

February 20, 2008

The Honorable Mayor Fraim and members of City Council
City of Norfolk
1109 City Hall Building
810 Union Street
Norfolk, VA 23510

Dear Mayor Fraim and members of City Council:

The purpose of this letter is to seek your immediate help in the revitalization of the Wards Corner area consistent with the strategies outlined in the Greater Wards Corner Comprehensive Plan adopted by City Council in November 2004. We do so because the residents of the entire area are growing increasingly frustrated with the apparent inattention given to this area despite our monthly meetings with council representatives to the Wards Corner Task Force.

The Wards Corner area has been in a steady state of decline for over 20 years. Most notable in the business district, this deterioration is also evident in the Denby Park, Monticello Village and Oakdale Farms neighborhoods as well as the Titustown area and is putting negative pressure on many other neighborhoods in the Greater Wards Corner area.

The Greater Wards Corner Partnership was formed eleven years ago, in an attempt to work in partnership with the city to address this growing blight. The 22 civic leagues, numerous businesses, churches, schools and individuals were committed then and are as committed today to see the entire area revitalized so that it is an economically viable section of the city. We all live here, love the area and do not want to see it decline any further.

In 2000, the Wards Corner Task Force was reestablished as a partnership of the city, City Council and citizens of the Greater Wards Corner Partnership area to develop revitalization plans and strategies for the area. In the beginning we were all hopeful that we would see positive progress and with the adoption of the Greater Wards Corner Comprehensive Plan we were encouraged that we would have tools to assist us and the city to move forward. While we recognize that some progress was made initially, it is now evident that all of these plans have been stalled.

As a result of these concerns the Greater Wards Corner Partnership is now calling for your immediate action to the following prioritized items. Wards Corner's location as a gateway to downtown Norfolk and potential for increased city tax revenue should make its revitalization a priority item on Council's agenda.

1. A revitalization action plan for the Denby Park/Monticello Village/Oakdale Farms neighborhoods that will include the signing of the Memorandum of

Understanding between the NRHA and the city so that this area may be a designated area with benefits similar to a Conservation Plan.

2. The purchase of the Alexis Apartments in Titustown and renewal of that area.
3. A plan to address the deteriorating infrastructure in the Wards Corner Business District and
4. The location of the new Police Station into the Central Business Park.

We believe that these are reasonable requests and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Very little attention has been given to the Greater Wards Corner area for the past several years and as a result it continues to decline. We are concerned that, unlike other areas of Norfolk, the Partnership area does not have a champion on City Council and call on our representatives to support us in moving forward. We can no longer wait; the time for you to act is now.

We look forward to your timely response and an agenda which addresses these concerns at the next Wards Corner Task Force meeting.

Sincerely,

The members and residents of the Greater Wards Corner Partnership