



Code Refresh Open House 8/15/24 at Main Branch Library

RICHMOND ZONING CODE REFRESH

PHASES 1-5

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

May 2026

Prepared by: Brick & Story



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Code Refresh Open House 2/26/25 at Hugesunot Center

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT CODE REFRESH

The Richmond Zoning Code Refresh is a multi-year initiative aligned with Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth, the city's new Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2020. The project seeks to modernize the city's zoning ordinance to better support equity, sustainability, housing choice, and a more flexible, mixed-use urban form. Led by Code Studio with partners Brick & Story, Avid Core, and Utile, the process spans five phases from project initiation through final ordinance adoption, with engagement conducted from April 2024 through 2026.

This report summarizes engagement activities and findings from Phases 1-5, highlighting how public input shaped the evolving zoning framework. Across all phases, the engagement strategy combined large public events, digital tools, stakeholder roundtables, pop-ups, advisory committees, and targeted outreach to ensure broad participation and inclusion of historically underrepresented communities.

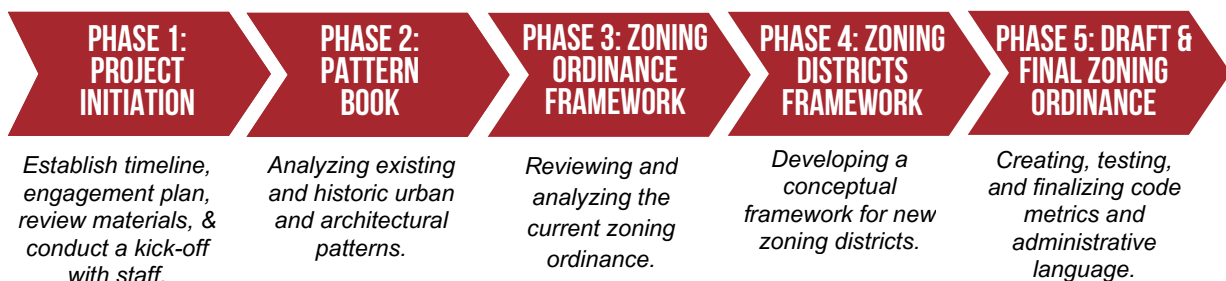
ENGAGEMENT APPROACH AND REACH

Early phases (Phases 1-4) focused on building awareness and foundational understanding of zoning and Richmond 300 through webinars, open houses, panels, pop-ups, and stakeholder meetings. These efforts reached approximately 400 participants and established baseline themes around housing affordability, neighborhood character, walkability, infrastructure, and environmental resilience.

To address persistent participation gaps among renters, Latino residents, African American residents, youth, and low-income communities, the project team intentionally expanded targeted outreach tools such as pop-ups in Southside and East End neighborhoods, bilingual engagement, and focused stakeholder roundtables.

Phase 5 significantly expanded engagement scale and diversity by leveraging local Richmond-based networks, including community organizations, faith groups, neighborhood leaders, and prior participants. This shift resulted in a substantial increase in participation, including approximately 385 residents engaged through pop-ups alone in Phase 5, along with expanded participation in roundtables, office hours, and open houses. This network-based approach improved trust, accessibility, and representation in the feedback received.

The Richmond Zoning Code Refresh process is divided into five distinct phases:



Across Phases 1-5, the project team engaged a total of 4,923 community members through a combination of consultant-led and city-led outreach efforts. Engagement activities included webinars, open houses, panel discussions, roundtables, pop-ups, office hours, neighborhood and civic association meetings, stakeholder interviews, and advisory council meetings, supported by a project website and public communications. Together, these varied engagement modes helped ensure broad community awareness and meaningful opportunities for residents and stakeholders to participate in the planning process.

KEY THEMES FROM ENGAGEMENT

Across all phases, several consistent themes emerged:

- Housing, Affordability, and Growth
 - Residents consistently emphasized the need for **more affordable and diverse housing options**, including duplexes, ADUs, and small multifamily housing. Concerns were raised about **displacement, rising costs, and the concentration of housing types**. Participants also questioned whether zoning alone is sufficient to address affordability without complementary housing and economic policies.
- Neighborhood Design and Uses
 - Strong support emerged for more **walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with access to grocery stores, healthcare, childcare, and local businesses**. At the same time, residents expressed concern about **maintaining neighborhood character**, ensuring appropriate scale of development, and avoiding over-concentration of certain uses. There was broad interest in **reducing auto-dependence** and improving **transit-oriented development**.
- Infrastructure and Livability
 - **Infrastructure capacity**, including transportation, parking, utilities, and environmental systems, was a major concern tied to increased density. Residents also emphasized the importance of **green space, tree canopy preservation, and climate resilience**.
- Aging in Place and Housing Stability
 - Participants highlighted the importance of allowing residents to **age-in-place** in their communities, including through accessible housing options, multigenerational living, and **affordable units for seniors and low-income households**.
- Process Clarity and Trust
 - Across all phases, residents frequently expressed **confusion about zoning processes, maps, and terminology**, as well as uncertainty about how public input is incorporated into final decisions. In Phase 5 especially, concerns about transparency, accountability, and the real-world impacts of zoning changes became more pronounced.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Engagement evolved from **broad education and awareness-building into detailed review of draft zoning proposals**.
- **Targeted outreach and local network partnerships** were essential to increasing participation among historically underrepresented groups.
- Phase 5 marked a significant increase in engagement reach and diversity due to **intentional collaboration with community-based organizations and trusted local networks**.
- Public feedback consistently emphasized **balancing housing growth with affordability, infrastructure capacity, and neighborhood character**.
- There is strong public support for more **walkable, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development**, paired with concerns about displacement and implementation impacts.

REFLECTIONS ON ENGAGEMENT

The engagement process for the Richmond Zoning Code Refresh demonstrates both the complexity of updating a citywide zoning ordinance and the importance of sustained, adaptive community engagement. Across five phases, the project team refined its approach to better reflect community needs, improve accessibility, and expand participation, particularly among historically underrepresented populations.

The insights gathered through this process have directly informed the final zoning ordinance and ensured that it reflects Richmond’s long-term goals for equitable growth, housing opportunity, and resilient neighborhoods, as envisioned in Richmond 300.



Pop-Up on 10/5/25 at the 2nd Street Festival



Code Refresh Open House 8/17/24 at Studio Two-Three

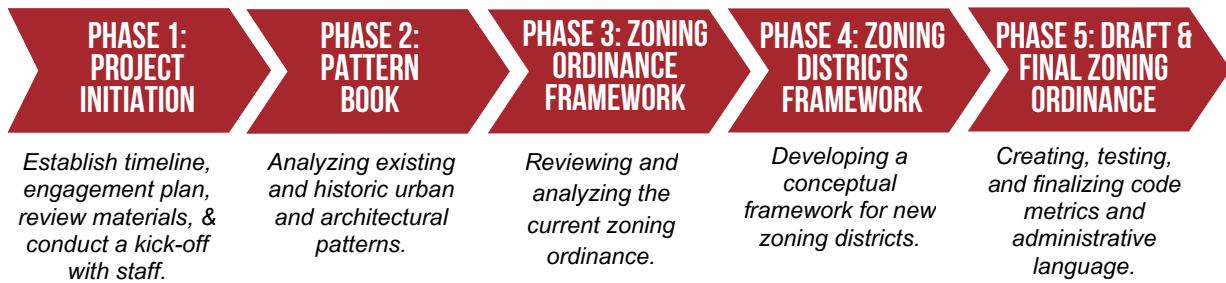
INTRODUCTION

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted [Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth, the city's new Comprehensive Plan](#). To align with the vision and goals of equity and sustainability in Richmond 300, one of the plan's "Big Moves" was to update the zoning ordinance. Updating the zoning code will allow for more mixed use and the incorporation of form-based elements. This project is known as [Code Refresh](#).

Starting in April 2024, a project team, led by Code Studio, and including the firms Brick & Story, Avid Core, and Utile, conducted public engagement for Richmond's Code Refresh, a process to update the city's zoning code that will continue through Spring 2026.

The Richmond Zoning Code Refresh process is divided into five distinct phases:



Phase 1 centered on orienting stakeholders to the project, while Phases 2 through 4, which overlapped significantly, focused on forming relationships with community partners. Phase 5, beginning in 2025, will concentrate on finalizing the updated zoning ordinance, including testing and refining code metrics, graphics, and administrative language.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CODE REFRESH PROCESS, VISIT THE PROJECT WEBSITE, [HTTPS://WWW.RVA.GOV/CODEREFRESH](https://www.rva.gov/coderefresh)

STUDY AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

To better understand who lives in the study area, the project team used 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates and 2020 Decennial census data (where 2023 ACS 1-year estimates were not available) and compared to the demographic report of engagement thus far.¹

Race/Ethnicity

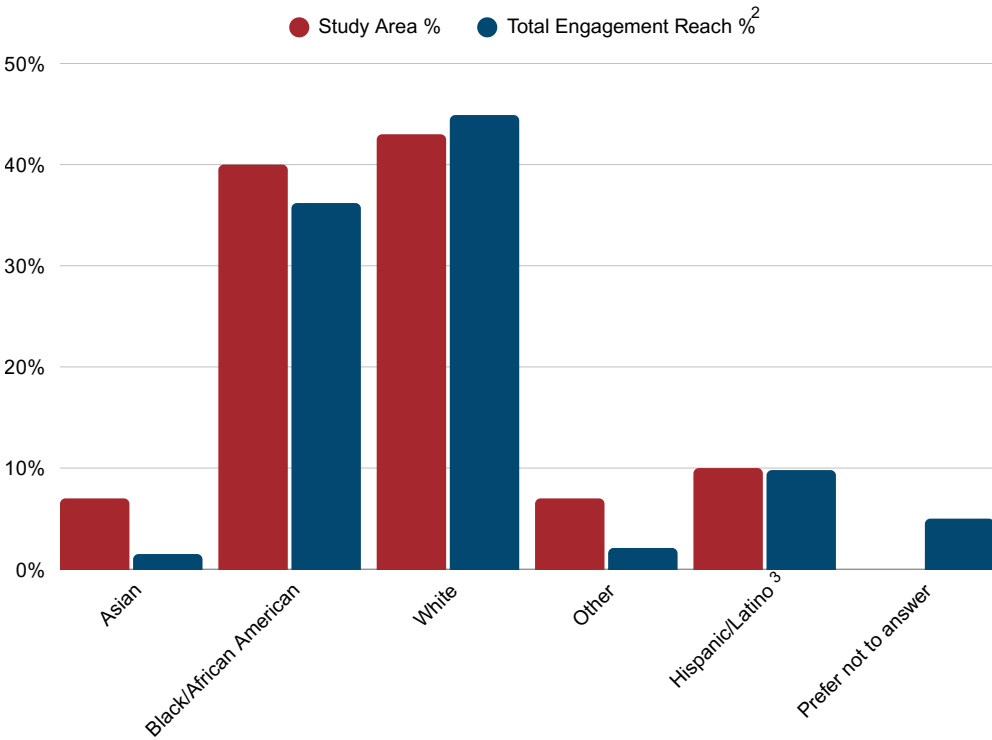
Traditional engagement events early in the process overrepresented those who identify as White and underrepresented those who identify as Black or Latino. The team specifically designed non-traditional engagements like pop-ups and roundtable discussions to better engage Black and Latino residents. To ensure easy access for Spanish speakers, all project materials were translated into Spanish and Spanish interpreters were present at all engagement events.

Age

The city of Richmond is most heavily populated by young adults, aged 25-44 (36%), with a fairly even distribution across other age categories that skews slightly older. Engagements reached people across all age groups, with 49% of participants in the 25-44 age range. Engagement underrepresents the two youngest age groups (this potential gap was filled with a youth-specific roundtable discussion).

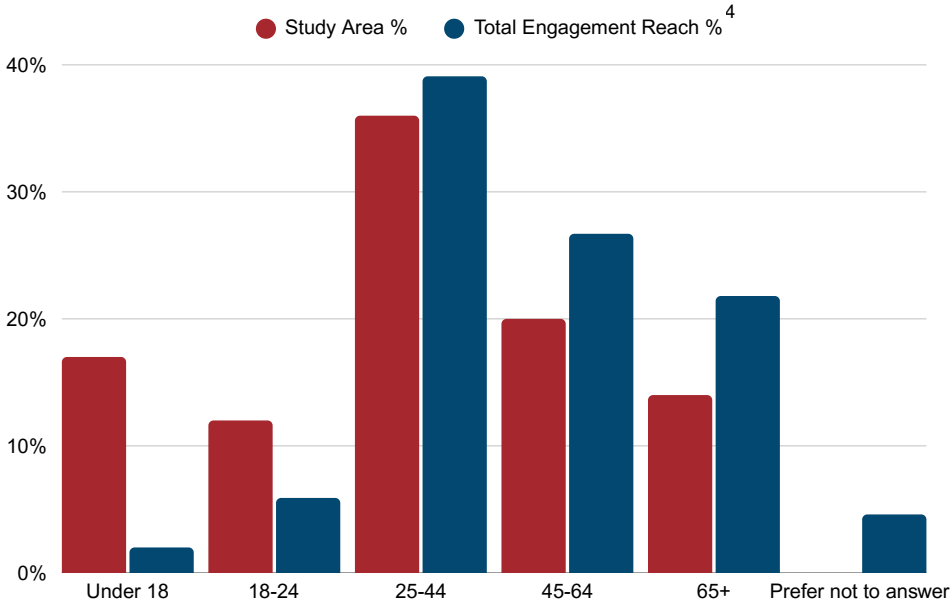
¹ The study area is defined as the county, Richmond City, Virginia. Data used: American Community Survey (ACS) 2023-1-year estimates and 2020 Decennial Census (where ACS 1-year estimates were not available).

Race/Ethnicity: Study Area vs. Engagement Reach



Source: P8 2020 Decennial Census

Age: Study Area % vs. Engagement Reach



Source: SO101 Age and Sex (2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates)

² These percentages are calculated using self-reported sign-in sheet data and visual observations from engagement led by the consultant team only.

³ Per P9 2020 Decennial Census.

⁴ These percentages are calculated using self-reported sign-in sheet data and visual observations from engagement led by the consultant team only. Age brackets on sign-in sheets do not perfectly align with ACS age brackets. When an age range fell across two categories, the numbers were divided in half and shared equally amongst the two groups (i.e., 8 people aged 40-49 > 4 people aged 25-44 and 4 people aged 45-60).



Pop-Up on 8/16/24 at Southside Community Services Center

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Critical to this process is ensuring that all Richmond residents feel that they are a part of the planning effort. This is particularly critical for residents who have been historically excluded from civic life and/or have not traditionally participated in public processes. In particular, some of the groups that we look to elevate as part of this process and who were underrepresented in Richmond 300 include:

- 8th and 9th District residents
- African American residents
- Latino residents
- Low-Income residents
- Youth
- Other communities that are not traditionally represented in civic life

To make the engagement process more equitable, this project’s outreach included:

- Open houses at accessible community centers north and south of the river: Main Street Branch Library and Studio Two Three, a local community art center/incubator space
- Strategic choice of pop-up locations to reach bus riders, Latino and Black residents, and Southside residents
- Options for offering feedback asynchronously online (via the city’s website)
- Translation of all materials into Spanish
- Spanish interpretation at all events to encourage people with limited English proficiency to participate in the engagement process

ENGAGEMENT REACH

The project team communicated these engagement opportunities to the public using the City of Richmond’s communication channels: a project webpage on the city website, official social media accounts, and listservs. Local partner organizations also promoted stakeholder roundtables and in-person engagements using their social media channels and listservs. **In all, the team directly engaged approximately 4,923 Richmond residents in phases 1-5.**

In addition to the events listed in the following Phases 1-5 Engagement Events table, in this stage of the project, activities included:⁴



DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT WEBSITE



MONTHLY ZONING ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS



MEETINGS WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS



MEETINGS WITH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS LED BY PDR

⁴ The figure 4,923 includes ALL engagement completed by both PDR AND the whole project consultant team. The report only details work led primarily by consultants.

PHASE 1-5 ENGAGEMENT EVENT OVERVIEW⁵

Event Type	# of Participants
Zoning 101 Webinars (2)	122
Open House Series (4)	44
Panel Discussions (4)	75
Roundtables (7) ⁶	13
Community Ambassador Roundtables (7)	2
Pop-ups (10)	20
Office Hours (10)	30



Zoning Panel on 9/11/24 at Dogwood Middle School

⁵ This report will only delve into the engagement led by the consultant team. A more extensive overview including the PDR-led engagement events can be found on the next page and in the appendix

⁶ This figure includes the community meeting with Virginia Organizing

CITY-LED ENGAGEMENT PHASES 1-5 OVERVIEW

The PDR team attended **98 events** hosted by existing neighborhood and civic associations as well as community organizations across Richmond. Through these engagements, the team spoke with about **2,684 community members**. A list of meetings and participating organizations is provided below. *Additionally, in December 2025, the PDR team mailed postcards to every household with information about the project, including details on the draft zoning code and the best ways for community members to provide feedback.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st District Council • 2nd District Council • 3rd District Council • 4th District Council • 5th District Council • 5th District Council (Southside) • 8th District Council • 9th District Council • 9th District Residents • Arts District Business Watch • Bellemeade Civic Association • Bellevue Civic Association • Carytown Merchants • Church Hill Central Civic Association • Church Hill Neighbors • Circles RVA • Colonial Place Association • Diverse Economy Working Group • Downtown Neighborhood Association • Environment Working Group • Equitable Transportation Working Group • Falls of the James • Fan District Association Board • Fan Preservation Committee • Forest Hill Neighborhood Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulton Civic Association • Gilpin Residents Meeting • Ginter Park & Other Civic Associations • Ginter Park Terrace Association • Grace Street Neighbors • Hampton Gardens Civic Association • HBAR • High-Quality Places Working Group • Highland Park Civic Association • Historic Jackson Ward • Inclusive Housing Working Group • Latinx Hispanic Association • Livability Initiative • Manchester Alliance • Maymont Civic League • Monument Park • Museum District Association • North Barton Heights • Oak Grove Back to School Event • Oak Grove Civic Association • Oakgrove Neighbors Association • Oregon Hill Neighbors Conversation • Partnership for Smart Growth • Richmond Association of Realtors • RRHA Resident Leaders • Sherwood Park Civic Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southhampton Civic Association • Southside Baptist Ministers • Strong Towns Panel with Charles Mahron • Sustainability & Resilience Commission • Swansboro West Civic Association • Thriving Environment Working Group • VA Community Voice • Virginia Health District • Virginia Organizing Meeting • Washington Park Civic Association • West Grace Street Association • Westhampton Civic Association • Westmoreland Place Civic Association • Westover Hill Civic Association • Westwood Baptist Church • Westwood Church and Residents • Willow Lawn Civic Association • Zoning Administrator - Roger York
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TOOLS USED

ZAC Meetings

The City of Richmond convened Zoning Advisory Council (ZAC), a volunteer group of diverse Richmond residents tasked with guiding the direction of the zoning ordinance. Stakeholders were invited to apply to sit on the ZAC; the City appointed 19 volunteer members to advise the project team over the course of the zoning update. ZAC members represented a variety of interests, including land use professionals, community advocates, elected officials, public servants, private and non-profit developers and policy leaders. Throughout all five phases of this project, the ZAC met with the project team on a monthly basis to offer feedback on deliverables and strategy. The public was invited to attend the hybrid meetings (virtually or in-person); meeting notes and recordings were uploaded to the [project website](#) after each meeting.

Across Phases 1-5, the Zoning Advisory Council (ZAC) met a total of 21 times, serving as a key advisory body throughout the Code Refresh process. The role of the ZAC evolved over time, from providing high-level input on planning frameworks in the early phases to offering detailed, iterative feedback on draft zoning materials in Phase 5. Meetings were designed to both gather input from members and keep them informed on project progress and refinements based on community feedback. Throughout the 5 phases the ZAC:

- Provided input on the **Draft Pattern Book and Zoning Framework**, with a focus on residential and neighborhood mixed-use areas
- Reviewed **block patterns and building scale analyses** to inform zoning approaches
- Offered feedback on **proposed zoning districts and use regulations** across multiple draft iterations
- Reviewed **revisions to zoning districts** and regulations based on community input
- Provided input on **draft development standards**
- Engaged with **market analysis** to understand Richmond's economic capacity under the proposed zoning changes

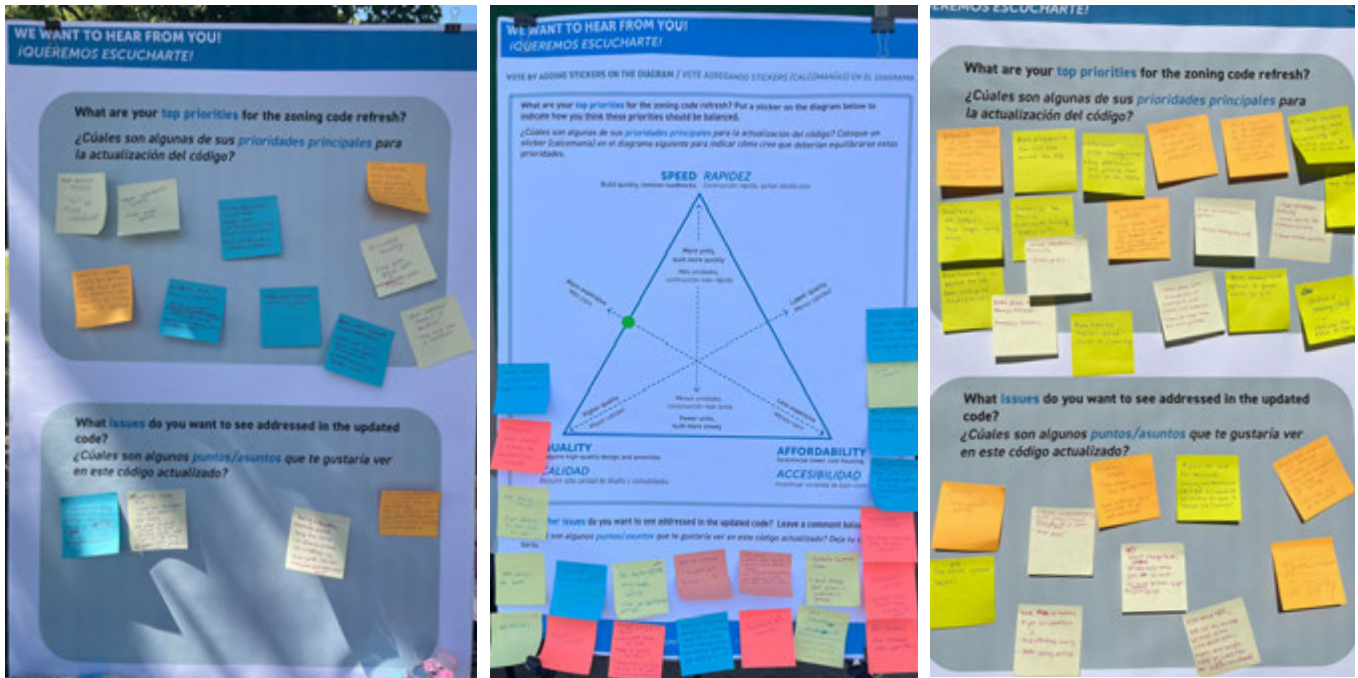
Zoning Panels

To raise awareness of the project and deepen public understanding, the team organized a series of panel discussions in collaboration with local and national leaders. Each panel focused on a different topic, connecting broader zoning issues to their specific impacts in Richmond and illustrating how zoning shapes all parts of the city.

Recognizing Richmond's complex history as one of the first U.S. cities to adopt zoning and to use it as a tool for segregation, the panels created space for open dialogue about the legacy and ongoing implications of zoning policy. Discussions explored national zoning reform efforts, highlighting innovative approaches and best practices while also grounding these ideas in Richmond's local context and the goals of Code Refresh.

Panels included:

- September 11, 2024: Looking Back and Moving Forward: a Panel Discussion on Richmond’s Zoning Update
- March 11, 2025, Housing Panel
- June 24, 2025: Land Use and Transportation Panel
- November 17, 2025: Housing, Economic Development, and Zoning - What We’re Seeing in the Market



Feedback boards used at various Pop-Up engagement events

Feedback Boards

Using a series of informational boards and interactive feedback boards, participants were able to learn about the Zoning Code Refresh process and share their feedback. The boards included an introduction to Richmond 300 and its role in guiding the zoning code update, along with an overview of the project timeline. One board displayed Richmond’s current zoning map, explaining how existing zoning districts dictate building size and type, and how this will inform updates to the new code.

The boards highlighted the Richmond 300 Land Use Vision with its ten land use categories: **Downtown Mixed Use, Destination Mixed Use, Corridor Mixed Use, Community Mixed Use, Neighborhood Mixed Use, Residential, Industrial Mixed Use, Industrial, Institutional, and Public Open Space.** Specific boards provided deeper dives into key land use categories, including **Residential Mixed Use, Neighborhood Mixed Use, Community Mixed Use, Destination Mixed Use, and Corridor Mixed Use.**

Additional boards featured analyses of city-scale zoning challenges, such as areas where current zoning does not reflect traditional patterns of parcel size, building height, or existing uses, and specific examples of nonconformities in neighborhoods like Jackson Ward. Participants were also encouraged to share their priorities for the zoning code refresh, choosing between quality, affordability, and speed, or suggesting additional issues to address.

For pop-up events, specific boards were selected from the broader set of materials explained above to suit the goals and format of these engagements. For pop-up engagements in Phase 1, these included an introduction to Richmond 300, which explained how the city's master plan calls for a zoning code refresh, setting the stage for participants to understand the process. Another board displayed Richmond's existing zoning districts and invited participants to weigh in on alternatives to single-family homes. A combined priorities board asked attendees to share their top priorities for the zoning code refresh, choosing between quality, affordability, and speed, while also providing space for participants to share additional issues they wanted addressed.

Sign-in Sheets

All engagement efforts utilized the same Richmond 300 sign-in sheets, which collected essential participant information, including first name, last name, email, zipcode, race/ethnicity, age, and whether they wanted to be added to the mailing list. This data was instrumental in identifying the stakeholders we were engaging with and pinpointing areas where additional outreach was needed. Moving forward, we plan to ask for participants' addresses instead of just zip codes to better understand which specific neighborhoods are being engaged and where further outreach may be necessary. We are also looking at refining some of the demographic questions posed to improve our demographic data tracking in Phase 5.

SHIFTS IN ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

After Phase One, the team found that the board asking participants to choose between quality, affordability, and speed for the zoning code refresh was difficult for the public to engage with effectively. So, in Phase Two, the boards were simplified. The updated set included one board introducing Richmond 300, another focused on the zoning code refresh with the project timeline and key details, and a final board that asked participants to share their top priorities for the zoning code refresh and what issues they wanted to see addressed in the updated code. This simplification made the engagement process clearer and more accessible for the public.



Pop-Up on 8/16/24 at the Hull St. Library

PHASES 1-4 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Between June and December 2024, the Code Refresh project team used a range of engagement tools to reach stakeholders in the City of Richmond. These tools were multi-pronged and included online events like the Zoning 101 Webinar and Stakeholder Roundtables, monthly ZAC meetings, an in-person Open House series, a Zoning Panel Discussion, and the team also hosted five pop-up events at various community hubs.

CODE REFRESH STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

PHASES 1-4 KEY TAKEAWAYS



FUTURE OF ZONING

- The success of future zoning implementation **ties directly to implementation of related housing, transportation, economic, and climate policies.**
- **ADUs and tiny homes would be beneficial** to expanding housing opportunity and flexibility
- Support in some neighborhoods for **denser housing and mixed-use zoning** that includes housing, shops, and grocery stores.
- Zoning should **prioritize alternative transportation options**, walkability, and create more mixed-use neighborhoods.
- Zoning should help **address climate change impacts**, with generational change in mind.



NEIGHBORHOOD USES/COMPATIBILITY

- **Concerns about businesses that cater only to 9-5 workers** and do not stay open to service local residents
- Too many similar businesses (e.g., tire shops, barber shops) and nuisance businesses (e.g. liquor stores, vape shops) on the same block. **Economic diversity is key.**
- Drive-through businesses negatively impact safety and walkability.
- **Aging populations need walkable areas**, better transportation, and access to grocery stores.
- **Zoning should support economic diversification** and reduce the auto-centric nature of neighborhoods.



AGING IN PLACE/HOUSING OPTIONS

- **Mixed-generation housing** is important for aging in place.
- Zoning should allow more **flexibility for homeowners to build extensions** or additional housing options on their property (e.g., ADUs, granny flats).
- **More zoning for senior apartment buildings** or housing that supports aging in place.
- Zoning should help with affordability in housing and **reduce barriers to creating housing options** like rent-to-own or multi-unit buildings.



CONCERNS ABOUT ZONING UPDATES

- The concentration of a single type of housing in certain areas is problematic, and **zoning should allow for more diverse housing options.**
- **The availability of rental housing is limited**, especially in desirable neighborhoods, and zoning could help address this issue by increasing and diversifying the supply.
- Zoning should **reduce the need for special permits and streamline the process** for creating housing options for all types of families.
- There is a strong interest in understanding how housing affordability can be achieved through a zoning rewrite given **current state restrictions** (e.g. The Dillon Rule).

PHASE 1-4 ENGAGEMENT

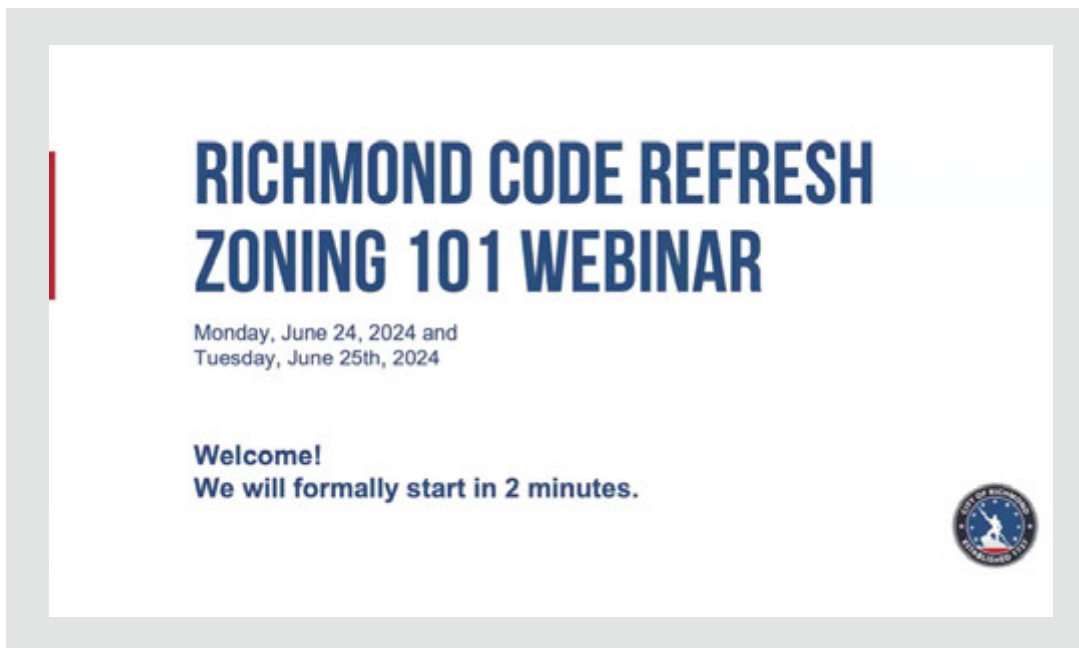
ZONING 101 WEBINAR

The project team collaborated with the City of Richmond to host an informational webinar on June 24th and June 25th called “Zoning 101” to introduce the basics of zoning and introduce the Code Refresh process to the public. The webinar aimed to:

- Educate the public about the basics of the zoning process
- Educate the public about the Code Refresh process (including ways to engage)
- Give the public an opportunity ask questions about the zoning or Code Refresh Process

A total of 122 Richmond community members participated in two virtual webinars to learn about the basics of zoning and provide feedback on the city's zoning Code Refresh process. Participants engaged in a Q&A session, sharing their thoughts and questions about zoning regulations, processes, and potential updates.

The webinar’s virtual format allowed for broader participation and facilitated meaningful conversations despite the lower overall attendance relative to the total population of Richmond. A recording of the webinar was posted on the [City’s website](#) for stakeholders to reference throughout the process.



Zoning 101 Webinar 6/24

OPEN HOUSE SERIES (AUGUST 2024 & FEBRUARY 2025)

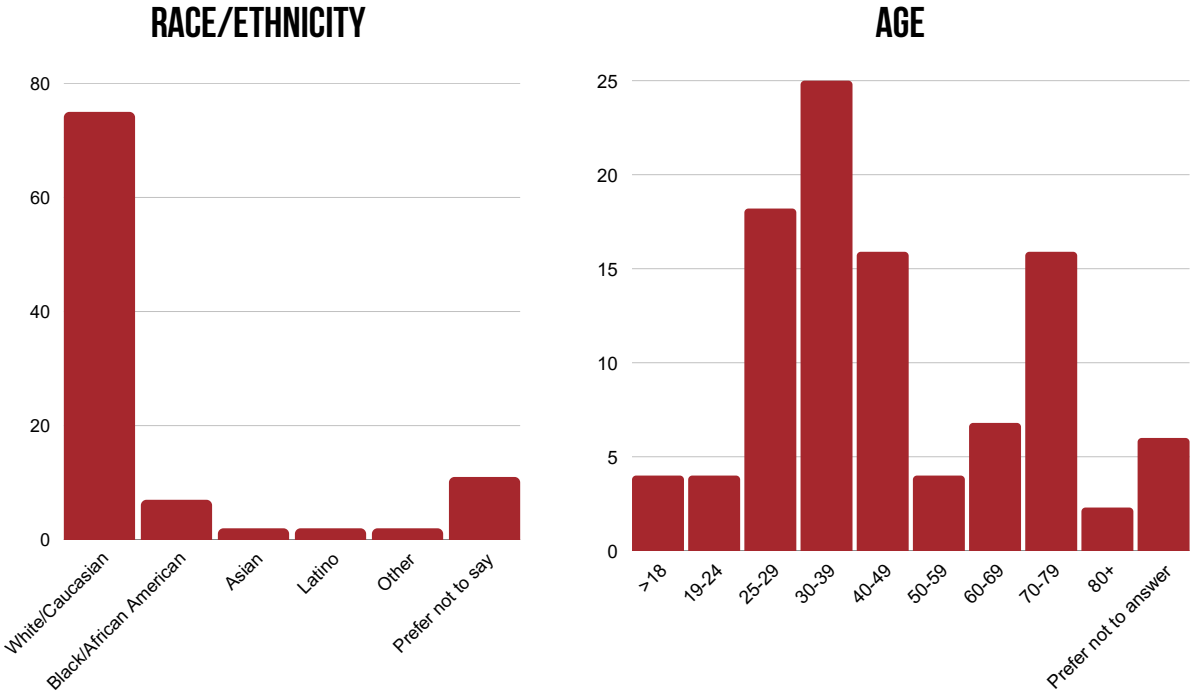
August 2024

The consultant team collaborated with the City of Richmond to host an informational open house to introduce the Code Refresh process on Thursday, August 15th, 2024 and Saturday, August 17th, 2024. The goals of the open house included:

- Introduce the public to the zoning Code Refresh process and project timeline
- Share information about past outreach methods and how Richmond 300 informs this process
- Provide an opportunity for the public to give input on mixed-use zoning and their hopes for the new zoning update

A total of **44 Richmond community members** attended one of the open houses, offering valuable feedback on zoning and their vision for the updated zoning ordinance. While we were hoping to engage other priority stakeholders, the lower turnout allowed staff to have in-depth conversations with attendees, ensuring their feedback was thoughtfully gathered.

As a result of the attendance, we decided to integrate more targeted stakeholder roundtable discussions into future engagement phases to reach a wider variety of community members.





Code Refresh Open House 8/15/24 at Main Branch Library

AUGUST 2024 OPEN HOUSE SERIES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



Inclusive Housing

- Abolish single-family housing zoning
- Promote more mixed-use and medium-density zoning around Forest Hill Avenue
- More housing contributes to making the city better for all residents
- Advocate for increased density in the West End
- Expand R-6 zoning in R-1 to R-5 areas
- End single-family zoning across the city
- Ensure every neighborhood is mixed-use



Thriving Environment

- Address flooding risks by incorporating zoning strategies related to flood mitigation
- Increase the availability of grocery stores
- Support the development of more community gardens



High Quality Places

- Shade requirements for improved public spaces
- Less cars in Carytown, as it's a shopping center, not a road
- Make the 15-minute city concept a reality
- Create more open streets, plazas, and parks
- Prioritize quality alongside affordability; poor infrastructure leads to higher costs



Equitable Transportation

- Steps toward rail infrastructure are necessary for future needs
- Promote equitable transportation opportunities

OPEN HOUSE SERIES (AUGUST 2024 & FEBRUARY 2025)

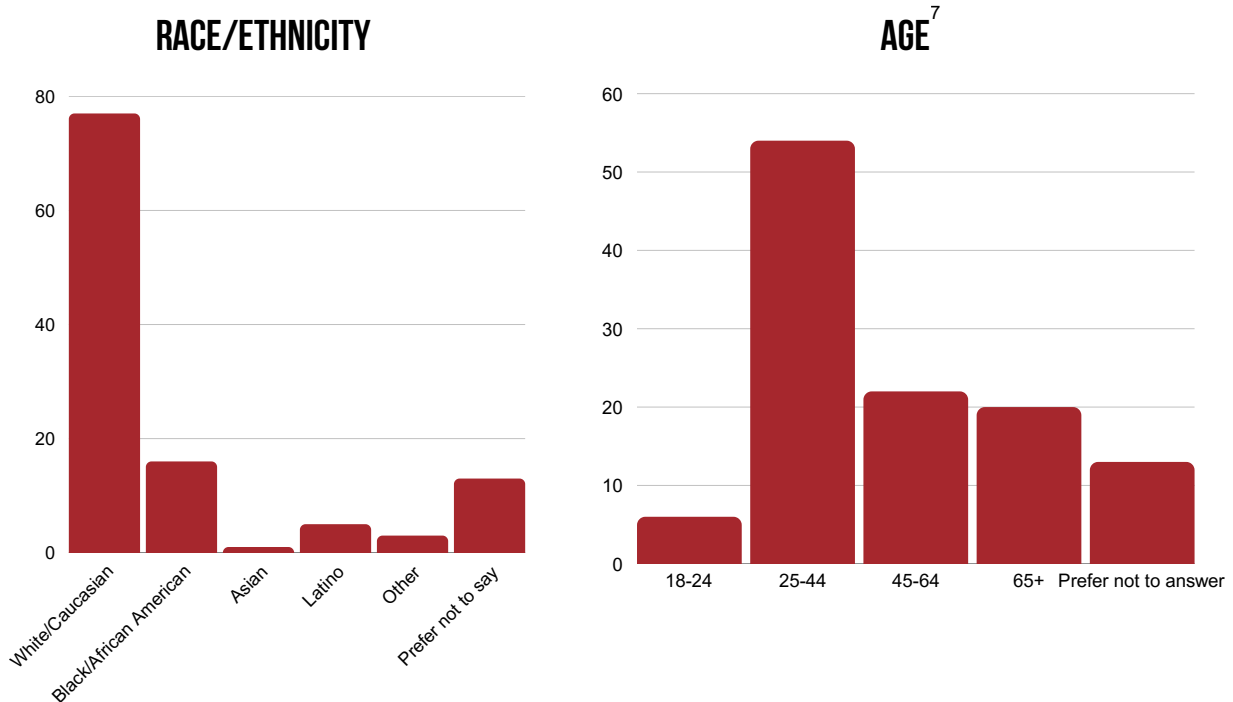
February 2025

The consultant team collaborated with the City of Richmond to host a second informational open house series to update the community on the Code Refresh process on Wednesday, February 26th, 2025 (Huguenot Center) and Thursday, February 27th, 2025 (City Hall and the Main Library). The goals of the open house included:

- Update the public on the zoning Code Refresh process and project timeline
- Share the final pattern book analysis
- Solicit feedback on the draft zoning framework
- Directly connect stakeholders with both planning staff and members of the Code Refresh consultant team to increase transparency and accessibility.

A total of **113 Richmond community members** attended the open houses, offering valuable feedback on zoning and their vision for the updated zoning ordinance.

The feedback for this series of open houses is organized by district.



⁷ We altered the age ranges on our sign-in sheets between 2024 and 2025

FEBRUARY 2025 OPEN HOUSE SERIES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



Residential Districts

- Attendees largely support allowing duplexes by right in the Residential Detached Districts (RD-)
- Some called for consolidating districts:
 - Consolidate RD-A, RD-B
 - Combine RDA, BNC
 - Eliminate RD-A, RD-B, RD-C, RA-A and replace with RA-B
- Request for higher unit limit for RA- (currently proposed: max 2 units, 6 units, 12 units in a building)
- Support for 4 stories in RA-C, some called for more
- Call for smaller setbacks



Mixed-Use/Industrial Districts

- Little support for an auto-specific use
- Unanimous support for allowing commercial uses on entire ground floor in RX-districts
- Breakdown of maximum heights for RX- districts seemed too granular/limited
- Concern that current industrial mixed-use areas will be downzoned if zoned IX (currently TOD-1, 12 stories)
- Two requests for unlimited height in industrial districts



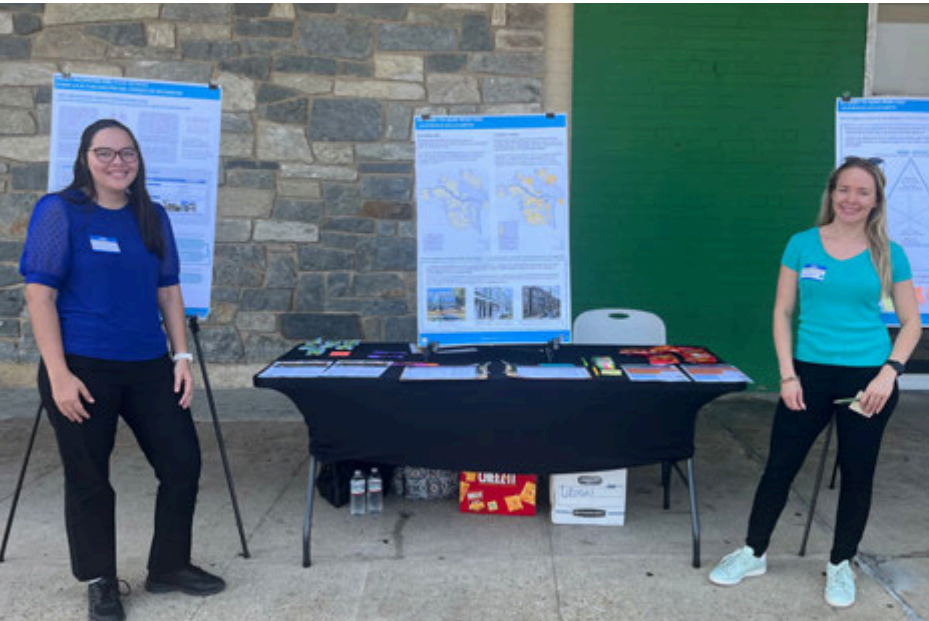
Institutional/Open Space

- “Institutions should be zoned as institutions” - some concerns about neighborhood input if no need for SUP
- Call for more green space, especially at the small, neighborhood scale (especially in Southside)



Overall Feedback

- Most popular comment: lower minimum lot sizes
- Many calls to eliminate the parking minimum
- Historic rowhouses (attached or semi-detached) considered most characteristic of Richmond
- Call for more mixed-use development
- Many requests for more TOD
- Concerns about capacity to handle infrastructure that comes along with future development (with support for said development)
- Concerns about the affordability of new housing in the neighborhood (specifically in Westwood)
- Perception that the city doesn't care about existing residents



Pop-Up on 8/16/2024 at SCSC



Pop-Up on 8/16/24 at the Hull St. Library

POP-UP ENGAGEMENTS

In Phases 1-4, the project team hosted five pop-up engagement events at community hubs across Richmond. Locations were specifically chosen to reach both downtown and Southside Richmond residents. Pop-up engagements are useful tools to meet stakeholders where they are and quickly collect feedback and/or share information. **In total, the team engaged with approximately 125 people at pop-up events.**

The feedback collected helped ensure that the community's perspectives were represented in the project. Pop-up engagements used feedback boards and informational flyers to:

- Introduce the public to the zoning Code Refresh process and provide an overview of the project timeline
- Promote the upcoming open house on August 17th to encourage community participation
- Collect valuable feedback on preferences for building heights and types to inform the zoning update
- Gather feedback on the priority issues to be addressed in the Code Refresh
- Answer any questions the public may have about zoning or the Code Refresh process

Pop-Up Engagement Overview

Date	Pop-up Location	Participants
Thursday, August 15, 2024	Broad Rock Library	~15
Friday, August 16, 2024	Southside Community Services Center	~30
Friday, August 16, 2024	Hull Street Library	~20
Thursday, September 12, 2024	Downtown Transfer Station	~35
Thursday, September 12, 2024	Broad Rock Library	~25

Broad Rock Library Pop-up #1

On August 15th, the project team hosted a pop-up at the Broad Rock Library on the south side of Richmond. The event lasted for approximately 1 hour, and **the team spoke with about 15 community members**, predominantly African American, Latino, and White individuals.

By choosing the library as the location, the team aimed to connect with a diverse group of community members, including library-goers, students, families, and individuals seeking information about local services.

Southside Community Service Center Pop-up

On August 16th, the project team hosted a pop-up at the Southside Community Service Center (SCSC) in Richmond. This site was chosen due to its central role in serving local families and residents. The event lasted for approximately two hours, and **the team spoke with around 30 residents, including a large number of Latino families**.

Unique to the SCSC pop-up, most stakeholders expressed a desire for Richmond to become a more family-oriented city with increased green spaces, tree canopies, and more accessible, less industrial environments. Some feedback was not directly linked to zoning; residents expressed concerns about substance abuse and a call for more methadone clinics.



A Note on Demographic Data Collection and Pop-Up Events: Because pop-up events are, by nature, quick interactions, the team relies on observational data collected by staff to gauge participant demographics. The following summaries rely on data collected by engagement team members and are more qualitative than elsewhere in this report.

Hull Street Library Pop-up

On August 16th, the project team hosted a pop-up at the Hull Street Public Library in Richmond. The event lasted for approximately 2 hours and the team engaged with around **20 community members**. This pop-up attracted a diverse group of people, including Hispanic, White, African American, Asian, and Middle Eastern individuals; most attendees were adults between the ages of 40 and 60.

Like Broad Rock Library, Hull Street was chosen for the opportunity it presented to engage a wide range of community members. Unique to this pop-up location, stakeholders pushed for solutions to help the unhoused population of Richmond, including turning empty areas into parks or picnics and repurposing old buildings into community centers instead of expensive apartments.



Pop-Up on 9/12/24 at the Downtown Transfer Station

Downtown Transfer Station Pop-up

On September 12, 2024, the project team hosted a pop-up at the Downtown Transfer Center in Downtown Richmond. The project team spoke with approximately 35 people, primarily Latino, White, and African American residents.

This site was chosen because it is a bus stop with high foot traffic. The team also intentionally scheduled the pop-up during the morning rush hour when people were running errands or heading to work so as to maximize the number of people with whom we were able to engage.

Broad Rock Library Pop-up #2

On September 12, 2024 the project team hosted a pop-up at the Broad Rock Public Library in Southside, Richmond. The project team stayed for two hours. The team spoke to approximately 25 people, mostly White and African American community members, with a small number of Latino residents. This site was specifically chosen to further engage the Southside of Richmond. Additionally, the site also hosted a pop-up farmers' market, which allowed the team to engage with both patrons of the library and the market.

Engagement Observations

Many participants were unaware not only of the Code Refresh process, but also of Richmond 300, so newer engagement materials included a primer on Richmond 300 in order to lay the foundation to discuss Code Refresh.

POP-UP BOARDS: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE ZONING CODE

- **Promote equitable transportation opportunities.**
- Focus on **improving walkability** (especially in Southside) and accessibility for residents using the bus network.
- **People are walking long distances (and stacking transit options) to access amenities** like grocery stores and healthcare facilities. Mixed-use communities would make accessing amenities easier for most stakeholders.
- **Encourage infill development** and allow more flexibility in by-right development, particularly in historic neighborhoods.
- **Stakeholders were divided about parking:** some felt that reducing parking minimums and investing in transit options was a viable strategy; others felt Richmond needs more parking, especially near transit centers.
- Many attendees emphasized the **importance of affordable housing** (increasing supply of stock like duplexes and missing-middle housing), improved accessibility/walkability, creating mixed-use neighborhoods, and revitalizing local spaces like Southside Plaza.
- **Demand for more youth services and spaces**, including more and improved playgrounds, parks, and recreational spaces.

PRESENT-DAY ISSUES TO ADDRESS IN UPDATED CODE

- **Streamline the process for new building development** and reduce the need for the Special Use Permit process.
- Ensure that small developers can **obtain permits more easily and quickly.**
- **Improve enforcement of construction hours** to minimize disturbances to existing residents.
- **Balance the need for new development** with proposals that seem out of scale/character with existing neighborhoods

COMMUNITY GROUP MEETINGS

Virginia Organizing Community Meeting

On October 22nd, 2024, the team was invited to engage with the Virginia Organizing chapter, a grassroots organization dedicated to empowering communities to address local issues. In a small group setting (8 members joined the hybrid meeting), the team sought input from attendees in a focus group style discussion –asking questions about their perspectives on zoning and how it impacts their community.

Community Ambassador Briefing to Richmond 300 Ambassadors

The project team met with the former community ambassador team for Richmond 300 to solicit feedback on the Phase 5 engagement strategy and identify any areas for improvement, especially as related to priority stakeholder groups. We will be regrouping with the Ambassadors in January 2025 to outline an approach to leverage their talents and networks in the Code Refresh process.

VIRGINIA ORGANIZING COMMUNITY MEETING: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Concerns and Needs

- Displacement of renters as homeowners increase; **need for deeply affordable housing** (60% AMI or below).
- Difficulty engaging affected communities due to work schedules, limiting participation in zoning discussions.
- Emphasis on zoning that supports both **affordability and livability**, addressing heat islands and green space shortages.
- Zoning should prioritize **affordable housing and mitigate displacement**, while also promoting green spaces and heat mitigation (e.g., trees, community gardens).
- Calls for **simpler zoning codes** to make them more accessible and easier to understand.

Zoning and Community Issues

- **Housing affordability:** Zoning should ensure affordable housing is prioritized and not displaced by market-driven development.
- **Green space and climate:** Zoning must address climate concerns, encouraging sustainable practices and green infrastructure

Aging in Place

- Zoning should support **aging residents** by promoting options like granny flats and senior housing.

STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLES

In Fall 2024, the team initiated the stakeholder roundtable series to engage directly with key community groups that had been underrepresented in the engagement process to date. A roundtable conversation is a small, focused discussion designed to facilitate open dialogue on a specific topic, allowing participants to share their experiences, priorities, and ideas in a collaborative setting. These roundtables were designed to create a space for stakeholders, such as Latino residents, renters, African American residents, youth, low-income residents, and 9th District constituents, to share their perspectives on how zoning impacts them. The roundtables aimed to:

- Understand the concerns and priorities of these groups.
- Gather feedback on how zoning could better support their communities.
- Explore opportunities for alignment between zoning and other policies or initiatives.

Questions

The roundtable discussions included questions such as, “How do you see future zoning supporting your neighborhood?” and “What is your perception of zoning—do you see it as an opportunity, a barrier, or something else?” These targeted questions helped participants articulate their experiences, priorities, and hopes for the zoning update. Additionally, some questions were tailored to each stakeholder group to ensure the discussions addressed their unique perspectives and concerns.

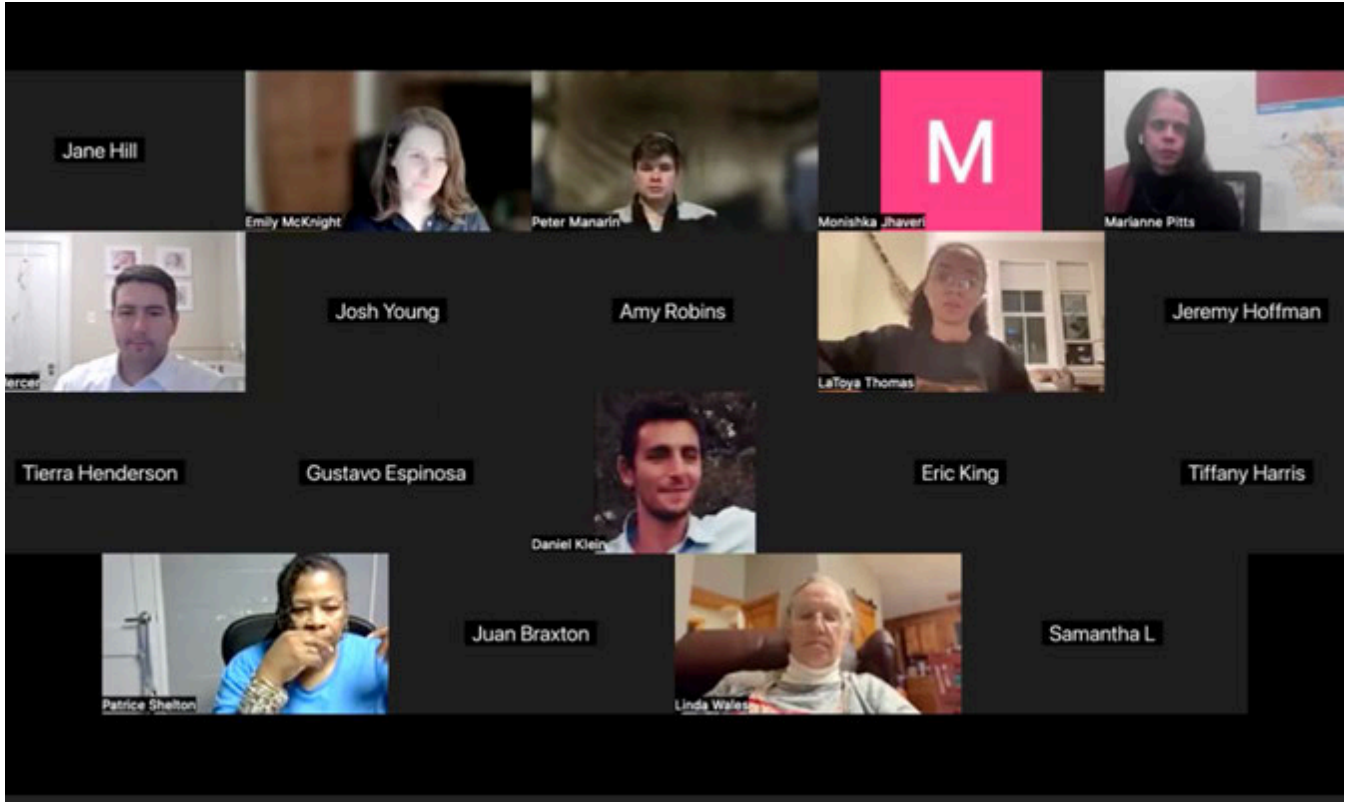
Roundtable Format

While most roundtables were held virtually to accommodate participants, the 9th District roundtable was conducted in person, hosted by Councilmember Jones. Outreach for these events was conducted through city networks such as social media and listservs, as well as through the connections of key stakeholders to ensure broad and inclusive participation.

The Stakeholder Roundtable series will continue into 2025 to support Phase 5 engagement efforts to reach additional target audiences such as 9th District residents, youth, African American residents, and low/moderate income residents.

Priority Stakeholder Roundtable Overview

Date	Stakeholder Group	Participants
Wednesday, November 6, 2024	Renters	13
Thursday, December 12, 2024	Latino residents	2



Renter Roundtable on 11/6/24

Renter Roundtable

On Tuesday, November 6, 2024, the project team hosted a virtual roundtable with renters to gather focused feedback on the zoning update. The meeting was from 6-7:15 PM and included attendees from the following organizations: Scott’s Addition, Richmond 300 Team, Legal Aid, City Sustainability Office, Councilmember Office, and Richmond NAACP. In total, 13 Richmond community members participated in the focus group.

Latino Roundtable

On Thursday, December 12, 2024, the project team hosted a virtual roundtable with renters to gather focused feedback on the zoning update. To ensure easy participation, all communication leading to the event was posted in Spanish, and the event was designed to be hosted entirely in Spanish. 11 stakeholders registered for the virtual event; 2 registrants actually attended the roundtable.

COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

	RENTER ROUNDTABLE	LATINO ROUNDTABLE
FUTURE ZONING & COMMUNITY NEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use developments • Climate resilience and sustainable zoning practices • Diverse housing options such as ADUs, tiny homes, and denser housing • Better transportation options • Integration of grocery stores in residential areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning as a tool for improving community quality of life by allowing for diverse housing needs • Need more walkability and inclusive public spaces with sidewalks, bike paths, and other transit options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Concerns about inadequate and unreliable public transportation. Suggestions include better lighting, seating, and shelter at bus stops and expanded transit routes • Desire more support for energy efficient systems and green infrastructure • Centralize services in Districts 8/9
NEIGHBORHOOD USES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some concerns include the over-concentration of vape shops and drive throughs, and a lack of economic diversification • Call for reducing car-centric development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of grocery stores and supermarkets in the Southside area • Need for more parks, playgrounds and recreational spaces like soccer fields • Housing near workplaces to cut down on the time and cost of commuting
AGING IN PLACE	<p>Zoning should support such things such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Mixed generation housing ◦ ADUs ◦ Senior apartments ◦ Equitable transportation options ◦ Flexibility to modify properties (granny flats, extensions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multigenerational housing is extremely common in the Latino community • Zoning should support two family dwellings, ADUs, and mixed generation housing to promote affordability and flexibility
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability is the bigger issue compared to availability for renters • Increase rental housing supply and come up with more creative housing solutions • Rent control and rent-to-own programs to promote stability • Streamlined processes for ADU development • Folks have aspirations to own a home but can't afford it, especially downtown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Desired options include affordable condos, co-ops, and townhomes. • Policies should limit corporate ownership of housing units and incentivize developers to build ownership-oriented properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable is a key concern, especially in the Southside of Richmond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Should be energy efficient ◦ Promote affordable rental options and incentives for developers to build housing for Latino families • Work toward centralizing housing developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Improve access to necessary resources • Participants expressed interest in exploring maps to identify Latino population distribution and housing needs • Engage with local Latino organizations such as Sagrado Corazon, and attend events and places where Latino services are provided (churches) • Direct outreach to individuals in community gathering spaces and service hubs



Code Refresh Open House 8/15/24 at Main Branch Library

REFLECTIONS FROM PHASES 1-4 & IMPLICATIONS FOR PHASE 5 ENGAGEMENT

As part of our review of the 2024 phases of engagement leading into Phase V in 2025, we evaluated what worked, what didn't, and where more work could be done as we looked to adjust and refine our engagement efforts for the zoning drafting phase. This review centered on two key elements based on our work to date:

- Engagement Tools and Strategies to Support Increased Participation from Underrepresented Groups
- Education on Zoning and Its Relationship to Other Policy Measures
- Demographic Data Collection - Refinement of Methods



AS PART OF PHASES 1-4, APPROXIMATELY 400 PEOPLE, OR 20% OF THE TOTAL GOAL, HAD BEEN ENGAGED TO DATE

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION FROM UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

As part of this process, the team set a goal of engaging ~2000 people as part of the entire 2-year zoning rewrite process. As part of Phases 1-4, approximately 400 people, or 20% of the total goal, were engaged to date. Unsurprisingly, for larger public events such as the Open Houses and Panel Discussions, stakeholders who were historically involved in other public planning processes and city initiatives were represented, and these stakeholders were White residents between the ages of 35 and 65.

Understanding at the start of this project that stakeholders who are traditionally underrepresented in civic life will not engage in these larger public events, our team leveraged other engagement tools, such as pop-ups and roundtable discussions, to engage populations such as renters, low-income residents, Latino residents, and African American residents. Leveraging these spaces allowed us to engage more directly with these populations (particularly those located South of the river), and we leveraged more of these spaces throughout 2025 to engage more of these populations and ensure their feedback was incorporated into the process.

As part of our efforts for 2025, we expanded the use of the Roundtable model, specifically in partnership with community organizations and individuals such as former Richmond 300 Community Ambassadors, to bring the engagement process directly to these populations. Roundtables, in addition to targeted pop-up opportunities that were leveraged during the Modules in Phase 5, allowed us to reach more underrepresented groups.

We also engaged several of the ZAC members more intentionally to connect with populations they work with or live near in an effort to expand engagement and support their continued participation in the ZAC.

Lastly, as engagement with the Latino community is critical to this process, we continued to support bilingual engagement needs and identified additional community partners and sites that helped target this group specifically.

EDUCATION ON RICHMOND 300, ZONING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICY MEASURES

Zoning is inherently a technical tool designed to regulate land use, shape the built environment, and guide development. It is not, however, a mechanism for direct public investment, such as building infrastructure, funding housing programs, or creating public amenities. This distinction is often misunderstood, which can lead to feedback that, while valuable, falls outside the scope of what a zoning ordinance can accomplish. For example, zoning can allow for mixed-use developments that enable walkable communities, but it cannot directly fund sidewalk repairs or transit infrastructure. Similarly, zoning can incentivize affordable housing development but does not create subsidies or enforce rent control policies.

When we initiated engagement early in the process, we quickly discovered that many residents located in Southside were unfamiliar with Richmond 300 and the entire process that preceded Code Refresh. As part of our subsequent engagements throughout the Summer and early Fall 2024, we revamped many of our engagement materials to provide a primer on Richmond 300 so that residents could understand the purpose of the comprehensive plan and how it ties into a zoning update.

It also became clear that most people did not understand the difference between changes made through zoning policy versus direct investments. As a result, in Phases 2-4, additional materials were prepared that delineated the difference between both change agents. As we moved into Phase 5 and began drafting the new zoning ordinance, we took a step back to ensure our community education efforts clarified what zoning can and cannot do. By providing this context, we were able to get focused feedback on actionable changes within the zoning framework, ensuring that the updated ordinance serves as an effective tool to advance the community's vision.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTION - REFINEMENT OF METHODS

For Phase 5, we expanded demographic data collection efforts and refined the questions posted as part of the data collection process. Previous data questions reflected those used in Richmond 300; however, our team reviewed and refined those questions in partnership with the City so that they better framed 1) the demographic data we want to know and 2) information that can specifically inform the zoning process.



Pop-Up on 9/27/25 at the East End Festival

PHASE 5 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Engagement during Phase 5 of the Zoning Code Refresh, spanning from March 2025 to April 2026, focused on translating earlier planning and analysis into a comprehensive draft of the new zoning ordinance. During this phase, the project team developed, tested, and refined key components of the code, including zoning districts, use regulations, and development standards. To support a clear and iterative review process, this work was organized into three sequential modules, each building on the last and released for public and stakeholder feedback.

Phase 5 was structured into three modules. Module 1 marked the release of the first draft of the proposed zoning map, zoning districts, and use regulations. Module 2 built on this foundation with the release of a second draft of the zoning map and districts, alongside draft development standards for each district. Module 3, currently in progress, focuses on administration and other provisions, including the remaining administrative language needed to implement the code.

From March 2025 until April 2026, the Code Refresh project team used a range of engagement tools to reach stakeholders in the City of Richmond for the last phase of the project. These tools were multi-pronged and included both online events and in-person events such as 5 pop-up events, roundtable discussions, online maps, office hours, and an Open House series. The following key takeaways emerged over the course of the engagement series:

CODE REFRESH STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

PHASES 5 KEY TAKEAWAYS



FUTURE OF ZONING AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Need for a **forward-looking** zoning code aligned with **growth, housing demand,** and evolving community needs, including **transit and infrastructure** connections.
- Concerns about housing **affordability and displacement**, and whether zoning changes can meaningfully address these issues.
- Desire for **greater transparency** in how public input is used, and clearer communication about zoning tools, maps, and outcomes.
- Need for more **inclusive and consistent outreach**, especially in historically underrepresented communities.



NEIGHBORHOOD USES/COMPATIBILITY

- Interest in more **mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods** with access to **essential services** (grocery, healthcare, childcare, local businesses).
- Desire for more **diverse housing types**, including **smaller-scale multifamily**, and more **vibrant commercial corridors**.
- Concerns about **gaps in amenities, parking availability**, and overall neighborhood functionality.
- Emphasis on **preserving neighborhood character while accommodating new development**, especially in historic areas.
- Need for more **parks, recreational spaces**, and **safe, accessible environments** for youth and families.



AGING IN PLACE/HOUSING OPTIONS

- Concerns about affordability and housing stability for **seniors**, especially those on fixed or lower incomes.
- Uncertainty about the **future of federal housing support programs** and impacts on older adults.
- Need for accessible, appropriately sized, and affordable housing that allows seniors to age-in-place.
 - **Displacement, rising costs, and limited housing options** seen as barriers to aging in place.



CONCERNS ABOUT ZONING UPDATES

- Confusion about zoning districts, maps, processes, and how they translate into real-world outcomes.
- Concerns about **by-right development** leading to out-of-scale buildings and loss of neighborhood character.
- Questions about the transparency and effectiveness of processes like **Special Use Permits (SUPs)**.
- Concerns about **infrastructure capacity**, including traffic, parking, utilities, and environmental impacts.
- Distrust toward institutions and development processes, including **concerns about accountability and equity in decision-making**.

PHASE 5 ENGAGEMENT

POP-UP ENGAGEMENTS

In Phase 5 the project team hosted five pop-up engagement events at community hubs across Richmond. Locations were specifically chosen to reach both downtown and Southside Richmond residents. In total, the team engaged with approximately 385 people at pop-up events.

The feedback collected helped to ensure that the community’s perspectives were represented in the project. Pop-up engagements used feedback boards and informational flyers to:

- Introduce the draft zoning districts and use regulations and explain how to navigate and comment on the interactive online maps
- Encourage community members to provide input directly on the draft through the online platform
- Gather feedback on desired types of development and changes under the proposed zoning
- Understand concerns related to growth, including building scale, neighborhood character, and potential impacts
- Identify top priorities and key issues the community would like the updated zoning code to address
- Answer questions about the draft proposals and next steps in the Code Refresh process

Pop-Up Engagement Overview

Date	Pop-up Location	Participants
Saturday, June 14, 2025	Multicultural Festival: Dogwood Dell Amphitheater	~55
Friday, June 27, 2025	Sacred Heart Church: Fiesta Patronales	~75
Saturday, June 28, 2025	The Life Church: Finance Festival	~60
Saturday, September 27, 2025	RVA East End Festival	~70
Saturday, October 5, 2025	2nd Street Festival	~125

Multicultural Festival

On June 14, 2025, the project team hosted a pop-up at the Multicultural Festival at the Dogwood Dell Amphitheater. The event lasted for approximately 3.5 hours, and the team spoke with 55 community members, predominantly African American, Latino, and White individuals.

By choosing this multicultural festival, the team connected with a wide range of community members, as it is a well-attended event within the Richmond community. The festival provided an important opportunity to engage with a diverse audience, including people of color and immigrant communities, and to ensure outreach efforts reached residents from a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences.



Pop-Up on 6/14 at the Multicultural Festival

Fiesta Patronales

On June 27, 2025 the project team hosted a pop-up at the Sacred Heart Church's Fiesta Patronales. This site was chosen due to its central role in serving local Spanish-speaking families and residents. The event lasted for approximately 2.5 hours, and the team spoke with around 75 residents, including a large number of Latino families.

We chose Fiesta Patronales to specifically engage Southside Spanish-speaking residents of Richmond. By attending this well-attended community block party, we were able to gather meaningful feedback from this group and hear directly from participants we may not have otherwise reached.

Finance Festival

On June 28, 2025, the project team hosted a pop-up at the Life Church's Finance Festival. The event lasted for approximately 4 hours and the team engaged with around 60 people. This pop-up was mostly attended by African American community members.

We chose the Finance Festival as it allowed us to engage with a wide range of people in Southside Richmond from different income backgrounds and lived experiences, all within a well-attended, accessible community setting.



Pop-Up on 9/27/25 at East End Festival



Pop-Up on 6/28/25 at the Finance Festival



Pop-Up on 10/5/25 at the 2nd Street Festival

RVA East End Festival

On September 27, 2025 the project team hosted a pop-up at the RVA East End Festival at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School. The project team spoke with approximately 70 people. Similarly to the Finance Festival, this pop-up was mostly attended by African American community members.

We attended the East End Festival to engage with families and community members of all ages, creating opportunities to hear from a broad cross-section of residents in a relaxed, community-focused setting.

2nd Street Festival

On October 5, 2025 the project team hosted a pop-up at the 2nd Street Festival in Jackson Ward. The project team stayed for 3.5 hours. The team spoke to approximately 125 people, mostly African American community members, with a small number of white residents.

We chose this festival because we knew it would be a strong opportunity to connect with residents in the Jackson Ward area and hear directly from the local community.



A Reminder on Demographic Data Collection and Pop-Up Events: Because pop-up events are, by nature, quick interactions, the team relies on observational data collected by staff to gauge participant demographics. The following summaries rely on data collected by engagement team members and are more qualitative than elsewhere in this report.

POP-UP BOARDS: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Feedback from stakeholders is organized below, corresponding to the three questions posed on the engagement boards.

WHAT TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT OR CHANGES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OVER THE NEXT 10-20 YEARS?

- More access to affordable grocery stores and everyday services, especially in Southside and underserved areas
- Increased healthcare options, including mental health services, clinics, and pharmacies
- More mixed-use development that combines housing with retail, services, and recreation
- Expanded parks, green spaces, and youth/family-oriented community facilities
- Greater variety in restaurants, local businesses, and cultural/entertainment options

WHAT CONCERNS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT FUTURE GROWTH OR DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

- Rising housing costs and displacement due to gentrification
- Lack of infrastructure to support growth (traffic, parking, water, and sewer systems)
- Loss of neighborhood character and concerns about overly large or out-of-scale development
- Insufficient green space and environmental impacts like reduced tree canopy and heat
- Concerns about safety, homelessness, and overconcentration of certain business types

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE ZONING CODE REFRESH

- Increasing affordable and diverse housing options
- Creating more walkable, transit-accessible, mixed-use neighborhoods
- Expanding parks, green space, and recreational amenities
- Improving access to essential services like food, healthcare, and community resources
- Ensuring new development is balanced with neighborhood character and infrastructure capacity

STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLES

We continued the Stakeholder Roundtable series into 2025 to support Phase 5 engagement. Below is a table of all of the roundtable discussions we completed in 2025. In this round, we also intentionally focused on reaching primarily African American residents and renters.

Priority Stakeholder Roundtable Overview

Date	Roundtable	Participants
Thursday, January 16, 2025	9th District Town Hall	~50
Monday, June 23, 2025	HOME of VA	~10
Saturday, June 28, 2025	Virginia Community Voice	~20
Wednesday, July 23, 2025	RVA YIMBY	~15



Code Refresh 9th District Town Hall 1/16/25

9th District Town Hall

On Thursday, January 16, 2025, the project team was invited to the 9th District Town Hall at Pop's Bingo Hall to gather focused feedback on the zoning update. There were approximately 50 community members in attendance, mostly African American homeowners. Most of the conversation was providing education on the process and why a zoning code rewrite is needed.



VACV Roundtable on 6/28/25

HOME of VA

On June 23, 2025, the project team hosted a virtual roundtable with 10 members of HOME of VA to gather focused feedback on the zoning update. This organization works to tackle systemically divisive housing practices through fair housing enforcement and research, advocacy, and statewide policy work. This was a great opportunity to hear from service providers on how the zoning code can better provide for the Richmond community.

Virginia Community Voice (VACV)

On June 28, 2025, the project team hosted an in-person roundtable with about 20 members of VACV at the Bellemeade Community Center. This organization aims to equip neighbors in historically marginalized communities to realize their vision for their neighborhoods, and prepare institutions to respond effectively. We were able to engage with both members and staff of VACV leading to an extremely fruitful discussion on Code Refresh. This roundtable was attended by all African American community members.

RVA YIMBY

On July 23, 2025, the project team hosted a virtual roundtable with about 15 members of RVA YIMBY to gather focused feedback on the zoning update. This organization works to create a more affordable and inclusive Richmond. Working with YIMBY we were able to hear from a diverse group of ages, races, both homeowners and renters, as well as a wide range of income levels.

COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

	9 TH DISTRICT TOWN HALL	HOME OF VA
FUTURE ZONING & COMMUNITY NEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants expressed concerns about rising property taxes associated with new development and zoning changes. Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that future development does not displace long-time homeowners. Participants indicated a desire for future housing options that better reflect existing community needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants questioned how feedback from public engagement is translated into actual changes in zoning policy Concerns were raised about whether zoning alone can address key issues like affordability and housing access Some participants expressed uncertainty about the effectiveness of increased density or ADUs in producing truly affordable housing Broader concerns were noted about external policy changes (including potential federal funding shifts) and how they may impact local housing needs
NEIGHBORHOOD USES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants raised ongoing concerns about vacant and abandoned homes in the neighborhood. Participants reported nuisance properties, including those with abandoned cars and overgrown or unmaintained lots. Participants requested increased city enforcement and maintenance of neglected properties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking availability and lack of free parking in many parts of the city were identified as ongoing challenges affecting accessibility and use of neighborhood spaces Questions were raised about what zoning can realistically influence in terms of neighborhood functionality and daily livability
AGING IN PLACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of participants expressed a strong preference to age in place within their current homes. Participants noted that increasing costs, particularly property taxes, may make aging in place more difficult over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns were raised about the potential loss or reduction of federal housing support programs that serve older adults, including Section 202 housing Participants highlighted uncertainty about how the city could respond to potential funding cuts affecting senior housing stability
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants recommended providing more senior housing options for those interested in downsizing. Participants recommended strengthening enforcement mechanisms to address property maintenance issues. Participants recommended considering policies that help stabilize property taxes for existing homeowners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve clarity on how public input and housing advocacy directly influence zoning ordinance updates Strengthen communication about what zoning can and cannot realistically achieve to manage expectations Increase transparency around data tracking and how community feedback is analyzed and used in decision-making Explore additional strategies beyond zoning to address affordability and housing support needs, especially for vulnerable populations

COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

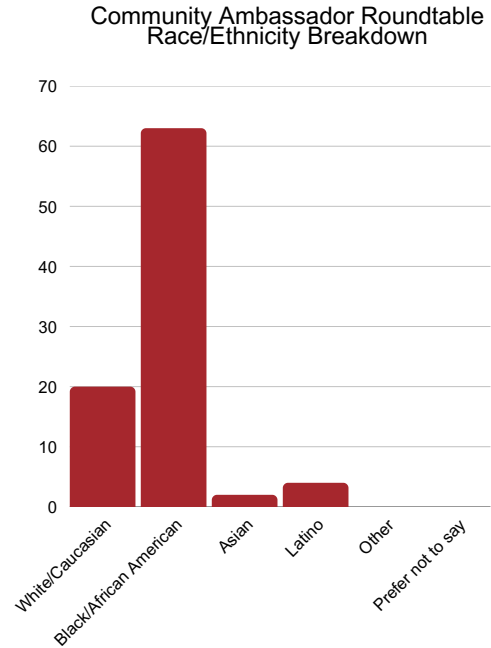
	VIRGINIA COMMUNITY VOICE	RVA YIMBY
FUTURE ZONING & COMMUNITY NEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants raised concerns about housing affordability, equity, and how zoning decisions contribute to displacement and unequal access to opportunity Strong emphasis on improving transparency in zoning processes and making materials (e.g., ADU guidance, presentations, plans) more accessible to the public Calls for more alignment between development and community needs, including better use of public land and updated data to guide planning decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants emphasized the need for a more forward-looking zoning code that supports future growth rather than only preserving existing conditions Strong support for increasing density along key corridors (Main Street, Manchester and Scott's Addition) Interest in aligning zoning with broader systems like transportation (especially BRT) to support more sustainable growth patterns
NEIGHBORHOOD USES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents highlighted a lack of essential neighborhood-serving amenities such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and entertainment options Participants questioned whether current zoning and development patterns are effectively attracting or supporting local commercial investment Concerns were raised about the balance between residential growth and the availability of everyday services within neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants supported more mixed-use and residential diversity, including small-scale multi-unit housing in traditionally single-family areas Discussion highlighted gaps in housing types, especially "starter homes," and the need to allow more flexible housing forms like ADUs and cottage-style development TOD and walkable neighborhood design were seen as key priorities to reduce car dependence Some participants supported expanding higher-density residential and mixed-use zoning in select neighborhoods across the city
AGING IN PLACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants expressed concern that current housing options do not adequately support seniors, particularly those at lower income levels (30-50% AMI) Frustration was noted regarding affordability constraints that make it difficult for long-term residents to remain in their communities Emphasis on ensuring housing stability and accessibility for aging residents as neighborhoods continue to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major direct themes specific to aging in place emerged in this set of feedback
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve transparency and public access to zoning information, including clearer online tools and documentation Address historical zoning inequities and ensure more inclusive decision-making processes moving forward Encourage stronger coordination between housing, land use, and economic development planning Ensure redevelopment efforts prioritize community needs, affordability, and long-term neighborhood stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase density along transit corridors and in high-demand neighborhoods to support housing supply and affordability Improve clarity and communication of zoning districts, maps, and policy intent to reduce confusion and misinterpretation Strengthen messaging around how zoning changes relate to future city needs rather than preserving current conditions Encourage more incremental housing options (duplexes, small multifamily, ADUs, cottage-style housing) across a wider range of neighborhoods Integrate zoning more intentionally with transportation planning (especially BRT) to support walkability and a "15-minute city" vision



Code Refresh Community Ambassador Roundtable with Churchill Small Business Owners 9/8/25

COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

In addition to the Stakeholder Roundtables, we also held Community Ambassador Roundtables. The concept of Community Ambassadors was introduced in Phase 4, but these roundtables were implemented during Phase 5. Community Ambassador Roundtables were organized by community members themselves who were interested in helping spread awareness about the Code Refresh process. Ambassadors were provided a stipend in recognition of their time and contributions. This approach helped expand outreach efforts and enabled us to engage a more diverse range of residents through trusted community networks. This program along with targeted pop-ups was one of the tools that increased participation from non-White stakeholders, low/moderate income individuals, and seniors



Community Ambassador Roundtable Overview

Date	Community Ambassador Event	Participants
Wednesday, May 28, 2025	Youth @ the Boys and Girls Club	~15
Friday, June 27, 2025	NACARED	~10
Monday, September 8, 2025	Small Business Owners in Churchill	~10
Tuesday, September 9, 2025	Gilpin Court Residents	~3
Thursday, September 11, 2025	West End Residents	~20
Tuesday, September 16, 2025	Young Professionals	~10
Thursday, September 25, 2025	Seniors at the Peter Paul Development Center	~15

Boys and Girls Club

On May 28, 2025, the project team hosted a virtual roundtable with **Devinasia Brown** with about **15 members** of the Boys and Girls Club. It was extremely interesting and helpful to hear from the youth of Richmond as this is a perspective that is often overlooked.

NACARED

On June 27, 2025, the project team hosted an in-person roundtable with **Thaniel Howard** from NACARED at Pig and Brew Restaurant. About **10 members** of his real estate/developer network gathered to provide focused feedback on the zoning update.

Churchill Small Business Owners

On September 8th, 2025, the project team hosted an in-person roundtable with **Hannah Sager** at her ice cream shop The Spotty Dog. About **10 small business owners** in the surrounding area came to share their feedback and concerns about Code Refresh.

Gilpin Court Residents

On September 9th, 2025, the project team hosted an in-person roundtable with **Lafonda Page** at Wesley Memorial United Methodist with **3 low-income and public housing residents** of Gilpin Court.

West End Residents

On September 11th, 2025, the project team hosted a hybrid roundtable discussion with **Tammy Rose** at the West End library with **20 middle-aged and older homeowners** in the West End.



Community Ambassador Roundtable on 6/27/25 at Pig & Brew Restaurant

Young Professionals

On September 16, 2025, the project team hosted a virtual roundtable with **Tyler Misencik** with about **15 members** of his civic professional network to gather focused feedback on the zoning update.

Seniors at the Peter Paul Development Center

On September 25th, 2025, the project team hosted an in-person roundtable discussion with community ambassador **Laura Stephens**. This conversation took place at the Peter Paul Development center with about **15 seniors** during their lunch hour.

COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR ROUNDTABLES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB	NACARED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants emphasized the need for more youth-friendly parks, recreation spaces, and amenities such as basketball courts, skate areas, and shaded public seating • Safety and accessibility concerns were raised, including inconsistent sidewalks, unsafe walking routes, and mobility barriers for people with disabilities • Kids and families expressed a desire for more “complete” neighborhoods with nearby access to schools, childcare, grocery stores, and everyday services • There is a strong need for more entertainment and social spaces specifically designed for teens and young people within their own neighborhoods • Overall, participants wanted neighborhoods where youth can safely stay, play, and access essentials locally without needing to travel far 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants emphasized that Richmond’s zoning code is significantly outdated and not aligned with current housing, development, and community needs • There was interest in stronger leadership alignment and clarity on how city officials, including the Mayor, are supporting the zoning update process • Community members highlighted opportunities for revitalization, particularly in underutilized corridors like Hull Street • Concerns were raised that “affordable housing” is often not truly affordable, with calls for stronger tools such as mixed-income development and targeted housing support to prevent displacement • Participants stressed the need for better engagement with RRHA residents and more accessible, community-based communication around zoning and planning processes

CHURCHILL SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS	GILPIN COURT RESIDENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are general concerns about the process required to get businesses operating in certain building types. Many businesses have had to go through protracted special use permit processes because their building type does not align with their intended use, resulting in significant delays, increased costs, and lost revenue due to delayed openings. • There is interest in exploring options for home-based businesses, while also recognizing that some types of businesses are not appropriate for residential settings. • There is a stretch of historic homes in this area that are currently occupied by businesses, including a mix of galleries. • There is interest in increasing the diversity of businesses along the corridor, particularly by adding more food retail options. • There is also interest in strengthening the corridor’s brand identity and sense of place, with the goal of creating a more defined destination that encourages people to visit, stay, and support local businesses. • There is specific interest in reinstating the MX-4 zoning district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents expressed major concern about rising rents and investor-driven housing, with many existing homes sitting vacant or becoming unaffordable. • Community members emphasized the need to repair and make the current housing stock livable and affordable, rather than focusing primarily on new construction. • Residents identified a significant shortage of family-sized housing, noting that most available units are too small for larger households. • Participants described increasing displacement and housing instability, with some residents being pushed into hotels, homelessness, or out of the area altogether. • Community members shared deep frustration and distrust toward RRHA and the broader redevelopment process, particularly around transparency and long-term affordability.

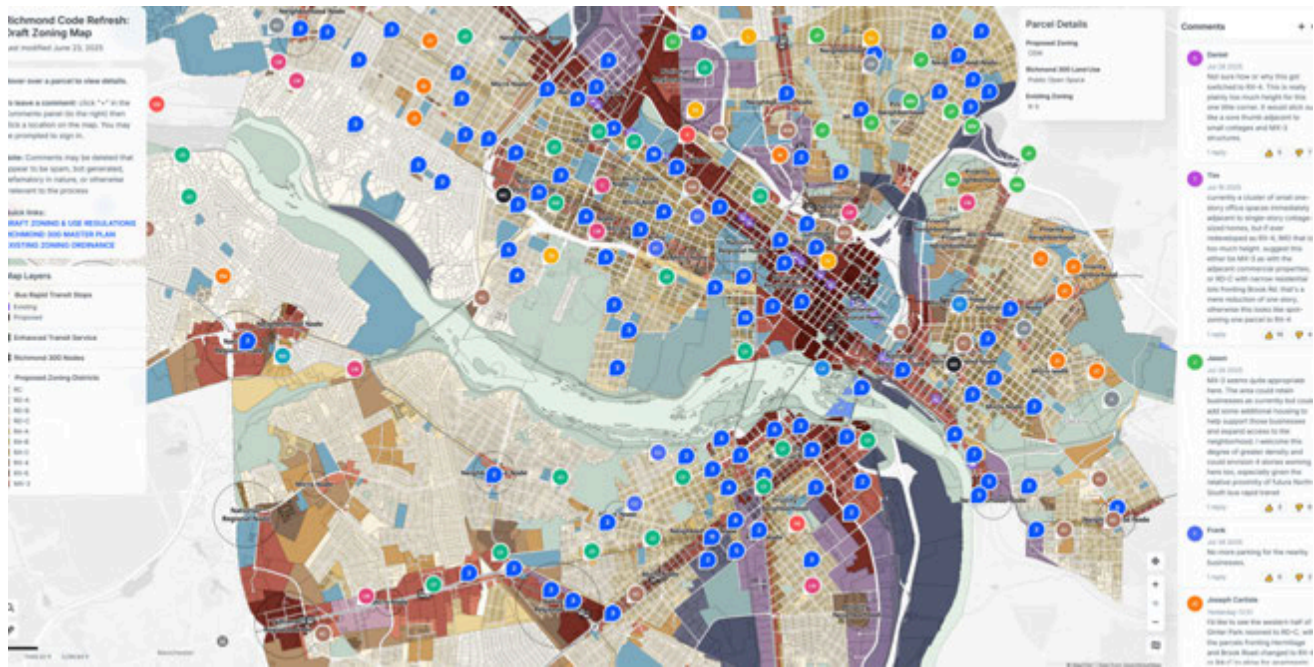
COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR ROUNDTABLES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

WEST END RESIDENTS	YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents expressed strong interest in understanding the proposed zoning map and how changes would impact specific parcels and development patterns. Community members raised concerns about maintaining the character of a historic, predominantly Black homeowner corridor, particularly in the face of larger, out-of-scale by-right developments. There were concerns about ongoing development in Westwood, especially on 50-foot-wide lots, where larger, higher-priced homes may contribute to displacement. Participants raised questions about housing affordability, including potential impacts on property taxes, protections for seniors, and safeguards to prevent long-term resident displacement. Broader concerns focused on preserving neighborhood quality of life, including traffic impacts, maintaining green space, ensuring community input and accountability, and improving transparency around processes like Special Use Permits (SUPs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some participants had positive reactions to the draft zoning maps, viewing them as a positive step toward a more urban, “real city” form of development that supports density and mixed uses Others felt the draft had scaled back from the original Richmond 300 vision, reflecting tensions between long-term growth goals and preservation of lower-density areas Housing affordability remained a central concern, particularly around the dominance of luxury apartments and the need for a wider range of housing types across the city Questions were raised about the structure of the new zoning code, including how much is truly new versus updated from the 1976 framework and whether certain areas are being disproportionately influenced by development interests Participants emphasized the importance of following through on public space commitments and better coordinating housing, infrastructure, and open space planning across city agencies

SENIORS AT PETER PAUL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants emphasized the need for deeper and more consistent engagement with East End communities throughout the planning process. Community members expressed concern that new development is not prioritizing family-sized housing, leaving larger households underserved. Residents raised questions about local representation, including whether members of City Council or the Planning Commission are from the East End, and shared dissatisfaction with current advocacy from elected officials. There were concerns about developers and their approaches to development in the South Side, particularly in relation to community impact. Participants highlighted the importance of building design that respects existing neighborhood character, as well as the need to consider connections to schools and surrounding localities.



AS PART OF PHASES 5, WE HAD A TOTAL OF 7 COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR-LED ROUNDTABLE CONVERSATIONS



Code Refresh Module 1 Draft Zoning Map (released in June 2025)

ONLINE DRAFT ZONING DISTRICTS/MAPS AND USE REGULATIONS

In Phase 5, the project team introduced an online commenting tool for the draft proposed zoning code to expand public access and participation. On June 28, 2025 (Module 1 release), an online draft of the proposed zoning map and draft use regulations was published, allowing the public to submit comments on specific parcels and code language through September 28. This platform allowed users to provide detailed, location-specific feedback that was also visible to other community members, helping foster transparency and shared dialogue. All comments were moderated by the project team to ensure appropriate and respectful language.

In addition to the online commenting platform, the public was also able to provide feedback throughout the Module 1 process via email, with **319 emails** received from community members. During the Module 1 comment period, the draft zoning map received **2,105 comments and 1,686 replies from 620 unique commenters**, including comments collected on the physical map during the open house events. The draft use regulations and related code documents received **427 comments from 119 commenters**.

In November 2025 (Module 2 release), a second draft of the zoning map was released in response to feedback received during Module 1, along with draft development standards for public review. Comments on both materials were accepted through March 1, 2026, and the team is currently reviewing feedback as preparation continues for Module 3, which is expected in summer 2026. To support accessibility, the project team also released a webinar in Module 1 demonstrating how to use the online commenting platform. In Module 2, recognizing that some residents experienced challenges navigating the digital tools, a Google Form was introduced as an alternative way to submit comments, which were then uploaded by staff into the online system to ensure all feedback was captured.

The public was also able to continue submitting comments via email throughout the Module 2 process, with **309 emails** received from community members. During the Module 2 comment period, the draft zoning map received **1,302 comments and 945 replies from 352 unique commenters**, including **86 comments** submitted through the Google Form and uploaded by staff into the online commenting platform. The draft zoning code documents, including the development standards, received **813 comments from 182 commenters**.

The following events were part of a coordinated series aligned with each module’s public comment period for the draft zoning code. Each release of updated maps and draft materials was paired with targeted engagement opportunities designed to gather community feedback, which was then used to inform subsequent revisions and the next phase of draft materials.

OFFICE HOURS

In Module 1, virtual office hours were promoted through the project website and open to all community members. These sessions included a mix of general and targeted offerings, including two general drop-in sessions, a bilingual Spanish-language session, a session focused on residents of the 6th and 9th Districts, and a renter-focused session. The intent of these office hours was to provide an additional, more informal space for people to ask questions about the Code Refresh process and learn how to use the online commenting tools.

Office Hours Engagement Overview

MODULE 1	
Monday, September 15th, 2025	General Session (Virtual)
Wednesday, September 17th, 2025	General Bilingual (Spanish/English) Session (Virtual)
Monday, September 22th, 2025	6th & 9th District Session (Virtual)
Wednesday, September 24th, 2025	Renter Session (Virtual)



The project team also hosted a live Reddit AMA on September 18, 2025, featuring Kevin Vonck, Director of PDR, to engage directly with the community on Code Refresh. During the two-hour session, participants dropped in to ask questions and receive real-time responses.

However, participation in Module 1 was largely driven by individuals who were already highly engaged in the process and frequently attending other engagement opportunities. As a result, in Module 2 the approach was adjusted to better support more targeted outreach goals. Rather than broadly advertising the sessions, invitations were shared primarily through partner organizations working directly with priority engagement groups. Module 2 office hours were offered in both virtual and in-person formats and were intentionally designed to center participation from underrepresented communities, ensuring the sessions more effectively supported equity-focused outreach objectives.

Office Hours Engagement Overview

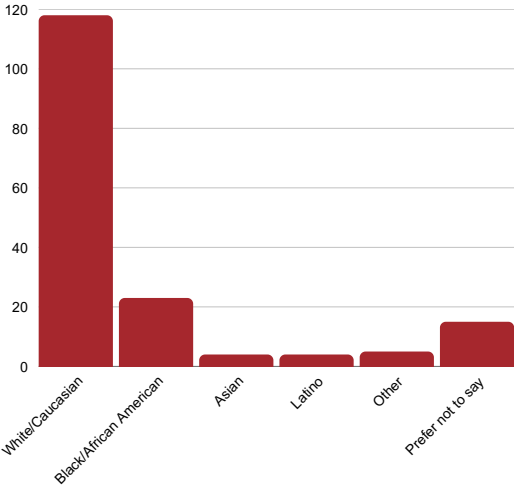
MODULE 2	
Thursday, January 29th, 2026	Office Hours #1 (Virtual)
Saturday, January 31st, 2026	Office Hours #2 (Virtual)
Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026	Office Hours #3 (Virtual)
Wednesday, February 11th, 2026	Office Hours #4 (Virtual)
Friday, February 13th, 2026	Latinx/Hispanic Meeting Association (Hybrid)
Wednesday, February 25th, 2026	West End Bible Study (Virtual)

OPEN HOUSE SERIES: MODULES 1&2

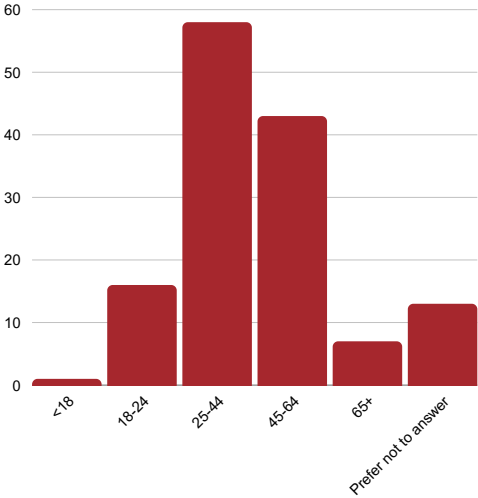
Module 1 (June 2025)

The consultant team collaborated with the City of Richmond to host 3 informational open houses to release the first draft of the proposed draft zoning map and draft use regulations (Module 1) on Wednesday, June 25th, 2025 (Southside) and Thursday, June 26th, 2025 (City Hall and Main Library). A total of **167** Richmond community members attended the open houses, offering valuable feedback on zoning and their vision for the updated zoning ordinance.

RACE/ETHNICITY



AGE



JUNE 2025 OPEN HOUSE SERIES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



General Feedback

- Strong focus on balancing housing growth with neighborhood character and livability.
- Widespread support for increasing housing supply, especially near transit corridors and nodes.
- Significant concern about clarity of zoning categories, maps, and real-world impacts.
- Repeated emphasis on infrastructure capacity (traffic, parking, water, trees, heat).
- Desire for better transitions between higher-density areas and existing residential neighborhoods.



Areas of Concerns

- Potential displacement of existing residents due to redevelopment and rising costs.
- Loss of neighborhood character, historic fabric, and perceived “scale mismatch” from taller buildings.
- Infrastructure strain (traffic, parking, utilities, stormwater) not keeping pace with zoning increases.
- Environmental impacts, especially tree canopy loss, heat islands, and reduced green space.
- Lack of clarity and transparency in how zoning changes translate into actual development outcomes.



Differing Views on:

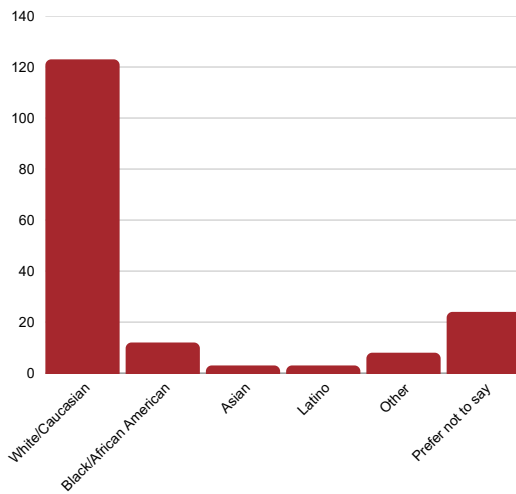
- Scale of upzoning: citywide bold densification vs. incremental/corridor-based change.
- Neighborhood approach: preserve existing character vs. apply more uniform density increases across wealthier areas.
- Design controls: strong setbacks/stepbacks/transitions vs. fewer restrictions to maximize housing feasibility.
- Mixed-use in residential areas: expand broadly vs. tightly limit to protect residential stability.
- Role of historic/contextual protections: prioritize preservation tools vs. prioritize housing production even in sensitive areas

OPEN HOUSE SERIES: MODULES 1&2

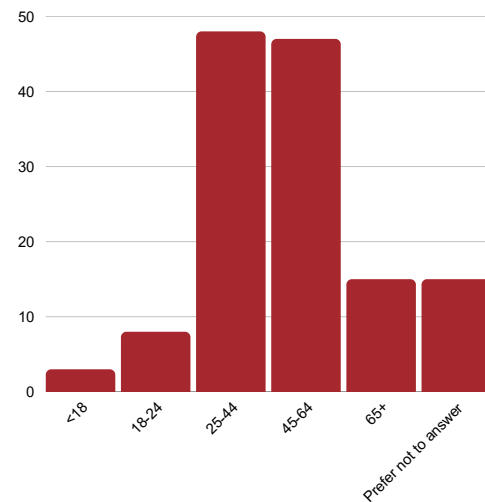
Module 2 (November 2025)

The consultant team collaborated with the City of Richmond to host 3 informational open houses to release the second draft of the proposed draft zoning map, draft use regulations, and the draft development standards (Module 2) on Wednesday, November 19th, 2025 (Main Library) and Thursday, November 20th, 2025 (City Hall and Southside). A total of **172** Richmond community members attended the open houses, offering valuable feedback on zoning and their vision for the updated zoning ordinance.

RACE/ETHNICITY



AGE



Code Refresh Open House 6/26/25 at Main Branch Library

NOVEMBER 2025 OPEN HOUSE SERIES: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



General Feedback

- Strong overall support for increasing density and expanding housing supply, especially near transit corridors, job centers, and underutilized areas
- Significant interest in aligning zoning with equity goals, including concerns about uneven distribution of density across neighborhoods
- Mixed views on neighborhood change, with both support for upzoning in key areas and strong desire to preserve existing residential character in others
- Continued emphasis on improving walkability, transit-oriented development, and access to mixed-use neighborhoods
- Broad desire for clearer, more consistent zoning rules and better explanation of how different districts function and transition



Areas of Concerns

- Fear that zoning changes may negatively impact established single-family neighborhoods, historic districts, and neighborhood character
- Concerns about displacement, gentrification, and whether zoning changes will disproportionately impact lower-income communities
- Infrastructure capacity worries (stormwater, traffic, parking, schools, and utilities) as density increases
- Uneven distribution of zoning changes across the city, with concerns that some areas are being over- or under-zoned
- Environmental and livability concerns, including tree canopy loss, flooding, shading, and overall neighborhood scale impacts



Differing Views on:

- Level and location of density increases (e.g., upzoning near transit corridors vs. preserving low-density neighborhoods)
- Whether MX/RM expansions improve affordability or risk overdevelopment and character loss
- Use of single-family neighborhoods for duplexes, ADUs, and small multifamily development
- Role of commercial uses in residential areas (small-scale retail in neighborhoods vs. maintaining strictly residential zoning)
- How equitable the distribution of zoning changes is across Richmond, with conflicting views on whether some areas are carrying too much or too little change



Code Refresh Open House 6/26/25 at City Hall

REFLECTION ON PHASE 5 AND OVERALL PROJECT

Across all five phases of the Richmond Zoning Code Refresh, the engagement process evolved from broad-based outreach and foundational education into a more targeted, iterative, and locally embedded dialogue about the future of zoning in the city. Beginning with early efforts to introduce Richmond 300 and build baseline understanding of zoning concepts, the process progressively deepened into more technical conversations about draft zoning districts, development standards, and implementation tools. Throughout, engagement was structured to ensure that community input directly informed each stage of refinement.

Phases 1-4 established a strong foundation for public participation, combining large-format events, educational webinars, pop-ups, and stakeholder roundtables to introduce the purpose of zoning and surface early priorities. These phases revealed both the opportunities and limitations of traditional engagement methods. While open houses, panels, and webinars successfully engaged residents already familiar with civic processes, they also reinforced existing participation patterns that overrepresented White, higher-income, and middle-aged residents. In response, the project team intentionally expanded the use of pop-ups, bilingual outreach, and focused roundtables to reach renters, Latino residents, African American residents, youth, and low-income communities, particularly in Southside and East End neighborhoods.

A key takeaway from these early phases was the need for stronger public education around what zoning can and cannot do, as well as clearer connections between zoning policy and broader systems such as housing affordability, transportation access, infrastructure, and environmental resilience. Residents consistently expressed overlapping priorities, affordable and diverse housing, walkable mixed-use neighborhoods, improved access to services, and protection from displacement, while also raising concerns about infrastructure capacity, neighborhood character, and development scale. These themes became the backbone of subsequent engagement and helped shape refinements to both messaging and engagement tools.

Phase 5 marked a significant shift in both scale and strategy, as engagement moved from conceptual planning into direct review of draft zoning proposals. This phase not only expanded the technical complexity of discussions but also substantially increased overall participation. Through a deliberate effort to leverage local Richmond networks, including community organizations, faith-based groups, neighborhood leaders, service providers, and prior engagement participants, the project team significantly broadened its reach and deepened trust within communities that had been less consistently engaged in earlier phases. This network-based approach, combined with more accessible tools such as pop-ups, multilingual roundtables, office hours, and hybrid engagement options, helped increase participation and resulted in engagement with approximately 385 residents at pop-ups alone in Phase 5, alongside expanded participation across roundtables and open houses. At the same time, Phase 5 highlighted important challenges related to engagement with the draft zoning map and online commenting tools.

While the introduction of an interactive mapping platform created new opportunities for detailed, parcel-level feedback and increased transparency, it also revealed barriers to access and usability for some residents. Participation in early virtual office hours and mapping engagement was largely driven by individuals already familiar with the process, and Southside participation in map-based commenting was more limited than anticipated. In response, the project team adapted its approach by introducing alternative feedback methods, including simplified submission tools, targeted and in-person office hours, and expanded outreach through trust community partners. Pop-ups, roundtables, and community-based engagements were intentionally used to supplement the mapping tool, ensuring that residents, particularly those in underrepresented communities, could still provide meaningful input on draft zoning proposals.

Importantly, Phase 5 engagement demonstrated a more representative cross-section of Richmond residents, particularly from historically underrepresented groups, including African American and Latino communities, renters, youth, and lower-income residents. These participants provided critical feedback on affordability, displacement, neighborhood change, and access to essential services, while also expressing strong support for more walkable, transit-oriented, and mixed-use communities. At the same time, participants across stakeholder groups continued to raise concerns about infrastructure capacity, the clarity of zoning maps, and the potential impacts of by-right development on neighborhood character.

Taken together, the full engagement process reflects both continuity and progression. Earlier phases built awareness and established shared language around zoning and Richmond 300, while later phases translated that foundation into detailed, actionable feedback on the draft code. The expansion of engagement in Phase 5, driven in large part by intentional collaboration with local networks, as well as adaptive strategies to address barriers in digital engagement, demonstrates the importance of trusted relationships, flexibility, and multiple engagement pathways in achieving broader and more equitable participation. In total, the project team engaged a total of 4,923 Richmond community members with both consultant and PDR-led engagement.

As the Zoning Code Refresh moves into its final stages, the feedback collected across all phases provides a clear and consistent set of priorities: increase housing choice and affordability, support walkable and connected neighborhoods, align zoning with transportation and infrastructure planning, and ensure that growth is managed in a way that protects existing residents while allowing for equitable change. The insights gathered through this process will directly inform the refinement of the final zoning ordinance, ensuring that it reflects both the long-term vision of Richmond 300 and the lived experiences of the communities it serves.



Code Refresh Panel 11/17/25 at Main Library

APPENDIX

Folder with all Files

Phases 1-5 Engagement Event Tracker

In-Person Engagement Photos

Open House Photos

Panel Event Photos

Phase 1-5 Pop-Up Photos

Roundtable (including Community Ambassador) Photos

Stakeholder Feedback

Notes/Event Summaries (2024)

Notes/Event Summaries (2025)

Data Sheets for Reference

Sign-Ins & Exit Surveys (2024)

Sign-Ins & Exit Surveys (2024-2026)

ACS Data Sheets

Supporting Engagement Materials