

Richmond Cultural Resources Management Plan

Phase 1 Executive Summary August 2023



Project Background

Commonwealth Preservation Group (CPG) was hired by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) and the City of Richmond (the City), in partnership with Historic Richmond Foundation (HRF), to complete Phase 1 of the Richmond Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP). According to VDHR, roughly 81% of the City's buildings are over 50 years old, and approximately 22,000 are listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and/ or the National Register of Historic Places. These statistics do not include the City's many below-ground resources, culturally important sites, places, objects or works of art, intangible cultural heritage, and places that have been lost over time. Despite the vast number of historic and cultural resources in Richmond, the City has never had a city-wide comprehensive plan or process for identifying, evaluating, and protecting these community assets. Therefore, in alignment with the goals set forth in Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth, the City aims to develop a city-wide CRMP to enhance the City's existing policies, ordinances, and programs; design practical strategies and achievable goals; and, acknowledge the role historic preservation currently plays and will continue to play in shaping the city's urban form and character. The CRMP will place emphasis on equity and inclusion, identifying and honoring historic places associated with historically underrepresented communities, and re-framing historic preservation practices and policies to serve all residents.



Phase 1 Research & Stakeholder Engagment

At the outset of Phase I, CPG conducted preliminary research to gain a better understanding of the current documentation, conditions, policies, and planning efforts within the City. This research included a review of DHR archival materials, past surveys, and an overview of mapping within the state database. This preliminary research also involved a review of existing planning documents such as the Richmond 300 and area studies that had recently been completed or were underway. Following initial meetings with city staff, DHR, and the City Planning Commission, CPG extended research efforts to the CRMP's focus areas, especially on ways that similar communities have emphasized equity and inclusion in their preservation planning documents and the practical applications and implementation of these tools in recent years. This preliminary research allowed CPG to enter into its first phase of stakeholder engagement with background knowledge on the City's cultural and historic resources. The resources will continue to shape CPG's approach to Phase 2, allowing staff to discuss real-world examples during public engagement and to gather input on what Richmonders would like to see most in the CRMP.

Following the preliminary research and project kickoff, CPG conducted a series of stakeholder interviews. The first round of interviews focused on Internal Stakeholders, or those with direct association to City government such as City Council members, appointed commission members, and City staff. These Internal Stakeholder Interviews are commonly referred to as "Round 1" interviews throughout the Phase 1 deliverables. Round 1 interviews were held primarily in-person in February 2023 and were comprised small groups or individual sessions. A few of these initial interviews were held virtually based upon the interviewee's preference. All interviews covered a broad range of topics as well as subject matter expertise based on the interviewee's role within the City. All members of City Council, City Planning Commission, and the Commission of Architectural Review were invited to interview, as well as selected staff from various departments, HRF staff, and technical preservation professionals appointed to the Advisory Committee. Participation from all of these groups was remarkably high, and therefore, required all of the time that had been allotted in the original project plan for both internal and external stakeholder engagement.

Following this first round of stakeholder interviews, which is discussed in more detail in the included public engagement analysis, the CPG staff determined that additional stakeholder interviews with community leaders outside city hall would be necessary (this round is referred to as Round 2 – External Stakeholder Interviews) to understand and incorporate the vision of the community as a whole. After summarizing the results of the internal stakeholder interviews, CPG prepared a presentation for the project partners that summarized the trends and topics that came up most frequently in conversations. During this meeting, CPG also presented a "pivot proposal" that revised the Phase 1 scope to incorporate the additional external stakeholder interviews that were needed based on internal stakeholder input.

In order to expand this area of the project scope, CPG evaluated the Phase I goals and deliverables against the project budget and provided the City and DHR with a revised proposal that shifted the focus of Phase I to be on more extensive, in-depth, and inclusive stakeholder interviews. The goal of this "pivot proposal" was to allow CPG time to build trust with community leaders and learn more about the concerns of the City's residents. Upon approval of this "pivot plan," the deliverables for Phase I were simplified to allow more time to engage with these community leaders, and a plan for extended stakeholder engagement was formed.

From May to July 2023, CPG engaged in the second round of interviews, which sought to gather input from a more diverse and comprehensive sample of Richmond's community leadership that did not have direct ties to City Hall. The list of interviewees was prepared based on recommendations of the first-round interviews, CPG research, and ongoing recommendations by second round interviewees. This approach allowed CPG to build trust, one stakeholder at a time. During the second round of interviews, a combination of in-person and virtual interviews were conducted by CPG staff, based upon the availability and preference of the interviewee. Between the two rounds, a total of 48 individual or small group interviews were completed. CPG transcribed all responses for internal analysis and identified key themes and areas of focus for future community engagement. These key themes also informed the development of preliminary guiding principles for the plan, which have been added to the annotated outline described below, the first draft of the community-wide public opinion questionnaire, and the Phase 2 Community Engagement Plan.

Phase 1 Deliverables

As previously delineated, the first round of stakeholder interviews revealed it was necessary to extend this one-onone and small-group interview approach before moving on to larger public engagement efforts. Rather than communitywide engagement and draft content development, the focus of Phase 1 evolved into expanded stakeholder engagement and trust-building. Community-wide public engagement activities and content development were shifted to Phase 2 of the project in order to ensure all input could be fully incorporated into the plan.

The original Phase 1 deliverable package included a draft of five sections of the CRMP. These five sections included: Executive Summary and Outline; Community Outreach and Engagement; Summary of Past Preservation Efforts; Survey/ Documentation Recommendations; and Risk Planning. The revised Phase 1 deliverable package includes:

1. Executive Summary of Phase 1 (this document)

The Executive Summary provides an overview of the project background, methods, and findings of the project to date, and explains changes to the project scope, timeline, and deliverables.

2. An annotated, preliminary outline of the CRMP

The preliminary outline was developed in Spring 2023 prior to the second round of stakeholder interviews to provide interviewees with an idea of what they could expect from the project. This document was revised in Summer 2023 following the conclusion of stakeholder interviews, and it is intended to evolve as more public input is gathered and until the start of the first draft of the plan.

3. Summary and analysis of Phase 1 Stakeholder Engagement

This document provides an overview of the stakeholder interviews and an analysis of the trends and key themes discussed across all interviews. This summary will become part of the CRMP.

4. Phase 2 Community Engagement Recommendations

The Phase 2 Community Engagement Recommendations are based upon the input collected during stakeholder interviews, feedback from community members and staff on preliminary ideas, and an analysis of the methods used during the Richmond 300 public engagement process. Because the timeline, scope, and budget of the CRMP project is more limited than the city-wide master planning process, CPG focused its recommendations on the engagement activities that will reach the largest, most diverse audiences, that earned the highest praise from the Richmond 300 experience, or which allow CPG staff the greatest opportunity for direct engagement and information gathering. Consultant time will be supplemented by strategic efforts of City Staff using templates, materials, and presentations prepared by CPG.

5. Public Input Questionnaire

This guestionnaire was developed using the key themes that emerged from the stakeholder interviews and is intended to give the larger community an opportunity to voice its opinion about the current trends, challenges, and goals for historic and cultural resources in the city. The audience for the survey is intended to be broad and includes all city residents (past and present) as well as those who work in the city or who live in the adjacent counties and frequently visit or utilize city resources. The survey offers a broad range of questions and seeks to understand the community's vision for preserving, recognizing, and honoring its historic places. Demographic questions are included in the survey to help understand who provided the responses. This tool will also allow CPG to identify, and hopefully fill gaps early in the process and before the input poll closes.

6. Advisory Committee Application Form

At the beginning of Phase 1, an advisory committee was established to support and guide development of the CRMP. The Advisory Committee membership consists of technical, subject matter experts including city staff, DHR staff, members of city-appointed commissions, staff of local preservation advocacy groups, university faculty, and cultural heritage professionals. Based on the internal and external stakeholder input, CPG believes that membership for the advisory committee should be opened to the community. The goal of creating a combined Advisory Committee with both technical experts and community members is to ensure that the plan excels at communicating the community vision while also meeting the standards and preservation best practices of the field. The community members should represent a diverse and inclusive cross-section of the City of Richmond. In order to create a balance that ensures community leader voices are not overshadowed by technical experts, CPG recommends appointing more community representatives than technical experts. Another way of ensuring this is a community-led effort is to appoint a Chair or Co-chair from among the community representatives.

The application form included with this deliverable set can be used to solicit applications for committee

members. By soliciting applications, rather than appointing members, the hope is that this will ensure that members are committed, interested, and have the capacity to provide the input and direction necessary, and will give CPG and the City an opportunity to use its diverse membership to finalize a plan that is reflective of the entirety of the city's residents.

Each of the Phase 1 deliverables are intended to serve as "Drafts," for review and comment by DHR, the City, and Advisory Committee members, and may be revised during Phase 2 based on client and community feedback. Several of these deliverables will also evolve into chapters, sections, or appendices of the final CRMP.

Phase 1 Conclusions

The initial public engagement completed during the Phase 1 stakeholder interviews emphasized the need for inclusion, equity, and broad representation related to identification and recognition of Richmond's cultural and historic resources, community engagement efforts, development decisions, and appointments to city boards, committees, and commissions. The responses associated with community engagement highlighted the need for a variety of accessible engagement options. Responses also indicated that it is important to consider the language used for public engagement and plan development. Interviewees emphasized the importance of explaining professional jargon so that a general audience can better engage with the subject matter. Additionally, CPG found that interviewees often discussed similar concepts and themes using different terminology. For example, concepts such as affordable housing, housing affordability, gentrification, rising costs, and density and development pressure were often used interchangeably or to describe similar concerns among individuals.

Overall, while responses generally supported preservation of historic and cultural resources in the city, the majority of interviewees indicated the need for an increased focus on the identification, acknowledgment, interpretation, and protection of culturally diverse resources—tangible and intangible—including the impacts that development, density, and housing pressures have on them. Lastly, interviewees acknowledged the need to reframe historic preservation to work for more residents and encompass a wider variety of resource types.

Next Steps

The findings of the Phase 1 stakeholder engagement and research were used to inform the recommendations developed for Phase 2. CPG recommends that Phase 2 begin with a series of community-wide public engagement events that provide ample and varied opportunities for the community to participate. Recommended engagement events and activities include in-person and virtual meetings, booths at local festivals, an open-house, and a community charette, in addition to an online public input survey. City staff and the advisory committee will be responsible for the final selection of community engagement events and activities. As part of the Phase 2 public engagement, CPG will also provide templated presentations that City staff can bring to more community meetings and events throughout the year. Following completion of the Phase 2 community engagement and analysis, the consultant will prepare an engagement summary and a detailed outline of the CRMP. The consultant will then complete a series of textheavy drafts, and make revisions based on comments and feedback from City staff, DHR, and the Advisory Committee until the final plan is delivered (12-14 months after Phase 2 commences). At key intervals in Phase 2, drafts should also be made available on the City's website for the public to track progress and provide feedback to City staff.

Included as an addendum to this Executive Summary is the proposed Phase 1 and Phase 2 schedule and project design, delivered as part of the pivot proposal in March 2023.



Richmond Cultural Resources Management Plan

Phase 1 Stakeholder Interview Analysis August 2023



Overview of the Stakeholder Engagement Process

The original scope of Phase 1 of the CRMP accounted for both stakeholder and public engagement. CPG typically conducts several days of in-person interviews with two stakeholder groups prior to holding larger group activities: internal stakeholders, or those directly linked to City government, and external stakeholders such as community leaders, residents, organizational leadership not directly associated with City government. This layered approach allows CPG to begin to build trust, better understand the unique trends and challenges of the community, and develop an engagement plan that best suits the residents of that community. The original CRMP project design followed this approach.

After completing a robust round of internal stakeholder interviews in the winter of 2023, it became clear that more time would be required for external stakeholder engagement to achieve the ultimate goals of the CRMP. Once this need was identified, the focus of Round 1 broadened and re-calibrated to reach more residents who fit into the external stakeholder group. The group of 20 external stakeholders CPG spoke with in the late spring and early summer 2023 represented a diverse group of community leaders and yielded significant insights for this project. While, ultimately, the stakeholder engagement timeline extended past its original intent, it allowed CPG to build trust within the community, better understand the community vision, more effectively gather and incorporate input from a broader audience, and develop a community engagement plan for Phase 2 that responds to Richmond's needs.



Two rounds of stakeholder interviews comprised of 48 individual or small group meetings were completed during Phase 1. Round 1 conversations took place with internal stakeholders, who included City leadership and staff and advisory committee members, shared information on current preservation processes and policies. During this round of stakeholder engagement, CPG began to develop a list of recommended external stakeholders and community leaders without direct ties to city government who would be key to better understanding the history and vision of the city and to reaching a more diverse audience. These individuals made up Round 2, or external stakeholder interviewees.

Interview questions were adjusted between Round 1 and Round 2 to reflect the different roles and perspectives of the two groups. During Round 1, questions addressed cultural resource topics in a manner that was specific to the person's or group's role. Round 2 questions addressed cultural resource topics broadly and sought to understand the community perspective. Answers were analyzed to identify common and recurring themes. Despite the adjustment in questions, some common themes emerged across Round 1 and 2; others applied only to Round 1 or only to Round 2.

Key Takeaways of Stakehholder Engagement

- Internal and external stakeholders identified development pressure as the biggest threat to historic and cultural resources in Richmond. Both groups also acknowledged the need to strike a balance between encouraging growth and development and protecting the city's historic character and cultural assets.
- Among all interviews, the theme of Inclusivity and Equity was in the top three most frequently discussed topics. While responses among internal stakeholders tended to focus broadly on themes such as "telling the full story," external stakeholders more specifically cited the need to identify, recognize, and acknowledge underrepresented communities, and their legacies throughout the City.
- External stakeholders frequently cited the need for protections in historic communities that preserve community character while remaining flexible enough to allow current residents to maintain their properties without the burden of cost-prohibitive restrictions.
- The interviews collectively highlighted the complex relationship between housing affordability and preservation; respondents noted the need for preservation tools in neighborhoods threatened by development pressure and gentrification, while also noting that the costs of doing preservation work often price out lower-income residents.

// ROUND 1 RESPONSE THEMES & CORRESPONDING ROUND 2 SUB-THEMES

Round 1	Round
Theme	Corresponding Sub-Them
Community Engagement	
	Engagement (41
	Word Choice and/or Focus Historic Preservation (18
	Collaboration (15
	Education (13
	Community Organizations (99
	Digital Resources (29
	Access (1
Cultural Landscape & Built Environment	
	Place (269
	Neighborhoods (159
	Historic Resources (159
	Community (14)
	Character (129
	Guidelines (99
	Old & Historic Districts (69
	Natural Resources (29
Density & Development Pressures	
	Threats (409
	Development (229
	Housing (169
	Gentrification (79
	Density (59
	Demolition (59
	Threatened Resources (39
Inclusivity/Equity	Incentives (29
	Interpreting History (47)
	Acknowledge Resources (219
	Underrepresented History (189
	Diversity (69
	Identity (49
	Arts & Culture (39
	Archaeology (1
City Staffing/Resources	
	Planning (509
	City Resources (299
	Dearda & Committees (17)

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Code Enforcement (4%)

Stakeholder Engagement Themes

Internal stakeholder interviews (Round 1) yielded several high-level themes. External stakeholder interviews (Round 2) resulted in more granular input which was categorized into sub-themes; these sub-themes organically fell under the larger themes identified in Round 1 interviews. The table on the previous page lists the Round 1 themes and the corresponding Round 2 sub-themes that are referred to throughout this analysis.

Responses in both Rounds 1 and 2 could be categorized into the same themes; however, the perspectives in each round varied based on the role and relationship to City government, as was demonstrated by the themes discussed most frequently in each round. Internal stakeholders focused most heavily on the physical historic and cultural assets of the city, including buildings, neighborhoods, natural resources, etc. In comparison, Cultural Landscape & Built Environment was the fourth most frequently discussed theme among External Stakeholders, who made more comments about Community Engagement, Inclusivity/ Equity, and Density and Development Pressures. While External Stakeholders acknowledged that the physical components of the city's cultural and historic resources are important, they indicated that the intangible aspects, policies, and external pressures relating to cultural heritage were more pressing. For example, many indicated that in order for historic preservation - and this Cultural Resource Management Plan - to be successful, the City and preservation-related groups need to engage in diverse and comprehensive community engagement; many also

5%21%24%25%Cultural Landscape & Built Environment (26%)Density & Development Pressures (25%)Inclusivity/Equity (24%)Community Engagement (21%)City Staffing/Resources (5%)

// ROUND 1 INTERVIEW RESPONSE THEMES

provided thoughts and suggestions on how to do so successfully. Inclusivity and equity were a recurrent theme among External Stakeholders and they often cited the need to identify, recognize, and acknowledge underrepresented communities, and their legacies throughout the City. Equally as significant, though, was the frequency with which the concepts of inclusivity and equity were alluded to in topics such as cost of living, neighborhoods facing development pressure, and general interpretation of the city's history throughout this group's responses.

Density and Development Pressure in the city was the second most frequently discussed theme among Internal Stakeholders and the third among External Stakeholders. Many of these conversations focused on the rapid growth of the city in recent years, and the impact that the push for greater density and new development has had on historic neighborhoods. Interviewees from both rounds acknowledged the need to strike a balance between encouraging growth and development and protecting the city's historic character and cultural assets. Furthermore, this theme, along with Inclusivity and Equity, evoked pressures related to housing affordability and gentrification in Richmond. In addition to the city's urban centers and frequently cited areas of concern such as Shockoe Bottom, the continued demand for increased density and new development threatens historic neighborhoods where smaller-scale residences are naturally more affordable, and until recent years, have historically been more accessible to low- and middle-income households. Both groups also



// ROUND 2 INTERVIEW RESPONSE THEMES

discussed concepts associated with City Staffing and Resources, acknowledging areas in which the City had been successful and could improve.

Note: The number of interviewees in Round 1 and Round 2 differed. Therefore, all comparisons were made utilizing percentages rather than raw numbers.

Threats to Cultural & Historic Resources

Round 1 questions were oriented toward public policy and asked specifically about the current trends, challenges, threats, and opportunities both from the purview of City Hall and within the broader climate of the community. Round 2 questions centered on perceived threats to historic and cultural assets in the community and possible goals for the plan. Despite the nuances in language across each group's questions, both sets of interviewees identified development pressure as the biggest threat to historic and cultural resources in Richmond. While there are other similar threats that were mentioned in both rounds, the two stakeholder groups did not necessarily agree of the order of importance.

Language

Across all interviews, it was apparent that interviewees were using different words and phrases to talk about similar concepts. One such topic was housing affordability. Although many responses within Rounds 1 and Round 2 addressed the topic in like-terms, using language like "affordable housing," "affordability," or "affordable," others within Round 2 invoked the same ideas using different language like "mixed income," "high prices," "gentrification," or "cost." Additionally, many responses revealed how intertwined these concepts and themes are in reality, and a large majority of the responses within Round 2 related in some way to the ideas of inclusivity and equity. While concerns regarding the increased cost of living in the City were voiced across the socioeconomic spectrum, External Stakeholders expressed how the decreased housing affordability in Richmond has had direct impacts on social equity, and has adversely impacted and disproportionately displaced communities of color.

The relationship between housing affordability and preservation is complex, as demonstrated by the varied responses of interviewees. Respondents noted the need for preservation tools in neighborhoods threatened by development pressure and gentrification. At the same time, they noted that the costs of doing preservation work (i.e., higher cost materials, increased property tax rates) often prices out lower-income residents.

Inclusivity, Equity, & Representation

In both Rounds 1 and 2, the theme of Inclusivity and Equity was in the top three most frequently discussed topics. Additionally, whether explicitly or implicitly discussed, the concepts of inclusivity, equity, and representation were woven through the majority of interview responses, especially those in Round 2. External Stakeholders highlighted the need for diverse and equitable representation in community engagement, interpretation of the city's history, development decisions, and among those appointed to city boards and committees.

A few of the implied areas relating to equity and inclusivity included the relationship among gentrification, displacement, and development as well as housing and neighborhoods. Gentrification and displacement were discussed in both general terms and in relation to specific neighborhoods such as Jackson Ward, Union Hill, Washington Park, Manchester, some West End neighborhoods, and in public housing developments slated for redevelopment. The disruption of community that has historically occurred through displacement of residents for larger public improvement projects has negatively impacted African American neighborhoods in the city for generations. Despite this, African American communities formed cohesive, self-sustaining communities throughout the city (though segregated). Over time, these neighborhoods have become integrated, and more and more of them are facing gentrification and development pressure. Infill construction, replacement of small-scale residences with larger single-family residences or multi-family condos and apartments, and the cost of historic building materials and maintenance in today's market has further impacted the affordability of historic neighborhoods and is forcing longstanding residents to make hard decisions to move out of communities. External Stakeholders frequently cited the need for protections in these communities that preserve community character while remaining flexible enough to allow current residents to maintain their properties without the burden of cost-prohibitive restrictions.

Many interviewees, especially External Stakeholders, spoke of the need for the identification and honorific recognition that acknowledges and celebrates the history and contributions of underrepresented histories, places, and communities. Additionally, many commented that Richmond has an opportunity to tell the full story of American history regarding slavery, Civil Rights, and race relations that spans centuries. Careful interpretation of sites such as Lumpkins Jail, Shockoe Bottom, and Monument Avenue was frequently cited as an opportunity to attract international tourism and promote racial healing within the city.

// ROUND 1: WHAT THREATENS CULTURAL AND/ORHISTORICASSETS IN THE COMMUNITY?

// ROUND 2: WHAT THREATENS CULTURAL AND/ORHISTORIC ASSETS IN THE COMMUNITY?





Lack of Code Enforcement (1%)

// COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES: KEY CONCEPTS



Future Engagement

Both Internal and External Stakeholders were asked to provide input on the future phases of public engagement. Responses between both groups focused on: things to **consider** while planning and completing public engagement, **focus areas** to include in engagement, **how and where** to engage the public, and specific contacts and recommendations for engagement.

CONSIDERATIONS

Internal and external stakeholders expressed their hope that the City would consider certain things while planning and completing public engagement. Considerations included identifying the demographics and audience, past experiences with engagement in Richmond, the city's role in engagement, and ways to make engagement accessible, equitable, and inclusive.

FOCUS AREAS

Focus areas for public engagement fell into two categories:

Education: areas where engagement also educates the community about historic and cultural resources and preservation would be useful. Specific topics that may require additional education include:

- Brief overview of the history of the city
- Cultural and historic resources: What are they? Where are they? Why are they important?
- Contact information for organizations and city staff that can provide additional information and resources
- Benefits of historic preservation
- Current programing
- Project background, progress, process, and findings
- **Input:** areas where engagement should be used to seek community input. Specific areas that stakeholders identified as requiring additional community input include:
 - General community input on places that are important to them
 - Zoning updates to protect historic and cultural resources
 - The future of Monument Avenue as a physical space as well as a place for talking about the full history of race relations in America

// COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES: THEMES



HOW & WHERE

Stakeholders provided several recommendations for how and where to best engage the public. Most of their recommendations included utilizing community ambassadors to build community trust; collaborating with existing groups and organizations; meeting people where they are (schools, churches, community events/ places, and community organizations/meetings); and providing accessible, inclusive, and equitable engagement opportunities.

The conversations held with internal and external stakeholders over the course of several months demonstrated that current and future engagement should strive to build trust, meet people where they are, and seek opportunity to be collaborative, equitable, and inclusive.

Conclusions

The Internal and External Stakeholder interviews conducted by CPG during Phase 1 of the CRMP provided a basis for understanding current trends and challenges impacting historic and cultural resources across the City. Many of the key themes discussed in this analysis were used to develop and revise some of the preliminary guiding principles and chapter summaries provided in the Annotated CRMP Outline. Additionally, the input from stakeholders helped inform the Phase 2 Community Engagement Plan, Questionnaire, and Advisory Committee Application.