

INTRODUCED: April 13, 2026

AN ORDINANCE No. 2026-092

To establish the Code Refresh Review Commission for the purpose of developing optimal recommendations for a forthcoming rewrite of the City’s zoning ordinance, based upon best practices and expert and community input.

Patron – Ms. Trammell

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: MAY 11 2026 AT 6 P.M

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the City is currently undertaking the first comprehensive review and revision of its zoning ordinance since 1976, which ordinance is set forth in Chapter 30 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, a process hereinafter referred to as the “Code Refresh;” and

WHEREAS, the Council, to ensure the Code Refresh best serves the City of Richmond and its citizens, believes an additional, independent Council-appointed body of experts and community voices will allow the Council to develop best policy to inform a forthcoming rewrite of the zoning ordinance expected to serve as the culmination of the Code Refresh;

AYES: _____ NOES: _____ ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: _____ REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That the Council hereby establishes the Code Refresh Review Commission (the “Commission”) pursuant to the following provisions:

A. **Purpose.** The Commission is created for the purpose of developing optimal recommendations for a forthcoming rewrite of the City’s zoning ordinance, based upon best practices and expert and community input. For purposes of section 2-773 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, the Commission is classified as “advisory.”

B. **Composition.**

1. **Appointment.** The Commission shall consist of 18 members appointed by the Council. Each Councilmember shall appoint two members of the Commission by providing the name of each appointee to the Council Chief of Staff in writing.

2. **Qualifications.** Members of the Commission shall be residents of the city of Richmond. No person shall be eligible who:

a. Is a real estate developer, officer, employee, or majority shareholder of a real estate development firm;

b. Is currently employed by, or a consultant for, a firm that provides services intended to facilitate real estate development, including without limitation any firm that specializes in land-use law, civil engineering, or commercial architecture; or

c. Holds a contractor’s license issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia for residential or commercial construction or is employed by a licensed general contractor.

3. **Duties.** The Commission shall review the City’s zoning ordinance, set forth in Chapter 30 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and make recommendations to the Council to assist in the Council’s development of best policy to inform a forthcoming rewrite of the zoning ordinance expected to serve as the culmination of the Code Refresh. The Commission shall call upon recognized experts in the fields of environmental policy, utilities regulation, finance, housing, transportation and parking, gentrification, urban planning, public housing, education policy, law enforcement, and fire and emergency services. The Commission shall hold two public hearings to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations, one held north of the James River and one held south of the James River, between 120 and 150 days after the appointment of a majority of Commission members. Any member of the public wishing to speak at such hearings shall be permitted to do so.

C. **Conduct of Affairs.**

1. **Quorum.** Ten members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

2. **Officers.** The Commission shall select among its members individuals to serve as officers including, but not limited to, Chairman and Vice Chairman.

3. **Duration.** The Commission shall commence within 30 days after appointment of a quorum of members and shall conclude 30 days following publication of the final report called for by section 1(C)(5) of this ordinance.

4. **Meetings.** Commission shall meet as often as it deems necessary to complete its duties within the time prescribed by this ordinance. In accordance with section 2-796(c) of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, the Commission’s meetings shall be subject to the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act,

codified as sections 2.2-3700 through 2.2-3715 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended (the “Act”).

5. **Reporting.** The Commission shall provide a written report on the progress of its work at each meeting of the Council’s Organizational Development Standing Committee. No later than 180 days following the date on which the Council has appointed a majority of the Commission’s members, the Commission shall furnish the Council with a final report detailing its findings and recommendations pursuant to section 1(B)(3) of this ordinance.

6. **Records.** The Commission shall keep minutes of its meetings in accordance with the Act. All records shall be maintained as provided in section 2-798 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, and subject to public disclosure as provided in the Act.

7. **Procedures.** The Commission may adopt rules of procedure or bylaws not inconsistent with this ordinance to govern the conduct of its meetings and affairs.

8. **Staff and Resources.** The Office of the Council Chief of Staff shall provide such staff and resources as may be necessary to assist the Commission in performing the duties imposed by this ordinance. It is estimated that the annual operating costs of the Commission will be approximately \$5,000 plus 40 staff hours.

§ 2. This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

DATE: March 20, 2026
TO: The Honorable Members of City Council
THROUGH: RJ Warren, Council Chief of Staff
THROUGH: Will Perkins, Senior Legislative Services Manager
FROM: The Honorable Reva Trammell, Councilmember 8th District
RE: To establish the Code Refresh Review Commission for the purpose of developing optimal recommendations for a forthcoming rewrite of the City's zoning ordinance, based upon best practices and expert and community input.

CNL-2026-0035

PURPOSE:

Patron requests an ordinance to establish a "Code Refresh Review Commission" to make optimal recommendations for a forthcoming rewrite of the City's zoning ordinance, based upon best practices and expert and community input. The Commission, which will be advisory in nature, will be composed of eighteen (18) citizen voting members, two each appointed by the Councilperson for each Council District. Appointees are required to be city residents but shall not be involved in the real estate development industry.

The Commission shall review the City's zoning ordinance and make recommendations to the Council to assist in the Council's development of best policy to inform a forthcoming rewrite of the zoning ordinance. The Commission shall call upon recognized experts in the fields of environmental policy, utilities regulation, finance, housing, transportation and parking, gentrification, urban planning, public housing, education policy, law enforcement, and fire and emergency services. The Commission shall hold two public hearings to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations, one held north of the James River and one held south of the James River, between 120 and 150 days of the appointment of a majority of Commission members. Any member of the public wishing to speak shall be permitted to do so.

The Commission shall commence within 30 days after appointment of a majority of members and conclude 30 days following publication of a final report, due no later than 180 days after appointment of a majority of members. The Commission shall provide a written report on its progress at each meeting of the Council's Organizational Development Standing Committee.

The Office of the Council Chief of Staff shall provide staff and resources as may be necessary to assist the Commission in performing the duties imposed by this ordinance. It is estimated that the annual operating costs of the Commission will be approximately \$5,000 plus 40 staff hours.

BACKGROUND AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

The City is currently undertaking the first comprehensive review and revision of its zoning ordinance, which is set forth in Chapter 30 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, a process commonly referred to as the “Code Refresh,” since 1976.

By a resolution dated February 21, 2023, the City Planning Commission established an ad hoc “Zoning Ordinance Revision Advisory Committee” (“ZAC”), composed of up to 17 members, appointed by the Chair of the City Planning Commission, to “create a demographically, educationally, and geographically diverse advisory body to support the Director [of Planning and Development Review] in [the Code Refresh] process and create public engagement activities that lead to exponential awareness and a more diverse, informed, and engaged land use and zoning constituency.” By a resolution dated October 7, 2025, the City Planning Commission expanded the membership of the ZAC to 21 to facilitate and encourage “additional public engagement and further [ensure] diverse, informed and representative input from the public to the Planning Commission.”

The Commission will assist City Council with development of policy positions related to zoning and revisions of the City’s zoning ordinance.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- Thriving Neighborhoods (that meet our housing needs)

FISCAL IMPACT: \$5,000

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: April 13, 2026

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: April 27, 2026

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Organizational Development Standing Committee

AFFECTED AGENCIES: Department of Planning and Development Review

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: None

ATTACHMENTS: N/A

STAFF: RJ Warren, Council Chief of Staff