

Oliver City Gets A Lift — At Last State Grants Secured

Editor's Note: Part One in a series on the revitalization of Oliver City

By KELBY HARTSON
Times-Democrat Staff Writer

After a three-year struggle, Warrenton officials are taking the first steps toward making good on their promise to revitalize the Oliver City neighborhood.

Warrenton annexed the neighborhood into the town limits in 1992 with an oath to fix it up, in an area where some residents lack indoor plumbing and use outhouses. Since then, the town has unsuccessfully applied for federal funds to revitalize the area two years in a row.

Then, in the spring of 1995, the town's third application for a Community Development Block Grant was approved. Citing that the "third time's a charm," town officials began plans to use the \$549,000 in funds to extend sewer lines to Oliver City and to rehabilitate some of the homes there.



Times-Democrat Staff Photo/Heather Hall

See Oliver, Page A-6 **Oliver City residents have waited several years for sewer service and other upgrades.**

► Oliver

From Page A-1

"It's been three years now we've been trying to get it going," said Planning Director Ray Ocel.

After the sewer line goes in, the town can begin rehabilitating the ten houses that meet the grant's mandatory low- to moderate-income levels, said Patty Knox, the town's community development assistant. Construction on the sewer line is expected to begin this summer.

Many of the Oliver City residents have lived in the neighborhood their entire lives, and in many cases these families are following generations that have resided there, Ms. Knox said.

Despite the fact that this project

will result in upheaval and inconvenience, Ms. Knox said the neighbors have been extremely supportive. Roads in Oliver City will need to be torn up to lay the sewer pipes. Some of the people who live in the houses being rehabilitated might have to move out for a while while the work is done.

The Oliver City residents have gone out of their way to help town employees throughout this project, Ms. Knox said, adding that it has been a treat working with the people there.

"The great thing about this neighborhood is they're a tight-knit community," Ms. Knox said, smiling.

"They're not only supportive because it will help them, but they're also supportive of their neighbors," she added. "They look out for each other."

Though the project consists of the \$549,000 grant and \$134,000 in town contributions — relatively small in comparison to some of the town's other projects — much time and attention has been devoted to Oliver City. "I have an entire file drawer just for this project," Ms. Knox noted.

Councilman Robert Walker, who grew up in the neighborhood, said he is thrilled to see the project becoming a reality.

"It's going to be great for that neighborhood," he said. With some of the houses that are run-down or in need of modern conveniences, Walker said, "the people just can't afford to renovate them."

After years of waiting, Walker said, "the people will really appreciate it."

**Photocopied from
the June 26, 1996
edition of the
Fauquier
Times-Democrat.**