



Virginia First Cities Benefits and Priorities and Accomplishments

- VFC advocates for the unique needs of core cities
- Core cities are burdened with poverty, joblessness, at-risk populations, older infrastructure, social issues and high fiscal stress
- Genesis - A loose coalition of core cities working together to promote blight legislation since 1999 (first year resulted in 14 pro City-requested bills passed during that session).
- Realized a lot more could be accomplished focusing on a city-specific agenda and battling policy inequities together
- VFC is proactive, providing studied solutions to city-specific problems, inequitable policies, and funding levels
- VML is a complimentary partner to VFC--both are needed
- VFC is a major coalition builder, working with others for needed change including counties, rural representatives, education, housing and transportation advocates

VFC PRIORITIES

- Education Funding for At-Risk Children (major priority that has not been cut due in great part to our urging)
 - Pre-K (additional funds)
- Protecting and Enhancing Funding for Police Departments (599 funding – major advocacy this year and last – no additional cuts)
- Redevelopment and Housing
 - Enterprise Zones
 - Blight Reduction (numerous bills adopted including the recently passed derelict structures bill)
 - Brownfield Funding (VFC is advocating funding for needed site assessments without which development is stalled)
 - Housing Trust Fund
- Urban Transportation Funding
 - Street Maintenance (VFC has won millions more in street maintenance \$ after lobbying for equitable funding practices)
 - Transit - moving people to jobs in and around cities is a priority (we have successfully advocated for additional funds for transit)
- Improving Health and Human Services (Advocating for unique service delivery methods to enhance services and ease burdens on core cities)
- Equitable Tax Policies/Service Responsibilities (VFC has requested and won a Constitutional amendment beneficial to urban area development)
- Urban Policy – VFC advocated and played a major role in the first Urban Policy Report Issued by the State – report was released at VFC's Annual Meeting June '08 in Lynchburg

VFC Major Accomplishments

- **Visibility/Credibility - * Elevated city issues in policy debates. * VFC now recognized by legislative and executive branches of state government. * Urban Policy Task Force Report – First ever adopted; * Governor appointed a high ranking Urban Policy Administrator at VFC request.**
- **Transportation – * Initiated more equitable city/town street maintenance funding. Ensured an additional \$15 million in FY 07 and \$25 million in FY 08. * Initiated VDOT “First Cities Urban Construction Management Program”. * Secured city-friendly street standards and industrial road access policies. * Secured additional statewide transit funding in 2007.**
- **Redevelopment/Housing - *Expanded Regional Industrial Facilities Act legislation statewide for development;* Put constitutional amendment for redevelopment on ballot – passed 3:1 statewide; * Housing Rehab Zones legislation passed; * Improved Enterprise Zone laws for cities; * Strengthened anti-blight laws and derelict structures; * Worked with VHDA for mixed-use projects; * Helped enact “brownfield” legislation; * Reduced requirements for selling tax delinquent property**
- **Education - *Successfully advocated against any cuts to At-Risk Education Funding 2010; Successfully Advocated for Hold Harmless for the Local Composite Index \$36.7 million in savings for VFC in FY11 and \$18 million in FY12; * Successfully advocated against House Block Granting At-Risk Education funding saving \$33 million in FY11 for VFC; *Protected all forms of At-Risk Education funding on state level (particularly in 2008 and 2009); * Successfully Advocated for Additional Pre-K funding**
- **Public Safety - * Successfully advocated to limit cuts to 599 funding and protected the existence of the program 2010**