

# RICHMOND 300

## A Guide for Growth

*Designing an equitable,  
sustainable, and beautiful  
Richmond for its 300th  
birthday in 2037*



Master Plan **Executive Summary**  
City of Richmond, Virginia  
Final | September 29, 2020

# RICHMOND 300

## A Guide for Growth

*Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* creates 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.

### **Richmond is on the map.**

Richmond has been experiencing remarkable growth. Richmond added more than 32,000 residents between 2000 and 2019. If growth trends continue, Richmond may add 30,000 additional residents by 2037. *Richmond 300* is a roadmap to guiding growth equitably, sustainably, and beautifully.

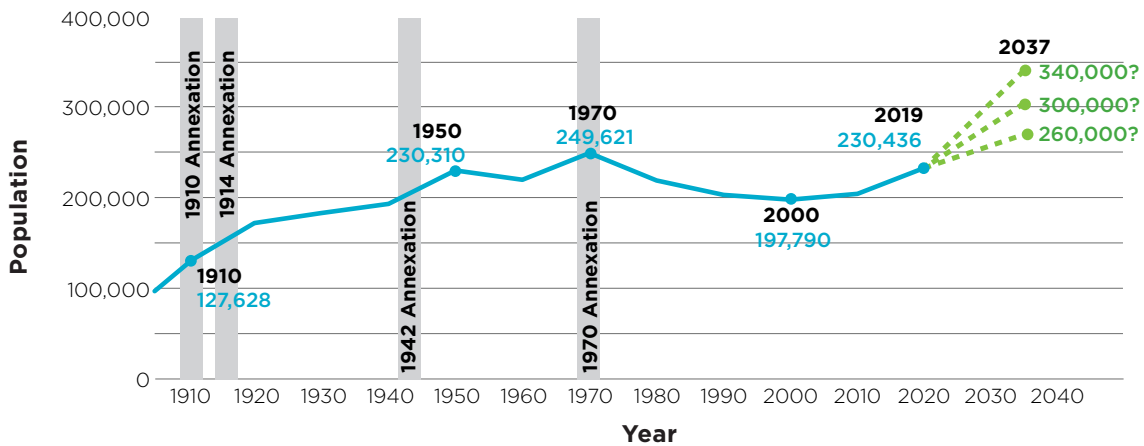
**Richmond's growth has not benefited everyone.** Richmond's poverty level remains persistently high. The poverty rate increased from 21.4% in 2000 to 25.5% in 2016 and has since decreased to 24.5% in 2019. Poverty rates are highly concentrated in certain areas of the city, particularly the East End which has the largest share of public housing in the city, as well as in large portions of the South Richmond. *Richmond 300* includes many strategies to increase opportunity for all Richmonders.

**Richmond's central location within Virginia and the East Coast makes the city well-positioned for economic growth and prosperity.** Richmond is an ideal place for commerce and innovation to thrive. Located at the convergence of I-95 and I-64, the highest navigable point on the James River, and the crossroads of multiple rail lines, Richmond's central location attracts businesses and residents. *Richmond 300* provides guidance on centering equitable economic growth strategies.

**Richmond 300 was developed by thousands of Richmonders.** The process to develop the Master Plan included reaching nearly 7,000 people during more than 100 *Richmond 300*-sponsored meetings and more than 230 civic association meetings, City Council district meetings, festivals, and presentations to City Council and various commissions.

32,000+  
number of residents  
Richmond added from 2000  
to 2019

**Richmond is 62.5 square miles and is not allowed to annex land.** *Richmond 300* includes hundreds of strategies and policy recommendations to plan for growth within the constrained footprint of the city. These recommendations are used by City staff, local businesses, non-profits, and the public to develop capital budgets, pursue grants, identify locations of new businesses, purchase real estate, plant trees, expand transit, build sidewalks, and many other decisions related to how Richmonders use and move about the city over the next two decades.



### Historic and Projected Population, 1910-2037

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 1910, 1950, 1970, 2000 Censuses, 2019 Population Est.; Population Projections by the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis at Virginia Commonwealth University, 2017

#### CITY STAFF, COMMISSIONS, & ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Identify areas well-positioned for growth and reinvestment
- Strengthen/grow neighborhoods and Nodes
- Determine how to maximize return on public investment
- Manage capital projects
- Develop budgets
- Pursue federal, state, and other grants
- Advance priorities for community wealth building

#### DEVELOPERS, DESIGNERS, & BUILDERS

- Purchase real estate
- Decide whether it is most appropriate to reuse or construct new buildings in a given location
- Identify likely hot spots for development
- Understand the City's development priorities
- Align design/development ideas with City goals

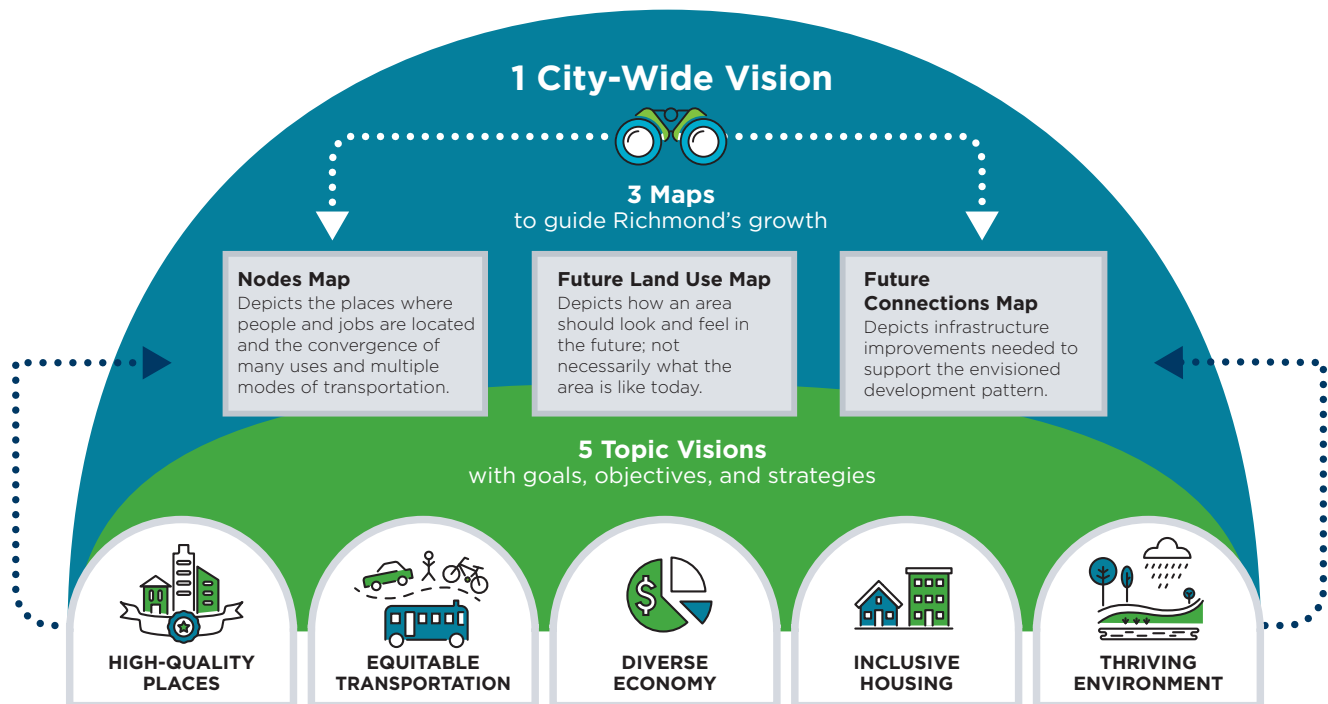
#### RESIDENTS, NON-PROFITS, & BUSINESS OWNERS

- Expand, start, or relocate a business
- Purchase real estate
- Renovate an existing building
- Improve a local park
- Find a suitable location for a community garden
- Attract a new business or service to a neighborhood business district

**Master Plan Users.** There are just some of the ways that various groups use the Master Plan to develop budgets, design projects, and invest in Richmond.

# Vision for 2037

In 2037, Richmond is a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, innovative, and equitable city of thriving neighborhoods; ensuring a high quality of life for all.



**Plan Structure Diagram.** *Richmond 300* has three maps that present a growth strategy centered on great places and networks and 5 topics to achieve the 20-year city-wide vision.

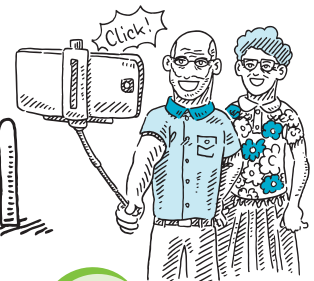
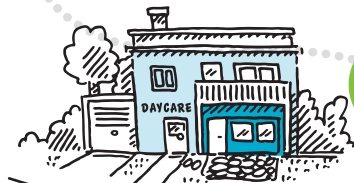
# Vision Story

The city-wide vision story helps to illustrate how the city-wide vision in *Richmond 300* could be realized in the lives of Richmonders in 2037. **What vision story would you tell?**

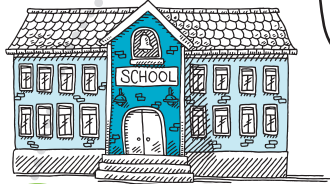
In 2037, 6-year-old Isabella lives in a home that is affordable to her single parent, Alex.



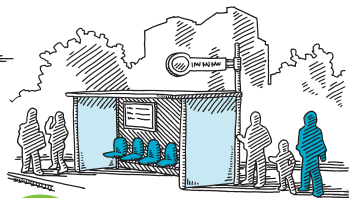
Her baby sibling, Miguel, attends a nearby daycare.



Isabella's grandparents, Jerome and Tonya, recently downsized and now live in an apartment above Isabella's garage.



Isabella attends a highly rated socio-economically diverse public elementary school.



Alex has a job that pays a living wage and has the option to commute by transit.



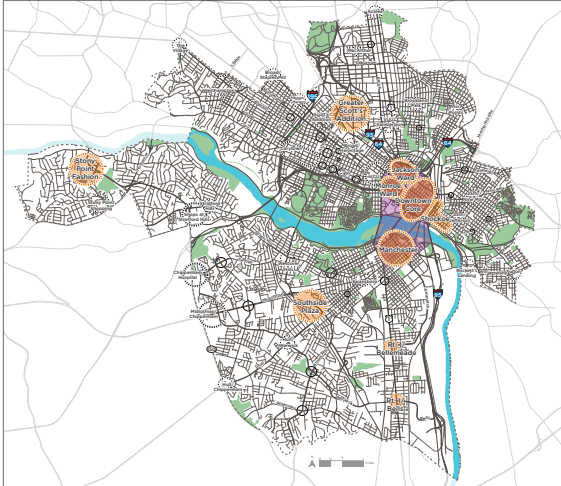
Isabella's uncle Jack and his fiancé Mel just moved to Richmond from D.C. to work in the robust start-up scene. They live in a nearby apartment.

All members of Isabella's family thrive in Richmond because they can easily walk, bike, take transit, or drive to see friends and family, shop at stores, go to work, play in parks, and go to school.



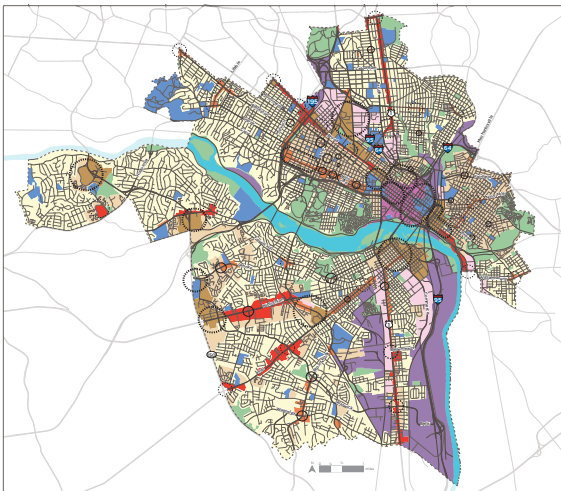
# Guiding Maps

*Richmond 300* includes three maps to guide Richmond's growth. These three maps are referred to several times throughout *Richmond 300* as these maps are the backbone of the Master Plan. The maps are described in Chapter 1.



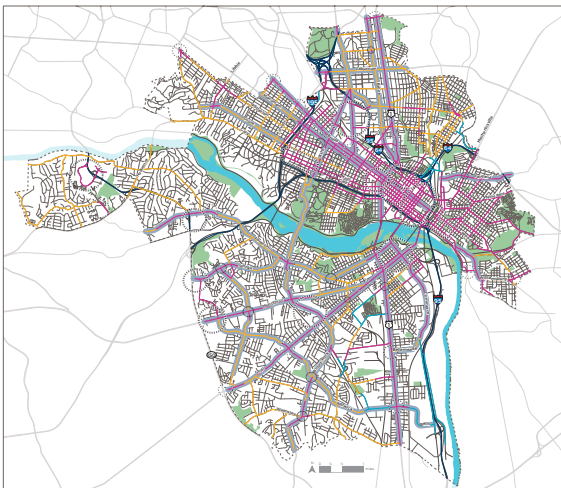
## Nodes Map

**Nodes are places in Richmond where people and jobs are today and continue to grow into the future.** Nodes are the places of convergence of many uses and include offices, shopping, housing, and/or public gathering places as well as access to multiple modes of transportation. 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.



## Future Land Use Map

**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.** Future land use is an important tool in helping communities envision the future of a place without getting into the implementation of how, specifically, the buildings, streets, public spaces, and parks will be designed and built. Once a future land use map is adopted, the City and others, utilize various tools (zoning, streetscape projects, park and open space projects, transportation improvements, and economic development programs) to achieve its vision.



## Future Connections

**The Future Connections Map depicts the envisioned transportation networks that provide access to and among Nodes.** The elements in the Future Connections Map are great streets, street typologies, greenways and on-street bike facilities, enhanced transit, street connections, interchanges, and bridges.

# Topic Visions

Five topic visions speak to how the city should physically grow over the next 20 years. The existing context, goals, objectives, and strategies related to these five topics are found in Goals 2 through 6.



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



## Equitable Transportation

**Richmond prioritizes the movement of people over the movement of vehicles through a safe, reliable, equitable, and sustainable transportation network.** Walking, biking, and transit options are the most convenient and most frequently used forms of transportation in Richmond, thereby improving the natural environment and our health. Richmond's multi-modal transportation system is easy for all people to use and seamlessly connects Richmond neighborhoods and attractions to each other, the region, and the nation.



## Diverse Economy

**Richmond is home to a variety of businesses and industries that offer opportunities for quality employment and capital investment.** Richmond is a first choice location for businesses and investment because the city's transportation, housing, cultural, outdoor, commercial, and institutional amenities create a vibrant city. Richmonders of all income levels have opportunities for life-long learning and skill-building.



## Inclusive Housing

**Richmond is a city where all people can access quality housing choices.** By preserving and increasing housing, Richmond supports existing and new residents, regardless of income. As the city grows, Richmond provides options to existing residents, preventing involuntary displacement and reducing housing disparities. Housing is the foundation of inclusive Richmond neighborhoods that are walkable with ample access to services, goods and open spaces.



## Thriving Environment

**Richmond is a sustainable and resilient city with healthy air, clean water, and a flourishing ecosystem.** Carbon emissions are low, air and water quality are high, and city-wide solid waste production is minimal. The City is positively adapting to the effects of a changing climate, with a built environment that enhances and protects natural assets, including the James River. All residents have equitable access to nature and a healthy community.

# Goals

Seventeen goals, grouped under the five topic areas, have objectives and strategies that provide policy, infrastructure, partnership, or other recommendations to achieve the topic and city-wide visions, which are found in Chapters 2 through 6.

HIGH-QUALITY PLACES	<b>Goal 1 Complete Neighborhoods:</b> Establish a city of complete neighborhoods that have access to Nodes connected by major corridors in a gridded street network.
	<b>Goal 2 City-Owned Assets:</b> Efficiently manage City-owned land and facilities.
	<b>Goal 3 Historic Preservation:</b> Support growth that preserves the historical urban fabric and enhances understanding of Richmond’s multi-faceted past.
	<b>Goal 4 Urban Design:</b> Establish a distinctive city comprising architecturally significant buildings connected by a network of walkable urban streets and open spaces to support an engaging built environment.
	<b>Goal 5 Planning Engagement:</b> Foster a planning engagement culture that effectively and equitably builds people’s capacity to organize to improve the city and their neighborhoods.
EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION	<b>Goal 6 Land Use &amp; Transportation:</b> Align future land use and transportation planning to support a sustainable and resilient city.
	<b>Goal 7 Vision Zero:</b> Systemically change the built environment to shift our safety culture and ensure that individuals are not killed or seriously injured on city streets.
	<b>Goal 8 Non-Car Network:</b> Enhance walking, biking, and transit infrastructure to provide universal access to all users, prioritizing low-income areas and areas within the high-injury street network.
	<b>Goal 9 Streets, Bridges, &amp; Connections:</b> Build and improve streets and bridges to expand connectivity for all users.
	<b>Goal 10 Emerging Transportation:</b> Incorporate emerging technology into the transportation network in ways that seek to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
DIVERSE ECONOMY	<b>Goal 11 Businesses &amp; Jobs:</b> Foster an environment that supports the growth of existing and new small, medium, and large businesses, focusing on Nodes, major corridors, and industrial centers.
	<b>Goal 12 Tourism:</b> Develop tourism and attractions to further elevate Richmond’s image and to continue to delight existing and future residents, employees, and visitors.
	<b>Goal 13 Anchor Institutions:</b> Leverage institutions to strengthen job sectors and collaborate on land planning.
INCLUSIVE HOUSING	<b>Goal 14 Housing:</b> Preserve, expand, and create mixed income communities, by preserving existing housing units and developing new ones—both renter- and owner-occupied—throughout the city.
THRIVING ENVIRONMENT	<b>Goal 15 Clean Air:</b> Improve air quality within the city and the region, achieve a 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions within the city by 2030, and achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions within the city by 2050 via RVAgreen 2050.
	<b>Goal 16 Clean Water:</b> Improve local water quality and manage the built environment to enhance and protect natural assets such as the James River.
	<b>Goal 17 Resilient &amp; Healthy Communities:</b> Positively adapt to the effects of a changing climate via RVAgreen 2050, and ensure that all residents have equitable access to nature and a healthy community.



# Big Moves

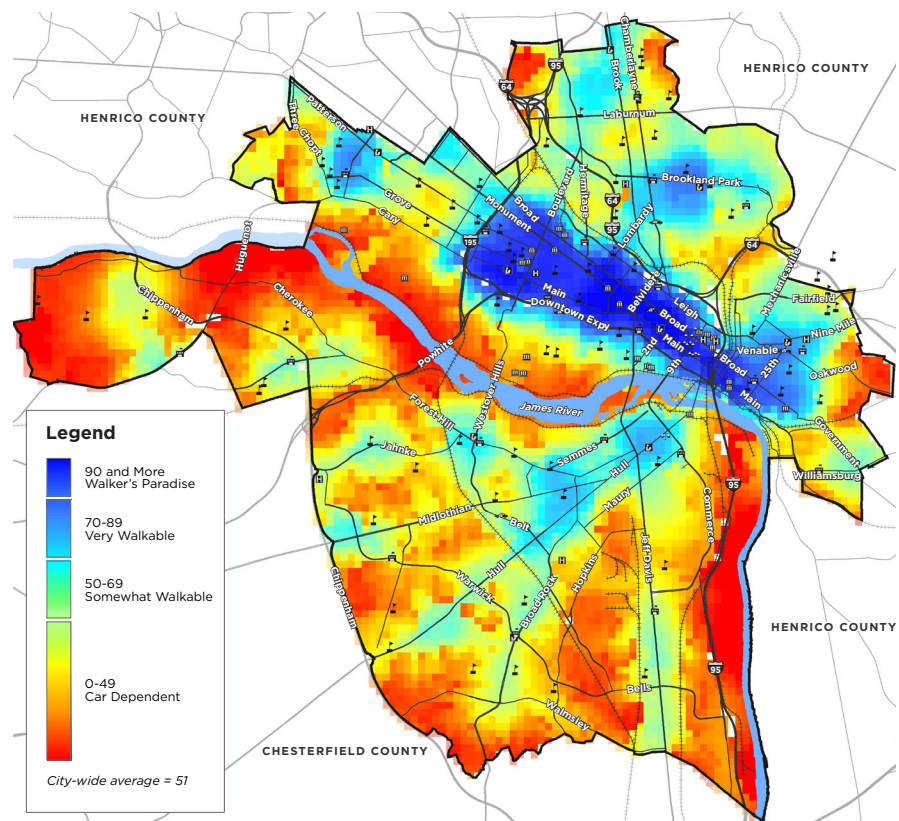
The sheer breadth and length of any comprehensive plan can make it difficult to execute; therefore *Richmond 300* outlines six Big Moves to deliberately advance over the next 5 years. Because these moves are wide-reaching, there are several strategies throughout *Richmond 300* that relate to each Big Move. As the City advances each of the Big Moves over the next 5 years, Richmond will be well on its way to realize its 20-year vision. The Big Moves are detailed in Chapter 7, which describes key benefits, *Richmond 300* vision and goal alignment, and action steps to implement each Big Move.

## Big Move | Re-Write the Zoning Ordinance

Direct growth to appropriate areas while maintaining existing neighborhoods as well as creating new authentic neighborhoods adjacent to enhanced transit.

Re-writing the Zoning Ordinance means developing new zoning category descriptions for the entire city and then mapping the new zoning categories to every parcel in the city. The re-write of the Zoning Ordinance is a 3- to 5-year process. The last comprehensive re-write was in the mid-1970s.

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. Many of the objectives in *Richmond 300* have strategies that suggest revisions to the Zoning Ordinance.



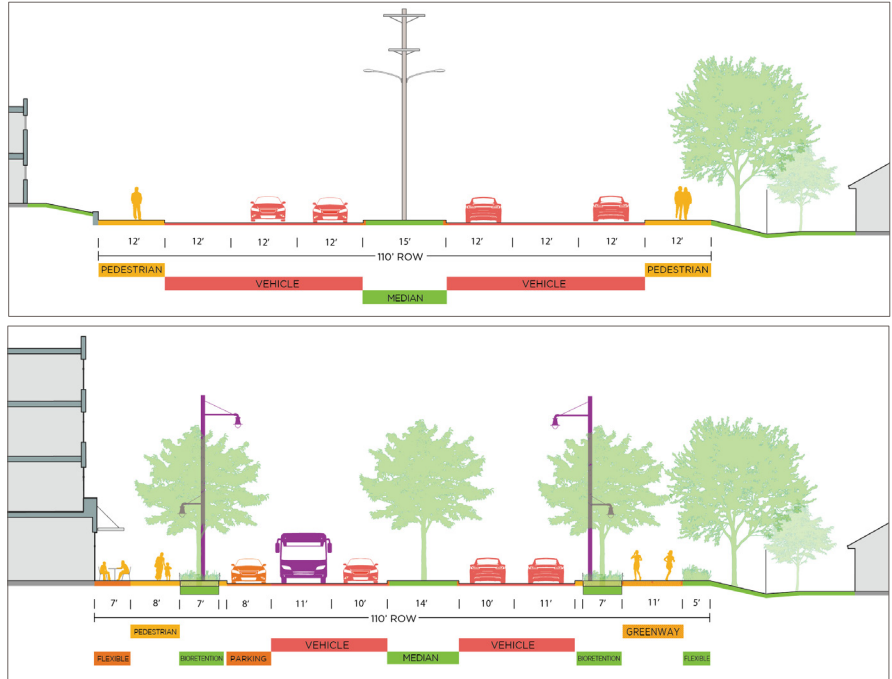
**Walk Score® Map** The re-write of the Zoning Ordinance will seek to improve walkability by creating form requirements and allowing mixed-use districts. The Walk Score® Map is a tool for showing how close amenities such as businesses, parks, and schools are to a specific place in the city. The city-wide Walkscore® is 51, meaning that on average, the city is somewhat walkable with some errands accomplished on foot, but the majority of errands require a car. This map shows the divide in walkability between areas of Richmond that are north of the James River, which are generally walkable, and the south side of the James River, which are generally car dependent.

Data source: Walk Score® (2016)

## Big Move | Re-Imagine Priority Growth Nodes

Target growth in jobs and population to Downtown, Greater Scott's Addition, Route 1 Corridor, Southside Plaza, and Stony Point Fashion Park.

People want to go to great places. The Priority Growth Nodes are places in Richmond that can be elevated to become even greater places than they are in 2020. Over the next 2 decades, not all of Richmond will experience population and job growth, but these Nodes are the places where the City is targeting the greatest growth in jobs and population.



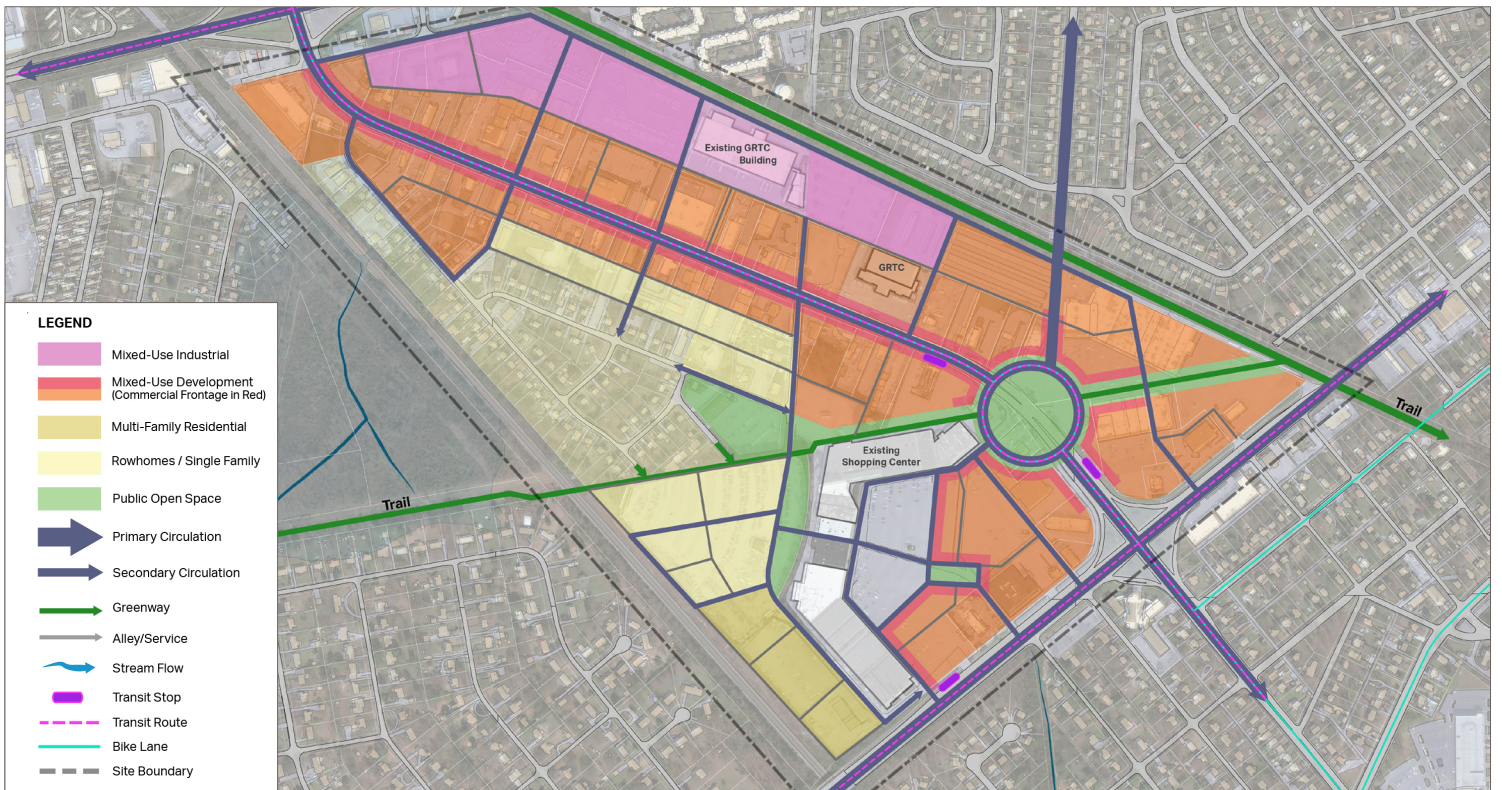
**Route 1 Potential Street Section Transformation.** The existing street [top] has more travel lanes than needed and can be transformed [bottom] into a complete street with elements such as outdoor seating, trees, pedestrian lighting, on-street parking, enhanced transit, car lanes, and a wide greenway (the Ashland to Petersburg Trail).



**Diamond Site Potential Transformation.** The urban neighborhood created along N. Arthur Ashe Boulevard [left] is possible because the grand crescent park [right] tucked in the middle of the site establishes a strong design edge, providing an oasis to enjoy nature, gather, and relax.



**Manchester Conceptual Aerial.** Manchester's proximity to Downtown and the James River is strengthened over the next 20 years with investments in improving connections, such as enhanced transit on Hull Street, improved bridges, the Ashland to Petersburg Trail, and an improved Manchester Canal.



**Southside Plaza Conceptual Plan.** Southside Plaza has the potential to be transformed into a bustling center of in South Richmond offering employment, housing, recreation, and entertainment in a walkable human-scale environment.

## Big Move | Expand Housing Opportunities

Encourage the development of housing options throughout the city to expand the geography of opportunity by de-concentrating poverty.

Richmond offers many housing options; however the city is intensely segregated by socio-economic status and race. This Big Move seeks to elevate the importance of creating more housing opportunities in more parts of the city for all income levels.



**Housing In Richmond.**  
Mixed-use, mixed-income community at the former Armstrong High School site redeveloped by RRHA [top]; Single-family homes in Battery Park [middle]; Multi-family building in Manchester [bottom]

## Big Move | Provide Greenways & Parks for All

Develop parks and greenways so that by 2037 100% of Richmonders live within a 10-minute walk of a park.

Create a parks system that is easily accessible by all Richmonders and connected by a greenway network.



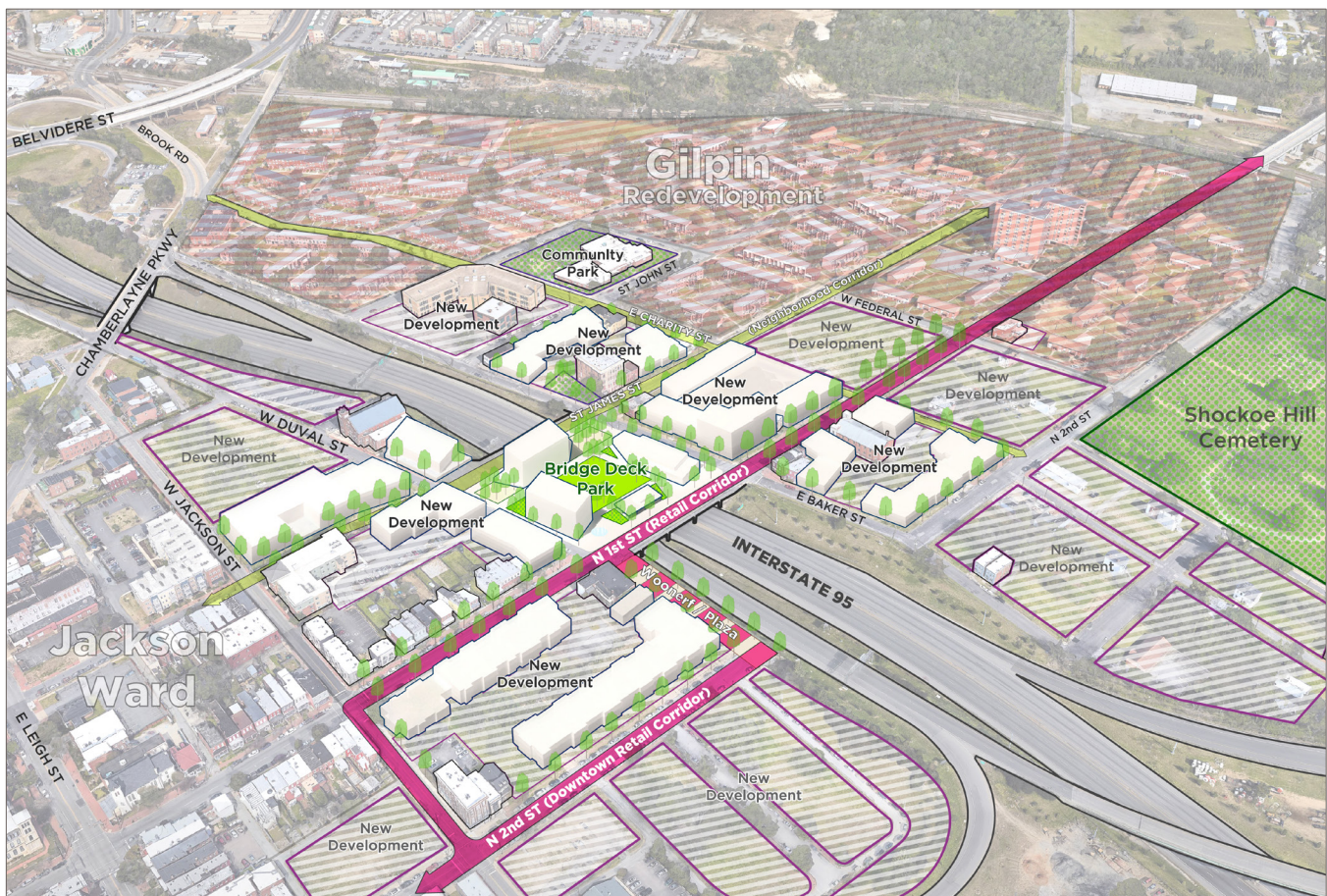
### Parks and Greenways.

As Richmond looks to add new parks to the city, not all new parks will be large parks. Some may be pocket parks, like Scuffletown Park in the Fan [top] and others may be reclaimed industrial space, like the Low Line [middle]. The Capitol Trail [middle] and Cannon Creek Greenway [bottom] are greenways that provides safe paths for walkers, joggers, and cyclists.

## Big Move | Reconnect the City

Cap highways to reknit neighborhoods destroyed by interstates, build/improve bridges, introduce street grids and make the city easier to access by foot, bike, and transit

In the 1950s the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (now I-95/I-64) was built through Jackson Ward; cutting the neighborhood in half and destroying over 900 buildings. The main project of this Big Move is to cap the highway and build a park, buildings, and roads on top of the highway in an effort to heal the wound caused by the highway construction.



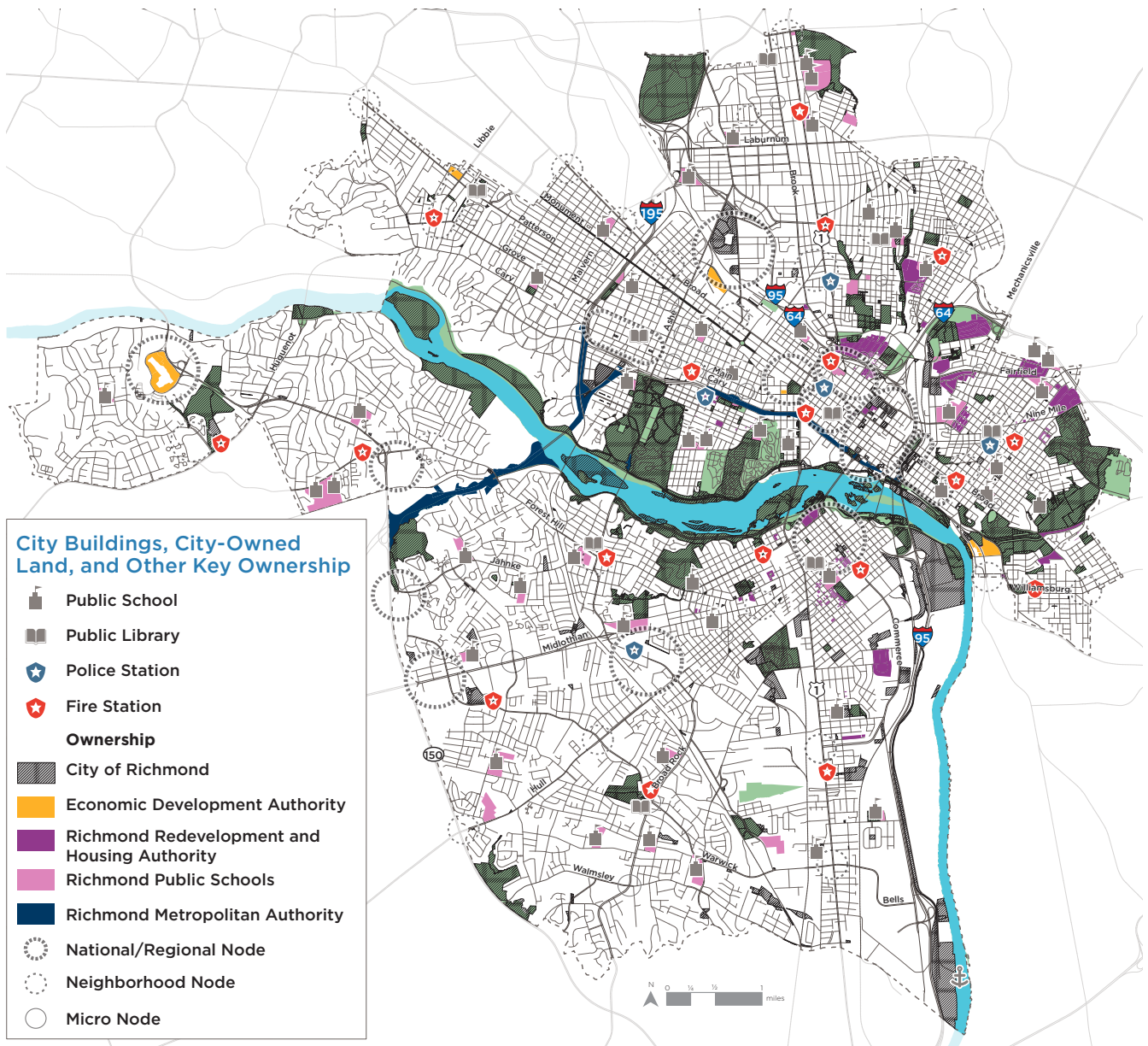
**Jackson Ward Bridge Deck.** By capping the highway between Jackson Ward and North Jackson Ward with streets, parks, and buildings, Jackson Ward will once again be one neighborhood

# Big Move | Realign City Facilities

Improve City buildings (schools, libraries, fire stations, police stations, etc.) to provide better services in efficient, shared-use, accessible facilities.

As the city grows, there will be new residents living in new areas of the city and filling out existing neighborhoods. This growth will likely lead to new demand in City services and require City facilities to move, expand, close, or co-locate. Cities across the country are creating innovative strategies

to co-locate city facilities and better serve residents – such as adding clinics to fire stations and reexamining how public libraries deliver of all kinds of information in various formats (not just books).





**RICHMOND** PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW  
**PDR**