



CHAPTER 2

High-Quality Places

Vision: Richmond is a well-designed city of communities interconnected by a network of Nodes, public facilities, and open spaces providing services to residents, businesses, and visitors.

As the Capital of the Commonwealth, Richmond leads the region in high-quality business and residential growth. Richmond's unique neighborhoods and districts, both historical and new, support a diversity of uses, the equitable accommodation of all phases of life, and the efficient use of land to promote sustainable and healthy lifestyles.



Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1: Complete Neighborhoods



Establish a city of complete neighborhoods that have access to Nodes connected by major corridors in a gridded street network.

Existing Context

Many of Richmond's neighborhoods are growing in population.

Richmond is largely a city of single-family neighborhoods with 33% of its real estate devoted to single-family houses, as shown in Figure 16. Neighborhoods are served and connected to each other by commercial corridors and mixed-use centers.

Richmond has created entirely new residential areas in the past 20 years.

The population has significantly increased in areas of the city that previously had nearly no residents. These parts of the city in particular, which are not traditional single-family neighborhoods, account for the largest share of Richmond's growth over the last 20 years, with the emergence of 18-hour neighborhoods in Downtown, Shockoe Bottom, Manchester, and Scott's Addition.

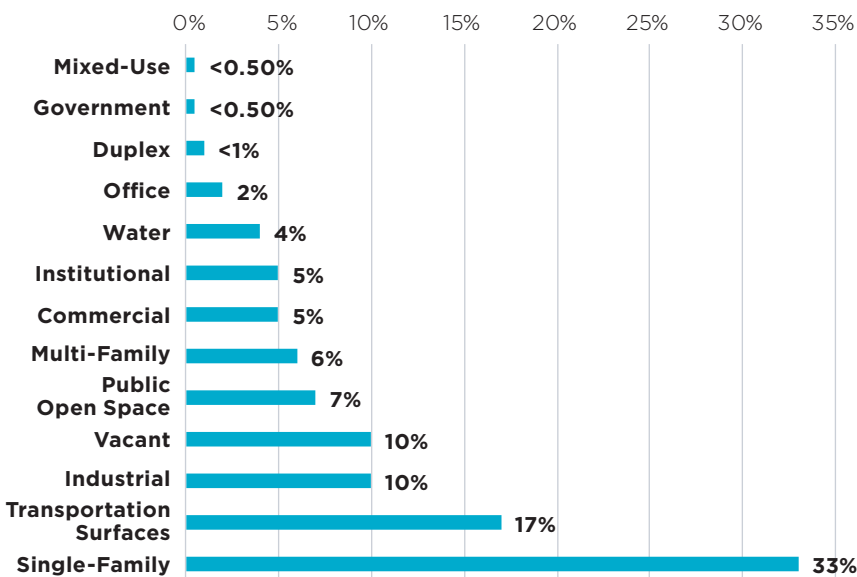


FIGURE 16 // Existing Land Use Land Area

Source: City of Richmond's Assessor's Office

From 1950 to 2000, a great deal of Richmond's single-family neighborhoods experienced a decrease in population that resulted in the demolition of many homes and the abandonment of structures.

However, since 2000, many of the previously abandoned homes and vacant lots have been redeveloped. The population has increased in Richmond's urban neighborhoods, such as the Fan, the Museum District, and Church Hill as people across the country are seeking walkable, mixed-use

neighborhoods with many amenities nearby. The population has also steadily increased in Richmond streetcar suburbs, which feature slightly larger homes on larger lots, such as Bellevue, Barton Heights, Ginter Park, Woodland Heights, Spring Hill, and others. Even with this increase in population, several neighborhoods still have many abandoned structures and vacant lots, such as Barton Heights, Washington Park, Swansboro, and more (please see Figure 17).

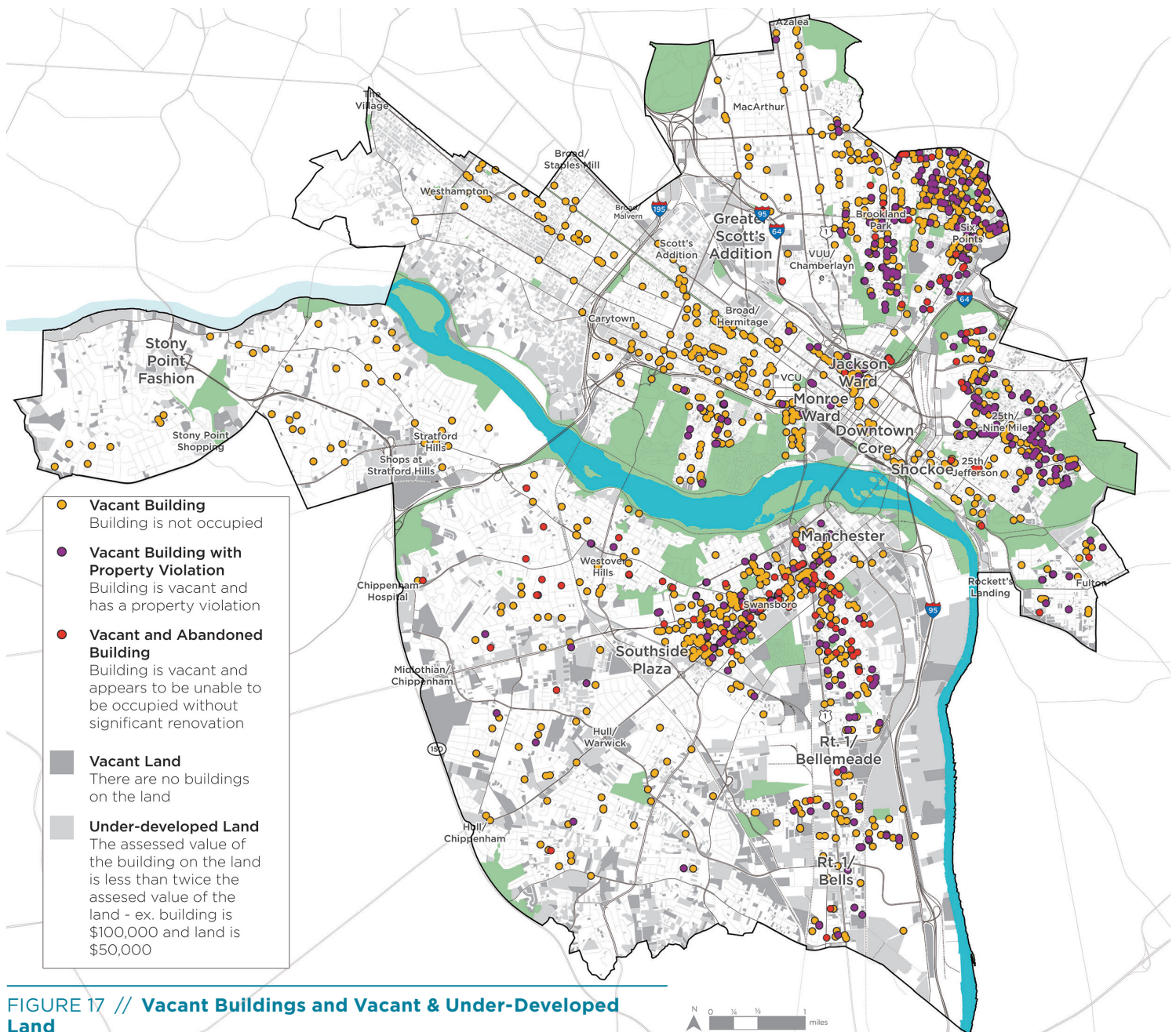


FIGURE 17 // Vacant Buildings and Vacant & Under-Developed Land

Source: City of Richmond, Planning and Development Review, Assessor's Office (2019)

Richmond is less dense than it was in 1950.

Richmond has a total residential density of about 3,500 people per square mile (sq. mi.). Richmond's population density in 2019 was less than it was in 1950 (5,800 people/sq. mi.)—even when the area annexed in 1970 is removed. Richmond is slightly less dense than cities of comparable population and comparable land area (please see Table 2).

Richmond's Zoning Ordinance is evolving to allow more mixed-use, form-based development.

The current Zoning Ordinance was adopted in the mid-1970s and was a single-use, or Euclidean zoning document, meaning that it sought to separate uses, allowing only residential in some areas, and allowing only commercial and office in others. Single-use zoning across the nation has been shown to lead to sprawling auto-dependent communities. Due to changes in housing preference and a concern for reducing the negative effects of climate change, individuals are increasingly drawn to mixed-use, transit-supporting, walkable neighborhoods. The Zoning Ordinance has been amended in recent years to allow for more mixed-use districts that allow a combination of uses, with fewer requirements for parking and more focus on building form (size and shape). This was evident in the adoption of the Pulse Corridor Plan (2017) and subsequent rezonings of Scott's Addition and Monroe Ward to support the Pulse Corridor Plan.

TABLE 2 // 2016 Density Comparison

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2016 ACS 1-Year Estimates

City	Population	Size (mi ²)	Density (ppl/ mi ²)	Population change ('10-'16)
Washington, D.C.	681,170	61.0	11,167	13.20%
Minneapolis	413,645	54.0	7,660	7.51%
Pittsburgh	303,624	55.4	5,481	-0.68%
Norfolk	245,115	54.1	4,531	0.95%
Richmond	223,170	62.5	3,571	9.28%

Note: These cities were chosen as comparative cities because they are a similar geographic size as Richmond and they do not have the ability to annex land.



5,800

people per square mile in 1950

4,032

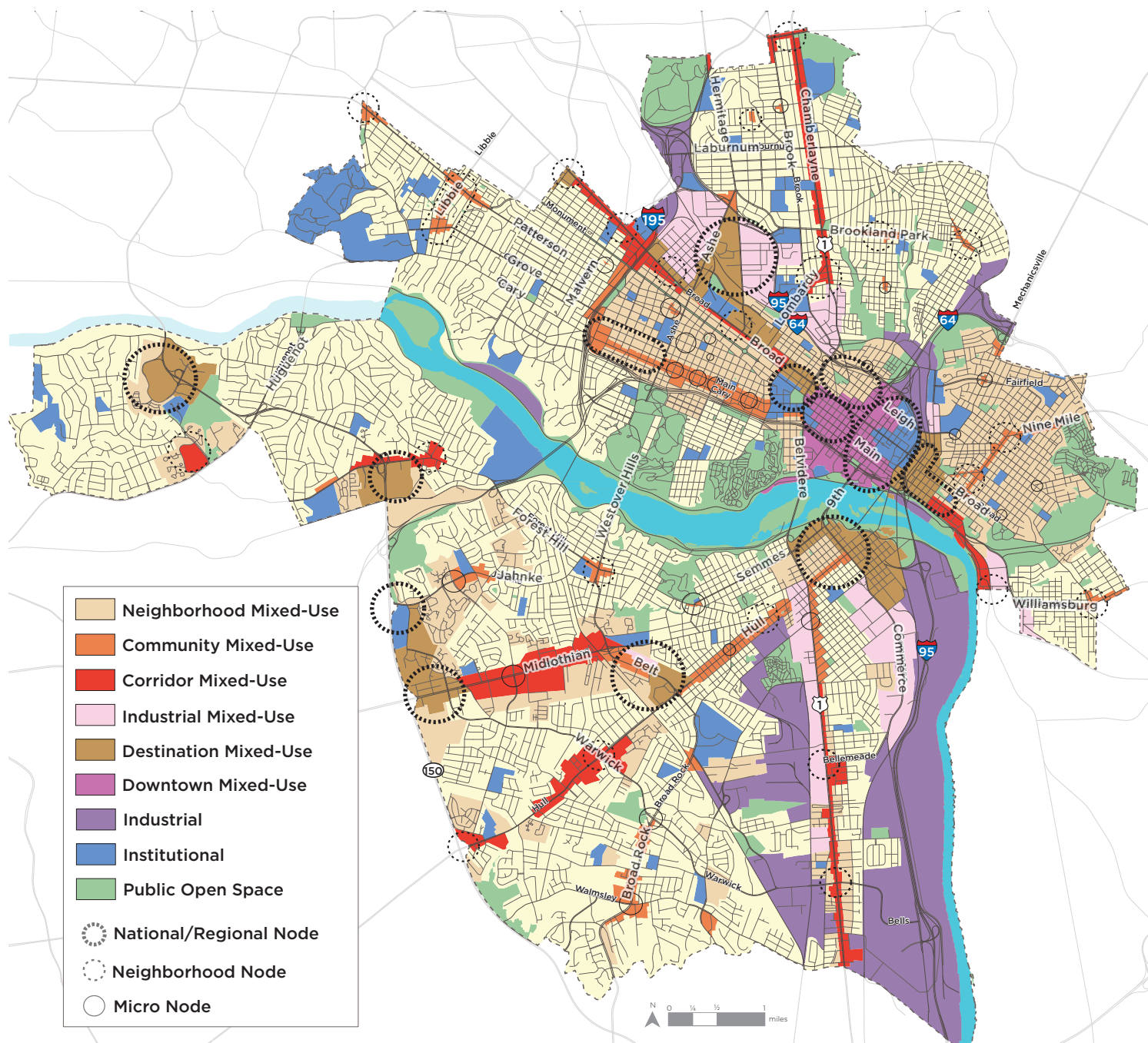
people per square mile in 2018
(in the same land area)



Objective 1.1

Rezone the city in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan, as shown in Figure 18 and described in Chapter 1.

- Re-write the Zoning Ordinance to achieve the goals set forth in *Richmond 300*.
- Prioritize rezoning parcels in Priority Growth Nodes (see Figure 19 for locations of the priority growth Nodes).
- Evaluate zoning districts in historical areas that were developed prior to the advent of zoning regulations to ensure new construction similar in form to the historical context is allowed (see Goal 3).
- Reduce the Special Use Permit (SUP) cost for small commercial uses to allow small businesses to open in small spaces (see Goal 11).
- Rezone parcels in Nodes with design requirements that encourage walking, such as providing sidewalks, street trees, shade structures, pedestrian-level lighting, street furniture, and street-level windows and doors; prohibiting parking facing the street; and limiting driveway entrances. Descriptions of the Priority Growth Nodes are found starting on page 26 and descriptions of the other National/Regional Nodes and Neighborhood Nodes are on page C-1 (see Goal 4 and Goal 8).
- Rezone to allow more housing types throughout the city (see Goal 14).



Objective 1.2

Develop and adopt small area plans for areas that require more examination.

- a. Develop a Coliseum Framework Plan.
- b. Develop small area plans for the Priority Growth Nodes at Shockoe, the Southside Plaza Area and Stony Point to evaluate and suggest specific opportunities for placemaking, connectivity, mixed-income housing, economic development, and open space.
- c. Develop a detailed corridor plans for Commerce Road and for Route 1 with specific recommendations on how to transform the road into a Great Street with amenities such as buildings addressing the street, a greenway (the Fall Line Trail), street trees, lighting, and other amenities and encourage redevelopment and business growth.

Objective 1.3

Support the growth of jobs and housing in Nodes by using placemaking, clustering community-serving facilities at Nodes, and prioritizing infrastructure projects that encourage multi-modal accessibility to and from Nodes, as shown in Figure 19.

- a. Coordinate public and private investments to create innovative mixed-used developments.
- b. Co-locate, consolidate, and modernize community-serving public facilities, and locate them in or near Nodes (see Goal 2).

- c. Utilize public art and the public realm to create unique features within Nodes (see Goal 4).
- d. Increase the number of transportation options viable at each Node by utilizing a Complete Streets approach to allocating space in the right-of-way (see Node descriptions for future connections improvements and Goals 6-10).
- e. Develop marketing plans, including signage, graphics, and branding, to differentiate the Nodes from one another and retain, create, and attract/retain businesses (see Goals 11-13).
- f. Implement housing strategies that increase housing at all income levels along corridors and at Nodes (see Goal 14).
- g. Develop new parks at Nodes and connect them via greenways to one another (Goal 8 and Goal 17).

Objective 1.4

Maintain and improve primarily residential areas by increasing their linkages to Nodes, corridors, parks, and open space, and maintaining high-quality design standards.

- a. Implement urban design and architecture strategies that maintain and enhance the unique character of Richmond's residential districts (see Goals 3-4).
- b. Implement transportation strategies that increase access among residential areas, Nodes, and corridors (see Goals 6-10).

FUTURE OF SHOPPING CENTERS

In 2020, retail uses in varying forms including big box shopping centers, strip commercial centers, and malls compose approximately 600 acres of the city. As the retail landscape of the country changes with increased online shopping, the future of these commercial centers must be explored. The goals and objectives of *Richmond 300* encourage the redevelopment of these centers in a more urban form with less emphasis on parking and more flexibility to incorporate multiple uses. As *Richmond 300* is implemented, the future of shopping centers and the tools to revitalize and support these centers must be explored.



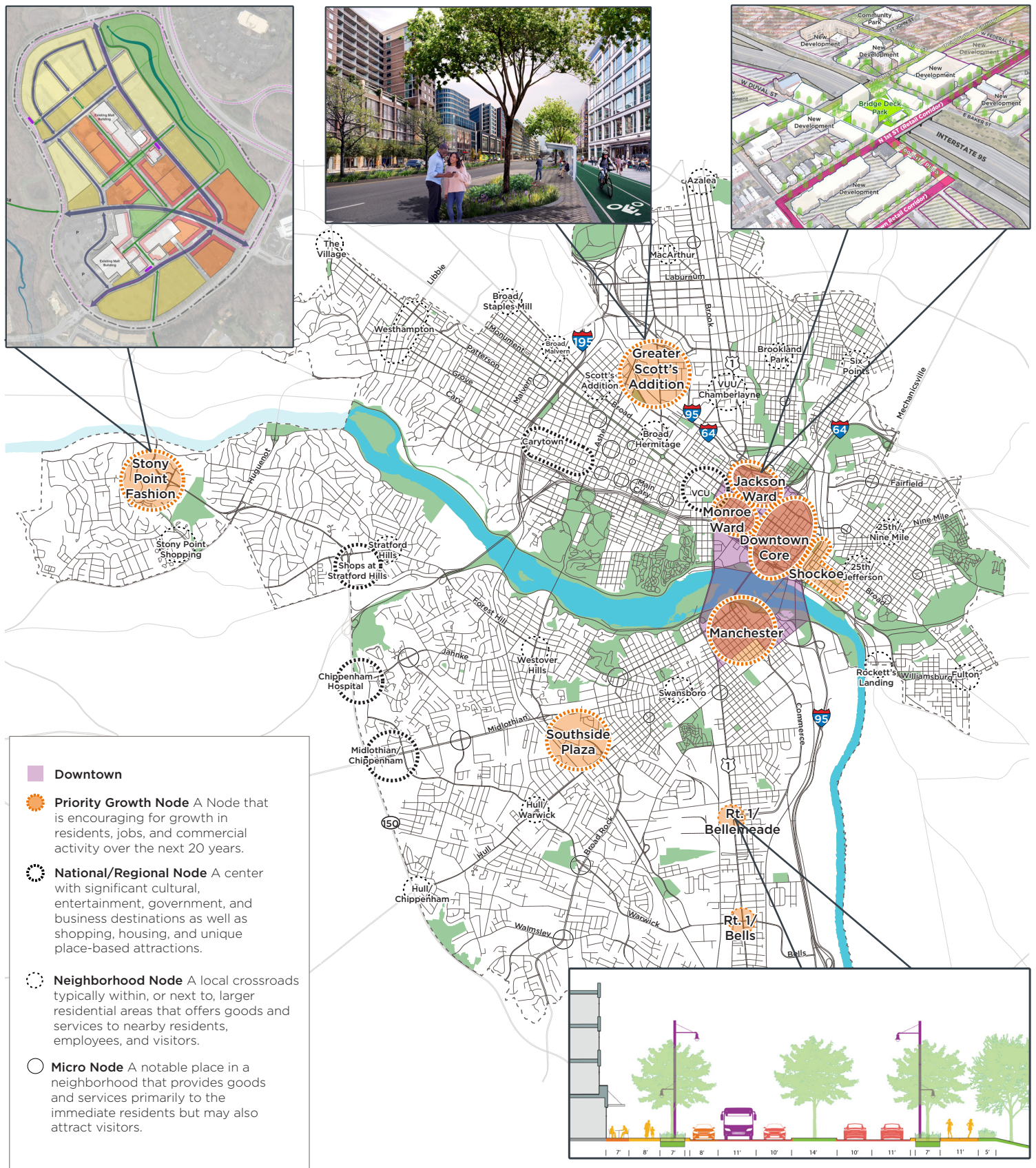


FIGURE 19 // **Nodes Map with Illustrations**

Nodes in Richmond are of two types: 1) places that can accommodate additional growth in jobs and population or 2) places where major activity exists today and should be preserved/enhanced. Descriptions of the Priority Growth Nodes are found starting on page 26 and descriptions of the other National/Regional Nodes and Neighborhood Nodes are on page C-1.

Goal 2: City-Owned Assets



Efficiently manage City-owned land and facilities.

Existing Context

The City of Richmond owns 4,400 acres of land.

The City of Richmond operates a wide range of facilities that serve the public good, providing services to residents both directly and indirectly. The City owns 4,400 acres of real estate, making it one of the largest landowners in the city, as shown in the hatched shade in Figure 20. The management of this land is under various City departments and includes:

- 100s of individual facilities, ranging from City Hall to facilities that support various City department functions;
- 21 community centers providing after-school programming, adult continuing education, athletic fields, swimming pools, and other enrichment activities;
- 25 fire stations and support facilities that support the City's Fire Department and provide fire-fighting services to the City's residents and businesses;
- 4 police precincts and support facilities, including five police stations, in order to facilitate public safety and deter crime;
- 8 branch libraries and one main library located throughout the city that provide access to printed and digital resources for all Richmonders; and
- 47 public schools, including 27 elementary schools, seven middle schools, eight high schools, and several specialty schools.

The Capital Improvement Budget must align with the Master Plan.

There is limited funding to maintain the City's existing facilities and to build new facilities; however, the City's Biennial Capital Improvement Budget outlines priorities for incrementally addressing facility needs. Per the City Charter, the Capital Improvement Budget must align with the Master Plan. Since 2001, when the last city-wide Master Plan was adopted, the City has completed many projects, including the renovation of all eight library branches, the construction of four new schools, the exterior re-cladding of City Hall, the construction of a new Justice Center, and countless other projects. Given that many of the City's facilities are over 50 years old, new facility needs will continue to arise. Furthermore, as the population shifts, the City must incrementally adjust services to serve the changing geography of its residents and businesses.

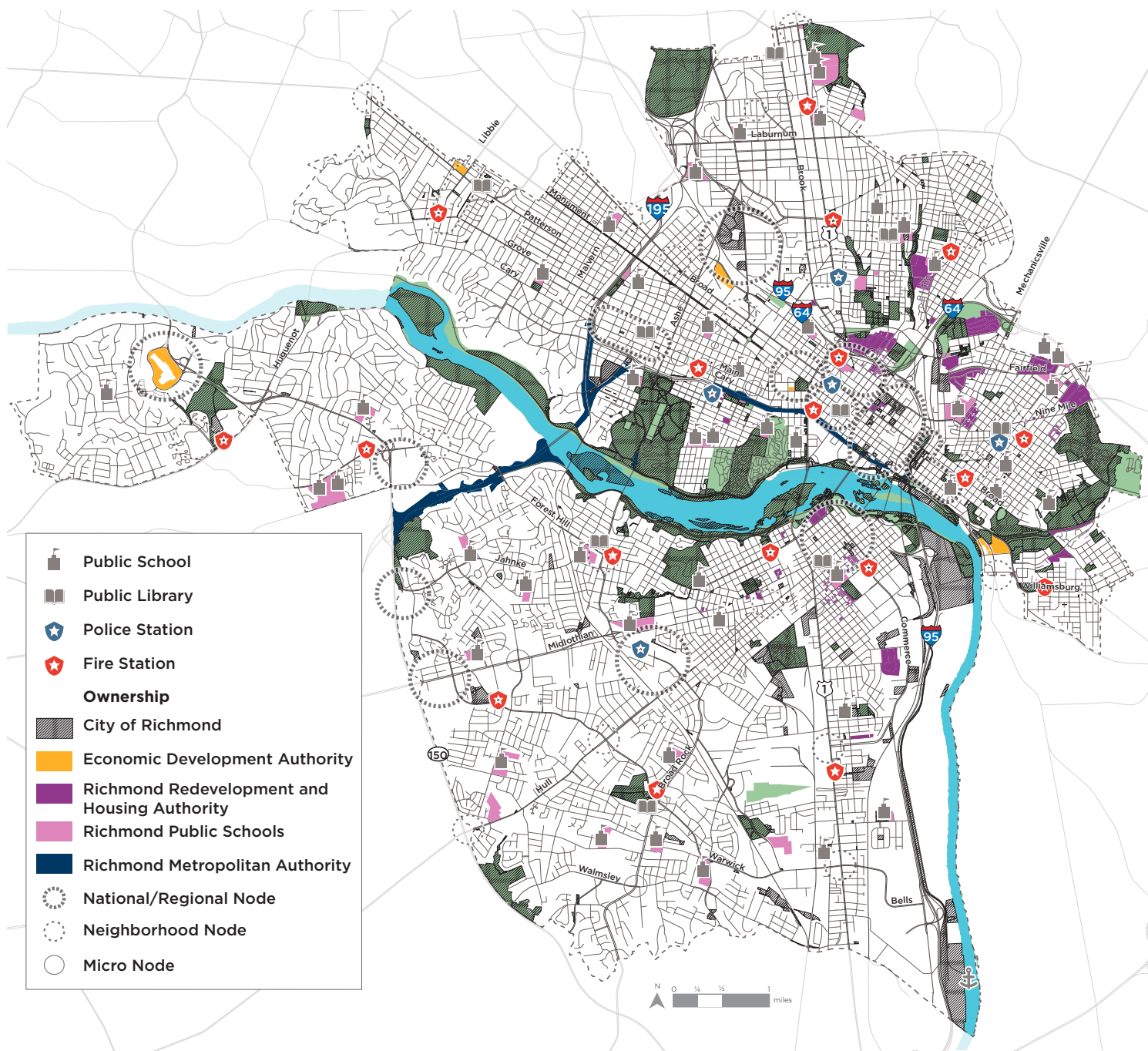


FIGURE 20 // City Buildings, City-Owned Land, and Other Key Ownership

Objective 2.1

Align new facilities and improve existing City-owned facilities with the Future Land Use Plan.

- a. Develop and maintain a facility assessment inventory of all City-owned facilities to track the longevity and maintenance of major systems (building envelope, plumbing, security, HVAC, roof, etc.) and plan for repair and replacement.
- b. Analyze police precincts and fire stations within the context of the Future Land Use Plan and determine whether there are needs for creating, relocating, and/or closing police and fire stations to align with population projections and meet minimum response times.
- c. Develop a schools facility master plan based within the context of the Future Land Use Plan to determine whether there are needs for creating, relocating, and/or closing schools to align with population projections.
- d. Finish implementing the Libraries Master Plan by renovating the Main Library, and then explore creating a new Libraries Master Plan to plan facilities improvements for the next generation of library users and incorporating other community-serving services.
- e. Develop a parks and community facilities master plan based within the context of the Future Land Use Plan that seeks to ensure all Richmonders live within a 10-minute walk of a park (see Goal 17).
- f. Implement programs to improve the energy efficiency of City-owned buildings (see strategies in Thriving Environment).

Objective 2.2:

Create a real estate acquisition and disposition strategy, prioritizing increasing jobs, housing, access to parks, and other basic needs of low-income and traditionally marginalized communities.

- a. Create and implement a real estate disposition strategy that aligns disposition with helping to reach *Richmond 300* goals, and includes redeveloping surplus public facilities, including, but not limited to, school facilities, the Diamond site, and the Coliseum.
- b. Create, implement, and fund a real estate acquisition strategy that includes key reasons for acquiring land, such as, assembling parcels for economic development, open space, and public facilities.

Objective 2.3:

Plan for expansion and improvement of utilities to support housing and employment centers.

- a. During the creation of Small Area Plans and other planning efforts, include staff from the Department of Public Utilities to ensure utility infrastructure plans align with anticipated growth in housing and/or employment areas (Goal 1).
- b. Implement energy retrofits and other energy initiatives in the Clean Air Goal of *Richmond 300* to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption (Goal 15).
- c. Implement green infrastructure measures and other measures outlined in RVA H2O Plan and in the Clean Water Goal of *Richmond 300* to improve water quality and reduce stormwater runoff (Goal 16).
- d. Improve communications infrastructure by expanding broadband internet access, focusing on low-income areas (Goal 11).

Goal 3: Historic Preservation



Support growth that preserves the historical urban fabric and enhances understanding of Richmond's multi-faceted past.

Existing Context

One-third of Richmond's real estate is located within a historic district.

Historic preservation not only saves historic buildings, but also helps protect authentic and unique neighborhoods, which are highly valued by Richmond residents and also serve as great tourist attractions and economic development assets. Approximately 25,000 properties in the city are located in either a City Old & Historic District or a National Register Historic District, representing one-third of all city real estate, as shown in Figure 21.

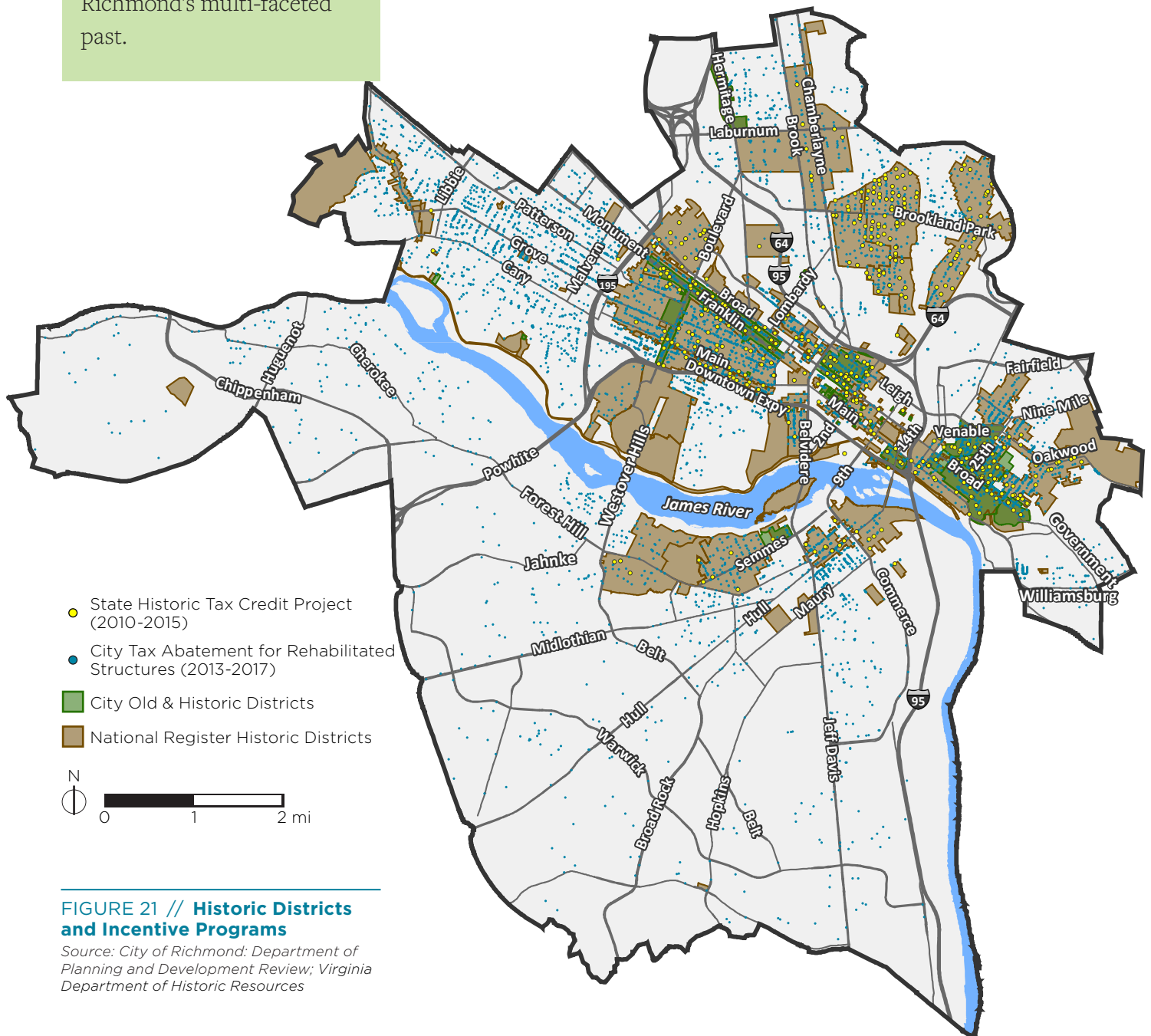


FIGURE 21 // Historic Districts and Incentive Programs

Source: City of Richmond: Department of Planning and Development Review; Virginia Department of Historic Resources

City Old & Historic Districts preserve the physical appearance of structures.

City Old & Historic Districts preserve historic neighborhoods by requiring exterior modifications, new construction, and additions to be reviewed by the Commission of Architectural Review (CAR). These local historic districts, first established in 1957, are among the earliest local districts in the country. In total, 45 such districts exist in the city, with approximately 4,500 properties, representing about 6% of all city parcels. Staff from PDR facilitate the review and approval of thousands of changes to properties in these districts over the years.

National Register Historic Districts provide property owners the opportunity to access tax credits to rehabilitate their property.

National Register Historic Districts are not directly managed by the City and do not place any requirements on property owners whose land is located within them. These districts are designated by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and managed by the U.S. National Park Service (NPS). Properties located in these districts are eligible for state and federal tax credits, which encourage the rehabilitation of historic structures. The use of historic tax credits has accelerated significant redevelopment and rehabilitation throughout Richmond's historic neighborhoods. There are 135 such districts throughout the city. National Register Historic Districts are purely honorific and do not offer any protections to properties located within their boundaries, except when state or federal funds are involved, leaving much of Richmond's historical fabric vulnerable to development pressures.

Historic landscapes, especially historic cemeteries are often overlooked in the preservation process.

The city has at least 15 historic cemeteries, containing nearly 700 acres. Some are privately owned, like Hollywood, while others, like Oakwood, are owned and operated by the City of Richmond. Richmond's historic Black cemeteries have not fared well, suffering from neglect and abandonment to nearly complete destruction. There are a number of small cemeteries, especially in south Richmond, that have long been abandoned that are uncovered during development and are not properly documented or dealt with. Cemeteries provide access to greenspace, nature, history, and genealogy. Although Richmond values its history and historic neighborhoods, it has never had a comprehensive process for



Top: Cary Street in Shockoe Slip
Bottom: Homes in the Fan

identifying, evaluating, and protecting historic buildings, neighborhoods, and landscapes, especially historically Black communities and cemeteries.

87% of the city's buildings were built prior to 1987.

In 2037, buildings that were built prior to 1987 will be at least 50 years old, which is the current NPS eligibility threshold for establishing historic districts, as shown in Figure 22. Given that in 2020, 80 percent of the city's buildings are over 50 years old, in 2037 the city will have even more old buildings. Not all the old buildings are well-built or of historical value,

however, as the city changes over the next 20 years, planners, developers, and the general public will want to ensure that Richmond's residents have high-quality structures in which to live, work, and play.

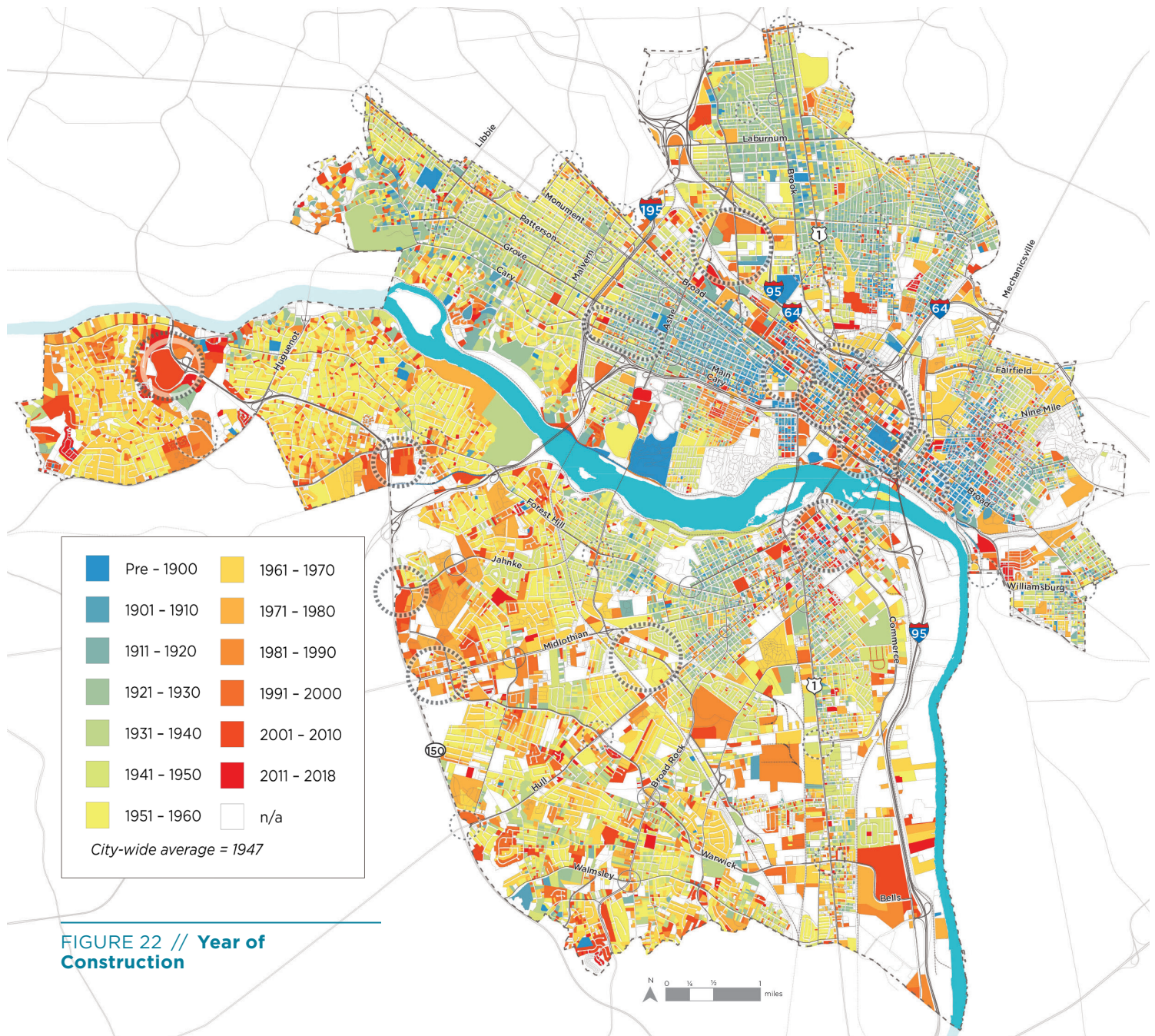


FIGURE 22 // Year of Construction

Objective 3.1

Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, neighborhoods, cemeteries, and landscapes that contribute to Richmond's authenticity.

- a. Develop and regularly update a city-wide preservation plan to establish near- and long-term preservation priorities and to identify proactive and innovative strategies to protect the character, quality, and history of the city.
- b. Identify partnerships and funding sources for the identification, protection, preservation, and if needed acquisition of abandoned and neglected cemeteries, especially Black cemeteries
- c. Complete and maintain a historic resources inventory that is current, comprehensive, and cost-effective.
- d. Identify areas of the city where we should restore and maintain historic paving, while also balancing the access needs of all users.
- e. Review and revise the CAR's Guidelines to improve the clarity and usability and regularly update the Guidelines to respond to new technologies and market demand.
- f. Develop stronger code enforcement tools for violations in City Old & Historic Districts.
- g. Utilize the city historic resources inventory, and identify additional districts for varying levels of protections.
- h. Establish controls to ensure that archaeological sites and subsurface materials are properly identified, evaluated, and mitigated. This should include proactive measures to prevent disturbance and potential destruction.
- i. Utilize historic preservation best practices for City-owned resources to prioritize preservation and reuse activity more heavily than new construction or demolition of historically and culturally significant resources.
- j. Evaluate the City's tax abatement program to incentivize preservation best practices, energy efficiency, and projects providing affordable housing.



Renovating historic buildings helps retain a place's authenticity and character while also sometimes honoring specific individuals or events that happened in the past. Adaptive reuse projects can be found throughout Richmond and have included turning a car dealership into an office/apartment building [top], a cookie factory into condominiums [middle], and a carriage house into a church and then into apartments [bottom].

- k. Lobby the General Assembly to maintain historic rehabilitation tax credits and adopt other legislation that improves the quality and character of Richmond's neighborhoods.
- l. Establish viewshed protections to protect/enhance views of critical natural features, such as the Libby Hill looking down river.

Objective 3.2

Reduce the demolition of historical buildings.

- a. Create flexibility in the Zoning Ordinance to encourage the adaptive reuse of historical buildings and deter demolition, such as allowing for compatible densities and uses in historical areas (e.g., reduce parking requirements for historical institutional buildings that are changing uses).
- b. Increase property maintenance code enforcement as a proactive tool to prevent demolition by neglect.
- c. Re-evaluate, fund, and utilize the City's Spot Blight property acquisition process, and prioritize disposition to non-profit housing developers and/or the Land Bank.
- d. Re-evaluate and utilize the City's demolition by neglect ordinance to preserve "at risk" resources.
- e. Increase funding for the Spot Blight acquisition program and explore additional programs to reduce blight.
- f. Develop a city-wide demolition review policy to ensure historic resources are considered before any demolition can proceed.

Objective 3.3

Broaden the constituency for historic preservation by more equally representing, preserving, and sharing the sites related to traditionally under-represented groups (e.g., Native Americans, Blacks).

- a. Increase education and outreach efforts regarding the preservation of neighborhood character and available incentive programs for historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and place-based economic development.
- b. Ensure that historic preservation values and interests are coordinated with economic development groups, affordable housing developers, and advocates and ethnic and cultural groups.
- c. Strengthen programs and partnerships that engage the public in exploring community history and places of significance.
- d. Work with the Richmond Public Library to develop oral history projects.
- e. Pursue public and private partnerships to fund the preservation of significant sites.

ADAPTIVE REUSE OF INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

In 2020, over 150 religious institutions were located in Richmond. These institutions own over 470 acres of land, which include religious buildings, parking lots, and vacant land. Several institutions are major property owners within communities throughout the city. As congregations decrease in size, religious institutions have sought to sell their buildings and properties. This has resulted in the adaptive reuse of churches as residential buildings and new construction occurring on vacant lots and parking lots owned by religious institutions. As *Richmond 300* is implemented, religious institutions and the future owners of formerly-religious buildings should work closely with PDR staff as they plan for the adaptive reuse of these unique buildings, which are often signature buildings in the community and can be challenging to retrofit for new uses.

Goal 4: Urban Design



Establish a distinctive city comprising architecturally significant buildings connected by a network of walkable urban streets and open spaces to support an engaging built environment.

Existing Context

Quality urban design is what makes a place feel like true neighborhood, not just a collection of buildings.

Urban design refers to how the built environment looks and feels, how buildings relate to one another, and how the “public realm” (streets, sidewalks, parks, etc.) enables such uses to function. Richmond has a wide variety of urban design, ranging from historic single-family neighborhoods to new Downtown high-rises.

Half of Richmonders live in streetcar suburbs or post-war suburbs. Historic urban neighborhoods and post-industrial neighborhoods have grown the most since 2000.

In preparation for *Richmond 300*, the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis at VCU completed an examination of the city’s “urban design typologies,” which classifies city neighborhoods into eleven typologies, as shown in Figure 23. Two main trends emerge when looking at Richmond’s population in regard to these typologies. First, nearly half of all Richmond residents live in either a streetcar neighborhood (older suburbs that were originally served by the Richmond streetcar system) or a post-war suburb (car-dependent neighborhoods built after World War II). The second main takeaway is that the typologies that have seen the most population growth since 2010 are downtown, post-industrial neighborhoods (e.g., Scott’s Addition), and historic urban neighborhoods (e.g., the Fan, Church Hill, Union Hill).



Streetcar neighborhood



Post-war suburb



Apartment court

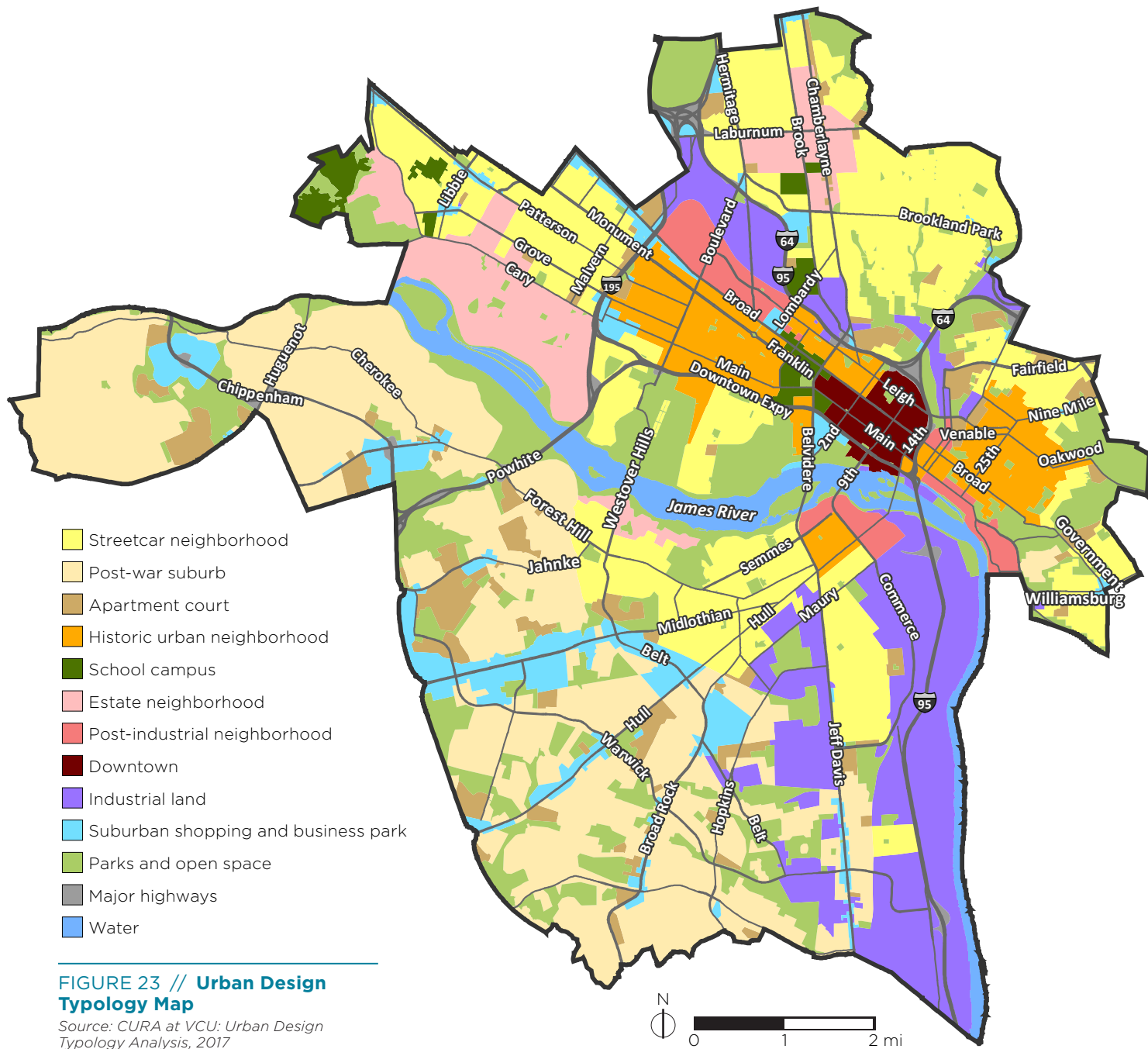


FIGURE 23 // Urban Design Typology Map

Source: CURA at VCU: Urban Design Typology Analysis, 2017



Historic urban neighborhood



Estate neighborhood



Post-industrial neighborhood

Homebuyers are increasingly drawn to walkable urban neighborhoods.

Across the country, individuals are seeking neighborhoods that embody walkable urbanism, whether they are historic neighborhoods that are reemerging, such as the Fan and Church Hill, or new urbanist neighborhoods, such as Libbie Mill in Henrico. Walkable urbanism describes places that are overall less-reliant on the automobile and feature non-residential destinations within a short walk, bike ride, or transit trip. While auto-oriented residential neighborhoods continue to flourish in and around the city, newer neighborhoods that are closer to the city's core have been built with greater focus on the pedestrian experience. The City has sought to encourage this trend by eliminating parking minimums, removing parking lots as a principal use in several zoning districts, and requiring sidewalks and other amenities, such as street trees, with new developments.

“Good urban design doesn’t solve everything but bad urban design doesn’t solve anything.”

—Mark A. Olinger, Director,
Department of Planning
and Development Review,
City of Richmond



Homes in Northside [top] and Oregon Hill [bottom].

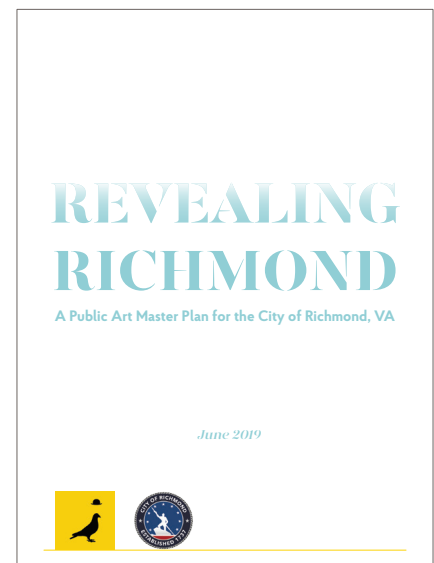
75% of Richmonders live within a 10-minute walk of a public park.

Public parks serve a vital role to the health and well-being of Richmond's residents and its environment. As more residents live closer to the city's center in either multi-family apartment buildings or in houses with very small yards, greater importance has been given to the City's public parks system. The City's nearly 3,000 acres of parkland include pocket parks nestled in the Fan and regional attractions such as the James River Park System and Byrd Park.

From 2010 to 2020, the City improved several parks and plazas and constructed new ones, such as the Maggie L. Walker Plaza, Kanawha Plaza, Monroe Park, and the improvements to the Riverfront, including the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge. Having a park within walking distance of every resident of the city is a Big Move of *Richmond 300*. Currently, about three-quarters of Richmonders live within a 10-minute walk of a public park. Large areas of the city are not within a 10-minute walk of a park, especially in the areas of South Richmond that were annexed from Chesterfield County in 1942 and 1970.

Public art is critical to showcase a place's uniqueness, culture, and history.

Richmond has a Percent for Art Ordinance that requires large capital improvement projects to allocate 1% of the budget to a public art fund that is administered by the Public Art Commission. The Public Art Commission completed a Public Art Master Plan in 2018, which guides the City's investments in public art. Recent public art projects include the Maggie L. Walker statue, the rings at the foot of the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge, and the medallion at the Hull Street Courthouse. Future public art projects and improved streetscapes in all parts of the city set the tone for high-quality development and create pride for residents as they look forward to the future prosperity of their neighborhood and their personal household.

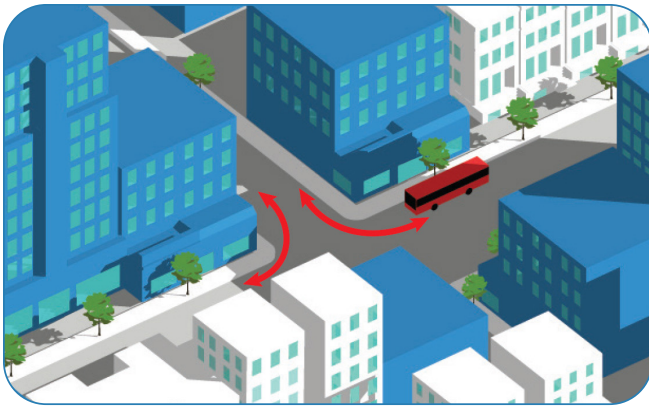


Relaxing at Byrd Park [left]. In 2018, City Council and City Planning Commission adopted the Public Art Master Plan [right] as part of the City's Master Plan. The Public Art Master Plan provides a 10-year vision to guide the City's investments in Public Art.

Objective 4.1

Create and preserve **high-quality, distinctive, and well-designed neighborhoods and Nodes** throughout the city.

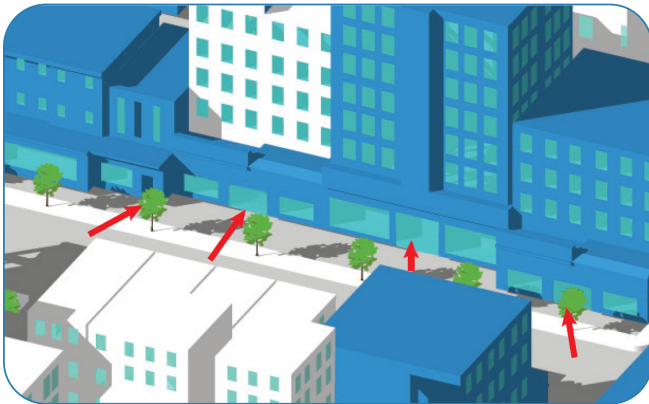
- a. Develop zoning districts that support protect and enhance neighborhood character, especially in areas that are not protected by City Old & Historic Districts.
- b. Allow and encourage a variety of architectural styles.
- c. On development sites that encompass most of a city block or block frontage, require multiple buildings and/or façade articulation to increase visual interest, require massing that is responsive to the human-scale, and consider pedestrian through-block connections through existing super blocks to establish a street grid.
- d. Require sites with frontage on Great Streets to meet special design guidelines, such as burying power lines and the six design elements outlined in the Pulse Corridor Plan, to ensure the buildings enhance and support the Great Street.
- e. Encourage development that respects and preserves the natural features of the site through sensitive site design, avoids substantial changes to the topography, and minimizes property damage and environmental degradation resulting from disturbance of natural systems.
- f. Ensure that building materials are durable, sustainable, and create a lasting addition to the built environment, and provide maximum adaptability for environmental change, change of use, and efficiency.
- g. Require the screening of utilities, communication, transformers, and other service connections to buildings.
- h. Require adequate distribution of windows and architectural features in order to create visual interest.
- i. Encourage design approaches that support creative solutions for transitions among varying intensities of building types and land uses.
- j. Apply design standards, guidance, and regulation consistently across the city regardless of market conditions or rent structure of development.
- k. Promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion caused by a proliferation of signage, ensuring that public and private signage is appropriately scaled to the pedestrian experience.
- l. Encourage roof lines and upper levels of tall buildings to be articulated with a distinguishable design.
- m. Require the podiums of tall buildings to reflect the human-scale, with design elements and active uses on the ground level.
- n. Prohibit driveways for new small-scale residential buildings on blocks that have alley access.
- o. Increase building permeability by requiring new buildings to have functioning entrances from the sidewalk and restricting blank walls at ground level.
- p. Encourage building placement and massing design that reduces the heat island effect by varying building heights in neighborhoods to increase airflow.
- q. Expand the City's façade improvement program.



Hold the Corner



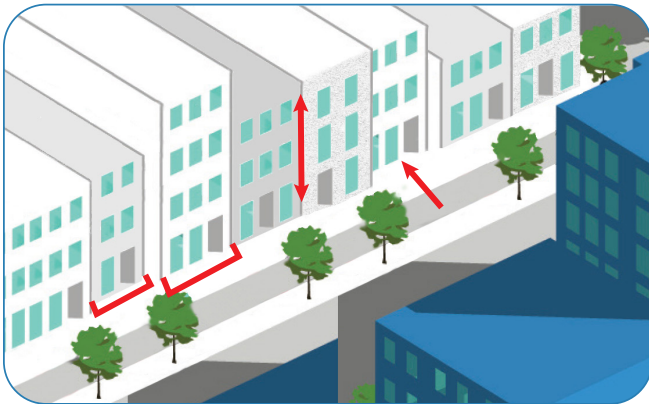
Appropriate Setbacks/Stepbacks



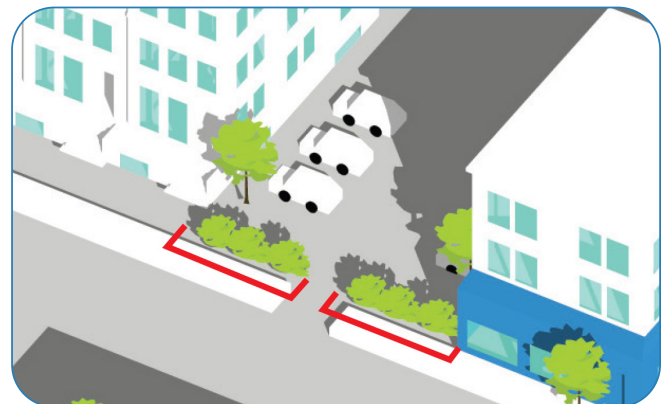
Entrances Face the Street



Transparency



Façade Articulation



Screened Parking/Services

Pulse Corridor Plan of Development Overlay Form Elements. Under the Pulse Corridor Plan of Development Overlay, developers must make considerations to each of the six elements in site plan design, which are key in creating an engaging pedestrian environment.

Objective 4.2

Integrate public art into the built environment to

acknowledge Richmond's unique history and neighborhood identity, and engage the creative community, focusing public art efforts in areas that do not have public art today.

- a. Develop public art projects within Nodes to elevate the place's unique character through creative placemaking.
- b. Utilize public art projects to preserve the cultural heritage of places, prioritizing areas that are experiencing major changes in demographics and development.
- c. Link public art with major public facility initiatives (e.g., plazas, buildings, parks, bridges) and expand the definition of public art to include architectural embellishments of buildings, or landscape features.
- d. Encourage outdoor art features on private land and buildings as part of a city-building aesthetic.
- e. Implement the Public Art Master Plan.



Public art can include traditional statues, such as the Maggie L. Walker statue and plaza, which were unveiled in 2017 [top], and also architectural embellishments as shown on Main Street Station [bottom].

Objective 4.3

Increase neighborhood access to, and through, a well-designed network of open spaces.

- a. Develop a Park Master Plan providing all Richmonders access to a quality public park within a 10-minute walk of their home, as shown in Figure 24 (see Goal 2 and Goal 17).
- b. Integrate natural features, history, culture, and art to enhance public open spaces throughout the city.
- c. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to change the definition of open space to require private land owners to include usable open space, small parks, playgrounds, green roofs, courtyards, etc. in their developments and link the open spaces to the city-wide open space network.
- d. Protect and restore natural resources (see Goals 15-17).
- e. Utilize conservation easements to expand the open space network (see Goals 15-17).

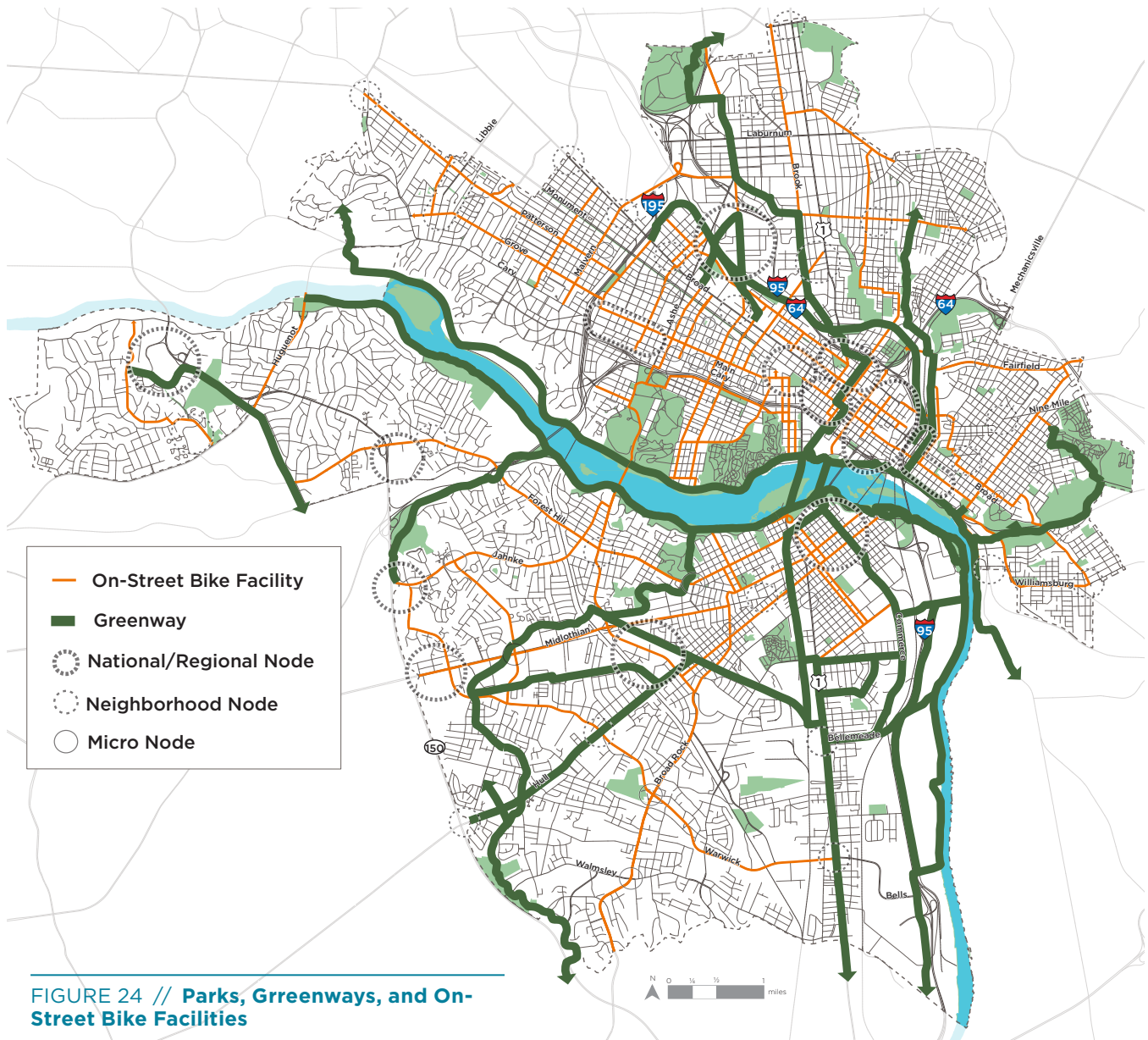


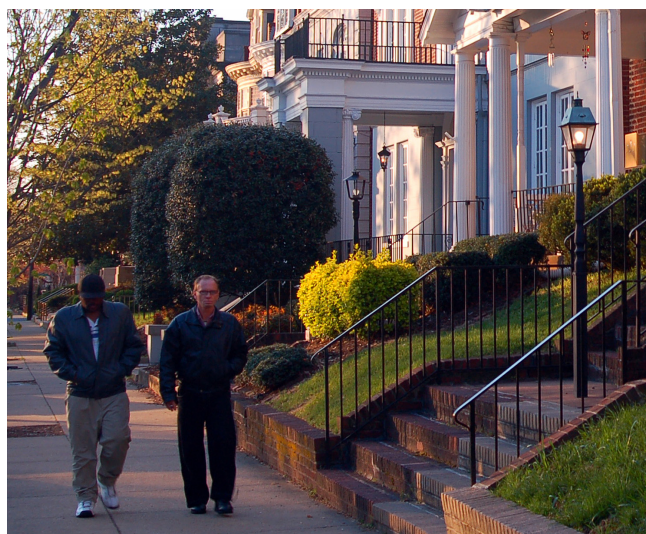
FIGURE 24 // Parks, Greenways, and On-Street Bike Facilities

- f. Require any new development along the river and canals to provide for public access and activated ground levels (see Goal 2 and Goal 15).
- g. Provide for the continuing maintenance of common open space; provision may include joint ownership by all residents in a homeowners association, donation of open space or conservation easements to a land trust or government entity, or other measures.
- h. Reserve appropriate riverfront and canal-facing sites for public amenities and river-related development such as boating services, picnics, etc.
- i. Work with other stakeholders to improve, restore, and maintain the historical canal system (see Goals 6–10).
- j. Implement the Richmond Riverfront Plan and the James River Park Master Plan.
- k. Encourage the creation of a balance of natural rather than hard landscape in creating and improving parks.

Objective 4.4

Increase Richmond's walkability along all streets.

- a. Develop city-wide public realm standards to include shade trees, bike parking, bike share, signage, public art, screened parking, street furniture, pedestrian-level lighting, and other elements in the public right-of-way that enhance walkability.
- b. Strengthen the streetscape connections by installing pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, pathway, and trails where such infrastructure is missing.
- c. Bury utilities underground along all Great Streets and bury utilities underground where possible on all other streets.



The Fan is a very walkable neighborhood because it has sidewalks, street trees, homes and businesses with windows, doors, and porches, and other elements that create a pleasant walking environment.

Goal 5: Planning Engagement



Foster a planning engagement culture that effectively and equitably builds people's capacity to organize to improve the city and their neighborhoods.

Existing Context

Engagement between the City and the community is essential to ensure that the public's needs are being met and that their vision for the city is being fulfilled.

PDR values the input of residents, businesses, and property owners to help guide the development of plans that will affect the future of neighborhoods and the city-at-large. The department notifies property owners directly when there are projects being considered by public bodies that are within proximity to their property. The boards and commissions that are managed by PDR staff, which notify property owners and/or civic associations, include City Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Commission of Architectural Review, and Urban Design Committee.

Currently, 130 civic associations are listed on the City's official Civic Association website.

PDR reaches out to local civic groups as part of the overall planning process, and in regard to specific projects. These groups have defined boundaries, which range from a single neighborhood to a collection of neighborhoods covering large areas of the city. The City does not directly manage these groups or their boundaries, which has resulted in many overlapping boundaries by multiple groups, and also areas of the city, particularly South Richmond, that have no formally established civic associations. During the implementation of *Richmond 300*, great potential exists to strengthen the bond between City and resident through the continuing public engagement process. This can be done by educating community members on the importance of their involvement in the planning process and including those that have been traditionally under-represented in the process.



Public engagement takes many forms, which may include office hours in community businesses [left] or large public meetings [right], two types of meetings held during the *Richmond 300* planning process.

Objective 5.1

Increase public knowledge of planning processes and continuously engage civic associations, special interest groups, and traditionally under-represented groups in the planning process.

- a. Create a Richmond planning knowledge program administered by PDR for everyday Richmonders to learn about the planning process and understand how their voices can be incorporated into the planning decision-making processes, such as special use permits, rezonings, City Old & Historic Districts, and other planning regulations.
- b. Issue an annual *Richmond 300* report that tracks how the City is implementing *Richmond 300* strategies.
- c. Host annual events about *Richmond 300* to ensure Richmond's existing and new residents are aware of the visions, goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the plan.
- d. Maintain and share the Civic Association database with city residents and City staff.
- e. Create a process to officially register civic associations with the City, eliminate overlapping boundaries, and assist in establishing civic associations where none exist.
- f. Review and update Richmond's Guide to Neighborhood Associations.
- g. Develop a set of unique and targeted engagement methods, beyond conventional surveys and town halls, to engage traditionally under-represented groups in the planning process.

Objective 5.2

Engage City staff, appointed commissioners, and elected officials in the planning process.

- a. Develop on-boarding training materials about *Richmond 300* for Human Resources to share with new City employees.
- b. Present the *Richmond 300* annual report at the City Council's Organizational Development Standing Committee and other relevant commissions and committees to continue to educate new and existing council members and commissioners about *Richmond 300*.



***Richmond 300* retreat with the City Planning Commission [top]. Community members provide their Big Ideas for South Richmond during Community Consultation #1**