

## **A-1 The Strategy Board**

### **Projects and Initiatives**

The attached “Strategy Board” summarizes all of the projects and recommendations included in this report. The board is intended to be used as working document for benchmarking and ongoing evaluation of the implementation process. Each recommendation that is presented in brief on the strategy board is supported in this report documentation.

### **Strategies and Visions**

Each of the plan strategies and visions are outlined in the strategy board. It is important to remember the ultimate marketing and development strategies that each project supports. Each of these strategies is linked with one another, but failure to achieve one goal does not negate the ability to achieve others.

### **Responsibilities**

The strategy board presents suggestions for the partner organizations that will be responsible for leading the implementation of each of the projects. During the initial downtown summit, individual responsibilities should be assigned to a lead agency. While an agency may be assigned lead role for implementation, each of these projects should be pursued through partnerships. As the plan progresses, these responsibilities should be reevaluated to determine where roles should change or shift.

### **Time Frames**

The projects are divided into three time frames. The first series of projects are demonstration projects that should begin immediately. For the most part, these are simple projects that will be highly visible, have significant impact and should be completed within the first two years after the plan is adopted. The second set of projects is labeled “mid term” or next step projects. Some of these are more advanced projects while others are continuations of projects that began during the demonstration period. The next step projects should be completed within the following three years. The final series of projects are long-term or plan completion projects. Many of the projects begun in the next steps phase will not be completed until after the 2016 deadline. Over time this category will continue to fill as priorities evolve.

The strategy board and its recommendations represent a “living document”. As time goes by and implementation proceeds, some priorities will shift while other ones will arise. The implementation strategy board should be evaluated periodically, no less than annually. This evaluation process will allow for finished tasks to be indicated on the board, for responsibilities to be shifted between parties, and for time frames to be adjusted for individual projects.

# Town of Blackstone, Virginia – Economic Restructuring Plan

The task items listed below represent the Town of Blackstone’s plan for economic development and promotion of the community, as part of the larger revitalization of the downtown. The tasks are presented below in four key strategic areas. Each strategy is accompanied by short, medium, and long tasks to meet the larger vision.

Strategies	First Steps: Year 1	Next Steps: Years 2-3	Final Steps: Years 4-10	Goal
<p><b>New Opportunity: Economic Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Coordinate small business/existing business support with Longwood SBDC in Farmville                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Planning/Marketing/Networking</li> <li>• Counseling &amp; Education</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Recruit businesses based on market demand                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local oriented (gen mdse, elec, drug, grocery) off DT (S Main &amp; N. Main)</li> <li>• “Home” oriented, full service dining, destination &amp; specialty in Downtown Core</li> <li>• Apparel, Grocery (in/out of DT)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Create Incentives for small business development &amp; startups</li> <li>▶ Issue RFPs with development criteria on key sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Work with local banks for small business financing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create low interest loans</li> <li>• down payment assistance</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Market available sites. Create available properties database and promote (sf, location, price, zoning, etc)</li> <li>▶ Build economic development marketing pieces</li> <li>▶ Preservation as Economic Development                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinstitute ARB with new process &amp; guidelines – protect downtown investments</li> <li>• Provide assistance to property owners to use Preservation Tax Credits (DBI, HISTORICAL SOCIETY)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Create a branded business recruitment package                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market analysis</li> <li>• Available properties database</li> <li>• Local incentives/ grants</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ As overall market changes, update market analysis to reflect new opportunities (every 5 years)</li> </ul>	<p>Blackstone will support existing downtown businesses, recruit new businesses based off of the market analysis, fill key vacant or underutilized properties, ultimately creating an active downtown with a mixture of uses.</p>
<p><b>New Markets: Broadening Downtown’s Reach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Create Local Loyalty Program                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target Blackstone &amp; Primary Trade Area</li> <li>• Focus on Community Pride</li> <li>• Businesses stay open later/ consistency</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Focus on local needs (primary customer base)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business - Restaurants, Women’s &amp; Family clothing, Local Produce/Market/Bakery)</li> <li>• Activity – Open space, rec, theater, children</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ More aggressive promotion of events, print &amp; web</li> <li>▶ Target “New Markets”                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs assessment – Pickett &amp; VUMAC USERS</li> <li>• Promotional packages for Fort &amp; Assembly Center</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establish New Markets - Market positioning (Downtown promotion on web, newspaper, direct mail for events)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve regional penetration (Farmville, Petersburg, S. Rich)</li> <li>• Growing STA – Amelia County</li> <li>• Segmentation – targeting middle &amp; upper incomes</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Strategies                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand events more regional draw</li> <li>• Regional tourism development - market to day trip destinations (Richmond, Triangle, Norfolk, C-ville)</li> <li>• Recruit Destination Retail (restaurants, home cluster)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Stronger presence on the Internet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Recruit additional lodging space to Blackstone                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodate assembly centers – larger confs. &amp; events</li> <li>• Appropriate scale – B&amp;B downtown, standard South</li> <li>• Feasibility study</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Residential recruitment to expand local market -Target key demographic segments</li> <li>▶ Assist private owners in developing affordable &amp; market rate housing (DHCD, VHDA)</li> </ul>	<p>Blackstone will reach new markets within the local trade areas and region, expand the reach of downtown’s market base, and solidify the community as the hub of Southside VA.</p>
<p><b>New Image: Branding &amp; Marketing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Develop a graphic brand identity for Blackstone as cornerstone of marketing strategy                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique History/Tavern</li> <li>• Southside Hub</li> <li>• Home businesses/ Arts &amp; Crafts</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Create Brand system by extending brand                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• existing agencies/events – Chamber of Commerce, Arts &amp; Crafts</li> <li>• New agencies – DBI, Historical Society</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Create new websites for Town of Blackstone, DBI, Chamber, Historical Society</li> <li>▶ Create marketing pieces promoting Community Pride</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Update business inventory/ create branded Shopping &amp; dining guide</li> <li>▶ Partner with Downtown Blackstone, Inc &amp; Virginia Main Street to complete marketing plan</li> <li>▶ Develop branded wayfinding                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In town trailblazers</li> <li>• Gateways</li> <li>• Trailblazers 460, 46</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Begin cross marketing between merchants. Consistent message based on market positioning</li> <li>▶ Position Blackstone as regional destination for home based shopping (furniture, home furnishings, antiques)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Place outdoor advertising on I-85, I-95, Richmond, &amp; Petersburg markets</li> <li>▶ Develop Farmers Market</li> <li>▶ Tourism development (site promo) – tourism anchor – destination/ catalyst</li> </ul>	<p>Blackstone will re-brand the town and downtown, building the foundation of a marketing and promotion strategy, positioning itself as a shopping, dining, and entertainment destination for Southside VA.</p>
<p><b>New Partners: Organizational Strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Town, DBI and key players meet first thing to determine implementation of grant &amp; the strategies of this plan</li> <li>▶ Next, hold meetings of key stakeholders &amp; leaders of public &amp; private sector groups to discuss CBDG/DBI initiatives &amp; present ER plan</li> <li>▶ Determine Lead Organizations &amp; assign tasks to specific groups</li> <li>▶ Implementation Newsletter – Communicate CBDG prog.</li> <li>▶ Determine permanent location for DBI &amp; Chamber</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Appoint new Architectural Review Board to facilitate design review</li> <li>▶ Partner with Farmville to promote area as furniture, home furnishings destination</li> <li>▶ Host annual meeting to continue to evaluate plan progress, initiatives, and new priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Continue to host annual “progress summits” on revitalization with the public and various stakeholder groups to evaluate progress of the plan and reassess goals and tasks</li> </ul>	<p>Blackstone will build a continued momentum of implementation by fostering strong partnerships with existing and newly formed economic development organizations</p>