

INTRODUCED: May 26, 2026

A RESOLUTION No. 2026-R024

As Amended

To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the Department of Planning and Development Review to (i) collaborate with the residents of and community stakeholders in the Westwood neighborhood, bordered by Dunbar Street[, ~~Patterson Avenue, and~~] to Glenburnie Road and from Stokes Lane to the north side of Patterson Avenue, to evaluate and recommend appropriate land use, zoning, and policy tools, , and (ii) develop community-informed design guidelines and strategies to preserve the cultural and historic character of the Westwood neighborhood and support neighborhood stability, and (iii) provide a written report of such findings and recommendations.

Patrons – All Members of Council

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: JUN 22 2026 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 17.06 of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, the City Planning Commission by resolution dated October 5, 2020, adopted a new master plan for the City of Richmond, and the City Council by Ordinance No. 2020-236, adopted December 14, 2020, approved the master plan adopted by the City Planning Commission (hereinafter the “Master Plan”); and

AYES: 9 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: JUL 27 2026 REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, the historic Westwood neighborhood was established by formerly enslaved African Americans [~~following the Civil War~~] in 1872 and grew into a self-sustaining community with homes, businesses, churches, schools, and [~~social~~] socio-cultural institutions [~~that served~~] serving generations of Black residents; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, after the City annexed the Westwood neighborhood from Henrico County in 1942, the community experienced prolonged neglect and discriminatory treatment, including the denial of public utilities and proposals by City officials during the 1940s to raze the Westwood [~~Neighborhood~~] neighborhood and replace it with a public park; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, despite facing displacement pressures, segregation, and racial intimidation, the residents of the Westwood neighborhood, including returning World War II veterans, successfully organized to resist the destruction of the neighborhood, secure the extension of public water and sewer infrastructure in 1947, build homes to serve the emerging Black, middle-class community, and preserve the community for future generations; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, the Westwood neighborhood is one of the oldest communities of its kind in Richmond and one of the few neighborhoods that continue to be maintained and occupied by the descendants and families of those who originally built it; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, Westwood residents contributed to the struggle for civil rights and educational equity in Richmond, including challenging school segregation following the decision in *Warden v. Richmond School Board*; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, Elizabeth Cooper, a Westwood neighborhood resident, initiated the landmark case against the Richmond School Board that led to the 1961 court order desegregating Richmond Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, on September 5, 1961, Daisy Jane Cooper, Elizabeth Cooper's's daughter, became the first African American student to integrate Westhampton Junior High School and one year later, became the first African American student to integrate Thomas Jefferson High School; and

WHEREAS, a monument, commissioned by Bon Secours Health System, unveiled in January 2024, stands at the corner of Libbie Avenue and Patterson Avenue commemorating the historic achievement; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, the Westwood community has nurtured and produced iconic leaders that contributed to the neighborhood's cultural heritage, and served the city of Richmond, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the broader world, including Arthur Ashe, international tennis champion and civic leader, Dr. Benjamin Lambert, Virginia State Senator, and Reverend Dwight C. Jones, Richmond Mayor; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, the historic Westwood neighborhood has experienced erosion of its historic footprint with the demolition of homes on Patterson Avenue, Glenburnie Road, and Snowden Lane, and the erection of commercial and municipal properties; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of Council, Preservation Virginia included the Westwood neighborhood on its 2026 Virginia's Most Endangered Historic Places List, and the Westwood neighborhood has been recognized by cultural and preservation organizations as "a historically significant African American neighborhood," and "a physical storyline of community

resilience, neighborhood success, and African American middle class home ownership from Emancipation to Reconstruction to Jim Crow through the Civil Rights Movement;” and

WHEREAS, by Ordinance No. 2023-236, adopted December 14, 2020, the Council approved the City’s Master Plan known as “Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth” which provides that “[a] new Zoning Ordinance should include measures to preserve the authentic character of Richmond’s older neighborhoods;” and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes both the historic significance of the Westwood neighborhood as a community founded by formerly enslaved African Americans and the importance of studying the neighborhood’s land use, infrastructure, historic resources, and development pressures to inform equitable and historically grounded recommendations for its future preservation and investment;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby requests that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the Department of Planning and Development Review to (i) collaborate with residents of and community stakeholders in the Westwood neighborhood, bordered by Dunbar Street [~~Patterson Avenue, and~~] to Glenburnie Road and from Stokes Lane to the north side of Patterson Avenue , to evaluate and recommend appropriate land use, zoning, and policy tools, (ii) develop community-informed design guidelines and strategies to preserve the cultural and historic character of the Westwood neighborhood and support community and neighborhood stability, and (iii) provide a written report of such findings and recommendations.

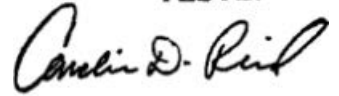
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council hereby requests that such collaboration between the Department of Planning and Development Review and residents and stakeholders in the Westwood neighborhood consist of the following:

1. Conduct a community-driven planning process to identify priorities for preservation, development, and community and neighborhood stability;
2. Evaluate and recommend appropriate land use, zoning, and policy tools to achieve these priorities, including but not limited to the establishment of a [~~special low-density~~] design or historic overlay district in [~~the Code Refresh~~] zoning ordinance amendments, [~~design overlay district, Old and Historic District,~~] or other zoning overlay;
3. Develop draft design guidelines and standards, informed by community input, to preserve the cultural, architectural, and spatial character of the Westwood neighborhood;
4. Identify and recommend strategies to prevent displacement of existing residents and support long-term housing stability, including opportunities for homeownership and the preservation of culturally significant housing;
5. Identify and recommend strategies to invest in stormwater, energy, and transportation infrastructure; and
6. Coordinate with relevant City agencies, including the Department of Public Works, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Economic Development, and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, to evaluate infrastructure, mobility, economic, and public space improvements that align with community priorities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council hereby requests that the Chief Administrative Officer, within 180 days following adoption of this resolution, provide a written report of the findings and recommendations to the Council and City Planning Commission, including any proposed zoning text amendments, overlay districts, or policy changes necessary to implement the community's vision.

A TRUE COPY:
TESTE:

City Clerk

DATE: May 26, 2026
TO: The Honorable Members of City Council
THROUGH: RJ Warren, Council Chief of Staff
THROUGH: Will Perkins, Senior Legislative Services Manager
THROUGH: Sophie McGinley, Council Policy Analyst
FROM: The Honorable Andrew S. Breton, Councilmember 1st District
RE: .

CNL-2026-0011

PURPOSE: To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the Department of Planning and Development Review to (i) collaborate with the residents of and stakeholders in the Westwood neighborhood, bordered by Dunbar Street, Patterson Avenue, , and Glenburnie Road, to evaluate and recommend appropriate land use, zoning, and policy tools, , and (ii) develop community-informed design guidelines and strategies to preserve the cultural and historic character of the Westwood neighborhood and support neighborhood stability, and (iii) provide a written report of such findings and recommendations.

BACKGROUND: The Westwood Neighborhood is a historically Black community with a rich cultural legacy shaped by resilience in the face of exclusionary planning and disinvestment. Developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Westwood provided opportunities for Black homeownership and community-building at a time when discriminatory policies limited access to housing and infrastructure elsewhere in the region. Despite longstanding challenges—including the City’s historic failure to extend basic infrastructure and past threats of displacement—the neighborhood has remained a stable, close-knit community with deep generational ties.

Today, Westwood is experiencing increased development pressure due to its proximity to major commercial corridors and regional growth, raising concerns about the potential loss of cultural identity, neighborhood character, and housing stability for long-time residents. Community members have expressed a desire for tools that both preserve the existing character of the neighborhood and guide future development in a way that reflects their values and priorities.

This resolution responds to those concerns by initiating a community-driven planning process led by the Department of Planning and Development Review to evaluate and recommend

appropriate land use, zoning, and policy tools, develop community-informed design guidelines and strategies to preserve the cultural and historic character of the Westwood neighborhood and support neighborhood stability. By centering community input and maintaining flexibility in the selection of tools, this approach allows the City to tailor solutions that reflect the unique history and needs of Westwood.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: This proposal is informed by direct engagement with Westwood residents and stakeholders, who have expressed interest in preservation strategies, neighborhood-guided development, and tools to support long-term housing stability.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: This resolution advances the City's Mayoral Action Plan (MAP) and Richmond 300 Master Plan by supporting a Thriving and Sustainable Built Environment and Thriving Neighborhoods. Specifically, it aligns with:

Goal A: Increase access to affordable housing and reduce the cost burden for residents.

By identifying strategies to prevent displacement and support long-term housing stability, this effort helps ensure that existing residents can remain in their community as development pressures increase.

Goal G: Advance equitable access to safe, well-maintained infrastructure in every neighborhood.

Through coordinated planning and community engagement, this initiative supports equitable investment and neighborhood improvements that reflect resident priorities.

FISCAL IMPACT: Any costs associated with staff time, community engagement, or development of recommendations are expected to be minimal and handled within existing departmental resources.

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: May 26, 2026

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: June 8, 2026

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Land Use, Housing, and Transportation

AFFECTED AGENCIES: Office of Chief Administrative Officer

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: None

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF: Sophie McGinley, Council Policy Analyst (804-646-5862)

MOTION

To amend Res. No. 2026-R024, which requests that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the Department of Planning and Development Review to (i) collaborate with the residents of and stakeholders in the Westwood neighborhood, bordered by Dunbar Street, Patterson Avenue, and Glenburnie Road, to evaluate and recommend appropriate land use, zoning, and policy tools, and (ii) develop community-informed design guidelines and strategies to preserve the cultural and historic character of the Westwood neighborhood and support neighborhood stability, and (iii) provide a written report of such findings and recommendations, to modify the substance of the collaboration and the neighborhood borders by changing the streets and roads that serve as boundaries.