



*Helping Neighbors Build Strong Communities*

# The Deep Dive into the Northside



Left: Six Points roundabout under construction. Right: Six points roundabout after construction  
Below: Panoramic view of Six Points after roundabout construction, which finished this summer.



If you haven't been down Brookland Park Boulevard in a while, now is the time to take a quick trip to the Northside. Activity is sprouting up all along this commercial corridor, one that has seen decades of disinvestment.

Six Points intersection, located farther down Brookland Park Boulevard, is bustling with change, and LISC is supporting partners with projects on four of the six corners of that intersection.

“Virginia LISC has been working heavily in Northside since 2012,” said Candice Streett, Executive Director of Virginia LISC. “Evoking a small town feel, the area around Six Points has a lot of potential but needs

targeted investment.”

Virginia LISC identified the opportunities and cultivated the partners needed. National LISC did a company-wide corporate challenge grant competition to incentivize innovative programming among the local LISC sites. Virginia LISC was awarded a \$250,000 challenge grant for their continued efforts in Highland Park. This money will go towards Virginia LISC’s corridor revitalization around Six Points and the Community Safety Initiative to address two crime hot spots—one in Gilpin Court and one around Highland Park to clean up the crime areas and make physical improvements.

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# Six Points Got a Makeover, Deep Dive into the Northside Continued

The LISC challenge grant is not the only money being invested around Six Points. Both Capital One and The Community Foundation recently provided grants for LISC’s work on the Northside.

### Business Façade Improvements

On one corner of Six Points sits Trims, a neighborhood barber shop with a façade in need of a face lift. Part of the LISC challenge grant funding is going directly to corridor revitalization, including façade improvements.



Volunteers help paint Trims Barbershop Storefront for Community Design—one of Virginia LISC’s close partners on the Northside-- and Virginia LISC, along with volunteers from Fort Lee, gave Trims a fresh new paint job in September.

### Healthy Corner Store Initiative

Virginia LISC and Tricycle Gardens have partnered to bring healthy, fresh produce to corner markets of neighborhoods labeled as food deserts. One of the participating markets in the Healthy Corner Store Initiative is Six Points Express Market, located on one of Six Points’ corners.



Six Points Express Market had a refrigerator installed to hold the fresh produce.

As part of the program, the corner markets install refrigerators to store the fresh produce that they receive on a weekly basis from Tricycle Gardens.

"The customers are very interested in the produce because they are not used to seeing it in markets like this," said Six Points store owner, Shawn Alghaim.

### Brookland Park Plaza Apartments

On a third corner of the Six Point intersection stands a vacant old school.



Virginia LISC encouraged a nonprofit from DC to work on the project.

Virginia LISC provided a \$318,000 pre-development loan to partner Community Preservation and Development Corporation and staffing support to turn the vacant building into an affordable senior living apartment complex.

Construction began this past spring and is projected to be completed by the end of this year.

### Six Pic

Across the intersection from the corner market sits a vacant storefront that used to be home to the thrift shop Sunny Days.



Highland Park’s youth will Now, Storefront for Community Design, an organization for which Virginia LISC provides capacity support, Art 180 and Saving our Youth are collaborating to turn the former thrift store into a youth programming center for Highland Park children and teens. The center will be named Six Pic and is scheduled to open in February 2017.

# Virginia Supportive Housing Expands Carver Space

Virginia LISC is providing a \$1.6 million loan to Virginia Supportive Housing to acquire property to expand their New Clay House supportive and affordable housing apartments located in Richmond’s Carver neighborhood.

"In 1992, the New Clay House became the first permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless in Virginia, so we are proud to expand services to this vulnerable population," said VSH Interim Director of Development Orlando Artze.

The renovations include expanding the number of apartment from 47 to 80 units, and expanding the size of each unit.

Virginia Supportive Housing also plans to increase parking, create a private courtyard area, expand the community room to include a kitchen and pantry, add computer and telephone rooms and include on-site laundry facilities.

"These are often the most challenging projects to develop and are among the most needed in the community," said Schirra Hayes, VA LISC Loan Officer.



# Church Hill Salon Owner Uses SEED Grant to Expand

Tucked away on an unassuming block up in Church Hill sits Jade Multicultural Salon.

It's wedged next to another commercial space surrounded by rows of housing, making it a true neighborhood walk-in salon, the type of place you would stop in on a Saturday afternoon while running errands.

"I love how in Church Hill you are part of a community," said Jade salon owner, Jaida Cureton.

Cureton is a 2015 SEED award winner. She heard about the SEED program before her business was even located in Church Hill.

"I was friends with the girl who had a salon in this space before I did, and I had been doing some research online and came across the SEED application and encouraged her to apply," said Cureton.

Cureton's salon was located across from the Jefferson Hotel at the time, so she could not apply herself since she was not located in Church Hill.

When her friend moved her salon out of the Church Hill space in 2014, Cureton jumped on the opportunity to move up into the neighborhood.

"Business has been great. All of my previous clients moved with me and Church Hill residents are clients now as well," she said.



Cureton explained that once she moved into the area, she looked up the SEED program application again and applied for the 2015 round. The SEED program provides small business grants to those looking to start or expand a business in Church Hill. In Cureton's case, she wanted to expand her salon.

She received \$5,000 in SEED funding to make renovation improvements to Jade Salon, which included adding another salon chair and mirrors so that she would have another station in the salon. The salon now has three stations instead of two. The added station has allowed Cureton to hire a new employee. She is in the process of conducting interviews with applicants and hopes to have a new full time employee hired within the next couple of weeks.

As part of the renovation she also repainted the salon and added new furniture in the space.

"I received rave reviews from my customers for the changes that were made," she wrote in her SEED final report.

The final item that Cureton used her grant money on was purchasing a new software system for her business finances.

"The new software has been great," she said. "It holds me accountable and keeps me up to date."

Cureton is one of 10 SEED winners in the 2015 round. She is the first salon winner in the program.

"I think it's important that the SEED winners are a diverse group of people with a vast array of different businesses," said Candice Streett, Executive Director of Virginia LISC. "We want to make sure that we are supporting services and amenities that are desired by the Church Hill community, and I think Jade Salon is a great example of that."

The sixth round of the SEED program is slated for January 2017. For more information on the SEED program, please contact SEED Program Coordinator Killeen King at [kking@lisc.org](mailto:kking@lisc.org) or at 804.358.7602 ext.14.

## New Report Proves FOCs Are Successful

A new study shows that LISC's Financial Opportunity Centers are uniquely successful in getting clients on the path to stability.

The independent study by the Economic Mobility Corporation (Mobility) found that FOC participants have greater success in meeting their financial goals than do people in programs offering employment assistance alone. FOC clients are more likely to be employed year-round, to reduce non-asset-related debt and to build positive credit histories than comparison group participants.

The Mobility study, which was made possible by a grant from the Social Innovation Fund, compared data from five FOCs and five publicly-funded workforce centers in Chicago. They looked at outcomes for FOC clients who had been involved with the program for two years and contrasted them with a similar group of job seekers who sought services from the city's workforce centers over a comparable time period.

## One-On-One Financial Coaching

"AD" discovered the Northside Financial Opportunity Center when she came to the Northside Family Learning Center to make a loan payment. AD told Lauren--the Ways to Work loan coordinator--that she was interested in finding a new job, and Lauren introduced AD to the FOC's financial and employment specialists.

From there, AD's story came pouring out: she was an ex-felon who'd gone to prison at 19, just after giving birth to her first child. When she was released from prison, she came back to a broken marriage and a pile of debt racked up by her ex-husband. She was bouncing between minimum-wage jobs because no one wanted to hire a criminal.

AD said she wanted to find a job that paid enough for her to pay off her debts and save money for herself and her children. She was working part-time at the 7-11 convenience store, but her hours were slowly being reduced since she couldn't work overnights since she had children at home.

AD started meeting with the FOC's financial and employment and coaches and quickly began to get her finances in order with their help. She also began searching for a new job. AD had wisely taken GED classes and skills training while she was in prison and was a hard worker.

Her hard-working attitude paid off. The Northside FOC team received a message from AD that she had driven straight from the FOC to a job lead discussed during her session and was hired on the spot as a housekeeper at a hotel.

AD says she loves her job and her wages increased from \$7.25 an hour to \$8.75 an hour, with a 20 percent increase per hour plus more hours each week.

For more information about the Northside FOC, contact the Ways to Work Manager Shanika McClelland at Shanika McClelland [smcclelland@humankind.org](mailto:smcclelland@humankind.org).

The Northside FOC is located at 800 W. Graham Road in the Partnership for Families building.

## Local Advisory Committee

- Chair: Cindy Mims**, VP Community Development Specialist, BB&T
- Vice Chair: Penny McPherson**, VP & Senior Community Development Officer, Wells Fargo Bank
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Citing organizational strength and sustained community impact, [S&P Global Ratings](#) has assigned a 'AA' credit rating to LISC, one of the only CDFIs in the country with a public rating.

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