

# Executive Summary

## **RICHMOND 300**

### **A Guide for Growth**

*Designing an equitable,  
sustainable, and beautiful*

*Richmond for its 300th  
birthday in 2037*



Master Plan  
City of Richmond, Virginia  
DRAFT - June 2020



# Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth

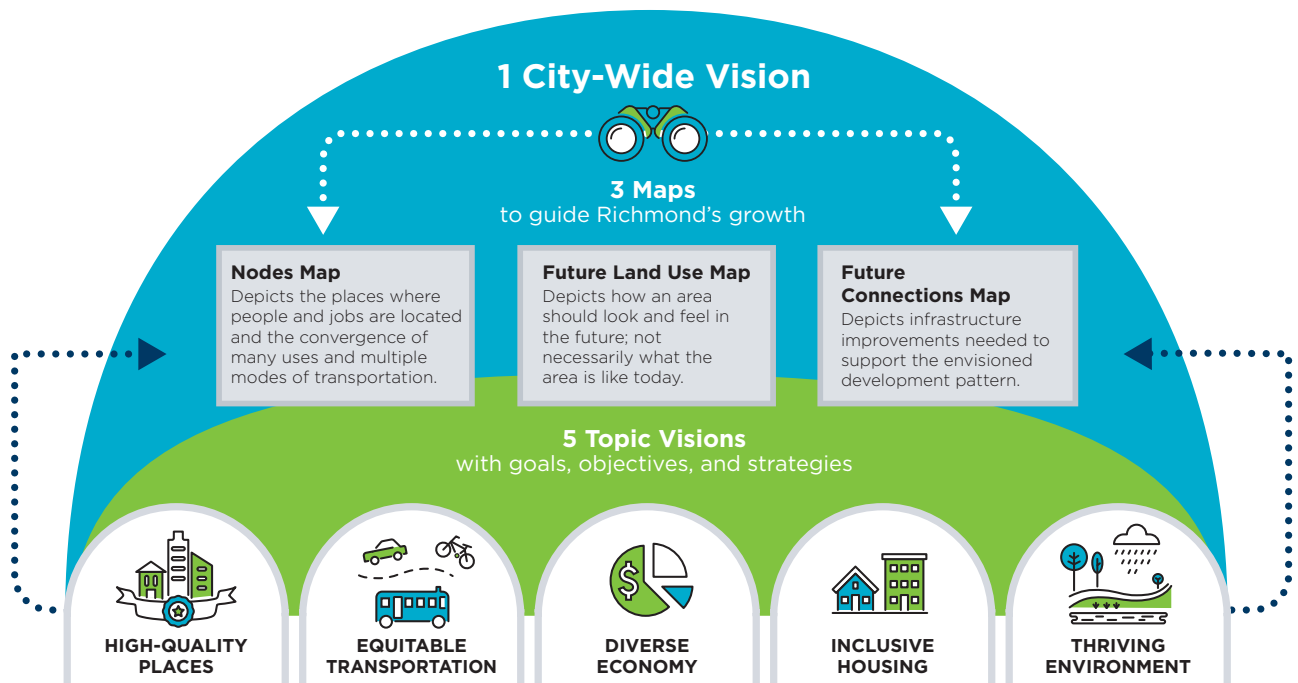
*Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* seeks to create a more equitable, sustainable, and beautiful future for all Richmonders; so that when Richmond celebrates its 300th birthday in 2037, Richmonders can collectively see how equity- and sustainability-centered actions resulted in evolving Richmond into a beautiful city where all Richmonders thrive.

*Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* outlines a 20-year vision, a growth strategy centered on nodes and networks, and 17 goals grouped in 5 topics to achieve the vision. This comprehensive plan was developed and reviewed by thousands of Richmonders. The plan coalesces various other plans and initiatives to provide one vision to guide the growth of the city. The hundreds of strategies and policy recommendations in the plan provide guidance for City staff, local businesses and non-profits, and the public to use as Richmond continues to grow and change over the next 20 years.

The sheer breadth and length of any comprehensive plan can make it difficult to execute; therefore this Master Plan outlines 6 big moves. Each big move intentionally seeks to expand equity, increase the sustainability of our city, and beautify our city. Because these moves are wide-reaching, there are several strategies throughout the Master Plan that relate to each big move. If the City can advance each of the big moves over the next 5 years, Richmond will be on its way to realize its 20-year vision.

## City-Wide Vision:

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



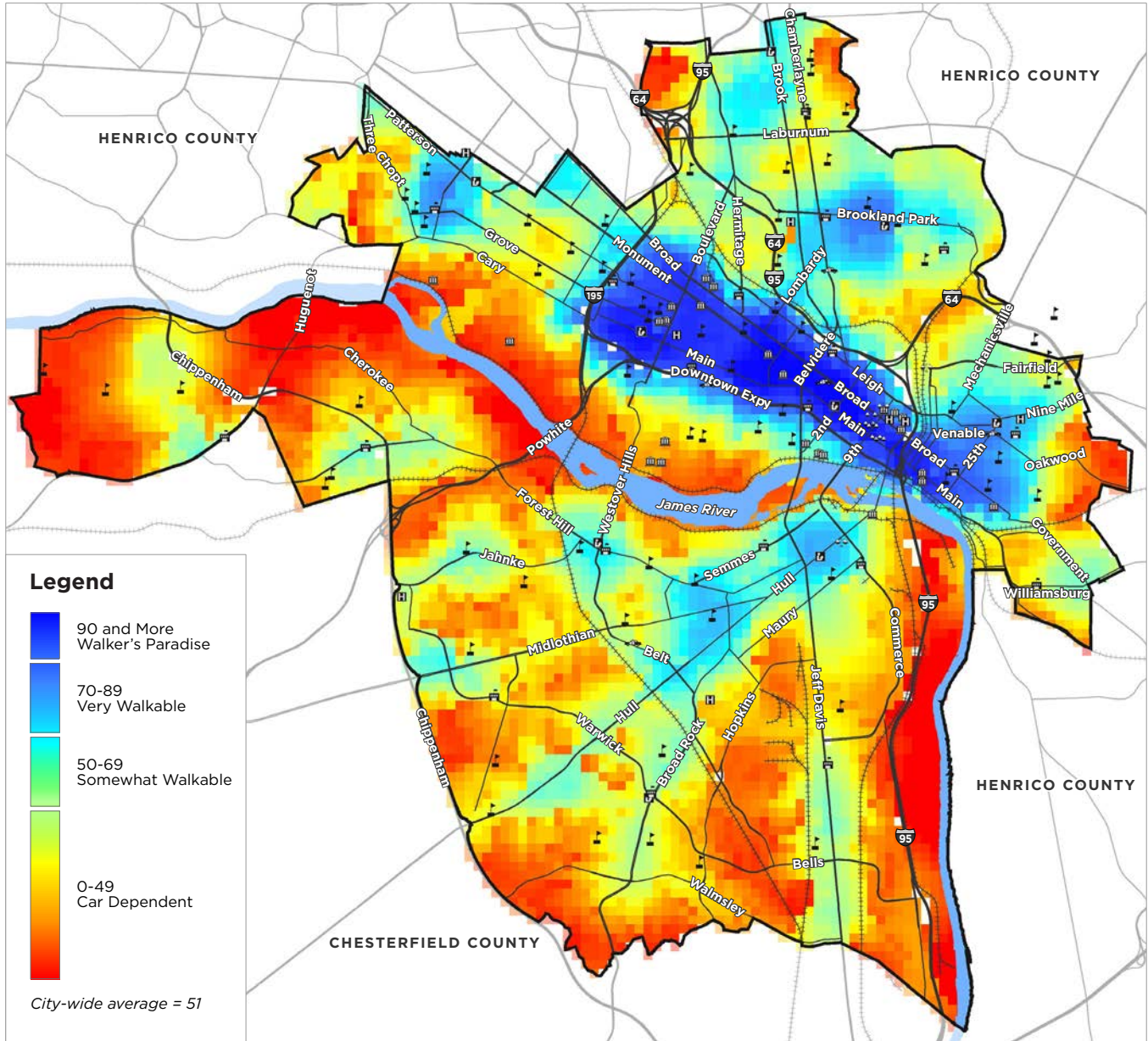
# Re-Write the Zoning Ordinance

## Direct growth to appropriate areas while maintaining and creating new authentic neighborhoods adjacent to enhanced transit

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 1970 but has been amended over the past several decades. Many of the objectives in this Master Plan have strategies that suggest revisions to the Zoning Ordinance. Updating the Zoning Ordinance will provide many benefits, including, but not limited to:

- **Move from Euclidean to Form-based:** The current zoning ordinance is predominantly a Euclidean approach to zoning – meaning uses are separated into distinct districts with limited mixing of uses. Over the past few years, the City has developed zoning districts that allow a mix of uses within the same district but also require certain form elements (such as windows and doors that open to the street and buildings built to the sidewalk). The re-write of the Zoning Ordinance will likely include a further look at using more form-based elements.
- **Prepare for Opportunity:** By rezoning the city, Richmond can prepare certain areas for anticipated development, such as the Priority Growth Nodes and industrial areas, to retain, attract, and grow companies to employ new and existing Richmonders.
- **Rethink the B-3 district:** Predominantly found along major streets in South Richmond, the B-3 zoning district is a district that promotes the development of car-oriented commercial buildings. The B-3 zoning district has been flagged by City Council and City Planning Commission for review to improve the form and function of the buildings in those commercial areas.
- **Improve Health, Resiliency, and Access:** By re-writing the Zoning Ordinances in accordance with the Future Land Use Map, the City will align land use and transportation planning to create compact and mixed nodes connected by walkable neighborhoods and corridors. Increasing walkability and access to non-car transportation modes has various benefits related such as improving public health, increasing resiliency in a changing environmental climate, and expanding easy to access by bringing homes, jobs, retail, and services closer together.
- **Expand Options:** The re-write of the Zoning Ordinance may include examining residential zoning districts to make sure they provide many housing options at various price points throughout the city – this will help further the Big Move related to housing.

Each one of the 5 topic areas contains many recommendations that refer to specific elements to consider when rewriting the Zoning Ordinance; for example, Objective 1.1 specifically states: “Rezone the city in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan.”



**Walkscore® Map** The Walkscore® 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. The re-write of the Zoning Ordinance will seek to improve walkability by creating form requirements and allow mixed-use districts.

Data source: Walkscore® (2016)

# Re-Imagine Priority Growth Nodes

## Route 1, Southside Plaza, Stony Point Fashion Park, Greater Scott's Addition, and Downtown

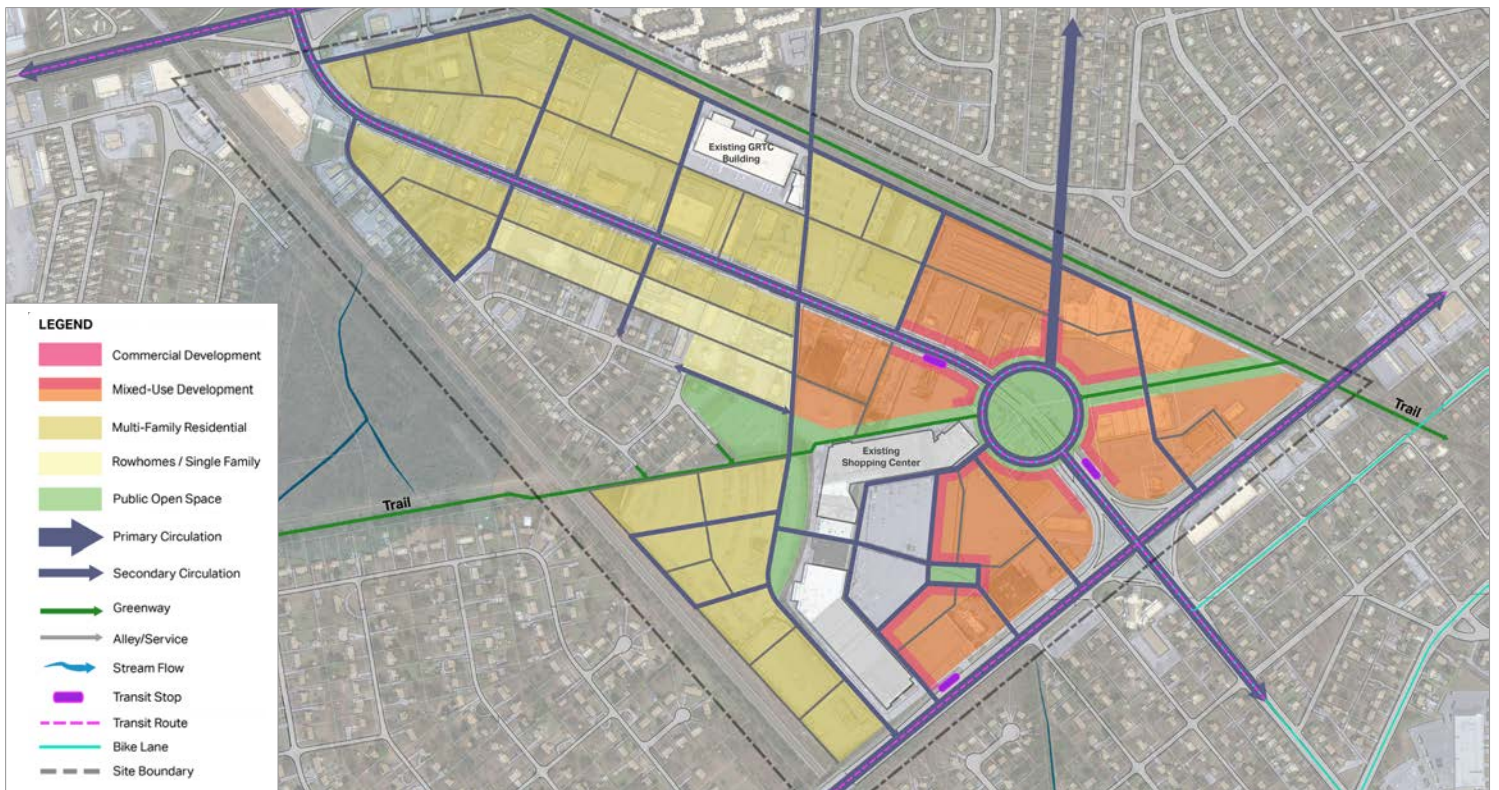
People want to go to great places. The Priority Growth Nodes are places in Richmond that can be elevated to become even greater places than they are in 2020. Over the next 20 years, not all of Richmond will experience population and job growth, but these Nodes are the places where the city is targeting the greatest growth in jobs and population. This targeted growth strategy has several benefits:

- **Open for Business:** Signals to the business attraction community that there are locations in the city where they can locate and expand.
- **New Neighborhoods:** Identifies new areas for increased residential

growth with housing a various income levels by creating entirely new neighborhoods.

- **Smart Growth:** Creates sustainable places that do not worsen environmental conditions. By focusing on creating amazing destinations with housing and jobs that are walkable and accessible by biking and transit.
- **New Services:** Targeting these area for new public buildings, parks, and businesses, increases access to new amenities within Richmond for existing residents in adjacent neighborhoods.

All of the goals in *Richmond 300* refer to Nodes because creating amazing destinations in Richmond requires strategies that create high-quality places, equitable transportation, a diverse economy, inclusive housing, and a thriving environment.



**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.



**Greater Scott's Addition Conceptual Aerial** Crescent Park, a signature element, anchors a series of green spaces that connect a new baseball stadium, residential areas, and employment.



**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 Fall Line Greenway, and an improved Manchester Canal.

# Expand Housing Opportunities

## Encourage the development of housing options throughout the city to expand the geography of opportunity by deconcentrating poverty

An entire section of *Richmond 300* is focused on creating Inclusive Housing throughout the city. Richmond already has a wide variety of housing options; however, many parts of the city are inaccessible to low-income households. Several of the objectives in Goal 14 seek to expand access to more parts of the city. The 9 objectives are summarized here:

- 14.1 Very-Low and Low-Income Units:** Create 10,000 new affordable housing units for very-low and low-income households over the next ten years
- 14.2 Mobile Homes:** Re-imagine the future of “manufactured home parks”
- 14.3 Aging-in-Neighborhood:** Assist households that desire to age in place in their neighborhoods
- 14.4 Mixed-Income:** Increase the number of mixed-income communities along enhanced transit corridors
- 14.5 Housing Variety:** Encourage more housing types throughout the city
- 14.6 Public Housing:** Transform Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority public housing properties into well-designed, walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-adjacent communities
- 14.7 Displacement:** Develop inclusionary and equitable housing options for gentrifying neighborhoods to prevent involuntary displacement
- 14.8 Communications:** Increase city-wide awareness of the importance of integrating affordable housing into every residential neighborhood
- 14.9 Homelessness:** Ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and one-time



**Housing In Richmond** [Top] Mixed-use community at the former Armstrong High School site redeveloped by RRHA; [Middle] Single-family homes in Battery Park; [Bottom] Multi-family building in Manchester



# Provide Greenways & Parks for All

## 100% of Richmonders within a 10-minute walk of a park

A connected network of parks and greenways will provide Richmonders with access to green space for places of relaxation, rejuvenation, and recreation and provide these benefits:

- **Reduce the heat-island effect:** Richmond's heat-island effect is more pronounced in areas of high poverty because there are not many parks, a lot of pavement, and a thin tree canopy.
- **Manage rainfall:** Green space manages rainfall and reduces the amount of rainwater that flows into the City's drainage and sewage systems.
- **Improve health outcomes:** Proximity to a park and greenway system can help reduce chronic conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, and obesity.
- **Anchor new and existing neighborhoods:** Parks and greenway systems create a gathering place in communities and can serve as catalysts to spur private investment in the city.
- **Increase resiliency to a changing climate:** vegetation sequesters carbon which helps reduce the total amount of emissions in the city and a network of greenways encourages biking and walking, instead of driving, thereby potentially reducing per capita carbon emissions

Many strategies in *Richmond 300* relate to creating more parks and greenways. Objective 17.4 states: "Increase the percentage of Richmonders within a 10-minute walk of quality open space to 100%, prioritizing low-income areas with a high heat vulnerability index rating, with a long-term goal of having all Richmonders within a 5-minute walk of a quality open space."



**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.

# Reconnect the City

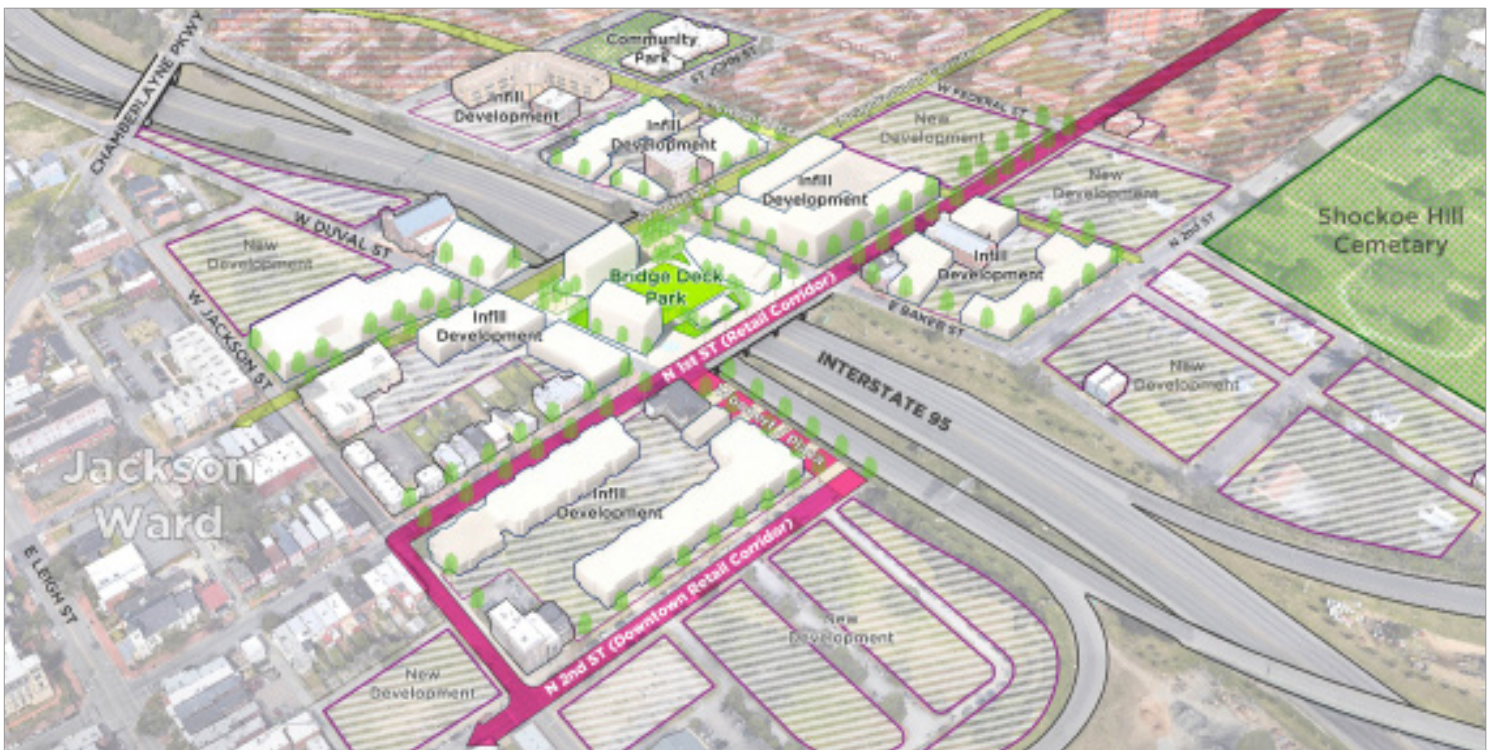
## Cap highways to reknit neighborhoods destroyed by interstates, build/improve bridges, introduce street grids and make the city easier to access by foot, bike, and transit

In the 1950s the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (now I-95/I-64) was built through Jackson Ward; thereby 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. There are several benefits to this Big Move:

- **One Neighborhood:** Jackson Ward and North Jackson Ward feel like two entirely different places, but capping the highway will make them feel as one.

- **Improve Access:** Connections to North Jackson Ward are limited today. It is difficult to get in and out of the area. Adding another street connection over the highway will make it easier to get to North Jackson Ward from Downtown by walking, biking, bus, or car.
- **Placemaking:** A park and buildings on top of the highway have the opportunity for distinctive architecture and public art that shows off Jackson Ward's history and also serves as a gateway to Richmond.

There are several other strategies within the Equitable Transportation section of the Master Plan that seek to reconnect Richmond, such as capping the Downtown Expressway, building a bridge over the tracks from Leigh Street to the Diamond Site, and general recommendations about creating street grids to encourage walking and increase access.



**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

# 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). Goal 2 of the High-quality Places section outlines Objective 2.1 to advance this Big Move:

**Objective 2.1:** Align new facilities with the Future Land Use Plan and improve existing City-owned facilities

- a. Develop and maintain a facility assessment inventory of all City-owned facilities
- b. Analyze police station and fire precincts within the context of the Future Land Use Plan and determine whether there are needs for creating, relocating, and/or closing police and fire stations to align with population projections and meet minimum response times
- c. Develop a schools facility master plan based within the context of the Future Land Use Plan to determine whether there are needs for creating, relocating, and/or closing schools to align with population projections
- d. Develop a parks and community facilities master plan based within the context of the Future Land Use Plan that seeks to ensure all Richmonders to live within a 10-minute walk of a park (see Goal 17)
- e. Implement programs to improve the energy efficiency of City-owned buildings (see Goal 15)

- f. Finish implementing the Libraries Master Plan by renovating the Main Library and then explore creating a new Libraries Master Plan to plan facilities improvements for the next generation of library users and incorporating other community-serving services

**If Richmond, not just the City government, but also non-profits, businesses, and residents, work together to advance these 6 big moves, the City will be on track to becoming more equitable, sustainable, and beautiful when it celebrates its 300th birthday in 2037.**

Re-Write the Zoning Ordinance

Re-Imagine Priority Growth Nodes

Expand Housing Opportunities

Provide Greenways & Parks for All

Reconnect the City

Realign City Facilities



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