



October 5, 2020

Richmond City Planning Commission

Re: Sports Backers Support for Richmond 300 Master Plan

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

The Metropolitan Richmond Sports Backers wishes to express our support for the Richmond 300 Master Plan, particularly the Equitable Transportation section.

Across the country, pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities are at a 30-year high according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Pedestrian and bicyclist deaths climbed to 6,283 and 857 in 2018, the highest in any year since 1990. In Virginia, the percentage of crash fatalities that were pedestrians rose from 10 percent to 15 percent between 2015 to 2018. People walking and biking represent our most vulnerable roadway users and risk of suffering life-altering injury or death increase exponentially with the increase of vehicle speed at impact. Strategies laid out in this plan work to further the City of Richmond's commitment to Vision Zero and eliminating preventable traffic fatalities and severe injuries.

We also recognize that the duty of city planning does not rest with simply reducing harm, but also in generating opportunities to thrive. A connected multi-modal transportation network that is useful for people walking, biking, busing, driving, and future forms of travel is a key component of a livable, healthy community. The Richmond 300 plan moves the City towards a more equitable and connected transportation network.

As a partner in supporting the adoption of the City of Richmond's Vision Zero Action Plan and Richmond Bicycle Master Plan, Sports Backers commits to supporting Richmond 300 and the Equitable Transportation objectives.

Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jon Lugbill'.

Jon Lugbill  
Executive Director  
Sports Backers

**Matthew Ebinger, Secretary**  
Richmond City Planning Commission  
900 E Broad St,  
Richmond, VA 23219

October 5, 2020

RE: Letter in Support of Richmond 300

Dear Mr. Ebinger and the Members of the Commission,

As the City's public health professionals, we write to document our assessment of the impact to public health and health equity of Richmond 300, the City's updated comprehensive plan. We find that the goals and objectives outlined in Richmond 300 will contribute to mitigating and, in some cases, reversing negative health trends in the City, as well as advance ongoing initiatives to improve health equity.

The links between the built environment and public health are increasingly clear. Our land use patterns can foster walkability, access to green space, and housing affordability. The modes that our transportation system encourages or discourages have lasting impacts on residents' physical activity, safety, air quality, and ability to access needed resources. Our housing policies impact who in our city has a safe and stable home, the bedrock for living a healthy and well life. Richmond 300 advances residents' health in the following ways:

- Six out of the 10 future zoning districts incorporate mixed use, which has been shown to improve walkability, thereby increasing opportunities for residents to be physically active.<sup>1</sup> 66 percent of adults in Richmond are obese and 53 percent are physically inactive, well above the national rates of 40 percent and 26 percent respectively.<sup>2</sup> Land use patterns that support increased walkability can help counter these adverse health trends.
- The plan outlines specific objectives to support Vision Zero (goal 7), an ongoing initiative to improve the safety of all road users. Motor vehicle crashes are among the leading cause of death in Virginia.<sup>4</sup> Measures described in the plan such as improving safety infrastructure on the high injury street network and providing ADA compliant access to transit stops will reduce fatalities and encourage traveling by active transportation by making it safer to do so.
- One in five Richmond residents lacks access to a vehicle.<sup>5</sup> Enhancing the non-car transportation network, as outlined in goal 8, will improve access to resources such as healthy food and medical care.
- Increased urban heat and other effects of climate change are growing public health and health equity concerns. Recent research indicates that the highest temperatures in Richmond fall

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, et al. (2019). "Mixed land use and walkability: Variations in land use measures and relationships with BMI, overweight, and obesity." *Health & Place*, 15(4), 1130-1141.

<sup>2</sup> CDC. BRFSS 2019 Annual Survey.

<sup>3</sup> America's Health Rankings 2019 Annual Report.

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Dept. of Health. "Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Annual Report" (2017).

<sup>5</sup> US Census (2019). ACS 5-year estimates.

neighborhoods of the lowest income.<sup>6</sup> Sustained increases in air temperatures heat-related illness and the exacerbation of other chronic conditions such as asthma and COPD.<sup>7</sup> Richmond 300 recommends mitigation such as expanding access to green space (objective 17.1), increasing the tree canopy (objective 17.2) and reducing urban heat (objective 17.3), to support equitable climate adaptation.

- Contributing to high rates of obesity and food insecurity alike, 40 percent of Richmond households live more than a mile from a grocery store. Objective 17.4 includes strategies to expand access to healthy food.

The adoption and implementation of Richmond 300 will be a fundamental shared project across agencies in Richmond Our staff are available to answer questions or provide additional health impact analyses that could assist this body in optimizing outcomes for the residents we jointly serve.



Sarah Shaughnessy, MPH, MCRP  
Community Health Planner,  
Richmond City Health Dept.

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<sup>6</sup> Hoffman, et al (2020). "The Effects of Historical Housing Policies on Resident Exposure to Intra-Urban Heat: A Study of 108 US Urban Areas." *Climate*, 8(1).

<sup>7</sup> Petkova, et al. (2015). "Health impacts of heat in a changing climate: how can emerging science inform urban adaptation planning?" *Current epidemiology reports*, 1(2), 67–74.

## **Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR**

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**From:** dominic barrett <dombarrett@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 5, 2020 9:59 AM  
**To:** PDR Land Use Admin  
**Subject:** Oregon Hill and Richmond 300

**CAUTION:** This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I live in Oregon Hill and believe it to be one of the city's finest neighborhoods. Folks are right to care for it. But I have grown increasingly frustrated with some of the arguments against the plan coming from our neighborhood leadership. First let me say that regardless of land use designation, Oregon Hill is a mixed-use neighborhood and should remain such. Within a very tiny footprint we have restaurants, a record store, a salon, art studios, a bodega, a boutique death shop...its part of what makes this place great. We need to accept that we are a mixed use community...like the Fan and Church Hill...and our land use designation should reflect that. It's not accurate to compare us to Randolph. I LOVE randolph...we lived there before moving to Oregon Hill...but good luck finding any commercial/mixed usage. It's an entirely residential neighborhood and makes sense to treat it differently than Oregon Hill.

In a letter to this body, the OHNA President has argued it is "essential that we attract and retain families to attend and improve Richmond Public Schools. Designating our historic neighborhood as mixed use would irreversibly damage the ability to retain these families." But I've yet to hear this argument actually used by one of the parents he claims to be acting on behalf of. (Some young parents may agree w/him.) But as a parent of 2 of the 13 recent births in the neighborhood, I don't appreciate being used as a pawn in this way, especially when we and several other parents here definitely disagree. Additionally the logic behind this argument is flawed and problematic. There is no correlation between single family housing and RPS enrollment. In fact the opposite may be true. If the argument was correct then the 1st district with such a high % of single family housing would be full of RPS parents. Yet the district barely produces enough students for 1.5 elementary schools...meanwhile in the 7th district where many live in the very multi-family housing he rails against, there are enough students to fill 4 or 5 elementary schools. So either the logic is wrong or folks are only interested in attracting a certain kind of RPS parent. In fact, it wouldn't be a stretch to argue that keeping neighborhoods exclusively single family is actually worse for RPS parents because it almost certainly means less tax revenue for RPS and more segregation. This same leadership has asserted that the current Richmond 300 plan will lead to more gun violence because of the supposed threat of mixed-use/multi-family...again, without any evidence or data to back up such an assertion...just the implication that more density or renters will lead to increased violence.

You have been told unequivocally that OHNA is officially against the plan. Yet I've not seen any record that OHNA ever voted on the plan...much less voted with a quorum. Some have suggested that a vote occurred in February of 2018, 30 months ago when the plan was in a very different place.

Again, there should absolutely be a healthy debate about any zoning and land use, and we should be diligent to protect certain historical elements of our community...but it should be done fairly and honestly. If folks are against the current plan they should share that and be heard, but it should be based in facts and reality, not scare tactics and conspiracy theories. Personally I support a master plan that protects the historic character of our neighborhood, while reflecting the historic mixed-used nature of the area and easily allowing for additional

commercial use in historically commercial buildings. If the plan before you today does that, then I would urge you to support it. (And I would love to see some duplexes/triplexes and ADU's in our neighborhood over time!)

Thank you,  
Dominic Barrett  
Laurel St., Oregon Hill

**Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR**

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**From:** Bill Rider <billqrider@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 5, 2020 8:04 AM  
**To:** PDR Land Use Admin  
**Subject:** Richmond 300

CAUTION: This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern,  
Our household strongly supports the vision of Richmond 300. This is the most exciting planning we've known in our almost 35 years as citizens of the city.  
PLEASE make this happen!!  
Bill Rider  
3130 Patterson Ave, Richmond, VA 23221

**Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR**

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**From:** Alex Burlingame <alexanderburlingame@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 5, 2020 8:15 AM  
**To:** PDR Land Use Admin  
**Cc:** Emily Burlingame  
**Subject:** In support of Richmond 300

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Hi there,

I just wanted to express how excited my wife and I are about the Richmond 300 masterplan. We live in Church Hill near Nine Mile and 25th street, and were excited to see that pointed at as a "node". We love the emphasis the plan has on green space, bike lanes, and mixed use zoning.

Thank you,  
Alex and Emily