



DEPARTMENT OF  
**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
REVIEW**

# JACKSON WARD



## COMMUNITY PLAN

**Planning Commission | December 2, 2025**

LaJuan Neal, Planner

City of Richmond, PDR

# History of Jackson Ward





# History of Jackson Ward





# History of Jackson Ward



Photos: Times-Dispatch



# HUD's Choice Neighborhood Program

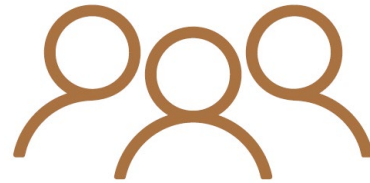
Transform distressed neighborhoods into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods

Improve the lives of residents of HUD housing

Catalyze investments in the surrounding neighborhoods



**HOUSING**



**PEOPLE**



**NEIGHBORHOOD**



# Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant

Grantee: RRHA

Co-Grantee: City of Richmond

Funding Amount: \$450,000

Grant Term: November 2021-2023



*Lead Grantee & Housing Lead*



*Co-Grantee & Neighborhood Lead*



**RICHMOND CITY**  
HEALTH DISTRICT

*People Lead*



**Storefront for  
Community Design**

*Engagement Lead*



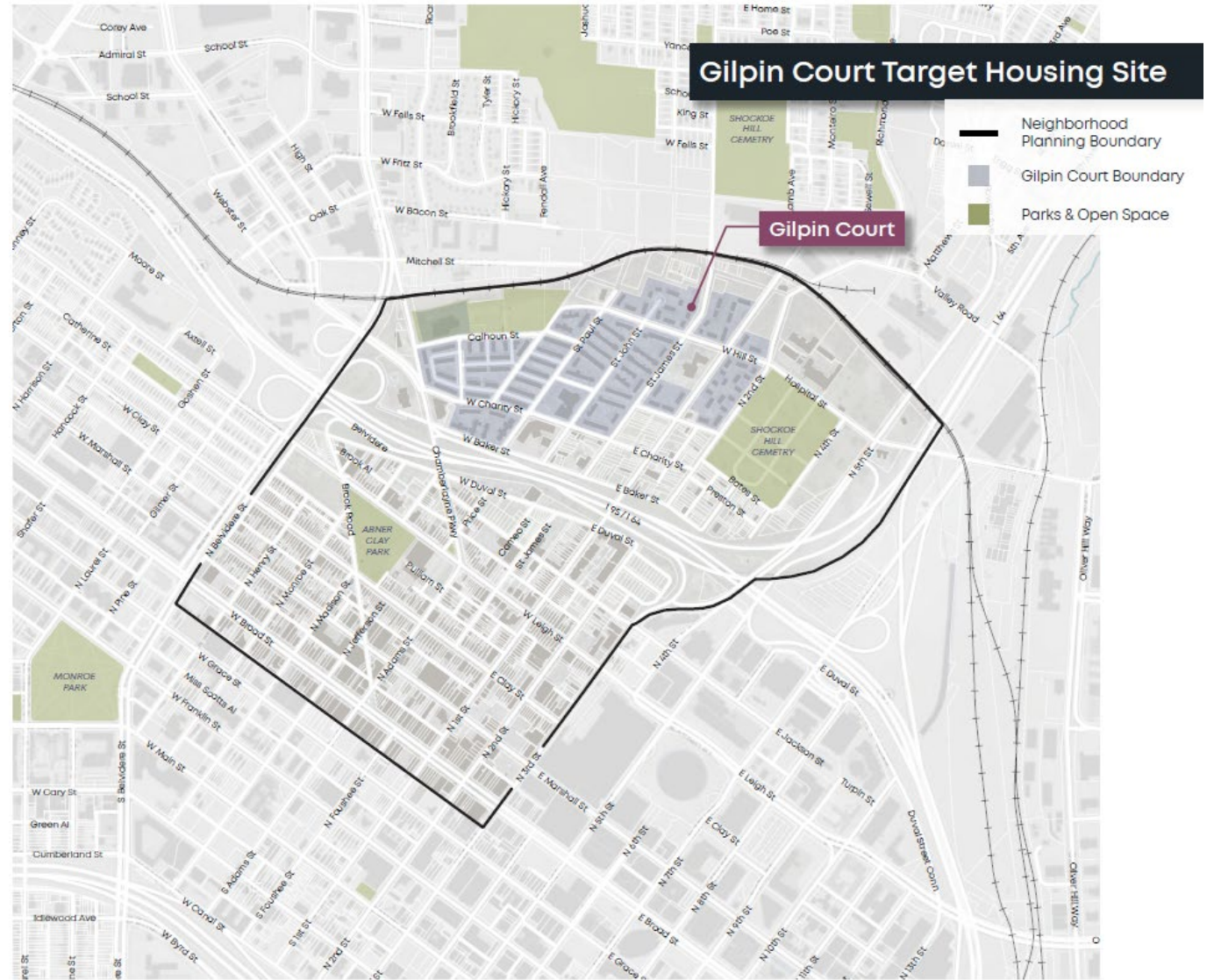
*Planning Coordinator*



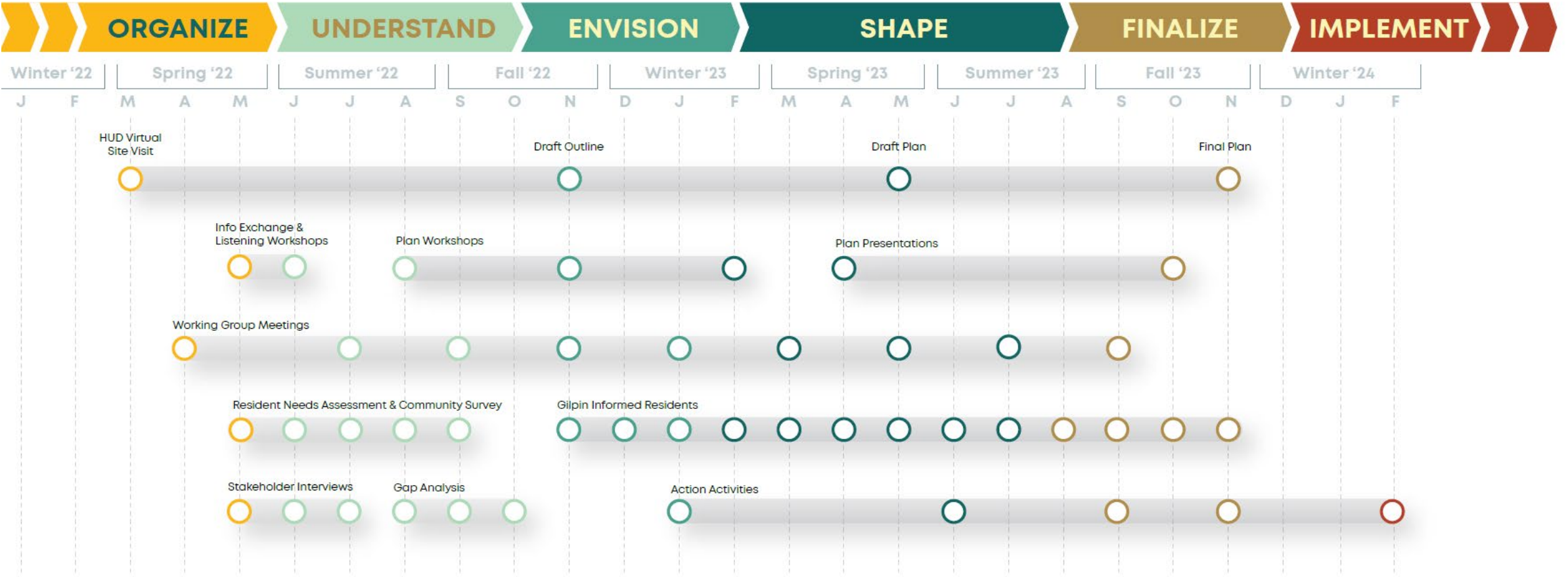
*HUD*

# Study Area

The Jackson Ward Community Plan brings together Gilpin Court residents, planning experts, elected officials, and community members together to reach an informed, shared vision for the future of Jackson Ward.



# Planning Process (2022-2023)







**WHAT WE'VE DISCOVERED: Resident Information Exchange**

What residents want to know about the future of the neighborhood is a key to the success of the project. This will be a ongoing engagement process and will be a key to the success of the project. What does the information exchange look like? Residents should be able to see the information and be able to see the information. How can the information exchange be used to the benefit of the community?

“Diverse socioeconomic groups live together peacefully. I know my neighbors and believe this day-to-day interaction of different types of people is a unique quality of Jackson Ward.”

Jackson Ward Resident

**Gilpin Resident Meeting/Workshop**



# THE STORY OF JACKSON WARD

- The Skipwith Cottage is Built  
Abraham Peyton Skipwith, the first known  
free Black person, purchases parcels of  
land on the northern edge of the City of  
Richmond in what would become Jackson  
Ward; he built a gambrel-roofed cottage  
which is one of the city's oldest documented  
dwellings.



- Jackson Ward Established  
Jackson Ward was created as an  
official, political subdivision in the  
City (ward), becomes 'city within a  
city' referred to as the 'Black Wall  
Street' & the 'Harlem of the South'.

- 1st Black-Owned Bank  
Jackson Ward Bank of the Good  
Savings Bank of the United Order of  
True Reformers established by the  
7 True Reformers at W.K. Green's  
former home.

- 1st Black Women-Owned  
Bank  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

- 1st Black-Owned  
Hotel  
Hugie Walker opens the St. Lee  
Penny Savings Bank.

1790s

1858

- Ebenezer Baptist Church  
Established as the first African  
Baptist Church

1884

- John Michael Jr. & the  
Richmond Pioneer newspaper  
John Michael Jr. was an editor and  
became the editor of the Richmond  
Pioneer, an African American weekly  
newspaper, providing civil rights  
advocacy, and social news.

1888

1902

- Mechanical Savings Bank  
John Michael Jr. & Charles  
McIntosh founded the bank and  
it was the first African American  
owned bank in the South.  
Though the bank was not for  
African American customers only,  
it was a landmark achievement in  
Jackson Ward's development.

1903

1904

1930s

1941

1947

1957

1967

1977

1987

1997

2007

2017

Note: this  
is a DRAFT  
timeline. Let us  
know what's  
missing or  
add your own

"It is going to be a different way of living for current  
Gilpin residents. They will be more integrated into the  
community. And you do that with mixed-income and  
density in a way that is attractive. You start with the  
urban design and layout, and areas where the concepts  
of density are appropriate."

Community Stakeholder

Community Meeting/Workshop



# Final Plan

“Jackson Ward is an interconnected neighborhood that celebrates Black history, ownership, and a vibrant community. It is a place where housing, healthy spaces, and its arts, education, and entrepreneurship thrive.”

5 THEMES

21 GOALS

NEIGHBORHOOD

Lead:  
City of Richmond

PEOPLE

Lead:  
Urban Strategies & RHHD

HOUSING

Lead:  
HRI Communities & RRHA

## CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

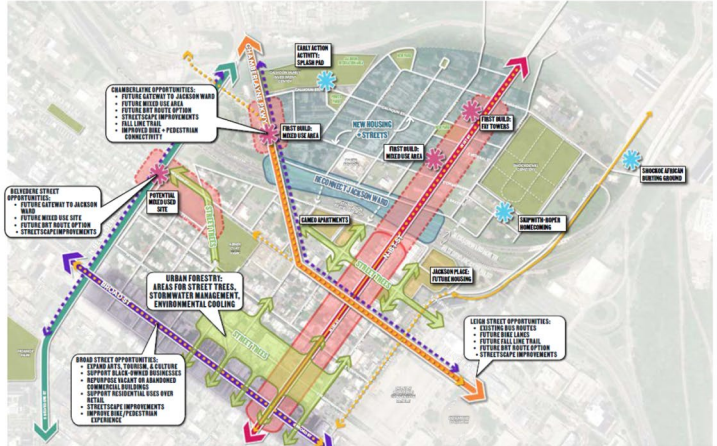


Figure 27: Strategies & Opportunity Areas

The Choice Neighborhood Plan integrates physical improvements and revitalization of Jackson Ward with the redevelopment of Gilpin Court. Strategies include:

- Reinforcing commercial corridors along North 1st Street and Chamberlayne Parkway.
- Reconnecting Jackson Ward across the highway through a potential cap or improved connections.
- Improving urban forestry through new street trees and protecting existing heritage trees.
- Strengthening mobility corridor 1st Street, Chamberlayne Park Street, Broad Street, and Belvidere Street.
- Revitalizing Broad Street as a commercial and cultural corridor.
- Identifying key opportunity sites for private or anchor institution development along North 1st Street, Chamberlayne, Belvidere Street.
- Prioritizing First Build Sites as for redeveloping Gilpin Court as mixed income housing for the future.



## PROPOSED HOUSING CONCEPT PLAN



Figure 35: Proposed Concept Plan

**DESIGN APPROACH**  
The Proposed Concept Plan is a hybrid of Alternative Concepts 1 and 2 shown on page 147. The design approach focuses the north-south connections to Historic Jackson Ward and redesigns the east-west streets to break down the superblocks of the current Gilpin Court site. All blocks are also loaded with internal and street parking throughout the site. Higher density mixed-use development is focused along Chamberlayne Parkway and North 1st Street, accounting for the market potential and proximity to downtown. A typical residential block includes a mix of densities that allows for ample front porches reminiscent of historic Jackson Ward. The Cultural Preservation Center Plan is central to the open space and park approach to the plan that is complemented by smaller scale park spaces that are surrounded by a variety of densities. The Power Plant Park program to preserve the historic building in its place and reimagine it as a community gathering hub and gallery space for storytelling and celebration of the legacy and history of Gilpin Court. The design includes a total of 1,200 new dwelling units.

**A VARIETY OF HOMES**  
The housing plan seeks to develop newly constructed housing units that align with the architectural style of the Jackson Ward community and reintroduce the historic street grid. To address housing needs, there will be a mix of row, medium, and high-density housing developed on the Gilpin Court site. The design of each building will focus on high-quality materials and high-quality design. The units developed will be two-story, modern-income, and market-rate units. Because of the scale of the housing program and the length of the development timeline, the designs will be able to respond to market demand over time.

- Row House
- Medium Density
- High Density
- Market Rate
- Two-Story
- Three-Story
- Four-Story

## GOAL 13: URBAN DESIGN

ESTABLISH A BEAUTIFUL AND CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD.

**Strategy A:** Develop streetscape design standards.  
Streetscape design standards are a set of guidelines that define the visual appearance of a street. They include details for street furniture, lighting, signage, and landscaping. The goal is to create a cohesive and attractive streetscape that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Richmond, VA  
November 2023



# 6 BIG MOVES

- # 6 BIG MOVES





# Updates and Recent Efforts

## HUD APPROVAL

- Submitted to HUD in November 2023
- Received HUD's comments in February 2024
- Resubmitted with revisions to HUD in June 2024
- Final Plan approved by HUD in August 2024

# Updates and Recent Efforts

## EARLY ACTION ACTIVITY

- Calhoun Park Splash Pad, 2023-2026
- Calhoun Center Disposition, 2024
- Calhoun Center Renovations, 2024-2026



# Updates and Recent Efforts

## EARLY ACTION ACTIVITY

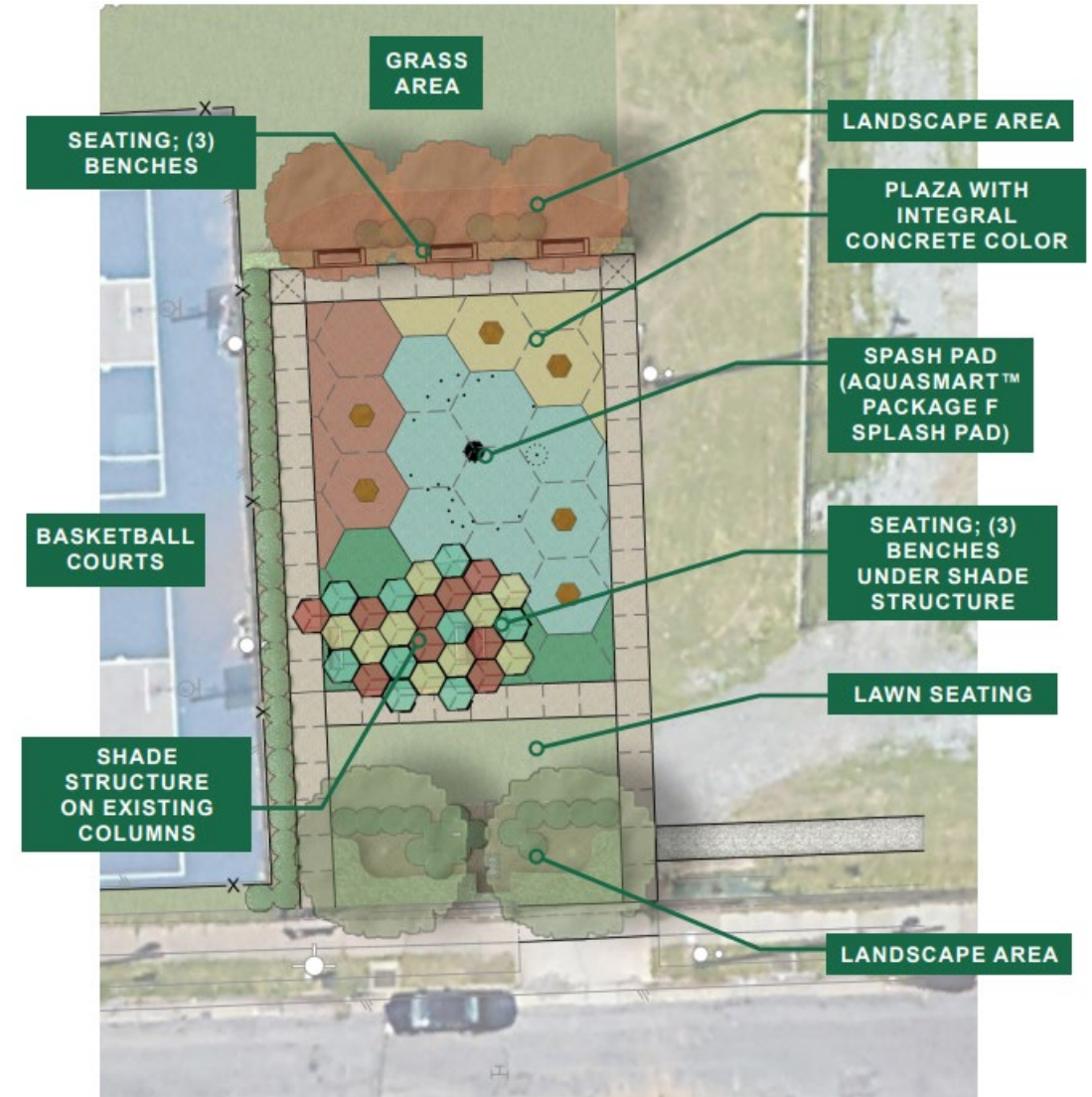
- Calhoun Park Splash Pad, 2023-2026
- Calhoun Center Disposition, 2024
- Calhoun Center Renovations, 2024-2026



image: AQUASMART™ Package F conceptual image. Note, the prefabricated configured system will be implemented into the rectangular plaza design as shown in the Splash Pad and Plaza enlargement plan.

### Calhoun Splash Pad

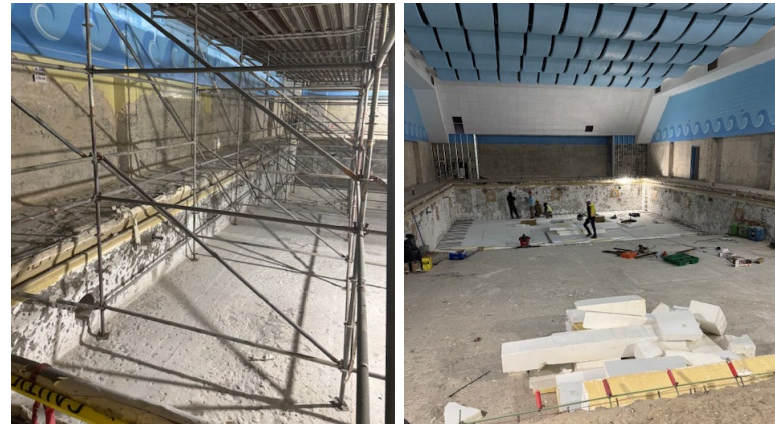
- Currently under construction
- Expected completion – May 31, 2026



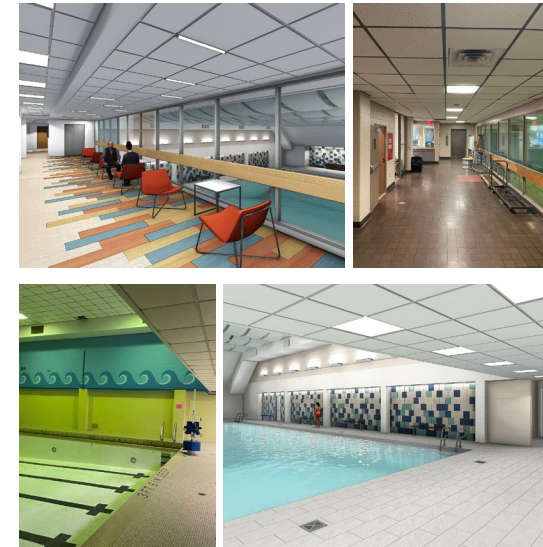
# Updates and Recent Efforts

## EARLY ACTION ACTIVITY

- Calhoun Park Splash Pad, 2023-2026
- Calhoun Center Disposition, 2024
- Calhoun Center Renovations, 2024-2026



*Work in progress*





# Updates and Recent Efforts

## ADDITIONAL PLANNING WORK/

## ONGOING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2nd Street Summit planning effort, 2024-2025
- USI Survey of Gilpin residents, 2024-2025
- Preliminary proposal for the “Build First” site, 2025
- Continued engagement, 2025
- JWCP Symposium, October 2025

# Updates and Recent Efforts

## ADDITIONAL PLANNING WORK/ ONGOING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

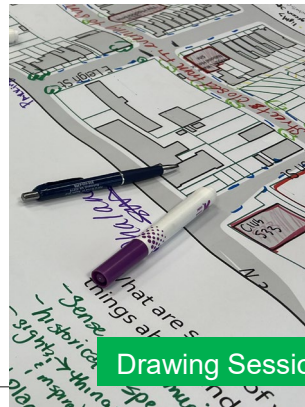
- 2nd Street Summit planning effort, 2024-2025
- USI Survey of Gilpin residents, 2024-2025
- Preliminary proposal for the “Build First” site, 2025
- Continued engagement, 2025
- JWCP Symposium, October 2025



Walking Tour



Visioning Activity



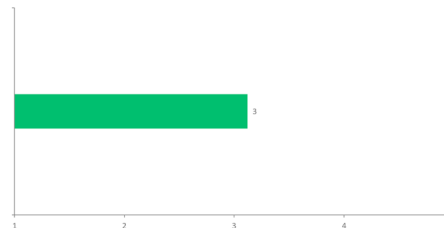
Drawing Session

# Updates and Recent Efforts

## ADDITIONAL PLANNING WORK/ ONGOING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

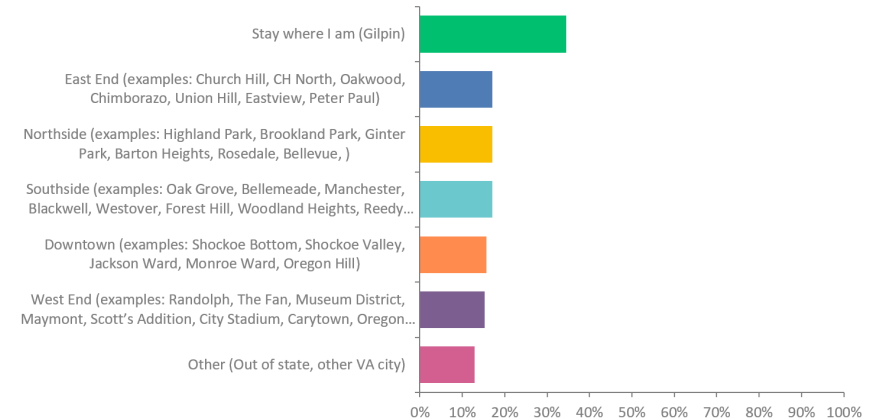
- 2nd Street Summit planning effort, 2024-2025
- USI Survey of Gilpin residents, 2024-2025
- Preliminary proposal for the “Build First” site, 2025
- Continued engagement, 2025
- JWCP Symposium, October 2025

Q5: on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being very likely), how likely are you to want to return to a redeveloped Gilpin Court?

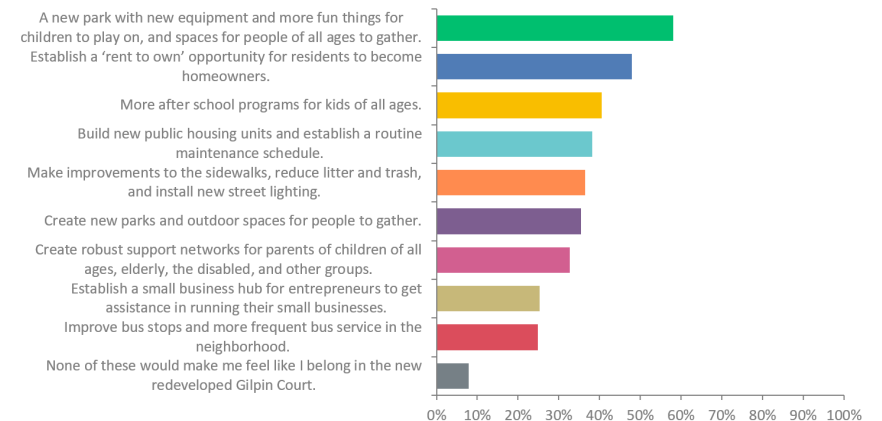


Powered by SurveyMonkey

Q1: If you could live anywhere in the Richmond region, where would you live?



Q6: Which of the following things would make you feel like you still belong in the neighborhood?



Powered by SurveyMonkey

242 surveys  
collected



# Updates and Recent Efforts

## ADDITIONAL PLANNING WORK/

## ONGOING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2nd Street Summit planning effort, 2024-2025
- USI Survey of Gilpin residents, 2024-2025
- Preliminary proposal for the “Build First” site, 2025
- Continued engagement, 2025
- JWCP Symposium, October 2025

# Updates and Recent Efforts

## ADDITIONAL PLANNING WORK/

## ONGOING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2nd Street Summit planning effort, 2024-2025
- USI Survey of Gilpin residents, 2024-2025
- Preliminary proposal for the “Build First” site, 2025
- Continued engagement, 2025
- JWCP Symposium, October 2025



# Updates and Recent Efforts

## ADDITIONAL PLANNING WORK/ ONGOING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2nd Street Summit planning effort, 2024-2025
- USI Survey of Gilpin residents, 2024-2025
- Preliminary proposal for the “Build First” site, 2025
- Continued engagement, 2025
- JWCP Symposium, October 2025



# Jackson Ward Community Plan Symposium

October 2025

An expo-style event to celebrate the work that went into crafting the Plan, learn and exchange information about neighborhood projects and initiatives, socialize and connect with neighbors, and build excitement for the Plan's adoption process.

City of Richmond

RRHA

RHHD

City Council

Historic Jackson Ward Association

Gilpin Informed Residents

The Ealey Project

M Companies

HRI Communities

Ronald McDonald House

VCU

U of R





# Priority Growth Node

## Downtown – Jackson Ward

### Primary Next Step

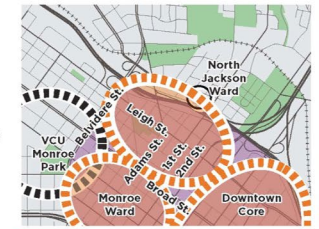
**Gilpin Court Transformation:** Develop a plan with existing community input to include Gilpin Court and vacant land in North Jackson Ward to transform the neighborhood into a mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable, and transit-adjacent community that provides both housing and jobs for residents (Goal 1, Goal 14).

#### Priority Growth Node

#### Downtown — Jackson Ward

##### Vision

Jackson Ward has retained historic buildings and plays a leading role in supporting Black cultural and economic vitality. Jackson Ward continues to be a residential neighborhood with non-residential uses scattered throughout at corners and along major roads—such as 1st Street, 2nd Street, and Marshall Street. New infill developments incorporate high-quality architecture and complement the character of historic buildings. Jackson Ward is better connected to the rest of Downtown with the conversion of one-way streets to two-way, greenways, transit, a new park, and bridges connecting Jackson Ward to North Jackson Ward over the highway. Decking over the highway will reunite the two sides of Jackson Ward that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the highway.



**Jackson Ward — Regional/National Node**  
This Node centers on the Historic Jackson Ward neighborhood but also extends north slightly to connect to North Jackson Ward.

##### Growth Potential

In 2019, there were approximately 29 acres of vacant/underdeveloped land in Jackson Ward, representing 33% of the Jackson Ward's total land area.

##### Primary Next Steps

- **Highway Deck Study:** Commence a planning study to analyze the feasibility of building a park, roads, and buildings over I-95 and I-64, reconnecting Jackson Ward and North Jackson Ward (Goal 8, Goal 9, Goal 17).
- **Business Growth:** Increase the number and support the growth of minority-owned businesses (Goal 11).
- **Historic and Cultural Attractions:** Maintain, grow, and market historic attractions such as the Black History Museum and Maggie L. Walker's
- **Gilpin Court Transformation:** Develop a plan with existing community input to include Gilpin Court and vacant land in North Jackson Ward to transform the neighborhood into a mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable, and transit-adjacent community that provides both housing and jobs for residents (Goal 1, Goal 14).





# Next Steps

- Minor edits to the 2024 Plan
- Continued community engagement
- Reconvening the Steering Committee
- Plan adoption process into Richmond 300

# Questions?

LaJuan Neal

Planner

804-646-0455

[LaJuan.Neal@rva.gov](mailto:LaJuan.Neal@rva.gov)

900 E. Broad St., Room 511, Richmond, Va. 23219-1907

<https://www.rva.gov/planning-development-review/jackson-ward>