

# City Center Innovation District

## SMALL AREA PLAN



## Acknowledgments

This document reflects the consensus reached by the community on guiding the future growth of the City Center area. The individuals listed here are elected officials, commission members, and City planning staff. The content in this plan arose from the time, attention, expertise, and passion of many people, beyond those listed here.

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### City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan

**Final**

November 23rd, 2021

**City Planning  
Commission Adopted**

December 6th, 2021

**City Council Adopted**

January 24th, 2022

INTRODUCED: January 10, 2022

AN ORDINANCE No. 2022-010

To approve the action of the City Planning Commission adopting the “City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan” as an incorporated element of the “Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth” Master Plan of the City of Richmond.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrons – Mayor Stoney and Ms. Lambert

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as to form and legality  
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: JAN 24 2022 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission last adopted a new Master Plan for the City of Richmond, entitled “Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth,” on October 5, 2020, which Master Plan the Council approved by Ordinance No. 2020-236, adopted December 14, 2020, in accordance with section 17.06 of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended; and

WHEREAS, the Council, by Resolution No. 2021-R024, adopted April 26, 2021, approved the biennial real estate strategies plan, which included many of the City-owned properties in the City Center area; and

AYES:            9       NOES:            0       ABSTAIN:    \_\_\_\_\_

ADOPTED:     JAN 24 2022     REJECTED:   \_\_\_\_\_   STRICKEN:   \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission conducted public hearings on June 7, 2021, and December 6, 2021, for the purpose of receiving public comments relative to a proposed amendment to the Master Plan in the form of the document entitled “City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan,” dated November 23, 2021, and prepared by the Department of Planning and Development Review (hereinafter, the “Plan”), a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this ordinance, as an incorporated element of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Plan provides a framework plan for the redevelopment of the City Center area to catalyze the development of a thriving, mixed-use downtown; and

WHEREAS, the Plan adds important detail and updates the City’s Master Plan for this area; and

WHEREAS, by a resolution dated December 6, 2021, a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this ordinance, the City Planning Commission adopted the Plan as an incorporated element of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, it is the consensus of the Council that it is in the best interest of the City of Richmond that the Council, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, consent to and approve the Plan as an incorporated element of the City’s Master Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That the plan set forth in the document entitled “City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan,” dated November 23, 2021, and prepared by the Department of Planning and Development Review, a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this ordinance, as adopted by the City Planning Commission by resolution at its hearing on December 6, 2021, a copy of which resolution is attached to and made a part of this ordinance, be and is hereby approved and

from the effective date of this ordinance shall be an incorporated element of the Master Plan for the City of Richmond.

§ 2. This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.



December 6, 2021

**CPCR.2021.127: RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND PLANNING COMMISSION  
TO UPDATE THE CITY OF RICHMOND'S MASTER PLAN TO INCLUDE FINDINGS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY CENTER INNOVATION DISTRICT SMALL AREA PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the City Planning Commission adopted a *Master Plan* on October 5, 2020 by resolution 2020.050; and the city council approved said *Master Plan* by Ordinance 2020-236 on December 14, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council Resolution 2020-R009 tasked the Chief Administrative Officer to direct the completion of an area plan for certain City-owned properties in the City Center area; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council Resolution 2021-R024 was passed in order to accept and approve the biennial real estate strategies plan, which included many of the City-owned properties in City Center; and

**WHEREAS**, the recently-completed City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan provides a framework plan for the redevelopment of the City Center area to catalyze the development of a thriving, mixed-use downtown; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan involved extensive public engagement and coordination with other departments of the City of Richmond; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the Draft City Center Small Area Plan on June 7, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed plan, taken into consideration comments received at its public hearing;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Richmond City Planning Commission hereby adopts the City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan as part of the *Master Plan*; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Planning Commission forwards the City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan to the City Council with the recommendation of approval.

**A TRUE COPY:  
TESTE:**

**City Clerk**

Rodney M. Poole  
Chair, City Planning Commission

Richard L. Saunders  
Secretary, City Planning Commission

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# Executive Summary

## City Center is the right place at the right time to become Richmond’s Life Sciences Innovation District.

The vision for City Center is to become the engine for expanding Greater Richmond’s life sciences<sup>1</sup> industries. City Center will be the place to live, learn, collaborate, create, and develop new life science businesses in a high density, walkable, urban full-service environment that includes multi-modal transportation options to city and regional neighborhoods and job centers.

### Right Place

As defined by Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner, innovation districts “are geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators, and accelerators. They are also physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired and offer mixed-use housing, office, and retail.”<sup>2</sup> Today, Richmond’s City Center is home to three life science-focused anchor institutions—Virginia Commonwealth University, VA Bio+Tech Park, and Reynolds Community College. The hardest element of creating an innovation district is having strong educational institutions and incubators in place. City Center has those anchors and strong partnerships with research, workforce development, and business communities.

<sup>1</sup> Life sciences is defined as “the sciences concerned with living organisms,” including biology, bioinformatics, physiology, biochemistry, and many more sub-topics.

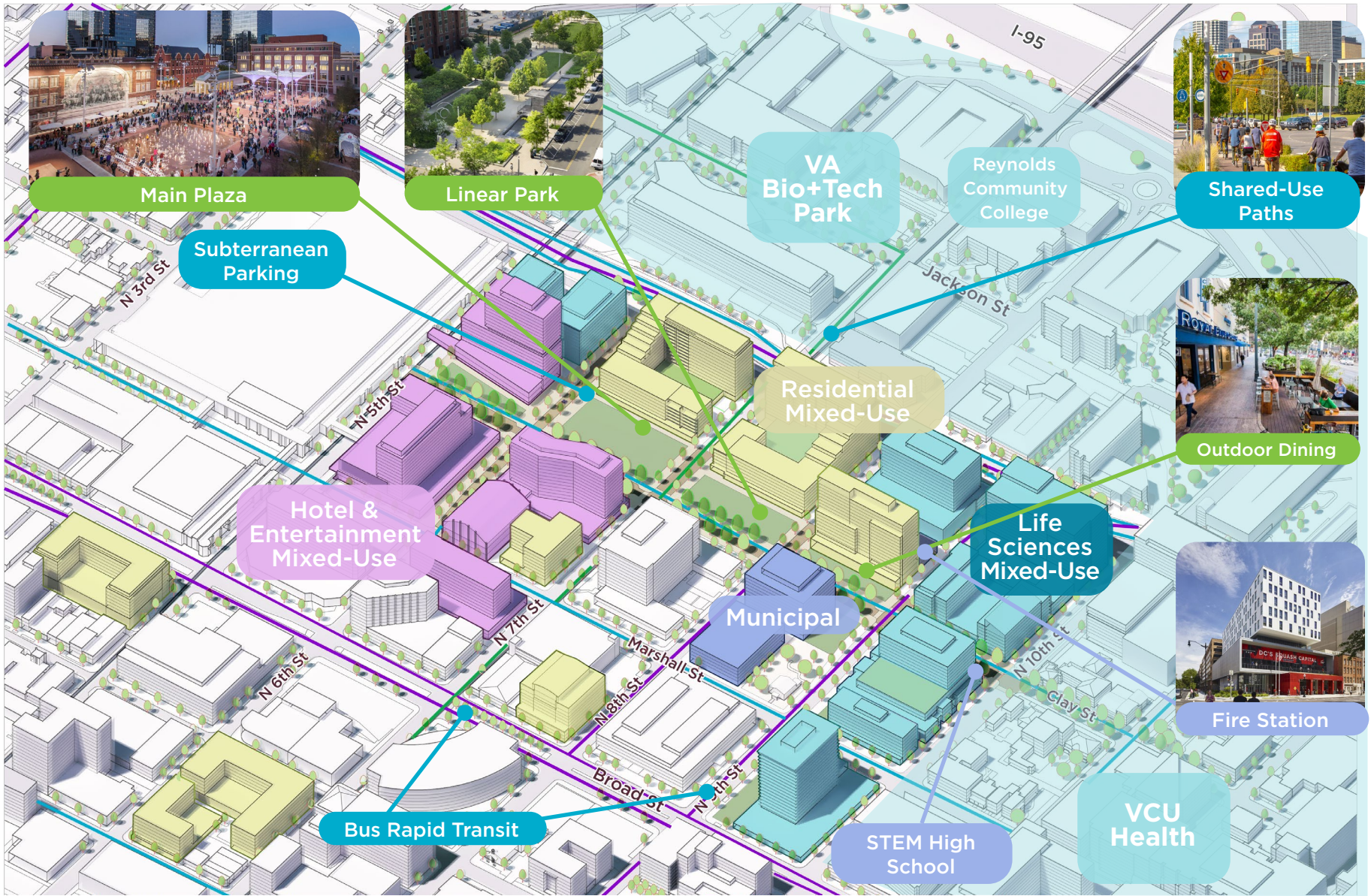
<sup>2</sup> Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner, *The Rise of Innovation Districts: A New Geography of Innovation in America*, The Brookings Institution, May 2014

City Center is already physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired. City Center is adjacent to several strong and up-and-coming neighborhoods in Downtown. Surrounded by Jackson Ward, VCU Health, VA Bio+Tech Park, the State Capitol, Monroe Ward, and the Financial District, City Center is essentially a natural hub just waiting to connect life science, educational, governmental, and R&D institutions together. Further, with the east-west Pulse Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that runs along the City’s primary commercial corridor, Broad Street, several high frequency local bus routes, a new north-south BRT, and Virginia’s new Ashland to Petersburg Fall Line Bike Trail in the planning stages to pass through Downtown, City Center is a natural nexus

### Why Innovation Districts Matter

<b>1</b>	<b>Leverage distinct advantages</b>	Further the ability of cities and metro areas to grow jobs in ways that both align with disruptive forces in the economy and leverage their distinct economic position.
<b>2</b>	<b>Empower entrepreneurs</b>	Empower entrepreneurs as a key vehicle for economic growth and job creation.
<b>3</b>	<b>Grow better jobs</b>	Grow better and more accessible jobs at a time of rising poverty and social inequality.
<b>4</b>	<b>Reduce impact on climate</b>	Reduce carbon emissions and drive denser residential and employment patterns at a time of growing concern with environmentally unsustainable development.
<b>5</b>	<b>Raise city revenues</b>	Help cities raise revenues and repair their balance sheets at a time when federal resources are diminishing and many state governments are adrift.

Source: Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner, *The Rise of Innovation Districts: A New Geography of Innovation in America*, The Brookings Institution, May 2014



### City Center Innovation District

The City Center Innovation District will become the engine for expanding Greater Richmond’s life sciences industries. City Center will be the place to live, learn, collaborate, create and develop new life science businesses in a high density, walkable, urban full-service environment that includes multi-modal transportation options to city and regional neighborhoods and job centers.

*Note: The conceptual massing diagram illustrates the potential shape and scale of buildings and open space; however as these areas develop, the exact design and scale of the buildings and spaces may be different from what is depicted in this conceptual illustration. The exact location of specific uses may also adjust overtime.*

where residents, researchers, entrepreneurs and workers can access multi-modal transit options.

However, today the area lacks housing, neighborhood retail services, restaurants, and much needed wet lab and flex office spaces. The opportunity to create an Innovation District in Richmond's City Center lies in the nearly 26 acres of government-owned land that are either vacant or obsolete located between several strong anchor institutions. Through public-private partnerships this land can be transformed into new mixed-income housing, laboratories, office and retail spaces as an Innovation District that will provide opportunities for all Richmonders.

## Right Time

City Center's Life Sciences cluster has been over 175 years in the making. The core life science anchor institution in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Medical College of Virginia (now known as VCU Health), was established in the City Center area in 1844. Today VCU Health is a top life sciences research center, medical school, and level 1 trauma center. VCU Health continues to build and renovate buildings to accommodate its exceptional growth. Reynolds Community College has had a downtown campus for over 40 years and continues to provide one and two-year occupational and technical programs in a number of allied health, business, and community service areas. The VA Bio+Tech Park was incorporated in 1992 and opened in 1995. Today the Park is home to nearly 70 companies, research institutes, and state/federal laboratories. The VA Bio+Tech Park, Reynolds, and VCU Health have been focused on building spaces for education, innovation, and networking focused on life science industries.

The City closed the Richmond Coliseum in 2019 and owns nearly 26 acres of vacant or obsolete sites and buildings in City Center. In

the 1940s/50s City Center was home to almost 2,000 households and dozens of retail stores and restaurants, and is now home to zero. Today, without any residents, the City Center area is only inhabited from 9-to-5 by office workers and individuals seeking City services. Large, un-activated ground floors, the lack of retail and restaurants, and the absence of public amenities add to the hostility of the area. Now is the time for the City to round out the innovative community that the Bio+Tech Park, VCU Health, and Reynolds Community College have been fostering by providing places for people to live and play within the City Center area.

## The Plan

The City Center Plan outlines the strategies to become Richmond's Life Sciences Innovation District. By consolidating City government functions and transferring parcels from public to private ownership, the City can use the City Center Plan as a tool to build an innovation district downtown. Mixed-use residential buildings can potentially bring thousands of residents back to the area and provide places for life science workers to live near work. New shared-use paths, bike lanes, ample green space, and activated ground floor uses can make City Center vibrant and inviting to residents, visitors, and other Richmonders. Hotel and entertainment uses can help foster tourism and create added value for patrons of the Greater Richmond Convention Center as well as Innovation District. Additional space for biotech & life sciences companies can provide expansion opportunities for this growing sector and help continue to place Richmond at the forefront of innovation. Additionally, including a STEM-focused high school can provide opportunities for Richmond students to grow into biotech careers. Overall, the City Center Plan is an essential step in establishing City Center as the engine of the Richmond Region's growing life science industries.

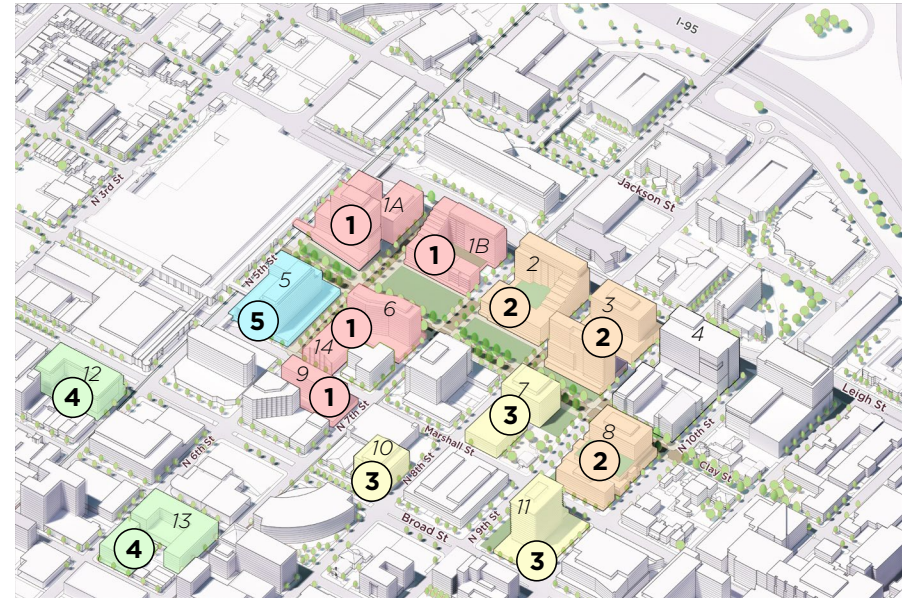


## Implementation

**Big Moves:** The City Center Plan outlines many goals and recommendations to create a Life Sciences Innovation District. These three big moves are critical next steps to implement in the next 3 to 5 years to implement the plan's vision:

- **Create an innovation zoning district:** rezone City Center to align with the innovation vision by allowing mixed-uses including residential, ground floor activation, and unlimited height and density.
- **Reduce the municipal footprint:** Redevelop city-owned properties that are vacant and explore options for renovating, replacing, or relocating city functions to reduce the municipal footprint In City Center so that the Innovation District may grow and City functions can operate more effectively in improved space.
- **Expand education offerings:** develop a high tech high school and establish a Center City campus for higher education collaboration.

**Phasing:** The City plans to issue solicitations for development teams to assist the City in implementing the vision for City Center. The proposed phasing of solicitations for city-owned properties are shown in the phasing map.



### Phasing Map

*Note: The conceptual massing diagram illustrates the potential shape and scale of buildings and open space; however as these areas develop, the exact design and scale of the buildings and spaces may be different from what is depicted in this conceptual illustration.*

# Introduction

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## Purpose

The City Center Small Area Plan outlines a strategy for redeveloping vacant and under-utilized parcels in Downtown Richmond, which are predominantly City-owned. The Plan describes the vision, guiding principles, and strategies for the City Center area in order to create a more equitable, sustainable, and beautiful Downtown in alignment with *Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* and the Pulse Corridor Plan.

The Dept. of Planning and Development Review (PDR) created the City Center Plan in response to City Council Resolution 2020-R009, with the following objectives:

- Engage the Richmond community to identify the key elements that must be located in the primary study area and that shall be included in future solicitations.
- Set the stage for potential developers to feel excited about responding to a solicitation by gaining general public consensus and thereby minimizing developer risk.
- Guide the redevelopment of Downtown to establish a mixed-use destination that drives activity outside of typical business hours and adds to the Downtown tax base.
- Leverage adjacencies by connecting with the Convention Center, VCU Health, and the VA Bio+Tech Park.
- Build strong connections with adjacent neighborhoods including Jackson Ward, Monroe Ward, Gilpin, and Shockoe Bottom.
- Incorporate the City Center Small Area Plan into the *Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* master plan document.

## Study Area

City Center is the name of study area, which is generally the area from E. Franklin Street to E. Leigh Street and from N. 10th to N. 5th Streets in Downtown Richmond. The City Center area is part of Downtown Richmond, Virginia and bounded by VCU Health/VA Bio+Tech Park, the State Capitol, Monroe Ward, and Jackson Ward, as shown in Figure 1. The focus of the City Center planning effort is on the City and RRHA properties that are vacant and/or underutilized in the City Center area, approximately 26.2 acres in total as shown in Figure 2 and Table 1.

## Plan Overview

The City Center Small Area Plan is structured in 3 major sections. The first section presents the existing conditions and history of the study area. The second section outlines vision for the City Center Innovation District and provides goals, objectives, and recommendations for achieving that vision. The third section outlines implementation steps to implement the plan.

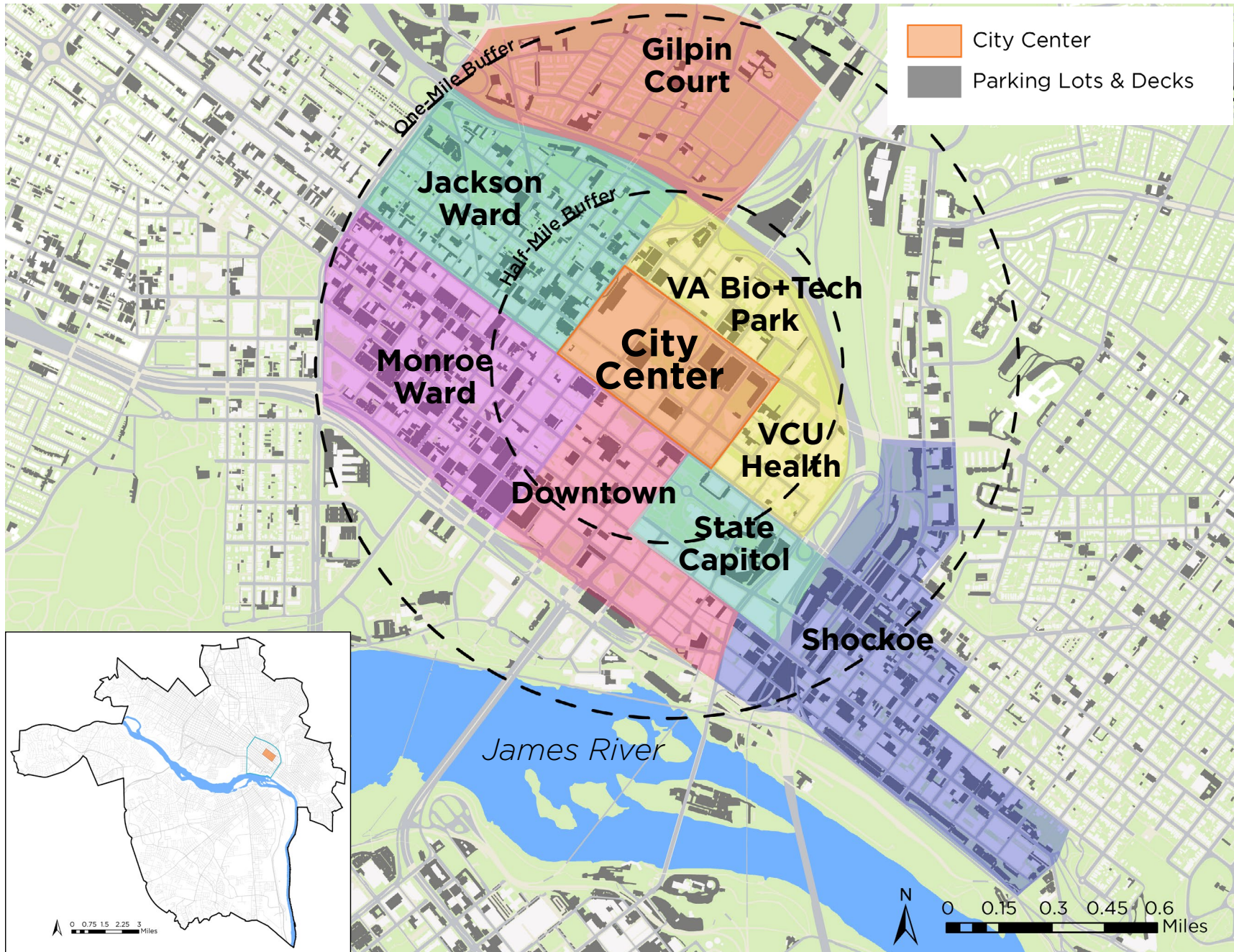
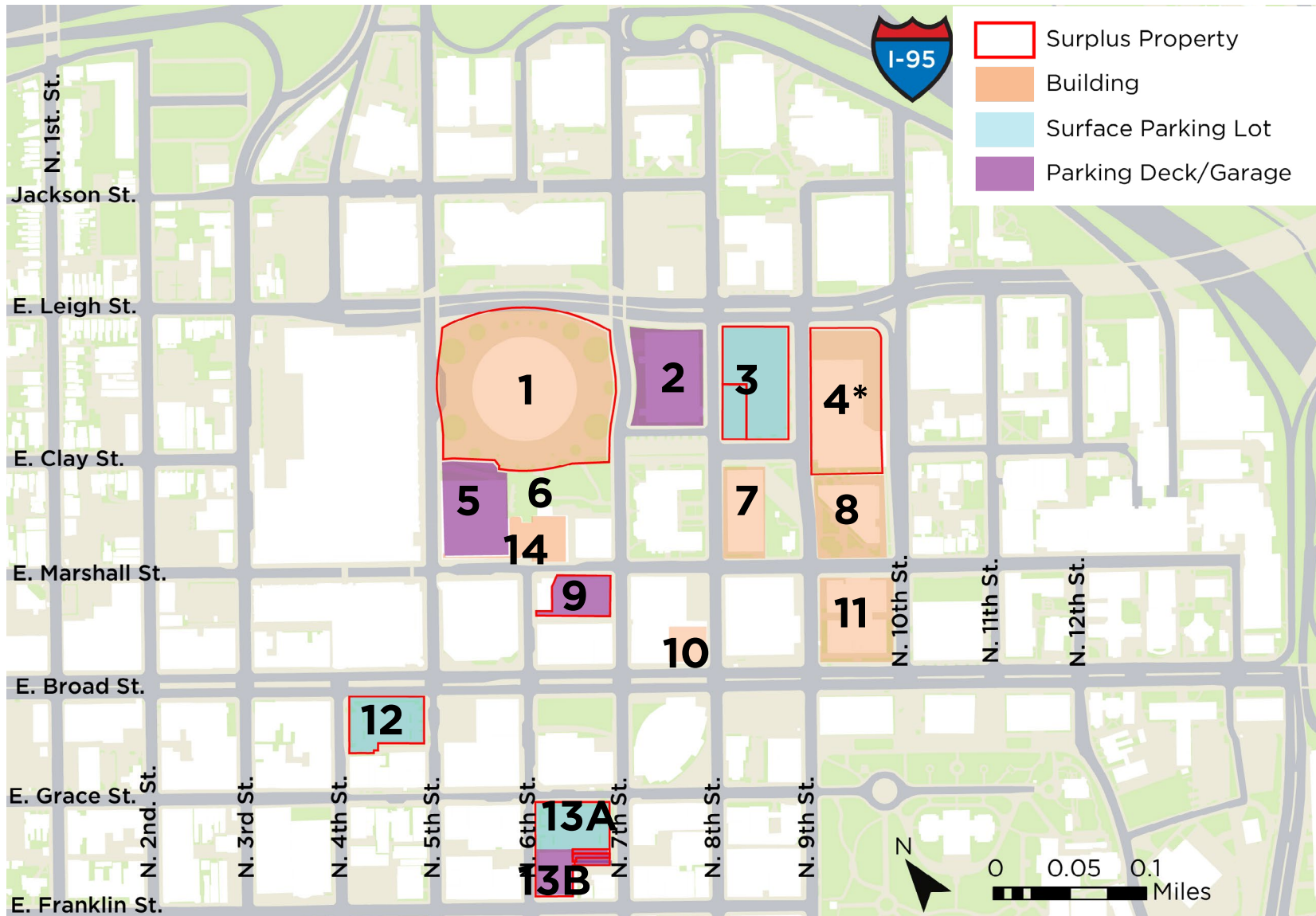


FIGURE 1 // City Center Context Map



**FIGURE 2 // City- and RRHA-Owned Parcels in City Center**

*\*The Public Safety Building parcel was sold to a private developer in August 2021 for redevelopment. As of November 2021, the building still stands. It will still be referenced throughout the plan, but it is no longer a City of Richmond property.*

TABLE 1 // City- and RRHA-Owned Parcels in City Center

Label	Parcel Name	Ownership/Status	Parcel Acreage	Surplus Property <sup>1</sup>	Condition Rating <sup>2</sup>	Maintenance Cost <sup>3</sup>
1	Coliseum	COR/Vacant	7.4	x	Poor	Not maintained
2	Coliseum Parking Deck	COR/In Use	1.9		Good	\$1.3M
3	9th/Clay Surface Parking Lot	COR/In Use	2.1	x	Fair	N/A
4	Public Safety Building <sup>4</sup>	Sold to private developer in summer 2021	3.0	x	Critical	\$20.97M
5	5th/Marshall Parking Garage	COR/In Use	1.6		Good	\$1.5M
6	Coliseum Public Open Space	RRHA/In Use	1.0		Poor	N/A
7	John Marshall Courts Building	COR/In Use	1.5		Poor	\$18.7M
8	Social Services Building	COR/In Use	1.6		Poor	\$4.5M
9	6th/Marshall Parking Garage	COR/In Use	0.8	x	Critical	\$7M
10	Theater Row Building	COR/In Use	0.4	x	Poor	\$11.2M
11	City Hall	COR/In Use	1.8	x	Poor	\$50.5M
12	4th/Broad Surface Parking Lot	COR/In Use	1.1		Good	N/A
13A	6th/Grace Surface Parking Lot	COR/In Use	1.0	x	Good	N/A
13B	6th/Franklin Parking Garage	COR/Vacant	0.5		Critical	Not maintained
14	Blues Armory Building	RRHA/Vacant	0.5		Poor	Not maintained

1: Properties surplus by City Council via Res. No. 2021-R024 on April 26, 2021.

2: Condition rating provided by Department of Public Works.

3: Cost of immediate maintenance provided by Department of Public Works.

4: The Public Safety Building was sold to a private developer in August 2021. It will be referenced in this plan, but is no longer a City of Richmond property.

See Appendix for summary of building conditions.

## Process

PDR developed the Small Area Plan over an 18-month period that included internal meetings with City staff and leadership, three public meetings, two public surveys, and several focus group interviews. At the beginning of the plan development process, the idea of including a new or renovated arena was part of the development program. However, in December 2020, Henrico County announced that they are going to build an arena-anchored project; therefore, the City removed the arena concept from the City Center program.

### Phase 1: Priorities and Preferences

During a virtual workshop in June 2020, the City shared a series of examples of revitalized downtowns with and without arenas. The survey results showed that the community generally supported a set of baseline elements (open space, office, mixed-income residential, multi-modal transportation, and gridded street network), neighborhood amenities (restaurants, cafes, grocery store, retail, and services), and community benefits (retail/office for local businesses, public open space, and equity-ownership by minorities). The survey results also showed general support for an arena, strong support for a movie theater, and little support for a resort casino in the area.

### Phase 2: Framework Alternatives

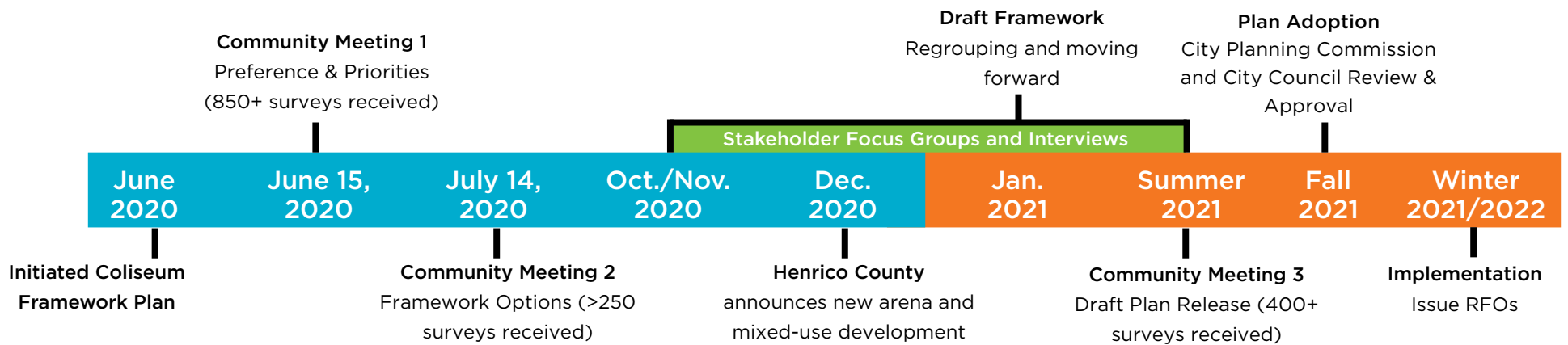
During a second virtual workshop and survey in July 2020, the City shared 3 framework alternatives that located the arena and public open space in various configurations and included recommendations for relocating City functions. The survey results and conversation during the workshop confirmed strong support for a mixed-use development and open space. Other elements that continued to need further discussion included the relocation of City government uses, the bus transfer facility, and the arena.

### Phase 3: Stakeholder Interviews

From September to November 2020, PDR conducted over 10 group interviews with property owners, non-profit organizations, community groups, elected officials, City staff, and other stakeholders with interest in the City Center area. During those interviews, PDR heard that a lot of residential units need to be added to the area to support businesses and that the housing should be at various price levels and provide rental and ownership options. Interviewees stated that flexible public open space and strong connections to adjacent neighborhoods are essential.

### Phase 4: Draft Plan

From December 2020 to May 2021, City staff developed the draft City Center Small Area Plan and released the plan for public review and comment in May 2021. The plan was revised and presented for adoption in late 2021.

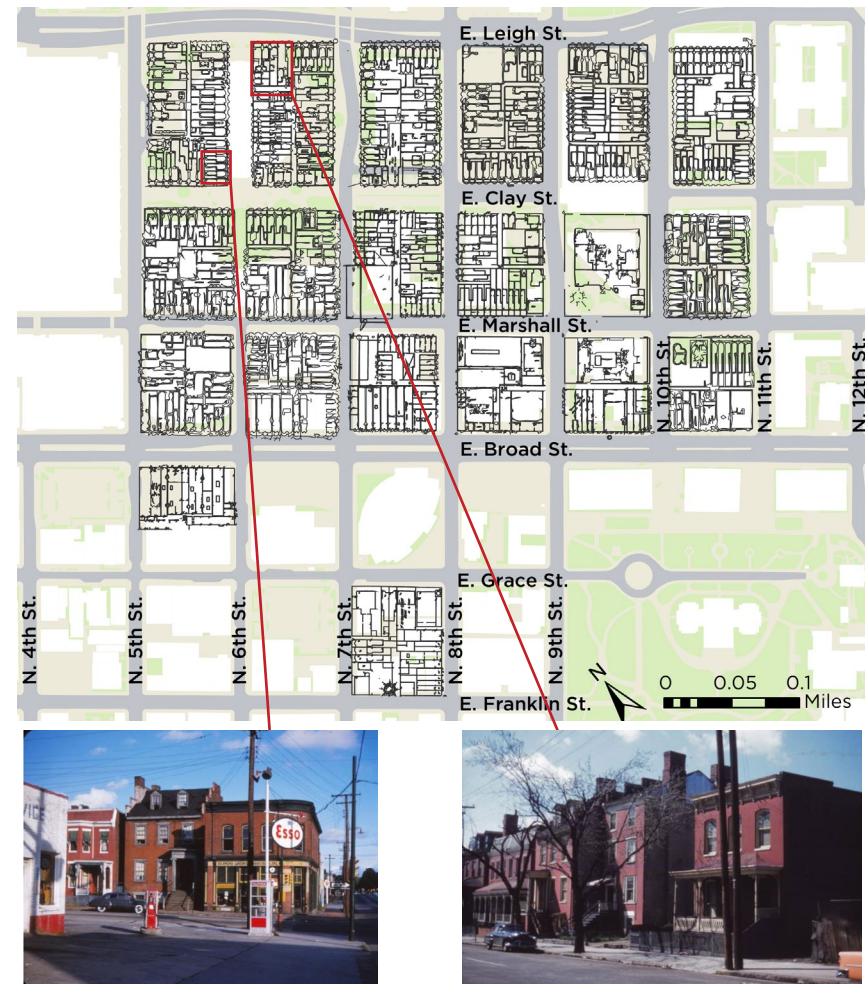


# History

Today City Center is completely unrecognizable from its land use and urban form 100 years ago (Figure 3). Annexed by the City in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area blossomed due to its proximity to important buildings like the State Capitol. Broad Street soon became the City's most critical commercial center – especially after the burning of Main Street during the Civil War and as it developed into the central corridor for the streetcar system implemented in the late 1880s.

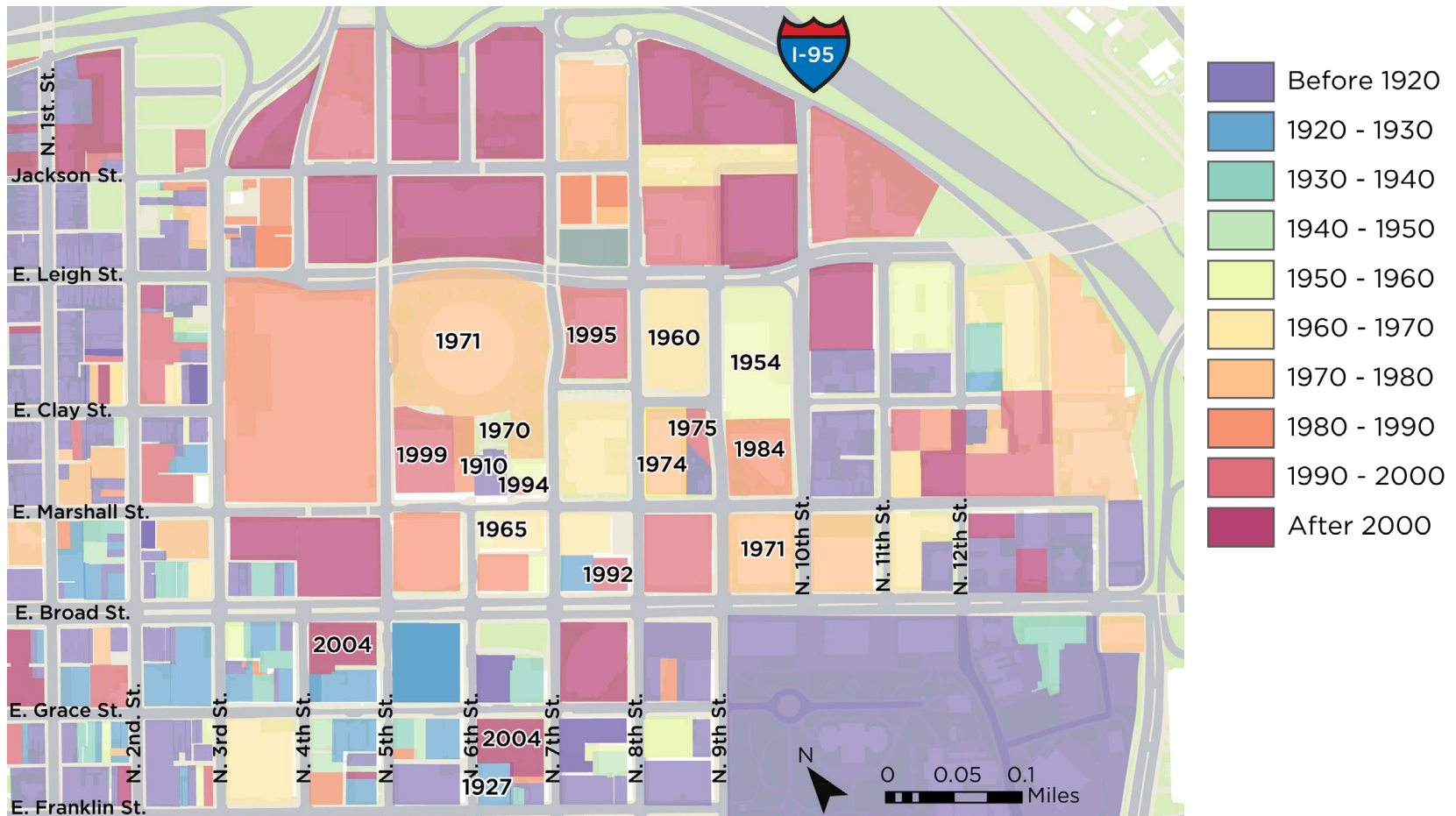
Post-Reconstruction Era, “Jackson Ward” was created as a political boundary meant to neutralize the new voting power of the recently-emancipated Blacks. Jackson Ward - located generally west of N. 3rd Street - and its surrounding areas, over the next few decades, became a thriving center for Black businesses and entertainment due to events like the establishment of Maggie Walker’s Consolidated Bank & Trust and the opening of the Hippodrome Theater. As segregation and Jim Crow policies expanded, Broad Street became an entertainment hub for white Richmonders, especially from N. 7th to N. 9th Streets – coined “Theater Row.” Department stores, notably Thalhimers and Miller & Rhoads, were the cornerstone of Downtown retail throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

As the city’s development expanded further from the original Downtown areas, white residents moving to the periphery, known as “white flight,” became the norm. From the turn of the century until the 1950s, Downtown’s racial composition shifted from majority-white to majority-black. Nevertheless, the development of the City’s first Master Plan, the creation of all-Black public housing, and the construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (now I-95) all had a hand in displacing thousands of Black residents and destroying their homes within and adjacent to City Center. Demand for parking in Downtown increased with the rise of the automobile and continued white flight to Henrico and Chesterfield Counties; many buildings, such as the 6th Street Market and John Marshall High School’s track field, as well as homes and businesses,



**FIGURE 3 // 1924 Block Layout and 1955 Site Photographs**  
Source: 1924 Sanborn Insurance Maps (Library of Virginia); The Valentine Museum





**FIGURE 4 // Year of Construction for Existing Buildings**

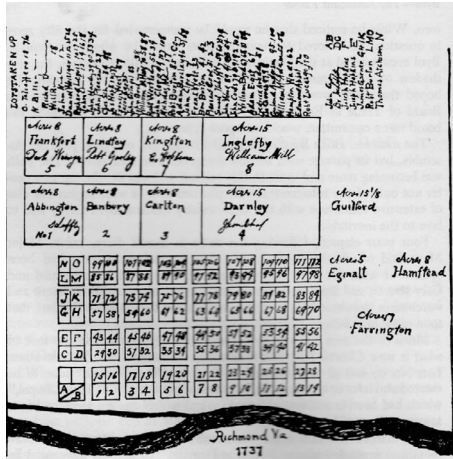
Source: City of Richmond Assessor's Office

were converted into parking garages or demolished and turned into surface parking lots to serve the Downtown commuters and customers.

The growing pace of white flight to the counties had increasingly negative economic impacts for Downtown and the city as a whole. As Henrico and Chesterfield's populations boomed, politicians and planners in Richmond attempted strategies to regain prominence and population, such as the 1970 Chesterfield annexation, the building of the Coliseum in 1971, a new 6th Street Marketplace in 1985, and the Convention Center in 1986 (Figure 4). Ultimately, City Center & Richmond suffered in the late decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and into the 2000s. Over the past century, communities, homes, and residents were displaced and replaced with

large, non-residential buildings and a Downtown that would only be inhabited from "9 to 5."

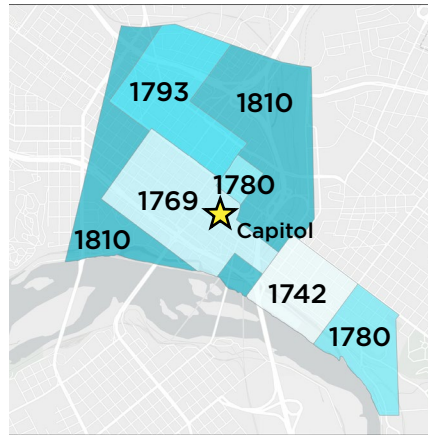
# Major Downtown Richmond Milestones



1737 Shockoe Plat

## 1737

Richmond is founded and the city is platted by Major William Mayo for William Byrd II. The streets and blocks run parallel to the James River and encompass an area of only 0.23 square miles.



Annexations

## 1742

King George II grants a charter to William Byrd II to establish Richmond as a town.

## 1769

Areas west of the original town boundaries are annexed, going as far west as today's 1st Street.

## 1788

John Marshall House is built (N. 9th and E. Marshall). Marshall lives there until his death in 1835. Today, it's one of the last remaining structures in Downtown built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



John Marshall House

## 1782

Richmond is incorporated as a city with a population of 1,800 - half of whom are enslaved people or free Africans.

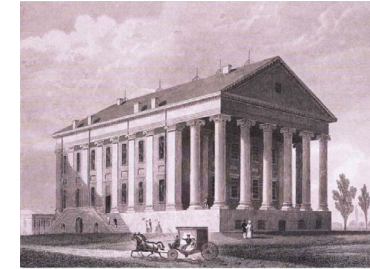
## 1780

The state capitol is moved from Williamsburg to Richmond.

The area just North of the Capitol is annexed.

## 1792

The Virginia Capitol building is completed.



Virginia State Capitol

## 1793

Much of present-day Jackson Ward and Gilpin Court are annexed, generally Monroe to N. 9th above E. Broad.

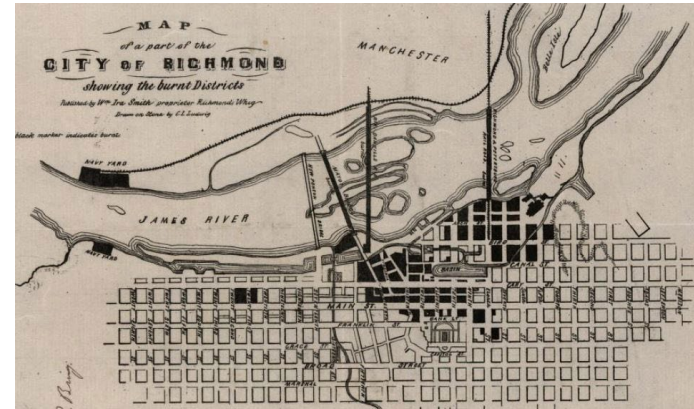
After the success of the 17th Street Marketplace, the City unsuccessfully attempts to establish a second market, Shockoe Market Hall, at E. Broad and 12th.

## 1810

Richmond annexes a little under 1 square mile from Henrico, including much of present-day Downtown.

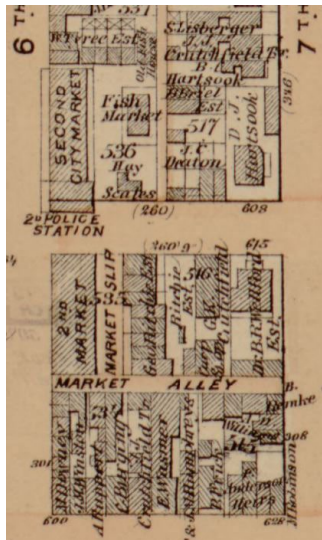


New Market



Areas burnt in Confederate Evacuation

1865



Market at N. 6th and E. Marshall

1816

A "New" or "Second" market is established at the southeast corner of N. 6th and E. Marshall.

1820

1834

The Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad becomes the first railroad to enter the City with a station located at N. 8th and E. Broad Streets.

The Second Market is expanded across E. Marshall Street. It becomes the largest market in Richmond by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

1844

The Medical Department of Hampden-Sydney College (now part of VCU Health) moves into its first building, the Egyptian Building (E. Marshall and College St.)



Egyptian Building

1840

1854

Southgate Farm is subdivided and dozens of lots are sold between N. 3rd Street and N. 6th Street, north of Jackson Street. This area becomes mainly inhabited by German immigrants and later, black residents. It's then known as "Navy Hill" to honor the soldiers of the War of 1812.

1845

H Street is renamed Broad Street, as it had become a place of convergence for the major north-south and east-west streets in the region with its unusual width.

1850



Map showing original Navy Hill

1860

Much of the Main Street commercial corridor is burned in a fire set by Confederate Troops evacuating the City at the end of the Civil War. Consequently, the Broad Street corridor, which included the 6th Street Market, becomes the premiere commercial core.

## 1867

Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church is organized by Rev. John Jasper and moves to its current site on Duval Street in 1869. The present church is built in 1887. The site was threatened by the construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike in the 1950s, but was saved due to Rev. Jasper's fame. Today, it's the only building remaining on the north side of Duval Street.



Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church

The streetcar helped create neighborhoods further from Downtown that carried racial deed restrictions. By the mid-1920's, black residents had taken over older, formerly-white areas in Downtown.



Streetcar on Broad Street

## 1869

Richmond Public Schools are created. Navy Hill School (N. 6th and Duval) had unofficially been operating as a school for Black children with Black teachers before this date. For many years, Navy Hill School was the only school in the city with Black faculty.

## 1888

Miller, Rhoads, and Gerhart (later Miller & Rhoads Department Store) opens at 509 E. Broad.

## 1871

Jackson Ward is created in an attempt to contain and neutralize the voting power of Richmond's recently emancipated Black population, leading to increased racial empowerment. Though it was thought to be originally named for Stonewall Jackson, the sesquicentennial celebration in 2021 re-contextualized the neighborhood by honoring Giles B. Jackson, a black resident of Jackson Ward who was born enslaved but later became the first black person to practice law before the Supreme Court of Virginia, among other achievements.

## 1889

Streetcar system is implemented, connecting Richmonders further from Downtown. Broad Street was the center of the elaborate streetcar network.



Hippodrome Theater

## 1914

The Hippodrome Theater (N. 2nd and E. Leigh) opens as a vaudeville and movie theater for Black performers, later becoming a celebrated musical locale attracting legendary greats, such as Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington. It becomes an anchor for entertainment in Jackson Ward.

## 1890

By 1890, Richmond's development had shifted westward to the point where Broad Street replaced Main Street as the main corridor for commercial activity.

## 1910

Blues Armory is built as the headquarter for the Richmond Light Infantry Blues - one of the nation's most historic military units. It served as a multi-level building that housed a public market at the bottom floor.

## 1909

John Marshall High School (N. 8th and E. Marshall) is opened. The building is demolished in 1961.

## 1906

The General Assembly mandates segregation on public transit.



Theater Row

## 1905

Maggie L. Walker founds Consolidated Bank & Trust (N. 1st and E. Marshall), the oldest surviving Black-operated bank in the U.S. She becomes the first woman bank president.

## 1904

After the Virginia Passenger and Power Company announces that it would segregate streetcars, the Richmond Streetcar Boycott begins & lasts until 1906.

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the north side of E. Broad between N. 7th and N. 9th Streets developed into "Theater Row," with notable theaters like The Bijou, The National, and The Colonial Theater. This area became a hub for entertainment such as movies and live performances.



Gilpin Court

Jackson Ward was known as “Black Wall Street” and “Harlem of the South” due to the thriving Black businesses and entertainment venues. During its heyday from the 1920s through the 1940s, it was one of the most active and well-known centers of African-American life throughout the U.S., and the hub of black professional and entrepreneurial activities in the city and the state.

**1922**

Thalhimer’s moves to its final location on E. Broad between N. 6th and N. 7th.

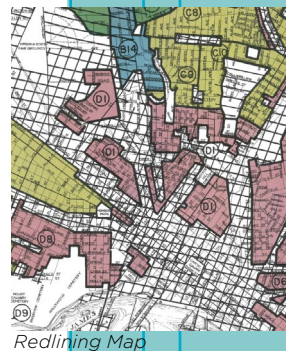
The National Theater is built at N. 7th and E. Broad.

1920

1930

**1937**

The Home Owner’s Loan Corporation creates “residential security maps” detailing areas where the federal government should and should not give home loans. The consequences led to the phenomenon of ‘redlining,’ where black-majority areas were denied loans.



Redlining Map

1940

**1940**

Richmond Housing Authority (now called the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority) is established through a New Deal program.

**1942**

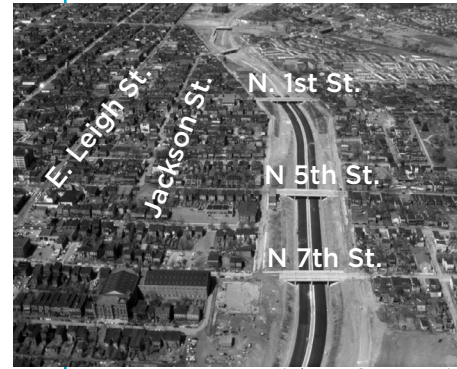
St. Louis planning consultant Harland Bartholomew is tasked with overhauling the City’s Zoning Ordinance. He creates specific districts for large single-family homes, known as exclusionary zoning. The majority-black areas in Downtown are surrounded by Industrial Zoning.

**1943**

The first public housing project in Richmond, Gilpin Court, starts construction in the area formerly known as “Apostle Town.” Because it was funded by the federal government, wartime efforts meant that the new housing would only allow defense workers. Only 25 of the original residents of this area qualified to live here, displacing hundreds of Black Richmonders.

**1946**

The first citywide, long-range Master Plan for the City of Richmond is completed by Harland Bartholomew and adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council.



Highway Construction

**1957**

Construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (now part of I-95) is complete and Jackson Ward, a historically Black neighborhood, is divided by a major highway - resulting in the demolition of a significant portion of the neighborhood. The project displaced 10% of the city’s Black population at the time.

After World War II, the ubiquity of the automobile and federal loan programs fuel white flight to the suburbs, causing an influx of black residents in those formerly-white areas.

Downtown Population: 28,329\*

27,335

**1948**

The streetcars cease operation and many are burned and replaced with buses.

**1950**

The first 10 professional Black firefighters are hired by the City to work at Engine Company No. 9 Fire Station (N. 5th and Jackson).

1950

17,547

**1960**

John Marshall High School is closed. The site becomes a Federal building. The athletic fields are turned into a surface parking lot (N. 8th/E. Leigh).

**1965**

Navy Hill School is closed.

**1964**

The 6th St. Marketplace is replaced with a parking garage.

1960

\*Census tracts generally between Belvidere to the west, train tracks N. of Gilpin to the north, James River to the south, and I-95 to the east

**1968**

Engine Company No. 9 Fire Station is demolished.



*Construction of Covention Center*

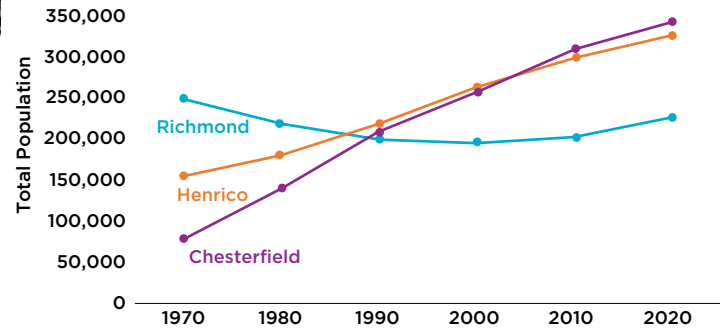
**1985**

The ground floor of the Blues Armory is converted to retail and restaurant space for the 6th Street Marketplace (N. 6th, E. Clay St., E. Marshall St.).



*Opening of 6th Street Marketplace*

After the 1970 annexation, Richmond's population began to decline as Henrico and Chesterfield's populations skyrocketed over the next several decades. Directly related to the population decline was the City's tax revenue and the decline of Downtown itself. Only recently has Richmond seen a resurgence in population.



**1971**

City Hall is built at N. 9th and E. Broad. The 13,000-seat Coliseum was completed, stretching 2 city blocks. It was in operation until 2018.

**1976**

The Blues Armory is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**1986**

The Richmond Convention Center is built (E. Marshall, N. 4th, and N. 5th Streets).

**1990**

Miller & Rhoads Dept. Store closes its doors.

**1977**

Henry L. Marsh becomes the first black mayor of Richmond, and 5 of 9 City Council seats are won by Black Richmonders.



*Closing of Thalheimer's*

**1992**

Thalheimer's Dept. Store closes its doors.

**1995**

VA Bio+Tech Park opens, eventually housing public and private life sciences companies, research institutes, and state and national medical laboratories.

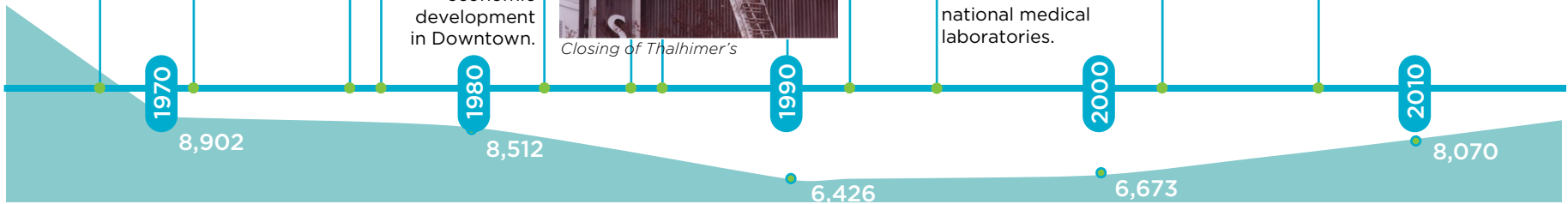
**2003**

The Greater Richmond Convention Center is expanded, now spanning 6 blocks.

**2007**

The 6th Street Marketplace closes.

As white flight to Henrico and Chesterfield increased the proportion of black residents in Richmond, white politicians wanted to prevent increased black political clout. In 1970, they annexed 23 sq. mi. of Chesterfield to dilute the black population, adding 47,000 mostly white residents. Overnight, the black population decreased from 52% to 42%.



# Existing Conditions

## Demographics

For the purposes of this plan, Downtown includes Census Tracts 302 and 305 (Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9). Downtown has had a recent resurgence in population since its lowest point in 1990. Today, almost all of the population in Downtown lives west of N. 4th Street. A large portion of the Downtown population in Monroe Ward is likely VCU students, since the Monroe Park Campus is adjacent to the western boundary. From 2000 to 2019, the share of people ages 18-34 increased from 50.8% to 73.2% (Figure 6). In the block group that includes Jackson Ward (E. Broad, N. 3rd, N. Belvidere, I-95), non-Hispanic white is the minority. However, an increase in the non-Hispanic white population has been the trend in Downtown overall since 2000 (Figure 5). Asians are overrepresented in Downtown, compared to the Richmond City share of Asians (2.1%). Educational attainment throughout Downtown has also increased since 2000. For the first time, the majority of adults over 25 in Downtown had at least a Bachelor's degree in 2019.

FIGURE 5 // Race and Ethnicity in Downtown, 2000-2019

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014-2019); Census 2000, 2010

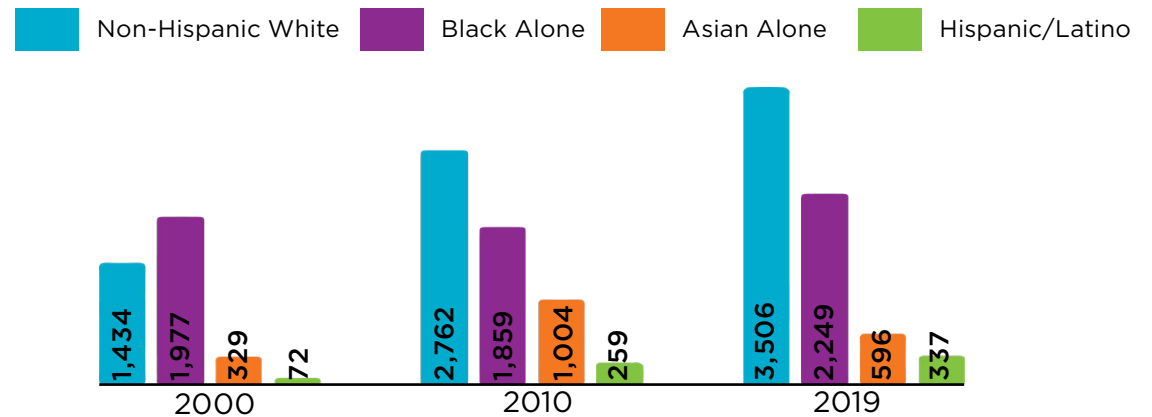
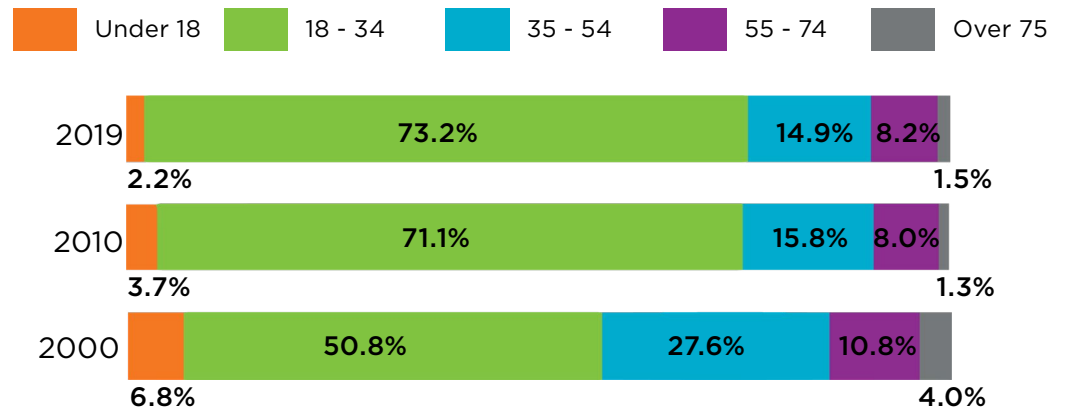


FIGURE 6 // Age Breakdown in Downtown, 2000-2019

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014-2019); Census 2000, 2010



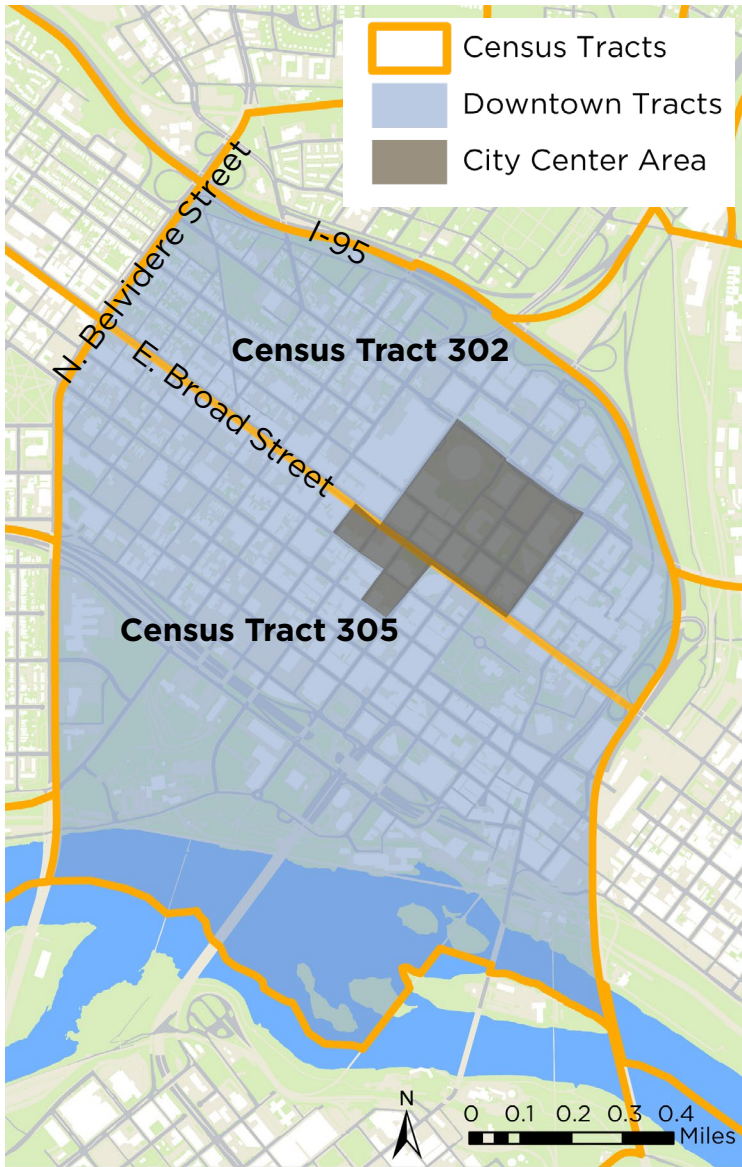


FIGURE 7 // Census Tract Map

FIGURE 8 // Selected Demographic Indicators for Tract 302, 2000-2019

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014-2019); Census 2000, 2010

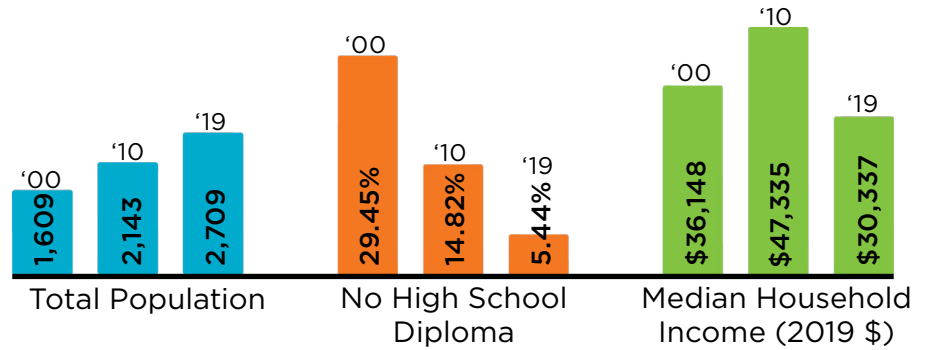
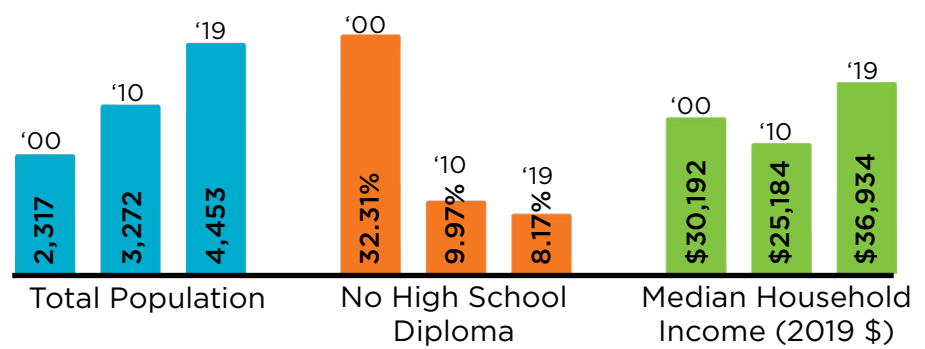


FIGURE 9 // Selected Demographic Indicators for Tract 305, 2000-2019

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014-2019); Census 2000, 2010





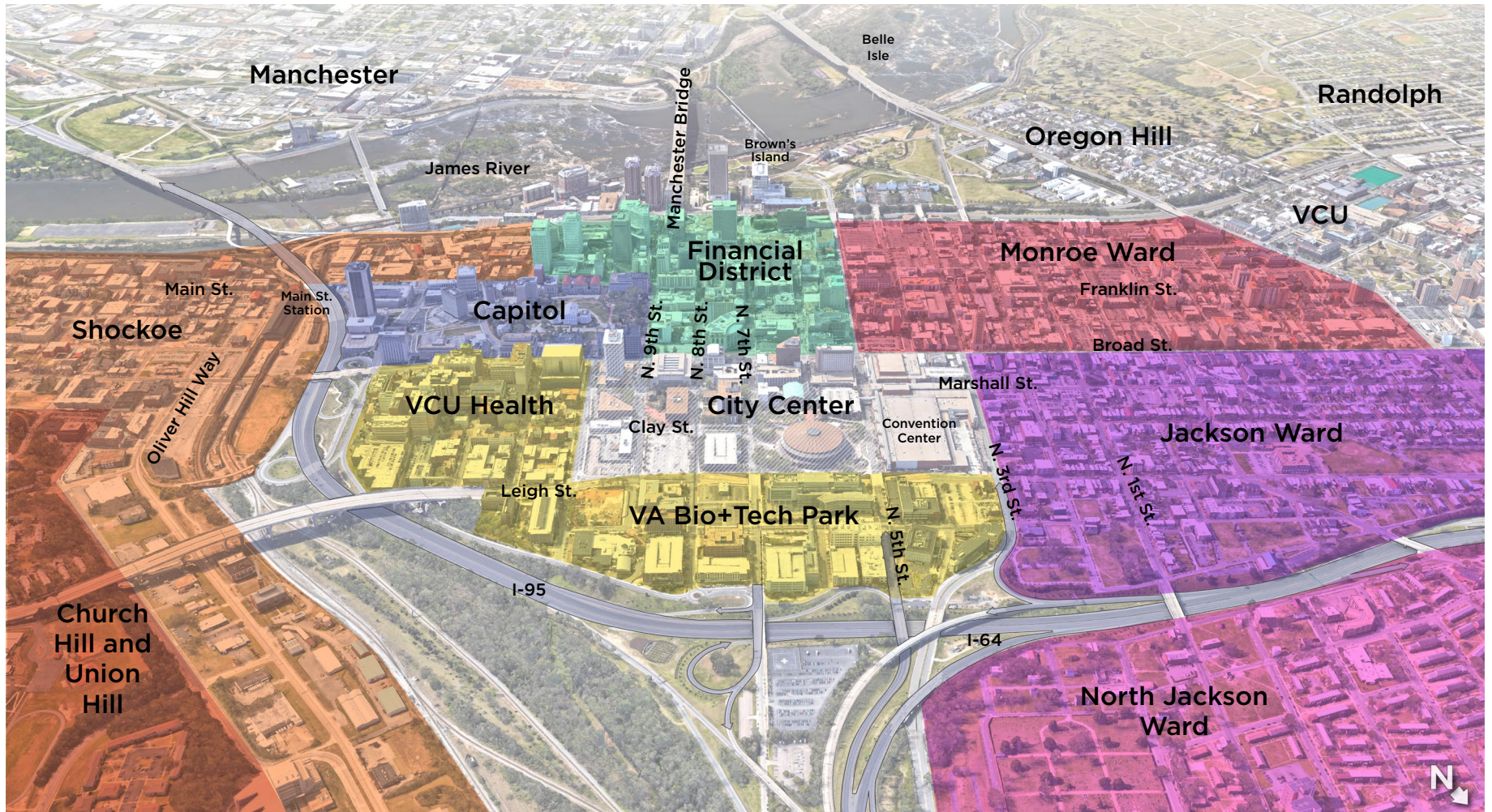


FIGURE 10 // **Adjoining Neighborhoods Map**

## Adjoining Neighborhoods

City Center is a void surrounded by established neighborhoods (Figure 10). To the west of the Convention Center is historic Jackson Ward and Gilpin Court north of I-95/64. To the south is the State Capitol and other State government buildings, and further west is Monroe Ward. To the east is VA Bio+Tech Park

and the VCU Health campus. Beyond I-95 is Shockoe Bottom, and further east is Church Hill and Union Hill.

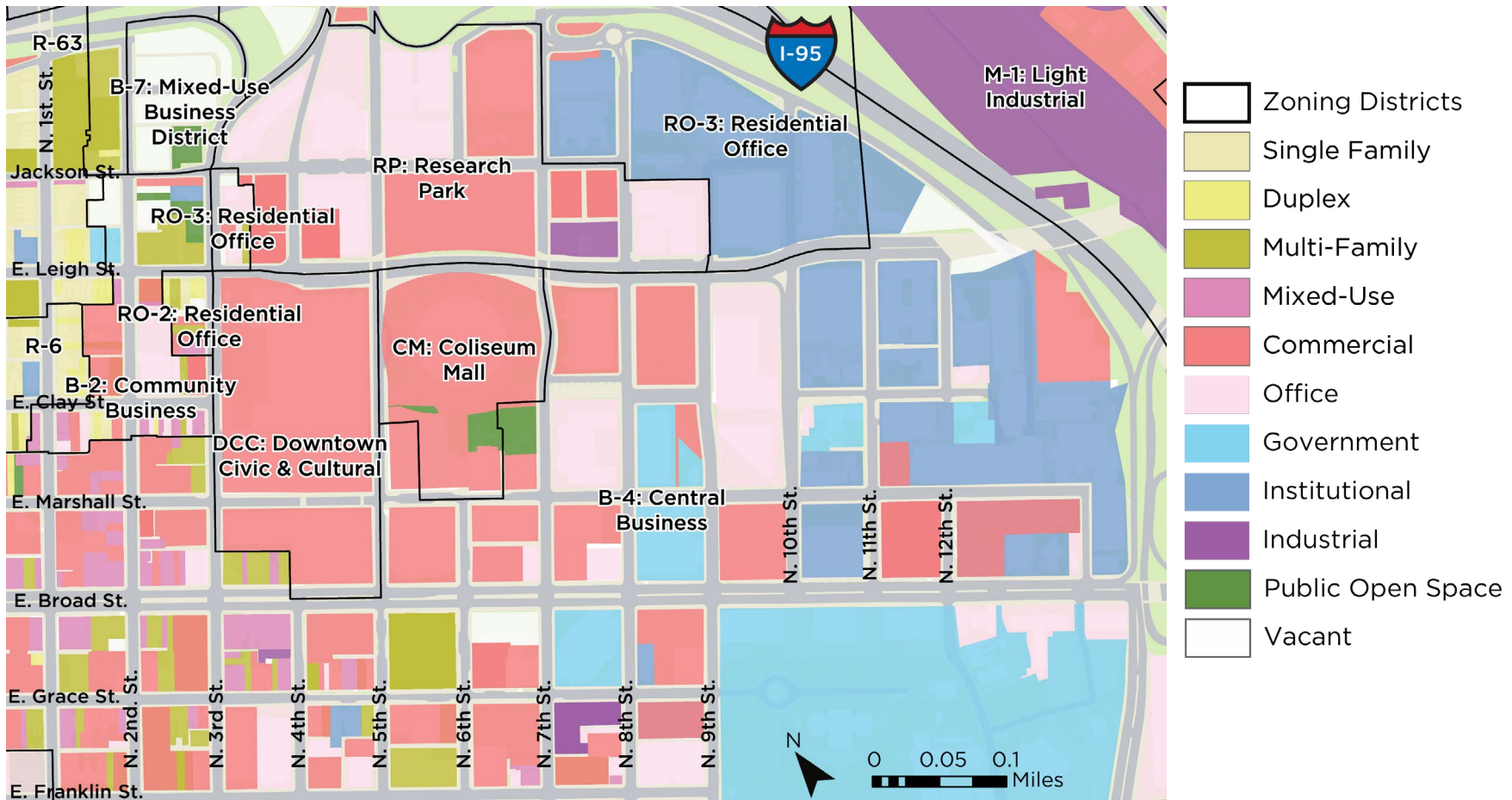


FIGURE 11 // Current Land Use & Zoning

Source: City of Richmond Appraisal Office

## Current Land Use & Zoning

Land uses in this area are mostly commercial, government, and office (Figure 11). The area lacks residential uses, so it is mostly uninhabited outside of typical work hours. There are notable local, state, and federal government uses, including City Hall, the State Capitol, and federal office buildings. Several of the parcels have surface parking lots or parking decks. The Richmond Coliseum, closed since December 2018, is vacant. The Coliseum has its own

Coliseum Mall [CM] zoning district, and the Convention Center is within the Downtown Cultural and Civic [DCC] zoning district. The rest of Downtown, south of E. Leigh Street, is zoned B-4: Central Business. The surrounding areas have less intense Residential Office [RO] and Community Business [B-2] zoning. Some of the Biotech buildings north of E. Leigh are zoned Research Park [RP].

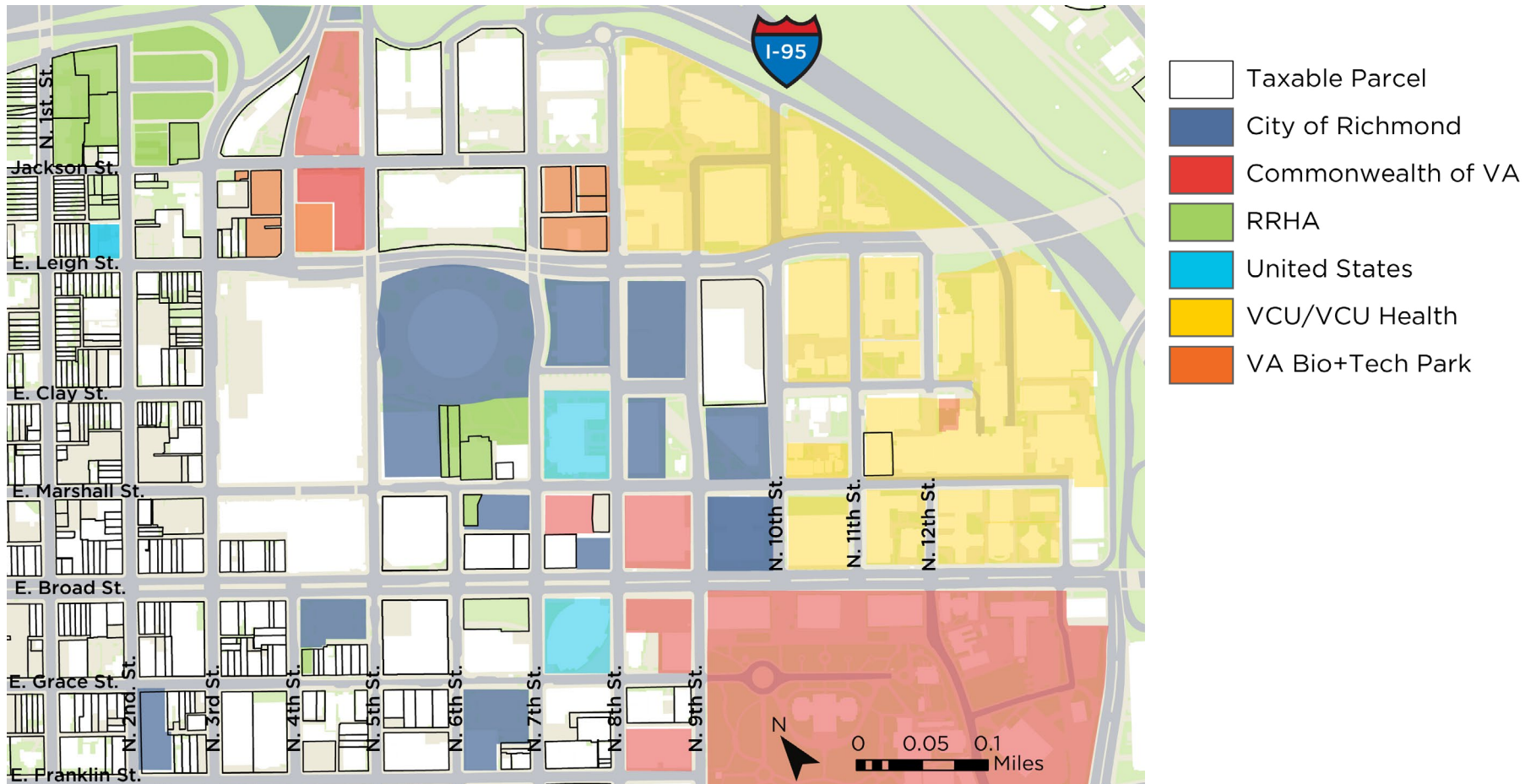


FIGURE 12 // Ownership and Taxable Status

### Major Tenants

Most of the parcels in the area are tax-exempt because they are owned by the city, state, or federal government (Figure 12). The most notable owner is the City of Richmond, controlling the majority of parcels between N. 5th, E. Broad, N. 10th, and E. Leigh Streets. The Commonwealth of Virginia owns the Library of Virginia and a State-owned parking deck. Meanwhile, VCU Health owns most of the parcels east of N. 10th Street. VA Bio+Tech Park owns a handful of parcels north of E. Leigh. The IRS building

and the U.S. District Court are federally-owned. The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) owns six parcels south of the Coliseum, including the Blues Armory, none of which are tax-exempt. Other privately-owned parcels include the Marriott Hotel and a few other LLCs.

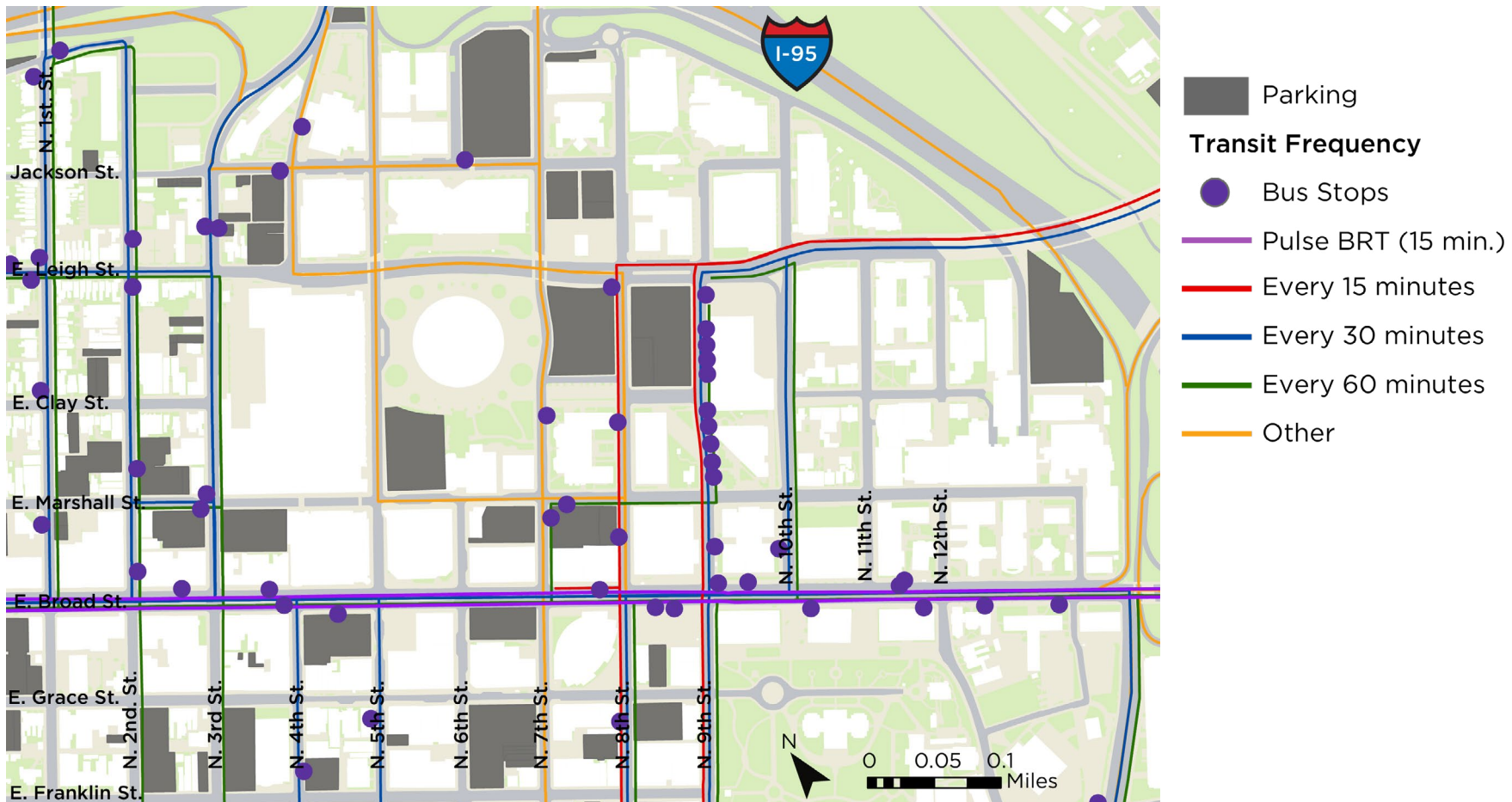


FIGURE 13 // Transit Infrastructure

## Transit Infrastructure Network

Although the area is next to walkable neighborhoods, there are many barriers to walkability in the area. I-64/95 is a barrier to the north and east; extreme changes in elevation south and east may inhibit some pedestrians. The ‘superblocks’ created by the Coliseum and Convention Center act as a barrier as well. Grade changes adjacent to the Coliseum on E. Leigh Street and E. Clay Street make walking on those streets uninviting and/or unsafe. Pedestrian and bike amenities are lacking in this area. With the

lack of greenspace and abundance of surface parking lots and other impermeable surfaces, walking in the heat can be unpleasant and even hazardous for vulnerable populations.

This area sits at the convergence of many Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) bus routes, including the Pulse Bus Rapid Transit line. N. 8th, N. 9th, and N. 10th Streets all have multiple GRTC routes (Figure 13).

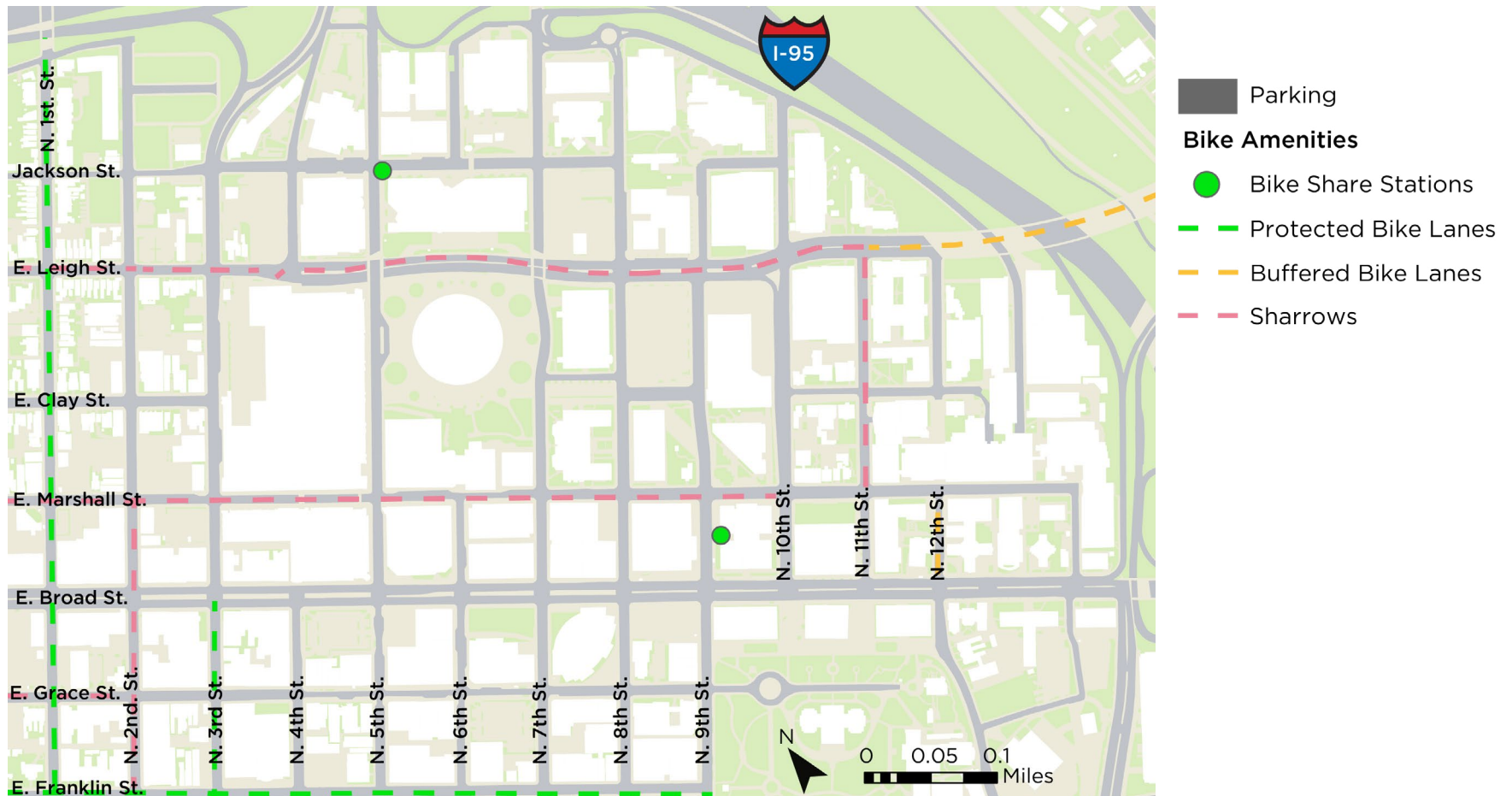


FIGURE 14 // Bicycle Infrastructure

## Bicycle Infrastructure Network

Even as central core of Downtown Richmond, City Center's bicycle infrastructure can feel as if it doesn't provide enough for bikers. Franklin Street has continuous protected bike lanes from N. Belvidere to the State Capitol at N. 9th Street, and as does N. 3rd Street from E. Franklin to E. Broad Street. There are buffered bike lanes on the MLK Bridge which connects to E. Leigh Street at N. 11th Street and goes over I-95 to Union Hill, as well as on N. 12th Street from E. Broad to E. Marshall Street. Otherwise, the other

bike infrastructure in this area is sharrows: going south on N. 2nd Street; going north on N. 11th Street; going west on E. Leigh Street; and going east on E. Marshall Street. There are a couple of bike share stations located at the N. 9th Street entrance at City Hall and at VA Bio+Tech Park on N. 5th Street.

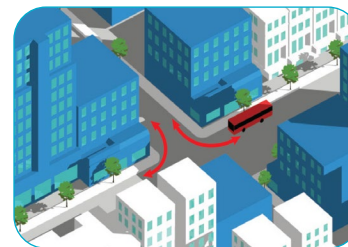
# Existing Plans

## Pulse Corridor Plan (2017)

The Pulse Corridor Plan directs future development at key nodes along the Pulse Bus Rapid Transit line. City Center is located in the Government Center Station Area which the plan envisions to evolve into a 24-hour neighborhood with “new development that matches the intensity of existing buildings but also includes active ground floor uses that enliven the sidewalks, and creates real opportunity to more fully engage the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park and VCU Health campuses with the balance of Downtown.” The station area recommendations for the Government Center Station Area and the other Downtown Station Areas include:

- **SA.40:** Develop a small area plan for the opportunity area around the VCU Medical Center, the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park, Blues Armory, the Coliseum, and City-owned land. Include VCU Health and the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park in the planning process. Explore public-private/non-profit partnerships to redevelop properties to make the area a dynamic live-work environment.
- **SA.44:** Reconnect the street grid as opportunities present themselves in order to establish a more fine-grained street pattern, while preserving the existing gridded street network by not closing any additional streets in the Downtown core.
- **SA.45:** Using City-owned lots, especially in the opportunity area around the Coliseum and the lot across from the Convention Center, develop affordable housing with a mix of uses.

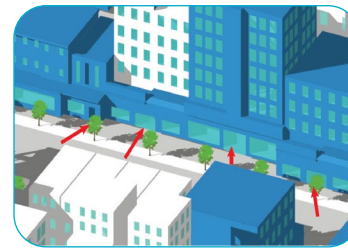
- **SA.46:** Continue to develop the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park area by attracting biotech companies to the Biotech Research Park.



*Hold the Corner*



*Appropriate Setbacks/Stepbacks*



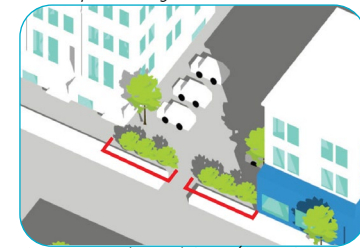
*Entrance Faces the Street*



*Transparency*



*Façade Articulation*



*Screened Parking/Services*

FIGURE 15 // Six Form Elements from Pulse Plan

## Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth (2020)

*Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* is a plan to create a more equitable, sustainable, and beautiful future for all Richmonders; so that when Richmond celebrates its 300<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2037, Richmonders can collectively see how equity- and sustainability-centered actions resulted in a beautiful city where all Richmonders thrive. The Department of Planning and Development Review (PDR) developed this new citywide Master Plan with extensive community engagement to plan for and guide Richmond's future growth. Richmond 300 includes five topic visions that will guide how the city should physically grow over the next 20 years. The Guiding Principles for the City Center Plan are based on these topic visions:



**High-Quality Places:** 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.



**Equitable Transportation:** Richmond prioritizes the movement of people over the movement of vehicles through a safe, reliable, equitable, and sustainable transportation network.



**Diverse Economy:** Richmond is home to a variety of businesses and industries that offer opportunities for quality employment and capital investment.



**Inclusive Housing:** Richmond is a city where all people can access quality housing choices.



**Thriving Environment:** Richmond is a sustainable and resilient city with healthy air, clean water and a flourishing ecosystem.

Richmond 300 identifies five Priority Growth Nodes where the City is encouraging the most significant growth in population and development over the next 20 years. City Center is located within the Downtown Core Node. The Primary Next Steps for achieving the vision for this node from *Richmond 300* include:

- **Coliseum Plan:** Develop the Coliseum Area Framework Plan with community engagement.
- **Coliseum Redevelopment:** Create and issue a Request for Proposals for the Coliseum area using the guidance from the Coliseum Area Framework Plan to reposition City-owned assets into revenue-generating properties.
- **Life Sciences Cluster:** Market and expand growth opportunities for life science-focused businesses and supporting entities clustered near VA Bio+Tech Park and VCU Health (Goal 11).
- **Downtown Marketing & Services:** Continue to market Downtown as the cultural, business, government, and recreation destination of the Richmond Region and support cleaning, event, and placemaking services throughout Downtown.
- **Non-Car Connectivity:** Improve non-car connectivity by encouraging urban design that promotes walking, continuing to improve transit access, and developing on-street bike facilities and greenways to Jackson Ward, the Riverfront (per the Riverfront Plan), Church Hill, and other areas.

## Future Land Use

*Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* includes the Future Land Use of areas throughout the city. Future land use designations are both visionary and strategic, and include language about how the area should look and feel in the future, but do not specify what an owner can or cannot legally do with their property. Figure 18 shows the Future Land Use designations in and around City Center. Most of the City Center Area is designated as Downtown Mixed-Use.

### Downtown Mixed-Use

Central business district of the Richmond region features high-density development with office buildings, residential buildings, and a mix of complementary uses, including regional destinations in a highly-walkable urban environment.

**Development Style:** Higher-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented development encouraged on vacant or underutilized sites. Historic buildings are adapted for new uses. Future development should be urban in form and may be of larger scale than existing context. Plazas and setbacks create an engaging street life. Many buildings are vertically mixed-use. New developments continue or introduce a gridded street pattern to increase connectivity.

**Ground Floor:** Ground floor uses engage with and enliven the street. Monolithic walls are discouraged, while windows, doors, storefronts, and other features that allow transparency and interaction between building and street are encouraged. Active commercial ground floor uses required on street-oriented commercial frontages.

**Mobility:** Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access are prioritized and accommodated. Bike parking is provided. Driveway entrances are required to be off alleys whenever possible; new driveways are prohibited on priority and principal street frontages. Surface

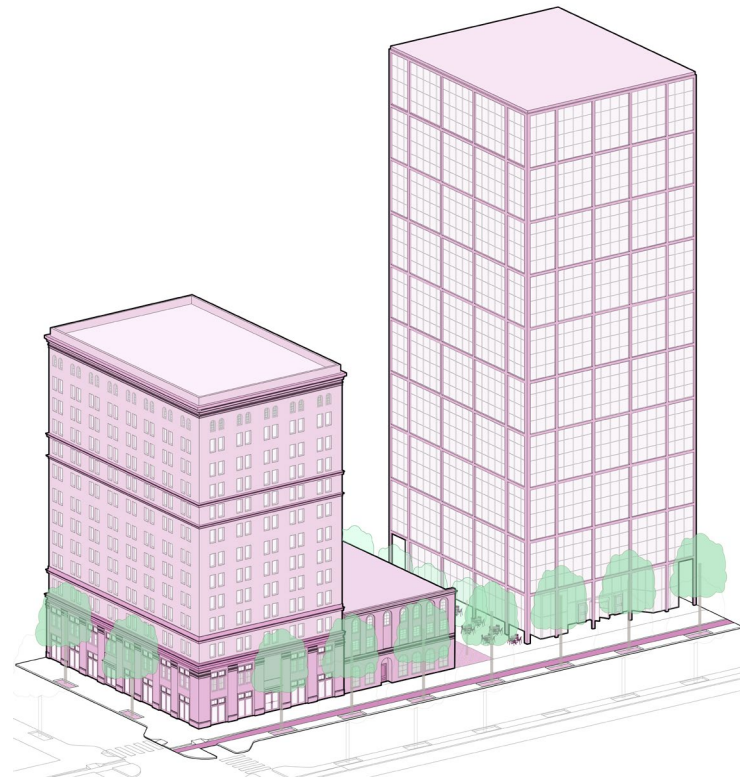


FIGURE 17 // Downtown Mixed-Use Diagram



FIGURE 16 // Downtown Mixed-Use Perspective



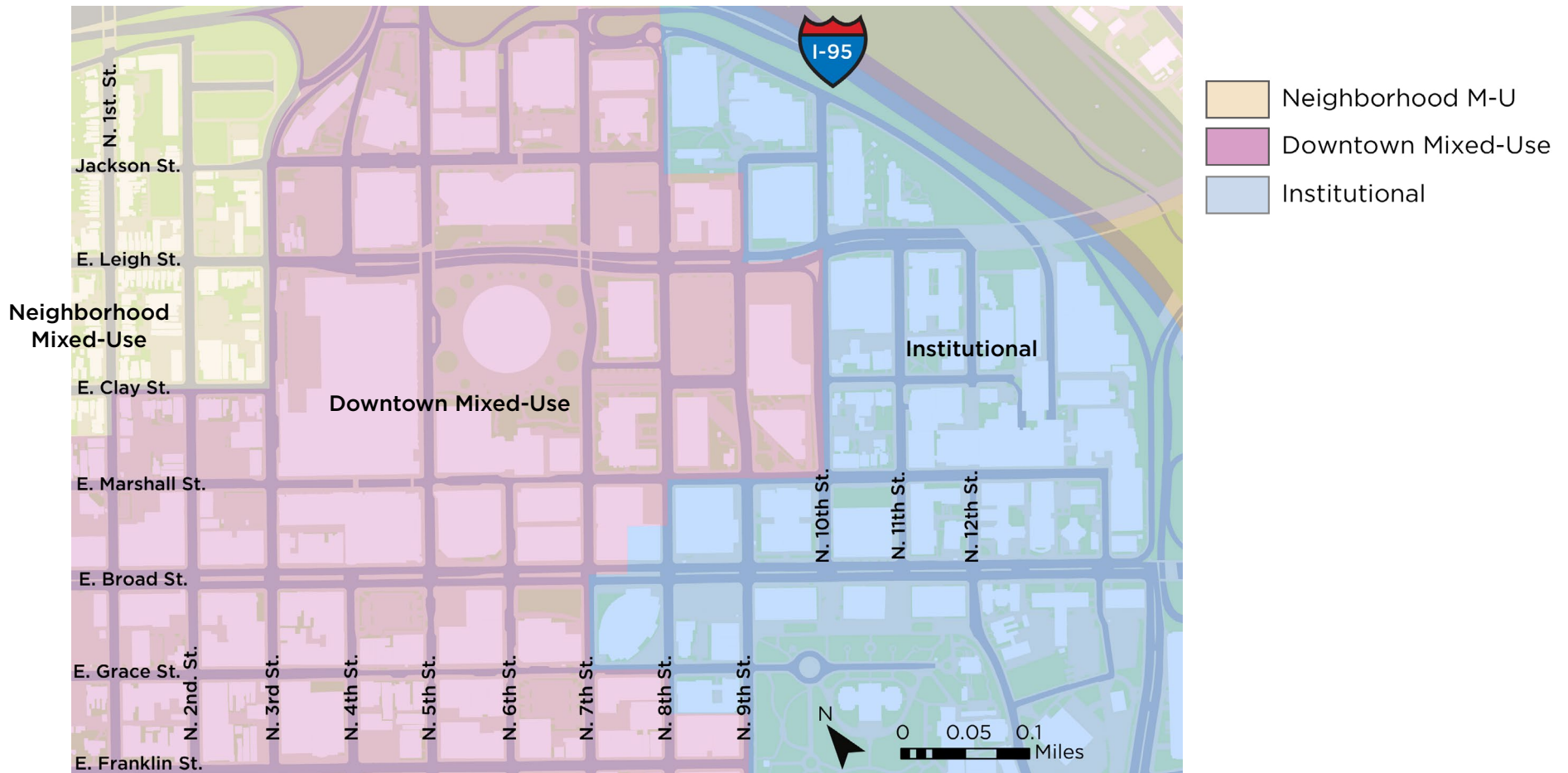


FIGURE 18 // Future Land Use Map

parking is prohibited as a principal use. Parking requirements are substantially less in these areas than other areas of the City and are largely eliminated.

**Intensity:** Buildings typically a minimum height of five stories.

**Primary Use:** Retail/office/personal service, multi-family residential, cultural, institutional, government, and open space.

# Vision and Guiding Principles

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## City Center is the right place at the right time to become Richmond's Life Sciences Innovation District.

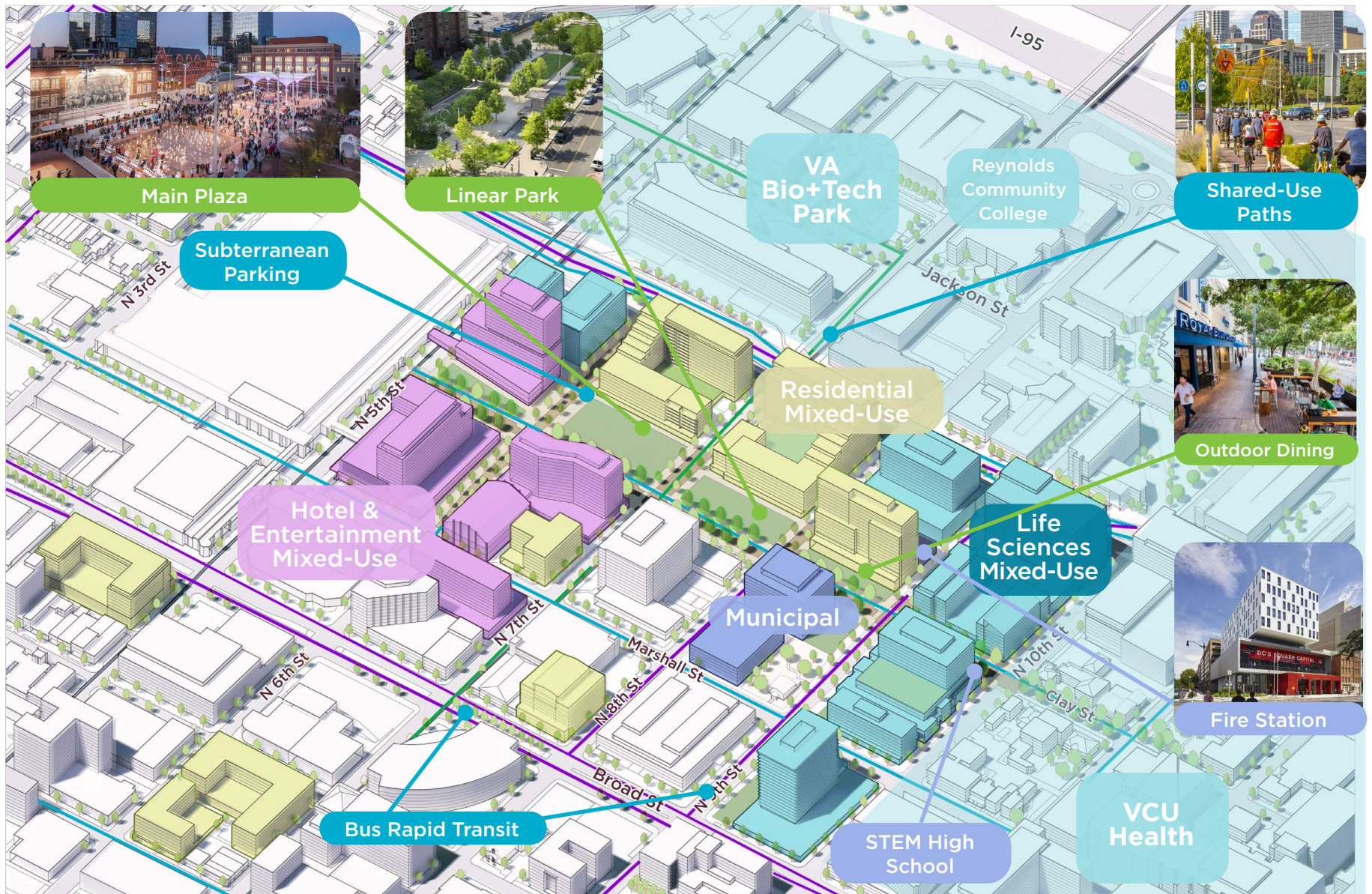
The vision for City Center is to become the engine for expanding Greater Richmond's life sciences industries. City Center will be the place to live, learn, collaborate, create, and develop new life science businesses in a high density, walkable, urban full-service environment that includes multi-modal transportation options to city and regional neighborhoods and job centers (see Figure 19).

### Guiding Principles

- **Making City Center a High-Quality Place:** Intentionally redevelop City-owned properties within City Center to create a walkable, beautiful, and distinctive Innovation District with high standards of urban design. Establish a series of connected public open spaces that enrich and enliven City Center. Integrate a diverse mix of uses to complement the surrounding context and incorporate activated ground floors to enliven the area.
- **Connecting with Safe & Equitable Transportation:** Prioritize the movement of people over the movement of vehicles through a safe, reliable, equitable, and sustainable transportation network, promoting easier and safer access to and through the City Center. Seamlessly connect City Center to Richmond neighborhoods and other nearby attractions

through enhanced pedestrian, bike, transit, and vehicular access and connectivity.

- **Diversifying City Center's Economy:** Diversify City Center's economic portfolio from primarily government uses to uses that leverage the adjacent educational institutions and VA Bio+Tech Park to create an Innovation District where these anchor institutions connect with start-ups, business incubators, accelerators, and other life science institutions. Enhance and complement existing tourist attractions through the development of hotels and entertainment venues. Provide opportunities for local, small, and minority-owned business to be a part of the redevelopment of City Center.
- **Creating Inclusive Housing Options:** Leverage City-owned properties in the City Center Innovation District to expand the availability of housing options at all income levels, increasing the number of dwellings Downtown to bring people closer to jobs and frequent transit.
- **Stimulating a Thriving Environment:** Develop City Center as a sustainable and resilient Innovation District with a built environment that enhances and protects natural assets. Reduce air and water pollution through green transportation, building and infrastructure design, and construction methods. Ensure that residents have equitable access to nature and a healthy community by increasing the tree canopy, greenspace, and access to healthy foods.



**FIGURE 19 // City Center Innovation District Conceptual Map**

*Note: The conceptual massing diagram illustrates the potential shape and scale of buildings and open space; however as these areas develop, the exact design and scale of the buildings and spaces may be different from what is depicted in this conceptual illustration. The exact location of specific uses may also adjust overtime.*

# Plan Overview

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The City Center Innovation District Plan proposes a series of development clusters. These are meant to guide future development in creating a mixed-use Innovation District. The exact location of future uses within City Center will most likely change as the implementation of the plan evolves.

## Development Clusters

**Hotel & Entertainment:** Situated adjacent to the eastern edge of the Greater Richmond Convention Center, the Hotel and Entertainment Cluster includes the development of over 800 hotel rooms (Figure 20). A Headquarters Hotel could locate on Block 1A and connect directly into the Convention Center and include active ground floor uses to engage with the open space. While the existing parking garages on Blocks 5 and 9 may remain in the near-term, these present opportunities for additional hotel and mixed-use development. Block 6 can accommodate several mixed-use buildings in addition to rehabilitating the Blues Armory Building. This cluster could incorporate other entertainment venues including a movie theater, performances spaces, and art galleries. All buildings should include active ground floor uses including retail and restaurants. Buildings should engage with the adjacent streets and open spaces to enhance the pedestrian environment.

**Residential:** City Center's redevelopment could include over 2,000 residential units with neighborhood amenities including a grocery store. Block 2 should be developed with mixed-use buildings to serve the residents and employees within City Center and the surrounding neighborhoods.

**Life Sciences and Office:** City Center will become an Innovation District to encourage the growth of entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, specifically in the Life Science fields. The Life Science and Office Cluster benefits from proximities to Reynolds Community College, VCU Health, and the VA Bio+Tech Park with mixed-use office buildings being shown near the edges of City Center in Blocks 4 and 8. This cluster also includes a public high school on Block 8 which could build partnerships with adjacent higher education institutions and life science anchors.

**Municipal:** City functions in City Center are consolidated into a site within City Center or elsewhere. A new STEM high school can be located within a mixed-use building within any of the development clusters. A fire station to serve Downtown can be included within a mixed-use building within any of the development clusters.

## Networks

**Street Network:** City Center has a gridded street network through the reintroduction of N. 6th Street from E. Broad Street to a new connector road parallel to E. Leigh Street and E. Clay Street from N. 10th Street to N. 5th Street.

**Bicycle Network:** Introduce bike lanes on E. Leigh, E. Clay, and E. Marshall Streets. The Fall Line Trail, a 43-mile shared-use path, connects City Center to Ashland & Petersburg and travels down Jackson and 7th Streets.

**Transit Network:** Continue to support transit infrastructure throughout City Center.

**Open Space Network:** Develop open spaces of varying scales on E. Clay Street and N. 9th Street.

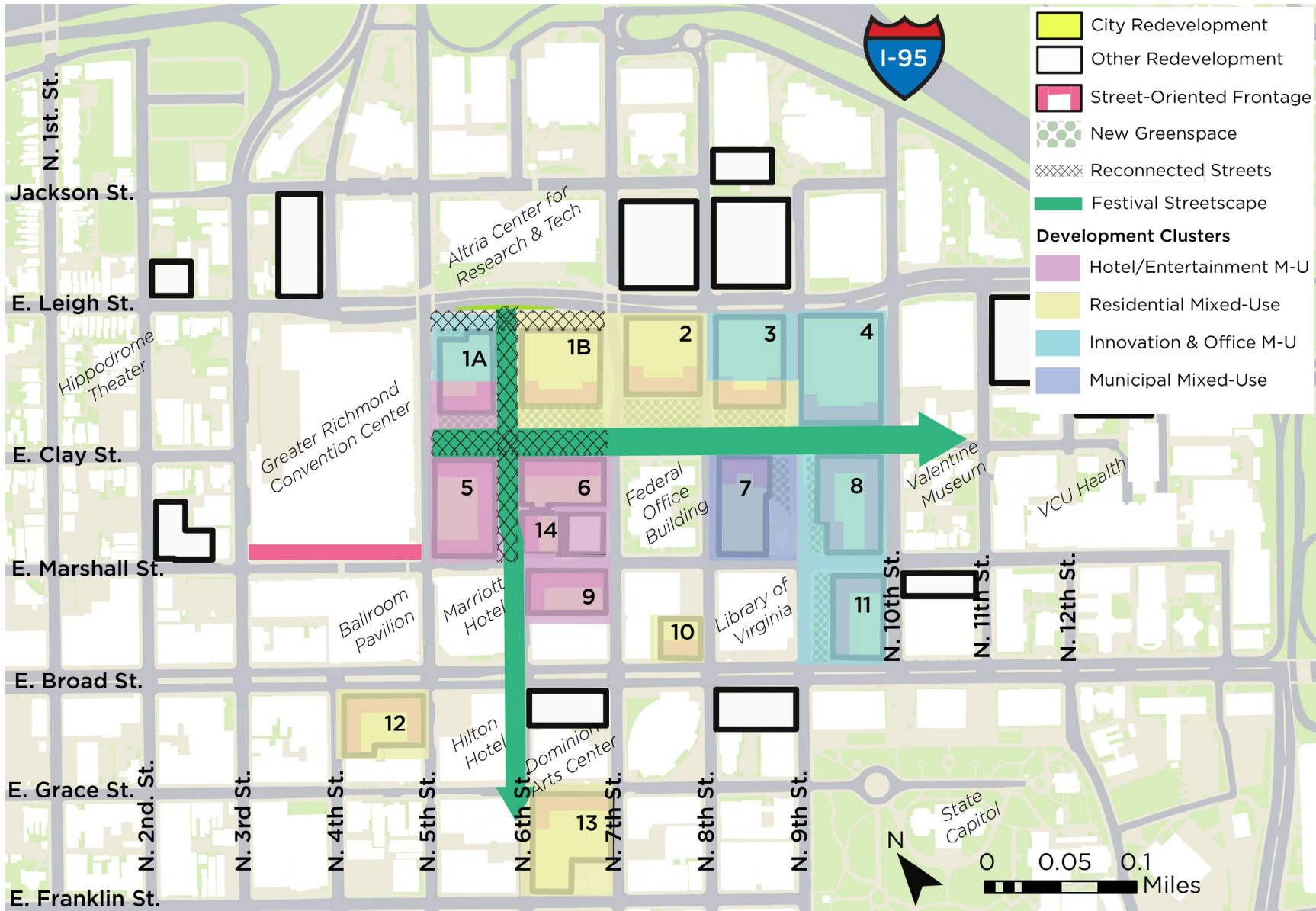


FIGURE 20 // Site Plan with Potential Development Clusters

# High-Quality Places

**Guiding Principles:** Intentionally redevelop City-owned properties within City Center to create a walkable, beautiful, and distinctive Innovation District with high standards of urban design. Establish a series of connected public open spaces that enrich and enliven City Center. Integrate a diverse mix of uses to complement the surrounding context and incorporate activated ground floors to enliven the area.

## Goal 1: City-Owned Assets

Efficiently manage City-owned land and facilities.

City Center is home to multiple City-owned assets including City Hall, the John Marshall Courts Building, the Richmond Coliseum, the 730 Building, Marshall Plaza, and multiple parking lots and garages (Figure 21). While some civic uses will remain in the area, other uses will be relocated or eliminated to allow for the redevelopment of the parcels by private parties. The majority of the City-owned structures have significant maintenance issues and continued maintenance to prolong their useful life is not appropriate (Figure 2 and Appendix A).

**Objective:** Utilize a real estate management and disposition strategy, prioritizing increasing jobs, housing, access to parks, and other basic needs of low-income and traditionally marginalized communities. (See the Equitable Development Benefits for specific goals for private development on City-owned land).

### Strategies:

- a. Continue to study the needs of City functions in this area following the release of the Department of Public Works Facilities Plan.
- b. **John Marshall Courts Building:** Explore options for a new Courts Building, including a major renovation of the existing building, rebuilding another Courts Building on the same parcel, or relocating the Courts Building elsewhere.

- c. **City Hall:** Explore options for City Hall, including a major renovation of the existing building, rebuilding another City Hall on the same parcel, or relocating City Hall elsewhere. Evaluate which City services and offices need to be located in the new City Hall building and which uses can be located elsewhere. Design City Hall to be welcoming to citizens and engage with the street. Explore incorporating amenities in to complement transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- d. **Richmond Coliseum:** Demolish the Coliseum, re-establishing the street network and city blocks that existed prior to the 1970s. Private development on the Coliseum site expand the Innovation District offerings and include significant open space.
- e. **Theater Row Building (730 E. Broad Street):** Evaluate the needs of existing City uses and potentially relocate to a centralized City Hall building and/or off-site locations to allow for the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of this building, with preservation of the building's historic facade. The Historic Richmond Foundation holds a conservation easement on this building.
- f. **Department of Social Services Building:** The City's social service delivery model is moving towards providing services within the communities they serve, and therefore a centralized DSS building at this site may no longer be needed. Some DSS services could be relocated to the City Hall building and in locations throughout the City. Private development on this site

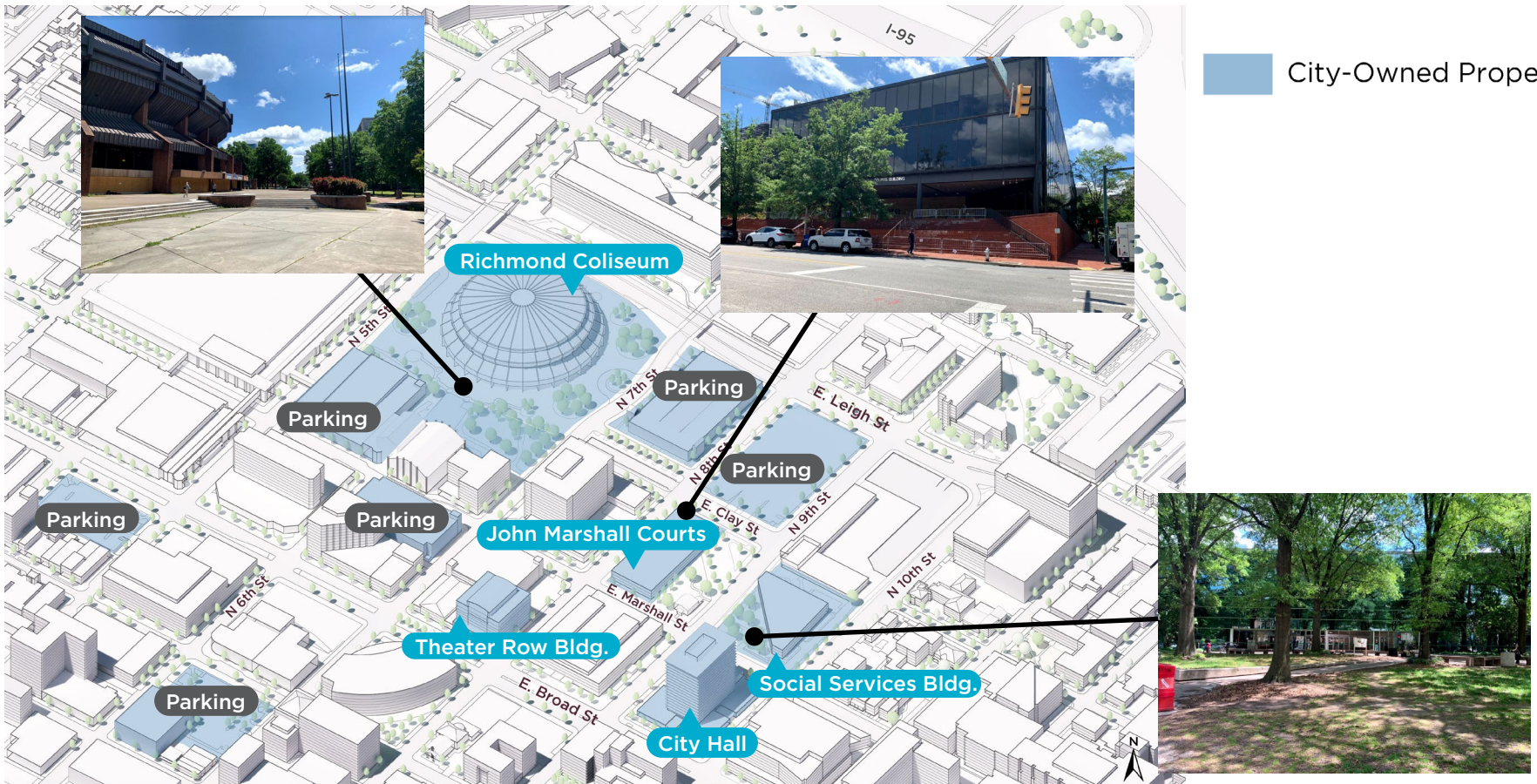


FIGURE 21 // Existing Conditions

should expand the Innovation District offerings and potentially include municipal uses as well.

- g. **Parking Lots:** Redevelop City-owned surface parking lots and parking decks to a higher and better use, while also providing multi-modal transportation options.
- h. **New Fire Station:** According to the Richmond Fire Department, “a new fire station in the center of Downtown along with a fire headquarters is needed.” To meet the demands of the increased population Downtown, a new fire station should be included in the redevelopment of City Center. At the request of the Fire

Department, it should have access to primary through-streets. This station does not need to be a standalone use and can be included in a mixed-use building.

- i. **New STEM High School:** City Center has robust post-secondary options. A STEM-focused high school within City Center Innovation District will create pathways for Richmond students to enter tech & life science careers.

## Goal 2: Open Space

Define the area with great public open spaces.

Currently, City Center's public open spaces are not activated and lack trees, plantings, and other green space. While Festival Park hosted Friday Night Cheers and other events when the Coliseum and 6th Street Marketplace were active destinations, today it sits vacant. The open space near the John Marshall Courts Building is composed of hardscaping and limited vegetation. The City Center Plan proposes to create open spaces of various scales adjacent to active uses (Figure 22). These public spaces will provide various destinations for residents, visitors, and Downtown workers.

**Objective:** Increase neighborhood and citywide access to, and through, with a well-designed network of open spaces within City Center which provide destinations for City Center residents and visitors.

### Strategies:

- a. Establish a series of connected public open spaces that enrich and enliven City Center. Program the open spaces with events throughout the year. Incorporate elements such as electrical outlets to support food trucks, playgrounds, fountains, and street furniture to make each of the spaces unique. The plan proposes three forms of open space:
  - **Large Signature Open Space:** accommodates citywide and community events (See Figure 22).
  - **Linear Open Space:** provides neighborhood amenities and regional destinations including areas for civic engagement, playgrounds, engaging public art, outdoor dining, and recreational amenities.

- **Smaller Open Spaces:** provides opportunities for outdoor dining and interaction with the adjacent ground floor commercial uses. These open spaces provide visual connectivity into the City Center from major intersections including N. 5th and E. Clay Streets and N. 9th and E. Broad Streets.
- b. Make flexible open spaces, such as festival streets, that draw residents and visitors to City Center through programming initiatives. Develop E. Clay Street and N. 6th Street as festival streets which can be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic to allow for incorporation of these streets in the adjacent open spaces.



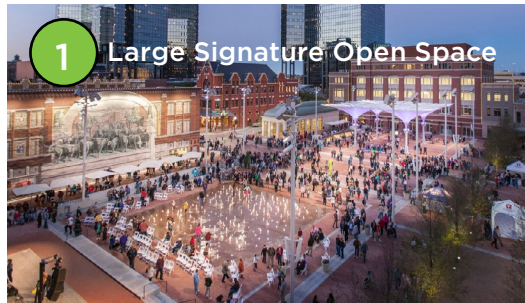
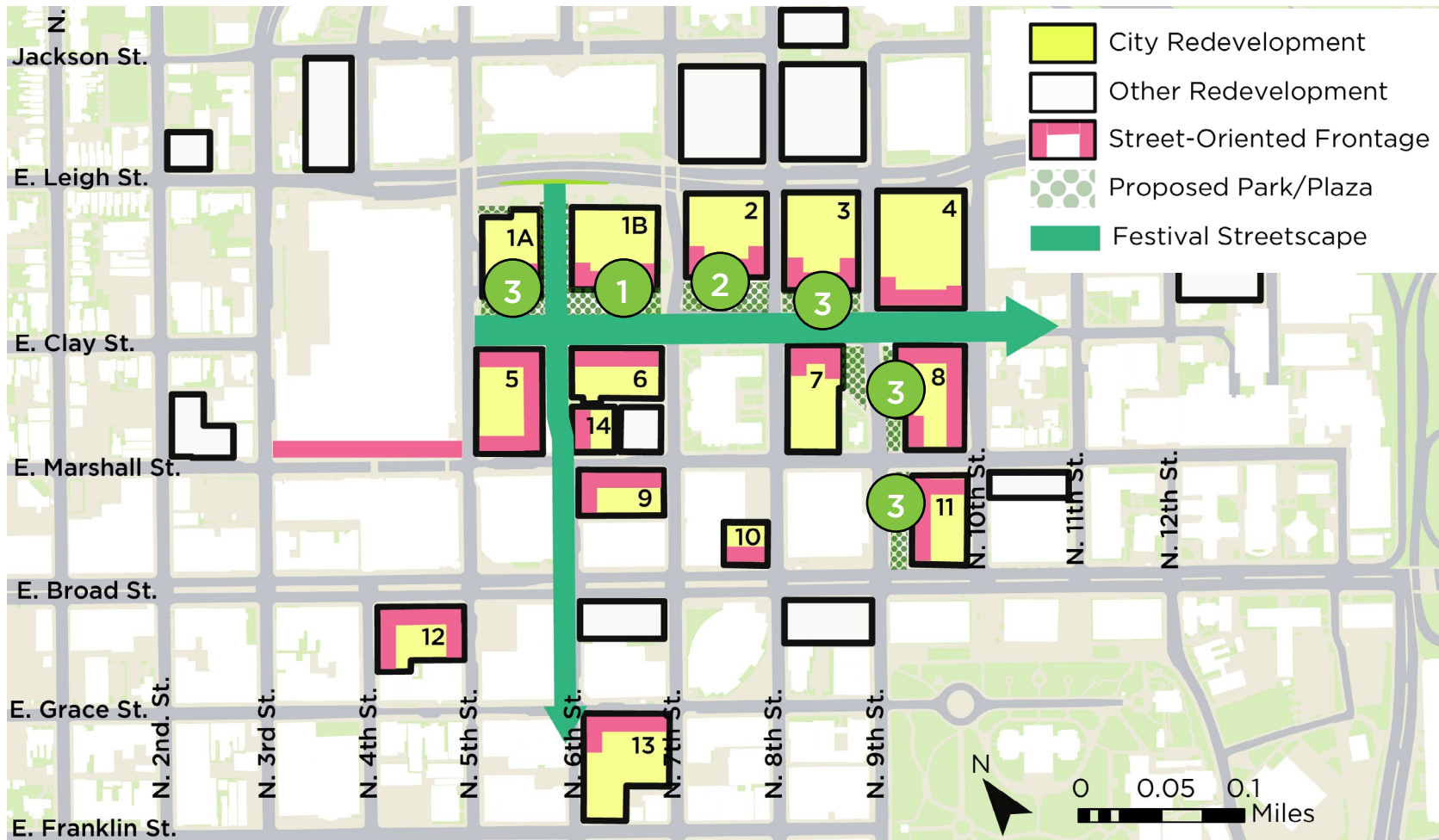
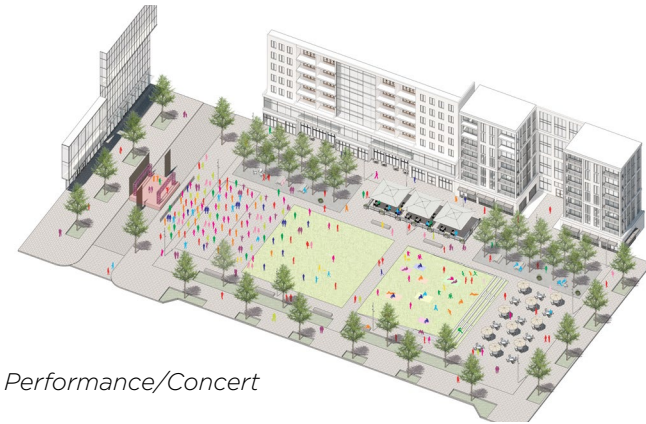


FIGURE 22 // Green Space

## Signature Open Space

The main plaza at the intersection of N. 6th and E. Clay Streets can be programmed for various activities and serve as a citywide convening space. The space can host concerts, festivals, outdoor movies, and holiday events including ice skating and tree lighting. The park also is active with everyday uses such as outdoor dining through movable seating, active and passive recreation, and amenities for families including water features and playgrounds. The main plaza can also host events programmed by the Convention Center to expand their offerings to potential conference organizers.



*Outdoor Performance/Concert*



*Ice Skating Rink*

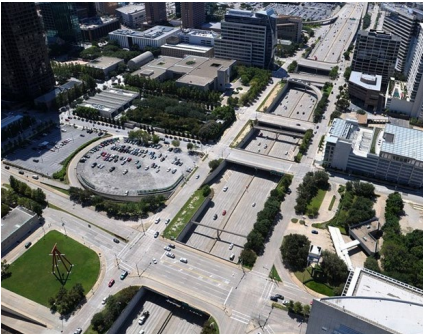


*Everyday Use*

## Public Open Space as a Destination

85% of U.S. residents identify proximity to parks, playgrounds, open space, or recreation centers as an important factor in their decision of where to live, and high-quality parks are one of the top factors that businesses cite in relocation decisions. When there is investment in equitable access to parks and open space, it can boost economic development, improve community health and wellness, and enhance adjacent projects' financial success. The following two examples show large public-private investments in public open space that replaced neglected areas in their cities, which used placemaking to create public open spaces that are worthy of their own destination.

### Klyde Warren Park (Dallas, TX)



Built on an overpass in the Central Core of Dallas in 2012, Klyde Warren Park is a 5.2-acre urban greenspace that transformed Downtown Dallas and is now one of the most visited attractions in the region. Klyde Warren is highly programmed, hosting 1,300 events annually. The Park is projected to generate \$312 million in economic development, \$13 million in tax revenue, and has more than 1 million annual visitors. Klyde Warren Park hosts food trucks, a children's playground, a dog park, dining facilities, and numerous active and passive spaces.

### Canal Park (Washington DC)



Located in the Navy Yard neighborhood, Canal Park is a 3-acre linear greenspace that replaced a city-owned school bus facility lot in 2012. The Park hosts a weekly farmers market, movie nights, an ice skating rink, and has become a key focal point of activity in the city. This public-private investment has enhanced the value of adjacent properties, which now overlook a valuable and vibrant public amenity, and has been a catalyst for the broader revitalization of the Navy Yard neighborhood. Canal Park gets around 28,000 visitors annually and has increased the perceptions of cleanliness and safety in the area by 200% since it opened.

### Goal 3: Zoning & Urban Design

Create a distinctive neighborhood with high-quality design and activated streets.

Zoning is the legal framework that guides how property owners may develop their land. 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. Currently, most buildings within City Center have limited engagement with the public realm due to lack of good building design and active ground floor engagement.

Zoning can create requirements to help foster a new dynamic neighborhood (Figure 23).

**Objective:** Develop City Center into a high-quality, distinctive, well-designed, walkable neighborhood.

#### Strategies:

- a. Develop a new zoning district for City Center that supports the development of uses that support the life sciences innovation district and create a walkable urban realm. Explore creating one zoning district for all the properties from I-95/I-64 to E. Broad Street and N. 5th Street. Currently these areas are zoned RP, RO-3, CM, and B-4.
- b. 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 include pedestrian through-block connections through super blocks.
- c. Require buildings to meet the six design elements outlined in the Pulse Corridor Plan: Hold the Corner, Appropriate Setbacks/Stepbacks, Entrances Face the Street, Transparency, Façade Articulation, and Screened Parking/Services (Figure 15).
- d. Require the podiums of tall buildings to reflect the human scale, with design elements and active uses on the ground level.

- e. Develop public art projects to elevate City Center’s unique character and history through creative placemaking.
- f. Implement 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 placemaking and walkability.

### Goal 4: Adjacent Neighborhoods

Connect to and support adjacent neighborhoods.

The redevelopment of City Center must enhance connections to adjacent neighborhoods and support the growth and development of those areas of the city.

**Objective:** Connect City Center to adjacent neighborhoods through infrastructure, land use, signage, and marketing.

#### Strategies:

- a. Explore improvements to the Leigh Street viaduct bridge to improve the pedestrian and cyclist experience to and from Church Hill.
- b. Explore opportunities to improve pedestrian access to and from Shockoe along Broad Street.
- c. Implement strategies in *Richmond 300* focused on Jackson Ward, Monroe Ward, and Shockoe, including, but not limited to developing a community-led small area plan for Jackson Ward (including Historic Jackson Ward, the transformation of Gilpin Court, and North Jackson Ward), developing a feasibility study to explore ways to reconnect Jackson Ward over the I-95/I-64 highway, developing the Fall Line Trail through Monroe Ward and identifying areas of park space within Monroe Ward, and developing the Shockoe Small Area Plan.
- d. Identify further opportunities to strengthen the connections between City Center and its adjacent neighborhoods.



**Responsibilities of the Public Realm:**

- (A)** Thoroughfares designed for vehicle speeds below 25 mph for a sense of comfort and safety.
- (B)** Sidewalks shaded with street trees.
- (C)** On-street parking serves as a buffer for people walking and dining, helps reduce vehicle speeds, and provides convenient parking for shoppers and guests.
- (D)** Defined “Furnishing Zone” allowing placement of trees, bicycle parking, parking meters, street lights, and other streetscape elements.
- (E)** Walkways are wide enough to allow at least two people to walk side-by-side comfortably.
- (F)** Encourage outdoor dining so long as an adequate walkway width is maintained.

**Responsibilities of the Private Realm:**

- (1)** Location of all off-street parking, both surface and structure, screened from street view.
- (2)** Shopfronts maximize transparency with clear windows.
- (3)** Main building entries face the sidewalk to increase activity on the street.
- (4)** A sufficient amount of openings facing the street, such as windows and doors, create interest and enhance security.

FIGURE 23 // Rendering of north side of E. Clay Street between N. 8th and N. 9th, facing west

Final November 2021

## Goal 5: Historic Preservation

Preserve and enhance historic and cultural resources.

The City Center area is home to several historic structures that should be protected while allowing for adaptive reuse of structures and growth within City Center (Figure 24). Efforts must be made to protect these historic resources while allowing for the adaptive reuse of structures and growth within City Center. Connections to historic resources within City Center and other parts of Downtown should be prioritized.

**Objective:** Support growth that preserves the historical urban fabric and enhances understanding of City Center’s multifaceted past.

### Strategies:

- a. Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, and structures in City Center.
- b. Rehabilitate the Blues Armory, utilizing preservation best practices to accommodate new uses that expand Innovation District offerings.
- c. Preserve the facade on the N. 6th and E. Franklin St. parking garage.
- d. Utilize open space along N. 9th Street near John Marshall House to complement the historic resource. John Marshall House should remain as a cultural asset within City Center. Design new structures on the parcel adjacent to John Marshall House to complement the historic asset.
- e. Connect City Center to cultural and historic resources throughout Downtown through wayfinding and strong streetscapes.

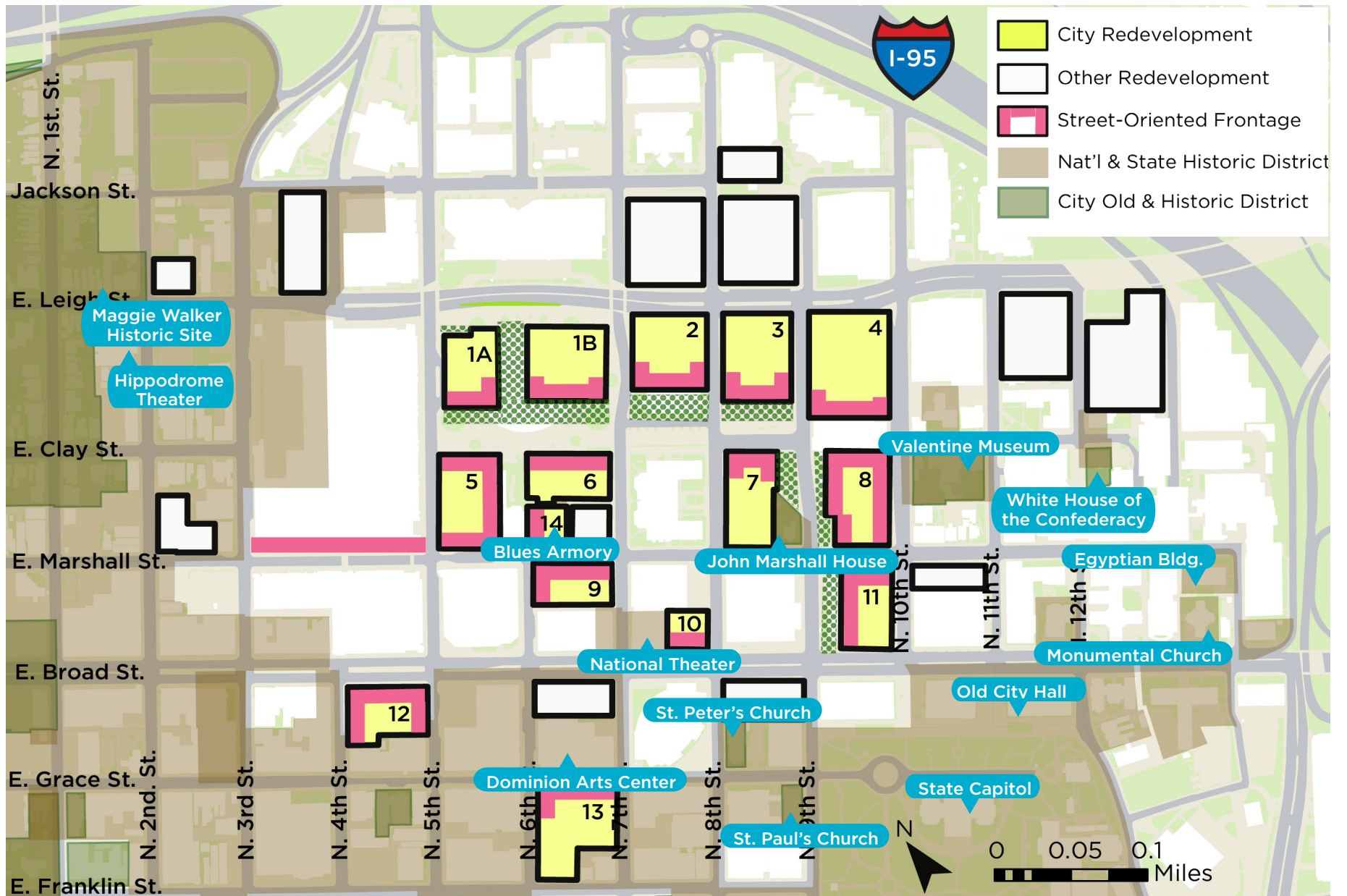
- f. Broaden the constituency for historic preservation by more equally representing, preserving, and sharing the sites related to traditionally underrepresented groups, such as Blacks, who were displaced from this area in the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> Century.



*Blues Armory*



*John Marshall House*



**FIGURE 24 // Historic Sites**

Source: City of Richmond GIS

# Equitable Transportation

**Guiding Principles:** Prioritize the movement of people over the movement of vehicles through a safe, reliable, equitable, and sustainable transportation network, promoting easier and safer access to and through the City Center Innovation District. Seamlessly connect City Center to Richmond neighborhoods and other nearby attractions through enhanced pedestrian, bike, transit, and vehicular access and connectivity.

## Goal 6: Pedestrian and Bicyclist Experience

Enhance access and safety.

**Objective:** Improve the pedestrian experience throughout City Center by improving sidewalks and improving pedestrian crossing and streetscapes for all ages and abilities.

### Strategies:

- a. Require developers to construct sidewalks as a part of development projects per the Better Streets Manual to include a clear width travel way, a building frontage zone, and a furniture or buffer zone.
- b. Require developers to design and build projects to provide and maintain street trees on both sides of at least 60% of new and existing streets within the project (and on the project side of bordering streets) or to provide and maintain trees that supply shade over at least 40% of the length of sidewalks on streets within or contiguous to the project within ten years of installation.
- c. Improve street furniture, plant shade trees, and install pedestrian-level lights and other streetscape improvements.
- d. Create a festival street on E. Clay and N. 6th Streets that can be closed to vehicles on certain occasions.

**Objective:** Expand and improve on-street networks and amenities serving bicyclists and other non-motorized vehicle users.

### Strategies:

- a. Expand, improve, and maintain on-street bike connections, prioritizing the creation of separated or buffered bike lanes on E. Leigh, E. Clay, and E. Marshall Streets, including the Fall Line Trail shared-use path on N. 7th Street (Figure 25).
- b. Expand the bike sharing program to include more stations within City Center.
- c. Install amenities (e.g., shelters, benches, parking, maintenance tools, restrooms, water fountains with bottle-refill stations) through City Center.
- d. Require secure and easily accessible short-term and long-term bicycle parking and storage facilities within new development projects.



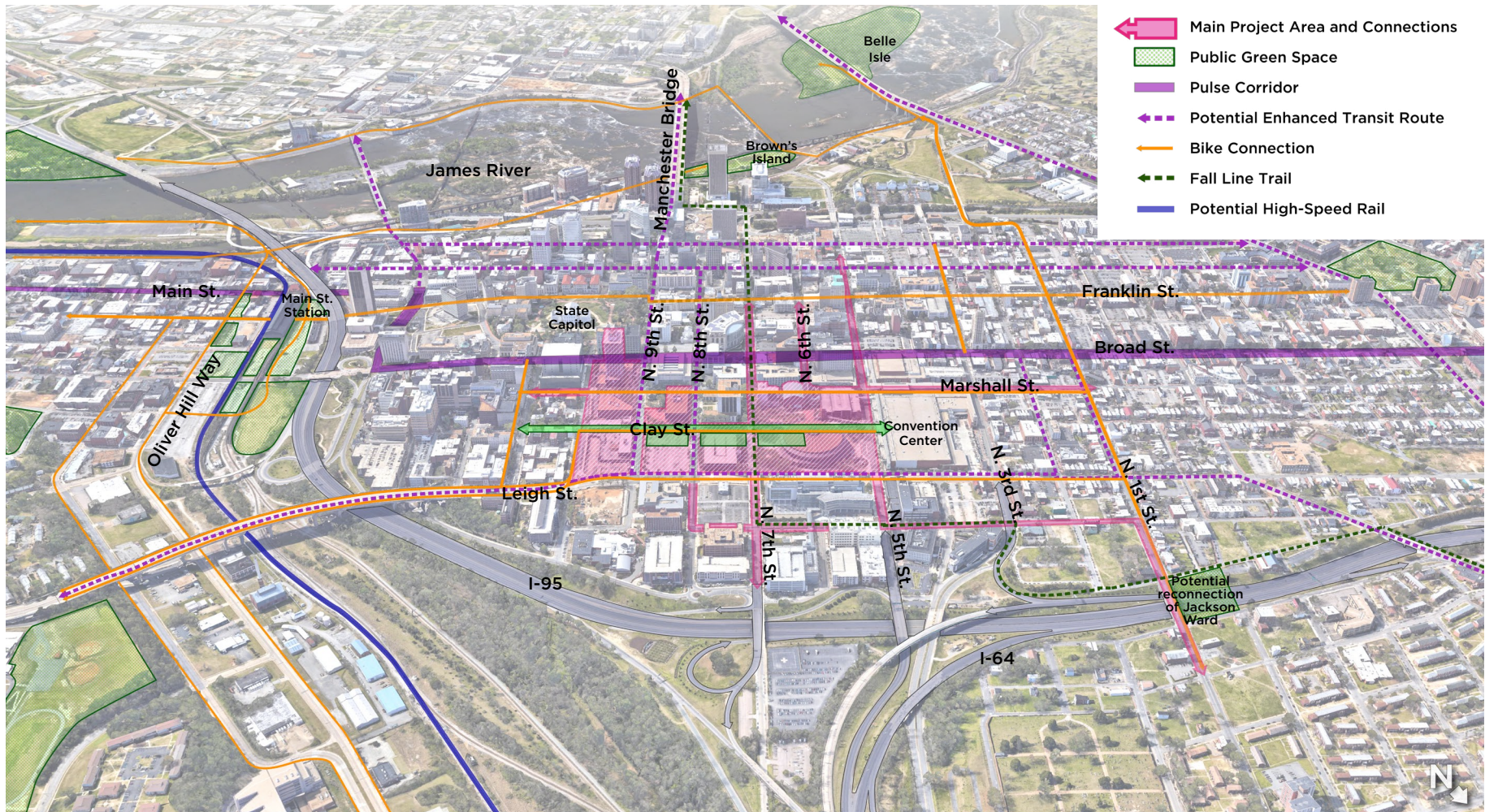


FIGURE 25 // Neighborhood Connections

## Goal 7: Transit

Develop a connected, multimodal destination.

GRTC has been pursuing the creation of a permanent multi-modal Transportation Terminal for the past two decades (Figure 26).

**Objective:** Continue to provide robust transit service to City center, improve the performance of the transit system, expand transit access, and provide amenities and destinations for riders.

### Strategies:

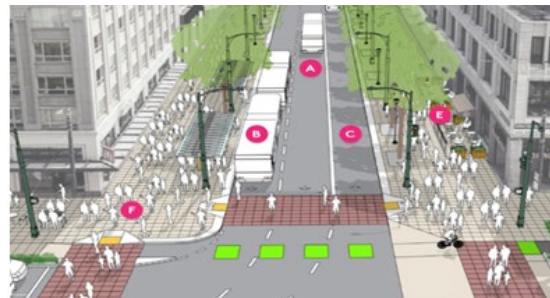
- a. Explore developing a transit mall along N. 8th Street, N. 9th Street, and/or E. Marshall Street to include dedicated bus bays and improved transit stop amenities such as shelters, benches, trash cans, and bike parking. Additional complementary amenities such as restrooms and ticket sales may be included in the adjacent existing and new development.
- b. Improve and maintain bus stops with amenities such as shelters, benches, trash cans, and bike parking.
- c. With community input, develop a North-South Bus Rapid Transit route.



*Nicollet St. Transit Mall, Minneapolis*



*16th St. Transit Mall, Denver*



*Third Ave. Transit Mall, Seattle*

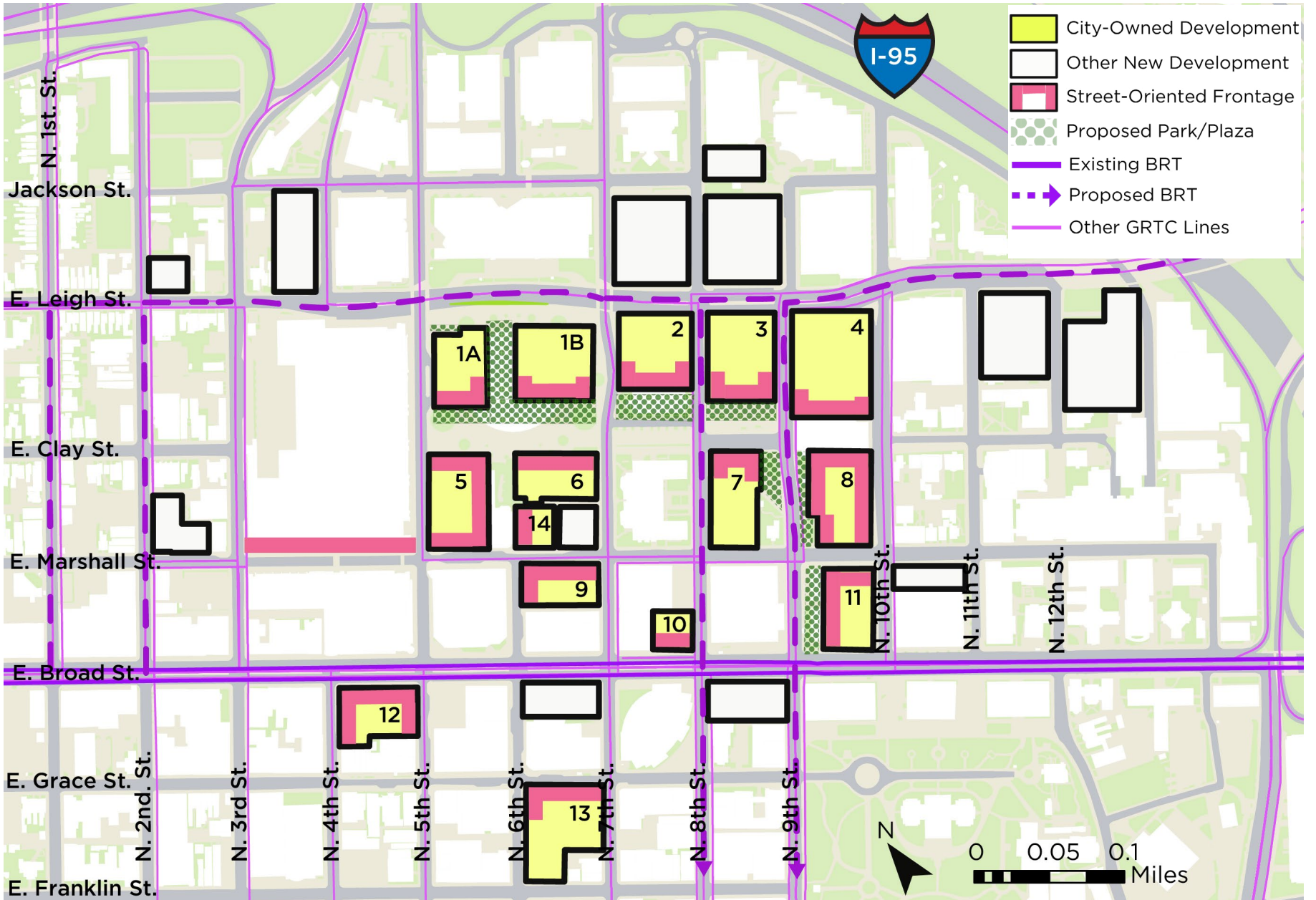


FIGURE 26 // Transit Network

## Goal 8: Streets and Connections

Reconnect the urban grid.

**Objective:** Strengthen the street network in City Center by preventing superblocks and encouraging gridded street networks to knit together the surrounding neighborhoods. During rezoning of the properties, include priority frontage and street-oriented commercial frontage designations where appropriate to foster a walkable urban environment.

**Strategies:**

- a. Reconnect N. 6th Street from E. Leigh Street to E. Broad Street.
- b. Reconfigure E. Clay Street to bring it to grade between N. 5th and N. 7th Streets and reconnect the street between N. 9th and N. 10th Streets. Design E. Clay Street with festival street features such as a curbless right-of-way that uses bollards and paving to differentiate pedestrian and vehicular areas.
- c. Construct a street parallel to E. Leigh Street to connect N. 5th and N. 7th Street while allowing E. Leigh Street to remain below grade to provide access to parking beneath the development at the existing Coliseum site.
- d. During the rezoning process, identify the street frontages that should have priority street frontage and street-oriented commercial frontage designations.

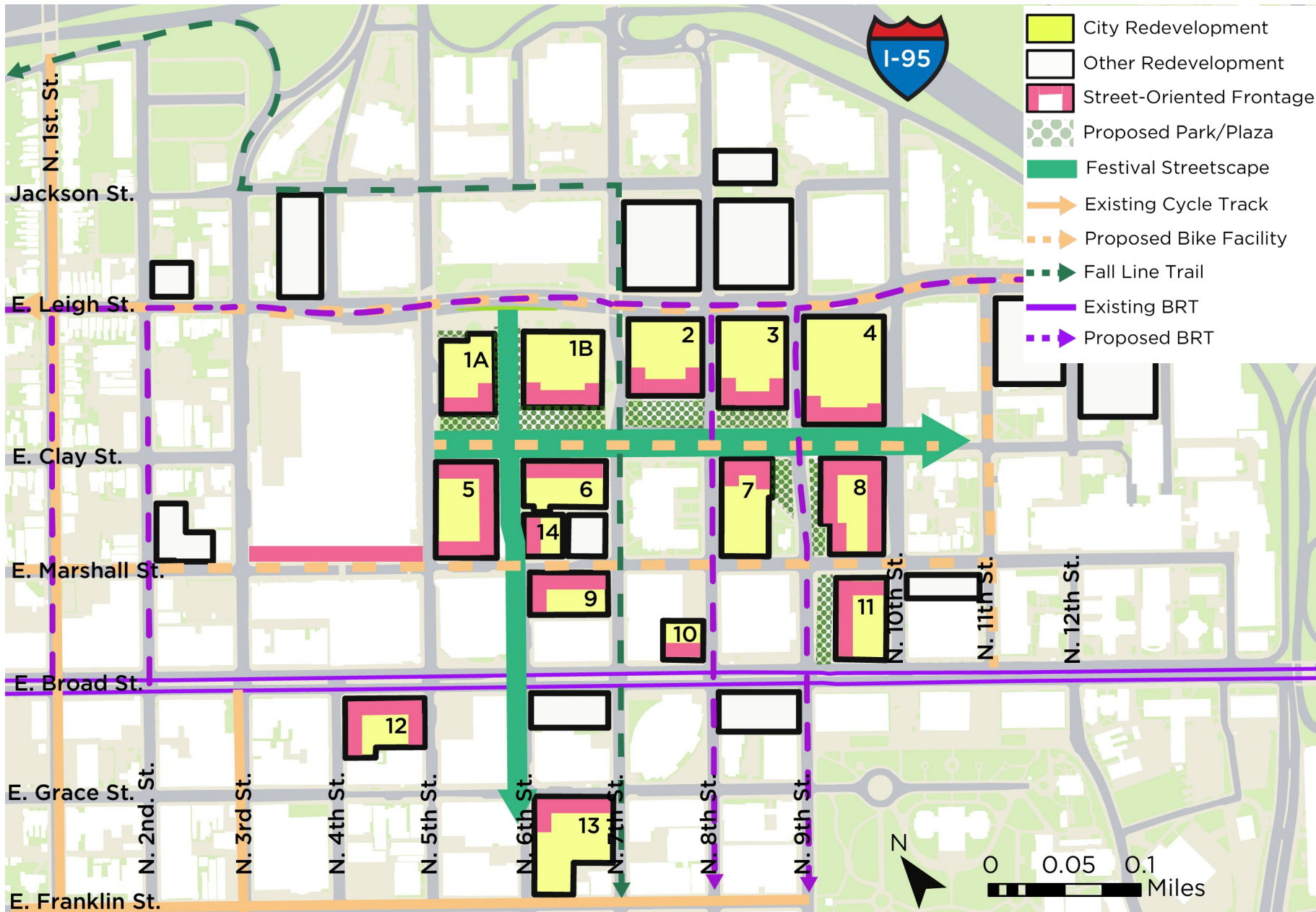


FIGURE 27 // Proposed Connections & Enhancements

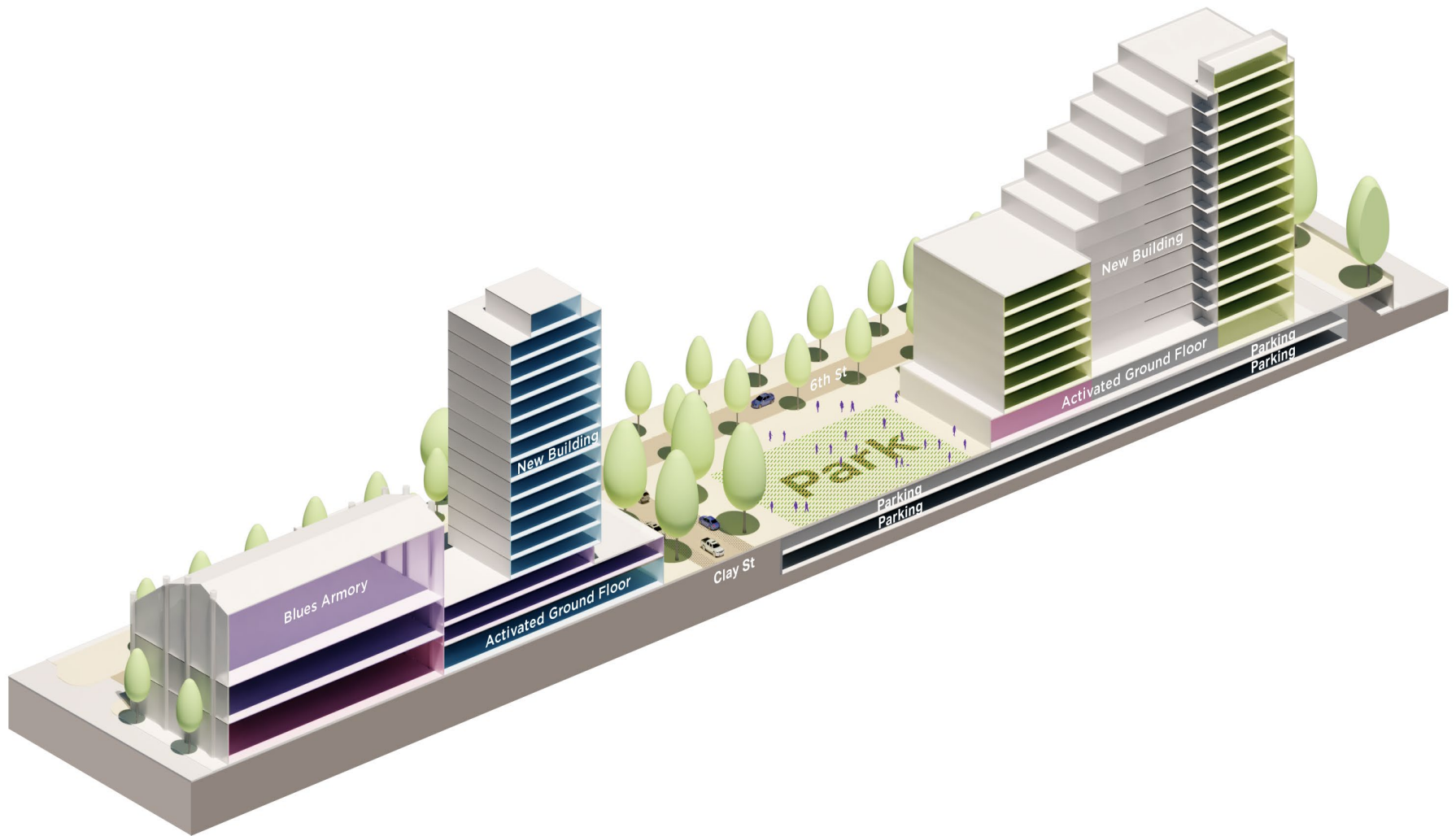
## Goal 9: Parking

Implement innovative parking solutions.

**Objective:** Implement parking strategies that effectively manage supply and demand of parking in City Center and limit the development of surface parking lots.

**Strategies:**

- a. Demolish the Coliseum and use the Coliseum pit as subterranean parking that is accessed from E. Leigh Street (Figure 28).
- b. Determine the need for City-owned parking decks/surface parking lots in the near-, mid-, or long-term, and prioritize the redevelopment of surface parking lots.
- c. Discourage the creation of new surface parking lots or parking garages in City Center. Surface parking lots are prohibited in the current Zoning district.
- d. Encourage the development of innovative parking solutions including automated parking decks to minimize the square footage required to store vehicles.
- e. Encourage any new parking garages to incorporate other wrapped, activated uses.
- f. Encourage the shared use of parking by requiring the developers of City-owned parcels to make all appropriate parking on their project site available to the public for parking after standard business hours (weekday evenings after 6:00 p.m., weekends, and all legal holidays) until 12:00 midnight or until the close of business of retail operations, whichever is later.



**FIGURE 28 // 3D Section through the Coliseum Site**

*Conceptual cross-section between E. Leigh, E. Marshall, N. 6th and N. 7th showing underground parking where the Coliseum is currently located.*

# Diverse Economy

**Guiding Principles:** Diversify City Center’s economic portfolio from primarily government uses to uses that leverage the adjacent educational institutions and VA Bio+Tech Park to create an Innovation District where these anchor institutions connect with start-ups, business incubators, accelerators, and other life science institutions. Enhance and complement existing tourist attractions through the development of hotels and entertainment venues. Provide opportunities for local, small, and minority-owned business to be a part of the redevelopment of City Center.

## Goal 10: Life Science Innovation District

Cluster and connect Life Science innovation.

**Objective:** Attract additional life science-focused industries, start-ups, and entrepreneurs to spur job creation Downtown through establishment of an Innovation District.

### Strategies:

- a. Encourage the expansion of uses that support the Life Sciences Innovation District on existing City-owned property adjacent to the VCU Health and VA Bio+Tech Park to facility the sharing of ideas and open innovation.
- b. Develop marketing materials for City Center, highlighting the area as an Innovation District with employment and educational opportunities as well as offering housing, open space, and retail in a transit-accessible location.
- c. Explore opportunities to develop a public STEM high school within City Center that will build partnerships with adjacent higher education institutions including Reynolds Community College, VCU Health, Virginia Union University, the University of Richmond, and life science anchors.
- d. Develop a City Center Campus to foster cooperative learning and research between post-secondary schools.

- e. Extend innovation programming to other parts of the city.
- f. Explore the creation of a Technology Zone and other new economic incentives to encourage the creation of an Innovation District.

## Goal 11: Tourism

Connect and enhance tourist destinations.

**Objective:** Develop tourism and attractions in City Center to further increase tourism in Downtown as a whole, elevating Richmond’s image and continuing to delight existing and future residents, employees, and visitors.

### Strategies:

- a. Encourage the development of hotel rooms in City Center including a Headquarter Hotel within walking distance of the Convention Center.
- b. Develop City Center as a unique destination through creative placemaking and branding.
- c. Create more cultural, art, and entertainment destinations of varying sizes to attract acts and visitors, leveraging nearby assets like The National, Hippodrome, Dominion Energy Center, and the Convention Center.



- d. Expand wayfinding signage throughout City Center, connecting City Center to other attractions throughout Downtown.

## Goal 12: Business and Job Opportunity

Expand access to business opportunities.

**Objective:** Implement equitable economic development strategies to expand business and job inclusivity and opportunity.

**Strategies:**

- a. For projects on City-owned property, provide opportunities for local, minority-owned, and emerging small business employment and growth and follow the Equitable Development Benefits outlined in the Implementation section of this plan.
- b. Encourage a range of employment opportunities that provide on-the-job training and facilitate upward mobility through investment in workforce development initiatives and collaboration with employers to create a pipeline of employees for existing and future positions.
- c. Support existing small businesses.
- d. Explore the establishment of a Community Equity Fund, which could require developers to use their funds in order to support the technical assistance and training needed to help minority businesses be eligible for employment and business opportunities.

# Inclusive Housing

**Guiding Principles:** Leverage City-owned properties in the City Center Innovation District to expand the availability of housing options at all income levels, increasing the number of dwellings Downtown to bring people closer to jobs and frequent transit.

## Goal 13: Housing

Create housing options for all in City Center.

Currently, there are no housing units within City Center. The City Center Plan prioritizes developing residential units in this transit- and job-accessible neighborhood. With its Downtown location, City Center can accommodate dense residential and mixed-use developments. City Center should provide a diverse housing stock and become a mixed-income neighborhood with both rental and homeownership opportunities.

**Objective:** Expand the availability of housing options Downtown at all income levels through the development of a mixed-income neighborhood in City Center.

**Strategies:**

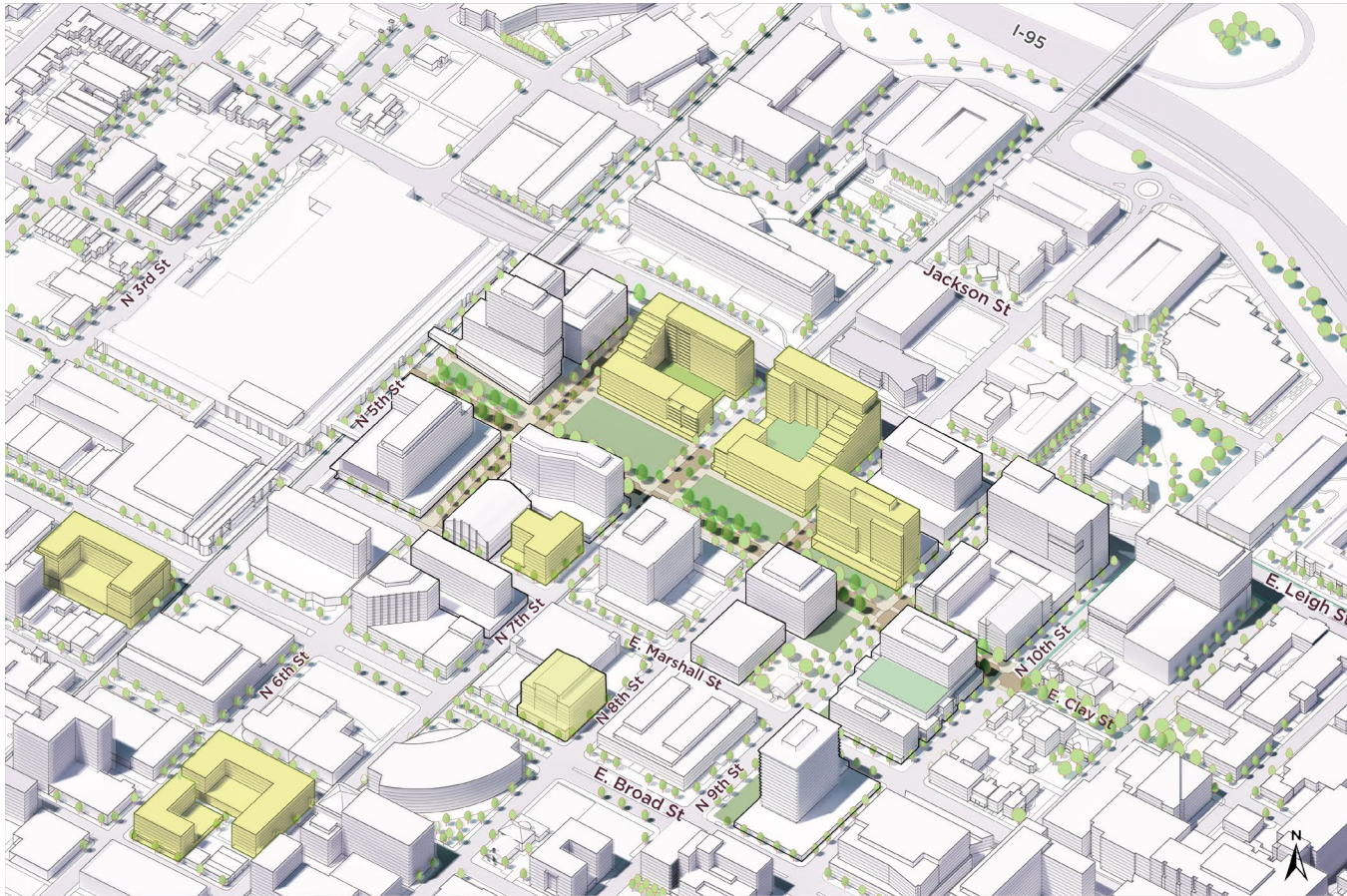
- a. Encourage the development of a mixed-income neighborhood with varied housing types throughout the City Center. These housing types need not be included in the same building but may be developed in multiple projects throughout City Center.
- b. Encourage the creation of housing affordable to households earning incomes at or below 60 percent of the area median income (AMI), with the goal of having at least 20% of the total units created on City-owned land at or below 60% AMI and for-sale units for households between 60% and 80% AMI (see Table 2).
- c. Explore the creation of an affordable housing tax-increment

finance (TIF) zone for land in City Center and direct the future incremental tax revenue funds from the TIF to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for funding mixed-income projects within the TIF zone.

- d. Through the disposition of publicly owned parcels, seek to develop these types of housing products: supportive housing, ownership products (e.g. cooperative housing), market-rate housing, and workforce housing.

TABLE 2 // Example Affordable Housing Split in City Center

Type of Housing	Rental	Home Ownership	Total
Percentage Split	65%	35%	2,000
Proposed # of units	1,300	700	2,000
Affordable to households earning between 60-80% AMI	130	175	305
Affordable to households earning between 30-60% AMI	260	0	260
Affordable to households earning below 30% AMI	130	0	130
Total affordable units	520	175	695
Percentage affordable	40%	25%	35%
Total market rate units	780	525	1,305
Percentage market rate	60%	75%	65%



Potential Residential

**FIGURE 29 // Housing Opportunities**

*Note: The conceptual massing diagram illustrates the potential shape and scale of buildings and open space; however as these areas develop, the exact design and scale of the buildings and spaces may be different from what is depicted in this conceptual illustration.*



*Mixed-Use Apartments in Amsterdam*



*Mixed-Use Apartments, DC*



*Converted Theater Apartments, Queens*



*Mixed-Use Fire Station/Apts., DC*

# Thriving Environment

**Guiding Principles:** Develop City Center as a sustainable and resilient Innovation District with a built environment that enhances and protects natural assets. Reduce air and water pollution through green transportation, building and infrastructure design and construction methods. Ensure that residents have equitable access to nature and a healthy community by increasing the tree canopy, greenspace, and access to healthy foods.

## Goal 14: Clean Air

**Objective:** Improve air quality within the city by reducing and/or offsetting greenhouse gas emissions through the design and development of City Center (Figure 30).

**Strategies:**

- a. Reduce air pollution related to transportation by increasing the number of residents in City Center, improving walking, biking, and transit infrastructure, and creating opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations.
- b. For development on City-owned land:
  - Require projects to earn the prerequisites and credits needed to achieve the appropriate LEED Silver certification (Neighborhood Development, etc.) using the LEED green building rating system.

- Require plans for diverting from landfill disposal the demolition, construction, and land clearing debris generated by the development projects, to include recycling and/or reuse of waste generated during demolition and/or construction.

## Goal 15: Clean Water

**Objective:** Establish and expand green stormwater infrastructure in City Center.

**Strategies:**

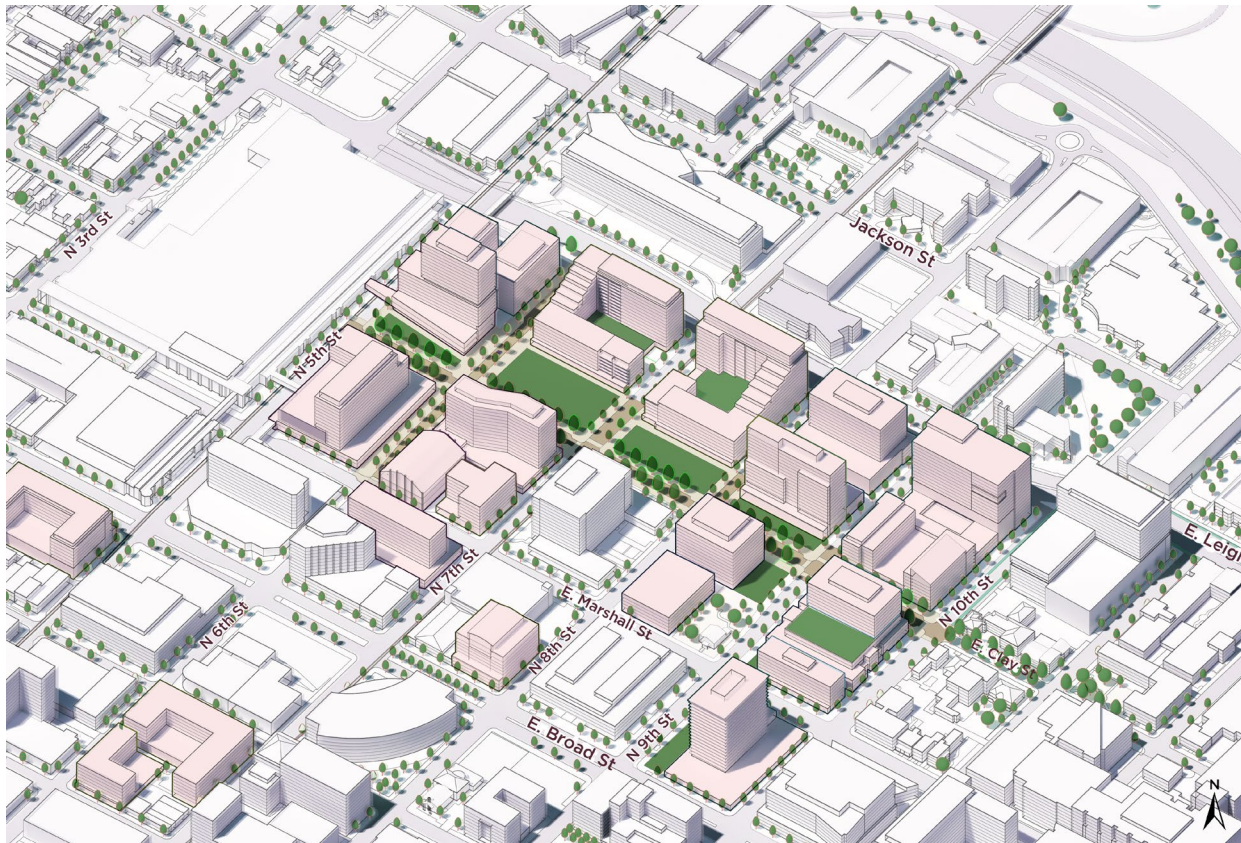
- a. Include green infrastructure in the development of new open space and rights-of way.
- b. Reduce litter in City Center by encouraging more trash/recycling receptacles and more frequent cleaning/management of areas with a lot of litter so that litter does not flow into city waterways.

## Goal 16: Resilient and Healthy Communities

**Objective:** Develop City Center as a resilient community that is able to efficiently adapt to the effects of climate change.

**Strategies:**

- a. Explore developing City Center as an eco-district.
- b. Create a public greenspace network and require greenspace to be included as a part of private developments.
- c. Increase the tree canopy in City Center by requiring street trees as a part of development on City-owned parcels.
- d. Encourage redevelopment of City-owned or private surface parking lots and parking garages into mixed-use developments and/or park areas.



Potential Greenspace

**FIGURE 30 // Thriving Environment**

*Note: The conceptual massing diagram illustrates the potential shape and scale of buildings and open space; however as these areas develop, the exact design and scale of the buildings and spaces may be different from what is depicted in this conceptual illustration.*

## Goal 17: Access to Healthy Foods

Residents of Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods including Jackson Ward have expressed the desire for a grocery store. While a traditional suburban grocery store may not work in City Center, the increased residential population proposed in this plan would make City Center a more desirable market for a grocery store which could locate within a mixed-use development.

**Objective:** Expand access to the local healthy food system.

### Strategies:

- a. Encourage the development of a grocery store within City Center through the development of substantial residential population.
- b. Encourage the development of a food hall as a part of the redevelopment of City Center to serve both residents and visitors to the area.
- c. Explore opportunities for alternative models of grocery stores including member-owned food co-ops.

# Implementation

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Once adopted, the City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan will become part of the citywide Master Plan, *Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth*. The general recommendations, objectives and goals outlined in *Richmond 300* are still relevant at this scale. However, this City Center Plan provides a finer grain vision and next steps for redeveloping this portion of Downtown. The implementation section of this plan outlines 3 big moves, a phasing strategy, and a series of equitable development goals to move the vision for City Center forward over the next 3 to 5 years.

## Big Moves

The City Center Plan outlines many goals and recommendations to create a Life Sciences Innovation District. The three big moves listed here are critical next steps to implement in the next 3 to 5 years to implement the plan's vision. Each big move includes the following elements:

- Big Move name
- Description
- Key benefits
- Description of how the Big Move advances equity, sustainability, and beauty
- Alignment with City Center Innovation District goals and objectives
- Actions that may be implemented to further the Big Move

- Type of actions:
  - Legislative: actions that result in a new ordinance for City Council to adopt
  - Administrative: actions that City staff can undertake as part of their regular duties
- Time Frame for implementation is shown using the City's Fiscal Year (FY) which runs July to June:
  - FY23 = July 2022-June 2023
  - FY24 = July 2023-June 2024
  - FY25 = July 2024-June 2025
  - FY26 = July 2025-June 2026
  - FY27 = July 2026-June 2027

## Create an innovation zoning district

Rezone City Center to align with the innovation vision by allowing mixed-uses including residential, ground floor activation, and unlimited height and density.

**Description:** The Zoning Ordinance is a legal document that outlines what property owners may build on their land and how the building and site must be designed. The current Zoning Ordinance was primarily written in 1976, but has been amended over the past several decades. Most of the property within the City Center area is zoned B-4: Central Business, RP: Research Park, CM: Coliseum Mall, ad RO-3: Residential Office. The Coliseum district and the Technology Park district do not permit residential uses by right.

**Key Benefits:** The benefits of rezoning include, but are not limited to the following. Rezoning the property will position the land to become the mixed-use innovation district outlined in the vision of the plan. Rezoning can allow uses not permitted today, such as residential uses, which are key elements in fostering a vibrant innovation district. The rezoning can include form-based elements that help support a walkable urban environment, thereby promoting multimodal transportation options and creating an engaging street. The rezoning can also include open space provisions that ensure there is adequate open space included within the development footprint.

Actions Steps May Include	Type	Plan Reference	Lead	Time Frame
City Planning Commission issues a resolution of intent to rezone the area, which officially commences the rezoning process that includes community meetings and concludes with City Council adopting the new zoning ordinance.	Legislative	Goal 3: Urban Design & Zoning	PDR	FY23-24

### Reduce the municipal footprint

Redevelop city-owned properties that are vacant and explore options for renovating, replacing, or relocating city functions to reduce the municipal footprint in City Center so that the Innovation District may grow and City functions can operate more effectively in improved space.

**Description:** The City owns over 23 acres of land in the City Center area. The facilities on nearly 16 acres of City-owned land are in

poor or critical condition. This Big Move calls for examining the physical spaces that City staff work in City Center and making recommendations for realigning City functions into improved work spaces.

**Key Benefits:** In order to realize the potential of City Center to tie together the strong anchors institutions in downtown, the City needs to reposition its property and support the introduction of uses that expand the Innovation District offerings. Many City functions are occurring in buildings that need significant renovation in order to support City functions and staff. By consolidating City functions and reducing the City’s land holdings downtown, the City can focus its municipal capital expenditures on fewer, consolidated facilities that are new and/or newly renovated, while also turning non-taxable land into tax-generating properties that expand the Innovation District offerings.

Actions Steps May Include	Type	Plan Reference	Lead	Time Frame
Launch process to find development partners to redevelop City-owned properties into uses that support the life sciences innovation district (see proposed phasing and equitable development goals)	Administrative	Goal 1: City-owned Facilities	PDR, DED	FY23-24+
Complete a space needs assessment of City functions and develop a facilities plan.	Administrative	Goal 1: City-owned Facilities	DPW	FY23

## Expand education offerings

Develop a high tech high school and establish a Center City campus for higher education collaboration.

**Description:** Today City Center is home to Reynolds Community College and VCU Health, two anchor institutions that have been educating the future generations of leaders in the life sciences profession in Downtown Richmond for over 40 years and 180 years, respectively. Workforce development and education opportunities are critical to creating a pipeline of talent to be employed by companies that City seeks to grow, maintain and attract to the City Center Innovation District. The City and educational partners can expand the educational offerings in City Center to include secondary education and other post-secondary institutions.

**Key Benefits:** Educating high school students in a high school located within the bustling City Center Innovation District invites students into the excitement of life sciences and high technology careers. The City and partners can program spaces and curate events to connect students to businesses and employees in the Innovation District and inspire students to enter life science careers. The proximity of Reynolds Community College and VCU Monroe Park campus, just a short ride on the Pulse BRT, provide easy access for high school students to enroll in higher-education courses while still in high school. City Center is already home to the medical school at VCU and Reynolds; however, there is opportunity to encourage the University of Richmond and Virginia Union University to open outposts in City Center that could focus education and research in topics that align with the innovation district. City Center could also be home to outposts of other

Virginia universities that do not have locations in the City of Richmond.

Actions Steps May Include	Type	Plan Reference	Lead	Time Frame
Convene secondary school partners to explore options for developing a high school downtown.	Administrative	Goal 1, Goal 10	Office for Children and Families, PDR, DED	FY23
Convene post-secondary schools partners to discuss programming and space needs in City Center	Administrative	Goal 10	PDR, DED	FY23

## Phasing

Given the size and breadth of the City Center development program, this plan suggests the following phasing to guide the development of City- and RRHA-owned parcels, as shown in Figure 31. Parcel 4, formerly the Public Safety Building, is currently being redeveloped; redevelopment includes the demolition of the Public Safety Building and development of a mixed-use complex including an office tower, Ronald McDonald House, Doorways facility, childcare center, structured parking, and the reconnection of E. Clay Street from N. 9th to N. 10th Street.

Any of the phases may include the creation of a public high school that may be part of a mixed-use facility and/or the creation of a new fire station that may be incorporated into a mixed-use facility.



## Phase 1

The first phase of the redevelopment of City Center comprises of the following actions: demolition of the Coliseum and 7th and Marshall Parking Garage; adaptive reuse of the Blues Armory; creation of new greenspace; and redevelopment of Parcels 1A, 1B, 6, and 9. The area is envisioned as an entertainment, residential, and office complex surrounding the main plaza and linear park. Phase 1 also includes the reconnection of E. Clay Street from N. 5th to N. 8th Street, the reintroduction of N. 6th Street from E. Marshall to a new street running at-grade parallel to E. Leigh Street (which will remain as is).

## Phase 2

The second phase includes the redevelopment of the Coliseum Parking Deck, 8th & Clay Surface Parking Lot, and Social Services Building. The redevelopment of these parcels should include mixed-use multi-family, with a mix of tenure and affordability. The parcels may also include office and retail uses as driven by market demand.

## Phase 3

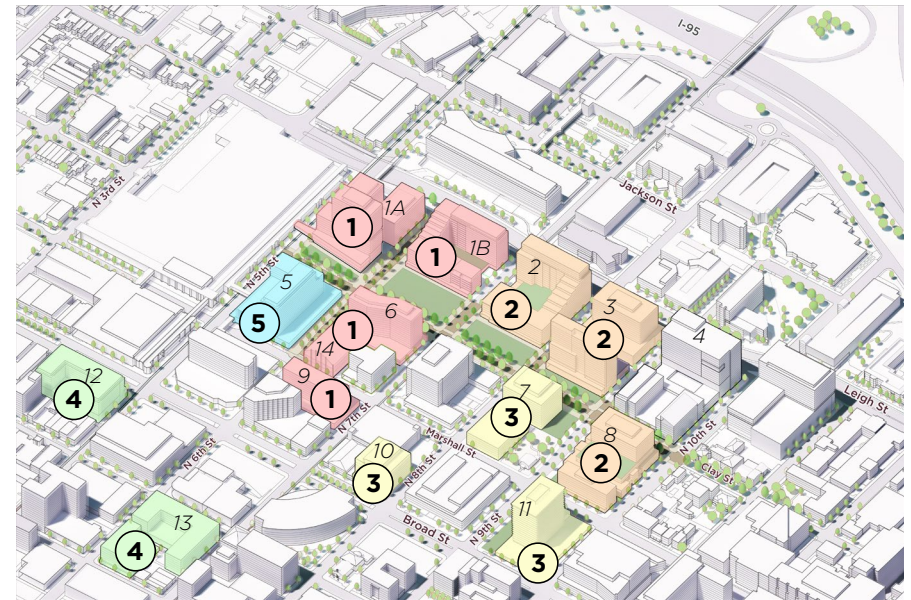
The third phase of City Center concerns the municipal buildings in the area, including City Hall, the John Marshall Courts Building, and the Theater Row Building. This phase will include the consolidation of City functions, potential public to private conversion of parcel(s), and redevelopment of parcels with adaptive reuse of the Theater Row Building. This phase may include the creation of a public high school as one of the municipal functions.

## Phase 4

The fourth phase includes the redevelopment of the Broad/4th Surface Parking Lot, 6th/Grace Surface Parking Lot, and adaptive reuse of the 6th/Franklin Parking Deck. These two parcels could potentially become mixed-use residential buildings.

## Phase 5

The fifth phase is the redevelopment of Parcel 5, the 5th/Marshall Parking Garage.



**FIGURE 31 // Phasing Map**

*Note: The conceptual massing diagram illustrates the potential shape and scale of buildings and open space; however as these areas develop, the exact design and scale of the buildings and spaces may be different from what is depicted in this conceptual illustration.*

## Equitable Development Benefits

As the City works with the private sector to redevelop City-owned land, the City should consider including the following benefits into development agreements. The exact benefits will vary depending on the parcels that are redeveloped and the proposed development program. For instance not all projects will include residential units and not all residential buildings need to be mixed-income; however, the development of City Center should include at least 20% of the total units affordable to people earning 60% or less of the area median income.

### Employment

- Commitment to pay workers a minimum of \$15/hour or the prevailing wage rate for the City of Richmond.
- Participate in and provide apprenticeship programs.
- Require health insurance and retirement benefits for all full-time employees.
- Create job training and workforce development programs.
- Coordinate job fairs and training programs with the City's Office of Community Wealth Building to seek to employ and train Richmond residents.

### Business Participation

- For construction, achieve a goal of at least 40% minority business enterprise participation.
- Give local community businesses and minority businesses preference when hiring consultants, contractors, and developers, and when seeking tenants for retail and office space.

### Ownership and Wealth Creation

- Create a community wealth building fund that permits community members to make smaller dollar investments up to 5% of the total project value to build wealth and ownership in the project from the community and/or surrounding neighborhoods.
- Develop for-sale housing affordable to households earning between 60% and 80% of the area median income, potentially introducing cooperative housing models to the City Center area.
- Develop at least 20% of rental housing affordable to households earning at or below 60% of the area median income.

### Site and Building Design

- Design buildings to be high-performing and energy-efficient buildings, using programs such as LEED Silver Standards as a benchmark.
- Utilize permeable pavers and other green infrastructure to minimize stormwater runoff.
- Reduce the heat island effect by planting shade trees and utilizing building materials with low albedo ratings.
- Develop on-site renewable energy.
- Create a combined heat energy district.

### Transportation and Public Realm

- Provide on-site electric vehicle charging stations.
- Provide indoor bike parking and bicyclist changing/showering facilities.

- Improve the right-of-way and design buildings to create excellent urban design to support walking and access for all ages and abilities.
- If on-site parking is provided, enter parking sharing agreements with adjacent users.
- Where indicated, provide open spaces per the City Center Small Area Plan and develop the design for the open space with public input.

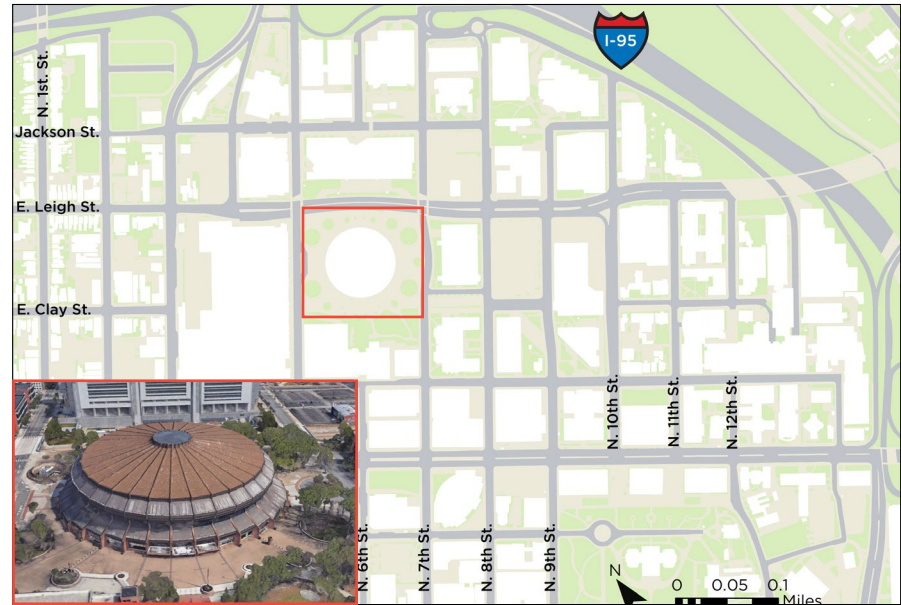
### **Municipal**

- Explore options for City Hall, including renovating the existing building, building a new facility on the same parcel, or moving into a new building in a different parcel.
- Develop a new fire station integrated into a mixed-use facility.
- Develop a public high school that focuses on life sciences and high technology career training.

# Appendix: Condition of City-Owned Facilities

## Coliseum

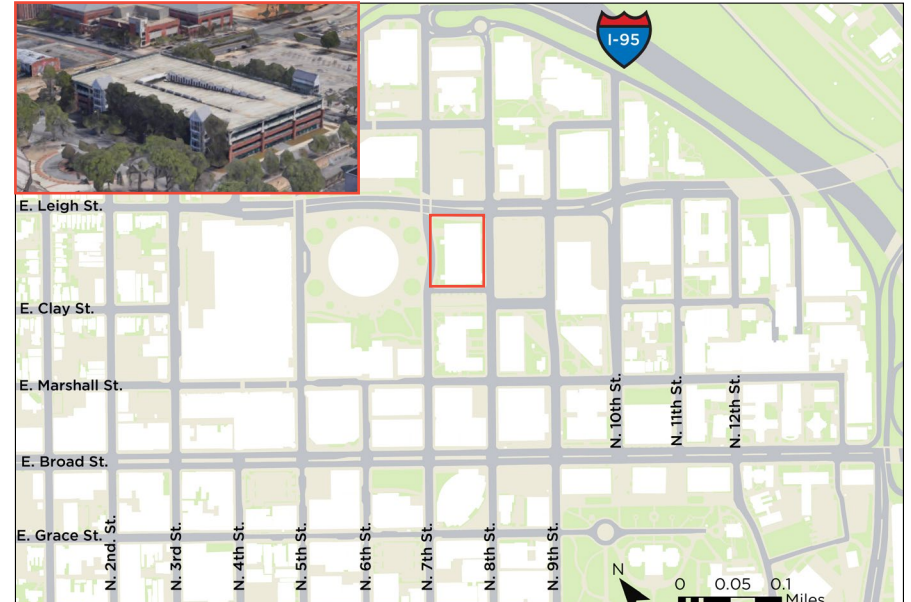
The Richmond Coliseum was built in 1971 as a public venture funded by the City of Richmond to revitalize Downtown. Its construction disconnected N. 6th and E. Clay Streets from the street grid and displaced dozens of predominantly Black homes. It was used for concerts, various sports events, political rallies, and more, with a total capacity of more than 13,000 seats. However, the Coliseum has been closed since 2018. The public debt for the Coliseum is yet to be paid off, and this 7-acre parcel continues to sit vacant and is unable to be taxed.



<b>Property Address</b>	601 E. Leigh Street
<b>Year Built</b>	1971
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Current Tenant(s)</b>	None
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$12.3M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$37.9M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	Not actively maintained
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Poor

## Coliseum Parking Deck

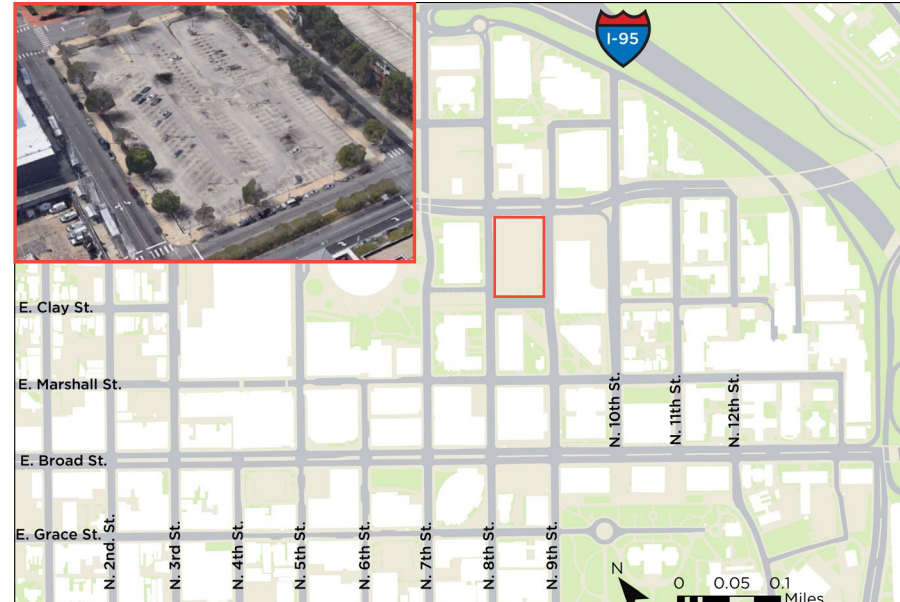
The Coliseum Parking Deck, located to the east of the Coliseum, was built in 1992. It was originally built to provide parking for state employees as well as public parking. This parcel once held a small parking garage and was later turned into a surface parking lot when the Coliseum was built in the 1970s.



<b>Property Address</b>	501 N. 7th St.
<b>Year Built</b>	1992
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Parking Capacity</b>	921
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$3.5M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$11.9M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	\$1.3M
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Good

## 8th/Clay Surface Lot

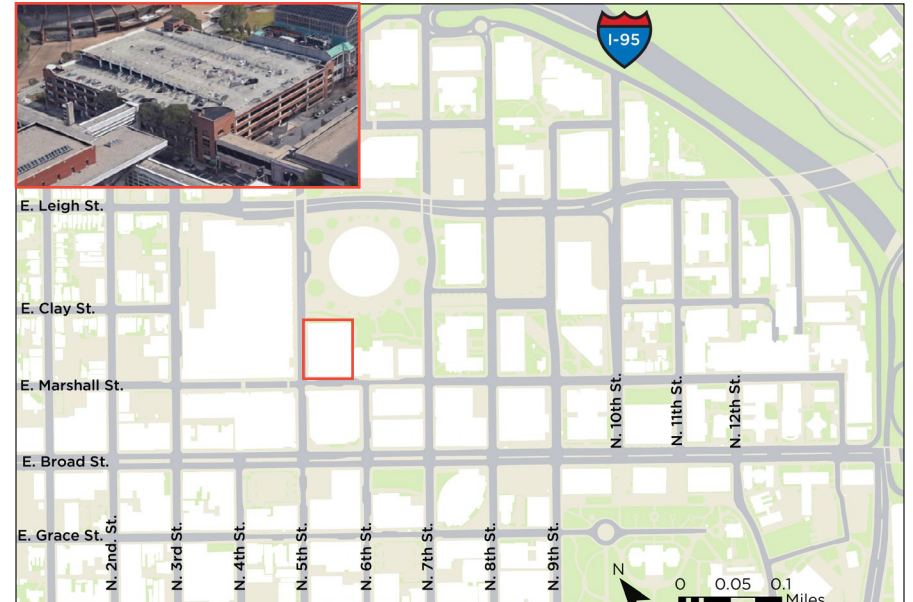
The 8th and Clay surface parking lot was built in 1960. The parcel was once a track & field for John Marshall High School, which was located where the John Marshall Courts Building is now. This parking lot is reserved partially for City employees, and partially for public, including those who are visiting the John Marshall Courts or City Hall. As of October 2021, the lot is slated to become a temporary GRTC Transfer Plaza.



<b>Property Address</b>	800 E. Clay Street
<b>Year Built</b>	1960
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Parking Capacity</b>	277
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$3.1M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$111K
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	N/A
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Fair

## 5th/Marshall Parking Deck

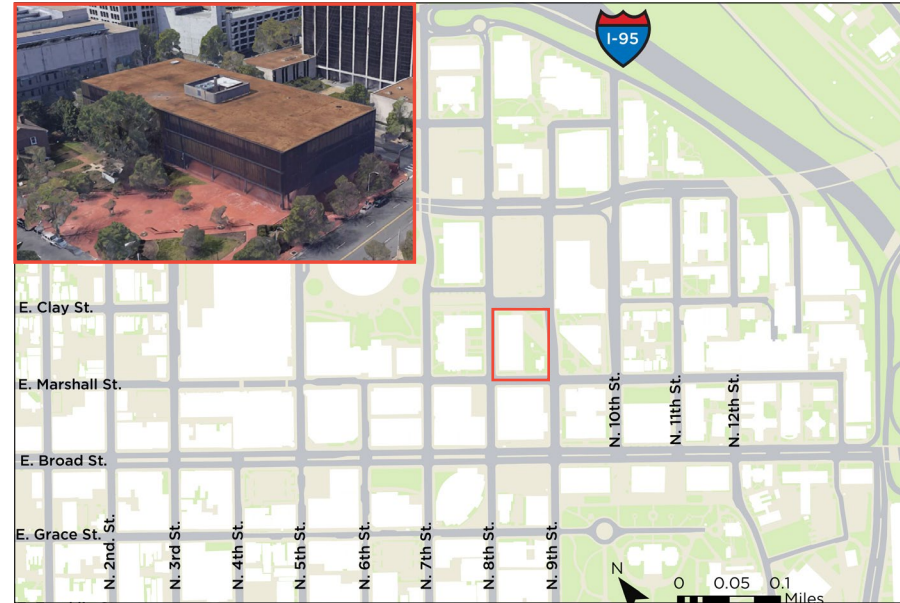
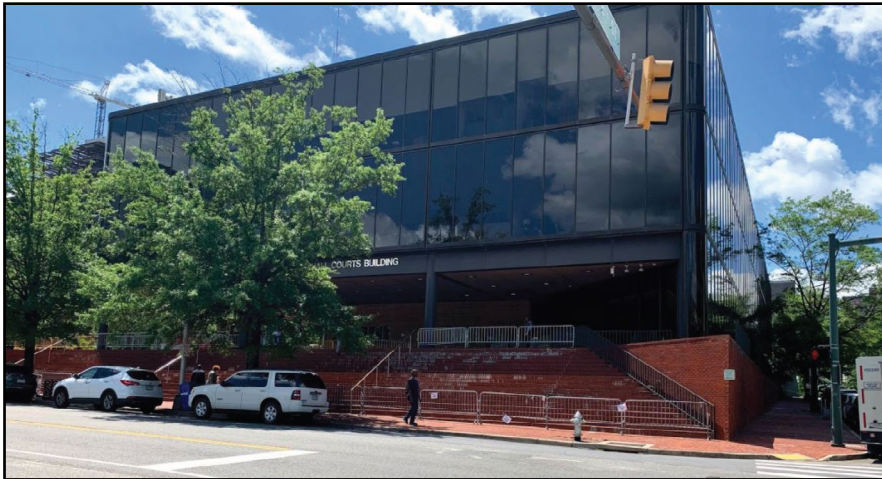
The parking deck at N. 5th and E. Marshall Streets was built in 1985. It has skybridge connections across N. 5th to the Greater Richmond Convention Center and across E. Marshall to the Marriott Hotel. Today, it currently provides parking for Convention Center attendees, Marriott Hotel guests, as well as other public parking.



<b>Property Address</b>	500 E. Marshall St.
<b>Year Built</b>	1985
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Parking Capacity</b>	1,000
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$2.1M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$12.2M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	\$1.5M
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Good

## John Marshall Courts Building

Built in 1976, the John Marshall Courts building is a 4-story building that serves as the main hub for City of Richmond courts. The building sits on the same block as the historic John Marshall House, which is a National Historic Landmark. The Courts parcel includes a large plaza that fronts N. 9th Street. Richmond City Judges have expressed the need for a new court facility for the City, both due to maintenance problems and security issues.



<b>Property Address</b>	400 N. 9th Street
<b>Year Built</b>	1976
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Current Tenant(s)</b>	City Courts
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$2.1M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$10.2M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	\$18.7M
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Poor



## Social Services Building

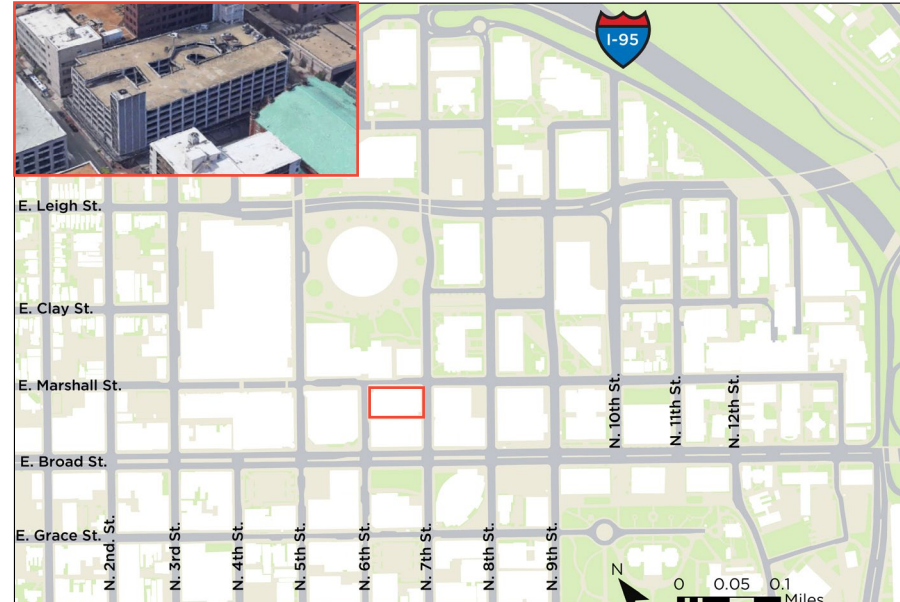
The Social Services Building, also known as Marshall Plaza, was built in 1984 with 3 stories and below-grade parking. The parcel includes Marshall Plaza, a small plaza that is some of the only existing greenspace in City Center today. Though the City of Richmond Department of Social Services currently operates here, the City is reassessing the space needs of the Social Services Department.



<b>Property Address</b>	900 E. Marshall Street
<b>Year Built</b>	1984
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Current Tenant(s)</b>	Department of Social Services
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$2.9M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$10.5M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	\$4.5M
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Poor

## 7th/Marshall Deck

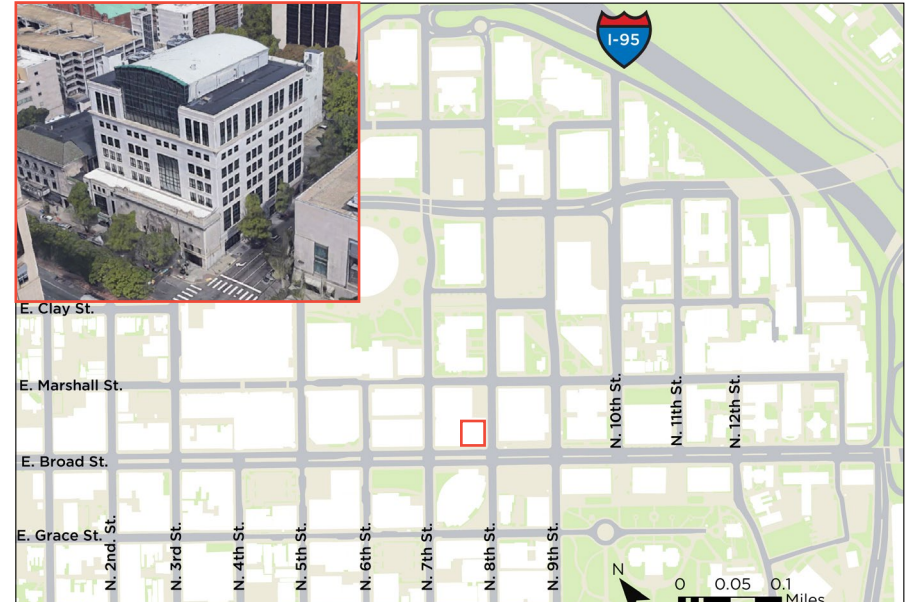
Built in 1965, the parking deck at N. 7th and E. Marshall Streets was created to cater to retail consumers. Today, it is in critical condition.



<b>Property Address</b>	607 E. Marshall St.
<b>Year Built</b>	1965
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Parking Capacity</b>	620
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$1.6M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$5.6M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	\$7M
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Critical

## Theater Row Building

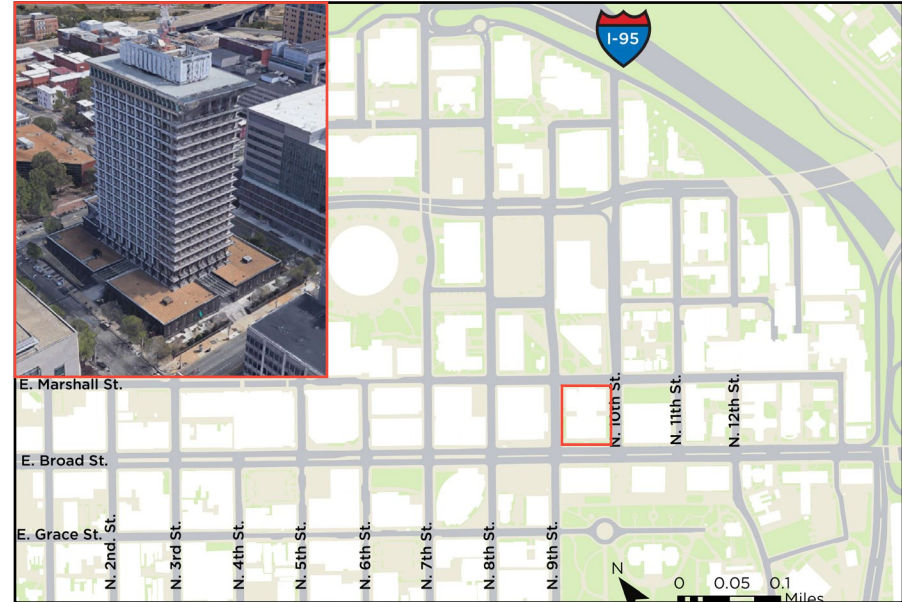
The Theater Row Building, also known as the 730 Broad Building, is on the block of E. Broad Street once known as “Theater Row.” The building utilizes the façade of the historic Colonial Theater – Historic Richmond Foundation has a preservation easement on it. The historic façade was built in 1921, but the 9-floor office building was built in 1992. Today, there are several public and private tenants in the building. Some of the users include City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities and Department of Social Services, VCU, and Virginia Credit Union.



<b>Property Address</b>	730 E. Broad Street
<b>Year Built</b>	1992
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Current Tenant(s)</b>	DPU, DSS, Virginia Credit Union, others
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$2.1M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$10.2M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	\$18.7M
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Poor

## City Hall

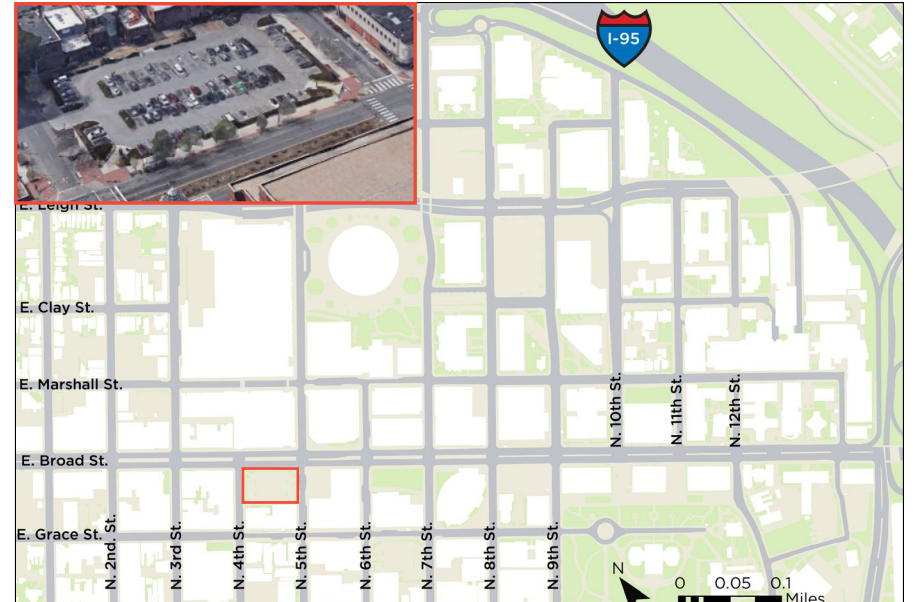
City Hall, built in 1971, is the Seat of Government and central hub of operations for the City of Richmond and Richmond Public Schools. The building is 22 floors with 3 floors of underground parking. Most of the building is used as office space for City employees, but also is used as a place for several public-facing functions like City Council meetings, voter registration, zoning appeals, and more. A recent Facility Condition Assessment of City Hall found that there are critical maintenance problems, especially with HVAC and electrical. Further, today's security risks are far greater than they were when the building was built; a security assessment was recently completed, and there have been multiple security enhancements made to secure the building.



<b>Property Address</b>	900 E. Broad Street
<b>Year Built</b>	1971
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Current Tenant(s)</b>	City of Richmond employees, RPS
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$6.4M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$57.5M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	\$50.5M
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Poor

## 4th/Broad Lot

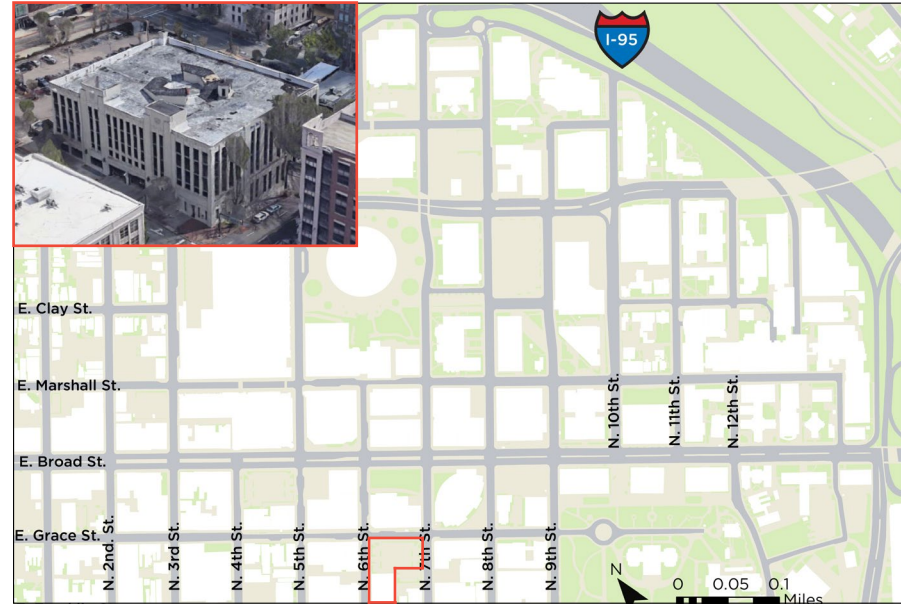
The surface parking lot at N. 4th and E. Broad Streets was created in 2004, replacing the vacant G.C. Murphy Co. building. The parking lot was constructed as part of a Downtown redevelopment effort. It is now used for public parking.



<b>Property Address</b>	401 E. Broad St.
<b>Year Built</b>	2004
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Parking Capacity</b>	117
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$3.0M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$76K
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	N/A
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Good

## Franklin/6th Parking Deck & Surface Lot

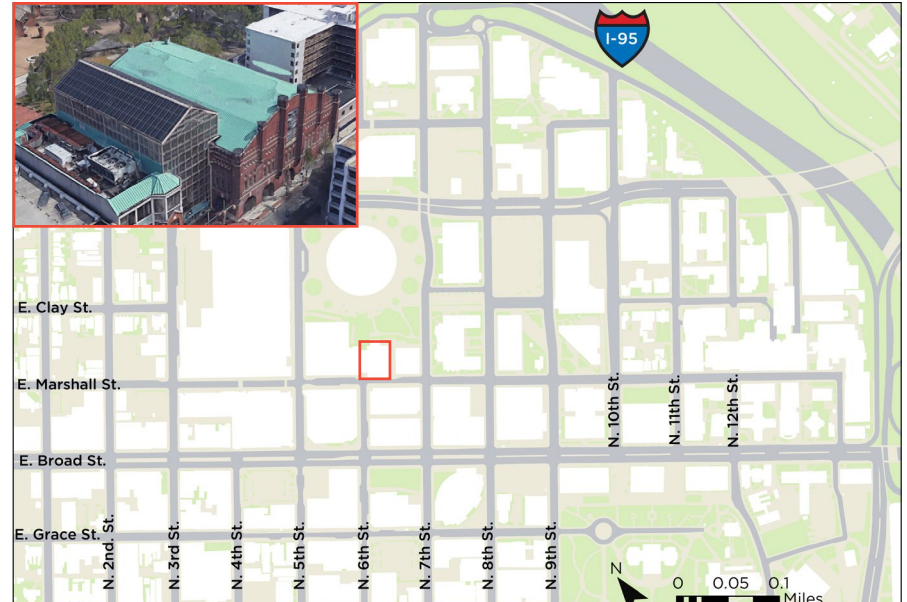
The parking garage on the corner of E. Franklin and N. 6th Streets was the first parking garage built in Downtown as a response to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century automobile boom. The 7-story structure was completed in 1927. Today, the deck is functionally obsolete because modern-day cars are too large to travel up the helix to higher floors. Because only the first floor can be utilized for public parking, this parking deck is estimated to lose more than \$100,000 in annual parking revenue for the City as compared to the maintenance costs. Future development on this parcel should attempt to retain the historic façade of the deck. The surface parking lot facing E. Grace was built in 2004, replacing the Atlantic Life Building.



<b>Property Address</b>	609 E. Grace Street
<b>Year Built</b>	1927 (deck); 2004 (lot)
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	City of Richmond
<b>Parking Capacity</b>	96 (deck); 124 (lot)
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$3.5M
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$2.8M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	Not maintained
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Poor (deck); Good (lot)

## Blues Armory

The Blues Armory was built in 1910 to be the headquarters of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues, one of the nation’s most historic military units. The ground floor was once used as a food market, once a part of the 6th Street Marketplace, and the upper floors were secured to be used for military units. The 6th Street Marketplace closed and another armory was built in the 1960s; thus the Blues Armory was vacated. The Armory was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1975. Part of the ground floor was re-fitted in the 1980s for the 6th Street Marketplace, a Downtown revitalization project, which was open until the early 2000s. Today, the Blues Armory is owned by Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority but is maintained as needed by the City of Richmond. Because of its vacant state, it is in poor condition. Any redevelopment of City Center should include the revitalization of the Blues Armory.



<b>Property Address</b>	601 E. Marshall Street
<b>Year Built</b>	1910
<b>Parcel Owner</b>	RRHA
<b>Current Tenant(s)</b>	None
<b>Land Value (2021)</b>	\$397K
<b>Building Value (2021)</b>	\$1.8M
<b>Immediate Deferred Maintenance Cost</b>	Not actively maintained
<b>Building Condition Rating</b>	Poor



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