

Code Refresh: Draft #3 Work Session

15 June 2026

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Development Review

City Council Work Session

Thriving Neighborhoods | Thriving Economy

Inclusive Communities | Sustainable Built Environment



Purpose and objectives

WHY CODE REFRESH?

Our 50-year-old zoning code does not align with our master plan (Richmond 300) goals for housing choice, neighborhood walkability, economic vitality, and climate resilience. We need a new zoning code that:

Allows more residents to build the types of housing units that fits their needs

Allows for greater mixing of uses at the proper scale and in the proper places

Facilitates new development that compliments our most significant cultural, historic, and natural assets

Simplifies standards and procedures

HOW DOES CODE REFRESH ALIGN WITH RICHMOND 300?

EQUITY

expand opportunities for all Richmonders, regardless of race or income, to live in more parts of the city by expanding the types of housing allowed to be developed by-right throughout the city

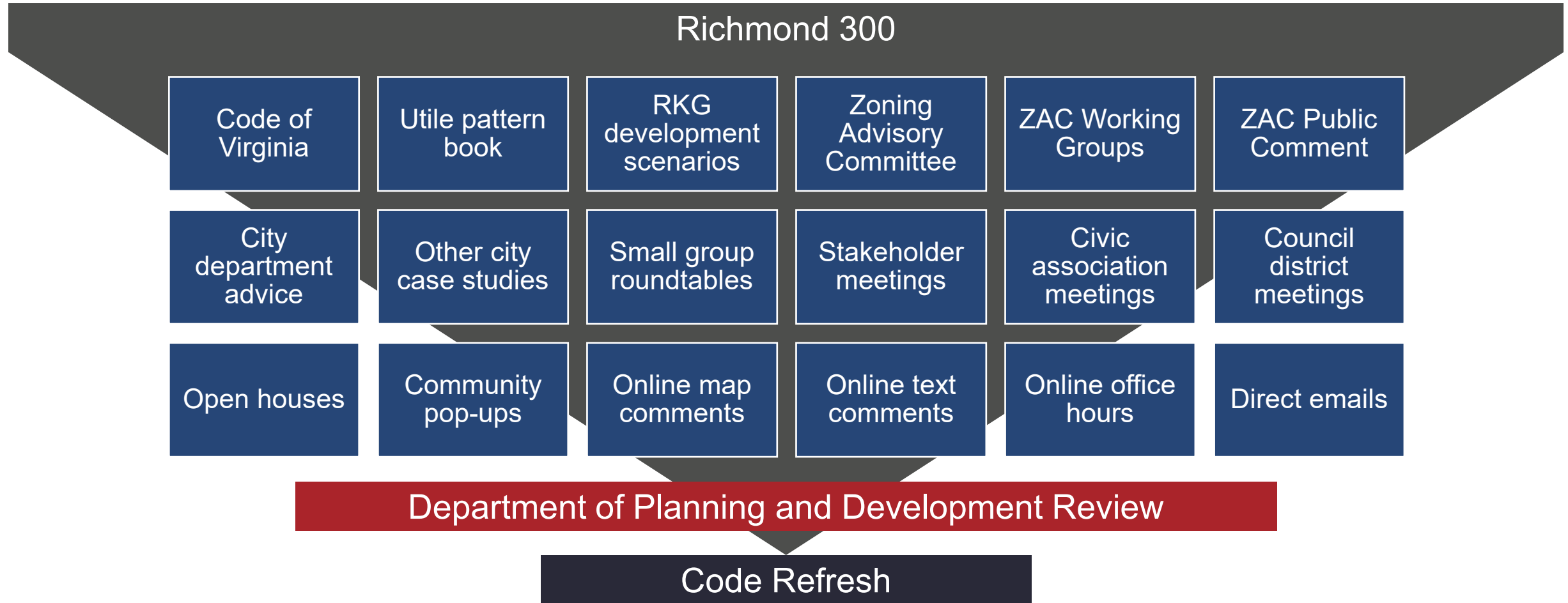
SUSTAINABILITY

create neighborhoods that are easily accessible by foot, bike, and transit; make on-site renewable energy production by-right; increase open space and permeability requirements; and require other measures to protect and enhance the natural environment

BEAUTY

preserve the authentic character of older neighborhoods and to create new ones with design elements that create a distinctive city; include form-based elements to create a walkable, engaging built environment

HOW DO WE CRAFT A DRAFT CODE?



WHERE DO WE HAVE SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT?

# of zoning districts	nuanced use permissions	more conditional uses	open space district	residential cottage district	design district framework
mapping nodes and corridors	mapping open space	nuanced residential mapping	minimizing CG mapping	MX-3 / MX-4 / MX-5 districts	lot widths
building coverage	building setbacks	building height	minimum tree canopy	transition setbacks and step-backs	transition screens
walls and fences	outdoor amenity space	windows and fenestration	clear pedestrian width	vehicle parking location	signs

WHERE ARE WE STILL EVALUATING OPTIONS?

How many people in a household?

How do we zone places of worship?

How many dwelling units on a lot?

How many people in a household?

HOW DOES CODE REFRESH ALIGN WITH RICHMOND 300?

OBJECTIVE 14.2

Ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

OBJECTIVE 14.8

Develop inclusionary and equitable housing options for our gentrifying neighborhoods to prevent involuntary displacement.

OBJECTIVE 14.9

Assist households that desire to age in place in their neighborhoods.

HOW MANY PEOPLE IN A “HOUSEHOLD”?

CURRENT CODE

Not more than three (3) unrelated persons or a combination of related and unrelated persons

DRAFT #1

not defined

DRAFT #2

eight (8) or fewer unrelated individuals

DRAFT #3

§ [36-105.4.Code of Virginia](#). Occupancy standards for residential dwelling units: 70 sf per single-occupant bedroom; 50 sf per person for multiple-occupant bedrooms

How do we zone places of worship?

HOW DOES CODE REFRESH ALIGN WITH RICHMOND 300?

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Rezone the city in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan, as shown in Figure 21 and described in Chapter 1.

OBJECTIVE 3.2

Reduce the demolition of historical buildings.

OBJECTIVE 11.3

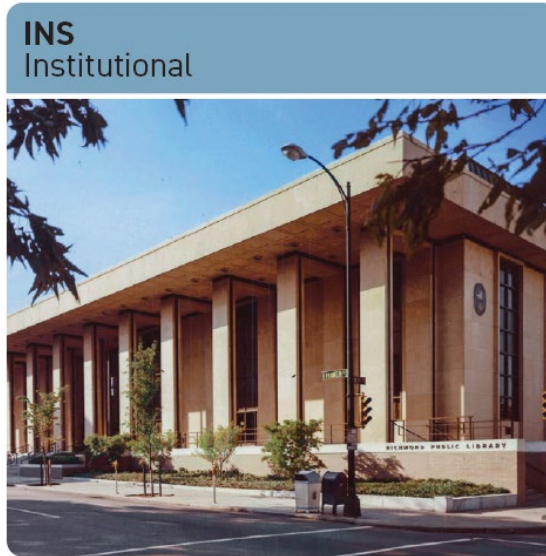
Increase the number and support the growth of small businesses, start-ups, and women-owned and minority-owned businesses.

HOW DO WE ZONE PLACES OF WORSHIP?

CURRENT CODE

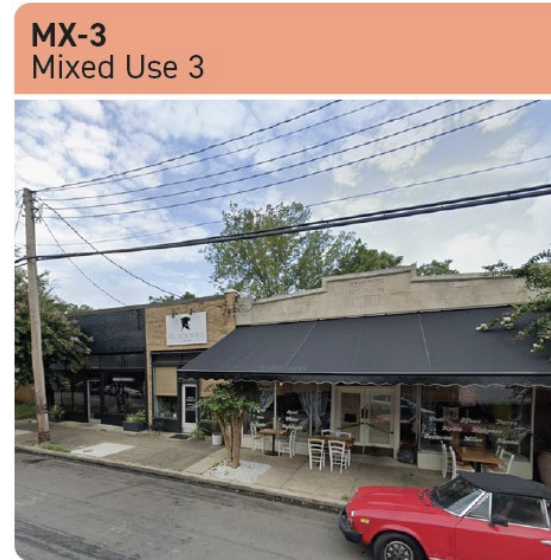
a wide mix of districts from R-1 (least intense) through B-4 (most intense)

DRAFT #1



Allows for a range of **larger-scale public, civic and institutional** uses.

DRAFT #2



Allows up to a **3-story residential, commercial or mixed use building**. Also includes **rowhouse, stacked townhouse, multiplex, & apartment**.

DRAFT #3

RM-A
Residential Multi-Unit Low

RM-B
Residential Multi-Unit Medium

RM-C
Residential Multi-Unit High

RC
Residential Cottage

CODE REFRESH: DRAFT #3 OPTIONS

RM-A
Residential Multi-Unit Low



Allows up to **6 units in a building**, includes **detached, attached, duplex, rowhouse, & multiplex.**

neighborhoods

RM-B
Residential Multi-Unit Medium



Allows up to **12 units in a building**, includes **detached, attached, duplex, rowhouse, stacked townhouse, multiplex, & small apartment.**

major streets,
transit corridors

RM-C
Residential Multi-Unit High



Allows an **unlimited** number of **units in a building**, includes **detached, attached, duplex, rowhouse, stacked townhouse, multiplex, small apartment, & large apartment.**

transit corridors,
growth nodes

RC
Residential Cottage



Clusters of **small detached houses** that could include **manufactured & tiny home parks & cottage courts**

as requested

How many dwelling units on a lot?

HOW DOES CODE REFRESH ALIGN WITH RICHMOND 300?

OBJECTIVE 4.1

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

OBJECTIVE 14.1

Increase city-wide awareness of the importance of integrating housing at all income levels into every residential neighborhood so every household has housing choice throughout the city.

OBJECTIVE 14.5

Encourage more housing types throughout the city and greater density along enhanced transit corridors and at Nodes and Priority Neighborhoods (shown in Figure 41) by amending the Zoning Ordinance.

HOW MANY DWELLING UNITS ON A LOT?

CURRENT CODE

(1) principal DU +
(1) ADU < 1/3 floor
area of principal
DU or 500 sf,
whichever is
greater

DRAFT #1

(2) principal DUs +
(1) ADU < 1,000 sf

DRAFT #2

(2) principal DUs +
(1) ADU < 1,000 sf
when preserving
existing building;
(3) buildings max

(1) principal DU +
(1) ADU < 1,000 sf
when demolishing
existing building

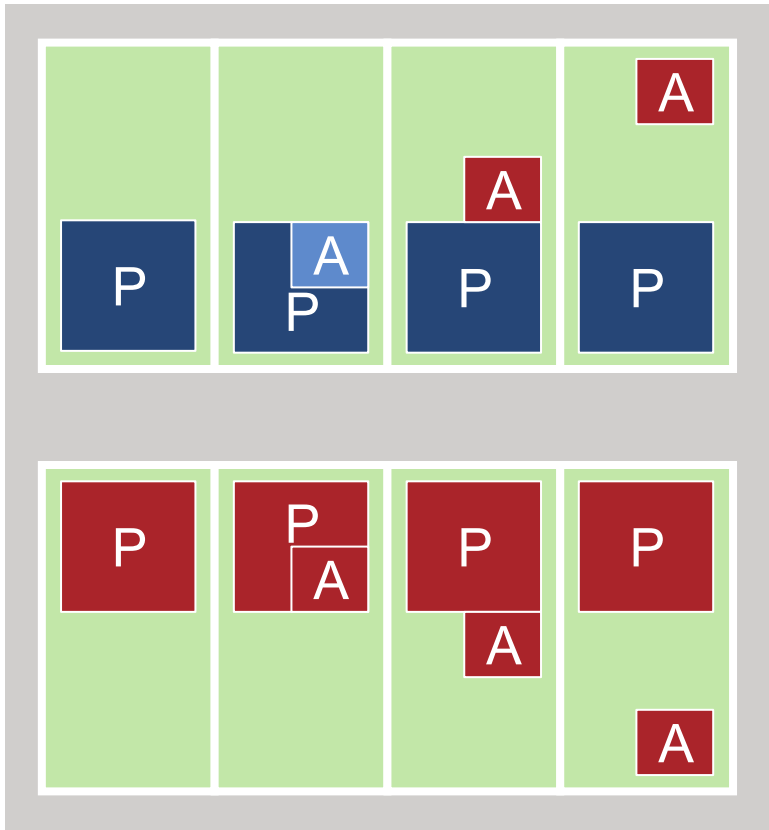
DRAFT #3

(1) or (2) DUs in
principal building +
(1) ADU < 1,200 sf
when preserving
existing building;
(2) buildings max

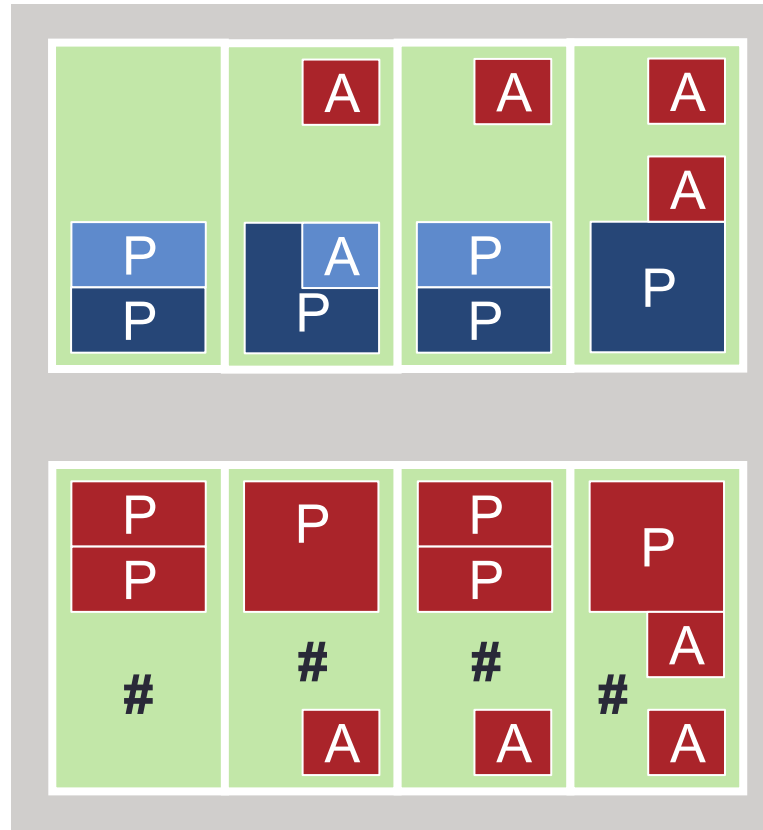
(1) principal DU +
(1) ADU < 1,200 sf
when demolishing
existing building

HOW MANY DWELLING UNITS ON A LOT?

CURRENT CODE ALLOWS



DRAFT #3 ADDS



ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Accessory Dwelling shall not be taller than Primary Dwelling

What are the next steps?

Questions and discussion