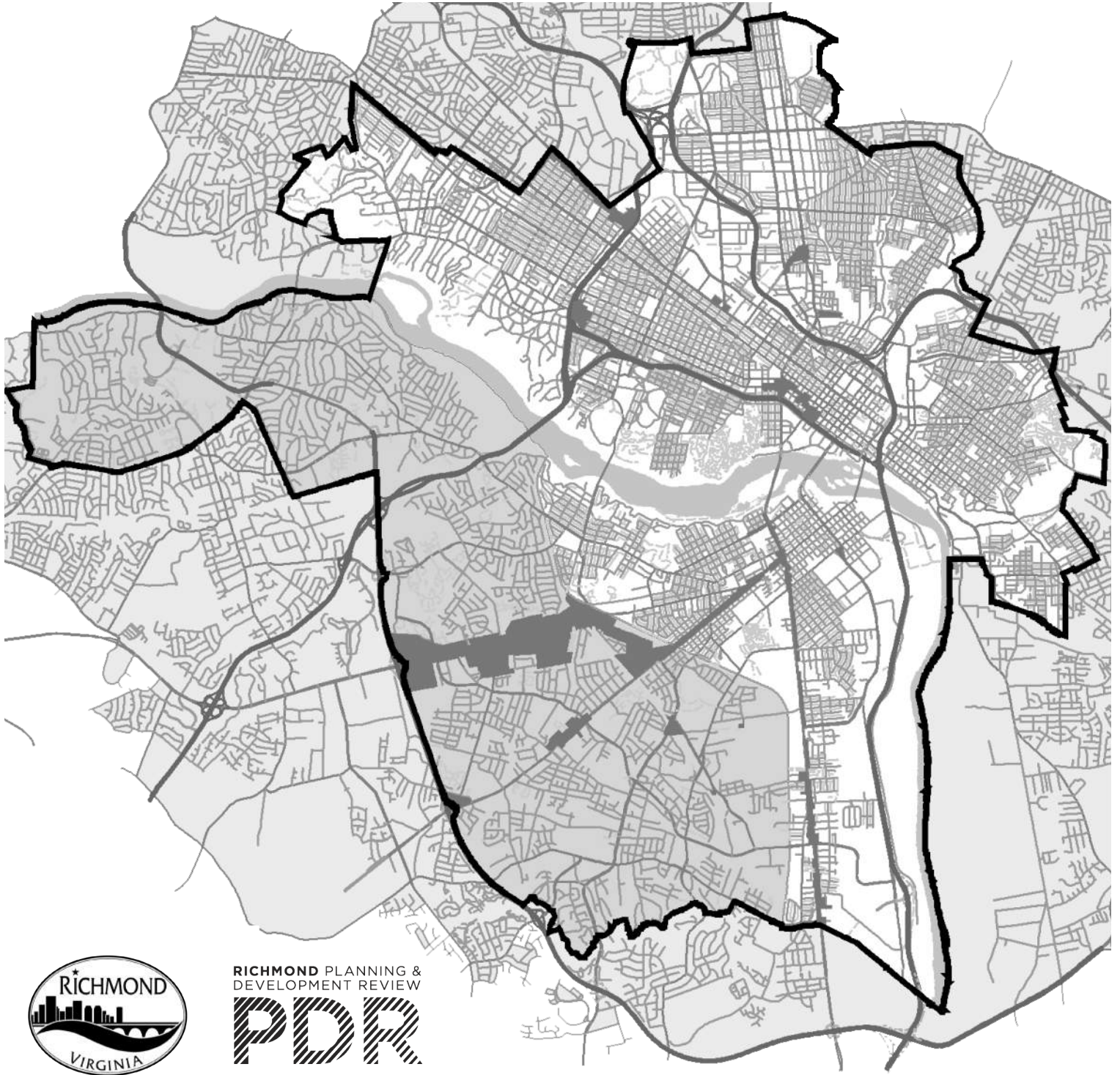


# CITY-WIDE ANALYSIS OF THE **B-3 ZONING DISTRICT**



RICHMOND PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW



January 2019

About this document:

This report was created by Planning and Development Review staff in response to Richmond City Council Resolution No. 2018-RO81, which reads:

“To request that the Planning Commission cause to be conducted a study of all properties zoned for the B-3 General Business District in all Council Districts of the city of Richmond to determine if such properties should be rezoned to facilitate development or redevelopment of such properties”

The Resolution requests that the study be completed in the following Council District order: Ninth, Eighth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Second, Third, Fourth, and First.

The Resolution further requests that the study be completed in coordination with the Richmond 300 Master Plan update process and that staff make recommendations that “align or do not conflict” with the Richmond 300 Master Plan update.

Recommendations are divided into three time frames:

*Currently Underway* - Areas which have already been included in a special area plan, such as the Pulse Corridor Plan, and PDR staff has already begun work to initiate zoning change

*Richmond 300* - Area should undergo study and be included in the Richmond 300 Master plan process

*1 to 3 Years* - Area needs immediate attention and should be rezoned as soon as possible

For more information about the B-3 zoning designation, please refer to Section 30-438.1 of Richmond City’s official zoning ordinance.

Street view images in this document are courtesy of Google Streetview.

*A presentation on this report was given to the City Planning Commission at their meeting on January 22, 2019.*

# WHAT IS THE B-3 ZONING DESIGNATION?

The B-3 District is a general business zoning district characterized by automobile-oriented uses, including auto service centers; auto and vehicle sales; and a wide variety of other uses, often with expansive surface parking lots, drive-up windows, deep setbacks and prominent signage.

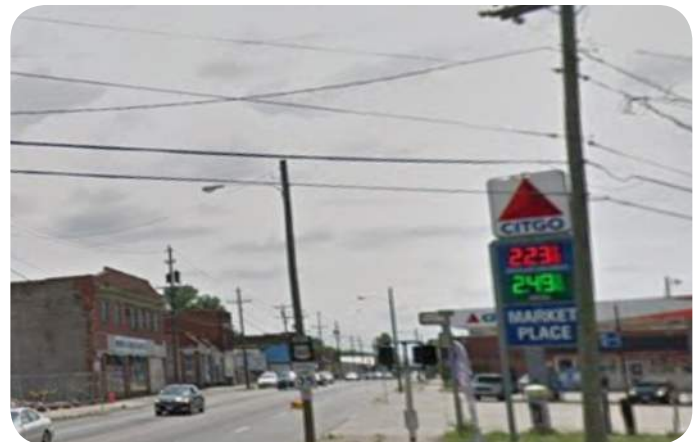
## WHY DO ANALYSIS/WHAT'S WRONG WITH B-3?

In the 1940s and '50s, Americans began to build cities around the automobile. We developed wide highways and arterial roads designed for moving people quickly from place to place, with amenities along the roads to accommodate the automobile: shopping malls and centers with wide swaths of parking out front, drive-up restaurants, gas stations, car washes and auto sales lots. These uses serve a primarily regional consumer base, and were not designed to meet the daily needs of area residents.

These types of uses and this auto-oriented form were supported and developed by B-3 zoning, which requires ample parking, allows parking lots between the building and the street, and allows drive-through windows.

While this type of corridor was initially very convenient for drivers, it took its toll on neighborhoods. Residential areas are cut off from one another by high-traffic corridors, all trips must be made by car, roads were developed with no sidewalks, and auto-oriented commercial uses are predominant, creating neighborhoods with no sense of place or identity.

Over the years the auto-oriented uses also included light industrial and adult-oriented uses.



Hull St at Midlothian Tnpk



Semmes Ave and Cowardin Ave



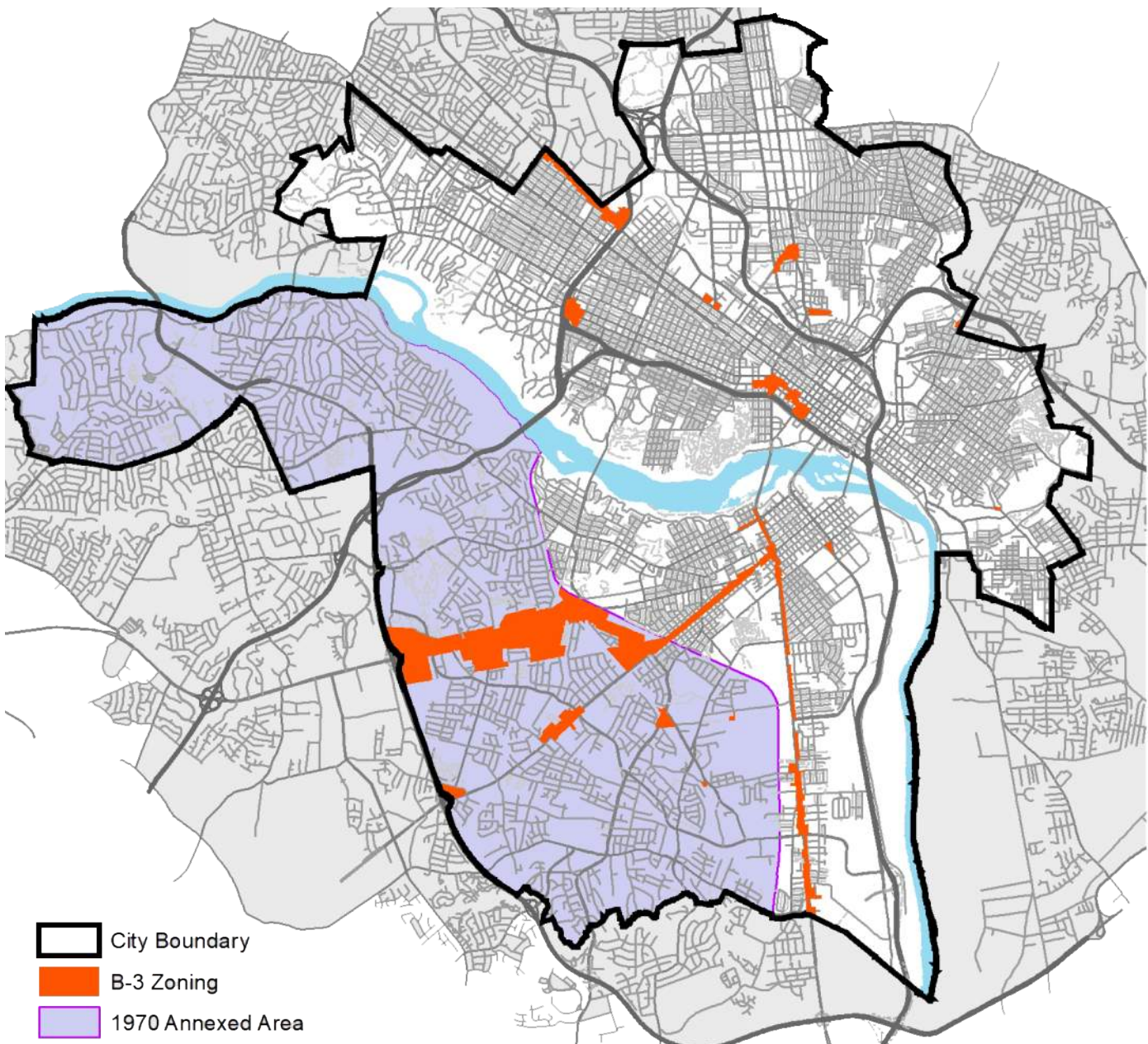
Midlothian Tnpk at Erich Rd

# WHY IS THERE SO MUCH B-3 SOUTH OF THE RIVER?

There are two major reasons why there is more B-3 south of the river than north of the river. The first is that neighborhoods north of the river were developed before there was widespread use of personal automobiles. Many of those older neighborhoods were originally street car suburbs and still reflect the development pattern of the time they were built.

The second reason is that most of the B-3 area along Midlothian Turnpike, Belt Boulevard and Hull Street was part of the annexation from Chesterfield County in 1970, which at that time was shaped per the Chesterfield County zoning code, and the suburban character under B-3 remains to this day.

The map below shows all areas zoned B-3 in orange, with the 1970 annexation area shaded in violet.

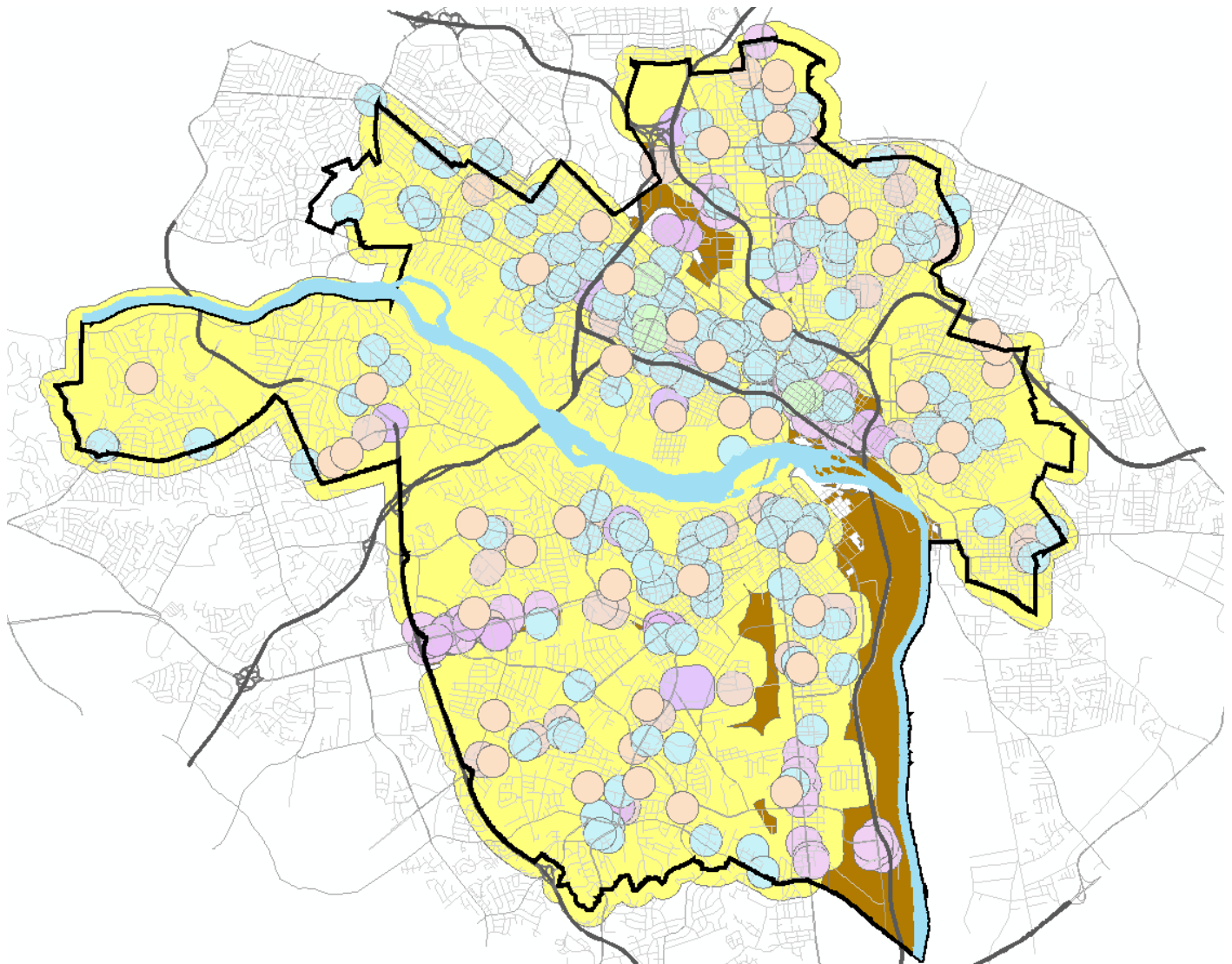


# LOCATING NEW ADULT USES

There is a requirement in the B-3 district that adult entertainment establishments, adult book stores, adult motion picture theaters and massage parlors are permitted, provided that the property is not situated within 1,000 feet of:

- any property in an R or RO district
- any church or other place of worship
- any public or private elementary, intermediate or high school
- any public library
- any lodginghouse or tourist home
- any day care center
- any nursing home
- any hotel or motel
- any other adult entertainment establishment, adult book store, adult motion picture theater or massage parlor

The map below shows all of the land uses listed above, all buffered by 1,000 feet. Residential districts buffered by 1,000 feet are in yellow and all pastel colored buffers represent one of the listed uses. The areas shown in brown are the only areas in the city where a new adult use can be established. Most of that land is currently zoned M-1 or M-2.



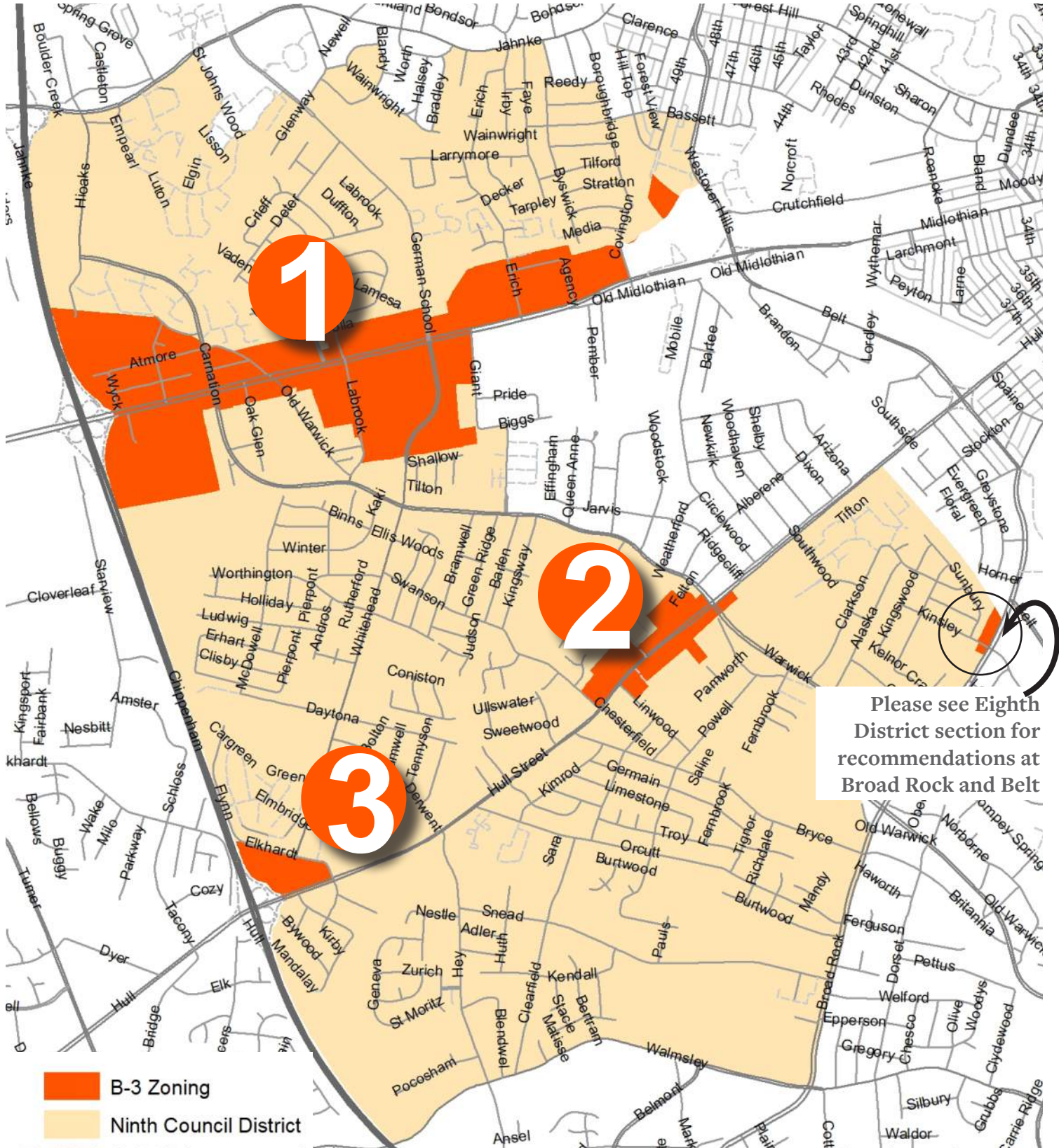
# DISTRICT ANALYSIS

The following pages show analysis of each area of B-3 in Richmond city, by Council District.

# NINTH DISTRICT

% of 9th District zoned B-3:  
8% (400 acres)  
40% of B-3 in city

## EXISTING B-3 ZONING

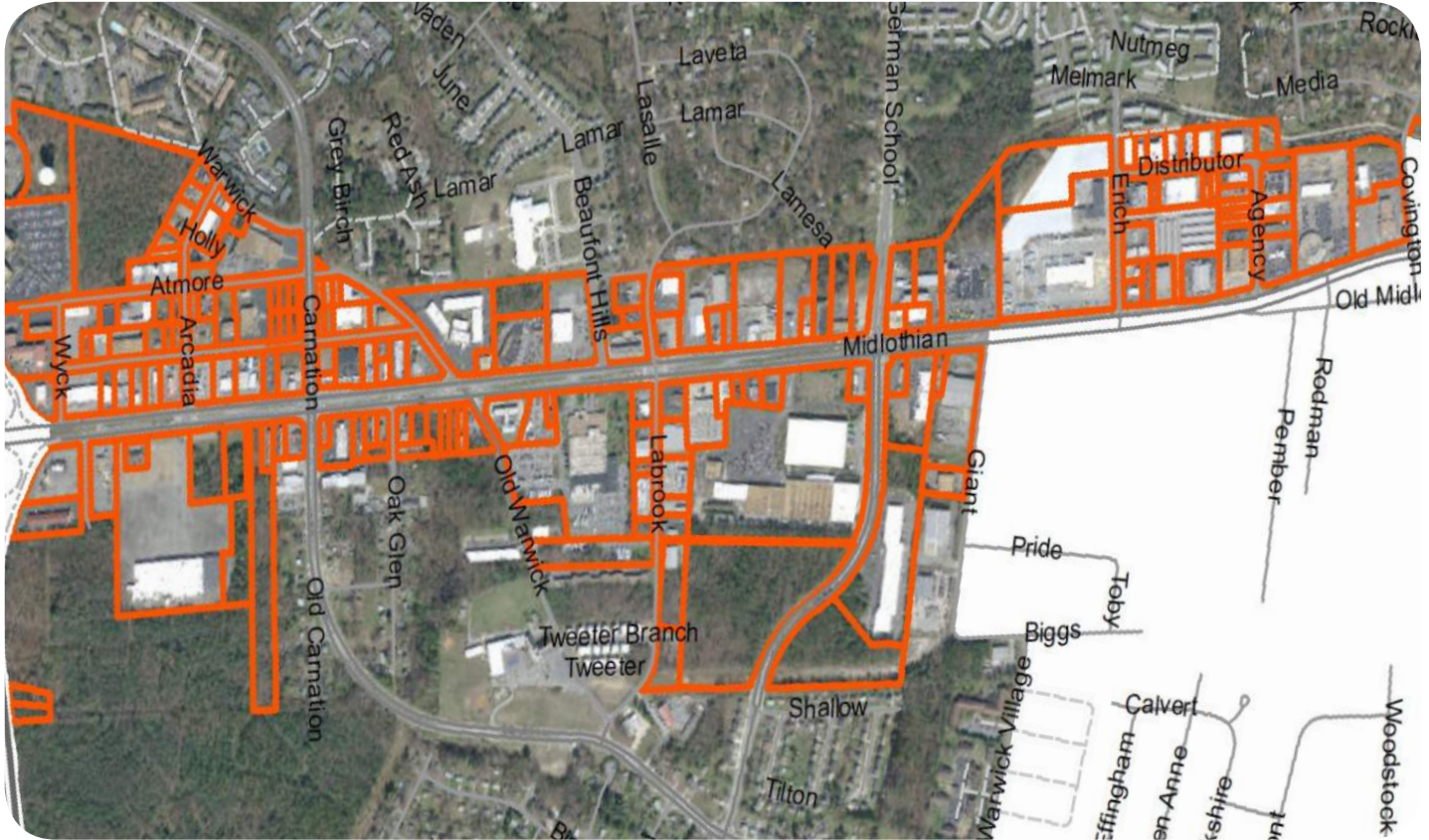




# RECOMMENDATIONS

1

**AREA:** MIDLOTHIAN TURNPIKE (Belt to Chippenham)  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING:** No  
**TIMELINE:** Richmond 300



Midlothian Turnpike, Chippenham Parkway to 9th District boundary line

The Midlothian Turnpike corridor has the largest amount of total land area zoned B-3 in the city.

Existing land uses vary, with the common feature being large swaths of surface parking.

In order to foster a fair and inclusive planning process, the entire corridor should be studied as part of the Richmond 300 process, including significant community involvement. Specific recommendations on rezoning will follow future land use recommendations in the Master Plan.

Staff recommends identifying opportunities for placemaking, connecting neighborhoods, reducing parking lots, and increasing height.

In an area with large swaths of land, some as yet unbuilt, coupled with high unemployment, there is significant opportunity for creating new opportunities for industry and job centers.



**AREA: HULL STREET (Warwick to Chesterfield Drive)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

In 2013, Richmond City and Chesterfield County worked with consultants to create the Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan, which was adopted in 2014.

The plan recommends creating mixed use nodes at Warwick and Hull and at Hull and Chippenham. One of the plan’s “priorities for immediate action” is to “put in place the regulatory/zoning framework...for implementing the plan’s recommendations”(ES-12).

The plan concludes that the area’s current zoning is not appropriate to foster the envisioned mixed-use urban centers, but does not make a particular zoning district recommendation.



Hull St at Warwick Rd

Staff plans to initiate the rezoning for the area after internal study to determine the best course of action to create the envisioned mix of uses and form.





**AREA: HULL STREET (NE corner of Hull and Chippenham)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: Undetermined**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

There is a large parcel at the intersection of Midlothian Turnpike and Chippenham parkway that is zoned B-3.

The parcel is currently home to a shopping center that houses Haynes furniture company, a neighborhood medical center, a Family Dollar, and several other stores.

The Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan envisions this property, as well as others south of Hull Street, as a “Design Health and Wellness Center”, including an indoor recreation center and a design business cluster.

Staff plans to initiate the rezoning for the entire area after internal study to determine the best course of action to create the envisioned mix of uses and form.



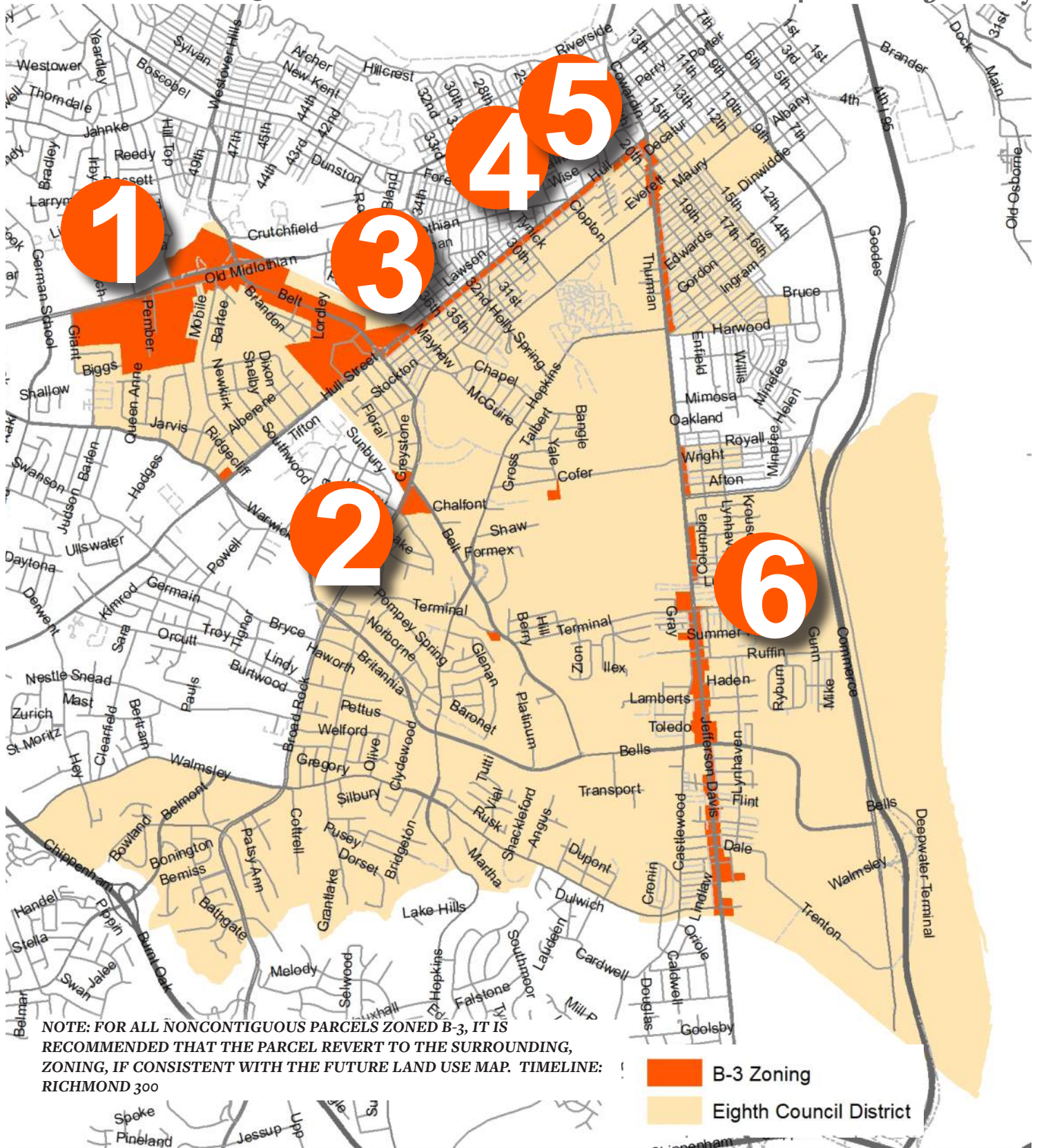
Hull St at Chippenham Pkwy



# EIGHTH DISTRICT

% of 8th District zoned B-3:  
 6% (421 acres)  
 42% of B-3 in city

## EXISTING B-3 ZONING



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1

**AREA: MIDLOTHIAN TURNPIKE (Belt to Chippenham)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**



This entire area should be studied as part of the Richmond 300 process, including significant community involvement, and specific recommendations on rezoning will follow future land use recommendations in the Master Plan.

Staff recommends identifying opportunities for placemaking, connecting neighborhoods, reducing parking lots, and increasing height.

2

**AREA: BELT AND BROAD ROCK**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

This intersection of Belt and Broad Rock Boulevards faces McGuire Medical Center.

Currently populated by auto-service centers and light-industrial uses, it has potential to be a mixed-use hub of commercial and residential uses serving the neighborhood, McGuire staff and visitors, as well as increased housing options.



Belt and Broad Rock



Belt at Broad Rock, facing Southwest



Belt at Broad Rock, facing Southeast



**AREA: SOUTHSIDE AND CIRCLE PLAZAS**

**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**

**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**



Belt Blvd including Southside and Circle Plazas

After it opened in 1957, Southside Plaza was a thriving shopping center with about 40 stores, including JC Penny's and Woolworth's.

It was built with parking spaces for 3,500 cars. Now, there are far more spaces in the parking lots there than would even be required by B-3 regulations.

Circle Plaza, across Belt Boulevard, has similar form and history.



Southside Plaza

This area should be included for study in the Richmond 300 planning process, with ample opportunity for community input.

At this time staff recommends exploring opportunities for placemaking, increased density, and increased height.

Southside Plaza has the potential for becoming a vibrant neighborhood center with a mix of housing, retail, offices, and other places of employment.

# 4

**AREA: HULL STREET (Cowardin to Belt)**

**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**

**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

This area of Hull Street was once on Richmond’s streetcar route. From Cowardin Avenue to Belt Boulevard, Hull Street retains some of its original character in places, though many are underutilized or vacant and in disrepair.



There are two-story buildings built to the sidewalk, many of which had apartments on the second floor, as well as older commercial and light industrial buildings, all of which are consistent with a more dense, pedestrian-friendly environment, and none of which fit the character shaped by B-3 regulations. There are also vacant lots, parking lots, used tire sales, and gas stations.

This presents an opportunity to support a zoning classification that will require new development

to rebuild the character to create a stronger sense of place, revitalize the neighborhood, and invigorate small business and local commerce.

Staff recommends internal study to determine the appropriate district and initiating rezoning as soon as possible.



Hull St SW of Cowardin



Hull St SW of Cowardin



**AREA: HULL STREET (Nodes)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

There are three intersections along Hull Street which have the potential to become more dense, multi-use areas.

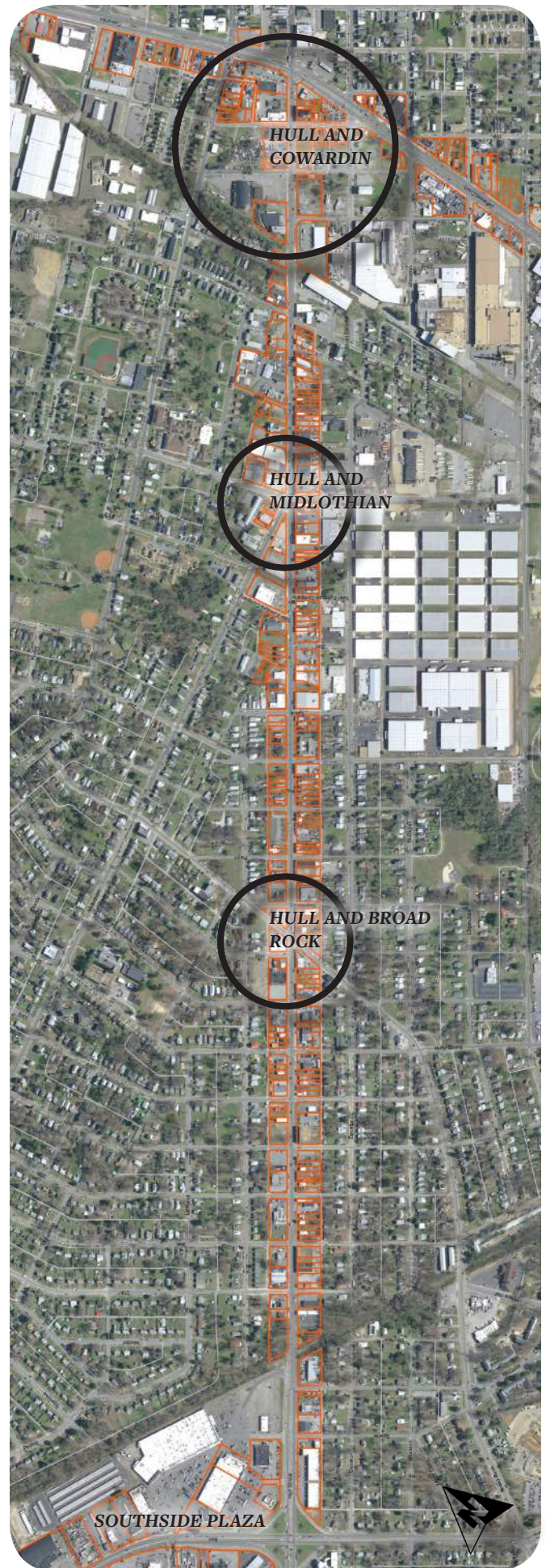
All three intersections are characterized by one and two story commercial buildings built right to the sidewalk, punctuated by surface parking lots and gas stations.

Not only do these existing buildings have the form necessary for a walkable commercial corridor, many of them were built at the beginning of the last century and have historic form and character because Jefferson Davis was once served by Richmond's streetcar system.

Applying a zoning designation that allows greater height at intersections will create opportunity for greater density along the corridor and new development can begin to create a sense of place and a series of neighborhood anchors.

Staff recommends rezoning these nodes to B-5, which allows up to 5 stories and does not permit surface parking as a principal use.

(Note: this page is a repeat from p 16 in the Eighth District section, as Hull is the dividing line between the two Council Districts.)







Hull at Cowardin



Hull at Midlothian



Hull at Broad Rock



**AREA: JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: Undetermined**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

Most of Jefferson Davis Highway is in the Eighth Council District, though a part of the east side of the road is in the Sixth District. From Maury to Lumpkin only parcels on the east side of the street are zoned B-3 (the majority on the west side are zoned M-1), and south of Terminal Road parcels on both sides of the road are zoned B-3.



Current land uses along Jefferson Davis Highway vary greatly, from one and two story single-family houses to gas stations and auto repair services to former tobacco factories being converted to apartments.

In many places Jeff Davis is the dividing line between industrial uses and residential neighborhoods. Before any zoning is changed, it is important to have an inclusive planning process that involves industrial property owners and neighborhood representatives.

Staff recommends finding opportunities to rezone and create neighborhood centers at nodes.



Jefferson Davis at Edwards

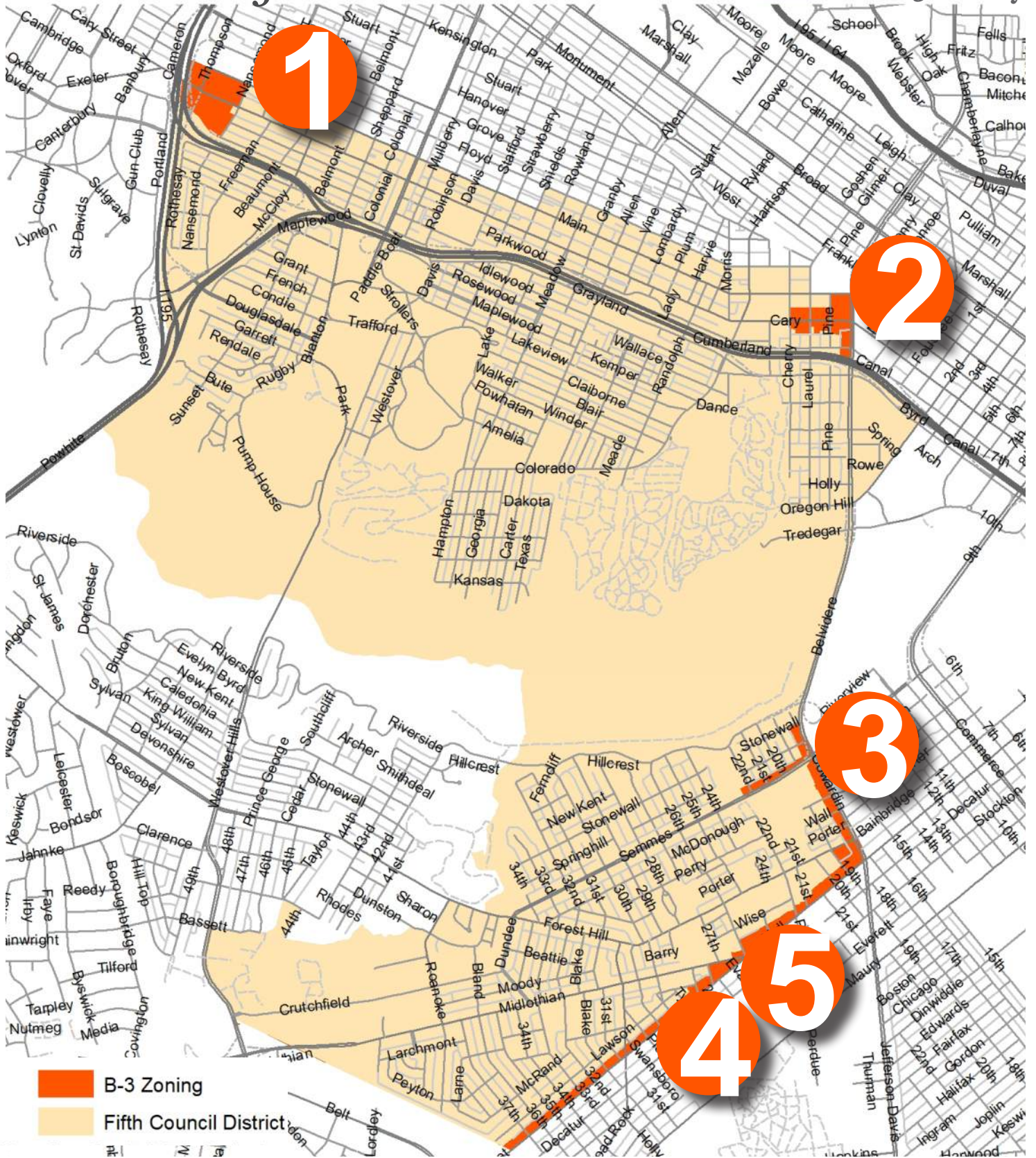


Jefferson Davis at Walmsley

# FIFTH DISTRICT

% of 5th District zoned B-3:  
1.8% (59.5 acres)  
6% of B-3 in city

## EXISTING B-3 ZONING



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1

**AREA: CARYTOWN GROCERY DISTRICT**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**



Most of the western end of Carytown, extending north on Thompson street to Floyd Ave, is zoned B-3.

As both transportation options and property values increase, there will be opportunity to decrease parking lot size and increase building height.

A new grocery-anchored development is being developed that extends the walkable character of Carytown by adding out-parcels to the right of way and an internal parking deck. Future development will be more likely to follow this pattern if the zoning is changed.

2

**AREA: WEST CARY ST (Belvidere to Cherry)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

There have been multiple attempts to change the zoning in this district, to no avail. On the north side of Cary Street there are two half blocks zoned B-3 and owned by VCU which, as a state entity, is not subject to local zoning laws. On the south side of the street, there are newer apartments and some older storefronts, all of which abut the Oregon Hill neighborhood. Staff recommends including the area in the Richmond 300 planning process and looking at the area comprehensively.





**AREA: SEMMES AND COWARDIN**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

Development is happening quickly at this intersection just south of the river, with new or planned multi-family projects at each corner and on Semmes.

In order to build on that momentum and take steps to create a more dense, walkable urban feel to the area, the intersection and parcels along Semmes and Cowardin should be rezoned to create higher density with a mix of uses and screened parking in the rear of parcels.

For example, TOD-1 on larger parcels and B-5 on smaller parcels along Semmes.



# 4

**AREA: HULL STREET (Cowardin to Belt)**

**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**

**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

This area of Hull Street was once on Richmond's streetcar route. From Cowardin Avenue to Belt Boulevard, Hull Street retains some of its original character in places, though many are underutilized or vacant and in disrepair.

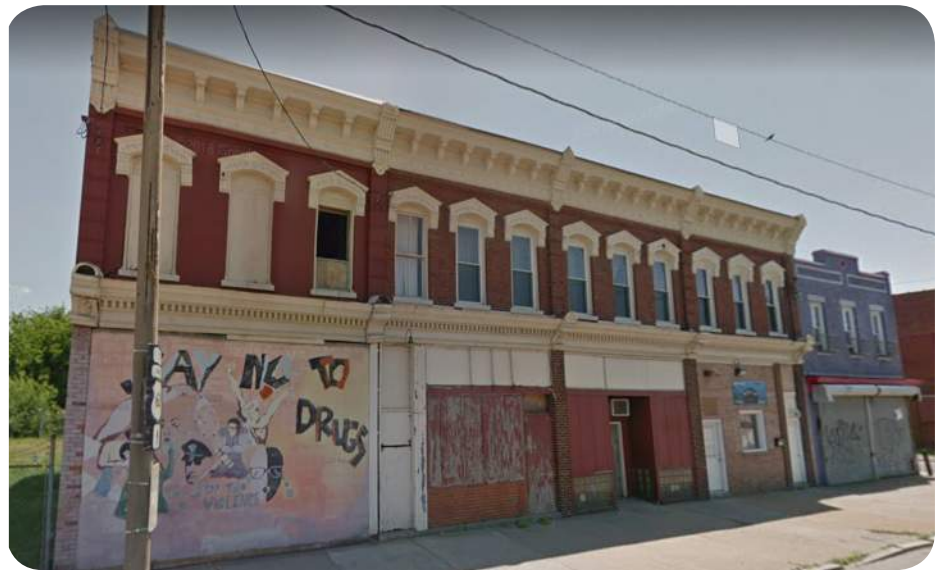


There are two-story buildings built to the sidewalk, many of which had apartments on the second floor, as well as older commercial and light industrial buildings, all of which are consistent with a more dense, pedestrian-friendly environment, and none of which fit the character shaped by B-3 regulations. There are also vacant lots, parking lots, used tire sales, and gas stations.

This presents an opportunity to support a zoning classification that will require new development to rebuild the character to create a

stronger sense of place, revitalize the neighborhood, and invigorate small business and local commerce.

Staff recommends internal study to determine the appropriate district and initiating rezoning as soon as possible.



Hull SW of Cowardin



Hull SW of Cowardin



**AREA: HULL STREET (Nodes)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

There are three intersections along Hull Street which have the potential to become more dense, multi-use areas.

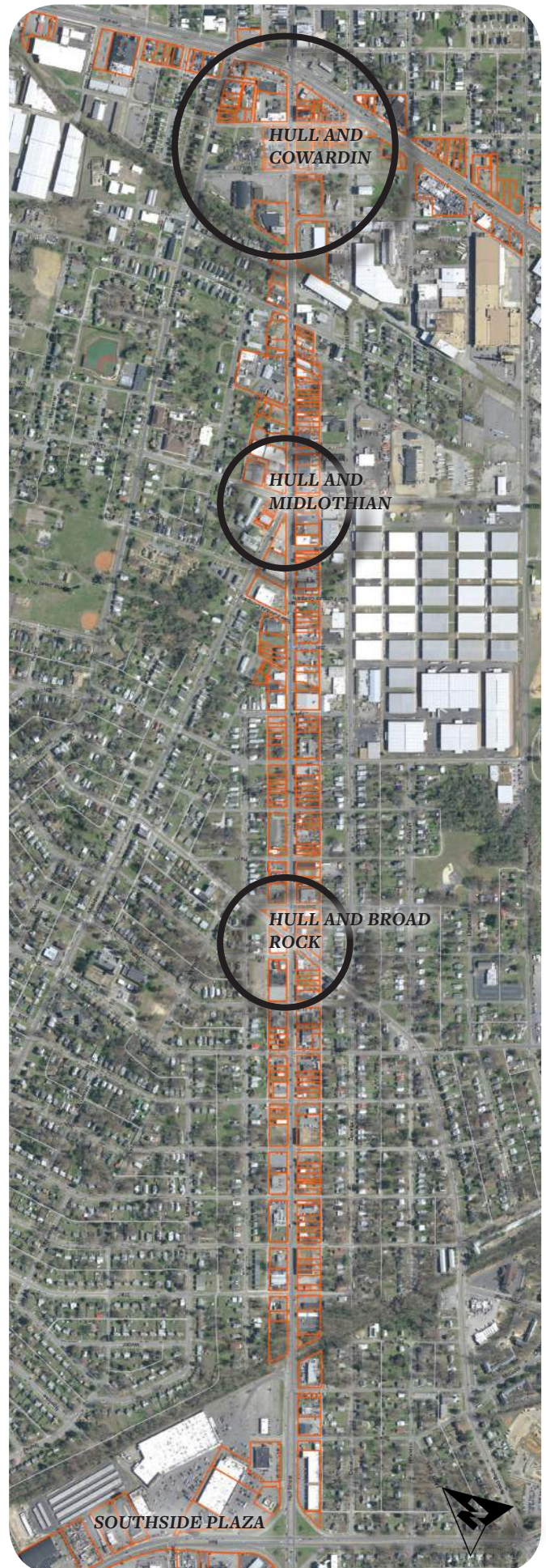
All three intersections are characterized by one and two story commercial buildings built right to the sidewalk, punctuated by surface parking lots and gas stations.

Not only do these existing buildings have the form necessary for a walkable commercial corridor, many of them were built at the beginning of the last century and have historic form and character because Jefferson Davis was once served by Richmond's streetcar system.

Applying a zoning designation that allows greater height at intersections will create opportunity for greater density along the corridor and new development can begin to create a sense of place and a series of neighborhood anchors.

Staff recommends rezoning these nodes to B-5, which allows up to 5 stories and does not permit surface parking as a principal use.

(Note: this page is a repeat from p 16 in the Eighth District section, as Hull is the dividing line between the two Council Districts.)





# MANCHESTER AND BLACKWELL NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

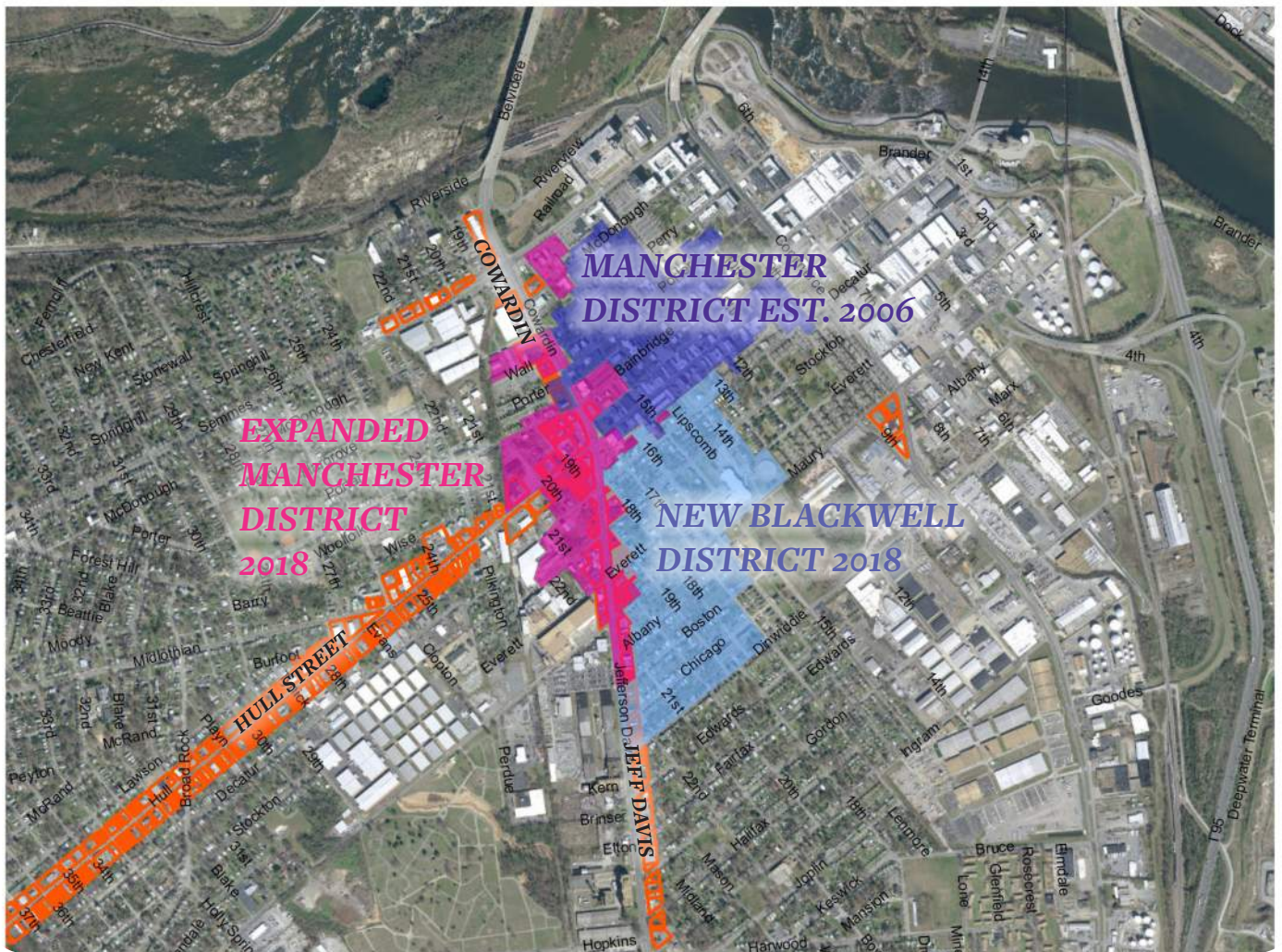
In October of 2018, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources approved the expansion of the Manchester National Register historic district and the creation of a new district in Blackwell.

These districts mean that buildings within the boundaries of these districts are now eligible for historic tax credits, which have been the impetus for much of the redevelopment in Richmond's oldest neighborhoods.

Many of the parcels in these two districts along Hull, Cowardin, and Jeff Davis are zoned B-3.

The new historic district areas have already begun to spur development, and it is important that the City take this proactive step to rezone ahead of more development to help shape the form of new development.

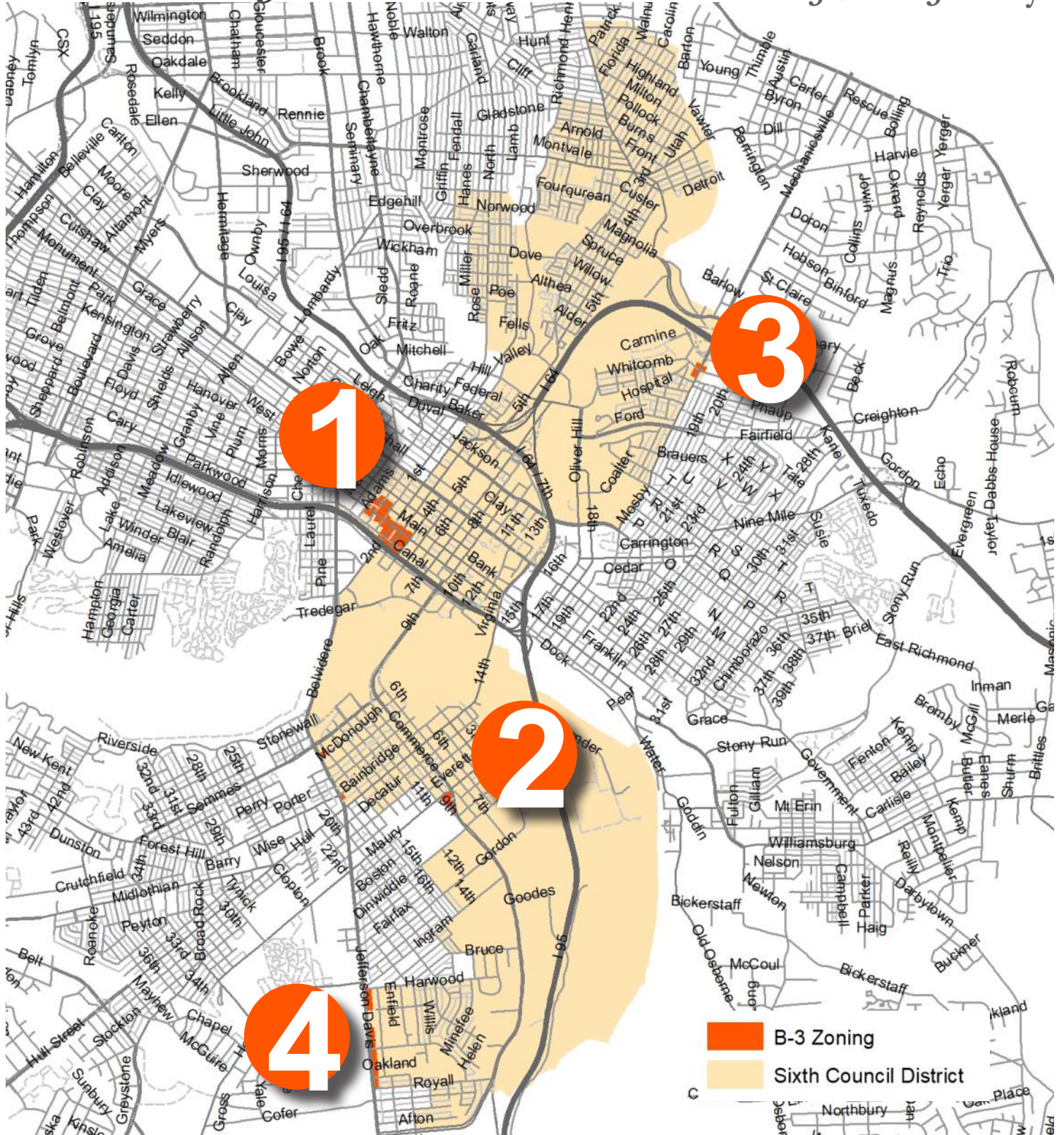
This neighborhood, like many others in the city, has suffered from buildings being demolished to make room for more parking. Therefore it is also important that whatever zoning district is applied to this area is one that does not allow surface parking lots as a permitted principal use.



# SIXTH DISTRICT

% of 6th District zoned B-3:  
0.7% (29 acres)  
3% of B-3 in city

## EXISTING B-3 ZONING



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1

**AREA: MONROE WARD**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Underway**

There is currently an area zoned B-3 in Monroe Ward, east of Belvidere and north of the Downtown Expressway. This area is part of the Arts District Pulse Station area in the adopted Pulse Corridor Plan. This area is scheduled to be rezoned in January of 2019 as the second phase of the Pulse Plan implementation.



2

**AREA: COMMERCE AND MAURY**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: Undetermined**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

There is a small group of four parcels at the intersection of Maury and Commerce that is zoned B-3. Currently, there are two unbuilt parcels, one fire station and one auto parts store. Staff recommends incorporating this area into the Richmond 300 planning process to determine appropriate future land use and zoning.





**AREA: MECHANICSVILLE TURNPIKE AND COOL LANE**

**APPROPRIATE ZONING: Undetermined**

**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**



Mechanicsville Turnpike and Cool Lane

This intersection currently has gas stations at two corners, a food store at another, and a beauty supply store at the fourth. All uses are dominated by large parking lots located between the building and the street. The gas stations most likely benefit from interstate traffic, but the food and beauty supply stores are focused more towards a local consumer.

There is an important opportunity to create a neighborhood and retail center for people who live to the east and west of this intersection.

This should undergo a planning process with community involvement to determine the best course of action.



Mechanicsville Turnpike at Cool Lane

# 4

**AREA: JEFF DAVIS HIGHWAY (Harwood to Royall)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: Undetermined**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

Most of Jefferson Davis Highway is in the Eighth Council District, though a part of the east side of the road is in the Sixth District . From Maury to Lumpkin only parcels on the east side of the street are zoned B-3 (the majority on the west side are zoned M-1), and south of Terminal Road parcels on both sides of the road are zoned B-3.

Current land uses along Jefferson Davis Highway vary greatly, from one and two story single family houses to gas stations and auto repair services to former tobacco factories being converted to apartments.

In many places Jeff Davis is the dividing line between industrial uses and residential neighborhoods. Before any zoning is changed, it is important to have an inclusive planning process that involves industrial property owners and neighborhood representatives.

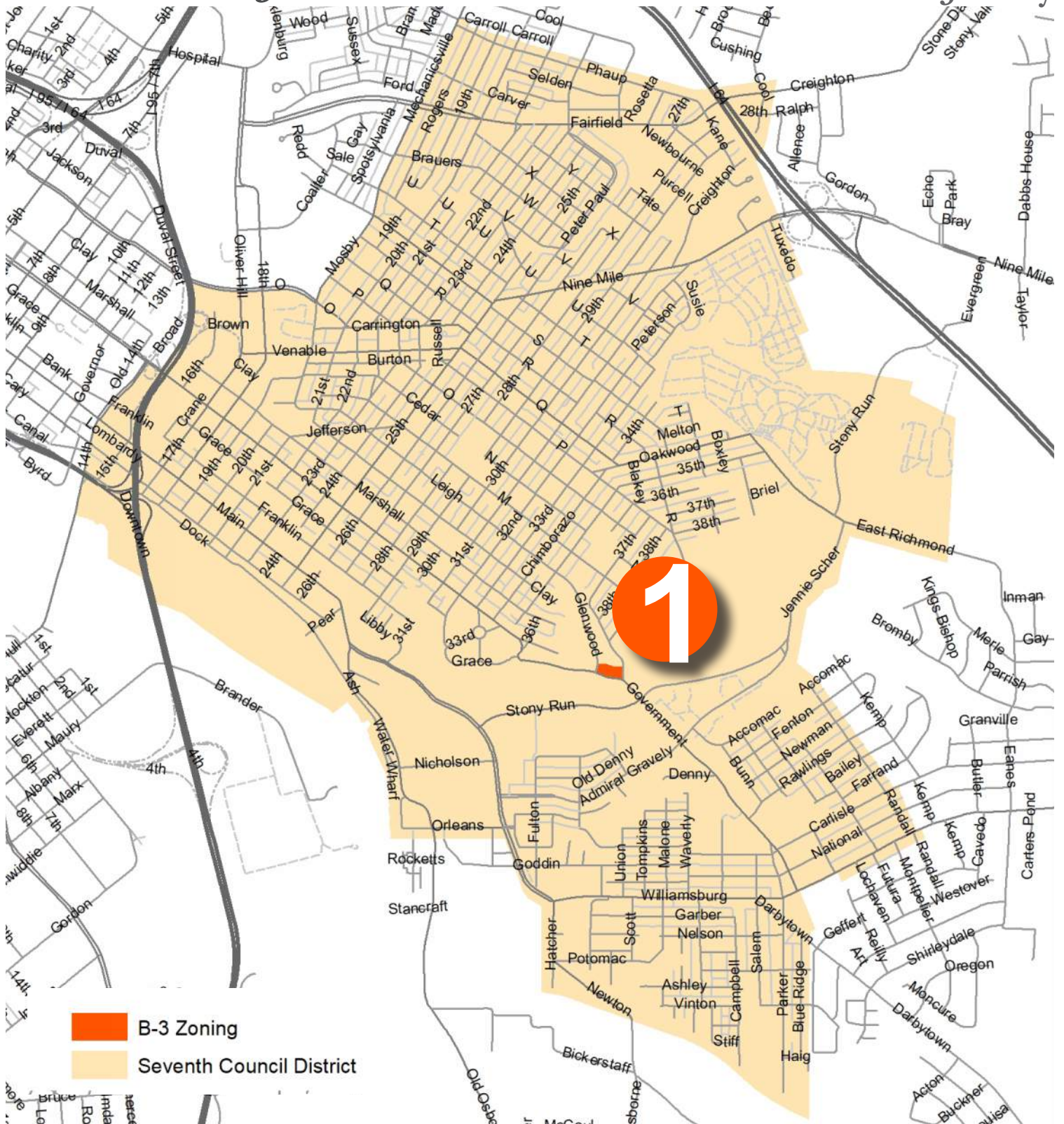
Staff recommends finding opportunities for increasing density and height and placemaking at nodes.



# SEVENTH DISTRICT

% of 7th District zoned B-3:  
0.02% (1 acre)  
0.1% of B-3 in city

## EXISTING B-3 ZONING



# RECOMMENDATIONS

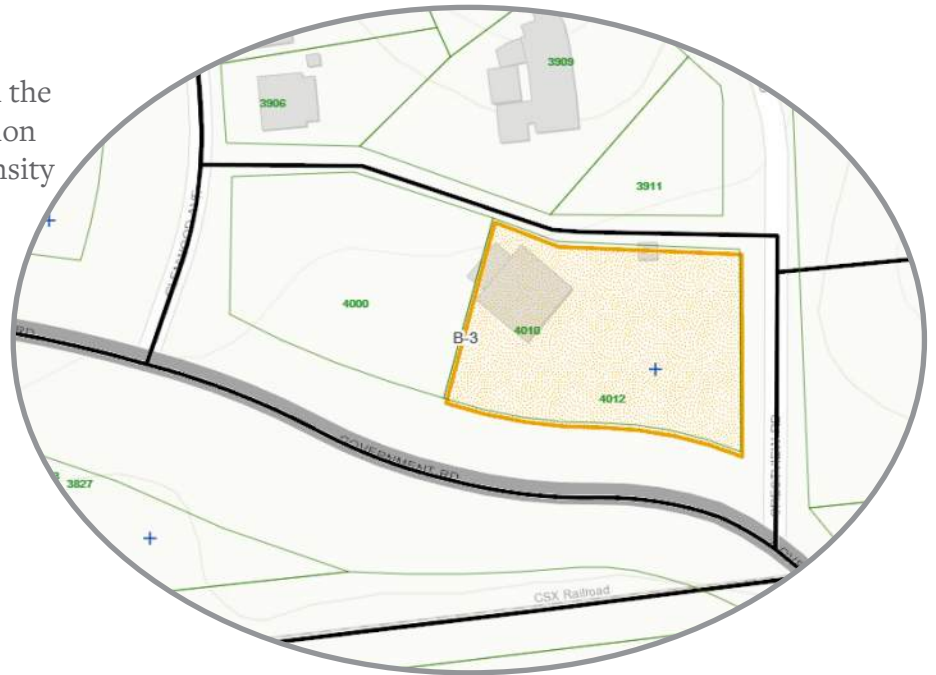


**AREA:** GOVERNMENT ROAD  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING:** No  
**TIMELINE:** 1 to 3 years

On the north side of Government Road, southeast of Church Hill and northwest of Fulton, there is one undeveloped parcel zoned B-3.

Considering the rate of development in the area, changing the zoning to a designation that would allow greater height and density would be the most proactive choice.

Staff recommends applying a zoning district that allows more height and density, perhaps R-63.







# RECOMMENDATIONS

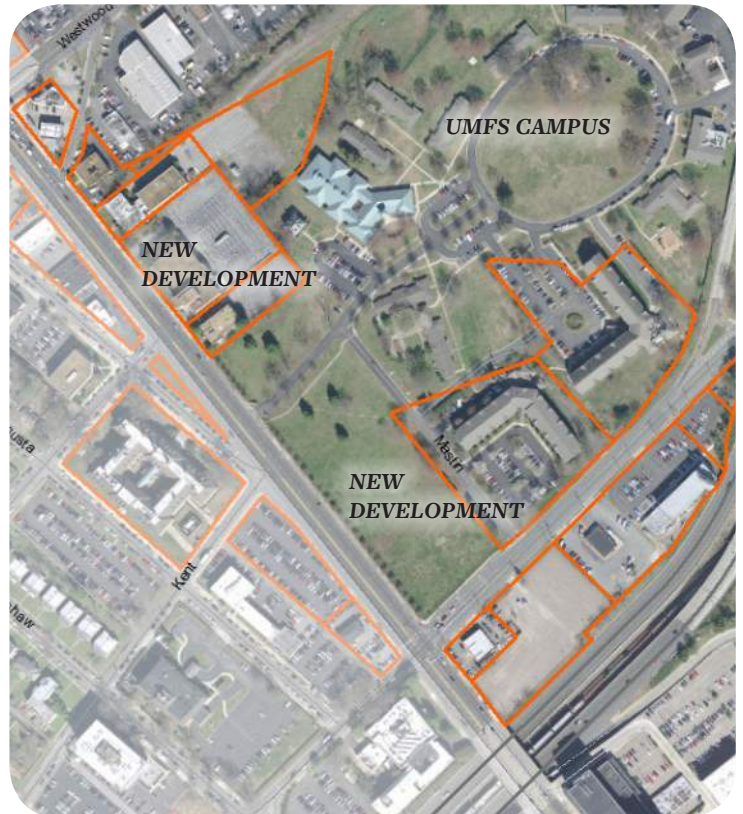
1

**AREA: BROAD ST (I-195 to Westwood)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

There are parcels zoned B-3 all along Broad Street, but these parcels stand out because of their proximity to both Scott's Addition (recently rezoned TOD-1 and B-7) and Henrico's Westwood Corridor, which the County has recently dubbed "Scott's Addition 2.0". There is a large, multi-family development on the UMFS property at the NW corner of Broad and Hamilton, and the former DGIF property just to the west will also be developed into apartments.

This is a good opportunity to pro-actively rezone ahead of any additional development. This area is part of the Pulse Corridor Plan and is labeled as a "Significant Node." Scott's Addition was rezoned in the summer of 2017 as the first phase of Pulse Corridor Plan implementation, but the rezoning did not extend west of I-195.

Staff recommends extending the TOD-1 zoning designation to the above-pictured B-3 parcels.



2

**AREA: SAUER'S CENTER**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

There is currently significant development underway at these B-3 parcels, including a Whole Foods Market. These parcels are all part of the Allison Street Station area and will be rezoned with the incremental implementation of the Pulse Corridor Plan.

3

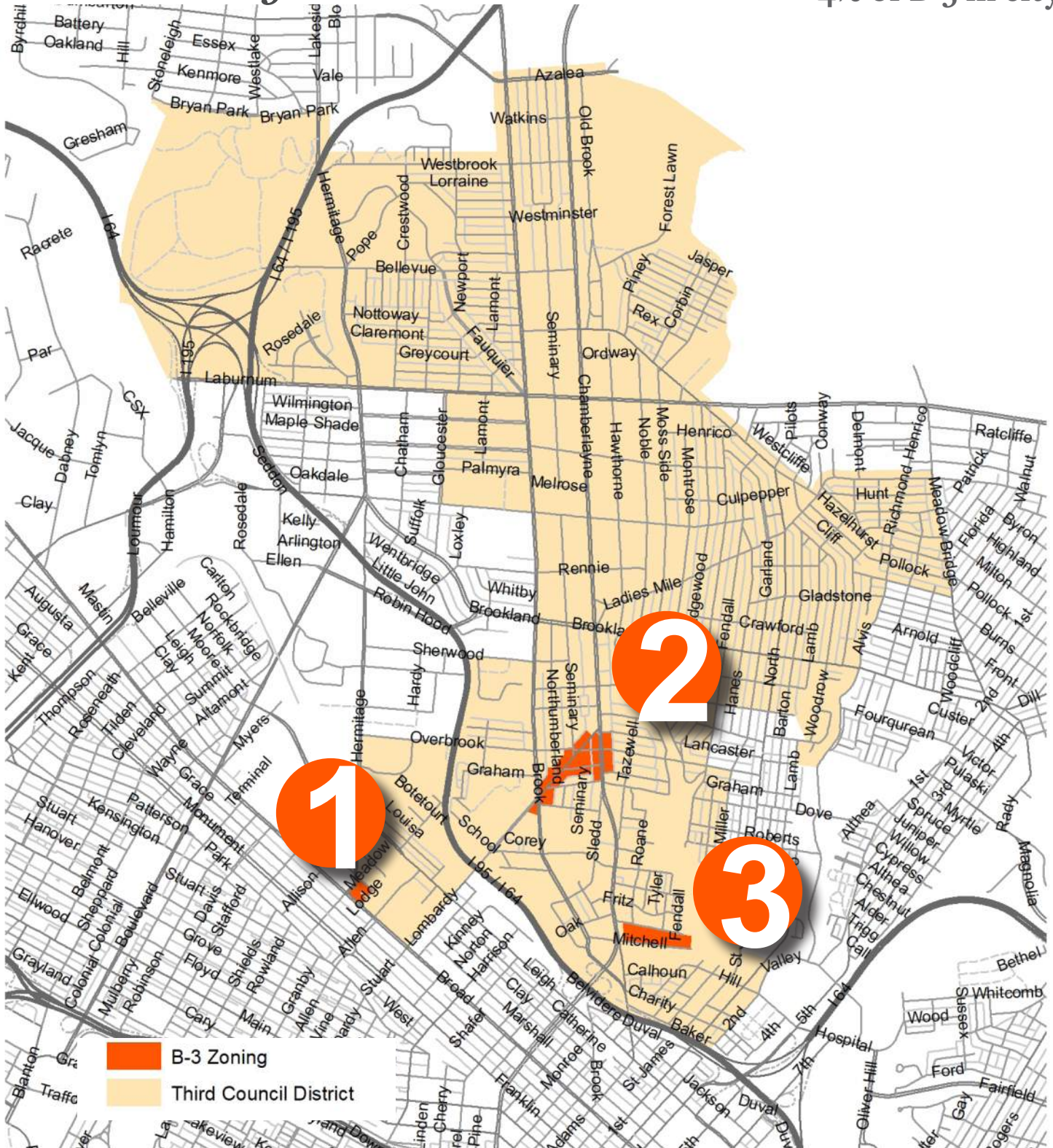
**AREA: MONROE WARD**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Underway**

All of the parcels zoned B-3 in Monroe Ward are included in the current effort to rezone the Arts District Station area as the second phase of the Pulse Corridor Plan implementation.

# THIRD DISTRICT

% of 3rd District zoned B-3:  
 1.3% (38 acres)  
 4% of B-3 in city

## EXISTING B-3 ZONING



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1

**AREA: BROAD AND HERMITAGE**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

The parcels on the northeast side of Broad and Meadow are, like Sauer's Center to the northwest, part of the Allison Station Area and will be rezoned with the incremental implementation of the Pulse Corridor Plan.



2

**AREA: LOMBARDY ST**  
**(Brook to Chamberlayne)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Underway**

All of the parcels on Lombardy Street from Brook to Chamberlayne, as well as the parcels on Graham, Overbrook, and the East side of Chamberlayne are zoned B-3. The entire area is part of the adopted VUU/Chamberlayne Plan, and staff has already begun work to initiate the rezoning as the first phase of implementing that plan.



3

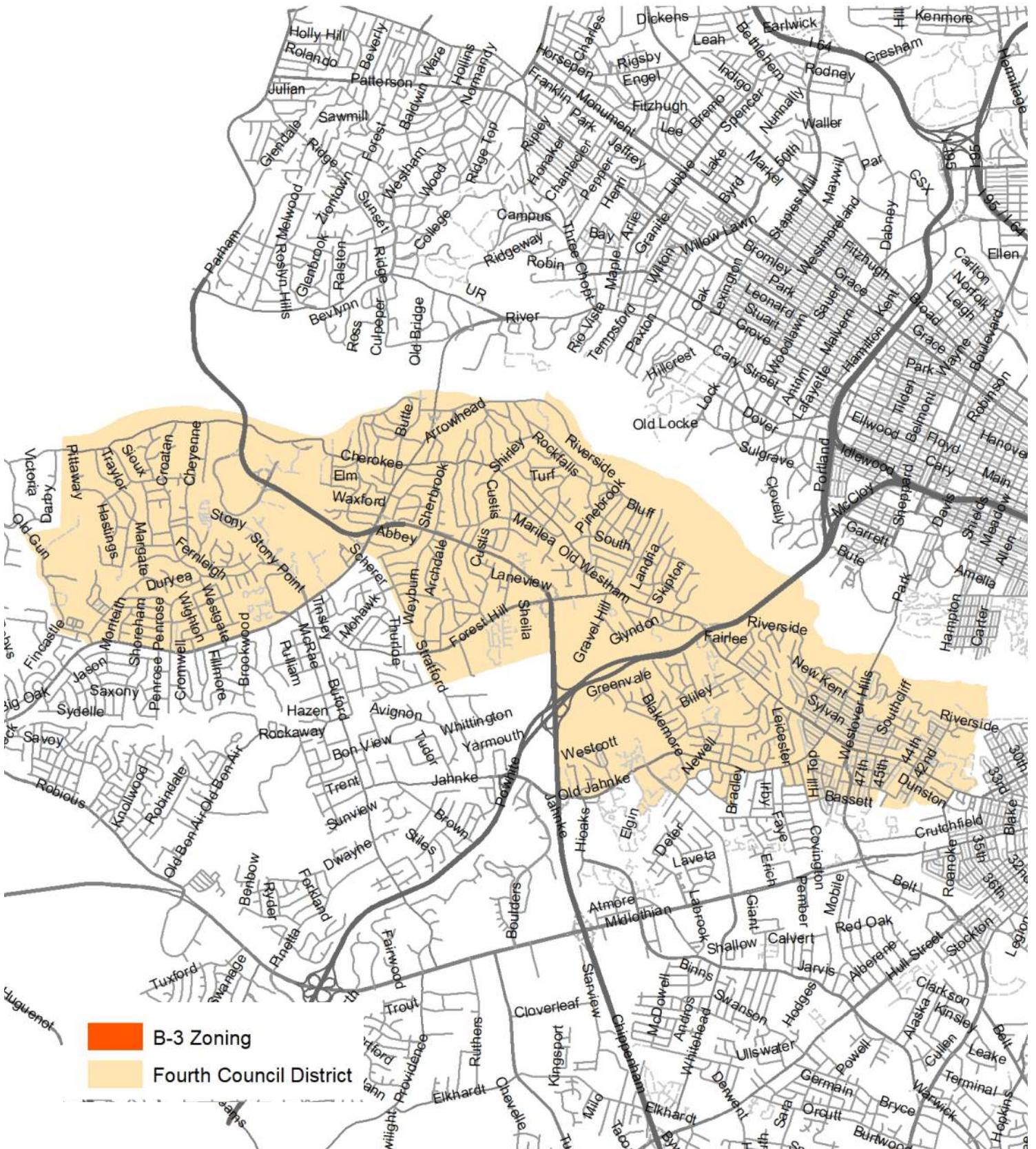
**AREA: CHAMBERLAYNE AND BACON**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

A large apartment complex was recently built on this parcel using a Special Use Permit. New development is not likely to occur within the next decade.



# FOURTH DISTRICT

## EXISTING B-3 ZONING

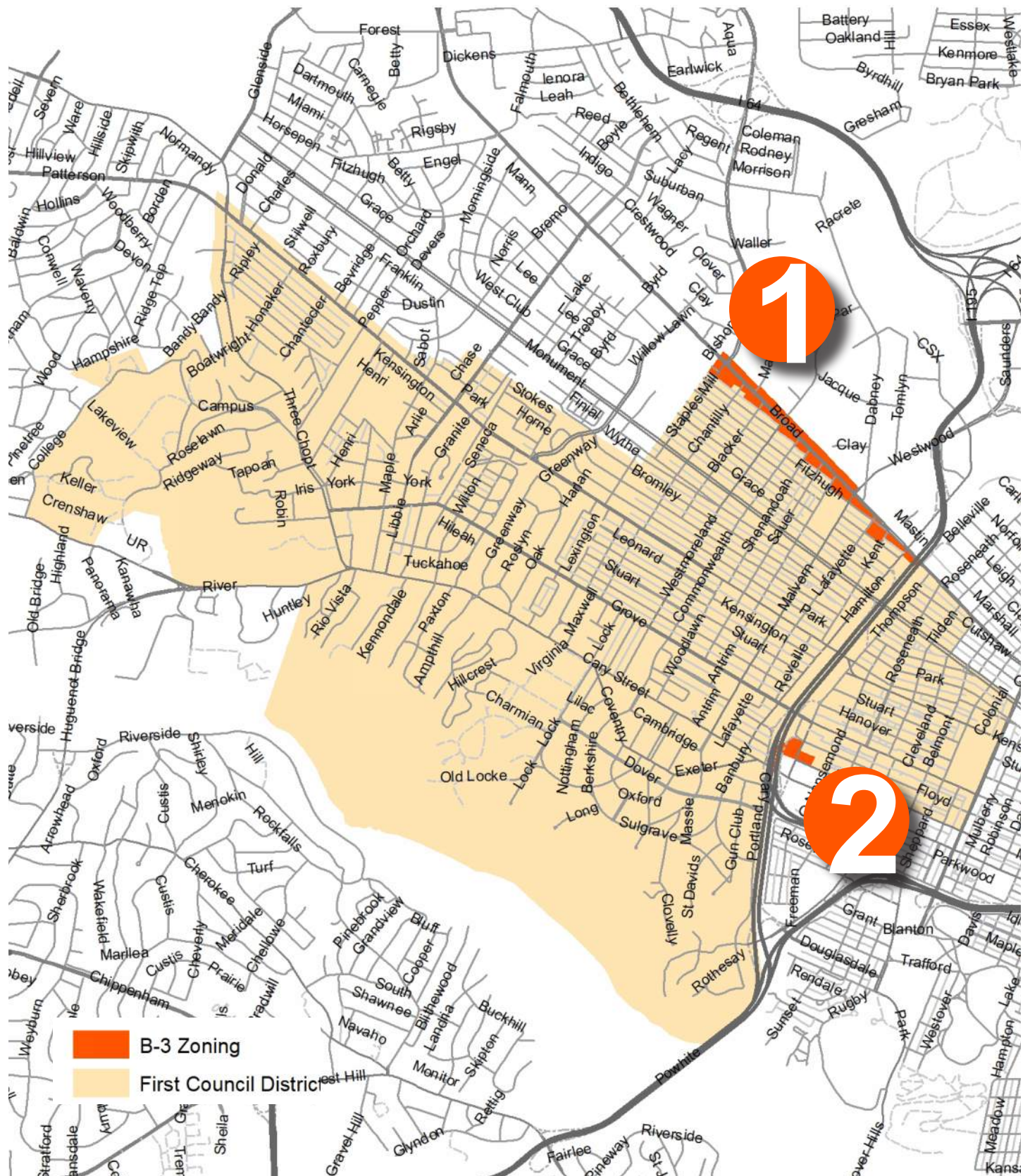


There is no land zoned B-3 in the Fourth Council District.

# FIRST DISTRICT

## EXISTING B-3 ZONING

% of 1st District zoned B-3:  
0.5% (34 acres)  
3% of B-3 in city



# RECOMMENDED CHANGES



**AREA: BROAD STREET**  
**(I-195 to Staples Mill)**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: 1 to 3 years**

The entire Broad Street Corridor from I-195 to Staples Mill Road is zoned B-3 on either side. It is included in the Pulse Corridor Plan, with a future land use designation of Corridor Mixed-Use except for a designation of Nodal Mixed-Use around the Staples Mill Station. This area should be rezoned as a next step in implementing the Pulse Corridor Plan.

The plan recommends increasing height to establish a gateway at Broad and Staples Mill, with potential zoning of B-4, B-5, RF-1 or RF-2 or a new district. Along the corridor, the plan recommends UB-2, B-5, B-6, RF-1 or a new district.



**AREA: THOMPSON AND ELLWOOD**  
**APPROPRIATE ZONING: No**  
**TIMELINE: Richmond 300**

There are three parcels zoned B-3 in the First District at the west end of Ellwood Ave: Ellwood Thompson's Market, Patient First, and Walgreen's. The suburban character of B-3 is not appropriate to this highly-trafficked and well-loved part of the city. Staff recommends doing analysis and including this area in the Richmond 300 process, and ultimately rezoning to a district that allows higher density.

