establish a “brand” and/or “slogan” that defines the experience a visitor should expect
- Action #4: Design District Logo
- Action #5: Create a Business / Merchant’s Association

OBJECTIVE #2
Identify Resources for the District
- Action #1: Identify (and subsequently include in marketing materials) the district’s assets, including people, buildings, heritage and institutions.
- Action #2: Explore the expansion of resources available to Fountain Square (FOCUS, etc.) and Virginia Avenue.
- Action #3: Approach LISC for potential financial support of a Virginia Avenue Business District.

OBJECTIVE #3
Gather Information for District Management
- Action #1: Identify organization to manage district.
- Action #2: Define the district’s market niche - its unique position within the marketplace.
- Action #3: Assemble data on existing businesses and retail storefront spaces, including size of space, lease rates, amenities, business type, etc.
- Action #4: Conduct primary research regarding existing and potential customer base of Virginia Avenue, including surveys of residents and nearby employees.

OBJECTIVE #4
Market the District
- Action #1: Nominate Fletcher Place or Virginia Avenue Business District as an Unsung Indy neighborhood.
- Action #2: Raise funds to install banners, signage or other physical features that landmark and identify of the district to those passing through.
- Action #3: Advertise district and district businesses in local publications (Urban Times, UpDowntown, NUVO, etc.)
2. Organize Around Physical / Design Improvements to the District

Once a district brand, identity and management have been established, effort should be put into enhancing the physical appearance of Virginia Avenue, including both the public (street and sidewalks) and private (buildings) components. Physical and aesthetic improvements are not an economic catalyst unto themselves, but they can play an important role in helping establish the district’s identity by making the area more recognizable, comfortable and memorable. They can also differentiate the district from other areas within the city, and assist in creating an inviting atmosphere that appeals to consumers.

The City of Seattle, Washington is well-known for its numerous neighborhood business districts. The city's publication: Create a Thriving Business District provides six hints for successful business district improvements. These are:

#1. Focus on visitor comfort and convenience, as well as appearance.
#2. Build a sense of identity
#3. Leverage physical improvements with other business development efforts
#4. Have a strategy
#5. Sustain and improve effort over time
#6. Collaborate

Streetscape Components
This Work Plan identifies six potential physical improvement and beautification projects that could be undertaken without significant cost by the Fletcher Place neighborhood. These projects, discussed in more detail on pages 14-15, still require funding and / or volunteer labor, but are much more cost effective than major infrastructure projects like the Fountain Square streetscape project which requires significant investment in time, management and funding. Another six physical improvement and beautification projects are identified on pages 16-17. These are larger scale projects that require higher levels of funding, management, and coordination with the City and other groups. These include infrastructure improvements, transportation amenities and partnerships with private businesses and property owners.

District Identity
Some neighborhood business districts can utilize their built form to establish an identity which people recognize and remember. In Indianapolis, Fountain Square and Broad Ripple are good examples. Other urban retail clusters are not so identifiable, and thus become more recognized by the individual businesses that exist rather than the place on the whole. Virginia Avenue falls somewhere in the middle - it has unique factors, but it isn't instantly recognizable, either, except as a corridor between Downtown and Fountain Square.

Many neighborhood business districts in Chicago have similar situations. While Lincoln Park, Wrigleyville and Streeterville are instantly recognized destinations as neighborhood retail/business districts, areas like Hyde Park, Andersonville and Wicker Park are thriving urban districts that have had to reinforce their areas, not only to serve local residents, but also to draw in visitors from around the city and metropolitan area. Cincinnati is another good example. Hyde Park, Covington (KY), and Clifton are the “flagship” neighborhood retail / entertainment destinations, but Northside and Oakley are lesser known yet emerging business districts in their own right.

These lesser known, or secondary business districts often (continued on page 18)
**“Design on a Dime”**
*Low Cost Physical Identity and Beautification Initiatives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BANNERS</th>
<th>COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION</th>
<th>PLANTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>description</strong></td>
<td>Pole banners are used to advertise a business district or special events within that district. With a unified design theme they are an effective, and cost-effective, method for district identification.</td>
<td>Organization of community volunteers for the purpose of beautifying an area through clean-up, landscaping, attractive plantings, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pros</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Helps build a sense of identity for a business district</td>
<td>• Cost effective labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relatively cost effective compared to official signs or gateway features</td>
<td>• Provides neighborhood unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Highly visible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>challenges</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Requires installation and maintenance</td>
<td>• Relies on volunteer base, which can be inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Must have a sufficient number of pole banners in an area to have a strong visual impact</td>
<td>• Requires maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Professional advice may be needed for maximum effect of planting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Some material shown is from “Create a Thriving Business District: A Guide to City and Neighborhood Business District Resources” published by the City of Seattle, Washington.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC ART</th>
<th>OUTDOOR SEATING</th>
<th>STREET TREES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>description</strong></td>
<td>Public Art, such as murals and statues, identify a neighborhood’s character and can become a landmark for the district. Art can take many forms, including unique items like trash cans, benches, and sidewalks.</td>
<td>Seating located outdoors, on sidewalks or patio spaces primarily for restaurants and coffee shops. Seating can vary between permanent, fenced areas or more temporary arrangements. Typically seasonal (late spring - early fall).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pros</strong></td>
<td>• Increases community pride and identification • Provides vibrancy to public spaces • Provides opportunities to present local heritage and culture</td>
<td>• Appealing warm weather alternative to sitting indoors • Helps advertise/landmark businesses, especially restaurants • Can add to appearance of district vibrancy to people passing through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>challenges</strong></td>
<td>• Requires a source of funding to pay artist and buy materials • Requires volunteer time to complete public approval process • Requires long-term maintenance • Can be difficult to agree on design</td>
<td>• May make sidewalks seem cluttered and reduce pedestrian traffic flow • Can become unattractive if furniture is not maintained properly • Needs to be of sufficient distance from street to be effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Streetscape / Major Enhancements

**Components of Great Business District Streets that Require Higher Levels of Funding and Planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKED CROSSWALKS / INTERSECTIONS</th>
<th>FACADES / SIGNAGE</th>
<th>PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>description</strong></td>
<td>Improve building facades for the benefit of businesses and the aesthetic character of the district; Establish clear, effective signage visible to both pedestrians and drivers</td>
<td>Street lighting on shorter poles and oriented towards sidewalk, providing better illumination for pedestrian traffic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **pros** | • Clearly defines pedestrian walkways and passages for drivers  
• Adds to aesthetics of business district  
• Announces a special district unlike other normal urban streets | • Improves the aesthetics of buildings within the district  
• Increases business visibility | • Creates and encourages a pedestrian friendly environment  
• Improves safety and business exposure  
• Design of lighting can add to overall aesthetic / experience of district |
| **challenges** | • Most effective methods are expensive  
• Does not guarantee that drivers will stop for pedestrians  
• Can provide little to no benefit for pedestrians if located in wrong place  
• Aesthetic uniqueness mitigated by choice of materials / paint that do not clearly define crosswalk or intersection | • Can be costly (though resources are available)  
• Requires agreement and/or financial match from property owner  
• Can increase lease rates | • City of Indianapolis currently requires that neighborhoods pay for installation and maintenance of new lighting. |
Redevelopment Work Plan for Virginia Avenue

Redevelopment Initiatives

(Some material shown is from “Create a Thriving Business District: A Guide to City and Neighborhood Business District Resources” published by the City of Seattle, Washington.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREET FURNITURE</th>
<th>BICYCLE AMENITIES</th>
<th>“GREEN” INFRASTRUCTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>description</strong></td>
<td>Benches, water fountains, kiosks, clocks, trash cans, bus shelters, etc. that provide convenience and amenities to pedestrians</td>
<td>Bicycle oriented infrastructure and amenities, particularly bicycle racks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pros</strong></td>
<td>• Adds attractive and recognizable features to business district • Add utility to aesthetics (sitting, refuse containers, sources of information, etc.)</td>
<td>• Encourages customers to ride a bike to district for short trips and errands • Cultural Trail will provide a major route through Virginia Avenue • Removes bicycles from obstructing pedestrians at locations such as store doorways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cons</strong></td>
<td>• Must keep away from crosswalks, curb cuts, fire hydrants and loading/bus zones • Requires maintenance and routine cleaning</td>
<td>• May clutter narrow sidewalks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
turn to two methods to attract recognition - marketing of the
district and its businesses, or visual cues that announce to a
visitor or person passing through the district that they are in a
unique place. These visual cues come in many different forms,
but often take the form of special signage, gateway features,
or infrastructure improvements such as new sidewalks or
crosswalks. One example is the Lincoln Square business
district in northern Chicago (top photo of Page 13).

Business Identity
Just as important as district identity is business identity. An
urban street or district can be clearly identified as a unique
place through design cues, but it is the businesses and services
that ultimately make that district a destination. It is important
that local businesses be clearly visible to people walking or
driving through a district. Business signage does not have to
be large or gaudy to achieve the necessary results. The photos
on page 16 show good examples of how businesses use fixed
and free standing signs, window advertisements and awnings
to identify their businesses.

Funding and Maintenance
Two of the most common challenges in the 12 physical
improvement strategies listed on pages 14-17 are Funding and
Maintenance. Both of these challenges will need to be overcome
before anything can be accomplished. The 12 improvements
are generally split between projects that can be funded and
implemented locally, meaning the neighborhood or SEND,
and larger scale projects that will require a much higher rate of
public or private investment. The Fletcher Place neighborhood
should organize around a fund specifically targeted for
improvements on Virginia Avenue and the methods for raising
money for such a fund. One method, an EID, is discussed on
page 22. Other methods could include revenue from special
events, such as the Italian Festival, fundraising and donations,
or even smaller methods such as bake sales, home tours, etc.

Raising money is not only important for purchasing items like
banners and planters, but it is also important for maintenance.
For example, the City of Indianapolis currently does not
allocate funds for decorative street lighting whose cost exceeds
that of standard street lighting. Neighborhoods are free to add
pedestrian scale lighting, but they must account for the cost
of purchase, installation, and maintenance. Chatham Arch
and Nora are two city neighborhoods that have established
neighborhood funds to construct and maintain higher quality
improvements than the city provides.

Market Differentiation
An important consideration in selecting physical improvements
for Virginia Avenue is to pick materials and an overall design that
is unique, and differentiates Virginia Avenue from the rest of the
“market”, which includes competitive neighborhood business
districts. Many street improvements, from banners and signs
to crosswalks and sidewalks use materials and landscaping that
are attractive, but if used in multiple places ceases to be unique.
This is not to say that certain materials should be excluded, but
materials and design for street improvements should consider
the local context and assist in establishing a unique identity
for Virginia Avenue and Fletcher Place rather than replicate
methods that have been used elsewhere.

WORK PLAN - Initiative #2
Physical Improvement Projects

OBJECTIVE #1
Create and Manage a Virginia Avenue Improvement Fund
Action #1: Strategize methods to raise money for
improvement fund.
Action #2: Assign a point-person to manage fund-
raising logistics at neighborhood level.
Action #2: Assign management of fund to appropriate
organization.

OBJECTIVE #2
Organize a Volunteer Labor Force for Beautification
Projects and Maintenance
Action #1: Appoint a volunteer coordinator.
Action #2: Set up and maintain a neighborhood
volunteer labor force.
Action #3: Establish a method to easily communicate
with volunteers regarding events, etc.

OBJECTIVE #3
Fund and Implement a Pilot Beaification Project
Action #1: Target specific improvements for an area
on Virginia Avenue for an initial, pilot
beaification program.
Action #2: Raise funds for pilot program.

OBJECTIVE #4
Establish a Design Vision for Virginia Avenue
Action #1: Hire or work with a professional design
consultant to develop a comprehensive street
improvement concept that is compelling and
meaningful, but responsive to local economic
and financial needs and constraints.
3. **Virginia / College Node**

Virtually all of the existing business storefronts on Virginia Avenue are located in the southern third of the Corridor. Even planned development with new storefront space will be located here. While future development may carry this pattern north, the area between McCarty / Calvary and Merrill Streets will be the focus for the Virginia Avenue business district in the near future.

There is an opportunity in the center of this proposed business district to establish a unique urban place that will work in conjunction with the physical improvements discussed in Initiative #2 establishing Virginia Avenue as a compelling urban destination to draw visitors, thus supporting the businesses that also serve Fletcher Place residents.

This opportunity is at the intersection of Stevens Street and College and Virginia Avenues. Intersections are prime locations for commercial activity because they tend to represent the largest percentage of traffic flow through an area, therefore increasing visibility of businesses and the district as a whole. Traffic signals represent stopping points that allow drivers a better view and experience of an area. They also define the optimal pedestrian crossing areas. In addition to being an intersection, this location is centrally located within the existing business zone and has several potential development sites that would assist in better defining and organizing the district.

An additional opportunity exists to “brand” this intersection with a name that coincides with or in and of itself the name for the Virginia Avenue Business District. Fountain Square is an example of how a commercial intersection became the prime identity for a business district and its surrounding neighborhoods. This branding is not necessary, and it is not the intention of this Work Plan to develop the name. Although, for the purposes of this initiative this intersection will be referred to as “Virginia / College Node”.

**Opportunity Sites**

There are several potential “opportunity sites” for development or support uses within the proposed Virginia Avenue Business District. The first - and perhaps largest - is the site of the proposed Fletcher Place Arts Building. Other sites represent opportunities to in-fill parking lots, underutilized land, or to redevelop distressed or underused properties.

With the cultural trail soon to be constructed along Virginia, the continued development of Fountain Square, and the high residential values associated with near-downtown neighborhoods, it is reasonable to expect that private
Redevelopment Work Plan for Virginia Avenue

Redevelopment Initiatives

Aerial View of Virginia Avenue Business District, Looking Northeast

Aerial View of Virginia Avenue Business District, Looking Northwest

- Virginia and College / Stevens Intersection
- Proposed Fletcher Place Arts Building
- Future Cultural Trail Route
Developers will begin to organize around development upon these opportunity sites once economic conditions allow them to do so. A benchmark as to how fast this might occur is the Fletcher Place Arts Building, which will test the market in many aspects, particularly retail space and apartments.

Given current economic conditions, 2010 is a perfect time for the neighborhood to get ahead of the development curve to ensure that future development adheres to its goals for Virginia Avenue. It is also an opportunity to improve the area and remove obstacles to development in order to attract private investment at a faster pace.

**Traffic Flow**

It may be advantageous for the Fletcher Place neighborhood if College Avenue, between Virginia Avenue and Fletcher Avenue, converted to two-way traffic. While traffic counts on College Avenue north of Washington Street support the current one-way pattern to Massachusetts Avenue, the same is not true of College south of Washington or Fletcher Avenue. Conversion of College Avenue to two-way would not only help the intersection Virginia and College Avenues, but also the intersection of Fletcher and College Avenues, which has seen notable investment in recent years, including the Fletcher Place Terrace and Fletcher Place Lofts condominiums. This change would also better link the Virginia Avenue Business District with Fletcher and College Avenues.

**Signage / Parking**

Other than consistent district identification, such as pole banners, there are three areas appropriate for signage in a neighborhood business district. The first two are at either ends of a main street as gateway markers announcing the entrance into a definable place. The third is at a mid-point, such as an intersection or other area where traffic slows down, or meets. Appropriate signage at this mid-point is directional, pointing traffic to other destinations within the neighborhood, or to parking areas off of the street. Off-Street parking is important to business districts because often times on-street parking does not provide enough supply for local businesses.

Although this is currently not the case for Virginia Avenue, if growth is anticipated along the corridor, areas where off-street parking can be accommodated needs to be addressed. Ideal off-street parking is behind or on the sides of buildings so it does not interrupt pedestrian flow in front of storefronts for more than 25 feet. If not visible from the street, signage needs to clearly identify its location. It is best if parking is not place more than 1/2 to 1 block away from the main street, and should have public access at all times, since many parking lots are privately owned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK PLAN - Initiative #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Virginia / College Intersection”</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OBJECTIVE #1**

*Remove Regulatory Barriers*

**Action #1:** Work with City of Indianapolis to transfer land currently zoned for industrial uses to zoning more appropriate to support commercial uses

**Action #2:** Seek zoning and regulatory incentives that allow for the vertical integration of commercial and residential uses

**OBJECTIVE #2**

*Seek to Convert College Avenue to Two-Way Traffic*

**Action #1:** Engage in talks with DMD and DPW to convert College Avenue to two-way traffic.

**Action #2:** Solicit local support, including residents and the development community

**Action #3:** Explore options of funding a traffic study to examine opportunities for a two-way College Avenue

**Action #4:** Reduce the ability for non-residential traffic to use Pine Street via signage or other regulatory methods.

**OBJECTIVE #3**

*Work Towards Redevelopment of Opportunity Sites*

**Action #1:** Organize to acquire sites that provide good opportunity to reach development, parking and design goals related to this node.

**Action #2:** Devise a shared parking strategy for the Virginia Avenue Business District, including sites for off-street parking lots and better defined on-street parking

**Action #3:** Track recent and future development and its performance to market area to new developers

**OBJECTIVE #4**

*Target Particular Physical Improvements in Virginia / College Intersection Area.*

**Action #1:** Target a location for bicycle racks on or near the College / Virginia intersection

**Action #2:** Identify opportunities to improve sidewalks and other pedestrian oriented infrastructure from Virginia Avenue into the greater Fletcher Place neighborhood
Redevelopment Toolkit

Economic Improvement District
An Economic Improvement District (EID) or Special Improvement District (SID) is a special taxing district that allows an organization to raise revenue via the voluntary contributions of local property owners. These “contributions” are essentially a self-imposed tax that is used to fund activities for the district that are ultimately beneficial for all businesses. Funds are used for a variety of purposes, but they are primarily used for beautification, maintenance, marketing, and business recruitment. Some organizations are funded entirely through these revenues, accounting for payroll, operational expenses and planning / marketing activities while others supplement the revenues with fundraising and other charitable contributions.

Currently, there are not EIDs in Indiana, but SEND is currently working to implement the first one centered around Fountain Square. Once this is in place, it would open the door for additional districts, one could be Virginia Avenue, or even all of Fletcher Place, given the multiple nodes of retail throughout the neighborhood. Fletcher Place will require a special organization, such as a not-for-profit to administer the EID. This would most likely have to be professionally managed. It is up to Fletcher Place to work with SEND, or potentially Indianapolis Downtown Inc., in administering an EID or preparing themselves to take on this role.

Revenue from the EID should account for payroll and operations, but as much as possible needs to be invested in the District. Alternative uses for these funds include subsidy and incentives that might kick-start businesses within the Virginia Avenue District. For example, EID funds could be used as a guarantee for loans, which would assist start-up businesses. Another use could be to “write-down” activities for businesses. This would involve using funds to reduce the price of certain costs that may be entry barriers for starting a business or rehabilitating a building. An example is a rent write-down, where the EID would subsidize a lease by paying $1 or $2 of the lease rate for a period of time while the business gets on its feet. Another example would be a loan interest write-down, where a certain percentage of a loan’s interest rate would be subsidized by the EID to reduce the initial cost of a start-up project.

Retail Recruitment Kit
In order to attract businesses to Virginia Avenue, a series of incentives may be required in the short-term to help establish the street as a true business district. The alternative to incentives is to allow the marketplace to incrementally attract investors and businesses to the neighborhood, but the lack of market momentum and a critical mass of residents means this will likely be a long-term proposition. There are several methods that can be used for retail recruitment and improvement, and are briefly discussed below. Given the limited capacity of Fletcher Place, especially financially at the time this document was produced, this list may be more of a guide for future initiatives than short-term activities. They are, nevertheless, proven strategies for attracting retail to distressed or low-market areas.

Storefront Rehabilitation / “White-Boxing”
Grants can be provided to property owners for a “very base finish of space,” making existing retail spaces more appealing to prospective businesses. This is especially important in older buildings that may have deteriorated. A grant should require that the property owner match a certain percentage of the grant, or require that the lease for the space be capped at a certain rate so it is not a barrier for new businesses.

Forgivable Loans
Approved retailers could receive a loan that is ultimately forgivable if they sign a lease for a certain period of time (i.e 5 years), provide quarterly sales data, and adhere to specific hours that will help to encourage an active business district. Awards would be based on meeting program criteria and the square footage of the space leased. Depending on the success of the business, they may be required to pay a certain percentage of profits back to the program.

Facade Improvement Grants
A program is already in place along Virginia Avenue, matching grants to improve the exterior condition of buildings within the business district.

Brokerage Incentives
Low lease rates can lead commercial brokers to work in other areas of the City. Providing a financial incentive to brokers who typically focus their attention on other areas could help recruit businesses to the district. The incentive would be a percentage of the ultimate lease rate.

Targeted Recruitment List
Form a list of targeted retailers and actively seek out existing businesses to relocate / expand into a business district. Advance negotiations allow a better understanding of the particular needs of that business (lease rates, availability of infrastructure, etc.) and the ability to negotiate a specific location.
Resources

Neighborhood Business Development
ULI - Ten Principles for Successful Neighborhood Retail
http://commerce.uli.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=20539&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm

City of Seattle - Office of Economic Development
Create a Thriving Business District - A Guide to City and Neighborhood Business District Resources

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Marketing for Main Streets / Downtowns

Redevelopment
Smart Growth
http://www.epa.gov/dced/

Economic / Special Improvement Districts
www.in.gov/indot/div/.../Special%20Improvement%20Districts.pdf
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_improvement_district

Urban Design
David Sucher
City Comforts

Complete Streets
http://www.cqgrd.gatech.edu/PDFs/GnG-Complete%20Streets_racicot.pdf

Greenways
Urban Green Spaces
http://www.urbangreenspaces.org/

Indianapolis Cultural Trail
http://www.indyculturaltrail.org/

Green Infrastructure
City of Portland, Oregon
http://greenvalues.cnt.org/green-infrastructure
http://www.portlandonline.com/osd/

Unsung Indy
http://www.unsungindy.org/
KEY FINDINGS

STRENGTHS

- Fletcher Place has a positive reputation as a core historic downtown neighborhood.
- Virginia Avenue has a good location between two major City destinations - Downtown and Fountain Square.
- There is already a cluster of business storefronts at one end of Virginia Avenue.
- Virginia Avenue is located near several major employers, including Eli Lilly, Anthem and Farm Bureau.

WEAKNESSES

- Fletcher Place does not hold enough local resident market to support a truly vibrant retail and services district.
- Virginia Avenue lacks strong connections to adjacent districts despite future plans for the Cultural Trail along Virginia Avenue.
- Many businesses lack signage and clear visibility to those traveling through the area.
- Some street amenities actually work against business vitality.
- Parking for Virginia Avenue is not clearly defined.

REDEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

1. Officially Establish a Virginia Avenue Business District - Implement a marketing and branding campaign that seeks to establish an identity for Virginia Avenue that is unique and separate from Fountain Square.

2. Organize Around Physical Improvements to the District - Identify, organize and fund improvement projects on Virginia Avenue that begin to define the street as a unique business district.

3. “Virginia and College Node” - Target future improvements around the intersection of College Avenue / Stevens Street and Virginia Avenue as a focal point for a neighborhood business district.