

CHURCH HILL CENTRAL



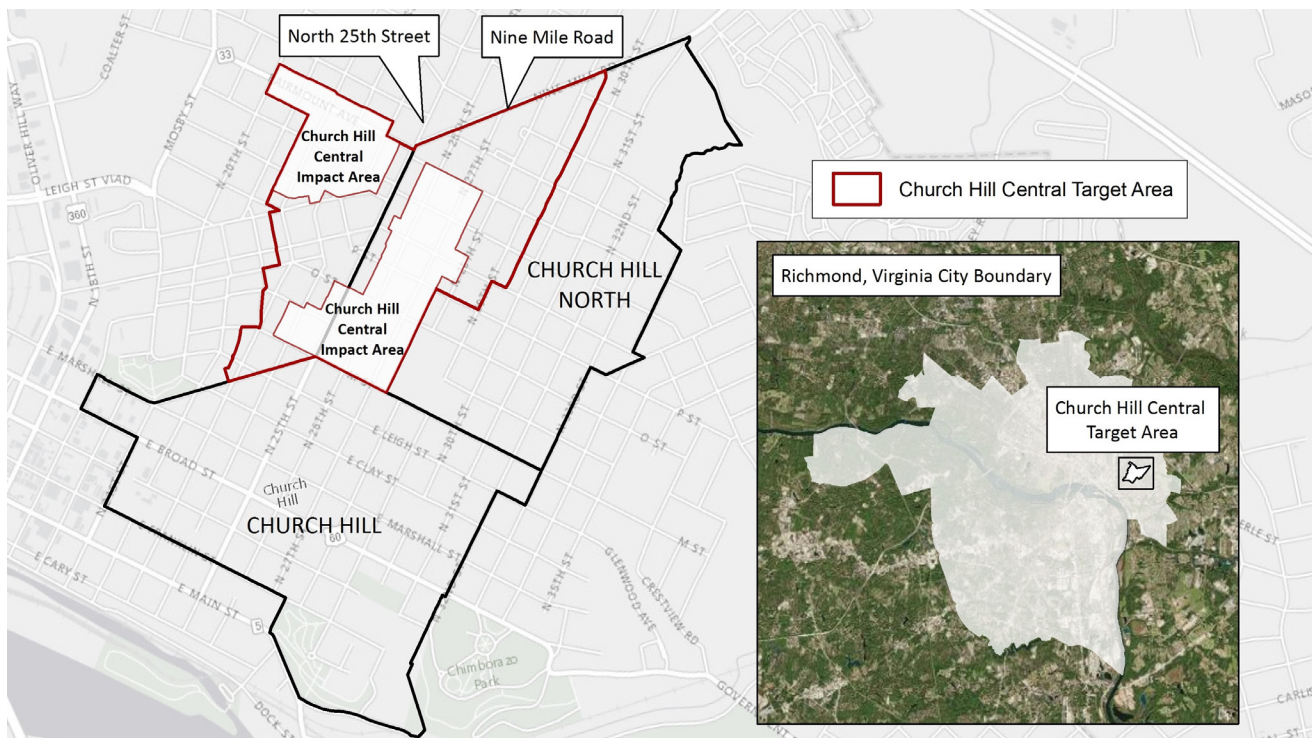
Neighborhoods in Bloom Retrospective

NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

Church Hill Central, a target area defined by the City of Richmond for Neighborhoods in Bloom (NiB), lies adjacent to the Church Hill neighborhood and partially inside the Church Hill North neighborhood boundary (see Map 1). Church Hill and Church Hill North share a common history dating back to 1737. Both neighborhoods were formally annexed by the City following the Civil War, and approximately 75 percent of the residential buildings in Church Hill and Church Hill North were constructed between 1867 and 1900.

Historians describe the 20th century as a period of decline for Church Hill and Church Hill North, as the City experienced a residential migration to its western boundaries and the adjacent counties. After several decades of population loss and worsening neighborhood conditions, Church Hill neighborhood revitalization began in earnest in the 1980s when the Historic Richmond Foundation began purchasing homes to resell to private homeowners for restoration. Through this effort, over 200 properties were renovated from 1983 to 1996, primarily by first-time homeowners. The Church Hill Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

Map 1: Neighborhoods in Bloom Central Impact and Target Areas – Church Hill Central

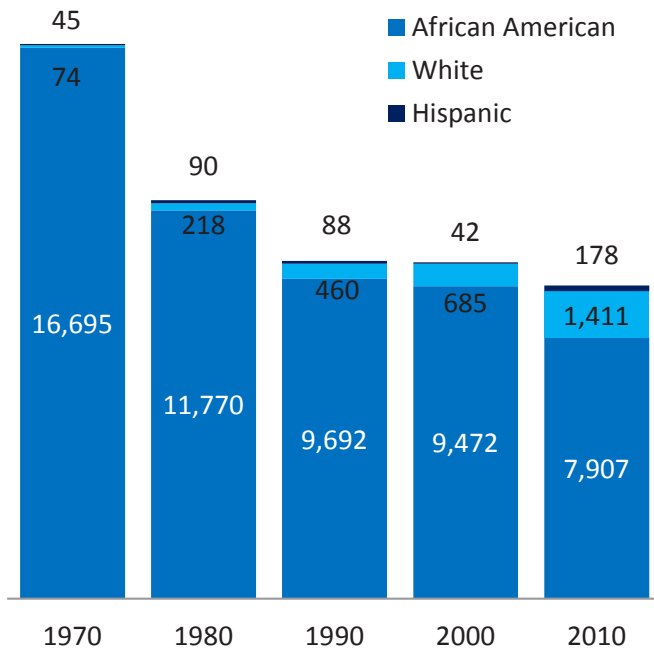


When NiB began in the fall of 1999, Church Hill North had a high concentration of poverty and vacant properties. A steady influx of private investment in Church Hill — coupled with nonprofit housing investment in Church Hill North — made the neighborhood a promising candidate for NiB investment. During the original NiB program (FY2000 to FY2005), City investments of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funding totaling almost \$2 million were concentrated in the Church Hill Central impact areas. The original NiB program also provided expanded city services, including increased policing and infrastructure investment, to the Church Hill Central target area.¹

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

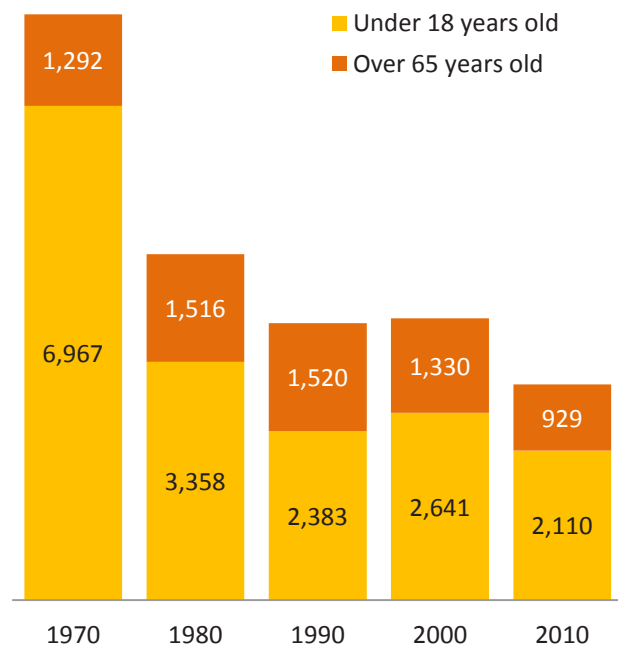
In the 1970s, Church Hill Central experienced a population loss of over 4,000 individuals, as well as demographic changes that included a 1.8 percentage point decrease in the total number of African American residents and a 13.6 percentage point decrease in the number of residents under the age of 18 (see Figures 1 and 2, respectively). The area continued to experience an increase in the number of non-African American residents every decade from 1980 until the first full year of NiB implementation in 2000, but it remained a majority African American area with approximately 92.9 percent African American residents in 2000. In the 2000s, the number of white residents more than doubled, and by 2010, 83.3 percent of residents were African American and 14.9 percent were white.

Figure 1: Racial Composition in Church Hill Central's Surrounding Census Tracts, 1970-2010



Note: Sample only includes individuals who self-identify as one race.
Source: GeoLytics, Neighborhood Change Database (1970-2010).

Figure 2: Age Composition in Church Hill Central's Surrounding Census Tracts, 1970-2010

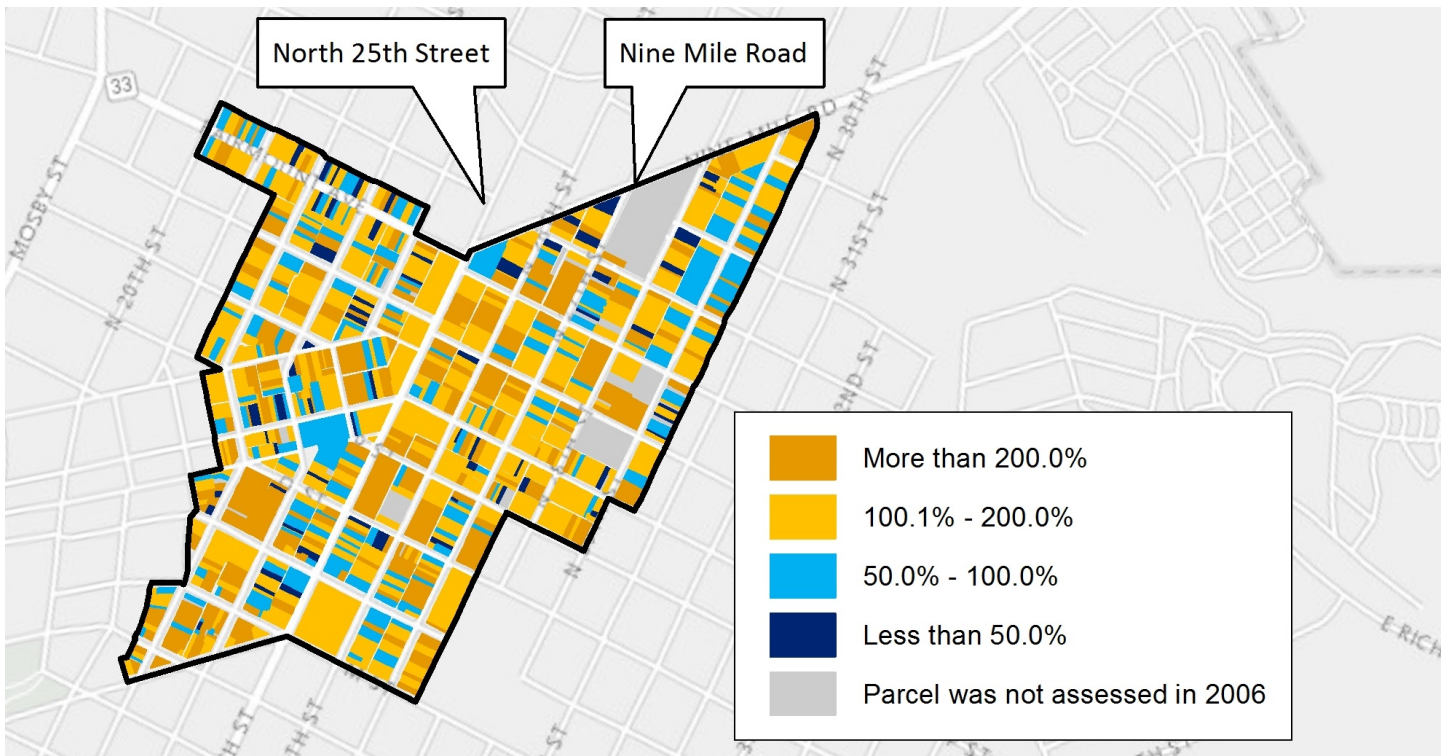


Source: GeoLytics, Neighborhood Change Database (1970-2010).

Note: When measuring the investment and impact of NiB in the early 2000s, the City and external researchers defined the Church Hill Central measurement area as the census tracts that contained the Church Hill Central target area. This profile also uses that definition, and as such, the measurement area includes the following 2010 census tracts: 51760020300, 51760020400, 51760020600, and 51760020700.



Map 2: 2016 Residential Assessment Value as a Percent of 2006 Residential Assessment Value in Church Hill Central

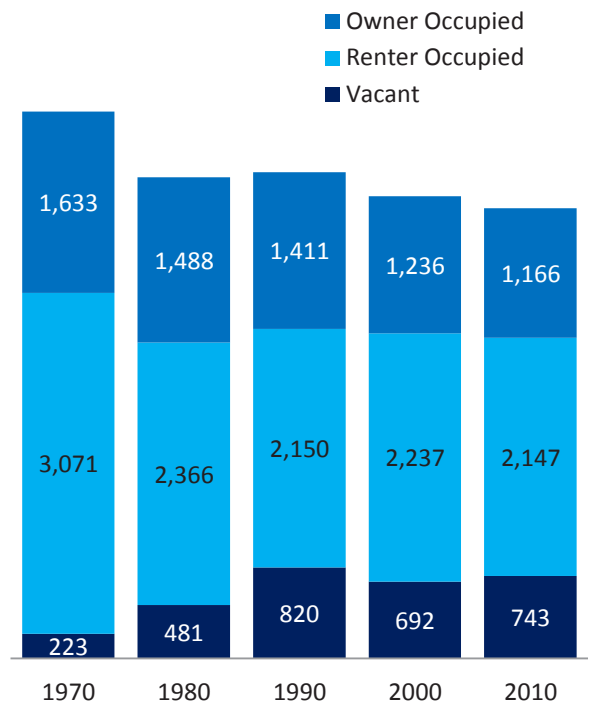


Source: City of Richmond Assessment Data, FY2006-FY2016.

The majority of housing units in Church Hill Central have consistently been renter-occupied from 1970 to 2010 (see Figure 3). Over this time period, the percentage of homeowner-occupied units topped out at 34.3 percent in 1980. Decennial census data indicate that the homeownership rate in Church Hill Central has fallen more recently, with 28.7 percent of occupants owning their homes as of the most recent census in 2010. Church Hill Central has also experienced persistent blight, with the number of vacant housing units peaking in 1990 at 820 units.

Of the 1,103 Church Hill Central residential land parcels that were assessed both in FY2006 — immediately following the official end of the NiB program — and in FY2016, 817 (74.1 percent) experienced an increase in nominal assessment value (see Map 2). Of these, 318 parcels (28.8 percent) more than doubled their 2006 assessed value by 2016. Five parcels (0.5 percent) experienced no change in nominal assessment value over the 10 year time period and 281 parcels (25.5 percent) had a lower nominal dollar value in FY2016 than in FY2006.

Figure 3: Housing Occupancy in Church Hill Central, 1970-2010



Source: GeoLytics, Neighborhood Change Database (1970-2010).

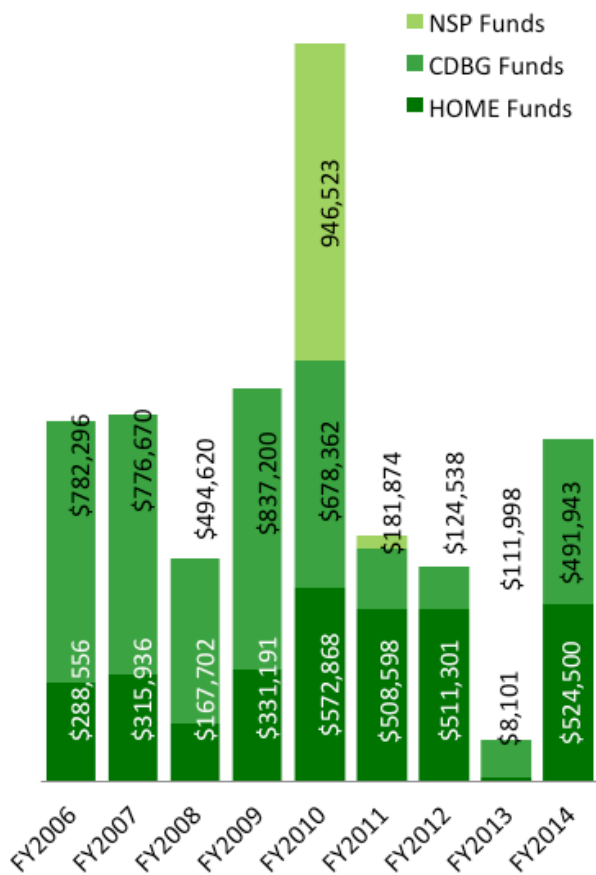


INVESTMENT AFTER NEIGHBORHOODS IN BLOOM

Public Investment

In the years since the end of the NiB program, the City has continued to direct CDBG and HOME funding, as well as funding from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), to Church Hill Central. Approximately 21.7 percent of all City CDBG and HOME funding from FY2006 to FY2014 was spent on Church Hill Central revitalization efforts. Post-NiB local government investment in Church Hill Central was highest in FY2010 with a total of approximately \$2.2 million and lowest in FY2013 with a total of approximately \$120,099 (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Local Government Investment in Church Hill Central (FY2006-FY2014)



Source: City of Richmond CAPER Reports, FY2006-FY2014.

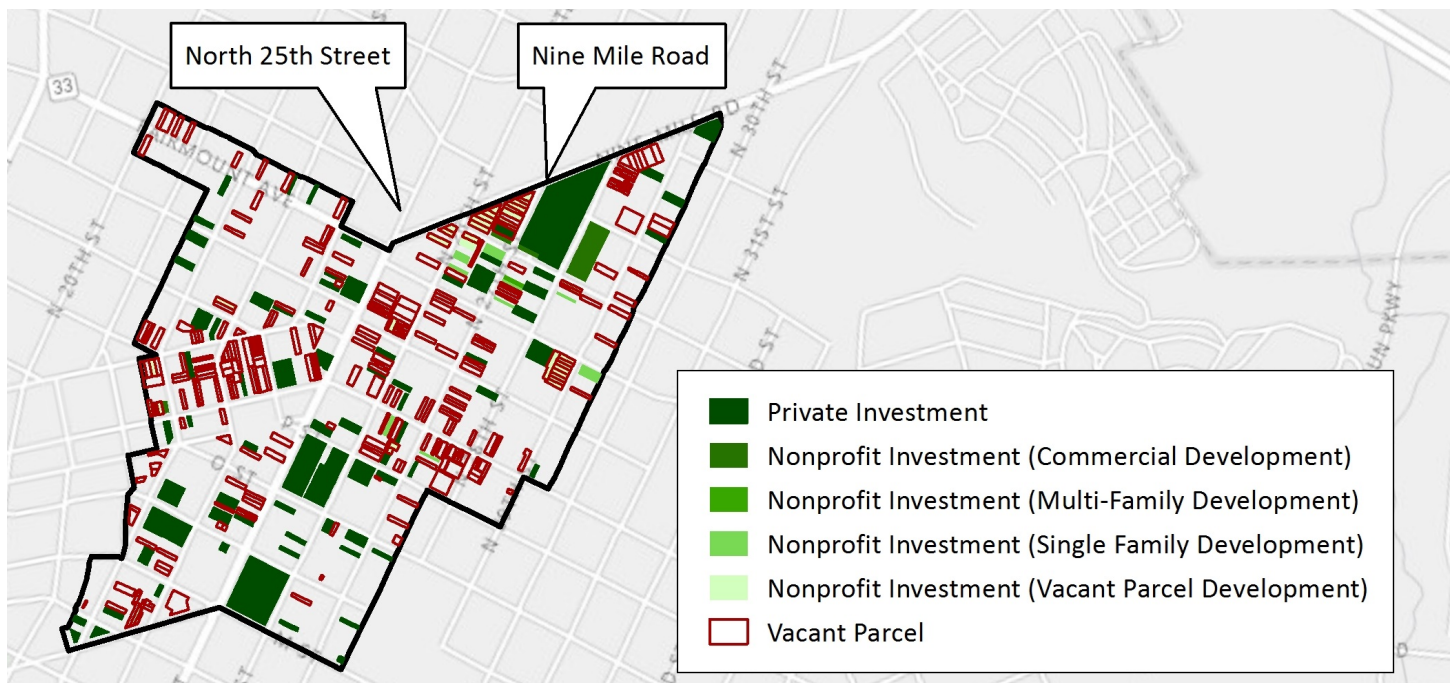
Nonprofit Investment

Numerous nonprofit organizations operated in Church Hill Central during the original NiB program, including the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA), Better Housing Coalition (BHC), project:HOMES (formerly ElderHomes), Interfaith Housing Corporation, Housing Opportunities Made Equal (H.O.M.E.) and the New Visions Civic Association. These organizations invested in Church Hill Central variously through the construction of new housing units, the rehabilitation of existing units and the provision of housing counseling services. In total, nonprofit development groups invested an estimated \$1 million in 59 Church Hill Central properties from 2006 to 2015 (see Map 3), and 44 of these properties experienced property value increases over the same time period. H.O.M.E. provided approximately \$690,350 in down payment assistance to 74 Church Hill Central homeowners during this time period.

As of 2016, 26.0 percent of the parcels in the Church Hill Central NiB target area were vacant, which is just over twice the overall vacancy rate in the city (see Map 3).² The 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates indicate that 47.8 percent of residents in the census tracts containing the Church Hill Central target area are housing-cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs.³ While this figure is only a few percentage points higher than the 45.9 percent of housing cost-burdened residents citywide, it may be indicative of a persistent need for affordable housing in the area. Poverty rates for Church Hill Central as given by the 2015 ACS 5-year estimates indicate disparity between the census tracts that comprise the target area, with tract-level poverty rates ranging from zero percent to 61.5 percent.



Map 3: Nonprofit Investment and Vacant Parcels in Church Hill Central (FY2006-FY2015)



Note: This map quantifies investment based on property sales and renovations, and thus may underestimate reinvestment.
 Source: City of Richmond Property Sale Data, Building Permit Data and Land Use Data, FY2006-FY2015.

CONTINUING TO BLOOM: CHURCH HILL CENTRAL TODAY

Neighborhood conditions in Church Hill and Church Hill North continue to be distinctly different. Beginning around 2014, Church Hill gained national recognition for its revitalization in general, and for its burgeoning restaurant scene in particular.⁴ Meanwhile, Church Hill North has not become self-sustaining and has continued to receive concentrated public and nonprofit investment. Since 2011, the City has pursued its Church Hill North East End Revitalization initiative, which includes plans for a 300-unit mixed-income residential development and the development of a full-service grocery in an area long

described as a food desert.⁵ In 2014, local nonprofit Bike Walk RVA brought the national Better Block Foundation to Church Hill North for the Church Hill North Better Block Project, which temporarily transformed a block on North 25th Street with provisional bike lanes and pop-up shops. Although the reinvented block was temporary, numerous organizations including Groundwork RVA, Bon Secours Health System and the Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) have continued to work for more permanent change in the area by investing in local small businesses and funding structural improvements.

Cover photo by Emily Wavering

1 David Collett and Isabel M. Smith (1996), "Church Hill North Application to the National Register of Historic Places."

2 The American Community Survey 2015 5-Year Estimates for the city of Richmond indicate a vacancy rate of 12.3 percent.

3 The share of the population that is housing-cost burdened may be a function of housing supply, housing prices, household incomes and personal preferences.

4 "10 Best: Up-and-coming neighborhoods around the USA," USA Today, May 7, 2014; "Shopping and Eating Amid History in Richmond, Va." The Washington Post, November 19, 2014.

5 "Church Hill North Revitalization Community Unit Plan – Preliminary Plan: The Old Armstrong High School" Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, 2014; "Grocery store planned for Church Hill 'food desert,'" Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 17, 2016.

