



# County of Mathews

Department of Planning & Zoning

P.O. Box 839 ▼ Mathews, VA 23109

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## ANSWERS TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM

**Q:** *What is the CDBG Program?*

A: The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is a federally funded grant program that makes funds available to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Q:** *How do localities in Virginia receive these funds?*

A: DHCD makes CDBG funds available through a competitive grant application process to eligible units of local government. Mathews County is an eligible unit of local government.

**Q:** *What criteria are established through this program to receive CDBG funding?*

A: A project that is eligible for funding must address at least one of three national objectives, which are:

1. Activities which benefit low-and moderate-income families
2. Activities which aid in the prevention or elimination of blighting influences, and
3. Activities which address community needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the community.

**Q:** *Which one of these national objectives will be addressed by the proposed Main Street Project?*

A: Mathews Main Street, Inc. and the County are seeking funding for a planning grant and a subsequent construction grant for a Business District Revitalization Project. This type of project addresses the national objective of conducting activities which aid in the prevention or elimination of blighting influences.

**Q:** *What constitutes blight?*

A: Title 36, Article 7 of the *Code of Virginia* defines a blighted area as: "any area that is detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare because commercial, industrial, or



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residential structures or improvements are dilapidated, or deteriorated or because such structures or improvements violate minimum health and safety standards.”

**Q: Are there examples of blight in the Mathews Courthouse Area ?**

A: Yes, there are several examples that could be identified as blight. For example, the presence of broken sidewalks, inadequate storm drainage, building facades that need repair, etc. could be interpreted as blighting influences.

**Q: *Are there are other influences that could be considered blight?***

A. Yes, DHCD also considers economic blight as a contributing factor to disinvestment in a community. For example, the presence of vacant and underutilized buildings and commercial spaces are taken into consideration in making the case that an area may contain blight.

**Q: *Why are Mathews Main Street, Inc. and the County seeking these funds?***

A: As a first step, Mathews Main Street and the County are seeking Planning Grant funding of up to \$35,000 to conduct various surveys/studies and to hire an architect, planning consultant and/or an engineer to develop reports, plans and cost estimates for improvements. The next step would be for the County to apply for a Community Improvement Grant (CIG) to construct the identified improvements. If awarded construction funding through this grant, the County could receive up to \$700,000 to pay for improvements such as building façade improvements, sidewalk repairs, storm drainage improvements, streetscape improvements, etc.

**Q: *After completing the Planning Grant process, will the County receive construction funds?***

A: No, these funds are awarded through a competitive application process and there are no guarantees that this project will be funded.

**Q: *How long will this process take before a decision is made by DHCD on who will be awarded construction funds?***

A: This is a multi-year process that could take three years or more before a CIG is awarded.

**Q: *What is being asked of Mathews County residents as it relates to this process?***



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A: Project stakeholders, which includes residents, property owners, business owners, County staff and elected officials are asked to support this effort, respond to surveys and participate in the planning process.